

**AGENDA
ZONING COMMITTEE
OF THE SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION
Thursday, August 29, 2013 3:30 P.M.
City Council Chambers, Room #300
Third Floor City Hall - Saint Paul, Minnesota**

NOTE: The order in which the items appear on this agenda is not necessarily the order in which they will be heard at the meeting. The Zoning Committee will determine the order of the agenda at the beginning of its meeting.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 1, 2013, ZONING COMMITTEE MINUTES

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications (Tom Beach, 651-266-9086)

NEW BUSINESS

13-216-391 Island Station Demo

Site plan review for the demolition of the existing Island Station Power Plant building
380 Randolph Ave
T2
Tom Beach 651-266-9086

ADJOURNMENT

Information on agenda items being considered by the Zoning Committee can be found online at www.stpaul.gov/pec, then Planning, then Zoning Committee.

ZONING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Call Samantha Langer at 266-6550 if you are unable to attend the meeting.

APPLICANT: You or your designated representative must attend this meeting to answer any questions that the committee may have.

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

FILE # 13-216391

1. **APPLICANT:** Breckner River Development, LLC **HEARING DATE:** 8/29/13
 2. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Site Plan Review
 3. **LOCATION:** 380 Randolph Ave
 4. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 122823420020 Section 12 Town 28 Range 23 Part Of Ne 1/4 Of Sw 1/4 & Se 1/4 Of Nw 1/4 & Part Of Sw 1/4 Of Ne 1/4 Of Sec 12 Tn 28 Tn 23 Lying Sly Of Shepard Rd, Nly Of Mississippi River, Ely Of Ely Line Of Tract A Of Rls 441 Ext Nly & Sly & Wly Of A Line Desc As Beg At
 5. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 9 **PRESENT ZONING:** T2 RC2 and RC3
 6. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** 61.402.c
 7. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** 8/20/13 **BY:** Tom Beach
 8. **DATE RECEIVED:** 7/31/13 **DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** 9/29/13
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Site plan review for the demolition of the Island Station power plant building
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** Approximately 7.7 acres (336,000 square feet)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** Vacant industrial building. A recent staff report prepared by Heritage Preservation staff says "the building appears to be in very poor condition. It retains fair exterior historic integrity, with extensive areas of missing glass or sash, sections of missing masonry, and graffiti."
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Industrial (I3)
 - East: Vacant land (R4)
 - South: Mississippi River
 - West: Vacant land (R4)
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:**

Section 68.103.d says "A site plan shall be submitted ... and approved ... in accordance with Section [61.402] before a permit is issued for any development on property wholly or partially located within the River Corridor District."

Section 61.402.a.9 says "A site plan shall be submitted ... and approved... before any permit is issued for ... "any development in the river corridor critical area or in the floodplain district except one- and two-family dwellings which do not affect slopes of 12% or greater."

Section 60.205.d gives the definition of Development in the River Corridor and it includes "demolition of a structure"

Section 61.402.c lists conditions that must be met to approve a site plan.
- F. **HISTORY:**

1924 The power plant was built for Saint Paul Gas Light Company.

- 1973 The power plant was decommissioned. The building has been vacant most of the time since then.
- 1983 The first comprehensive Historic Sites Survey in Saint Paul was completed. The building was identified as a Site of Major Significance.
- 1984 A draft report was prepared on behalf of the property owner to nominate the site for the National Register of Historic Places. However, the State Historic Preservation Office found that the property did not meet the criteria for eligibility.
- 2003 A proposal was submitted by SpringPointe Development calling for renovating the building and the site for a mixed use development with 200 condominiums, 20,000 square feet of commercial space and a marina. The property was rezoned from Industrial to T2 for this project. However, the project was never built. An Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) done for the marina noted that Island Station had been determined not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- 2012 The City received an inquiry about demolishing the Power Plant building. At the time the City was working on the Great River Passage Plan. Public comment periods and reviews from various boards and commissions took place in 2012, including review by the HPC. Draft language in the Plan envisioned reuse of the building and activating the site with private and public amenities. The City Council adopted an interim ordinance in August of 2012 prohibiting the issuance of city permits until the Great River Passage Plan was adopted and until an historic evaluation was completed for the site.
- 2013 *An Historic Significance Evaluation Study for the Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station* was completed on March 15, 2013. The Study was presented to the Heritage Preservation Commission which accepted and forwarded the Study to the State Historic Preservation Office for review and comment.

On April 10, the City Council adopted the Great River Passage Plan as a chapter of the Comprehensive Plan that includes a section about Island Station.

On May 17, the Saint Paul Planning Commission found that designation of the Island Station site as a local Heritage Preservation Site "is consistent with the goals and strategies within the Comprehensive Plan."

One May 23, the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission determined that the Island Station Site is eligible for designation as a local Heritage Preservation Site. The vote was 8-0.

On July 17, the Saint Paul City Council failed to adopt an ordinance that would have designated Island Station as a local Heritage Preservation Site. The vote was 3-3.

On July 29, Frattalone Companies applied for a demolition permit on behalf of the property owner, Breckner River Development, LLC. Staff informed them that a site plan for the demolition must be approved before a demolition permit can be issued.

G. DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Staff has not received a recommendation from the Fort Road Federation (District 9) at the time this staff report was sent out.

H. FINDINGS: Section 62.108(c) of the Zoning Code says that in "order to approve the site

plan, the planning commission shall consider and find that the site plan is consistent with” the findings listed below.

1. *Preservation of unique geologic, geographic or historically significant characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas.*

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with this finding.

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with the preservation of historically significant characteristics of the city. The historic significance of the power plant building has been reviewed a number of times since the building closed. A number of reports over the years have found that the building is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Recently the City Council, on a 3-3 vote, failed to adopt an ordinance that would have designated the power plant building as a Heritage Preservation site.

The site plan for demolition is also consistent with preservation of unique geologic and geographic characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas subject to conditions about erosion and sediment control noted below in finding 11.

2. *The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city.*

The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city have a number of sections that refer to the Island Station site:

- Land Use Plan This plan includes the Island Station site in a list of “opportunity sites for future development consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, either as mixed-use development or as employment centers” but does not specifically mention reusing the existing building. (LU1.54)
The plan also “support[s] the protection and enhancement of the visibility of architectural landmarks.”
- Housing Plan This plan identifies the Island Station site as an “Opportunity Site for Potential Housing Development.” (Page 12)
- Historic Preservation Plan This plan calls for “making the designation of significant historic resources as heritage preservation sites a priority for the City Council” and “protect[ing] any undesignated property that is eligible for local designation or listing on the NRHP.”
- Great River Passage Plan In April 2013 the City Council adopted the Great River Passage Plan as a chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan includes a section on Island Station. The “Island Station Vision” calls for repurposing the building as “a year-round active use destination”. The “Goals and Objectives” call for “redevelop[ing] Island Station to become a center for river-oriented arts and leisure activities” and to “utilize redevelopment to link the West 7th Street corridor to the river”. (Pages 66 and 67)
- District 9 Area Plan Summary (adopted 2013) The section on Parks says “if Island Station is not redeveloped preserving the original building as housing, consider reuse of the site as a public park property and the building as a park facility.”
- Fort Road Development Plan Summary (adopted 2005) The plan says “proximity to the river and old power plant building have made potential housing on the [Island Station] site a long-term desire.... The Island Station site is to be developed as housing” and that “preserving the existing Island Station power plant structure” is one of the “amenities and elements” that “should be considered for such development.”

On balance, the site plan for demolition of the power plant building is consistent with these plans.

The City Council's recent discussion over historic designation for the site noted that the building has been vacant for 40 years and that no government funds would be available in the foreseeable future for restoring the building to a point where it would be feasible to develop. It is also clear by this application that the building's owner does not intend to invest money into rehabilitating the building. As a result, the continued presence of the building in its current state is not consistent with the goals of the Land Use Plan and Housing Plan to develop the site as a mixed use or employment center or for housing.

The Comprehensive Plan's specific references to restoring and reusing the Island Station building as housing, or as a mixed use development, or as a park facility, are statements of the City's objectives and policy goals to guide land use decisions. Comprehensive Plan vision statements do not create regulatory authority for the City to compel these objectives and goals. That ability comes separately under the City's specific statutory authority to enact zoning ordinances which, by definition, control the physical development of the City and implements the general objectives of the City's comprehensive plan. Accordingly, a site plan application that conforms to the regulations of the zoning code by definition conforms to the comprehensive plan.

In this case, demolition of the building is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan's long term desire for the property to be used for housing or mixed use development. It is reasonable to say that demolishing the existing structure paves the way to redevelop the property consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Demolition does not foreclose the possibility that the land might someday be used for park purposes. Demolition will foreclose the vision that the building might someday be repurposed as a year round active use destination. However, this vision is at the very least dependent on this or any owner's substantial investment of funds which has not been forthcoming for the past forty years.

3. *Applicable ordinances of the City of Saint Paul.*

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with zoning standards, including standards dealing with the River Corridor. The plans for demolition must also be reviewed and approved by the Building Official for compliance with portions of the Building Code dealing with demolition. The site plan will be consistent with this finding if it is approved by the Building Official.

4. *Protection of adjacent and neighboring properties through reasonable provision for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and those aspects of design which may have substantial effects on neighboring land uses.*

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with protection of adjacent and neighboring properties.

5. *The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.*

This finding is not applicable to the plans for demolition of the power plant building since the plans do not propose any buildings, uses or facilities.

6. *Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures.*

This finding is not applicable to the plans for demolition of the power plant building.

7. *Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and*

design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.

Traffic from the demolition will have to cross the Sam Morgan Trail that runs along the north edge of the site. Staff from Public Works Traffic Engineering is working with the applicant on a plan for signs and other traffic control measures to handle this. The plans for the demolition of the power plant building will be consistent with traffic safety if this plan is prepared and approved by staff from Public Works Traffic Engineering

8. *The satisfactory availability and capacity of storm and sanitary sewers, including solutions to any drainage problems in the area of the development.*

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with this finding. The site was never served by sanitary sewer. The amount of impervious surface will be reduced and the site will be graded to handle stormwater drainage.

9. *Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives.*

The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building is consistent with this finding. The site will be seeded to establish ground cover in areas disturbed by demolition activity. A fence will be installed to keep the public out of a depressed area that will be created in the footprint of the building.

10. *Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes.*
This finding is not applicable to the plans for demolition of the power plant building.

11. *Provision for erosion and sediment control as specified in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's "Manual for Protecting Water Quality in Urban Areas."*

An erosion and sediment control plan was submitted as part of the site plan for the demolition. Staff has reviewed the plan and found it meets applicable standards. The plans must also be approved by the Capitol Region Watershed District. The site plan for the demolition of the power plant building will be consistent with erosion and sediment standards if it is approved by the Capitol Region Watershed District.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings above, the staff recommends approval of the site plan to allow demolition of the Island Station power plant building at 380 Randolph Avenue with the following conditions:

1. The plan for the demolition must be approved by the Building Official for compliance with all portions of the Building Code dealing with demolitions.
2. Plans for traffic control during demolition must be approved by staff from Public Works Traffic Engineering
3. Plans for erosion and sediment control measures must be approved the Capitol Region Watershed District.

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ATTACHMENTS

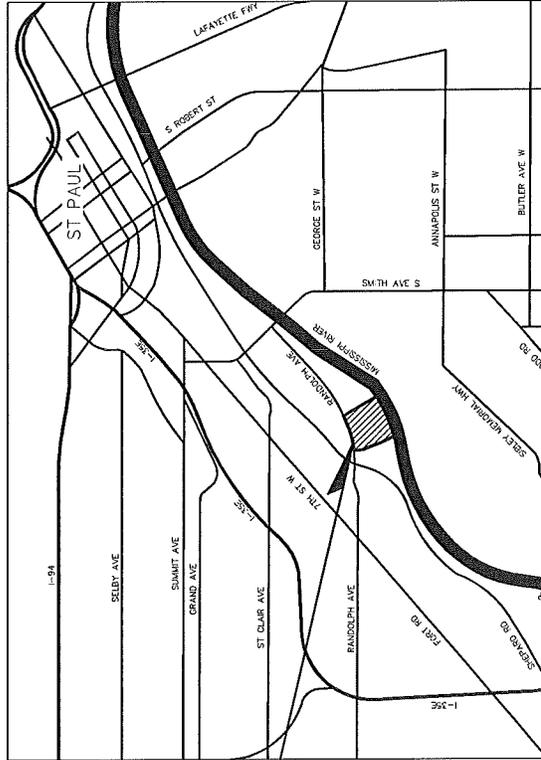
- Site plan
- Resolutions on local historic designation from the Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission
- Excerpt from Great River Passage Plan
- Map of Opportunity Sites for Potential Housing
- Photos of the site and location map

THE PRESENCE OF ADJACENT UTILITIES SHOWN ON THIS PLAN IS NOT GUARANTEED BY THE PROJECT CONTRACTOR'S BID. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY THE LOCATION AND DEPTH OF ALL UTILITIES PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE CITY OF ST. PAUL.

CONTRACTOR'S NAME CONTACT
GOPHER STATE EARTHWORKS
 601 HULL FREE ASSOCIATION
 1700 CITY PARK DRIVE
 ST. PAUL, MN 55108

DEMOLITION APPLICATION PLANS FOR ISLAND STATION POWER PLANT

LOCATED AT
 380 RANDOLPH AVE
 ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA



VICINITY
 N.T.S.

Sheet Index	
C010	COVER SHEET
C100	EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL PLAN
C101	EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL DETAILS
C120	SITE PLAN
C130	GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLAN

PREPARED BY:

 Kimley-Horn
 and Associates, Inc.

 Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. 2200 UNIVERSITY AVE, SUITE 2200, ST. PAUL, MN 55114 PHONE: 612-634-1100 FAX: 612-634-1105 © 2010 KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.	DATE: 05/02/2013 DRAWN BY: JCC CHECKED BY: JCC PROJECT NO.: 18078000 SHEET NUMBER: C010
	PROJECT: ISLAND STATION POWER PLANT LOCATION: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE

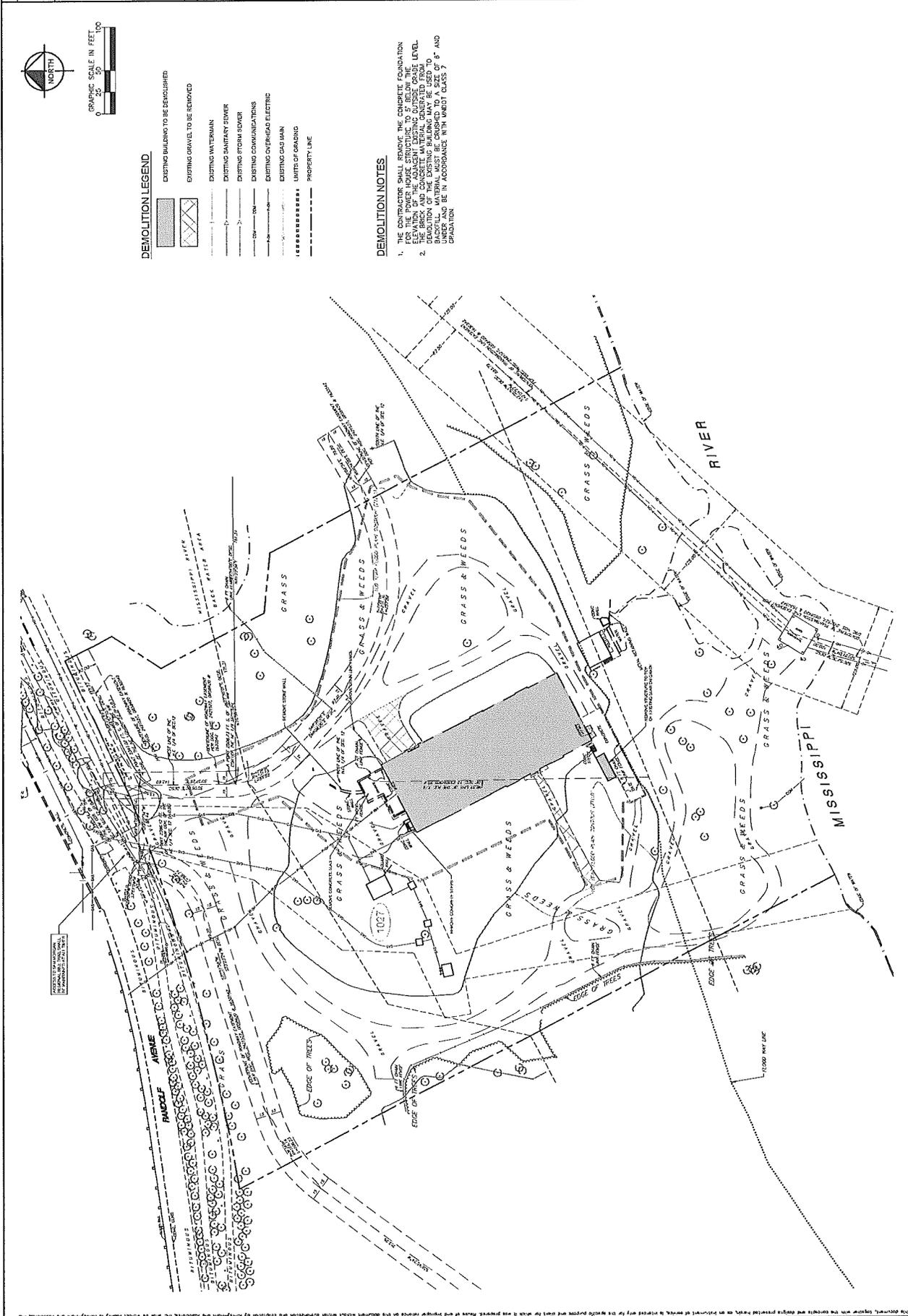
2010 KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
 2200 UNIVERSITY AVE., SUITE 2000, ST. PAUL, MN 55114
 PHONE: 612-434-4444
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

DESIGN ENGINEER: LUCAS C PLANE
 CHECKED BY LCP
 DATE: 05/02/2013
 DRAWN BY JCC
 46755
 LICENSED BY JCC

DEMOLITION PLAN

ISLAND STATION
 POWER STATION
 ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
 MINNESOTA

DATE: 05/02/2013
 PROJECT NO.: 160708000
 SHEET NUMBER: C110



DEMOLITION LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED
- EXISTING GRAVEL TO BE REMOVED
- EXISTING WATERMAIN
- EXISTING SANITARY SEWER
- EXISTING FIBER OPTIC
- EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS
- EXISTING OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
- EXISTING GAS MAIN
- EDGEO OF GRASS
- PROPERTY LINE

DEMOLITION NOTES

- THE CONTRACTOR SHALL REMOVE THE COMPLETE FOUNDATION FOR THE POWER HOUSE STRUCTURE TO A LEVEL BELOW THE ELEVATION OF THE ADJACENT EXISTING OUTSIDE GRADE LEVEL.
- DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING MAY BE USED TO BACKFILL MATERIAL MUST BE CRUSHED TO A SIZE OF 8" AND SMALLER.

NO.	REVISIONS	DATE

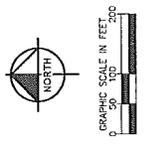
Kimly-Horn
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2500 UNIVERSITY AVE. SUITE 2000
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414
PHONE: 612-434-4444
FAX: 612-434-4444
WWW.KIMLY-HORN.COM
2010 MAILING AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

DESIGN ENGINEERS
LUCAS C PANE
MINNESOTA LICENSE NUMBER
46785
DATE: 05/02/2013
CHECKED BY: LCP
DRAWN BY: JCC

GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLAN

ISLAND STATION
POWER STATION
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
MINNESOTA

DATE: 05/02/2013
PROJECT NO.: 150708000
SHEET NUMBER: C130



LEGEND

	PROPERTY LINE
	LIMITS OF DISTURBANCE
	EXISTING CONTOUR
	PROPOSED CONTOUR
	PROPOSED SPOT GRADE
	PROPOSED SLOPE
	EXISTING SLOPE
	EMERGENCY OVERFLOW ELEVATION
	15% V/C CORNER AND MET FILL ALLOWED IN THE AREA
	100 YR FLOODING AREA

SITE NOTES

- ALL CUT OR FILL SLOPES SHALL BE 3:1 OR FLATTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
- EXISTING AND PROPOSED GRADE CONTOUR INTERVALS SHALL BE AT 1 FOOT.
- CONTRACTOR TO REVIEW DNR AND MPCA SEWERING PERMIT CONDITIONS AND SHALL OBTAIN A PERMIT IF REQUIRED FOR SITE.
- SITE BOUNDARY, TOPOGRAPHY, AND UTILITY INFORMATION IS TAKEN FROM A SURVEY BY A LAND SURVEYOR.



DR. DRAWING. DRAWING WITH THE CONCEPTS AND DESIGN PRESENTED HEREIN IS AN INSTRUMENT OF SERVICE. IT IS PREPARED FOR THE CLIENT'S USE AND IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF KIMLY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. THE CLIENT ASSUMES ALL LIABILITY FOR THE ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO KIMLY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. BY THE CLIENT. KIMLY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC. SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS IN THIS DRAWING.

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number 13-25
date May 17, 2013

Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station
HERITAGE PRESERVATION SITE DESIGNATION

WHEREAS, Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code directs that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) shall recommend to the Mayor and City Council area and buildings which the HPC has reason to believe are eligible for designation as heritage preservation sites; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station (Island Station) at 437 Shepard Road (380 Randolph Avenue, formerly 1 Ross Road; RA-SPC-3323) is located in Section 12 of Township 28N R23W, about two miles upstream from downtown Saint Paul. It is in Planning District 9, known as the West 7th/Fort Federation. The electric-steam plant was constructed in 1924 and designed by the firm of Toltz, King and Day (now TKDA). It occupies the foot of a peninsula on the west side of the Mississippi River about 100 feet from the shoreline. This peninsula was originally the 6-acre Ross Island and was reached by a wood bridge (razed). The west half of the island is now infilled in part by ashes sluiced out of the plant furnaces; and

WHEREAS, Island Station was first surveyed as part of the *Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County* in 1983. An inventory form was filed and the building was listed as a site of "Major Significance." A National Register nomination form was completed in 1984 for the owner at the time and recommended that the property was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but did not evaluate it under specific criteria.

moved by Wencil
seconded by _____
in favor 14-0 with 1 abstention (Spaulding)
against _____

(cont.) In 1984 a memo from the State Historic Preservation Office found the property did not meet the NRHP criteria for eligibility. A 2003 Environmental Assessment Worksheet noted the Island Station was not eligible for the NRHP and two additional studies for nearby developments in 2004 and 2006 noted that Island Station had been recommended by the SHPO as not eligible for listing in the NRHP; and

WHEREAS, In early 2013, the Department of Parks and Recreation hired Landscape Research to complete an *Historic Significance Evaluation Study* (Study) for the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station pursuant to City of Saint Paul Ordinance No. 12-55. The Study further established the historical significance of the site and also examined the broader context of the Island Station as it relates to electric steam power generation in early Twentieth Century Saint Paul. On March 28, 2013, the HPC accepted the *Study* and voted to commence the designation process for the potential historic site. The State Historic Preservation Office has received the Study and the draft nomination form and is currently reviewing the proposal to locally designate the site; and

WHEREAS, the property contains the main plant, a screen house and a scale/car puller house and have a fair degree of integrity while the condition of the main plant structure is considered poor. There is also a gable-roofed metal garage of unknown construction date at the northwest of the plant. The Period of Significance for the site is from 1924 when the building(s) was constructed to 1973 when the site was decommissioned as a power plant; and

WHEREAS, as required by Legislative Code 73.05 (b), the Heritage Preservation Commission has requested that the Planning Commission review the proposed designation and comment on the following: 1) the relationship of the proposed designation to the Comprehensive Plan; 2) the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding neighborhood; and 3) any other planning considerations, along with a recommendation for approval, rejection, or modification of the proposed designation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Planning Commission finds the following regarding the proposed St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station designation:

1. *Relationship of the proposed designation to the Comprehensive Plan.* The proposed designation of the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station is generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The Historic Preservation Chapter recognizes that heritage preservation has been used effectively in Saint Paul as a tool for community development and revitalization (Strategies HP 3.11, 3.12, 4.3, 5.3 and 5.9). Specifically, the Land Use Chapter identifies this area as an opportunity site (LU1.54). The Land Use

Chapter further encourages supporting the protection and enhancement of the visibility of architectural landmarks (LU3.18).

Specifically, the Great River Passage Master Plan Comprehensive Plan Addendum (adopted by the City Council in 2013) provides a vision for preserving and redeveloping the Island Station to become a year-round destination with a focus on river-oriented arts and leisure activities. The Fort Road Development Plan Summary (adopted by the City Council in 2005) and the District 9 Area Plan Summary (adopted by the City in 2010) highlight strategies to preserve and reuse Island Station, if not for housing, then the building for park use.

2. *Effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding neighborhood.* Designation would have a positive effect on the surrounding area, both residential and commercial, and act as an anchor for redevelopment in the Ft. Road neighborhood and along this stretch of the Mississippi River. Having design review guidelines (Preservation Program) will help to ensure the site develops while maintaining its architectural and historical character over the long term. Designation, with the accompanying Preservation Program, would also provide clarity to future owners or developers in visioning how the building could be adaptively reused and incorporated within a larger development.

3. *Other planning considerations and recommendation for approval, rejection, or modification.* Retaining and reusing the current historic building provides a development opportunity with proximity to and good views of the river valley.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission finds the designation of the Saint Paul Gas Light Company Island Station as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site, along with its Preservation Program, is consistent with the goals and strategies within Comprehensive Plan.

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL HERITAGE PRESERVATION
COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

FILE NAME St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station Heritage
Preservation Site nomination

DATE May 23, 2013

WHEREAS, Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code directs that the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) shall recommend to the Mayor and City Council areas and buildings which the Commission has reason to believe are eligible for designation as heritage preservation sites; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 73 requires that the Heritage Preservation Commission shall secure comments from the Planning Commission and the Minnesota Historical Society prior to forwarding the proposed designation to the City Council for its consideration; and

WHEREAS, the HPC accepted the nomination form regarding the proposed designation of the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station (Island Station) as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission reviewed the proposed designation on May 17, 2013 and found the proposed Island Station Site to be consistent with the comprehensive plan of the City of Saint Paul and that such designation would have a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood and recommended approval of the proposed designation to the City Council and Heritage Preservation Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Historical Society, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 471.193, Subdivision 5 and Chapter 73 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, has reviewed and commented on the proposed designation of the Island Station and found the site to be a good candidate for local designation for the following reasons:

Constructed in 1923-1924, the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station is a multi-story, industrial building made of structural steel and brick accented with stone. Crowning the building is a 289-foot-high steel smokestack. Island Station was the first power plant in the Twin Cities area that utilized pulverized coal technology. It was designed by the prominent architectural and engineering firm of Toltz, King & Day. The plant is associated with St. Paul's growth and economic development during the early 1920s, particularly the response to increased demand for various electrical devices for household use. In 1925, one year after opening, Island Station was acquired by Northern States Power, which operated the facility on a standby basis until 1973, when it was decommissioned. We concur that Island Station is eligible for designation as a local landmark under Criteria 1 and 7; and

WHEREAS, the HPC held a public hearing regarding the proposed designation on May 23,

2013 and made the following findings:

1. Constructed in 1923-1924, the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station is a multi-story, industrial building made of structural steel and brick accented with stone. Crowning the building is a 289-foot-high steel smokestack.

Island Station was the first power plant in the Twin Cities area that utilized pulverized coal technology. It was designed by the prominent architectural and engineering firm of Toltz, King and Day (now TKDA). The plant is associated with St. Paul's growth and economic development during the early 1920s, particularly the response to increased demand for various electrical devices for household use. In 1925, one year after opening, Island Station was acquired by Northern States Power, which operated the facility on a standby basis until 1973, when it was decommissioned.

2. The Planning Commission (under resolution number 13-25) finds the designation of the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station as a St. Paul Heritage Preservation Site generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, that designation will have a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood and act as an anchor for redevelopment. The Great River Passage Plan includes several references to Island Station and envisions reusing the building. One such goal states, "The historic, iconic and vacant power plant will be repurposed to bring the arts, environmental and recreation communities together, supported by commercial and residential uses developed by public and private partners."
3. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §471.193, subd. 6, and Section 73.05 (c) of Saint Paul's Legislative Code, staff submitted the proposed nomination form and draft preservation program to the State Historic Preservation Office on April 9, 2013. The response from SHPO dated May 16, 2013 concludes that Island Station is eligible for local designation under Criteria 1 and 7 in Section 73.05(a) of the Legislative Code.
4. Island Station has been mostly vacant since 1973. The building appears to be in very poor condition. It retains fair exterior historic integrity, with extensive areas of missing glass or sash, sections of missing masonry, and graffiti. The surrounding site also retains fair historic integrity, despite removal of railroad trestles and other site circulation. The original screen house and car puller buildings are still extant and considered contributing while a metal garage structure of unknown construction date is considered noncontributing.
5. The period of significance for the Island Station is from 1924 to 1973 and spans the initial construction of the site to when Northern States Power decommissioned the plant.
6. The St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station is eligible for local designation as a Heritage Preservation Site under criteria (1) and (7) of Section 73.05 (a) of the Legislative

Code.

(1) Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of St. Paul, the State of Minnesota, or the United States.

Island Station represented the St. Paul Gas Light Company's attempt to compete with NSP at a time when acquisition and consolidation of such companies was standard practice. St. Paul Gas Light Company became the city's chief gas supplier, but was never its leader in electric power production. The investment in this plant and its new coal pulverization technology, and in a Service Center at Rice and Atwater Streets (1925), demonstrates that the company intended to expand production to meet increasing demand. Investment in this plant did not actually result in a significant contribution to power generation in St. Paul, because after acquisition by NSP it was only used in a standby capacity.

The planning and construction of this plant, however, is associated with the city's early 1920s neighborhood growth. This was based on reinvigorated railroad, warehousing, retail, and manufacturing interests and corresponding demand for housing supplied with many types of electrical equipment. This included widely advertised, labor-saving household devices. As detailed in St. Paul's Historic Context, "Residential Real Estate Development: 1880-1950" (Zellie and Peterson 2001) and in "The St. Paul Gas Light Company and the Growth of Early Twentieth-Century St. Paul Neighborhoods" the early 1920s were an exceptional period for new housing and neighborhood infrastructure, particularly in the western half of the city including the Highland Park area.

(7) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or City of St. Paul.

Island Station and its 289-foot smokestack are prominent landmarks against the downtown St. Paul skyline and upriver landscape of bluffs and bottomland forest. The vacant building, which declines in condition each passing year, is a well-known local landmark. Since decommissioning in 1973 the building and its setting have inspired artists, designers, explorers, students, neighbors, developers, and all those who imagine the possibilities of the place. Criterion 7 offers a way to address the importance of the building in the public's imagination.

7. Written testimony received for the May 23, 2013 Public Hearing is from the current property owner who objects to the proposed designation; and

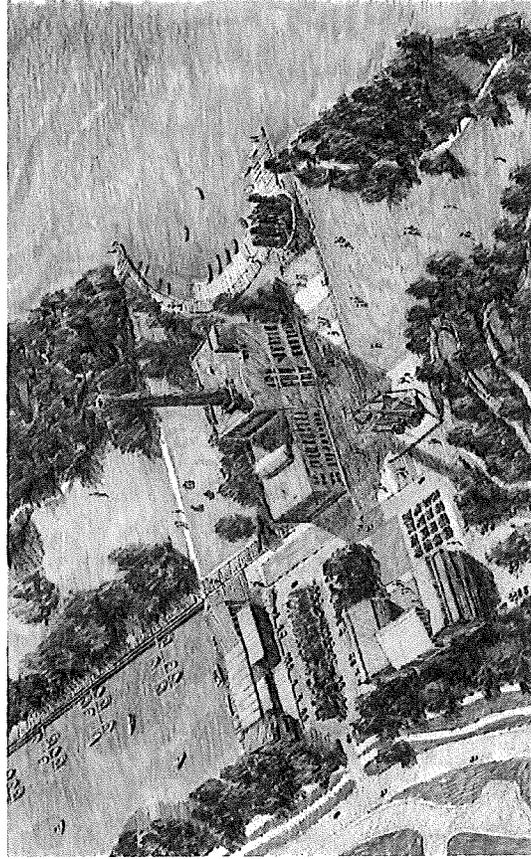
NOW, FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Saint Paul determines that the Island Station Site is eligible for designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site and forwards consideration of the designation and preservation program to the Saint Paul City Council;

MOVED BY **Commissioner Dana**
SECONDED BY **Commissioner Barnes**

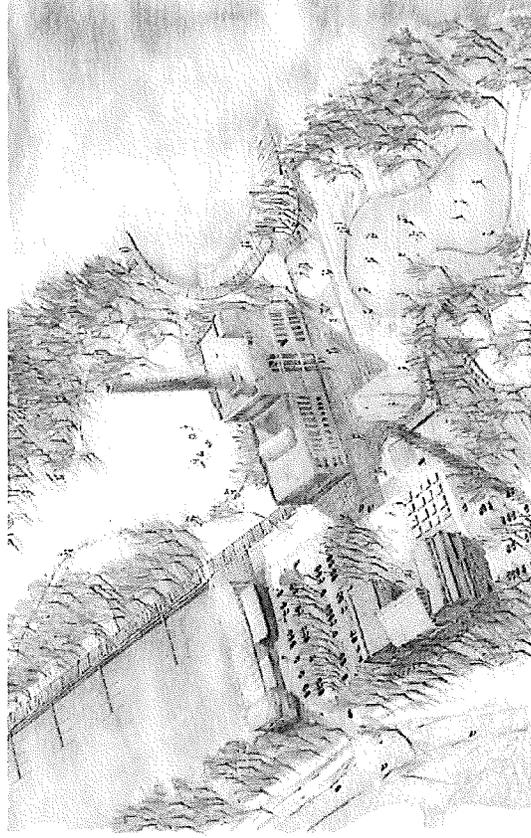
IN FAVOR **8**
AGAINST **0**
ABSTAIN

Island Station Vision

Island Station will become a year-round active use destination. The historic, iconic and vacant power plant will be repurposed to bring the arts, environmental and recreation communities together, supported by commercial and residential uses developed by public and private partners. Upon its transformation, Island Station will become an activity center that links neighborhoods to the river and establishes Randolph Avenue as a key connection from the West 7th neighborhood and the larger community of Saint Paul.



Summer activities include festivals and outdoor art exhibits connected with studios in the renovated building. An outdoor cafe overlooks a climbing wall, mountain-bike skills course and a performance lawn.



Winter activities include cross country skiing, pond skating and ice climbing.

2013 Great River Passage Plan

Plans are conceptual in nature and subject to further planning, design and public input.

Island Station Vision Plan

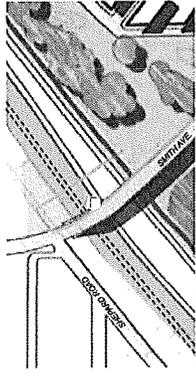
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Redevelop Island Station to become a center for river-oriented arts and leisure activities

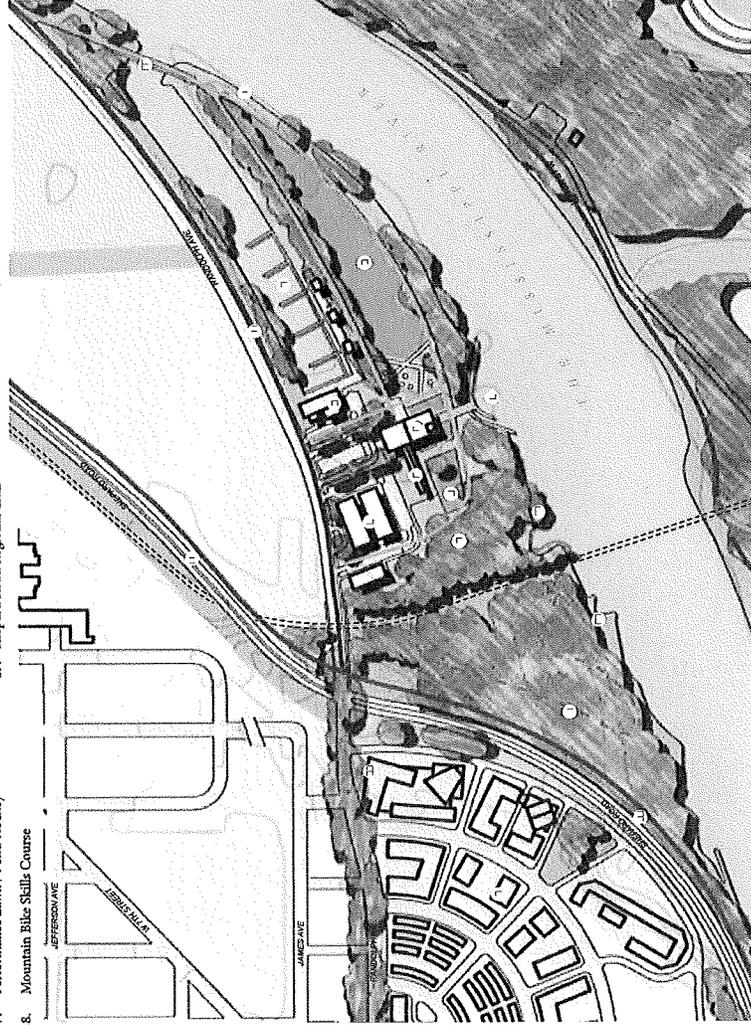
The peninsula on which the old Island Station power plant is located will be transformed, through a public-private partnership, into a mixed-use center for adventure, recreation, visitor services, residences, offices, and a community park with public access to the River. The repurposed building can become a center for not-for-profit environmental and art organizations, including the National Park Service regional office, hotel, restaurants, shops and cafes. Offices can occupy upper floors, while industrial-scale artist's studios, river-oriented cottage industries and adventure sports activities can occupy the lower and ground levels, attracting people year round.

Utilize redevelopment to link the West 7th Street corridor to the river

Redevelopment of Island Station and the ADM site will provide a major missing piece to provide public access to and along the river between downtown and the Valley reach. Green connections between the peninsula and Shepard Road extend to the neighborhoods and to the West 7th Street business district. Enhanced streetscapes support redevelopment opportunities and pedestrian friendly neighborhood expansion along Randolph Avenue.



Inset Plan - High Bridge Park



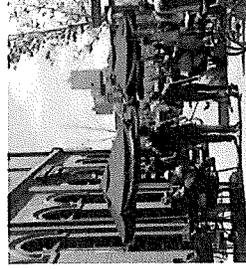
This plan is a concept only, and is subject to further planning, design and public input.

LEGEND

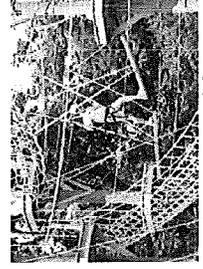
1. Marina
2. Peninsula Festival Lawn
3. Infill Development
4. Canoe / Kayak Launch / Small Craft Dock
5. Renovated Island Station Building / Outdoor Cafe
6. Climbing Wall / Ice Wall
7. Performance Lawn / Pond Hockey
8. Mountain Bike Skills Course
9. Rustic & Mountain Bike Trails
10. Potential Pedestrian / Bike Bridge
11. Fishing Access
12. Fountain Cave Investigation
13. Randolph Station Area
14. Samuel H. Morgan Regional Trail
15. Shepard Road Regional Trail



Ice Climbing attracts outdoor enthusiasts in the winter.



Outdoor Cafes support economic development and provide a desirable leisure activity.



Ropes Courses are one type of adventure sport that appeals to all ages.



Mountain Bike Skills Courses reduce environmental impact by educating riders

FIGURE H-L. OPPORTUNITY SITES FOR POTENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

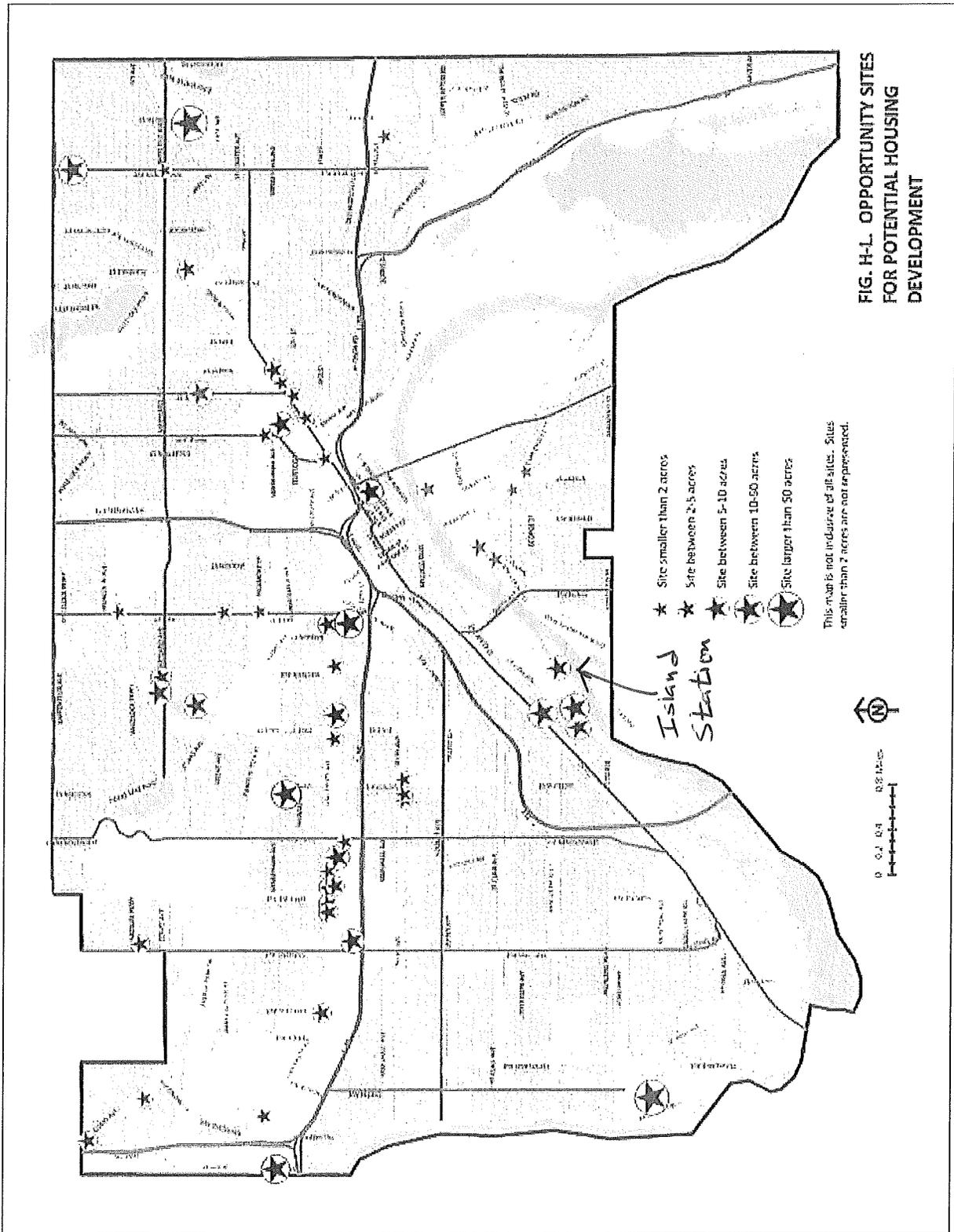


FIG. H-L. OPPORTUNITY SITES FOR POTENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



JAMES AVE

RANDOLPH AVE

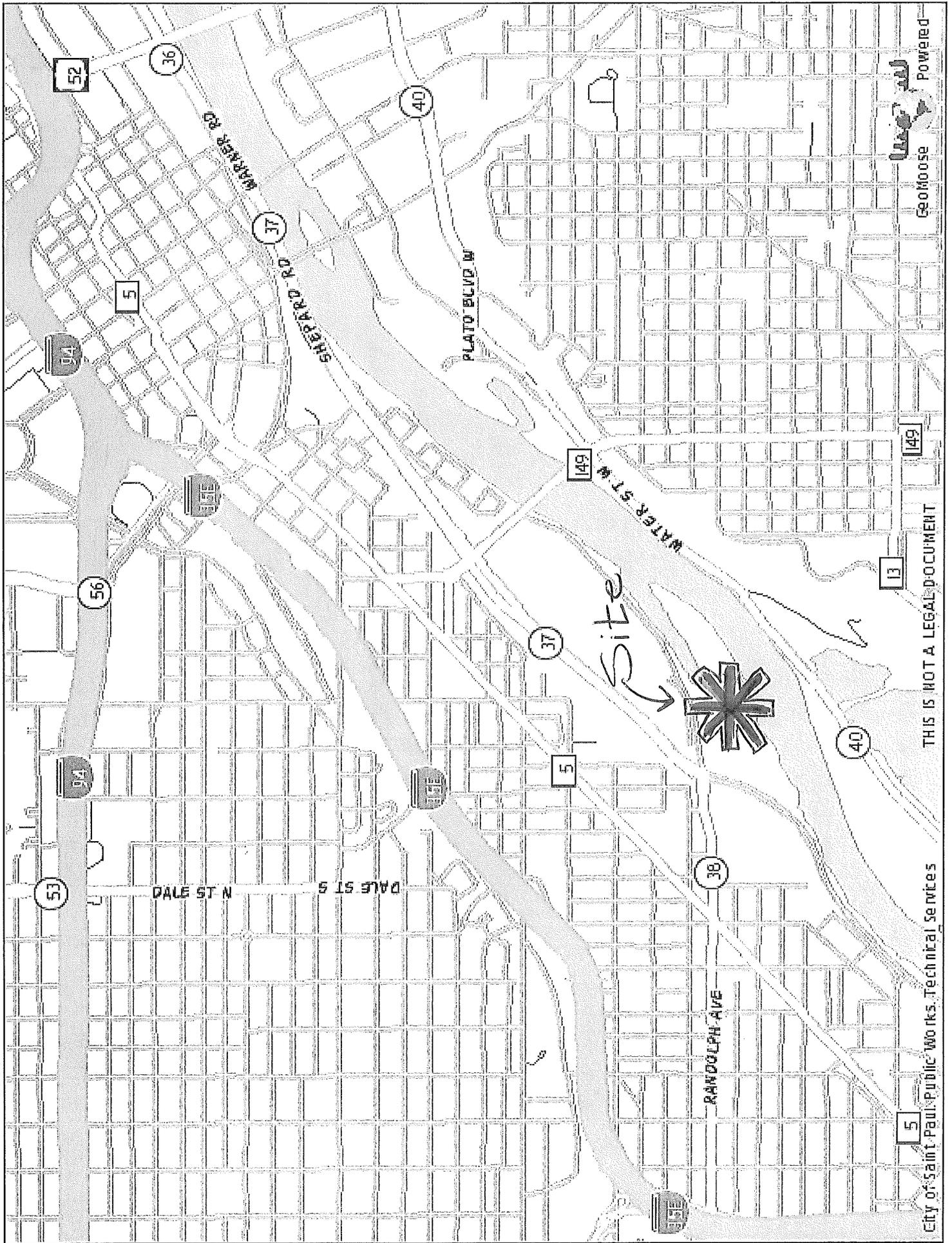
GISmo Oblique Photography

Images courtesy of: Microsoft® Virtual Earth™ 2006

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