



March 15, 2017

Re: Saint Paul Right of Way Assessment Changes

Dear Saint Paul City Council Members:

The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce appreciates the work that has been done to reorganize the City's property assessments after the recent legal opinion. **We support Mayor Coleman's plan for 2017**, which will use a fee-for-service charge limited to five City services and \$19 million from the City's general fund.

As an organization that represents many Right of Way assessment and property tax payers, it is hard to find fault with a proposal that will lower all payments in 2017. However, **we urge you to change one part of Mayor Coleman's proposal and provide the same 50% subsidy to corner commercial properties that is proposed for corner residential properties.**

"The most livable city in America" needs businesses to thrive, and assessing the lowest taxes possible is one way to ensure that businesses stay in the city, grow in the city, and move into the city.

Looking to 2018, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce wants to see the collection of the fees to property owners remain equitably spread between residential, tax-exempt, and commercial owners. Current conversations have been examining ways to lower costs for tax-exempt properties at the risk of increasing costs for commercial property owners, even though all properties within the city benefit from city services.

It is essential that the cost burden is spread evenly throughout all property classifications and valuations. Requiring high-value properties to pay more does not take into account that the businesses on these properties provide great value to the city through employment opportunities, community involvement, and overall city strength. We ask that all properties pay a fair share, demonstrative of their contributions to the vitality of Saint Paul.

Thank you for your service to Saint Paul and your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Marie Ellis
Director of Public Affairs and Legal Counsel