

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**
250 South 4th Street, Room 100
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385



City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Beth Elliott, Principal City Planner 612.673.2442
DATE: August 8, 2011
RE: Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan Project – Conceptual Approval

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2010 the City of Minneapolis applied for and received an Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (“Legacy”) Grant to develop the *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan*. The plan builds upon the information and guidance developed in the *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Designation*, *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines*, and the *North Loop Small Area Plan*.

The purpose of the plan is to provide clear direction on the pressing issue of how to protect the historic infrastructure of the District while promoting an accessible and pedestrian friendly environment. The plan will improve the decision-making process for the adaptive reuse of streets in the historic district.

The geographic scope of the project is the twenty-three blocks of streets and numerous alleys that retain original paving materials and the industrial infrastructure. The original paving materials include brick, cobblestone, and wood paver systems. The industrial infrastructure includes loading docks, canopies, and abandoned railroad tracks in the public right-of-way.

The document is a detailed street by street plan with specific trouble-shooting for how to preserve the remaining historic materials and industrial infrastructure, while accommodating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and the need for street and sewer repairs. Chapter 5: Specific Street Analysis, Concept Plans and Recommendations shows in detail how to accommodate accessibility needs, stormwater management needs, and preservation needs on each block. The plan will be used to inform the individual site decisions that property owners, design professionals, and the City will need to make when buildings in the District are rehabilitated. It will also be used as the guiding document for the design and development of City capital improvement projects for the reconstruction and repair of the streets and alleys.

PROCESS

Once the Legacy grant was secured, the City began identifying a scope of work based on adopted policy and input from various stakeholders. One group, the Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee, accompanied staff on a field tour in October 2010 to offer a better understanding of walking impediments and ideas for improvements. City staff also met with the North Loop Neighborhood Association while

developing the scope that fall as well as throughout the planning process to test ideas and receive input at critical stages.

On November 30, 2010, staff provided the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) with an update to the plan and upcoming process. An update on February 15, 2011 focused primarily on information learned about the history and existing conditions of the paving material within the streets.

A Task Force was established and met four times from December 2010 to April 2011 to provide insight into City policies and the nuances of neighborhood livability, provide project guidance, and review suggested recommendations. It included:

- CPED-Planning: Beth Elliott, Brian Schaffer
- Public Works: Anna Flintoft, Bob Carlson
- Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission: Denita Lemmon, Alex Haecker
- Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office: Leslie Coburn
- Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities: Joan Willshire
- North Loop Neighborhood Association: Karen Rosar, Darwin Lookingbill

Task Force expertise was supplemented by many conversations with additional technical experts – from Public Works and the Minnesota State Council on Disability, in particular - on issues such as street maintenance, sidewalk accessibility issues, stormwater management, brick removal and storage, and street and sidewalk construction methods.

The project has been coordinated and managed by Minneapolis CPED Planning staff and Minneapolis Public Works staff. A robust consultant team was hired to perform the work on the plan. The project team was led by John Slack from Bonestroo and included the following sub-consultants: Glacial Ridge (a paving contractor), MacDonald and Mack Architects, Landscape Research, Tammy Lindberg, and American Engineering Testing. As a resident of the North Loop neighborhood, John Slack proved to be the ideal project manager due to his passion for the historic resources and first-hand knowledge of neighborhood livability.

The North Loop Neighborhood Association (NLNA) approved the *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* on July 27, 2011.

NEXT STEPS

CPED Planning staff is seeking conceptual approval of the *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* from the Heritage Preservation Commission. Each individual repair or reconstruction project will come forward to HPC for approval individually as each project moves forward. Further details on phasing can be found in Chapter 6: Implementation Recommendations and Strategies.

Public Works and CPED are working cooperatively on funding 6th Avenue North as the first Heritage Street to be completed as envisioned in the plan. A Capital Budget Request (CBR) has been submitted for 6th Avenue North to be included in the City's Capital Improvement Program for the year 2016 and they have supported funding it fully; a final decision will be made by the Mayor and City Council by the end of this year.

In order to achieve the level of preservation sensitivity required for this work, the City is also seeking a grant through the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program (SAFETEA-LU) to cover the historic preservation components of the street reconstruction project. The North Loop Neighborhood Association (NLNA) voted to support submittal of this application on July 27, 2011.

FINDINGS

- 1) The *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* is consistent with and helps implement the *Warehouse Historic District Designation*.
- 2) The *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* is consistent with and helps implement the *Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines*.
- 3) The *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* is consistent with and helps implement the *North Loop Small Area Plan*.
- 4) The *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* will be used as a basis for prioritizing projects and identifying funding sources, including potential grant opportunities.
- 5) All construction projects to implement the *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan* will be subject to the necessary review and approval processes as defined in the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 599.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

CPED-Planning staff recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission **adopt** staff findings and **approve** the *Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan*.

Attachments

- Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan
- Appendices on the project website: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/heritage_street_plan.asp