



West Side Flats

Master Plan and Development Guidelines Update

The Most Livable
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Wednesday, November 6, 2013

West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines Update Community Task Force Meeting #8

Attendees:

Community Task Force (CTF) Members

Attending:

Betsy Reveal (Chair), Karen Reid, Lorrie Louder, Gjerry Berquist, Carol Swenson, Rebecca Noecker, Jessica Treat, Tony Kuechle, Michelle Grosz, Denise Rene Hannah, Irene Jones, Alicia Uzarek

Project Staff/Consultants

Lucy Thompson, Jeff McMenimen, Jeff Miller

Meeting Notes

The consultants reviewed the Master Plan chapter of the document and received the task force's feedback on the draft chapter.

It was noted that the photos in the Development Guidelines chapter will be reviewed and updated based on previous input from the task force.

Master Plan Chapter Comments:

Overall

1. The emergence of multi-modal stations near the WSF – Green Line stations (Central Station and Union Depot) - should be addressed in the Master Plan chapter.
2. In general, consider making the master plan strategies shorter and clearer.
3. Be consistent with terminology throughout the document – urban village vs. urban neighborhood vs. neighborhood village.
4. Bulleted text should not be italicized within strategies.

Land Use

5. Preface the Land Use section with a description of the type of development that existed prior to the industrial park, which included a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses. The master plan should promote the idea of repopulating the West Side Flats.
6. Discuss the potential for multi-modal investments along Robert Street (streetcar) and its impact on land use and density decisions.

7. If possible, the paragraph #3 should address the percentage of WSF employees that also live in the WSF.
8. Illustration on page 28 needs a caption identifying the view shown.
9. LU strategy #7 should also include providing WSF employees more options for getting outdoors, being active, and healthy.
10. LU strategy #8 – make this strategy clearer and shorter.
11. LU strategy #8 or #9 should encompass reducing the predominance of large surface parking lots and preventing the creation of new large surface parking lots.
12. LU strategy #9 could be strengthened with quantitative comparisons, such as number of jobs per acre or square feet per employee, for existing businesses and anticipated new business types.

Urban Design

13. Friends of the Mississippi River may decide to oppose the preferred building heights shown in the master plan, particularly the 100' and 125' heights.
14. The concept of “porosity of buildings” should be added to the Urban Design section.
15. The group discussed interest in incorporating a viewshed analysis component into the City’s review of future WSF development projects, e.g. CUP or T3/T4 requirement. The current T3/T4 zoning ordinance includes “visual analysis of impact on critical views and vistas” as a master plan graphic but it is not a requirement. It was recommended that a development guideline be added to address the desire for a viewshed analysis.
16. An informal straw poll regarding the preferred building heights diagram resulted in 8 votes in support, 2 votes opposed, and 1 vote undecided.
17. Need to add how this begins to set the rationale for proposed rezonings.
18. Lorrie Louder expressed a concern about “downzoning” on the east side of Robert Street and the potential creation of non-conforming uses in the industrial area.
19. Does the preferred building heights diagram align with the Comprehensive Plan’s River Corridor Plan? (Staff confirmed that it does.)
20. Another tool for determining the appropriate heights for future WSF development projects could be the building height regulations of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area.
21. UD strategy #1 – Views of the riverfront should be changed to views of the river valley.
22. UD strategy #5 – Expand the language regarding screening of free-standing parking structures.
23. UD strategy #6 – Consider removing verbs in front of each of the economic, social and environmental sustainability best practices; consider moving this section up to an earlier section of the document as it may be too broad for the strategies section; consider highlighting sustainability in other master plan element sections. There was some question as to whether the lists of the characteristics of economic, social and environmental sustainability are redundant.

Street System

24. What are the impacts of MN DOT's Complete Streets policy on the design of streets and bridges? In particular, will the Robert Street Bridge be required to provide bike facilities? Consider a road diet design alternative for Robert Street that includes bike lanes.
25. Remove quotation marks from the term Complete Streets.
26. Page 36 – Consider removing verbs in front of each of the Complete Streets design characteristics. Consider replacing this section with a reference to the City's support of Complete Streets and maybe create a Complete Streets summary in a callout box.
27. Page 36 – Combine the Plato Boulevard bullet with the last bullet.
28. Page 37 – Show the entire Green Boulevard loop by adding a dashed green line to the loop streets east of Hwy 52 and west of Wabasha Street.
29. SS strategy #1 – Simplify the language; refer to restoration of a street grid.
30. SS strategy #2 – Layout of paragraphs should be changed.
31. Page 38 – Replace photo of alley.
32. SS strategy #4 – Refer to public art element of master plan?

Transit System

33. Page 40 – Last sentence should be moved to page 42 or deleted.
34. Transit Hubs should be called Multi-Modal Nodes on diagram (page 41) and in text.
35. Add a description of Multi-Modal Node to page 40.
36. Green Line LRT should be represented as a green line on diagram (page 41).
37. Should a Multi-Modal Node be shown at the intersection of Hwy 52 and Plato Blvd?
38. A strategy for reducing the requirement of parking spaces to encourage transit use should be added as strategy #7 and addressed on page 40.

Pedestrian and Bike Circulation

39. Show existing Nice Ride stations in downtown area on diagram (page 45).
40. Propose a future Nice Ride station for future Eva Street park on diagram.
41. Instead of showing dots for boat docking points, consider showing actual docks on the river.
42. For vertical circulation, show existing vs. proposed differently on diagram.
43. Explore the potential for bike lanes on Robert Street.
44. Revise the term "Nice Ride" to bike share in the legend.
45. PB strategy #1 – Clarify and shorten strategy – e.g. Build out the street system.
46. PB strategy #5 – replace transit hub with multi-modal node.
47. PB strategy #6 – Replace "explore" with "pursue, where feasible" and mention the Green Stairs.

Parks and Open Spaces

48. Consider adding a reference to the WSF's location in the MNRR National Park.
49. Use of native vegetative species in parks and open space should be addressed since the WSF is located within a bird migratory route.

50. As a residential population is brought back to the WSF, there will be a demand for additional parks and recreation facilities. Consider addressing a population threshold for when this need must be addressed.
51. What about potential noise concerns for future residents, e.g. big events at Harriet Island Regional Park?
52. Page 48 – This section should be tightened up and consider whether the last paragraph and bullet points are appropriate here.
53. Diagram on page 49, all streets should be Green Streets and “Green Streets” should be removed from the legend.
54. POS strategy #2 – Mention that the riverfront esplanade is very underused today.

Green Infrastructure

55. Page 52 – The description of the future Green Infrastructure element needs to be expanded.
56. Suggested that Green Infrastructure could be called Blue Infrastructure (after discussion with the PMT, it will stay “Green Infrastructure,” as this is the accepted term.
57. Page 58 – Green Infrastructure strategies section should be moved up to precede the diagrams.
58. GI strategy #2 – the hierarchy types should be the same as what’s on the plan.

Public Art

59. Page 60 – Concern about using the term “audiences,” so consider using another term and delete last part of paragraph #2 beginning with “for the targeted audiences...”
60. Title of Public Art Plan diagram should be changed to “Arts Opportunities” since the project ideas are not all inclusive.
61. Consider changing the title on page 60 to something like Arts Opportunities as well.
62. On diagram (page 61), arrows for Employment Districts could be extended further west toward Robert Street. Also, remove purple background on employment district blocks.
63. PA strategy #2 – Delete, as this is City policy already.
64. PA strategy #5 - when referring to artists, make sure it is inclusive of both visual and performing artists.

Illustrative Master Plan

65. There was a general question as to whether developers know what this diagram means.
66. Consider doing a view on p. 65 looking back towards the bluffs.
67. Identify where the two elevation drawings are views from.
68. Consider zooming in to the Greenway Park Elevation to enable people to see more of the character of the street level.

Next Meetings

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- November 20th Community Open House
- December 3rd WSCO Annual Meeting