



**DOWNTOWN
MINNEAPOLIS
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

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May 9, 2019

Jason Wittenberg, Manager Code Development
Janelle Widmeier, Principal City Planner
City of Minneapolis – Community Planning and Economic Development
250 4th Street South – Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Mr. Wittenberg and Ms. Widmeier:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee to express our concern about several public realm issues that have arisen during construction of the Ironclad development at 811 Washington Avenue South.

In a letter dated May 16, 2016, the DMNA endorsed the Ironclad project, emphasizing its contribution to the architectural diversity of the area and its activation of street frontage on Washington, Chicago and 9th (McGrew Place) Avenues. We believe the project's public realm contribution has been significantly diminished, however, by changes that have subsequently been made to the specifications as shown in the staff report by Lisa Steiner, dated February 21, 2017 (plan 3636) and approved by the Planning Commission on February 21, 2017. These changes include:

1. The window and door locations and configurations have changed on the east and north elevations, including the elimination of specified windows.
2. The windows specified as "aluminum perforated window system-anodized aluminum color" have been changed to black painted louvers. They are not windows and do not look like windows.
3. The specified concrete pavers have been changed to broom finish cast-in-place concrete.
4. The slope on one portion of the walkway appears to be much steeper than specified, and steeper than is allowed by ADA standards.
5. Specified landscape plants next to the transformers have been eliminated. The ornamental grasses that are called for will not adequately screen the transformers.

(This list is not intended to be complete; more items may be added later.)

Beyond these changes, a pedestrian issue has been created within the City-owned right of way, because the sidewalk as shown on the approved plan stops short of the property line and therefore will be separated by a short gap (and landscape planting bed) from a sidewalk on the adjoining property. This means that pedestrians will be crossing this planting bed when walking north or south between U.S. Bank Stadium and Washington Avenue.

The changes we have noted and the sidewalk issue that has been created inhibit the activation of both Washington and 9th Avenues. The elimination and altered configuration of windows and the failure to screen transformers present a loading dock and “back of house” view to pedestrians and vehicles on both of these streets. The elimination of pavers, increased walkway slope and sidewalk gap render the pedestrian passageway less accessible and more difficult to traverse. We believe these changes also run counter to the public realm goals of the Minneapolis 2040 plan, as expressed in policies 6 (Pedestrian-Oriented Building and Site Design), 7 (Public Realm) and 18 (Walking).

We ask for your assistance in finding resolutions to these issues, including the continuation of the sidewalk to the property line on 9th Avenue and the installation of an opaque gate screening the front of the transformers. We are also asking for clarification and documentation of CPED approvals regarding changes made to the Ironclad Land Use/Site Plan Application.

Regards,

Kevin Frazell
Land Use Committee Chair

Cc. Council Member Steve Fletcher
Council Member Lisa Goodman
Varun Kharbanda, Ironclad
Mike, Ann, Julia and Alayna Roess