

STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** District Council Boundary Change Request
 2. **APPLICANTS:** District 9 and District 17 **HEARING DATE:** February 19, 2020
 3. **ADMINISTRATIVE CODE REFERENCE:** Chapter 95
 4. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** January 8, 2020 **BY:** Kady Dadlez
 5. **DATE RECEIVED:** December 4, 2019
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Change the boundary between District 9 (West 7th Fort Road Federation) and District 17 (Capitol River Council).
- B. **ADMINISTRATIVE CODE CITATION:** Chapter 95 provides procedures for modifying district council boundaries. The application submitted by the two district councils followed the procedures set forth in Sec. 95.03. A.2.
- C. **BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:** A group of residents on Irvine Avenue requested a change to the district council boundary so that they would be in District 9 rather than District 17. In response to this request District 9 and 17 councils decided to submit a joint application to change the district council boundary. In addition to the boundary change requested by the Irvine Avenue residents, the district councils are also requesting a change to the boundary that currently runs along Kellogg Boulevard so that the Ramsey County river bluff site (formerly known as the Ramsey West site and now known as Riversedge) and other buildings on the south side of Kellogg Boulevard (District Energy, Science Museum, and RiverCentre parking ramp) are included in District 17 rather than District 9. The current boundary follows Kellogg Boulevard with the buildings on the south side of the street in District 9 and those on the north side in District 17. The maps attached to the staff report show the existing and proposed boundaries.

Section 95.03 of the Administrative Code requires the affected district councils to hold a noticed public meeting to gather input from all interested parties before the district councils take a vote on the proposed boundary change. A public meeting was held on July 22, 2019; notice of the meeting was mailed to all property owners in the areas of change on June 24, 2019. The district councils reported that no one who attended the meeting expressed opposition to the proposed boundary change and neither district council office has received comments from anyone opposed to the boundary change.

The rationale for changing the boundary on Irvine Avenue is that the residents do not consider themselves to be downtown residents and they report that they have historically participated with the West 7th Fort Road Federation's activities. Almost all the planning and engagement activities in District 17 are focused on the needs and concerns of downtown residents and workers and all its meetings are held downtown, which are not convenient for Irvine Avenue residents. The main consequence of failing to act on the requested boundary change is that the Irvine Avenue residents will continue to feel they are not served well by their district council or by planning activities in District 17.

The rationale for changing the Kellogg Boulevard boundary is that both sides of Kellogg Boulevard are in downtown central business districts, with the north side zoned B4 and the southside zoned B5. It seems to make sense for the buildings on both sides of Kellogg Boulevard to be included in the downtown area and in District 17. Under existing conditions,

the RiverCentre parking ramp, Science Museum, District Energy, and Ramsey County river bluff sites are in District 9. These buildings and river bluff site relate more to the downtown environment than the West 7th Fort Road Federation neighborhood.

The main ways in which people would be affected by the proposed boundary change are:

- Irvine Avenue residents would be able to vote for district council board member candidates in the District 9 election and would be eligible to serve as District 9 board members. If there are Irvine Avenue residents who work in District 17 they would still be eligible to participate in District 17 activities.
- Irvine Avenue residents who have concerns about their neighborhood or who request zoning approvals would work with District 9 instead of District 17.
- District 9 planning activities would include the Irvine Avenue neighborhood.
- Future residents and workers at the Ramsey County river bluff site and the other buildings along the south side of Kellogg Boulevard would be eligible to vote in District 17 elections and serve as District 17 board members.
- The current District 17 boundary includes one home on the southside of Summit Avenue. The boundary change would put the home in District 9 instead of District 17. The property owner is supportive of the proposed boundary change.

D. **FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION:** § 95.07 of the Administrative Code lists the factors the City Council may consider in determining whether to grant or deny the application for a district council boundary change. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. ***The department recommendation.*** PED staff recommends approval of the boundary change.
2. ***In the case of an application by petition, whether the affected district councils are in favor of the change.*** This is a joint application not an application by petition. Both district councils are in favor of the change. The CapitolRiver Council voted unanimously in favor of the boundary change on August 20, 2019 and the West 7th Fort Road Federation voted unanimously in favor of the change on September 9, 2019.
3. ***Public input.*** A public meeting was held on July 22, 2019. The district councils reported no one who attended the meeting expressed opposition to the proposed change and neither district council office has received any comments in opposition to the boundary change.
4. ***Whether the boundary change will significantly impact district council funding levels.*** The executive directors of District 9 and 17 stated the boundary change will not significantly affect their funding levels. They noted that the proposed boundary change involves so few households that it is not enough to trigger a change in the funding formula.
5. ***Whether the boundary change will provide better representation or opportunities for engagement.*** Both District 9 and 17 believe the boundary change will result in better representation and opportunities for engagement for the Irvine Avenue residents.

6. ***Why the change will improve the engagement and representation for residents.***

The Irvine Avenue residents do not consider themselves to be downtown residents and they report that they have historically participated with the West 7th Fort Road Federation's activities. Almost all the planning and engagement activities in District 17 are focused on the needs and concerns of downtown residents and workers and all its meetings are held downtown, which are not convenient for Irvine Avenue residents.

7. ***Possible consequences of inaction.*** The main consequence of failing to act on the requested boundary change is that the Irvine Avenue residents will continue to feel they are not served well by their district council or by planning activities in District 17. In addition, a significant downtown redevelopment site and important downtown institutions (Science Museum and District Energy) will continue to be within District 9.

8. ***Utilization of clear, rational, logical boundaries which take into consideration visible and identifiable natural or manmade features, topography, census tracts or block groups, population, political boundaries, school enrollment areas, or other distinguishing features. Not all characteristics will be pertinent in every case.*** The proposed boundaries are clear, rational, and logical.

E. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above factors, staff recommends approval of the application to change the District Council Boundary between District 9 and District 17 as identified on the maps attached to this staff report.