

From: JEAN WULTERKENS <gerrit21@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, June 03, 2019 10:16 PM
To: Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul) <lucy.thompson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Comments on Mississippi River Corridor

Below are comments regarding plans for the Mississippi River Corridor. I request that they be made part of the record and distributed to the St. Paul City Council and the Mayor.

Comments on plans under consideration for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA).

1) The Highwood neighborhood of St. Paul sits above the Mississippi River Corridor at Pig's Eye. People here breathe air polluted by particulates from rail traffic and industrial emissions. We hear the squealing of train brakes. We are subject to the dangers of highly volatile shipments of Bakken crude oil shipped on rail lines less than a mile from where we live.

For years, the oil industry, allied with regulators, state governments, and even the federal government have refused to move ahead on a requirement to stabilize the vapor pressure on oil trains that pass by day after day.

"Vapor pressure is a measure of the volatility of flammable liquids and correlates to their likelihood of igniting. Higher vapor pressure means an oil is more volatile and more likely to ignite and burn when a train derails," according to Justin Mikulka, an environmental watchdog who has followed the efforts to pass the regulations required to reduce the danger.

A two-year study at Sandia National Laboratories, commissioned by the federal government in 2016, has been delayed in presenting its findings. Mikulka reports: "The federal government is unable to complete a two-year study in four years on a question to which oil experts already know the answer." Meanwhile trains have continued to explode, all over the country, and like mass shootings, are briefly discussed and then set aside under industry pressure.

Particulate pollution kills slowly. Oil train explosions kill immediately, unless people are able to flee the area within minutes. So, yes, the residents of Highwood live in a danger zone.

2) The Mississippi River Corridor is supposed to be a place where nature meets population in a mutually respectful way. St. Paul is proud of the sanctuary many species

of wildlife have found in the area of Pig's Eye, including the oft-mentioned heron rookery.

But as we are repeatedly reminded, the Mississippi is also a "working river," and the working river part of the equation has become the dominant force, to the point that Pig's Eye looks to those who live here more like an industrial zone than a wildlife refuge, with access by people and the natural world increasingly cut off.

That does not seem right, unless you believe that profit is more important than anything else. Given the needs of the city, profits that can be taxed (though those tax benefits are often given up in return for industry agreeing to come) are, literally, coin of the realm, as are the jobs promised.

But we need to ask ourselves as we head, like the Mississippi, downriver to Louisiana—where nature has lost the battle with big oil—Are we doing everything we can to save the natural world? Or are we giving it away by saying yes to repeated demands by industry, including the railroads?

Jean Wulterkens
413 Totem Road
St. Paul

June 5, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of District 1 — living on the northern edge of the Highwood neighborhood. The MRCCA as a whole looks very good.

On page 230 - Restoration Priorities it states "It is not likely that substantive restoration projects on land in any of these categories is feasible, since no substantial future subdivisions of residential land are likely; public land other than parkland already serves other public purposes that are likely incompatible with vegetation restoration; and change from industrial or institutional uses to uses more compatible with vegetative restoration on the remaining large parcels is unlikely due to both ownership and non-MRCCA policy reasons."

I would like to point out that we do have one area that is not addressed in the MRCCA - the land that is now being vacated on Boys Totem Town -- I know it is county land, but it is in the critical area and could be ours again. That acreage is a degraded Oak Savannah -- one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. The degradation is mostly buckthorn growth that has come about largely in the last 20 years. Restoring this is critical. It is also habitat for the endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

That section also states: "The City of Saint Paul supports the restoration of natural vegetation throughout the MRCCA and will support efforts of its local government partners to do so."

I am very concerned with the railroad development that is being discussed right now in the Pigs Eye Lake area - specifically around the Red Rocks Terminal. I acknowledge that part of the river is a working river that serves our economy -- however CA-34 - CA-37 should be kept in mind. And purposed development/changes there should not interfere with the plan.

I think it is interesting that Gavilon is pushing the change at Red Rock, and proposing to pay for it, after buying the property. I believe that they are doing this so they can expand their operation. They've stated they can't afford to pay for the extra rail employee that is the current safety solution — but they can afford to pay for the rail changes... Hmmm. If it weren't for Gavilon there would be no issue (per comments at the discussions) and plans could continue for a Recreation Area with public access. Perhaps they could be replaced with a business that fits the size and space of the current foot print - per the Water Uses section.

That area (designated CA-UM) should not get any larger or change the topography in any way. The plan states development should be managed in a manner that "does not negatively affect public river corridor views and that protects bluffs and floodplains. Restoring and enhancing bluff and shoreline habitat, minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the river, and providing public access to and public views of the river are priorities in the district."

By keeping our green spaces/natural areas and enhancing them for public use and benefit - Saint Paul could become an even better more livable city AND a bigger tourist destination, bringing in more money all while doing our part to curb climate change.

That being said I did not notice a specific statement and/or section addressing Climate Change -- which I believe should be included. In the next 50 years this is going to be critical to the area, it's flora and fauna.

Sincerely,
Patty McDonald
2150 Mailand Road
St. Paul, MN 55119

From: Vicki Baucom [<mailto:vickibaucom@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 3, 2019 7:13 PM
To: TOM DIMOND <tdimond@q.com>
Cc: Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Harr, Stephanie (CI-StPaul) <Stephanie.Harr@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: Wednesday City Council hearing on critical area chapter 2040 plan

Tom, your missives make me sad... it is the same story I have seen in every neighborhood I have lived in (the "wrong side of the tracks" as it were). Dumped on, literally, with wood chipping, toxic waste, pollution from rail and others, etc.

It is difficult to constantly muster the energy to hold people accountable for historic wrongs. Maybe we need to call in the pros at Trust for Public Land or the Minnesota Land Trust or any other organization that is focused on protecting land!

So sadly frustrating... Thanks for documenting the history through your testimony and emails.

Wishing you good health.

~Vicki

On Monday, June 3, 2019, 10:27:13 AM CDT, TOM DIMOND <tdimond@q.com> wrote:

All,

Below are some comments I submitted before. I intend to have additional comments for this week's City Council meeting. I will be glad to share them if I have them prepared before the meeting. I am still operating in a diminished capacity and working on a Veteran's Issue that I need to get the response in.

That said, I think this is an opportunity considering proposals to fill Eagle Lake wetlands, split the regional park with a rail yard, and Totem Town. My intent is to emphasize the amazing natural resources we have and the lack of resources, City advocacy we receive for protecting, and enhancing our natural resources, and making them accessible for the public. I think it is important for us to compare and contrast the resources provided to other parts of Saint Paul and the zero investment in our riverfront, the lack of access provided, etc.. A third of the city lives on the Eastside but we get nowhere near that level of investment in our stretch of the riverfront that we deserve.

The City, County, and Met Council agreed decades ago the publicly owned lands outside the berm at the waste plant should be transferred to the regional park for public enjoyment. It was to compensate for the land removed from the regional park so the railroads could expand on park property. After decades, there has still been no action. Would that be allowed on the Highland riverfront? Does it sound like the recent proposal to cut across the park with a rail yard? The government makes promises to get approval. Lands are lost but nothing in return in spite of their promises. Another thing that happens is natural resources are "replaced" in other parts of the State. We lose and the National Park has fewer natural resources and public access to those natural resources.

The Eastside commonly gets promises to get approvals and then we are forgotten. It is a consistent and long standing problem.

The EPA has determined that it will cost \$825 million to clean up the Pig's Eye Superfund site. Leaking barrels of highly toxic chemicals and other material that are in the water table polluting our water. What position statement does Saint Paul have in the Comprehensive Plan to seek funding to remove this threat from our waters and park. Where is the position statement on why it is vital that we have a full cleanup of this toxic site. The main public access to Pig's Eye Regional Park is Pig's Eye Parkway. I say parkway because that is what plans have called for including biking and pedestrian paths. The access to the park and visual realization there is a park is blocked by the "temporary" use of the Regional Park Property" for chipping the elm trees. The elm tree crisis ended decades ago but the commercial wood chipping operation remains smack dab in the middle of our park access. When Mayor Chris Coleman was elected he made it a priority to relocate the wood chipping somewhere else that is not parkland. He appointed a task force and we came up with alternatives. Moneyed interests stepped in and Eastside parks lost out once again. The planning to relocate the chipper was shut down. Wood chipping even includes wood pallets. So where in the Comprehensive Plan do they set a timeline for the removal of the wood chipper and providing and development of an entrance and trails for the park instead?

Totem Town is an incredible natural area. Much of the area is virgin oak savanana that has never been plowed. Because of very steep grades (bluff) and wetlands much of the site is legally protected from development. Part of the site is community gardens, ball fields, and plant materials recycling. This property was owned by the City, City and County jointly and County which reflects the transition of corrections from the city to County as rural Ramsey developed. When the City transferred title to the County the City put a deed restriction on the title that if the property was not needed for corrections it would become a park. The Highwood Plan adopted by the neighborhood, District Council, and City with the participation of the County and Watershed District states clearly that Totem Town will be preserved as parkland if no longer needed for corrections. We have had recent meetings with hundreds in attendance and when asked the public overwhelmingly supports protecting the area as public open space. When the City Hall/County Court House was being remodeled the County slipped some property titles that need some cleanup of wording into the agreement. One of the titles was Totem Town. The County had removed the park requirement. When called out on this and not disclosing what was proposed the County Board assured the City that absolutely the County would protect Totem Town as park if it was not needed for correction. They claimed this was only something the County Attorney told them they needed to do for legal purposes.

On City owned land around Pig's Eye Lake and Park coal is being shipped that will contribute to global warming. The City has taken a strong stance against global warming. It is inconsistent with the City position to use City owned and taxpayer subsidized property to assist in the transportation of coal that will contribute to global warming. The City should put a stop to using pubic facilities to aid in the use of coal. The Minneapolis City Council, Mayor and State Senators and Representatives worked for years to remove airborne toxic materials from being processed on their riverfront. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and City took action and the offender moved to Becker where that City required a structure to contain the toxic material that become airborne. That material is then trucked in open trucks to our river front and dumped outside. There is no containment system. When it is windy the material is spread on the winds with coal dust from the trucks dumping next to them. The City clearly is not protecting Eastside residents from known airborne dangers that the City of Minneapolis worked to get off their riverfront to protect their residents. This should be addressed in the Riverfront Comprehensive Plan.

You might note a common theme. We are very fortunate to have amazing natural resources. Unfortunately, the Eastside gets very little resources and even less focus of attention on protecting the resources we have and making them accessible to the public. The lack of listed ways the City plans to address these shortfalls in a timely manner is at the heart of the problem. The comprehensive plan is a look out to 2040. The plan should included defined ways that these shortfalls will be addressed in the next 20 years. The City should call out the County for their promises to protect Totem Town as public open space within our National Park. What good are government promises if we do not hold them to their promises. The government breaks their promises to protect natural resources because "they want to hear what the public wants". This fake process is so they can try to develop property they have promised to protect and the public has repeatedly come out to support as protected a natural area. You can understand how the tribes feel about the government honoring promises to protect land.

I will speak at the City Council public hearing this week. Thanks to Jane, Dan, Whitney, Jean, Sheldon, Shirley and all the rest for their work to protect parks and open space also on this side of town. I wish I could do more.

Tom Dimond

2040 Plan Comments
Dan McGuiness
June 6, 2019 City Council

Speaking as East Side Resident, Board Member Lower Phalen Creek Project – I would like to focus specifically on goal 6 of the MRCCA draft Chapter and some comments about the Downtown Reach and Floodplain Reach as shown on Figure 1 of the draft chapter.

Goal Six of the plan says: “The river is the backbone of a community-building network that extends beyond the shoreline and into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods.”

This is a significant goal, for it acknowledges the fact that what is proposed in this chapter affects what happens beyond the borders of the Critical Area boundary and vice versa.

This is particularly true on the East Side, where the river corridor is part of the Daytons Bluff, Mounds Park, Battle Creek and Highwood Neighborhoods.

On the East Side the wide river corridor includes more acreage of connected parkland, natural habitat and river floodplain than any other reach of the river in Saint Paul – beginning at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and extending downstream through the Dakota Mounds Park, Battle Creek Park, The Fish Hatchery and the forested bluffs and 500-acre Pigs Eye Lake in the Highwood Neighborhood.

What is often overlooked is the fact that, in this reach of the river three creek corridors run through the neighborhoods connecting the Mississippi River to nearby Lakes.

The Phalen Creek Corridor runs from Lake Phalen to the Mississippi River, and, while the creek itself is nearly entirely underground, the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, from Lake Phalen, and along Phalen Boulevard and then through Swede Hollow Park and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary are important community connectors.

Likewise, the Battle Creek corridor connects Mud Lake and Tanners Lake in nearby Maplewood and Woodbury, to the Mississippi River with both a beautiful creek and parallel public trails serving as important community connectors.

Finally, perhaps least known, but incredibly beautiful, the Fish Creek Corridor connects Carver Lake and Fish Creek Preserve in Woodbury and Maplewood to the Mississippi River at Eagle Lake and Pigs Eye Lake at the lower end of the floodplain reach. Both Fish Creek and Pigs Eye Lake are difficult to access but, nonetheless, are amazingly diverse and beautiful resources once you find a way to access them.

Paralleling the river in this reach on the east side are our magnificent bluffs and significant and sacred sites of the Dakota – Wakan Tipi Cave at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, the burial mounds of Mounds Park, and the locations of Kaposia, Little Crows Village sites along the east shore of the Mississippi River and Pigs Eye Lake. In this reach there are pockets of parkland and native habitat and a site whose fate is yet to be determined, the current site of Ramsey County's Boys Totem Town.

I bring these specific places to your attention to emphasize that this chapter is dealing with real places and real people. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is not a regulation, nor a zoning ordinance per-se as much as it is a statement of our collective intentions. We need these words and these maps to state our intentions. They need to be sincere and we need to do what we can to implement the plan – putting real policy and real money behind it.

It is a document that expresses how we plan to take care of our water, how we plan to take care of our land and how we plan to take care of each other. The East Side neighborhoods, over the years, have taken a hit with the closure and relocation of several major businesses that once called the East Side home. Some now look upon the East Side as a rusting hulk of its former self, but I believe it is a sleeping giant beginning to stir.

The significant challenges we face in implementing this plan are also opportunities to make the right choices and to act. Our East Side community, including the Lower Phalen Creek Project, is working hard to create, with the City, the Wakan Tipi Interpretive Center and gathering place at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and to acknowledge and fully address the Dakota significance of the cave and the nearby burial mounds. We are vitally interested in the future of The Fish Hatchery lands near Warner Road, and Pigs Eye and Eagle

Lakes and what happens along the Highwood Bluffs, including the future of Boys Totem Town. As we address these opportunities, I hope we will sincerely take to heart the goals of this chapter of the plan, recognizing the historic and contemporary significance of these places and their importance in our future.

From: dan@dmcguinness.com [<mailto:dan@dmcguinness.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2019 11:02 AM

To: Shirley Erstad <shirleyerstad@gmail.com>; Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: TOM DIMOND <tdimond@q.com>

Subject: RE: MRCCA Plan

Importance: High

Looking from near current site of Henry Park in Highwood, up the river valley over Pigs Eye Lake and toward Battle Creek and Mounds Park. 1888 Courtesy of MN Historical Society archives.

Dan McGuinness

651-260-6260

Helping People - Protecting Places

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: MRCCA Plan

From: Shirley Erstad <shirleyerstad@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, June 05, 2019 10:57 am

To: "Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul)" <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: TOM DIMOND <tdimond@q.com>, Dan McGuinness <dan@dmcguinness.com>

I would suggest adding Area C at the Ford site to number 1. We were told that Ford would be required to clean it up to recreational standards, yet we are allowing Ford to move forward with the sale of the upper site without holding them accountable to clean up this area in the floodplain.

Also, to plan for future opportunities that may become available how about changing Lucy's suggested language to something like:

CA-21. Pursue opportunities to clean up known areas of significant contamination, such as the Pig's Eye Superfund Site and Area C on the Ford property, within the Critical Area, and other areas as they become known.

Thank you, Jane!

Shirley



From: Shirley Erstad [<mailto:shirleyerstad@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2019 10:42 AM
To: Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: MRCCA Chapter

Jane, I sent you an email a bit ago regarding this, but I'm cleaning up that language here for you as a possible response.
Shirley

Yes, thank you, that is what I am referring to. The Planning Commission's amendment number 1.

It adds language, requested by FMR as you said, that if left as is, makes it seem as if we are creating a hierarchy of concerns, rather than balancing all nine areas of concern as stated in Goal Number 7 on the previous page.

FMR had actually asked for an additional sentence that was not added. The second sentence read, "The city will utilize the criteria provided in the MRCCA rules to evaluate potential visual impacts of additional height, and if/when mitigation is needed." If both sentences had been added, the intention would be more obvious that FMR is concerned about visual impacts and mitigation options.

As it has been amended, it doesn't do what FMR was trying to do and in fact, makes environmental protection seem secondary when there is a conflict between MRCCA Districts, Future Land Use districts, and/or zoning.

As amended, it states that, "... St. Paul will need to strike a balance between the economic and social benefits of redevelopment and the natural, cultural, and recreation resources of the Mississippi River." It leaves out environmental, physical, historic, and spiritual.

So, in effect, it says we're concerned with economic, etc. but not environmental concerns specifically when there's conflict. It clearly wasn't FMR's intent and probably not the Planning Commissions intent, either, but that's how it reads now.

Can I amend it to add FMR's additional sentence to make the intention clear? Was there a reason given by PC as to why only one sentence of FMR's suggested language was added?

Thank you.

From: TOM DIMOND [<mailto:tdimond@g.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2019 8:47 AM

To: Shirley Erstad <shirleyerstad@gmail.com>

Cc: Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Harr, Stephanie (CI-StPaul) <Stephanie.Harr@ci.stpaul.mn.us>;

Subject: Additional comments for today's river corridor meeting

All,

On World Environment Day and during the 75 Anniversary of D Day we should consider how some have sacrificed all so we can have a better future. Hopefully, you can all take some time out of your day to speak at the City Council about providing a better future for our younger generations. The river corridor needs your voice and advocacy for a better future.

Attached are additional comments I will submit.

See you at the City Council public hearing today (June 5th) at 3:30 in City Council Chambers 3rd floor City Hall.

Tom Dimond

Tom Dimond
2119 Skyway Drive
Saint Paul, MN 55119

June 4, 2019

RE: Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience planning calls for changes in antiquated freight transportation policy and new thinking about transportation which is evolving rapidly.

Saint Paul wants to be carbon neutral by 2050. Tier 4 locomotives provide the cleanest burning and most fuel efficient way to transport the broadest range of freight. BNSF can ship a ton of freight 500 miles on a gallon of fuel and Tier 4 locomotives have some of the most sophisticated technology to ensure they meet the latest EPA standards.

Barges use more fuel because winding rivers translate to longer distance. Barge shipments require longer truck trips to loading sites. Rail has sites distributed across the State. Reduced truck mileage saves fuel, reduces pollution, and wear and tear on our roads. It also helps ensure the continued economic viability of rural rail. Rail carries a wider array of freight.

In Saint Paul, barge operations are subsidized with millions of dollars of tax payer money. Barges receive billions in Federal subsidies that could better serve transportation and transit.

Coal is a product trucked to barges on our riverfront. On windy days you can hardly see the trucks in the cloud of coal dust when dumped. Saint Paul and Minnesota taxpayers are assisting the burning of coal with taxpayer subsidizes. This does this fit with a carbon neutral policy?

Saint Paul should eliminate the thousands of trucks hauling coal to our riverfront and end the shipment of coal from City owned and taxpayer subsidized docks. Saint Paul should support advanced smart freight transportation and clean energy. Saint Paul residents are paying with their health and potholed streets.

Rail moved 240 million tons of freight in MN in 2007. In 2030 it is expected to be 300 million tons.

Trucks moved 390 million tons of freight in MN in 2007. In 2030 it is expected to be 430 million tons.

Barges moved 5 million tons of freight from St. Paul. It is expected to decline.

Saint Paul should keep an open mind to the highest and best use of riverfront property.

The high water levels this year have allowed us to enjoy walks along the river without a wall of rusting steel barges. The economy of Saint Paul is just fine. There is an \$825 million dollar cleanup required at the super fund site located in our water table next to the Mississippi River. It is constantly leaking toxic chemicals into our ground water and the Mississippi River. **Our priorities should be cleanup of the superfund site and restoration of wetlands and trucks dumping airborne toxic materials forced off Minneapolis's riverfront by the MPCA.**