Saint Paul on the Mississippi

Development Framework

CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Norm Coleman, Mayor

390 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 612-266-8510
Facsimile: 612-266-8513

June, 1997

Saint Paul is undergoing a profound transformation. Not only a physical transformation, but also a transformation of the very spirit of the Capital City.

Literally thousands of people have joined together, in a variety of forums, over the past three years to describe a new vision for Saint Paul. A vision for a vibrant, healthy water-front downtown. An attractive place for people to live, to work, and to play. A place with a restored natural environment, new urban villages, and a strong commercial base.

This community vision is reflected in *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*. *Saint Paul on the Mississippi* provides a set of guiding principles that will shape the city well into the next century. It is premised on the concept of integrating rather than segregating, the city's social, environmental, and economic assets. And, it calls for reconnecting the river, the downtown, and the neighborhoods as a vibrant whole.

I am proud of the direction we are headed in Saint Paul. By building upon the strengths of our natural assets, our neighborhood communities, and our economic environment, Saint Paul is poised to become one of America's finest urban centers.

Norm Coleman (signed)

Norm Coleman
Mayor

Saint Paul on the Mississippi

Development Framework

Prepared by:

Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg

Dark Gabor Limited

In association with:

Applied Ecological Services Inc.

Close Landscape Architecture

Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart

June, 1997

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people in the preparation of this document:

Staff Team:

Tim Agness
Division of Parks and Recreation

Mark Basten
Office of License, Inspections and Environmental Protection

Errol Edwards
West Side Citizens Organization

Tom Eggum
Department of Public Works

Margot Fehrenbacher
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Bob Geurs
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Nancy Homans
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Mike Klassen
Department of Public Works

Pat Loonan
Capital City Partnership

Jody Martinez
Division of Parks and Recreation

Jim O'Leary
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Gregory Page
Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation

Leon Pearson
Department of Public Works

Lucy Thompson
Department of Planning and Economic Development

Mayor's Urban Core Management Team:

Norm Coleman
Mayor, City of Saint Paul

Stacy Becker
Director, Department of Public Works

Dick Broeker
Lead Staff

Peter Hames
Deputy Chief of Staff

Ken Johnson
President, Saint Paul Port Authority

John Labosky
President, Capital City Partnership

Tim Marx
Mayor's Chief of Staff

Bob Piram
Director, Division of Parks and Recreation

Patrick Seeb
CEO, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation

Mark Shields
Mayor's Chief of Staff

Pamela Wheelock
Director, Department of Planning and Economic Development

WSCO Riverfront Team

David Boyce
Celia Hiland
Anne Hunt
Patrick Leahy
Gloria Perez Jordan
Patti Tototzintle

Central River Valley Development Framework Task Force

John Anderson
Richard Dethmers
Litton Field, Jr.
Gary Grefenberg
Erik Hare
Denise Harris
Dick Huss
Sigrid Johnson
Dick Lambert
Bob Lunning
Jim Miller
Joan Mishek
Nathan Mueller
Ray Ogren
Steve Peacock
Fred Perez
Christine Podas-Larson
Bob Porter
Craig Rafferty
Sandra Taylor
Mike Temali
Patti Tototzintle
Mark Vaught

The Development Framework Team was comprised of:

Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Dark Gabor Limited

Ken Greenberg
Nicola Jancso
Warren Price
Stéphane Tremblay

Close Landscape Architecture Inc.

Bob Close
Bruce Jacobson

Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart

Walter Kulash

Applied Ecological Services Inc.

Steve Apfelbaum

Table of Contents

Preface:
Reconnecting the City and the River 1

The Vision – Capital City on the Mississippi 5

1. Environmental Context 21

1.1 Environmental context: an urban ecology 21

1.2 Environmental goals and objectives 23

1 Strengthen Saint Paul's identity by reinforcing its topography and natural environment. 23

2 Protect, restore and reinforce native vegetation. 24

3 Develop creative design alternatives for river edge treatments. 26

4 Intensify the use of natural stormwater management solutions. 28

5 Support a variety of clean-up efforts and programs for adaptive re-use of contaminated properties. 30

6 Develop an advocacy of people and corporations to participate in restoration and gain proprietary interest in ecological resources. 32

2. Urban Structure 33

2.1 Land use: from isolated CBD to diverse, vibrant urban villages . . .33

2.2 Land use goals and objectives 34

1 Create a downtown comprised of a series of linked "urban villages" by building on existing villages and creating new ones. . .35

2 Build on and enhance existing amenities. 37

3 Maintain a broad employment base. 38

2.3 City form: seeking a hospitable extroversion 38

2.4 City form goals and objectives 39

4 Strengthen the "prime" edges. 39

5 Define the freeway edges. 41

6 Identify and define gateways. 41

7 Build on the strengths of existing successful neighborhoods. . . .42

8 Reinforce the existing urban fabric. 43

9 Configure the redevelopment areas into readily developable city blocks by extending the network of streets and blocks. 44

10 Complete the fabric of the city and respond to local typologies . .45

11 Encourage buildings of appropriate scale. 47

12 Encourage buildings that define and support the public realm . .48

13 Preserve buildings, landscapes and monuments of architectural, cultural and historic merit. 49

14 Identify, preserve and enhance critical views and panoramas in and around the core and riverfront. 49

3. Movement Networks 51

3.1 From quantity to quality 51

3.2 Movement goals and objectives 54

1 Re-balance the functions of streets. 54

2 Extend and link pedestrian precincts by connecting, the urban villages now in downtown. 57

3 Supplement the skyway system with alternate weather-protected routes. 60

4 Connect bicycle routes. 62

5 Evolve transit services for the new downtown. 64

6 Plan and design parking in accordance with Framework principles. 65

7 Balance and maximize use of the river. 67

4. Public Realm 69

4.1 Parks, recreation and open space: focus, reconnection and a catalyst for re-investment. 69

4.2 Public realm goals and objectives 70

1 Provide easily recognizable and accessible connections between downtown Saint Paul, the riverfront and the city-wide/regional open space trail system. 70

2 Recognize and take full advantage of the historic and recreational significance of Saint Paul's parkway and trail corridor system. . .70

3 Build on existing initiatives to establish an urban greening policy for the downtown, riverfront and river bottom areas. . . .72

4 Strengthen, organize and humanize the public realm by recognizing that parks and open space are necessities for creating and sustaining a quality, livable downtown environment. 72

5 Develop a strategy for "greening" streets that supports an improved driving experience and a high-quality pedestrian and bicycle environment. 74

6 Promote a high level of quality programming and maintenance of park, recreation and open space facilities within the public realm. 76

7 Enrich the existing downtown and riverfront by creating new parks, village greens and signature open spaces in the urban core and along the riverfront. 77

8 Protect and enhance the environmental and aesthetic quality and integrity of Saint Paul's natural features. 78

9 Acknowledge and celebrate the role of public art in the downtown and riverfront area. 80

5. The Capitol-Mississippi Crescent 81

5.1 The Crescent 81

5.2 Wabasha Corridor Precinct 85

5.3 Rice Park-Civic Center Precinct 96

5.4 Upper Landing Precinct 103

5.5 West Side Precinct 113

6. The Principles of City Building 127

Appendices 133

Appendix 1 Study Methodology 133

Appendix 2 Background to the Precinct Plans 134

Appendix 3 Precinct Plan Charrette Participants 135

Preface

Reconnecting the City and the River

The Mississippi River has been relatively isolated from downtown Saint Paul since the 19th century, when its role as an industrial and transportation corridor caused the city to treat the river as a "back door." The recent retreat of the "industrial glacier" has revealed a vast terrain of opportunity in the river valley. Like cities throughout North America, this community has begun to recognize the river as a well-spring of community pride, identity and vitality.

As the 20th century draws to a close, the futures of Saint Paul's urban core and the adjacent Mississippi River Corridor are inextricably linked. The stage is set for Saint Paul to redefine its relationship with the river and, in so doing, to redefine itself and its future role in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. The ***Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*** is not just a riverfront plan, nor is it just a downtown plan. It is about a reconnection of the city and river as profound and far-reaching as the industrialization of the river in the last century. In responding to this opportunity, Saint Paul, like numerous other waterfront cities, will renew and redefine itself for the next century.

Over the last century, transportation routes and industrial uses have isolated the Mississippi River from the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Anticipating living, working and recreation in close proximity to the river, the Development Framework invites people to experience the Mississippi.

The Mississippi should be seen as flowing through, instead of adjacent to, the downtown.

The Development Framework is based on an implicit understanding that quality of life – the ability of a city to effectively balance economy, environment and society – provides a primary competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized world.

The Development Framework is based on an implicit understanding that quality of life – the ability of a city to effectively balance economy, environment and society – provides a primary competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized world. An important body of evidence suggests that the health of the local economy is intricately linked to the health and attractiveness of the natural and built environment, and the social fabric. A physically appealing and vital downtown environment will enable Saint Paul to effectively target particular market niches: people who are seeking a more urban lifestyle, high value-added companies that thrive in an urban setting, high-profile conventions and visitors. These bring an increase in outside dollars into the city and, in turn, will support a greater variety and number of supporting businesses.

The Framework does not advocate restoring the vitality of the downtown at the expense of Saint Paul's neighborhoods. The strength of the Capital City has always been in the health of its neighborhoods. An unhealthy urban core drains the city and creates significant property tax burdens for individual homeowners. With this Framework comes the opportunity for the City to reposition itself in a way that will pump new wealth and strength into the community by engaging the private and public sectors in the revitalization of the downtown waterfront core.

Some strategic investment of public resources will be required to create confidence in the downtown core and riverfront, and act as a catalyst to private investment. An important role of the Framework is to set the ground rules for this strategic reinvestment. Building upon Saint Paul's unique amenities and existing strengths – natural, social, cultural, historic, architectural, and economic – the Framework establishes a compelling vision that can foster investor confidence and provide broad direction for mutually supportive and integrated private, public and community projects.

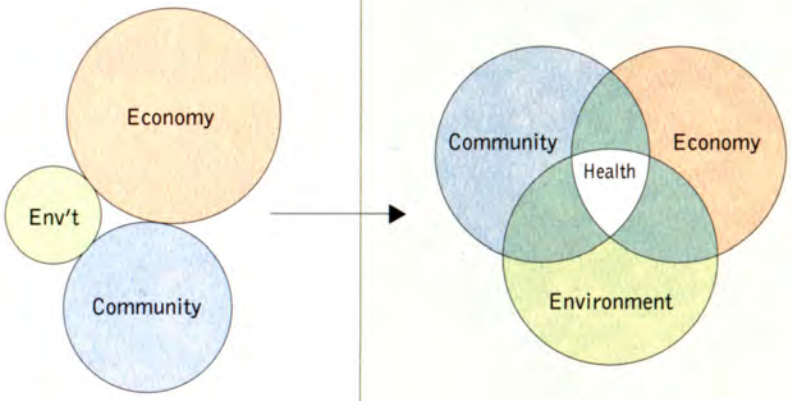
As the urban core becomes revitalized, it will reconnect to the adjacent neighborhoods from which it has been separated. The West Side, Dayton's Bluff, Cathedral Hill, Capitol Hill, Grand Hill, West 7th Street and Irvine Park can be relinked to the downtown waterfront core in a way that strengthens those neighborhoods as well as the downtown itself. While the focus of the Development Framework is a four-square-mile area embracing the downtown core, the Capitol, and the Mississippi River, it proposes a methodology that can be applied throughout the city's neighborhoods.

In his 1995 State of the City address, Mayor Norm Coleman envisioned the riverfront as a stimulus for community development throughout Saint Paul. Mayor Coleman, City agencies and the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, with the support of The McKnight Foundation, The Saint Paul Foundation, F.R. Bigelow Foundation, and the Northwest Area Foundation, launched a series of town hall meetings and community gatherings led by the Design Center for American Urban Landscape.

These meetings, coupled with hundreds of other presentations and discussions throughout the community, laid the groundwork for the community's participation in the Development Framework. Additional partners – the Capital City Partnership and the West Side Citizens' Organization – joined the effort to focus on the Development Framework for the urban core, Saint Paul on the Mississippi. The Framework Consulting Team conducted a series of community discussions, individual meetings, and design charrettes. Dominant themes and priorities became evident.

Although there is not complete agreement on all issues, an overarching vision has emerged. There is a continuing and important need for on-going discussions about the Framework and individual projects, but the time for action is now. The next major step will be to reach consensus on implementation. Building capacity, ensuring inter-agency cooperation, adopting supporting public policy, raising financial resources and maintaining community involvement are among the key challenges.

The Framework seeks to create a healthy community by balancing economic, community and environmental imperatives.



Traditional **Ecosystem Approach**

The vision for Saint Paul is of a system of interconnected urban villages nestled in the lush green of a reforested river valley.

The Vision – Capital City on the Mississippi

The Mississippi River flows by 27 miles of Saint Paul, winding through the very heart of the city. Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been spent to clean the water, clear acres of land of obsolete industrial uses, build new infrastructure, and restore the native habitats that once characterized the shoreline. These initiatives attest to the strength of the community's commitment to revitalize the Mississippi riverfront.

The vision for Saint Paul articulated in the Framework is of a system of interconnected urban villages nestled in the lush green of a reforested river valley. People live and work in these villages, each of which is designed around a high-quality public park or other gathering place. Irvine Park, Rice Park and Lowertown are familiar village models. They help to illustrate the vision and lead us to believe that it is within our grasp. Concord Street and Upper Swede Hollow are taking shape. The Upper Landing, Northeast Quadrant and West Side Flats are on the drawing board. The goal of the Framework is to build – and rebuild – the connections between these unique places and re-establish their links to the Mississippi River.

The downtown will offer a fine-grained and layered concentration of activities and amenities, and a sense of inter-relatedness that cannot be easily duplicated in the suburbs. People will be attracted by choice, vibrancy, and the diversity of experiences available – socially, culturally, economically and intellectually. As a place of assembly and recreation, the urban core linked to the neighborhoods will become a magnet, drawing visitors, tourists, more residents, innovative start-up businesses and high-profile employers who are attracted by the unique features and high quality of life offered to their employees.

An increasingly diverse and lived-in downtown will be used over more hours of the day. The riverfront downtown will once more offer a full range of eating establishments, stores, cinemas, and other amenities. This in turn will invite people to get out of their cars and stroll along streets designed to be attractive for pedestrians and cyclists, even in winter months, with partial weather protection at sidewalk level. Public transit will offer a viable and desirable means of getting to and around downtown.

The Mississippi River valley – more clean and green – will be embraced, the river itself more accessible. The downtown and river corridor will be the vibrant pulse at the center of Saint Paul and the larger Metropolitan Area. The downtown will be marked by a strong sense of place and identity, unique within the regional context. It will bring greater definition and shape to the city and provide an anchor for the region.

Although it requires considerable commitment, this is a sustainable vision for Saint Paul. It recognizes the intricate and delicate interdependence of environmental, social and economic issues. It aims in all aspects to create an urban area that is well-integrated with its setting. It leaves intact and reinforces natural and cultural resources for future generations. Its realization requires an effective and comprehensive approach, backed by strategies that address an extremely broad array of issues.

The Capitol-Mississippi "Crescent" emerges as a highly focused band of opportunity – building on initiatives already underway from the Capitol, along Wabasha and St. Peter Streets, splaying out through Rice Park to the downtown high bluff, the Upper Landing and Harriet Island Park. Realizing the early vision of the renowned architect Cass Gilbert will make a significant contribution to forging a strong link between the Capitol, the downtown and the river.

Portions of the Mississippi River valley are already reclaimed.

Ten principles that underpin the Framework

Promoting a more holistic approach to city building, the Development Framework reflects a fundamental shift in thinking, represented in the Ten Principles summarized below.

1. Evoke a sense of place.

Saint Paul has a unique natural setting. The Mississippi River, the bluff formation, the Phalen Creek-Trout Brook reach and remnants of the prairie landscape contribute to defining the city's character and sense of place. Saint Paul is also distinguished by a number of outstanding parks, buildings of architectural and historic importance, as well as important natural features. The key is to use Saint Paul's unique physical qualities – natural setting, parks, and buildings – to strategically enhance them and improve relationships between them.

Key recommendations:

- Identify key aspects of the natural setting that contribute to defining the character of Saint Paul, including the bluff, river, undulating topography and the native prairie landscapes; incorporate these features into new development opportunities.
- Create a unique urban setting on the Mississippi River by investing in Lowertown, the Lower Landing and the Capitol-Mississippi Crescent (including Wabasha Corridor, Rice Park-Civic Center, Upper Landing and the West Side) and Harriet Island Park.
- Create a community of urban villages, each focused on a high-quality public space, that invites residents, workers and visitors, to live, walk, shop, recreate, meet and experience the city.

Historic structures, such as the Landmark Center, contribute to the sense of place.

2. Restore and establish the unique urban ecology.

Generally speaking, since the industrial era, natural systems in urban areas have given way to the demands of development and industry. In light of the diminishing transportation/industrial role of the river valley, an unprecedented opportunity exists to re-establish a balance between urban and natural systems and to create a unique urban ecology in Saint Paul, embracing natural features and providing a context for initiatives to restore contaminated lands and waters.

Key recommendations:

- Approach development decisions with a view to establishing a balance between built and natural areas.
- Create an urban forest by extending the tree canopy found on the bluff tops and in surrounding neighborhoods into the urban core.
    - Build on the work of Greening the Great River Park to create a dense green armature embracing downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods, comprised of the Mississippi River corridor, the Phalen Creek-Trout Brook Reach, and the bluffs.
    - Establish a greener downtown by landscaping major streets and open spaces throughout the urban core.
- Identify appropriate opportunities for restoring native habitats.
- Improve the quality of the Mississippi River by utilizing stormwater management that makes use of biological systems within the open space network.
- Balance the competing demands for use of the Mississippi River and its banks, including barging and recreational use, and opportunities for naturalization and restoration.
- Develop strategies to restore, manage and/or contain existing contaminated soils, particularly along the river, as part of a broader strategy of re-populating the riverfront and re-urbanizing vacant lands.
- Establish stewardship programs that engage the community.

The tree canopy found on bluff tops and in surrounding neighborhoods should be extended into the downtown to create an urban forest.

3. Invest in the public realm.

Streets, sidewalks, parks, and ravine edges support the public life of the city and contribute to a sense of community. Deliberately designed as a network, these spaces encourage pedestrian activity and form important connecting routes within the downtown. A successful and vibrant public realm fosters a sense of security and attracts private investment.

Streets:

For the last several decades, streets have been viewed primarily in terms of their traffic capacity. Their potential to play an important role as pedestrian spaces has been underplayed. Resources that could have gone into improved streets have been put into skyways physically removed from the street level. Similarly, building design has frequently missed opportunities to contribute to framing and enhancing street-level spaces. A full range of urban design strategies is required to form successful streets.

Key recommendations:

- Shift the approach to streets from one that focuses primarily on traffic capacity to one that gives equal consideration to the intensity of pedestrian activity and quality of public space.
- Design streets to be attractive and inviting elements of the urban landscape through streetscape initiatives, the orientation and detailing of buildings, and judicious use of traffic calming techniques.
- Encourage pedestrian use of streets by limiting further expansion of the skyway network, creating more vertical connections between the skyway and street levels, and developing more weather protection at the street level.

Parks and Open Spaces:

Saint Paul has a rich tradition of parks and urban squares including Mears Park, Rice Park, Irvine Park and Capital Centre Plaza. The challenge is to build upon and expand this network, integrating new elements into the urban fabric. The Mississippi River and its edges, the reaches and bluff tops, are also critical elements of the public realm that should be made more accessible and inviting.

Key recommendations:

- Increase the diversity of parks and open spaces to support a range of recreational opportunities and community events.
- Design and program existing open spaces to encourage greater use, including the Capitol Mall and Capital Centre Plaza.
- Improve access to natural features, such as the Mississippi River, the bluffs and the reaches, through trails, stairs, view corridors, and extensions of streets.
- Where appropriate, locate a green "commons" at the heart of urban villages.

Investment in the public realm, particularly streets, encourages pedestrian activity.

4. Broaden the mix of uses.

A greater mix of uses creates a more vibrant urban core by encouraging people to live, work and walk downtown and by fostering synergy between activities. While there are already people living in the core, they are in a few isolated pockets and, as a result, their presence is scarcely felt. Commercial and office functions continue to dominate the downtown. Through an incremental process, the re-emergence of a downtown community can be accelerated. A defined series of "urban village" settings will create the opportunity to develop new market niches in an already diversifying urban economy.

Key recommendations:

- Create a series of mixed-use urban villages throughout the downtown and West Side that build on the precedents established by Lowertown and Rice Park and support a diversity of housing, employment, recreation and supporting amenities.
- Complement urban villages with intensified mixed-use corridors along Wabasha (from Concord to the Capitol Mall), both banks of the Mississippi River, and West 7th Street.
- Increase the range of housing available downtown through strategic redevelopment of sites, such as the Lowry Hotel, 7th Place Residences, and Schubert Apartments.

A series of linked, mixed use "urban villages" supports the re-emergence of a downtown community.

5. Improve connectivity.

Saint Paul is marked by an impressive legacy of built form and open spaces. While many elements are individually successful, such as Rice and Mears Parks, they are generally disconnected from each other. In some places, the dramatic changes in topography create barriers to movement, for example, between the bluff top and the river flats. At a larger scale, the downtown as a whole is effectively isolated from the surrounding city by the massive "canyons" of the interstate network.

The impact and role of individual built and natural elements, and indeed of the whole downtown, could be greatly enhanced if they were connected to and part of a larger network. There is an opportunity to identify and provide the critical linking elements, taking advantage of a wide range of options for improved visual and physical connections at the local, city and regional scale.

Key recommendations:

- Create links between the downtown and regional trails such as the Grand Round-Chain of Lakes in Minneapolis, the Dakota Country Trail System and the Gateway Trail to Duluth.
- Increase access to the river, the bluffs and the reaches by creating connected pedestrian and/or bicycle trails along them.
- Develop stairs, ramps, and elevators at key locations to navigate the change in grade from the bluff tops to the river flats and reaches.
- Improve connections between parks in the downtown by greening linking streets and creating a more inviting pedestrian environment.
- Preserve view corridors that establish connections to key natural features, landmark structures and neighborhoods.

Connections exist at many scales. In contrast to the History Center (below), the siting of buildings and alignment of streets powerfully connects the Rice Park precinct to the surrounding city (above).

6. Ensure that buildings support broader city-building goals.

There are many examples of distinguished architecture from various periods within downtown Saint Paul that respond to the context and contribute successfully to the public realm by framing and directly addressing streets and open spaces. The Hamm Building is an excellent example. However, some recent buildings in Saint Paul have tended to be more insular and self-absorbed, thereby overlooking key opportunities to contribute to broader city-building objectives. The challenge is to rigorously identify and promote elements of building design that contribute to building a vibrant city and streetscape.

Key recommendations:

- Ensure that new and renovated buildings contribute to the public realm by addressing and framing streets as well as open spaces, and by locating active uses on the ground floor.
- Encourage a diversity of mixed-use buildings appropriate to the distinct character of each area in the downtown.
- Discourage superblock, mega-structures that create barriers within the urban fabric.
- Ensure that the scale of buildings does not overwhelm natural features.
- Discourage large, high-rise structures that absorb inordinately large increments of development vertically into one location and prevent a greater distribution of much-needed investment.
- Encourage parking structures that are less obtrusive, including underground parking and mixed-use parking ramps designed as urban buildings with active, street-oriented uses on the ground floor.

7. Build on existing strengths.

The positive impact of downtown success stories – parks, buildings, streets – can be increased by strategically extending them and replicating their positive attributes. Rice Park and Lowertown are prime examples of successful urban areas. Greater benefit can also be attained from investment dollars by targeting areas where there are already initiatives underway. The key is to nurture and expand upon successes and to strategically consolidate initiatives throughout the downtown.

Key recommendations:

- Extend successful urban areas. For example, extend Irvine Park into the Upper Landing, Lowertown into the Northeast Quadrant and to the river, and the West Side neighborhood to the river. Expand the positive character of Rice Park to create a regional destination that embraces the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Civic Center and other cultural draws.
- Identify and build incrementally and strategically on areas where there are initiatives already underway, such as in Lowertown and the Capitol-Mississippi Crescent.

The highly successful Mears Park creates a focus for Lowertown.

Historic resources include buildings such as the Saint Paul Hotel, terminating the axis of 5th Street.

8. Preserve and enhance heritage resources.

Saint Paul has a rich legacy of historic resources – buildings, landscapes, and monuments as well as distinctive geological and topographic features. These resources define a sense of place that is rooted in local history. The challenge is to recognize the diverse range of such resources within Saint Paul, to preserve them, and, where possible, to creatively adapt them for new uses and expanded significance.

Key recommendations:

- The Historic Sites Survey undertaken by the Heritage Preservation Commission and Ramsey County Historical Society should be supplemented to include all historic buildings, structures, landscapes, monuments and geological features within the downtown and river corridor, especially in the Seven Corners area and along West 7th Street (overlooked in the 1983 survey).
- Promote the designation of Heritage Preservation Districts in addition to individual buildings. For example, consideration should be given to designating the Rice Park area as a Heritage Preservation District.
- Renovation and adaptive re-use should be made a priority for key heritage elements.

9. Provide a balanced network for movement.

A balanced network for movement supports travel by car, public transportation, bicycle and foot. It means that street rights-of-way are designed to be shared, attractive and safe for all these modes of movement. In Saint Paul, the dominant form of transportation is the automobile. Public transit is not an attractive or viable alternative for many trips. Similarly the environment is not conducive to bicycling and walking in many parts of the downtown. The key is to employ a diversity of strategies to create a more balanced system of movement, an objective that is closely linked to the overall quality of the public realm.

A balanced network for movement encourages travel by car, transit, bicycle and on foot.

Key recommendations:

- Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment by acknowledging that streets are a major element in the public realm and designing them appropriately.
- Create new forms of weather-protected pedestrian walkways at-grade, comprised of arcades along building edges, through-block connections and free-standing shelters.
- Facilitate bicycle movement by connecting to regional greenway corridors and designating bicycle lanes on selected streets.
- Create a local transit system that facilitates movement within the downtown and links the urban villages.
- Establish a street hierarchy that meets the needs of a more pedestrian-friendly downtown and is based on a range of characteristics, including intensity of adjacent uses, greening and vehicular capacity.
- Re-introduce two-way streets through phased initiatives, beginning with Wabasha and St. Peter Streets.
- Improve the management of existing parking; judiciously expand the range of new parking.
- Maximize the use of on-street parking.

10. Foster public safety.

The sense of safety is greatest when there is a vibrant downtown – when streets, parks and public spaces are active for longer hours of the day, when there is a continuous urban fabric, and when active uses provide an informal means of surveillance.

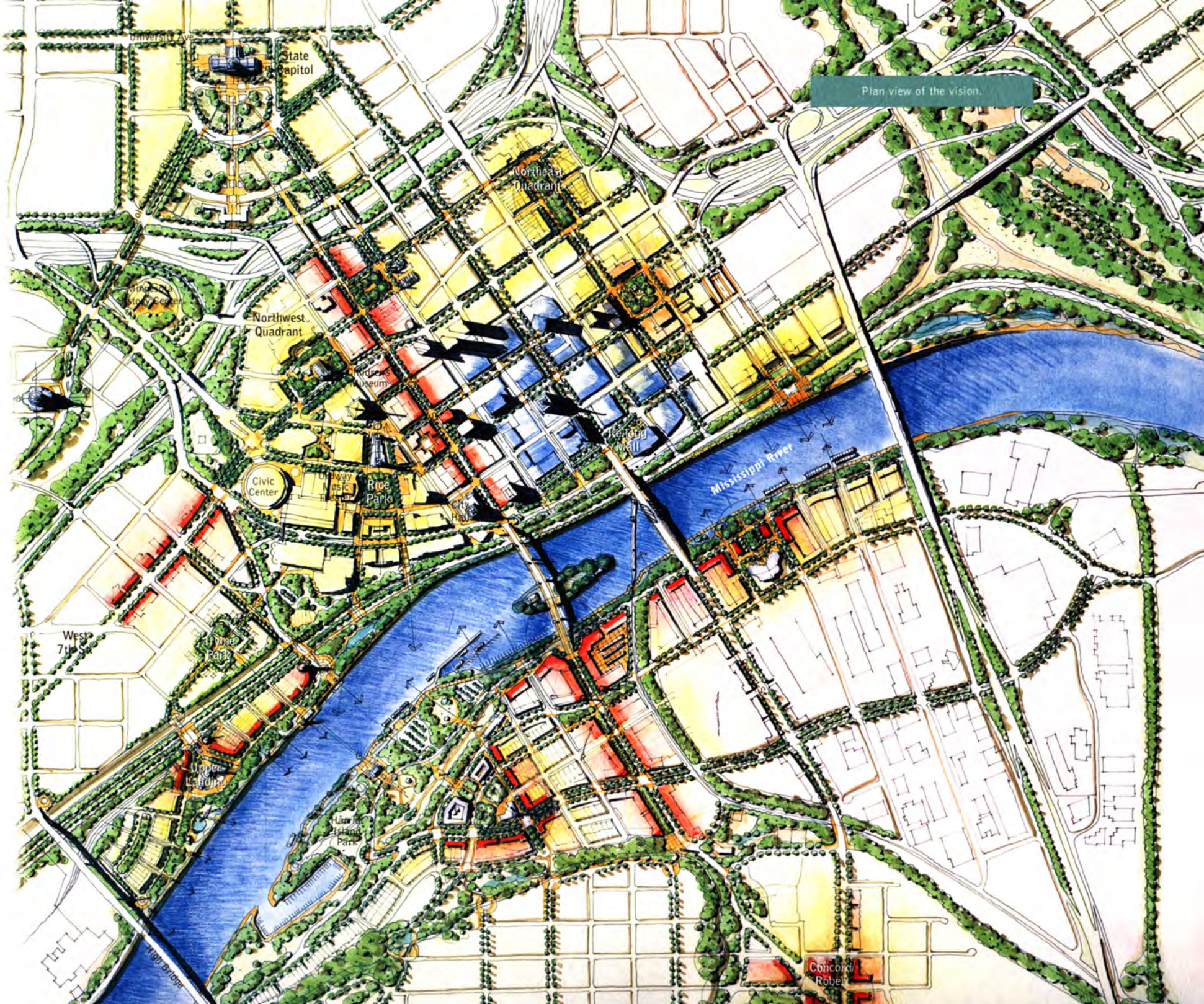
During the day, downtown workers contribute to a system of informal surveillance that helps to make the streets feel safe. As the streets empty out at night and there are fewer "eyes on the street," the sense of security is diminished. Many buildings in Saint Paul locate inactive and blind uses on the ground floor, creating a dead zone and removing an important source of casual surveillance. The large number of vacant lots, particularly on the downtown periphery, also diminishes the sense of security.

The key is to implement the broad range of strategies identified in the Framework to revitalize and re-populate the downtown, and create a vibrant and healthy urban environment.

Key recommendations:

- Encourage people to live in the downtown by supporting the development of urban villages and a diversity of housing opportunities.
- Encourage activities, particularly at the street level, that keep the downtown vibrant at night, such as after-theater dining.
- Direct infill projects to strategic vacant parcels.
- Lower the concentration of social agencies and problem uses in the downtown core.
- Work with developers, designers, and building/lot owners to implement the "Design for Public Safety Saint Paul" initiative.

A vibrant downtown creates a safer environment for even the most vulnerable members of society.



Plan view of the vision.

Chapter 1

Environmental Context

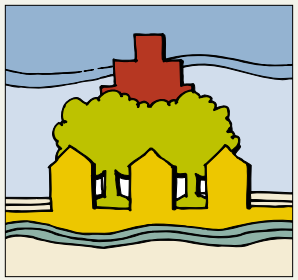
Chapter 1

Environmental Context

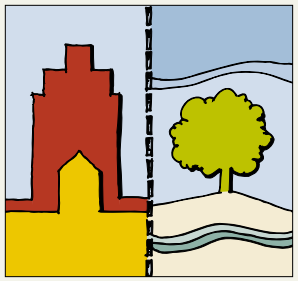
1.1 Environmental context: an urban ecology.

Originally settled along the northernmost navigational point of the Mississippi River, Saint Paul developed within a unique river valley and flood plain system. The city's location on the bluffs above the river provided dramatic views, but also allowed people direct access to the river by way of natural breaks in the limestone bluffs.

Over time, industrial uses and other types of developments, including roads, levees and railroads, have significantly altered the environment and masked the natural connections between the city and the river, isolating the built environment from surrounding natural systems. Development has also heavily impacted many indigenous landscapes.



Efforts should be made to reintegrate the currently isolated natural and built environments (below), creating a unique and healthy urban ecology (above).



The note on this postcard suggests that, historically, people had a close relationship with the river.

The city needs to be understood as part of a functioning ecosystem. This does not mean that future development should be discouraged or that there should be a wholesale restoration of the natural environment. It means instead that efforts should be made to redress the imbalance that now exists between the natural and built environments. The intent is to understand the city as a unique and healthy urban ecology specific to Saint Paul.

The potential to create a special identity and sense of place for Saint Paul will come, in part, from our ability to recognize and interpret the city's rich natural history and celebrate its physical and cultural diversity. Actions should be guided by a set of principles that address appropriate ecological practices within the river corridor and downtown. An ecological charrette/workshop was held in December 1996 to determine these principles, that include:

1. View the river, river valley and downtown as an integrated living ecosystem.
2. Restore and sustain the complex interaction of natural, human and cultural sub-systems.
3. Recognize environmental stewardship as a necessity, not a luxury.
4. Balance nature and development so that both are economically sustainable.
5. Be a responsible upstream community.
6. Recognize that the Mississippi River is, and will continue to be, a working river.

1.2 Environmental goals and objectives.

A number of goals and objectives are identified to encourage the emergence of a unique urban ecology.

Goal 1:

Strengthen Saint Paul's identity by reinforcing its topography and natural environment.

The Mississippi River is a well-spring of opportunity. The wide flood plain is edged with a unique bluff formation that frames the river valley. The city is built on 10,000-year-old glacial till soils, deposited in an undulating topography, providing visual interest and spectacular views. In light of the current diminishing transportation/industrial role of the Mississippi River valley, Saint Paul has a chance to recognize and reconnect to its very reason for existence, the Mississippi River.

Objective: Approach development decisions with a view to establishing a balance between built and natural areas.

Objective: Develop and undertake strategies to restore the health of local ecosystems.

Objective: Identify and reinforce the key elements of the natural setting that contribute to the character of Saint Paul, including the river, and the bluffs.

Objective: Reinforce, rather than flatten, Saint Paul's topography as a natural asset to which urban form should respond.

Objective: Renew connections with the Mississippi River, urban forests, and floodplain reaches.

Saint Paul's unique topography, which at one time was so readily visible, should be reinforced, not diminished, by urban form.

Goal 2:

Protect, restore and reinforce native vegetation.

Saint Paul is located at the meeting of the prairie and eastern hardwood forests. Historically, the well-drained uplands were vegetated by prairies, savannas, and woodlands that contained rich and diverse wildlife communities. Lakes occupied deeper depressions, while wetlands developed in uplands and lowlands that were not so well drained. A variety of habitat types continue to exist within the Mississippi River corridor, including remnant savannas, prairies, the bluffs, old fields, brown fields, riverine areas, caves, river edge wetlands, floodplain systems, and the river itself. Remnant landscapes are left disconnected from the larger ecosystem, and their health continues to be challenged by a number of factors related to urban development.

There is a wealth of opportunity for preserving and restoring native plant and animal habitats. The creative restoration, integration and reconnection of natural areas, including their linking to urban green spaces, is a primary component of this Framework. Such strategies as the "greening" of downtown Saint Paul and the creation of an interconnected system of natural and structured green elements within urban villages, mixed-use commercial areas, parks, gateways, edges, etc. will help preserve and restore native habitats. The work of Greening the Great River Park, for example, has played an important role in restoring the river valley and contributing to a connected greenway for migrating songbirds.

The intent is to establish a healthy urban ecology that contributes to the sense of place, improves the quality of life, and sets a context within which other strategies of the Framework can be implemented.

Objective: Continue to re-introduce native species. Implement management strategies to assist in achieving sustainability. Many of the existing habitats are seriously deteriorated and will only become healthy again with human intervention. Bluffs and degraded savannas overgrown with European buckthorn shrubs are eroding. Re-introduction of soil-stabilizing native grasses, sedges and wildflowers with a concurrent reduction of the buckthorn is necessary.

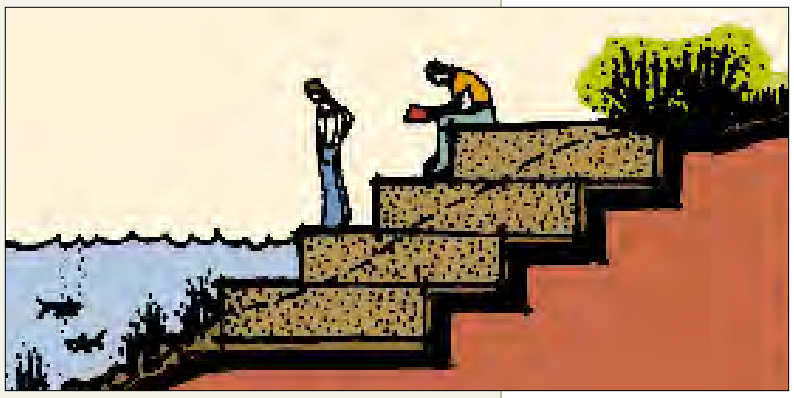
Objective: Continue to develop comprehensive data bases on the quality of ecological systems. Availability of data on the natural resources in the Framework area will be useful in future management programming and decisions. Monitoring the data will be useful to refining management and restoration programs.

Objective: Define protection strategies and incentives essential to the preservation of important habitats. Strategies for involving land owners in habitat protection and restoration are an important element of the Framework. Providing legal, financial and community incentives may be essential to foster preservation and restoration opportunities. (For example, tax incentives may help leverage additional preservation. Inclusion of private lands within greenway networks with appropriate financial incentives may be another option.)

Objective: Integrate future growth and development with restoration programs that reconnect and restore remnant landscapes.

Ben Thompson's 1992 image of a "greened" river valley captured the imagination of Saint Paul's citizens.

Increased pressure to use and enjoy the river challenges us to find means to increase access and improve the shoreline with both hard and soft edge treatments.



Goal 3:

Develop creative design alternatives for river edge treatments.

Historically and at present, the functional needs of industry and transportation dominate the overall character and quality of the river shoreline adjacent to downtown Saint Paul and the West Side. Natural shorelines have been converted to hard edges using stone, rip-rap and steel pylons, rendering these edges inaccessible and unattractive. Increased pressure to use and enjoy the river, both from the shore and on the water, challenge us to provide better access and to promote creative improvements to the shoreline that incorporate both hard edge and vegetative systems.

A variety of walkways, bikeways, walls, bulkheads, boat ramps, docking areas, fishing piers and other river edge features are currently in use along Lower Landing Park, Harriet Island Park, Raspberry Island and the Esplanade. In addition to these amenities, the City of Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation has already defined plans for stronger connections to the water's edge, additional greenway/park space within this corridor, and potential for increased recreational uses in and adjacent to the river.

Future improvements should strive to include native plantings and natural earth forms as part of site grading and flood control operations. The intent is to respond appropriately to local conditions and needs, incorporating a blend of hard and soft edge treatments along the river. Design recommendations should recognize the regional context of natural plant and animal communities within the Mississippi River corridor.

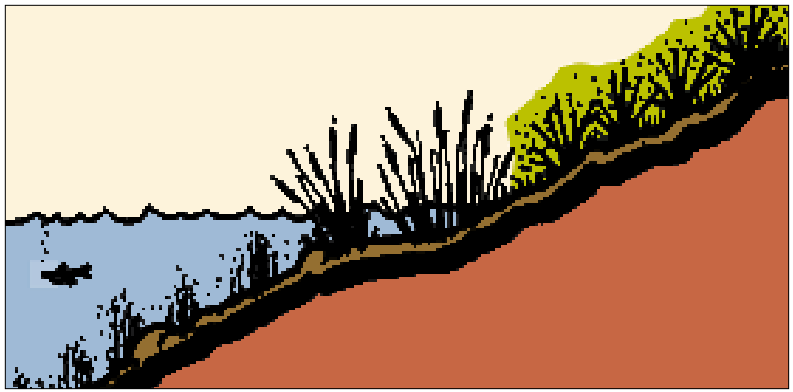
Objective: In areas where hard edge or shoreline armoring is necessary, use a number of methods, including walls, ramps, steps and terracing. A range of materials are appropriate, including large, square-cut limestone blocks.

Objective: Where appropriate, when redeveloping or stabilizing the river's edge, use soil bio-engineering techniques and plantings in combination with more traditional engineered solutions. These combined solutions are usually less expensive than conventional river bank treatments, and they increase in strength as plant material continues to grow.

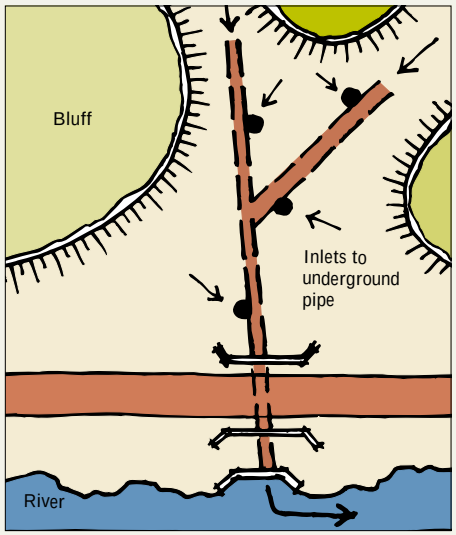
Objective: Where appropriate and feasible, re-establish a littoral zone, a band of vegetation where the shoreline meets the river edge. This vegetation is important for dissipating wave energy and for aquatic organism habitat.

Objective: Improve the overall visual/aesthetic character of the shoreline and river edge.

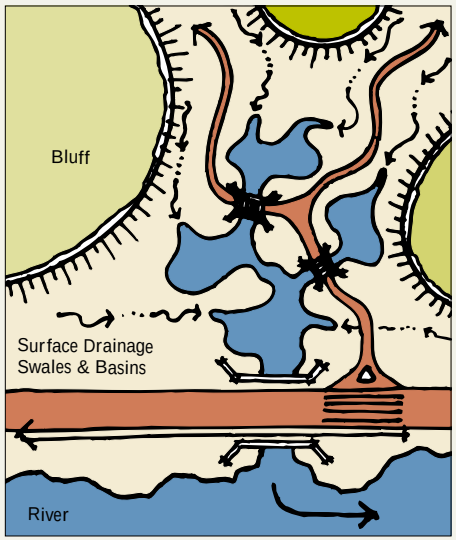
The shoreline treatment should respond to local conditions and needs.



Conventional techniques for stormwater management have focused on the rapid removal of water via pipes, ditches or overland on impermeable surfaces.



Alternative strategies, including pre-treatment in upland plantings, sediment traps, and created wetlands, assist in improving water quality.



Goal 4:

Intensify the use of natural stormwater management solutions.

Conventional techniques for stormwater management in urban areas have focused on the rapid removal of water via pipes, ditches, or overland across impermeable surfaces. These solutions have effectively removed runoff water. However, pipe construction is often expensive when sized to take peak flow directly to receiving waters, and carry more sediments and pollutants to the discharge point. Speedy removal does not allow for groundwater recharge, and the discharge of high volumes of runoff can often cause flooding in small receiving waters.

Saint Paul's solution to managing stormwater runoff incorporates other alternatives in addition to piping systems. Wetlands and ponds have been acquired and created to minimize peak flows by temporarily detaining runoff. Benefits include: smaller piping systems downstream, sedimentation of materials and recharging of groundwater.

City site plan review includes strict stormwater management requirements that limit the rate of runoff from new development to the equivalent from a residential area and requires storage for the 100-year rainfall. Landscape solutions are frequently used to meet this requirement. The city has also constructed sumps, small detention containers, and intersection drains (catchbasins). Sumps trap sediment before they enter the storm sewer system. Saint Paul is also experimenting with citizen education to eliminate pollutants at the source. This is easily the least expensive solution to remove pollutants and improve downstream water quality.

These and other creative stormwater management strategies can continue to be integrated with development or retrofitted within an existing area. Although the Mississippi River is an important working river, its health would benefit from increased ecological approaches to stormwater management. Pre-treatment in upland plantings, sediment traps, and created wetlands will assist in improving the quality of the river water and other water bodies. Ecological solutions for managing stormwater may be more cost-effective in the short term, and typically offer long-term economy even when short-term costs are higher.

Objective: Apply appropriate codes and procedures already used in Saint Paul for stormwater management. Work closely with local, state, and federal representatives to explore and apply new technologies and innovative approaches that maximize the natural treatment of stormwater.

Objective: Reduce the rate and improve the quality of stormwater runoff into the Mississippi River without major detention basin pre-treatment. In each development, continue to require a detained rate of water removal from properties, providing settling and infiltration prior to discharge. Redevelopment of the Upper and Lower Landings, the West Side and the Northeast and Northwest Quadrants of downtown present immediate challenges for more natural stormwater management.

Objective: Use stormwater management elements such as ponds and swales to unite development areas with the natural environment. Emphasize what these elements add to site development in terms of aesthetic benefits and cost-effective stormwater management. Incorporate public use as a site amenity whenever possible in designing stormwater management systems.

Objective: Create upland buffers and wetland biofiltration systems to enhance the quality of water leaving developed areas.

Objective: In a number of locations, streams are now piped below ground. Initiate a program to daylight these streams, and integrate them with open space systems and restoration programs. The city should identify which streams can be reclaimed over time and gradually acquire properties as they become available.

Objective: Immediately pursue approaches to remove and eliminate pollutants at the source before they contaminate runoff. Expand the public education program to alert citizens about the dangers of disposing of various chemicals into the newly separated storm sewer system. Regulate the chemical content and use of lawn fertilizers in public and private areas of the city. Meticulously follow requirements for soil and erosion control on all projects within the city.

Continue to work with government organizations, neighborhoods and environmental groups to coordinate a city-wide education program that addresses watershed awareness, illegal dumping into the storm sewer system, lawn care practices and other non-point pollution issues.

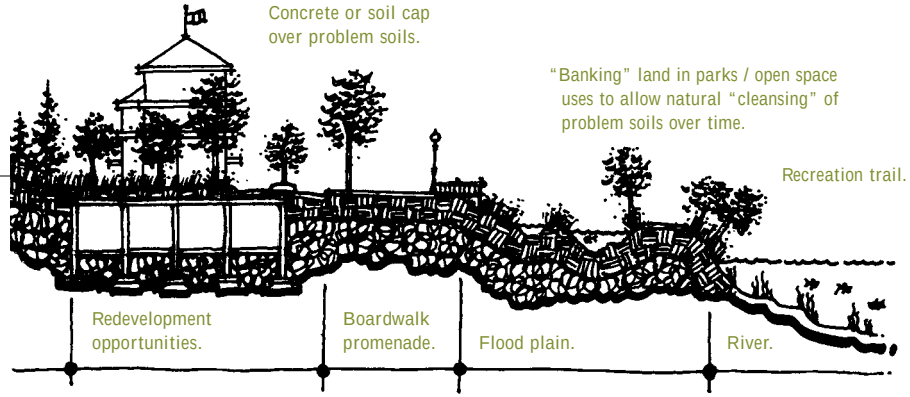
Upland buffers and wetland biofiltration systems enhance the quality of water leaving developed areas.

Goal 5:

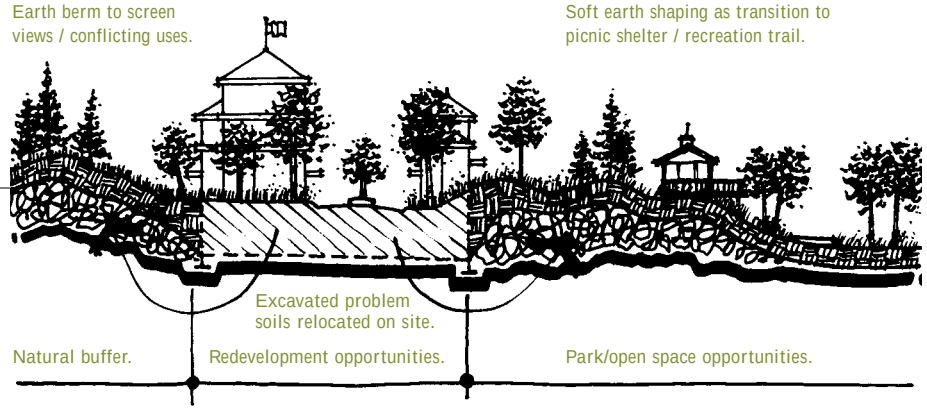
Support a variety of clean-up efforts and programs for adaptive re-use of contaminated properties.

The adaptive reuse and creative redevelopment of "brownfield" sites within the downtown core and Mississippi River corridor represent not only a significant challenge, but also a wealth of opportunity. The varying degrees of contamination now present in some areas reflect the legacy of past uses during the industrial period in Saint Paul. Strategies for cleanup and available technology to implement these initiatives are rapidly changing. At the same time, regulatory agencies continue to look for innovative, realistic, and economically feasible approaches that address current needs while making a strong commitment to explore new technologies for the future.

Capping of contaminated soils allows for natural recovery.



Contaminated soils can be excavated for use in on-site earth shaping, creating natural buffers and open space.



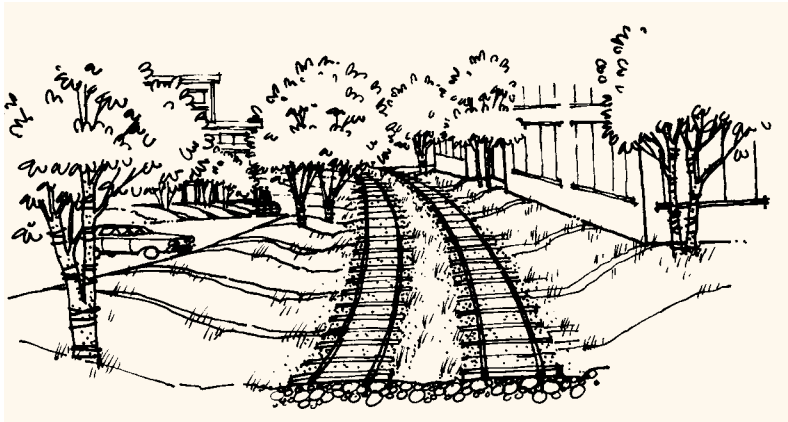
Objective: Develop cost-effective strategies for addressing site contamination, both in the short- and long-term. Establish a regional team of technical experts to assist in the design of acceptable strategies for handling hazardous materials and other contaminants.

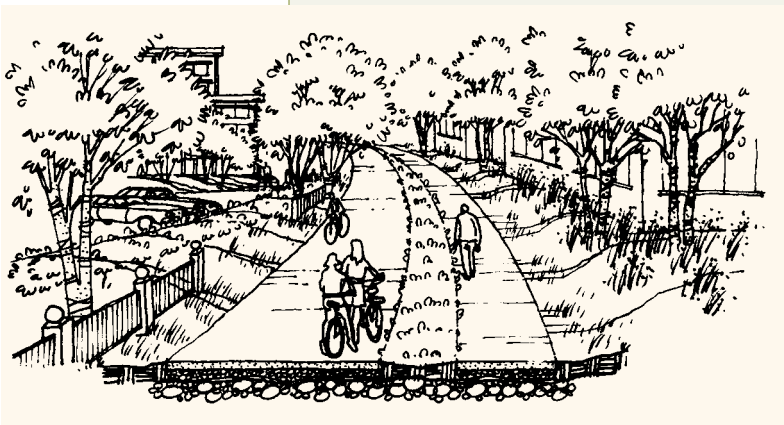
Objective: Develop case study pamphlets for distribution to the community that provide sample projects that have constructively dealt with hazardous materials and related concerns. Promote an information exchange process with stakeholders to share the latest technologies and best approaches for addressing these concerns.

Objective: Develop a regional inventory that documents potentially contaminated properties and estimates cleanup costs.

Objective: Promote natural recovery of contaminated sites through increased coordination and cooperation with pollution control agencies and land use policies.

There are opportunities to convert existing railroad corridors (left) to valuable recreational trail/greenspace (right).





Local initiatives, such as Greening the Great River Park, have created a powerful constituency of advocates for the Mississippi River valley.

Goal 6:

Develop an advocacy of people and corporations to participate in restoration and gain proprietary interest in ecological resources.

The preservation, restoration and inclusion of natural habitats in redevelopment areas is entirely dependent upon the people who have the knowledge and will to do it. Our natural resources need to be managed and maintained, protected from incompatible uses, and connected with humans. They should not be isolated enclaves separated by fences.

Preservation and stewardship require an investment by caring people. Building this advocacy, with a commitment from both public and private sector groups and individuals, is key to the long-term success of these efforts.

Objective: Provide awareness, educational, and social opportunities through participation in natural areas management for citizens. For example, brush clearing, native plant seed harvesting and other management activities can be implemented in a stewardship program by the community.

Objective: Provide recreational opportunities compatible with the protection of natural areas. Access to natural habitats is important for people to develop an appreciation of nature.

Chapter 2

Urban Structure

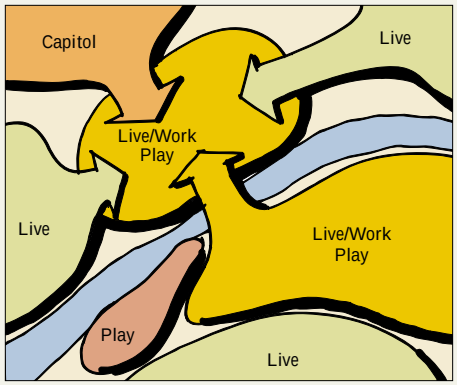
Chapter 2

Urban Structure

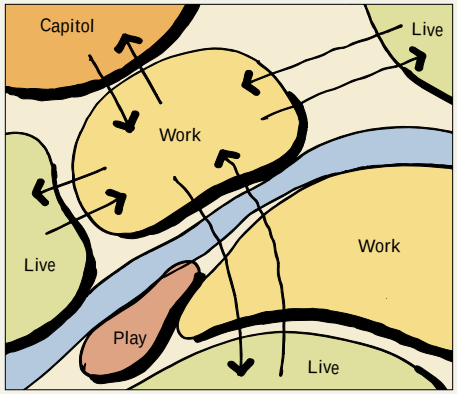
2.1 Land use: from isolated CBD to diverse, vibrant urban villages.

While there are already some residential pockets and several outstanding, new cultural uses, downtown Saint Paul is predominantly a nine-to-five Central Business District: a place for people who live elsewhere to come to work. This high degree of specialization is supported by an extensive freeway network that serves outlying residential suburbs. Over time, this pattern of development becomes self-reinforcing and has well-recognized results: city streets lose vitality and are viewed solely as conveyors of cars; the empty downtown feels unsafe at night; restaurants, residents and, increasingly, businesses are drawn to the suburbs.

However, the urban core must not be abandoned; it is clear that the downtown has a role to play that cannot be duplicated by suburban locations. Recent changes in the urban economy suggest renewed roles for city centers; there is already some evidence of this shift in the Saint Paul urban core. A more diverse clustering of activities, including an expanded array of enter-



Whereas now people generally live, work and play in isolated locations (below), the intent of the Framework is to increase the opportunity to overlap these activities within the downtown core (above).



tainment, recreational and cultural activities and a growing residential population seeking a more urban lifestyle, is emerging.

The intent of the Development Framework is to support and give direction to this positive and healthy change, capitalizing on a new relationship to the river by creating opportunities for a more diverse mix of uses, and encouraging a greater number of people to live and work downtown.

There are many benefits. From an environmental perspective, locating origins (such as housing) and destinations (such as work places and entertainment venues) closer together reduces trip length, and encourages walking and bicycling in a compact urban setting. A mix of uses also promotes vitality and a feeling of safety by having more activity at all times of the day and night and more “eyes on the street.” It also enhances the sense of community by creating local opportunities for people to shop or work in their own neighborhood. Support for local services increases the diversity of services available.

2.2 Land use goals and objectives.

A number of goals and objectives are identified to facilitate the shift from a monolithic CBD to a more mixed and vibrant downtown.

Goal 1:

Create a downtown comprised of a series of linked "urban villages" by building on existing villages and creating new ones.

In "Death and Life of Great American Cities" written in 1961, Jane Jacobs drew attention to the intricate mix and overlap of uses in Greenwich Village in New York City – in contrast to the sterile, planned homogeneous character of urban renewal districts. In a similar vein, the sociologist Herbert Gans used the term "urban villagers" in the 1960's to describe the residents of American Italian communities in the north end of Boston. Characterized by a rich mix of loosely organized and overlapping uses, these communities represented a re-creation of southern Italian villages in a North American urban setting. In identifying the unique and vibrant character of these communities, Gans helped to raise their profile and ultimately prevent their demolition, challenging conventional thinking in an age when segregating uses within well-defined boundaries was seen as an unquestioned good.

In the fullness of time, these observations have become conventional wisdom. Increasingly it is understood that the complex mixing of uses, based on an order that was previously misunderstood, is essential for the vibrancy of cities. Today, there are many initiatives aimed at re-establishing this more intricate and synergistic pattern of urban development.

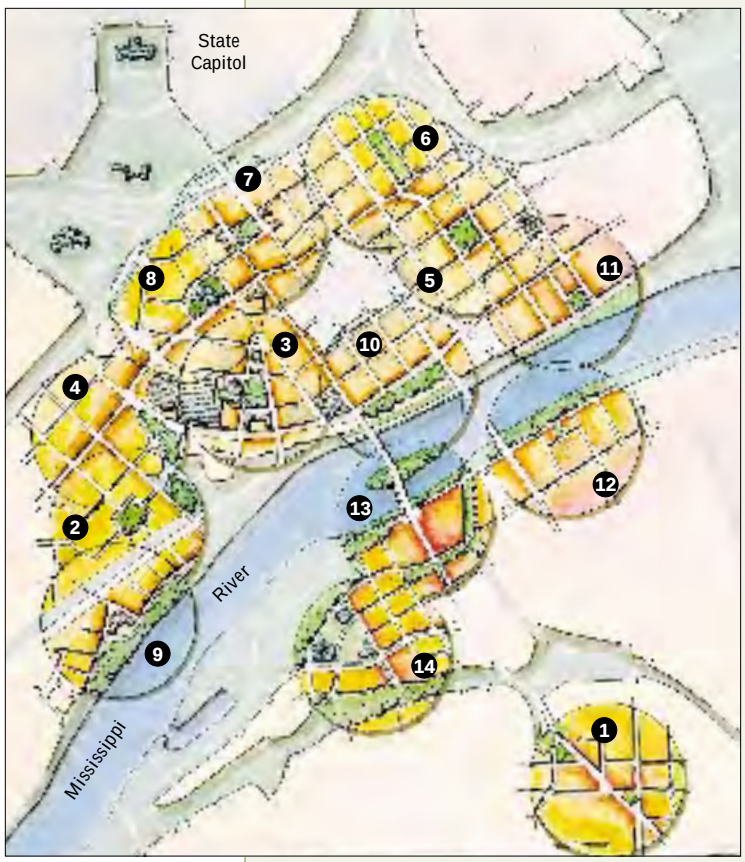
Borrowing from Jane Jacobs and Herbert Gans and increasingly contemporary usage, the Framework uses the term "urban villages" to describe compact, dense, and pedestrian-oriented areas of the city. Lowertown and Rice Park are prime examples of emerging urban villages. These villages are not isolated, self-contained enclaves. Positively defined by an overlap of uses within easy walking distance, urban villages present opportunities for residents to shop, work and recreate within their immediate community. Although it is not anticipated that there would be a strict correlation of living and working in the same village, the opportunities to do so are increased.

Urban villages are frequently anchored by successful public spaces – a square or park, a boulevard or street. It is anticipated that each urban village will develop its own

Downtown Saint Paul should be comprised of a series of linked "urban villages."

Emerging
1. Concord-Robert
2. Irvine Park
3. Rice Park
4. West 7th
5. Lowertown

Proposed
6. Northeast Quadrant
7. Fitzgerald Park
8. Northwest Quadrant
9. Upper Landing
10. Kellogg Mall
11. Lower Landing
12. The Esplanade
13. South Wabasha Bridgehead
14. Harriet Island



Lowertown, focused around Mears Park, is an emerging urban village.

A sufficient mix of uses should be encouraged to permit many daily needs to be met within a five-minute walking distance.

Wherever possible, a public space should be created at the heart of each village to accommodate a variety of community and recreational needs.

particular set of uses and character. Some may be heavily residential, others may have a cultural or employment orientation. The evolution of each depends on its location, origin, and adjacent uses. They are flexible, adaptable organisms designed to facilitate overlap and exchange, and provide a focus for community life.

Objective: New urban villages should be created at the South Wabasha Bridge Head, Harriet Island (adjacent to Harriet Island Park), the Esplanade, Upper Landing, North Wabasha (Fitzgerald Park), the Northeast Quadrant, Northwest Quadrant (Capitol Park) and Lower Landing. An expanded urban village can also be created at Kellogg Mall through more intensive use of existing sites and structures.

Objective: The emerging urban villages of Concord-Robert, Irvine Park, Rice Park, West 7th and Lowertown should be enhanced.

Objective: A sufficient mix of uses should be encouraged to permit many daily needs to be met within a five-minute walking distance. Rather than prescribing what uses should be within each village, the emphasis should be on enhancing connections between uses. Associated uses should occur in close proximity, each village developing its own character.

Objective: Uses should be mixed within individual buildings and/or blocks. For example, residential and office uses can be located above retail stores, restaurants or cafes. Residential buildings can include some proportion of increasingly popular live/work lofts that accommodate home occupations.

Objective: Urban villages should contain a range of residential units, including apartments, townhouses, converted industrial/warehouse units, and live/work units. There should be housing to accommodate a broad cross-section of people in terms of income, age, and family size. There should be opportunities for renters and homeowners.

Objective: Residential and commercial density should be sufficient to create a demand for the diversification of local services.

Objective: Wherever possible, a signature public space should be created or improved at the heart of each village. It should be designed to accommodate a diversity of community and

recreational events as well as daily opportunities to meet and socialize. Where feasible, active uses should be located on the ground floor of buildings facing this space.

Objective: Urban villages should be well connected by a network of "greened" streets that invite pedestrians to move between them.

Goal 2:

Build on and enhance existing amenities.

Downtown Saint Paul contains a wealth of amenities, including the Ordway Music Theater, Fitzgerald Theater, Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Children's Museum, Farmers' Market, and Raspberry and Harriet Island Parks. These amenities are the seeds of future vibrant urban villages and should be reinforced.

Objective: Successful enterprises and amenities should be encouraged to grow. For example, the Farmers' Market is a highly successful enterprise and should be expanded to become a seven-day-a-week, year-round event within the downtown.

Objective: Clusters of supporting activities should be encouraged around existing and proposed amenities. For example, restaurants, bars, cafes and hotels should locate in close proximity to existing cultural institutions such as theaters, museums, and successful parks.

The Farmers' Market is a highly successful enterprise that is ready for expansion.

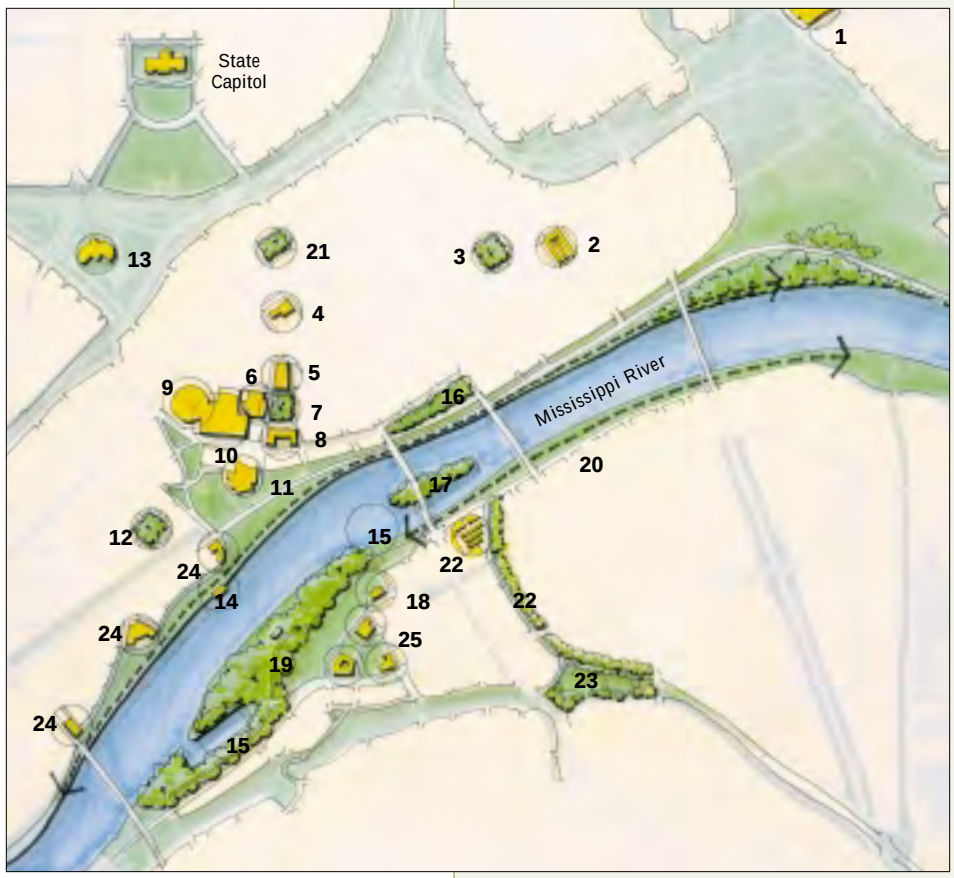
There is already a rich array of existing amenities that can be built upon.

Existing

1. Metropolitan State
2. Farmers' Market
3. Mears Park
4. Children's Museum
5. Landmark Center
6. Ordway Music Theater
7. Rice Park
8. Central and Hill Reference Library
9. Civic Center
10. Convention Center
11. Science Museum and Celebration Plaza
12. Irvine Park
13. Science Museum
14. Head House
15. Marina
16. Kellogg Mall
17. Raspberry Island
18. Harriet Island Park

Proposed

19. MNRRA Education Center
20. Riverfront Trail
21. Fitzgerald Park
22. Mercado
23. Green railway corridor
24. Recreational facilities
25. Amenity sites



Extroverted buildings that respond to the street create a much more inviting and memorable environment for residents and visitors (above); introverted buildings discourage use of city streets (below).

Goal 3:

Maintain a broad employment base.

In the interest of maintaining a balanced economic base, it is important for Saint Paul to continue to reserve lands for employment and particularly for clean manufacturing uses.

Objective: Within the river corridor, new manufacturing uses should generally be directed to the West Side. West of Wabasha, light manufacturing can be mixed with new residential uses. Other industrial uses should be located between Robert and Wabasha. Heavy industrial uses should be located east of Robert Street.

Objective: An inventory of appropriate sites for future manufacturing uses should be developed.

2.3 City form: seeking a hospitable extroversion.

The Framework deals with the built environment at a range of scales, from the entire downtown to individual buildings. At all scales, the Framework seeks to achieve "extroversion:" a more hospitable, legible and attractive city that people are invited to explore and use to the fullest.

At the scale of the downtown, extroversion begins with the perception of the city edge, and the way it meets adjacent areas and welcomes visitors. Many edges of the downtown are currently lacking in definition and fragmented by vacant sites and surface parking lots. Nor is there a cohesive and coherent edge to the city in relation to any of the major natural features – the bluffs, the Mississippi or the reaches. The creation of such a coherent city "face" along the key edges of the downtown will involve strategically coordinated infill development to reinforce frayed edges and consolidate existing components of the urban fabric.

The Framework also addresses the scale of individual buildings. Downtown Saint Paul and the river corridor contain a number of outstanding and handsome buildings of historic, cultural and architectural importance. Comprising many different architectural styles, these buildings have in common the confident and extroverted manner in which they address and

support public spaces. Doors directly access and windows overlook the streets. Continuous facades contribute to a strong and understandable streetscape. In recent years, the declining sense of optimism in the core has unfortunately been reflected in built form; buildings have become more introverted, self-referential "objects," turning their backs to the street. The intent of the Framework is to encourage a greater sense of continuity of built form and civic "extroversion" at the scale of individual buildings.

Achieving this type of development will involve a change in attitude. One of the hoped-for solutions to the decline in the downtown has been the lure of the mega-project. While sometimes successful in narrowly defined programmatic terms, many of these large projects fail to contribute to the city as a whole. Large bulky structures present impenetrable barriers, either by restricting movement and cutting off areas of the city that lie beyond, or by diminishing street interest to the point that the sidewalk becomes unwalkable. At the same time, because of their high profile and exciting nature, many of these projects absorb huge amounts of energy and investment and cause the smaller, more fine-grained, lower-profile development areas to be ignored – leaving much of the urban fabric in dire need of investment. The intent of the Framework is to encourage balanced and incremental growth that reinforces and consolidates a fine-grained urban fabric, and creates a greater sense of extroversion throughout.

The bluff face overlooking the Mississippi River is a "prime" edge whose definition can be improved.

2.4 City form goals and objectives.

A number of goals and objectives are identified to facilitate the shift toward a more contextual and extroverted form of development.

Goal 4:

Strengthen the "prime" edges.

Bisected by the Mississippi River valley and the reaches connecting to the river, downtown Saint Paul has three prime natural edges: the river's edge, the bluffs and the reaches. The intent is create a continuous outward-looking city facade along these edges that gives greater definition to the city and provides a more coherent relationship to these natural features.

"Prime" edges, freeway edges and gateways should be defined. Gateways should include:

1. Kellogg East
2. East 7th
3. 10th-Wacouta
4. Capitol
5. Kellogg-5th
6. West 7th-Kellogg
7. North Wabasha Bridgehead
8. Robert-Kellogg
9. Lowertown
10. South Robert Bridgehead
11. South Wabasha Bridgehead
12. Chestnut-Shepard
13. Ohio Street
14. Wabasha-Bluff
15. Concord-Robert

"Prime" edge

Freeway edge

Objective: Development should be oriented to address the river valley and to clarify the urban presence along it. Development should also assist in physically connecting the river to the downtown.

Objective: The scale and design of future development should not obscure or overwhelm the bluff lines.

Objective:
Along the Mississippi, development should be set back to enable the creation of a river's edge promenade. This setback should vary. The narrowest, most urban portion section of the corridor should occur in the central portion of downtown, between the Upper and Lower Landings.

Objective:
Along the bluff tops, development should be configured to create a permeable city edge that maximizes the potential of this unique setting for views. Where feasible, a bluff-top public promenade should be created. Publicly-accessible open spaces should be created to facilitate view corridors where streets terminate at the bluff edge.

Objective:
Along the Phalen Creek-Trout Brook Reach, development should generally form outward-looking, continuous city facades. The "valley" running between the Science Museum, Civic Center and the Irvine Park neighborhood should be defined by future development as a prominent public space and gateway to downtown.

Goal 5:

Define the freeway edges.

The introduction of I-94 and I-35, in deep trenches, sliced through the urban core and created a number of prominent freeway edges. Many of these edges remain unresolved and underutilized. The intent is to encourage a more positive definition of these edges and more beneficial use of available spaces.

Objective: Encourage uses adjacent to freeway edges that could benefit from both the high volume of traffic passing by and the proximity to downtown.

Objective: Encourage a form of development along the freeways that retains visibility yet is compatible with the adjacent urban fabric and scale. Structures should be designed to appropriately address both the freeway and the downtown.

The freeway edges have potential for an improved relationship with the fabric of downtown.

Goal 6:

Identify and define gateways.

A number of entrances to the city, particularly the bridges, have already been improved through a variety of streetscape strategies. Through the continued creation and further definition of gateways, the sense of arriving downtown will be more understandable and inviting. Gateways in this context should be understood not just as single entrance points in the traditional sense, but also as a sequence of visual cues occurring along a corridor.

Objective: Gateways should be established at a number of locations including: the Capitol, West 7th-Kellogg, Robert-Kellogg, East 7th, Chestnut-Shepard, Kellogg East, Kellogg-5th, Lowertown, 10th-Wacouta, North Wabasha Bridgehead, South Wabasha Bridgehead, Ohio Street, Wabasha-Bluff, Concord-Robert, and South Robert Bridgehead.

The new Wabasha Bridge positions the north and south bridgeheads as gateways to the West Side and downtown.

The strengths of existing neighborhoods can be extended to reinforce the urban fabric.

Existing

1. Irvine Park
2. Rice Park-Civic Center
3. Fitzgerald Park
4. Lowertown
5. West Side

City fabric extension

City fabric consolidation

Objective: Through appropriate massing, orientation and architectural detailing, built form should define gateways to foster a sense of arrival into the urban core. Where possible, ensembles of buildings should be coordinated to fully realize the gateway potential.

Objective: Lighting, planting, signage, public art, street and sidewalk treatment, as well as the landscape should be used strategically to reinforce the sense of arrival into the core in coordination with architectural schemes.

Objective:
Wherever feasible, two-way traffic movement should be encouraged at gateways to increase their profile and improve readily intuitive orientation to the downtown. Signage should clearly identify the gateway and assist in way-finding.

Goal 7: Build on the strengths of existing successful neighborhoods.

Existing successful neighborhoods should be extended wherever possible to expand the city fabric out to the edges of the urban core, and provide strategic opportunities for new and compatible growth.

Objective:
Irvine Park, Lowertown, Rice Park-Civic Center and the West Side neighborhood on the bluff should be extended toward the river with compatible development.

Objective:
Physical linkages and visual continuity should be sought between existing and extended neighborhood fabric through scale and alignment of built form, streets, view corridors, park links and trail systems.

Objective: Creative solutions should be sought where there are particular obstacles to neighborhood extension. For example, despite the vertical separation of the bluff, the Irvine Park neighborhood can be successfully linked to the Upper Landing through the extension of Chestnut Street and a major public bluff edge stairway. Similarly, the Post Office parking deck must be traversed in order to extend Lowertown to the river's edge and the Lower Landing.

Goal 8:

Reinforce the existing urban fabric.

In parts of the core, the continuity of the urban fabric is broken by vacant and underutilized lots, including a larger number of surface parking lots. These extensive voids make these areas uninviting and inhospitable. This pattern is most prevalent in the Northwest Quadrant around St. Joseph's Hospital, at the north end of Wabasha, around the Civic Center and in the Northeast Quadrant of Lowertown. Given its low density and fragmented building pattern, many parts of the West Side flats also have this fragmented character.

The intent is to encourage infill development on vacant and underutilized sites to reinforce the city fabric. There is also an opportunity for strategic modifications to the pattern of streets and blocks, and the introduction of new public spaces.

Objective: With the relocation of St. Joseph's Hospital, there is a major opportunity for mixed-use redevelopment of the Northwest Quadrant that builds on existing street patterns, structures and uses.

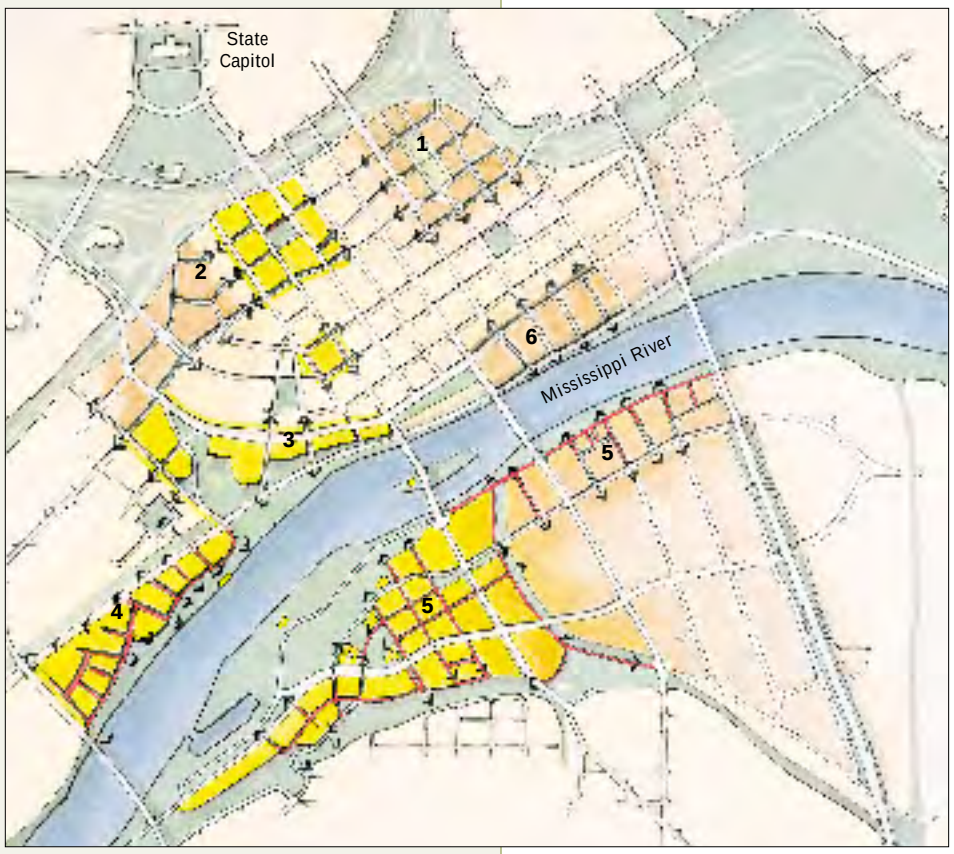
Objective: At the north end of Wabasha Street, the boundary of the urban core should be reinforced to enhance connections between the Capitol and the downtown. A mixed-use, predominantly residential neighborhood should be created around Fitzgerald Park, a new green square bounded by Exchange, Wabasha, 10th and Cedar.

The existing West Side neighborhood should be extended to the Mississippi River.

Infill development in the Northeast Quadrant (below) should build upon existing industrial/warehouse structures to create a new urban village that complements Lowertown (above).

Configure redevelopment areas into readily developable city blocks by extending the network of streets and blocks.

1. Northeast Quadrant
2. Northwest Quadrant
3. Rice Park
4. Upper Landing
5. West Side
6. Lower Landing



New or re-opened street

Short-term development focus

Long-term development focus

Objective: There is an opportunity for significant new mixed-use development with a strong residential character in the Northeast Quadrant. Infill development should build upon the pattern of solid and usable existing industrial/warehouse structures. A new public square should be created at the core of this quadrant and remnants of the previous urban fabric reconnected. The neighborhood should have a strong relationship with an improved, retail-oriented 7th Street.

Objective: The West Side, below the bluffs, should be restructured to create a coherent, mixed-use community. Four distinct areas are envisioned. Toward Lilydale, the emphasis should be on blending new residential structures with the existing industrial/commercial structures to create a vibrant community with a range of housing types. Between Wabasha and Robert Streets, a mix of commercial, industrial and some residential uses is envisioned. East of Robert Street, the existing industrial/commercial area should be consolidated with an emphasis on employment. Along the river, east of Robert Street, a riverfront residential community should be encouraged.

Objective:
Residential infill development should occur as appropriate in different locations to increase the extent and diversity of housing within the downtown and river corridor.

Goal 9: Configure redevelopment areas into readily developable city blocks by extending the network of streets and blocks.

Most of Saint Paul is characterized by a fine-grained network of streets and blocks. In order to integrate new development with the existing urban fabric, this pattern should be respected and extended into future redevelopment areas. This well-connected "grid" enhances connectivity and access, provides a diversity of route choices, and disperses traffic. By providing multiple routings, it also reduces walking distances, encouraging a more pedestrian-oriented city.

Objective: Large-scale areas of new development should be platted to create blocks of a size and shape that appropriately accommodate a range of building types. The pattern of new streets should relate strongly to that in adjacent existing areas.

Objective: Streets should be kept open, wherever feasible, to increase connectivity and avoid the creation of super-blocks. When considering new development, street-closing should be avoided; rather, buildings should be generally configured to fit into the existing grid.

Goal 10:

Complete the fabric of the city and respond to local typologies.

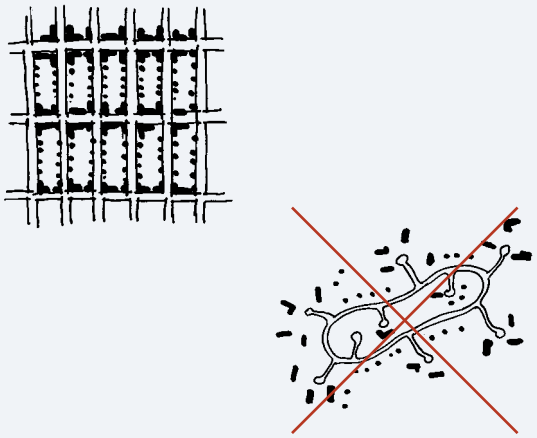
The city's "figure ground" reveals two characteristics of the existing urban fabric. First, there are a number of voids, both large and small. These are dotted throughout the downtown but are most prevalent toward the edges of the urban core.

There are numerous opportunities to complete the city fabric.

1. Upper Landing
2. Northwest Quadrant
3. Northeast Quadrant
4. Lower Landing
5. West Side

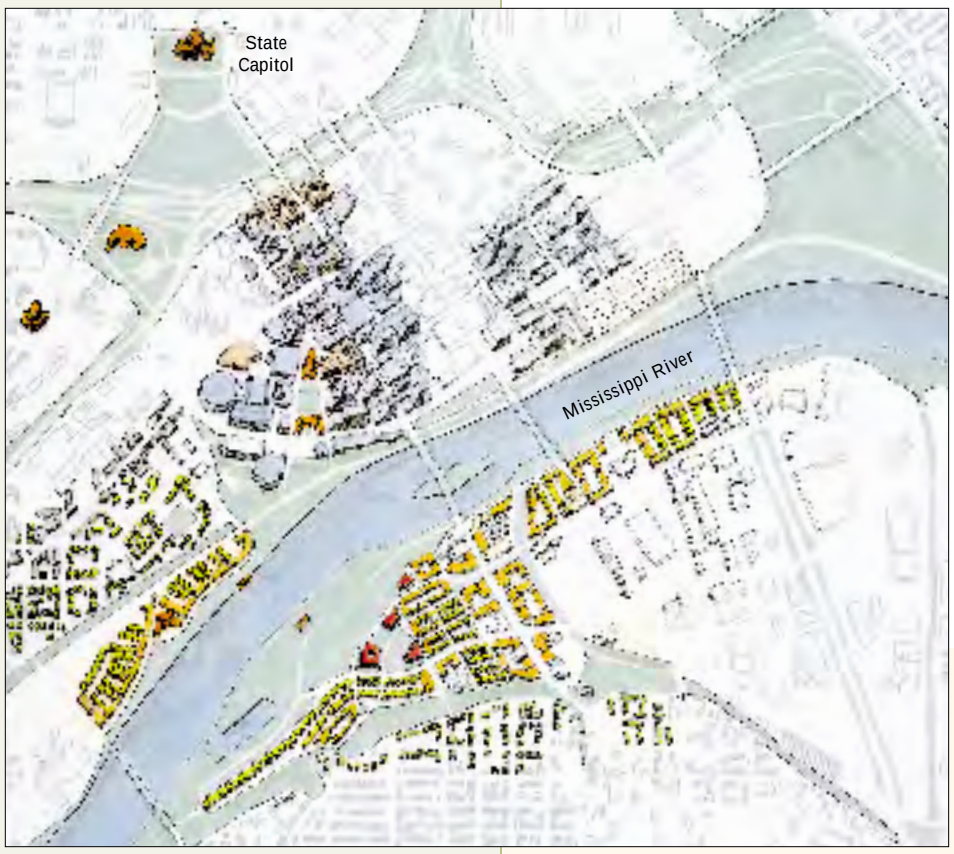
Development/ infill sites.

An interconnected grid of streets and blocks is more easily developed than a discontinuous pattern.



Opportunities exist to respond to local building typologies or form in each area of the Framework.

- Introverted complex
- Urban block
- Urban block infill
- Pavilion buildings
- Detached house or townhouses
- Street-related, mid-rise building



Second, there are discrete families of building typologies. For example, the downtown is characterized by a dense urban form. Buildings with large floorplates are built to the street line, framing the public realm. The West Side is characterized by a much lower-density form. Large industrial structures are located on expansive lots surrounded by green open space. Irvine Park consists primarily of low-density house form buildings. Larger commercial structures are predominant on 7th Street. The Capitol area is marked by large pavilion buildings in a park-like setting.

Future infill development should be directed to areas where there are voids in the existing urban fabric. It should also respond and be sensitive to the characteristic pattern of built form in each area.

Objective:

Future development should fill in the voids and define the edges of the urban core. To reconnect the city to the river, infill development should be a priority in the Upper Landing, Lowertown and West Side. To re-establish connections between precincts, infill development should be directed to key sites such as the Applebaum's block and the vacant blocks north of Fitzgerald Park.

Objective:

New development should consist of a range of building types that is appropriate to the particular context and established character of each area.

There should be appropriate transitions in scale between new and existing structures.

Goal 11:

Encourage buildings of appropriate scale.

Built form is a function of density, height and floor plate size. The same density can often be accommodated in tall structures or low-mid rise structures with a larger floorplate. The Framework concerns itself with two issues in this respect. First, scale should be appropriate to the context. Second, in a limited market such as Saint Paul, development should be used strategically so that its benefits are evenly dispersed.

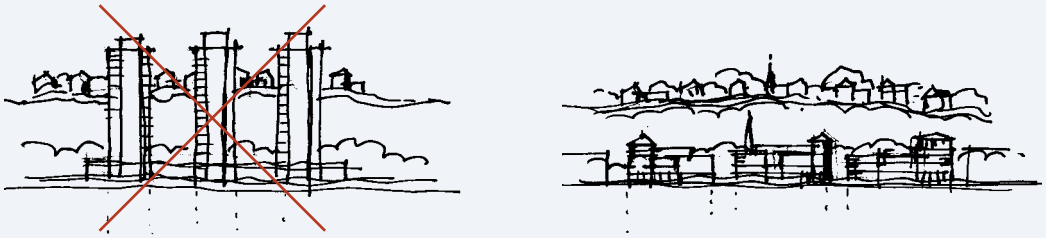
Objective: With rare exceptions, density should be generally accommodated in low- to mid-rise structures. It is counter-productive to have a very few high-density, tall structures that absorb an inordinate share of the market for a given use in one structure and prevent a broader distribution of investment dollars to achieve city building goals.

Objective: In areas where there is significant redevelopment, there should be appropriate transitions in scale between new and existing structures.

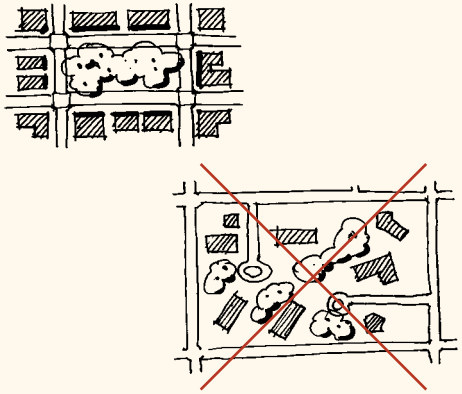
Objective: New building scale should be sensitive to local topography, including the river corridor, the bluffs, and the many valleys and depressions that define Saint Paul's urban core.

Density can often be successfully accommodated in low- to mid-rise structures that reinforce and frame public spaces (above). Generally, high-density, tall structures should be discouraged (below).

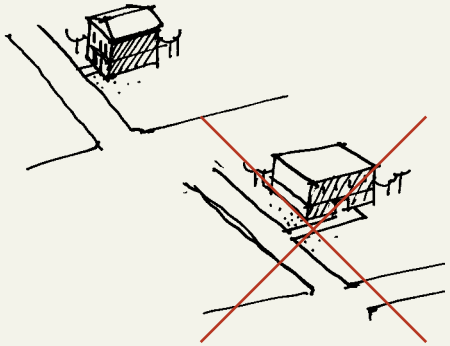
New building scale should be sensitive to topography.



New development should support an urban street grid that consistently emphasizes the vitality of the public realm.



Building facades should be sited and detailed to create a direct relationship with the street.



Goal 12:

Encourage buildings that define and support the public realm.

Saint Paul has a wealth of handsome buildings that define and respond to the public realm. These are "extroverted" buildings – buildings that contribute to the street wall and create a more animated street level. Windows overlook the streets, and doorways directly access the street. These buildings provide an informal means of surveillance and enhance the sense of security. This form of building should be rigorously prescribed.

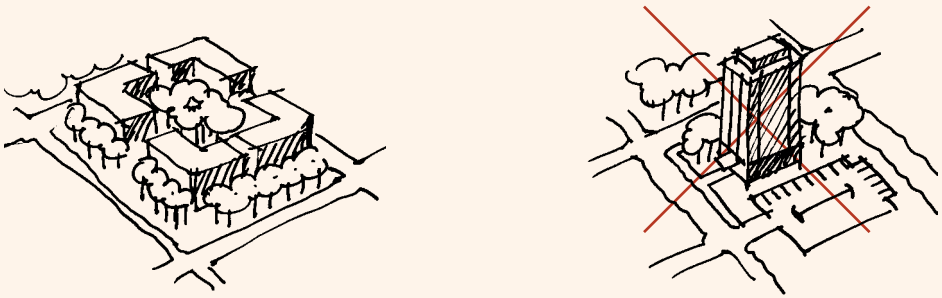
Objective: Building facades should be animated with appropriate architectural detailing, fenestration, entrances, and structural rhythm in order to create a direct relationship with the street. Blank walls should not be permitted along the street edge.

Objective: Active uses should be located on the ground floor. Parking should not generally be located on the ground floor, particularly along important building frontages. Access to parking and servicing should be provided from the sides and rear of buildings.

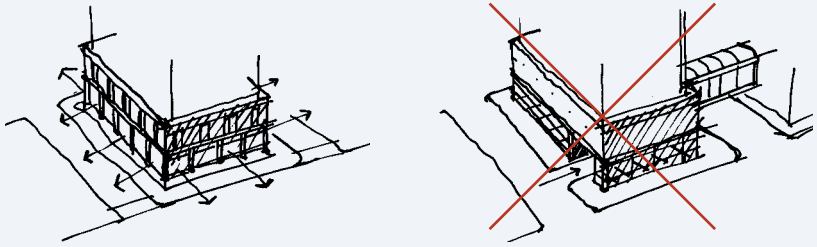
Objective: Buildings should generally provide a frame for streets and other public spaces, and not be conceived as isolated objects.

Objective: New development should support an urban street grid that emphasizes the vitality of the public realm. Buildings should front up to the street/property line.

Buildings should not be conceived as isolated projects but should generally provide a frame for streets and other public spaces.



Active uses should be located on the ground floor.



Goal 13:

Preserve buildings, landscapes and monuments of architectural, cultural and historic merit.

Saint Paul has a wealth of structures and landscapes of architectural, cultural and historic merit. These contribute to the sense of history and place, provide a sense of continuity and should be preserved. An Historic Sites Survey has been prepared by the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Ramsey County Historical Society identifying buildings eligible for heritage preservation designation. This work provides important reference and supporting material for preservation strategies in Saint Paul.

Objective: Augment the existing Historic Sites Survey to include all historic buildings, structures, landscapes, monuments and geological features within the downtown and river corridor, especially in the Seven Corners area and along 7th Street.

Objective: Promote designation of Heritage Preservation Districts in addition to the designation of individual buildings. For example, consideration should be given to designating Rice Park as a Heritage Preservation District.

Objective: Renovation and adaptive re-use should be made a priority for key heritage elements.

Renovation and adaptive re-use should be a priority for key heritage elements.

Goal 14:

Identify, preserve and enhance critical views and panoramas in and around the core and riverfront.

Saint Paul is set in a bowl, surrounded by hills upon which many of the neighborhoods and landmarks are perched. Key views and panoramas of the river from the city and the neighborhoods, and from the river back to the city, including from bridges, should be preserved and enhanced.

Objective: Primary view corridors, such as city-scale views of the State Capitol, Cathedral and to and from the West Side and Dayton's Bluff, should remain open and unobstructed as new development occurs. Buildings and landscape can be used to frame and enhance the view corridor.

Primary view corridors should remain open and unobstructed.

Objective: As opportunities arise, interrupted primary corridors should be reclaimed, such as the north-south axial view from the Capitol to the Mississippi River (now broken by the Veteran's Building).

Objective: Key views, for example along 5th and 6th Streets from Wabasha Street to the Landmark Center and Saint Paul Hotel and the view of the churches on Cedar Street from Wabasha and Exchange Streets, should be retained and strengthened.

Critical views and panoramas should be identified and enhanced in and around the core and riverfront.

Landmarks

Key vistas

Important views

Objective:
Panoramic views should be captured at overlooks by providing sites to experience the cityscape and the river valley. Examples of these view points include the bridges and bridgeheads, key blufftop sites such as at Irvine Park, and the West Side stairway.

Objective:
As feasible, overlooks should be integrated into the system of walks that links downtown to the river and the neighborhoods, such as along the urban balcony at Kellogg Park and at Indian Mounds Park in Dayton's Bluff.

Objective:
Height limitations and view corridors should be established to ensure that key views to the river and landmarks are preserved.

Chapter 3

Movement Networks

Chapter 3

Movement Networks

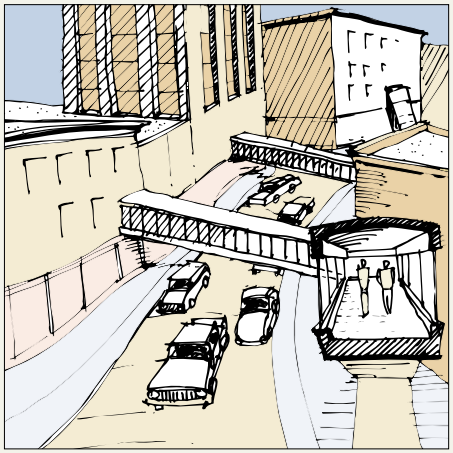
3.1 From quantity to quality.

The Saint Paul downtown transportation system needs updating, in contrast to restructuring or rebuilding. This update involves a transition away from an earlier objective of providing the maximum possible quantity of vehicular capacity to an emphasis on overall quality of travel, by all modes, within downtown.

The existing transportation system in downtown Saint Paul largely addresses a previous era. Vehicular speed and capacity were paramount. The freeway was the ideal of downtown transportation. The then-current belief was that freeways would give downtown the access it needed to be the central place in the region. The corollary – that freeways would simply explode the region and rob downtown of its uniqueness – was not foreseen in Saint Paul, or anywhere else.

Downtown streets became more single-purpose: the movement of as many vehicles as possible, at the highest affordable level of service. Evidence of this

The Framework intends to remedy the current situation that emphasizes streets as places for cars and skyways as places for people resulting in streets that lack a sense of vibrancy and safety.



single-mindedness exists in one-way streets, auxiliary (turning) lanes on downtown streets, and removal of on-street parking.

This was the result of a two-edged thrust. The traffic demands consumed more of the street. At the same time the disappearance of pedestrians from the street removed one of the major constituencies on how the street should be used. Providing a weather-protected pedestrian environment was seen as the way to compete with suburbs, and this led to development of the skyway system.

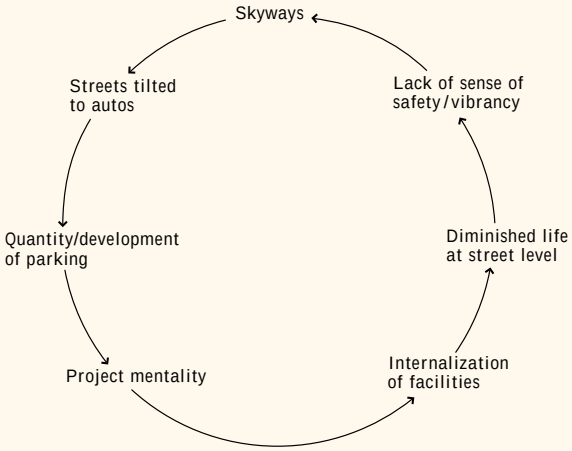
A New Paradigm

Saint Paul is enmeshed in a problematic paradigm with a number of connected elements:

- skyways,
- streets tilted to autos,
- quantity/deployment of parking,
- project mentality,
- internalization of facilities,
- diminished life at street level,
- lack of sense of safety/vibrancy,
- skyways.

To alter the way things work, the city must unravel this paradigm and break its links. While the entire existing structure cannot be reworked, changes at the margin can be made that will multiply over time and assist in creating complete new neighborhoods. Such an effort requires a comprehensive, coordinated and internally consistent set of initiatives, not isolated strategies.

Existing Paradigm



New Paradigm

Transportation needs to address the concept of what we now want downtown to be:

Residential

Transportation needs to be geared to a resident population. Downtown streets are currently sterilized for vehicles, and this condition needs to be reversed to appeal to other users. One-way streets are a constant reminder that pedestrians are not the preferred user of the street. The skyway system is not open during most of the hours that residents are home. Virtually no business of interest to residents is on the skyway system. Major amenities, such as the riverfront, Hamm Plaza and bluffs, while in close proximity to residents, are not easily reached by walking. Some cannot be reasonably reached at all.

Entertainment

There is agreement that a significant part of the future vitality of downtown is in entertainment. There is real strength in the existing downtown venues such as the Ordway and Fitzgerald Theaters. The energy expended on relocating the Science Museum within the downtown indicates a good deal of resolve to focus entertainment in the urban core. By extending the walking reach of the individual islands of entertainment and linking other complementing uses (dining, specialty shopping, riverfront visits) to the primary entertainment destinations within downtown, the duration of stay in the downtown area can be increased.

Employment and retail

Downtown will continue to have a significant employment base and is likely to retain retail uses that primarily serve daytime employees. (Of course, as the number of people living downtown increases, there also will be increased demand for commercial uses that serve residents' needs.) In order to keep downtown attractive to daytime employees, the public realm of streets, parks and plazas must be safe, active and well-kept. This will require improvements that mostly serve pedestrians, such as wider sidewalks, successful at-grade links between destinations and occasional use of the street for non-vehicular purposes (such as art fairs).

Alternative modes of travel

Walking, bicycling and transit loom large in the new vision of downtown. These are now seen as major modes of travel, with planning and funding equal to that devoted to automobile travel.

The over-reliance on travel by private automobile creates extraordinary demand for additional travel lanes and parking in the downtown on lands that could otherwise be used for other uses.

3.2 Movement goals and objectives.

A number of goals and objectives are identified to facilitate the shift to a more balanced movement network.

Re-balance the functions of the street to recognize traffic function, pedestrian classification and landscape design.

Street Classification

- Arterial street (existing)
- Collector street
- Local street (existing)
- Local street (new)

Goal 1: Re-balance the functions of the street.

Re-deploy the considerable street resources that are largely devoted to free-flow traffic in downtown. Maintain a good level of traffic service, while greatly enhancing walking, bicycling and greening of the streets.

Objective:

Clearly establish a street hierarchy for all street users that includes, but goes beyond, the traditional traffic functional classification. The Framework recognizes that there are at least three important dimensions that define street types in downtown Saint Paul: traffic function (the type of vehicular flow carried by the street), pedestrian classification (the walking environment and use of the street for non-motorized uses) and landscape design.

The traffic functional classification categorizes all streets according to a hierarchy of traffic movement qualities. This hierarchy, long a standard vocabulary of traffic engineers, consists of three categories:

Arterial streets are intended primarily for longer-distance mobility; for example, between regions of the city, or between downtown and outlying areas. Many trips on arterial streets have neither origin nor destination in downtown Saint Paul, but are simply passing through. Arterial streets provide some direct access to fronting properties, but their most important function is mobility.

Collector streets have both a mobility and access function. The mobility role is to collect/distribute longer-distance traffic from/to the arterial streets. Some short-distance trips are completed on collector streets alone, without needing to reach an arterial street. The access function for collector streets is to provide a substantial number of access points (driveways, parking lot entrances) for fronting properties.

The primary traffic function of the local street is to provide access to properties fronting the street. Motorists do not intend to drive for long distances on local streets. Rather, in the course of longer trips, they use local streets for short distances (one-half mile or so) to reach the collector and arterial street systems.

The Framework recognizes the growing diversity of functions for downtown streets, and classifies first those streets for which there is already a strong direction. Streets not yet ready to be classified will acquire a more clear direction as downtown development progresses according to the Framework.

Objective: Redesign and reconstruct the downtown street system to optimize the following criteria:

- greater friendliness to pedestrians and non-motorized traffic,
- street-related retail,
- substantially calmed traffic,
- improved access: convenience of approach and a healthy volume of vehicular traffic,
- maximized on-street parking, and
- attractive, convenient transit.

Objective: In the redesign of the downtown streetscape, provide the following design elements on each street in a way that best meets the above criteria:

- **On-street parking.** On-street parking provides convenience to downtown users and frames the street, offering protection to pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- **Number of lanes and lane widths.** Narrower streets are more pedestrian-friendly. The number of lanes needed depends on the volume of traffic the street must or is desired to carry.
- **Sidewalk width.** Wider sidewalks are friendlier to pedestrians and encourage seating, sidewalk cafes, artwork, performance, plantings, etc.
- **Traffic direction.** In general, two-way traffic will be the first preference. Two-way traffic is typically more conducive to pedestrian activity because there is greater parity between the speed of cars and pedestrians. Traffic tends to move more slowly on two-way streets due to the greater complexity and variety of vehicular movements.

When streets are designed solely with the traffic function in mind, there is little invitation for pedestrians to use grade level.

With appropriate attention to building, landscape and street cross-section design, streets can play a multiplicity of roles, creating a vibrant and inviting public realm.

The street cross-section design can make it clear that both pedestrians and vehicles are welcome.

Existing pedestrian friendly environments should be extended.

Two-way streets also support at-grade retail activity, especially where on-street parking is provided. One-way streets are often disorienting, particularly for visitors. Navigating through a two-way system is intuitive, enhancing access to destinations. Brief vehicular stops and passenger drop-offs are facilitated on the "slow" side of the street (i.e. curb lanes). Outdoor cafes are more attractive on two-way streets adjacent to slower moving cars.

- **Bike lanes.** Bicycle lanes make travel by bicycle more comfortable and safe. Downtown streets should be striped and marked for bicycles in accordance with Saint Paul's Transportation Policy Plan.

The design treatment for each street should reflect its desired role in the hierarchy. For example, Wabasha will become the city's main street with emphasis on retail. The adjoining streets, including St. Peter Street, are intended to perform a similar function and create connections to the Rice Park area. Immediate consideration should be given to converting Wabasha and St. Peter Streets to two-way traffic. Minnesota and Cedar Streets should be designed favoring transit. Fifth and 6th Streets serve both purposes, being major transit links and also retail-oriented connectors between Rice Park and Lowertown.

Objective: In rebuilding Shepard Road, continue with the design directions already established for the road adjacent to downtown; namely, as an arterial street of boulevard design with more intersections between Randolph Avenue and the Upper Landing, and between the Upper and Lower Landings as a riverfront parkway with off-peak parking permitted. Continuous pedestrian and bicycle paths will be included along the entire right-of-way.

Objective: Design new streets for the Upper Landing to advance the new downtown vision. New streets in the Upper Landing should embody the principles of the Framework, specifically: development of an appealing, continuous public space along the riverfront, streets for residents and visitors rather than for through traffic, local streets that can be shared by vehicles and non-motorized traffic, and configurations that create a focus for the new urban village.

Objective: Incorporate the Science Museum in the downtown street system in a manner consistent with the new vision for downtown. This connection should convey the urban theme of downtown, accommodate downtown traffic features such as passenger drop-off and valet parking, reinforce Chestnut Street as an important approach to downtown, invite walking beyond the immediate Museum grounds, create usable parcels of land in the vicinity of the Museum, and reinforce the existing street grid in the vicinity.

Goal 2:

Extend and link precincts by connecting the urban villages now in downtown.

Connect the major sources and destinations of pedestrian travel in downtown. Connect downtown's pedestrian precincts to urban villages adjacent to downtown. Make walking to the river possible and much more enjoyable, and greatly extend the range of appealing walking experiences for pedestrians once at the river.

Objective:

Enlarge the pedestrian precincts around the existing urban villages, already the nuclei of pedestrianism. For daytime users of the villages (workers, visitors, shoppers) this expansion of pedestrian precincts serves to increase the attractiveness of the visit, and extend duration of stay and expenditure of time and money in downtown. For residents, lengthening the pedestrian range is an important part of building the vibrancy that will be downtown's key competitive advantage.

Extending the pedestrian precincts is accomplished through incremental, organic changes, principally through addition of new public spaces, upgrading of streets from mere traffic conduits to pedestrian routes, connecting to nearby destinations, providing seasonal weather protection for walkers and generally fostering a park-once pattern of downtown visitation.

Pedestrian friendly environments exist at the ends of the skyway network and are beginning to emerge along the river.

Pedestrian focal points

At-grade weather-protected pedestrian precinct

Parks

Pedestrian links

Exclusive pedestrian ways

Trail, bluff walks

Enclosed skyway

On-street pedestrian ways

Destination or connector streets

New destination or connector streets

Objective: Joining existing and proposed urban villages with appealing pedestrian routes will balance vehicular and pedestrian use, and join a potentially large number of trip origins and destinations. The primary means of connection is through the evolution of the connecting street into an address or signature street, de-emphasizing the previous traffic-only use, and emphasizing the pedestrian environment.

Objective: Establish a street hierarchy for pedestrian use (see Chapter 4: Public Realm). The pedestrian use of the street is distinct and separate from its vehicular traffic function. Three categories of street types are proposed to define their use by pedestrians:

Destination streets are the address for numerous and important pedestrian destinations: shopping, work, residences, services, entertainment, and so forth. Physically, the destination street is typically bordered by a vibrant and continuously engaging street front: building facades, parks, monuments, arcades, plazas and so forth. Destination public streets are typically the premier public spaces of the city, either by themselves or in combination with bordering sites (squares, structures). They contain the highest pedestrian volumes in the city. In addition to pedestrians en-route, destination streets are host to "stopped" pedestrians, in sidewalk cafes, park seating, transit stops and the like.

The important design directions for the destination pedestrian street are further focus of pedestrian activity, reinforcement as the city's premier public space, improved value as a business address, extended hours of activity, siting of programming (festivals, displays, events) street furniture, streetscape and landscaping.

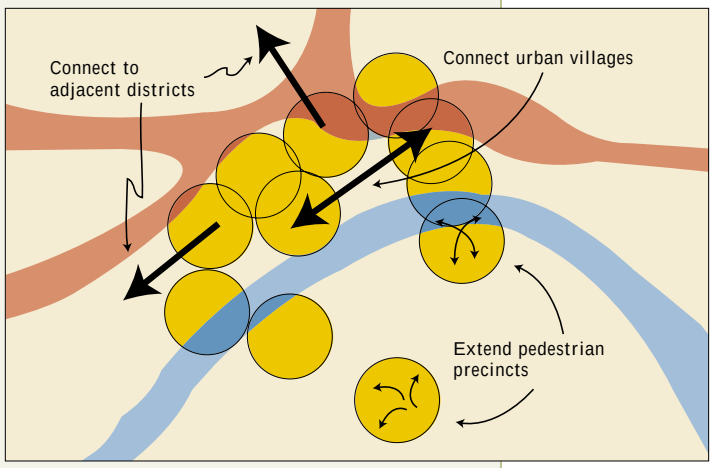
A connector street is a primary route for pedestrians. Physically, the connector street is a continuously pleasant walking environment, with occasional points of interest along the way.

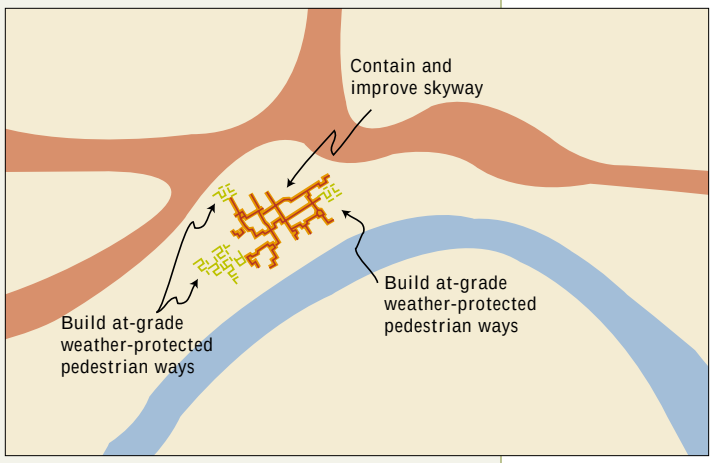
Users of pedestrian connector streets are typically walking for a sustained trip of more than two blocks, frequently for daily-recurring purposes such as parking-to-work, or office-to-lunch. Users of connector streets do not regard such streets as destinations, but rather as the most direct means of getting from Point A to Point B.

The important design directions for the pedestrian connector street are integrating linear street elements (sidewalks, street trees), adding to pedestrian comfort and safety at intersections, controlling vehicle domination (for example, driveways, visible parking), and building a coherent design theme for extended segments of street.

Background streets are neither destinations nor primary routes of travel for pedestrians. The design objective for pedestrian travel on background streets is to provide a safe, pleasant

Opportunities to improve pedestrian networks.





and comfortable walking route, with the understanding that use of the route by pedestrians will be light.

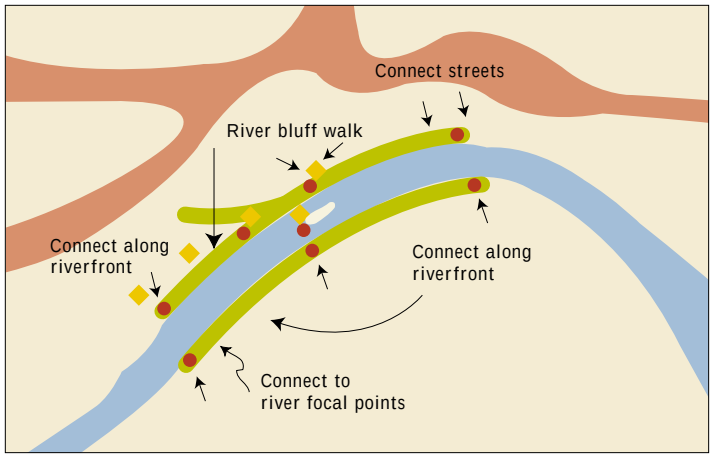
Alleys that do not fall into any of the above categories may be optionally provided in newly-developed areas consistent with the existing urban pattern. The provision of alleys as a means of providing off-street access to parking and improving the pedestrian quality of the street frontage should be explored when planning for redevelopment of the Upper Landing and West Side.

Existing alleys in historic downtown neighborhoods may be developed as pedestrian routes, but only in those areas where sidewalks are already heavily traveled by pedestrians.

Objective: Provide more pedestrian access between the river flats and bluff elevations by increasing the number of pedestrian routes (stairs, ramps, escalators, elevators, etc.) on both sides of the river. These connections are essential elements in providing more walking access to the river. They are also essential for connecting new urban villages (for example, Upper Landing) to existing urban villages.

Objective: Connect pedestrians to the river by opening new points of river access. Raise the recreational and aesthetic value of existing river access points. Join the points with walking routes linearly along the river. Connect the points inland to the rest of the walking system, incorporating new riverbank/bluff routes where necessary.

The wide constituency served by these measures includes the downtown daytime population increasing its activity in downtown, recreational visitors extending their time of visitation, and downtown residents and regional residents attracted to the river as a recreational destination.



Key routes between the downtown and the river, such as 2nd Street, should be made more inviting for walking and bicycling.

Landscape and streetscape features can greatly enhance the pedestrian environment.

Goal 3:

Supplement the skyway system with alternate weather-protected routes.

Our goal is to have vibrant streets filled with people. We recognize that skyways take pedestrians from the street at certain times of the day and, especially, at certain times of the year. Downtown Saint Paul, however, will struggle to succeed with its walking traffic divided between two competing systems: an at-grade (sidewalks) network and an elevated (skyways) network. Outside walking traffic is often a scarce commodity in downtown, even where efforts are made to focus and concentrate it.

Downtown's unique strengths – its setting, architecture, public spaces, wide range of retailing styles, diversity of parcel ownership, longer hours of operations, mom and pop ventures, low-rent operations and incubating start-ups – are ignored or, worse, negated by a concept of travel that removes users from the street experience. Downtown's future lies in the open, extroverted, lively and spontaneous experience of the genuinely public street. Successful examples exist in Rice Park and along Grand Avenue and West 7th Street.

The contrast with skyways can be stark. Private resources, otherwise available for extroverted features such as storefronts, displays, streetscapes and arcades, are instead turned inward toward introverted pursuits such as parking connections, bridges and internal security. With much of the usual constituency for multi-purpose streets focused elsewhere, street use gravitates toward the single purpose of moving vehicles as rapidly as possible. Public safety seems to decline as de-populated streets leave few "eyes on the street."

The cost-effectiveness of skyways as a public investment is questionable and merits much closer scrutiny. The argument for large subsides (in the form of skyways) to induce more downtown office employment appears to be a self-defeating spiral in which the feature (i.e., the skyway) used to attract workers isolates them from street-level commerce and activity. This large subsidy to downtown travel needs to be put into perspective, through comparison with other downtown investments, such as inducements to new retail establishments and new residential population, street revitalization, and so forth.

The goal must be to bring users to street level: the open world of the commercial urban environment where the elements exist that make the downtown a unique experience. Since companies approach the urban setting from different backgrounds and experiences, the City must first work with prospective downtown businesses to demonstrate the advantages of not being "bound" by a skyway connection. Second, downtown stakeholders must greatly improve the street-level experience. Third, attractive, user-friendly, street-level enclosed and temperature-controlled walkways, which blend in and/or complement the surroundings, must be developed. Finally, existing buildings must be re-engineered to bring foot traffic to the street. This will be accomplished by using escalator lobbies, atriums, stairways, elevators and the like.

In summary, a transition from the current, divided system must begin. The best way to discourage skyways is by providing compelling alternatives. Buildings must be re-engineered/designed to simplify easy street entrances and exits. The street-level experience in downtown Saint Paul should be enhanced to draw pedestrian traffic outside. Where feasible, street-level enclosed walkways must be encouraged through subsidies that would otherwise fund the extension of the skyway system.

The goal of focusing pedestrian travel on the streets is accomplished through a number of objectives.

Objective: Encourage new development to support the street level as the main pedestrian level; discourage new skyway construction.

Objective: Develop alternative approaches to providing weather protection and security. These alternative measures include free-standing weather protection structures (canopy, pergola, etc.) located on sidewalks, temporary seasonal structures, building features (arcades, galleries, passageways) that provide ground-level weather-protected walking routes, wind baffles, radiant heaters, heated/dried sidewalks, raised heated crosswalks, and so forth.

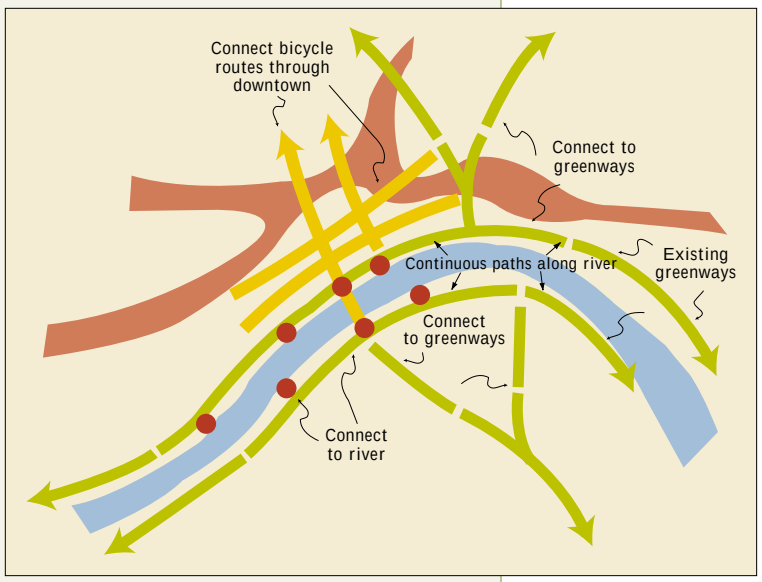
When extensions to the weather-protected network are planned, successes like Rice Park and Mears Park can be extended by providing compelling alternatives to skyways.

At-grade pedestrian arcades, which are built along the front of buildings and can be opened in summer months, are an excellent alternative to skyways.

Objective: Work toward a reduction in skyway distance. Over the longer run, as the city gains success with alternative means of weather protection for pedestrians, phase out selected segments of the skyway network. Re-route pedestrians from the deleted segments of skyway to the improved sidewalk system.

Objective: Improve the pedestrian environment on streets where skyways exist. Improve 5th, 6th and 7th Streets between Wabasha Street and Robert Street as described in other sections of this Framework. These measures will re-establish the on-street pedestrian environment for the sizable number of pedestrians not able or willing to use the skyway.

Bicycle initiatives.



Objective:
Improve visibility and access between the skyway system and the street, especially for those of limited mobility. Make skyway access from the street more visible and inviting. Increase the number of access points from street level. Inside the skyway, provide more orientation, and better visibility of and more frequent connections to the surrounding street system.

Goal 4: Connect bicycle routes.

Bicycle travel needs to be more safe, comfortable and attractive. The intent is to encourage bicycling both as a form of transportation to achieve a more balanced movement network and as a form of recreation.

Objective:
Connect to regional greenway corridors using re-designed streets and short sections of off-street bike path connectors. Provide links between the five regional greenway corridors and the downtown street system, making downtown a focal point for regional bicycle travel. Users of these connections will be daily commuters to downtown, recreational riders from throughout the region, and downtown residents traveling to outside destinations.

Objective: Provide continuous bicycle routes through downtown by designating on-street bike lanes on selected links for the major directions of bicycle travel. Connect the five greenway corridors with these downtown bike routes. Primary users of these connections will be riders with destinations within downtown. Another important user group is the long-distance rider using downtown as a hub for connections between greenway routes.

Objective: Connect bicycle routes to the river using calmed streets and short sections of new off-street bike paths. Provide connections from downtown bike routes to multiple riverbank locations. Using primarily new off-street bike paths, provide for continuous bike travel along both river banks through the downtown area. Key users are recreational bicyclists, primarily from region-wide origins outside downtown, but with significant demand also coming from downtown itself.

Bicycling is a form of both transportation and recreation.

A network of on- and off-street bicycle paths should be created.

Exclusive facilities

Off-street bike path, trail

On-street bike lane

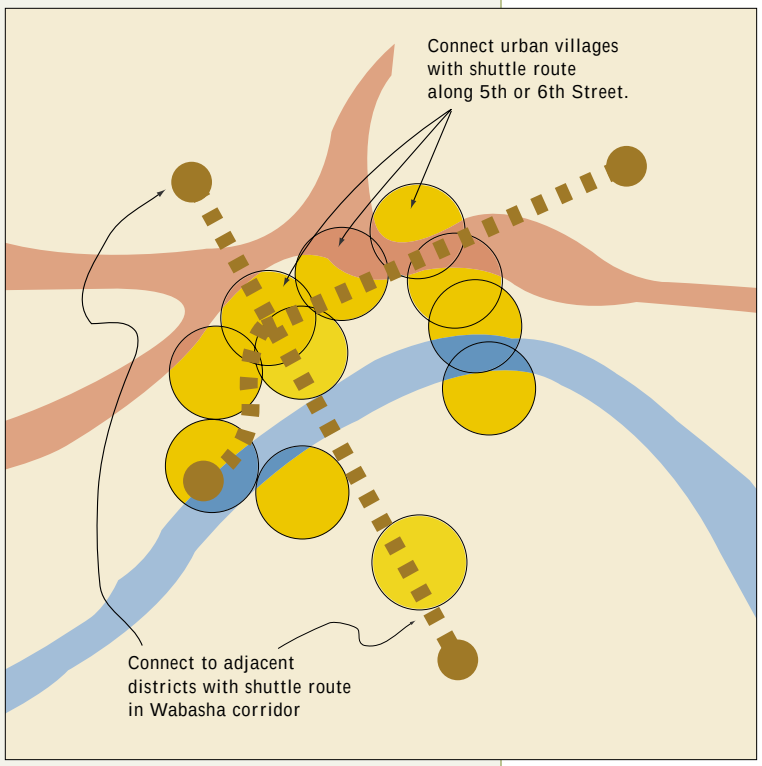
Shared facilities

Street shared by bikes and motorized traffic (existing)

Street shared by bikes and motorized traffic (new)

River access or viewpoints

Downtown transit service should support emerging urban villages.



Goal 5:

Evolve transit services for the new downtown.

Make travel by public transit more attractive and comfortable for a greater percentage of the population to support the broader principle of a balanced network for movement. Provide transit service targeted at all-day travel within downtown, in contrast to the peak-hour region-to-downtown focus of present transit service. Incorporate simplicity, frequency and street-friendly transit vehicles into downtown service.

Objective:

Using small, street-friendly equipment, provide service on short routes serving the urban villages within downtown. Routes should be simple, direct (no loops) with frequent service, extended hours of operation and numerous stops. Primary users are downtown residents traveling to/from work or for daily shopping and personal service needs. Daily visitors (workers) and occasional visitors (shoppers, entertainment customers) extending their "park-once" range within downtown are other important groups of users of the urban village connector transit services.

Public transportation should be considered a viable alternative to the private automobile.

Goal 6:

Plan and design parking in accordance with Framework principles.

Vehicle parking represents a major element of downtown infrastructure, both in terms of capital expenditure and impact on physical character. Parking principles are therefore as essential to the Framework as street design or land use principles.

These parking principles flow from the same outlook that has driven the street design and land use principles of the Framework. The overarching theme of these principles is that no piece of city infrastructure should be sited and designed for a single narrow purpose (storage of cars); rather, any investment in infrastructure should take the opportunity to build as much downtown urban fabric as possible.

The planning and design objective of new parking, therefore, transitions from the narrow supply-focused goal of:

> *"parking the most possible vehicles, with the greatest motorist convenience, at the lowest possible cost to the user"*

to the broad goal of:

> *"furthering the broadest possible range of downtown objectives, leveraging as many other related initiatives as possible, priced however necessary to assure a quality environment."*

Where ramps are required, they should be designed to have vibrant uses on the ground floor (above and below) and attractive facades (above)..

Objective: Emphasize public rather than private parking. Regardless of the ownership/management (public or private) of new parking capacity, locate it to serve a larger sector of downtown (urban village, district, etc.) rather than a single destination. Minimize any new parking (public or privately constructed) that serves a single destination with building-side parking featuring exclusive access to a single site.

In the design of new parking, stress the public, district-wide quality of the parking, through signing to vehicle entrance points, "invitation" and "welcoming" character of the parking design, extension of a superior walking environment for users of the parking facility, pedestrian access points, signs and logos, public information, contract (monthly) parking programs, pricing and retail validation measures.

Objective: Meet parking needs through management as well as new capacity. Recognize, by means of policy and capital improvement work programs, that construction of new parking space is only one way to meet parking needs and to remedy parking deficiencies. Rather than

immediately turning toward new construction, use the full range of parking management actions to extend the usefulness of existing parking capacity. Exhaust these possibilities before resorting to construction of new spaces. Place particular emphasis on management actions that simultaneously support numerous other Framework goals.

Typical of management actions are those already identified by the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority:

- park and ride shuttle service, to better utilize fringe parking resources,
- downtown commuter check program, to encourage higher vehicle occupancy,
- downtown voucher program, to encourage a wider range of parking "products,"
- park and ride facilities, to intercept vehicular traffic at some distance from downtown, and use of outlying parking facilities,
- shopper parking validation programs, and
- advanced directional signs for parking information.

Objective: Observe, in the site and building design of new parking facilities, the principles called for by all other aspects of the Framework. Use the street frontage of parking structures for lively, pedestrian-oriented uses such as retail and personal services establishments. Channel pedestrian flows to and from parking facilities along street-level routes that maximize exposure to downtown retailing, entertainment and cultural attractions. Extend a superior walking environment from parking facilities to major destinations. Overcome the inherent challenges of downtown parking (its cost, interior deck location) with the inherent advantages of the downtown street environment (variety, spontaneity, excitement, interest). Work towards a parking arrival sequence of public deck/vibrant street/final destination rather than an encapsulated building side deck/final destination sequence.

Objective: Develop a full spectrum of parking "products" in downtown, rather than concentrating exclusively on attempting to satisfy all parking needs with enclosed parking adjacent to final destination or along the skyway system. Other parking products involve lesser degrees of convenience, but typically lower cost and lower physical impact. Possible opportunities include joint use of parking at the Civic Center and other available parking venues, surface

parking on the West Side served by high-frequency shuttle service, and fringe parking at intercept locations at the core, combined with frequent shuttle transit service to and through downtown.

Objective: Maximize the amount of on-street parking. Consider all of the downtown street network as a candidate for on-street parking. Sole exceptions will be some of the streets designated as arterial streets, but even in these instances on-street parking may be possible during periods of off-peak traffic. Systematically re-introduce parking to streets (as in the recent case of Wabasha Street) as part of precinct plans and expansions of urban villages.

On-street parking in downtown Saint Paul is essential for three reasons:

(1) **Supply of parking.** The number of spaces yielded by on-street parking is significant, particularly given the density and completeness of the downtown Saint Paul street network. Further, the highly visible turnover of spaces used for curbside parking adds to a feeling of plentiful, convenient parking that far exceeds that actual number of spaces provided.

(2) **Retail-friendliness.** On-street parking is a powerful symbol that the street is a retail district and is intended for something other than simply moving as much traffic as possible, as rapidly as possible. The presence of on-street parking is particularly suggestive of retailing, and "invites" motorists to stop and visit stores, restaurants and services providers.

(3) **Pedestrians.** Vehicles parked at curbside furnish a strong buffer between moving lanes of traffic in the street and pedestrians on the sidewalks. Further, the sense of enclosure and the articulation of the view resulting from a line of parked cars help frame and enliven the sidewalk view to pedestrians, making it into a more inviting and appealing space for walking.

Goal 7:

Balance and maximize use of the river.

Actively promoting more transportation and recreational use of the river in the downtown area, while encouraging its restoration and naturalization, will increase the profile of the river, help connect it to the downtown and contribute to the overall sense of vitality.

A range of parking "products" should be provided. On-street parking has the additional benefit of providing a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians.

There should be a balance between barging (below) and the growing demands for recreational use of the Mississippi (above).

Objective: Serve a series of points on both river shores with water taxi service. Likely landings on the downtown side are at Upper Landing/Science Museum and the Lower Landing. On the West Side, likely landings include Harriet Island Park, the Marina and the South Wabasha Bridgehead. Raspberry Island is also a prime candidate for a water taxi landing.

Water taxis extend the walking range of pedestrians on both sides of the river, greatly enlarging the area that can be reached within 10-minutes. Water taxi service would be useful to bicyclists, permitting them to cross from one side of the river to the other at riverbank elevation, thereby avoiding the need to cross at the much higher elevations of the High Bridge or Wabasha Bridge.

For many users, water taxi service would be a purely recreational activity, extending a visit to downtown made primarily for another purpose (for example, Science Museum, Civic Center, etc.). Water taxi service, with its frequent arrivals and departures at landings, animates the waterfront, adding interest and appeal to the riverfront scene for both users and observers.

Objective: Encourage river cruising. These are generally private ventures based from public docks, involving daily, short (1 – 3 hour) trips from the Marina, chartered special event cruises based from the Marina, and large riverboats based from other cities making occasional calls to Saint Paul, docking at Lower Landing.

Downtown has a strong interest in supporting the full range of river cruising activity. The activity brings local residents to downtown as a primary destination, creates its own excitement as people come to watch the boats, extends the duration of stay for visitors attracted to downtown primarily for other reasons, and brings out-of-region visitors to downtown.

The Framework can support river cruising mainly through the "landslide" of the activity: raising the entertainment value of Lower Landing, extending a vibrant walking precinct from the Lower Landing to the rest of downtown, providing good pedestrian connections to the Marina and Lower Landing, offering shuttle transit service that assures frequent service to Lower Landing when riverboats are calling, and water taxi service.

Objective: Use the inherent interest and uniqueness of barge fleeting to add to the appeal of a downtown visit. Provide understanding and appreciation of this special activity, through displays, models, exhibits, information, etc., at several appropriate riverfront venues, both indoor and outdoor: the Minnesota Transportation Museum, the Science Museum, bridgeheads, Lower Landing and the river's edge walkway on the West Side. Arrange for hands-on involvement in the barging experience, such as floating exhibits and tours of working tugs.

Chapter 4

Public Realm

Chapter 4

Public Realm

4.1 Parks, recreation and open space: focus, reconnection and a catalyst for re-investment.

Parks, recreation and open space are necessary to a vital urban core. High-quality public facilities provide a central focus for new development, contribute to a coherent network of public spaces, and stimulate private investment. Efforts to strengthen the park, recreation and open space system and to "green" the downtown and riverfront are already underway.

Building on the highly successful redevelopment efforts already completed in the downtown area (Mears Park, Rice Park, Kellogg Park and Lower Landing Park), those soon to be completed (Harriet Island Park), and the availability of former industrial sites in and around downtown, the Framework seeks to develop a mixture of urban villages organized around a series of green squares or small parks, and connected by a network of "green" streets, pathways and natural corridors.

The intent of the Development Framework is to green the downtown and connect previously disconnected elements of the public realm.

The retreat of the "industrial glacier" (below) creates a vast terrain of opportunity to reclaim and make connections along the Mississippi (above).

Greening is achieved through a variety of approaches including: street tree planting, development of new public squares and pocket parks, and the reclamation of derelict or underused spaces. Greening is put forward as a key element of the urban infrastructure, and all redevelopment areas should contribute to the effort. Tourism revenue and a variety of public/private initiatives are needed to fund public spaces and maintain a high level of quality.

4.2 Public realm goals and objectives.

Regional Parks, Trails and Open Spaces

Goal 1: **Provide easily recognizable and accessible connections between downtown Saint Paul, the riverfront and the city-wide and regional open space trail systems.**

Goal 2: **Recognize and take full advantage of the historic and recreational significance of Saint Paul's parkway and trail corridor system.**

The Development Framework calls for reconnection of the urban system of green streets, walkways, parks and squares with local and regional parks and trails. These connections will be provided through a variety of proposed improvements, including street plantings, new walks, ramps and stairs, signage and lighting.

The intent is to enhance existing, or define new, opportunities for a variety of physical connections to serve all forms of movement, including pedestrian, bicycle and automobile. This will allow workers and residents of the downtown core and adjacent neighbor-

hoods to easily access the larger open space and trail systems leading into and out of the city. In addition, public and private initiatives to stitch together existing natural green corridors with new plantings will further improve the visual continuity between the downtown core, river, adjacent neighborhoods and regional green structure.

Objective: Provide major connections and trailheads to regional systems throughout the downtown and riverfront corridor. These connections should be clearly identified using signage, landscape treatment, lighting and special architectural elements, such as the Harriet Island-Lilydale trailhead, the future Phalen Creek Trailhead at Lower Landing Park and the regional trail corridor link along the Upper Landing redevelopment site.

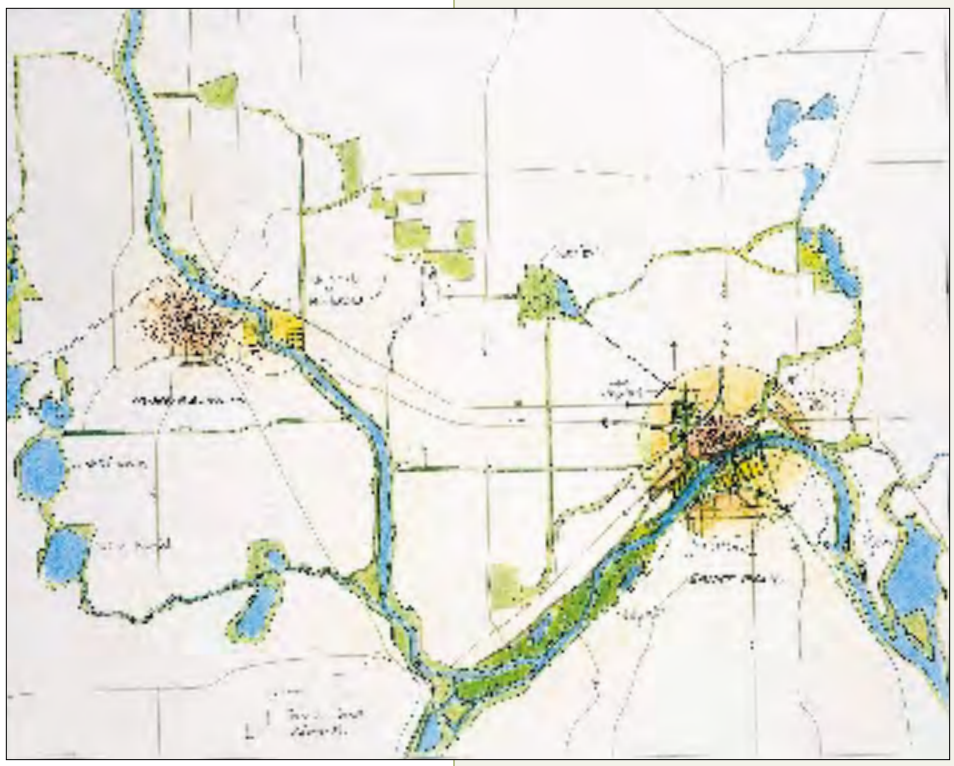
Objective: Where possible, connect bicycle/pedestrian trails with streets and neighborhood access points at frequent intervals along the corridor to improve access and safety, such as the Phalen Creek trail through Swede Hollow.

Objective: Use street linkages to provide gracious access for all modes of movement, and include comfortable sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes, similar to Summit Avenue. Separate off-street bike/pedestrian paths where feasible. Landscaping should be a key element at each of these connections.

Objective: Where possible, integrate connections to regional trails and trailheads within new development.

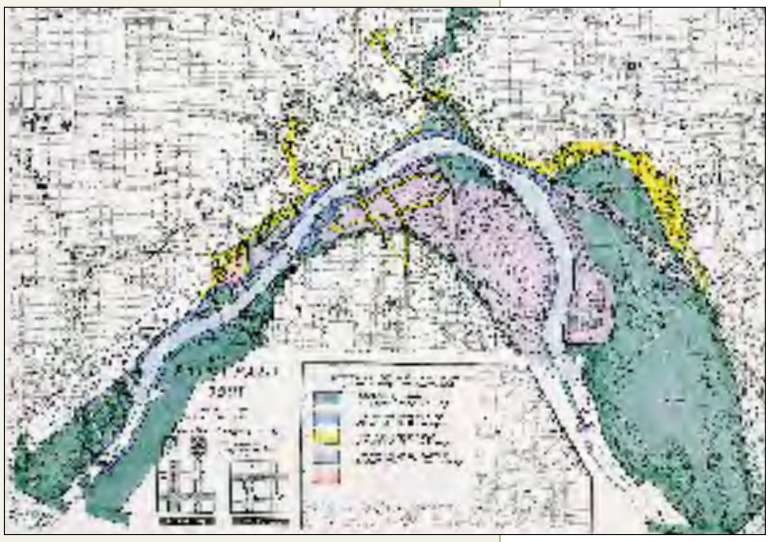
Objective: Identify and enhance specific downtown streets to be improved as key green connections and access points to the river valley and valley reaches. Improvements should include street trees, intersection plantings, and other landscape treatments to emphasize these corridors. Examples include improved connections at Jackson, Sibley, 2nd, Chestnut, Ohio and Concord Streets, and new links at Wacouta and Broadway.

The Framework anticipates connections between downtown Saint Paul, the riverfront and the city-wide and regional open space trail systems.



Innovative solutions should be developed to create vertical pedestrian connections between the bluff top and the river valley.

The "Greening the Great River Park" initiative has established targets for green cover in the river valley.



Ecological core at least 90% canopy

Riparian greenway at least 50% canopy

Inland greenway at least 50% canopy

Environmentally integrated development 20-30% canopy

Objective: Establish accessible and easily identifiable vertical pedestrian connections into the valley or its reaches from adjacent neighborhoods, the city balcony, at bridge heads and at selected points such as Kellogg Park, Irvine Park, Indian Mounds Park, East 3rd Street at Swede Hollow, and the West Side blufftop.

Green Structure

Goal 3: **Build on existing initiatives to establish an urban greening policy for the downtown, riverfront and river bottom areas.**

Goal 4: **Strengthen, organize and humanize the public realm by recognizing that parks and open space are necessities for creating and sustaining a quality, livable downtown environment.**

In Saint Paul, and specifically the downtown/riverfront area, vegetation has systematically been removed and the downtown core has become a concrete "island". As a consequence of urban development patterns in the downtown core and along the riverfront, the green structure of Saint Paul is currently neither a dominant nor effective organizing element of the public realm. Unlike the surrounding neighborhoods, which are characterized by dense, linear patterns of trees that reinforce and enrich the street while providing a shaded and protected pedestrian zone, the downtown lacks the landscape patterns that complement the urban environment.

Building on existing initiatives, such as Greening the Great River Park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Plan, and plans and programs developed by the Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation, the Development Framework is focused on recreating Saint Paul as a green city on the river and extending the surrounding urban forest into the downtown area.

Objective:

Where possible, landscaping should occur in conjunction with street improvement projects. Design should emphasize plant health and maintenance to ensure long term viability, reduce replacement costs, and accommodate snow removal and other street maintenance operations. Initial work should occur on high-profile streets such as Wabasha, St. Peter, and 5th Streets and Kellogg Boulevard.

Objective:

Continue the aggressive landscape approach for the edges of the downtown island, including the freeway corridors, freeway entrances into downtown, and bridgeheads. Sites include the Lafayette/7th Street area, the I-35 entry at Wacouta Street, the I-35E/I-94 interchange, and the plazas on either end of the new Wabasha bridge.

Objective:

Promote uninterrupted connections between the downtown core, riverfront and adjacent neighborhoods. Provide a network of green streets to link urban villages, create additional parks and squares that provide signature green spaces, and where possible re-connect the natural landscape corridors along the bluffs and river with downtown green space.

Objective:

Where possible, revegetate underused or vacant sites; develop these areas as community gardens, buffers, green pockets and other open space amenities.

The Framework builds on existing initiatives to establish an urban greening policy for the downtown and riverfront.

1. Green riverfront
2. Restore bluffs
3. Green streets
4. Green parks/squares

Parks & squares

Green streets

Soften freeway edge

Natural/restored green

Green Streets

"Green" streets support an improved driving experience and a high-quality pedestrian and bicycle environment.

1. Wabasha Street
2. Robert Street
3. University Avenue
4. West 7th Street
5. Kellogg Boulevard
6. Filmore Street
7. Plato Boulevard

Goal 5:

Develop a strategy for "greening" streets that supports an improved driving experience and a high-quality pedestrian and bicycle environment.

Movement into and out of downtown Saint Paul occurs primarily on freeways, freeway feeders, a number of key streets such as Kellogg Boulevard and West 7th Street and, in many cases, via bridges. The intent is to protect and enhance existing street plantings and to introduce new plantings wherever possible throughout the downtown core. The level or intensity of "greening" for each street will be determined by its classification, based on traffic flow, pedestrian use, and the desired visual character.

Objective:

Strengthen key "destination" streets, such as Wabasha, Concord, Robert and West 7th Streets and Kellogg Boulevard, with additional trees, flowering shrubs and flowers, decorative lighting, improved transit facilities, abundant street furnishings and facade improvements.

Objective:

Key routes between existing and proposed urban villages and between the downtown and the riverfront are classified as pedestrian "connector" streets, such as 5th, 6th, Wacouta and Water Streets. These streets should be emphasized as high-quality, green corridors, very pedestrian-friendly and inviting. They should receive improved lighting, street trees, additional planting as feasible, upgraded transit facilities and appropriately-placed street furnishings.

Objective: Re-establish the connection between the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods by providing intensive street-tree planting and decorative lighting along key connector streets.

Objective: The majority of the urban streets are classified for pedestrian use as “background” streets. These streets play an essential role in the overall character of the city and the ability to move through it; the background streets need to be safe and comfortable places to walk. Installation of street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting should be a minimum standard for these streets, with additional improvements at key locations as appropriate.

Objective: Continue to upgrade downtown “gateways” as important gathering places, street identifiers and major elements of the city fabric. Improvements should include a combination of trees, shrubs, and flowers, in conjunction with lighting, signage, furniture and public art.

Improvements to existing streets contribute to creating an inviting public realm.

Even in the cold winter months, Kellogg Mall is an outstanding urban park.

Park Maintenance

Goal 6:

Promote a high level of quality programming and maintenance of park, recreation and open space facilities within the public realm.

Park, recreation and open space facilities are key elements to the revitalization of the urban core. They are no longer mere luxuries, but necessities. Since the creation of new facilities will overwhelm an already overburdened park system, high-quality programming and maintenance are fundamental to the long-term use and success of these areas. Traditional resources to sustain parks, recreation and open space, such as tax appropriations, special tax districts and volunteerism, will continue to be utilized, but they can no longer be depended upon to be the sole supporting mechanism. Other options need to be considered.

Objective: Encourage the formation of development associations as an integral part of new development projects, to be responsible for the programming and maintenance of the adjacent public realm such as public squares, open space and pathways.

The Lilydale/Harriet Island Regional Park Master Plan, approved in 1993, envisions a much improved riverfront park.

Objective:
Where feasible, include park, recreation and open space facilities with high entertainment and tourism value to generate revenue specifically dedicated to the on-going programming and maintenance of a high-quality public realm. Examples include areas for special events, pavilions, food service, excursion boat rides, docking facilities and equipment rental.

Parks and Squares

Goal 7:

Enrich the existing downtown and riverfront by creating new parks, village greens and signature open spaces in the urban core and along the riverfront.

Key to the structure of existing successful downtown districts (e.g. Rice Park, Irvine Park and Lowertown) are the signature village "greens" around which the districts are organized. The Framework extends this idea into redeveloped quadrants of the city, with new signature green spaces at the center of emerging villages and pedestrian-friendly connections between them. The Framework also calls for connections between these village greens and other existing or new city and riverfront parks.

Objective: Open space and parks should be integrated into riverfront redevelopment, and should be linked to other existing or proposed park space to create a seamless flow into the urban core, such as between the new development on the Upper Landing Precinct, the proposed Science Museum Park and Lower Landing Park.

Objective: Urban local streets should be improved over time to establish a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly green network that connects existing and proposed green spaces, such as along Wacouta Street from Mears Park to Lambert's Landing.

New and improved parks, village greens and signature open spaces will enrich downtown and the riverfront.

Existing public spaces

1. Capital Mall
2. Mears Park
3. Kellogg Mall
4. Rice Park
5. Celebration Plaza (planned)
6. Irvine Park
7. Harriet Island Park
8. Raspberry Island
9. Lambert's Landing

Proposed public spaces

10. Fitzgerald Park
11. Riverside Park
12. Railway Corridor Green
13. Harriet Island Village Park

Conceptual public spaces

14. Northwest Quadrant
15. Northeast Quadrant

A transition in grade adds visual interest to Irvine Park, one of Saint Paul's great urban squares.

Objective: Develop multiple types of parks and open space to accommodate a wide range of uses for residents and workers in the area, such as Harriet Island Park (with programmed and active recreational opportunities), Lower Landing Park (with more passive recreational opportunities), and Lilydale Park (with more educational and wildlife opportunities).

Objective: Where possible, locate a village green as the focus of emerging and proposed urban villages. These greens should be designed to accommodate a range of community and social events.

Natural Features

Goal 8:

Protect and enhance the environmental and aesthetic quality and integrity of Saint Paul's natural features.

In parallel with the Environmental Context Goals and Objectives (see Chapter 1), reconnecting natural features as part of the city green structure provides a unique opportunity for the public to experience the natural world within downtown Saint Paul. The fractured condition of existing remnant natural areas makes this a challenging, but essential, goal.

A prominent and thriving system of natural features has tremendous value, both environmentally and aesthetically, and can augment Saint Paul's built environment, creating a unique, healthy and vital urban area. It also adds a variety of new and reintroduced experiences to the growing list of recreational and educational opportunities in the downtown area. The Framework calls for the complete integration of natural systems into the overall development strategy, resulting in a more environmentally sustainable and economically viable city.

The exposed bluff face is visible in a number of locations throughout the downtown.

Objective: Protect and celebrate the unique bluff formations in and around downtown Saint Paul, including those adjacent the West Side, the Irvine Park neighborhood, and at Dayton's Bluff.

Objective: Where feasible, and as a part of a comprehensive stormwater management strategy, develop new wetlands/natural areas in the existing drainages upstream and downstream from the downtown core (Upper Landing Precinct and the mouth of the Phalen Creek-Trout Brook Reach), integrating interpretive and recreation uses into these areas.

Objective: Implement plans to improve access into natural areas for recreational and educational purposes, such as the Lilydale Park area, and a variety of greenway/trail corridors along the base of the bluffs and the river.

Objective: Plans for new development areas, such as the Science Museum and Upper Landing redevelopment projects, should include innovative and sustainable approaches for stormwater management that integrate landscape plantings.

Objective: Explore additional opportunities to enhance the natural qualities of the river itself, including greenway buffers, wildlife preserves, limited access areas, and other programs.

Saint Paul's natural features, including the Mississippi River and the bluffs, should be protected and enhanced. NSP is currently preparing an extensive landscaping plan for its downtown plant that will help to green the river valley.

Public Art

Goal 9:

Acknowledge and celebrate the role of public art in the downtown and riverfront area.

Public art is essential to the vitality and memory of our community. It is an icon of our identity, it memorializes our civic ideals and leaders, it provokes thought and catalyzes social action, and it creates public places that enhance our civic life.

The impetus for public art comes from many sources – from the character and need of a particular site; from a patron's wish to publicly commemorate or memorialize a person, event or ideal; from a community's wish to highlight and change social and environmental conditions; from an artist's wish to express an aesthetic idea in a public context. There are many excellent opportunities for artists to participate in emerging public and private initiatives that will further enrich and energize Saint Paul's public realm.

Objective:
Implement the "Action Public Art: Placemaking in Downtown Saint Paul" initiative and Public Art Saint Paul's "20 by 2000" initiative as guiding strategies for developing art projects in the public realm.

Objective:
Use art in the public realm to further key goals of the Framework, such as linking urban villages, accenting important focal points and improving the pedestrian environment of the street.

Objective:
Establish funding mechanisms to ensure the integration of public art into both public and private initiatives throughout the downtown and riverfront.

Initiatives such as the Placemaking Workshop, sponsored by Public Art Saint Paul and the CapitolRiver Council, have identified a number of potential sites for public art.

Objective: Use public art as an educational tool to develop a greater understanding of the physical and cultural history of Saint Paul.

Objective: Continue to encourage a wide range of non-traditional public art projects that address issues in the natural environment, such as water quality and management, site restoration and preservation, and reforestation.

Objective: When possible, include artists in the conceptualization and early design of infrastructure improvement projects.

Chapter 5

The Capitol-Mississippi Crescent

Chapter 5

The Capitol-Mississippi Crescent

5.1 The Crescent.

The Framework approaches the downtown as a series of precincts roughly defined by prominent features, amenities and/or by geographic boundaries. The early inventory phase of the Development Framework revealed clusters of initiatives building on historic assets such as the Capital Mall, Rice Park, the Wabasha spine, the Mississippi River valley and the waterfront. This led to the selection of four precincts for detailed study: Wabasha Corridor, Rice Park-Civic Center, Upper Landing, and West Side.

A key criterion in selecting these precincts was the desire to deal with immediate needs and maximize the benefits of proposed initiatives. Within the four precinct areas, a number of pivotal projects were identified, including the recently-built Minnesota Children's Museum, the new Wabasha Bridge, new Shepard Road, the Civic Center expansion, the new Science Museum, the St. Paul Companies' rehabilitation of the Hamm Building, and the continuing upgrading of Harriet Island Park.

When the precincts are combined, these major initiatives and their connecting links form an observable pattern, a kind of "fertile crescent." This crescent contains and links together many of the most significant existing assets and current initiatives within the Capital City's urban core. It is primed to be a major focus of investment in Saint Paul, extending from the Capitol, to the Upper Landing Precinct, to Harriet Island and on to the West Side. To accelerate the revitalization of the urban core and demonstrate the value of real urbanity in an area of significant opportunity, the implementation of the Framework strategically targets complementary and linked efforts where their impacts will be greatest. By creating a continuous and vibrant link from the Capitol to the West Side, the Capitol-Mississippi Crescent will re-position Saint Paul as a dynamic contemporary river city, fundamentally re-orienting its focus while building on its present strengths.

There is a compelling historic resonance to this set of linked opportunities extending from the Capitol to the Mississippi River. In Cass Gilbert's visionary designs for the "new" State Capitol at the turn of the century, he recognized the importance of the larger context: an emerging downtown and a high-profile location on the river. Relocated from the downtown area to a prominent knoll overlooking the city at the head of Cedar Street, the Capitol dome became a focal point for the entire city. His sketches and studies proposed avenues and boulevards that would radiate from prominent Capitol buildings, connecting the Capitol to the surrounding city and the Mississippi River. Concurrently, he sought to create an approach to the Capitol appropriate to its stature.

The Capitol-Mississippi Crescent contains many of the most significant existing assets and current initiatives within the Capital City's urban core and is primed to be a major focus of investment.

Over time, elements of his vision were built. One of the most enduring pieces is Irvine Park. Originally conceived as a major urban square, it is today a serene and magnificent neighborhood park offering views of the river from its bluff top location. Cedar Street was also partly developed as an urban boulevard. Much of Gilbert's concept was never fully realized as he had envisioned, as short-sighted decisions gradually diminished its impact. However, the underlying inspirational idea endures. As Gary Phelps notes in The History of Minnesota State Capitol Area, "the original vision remains today."

A century later, the Capitol-Mississippi Crescent, as it has emerged in the Framework, represents an opportunity to finally bring to fruition Cass Gilbert's powerful vision to link the Capitol to its waterfront, albeit in an entirely different form. At both ends of the crescent of opportunity there is a pre-eminent public space, Harriet Island Park on the West Side and the Capital Mall. Wabasha Street as a revitalized main street is the primary corridor linking the two. Direct connections to the river are made at a number of locations, including the Wabasha Street Bridge, Rice Park and the grand public stair at the Science Museum, Celebration Park and the Upper Landing, and on the West Side from Harriet Island. The Mississippi River valley within the core city becomes a regional destination. In its entirety, the area runs north to the Capitol some 12 blocks from the river and is approximately 4 blocks wide.

The realization of this century-old ambition provides the broader context for a series of new and related development initiatives. The revitalization of the West Side, the creation of a new waterfront neighborhood on the Upper Landing, Celebration Plaza on the river, the new Science Museum and Civic Center expansion, the redevelopment of the Applebaum's block on Wabasha Street, the refurbishing of Wabasha Street, the World Trade Center redevelopment, the new Capital Area Architectural and Planning Board Comprehensive Plan and the Fitzgerald Park initiative each represent a key building block in achieving the overall vision. High priority projects in their own right, they cumulatively form a single city-scale project that will advance the revitalization of the downtown.

The role and contribution of each precinct is considered in detail within the larger context. A vision for its development is supported by key guidelines and recommended initiatives covering all aspects of physical development from streetscape to built form. A range of potential private, public and community projects is identified. Each initiative represents a discrete step toward the achievement of the larger vision.

5.2 Wabasha Corridor Precinct

5.2.1 The role of Wabasha: strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Wabasha Street is a powerful repository of the city's collective memory and Saint Paul's historic main street. Early this century, Cass Gilbert developed a vision in which an active downtown radiates out from and is connected to the Capitol. Until World War II, Wabasha was one of the connecting streets, vibrant and busy, lined with stores and filled with pedestrians. In the postwar era, considerable change occurred. The building of the interstates, a loss of retail market share, the conversion to one-way streets, and the extensive development of the skyway network gradually diminished pedestrian and retail activity along the street.

The Wabasha Corridor still plays an important ceremonial role, however, linking the Capitol, Mississippi River, Raspberry Island and West Side all the way to Concord. The Wabasha Corridor is also a primary axis of economic activity, supporting a diversity of new and existing commercial ventures. The tide is turning back, led by the World Trade Center and Town Square initiatives, and the new Wabasha Bridge.

Cass Gilbert's historic vision to link the Capitol to the Mississippi (above), thwarted by short-sighted development and construction of the freeway (below), is revisited by the Framework.

Strengths

Between the Capital Mall and the river, Wabasha Street is characterized by numerous buildings of architectural and historic merit, a relatively consistent street wall, a comfortable building scale, and a good building-height-to-street-width relationship. There is a diversity of uses along its length, ranging from institutional, retail, and housing, although some of these are at the lower end of the market.

The skyway network terminates and comes back to street level at a number of locations along Wabasha Street: the Children's Museum, Wabasha Court, 7th Place Mall and Capital Centre Plaza. As a result, Wabasha Street continues to have pedestrian activity at street level. A number of cultural amenities are in close proximity, including the Ordway Music Theater, Landmark Center, Central Library, Fitzgerald Theater, and Science Museum. The street also forms an important view corridor between the Capitol and the Mississippi River.

Weaknesses

There is an air of decline about portions of Wabasha Street. The retail uses along its length are of mixed character. While there are some good-quality stores, many are weak and there are a number of vacant buildings and lots. Several residential buildings along Wabasha Street (the Lowry Hotel, 7th Place Residences and Schubert Apartments) generate unwanted activities, such as loitering. These activities, combined with a lackluster streetscape and a lack of vitality at-grade, create a street that is often uninviting to pedestrians after regular business hours.

Despite the proximity of a number of outstanding amenities, Wabasha Street feels cut off from its surroundings. For example, there is little sense of connection to Rice Park or Lowertown due to the unappealing nature of the intervening streets and the lack of activity at ground level. Capital Centre Plaza lies in the heart of the business community, at the junction of street and skyway, yet is lacking in identity and pedestrian appeal. One-way traffic on Wabasha Street that flows north, away from the Mississippi River, is disorienting and not conducive to retail activity at-grade.

Opportunities

Several key redevelopment and planning opportunities are poised to play a major role in revitalizing Wabasha Street. These include: the potential expansion of office space for a number of major private corporations, the recently announced renovation of the World Trade Center and Town Square that will create a more vibrant facade along Wabasha and 7th Streets, the revision of the Capital Area Architectural and Planning Board's Comprehensive Plan and implementation of the Wabasha West Study. As well, there is the potential need for additional State office space associated with the Capitol, the potential construction of a State visitor center near I-94, the rehabilitation/re-use of the existing Science Museum facilities, and the potential for creating a new Fitzgerald Park at Exchange Street as the core of a new urban village. The City is planning investments in an improved streetscape including conversion to two-way operation and has already re-established on-street parking. Finally, Wabasha is located between two large potential redevelopment areas: the Northwest Quadrant (with the closure of St. Joseph's Hospital) and the Northeast Quadrant.

There are a number of individuals, agencies and groups who share the commitment and desire to restore the street to its former glory and fully realize it inherent potential. The August 1996 report "Strengthening Vitality West of Wabasha: Ideas from the Community" contains a complete inventory of potential initiatives in the Wabasha West area on a block-by-block basis. The Wabasha Corridor is also a high priority of the Capital City Partnership.

The planned renovation of the World Trade Center and Town Square will create a welcome presence at the juncture of Wabasha and West 7th Streets.

Wabasha was once a pedestrian-oriented, dynamic main street.

5.2.2 The Vision.

Wabasha Street is a lively, people-oriented spine connecting a series of distinct destination nodes within an urban setting of high-quality buildings and public spaces. With a change in attitude and a number of key initiatives in place, there is now an opportunity to regain much of the street's former glory.

5.2.3 Objectives and guidelines.

Based on the broad Framework goals, the following objectives and guidelines are intended to direct the development of the Wabasha Corridor toward the achievement of the Vision.

PUBLIC REALM

Objective: Refurbish Wabasha as downtown's main street – a green, pedestrian-oriented ceremonial street linking the Capitol to the river and the West Side.

Guideline: **Improve the pedestrian environment.**

- Widen the sidewalks and narrow the street pavement, where feasible, to maximize the available area for pedestrians.
- Introduce street trees, plantings, and other streetscape improvements.
- Provide at-grade weather protection in the form of awnings, and permanent and convertible arcades.

Wabasha is envisioned as a lively, people-oriented street providing one of the key links between the Capitol and the Mississippi River.

Guideline: **Create a unique series of urban open spaces along the corridor.**

- Improve key open spaces including:
  - 7th Place Mall,
  - the intersection at 7th and Wabasha Streets,
  - Capital Centre Plaza.
- Redesign Capital Centre Plaza as a high-profile urban square, with more trees, areas for tables and reorientation of interior uses to face onto the plaza.
- Create a neighborhood park when the opportunity arises to remove the Arts and Science building; shift 10th Street south to line up with its more easterly alignment.
- Retain Kellogg Mall; incorporate it into the design of the new Wabasha Street bridge.

The current redesign of the Capital Centre Plaza provides the opportunity to create a more successful urban square.

Guideline: **Program public spaces to sustain activity.**

- Build on the city's Wabasha Street Initiative to encourage greater use of the public realm.
- Develop innovative year-round programs for the diverse open spaces that abut the Wabasha Corridor.
- Cooperate with the State to program activity on the Capital Mall throughout the year.
- Support temporary seasonal attractions such as Taste of Minnesota and the Winter Carnival.

Guideline: **Create links to other parts of the core.**

- Create green "fingers" extending out from Wabasha Street to establish connections to the surrounding neighborhoods: Rice Park, Lowertown, the Northeast and Northwest Quadrants.
- Improve 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets through plantings, sidewalk widening, pedestrian-scale lighting, street furnishings, pavings.
- Develop Kellogg Boulevard and 7th Street, the major connecting cross-roads, as green urban boulevards.
- Create a weather-protected walkway along the city balcony "river walk" as opportunities arise.
- Incorporate the covered portion of 2nd Street below Kellogg Mall as a link to Lowertown.
- Enhance visual connections by preserving key view corridors:
  - along 5th Street to the Saint Paul Hotel
  - along 6th Street to the Landmark Center
  - along 7th Place Mall to the St. Paul Companies
  - along Exchange Street to the Central Presbyterian and St. Louis Catholic Churches
  - along Wabasha Street south to the Mississippi from 4th Street
  - along Kellogg Boulevard to the Mississippi.
- Remove the skyway between the Science Museum and the Arts and Science Center to improve the view corridor between the Capitol and the Mississippi River.
- Green the I-94 corridor:
  - Plant with trees, shrubs and perennials along the rim.
  - Augment existing tree patterns with understory plantings and additional tree plantings on the downtown side of the road frontage.

LAND USE

Objective: Establish a range of uses and activity nodes along Wabasha Street that encourage vibrancy for additional hours of the day.

Guideline: **Encourage people to live and work along Wabasha.**

- Encourage uses that support living and working downtown, including:
  - grocery and convenience stores,
  - restaurants,
  - convenient on-street short-term parking,
  - neighborhood parks,
  - opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation.
- Create an urban village at the north end of Wabasha Street that builds on the existing Arts and Science Neighborhood.
  - Encourage a broad mix of uses, including a significant concentration of housing, cultural amenities, State offices, and potentially the Visitors' Center.
  - Develop an expanded park on the Arts and Science Annex site as the focus of the village.
- Develop an urban village on the West Side at the new South Wabasha Bridge Head, accommodating retail stores, restaurants, and new housing as a focal point of activity on the riverfront.
- Renovate existing structures to provide quality residential accommodation for an expanded range of incomes including the:
  - Lowry Hotel,
  - 7th Place Residences,
  - Schubert Apartments.
- Consider underutilized sites as a strategic opportunity to incorporate new residential uses including the:
  - Public Health Building site,
  - Fitzpatrick Building,
  - Capitol Square Building block,
  - St. Joseph Hospital site (a long-term potential when the hospital relocates).

Guideline:

The Fitzgerald Theater is one of the amenities around which a new residential community could be focused at the north end of Wabasha. Some existing residential buildings should be renovated to accommodate a broader range of incomes.

Encourage a mix of uses.

- Generally encourage a greater mix of uses within downtown including:
  - a diversity of housing,
  - retail,
  - office,
  - entertainment,
  - parks for a range of ceremonial and neighborhood needs.
- Develop retail uses at-grade along the length of the corridor.
- Use the renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings, including new State offices, as opportunities to introduce active, street-related uses, such as cafes, restaurants, retail uses, and services. For example, redevelopment of the Wabasha Court Building and the Applebaum's block should incorporate active, street-related uses on the ground level.
- Encourage major corporations seeking expansion to locate on Wabasha Street between Kellogg Boulevard and 7th Street.

BUILT FORM

Objective: Encourage cohesive street frontages.

Objective: Incorporate significant heritage structures.

Guideline: **Preserve heritage buildings.**

- Preserve and rehabilitate buildings of architectural and/or historical merit including:
  - City Hall,
  - Commerce Building,
  - Saint Paul Building,
  - Northern States Power Company Building,
  - Ecolab,
  - Minnesota Children's Museum,
  - Fitzgerald Theater,

- Lowry Hotel,
- Hamm Building,
- 7th Place Residences,
- Orpheum Theater,
- Fitzpatrick Building (Nates Clothing),
- Exchange Building (formerly Saint Agatha's Conservatory of Music and Arts).

Guideline: **Encourage buildings to frame and address the street.**

- Renovate existing buildings that do not relate strongly to street level to have a greater presence on the street and improve the relationship with enhanced street-level activities.
  - The exterior wall and ground floor of the Radisson Hotel should be renovated to create greater transparency and a stronger relationship between the interior and the adjacent sidewalks on Wabasha Street and Kellogg Boulevard.
  - The street level of Dayton's can be improved to address the street and create greater transparency. Short-term initiatives have included planters, window displays, public art, improved sidewalks and seating/tables. Long-term initiatives should include building exterior redesign, new street-related shops, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, awnings, and improved paving.
- Redevelop vacant and underutilized blocks with new projects that strengthen the street edge.
  - The redevelopment of Wabasha Court and the Applebaum's block should be designed to contribute to the revitalization of the Wabasha frontage and to improve connections to Rice Park.
- Direct strategic "infill" to vacant lots that are critical to defining the edges of the urban core, particularly at the north end of Wabasha Street.
- Create "anchors" at the north and south end of the Wabasha Corridor.
  - On the West Side, an activity node should be created at the South Wabasha Bridgehead with continued links to Concord.
  - A gateway should be created to anchor the north end of Wabasha Street and improve the connection to the Capital Mall.

Design details can signal a pedestrian-friendly environment.

MOVEMENT NETWORKS

Objective: Create an environment that encourages pedestrians and automobiles to move in a manner appropriate to a ceremonial main street.

Guideline: **Improve the grade-level environment for pedestrians along the length of the corridor.**

- Improve the intersections of Wabasha Street and Kellogg Boulevard, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Streets to facilitate pedestrian crossing.
  - Create bumpouts at intersections to favor pedestrian crossing.
  - Reduce traffic signal cycle lengths.
- Design streets as high-quality components of the public realm through redesign of the right-of-way and streetscape improvements.

Guideline: **Encourage pedestrians to use the street level.**

- Restrict expansion of the skyway network beyond Wabasha Street, Kellogg Boulevard and 7th Street.
- Facilitate movement between the skyway and street level, especially for those of limited mobility.
  - Create more visible access.
  - Provide clear way-finding to direct skyway users to the street level.
- Create at-grade weather protected connections in strategic locations through buildings and across building frontages along the length of Wabasha Street.
- Improve pedestrian connections between Wabasha Street and Rice Park-Civic Center.
  - Redevelop the Applebaum's block to create weather-protected at-grade connections between Wabasha Street and Rice Park.
  - Add street-level interest and articulation (civic art, seating, plantings, etc.) to Hamm Plaza to support the major at-grade pedestrian route through this important public space.
- Improve the pedestrian environment adjacent to parking ramps.
  - Improve the appearance of existing ramps through landscaping and facade articulation.
  - Design new ramps to be "faced" with active uses at grade level.
- Capitalize on the fact that the skyway system meets the ground level at Wabasha Street (at Capital Centre Plaza).

Guideline: **Redesign the Wabasha right-of-way to slow traffic, improve connectivity between the West Side and the Capital Mall, and encourage street-related activities.**

- Restore two-way vehicular traffic to Wabasha and St. Peter Streets.
  - Two-way (one lane in each direction) operation on Wabasha Street should begin at East 11th Street, and continue to the current two-way operation south of Kellogg Boulevard. An additional third lane for left turns at all approaches to cross streets should be provided where possible (i.e. where not precluded by one-way operation on east-west streets).
  - Two-way traffic should be restored on St. Peter Street between 11th Street and Kellogg Boulevard, and a related program of traffic calming measures introduced with a particular focus on the plaza to the north of Landmark Center.
- Narrow intersections along Wabasha Street with corner bumpouts similar to those now in place at Wabasha and Exchange Streets.
  - Where appropriate (depending on detailed traffic analysis), extend bumpouts to cross-streets (as has been done on Exchange Street to the east of Wabasha Street).
- Maintain convenient on-street parking to support local retail uses.

Guideline: **Improve public transit along the Wabasha Corridor.**

- Establish a transit shuttle spine along Wabasha Street from the Capitol to the West Side to extend the reach of existing parking, serve the need for mid-day trips for downtown workers, extend the duration of stay and internal travel distance within the downtown for visitors to the Civic Center and the Science Museum, and strengthen the connections between downtown and the West Side.
  - The shuttle spine should have frequent service (every 5-8 minutes during most of the day, and every 10-12 minutes during early/late hours) and operate 14-16 hours daily.
  - Smaller mid-sized vehicles should have simple, direct routing.
  - The operation should be clearly differentiated, in the users' view, from regular transit coach, quiet and fume-free. There should be safe, appealing and weather-protected boarding areas.

5.3 Rice Park-Civic Center Precinct

5.3.1 The role of the Rice Park-Civic Center area: strengths, issues, constraints and opportunities.

With major new investment building on the success of the Ordway Music Theater and the Civic Center, the Rice Park-Civic Center Precinct is poised to become a city-wide and regional draw. Strategically located along the bluff with a natural topographic connection to the river, it is positioned to provide one of the key visual and physical connecting links between the city and the river.

Strengths

The area is marked by a wealth of resources. Rice Park is an exemplary urban park framed by high-quality new structures, such as the Ordway Music Theater, and historically significant structures including the Landmark Center, the Central and Hill Reference Libraries and the Saint Paul Hotel. The expansion of the Civic Center and the construction of the new Science Museum of Minnesota represent a very large investment and significant new resources. The historic splay formed by Washington and Market Streets creates visual interest, beauty and opportunities for perspectives and views in a unique and dramatic location in the city at the edge of the bluff overlooking the Mississippi.

Issues

The initial reason for examining this precinct lies in the opportunity presented by the some 2.5 million annual visitors projected to visit the Civic Center, most of whom will be staying at hotels in the heart of the downtown, including the Radisson. The skyway network that connects much of the downtown does not extend through Rice Park to the Civic Center. In a competitive convention market, connections that provide clear way-finding are an important criterion in selecting convention sites.

The challenge is how to create the connection between the hotels and the Civic Center while still preserving the integrity and character of Rice Park. A number of options have been proposed (and new ones continue to emerge). There was a general consensus that there should be a connection, but that none of the previously considered options were workable. The suggestion to extend the skyway to the Civic Center across Rice Park met with considerable opposition: it detracts from street life and has a significant visual impact on the Park. Similarly, an underground route detracts from street life, feels unsafe, and creates a confusing third level of pedestrian circulation. The potential riverwalk is expensive and difficult to implement quickly. There is a perception that the existing at-grade connections do not provide a sufficient link.

Constraints

In the short term, the lease on the Radisson Hotel stipulates that no new hotel can be built within the next five years using City funds, requiring that a solution be found to create an interim connection between existing facilities. At the same time, the key strengths of the precinct – the quality and historic nature of buildings and open spaces, and the existing highly successful public realm, which is exceptional in downtown Saint Paul, also represent constraints by making the issue of weather protection through this precinct extremely sensitive. As well, there are generally insufficient amenities – shops, restaurants, cafes – within the Rice Park area to meet other needs of convention goers.

Opportunities

The Rice Park-Civic Center area has the physical resources to serve as a city-wide and regional draw. Over time, the creation of a city balcony riverwalk will provide a magnificent opportunity to exploit views of the Mississippi from a number of vantage points. Improved connections from the precinct to the surrounding city and neighborhoods, such as the grand public stair at Washington Street to Celebration Plaza and the river, will greatly enhance the appeal in this area and extend its reach. There is also a major opportunity to expand the network of internal grade-level weather-protected walkways as new development and redevelopment occur.

Rice Park received the highest rating in the City's 1993 Visual Preference Survey and is a city-wide and regional draw.

The Rice Park-Civic Center Precinct Plan builds on existing assets to create visual and physical connections to the downtown and the Mississippi.

5.3.2 The Vision.

The overall approach to the Rice Park-Civic Center Precinct builds broadly on existing strengths and resources to create a vibrant, active, cultural/entertainment center with a local and regional draw. Improved links are provided between Rice Park and the river as well as the surrounding neighborhoods, especially the Wabasha Corridor. The creation of a connection between the Radisson Hotel and the Civic Center, either through additions to the skyway network or the development of expensive tunnels, is not recommended. Instead, in addressing the issue of a weather-protected link, the intention is to strike a balance between maintaining the vitality of the public realm at street level, the preservation of Rice Park's character, and meeting the needs of the Civic Center and convention goers. A solution that fails to strike this balance could contribute to a loss of vitality in this exceptional area; this is an unthinkable price to pay in resolving a temporary problem. In the long term, a new convention hotel should be built closer to the Civic Center.

5.3.3 Objectives and guidelines.

Based on the broad Framework goals, the following objectives and guidelines are intended to direct the development of the Rice Park-Civic Center area toward the achievement of the Vision.

PUBLIC REALM

Objective: Enhance and build upon the successful pedestrian environment.

Guideline: **Improve connections to Wabasha and the downtown core.**

- Create connections to Wabasha Street by extending the special streetscape character of the Rice Park area, consisting of paving, lighting, tree planting, and street furniture, north to 7th Place.
- Reinforce connections along Washington and Market Streets, 4th, 5th, 6th Streets and 7th Place through widening the sidewalks, as well as landscape and streetscape initiatives.
- Preserve view corridors between Rice Park and Wabasha along 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets. Create a focal point at the end of 6th Street to provide visual interest and establish a connection from Wabasha Street.
- Create a convertible at-grade pergola that is enclosed in winter and opened in summer. The preferred alignment is along 4th Street in front of the Public Library (or integrated within the library itself). In the summer, the structure could be used for a market and artists, and planted with climbing vines.

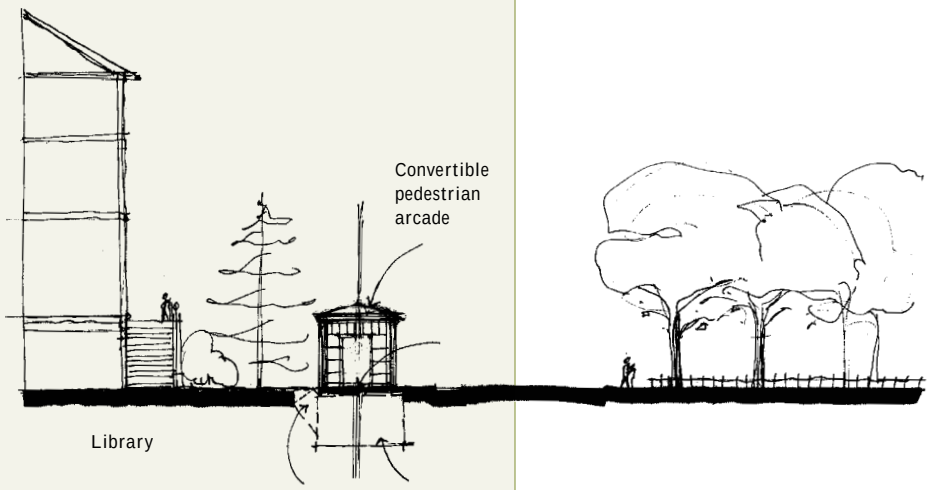
Guideline: **Create connections to the Mississippi.**

- Maximize opportunities for new public vertical connections to the river, including the grand Science Museum staircase and a potential additional stairway at Exchange.
- Develop a city balcony riverwalk incrementally as opportunities arise, using existing buildings to extend a linked convertible walkway along the bluff edge from the Science Museum to Lowertown.

Guideline: **Create new open spaces.**

- Create a sequence of open spaces between the expanded Civic Center and the existing St. Paul Companies day care center, incorporating existing landscape features.

A weather-protected link between the Radisson Hotel and the Civic Center should strike a balance between maintaining the vitality of the public realm at street level, the preservation of Rice Park's character and meeting the needs of the Civic Center and convention goers.



LAND USE

Objective: Encourage a diversity of additional uses to expand the draw of the Rice Park-Civic Center area as a regional cultural and entertainment destination.

Guideline: **Encourage a diversity of uses.**

- Locate active uses, such as restaurants and cafes, on the ground floors surrounding Rice Park. Appropriate locations include:
  - the ground floor of the Hamm Building,
  - the Commercial Bank site,
  - the Applebaum's block,
  - Landmark Center,
  - the St. Paul Companies,
  - the Landmark Tower,
  - the U.S. West building.
- In the long term, there is a potential to create a large convention hotel adjacent to the Civic Center and a small, high quality hotel/restaurant on the Minnesota Club site. A Visitor's Center is also a potential use.

Guideline: **Introduce residential uses in the vicinity.**

- Strategically introduce residential uses at a number of potential sites including:
  - the Lowry Hotel,
  - 7th Place,
  - the north west corner of 7th and Wabasha Streets,
  - immediately south of the existing Science Museum.

BUILT FORM

Objective: Ensure that new and renovated structures contribute to the quality of the public realm and the coherence of the architectural setting.

Guideline: **Achieve contextual fit.**

- Design new buildings to be compatible with the character of the area, respecting scale, massing, and street alignment.

The city balcony, already existing at Kellogg Mall, should be extended.

Guideline: **Enhance the pedestrian environment: create an outstanding example of at-grade alternatives to skyways.**

- Use convertible arcades along the edges of buildings and strategic through-block connections to create weather-protected at-grade pedestrian routes. Appropriate routes include:
  - through the Public Library to access Kellogg Boulevard and the river,
  - through the St. Paul Companies,
  - the Ordway Theater,
  - along Kellogg Boulevard through the Ramsey County building.

Guideline: **Frame the public realm.**

- Use redevelopment opportunities strategically to create connections and frame the public realm.
  - Redevelop the Applebaum's block to improve at-grade connections to Wabasha Street via a medium-sized courtyard building.
  - Design the future expansion of the St. Paul Companies to frame an open space north of the Civic Center.
  - Develop a future hotel on the site of the existing Civic Center Exhibition Space or on alternative adjacent sites.
  - Redevelop the Firstar Bank site as a low-rise, mixed-use building that creates a vibrant focal point within the precinct and connects the precinct to Wabasha Street.

MOVEMENT NETWORKS

Objective: Maintain the focus on a successful street-level network that balances the needs of the pedestrian and vehicular access.

Guideline: **Extend the quality of Rice Park.**

- Overcome the barriers created by major traffic arteries bordering the site. Seventh Street and Kellogg Boulevard should be landscaped as urban boulevards.
- Improve the quality of all local streets.
  - The rights-of-way should be modified to better accommodate pedestrians, especially along St. Peter, 4th, 5th and 6th Streets.
  - St. Peter and Wabasha Streets should be restored to two-way vehicular movement.
  - An at-grade weather protected pedestrian network should be created using existing building connections and adding new segments along Landmark Center, St. Paul Companies, the Appelbaum's block and Kellogg Boulevard.

5.4

Upper Landing Precinct

5.4.1 The role of the Upper Landing: strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

The Upper Landing Precinct is a site with a history of dramatic change. At one time the site of Little Italy, a small thriving community removed due to flooding, it was subsequently occupied by industrial uses that have since been removed. With new opportunity comes the ability to rethink the future of this prominent site.

The Upper Landing Precinct presents one of the most significant opportunities to reintegrate and reconnect the Mississippi with the city, specifically the downtown core. It also forms an important link in a regional network of trails running along the Mississippi River. Strategically redeveloped, the Upper Landing is poised to achieve a number of objectives outlined by the Development Framework.

The Upper Landing presents one of the most significant opportunities to reconnect the Mississippi to the downtown core.

Strengths

The site occupies a unique, high-profile, and pivotal location along the river. It is immediately adjacent to the new Science Museum and in close proximity to the downtown.

Weaknesses

The topography of the site and surrounding area, the road network, and the railroad isolate the site from the adjoining residential and retail community. In addition, the soil quality presents a number of challenges to the redevelopment of the Upper Landing Precinct. The soil is unstable and structures will likely require piling. Portions of the site are contaminated and will require remediation prior to more intensive use. Situated on the river flats, the Upper Landing Precinct lies within the 100 year flood plain. Securing the lands from future flood waters requires that the site be raised 3-4 feet.

On-going barge fleeting in this area also requires consideration in planning for riverfront and related features. The newly aligned Shepard Road, while freeing the river's edge for pedestrians, bikes and open space, will extend across the northern edge of the Upper Landing. Finally, the location of the High Bridge and NSP immediately to the west, combined with the location of NSP tracks used for coal storage along the northern portion of the site, will require careful consideration and buffering.

Opportunities

The overall opportunity is to successfully capitalize on and celebrate the meeting of river and city. By clustering activities to create focal points and extending the public realm to the river's edge, there is the opportunity to create a vibrant residential community and a high- profile destination that attracts visitors through the year. The design of buildings and the public realm can enhance and create a number of connections: between the river and downtown, along the river, between neighborhoods, and to the Science Museum. There is also an opportunity to acknowledge the site's origins: its geological history in the exposed bluff face, its history as a working river community and its history as the former Little Italy. Strategic development of the Upper Landing Precinct could enhance the role of this segment of the Mississippi as an important natural habitat and ecological corridor.

5.4.2 The Vision.

The Upper Landing Precinct is a place where the balance between the culture of the city and the nature of the river is played out. The mixed-use development proposed on the site seeks to connect to the river and the city, inviting the citizens of Saint Paul to live and work near the river as well as to experience and contemplate it. A broad range of housing types and commercial ventures catering to the local and visitor market is supported. A broad naturalization strategy aims to reintegrate and restore the river's edge and flats. Innovative storm water management solutions provide ponds along the river. A prominent civic space at the foot of Chestnut Street with a pavilion structure forms a principal entry to the site. Oriented to face the river, a central public space provides a village green for socializing and experiencing the river.

The vision outlined above and elaborated here is still conceptual. It requires a detailed technical analysis of engineering, regulatory and development feasibility issues.

5.4.3 Objectives and guidelines.

Based on the broad Framework goals, the following objectives and guidelines are intended to direct the development of the Upper Landing Precinct toward the achievement of the Vision.

The Upper Landing Precinct Plan proposes a mixed-use neighborhood setting that will invite the citizens of Saint Paul to live, work and recreate adjacent to the river.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Objective: Use development of the Upper Landing Precinct as a key opportunity to explore the balance between development and the natural environment, and to encourage a unique urban ecology.

Guideline: **Reduce the rate and quantity of direct stormwater runoff into the Mississippi River from the Upper Landing.**

- Develop upland buffers to create wetland biofiltration systems as ecologically-functioning open space elements.
- Separate and re-use clean runoff from roof-tops and yards, and create "natural areas" for landscaped watering. This may involve the installation of cisterns.
- Convey excess clean and "dirty" stormwater (from roadways and parking lots) through vegetated swale systems into upland prairie and wetland biofiltration systems for cleansing, rate mitigation, and quantity reduction.

Guideline: **Naturalize the river's edge.**

- Introduce a combination of hard and soft edges along the river banks. Re-introduce natural species where possible.
- In the short term, there should be a co-existence of barging and recreational activities in this area of the river. In the long term, there should be a gradual, phased changeover in favor of recreational activities and naturalization.

Guideline: **Manage contaminated soils.**

- Explore innovative techniques for consolidating and capping contaminated soils and integrating this process with site development.

Guideline: **Clearly establish the required elevation for flood control.**

PUBLIC REALM

Objective: Employ a greening strategy that responds to and takes maximum advantage of the riverfront location.

Guideline: **Create a diversity of parks spaces and strengthen connections to the existing city fabric.**

- Create a generous, meandering, informal riverfront promenade that incorporates a series of connected parks and plaza spaces along the length of the Upper Landing Precinct.
  - Development should generally be set back a minimum of approximately 150 feet from the river's edge with the exception of a strategically-located pavilion structure.
- Create a naturalized park complementing Celebration Plaza immediately east of Chestnut Street.
- Accommodate water-related activities within the context of the overall plan as feasible and appropriate.
- Maximize the opportunities within and/or around park spaces to generate revenue related to park users' needs.

Guideline: **Create visual connections.**

- Preserve key view corridors.
  - along Chestnut Street to the Cathedral,
  - from the bluff,
  - from the High Bridge,
  - from the new Shepard Road to the river,
  - from Seven Corners to the river.
- Create a direct visual connection from the Head House back to Irvine Park.

LAND USE

Objective: Develop an urban village that meets many daily needs of local residents and also creates a destination point catering to the larger city.

Guideline: **Create a mix of uses throughout the Upper Landing Precinct.**

- Include residential, commercial, live/work studios, workshops, recreation and open space within the development.
- Cluster retail and commercial uses at the foot of Chestnut Street, in and around the central pavilion building, and toward the west near the High Bridge.
- Locate residential units along and to the north of the village's main street.

Guideline: **Create a local tourist destination.**

- Position the urban village as a place for residents and visitors.
- Encourage the landmark pavilion building to contain tourist/visitor attractions and bring people to the river's edge.
- Re-use the Head House, an industrial and historic artifact, for a restaurant/cafe, interpretive center, or observation tower.
- Explore opportunities to create programmatic connections with the Science Museum, such as environmental, educational and demonstration activities for residents, visitors, developers and others.

BUILT FORM

Objective: Create development that provides a transition between the core and the river, defines a public realm and allows the public to experience the river.

Objective: Use development strategically to buffer the NSP Plant and to resolve issues related to contamination.

Guideline: **Develop buildings that are in keeping with the scale of the river valley.**

- Establish an overall height limit of 3-6 stories.
- Include townhouses and low- to mid-rise apartment forms.
- Consider building modest tower elements as “markers” at strategic locations.
- Orient buildings to maximize the benefits of the southern exposure.

Guideline: **Develop structures that frame the public realm.**

- Locate a pavilion structure in the central green to provide an open space/entry focus.
- Use built form to define and frame the public water’s edge from the High Bridge to Chestnut Street.

Guideline: **Use buildings as buffers where appropriate.**

- Create a continuous edge with non-residential uses such as offices and workshops at the western end of the site to create a buffer to the High Bridge and NSP Plant.

Future development should respect the scale of the river valley.

Guideline: **Where feasible, use structures to assist in dealing with contamination issues.**

- It may be possible to address a number of problems simultaneously. Providing parking one half-level underground would cap the site with concrete pads, raise the level of usable space above the level of the flood plain and reduce the demand for surface parking lots. Where this occurs, the roof of the parking deck can be used for landscaping or can be built upon with new residential and commercial uses.

MOVEMENT NETWORKS

Objective: Create a street network that enhances connections to the city and river, and enables easy development of the site.

Guideline: **Establish an interconnected informal grid of streets and blocks.**

- Establish small, regular developable blocks perpendicular to the Mississippi in order to allow views and connections to it.
- Create an open street grid pattern with a diversity of routes.
- Form a main street along the river.
- To increase the size of the development parcel by approximately 2.5 acres, push the new Shepard Road approximately 50 feet further north, as close as possible to the existing rail tracks and the bluff. This additional land would need to be acquired from the rail company.
- To further increase the size of the development parcel, relocate the spur tracks of the NSP Plant to the north to align with the new Shepard Road.
- Maintain the old Shepard Road right-of-way at the southern edge of the Upper Landing Precinct. The exact location of this right-of-way should be flexible.
  - The right-of-way should be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles.
  - Traffic calming techniques should be introduced to ensure that automobiles move slowly in this area.

Guideline: **Improve connections to the rest of the city.**

- As feasible, once a development scheme for the Upper Landing Precinct has been determined, extend Chestnut Street south of Shepard Road to improve connections to the Irvine Park neighborhood, increase access to the Upper Landing and facilitate a pedestrian loop through the site. Create a full 4-way signalized intersection at Chestnut Street and Shepard Road.
- Establish two signalized intersections along Shepard Road, as well as a number of right-in/right-out intersections.

- To reduce the barrier effect of the new Shepard Road, focus the design of the right-of-way and streetscaping initiatives on creating a successful urban boulevard, heavily landscaped within minimized concrete shoulders.
- Retain the old Shepard Road right-of-way for use as a major bicycle trail.
- Create a pedestrian walkway along the bluff top.
  - Access to the walkway should be provided at the High Bridge and Chestnut Street to provide a connection to the river.
  - A new vertical connection between the bluff walkway and the river flats should be provided toward the middle of the Upper Landing Precinct, where the bluff walkway is combined with a pedestrian bridge over the rail corridor.
- In the vicinity of the Science Museum, design Chestnut and Eagle Streets to ensure connectivity and the quality of the pedestrian environment.
- Locate an access point to the NSP Plant along new Shepard Road west of the High Bridge.

5.5 The West Side Precinct

5.5.1 The role of the West Side: strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

The West Side community is unique within Saint Paul. Settled by waves of immigrants, it has evolved into a neighborhood with a distinctive ethnic character. Its rich cultural history, marked by both difficulties and hope, should be acknowledged by future plans. Through strategic and creative redevelopment, there is an opportunity to create a unique and special blend of uses that will position the West Side as one of the most desirable areas and key destinations within Saint Paul.

The murals adorning buildings on the West Side display the strength and richness of local ethnic communities.

Strengths

The West Side community has a number of inherent strengths that should be recognized and consolidated in redevelopment plans. The existing community is actively involved and passionate about future plans for the area. It is comprised of a unique blend of cultures, including Latino, Hmong, Irish, Lebanese, Native American, Jews, Norwegians, etc. This is reflected in the diverse restaurants, murals adorning buildings, and the strong sense of community and history.

The retail strips along Robert, Wabasha and Concord Streets serve local residents and are increasingly emerging as a regional draw. Supported by a range of light and heavy industrial uses in the Riverview Industrial Park, the area has a strong local business base. Energetic and diverse land and business owners on the West Side are actively involved in bringing forward a range of visionary initiatives.

The Mississippi River is accessible from the flats at the foot of the bluffs. The new levee running along its length creates the opportunity to build adjacent to the river and represents an ideal location for an expanded river walk. Harriet Island, Lilydale and the caves are unique amenities. Located at the top and base of the 100-foot-high limestone bluffs, the West Side has an appealing physical setting. The two existing staircases, one at the end of Wabasha and one at Ohio, allow pedestrians to move with relative ease between the top and base of the bluffs in these locations. The area is easily accessed from downtown over the High Bridge, as well as the Wabasha and Robert Street Bridges.

Weaknesses

The quality of the existing physical setting is inconsistent and fragmented. An evenly spread, low-density sprawl occupies the river flats, but in a way that fails to realize its enormous locational advantage. Much of the existing employment is located in suburban-style office parks where buildings are set back far from the street edge. Buildings are surrounded by large underutilized open space and surface parking lots.

Along the key retail streets, Wabasha, Concord and Robert Streets, frontage is discontinuous, with surface parking lots and vacant storefronts dotted throughout. The occupation of some prime retail sites by non-profit uses dilutes the strength of the local retail strips and adds to the sense of discontinuity. The cluttered signage, billboards and barren landscapes create a poor visual image along the major corridors.

The fast movement of cars along Robert and Concord Streets diminishes the environment for pedestrians. There are also relatively few locations where pedestrians are easily able to move between the bluff tops and the flats.

Opportunities

By extending the existing West Side community to the river, making better use of the land resource, and consolidating existing employment uses, the West Side can offer residents the opportunity to live and work in close proximity to the river. Building on its emerging role as a destination, the West Side can offer other Saint Paul residents and visitors the opportunity to experience the river from a unique cultural perspective. In redeveloping the flats, there is the opportunity to recall contributions of the many peoples who have lived on this land over time.

From the new bridgehead, Wabasha Street itself can be reclaimed as a mixed-use main street and the focus of retail activity by enhancing and building on existing retail uses. There is an opportunity to provide a range of community facilities to enhance the lives of community members, young and old. Such amenities might also include links to local and regional green trails and an outdoor market. Opportunities for local youth should also be considered.

The West Side Precinct Plan envisions a series of linked urban villages that will extend the existing neighborhood to the riverfront and create a number of new opportunities to experience the Mississippi.

5.5.2 The Vision.

The West Side of the future is envisioned as a series of linked urban villages where people live, work and play. Each village has a clearly-identified focus, high-quality architecture and well-designed public spaces. There is a diversity of housing opportunities in terms of income, age and family size. A vibrant local economy is reflected in businesses catering to neighborhood needs as well as community/regional markets. The history of the community is recalled through preservation of historic buildings, cultural references, monuments, restoration of landscapes, etc.

The Mississippi River is an integral part of the local community, and there are opportunities to experience it from a number of perspectives and vantage points. Entertainment and leisure activities are accessible to residents and visitors. Harriet Island Park, a significant regional attraction, and a popular market bring the West Side into the city's consciousness as a destination. It is a vision of Saint Paul as a city on both sides of the Mississippi River.

West of Wabasha Street, the Harriet Island urban village is created through blending a new, mixed-use community with the existing neighborhood. The community is focused around a village green that extends the green of the Mississippi inland through Harriet Island Park. With the exception of a few structures, the existing buildings are maintained. Over time, it is anticipated that higher-quality architecture will replace some of them. As the heart of the

extended West Side neighborhood, community facilities, such as the cultural/community center or school, are proposed for this area. Along the three blocks west of the Wabasha Bridge, the levee is widened to enable buildings to be built directly facing onto it, creating a more direct relationship with the Mississippi River. A green open space lies at the foot of the bluff.

Between Wabasha and Robert Streets, the Concord-Robert urban village is extended north to the river in a mixed-use band. This represents the focus of the West Side small business community. A regional attraction, potentially water- or environmentally-related, is proposed for the JLT and HRA lands. The rail corridor is proposed as a linear green corridor several hundred feet wide that could be used as a park, cultural corridor, gardens, etc. By bringing an existing stream to daylight, a serpentine water feature is created adjacent to the rail corridor for stormwater management and recreation.

East of Robert Street, the West Side continues to be predominantly industrial in character. The built form is consolidated to create a more coherent public realm. Immediately adjacent the Mississippi River, a mixed-use, predominantly residential area is proposed, forming the heart of the Esplanade urban village.

Essentially, the plan accepts and works with the large grid network established by Robert, Wabasha, and Water Streets and Plato Boulevard. West of Wabasha Street, the plan fills in the grid with a finer grained network of streets, creating a number of smaller blocks. Between Wabasha and Robert Streets, blocks are slightly larger. East of Robert Street, the grid is largely retained in its existing form, accommodating large industrial uses.

The green armature comprises the banks of the Mississippi, the greened bluffs, Wabasha Street and the rail corridor. Within this broader armature, the village square, the regional attraction, and a number of smaller neighborhood parks contribute to a finer-grained green network extending throughout the West Side. A neighborhood park with playing fields is created between the South Wabasha Bridgehead and Concord-Robert urban villages, between Wabasha and Robert Streets.

Wabasha Street is redesigned as a major transit spine, pedestrian promenade and north-south connection. Plato Boulevard and Water Street are greened as the key connecting east-west streets. A bluff edge trail runs from Cherokee Park to the Wabasha staircase, adding to a city-wide recreational trail system.

It is envisioned that Harriet Island Park (above) will again become an important recreational resource for local residents and visitors (below ca. 1900).

5.5.3 Objectives and guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Objective: Balance the natural and built environment in strategic riverfront redevelopment.

Guideline: **Reduce the rate and quantity of stormwater runoff from the West Side into the Mississippi River.**

- Develop a series of natural and engineered water management features including swales, wetlands and infiltration sites.

Guideline: **Identify opportunities for ecological restoration/preservation/naturalization.**

- Continue the work of Greening the Great River Park.
- Naturalize and green the levee, rail corridor, bluff base wetland and water courses, and Lafayette freeway.

Guideline: **Identify educational opportunities by linking community, and particularly youth development, with ecological initiatives.**

- Involve the public in restoration projects.
- Reference the cultural and natural history of the West Side.
- Maximize opportunities inherent in the MNRRA Harriet Island Educational Center.

Objective: Employ a greening strategy that responds to and takes maximum advantage of the riverfront location, and enhances natural features and green amenities.

Guideline: **Use landscape and streetscape initiatives strategically to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment.**

- Extend landscape initiatives to create a series of pedestrian promenades along Wabasha, Robert, and Water Streets, and Plato Boulevard.
- Position Wabasha Street as the pre-eminent pedestrian boulevard.

Guidelines: **Preserve the bluff line.**

- Restrict the height of new structures to 3-6 stories.
- Create attractive “roofscapes” as seen from bluff tops.

PUBLIC REALM

Objective: Embrace and raise the profile of open spaces and natural features.

Guideline: **Create and enhance the network of connected local parks.**

- Create a neighborhood park along the bluff base.
- “Daylight” streams that are currently buried, one running along the bluff base west of Wabasha Street and one near the rail corridor.
- Enhance the rail corridor from south of Robert Street to the Mississippi River as a linear green space with a canal running adjacent to it.
- Create a large neighborhood park between Wabasha and Robert Streets.

Guideline: **Connect to local and regional trails.**

- Orient the streets and blocks to frame and improve visual and physical connections to Harriet Island Park and the Mississippi River.
- Create focal points on the levee at the ends of streets to connect the community to the Mississippi River.
- Ensure easy bicycle and pedestrian connections to Lilydale.
- Widen the levee along the three blocks west of Wabasha Street to create a promenade/bicycle path along the top of it and enable buildings behind the levee to face directly onto the Mississippi River, taking care to maintain physical and visual connections between the river and the rest of the West Side.
- Complete and connect trails along the bluff edge.

Guideline: **Preserve views and panoramas.**

Guideline: **Explore opportunities for carefully managed and secured re-use of the caves.**

LAND USE

Objective: Extend and diversify the existing West Side community by creating a series of urban villages that incorporate a concentration of retail activities, housing and local employment opportunities.

Guideline: **Create urban villages that increase the opportunities for people to live, work and meet most daily needs within walking distance.**

- Villages should be created:
  - adjacent to the Harriet Island Park,
  - at the South Wabasha Bridgehead,
  - at Concord and Robert Streets,
  - at the Esplanade.

Guideline: **Diversify the mix of uses on the river flats:**

- East of Robert Street uses should include:
  - opportunities for small business incubator space,
  - a range of housing (by income level, size and for renters and owners),
  - live/work space,
  - light industrial,
  - open space.
- Between Robert and Wabasha Streets, uses should include:
  - retail/commercial, including an open air market,
  - community services and facilities,
  - a range of housing (by tenure, income level, size),
  - a regional attraction,
  - open space.

- West of Wabasha Street behind the levee, uses should include:
  - a range of housing (by tenure, income level, size),
  - retail/commercial,
  - community services and facilities,
  - light industrial,
  - open space.
- East of Robert Street along the river, uses should include:
  - residential,
  - office,
  - retail/commercial,
  - light industrial,
  - open space.

Guideline: **Create concentrations of retail activity.**

- Build on existing retail uses along Wabasha and Robert Streets near Concord Street, and at Concord and State Streets.
- Encourage a broad range of businesses that cater to neighborhood, local and regional markets.
- Discourage the displacement of retail stores and businesses on primary commercial frontages by community service activities.

Guideline: **Create a focus for community activities.**

- Encourage a full range of community services, such as an Adult Learning/Cultural /Community Center, to be located west of Wabasha Street.

BUILT FORM

Objective: Create a city edge along the river by extending the existing urban fabric of the West Side, and restoring and preserving buildings of historic and architectural merit.

Objective: Create readily-developable blocks.

Guideline: **Strategically direct infill development.**

- Use development to define common edges for the extended West Side community along the river.
- Direct infill development to vacant and underutilized sites, particularly those along the main retail strips – Wabasha, Concord, Robert and Congress – to create a continuous building edge along the street.
- Front buildings directly onto an extended levee between the South Wabasha Bridgehead and Harriet Island Park.
- Identify and develop key gateways with buildings and landscaping:
  - at the Robert Street bridgehead,
  - at the Wabasha Street bridgehead,
  - along Wabasha and Robert Streets,
  - at Ohio Street and Plato Boulevard.
- Develop a strategy for successfully integrating residential and employment uses. Combine landscaping, setbacks, building orientation, etc. to ensure compatibility of uses.

Guideline: **Ensure that built form responds to the topography of the river valley and to existing low-rise structures.**

- Encourage buildings that are predominantly low- to medium-rise in form.
- Where industrial and residential uses are mixed, ensure that entrances, parking, loading, etc. are appropriately integrated and designed.

Guideline: **Configure the West Side into a network of streets and blocks to accommodate a range of uses.**

- Create a fine-grained network of streets and blocks west of Wabasha Street.
- Create a mixture of block sizes between Wabasha and Robert Streets.
- Leave intact the large blocks east of Robert Street.

Guideline: **Undertake an inventory of existing heritage and cultural structures, landscapes, and artifacts (murals, etc.), and develop a strategy for their preservation.**

MOVEMENT NETWORKS

Objective: Facilitate a diversity of forms of movement, including walking, bicycling, transit and driving.

Guideline: **Facilitate movement and connections between neighborhoods, retail areas, the riverfront, downtown and the existing West Side community.**

- Create a well-defined and connected street network that offers a range of possible routes for movement between the existing West Side community, the river, and locations to the east, west, north and south.
- Create a network of on- and off-street paths and trails for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Facilitate movement between the bluff top and flats through stairs, ramps, elevators, etc.
- Improve connections to Harriet and Raspberry Islands.
- Create a trolley route with short headways connecting the West Side to downtown and the Capitol.

Guideline: **Design the street rights-of-way to balance the needs of cars, bicycles, public transportation and pedestrians.**

- Pay particular attention to the retail areas along Wabasha, Concord and Robert Streets, the riverfront, areas of community activity, Water Street and Plato Boulevard.

Ohio Street creates an important link between the bluff top and the river flats.

- Selectively create wider sidewalks.
- Selectively narrow pavement widths.
- Designate bicycle lanes on key streets.
- Design intersections along Concord, Wabasha, Robert, and Water Streets and Plato Boulevard to be more friendly for pedestrians.
- Maintain a range of street types.

Guideline: **Enhance the existing transit service.**

- Create a trolley route with short headways connecting the Concord-Robert urban village and the Capitol.
- Consider the possibility of using narrow-gauge vehicles.

Guideline: **Develop a comprehensive parking strategy.**

- Identify build-to requirements that will consolidate buildings on the frontage of lots and locate parking at the rear.
- Draw on the overflow available on the industrial lands to the east.
- Retain on-street parking throughout the West Side.

Guideline: **Facilitate movement between the urban core and the West Side.**

- Explore opportunities for developing a water taxi link between the Upper Landing Precinct, Harriet Island and Lilydale.

Chapter 6

The Principles of City Building

Chapter 6

The Principles of City Building

The Development Framework is intended to provide a level of confidence that will foster and guide reinvestment. The next significant challenge is to achieve consensus on the means of implementing the vision. Four key principles are outlined below that should underpin this effort.

Foster an integrated approach.

Implicit in the Framework is a cultural shift in the methodology of city building. Just as land uses have become increasingly separated in the post-war period, so too have the tasks of city building. Tasks related to economic development, planning, parks, land use and transportation have increasingly been conducted in isolation. It is essential to remove the organizational and psychological barriers that isolate the various kinds of expertise and initiatives so essential to successful city making. The habits of mind that have grown up around the one-project or one-issue-at-a-time approach must be overcome. To ensure the highest quality projects and development, all relevant fields of expertise should have input. Each discipline can bring to the project a particular perspective that will ultimately enhance it.

To ensure the highest quality development, all fields of expertise must work cooperatively in the tasks of city building.

Partnerships between the public and private sectors and with surrounding communities create powerful alliances for realizing the vision.

Ensure stewardship.

There must be individuals or committees responsible for governing the Development Framework and ensuring its implementation at two levels. At the oversight level, there should be a structure to oversee and have ultimate responsibility for the Development Framework. Over the last two years, the City of Saint Paul, the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, the Capital City Partnership, and the Saint Paul Port Authority have worked together to oversee the creation of the Development Framework. This has been a successful and highly productive partnership between the public and private sectors. Consideration should be given to formalizing this relationship through the creation of a broadly representative Board or Oversight Committee that would be responsible for providing leadership and guiding implementation of the Framework.

There must also be clearly defined responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Development Framework. The staff team, made up of representatives from Planning and Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, the Capital City Partnership and West Side Citizens Organization, has played an integral role in the Framework's creation and should constitute the core of such a group. This team needs a leader and a clearly-defined leadership role in the City's departmental structure.

Additional urban design capacity and, in particular, urban design leadership must be provided within the City government. While the presence of the consultant team offered invaluable support during the development phase of the Framework, this responsibility must rest squarely within the City government in the years ahead. This is an urgent priority.

Finally, the citizens of Saint Paul have participated generously in the creation of the Development Framework through extensive public meetings, discussions and participation in the Design Charrettes. The continuing value of broad-based involvement needs to be emphasized during the implementation phase. On-going effort should be devoted to expanding this involvement and encouraging broad community outreach.

Provide clear policy direction while maintaining flexibility.

Because the city's evolution is dynamic and not entirely predictable, especially in its details, the Framework concentrates on broad relationships, maintaining an open stance and a margin of flexibility in its particulars. It is therefore important that the implementation process remain supple. As initiatives arise in a given area, a detailed response and direction should be provided to project proponents, giving consideration to need, opportunity and market conditions. Guidance from the City should focus primarily on the issues of fit and context as well as on the creation and maintenance of an attractive, safe and well-used public realm, a basic factor in urban vitality.

For the Framework to be fully effective, a number of public policy changes must be addressed. These should be reflected in the upcoming review of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance regarding, land use, transportation, open space, etc. In particular, the Framework proposes a design-based methodology that emphasizes compatible built form while encouraging mixed use. The City should establish design guidelines and a means of design review to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved from every project and development. The primary urban design issues to be addressed concern compatibility with context and existing local building typologies, appropriate scale of development, and defining and supporting the public realm.

Implementation of the Development Framework should strengthen the neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

The broad urban design directions established in the Framework itself are more general than the detailed design work needed to move ahead on specific proposals or urban design initiatives. As these move forward into implementation, a shift is required from the broad conceptual design guidelines spelled out in the Framework to a level of more detailed schematics in priority areas. High-quality urban design is not an "extra" that detracts from the financial viability of a project. By creating a better product and contributing to the quality of the total urban environment, it ultimately adds to the value of the project, as well as its long-term viability.

Invest strategically.

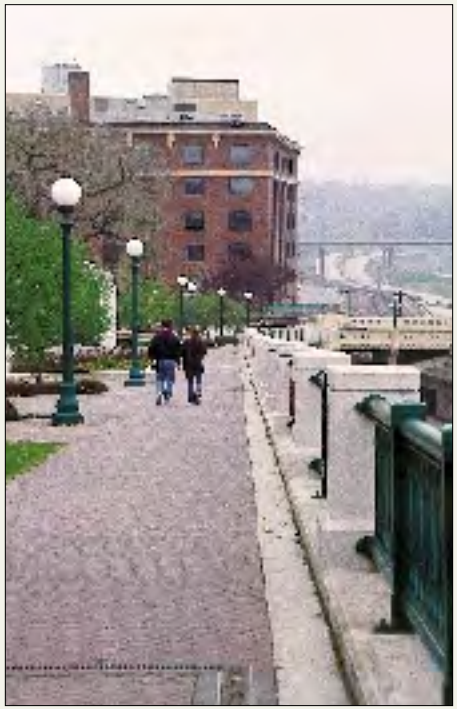
A vibrant, thriving and connected downtown core is a common goal that benefits all stakeholders. Greater vibrancy increases the value of private investments, attracts more investment and adds to the city's tax base, building upon itself in a snowball-like effect. There should be a more detailed periodic examination of the various market sectors and an on-going inventory of the lands and buildings available to accommodate foreseeable needs. The mixed-use vision proposed by the Framework should also be monitored in terms of projected tax revenues and its ability to move the city toward a sustainable economic base.

Good plans are manifested in successfully completed projects. The identification of strategic projects that set the standard and lead the way in the urban core's revitalization is vitally important. Relevant current examples are the start of construction of the new Science Museum relinking the core of the downtown to the waterfront, the replacement of the Wabasha Street bridge, and the Greening the Great River Park project. These initiatives represent pivotal developments that will provide considerable value well above their individual worth as free-standing projects. In the early stage, public funds will be required and should be used strategically to leverage private investment. The impact of each new project can be multiplied when it is linked to or expands an existing zone of success.

A number of other near-term objectives – in particular, within the Capitol-Mississippi Crescent – have been identified as the next generation of high priorities, including the reclamation of Harriet Island Park, the development of waterfront downtown housing (in the Upper Landing Precinct or on the West Side), and the refurbishing of Wabasha and St. Peter Streets as the downtown's principal pedestrian-oriented main streets. Other high priority projects include the further revitalization of Lowertown and the potential for an urban village in the Northeast Quadrant.

The Framework will be realized through a combination of projects at various scales. Although large-scale projects are important for the funds they bring, the energy directed toward attracting them should not be to the exclusion of smaller scale, fine-grained development. There is seldom a single "magic bullet." It is important to seek out more modest, incremental change to the built environment that builds on what already exists and initiatives already under way. Small scale opportunities – re-use of vacant lands, underutilized and "soft" sites, public, private and community initiatives – should be harnessed and capitalized upon. While these types of initiatives may not have immediate impacts individually, they should not be underestimated. Cumulatively and over time they effect profound change.

A more vibrant public realm can be achieved incrementally with a multi-disciplinary approach that seizes every opportunity to effect change and advance the larger vision. Capital projects can be augmented in a number of ways. For example, the cyclical reconstruction of streets, sidewalks, services and utilities is an opportune time to make design changes for a relatively small incremental cost by integrating urban design considerations into the normal capital budget preparation. In like fashion, each redevelopment project creates an opportunity to reshape a portion of the public realm.

The stage is set to implement *Saint Paul on the Mississippi*. Over the past decade, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in the Mississippi River. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of citizens have become involved in redevelopment activities, from CEO's making downtown redevelopment a priority, to volunteers reforesting the river valley, to West Side citizens carving out a local economic development strategy. The Development Framework can direct and increase the impact of these diverse initiatives and create a level of confidence that will attract an even greater amount of resources. Working in partnership and building on the current momentum, with consensus and long-term commitment, the vision is within reach.

A thriving downtown core connected to the river is a common goal that benefits all stakeholders.