

Phalen Corridor Development Strategy Summary

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission on March 9, 2001

Adopted by the City Council April 4, 2001

This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the vision of the Phalen Corridor Development Strategy for redevelopment of the Phalen Corridor. This includes adoption of a proposed land use concept as a further refinement of the City's Land Use Plan for the area.

The Summary identifies the means for implementing a number of Comprehensive Plan policies, including:

- *Housing and transit-supportive development (i.e., mixed income; affordability)*
- *Corridor redevelopment for industrial growth*
- *Integrated neighborhood development and improved connections*
- *High quality built environment*
- *Partnership action: City, neighborhood, private and non-profit sectors*

Location

The area addressed in the *Phalen Corridor Development Strategy* includes land within a corridor that is approximately 1/4 mile on either side of the future Phalen Boulevard, which runs in the railroad right-of-way between I-35E and Johnson Parkway on Saint Paul's East Side.



Phalen Corridor

Objective

The Phalen Corridor Initiative is a community partnership with the mission to enhance, stabilize and sustain the economic, social and physical prosperity of Saint Paul's East Side. Its focus is industrial development and jobs. Its goal is to construct a new road, Phalen Boulevard, in the rail corridor that stretches from I-35E, near downtown, to the Lake Phalen area, in order to open up 100 acres of under-utilized land for industrial development. This effort responds to the serious challenges the community has faced in the wake of substantial job losses over the last two decades and builds upon the remaining strengths of the community. The scale of change that will be set in motion by this industrial development calls for answers to the following questions – how should corridor land be used, what should new development look like and how should it all fit together.

Physical Recommendations

The *Development Strategy* includes a (1) land use strategy and corridor-wide concept plan, (2) a set of design principles and (3) objectives for development in three corridor neighborhoods.

Land Use

The Land Use Concept Plan for the Phalen Corridor, attached, recommends a long-term use of land in and near the corridor to achieve the objectives of more jobs, a stronger tax base and livable neighborhoods.

Industrial Strategy

- address access, parking, expansion and buffering needs of existing industrial businesses
- market vacant industrial buildings
- develop several new industrial sites along Phalen Boulevard

Residential Strategy

- bring homes up to community and functional standards
- remove dilapidated housing that is beyond economic retrieval
- construct new homes with neighborhood compatible designs on infill lots throughout the area
- develop new medium density sites

Commercial Strategy

- physically improve existing properties and public infrastructure
- increase public safety
- improve the capacity of business operators
- add businesses to serve new industries and employees

Mixed Use Strategy

- encourage development of residential uses above business uses on commercial streets
- support market-responsive development of specified mixed use areas

Institutional/Recreational/Greening Strategy

- maintain and enhance uses that contribute to East Side community development
- identify opportunities for private development to complement the civic environment

Design Principles

To express and to achieve the community's expectations for high aesthetic quality in new development, the orderly appearance of existing development, "greening" that takes advantage of and enhances the natural environment, a sense of safety and strong connections, the *Development Strategy* includes the design principles summarized here.

Corridor-wide

All new Phalen Corridor development should

- fit within the neighborhood context and be compatible with surrounding uses
- beautify and enhance the neighborhood character
- make and strengthen connections between uses and to surrounding areas
- buffer incompatible uses from one another
- optimize density to make good use of limited urban land
- create a sense of safety
- promote mass transit and bicycle and pedestrian use
- make creative use of topography
- respect and enhance the historic character of the East Side
- use signage conservatively, to provide information about uses use and transportation and to enhance neighborhoods

Industrial

New industrial development sites should

- have maximum land coverage
- orient buildings to the street
- arrange parking to be screened and located mainly in the side and rear, and limited in front
- have significant landscaping massed for visual effect
- include outdoor gathering areas
- screen service areas well and include no outside storage

New industrial buildings should

- be massed to fit with the neighborhood scale and context

- have articulated exterior walls facing the streets
- signify main entrances with windows, awnings and architectural detail
- use multiple masonry materials and incorporate color reflective of the neighborhood
- have orderly roof designs

Residential

New medium density residential development sites should

- have a minimum of ten units per acre
- have front yard setbacks consistent with the street
- place garages and driveways on alleys or screen them from main street
- use fencing that is partially open; there should be no stockade or chain link fencing
- have significant landscaping massed for visual effect

New medium density residential buildings should

- be massed to fit with nearby dwellings
- have gabled roofs
- place primary entrances facing the street; entrances should be private and porched
- integrate building materials across facades
- use materials which reflect the neighborhood

Commercial

Commercial sites should

- have minimum front setbacks
- arrange parking to be mainly in the side and rear, screened with plantings or railings and well-landscaped
- include planters and window box plantings
- screen service areas well; there should be no outside storage
- be well-lit and secure

Commercial buildings should

- have main entrances facing the street
- have windows on the street
- use multiple masonry or wood building materials
- use materials which reflect the neighborhood
- have orderly roof designs
- include attractive signage that fits the scale and character of the building and its surroundings

Public Infrastructure

Phalen Boulevard should

- be “multi-modal,” to serve cars, trucks, transit, pedestrians and bicycles
- have neighborhood-friendly speeds
- be well-lit and use historic lanterns; historic lanterns are to be installed on New Prosperity Avenue
- include signage that identifies neighborhoods and creates gateways

New or reconstructed bridges in the corridor should:

- have visually-interesting piers and beams
- include historic style lighting and decorative rails on bridges; use attractive, above-standard guardrails and above-standard fencing on bridge approaches and rights-of-way
- carry the historic and decorative style to the connecting roads
- proposed developments on adjacent properties, when subject to site plan review, shall have fencing compatible with the design elements of the bridge

“Greening” efforts should

- create significant landscaping within the corridor
- reflect seasonal design to create a year-round green effect
- use ecologically sustainable plantings
- identify and act on reforestation opportunities

Water management should

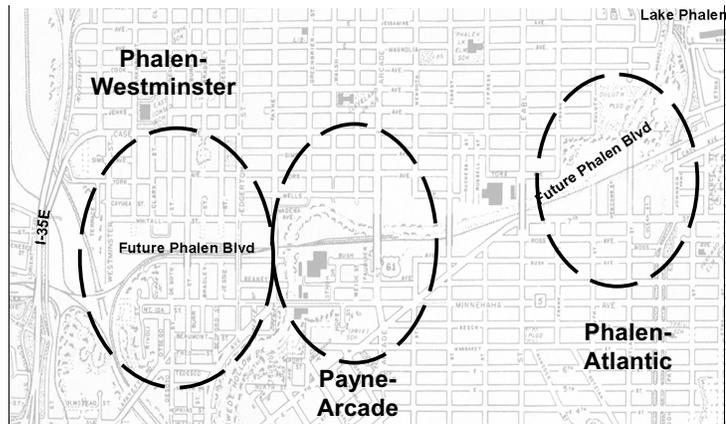
- integrate public and private storm retention
- be designed as an amenity
- explore connecting ponds with drainage ways
- be planted for aesthetics, sustainability and easy maintenance

Public art should be considered to enhance development at locations such as

- neighborhood gateways
- major developments
- bridges
- key public areas

Neighborhood Development Objectives

The *Development Strategy* includes development objectives for three neighborhoods in the Phalen Corridor. They provide details on how the overall objectives of jobs, housing, environmental enhancement and neighborhood connections can be met.



The three Phalen Corridor areas are: (1) Phalen-Westminster; (2) Payne-Arcade; and (3) Phalen-Atlantic.

Phalen-Westminster

The Phalen-Westminster area, which extends to Payne, is situated east of the new Williams Hill business park, Metro Transit site, and Van Waters and Rogers plant. It is where the rail corridor narrows and is overlooked by residential neighborhoods: the southern portion of the East Consolidated neighborhood on its north side and the Railroad Island neighborhood on the south. The existing industrial activity is land-intensive.

Access to this area will be substantially changed when Phalen Boulevard and the relocation of the I-35E interchange from Pennsylvania to Cayuga are constructed.

Objectives for redevelopment in the Phalen Westminister area are:

- to make a gateway where the new Cayuga/I-35E interchange links up with Phalen Boulevard
- to develop light industrial sites along Phalen Boulevard and to provide a green buffer between the new industrial sites and nearby residential areas by re-foresting the bluff to manage stormwater generated by road and development sites with ponds and to create a visual enhancement along the road and from the neighborhoods on either side of the road
- to provide for new and rehabilitated housing

Payne-Arcade

Further east in the Phalen Corridor is an area bracketed by the Payne and Arcade commercial streets that, for a century, was dominated by the Hamms (most recently Stroh) brewery. This area perhaps best recalls the East Side's original urban development pattern, with its traditional commercial streets and workers' housing immediately adjacent to industrial sites. The separation between neighborhood and rail corridor, defined by the topography that is found to the west, continues here; the relationship between land uses tighten. The connection between Swede Hollow Park via the Phalen Creek Trail around the brewery site introduces an environmental/recreational character to this portion of the corridor; the Hamms Brewery site itself is a National Register-eligible historic district, as is Payne Avenue. An enclave of homes, businesses, and parking lots exists in industrially-zoned land between the brewery site and Arcade.

Objectives of development in the Payne-Arcade area are:

- to reflect the area's denser, more urban character
- to create new housing north of the Phalen Creek Trail and Phalen Boulevard and near the John A. Johnson Achievement Plus school and YMCA; all would be within easy walking distance of neighborhood commercial streets and transit routes
- to provide opportunities for a substantial commercial investments where Phalen Boulevard intersects with Payne and with Arcade
- to manage storm water through the use of ponds, which would be visually attractive and enhance the environment near the Phalen Creek Trail and the residential and school neighborhood to the north
- to create a mixed use area between Payne Avenue and Arcade Street that could balance historic and economic reuse of the property, reflect the character of the area, and take advantage of the relationship to Swede Hollow Park and other assets in the area
- to encourage mixed use development on the southwest, southeast, northeast and northwest corners of Payne Avenue and Whitall Street consistent with the Payne Avenue Main Street program
- to determine the opportunities for mixed use development, including housing, in the Payne-Minnehaha- Reaney area

Phalen-Atlantic

East of Earl the topography of the Phalen Corridor flattens, the rail corridor broadens, and the area becomes more wooded as one approaches the Lake Phalen Park area. The more park-like character north of the tracks is reinforced with the nearby presence of Duluth Playground, the restoration of the Ames Lake wetland in Phalen Village, and the continuation of the Phalen Creek Trail. The eastern end of Phalen Boulevard at Johnson Parkway forms the entrance to Phalen Village, which is being re-formed as a mixed use urban village and natural area. Between the tracks and East Seventh is a mix of housing and business uses, with some that are thriving and some that are marginal and/or poor complements to one another. The south side of East Seventh is a similar mix of uses and quality.

Objectives of redevelopment in the Phalen Atlantic area are:

- to be compatible with the park-like character of the area, which includes Lake Phalen, Johnson Parkway, and Ames Lake, with arrangement of storm ponding
- to achieve a mix of existing businesses and new light industrial uses in the development of industrial sites
- to retain and enhance the buffering of homes on the west side of Johnson Parkway
- to strengthen the mixed use area on the south side of East Seventh Street.

**Future Amendments to the Summary:
Development Master Plans for Neighborhoods in the Phalen Corridor**

The Neighborhood Development Objectives are a broad sketch of how the larger objectives of jobs, housing, environmental protection and the creation of neighborhood connections could be translated into specific development plans for the three Phalen Corridor neighborhoods.

As design and construction of Phalen Boulevard proceeds from I-35E and Williams Hill, on the west, towards Johnson Parkway and Phalen Village, on the east, PED and the Port Authority staff will meet with the surrounding community to describe the industrial development process and the development alternatives for industrial sites in that neighborhood. In addition, PED and the Port Authority staff will describe possible development scenarios for commercial redevelopment and housing, including the construction of new housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing.

As community meetings in each neighborhood conclude, PED and the Port Authority will develop a preliminary master plan for that neighborhood. The preliminary master plan will be used to prepare an implementation plan for development. Implementation of the preliminary master plan may be influenced by such issues as civil engineering, marketing and site design. Other conditions unique to each individual site within the preliminary master plan will also be factors influencing the implementation plan. The implementation phase will include discussions with neighborhood residents regarding specific site development issues.

The preliminary master plans, as they are prepared, will be presented to the Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee and the Planning Commission as amendments to the Summary.

The first amendment to the Summary – the preliminary master plan for Phalen-Westminster – is the result of community meetings involving residents in the East Consolidated neighborhood immediately north of Phalen Boulevard during the fall and early winter of 2000 and 2001.

Companion Recommendations

Physical change is not enough to return the Phalen Corridor community to economic stability. New jobs must be attainable by Eastsiders; the East Side must be a desirable place to live; and, new income must benefit local merchants. To complement the physical guidelines in the plan, the Development Strategy includes recommendations for workforce development, housing policy and commercial marketing.

Workforce Development

- Ensure that publicly-financed jobs have family-supporting wage levels and career-ladder opportunities and that they are targeted to East Side residents
- Link businesses to training
- Develop Eastside-targeted training resources
- Build relationships between businesses and community workforce resources
- Market the East Side as a place of job opportunity

Housing Policy

- Capture the benefit of new job growth by ensuring housing availability for a range of incomes
 - maintain good value housing through housing rehabilitation
 - build new housing choices to serve a range of incomes and lifestyles and to help realize the City's affordable housing goals
 - replace housing lost when land is redeveloped through a community wide approach
 - promote the residential advantages of the East Side
- Ensure that residential neighborhoods are desirable places to live
 - invest in physical improvements using code enforcement, owner and rental rehab, rental management training, vacant home disposition and infill construction
 - enhance neighborhood social/economic sustainability -- a mix of income, mix of family types, compact development and resident investment in their neighborhoods -- through actions describe in first housing policy bullet point above
 - focus compact, mixed use development especially along transit lines and in support of neighborhood commercial areas
 - encourage home ownership among families through financial assistance and training.
- Use the collaborative community development approach
 - target code enforcement and rehabilitation to areas undergoing major redevelopment for jobs, to commercial/transit corridors, as well as around school sites
 - work with major employers on employer-assisted housing and marketing to employees and management
 - connect job training with counseling and marketing about housing

Commercial Marketing

- Enhance gateways to retail streets as a way to attract customers into shopping areas
- Promote the unique character of commercial streets as a pedestrian-oriented, historic shopping experiences; promote an unique selection of goods, such as antiques
- Recruit and develop businesses to fill retail niches
- Create a sense of safety and comfort for shoppers with more lighting and police presence

Implementation

- Have periodic updates on the status of this Development Strategy
- Continue to develop financial resources
- Be guided by the spirit and principles of this strategy, but recognize that details of actual site arrangements will be determined as specific redevelopment projects are proposed.
- Work in cooperation with industrial/manufacturing end users and residential and commercial developers, using a combination of requirements and incentives and strongly encouraging innovation to implement design principles.
- Involve affected neighborhood interests in site planning for areas along the corridor where land uses will change, when resources and other conditions are in place for redevelopment to occur.
- Target investment to integrate planning and development activities.
- Phasing considerations:
 - Dependent upon Phalen Boulevard: land along the rail tracks between I-35E and Payne, and between Arcade and Johnson Parkway. It currently appears that the west end will be developed first.
 - The Hamm's (Stroh) area is under study. Development at the former brewery site does not depend upon the construction of Phalen Boulevard. Construction of Phalen Boulevard would make the brewery site more accessible to the freeway.
 - Commercial improvements would be on-going. A major opportunity for a gateway commercial development at Payne and Phalen Boulevard will be timed with the schedule for road construction.
 - PCI partners are prepared to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.
- Identify opportunities for innovative approaches to environmental enhancement, cultural resource preservation, and public art, as well as solicit assistance from community resources.
- Partners in PCI will take lead responsibility in accordance each agency mission and expertise

City Action

Actions needed to encourage development according to the concept include:

- Adopt this summary, including its land use map, as an amendment to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.
- Complete sub-area planning for three redevelopment areas, including appropriate rezonings, through a neighborhood-inclusive process
- Guide development, to realize the plan's objectives, through site plan review and zoning procedures.
- Proactively pursue development consistent with the strategy in allocation of public development resources.
- Design and construct Phalen Boulevard and other public improvements that are necessary for new development and desirable for community livability.
- Continue active participation in the Phalen Corridor Initiative and its legislative, fund-raising and community participation agenda.

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that the *Phalen Corridor Development Strategy Summary* and *Summary Amendment* is consistent with The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The Phalen Corridor Development Strategy was prepared under the guidance of the Phalen Corridor Initiative Steering Committee. Membership includes representatives of district councils (2, 4 and 5), business associations, community development corporations, public agencies, elected officials, institutions, major employers and the faith community. The Steering Committee was assisted throughout the process by staff from PED and the Port Authority, with design consultation provided by SMMA and Helgeson & Associates. The Steering Committee hosted a series of community meetings on the development strategy recommendations in the summer of 1999 and adopted the plan in September 1999. In the intervening months, the City has focused on continued study of the Payne-Arcade area, as well as securing funding for Phalen Boulevard development. A series of community meetings in the Payne-Arcade area during the fall and early winter of 2000-2001 focused on alternatives for a preliminary master plan for industrial development sites in the Phalen-Westminster area.