

**DATE:** May 24, 2017

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

**FROM:** Elizabeth C. Reveal, Chair, Saint Paul Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** Central Station Block Design Guidelines

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Central Station Block is bounded by Cedar, Minnesota, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets in downtown Saint Paul. In 2006, the environmental review process for the Green Line LRT project determined that there is a district in downtown, the Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District, that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Central Station Block sits at the center of the Urban Renewal Historic District.

Building Central Station and putting the Green Line LRT tracks at a diagonal through the block required the demolition of the First Federal Savings and Loan Building at 360 Cedar Street, a contributing building within the Urban Renewal Historic District. Demolition of the building was found to constitute an “adverse effect” on the District, requiring mitigation before the LRT project could proceed.

Per the Programmatic Agreement for the Green Line, the Metropolitan Council, as the agency that built and operates the Green Line, was given the responsibility to prepare the Central Station Block design guidelines. The Metropolitan Council delegated oversight of the project and adoption of the results to the City of Saint Paul, since the City will ultimately administer the guidelines. The design guidelines will guide future development so that it is compatible with the defining features of the Urban Renewal Historic District, as well as those of adjacent, early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings also determined eligible for the National Register, such as the St. Paul Athletic Club, First National Bank Building and Minnesota Building.

## **CENTRAL STATION BLOCK DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The design guidelines are recommended for adoption as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan* (2010). They provide more detail on redevelopment of the block so that it responds to its location in the Urban Renewal Historic District as well as its proximity to significant buildings of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These historic influences impact the massing, form, height and materials of new development; they do not speak to land use. Permitted and conditional land uses are still regulated by zoning.

The Central Station Block design guidelines consist of:

- Historic context – a brief description of the historic influences on the block, including both early-20<sup>th</sup>-century and mid-century modern periods in architecture and urbanism
- Design framework and design principles – 11 design principles that set general parameters for new building and site design on the block
- Design guidelines for new development – guidelines to direct site planning, architectural character, building design, massing and form, exterior building materials, public space activation and structured parking.
- Infill development scenarios – application of the guidelines in four possible development scenarios

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- Circulation – how private development and public spaces should provide for pedestrian, bike and transit use
- Open space – how public open space should be provided on the block and incorporated into other activities on the block (transit and private development)
- Public art – how public art should be used to add vibrancy to new development.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Central Station Block Design Guidelines on April 21, 2017, and adopted Resolution #17-27 on May 19, 2017 recommending adoption of the document as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan*. The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission adopted Resolution #17 on April 13, 2017 also recommending adoption of the Guidelines.

#### **Attachments:**

1. Planning Commission Resolution #17-27
2. Planning Commission background memo
3. Central Station Block Design Guidelines
4. Website link: *Downtown Station Area Plan*  
<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/downtown-station-area-plan>
5. Heritage Preservation Commission resolution – April 13, 2017