

**Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study  
Project Introduction Meeting**

**Tuesday, November 30, 2010  
4:30-6:30 PM**

**East Side Neighborhood Services, 1700 2nd St NE**

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| Welcome, viewing of displays, discussion                                    | 4:30-5:00 |
| ○ Time to fill out surveys, if applicable                                   |           |
| Introductions of staff and participants                                     | 5:00-5:10 |
| Staff Presentation  | 5:10-5:40 |
| ○ Overview of ATF Plan  |           |
| ○ Need for implementation study   |           |
| ○ Review of existing and planned conditions in policy areas                 |           |
| ○ Update on implementation study work to date                               |           |
| ○ Market and feasibility study – preliminary findings                       |           |
| ○ Business and community outreach – survey                                  |           |
| ○ Other related planning efforts  |           |
| Guided discussion/Q&A   | 5:40-6:15 |
| ○ Any thoughts on Above the Falls Plan and policy review study process?     |           |
| ○ How do you value and use area, and how is that impacted by these plans?   |           |
| ○ What should be the City’s policy and investment priorities for this area? |           |
| Next steps and future opportunities for input                               | 6:15-6:30 |
| ○ Development feasibility study consultant work                             |           |
| ○ Internal work on recommendations for plan implementation                  |           |
| ○ Ongoing public outreach – estimated January meeting                       |           |

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Thanks for attending!

Check the project website for additional information and ongoing updates:  
[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above\\_the\\_falls.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above_the_falls.asp)

## Above the Falls: Policy Review and Implementation Study

**Background.** In 2000 a far-reaching vision for the Upper Mississippi River area was formally established through the adoption of *Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis*. The plan calls for continuous park frontage along both sides of the river, new residential neighborhoods, and job growth despite a much reduced industrial footprint. Since its adoption, significant steps have been taken in areas such as park and trail expansion, renovation of the Grain Belt complex, and laying groundwork for the establishment of the Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation. Large-scale redevelopment, envisioned to unfold over several decades, has been relatively modest to date.

**City Council Direction.** Much has happened in the last decade that bears on the redevelopment objectives of *Above the Falls*. A growing sensitivity to recent and proposed reductions in the City's industrial sector prompted a study and recommendations that were adopted in 2006—titled *Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan*. Questions have been raised concerning the practicality and cost of sweeping land use conversion along the upper river. Existing property owners have requested more certainty regarding the timeline of redevelopment so that they can make better informed investment decisions. In July, 2008, The City Council responded to these and other considerations by directing staff to “explore policy and regulatory strategies for providing existing property owners clearer expectations about the phasing of long-range land use transitions”, and to analyze “potential impacts of the [*Above the Falls* land use guidance] related to the extent and phasing of the . . . transition from industrial to nonindustrial development.”

**Phased Work Plan.** The Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is undertaking a study in response to City Council direction. Its objective is to address questions about the redevelopment vision in *Above the Falls*, and advance its implementation. It may or may not result in modifications to *Above the Falls*. The project will be phased as follows:

- 1) **Analysis** of the land use and redevelopment recommendations of *Above the Falls*—with a focus on feasibility, and the appropriate industrial-residential balance.
- 2) **Revisions** to *Above the Falls* and related documents as appropriate
- 3) **Rezoning** of property, and consideration of other *Above the Falls* implementation strategies

**Process.** The project will be led by city staff with broad public and stakeholder engagement. Key stakeholders include the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Friends of the Mississippi, Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee, the emerging Mississippi Riverfront Corporation, neighborhood and business organizations, and property owners. Work will begin in late 2009.

**Study Area.** The study area includes property between the Camden Bridge on the North, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the South, Interstate 94 on the West and Marshall Street on the East. The study area may be modified during the study process.



- **Grain Belt.** The Grain Belt Brew House is a historic landmark that was renovated between 2000 and 2002 as commercial office space. The Wagon Shed and Shops Buildings were sold to the Minneapolis Public Library and were renovated as the Pierre-Bottineau Library. The Warehouse and Bottling House structures were sold to Artspace for use as commercial lease space. One historic structure awaits renovation and reuse and that is the Office Building, scheduled for sale and rehabilitation in 2009.
- **Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan.** This 2002 plan established laid the groundwork for the reconstruction of Lowry Avenue, and established land use and development guidance for the corridor.
- **Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment Study.** This 2004 study developed and evaluated three scenarios for redevelopment of the Upper Harbor Terminal. It contributed to the thinking concerning how the UHT might be reused, but it was not formally approved by the City Council.
- **Marshall River Run Housing Development.** The Marshall River Run project is a mixed income multifamily housing development constructed in 2005 with ownership and rental components. The rental component is a three story building with 74 housing units. It required pollution remediation and received TIF pay-as-you-go financing from the City of Minneapolis in addition to other gap financing. The ownership component was 11 market rate townhome units fronting on Marshall Avenue.
- **Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan.** This 2006 analysis was partly prompted by Above the Falls and other plans that envisioned industrial to residential conversion. It explored the adequacy of industrially zoned land and proposed policies to preserve certain remaining industrial properties. It adopted Employment Districts that are consistent with the land use objectives of the Above the Falls plan.
- **Edgewater Park.** The Master Plan for this park was approved in 1996 and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board constructed this park in May through October 2006 with funding from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO). Artistic elements highlighted in this project include: “Park Landmarks” that are interpretive nodes of Minneapolis and St. Paul along the river, signage interpreting cultural and historical stories, no-mow turf, porous concrete, pavers and gravel pave system, and a River Overlook with seating area.
- **UHT Historical Survey.** Completed in the fall of 2007, this survey was done to satisfy, in part, a preliminary analysis in the Upper Harbor Terminal Redevelopment Study that suggested that the Upper Mississippi Harbor Development appeared to meet two National Register criteria. In addition, the ATF Master Plan provides a dramatically different vision for the area than currently exists. This survey will inform potential historic interpretation for this site.
- **Construction of Phase I trails and landscaping.** The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board undertook trail and park construction in 2007 & 2008 on the west bank of the Mississippi between Plymouth Avenue and the Burlington Northern railroad bridge north of West Broadway Avenue. Bicycle and walking trails were constructed consistent with the model used elsewhere in the Grand Rounds system—along with landscaping and park improvements. Other improvements remain to be done in a second phase of construction.
- **Upper River Historical Survey (pending).** This survey is being done in preparation of future redevelopment activities consistent with ATF. This survey will inform future potential historic districts, sites, or interpretive opportunities.
- **Creation of Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation (MRC).** In the fall of 2008, the new nonprofit corporation for the Minneapolis Mississippi riverfront was incorporated. ATF referenced such an organization and one of the primary goals of this new group will be to focus on redevelopment activities in the upper river area consistent with ATF.
- **BF Nelson.** This 12 acre park received a \$775,000 grant from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) to fund the design process and initial construction to convert the property. The earthwork, preliminary trail development and shoreline, wetland and native plant restorations were completed by the end of 2008.
- **Lowry Bridge Design.** The replacement of the Lowry Avenue Bridge is currently awaiting notice from the feds to proceed. A contract may be awarded as early as this fall, with an anticipated completion date in late 2011. The replacement of the bridge may be considered a step in implementing the Above the Falls plan because the design parameters of the ATF plan were used as criteria for evaluating the proposed bridge design.
- **Sheridan Memorial Park.** The Park Board is currently making the area of the Grain Belt Campus that abuts the river into a park. Future park amenities include a memorial reflecting pool and flagpole honoring all U.S. veterans, a peace garden, a picnic area and river overlooks. The City conveyed land to the Park Board for the park in 2008. The demolition of structures on that land is to happen soon. The Park Board also acquired an additional privately-owned parcel for the park.
- **Phase 1 East Bank Trail.** The Park Board acquired some additional land upriver from the Grain Belt for the planned Phase I east bank trail.
- **North Mississippi Park.** This park has undergone additional phases of development since the ATF Plan was adopted.
- **Additional Development Projects.** Other projects completed since ATF approval include the Graco Expansion (which includes provision of an easement for a trail along the river), Riverview Homes, the Alley, and some North Washington Jobs Park projects (DHL, Stremel Manufacturing, and the pending Standard Heating)
- **Coloplast Headquarters development.** The construction of the North American headquarters of Danish medical device company Coloplast, consistent w/ ATF land use and development guidance. The \$35 million campus, located on a 5.4 acre site on the bank of the Mississippi River, will be LEED certified and will include one of the company’s three global Innovation Centers. The 178,000 square foot facility will house approximately 500 employees in sales, marketing, and research and development. Public funding for the project consists of \$2.9 million in Tax Increment Financing, \$500,000 from the State of Minnesota Investment Fund loan program, and \$944,500 in environmental remediation grants.
- **The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.** The Above the Falls land use plan was fully incorporated into the future land use maps of the draft Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

## **Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study Frequently Asked Questions – as of 10/5/10**

**Q:** How does the existing city policies through the Above the Falls Plan impact existing property owners and businesses?

**A:** The Above the Falls Plan is an officially adopted policy document that has been incorporated into the City's comprehensive plan. Among other recommendations, this plan calls for a linear park to be established along the upper riverfront in areas where it does not currently exist. It also recommends the establishment over time of new residential neighborhoods in certain areas that are currently industrial. As a result, it anticipates that some existing uses would need to transition or redevelop in order to realize the full vision of the plan. The full implications of this have not been realized to date, as there has been a delay in plan implementation steps, such as rezoning properties anticipated to transition.

**Q:** What would be the implications of full implementation of the plan, including rezoning?

**A:** If full rezoning is done to bring the zoning code in line with the existing Above the Falls Plan, a number of land uses within the transitioning areas (e.g. from industrial to residential/park) would be rendered nonconforming. Under existing state law, nonconforming uses can continue to operate in their existing capacity indefinitely. However, any expansion, change, or discontinuation of the use may require additional steps to acquire approvals – and they are not guaranteed. The city acknowledges this can introduce some uncertainty for business or property owners looking to invest, expand, move, or make other changes.

Existing Above the Falls businesses and property owners within designated Industrial Employment Districts will see no change in their status with the implementation of zoning changes – nor will others that are effectively already in line with Above the Falls policy. City staff can provide detailed information as to which properties would be impacted by this change.

**Q:** What is the purpose of the Policy Review and Implementation Study?

**A:** In the ten years since the plan was adopted, there have been several factors which have led to this interim study prior to full plan implementation. One has been an acknowledgement that the ambitious and visionary nature of this plan means it will not be implemented quickly, and that transitions may stretch out over decades. The resulting sense of uncertainty regarding timing has been recognized as an obstacle for property owners and businesses wishing to thoughtfully plan for their futures. Additionally, changes in market conditions and other factors have prompted the city to revisit some of the plan's original analysis and seek to supplement it with updated material – which may lead to some changes to the plan's recommendations.

As a result, prior to taking additional steps toward implementing this long-range vision, the City Council directed staff in 2009 to “analyze and report back to the Council on the potential impacts of the land use guidance in the Above The Falls study area related to the extent and phasing of the proposed long-range transition from industrial to non-industrial development.” In response, City staff initiated the Above the Falls Policy Review and Implementation Study.

Q: What is the status of the implementation study, and how will the public be kept informed?

A: At present, the study is focusing on two major elements: additional market research and analysis to supplement the work done in the original Above the Falls study, and public outreach that covers the broad range of stakeholders in the study area. The research piece includes both internal review by staff and supplementary analysis by Bay Area Economics, a consulting firm specializing in real estate economics and development.

The public outreach component will both work with existing groups organized around the upper riverfront – such as the Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee (AFCAC) – as well a more targeted outreach to stakeholders who may not be represented in these groups. The process will accommodate both those who have been with the plan since the beginning, and those who are just finding out about it now.

The study is still in fairly early stages, and no decisions have been made to date about whether there will be any changes to the Above the Falls Plan prior to implementation. The city encourages all interested groups and individuals to provide relevant input into this decision making process.

Q: Where can I find more information?

A: The official project website - [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above\\_the\\_falls.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/above_the_falls.asp)

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