

AUG 05 2013



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE

Department of Safety and Inspections
375 Jackson Street
Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806
General: 651-266-9008
Fax: (651) 266-9099

Zoning office use only

File Number: 13-218991

Fee: \$ 0.00

Tentative Hearing Date: 09-04-13

Section(s) 64.502(3)(2)

City agent Y DIATTA

APPLICANT

Name Richard Lang Company Visual Communications, Inc.

Address 475 Cleveland Avenue North, Suite 223

City St. Paul St. MN Zip 55104 Daytime Phone 651.644.4494

Property Interest of Applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc) Saint Paul College

Name of Owner (if different) Shaan Hamilton, VP Finance/Oper Phone 651.846.1365

PROPERTY FORMATION

Address / Location 235 Marshall Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102

Legal Description See Attached

(attach additional sheet if necessary)

Lot Size 27 Acres Present Zoning RM-2 Present Use Educational Facility

Proposed Use Same - Educational Facility

Variance(s) requested:

Amount of allowable signage & method of operation for ETS.

Supporting Information: Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, and explain why a variance is needed. Duplex/triplex conversions may require a pro forma to be submitted. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

See Attached

Attachments as required:

Site Plan

Attachments

Pro Forma

Applicant's Signature

Richard Lang

Date

8/2/13

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Zoning Code

- (3) For stable text and/or stable images, the transition from one static display to another must be direct and immediate without any special effects except for fading and dissolving that takes less than one (1) second.

136 Sec. 64.502. RL through RM3 residential districts.

137 (a) *Identification signs:*

- 138 (4) For parks, community centers, and religious, civic, educational or philanthropic institutions, one
139 (1) identification sign, not exceeding a total of thirty (30) square feet in area for each street
140 frontage, and one (1) bulletin board not exceeding a total of thirty (30) square feet in area.
141 Such bulletin board signs may ~~have electronically changeable text, but shall not fade in and~~
142 ~~out, scroll, or flash~~ be signs with dynamic display, which shall be monochromatic, shall not
143 scroll or change their displays faster than every twenty (20) minutes, and shall be turned off
144 between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

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Saint Paul College: Background

Saint Paul College celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2010. The same year, the College was also ranked the #1 Community College in the nation by *Washington Monthly Magazine* for student engagement in active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, and support for learning. *Washington Monthly Magazine* referred to Saint Paul College as *Shakespeare with Power Tools*.

Located in historic downtown Saint Paul, Saint Paul College is the fastest growing two year comprehensive Community and Technical College in Minnesota State College and University System (MnSCU). Saint Paul College Offerings include Career and Technical Education, general education areas of study that transfer to four-year colleges and universities, short term workforce training, continuing education and corporate training, trade(s) unions pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training programs, as well as English as a Second language and remedial education. Saint Paul College is located at the historic downtown Saint Paul, and serves more than 9,800 credit students and 2,300 non-credits students annually.

A 2013 Wilder Foundation Research study estimated that Saint Paul College generates an annual economic impact of \$256 million to the Twin Cities from its operations. Based on the Twin Cities metro economy of \$190.7 billion, this means that for every \$1,000 produced in the Twin Cities metro area, \$13 are directly or indirectly related to Saint Paul College. Similarly, during 2011 the college and its students generated an estimated 2,471 jobs in the Twin Cities, including 1,738 direct jobs and 733 additional indirect jobs created by vendors, contractors, and businesses supplying inputs to the college and its students.

The College has deep roots in the local community. It was established in 1910 as a fee-based manual training school founded by the Saint Paul Builders Exchange and operated under the auspices of the Saint Paul Institute. Over the last century, the institution has operated under various names and at various locations. To date, the College has graduated more than 40,000 students.

After World War I, Saint Paul Vocational High School became the official name, and it began operating as a separate entity of the Saint Paul Public Schools system. By 1945, legislation created the state's AVTI (Area Vocational-Technical Institutes) system and Saint Paul Technical Vocational Institute, or "TVI," for short, operated until 1987 when titles of all Minnesota technical institutes were changed, again, leaving out the word "vocational." The school was then known as St. Paul "TI" until 1989, when it came under the direction of Minnesota's Technical College System and was renamed St. Paul Technical College.

In 1995, as part of a restructuring of the state's public higher education system, St. Paul Technical College became part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Moreover, in 2002, liberal arts and transfer programming was added as a new mission—to provide a two-year, baccalaureate transfer program. The change led to the College's current name and role: Saint Paul College—A Community & Technical College.

With a 520,000 square foot campus on 30-acres in Saint Paul, Saint Paul College offers 44 associate degree programs, including Associate in Arts degrees, and 71 career certificate and diploma programs. Saint Paul College is one of the most diverse schools in Minnesota. Each year the college serves more than 9,800 credit students and 2,300 non-credit students; more than half of them are women and 58 percent are minority students. The college has 498 employees; 124 of them are full-time faculty members. In 2011, the college awarded 418 associate degrees and 686 diplomas and certificates.

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Through the education of its students, Saint Paul College enhances the productivity of both private and public organizations in Minnesota. The 418 associate degrees awarded by Saint Paul College in 2011 are equivalent to \$39.1 million in future value created in the state.

Today, Saint Paul College is proud to be “the **Ellis Island of Higher Education in Minnesota**” and the fastest growing and the most diverse two year community and technical college in the Minnesota State College and University system. For over a century, Saint Paul College has provided lifelong learning opportunities for our constituencies, been a catalyst for economic development, and made a significant contribution to the prosperity of our region.

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Saint Paul College Executive Summary

Saint Paul College generates an annual economic impact of \$256 million from its operations in the Twin Cities. Based on the Twin Cities metro economy of \$190.7 billion, this means that for every \$1,000 produced in the Twin Cities metro area, \$13 are directly or indirectly related to Saint Paul College. The direct impact of Saint Paul College in 2011 was \$150 million, while the indirect impact in other industries was \$106 million.

Similarly, during 2011 the college and its students generated an estimated 2,471 jobs in the Twin Cities. These jobs included an estimated 1,738 direct jobs, and 733 additional indirect jobs, created by vendors, contractors, and businesses supplying inputs to the college and its students.

Additionally, by educating its students, Saint Paul College enhances the productivity of both public and private organizations in Minnesota. Only considering the 418 associate degrees awarded by Saint Paul College in 2011, this is equivalent to \$39.1 million of future value created in the state.

Legal Description

THAT PART OF BAILEY'S ADDITION, DAYTON'S AND IRVINE'S ADDITION,
NININGER'S ADDITION, RONDO'S CHAMBER'S REARRANGEMENT ADDITION OF RONDO'S ADDITION,

Section 36, Township 29, North, Range 33 West
Section 1, Township 28, North, Range 33 West
Ramsey County, Minnesota

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Reason for Variance Request

Area 1 Wall Mount Signage

The current sign code within this RM-2 District allows 30 square feet of building signage per street front – this 27 acre college occupies approximately 3 lineal blocks on its north border. This application is for a Variance to allow additional signage square footage on the north elevation of this unique property, as the existing sign code square footage does not allow the college to have signage on this new unattached building.

	Square Feet
Allowed Square Footage per code	30
Existing signage Square Footage on property	81.37
New Square Footage Requested	203.35
Total Square Footage of North Elevation Signage	284.70
Total Square footage Requested in this Area of Variance	254.70

Hardships are as follow:

1. Saint Paul College recently completed construction of a 4 Level, 610 space parking ramp facing Interstate 94 on the west side of existing buildings. The square foot frontage fascia area is not allowed any signage due to the existing sign code.
2. Saint Paul College is a key service and employment based educational facility in St. Paul for the past 100 years occupying 27 Acres. Through the years, the landscape surrounding the campus has changed drastically with an expanded freeway and roadway system, increased vehicular speed, and new site lines and dynamics created by bridges and overpasses.
3. The mission of the college, in conjunction with its name identity, the college has changed due to the modern complexities of higher education, and the competitive marketplace. Saint Paul College is unable to sign and distinguish this newly erected parking facility, as part of the college, and part of the 27 acre campus.
4. As Saint Paul College is the sole educational facility in the downtown city center, it's significance in the downtown area is similar to other distinctive public facilities within the area - all bearing noticeable and readable identification - Regions Hospital, Minnesota Science Museum, United Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, RiverCentre, Excel Center, and so forth.
5. Saint Paul College provides broad based education to 9,826 students per year and has over 250,000 visitors per year. Over 95% of students commute to the downtown St. Paul facility from outside the city. The new 610 parking space ramp is currently not allowed any signage due to the existing sign code.

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Reason for Variance Request (Continued)

Area 2 Building Entrance Identification

Saint Paul College would like to provide entrance identification at each exterior building entrance for wayfinding. Entrance identification would provide necessary directional wayfinding for students, teachers, and visitors while also providing needed security information and location identification for police and fire assistance. The sign code allows directional signage; however, the name and logo portion of the sign is not considered directional information. Therefore, only the square footage attributed to the logo and name require variance approval. The current sign code within this RM-2 District allows 30 square feet of building signage per street front – this 27 acre college occupies approximately 3 lineal blocks on its north border. This application is for a Variance to allow additional signage square footage on the north and east elevations of the primary education building to identify these entrances.

North Elevation & West Ramp Entrance (Signage is placed on North Elevation)

Allowed Square Footage per code	30
Existing signage Square Footage on property	81.37
New Square Footage Requested for North Entrances (4 Locations)	15.04 (3.76 per entrance)
Total Square Footage of North Elevation Signage with new signage	96.41
Total Square New Footage Requested in Area 1 of Variance (Refer to Area 1, page 2 of this variance Request)	203.35
Total Square Footage requested new Area 1 & Area 2	218.39

East Elevation

Allowed Square Footage per code	30
Existing signage Square Footage on property	81.37
New Square Footage Requested for North Entrances (1 Location)	3.76
Total Square Footage of East Elevation Signage	85.12
Total Square Footage Requested in this Area of Variance	3.76

Hardships are as follow:

1. The primary education building occupies 507,908 square feet in area (11.65 acres). The extraordinarily large building has eight unique student entrances. Students arrive by automobile and city transit utilizing many of the entrances. As entrances are not signed, it is confusing for users to locate and identify specific entrances.
2. The north elevation includes 4 entrances, each requiring separate identities for visitor and student use. Each entrance requires the college name to distinguish the entrance as a welcoming public point of entry.
3. Entrances on this large property require identification for police and fire.

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Reason for Variance Request (Continued)

Area 3 Bulletin Signage

Saint Paul College would like to provide a ground monument with a dynamic message center consistent with current industry marketing trends for student information, marketing, and public service announcements.

Current sign code (Sec. 64.502.RL-RM3, a. identification signs, section (4) allows a 30 square foot dynamic bulleting board. This variance request is for the following:

1. Additional size and square footage.
2. Full Color rather than monochromatic (yellow or red on black background).
3. Message changeability at 30 second intervals rather than 20 minute intervals.

Size	Square Feet
Allowed Square Footage per code	30
Existing Bulletin Board signage Square Footage on property	0
New Square Footage Requested	145.35
Total Square Footage of North Elevation Signage	145.35
Total Square Footage Requested in this Variance	115.35

Note that 46 square feet of the sign would provide permanent identification while of 99.45 square feet would be changeable bulletin board information.

Color

Existing code requires that dynamic signs be monochromatic or one color – either yellow or red on a black background. This variance request is to have a full color marquee rather than a one color marquee. Full colored marques represent state of the art electronics that have been widely utilized nationally for the past 15 years. Full color graphics are considered more pleasing to the eye, more easily understood, and are more representative of the student age audience at this high tech facility.

Scrolling or Changing

Existing code allows for any changes to occur not more that 20 minutes apart. This variance request is to have the message change every 30 seconds. The International Sign Association (ISO) recommends messaging changes from 7 to 15 seconds; therefore, the 30 second interval that we are recommending presents conservative changes.

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Reason for Variance Request (Continued)

Area 3 Bulletin Signage

Hardships are as follow:

1. Current bulletin board code of 30 square feet is not adequate for messaging. The request for additional square footage would allow the college to implement a functional message center that will be essential for student information and a vital public service message board to the community.
2. While the college is located adjacent to Interstate 94, the signage has little or no visibility from Interstate 94. The signage will address primarily eastbound exit traffic while automobiles are on the exit ramp with limited exposure to westbound Kellogg Boulevard.
3. The mission of the college, it's name and identify has changed due to the modern complexities of higher education, and the competitive marketplace. Saint Paul College is unable to sign, communicate and distinguish the college on the east, west, or south residential sides of the college.
4. As Saint Paul College is the sole educational facility in the center downtown city, its significance in the downtown area is similar to other distinctive public facilities within the area - all bearing noticeable and readable digital message signage including River Centre, Excel Center, Minnesota Public Radio, and so forth.
5. Saint Paul College provides broad based education to over 9,800 students per year and has over 250,000 visitors per year. Over 95% of students commute to the downtown St. Paul facility from outside the city. The message signage would benefit all visitors, student or business, and provide vital public service information.

FILE
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Variance Request Criteria Response

Reason for Variance Request (Continued)

Area 3 Bulletin Signage

The sign request is due to unusual conditions pertaining to sign needs for a specific building or lot.

- The college is located on 27 acres; however, the most visible area of the college is the area nearest the freeway and this area of the college is the rear entrance or shipping and receiving dock. This college would like create a positive identity image on this property and to communicate with its student body of 9,826 members with pertinent information, advertise and communicate special college events, and communicate special non-college specific events including business conferences, weddings, and so forth. The sign would be located on the rear side of the building and visible mainly from the eastbound exit ramp from Interstate 94 – it will not be visible from the freeway. The sign will be visible for approximately 300 feet of Kellogg Boulevard.

The sign would not create a hazard.

- The sign would not create a hazard as signs of this type are routinely the choice of Departments of Transportation as a method to direct traffic. Dynamic signs have been utilized successfully in many existing locations including stadiums, educational facilities, and churches.
- The signage operation will be in compliance with current digital messaging codes in that there will be no movies or animation.
- The LED technology inherent in electronic message centers have been studied for over 30 years and have never been found to be hazardous to traffic safety.
- There are two basic types of safety studies in the United States: Statistical and Human Factors. Neither type of study has ever shown that digital signs cause an increase in accidents or are a hazard to the traveling public.

The sign would not violate Minnesota Statutes or rules and regulations developed pursuant hereto.

- The sign would not violate any existing Minnesota State statutes.

The sign would not be objectionable to adjacent property owners.

- The sign is not visible to any residential areas within 350 feet.
- The sign is not visible from the State Capitol nor does it intrude or distract from its views.
- The sign as positioned will not impede on the apartment complex which is over 350 feet away from the sign and in the neighboring district as the sign is set perpendicular to the roadway. The sign will have limited visibility from the complex.

The sign would not adversely affect residential property through excessive glare and lighting.

- The dynamic sign area will only operate from 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM per code.
- The dynamic sign area will be set on a dimmer so that it will not be overly bright in the evening.
- The full color dynamic bulletin board provides additional readability over monochromatic one color.

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Variance Request Criteria Response (Continued)

Area 2 Bulletin Signage

The sign would be in keeping with the general character of the surrounding area.

- This is a highly unique area separated from residential, commercial, and state capitol areas by freeways and bridges. The area is most defined by Interstate 94 and the exit ramp that is north of it. The college does not have visible or readable identification at this point on the building or grounds.
- The signage is not unusual to the nearby downtown area as larger signage of this type is being utilized in multiple locations at Xcel Center located nearby on Kellogg Boulevard.
- Minnesota Department of Transportation utilizes multiple signs of similar message center size to mark detours and road closures throughout the downtown area.

The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

- This sign design is consistent with the overall signage master plan of the college in materials, color, character, and letter style.