

South St. Paul City Council Work Session

Session Notes for September 22, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Francis called the City Council Work Session to order at 7:00 PM on September 8, 2025

No formal Council Action is taken at a work session meeting, this is a summary of discussion that took place.

Council Members Present: Jimmy Francis, Lori Hansen, Joe Kaliszewski, Matt Thompson, Pam Bakken, Tom Seaberg, and Todd Podgorski.

Staff Present: Ryan Garcia, City Administrator, Shelly Anderson, Assistant City Administrator/Human Resources Director.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Hardman Triangle – Public Realm Concept Discussion

Mr. Garcia introduced Ryan Herm and Matthew Tucker, Landscape Architects with Urban Ecosystems, the design firm assisting the City with the preparation of design concepts and program for a potential public realm within the Hardman Triangle redevelopment area.

Mr. Tucker provided background on the site, its ecological history as a part of the Mississippi River Floodplain as well as its industrial history as the former Swift & Co. meatpacking plant and acknowledged the role that the site's history could play in the realization of a public realm. Mr. Tucker discussed the core fundamental focus of the public realm to provide for stormwater management systems for the district, in accordance with state water quality rules and Watershed Management Organization standards. Mr. Tucker and Mr. Herm provided a walkthrough of two alternative schematic design concepts for the public realm.

Following the presentation, staff and the consultant team received the following feedback from Council:

- Council was encouraged to see intentional connections to existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure surrounding and in proximity to the site.
- Several councilmembers expressed some concern about public parking to accommodate users of the public green space that did not live within walking distance.
- Council liked the idea of reusing/repurposing building elements (brick, steel, wall sections, concrete, etc) from existing building into the public realm as proposed in seating areas, public art, play/climbing features, etc.
- Council did not feel that preserving the existing buildings for adaptive re-use (concepts included office, program space, banquet / meeting space) would be economically feasible, particularly in light of the ongoing efforts to identify a

- repurposing approach with the former library building.
- Most council members felt restroom facilities were essential to include in the design.
- Council agreed that management of stormwater was an important part of the story and should be leveraged to identify potential partners (WMO, State, Met Council, County)
- Council felt that the incorporation of the Armour Gatehouses made thematic sense and was consistent with the spirit of reuse/repurposing of the existing industrial structures and features in the Hardman Triangle, but some expressed ongoing concern about the expense of relocating the structures.

Based upon the feedback received at the Worksession and at the public meeting hosted by the Parks and Recreation Commission on September 9, Staff and Urban Ecosystems next steps would be to refine the schematic concept into a preferred schematic that would serve as a foundation for design development and ultimately construction of the public realm. This work will continue through the fall and winter in preparation of potentially aligning with the beginning of private development as soon as mid- to late- 2026.

B. City Administrator's Update

Mr. Garcia noted that EDA properties along Concord Street, Bridgepoint Drive, Grand Avenue and Concord Exchange were completing fall clean-up. Councilmembers suggested that Veterans Memorial Lane and the Concord/Richmond Parking Lot leased to Fury Motors also needed attention.

Mr. Garcia notified council that environmental investigations for the first phase of the proposed Hardman Triangle mixed-use development would be taking place in October. He also advised Council that DEED would be holding a public hearing on a business subsidy for Long Cheng on October 8, related to a \$6,000,000 grant to the business for relocation.

Mr. Garcia and Mayor Francis referenced a request from Union Pacific for a letter of support related to their proposed merger with Norfolk-Southern Railroad. Council felt that a "neutral" letter was acceptable.

3. COUNCIL COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

There were none.

4. CLOSED SESSION: LABOR NEGOTIATIONS – TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT LABOR SERVICES (LELS) FOR 2026 – 2027

Councilmember Seaberg moved to go into closed session at 9:08 P.M., in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13D.03, for the purpose of discussing negotiating strategy with Law Enforcement Labor Services for 2026 – 2027. Councilmember Bakken seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote 7/0.

Councilmember Kaliszewski motioned to reopen the meeting at 9:16 P.M, with Councilmember Hansen seconding the motion. Meeting was reopened on a voice vote 7/0.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council at the regular work session meeting, Mayor Francis declared the meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/: Ryan Garcia

City Administrator