DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director



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CITY OF SAINT PAUL Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street Saint Paul, MN 55102

DATE: March 16, 2015

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Jonathan Sage-Martinson

SUBJECT: 8-80 Vitality Fund: River Balcony

Project Description

The *Great River Passage Master Plan*, adopted by the City Council in April 2013 as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, calls for the creation of a River Balcony along the downtown river bluff (green/yellow line on image below). The River Balcony is envisioned as a publicly-accessible pathway connecting public spaces and bluff-side redevelopment sites from the Science Museum to Union Depot. It will be designed to accommodate walking, outdoor seating, gathering and related public activities; and to be a catalyst for economic development – all goals of the City's 8-80 Initiative.



Project Goals

The River Balcony will:

reconnect downtown to the river visually and physically;

Attachment 4

- provide a public linear path, with occasional vertical connections to the river's edge, along the downtown river bluff;
- activate private development on the Ramsey County West/Adult Detention Center and Custom House sites; and
- connect public spaces and private development sites along the river's edge in downtown.

The design rendering in the *Great River Passage Master Plan* shows an active, vibrant public ledge overlooking the river:



Status of Work

To-date, the River Balcony is just a line on a map in the *Great River Passage Master Plan*. The City is currently working with the Saint Paul Design Center, Metropolitan Design Center, BKV Group (architects for Custom House), Exeter Group (Custom House developer), Science Museum, District Energy and Ramsey County to prepare: 1) a master plan for the entire length of the River Balcony (Science Museum to Union Depot), identifying general design parameters and location/alignment; and 2) a detailed concept plan for the segment from Kellogg Mall Park to Union Depot (Phase 1), incorporating detailed design for the portion of the River Balcony along the Custom House building. These tasks will be completed by September 2015. The design work is being guided by a team of representatives of the partners noted above; PED staff is the lead.

Cost

The master plan and Phase 1 technical/design work cost is \$230,000: \$100,000 in Livable Communities Demonstration Account funds, \$100,000 from the 8-80 Vitality Fund, and \$30,000 from the City's Design Center budget. In addition, Exeter Group and the Metropolitan Design Center are each contributing \$30,000 in in-kind assistance. There is no estimate on the cost to build the River Balcony.

Benefits

- Provides continuous public access along the downtown river bluff, allowing for views of the Mississippi River valley as well as (hopefully) physical connections to the river's edge
- Provides an asset and catalyst for private development on the Ramsey County West,
 Ramsey County East and Custom House sites

Timeline

2015 Master plan, concept design for Phase 1

Attachment 4

2016	Construction of Phase 1 through the Custom House
2016	Detailed design for segment along Ramsey County West/Adult Detention
	Center site
2016-2017	Upgrades to existing portions of the Balcony (e.g. Kellogg Mall Park)