Transportation

The transportation network within our district is a part of a regional system. What happens regionally with transportation affects our local area. This plan must consider those impacts and provide a framework for us to assure that the effects are positive for us.

In this plan we consider all modes of transportation and the needs of all community members, including elders and children, the disabled and the able-bodied, all economic classes, recreational travelers and commuters, and members of all cultural communities.
We see transportation as a vital mechanism to drive economic well-being of both residents and businesses in this neighborhood, and recognize the intimate ties between transportation and land use. This plan is created in recognition of, and incorporates, previously approved land use plans, including the Mississippi River Corridor Standards, the Highwood Plan, the Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan, the White Bear Avenue Plan, the Red Rock Corridor Station Area Plan, and a variety of parks and trails plans listed in Appendix A. It is created within the context of the 2010 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.

A healthy neighborhood is dependent on both a healthy business district and economic opportunities for residents, both of which are dependent on a strong and connected transportation system. A part of the economic impact of transportation is the funding for projects to build out those transportation systems. We recognize that funding for all forms of transportation has been and will likely continue to be challenged by constraints on available public funding. We believe that public funding should be limited to transportation that is accessible to the broad general public. Public funds should not be used for private transportation facilities or publicly owned transportation facilities that have long-term exclusive leases for private use unless the funds are fully reimbursed through lease payments. Diversion of funds for private use diverts funding from much needed public facilities and creates an unfair competitive advantage among competing businesses. With this understanding, the District 1 Community Council will seek out opportunities to assure that public funding finds its way to our neighborhoods so that our residents and businesses can participate in the economic development that arises from such projects with public benefit.

Sun Ray Transit Center

In addition to its economic implications, transportation has a strong environmental component: we see transportation as a way to create and maintain healthier natural and social settings in our district. We focus on ways to increase the livability of our neighborhoods through developing a healthy transportation system. A healthy transportation system is one that embodies connectedness among and within all

modes for moving about the area. This plan will attempt to balance specificity of projects with overall flexibility in order to accommodate a changing political and economic environment while meeting neighborhood needs. Our overall goal with this transportation plan is to build on the positive of what we have or want to have, and to work to minimize or reduce the negative.

Sun Ray Shopping Center

Contents:

- Pedestrian Travel
- Biking
- Vehicular Access (Cars)
- Transit
    - Regional
    - Local
- Commercial Transportation
    - Trains
    - Trucks

Pedestrian Travel Objectives and Strategies

Walking through a neighborhood provides abundant benefits to a community and its members. For the purpose of this document, walking includes transportation by wheelchair or other assistive modes, and pedestrians include persons who use these modes for individual transportation. Having more feet on the street slows traffic, builds a sense of community, and deters crime. Walking for short trips saves money over driving and it promotes health.

District 1 is a large, predominantly residential district with abundant parks offering recreational walking opportunities. It has concentrated business districts in only a few places, which were designed originally to be accessed primarily via automobiles. Its residential character features areas of either relatively low density, single-family homes or high density, multi-family housing, often along extra long blocks. As a result of this distinct combination of variables, the area is not ideally configured to encourage walking as a means to get from place to place.

The goal of this plan is to expand opportunities throughout the year for all residents in all portions of the district, regardless of age or physical ability, to choose walking for their local trips; for recreational purposes; for accessing other modes of transportation, especially transit, for mid- to long-range trips; and to increase their health and economic well-being, as well as for creating a safer community.

T1. Establish zoning throughout the district where appropriate to create a more pedestrian-friendly community.

T1.1 work with interns and city staff to complete 40-acre studies to assess current zoning;

Typical housing and streets

T1.2 work with individual landowners and neighborhoods to identify current incompatibilities between zoning and land use;

T1.3 support use of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and pedestrian scaled projects as outlined in the Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan, and the White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan.

T2. Complete the sidewalk network emphasizing accessibility and safety for all community members (see figure T-1).

T2.1 Work with neighbors affected by RSVP projects to include sidewalk and lighting upgrades;

T2.2 Apply for CIB funding to upgrade sidewalks, lighting and pedestrian trails and overpasses.

Entrance to Battle Creek Regional Park

T2.3 Work with public organizations (schools, rec centers, the library) and community members on Safe Routes projects and to develop Complete Streets throughout the district;

T2.4 Work with neighbors and public entities to complete the trail network where it is the alternative to a sidewalk network.

T3. Repair sidewalks so they are smooth, and educate residents and businesses to keep them clear of low-hanging or over-hanging vegetation and snow so that all users can safely access the sidewalks as well as the homes and businesses along them.

T3.1 survey sidewalk conditions throughout the district by enlisting residents, block clubs and volunteer groups;

T3.2 apply for CIB funding to upgrade sidewalks, lighting, bridges and pedestrian overpasses;

T3.3 distribute information about residents' responsibilities to keep sidewalks clear through new neighbor packets and other outreach efforts; work with such groups as St. Paul Smart Trips to make this information available.

T4. Assure that all pedestrians can safely cross streets and access key destinations throughout the district and throughout the year.

T4.1 establish marked crosswalks at key intersections;

T4.2 educate pedestrians and motorists about safety concerns when transportation modes mingle through use of newspaper articles, blogs, partnerships with schools and other organizations;

T4.3 support traffic-calming efforts within neighborhoods, and work with schools, rec centers and the library on Safe Routes programs;

T4.4 work with neighbors and city staff on an on-going basis to identify and address locations where safety of pedestrians is a concern;

T4.5 work with developers on proposed projects to increase the pedestrian accessibility and orientation in business districts;

T4.6 work with Metro Transit to locate transit stops along major pedestrian routes;

T4.7 work with Ramsey County and other partners to install and maintain benches at key locations and appropriate intervals along major pedestrian routes;

T4.8 work with MnDOT to make the I-94 pedestrian overpass

wheelchair accessible;

T4.9 work with Parks, property owners to assure that public sidewalks are kept clear of obstructions, including snow.

T5. Provide recreational walking opportunities for residents and visitors throughout the district.

T5.1 support completion of pedestrian/bike path along Lower Afton Rd through Battle Creek Park;

T5.2 support completion of park trails that access the riverfront throughout the district and to Pigs Eye Lake, and of river corridor and river bluff trails, including the system between districts and municipalities as outlined in the park plans listed in Appendix A;

T5.3 support maintenance of pedestrian paths through and around all parks, including during the winter months.

Examples of Locations Needing Attention with respect to Pedestrian Concerns:

1) see figure T-1 for incomplete sidewalk system – includes south side of Burns Avenue between Ruth St. and Suburban Ave.; Pederson St. between Conway Rec Center and 5th Street; around Suburban Pond, especially along south side of Suburban Avenue;

2) Pedestrian crossings at highway 61 and Burns Ave; Ruth and Burns; McKnight and Burlington; Etna and 3rd St.; White Bear Ave and I-94; Ruth St. and I-94; streets near Harding High School; 3rd St and White Bear; White Bear Ave and Minnehaha Ave; McKnight and I-94/Old Hudson.

3) Bridges over I-94 at White Bear Ave and Ruth Street;

4) Pedestrian overpass along I-94 near Highway 61 – this overpass is currently not wheelchair accessible (2011);

5) Snow removal of public sidewalks around and within public areas such as Conway Park (Ruth Street);

6) Parks, bluff and riverfront trails as shown in figure W-2, but not exclusive to these.

FIGURES T2-T5: Trail maps for parks areas in and around District 1. The trails shown in these maps are expected to extend into District 1. Parks plans emphasize establishing a trail system along the bluffs among Mounds, Battle Creek, Taylor, Henry and Fish Creek Parks and the Highwood Nature Preserve, and to complete the trail system along the river.

The next few pages represent trail maps from established parks plans. Maps - not included, but still incorporated by reference - are trail maps from the Great River Passage Plan.

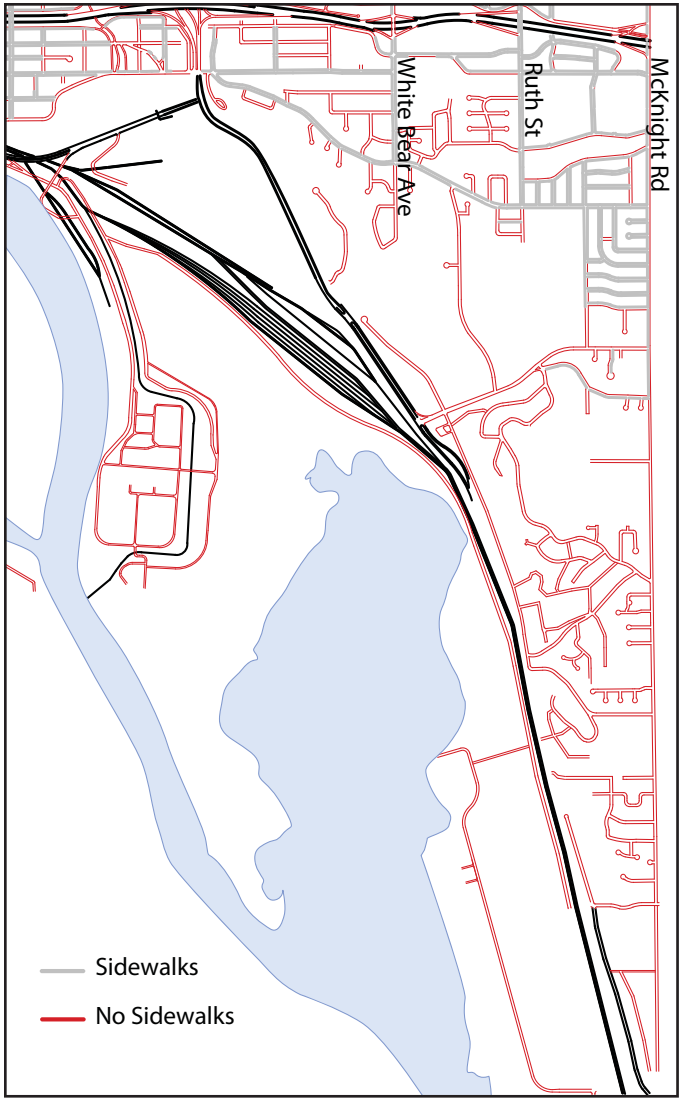


Figure T1

Gaps in the sidewalk system for District 1. Please note that the Highwood Plan places restrictions on adding sidewalks in the southern part of the district. Areas lacking sidewalks are shown in yellow.

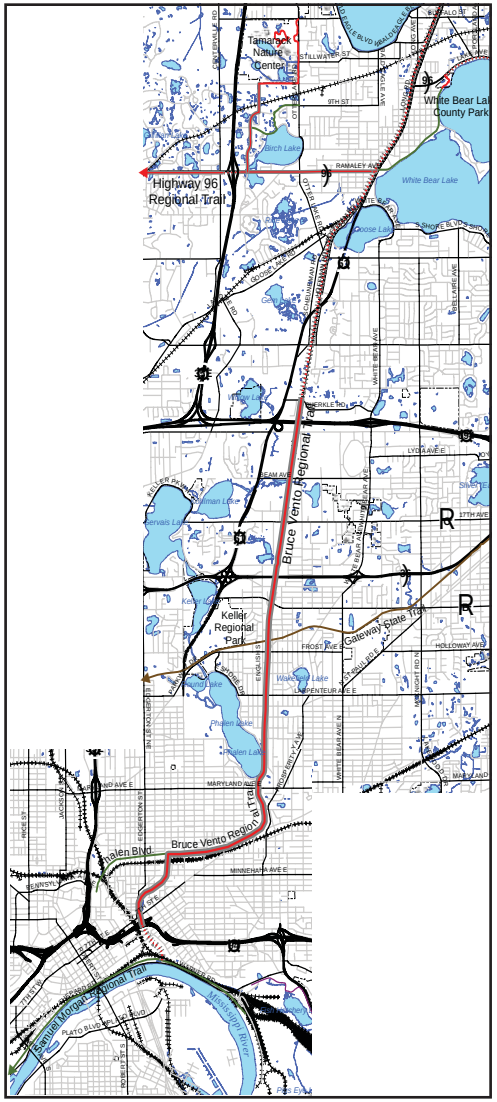


Figure T2

Bruce Vento Regional Trail

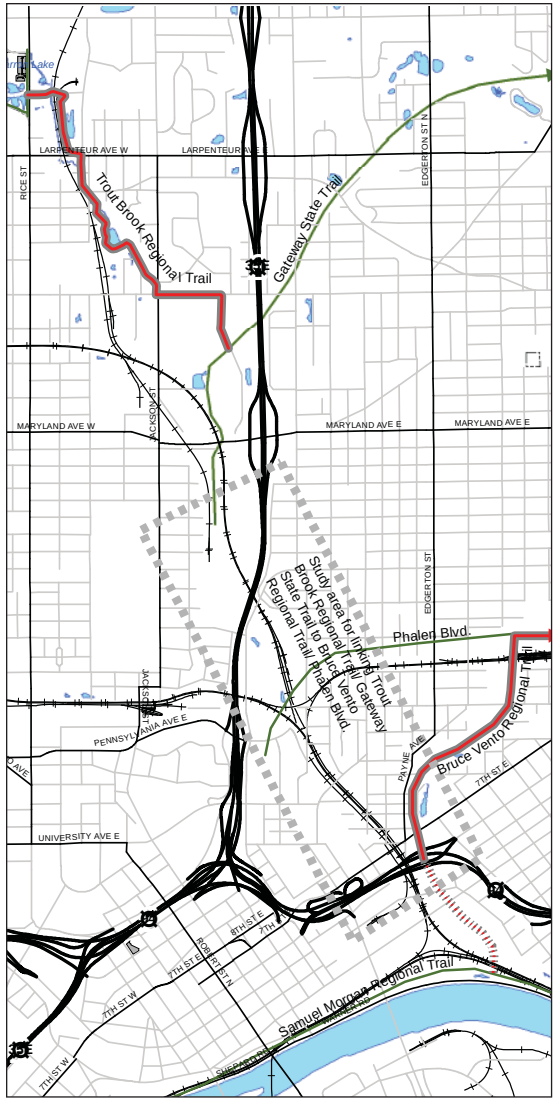


Figure T3

Trout Brook Regional Trail

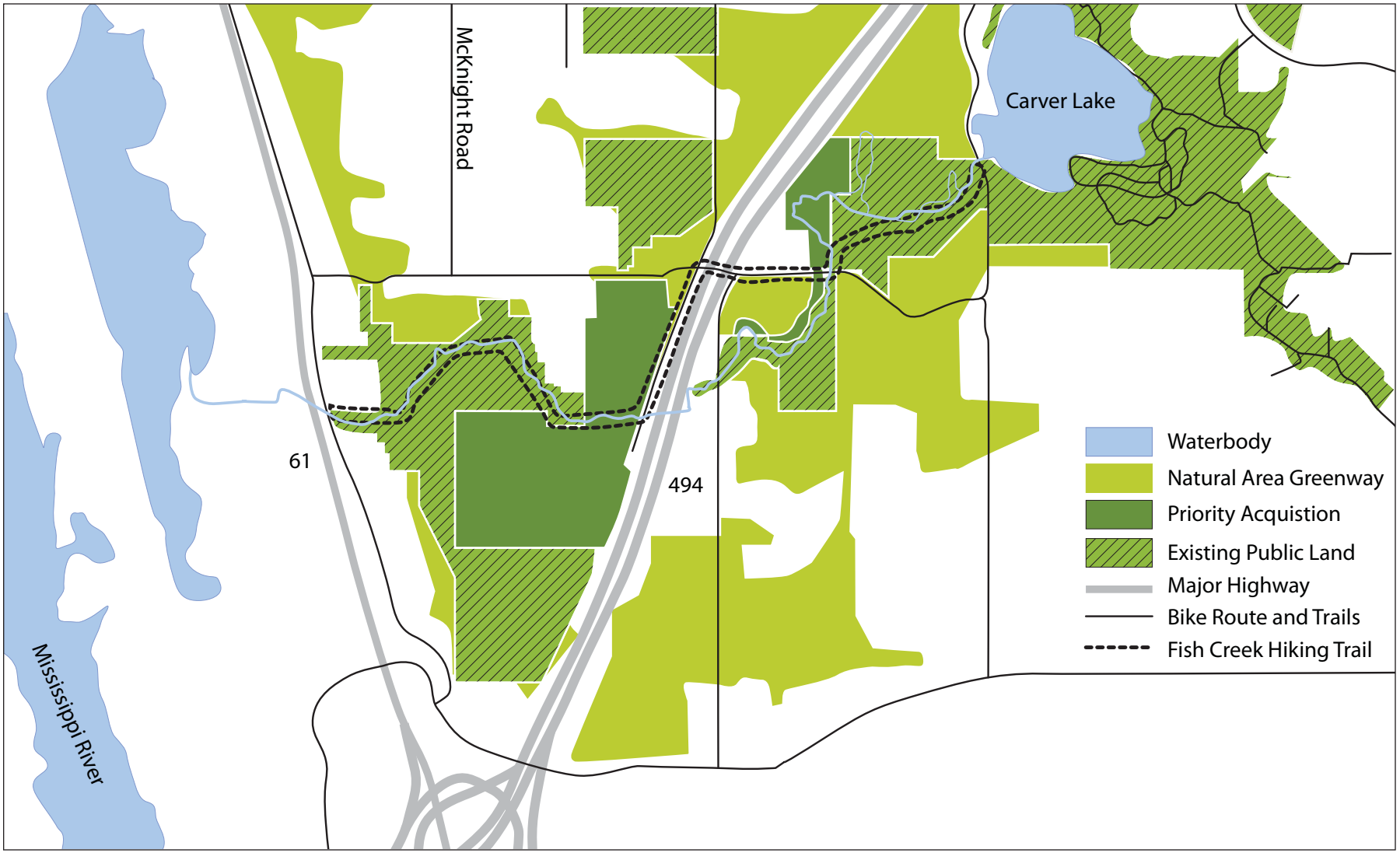
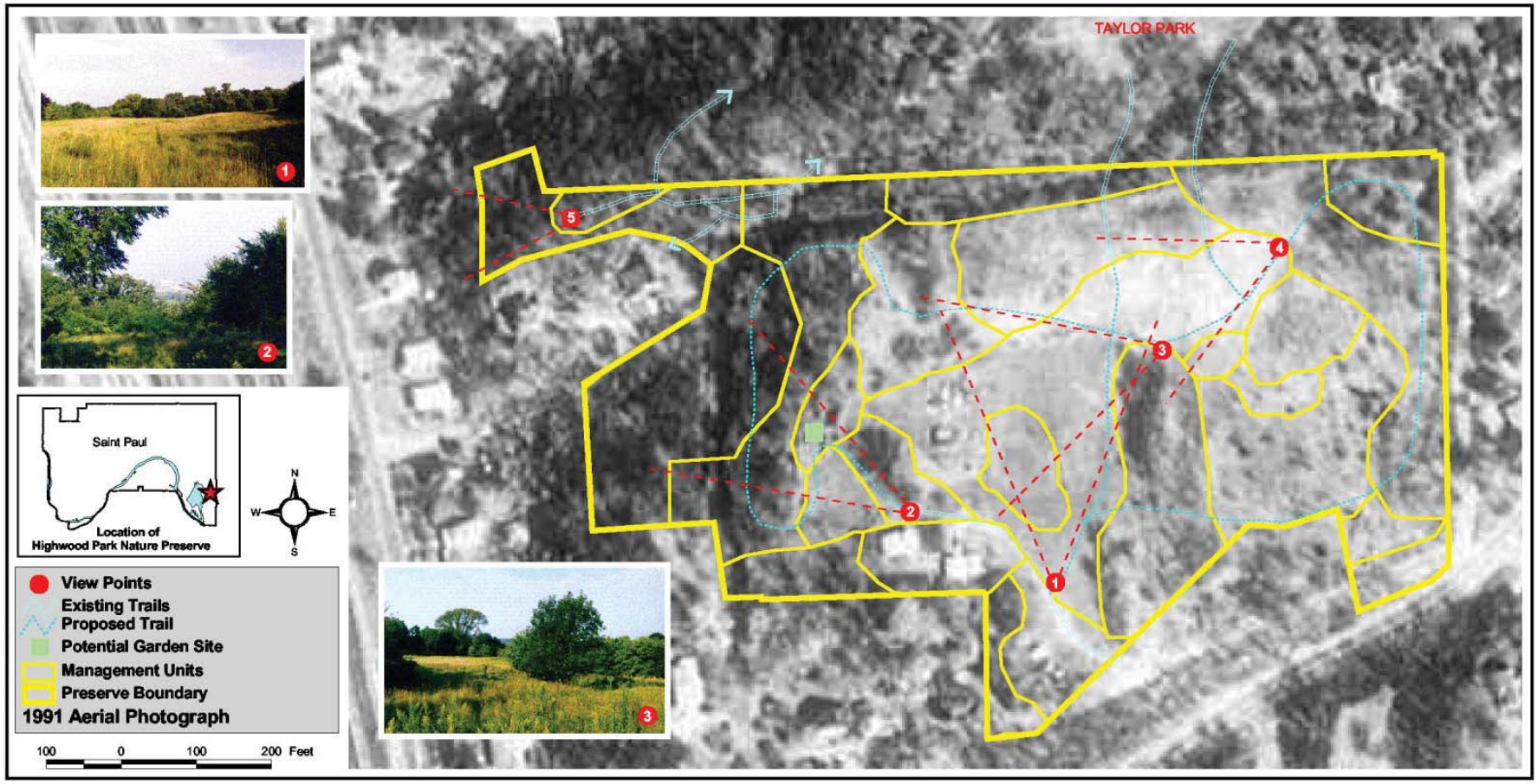


Figure T4
Vision for Public Lands in Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway



GREAT RIVER GREENING

Trails and Views

Highwood Park Nature Preserve
Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 29, 2001 (G:\Great River Greening\Projects\Big Rivers\Sites\Central Region\Highwood Preserve\GIS\management plan.apr)

Figure T5
Highwood Park Nature Preserve Trails and Views

Biking Objectives and Strategies

Biking, like walking, through a neighborhood provides abundant benefits to a community and its members. For the purposes of this document, we recognize that bicyclists vary in terms of age, experience, comfort-level interacting with motor vehicles, and reasons for cycling. Because bikers move more slowly along the streets and because they tend to be more attentive to the environment through which they are moving, their presence in a neighborhood helps build a sense of community, and deters crime. Their presence also tends to slow motor vehicle traffic. Biking for short and mid-range trips saves money over driving and it promotes health.

The City of Saint Paul has long neglected the eastside when implementing biking facilities (figure T6). District 1 has a minimal bike path/trail network (figure T7). Most of the current bike trails are through the parks connecting to the Sam Morgan trail along the Mississippi River. District 1 is also not included in the Nice Ride program nor has it been a focus of Saint Paul SmartTrips, a non-profit funded by the Metropolitan Council to act as the city's TMO (Transportation Management Organization) that encourages non-motorized transportation.

Bike Lane

The goal of this plan is to expand opportunities for all residents to choose biking for their local and mid-range trips as well as for recreational purposes; to connect bike lanes and trails to destinations within and beyond the district and also to regional commuter routes; and to increase residents' health and economic well-being, as well as creating a safer community.

T6. Provide access to bicycling as a transportation mode to all members of the community wishing to participate.

T6.1 work with Nice Ride to bring bike sharing to our district;

T6.2 work with partners who can provide free or low-cost bicycles to low income residents;

T6.3 work with potential business partners to bring a bike shop to the district;

T6.4 work with local schools and community facilities on Safe Routes programs;

T6.5 support snow-removal from bike lanes, trails and paths.

T7. Increase connectivity of bike trails and lanes within and beyond the boundaries of the district.

T7.1 submit CIB proposals for trails and lanes in the district and partner with adjacent eastside district councils on proposals for increased bike facilities across the eastside, including use of bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, share-theroad signage;

T7.2 work with St. Paul SmartTrips, or other organizations, to develop biking maps of the district;

T7.3 work with the city and MnDOT to make the I-94 pedestrian overpass bicycle accessible;

T7.4 identify key destinations for bicyclists and assure access to them via safe bike routes (schools, library, business areas);

T7.5 use mill and overlay projects or the RSVP process as opportunities to establish, connect and complete a system of bike lanes and paths through the district;

T7.6 provide options for east-west and north-south travel by bicyclists with different tolerances for interacting with motorized vehicles; work with City to identify and implement these options;

T7.7 support bicycle trails and lanes as outlined in park plans listed in Appendix A.

T8. Increase the number of bike facilities in the district.

T8.1 work with Nice Ride to establish Nice Ride stations on the eastside and in the district;

T8.2 work with businesses and organizations to install bike racks at key destinations;

T8.3 include consideration of biking in all business developments when planning for who is coming to the proposed businesses and how they are getting there.

T9. Increase the safety of bikers in the district.

T9.1 see strategies under Objectives 1 and 2;

T9.2 inform and educate residents about rules of the road as they apply to bicycles and their interactions with both pedestrians and motor vehicles;

T9.3 address the design of major north-south connections for bicycle safety (McKnight Road, Ruth Street, White Bear Avenue);

T9.4 address bicycle crossing at Highway 61 and Burns Ave, at Warner and Fish Hatchery roads, and at Upper Afton and Battle Creek Trail;

T9.5 hold bicycle rodeos and safety fairs periodically for children in the district in collaboration with the police department and other partners;

T9.6 work with partners to provide safety equipment for all persons who cannot afford to purchase this equipment themselves;

T9.7 work with city to keep bike lanes clear of snow and debris throughout the year;

T9.8 work with schools, rec centers and the library on Safe Routes programs.

T10. Provide recreational biking opportunities for residents and visitors.

T10.1 support completion of pedestrian/bike path along Lower Afton Rd through Battle Creek Park and other park routes as outlined in plans listed in Appendix A;

T10.2 support inclusion of the district in the Grand Round bicycle tours by establishing an off-shoot route through the district from Johnson Parkway and the Sam Morgan Trail, and inclusion of the off-shoot route with organizers of the Grand Round Tour; Approved 1/23/12

T10.3 support maintenance of biking paths through all parks, including during the winter months.

T11. Establish an eastside coalition for bicycle planning to complete the bikeroute system across the eastside of Saint Paul.

Bike Safety Rodeo (2010)

1) see figure T6 and T7 for incomplete bike path system – improve McKnight/I-94 intersection for bicycles; connect bike routes to Furness bikeway, Johnson Parkway; I-94 pedestrian overpass; Upper Afton; Burns Ave; 3rd Street; Margaret Street;

2) Businesses/organizations where bicycle racks would be encouraged – churches, recreation centers, shopping centers, libraries, etc.

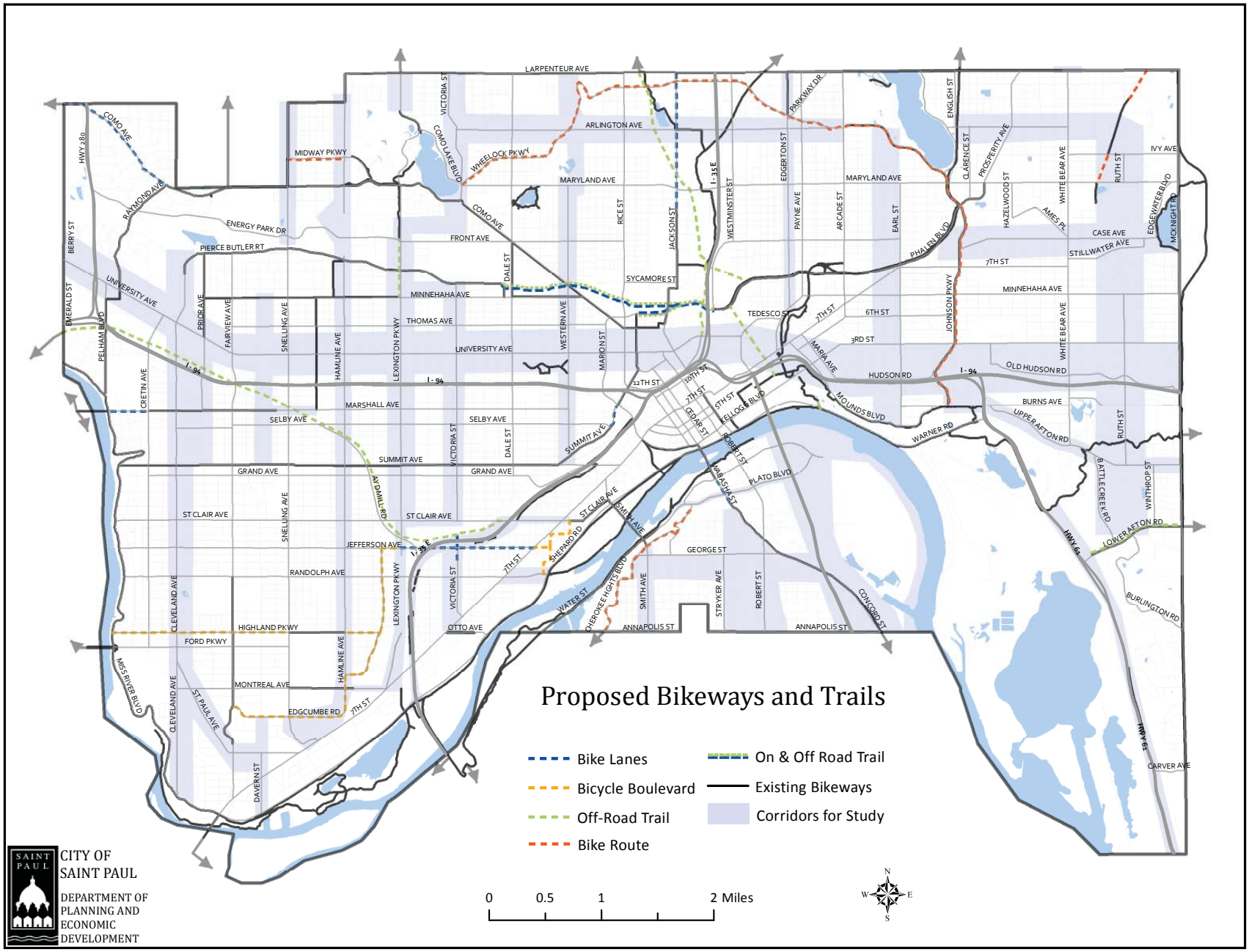
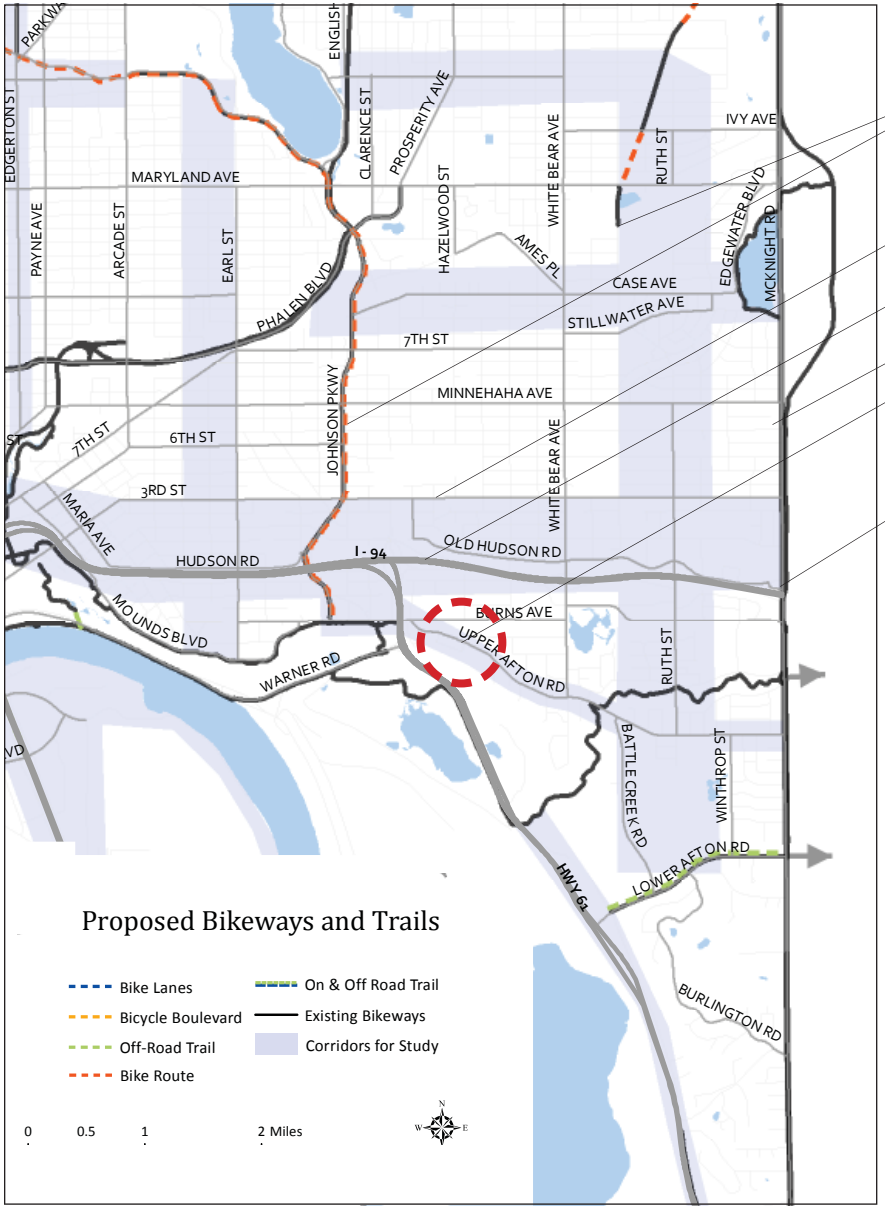


FIGURE T6: This map shows existing and planned bike lanes across the city as of 2010. Please note the wider spacing of bike lanes on the eastside. However, note that during 2011 and 2012, the City was undergoing a re-write of its bicycle plan.

Examples of Locations Needing Attention with respect to Bicycling Concerns in District 1:



Connect bike routes to Furnace and Johnson Parkways

3rd Street

Interstate 94 pedestrian overpass

Margaret Street

Upper Afton and Burns Avenue

Improve McKnight and Interstate 94 intersection

FIGURE T7 Proposed and existing bike paths in District 1

Vehicular Access (Cars) Objectives and Strategies

A large proportion of D1 residents use motor vehicles as their primary means of transportation (84% according to 2010 Census). As a result, streets carry local traffic, and collectors and arterials (and I-94) also carry a share of regional traffic through our district. D1 needs to work with the City, County and State to ensure that the roadways in our district are well-maintained and safe, but also to ensure that they provide connections for our residents and for others to destinations within D1. At the same time, roadways need to provide efficient access to the regional transportation system and to destinations throughout the Metro area.

The goal of this plan is to provide streets that offer safe, well-maintained vehicular connections for residents to their homes, to businesses and to recreational destinations in D1, but also provide efficient access to the regional transportation system and to destinations throughout the Metro area. A subsidiary goal is to reduce the number of local trips by car that residents take. The strategies for other modes of transportation in this plan are the means to reach this subsidiary goal.

T12. Ensure that major transportation improvements along I-94 and Highway 61 serve our neighborhood, not just commuter traffic through our neighborhood, and that these improvements are planned in a comprehensive way. $

T12.1 Consider improving Old Hudson Road to create a more pedestrian oriented street that will serve the new uses along it and prevent its use as a freeway frontage road. Old Hudson should be considered for changes as a Complete Street, including in conjunction with planning for the Gateway Corridor Project.

T12.2 Work with MnDOT to make the southbound I-94 exit to McKnight Road safer; advocate for a better eastbound entrance to I-94 at McKnight (in Maplewood).

T12.3 Improve access and traffic flow at Sun Ray; look at a better circulation system in conjunction with the development of a transit hub at Sun Ray to serve the Gateway Corridor.

T13. Ensure that D1 has Complete Streets that safely accommodate vehicular traffic, bicycles and pedestrians. $

T13.1 Provide input on the City's Complete Streets plan, propose D1 streets as pilot projects, and work with the City's final design guide and action plan to improve D1's transportation system;

T13.2 Work with MnDOT to improve vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections on McKnight;

Highway 61 Park and Ride

T13.3 Improve access and traffic flow at Sun Ray; look at a better circulation system in conjunction with the development of an enhanced transit hub at Sun Ray (e.g., to serve the Gateway Corridor);

T13.4 Minimize and consolidate curb cuts along Suburban, and any other commercial locations as redevelopment occurs.

T14. Provide better access and more aesthetic connections from I-94 ramps to neighborhoods:

T14.1 Examine traffic management at Old Hudson Road, Ruth and the freeway ramps on either side of the Ruth Street bridge, and similar locations on White Bear Avenue. Determine whether there are better ways to channel traffic and/or provide access to businesses on Old Hudson Road.

T15. Improve the aesthetics of heavily traveled neighborhood streets such as White Bear, Ruth, Suburban, and McKnight.

T15.1 Use landscaping and other traffic-calming measures to better manage traffic and excessive speeds.

T15.2 Improve aesthetics and create an entrance to the neighborhood at White Bear and Ruth freeway exits; use these areas to bring drivers into neighborhood shopping areas as well as serve local traffic.

T15.3 Redesign and reconfigure the local street network to provide a connection between the three nodes of Sun Ray, Suburban and White Bear areas.

T16. Reduce speeding along all streets and traffic noise along local residential streets:

T16.1 apply alternative, low cost and effective traffic calming techniques asneighborhoods desire in conjunction with RSVP and other street improvement projects;

T16.2 work with Public Works and the Police Department to educate motorists about the laws, and to enforce them in key locations identified by residents.

T17. Match parking capacity and need within the neighborhood business districts.

T17.1 Prepare a utilization study of existing surface parking lots to assess actual parking needs and to identify excess impervious surfaces.

T17.2 Promote shared use of parking at Sun Ray and along Suburban Avenue to maximize land available to development.

Current conditions at McKnight Road

Public Transit Objectives and Strategies

Transit is an important means to connect residents to the broader metropolitan region, but it is also used for local trips within our large district. Transit is the primary transportation mode for many residents, including children, the elderly and the disabled. A robust transit system enables residents to participate fully in the economic and civic life of our neighborhood and our city. A transit system will also help to assure that our business districts remain vital and that all residents have access to them.

The goal of this plan is to provide high quality transit service to residents, employers and employees of the district.

T18. Provide high quality transit services to, within and from District 1 for residents and commuters. $

T18.1 support the Gateway Corridor in an alignment that includes a station at Sun Ray and an alignment to the west that preserves residential neighborhoods. The Gateway Corridor is important in providing regional transportation connections for D1 residents, but is also critically important to encouraging redevelopment and a strong economic center for D1.

T18.2 work with Metro Transit to provide a robust feeder system to both the Lower Afton commuter Park and Ride to reduce single occupancy vehicles from the neighborhood at the park and ride, and to the transit hub at Sun Ray.

T18.3 support the Red Rock Station Area Plan (and re-naturalizing the current park and ride site).

T19. Improve and expand local service.

T19.1 advocate for a robust feeder system to provide access to transit hubs, including Sun Ray, Lower Afton, and any other connections including LRT, BRT, express bus or local lines.

T19.2 support the continuation of Metro Mobility to serve local residents and work with Metro Mobility to ensure

Sun Ray Transit Center

that D1 residents are aware of, and know how to use Metro Mobility services.

T19.3 advocate for better service connecting to local and regional destinations for shopping and work, e.g., Lower Afton Park and Ride, Downtown, Maplewood Mall, Woodbury;

T19.4 improve vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Sun Ray transit hub. Such changes may

require land use/zoning changes or acquiring property to open up access to this area;

T19.5 work with Metro Transit and Saint Paul Police Department tomaintain cleanliness and policing at the Sun Ray Transit Center.

T19.6 support improved transit service between Sun Ray transit center and other communities within St. Paul and the East Metro, using a combination of local and regional transit options.

T19.7 support higher density transit-oriented design in areas readily accessible to regional and local transit service. This may be particularly important in areas likely to undergo redevelopment near transit hubs and stations.

T19.8 support mixed use development in TOD areas, including additional residential uses in areas that are now devoted to commercial. Mixed use development may provide a more balanced option than maintaining the large amount of commercially-zoned land in D1 that may no longer be required by the marketplace.

Sun Ray-Battle Creek Public Transportation

Commercial Traffic Objectives and Strategies

Moving commercial traffic within and through a district is a necessary part of a vibrant business community, but must be done in the most fuel-efficient manner with the least impact on neighborhoods and the environment. For the purposes of this document, commercial traffic includes trucks, trains and barge traffic.

View from the bluffs

District 1 has very limited retail/service business districts focused primarily along I-94 and at nodes along the major north-south routes of McKnight Road and White Bear Avenue. In addition to these retail/service districts, we are home to industrial areas along the Mississippi River and (as of 2011) at Minnehaha Avenue and Hazelwood Street. Major rail lines run parallel to the river in the southern part of the district. River barge traffic also has an impact on the district. These different modes of commercial traffic present distinct opportunities and challenges to the district, which is otherwise predominantly residential in character.

The goal of this plan is to assure the success of businesses in our district by moving their goods to and from the commercial nodes via the transportation type, route and zoning plan that provide the greatest fuel efficiencies, lowest pollution emissions, greatest year around reliability, and least impact on the environment and our neighborhoods.

T20. Reduce commercial traffic in residential and recreational areas.

T20.1 identify areas where commercial traffic is encroaching on residential and recreational/park areas;

T20.2 work with Public Works to delineate truck routes with signage through the district;

T20.3 work with PED and developers to find an alternative use for the Cemstone site at Minnehaha and Hazelwood that is compatible with the residential character of the area;

T20.4 work with neighbors in block clubs and other local groups on a voluntary basis to encourage single trash haulers for their neighborhoods to minimize wear and tear on streets, and reduce noise and pollution.

T21. Reduce noise from CPRail and other rail operations along Highway 61.

T21.1 work with local, state and federal politicians to modify operations that result in squealing brakes at the switching yard;

T21.1 work with local, state and federal authorities on general noise reduction alternatives.

T22. Increase safety in the interactions of commercial traffic and other traffic, especially with pedestrians and bicyclists.

T22.1 Childs Road and bike trail – promote redesign of the Warner Road/Childs Road intersection;

T22.2 Work with MnDOT to improve vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections on McKnight;

T22.3 Work with Sun Ray management and Public Works on traffic flow at the shopping center to minimize truck and pedestrian/bicycle conflicts.

T23. Reduce airport noise impacts.

T23.1 support continued monitoring and abatement efforts of noise from the airport;

T23.2 support District 1 representation on the Dowtown Airport Advisory Council.

Examples of Locations Needing Attention with respect to Bicycling **Concerns:**

1) Sun Ray Shopping Center, Suburban Avenue and the White Bear Avenue business nodes;

2) Minnehaha and Hazelwood;

3) Highway 61 and I-94;

4) CPRail switching yard and rail tracks, including capacity concerns;

5) Riverfront, including Pigs Eye and Little Pigs Eye Lakes and park lands currently not easily accessible to the public.

Appendix A: Parks Plans whose transportation components are incorporated into this plan by reference

1. *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, 2010
2. *Saint Paul Systems Plan*, 2010
3. Warner Road Bridge Park plan from the *Great River Passage Master Plan*, 2012
4. *Highwood Nature Preserve Management Recommendations*, 2001
5. Fish Creek Park plan from *Recommendations & Opportunities for Fish Creek Natural Area Greenway: Report to Maplewood City Council*, 2010
6. *District 1 Plan for Henry Park*, 2004
7. Bruce Vento and Trout Brook plans from *System Plan, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation*, 2006
8. *Indian Mounds Regional Park Master Plan*, 2011