
Sponsor: Property Management

Meeting Date: 9/17/2024

Title: Participation in the Comprehensive Improvement Special Service District for Downtown Saint Paul

File Number: 2024-380

Background and Rationale:

The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance represents downtown business, nonprofits, government entities, residents, and entrepreneurs to build a strong and vibrant downtown and to create a positive downtown experience. In 2020, the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance proposed the Special Service Improvement District for a portion of downtown Saint Paul, with the mission of creating and maintaining a vibrant, economically successful, and safe and attractive downtown.

With support from local property owners and businesses, the Saint Paul City Council subsequently established a downtown special service improvement district for a portion of downtown Saint Paul. Beginning in 2021, the services provide for enhanced safety programs, cleaning and upkeep programs, and communication/public space activation programs. The services are funded by service charges assessed by the City of Saint Paul against commercial and industrial property owners in the district, and via voluntary participation by residential and tax-exempt property owners in the district.

In November 2020, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved Ramsey County's participation in the Special Service Improvement District for Downtown Saint Paul for a period of five years (Resolution B2020-224).

On July 24, 2024, the Saint Paul City Council adopted Ordinance No. ORD 24-17 to replace the existing Special Service Improvement District with a new expanded downtown special service improvement district that, in totality, will include nearly all of the downtown Saint Paul geographic area. The Saint Paul City Council also adopted Resolution No. RES PH 24-157 to authorize annual service charges for the expanded district, with residential property owners now included as non-voluntary participants. The expanded special service improvement district is referred to as the Comprehensive Improvement Special Service District, and a new five-year term for the district will take effect on January 1, 2025 - effectively ending the term for the initial Special Service Improvement District one year early on December 31, 2024.

Ramsey County, as a voluntary participant in the district, will pay annual service charges per the rates established for property owners in the district and based on the building size and street frontage. The expanded district includes all county buildings in downtown. It also includes a significant portion of the Union Depot property subject to separate consideration for voluntary participation by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve participation in the Comprehensive Improvement Special Service District for Downtown Saint Paul for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2029.
2. Accept annual service charges imposed in the district for county properties estimated at \$199,000 for 2025 and subject to escalation in each of the four subsequent years.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Frethem, seconded by Commissioner Xiong.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board