



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
*Melvin Carter, Mayor*

*25 West Fourth Street, Ste. 1400  
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6700  
Facsimile: 651-266-6549*

DATE: June 21, 2019  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Mike Richardson, Planner  
RE: Ford Site Design Standards Public Hearing on June 28, 2019

The public hearing on the draft Ford Site Design Standards and related text amendments is scheduled for your next meeting on June 28, 2019. Attached is the memo from the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee dated May 30, 2019. You received this memo when the Planning Commission released the draft plan and text amendments for review and scheduled the public hearing. While another copy is not included here, you may refer to the copy distributed in the May 31<sup>st</sup> Planning Commission meeting packet or view the draft at [www.stpaul.gov/ford-design](http://www.stpaul.gov/ford-design).

Comments received to date are included here, and additional comments received through the end of the public comment period as established by the Planning Commission will be included in the follow-up packet to the Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee.

Please let me know if you have any questions prior to the public hearing on June 28, 2019, 651-266-6621 or [mike.richardson@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:mike.richardson@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

Attachments:

1. Memo from CNPC to PC dated May 30, 2019
2. Public comment received to-date

ATTACHMENT 1

Memo from CNPC to PC dated May 30, 2019



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
*Melvin Carter, Mayor*

*25 West Fourth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6626  
Facsimile: 651-228-3341*

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Date: May 30, 2019  
To: Saint Paul Planning Commission  
From: Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee (CNPC)  
Subject: Design Standards Amendment to the *Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan*

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## **BACKGROUND**

In 2017, the City Council directed the creation of design standards when it adopted the *Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan (Master Plan)* (Ord 17-40). Design standards support the development of a walkable, pedestrian and bike-friendly built environment, and encourage a sense of place. They are intended to address things like how the faces of buildings meet the street, what exterior building materials should be used, and landscaping. The standards will be added to the *Master Plan*, with Zoning Code amendments necessary for consistency.

As you know, Ryan Companies (Ryan), the master developer awarded development rights to the Ford Site, requested amendments to the *Master Plan*. After recommendations from the Planning Commission, a version of those amendments was adopted by the City Council in April of 2019. While most of those changes were to existing *Master Plan* content, the design standards being considered now would be new material. While minor changes to other parts of the *Master Plan* are proposed for internal consistency, no other changes are being recommended, nor is it expected that the Commission would entertain or recommend them.

## **PROCESS**

A consultant team led by LHB, Inc. and supported by PlaceMakers and Forecast Public Art began working on the design standards in late fall of 2018. An inter-departmental City staff working group was created and met regularly to advise the consultant throughout the process. A focus group comprised of varied professionals and neighborhood representatives familiar with the area around the Ford Site was also assembled. The focus group met twice – once early in the process to provide guidance on overall approach and an outline of the standards, and once towards the end of the process to react to draft materials. Ryan was invited to, and participated in, both the working and focus groups.

City staff and the consultant presented at the Highland District Council's January 15, 2019 Community Development Committee meeting to provide a briefing on scope and schedule, and to answer questions. City staff hosted a public open house on April 23, 2019 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to update interested parties on the work, provide draft materials, and listen to feedback.

May 30, 2019  
Ford Design Standards at Planning Commission

As an amendment to the *Master Plan* and per Sec 66.951 of the Zoning Code, the draft *Master Plan* and zoning text amendments will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council, both of which will hold public hearings.

## **CONTENT**

The design standards are proposed as a new chapter of the *Master Plan*, following Chapter 4 Zoning - Districts and General Standards. An outline of the content is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. General Standards
  - a. Open Space Diagram
  - b. Street Frontage Types
3. Design Standards by District
  - a. Frontage Types and Map
  - b. Standards Applicable to All Zoning Districts
  - c. Standards Applicable to Specific Zoning Districts
4. Appendix

When the *Master Plan* was originally adopted by the City Council in September of 2017, it used TN3 zoning district design standards as a placeholder until site-specific design standards were developed. Some of the content of the T3 standards has been incorporated into the draft design standards, but their general application in the Ford districts will be removed as part of this process.

The public art approach outlined in the *Master Plan* was also considered as part of the development of design standards. That work will provide the basis for a public art strategy, which will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council at a later date.

## **ZONING STUDY AND OTHER CHANGES TO THE MASTER PLAN**

To bring the Zoning Code and proposed *Master Plan* amendments into alignment, Zoning Code text amendments are necessary and attached herein. A zoning study is necessary to allow those text amendments to happen on a parallel track with the review of the design standards.

Other edits are necessary to the *Master Plan* and are:

1. Revise Table of Contents
2. Make Open Space System maps consistent
3. Remove references to forthcoming design standards
4. Clarify terminology of street hierarchy
5. Correct formatting errors

May 30, 2019  
Ford Design Standards at Planning Commission

**CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS**

The nature of the design standards has required frequent coordination with the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Safety and Inspections. That coordination will continue through the public review period. Any additional considerations will be brought back to the CNPC, along with the staff report after the public hearing.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The CNPC recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Initiate a zoning study for text amendments to the Zoning Code that correspond with the addition of design standards; and
2. Release the draft *Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan* text amendments and draft design standards for public review and set a public hearing date of June 28, 2019.

**Attachments:**

Draft Design Standards Amendment to the *Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan*  
Draft Zoning Text Amendments for Ford Design Standards

**Cc:**

Dr. Bruce Corrie, PED Director  
Ward 3 Office  
City Attorney's Office  
Highland District Council  
Tony Barranco, Ryan Companies  
Design Standards Working Group  
Design Standards Focus Group

ATTACHMENT 2

Public comment received to-date

## Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Nathaniel M Hood <nmhood@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 17, 2019 2:41 PM  
**To:** Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** #CI-StPaul\_Ward3; McMahon, Melanie (CI-StPaul); Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Ford Site Design Standards | Planning Commission | Submitted Comments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Good afternoon Mike,

I am submitting comments for the City of St. Paul's Ford Site Design Standards – If possible, could you submit these comments to the Planning Commission for consideration for the June 28th public hearing?

I am generally supportive of the Ford Site Design Standards as written. I think city staff did a good job highlighting the major issues. There are only a few additional items I feel could be improved on. I have detailed those below. Thank you for your consideration -- and thank you in advance to passing along to the city's Planning Commission.

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### Page 2: Open Space Diagram –

- The City should aim to connect Village Way to the site to allow for pedestrian and bike traffic. This can be accomplished in a cost-effective way with a 10ft shared-use bituminous trail.
- The City should also aim to create a connection on the north of the Highland Ball fields (Open Space "H") to allow pedestrian traffic to connect through to Saunders Ave. This can be accomplished in a cost-effective way with a 10ft shared-use bituminous trail.
- The extension of Saunders Ave on the western section of the Ford Site is labeled as "Galaxie Ave". This may be confusing and I recommend being consistent throughout the corridor and staying with "Saunders Ave" (unless there is a historic reason / rational precedent for changing the name).

### Page 3: Open Space Standards –

For "Open Space F" titled "Hidden Falls Headwaters Park" - While the the stormwater function is important, we should aim to make this space a great amenity for the neighborhood and include language to design it in a manner that doesn't make it simply a stormwater-run off retention wetland. The pond concept was one of the few non-controversial elements of the plan (it was widely supported) and we should aim to identify this space as something more than a "stormwater feature".

### Page 4: Street Types and Descriptions –

Under "Vehicle Access Street", the City should aim to limit the size of curb cuts for parking garages/underground parking to 22 to 24ft. Smaller curb cuts lead to lower turning speeds and allow for more on-street parking opportunities. Slower speeds for vehicles leaving garages will lead to a safer pedestrian environment.

### Page 7: Gateway East Definition

The paragraph states that "greenspace is *encouraged* to face the street". I believe we should change the language to "*should*". This area of the site will be the most dense residential district of the site and I believe that it's important we incorporate good, greenspace at the street level in this node. A well-design linear public greenspace can help make a dense residential district feel quiet, quaint and comfortable.

**Page 8:**

“G12” - “Where breaks occur, the street edge shall be continued through the use of fencing, low walls and/or landscaping”. We should add that the fencing should aim to be decorative and the low walls be made of higher quality building material.

**Page 9:**

“G18” - This section should provide guidance on structured and underground parking access design, such as curb cut width (aim for 22ft to 24ft for residential, slightly larger for commercial) and to provide a design that allows for safe exiting with proper site views. Having abrupt exits from structured parking can create a safety issue for pedestrians (e.g.: *The Finn onto Highland Parkway as an example of what not to do*). Smaller curb cuts lead to lower turning speeds and allow for more on-street parking opportunities. Slower speeds for vehicles leaving garages will lead to a safer pedestrian environment.

**Page 12:**

“S7” – The maximum height for a decorative fence should be reduced to 36”. This is an appropriate height to delineate private space, but will do so by not being as imposing as taller fencing/ walls. I believe making this modification will help make the pedestrian space along MRB better.

**Page 14: F3 Residential Mixed Mid**

The City should aim to include language regarding residential parking facilities. If too difficult / cost prohibitive to allow underground parking, the building should avoid the “parking podium” design which can create a blank space at the human-scaled pedestrian realm.

**Page 23: F6 Gateway**

“S43” – This outlines the building materials recommended. I agree with the building material standards on all other districts that favors a neo-traditional urban design. However, the Gateway is an opportunity to allow for a creative / landmark structure. While we should still aim for a high standard of material and design, I believe we should deviate from the norm of the site in this district to allow more architectural flexibility; such as glass buildings, create metal façade buildings, etc.). I do not have recommendations on what new language would look like, but this is the one district where we should explore something ambitious/creative.

Thanks again for the consideration,

- Nate Hood  
Highland Park, St. Paul





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