



West 7th / Fort Road Federation

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Saint Paul, MN 55102

651.298.5599

www.FortRoadFederation.org

October 31, 2024

Office of the City Council

310 City Hall

15 Kellogg Blvd. West

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Subject: Drive Through Zoning Study - D9 Public Comment, Amended

Dear City Council,

The West 7th/Fort Road Federation Board met and discussed the proposed amendments for the drive through zoning study on May 13, 2024 and unanimously voted to recommend passing an ordinance that will prohibit the construction of any new drive throughs in the City of Saint Paul. The issue was revisited at our October Transportation & Land Use Committee meeting (10/2) and our October board meeting (10/14). While we recognize the broader concerns about drive-throughs, particularly around climate impacts, pedestrian safety, and prioritizing a car-centric culture, we also understand the unique benefits that drive-through services at pharmacies and banks can provide. These include improved accessibility for residents with limited mobility, greater convenience for caregivers, and increased safety for those needing secure access to essential services, especially in inclement weather. Therefore, we support amendments that would restrict new drive-through developments for other types of businesses *while allowing them for banks and pharmacies.*

We believe the limitation of new drive throughs support priorities listed in the Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action and Resilience Plan, Pedestrian Plan, and Bicycle Plan. Drive throughs prioritize cars, perpetuating a car-centric culture that discourages alternative modes of transportation like walking or cycling. This not only contributes to traffic congestion but also neglects one of the core tenets of the city's transportation plan to put pedestrians first. Additionally, idling vehicles at drive throughs contribute to global carbon emissions and local air pollution. The extensive pavement required for appropriate queue lengths and the increasing size of vehicles contributes to the urban heat island effect and exacerbates stormwater runoff issues.

The Fort Road Federation coordinates participation in advocacy and planning and builds community connections for the residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations of the West 7th neighborhood so that it is a place where people want to live, work, and play.

Lastly, as evidenced by the current types of businesses that operate drive-throughs in Saint Paul, they often cater to large chain businesses. In our neighborhood, we value locally owned, independent businesses and we currently have enough pedestrian safety challenges to contend with. Additional drive-throughs would further exacerbate hazards to pedestrians and cyclists, degrade local character, and threaten sustainability goals.

For these reasons, the West 7th/Fort Road Federation board believes the City Council should vote in favor of limiting new drive throughs to banks and pharmacies only.

The board thanks you for the opportunity to weigh in on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 651.298.5599 or julia@fortroadfederation.org.

Thank you,



Julia McColley
Executive Director

CC: Councilmember Noecker
Councilmember Jost
Bill Dermody, Current Planning Manager

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