



SAINT PAUL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

December 14, 2011

Council President Kathy Lantry
1400 City Hall Annex
25 Fourth Street W
Saint Paul MN 55102-1623

RE: Amending Chapter 64 of the Zoning Code Pertaining to Signs

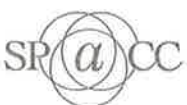
Dear Council President Lantry,

The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) respectfully urges the Saint Paul City Council (Council) to vote no on Ordinance 11-31 amending Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code (Signage Amendment). We understand the need for reasonable regulations but there is room for significant improvement over the currently proposed Signage Amendment. Over a year ago the Chamber participated in the process as the Saint Paul Planning Commission developed its recommendations for this Council. The Chamber supported the ultimate recommendations of the Planning Commission which did include some additional regulations on signage that were the result of broad community input. See attached letter dated 5-18-11.

While the most current version of the Signage Amendment is less restrictive than originally proposed, we are still concerned that the new regulations could negatively impact business in Saint Paul. Many small businesses without the resources to invest in other forms of marketing depend on window signs as a primary method of communication with customers. Small business may be disproportionately impacted by the new signage regulations. Additionally, many larger businesses have signage developed at corporate offices outside of the area. A local franchise owner could be put in difficult position if directed to use promotional material that conflicts with local ordinance.

We understand the need for reasonable regulation and sympathize with the safety concerns raised by the young people at the last public hearing. Business owners care deeply about the safety of their businesses, employees and customers. Our concern, however, is that this particular ordinance will make it more difficult for businesses to operate in Saint Paul without effectively addressing the safety concerns that are being raised to justify the new regulations. The zoning code is not well suited for use as a tool for crime prevention. Approaching this issue through licensing has a much greater potential to effectively address some of the safety concerns around signage while remaining flexible enough not to negatively impact businesses that do not present the same safety concerns.

The current Signage Amendment proposal would penalize a large segment of businesses in Saint Paul for the bad practices of a few. We believe there is a better solution and respectfully urge the Council to vote against the currently proposed Signage Amendment.





SAINT PAUL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Sincerely,

James McClean

Director of Public Affairs

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

cc

Mayor Chris Coleman

Councilmember Melvin Carter

Councilmember Dave Thune

Councilmember Pat Harris

Councilmember Russ Stark

Councilmember Lee Helgen

Councilmember Dan Bostrom

