

**Historic Resources Evaluation**  
**for the**  
**North Portion of Saint Paul's Grand Round**  
**Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Prepared**  
**for the**  
**City of Saint Paul and SEH, Inc.**  
**by**  
**Landscape Research LLC**  
**June 2016**





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**Vadnais Heights, Minnesota**

**by**

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**Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**June 2016**



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*Illustrations are from Minnesota Historical Society collections, unless noted.*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Grand Round Master Plan developed by SEH, Inc. and its subconsultants for the City of Saint Paul will add new cycling amenities along Pelham Boulevard, Raymond Avenue, Como Avenue and Wheelock and Johnson Parkways (Figure 1). The 12.3-mile route crosses many historic Saint Paul neighborhoods that have been shaped by the parkway since their earliest development. The project will include new bike lanes as well as upgrades to existing lanes. The project may involve changes to existing roadways or boulevard width and the addition of wayfinding and other features.

This study of the North Portion of Saint Paul's Grand Round was conducted for the City of Saint Paul and SEH, Inc. to provide a cultural resources background for planning the new amenities and to determine if any properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic contexts related to Saint Paul's park and parkway development are the foundation for inventory and evaluation of historic resources (see Chapter 3, "The Development of the North Portion of the Saint Paul Parkway System, 1872-1945").

Previous inventory forms, evaluation studies, and NRHP nominations prepared for properties along or adjacent to the parkway corridor were reviewed and the results are reported on Table 1. In March 2016, seven Phase I inventory forms were prepared for Wheelock Parkway and its subareas and features including the Wheelock Parkway Bridge (MN Bridge 5592). One form was prepared for Johnson Parkway. Additional properties may be inventoried at a future date. Findings and recommendations of the context study and inventory evaluation are reported in Chapter 5 and on Table 2.

Alterations to NRHP-eligible properties, including historic landscapes, may require review for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Depending on location and source of funding, this review may be coordinated by the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and/or the Cultural Resources Unit of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Potential archaeological resources were not included in this study.

Landscape Research principals Carole Zellie and Amy Lucas conducted the fieldwork and research and prepared this report.

### 1.1 Grand Round Description

A system of parkways linking the Mississippi River with Saint Paul's northern lakes was envisioned in 1872 when landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland encouraged city leaders to acquire the river banks and lakes before urban development destroyed the landscape or made park and parkway acquisition too costly. Como Park was acquired in 1872, but a city-wide parkway system was not fully realized until the 1930s.

The north portion of the Saint Paul Grand Round is comprised of parkways and avenues that link the north end of Mounds Park with North Mississippi River Boulevard (Figure 1). The east end of the loop begins on Saint Paul's east side at the intersection of Burns Avenue and Johnson Parkway. This intersection is north of Mounds Park and the Municipal Forest. From here Johnson Parkway proceeds north to Wheelock Parkway, intersecting at the south end of Lake Phalen and Phalen Park and Boulevard. Wheelock Parkway next continues west, edging Phalen Golf Course, across a terminal moraine to its "horsehoe bend" at Virginia Street, and then southwest to its intersection with E. Como Boulevard. Most of the parkway to this point is lined with houses, most dating from ca. 1900 to 1960. The route continues west, following Como Parkway to

Nagasaki Road and Horton Avenue, and then along Como Avenue, through Como Park. Midway Parkway alternatively follows across Snelling Avenue to the east gate of the State Fairgrounds. Como Avenue, flanked by early twentieth-century houses and a small commercial district, proceeds west across Snelling and along the south side of the fairgrounds en route to the intersection of Raymond Avenue.

Raymond Avenue was never constructed as a parkway. It follows south to University Avenue where it jogs on Myrtle Avenue to join Pelham Boulevard. Raymond intersects with the University-Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District (Figure 51).

Pelham Boulevard, once known as Como-River Drive, edges the Town and Country Golf Course and intersects with North Mississippi River Boulevard north of the Marshall-Lake Street Bridge. The parkway and avenue segments cross largely residential areas as well as the Minnesota State Fairgrounds and dispersed commercial and industrial land uses in the south corridor.

Along the length of the corridor, rail crossings include two along Wheelock Parkway, one along Johnson Parkway, and the broad Midway Transfer Yard is bridged by Raymond Avenue north of Energy Park Drive. Raymond Avenue is bridged by the Great Northern at Energy Park Drive and crosses the Green Line light rail line at University Avenue. Pelham Boulevard bridges the CM&StP Short Line and Interstate 94.

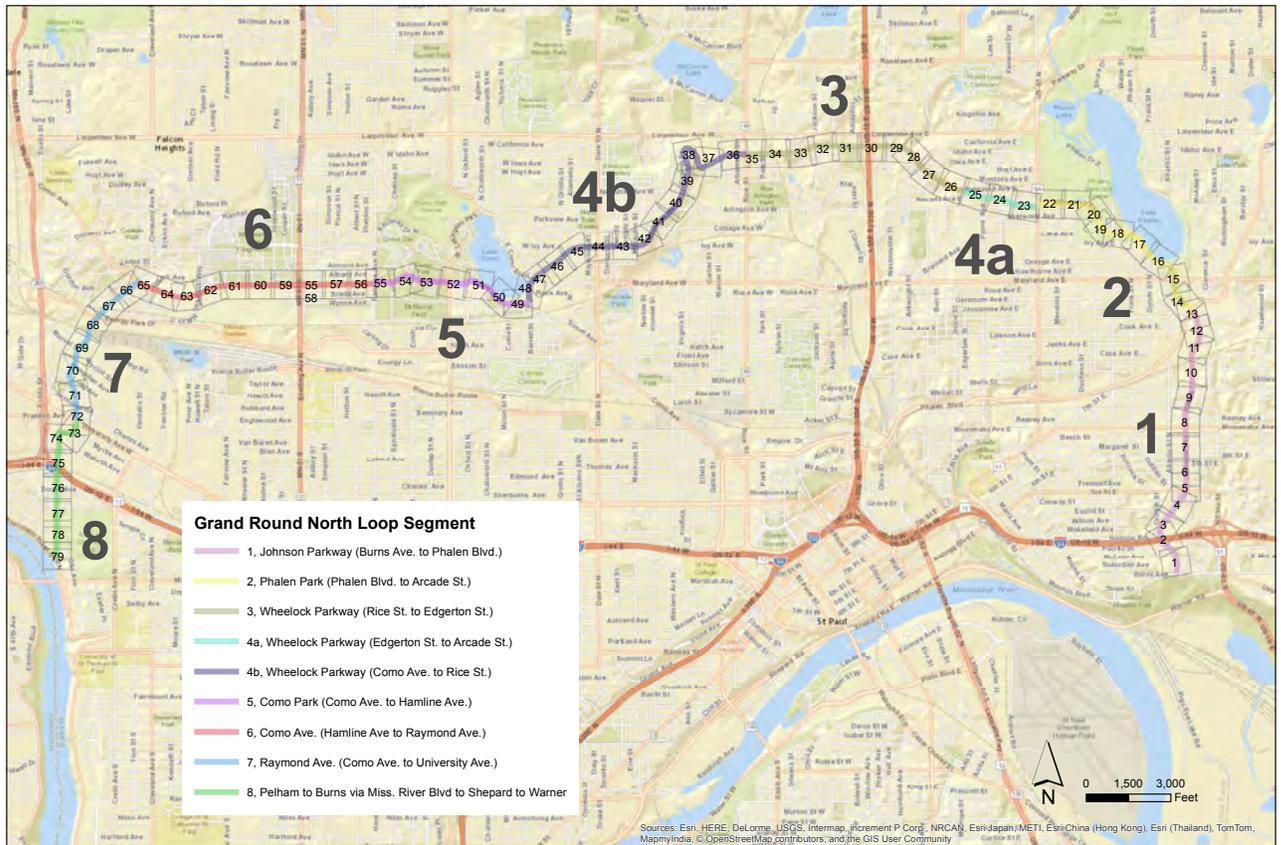


Figure 1. Grand Round North Portion (North Loop) Study Areas, 2015. (SEH; J&J)

## 2.0 SOURCES AND METHODS

### 2.1 Background Research

The consultants conducted research at the Minnesota Historical Society, the Ramsey County Historical Society, and the Saint Paul Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments. The *Annual Reports of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of St. Paul*, 1888- (hereafter *Annual Report(s)*) are a chief source for documentation of the history of the Saint Paul park system. Historical maps also document the progress of the parkway system, most notably the 1884 and 1916 city atlases (G.M. Hopkins). Apart from those for Como Park, available historic photographs of parkway segments were somewhat limited; after 1914 the annual reports were typically not illustrated. The *St. Paul Globe*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and *Minneapolis Tribune* and other Minneapolis newspapers for the period 1887-1930 also provided information about parkway history.

H.W. S. Cleveland occupies an important place in the history of late nineteenth-century American landscape architecture. His projects span New England and the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest. He served as the Saint Paul park board's landscape architect during 1888-1889, but the published drawings documenting his parkway recommendations were prepared during the superintendency of Frederick Nussbaumer, 1891-1922. With the exception of those for Como Park, no plans apparently directly prepared by Cleveland have been identified. The *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of St. Paul* for 1911 contains plans for Johnson, Wheelock and Midway Parkways, and the Como and Raymond Avenue segments. A 1909 parkway system map developed by Nussbaumer was published in the *Annual Report* for 1910. After 1914, the park board's reports were combined with other City of Saint Paul reports, and maps of parkway construction progress were shown on standard city maps. Saint Paul Public Works Department records document parkway construction and maintenance since initial surveys.

### 2.2 Fieldwork and APE

Initial fieldwork was conducted across the project area by automobile and pedestrian survey and recorded character-defining features of all parkway segments. The Phase I inventory (March 2016) focused on Wheelock and Johnson Parkways and utilized historic context information developed for this study (Chapters 3 and 4). Table 2 contains properties inventoried in 2016. The APE recommended by the consultant includes the parkway right-of-way owned by the City of Saint Paul.

**Table 1. Saint Paul Grand Rounds North Portion: Previously Inventoried, Determined Eligible or Listed NRHP Properties, 2015**

<b>SHPO Inventory</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Architect</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Photo</b>
RA-SPC-5686	Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Bridge	Johnson Parkway at E. Case Ave.	American Bridge Company	1906	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-1971	Gillette Hospital West Wing-Children's Hospital	Phalen Park-1003 E. Ivy Ave.	Clarence.H. Johnston Sr.	1924	Local designation, 1980	
RA-SPC-0771	Como Park Conservatory	Como Park	Toltz Engineering	1914-15	NRHP, 1974	
RA-SPC-7001	Como-Harriet Interurban Line Streetcar Waiting Station	1224 N. Lexington Ave.		1905	To be determined	
RA-SPC-5687	Como Park Elementary School	780 W. Wheelock Parkway	Charles A. Hausler	1916	Not Evaluated	
	Bridges No. L-5853 and 92247	Lexington Ave. in Como Park	William S. Hewett	1904	NRHP, 1989	
RA-SPC-0718	Salvation Army Booth Memorial Women's Home and Hospital	1471 Como Ave.	Clarence H. Johnston Sr.	1912-13	NRHP 1983, Local, 1983	
RA-SPC-6826	University- Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District	University Ave. from Hampden Ave. to vicinity of Hwy 280; Raymond to Charles Ave.	Multiple	1910-1955	Local designation and certified NRHP, 2005	
RA-SPC-0724	Linnea Home	2040 W. Como Ave.		1917	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	91 E. Wheelock Pkwy		1940	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	119 E. Wheelock Pkwy		1950	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	656 E. Wheelock Pkwy		1911	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	916 E. Wheelock Pkwy		1915	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	581 W. Wheelock Pkwy		1931	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	Bethel Lutheran Church	670 W. Wheelock Pkwy (1301Maywood)		1948	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	711 W. Wheelock Pkwy		1922	Not Evaluated	
RA-SPC-pending	House	779 W. Wheelock Pkwy		1917	Not Evaluated	

### 3.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT:

#### The Development of the North Portion of the Saint Paul Parkway System, 1872-1945

##### 3.1 Introduction

Building on the legacy of a few pioneer urban squares, Saint Paul created its system of parks and parkways during a roughly sixty-year period beginning in 1872. Inspired by the Minneapolis Grand Rounds so named in 1890 by William W. Folwell—but apparently not formally named the Saint Paul Grand *Round* until ca. 2000—the city incrementally built its lake, creek, and riverside parks and parkways during periods of economic growth and decline. This chapter discusses the development of the north portion of Saint Paul’s parkways prior to ca. 1945.

Landscape architect Horace William Shaler Cleveland established the early vision of a system of parks and parkways linking the river and lake Como and Phalen. His influence in Saint Paul began in 1872 and extended sporadically until about 1890, overlapping with the creation of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners in 1887 and the superintendencies of John D. Estabrook and Frederick Nussbaumer. Saint Paul’s park-making efforts reflected those in many other American cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and sometimes intersected with efforts to create a modern city according to principles of the City Beautiful Movement. Completion of some segments of the northern portion of the Grand Round was still underway in the 1930s and beyond. The Raymond Avenue segment was never constructed as a boulevard due to pre-existing residential and commercial development.

##### 3.2 Saint Paul Park Foundations, 1849-1872

The present system . . . has been carefully thought out and elaborated, from a plan presented by nature itself.

Lloyd Peabody, “History of the Parks and Public Grounds of St. Paul” (1915), 523.

Saint Paul was incorporated as a town in 1849, the same year that the Minnesota Territory was created by the U.S. Congress. When the plat of Saint Paul Proper was recorded in 1847 it provided little acknowledgement of the townsite’s picturesque perch on a steep sandstone and limestone bluff above the Mississippi River. Its grid-plan blocks, some surveyed across small hills of glacial drift, were aligned to the river, while most subsequent plats followed the cardinal points of the compass. George Nichol’s map of 1851 shows the city’s downtown blufflines as well as the modest provision for public space (Figure 2). Two blocks were intended for occupancy by the courthouse and the Minnesota State Capitol, and Market Square (Rice Park), Smith Park, and a residential quarter that became Irvine Park were also set aside. Various squares acquired by donations, the squares were characterized as a “haphazard lot of open spaces, which had come to the possession of the city in all sorts of ways” (Peabody 1915:610). Like the upriver settlements of Minneapolis and St. Anthony, no single plat envisioned impressive broad avenues lined with civic spaces; such proposals would wait decades.

The pioneer Saint Paul settlement was focused on the points of trade at the steamboat landings at the Upper (Chestnut Street) and Lower (Jackson Street) landings. Here, overland routes, including those from the Red River valley, converged and created demand for storage of bulk goods and supplies that investors in the Lowertown area would soon meet. To the west of the Lower Landing, Third Street rose along the bluff as a principal commercial avenue. Vital Guerin donated Court House Square between 4th and 5th Streets and Wabasha and Cedar streets to Ramsey County in 1850 (Peabody 1915:610). The county deeded half of the block to



**Figure 2. Map of the City of Saint Paul, Capitol of Minnesota. (G.C. Nichols, 1851)**

the City of Saint Paul in 1892. Its small park was designed to front Wabasha Avenue. Following the construction of the new Ramsey County Courthouse and Saint Paul City Hall at Fifth and Wabasha, the building was demolished and was replaced by a parking garage. Rice Park, a small trapezoid between 4th, 5th, Washington and St. Peter streets was a focus for early residences as well civic buildings including the old Saint Paul City Hall at 5th and Washington streets. Senator Henry M. Rice and John R. Irvine donated the 1.6-acre site to the city in 1849. Once known as City Park, it is mapped as Market Square in 1851 (Peabody 1915:611; Figure 2). In 1872 the Saint Paul Common Council purchased a fountain that was placed at the center of the square but the park was apparently not subject to any ornamental landscape design prior to the organization of the Board of Park Commissioners in 1887. Later framed by the Federal Courts Building (1901), the Saint Paul Hotel (1910), Minnesota Club (1915) and the Saint Paul Central Library (1917), by World War I the landscape around the park was entirely commercial and institutional. Under parks superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer, the park was filled and regraded, and acquired a more ornamental appearance by the time of its overhaul in 1898 (*Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners* [hereafter *Annual Report*], 1899:29-30). A mid-1960s redesign included a concrete fountain. The Ordway Theater (1985) now edges the park along its Washington Street frontage.

Irvine Park was designated as a public square in Rice and Irvine's Addition of 1849. The 3.58-acre parcel was intended as a neighborhood park and is now part of the Irvine Park Historic District, listed on the NRHP. Smith Park, located between 5th, 6th, Sibley and Wacouta Streets, was part of Whitney and Smiths Addition (1849). Intended as a public square, the parcel was originally a 60-foot hill of glacial drift, and was graded to provide the park and surrounding building sites. It is part of the Lowertown Historic District (NRHP).

Central Park was acquired in 1884 as a State Capitol approach. Part of the 2.35-acre property was donated by citizens, and the city acquired the rest. It was cited as “one of the earliest instances of the citizens of Saint Paul making an effort to improve the appearance of the city by increasing its open spaces” (Peabody 1915:613). Lafayette Square was acquired by the city in 1884-86 (Peabody 1915:613). The 1.01-acre parcel was framed by Grove, Locust, Ninth, and Willius Streets. Although Henry S. Sibley and other prominent residents built expensive homes here, by 1900 the area was encroached by railroad and warehouse development.

### 3.3 Saint Paul City Council Committee on Parks, 1872

In 1872, the Saint Paul City Council created a committee on parks, headed by W. A. Van Slyke. The committee “had charge of the squares of the city, and renovated and improved them from time to time as the circumstances demanded and permitted” (Castle 1912:371).

In February 1872 the City of Saint Paul began an effort to acquire Como Lake along the Como Road (Castle 1912:371). Some of the property, largely upland prairie interrupted by oak savannah as well as marshland, was under cultivation. The park would become a central feature of the city’s northern parkway development, and was also a primary focus for public recreation through much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Schmidt 2002:44-45). The Panic of 1873 interrupted efforts to improve the park, and the delay would extend more than 15 years until after the creation of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners.

### 3.4 The Parkway System and the Early History of Saint Paul Parks

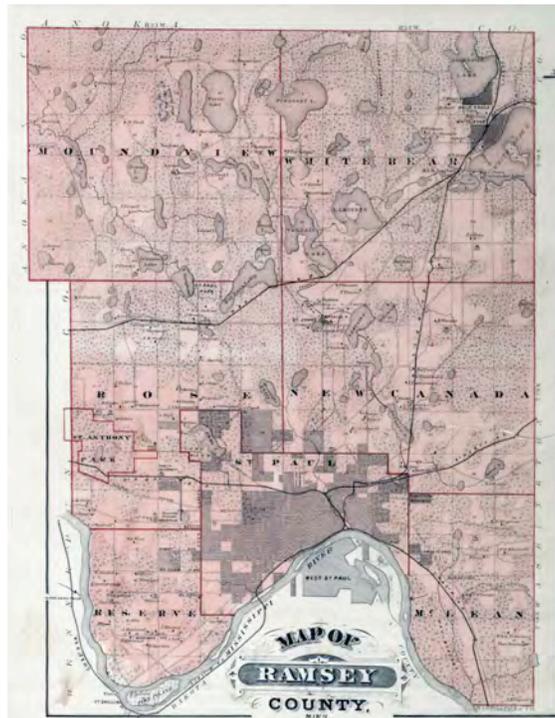


Figure 3. *Map of Ramsey County Minn., 1874.*  
(A.T. Andreas)

H.W. S. Cleveland arrived in Saint Paul in February 1872 to address the Chamber of Commerce, and visited again on June 24, 1872 to address the Common Council. He would have observed two

decades' worth of development that supported a population of about 20,000 (Figure 4). As shown on the A. T. Andreas *Map of Ramsey County* (1874), development was gathered around the downtown river levee and along the Trout Brook Valley (Figure 3). The river and valley, cutting through oak-studded upland prairie broken with small creeks, provided routes for several railroad lines that were gradually edging out the steamboat hub at the foot of Jackson and Chestnut streets. Central downtown Saint Paul was a mix of business blocks, dwellings, buildings, and churches, as well as the warehouses and factories that would comprise most of Lowertown during the late nineteenth century. The city's few park squares were barely improved. Later, in spring 1872, Cleveland toured the river gorge upriver to the Falls of St. Anthony in Minneapolis, and saw the lakes and creeks of both cities. These natural features, and especially the river gorge opposite Minnehaha Falls, provided the armature for his writings, lectures and park plans during the next twenty years.



**Figure 4. Looking downriver from downtown Saint Paul, ca. 1865. W. Third Street, ca. 1872.**

### 3.5 National Precedents

Saint Paul and Minneapolis leaders were well aware of the role of landscape architecture and park making in the progress of other American cities in the post-Civil War period. In various incarnations, improved public health and belief in the moral benefit of exposure to nature were at the foundation of the effort. The belief that nature uplifted public morality, especially for the newly arrived immigrant and working poor, fueled early park development in densely populated cities; the success of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux with New York's Central Park and the postwar development of their designs for Prospect Park and the Brooklyn system headlined efforts nationally. Olmsted was also retained for work with Vaux in Chicago for the South Park System (1870) and in Boston to design the Back Bay Fens Park and Parkway (1873), the first extension of what would become the Emerald Necklace. His work in Buffalo (1879) would be among the first extensive park and boulevard systems completed in the United States.

### 3.6 Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900)

H.W.S. Cleveland was raised in the circle of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the New England Transcendentalists. The Lancaster, Massachusetts native had a deep background in farming, horticulture and civil engineering, and was an expert hunter and Civil War rifleman (Neckar 1995; Nadenecek 2001). His father, Richard J. Cleveland (1773-1860) was an internationally known ship captain and maritime expert.

Cleveland located in Chicago in 1869 and established one of the first landscape architectural

practices in the Midwest. William Merchant French (1843-1914), became Cleveland's partner in the firm of Cleveland and French in 1871. Cleveland and French were retained to implement Olmsted's designs for the South Park district including Drexel Boulevard and what would become Washington Park. Through this work he met William Morse Berry, whom he would later bring to Minneapolis as park superintendent. One of the planting techniques that Cleveland and Berry used in the cash-strapped, post-fire city was to salvage as many existing trees as possible. This meant minimal topographic modification and a resulting rough-and-ready picturesque aesthetic, one not common in parks in more developed cities of the East. Exotic plants described by Olmsted in the original documents to achieve subtropical effects were eschewed. Instead, ordinary, often native, plants from local nurseries were used. In Minneapolis this approach would also guide the approach to planting the early small parks (Neckar 1995).

Cleveland's previous accomplishments included the design of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts (1855). In 1857, with his former partner Robert Morris Copeland (1830-1874), he unsuccessfully competed for the design of New York's Central Park (Neckar 1995). In the 1860s he worked with Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) and Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) on the design and construction of Brooklyn's Prospect Park and on its connecting parkways and small parks. Other commissions, in Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey included cemeteries and estates. In the shadow of the Olmsted and Vaux firm's work in Chicago, in 1871 Cleveland wrote his own advertising pamphlet, *A Few Hints on Landscape Gardening as Applied to the Wants of the West.* As the title suggests, he was already prospecting for work in the new railroad, lumber and grain cities in the Midwest and the Great Plains (Neckar 1995). Another promotional piece, the *Public Grounds of Chicago: How to Give them Character and Expression* (1869) offered direction on the planting of boulevards as arboreta, recommending that many species be artistically combined (Cleveland 1869:7-18).

### **3.6.1 Cleveland and Saint Paul: 1872-1894**

In February 1872 William Watts Folwell (1833-1929) invited Cleveland to speak at the "People's Course of Lectures" held at the Pence Opera House (Tishler 1985:282). Folwell, President of the University of Minnesota during 1869-1884, was Cleveland's first and constant correspondent over the next decades. Cleveland's address, "The Application of Landscape Architecture to the Wants of the West," was repeated the next night in Saint Paul for the Chamber of Commerce. According to newspaper accounts, he urged the immediate acquisition of valuable parklands, especially the bluffs along the Mississippi River gorge (*Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1872:1; *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 9, 13, 16, 17, 1872).

Cleveland was next invited by the Common Council to make a "general outline report, upon the proper location of Parks, Wide Avenues, Public Squares, and other improvements, on a scale suitable to the wants of a crowded city." "A Park System for the City of St. Paul," delivered on June 24, 1872, cited the success of older cities such as New York and Chicago in creating park systems (Cleveland 1872:14). He urged Saint Paul to preserve what "nature had furnished without cost." He noted:

The steep and densely wooded bluffs comprise one of the most important objects in the general outlook. They can possess but little intrinsic value, but if suffered to be marred by quarries, and their picturesque features destroyed, as they are liable to be if left in private hands, they will present a most unsightly aspect, in conspicuous view from all parts of the city . . . a park, or least a fine driveway along the bluff, should by all means be secured, and the bluffs themselves preserved from desecration.

H.W.S. Cleveland, *A Park System for the City of St. Paul*, June 24, 1872



**Figure 5. The scenery that inspired Cleveland:**  
**Bridal Veil Falls at Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, ca. 1860; Shadow Falls at the**  
**foot of Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, ca. 1890.**

The Mississippi River gorge between Minneapolis and Saint Paul provided the framework for his park-making ideas for both cities (Figure 5). He urged swift action to claim the riverbanks, and lamented the loss of bluff views from Summit Avenue because it had not been laid out along the bluff's edge. He singled out Carpenter Park (later Summit Overlook) at Ramsey Street as a remaining opportunity. He urged the preservation of hills and elevated points for public grounds, and preserving "breathing places" for the "toiling multitudes who have neither the time nor the means to visit the extensive pleasure grounds" (Cleveland 1872:7). He envisioned the opening of "spacious avenues radiating in such directions as will be most frequented by future travel." The City of Chicago was then engaged in laying out a boulevard system, which he observed "served in part to relieve the monotony of the interminable system of rectangles."

In *A Park System*, Cleveland defined the boulevard as

simply a grand avenue, of sufficient width to admit of two or three roads for different purposes; as, one for the heavy traffic of teams and business wagons, one for pleasure and driving, and one for equestrians, and also paths of sufficient width to accommodate throngs of pedestrians. The roadways are separated from each other by rows of trees with intervening grass plots, and sometimes by a broad central mall adorned with fountains, and the paths for pedestrians at the sides or between the roads, are like garden paths, the sides being ornamented with trees, grass, shrubbery and flowers (Cleveland 1872:11).

Such a boulevard provided fresh air, fire protection, and would be within easy access of "all classes of citizens." His scheme was envisioned to include creation of a Riverside Park and several linkages to Minneapolis, including the "Union Parkway" via Summit Avenue and 34th Avenue S. across the river; he observed, "St Paul and Minneapolis eventually, and at no distant day, will become virtually one city" (Cleveland 1872:13; 1885:27). He repeated this call to unite the cities with connecting parkways in another lecture thirteen years later (Cleveland 1885:28).

### 3.6.1.1 Como and Phalen Lakes and St. Anthony Park

In addition to the river, Saint Paul's northern lakes were cited for their potential use as a water supply and their "aesthetic advantages" (Cleveland 1872:14). He recommended acquisition of Como and Phalen lakes, urging that the city connect them "with the city and with each other, by avenues befitting the wants of the time" (Cleveland 1872:15). In planning for future population growth, he urged not spending money on "artificial decorations beyond the wants of the present generation . . . you have yet too much work to do" (Cleveland 1872:16). He meant that money should be spent on land acquisition and basic improvements, and parks should not be embellished with unnecessarily ornamental structures or buildings.

Cleveland secured important work in both cities as a result of this introduction to Minneapolis and Saint Paul civic leaders, including commissions for grounds at the University of Minnesota, Oakland Cemetery, and designs for Summit Avenue and St. Anthony Park (Tishler 1985:283). His unrealized 1873 plan for St. Anthony Park, prepared with his Chicago partner William M. R. French for real estate developers as a residential district of small estates, connected to the city by passenger rail, and linked to both cities via Como Avenue, suggested as a broad avenue from Lake Como to Minneapolis (Cleveland and French 1873; Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Vignette showing interurban boulevard, St. Anthony Park Plan, 1873. Inset showing Minneapolis and Saint Paul parkway connections, St. Anthony Park Plan, 1873.**

At the time of these early visits to Saint Paul, Cleveland was preparing *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West* (1873), his manifesto on the role he proposed for landscape architecture in shaping the country's fast-growing new cities. Central to this approach would be the park and parkway system described in his lectures and the book. Cleveland drew on his reading of William Robinson, who described the Paris park system in *Parks, Promenades and of Paris* (1869), and on his own experience building the Brooklyn system. In both of these precedents, park systems were understood to have connective boulevards and larger parks, but also neighborhood parks. (It should be noted that despite his references to Parisian parks, there is no evidence that Cleveland ever traveled to Europe, nor is there evidence that, according to one account, he met the future park superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer in Paris.)

In May 1873 Cleveland & French Landscape Architects, based in Chicago, announced their office in Saint Paul's Forepaugh Block, noting that Cleveland was "visiting Minnesota"

(*Minneapolis Tribune* May 15, 1873). Apart from projects such as St. Anthony Park and Oakland Cemetery, however, Cleveland's major municipal work would await the creation of the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1883. In 1883 he was hired by Minneapolis to produce *Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis*, which was published in the board's first annual report. His subsequent work for the board created the foundation for the city's system of parks and parkways.

### **3.6.1.2 “Preserve above all the wild and picturesque character of the river banks”**

On June 19, 1885, Cleveland addressed the Saint Paul Common Council and Chamber of Commerce on “Park Ways and Ornamental Parks: the Best System for St. Paul.” This plan, printed and bound with his 1872 address as *Public Parks, Radial Avenues and Boulevards: Outline Plan for a Park System for the City of St. Paul*, was the framework for his remaining work with the city. Once again, he called for preservation of the city's natural gifts. He noted, “your opportunity today is to avail yourselves of the advantages which nature has provided to your hand, for the inauguration of such a system of improvements as shall be in keeping with the demands of the future populations.” As always, the river was his organizing principle for Saint Paul:

Preserve above all the wild and picturesque character of the river banks, and do not suffer them to be stripped of their foliage or scarred and seamed by excavations. The day is not distant when the thickly wooded banks, the deep and dark ravines, the rugged and precipitous rock, and the picturesque cascades which for the shore of the majestic river, will be regarded as your choicest possessions for the unique character they will confer upon the city. No money could purchase what nature has here provided, and its value when contrasted to the architectural display of the great metropolis, will be proportionate to the degree of wild grandeur and beauty they display, and which no art could imitate.

He reiterated his approval of broad ornamental avenues, “known as boulevards or park ways,” relieved at intervals by small parks. A boulevard was not a dreary roadway, 200 feet wide, he noted, “but an extended park, immediately accessible from the adjacent streets, enlivened by all the features of busy life which render the adjacent streets, enlivened by all the features of busy life which render the streets themselves attractive. Architectural features needed the graceful drapery of nature” (Cleveland 1885:25). He acknowledged that such boulevards would receive increasing amounts of traffic.

Cleveland did not revisit planning for Como or Phalen parks in the 1885 plan. Preserving the city's forest, and especially its bluffs, was his focus. He noted opportunities to reserve some areas that he had suggested in 1872 “are now beyond possibility of such development” (Cleveland 1885:29). He reiterated his preference for the landscape gardener's role to serve as the high priest of Nature: “to interpret her language and develop her suggestions . . . without ‘artificial decorations’.”

### **3.6.1.3 Cleveland and the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners**

With the prospect of continuing work in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Cleveland moved to Minneapolis with his wife and two grandchildren in 1886. In the same year, Cleveland contributed “The Selection of Sites for Parks and Parkways” to the *Annual Report of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society* (Minnesota State Horticultural Society [hereafter MSHS] 1886). He noted that the construction of fine roads and ornamental avenues to outlying parks, even when grading and draining is needed, would prove to confer great value upon the adjacent

area, so that city would be “more than paid for the outlay by the addition” (MSHS 1886:345). He encouraged acquisition of land that might be avoided by the “most desirable class of population” because they might be occupied for objectionable purposes and expend money to redeeming them and rendering them attractive (MSHS 1886:345-346). He was encouraged by the Minnesota State Legislature’s efforts to acquire Minnehaha Park at Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis as a state park, noting that although it was no Niagara Falls, it “has been invested with such poetic associations as must forever hallow its precincts with a charm which all the world will recognize” (MSHS 1886:348).

The Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners was organized in February 1887 (*First Annual Report* 1888:821-22). At this time, Saint Paul’s city limits extended at the north to Larpenteur Avenue (Murphy and Granger 1983:415; Figure 7). In addition to improvements to Como Park (acquired in 1873), the board’s initial focus was acquisition of the West Saint Paul Park across the river; Carpenter (Summit Overlook) Park, at Summit Avenue and Ramsey Street; Indian Mounds Park on Dayton’s Bluff; the riverside Hiawatha Park, near Cleveland Avenue, and a survey of the east bank of the river from the CM&StP bridge to the Fort Snelling bridge (*Annual Report* 1888:822-23). As shown on Rice’s Map of St. Paul (1887), real estate additions and subdivisions reached to the edges of the city limits as far as Lake Phalen (Figure 7). Much of the land, including the platted additions, would remain undeveloped for decades, however.

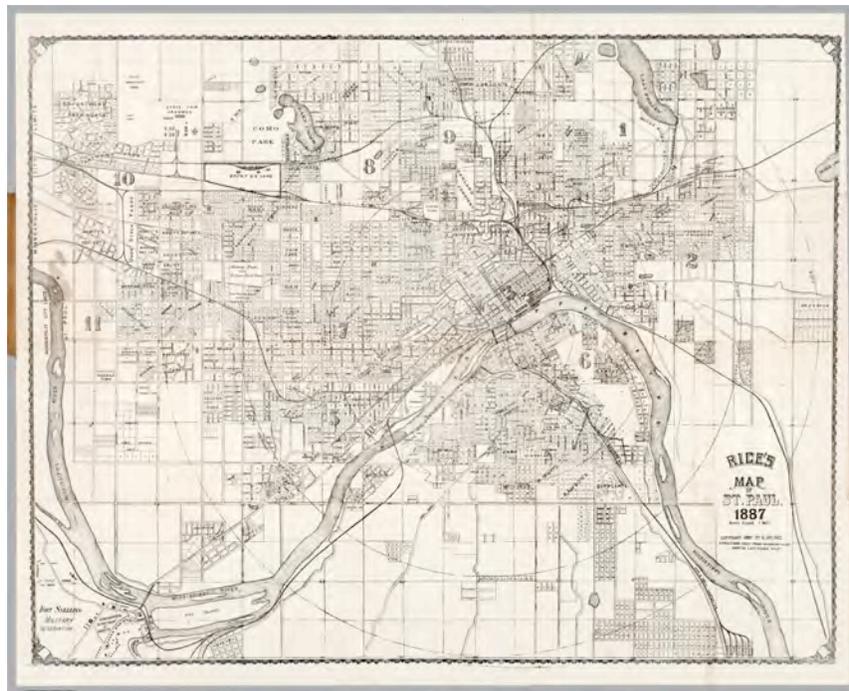
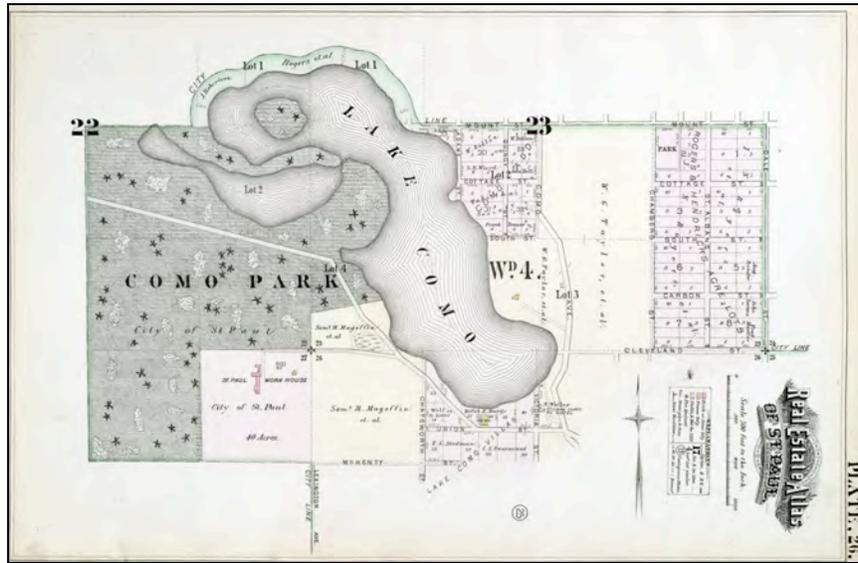


Figure 7. *Rice's Map of St. Paul, 1887, showing extent of platting.*

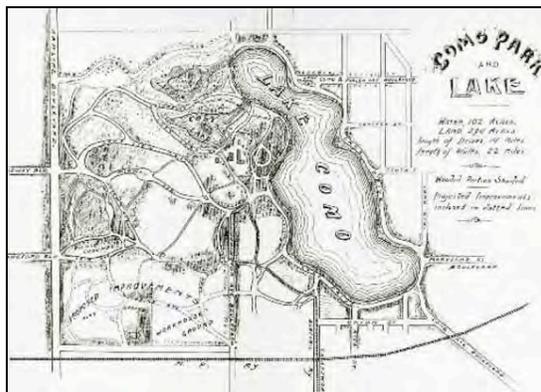
#### 3.6.1.4 Cleveland Finally Hired: 1888

In June 1887 the new Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners voted to hire Cleveland for work on the city’s parks, but this appointment does not appear to have become effective until 1888 (*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 5, 1887:3). According to the *First Annual Report*, initial work on Como Park, including clearing and grubbing by Saint Paul Workhouse inmates, began in August 1887 (*Annual Report* 1887-88:823). In 1888, the board, with William Van Slyke as president, appointed John D. Estabrook as Superintendent of Parks and hired Cleveland for \$1500

per year to “prepare designs and plans for the improvement of Saint Paul parks and parkways” and to “supervise the execution of all work on parks and parkways” (*Annual Report 1888-89:673*). Only \$25,000 was provided for improvements to Como Park, out of \$225,000 appropriated for the city’s park fund (*Annual Report 1895:5*; Figure 8). Cleveland’s Como Park plans as printed in 1889 and 1890 showed curvilinear paths and roadways that edged the rolling hills west of the lake (Cleveland 1889, 1890; Figure 9). The plan did not rely on new ornamental plantings, but rather the existing stands of native oak and new trees, shrubs and vines. A parkway edged the lakeshore and connected to Como Avenue.



**Figure 8. Pre-Cleveland: Como Park and unimproved Como Road in 1884. (Hopkins Real Estate Atlas of St. Paul, 1884)**



**Figure 9. Como Park (ca. 1890; redrawn 1895)**



**Como Park drive and walkway, 1905.**

In April 1888, Cleveland presented *The Aesthetic Development of the United Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis* to the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts. This lecture was focused on acquisition of Minnehaha Falls as a state park, but emphasized the joint needs of two cities (Cleveland 1888). In October 1888, he delivered an address to the park board on the improvement of vacant squares in the city (*Appendix to Second Annual Report 1889:690-92*). He reprised his earlier messages about the necessity of preserving the Mississippi River bluffs in a January 12, 1889 address to the “Joint Committee of Minneapolis and St. Paul on Mississippi River Park” (*Appendix to Second Annual Report 1888-89:693-98*).

In 1889 the Minnesota State Legislature passed an act authorizing the City of Saint Paul to issue bonds for the acquisition, improvement and maintenance of public parks. Other acts authorized bonds for the improvement of Lake Como, and acquisition of the Indian Mounds on Dayton's Bluff for a public park (Castle 1912:372-3).

Cleveland's concurrent Minneapolis work was accomplished with close collaboration with park board presidents William W. Folwell and Charles M. Loring, who shared his appreciation for naturalistic landscapes. During the 1906-1935 tenure of Minneapolis park superintendent Theodore Wirth, Cleveland's approach was modified to accommodate active recreation, automobiles, and increased leisure time, and a different park-making aesthetic that often emphasized the beautiful over the picturesque. In Saint Paul, Frederick Nussbaumer inherited the Cleveland legacy and similarly responded to these mandates.

In 1890 Cleveland and Superintendent Estabrook supervised improvement of Summit Avenue between Lexington and the Mississippi River, and extensive work on Como Park was also completed (*Annual Report* 1891:231). By 1891, Cleveland's role in Saint Paul had apparently ended. There may have been some discord; board member William Van Slyke stated in March 1890 that he did not "like the idea of employing a Minneapolis man to lay out St. Paul parks," and questioned Cleveland's \$125 monthly fee. According to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Van Slyke thought Saint Paul parks should differ from Minneapolis and "should not be designed by the same hand" (*Minneapolis Tribune* March 29, 1890:8).

In his report for the year 1890-91, Estabrook specially recognized Nussbaumer, then the park gardener, for his efforts, but he did not make any note of Como Park's visionary landscape architect (*Annual Report* 1891:232, 236, 239). Although he continued to work in Minneapolis on plans for Powderhorn Park (with the assistance of his son, Ralph D. Cleveland, 1851-1918), Cleveland moved back to Chicago in ca. 1894 (Tishler 1985:290).



Figure 10. Como Park entrance, 1905.

Como Park viaduct and planted beds, 1907.

### 3.7 The Superintendency of Frederick Nussbaumer: 1891-1922

George Frederick Nussbaumer (1850-1935) inherited Cleveland's general ideas for a park system that preserved the city's natural features, but at Como Park he particularly demonstrated his own interest in floral and decorative effects. A native of Baden, Germany, Nussbaumer was the son of a nurseryman. He studied mechanical and civil engineering as well as botany and landscape architecture at the University of Freiburg (Castle 1912:710). Well traveled in Europe, he worked in Paris and at Kew Gardens in London. Nussbaumer arrived in the United States in 1876 and in Saint Paul in 1878. He worked as a florist prior to being hired as a Como Park gardener in 1887.

He filled Estabrook's term in 1891 and served as Superintendent in 1891 (Schmidt 2002:48). Like Theodore Wirth, a native of Switzerland who was hired as Minneapolis park superintendent in 1906, Nussbaumer was influenced by European training while also participating in the development of modern municipal park management; both, for example, had leadership roles in the American Association of Park Superintendents. The promoter and guardian of the early Saint Paul parks was Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906). A native of Nova Scotia and a Saint Paul pioneer, in 1916 he co-founded the *St. Paul Daily Press* (later the *Pioneer Press*) in 1861. He was President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners from 1893 until his death.

Development of Como Park was the primary early accomplishment of its new commission, and the infusion of \$25,000 in bonds in 1891 allowed Nussbaumer to complete Como Lake Drive (Schmidt 2002:48). Generally following Cleveland's 1890 plan, the superintendent also developed elaborate floral displays through the park, and added bridges and exotic plants including summertime palms, topiaries, and the popular "gates ajar." The lily pond and frog pond surrounded by a grotto were also popular features. Such features were anathema to Cleveland, who had urged restraint with such artificial effects. The completion of the Conservatory in 1915 would be a crowning achievement for Nussbaumer and the commission (Schmidt 2002:48).



Figure 11. Como Conservatory, 1915



Partial Lake Como Parkway aerial, 1921

### 3.7.1 Como Park: A Parkway Hub

As recommended by Cleveland and developed by Nussbaumer, Como Park was the hub of a boulevard system potentially connecting to Phalen Park and Indian Mounds Park to the east and south, and to the river via Midway Parkway or Como and Raymond Avenues. A regional scheme, extending north to White Bear and Bald Eagle lakes, was also contemplated (*Annual Report* 1905:18).

During the 1890s, the creation of "broad driveways" or boulevards connecting Indian Mounds, Phalen, and Como Parks—as well as the State Fairgrounds and University of Minnesota Experimental Farm—were debated, with another fork extending south to the Mississippi River Boulevard. Earl Street, from Indian Mounds to Phalen Park, was examined as a possible connector, but a new course along Phalen Creek was regarded as more desirable (*Annual Report* 1896:472). Widening of Como and Phalen Avenues to boulevard scale was also considered, but Nussbaumer's proposal for a completely new boulevard, without conflict from railroad tracks and steep grades, prevailed. Plans to realize Cleveland's river bluff park and parkway schemes were well formed by 1895 (*Annual Report* 1896:473). Nussbaumer's tenure spanned the introduction of active recreation mandates in American urban parks, and Saint Paul established a playground committee in 1904. By 1909, six playgrounds were installed in the city, and baseball fields and tennis courts were installed at Como.

Land acquisition to link the parks and parkways proceeded slowly. Condemnation for Indian Mounds Park, for example, began in 1888 and the board began to make improvements to the initial 17 acres in 1896 following plans by Nussbaumer (*Annual Report 1896:467*). The park benefitted in 1901 from state legislation allowing park boards to contract for land purchases and the Saint Paul board purchased more than thirty-five acres of lots and unplatted land adjacent to Mounds Park. New acquisitions brought the total to more than 80 acres (*Annual Report 1902:7*).



**Figure 12. Park and Parkway System, City of Saint Paul, Minn. Frederick Nussbaumer, 1909.**

### **3.7.2 Parkways and Civic Planning: Commonwealth Parkway and the Outer Circle**

Before there was the “Grand Round,” there was Commonwealth Parkway and the Outer Circle. By 1903, the Commonwealth Parkway, linking the river with four of the city’s major institutions—the Capitol, the University of Minnesota, the State Fairgrounds and the State Experimental Farm—was proposed (*Annual Report 1903:37*; *St. Paul Globe* April 10, 1904:24). Overall, however, planning was slow and piecemeal and the *Annual Report* noted in 1905, “while St. Paul takes an just pride in its park system, it is yet lamentably deficient in parkways” (*Annual Report 1905:15*). The city’s 1,251 acres of parkland then included only 207 acres devoted to parkways.

Commonwealth Parkway was a part of what was later called the north loop of the “Outer Circle.” As Lloyd Peabody explained it in 1915, “the Mississippi river sweeps about the city in a semi - circle, from the city limits of Minneapolis on the west to the turn of the river at Indian Mounds

Park. Lake Phalen and Como lie in the northerly half of the great circle of which the river makes the southerly portion” (Peabody 1915:623) He noted that “this is what is known to those concerned in the development of the parks as the Outer Circle; far too much of it has been marred by the hand of man. Much of it remains to be acquired” (Peabody 1915:623).

Much of this planning spanned the height of the popularity of the City Beautiful Movement, from ca. 1901 to 1917. Saint Paul’s parkway plans set an independent course somewhat outside of the City Beautiful canon, in spite of the similarities with other cities that also developed major civic center plans more typical of the movement’s core principles. St. Paul’s early parkway efforts are not acknowledged in the principal document of the movement, Charles Mulford Robinson’s *Modern Civic Art or the City Made Beautiful* (1903). Robinson focused on Paris, Berlin, Rome, and other European cities and well-established urban improvements in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston and on the new McMillan Commission plans for Washington D. C. Robinson praised winding Kenwood Parkway in Minneapolis in his chapter on the subject of parkways (Robinson 1903: 312). He briefly noted that Saint Paul’s Summit Avenue “a magnificently situated avenue,” observing it was not properly a parkway because of the buildings on both of its sides (Robinson 1903: 316).

Superintendent Nussbaumer may have wanted to cast the parkway work in a more practical context because of ambitious but unrealized and underfunded City Beautiful proposals, most notably for the capitol approaches. The park commission’s architect, Cass Gilbert, began the first of three capitol approach plans in 1902. The *Report of the Capitol Approaches Commission* (1906) estimated the cost of the three approaches at \$1.9 million, and most of the original concepts were never realized (Phelps 1985). In 1904 landscape architect Warren Manning of Massachusetts prepared a plan that included an unrealized, wide Como Avenue connection to the Minnesota State Capitol, and exhibited it at the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition. In 1905 the plan was also published in *The Existing and Proposed Outer Park Systems of American Cities: Report of the Philadelphia Allied Organizations* (Crawford 1905). Others offering plans included Nussbaumer and A.B. Stickney, as well as landscape architect John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1911, Nolen, a national leader of the City Beautiful movement, would propose a similar but unpublished plan (Nolen and Comey 1911; Herrold 1922:7-8).

In 1914 Saint Paul created a City Planning Board and in 1920 George Herrold was appointed planning director and city engineer with Chicago consultants Edward Bennett and Harold Parsons. Herrold, Bennett and Parsons authored the *Plan of Saint Paul* (Herrold 1922). In analyzing the city’s street system, the 1922 plan noted, “parkways, where well located, assume the functions of major streets, although restricted to special use.” The authors revisited H.W.S. Cleveland’s quest to locate parkways along bluff edges “whence fine views are afforded” and, beginning in 1928, Kellogg Boulevard design would follow this scheme (Herrold 1922:21). The idea of an outer-park regional system based on a “Grand Round Boulevard” was explored by Herrold and others in the 1920s (Herrold 1928: 4a).

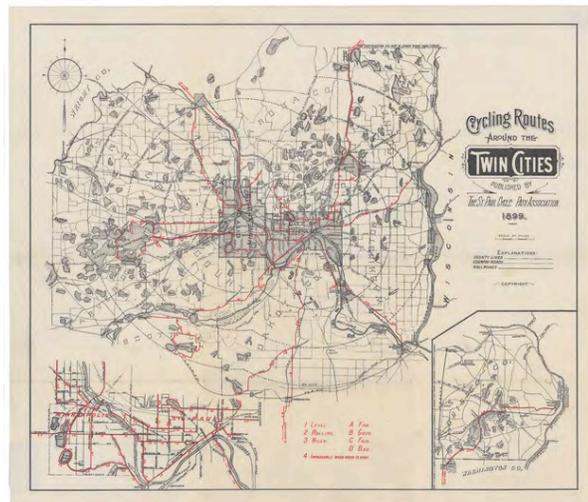
In 1926 Herrold summarized Saint Paul’s independent and practical approach:

In St. Paul we have stressed the idea that City Planning is a means of substituting economic planning for political expediency. No attempt has been made to plan a “City Magnificent” nor to copy after Paris or Rome. We are proud of our individuality, our narrow street, [*sic*] our fine topography, our natural parks and lakes, our traditions and landmarks. Our aim has been to improve living conditions that life may be easier, more refined and richer for all” (Herrold, 1926: 28).

### 3.7.3 Saint Paul and the Bicycle

By the mid-1890s, cycling enjoyed great popularity across the United States. Minneapolis and Saint Paul created a variety of clubs, and members lobbied municipalities for path construction. In Saint Paul, much of this effort was initially directed at routes reaching outside the city, with little mention of cooperation with the still organizing Saint Paul park commission. The City of Saint Paul created a bicycle ordinance in 1892, primarily intended to control speed and safety. The Twin Cities Cycle Association and St. Paul Cycle Path Association campaigned for bike paths, which were primarily sidepaths to existing roadways. Main arteries were the focus: Marshall Avenue was the first interurban route established Ramsey County created a Sidepath Commission in 1901. In the same year there were about 115 miles of paths within the county dedicated to cyclists (*St. Paul Globe*, June 8, 1902:12). The Saint Paul park commissioners addressed the needs of the growing sport in 1896:

The extraordinary growth and rapid increase of bicycle riding makes necessary a revision of the ordinary system of road-making. These light, swift vehicles, driven by man power, are entitled to their right of way equally with the horse-driven carriage. Good, smooth, hard, paths for the former have become as indispensable as good roads for the latter, and should be carefully provided for in all boulevards and parkways. It furnishes a new reason for narrowing the roadways in such parkways and widening the lawn so as to admit of the establishment of bicycle paths through them. The bicycle path will form a feature of all boulevards of parkways which shall come under the jurisdiction of the board. It is now proposed to establish bicycle paths through the central lawn and roadways of Summit Avenue boulevard. In time these will be extended through the side lawns of Lexington avenue to Como park, when widened and improved as proposed, and through an extension of Summit avenue boulevard along the river bank to Minneapolis, which will probably be acquired and improved at an early period (*Annual Report* 1896:477).



**Figure 13. Cycling Routes Around the Twin Cities, 1899.  
(St. Paul Cycle Path Association)**

In 1898 it was noted that the park commissioners had not “been backward in recognizing the rapidly growing claims of the bicycle to liberal treatment and hospitable accommodation in our system of parks and parkways” (*Annual Report* 1898:17). The number of riders, men and women, was a “large and rapidly increasing proportion of visitors to Como Park.” Bicycle paths set apart for the special or prior use of wheel riders was recommended (*Annual Report* 1898:17). A bicycle

path was provided along the lake and along both sides of Como Avenue Parkway where 7-foot paths were built. In 1898, stands for 500 bicycles were placed around the park, at a cost of \$160 (*Annual Report 1898:28*).

During the next decade, enthusiasm for bicycles waned with the introduction of the automobile, and road building for the needs of cars rather than carriages occupied the park superintendent and staff. When a road oiling plant to service parkways and park roads was established, it was noted, “Heavy motor cars, going at a high rate of speed, need a coarse stone cushion for the top surface” (*Annual Report 1909, n.p.*).

### 3.7.4 Lake Phalen

Following Cleveland’s general recommendations from 1872, various attempts were made to condemn parcels on the western shore of Lake Phalen (*Annual Report 1896:466-67*). By 1896, a 105-acre parcel was secured, including a boulevard bringing the total to 129.5 acres. Phalen was surrounded by native forest, which commissioners stated could be “maintained at little expense.” It differed in character and function from Como Park, forming “a needed compliment to that beautiful pleasure ground, while it serve to balance the distribution of park benefits between the eastern and western sections of the city” (*Annual Report 1896:467*).



**Figure 14. Lake Phalen and early auto, ca. 1910.**



**Lake Phalen aerial, 1959.**

Improvements were underway by 1900, including widening and deepening the creek linking the 317-acre lake with 217-acre Lake Gervais, which was also acquired. The waterways offered the potential for a nine-mile route, which Joseph A. Wheelock described as “magical.” When illuminated by electric lights at night he observed, “art can add but little to the natural beauty of the park proper” (*Annual Report 1901:25*).

### 3.7.5 River Boulevard

Under Wheelock’s leadership, improvement of the 200-foot wide, 3.51-mile Mississippi River Boulevard secured the crest and slope of the eastern side of the river gorge from the Minneapolis city limits to W. 7th Street at the Fort Snelling Bridge. Acquired between 1901 and 1915, and remaining “practically in a state of primitive nature,” with the hardwood forest “for the most part unspoiled by the ax,” the improvements included bridges, culverts, and an oiled gravel drive popular with early motorists as well as cyclists. The economic depression of 1893 made land prices favorable, and completion of the planning for the Meeker Lock and Dam discouraged industrial users. As reported in 1898, “its precipitous and wonderfully beautiful banks are being year after year shorn and despoiled of their natural features by stone quarries and wood

choppers.” Echoing Cleveland’s admonitions of thirty years before, Wheelock warned that if not soon acquired by the city, “it will be but a few years before the city will have lost one of the most precious possessions in all its wide domain of natural beauties” (*Annual Report 1898:13*).



**Figure 15. River Boulevard, 1918.**

### 3.7.6 Midway Parkway

Midway Parkway was, remarkably, completed within a few years of its initial proposal and design. Located between Como Park and Hamline Avenue and the east gate of the Minnesota State Fair grounds on Snelling Avenue, it was proposed by 1896 as a 200-foot-wide parkway that crossed the park and then meandered through the fair grounds and the Experimental Farm. The opportunity to show “model country roads” was the objective of the route across the farm (*Annual Report 1897:8*). The board thought the road could next extend westerly through St. Anthony Park neighborhood to Minneapolis and southward to the Mississippi River Boulevard.



**Figure 16. Midway Parkway and Como Park, 1916. (Hopkins)**

Como Avenue (Langford Avenue) had previously provided the main approach from the west, and its use as a streetcar route encouraged an alternative between the park and Snelling Avenue and

the Saint Paul gate of the fairgrounds (*Annual Report* 1897:7). The stretch of former farmland was described in 1898 as “an elevated although naked plateau, commanding a fine view of the rural landscape around it. Its width will afford a fine opportunity for decorative treatment” (*Annual Report* 1897:8). Six lines of elm, white ash, box elder, Carolina poplars, and sugar maples were planted along Midway Parkway by 1899 (*Annual Report* 1899/1900:17, 21).

Midway Parkway, encompassing twelve acres, was thus intended to “form the central section of a metropolitan driveway,” extending from the capitol grounds in Saint Paul, along Park Avenue to Como Avenue and the experimental farm, then forking along Como Avenue to Minneapolis “where it would connect with the boulevard system of our sister city,” a second fork would follow Raymond Avenue to Mississippi Boulevard (*Annual Report* 1897:8). Land acquisition for a parkway along the Raymond-to-University corridor did not proceed, however, and Raymond had significant development by ca. 1910.

### **3.7.7 Wheelock and Johnson Parkways**

The symmetry of our park system, when completed as planned, owing to the diversified elements of natural beauty and of the topographical advantages offered within the city and its immediate environments, will be most unique in its detail. It can never be approached by any other city in its picturesque splendor.

*Twenty-first Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners* (1911:29)

Parkway acquisition and development progressed during 1909. The first section of Wheelock Parkway was graded in 1907-1909 (*Annual Report* 1909:n.p.; Public Works Index Cards), and acquisition of property for Johnson Parkway between Phalen and Indian Mounds parks was pursued at the same time. Described as “denuded of its natural tree growth,” the Johnson Parkway route was praised for its elevation. It included the marshy end of Lake Phalen, and crossed under the Northern Pacific Railway en route to Mounds Park (*Annual Report* 1911:25). However, in 1918, the two- and one-half mile Johnson Parkway route was then described as “an uninteresting territory with no landscape features worthy of note.” It was described only as “supplying an ornamental driveway between the two parks” (*Annual Report* 1918:17).

By 1909, completion of eleven miles of parkway between the River Boulevard, Como, Phalen and Indian Mounds Parks was contemplated, “encircling the north half of the city. “Ornamentation, seats and fountains” were recommended for intersections about one mile apart. Two installations were recommended for Wheelock Parkway, one at the intersection of Western Avenue and the other at Montana Avenue. Each offered “charming views of the city.” Many other projects beckoned in this period, including the Capitol and Union Park approaches, creation of a parade ground, a golf course at Como Park, and improvement of neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

By 1910, the city had about thirty-five miles of parkways planned, with only thirteen and one-half miles constructed (*Annual Report* 1911:7). One new park commissioner apparently obstructed efforts to move ahead at this point, however. Four miles of Wheelock Parkway connecting Phalen and Como parks were graded in 1909-10, and awaited two bridges (*Annual Report* 1911:9). A single mile was planted with 404 elms (*Annual Report* 1911:33).



**Figure 17. Johnson Parkway looking north to E. 7th Street, 1930.**



**Arbor Day at Johnson Parkway and Burns Avenue, 1952.**

### 3.7.7.1 Parkway Principles, 1911

Nussbaumer noted in the 1911 report, “Parkways, although having the character of a street, should be of extraordinary width. They should present verdant features and objects of interest. They should be laid out with an idea of convenience and to reach principal places of interest and the most frequented large parks and public buildings” (*Annual Report* 1911:65). He listed the principles and accomplishments of the Saint Paul park and parkway system, some echoing Cleveland’s recommendations in 1872 and 1885: “the parkway system practically encircling the entire city;” “the numerous small squares and street intersections;” “small inside parks adapted to serve the purpose of recreation for the people in the several neighborhoods;” and “one park where the enjoyment of floral beauty and plant beauty of a special character is liberally provided for.” He also listed “one park with its main features consisting in its panoramic view and wide sweep of prospect and containing in its grounds five tumular monuments of a historic Indian race; another large park, the character of which is strictly and distinctively aquatic” and “a large and extensive driveway of unequalled beauty, leading along the river bluff and commanding enchanting glimpses of river scenery through an old forest growth; a distance of over five miles long” (*Annual Report* 1911:66).

The superintendent warned, however, that St Paul was falling behind other cities in meeting the demand for athletic exercise, and deplored the board’s desire to withhold funds. Due to lack of funds, 1911 proved to be another slow year (*Annual Report* 1912: n.p). He noted the “absurdly inadequate provisions of funds made by the City Council for the park and parkway system . . . has delayed so many important improvements” (*Annual Report* 1912: 23). The *Twenty-first Annual Report* for 1911-12, one of the last to be illustrated, included a set of drawings of park and parkway segments, perhaps to emphasize all the work done to date but awaiting funding. The Board of Park Commissioners was abolished in 1914 when the City adopted the commission form of government. By 1922, “practically no park lands” were acquired and parkways totaled 617 acres (Herrold 1922:44). The 1905 total was 207 acres.

### 3.7.8 Como and River Boulevard (Pelham Boulevard)

Acquisition of the Como and River Boulevard (Como-River Boulevard) was completed by 1911, and a “medium good driveway and side plantings” were contemplated (*Annual Report* 1912: 25). This segment offered connection to the Minneapolis Grand Rounds system via the river road. Later named Pelham Boulevard, the viewshed of its sloping approach to the river was enhanced by the bordering landscape of the private Town and Country golf club (1888). During this period,

the park board's nursery furnished stock for parks and parkways as well as street tree plantings. In 1912, the plant list included more than 4,000 elm trees and seedlings (*Ulmus Americana*), Sugar and Red Maple (*Acer Sacharinum* and *Rubrum*) as well as natives such as white oak (*Quercus Alba*), Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus Hippocastanum*), Butternut (*Juglans Cinera*), Black Walnut (*Juglans Nigra*), Basswood (*Tilia Americana*), and Shellbark Hickory (*Caya Alba*). The Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus Glandulosa*) was also a favorite (*Annual Report 1912:1913:32-35*).

### 3.7.9 After Nussbaumer: 1922-1945, and Beyond

Superintendents Earl L. Finney (1922-23), William T. March (1923-24), George L. Nason (1924-32) and William Kaufman (1932-1966) succeeded Nussbaumer. Nason oversaw the acquisition and improvement of more than 30 playgrounds and athletic fields during the relatively prosperous years preceding the Depression. Como Park was improved with a golf course (1930) and expanded zoo (1930-) and continued to be the central hub of the system. The Depression and World War II economies during Kaufman's administration generally placed further parkway improvement on hold, but Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds would assist in some parkway construction and maintenance, especially along the River Boulevard during the 1930s and early 1940s (WPA 1939).

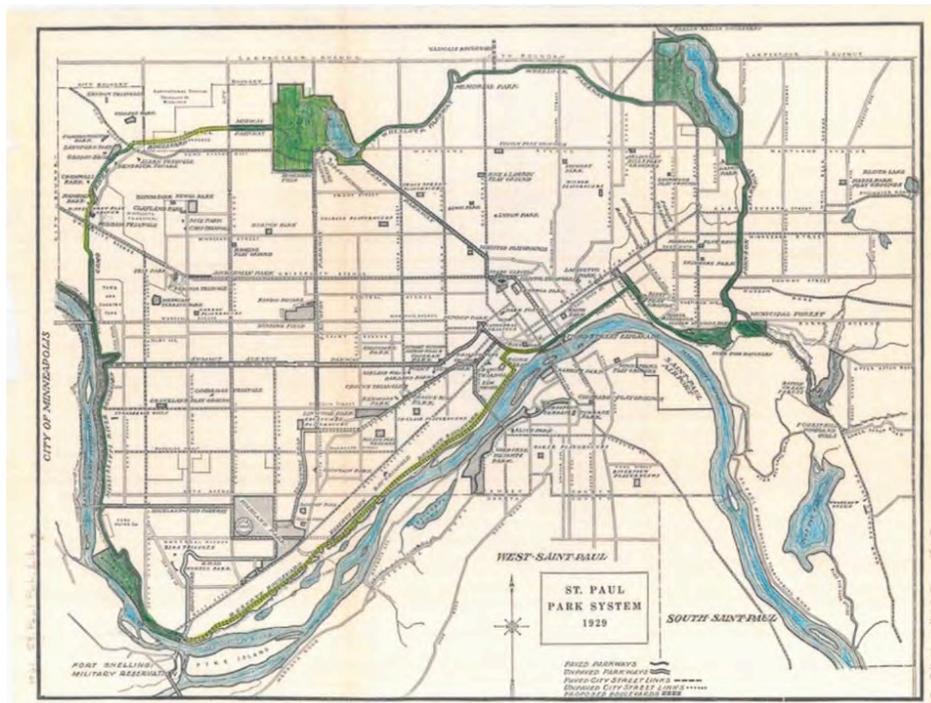


Figure 18. St. Paul Park System, 1929

The completion of each parkway segment encouraged real estate and neighborhood development, depending on economic cycles. In some cases, particularly along segments of Wheelock Parkway, some incremental development occurred over many decades, ca. 1915-70. Examples of pre-existing dwellings edge the parkways along their course. Most residences on Midway Parkway, however, were completed within about twenty years, ca. 1912-30, and Como Avenue east of Snelling had a similar compact development period. Across the area there was great variety of residential building styles and types, ranging from small frame bungalows to substantial Period Revival houses trimmed in brick and stone. Continuous bands of private front lawn, generally uninterrupted by fences or garden beds, are ribboned along the parkway lots.

## 4.0 GRAND ROUND PARKWAY HISTORIES AND HISTORIC FEATURES

The comprehensive parkway system contemplated and partially completed will link our large parks by broad circuits through natural scenery in the environs of the city.

Frederick Nussbaumer (*Annual Report 1911:23*)

### 4.1 Introduction

H.W.S. Cleveland envisioned a Saint Paul parkway system that linked the city's lakes and the Mississippi River and also neighboring Minneapolis. Hiawatha Park, which later became Hidden Falls Park, was at one time considered for its potential to be connected by a bridge spanning the Mississippi to Minnehaha Park. Como Park was the hub for the north portion of Saint Paul's system, which was planned and partially built during Frederick Nussbaumer's superintendency (1891-1922).

The historic character of the system is founded on its broad, boulevarded parkways, sometimes supplied with a central landscaped median. Much of the route, particularly along Johnson and Wheelock, has diverse topography, which the roadway and medians carefully accommodate. Only moderate grading and filling appears to have been required along much of the route, except in low-lying or exceptionally steep areas.

Shallow concrete curbs line most parkway segments, and concrete sidewalks are located along portions of the boulevard. Kasota stone entry gates and limestone retaining walls at the west side of Lake Como, dating from the Works Progress Administration era of the 1930s, are among character-defining features. No historic lighting or other furnishings were noted along the route.

The consistent tree canopy is a key character-defining feature of the parkways. Ranging from very large oak and elm specimens that suggest native vegetation to plantations of spruce and fir and many types of young deciduous trees, the groupings within the medians and along the boulevards are distinctive for their abundance, natural distribution, and the expansive area that typically surrounds them. Except for the 1911-12 plans, there is little record of the historic planting design; planners apparently worked with existing, often native vegetation and added freely from the city's nursery stock. Construction dates and architectural character of the houses lining the parkways vary greatly. Parkway creation, or its prospect, encouraged real estate additions and subdivisions, although none have picturesque names evoking the parkway landscape. Some pre-existing houses, including those dating to the 1880s and before, were near main arterials—Rice and E. 3rd Streets, for example—that were part of small neighborhood enclaves close to railroad yards and factories.



**Figure 19. Wheelock Parkway near Lake Phalen (7/1/2015).**



**Figure 20. Como Avenue at Arona Street (7/1/2015).**

## 4.2 Johnson Parkway: Burns Avenue to Phalen Parkway

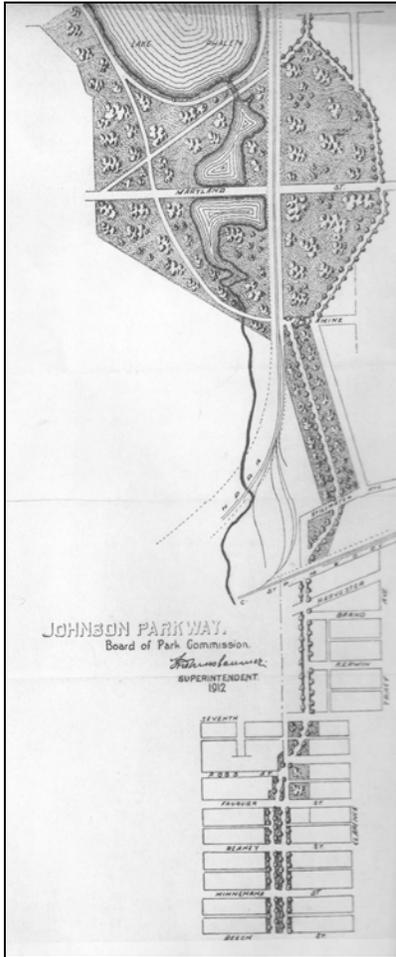


Figure 21. Johnson Parkway, 1912 (Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners)



Figure 22. Johnson Parkway, 1916. (Hopkins)

### 4.2.1 Johnson Parkway History

Unlike the Wheelock Parkway area to the northwest, by 1910 much of the area between Indian Mounds Park and Lake Phalen had significant residential development as well as large industrial plants and railroad corridors. The southern end of the corridor crossed the Point Douglas and Hudson Roads, both early connectors to outlying Ramsey and Washington County. By 1891, the Milwaukee Wheel and Foundry Company, later Northwest Wheel and Foundry Company and the Griffin Wheel Company, manufacturers of train and streetcar wheels, occupied a large plant at the western edge of the Parkway, bounded by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad tracks (Sanborn Map 1927; 941 Johnson Parkway, razed). Earl Street was initially considered as a potential parkway route linking Mounds Park with Lake Phalen, but it was found unsuitable because of its many railroad crossings and other land use conflicts. The Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners considered acquisition of the present Johnson Parkway route in 1909 and on December 6, 1909 the City Council passed a resolution to begin survey and condemnation (Saint Paul Public Works). A working plan was developed in 1910 and the plan was included in the *Saint Paul Board of Commissioners Annual Report* for 1911 (dated 1912), but grading and paving did not begin until 1916. The first graded segment of Johnson Parkway,

completed from Burns Street to E. 7th Street, was forty feet wide with two, twenty-foot drive lanes (Saint Paul Public Works). This segment was generally completed as proposed in the 1911 plan, with a central parkway and residential frontage roads paralleling the parkway.

It was noted in 1916 that it was to be “regretted that this parkway had to be replanned, in order to comply with the clamor of the interested citizens to have it graded, when sufficient funds were not available to carry out the original plan which provided for double roadways at convenient contour lines. This would have benefitted the improvement and the adjacent property to an extent vastly more in value than the amount necessary to complete the improvement on its original plans” (*Annual Report*, 1916:2). “Double roadways” seem to have been accomplished along much of the route, so exactly which “original plan” is referenced is not clear. It may have referred to a delay in grading and planting the side medians (*Annual Report*, 1917:11).

The route between Burns and Conway Streets at the south triangulated around several small ponds and steep slopes before reaching more level ground to the north. Completion of Johnson Parkway from E. 7th Street to the connection with Wheelock Parkway at Lake Phalen was delayed until land acquisition and railroad negotiations with the Northern Pacific Duluth line in the 1920s. The segment between Jessamine and Maryland Avenues was completed in 1925 (Saint Paul Public Works). Construction was coordinated with the location of the Belt Line Interceptor, a tunnel that diverts Phalen Creek from Swede Hollow to its Mississippi River outlet near the former Saint Paul Fish Hatchery. Interceptor construction was underway during the 1920s (Passi 2014). The route of the interceptor is shown as the “Water Department Right of Way” on the 1916 Hopkins Map (Figure 29).

Portions of Johnson Parkway were paved in the 1930s; the segment between Burns and Earl was planned in 1930, E. 7th Street and Stillwater Avenue (near present-day Ames Avenue E.) in 1931 and the segment from Stillwater Avenue and Maryland Avenue E. in 1932 (Saint Paul Public Works). The parkway pinched under the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company Bridge (later Union Pacific; 1906). The four-track bridge was designed by the American Bridge Company of New York and has a plate girder with I-beam approaches. The St. Paul and Duluth Railroad (later Northern Pacific) originally paralleled Johnson Parkway at the west and crossed to the east side of Lake Phalen at the south end. Johnson Parkway crossed over the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks near Jessamine Street. The tracks have been removed.



**Figure 23. Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Bridge over Johnson Parkway, north of Case Ave. E. (1906), facing north.**

Alterations include a 1959 rerouting between Hudson Road and Wakefield Avenue. Prosperity Avenue at the west of Johnson Parkway was rebuilt in 1963. Johnson Parkway was further altered with the 1964 construction and subsequent widening of Interstate 94, which partially follows the route of the old Hastings Road. In 1999, Phalen Boulevard was completed to connect the east side of Saint Paul to I-35E, requiring a new interchange at Johnson Parkway south of Maryland Avenue. The new roadway was partially placed in the vacated Northern Pacific rail corridor. New ornamental lighting was installed in 1978-1980 (St. Paul Public Works). Johnson Parkway was named in honor of John A. Johnson, Governor of Minnesota from 1904 to 1908 (Empson 2006:144).



**Figure 24. Abandoned Northern Pacific rail corridor, looking north to Lake Phalen. Johnson Parkway is at right.**

#### **4.2.2 Johnson Parkway Character**

Johnson Parkway is 2.14 miles long. As planned by 1916 it encompassed 52.87 acres (1916 *Annual Report*: 28). The central roadway flanked by planted medians and tree-lined, flanking roadways with generally low-profile concrete curbs is an important landscape characteristic. This “three-roadway” system is interrupted at bridge crossings and north of E. 7th Street. The parkway narrows to forty feet under the Union Pacific Bridge at Case Avenue and at the underpass for I-94. Alterations include the apparent removal of the western frontage street between Bush Avenue and E. 7th Street. The west frontage street has curbs to halt crossing at E. 3rd Street. This southern portion has a variety of trees including elm and oak, some apparently dating from the original planting design. Concrete sidewalks were installed north of E. 7th Street.

The parkway segment north of the (east-west) Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company right-of-way does not maintain the three-road system. Prosperity Avenue, north of the right-of-way, parallels the corridor between Ames and Magnolia Avenues and young trees line the parkway.



**Figure 25. Johnson Parkway at Hudson Street, looking north.**

Most residential construction along Johnson Parkway appears to postdate parkway development. Housing between Burns Avenue and I-94 dates from the 1940s and 1950s and is predominately one-story, Ranch-style homes. Housing between I-94 and E. 3rd Street includes one- or one- and one-half-story, Period Revival style houses dating from the late 1920s and 1930s. Houses between E. 3rd and E. 7th Streets face the parkway and most date from the 1930s and 1940s. However, much of the residential fabric in the two-block area between E. 7th Street and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company (later Union Pacific) right-of-way dates from the 1870s and 1880s and pre-dates the parkway. Some of these properties are likely associated with the area's early factories and railroad employment. Residential construction north of the railroad right-of-way dates from the 1940s and later.



**Figure 26. Johnson Parkway (at right), and Prosperity Avenue (at left), looking south (7/1/2016).**



**Fig. 27. Johnson Parkway (at left), frontage road (center), and Conway Street (angled at right), looking south, 2016.**

### **4.3 Wheelock Parkway: Lake Phalen to Lake Como**

#### **4.3.1 Phalen Park**

The acquisition of Phalen Park and boulevard is a necessity of the first order to the symmetrical completion of the park system of St. Paul.

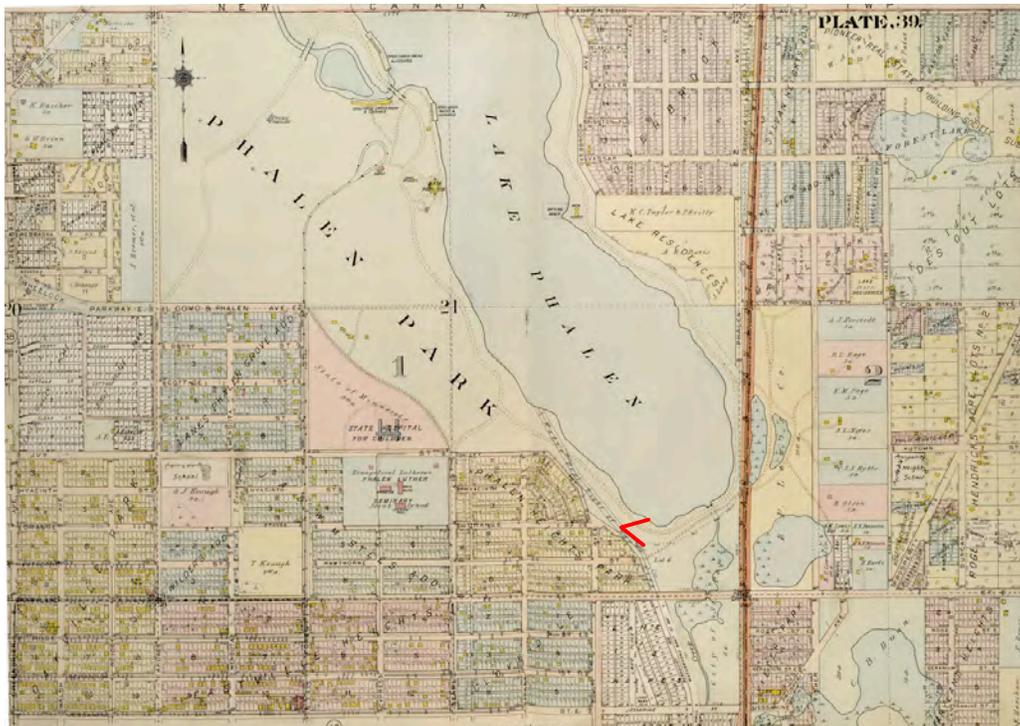
*Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1898:12*

By 1896, a 105-acre parcel was secured for Phalen Parkway (present-day Phalen Drive). No construction occurred until after World War I; in 1923 the parkway along the west shores of the

lake was paved from Arcade Street to the “junction” (as it was called in park board reports) and from Earl and Ivy Street to the “junction.” The next year, parkway paving was completed with the section from the Phalen Park bathhouse to Larpenteur Avenue, and the south end of the lake to Maryland Street (Johnson Parkway). Phalen Drive hugs the lakeshore at the west side of Lake Phalen while Johnson Parkway, then connecting with Wheelock Parkway, extends along the west side of Phalen Park.

#### 4.3.2 Wheelock Parkway History

Planning for Johnson and Wheelock Parkways was underway at approximately the same time. The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; plans for the route were developed by 1907 with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. A good portion of the area was then devoted to small farms and nursery businesses. The first section of the parkway was graded in 1909 and the section from Rice to Edgerton Streets was graded in 1916. In 1917 the park board called for widening of Wheelock on the east side between South Street and Hoyt Avenue, to protect the “magnificent view from that point open for all times” (*Annual Report 1917:10*). Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the 1920s. Paving, including early macadam, was completed for most of Wheelock Parkway by 1924 and included a 30-foot-wide section between Como Avenue and Mackubin Street and two, twenty-foot-wide roads between Payne Avenue and Arcade Street (Saint Paul Public Works). The sections between Nebraska and Edgerton Streets and Edgerton and Payne Avenue have varied widths, but are predominately two, 20-foot-wide roadways. In 1929 a grove of elms was planted in the “Memorial Park at Horse Shoe Bend” (*Report of the Department of Parks, Playgrounds and Public Buildings 1930:27*). The final section between Johnson Parkway and Arcade Street was not completed until the mid-1970s (Saint Paul Public Works).



**Figure 28. Wheelock Parkway, Water Department right-of-way (at arrow), and future Johnson Parkway alignment area, 1916 (Hopkins).**

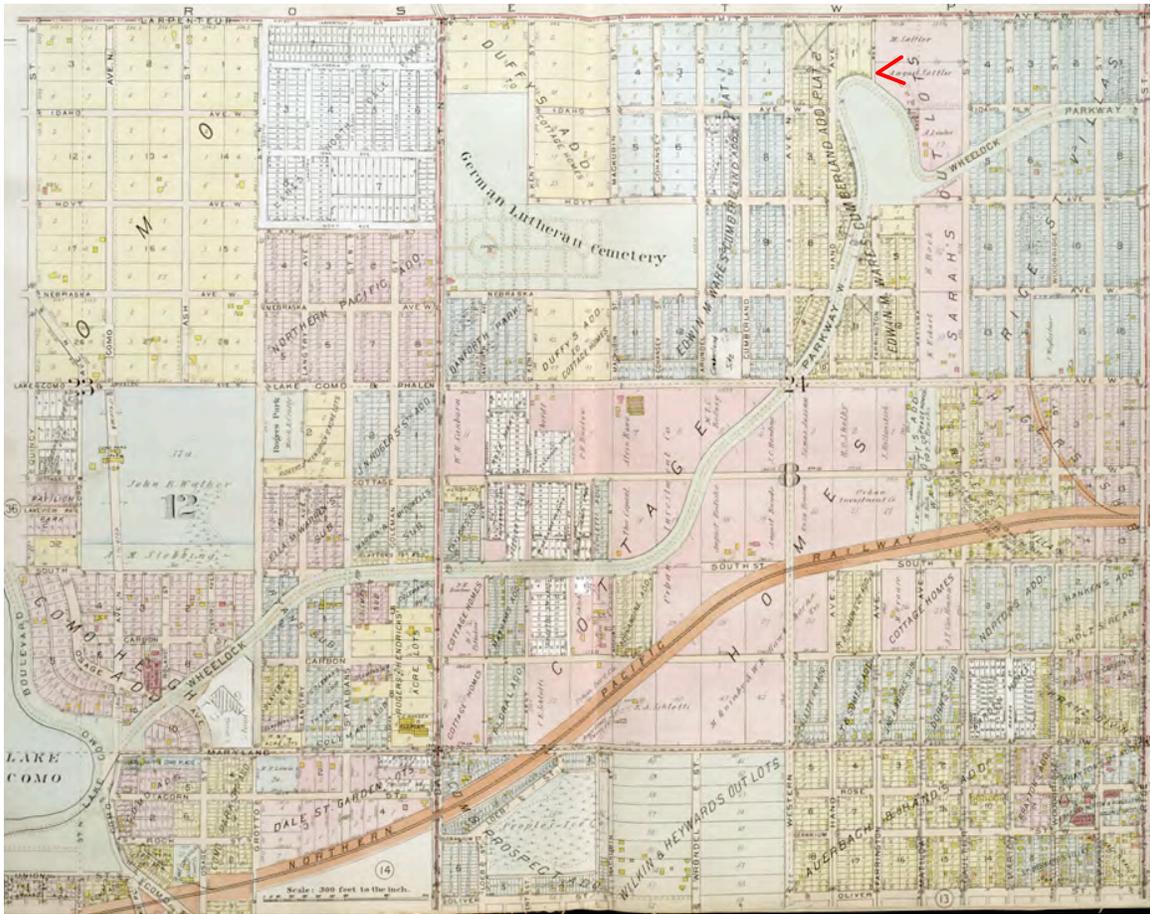


Figure 29. Wheelock Parkway, Rice Street to Como Boulevard (Hopkins 1916). The distinctive horseshoe bend is shown at arrow.

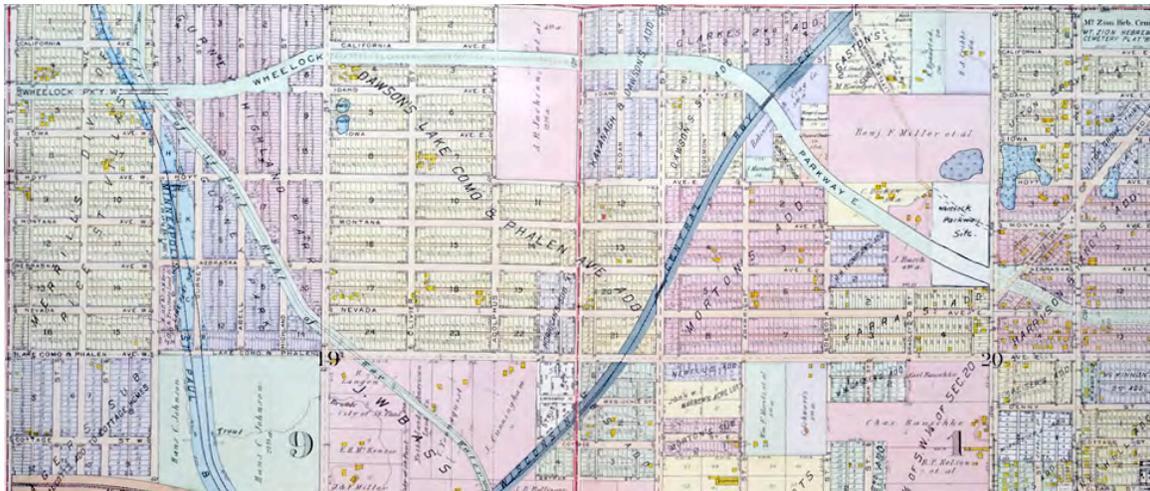


Figure 30. Wheelock Parkway, Greenbrier to Rice (Hopkins 1916).



### 4.3.3 Wheelock Parkway Character



**Figure 32. Typical Wheelock Parkway section west of Lake Phalen, facing north.**



**Figure 33. Wheelock Parkway facing Phalen gates, looking east.**

Wheelock Parkway maintains a nearly continuous ribbon of turf-clad boulevard and linear as well as naturalistic plantings of young and mature trees. It is a split parkway at the west side of Lake Phalen near the Phalen Golf Course. East of Arcade, the parkway has concrete curbs, a narrow median between the paired streets and occasional Kasota stone retaining walls. There is a stone entrance gate at Wheelock Parkway and Phalen Drive. This segment was completed in the 1970s. Between Arcade and Parkway Drive/Edgerton Streets the two-road parkway flanks a median and, in this section, there are concrete curbs and sidewalk at both sides of the parkway (inventoried as RA-SPC-5681). The parkway pinches into a single road at the Arcade and Edgerton Street crossing and flanks another median between Edgerton and the Wisconsin Central Railroad (Soo Line; Gateway State Trail) Bridge (1938). This median edges steep topography; it was inventoried as RA-SPC-5680. The bridge now carries bicycle and pedestrian traffic as part of the Gateway State Trail system (1938, MN Bridge #5592; RA-SPC-7117).

Wheelock Parkway then remains a single, two-way roadway bridge to Lake Como. There are no sidewalks between the Gateway bridge and the I-35E Bridge (1960, 2014). A sidewalk begins at the south side of the parkway at the I-35E crossing and continues to Rice Street. The Minneapolis St. Paul & Sault St. Marie Railway Company (Soo Line) tracks at the east of Rice Street parallel Trout Brook; the first bridge at this location, ca. 1916, was replaced with a concrete deck in 1954 and reconstructed in 2014 (Ramsey County Bridge #62641). Rising over Horseshoe Bend, there are no sidewalks between Rice and Mackubin Streets. A ravine lines the west and south side of the parkway between the bend and Cohansey Street (see RA-SPEC-5683). Between Mackubin Street and E. Como Boulevard sidewalks are placed at both sides of the parkway across a primarily residential area (segment inventoried as RA-SPC-5683).



**Figure 34. Wheelock Parkway at Greenbrier Street, facing northwest (7/1/2015)**



**Figure 35. Wheelock Parkway at Edgerton Street, facing east (7/01/2015).**



**Figure 36. Soo Line Bridge, 1938 (Gateway State Trail), facing east (7/1/2015).**



**Figure 37. Wheelock Parkway at Park Ave., facing east (7/1/2015).**

Residential architectural character varies includes a few nineteenth-century house that appear to predate parkway construction, many Period Revival style houses of various descriptions, and one-story, mid-twentieth-century Ranch style dwellings. Some sections of the corridor have a suburban feel, with many houses dating from after World War II. Houses between Arcade and Edgerton Streets were built in the 1920s and 1930s and many are of Period Revival style. Houses of other styles and construction dates face the parkway between Edgerton and the Gateway State Trail Bridge; most date primarily from the 1950s and 1960s. Houses between Rice and Mackubin Streets were primarily built in the 1950s and 1960s. The parkway between Mackubin and Lake Como features simple Period Revival designs dating from the 1920s and 1930s.

#### **4.4 Como Avenue: Lake Como and Como Avenue to Raymond Avenue**

W. Wheelock Parkway connects with E. Como Boulevard at the southeast corner of Lake Como. E. Como Boulevard continues at the south of Lake Como and the parkway continues through Kasota stone gates (1933) onto W. Como Boulevard (renamed Nagasaki Road in 2015). Como Avenue crosses through Warrendale, a 52-acre residential subdivision on the southwest side of the lake designed by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland in 1884.

##### **4.4.1 Parkway History**

By 1898 a portion of Como Avenue—the “Como Parkway” at the west of Lake Como that was planned to connect to the Minnesota State Capitol area—was graded across Como Park with bike paths flanking the boulevard. The parkway was designed with a “two-foot planting space on the property line along six-foot sidewalk, seven-foot planting space, seven-foot bicycle path, eight-foot planting space, and a forty-foot driveway” (*Annual Report* 1898:26). Paving proceeded incrementally over the next decades. The segment of early Como Avenue that led from the park



**Figure 38. Salvation Army Booth Memorial Women's Home (1912).**

to Raymond Avenue was landscaped with a single line of trees and was paved in 1919 and from Snelling to Hamline in 1922 (Saint Paul Public Works). From the west, Como Avenue provided an important streetcar link to the park. It skirts the south edge of the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. The current 320-acre fairgrounds site was established near Como Park in 1885, when the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners “donated their 210-acre poor farm to the State Agricultural Society, the governing body of the State Fair” (Minnesota State Fair).

Between Como Park and Raymond Avenue, Como was known as Langford Avenue prior to ca. 1910 (Upham 1920:633). The Salvation Army Booth Memorial Women’s Home and Hospital (1471 Como Avenue, 1912-13; NRHP), intended to serve unwed mothers, and the Linnea Home (2040 W. Como, 1917), built as a boarding house for Swedish immigrant women, are two early institutional properties.

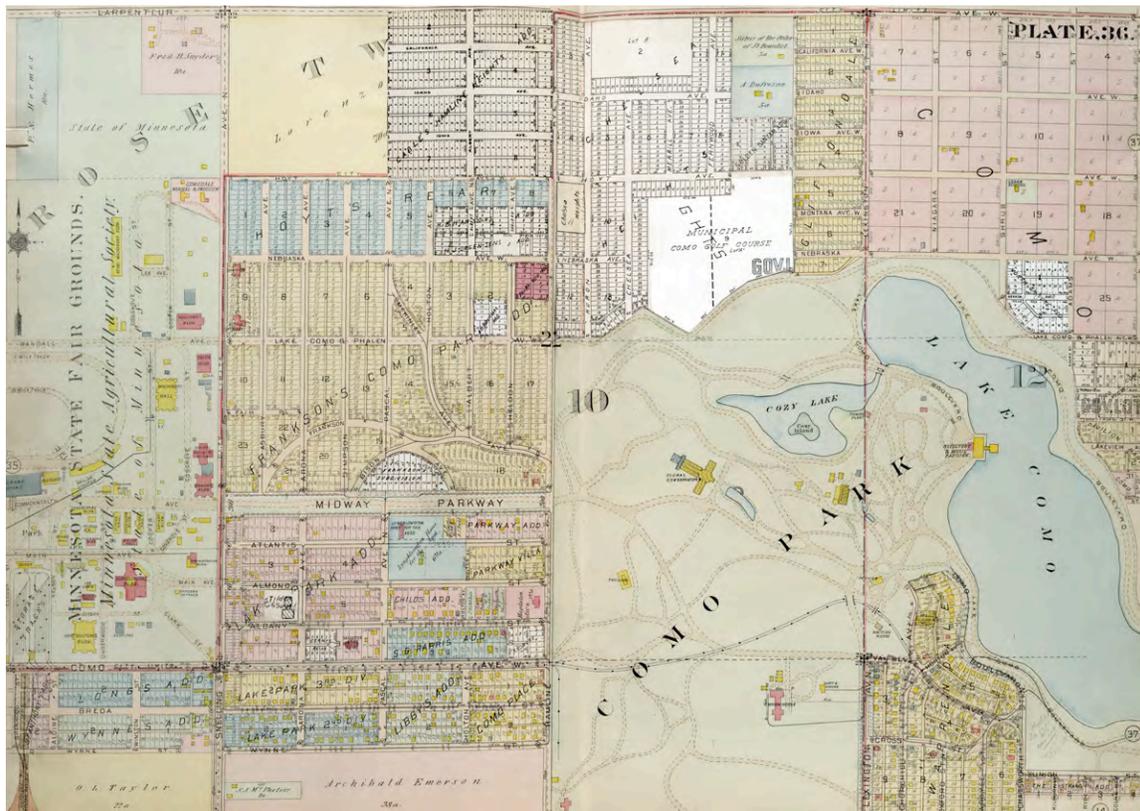


Figure 39. Como Park, Midway Parkway, and Como Avenue to Sherwood Street (Hopkins 1916).

#### 4.4.2 Como Park and Como Avenue Character

Como Avenue traverses east-west across Como Park; this section has bituminous paths at each side and is lined intermittently with Kasota stone retaining walls. Between Hamline and Aurora Streets, Como Avenue is a 96-foot-wide, two-way street lined with Craftsman bungalows and Period Revival style houses constructed between 1900 and 1930. A unique concrete bollard is placed at the corner of Aurora and Como.



**Figure 40. Kasota Stone retaining walls along Como Avenue (Nagasaki Rd), west of Lake Como (7/1/2015).**



**Figure 41. Residential block and retaining wall overlooking west side of Lake Como (7/1/2015).**

There is a small commercial node, ca. 1915-1940, at Snelling and Como Avenues. Como crosses under the four-lane Snelling Avenue (TH 51) overpass and edges the south boundary of the Minnesota State Fairgrounds between Snelling and Raymond Avenues. The coliseum, animal barns, and other fair buildings are well set back from the corridor and the fairground perimeter is fenced with chain link. Between Snelling and Raymond Avenues the south side of the corridor is has institutional, industrial, and commercial land uses, with approximately one block of early twentieth-century houses east of the intersection. The Commonwealth Student Housing community is located at the northeast corner of the intersection.



**Figure 42. Former Ewald Bros. Dairy sign, relocated to Como Avenue at Minnesota Fairgrounds in 1983.**

## 4.5 Raymond Avenue: Como Avenue to Pelham Boulevard

### 4.5.1 Raymond Avenue History

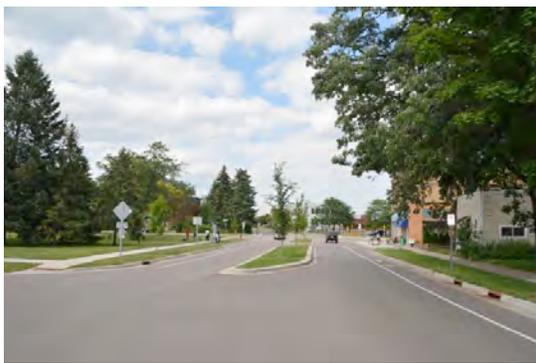


**Figure 43. Raymond Avenue.**  
(*Rice's Map of St. Paul, 1887*)



**Figure 44. Raymond Avenue, Como Avenue to Myrtle.**  
(*Hopkins 1916*)

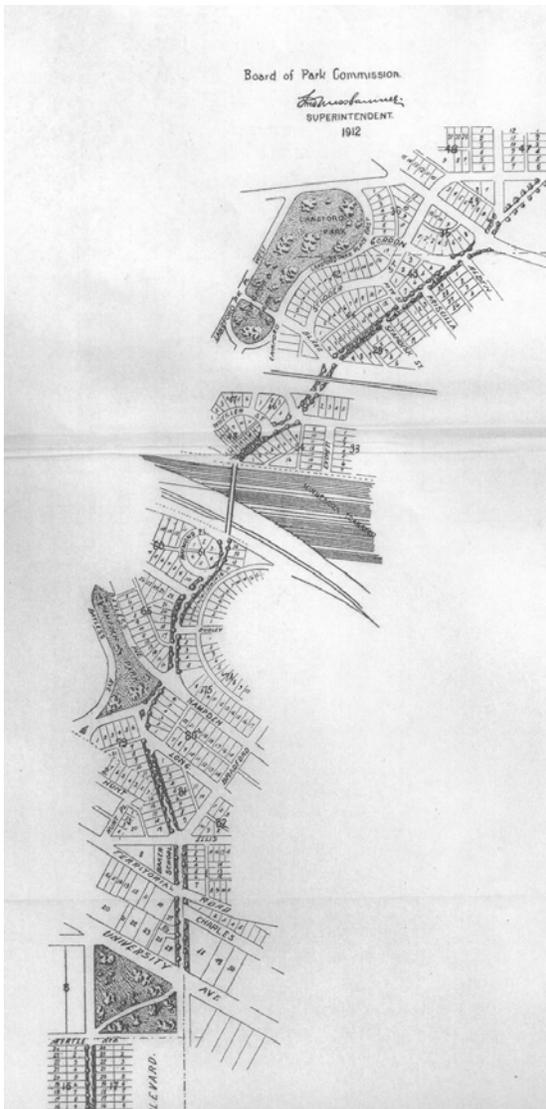
The circuitous route of Raymond Avenue appears on city maps after the annexation of St. Anthony Park to the City of Saint Paul in 1885-87. An important route because it offered the only crossing over the ever-expanding Midway Transfer Yard, it is framed by lots platted in the 1870s through ca. 1900. The avenue bisects the southern half of North St. Anthony Park north of Energy Park Boulevard. South of Energy Park Boulevard it winds through South St. Anthony Park. The northern half was paved in the 1920s; the section from Ellis to Hampden was paved in 1923 and the section from Hampden to Como the following year (Saint Paul Public Works). Raymond crosses Territorial Road—an 1850s overland route between Point Douglas, the Falls of Saint Anthony, and Fort Ripley—before intersecting with University Avenue. It parallels the former Pelham Street south of University for several blocks. In 1911, the park board noted that the general plan for improvement of Raymond and Como Avenues to the north was simply to be “a medium good driveway and side plantings” (*Annual Report 1911:25*). In 1917 it was recommended that Raymond be “parked to Larpenteur Avenue and a connecting link acquired to the terminal of St. Anthony Parkway in Minneapolis, thus connecting the parkways systems of the two cities.”



**Figure 45. Raymond Avenue commercial node at Hampden Park, at left, looking north.**



**Figure 46. Raymond Avenue, looking south across University Avenue.**



**47. Raymond Avenue, Como Avenue to Pelham Avenue, 1912. (Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners)**

#### **4.5.2 Raymond Avenue Character**

North of the rail crossing at Energy Park Drive, Raymond Avenue winds through a mixed-use corridor framed by late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century houses, some testament to the area's early popularity as a small rail-commuter suburb. Commercial and industrial land uses dominate the area around the Minnesota Transfer Yards south of Energy Park Drive. The Baker School (1910); IOOF Hall (Hampden Co-op; ca. 1910), and the Saint Paul Fire Station at 926 Hampden Park (ca. 1909) are among notable historic properties set among many late nineteenth-century dwellings. The Great Northern Railway (now BNSF) crosses Raymond across just north of Energy Park Drive. The concrete bridge crossing the Midway Transfer Yard dates from ca. 1990. Raymond Avenue has few designed historic landscape features, except at Hampden Park, where there has also been recent new streetscape construction.

Raymond crosses the University-Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District (locally designated and also NRHP-certified for historic tax credit purposes; Figure 52) south of Territorial Road. The district along University is comprised of a number of large warehouse and office structures, ca. 1900-1920. At this point, the historic character of the north side Raymond between Territorial Road and University includes an eclectic collection of one-story, flat-roofed mixed-use buildings, ca. 1915-1950 (Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission 2005).

#### 4.6 Pelham Boulevard: University Avenue to Mississippi River Boulevard

##### 4.6.1 Pelham Boulevard History

A portion of Pelham Boulevard generally follows the alignment of the former Pelham Street as labeled on the 1887 plat of Desnoyer Park by surveyors Hawley and Newell for the Union Land Company of Saint Paul (Ramsey County Property Records 1887). As constructed, it was first named the Como and River Boulevard. Como and River Boulevard was renamed Pelham Boulevard on May 1, 1940. North of its crossing of I-94, Pelham bridges over the CM&StP Railroad Shortline (1889). South of I-94, Pelham crosses St. Anthony Avenue, a segment of the Red River oxcart trail that linked Pembina (now North Dakota) with St. Anthony Falls and Saint Paul during the mid-nineteenth century (Vogt 1990:3-5).

Acquisition of land for Pelham Boulevard was in 1909-1911 (*Annual Report* 1911: 25; Saint Paul Public Works). The first paved parkway section ascending the river terrace from the Mississippi River to Doane Avenue was completed in 1928 and the section connecting to University Avenue was completed in 1930 (Saint Paul Public Works). Residential construction at the top of the hill, around Desnoyer Park, appears to date from ca. 1955, while earlier Period Revival style houses are concentrated near the intersection of the river drive.

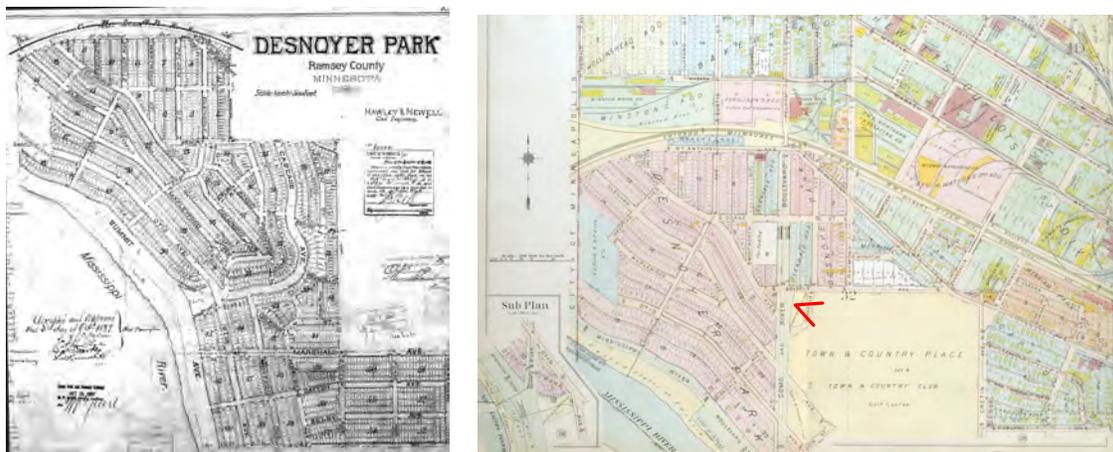


Figure 48. Left: Desnoyer Park, 1887; right: Phalen Boulevard, University to Mississippi River Boulevard (Hopkins 1916).

In 1911, the park board noted that Pelham had been widened and extended to St. Anthony Avenue, and that improvements were still needed from University to St. Anthony Avenues. Acquisition of the block bounded by Pelham, Raymond, University and Myrtle was recommended, “not only for the purpose of forming an harmonious connection with Raymond Avenue and Pelham Street, but for the more important necessity of establishing a park on the leading traffic street between the two cities” (*Annual Report* 1911:25).



Figure 49. Raymond Avenue and Pelham Boulevard in 1945. (UM Borchert)

#### 4.6.2 Pelham Boulevard Character

At the north, Pelham Boulevard crosses an industrial area and various at-grade rail spurs between University and I-94. Further south, the west side is lined with ca. 1930s residences between Mississippi River Boulevard and St. Anthony Avenue, and is framed by sidewalks and mature trees. At the east there is no sidewalk along the Town and Country Golf Course. The Town and County Club was organized in 1888 (Vogt 1990:15).



Figure 50. Pelham Boulevard residences, north of Beverly Road; center: looking south at Doane Ave; right: looking north, Town and Country Club at right.

## 5.0 RESULTS

This study of the North Portion of Saint Paul's Grand Round was conducted for the City of Saint Paul and SEH, Inc. to provide a cultural resources background for planning new cycling amenities and to determine if any properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). Historic contexts related to Saint Paul's park and parkway development are the foundation for inventory and evaluation of historic resources (see Chapter 3, "The Development of the North Portion of the Saint Paul Parkway System, 1872-1965").

### 5.1 National Register of Historic Places Evaluation

Wheelock and Johnson Parkways were inventoried with guidance from National Register Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*.

The NRHP is the official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. A property can be significant at the local, state, or national level.

Criterion A—association with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

Criterion B—association with the lives of persons significant in our past;

Criterion C—embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; representation of the work of a master; possession of high artistic values; or representation of a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D—potential to yield information important to prehistory or history.<sup>1</sup>

The following landscape characteristics were included in the assessment of each parkway and parkway segment:

Topography

Views and vistas

Buildings and structures including retaining walls and bridges

Circulation patterns

Vegetation

Lawns and turf

### 5.2 Integrity Evaluation

The National Park Service (NPS) identifies seven aspects of integrity that must be considered when evaluating the ability of a property to convey its significance: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Park properties do not need to be in an original unaltered state to possess integrity, but enough original fabric to convey historic significance should be present. Key elements of the spatial arrangement from the period of significance should be present, including circulation, general location of activity areas, and vegetation patterns that appear to continue the traditional appearance of the park. National Register Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* notes:

The specific features that a designed historic landscape must retain will differ for various landscape types. Such features may include, but are not necessarily limited to, spatial relationships, vegetation, original property boundary, topography/grading, site-

furnishings, design intent, architectural features, and circulation system. If, for example, a property is primarily significant because of its internal road circulation, yet the historic road patterns are no longer discernible or have been badly damaged, then the landscape has suffered a loss of integrity that may make it ineligible for the National Register. In addition to establishing the reasons for a designed landscape's significance, it is also necessary to determine if the designed landscape is significant for its original or altered character or both. Although a landscape need not retain all the characteristic features that (see list above) it had during its period(s) of significance, it must retain enough or have restored enough of the essential features to make its historic character clearly recognizable, and these features should be identified.

### **5.3 Historic Contexts**

Saint Paul's parkways are associated with historic themes identified by the National Register of Historic Places. These themes primarily relate to Community Planning and Development, Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Landscape Architecture and Engineering. The local historic context, "Development of the North Portion of the Saint Paul Parkway System, 1872-1945, provides a basis for evaluating the local NRHP significance of the inventoried parkways. As NRHP Bulletin 18 notes, "all landscapes that possess age are not significant, and those that are significant must be determined from their connection to the historic theme(s) it represents and in relationship to a group of similarly associated properties."

### **5.4 Period of Significance**

Each parkway can be evaluated as a potential historic district. The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway is recommended as ca. 1907 to 1945. The period of significance for Johnson Parkway is recommended as ca. 1916 to 1945. The period spans initial construction to the end of World War II and the termination of federally-sponsored park and parkway programs including the WPA. The cut-off date for NRHP eligibility is 50 years (ca. 1966). Although there was some new construction at the eastern end of Wheelock Parkway as well as new housing construction after that date, most parkway work after 1945 appears to have been maintenance-related.

### **5.5 Inventoried Properties**

In March 2016, seven Phase I inventory forms were prepared for Wheelock Parkway and its subareas and features including the Wheelock Parkway Soo Line Bridge (Table 2). One form was prepared for Johnson Parkway (see Appendix). Additional segments and properties may be inventoried at a future date. Other parkways discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, including Como Boulevard, Midway Parkway, and Pelham Boulevard were not recorded on inventory forms or evaluated as part of the current study.

**Table 2. Phase I Inventoried Properties, Wheelock Parkway and Johnson Parkway, March 2016**

SHPO Inventory	Property Name	Address	Date	Recommendation
RA-SPC-5679	<b>Wheelock Parkway: Lake Phalen to Lake Como</b>  <i>Sub-areas and Features:</i>	Lake Phalen to Lake Como	1907-	Potentially NRHP eligible as Wheelock Parkway Historic District; potentially part of Saint Paul Parkway Historic District; Criterion A
RA-SPC-5680	Wheelock Parkway Median: Edgerton Street to Soo Line (Gateway State Trail) Bridge	Edgerton Street to Gateway State Trail Bridge	1907-	Contributing to potential district; Criterion A
RA-SPC-5681	Wheelock Parkway Median: Arcade Street to Parkway Drive	Arcade Street to Parkway Drive	1907-	Contributing to potential district; Criterion A
RA-SPC-7117	Wheelock Parkway Soo Line Bridge (MN Bridge 5592; former Wisconsin Central, Soo Line, now Gateway State Trail Bridge)	Wheelock Parkway near Arkwright Street	1938	Not NRHP eligible according to SHPO records; review of previous evaluation should be conducted.
RA-SPC-5682	Wheelock Parkway Segment: E. Como Boulevard to Mackubin Street	E. Como Boulevard to Mackubin Street	1907-	Contributing to potential district; Criterion A
RA-SPC-5683	Wheelock Parkway Segment: Mackubin Street to Hoyt Avenue W.	Mackubin Street to Hoyt Avenue W.	1907-	Contributing to potential district; Criterion A
RA-SPC-5684	Wheelock Parkway Segment: Horseshoe Bend, Virginia to Matilda Streets	Horseshoe Bend, Virginia to Matilda Streets	1907-	Contributing to potential district; Criterion A
RA-SPC-5685	<b>Johnson Parkway: Indian Mounds Park to Lake Phalen</b>	Indian Mounds Park to Lake Phalen	1916-	Potentially NRHP eligible as Johnson Parkway Historic District; potentially part of St. Paul Parkway Historic District; Criterion A

## 5.6 Recommendations

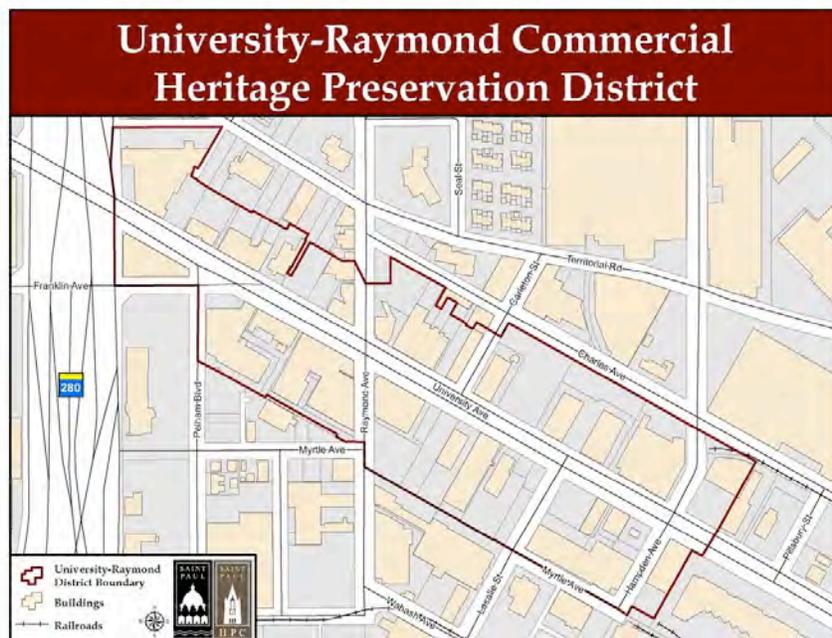
Wheelock and Johnson Parkways are recommended as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A as components of Saint Paul’s historic park and parkway system. The parkways are significant for their association with the NRHP themes of Community Planning and Development, Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Landscape Architecture and Engineering.

Each was evaluated as an historic parkway district. Overall historic integrity is good, although there are non-contributing areas and features. Parkway planning and construction typically occurred over a number of years and the period of significance for Wheelock Parkway is 1907-1945. The period of significance for Johnson Parkway is 1916-1945. Non-contributing sections include the 1970s construction of Wheelock Parkway east of Arcade Street, and the Phalen Parkway crossing area of Johnson Parkway, ca. 1999. Certain commercial intersections and features such as new bridges may also be non-contributing.

The city-wide park and parkway system was proposed by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and executed during the superintendency of Frederick Nussbaumer (1891-1922) and his successors. Under National Register Criterion A, Wheelock and Johnson Parkways are associated with an important period of the city's development, one that promoted the creation of a system of open space and the linkage of two urban lakes to the Mississippi River and other key areas.

Further inventory and evaluation, including expanded historic contexts, will allow determination of eligibility for other parkway segments and the system as a whole. The route of Raymond Avenue, never formally developed as a parkway but part of the system, also intersects the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District (Figure 51; RA-SPC-6826, locally designated and certified NRHP).

It is recommended that the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission be consulted during future parkway project planning involving potential historic and cultural resources.



**Figure 51. University-Raymond Commercial Heritage Preservation District (City of Saint Paul)**

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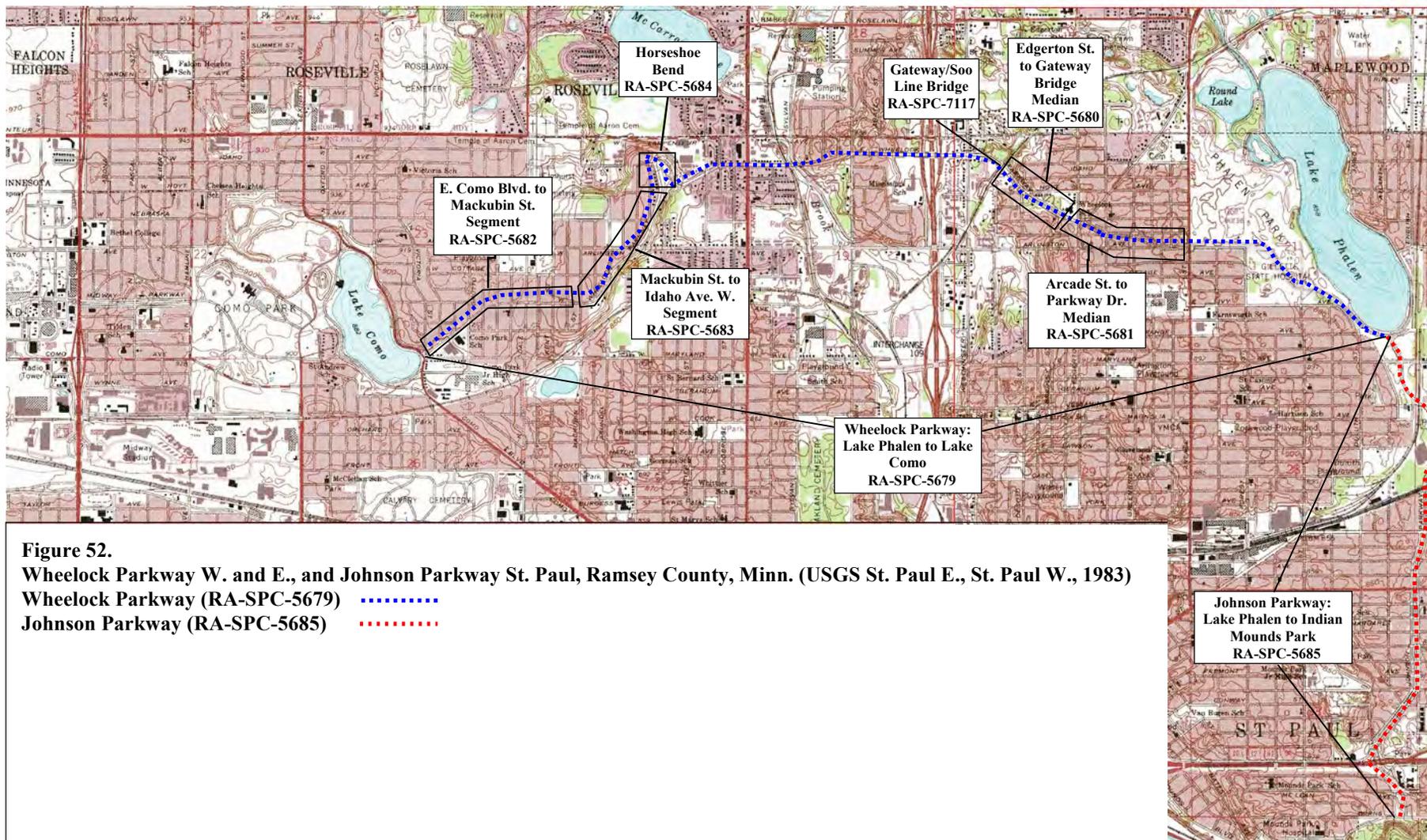
*Minneapolis Morning Tribune*

*St. Paul Pioneer*

## 7.0 APPENDIX

Figure 52. Wheelock Parkway W. and E., St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minn.  
Wheelock Parkway Form  
Wheelock Sub-Area Forms  
Johnson Parkway Form

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**Figure 52.**  
 Wheelock Parkway W. and E., and Johnson Parkway St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minn. (USGS St. Paul E., St. Paul W., 1983)  
 Wheelock Parkway (RA-SPC-5679) .....  
 Johnson Parkway (RA-SPC-5685) .....



**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway

**SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5679

**Other Name:**

**Address:** Between E. Como Boulevard and Johnson Parkway

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:** approximately 65.88

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township: 29N Range: 22W Sections: 19-21

Township: 29N Range: 23W Sections: 23-24

**UTM:** Easting: 496224.58 Northing: 4980597.48 (intersection with Johnson Parkway)

Easting: 489321.72 Northing: 4989458.50 (intersection with Como Avenue)

Zone: 15 NAD 83

Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-1970s (most completed by 1940-45; east of Arcade mid-1970s)

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul, Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC

Photos: Carole Zellie and SEH, Inc.

**Description**

Wheelock Parkway extends for approximately 4.2 miles from Johnson Parkway and Lake Phalen at the east to Como Avenue and Como Park at the west. The dividing line for the east and west segments of the parkway is the Trout Brook and Soo Line Bridge corridor, east of Rice Street.

*Topography*

At its eastern end, Wheelock Parkway begins at Johnson Parkway and follows Lake Phalen where it is flanked by the Phalen Park Golf Course and Phalen Park between Earl and Arcade Streets. To the west, it crosses a variety of terrain (at an elevation averaging 850 feet) across primarily residential areas. The roadway edges several ravines, and climbs a steep terminal moraine—known as the Horseshoe Bend— east of Virginia Street (reaching an elevation of approximately 920 feet) before intersecting with E. Lake Como Boulevard at the west. Two railroad bridges and the Interstate 35E freeway bridge cross the parkway route. The former Soo Line alignment follows the Trout Brook Valley, east of Rice Street.

*Parkway Form and Circulation*

Although interrupted by the highway and commercial land uses at some arterial streets, a nearly continuous ribbon of turf-clad boulevard and linear as well as naturalistic plantings of young and mature trees frame most of Wheelock Parkway. The boulevard is of varying widths. Dozens of cross streets intersect with the parkway route. In some areas, small landscaped triangles or irregular shapes resulted at the end of some blocks where the long parkway diagonal was laid across a grid-plan of streets. Along some residential blocks, the irregular geometry resulted in garages and backyards edging the parkway. The section between Payne Avenue and Parkway Drive is exemplary.

\*Ugg'O cr =Hki wt g'74+\*

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

At the west side of Lake Phalen, at Phalen Drive, the single roadway converts to a split parkway, with two, one-way roadways flanking a planted median. Where the parkway follows the Phalen Park Golf Course between Phalen Drive and Arcade Street it has concrete curbs, a narrow planted median between the paired streets and several Kasota Stone retaining walls. (The segment between Johnson Parkway and Arcade Street was completed in the mid-1970s.) The split parkway resumes between Arcade and Edgerton Streets and, in this section, there are six individual median “parks,” created by cross streets, and concrete curbs and sidewalks lining both sides of the parkway. The two-road parkway pinches into a single roadway at the Arcade and Edgerton Street crossing (inventoried as RA-SPC-5681). Here it again becomes a split parkway, with two multi-block segments interrupted at only one midpoint (inventoried as RA-SPC-5680). It pinches again just before the Wisconsin Central Railroad Bridge (later Soo Line, 1915, replaced 1938; RA-SPC-7117). The bridge now carries bicycle and pedestrian traffic as part of the Gateway State Trail system (MN Bridge 5592). A steep wooded bluff, partially lined with concrete retaining walls, is immediately east of the bridge, on the north side of the parkway.

Wheelock Parkway is next a single, two-way roadway from the Gateway State Trail Bridge to its terminus at Lake Como. Except for a short block west of Westminster Street, there are no parkway sidewalks between the Gateway State Trail Bridge (1938) and the I-35E Bridge (1960, 2014). The parkway landscape resumes west of the bridge as the parkway winds to Rice Street. It includes sidewalks along the south side of the parkway at the I-35E crossing and continues until Rice Street. The Minneapolis St. Paul & Sault St. Marie Railway Company (Soo Line) tracks at the east of Rice Street parallel Trout Brook; the first Wheelock Parkway Bridge at this location, ca. 1916, was replaced with a concrete deck in 1954; the bridge was reconstructed in 2014 (Ramsey County Bridge 62641). There are two slender medians in the “switchback” of the Horseshoe Bend east of Virginia Street. There are no sidewalks along the parkway between Rice and Mackubin Streets; between Mackubin Street and E. Como Boulevard the sidewalks are placed at both sides of the parkway and are framed by the front yards of the surrounding houses.

Wide grass panels frame the parkway landscape southwest of the Horseshoe Bend at Idaho Avenue. Wheelock edges along a steep wooded ravine at the east, and between Idaho Avenue and Cohansey Street there are only a few residential building lots.



**Wheelock Parkway at Cohansey Street, ca. 1920. (MHS)**

The roadway is surfaced with bituminous paving and has shallow concrete curbs along the route. Parkway builders adapted the design to the diverse topography along the route. The earliest (and only) comprehensive parkway plan is from ca. 1911, and it proposed a consistent tree linear

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

canopy edging the roadway as well as groups of trees in open areas and inside medians (City of Saint Paul). Vegetation varies from one area to another, and includes naturalistic groupings of deciduous trees and conifers as well as linear street tree plantings. Aerial views from 1940 show that all tree planting was not completed at the same time and existing canopy includes trees of various maturities.

Ravines and slopes along the route are often lightly wooded with shrubs and small trees. The houses lining the parkway sections that have a central median and those between Edgerton Street and the Gateway Trail Bridge, as well as those between Idaho Avenue and Cohansey Street, typically have the deepest setbacks and lawn areas.

*Housing Character*

Some sections of the corridor have a suburban feel, with many houses dating from after World War II. There are also a few former corner stores, several churches and schools, including Como Park Elementary (1916) near Como Boulevard. A few simple houses apparently pre-dating parkway construction are sometimes located near early arterial streets. In addition to a number of small apartment buildings, the northern tier of McDonough Homes, a community built in the mid-1950s and renovated after 2000, occupies a 70-acre tract adjacent to the McDonough Recreation Center on the south side of the Parkway, between Jackson Street and I-35E.

The most consistent architectural character of Wheelock Parkway is anchored by simple versions of Period Revival style houses, including one- and one-half story examples of Tudor and Colonial Revival styles that are found along the length of the parkway. Houses between Arcade and Edgerton Streets were built in the 1920s and 1930s and many are of Period Revival style; there are also examples of Craftsman Bungalows. The vicinity of Wheelock Parkway and Walsh Street includes larger, two-story examples. Houses of other styles, including varieties of the popular Ranch, face the parkway between Edgerton and the Gateway State Trail Bridge; most date primarily from the 1950s and 1960s. Houses between Rice and Mackubin Streets were primarily built in the 1950s and 1960s. The parkway blocks between Mackubin and Lake Como feature examples of simple Period Revival designs dating from the 1920s and 1930s.

**Natural and Historic Features:**

**Major features:** Bridge No. 5592 (Gateway State Trail); Horseshoe Bend

**General features:** roadway; sidewalks; landscape; bridge; natural features

**Non-contributing area(s) or features include:**

Wheelock Parkway between Johnson Parkway and Arcade street (completed 1970s); new I-35E bridge construction; commercial areas at Rice Street and I-35E.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Wheelock Parkway in 1945. The portion between Lake Phalen and Arcade Street (boxed) would not be completed until the mid-1970s. (MHAPO)**

### **History**

The route follows the natural curves of the summit encircling the city on its northern boundary, commanding a series of changing views of the wide expanse of the city to the south, and the panoramic country scenery to the north for miles in extent. It is planned to acquire a strip of land 120 feet wide; forty feet for driveway and eighty feet for ornamentation. This improvement will convert the at present undesirable property into a charming residence district of greatly enhanced value. For that reason it is expected that the holders of large tracts of land can well afford to donate the strip of land needed for the Boulevard.

*Seventeenth Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners, 1907, 46.*

The planning and construction of Wheelock Parkway was among the first major accomplishments of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners established in 1887. The parkway was named for Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906), President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners (1893-1906). Land was acquired in 1907 (*Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners for the year ending December 31, 1907:9* [hereafter *Annual Report*]). The Commissioners noted that the generally 120-foot wide boulevard near the city's northern edge ran through territory "almost entirely denuded of native trees, which if anything, will help to accomplish its distinctive purpose of a prospect pleasure drive . . . For nearly its entire distance the city, with the State Capitol building as a central point, can be seen" (*Annual Report, December 31, 1907:9*).

The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; plans for the route were developed by 1907 with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. The first section of the parkway was graded in 1909. By 1910 it was reported that grading was completed, but construction of the two railroad bridges still remained (*Annual Report 1910:9*). Plans published in 1911, along with plans for other city parkways, appear to be the only comprehensive set (*Annual Report, 1909*). The section from Rice to Edgerton Streets

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

was graded in 1916. In 1917 the park board called for widening of the Wheelock on the east side between South Street and Hoyt Avenue, to protect the “magnificent view from that point open for all times” (*Annual Report* 1917:10). Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the 1920s. Paving, including macadam, was completed for most of Wheelock Parkway by 1924 and included a 30-foot-wide section between Como Avenue and Mackubin Street and two, twenty-foot wide roads between Payne Avenue and Arcade Street. The section between Payne and Hoyt was graded in 1930. The sections between Nebraska and Edgerton Streets and Edgerton and Payne Avenue have varied widths, but are predominately two, 20-foot-wide parkways. In 1929 a grove of elms were planted in the “Memorial Park at Horse Shoe Bend” (*Report of the Department of Parks, Playgrounds and Public Buildings* 1930:27). Some construction work appears to have continued in the early 1940s. The final section between Johnson Parkway and Arcade Street was not completed until the 1970s (St. Paul Public Works).

By 1916, real estate developers platted more than thirty subdivisions along the parkway route, including those with names such as “Rice Street Villas,” “Cottage Homes,” and “Gurney Highland Park” (G.M. Hopkins 1916). Many lots and blocks, however, were not built up for decades. Residential architectural character varies along the parkway and includes the occasional late nineteenth-century house predating parkway construction, many Period Revival style houses of various descriptions, and one-story, mid-twentieth century Ranch style dwellings. Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the 1920s; all paving appears to have been completed by the mid-1920s (Saint Paul Public Works General Index Cards).

Original lighting plans have not been located, but some of the existing lighting was introduced in 1978 (Public Works Index Card #5).

Except for bridge construction, paving and other repairs, sewer improvements, and planting efforts such as that between Payne and Western Avenues in 1929, there appear to have been few major alterations to the design in place by the mid-1920s and 1930s.

### **Significance and Evaluation**

The construction of Wheelock Parkway secured the important northern link of the Saint Paul Parkway system between Phalen and Como Lakes for public use, as envisioned by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and executed by Parks Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer. Wheelock Parkway was the longest segment yet accomplished, and roughly followed the Park Board’s construction of Summit Avenue Boulevard (2.5 miles), the Mississippi River Boulevard (2.5 miles), Como Parkway (.5), Midway Parkway (.5 miles), West Side Boulevard (.3 miles) and Lexington Boulevard (2.5 miles; *Annual Report* 1905:17).

Wheelock Parkway has not been previously evaluated for significance as a designed historic landscape contributing to the history of Saint Paul’s urban and public park development. There are no adjacent properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or locally designated by the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission.

The historic context developed for the “Historic Resources Evaluation for the North Portion of Saint Paul’s Grand Round” (Zellie and Lucas 2016), and additional research including Saint Paul Public Works Department archives and other City of Saint Paul records, provide the basis for this evaluation. Under National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) guidelines, historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, State, or the nation. It is based on:

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- Criterion A: Association with events, activities, or patterns
- Criterion B: Association with important persons
- Criterion C: Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form
- Criterion D: Potential to yield important archaeological information.

Properties must retain historic integrity to be significant. Integrity is defined as the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's prehistoric or historic period. The qualities of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association (NRHP Bulletins 15 and 16A).

Wheelock Parkway was evaluated under Criterion A for its association with the early-twentieth century development of Saint Paul's park and parkway system.

*National Precedents*

Saint Paul and Minneapolis leaders were well aware of the role of landscape architecture and park making in the progress of other American cities in the post-Civil War period. In various incarnations, improved public health and belief in the moral benefit of exposure to nature were at the foundation of the effort. The belief that nature uplifted public morality, especially for the newly arrived immigrant and working poor, fueled early park development in densely populated cities; the success of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux with New York's Central Park and the postwar development of their designs for Prospect Park and the Brooklyn system headlined efforts nationally. Olmsted was also retained for work with Vaux in Chicago for the South Park System (1870) and in Boston to design the Back Bay Fens Park and Parkway (1873), the first extension of what would become the Emerald Necklace. His work in Buffalo (1879) would be among the first extensive park and boulevard systems completed in the United States.

*Horace William Shaler Cleveland*

In 1869, H.W.S. Cleveland (1814-1900), a native of Massachusetts and with experience with cemetery and park design in New England and New York, established in Chicago one of the first landscape architectural practices in the Midwest (Neckar 1995; Nadencik 2001). With his partner William Merchant French (1843-1914), the firm of Cleveland and French implemented Olmsted's designs for Chicago's South Park district including Drexel Boulevard and what would become Washington Park. Cleveland published many articles and pamphlets in this period, including the *Public Grounds of Chicago: How to Give them Character and Expression* (1869), where he offered direction on the planting of boulevards as arboreta, recommending that many species be "artistically combined" (Cleveland 1869:7-18).

*Cleveland and Saint Paul: 1872-1894*

In February 1872 Cleveland presented an address, "The Application of Landscape Architecture to the Wants of the West," to the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce. He urged the immediate acquisition of valuable parklands, especially the bluffs along the Mississippi River gorge (*Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1872:1; *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 9, 13, 16, 17, 1872).

Cleveland was next invited by the Common Council to make a "general outline report, upon the proper location of Parks, Wide Avenues, Public Squares, and other improvements, on a scale

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suitable to the wants of a crowded city.” “A Park System for the City of St. Paul,” delivered on June 24, 1872, cited the success of older cities such as New York and Chicago in creating park systems (Cleveland 1872:14). He urged St. Paul to preserve what “nature had furnished without cost.” The Mississippi River gorge between Minneapolis and St. Paul provided the framework for his park-making ideas for both cities. He envisioned the opening of “spacious avenues radiating in such directions as will be most frequented by future travel.” Such a boulevard provided fresh air, fire protection, and would be within easy access of “all classes of citizens.” His scheme was envisioned to include creation of a Riverside Park and several linkages to Minneapolis, including the “Union Parkway” via Summit Avenue and 34th Avenue S. across the river; he observed, “St Paul and Minneapolis eventually, and at no distant day, will become virtually one city” (Cleveland 1872:13; 1885:27). He repeated this call to unite the cities with connecting parkways in another lecture thirteen years later (Cleveland 1885:28).

*Como and Phalen Lakes*

In addition to the river, Saint Paul’s northern lakes were cited for their potential use as a water supply and their “aesthetic advantages” (Cleveland 1872:14). Cleveland recommended acquisition of Como and Phalen Lakes, urging that the city connect them “with the city and with each other, by avenues befitting the wants of the time” (Cleveland 1872:15).

At the time of these early visits to St. Paul, Cleveland was preparing *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West* (1873), his manifesto on the role he proposed for landscape architecture in shaping the country’s fast-growing new cities. Central to this approach would be the park and parkway system described in his lectures and the book. On June 19, 1885, Cleveland addressed the Saint Paul Common Council and Chamber of Commerce on “Park Ways and Ornamental Parks: the Best System for St. Paul.” This plan, printed and bound with his 1872 address as *Public Parks, Radial Avenues and Boulevards: Outline Plan for a Park System for the City of St. Paul*, was the framework for his remaining work with the city. Once again, he called for preservation of the city’s natural gifts. He noted, “your opportunity today is to avail yourselves of the advantages which nature has provided to your hand, for the inauguration of such as system of improvements as shall be in keeping with the demands of the future populations.” As always, the river was his organizing principle for St. Paul and he reiterated his approval of boulevards, which he saw as “an extended park, immediately accessible from the adjacent streets, enlivened by all the features of busy life which render the adjacent streets attractive.” (Cleveland 1885:25). He acknowledged that such boulevards would receive increasing amounts of traffic.

Cleveland did not revisit planning for Como or Phalen Park in the 1885 plan. Preserving the city’s forest, and especially its bluffs, was his focus. He noted opportunities to reserve some areas that he had suggested in 1872 “are now beyond possibility of such development” (Cleveland 1885:29). He reiterated his preference for the landscape gardener’s role to serve as the high priest of Nature: “to interpret her language and develop her suggestions . . . without ‘artificial decorations’.”

*Cleveland and the St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners*

Cleveland relocated his office to Minneapolis in 1886 and was occupied by his work for the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners. The Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners was organized in February 1887 (*Annual Report* 1888:821-22). In June 1887 the Board of Park Commissioners voted to hire Cleveland for work on the city’s parks, but this appointment does not appear to have become effective until 1888 (*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 5, 1887:3). Cleveland’s Como Park plans as printed in 1889 and 1890 showed curvilinear paths and

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roadways that edged the rolling hills west of the lake (Cleveland 1889, 1890). The plan did not rely on new ornamental plantings, but rather the existing stands of native oak and new trees, shrubs and vines. A parkway edged the lakeshore and connected to Como Avenue.

In 1889 the Minnesota State Legislature passed an act authorizing the City of St. Paul to issue bonds for the acquisition, improvement and maintenance of public parks. Other acts authorized bonds for the improvement of Lake Como, and acquisition of the Indian Mounds on Dayton's Bluff for a public park (Castle 1912:372-3).

For his concurrent Minneapolis work, Cleveland collaborated with park board presidents William W. Folwell and Charles M. Loring, who shared his appreciation for naturalistic landscapes. During the 1906-1935 tenure of Minneapolis park superintendent Theodore Wirth, Cleveland's approach would be modified to accommodate active recreation, automobiles, and increased leisure time, and a different park-making aesthetic that often emphasized the beautiful over the picturesque. In Saint Paul, Frederick Nussbaumer inherited the Cleveland legacy and similarly responded to these mandates.

In 1890 Cleveland and Superintendent Estabrook supervised improvement of Summit Avenue between Lexington and the Mississippi River, and extensive work on Como Park was also completed (*Annual Report* 1891:231). By 1891, Cleveland's role in St. Paul had apparently ended. There may have been some discord; board member William Van Slyke stated in March 1890 that he did not "like the idea of employing a Minneapolis man to lay out St. Paul parks," and questioned Cleveland's \$125 monthly fee. According to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Van Slyke thought St. Paul parks should differ from Minneapolis and "should not be designed by the same hand" (*Minneapolis Tribune* March 29, 1890:8). Although he continued to work in Minneapolis on plans for Powderhorn Park (with the assistance of his son, Ralph D. Cleveland, 1851-1918), Cleveland moved back to Chicago in ca. 1894 (Tishler 1985:290).

*Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer: 1891-1922*

George Frederick Nussbaumer (1850-1935) inherited Cleveland's general ideas for a park system that preserved the city's natural features, but at Como Park he particularly demonstrated his own interest in floral and decorative effects. A native of Baden, Germany with engineering and horticultural training, he worked as a florist prior to first being hired as a Como Park gardener in 1887. He was hired as Superintendent in 1891 (Schmidt 2002:48). Like Theodore Wirth, a native of Switzerland who was hired as Minneapolis park superintendent in 1906, Nussbaumer was influenced by European training while also participating in the development of modern municipal park management; both, for example, had leadership roles in the American Association of Park Superintendents. The promoter and guardian of the early St. Paul parks was Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906). A native of Nova Scotia and a St. Paul pioneer, he co-founded the *St. Paul Daily Press* in 1861. He was President of the St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners from 1893 until his death.

Development of Como Park was the primary early accomplishment of its new commission, and the infusion of \$25,000 in bonds in 1891 allowed Nussbaumer to complete Como Lake Drive (Schmidt 2002:48). Generally following Cleveland's 1890 plan, the superintendent also developed elaborate floral displays through the park, and added bridges and exotic plants including summertime palms, topiaries, and the popular "gates ajar." The completion of the Como Park Conservatory in 1915 (NRHP) would be a crowning achievement for Nussbaumer and the commission (Schmidt 2002:48).

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Saint Paul's population rose from 160,000 in 1900 to 214,000 in 1910, and parks were increasingly needed to meet the needs of the 52.2-square mile city. By 1908, work on Wheelock Parkway on other boulevards was ongoing despite an almost continual struggle for funding. This historic system includes Mounds Park Boulevard, Johnson Parkway, Midway Parkway, Pelham Boulevard and Mississippi River Boulevard. Through Como Park, the parkway is continued on parkway-like streets, and links to Midway Parkway, which joins Snelling Avenue and connects to the Minnesota State Fair Grounds and the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus. The parkway route to the river is somewhat discontinued on this route along Como and Raymond Avenues. South of University Avenue, the parkway resumes with Pelham Boulevard, which intersects with Mississippi River Boulevard.

Parkway planning spanned the height of the popularity of the City Beautiful Movement, from about 1901 to 1917. Saint Paul's parkway plans set an independent course somewhat outside of the City Beautiful canon, in spite of the similarities with other cities that also developed major civic center plans more typical of the movement's core principles. Planning for the Capitol Approach, by Cass Gilbert, John Nolen, and others, dominated the efforts aligned with City Beautiful principles.

Especially after World War I, Wheelock Parkway continued to attract builders of attractive houses placed on lots that fronted the parkway. At the eastern end of the parkway, many Period Revival houses were placed near Phalen Park Golf Course, and at the opposite end near Como Park and Como Park Elementary School (1916, 1973).

*After Nussbaumer: 1922-1945, and Beyond*

Superintendents Earl L. Finney (1922-23), William T. March (1923-24), George L. Nason (1924-32) and William Kaufman (1932-1966) succeeded Nussbaumer. Nason oversaw the acquisition and improvement of more than 30 playgrounds and athletic fields during the relatively prosperous years preceding the Depression. Como Park was improved with a golf course (1930) and expanded zoo (1930-) and continued to be the central hub of the system. The Depression and World War II economies during Kaufman's administration generally placed further parkway improvement on hold, but Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds would assist in some parkway construction and maintenance, especially along the River Boulevard during the 1930s and early 1940s.

The term Grand Rounds was suggested for the Minneapolis parkway system by William Watts Folwell in 1890, and became widely used (*Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners Annual Report* 1890: 25-26). The idea of an outer-park regional system based on a "Grand Round Boulevard" was explored by City Planner and Engineer George H. Herrold and others in the 1920s (Herrold 1928: 4a). More recently, the term "Grand Round" appears to have been applied to the Saint Paul parkway system in planning studies in ca. 2000.

**Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway is ca. 1907 through 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity.

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**Historic Landscape Characteristics and Integrity**

Wheelock Parkway's historic character-defining landscape features include topography, vegetation, circulation patterns, buildings and structures, view and vistas, and objects and small-scale features.

The parkway design as proposed in the plans of ca. 1907-1912, accommodated the rolling topography spanning the two lakes. Relatively little filling was used to smooth irregularities, as evident at many locations. Broad panels of grass, ornamented with naturalistic plantings or street trees that lined sidewalks, characterize much of the alignment. The grassy medians that divide the roadway between Edgerton Street and the Gateway Trail Bridge add to the overall naturalistic feeling while also providing a formal division of the roadway. Likely the route passed through some stands of pre-existing trees including mature oak, although the park board noted in that portions of the area were "denuded" (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9).

An aerial view of 1923 shows that small agricultural parcels, probably market gardeners, lined the just-opened stretch of parkway west of Edgerton, along with a number of small ponds.

Today the mature canopy is combined with younger trees as well as volunteers on steep slopes. The original pattern of circulation appears to be generally intact, including pedestrian circulation. It has been modified by features such as new driveway construction and, most notably, the construction of I-35E and its approaches.

Housing construction began immediately after parkway completion, and progressed after interruptions by World War I. Vacant lots were also filled after World War II and continued through the 1960s. Some of the Period Revival style houses reflect the best of the examples in the Phalen Park area.

Other structures along the route include the three bridges of Wheelock Parkway, including two historic railroad crossings. Of these, only the Wisconsin Central-Soo Line Bridge (1938), now carrying the Gateway Trail, retains historic integrity. Smaller-scale objects include the Kasota Stone retaining walls on the south side of the parkway west of Lake Phalen may date from the 1970s. There are no examples of historic lighting or other features.

**Historic Integrity**

Although residential, commercial, and institutional development continues to evolve along its edges, since the initial grading and paving and landscape design completed in the 1920s and 1930s, Wheelock Parkway has retained a high level of historic integrity and retains the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The approximately one-mile section between the Gateway State Trail Bridge and Rice Street was designed and built as part of the system, but pre-existing development limited parkway construction in some areas. Commercial land use and freeway construction has resulted in alteration to the qualities of setting, feeling, and association. The parkway section between Arcade and Lake Phalen appears to have been completed in the 1970s and is outside the 50-year cut off for NRHP eligibility.

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**Summary and Recommendation**

The Wheelock Parkway Historic District is recommended as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A as a component of Saint Paul’s historic park and parkway system. The district area is between between Arcade Street at the east and E. Como Boulevard at the west. The parkway is significant for its association with the NRHP themes of Community Planning and Development, Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Landscape Architecture and Engineering.

Wheelock Parkway, constructed incrementally after ca. 1907 and apparently substantially completed by ca. 1940, is an early component of the city’s historic parkway system and made a significant contribution to the growth of St. Paul. Most of the parkway retains a good level of historic integrity, with many unaltered landscape features from the original design.

Further study and evaluation of its contributing landscape features and other Saint Paul parkway segments will assist in determining if Wheelock Parkway is also contributing to a Saint Paul Parkway Historic District.

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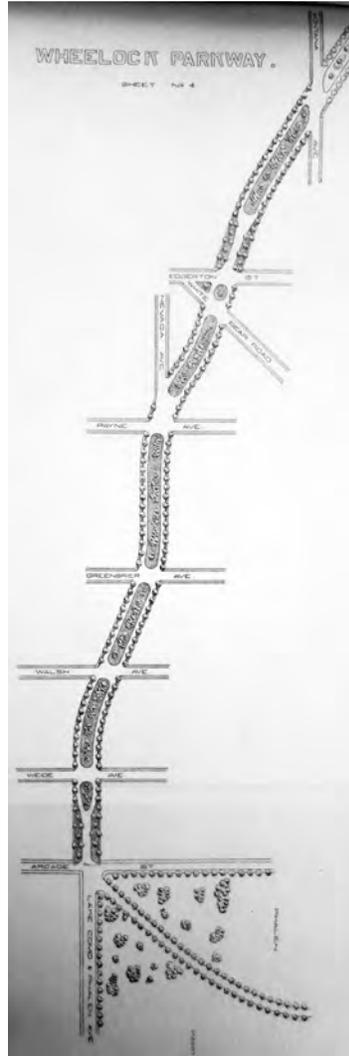
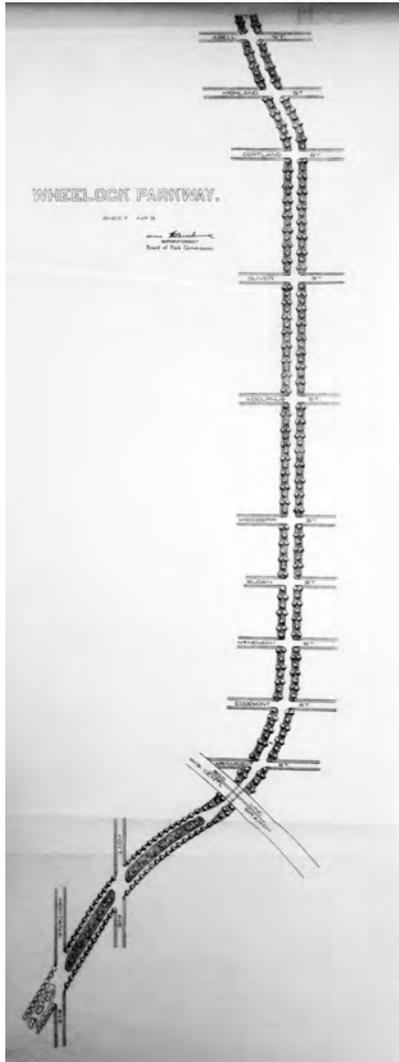
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**Illustrations and Photographs**



**Wheelock Parkway, 1911 plans  
Sheets 1-2 (St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners)**



**Wheelock Parkway, central median and two-way roadway, west of Edgerton (7/21/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway sloped median between Desoto and Edgerton Streets, facing east (7/2015).**

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**Wheelock Parkway west of Lake Phalen, facing west, with retaining wall and a variety of maple and elm (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Edgerton Street, facing east (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Greenbrier Street, facing east (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway between Desoto and Edgerton Streets, facing east (7/2015).**



**Soo Line Bridge, 1938 (Gateway State Trail), MN Bridge 5592. Facing southeast (7/2015).**



**Soo Line / Trout Brook Bridge, 2014, east of Rice Street, facing west (7/2015).**

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**Wheelock Parkway at Park Street, facing east (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Nebraska Street, facing southwest (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Arundel Street, facing southwest (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway and Parkway Drive house pre-dating parkway construction, east of Edgerton, facing east (1/2016).**



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**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway Segment: **SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5682  
E. Como Boulevard to Mackubin Street  
(E. Como Lake Drive)

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:**

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township 29N Range 23 Sections 23-24

**UTM:** Easting: 490444.92 Northing: 4980828.43 (intersection with Mackubin Street)  
Easting: 490980.43 Northing: 4981840.23 (intersection with E. Como Boulevard  
[E. Como Lake Drive])  
Zone: 15 NAD 83  
Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC  
Photos: Carole Zellie and SEH, Inc.

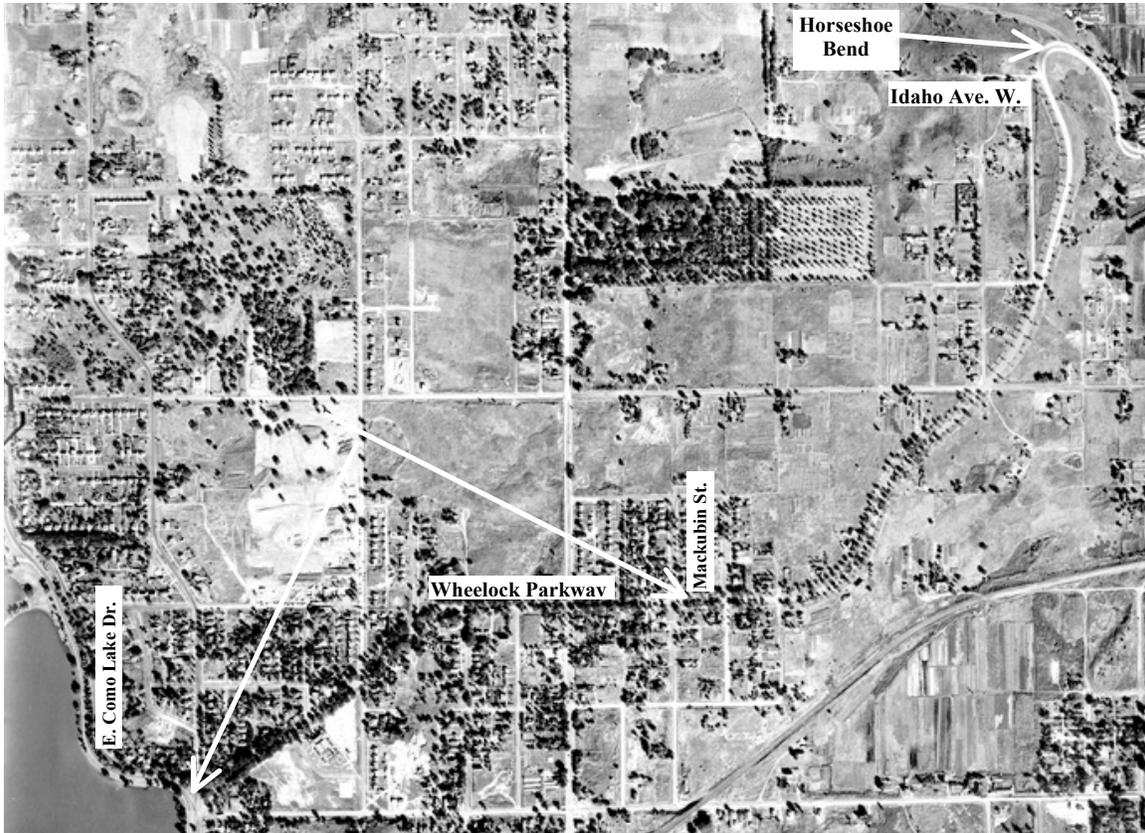
### **Description**

The .8-mile Wheelock Parkway segment between Mackubin Street and E. Como Boulevard (E. Como Lake Drive) consists of a roadway flanked by sidewalk-lined boulevards. A shallow concrete curb edges the length of the roadway. The public right of way is planted with a variety of young and mature street trees including a few examples of the elms that were part of the original planting design. There are many street crossings and, due to the application of the parkway diagonal across the pre-existing grid-street plan, there are a number of small triangles and other irregular parkway features along the route.

Houses along this segment date primarily from ca. 1920 to 1970, with notable examples of Period Revival and Craftsman style houses from ca. 1920-1940. Some, such as the house at 563 Wheelock, have masonry retaining walls. An aerial view of 1945 shows that small truck farms still occupied much of the area northeast of Lake Como and these areas infilled after World War II. Like the parkway segment from Mackubin to the Horseshoe Bend, the area to the north still supported many small farms until after World War II. The Como Park Elementary School (RA-SPC-5687) is located between Grotto and Avon Streets, There is also an example of a small ca. 1930s store and apartment building (at Folsom Street) and a ca. 1960s church at Mayowood Street (Bethel Lutheran).

See Wheelock Parkway form RA-SPC-5679 for a discussion of general historic parkway planning. Ugg"cmq"O cr ."Hki wtg'740'

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**Wheelock Boulevard between E. Como Boulevard (E. Como Lake Dr.) and Mackubin Street., 1945; Como to Mackubin shown arrows. (MHAPO, University of Minnesota)**

### **History**

The planning and construction of Wheelock Parkway was among the first major accomplishments of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners established in 1887. The parkway was named for Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906), President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners (1893-1906). Land was acquired in 1907 (*Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners for the year ending December 31, 1907:9* [hereafter *Annual Report*]). The Commissioners noted that the generally 120-foot wide boulevard near the city's northern edge ran through territory "almost entirely denuded of native trees, which if anything, will help to accomplish its distinctive purpose of a prospect pleasure drive . . . For nearly its entire distance the city, with the State Capitol building as a central point, can be seen" (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9). A photograph of 1920 suggests this character.

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**Wheelock Parkway at Cohansey Street, ca. 1920. (MHS)**

The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; preliminary plans were developed in the same year with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. A first, unspecified section was graded in 1909 (*Annual Report* 1909). By 1910 it was reported that grading was completed, but construction of the two railroad bridges still remained (*Annual Report* 1910:9). Plans published in 1911-12, along with plans for other city parkways, appear to be the only comprehensive set (*Annual Report*, 1909). Much of Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the late 1920s; paving appears to have been completed by 1931 (Saint Paul Public Works General Index Cards). The final section, between Arcade and Johnson Parkway, was completed in 1975.

Saint Paul Public Works records note a paving plan for Mackubin Street to Como Avenue N. (E. Como Boulevard, E. Como Lake Dr.) dated 1924 (Saint Paul Public Works Index Card #2). Original lighting plans have not been located, but some of the existing standards were replaced in a 1978 program (Public Works Index Card #5).

Additional streets were opened after the publication of the 1911-12 plan, including those between Dale and Cottage (Danforth, Kent, Schletti, Mackubin, Cohansey). These streets do appear on the G.M. Hopkins Atlas of 1916, but were likely not opened for years. Dale to Kent was opened in 1922, for example (Saint Paul Public Works Index Card #2). Except for bridge construction, paving and other repairs, and sewer improvements, there appear to have been few major alterations to the design in place by the 1930s.

### **Historic Integrity**

The alignment and overall landscape character of this Wheelock Parkway segment appears to have had no significant alteration since construction. The original elm planting has largely been replaced by other species. This segment retains its historic topographical character and alignment as residential development has evolved along its edges and exhibits the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### **Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway and this segment are ca. 1907 through 1945 period of significance for Wheelock Parkway and this segment are ca. 1907 through 1945. This

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period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity.

**Summary and Recommendation**

The Wheelock Parkway Historic District (RA-SPC-5679) was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP and Mackubin Street to E. Como Boulevard is a generally intact segment that contributes to the overall historic significance of the historic landscape. Like the adjoining segment to the northeast, this primarily residential area of the parkway appears to well represent the landscape intentions of the original park planners.

**References**

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**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5682**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

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**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

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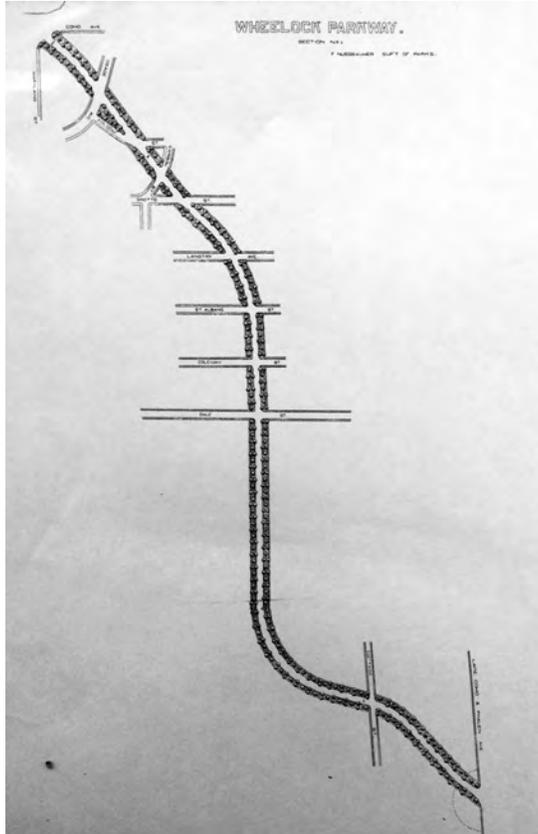
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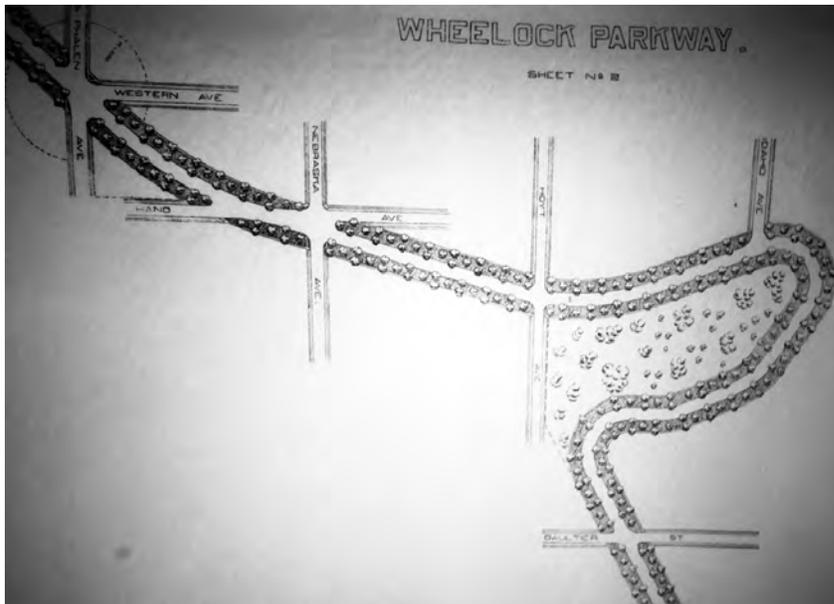
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**Wheelock Parkway and median, 1911 plans as proposed (changes in execution). Sheets 1-2 (St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners)**



**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5682  
Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Photographs**



**Wheelock Parkway at Danforth Ave. W., looking west (Dan Pratt 4/1/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Folsom St., looking west (1/21/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Kent Street looking west (1/21/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Schletti Street, looking west (1/21/16).**



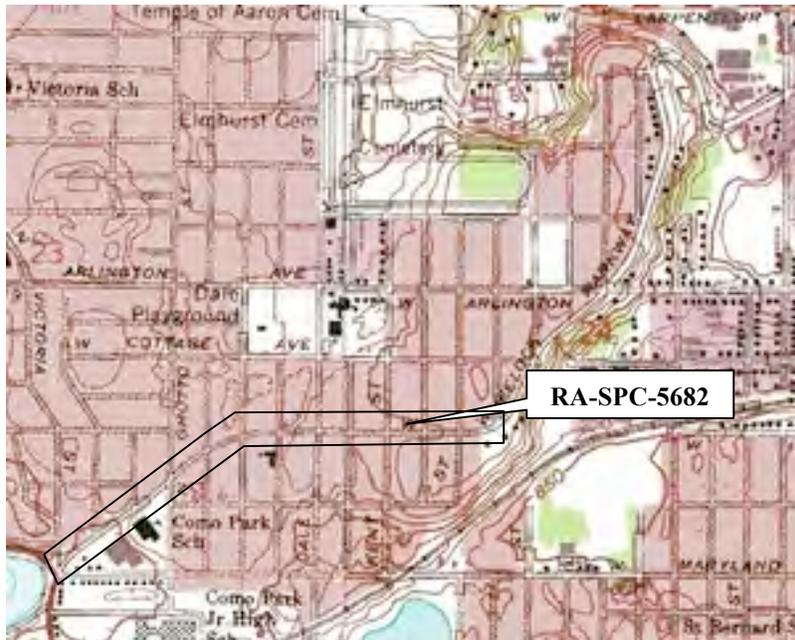
**Wheelock Parkway at Alameda, looking west (Dan Pratt, 4/1/2016).**



**563 Wheelock Parkway (1929), at Kent Street, looking north ( 3/20/16).**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Map**



**USGS: Saint Paul East**

**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5682**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway Segment: **SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5683  
Mackubin Street to Idaho Avenue W.

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:**

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township 29N Range 23 Section 24

**UTM:** Easting: 490442.31 Northing: 498084.25 (intersection with Mackubin Street)  
Easting: 490980.43 Northing: 4981840.23 (intersection with Idaho Avenue W.)  
Zone: 15 NAD 83  
Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2016

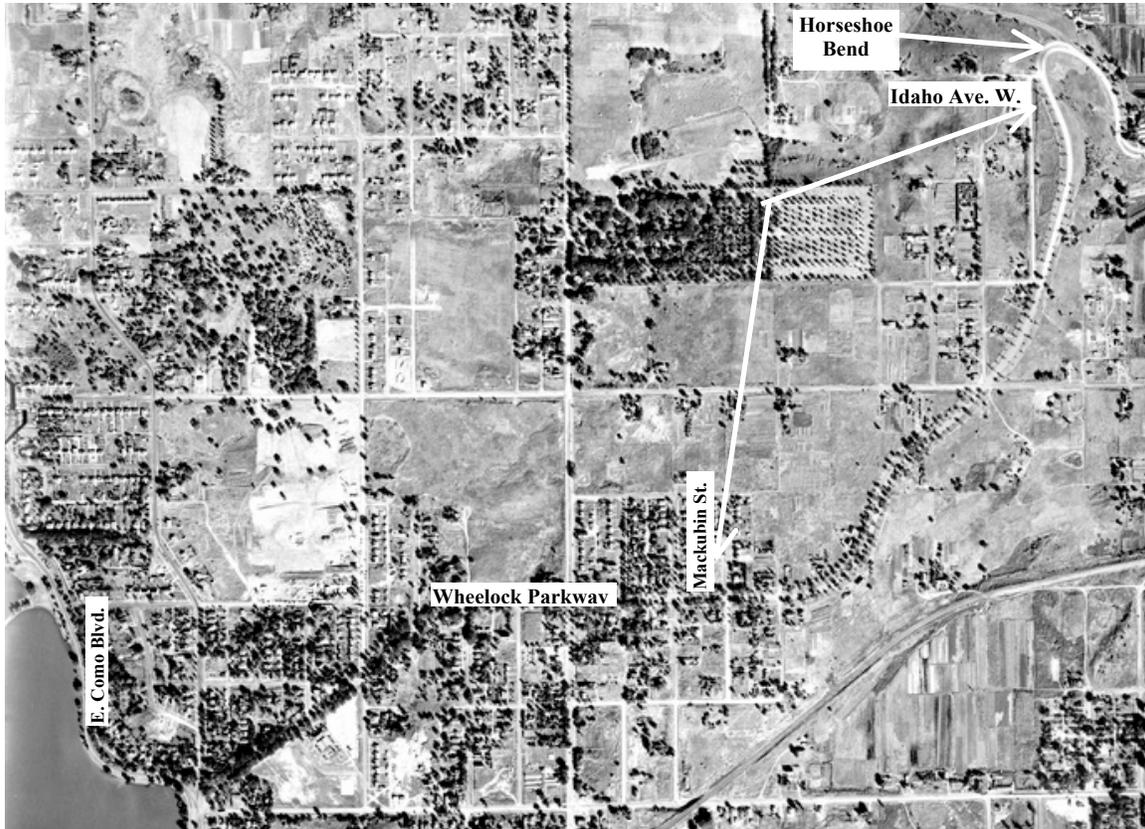
**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC  
Photos: Carole Zellie, Dan Pratt

**Description**

The .5-mile Wheelock Parkway segment between Mackubin Street and Idaho Avenue W. consists of an approximately 20-foot roadway flanked by a ravine on the east and residential lots on the west. There are no sidewalks, and only eleven houses on the east side. A shallow concrete curb edges the length of the roadway. There are no sidewalks. A great variety of trees about the curblines on the west, and the wooded east side of the roadway offers vistas of Saint Paul to the east and south. The elevation of this stretch reaches about 932 feet at some points. The roadway curves down the Horseshoe Bend (RA-SPC-5684) at Idaho. There are no cross-street interruptions between Mackubin and Marion Street at the foot of the Horseshoe Bend. The wooded and generally unbuild ravine edge are distinctive historic landscape features of this segment.

See Wheelock Parkway form RA-SPC-5679 for a discussion of general parkway planning.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Wheelock Boulevard between E. Como Boulevard (E. Como Lake Dr.) and Idaho Ave. W., 1945; Mackubin to Idaho at arrows. (MHAPO, University of Minnesota)**

### **History**

The planning and construction of Wheelock Parkway was among the first major accomplishments of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners established in 1887. The parkway was named for Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906), President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners (1893-1906). Land was acquired in 1907 (*Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners for the year ending December 31, 1907:9* [hereafter *Annual Report*]). The Commissioners noted that the generally 120-foot wide boulevard near the city's northern edge ran through territory "almost entirely denuded of native trees, which if anything, will help to accomplish its distinctive purpose of a prospect pleasure drive . . . For nearly its entire distance the city, with the State Capitol building as a central point, can be seen" (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9). A photograph of 1920 suggests this character.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Wheelock Parkway at Cohansey Street, ca. 1920. (MHS)**

The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; preliminary plans were developed in the same year with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. A first, unspecified section was graded in 1909 (*Annual Report* 1909). By 1910 it was reported that grading was completed, but construction of the two railroad bridges still remained (*Annual Report* 1910:9). Plans published in 1911-12, along with plans for other city parkways, appear to be the only comprehensive set (*Annual Report*, 1909). Much of Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the late 1920s; paving appears to have been completed by 1931 (Saint Paul Public Works General Index Cards). The final section, between Arcade and Johnson Parkway, was completed in 1975.

Saint Paul Public Works records note a paving plan for Mackubin to Payne Avenue dated 1923 (Saint Paul Public Works Index Card #2). Although many lots were shown on subdivisions platted along the east edge of the parkway, only a few lots were built (G. M. Hopkins 1916). In 1929 a grove of elms was planted in the “Memorial Park at Horse Shoe Bend” (Report of the Department of Parks, Playgrounds and Public Buildings 1930:27), which is believed to be in the vicinity of Idaho Avenue W. Houses along this segment date primarily from ca. 1940 to 1970, with most from after ca. 1950. An aerial view of 1945 shows that small truck farms still occupied much of the area north of Arlington Avenue W., and below the Horse Shoe Bend.

Original lighting plans have not been located, but some of the existing standards were replaced in a 1978 program (Public Works Index Card #5).

Except for bridge construction, paving and other repairs, and sewer improvements, there appear to have been few major alterations to the design in place by the early 1940s. WPA funded programs were employed for maintenance and other parkway projects in the 1930s.

### **Historic Integrity**

The alignment and overall landscape character of this Wheelock Parkway segment appears to have had no significant alteration since construction. The sparse plantings of the early period of development have evolved to a densely wooded border along the ravine, and mature trees are among those that line the west side of the parkway. This segment retains its historic topographical character and alignment as residential development has evolved along its edges and exhibits the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway and this segment are ca. 1907 through 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity.

**Summary and Recommendation**

The Wheelock Parkway Historic District (RA-SPC-5679) was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP and Mackubin Street to Idaho Avenue W. is a generally intact segment that contributes to the overall historic significance of the historic landscape. This residential area of the parkway appears to well represent the landscape intentions of the original park planners and also includes the parkway system’s highest elevations and significant viewpoints. This segment also includes the edge of the “Memorial Grove” area planted on Horseshoe Bend in 1929.

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**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



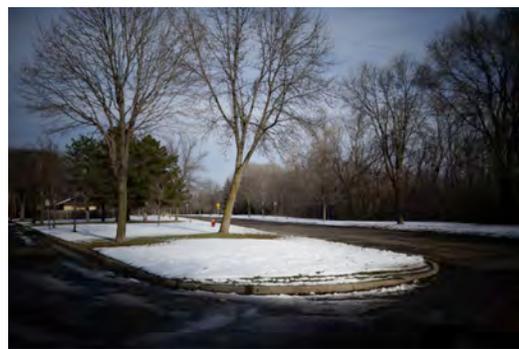
**Wheelock Parkway at Idaho Ave. W, looking south (Dan Pratt 4/1/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Virginia St., looking East at ravine (1/21/16).**

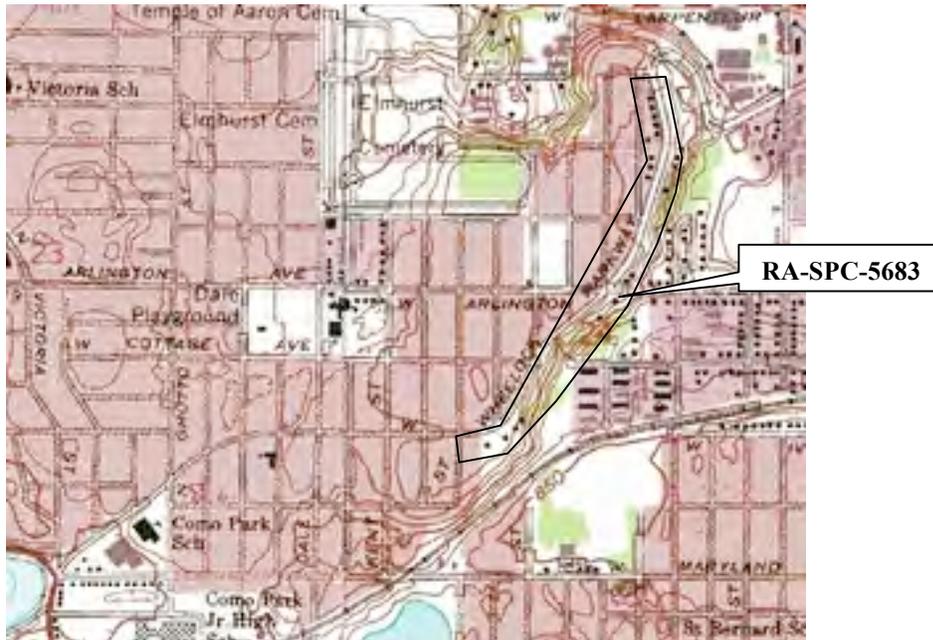


**Wheelock Parkway at Nebraska Ave., looking northeast (Dan Pratt 4/1/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Nebraska, detail of intersection with Virginia Street, looking northeast (1/21/16).**

**Map**



**USGS: Saint Paul East**

**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5683**  
**Saint Paul Parks and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**



**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**

**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway Horseshoe Bend **SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5684

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:**

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township: 29N Range: 23W Section 24

**UTM:** Easting: 491185.19 Northing: 4981694.47 (east end)

Easting: 490981.56 Northing: 4981838.05 (west end)

Zone: 15 NAD 83

Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul, Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2015-2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC

Photos: Carole Zellie, SEH

**Description**

The Horseshoe Bend of Wheelock Parkway marks a terminal moraine near Saint Paul’s northern boundary with Maplewood. The feature is located approximately between Virginia and Matilda Streets. The 932-foot elevation, rising sharply from about 852 feet immediately to the east, did not allow any building lots and the steep slopes are wooded. There are wide vistas of Saint Paul to the south from the summit of Horseshoe Bend. The summit is wooded with deciduous trees and a few conifers. There are a few informal paths. Two slender median strips are located at the base of the feature. Shallow concrete curbs frame the roadway. There is a large commercial lot at the base of the hill that includes an array of greenhouses that are part of the Linder Wholesale Nursery at 275 W. Wheelock Parkway. This business was established in 1910.

See Wheelock Parkway inventory RA-SPC-5679 for discussion of general parkway planning. See also Map, Figure 52.

**History**

Planned in ca. 1907 and shown on the 1911-12 Wheelock Parkway Plan, the Horseshoe Bend appears to have been graded by the 1920s (Saint Paul Public Works). In 1929 a grove of elms was planted in the “Memorial Park at Horse Shoe Bend” (*Report of the Department of Parks, Playgrounds and Public Buildings 1930:27*).



**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
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character. It retains a good level of the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**Period of Significance**

The period of significance for the Horseshoe Bend of Wheelock Parkway is ca. 1907 through 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction of the parkway to the end of most design and construction activity. It also includes the creation of a Memorial Grove in 1929, although the exact location of this feature has not been determined.

**Summary**

The Horseshoe Bend of Wheelock Parkway, constructed after ca. 1907, is an character-defining designed historic landscape feature as well as a significant natural feature (terminal moraine). It contributes to the significance of the Wheelock Parkway Historic District under NRHP Criterion A. Wheelock Parkway is associated with the vision of a continuous Saint Paul parkway linking the Mississippi River, Como and Phalen Lakes, civic destinations, and Como Park and other parks as outlined by nationally prominent landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland between 1872 and 1883, and as executed primarily during the park superintendency of Frederick Nussbaumer (1891-1922).

**Recommendation**

The Horseshoe Bend is a contributing feature of Wheelock Parkway Historic District. The parkway is recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. Wheelock Parkway was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP, and this is a contributing historic landscape feature (see RA-SPC-5679). Further study and evaluation of other Saint Paul parkway segments will assist in determining if Wheelock and its Horseshoe Bend are contributing to a Saint Paul Parkway Historic District.

**References**

Birnbaum, Charles A. and Christine Capella Peters, ed. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996.

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**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Photographs**



**Wheelock Parkway, Horseshoe Bend and two-way roadway, west of Gateway Bridge looking northwest (3/2/16).**



**Wheelock Parkway, Horseshoe Bend below Idaho Street, looking northeast (3/2/16).**

**Map**



**USGS: Saint Paul East**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**

**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway Median: **SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5680  
Edgerton Street to Soo Line/Gateway State Trail Bridge

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:**

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township: 29N Range: 22 Section 20

**UTM:** Easting: 493873.79 Northing: 4981474.34 (intersection with Edgerton Street)  
Easting: 493493.49 Northing: 4981768.90 (intersection with Soo Line/ Gateway State Trail Bridge)  
Zone: 15 NAD 83  
Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul, Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC

Photos: Carole Zellie and SEH, Inc.

**Description**

The landscaped median between Edgerton Street and the Soo Line/Gateway Bridge is one of two primary medians along the 4.2-mile course of Wheelock Parkway between Johnson Parkway at the east and Como Boulevard and Como Park at the west. (The other, an adjoining median group to the east, extends from Edgerton to Arcade Streets.) The median extends approximately .4 miles northwesterly from Edgerton Street to the Soo Line (Gateway State Trail) Bridge and is approximately 50 feet wide at its midpoint near Wheelock Ridge Road. A shallow concrete curb edges the median and there is a single paved cross-drive. The median is flanked by paved roadways approximately 20 feet wide. Because of the steep topography near the eastern end, some north roadway sections are higher than those at the south.

Unlike the median feature to the east between Edgerton and Arcade Streets, there is no cross-street interruption of the landscaped area except for the single cross drive. The median is grass-covered and planted with a variety of deciduous trees and conifers. These features appear consistent with the character of other Wheelock Parkway medians and boulevards.

The median is framed by a variety of single-family houses, an apartment building, and a church. Most residential construction along this area of Wheelock Parkway dates from after ca. 1950.

See Wheelock Parkway form RA-SPC-5679 for a discussion of general parkway planning. See also Map, Figure 52.

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**Median between Gateway State Trail Bridge and Edgerton Street, 1940. (MHAPO, University of Minnesota)**

**History**

The planning and construction of Wheelock Parkway was among the first major accomplishments of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners established in 1887. The parkway was named for Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906), President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners (1893-1906). Land was acquired in 1907 (*Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners for the year ending December 31, 1907:9* [hereafter *Annual Report*]). The Commissioners noted that the generally 120-foot wide boulevard near the city's northern edge ran through territory "almost entirely denuded of native trees, which if anything, will help to accomplish its distinctive purpose of a prospect pleasure drive . . . For nearly its entire distance the city, with the State Capitol building as a central point, can be seen" (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9). A photograph of 1920 suggests this character.

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**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Wheelock Parkway at Cohansey Street, ca. 1920. (MHS)**

The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; preliminary plans were developed in the same year with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. A first, unspecified section was graded in 1909 (*Annual Report* 1909). By 1910 it was reported that grading was completed, but construction of the two railroad bridges still remained (*Annual Report* 1910:9). Plans published in 1911-12, along with plans for other city parkways, appear to be the only comprehensive set (*Annual Report*, 1909). Much of Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the late 1920s; paving appears to have been completed by 1931 (Saint Paul Public Works General Index Cards). The final section, between Arcade and Johnson Parkway, was completed in 1975. Original lighting plans have not been located, but some of the existing standards were replaced in a 1978 program (Public Works Index Card #5).

Except for bridge construction, paving and other repairs, and sewer improvements, there appear to have been few major alterations to the general parkway design in place by the 1930s. There are more crossings than that shown in the plan of 1911-12.

### **Historic Integrity**

With the exception of a single new cross street, the alignment and landscape character of this Wheelock Parkway median appears to have had no significant alteration since construction. It retains its historic topographical character and alignment as residential development has evolved along its edges. Trees are consistent with an evolving mature landscape. Wheelock Parkway and this median have retained a high level of historic integrity and exhibit the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### **Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway and this median is ca. 1907 through 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Summary and Recommendation**

The median between Edgerton Street and the Soo Line/Gateway State Trail Bridge (RA-SPC-7117) is a generally intact historic landscape feature that contributes to the overall historic significance of the Wheelock Parkway Historic District. This largely residential area of the parkway appears to well represent the landscape intentions of the original park planners. Wheelock Parkway was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, and this median is contributing historic landscape feature (see RA-SPC-5679).

**References**

Birnbaum, Charles A. and Christine Capella Peters, ed. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996.

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**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5680**  
**Saint Paul Parks and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

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**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

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**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Photographs**



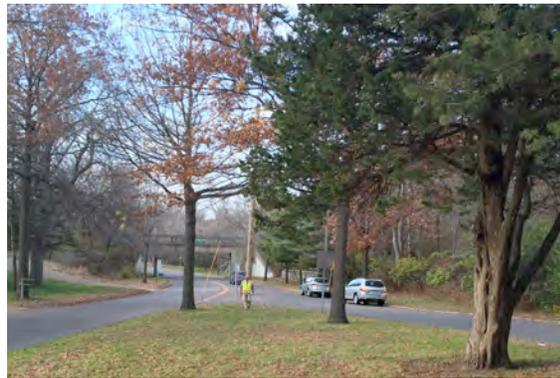
**Wheelock Parkway, central median and two-way roadway, west of Edgerton (7/21/15).**



**Wheelock Parkway sloped median between Desoto and Edgerton Streets, facing east (7/2015).**



**Wheelock Parkway at Edgerton Street, facing west (7/2015).**



**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing west (7/2015).**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Map**



**USGS: Saint Paul East**

**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5680**  
**Saint Paul Parks and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**

**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Wheelock Parkway Median: **SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5681  
Arcade Street to Edgerton Street and Parkway Drive

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:**

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township: 29N Range: 22 Section 20

**UTM:** Easting: 494033.89 Northing: 4981422.70 (intersection with Edgerton Street and Parkway Drive)

Easting: 494735.35 Northing: 4981256.01 (intersection with Arcade Street)

Zone: 15 NAD 83

Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1907-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul, Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2015-2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC

Photos: Carole Zellie and SEH, Inc.

**Description**

The landscaped median between Arcade and Edgerton Street and Parkway Drive is one of two primary central medians along the 4.25-mile course of Wheelock Parkway between Johnson Parkway at the east and E. Como Boulevard and Como Park at the west. (The other, an adjoining median to the east, extends from Edgerton to Arcade Streets and was inventoried as RA-SPC-5680.) The median extends approximately .5 miles northwesterly from Arcade Street to Parkway Drive (formerly White Bear Road) and Edgerton Street. A shallow concrete curb edges the six divisions of the median and there are street crossings at Weide, Walsh, and Greenbrier Streets and at Payne Avenue. The median segments vary in width, most averaging about 50 feet at each midpoint. The flanking paved roadways are approximately 20 feet wide.

The median is grass-covered and planted with a variety of deciduous trees and conifers. These features appear consistent with the character of other Wheelock Parkway medians and boulevards.

The median is framed by a variety of single-family houses; the segment between Greenbrier and Walsh Streets is framed by block-long park triangles. Most residential construction along this area of Wheelock Parkway dates from ca. 1930-1960.

See Wheelock Parkway form RA-SPC-5679 for a discussion of general parkway planning. See also Map, Figure 52.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Median between Arcade and Edgerton Streets, 1940. (MHAPO, University of Minnesota)**

**History**

The planning and construction of Wheelock Parkway was among the first major accomplishments of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners established in 1887. The parkway was named for Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906), President of the Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners (1893-1906). Land was acquired in 1907 (*Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners for the year ending December 31, 1907*:9 [hereafter *Annual Report*]). The Commissioners noted that the generally 120-foot wide boulevard near the city’s northern edge ran through territory “almost entirely denuded of native trees, which if anything, will help to accomplish its distinctive purpose of a prospect pleasure drive . . . For nearly its entire distance the city, with the State Capitol building as a central point, can be seen” (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9). A photograph of 1920 suggests this character.



**Wheelock Parkway at Cohansey Street, ca. 1920. (MHS)**

The City Council approved a resolution in 1907 to acquire 65.88 acres for Wheelock Parkway; preliminary plans were developed in the same year with a boulevard extending 4.25 miles between Lakes Como and Phalen. A first, unspecified section was graded in 1909 (*Annual Report* 1909). By 1910 it was reported that grading was completed, but construction of the two railroad

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

bridges still remained (*Annual Report* 1910:9). Plans published in 1911-12, along with plans for other city parkways, appear to be the only comprehensive set (*Annual Report*, 1909). Much of Wheelock Parkway and the adjoining drive around Lake Phalen remained unpaved into the late 1920s; paving appears to have been completed by 1931 (Saint Paul Public Works General Index Cards). The final section, between Arcade and Johnson Parkway, was completed in 1975. Original lighting plans have not been located, but some of the existing standards were replaced in a 1978 program (Public Works Index Card #5).

Except for bridge construction, paving and other repairs, and sewer improvements there appear to have been few major alterations to the general parkway design in place by the 1930s. As built, there are more crossings than that shown in the plan of 1911-12.

### **Historic Integrity**

Despite additional cross streets, the alignment and landscape character of this Wheelock Parkway median appears to have had no significant alteration since construction. It retains its historic topographical character and alignment as residential development has evolved along its edges. Wheelock Parkway and this median have retained a high level of historic integrity and retain the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### **Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Wheelock Parkway and this median is ca. 1907 through 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity.

### **Summary and Recommendation**

The median between Arcade Street and Parkway Drive and Edgerton Streets is a generally intact historic landscape feature that contributes to the overall significance of the potential Wheelock Parkway Historic District (RA-SPC-5679). This largely residential area of the parkway appears to well represent the landscape intentions of the original planners. Wheelock Parkway was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, and this median is contributing historic landscape feature.

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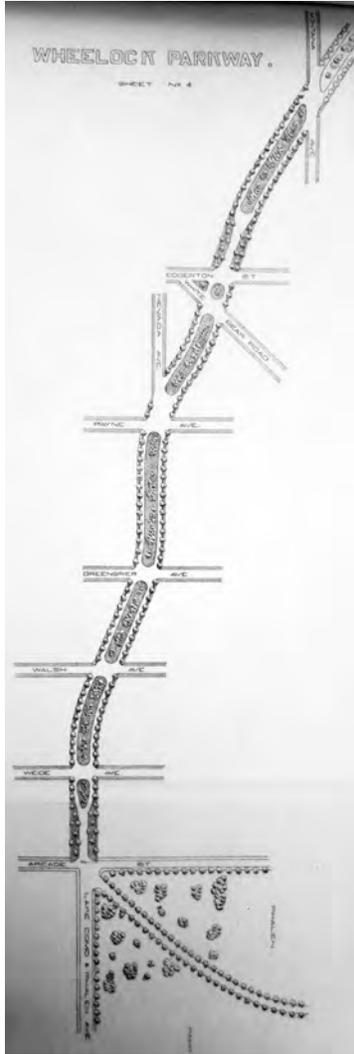
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**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**



**Wheelock Parkway and median, 1911-12 plan as proposed between Arcade and Edgerton Streets (Sheet No. 4, Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners).**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Photographs**



**Typical Wheelock Parkway section with median west of Lake Phalen, facing north. (7/1/2015)**



**Wheelock Parkway median at Greenbrier Street, facing northwest. (7/1/2015)**



**Wheelock Parkway median at Weide Street, looking west (Dan Pratt, 4/1/2016)**



**Wheelock Parkway median at Payne Avenue, looking west. (Dan Pratt, 4/1/2016)**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Map**



USGS: Saint Paul East

**Wheelock Parkway Median between Edgerton Street and Soo Line Bridge RA-SPC-5681**  
**Saint Paul Parks and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**





**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

*Council*, 1914:47-48). The railroads were ordered to pay for this and the other Wheelock Parkway crossing at Rice Street over the Soo Line and Trout Brook (*Engineering and Contracting* September 11, 1912:43). That bridge required an overhead bridge costing about \$23,000. Apparently the matter was not resolved, leading to the emergency ordinance, “rendered necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety” (*Proceedings*:334).

Plans for the wood trestle were signed by Louis Nash, Commissioner of Parks, Playground and Public Buildings, M.N. Goss, Commissioner of Public Works, and Oscar Claussen, Chief Engineer (*Proceedings*:334). The structure was temporary, and was to be replaced within ten years.

More than twenty years passed, however, before the present bridge was completed in 1938. Various plans were prepared. The Parks Commissioners were “very anxious to get rid of present old wood trestle,” and planning for the permanent bridge was underway by 1930. One issue was if the City or railroad companies were responsible for construction. The City was concerned with the aesthetics of the bridge along a public parkway. The choice to clad the steel bridge in concrete was debated by the Saint Paul Parks Commissioner and the City. In a letter to Public Works Commissioner, Milton Rosen, Parks Commissioner George L. Nason noted that it was desirable to not make the bridge look like a concrete structure, but rather to express its steel construction. Sheet steel and ornamentation in the form of rosettes was proposed (Nason to Rosen, September 8, 1930; on file Saint Paul Bridge Division).

Plans were prepared by the Minnesota State Highway Department (Construction Plan for Ramsey County Project 62-24, on file, St. Paul Bridge Division). The bridge engineer is identified as M. Hoffman.

Saint Paul was the recipient of various federal programs during this decade, including bridge and construction projects funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). However, this project was recorded as Federal Aid Project No 566A, and in September 1937 funds apportioned to the State under the Federal Aid Grade Crossing Program were used for construction. The City of Saint Paul agreed to provide funds for maintenance. The receiver of the bankrupt Wisconsin Central Railway was also a party to the agreement. (“Agreement Between the State of Minnesota, Department of Highways, City of Saint Paul, September 22, 1937;” on file, Saint Paul Bridge Division.)

### **Integrity**

Bridge MN 5592 occupies its original location and retains its historic setting along Wheelock Parkway. Although now a pedestrian bridge, it retains its historic use as a parkway crossing. The registration requirements in the “Iron and Steel Bridges in Minnesota MPDF” note that to be “eligible for the National Register, the superstructure itself must be in substantially original condition, including the connections and the composition and configuration of individual composite members. Because the superstructure is the most important features of bridges in the property type, neither an original substructure nor an original deck and guardrail system are necessary for the bridge to be eligible (although these original components may add to the significance of the bridge)” (Quivik and Martin 1988:F8). Bridge MN 5592 has been adaptively reused as part of the Gateway Trail. Railbed features such as tracks and equipment were removed and the deck paved with bituminous.

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

It appears to retain the components of its 1938 design and most of its historic features including the railing. The superstructure retains its original design and integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. As the bridge retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, and materials, it retains its integrity of feeling and association. Overall, Bridge MN 5592 retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance.

**Significance**

Bridge MN 5592 is one of two railroad bridges predating 1945 along Wheelock Parkway. The other railroad bridge, at Rice Street, was completely reconstructed in 2014. The parkway links Como and Phalen Lakes and, as ordered by the City of Saint Paul and eventually completed with Federal Aid Grade Crossing Program funds, it is a contributing property within the parkway landscape under Criterion A. The construction of Wheelock Parkway secured the important northern link of the Saint Paul Parkway system between the lakes, as envisioned by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and executed by Parks Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer. The period of significance is 1938, the date of construction.

**Recommendation**

Bridge MN 5592 is a contributing historic structure of the Wheelock Parkway Historic District under Criterion A and may also be individually eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. The SHPO database indicates a previous evaluation (not located) that recommended this property is not eligible, therefore more research is needed.

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**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Photographs**



**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing west (7/1/2015).**



**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing west (7/1/2015).**



**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing southwest (7/1/2015)**



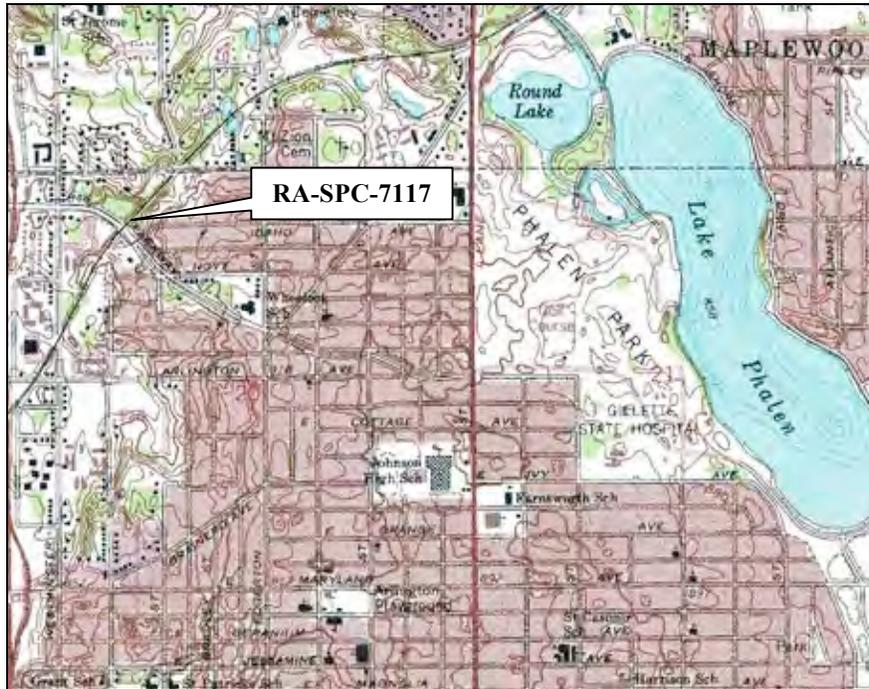
**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing southwest (7/1/2015).**



**MN Bridge 5592, Soo Line Railway Bridge, facing west, (7/1/2015).**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Map**



**USGS: Saint Paul East**

**Wheelock Parkway – MN Bridge 5592 – Soo Line Gateway State Trail RA-SPC-7117**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

**Historic Name:** Johnson Parkway

**SHPO Inventory:** RA-SPC-5685

**Other Name:**

**City/County:** Saint Paul, Ramsey

**Acreage:** 52.87 acres

**Owner:** City of Saint Paul Township: 29N Range: 22W Sections: 21, 27, 28, 33

**UTM:** Easting: 496233.54 Northing: 4980594.24 (intersection with Wheelock Parkway)

Easting: 496779.08 Northing: 4977989.63 (intersection with Burns Avenue)

Zone: 15 NAD 83

Datum: 1983

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**Construction Date:** ca. 1916-

**Landscape Architect and/or Engineer** Frederick Nussbaumer, Saint Paul Park Superintendent

**Project Name:** City of Saint Paul Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, 2016

**Date Surveyed:** 2/1/2016 By: Carole Zellie, Landscape Research LLC

Photos: Carole Zellie and SEH

### **Description**

Johnson Parkway is 2.14 miles long between Burns Avenue at the south and the intersection with Wheelock Parkway at the north. As planned by 1916 it encompassed 52.87 acres (1916 *Annual Report* :28).

#### *Topography*

Johnson Parkway winds across diverse terrain at its southern end and has one historic railroad bridge at Case Avenue.

#### *Parkway Form and Circulation*

The central roadway flanked by planted medians and tree-lined, flanking roadways is an important landscape characteristic. This “three-roadway” system is interrupted at bridge crossings and north of E. 7th Street. The parkway narrows to forty feet under the Union Pacific Bridge at Case Avenue and at the underpass for I-94. Alterations include the apparent removal of the western frontage street between Bush Avenue and E. 7th Street. The west frontage street has curbs to halt crossing at E. 3rd Street. South of E. 7th street trees include elm and oak, some apparently dating from the early planting design. Shallow concrete curbs line the roadway. The parkway segment north of the (east-west) Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company right-of-way does not maintain the three-road system. Prosperity Avenue, north of the right-of-way, parallels the corridor between Ames and Magnolia Avenues and young trees line the parkway.

#### *Housing Character*

Most residential construction along Johnson Parkway appears to postdate parkway development. Housing between Burns Avenue and I-94 dates from the 1940s and 1950s and is predominately one-story, Ranch-style homes. Housing between I-94 and E. 3rd Street includes one- or one-and one-half-story, Period Revival style houses dating from the late 1920s and 1930s. Houses between E. 3rd and E. 7th Streets face the parkway and most date from the 1930s and 1940s. However, much of the residential fabric in the two-block area between E. 7th Street and the

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company (later Union Pacific) right-of-way dates from the 1870s and 1880s and pre-dates the parkway. Some of these properties are likely associated with the area's early factories and railroad employment. Residential construction north of the railroad right-of-way dates from the 1940s and later.

**Historic Landscape Features**

**Major features:** Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Bridge; central medians

**General features:** roadway and curbs; sidewalks north of E. 7th Street; bridge; landscape; natural features

**Non-contributing features:** Phalen Parkway intersection area; **commercial intersections.**

**History**

Unlike Wheelock Parkway to the northwest, by 1910 much of the area between Indian Mounds Park and Lake Phalen had significant residential development as well as large industrial plants. The southern end of the corridor crossed the Point Douglas and Hudson Roads, both early connectors to outlying Ramsey and Washington County. By 1891, the Milwaukee Wheel and Foundry Company, later Northwest Wheel and Foundry Company and the Griffin Wheel Company, manufacturers of train and streetcar wheels, occupied a large plant at the western edge of the Parkway, bounded by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad tracks (Sanborn Map 1927; 941 Johnson Parkway, razed).

Earl Street was initially considered as a potential parkway route linking Mounds Park with Lake Phalen, but it was unsuitable because of its many railroad crossings and other land use conflicts. The Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners considered acquisition of the present Johnson Parkway route in 1909 and on December 6, 1909 the City Council passed a resolution to begin survey and condemnation (Saint Paul Public Works). A working plan was developed in 1910 and the plan was included in the *Saint Paul Board of Commissioners Annual Report* for 1911 (dated 1912), but grading and paving did not begin until 1916. The first graded segment of Johnson Parkway, completed from Burns Street to E. 7th Street, was forty feet wide with two, twenty-foot drive lanes (Saint Paul Public Works). This segment was generally completed as proposed in the 1911 plan, with a central parkway and residential frontage roads paralleling the parkway.

It was noted in 1916 that it was to be “regretted that this parkway had to be replanned, in order to comply with the clamor of the interested citizens to have it graded, when sufficient funds were not available to carry out the original plan which provided for double roadways at convenient contour lines. This would have benefitted the improvement and the adjacent property to an extent vastly more in value than the amount necessary to complete the improvement on its original plans” (*Annual Report*, 1916:2). “Double roadways” seem to have been accomplished along much of the route, so exactly which “original plan” is referenced is not clear. It may have referred to a delay in grading and planting the side medians (*Annual Report*, 1917:11).

The route between Burns and Conway Streets at the south triangulated around several small ponds and steep slopes before reaching more level ground to the north. Completion of Johnson Parkway from E. 7th Street to the connection with Wheelock Parkway at Lake Phalen was delayed until land acquisition and railroad negotiations with the Northern Pacific Duluth line in the 1920s. The segment between Jessamine and Maryland Avenues was completed in 1925 (Saint Paul Public Works). Construction was coordinated with the completion of the Belt Line Interceptor, a tunnel that diverts Phalen Creek from Swede Hollow to its Mississippi River outlet near the former Saint Paul Fish Hatchery. Interceptor construction was underway during the

**MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE – HISTORY INVENTORY FORM**  
**Saint Paul Park and Parkway System, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota**

1920s (Passi 2014). The route of the interceptor is shown as the “Water Department Right of Way” on the 1916 Hopkins Map.

Portions of Johnson Parkway were paved by the 1930s; the segment between Burns and Earl was planned in 1930, E. 7th Street and Stillwater Avenue (near present-day Ames Avenue E.) in 1931 and the segment from Stillwater Avenue and Maryland Avenue E. in 1932 (Saint Paul Public Works).

The parkway pinched under the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Company Bridge (later Union Pacific; 1906; RA-SPC-5686). The four-track bridge was designed by the American Bridge Company of New York and has a plate girder with I-beam approaches. The St. Paul and Duluth Railroad (later Northern Pacific) originally paralleled Johnson Parkway at the west and crossed to the east side of Lake Phalen at the south end. Johnson Parkway crossed over the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks near Jessamine Street. The tracks have been removed.

Alterations include a 1959 rerouting between Hudson Road and Wakefield Avenue. Prosperity Avenue at the west of Johnson Parkway was rebuilt in 1963. Johnson Parkway was further altered with the 1964 construction and subsequent widening of Interstate 94, which partially follows the route of the old Hastings Road. In 1999, Phalen Boulevard was completed to connect the east side of Saint Paul to I-35E, requiring a new interchange at Johnson Parkway south of Maryland Avenue. The new roadway was partially placed in the vacated Northern Pacific rail corridor. New ornamental lighting was installed in 1978-1980 (St. Paul Public Works). Johnson Parkway was named in honor of John A. Johnson, Governor of Minnesota from 1904 to 1908 (Empson 2006:144).

### **Significance and Evaluation**

Johnson Parkway provided the important north-south link between Indian Mounds Park and Lake Phalen, then linking to Wheelock Parkway en route to Lake Como. Such a linked system was envisioned by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and executed by Parks Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer. Johnson Parkway has not been previously evaluated for significance as a designed historic landscape contributing to the history of Saint Paul’s urban and public park development. There are no adjacent properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or locally designated by the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission.

The historic contexts developed for the “North Loop of Saint Paul’s Grand Round: A History and Evaluation of Historic Resources” (Zellie and Lucas 2016), and additional research including Saint Paul Public Works Department archives and other City of Saint Paul records, provide the basis for this inventory and preliminary evaluation. Under National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) guidelines, historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, State, or the nation. It is based on:

- Criterion A: Association with events, activities, or patterns
- Criterion B: Association with important persons
- Criterion C: Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form
- Criterion D: Potential to yield important archaeological information.

Properties must retain historic integrity to be significant. Integrity is defined as the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed

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during the property's prehistoric or historic period. The qualities of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association (NRHP Bulletin 15 and 16A). Johnson Parkway was evaluated under Criterion A for its association with the early-twentieth century development of Saint Paul's park and parkway system.

*National Precedents*

Saint Paul and Minneapolis leaders were well aware of the role of landscape architecture and park making in the progress of other American cities in the post-Civil War period. In various incarnations, improved public health and belief in the moral benefit of exposure to nature were at the foundation of the effort. The belief that nature uplifted public morality, especially for the newly arrived immigrant and working poor, fueled early park development in densely populated cities; the success of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux with New York's Central Park and the postwar development of their designs for Prospect Park and the Brooklyn system headlined efforts nationally. Olmsted was also retained for work with Vaux in Chicago for the South Park System (1870) and in Boston to design the Back Bay Fens Park and Parkway (1873), the first extension of what would become the Emerald Necklace. His work in Buffalo (1879) would be among the first extensive park and boulevard systems completed in the United States.

*Horace William Shaler Cleveland*

In 1869, H.W.S. Cleveland (1814-1900), a native of Massachusetts and with experience with cemetery and park design in New England and New York, established in Chicago one of the first landscape architectural practices in the Midwest (Neckar 1995; Nadencik 2001). With his partner William Merchant French (1843-1914), the firm of Cleveland and French implemented Olmsted's designs for Chicago's South Park district including Drexel Boulevard and what would become Washington Park. Cleveland published many articles and pamphlets in this period, including the *Public Grounds of Chicago: How to Give them Character and Expression* (1869), where he offered direction on the planting of boulevards as arboreta, recommending that many species be "artistically combined" (Cleveland 1869:7-18).

*Cleveland and Saint Paul: 1872-1894*

In February 1872 Cleveland presented an address, "The Application of Landscape Architecture to the Wants of the West," to the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce. He urged the immediate acquisition of valuable parklands, especially the bluffs along the Mississippi River gorge (*Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1872:1; *St. Paul Pioneer*, February 9, 13, 16, 17, 1872).

Cleveland was next invited by the Common Council to make a "general outline report, upon the proper location of Parks, Wide Avenues, Public Squares, and other improvements, on a scale suitable to the wants of a crowded city." "A Park System for the City of St. Paul," delivered on June 24, 1872, cited the success of older cities such as New York and Chicago in creating park systems (Cleveland 1872:14). He urged St. Paul to preserve what "nature had furnished without cost." The Mississippi River gorge between Minneapolis and St. Paul provided the framework for his park-making ideas for both cities. He envisioned the opening of "spacious avenues radiating in such directions as will be most frequented by future travel." Such a boulevard provided fresh air, fire protection, and would be within easy access of "all classes of citizens." His scheme was envisioned to include creation of a Riverside Park and several linkages to Minneapolis, including the "Union Parkway" via Summit Avenue and 34th Avenue S. across the river; he observed, "St Paul and Minneapolis eventually, and at no distant day, will become virtually one city"

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(Cleveland 1872:13; 1885:27). He repeated this call to unite the cities with connecting parkways in another lecture thirteen years later (Cleveland 1885:28).

*Como and Phalen Lakes*

In addition to the river, Saint Paul's northern lakes were cited for their potential use as a water supply and their "aesthetic advantages" (Cleveland 1872:14). Cleveland recommended acquisition of Como and Phalen Lakes, urging that the city connect them "with the city and with each other, by avenues befitting the wants of the time" (Cleveland 1872:15).

At the time of these early visits to St. Paul, Cleveland was preparing *Landscape Architecture As Applied to the Wants of the West* (1873), his manifesto on the role he proposed for landscape architecture in shaping the country's fast-growing new cities. Central to this approach would be the park and parkway system described in his lectures and the book.

On June 19, 1885, Cleveland addressed the Saint Paul Common Council and Chamber of Commerce on "Park Ways and Ornamental Parks: the Best System for St. Paul." This plan, printed and bound with his 1872 address as *Public Parks, Radial Avenues and Boulevards: Outline Plan for a Park System for the City of St. Paul*, was the framework for his remaining work with the city. Once again, he called for preservation of the city's natural gifts. He noted, "your opportunity today is to avail yourselves of the advantages which nature has provided to your hand, for the inauguration of such as system of improvements as shall be in keeping with the demands of the future populations." As always, the river was his organizing principle for St. Paul and he reiterated his approval of boulevards, which he saw as "an extended park, immediately accessible from the adjacent streets, enlivened by all the features of busy life which render the adjacent streets, enlivened by all the features of busy life which render the streets themselves attractive." (Cleveland 1885:25). He acknowledged that such boulevards would receive increasing amounts of traffic.

Cleveland did not revisit planning for Como or Phalen parks in the 1885 plan. Preserving the city's forest, and especially its bluffs, was his focus. He noted opportunities to reserve some areas that he had suggested in 1872 "are now beyond possibility of such development" (Cleveland 1885:29). He reiterated his preference for the landscape gardener's role to serve as the high priest of Nature: "to interpret her language and develop her suggestions . . . without 'artificial decorations'."

*Cleveland and the St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners*

Cleveland relocated his office to Minneapolis in 1886 and was occupied by his work for the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners. The Saint Paul Board of Park Commissioners was organized in February 1887 (*Annual Report* 1888:821-22). In June 1887 the Board of Park Commissioners voted to hire Cleveland for work on the city's parks, but this appointment does not appear to have become effective until 1888 (*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, June 5, 1887:3). Cleveland's Como Park plans as printed in 1889 and 1890 showed curvilinear paths and roadways that edged the rolling hills west of the lake (Cleveland 1889, 1890). The plan did not rely on new ornamental plantings, but rather the existing stands of native oak and new trees, shrubs and vines. A parkway edged the lakeshore and connected to Como Avenue.

In 1889 the Minnesota State Legislature passed an act authorizing the City of St. Paul to issue bonds for the acquisition, improvement and maintenance of public parks. Other acts authorized

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bonds for the improvement of Lake Como, and acquisition of the Indian Mounds on Dayton's Bluff for a public park (Castle 1912:372-3).

For his concurrent Minneapolis work, Cleveland collaborated with park board presidents William W. Folwell and Charles M. Loring, who shared his appreciation for naturalistic landscapes. During the 1906-1935 tenure of Minneapolis park superintendent Theodore Wirth, Cleveland's approach would be modified to accommodate active recreation, automobiles, and increased leisure time, and a different park-making aesthetic that often emphasized the beautiful over the picturesque. In Saint Paul, Frederick Nussbaumer inherited the Cleveland legacy and similarly responded to these mandates.

In 1890 Cleveland and Superintendent Estabrook supervised improvement of Summit Avenue between Lexington and the Mississippi River, and extensive work on Como Park was also completed (*Annual Report* 1891:231). By 1891, Cleveland's role in St. Paul had apparently ended. There may have been some discord; board member William Van Slyke stated in March 1890 that he did not "like the idea of employing a Minneapolis man to lay out St. Paul parks," and questioned Cleveland's \$125 monthly fee. According to the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Van Slyke thought St. Paul parks should differ from Minneapolis and "should not be designed by the same hand" (*Minneapolis Tribune* March 29, 1890:8). Although he continued to work in Minneapolis on plans for Powderhorn Park (with the assistance of his son, Ralph D. Cleveland, 1851-1918), Cleveland moved back to Chicago in ca. 1894 (Tishler 1985:290).

*Superintendent Frederick Nussbaumer: 1891-1922*

George Frederick Nussbaumer (1850-1935) inherited Cleveland's general ideas for a park system that preserved the city's natural features, but at Como Park he particularly demonstrated his own interest in floral and decorative effects. A native of Baden, Germany with engineering and horticultural training, he worked as a florist prior to first being hired as a Como Park gardener in 1887. He was hired as Superintendent in 1891 (Schmidt 2002:48). Like Theodore Wirth, a native of Switzerland who was hired as Minneapolis park superintendent in 1906, Nussbaumer was influenced by European training while also participating in the development of modern municipal park management; both, for example, had leadership roles in the American Association of Park Superintendents. The promoter and guardian of the early St. Paul parks was Joseph A. Wheelock (1831-1906). A native of Nova Scotia and a St. Paul pioneer, he co-founded the *St. Paul Daily Press* in 1861. He was President of the St. Paul Board of Park Commissioners from 1893 until his death.

Development of Como Park was the primary early accomplishment of its new commission, and the infusion of \$25,000 in bonds in 1891 allowed Nussbaumer to complete Como Lake Drive (Schmidt 2002:48). Generally following Cleveland's 1890 plan, the superintendent also developed elaborate floral displays through the park, and added bridges and exotic plants including summertime palms, topiaries, and the popular "gates ajar." The completion of the Como Park Conservatory in 1915 (NRHP) would be a crowning achievement for Nussbaumer and the commission (Schmidt 2002:48).

Saint Paul's population rose from 160,000 in 1900 to 214,000 in 1910, and parks were increasingly needed to meet the needs of the 52.2-square mile city. By 1908, work on Wheelock Parkway on other boulevards was ongoing despite an almost continual struggle for funding. This historic system includes Mounds Park Boulevard, Johnson Parkway, Midway Parkway, Pelham Boulevard and Mississippi River Boulevard. Through Como Park, the parkway is continued on parkway-like streets, and links to Midway Parkway, which joins Snelling Avenue and connects to

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the Minnesota State Fair Grounds and the University of Minnesota St. Paul campus. The parkway route to the river is somewhat discontinued along Como and Raymond Avenues. South of University Avenue, the parkway resumes with Pelham Boulevard, which intersects with Mississippi River Boulevard.

*After Nussbaumer: 1922-1945, and Beyond*

Superintendents Earl L. Finney (1922-23), William T. March (1923-24), George L. Nason (1924-32) and William Kaufman (1932-1966) succeeded Nussbaumer. Nason oversaw the acquisition and improvement of more than 30 playgrounds and athletic fields during the relatively prosperous years preceding the Depression. Como Park was improved with a golf course (1930) and expanded zoo (1930-) and continued to be the central hub of the system. The Depression and World War II economies during Kaufman's administration generally placed further parkway improvement on hold, but Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds would assist in some parkway construction and maintenance, especially along the River Boulevard during the 1930s and early 1940s.

The term Grand Rounds was suggested for the Minneapolis parkway system by William Watts Folwell in 1890, and became widely used (*Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners Annual Report* 1890: 25-26). The idea of an outer-park regional system based on a "Grand Round Boulevard" was explored by City Planner and Engineer George H. Herrold and others in the 1920s (Herrold 1928: 4a). More recently, the term "Grand Round" appears to have been applied to the Saint Paul parkway system in planning studies in ca. 2000.

**Historic Landscape Characteristics and Integrity**

Johnson Parkway's historic character-defining landscape features include topography, vegetation, circulation patterns, buildings and structures, and objects and small-scale features.

The design of Johnson Parkway, as proposed in the plans of ca. 1911, spanned irregular terrain stretching from the pond-studded backslope of Mounds Park to the marshy south shore of Lake Phalen. Two railroad crossings and existing neighborhood grids were negotiated. As was the case along Wheelock Parkway, relatively little filling was used to smooth irregularities, as evident at many locations. Broad panels of grass, ornamented with naturalistic plantings or street trees that lined sidewalks north of E. 7th Street, characterize much of the alignment. Also like Wheelock Parkway, the grassy medians add to the overall naturalistic feeling while also providing a formal division of the roadway. Likely the route passed through some stands of pre-existing trees including mature oak, although the park board noted in that portions of the area were "denuded" (*Annual Report*, December 31, 1907:9).

The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway Bridge Bridge at Case Avenue (1906; RA-SPC-5686) is the only historic bridge along the route. No examples of historic lighting were identified.

**Period of Significance**

The period of significance for Johnson Parkway is ca. 1916 to 1945. This period spans initial land acquisition, grading and construction to the end of most design and construction activity including that funded by the Works Progress Administration.

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**Historic Integrity**

Despite major reengineering of cross-routes including I-94 and the Northern Pacific rail corridor replaced by Phalen Boulevard, Johnson Parkway has retained a high level of historic integrity and retains the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Although commercial land use and freeway construction has resulted in alteration to the qualities of setting, feeling, and association, the overall integrity is good.

**Summary and Recommendation**

The Johnson Parkway Historic District is recommended as potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A as a component of Saint Paul’s historic park and parkway system. The parkway is between Burns Avenue at the south and the intersection with Wheelock Parkway at the north. The parkway is significant for its association with the NRHP themes of Community Planning and Development, Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Landscape Architecture and Engineering.

Johnson Parkway, constructed incrementally after ca. 1916 and apparently substantially completed by 1931, is an early component of the city’s historic parkway system and made a significant contribution to the growth of St. Paul. Most of the parkway retains a good level of historic integrity, with many unaltered landscape features from the original design.

Further study and evaluation of its contributing landscape features and other Saint Paul parkway segments will assist in determining if Johnson Parkway is also contributing to a Saint Paul Parkway Historic District.

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**Photographs**



**Johnson Parkway (at right), and Prosperity Avenue (at left), looking south (7/1/2015).**



**Johnson Parkway (at left), frontage road (center), and Conway Street (angled at right), looking south (7/1/2015).**



**Johnson Parkway at Hudson Street, looking north (7/1/2015).**



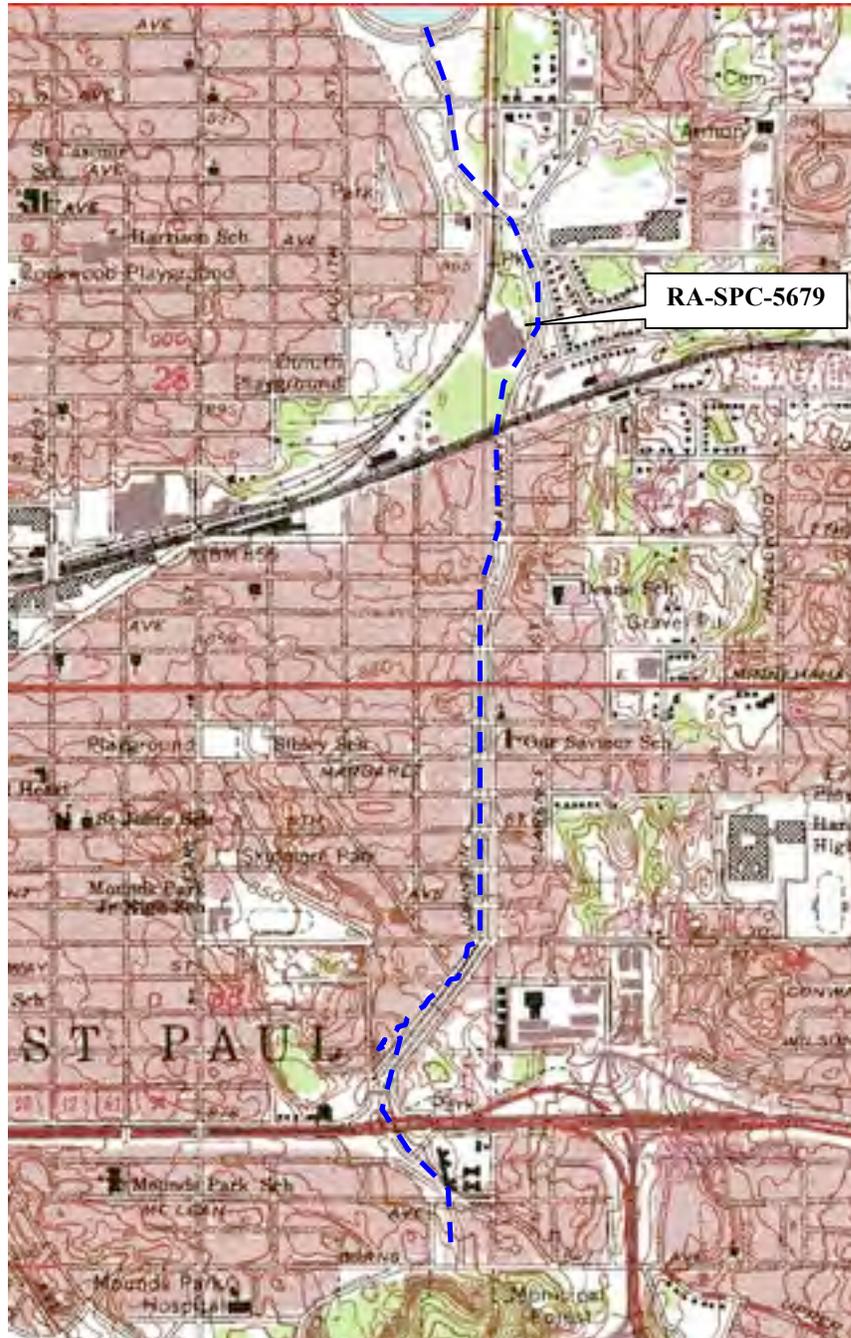
**Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Bridge over Johnson Parkway, north of Case Ave. E. (1906), facing north (7/1/2015)**



**Abandoned Northern Pacific rail corridor, looking north to Lake Phalen; Johnson Parkway is at right (7/1/2015).**

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Map (See also Figure 52)



USGS St. Paul East

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