



Community Planning & Economic Development

News Release

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Minneapolis City Council Adopts Conservation District Ordinance Text Amendment

Friday, October 17, 2014 (Minneapolis, MN) – The Minneapolis City Council passed the Conservation District Ordinance Text Amendment today. The new ordinance updates existing Heritage Preservation Regulations to ensure that development in notable areas respects neighborhood character. The text amendment was developed with extensive public input obtained through community meetings and electronic feedback.

The Conservation District Ordinance was first introduced to the City's Heritage Preservation Regulations in 2012 by Ward 2 Council Member Cam Gordon. It was a response to public requests to create a mechanism to protect character-defining features in neighborhoods in a way that was more prescriptive than the zoning code, but less restrictive than historic district design guidelines.

"Conservation Districts offer a new option for better protecting the visual form of some of the unique, treasured and significant places in Minneapolis," said Council Member Cam Gordon, author of the ordinance. "My hope is that by providing this new tool we can conserve characteristics that make an area of historical importance special, and, in doing so, better support harmonious and efficient growth and development in our city."

Under the new ordinance, at least 75 percent of the properties in conservation districts must possess the visual character for which the district is considered notable. One-third or more of property owners in a given area may apply for conservation district establishment, but at least two-thirds of owners must agree to abide by the design guidelines identified as notable to the community before the City Council can consider establishing a conservation district.

Districts can occur anywhere, but must be contiguous and include at least one complete block face with two or more principal buildings; or be centered upon the intersection of two or more streets, with all corner lots included in the district. Proposed development will not incur additional regulations until Council formally established a district.

With its focus on conserving and proliferating notable visual character, rather than preserving materials imbued with significant history (historic preservation), the ordinance permits demolitions of properties that contribute to the visual character of a district, provided the follow-on development perpetuates the district's visual character by meeting the district's design guidelines.

The complete Conservation District Amendment is available on the [City of Minneapolis' website](#).

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