

**Community Planning & Economic Development
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 29, 2011
RE: Update to the St. Anthony Falls Design Guidelines: Review of First Draft

BACKGROUND AND IMPETUS FOR NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES

The existing St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines were adopted by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission in 1980. In the three decades since they 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 archaeology within the district has 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 quickly becoming overdue.

The existing design guidelines for the historic district provide a set of architectural standards for new building construction based on a series of discrete sub-districts. The existing document was not crafted in a time when it was considered necessary to address some of the basic and key cultural landscape features of the district especially the river and the falls. The existing design guidelines document does not address the interconnected layers of transportation that weave through the district – on land and in the water. Most importantly, when the original historic district guidelines document was written and adopted, key documents that outlined the vision for the central riverfront sometimes treated the goal for creating a network of open space along the river as something mutually exclusive from the goal of preserving the historic, industrial fabric at the heart of the city.

TIMELINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

- **Develop strategy for design guidelines:** The strategy for the design guidelines was completed in April and May of 2011 and included public input as well as input from the Heritage Preservation

Commission (HPC) and the technical and community advisory groups. The result of this work was a Strategy Paper that outlined the strategy to address the development of the design guidelines. The Strategy Paper was shared with the HPC in May 2011.

- **Review of first draft:** The first draft will be formally reviewed by the HPC and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The draft will not be reviewed in a dedicated public meeting. However, comments from the public on the guidelines will be accepted and can be provided to the City's project manager, Brian Schaffer.
Estimated Completion: December 2011
- **Development of second draft:** based on the feedback from the HPC, TAG and CPED revisions to the design guidelines document will be made.
Estimated Completion: February 2012
- **Review of second draft:** The second draft will be reviewed in February and March 2012. It will be reviewed by the technical and community advisory groups. A public meeting will be held to review and discuss this draft of the design guidelines.
Estimated Completion: March 2012
- **Development of draft for SHPO review and HPC review and approval:** A revised draft will be developed that considers the input during the review of the second draft of the design guidelines. This new draft will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for their review and then the HPC for their review and adoption.
Estimated Completion: May 2012
- **Development of final draft based on HPC approval.** The final design guidelines document will be completed following the SHPO and HPC review and adoption.
Estimated Completion: July 2012

THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

There are several goals for the new design guidelines. Two of these goals are a holistic approach to the new design guidelines and that the new guidelines need to serve a wide audience.

Holistic Approach

It is important that the guidelines take a holistic approach toward the many features that make up the essential character of the district; they need to address the entire cultural landscape of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. To that end, the draft guidelines include guidance on archaeology, the public realm – including historic infrastructure, landscape and streetscape design, building rehabilitation, connectivity, public art, and new infill buildings.

In the original guidelines the organizational concept for the document was based on sub-districts. These sub-districts were based on the geographic patterns, mainly architectural development patterns, of the district as recognized at the time. This organization concept is retained in the new draft of the design guideline. However, the geographies of these areas have been refined and

changed to recognize the robust and interconnected development patterns of the district; in this new draft of the guidelines document these geographies are called “Character Areas”. In the original guidelines, this geography was used to organize all of the guidance offered in the document. To reduce overlap, the draft guidelines are organized with general guidance on all resource types from archaeology to streetscape and landscape design to existing and new buildings. This guidance is then further augmented and refined later in the document in the specific Character Area sections. It is the intent of this organization to recognize both the discreteness and interconnectedness of the Character Areas within the district.

Serve a Wide Audience

Another goal for the update to guidelines is to serve and be accessible to a wide audience including property owners, residents, architects, engineers, contractors and City staff. To serve this audience, the guidelines include basic information about the history of the district and the tenants of preservation that can be easily used by all who are interested in understanding the design and history of the district and the interconnectedness of its features. To further serve this goal, each guideline contains a series of components: background information, policy and intent statements, the design guideline and additional information on how or how not comply with guideline. The purpose of this is to provide more robust information to users of the guidelines. In addition, because the guidelines are intended to serve an educational role as well as a regulatory role, the language of the guidelines sometimes appears more conversational, often written more in the affirmative, than in typical zoning standards.

FEEDBACK ON FIRST DRAFT OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

CPED is seeking feedback from the Heritage Preservation Commission on this first draft of the design guidelines. One hour is scheduled to discuss this draft at the November 29, 2011 HPC meeting. This is a time certain item with discussion scheduled from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. The project consultant, Winter & Company, will be joining the discussion via conference call. This portion of the HPC meeting will be held in room 319 of City Hall to better accommodate the discussion and conference call. The discussion is open to the public; however, public testimony will not be taken at this time.

To use this time efficiently and effectively CPED will not be presenting the design guidelines or going through the document section by section in the actual meeting. CPED asks that the commissioners come to the meeting prepared to discuss and share comments. Written comments from the commissioners will also be accepted into the record at the November 29, 2011 HPC meeting.

The following are suggested topics to organize the discussion on November 29, 2011:

General Guideline Format:

- Is the structure of the document understandable and accessible? *Why or Why Not?*
- Do both the tone and the language in individual guidelines work? *Why or Why Not?*
- Do you feel you can use the document and guidelines to make sound legal decisions in your role as the HPC? *Why or Why Not?*

Specific Guideline Content:

What works? Why?

What needs to be refined? Why?

What needs to be added? Why?

What needs to be removed? Why?

- Archaeology
- Public Realm
- General Guidelines
- New Infill Guidelines
- Character Areas
- Building Rehabilitation

The first draft of the design guidelines can be found on the project webpage:

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/St_Anthony_Falls_Historic_District_Design_Guidelines.asp