

Ford Site Topics for Discussion by Ford Task Force at January 11, 2016 meeting

Topic 1 – Stormwater

Ford Task Force Principles

(related to topic; from 2007 Phase I Ford Site Redevelopment Scenarios report)

- Redevelop the site to be integrated with the physical neighborhood and fabric of the community
- Redevelop the Site to exhibit a high level of compatibility with the surrounding natural communities, retaining the distinct character of the Mississippi River Corridor and providing additional natural, active and passive open space to support both natural systems and residents' recreational needs.
- Redevelopment of the Ford Site shall exhibit the highest examples of environmental sustainability, Becoming a local, state, national, and global model for sustainable planning, design, and day-to-day living.

City of Saint Paul Principles

(framed to guide 2014-2015 public meetings)

- Regional, national, and global model for sustainable planning, design, and day-to-day living that protects our air, water and natural resources for future generations
- Best technologies in infrastructure and buildings to save money, increase efficiency, and reduce impacts on the environment
- Strong connections to the Mississippi River, within the site, and to the surrounding neighborhood.

Related Studies / Analysis

Stormwater Management Strategy (2015 - ongoing)

- Estimated land required for stormwater treatment at the Ford site ranges from 8 acres to 10 acres
- Estimated costs, benefits, and impacts of “standard” stormwater treatment vs. a centralized, regional system
- ‘Sustainable Return on Investment’ will monetize social and environmental costs/benefits
- The centralized system is cost neutral or slightly less expensive to build than a parcel-based system

Hidden Falls Water Resource Dev. Feasibility Study (2014)

- Evaluated potential enhancements to Hidden Falls Regional Park
- Recommended improved access to top of the falls, reduced peak flows to prevent erosion demand and restoration costs, and removal of some of the concrete walls and lining

Sustainable Stormwater Feasibility Report for the Ford Plant Site (2010)

- Explored feasibility of low-impact stormwater management on site
- Based on city goals to reduce runoff volume by 90% or provide corresponding water quality benefit
- Soil correction likely necessary due to high clay content on site, shallow bedrock, and high groundwater in some areas

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- Identifies areas on site where infiltration will be most efficient and cost-effective
- Recognized potential for recreational, educational, aesthetic, and ecological benefits
- Introduces possibility of treating 300 acres of stormwater external to site boundary
- Identifies potential stormwater BMPs

Roadmap to Sustainability (2010)

- Performance standards for runoff volume from the site (reduce by 90%)
- Performance standards for pollutant loads to Mississippi
- Sets “ultimate” goal as zero discharge of untreated stormwater from the site
- Recommends redirecting some flow from areas adjacent to the Ford site away from untreated storm sewers and into the site’s comprehensive system

Public Input from 2015

- “Advocate for above standard” [stormwater management]
- Preserve land and feature water as amenity so we can “have cake and eat it too”
- Overwhelming support for recreating stream (Hidden Falls) flow and for 9 acres of stormwater treatment if it does not compete with parkland dedication
- “Everything [streets, parking, bikes] revolves around to the creek”
- General desire to trade buildable land for great stormwater because you “can’t tear down buildings later”
- “9 acres [of stormwater features] will require hard negotiations with the developer. Stand your ground, this will be important”

Link to complete input from public meeting held June 23, 2015:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View2/79725.pdf>

PED Staff Perspective as of Jan. 6, 2016, for discussion purposes at January 11 Task Force meeting

- A centralized stormwater treatment system provides a strong net benefit to the redeveloped Ford site, relative to a business-as-usual system; it provides a strong visual and open space amenity to the site which increases the economic value of adjacent land uses and livability of the site as a whole, and it achieves higher levels of environmental performance.
- A centralized system would allow site developers to do a simple hook up and pay a connection fee, instead of dedicating part of their land and paying the expense for parcel-based treatment system.
- A centralized system will require annual maintenance that is more expensive than an underground system, similar to the maintenance of other vegetative and open space features on the site. Funding for annual maintenance will need to be determined.
- The cost of a centralized system comes largely in the first years of development, an investment which must be financed and then paid off through stormwater connection fees as parcels develop. A special financing strategy would have to be identified.

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Topic 2 – Parks, Open Space, and Vegetation

Ford Task Force Principles

(related to topic; from 2007 Phase I Ford Site Redevelopment Scenarios report)

- Redevelop the site to be integrated with the physical neighborhood and fabric of the community
- Provide opportunities for public art and cultural amenities, and some which reflect the heritage of Ford and the Highland neighborhood.
- Redevelop the Site to exhibit a high level of compatibility with the surrounding natural communities, retaining the distinct character of the Mississippi River Corridor and providing additional natural, active and passive open space to support both natural systems and residents' recreational needs.
- Re-establish an urban tree canopy and green space to the site with street trees, and private and public green spaces, with an emphasis on integrating native plant materials.

City of Saint Paul Principles

(framed to guide 2014-2015 public meetings)

- Significant greenery, public art, and cultural activities to create an attractive and vibrant community.
- Natural spaces and active places for people to play, relax and interact, including the Ford Little League Fields.
- Design elements and public amenities that reflect the heritage of Ford Motor Company and the workers who invested themselves at the site for nearly a century.
- Strong connections to the Mississippi River, within the site, and to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Interconnected system of streets, bikeways, and walkways for transport and recreation that is safe and accessible for people of various ages and abilities, and that weaves into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood

Related Studies / Analysis

Hidden Falls Water Resource Dev. Feasibility Study (2014)

- Evaluated potential enhancements to Hidden Falls Regional Park
- Recommended improved access to top of the falls, reduced peak flows to prevent erosion demand and restoration costs, and removal of some of the concrete walls and lining

Great River Passage Plan (2013)

- Calls for increasing programming, improving park access and facilities in HFRP
- Calls for improved connections along MRB above to enhance experience at top of bluff
- Calls for a green connection on the Ford site to treat stormwater and connect to HFRP
- Calls for a bridge to cross ravine to expose stream and allow pedestrian passage between the Ford site and HFRP

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Ford Open Space Guidelines (2011)

- Utilize “programmatic, design and performance criteria for future open space”
- Provide pedestrian and surface water connection between Ford and Hidden Falls
- Retain ball fields
- Expand natural areas on bluff, if possible
- Use open space to create an inter-connected greenway system
- Explore a range of funding sources to advance open space at the site; some are recommended

Roadmap to Sustainability (2010)

- Use minimum thresholds for plant and animal diversity
- Provide comprehensive network of ADA accessible trails throughout the site connecting major uses and public spaces
- Pursue programmed sports fields and a large public gathering space, as well as indoor public spaces for community use
- Include community garden(s) and on-site food production/greenhouse space

Public Input from 2015

- Strong support for civic square, some expressing importance to connect it to existing Highland Village
- Top priorities were: a creek feature with a connection to Hidden Falls; gathering space; habitat/natural space; and accessibility for all ages and abilities
- Make efficient use of recreation space by making it multi-purpose and coordinate with neighboring athletic facilities and schools
- Support for designing “urban” public spaces in north and more “natural” public spaces in the south

Link to complete input from public meeting held February 26, 2015:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View2/77788.pdf>

PED Staff Perspective as of Jan. 6, 2016, for discussion purposes at January 11 Task Force meeting

- Linked open space network and well-designed public spaces are vital to site livability and economic value. A variety of spaces and design will provide the greatest interest and amenity.
- Well-designed streets that incorporate vegetation and a central stormwater treatment system can enhance the open space network.
- Strong trend among other recent developments nationally to include significant, well-connected open spaces for recreation, and to drive investment, increase water quality, improve aesthetics, etc.
- Potential tension between space for green (parks, stormwater, ballfields) and developable land. There is a tradeoff between density of developable acres and amount of open space; less dense development will require more developed acres to achieve an economically viable; the same level of density can be low-slung and spread out, or concentrated densely with more open space between.

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- The Little League Fields serve an important need in the community, providing services to over 1000 kids per year. The cost and land used for them will need to be compensated for with additional private development, private funding, and/or public subsidy.
- Park land is different than land for storm water treatment, even if the two are adjacent and designed to be complementary.
- Future connection to move people between the site and Hidden Falls Regional Park is a high priority clearly articulated by the public, the Great River Passage Plan and many stakeholders.
- Detailed, high quality design for the public spaces and places should be a priority in site design and engineering with a master developer.

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Topic 3 – Jobs

Ford Task Force Principles

(related to topic; from 2007 Phase I Ford Site Redevelopment Scenarios report)

- Provide a strong and innovative business base with an emphasis on family sustaining jobs.
- Retain opportunities for continuing education, training and other educational opportunities on the site.
- The proposed mix of land uses within the site shall respect and complement existing abutting uses to provide an extension of the existing Highland neighborhood.

City of Saint Paul Principles

(framed to guide 2014-2015 public meetings)

- Vibrant place to live, work, and recreate for all people.
- Significant increase in the tax base that strengthens surrounding property values.
- Range of business and employment opportunities with an emphasis on family supporting jobs.
- Increased regional significance and economic value.

Related Studies / Analysis

Jobs Strategy Report (2015 – Ongoing)

- Industries and business types most compatible are health and medical, R&D, Custom, light manufacturing, institutional, office
- Potential legislative and financial strategies include establishing a TIF district to help finance infrastructure, maximizing tax paying businesses, and being strategic and conservative if considering financial incentives
- Identifies lead agencies for activities related to job/business development

Green Manufacturing Potential for the Ford Site (2009)

- Site not strongly positioned for wholesale industrial reuse, particularly due to lack of interstate access
- Potential opportunity for smaller scale industries

Phase I Summary Report/Colliers Market Study (2007)

- Mix of uses is feasible and desirable [leads to variety in job types]
- Good demand for neighborhood retail, up to 300,000 square feet (7 acres)
- Modest corporate campus potential, strong institutional campus potential
- Lack of good transportation limits trucking and transportation intensive uses

Ford Site Topics for Discussion by Ford Task Force at January 11, 2016 meeting

Public Input

- Important to be able to live very near to where you work, need jobs that pay more than \$15/hr
- Diversity of job types to allow advancement opportunities within the neighborhood
- Small-scale production and processing is okay, if limited in scale and visual impact
- High interest in new employment models: co-op spaces, incubator spaces, maker zones
- Incentivize small businesses

Link to complete public input from meeting on July 22, 2015:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View2/80362.pdf>

PED Staff Perspective as of Jan. 6, 2016, for discussion purposes at January 11 Task Force meeting

- Employment uses on the site are key to creating a synergistic live-work-play community, by helping to reduce auto dependency, providing economic opportunity, and balancing uses and trips on and off site.
- Including light industrial on the site can provide good jobs for people with varied educational backgrounds and provide property tax revenue at higher rates than residential, which can help pay for infrastructure and services.
- Employment uses are typically harder to bring to a site than residential and retail. If employment uses are desired for the site, zoning or other tools may be needed to preserve land for jobs or to make employment competitive with other uses.
- City should be actively engaged with other economic development partners in the region to market and recruit targeted industries and businesses to the site.

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Topic 4 – Office, Retail, and Services

Ford Task Force Principles

(related to topic; from 2007 Phase I Ford Site Redevelopment Scenarios report)

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- The proposed mix of land uses within the site shall respect and complement existing abutting uses to provide an extension of the existing Highland neighborhood.
- Redevelopment of the Ford Site shall exhibit the highest examples of environmental sustainability, Becoming a local, state, national, and global model for sustainable planning, design, and day-to-day living.

City of Saint Paul Principles

(framed to guide 2014-2015 public meetings)

- Vibrant place to live, work, and recreate for all people.
- Services and amenities that meet local needs to reduce auto dependency.
- Well-designed and dense urban neighborhood that complements and integrates into the Highland Park area and broader community.
- Range of business and employment opportunities with an emphasis on family supporting jobs.
- Increased regional significance and economic value.
- Mix and density of activities to support transit through and around the site.

Related Studies / Analysis

Real Estate Market Study (2015-early 2016)

- Key Findings coming soon

Phase I Summary Report/Colliers Market Study (2007)

- Mix of uses is feasible and desirable [leads to variety in job types]
- Good demand for neighborhood retail, up to 300,000 square feet (7 acres)
- Modest corporate campus potential, strong institutional campus potential
- Constrained transportation access makes site incompatible with large, destination retail
- Retail could be a mix of independent and chain business
- Strong office market outside of downtown, especially in this location; Office becomes more attractive with good housing stock, neighborhood retail, and institutional uses nearby

Public Input

- Strong desire for mixed-use development
- Dense and diverse retail/services that is walkable, no big-box stores
- Do what is possible to encourage small businesses

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- High interest in new models: co-op spaces, incubator spaces, maker zones
- Want good design built sustainably
- Be sensitive to relationship with Highland Village and Lunds area

PED Staff Perspective as of Jan. 6, 2016, for discussion purposes at January 11 Task Force meeting

- Market potential for retail at the site is strong, but only requires a small portion of this large site.
- Retail and service focus should be community-serving, not regional, with zoning used to support these uses at an appropriate scale.
- Office uses are an important complement to business and light industrial uses at the site, providing a wider range of economic and employment opportunities. Zoning should support office uses at appropriate locations throughout the site.
- City should be actively engaged with other economic development partners in the region to market and recruit office uses to the site.