



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

*25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6626
Facsimile: 651-228-3341*

Date: August 10, 2012
To: Kathy Lantry, Council President
Councilmembers:
Dave Thune
Melvin Carter, III
Chris Tolbert
Russ Stark
Amy Brendmoen
Dan Bostrom
From: Planning Commission
Re: District del Sol Small Area Plan

On November 19, 2010, the Planning Commission initiated a small area plan for property on two sides of Wabasha Street from the retaining wall to Congress Street, Cesar Chavez (old Concord) Street from Wabasha to Ada Streets, and Robert Street from Colorado to Cesar Chavez Streets, and established a neighborhood task force to develop recommendations for the plan. Dubbed the "District del Sol," the study area is entirely within District 3; the task force was co-chaired by a planning commissioner and a District 3 resident.

The *District del Sol Small Area Plan* was approved by the task force in February 2012 and was submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration and adoption. Objectives and strategies in the plan address commercial and residential real estate (both buildings and vacant property), multi-modal streets, pedestrian-oriented improvements, the natural and urban environment, neighborhood and business capacity, and land use.

The attached draft *District del Sol Small Area Plan*, to be adopted as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, was modeled after the "Smith Avenue Revitalization Plan" adopted by the City in 2011. The draft plan has been reviewed by affected City departments (Public Works, Parks and Recreation and the Heritage Preservation Commission) for consistency with City policies and the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Hearing

On October 5, 2012 a public hearing was held before the Planning Commission regarding the *District del Sol Small Area Plan*. Testimony was heard from two members of the community.

Testimony in support. Positive testimony was heard from two members of the community. First, Elena Gaarder, Executive Director of the District 3 Planning Council - West Side Community Organization (WSCO), stated that the plan positively positions the commercial district for future

transitway investments, would bring added buying power to the commercial district through adding housing units, and respects the history and values of the neighborhood. Karen Reid, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA) also spoke in support. She stated that her organization was in support of the plan and recognized the work of the Riverview Economic Development Alliance (REDA) which spearheaded the work on the plan. Both Ms. Gaarder and Ms. Reid were members of the task force convened for this small area plan.

Also in support was a letter from Kenneth Smith, President and CEO of District Energy St. Paul. The letter states that District Energy provides service into District del Sol and that the organization would like to be involved in the activities under *E1.1 Conduct a basic energy audit for commercial and residential structures in the District* in order to expand the evaluation and discussion of community energy use and energy efficiency opportunities and *E1.3 Involve Energy Smart and other programs in audits of commercial buildings* as audits of buildings connected to the District Energy system use different sets of criteria to determine efficiencies. Mr. Smith also suggested a fifth energy objective for the plan, “E5. Evaluate the costs and benefits of connection to the District Energy system in areas of new development or significant renovation.”

Testimony in opposition.

No testimony in opposition, either verbal or written, was received.

Planning Commission Recommendation

To address the comments from Kenneth Smith of District Energy St. Paul, the Planning Commission recommends that the “Implementation” section of the plan be amended to include District Energy as a “Participating Party” for *E1.1 Conduct a basic energy audit...* and for *E1.3 Involve Energy Smart and other programs in audits of commercial buildings*. In addition, it is recommended that a fifth Energy Efficiency Strategy, “Evaluate the costs and benefits of connection to a variety of energy systems or utilities in areas of new development or significant renovation” be added.

In addition, it was recommended that Water Resources Objective WR2.1 *Prepare a hydrology study to map the watershed and determine stormwater volumes* be removed. This is because there was a hydrology study done for the entirety of the West Side in 2010, which remains current and is used by the Department of Public Works Stormwater Division in decision making.

The Planning Commission forwards the *District del Sol Small Area Plan* to the Mayor and City Council with a recommendation for adoption of the plan as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, pending approval by the Metropolitan Council.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Resolution to adopt the District del Sol Small Area Plan
2. **District del Sol Small Area Plan draft**