

**SUBJECT:** A report and recommendation on a zoning study at the Evanston Five-Point Neighborhood Business District.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

**Location:** The Five Point neighborhood Business District (NBD) is located along Woodburn Avenue between Gilpin Avenue and Hewitt Avenue and along Montgomery Road between Hewitt Avenue and Duck Creek Road. (Please see the attached map.)

**Petitioner:** Evanston Community Council

**Purpose:** To ensure consistency with the neighborhood's 2003 Evanston Five-Point Urban Renewal Plan by emphasizing residential and low-intensity commercial uses in the NBD.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Evanston Five Point Urban Renewal Plan was adopted by Cincinnati City Council in 2003. Two of the recommendations in the Plan were to 1) reduce the size of the NBD by restricting it to the core area surrounding the Five Point convergence; and 2) rezone the properties south of the Five Point convergence from business to mixed-use commercial and residential zoning. Because the zoning code was in the process of being re-written, no specific zones were recommended.

The Evanston Community has been working diligently to implement portions of the Urban Renewal Plan, and has recently been allocated \$2 million for programs related to Plan implementation. The Community Council feels that the rezoning is essential to their success in attracting appropriate uses to revitalize the NBD. Although the official request for the zoning study included only those properties south of the Five Point convergence, the Community Council later requested that the study include all properties in the NBD in order to review it more comprehensively.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

The properties within the Evanston Five Point NBD are zoned Commercial Neighborhood – Mixed (CN-M) and Commercial Community – Mixed (CC-M), as shown on the attached map. The properties are a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Most of the properties north of the Five Point convergence are commercial uses. The properties south of the Five Point convergence are mostly residential with commercial uses interspersed. Some commercial uses are located on the first floor of large homes.

The property surrounding the NBD is as follows:

North: RMX Residential Mixed, and SF-2 Residential Single Family

West: RMX Residential Mixed

South: CC-M Commercial Community – Mixed and CN-M Commercial Neighborhood - Mixed

East: RMX Residential Mixed, SF-2 and SF-4 Residential Single Family

**PLANS:**

The Evanston Five Point Urban Renewal Plan (2003) is the basis for this zoning study. The Plan recommends a rezoning of the southern portion of the NBD from Business (at the time of the Plan, the zoning was primarily B-2, B-3, and B-4) to mixed-use commercial and residential zoning. The rationale was that the rezoning would encourage renovation of existing mixed-use structures and promote family-oriented businesses. The recommendation for the northern portion of the NBD (zoned mostly B-4 at the time) was for a medium and high-density business zoning to remain in place, as that was the core area of business development recommended in the Plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Planning Staff held a public conference on this zoning study on April 10, 2007. Ten people were in attendance. Those in attendance were generally supportive of following the recommendations set forth in the Plan, but most had questions about how the rezoning would impact existing businesses. Specifically, there was concern about rezoning the properties north of the Five Point convergence presently zoned CC-M. Several auto-oriented businesses operate in that area, and those businesses would be negatively impacted by a change to a zone that does not allow auto-oriented uses. Also, residents in attendance expressed a desire to allow some auto-oriented business to remain in the NBD for the sake of jobs and convenience. Representatives of the auto-oriented businesses in attendance offered to work with the Evanston Community Council to ensure that all properties are well-kept and properly buffered from residential uses.

The Evanston Community Council discussed this zoning study at their regular meeting on April 18, 2007. After a presentation and questions, the Evanston Community Council voted in support of a zone change that follows the 2003 Urban Renewal Plan.

**ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE:**

The Evanston Five Point Urban Renewal Plan (2003) recommended that the NBD could be more successful if the bulk of the commercial uses were concentrated in a smaller area, instead of spread out along an NBD that is too long and intermittent to be effective. Additionally, there are concerns that some of the older homes along this stretch, some of which are large, beautiful turn of the century residences, may be converted to or demolished for commercial uses. When analyzing the zoning in this area, it was important to consider existing uses in contrast with existing and proposed zoning to ensure that no property owner would be harmed by a rezoning of their property. The resulting recommendations are a balance between the desires of the community and the needs and rights of the property owners. The proposed changes are described below and shown on the attached map.

A change in the bulk of the NBD from CN-M Commercial Neighborhood – Mixed to CN-P Commercial Neighborhood – Pedestrian will allow most businesses to continue operation with little to no change. However, auto-related uses such as drive-through access, fuel stations, car repair, and vehicular storage lots will not be permitted in any future use of the properties in this area. Existing businesses will be permitted to continue to operate, and can even be replaced by another of the same use. However, the business cannot expand.

A change from CN-M Commercial Neighborhood – Mixed to RMX Residential Mixed on the residential properties in the NBD will not only retain residential uses, but will also act as a boundary for the NBD, shortening it slightly to encourage a concentration of business uses. Two properties that the Community Council specifically requested to be rezoned RMX are excluded from this recommendation: the bus lot and the auto repair property. These properties are not recommended to be rezoned RMX, but rather CN-P. Although the bus lot is targeted as a site for future residential development, it may be more marketable to a future developer if some commercial uses are still permitted. This would allow for a residential development with related commercial uses on-site. The auto repair property may not be appropriate for residential development; rezoning it residential may greatly reduce the property owner's ability to sell or redevelop the property.

The properties along the west side of Montgomery Road between Ruth Avenue and Dauner Avenue should remain CC-M Commercial Community – Mixed. They are commercial in nature, and some are auto-oriented. This is also the portion of the NBD that was recommended to retain its auto-oriented uses, and changing the zoning in this location would cause significant harm to the businesses. It is recommended that the business and property owners in this area continue to work with the Evanston Community Council to ensure orderly development and maintenance of these properties, and appropriate buffering from the adjacent residential properties.

There are two additional areas where no change in zoning is recommended: at the far northern and far southern edges of the study area. The property at the northern edge is commercial in nature; it should not be changed to the neighboring zone of CC-M Commercial Community – Mixed, but is also at too busy an intersection and too close to I-71 to legitimately consider a pedestrian-oriented zone. The two properties at the southern edge of the study area are commercial in nature, and are more closely connected to the DeSales Corner NBD and the other CN-M properties in that area than the Evanston Five Point NBD. For these reasons no change is proposed on these properties.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

1. The CN-P Commercial Neighborhood – Pedestrian designation is appropriate for the portion of the NBD between Holloway Avenue and Fairfax Avenue and on the commercial properties near Woodburn Avenue and Merrimac Street. These properties are primarily commercial uses; the CN-P designation prevents auto-oriented development but still allows commercial uses.
2. The RMX Residential Mixed zoning is appropriate for the residential uses along Woodburn Avenue between approximately Fairfax Avenue and Gilpin Avenue. These properties are primarily residential in use. Rezoning of these properties will allow existing commercial uses to remain, but will encourage the future use of homes as residential uses.
3. The CC-M Commercial Community – Mixed District zoning is an appropriate designation for the property that is already zoned as such. No zone change is recommended for these properties.
4. The CN-M Commercial Neighborhood – Mixed is appropriate for the properties presently zoned as such at the far northern and far southern edges of the study area. No zone change is recommended for these properties.
5. These conclusions are in keeping with the recommendations of the Evanston Five Point Urban Renewal Plan (2003), while ensuring that existing businesses are not unduly harmed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The staff of the Department of Community Development and Planning recommends that City Planning Commission take the following action:

**Approve** a zone change from CN-M Commercial Neighborhood – Mixed to CN-P Commercial Neighborhood – Pedestrian and RMX Residential Mixed in the Evanston Five Point NBD in Evanston as shown on the attached map.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret A. Wuerstle, AICP  
Chief City Planner

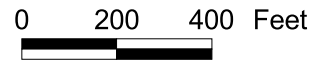
Katherine Keough-Jurs, AICP  
Senior City Planner




# Zoning Study at Evanston Neighborhood Business District

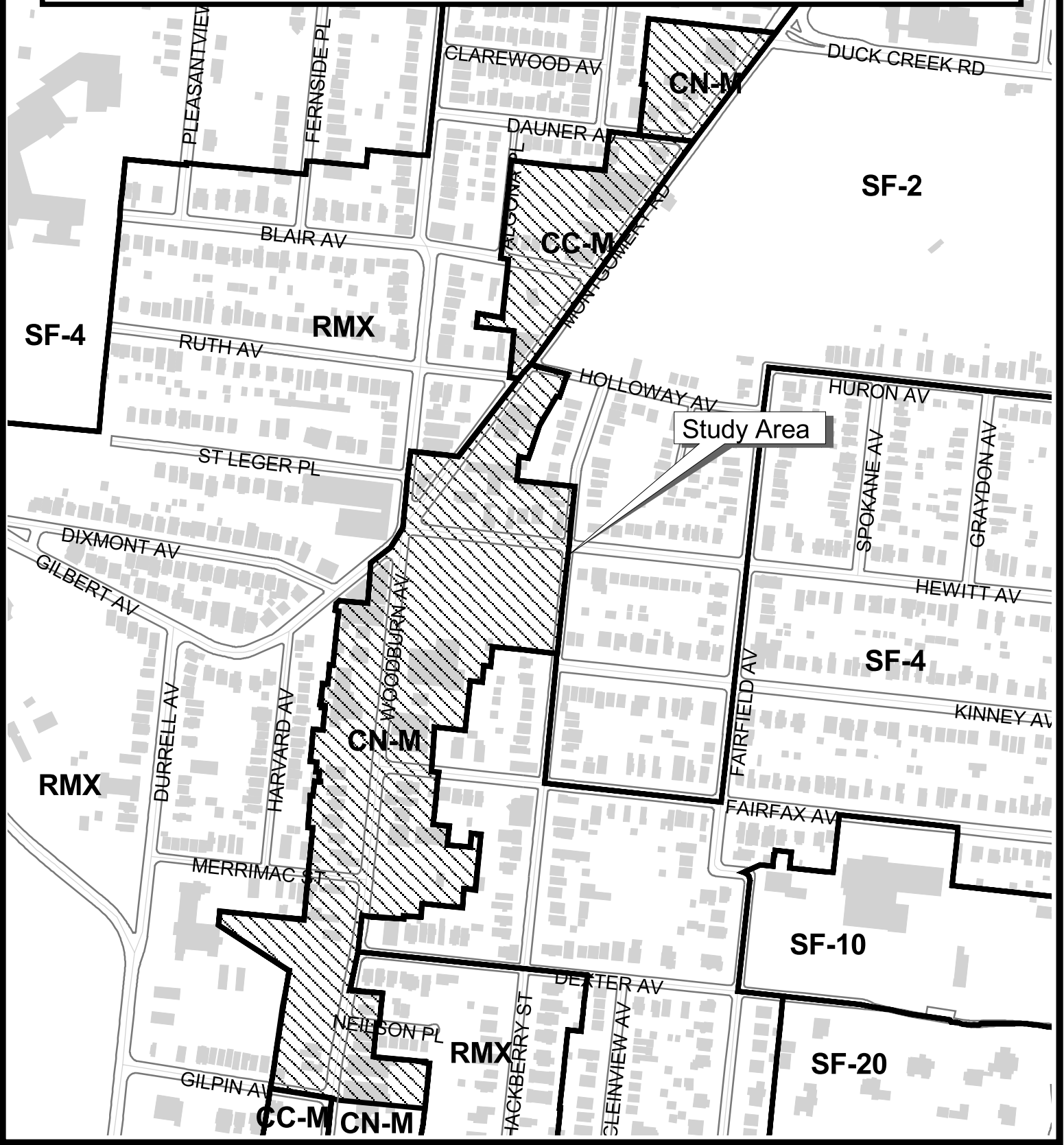


## Study Area Boundary

City Planning Commission  
May 18, 2007



-  Zoning
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Buildings



# Zoning Study at Evanston Neighborhood Business District

## Recommendations

City Planning Commission  
May 18, 2007



0 200 400 Feet

- Buildings
- Zoning
- CN-M to RMX
- CN-M to CN-P

