

Hello,

I strongly support the Pedestrian Plan. I would also like to encourage efforts to educate property owners about what they can and cannot do on public sidewalks. The Plan mentions snow removal, which is critically important, but there are many other ways in which property owners make sidewalks impassable for some residents, particular those using strollers and wheel chairs. This includes parking on/across sidewalks, setting up sprinklers so that you have to leave the sidewalk or cross the street to avoid getting wet, allowing vegetation to block or narrow the passable portion of the sidewalk, using sidewalks for construction staging areas, and other problems.

I believe that public education could help a lot with this problem, just as public education has had a positive impact on drivers stopping for pedestrians.

Thank you.

Mark Thieroff
1438 Chelmsford St.

I'm amazed and embarrassed that a city who's crime has increased at a ridiculous rate is willing to put something as silly as a pedestrian plan together rather than spend money to keep their citizens safe. This current government would rather run citizens out of town by raising taxes and spending money on frivolous things like this plan.

Raise taxes! Hell ya! Who cares if they get robbed or worse. We just want your money!

You're greedy beyond belief!

Louise Ricci

I am thankful to the City Council for making pedestrian safety a priority in St. Paul. My family and I love to walk whenever we can. I am interested in what measures might be taken improve pedestrian safety on West 7th Street. The intersections are at funny angles and the crosswalks are not very well marked. I don't know if you've spent a lot of time walking on West 7th, but cars don't tend to pay a lot of attention to walkers or bikers, and crossing, especially at night when visibility is lower, is scary.

I was thankful that the SPPD stepped up enforcement last summer to encourage drivers to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks, but it seems like more should be done along West 7th specifically. With so many attractions on West 7th, I would like to see more pedestrian bump outs or signage. It would be great to get a lighted crosswalk or other traffic controls to help pedestrians stay safe when they cross West 7th.

Thank you,
Jake Scott
333 Oneida St.
St. Paul, MN 55102

Hello Saint Paul City Council,

I'd like to point out that the pedestrian plan has no clear breakdown of costs for sidewalk construction, especially for labor, the contracting process, or material costs. There is no comparison to other municipalities across the country for sidewalk construction costs. Surely basic research by the City's cost engineer should be able to provide a breakdown of these costs.

My suggestions include the following:

- * Determine if low-density cellular concrete can be used to drastically lower the cost of sidewalk construction.
- * Specialized forms can be deployed with small crews to easily cast entire blocks worth of sidewalks.
- * Use competitive bidding processes open to contractors across the country to lower costs and speed implementation.

Addressing these topics in the pedestrian plan would help justify to the public why City Council supports particular sidewalk construction practices.

Furthermore, I cannot express how strongly streets like Maryland Avenue need to be converted from 4-lanes to 3-lanes (two straight, one turning) AND that the City's speed limits should be reduced to 20 mph outside of all residential streets, including Ramsey County roads. These initiatives should be addressed in the plan.

Thank you,
Anthony Levine

Thank you for your work on the plan and incorporation of comments on it. This is important work which can help Saint Paul live up to its motto.

I have two comments addressing 1) default Don't Walk on green light at some intersections and 2) motorists not stopping until they are fully through the the crosswalk.

Default Don't Walk on green

I'm concerned that intersections with high pedestrian traffic that have recently been renovated seem to default to the Don't Walk symbol when the light turns green *unless* a pedestrian hits a button before the light turns green. I am confused as to why the light doesn't default to Walk when the light turns green.

I have found this to be the case at Lexington intersections with Grand, Summit and Marshall.

Many motorists use the Don't Walk sign as a cue that they have the right of way over pedestrians when turning (even when the pedestrian has the green light). Many pedestrians (minors and adults) are not accustomed to hitting the pedestrian button to cross, and if they do not do so before the light turns green they must wait until the light cycles to red and back to green.

This seems to be to be a very car-focused crosswalk strategy where cars are assumed to have the right of way unless explicitly claimed by pedestrians.

Motorists not stopping until they are fully through the the crosswalk

There are several intersections and alleyways on Lexington Avenue where motorists will pull fully up to Lexington (over sidewalk or crosswalk) while looking the other way making it very dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists who choose to use the sidewalk.

For example, motorists heading west on Grand Avenue that want to turn right onto northbound Lexington will often pull fully through the crosswalk while checking traffic to their left. This happens mostly when the east/west traffic has a red light. Because the building on the northeast corner of that intersection greatly reduces visibility to pedestrians traveling south on the east side of Lexington. Even motorists that stop before the crosswalk in this situation will frequently never look to their right (north) because they are fully engaged to their left (south) looking for their opportunity to turn right on red.

Cars pulling onto Lexington from alleyways also frequently display this behavior.

I'm not certain what educational, design or enforcement strategies can address this, but hope that these types of behavior and their ilk will be addressed by the pedestrian plan initially and as it matures once adopted.

Thank you!

Dear Council Members:

As has been stated many times, but completely ignored, teaching and training and influencing pedestrians (and bicyclists) to step in front of oncoming traffic will never be safe.

Let the accidents, injuries, and fatalities continue.

Dave Hafner
1037 Marnie St. S.
Maplewood, Mn. 55119

P.S. Do not let my address reduce your consideration or concern for my statements. I was born and raised in St. Paul. And I currently work in St. Paul, so I have a strong concern for the safety of our citizens.

I read through this quite awhile back and what kept coming up is who's going to pay for this? What has changed in the budget that makes this desirable and supportable? Who's going to police it? We have reported walk issues for years on West 7th without any noticeable results. When will the forestry department get on board and quit planting trees so close to the sidewalk that it's inevitable that they will push the sidewalks out of the way? I'm tired of walking on the sidewalk and an electric scooter comes flying down the sidewalk expecting me to move out of their way? Sometimes two abreast. I think the ideas are wonderful but a plan is not a project and unless its supported, funded, and policed, it's just another waste of time.

Scott Entenman

I strongly support the proposed plan - in particular, the Infrastructure and Maintenance Priorities. Be sure to prioritize wheelchair users as well.

Focus more on infrastructure than driver education. As a pedestrian, I obviously find it much safer to cross when there are no vehicles. I will never trust drivers to stop. You will never be able to train every driver, and drivers make mistakes. I have been rear-ended in my vehicle three times in my neighborhood when I stopped and someone behind me did not.

A problem I don't see being addressed is the issue of vehicles turning at intersections. Turning right on red can make for a constant flow of traffic on a street. Turning right on green interferes with pedestrian crossing at that intersection (e.g. turning from northbound Snelling onto eastbound I-94 before a soccer game, vehicles never have the opportunity to turn).

K. Coad
Mac-Grove

Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan Written comments

Submitted: 5/31/2019

Nathaniel (Nate) Hood
(612) 237-7614
St. Paul, MN

I am very supportive of the goals and tactics outlined in the Draft St. Paul Pedestrian Plan. As a former-Transportation Planner and current Community and Economic Development Planner for Hennepin County's Community Works Division, I thought I would add some comments (and additions) that are based on my experiences working in the field over the last decade. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these ideas.

Please reach out if you have any questions or if you are unable to access the attached PDF

–Nate Hood

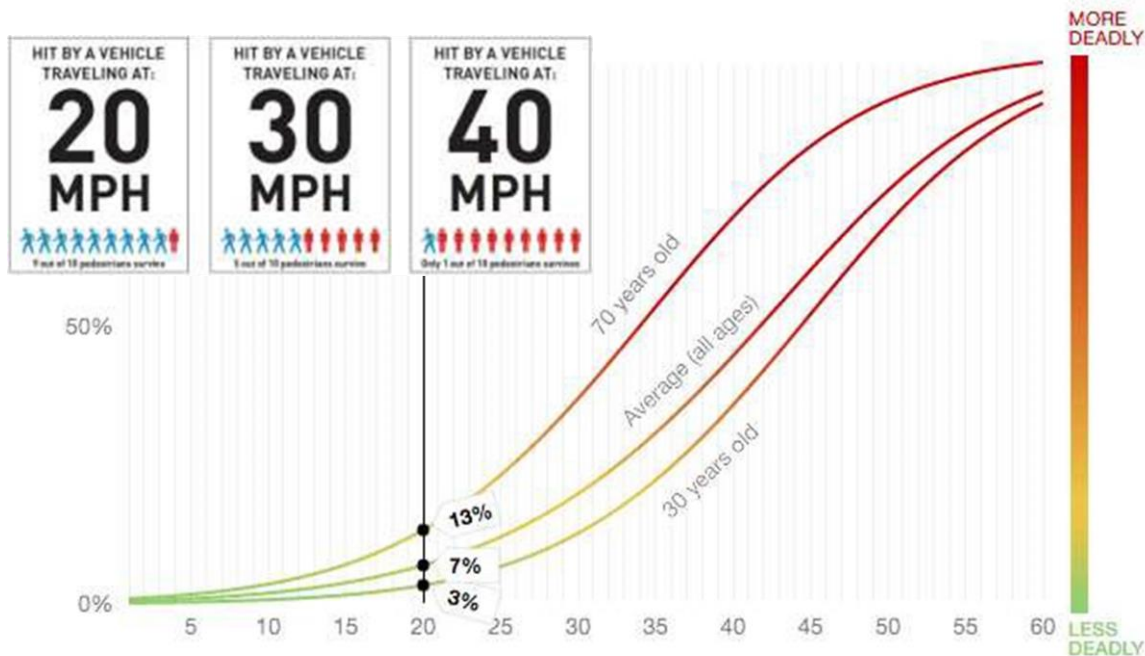
Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan Written comments – Nathaniel (Nate) Hood
Submitted: 5/31/2019

I am very supportive of the goals and tactics outlined in the Draft St. Paul Pedestrian Plan. As a former-Transportation Planner and current Community and Economic Development Planner for Hennepin County's Community Works Division, I thought I would add some comments (and additions) that are based on my experiences working in the field over the last decade. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these ideas. Please reach out if you have any questions –Nate

1. Aim to reduce vehicle speeds citywide through engineering

The Chance of Being Killed by a Car Going 20 mph

Roll over the curved lines to see the risk at any speed



While reducing vehicle speed is mentioned under “Actions” in Table 3, I believe it warrants being mentioned as a Goal in the Plan. One of the biggest factors in pedestrian collisions – and the severity of those collisions – is vehicle speed. Our city should aim at a design speed to 20 to 25 miles per hour for residential areas and business nodes, and 30 miles per hour on arterial streets.

2. Actively de-prioritize Level of Service (LOS) at intersections
 - a. Optimizing signals to improve traffic flow may sound like a ‘neutral’ or objective goal, but it makes crossing the street more difficult and makes walking less desirable. For example; signal updates along Ford Parkway have reduced vehicle delay – but as a resident who bikes, walks to the bus, and visits local shops, it has become increasing

harder to cross the street and I am now required to wait longer to do so.

Additionally, newly optimized signals have contributed to more difficulty in crossing at non-signalized intersections. De-prioritizing LOS and prioritizing safe crossings should be an aim of the goal – and it would be a bold, progressive move for the City to take up this initiative.

3. Actively reduce street and lane widths at each opportunity through reconstruction
4. Actively reduce lane widths at each opportunity through striping as part of the mill and overlay program

5. Allow staff flexibility to experiment with temporary installations of traffic calming efforts that improve pedestrian crossing experience
 - a. For example: the successful and widely-praised temporary delineator curb-extensions installed last summer (2018) at the intersection of Cretin Ave and Highland Parkway
 - b. *Note:* please bring those back this summer, it'd be much appreciated!

6. Prioritize removing on-street parking (*if it exists on both sides*) instead of tree removal
 - a. Trees are a common conflict in the construction of new sidewalks. Upon full street reconstruction, if such a conflict exists in residential areas with low on-street parking utilization, the city should prioritize sidewalks over on-street parking.

A recent example of this conflict is the recent Stonebridge sidewalk dispute in the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood. Under my proposed policy, if trees are desired to be kept by the neighborhood, a sidewalk would be installed by decreasing the size of the residential street to include only one side parking.

This policy would accomplish three goals: 1) eliminates sidewalk gaps, 2) reduces street size (which has been shown to effectively slow average vehicle speed, and 3) helps preserve mature trees which can add to quality of life.

7. Prioritize loss of on-street parking during conflicts of bikes and pedestrians
 - a. A common conflict in street design is between bicycles and pedestrians. For example: Should the city install curb extensions if it blocks the potential development of a proposed bike lane?
 - b. In these situations, the city should consider the removal of on-street parking to accommodate both. It is recommended the city conduct a parking utilization study prior to implementation of fixed infrastructure that would conflict bikes/pedestrians.

8. Pedestrian Improvement Flow Chart Creation
 - a. While I do not see this specifically in the Plan, if the city aims to create a "Pedestrian Improvement Flow Chart" to determine which improvements are warranted – I advise the city to make it "suggestions" (and not a guarantee of an improvement). I believe

the standard model of “flow chart” improvement leads to a poor allocation of resources.

b. I recommend implementing improvements strategically and not through “neighborhood feedback” – This is an equity issue on who has access to resources, time, social and political capital, etc.

I recommend also basing much of the decision of the Flow Chart as “destination” based and not “peak crossing warrants” based. The City of Richfield is exploring a “destination” based crossing improvements model and I believe it’s the direction St. Paul should be going. I am very supportive of the goals and tactics outlined in the Draft St. Paul Pedestrian Plan. As a former-Transportation Planner and current Community and Economic Development Planner for Hennepin County’s Community Works Division, I thought I would add some comments (and additions) that are based on my experiences working in the field over the last decade. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these ideas. Please reach out if you have any questions –Nate

Hello:

Electric scooters on sidewalks are an increasing danger to pedestrians. Users do not stay on the street and do not signal their presence to walkers.

Scooters are a danger to those using them as well. Just this weekend I saw a mother with her daughter both on one scooter.

Younger riders are joy riding and going too fast. Scooters seem to be mostly for fun not actual transportation.

Please keep the number of scooters available in the city as low as possible.
We walkers thank you.

Karla Hollinshead
2114 Pinehurst Avenue

Dear Council members,

I'm writing in support of the pedestrian plan, since I can't make it to the hearing on Wednesday, June 5.

If I were there tomorrow afternoon, I would speak in favor of sidewalks being put in place where there are none -- I walk to work every day and 2/3 of my route has no sidewalks. I would speak in favor of snow and

ice removal being shifted to city responsibility AND being improved -- while the city does a good job of snow removal for cars, it has not yet fulfilled its responsibility to bicyclists, and we have a long way to go to reach snow removal equity for pedestrians. And I would speak in favor of every possible action the city can take to make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians, including all traffic-calming measures, restrictions on vehicles over 2 axels (buses and other infrastructure exempted), reduced free parking, and road diets on nearly every street over 3 lanes. When you design from a pedestrian-safety perspective, you make streets safer, calmer, and better managed for everyone, whether they are walking, cycling, or driving.

Thank you!

Nicki Jones
765 Hampden Ave Apt 337
St. Paul, MN 55114

Council Members,

I'm unable to leave work early to be at the 3:30 p.m. public hearing today for the Pedestrian Plan, so I wanted to send my comments to you for the public record. (I do hope that 3:30 p.m. public hearings do not become a trend.)

I'm excited that St. Paul will finally have a plan for the transportation mode everyone can and does use, a plan for the most vulnerable travelers in our city. I remember attending a meeting more than 4 years ago organized by community members to hear from a planner at Minneapolis about their pedestrian plan. After that meeting, many of the neighborhoods passed resolutions through district councils requesting a pedestrian plan. I count the development of this plan as a grassroots success. Please put all your support and power as council members behind its prompt and thorough implementation.

I do have some concerns about how aspects of the plan may be implemented. Snow and ice removal for pedestrians needs to be a higher priority, with the city looking at possibilities beyond just "compliance with sidewalk shoveling ordinance." We know that as our climate changes and our winters warm, our heaviest snow storms will become larger. These snowfalls absolutely break anything resembling a fragment of a pedestrian network long after major streets are clear. It's unacceptable to ignore how those traveling outside vehicles struggle through uneven mountains of snow and ice at curb cuts, where plows have pushed snow onto previously cleared sidewalks, and at bus stops.

I was dismayed recently when Public Works surveyed residents about the possibility of plowing alleys. This would continue to prioritize those with personal vehicles and then the movement of trash. The city should not be prioritizing the movement of trash in the winter over that of people who travel outside vehicles. If we can talk about potentially plowing alleys, then we can talk about potentially having the city clear sidewalks and curb cuts and bus stops. We should be taking a broader look at how larger snowfalls with climate change will impact how our city functions, and those core functions include people walking.

While the High Priority Areas for Walking Investments make sense for infrastructure improvements, people need to travel on foot and by wheelchair throughout the city, and this structure doesn't make as much sense for prioritizing snow and ice removal at an operations level. One example is how the A Line stops, a significant investment in arterial bus rapid transit in our city, aren't all included in these high priority areas. Pedestrian connections to any transitway investment should be consistently prioritized throughout its length, whether it's rail or bus.

Equity is an important consideration in the plan, as it should be. But don't lose sight of the overall context and need for transformational change in our values as shown through our transportation system. The

biggest structural inequity in our transportation system is auto dependency, as identified in a recent report from the University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies on equity in transportation. It's not just a question of if we build sidewalks in areas that have seen disinvestment and have higher need. Equity also a question of if we prioritize people walking throughout the entire city, not just certain areas, over those who drive personal vehicles when trade offs need to be made. These priorities play out in every day decisions by the city on providing safe and direct pedestrian access through areas with construction, snow and ice removal, and other maintenance and operations work. Designing for pedestrians first with a focus on safety, as our draft comprehensive plan calls for, is important but alone isn't enough; we also have to keep that focus throughout operating and maintaining the system citywide.

I'm also concerned about what I've heard about the Stop for Me campaign shifting focus to citing pedestrians this year in its enforcement efforts. I'm concerned this will result in uninformed or inaccurate direction from law enforcement, perpetuate victim blaming of pedestrians and the inequities of a system that prioritizes drivers and auto-dependency, and possibly create racial disparities. I have been involved with the Stop for Me campaign in the past as a resident, both on the steering committee and as an event volunteer. As a resident, I've seen a difference in my ability to more safely cross the usually terrifying four-lane street to my bus stop after the work that has been done with Nichole Morris and the U's HumanFIRST lab, which has resulted so far in higher rates of drivers stopping for pedestrians around the city. This has been important work that I appreciate.

In the binary structure of blaming drivers OR pedestrians used by law enforcement, those who design the transportation system are left unresponsive, when a lot of pedestrian behavior that many might want to blame is created by a system that wasn't designed to adequately accommodate how people travel on foot or in wheelchairs. People take the most direct route, and those who travel on foot or by rolling are the most vulnerable and sensitive to distance, weather, and physical conditions. Pedestrians are the most vulnerable travelers. There is no 50/50 equally shared responsibility between drivers and pedestrians when drivers have the weapon and pedestrians are simply people with soft tissue without any metal shields. The city needs to move toward a Vision Zero and Safe Systems approach instead of blaming people walking.

Please support the Pedestrian Plan today with your vote and in all the days ahead with your power as Council members to push its rapid implementation. With the climate crisis, we don't have time to wait. We need everyone to have the choice to safely walk for transportation now.

Thank you.

Heidi Schallberg

706 Mississippi River Blvd S #204

55116

Sent: Wednesday, June 5, 2019 2:35 PM

To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council <Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Mehmet Berker <mehmetikberker@gmail.com>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: St. Paul Ped Plan

Dear City Council,

My husband and I recently bought a duplex on Rice St and Hawthorne Ave in the North End. He grew up in St. Paul, and when we started looking at the location, told me about the time he walked from his house on Selby all the way to Arlington to get to summer school as a kid.

In any event, our street, Hawthorne, is directly behind a shopping center and there is no sidewalk on it. Also, Rice St has no crosswalk across it from Maryland north to Arlington, and

keep in mind that Rice and Maryland are bloated two-lane roads thanks to the County, and crossing at the intersection of Rice and Maryland is not very safe, even with the full signal.

We have the honor of having two families as tenants. Our building houses eight young children. We want them to be able to go Sylvan Park, Trout Brook, and other local destinations safely and also in an enjoyable way.

Please pass this ped plan so that we can get on the road to a safer St. Paul. We are more than happy to pay a higher assessment to have a sidewalk built on our side of Hawthorne Ave!!

Thanks,

Madeline Brozen and Mehmet Berker
Property owners, 1234 Rice St

I can't be at the hearing today but here are my comments on walking problems where we live on the east side, six blocks east of Lake Phalen -

1. The Rush Line bus will go in 80 dwellings back yards and wreck the present Vento Trail that is mostly used by walkers of all ages and abilities. It is the North Star route, could have a dirt path along it for easy walking, could attract tourists and could be turned into a Regional Park to connect Swede Hollow with places farther north if the bus is moved to the #2 option that actually would get us to jobs, BRT on the new 35E lanes. Then add a Snelling-like fast bus to 35E in addition to the present local 64, and upgrade the 64 stations with the stations being planned right now for the Rush Line.
2. With Frost Lake Park closed there are none near by so the Park Plan I saw says we are to use it and then the bike path around Lake Phalen to get to the new park building on the west side of the lake but that is impossible for kids to do as it is and will be worse with it as a 24 hour dedicated bus lane.
3. The Rush Line wrecks our great walking path but also goes right through Endangered Rusty Patch Bumble Bee Habitat. See the Fish and Wildlife Service endangered Rusty Patch red and yellow areas at the end of my attached Wildlife Corridor essay - the bees are mostly left in Saint Paul and nearby, not out state except some along the river. So change the Rush line to 35E, make the Vento Trail a Regional Park tailored to saving the Rusties by keeping all the native plant green space that is there and improving it by removing Buckthorn and other invasives. I have seen 9 of them in 3 years at the SE corner of Phalen and East Side Heritage Park where the bulldozing of the green space happens for the bus lanes. For every improvement for walking the green space should be designed for the plants Rusty Patches like. They also need big patches of flowers blooming all year long and to have big woods nearby. See the US Fish and Wildlife Service web site and talk to Marla Spivak at the U of M Bee Lab.
4. A recent street and sidewalk improvement was done with a traffic circle near our house to Lake Phalen. But the sidewalk cement is very slippery when wet! You have to walk in the street! No one knows how to take care of rain gardens so they didn't do that option which is too bad for walkers, clean water at Phalen, and the pollinators.
5. Please include my attached essay in my comments. It is complicated how we get rid of green spaces and so complicated to not do that when adding public transit including walking paths. Walking paths like the Vento Trail are great Wildlife Corridors and are required for healthy plant and animal gene flow.
6. I think the city council voted for Saint Paul to be a Pollinator Friendly city. This should be included in all plans including walking paths.

Thanks for listening!

Kathy Sidles
1380 Winchell St.
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Metro Urban Wildlife Corridors are in Trouble

Kathy Sidles, 01/13/2019, east side Saint Paul resident kesid@aol.com

BACKGROUND

I walk to Frost Lake Park to see ducks and warblers, and bike down the Bruce Vento Bike Trail to hear birds, in the east side of Saint Paul. I collect trash and pull garlic mustard along the trail and in neglected green spaces above the buried Lake Phalen creek and sewer pipes. I count birds and bumblebees as I work and enter data into ebird.org and bumblebeewatch.org. Chimney Swifts nest in apartment chimneys, feeding above Phalen Corridor as the creek bed it used to be, and I count them. I organize the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in this area – we always see Eagles and Hawks and sometimes an Owl. I enjoy living within and not instead of nature here on the east side of Saint Paul.

It's not just me! Neighbors created the Big Urban Woods (1) at the Phalen Boulevard yard waste drop off site, a flower garden kept up by a neighbor is at the rail road berm along Maryland, a group teaching Native American traditions is at another woods, and behind apartments are dirt people paths to green spaces and across rail road right-of-ways.

As a high school student in southern Iowa I learned the importance of natural area corridors – wildlife genes have to flow for a healthy population. As I pick up trash and pull invasive Garlic Mustard I see how a wildlife corridor works close up.

Though not a biologist, through reading (2) and observation I have learned that insects, the birds and plants that depend on insects for food and pollination, and other plants and animals, need particular and connected habitats full of native plants to thrive.

PRESENTSITUATION

I see good natural area upkeep near the Bruce Vento Trail. Saint Paul Parks employees burn Ames Lake, East Side Heritage Park, and shores of Lake Phalen.

There are problems elsewhere where little or no maintenance is done. Native plant wetlands are filling in with burdock and spotted knapweed. Storm ponds and the Vento Trail are being mowed and taken over by lawn grass. Train wheels have been fixed (3) so, though fire-resistant oak and prairie grass remain, wheels

no longer set the right-of-ways on fire and Spotted Knapweed and Garlic Mustard invade. And with no formal pick up plans, trash blows to and builds up in these natural areas.

There is a plan to upgrade Minnesota wildlife corridors and some money to do it. According to the 2007 state corridor map (6) the only complete corridors in the Twin Cities are along the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. There is a corridor on the map through Washington County and along the Saint Croix. But the map shows large areas with no corridors in dense urban neighborhoods where most families live.

A highlight is the presence of Endangered Rusty Patch Bumble Bees in the Metro area, especially in and near Saint Paul! (21) I found 9 of them along the Vento Trail. So far they are not found in large numbers outstate. They need native flowers blooming throughout the season so their presence means we still have large areas of quality greenspace. The Fish and Wildlife Service has marked areas where their presence must be taken into account for development. ((20) and map below). There are three other endangered species in Ramsey County, two in the Mississippi and one in the Saint Croix.

But at least three large development plans for the east side of Saint Paul affect the urban corridors and the Rusty Patches. See maps below for their locations -

9. There is an approved plan for the Rush Line bus lanes (5), which removes much of the Vento Bike Trail and its natural areas. The plan could be changed so the Vento Trail is a Regional Park and Route 64 buses are upgraded like the Snelling buses to go to Bus Rapid Transit on 35E. This would help save the Rusty Patch, improve transit to jobs throughout the metro for the people along Maryland and White Bear whose ridership numbers were used to justify replacing the trail - and not just go to White Bear Lake with few jobs after an additional bus transfer.

10. The Port Authority is planning for an upgrade of the Rail Road so it goes into park land at Pig's Eye. There are alternate solutions for this proposal also. This area is part of the same east side Saint Paul Rusty Patched critical area and involves barge traffic on the Mississippi. There are other species of concern that state maps say have been seen in the park and endangered species in the river.

11. The metro area is planning for a large population increase. Saint Paul's plan for this so far doesn't include improved wildlife corridors, from looking at its map.

(4) The plan adds denser industrial, mixed use and public transit corridors and removes green spaces from the map other than city and regional parks.

These future city and transit plans make the lack of protected and enhanced continuous wildlife corridors through the city even worse. Neighborhood Chimney Swifts and Grackles that are listed in the 2014 State of the Birds as "Common Birds in Steep Decline" will continue as well as we could contribute to the extinction of the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee. And most importantly for the long term health of all of us, local people lose many of their nearby wildlife corridors and parks that enhance and connect isolated urban natural areas.

NATURAL AREA FUNDING

There is money to preserve and upgrade Minnesota natural areas. From what I could find online there is about \$46 per person available each year - roughly \$11 from gambling and \$35 from our 3/8 percent sales tax (7).

About \$13 million of this money goes each year to metro wildlife corridors. This is about \$4.50 per person per year in the Metro area. It is called Metro Conservation Corridors - MeCC (8). It is run this year by the Minnesota Land Trust and DNR. Even with sales tax and gambling money available in Minnesota the MeCC website says 60 acres of natural areas are being lost in the Metro

area each day! (8). If these numbers are right we should look at if giving \$46 and getting \$4.50 back is enough to protect our quality river town wildlife corridors.

WHY ARE NATURAL AREAS STILL BEING LOST?

None of the neglected natural areas I volunteer in – the Bruce Vento Bike Trail, buried Phalen Creek and sewers, or Frost Lake Park - receive this money that I know of. They don't meet the criteria of being a Regional Park or have not applied for it. Railroads, the many east side cemeteries, private land, and Highway right-of-ways also don't qualify and are not seen as the urban wildlife corridors they could be.

One of the goals of the sales tax money is to increase access to natural areas by young people and the diverse populations of Minnesota (9). The highest concentration of households with children, lower income people, and diverse

populations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and maybe the state, is the east side of Saint Paul (10). But no gambling or sales tax funds can be used for natural areas in large parts of it. And from what I have seen development proposals either don't have to look at loss of wildlife and wildlife corridors, and the public input isn't asked for until planning is completed. Also the new Saint Paul development plan map doesn't include wildlife corridors or non-park green spaces like the old one did – just high density industrial. These same things metro-wide could be a cause of the removal of natural areas that MeCC is worried about.

WHAT CAN BE DONE? HOW CAN WE ALL HELP?

Here are twelve ideas to stop removal of urban natural areas, enhance them, and increase use and understanding of them by young and diverse metro area people:

1. Saint Paul and other cities long range development plans could include no loss of green space and higher density development on already paved/developed areas. All development proposals such as the Rush Line and Pig's Eye rail upgrades should include an assessment of natural areas lost and degraded and impacts on endangered species before project approval. For example, environmental assessment of the Rush line bus lane replacement of the Vento Trail is being done after approval. (5)
2. Support neighborhoods along river corridors that are included in recent MeCC plans (11) to bring some public dollars back to urban neighborhoods. Expand the plan to neighborhoods that are green interpretive deserts.
3. All parts of the metro area can have a protected neighborhood corridor. Give Rail Roads (3), highway right of ways, buried stream and waste water green spaces names, protect them, pick up the trash and enhance them.
4. The Bruce Vento Bike Trail could become a Regional Park and enhanced for wildlife instead of a bus lane (12) (13). The high density of diverse families along it would then have access to Regional Park programming. As with the Snelling buses, public transit to all parts of the metro can go where the riders are - White Bear, Maryland, English, Phalen Boulevard to BRT on 35E (5). We need both trails and public transit to compete with the suburbs for business and homeowners and prevent urban sprawl.

5. Volunteer homeowner's yards can be a permeable corridor (2) related to one of the major corridors. A discount can be given on sewer bills for people who participate since less water runs into sewers. Audubon has an App and booklet to help people find the best plants for their yard.
6. A Park Ranger can float among the corridors and block clubs with the goal of educating diverse and young populations (13). Audubon members can help with bird watching programs.
7. Assign a DNR school forest to each metro school and a coordinator. The Big Urban Woods is a school forest for three schools. Audubon chapters are already organized to help schools but this way have a woods to learn in.
8. Audubon can use 70 years of metro Christmas Bird Count Data and eBird data to pick declining species to enhance the wildlife corridors for. (14) Otherwise migrant warblers, ducks, Grackles, Woodpeckers, Owls, Kingbirds and Hawks will lose their urban stop-over points and homes.
9. Ramsey County has reached the maximum amount of water new development can put down storm drains (15). The new storm ponds taking the place of sewers can be maintained for native plants, frogs, woodchucks, and with standing water become stop overs and hotspots for birds.
10. The State of Minnesota can work with the Minnesota Soybean Association (16) and cities to come up with a plan to remove Buckthorn. Soybean aphids overwinter in our Buckthorn then fly south and eat soybean leaves, so farmers have to spray pesticides. North Saint Paul has removed all its Buckthorn (17) and other cities can too.
11. Nectar and milkweed plants for Monarchs and native plants for migrating birds can be put on and near Highway 35E, an official Monarch (18) highway, and other urban roadsides. Highways connect with Minnesota and Mississippi flyway Birding Trails (19).
12. We could plan to maintain our many railroad corridors as good natural areas for hawks, turkeys and other grassland birds. Otherwise oaks and prairies still there from when the wheels set the corridors on fire (3) go away.

CONCLUSION

The recent designation of the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee as Endangered and finding the majority of them in the Metro areas presents some good luck and challenges to us as we try to protect them and bring them back from the brink of extinction. And in doing so we can set an example of how to live within nature so

other species don't become endangered. As an urban area we have a chance to bring our diverse greenspaces (Railroads, Cemeteries, Storm Ponds, yards) back up in quality as they were in their original state. This mindset and public input needs to be in place at the beginning building projects and as we maintain our greenspaces.

We are lucky to have gambling and sales tax money for natural area enhancement. But thanks to the work of birds and other plants, insects and animals Wildlife Corridors pay for themselves. The top predator Hawks and Owls keep rodents in check. Chimney Swifts eat mosquitos. Native plants direct water down their roots and reduce flooding and replenish Aquifers. Pollinators and birds

spread natural areas and keep them healthy for free. Well-kept green spaces in all neighborhoods encourage private dollars to recycle neighborhood housing. Local wildlife corridors allow households to enjoy nature without paying for a trip up north. In a lot of ways natural areas pay for themselves.

Local urban corridors with interpretive programs for families will allow more diverse populations and young people to learn about and experience natural areas in their own neighborhood. They will grow up knowing how to support natural areas state-wide. And we will be living within and not instead of nature.

(See Rusty Patch, Saint Paul planning maps and MeCC corridor map below) Kathy Sidles,
Saint Paul Audubon member, Saint Paul Parks volunteer kesid@aol.com 651-771-7528
(evening)

- (1) Big Urban Woods website:
<https://sites.google.com/site/bigurbanwoods/home>
- (2) Portland, Oregon Wildlife Corridor Plan:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265085554_Wildlife_corridors_and_permeability_-_a_literature_review
- (3) Trains wheels setting right-of-way on fire, studies of native plants in right-of-ways (notice Ramsey County rail right-of-ways have never been studied):
<file:///C:/Conservation%20Committee/Minnesota%20Railroad%20Right%20of%20Ways.pdf>
- (4) Saint Paul Land Use draft plan: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/2040-comprehensive-planning/land-use-chapter>
- (5) Rush Line dedicated busway website, and alternative Rapid Bus Lines: www.rushline.org and <http://www.startribune.com/more-rapid-bus-lines-planned-for-twin-cities/474438883/>
- (6) Minnesota Wildlife Corridor maps:
file:///C:/Conservation%20Committee/MN_BirdCorridorsMap040611.pdf
[file:///C:/Users/KathyS/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/EO3Q2MT/Metro_Greenways_Seven-County_Twin_Cities_Region_Minnesota%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/KathyS/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/EO3Q2MT/Metro_Greenways_Seven-County_Twin_Cities_Region_Minnesota%20(1).pdf) Figure 6
- (7) Web site with estimate of gambling and sales tax money Environmental Trust Fund (lottery funds) \$35.3 million Trust Fund, \$13.3 million Game and Fish, \$13.3 million Natural Resources, total \$62 million each year: <file:///C:/Conservation%20Committee/Annual-Report-FY17%20lottery.pdf>

Outdoor Heritage Fund 33% estimated at \$80 million, 14.25% parks and trails, 33% clean water total ~\$195 million each year:

<http://www.legacy.leg.mn/about-funds>
- (8) MeCC web site, urban corridor dollars and acres being lost:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/metroconservationcorridors/index.html>

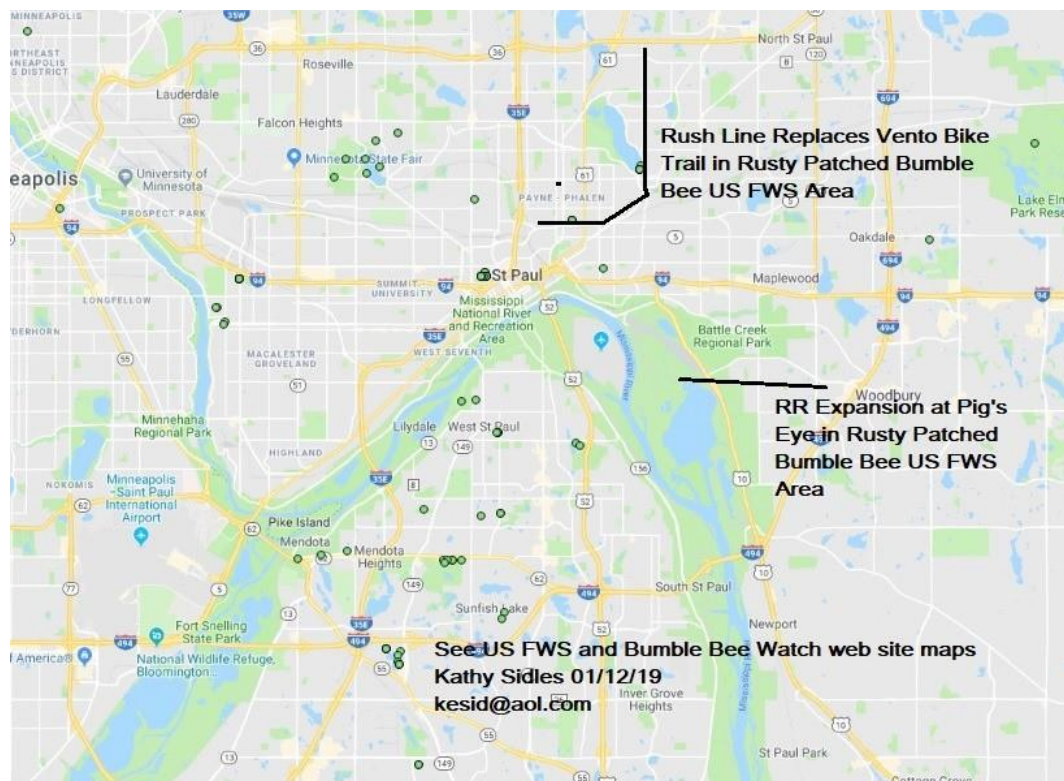
- (9) Salestaxandgamblinggoalswebsite:
http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/nrplanning/community/nrplanning_guide/handbook.pdf
- (10) Concentration of school aged kids:
<https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/children-families/>
- (11) MeCC plans for neighborhoods along corridors:
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/maps/mecc/mapper.html>
- (12) Example of an urban wildlife regional park and trail in Saint Paul:
<https://www.trailink.com/trail/samuel-h-morgan-regional-trail/>
- (13) Gateway/Browns Creek is assigned a DNR Naturalist (see Directors):
<http://gatewaybrownscreektrail.org/>
- (14) eBird and Christmas Bird Count data: www.ebird.org and
<http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/Historical/ResultsBySpecies.aspx>
[21](#)
- (15) Ramsey County and Saint Paul storm water runoff reduction plans:
<https://www.minnpost.com/line/2016/12/rain-resource-st-paul-innovates-shared-sustainable-stormwater-management>
<https://www.rwmwd.org/explore/management-plan/>
- (16) Soybean aphids overwinter on Buckthorn, Soybean Association:
<https://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/soybean/pest/soybean-aphid/>
<https://mnsoybean.org/msga/>
- (17) North Saint Paul Buckthorn City Code - Buckthorn must be removed:
[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Minnesota/north_saint_paul/cityofnorthsaintpaulminnesotacodeofordin?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:northstpaul_mn](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Minnesota/north_saint_paul/cityofnorthsaintpaulminnesotacodeofordin?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:northstpaul_mn)
- (18) 35E Monarch Highway, and roadsides for wildlife:
<http://blog.nwf.org/2017/06/interstate-35-monarch-butterfly-highway/>
<https://www.wired.com/2015/04/roadside-utility-corridor-habitat/>
- (19) Bird Migration Highways:
<https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/explore/travel/birding-flyways.php>
- (20) Rusty-Patched Critical Areas in the Twin Cities, and threatened and endangered species in Ramsey County:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/mcbs/maps.html>

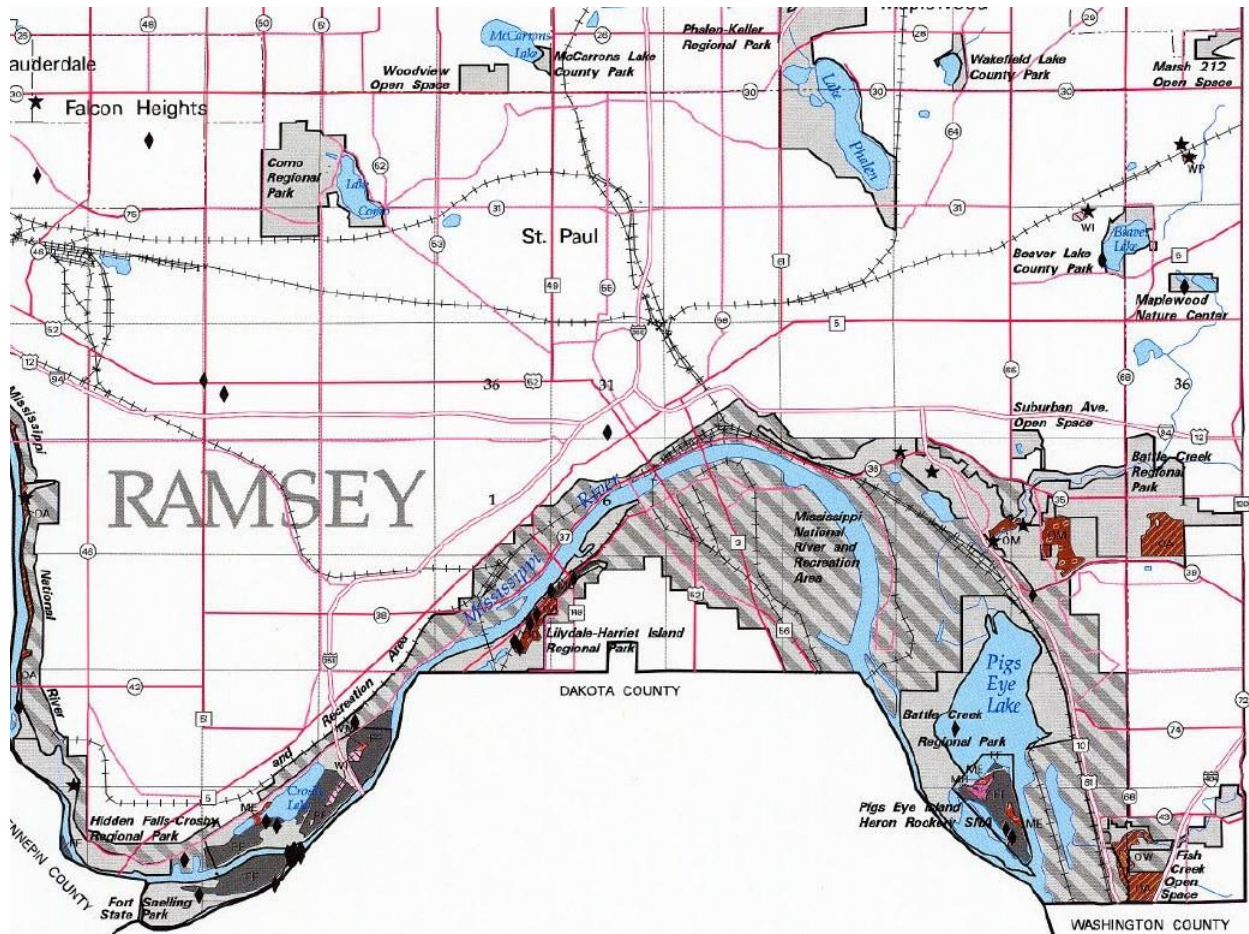
<https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/app/#/bees/map>

[illegible]

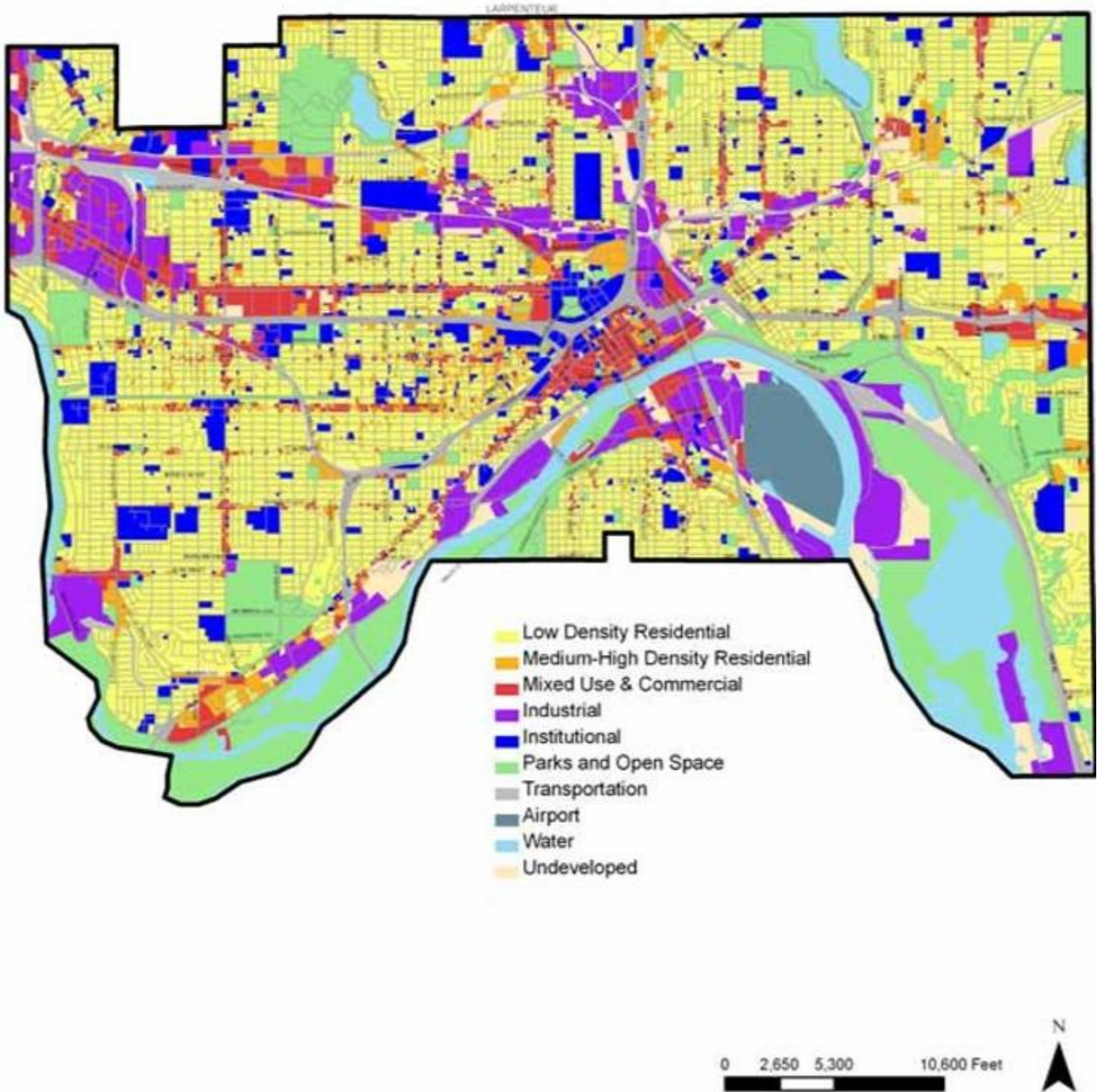
RUSTY PATCH SIGHTINGS IN MINNESOTA/SAINT PAUL AREA



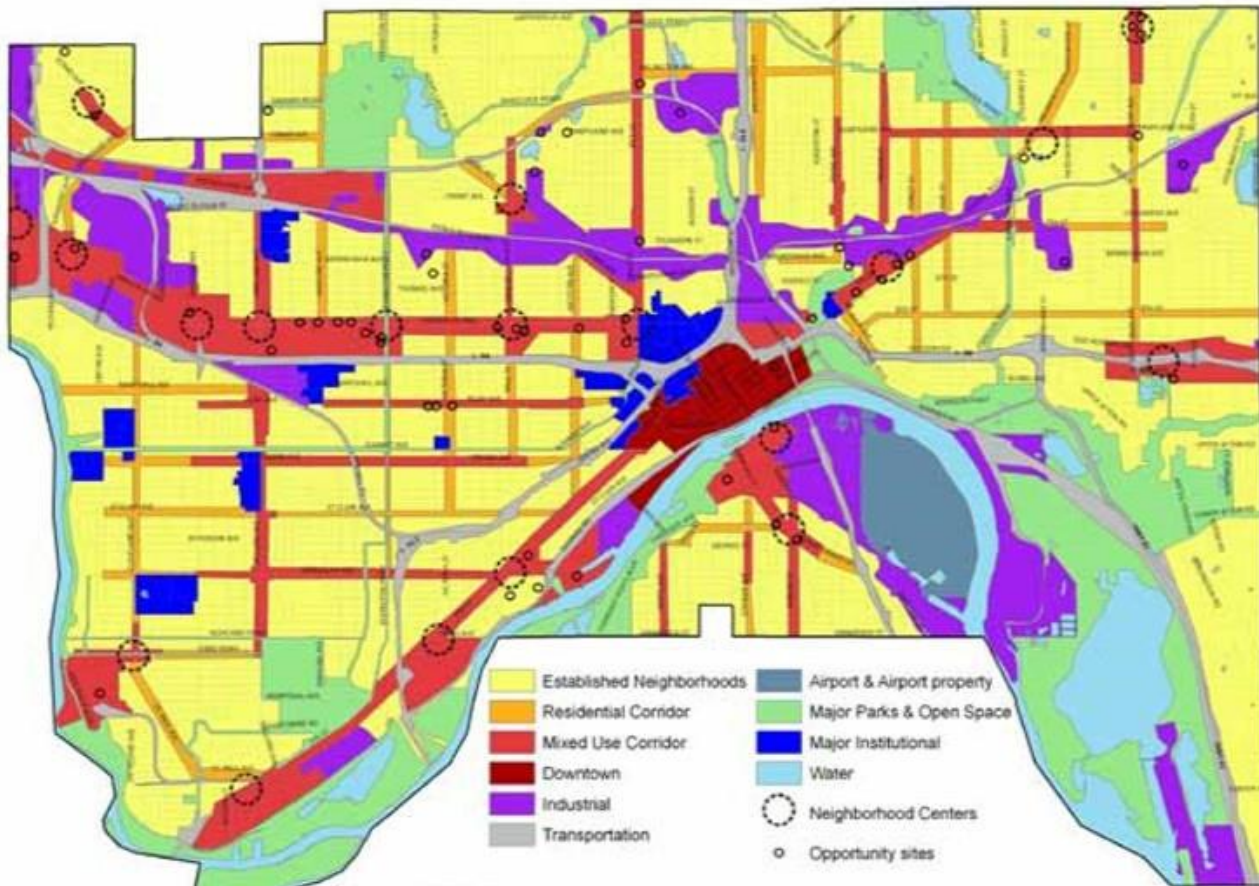
RAMSEY COUNTY RARE PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES



PRESENT SAINT PAUL LAND USE MAP – PERMEABLE GREEN SPACE



FUTURE SAINT PAUL LAND USE MAP (PROPOSED): NOT PERMEABLE



NOTES FOR THE GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP*

1. This map provides a general framework for accommodating the growth of future housing, businesses, services, and open spaces in Saint Paul. Adopted summaries of small area plans and district plans provide more specific guidance on future development in the areas of the city where they apply.
2. This map does not reflect current zoning, but it provides general guidance for the rezoning of property.
3. The "Saint Paul Land Use Table in 5-Year Stages" provides the range of residential densities allowed in each land use category, as well as guides acres in each land use category. Commercial and office uses are included within Mixed Use Corridors, and Downtown.

4. The table entitled "Saint Paul Residential Uses by 2050 Land Use Category" includes data demonstrating how the city will meet its household forecasts.
5. All categories of Land Use map contain parks/open space, recreational facilities, trails, institutional uses of less than 25 acres, and small scale commercial uses.
6. Current and proposed regional parks are described in more detail in Appendix B of the Parks chapter of this plan. Parcel level additions to the regional park system are shown on Figure 25.
7. Parcel-specific boundaries of Hoffman Field and the St. Paul Downtown Airport are shown on this map.

MECC WILDLIFE CORRIDOR PROJECT AREAS – MISSING IN CITIES

