

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number 17-32
date June 2, 2017

RIVER BALCONY MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted the *Great River Passage Master Plan* as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan in 2013; and

WHEREAS, one of the projects recommended in the *Great River Massage Master Plan* is the River Balcony, a 1.5-mile pedestrian pathway from the Science Museum to Union Depot along the top of the downtown bluff; and

WHEREAS, the River Balcony was envisioned to contribute to the economic vitality of downtown, and extend and reconnect community life to the Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, in anticipation of the adaptive reuse of the U.S Post Office and Custom House, which sits on the path of the proposed River Balcony, an inter-departmental City staff team engaged the Minnesota Design Center, BKV Group and Landscape Research to prepare a master plan and Phase 1 schematic design for the River Balcony; and

WHEREAS, a Project Review Team comprising property owners along the River Balcony route, CapitolRiver Council representatives and other key stakeholders advised the consultant team and City staff throughout the process; and

WHEREAS, the City hosted roundtables, design team workshops, a public open house in September 2015 and a public meeting in April 2016 to engage the public in preparation of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan lays out a vision for the River Balcony as a publicly-accessible pathway connecting public spaces and bluff-side redevelopment sites from the Science Museum to Union Depot that will be designed to accommodate walking, outdoor seating, gathering and related public activities, and that will be a catalyst for economic development; and

WHEREAS, a set of core goals establishes the role of the River Balcony in not only activating the public realm along the river bluff but also in catalyzing high-quality private development on key sites along Kellogg Boulevard; and

moved by Thao
seconded by _____
in favor Unanimous
against _____

WHEREAS, the goals of the River Balcony are to: 1) reconnect downtown to the river visually and physically; 2) provide a public linear path along the downtown river bluff with occasional vertical connections to the river's edge; 3) activate private development on the Ramsey County West/Adult Detention Center, Ramsey County East and Custom House sites; and 4) connect public spaces and private development sites along the river's edge in downtown; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan contains design guidelines for the River Balcony as a whole, individual sections of the River Balcony and adjacent private development sites; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission released the draft *River Balcony Master Plan* for public review in April 2017 and held a public hearing on May 19, 2017, notice of which was published in the St. Paul Legal Ledger and through the City's Early Notification System; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2017, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission adopted Resolution #17-07 recommending adoption of the *River Balcony Master Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed all public testimony and is recommending some changes to the draft Master Plan to respond to public testimony.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission finds the *River Balcony Master Plan* consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the *River Balcony Master Plan* as an amendment to the *Great River Passage Master Plan* with the following changes:

1. Specify the use of "bird-safe glass," "dark-sky-friendly lighting" and "pollinator-friendly native plants.
2. Add references to encourage the River Balcony to be a model park for green, technological and Zero Waste features.
3. Consider alternatives to wood decking as further design and performance studies are conducted.