

## Minneapolis Mississippi River Critical Area Plan Text Corrections

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#### II. C-2 Upper Harbor Terminal

**Comment:** Clarification from CPED staff

Perhaps the key policy issue for the Upper River is the status and future of the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT). This 48-acre barge terminal facility is owned by the City of Minneapolis under the management of the Department of CPED, with a private company handling operations. Several acres of the site are used to store dredge materials, basically riverbed sand, dredged by the Corps of Engineers to maintain a nine-foot deep barge navigation channel on the Upper River; ~~the area south of the docs is fully used for tree shredding and container storage.~~ In addition to dredge materials, the UHT site contains stores of ~~coal, pit pig iron, pipe,~~ aggregate and bunker sand. The remaining parts of the site contain a warehouse, grain elevator, three concrete storage domes, asphalt tanks, a railroad yard, ~~truck scales~~ and three barge docking areas.

**Deleted:** additional areas south of the barge docks are vacant

The fate of the Upper Harbor Terminal will be determined by the Minneapolis City Council. Although the terminal has generated a positive cash flow in the past, service on the original debt has caused annual deficits. The City has subsidized the operation since 1990, fluctuating between the amounts of \$100,000 to \$1 million per year. Bonds used to finance the terminal were paid in 1999. With the bonds paid, it ~~was~~ anticipated that the UHT ~~would~~ generate some revenue for the City. ~~However, between 2000 and 2004 Terminal operations generally broke even. In 2005 the operating agreement for the Terminal was amended making the operator entirely responsible for losses at the Terminal. Additionally, any net revenues that are generated will be split evenly by the City and the operator.~~ Although positive cash flow ~~will~~ provide revenue to the City, the UHT will continue to be exempt from property taxes. This lack of a tax generating use of this 48-acre riverfront site is an ongoing opportunity cost. Even if much of the site were used as non-taxed parkland, the adjacent properties would no doubt rise in value.

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Other points for consideration include:

- ~~Currently~~ eight percent of material moved through the UHT is related to business in Minneapolis; an additional ~~24~~ percent is for the metropolitan area, ~~47 percent is for the remainder of Minnesota and 21 percent of the business at the terminal is generated in other states or Canada.~~
- The UHT has a low job count – historically with employment density less than one job per acre.
- The UHT, at roughly ~~250,000~~ tons per year, generates ~~less than~~ half to two-thirds of the annual tonnage moving through the Minneapolis locks.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and ultimately the U.S. Congress, have final say over the future operation of the three locks in Minneapolis.

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- Private barge terminal users benefit from the City's operation of the UHT, since the UHT is a significant factor in justifying annual federal expenditures on the Minneapolis locks and channel maintenance operations. All of the businesses that operate private terminals provide necessary commodities and services to the City and region. For instance, Aggregate Industries provides aggregate for construction and for making cement. American Iron and Supply buys and ships recyclable metals. The availability of barging as a transport option allows these businesses to operate at a lower cost. It should be noted that many competing businesses operate without access to a commercial navigation channel.

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Barge terminals are intermodal transfer facilities, and therefore bulk materials are loaded on or off rail cars and trucks, concentrating rail and truck traffic on the west bank of the Upper River. Relocating this traffic to other facilities may cause minor regional impacts. Not all of the shift to other modes would be to trucks, and some origins and destinations may be closer to other terminals. In fact, there are over 30 other barge terminals in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, on the Mississippi in St. Paul and on the Minnesota River. It is likely that terminals in St. Paul can absorb the volumes moving through the Upper River. If barging were discontinued on the Upper River, it is likely that the pattern of truck traffic in Minneapolis would change. There may be a reduction of truck traffic in the area of the Terminal but there may also be an increase in traffic through the City from terminals in St. Paul or on the Minnesota River.

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*III. A-3. Appropriate Riverfront Land Uses*

The City will work to preserve, enhance, and create a sustainable natural and historic environment citywide. The Mississippi River is one of the major form-giving elements of the community, and City actions should enhance it. Land uses within the Critical Area should relate to their riverfront location in a manner that enhances the river environment. Land uses that may be considered river enhancing will vary depending on the location and context. The City will follow the land use guidelines of *The Minneapolis Plan* except where they may be modified or made more explicit by City-adopted small area plans; subsequent small area plans will further enhance and promote the policies necessary to maintain and protect the Critical Area. Activities which have no need for river locations or which would have detrimental effects on a high quality river environment should not be allowed to locate or expand within the Critical Area.

Appropriate riverfront land uses would include:

Upper River

- The Upper River is an area suited for new housing, industrial and office jobs, and an extended parkway system. Job-intensive light industries not located immediately on the riverfront would be appropriate in certain locations.

- Largely residential areas with parks and open space are recommended.
- Expansion of existing and development of new appropriate industrial, commercial, and other non-residential uses that serve to preserve and enhance the residential character of the district are encouraged.
- Nearly all of the land in the Urban Developed District in the City of Minneapolis is now part of the North Mississippi Regional Park or right-of-way for Interstate 94 and should continue in that use.
- Several lateral greenway connections should be considered to the river from nearby neighborhoods including:
  - 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North
  - 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
  - 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue North
  - 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
  - 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast/Plymouth Avenue
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast
  - Burlington Northern/Santa Fe bridge
  - Dowling Avenue
  - Lowry Avenue
  - West Broadway.

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*III. B-3. Views Of and From the River*

The City will strive to maintain views to and from the river by providing overlooks, river corridor parks, and view corridors between river corridor buildings. View should favor downstream vistas whenever possible for longer views of the river. To preserve views to the Downtown skyline, development on the west bank should be flanked by view corridors. Specific sites to be addressed should include:

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- The former site of the Riverview Supper Club, at the northern end of West River Road.
- The Burlington Northern Railroad bridge, proposed to become a pedestrian-bicyclist bridge.
- The proposed promenade of the housing site near 26th Avenue North.
- A new Lowry Avenue bridge.
- Bluff Street Park.
- The top of the proposed Grand Stairs at 35th Avenue North and First Street.

Comment: Rosemary Knutson/Cedar Riverside

- Dowling Avenue North at the river.
- 41st Avenue North at the river
- The proposed new parkland along the high east side of the river.
- The cottonwood grove south of East Lake Street.
- The proposed overlook at 36<sup>th</sup> Street, north of the ravine.
- The eastern edge of the 44<sup>th</sup> Street East picnic area.
- Historic views and sites.
- Father Hennepin Bluffs Park.
- Nicollet Island (from both banks).
- West River Parkway (provides views of St. Anthony Falls).
- The Stone Arch Bridge.

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*III. C-5. Erosion*

The City will work to control erosion through use of its regulatory tools including in the zoning ordinance and site plan review standards, as well as other ordinances and regulations. Compliance with all City ordinances and regulations are required for any improvements made by the MRPB.

- The MRPB should monitor whether erosion is endangering Mississippi River sand beaches planned for future recreational use. If erosion is occurring the MPRB, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should undertake erosion control measures.
- Development should be suited to the site and to the soil conditions.
- Erosion protection measures should make maximum use of natural in-place vegetation and additional planting of new native vegetation rather than the use of artificial devices on site as erosion control measures.
- Development should not cause erosion, increase the net surface runoff rate, or decrease the net rate of storm water absorption on the site, and development shall minimize runoff.
- The rate of runoff from parking lots, roads, **bridges** and trails near the bluffline will be minimized and controlled to prevent erosion. Techniques may include detaining water in a parking lot or creating a detention pond.
- Adequate erosion control measures should be maintained before, during, and after construction to ensure that gross soil loss levels do not degrade adjacent water bodies or water courses.
- The quality of surface water runoff and water infiltrated to the water table or aquifer should be improved and higher after development than it was before development of the site.
- Where feasible, trees and vegetation should be used to stabilize slopes susceptible to erosion problems.
- Artificial devices such as retaining walls should be allowed as a last resort after consideration of all other best management practices such as native vegetative or bioengineering solutions for the sake of minimizing slope and erosion problems.

Comment: Rosemary Knutson/Cedar Riverside

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*III. G-2. River-Oriented Recreation*

Recreational activities on and along the Mississippi River should capitalize on the recreational opportunities that are river-oriented and compatible with the surrounding environment. Current recreation includes biking, walking, pleasure driving, canoeing, boating, sight-seeing, historic interpretation, eating and drinking, picnicking and bird-watching.

- Active sports, especially those requiring highly delineated spaces and hard surfaces in which participants are not aware of the surrounding environment, should not be encouraged along the river's edge.
- Because of conflicts with boat traffic, river currents, and the fact that more appropriate water facilities are available, swimming, sailing, and ice skating should be actively discouraged.
- Fishing should be encouraged along the river in designated areas which do not conflict with other recreation or transportation uses and when state water quality standards permit.
- Sculling, rowing, kayaking, and canoeing are encouraged everywhere in the River except (for reasons of public safety) between Hennepin Avenue and I-35W.

Comment: Rosemary Knutson/Cedar Riverside

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*III. G-3. Continuous Parkway*

A continuous parkway corridor parallel to and along both sides of the Mississippi River should be established to provide recreational opportunities for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The parkway includes an automobile road, a pedestrian path, and a bicycle path and the railroad pedestrian bridge south of the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge.

- Although the parkway may vary in distance from the riverbank in some areas, it should provide the user with visual contact of the river and river-related activities whenever feasible.
- Where existing commercial and industrial development along the river preclude adequate space for pedestrians, bicycle, and motor routes, the different trail components can be separated and City streets may be used. If possible, the pedestrian and bicycle routes should remain at the river's edge. If public ownership of the route is not feasible, easements should be investigated.
- In the Lower Gorge, pedestrian and bicycle trails should generally follow the East and West River Parkways with looped pedestrian trails at East River Flats, East and West Sand Flats, and Riverside Park to connect the upper bluffs with the lower shoreline.
- In the Central Riverfront, pedestrian, bicycle, and auto routes along both sides of the river should be developed.

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*III. G-5. Access Routes to the River*

"Points of particular interest" or "nodes" should be developed along the river at points where adjacent neighborhoods have lateral entry to the river, to provide focal points or interesting directions along the way, and to provide parklands for recreation purposes.

- Wherever feasible, lateral access routes or greenway windows to the river should be developed in the Central and Upper River to provide adjacent neighborhoods with physical and visual access. Greenway windows should utilize existing public rights-of-way to link neighborhood parks or special features to proposed recreational nodes along the river.
- In the Upper River, a parkway should be extended along the west side from Plymouth Avenue to Webber Parkway near the Camden Bridge. This parkway may weave away from the riverfront at Mississippi Promenade (between Lowry Avenue and the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge near 26th Avenue).
- On the east side, Marshall Street may be improved as a landscaped boulevard with greatly improved sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Since Marshall Street would not be an element of the parkway system, it would continue to carry truck traffic.
- There should be continuous bicyclist and pedestrian paths along both sides of the Upper River across parkland or, in limited instances, public easements.
- Parkway access also should be added on the east bank to connect existing Main Street to East River Parkway at the University of Minnesota.
- The eight-acre Bluff Street Park, with its pedestrian and bicycle path, brings together the West River Road, University of Minnesota east and west bank and provides an overlook of the river and wildlife including eagle and falcon sightings.

Comment: Rosemary Knutson/Cedar Riverside

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*III. B-4. Site Layout and Architectural Design*

The City will seek the highest quality site layout and architecture for land along its Mississippi riverfront. When seeking and reviewing development proposals for land that the City owns along the riverfront, or when reviewing projects along the riverfront in the Critical Area to which the City is providing financial assistance, developments will be required to meet and surpass the standards for site design and architectural quality contained in the zoning code. All site designs will be reviewed and evaluated for:

- Compliance with Executive Order 79-19.
- Appropriate building location in relation to the water's edge.
- Orientation to the river.

- Fenestration to create views to the river.
- High quality building materials.
- Location of parking areas away from the river side of a site.
- Screening of all parking and open storage areas from the river.
- Landscaping that is complementary with the vegetated context of the river corridor.
- Best practices for stormwater management.

Citywide policies and regulations, as specified in its comprehensive plan, other policy plans, and its zoning code emphasize sustainable development, including pollution prevention and cleanup, “green” buildings [both construction and demolition] and “green” energy, smart growth and sustainable land use and transportation, and water conservation, stormwater management, conservation of natural areas, and landscaping. In addition to evaluating a proposed development for its environmental impact the City will also seek attractive and context-sensitive architectural design. Where development occurs on the west bank close to the riverfront, structures should step back so that sunlight penetrates to the public areas. The total site and architectural design should contribute to creating a vibrant, interesting, and well-used riverfront and be consistent with adopted small area plans. Fifty percent of the first 150 feet of a private development facing the riverfront should be open space to avoid a solid wall of buildings and to create open space and varied facades.

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III. I-1. Streets and Roads

The City and the MPRB will minimize creating roads, including parkways, that would be visible from the river surface or that would interfere with enjoyment of the river. Any road improvements will observe the policies of this plan for protection of vegetation, water quality, wildlife habitat, views to and from the river, public access to the riverfront, erosion control, and public open space. The north-south orientation of streets should be maintained, matching the existing grid dimensions on the west bank and providing access to the river.

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