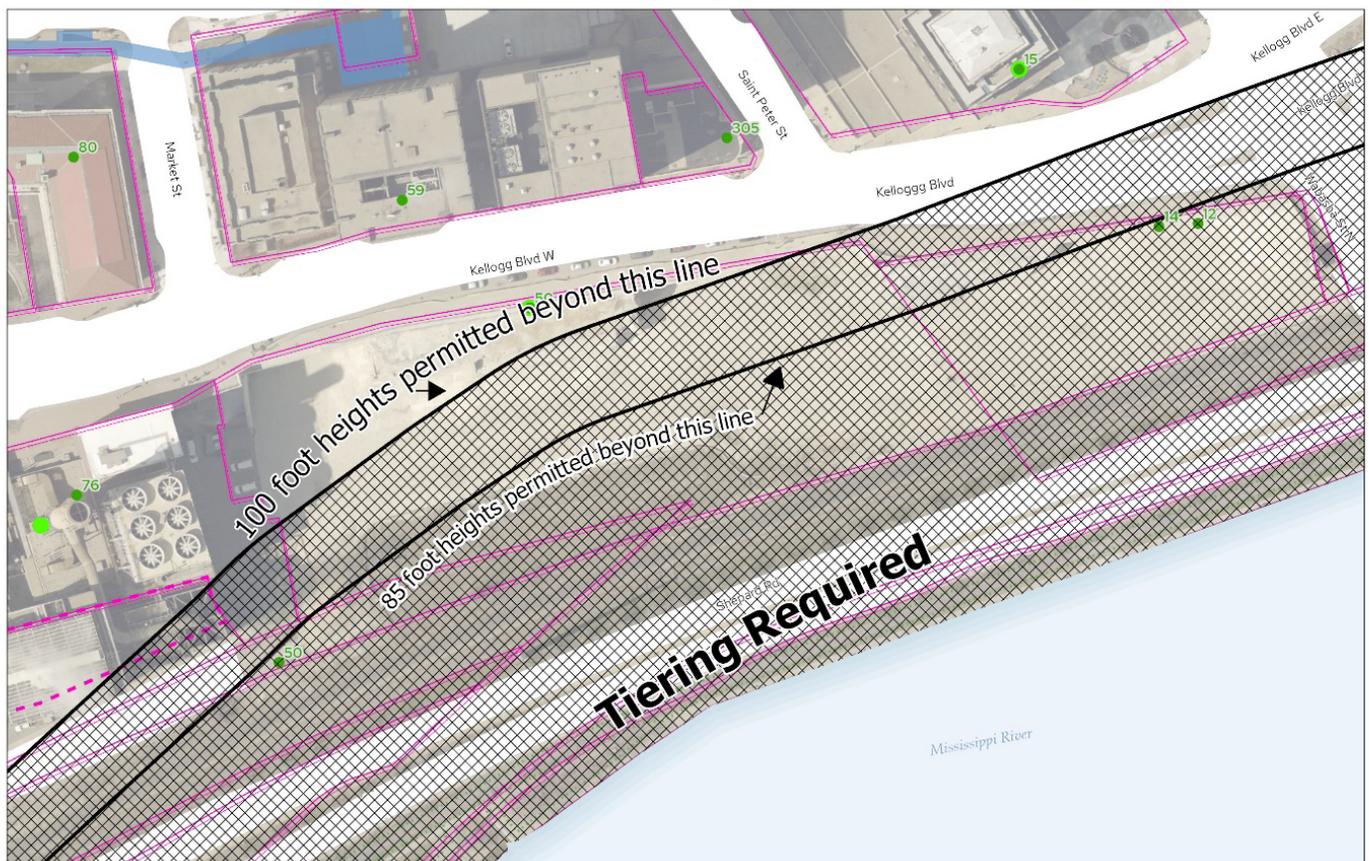


Ramsey West Site (Downtown Saint Paul):

Under Mr. Torstenson’s proposal, the UC District would be subject to a 35-foot base height at the shoreline, with a 1-foot height increase for every 5 feet of distance a structure is from the river. This approach would be highly restrictive in a downtown context, where the bluff is approximately 85 feet high. If adopted, this approach would only allow development that is constructed at the toe (the bottom) of the bluff to project approximately one or two stories over the bluff line (top of the bluff). This height limitation would effectively prevent the development concepts proposed by Ramsey County for this site from advancing without a large MRCCA height variance. Additionally, the curvilinear nature of the river near this site further complicates implementation, making setback-based height calculations difficult to administer and creating significant design challenges for future developers.

Ramsey County West Tiering

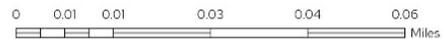
Tuesday, July 1, 2025



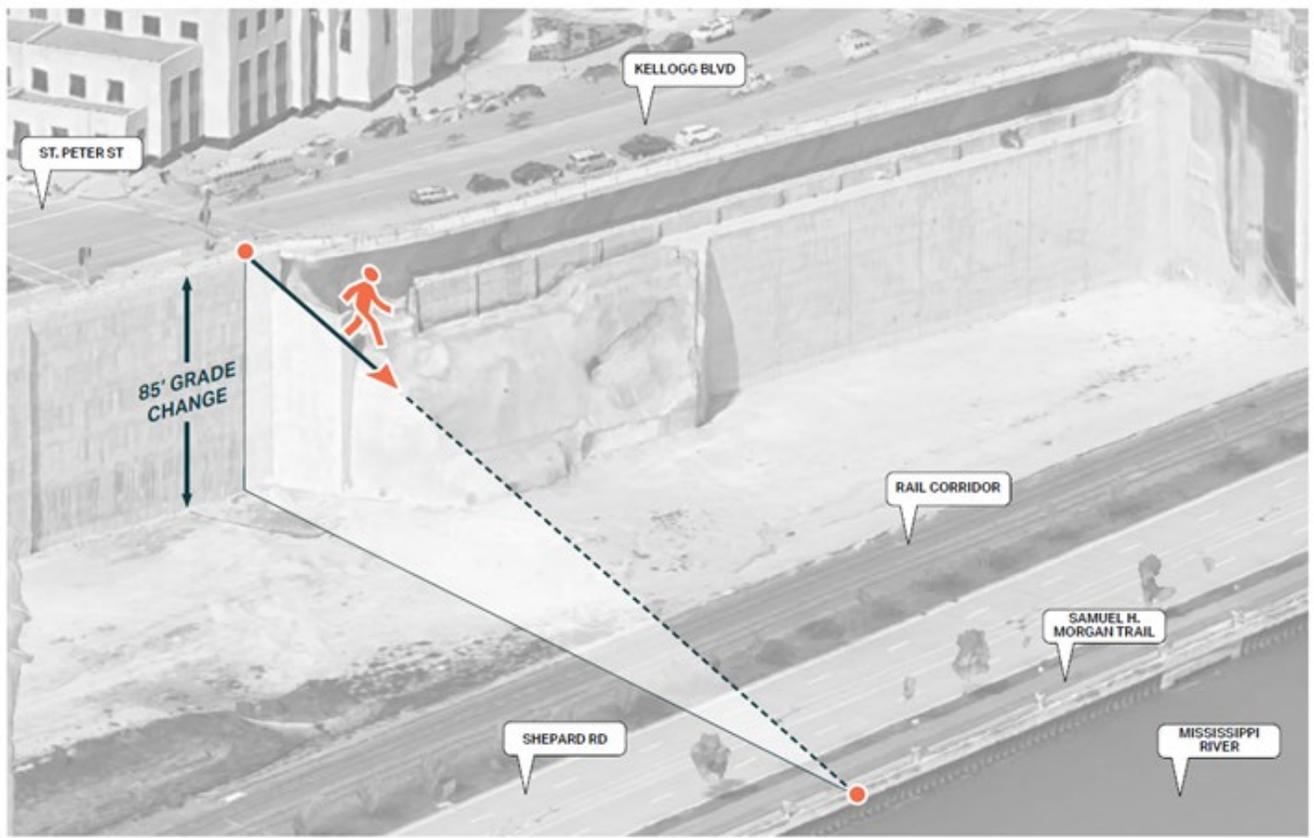
- City Boundary
- Water Bodies
- UC Tiering up to 100 feet



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MAP CREDIT: St. Paul InMaprise GIS Parcel Polygons; current Ramsey County data via Minnesota Department of Commerce, Road and Building Polygons, 2007; impervious surface dataset: Ramsey County; Street Centerlines Minnesota DNR; © 1985-2025 ESRI. This document was prepared by the Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development Department and is intended to be used for reference and illustrative purposes only. This drawing is not a legally recorded plan, survey, official tax map or engineering schematic and is not intended to be used as such. DATE: 07/01/25 5:41 PM DOCUMENT: TIERING UC District MRCCA Height 07/01/25.apx



Recommendation:

Staff does not recommend amendments to lower base heights as proposed by public hearing testimony, because the suggested height amendments from public testimony are:

- inconsistent with the guidance the from the DNR’s model ordinance, which suggest creating sub-districts if cities wish to apply less subjective tiering requirements.
- inconsistent with the approach to heights that every other city that is required to adopt MRCCA provisions has taken, undermining the goal of promoting coordinated land use planning and zoning along the 72-mile river corridor;
- difficult to administer due to the irregular and curvilinear nature of the rivers and bluffs, potentially difficult to survey district boundaries, and at times unreliable data to assist staff in discerning what is a natural vs. man-made bluffs;
- overly restrictive in the UC district and would not permit reasonable downtown development projects as envisioned without height variances (Mr. Torstenson’s version of amendments); and the setback formula in the RTC and UM districts would not result in less subjective tiering requirements for most new developments.

However, in response to the testimony, staff recommend the following amendment for heights to ensure better alignment with the DNR’s model ordinance: