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Tower proposal near St. Anthony Main gets a 24-story haircut

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A planned housing project in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood will still bring 574 apartments to Minneapolis, but it no longer has the 800 originally envisioned and it no longer has 100 affordable units.

That's because the Heritage Preservation Commission rejected a proposal for a 30-story tower on the site, and now developers Doran Cos. and CSM Corp. are going with a series of five- and six-level buildings, said Doran Senior Development Associate Cody Dietrich.

The project has been in the works for two years, when Doran and CSM bought 8.7 acres of land — nearly three city blocks — from General Mills Inc. The first phase, The Expo, is a 25-story tower with a six-level building wrapping around the base. That 368-unit phase is under construction and set for a summer 2020 completion.

The concept of several six-story buildings was something Doran and CSM had presented to neighbors, city staff, the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission last summer. It was one of five options Doran gave those groups and came out of meetings saying that the community wanted the 30-story tower plan (one of the five options had two 30-story towers).

Dietrich said that HPC members indicated in those meetings they would support a good 30-story tower, but a couple of members left the commission and at a January meeting it became clear the project wouldn't have the votes to pass.



DORAN COS.

Doran Cos. and CSM Corp. are planning a 574-unit apartment project in Minneapolis, across the river from downtown. They originally wanted to build a 30-story tower and 800 total units.

"We didn't have the support of HPC," Dietrich said. "We had these five options and were fine moving forward with any of them."

Doran and CSM are voluntarily setting aside 10 studio units in The Expo as affordable. It was going to partner with a nonprofit to develop 100 more in the next phases, but Dietrich said without the height of the tower "we cannot provide the affordable housing."

Doran plans to tear down a General Mills research and development facility in around a month and wrap that up by the end of the year. Pending city approvals, construction on the first block — the east block, which will have 304 units — will begin in the second half of 2020, Dietrich said. The west block, which will have 270 units, would start in 2023.

The Planning Commission will vote on the current iteration of the project on Monday. Staff has recommended approval.

Sam Rockwell, president of the Minneapolis Planning Commission, said he was supportive of the 30-story tower.

"From my perspective, I believe density in this area is appropriate," he said in an email. "It is a walkable neighborhood, a neighborhood with transit service now and better transit service planned, and therefore is an appropriate place for dense development."

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