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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Brian Schaffer, Senior City Planner 612.673.2670
DATE: November 30, 2010
RE: St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines

Background

The existing St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines were adopted by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission in 1980. In the three decades since the existing design guidelines were adopted, the district has seen dramatic change. Access to and interaction with the falls and the river has evolved, infrastructure has been added, project plans have been developed and realized, and the understanding and knowledge of the historic resources in the district have increased. The field of preservation has also evolved from a disciplinary perspective. It is no longer sufficient to simply save and re-use a specific collection of historic buildings or properties. In order to create and sustain economically successful places, it has become critical to evaluate and carefully consider how entire environments function as a diverse, but unified cultural landscape. Guidance for preservation and development in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District has been accomplished through documents approved for specific uses, projects, or sub-areas, but it has been piecemeal. After thirty years, a comprehensive re-evaluation and a more finely grained approach to design guidelines is due.

In March of 2010 the City of Minneapolis received a grant from the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board to develop new design guidelines for the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. CPED-Planning Preservation & Design staff developed a request for proposals (RFP) that we intend to release in December 2010. The project will start in late winter 2011 and will be completed in the fall of 2011, when the new design guidelines are adopted by the Minneapolis HPC.

CPED staff is interested in obtaining feedback from the HPC on the project requirements and deliverables prior to the release of the RFP. Below are the draft project requirements and deliverables for the project.

Project Requirements

The significance of the St. Anthony Falls Historic district is layered in the evolution of the use of the falls. The natural beauty of the falls attracted tourists and residents, the water and eventual electric power attracted industry and further stimulated development. Plans such as the St. Anthony Falls Interpretive Plan, created by the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, formally establish a vision for the future of the area. It is important to understand and incorporate the visions for the area into how design guidelines can further steward this collection of resources.

The existing design guidelines for the historic district provide a set of architectural standards for new building construction based on a series of discreet sub-districts. The existing document was not crafted in a time when it was considered necessary to address some of the basic and key features of the district: the falls, the river, industrial infrastructure, archaeology and landscape features.

The update to the design guidelines should take a holistic approach toward the many features that make up the essential character of the district – one that balances preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation with the opportunity that comes from integrating new infrastructure, new uses, higher densities, new buildings, and new landscapes. New design guidelines need to address the entire cultural landscape of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District to steward the entire collection of resources into the Twenty-First Century. The new guidelines will include guidance on the following:

- Archaeological sites and sites of specific cultural/historical significance
- Existing and new infrastructure; sites of specific engineering and transportation significance
- Natural features and open space
- Existing buildings and the construction of new buildings; sites of specific architectural significance

1 Scope of Services

1.1 Evaluation of Baseline Conditions

Prior to the beginning of the project CPED will be developing a resources inventory of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. This resource evaluation will synthesize previous research conducted for the district, information from the overlapping Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District, and historic plat and Sanborn maps with field investigation to verify locations and conditions of resources and landscape features within the district.

The consultant will join CPED in an interagency evaluation of the historic resources and the synthesized analysis resulting from work outlined above. This process is paramount in developing a complete understanding of the resources within the district creating a foundation for the design guidelines.

1.2 Identification of Historically Significant View Sheds and Corridors

In 2008, an intercept survey was taken by Cincinnatus; a consulting team developing the St. Anthony Falls Interpretive Plan for the St. Anthony Falls Heritage. The survey was taken of the people visiting the St. Anthony Falls area. The survey asked visitors what the most important attribute of the riverfront was. The largest response was scenic views. A perennial discussion that occurs when alterations are proposed in the district is the impact of the alteration to the historic view sheds and corridors. The identification of significant historical view sheds and historical corridors will help inform future conversations about alterations and new development in the district.

1.3 Vision and Guiding Principles

The consultant will lead the development of a Vision and Guiding Principles for the St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines. The development of the vision and

guiding principles shall be undertaken with input from the technical advisory group convened for the project. The vision element will capture the essence of the community's overarching objective with respect to stewarding the St. Anthony Falls Historic District into the 21st Century. The guiding principles will create the context for the individual design guidelines. The guiding principles will provide further direction by connecting the overarching vision for the district and the guidelines to the specific individual design guidance offered.

1.4 Design Guideline Development

- *Evaluation of existing St. Anthony Falls Design Guidelines.* A review of the guidelines identifying strengths and weaknesses.

- *Establish preferred treatment for the following four thematic groups and proposed guideline language for each of the following:*
 - *Archaeological sites and sites of specific cultural and historic significance*
The district is rich in these resources. Guidance should focus on how to preserve, interpret, and incorporate these known (and potentially unknown) resources into telling the story of the district and the falls. While the district's historic context does not specifically address sites and features with cultural significance to indigenous populations, the guidelines shall provide guidance that respects the cultural significance of the features within the district that are significant to the indigenous populations.

 - *Existing and new structures and infrastructure*
A substantial number of the resources in the district are man made structures created for transportation and power. The resources include but are not limited to the dam, bridges, log sluices, canals, and rail corridors. Guidance shall be created for existing contributing and non-contributing resources as well as new structures and infrastructure. The potential reuse of existing structures and infrastructure for eco-friendly, green energy and other sustainable uses will also be considered.

 - *Natural features and open space*
The district contains several historic natural features as well dedicated open space. Open space and in particular parks may not have been paramount features of district during its period of significance, but they are integral to the planning efforts to steward district into the 21st Century. The guidelines should recognize the continued evolution of the district and provide direction on how to preserve significant resources, while allowing for new uses.

 - *Existing and new buildings*
The district as it stands currently consists of a diverse collection of buildings, including several non-contributing buildings constructed outside the period of significance. Guidelines shall address the rehabilitation of existing contributing and non-contributing resources as well as well as the construction of new buildings. Guidelines shall consider the use of green energy and other sustainability efforts in the rehabilitation of existing buildings.

1.5 Public Engagement, Communication and Outreach

The St. Anthony Falls Historic District is rich in stakeholders that range from in the government entities, to non-profit advocacy groups, to passionate individuals. It is important to create meeting structure to effectively and efficiently involve the community in the process of developing design guidelines. To facilitate this CPED proposes a three tiered approach using the structure of technical advisory group, a community advisory group, and public meetings. CPED will coordinate the meetings for these groups.

- **Technical Advisory Group:** The role of the technical advisory group is to provide advice and specific technical review to CPED and the hired consultant in the development of the guidelines. The group will consist of staff from various City departments and outside preservation, and design professionals. This will be a working group and the group should be used as a resource to discuss concepts and specific technical issues.
- **Community Advisory Group:** The community advisory group will consist of representatives of stakeholder agencies and groups such as neighborhood organizations. The role of this group is to provide input on proposed concepts for inclusion in the guidelines.
- **Public Meetings:** The public meetings will be held at key input and decision points in the project.

In addition to the advisory groups and community meetings, a project webpage will be created to provide updates and schedules for the project as well as post documents and presentations. Additional ideas for outreach tools and techniques are welcomed.

2 Final Products

2.1 Design Guideline Document

While the design guidelines are typically a regulatory tool used to evaluate alterations in the district, the St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines will be much more. The document should include narratives and explanations that explain the intent of the guidelines. The document needs to set the context that will provide clarity in the interpretations of the specific guidance it offers. It should include narratives that explain the purpose of the guidance being offered and how the guidance affects the specific individual resources of the district and the district as a whole.

Much like in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines the specific guidance offered in the document should be organized in a hierarchical or tiered format. This organization is intended to provide clarity on what guidance is required and what guidance is meant to provide additional information. Specific guidance should be divided into Requirement, Advisory, and Other Considerations. Guidelines in the *Requirement* group must be met. They explain what should or should not be done. Guidelines in the *Advisory* group are just that, advisory. They are included to educate the user of the guidelines about what is encouraged or would be generally appropriate. Guidelines in the *Other*

Considerations group provide a process to follow if the guidelines in the Requirement group cannot be met. These guidelines suggest that under specific circumstances variances from the required guidelines will be considered.

2.2 Design Guideline Process Document

A companion document shall be developed in addition to the design guidelines. This document will include all the information (presentations, handouts, meeting notes) from the guideline development process. This document is an important resource that will illustrate the discussion and background research that went into the design guidelines. This memorializing of the process will help future users for the design guidelines understand the final guideline document better.