

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number 24-17
date June 7, 2024

WHEREAS, the River Balcony Master Plan (master plan) was adopted as an amendment to the Great River Passage Master Plan, an addendum to Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan, on June 21, 2017, and identifies the vision, goals, and design principles for the River Balcony, a 1.5-mile pedestrian pathway from the Science Museum to Union Depot along the top of the downtown bluff 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, the River Balcony Basis of Design Report (basis of design report), which is the next iteration of planning for the River Balcony and represents a refined design for the River Balcony, was created in September 2022 with assistance from a consultant and updated by the city in February 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City hosted numerous activities and events from fall 2021 through fall of 2022 to engage the community, along with technical advisors and stakeholders; the activities and events included a walking tour, focus group meetings, a community workshop, a community open house, three digital surveys, and a design celebration; and

WHEREAS, the master plan contains design guidelines for the River Balcony and adjacent private development sites and states "The design of each project must adhere to the master plan document as a baseline...", and there are key differences between the master plan and the basis of design report; and

WHEREAS, the basis of design report, at the direction of the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Great River Passage Conservancy, pivots towards an urban promenade layout using existing balcony and street infrastructure with less focus on elevated balcony elements and connections over the road and rail to the river; and

WHEREAS, the basis of design report was assessed in a memorandum from the Saint Paul Planning Commission's Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee, dated

May 31, 2024, and the memorandum identifies the differences between the master plan and the basis of design report and assesses the basis of design report's consistency with the master plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission released the memorandum assessing the basis of design report in March 2024 and held a public hearing on May 10, 2024 pursuant to Legislative Code

§ 61.303, at which all interested parties were afforded the opportunity to be heard; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission held a public hearing on February 8, 2024 and adopted Resolution #24-02 recommending approval of the basis of design report as an addendum to the master plan; and

WHEREAS, the basis of design report is intended to be a flexible document allowing for some design refinement as projects evolve from the schematic phases to design development phase and ultimately to construction documents; and

- a. *The use shall be limited to no more than three (3) days per week.* This condition is met. The farmers market will initially be held once a week and may increase to three times per week.
 - b. *Foods, manufactured goods, wares and merchandise may be sold if approved by the Planning Commission.* This condition will be met if approved by the Planning Commission.
2. Zoning Code § 61.501 lists five standards that all conditional uses must satisfy.
- a. *The extent, location and intensity of the use will be in substantial compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the City Council.* This condition is met. The site is identified as Mixed Use in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the policies of which focus on pedestrian-friendly building and land use design. These policies do not necessarily apply to the proposed use; however, farmers markets provide for gathering spaces, support locally grown food, and contribute to an active streetscape. The site is also within the Raymond Station Area Neighborhood Node. Neighborhood nodes are ideal locations for farmers markets because nodes “serve a neighborhood’s daily needs, including access to food; reduce public infrastructure disparities; improve livability; and accommodate growth”.

The following policies apply:

2040 Comprehensive Plan

Policy LU-6. Foster equitable and sustainable economic growth by:

1. facilitating business creation, attraction, retention and expansion;

Policy LU-10. Activate streetscapes with active first-floor uses, street trees, public art, outdoor commercial uses and other uses that contribute to a vibrant street life.

Policy LU-16. Encourage the equitable spatial distribution of community food assets, including urban farms, community gardens, food markets, healthy retail food options and food hubs.

Central Corridor Development Strategy (2007)

Initiative 50. The Walk to the Corner Store

Providing a mix of uses and services along the Corridor is critical to encouraging people to walk to their destinations. New development should encourage a mix of uses, and effort should be made to preserve and strengthen existing locally-based stores and services along the Corridor.

District 12 St. Anthony Park Community Plan (2008)

Policy 62. The St. Anthony Park Community Council and the St. Anthony Park Foundation will work with the City and community partners to help maintain and strengthen small neighborhood commercial retail, especially basic services that residents can walk to: grocery, hardware, etc. and lively centers of attraction.

- b. *The use will provide adequate ingress and egress to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.* This condition is not applicable. When the farmers market is being held, no vehicles will be permitted on the parcel.
- c. *The use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.* This condition is met. The proposed farmers market would occur for a few hours per week and would not require the modification or construction of any structures. Farmers

markets do not produce negative externalities that would affect public health, safety, and general welfare to a notable degree. The proposed use will not be a substantial change to the character of the immediate neighborhood.

The parking lot on site would not be usable when the farmers market is taking place. However, the Applicant has stated that at most 20% of the parking stalls are used at a given time and that free on-street parking is plentiful in this area. The subject parcel is on Raymond Avenue between Myrtle Avenue and Wabash Avenue. On-street parking is available on both sides of Raymond Avenue and the north side of Myrtle. Pelham Boulevard and Glendale Street are also within walking distance of the subject parcel and allow on-street parking. The site is also accessible by transit and bicycle. Bicycle facilities on Raymond Ave and Pelham Blvd are part of the Saint Paul Grand Round. Stops for the 63, 67, and 87 bus lines and the Green Line Raymond Station are within walking distance of the subject parcel.

- d. *The use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.* This condition is met. Most of the surrounding neighborhood is zoned T3 or T4, the uses of which are compatible with farmers markets. The vacant industrial land south of the parcel has been identified as an ideal location for a park in the Central Corridor Development Strategy and the Raymond Station Area Plan.
- e. *The use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.* This condition may be met subject to site plan review approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, under the authority of the City's Legislative Code, that the application of MidCity Kitchen for a conditional use permit for a farmers market including the sale of foods, manufactured goods, wares and merchandise at 693 Raymond Avenue is hereby approved subject to the following condition:

1. A site plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Zoning Administrator. The site plan is subject to conditions per Section 61.401 and 65.515(b).