

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
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**DATE:** March 19, 2015  
**TO:** City Council Members  
**FROM:** Jonathan Sage-Martinson  
**SUBJECT:** 8-80 Vitality Fund: Little Mekong Plaza

**Project Description**

Little Mekong Plaza will be a quarter-acre plaza located in the Western Station area of the METRO Green Line. This plaza is designed and envisioned to create a new public open space that centers the local East Asian community and neighborhood, enhances local businesses by attracting visitors from the Green Line, and improves walkability in the area. It will provide a home to cultural events and attractions, such as the Little Mekong Night Market, a summer evening festival organized by Asian Economic Development Association (AEDA), which supports small businesses and provides a venue for family fun and cultural exchange. The open air market includes food vendors, handicrafts, music and cultural performances.



## Project Goals

Little Mekong Plaza will:

- Strengthen the economic, environmental, and social lives of the community
- Form a development framework that catalyzes transit-oriented mixed-use development that incorporates publicly accessible open space and innovative stormwater management
- Improves walkability in the area
- Demonstrates the first Privately-Owned Public Space (POPS) on the Green Line LRT, which are an innovative way to create and provide new open space on the Green Line.



## Status of Work

The site of the plaza is on the south-west corner of University Avenue and Western Avenue. On the site, there is currently a vacant building that is unusable. Hmong American Partnership owns the building and the building and parking lot to the east of the future plaza, occupied by Mai Village restaurant and Hmong American Partnership's offices. The vacant building is planned to be torn down this spring. Then an interim plaza will be built, which will include a tree covered market area, performance space, and community gathering space. The goal is to have the plaza ready for the Little Mekong Night Market, which begins its season in July.

## Cost

The total project cost to build a permanent Little Mekong Plaza is \$2.6 million. The 8-80 Vitality Funds will contribute \$300,000 to starting this build-out, by providing funds to demolish the building and establish an interim plaza that will demonstrate the value of having a plaza in this space, and provide a model to incorporate a plaza in future large-scale development plans for the entire block.

**Benefits**

- Provides public open space along the Green Line
- Provides a catalyst for future transit-oriented mixed-use development at this station area.
- Contributes to economic development, particularly for ethnically-owned, local small businesses, by attracting visitors and providing space for markets and festivals.

**Timeline**

Spring 2015	Demolish building, test and abate hazardous materials, and fill and grade site Create interim plaza space
Summer 2015 2016	Programming of activities, including Little Mekong Night Market Capital campaign for permanent plaza

