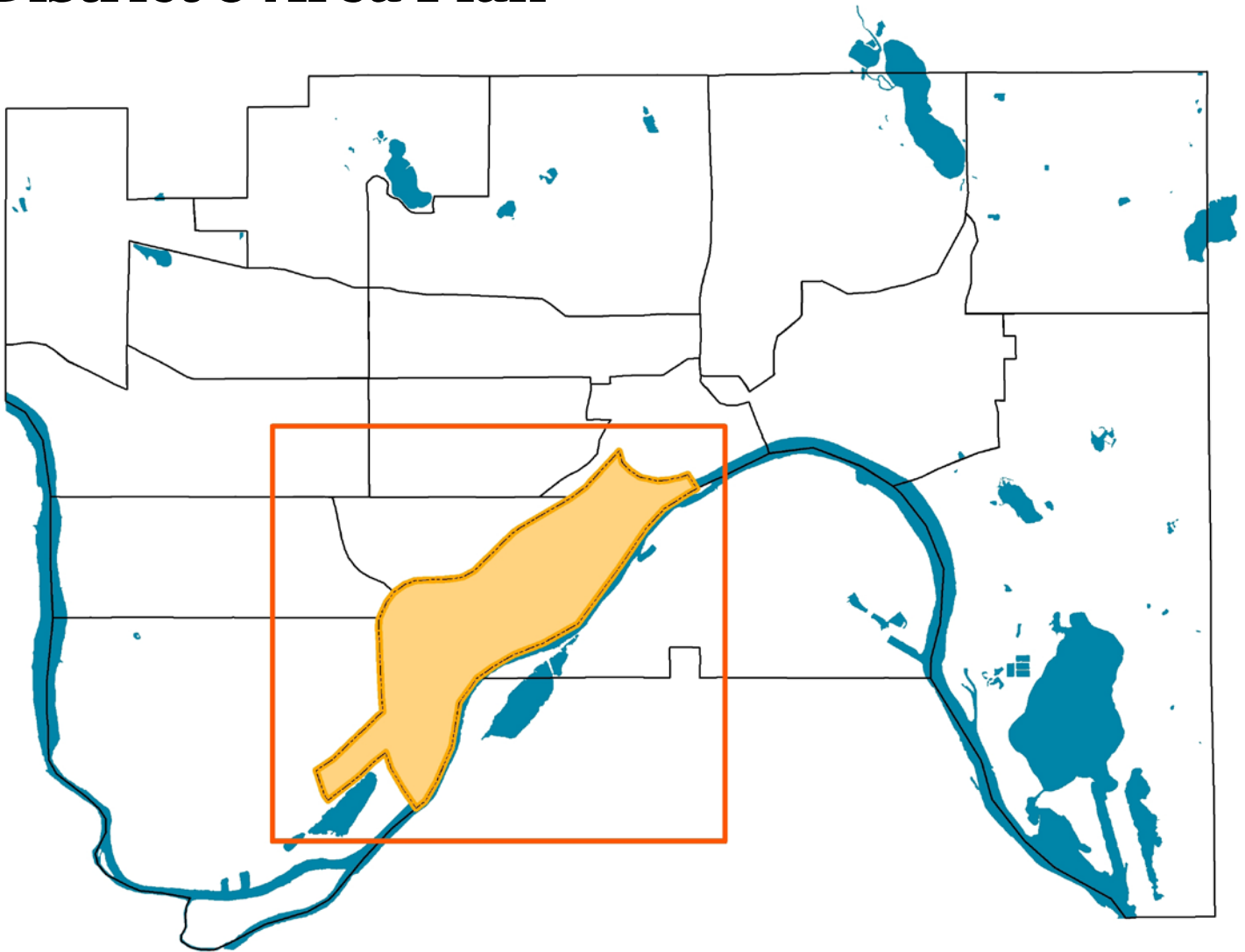


# West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road

## District 9 Area Plan



Source: SDG Server  
Prepared by PED Staff  
City of Santa Fe  
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# Summer 2006

Amended 2012



**The West 7<sup>th</sup> Street area was one of the first in St. Paul to be settled.**

## Executive Summary

**T**HE PREVIOUS DISTRICT 9 AREA PLAN WAS COMPLETED IN 1983, SO THIS NEW PLAN IS LONG OVERDUE. Embedded within our recommendations is the importance of the main connecting artery in our community, Fort Road/West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. It is the communal connection for all of our individual neighborhoods and should not be a divider between the north and south neighborhoods along its three miles. Improvements to the community and future development should be assessed for their ability to tie our neighborhoods together. With adequate planning, West 7th can promote the wholeness of the community, acting as a seam to bring us together.

The 2006 plan addresses recommendations for housing, economic, and community development while insuring a mix of land uses, historic preservation, environmental quality and circulation improvements. The main recommendations for housing include preserving and improving the existing housing stock, adding new units to maximize access to transit, and providing a mix of affordable housing options. Jobs and economic development are dependent on improving employment opportunities through environmentally-friendly industries and vital commercial establishments along West 7<sup>th</sup>. To meet the needs of residents and employees, community centers, schools, safety and parks must be addressed. Assessing how these needs can be met through more effective utilization of our public schools and community structures will improve their viability.

Our competitive advantage as a community is in the history of our community and its neighborhoods, and our geographic proximity to the Mississippi River, Historic Fort Snelling, and the Central Business District of St. Paul. Improvements in utilizing mixed land uses while preserving our historic character are important in future planning. Our natural resources have been polluted in the past, and in this plan we address the need

to enhance environmental quality and sustainability for our future. Circulation provisions and planning for vehicles, pedestrians, public transit and bicycles must be integrated to encourage safe and energy-efficient transportation. Finally, our community has been active during the past 20 years in developing sub-area plans. The work and recommendations of these plans are to be adopted as components of this new district plan.

## A Brief History of our Community<sup>1</sup>

THE WEST SEVENTH STREET AREA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST IN ST. PAUL TO BE SETTLED. During the 1830's, a handful of former fur traders, discharged soldiers from Fort Snelling, and early pioneers built cabins along the wooded banks of the Mississippi River south of present day West Seventh Street. A boat landing was established near the present-day Chestnut Street, and by the 1840's had become a bustling steamboat docking area called the Upper Landing. Eventually, Fort Road was built between the Upper Landing and Fort Snelling, and a residential and commercial community developed. A focal point of the Uppertown neighborhood was the two-acre Irvine Park area, a fashionable residential cluster platted in 1849. Development of other residential portions of District 9 occurred during the 1850's through 1890's as immigrant groups were attracted to the West Seventh Street area by several large industries including at least six breweries built along the river bluffs; foundries; factories; and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad shops.

Commercial development in District 9 began in the 1840's-1850's at the intersection of Fort Road, West Third, West Fourth, Eagle, and Main streets. It became an important business district called Seven Corners. The business climate of the neighborhood was enhanced in 1872 when horse-drawn streetcar tracks were laid along Fort Road west to Ann Street. The line was extended to the Fort Snelling Bridge in 1891.

The Irvine Park neighborhood became a National Register Historic District in 1973 and a St. Paul Heritage Preservation District in 1982. It contains the city's largest concentration of pre-Civil War houses. With

the exception of the northwestern corner of the planning district, which was settled somewhat later, and the Irvine Park area, the remainder of the West Seventh Street neighborhood contains modest frame and brick houses built by German, Irish, Polish, Bohemian, and Italian immigrant working class families. These buildings are some of St. Paul's most architecturally and historically significant working class housing. They date from as early as the 1850's and 1860's.

District 9 also contains a tremendous concentration of larger brick and wood frame houses dating from the 1870's through the turn of the century. Many have intact open porches. These houses represent the Italianate, Queen Anne, Eastlake, and Colonial Revival and other styles. Many good examples of Italianate, Eastlake and Queen Anne row houses and double houses dating from the 1880's through circa 1900 also stand in the district. In addition, the West Seventh Street area contains a few excellent Prairie style houses.

Several churches and other religious, cultural, and social institutions, most having ethnic origins, are located in residential areas. Although Seven Corners itself has been obliterated by street rerouting and redevelopment (the Xcel Energy Center marks the approximate site of the intersection), some of the Victorian commercial buildings that were constructed further west on West Seventh Street as the business district expanded are still standing.

The West Seventh Street area is one of the city's oldest communities. It contains some of St. Paul's most historically and architecturally significant buildings. Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been demolished or insensitively altered through urban renewal efforts and new development. Many more have suffered through neglect. In recent years, however, there has been a major effort by community residents to recognize the area's history and preserve significant buildings.

## The People of our Community<sup>2</sup>

**B**Y THE CENSUS OF 2000, 10,412 PEOPLE LIVED IN THIS COMMUNITY, A DECREASE OF 3% FROM 1990. The race and ethnicity of the

community remained primarily White in 2000, 78%, although lower than in 1990, which was 88% White. Diversity gains were primarily in the Latino population (from 4% to 8%) and the Black population (from 3% to 7%). The Asian population remained at 3%, the American Indian population remained at 2%, and 3% of residents were multiracial. Eleven percent of the population spoke languages other than English at home: Spanish (5%), other Indo-European languages (3%), and Asian languages (3%).

The average household size was 2.17 persons in 2000, slightly smaller than in 1990 (2.24), and 23% of households had children, down slightly from 26% in 1990. About half of children lived in married-couple families (54%), 35% in single-parent families, and 11% in other arrangements (primarily with grandparents and other relatives).

### **Who is the typical West Ender? *In 2000, he or she:***

- Was White (78%)
- Spoke English at home (89%)
- Was a high school graduate (83%)
- Had 2.17 persons in the household
- Had a median household annual income of \$34,363
- Was more likely to have an income below \$25,000 (32%) than above \$75,000 (13%)
- If receiving government benefits, was more likely to receive Social Security income (29%; \$10,199) than public assistance (8%; \$2,205 per year)
- Was slightly more likely to be a homeowner (56%) than a renter (44%)
- Lived in a housing unit built more than 60 years ago (57%)
- Was about as likely to have lived in the same home for at least 5 years (53%) as to be a new neighbor
- If a renter, paid \$516 per month
- If a homeowner with a mortgage, paid housing costs of \$854 per month
- If a homeowner without a mortgage, paid housing costs of \$269 per month
- If a child:*
  - was about as likely to live in a married couple family (54%) as in a single parent family (35%) or other type of arrangement (11%)
  - qualified for free/reduced-price school lunch (58%)
  - had parents who were in the workforce (71%)
- If older than 65:*
  - was White (95%)
  - lived with someone else (55%)
  - had an income less than \$30,000 (64%)
- Had one or more automobiles in the household (77%)
- If working, drove alone (70%)

**Mass transit options are very important for our residents.**

All categories of age groups decreased in size, except for working age adults (age 18-64), whose numbers increased 5% to 6,837. The number of preschoolers (age 0-4) decreased 29% to 571 children. The number of school-age children (age 5-17) decreased 3% to 1,667. And, the number of older adults (age 65+) decreased 26% to 1,337.

Of public school students living in this community in 2000, 44% were children of color, indicating more diversity among our younger residents than is represented in the community as a whole. In 2000, for every 20 public school students living here, 11 were White, 4 were Black, 3 were Hispanic, 2 were Asian, and 1 was American Indian. For almost one out of five public school students, English was not the primary language spoken at home (19%). And, 58% of public school students qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch, compared to 65% in Saint Paul as a whole. In 71% of families with children under age 6, all parents in the family were in the workforce.

Of the older adults living in this community, 45% were living alone, compared to 51% in 1990. Their race and ethnicity represent the nature of the immigrants who settled in the community: White, 95%, with only 1% Black, 1% American Indian, 1% Latino, and 1% multiracial.

Of those aged 25 and older, 83% had at least a high school education. About a quarter (26%) had some college or a 2-year college degree, 21% had a 4-year college degree or higher, and 6% had a graduate or professional degree. Of those residents aged 16 and over, 66% were in the workforce in 2000. Top occupations included management and professional (30%), sales and office work (28%), service jobs (18%), and production and transportation (15%). Top industries employing residents in this community included education/health/social service (25%), retail (11%), and manufacturing (11%).

The median household income in 1999 was \$34,363 compared to \$38,774 for Saint Paul as a whole. Many fewer households had incomes of \$75,000 or more (13%) than households with incomes of less than \$25,000 (32%). However, only 8% of households received public assistance in 1999, an average of \$2,205 for the year, while 29% received Social Security income, an average of \$10,199 for the year. Of the older adult households, 64% had annual incomes below \$30,000.

In 2000, families with incomes below the poverty level in this community included: 13% of families with children; 15% of families with children under age five; 30% of single mothers with children; and 38% of single mothers with children under age five. Individuals with incomes below the poverty level included: 11% of all residents in this community (compared to 16% in the city as a whole); 15% of all children under age 18; and 7% of older adults age 65 or older.

There were 4,580 occupied housing units in 2000, of which 56% were owner-occupied (2,570 units) and 44% were rented (2,015 units). Of older adult households (age 65+), 65% were homeowners and 35% were renters. Over half (53%) of the residents in this community had lived in the same home for at least five years. As would be expected from our history, 57% of the total housing units were built before 1940, 12% between 1940 and 1959, and 31% since 1960.

Housing cost burden is occurring in the community, even though housing costs are slightly less than the average in St. Paul. Almost one out of five (18%) of homeowners and one out of three (31%) renters were

## **10 Principles of Smart Growth:**

1. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
2. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
3. Provide a variety of transportation options.
4. Strengthen existing communities and direct development towards them.
5. Preserve natural beauty, parks, and environmentally critical areas.
6. Create complete neighborhoods where daily needs are close at hand.
7. Create a safe, inviting environment for walking.
8. Foster distinctive communities with a strong sense of place.
9. Make efficient use of public investments in infrastructure, schools and services.
10. Put jobs and good schools within reach of all who need them.

paying 30% or more of their income for housing in 1999 (this includes households of all incomes). The median rent in this community was \$516 in 1999, compared to \$565 in the city as a whole. For the 68% of homeowners who had a mortgage in 1999, they paid a median of \$854 for monthly housing costs. Homeowners with no mortgage, 32%, paid a median of \$269 in monthly housing costs.

Mass transit options are very important for our residents. About one-fourth (23%) of households in the community had no vehicle, 42% had one vehicle, 27% had two, and 8% had three or more. To go to work, 70% of workers in this community drove alone, 12% carpooled, 9% took public transportation (including taxis), 5% walked, and 4% worked at home.

Population changes due to major housing developments will affect the demographic characteristics of our community. In particular, three sites—Upper Landing, Victoria Park, and the Brewery—will add more than 1,600 housing units, ranging from low-income senior rental to upper-end market-rate condominiums representing a potential increase of 25% over our current population. This will significantly impact our community and its needs.

## Vision for our Future

**O**VER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, MORE THAN 4,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS WILL BE BUILT IN WEST 7<sup>TH</sup>. Our challenge in the community is to planfully integrate these new units into the existing density of the community, maintain the existing housing stock, and retain the character of West 7<sup>th</sup>. New housing units and households will impact adjacent land uses, social concerns and support, traffic and transit demand, retail demand, pedestrian and bicycle safety, design standards and the market for diverse and affordable housing options. The Principles of Smart Growth (see table) guide our framework for this plan. The plan is divided into components consistent with the St. Paul Guidelines for District Plans. In each section we address trends, key issues, and actions to realize the quality of community we envision for the next 20 years.

## Through the realization of a new district plan for West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road District 9, we hope to:

- Maintain a diversity of households in regard to income, age, and race/ethnicity.
- Maintain existing housing stock while developing new housing to meet the diversity of households' needs.
- Link the neighborhoods within West 7<sup>th</sup> more strongly to one another.
- Link the community of West 7<sup>th</sup> to the amenities and opportunities within and outside of the community.
- Develop job opportunities through retail, services, entertainment, and clean industrial development.
- Wisely reuse industrial sites consistent with the plan.
- Respect the Mississippi River as a community asset, limit new building on the river and seek opportunities to connect the neighborhoods to the riverfront.
- Improve environmental quality for a sustainable future.
- Promote aesthetic values in rehabilitation and development efforts.

## Community Test:

**Popsicle Test:** Can you walk home from the store before your Popsicle melts?  
Can most daily needs be met by walking or biking?

**Smooch Test:** Is the place comfortable, safe, attractive and intimate, suitable for a date-night stroll? Are people and their ears shielded from high speed car traffic? Would you feel good about taking a visitor here?

**Kid Test:** Can children safely explore a world beyond their own backyards?  
Can older kids get around on their own and safely develop a sense of self-reliance and autonomy?

**Senior Test:** Are elder citizens a welcome part of the mix of residents? Are they engaged and active? Can they get out and about and get their needs met when driving is no longer an option?

**Commons Test:** Does the development contribute to the overall community something greater than what it takes in terms of natural and community resources? Will it age gracefully and adapt to future uses, or is it designed to be disposable? What does it leave for future generations?



## Preservation and improvement of existing housing

District 9 has always championed the preservation and improvement of our existing housing stock. To maintain a livable community, variation in type and age of housing is critical. Our housing stock spans 150 years, and as new housing is built, it needs to respect the character of existing housing in the community. The community has lost significant numbers of housing units over the past 40 years due to the I-35E corridor, private developers (e.g., United Hospital), and urban renewal programs of the 1970's. We do recognize that the new housing built during that time has provided options that serve our community. For example, Sherman Forbes townhouses, built in 1973, provide subsidized housing appropriate for the elderly and small families.

There are, however, specific geographic areas and sites that need attention to sustain their residential character. Those that are at particular risk are:

**The Jefferson School** area bordered by Smith on the east, Grand on the north and West 7th on the south—in addition to the negative influence of absentee ownership, proximity to the United Hospital complex may attract development incompatible with the existing residential character.

**Uppertown neighborhood and Butternut neighborhood**—these areas have a significant number of structures that could warrant historic designation, either as individual buildings or as districts.

**The area north of West 7<sup>th</sup> bordered by I-35E and St. Clair**—many houses are being kept by the owners as rentals, limiting ownership opportunities for new families.

**Nugent Street**—the properties on this street are extremely blighted.

**The Kipps Glen neighborhood** at the west end of District 9—the housing is modest, of low density and about 50 years old. The proximity to the river is potentially attractive to developers.

## Housing

Housing structures in West 7<sup>th</sup> consist primarily of single-family housing, attached town homes, and an occasional high-rise apartment building. While much of the housing stock is intact, it needs attention to counter potential threats to its preservation. Additionally, there are areas in which new, large housing developments are desirable. This section discusses issues related to existing housing, and new housing development opportunities to address transit, market and affordability.

**Women of Nations at Leech and McBoal**—this is a positive architectural feature in the neighborhood and is an appropriate use. If its current owner were to vacate, a future use should be another acceptable licensed institution or developed as apartments.

**The Banhauser building and the Marie Schmit Bremer house**—these are major landmarks in the community and important to preserve.

Housing phenomena are occurring across the community that threaten the overall quality of existing housing and neighborhoods:

**Accessory buildings**—need to be addressed to support appropriate density and aesthetics.

**“Sober Houses”**—these are houses bought by private investors and rented to individuals who must remain sober to continue to rent. The number of occupants within the housing units (housing maintenance code) and the density/proximity of the houses (zoning ordinance) are problematic. The City authorized a study and it needs to be completed so that a deliberate approach can be formulated to address them.

**Lack of housing maintenance**—spot properties throughout the community exhibit lack of maintenance and deterioration. Purchase of housing by investors and shoddy rehabilitation work which only serves to increase sale prices but does not improve the character and integrity of the neighborhood’s housing.

**Purchase of housing by investors** and shoddy rehabilitation work which only serves to increase sale prices but does not improve the character and integrity of the neighborhood’s housing.

## Preservation and improvement of existing housing Actions:

- Maintain the character of existing residential areas by keeping zoning appropriate to residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage retention of ownership of properties through owner-occupant home loan programs, and enforce residency of owners who claim homestead property designation.
- Rezone the area from Western to Grand, I-35E to West 7<sup>th</sup> to ensure its residential future.
- Investigate designation of Uppertown and Butternut neighborhoods for local historic designation, as individual buildings and/or as districts.
- Investigate needs of residents in the Kipps Glen area to ensure its continuance as a residential neighborhood.
- Review procedures for approval of accessory housing unit construction.
- Investigate the proliferation of Sober Houses and enforce current ordinances or develop new policies to ensure the fair dispersal of sex offenders, treatment facilities and sober houses throughout St. Paul.
- Enforce the Property Maintenance Code equitably and reasonably throughout the community to stave off deterioration of the housing stock.
- Promote services for volunteer groups to assist in upkeep of housing.
- Reinstate the Houses to Homes rehabilitation program and other old house finance programs.
- Market existing housing through the City of Saint Paul sponsorship of the Home Tour.





## Additions to the housing supply, especially near transit

Because West 7<sup>th</sup> is the major artery for transit service and is at a diagonal orientation to the street grid, most residential structures are relatively close to transit access. Housing opportunities in proximity to transit are an attractive amenity of living in West 7<sup>th</sup>. New housing developments need to recognize and take advantage of access to transit services. Additionally, new developments need to be sensitive to the existing neighborhoods surrounding the site.

The key sites identified for major housing developments are:

**The gateway area** bordered by one-half block north of Exchange, Walnut on the west, Eagle Street on the east, and south to the intersection of Chestnut and Eagle—this area has been identified for more than 15 years as an ideal location for housing.

**The Schmidt Brewery site**—given the demise of the brewery operations and more recently the ethanol operations, the site is prime for redevelopment.

**Randolph/Shepard/West 7<sup>th</sup>**—identified as a key development site in the Fort Road Corridor Development Plan.

**Victoria Park**—the riverbluff area formerly used for storage of gas in large tanks recently received environmental clearance from the courts and is prime to move from conceptual stage to its redevelopment as a mixed-use urban village.

## Additions to the housing supply, especially near transit Actions:

- Identify parts of the Fort Road Corridor Development Plan that are consistent with our community desires. Identify opportunities for development that are consistent with the District Plan.
- Rezone the Chestnut/Exchange area to TN2 to develop medium-density housing adjacent to Irvine Park. Innovative plans to screen the Xcel Energy Center parking ramp (along Eagle) should be part of the development.
- Encourage retention of the historic components of the Schmidt Brewery structures, and develop the site as mixed use housing, commercial and neighborhood services.
- Ensure that the new Victoria Park development is integrated and connected with the existing Randolph and View neighborhoods.
- Promote those stretches of West 7<sup>th</sup> between key nodes as the appropriate location for higher-density residential use, in order to add diversity to the housing stock while reserving the traditional neighborhood fabric and supporting existing and future transit investment.



## **Housing additions and improvements to complement existing housing**

District 9 has always been a community attractive to young families. In the past five years, however, housing values have risen more than 100%, making the initial purchase price of housing prohibitive when coupled with the cost of needed improvements to the structure. These costs especially are a burden for single-income households and single-headed households, and the special financing, grant and incentive programs for residents, such as exterior improvement grants and This Old House Tax Credit, are no longer available. Additionally, households have experienced predatory lending and equity stripping. And, the unique geology of our area—peat and bedrock—creates additional challenges for builders to keep new housing affordable and of high quality. For example, the new Scheffer Avenue townhouses are already having structural problems. However, compared to other city communities, housing still is considered affordable. Families move here more so because of affordability than other traditional market draws, such as schools.

## **Housing additions and improvement at a cost/income mix to meet market demand and the City's housing policy**

The West 7<sup>th</sup> community can remain strong in the future if it retains a diversity of families across the life span, supporting the concept of a life-cycle community. Shelter requirements to attract this diversity include a balance of type of units and a variety of costs of housing. As new developments are planned, they must include affordable housing units to enable individuals to establish their roots in our community. New developments that are built and populated quickly, such as the Upper Landing housing development, may encourage households who are more mobile than traditional West 7<sup>th</sup> households. The established West 7<sup>th</sup> community and service organizations need to develop ways to connect with these new households.

## **Housing additions and improvements to complement existing housing**

### **Actions:**

- Revitalize the exterior improvements grants program. Examine other funding initiatives and policies to allow residents to improve their property.
- Investigate ways to require site plan review of all housing by the City to ensure that new construction is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood in which it is developed.
- Enforce building codes to ensure that infill housing maintains integrity of the geological foundation and structure.
- Require housing additions and improvements to respect the aesthetic and historical context of the original house and neighborhood.

## **Housing additions and improvement at a cost/income mix to meet market demand and the City's housing policy**

### **Actions:**

- Incorporate affordable housing for individuals and families in all new developments.
- Identify ways to integrate new residents into the community—educating them about our past and involving them in our future.
- Identify strategic areas to incorporate mixed-use and higher-density development in context with existing structures.



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## Jobs and Economic Development

District 9 is a community of individuals with a strong work ethic. Historically, there has been a range of skilled and unskilled employment opportunities in the community. Many of the highest-paying jobs were connected with the industries that existed throughout the community. Today, many of those have moved to other communities and states, if they survived at all. The District is in favor of bringing in new “clean” industries, with the caveat that they operate to improve the environment and meet the employment needs of the community. The main artery, West 7<sup>th</sup>, needs to thrive as our major commercial corridor. While there may be satellite commercial areas, e.g., Shepard Road, Chestnut, and Randolph, they should not compete with businesses on West 7<sup>th</sup>. Access to businesses requires access to parking.

## Preservation of business and jobs in the area while complementing housing objectives

Many of the businesses in West 7<sup>th</sup> have roots from early in the last century and have shaped our character. Other businesses have developed as the community has changed. Both need to be supported, and we recommend some general actions to ensure compatibility. There are areas of more intense business activity along West 7<sup>th</sup> that should be emphasized and we identify recommendations for specific sites in order to better serve the community. In general, the community should develop as an attractive area in which to live and work, and provide the mix of retail and service operations to support small businesses.

## Preservation of business and jobs in the area while complementing housing objectives

### Actions:

#### General:

- Develop commercial areas to be supportive of the total community needs and should be planned to integrate mixed use developments. The following areas are of primary importance because they also serve as entrances to the community: West 7<sup>th</sup> and Kellogg, Smith, St. Clair, Jefferson, Randolph, and Montreal/Lexington. The Sibley Plaza area is also important to the vitality of West 7<sup>th</sup>. Although it is not within the boundaries of the District 9 Planning District, it is within the West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Federation (community organization) boundaries.
- Support “nodes” of retail businesses at the intersections identified above, rather than a continuous strip of retail throughout the length of West 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Require site plan review by the City to ensure that new construction is sensitive to the context of the neighborhood in which it is developed
- Update and encourage implementation of the Fort Road Design Guidelines for commercial areas.
- Widen sidewalks when new structures are built on West 7<sup>th</sup>, while maintaining street width.
- Review sight lines to significant landmarks as new parking structures, such as the new ramp at Kellogg and Smith, and other buildings are planned.
- Support and encourage independent business owners, rather than franchises, to locate in the community.

#### Parking:

- Expand residential permit parking into those areas impacted by Xcel Energy Center and RiverCentre event attendees and hospital complex employees. These individuals frequently park on our neighborhood streets and then take the bus or walk downtown to their destinations.
- Provide shuttle buses with parking for downtown events.
- Address parking issues consistent with design guidelines, as new retail and restaurants are planned.
- Encourage parking flexibility strategies to meet minimum requirements such as shared parking for commercial and institutional users and parking behind structures.
- Develop a parking management plan or parking utility as recommended in the Seven Corners Gateway Plan.

#### Site specific:

- Monitor the commercial area on Chestnut from Exchange to Smith to ensure appropriate use and development to support the neighborhood, institutions, and businesses.
- Relocate the ambulance garage on Forbes nearer to the hospital.
- Maintain Fire Stations #1 and #10 in the neighborhood.



## Effective reuse of industrial, polluted and under-used sites

West 7<sup>th</sup> experienced the same type of evolution as did other communities along major waterways—the river was considered a tool of industry rather than an amenity—and the many industrial sites over time became polluted. As industry left, these large sites are prime areas for redevelopment. The Upper Landing, Island Station and Victoria Park are examples of developments in process on former industrial land. The area that poses concern for the future is along the river between Upper Landing and Island Station that currently is used by the Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant and Ashland Oil. Neither of these has plans to cease operation; in fact, the High Bridge Plant is in the process of converting to natural gas instead of coal.

## Priority redevelopment sites

A number of areas in West 7<sup>th</sup> continue to evolve as potential redevelopment sites for both business and industry.



## Effective reuse of industrial, polluted and under-used sites Actions:

- After demolition of the Xcel High Bridge coal power plant, maintain the site as open space to support recreation activities such as a soccer field.
- Incorporate extensive landscaping for noise control and beautification, particularly between the new Upper Landing housing and the High Bridge plant.
- Ensure that when the existing High Bridge Plant smoke stack is demolished, the potential for airborne contaminants is minimized.
- If Ashland Oil ever chooses to abandon their site on Shepard Road, initiate cleanup to residential standards for maximum flexibility of future land uses.
- Investigate the feasibility of using biological plants to leech out toxic chemicals from land.
- Complete the full build-out of the community's plan for Victoria Park.

## Priority redevelopment sites

### Actions:

- Encourage appropriate industrial uses as long as they are not intense in scale or function.
- Adopt the National Great River Park plan for the Downtown Reach and the Valley Reach portions of the Mississippi River.
- Monitor large sites to ensure they meet needs of West 7<sup>th</sup> first. For example, land used for storage of automobiles near Randolph should not develop as a large distribution site of automobiles for metro dealers.
- Determine and monitor ownership of land along the river, particularly from Ashland Oil to 35E (i.e., MnDOT, ADM, Flint Hills (Koch), etc.) so future plans can be managed.
- Support the adaptive reuse for limited retail/commercial of the Head House at Chestnut and Shepard, creatively planning for adequate parking.



## Community Development

West 7<sup>th</sup> has been an advocate for services for its residents through the many programs offered. Many buildings in which these programs are offered, however, do not meet our current needs, due to poor physical condition and lack of space for expanded services.



## Recreation and community centers

West 7<sup>th</sup> has two community centers, St. Clair and the Salvation Army (private, non-profit) and one small recreation center, Palace. St. Clair and Palace are woefully inadequate for the needs of the children, elders, and others in the community.

## Schools and libraries

Over the last 35 years, West 7<sup>th</sup> has fought for preservation of school options in the community. Monroe was originally a high school; when threatened with closing in the 1970's, the community worked to establish it as a kindergarten through eighth grade community school. We have always embraced other school options in the community. Additional schools operated by the St. Paul School District 625 include Adams Spanish Immersion Magnet, Open School, Bridgeview (for children with developmental disabilities) and Four Season's School. Other schools include the charter school TC Academy, and St. Francis/St. James, a Catholic parochial school. We want to be sure that each of these institutions continues to improve in order to attract new families to the community.

## Community gathering places and public access

Opportunities for community gathering places must be realized in redevelopment plans of former industrial properties. For example, redevelopment of the Schmidt Brewery should include space for such a gathering. The area along West 7<sup>th</sup> from the brewery to Randolph is a central area of the community and could become our "downtown West 7<sup>th</sup>." Redevelopment sites need to allow for public access to amenities in the community. Examples that exclude community residents and thus are unacceptable include gated courtyards, private roads through developments, and lack of access to marinas.

## Recreation and community centers

### Actions:

- Renovate St. Clair Recreation Center to improve both building utilization and recreational facilities.
- Expand services, especially at the St. Clair Recreation Center and Palace playground, to focus on the needs of elders and youth in our community.
- Incorporate programming for community youth that is more diverse than only sports activities.
- Replace the Palace playground building and upgrade the grounds and recreation center.

## Schools and libraries

### Actions:

- Support the needs of Monroe school to ensure adequate resources for it to thrive.
- Identify ways to improve the enrollment and financial concerns of St. Francis School.
- Determine the optimal location for expanded library facilities, including expanded hours, such as building a new facility or integrating with Monroe Community School, or a new Palace Recreation Center or new St. Clair Community Center.
- Maintain public access to public school outdoor recreation areas at all hours, and limit leasing of school property to private sport organizations.
- Continue to work with the schools and libraries to ensure that facilities meet evolving community needs.

## Community gathering places and public access

### Actions:

- Incorporate indoor and outdoor public green spaces in major redevelopments such as the Brewery, Randolph/Shepard/West 7<sup>th</sup>, and Victoria Park developments.
- Maintain public access to streets, parks, green areas and the river.

## Places of faith

### Actions:

- Encourage and support the development of programs for members of the community.
- Maintain connections and communication with the faith leaders of the facilities.

## Places of faith

West 7<sup>th</sup> has always been endowed with facilities of various faith traditions. They contribute to the quality of life in the neighborhood through their worship and outreach programs. They are crucial participants in helping to strengthen families, providing opportunities for individuals of all ages and sustaining the community particularly during difficult times.

## Public safety

West 7<sup>th</sup> is perceived to be a safer community than a few decades ago. However, there are areas that need attention, particularly related to recreational opportunities. The bike trail along 35E is very isolated. The Crosby Farms park area on the northeast side of 35E and Shepard Road needs improved landscaping and lighting to create a safe environment. Also, areas around schools need to be assessed for safety.

## Parks

Our quality of life is compromised because of the dearth of park areas in West 7<sup>th</sup>. This was an issue in the 1980 district plan and continues to be one. Because of the narrow geography of West 7<sup>th</sup>, large tracts of land for park areas are not available, except the existing open space at Montreal and West 7<sup>th</sup>. Smaller tracts of land and vacant lots could be optimized as community “guerrilla gardens.” A coordinated, integrated plan of parks development should include pocket parks in small geographic areas, neighborhood parks with play and recreational opportunities, and regional parks with recreational facilities and trails. Providing passive open green space is also important, but must not be used as an excuse not to build active parks in the community.

The National Great River Park planning effort currently underway through a partnership between the City of Saint Paul and Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation will guide projects to both increase the amount and quality of park space along and adjacent to the Mississippi River, and improve the connections between the river and the West 7<sup>th</sup> community. The community needs to stay an active participant in this process to ensure that the neighborhood is well-served with parks and related facilities.

## Public safety

### Actions:

- Increase security through physical planning improvements in the Crosby Farms area.
- Extend horse and bicycle patrols into the Crosby area.
- Provide appropriate lighting and visibility for the recreational bike trail along 35E.
- Assess lighting and safety around the schools.
- Develop new West 7<sup>th</sup> lighting, utilizing the historic lantern style in all of Area 1.
- Provide call boxes throughout the neighborhood for emergency calling.
- Add signage throughout the neighborhood to provide information for connecting trails.
- Develop traffic calming strategies along the major arteries in the neighborhood, such as West 7<sup>th</sup>, Montreal, Victoria, Otto, Randolph, Lexington, St. Clair, and Smith.
- Enforce traffic laws, especially regarding speeding and pedestrian rights.

## Parks

### Actions:

- Complete the National Great River Park plan, ensuring that it serves the needs of the West 7<sup>th</sup> community.
- Improve connections between parks to create a system of greenways.
- Identify areas for off-leash dog parks, particularly because of the expansion of housing in the community.
- Assess the Uppertown neighborhood’s needs to be sure that Dousman Park serves the children in the area.
- Prioritize areas of higher-density housing and apartment units for new play parks.
- Identify areas for park/green space in the large residential areas on both sides of West 7<sup>th</sup> between Shepard and 35E at Randolph.
- Preserve open space at Bridgeview School as a large play park.
- Develop the northeast side of 35E and Shepard Road for overflow parking for Crosby Farms Park.
- Improve access to the river by better and more vertical connections from the bluff (especially at the end of Walnut and at the High Bridge) and a pedestrian tunnel under Shepard Road.
- If Island Station is not redeveloped preserving the original building as housing, then the site should be maintained as a public park property and the building used as a park facility.
- Maintain the playground in Upper Landing under the High Bridge.
- Establish open space to support recreation activities such as a soccer field after demolition of the Xcel High Bridge coal power plant.
- Pursue acquisition of riverfront property [e.g., Flint Hills (Koch)] for public domain easements for access.
- Reinstate the identification and development of pocket parks on small lots that are not developable.
- Promote the Master Gardener program in West 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Identify sites appropriate for community gardens.





Image from the Metropolitan Design Center Image Bank.  
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## Mix of Land Uses

We support the integration of a mix of land uses within our community, but it is important to ensure compatible uses within this dense community.

## **Improved compatibility for residences, business and industry**

As West 7<sup>th</sup> extends from Kellogg Boulevard to 35E, its context changes from strictly commercial to mixed use. Much of West 7<sup>th</sup> between Randolph and 35E is very residential and vulnerable over the long-term. Also, the commercial land use along West 7<sup>th</sup> should be confined to the block “face” and not extend into residential neighborhoods.

## **Increased opportunity for mixed residential/business use**

The West 7<sup>th</sup> community has a broad variety of land use. It is desirable to encourage compatible residential and business uses in new development. We also want to ensure the character of our neighborhoods that is central to the history of the community by utilizing protective design control and/or historic district designations.

## **Improved compatibility for residences, business and industry**

### **Actions:**

- Strategically plan for commercial operations to relate to the residential nature of West 7<sup>th</sup> frontage to Ensure a quality living environment for residents and to support commercial opportunities.
- Assess residential character where it exists on West 7<sup>th</sup> and identify where it might be appropriate for higher-density residential infill.
- Concentrate commercial activity at key nodes along West 7<sup>th</sup> to improve viability of businesses.

## **Increased opportunity for mixed residential/business use**

### **Actions:**

- Support the redevelopment of the northeast intersection of St. Clair and West 7<sup>th</sup>, working with existing businesses to improve the commercial facility, and develop rental housing on upper floors of a new development.
- Redevelop the Schmidt Brewery as a mixed-use facility including such uses as a community hall, commercial establishments, housing, library, a satellite farmers’ market, teen center, artists’ studios, brewery interpretive center, etc.



## Historic Preservation and Aesthetics

West 7<sup>th</sup> is steeped in the history of St. Paul. Our comprehensive district plan is worth nothing if it does not reflect the value of the historic roots of our community. We recognize that we cannot be a museum, but new development should complement the existing community. Specific areas that have sustained their character for more than 100 years need special attention to ensure that they are not lost to development and gentrification during the next decades.

The aesthetic quality of our physical environment is based on the *Fort Road Design Guidelines*, adopted in 1979<sup>1</sup>. The guidelines have been updated and represent the community's aesthetic preferences for commercial developments. The guidelines, with examples of appropriate and inappropriate designs, are included in the appendix.

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Fort Road Design Guidelines* were reviewed and expanded in this chapter and an appendix was added in Summer 2012.

## Preserve historic character of the community

It is advantageous that the majority of the housing and commercial buildings that exist today are original to the community. This also means that the structures can be costly to maintain and improve. Others may be threatened by demands to utilize higher economic uses of commercial and residential areas.

## Urban design guidelines

Urban design guidelines need to be enforced to ensure an aesthetic environment that supports the character of the community and enhances the neighborhood's quality of life. Because of the age of the community, new developments need to respect the historic antecedents, where appropriate, while creating a living and working environment for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Design guidelines are iterated in the *Fort Road Design Guidelines* as well as in each of the small area plans adopted since 2000. Recent adoption by the City of Saint Paul of Traditional Neighborhood Districts zoning include design guidelines (Sec. 66.343), which are supported in this plan.

New construction, particularly along West 7<sup>th</sup>, should have the scale, proportions, colors, rhythm of solids and voids, and expression in character with adjacent buildings. Contemporary design is supported if sympathetic to the streetscape. The first floor should be active and have a strong relationship to the sidewalk. Where original storefronts remain, their character should not be altered. Existing historic elements should be repaired, preserved and maintained. When possible, storefronts that have been altered should be restored to, or close to, their original character. In some cases, the original building fabric may be found behind the alterations. In all cases, as much original fabric should be maintained as possible. The back of commercial buildings should not be neglected from the perspective of shoppers or residents. Mechanical systems should not be located in public view.

Street furniture along West 7<sup>th</sup> should provide continuity and a welcoming pedestrian scale. Historic lanterns should be installed along the entirety of West 7<sup>th</sup>.

Examples of appropriate designs are included in the appendix.

## Preserve historic character of the community

### Actions:

- Consider phased development of the Schmidt Brewery including interim usage of some of the buildings.
- Pursue local and National Register designation for the Schmidt Brewery historic buildings.
- Pursue local designation of the Leech/McBoal and Butternut neighborhoods, either as individual buildings or as districts.
- Pursue local and National Register designation of the original limestone residential and commercial buildings in West 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Restore the original Fire Station #1 that was designed by Capp Wittington, currently owned by Kraus Anderson St. Paul.
- Maintain commercial facades along West 7<sup>th</sup> and restore their original features.
- Preserve the Island Station building.
- Explore loan programs that are targeted to the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Identify funds to target rehabilitation to older structures (similar to Dayton's Bluff Guidelines).
- Promote use of historic house/building tax credits as an incentive for rehabilitation.

## Urban design guidelines

### Actions:

- Utilize and enforce the *Fort Road Design Guidelines* to address West 7<sup>th</sup> commercial development (see appendix).
- Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines to guide improvements to the physical environment to reduce crime (i.e., develop defensible spaces) and improve the aesthetic environment.
- Encourage green roofs and compliance with sustainability standards in commercial buildings.
- Encourage redevelopment that maintains appropriate scale and view sheds towards the river and to the upper bluff including the Cathedral and the Capitol.
- Improve the appearance of entrances to the community with sidewalks and landscape buffers.
- Maintain the existing urban street grid and reestablish it in the Schmidt Brewery site development.
- Develop the intersection at Randolph and Shepard Road to be more welcoming as a central gateway intersection of the community integrating it from Shepard Road to 35-E.
- Improve the southeast intersection of West 7<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson to respect the importance of this intersection as the keystone of the redevelopment of the Schmidt Brewery.
- Enforce the *Victoria Park Master Plan* guidelines.



## Environmental Quality

We have opportunities, as well as responsibilities, to steward the environmental future of our community. We encourage the support of the City and the development community to take the lead on evaluating and developing our community consistent with the principles and guidelines of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) to create a sustainable future. If our community is a healthy environment for people in which to live, it will also be attractive to visitors and other residents of the region. We encourage utilizing the guidelines for building green. In the sidebar are the LEED guideline categories for homes. Addressing principles such as these will help to protect the environment and ensure sustainability of our community.

### **Enhance and protect natural landscape, greenway & river connections**

In the 1970's, the community recognized its untapped amenity—the Mississippi River. We must preserve the connection to the river physically and psychologically.

### **Pollution (air, water, ground, and noise)**

We recognize that we are a community that throughout our history has been affected by activities that now pose major clean-up challenges. This is not perceived as a deterrent to future development, but development costs may be greater because of pollution mitigation. We want to ensure that any development or activities minimize the environmental effect on residents today and in the future.

### **Sustainability**

LEED guidelines provide a timely opportunity to set standards for the future of the city using the West 7<sup>th</sup> community as the model. Applying these principles can enable the community and City to apply best practices for our future. Integrating current LEED standards, while preserving our 100-year-old-plus building stock, provides a laboratory of opportunity.

## **Enhance and protect natural landscape, greenway & river connections**

### **Actions:**

- Improve and celebrate our historic natural amenities.
- Restrict tall broad building towers that obliterate views of the natural bluff and topography, e.g., from the river level to the West 7<sup>th</sup> bluff, and from the Seven Corners and Smith Avenue area to the Cathedral Hill area.
- Preserve the natural topography of hillside bluffs.
- Endorse the National Great River Park Downtown Reach and Valley Reach plan.
- Encourage “green” development that minimizes impact on each site’s unique natural resources.

## **Pollution (air, water, ground, and noise)**

### **Actions:**

- Encourage “clean” industry development at appropriate sites.
- Assess and mitigate the environmental impacts associated with the removal of the High Bridge Xcel Energy Plant coal burning smoke stack as the plant converts to natural gas.
- Identify formerly-polluted sites for clean-up, e.g., at Randolph and Milton, James and Randolph, and at the end of Drake at Shepard, and determine appropriate mitigation.
- Require that the contaminated dirt pile at St. Clair and I-35E, owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, be removed.
- Enlist community volunteers to continue to mark street drains with the stencil “Drains to the River.”
- Utilize durable but quiet surfaces for roadways.
- Monitor the on-going clean-up of polluted sites.

## **Sustainability**

### **Actions:**

- Encourage use of quality materials in buildings and public improvements so that they will last.
- Encourage Energy Star ratings and high efficiency in new building.
- Minimize square footage of hard surfaces to reduce runoff.
- Encourage the use of rain gardens and green roofs in new development.
- Integrate transit planning into new developments.
- Redevelop brownfields to utilize available land for development.

## *LEED Categories of Evaluation for Homes*

### **Location and Linkages**

- In a LEED certified neighborhood
- Appropriate site selection
- Infrastructure and efficiency
- Ease of access
- Land use efficiency

### **Sustainable Sites**

- Minimize site impact
- Resource efficient landscaping
- Surface water management
- Poison

### **Water Efficiency**

- Outdoor use
- Indoor use

### **Indoor Environmental Quality**

- Performance
- Combustion venting
- Humidity
- Ventilation
- Contaminant control

### **Materials and Resources**

- Efficiency
- Local sources
- Durability
- Improved products
- Waste

### **Energy and Atmosphere**

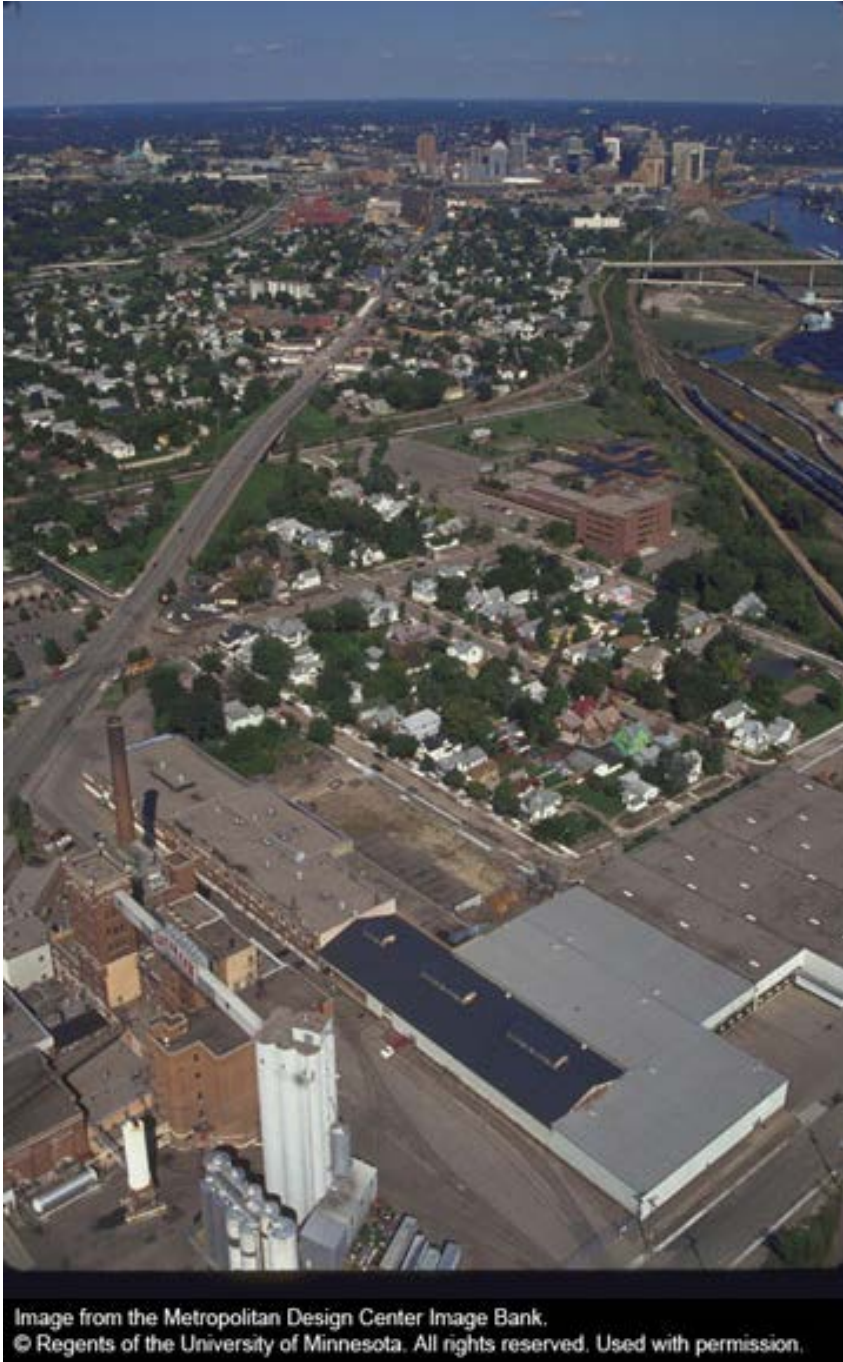
- HERS rating
- Envelope
- Comfort systems
- Water heating
- Lighting
- Appliances
- Renewables
- Ozone

### **Homeowner Awareness**

- Guidance

### **Innovation and Design Process**

- Innovation in design



## Transportation and Circulation

### **Vehicular circulation**

The community is bounded by major thoroughfares—Shepard Road, I-35E and West 7<sup>th</sup>—providing ample vehicular access through the community. However, the number of trips made on these roadways increases each year, creating more stress on the system. The Great River Road includes portions of Shepard Road within our community and affirms the value we place on our connection to the Mississippi River as a major amenity.

### **Pedestrian and child safety**

The community needs to be supportive of pedestrians to support retail establishments, reduce automobile traffic, encourage transit use, and provide an additional level of safety monitoring.

### **Public transit**

Public transit is critical for West 7<sup>th</sup> residents and businesses, and access is a major amenity for the community. In addition, because of new housing development, bus service will be necessary for our new residents. In 2003, the community defeated a proposal to dedicate lanes along West 7<sup>th</sup> for bus service only because of the potential loss of parking and/or sidewalk width and vegetation. All of these considerations must be balanced in providing improved public transit.

### **Bicycle and pedestrian options**

Bicycle and pedestrian options are increasingly important in a built-up community such as West 7<sup>th</sup>. Whether for recreation or basic need (many residents do not own automobiles), bicycle trails and pedestrian access should be substantially improved.

## **Vehicular circulation**

### **Actions:**

- Separate access to commercial from residential access.
- Redesign the intersection of West 7<sup>th</sup> and Smith Avenue (including McBoal between Smith and West 7<sup>th</sup> and the alley between McBoal and Goodrich behind the tire company) to ensure enough room to make a safe turn onto Smith by large semi-trailer trucks.
- Investigate an interchange at Shepard and 35E to remove through-traffic from neighborhood streets.
- Monitor preparation of the 35E/Shepard Road Environmental Impact Statement for neighborhood impacts.
- Require public access to the riverfront in any new developments along the Mississippi.
- Redesign the intersection of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Montreal Avenue and Lexington Parkway.
- Explore the redesign of Shepard Road from Homer Street to Davern Street like a parkway with planted median and ornamental lighting.
- Extend Smith Avenue between Kellogg Boulevard and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Construct new street segments within the Brewery site to connect to neighboring streets and break up the site into urban block increments.

## **Pedestrian and child safety**

### **Actions:**

- Improve bridges to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use, e.g., West 7<sup>th</sup> overpass between St. Clair and Jefferson.
- Improve timing of lights for train traffic and pedestrians.
- Plant vegetation along the railroad corridor, particularly as it intersects residential neighborhoods, to buffer and minimize access to railroad tracks.
- Monitor and, where necessary, remove and replace boulevard trees damaged in the 1998 straight-line wind storm and the reemergence of Dutch Elm disease.
- Remove barbed wire fencing where it is adjacent to pedestrian walkways.
- Promote traffic-calming features to slow down traffic, e.g., bump outs, marked crosswalks, street trees, and pedestrian lighting along the following: West 7<sup>th</sup> at key nodes; Smith Avenue between the High Bridge and West 7<sup>th</sup>; Osceola between West 7<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson; Otto from Shepard to West 7<sup>th</sup>; Jefferson, Canton and Victoria for access to West 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **Public transit**

### **Actions:**

- Continue to work with Metro Transit to improve mass transit in this corridor. For example, stops should be better sequenced so that buses do not become “ganged” along West 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Work with Metro Transit to provide for more stops along West 7<sup>th</sup> and increased frequency of buses.
- Investigate the utilization of Shepard Road and abandoned rail lines as new mass transit routes.
- Examine school bus services to ensure safe access for children and minimal disruption to the community.
- Promote new development that will fully utilize existing transit services, and encourage continued and improved transit facilities.

## **Bicycle and pedestrian options**

### **Actions:**

- Provide access between West 7<sup>th</sup> and the Mississippi River, e.g., at the street level from Chestnut and Shepard and vertically, Irvine Park at Walnut, Uppertown at the High Bridge.
- Reestablish pedestrian access to Kellogg from Eagle and Exchange along the hill (formerly a stairway was available).
- Connect the bike path between West 7<sup>th</sup> and Crosby Farms Park.
- Insist that the bike path along 35E be maintained by the City of St. Paul (they receive funding from the State of Minnesota to do so).
- Improve the condition and where possible, the width, of sidewalks throughout the community.
- Improve pedestrian access and safety at the intersection of West 7<sup>th</sup> with Lexington.
- Develop a bike trail on Jefferson to Schmidt Brewery and Shepard Road along Duke.
- Establish a bike lane on Otto between West 7<sup>th</sup> and Shepard.



## Adjacent Areas

The districts adjacent to District 9 affect our quality of life. Measures we take in our planning efforts need to reflect the adjacent areas. Two areas in particular affect us directly: 1) the southwest end of West 7<sup>th</sup> including the traffic congestion due to the intersection of Shepard Road and I-35E and the Gateway housing development in Highland Park; and, 2) the northeast end adjacent to the St. Paul Central Business District. Additionally, view corridors need to be preserved from the West Side and Cherokee Avenue and finally, the future of Ayd Mill Road and its relationship to I-94 continue to affect our community.

### Adjacent Areas

#### Action:

- Ensure representation of the District 9 Council on area-wide taskforces initiated by other parties, e.g., those that deal with the Mississippi River Valley, MetroTransit, etc.

## Existing Plans Adopted within this Plan

During the intervening years from when our previous community plan was developed to today, site specific plans have been adopted by the City and continue to be relevant to this current district plan. The following plans provide additional guidance to specific sub-areas within our larger community.

- Fort Road Design Guidelines
- Upper Landing Urban Design Master Plan (2000)
- Brewery/Ran-View Small Area Plan (2000)
- Seven Corners Gateway Plan (2000)
- Irvine Avenue Development Plan (2003)
- Victoria Park Master Plan (2005)
- Fort Road Development Plan (2005)
- National Great River Park plan (in progress)

## Members of the Planning Committee

The committee first met July 14, 2004, and continued through summer of 2005. The draft of the plan was presented at the 2006 annual meeting of the West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Federation in April, 2006. The plan was adopted by the West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Federation in Summer 2006. The members were:

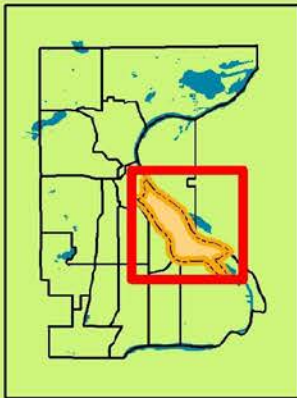
Diane Gerth	Paulette Myers
Becca Hine	Ken Peterson
Ed Johnson	Leonard Schwartz
Tonya Johnson	Lucy Thompson
Carol Mars	Dave Wickiser
Pat McMahon	Adam Yust
Betty Moran	Becky Yust, Chairperson

<sup>1</sup> The West Seventh neighborhood history profile is adapted from information available on the web at [http://www.rchs.com/neighborhoods/west\\_seventh.htm](http://www.rchs.com/neighborhoods/west_seventh.htm) retrieved on May 18, 2005. The profile at that site was originally taken from the Ramsey County Historic Site Survey Report, published in the early 1980's.

<sup>2</sup> Demographic information was summarized from a report on the West 7<sup>th</sup> neighborhood (District 9) compiled by Community DataWorks, a service of the Wilder Research Center. It was retrieved on May 18, 2005 from <http://www.communitydataworks.org/StPaul/data/stpaul/nhood/dist9/profile.pdf>



**West Seventh/Fort Road  
District 9 Area**



Source: SEE Service  
Prepared by PEP Staff  
City of Saint Paul  
February 2006



**District 9  
Redevelopment  
Priorities**

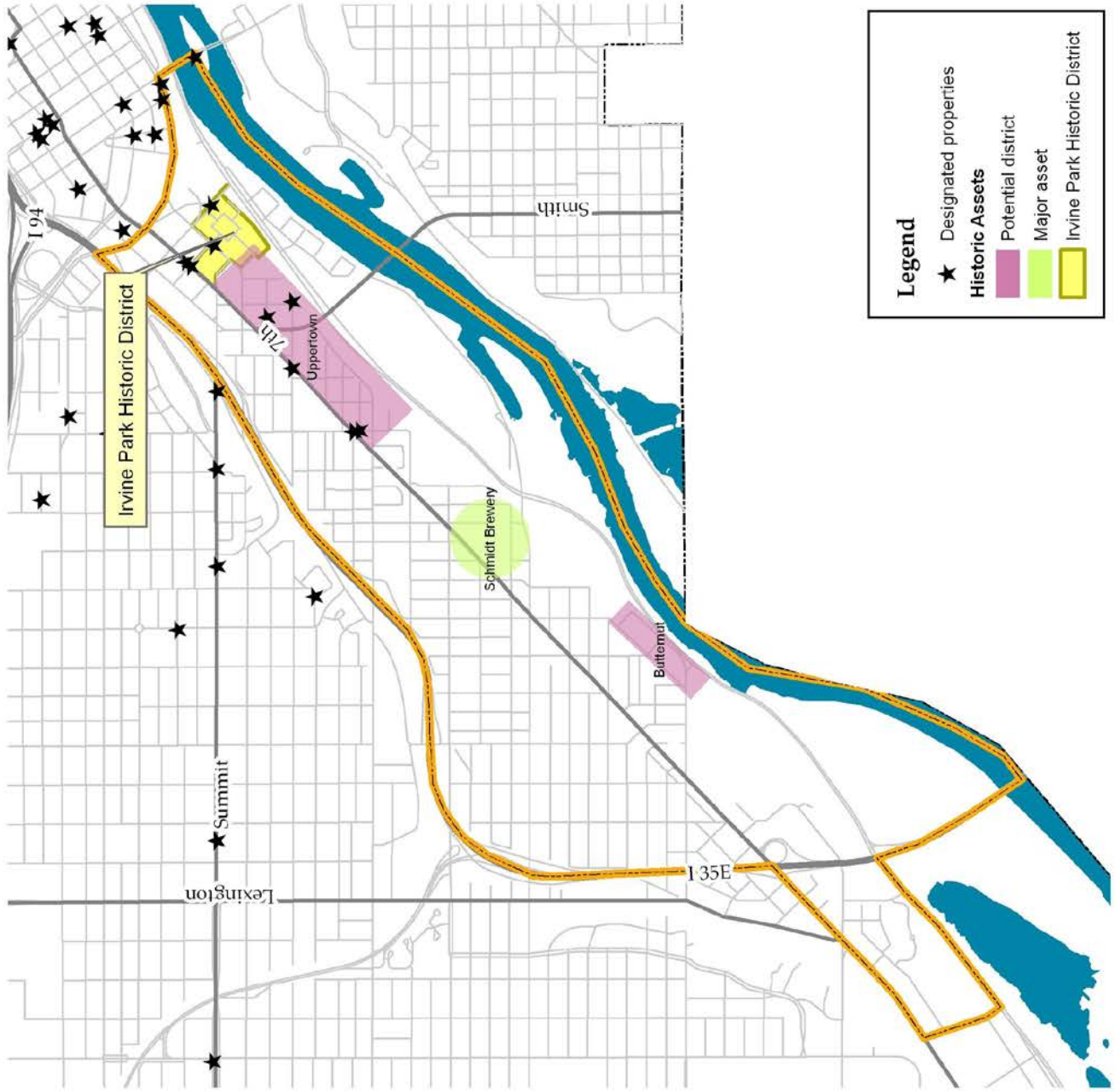


Source: SEE Survey  
Prepared by IEP/Staff  
City of Saint Paul  
February 2006

# District 9 Existing Historic Districts, Designated Properties, and Potential Districts



Source: SEE Survey  
Prepared by IEP/Staff  
City of Saint Paul  
February 2008

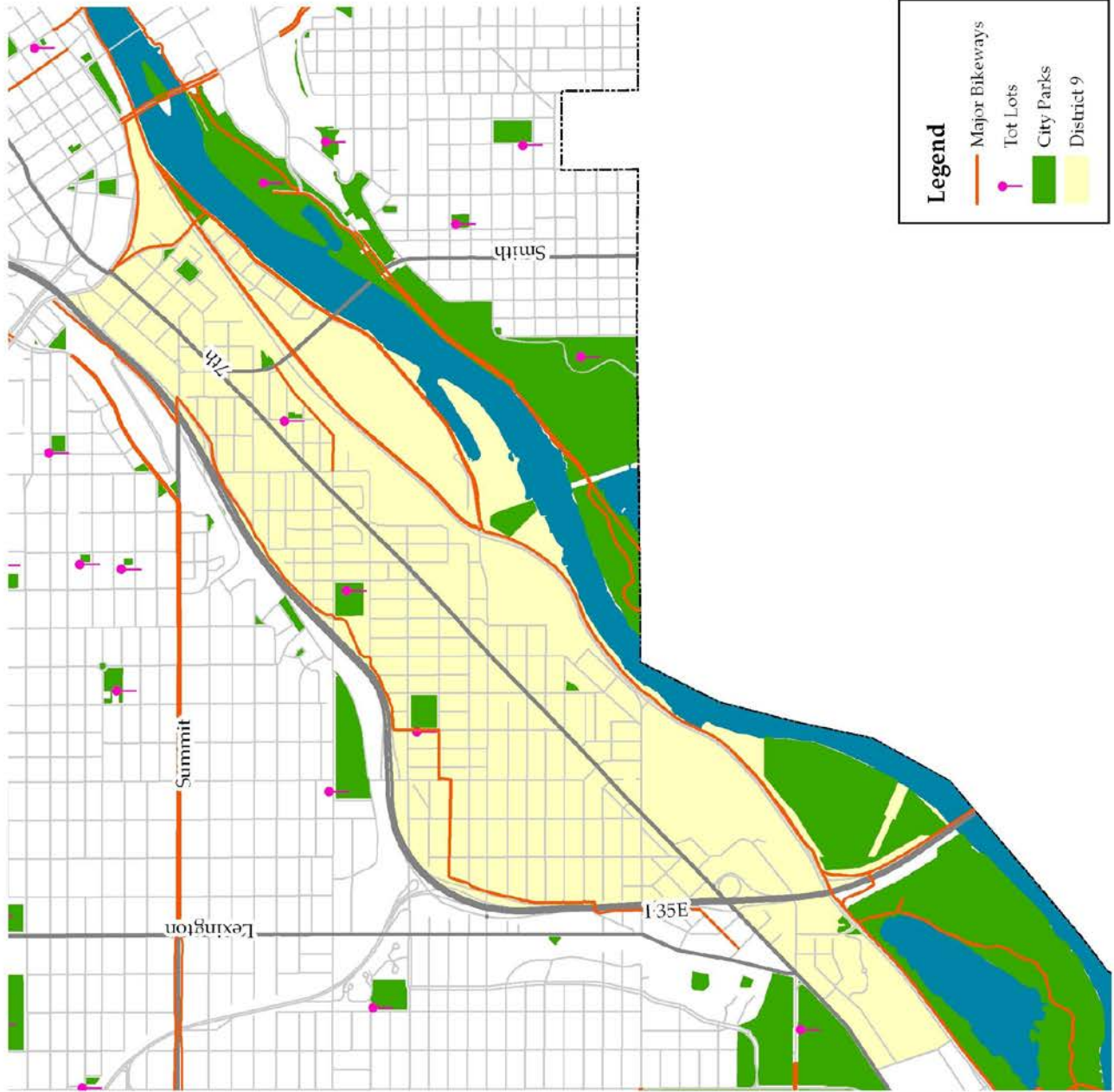


**Legend**

- ★ Designated properties

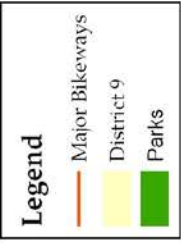
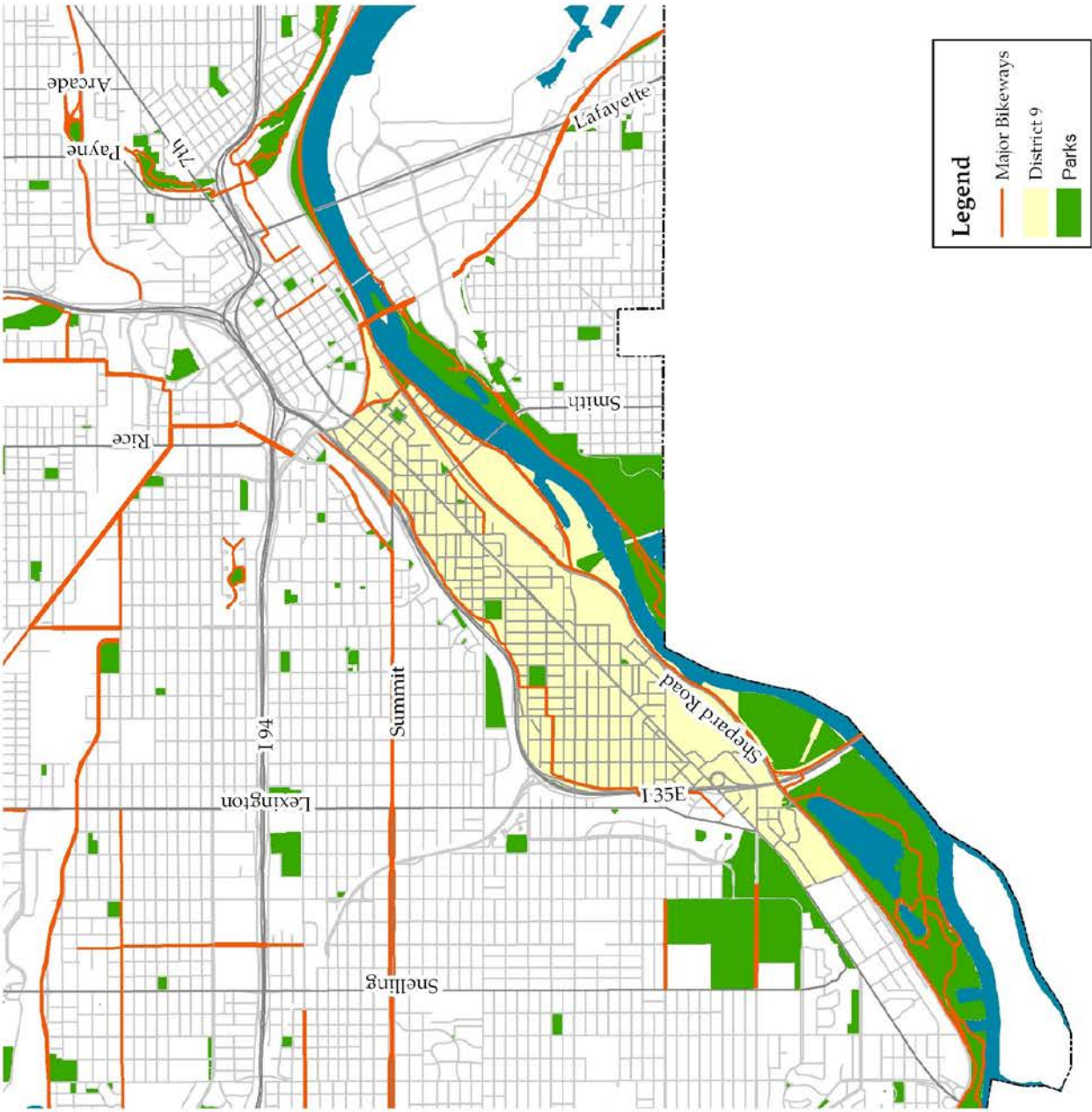
**Historic Assets**

- Irvine Park Historic District
- Potential district
- Major asset



**District 9  
Major Bikeways,  
Parks, and Tot Lots**





**District 9  
Connections to  
Major Bikeways  
and Parks**



Source: GIS Service  
Prepared by: PED Staff  
City of Saint Paul  
February 2008

# Appendix

Examples of successful and not so successful designs for commercial development are included in this appendix. By providing design examples mostly from the community, aesthetic preferences of West 7<sup>th</sup> will be clear to commercial owners as they work with the community and the St. Paul city staff in developing their properties. The guidelines will help to retain the uniqueness of West 7<sup>th</sup>. In general, these guidelines strive to support developments whereby adjacent buildings create a common street character (unifying) but also allow diversity and individual expression to avoid monotony (diversifying).

## Shop Fronts

Shop fronts should emphasize pedestrian scale along the sidewalk. There should be a strong sense of entry, frequently recessed, and windows should allow pedestrians to view inside. Windows should be kept at their original scale in old buildings. In the 1870's, innovation in storefront design was possible because of the development of large plate glass windows and cast iron for frames. Over time, many of these storefronts were bricked in and large signs attached to attract automobile drivers, ignoring the pedestrian shopper. Newly constructed buildings should have a similar proportion (width to height ratio) of the facades of adjacent buildings. The new facades should be consistent in the number of bays, size, and proportions and number of openings with that of neighboring buildings. And, new commercial structures should be generally consistent with the height and setback of adjacent structures.

### DO:



This block of buildings has maintained the entries and windows at the street level to appeal to shoppers. Keeping the original windows on the second and third floors, as well, maintains the structures' historic character.

### DON'T:



These pictures show buildings that have lost their original integrity through the blocking up of the store fronts, and elimination of original building details (such as cornices).



## Windows

Next to the material of a building, the size, shape, placement, and trim of windows constitute the major character-creating element of the building. In restoring an historic building, the practice of “blocking-up” or “blocking-down” existing window openings to fit a smaller than original window should be avoided because it does more than any other single element to change the basic appearance of a building—seldom for the better. Use of an interior sloped or boxed soffit can allow the window to retain its full height. In new construction, windows should provide character and evidence of human occupancy.

### DO:



In the first picture, windows were restored at the street level in this series of commercial buildings (however, cornices are missing).



In this newly constructed building on the left, appropriately-sized windows at the street level and in the second floor residential units are designed to be functional and reflect proportions of older structures.

### DON'T:



Windows in this large office building are monotonous and lack interest.



In the building to the left, original first floor windows were removed and replaced with windows that do not conform to the building's historic character. The rectangular horizontal orientation of the first floor windows is incompatible with the age of the structure. Finally, the shutters on the second floor are decorative, not original replacements, and would not cover the windows even if they were functional.



## Exterior Materials

Existing masonry should not be covered with other materials, but should be maintained in a manner that will preserve it. Waterproofing, water repellent coatings and sandblasting should be avoided as they can accelerate deterioration of the masonry. When tuck-pointing the joints, new mortar should duplicate the original mortar in composition, color, and joint profile. In new construction, materials should be used that complement other nearby structures that have kept their original materials, such as stone and brick.

### DO:



Maintenance of the original brick, stone and other materials makes this a successful historic structure.



Use of two color tones of brick horizontally delineating commercial and residential floors is effective in this new construction.



Use of blocks of material types creates visual interest and a sense of entry.



Use of brick and metal reflecting an industrial physical form is appropriate for this new construction in a former industrial area.

### DON'T:



The first floor of the building to the left was covered with materials inappropriate to the materials used in the original structure. The first floor has since been rehabilitated.

## Cornices

Cornices are projections from buildings that help to keep rainwater away from the front of the structure. They are most often at the top of a building, creating a “crown” effect, but they may also be above a lower floor as well, creating a more human scale to the building. Historically, each building usually had a distinct cornice style, and when combined in a streetscape they had a unifying effect. Cornices should be restored to their original appearance as much as possible. A new, sympathetic cornice could be used to replace a cornice beyond repair. Cornices can be applied to structures to help unify the façade of the streetscape when the building is out of character with the rest of the streetscape and when there is a break in the cornice flow.

### DO:



In the picture to the left, cornices were preserved on an historic office building. At the first floor level, the cornice contributes to making the building pedestrian friendly. At the top of the building, the cornice “finishes” the façade setting off the architectural elements of the structure. The topmost façade can also hide mechanical systems.



In this newly constructed building, a cornice at the top of the building is complementary to other cornices in the area.

### DON'T:



The cornices at the tops of the buildings are still somewhat intact, but the cornices above the first floor have been changed over time.

## Roofs

Roofs retaining their original shape should be maintained and preserved. Deteriorated roof coverings should be replaced with new material that matches the old in color and texture. Roofs can help in hiding mechanical systems from the street and from other viewpoints of the building. All architectural features which give the roof its essential character such as dormers, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, etc., should be preserved or replaced where necessary.

### DO:



Each of these structures has kept its original roof line and features, including a residential structure that is now used for commercial purposes.



## Graphics

The use of graphics on buildings should be kept in character with the age of the building. Signs should be pedestrian oriented in size while also allowing for identification from vehicles. Signs should be simple and bold, attracting the passerby, both driving and walking. Signs should not be above the sill of the second floor unless it reflects a different occupant than that of the first floor. Graphics painted or stenciled in shop front windows were common, historically. The clutter and chaotic diversity of signs can be a problem, and is compounded by large signs and lighting techniques. The resulting visual environment is extremely confusing to one not familiar with the area, making it difficult to find a particular store or place. Paper and vinyl signs attached to store windows and buildings should be discouraged unless they are for a temporary public notice.

### DO:



Each of these examples displays signage appropriate to the era of the building. The signage is clear, easy to read from the sidewalk and from a car, and the signage does not restrict views into the building. Note that graphics painted on an awning is also traditional for historic buildings. Lighting of signs should be similar to the period.



### DON'T:



The material, lettering, and size of the sign at the left is not complementary to the age and integrity of the building. Additionally, plastic display signs, backlit with fluorescent lamps are inappropriate for the majority of existing commercial structures, particularly for those buildings built before 1970.

## Awnings

Awnings provide shelter from the natural elements, and create a feeling of protection and human scale. People are drawn to walk beneath them and view shop front displays, an important factor in increasing sales. Colors are encouraged when complementary to the building. The size and scale of the awnings should be appropriate to the building openings and care should be taken not to cover any fine details on the façade. Awnings at the second and third floor levels should not be used unless documentary evidence shows that they existed on that building.

### DO:



The awnings in the three pictures on the left are simple, protective, and help to orient pedestrians to the buildings.



### DON'T:



While the awnings in the picture to the left are simple and colorful, they have no purpose in relationship to the function of the building.



The “awning” on the lower picture overwhelms the pedestrian scale at the sidewalk.

## Color

Color is an extremely important element in the street environment. Inappropriate colors and misuse of them can destroy the image of a building. Exterior colors should harmonize with other colors on the same building and with the colors on the street in general. Pastels were not a color tradition in the history of this community and should be avoided.

### DO:



The use of variations in color can break up a large structure into smaller units, making it more interesting.



Paint colors selected for wood components of buildings should complement the other exterior colors and be appropriate to the age of the structure. Historic color palettes are carried by most major paint manufacturers. The National Register of Historic Places can also provide resources.



Sometimes, a burst of color on a building or on awnings can be effective, such as on the buildings on the left.

### DON'T:



Given the number of bleak months during the year in St. Paul, plain concrete is not an effective color choice.

## Building Rear

The design guidelines focus primarily on the front streetscape of commercial buildings along West 7<sup>th</sup>. But, the back of buildings should not be neglected when shoppers have access to them from parking lots. Space for delivery and trash and recycling can be developed to allow room for pedestrians. Landscaping and identification graphics should be used to improve the rear of buildings. Additionally, because West 7<sup>th</sup> transects the street grid, the front door of many residences faces the rear of commercial buildings; for others, they may share an alley. Below are some examples of how businesses have dealt with “their backdoor” in relationship to their shoppers and neighbors.

### DO:



These three examples solve different parking and access situations, but each is attractive to shoppers and to neighboring properties.



### DON'T:



Many residential properties face this fence and the large expanse of asphalt. Additional vegetation would soften the view for the residential and pedestrian community.

## Street Furniture

Street furniture, both publicly and privately owned, provides necessary services to a pedestrian environment, as well as providing a continuous element on the street. Benches and waste receptacles should be carefully placed for convenience of use, and to not interfere with pedestrian walkways (maintain 6 feet clear for walking). Historic street lighting (lantern style) should be installed along the entire length of West 7<sup>th</sup>. Trees should be carefully placed so that they don't obscure business fronts. In the west end of West 7<sup>th</sup>, many more trees should be planted; in other areas, they should be used to fill in the massing of the facades. Parking lots should be screened by a fence or a masonry wall and landscaping. A standard form of street graphics, with a single lettering style and a limited and consistent number of colors, should be used for identification of the community of West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road. After the original design guidelines were adopted by the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation, such a graphic was integrated into sidewalk imprints and signage. This should be integrated into new developments to strengthen the identity of West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road.

### DO:



Street furniture can be used to accommodate and encourage healthy means of transportation. The bicycle rack allows for bikes to be parked without interfering with the sidewalk.



The trees were planted so that they do not block the entrance to this business. For additional greenery, large planters are used.

### DON'T:



The fence material is appropriate to the streetscape, but trees should have been planted behind the fence to soften this edge and to fill in the void between commercial buildings.



## Parking

Parking in West 7<sup>th</sup> needs to be addressed on a block by block basis. An area for potential parking development may be found in underutilized spaces behind existing commercial buildings. These areas have the potential of meeting the need for more and convenient parking. An alternative solution to parking is for businesses and adjoining properties to share parking when the uses occur at different times of day and different days of the week. For example, a retail store and a restaurant/bar have parking needs at different times of the day. A similar situation could occur with places of worship and restaurants. Another example for large parking is to create green space parking pods for overflow parking. Development of any parking should be coupled with an up-grading of the entire area including creation of a walk area having safe and attractive features, landscaping, benches, adequate lighting and well designed and effective signage for directions and identification.

### DO:



On the left, access to a row of parking is narrow and the parked cars are partially shielded by vegetation and neighboring buildings.



The picture on the left shows the parking solution at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis. Each green parking pod accommodates four additional parking spaces when necessary.



The view on the left is of parking located behind a commercial building, accessed through the alley. Decorative fencing and vegetation border the sidewalk.



In the picture below, an alley, access to underground parking and access to surface parking are each accommodated from a side-street. The way these are integrated provides a buffer between the back of residential structures on the left and the back of the commercial structure on the right.

### DON'T:



There is no delineation between the busy street, the sidewalk, and the parking lot for the businesses, making it a vast expanse of pavement. Wide driveways into the lot also contribute to pedestrian and automobile safety concerns.

## Scale

The relationship of the size of structures to one another and to pedestrians is a concern of “scale.” New construction does not have to be exactly the same size as adjacent buildings, but its height and setback should be generally consistent with that of adjacent structures. In summary, we want the commercial strip to be “pedestrian friendly.”

### DO:



The series of residential structures along West Seventh are each different in the number of stories, but they are acceptable in scale to one another because of the overall height of each.



The commercial structure on the left has incorporated full height windows on the first floor and trees, and shrubs along the sidewalk to make it pedestrian-scale friendly.

### DON'T:



The height of the structure towers over its historic neighboring buildings. It is too tall compared to its adjacent buildings. It is more similar to heights of buildings in the central business district of St. Paul.



The sidewalks along the two parking garages on the left are brutal environments for pedestrians. The building structures overwhelm the pedestrian scale of the street and provide no refuge for pedestrians, albeit one lone bus stop bench.

