



LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 501 Nicollet Mall
Project Name: Fish and Richardson Signage
Prepared By: [Janelle Widmeier](#), Senior City Planner, (612) 673-3156
Applicant: Fish and Richardson
Project Contact: Sean Sowder, SDDI Signs
Request: To install a wall sign.
Required Applications:

Variance	To increase the maximum allowed height of a wall sign from 28 feet to 58.75 feet.
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SITE DATA

Existing Zoning	B4-2 Business District NM Nicollet Mall Overlay District DP Downtown Parking Overlay District
Lot Area	58,143 square feet
Ward(s)	3
Neighborhood(s)	Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association
Designated Future Land Use	Commercial
Land Use Features	Commercial Corridor (Nicollet Mall) Growth Center (Downtown) Major Retail Center (Nicollet Mall)
Small Area Plan(s)	Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan (2010)

Date Application Deemed Complete	May 11, 2015	Date Extension Letter Sent	Not applicable
End of 60-Day Decision Period	July 10, 2015	End of 120-Day Decision Period	Not applicable

BACKGROUND

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE. The subject property is located on Nicollet Mall between 5th Street South and 6th Street South. On the lower levels, the existing building was recently converted from retail (Neiman Marcus) to a mixed use building with offices. Fish and Richardson is a tenant on the fourth floor of the building in the southwest corner with walls facing Nicollet Mall and 6th Street.

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD. The surrounding properties are also located within the downtown core and include a mix of uses, including office, residential and retail.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION. The applicant is proposing to install a 50 square foot wall sign on the façade facing Nicollet Mall. The top of the sign would be located 58.75 feet above the adjacent grade. In the NM Nicollet Mall Overlay District, the maximum allowed height is 28 feet. A variance is required to increase these maximum sign height. The sign proposal would comply with all other applicable zoning code requirements.

RELATED APPROVALS. Earlier this year a master sign plan was reviewed by the City Planning Commission. Master sign plans are required for multiple-tenant buildings. A variance was approved to increase the maximum allowed height for two wall signs on the north end of the building to 37.5 feet and to 40 feet. However, the proposed sign was not included in that plan.

Planning Case #	Application	Description	Action
BZZ-7064	Conditional use permit and variances	Signage	Approved at 4/13/15 meeting of the Planning Commission

PUBLIC COMMENTS. As of writing this report, no correspondence from the neighborhood group has been received. A letter from the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District was received and is attached to this report. Any additional correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Board of Adjustment for consideration.

ANALYSIS

VARIANCE

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to increase the maximum allowed height of a wall sign from 28 feet to 58.75 feet based on the following findings:

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance due to circumstances unique to the property. The proposed amount of signage is far less than what could be installed on each wall facing a street. The NM overlay district allows more building signage than any other district (3.5 square feet of signage for every one foot of primary building wall), but does not allow signage to be located more than 28 feet above the adjacent grade. Although a large amount of signage is allowed, there are limited options where signage can be located as much of the façade is windows. To

prevent covering up existing windows (most ground floor windows must remain open in the NM overlay district), an increase in height is requested. The applicant would like the sign to be located at the 4th floor where the tenant space is located. However, this conflicts with the purpose of the height limit in this location, which is to create a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment. It also exceeds the height previously approved for the master sign plan. A space between the second floor and third floor windows allows for a sign band to be created. This is also the area where the previous sign height variance allowed signs to be located. The bottom of the third floor windows are located 40 feet above the adjacent grade. To ensure that the height is consistent with the intent of the ordinance and the master sign plan, staff is recommending that the height be limited to 40 feet.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

Regulations governing on-premise signs are established to allow effective signage appropriate to the planned character of each zoning district, to promote an attractive environment by minimizing visual clutter and confusion, to minimize adverse effects on nearby property, and to protect the public health, safety and welfare. The B4 Downtown Business District is established to provide an environment for retail and office activities of citywide and regional significance. The district also allows entertainment, residential and public uses which complete the mixed use character of the area. The B4 District allows the highest density office development within the downtown area. The NM Nicollet Mall Overlay District is established to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of the Nicollet Mall area and to promote street level activity by creating a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment. Increasing the allowed sign height will prevent windows from being covered by signage. Provided the height does not exceed 40 feet for the reasons listed above, the request is reasonable and in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and comprehensive plan.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

If the height is limited to 40 feet, granting the variance would not negatively alter the character of the area and would not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties. There is a mix of high density uses in the immediate area. Although the sign would be taller than encouraged for a pedestrian area, it is not the only taller signage in the immediate area. Placing the wall signs at the third floor will not block ground floor windows, which are also important to the pedestrian environment.

Additional Standards for Sign Adjustments

In addition, the Planning Commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors when considering an adjustment to the number, type, height, area, or location of allowed signs on property located in an OR2 or OR3 District or a commercial, downtown, or industrial district:

1. *The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.*

The B4 Downtown Business District is established to provide an environment for retail and office activities of citywide and regional significance. The district also allows entertainment, residential and public uses which complete the mixed use character of the area. The B4 District allows the highest density office development within the downtown area. The NM Nicollet Mall Overlay District is established to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of the Nicollet Mall area and to promote street level activity by creating a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment. The total amount of signage proposed is well below what is allowed. Although the wall sign would be taller

than encouraged for a pedestrian area, it is not the only taller signage in the immediate area. Placing the wall sign at the third floor will not block ground floor windows, which are also important to the pedestrian environment. Provided the height does not exceed 40 feet for the reasons listed above, the request would not lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the B4 district or the NM overlay district.

2. *The sign adjustment will allow a sign that relates in size, shape, materials, color, illumination and character to the function and architectural character of the building or property on which the sign will be located.*

The sign will relate in size, shape, material, color, illumination and character of the building and the use. The primary exterior materials of the high-rise office building are precast stone and glass. The sign will consist of aluminum channel letters. The letters will be internally illuminated. Limiting the sign height to 40 feet will help create a sign band for the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the Zoning Board of Adjustment adopt staff findings for the application(s) by SDDI Signs, on behalf of Fish and Richardson, for the property located at 501 Nicollet Mall:

A. Variance to increase the maximum allowed sign area on a primary building wall.

Recommended motion: **Approve** the variance to increase the maximum allowed height of a wall sign from 28 feet to 40 feet, subject to the following condition:

1. Approval of the sign permit by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Written description and findings submitted by applicant
2. Zoning map
3. Site plan
4. Sign plans
5. Renderings
6. Photos



8627 EAGLE CREEK CIRCLE
SAVAGE, MN 55378

P. 952-224-9906
F. 952-224-9906
sddisignsystems.com

May 7, 2015

City of Minneapolis
Janelle Widmeier, Senior City Planner
250 4th Street South, #300
Minneapolis MN 55415

RE: Fish and Richardson
Variance Findings Statement

The sign for Fish and Richardson is located on the corner of 6th and Nicollet Mall. The maximum height is 28'. The location at 28 feet cannot have a sign due to window location and design of building. Fish and Richardson is located on the entire 4th floor on the 501 building. This is where the location of the sign is being requested.

The Property owner has approved the sign with their building standards. The sign designer has kept the spirit of the building in mind when designing the sign with a simple letter mounting and individual lettering will keep the sign looking non-retail, yet corporate.

The proposed sign keeps the essential character of the locality, while not being a detriment to the health and safety to the public.

The sign adjustment /location will not increase signage clutter by being on the 4th floor where Fish and Richardson location.

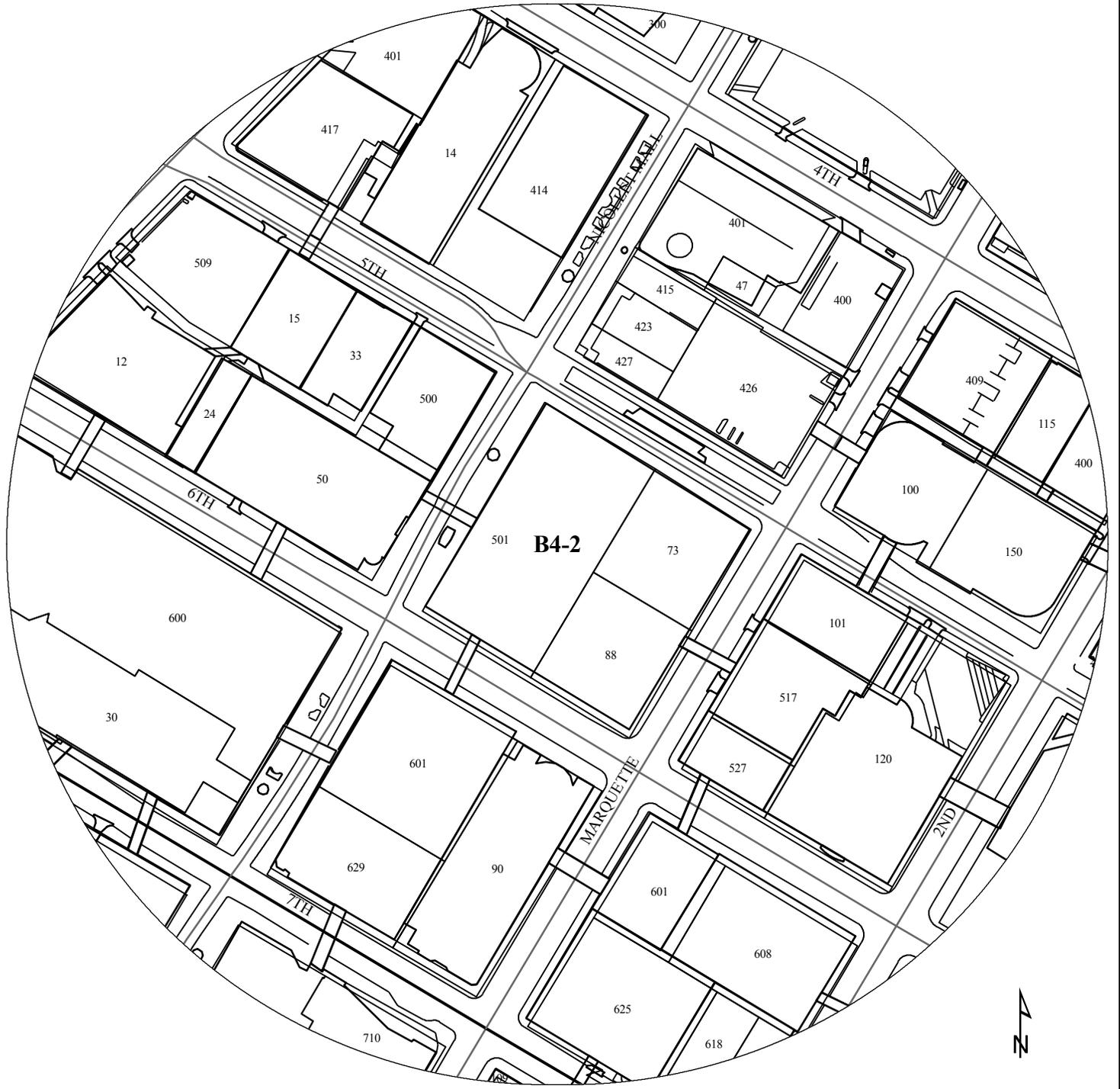
The Sign design, shape, colors and material was crucial in creating an aesthetically pleasing sign while not to take away from the building architecture and style.

Sincerely,

Sean Sowder – Co Owner
SDDI Signs

NAME OF APPLICANT

WARD

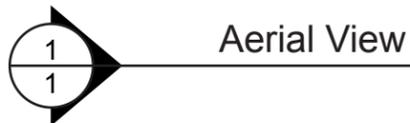


PROPERTY ADDRESS
501 Nicollet Mall

FILE NUMBER
BZZ-7178



Sign Located Here



Define your image.

8627 EAGLE CREEK CIRCLE
SAVAGE, MN 55378
P. 952-224-9906
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sddisignsystems.com

Project:	Aerial View
Client:	Fish and Richardson
Project Manager:	S. Sowder
Drawn By:	C. Oosterhuis
Scale:	NA
File Name:	Aerial View
Origin Date:	04.24.2015
Revised Date:	
Revision:	

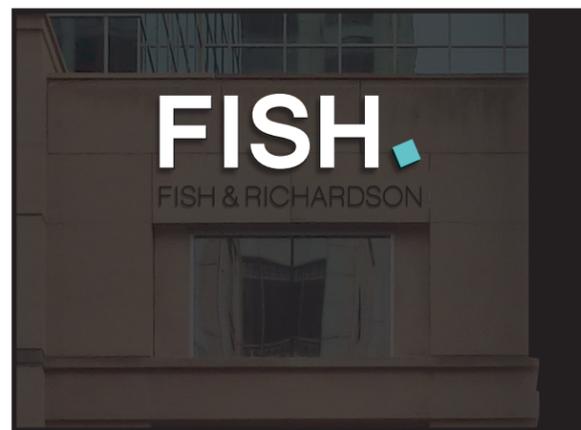
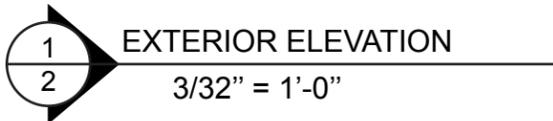
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Sign Type:
Aerial View

Please sign and return drawing/s to SDDI Signs. Signature below indicates approval of BOTH design and/or placement of sign/s.

PLEASE EMAIL OR FAX YOUR APPROVAL BACK

Approved As Is _____	Approved With Changes _____	Please Change and Resubmit _____
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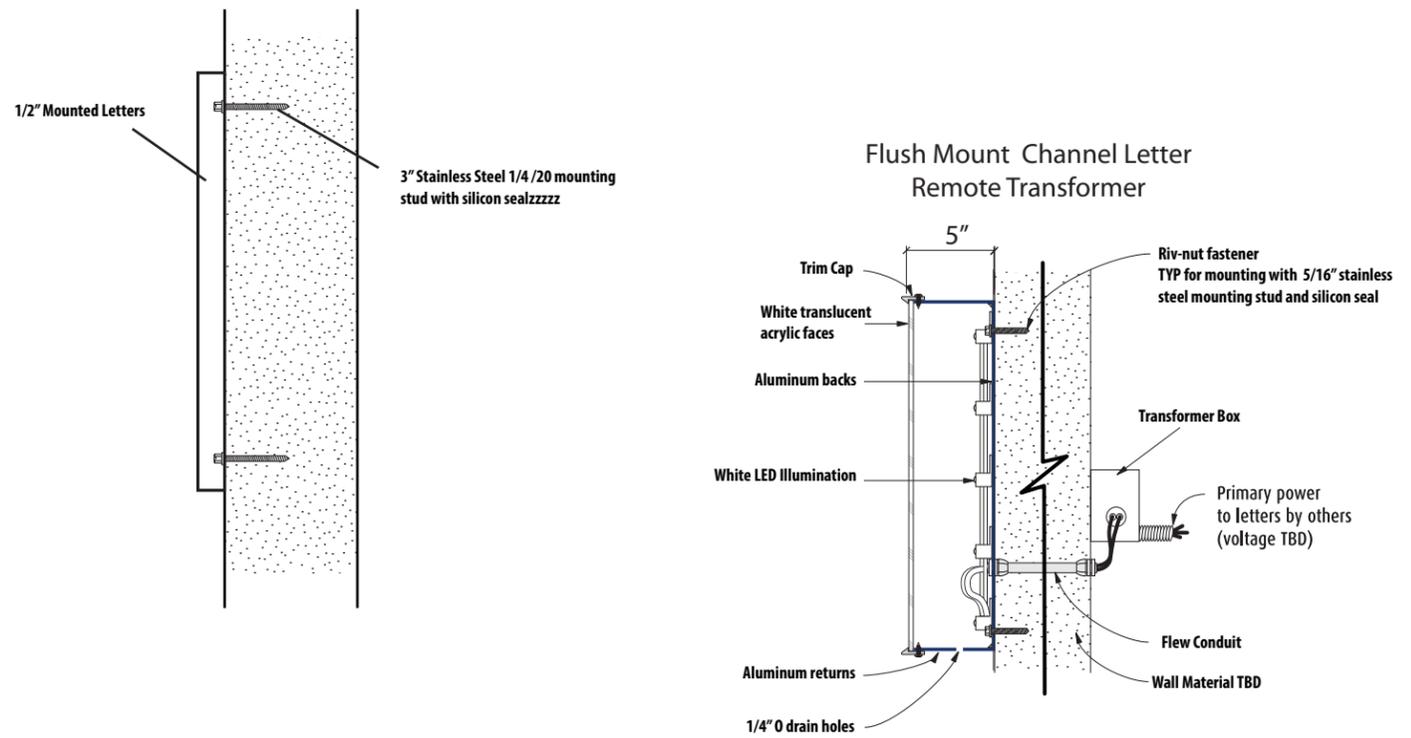


ILLUMINATED SIGN AT NIGHT

KEY

A) Channel & Flat Cut Aluminum Letters

Font(s): Imported Image



WHITE FACE w/ PERFORATED VINYL OVERLAY
 PAINTED TO MATCH PMS 303
 (PMS 303 DURNING DAY / WHITE AT NIGHT)
 TRIM CAPS & RETURNS PAINTED TO MATCH PMS 303
 WHITE LEDs



.5" FLAT CUT ALUMINUM LETTERS
 PAINTED TO MATCH PMS 303
 STUD MOUNTED w/ .5" STANDOFF

WHITE FACE w/ DIGITALLY PRINTED
 VINYL OVERLAY TO MATCH PMS 320
 TRIM CAPS & RETURNS PAINTED TO MATCH PMS 320
 WHITE LEDs



Define your image.

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 SAVAGE, MN 55378
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 sddisignsystems.com

Project: Channel Letters

Client: Fish & Richardson

Project Manager: S Sowder

Drawn By: D Gordon

Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0"
 1/2" = 1'-0"

File Name: Fish & Richardson Signs

Origin Date: 03/19/2015

Revised Date:

Revision:

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Sign Type:
 Channel Letters
 & Flat Cut
 Aluminum Letters

Please sign and return drawing/s to SDDI Signs. Signature below indicates approval of BOTH design and/or placement of sign/s.

PLEASE EMAIL OR FAX YOUR APPROVAL BACK

Approved As Is _____

Approved With Changes _____

Please Change and Resubmit _____



Define your image.

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sddisignsystems.com

Project: Channel Letters

Client: Fish & Richardson

Project Manager: S Sowder

Drawn By: D Gordon

Scale: 1:100"

File Name: Fish & Richardson Sign-Photo

Origin Date: 04/08/2015

Revised Date:

Revision:

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Buses do not stop here

D'AMICO & SONS

D'AMICO & SONS





5th Avenue S.
Main St.

NO
TURNS







Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District

MAIN 612-338-3807
FAX 612.338.0634
MinneapolisDID.com

81 South 9th Street
Suite 260
Minneapolis, MN 55402

May 1, 2015

Sean Sowder
SDDI Signs
8627 Eagle Creek Circle
Savage, MN 55378

RE: Fish & Richardson signage review

Dear Sean,

The Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID), serving in its capacity as the Nicollet Mall Advisory Board (NMAB), has reviewed the plans for the proposed Fish & Richardson signage at 501 Nicollet Mall and offers the following comment:

1. The proposed sign, identified as 'Fish & Richardson' (channel letters & flat cut aluminum letters), does not align with the City of Minneapolis zoning requirements for *signage attached to a building within a B4 downtown district*. Upon review of the proposed design and placement of the 'Fish & Richardson' sign, the NMAB recommends:
 - a. A variance be granted to increase the maximum allowed height of a wall sign placed on the façade from 28' to 58' above grade.

If you have any questions or require further action on the behalf of the Nicollet Mall Advisory Board please feel free to contact me directly at (612) 656-3820.

Best Regards,

Kathryn Reali
Chief Operating Officer, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District