



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6565
Facsimile: 651-266-6549

DATE: May 23, 2017

TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee

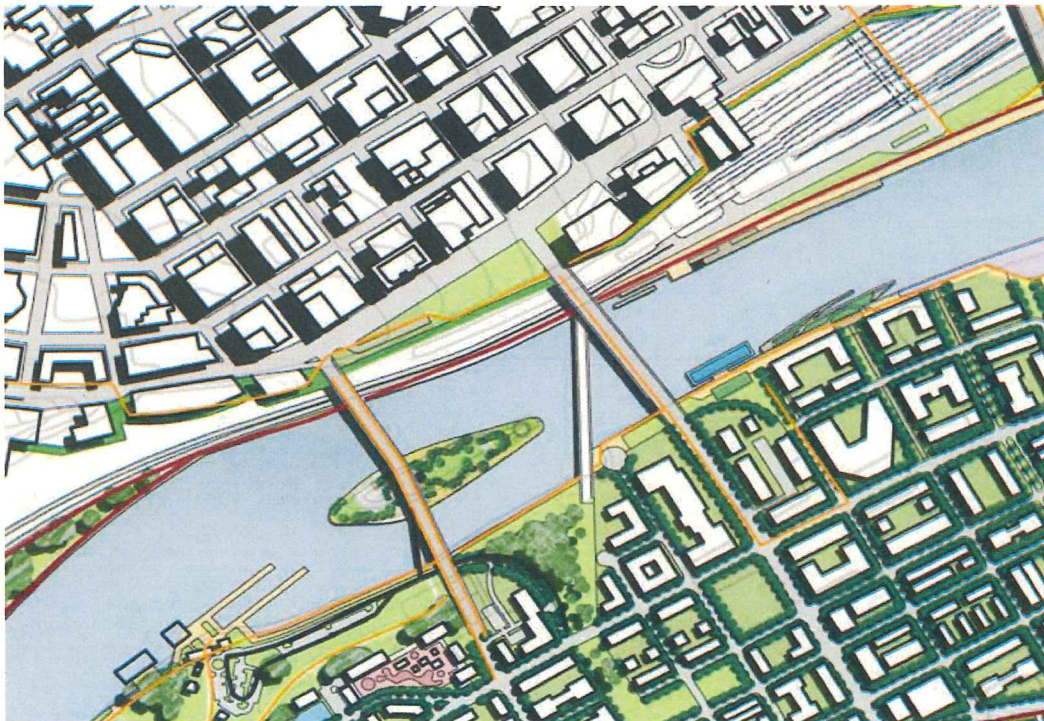
FROM: Lucy Thompson, Principal City Planner

SUBJECT: *Saint Paul River Balcony Master Plan* Public Testimony and Recommendation to Planning Commission

BACKGROUND

Reconnecting to the Mississippi River has been a City of Saint Paul and community priority since completion of the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework* in 1997. Like so many American river cities, Saint Paul turned its back on the Mississippi River for decades. But, in the last 20 years, the City and its partners have worked tirelessly to embrace the river and recognize it as a natural, historic, cultural, recreational and ecological amenity.

The *Great River Passage Master Plan*, adopted by the City Council in April 2013 as an addendum to the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, calls for the creation of a River Balcony along the downtown river bluff (green/yellow line on the image below). The River Balcony was one of the most widely-supported ideas to come out of the *Great River Passage Master Plan*.



The design rendering in the *Great River Passage Master Plan* shows an active, vibrant public ledge overlooking the river:



THE SAINT PAUL RIVER BALCONY MASTER PLAN

Given the broad community support for the River Balcony, as well as its potential to be a catalyst for private investment along the downtown river bluff, City staff worked with the Minnesota Design Center, Landscape Research, BKV Architects, Saint Paul Design Center and adjacent property owners to prepare the *River Balcony Master Plan* as an amendment to the *Great River Passage Master Plan*.

The Master Plan lays out the following vision for the River Balcony:

The River Balcony is envisioned as a publicly-accessible pathway connecting public spaces and bluff-side redevelopment sites from the Science Museum to Union Depot. It will be designed to accommodate walking, outdoor seating, gathering and related public activities; and to be a catalyst for economic development.

A set of core goals establishes the role of the River Balcony in not only activating the public realm along the river bluff, but also in catalyzing high-quality private development on key sites along Kellogg Boulevard. The River Balcony will:

1. reconnect downtown to the river visually and physically;
2. provide a public linear path along the downtown river bluff with occasional vertical connections to the river's edge;
3. activate private development on the Ramsey County West/Adult Detention Center, Ramsey County East and Custom House sites; and
4. connect public spaces and private development sites along the river's edge in downtown.

The *River Balcony Master Plan* contains design guidelines based on the following general design principles:

1. The River Balcony is a public space, accessible to all, at all times of the day and during all seasons.
2. The main purpose of the River Balcony is to provide visual and physical connections between downtown and the Mississippi River.
3. The River Balcony is an integral part of a larger public realm network comprising the Capital City Bikeway, City and regional parks and trails, streets, plazas and skyways.
4. The River Balcony is both a horizontal (linear) and vertical (from upper bluff to river's edge) system of movement.

5. The River Balcony will be a fundamental feature of new development on private property along the bluff, including Custom House and the Ramsey County riverfront properties.
6. The River Balcony will be designed to add value to adjacent private development.
7. The River Balcony will be built with high-quality, durable materials.
8. The River Balcony will be designed as a coherent series of public spaces, with overall continuity of design, but allowing for site- or district-specific expressions of place.
9. The River Balcony will be designed to be a "light touch" on the bluff landscape.
10. The River Balcony will incorporate natural features as much as possible, recognizing that some areas will be more predominantly hard-surfaced.

The Master Plan also contains sections on land use history and cultural resources; project precedents from around the country and world that inspired our vision; and design guidelines for 1) the River Balcony as a whole; 2) each component of the River Balcony; and 3) adjacent private development sites.

The guidelines for the River Balcony as a whole address:

- Identity
- Connected pedestrian amenities
- Balcony structure
- Materials
- Landscaping
- District (utility) systems
- Furnishings
- Retaining walls
- Paving
- Railings
- Wayfinding signage
- Lighting
- Vertical circulation towers
- Historic resources
- Public art

The guidelines by component address four conditions along the 1.5-mile route:

- Balcony on-grade at sidewalks and plazas
- Balcony on-grade at street crosswalks (Wabasha and Robert streets)
- Free-standing balcony
- Balcony connections to the river

The guidelines for adjacent private development sites address how the following elements on privately-owned sites interface with and activate the River Balcony:

- Site development
- Building form and façade
- Landscaping
- Historic preservation
- Sustainability and district systems
- Furnishings

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

The Planning Commission released the *River Balcony Master Plan* on April 7, 2017 and held a public hearing on May 19, 2017. Ten people spoke at the hearing, with many of them submitting written comments as well. Written comments were received from three additional parties. The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a resolution in support on April 13, 2017.

In general, public testimony was very positive and recommended adoption of the River Balcony Master Plan. Statements in support included the following points:

Science Museum of Minnesota:

- The River Balcony is an important opportunity to capitalize on Saint Paul's key asset, the Mississippi River, and to bring together all the assets along Kellogg Boulevard into an engaging experience that is greater than the sum of its parts.
- The River Balcony is Saint Paul's "signature element" that will raise its prominence beyond its borders.
- The Science Museum of Minnesota is deeply committed to realizing the River Balcony, and is already working to activate its portion of the route.

National Park Service (NPS):

- The River Balcony has the potential to achieve many of the recreation and visitor access goals in the NPS Comprehensive Management Plan.
- The Balcony will enhance views of downtown from across and on the Mississippi River, provide essential physical and visual connections to the river, and greatly enhance the visitor experience and use of the river.

Ramsey County:

- The County's Riverfront Properties development will be integrated with the River Balcony, which will maximize the contribution of both projects to the vitality of downtown Saint Paul.
- Union Depot will benefit from its connection to the Balcony.

Visit Saint Paul (Convention and Visitors Bureau):

- The River Balcony will create wealth and health.
- There is a tremendous market for connecting people to bodies of water. With Saint Paul close to a large population base, the River Balcony presents great potential to bring people to the Mississippi River.
- The Duluth Canal Walk demonstrates the power of something like the River Balcony to draw people to the water and generate significant economic development.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR):

- Excellent features of the Master Plan include: 1) increasing and improving open space downtown; 2) improving the views of the river valley and downtown; 3) improving access between the river and downtown; and 4) improving connectivity with existing pedestrian routes and area amenities.

Exeter Group (Custom House):

- The River Balcony will be critical to leasing currently-vacant second floor space in Custom House.

Minnesota Wild and Xcel Arena/RiverCentre:

- The River Balcony will be an "iconic park."
- It will connect events at the Arena to other parts of the city and expose more people to the Mississippi River.
- The Balcony will be a great "sales item" for attracting events to Saint Paul.
- The RiverCentre ramp reconstruction project includes a placeholder to build the River Balcony along the river side of the new structure.

Friends of the Parks and Trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County:

- The River Balcony will enhance access to the river while creating investment – both economic (creating places where people want to live, work and recreate) and personal/emotional – in it.
- The River Balcony will help people of all ages interact with the Mississippi River in new ways and become our future stewards of the river.

Other:

- The River Balcony can be a vibrant “canvas” for arts activities and programming.

There were some concerns expressed, as well as minor changes requested to the Master Plan document:

- “Bird-safe glass,” “dark-sky-friendly lighting” and “pollinator-friendly native plants should be specified.” (FMR)
- References should be added to encourage the River Balcony to be a model park for green, technological and Zero Waster features. (FMR)
- Alternatives to wood decking should be considered as further design and performance studies are conducted. (FMR)
- The area below the River Balcony where it connects to Lower Landing needs to be improved and cleaned up to present a positive image to those entering downtown.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Comprehensive Planning Committee forward the *River Balcony Master Plan* to the Planning Commission with the following recommendations:

1. that the Commission find the *River Balcony Master Plan* consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and
2. that the Planning Commission recommend to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the *River Balcony Master Plan* as an amendment to the *Great River Passage Master Plan* with the following additions:
 - “Bird-safe glass,” “dark-sky-friendly lighting” and “pollinator-friendly native plants be specified.”
 - References be added to encourage the River Balcony to be a model park for green, technological and Zero Waster features.
 - Alternatives to wood decking be considered as further design and performance studies are conducted.

Attachments:

Written comments on the draft *River Balcony Master Plan*

RESOLUTION # 17-07
Saint Paul River Balcony Master Plan

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission is an appointed body established to advise the Mayor and City Council on long-range and city-wide matters related to Parks and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Great River Passage Master Plan have identified a River Balcony as a bluff side promenade that will connect the community to and along the bluff as well as to the Mississippi River, activate the bluff edge, and stimulate economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul River Balcony Master Plan was prepared by the City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission endorsement and Saint Paul City Council adoption of the plan is a prerequisite for Metropolitan Council adoption of the Master Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the adoption of the Saint Paul River Balcony Master Plan as the principal planning document for the development of the signature project.

Adopted by the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission on April 13, 2017:

Approved:

Yeas

7

Nays

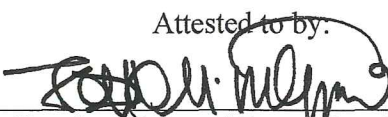
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Absent:

2

Resolution #17-07

Attested to by:



Staff to the Parks and Recreation Commission



CAPRA Accreditation

An Affirmative Action Equal
Opportunity Employer



National Gold Medal Award

May 19, 2017

Planning Commission
City of Saint Paul
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM), I welcome this opportunity to convey the Museum's support for the River Balcony.

The City of Saint Paul has many existing and remarkable public and private assets along Kellogg Boulevard with many others under consideration. The River Balcony is an enormous opportunity to bring them all together into an engaging public experience that is greater than the sum of its parts. Achieving this vision is important to all of the entities along the proposed River Balcony because of the considerable opportunity to increase the visibility of all of us along the balcony but also because cities increasingly need signature elements that raise their prominence and presence of mind well beyond their borders. The River Balcony has the potential to accomplish this vital vision for Saint Paul.

SMM is committed to doing its part to help realize this vision by seeking to create engaging experiences for those who encounter and explore its segment of the River Balcony. SMM, the National Park Service and District Energy St. Paul in 2012 produced and installed exhibits on the Kellogg Plaza Overlook that interpret the Mississippi River Valley and the combined heat and power plant next door to the Museum. Most recently, SMM with the Mississippi Park Connection and Saint Paul Forestry with support from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency installed a demonstration bare-root tree gravel bed nursery on the Museum's Kellogg Plaza. SMM now is pursuing a major grant proposal from Artplace America that if successful would enable the Museum and its partners to create an engaging urban forestry parklet on the Museum's Kellogg Plaza.

SMM looks forward to continuing to collaborate with all of the public and private partners who together will realize the River Balcony. SMM is deeply committed to helping to realize this vision, which is why it is already engaged in work to activate its portion of the River Balcony.

Sincerely,



Alison R. Brown
President and CEO



Science
Museum
of Minnesota

120 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102
(651) 221-9444 | smm.org



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Ste 105
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1256

May 18, 2017

Lucy Thompson
Principal City Planner
1300 City Hall Annex
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: River Balcony Master Plan

Dear Ms. Thompson:

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to provide comments on the River Balcony Master Plan. The proposed balcony would lie completely within the boundary of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (NRRRA). Congress established the Mississippi NRRRA in 1988 to preserve, protect, and enhance the significant values of the Mississippi River Corridor in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Housed within the Science Museum of Minnesota, our Mississippi River Visitor Center will be a key element along the River Balcony. We look forward to participating in the development of the River Balcony Master Plan, and feel it has the potential to achieve many of the recreation and visitor access goals identified in our Comprehensive Management Plan. If done right, the balcony will enhance views of downtown St. Paul from across the river and from on the river. It will also provide essential physical and visual connections between Saint Paul and the Mississippi River and greatly enhance the visitor experience and use of this prized resource.

If you any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at john_anfinson@nps.gov or 651-293-8432.

Sincerely,

John Anfinson
Superintendent

Good morning. My name is Josh Olson and I'm the Planning Specialist for Ramsey County in the county's Community and Economic Development Department. Over the last few years the county has been actively engaged in the development of the River Balcony Master Plan, including by providing financial support for the master planning process through our Regional Railroad Authority. We applaud the efforts of city staff in the development of the River Balcony Master Plan and I am pleased to speak in favor of the plan today.

The River Balcony is of particular interest to Ramsey County at this time, as we are leading the effort to redevelop a key site—the Riverfront Properties—that will intersect with the River Balcony. From the outset of this process, it has been a stated goal to integrate the Riverfront Properties development with the River Balcony in order to maximize the contribution of both projects to the vitality of downtown St. Paul. We have recently entered into negotiations with a developer for the Riverfront Properties who shares this vision and is

excited to establish an active first floor that interacts with pedestrian activity along the River Balcony.

Additionally, Union Depot, a county property and the easternmost property on the River Balcony, will be a key public entry point to the River Balcony and stands to benefit from its connection to the balcony. Ramsey County looks forward to an ongoing partnership with the city to integrate Union Depot seamlessly into the River Balcony.

Because the county has such a significant presence on the riverfront, we have maintained a keen interest in the River Balcony from its inception. We are pleased to witness the progress that the completion of the Master Plan represents, and are excited to continue to support the River Balcony in the years ahead.

Thank you.



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

101 East Fifth Street
Suite 2000
Saint Paul, MN 55101

651-222-2193
www.fmr.org
info@fmr.org

May 17, 2017

Saint Paul Planning Commission
Betsy Reveal, Chair
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: River Balcony Master Plan draft

Chair Reveal:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit community-based organization that works to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities. We have 1,800 active members, and more than 3,000 volunteers who care deeply about the river's unique resources. FMR has been an active and ongoing participant in planning for the future of the Saint Paul riverfront.

We are writing today with our comments on the River Balcony Master Plan draft.

Overall, we are pleased with this plan. We are glad Saint Paul is investing in the riverfront downtown. This plan contains many excellent features including several that we outline below.

- Increasing and improving public space downtown, for example:
 - moveable furniture to accommodate a variety of groups
 - providing an option for the eastbound lanes of Kellogg Boulevard to easily transition to a pedestrian space for large events
 - emphasizing the use of native plants for landscaping
 - including a green roof on the civic building
- Improving the views of the river valley and downtown, for example:
 - ensuring protections are in place for preserving views and viewsheds
 - ensuring portions of the bluff are visible and including subtle bluff lighting that highlights the natural features of the area
- Improving access between the Mississippi River and downtown, for example:
 - building vertical connections early on in Phase 2
 - providing expansive visual access from the Balcony to the river
- Improving connectivity with existing pedestrian routes and area amenities, for example:

- connections to the Sam Morgan Regional Trail, Science Museum of MN, Light Rail Transit, etc.
- Ensuring development guidelines are in place for adjacent private development sites

We also have a few suggested clarifications and changes that we've organized by topic.

Bird-friendly

This park is part of an internationally significant migratory corridor that millions of birds and other wildlife use throughout the year. Therefore, we encourage specifying bird friendly features as priorities in the plan. The plan indicates that tempered glass will be used as a design feature for railings, stair and elevator shafts at the bridgeheads, and walls of the civic building near the Robert Street bridgehead. The tempered glass references should be updated to include bird-safe glass. Additionally, the inclusion of dark-sky friendly lighting in the plan will help prevent birds from becoming disorientated. However, page 69 also indicates that the vertical circulation towers' "lighting should provide a striking night-time image." We would support the striking image if it could be accomplished in a bird-friendly way. We also encourage the landscaping sections of the plan to specify that "pollinator-friendly native plants" will be used.

Technology & green energy & going green

The plan does feature some innovative ideas like using District Energy Heat to melt snow and provide comfortable outdoor spaces. We'd like to see the plan go further so the park becomes a model park in the Twin Cities for green and technological features, especially with its proximity to downtown. We encourage further discussions to ensure this is a leading model park and we would be happy to assist in exploring these and other questions.

- Why not specify that the planned kiosks will be interactive with state-of-the-art technology powered by solar energy?
- Why not encourage the employees and students to come out to the river balcony with their electronics that can be recharged at no cost in the park with solar or wind energy?
- Why not specify that the park will be Zero Waste, like so many other surrounding park systems have already done, and list compost as an option on page 62 and 63?

Wood decking

We appreciate the desire to bring natural elements into the park design, but it may be wise to avoid wood decking on trails. Wood decking is a rare feature in parks today as it has largely been replaced with more durable and safe materials like composite decking or plastic lumber made from recycled materials. We've been involved in conversations regarding the wood planking in the Mill City portion of West River Parkway in Minneapolis. Frequent trail users complain of noise when wheeled recreational vehicles (e.g. bikes, inline skates, skateboards, etc.) go over the planks, slipperiness when wet, and safety concerns due to the natural warping of the boards (e.g. tripping, inline skates getting caught, dangerous in high heels, etc.). The Minneapolis Park Board staff have also

mentioned the high cost of constantly replacing these boards as they warp. We hope whatever material is chosen will be long lasting, safe to use year-round in all weather and safe to use on inclined portions of the project.

Other small tweaks

On page 39, we'd like to see "take in the scenic river valley" added to the last paragraph that lists what the River Balcony should provide. The bottom of this page also needs a period. On page 49, label Pad 10A and Pad 10B. On page 67, "orientation" is spelled incorrectly.

Thank you for your work on this visionary plan. With a few small changes, we look forward to being able to fully endorse this plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Whitney L. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and a distinct 'L' and 'C'.

Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director

Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)

From: Jay Severance <jayseverance@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 19, 2017 11:42 AM
To: Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Written Testimony for City Planning Commission Hearing on River Balcony 5/19/17
Attachments: Lower landing; Proposed Riverview LRT Routing

To: City Planning Commission
c/o: Lucy Thompson, Department of Planning and Economic Development
Subject: Written Testimony for the City Planning Commission hearing on the River Balcony Project 5/19/17

Please forward these comments as a follow up to my testimony at the above hearing.

I live at 350 St Peter Street, Unit 409, St Paul 55102. I am testifying as a property owner/resident of the Lowry Building condominiums. We own one of 11 condominiums which face toward the river. We are very enthusiastic about the plans for the River Balcony, but have a few concerns relating to the River Balcony and its integration with the proposed development at the ex-county jail and West Publishing sites.

- Sight Lines – We are currently enjoying expanded sight lines to the river and Harriett Island. We would ask that the River Balcony not impede these sight lines, keeping them as close as they are today, but at least as they were before the deconstruction of the jail and West buildings.
- Sun Lines – This request pertains to the integration of the River Balcony and proposed development of the jail and West properties. We ask that no structures be taller than the previous West buildings, so that sun exposure will not be impeded, specifically at the low point of the sun elevation in December
- Sound Sources – While we appreciate that the downtown noises are something which must be tolerated, we ask that consideration be given to the downtown residents before adding to the sources of noise. For example, the recent addition of audible street crossing signals using a loud “demented woodpecker” knocking sound is very annoying. We recognize the need for audible signals for the vision impaired, and we anticipate some may be necessary for the River Balcony. We would appreciate it if these could be more melodic and subtle...and, replace the current signals as well.

There are two other issues which should be considered in the River Balcony project development.

- The condition of the area beneath the railroad viaduct at Sibley and Warner Road - I am attaching an email (Lower landing). I sent to Lucy Thompson and others last year regarding the poor appearance and accumulation of trash at this entrance to the city, and docking point for river cruise ships. The River Balcony will access this area. Improvement of the area should be considered as part of this project.
- Integration with the Riverview Corridor Project and passenger rail access – I am attaching an email (Proposed Riverview LRT Routing) which incorporates a two level structure to accommodate the Riverview Corridor LRT and the River Balcony. This proposal is not currently one of the preferred alternatives, but the River Balcony Project should consider Riverview Corridor issues as development progresses. There is currently room for additional tracks for passenger trains at the Union Depot. Care should be taken to not impede access for additional tracks to the West.

I believe it was stated in the hearing that additional public testimony would be heard on this subject at a meeting on May 30. I would appreciate receiving notice of the time and place of the meeting.

Thank you,

Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)

From: Jay & Kathryn Severance <jkseverance@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2016 10:06 AM
To: Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)
Cc: info@visitsaintpaul.com
Subject: Lower landing

Good Morning,

I saw your recent video regarding the river balcony project...very nicely done. You mentioned the possibility of Viking Cruise lines using the lower landing in upcoming years. The comment triggered a concern about the "first impression" a visitor might get as they dock at the lower landing.

I frequently walk along the river and through Lower Town, and have been impressed with the improved look and activity in the area. The one exception is the shabby state of the rail viaduct across Shepard Road from the Lower Landing, at the foot of Sibley St.

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Shepard+Rd+%26+N+Sibley+St,+St+Paul,+MN+55102/@44.9458989,-93.0856204,3a,75y,10h,90t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1s3vLq_6ULwtONY1sXqIsMGg!2e0!6s%2F%2Fgeo0.ggpht.com%2Fcbk%3Fpanoid%3D3vLq_6ULwtONY1sXqIsMGg%26output%3Dthumbnail%26cb_client%3Dsearch.TACTILE.gps%26thumb%3D2%26w%3D86%26h%3D86%26yaw%3D10.999128%26pitch%3D0!7i13312!8i6656!4m2!3m1!1s0x87f7d545b6eab7b3:0xab8a0555c3c5dd4e!6m1!1e1

A coat of paint, and attention to the grassy area would make this a much more appealing entrance to the city, and first impression for arriving travelers. Better yet, a wall with murals depicting the origins of St Paul, riverboats etc would keep people out of the area under the viaduct...instead of a snow fence...while providing an attractive view from the highway or riverboats.

As you know, there are other cruise lines currently docking in St Paul. We have taken several cruises with American Cruise Lines to other destinations along the river and East and West Coasts. They have two new boats on the river based in New Orleans. This year, they will dock in St Paul on the following dates: July 23, August 6, August 27, September 10, October 1 and October 15. They debark passengers and embark new passengers for the down-river trip on those days. Generally, that entails around 200 passengers arriving who will probably head out of town unless there is some reason to stay, and another 200 embarking, who potentially need overnight accommodations.

Our experience at other debarking/embarking locations is that walking tours or bus tours are usually provided as part of the cruise. I don't know whether this is planned for the St Paul arrivals or departures, but would be an opportunity for the city to make an impression on visitors. I would encourage the proper individuals with the city or Visitor and Convention Bureau to be in contact with American Cruise lines to see if some exposure to the city would be possible.

Thank you,
Jay Severance
350 St Peter St #409
St Paul MN 55102



May 19, 2017

Re: Comments on St. Paul River Balcony

1660 Laurel Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
612-703-9044
www.friendsoftheparks.org

We are writing to endorse the St. Paul River Balcony effort. For over three decades, Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County has been a voice to promote, protect, and enhance parks, trails, and open space in our local community. Our Executive Director was on the Great River Passage Master Plan Task Force.

We have a long-standing history of active participation in conversations regarding development and natural resource protections in the Mississippi River corridor. In fact, our organization was founded in 1985 after a group of concerned citizens banded together to point out that putting a housing development in Crosby Farm Regional Park was not the best use of that property.

We were active participants during the recent Minnesota Department of Natural Resource revision of the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area rules. United States Senator, David Durenberger, co-sponsor with United States Representative Bruce Vento to create the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area National Park, is on our Board of Directors.

As you can see, we have been stewards of the St. Paul riverfront for quite some time and continue to be mindful of both economic development and natural resource protection. We have partnered with St. Paul and Ramsey County to do our very best to take care of what we have today while planning for future generations.

We are pleased to see that the River Balcony conceptual design both enhances access to the river while creating investment in it. Investment can take many forms. Not only does this plan promote economic investment with its vision for places where people want to live, work, and recreate, but it also creates personal, emotional investment in the river for those same reasons.

By designing and building in such a way that encourages people of all ages to interact with the Mississippi River in new ways, we are also building new relationships with the river that runs through our city. Those relationships will be the building blocks for future generations to be stewards of the river in years to come.

We applaud that vision. As stewards for over 32 years, we are happy to endorse a plan that will inspire future generations to appreciate the river as we do.

Sincerely,



Shirley Erstad, Executive Director

President
Rainy Salk
Vice President
Scott Ramsay
Treasurer
Andy Capistrant
Directors
Richard Arey
Jim Bricher
Kassim Busuri
Mariann Cyr
Gus Koutsouvas
Ryan Lucey
Dan Marckel
Dan McGarry
Duane Noecker
Tony Parrish
Pete Regnier
Pachua Vang
Directors Emeritus
Peggy Lynch
Truman W. Porter
Jeanne Weigum
Ex Officio
Reuben Collins
Dave Durenberger
Dale Gade
Mike Hahm
Rachel Hintzman
Jon Oyanagi
Executive Director
and Secretary
Shirley Erstad

Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)

From: Robin Turner <rdturner1@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2017 7:06 AM
To: Thompson, Lucy (CI-StPaul)
Subject: river promenade and beer garden for downtown St. Paul

Ms. Thompson,

I am a huge fan and member of FMR and love good craft beer. West St. Paul definitely has room for another tap room and the amenities that will surround it. Minneapolis has taken advantage of the Mississippi's awesome scenic dining backdrop for years. It is a fine time for St Paul to do the same. What a cool pre-activity for a Saints Game at the CHS. I wholeheartedly support the promenade and beer garden in St. Paul "Build it and they will come!"

Robin Turner
FMR member & SHEP super volunteer.



Virus-free. www.avast.com

4-13-17

DEAR MS. THOMPSON:

RECEIVED APR 18 2017

PLEASE CANCEL THE ENTIRE RIVER BALCONY PROJECT.

THE MONEY (NOT MENTIONED IN THE PIONEER PRESS ARTICLE) COULD BE BETTER USED ON OTHER THINGS THAT BENEFIT ALL ST. PAUL RESIDENTS, INSTEAD OF A BUNCH OF TOURISTS AND HOITY-TOITY ARTSY-FARTSY TRENDYDS.

HOW ABOUT FIXING THE STREETS? HOW ABOUT SNOW PLOWING THE ALLEYS? HOW ABOUT INSTITUTING A SPECIAL CELL-PHONE COURT SYSTEM? (GRANT THE COPS THE AUTHORITY TO CONFISCATE PHONES FROM DISTRACTED DRIVERS - THEN REQUIRING THE SCOFFLAWS TO GO TO COURT TO RECLAIM THEM).

HOW ABOUT ATTRACTING SOME MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES TO MOVE TO ST. PAUL?

I HOPE YOU DON'T GO THE WAY OF MINNEAPOLIS, WHERE THEY CARE MORE ABOUT TOURISTS THAN THEIR OWN CITIZENS.

THANK YOU.

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

RIVER BALCONY MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted the *Great River Passage Master Plan* as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan in 2013; and

WHEREAS, one of the projects recommended in the *Great River Massage Master Plan* is the River Balcony, a 1.5-mile pedestrian pathway from the Science Museum to Union Depot along the top of the downtown bluff; and

WHEREAS, the River Balcony was envisioned to contribute to the economic vitality of downtown, and extend and reconnect community life to the Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, in anticipation of the adaptive reuse of the U.S Post Office and Custom House, which sits on the path of the proposed River Balcony, an inter-departmental City staff team engaged the Minnesota Design Center, BKV Group and Landscape Research to prepare a master plan and Phase 1 schematic design for the River Balcony; and

WHEREAS, a Project Review Team comprising property owners along the River Balcony route, CapitolRiver Council representatives and other key stakeholders advised the consultant team and City staff throughout the process; and

WHEREAS, the City hosted roundtables, design team workshops, a public open house in September 2015 and a public meeting in April 2016 to engage the public in preparation of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan lays out a vision for the River Balcony as a publicly-accessible pathway connecting public spaces and bluff-side redevelopment sites from the Science Museum to Union Depot that will be designed to accommodate walking, outdoor seating, gathering and related public activities, and that will be a catalyst for economic development; and

WHEREAS, a set of core goals establishes the role of the River Balcony in not only activating the public realm along the river bluff but also in catalyzing high-quality private development on key sites along Kellogg Boulevard; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the goals of the River Balcony are to: 1) reconnect downtown to the river visually and physically; 2) provide a public linear path along the downtown river bluff with occasional vertical connections to the river's edge; 3) activate private development on the Ramsey County West/Adult Detention Center, Ramsey County East and Custom House sites; and 4) connect public spaces and private development sites along the river's edge in downtown; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan contains design guidelines for the River Balcony as a whole, individual sections of the River Balcony and adjacent private development sites; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission released the draft *River Balcony Master Plan* for public review in April 2017 and held a public hearing on May 19, 2017, notice of which was published in the St. Paul Legal Ledger and through the City's Early Notification System; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2017, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission adopted Resolution #17-07 recommending adoption of the *River Balcony Master Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed all public testimony and is recommending some changes to the draft Master Plan to respond to public testimony.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission finds the *River Balcony Master Plan* consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the *River Balcony Master Plan* as an amendment to the *Great River Passage Master Plan* with the following changes:

1. Specify the use of "bird-safe glass," "dark-sky-friendly lighting" and "pollinator-friendly native plants.
2. Add references to encourage the River Balcony to be a model park for green, technological and Zero Waster features.
3. Consider alternatives to wood decking as further design and performance studies are conducted.