

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL**  
**REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN UPDATE**  
**TASK FORCE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**DECEMBER 27, 2021**  
**6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – The Sandberg Room  
2400 Margaret Street

**ATTENDANCE:**

Rick Gelmann, Planning Commission – Here  
John Monge, Planning Commission – Here  
Robert Dew, EDA – Here  
Don Jensen, EDA – Here  
Scott Thorsen, Council – Absent  
Lisa Wong, Council – Here

**STAFF:**

Morgan Dawley, City Engineer – Absent  
Brandy Howe, City Planner – Here  
Lisa Ritchie, Administrative Assistant - Here

**I. Review draft chapters**

Brandy had red-lined recommended changes to the Redevelopment Master Plan Chapters for review which was included in the packet. The task force will need to review and discuss at the next meeting.

**II. Discussion**

Robert started off the discussion by stating, “There is value in revisiting the plan and what actually got done. It would help to show before and after images from where we were to what has been done, such as the Anchor Block site.” Lisa Wong inquired about the possibility of the images being interactive.

Brandy stated there is a program called Story Maps that is a GIS program that may be able to use. She will check with the WSB GIS department to see what options are available.

Robert stated both the Northbrook Study & Old Anchor site listed in the Redevelopment Master Plan has been fully executed. In the new plan, that should drop off. Brandy stated she hadn’t reviewed those documents as they already have a narrative. She added review of the documents that hadn’t been discussed before.

Robert stated that over the years, he has heard studies are being done and then not used such as the Living Streets Plan and the Bicycle & Sidewalk Plan. The Living Streets Plan is a reference document that Brandy thought was quite useful especially by engineering. Robert said we should update them and use them or we are going to throw them out. Robert is curious as to how they are going to be updated to be used in the Redevelopment Master Plan? Lisa Wong stated the Planning

Commission is the body that will use the Design Manual and the Living Streets Plan. Robert asked if we would be able to complete the Redevelopment Master Plan without the other documents being updated? Brandy stated the plans will be referenced and brought forward in a graphic format into the updated Redevelopment Master Plan. It will be reviewed by the Plan Review Task Force. Robert stated he would like to get the Redevelopment Master Plan right, he would like a concurrent effort to update those documents as well. Robert asked Lisa Wong, as the Planning liaison for her thoughts. Lisa stated at least the ones that are relevant to the downtown area could have a quick look. Brandy stated she feels confident about the engineering type plans are fine. The Downtown Design Manual, may have a new perspective on how we want the Downtown to look. So that one may require a bit of discussion. Lisa Wong stated that is currently in the works.

Robert stated the EDA will be taking on a new Housing Study. The one that was done in 2011, dealt specifically with the downtown area but there is value in expanding that city wide. This information could be included in the final Redevelopment Master Plan.

The Task Force reviewed the CHANGES SINCE 2012 document and stated the following: Rick Gelbmann asked Brandy to color code the text to correspond with the outlined colored locations on the map.

Lisa Wong stated the Library should be renamed to “FKA-Community Center”.

Brandy stated excluding the stuff that has already been developed, like Anchor Block, the green is what the Comp Plan says are the priority redevelopment sites and she would like that confirmed. Robert referenced item 3 on the map and indicated that is Berwald’s property. The Comp Plan shows as potential redevelopment. When the Comp Plan was last done, there was some discussion of a major land swap with Berwald’s so that was in the cards at the time. To the best of Robert’s knowledge, that is off the table now. Robert questioned if we should mirror the Comp Plan if we know it has changed? Lisa Wong stated it helps them align. Robert feels the Redevelopment Master Plan is its own document and should be kept to 10 years or less and reflect what is real. Rick Gelbmann and John Monge discussed the idea of identifying Item 3 (Berwald’s Storage Area) as a “Non-Developed/Underdeveloped” area rather than “Potential”. Robert would like to identify areas in the downtown that are not at their highest potential and something could happen here. There was discussion on how that would be interpreted by current property owners. Most agreed that owners may consider selling if the price is right. This conversation led to discussion of different scenarios of how the mapping could be identified for future development but also being mindful of current property owners. There was not a final conclusion but Robert stated he doesn’t think the Redevelopment Master Plan should match the Comp Plan. We should have a firm concept of what we want the downtown to be.

The task force then reviewed the Collection of Districts document. Robert stated the map as shown is fine. He pointed out the item: Develop a downtown park/square feature as a community destination and gathering space stated on the document has been an important item for a long time. We should create the vision and paint a picture of what it should be. Don Jensen stated he thinks we should do more to make North St. Paul and the Gateway Trail (more or less) unanimous. He said it is not attractive along the Gateway Trail. He doesn’t have any issues with the connections at Polar Ridge or Margaret but it would be nice to have something blocking the view by Tschifsky’s and the area around Century is not very inviting. Robert stated that is the over-arching purpose of the Redevelopment Master Plan. It is more detailed than the Comp Plan so when things come along, we don’t sign off on the vision and just go with whatever. Don agreed and stated that is why we are working on the Redevelopment Master Plan as some of the things that have happened are do not follow what we are looking at as far as planning is concerned. There was discussion around the Round-about that was in the works that hasn’t happened. Roberts wants to be sure going forward, we are conscious of our efforts and as things come up, refer to the Plan and decide if this is the appropriate time to execute projects in the plan. Lisa Wong stated it is the Park & Rec

Commission's liaison (Tim Cole) would like to know of any specific lots become available for potential parks. Don Jensen mentioned the need for funding if that were to be done. Brandy asked if we know of current TIF projects. Adding whoever is writing our TIF plans should be referencing the Redevelopment Master Plan. Lisa Ritchie stated she would forward the current TIF information to her. Lisa Wong stated our new city-manager, John Stark's background is in EDA and Planning. Brandy stated, anyone interested in developing within the city should be talking to him going forward. Brandy asked the commission if the Collection of Districts identified on the map is still valid? Robert stated they should be revisited. Commerce Park Development District has changed. McKnight Employment center, the vision fell out a little bit as a deal that had to get done to get the bus garage out of where it was to accommodate the Commerce Park Plan. Robert stated there are some prime redevelopment opportunities in the McKnight Employment Center. There was some discussion of current businesses located here and ideas for future development. It was suggested to have a trade-school or something of that nature in that area along with the Work Force Center, but Lisa Wong stated the Work Force Center moved out of North St. Paul. Lisa Wong added there had been some discussion a vision of combining public services such as the library, the food shelf and other non-profits into one-location.

Robert stated it would be worthy to revisit the Collection of Districts documents. It was decided that Brandy would create a draft to be reviewed by the task force. Robert added it would be good for public comment on that map.

Brandy stated for the next meeting, if people haven't had a chance to review the red-lined recommended changes for the Chapter's, please do so. Lisa Ritchie will be forwarding the documents to be reviewed via email.

Robert inquired about being locked into the Comp Plan as that plan it tied into broader regional planning with Met Council in terms of transportation etc. He inquired "What if we went in a completely different direction in an area of our Comp Plan? Are those things we need to go and get approval to bypass? Where are those lines drawn?" He asked as when we develop this document, what if we go completely 90 degrees in another direction? Lisa Ritchie stated that would be a question for John Stark to answer. Lisa Wong stated the Comp Plan is mandated the governor appointed entity, Met Council. She added that she thinks there are some hard and fast things that we have to do. She thinks the plan fluid but at the same time, there was a lot of work in community engagement. It is revisited and updated from time to time, as it has been recently. With that said, it may be worthwhile to keep some consistency with the Comp Plan that has been approved. It has been thru the Planning Commission, communities and City Council so there is that level of understanding. Rick Gelbmann added, "At a central level, there are regional urban services that get distributed and to get those services, each city has to give acknowledgement as to what they are doing. Within the city, it is a little less ridged. There is consistency with the Zoning regulations within the city. That has to be consistent with grants and planning. Rick agreed the new city manager should be able to provide information on this. Robert said a 15-20 minute discussion or explanation on how that works would be helpful for a Joint EDA & Planning Commission meeting. He added there are a number of things that have happened that weren't in the Comp Plan and most likely there wasn't any resubmission or request for change that happened as part of the Comp Plan process. Don Jensen stated he doesn't think North Saint Paul is going to go way out of our way as far as Met Council is concerned like Lake Elmo or Dayton did. Robert stated that's why he is trying to figure out where that line is. Part of the document is regional sewer plan and water. Is it possible that we go too far the other way and start running out of capacity? Lisa Wong stated the Council discusses this and Morgan Dawley (city engineer) keeps them up to date. "The council is looking at an additional water tower located at Tower Park, but it won't be for a while. Right now, we are okay." Per Robert, the Northbrook study stated we could

not do what we are doing right now without new a new water tower. Robert added, he knows he is getting off track but it all goes together.

Lisa Wong stated, "As for the Commerce Park area, MN Dot is done a study for the intersection of HWY 36 and HWY 120 and there is an upcoming public meeting. There are people from the Senate who are going to take a look at potential sites within the East Metro for bonding opportunities. The project is coming closer to a reality now.

Robert stated as far as projects are concerned, we can't get anything done along that road from a development standpoint from a developer's standpoint until we know the position of the project. Robert is hoping they put something there that brings people into North Saint Paul and makes us more valuable. Don Jensen it is such a valuable stretch now that the stop lights are gone on HWY 36, you can get to downtown Minneapolis, you can get to the airport, you can get to all kinds of places in 20 minutes which has value. Robert's concern is they will get rid of the stoplight at HWY 36/120 and people will just continue to blow by North Saint Paul.

Lisa Wong stated she will forward information she received from MNDOT on this on the upcoming project.

Robert stated that what happens there on that corner is important from an EDA and Planning standpoint. The best thing we can do is take everything on the north side of HWY 36 (DQ, the bike shop & Caribou Coffee) and bring them over to the Commerce Park area. That would be a big win for us. Rick Gelbmann stated that it is more than just the Intersection. The project goes all the way down to HWY 94. Robert added, we have to grab the Oakdale people coming down HWY 120 and the soon to be Hillcrest people as well.

Lisa Wong stated Washington County has done a study as well on HWY 120. They are exploring transportation options, in conjunction with MN DOT, going from downtown Minneapolis to Stillwater and even potentially connecting to Wisconsin.

Brandy asked for final thoughts...Don asked to confirm if Brandy plans to "take a swing" at the Collection of Districts draft? Brandy concurred. Lisa Wong inquired if there was a timeline on the Redevelopment Master Plan revision? John Monge stated the original plan was for 6 months but that has been extended to July. Robert added the Planning Commission will also need to get their plans updated and the EDA needs to get the housing study done. Lisa Ritchie stated we need to consult with the city manager before moving forward with updating other plans as no funds have been allocated in the Capital Improvement Plan for this project. Don stated EDA will pay for the Housing Study. John Monge jokingly inquired about a slush fund? Brandy indicated she asked someone from WSB to do a market study and that information will be on next month's agenda. Brandy inquired on the date for the January meeting, which is January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **III. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM