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MINNESOTA TWINS-HENNEPIN COUNTY BALLPARK DESIGN UNVEILED *Minnesota's New Ballpark to Provide Fans with One of Baseball's Most Intimate Settings*

MINNEAPOLIS – The design of the new Minnesota Twins-Hennepin County ballpark – a cosmopolitan expression of Minnesota's natural beauty – was officially presented to the Hennepin County Board today.

Also invited to the morning presentation at the Hennepin County Government Center were members of the Minneapolis City Council as well as members of the Minnesota Ballpark Authority, the agency that will own and oversee operations of the new ballpark.

"What a tremendous, long-awaited day this is for the Minnesota Twins and baseball fans across the Upper Midwest," said Jerry Bell, president of Twins Sports Inc. "Minnesota's new ballpark will be an inviting landmark and an intimate venue providing for a superior baseball experience for future generations of Twins fans."

"People have been waiting a long time to see tangible progress on this project, and today we reward them for their patience," said Hennepin County commissioner Mike Opat. "This ballpark will not only be a great baseball venue. It will be a great public asset for Minnesota. The design shows that despite our challenges with this site, we will build one of the great urban ballparks in America."

"The Ballpark Authority is excited about working with the Minnesota Twins to create a dynamic new landmark," said Steve Cramer, chairman of the Minnesota Ballpark Authority. "This facility will be an outdoor baseball fan's dream and we believe it will serve as a catalyst to further development on the western edge of downtown."

The one-million-square-foot ballpark will have approximately 40,000 seats. Similar in size to PNC Park in Pittsburgh and AT&T Park in San Francisco, the new Twins ballpark will provide fans with fantastic, baseball-focused sightlines in an intimate setting.

Nestled on an eight-acre site next to the downtown Minneapolis Warehouse District, the ballpark will be an urban architectural icon. The site dictates the ballpark's lean physique, and the design's form follows the function of the events on the field. The seating bowl swathes the field; the exterior walls are shaped by the seating bowl; and a roof canopy spanning nearly the entire seating bowl crowns the ballpark.

"The new ballpark will reflect Minnesota's dynamic blend of urban sophistication and outdoor vitality," said Earl Santee, AIA, HOK Sport senior principal leading the architectural effort. "Minneapolis' downtown skyline will provide dazzling views beyond the outfield, creating a wonderful connection to the city."

The ballpark's exterior is a modern interpretation of the state's natural creations. Hearty, weather resistant, native Minnesotan limestone forms the mass of the ballpark's façade. Glass and metal details punctuate the limestone surface, creating a sophisticated composition.

Fissures, or gaps, in the stone enclosure of the ballpark will create unique viewing opportunities for fans both inside and outside the ballpark.

In addition to a modern façade, the ballpark will illuminate its mark on the urban skyline with distinct entry beacons. These prow-like icons are a direct reflection of the city's style at each of the ballpark's entry points.

"This project creates a new standard in urban integration," said Santee. "The ballpark connects with fans whether they arrive by foot, bike, bus, car, light rail or commuter rail."

Minnesota's new ballpark promises to be one of the most accessible sports facilities in all of American sport. The ballpark site sits at the convergence point of the Light Rail Transit (the existing Hiawatha Line and future lines such as the Central Corridor), the future Northstar commuter rail line, the Cedar Lake Bike Trail and Interstates 394 and I-94. Moreover, fans will take advantage of the more than 20,000 parking spots within a five-block radius of the ballpark.

The new ballpark strives to be one of Major League Baseball's most environmentally friendly ballparks as well, incorporating conservation, sustainability and energy efficiency into the design.

"A green ballpark was one thing hundreds upon hundreds of fans requested," said Rebecca Greco, AIA, HGA principal. "Because this is a ballpark for all of Minnesota, we placed a high priority on fan input. Minnesota's new ballpark will be a defining testament to a team, a state and its people."

HGA is serving as local architect on the project. They are joined by lead design firm HOK Sport, a Kansas City-based architectural firm which has designed 14 new professional ballparks and M. A. Mortenson Company, a local construction firm which is one of the top three national builders of sports venues.

"We look forward to bringing to life this great ballpark that will celebrate outdoor baseball in Minnesota," said Ken Sorensen, vice president and general manager of Mortenson's Minnesota Office. "Working closely with HGA and HOK Sport, we will build a ballpark for all Minnesotans to call home."

The development agreement signed between the Twins and the county gives the County Board approval over ballpark design; the board is expected to review the ballpark design at its April 17 meeting with a final vote scheduled for the April 24 meeting.

Under the state of Minnesota's authorizing legislation, the county's share of financing the ballpark is \$350 million for construction and infrastructure costs, while the Twins organization is contributing \$130 million. The Hennepin County/Minnesota Twins proposal for a new ballpark was approved by the Minnesota Legislature and signed into law in May 2006. Construction is expected to begin this spring, and the ballpark is scheduled to open for the 2010 season. For more information on the ballpark, visit www.twinsbaseball.com/newballpark.

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