



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
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**DATE:** February 4, 2016

**TO:** Neighborhood Planning Committee

**FROM:** Merritt Clapp-Smith, Principal City Planner

**SUBJECT:** Review Ford Site Project Area Redevelopment Plan for compliance with Comprehensive Plan

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#### **BACKGROUND and ANALYSIS**

Planning for redevelopment of the Ford Motor Company site in Highland Park has been underway since 2007, following the company's closure announcement. There has been extensive public engagement, targeted studies, and planning work by city staff, regional and state agencies. The Ford Site Planning Task Force, appointed by the Planning Commission, has met dozens of times to review various aspects of the work and to hear from the public and stakeholders. All of the work and analyses have provided a wide and deep understanding of the site's opportunities and constraints and will serve as the foundation for a zoning and public realm plan to be brought to the Planning Commission and City Council later this year. While we move judiciously towards this key step to reposition the site for redevelopment, we find our timing eclipsed by another important decision – whether or not to establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for the site.

State TIF law provides for a three year window to create a TIF district if blight findings are made and at the time that demolition commences. Blight findings for the Ford site were made and approved by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) in February 2013 and demolition commenced in March 2013, triggering the start of the 3 year window. Typically, 3 years provides enough time for a site to complete demolition and for a developer to propose a redevelopment plan for TIF if such financing is deemed necessary to advance the site. In this case, the 135-acre site had a large and complex set of buildings and conditions, and a multi-stage decommissioning process that required reviews and approvals by four permitting entities, as well as Ford Motor Company's own contracting, budgeting and approval processes. As a result, the

property is still in final stages of decommissioning and environmental assessment and remediation planning is ongoing.

The 3 year eligibility window for TIF district establishment at this site closes at the end of March 2016. This puts the City in the position of needing to make a TIF district determination in advance of when we'd ideally do so. During last year's legislative session, the City of Saint Paul sought flexibility in the TIF law to extend our 3 year deadline to give us more time to make a decision for the Ford site. Our request made it into the tax bill, but ultimately the tax bill was not passed. The legislation will be considered again this session, but there is no chance that a decision will be made before the end of March when our deadline expires.

In light of these circumstances, we are advancing a proposal to create a new TIF district at the Ford site. The intent is to preserve the ability to use TIF as a potential financing tool, IF NEEDED, to support redevelopment of the Ford site as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood and sustainable community. The item would go to the City Council for Public Hearing on March 16<sup>th</sup> and to the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Planning Commission is asked to review the Redevelopment Plan for the Ford Site Project Area for compliance with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and other local plans. The Plan has been attached for your consideration. The Plan describes a series of objectives for a mixed-use redevelopment at the Ford site that is highly consistent with a wide range of Comprehensive Plan goals. It complies with the District 15 Highland Park Plan Summary (2007), which identifies the Ford site as appropriate for a mixed-use development.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Neighborhood Planning Committee forward to the Planning Commission a recommendation for approval of the Redevelopment Plan for the Ford Project Area to the Mayor, City Council, and the HRA Board for public hearing and approval.

#### **Staff Contacts**

Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651.266.6547 and Jenny Wolfe, 651-266-6680

#### **Attachment**

- Redevelopment Plan for the Ford Site Project Area, including the area Map

**Redevelopment Plan  
for  
Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area  
Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**Approved by the City Council: March 16, 2016**

**Approved by the HRA: March 23, 2016**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Description of Redevelopment Project Area.....	1
B. Background.....	2
C. Development Objectives.....	2
D. Redevelopment Techniques to Achieve Plan Objectives .....	5
E. Other Necessary Provisions to Meet State/Local Requirements.....	8
F. Provisions for Amending the Plan .....	8
Exhibit A (Map of Project Area).....	9

## **Redevelopment Plan for the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area**

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota (HRA) proposes to establish the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area, as provided for in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 469.002, Subd. 14. This document comprises the Redevelopment Plan as provided for in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 469.002, Subd. 16.

### **A. Description of Redevelopment Project Area**

The boundaries of the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area shall consist of all the properties and adjacent roadways, sidewalks and rights-of-way described as follows and shown on the map included as Exhibit A, which is incorporated herein by reference:

Commencing at Mississippi River Boulevard South at the intersection of the northern most on-off ramp to Ford Parkway, then continuing East along Ford Parkway to its intersection with Cleveland Avenue, South along Cleveland Avenue South to its intersection with Saint Paul Avenue, Southeast along Saint Paul Avenue to Montreal Avenue, West along Montreal Avenue to its intersection with Cleveland Avenue South, South along Cleveland Avenue South to its intersection with the Right-of-Way for West Hampshire Avenue, West along the southern edge of the Right-Of-Way for West Hampshire Avenue until it terminates and then continuing West along the southern edge of the Canadian Pacific Railway property line, South in a direct line crossing the Mississippi River Boulevard Right-of-Way until it reaches the property line for Hidden Falls Regional Park, Northwardly along the Mississippi River Boulevard Right-of-Way to its intersection with the southern edge of the Ford Motor Company river property PIN# 17.28.23.31.0001, West along the southern side of the Ford property boundary, then following it Northward along its western edge, then East along the northern edge of the property to its intersection with the Mississippi River Boulevard Right-of-Way, North on Mississippi River Boulevard to its intersection with Ford Parkway and including the southernmost Mississippi River Boulevard on-off ramp.

Together with all adjacent roadways, sidewalks and rights-of-way in their entirety and portions of lots for alleys, this project area is comprised of the following property identification numbers (PIN) 17.28.23.13.0002; 17.28.23.31.0001; 17.28.23.41.0001; 17.28.23.41.0002; 17.28.23.11.0092; 17.28.23.11.0101; 17.28.23.11.0102; 17.28.23.11.0103; 17.28.23.14.0002; 17.28.23.14.0003; 17.28.23.14.0004; 16.28.23.23.0025; 16.28.23.23.0026; 16.28.23.23.0091; 16.28.23.23.0092; 16.28.23.23.0093; 16.28.23.23.0094; 16.28.23.23.0094; 16.28.23.23.0150; 16.28.23.23.0161; and 16.28.23.23.0183, all as shown on the map included in Exhibit A.

## **B. Background**

The Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area is generally bounded by Ford Parkway on the North, a handful of other properties on the northeast corner, Cleveland Avenue South on the east, the Canadian Pacific Railway spur and Hidden Falls Regional Park on the south, and the Mississippi River on the west. The majority of the area served as home to the Ford Motor Company Twin Cities Assembly Plant from 1924 to 2012. Since its closure, Ford Motor Company has undertaken site decommissioning activities to demolish former buildings, remove building foundations and slabs, and conduct a Phase II environmental investigation for the entire site.

While the site is a well-located and has strong redevelopment opportunity as a mixed-used site, without positive intervention, the Ford Site Area is unlikely to meet its full potential. Unless public actions commence to prepare the area for redevelopment and guide its transformation, new private investment that fully realizes the potential of this area and meets City goals and objectives is unlikely to occur.

Implementation of this Plan will be accomplished through public and private financial assistance, land use controls and design guidelines that encourage high-quality, economically sound, sustainable, and environmentally-sensitive development consistent with the needs of the community as a whole. The exceptional opportunity in the Ford Site Area is to reposition a large brownfield site into a vibrant live, work, and play community along the bluffs of the Mississippi River and connected to adjoining commercial and residential uses of the neighborhood.

## **C. Development Objectives**

The following development objectives for the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area are based on the policy directives of *the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and the principles, goals and objectives of the *Highland Park Neighborhood Plan Summary (2006)* and various studies conducted for the Ford site redevelopment, including:

1. *Phase I Summary Report: 5 Major Development Scenarios (2007)*
2. *Sustainable Stormwater Feasibility Report for the Ford Plant Site(2008)*
3. *Roadmap to Sustainability for the Saint Paul Ford Site (2009-10)*
4. ***Green Manufacturing Potential for the Ford Site (2009)***
5. ***Ford Site Open Space Guidelines (2010)***
6. ***Fiscal Impact Model and Analysis of the Five Scenarios (2008 and 2011)***
7. ***Ford Site Zoning Framework Study (2012-13)***
8. ***The Ford Site Energy System Study (2014-14)***
9. ***Ford Site Jobs Strategy Report (2015)***
10. ***Sustainable Stormwater Infrastructure Alternatives Analysis for the Future Development of the Ford Site (2015-16)***

## **General**

- Develop the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area in a manner that complements and improves the surrounding Highland area.
- Redevelop the Ford Site as a mid-rise, medium-to-high-density, mixed use urban neighborhood.
- Increase the tax base and job-supporting capacity of the area.
- Use public financial resources in a manner that conforms to the City's and HRA's policies.
- Provide public improvements in order to stimulate private investment and reinvestment in the project area, and to make private land highly marketable, usable, and valuable.
- Provide high-quality public improvements (such as open space, streets, public parking, street trees, landscaping and sidewalks) to provide community-gathering spaces and reconnect the site to the adjacent neighborhood.

## **Public Realm and Built Form**

- Connect the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area to adjacent neighborhoods and amenities like the Mississippi River using streets and sidewalks, lighting, extensive tree plantings and other landscaping, streetscape features, bike trails, etc.
- Create a civic square at the northern end of the site to serve as a community gathering place and economic hub connecting the Ford site to the existing fabric of the Highland Park Village along Ford Parkway.
- Design new streets and buildings in the redevelopment area to connect to the urban block pattern of the surrounding neighborhoods as much as possible and to break the site up into walkable, urban block increments.
- Design new buildings to frame all public spaces, including streets, non-vehicular paths, parks and open spaces.
- Use zoning and design standards to allow and encourage a range of building styles and designs at the Ford site, from traditional to modern forms.
- Encourage the use of high-quality exterior materials.

## **Transportation**

- Zone for a mix of uses and a density of activities that facilitate trips made by walking, biking and transit, in order to reduce auto-dependency and vehicle trips.
- Bring a major transit corridor through the site, connecting to existing major transit services on Ford Parkway to the north and along the West 7<sup>th</sup> Street corridor to the south.
- Create an interconnected system of streets, bikeways, and walkways for transportation and recreation through the site and connected to the adjacent neighborhood fabric and key activity centers in the community, such as the river corridor, Hidden Falls, the Highland Business District, and community and recreation centers. Design the networks to be safe and accessible for people of various ages and abilities.
- Provide amenities such as nice transit stops, bike parking, car share and bike share services, and electric vehicle charging to help shift trips away from single-occupancy, gasoline fueled vehicles.

## **Parking**

- Allow parking on site to meet basic tenant needs in a land efficient manner, emphasizing structured parking, with some on-street parking and very limited surface parking behind buildings.
- Utilize site wide parking standards and a managed, shared parking system to efficiently and cost-effectively provide and manage parking across the site, instead of requiring single-use parking for each property.

## **Housing**

- Provide a range of housing types (owner, rental, townhouse, apartment, live / work, and / or row house), sizes, and affordability to foster a diverse community.
- Use City policy for affordable rental housing to guide affordability thresholds for the Ford site -- 25% of rental housing units site-wide to be affordable: 5% of units at 30% of AMI (Average Median Income); 10% of units 50% of AMI; and 10% of units at 60% of AMI.
- Encourage accessible design for all housing types.
- Strongly encourage energy efficient design for all housing types.
- Use zoning, marketing, and other tools to attract high quality senior housing as part of the site's residential mix.

## **Energy and Sustainability**

- Create a sustainable and livable community using sustainable and best practice technologies for energy efficient buildings, reduced water use, reduced waste, renewable materials, renewable energy sources, high quality stormwater management, and low-carbon transportation.
- Work closely with and support local utilities to study and advance a next generation energy system for the Ford site that is low-carbon, climate responsive, highly dependable, and cost-effective.

## **Employment**

- Use zoning, marketing and recruitment to allow and attract a strong base of employment on the site, with a range of job types. Ensure that the form of employment fits the character of the immediate area.
- Use zoning to support retail and service uses that are community-serving and built to a scale and form that are consistent with the mainstreet character of an urban village.
- Use zoning to support office, research, custom design and small manufacturing uses at an appropriate scale and design for an urban neighborhood.

## **Parks and Amenities**

- Revegetate the site with significant greenery, using street trees, naturalized plantings, and surface stormwater infrastructure.
- Provide a variety of neighborhood and small open space and park areas throughout the site that provide active and passive recreation opportunities for all ages.
- Provide public art and cultural activities to create an attractive and vibrant place.



- Re-establish the Ford Little League Fields somewhere on the site.
- Use design elements and public amenities to reflect the heritage of Ford Motor Company and the workers who invested themselves at the site for nearly a century.
- Provide strong connections to the Mississippi River, within the site, and to the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Stormwater**

- Install a centralized stormwater treatment system to create a strong visual and open space amenity on the site that increases the economic value of adjacent land uses and livability of the site as a whole, while achieving high levels of environmental performance.
- Direct treated stormwater from the site through a day-lighted stream feature into Hidden Falls and manage runoff volume to create stable base flow while reducing storm event surges and erosion of the Hidden Falls streambed.

## **D. Redevelopment Techniques to Achieve Plan Objectives**

This plan envisions the use of all techniques or powers authorized through applicable statutes by the City, HRA, State of Minnesota or other public agencies as appropriate and necessary to carry out its implementation. No provision of the Plan should be taken to limit the full exercise of these powers. The following techniques are examples of means to achieve the objectives presented in Sections C and D above.

### **1. Support private initiatives.**

As a primary course of action, the HRA and the City will promote and support those initiatives by property owners or other persons in control of project sites to market, develop, redevelop, rehabilitate or otherwise improve their property in accordance with this Plan. Private initiative and investment is the preferred means of achieving the objectives of this Plan, and will be encouraged. The HRA or the City may, without acquiring property, enter into agreements with property owners or other persons in control of project sites that identify specific private responsibilities for the improvement of sites in accordance with this Plan.

To induce such agreements, the HRA and the City will provide for, or cause to provide for, the following as necessary and appropriate:

- a. Administration of those public processes and requirements deemed necessary to support or allow development/redevelopment of property to occur in accordance with this Plan. If applicable and advisable, the HRA and the City will provide assistance to developers to allow them to take responsibility for administrative activities.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination of project activity, financing and review with appropriate regional, state, 1 and federal government agencies, the property owners and neighborhood organizations;
- Initiation of vacations, re-zonings, dedication of public rights-of-way, or other public actions as may be necessary to implement this

- Plan, in accordance with local, state, regional and federal government agencies;
  - Provisions of standard municipal services to adequately insure public health, safety and welfare;
  - Enforcement of building codes, design guidelines, site covenants, provisions to insure compliance with state and local requirements relating to non-discrimination, income levels, environmental quality, faithful performance and any other public objectives relating to the purchase, development, improvement or use of the land; and/or
  - Property exchanges.
- b. Public improvements that include, but are not limited to, installation /construction/reconstruction of streets, utilities, open space, walkways and other public improvements or facilities as necessary or desirable to carry out the objectives of this Plan. Public improvements will be undertaken in phases (of time and location) that coincide with and promote rational development patterns. Costs of such improvements may be assessed to the sites served by them and/or funded through grant awards.
- c. Affordable sources of financing, if needed, to private and public entities involved in developing components of this Plan. Several financing mechanisms can be used to accomplish the objectives of this Plan. They include, but are not limited to:
- Tax increment financing
  - Industrial development revenue bond loans (taxable or tax-exempt)
  - Other revenue bond loans (taxable or tax-exempt)
  - Housing revenue bond loans
  - Mortgage subsidy bonds
  - Federal and State tax credits for affordable housing or historic structures
  - Acquisition/lease/sublease
  - Land lease
  - Equity participation
  - Interest rate reduction
  - Other relevant local, regional, state, or federal funding sources, as appropriate

In selecting methods of project finance, the HRA and the City will take into account the forms of other assistance available and negotiate with individual developers to select a method that provides sufficient incentive for the developer to create a quality product.

## **2. Land Acquisition**

As an alternative and/or complementary redevelopment technique, the HRA or the City may choose to acquire certain property either through exercise of eminent domain, if necessary for public use or public purpose, according to the procedures established under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 117 or through

voluntary sale. Acquisition of property will be considered when such property is found to have any of the following characteristics:

- a. blighted areas, buildings and other real property, where removing such can remove, prevent or reduce blight or the cause of blight;
- b. open or undeveloped land blighted by virtue of conditions that have prevented normal development by private enterprise;
- c. underused or inappropriately used land that may be converted to other uses recommended by this Plan at a reasonable cost without major clearance activities;
- d. land necessary to complete parcels that are suitable for development;
- e. lands or property declared to be unsafe or otherwise hazardous to public health and safety; and/or
- f. other real or personal property necessary to accomplish the objectives of this Plan.

Acquisition of property will be undertaken in strict adherence to applicable state and federal statutes, including the provision of relocation services, assistance and benefits in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 117.

### **3. Site Preparation**

If needed, the HRA or the City will undertake or cause to undertake those actions deemed necessary to prepare acquired sites for redevelopment. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. demolition, removal or rehabilitation of buildings and improvements;
- b. activities to correct adverse characteristics of the land, soil or subsoil conditions, unusable subdivision or plat of lots, inadequate access or utility service, flood protection or other development-inhibiting conditions;
- c. activities deemed necessary or desirable to remove, reduce or prevent other blighting factors and cause of blight;
- d. installation, construction or reconstruction of streets, open space, utilities, walkways and other public improvements or facilities as necessary or desirable for carrying out the objectives of this Plan;
- e. provisions of relocation services, assistance and benefits in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 117;
- f. other activities deemed necessary or desirable to improve and prepare sites for development rehabilitation or redevelopment for uses in accordance with this Plan.

### **4. Land Disposition and Improvement Agreements**

If needed, the HRA and the City will sell, lease or otherwise dispose of acquired property at fair use values in accordance with the requirements of applicable laws and plans, and subject to purchaser's contract obligations, by any or a combination of the following methods:

- a. after clearance and/or provision of site improvements;
- b. after rehabilitation at its fair market or reuse value so improved;

- c. without clearance, to rehabilitate, clear or otherwise improve the property in accordance with the objectives and requirements of this Plan; and/or
- d. to public bodies for the purpose of providing public improvements or supporting facilities.

**E. Other Necessary Provisions to Meet State/Local Requirements**

**1. Non-Discrimination.**

Every contract for sale, lease or redevelopment of property within the Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area will prohibit land speculation; require compliance with all state and local laws in effect from time to time; prohibit discrimination or segregation by reasons of race, religion, color, sex, or national origin in the sale, lease or occupancy of the property; and require that this latter provision be made a covenant running with the land and be binding upon the redeveloper and every successor in interest to the property.

**2. Vacations, Re-zonings, Dedications and Covenants.**

Vacations, re-zonings, and dedications of public rights-of-way as may become necessary shall be accomplished by separate actions in accordance with state law and local ordinances, and will be initiated by the agency or the redeveloper.

**F. Provisions for Amending the Plan**

The Redevelopment Plan may be modified at any time in the manner provided by law, and will be reviewed by the Saint Paul Planning Commission for conformance with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Exhibit A – Map of Ford Site Redevelopment Project Area

