

MEMORANDUM

To: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole
Prepared By: Jim Voll, Planning Project Manager, (612) 673-3887
Chris Vrchota, Principal City Planner, (612) 673-5467
Date: August 20, 2020
Subject: Proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment: Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

CPED staff is seeking the City Planning Commission's feedback regarding the amendment related to a proposed Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Overlay District to replace the current MR Mississippi River Critical Area Overlay District. The height regulations and how they integrate with the proposed built form districts, were presented to the City Planning Commission of the Whole at the meeting of August 6, 2020.

The amendment would impact the following chapters of the zoning code and subdivision ordinance:

- Chapter 551 Overlay Districts
- Chapter 598 Land Subdivision Regulations

The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) extends 72-miles through the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, from the townships of Dayton and Ramsey in Hennepin and Anoka counties downstream to just south of Hastings in Dakota County. Governor Wendell Anderson designated the MRCCA in 1976 by Executive Order 130. It was renewed by Governor Al Quie in 1979 by Executive Order 79-19.

The MRCCA is governed by special land planning requirements and land development regulations. These regulations, which are implemented through local MRCCA plans and ordinances, protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational, and transportation resources of this section of the Mississippi River. In response to residents and interest groups raising concerns around the adequacy of the MRCCA regulations, the Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish rules for the MRCCA in 2009 and 2013. Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6106, became effective on January 4, 2017, and replace Executive Order 79-19, which previously governed land use in the MRCCA. They provide the land planning and regulatory framework that protects the MRCCA's resources. CPED staff reviewed and commented on these rules and the comment letter was received and filed by the City Council at the Z&P Committee meeting on June 6, 2016.

The adopted rules formed the basis for the updated MRCCA plan that was reviewed and adopted as Appendix A of Minneapolis 2040 in October of 2019. To implement the adopted rules and MRCCA plan, the City is required to update its zoning ordinance to revise the current MRCCA zoning regulations. These updated zoning regulations are required to be implemented as an overlay district. The DNR created a MRCCA model ordinance to guide development of local MRCCA ordinances. The draft ordinance is attached to this report. Please note that it does not yet have section numbering.

The draft ordinance is based on the DNR model ordinance with relatively minor changes in language and formatting to more closely match the style and requirements of the Minneapolis Zoning Code. The one exception are the height regulations, where additional requirements were necessary to coordinate with future built form regulations. The draft ordinance has the following sections:

GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS – This section contains definitions related to the MRCCA.

ADMINISTRATION – This section defines procedures and conditions of approval for variances and conditional use permits. Variances and conditional use permits are required to meet findings as required by state statute and must consider the potential impacts on primary conservation areas, public river corridor views, and other resources identified in the MRCCA plan. The administration section also provides regulations for uses nonconforming to the MRCCA ordinance.

MRCCA DISTRICTS – The MRCCA rules established the following districts:

- Rural and Open Space (CA-ROS)
- River Neighborhood (CA-RN)
- River Towns and Crossings (CA-RTC)
- Separated from River (CA-SR)
- Urban Mixed (CA-UM)
- Urban Core (CA-UC)

The intent and level of protection for each of the six districts is based on the natural resource values within the district, with the greatest levels of protection in those areas that abut the river and still retain natural features. Greater flexibility is provided in those districts that contain areas with more limited resource values, areas that are separated from the river, and developed areas of the two major cities – downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul. This array of districts is intended to more accurately reflect the different land uses existing within the MRCCA, current development patterns, and proposed future development. All six districts are geographically present in Minneapolis.

SPECIAL LAND USE PROVISIONS – This section provides regulations for agricultural uses, river-dependent uses, and wireless communication towers. Provisions in the MRCCA rules and model ordinance related to feedlots, forestry, and nonmetallic mining were not included in the ordinance, as they are not allowed uses in Minneapolis.

STRUCTURE HEIGHT AND PLACEMENT – This section contains the regulations for building and structure height and setbacks for each MRCCA District.

The current MRCCA ordinance has river setback requirements and references the SH Shoreland Overlay District’s height limitation of 2.5 stories, or 35 feet, whichever is less, within 300 feet of the river. Otherwise, height outside of the Shoreland, is currently regulated in the MRCCA only by underlying zoning. A major change of the new regulations, is the addition of maximum height regulations for each MRCCA district, as follows:

	CA-ROS	CA-RN	CA-RTC	CA-SR	CA-UM	CA-UC
Height	35’	35’	48’	Underlying Zoning	65’	Underlying Zoning
River Setback	200’	100’	75’	N/A	50’	Underlying Zoning
Bluff Setback	100’	40’	40’	40’	40’	40’

For more detailed information on how the height regulations, including allowing exceptions to maximum allowable height, and structure tiering, will be implemented, please see the excerpt from the August 6th Committee of the Whole memo attached to this report.

PERFEROMANCE STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE FACILITIES – This section has specific requirements for private roads, driveways, and parking lots; water access and viewing, decks and patios in setback areas, off-premise and directional signs, and fences.

PERFEROMANCE STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES - Public facilities in the MRCCA are defined as public utilities, public transportation facilities, and public recreational facilities. This section has specific standards for these facilities.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT – This section contains regulations and permitting requirements for removal, maintenance, and restoration of vegetation in the MRCCA.

LAND ALTERATION STANDARDS AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT - This section contains regulations, permitting requirements, and conditions for permit approvals for land alteration, stormwater management, erosion control, and development on steep slopes in the MRCCA.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS - The design standards in this section apply to subdivisions, planned unit developments and master- planned development and redevelopment of land involving ten or more acres for contiguous parcels that abut the Mississippi River and 20 or more acres for all other parcels, including smaller individual sites within the following developments that are part of a common plan of development that may be constructed at different times.

EXEMPTIONS – This part of the ordinance contains a table listing uses or activities and exemptions allowed from standards related to height, setbacks, the Shore Impact Zone, and the Bluff Impact Zone in the MRCCA. The exemptions are categorized as follows:

- Exempt, this means that the use or activity is allowed;
- Exempt if no alternative, this means that the use or activity is allowed only if the zoning administrator determines that no alternatives exist; and
- Not exempt, this means that a use or activity is not exempt and must meet the standards of this ordinance.

These exemptions would only apply to MRCCA standards and activities or uses would still be subject to the zoning code, which may be more restrictive than the exemption.

APPLICABLE POLICIES

This ordinance would implement the MRCCA policies in Chapter 10 of the MRCCA plan, adopted as Appendix A of *Minneapolis 2040*.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

No specific feedback is request. General feedback regarding any aspect of the ordinance is requested.

ARTICLE XXX.- MR MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRITICAL AREA OVERLAY DISTRICT

551.XXX.-AUTHORITY, INTENT AND PURPOSE

(a) *Statutory Authorization.* These Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) regulations are adopted pursuant to the authorization and policies contained in [Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 116G](#), [Minnesota Rules, Parts 6106.0010 - 6106.0180](#), and the planning and zoning enabling legislation in Minnesota Statutes, [Chapter 462 and 473](#).

(b) *Policy.* The Legislature of Minnesota has delegated responsibility to local governments of the state to regulate the subdivision, use and development of designated critical areas and thus preserve and enhance the quality of important historic, cultural, aesthetic values, and natural systems and provide for the wise use of these areas.

(c) *Purpose.* The Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Regulations are intended to:

- (1) Establish districts under which building height and structure placement are regulated to protect and enhance the Mississippi River's resources and features consistent with the natural and built character of each district.
- (2) Identify development standards and considerations for land uses that have potential to negatively impact primary conservation areas and public river corridor views.
- (3) Establish standards that protect primary conservation areas and public river corridor views from development impacts and ensure that new development is sited consistent with the purpose of the MRCCA.
- (4) Establish design standards for private facilities that are consistent with best management practices and that minimize impacts to primary conservation areas, public river corridor views and other resources identified in the MRCCA plan.
- (5) Establish design standards for public facilities that are consistent with best management practices and that minimize impacts to primary conservation areas, public river corridor views and other resources identified in the MRCCA plan while recognizing that they serve the public interest by providing access to the Mississippi River corridor or require locations within the river corridor and therefore require some flexibility.
- (6) Establish standards that sustain and enhance the biological and ecological functions of vegetation; preserve the natural character and topography of the MRCCA; and maintain stability of bluffs and steep slopes and ensure stability of other erosion-prone areas.
- (7) Establish standards that protect water quality from pollutant loadings of sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and other contaminants; and maintain stability of bluffs, shorelines, and other areas prone to erosion.
- (8) To create standards for subdivisions and development or redevelopment of large sites that protect and enhance the natural and scenic value of the MRCCA, protect and restore biological and ecological functions of primary conservation areas, and encourage restoration of natural vegetation where restoration opportunities have been identified in the MRCCA Plan.

551.XXX.- GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS

(a) *Jurisdiction.* The provisions of this article apply to land within the river corridor boundary as described in the State Register, volume 43, pages 508 to 519 and shown on the zoning map in section 521.30.

- (b) *Enforcement.* The zoning administrator is responsible for the administration and enforcement of this ordinance. Any violation of its provisions or failure to comply with any of its requirements including violations of conditions and safeguards established in connection with grants of variances or conditional uses constitutes a misdemeanor and is punishable as defined by law. Violations of this ordinance can occur regardless of whether or not a permit is required for a regulated activity listed in [Section 3.2](#).
- (c) *Severability.* If any section, clause, provision, or portion of this ordinance is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this ordinance shall not be affected thereby.
- (d) *Abrogation and Greater Restrictions.* It is not intended by this ordinance to repeal, abrogate, or impair any existing easements, covenants, or deed restrictions. However, where this ordinance imposes greater restrictions, the provisions of this article shall prevail.
- (e) *Underlying Zoning.* Uses and standards of underlying zoning districts apply except where standards of this overlay district are more restrictive.
- (f) *Definitions.* Unless specifically defined below, words or phrases used in this ordinance shall be interpreted to give them the same meaning they have in common usage and to give this ordinance its most reasonable application. For the purpose of this ordinance, the words “must” and “shall” are mandatory and not permissive. All distances, unless otherwise specified, are measured horizontally.

Access path. An area designated to provide ingress and egress to public waters.

Adjacent. Having a boundary that physically touches or adjoins.

Agricultural use. A use having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [40A.02](#).

Alternative design. Subdivision design methods such as conservation design, transfer of development density, or similar zoning and site design techniques that protect open space and natural areas.

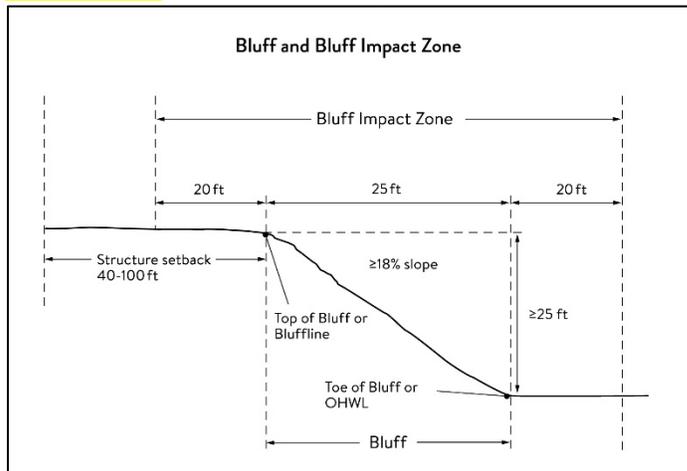
Barge fleeting. Temporarily parking and securing barges on the river, on or off channel, while tows are assembled or broken up.

Biological and ecological functions. The functions of vegetation in stabilizing soils and slopes, retaining and filtering runoff, providing habitat, and recharging groundwater.

Bluff. A natural topographic feature having:

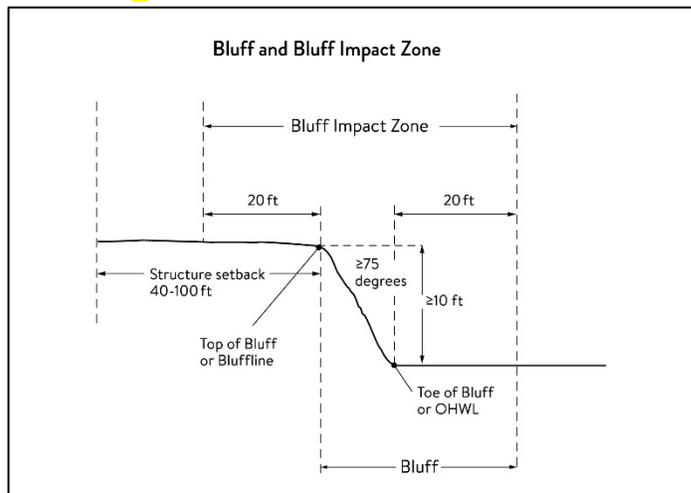
- A. A slope that rises at least 25 feet and the grade of the slope averages 18 percent or greater, measured over a horizontal distance of 25 feet, from the toe of the slope to the top of the slope. Where the slope begins below the ordinary high water level, the ordinary high water level is the toe of the slope. See [Figure 551-X](#); or

Figure 551-X. Bluff and Bluff Impact Zone



- B. A natural escarpment or cliff with a slope that rises at least ten feet above the ordinary high water level or toe of the slope, whichever is applicable, to the top of the slope, with a slope of 75 degrees or greater. See 551-X.

Figure 551-X. Natural Escarpment Bluff and Bluff Impact Zone



Bluff impact zone. A bluff and land located within 20 feet of the bluff. See Figures 551 X and X.

Bluffline. A line delineating the top of the bluff. More than one bluffline may be encountered proceeding landward from the river. See Figures 1 and 2.

Bluff, Toe of. A line along the bottom of a bluff, requiring field verification, such that the slope above the line exceeds 18 percent and the slope below the line is 18 percent or less, measured over a horizontal distance of 25 feet. See Figures 1 and 2.

Bluff, Top of. A line along the top of a bluff, requiring field verification, such that the slope below the line exceeds 18 percent and the slope above the line is 18 percent or less, measured over a horizontal distance of 25 feet. See Figures 1 and 2.

Buildable area. The area of a lot or parcel upon which structures may be placed which excludes areas needed to meet requirements for setback, rights-of-way, bluff impact zones, historic properties, wetlands, designated floodways, land below the ordinary high-water level of public waters, and other unbuildable areas.

Building. A structure with two or more outside rigid walls and a fully secured roof that is affixed to a permanent site.

Certificate of compliance. A document written after a compliance inspection, certifying that the development is in compliance with applicable requirements at the time of the inspection.

Commissioner. The commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Conditional use. A use having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, chapters [394](#) and [462](#).

Conservation design. A pattern of subdivision that is characterized by grouping lots within a portion of a parcel, where the remaining portion of the parcel is permanently protected as open space.

Conventional subdivision. A pattern of subdivision that is characterized by lots that are spread regularly throughout a parcel in a lot and block design.

Deck. A horizontal, unenclosed, aboveground level structure open to the sky, with or without attached railings, seats, trellises, or other features, attached or functionally related to a principal use or site.

Developer. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [116G.03](#).

Development. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [116G.03](#).

Discretionary action. An action under this chapter related to land use that requires a public hearing by local ordinance or statute, such as preliminary plats, final subdivision plats, planned unit developments, conditional use permits, interim use permits, variances, appeals, and rezonings.

Dock. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules, chapter [6115](#).

Electric power facilities. Equipment and associated facilities for generating electric power or devices for converting wind energy to electrical energy as identified and defined under Minnesota Statutes, section [216E](#).

Essential services. Underground or overhead gas, electrical, communications, steam, or water distribution, collection, supply, or disposal systems, including storm water. Essential services include poles, wires, mains, drains, pipes, conduits, cables, fire alarm boxes, traffic signals, hydrants, navigational structures, aviation safety facilities or other similar equipment and accessories in conjunction with the systems. Essential services does not include buildings, treatment works as defined in Minnesota Statutes, chapter [115.01](#), electric power facilities or transmission services.

Floodplain. Having the meaning given the meaning given under Minnesota Rules chapter [6120](#).

Fully reconstruct. The reconstruction of an existing impervious surface that involves site grading and subsurface excavation so that soil is exposed. Mill and overlay and other resurfacing activities are not considered fully reconstructed.

Hard-surface trail. A trail surfaced in asphalt, crushed aggregate, or other hard surface, for multi-purpose use, as determined by local, regional, or state agency plans.

Historic property. An archaeological site, standing structure, site, district, or other property that is:

- (1) Listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places or locally designated as a historic site under Minnesota Statutes, section 471;
- (2) determined to meet the criteria for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places as determined by the director of the Minnesota Historical Society; or
- (3) An unplatted cemetery that falls under the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, section 307, in consultation with the Office of the State Archaeologist.

Impervious surface. A constructed hard surface that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil and causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities and at an increased rate of flow than prior to development. Examples include rooftops, decks, sidewalks, patios, parking lots, storage areas, and driveways, including those with concrete, asphalt, or gravel surfaces.

Intensive vegetation clearing. The removal of all or a majority of the trees or shrubs in a contiguous patch, strip, row, or block.

Interim use. A use having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [394](#) and [462](#).

Land alteration. An activity that exposes the soil or changes the topography, drainage, or cross section of the land, excluding gardening or similar minor soil disturbances.

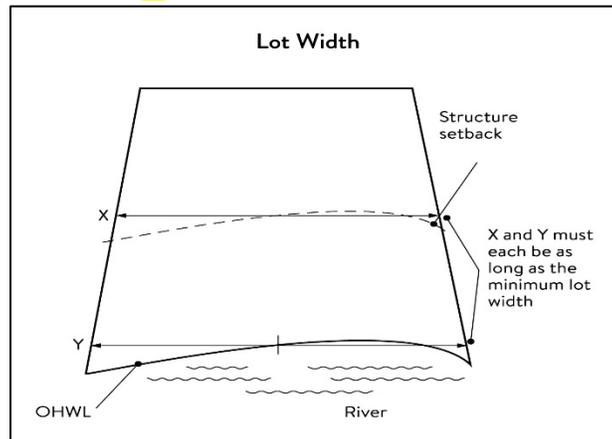
Local government. Counties, cities, and townships.

Local park agencies. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Three Rivers Park District.

Lot. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules chapter [6120](#).

Lot width. The shortest distance between lot lines measured at both the ordinary high water level and at the required structure setback from the ordinary high water level. See Figure 3.

Figure 551-X. Lot Width



Marina. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules chapter [6115](#).

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). The area within the River Corridor Boundary

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Plan. A chapter or other element in the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan.

Mooring facility. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules chapter [6115.0170](#).

Native plant community. A plant community that has been identified as part of the Minnesota Biological Survey or biological survey issued or adopted by a local, state, or federal agency.

Natural-surface trail. A trail composed of native soil and rock or compacted granular stone, primarily intended for hiking, equestrian, or mountain bike use, as determined by local, regional, or state agency plans.

Natural vegetation. Any combination of ground cover, understory, and tree canopy that, while it may have been altered by human activity, continues to stabilize soils, retain and filter runoff, provide habitat, and recharge groundwater.

Nonconformity. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [394.22](#).

Nonmetallic mining. Construction, reconstruction, repair, relocation, expansion, or removal of any facility for the extraction, stockpiling, storage, disposal, or reclamation of nonmetallic minerals such as stone, sand, and gravel. Nonmetallic mining does not include ancillary facilities such as access roads, bridges, culverts, and water level control structures. For purposes of this subpart, "facility" includes all mine pits, quarries, stockpiles, basins, processing structures and equipment, and any structures that drain or divert public waters to allow mining.

Off-premise advertising signs. Those signs that direct attention to a product, service, business, or entertainment venue that is not exclusively related to the premises where the sign is located.

Ordinary high water level (OHWL). Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [103G.005](#).

Parcel. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [116G.03](#).

Patio. A constructed hard surface located at ground level with no railings and open to the sky.

Picnic shelter. A roofed structure open on all sides, accessory to a recreational use.

Planned unit development. A method of land development that merges zoning and subdivision controls, allowing developers to plan and develop a large area as a single entity, characterized by a unified site design, a mix of structure types and land uses, and phasing of development over a number of years. Planned unit development includes any conversion of existing structures and land uses that utilize this method of development.

Plat. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, sections [505](#) and [515B](#).

Port. A water transportation complex established and operated under the jurisdiction of a port authority according to Minnesota Statutes, section 458.

Primary conservation areas. Key resources and features, including shore impact zones, bluff impact zones, floodplains, wetlands, gorges, areas of confluence with tributaries, natural drainage routes, unstable soils and bedrock, native plant communities, cultural and historic properties, and significant existing vegetative stands, tree canopies, and other resources identified in local government plans.

Private facilities. Private roads, driveways, and parking areas, private water access and viewing facilities, decks and patios in setback areas, and private signs.

Professional engineer. An engineer licensed to practice in Minnesota.

Public facilities. Public utilities, public transportation facilities, and public recreational facilities.

Public recreation facilities. Recreational facilities provided by the state or a local government and dedicated to public use, including parks, scenic overlooks, observation platforms, trails, docks, fishing piers, picnic shelters, water access ramps, and other similar water-oriented public facilities used for recreation.

Public river corridor views. Views toward the river from public parkland, historic properties, and public overlooks, as well as views toward bluffs from the ordinary high water level of the opposite shore, as seen during the summer months and documented in the MRCCA plan/chapter of the comprehensive plan.

Public transportation facilities. All transportation facilities provided by federal, state, or local government and dedicated to public use, such as roadways, transit facilities, railroads, and bikeways.

Public utilities. Electric power facilities, essential services, and transmission services.

Public waters. Having the meaning given under [Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.005](#).

Readily visible. Land and development that are easily seen from the ordinary high water level of the opposite shore during summer months.

Resource agency. A federal, state, regional, or local agency that engages in environmental, natural, or cultural resource protection or restoration activities, including planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Retaining wall. A vertical or nearly vertical structures constructed of mortar and rubble masonry, rock, or stone regardless of size, vertical timber pilings, horizontal timber planks with piling supports, sheet pilings, poured concrete, concrete blocks, or other durable materials.

Rock Riprap. Natural coarse rock placed or constructed to armor shorelines, streambeds, bridge abutments, pilings and other shoreline structures against scour, or water or ice erosion.

River corridor boundary. The boundary approved and adopted by the Metropolitan Council under Minnesota Statutes, section [116G.06](#), as approved and adopted by the legislature in Minnesota Statutes, section [116G.15](#), and as legally described in the Sate Register, volume 43, pages 508 to 518.

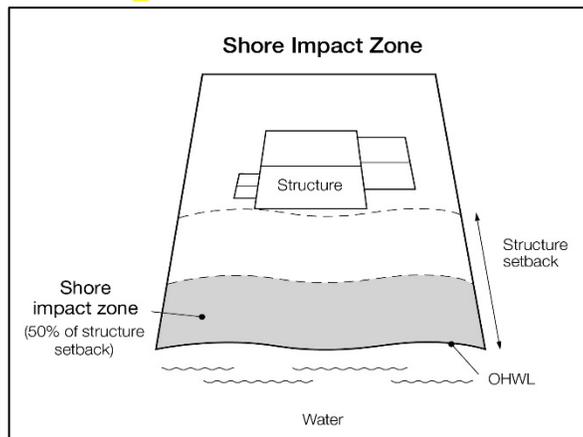
River-dependent use. The use of land for commercial, industrial, or utility purposes, where access to and use of a public water feature is an integral part of the normal conduct of business and where the use is dependent on shoreline facilities.

Selective vegetation removal. The removal of isolated individual trees or shrubs that are not in a contiguous patch, strip, row, or block and that does not substantially reduce the tree canopy or understory cover.

Setback. A separation distance measured horizontally.

Shore impact zone. Land located between the ordinary high water level of public waters and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50 percent of the required structure setback or, for agricultural use, 50 feet landward of the ordinary high water level. See Figure 551-X.

Figure 551-X. Shore Impact Zone



Shoreline facilities. Facilities that require a location adjoining public waters for ingress and egress, loading and unloading, and public water intake and outflow, such as barge facilities, port facilities, commodity loading and unloading equipment, watercraft lifts, marinas, short-term watercraft mooring facilities for patrons, and water access ramps. Structures that would be enhanced by a shoreline location, but do not require a location adjoining public waters as part of their function, are not shoreline facilities, such as restaurants, bait shops, and boat dealerships.

Special purpose units of government. The University of Minnesota, the St. Paul Port Authority, watershed management organizations established under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103B, watershed districts established under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103D, and any other unit of government other than local government or a state or regional agency.

State or regional agency. The Metropolitan Airports Commission, Minnesota Historical Society, University of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council and other state agencies.

Steep slope. A natural topographic feature with an average slope of 12 to 18 percent, measured over a horizontal distance equal to or greater than 50 feet, and any slopes greater than 18 percent that are not bluffs.

Storm water management facilities. Facilities for the collection, conveyance, treatment, or disposal of storm water.

Structure. A building, sign, or appurtenance thereto, except for aerial or underground utility lines, such as sewer, electric, telephone, or gas lines, and utility line towers, poles, and other supporting appurtenances.

Subdivision. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [462.352](#).

Subsurface sewage treatment system. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules, part [7080.1100](#).

Transmission services.

- (1) Electric power lines, cables, pipelines, or conduits that are:
 - (a) Used to transport power between two points, as identified and defined under Minnesota Statutes, section [216E.01, subdivision 4](#); or
 - (b) For mains or pipelines for gas, liquids, or solids in suspension, used to transport gas, liquids, or solids in suspension between two points; and
- (2) Telecommunication lines, cables, pipelines, or conduits.

Treeline. The more or less continuous line formed by the tops of trees in a wooded area when viewed from a particular point. The treeline is determined during all seasons as if under full foliage.

Variance. Having the meaning given under [Minnesota Statutes, section 394.22](#).

Water access ramp. A boat ramp, carry-down site, boarding dock, and approach road, or other access that allows launching and removal of a boat, canoe, or other watercraft with or without a vehicle and trailer.

Water-oriented accessory structure. A small building or other improvement, except stairways, fences, docks, and retaining walls, that, because of the relationship of its use to public waters, needs to be located closer to public waters than the normal structure setback. Examples include gazebos, screen houses, fish houses, pump houses, and detached decks and patios.

Water quality impact zone. Land within the shore impact zone or within 50 feet of the boundary of a public water, wetland, or natural drainage way, whichever is greater.

Wetland. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Statutes, section [103G.005](#).

Wharf. Having the meaning given under Minnesota Rules, part [6115.0170](#).

551.XXX .- ADMINISTRATION

- (a) *Permits.* A permit is required for the construction of buildings or building additions (including construction of decks and signs), the installation and/or alteration of sewage treatment systems, vegetation removal consistent with [Section 9.0](#) and land alterations consistent with [Section 10.0](#).
- (b) *Variances.* Variances to the requirements of this article may only be granted in accordance with [Minnesota Statutes, Section 462.357](#) and must consider the potential impacts of variances on primary conservation areas, public river corridor views, and other resources identified in the MRCCA plan. In reviewing the variance application, the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Adjustment shall:
- (1) Evaluate the impacts to these resources and, if negative impacts are found, require conditions to mitigate the impacts that are related to and proportional to the impacts, [consistent with Section 3.5](#) and
 - (2) Make written findings that the variance is consistent with the purpose of this ordinance, as follows.
 - a. The extent, location and intensity of the variance will be in substantial compliance with the MRCCA Plan;
 - b. The variance is consistent with the character and management purpose of the MRCCA district in which it is located;
 - c. The variance will not be detrimental to PCAs and PRCVs nor will it contribute to negative incremental impacts to PCAs and PRCVs when considered in the context of past, present and reasonable future actions; and
 - d. The variance will not negatively impact other MRCCA plan-identified resources.
- (c) *Conditional and interim use permits.* All conditional and interim uses, required under this ordinance must comply with Minnesota Statutes, section [462.3595](#) and must consider the potential impacts on primary conservation areas, public river corridor views, and other resources identified in the MRCCA plan. In reviewing the application, the Planning Commission shall:
- (1) Evaluate the impacts to these resources and if negative impacts are found, require conditions to mitigate the impacts that are related to and proportional to the impacts, [consistent with Section 3.5](#); and
 - (2) Make written findings that the conditional use is consistent with the purpose of this ordinance as follows.
 - a. The extent, location and intensity of the conditional use will be in substantial compliance with the MRCCA Plan;

- b. The conditional use is consistent with the character and management purpose of the MRCCA district in which it is located;
- c. The conditional use will not be detrimental to PCAs and PRCVs nor will it contribute to negative incremental impacts to PCAs and PRCVs when considered in the context of past, present and reasonable future actions; and
- d. The conditional use will not negatively impact other MRCCA plan-identified resources.

(d) Conditions of Approval. The Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Adjustment shall evaluate the impacts to PCAs, PRCVs, and other resources identified in the MRCCA Plan, and if negative impacts are found, require conditions to mitigate the impacts that are related to and proportional to the impacts. Mitigation may include:

- a. Restoration of vegetation identified as “vegetation restoration priorities” identified in the MRCCA plan.
- b. Preservation of existing vegetation;
- c. Stormwater runoff management;
- d. Reducing impervious surface;
- e. Increasing structure setbacks;
- f. Wetland and drainageway restoration and/or preservation; and
- g. And other conservation measures.

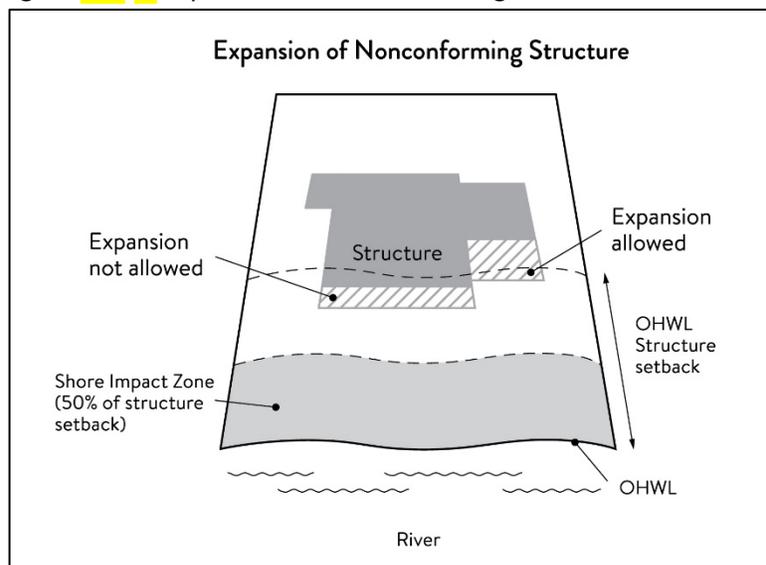
(e) *Application materials.* Applications for permits and discretionary actions required under this article must submit the following information unless the zoning administrator determines that the information is not needed.

- (1) A detailed project description;
- (2) Scaled maps and plans, dimensional renderings, and other materials that identify and describe:
 - a. Primary conservation areas;
 - b. Public river corridor views;
 - c. Buildable area;
 - d. Existing and proposed topography and drainage patterns;
 - e. Proposed storm water and erosion and sediment control practices;
 - f. Existing and proposed vegetation to be removed and established;
 - g. Ordinary high water level, blufflines, and all required setbacks;
 - h. Existing and proposed structures;
 - i. Existing and proposed impervious surfaces;
 - j. Existing and proposed subsurface sewage treatment systems.

(f) *Nonconformities*. All legally established nonconformities as of the date of this ordinance may continue, consistent with Minnesota Statutes Section [462.357 Subd. 1e](#) and Chapter 531.

- (1) New structures erected in conformance with the setback averaging provisions of [Section 6.34](#) are conforming structures.
- (2) Site alterations and expansion of site alterations that were legally made prior to the effective date of this ordinance are conforming. Site alterations include vegetation, erosion control, storm water control measures, and other nonstructural site improvements.
- (3) Legal nonconforming principal structures that do not meet the setback requirements of [Section 6.3](#) may be expanded laterally provided that:
 - a. The expansion does not extend into the shore or bluff impact zone or further into the required setback than the building line of the existing principal structure (See [Figure 551-X](#)); and
 - b. The expanded structure's scale and bulk is consistent with that of the original structure and existing surrounding development.

Figure [551-X](#). Expansion of Nonconforming Structure



(g) *Notifications*. Amendments to this article and to the MRCCA plan shall be submitted to the Commissioner as provided in Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0070, Subp. 3, Items B – I.

- (1) Notice of public hearings for discretionary actions, including conditional and interim use permits, variances, appeals, rezonings, preliminary plats, final subdivision plats, and PUDs, shall be sent to the following entities at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing:
 - a. The Commissioner in a format prescribed by the DNR;
 - b. National Park Service; and

- c. Where proposed building heights exceed the height limits specified in **Section 6.2** as part of a conditional use or variance process, adjoining local governments within the MRCCA, including those with overlapping jurisdiction and those across the river.
 - (2) Notice of final decisions for actions, including findings of fact, must be sent to the Commissioner, the National Park Service, and adjoining local governments within the MRCCA within ten (10) days of the final decision.
 - (3) Requests to amend district boundaries must follow the provisions in Minnesota Rules, part 6106.0100, Subp. 9, Item C.
- (h) *Accommodating disabilities.* Reasonable accommodations for ramps or other facilities to provide persons with disabilities access to the persons' property, as required by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the federal Fair Housing Act and as provided by [Minnesota Rules, chapter 1341](#), must:
- (1) Comply with Sections **6.0 to 12.0**; or
 - (2) If Sections **6.0 to 12.0** cannot be complied with, ramps or other facilities are allowed with an administrative permit provided:
 - a. The permit terminates on either a specific date or upon occurrence of a particular event related to the person requiring accommodation; and
 - b. Upon expiration of the permit, the ramp or other facilities must be removed.

551.XXX.- MRCCA DISTRICTS

(a) *District description and management purpose.* The MRCCA within the City of Minneapolis is divided into the following sub-districts:

- (1) Rural and Open Space (ROS).
 - a. Description. The ROS District is characterized by rural and low-density development patterns and land uses. It includes land that is riparian or visible from the river, as well as large, undeveloped tracts of high ecological and scenic value, floodplain, and undeveloped islands. Many primary conservation areas exist in the ROS District.
 - b. Management purpose. The ROS District shall be managed to sustain and restore the rural and natural character of the corridor and to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas.
- (2) River Neighborhood (RN).
 - a. Description. The RN District is characterized by primarily residential neighborhoods that are riparian or readily visible from the river or that abut riparian parkland. The district includes parks and open space, limited commercial development, marinas, and related land uses.
 - b. Management purpose. The RN District shall be managed to maintain the character of the river corridor within the context of existing residential and related neighborhood development, and to protect and enhance habitat, parks and open space, public river corridor views, and scenic, natural, and historic areas. Minimizing erosion and the flow

of untreated storm water into the river and enhancing habitat and shoreline vegetation are priorities in the district.

(3) River Towns and Crossings (RTC).

- a. Description. The RTC District is characterized by historic downtown areas and limited nodes of intense development at specific river crossings, as well as institutional campuses that predate designation of the MRCCA, and that include taller buildings.
- b. Management purpose. The RTC district shall be managed in a manner that allows continued growth and redevelopment in historic downtowns and more intensive redevelopment in limited areas at river crossings to accommodate compact walkable development patterns and connections to the river. Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated storm water into the river, providing public access to and public views of the river, and restoring natural vegetation in riparian areas and tree canopy are priorities in the district.

(4) Separated from River (SR).

- a. Description. The SR District is characterized by its physical and visual distance from the Mississippi River. The district includes land separated from the river by distance, topography, development, or a transportation corridor. The land in this district is not readily visible from the Mississippi River.
- b. Management purpose. The SR District provides flexibility in managing development without negatively affecting the key resources and features of the river corridor. Minimizing negative impacts to primary conservation areas and minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the Mississippi River are priorities in the district. The RTC District shall be managed in a manner that allows continued growth and redevelopment in historic downtowns and more intensive redevelopment in limited areas at river crossings to accommodate compact walkable development patterns and connections to the river. Minimizing erosion and the flow of untreated storm water into the river, providing public access to and public views of the river, and restoring natural vegetation in riparian areas and tree canopy are priorities in the district.

(5) Urban Mixed (UM).

- a. Description. The UM District includes large areas of highly urbanized mixed use that are a part of the urban fabric of the river corridor, including institutional, commercial, industrial, and residential areas and parks and open space.
- b. Management purpose. The UM District shall be managed in a manner that allows for future growth and potential transition of intensely developed areas that does not negatively affect public river corridor views and that protects bluffs and floodplains. Restoring and enhancing bluff and shoreline habitat, minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the river, and providing public access to and public views of the river are priorities in the district.

(6) Urban Core (UC).

- a. Description. The UC District includes downtown.
- b. Management purpose. The UC District shall be managed with the greatest flexibility to protect commercial, industrial, and other high-intensity urban uses, while minimizing negative impacts to primary conservation areas and minimizing erosion and flow of untreated storm water into the river. Providing public access to and public views of the river are priorities in the district.

(b) *MRCCA district map.* The locations and boundaries of the MRCCA districts established by this ordinance are shown on *(insert name of MRCCA Overlay District map)* which is incorporated herein by reference. The district boundary lines are intended to follow the center lines of rivers and streams, highways, streets, lot lines, and municipal boundaries, unless a boundary line is otherwise indicated on the map. Where district boundaries cross unsubdivided property, the district boundary line is determined by use of dimensions or the scale appearing on the map.

551.XXX.- SPECIAL LAND USE PROVISIONS

(a) *Underlying zoning.* Uses within the MRCCA are generally determined by underlying zoning, with additional provisions for the following land uses:

- (1) **Agricultural use.** Perennial ground cover is required within 50 feet of the ordinary high water level and within the bluff impact zone.
- (2) **River-dependent uses.** River-dependent uses must comply with the following design standards:
 - a. Structures and parking areas, except shoreline facilities and private roads and conveyances serving river-dependent uses as provided in **Section 12.0**, must meet the dimensional and performance standards in article, must be designed so that they are not readily visible, and must be screened by establishing and maintaining natural vegetation;
 - b. Shoreline facilities must comply with [Minnesota Rules, chapter 6115](#) and must:
 - 1. be designed in a compact fashion so as to minimize the shoreline area affected; and
 - 2. minimize the surface area of land occupied in relation to the number of watercraft or barges to be served; and
 - c. Dredging and placement of dredged material are subject to existing federal and state permit requirements and agreements.
- (3) **Wireless communication towers.** Wireless communication towers require a conditional use permit and are subject to the following design standards:
 - a. The applicant must demonstrate that functional coverage cannot be provided through co-location, a tower at a lower height, or a tower at a location outside of the MRCCA;
 - b. The tower shall not be located in a bluff or shore impact zone;
 - c. Placement of the tower shall minimize impacts on public river corridor views.

- d. The tower design shall comply with the general design standards in **Section 8.2** and the requirements of Chapter 535 Article VIII.

551.XXX.- STRUCTURE HEIGHT AND PLACEMENT AND LOT SIZE

(a) *Structure height.* Structures and facilities must comply with the following standards unless identified as exempt in **Section 12.0**.

- (1) ROS District: 35 feet
- (2) RN District: 35 feet.
- (3) RTC District: 48 feet provided tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River and from blufflines is given priority, with lower structure heights closer to the river and blufflines, and that structure design and placement minimizes interference with public river corridor views.
- (4) SR District: Height is determined by underlying zoning, provided the allowed height is consistent with that of the mature treeline, where present, and existing surrounding development, as viewed from the OWHL of the opposite shore.
- (5) UM1 District: 35 feet, provided tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River and from blufflines is given priority, with lower structure heights closer to the river and blufflines, and that structure design and placement minimize interference with public river corridor views.
- (6) UM2 District: 42 feet, provided tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River and from blufflines is given priority, with lower structure heights closer to the river and blufflines, and that structure design and placement minimize interference with public river corridor views.
- (7) UM3 District: 65 feet, provided tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River and from blufflines is given priority, with lower structure heights closer to the river and blufflines, and that structure design and placement minimize interference with public river corridor views.
- (8) UC District: Height is determined by underlying zoning, provided tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River and blufflines is given priority, with lower structure heights closer to the river and blufflines, and structure design and placement minimize interference with public river corridor views.

(b) Height is measured as defined by the Minneapolis Zoning Ordinance for compliance with Built Form Overlay District requirements and also on the side of the structure facing the Mississippi River for compliance with the MRCCA Districts. The more restrictive requirement shall apply.

- (1) Increasing Maximum Height: Height increases may be requested, subject to the following provisions:
 - a. The height limitation of accessory structures, single- and two-family dwellings, and three-family dwellings located may be increased only by variance, as provided in Chapter 525, Administration and Enforcement, and subject to the provisions of this chapter.

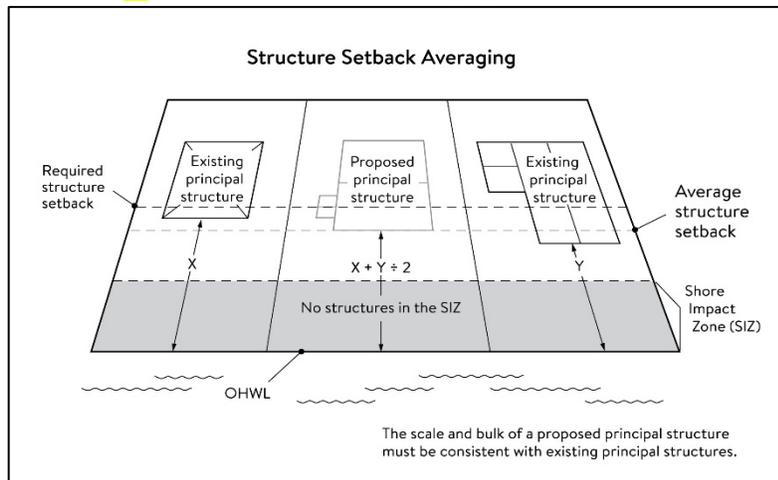
- b. For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, and three-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of the Built Form Overlay District, but not the MRCCA Overlay District, maximum height may be increased as allowed in the Built Form Overlay Districts up to the height limitations of the MRCCA Districts.
 - c. For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of both the Built Form Overlay District and MRCCA Overlay District, maximum height increase is subject to both the standards for increasing maximum height in the Built Form Overlay District and a variance of the MRCCA requirements in the CA-ROS and CA-RN districts or a conditional use permit in the CA-RTC and CA-UM districts.
 - d. For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of the MRCCA District, but not the Built Form Overlay District, the maximum height increase is subject to a variance of the MRCCA requirements in the CA-ROS and CA-RN districts or a conditional use permit in the CA-RTC and CA-UM districts.
- (c) In addition to the conditional use permit requirements of **Section 3.4**, criteria for considering whether to grant a conditional use permit for structures exceeding the height limits shall include:
- (1) Assessment of the visual impact of the proposed structure on public river corridor views, including views from other communities;
 - (2) Identification and application of techniques to minimize the perceived bulk of the proposed structure, such as:
 - a. Placing the long axis of the building perpendicular to the river;
 - b. Stepping back of portions of the facade;
 - c. Lowering the roof pitch or use of a flat roof;
 - d. Using building materials or mitigation techniques that will blend in with the natural surroundings such as green roofs, green walls, or other green and brown building materials;
 - e. Narrowing the profile of upper floors of the building; or
 - f. Increasing the setbacks of the building from the Mississippi River or blufflines;
 - g. Identification of techniques for preservation of those view corridors identified in the MRCCA Plan; and
 - h. Opportunities for creation or enhancement of public river corridor views.
- (d) *Structure and impervious surface placement.*
- (1) Structures and impervious surface must not be placed in the shore or bluff impact zones, unless exempted in **Section 12.0**.

- (2) Structures and facilities must comply with the following OHWL setback provisions unless exempted in **Section 12.0**.
 - a. ROS District: 200 feet.
 - b. RN District: 100 feet.
 - c. RTC District: 75 feet.
 - d. UM District: 50 feet
 - e. UC District: As per underlying zoning.

- (3) Structures and facilities must comply with the following bluffline setback provisions unless exempted in **Section 12.0**:
 - a. ROS District: 100 feet.
 - b. RN District: 40 feet.
 - c. RTC District: 40 feet.
 - d. SR District: 40 feet.
 - e. UM District: 40 feet.
 - f. UC District: 40 feet.

- (4) Where principal structures exist on the adjoining lots on both sides of a proposed building site, the minimum setback may be altered to conform to the average of the adjoining setbacks, provided that the new structure's scale and bulk riverward or bluffward of the setbacks required under **Sections 6.32 and 6.33** are consistent with adjoining development. See Figure 551-X.

Figure 551-X. Structure Setback Averaging



(e) Lot size and buildable area.

- (1) The width of lots abutting the Mississippi River in the ROS District must be at least 200 feet, unless alternative design methods are used that provide greater protection of the riparian area.
- (2) All new lots must have adequate buildable area to comply with the setback requirements of Sections 6.32 and 6.33 without requiring variances to use the lots for their intended purpose.

551.XXX.- PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PRIVATE FACILITIES

(a) *General design standards.* All private facilities must be developed in accordance with the vegetation management and land alteration requirements in Sections 9.0 and 10.0.

(b) *Private roads, driveways, and parking areas.* Except as provided in Section 12.0, private roads, driveways and parking areas must:

- (1) Be designed to take advantage of natural vegetation and topography so that they are not readily visible;
- (2) Comply with structure setback requirements according to Section 6.3; and
- (3) Not be placed within the bluff impact zone or shore impact zone, unless exempt under Section 12.0 and designed consistent with Section 8.2.

(c) *Private water access and viewing facilities.*

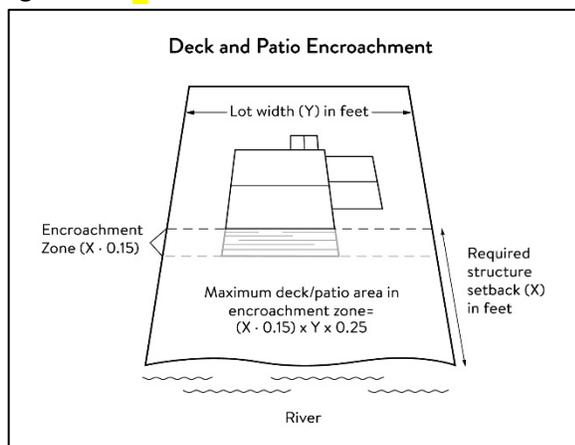
- (1) Private access paths must be no more than:
 - a. Eight feet wide, if placed within the shore impact zone; and
 - b. Four feet wide, if placed within the bluff impact zone.
- (2) Private water access ramps must:
 - a. Comply with Minnesota Rules, chapters [6115.0210](#) and [6280.0250](#); and
 - b. Be designed and constructed consistent with the applicable standards in Design Handbook for Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities.
- (3) Design and construction of private stairways, lifts, and landings are subject to the following standards:
 - a. Stairways and lifts must not exceed four (4) feet in width on residential lots. Stairways shall not exceed six (6) feet in width for commercial properties and residential facilities held in common.
 - b. Landings for stairways and lifts on residential lots must not exceed 32 square feet in area. Landings for commercial properties and residential facilities held in common shall not exceed 48 square feet in area.
 - c. Canopies or roofs are prohibited on stairways, lifts, or landings;
 - d. Stairways, lifts, and landings must be located in the least visible portion of the lot whenever practical; and

- e. Ramps, lifts, mobility paths, or other facilities for persons with physical disabilities are allowed for achieving access to shore areas according to **Section 7.43 A. – D**, and as provided under **Section 3.9**.
- (4) One water-oriented accessory structure is allowed for each riparian lot or parcel less than 300 feet in width at the ordinary high water level, with one additional water-oriented accessory structure allowed for each additional 300 feet of shoreline on the same lot or parcel. Water-oriented accessory structures are prohibited in the bluff impact zone and shall:
- a. not exceed 12 feet in height;
 - b. not exceed 120 square feet in area; and
 - c. be placed a minimum of 10 feet from the ordinary high water level.

(d) *Decks and patios in setback areas.* Decks and at-grade patios may encroach into the required setbacks from the ordinary high water level and blufflines without a variance, when consistent with **Sections 9.0 and 10.0**, provided that:

- (1) The encroachment of the deck or patio into the required setback area does not exceed 15 percent of the required structure setback;
- (2) The area of the deck or patio that extends into the required setback area occupies no more than 25 percent of the total area between the required setback and the 15 percent using the formula:
[required setback depth (feet) x 0.15 x lot width (feet) = maximum total area]
- (3) The deck or patio does not extend into the bluff impact zone. See **Figure 551-X**.

Figure 551-X. Deck and Patio Encroachment



(e) *Off-premise and directional signs.* Off-premise advertising signs and billboards, including the sign face and structure, which may be viewed from the Mississippi River shall be prohibited, except a sign or billboard designated by the Heritage Preservation Commission or determined by the Heritage Preservation Commission to be a contributing feature in a historic district.

(f) Fences. Fences between principal structures and the river are permitted, provided the following standards are met:

- (1) Fences are subject to height and location requirements of Section 535 Article VI. Fences shall not exceed six feet in height.
- (2) Fences shall not be located within 40 feet of slopes greater than 12%.
- (3) Fences shall not be located in the regulatory floodplain.

551.XXX.- PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES

(a) **General design standards.** All public facilities must be designed and constructed to:

- (1) Minimize visibility of the facility from the river to the extent consistent with the purpose of the facility;
- (2) Comply with the structure placement and height standards in [Section 6.0](#), except as provided in [Section 12.0](#);
- (3) Be consistent with the vegetation management standards in [Section 9.0](#) and the land alteration and storm water management standards in [Section 10.0](#), including use of practices identified in [Best Practices for Meeting DNR General Public Waters Work Permit GP 2004-0001](#), where applicable;
- (4) Avoid primary conservation areas, unless no alternative exists. If no alternative exists, then disturbance to primary conservation areas must be avoided to the greatest extent practicable, and design and construction must minimize impacts; and
- (5) Minimize disturbance of spawning and nesting times by scheduling construction at times when local fish and wildlife are not spawning or nesting.

(b) *Right-of-way maintenance standards.* Right-of-way maintenance must comply with the following standards:

- (1) Vegetation currently in a natural state must be maintained to the extent feasible;
- (2) Where vegetation in a natural state has been removed, native plants must be planted and maintained on the right-of-way; and
- (3) Chemical control of vegetation must be avoided when practicable, but when chemical control is necessary, chemicals used must be in accordance with the regulations and other requirements of all state and federal agencies with authority over the chemical's use.

(c) *Crossings of public water or public land.* Crossings of public waters or land controlled by the commissioner are subject to approval by the commissioner according to Minnesota Statutes, sections [84.415](#) and [103G.245](#).

(d) *Public utilities.* Public utilities must comply with the following standards:

- (1) High-voltage transmission lines, wind energy conversion systems greater than five megawatts, and pipelines are regulated according to Minnesota Statutes, chapter [216E](#), [216F](#), and [216G](#) respectively; and
 - (2) If overhead placement is necessary, utility facility crossings must minimize visibility of the facility from the river and follow other existing right of ways as much as practicable.
 - (3) The appearance of structures must be as compatible as practicable with the surrounding area in a natural state with regard to height and width, materials used, and color.
 - (4) Wireless communication facilities, according to [Section 5.26](#).
- (e) *Public transportation facilities.* Public transportation facilities shall comply with structure placement and height standards in [Section 6.0](#). Where such facilities intersect or about two or more MRCCA districts, the least restrictive standards apply. Public transportation facilities must be designed and constructed to give priority to:
- (1) Providing scenic overlooks for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
 - (2) Providing safe pedestrian crossings and facilities along the river corridor;
 - (3) Providing access to the riverfront in public ownership; and
 - (4) Allowing for use of the land between the river and the transportation facility.
- (f) *Public recreational facilities.* Public recreational facilities must comply with the following standards:
- (1) Buildings and parking associated with public recreational facilities must comply with the structure placement and height standards in [Section 6.0](#), except as provided in [Section 12.0](#);
 - (2) Roads and driveways associated with public recreational facilities must not be placed in the bluff or shore impact zones unless no other placement alternative exists. If no alternative exists, then design and construction must minimize impacts to shoreline vegetation, erodible soils and slopes, and other sensitive resources.
 - (3) Trails, access paths, and viewing areas associated with public recreational facilities and providing access to or views of the Mississippi River are allowed within the bluff and shore impact zones if design, construction, and maintenance methods are consistent with the best management practice guidelines in [Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines](#).
 - a. Hard-surface trails are not allowed on the face of bluffs with a slope exceeding 30 percent. Natural surface trails are allowed, provided they do not exceed eight feet in width.
 - b. Trails, paths, and viewing areas must be designed and constructed to minimize:
 1. Visibility from the river;
 2. Visual impacts on public river corridor views; and
 3. Disturbance to and fragmentation of primary conservation areas.

- (4) Public water access facilities must comply with the following requirements:
 - a. Watercraft access ramps must comply with Minnesota Rules chapters [6115.0210](#) and [6280.0250](#); and
 - b. Facilities must be designed and constructed consistent with the standards in Design Handbook for Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities.
- (5) Public signs and kiosks for interpretive or directional purposes are allowed in the bluff or shore impact zones, provided they are placed and constructed to minimize disturbance to these areas and avoid visual impacts on public river corridor views. Sign size, height, type and illumination shall be as regulated in the base zoning district.
- (6) Public stairways, lifts, and landings must be designed as provided in [Section 7.43](#).

551.XXX.- VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

(a) *Applicability*. This section applies to:

- (1) Shore impact zones;
- (2) Areas within 50 feet of a wetland or natural drainage way;
- (3) Bluff impact zones;
- (4) Areas of native plant communities; and
- (5) Significant existing vegetative stands identified in the MRCCA plan.

(b) *Activities allowed without a vegetation permit*.

- (1) Maintenance of existing lawns, landscaping and gardens;
- (2) Removal of vegetation in emergency situations as determined by the City.
- (3) Right-of-way maintenance for public facilities meeting the standards [Section 8.3](#);
- (4) Agricultural and forestry activities meeting the standards of [Sections 5.21 and 5.23](#);
- (5) Selective vegetation removal, provided that vegetative cover remains consistent with the management purpose of the MRCCA District, including:
 - a. Vegetation that is dead, diseased, dying, or hazardous;
 - b. To prevent the spread of diseases or insect pests;
 - c. Individual trees and shrubs; and
 - d. Removal of invasive non-native species.

(c) *Activities allowed with a vegetation permit*.

- (1) The following intensive vegetation clearing activities are allowed with a vegetation permit:
 - a. Clearing of vegetation that is dead, diseased, dying, or hazardous;
 - b. Clearing to prevent the spread of diseases or insect pests;

- c. Clearing to remove invasive non-native species.
- d. Clearing to prepare for restoration and erosion control management activities consistent with a plan approved by the City or Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.
- e. The minimum necessary for development that is allowed with a building permit or as an exemption under [Section 12.0](#).

(2) Conditions of vegetation permit approval:

- a. Development is sited to minimize removal of or disturbance to natural vegetation;
- b. Soil, slope stability, and hydrologic conditions are suitable for the proposed work as determined by a professional engineer.
- c. Clearing is the minimum necessary and designed to blend with the natural terrain and minimize visual impacts to public river corridor views;
- d. Any native plant communities removed are replaced with vegetation that provides equivalent biological and ecological functions consistent with an approved vegetation restoration plan as provided in [Section 9.62](#). If replaced, priorities for restoration are stabilization of erodible soils, restoration or enhancement of shoreline vegetation, and revegetation of bluffs or steep slopes visible from the river;
- e. All other vegetation removed is restored with natural vegetation to the greatest extent practicable consistent with an approved vegetation restoration plan as provided in [Section 9.62](#). Priorities for replacement are the same as under [Section 9.42.D](#);
- f. Any disturbance of highly erodible soils is replanted with deep-rooted vegetation with a high stem density;
- g. Vegetation removal activities are conducted so as to expose the smallest practical area of soil to erosion for the least possible time;
- h. Areas of vegetation restoration priorities identified in the MRCCA plan are restored, if applicable; and
- i. Any other condition determined necessary to achieve the purpose of this section.

(d) *Prohibited activities*. All other intensive vegetation clearing is prohibited.

(e) *Vegetation restoration plan*.

(1) Development of a vegetation restoration plan and reestablishment of natural vegetation is required:

- a. As a condition of a vegetation permit issued under [Section 9.42, items D and E](#);
- b. Upon failure to comply with any provisions in this section; or
- c. As part of the planning process for subdivisions as provided in [Section 11.0](#).

- (2) The vegetation restoration plan must satisfy the application submittal requirements in **Section 3.6**, and:
 - a. Include vegetation that provides suitable habitat and effective soil stability, runoff retention, and infiltration capability. Vegetation species, composition, density, and diversity must be guided by nearby patches of native plant communities and by [Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines](#);
 - b. Be prepared by a qualified individual; and
 - c. Include a maintenance plan that includes management provisions for controlling invasive species and replacement of plant loss for three years.
- (3) A certificate of compliance will be issued after the vegetation restoration plan requirements have been satisfied.

551.XXX.- LAND ALTERATION STANDARDS AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

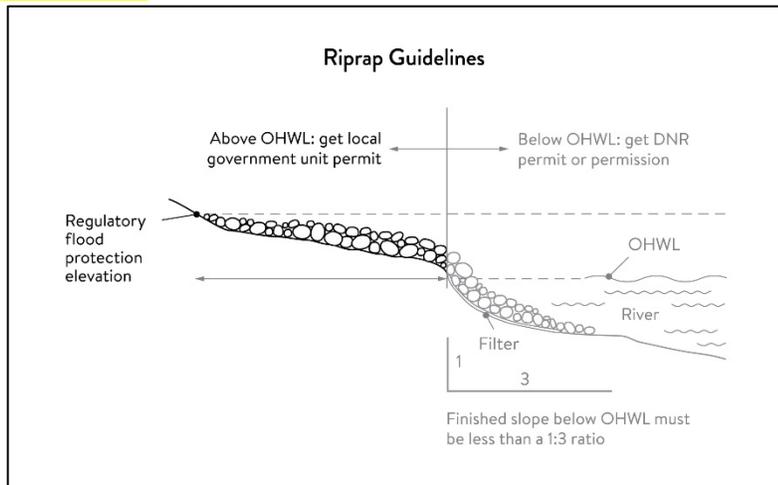
(a) Land alteration permit.

- (1) Within the bluff impact zone, land alteration is prohibited, except for the following which are allowed by permit.
 - a. Erosion control consistent with **Section 10.6**;
 - b. The minimum necessary for development that is allowed as an exception under **Section 12**; and
 - c. Repair and maintenance of existing buildings and facilities.
- (2) Within the water quality impact zone, land alteration that involves more than ten cubic yards of material or affects an area greater than 1,000 square feet requires a permit.

(b) Rock riprap, retaining walls, and other erosion control structures.

- (1) Construction, repair, or replacement of rock riprap, retaining walls, and other erosion control structures located at or below the OHWL must comply with Minnesota Rules, chapters 6115.0215, subpart 4, item E, and 6115.0216, subpart 2. Work must not proceed until approved by the commissioner. **See Figure 551-X**

Figure 551-X. Riprap Guidelines



- (2) Construction or replacement of rock riprap, retaining walls, and other erosion control structures within the bluff impact zone and the water quality impact zone are allowed with a permit consistent with provisions of **Section 10.6** provided that:
 - a. If the project includes work at or below the OHWL, the commissioner has already approved or permitted the project.
 - b. The structures are used only to correct an established erosion problem as determined by the watershed management organization.
 - c. The size and extent of the structures are the minimum necessary to correct the erosion problem and are not larger than the following, unless a professional engineer determines that a larger structure is needed to correct the erosion problem:
 1. Retaining walls must not exceed five feet in height and must be placed a minimum horizontal distance of ten feet apart; and
 2. Riprap must not exceed the height of the regulatory flood protection elevation.
 - (3) Repair of existing rock riprap, retaining walls, and other erosion control structures above the OHWL does not require a permit provided it does not involve any land alteration under **Section 10.2**.
- (c) *Stormwater management.*
- (1) In the bluff impact zone, storm water management facilities are prohibited, except by permit if:
 - a. There are no alternatives for storm water treatment outside the bluff impact zone on the subject site;
 - b. The site generating runoff is designed so that the amount of runoff reaching the bluff impact zone is reduced to the greatest extent practicable;

- c. The construction and operation of the facility does not affect slope stability on the subject property or adjacent properties; and
 - d. Mitigation based on the best available engineering and geological practices is required and applied to eliminate or minimize the risk of slope failure.
- (2) In the water quality impact zone, development that creates new impervious surface, as allowed by exemption in [Section 12.0](#), or fully reconstructs existing impervious surface of more than 10,000 square feet requires a storm water permit or approved storm water plan. Multipurpose trails and sidewalks are exempt if there is down gradient vegetation or a filter strip that is at least five feet wide.
 - (3) In all other areas, storm water runoff must be directed away from the bluff impact zones or unstable areas.
- (d) *Development on steep slopes.* Construction of structures, impervious surfaces, land alteration, vegetation removal, or other construction activities are allowed on steep slopes if:
- (1) The development can be accomplished without increasing erosion or storm water runoff;
 - (2) The soil types and geology are suitable for the proposed development; and
 - (3) Vegetation is managed according to the requirements of [Section 9.0](#).
- (e) *Conditions of land alteration permit approval.*
- (1) Temporary and permanent erosion and sediment control measures retain sediment onsite consistent with best management practices in the [Minnesota Stormwater Manual](#);
 - (2) Natural site topography, soil, and vegetation conditions are used to control runoff and reduce erosion and sedimentation;
 - (3) Construction activity is phased when possible;
 - (4) All erosion and sediment controls are installed before starting any land disturbance activity;
 - (5) Erosion and sediment controls are maintained to ensure effective operation;
 - (6) The proposed work is consistent with the vegetation standards in [Section 9.0](#); and
 - (7) Best management practices for protecting and enhancing ecological and water resources identified in [Best Practices for Meeting DNR General Public Waters Work Permit GP 2004-0001](#).
- (f) *Compliance with other plans and programs.* All development must:
- (1) Be consistent with Minnesota Statutes, chapter 103B, and local water management plans completed under chapter 8410;
 - (2) Meet or exceed the wetland protection standards under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8420; and
 - (3) Meet or exceed the floodplain management standards under Minnesota Rules, chapter 6120.5000 – 6120.6200

551.XXX.- SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

(a) *Applicability.*

(1) The design standards in this section apply to subdivisions, planned unit developments and master- planned development and redevelopment of land involving ten or more acres for contiguous parcels that abut the Mississippi River and 20 or more acres for all other parcels, including smaller individual sites within the following developments that are part of a common plan of development that may be constructed at different times:

- a. Subdivisions;
- b. Planned unit developments; and
- c. Master-planned development and redevelopment of land.

(2) The following activities are exempt from the requirements of this section:

- a. Minor subdivisions consisting of three or fewer lots;
- b. Minor boundary line corrections;
- c. Resolutions of encroachments;
- d. Additions to existing lots of record;
- e. Placement of essential services; and
- f. Activities involving river-dependent commercial and industrial uses.

(b) *Application materials.* Project information listed in **Section 3.6** must be submitted for all proposed developments.

(c) *Design standards.*

a. Primary conservation areas, where they exist, must be set aside and designated as protected open space in quantities meeting the following as a percentage of total parcel area:

1. CA-ROS District: 50%;
2. CA-RN District: 20%;
3. CA-RTC, CA-UM, and CA-UC Districts: 10%; and
4. CA-SR District: 10% if the parcel includes native plant communities or provides feasible connections to a regional park or trail system, otherwise no requirement.

b. If the primary conservation areas exceed the amounts specified in **Section 11.41**, then protection of native plant communities and natural vegetation in riparian areas shall be prioritized.

c. If primary conservation areas exist but do not have natural vegetation (identified as restoration priorities in the MRCCA Plan), then a vegetation assessment must be completed to evaluate the unvegetated primary conservation areas and determine

whether vegetation restoration is needed. If restoration is needed, vegetation must be restored according to **Section 9.62**.

- d. If primary conservation areas do not exist on the parcel and portions of the parcel have been identified in the MRCCA plan as a restoration area, vegetation must be restored in the identified areas according to **Section 9.62** and the area must be set aside and designated as protected open space.
- e. Storm water treatment areas or other green infrastructure may be used to meet the protected open space requirements if the vegetation provides biological and ecological functions.
- f. Land dedicated under Title 22 Article V for public river access, parks, or other open space or public facilities may be counted toward the protected open space requirement.
- g. Protected open space areas must connect open space, natural areas, and recreational areas, where present on adjacent parcels, as much as possible to form an interconnected network.

(d) *Permanent protection of designated open space.*

(1) Designated open space areas must be protected through one or more of the following methods:

- a. Public acquisition by a government entity for conservation purposes;
- b. A permanent conservation easement, as provided in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 84C;
- c. A deed restriction; and
- d. Other arrangements that achieve an equivalent degree of protection.

(2) Permanent protection methods must ensure the long-term management of vegetation to meet its biological and ecological functions, prohibit structures, and prohibit land alteration, except as needed to provide public recreational facilities and access to the river.

(e) *Alternative design standards.* Alternative design standards may be considered through a planned unit development or cluster development. Individual lots in a planned unit development or cluster development are not required to meet the design standards of this section if it can be demonstrated that the overall development is in compliance with the standards and purpose of this section.

551.XXX.- EXEMPTIONS

(a) *Applicability.*

(1) Uses and activities not specifically exempted must comply with this section. Uses and activities exempted under shore impact zone and bluff impact zone must comply with the vegetation management and land alteration standards in **Sections 9 and 10**.

(2) Uses and activities in Table **551-X** are categorized as:

- a. **Exempt – E.** This means that the use or activity is allowed;
- b. **Exempt if no alternative - (E).** This means that the use or activity is allowed only if the zoning administrator determines that no alternatives exist; and
- c. **Not exempt - N.** This means that a use or activity is not exempt and must meet the standards of this ordinance.

Table 551-X: Uses or activities in the MR District

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Industrial and utility structures requiring greater height for operational reasons (such as elevators, refineries and railroad signaling towers)	N	E	N	N	Structure design and placement must minimize interference with public river corridor views.
Bridges and bridge approach roadways	E	E	E	(E)	Section 8
Wireless communication towers	E	E	N	N	Section 5.26
Chimneys, church spires, flag poles, public monuments, and mechanical stacks and equipment	N	E	N	N	
Historic properties and contributing properties in historic districts	E	E	E	E	Exemptions do not apply to additions or site alterations

Public utilities.

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Electrical power facilities	E	E	E	(E)	Section 8
Essential services (other than storm water facilities)	E	E	E	(E)	Section 8
Storm water facilities	E	N	E	(E)	Section 10
Wastewater treatment	E	N	E	N	Section 8
Public transportation facilities	E	N	(E)	(E)	Section 8

Public recreational facilities.

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Monuments, flagpoles, light standards, and similar park features	E	E	(E)	(E)	Section 8; within BIZ, only on slopes averaging less than 30%. Exemptions do not apply to principal structures.
Picnic shelters and other open-sided structures	E	N	(E)	N	Section 8

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Parking lots	(E)	N	(E)	(E)	Section 8; within BIZ, only within 20 feet of toe of bluff; not on face of bluff; and must not affect stability of bluff
Roads and driveways	(E)	N	(E)	(E)	Section 8
Natural-surfaced trails, access paths, and viewing areas	E	N	E	E	Section 8
Hard-surfaced trails and viewing platforms	E	N	E	(E)	Section 8; within BIZ, only on slopes averaging less than 30%
Water access ramps	E	N	E	(E)	Section 8
Public signs and kiosks for interpretive or directional purposes	E	N	E	(E)	Section 8

River-dependent uses.

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Shoreline facilities	E	N ¹	E	(E)	Section 5.25. Exemptions do not apply to buildings, structures, and parking areas that are not part of a shoreline facility
Private roads and conveyance structures serving river-dependent uses	E	N	E	(E)	Section 5.25

Private residential and commercial water access and use facilities.

Use or Activity	Set backs	Height Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Private roads serving 3 or more lots	(E)	N	N	(E)	Section 7; in BIZ, only on slopes averaging less than 30%. Exemption does not apply to private roads serving fewer 3 lots or to private driveways and parking areas
Access paths	E	N	E	E	Section 7
Water access ramps	E	N	E	N	Section 7
Stairways, lifts, and landings	E	N	E	E	Section 7

¹ River-dependent commercial, industrial, and utility structures are exempt from height limits only if greater height is required for operational reasons.

Use or Activity	Set back s	Heigh t Limits	SIZ	BIZ	Applicable standards with which the use or activity must comply
Water-oriented accessory structures	E	N	E	N	Section 7
Patios and decks	E	N	N	N	Section 7.5
Directional signs for watercraft (private)	E	N	E	N	Section 7.6; exemption does not apply to off-premise advertising signs
Temporary storage of docks, boats, and other equipment during the winter months	E	N	E	N	
Erosion control structures, such as rock riprap and retaining walls	E	N	E	(E)	Sections 10.3, 10.5 and 10.6
Flood control structures	E	N	E	(E)	Section 10

Excerpt form 8-6-2020 memo to CPC Committee of the Whole:

The current MRCCA ordinance has river setback requirements and references the SH Shoreland Overlay District’s height limitation of 2.5 stories, or 35 feet, whichever is less, within 300 feet of the river. Otherwise, height outside of the Shoreland, is currently regulated in the MRCCA only by underlying zoning. A major change of the new regulations, is the addition of maximum height regulations for each MRCCA district, as follows:

	CA-ROS	CA-RN	CA-RTC	CA-SR	CA-UM	CA-UC
Height	35’	35’	48’	Underlying Zoning	65’	Underlying Zoning
River Setback	200’	100’	75’	N/A	50’	Underlying Zoning
Bluff Setback	100’	40’	40’	40’	40’	40’

The adopted MRCCA rules, which provide the guidance for the new zoning regulations, set standard for measuring and regulating height that is slightly different than the those of the current Minneapolis zoning code and future Built Form districts. Some of the major differences:

- The MRCCA measures height on the river side of a structure, while the zoning code measures it at the front center of a building or structure from natural grade.
- The MRCCA measures height in feet, while the zoning code measures height in both stories and feet.
- The MRCCA allows height exemptions for certain uses, and the zoning code allows some general height exemptions for certain buildings and structures (except in the SH Shoreland Overlay).
- The MRCCA allows height increases by variance in the CA-ROS and CA-RN districts; by conditional use permit in the CA-RTC and CA-UM districts; and by the underlying zoning regulations in the CA-SR and CA-UC districts, while the proposed Built Form districts will allow height increases by variance or administrative standards.
- The MRCCA requires “tiering be given priority” in the CA-RTC, CA-UM, and CA-UC districts.

To integrate the MRCCA and Built Form regulations, the proposed approach is to have the most restrictive regulations of either the MRCCA or Built Form districts apply, but also to allow the flexibility allowed by those districts. (Please see the MRRCA-BF height increases table document included in this meeting packet for more detailed district information). The following are proposed:

- Height will be measured using the zoning code definition at the front center of a building or structure and at the river facing side, with the most restrictive height applied.
- Height will be measured in both feet and stories.
- The height exemptions in the MRCCA rules and the zoning code will be incorporated.
- The SH Shoreland Overlay District height requirements will remain in effect.

- Beyond river and bluff setbacks, building setbacks and allowable floor area will be determined by the Built Form districts.

Requests to increase the maximum allowable height are proposed to be subject to the following (please see attached charts for each district with meeting materials):

- The height limitation of accessory structures, single- and two-family dwellings, and three-family dwellings located may be increased only by variance.
- For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, and three-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of the Built Form district, but not the MRCCA district, maximum height may be increased only as allowed in the applicable Built Form district up to the height limitations of the MRCCA Districts.
- For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of the MRCCA district, but not the Built Form district, the maximum height increase is subject to a variance or conditional use permit, as determined by the applicable MRCCA district.
- For structures other than accessory, single- and two-family dwellings, where an increase in maximum height exceeds the height limitations of both the Built Form district and MRCCA district, maximum height increase is subject to both the standards for increasing maximum height in the Built Form district and a variance or conditional use permit, as specified by the applicable MRCCA district.

The MRCCA rules set height limits for the CA-RTC (Rural Towns and Crossings), CA-UM (Urban Mixed), and CA-UC (Urban Core) districts and have the provision that “tiering of structures away from the Mississippi River is given priority.” The rules do not define tiering or provide guidance how to implement as part of an ordinance. DNR staff have indicated in conversations with City staff that tiering is generally a stepping of buildings up from the river as one moves away from the river. Further, in their model ordinance, they provide an example of sub-districts with allowable height increasing as one moves away from the river to implement tiering. The City of Minneapolis MRCCA plan, anticipating this issue, has the following language regarding tiering:

“Historically, before the creation of the new districts, the majority of this area was part of the Urban Diversified District, which had no height requirements beyond those of the underlying zoning districts or the Shoreland Overlay. Therefore, the development pattern, especially in the core of the city is of varying building heights, some very tall. Therefore, a strict literal application of tiering, to create a step pattern up from the river will not always be practical or within the character of an existing major city. Further, in some instances it could actually harm the protection of primary conservation areas and public river corridor views. For example, a short boxy building may block more views at ground level than a taller tower that does not cover an entire building site.

In general, structures within the Critical Area should be shorter when located closer to the river with height increasing as distance from the river increases. However, taller buildings can be

considered closer to the river when the existing built character is similar, especially in the downtown area, or where measures are taken to provide significant landscaping and buffering of the structure. In addition, buildings should utilize tapered profiles as building height increases to allow views of and from the river and to avoid overly wide buildings that can create a wall along the riverfront significantly blocking views for other structures, development sites, and neighborhoods. Tiering is most appropriate to consider when requests are made for conditional use permits to increase the height of a building beyond the district height limits in the CA-RTC and CA-UM districts.”

The proposed MRCCA Overlay will implement tiering in the CA-UM by splitting the district into three sub-districts: CA-UM1, CAUM2, and CAUM3.

	CA-UM1	CA-UM2	CA-UM3
Height	35'	42'	65'

The CA-UM1 District will be applied closest to the river and generally overlapping with the SH Shoreland Overlay (not exactly matching) and parkland. It has a height maximum of 35 feet. The CA-UM2 District will be applied to areas further inland from the CA-UM1, but also to match most similar Built Form districts, which may not translate into an exact stepping up from the river. It has a height maximum of 42 feet. The CA-UM3 District will be applied furthest in from the river, but in some cases, such as the Upper Harbor Terminal, The Xcel Riverside Plat, Coloplast Headquarters, and the Grain Belt Brewery it will be mapped to reflect existing conditions. It will have a maximum allowable height of 65 feet. The CA-UM District is generally present in the upper river area and some parts of the central river.

Tiering in the CA-RTC will be accomplished by utilizing the SH Shoreland Overlay height limit of 35 feet 300 feet from the river and then the applicable CA-RTC District height limit of 48 feet. Additional sub-districts were not deemed necessary due to the small height difference between the maximum allowable height in the SH Shoreland and the CA-RTC districts and due to the relatively small amount of area mapped as CA-RTC in Minneapolis. The CA-RTC District is generally present at Nicollet Island and on the east and west sides of the river between 1-94 and Franklin Avenue.

Tiering in the CA-UC will be accomplished by utilizing the SH Shoreland Overlay height limit of 35 feet 300 feet from the river and then the underlying Built Form districts. This will be most reflective of the existing built form and character of the downtown area.