

Lot A - Vision & Planning

Analysis Process, Recommendations and Scenarios



The City of Minneapolis has plans for major development around the new Cedar Avenue Light Rail Station. The first proposed development will be on the Lot A site. The West Bank Business Association, West Bank Community Coalition and West Bank Community Development Corp. are working together to educate the community on the development and RFP (Request for Proposals) process and plan a community response to in advance of development.

Development may result in loss of affordable commercial parking, which will affect residents and businesses. The lot in question is a city-owned lot, and as the city has proactively notified stakeholders about the potential development this is an opportunity to help educate the community and help create a collective vision that could positively impact the development RFP.

This document includes an analysis of issues surrounding development, an assessment of community needs, and a strategy for engaging the community in planning. A summary of criteria to serve as a starting point for conversation includes recommendations on parking, pedestrian traffic, vehicular traffic, building massing and design, and addressing community needs.

This resource was created by the Lot A Vision & Planning Committee: Members of the West Bank community, West Bank Business Association, West Bank Community Coalition, West Bank Community Development Corporation, University District Alliance, and with guidance from the City of Minneapolis.

Questions? Please contact the West Bank Business Association: info@thewestbank.org

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Maps



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Photos





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Minneapolis - Cedar Riverside

0 30 60 90 120 feet

Summary and Approach

Between July and December, 2012, a group of stakeholders met regularly to discuss potential development issues and RFP planning criteria for Lot A. (see map.)

The group of stakeholders included community organizations, area businesses, and representatives from the city of Minneapolis. (For a complete list of participants over the 5-month period, please see the section “participants and stakeholders.”)

The goals of this group were several:

- to examine (not duplicate) area plans and recommendations
 - to analyze the potential issues of development in Lot A
 - to create a plan for outreach and educating the community on the Lot A development and RFP process in general
 - to engage the community on an educated, focused response to the proposed development
 - to establish a set of recommended criteria in advance of an RFP for Lot A
- Participation in the initial conversation was open. Conversation included the following stakeholders, participants, and community members. The City of Minneapolis provided guidance about the RFP process and updates throughout the conversation.

Participants and Stakeholders

- Hussein Ahmed, West Bank Community Coalition
- Joe Bernard, City of Minneapolis
- Mark Dudek Johnson, West Bank Business Association & Cedar Cultural Center
- Robin Garwood, City of Minneapolis
- Dick Gilyard, University District Alliance
- Rod Johnson, Midwest Mountaineering
- Tim Mungaven, West Bank CDC
- Jamie Schumacher, West Bank Business Association
- Russom Solomon, Red Sea Owner
- Peg Wolff, University of Minnesota Community Relations
- The West Bank Business Association Parking Committee
- Abdulkadir Warsame, Riverside Plaza Tenants Association

Why this conversation is important:

The conversation is critical and timely for a number of reasons.

- The development of Lot A could result in loss of affordable commercial parking, which will affect residents and businesses.
- Because this is a city-owned lot and because the city has proactively notified us about the potential development, we see this is an opportunity to help educate the community and help create a collective vision that could positively impact the RFP that will be created.
- While the Small Area Plan has specific language about the use of Lot A - this work would build on previous studies

Stakeholder Outreach: Audience Identified

The development of Lot A has immediate and periphery stakeholders that could be affected by development of Lot A. The committee identified the following categories and groups to be targeted in an outreach campaign following the creation of an analysis document.

- Residents
 - Businesses
 - Organizations & Boards(as communicators to reach to various audiences)
 - Institutions
 - Property owners
 - Guests to the West Bank Area (via businesses and other)
 - Events that use the lot (or other lots occupied when the lot is under development)
- The group connected with stakeholders in the planning process and will be conducting broader outreach to larger groups in January and February.

Topics for Analysis

The group discussed and analyzed the following issues, among others

- Existing studies (what do they say about this Lot and what are they missing?)
- Commercial Parking (Existing Spaces, Cost of businesses, Rate of use)
- New vision / City Vision (looking at previous plans)
- Connectivity to the area
- Physical Fit (what can fit in this space?)
- Relation to Street (how does this property relate to the adjacent streets?)
- Mix of Uses
- Building Massing
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic

Concurrent Development

The group wanted to be mindful of current, planned, and potential development that could shape the context of Lot A development.

Current / Recently completed

- Riverside / streetscape (done!)
- Currie Park Flats development by Fine Associates
- 7West development by Alatus
- Possible move of 1500 S 6th Street to a new location
- Rebuilding of Brian Coyle Center
- Central Corridor Light Rail opening in 2014
- Cedar Avenue Sidewalks project in 2013/2014
- 15th Ave and 4th Street full reconstruction in 2014
- Pedestrian improvements at 7 Corners
- Redevelopment of the 400 Bar

Related / Potential:

- Viking Bar
- 7 Corners / Pedestrian Study
- Riverside Imports
- Dania Hall / 427 Cedar

Issue Areas

The group looked at the specific assets of the site, the edges and the issues that affect the edges and how this lot interfaces with the community.

Issue	Description
1. Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential loss of affordable public parking • 93 parking spaces
2. Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City's vision for neighborhood. (Small area plan, trench area, etc. Have all visions been synthesized into one? how do we summarize studies? how is wasted space reclaimed?) • Neighborhood vision, and how this fits into the larger context. • How does this interact with Cedar Ave? (Does it come all the way out, etc.) Helping connect to 7 Corners. • Height - how big will this building be? • What is the street position in regard to 4th Street?
3. Pedestrian/ Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike Path Relative Site • How will this development help/hinder/connect to bike paths and increase pedestrian traffic? • (How does this actually work upon implementation?)
4. Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing vs office space, etc?
5. Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail? Street level retail? Live/work? Live space above? • If it's housing, is it market rate? What will the housing type be? (Both low-income, market rate?) • Market study would bring some info out (what's realistic.) • Right now, a lot of our housing is not owner-occupied.
6. Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this utilize trench to connect, how does this building act like a conduit and not a barrier? • Does this reinforce the existing commercial?
6a. 16th Ave (relation to street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16th Avenue has to be addressed also. • Should it remain cobblestone? • Where should this access for building/building be? (4th, 16th?) • Delivery access for buildings/businesses.
6b. Peripheral Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brick/Building - Old Gluek Building. • How will this building fit with other places later on? • How does this fit with University plans for the four quadrants.
7. Environmental Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Massing • Green Space / Public Space
8. General Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the New Vision?
9. Vehicular Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will development of this lot shape / change vehicular traffic in the area?

Suggestions for RFP Criteria based on issues

A. Parking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any proposal for development on Lot A must include a comprehensive plan for replacing the existing affordable parking in the long term and providing interim parking during the construction period. 2. The new development should replace the parking now provided on the site on a one-for-one bases in addition to providing adequate parking for any new uses included in the proposal. 3. The cost of this replacement parking to the user and to businesses should be comparable to the costs involved in the existing validation system. Interim parking during construction should have the same cost structure. 4. Policies for the control of the replacement parking must insure that parking is reserved primarily for business users and that theater venues, like Mixed Blood, have adequate spaces available for performance events. 5. Control policies should also minimize use by students and park-and-ride users. 6. Part of the replacement spaces on the site should be easily accessible street level parking, if possible
B. Pedestrian /bike	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any proposal for development on Lot A should enhance the existing pedestrian and bicycle environment both within the development and where it interfaces with the surrounding community. 2. Where the development abuts Cedar Avenue, structures should replicate the setback and massing of the existing buildings to the south. 3. Commercial uses with direct access for pedestrians on Cedar should be developed along this edge. 4. The new structure should extend as far north as possible to help narrow the “trench gap” between the Lot A site and the Seven Corners area. 5. Multiple pedestrian egress options from commercial parking should be included in the design 6. The vacated 3rd Avenue west of Cedar should not be re-opened to vehicular traffic but a generous pedestrian and bike travel way should connect Cedar to 16th Avenue. 7. An ample bike and pedestrian path should be provided along the north edge of the expanded Lot A site in conjunction with the Central Corridor Light Rail right-of-way. This path should be integrated into the design of new buildings on the site and provide opportunities for intercourse between the path and other uses on the site. 8. The 4th Street edge of the site should be pedestrian friendly
C. Vehicular	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be no direct vehicular access off of Cedar Avenue. 2. Pedestrian friendly vehicular access from 16th is preferable. 3. 16th Avenue should provide service access to the buildings on Cedar Avenue and vehicular access to new development on Lot A.
D. Uses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priority should be given to development proposals that meet the needs of the local community. This includes commercial services, like a supermarket, jobs and home ownership opportunities
E. Building Design	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building massing along Cedar 16th and 4th Street should maintain a pedestrian scale 2. Building designs should not create a “wall” on the south side of the Trench which would block sunlight from entering. 3. Building designs should make good use of sun light on the 4th Street side.

Guiding Principles

- I. The existing historic strip commercial along Cedar Avenue is a valuable asset to the neighborhood and the region. The character of the buildings, the quality of the pedestrian experience and the diversity of locally owned businesses all contribute to this asset. They should be preserved and enhanced by any new development that occurs.
- II. Parking: a major positive feature of the existing business district is the publicly controlled reservoir of affordable commercial parking available to customers of all businesses near the Cedar Riverside intersection. The diversity of the existing commercial district depends on this resource. Any new development should preserve and enhance this affordable communal commercial parking reservoir.
- III. Pedestrian environment: the existing historic strip commercial buildings along Cedar Avenue provide a framework for an inviting and active pedestrian experience. Any new development should enhance the pedestrian experience by
 - a. closing the “trench gap” on the Cedar Avenue bridge
 - b. maintaining a two to three story height limit on structures that abut Cedar
 - c. expanding the pedestrian and bike connections within the neighborhood
 - d. improving and expanding existing pedestrian space.
- IV. Let the sun shine in- Any new development architectural design should avoid creating extensive dark areas created by the shade from new buildings.
- V. Uses- Priority should be given to development proposals that meet the needs of the local community. This includes commercial services, like a supermarket, jobs and home ownership opportunities.

Usage Scenarios

- Cedar Interface - Have active commercial activities along Cedar at grade
- Space that creates job opportunities (for example: Micro Manufacturing)
- Community center (gym, etc)
- Full-service grocery store
- Senior housing
- Owner-occupied housing

Recommendations for Review and Comment

CPED should present the following information to WBBA and WBCC for review and comment:

1. Draft RFP-with CPED recommended Criteria before presentation to City Council
2. WBBA and WBCC should have access to the review of competing proposals by having representation on the RFP review team traditionally established by CPED.
3. The final recommendation CPED will make to the City Council
4. Implementation details including, building plans, parking plan, financial plans and public infrastructure requirements at least one month prior to the real estate closing on the land sale.

Draft of Community Meeting Agenda

The group recommended having meetings on three separate occasions. one evening meeting, one daytime meeting, and one weekend meeting. Another meeting may be shared on the web. This will allow us to reach a broader audience. These meetings will be in supplement to the regular board meetings and staff meetings of the stakeholders. Big Meeting(s) will include:

- Info about RFP process and how it works
- The city's timeline / rough timeline
- Summary Information about other development
- Presentation
- Discussion / feedback

Resources and Studies

Cedar Riverside Parking Study:

<http://wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/CedarRiversideParkingStudy.pdf>

Don't Pass Us By Project:

<http://www.dontpassusby.org/2012/06/06/exploring-the-economic-impact/>

Small Area Plan Notes (with key points highlighted):

http://wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/OpportunitySites_SmallAreaPlanNotes.pdf

UDA Phase II Report:

<http://wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/UDA-Phase2-Final.pdf>

West Bank Area Implementation Study:

<http://wbba.thewestbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/WestBankAreaImplementationStudy.pdf>