



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: May 9, 2017

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Comprehensive Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Central Station Block Design Guidelines – Review of Public Testimony and Final Recommendation

BACKGROUND

The Central Station Block is bounded by Cedar, Minnesota, 5th and 4th streets in downtown Saint Paul. It is the location of Central Station, one of the three busiest LRT stations along the Green Line. In 2006, the environmental review process for the Green Line determined that the Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District in the heart of downtown 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 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. The mitigation agreed to by all parties involved in the project was preparation of redevelopment design guidelines for the Central Station Block. 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 20th 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 20th 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.

Other minor revisions will be made to the body of the *Downtown Station Area Plan* to refer to the Appendix (Table of Contents, Section 3.1 and Section 4.4) so that the guidelines have the same legal status as the rest of the document (i.e. part of the Comprehensive Plan).

The Central Station Block Design Guidelines address the following:

- Historic context – a brief description of the historic influences on the block, including both early-20th-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
- 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.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION COMMENT

The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission adopted a resolution on April 13, 2017 supporting adoption of the *Central Station Block Design Guidelines* as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan*. The resolution is attached.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 21, 2017. One person spoke at the hearing, and expressed interest in seeing a transit building on the triangle parcel north of the Saint Paul Athletic Club building. This building would contain security, restrooms and other transit-related services. This comment does not require any changes to the draft document.

In addition, the CapitolRiver Council (District 17) Board unanimously passed a motion on April 19, 2017 to support approval of the *Central Station Block Design Guidelines*.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends that the Planning Commission forward the *Central Station Block Design Guidelines* to the Mayor and City Council for adoption as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan*.

Attachments:

1. *Central Station Block Design Guidelines*
2. Heritage Preservation Commission resolution – April 13, 2017