

June 2, 2011

**Upper River Forum: Planning Our Development Future
Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study
Meeting Notes**

Attendees: Approximately 80 people representing a range of backgrounds and interests attended

A welcome was given by Cordelia Pierson of the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership, Mary Maguire from the Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee, and Councilmember Diane Hofstede. Several other elected and appointed officials were welcomed. All participants were given a chance to introduce themselves to the group.

Tom Leighton and Haila Maze from the City of Minneapolis gave a presentation, updating attendees on the progress to date of the Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study. The purpose of this study is to provide additional information needed prior to the further implementation of the Above the Falls Plan, and to possibly recommend changes to the plan's policy and land use guidance. The full presentation is available on the project website at:

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above_the_falls.asp

Main topics covered in this presentation include:

- Review of Above the Falls plan, and main values guiding previous and current process
- Description of research being covered in the policy review, including land, utilities, economic analysis, employment and business, freight, and comparison cities
- Discussion of the implications of research for industrial, office, and residential development futures, and the relative strengths of the area and its sub-areas - generally, scenarios yielding greater returns had higher up-front public costs and more need for context - and vice versa
- Other considerations being addressed, including context setting, critical mass, density, up front public costs needed, timeline/phasing, park development (and coordination with MRDI), and neighborhood connections
- Project timeline and next steps

Question and answer time, with some comments from the audience as well, followed the presentation:

Q: Is this market rate housing, and did the analysis consider the impact on surrounding housing market?

A: Yes, all development scenarios assume market rate development

Q: Do the scenarios assume an increase in amenities?

A: Yes, need to have increase in amenities (including quality riverfront parks and trails) to stimulate any new development

Q: How do you get the transit service that housing wants?

A: Transit will probably follow housing, as there is not sufficient density to support much service now. Housing development wants this and other amenities. Northeast side currently much more appealing to residential developers.

Comment: Quality of housing, increase in tax base along the river, will deter people middle or lower income people to live there – transportation would be a factor – that is key. Lots would drive cars.

Q: If you do not build it right, they will not come. Has anyone studied the tipping points on a large scale – a model that seems to work better in other areas?

A: The City Council is also interested in findings from best practices. We will be compiling and presenting as part of our reporting to them and the public.

Q: Industrial users are here now – we are trying to plan our futures now. Where do we fit in? We have been here 75, 90+ years and do not mix with residential

A: You are currently not in the adopted Above the Falls Plan. But we want to recognize the value of these businesses and what they bring to the city. We are reevaluating the recommendations that call for the removal of much of the industrial. Additionally, any redevelopment scenario is likely to proceed only with willing sellers. Please tell us what you think - your comments inform what happens next. Business Development staff at the city are available to meet with any business that is interested.

Comment: Location on the river is key for public and green space. Could the business move to a better place not on the river?

Q: Does plan factored into assumptions potential impact for further economic recession?

A: Not directly - as it is a long-term plan, will be business cycles, which will average out over fluctuations

Comment: This plan does not have anything to do with the river. We ought to be thinking about using the river for boating, etc. The RiverFIRST plan seems to be dealing with the river

Comment: This plan is not business friendly, and this is a concern.

Comment: This plan needs to address phasing and how the plan builds on publicly owned lands. Public lands provide the best chance of making change happen, and a significant amount of land in the study area is in public ownership, such as the Upper Harbor Terminal.

Q: Will this presentation be available soon?

A: Yes, it will be available on the website tomorrow

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above_the_falls.asp. The reports referenced during the presentation are already on the website.

Attendees were thanked for their attendance. There was general discussion about the possibility of follow-up opportunities to provide more input on the contents of this study. Staff are aiming for a recommendation to City Council by September, so another round of input will be scheduled in August.