City of Duluth
Planning Division

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 11, 2014

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: John Judd, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Report from Planning Commission Sub-Committee, regarding the recommendations in the Park Point Small Area Plan.

The December 17, 2013 Special Planning Commission meeting included a discussion of the Recommendations for the Park Point Small Area Plan. We reviewed the plan purpose and an outline of the Small Area Plan process. Your packet also included the following: Chronological list of Plan Meetings and their Discussion Topics, Demographic Data for 2000 and 2010 Census, and a Build Out analysis, the results of an Alignment and Traffic Study, Summaries of comments from the two public meetings, the collected Public Comments as of to December 5, 2013, a copy of the Park Point Community Club Survey Questions and Responses, and a set of Implementation Maps and a Draft of the Recommendations Small Area Plan process.

Following my presentation of the above material, two additional Minority reports were presented to the Commission by members of the Small Area Plan Stakeholder Committee. An additional 17 individuals spoke regarding the elements of the planning process and proposed recommendations.

President Guggenbuehl suggested that, due the complexity and importance of the issues raised by the two minority reports and the public comments, a sub-committee of the Planning Commission be formed to work with planning staff to review all of the material and comments and develop suggested action regarding the Park Point Small Area Plan plan's recommendations. The balance of the Planning Commission supported Guggenbuehl and appointed Commissioners Garner Beeman and Sydow to the serve on the sub-committee. They also provided some additional questions for the sub-committee to consider during their evaluations.

The Park Point Small Area Plan sub-committee met on January 2nd along with Planning and Construction Services Director Hamre, Land use Supervisor Froseth, Senior Planner Judd and the Planning Commission's representatives to on the Small Area Plan and Stakeholder Committee member Rand.

Staff initially addressed the Commissioners questions from the Dec. 17, Special meeting. The current status of Park Point Street ends are as noted in the attached table. A vacated street which increases an adjacent property owners parcel size, does add to the City tax base. Any request to vacate all or a portion of a street end would need to follow the process as provided for in the City's Unified Development Chapter. The Parks and Recreation Commission wanted water access points approximately every 2 blocks and do not want any vacations of street ends in favor of the adjacent property owners. Taking into consideration the 2 Minority reports the Plan Committee supported most of the recommendations with the exception of the status of the street ends.

Among the reasons for moving the "S" curve included safer access to and utility of Franklin Park, the movement vehicle traffic to the more commercially developed and open Minnesota Ave. and away from the most densely residential area along Lake Avenue. Bikes could change lanes after the bridge by of circling under the lift bridge or crossing Minnesota Ave. via one the side streets.

The sub-committee met again on January 29th absent Rand, but with the additional attendance of Parks and Recreation Director Bergen. Subsequent to their consideration of the recommendations of the Plan Committee, the two Minority reports and Staff recommendations, the following are the major findings of the Planning Commission's Park Point Small Area Plan sub-committee regarding the Plan's recommendations.

Endorse the Recommendations for Goal 1 entirely.

Endorse the Recommendations for Goal 2 entirely.

Endorse the Recommendations for Goal 3 with the additional provisions that:
The Tier 2 access points ***will not be mentioned in the pamphlets or shown on the maps.***

- Install Public access signs ***only at*** officially recognized ***Tier 1 water*** access points on the Bay and Lake side.
- ***Tier 2 access points will be recognized by a marking device on/in the sidewalk***.

Endorse the Recommendations for Goal 4 with the addition to Item (F) under Recommendations (Non-Motorized): ***that if the relocation of the "S" curve is not approved then 4ft bike lanes are provided on both sides of Minnesota Avenue from 8th to 13th street.***

Endorse the Recommendations for Goal 5 with the additional provisions that:
Under Item (E) also designate as a Tier One access point, ***Trails and natural area from Sky Harbor Airport to the end of the point.***

Under Item (F) Tier Two ***access points will be recognized by a marking device on/in the sidewalk*** and ***These Tier 2 access points to will not be mentioned in the pamphlets or shown on the map.***

Item (G) be re-written as follows: ***Subject to Further Research, consider petitions, brought by adjacent property owners, to the City Planning Commission the potential vacation of all or a portion of the following street easements:***

And that the Park Point Street Ends Draft Recommendations table is modified to reflect the changes recommended by item G. above.

See attached listing below.

Park Point Street Ends Draft Recommendations 1/29/2014

Street	Avenue		Lake Side Access		Bay Side Access
South Pier	South Lake		Tier 2		Tier 2
8th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
9th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Previously Vacated
10th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Previously Vacated
11th	South Lake		S-T-F-R		Previously Vacated
12th	South Lake		S-T-F-R		Previously Vacated
13th	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Franklin Park)		Tier 1 Franklin bayside)
14th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
15th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
16th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Tier 2
17th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
18th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Keep R-O-W
19th	Minnesota		Tier 2 (ped/bike trail end)		Tier 2 (Sand Point)
20th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
21st	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
22nd	Minnesota		Tier 2		S-T-F-R
23rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
24th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
25th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
26th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
27th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
28th	Minnesota		Tier 2		S-T-F-R
29th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
30th	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Lafayette Sq.)		S-T-F-R
31st	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Lafayette Sq.)		S-T-F-R
32nd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
33rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
34th	Minnesota		Tier 2		S-T-F-R
35th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
36th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
37th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		S-T-F-R
38th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Tier 2
39th	Minnesota		S-T-F-R		N/A
40th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
41st	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
42nd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
43rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A

(R-O-W) **Right-of-Way -** A street right of way

(S-T-F-R) **Subject-to-Further-Research**

Park Point Small Area Plan

Draft Recommendations list as revised and approved by the Plan Committee at the November 13, 2013 Committee meeting.

NOTE: *Italicized* items in *RED* were added to the recommendations.
***Italicized* items in *BLUE* were removed from the recommendations.**

Goal 1.
Determine carrying capacity of the land in terms of water, sewer and utilities infrastructure for future commercial and residential development opportunities.

Rationale

The existing water and sewer lines on Park Point are aging like most of the infrastructure throughout the City of Duluth. Recent development activity on Park Point, including two proposed hotels, has raised concerns about the capacity and condition of the existing system. Park Point is surrounded by water on all sides and with aging infrastructure as a concern, it is a necessity to preserve and protect the water quality of Lake Superior and the Superior Bay. Based on current land availability, there is potential for residential and commercial development opportunities. Therefore, it will be important to maintain and upgrade water and sewage systems to meet current demand and for future needs.

Recommendations

A. Replace and upgrade water and sewer infrastructure when damaged and/or feasible with industry standard materials. This will reduce the need for repair and maintenance.

B. Upgrade the existing wastewater pump station to maintain capacity and ensure reliability

C. Seek grant opportunities for replacement/upgrade to water and sewer lines.

- Minnesota Point Preservation Society a 501C-3 nonprofit to partner with the City for grant opportunities that meet the goals and objectives for funding, and are financially feasible for both entities to fund improvements to water and sewer lines.

D. Bury overhead utility lines when feasible to reduce the need for repair and maintenance, improve visual character of the area, remove utility clutter and provide more area for improvements in the right-of-way. This should be a special consideration during future major street improvement projects

Goal 2.
Change future land use categories and zoning map designations to better reflect existing land use while minimizing potential negative impacts to surrounding area.

Rationale

A large area along Superior Bay between the Army Reserve facility and the Corp of Engineers is currently zoned Industrial-Waterfront (I-W). The I-W district is intended to provide for water-dependent and port-dependent industrial uses, which include research laboratories, industrial services, manufacturing light and heavy, and rail and ship yards. It is recommended that this district is located away from residential development. The area surrounding the I-W district is primarily residential with institutional and recreation uses along the bay front. Permitted uses within the I-W district would not be compatible with existing land use. The current zoning is not consistent with the Comprehensive Land Plan. A mix of commercial waterfront, recreation and residential use would complement the existing land uses.

Recommendations

A. Amend the Comprehensive Plan – Future Land Use Map from Institutional (Corp of Engineer and Boat Club area) and Transportation and Utilities (Army Reserve Facility) to Commercial Waterfront. A land use designation of Commercial Waterfront calls for waterfront dependent uses sometimes mixed with residential and includes tourist or recreation-oriented uses.

B. Rezone the I-W district to zoning designations that are consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This will include zone districts such as Mixed-Use Waterfront to match the Commercial Waterfront land use, Park and Open Space (P-1) for the areas identified as Recreational and Residential Traditional (R-1) for the areas with a future land use category of Traditional Neighborhood, as shown in the map on page __.

C. Rezone Block 4 (South of Pellenger St. and East of Minnesota Avenue) of the Oatka Beach Addition Plat from Residential Traditional (R-1) to Park and Open Space (P-1), as shown in the map on page __.

Goal 3.
Improve wayfinding and signage for recreational, residential and commercial use.

Rationale

Park Point has unique natural and cultural features, including waterfront parks and open space, marinas, scenic views and water and land based recreation. The natural and manmade features are important to and used not only by residents of Park Point and other residents of our City but also a great many visitors from outside the area as well. These amenities have also attracted hotel development and vacation rental activity. Improved wayfinding will allow for a safe and more positive, user friendly approach to the area by providing locations, directions and information to visitors and resident alike. Orienting people to their surroundings and providing better navigational tools such as signage for public access points to beach, trail and natural areas regardless of the mode of travel (pedestrian, bicycle or motorized) will also assist in mitigating the intentional or incidental trespass onto private property. At some future date much of this information could be made available as an app smartphones.

Recommendations

A. Install an informational kiosk on the north (Canal Park) and/or south (Canal Pier) side of the lift bridge, primarily for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The kiosk would provide a location for residents and visitors to get information about the unique character of the Park Point environment and locations of publicly sanctioned places to visit. In addition to free maps, pamphlets and other literature available at the kiosk, a fixed large map of the area can also be displayed along with a 'do's and don'ts"/code of conduct list to provide navigational and behavioral guidance for visitors and residents on the point. ***The Tier 2 access points to will not be mentioned in the pamphlets or shown on the map.***

B. Develop and distribute a wayfinding map/pamphlet of Park Point that showcases the cultural and natural amenities of the area and includes a code of conduct. This map/pamphlet will be available at the kiosk, as recommended above and also available to the public at information bureaus, hotels, restaurants and vacation rentals around the City, including Canal Park and on Park Point. ***The Tier 2 access points to will not be mentioned in the pamphlets or shown on the map.***

C. Install Public access signs ***only*** at officially recognized ***Tier 1*** water access points on the Bay and Lake side.

- Signage will be consistent with the City of Duluth Park and Recreation sign program.

D. Install bike route signs and boulevard pavement marking placement signage along Minnesota Avenue to better facilitate bike path identification and navigation.

E. Install directional signage for bike and pedestrian wayfinding in Canal Park and Park Point. The directional signage will be part of a larger sign program that will be used throughout the City. Directional signage will be aligned with information provided on a kiosk and a map.

F. A higher level of enforcement the of the existing park regulations will be necessary all along the point as more visitors use the greater number of identified and sanctioned accesses to the Lake and Bay. The seasonal "Park Ranger" concept has been successful elsewhere.

Goal 4.
Provide safe and convenient motorized and non-motorized transportation options throughout the study area.

Rationale

Vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian and other modes of travel utilize the existing streets and sidewalks on Park Point. The primary routes for these modes of travel are from the Lift Bridge along Lake Avenue to the 12th Street diagonal, and then Minnesota Avenue to the Recreation area. The seasonal increase in the volume of vehicular traffic during warmer months elevates the need for increased efforts to ensure safe transportation. Vehicular traffic patterns and circulation can be improved by re-routing traffic to a roadway more appropriate for heavier

traffic that also passes through adjacent existing commercial and other more intensive land uses. Pedestrian and bicycle travel can also be enhanced by improving the existing sidewalk conditions, providing safe and well signed bike routes, and re-allocation of the existing improved right-of-way (ROW) to facilitate multi-use pedestrian and bike lanes.

Recommendations (Vehicular)

During the summer of 2013, Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) conducted a preliminary analysis of two realignment alternatives for Lake Avenue. The two main objectives in doing this would be to provide better access to and utility of Franklin Park and move traffic to the more commercially developed Minnesota Avenue and away from the densely residential area along Lake Avenue.

Two alternatives to accomplish this were evaluated. The first alternative closes the motor vehicle connection for Lake Avenue to Minnesota Avenue on both the north and south ends with access to Lake Avenue occurring on 9th to 12th Streets. This alternative provides an opportunity for Lake Avenue to be redesigned as a local street with treatments more typical of those found on residential streets. The second alternative creates one-way pairs on Lake Avenue and Minnesota Avenue from 8th to 13th Streets with Minnesota serving as a southbound one-way and Lake Avenue a northbound one-way.

Minnesota Avenue

A. Relocate the "S" curve from Lake Avenue to Minnesota Avenue from 12th Street to 8th Street allowing the main traffic pattern to move onto Minnesota Avenue from 8th Street to 13th Streets. The motor vehicle connections between Lake Avenue and Minnesota Avenue would remain from 9th to 12th Streets.

B. The horizontal alignment selected for Minnesota Avenue utilizes two curves each with a 220 foot radius which meet the State Aid 30 mph urban horizontal curve standards. The typical section used for this study includes two 11- foot through lanes, a 2- foot reaction shoulder on the north side of the road, an 8- foot parking lane and a 6- foot sidewalk on the south side of the roadway. This results in a total pavement width of 32 feet plus a 6- foot sidewalk.

C. Provide curb extension (bump out) on the west side of Minnesota Avenue at the 13th Street intersection. The curb extension would provide shorter pedestrian crossings and place pedestrians in a position to better view motorists and vice-versa improving sight distance.

D. The above re-alignment would require existing right-of-way to be purchased from at least two and up to six private homeowners, depending on the select design. However, if variances were granted for smaller/slower (20 mph) horizontal curves and the parking and sidewalk were eliminated, it may be possible to greatly reduce the amount of right-of-way to be acquired and avoid any conflicts with the utility poles.

E. Redesign or Relocate or bury the City sanitary lift station at 8th Street to minimize foot print.

Lake Avenue

A. Design a "Bicycle Boulevard" for Lake Avenue from 8th Street to 12th Street. This design provides for a lower volume, slower and safer travel way to be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

B. Bicycle Boulevard design will include two 10-foot drive lanes, two 8-foot parking lanes, two 4-foot boulevards, and two 5-foot sidewalks.

Attributes of the Bicycle Boulevard design for Lake Avenue are:

- *Bicycle boulevards are low volume; low speed residential streets where improvements have been made to give bicyclists some priority for travel.*
- *Bicycle boulevards generally appeal to all types of bicyclists.*
- *Bicycle boulevards are sometimes used as an alternate or to supplement routes on higher volume and higher speed streets.*
- *Bicycle boulevard pavement marking placement encourages bicyclists to travel in the correct direction reducing conflicts with opening car doors.*
- *Bicycle access at the north and south ends can be accomplished with curb cuts and trail connections.*
- *The trail crossing of Minnesota Avenue at 13th Street could include a pedestrian activated rectangular rapid flashing beacon which has a documented high rate of motorist compliance (>80%)*
- *The overall design enhances the aesthetic character of the adjacent residential area while providing users a safe, functional appropriately scaled multimodal facility.*

Utility Considerations

A. Utility poles to be relocated and utility lines buried when and where possible.

B. If utility poles remain in sidewalk area, sidewalks must meet ADA requirements.

C. Relocate and/or install storm sewer, sanitary sewer, or water main systems in the area as necessary.

Recommendations (Non-motorized)

A. Reclaim and redesign Franklin Square Park to increase its capacity, and with the existing "S" curve removed, the park can be expanded. Safety is increased for users of the park, especially the Tot Lot which is no longer divided by a 30 mph roadway. These changes will improve access to the Lake and provide increased for public facilities for the park.

B. Diagonal road (12th Street diagonal) between Franklin Square Park and Tot Lot is removed and bike/recreation trail added around the park to a crossing to the Bay side and St. Louis Ave. at 13th Street

C. A curb extension and crossing signal at 13th St. and Minnesota Ave. will provide a safer and shorter pedestrian crossing distance and better sight lines for all user groups.

D. An improved sidewalk connection would also be made from Minnesota Ave. along the Bayside to the existing South Pier walkway. The Lakeside of the South Pier will be designated as a Tier two Beach access point.

E. Improve St. Louis Avenue R-O-W as a recreational pathway from 13th Street to 19th St.

F. Complete sidewalk improvements along Minnesota Avenue and Lake Avenue between the bridge and 13th St.

G. Reallocate/restripe the 44ft curb to curb space including shifting the location of driving lanes, parking lanes, and bike lanes along Minnesota Avenue from 19th Street to the Park Point Recreation Area. From West to East 11ft Parking lane, 2-11ft. driving lanes and 11ft bike (wheeled) lane.

H. Concerns that the operation of the traffic signal at the intersection of Buchanan Street and Lake Avenue in Canal Park, north of the Lift Bridge, has exacerbated the traffic problems at the North end of Park Point were examined. Revision of the traffic signal design and adjusting timing plans for morning, afternoon, off-peak and weekend peak periods for this traffic signal would optimize operations for all traffic conditions.

Goal 5.
Define public access/use of improved and unimproved rights-of-way (Street-Ends).

Rationale

Public access and street-end rights are a long standing issue on Park Point. Their primary purpose of which is to access developed or developable property. Historical use of the street ends has been to provide access to the lake and bay for visitors, Duluthians and residents of Park Point. Several of the street ends are also used for access to homes and are utilized by adjacent property owners for yard area. Each street-end has its specific merits that will be considered during the inventory and analysis phase. The recommendations below will help to establish improved official lake and bay access, but will also look at opportunities to vacate street-ends allowing adjacent property owners to obtain additional property.

Recommendations

A. Remove section of City Legislative Code Charter allowing public dockage at all street ends on Superior Bay side.

B. Notify all property owners who have structures within any existing street easement that they must either have or acquire an approved Concurrent Use Permit.

C. Endorse the Tier 1 and Tier 2 system Parks and Recreation recommendation but with fewer Tier 2 access points and more distance between those points.

D. Identify and categorize street-ends based on established criteria for retention as Right-of Way, improvement for public access per the two tier system or allow for the partial or entire vacation of some street ends/easements identified as "useless" for street right of way. The set of criteria used to help identify and categorize the best Lake/Bay access points with the least negative impact:

- Level of environmental sensitivity as determined by Department of Natural Resources Corps of Engineers
- Presence of, or future location of, public / private utilities
- Constructability and cost of public improvement
- Access to housing adjacent to an existing easement
- Easement leading and/or adjacent to housing facing Lake Ave. R-O-W
- Distance of 3 or 4 blocks between access points is acceptable

E. Designate the "Tier One" access points to Lake and Bay Sides of Park Point. Tier One access points should provide a full range of amenities i.e.: Garbage collection, toilets, supervised recreation areas an adequate parking.

Lake side locations are:

Franklin Park

Lafayette Square

Park Point Beach House area

Trails and natural area from Sky Harbor Airport to the end of the point.

Bay side locations are:

Old Boathouse site 13th St.

Improved easement/access adjacent to the Sand Point Yacht Club (20th St.)

Park Point Beach House area.

F. Designate "Tier Two" access points established in an approximately 3 to 4 block interval pattern as trail linkages to Lake and Bay Sides of Park Point from the Avenues with minimal improvements. Improvements at the Tier two accesses may include some of the following: ***designating symbol (signage),*** modified trail surface (gravel, sand, board or beach carpet) and screening from adjacent properties (plantings, sand fence, earth berm) garbage collection. ***These Tier 2 access points to will not be mentioned in the pamphlets or shown on the map.***

See attached listing.

G. Consider potential vacation petitions by adjacent property owners of the following street ends:

See attached listing.

Park Point Street Ends Draft Recommendations 11/13/2013

Street	Avenue		Lake Side Access		Bay Side Access
South Pier	South Lake		Tier 2		Tier 2
8th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
9th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Previously Vacated
10th	South Lake		Keep R-O-W		Previously Vacated
11th	South Lake		Vacateable		Previously Vacated
12th	South Lake		Vacateable		Previously Vacated
13th	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Franklin Park)		Tier 1 Franklin bayside)
14th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
15th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
16th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Tier 2
17th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
18th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Keep R-O-W
19th	Minnesota		Tier 2 (ped/bike trail end)		Tier 2 (Sand Point)
20th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
21st	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
22nd	Minnesota		Tier 2		Vacateable
23rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
24th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
25th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
26th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Keep R-O-W
27th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
28th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Vacateable
29th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
30th	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Lafayette Sq.)		Vacateable
31st	Minnesota		Tier 1 (Lafayette Sq.)		Vacateable
32nd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
33rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Tier 2
34th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Vacateable
35th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
36th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
37th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		Vacateable
38th	Minnesota		Tier 2		Tier 2
39th	Minnesota		Vacateable		N/A
40th	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
41st	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
42nd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A
43rd	Minnesota		Keep R-O-W		N/A