MEMORANDUM

TO:          City Council
FROM:        Sarah Hanzel, Planning Projects Division Manager
DATE:        April 14, 2021
RE:          Request for City approval to demolish a secondary structure in the West Boulevard Historic District located at 817 St Cloud Street

The property owner of 817 Saint Cloud Street applied for a historic review to demolish a deteriorated secondary structure and build a new garage. The structure was contributing in the historic district; however, it was in a significant state of disrepair. By State Law, the City has the final decision on issuing permits for historic property. If the City issues a permit for a project that will adversely affect a historic structure, the governing body must make a written determination based upon the consideration of all relevant factors, that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposal, and that the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic property. This determination must be sent to the SHPO office by certified mail.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provided comments in their letter dated February 10, 2021, stating “the demolition of the contributing garage will encroach upon, damage, or destroy a historic property...; however, it appears that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposal and that the proposal includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic structure.” The SHPO also commented that the proposed new construction met the Standards for New Construction in Historic Districts. Due to an error caused by a misunderstanding in the interpretation of SHPO’s comments, the demolition permit for this project was issued prior to Council’s approval. Council’s approval of this request is now requested retroactively.

A review of this project concludes there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the proposal and the proposal includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic structure. The relevant factors for this determination acknowledge economic practicability and include: failing roof, non-standard door openings, deterioration of windows and cladding, sunken foundation causing water infiltration, and existence of substandard floor.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approve the request, noting the factors outlined above.