

# Mill City Times

Covering the central riverfront neighborhoods of Minneapolis

## Ironclad Breaks Ground at Chicago & Washington

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**The Ironclad project broke ground recently at the corner of Washington & Chicago.**

### **SITE HISTORY**

Constructed in 1867, The Union Grain Elevator (or “Elevator E”) that once stood on the site was one of the earliest and largest wood grain elevators built in Minneapolis (able to hold up to 130,000 bushels of grain). The elevator was located directly on the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Saint Paul railway that ran towards the adjacent Mill District along the Mississippi. After just 10 years of use, The Union elevator was burned to the ground, reconstructed, and IRON CLAD to better protect the structure against future fires.

### **BACKGROUND FROM MINNEAPOLIS CPED STAFF REPORT**

**SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE.** The subject property is currently a surface parking lot located at Chicago Avenue and Washington Avenue South. The

property was historically used by the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Saint Paul Railway as a connection into the rail facilities in the Mill District and was the site of a grain elevator. In 1884, the company built a viaduct to carry depot-bound trains over Washington Avenue near 8th Avenue South. The viaduct was demolished in 1984, but remnants of the stone wall that supported the viaduct remain along Washington and Chicago Avenues. The site is irregularly shaped due to the former location of the railroad.

**SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD.** The property is surrounded by a mix of uses, including residential units, restaurants, hotels, and offices. Surrounding zoning is mostly B4N Downtown Neighborhood District and C3A Community Activity Center District. There are several surface parking lots in the surrounding area, though some are currently being redeveloped. The site is about one block from the Downtown East light rail station and several bus routes serve the immediate area.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION.** The applicant is proposing to construct a mixed use building including 171 dwelling units, a hotel with 148 rooms, approximately 8,000 square feet of retail space, and 388 parking spaces. Additionally, the applicant is proposing a second phase of residential development including approximately 38,000 square feet of additional space and 20 more dwelling units along 9th Avenue South. The initial residential portion would be 14 stories or 148 feet in height. The hotel would be 8 stories or 90 feet tall. The parking spaces would be incorporated in two levels of underground parking and two levels of above grade parking at the rear of the property. This area would be accessed by a curb cut on Chicago Avenue and another curb cut on 9th Avenue South. A valet drop-off would be incorporated at the ground level in the parking structure. Amenities for the hotel and residential uses are proposed above the parking structure at the third floor. The residential portion of the building would be located on the northeast portion of the site along Washington Avenue South and the hotel would be on the northwest side along Chicago Avenue.

The applicant is retaining a significant portion of the existing limestone retaining wall from the historic viaduct, though some deconstruction and reconstruction will be required to allow for construction activities for the building. About 300 linear feet of the wall currently wraps the perimeter of the site along the property lines at Chicago and Washington. Approximately 200 linear feet of the wall would be kept along Chicago and Washington with the proposed new construction. Additional limestone blocks will be utilized as decorative landscape pieces on the site and in the adjacent public right-of-way.

Removal of a portion of the wall allows for direct access from the public sidewalk to the retail spaces on Washington Avenue. The proposal also includes an 18 foot wide walkway along the northeast portion of the property that accesses an additional retail space and provides a pedestrian connection from 9th Avenue South to Washington Avenue. Additionally, the applicant is proposing significant improvements to the public realm along 9th Avenue South.



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