

Near East Side Commercial Buildings Subcommittee Recommendations report

Background: The Near East Side Commercial Buildings Subcommittee (of the [Near East Side Task Force](#)) has developed a commercial real estate strategy for properties, buildings, and businesses on blocks within the Near East Side study area. Once the public has provided comments, the **strategic actions** will be finalized by the Near East Side Task Force in order for them to develop a **community development action plan** for the area.



How were the recommendations (strategic actions) reached? The subcommittee utilized an area-wide scale, a block-level scale, and a property-level scale in developing these strategic actions. *Factors included ... Existing land use plans? Relationship of East 7th Street businesses to other East Side commercial corridors? Strong concentrations of businesses that should be supported versus areas that might transition over time? Pedestrian-oriented areas, well-served by transit? Predominantly residential areas or industrial areas versus the areas that are more of a mix in terms of land uses? Building occupancies or vacancies? What do we know about specific businesses? Building or aesthetic site improvements needed? If vacant, does the building have high visibility and due to its good condition/character have high potential for reuse, or high barriers to reuse?*

Action-oriented goals: Six action-oriented goals emerged from the Commercial Buildings Subcommittee. The goals include tangible, strategic actions to help the community achieve them:

- Find spaces within which small and medium size businesses could locate.
- Invest in existing buildings and sites near the E. 7th Street/Arcade intersection, and along E. 7th Street to Maria, to support and enhance the existing commercial district.
- Redevelop and/or re-occupy large vacant sites in the short to medium term.
- Make investments to the public realm to improve the walkability of the E. 7th Street streetscape from Mounds Boulevard to Forest Street.
- Improve the transitions between commercial-industrial and residential uses.
- Re-position East 7th Street east of Forest Street.

Strategic actions: The recommendations are block-specific and property-specific and together are grouped as **categories of strategic actions**. Some actions could be most effectively implemented across the entire area with a dedicated and funded program, while others are property- or project-specific.* All actions are informed by a comprehensive vision of the corridor, as outlined in the goals:



Reuse vacant/under-utilized spaces (contact owner; assess building condition; code compliance updates; marketing)



Appearance enhancement, i.e. façade, aesthetic site improvements (e.g., fencing, landscaping, signage)



Redevelopment opportunities (large ones first; site assembly for others in medium to long term)



Zoning actions to ...



Outreach opportunities to build community and capitalize on shared resources (e.g., business/neighborhood outreach for shared parking, community gathering spaces, etc.)

Implementers/partners to take action: Private property owners and business owners; the real estate community; community development organizations (e.g., Historic Saint Paul, Northeast Neighborhoods Development Corporation, Dayton's Bluff Community Council and the *Make it Happen on East 7th Street initiative*; Latino Economic Development Center, Neighborhood Development Center); business groups (Dayton's Bluff Area Business Association); St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED); Saint Paul Port Authority; local artists; residents, etc.

Next steps for these recommendations:

City and community development organizations will better understand neighborhood priorities for investment, and partnerships can form around implementation items, to include, but not be limited to...

- ✓ Staff that are housed in a implementer/partner organization that could dedicate time to implementing some portion of these actions (outreach to businesses, program- and project-related work)
- ✓ Funding applications might be made around certain types of activities (e.g., programs that could be housed with one partner but supported by multiple) or specific real estate development or building renovation projects
- ✓ Broker tours or developer tours could be organized to showcase properties or available business spaces

*Images shown above are examples of properties that have been recommended for the specified category of strategic action. Properties shown include 776 7th St E; 790 7th St E; 915 7th St E; 1066-1082 7th St E; and 870 Newcombe; and 672 Arcade St, respectively.