



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

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DATE: June 26, 2013

TO: Mayor Chris Coleman
Council President Lantry
Members of the Saint Paul City Council

FROM: Barb Wencil, Chair, Saint Paul Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*

On June 14, 2013, the Saint Paul Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend City Council approval of a set of amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary* proposed by the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation. This memo presents the reasons for the proposed amendments, the process used to prepare them, and the Planning Commission's recommendation.

BACKGROUND

The *District 9 Area Plan Summary* was adopted by the City Council in July 2010. In May 2011, at the request of the City Council, the Planning Commission initiated the District 9 Commercial Zoning Study for the area bounded by Grand/Ramsey, Leech, Goodrich, W. 7th and Smith. A development moratorium was adopted by the City Council in May 2011 as well. The result of the study was the rezoning of several parcels in the study area from B3 General Business, B2 Community Business and VP Vehicular Parking to T2 Traditional Neighborhood. One of the primary reasons for rezoning to T2 was compliance with traditional neighborhood design standards to address a wide range of urban design issues of concern to adjacent residents.

At the Planning Commission public hearing on the Zoning Study, many of the people who spoke in support of T2 zoning asked that an overlay district with design guidelines be adopted as well. PED staff discussed options with the Commission, but there was not enough time to adequately explore them before the development moratorium expired. To address this outstanding neighborhood concern, the Planning Commission requested that PED staff continue to work with neighborhood, business and District 9 representatives and property owners to explore the best way to "codify" design guidelines for the gateway.

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In January 2012, PED staff started meeting with a working group convened by the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation (District 9) and Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association. The group met through July 2012, exploring a range of planning and regulatory techniques to address outstanding urban design concerns in the gateway area and along W. 7th Street. Options considered were: 1) amending the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*; 2) preparing a new Uppertown Small Area Plan, which would address other development issues as well; 3) adding new standards to the T2, city-wide and/or site plan review design standards; and 4) creating a new overlay district. After exploring the pros and cons of these options, the group decided to prepare amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*, using as its starting point the Fort Road Design Guidelines (1979). In 2013, the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation submitted proposed amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan* and *District 9 Area Plan Summary* to address urban design issues along W. 7th Street, especially at the gateway node at Grand/Ramsey Street (letter attached).

PLANNING COMMISSION PROCESS

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments on May 3, 2013, and approved a final version of the amendments for Mayor and City Council consideration on June 14, 2013. Throughout the Planning Commission process, City staff worked with representatives of the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation to address concerns raised by the Commission, including potential conflict (or confusion) of the design guidelines with zoning dimensional standards, and the reception of negative images by business and property owners. The final version recommended to you contains revised language and images that all parties agree address these concerns while maintaining the intent of the proposed design guidelines.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

As noted in the attached resolution adopted by the Planning Commission on June 14, 2013, the Planning Commission recommends approval of the final draft of the proposed amendments to the *District 9 Area Plan Summary*.

Attachments:

- January 16, 2013 letter from the W. 7th/Fort Road Federation
- June 14, 2013 Planning Commission resolution
- Proposed *District 9 Area Plan Summary* amendments