

**NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE**  
**Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5**

**Wednesday, October 7, 2009**  
**City of Minneapolis Public Service Center**  
**3:00 – 5:00 PM**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Committee members present: Karen Rosar, Adrienne Hannert, Bob Schmitz, Bruce Rubin,

Committee members absent: Paul Adelman, Mary de Laittre, Ryan Kronzer, Erin Fitzgerald

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: none

**Open House**

Beth Elliott summarized the September 23 open house. Sixty-five people signed in and the majority were new faces to the planning process. Both Karen and Bob attended and they thought it was well-received and participants were generally supportive of the plan's direction.

Beth and Joe went through some of the comments received during the open house.

Street condition – Many participants mentioned that they hope the plan emphasizes the poor condition of some of the streets, particularly the historic brick streets. A number of people want to see 5<sup>th</sup> Ave N reconstructed because of its uneven surface and difficult pedestrian space. Joe and Beth told the CAC that this issue can be explained easily in the draft in a way to emphasize street condition as a livability issue.

Streetcar – The need for streetcar on Washington was articulated in the open house. Staff will better explain the citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study and highlight the fact that Washington Ave N is one of the preferred routes. Streetcar will also be listed with other modes in places where the plan lists aspects of multimodalism.

Height – Staff heard during the community meeting mixed comments on the issue of height and density in the North Loop neighborhood. Some comments received emphasized promoting density without excessive restrictions on height while other participants are worried about tall buildings, particularly in the historic area of the neighborhood. Beth explained the concern of some residents who live at Tower Lofts of the height of buildings on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The current draft Development Intensity Districts identify everything on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and north to the river in the Downtown Neighborhood-Intensity District which calls for heights of 2-6 stories. From the perspective of these open house participants, height should be set at 4 stories on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and step down to the river. Additionally, they pointed out that the

majority of buildings along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street are currently 4 stories. Beth explained that some buildings are higher than 4 stories (e.g. Itasca) and the 6-story limit is consistent with the historic district guidelines.

CAC members were mixed on whether to keep the 6-story limit or reduce it to 4 stories in some or all of the Downtown Neighborhood-Oriented District. A member pointed out the historic character and explained that many residents purchased units because the area felt like a compact Paris neighborhood. Another member supports opportunities to grow our Downtown in order to support the nearby transit.

A couple blocks in particular were identified as questionably located in the Downtown Urban-Oriented District which allows for heights up to ten stories – these blocks run along the west side of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N between Washington and 1<sup>st</sup> St. The Colonial Warehouse is in this area and an historic resource. Staff explained the boundaries were drawn to be consistent with the Warehouse Historic District guidelines but they would do additional research as to what the historic district guidelines say for both the Warehouse district and the St. Anthony Falls district.

\*\* After clarifying the issue with CPED Preservation & Design staff, those two blocks in question are indeed located in the Warehouse Historic District and the blocks north of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street are located in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District . In the updated Warehouse design guidelines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N is the boundary between two distinct sub-areas – 19<sup>th</sup> Century Warehouse and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Warehouse. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Warehouse sub-area is located on the west side of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N and allows for heights up to 10 stories. While a building like the Colonial Warehouse is a similar height to buildings across the street, it does not exhibit the same character to structures built in the era of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Warehouse sub-area – the size and type of building is different. The St. Anthony Falls guidelines set a height standard of 4-6 stories for new construction in the “North First Street Warehouses” sub-area which runs along 1<sup>st</sup> St from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N to 8<sup>th</sup> Ave N.

## **Timeline**

Staff will be writing the plan during October. CAC members are comfortable with having two weeks to review the draft document before it becomes available for the 45-day review. Staff will make revisions based on CAC feedback and likely start the public review in the middle of November.

Once the 45-day review is complete, staff will again distill the public comments and make revisions to the document as necessary. This revised draft will be presented to the Planning Commission during a public hearing and forwarded on to the City Council for final approval – this should happen in the first part of 2010.

The City will be trying a new method of reaching additional audiences during the 45-day public review. The Wiki Pilot Project was first introduced during the open house. It will be hosted by the North Loop Neighborhood Association on a separate website but be linked from the plan’s official City page. The concept is to provide an opportunity for interested stakeholders to edit and comment on the draft plan document on a flexible schedule. City staff will compile the

comments from the Wiki Pilot Project with all other public comments and revise the plan as necessary for the approval process. CAC members are generally supportive but want to make sure participants will be able to see a history of other people's comments.

*Meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm*