

Resolution of the Dickerman Park Task Force December 17, 2003

The 2.5-acre Dickerman Park is located on the north side of University Avenue between Fairview Avenue and Aldine Street. Dickerman Investment Company and Griggs, Cooper, & Company dedicated the land to the City of St. Paul for park and parkway purposes in 1909. Many people in the surrounding community are unaware that this plot of land is a city-owned park. The park has the appearance of a front yard for the properties it abuts: Griggs Midway Building; Midway Family YMCA; Metro Sound and Lighting; Community Learning Centers Building; and Marsden/American Security.

Beginning in 2002, Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County initiated a series of meetings with some interested residents and community groups in the area regarding the future of the park. This informal group conducted research into the history and legal issues surrounding the park, and over time pulled in more interested partners.

In the summer of 2003, the group asked University UNITED to convene a Dickerman Park Task Force to develop a consensus vision for the future of the park. The 15-member Task Force, which met several times throughout the fall of 2003, includes neighboring property owners, and representatives of Hamline Midway Coalition, Merriam Park Community Council, Midway Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Parks and Trails, elected officials, government agencies, and technical advisors from Public Art St. Paul, the St. Paul on the Mississippi Design Center, and the Design Center for the American Urban Landscape at the University of Minnesota.

The Dickerman Park Task Force identified several key issues that needed to be addressed in the redesign and redevelopment of the park, including: design elements that would make Dickerman look and feel like a park; a plan and budget for maintenance; and meeting the parking needs of the adjacent properties.

The Task Force sponsored a design charrette on November 20, 2003 to brainstorm design/development concepts for Dickerman Park. The charrette was open to the community and there was broad participation from a variety of interested parties including a member of the Dickerman family. The resolutions below reflect this extensive community input.

Whereas the city-owned park land located on the north side of University Avenue between Fairview Avenue and Aldine Street, known as Dickerman Park, was dedicated to the City in 1909 for park and parkway purposes; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force, which represents a broad range of community stakeholders, believes that the current conditions in Dickerman Park fall short of the original intentions for its use; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force believes that recent investments by surrounding property owners and the potential for Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit on University Avenue merit taking a fresh look at the significance and potential of Dickerman Park; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force believes that Dickerman Park should be improved and beautified so that it is an asset to residents of the neighborhood and to surrounding landowners and enhances the image of University Avenue and the community; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force believes that the park design should be sustainable over a long period of time and that a maintenance plan should be a central component of any improvement plan; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force believes that the design program for Dickerman Park should include:

- *An assumption that the current boundaries of the park will be retained;*
- *Connections to other nearby greenspaces;*
- *Improved pedestrian access to Dickerman Park across University Avenue and include measures to calm or reduce traffic on the portion of Wheeler Street that passes through the Park.*
- *Creation of a new public walkway or promenade in front of the buildings that abut the park to the north;*
- *Integration of public art into the overall design;*
- *Provision of play areas in or near the park for the children attending the neighboring charter schools and daycare facilities, and living in the neighborhood;*
- *Provision of areas in the park for people to sit and eat;*
- *Preservation of the existing mature oak trees and incorporation of native plantings into the overall design;*

and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force firmly believes that in order to develop Dickerman Park into a true asset for the community, the parking needs of the surrounding properties must be resolved to allow for removal of the two parking lots currently located in the Park; and

Whereas the Dickerman Park Task Force believes that redesign and improvement of Dickerman Park may create opportunities for redevelopment of the Midway Family YMCA, properties across University Avenue from the park, the Goodwill/Easter Seals parking lot west of the park, and other properties in the vicinity; and

Whereas Friends of the Park, University UNITED, and Public Art Saint Paul have launched a campaign to secure financial support for the Park's design and development

and anticipate securing Park design funding commitments by February, 2004; now therefore,

Be it resolved that the Dickerman Park Task Force formally requests that the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation work expeditiously with the Task Force to support and facilitate the Park's redesign by a qualified landscape firm and public artist approved by University UNITED and other constituencies represented on the Task Force, and to redevelop Dickerman Park in accordance with the design and development program contained in this resolution; and

Be it further resolved that the Dickerman Park Task Force formally requests that the St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development conduct a 40-acre study and master plan for the Fairview Avenue/University Avenue area in coordination with University UNITED and other constituencies represented on the Task Force. The study and master plan would investigate opportunities for development of the parking facilities and other public improvements necessary for redevelopment of Dickerman Park and the potential redevelopment of the Midway Family YMCA, and other nearby properties.