



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
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## **Listening Sessions 2018**

Fall of 2018 Heritage Preservation staff and Heritage Preservation Commissioners have had a series of listening sessions in all the historic districts. We have had approximately 12% of historic district residents (90% property owners and 10% tenants/renters) in the districts attend and fill out surveys, comment boards and speak to Commissioners and staff directly. The following are the top comments shared among all the listening sessions:

1. *Guidelines are not clear with unrealistic expectations which hurt residents.*

*More flexibility on window replacement-consider energy efficiency.*

*Consider modern materials and building options, including energy efficiency.*

*More dynamic and creative new construction.*

*Work that cannot be seen should be allowed.*

*Take into consideration costs.*

*Dynamic display signs should not be allowed.*

2. *Need good examples of work that satisfies the guidelines.*

3. *Review time is too long.*

4. *You need to communicate with residents more.*

5. *Contractors and real estate agents don't understand the restrictions.*

This is a single comment that was submitted online and at the Historic Hill listening session:

*Creating heritage preservation districts perpetuates exclusionary policies real estate and land use that put down lower income and minority residents.*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed?

1. Mechanical, HVAC, Solar, Mini-Splits
2. Repair Work
3. Windows/Doors, Egress, Storefronts

An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve:

1. Length of review
2. Outreach and education
3. Protecting the district character

## **Comments by district:**

### Dayton's Bluff

*Community needs to be informed of meetings*  
*Need less and easier to understand regulations (guidelines)*

### Irvine Park

*Rules (guidelines) seem too strict.*  
*Work that cannot be seen should be allowed.*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed? *New Construction*  
An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve: *Outreach with residents*

### Jacob Schmidt, Jackson Street Shops, Como Shops & Heritage Preservation Sites

*Rules (guidelines) need to be practical for building owners and take into consideration costs.*  
*Modern, sustainable materials should be allowed.*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed? *Mechanical*  
An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve: *Length of review*

### Lowertown

*More adventurous and dynamic or fun new construction.*  
*You need to communicate with new owners somehow.*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed? *Signage*  
An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve: *Outreach with residents*

### Summit Avenue West

*Concern about the amount of time it takes for approval of applications.*  
*Threats to the residential character are greatest concern.*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed? *Repairs*  
An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve: *Protecting the district character*

### Historic Hill

*Need to be more reasonable and flexible-consider costs.*  
*We need clearer guidelines-currently unreadable*

What area of the existing guidelines needs to be improved or changed? *Windows/Doors*  
An area that Saint Paul Heritage Preservation needs to improve: *The associated costs*

### University-Raymond

Staff received no comments or participants at the listening session

### **Focused listening sessions**

Staff held focused listening sessions with groups who are customers, but not necessarily residents of the historic districts:

#### **Architects**

*Need better communication (and knowledge) between City leadership, HPC and the required standards. Timeframes for review should be clearer.*

#### **Contractors**

*Consider alternative materials that visually replicate the original, especially for cost and durability. Clarify the guidelines; some contractors will not work in districts cause the guidelines are not clear. Balance the guidelines; some areas are too strict others are very loose.*

#### **Developers**

*Need to refine and clarify the guidelines-especially windows. Review times must be improved. Need case studies or a list of pre-approved materials list.*

#### **District Councils**

*Historic vacant structures are not being preserved, the City is requiring demolition-this needs to stop Find ways to reach out to new owners-they don't know what to do*

### **Survey results**

1. Do you own property in an historic district? **90% yes**
2. Have you heard of or worked with the Saint Paul HPC or staff? **86% yes**
3. When I hear that an old or historic place is threatened with demolition, I:
  - A. Reach out to city officials to save the structure. **54%**
4. Overall, how do you rate the district as a place to work, live or do business? **Very good-78%**
5. Overall, how do you rate the City's existing approach to Heritage Preservation in providing protection for historic areas and buildings in Saint Paul? **Very good-32%, Good-31%, Fair-31%**
6. How do you believe heritage preservation has impacted this district?
  - A. Historic preservation has made a positive impact on my neighborhood. **87%**

### **Suggested Options for Discussion**

There were consistent themes shared by residents in all the districts; guidelines need clarity, processes should be streamlined, and the Commission needs to engage with residents more.

1. Guidelines
  - a. Monthly guideline discussion on possible clarity or simplification changes
  - b. Incorporating graphics into guidelines
2. Process
  - a. Possible text amendments to Ordinance
  - b. Find ways to clarify and set time expectations
  - c. Case studies
  - d. Pre-approved materials list
3. Outreach
  - a. Activities: Preservation fair, revamp of awards
  - b. Newsletter
4. Draft a letter to the residents of the locally designated Historic District describing actions and thanking them for their patience and support.