

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development
Zoning Code Text Amendment**

Date: December 2, 2013

Initiator of Amendment: Council Member Goodman

Date of Introduction at City Council: October 18, 2013

Specific Site: Locations along and within one hundred sixty-five (165) feet of Nicollet Mall from Washington Avenue to Grant Street, and between Nicollet Mall and Hennepin Avenue from Sixth Street to Eighth Street.

Ward: 7th **Neighborhood Organization:** Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association, Citizens for a Loring Park Community.

CPED Staff and Phone: Steve Poor, (612) 673-5837

Intent of the Ordinance: To revise regulations pertaining to signage.

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code: Chapter 520: Introductory Provisions; Chapter 543: On-Premise Signs; Chapter 551: Overlay Districts.

Background: An ordinance amendment was introduced to the City Council on October 18, 2013, to revise the regulations pertaining to roof-mounted signage within the Nicollet Mall Overlay District. Currently, roof signs are prohibited in the city, excepting for the Downtown Height Overlay District.

Staff was directed to amend regulations governing signage along Nicollet Mall because of some unique opportunities to enliven and improve the visual streetscape along Nicollet Mall.

Purpose for the Amendment:

What is the reason for the amendment?

What problem is the Amendment designed to solve?

What public purpose will be served by the amendment?

What problems might the amendment create?

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to allow for unique signage that incorporates interesting designs, materials and lighting to be mounted on lower profile buildings located along Nicollet Mall, from Washington Avenue to Grant Street. This is intended to further enliven the streetscape and contribute to maintaining Nicollet Mall as a retail destination for visitors and residents in Downtown.

The proposed amendment would limit the height of roof signs to a height restriction of one hundred and twenty (120) feet above grade. This is a more restrictive height requirement for roof signs than is found in the nearby Downtown Height Overlay District, because it is intended to enliven the Nicollet Mall pedestrian experience.

The amendment is not expected to create any problems due to the proposed changes and will be subject to City illumination standards.

Timeliness:

Is the amendment timely?

Is the amendment consistent with practices in surrounding areas?

Are there consequences in denying this amendment?

This amendment is timely due to a recent proposal for a roof sign with design and lighting aspects that embrace and celebrate significant Twin Cities cultural references (i.e.: Northwest Bank's "Weather Ball" roof sign). In addition, the changes will augment and contribute to the upcoming renovation of Nicollet Mall.

This amendment is similar to provisions in the nearby Downtown Height Overlay District and the sign regulations governing Regional Sports Facility, both of which allow roof signs.

The main consequence of denying said amendment is that the City of Minneapolis would continue to restrict roof signs along Nicollet Mall.

Comprehensive Plan:

How will this amendment implement the Comprehensive Plan?

The following general land use policies of the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* apply:

Policy 4.16 Strengthen Downtown's position as a regional cultural, entertainment and commercial center that serves Downtown employees, visitors, and residents.

4.16.1 Maintain a destination Retail District along Nicollet Mall.

4.16.5 Support development of Downtown Minneapolis as a unique retail, arts, and cultural destination.

Economic Development Policy 10.20: Promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion caused by a proliferation of signage

10.20.3 Develop incentives for exceptional sign design and style, including a special review process to ensure appropriate location, size, height and compatible design to the architecture of the building and other signage.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the above policies of the comprehensive plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the zoning code text amendment, amending chapter 551. Staff further recommends that Chapters 520 and 543 be **returned** to the author.

Attachments:

1. Ordinance amending Chapter 551, Nicollet Mall Overlay District, to add roof signs as an allowed type of sign, and that the height of roof signs shall not exceed 120 feet above grade.