

Application to the Heritage Preservation Commission for Expansion of the George K. Isaacs Streetcar Barn.

Why do we need the addition?

The Museum is in the late stages of restoring another streetcar, which we would like to operate at Lake Harriet. It's a smaller streetcar built in 1913 that ran in Winona, MN until 1938. Its body was made into a cabin for the next 62 years. We have been restoring it at our Excelsior shop, and expect the restoration to be complete by 2015.

Moving it to Lake Harriet will free up space in the Excelsior shop for our next project, a streetcar from Fargo-Moorhead. However, the Lake Harriet carbarn needs more space to accommodate the new car.

The addition will serve three purposes.

1. A "speeder shed" will house the small track maintenance cars that are currently stored in the rear of the carbarn. This will create sufficient space in the existing carbarn for Winona #10.
2. It will provide additional shop space for streetcar maintenance and restoration. The current shop area is very cramped.
3. The addition will provide room for a museum office/archive room, to house records of streetcar maintenance and restoration, parts inventories and historic paper artifacts. There is currently no room in any Museum building to house these basic functions.

The addition

The addition will slightly less than 1000 square feet on the east side of the present carbarn. Working with Park Board staff, we have downsized the addition from the original plan, so that it is invisible when viewed from Queen Avenue. Because it is both lower and shorter than the existing carbarn, when viewed from West Lake Harriet Parkway the visual bulk of the building will not increase. Like the existing carbarn, this will be a simple metal building without windows.

Storm water runoff treatment

The Park Board and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District require that the flow of storm water runoff from the addition be slowed. The design calls for an underground tank that will release the water slowly, to reduce erosion and improve water quality. The Museum proposes to add an additional tank to treat the runoff from the entire existing carbarn roof, which currently pours untreated into the lake. Our goal is to be good environmental stewards and achieve a net improvement in runoff control and water quality

Community input so far

On July 25 the Park Board and Museum held an open house at Linden Hills Park for residents living near the carbarn to see the plans and give input. Three residents showed up. All enthusiastically supported the project.

On August 13 the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to support the carbarn expansion project.

Historic variance applications

The Museum requests the following variances:

- Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the expansion of a nonconforming use.
- Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the shoreland overlay requirements.
- Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the setback variance requirements.

1. Expansion of a nonconforming use application findings (Section 531.50 of the zoning code)

The variance is compatible with the preservation of the property, because it ensures the continued ability of the Museum to house, operate, maintain, repair and restore historic Minnesota streetcars, as it has done on this site since 1970. The lack of adequate shop and office space inside the existing building impedes those efforts.

The variance is compatible with the other properties in the area, because those properties directly abutted the historic streetcar line from 1879 until 1954. In fact, the streetcar line was instrumental in causing the development of both the parks and residential districts through which it traveled.

The variance is necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant. The constrained dimensions of the 50-foot wide streetcar right of way constitutes a special condition that is unique to this property and was not created by the applicant. When the original streetcar barn was constructed in 1970, and when it was expanded in 1977, and 1995, the City, Park Board and Museum all believed the land was owned by the Park Board. The Museum even had a signed lease with the Park Board. The fact of City ownership remained undiscovered until 2005. The Museum's recreated streetcar line cannot be sustained without an adequate carbarn facility. If the City denies the Museum's modest proposal to make that carbarn a better facility, that constitutes a hardship.

2. Shoreland Overlay variance (Section 525.500 for general variance findings, Section 551.470 of Shoreland Overlay section, and Section 551.500).

As a tenant, the Museum has a legal interest in the property and may apply for a variance. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property (i. e. the constrained width of the former streetcar right of way). The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.

The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.

The Museum will continue to use the property as it has been used since 1970.

The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.

The essential character will be unchanged and those using the property (other than Museum volunteers) will generally be unaware that anything has changed.

3. Setback variance (Section 525.500 for general variance findings).

See response to Shoreland Overlay variance above.

(1) The alteration is compatible with and continues to support the criteria of significance and period of significance for which the landmark or historic district was designated.

The function of the George K. Isaacs Carbarn is to provide a secure place to house, maintain and restore the Museum's historic streetcars (including streetcar #1300, which is listed on the National Register) and other historic artifacts related to the history of the streetcars. The historic site designation was made after the Museum recreated the streetcar line. The ongoing operation of the streetcar line would be impossible without the carbarn. This alteration is completely compatible with the carbarn's past function and improves the carbarn's ability to fulfill its function.

(2) The alteration is compatible with and supports the interior and/or exterior designation in which the property was designated.

The carbarn had been in existence for seven years and had been expanded once when the property was designated. This addition is compatible with the original designation.

(3) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued integrity of the landmark or historic district for which the district was designated.

The addition is compatible with the construction and appearance of the existing carbarn building. Because it provides needed space for streetcar maintenance and repairs, and because one of the streetcars to be maintained has been designated as an historic site, it will ensure continued integrity of the landmark for which the district was designated.

(4) The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the applicable design guidelines adopted by the commission.

Because the carbarn already exists, and because the addition will be small compared to the existing building, and because the addition is designed to not increase the visual presence of the existing building, we believe the alteration

will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark.

(5) The alteration will not materially impair the significance and integrity of the landmark, historic district or nominated property under interim protection as evidenced by the consistency of alterations with the recommendations contained in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, this addition is a Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. The following is our response to the requirements for rehabilitation set forth in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

1. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

The historic character of the carbarn area was lost when the carbarn was built, a necessity if the rest of the property was to be returned to its historic use. This addition affects only the carbarn area. There will be no change to the portion of the historical property north of the carbarn.

2. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

As stated above, the carbarn area had already lost its historic appearance. The addition will have no further negative impact on the historic nature of the site.

3. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

The carbarn itself was built in stages from 1970 to 1995 and is not historic.

4. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

No distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship are involved.

5. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

N/A

6. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

N/A

7. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

The only architectural resource is the Linden Hills Boulevard bridge and the this project will have no impact on the bridge.

8. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

N/A

9. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

N/A

(6) The certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.

As far as we are able to discern, the certificate of appropriateness conforms to all applicable regulations of this preservation ordinance and is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and applicable preservation policies in small area plans adopted by the city council.

In addition, the following findings must be addressed if approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves the **DESTRUCTION, IN WHOLE OR IN PART**, of any landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection:

(1) The destruction is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the destruction. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses. The commission may delay a final decision for a reasonable period of time to allow parties interested in preserving the property a reasonable opportunity to act to protect it.

□ In addition, a written statement by the applicant making the findings that

alterations are proposed in a manner that demonstrates that the applicant has made adequate consideration of the following documents and regulations:

- (1) The description and statement of significance in the original nomination upon which designation of the landmark or historic district was based.
- (2) Where applicable, Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Zoning Code, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.
- (3) The typology of treatments delineated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the associated guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, reconstructing, and restoring historic buildings.

In addition, the following findings must be addressed if approving a certificate of appropriateness that involves ***ALTERATIONS TO A PROPERTY WITHIN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT:***

- (1) The alteration is compatible with and will ensure continued significance and integrity of all contributing properties in the historic district based on the period of significance for which the district was designated.
- (2) Granting the certificate of appropriateness will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.
- (3) The certificate of appropriateness will not be injurious to the significance and integrity of other resources in the historic district and will not impede the normal and orderly preservation of surrounding resources as allowed by regulations in the preservation ordinance.

The addition will be constructed only partially within the historic district, which ends at the streetcar right of way property line. Of the 24-foot wide area to be disturbed, 6-8 feet is within the historic district. The remainder is on Park Board land that abuts the historic district. The addition is compatible with the existing metal building, and has been sized and designed to not add to the existing building's visual impact. For that reason the addition will not negatively alter the essential character of the historic district.

The proposed treatment of storm water runoff for the entire carbarn building will once again make the runoff from the site equivalent to what it was before the carbarn was constructed.

DEMOLITION OF AN HISTORIC RESOURCE

A written statement by the applicant which addresses the following required findings:

That the demolition is necessary to correct an unsafe or dangerous condition on the property, or that there are no reasonable alternatives to the demolition. In determining whether reasonable alternatives exist, the commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the significance of the property, the integrity of the property and the economic value or usefulness of the existing structure, including its current use, costs of renovation and feasible alternative uses.

The only demolition will be the grading to lower the embankment on the east side of

the carbarn. As state before, only ¼ to 1/3 of the embankment falls within the historic district. As part of that grading, timber retaining walls installed by the Museum in 1977 will be replaced by more permanent sheet pile walls. There are no reasonable alternatives to the site grading.

HISTORIC VARIANCE

A written statement by the applicant which addresses the following required findings:

- (1) That the variance is compatible with the preservation of the property and with other properties in the area, and that the variance is necessary to alleviate undue hardship due to special conditions or circumstances unique to the property and not created by the applicant.

The variance is necessary for the Museum to continue to act as the steward of the historic district, thereby ensuring its continued preservation. Because of the constrained nature of the carbarn site (a 50-foot wide strip of former streetcar right of way), there is no alternative location that will accommodate the Museum's need for more space. Approval of the variance alleviates an undue hardship on the museum, which would be prevented from displaying streetcar #10 at Lake Harriet. Keeping streetcar #10 at the Museum's Excelsior carbarn would prevent the restoration of streetcar #28, which is currently stored off-side on private property.

Hanauer, Aaron M.

From: AaronMona@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 04, 2013 10:37 AM
To: Swanson, Jennifer A.
Cc: Hanauer, Aaron M.
Subject: Streetcar museum request for variances

Jennifer,

As requested by City PED staff, this is formal notification to Council Member Hodges' office that the Minnesota Streetcar Museum has applied to the Heritage Preservation Commission for historic variances to permit the construction of the addition to the George K. Isaacs carbarn at Lake Harriet. Following the August 13 meeting where the LHiNC Board endorsed the carbarn expansion project, City staff determined that the following variances were required:

1. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the expansion of a nonconforming land use.
2. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the shoreland overlay requirements.
3. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the setback variance requirements.

Please let me know if you require further information.

Aaron Isaacs, Vice Chair
Minnesota Streetcar Museum

Notification: Linden Hills Neighborhood

Hanauer, Aaron M.

From: AaronMona@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 04, 2013 10:35 AM
To: christyprediger@gmail.com
Cc: cpepin@bitstream.net; Hanauer, Aaron M.
Subject: Streetcar museum request for variances

Christy,

As requested by City PED staff, this is formal notification to the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council that the Minnesota Streetcar Museum has applied to the Heritage Preservation Commission for historic variances to permit the construction of the addition to the George K. Isaacs carbarn at Lake Harriet. Following the meeting where the LHiNC Board endorsed the carbarn expansion project, City staff determined that the following variances were required:

1. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the expansion of a nonconforming land use.
2. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the shoreland overlay requirements.
3. Historic variance to allow for departure of the literal requirements of the setback variance requirements.

Please let me know if you require further information.

Aaron Isaacs, Vice Chair
Minnesota Streetcar Museum



Administrative Offices
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227

Operations Center
3800 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1000

Phone
612-230-6400
Fax:
612-230-6500

www.minneapolisparcs.org

President
John Erwin

Vice President
Liz Wielinski

Commissioners
Brad Bourm
Bob Fine
Carol A. Kummer
Jon C. Olson
Anita Tabb
Scott Vreeland
M. Annie Young

Superintendent
Jayne Miller

Secretary to the Board
Michael P. Schmidt

September 3, 2013

Aaron Hanauer, Senior Planner
City of Minneapolis CPED
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

RE: Minnesota Streetcar Museum - George K. Isaacs Car barn Expansion.

Dear Mr. Hanauer:

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has been coordinating with the Minnesota Streetcar Museum (MSM) on their proposed car barn expansion. The existing building currently occupies 4291 Queen Avenue South; the proposed expansion would extend onto MPRB property at 4525 Upton Avenue South. Although the MPRB Board of Commissioners has not yet taken formal action on a license agreement allowing the expansion (planned for consideration in October 2013), the Board expressed broad support for the proposal at a March 2012 Board meeting. Recent community meetings also suggest broad support for the proposed addition.

MSM approached MPRB staff with the concept for the proposed expansion in late 2011. Since then, our organizations have collaborated to refine the proposal, minimize visual and physical impacts and develop innovative stormwater management strategies that exceed Minnehaha Creek Watershed District requirements. The proposal is consistent with MPRB policies and goals.

MSM has been a valued partner of MPRB since the 1970's. MSM's events and programs conducted at their Lake Harriet location contribute to parks and to the community. MSM is a good neighbor and maintains the "Como-Harriet" rail corridor in coordination with MPRB. The proposed addition is important to MSM's continued operation and will expand the Museum's capacity as a steward of historic resources.

I encourage the City's review processes to continue. Please do not hesitate to call on me and my staff if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Bruce Chamberlain, ASLA
Assistant Superintendent for Planning
bchamberlain@minneapolisparcs.org
612-230-6467



August 19, 2013

Council Member Betsy Hodges
City of Minneapolis
350 S. 5th St., Room 307
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Minnesota Streetcar Museum (MSM) proposed carbarn expansion and land transfer

Dear Council Member Hodges,

We are writing to convey our full support for the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's plans for a proposed expansion to the George K. Isaacs Carbarn near Lake Harriet, and for the transfer of the affected land to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). Mr. Aaron Isaacs of the MSM offered a very thorough presentation detailing the plans for expansion, and also the need to transfer the land on which the carbarn sits from the City of Minneapolis to the MPRB.

LHiNC voted unanimously to offer its full support of both the carbarn expansion and the land transfer.

Please contact us if you would like further information. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Constance Pepin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C'.

Constance Pepin, Co-Chair

Linden Hills Neighborhood Association (LHiNC)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Hawthorne". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Grant Hawthorne, Co-Chair

cc: Jennifer Swanson

Proposed Addition to the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's George K. Isaacs Car barn located adjacent to Lake Harriet Parkway West

March 14, 2012



MPRB Comprehensive Plan

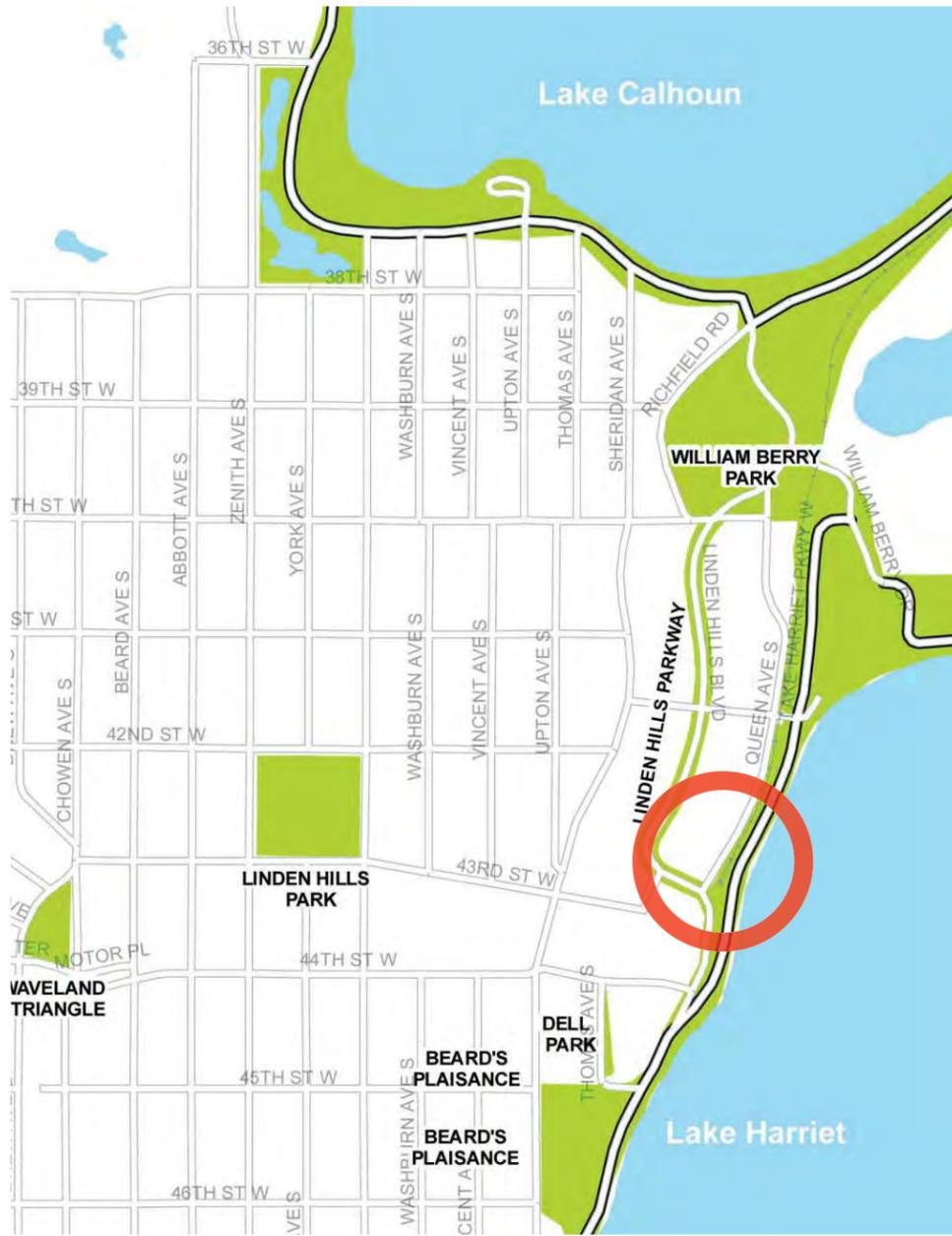
Goal: *Volunteers make a vital difference to people, parks, and the community.*

Goal: *People connect through parks and recreation.*

Strategy: *Enrich physical, artistic, environmental, and social program delivery by partnering with other agencies, professionals, and providers.*



project location



existing conditions: view from Queen Avenue South

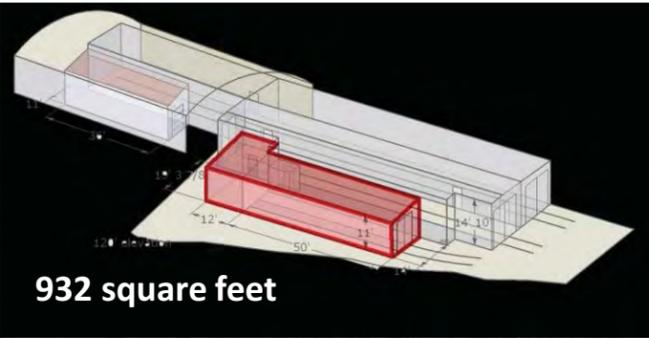


July 25, 2013

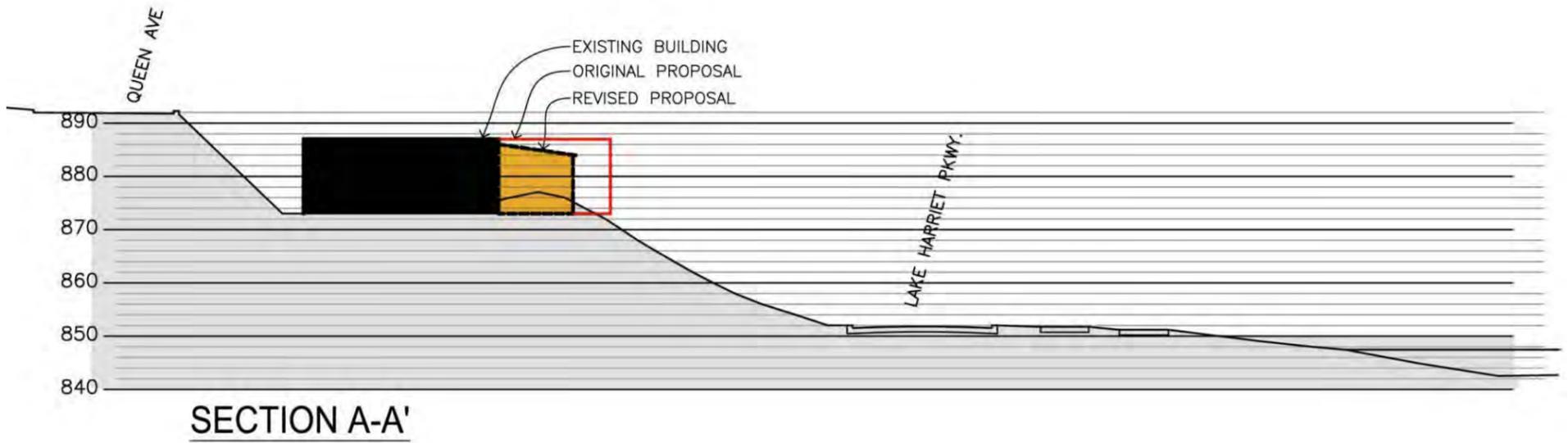
Minnesota Streetcar Museum Proposed Car barn Expansion



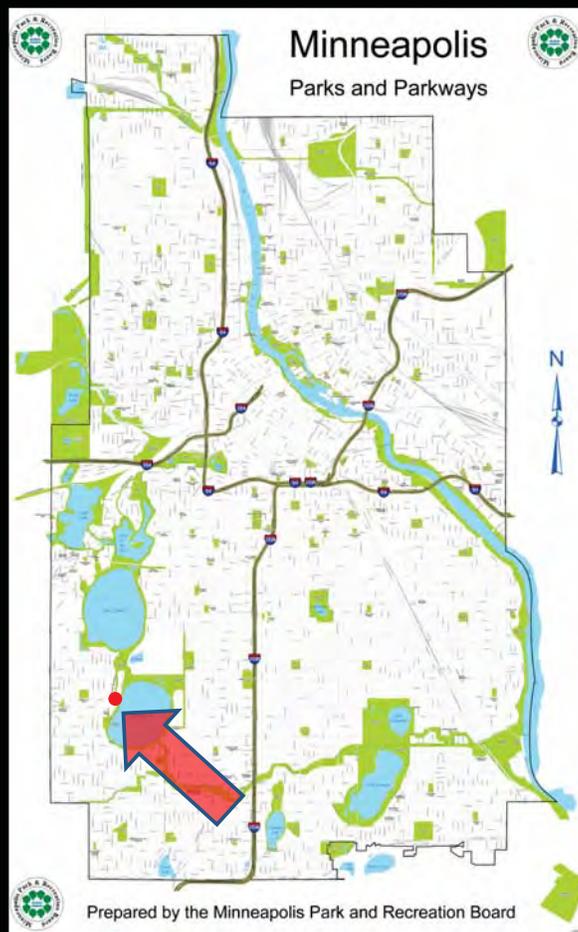
revised proposal



site section



project location

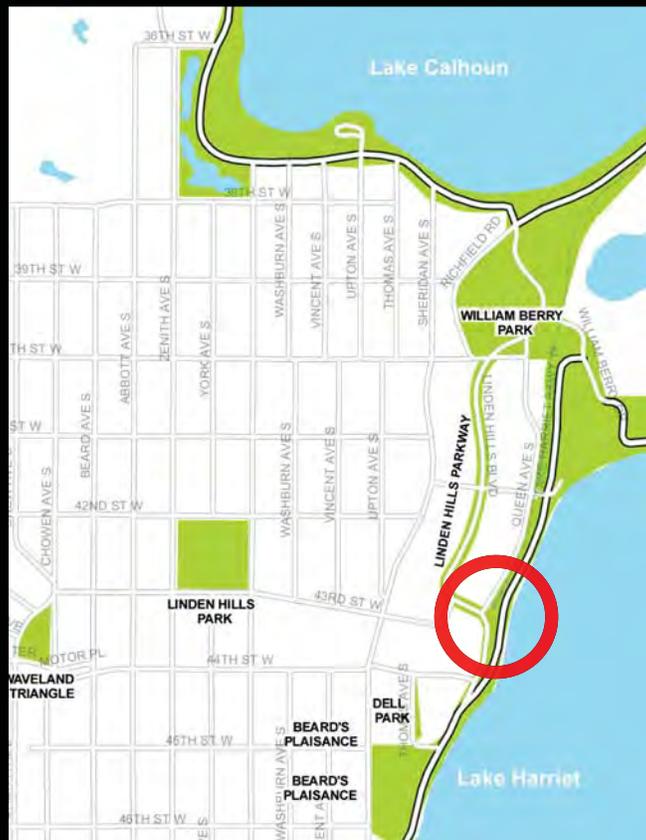


March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

3

project location



March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

4

site context



March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

5

property ownership

Interactive Maps

Find a PID or an address on the map

Welcome

Results

Links

- [Tax Information](#)
- [View oblique imagery \(Bing maps\)](#)
- [Survey Documents](#)

PID: 0802824410002

4291 Queen Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55410

Owner/Taxpayer

Owner: City Of Minneapolis
CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS
C/O MN STREETCAR MUSEUM

Taxpayer: P O BOX 14467
UNIVERSITY STA
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55414

Tax District

School Dist: 001

Sewer Dist:

Watershed Dist: 3

Parcel

Parcel Area: 1.26 acres
54,910 sq ft

Torrens/Abstract: Abstract

Addition: Unplatted

Lot:

Legend

Measure

City of Minneapolis Property

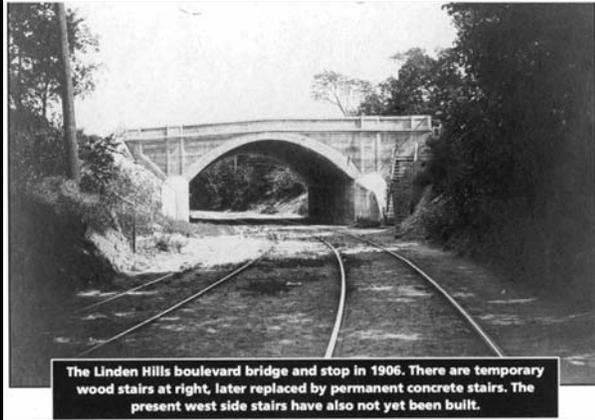
MPRB property

March 14, 2012

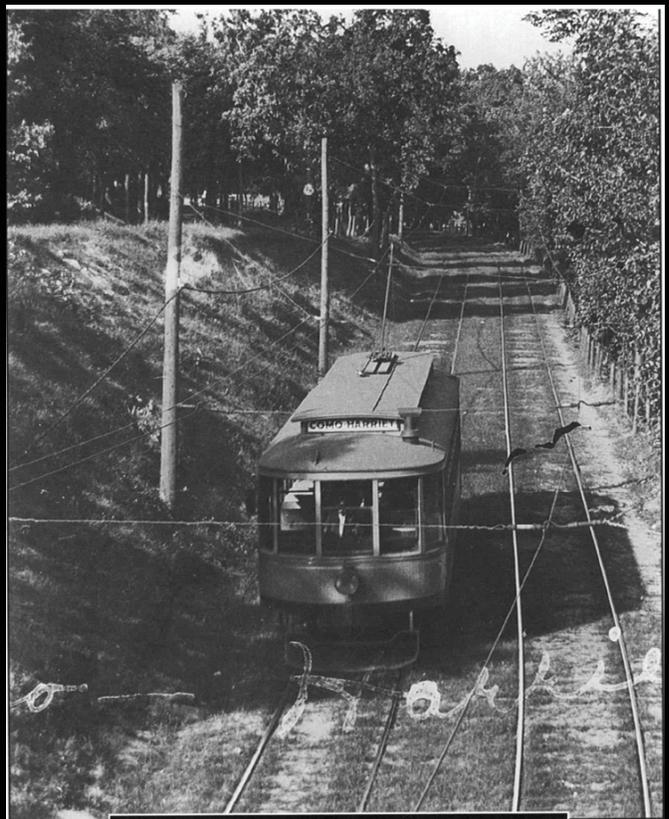
Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

6

historic views: 1906, 1910



The Linden Hills boulevard bridge and stop in 1906. There are temporary wood stairs at right, later replaced by permanent concrete stairs. The present west side stairs have also not yet been built.

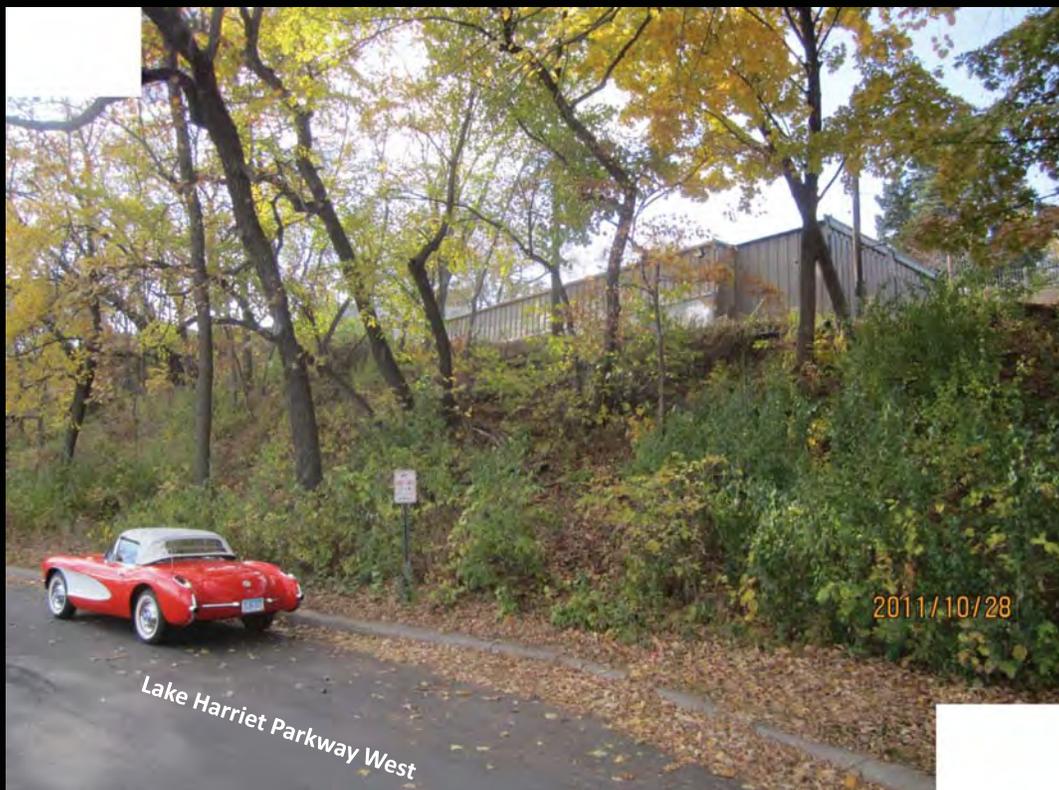


Viewed from the Linden Hills Boulevard bridge, a southbound car passes the site of the present museum carbarn about 1910. Note that the concrete retaining wall is not yet in place. It would be constructed in 1916.

existing conditions: view from Queen Avenue South



existing conditions: view from Lake Harriet Parkway West



March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

9

existing conditions: view from Linden Hills Parkway bridge

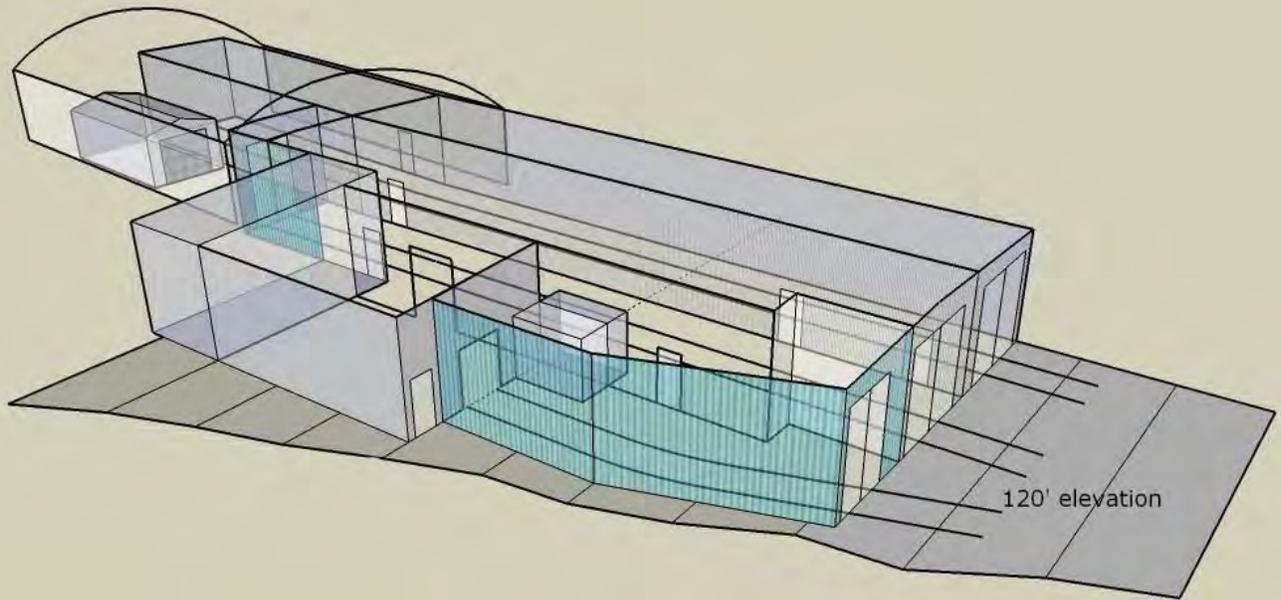


March 14, 2012

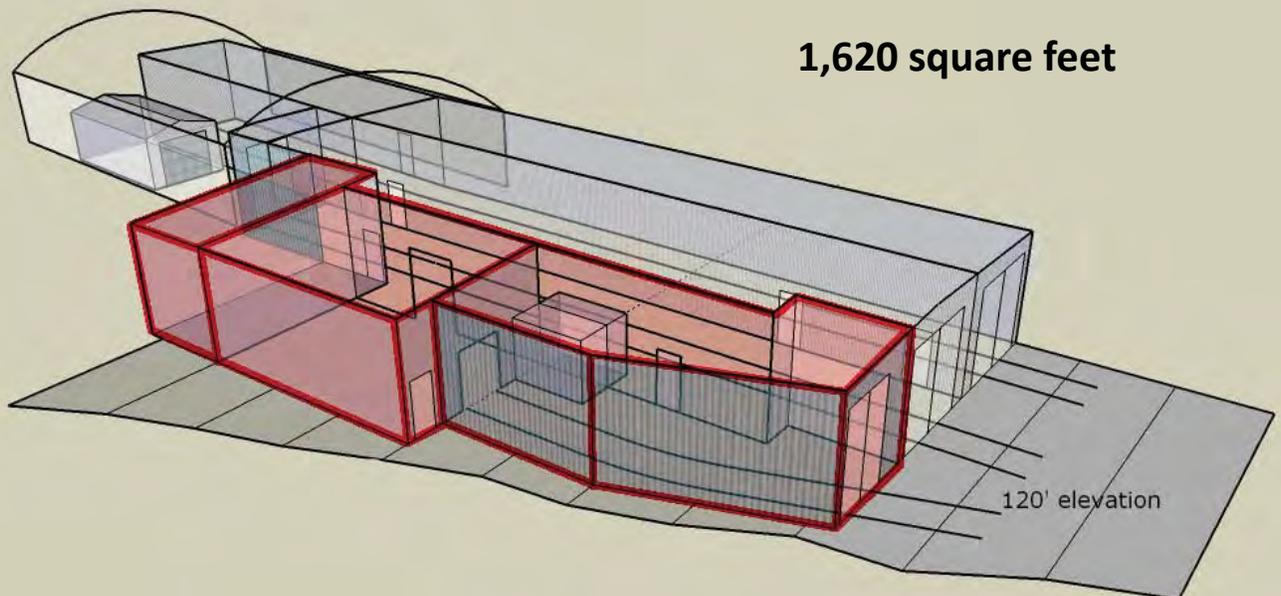
Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

10

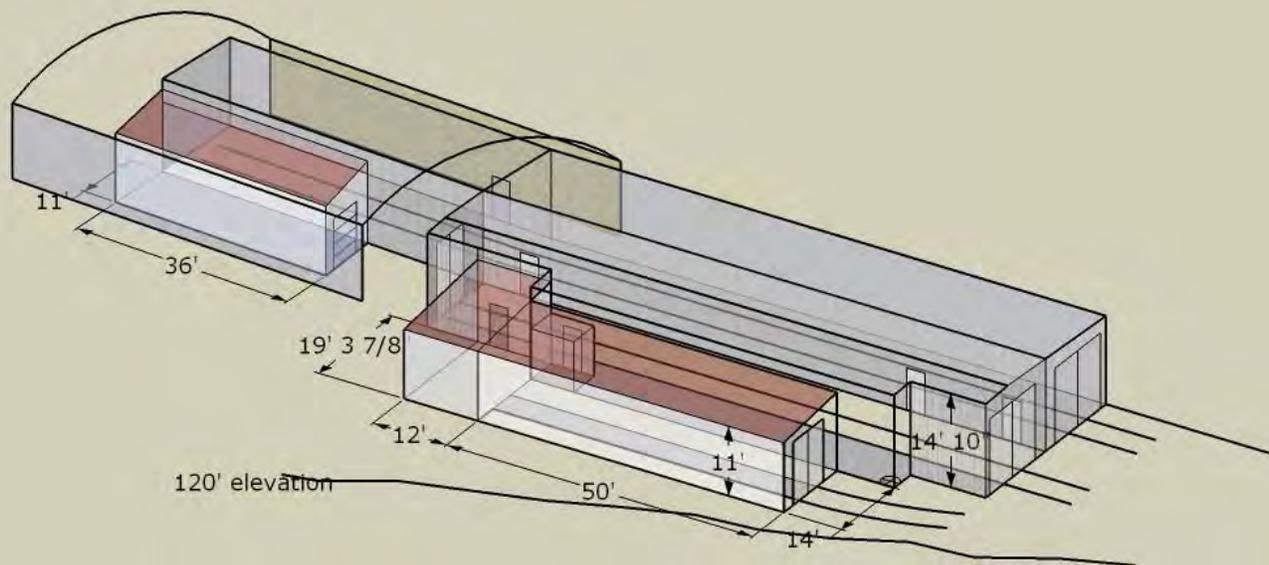
original proposal



original proposal



revised proposal

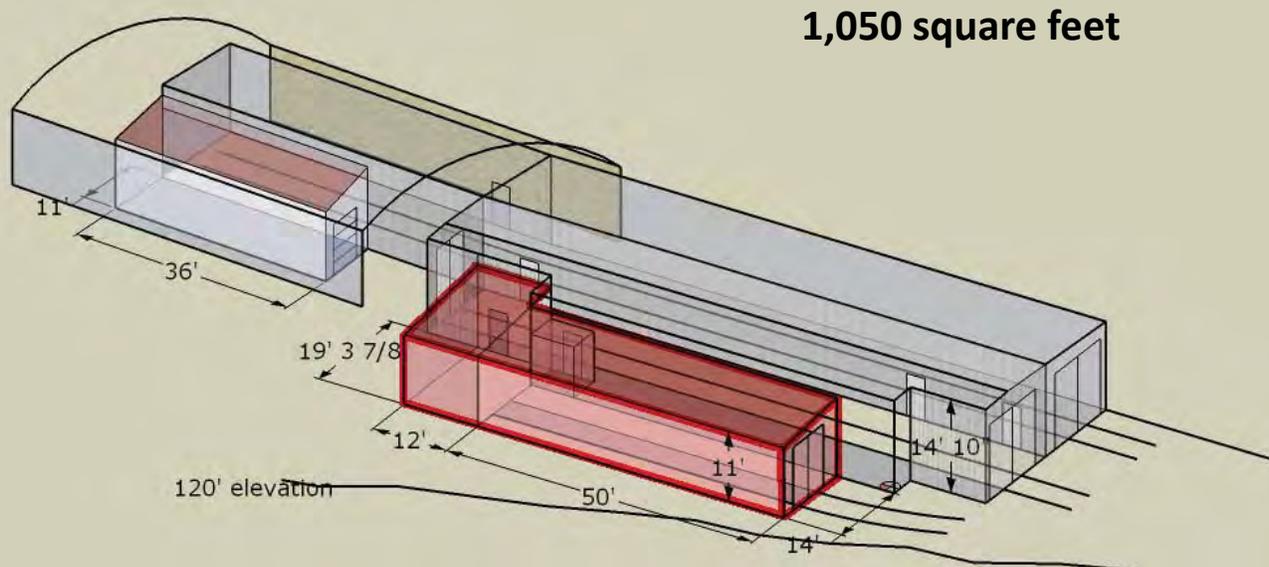


March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

13

revised proposal

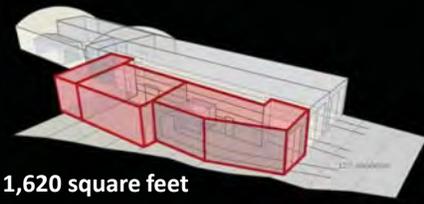


March 14, 2012

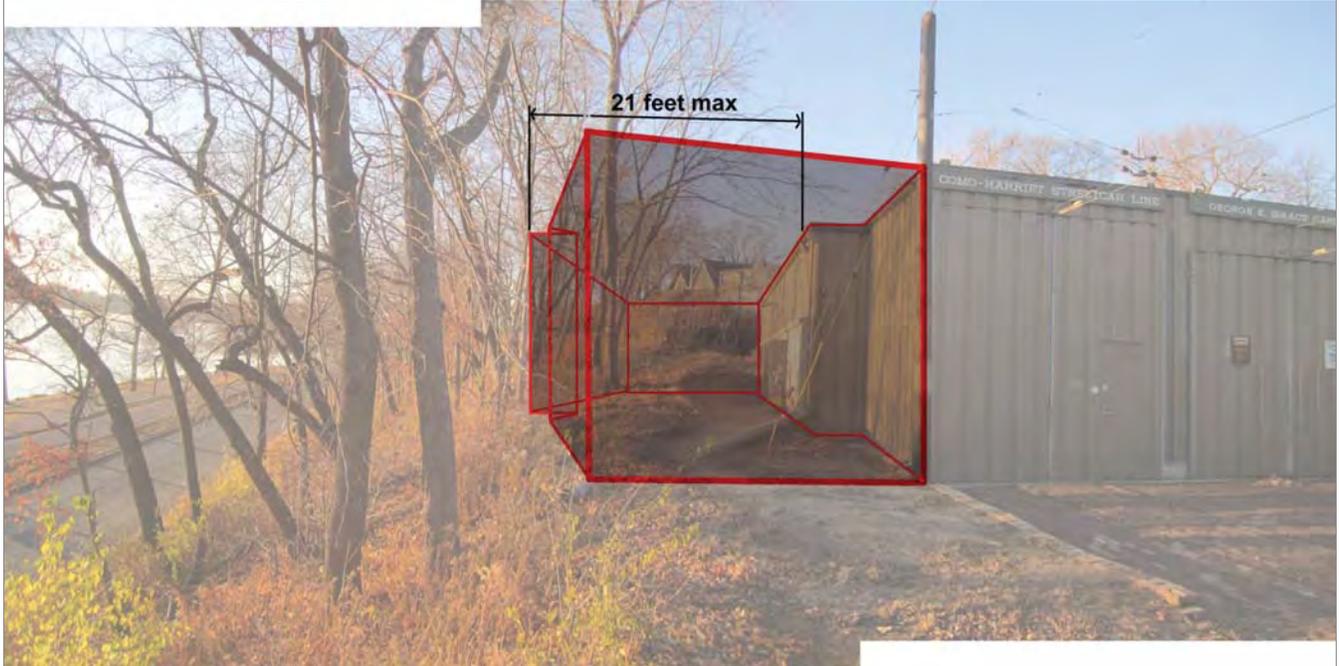
Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

14

original proposal



1,620 square feet

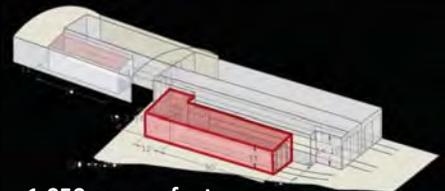


March 14, 2012

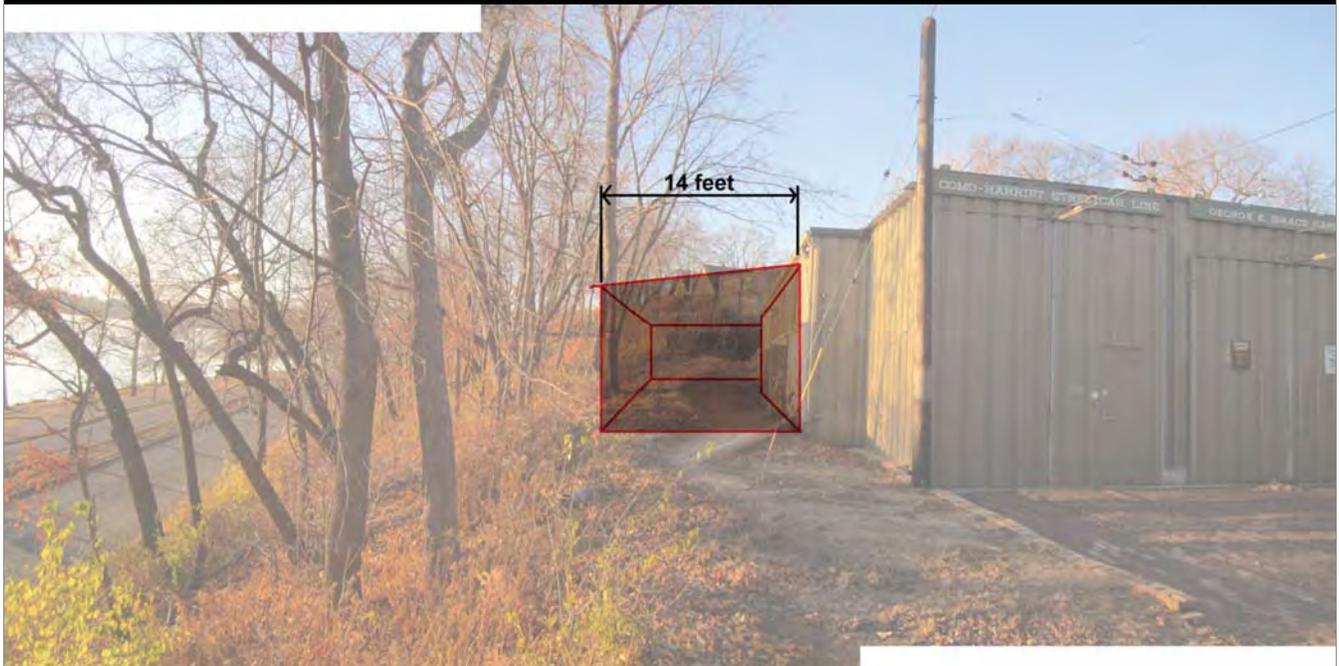
Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Carbarn Expansion

15

revised proposal



1,050 square feet

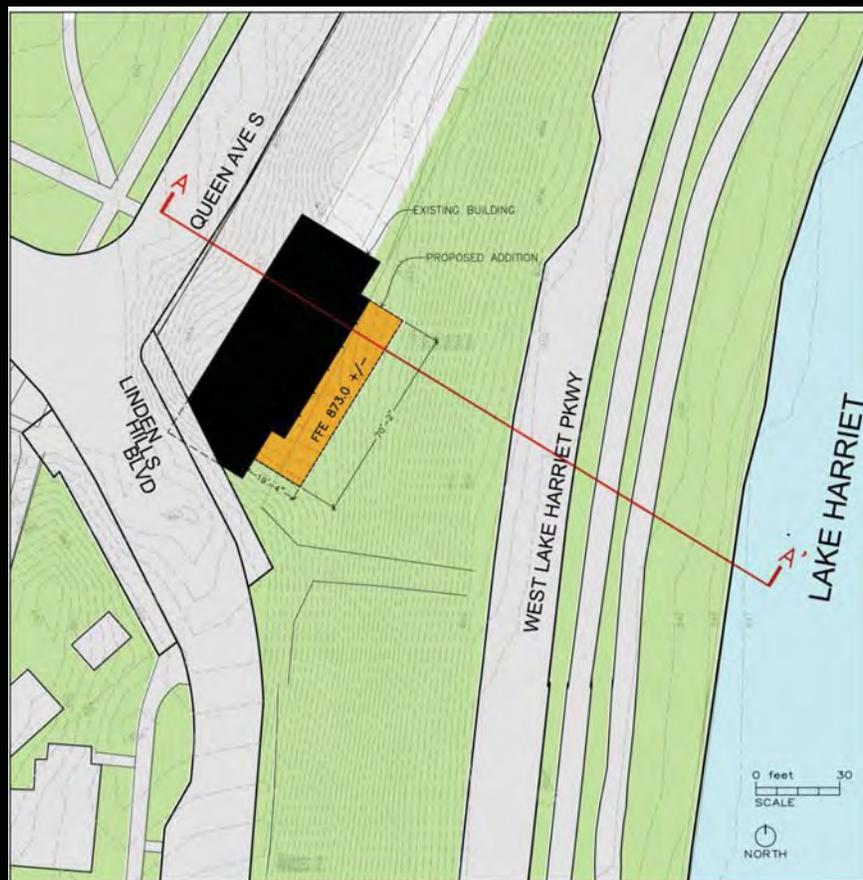


March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Carbarn Expansion

16

site plan

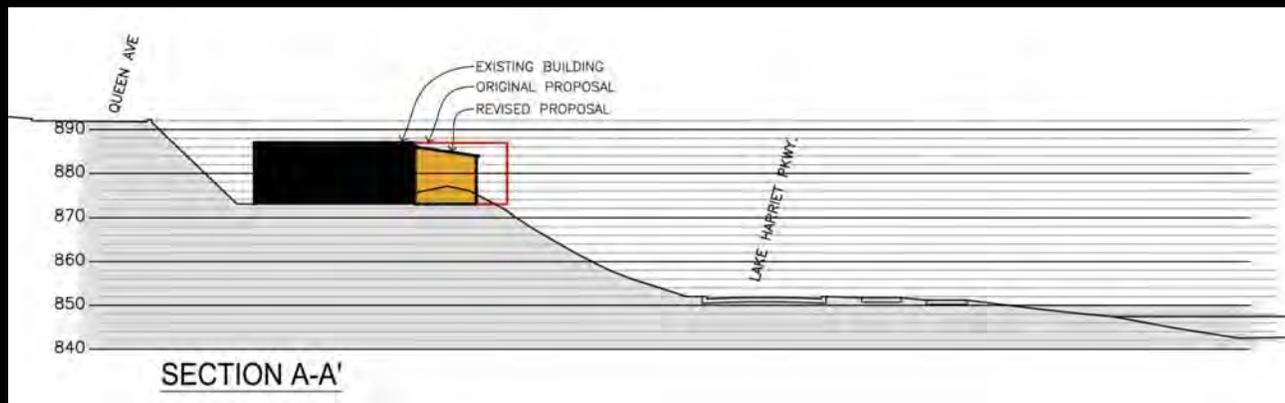


March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

17

site section



March 14, 2012

Minnesota Streetcar Museum - Proposed Car barn Expansion

18

next steps

- **host neighborhood open house (MSM)**
- **draft easement agreement (MPRB Staff)**
- **coordinate with MSM to refine design as needed (MPRB Staff)**
- **prepare item for formal Board action (MPRB Staff)**
- **fundraising (MSM)**
- **design, permitting & construction (MSM)**

