

Area Plan Summary

The Great Northern Corridor: A Community Vision

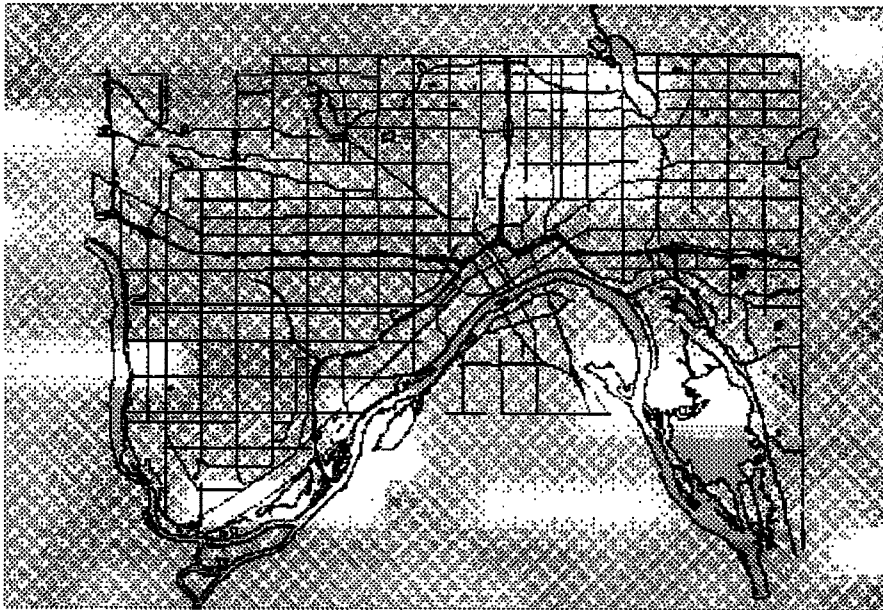
Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission, March 10, 2000 Adopted by the City Council, April 11, 2000

This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the community's vision for the redevelopment and revitalization of an aging rail corridor linking the Capitol area with the Thomas Dale and North End neighborhoods. It makes recommendations at two levels. The most specific relate to the redevelopment of the Dale Street Shops/Maxson Steel site, a nearly abandoned railroad yard at the heart of the corridor. More generally, the plan links the new industrial park proposed for the site with opportunities for revitalization of its surrounding neighborhoods.

Location

The Great Northern Corridor begins at the State Capitol and extends generally along the rail corridor to Lexington Avenue, encompassing the neighborhoods to the north and south.



The Great Northern Corridor

Vision

The Dale Street Shops/Maxson Steel site should be redeveloped as a single urban industrial park, offering space to light industrial businesses willing and able to employ a significant number of neighborhood residents at family-supporting wages.

The park should be developed in the context of a high amenity redevelopment corridor where uses throughout the corridor are physically and programmatically linked with one another. Investments in the construction of new industrial facilities should be used to leverage the construction and rehabilitation of housing, the establishment of schools, child care centers and other family support services, support for new and existing small businesses, and enhancements to the natural environment of the area.

Specific Recommendations and Implementation Steps

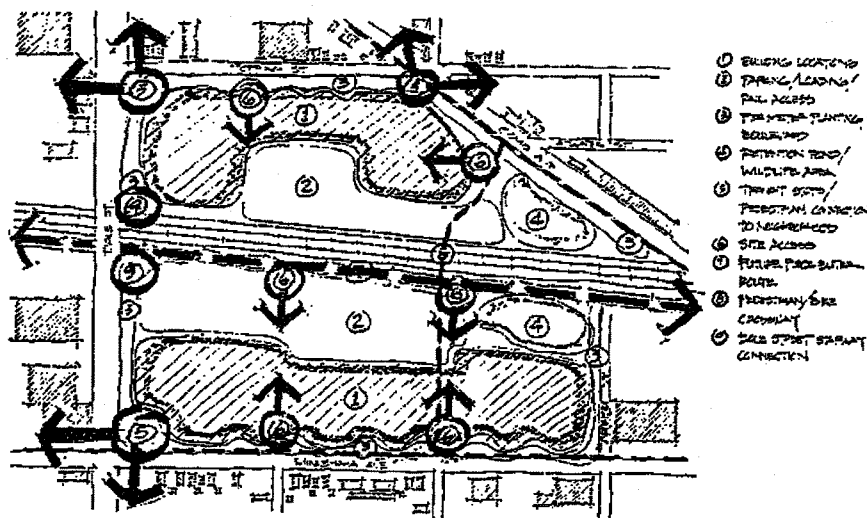
Great Northern Industrial Park

Designing the Site

In general, the Plan suggests a development pattern for the industrial site that is both urban in character and respectful of the area's topography and drainage patterns. Twelve site design principles emphasize a pedestrian friendly environment, buildings sited close to the street with parking and loading facilities to the rear, attention to landscaping and the design of storm water detention facilities and a prohibition of outside storage.

Designing the Buildings

When a prospective business purchases a site within the industrial site, it will be asked to agree to a series of covenants related to building design and construction quality. The Plan proposes that those covenants include, consistency with neighborhood architectural form and character, an emphasis on architectural features (windows, articulated facades), appropriate scale and massing and the use of quality materials.



Conceptual Site Design

Symmes Maini & McKee Associates/Winsor Fancy

Existing Buildings

Owners of some of the existing buildings have expressed an interest in remaining on the site. Whether they do or not will be a matter between the owners and the St. Paul Port Authority. In order to remain on the site, existing buildings and businesses must conform to this Plan's standards related to employment, building design, and type of business. If existing businesses cannot meet those standards, reasonable efforts should be made to relocate them within the City of Saint Paul.

Employing Neighborhood Residents

Beyond attracting jobs to the community, the goal is to ensure that neighborhood residents can be employed in those jobs. The plan includes a series of benchmarks relative to the number of jobs that prospective businesses should bring to the site (at least 1 per 1000 square feet of building space) as well as recommendations related to linking prospective businesses with neighborhood based training and placement services to increase the probability that companies will hire area residents. Minimally, 60 percent of new hires should be Saint Paul Residents with half of those living in Thomas Dale or the North End. Wages must either be at levels determined by the Port Authority Board or be consistent with the City of Saint Paul's living wage requirements.

Rebuilding the Village

For the corridor, the plan makes recommendations relative to the revitalization of the housing stock and commercial areas, new community services, accessibility and circulation and employment.

New and Rehabilitated Housing

In Thomas Dale, continued work on the rehabilitation of existing units and the construction of in-fill housing should focus on the area immediate surrounding the site. ~~On the North End, the feasibility of a major new mixed used development in the area generally bounded by Como, Front and Western should be explored.~~

Superseded by North End - South Como District 6 Plan (adopted 2012)

Commercial Corners and Minnehaha Mall

The addition of 5-7 new businesses and 700 new employees in the industrial park will provide a new market for restaurants, convenience retail and businesses services on Dale Street and at the Minnehaha Mall. To take maximum advantage of this market, the commercial nodes should be attractive, easily accessible on foot and integrated with transit services. Businesses selected for the site should be selected, in part, for their potential support of commercial services.

New Community Centers and Services

A new elementary school on Front Street between Kent and Mackubin and a possible Achievement Plus school in the area will be important community services. Other opportunities for services that support families—child care, a National Guard Armory/Community Center, and expanded recreation center—all should be explored.

Accessibility and Circulation

The success of the industrial park will depend on improving access to the site. The extension of Pierce Butler through the site and connecting it with Pennsylvania, I-3 5E and the Phalen Corridor merits further study and design. Other issues related to accessibility and circulation include:

- Redesigning Como Boulevard as a parkway linking the Capitol with Como Park.
- Improving Topping Street so that it can accommodate truck access to the northern portion of the site. >
- Enhancing transit services to reduce the need for on-site parking and ensure access for neighborhood residents seeking employment.
- Making pedestrian and bicycle connections through the site as a means of connecting the two neighborhoods, providing access of employees on the site to community services in both neighborhoods and expanding the effective trade area for each of the commercial nodes.

Implementation

The Plan recommends a continuing forum within which neighborhood representatives can work with the Port Authority and Housing and Redevelopment Authority in three key areas: (1) business selection, (2) linking neighborhood workforce development programs with businesses selected for the site, and (3) design review.

City Action

To encourage implementation of this vision the City of Saint Paul should:

- Analyze the feasibility of realigning Pierce Butler Route through the site and connecting it with I-3 5E and Phalen Boulevard. If feasible, identify potential funding and proceed to design and construction phases.
- Support the Port Authority's development of the Great Northern Industrial Park.
- Support community planning and legislative initiatives related to siting and constructing an Achievement Plus School and National Guard Armory in the corridor.
- Initiate a community-based planning process for the area east of Como Boulevard to assess the feasibility of new housing and related services.
- Proceed with the redesign of Como Boulevard as a parkway linking the Capitol with Como Park.
- Continue to support initiatives in both Thomas Dale and the North End to construct housing on vacant and underutilized land as well as rehabilitate existing housing structures in the corridor.

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that *The Great Northern Corridor: A Community Vision* is consistent with *The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The Great Northern Corridor: A Community Vision was prepared by a task force established by the District 6 Planning Council, District 7 Planning Council, Frogtown Action Alliance and the North End Area Revitalization (NEAR). Representatives of partner organizations such as Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, the St. Paul Port Authority, the Saint Paul Public Schools, the Midway Chamber of Commerce, the Wilder Foundation, the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation and Frogtown-COPE as well as the area legislators, were invited to meet with the task force throughout the process. Their work was supported by the architectural firm of Symmes Maini & McKee Associates/Winsor Faricy as well as staff from the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development. The Plan was recommended by the task force on November 11, 1997 and subsequently endorsed by each of the four convening organizations.