

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

LATOYA CANTRELL  
MAYOR

ROBERT D. RIVERS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LARRY W. MASSEY, JR.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**City Planning Commission Staff Report**

**City Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Tuesday, July 22, 2025**

**CPC Deadline: 09/20/2025**  
**CC Deadline: 60 days from receipt**  
**City Council District: D – Green**

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**STAFF REPORT**

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**Zoning Docket: 037/25**

**To:** City Planning Commission

**From:** Robert Rivers, Executive Director  
Stephen Kroll, Planning Administrator

**Prepared by:** Mitchell S. Kogan

**Date:** July 23, 2025

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Applicant:** City Council Motion No. M-25-289

**Request:** Zoning change from an S-RD Suburban Two-Family Residential District to BIP Business-Industrial Park District for the properties not presently zoned as such, identified in Exhibit A attached to Motion No. M-25-289, and generally bounded by Almonaster Avenue, Carver Rams Way (formerly Higgins Boulevard), Press Street, Montegut Street, Benefit Street, Feliciana Street, Abundance Street, Clouet Street, and Florida Avenue

**Municipal address(es):** There are multiple municipal addresses

**Description:**

Zoning Docket 037/25 is a request for a zoning change from an S-RD Suburban Two-Family Residential District to BIP Business-Industrial Park District for the former Agriculture Street Landfill / Gordon Plaza suburb. The site and its multiple vacant / residential properties have been fully purchased by the City of New Orleans as of October 2024 and is currently planned by the Office of Resilience and Sustainability to utilize the former site as a solar farm to provide power for homes and businesses within the area.

## Why is City Planning Commission action required?

The City Planning Commission is required to make a recommendation on all requests for zoning map amendments prior to City Council action, in accordance with **Article 4, Section 4.2.D.3** Action by City Planning Commission of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

## BACKGROUND

### Site's zoning and land use history of the site

<i>Zoning:</i>	1929 – Vacant Property
	1953 – J “Light Industrial District” and B “Two-Family District”
	1970 – Landfill and Residential
	Current – Vacant property / Single-Family Dwellings
<i>Land Use:</i>	1929 – Landfill
	1949 – Landfill and Residential
	1999 – Residential

The subject property served as the Agriculture Street Landfill from approximately 1909 to 1957, with a brief reopening from 1965 to 1966 to accommodate cleanup debris following Hurricane Betsy. In the mid-20th century, portions of the area were redeveloped with two-family residential housing, followed by additional predominantly single-family development throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, in 1994, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the site as a Superfund Site due to the presence of hazardous materials associated with its former use as a landfill. Since that designation, the site has been the focus of sustained litigation, environmental remediation efforts, and community advocacy aimed at addressing the environmental and public health risks.

## ANALYSIS

### Purpose of the rezoning and anticipated impact on surrounding land uses

The purpose of the proposed rezoning is to facilitate the redevelopment of the former Agriculture Street Landfill site as a solar energy facility. The property, currently zoned S-RD Suburban Two-Family Residential District, was previously developed with residential structures but has since been fully acquired by the City of New Orleans as of October 2024. Given the site's historical use as a municipal landfill and its subsequent designation as a Superfund site, it is no longer suitable for residential redevelopment. The proposed solar farm represents an opportunity to transform an environmentally burdened site into a source of clean, renewable energy.

The purpose of the existing S-RD Suburban Two-Family Residential District is to facilitate the creation and maintenance of a more compact development type, where there may be a mix of housing types, including two-family and townhouse dwellings. This district also allows higher residential densities when a project is providing significant public benefits such as long-term affordable housing. The subject property and lots within the surrounding area were primarily

developed following the closure of the landfill but was met with controversy when residents were filing complaints citing environmental hazards and a cluster of illnesses occurring within the vicinity of the site.

The purpose of the requested BIP Business-Industrial Park District is to provide appropriate locations for certain types of business and light industrial facilities in well-designed and landscaped campus environments and provide employment opportunities near residential areas. This zoning will allow for the implementation of the solar farm. About 1/3 of the site is presently zoned with the BIP classification, and this request is to consolidate the remaining of the acquired property that is zoned S-RD.

### **Spot zoning policy**

The request is a spot zone based on the Commission's definition of spot zone in its Administrative Rules, Policies, & Procedures document.<sup>1</sup> The terms "spot zone" and "spot zoning" refer to zoning changes which have the effect of singling out a lot or other relatively small tracts of land for treatment different from similar surrounding parcels. These zoning changes have the effect of granting preferential treatment to those spot zoned parcels which is not also granted to similar surrounding properties. Due to this preferential treatment, the Commission is generally not supportive of spot zoning.

Spot zoning can include the establishment of a new zoning district for a single property (or relatively small number of properties), as well as the expansion of an existing zoning district when the expansion has the effect of granting a certain property (or small number of properties) preferential treatment that is not also granted to surrounding similarly situated properties. As a policy, the City Planning Commission will generally object to requests for spot zones.

In the case of the subject site, staff has determined that this specific request falls under the definition of spot zoning in form, but not in spirit. While the proposed rezoning technically constitutes a spot zone, it is not inconsistent with the broader land use patterns and planning intent for the area. The current Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as Residential Post-War Suburban, which would typically support low-density residential uses. However, the practical suitability of the site for residential redevelopment has been undermined due to its historical use as a landfill, its designation as a Superfund site, and the full acquisition of all parcels by the City of New Orleans as of October 2024.

In addition to this, a FLUM amendment was approved in 2023 (PD07-07), which changed the land use designation for a portion of the site to Business Center (BC). Although this amendment did not include the entirety of the subject area, it signaled a shift in towards the requested BIP zoning and its compatible uses. The current request to rezone the remainder of the site to BIP Business-

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 52-54 of the City Planning Commission's Administrative Rules, Policies, and Procedures, available at: [https://nola.gov/city-planning/rules-and-regulations/rules-regulations-documents/2014\\_05\\_19\\_final\\_rules\\_document/](https://nola.gov/city-planning/rules-and-regulations/rules-regulations-documents/2014_05_19_final_rules_document/)

Industrial Park District is therefore consistent with this original amendment, the property simply had expanded.

### **Evaluation of approval standards**

The City Planning Commission recommendation and the City Council decision on any zoning text or map amendment are matters of legislative discretion. In making their recommendation and decision, the City Planning Commission and the City Council shall consider the standards contained in **Article 4, Section 4.2.E Approval Standards** of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. In this section, the staff evaluates the application using those standards.

#### ***The proposed amendment is compatible with the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map.***

This standard is met. The Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans requires all land use actions to be consistent with the Master Plan. A land use action is consistent with the Master Plan if it furthers, or at least does not interfere with, the goals, policies, and guidelines outlined in Chapter 13: Land Use Plan of the Master Plan, and is compatible with the uses, densities, and intensities of the designation of its site on the future land use map. “Chapter 13: Land Use Plan” of the Master Plan designates the future land use of the petitioned site as “Mixed-Use Low Density.” The goal, range of uses, and development character for that designation are copied below:

#### **RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY POST-WAR**

**Goal:** Preserve the existing character and scale of low density single-family residential in post-war (WWII) areas of the city and allow for compatible infill development.

**Range of Uses:** Single-family dwellings, agriculture, stormwater management, and supporting public recreational and community facilities allowed (e.g. schools and places of worship). Neighborhood-serving businesses and traditional corner stores may be allowed where current or former use is verified. Conversion to multifamily, neighborhood-serving commercial, or mixed used may be allowed for historical institutional or other non-residential structures.

**Development Character:** New development will fit with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods where single- and two-family residential structures are typically set back away from the street on larger lots than in older, pre-war neighborhoods. Incorporate risk reduction and adaptation strategies in the built environment.

While the proposal does not fully conform with the current FLUM designation, the zoning change is compatible with the surrounding zoning context. Much of the adjacent and nearby property is already zoned BIP, with an already amended portion of the subject site being listed as BC Business Center for Future Land Use. Furthermore, the Residential Low Density Post-War FLUM classification is strictly for residential development with neighborhood facilities. The request and utilization of the property is inherently beneficial and would still keep the true nature of the

designation, as residential uses are essentially restricted due to the environmental cost upon current and potential residents.

***The proposed amendment is compatible with the place designations of this Ordinance.***

This standard is met. The requested zoning change would go from a Suburban Neighborhood district to one that would be more beneficial to the community; therefore, the request is compatible with the place designations of this ordinance.

***The proposed amendment is compatible with existing use and zoning of nearby property.***

This standard is met. While the site is currently vacant, the site's immediate neighbors include parcels that have BIP zoning, in addition to the FLUM amendments of 2023 accommodating this request.

***The proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety and welfare of the City.***

This standard is met. The proposed zoning change meets this standard by supporting the redevelopment of an environmentally constrained site into a solar energy facility, which promotes public health, safety, and welfare through sustainable infrastructure and responsible land use.

***The proposed amendment is a more suitable zoning classification for the property than the current classification.***

This standard is met. The staff believes that the current zoning classification is now moot based on environmental concerns. The zoning change allows for the conversion of a hazardous site into a public and green infrastructure location in an area where residential development would be more harmful to the area.

***Based upon the length of time that the property in question has been vacant, the proposed amendment is a more suitable zoning classification for the property than the current classification considered in the context of development in the area where the property is located.***

This standard is met. Given the long-term vacancy of the property and the surrounding context, the proposed amendment provides a more appropriate zoning classification than the current S-RD designation, aligning with existing development patterns and the City's intended use of the site.

***The proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy.***

This standard is met. The proposed amendment does not correct an error but does reflect a decision in policy in how to implement the goals of the FLUM designation nearby.

***The proposed amendment benefits the citizens of the City as a whole.***

This standard is met. This zoning change would have a significant impact on the city as a whole as it would allow for the construction of a solar farm to provide clean and renewable energy as well as revitalizes the former environmentally hazardous area.

***The proposed amendment provides a more workable way to achieve the intent and purposes of this Ordinance and the Master Plan.***

This standard is met. The goals of the existing FLUM designation cannot be accomplished since the environmental constraints prevent residential development. Therefore, the proposed amendment provides a more workable way to achieve the intent and purpose of this Ordinance and the Master Plans.

***The proposed amendment does not create a significant number of nonconformities.***

This standard is met. The amendment would not create any nonconformities as there is no longer any residential development on the site.

***The proposed amendment is compatible with the trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question.***

This standard is met. The surrounding area is primarily zoned for business and industrial uses, making the proposed rezoning a natural extension of the existing development pattern. The solar farm fits well within this context by offering a low-impact, utility-focused use that complements nearby properties and supports the City's broader sustainability goals.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The staff recommends **APPROVAL** of Zoning Docket 037/25.

## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING (July 22, 2025)**

The staff summarized the application and presented its recommendation of approval. Staff also noted that they received an email from a constituent who owns the property located at 3125 St. Ferdinand Street which was shown on the proposed rezoning map. The applicant did not wish to be a part of the rezoning, and it was not part of the affected addresses received from City Council; therefore staff stated on the record that, if the Commission were to recommend approval, the referenced address would be excluded from the request. Staff noted that a revised map would be created and transmitted to council. There was no public comment. Commissioner Joshi Gupta made a motion to accept staff's recommendation with the exception of 3125 St. Ferdinand from the proposed Zoning Change. Commissioner Flick seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

MOTION:

BE IT MOVED BY THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION THAT ZONING DOCKET 037/25 IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL. BE IT FURTHER MOVED THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO NOTIFY THE CITY COUNCIL OF SAID ACTION.

YEAS: Flick, Jordan, Joshi-Gupta, Lunn, Stewart

NAYS:

ABSENT: Brown, Steeg, Witry

**MOTION  
(AS AMENDED)  
NO. M-25-289**

**CITY HALL: May 22, 2025**

**BY: COUNCILMEMBER GREEN (BY REQUEST)**

**SECONDED BY: COUNCILMEMBER MORRELL**

**BE IT MOVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS,** That the City Planning Commission is directed to conduct a public hearing to consider a zoning change from S-RD Suburban Two-Family Residential District to BIP Business-Industrial Park District for the properties not presently zoned as such, identified in Exhibit A, and generally bounded by Almonaster Avenue, Carver Rams Way (formerly Higgins Boulevard), Press Street, Montegut Street, Benefit Street, Feliciana Street, Abundance Street, Clouet Street, and Florida Avenue, the general boundaries of the former agriculture Street Landfill.

**BE IT FURTHER MOVED,** That the Neighborhood Participation Program requirement and any fees necessary to effectuate this request are hereby waived.

**BE IT FURTHER MOVED,** That in the process of studying and reviewing the proposed map amendment, the City Planning Commission staff is directed and granted the flexibility to make all appropriate changes relative to this request to ensure consistency and continuity or to clarify any ambiguities or mistakes, and to make adjustments deemed necessary in light of public testimony resulting from the study and review of this request.

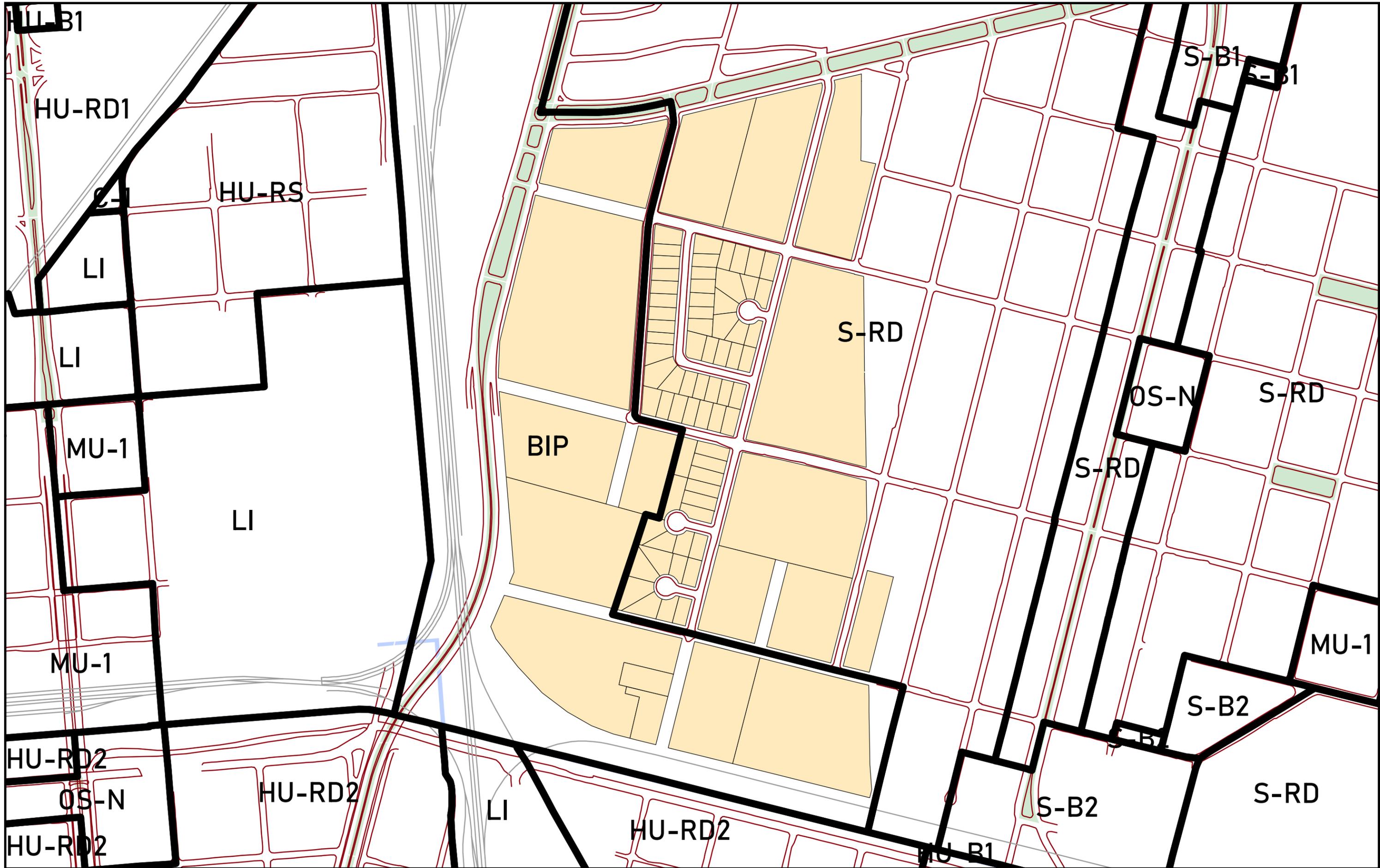
**THE FOREGOING MOTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF, AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS: Giarrusso, Green, Moreno, Morrell, Thomas - 5**

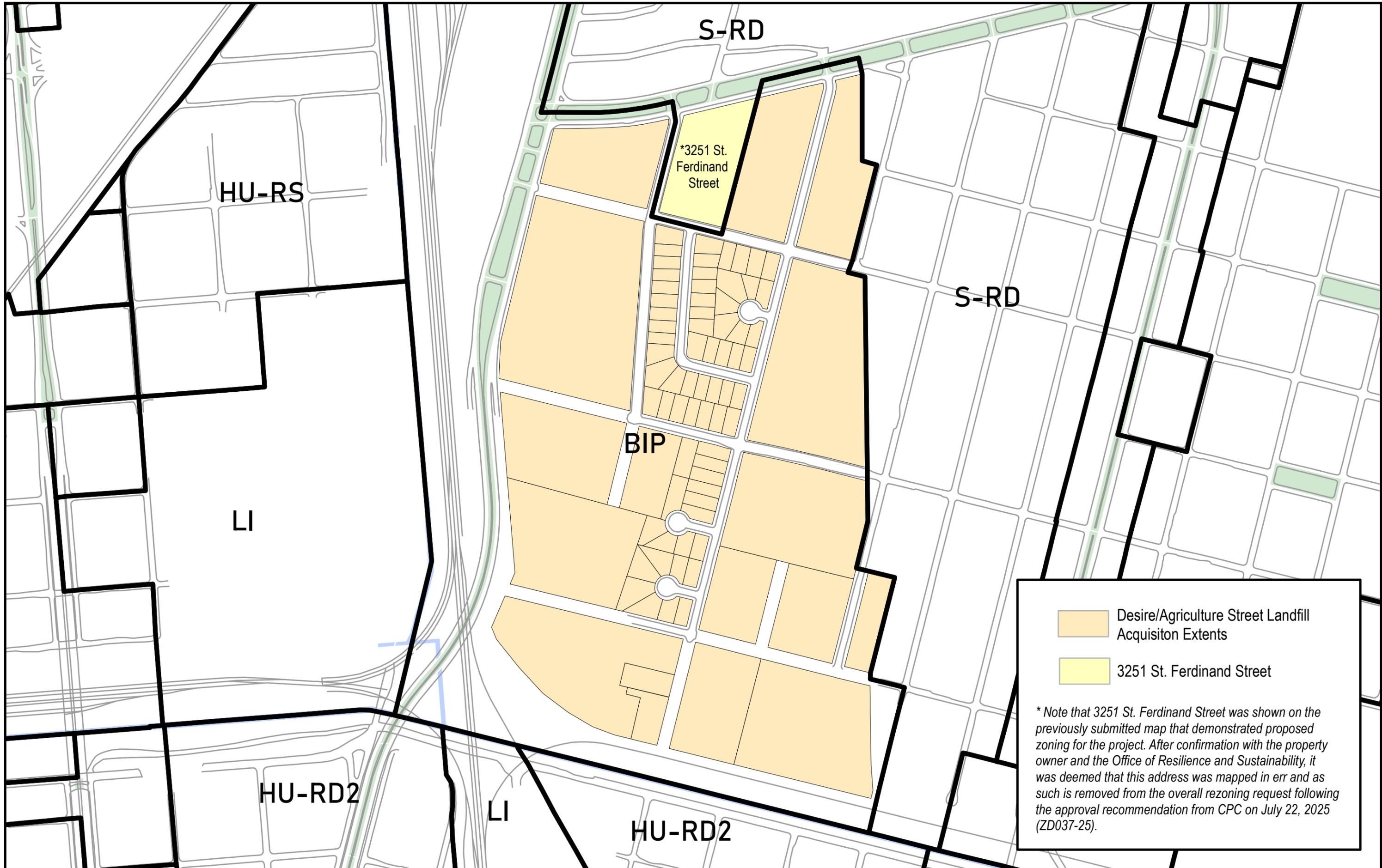
**NAYS: 0**

**ABSENT: Harris, King - 2**

**AND THE MOTION WAS ADOPTED.**

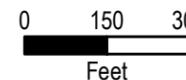


**Agriculture Street Landfill Existing Zoning Designation**



**Agriculture Street Landfill Proposed Zoning Designation Map**

24 July 2025



Desire/Agriculture Street Landfill Acquisition Extents  
 3251 St. Ferdinand Street

*\* Note that 3251 St. Ferdinand Street was shown on the previously submitted map that demonstrated proposed zoning for the project. After confirmation with the property owner and the Office of Resilience and Sustainability, it was deemed that this address was mapped in error and as such is removed from the overall rezoning request following the approval recommendation from CPC on July 22, 2025 (ZD037-25).*