

NICOLLET HOTEL BLOCK/NORTH TERMINAL
PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
October 20, 2004
AGENDA/NOTES

1. Welcome – Mayor R. T. Rybak and Council Member Lisa Goodman

Mike Christenson, CPED Economic Development Director, opened the conference at approximately 11:30 a.m. (CDT) and introduced Mayor R. T. Rybak and Council Member Lisa Goodman. The Mayor welcomed conference participants and spoke about the City's downtown and transit-oriented development strategy. He also encouraged developers to use their creativity to produce a landmark development on the Nicollet Hotel Block, which he considers a pivotal site because of its relationship to the transit system, the new Central Library and the river. Council Member Goodman traced the history of the City's involvement in the Nicollet Hotel Block and the award of federal funding for a transit facility on this site in the early 1990's. She also spoke of many years of unfilled expectations for this site and encouraged developers to consider this important development opportunity.

2. Minneapolis Transit Development Agenda – Mike Christenson, CPED Director of Economic Development

Mike Christenson described the City's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) strategy, especially relative to the Franklin Avenue and the Metrodome station areas and the Nicollet Hotel Block site. He mentioned that this conference on the Nicollet Hotel Block could be the first of many such conferences that may be held on TOD opportunities.

3. Metro Transit Partnership – Brian Lamb, General Manager of Metro Transit, and Mike Christenson

Mike Christenson spoke of the City's important partnership with the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit and acknowledged the presence of Peter Bell, Metropolitan Council Chairperson, and then introduced Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager. Mr. Lamb also spoke of this partnership with the City - one of its big customers – in creating a network of mobility in the downtown area and the part that the transit facility on the Nicollet Hotel Block site will play as a staging area for buses. He also expressed concern about the possible closing of Nicollet Mall near the site and how it would affect operation of the transit system. Mike Christenson also noted that the letter from Metro Transit, expressing in detail its concerns about the Nicollet Mall closing, is posted on the City website along with the Nicollet Hotel Block RFP materials.

4. Nicollet Hotel Block Opportunity – Leonard Parker, Architect Emeritus

Mike Christenson introduced Leonard Parker, Architect Emeritus of the City of Minneapolis. Mr. Parker spoke about the history of the City's redevelopment efforts in Gateway (North Nicollet) area that started in the early 1960's, and resulted in the demolition of 180 buildings (some with controversy) and the development of well-designed landmark structures. He mentioned the contributions of many noted architects in the design of the Reliastar office building, the 100 Washington building, the Federal Reserve/Marquette Plaza building, and the new Federal Reserve building, and expressed his conviction that the Nicollet Hotel Block is poised for another landmark development.

5. Project Issues/Project Team/Q and A – Mike Christenson

Mike Christenson opened the Q/A period by mentioning some project issues and announcements:

- The option of closing the Nicollet Mall was mentioned again, but Metro Transit's concerns about this option and the need for impact analyses if developers propose some form of closure were noted.
- The City's deadline for submission of development proposals is being extended from November 19, 2004, to December 20, 2004. An addendum will be issued shortly that formally extend this deadline.
- Architect Cesar Pelli has agreed to serve on the RFP evaluation committee/jury, subject to his schedule.
- The Metro Council and the City (through its Affirmative Action Department) has formed a partnership to develop and implement a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, which a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirement due the federal funding for the transit terminal. More details on the DBE Plan for the Nicollet Hotel Block project will follow.

Mike Christenson introduced Pat Jones (Metro Transit), Bob Morgan (City Public Works), and Cynthia Lee (CPED Multifamily Housing Manager).

- Pat Jones mentioned the possible Nicollet Hotel Block closure and reiterated Metro Transit's engineering and logistical concerns as expressed in its letter on the City's website. He also stated that the federal funding for this project includes the condition that any proposed development must demonstrate a "transit benefit."
- Bob Morgan stated that the Nicollet Mall closure option does not just mean the closing of the roadway but could also include other possibilities such as below-grade connections.
- Cynthia Lee encouraged developers to consider the site and said that CPED looked forward to receiving many creative proposals.

One question was asked from the audience regarding a recent article in the Star Tribune about the Downtown Council's position advocating the removal of buses from the Nicollet Mall.

- Brian Lamb of Metro Transit responded that the City and Metro Transit have been trying to develop a common vision for transit on the Mall for several years but are not there yet. He mentioned that the proposed Downtown Circulator plan would utilize smaller, environmentally-friendly hybrid buses.
- Council Member Goodman indicated that the removal of buses from the Nicollet Mall was not feasible. If implemented, the Downtown Circulator approach would reduce the negative impact of large buses on the Mall, but the State legislature has not been supportive of the City's efforts.

Another question was asked about the City's preference regarding the use of the right of way (ROW) on the northern most part on the Mall. Mr. Parker mentioned the need to protect views. Jack Byers of the CPED Planning Division referred to statements in the RFP about the Nicollet Hotel Block being an important, high-profile site and that the City is encouraging design/development teams to use maximum creativity. Council Member Goodman also mentioned that more connections to the site would be created if Opus proceeds with its nearby development.

Mike Christenson closed the conference by thanking attendees for their participation and interest in the Nicollet Hotel Block site, and also mentioned that all questions and answers would be handled electronically on the City's website to ensure a fair process and equal access to all project information. He indicated that all contact regarding the project must be through Jerry LePage of CPED, who is the RFP Coordinator. In the interest of fairness, Mr. Christenson also advised attendees not to have informal discussions with City staff or members of the project team after the conference on the subject of the Nicollet Hotel Block project.

The Nicollet Hotel Block pre-proposal conference concluded at approximately 12:20 p.m. (CDT).