

Motion to Dismiss Smith Parker PLLP from the Lake Street Reconstruction and Streetscaping Project

WHEREAS Lake Street is a vital street and place, home to a growing community of small businesses and ethnic and minority groups and entrepreneurs, and

WHEREAS the design and construction decisions taken as part of the Lake Street Reconstruction and Streetscaping Project will greatly affect the future development and character of Lake Street, and

WHEREAS Hennepin County has appointed the law firm Smith Parker PLLP as project managers for this project, and

WHEREAS said decision was undertaken without open or competitive bidding, and

WHEREAS Smith Parker is a law and lobbying firm, and not an urban planning or architecture or engineering or economic development firm, disciplines which are central to the proper visioning and execution of a project for Lake Street of this size, scope and significance, and

WHEREAS Smith Parker, as a law firm, is therefore unqualified to lead and/or manage this project, and

WHEREAS Smith Parker currently serves as legal representative for major corporations and non-profit entities with significant economic and real estate interests in the area of this project, including Wells Fargo, Abbott Hospital, Children's Hospital, the Phillips Partnership, and Midtown Community Works, and

WHEREAS these landholders have different interests, stakes, and needs for this project than the small businesses and immigrant communities that have been central to the ongoing revitalization of Lake Street, and

WHEREAS a conflict of interest, with unequal representation of affected parties is therefore apparent, working against fair outcomes in this project, and

WHEREAS Smith Parker has already been embroiled in significant controversy as a result of their management of the 35W Access Project, which also contains clear conflicts of interest and other unethical practices, and

WHEREAS the Project Advisory Committee for this project is supposed to be an independent body with the power to direct the Project,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we, the members of the Lake Street Reconstruction and Streetscaping Project Advisory Committee (PAC) recommend that Smith Parker PLLP be terminated as project managers for the Project, and that they be barred from further involvement in it.

Additionally, the PAC recommends that an open, transparent process be instituted and that respected national consultants with recognized expertise like Project for Public Spaces be invited to participate in the search for a firm to lead the design and reconstruction of this important Street and Place in our City.