

## MEMORANDUM

To: Saint Paul City Council, Mayor Coleman  
From: Ford Site Planning Task Force  
CC: Donna Drummond, Jonathan Sage-Martinson  
Date: September 18, 2017  
Subject: Recommendations on proposed Ford Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan

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Dear Members of the Saint Paul City Council and Mayor Coleman,

The Ford Site Planning Task Force (the “**Task Force**”) was commissioned by the Saint Paul City Council in November of 2006. The Saint Paul Planning Commission was asked by Mayor Chris Coleman and then-Councilmember Pat Harris to “establish a community-based task force to be integrally involved in the development of alternate scenarios, oversight of the AUAR and fiscal impact analyses, and the recommendation of a preferred alternative to the Planning Commission.” More than 100 nominations were received for the Task applications were received, and in January 2007 a 24-member Task Force was selected.

The Task Force met more than 40 times during its tenure, from the early visioning phase of the project to the final preparation of recommendations on the Draft Ford Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan that the Planning Commission has before it for consideration. Starting with 24 members in 2007, the Task Force at its conclusion had 15 regularly participating members. These members are identified below:

1. William Klein, Co-Chair
2. Kyle Makarios, Co-Chair
3. Tony Schertler, Co-Chair
4. Peter Armstrong
5. James Bricher
6. Ronnie Brooks
7. David Drach
8. Charles Hathaway
9. Deborah Karasov
10. Angela Kline
11. Gary Marx
12. Jim Reinitz
13. Morgan Tamsky
14. Bruce Valen
15. Ellen Watters

The first year of Task Force work involved a consultant team and extensive community outreach, resulting in the Phase I Ford Site report, which identified an overarching vision and principles to guide subsequent planning.

## Vision Statement

*The redeveloped Ford Site will balance economic, social and environmental sustainability in a way that conserves and improves the qualities and characteristics of the unique Highland Park neighborhood and Mississippi River Valley Corridor in which it sits, while advancing the City's economic wealth and community goals, resulting in a forward-thinking 21st Century development.*

This Phase I Report also identified goals relating to Character and Built Form, Community Amenities and Open Space, Economic Viability, Land Use, Policy, Sustainability, and Transport and Infrastructure Connectivity, which the Task Force believes continue to be relevant today.

The strong foundation of early work formed the base of the next decade of planning – studies to examine the technical, financial and environmental aspects of the concepts, and stakeholder engagement to refine the principles and focus the mixed use vision for the site.

During its ten years, most members of the Task Force attended and sometimes helped with activities at large project meetings with the public, considered the site's constraints and opportunities as an infill redevelopment, tracked the numerous studies that considered various uses and design options for the site, and held its own meetings, open to the public, to discuss important issues related to the Ford site redevelopment.

Since November 14, 2016, when the city released a draft concept plan for zoning and public realm at the future Ford site, the Task Force has been considering the plan and public feedback. A refined Draft Plan was presented to the public and Task Force on March 7, 2017, following which the Task Force met twice to discuss the refined Draft Plan.

Discussions at those meetings focused on primary elements of the Draft Plan. No alternatives to the current Draft Plan were presented for consideration. Overall social, cultural, and community impacts of the redevelopment were at times discussed during the Task Force's tenure and influenced the Task Force's consideration of the Draft Plan. During these meetings members of the Task Force considered a number of suggested changes to aspects of the Draft Plan, which were presented to the Planning Commission.

The Task Force then met again on September 11 to review the Ford Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan, as revised by the Planning Commission and thereafter by amendments offered by Council Member Chris Tolbert (the "**Tolbert Amendments**").

## **Ford Task Force Recommendation on the Draft Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan:**

### **Support for Plan as Revised by Tolbert Amendment**

- The Task Force members present at the meeting voted 8 to 1 to express their support of the proposed Ford Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan as modified by the Tolbert Amendments (the “**Proposed Plan**”).
- The Task Force wishes to express its views on the following other matters related to the Plan.

### **Mississippi River Boulevard realignment along southern edge of Site**

- The Task Force urges the City to pursue steps to realign the southern curve of Mississippi River Boulevard at the south end of the Ford site and use the shifted southern park space to the expand bluff top open space that should be added to Hidden Falls Regional Park. Before any decision is finalized, the City should work with the Highland District Council to engage the community regarding the proposal, seek input from affected neighbors, and review the impact on traffic and other neighborhood concerns.

### **Residential Zoning Along Mississippi River Boulevard**

- The Task Force supports limiting F1 River Residential District zoning to permitting a residential mix of multi-unit homes and carriage houses, including houses of no more than 2-to-6 units, and allowing 1- to 2-unit carriage houses in back, as initially proposed and as reflected in the Proposed Plan as amended by the Tolbert Amendment, and oppose any revisions that would include townhomes or other multi-unit housing of greater density.

### **Design Standards for the Site**

- Design standards for public and private buildings and exterior spaces should be prepared and added to the Site zoning standard, with these adhering to the vision and guiding principles on the Master Plan. Until such standards are adopted, the Traditional Neighborhood zoning district design standards should be applied to the Site.

### **Historic References in Future Site**

- Acknowledge and reference Native Americans and Ford Employees in future public art and historic interpretation at the Site, and seek input from these groups in designing and acquiring this public art and developing these historic interpretations.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations on the Proposed Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

Sincerely,

Ford Task Force Co-chairs Bill Klein, Kyle Makarios and Tony Schertler