

Design Guidelines

The Towerside / CEZ Unified Project Design Standards have been crafted to provide planning and design guidance to all parties with a stake or role in the redevelopment of the Innovation District and the communities in which it is located. These planning and design standards are based on community values and aspirations and the Eco-District Imperatives of Equity, Resilience and Climate Protection. A primary purpose the cities of Minneapolis and St Paul had in designating this geography an Innovation District was for it to serve as a replicable model of 21st century urban redevelopment. As such, all projects within the district are charged with the responsibility of incorporating these principles and to the enrichment of this place, its beauty and its livability by excellence of design.

MOU Process

Summary Unified Project Standards

1. Districtwide Systems - Connect to and participate in districtwide energy, stormwater, parking and open space systems when available or under consideration. When districtwide systems are not available design for future connection to them.
2. Green Space – Preserve and expand viable green space on site that includes natural landscapes and contributes to an interconnected public realm, in addition to any green space required by municipality. Do not designate green space to be private or inaccessible to the public.
3. Connectivity - Create and maintain pedestrian and bicycle paths to and through the site and enhance connections to public trail networks and districtwide systems. Employ TOD principles and address first/last mile connectivity issues across multiple modes of transportation.
4. Parking – If development cannot participate in shared parking or districtwide parking facility, provide required parking for staff, and/or residents on site, preferably within or below structures. Reduce parking needs to support pedestrian, bicycle and transit usage.
5. Urban Context – Respect and reinforce the intrinsic character, scale and architectural fabric of the neighborhood and adjacent properties.
6. Streetscape and Pedestrian Zone – Enhance the public realm by placing shops, restaurants and other active uses on the sidewalk level to provide “eyes on the street.” Provide large glazing areas to make visual connections to interior spaces and invest in streetscape enhancements. Use design principles and building materials that promote quality and permanence.
7. Adaptability – Design structures to create flexible, adaptable spaces with high ceilings and long span structures for evolving future uses.
8. Historic Preservation – Preserve or repurpose historic structures and fabric whenever possible, whether designated on National Register of Historic Places or not.
9. Art, Culture and Design – Include culturally relevant public art as part of the design of the building and site, source local artists, and include community in the process.
10. Sustainability and Health – Identify and meet appropriate performance targets for stormwater, energy and water use, indoor air quality, healthy and renewable materials, construction waste and dark skies.
11. Collaborative and Maker Spaces – Create spaces in buildings, especially at ground level that can be part of the collaborative commons. When appropriate, make some portion of the building available for public use or commerce.
12. Affordable and Mixed Option Housing – In projects that are primarily housing, provide a minimum of 30% of the units to be affordable to people with incomes between 30 and 60% of AMI. Provide mixture of 1, 2 and 3 Bedroom units with appropriate amenities for populations served. A broad range of housing types, including co-housing, artist lofts and live/workspaces are encouraged.