

Parcel E Liner Pre-Proposal Meeting Questions and Answers – March 16, 2010

**1. Talk more about the process for dealing with the archaeological foundations discovered on the site during the soil remediation work.**

Limestone foundations were discovered on the Liner, primarily at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South and Chicago Avenue. It is believed that some of the foundations were associated with the former grain elevator on the site. The soil report posted on the RFP website contains an 11X17 drawing identifying the foundations. The square foundation blocks are apparently about three to five feet below the current grade and are each about eight feet by eight feet by three feet deep.

The City is speaking with the State Archaeologist and State Historic Preservation Office Archaeologist to assess the necessary steps to be taken under the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (Minn. Stat. 138.40). It is likely that preliminary site plans will need to be submitted to the State and are typically reviewed within 30 days.

Various ways that archaeological findings in the Mill District area have been handled range from: a) an official archaeological dig followed by an official publication prepared; b) monitoring additional site excavation work to document any discoveries; c) including an interpretive feature into the project design. The City does not expect (but cannot guarantee against) a requirement that the foundations remain undisturbed, but would be open to a proposal that retained and interpreted some of the blocks as part of a plaza at the corner of Second and Chicago.

**2. Talk more about the environmental conditions of the site.**

The City purchased this site from Hennepin County who completed certain soil remediation on the site. A copy of the Final Interim Response Action Implementation Report is available in paper copy form that can be reviewed at City offices and is also posted on the City website with the RFP. The frontage along Washington Avenue over to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South still contains some buried ash that will need to be handled appropriately if it is excavated from the site. If the ash materials remain on site, a restrictive covenant may be required. The quantity and location are identified in the report.

The City is working with Hennepin County to obtain a No Action Letter from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the remediation work already done on the site along Chicago Avenue S.

**3. Talk about the service alley on the site along the Washington Avenue side of the ramp.**

There is a 15 foot wide access easement and a 10 foot wide no-build area that must remain clear of any building to allow for snow removal, ramp maintenance, ventilation, etc. The no-build area adjacent to the ramp runs from the ground to the sky, but immediately west of the ramp corner, at the corner of Chicago and Washington, a building may be constructed over the easement after allowing for vehicle access clearance. A copy of the Declaration of Easements is posted on the City website with the RFP.

Building construction on the Chicago side may abut the ramp building subject to adhering to code construction requirements.

**4. How is snow removal coordinated?**

Currently Public Works conducts snow removal during the evenings; however, they typically work with the community and can shift hours for convenience.

**5. Describe more the vision for retail at the corner of Washington Avenue and Chicago Avenue.**

The most important elements that relate to this vision were excerpted from the Historic Mills District Master Plan Update and were included in the RFP. The plan identified a hierarchy of corners for retail uses and the Washington Avenue South and Chicago Avenue South corner ranks top for this plan.

The City will look for an active use at this corner. There is some flexibility as to the type of activity (retail, restaurant, museum, etc.) but the corner must include a primary entrance and use accessible to the public.

**6. Talk about the parking situation.**

The RFP is specific in allowing no below-grade parking on-site for commercial or retail development. The public parking ramp on the block, as well as other ramps and surface lots in the area, have considerable capacity. To retain the tax exemption on the bonds issued to finance construction of the ramp on the block, the City cannot convey priority rights or preferential benefits to nongovernmental users. But the regulations generally allow private use of up to 10% of the overall capacity of the ramp (975 spaces) or 97 spaces. Public Works will work with the selected developer to accommodate any parking needs of the development via their various parking programming options.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to identify their parking needs in their proposal.

**7. Describe the neighborhood review process.**

Staff has presented the RFP to the neighborhood group for this area, the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association. Staff will present the selected proposal to this group and include their comments with the Council Report for the proposal selection. In addition, a public hearing for the land sale will be included as part of the subsequent Council Report approving the redevelopment contract terms.

Citizen participation and input regarding the project design is included in the planning approval process.

Staff could not recall any additional neighborhood concerns regarding this site not already identified and addressed by the Historic Mills District Master Plan Update.

**8. What is the role of the Heritage Preservation Commission on this project?**

This site is not designated or located in a designated historic district and is thus not subject to HPC approval. A demolition permit does require HPC approval. However, the subject site is currently vacant and will not require a demolition permit.

**9. Talk about the setback requirement along Washington Avenue South.**

A minimal setback of 1-2 feet may be necessary to adhere to the Washington Avenue streetscape requirements attached to the RFP.