



## Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development

**Date:** July 30, 2015

**To:** Honorable Lisa Bender, Chair Zoning and Planning

**Subject:** Resolution creating an Innovation District Designation

**Recommendation:**

Approve resolution creating an Innovation District designation.

**Previous Directives:**

None

**Department Information:**

Prepared by: Haila Maze, CPED (612-673-2098)

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
D. Craig Taylor, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Kjersti Monson, Haila Maze

**Financial Impact:**

- None

**Community Impact:**

- City Goals: Satisfies city goals including:
  - Living Well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life.
  - A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here
  - A City that Works: City government runs well and connects to the community it serves.

**Overview:**

Attached is a draft City Council resolution creating the concept of an Innovation District for the City.

The Innovation District concept has been developed through the ongoing planning efforts in the area around University Avenue SE, centering on the Prospect Park LRT Station Area but including other adjacent areas as well. In collaboration with the City's planning efforts in this area, a number of community partners have formed the Prospect North Partnership, which is working together to support redevelopment in the context of a sustainable and innovative district. As part of this ongoing process, the Prospect North Partnership has identified that designating an innovation district would assist in establishing an identity and standards for the redevelopment of the area.

Council Member Cam Gordon's office has taken the lead in bringing forward this resolution in support of this intent. The overall goals are to provide a working definition for this concept, and to generally speak toward how the City can work to assist with the implementation of innovative concepts.

This resolution does not allocate additional City resources to an Innovation District, identify potential districts, or change any regulations impacting this area. Some conversations about these items are ongoing, but they haven't occurred to date. At this point, the resolution just creates a definition for the overall framework for these potential changes.

## **Purpose and Intent:**

The intent in developing an Innovation District designation is to acknowledge and plan for locations that would benefit from a district approach to redevelopment and supporting regional systems. Redevelopment in Minneapolis often takes place on an individual site basis, making it difficult to achieve district-level outcomes. The Innovation District structure provides a framework for those goals, and the collaboration needed to achieve them.

The Innovation District title is based deliberately on an emerging national model for urban redevelopment. As defined by the Brookings Institution in a recent report entitled "The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation":

A new complementary urban model is now emerging, giving rise to what we and others are calling "innovation districts." These districts, by our definition, are geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail.

Innovation districts are the manifestation of mega-trends altering the location preferences of people and firms and, in the process, re-conceiving the very link between economy shaping, place making and social networking. Our most creative institutions, firms and workers crave proximity so that ideas and knowledge can be transferred more quickly and seamlessly. Our "open innovation" economy rewards collaboration, transforming how buildings and entire districts are designed and spatially arrayed. Our diverse population demands more and better choices of where to live, work and play, fueling demand for more walkable neighborhoods where housing, jobs and amenities intermix.

The development of this resolution acknowledges that the complicated work of developing an innovation district may require additional resources and tools that are not currently in place. The resolution sets the stage for decisions to allocate these, in support of redevelopment goals.

## **Other Related Actions:**

The Minneapolis Planning Commission reviewed the draft resolution at their Committee of the Whole meeting on June 18, 2015. While the Planning Commission does not typically take formal action on draft City Council resolutions, they agreed to submit a letter to City Council in support of the innovation district resolution. This letter is attached.

## **Future Related Actions:**

A future Council action will likely designate the first innovation district in the Prospect North/ University Avenue area. Others may follow over time.

At this point, the adoption of the resolution will not require specific implementation steps. However, in the future it could be used to support a number of additional actions listed in the resolution, including but not limited to support for additional staff time, funding, regulatory changes, capital project prioritization, economic development assistance, or other assistance.

While these requests may be supported by the, they will also need to be evaluated on their own merits and in the context of other competing priorities for resources.

**Attachments:**

- Resolution of the City of Minneapolis Creating an Innovation District Designation
- Letter from Minneapolis Planning Commission in support of resolutions