



Getting There

4.0 Implementation and Partnerships

While the preceding chapters recommend strategies specific to a particular issue or place, the following chapter looks at the study area through a wider lens. The recommendations and strategies that follow explore the broader processes and partnerships by which downtown stakeholders will move the *Downtown Station Area Plan* forward, and begin to implement the Directions and Strategies for Place-Specific Opportunities described in earlier chapters. These include:

- describing the issues to be addressed in a future **Lowertown Master Plan**;
- understanding how the **City of Saint Paul Zoning Ordinance** can be fine-tuned to support the recommendations of the *Downtown Station Area Plan*;
- outlining parameters and best possible outcomes in the planning and development of complex and strategic **redevelopment sites**;
- pursuing designation of the **Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District** as both a local and National Register district; and
- identifying key **strategic partnerships** in order to maintain support for the plan, keep the LRT and downtown planning process inclusive and transparent, and realize tangible results.

4.1 Preparing the Lowertown Master Plan

In the course of developing the *Downtown Station Area Plan*, several Lowertown issues were identified for subsequent, more detailed, exploration. Using the *Downtown Station Area Plan*'s broader vision as the framework, these issues should be addressed in a *Lowertown Master Plan*. They include:

- more specific site planning to coordinate and integrate the new development activity envisioned for the Lowertown Transition area (between Broadway and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary), including a municipal/Saints ballpark, a new Lafayette Bridge, and the Central Corridor LRT OMF;
- specific housing needs and opportunities;
- specific activities and components in the area identified as “active recreation” between the Lafayette Bridge and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary;
- a Lowertown parking management plan;

- impact of skyways on street activity and integrity of historic buildings;
- sustainability/“green” design;
- strengthening the Farmers’ Market as a focal point for Lowertown;
- further exploration, including market feasibility study, of a Lowertown Performing Arts Center;
- further exploration of Broadway and Pine street extensions to Warner Road and the riverfront;
- specific actions to strengthen the presence of artists in Lowertown and their involvement in public art, neighborhood redevelopment, and place-making;
- riverfront development opportunities adjacent to Union Depot; and
- full utilization of Union Depot as a multi-modal transportation hub and community asset

Further, the *Lowertown Master Plan* should lay out a detailed implementation strategy, including key partners and specific activities. It should be guided by a community-based task force representing Lowertown’s residential, commercial, entertainment, arts and cultural communities.

4.2 Fine-Tuning the Saint Paul Zoning Ordinance

As stated in the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, downtown Saint Paul already has much of the physical and regulatory structure in place to support a high level of public transit and transit-oriented development. The following “fine-tuning” amendments to the B4 and B5 zones are recommended to discourage any further proliferation of surface and structured parking uses, and to assist in the creation of animated ground-level building frontages:

Prohibit construction of new freestanding, single-use parking structures and make surface parking lots a conditional use. Freestanding, single-use parking structures detract from our experience of the built environment and public realm in downtown. New surface parking lots should require a conditional use permit so that they may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and considered in the context of site, adjacent land use, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, etc.

Zone for animated ground-level building frontages.

Consistent with recommendations of the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, future design standards for the underlying B4 and B5 zones should help reinforce the vitality and animation of streets, blocks and open spaces. This includes specific ordinance requirements for minimum retail frontages at street levels of commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings, as well as all parking structures where feasible; minimum glazing as a percentage of the first-story elevation of any new or renovated building; and mandatory pedestrian entrances clearly defined and oriented to a public street, particularly where fronting a transit station or park space.

4.3 Advancing Key Redevelopment Sites

The key redevelopment sites identified in this plan will play important roles in the long-term revitalization of downtown Saint Paul. These large and complex sites, which include the former Diamond Products/OMF site and the future LRT station at 4th and Cedar streets (also known as the Central Station block), afford the ability to drastically enhance the character and quality of places surrounding them through the creation of medium- to high-density, transit-supportive development.

Given the strategic importance of these sites, it is recommended that the redevelopment of each proceeds through a City-initiated master plan process. The intent of each master plan would be to: clearly describe the opportunities of each site (as identified in the *Station Area Plan*); identify a range of suitable development responses and guidelines for each in pursuit of capitalizing upon these opportunities; and present a detailed partnership and implementation strategy for ensuring the necessary financing, approvals, and partnerships for development to proceed. Issues to be addressed in each master plan should include:

The relationship between the site and LRT: What is the proximity of the site to LRT and how can access

to and from LRT service be enhanced through the redevelopment of this site? Further, what implications (if any) will LRT construction have on redevelopment of the site?

Where relevant, a detailed strategy would describe a joint development process, including issues of transit infrastructure or facility construction, development phasing, and public easements.

Options for accommodating public realm improvements: The redevelopment sites identified in this document will shape and enhance important public spaces downtown. Building on the place-specific opportunities described herein, each master plan should explore the potential to contribute to or create new public places, parks, and streets. This will be critically important to realizing the future LRT public plaza desired for the Central Station and the successful redevelopment of the northern half of the former Diamond Products site, where public streets will shape urban-scaled development blocks.

Detailed pedestrian plan: The intent of this study is to identify ways to minimize conflict between automobiles and pedestrians/cyclists. This component is particularly important where redevelopment sites are

located close to LRT stations, and where underground parking access has the potential to interfere with sidewalk activity.

Where relevant, the provision of transit amenities for both LRT and bus passengers, including sheltered waiting areas, street-related retail, and transit signage, should also be explored as a component of the pedestrian plan.

As part of the Section 106 process for the Central Corridor project, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the Federal Transit Administration, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation was signed. As mitigation for the demolition of the Midwest Federal Building, required to make way for the LRT station, the PA requires the Metropolitan Council to develop design guidelines for future development of the block, consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*. The Metropolitan Council will work with the City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, and State Historic Preservation Office to prepare the guidelines. Once these guidelines are approved, they will be adopted as an amendment to the *Downtown Station Area Plan*.

4.4 Designating the Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District

In the course of preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Central Corridor project, the Saint Paul Urban Renewal Historic District was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The district is generally bounded by Kellogg Boulevard on the south; Wabasha Street on the west; Seventh Place and 6th Street on the north; and Jackson, 5th, Robert and 4th streets on the east. The Saint Paul Urban Renewal District recognizes the significance of downtown redevelopment efforts between 1955 and 1974. During this period, the physical fabric of downtown Saint Paul was dramatically remade as blighted blocks were replaced

with modernist office towers and plazas. The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission should initiate the process for listing the district on the National Register, as well as pursue designation of the district as a local heritage preservation district.

In addition, there are several individual buildings within the two station areas that were determined eligible for the National Register in the EIS, including the Athletic Club, First National Bank, Merchants Bank and Minnesota Building. National Register listing and local designation should be pursued for these sites as well.

4.5 Leveraging Strategic Partnerships

The key agencies and stakeholder groups that will provide both partnership opportunities and investment potential for implementing downtown initiatives include:

City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development

- principal champions of station area plan
- gauge future development proposals against built form and public realm components of plan
- identify opportunities to implement public realm and mobility improvements through private investment and infrastructure projects

City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works

- primary responsibility for design and construction of street and sidewalk improvements
- implementation of progressive design standards for pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, roadways
- identify opportunities to implement public realm and mobility improvements through private investment and infrastructure projects

City of Saint Paul Division of Parks and Recreation

- primary responsibility for design, construction and maintenance of parks and landscaping improvements in public realm
- identify opportunities to implement public realm improvements through private investment and infrastructure projects

Central Corridor Project Office

- primary responsibility for design and construction of LRT
- incorporate collective input of station area plan into design
- use plan to build support and enthusiasm for LRT's positive impact on downtown
- influence design of OMF and impact on Lowertown

Public Art Saint Paul

- primary responsibility to champion art in Saint Paul's public realm, initiator of the 4th Street Artway, and sponsor of the City's Public Artist in Residence program

- work with the City to plan and develop the Artway and to engage artists in shaping the form and experience of downtown's open spaces and infrastructure

Metropolitan Transit

- in addition to operation of transit service, long-term responsibility to manage OMF in a neighborly fashion

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

- key partner in promoting strategic redevelopment sites such as 4th and Cedar and adjacent to Union Depot

Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation (Design Center)

- valuable input into design and review of proposed building, open space and complete streetscape designs
- assist in shaping infrastructure projects to improve connectivity and walkability downtown

Leveraging Strategic Partnerships cont'd

Saint Paul Building Owners & Managers Association and Downtown Building Owners Association

- consultation on implementing façade improvements, on-going outreach to building owners and managers to realize the greatest positive impact from LRT, and accomplish improved connections between street and skyway

Capitol River Council

- advocates of station area plan and recommendations
- on-going participation in planning and development decisions

Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission

- stewards of Lowertown's historic fabric
- approval of development applications and infrastructure projects
- recommends sites and districts to the City Council for local designation

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office

- stewards of Lowertown's historic fabric, Section 106 Programmatic Agreement

Property Owners / Developers

- work closely with all civic partners in promotion of buildings for adaptive re-use and investment
- assist to seek out funds for façade enhancements

Saint Paul Convention and Visitors' Bureau

- promote enhanced identity and accessibility of downtown Saint Paul within Twin Cities region
- improve connection between 4th and Cedar Station and Entertainment District

Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority

- work closely on design and integration of multi-modal transit hub at Union Depot into greater Lowertown fabric

Saint Paul Bicycle Advisory Board

- work to improve bicycle network and to promote awareness of bicycle network and cycling as a viable form of commuting downtown

Saint Paul Smart Trips

- promote the use of transit, bicycling, walking, car/vanpooling, and car-sharing for both commute and non-commute trips, with a focus on changing the behavior of area residents and employees

Blooming Saint Paul

- street beautification and community gardening projects
- provide assistance in identifying greening options for downtown buildings where sidewalk widths do not permit street trees

Saint Paul Growers' Association

- ensure that LRT best serves the Farmers' Market and contributes to its on-going vitality and growth
- continue to work on securing indoor market in Lowertown

Capital City Partnership

- work to ensure the greatest economic impact from LRT in both downtown and the greater eastern metropolitan area

