



# SAINT PAUL

## PUBLIC WORKS

### 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



The Most Livable  
City in America



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## Dear Friends of Saint Paul Public Works:

I write this as the newly appointed Director of Public Works, having been on the job for only a few months. With my previous tenure of almost 18 years on the Saint Paul City Council, I must say this is quite a departure for me professionally. It's a huge responsibility and I'm gratified that Mayor Chris Coleman places such confidence in me.

Although my appointment to this post came as a surprise, I like to think I bring some qualities to the job that only someone from outside the public works field can offer. While I see the role of public works through different eyes and a different experience, I'm no stranger to the agency.

I'm familiar with its budget, its projects and many of its principal staff. To be sure, I have a lot to learn about this department, and I'm gratified that our staff seems to be eager to help me learn.

My hope is to bring some fresh energy to the department, and cultivate an atmosphere that embraces new ideas. This isn't to say that Public Works is in need of a major overhaul; we know large organizations need to adapt and make constant improvements

One goal for the department that I will pursue with vigor is an improved ability to tell our story to the public. From my vantage point, Public Works has produced countless success stories that have, unfortunately, gone untold.

Telling our story is critical to the task of building trust with the public. If the public believes that we are competent, we enhance our ability to gain the public's support and cooperation when we need it most.

To that end we offer the report that follows on these pages. You will find that Public Works is a department staffed by experienced, ethical and dedicated employees, who care deeply about Saint Paul and its welfare.



## Traffic & Lighting Division

Whether you walk, bike, drive or use the public right of way in Saint Paul, you are dependent on the work of our division's engineers, technicians, electricians, painters, sign installers, sign makers and administrative staff.

Managing Saint Paul's traffic safety and right of way assets requires a great deal of planning, and the job is never made easier when you add the construction of a light rail line through the middle of the city, the largest public works project in the state's history.

The traffic and lighting division had both feet in the Green Line construction, and work didn't end with the end of heavy construction on the line. In 2014, our charge was to test and implement the line's traffic signal and timing system in coordination with the Metropolitan Council, the owner of the line.

This testing and implementing required balancing the interests of riders, drivers and pedestrians. Riders wanted a light rail line that minimized travel times along the route, as did drivers using the streets that intersected with the line.



Residents who live in the areas adjacent to the corridor were vocal in their support for a light rail line that serves their needs without creating a “wall” between neighborhoods.

These interests were balanced through the use of “predictive priority” signal timing that continues to shorten Green Line travel times while resolving access issues for motorists and pedestrians.

Much of our work in 2014 involved coordinating with other governmental partners on large construction projects owned by these agencies. For example, we coordinated with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on staging and traffic control on the Lafayette Bridge, the I-35E/Cayuga interchange, the I-35E MnPASS and Snelling Avenue projects.

With respect to Snelling Avenue, our coordination with both MnDOT and Metro Transit in 2014 will help smooth the way for construction in 2015 of Metro Transit’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) A Line on this busy arterial street. We also worked with MnDOT to complete design on an above standard street lighting system that will improve the aesthetics of the Snelling Avenue streetscape.



The city’s emphasis on improving our streets to make them more welcoming to bicyclists took another step in that direction with the work we did to construct new bikeways on Jefferson, Griggs and Charles avenues. We were also able to coordinate with Ramsey County’s mill and overlay program to add bike lanes to new asphalt overlays on Marshall Avenue, Jackson Street and Johnson Parkway.

Although not a job commonly associated with the Traffic Division, we embarked on a new plan last year to manage and enforce the city’s right of way requirements governing news racks in the city.

Why newsracks? Anyone who’s ever seen a newsrack on the street that is old, rusted, dented or tagged with graffiti knows how unsightly it is and how harmful it is to the city’s image.

We are working to fix this problem through a more proactive permitting and enforcement process. Additionally, we have expedited our notice process to prompt newsrack owners to act quickly on complaints and be more vigilant about maintaining their equipment.

The city’s vigilance is in the best interests of newsrack owners as well. After all, an unsightly newsrack is hardly inviting whether you’re a resident or a visitor. As is the case of a vacant building with broken windows, quick attention to eyesores in the public right of way reminds residents and visitors that the city cares about its image.

While our jobs vary within our division, we all aspire to do great work to make Saint Paul a better city.

**“I have often been surprised by people’s reactions when I tell them that I work for Public Works. Beyond what I do on a day to day basis, they are genuinely interested in the projects that affect their daily lives whether it is in front of their homes or projects they see in their daily routine.”**

**“While you cannot make everyone happy all the time, being able to share information and listen to their concerns has often been a rewarding experience for me.”**

**Brian Vitek,  
Civil Engineer IV**



## Sewer Utility

Most of us don't give any thought to our city's sewer system – unless there is a problem. That residents in Saint Paul don't spend much time thinking about our sewer system, or experience service issues, is a tribute to the people who inspect, clean and design its operation.

As we look back on 2014, let us tell you a bit about what we did to keep our system reliable for those who live and work in the city.

Managing the city's stormwater is a big job in a city that covers roughly 55 square miles. Not only is it a big job, scientific management is critical to improving the quality of the water that enters the Mississippi River and local streams and lakes.

Several projects that were completed last year were central to improving stormwater quality within the city. Perhaps our most visible work in this regard was the construction of the Hampden Park Water Quality Improvement Project.

This Hampden Park infrastructure takes stormwater from a storm drain pipe running under the park, filters it to remove debris and sediment, and then infiltrates the water into the underlying soil where it becomes part of the groundwater table. This was the first time the Utility had undertaken such a project on city parkland.



As demand for fresh water increases, the Utility has an obligation to work with our local watershed districts and other agencies to improve the quality of stormwater that reaches the Mississippi River. Projects such as Hampden Park help us to fulfill that obligation.

Another example of managing city stormwater was the completion of the 2013 Stormwater Pond Cleaning Project. Periodically, these ponds, which act as a filter for storm water runoff, need to be dredged in order to remove trapped sediment. Cleaning the ponds results in better filtration and negates the need to build a larger pond.

Inspection, maintenance and rehabilitation of our system kept our staff very busy in 2014. We completed Phase 5 of the St. Anthony Storm Tunnel Rehab Project, the University/Lynnhurst Brick Sewer Rehab Project, other major sewer repairs, and several sewer lining projects.

Some of our inspection work can be done with video cameras, but some of it can't. Similarly, our sewer cleaning is aided by modern equipment and technology, but a good share of work still requires manual labor to be performed by qualified maintenance staff.

For those of our staff who perform the underground work, soil collapse is a concern never far from their minds. So last year, joined by our friends in the Fire Department, our maintenance staff practiced responding to a trench collapse. Learning what to do in an emergency will allow us to be better prepared for any real mishaps involving excavation work.

While excavation work will always be part of our operations, in recent years we have been able to reduce our reliance on dig-and-replace methods of sewer replacement—and the disruption to residents that results from it – by employing a sewer rehabilitation technology known as cured-in-place pipelining (or CIPP).

Our use of CIPP is not only less disruptive, but it can be completed in less time for less money than traditional sewer reconstruction. As a less labor intensive method of construction it also means the city reduces its exposure to liability claims. To the credit of our engineers, technicians and contractors, we were able to complete sewer lining projects.

Flood response is another subject never far from our thoughts. The Mississippi River is prone to springtime flooding and last year was no exception. Our staff

responded quickly to rising river levels that threatened Lowertown; assembling temporary flood walls augmented with portable pumps. Thankfully the river never reached a level that could have resulted in major property damage.

Central to our flood preparations is the ability to have reliable data that allows for more accurate flood prediction. Future flood planning will be aided greatly by the completion of the Mississippi River Inundation mapping project.

We partnered with several government agencies on this project to produce a hydraulic model for a 6.3 mile stretch of the river. In lay terms, this new mapping technology will allow us to plan our flood response with greater precision by providing information based on varying surface water levels.

To recount all of the achievements in 2014 would overwhelm this space, but it's important that you know that your sewer system is managed and operated by an experienced staff who not only respond to active concerns and look well down the road to head off any threats to the system, but also enjoy what they do.

**“One of the many responsibilities we have at the Sewer Utility is to provide sewer data to property owners, contractors, consultants, City staff, and other agencies. Ensuring that up-to-date sewer data is provided on time and in user-friendly formats helps us meet our goal of providing the highest level of service to our sewer customers.”**

**Richard Ekobena  
Civil Engineer IV**



## Bridge Division

**The bridge division fulfills several roles in the Public Works Department, from designing the city's bridges and overseeing their construction, to inspecting and maintaining the bridges in both warm and cold weather.**

Attending to all these needs requires a team of bridge engineers, experienced bridge inspectors, knowledgeable technicians and skilled maintenance staff. It also requires coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Ramsey County, various railroads, the Department of Natural Resources, the city's departments of Safety & Inspections and Parks & Recreation, along with our fellow Public Works divisions.

Coordination is critical if we are to keep our projects on time and on budget and to avoid delaying other projects managed by other divisions and other agencies. It also keeps us abreast of project overlap that might occur in the future and allows us to plan for those contingencies.

**"I like working in the bridge division because I enjoy working on projects from the beginning concept all the way through design and construction.**

**Carol Zevenbergen,  
Public Works Technician II**





A look back at our **design and construction** work in 2014 records an impressive list of accomplishments:

- Finished construction of the Wheelock Parkway Bridge which spans the Canadian Pacific railroad line and the Ramsey County Trout Brooke Bike Trail;
- Completed design of the westbound Maryland Avenue Bridge near Jackson Street;
- Completed our annual bridge inspection program, an inventory of more than 160 bridges;
- Completed design of the Grotto Street Stairway;
- Completed load rating and analysis of the Kellogg-Third Street Bridge resulting in a reconfiguration of the bridge from four lanes to three lanes, in effect keeping the bridge open to vehicular traffic;
- Worked with a private consultant to begin preliminary design of the Kellogg-Third Street Bridge to generate a preliminary estimate to obtain project funding;
- Worked with a consultant to complete design of Kellogg Boulevard Bridge at Market Street;
- Worked with a consultant to complete design of Kellogg Boulevard Bridge between St. Peter and Wabasha streets, and gained federal approval of the construction project;
- Special projects included: Ford Bridge railing repairs for Ramsey County's Ford Parkway Bridge and repair of the Grotto Street stairway.

Our **maintenance** crews devoted themselves to many of their typical maintenance tasks, including removing snow from bridge sidewalks, cleaning of debris from expansion joints, sweeping sidewalks and flushing decks.

This year, our maintenance staff also helped rehabilitate the Kellogg Boulevard median planter which rests on top one of our bridges. Not only was the job a welcome change from the ordinary routine of their work, but it was unusual for us in the sense that we don't usually put dirt and trees on top of bridge decks.

This month-long project was undertaken to address a leak in the planter that led to water dripping on the bridge deck below and the Xcel Energy Center's loading dock. Once we removed the soil from the planter, we replaced the concrete in the planter and the surrounding boulevard median.



The new concrete will help prevent leaks from developing in the future. Drain tile and a drain were then added to the planter to channel excess water to a nearby stormwater catch basin. The planter's concrete joints were sealed as well.

Then we worked with a new material – lightweight aggregate – as a filter media which was important in keeping the dead load on the bridge as light as possible.

Acquiring the lightweight aggregate proved to be an adventure as most local concrete companies don't keep it on hand. This meant we had to write a special order for the aggregate, wait for it to be shipped by barge on the Mississippi River to South St. Paul. From there responsibility for delivery fell to us.

We then waited for a slinger truck (a dump truck equipped with a conveyor) to become available to use in spreading the aggregate on to the planter and the rest of the median area that had been excavated. The slinger truck was worth the wait as it made the job go much faster, saving us time and money.

After removing tree roots and other debris from the original topsoil we were able to return it to the median and the planter. Reusing the topsoil had both budgetary and environmental benefits, because the original soil was rich with plant nutrients.

Thanks to this "unusual" work by our bridge maintenance staff, the median will be ready for new flora to adorn Kellogg Boulevard in spring 2015.

As it happens, Kellogg Boulevard between Wabasha and Market Streets will be the scene of our biggest project for the coming year: the reconstruction of two bridges along this stretch of the boulevard. The project will begin April 1<sup>st</sup> and will be complete in late fall 2015.

Another day, another bridge: We're proud to be leaving our mark on Saint Paul.



## Street Maintenance: *Silent Streets Have Many Things to Say*

The street maintenance division understands better than anyone the importance of keeping the city's streets well maintained – no matter the season. Our streets range in classification from busy four-lane arterials that connect us to other cities to quiet two-lane residential streets. Of course, it's no small job in a city with more than 1,900 lane miles in a 55-square-mile area.

Nature reminded us of just how big the job is during the winter of 2014, one of the coldest winters in almost 40 years. While snowfall was above average last year – requiring the city to declare eight snow emergencies, the real difficulty for us lay in dealing with 59 days of subzero temperatures.

Once warmer temperatures appeared, so too did the potholes. Our crews found themselves patching potholes one day and plowing snow the next. To gain the upper hand, our patch crews were called in to work overtime on both weekdays and weekends. Through it all they persevered and morale never dragged.



We are always planning for the unexpected. Accordingly, Assistant Street Maintenance Engineer Matt Morreim took on the job of preparing a table top exercise that reviewed the city's crisis communications during a snow blizzard scenario. Several city departments and two outside agencies participated in the exercise, which allowed us to identify gaps in our communications plans.

Asked to share their knowledge of snow operations with their colleagues, Matt and City Engineer John Maczko presented information at the University of Minnesota about our own snow operations plan and how we adjust to and respond to differing winter conditions.

Sharing our experience and lessons learned with our colleagues promotes a spirit of fellowship and encourages further exchanges of ideas among public works professionals, a practice that benefits all of us.

One operation often overlooked in our division is the invaluable contribution of the administrative staff. In addition to staffing the service desk phones around the clock, our office staff handles thousands of resident phone calls each year, and often under trying circumstances.

Many callers want to have their questions and service requests handled immediately, so it takes people with patience and a special temperament to hold up under the demand, and we are fortunate to be blessed with a great team of professionals.

Another important aspect of our administrative work is payroll management. With more than 100 staff assigned to our division, working around the clock, and represented by five different bargaining agreements, it's imperative that our timekeeping is accurate so that everyone is paid for the hours they work.

Enter payroll manager Heather Vasquez. Heather, an experienced office administrator in our division, ensures that our payroll records are accurate and that our staff is paid what they are owed. She has accomplished this enviable performance record by earning the trust and respect of her fellow employees.

Whether they work inside the office or out in the field, this type of work ethic is typical of the people who serve the city in the street maintenance division.

As we look ahead to 2015, we are working with our sister divisions on the Public Works Department's plan for meeting the city's racial equity goals as established by Mayor Chris Coleman.

We will hire people of color through the city's Right Track program to help us with our summer operations. We are also exploring the possibility of creating an apprenticeship program to help young people of color to acquire job skills that will qualify them for good paying jobs.

We are proud to report that with new equipment purchases and new work policies, we'll be able to respond to the city's needs more efficiently. We are looking at areas of need and ways to be smarter about our purchases.

We will continue to look into the possibility of constructing a new building to house our heavy equipment. Much of our fleet is parked outside year round and housing them indoors will help protect our investment, reduce maintenance time and allow us to respond more quickly to a snow event.

These are but a few of the ideas we'll be pursuing in the coming year to improve our service delivery for residents and visitors.

My job has grown quite a bit in the last few years. I've taken on responsibilities that have made me very proud and grateful to be where I am today within the city. It is my number one priority to make sure that everyone in the street maintenance division is not only paid correctly, but HAPPY as well. Happy co-workers = Happy Heather!

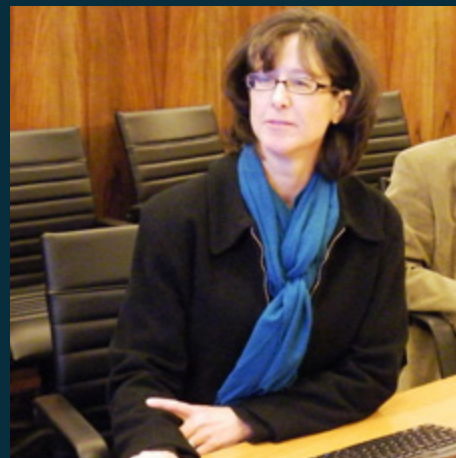
I'm very passionate about my job, but about my co-workers most of all. They are like family to me...all 116 of them! I always want to make sure they know they can come to me with any issues that come up and they have the confidence in me that I will make sure I take care of them. My job is very rewarding!

Heather Vasquez  
Office Assistant III,  
Street Maintenance Division

## Administration Division

**The administration division is unique among the Public Works divisions. Our work encompasses accounting, payroll, human resources, environmental programs and technology support.**

Big changes were in abundance for us in 2014, with both short and long term improvements to our recycling program. The most visible change — and perhaps the most welcome from the perspective of our residents — occurred with our vendor's adoption of single sort recycling. Now, residents no longer need to separate glass from paper and they now can add additional types of plastics for curbside pickup.



“In the administration division we get to see the entire continuum of work that is accomplished in the department. Through projects that come up we are able to focus on specific areas from time-to-time and assist managers and staff in making service improvements.”

Bruce Beese, Manager  
Administration Division

We bolstered the launch of single sort recycling with an aggressive public relations campaign underscored by the creation of our new “All In” brand. We promoted the changes with an engaging and educational video, created by our private sector partner. Two other instructional videos were produced in-house and aired throughout the year to educate residents about our program.

The move to single sort is already helping us meet our long term goal of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills by 75% by the year 2030. Consider that while single sort recycling only began in April of 2014, we increased the amount of plastics recycled by 82%, and increased our overall volume of collected material by 16% over the course of 2014.

Another large change in the administration division was the transition to the new Infor accounting systems in January 2014. This was no small endeavor for our accounting staff, as the city's old accounting system was more than 30 years old and much of that system's structure and functions were not preserved.



Our accounting staff also needed to educate city vendors about the new Infor requirements. In time this responsibility will lessen as we grow more familiar with Infor.

The city's updating of its finance systems included the addition of a new payroll and timekeeping system called Time, Attendance and Scheduling Solutions (TASS). Our payroll staff has worked hard to refine TASS so that it best meets the needs of both the city and our employees.

Our health and safety staff continues to find ways to keep our workers compensation costs low and last year was no exception. Paid claims in 2014 are a fraction of what they were only a few years ago. Thanks to stretching programs like the ones used by

our street maintenance and traffic divisions, we have seen a substantial reduction in neck, back and shoulder injuries.

As we look ahead in 2015, our human resource staff will be assisting our managers in revising our organizational matrix. We will also work closely with Civic Consulting Minnesota, a private consultant service that is donating its expertise to Public Works to identify efficiencies in our service delivery systems.



## Municipal Equipment

Public Works is sometimes compared to the offensive linemen in football in that when they do their job well, no one notices.

In that same vein, our municipal equipment staff shares the fate of the offensive linemen. When our city equipment is running well, no one gives much thought to the work we do. As Fleet Manager Ron Mundahl puts it, "Our job is to be taken for granted."

Everyone who works here understands this reality, but it's still important for us to look back and take stock of what we accomplished in the previous year.

The winter of 2013-2014 was as harsh as winter ever gets in the Twin Cities. Our ability to maintain winter equipment is vital to keeping our city streets safe and passable.

The extremely cold temperatures meant that we did have to adjust our seasonal work schedules to accommodate snow plowing, but otherwise our staff dealt with the same issues that we would in any winter.

Last year's winter and spring temperatures meant that there often was a demand for plowing and salting equipment at the same time there was a demand for pothole patching and sweeping equipment. It's not easy to make this sort of transition quickly, but we're proud that our staff remained engaged in their work and kept their focus.



We made some physical improvements to our garage facility last year that will improve safety for everyone who uses the garage. Perhaps the most welcome improvement was the resurfacing of the entire shop floor with an anti-slip surface. The new surface is much brighter and provides better light reflection for anyone working under a truck or other piece of heavy equipment.

As we do every year, in 2014 we continued to work with our sister governmental agencies around the metro area to share our fleet management experiences. By doing this, we learn how to reduce our costs and get the most out of our limited resources.

Another example of how we work with other agencies is the purchase of our fuel through the State Fuel Contract. By pooling our fuel purchases with other agencies and the State of Minnesota we're able to lock in the best price possible for a twelve month period.

This contract should always be viewed first as a budget tool, in that the price is fixed for the entire year. By locking in a set price, we are shielded from sudden price fluctuations in the fuel market.

Each year our technicians take the initiative to deepen their knowledge



and skill sets within their own profession, but last year we also began training our staff in areas that fall outside their usual duties.

One of Mayor Coleman's top priorities is racial equity and one of the city's accompanying goals is for all employees to learn what it means to go beyond simply having a more diverse workforce, or serving a more diverse city population.

Accordingly, three of our staff completed a professional "Beyond Diversity" workshop. By 2016, all of our staff will have had this training. Not only will they be better public employees because of it, but we expect they will become ambassadors for racial equity with their family and friends.

Training to become a better leader is a valuable opportunity for city employees, and we're proud that veteran Vehicle Lead Mechanic Dan Escobedo took advantage of the

city's Advanced Manager Academy. The program is designed for those who aspire to a managerial or supervisory position and are looking to gain the necessary skills to accomplish that goal.

The coming year will see an increase in new equipment placed in service including seven new single axle plow/patch trucks, cars, pickup trucks and other units. The new equipment has less environmental impact and is more operator friendly. New equipment should require less maintenance and often brings operational advancements, but new technology may also bring new complexities to maintenance work. If this happens, technicians may need additional training to help keep things running smoothly, so that we continue to be taken for granted.

**"One of the things I enjoy about being with municipal equipment is the work we do to help other departments provide great service for the city. I had the privilege to attend our Leadership Academy which has provided me with skills to interact with other departments and agencies. I take pride in being a leader for our department and fellow employees when we are called upon."**

**Dan Escobedo  
Vehicle Mechanic Lead worker**

# Street Design and Construction

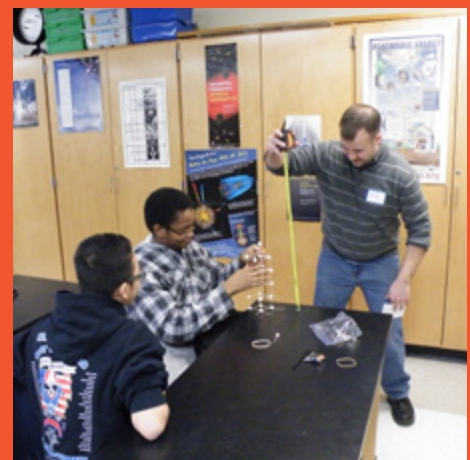
## What should our city streets and sidewalks look like 10 or 20 years from now? Whose interests should be considered when designing these roads and pathways?

Well, if you work in the street design & construction division, you spend a lot of your time weighing those interests by surveying, planning and listening to residents before designing the look and functionality of the street.

Once a final project design is approved, other professionals in our division oversee the construction work that is performed by private contractors. This aspect of our work is often overshadowed by a lack of visibility to the general public, but their job is as important as that of the design team.

That's because street design & construction project managers and inspectors are the people on the front lines who keep the project moving, serve as a liaison with residents and business owners, and ensure that the work meets the terms of the contract and stays within its budget.

This coordinated process serves the city well as our division completed work on several major construction projects in 2014, including the Montana-Greenbrier and Fairview-Bohland residential street projects.





Other completed projects include:

- Montreal Avenue reconstruction project.
- Highland Village Streetscape project
- Cayuga/Arkwright reconfiguration in preparation for the completion of the 35E project which will result in more traffic at this intersection.
- Griggs/Jefferson bikeway project.
- Eighth/Wall project
- Brick paving project on Virginia
- Begon reconstruction of Western Avenue

The Highland Village Streetscape project is worthy of special mention for the standard it set for cooperation between our division, the Highland District Council, the Highland Business Association, and Highland residents and visitors.

Thanks to our conscientious team of designers, project managers and inspectors, the project earned high praise from everyone connected with the project from start to finish. The deteriorated sidewalks and the hazards they posed have been replaced with new sidewalks and ornamented with brick pavers and decorative street lamps.

Last year's completed projects tell the city and its visitors that people care about the look and feel of their neighborhoods and are willing to go the extra mile to preserve them.

Another attribute of our division is its ability to shift on the fly when public need calls for it. Perhaps the best example of our flexibility can be found in the way we responded to the city's call last year for the improvement of our arterial streets through what is now called the Saint Paul Street Vitality Program (SPSVP).

We expanded our annual mill and overlay program to include the "Terrible 20" arterials that were most in need of immediate repairs. Thanks to strong support from the mayor and the city council, we were able to mill and overlay 11 of these streets in 2014, which is more than twice the number of overlay projects we would complete in a typical year.

Many of Saint Paul's arterial streets have deteriorated to the point where reconstruction or extensive rehabilitation is required. Others can be improved through mill and overlay.

Our engineers have spent most of the winter working on designs for several SPSVP projects for the 2015 construction year:

- Como/Chatsworth
- East Seventh streetscape
- East Third Street reconstruction
- Raymond Avenue phase II
- St. Clair Avenue pavement rehabilitation
- Franklin Avenue Reconstruction

Finally, we'll be finishing the work on the Prince Street project near the new CHS Field. The project included reconstructing the street and connecting it with the Bruce Vento Regional Trail to allow for easy bike access to CHS field.

The Prince Street project was yet another example of our staff's flexibility in action. Several unforeseen obstacles arose during the project's construction, but our staff worked through them to keep the project on schedule for completion just in time for the start of the Saints inaugural season in their new home.

This is all in a day's work for the busy professionals of the street design & construction division.

**"The successful revitalization of the Highland Village Streetscape was a great example of community collaboration. Early on, the Public Works' team reached out to key community leaders to ensure that the final product was something to be proud of – and to make sure that the construction was managed in a way that minimized disruption for businesses in the Village.**

**"With the upcoming Metro Transit BRT (bus rapid transit) improvements, and the county reconstruction of Ford Parkway just to the east, the entire area will be well-positioned for the redevelopment of the Ford site."**

**Jesse Farrell,  
Civil Engineer III**



## Capital & Transportation Planning

**Without a doubt, the most notable achievement of 2014/2015 for our division was the adoption of the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan. After undergoing a multi-year public process, the City Council, in March of 2015, adopted an ambitious series of goals to more than double the bike infrastructure in the city.**

Educating residents, business owners, commuters, planning commission members, elected officials and numerous partners about the long term value of the bike plan yielded even greater support for it than we had anticipated.

This was particularly true of the business community's support of the plan, especially those who endorsed the portion of the plan that calls for the creation of the Downtown Bicycle Loop. Construction of the bike loop is scheduled to begin in 2016 in conjunction with the Jackson Street reconstruction project.

Business owners in downtown and elsewhere in the city see the opportunities that an expanded bicycle network presents for their future stability. The trend toward less reliance on automobiles is growing and not just among young people. Knowing this, we felt a sense of responsibility to create a comprehensive bicycle plan that guides the city's investments in a way that appeals to riders of all ages and lifestyles.



Meetings to discuss the implementation of the bike plan are underway, and we look forward to being an integral part of this exciting chapter in the city's history.

Along with bike transportation, there has been a corresponding shift toward a greater demand for more transit options and more walkable streets in Saint. Paul. Accordingly, we spent much of 2014 working with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) planning for improvements to Snelling Avenue that will be constructed in 2015.

Specifically, the improvements will include building the city's first bus rapid transit line, resurfacing Snelling from Dayton Avenue to Pierce Butler Road, redecking the bridge over I-94 and adding streetscape improvements (from University to Taylor) – e.g. wider sidewalks, twin lantern lighting, shorter pedestrian crossings and center island medians.

With the success of the Green Line providing the public momentum, our staff became actively involved in station area planning and preliminary design concepts for three transit corridor studies taking place in the East Metro: Gateway, Riverview and the Rush Line.

The Riverview line will make connections from downtown Saint Paul to MSP Airport and the Mall of America. The Rush Line will provide transit service from downtown to Forest Lake and the Gateway Corridor will extend east from downtown to Manning Avenue along I-94.

For the third consecutive year, we successfully applied for a Green Corps member to join the capital & transportation planning staff as an intern. Green Corps is a program funded by the state's Pollution Control Agency, and places young adults with employers to work on environmentally beneficial projects.

As division manager Paul Kurtz relates, "We have been so fortunate to get such dedicated, hard-working and enthusiastic Green Corps interns. In fact, one worked out so well that we started the process to hire him full time in Public Works."

As part of a long range effort to revise how money is distributed from the Highway User Fund, Paul Kurtz has represented the city on a task force with MnDOT over the past three years. The task force developed a new method for determining the distribution of



Municipal State Aid (MSA) funding to qualified cities throughout Minnesota.

The new funding formula is easier and more streamlined for all cities in Minnesota that participate in the distribution. The results had a positive effect for Saint Paul.

As the department's lead planning division, we are also excited about what contributions we can make to the street network that will surround the redevelopment plan for the Ford site. This network will feature sustainable transportation elements consistent with the city's Complete Streets and 8-80 vision, a goal that proposes that all future street plans are welcoming for all types of users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users.

**"While I'm excited to see what the future holds as we work on implementing the bike plan, the past few years of discussions about the future of bicycling in Saint Paul among various staff from Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation is perhaps even more important. Implementing this plan will take a concerted effort from all staff across many departments to be successful, and laying that groundwork was invaluable."**

**Reuben Collins,  
Transportation Engineer/Planner**



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