APPENDIX A

Upper Harbor Terminal
PLANNING FRAMEWORK

SEEKING A DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

In 2013 MPRB concluded the majority of the ATF Regional Park planning process with a public presentation and opening of a 45 day comment period. At that time, the boundary for the regional park within the City owned Upper Harbor Terminal property was undetermined. In 2015, the Army Corps of Engineers closed the St. Anthony Falls lock and ended barge traffic to the upper river and redevelopment planning for the Upper Harbor Terminal entered a new phase.

Because the City and MPRB would split the Upper Harbor Terminal between park and private development, it was critical to understand the nature of the private development. MPRB was seeking adequate width for shoreline restoration, circulation routes, and park features, while the City sought to retain adequate width to support a wide range of development options. With much of the site approximately 500’ wide, the land use and required width for development was a critical question for both agencies. After discussions with developers in 2014, there were many questions about the viability of private development, particularly housing and mixed use. In order to gain insight into the real estate and development market, the City and MPRB agreed to seek a master developer to join the planning process. The two agencies signed an agreement to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and conduct a competitive process, informed by community engagement, to find a developer.

In late 2015, staff initiated the upcoming planning process by raising awareness among community members and asking for input that would help inform the RFQ. In August 2016, the team issued the RFQ and received one submission from United Properties, THOR Companies (Thor), and First Avenue Productions (First Avenue). The submission included an initial vision for the Upper Harbor Terminal and a list of consultants and partners for staff and community members to include in their assessment. With near unanimous approval of the developers by community members, the City, MPRB, and developers signed a three-way exclusive rights agreement and the next stage of planning began.
EARLY UPPER HARBOR TERMINAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MPRB concluded general engagement for the ATF Regional Park plan in 2013. In their comments during the 45 day review period, community members articulated concerns about maintaining adequate park space at the Upper Harbor Terminal. During 2014, the City conducted a technical study examining development options and parcel sizes on the terminal property. With the increased understanding of the site and the closing of the lock, the City and MPRB collaborated on a new stage of engagement beginning the fall of 2015.

Staff had four key goals during the engagement work prior to issuing the RFQ for a master developer. The first was to gain input from community members that would help shape the RFQ, such as the preferred qualifications and experience of potential developers. Staff sought to use this time to raise awareness of the project and gain general understanding of the vision community members had for the Upper Harbor Terminal. In addition, staff solicited input to shape a community engagement plan to guide the process once a developer joined the team. The City and MPRB reached out to neighborhood and other community organizations, attended events and meetings, and held public forums while forming the RFQ. The Minneapolis Parks Foundation (MPF), the non-profit philanthropic partner to MPRB, assisted with engagement by hiring Juxtaposition Arts, an organization in North Minneapolis that teach youth skills in arts, communication, and engagement. During this time, staff showed Upper Harbor Terminal materials at eight community events, three meetings hosted by other organizations, two focus group sessions, and held three public meetings, some including tours of the site. The City and MPRB staff also had many one-on-one discussions with community leaders and members. At the final public meeting, staff compiled comments received into nine Characteristics of Success summarized below, and outlined several ways in which the engagement information influenced the RFQ. These Characteristics were highlighted in the RFQ and were important to the development team in guiding their planning.

Characteristics of Success

- Achieves equitable development and helps address disparities
- Includes a first-class regional park
- Connects into the fabric of the community
- Offers a significant riverfront-oriented destination
- Provides high quality, community-benefitting private development
- Reflects the history of the site
- Incorporates high quality design
- Showcases “green” sustainable approaches and features
- Feels unique to this specific place
After receiving one submission from the developers, staff held an open house in November 2016 to show the submission and invite community members to meet the developers. Between an online survey and a heavily attended open house approximately 230 community members provided feedback. While participants questioned some of the initial submission ideas, nearly 90% of respondents wanted the City and MPRB to select the developers and move into a planning and design process.

ENGAGEMENT TO CREATE A CONCEPT

The City and MPRB continued to conduct outreach to raise awareness of the upcoming planning project. In the spring of 2017 the team, now including the developers and their consultants, held an average of two public meetings a month to analyze the site and initial ideas. The team also determined that the remote nature of the Upper Harbor Terminal made engagement difficult, as most people were unfamiliar with the site. During the summer and fall of 2017, the team focused on bringing as many people to the site as possible, through community bike rides, kayak tours, bus tours, and walking tours. Several community organizations assisted the team with engagement, by hosting meetings and organizing tours. The team also attended many events and meetings held by existing organizations, hired community groups to co-host cooking events and other gatherings, posted an online survey which had 26 participants, knocked on doors throughout the McKinley Neighborhood, and sent postcards or left flyers for occupants not at home. By the fall of 2017, staff felt that community members were ready to see some design options to focus the conversation on specific possibilities at the Upper Harbor Terminal.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR PARKS

Community members consistently ranked trails, picnic areas, gathering spaces, views and access to the river, food, and live music as top attractions that the Upper Harbor Terminal could provide. Other top requests included popular neighborhood park amenities such as playgrounds, skateboarding, courts sports, field sports, and urban agriculture. Participants expressed a clear desire for a park that was unique to the Upper Harbor Terminal and took full advantage of the river location, and possibly made use of the industrial relics.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLANNING

After significant site analysis and conducting various studies, the team released a draft concept for public review in the summer of 2018. MPRB’s goal was to identify a park boundary that would allow implementation of most of the community requests for park space, but also to accommodate adjacent development that would help activate the park areas and enhance security. While the concept purposely showed limited park features, such as parkway and trail circulation, staff listed the types of amenities that the park areas could support based on the space provided.

The City and MPRB led an engagement process to review the draft concept that included five public meetings, three staff open hours sessions, attendance at several community led meetings, limited doorknocking in the McKinley Neighborhood, and an online survey with 259 participants.
PARK BOUNDARY

Community members provided mixed feedback on the draft concept; many people requested more park and public space. Others, however, prioritized employment and housing opportunities. Staff also heard mixed input on having private development between the parkway and the river. Some community members felt that having private development closer to the river created a more exciting riverfront as long as the development had public amenities. Others were concerned that such a step felt like privatization of a riverfront that should always feel public. MPRB worked with the City and developers to revise the proposed park boundary as shown in Figure A.1. The revised park boundary increased the total amount of MPRB-owned parkland by 25%.

Figure A.1  Regional Park Boundary at Upper Harbor Terminal
MPRB will initiate a process to create conceptual designs for the park during the next stage of planning. The areas shown above are generally designed to accommodate the following types of uses:

**The linear riverfront park area (#3, #7, & #8 on Figure A.1) will accommodate:**
- A parkway, and bicycle / pedestrian circulation with routes separated by buffers if need be
- Shoreline restoration at preferred slopes (around 3 or 4:1 typically) except for where the existing riverwall will largely be maintained
- Variation in width which allows for seating, viewing, and other recreational nodes
- Signage, art, and other interpretive and educational elements

**The pedestrian connection from the end of Dowling Avenue to the river (#1 on Figure A.1) can provide:**
- An immediate and direct link from the neighborhood to the river
- An area with good service access and visibility for pop up attractions such as markets, food trucks, and events
- Park amenities such as fountains/water play and gardens

**The 2.3 acre park south of the existing domes (#6 on Figure A.1) has the largest space for:**
- Larger outdoor amenities such as athletics or an event space
- Possible public park building
- Group picnicking and gathering areas
- Urban agriculture and educational gardens
- Amenities such as childrens play or youth recreation such as skateboard routes

**The park node near 35th Street (#9 on Figure A.1) is small but will accommodate uses such as:**
- A gathering plaza, picnicking, and play areas

**At the south end of the site, the expanded park area allows for:**
- Riverfront beach area
- Water access with possible parking and support facilities

All areas can incorporate site specific practices such as stormwater management and habitat restoration.

**PARK CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT**

Following approval of the park boundary, MRPB will begin the engagement and design process specifically to determine the overall park concept, the first phase of improvements, and a general plan for additional phases of work.
CITY CONCEPT PLAN AND PRIVATE REDEVELOPMENT

The concept plan being considered by the City includes the following types of private redevelopment (see Figure A.2):

- An outdoor music performance venue just south of Dowling Ave along the river
- A hospitality mixed-use building just north of Dowling Ave along the river
- A residential mixed-use complex on the southeast corner of Dowling and Washington Avenues with both market-rate and affordable units
- An office mixed-use building on the southwest corner of Dowling and Washington Avenues
- An innovative mixed-use building dubbed “The Hub” along the river at about 36th Ave N
- Parking to support the development.

Development of the remaining parcels would occur at a later phase of implementation; however, staff and the development team will further explore potential concepts in the next phase of planning.

CONCEPT PLAN OVERVIEW

1. DOWLING PLAZA
2. DOWLING AVE GREENING
3. BOARDWALK AND POTENTIAL WATER ACCESS
4. OUTDOOR MUSIC PERFORMANCE VENUE
5. VENUE LAWN / PUBLIC ACCESS
6. RELICS PARK
7. THE HUB
8. WATERFRONT PARK
9. BEACH
10. PARK
11. PARKWAY
12. PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT
13. FUTURE PHASE(S) DEVELOPMENT

Figure A.2 City of Minneapolis Upper Harbor Terminal Concept
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