



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Melvin Carter, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700
Facsimile: 651-228-3220

DATE: August 21, 2019
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Comprehensive & Neighborhood Planning Committee
RE: Downtown Overnight Shelters Zoning Study

BACKGROUND

On November 7, 2018, the City Council approved an interim use permit (IUP) to allow Ramsey County to operate an overnight shelter through the winter months at 160 E. Kellogg Blvd., a site zoned B4 Central Business District. It was the second consecutive year that this site received such approval for an overnight shelter through the winter months. Via their 2018 resolution approving the IUP, the City Council also directed Department of Planning and Economic Development staff to pursue amending the Zoning Code to permit overnight shelters in the B4 zoning district as a conditional use. On May 15, 2019, the City Council granted an extension of the IUP at 160 E. Kellogg Blvd. to allow for summer use and to allow more time to process this zoning study.

An *overnight shelter* is defined as “One main building, or portions thereof, on one zoning lot where persons receive overnight shelter, but are not expected or permitted to remain on a 24-hour-per-day basis.” Overnight shelters must be a minimum 600 feet from certain other congregate living facilities, including other overnight shelters and emergency housing facilities.

A similar congregate living use, *emergency housing facility*, is already permitted in B4 with a conditional use permit. *Emergency housing facility* is defined as “One main building, or portions thereof, on one zoning lot where persons who do not have housing live on a 24-hour-per-day basis until more permanent arrangements can be made, but generally for no longer than 30 days.” In the B4 district, such facilities must be a minimum 600 feet from certain other congregate living facilities, including overnight shelters and other emergency housing facilities.

Both *overnight shelters* and *emergency housing facilities* are permitted in the B5 Central Business-Service District with a conditional use permit. The B4 and B5 districts together comprise the downtown.

ANALYSIS

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan (in effect as of this writing) calls for assisting in the preservation and production of homeless and supportive housing in Policy H-3.4. The draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan, in Policy H-18, similarly calls for fostering the preservation and production of supportive housing and housing for people experiencing homelessness.

The B4 district's intent is, among other aims, "to provide for the needs of... a transient population." *Overnight shelters*, like *emergency housing facilities*, serve a transient population. Land use impacts of both are similar, and locating them in downtown makes sense because of access to services. Also, having such facilities in downtown allows for overflow from one facility to be sent to others, as necessary. Additionally, allowing for sufficient facilities for the unsheltered homeless population takes pressure off the skyway system and public transit, which are not designed for human shelter.

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

A public hearing was held before the Planning Commission on Friday, July 26, 2019, with the written record held open until the following Monday. No testimony was received.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Comprehensive & Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the attached Draft Resolution recommending the proposed Downtown Overnight Shelters Zoning Study Code Amendment.

Attachment

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution