



Strategy 2: Provide Land for Jobs

Cities can be the fulcrum for regional economic prosperity. When the assets of urban centers are utilized creatively and with energy, they are catalysts for investment in industries and, thus, jobs for residents.

Cities inherently have much to offer. For many decades they were centers for economic and political activity and for culture and education. They had quintessential neighborhoods where men and women who worked in the city lived and raised their families. Although much economic activity has shifted to the suburbs and to other countries, the basic elements that made cities successful for so long are still in place: mature physical infrastructure; universities and vocational training schools; institutions and cultural amenities, which provide ideas; and important economic centers, such as medical facilities and financial institutions.

During the past 20 years, Saint Paul pulled together an array of strategies and projects intended to address the loss of manufacturing jobs. The focus has been reclaiming vacant and underutilized industrial lands and making them productive once again. Elements central to this effort included brownfield cleanup, redevelopment, and workforce development.

Now, early in the 21st Century, factors are converging that compel Saint Paul and its partners to hone these strategies and to supplement them, so that revitalization can continue to provide for job-rich industries. Globalization of many industries has intensified. Technologies have become increasingly more sophisticated. The land likely to be developed with job-rich industries may often be found in smaller parcels throughout the city rather than in large swaths of land in railroad corridors. Changing demographics are producing shifts in the labor market. Immigration is giving Saint Paul a new pool of potential employees – energetic and hard working but sometimes lacking skills needed for jobs that are available – at the same time that baby boomers, though close to retirement age, are continuing to work, sometimes at part time jobs.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

There are core guidelines that establish a foundation for the formation and maintenance of employment centers.

2.1 Ensure the availability of sufficient quantities of land suitable for existing and new employment centers; prepare an inventory of properties zoned for industrial and commercial uses that have the potential for redevelopment as employment centers. \$

An inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings and land currently zoned for industrial and commercial use will provide the City and its development partners with baseline information necessary to pursue a program to develop employment centers.

2.2 Promote the redevelopment of outmoded and non-productive sites and buildings so they can sustain existing industries and attract emerging

industries to Saint Paul; focus on issues that include, but are not limited to, energy efficiency, water conservation, and broadband capability. 🌱💰

2.3 Attract industries that use best management practices regarding environmental issues (e.g., air and water quality, soil contamination, solid waste, sustainable construction practices, etc.) in their site development and operations. 🌱💰

JOB-RICH EMPLOYMENT CENTERS AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

Saint Paul’s employment districts historically have been located either in Downtown office buildings or within railroad corridors running through the city. Location, land availability, and transportation contributed to this pattern, which has continued with new employment centers developed since the late 1980s and early 1990s and is expected to continue into the future. The shift to an information-based economy, producing more service-sector employment and small-scale manufacturing, presents opportunities for redevelopment on all types of sites, including smaller sites and those on arterial streets (see Figure LU-F).

CORRIDORS

2.15 Redevelop underutilized or vacant land in railroad corridors. 🌱💰

There has been significant redevelopment in the Phalen Corridor and the Great Northern Corridor in the last two decades. Ample acreage is available for light industry, commercial office development, and capitalization on the growth of freight rail.

2.16 Prepare a study of the West Midway industrial area outside the line of change as identified in the *Central Corridor Development Strategy* to determine how the industrial area may be best used to strengthen Saint Paul’s industrial sector and employment base (see Figure LU-G). 🌱💰

The West Midway, one of Saint Paul’s historic railroad corridors, is strategically located, with much of its current business activity closely tied to the railroad lines that run through it. Many existing businesses, though successful, do not employ large numbers of people. The study, in part, will focus on how the West Midway can evolve to capture “knowledge-based” business activity and to take advantage of the potential for a jobs/housing match because of its proximity to the Central Corridor.

