

VII. Implementation Strategies

Even the best plans are of little value if they are not implemented. Implementation of the opportunities outlined in this document is dependent on proactive leadership of the community and an orchestrated collaboration between the City officials and departments, property owners, the business community, civic organizations, and developers.

The Second Street Corridor has been evolving into its current pattern of development for nearly 120 years. Even with a strong commitment, it will take a number of years before many of these recommendations take full shape. Although the City's role in this process is an important one, the success of this effort will not be possible without the full support and participation of landowners, citizens and the development community.

A concerted effort has been made throughout this project to involve a broad cross-section of the community. Business owners, residents, elected and appointed officials, and community leaders have been invited to provide input and guidance. Their participation has improved the study and their continued participation and support will be critical in sustaining the community's commitment over time. The optimum results for this effort will only come if this study is also embraced by the private sector and if it guides both public and private investment over time.

The approach to redevelopment of the Second Street area involves four interdependent components that lay the foundation for long-term successful community-based economic and physical redevelopment. The four components include:

- Design and planning tools
- Redevelopment strategies
- Community organization and promotion
- Public improvements

Following is an outline of these components and associated recommendations. An outline of the associated actions steps and responsible entities follows each of the four components of the strategy.

A. Design and Planning Tools

A primary goal of the Second Street Corridor Framework Plan is to create a "sense of place" and an attractive focus to the City of Rochester. The design of the streetscape, buildings, signs, open spaces, and landscaping must all work together to reinforce a strong, cohesive and memorable identity. This section focuses on establishing the design and planning tools recommended to foster a built environment that reflects the values and expectations of the participants in this planning process.

Recommendations:

1. Adopt this document as an addendum to Rochester's Comprehensive Plan.

This design framework plan should be adopted as part of the Rochester Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's central statement of policy and could be amended by reference to this document without having to make extensive changes to the land use, transportation, parks, and other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan is intended to be flexible and could be reviewed and amended as circumstances change.

2. Define and Adopt Design Guidelines

Overall improvement of the Second Street Corridor area must go beyond the improvement of the street rights of way. Design Guidelines should be refined to reinforce the character of the built environment desired by the community and conceptually illustrated in this document. The guidelines refer to public and private improvements, renovations, and redevelopment of buildings within the Gateway, St. Marys, and East Districts. The purposes of the guidelines are to:

- Foster high-quality architecture and site planning consistent with the vision desired by the community
- Maintain an urban development pattern
- Protect public and private investment in the corridor

Guidelines, by definition, are qualitative design goals for new and existing buildings. Guidelines set forth the generalized components that will foster the desired character for the corridor. The guidelines should be reinforced through specific design standards defined in an amended zoning district for the corridor. Design Guidelines should address:

- Site planning
- Parking lot edge treatments
- Commercial and residential building types
- Franchise architecture
- Façade treatments
- **Distinct modules**
- Ground level expression
- Signs
- Wayfinding system
- Roof design
- Sustainable/green energy saving building practices

Distinct Modules: In architecture, a unit adopted to regulate the dimensions, proportions or construction of the parts of a building.

Site Planning

The placement of buildings along the Second Street Corridor has a profound effect on the character of the pedestrian environment. Buildings should be placed close to the street, with primary entrances on the street. Buildings should be placed on corners at street intersections, to emphasize and define those intersections. Parking areas

should be placed behind or to the side of buildings. In the Gateway and St. Marys District, future buildings should be setback and/or arcades utilized.

Parking Lot Edge Treatments

Parking lots are a necessity in most mixed-use areas in the United States. They can, however, break up the continuity of an otherwise unified sculpted area. Parking lot frontage on pedestrian streets should be reduced, and their edges and interiors should be extensively landscaped. A combination of edges, ornamental railings, bollards, trees, and other methods should be used to buffer parking lots from pedestrian spaces.

Commercial and Residential Building Types

Buildings should address the street, particularly at intersections, providing unique corner treatments, windows, and access points to create interest at the street level. Multi-level and mixed-use buildings also add significant benefit to the corridor, as their mass helps to define and frame the street. Buildings fronting on Second Street should be a minimum of two stories or 32 feet in height and a maximum of six stories or 84 feet in height. The plan recommends concentrating density along Second Street and stepping down toward the residential district along First Street. Building heights should be carefully sculpted to maintain solar access to neighboring properties, particularly on the north side of the block in the East District.

Residential buildings may take different forms, such as townhomes and condominium or apartment buildings. They should address the street, be constructed of high-quality materials, and possess various roof lines and a clear but approachable differentiation between public and private space. They should also include interior parking and plaza spaces in order to provide residents opportunities to access the buildings and relax outdoors sheltered from the street.

Franchise Architecture

Chain establishments typically desire a specific architectural motif, in order to emphasize consistency in their network and attract regular customers. In many cases, this standardized architecture conflicts with the urban character desired by the community. There are ways, however, of incorporating the franchise's desired signage and even some building treatments, while still encouraging the basic principles of commercial building design listed above. Franchise establishments should still address the street with windows, prominent entrances, and unique corner treatments.

Facade Treatments

Commercial/mixed-use should have a well-defined base, middle, and top. The base or ground floor should appear visually distinct from the upper stories through the use of a change in building materials, window shape or size, an intermediate cornice line, awning, arcade or portico, or similar techniques. The base or ground floor of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale, including texture, projections, doors, windows, awnings, canopies, or ornamentation.

Distinct Modules

The primary facade(s) of buildings 40 feet or more in width should be articulated into smaller increments through use of different textures, division into storefronts with separate display windows, ornamental features such as arcades or awnings, or by division of the building mass into several smaller segments.

Ground Level Expression

Ground level expression refers to the way in which a building meets the street. This building/pedestrian interface is a crucial part of urban design and should provide visual interest, opportunities for sociability, and overall pedestrian safety and comfort. As stated above, windows and clear entrances enhance a building's appearance on the street, and may be further augmented by awnings, pocket plazas, outdoor cafe seating, and plantings.

Signs

Commercial districts, with their many businesses vying for attention, can become cluttered with signs. Signs should address the scale of the pedestrian, be simple in materials and message, and enhance the overall street environment. This is not to say that signs cannot be colorful, unusual, or noticeable- in fact, interesting signs can add a memorable dimension to a commercial area. In essence, signs should effectively communicate the character of the business they advertise without overwhelming the pedestrian streetscape.

Wayfinding System

It is our understanding that the City is currently developing a wayfinding system for the downtown area to direct visitors to public facilities, parking, amenities, and places of interest. As a main entry into the city, Second Street could also be a primary corridor to demonstrate the new wayfinding system.

Roof Design

A building's roof line can establish its individuality and interest within the context of a commercial area, and variety in roof lines from building to building can add visual interest to a mixed-use area. Some techniques that add interest include varying heights and cornices within an otherwise unified design scheme, using roof line changes to note entrances or commercial bays, and establishing contrasting roof lines at street corners.

Sustainable/Green Energy Saving Building Practices

New and renovated buildings should be encouraged to incorporate more sustainable and green energy-saving building practices, including low-impact stormwater treatments such as green roofs, micro basins, rain gardens, street tree filters, permeable pavements, and depressed parking lot islands, as well as cradle to cradle materials and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems. The City should explore adopting minimum standards and incentives to encourage the development of "green" buildings without forcing excessive costs or other burdens upon developers, building owners or occupants.

3. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to Include Form-Based Zoning Districts

If design guidelines can be visualized and defined in quantitative terms, they can be expressed in a form-based zoning code. A form-based code is the most effective and legally sound way for City staff to administer design standards. Definitive standards, developed in response to reasonable goals and objectives adopted as part of the comprehensive plan, can discourage legal challenges and better withstand them as well.

City staff would most likely be the entity reviewing development applications and administering the design standards. In discussions with the staff, the recommended approach is to:

- a. Create entirely new form-based districts for the corridor.
- b. Refine the design guidelines outlined above and include as design standards in the new districts.
- c. Consider including incentives for developers to meet the design criteria such as a streamlined review process and/or reduced parking requirements if public

parking is available, shared parking agreements are in place, on-street parking is available, or transit passes are provided to employees.

B. Redevelopment Strategies

To benefit all of the stakeholders, residents, shoppers, businesses and investors, the Second Street area must have a solid economic foundation. It is important that any redevelopment serves to strengthen the economic viability of the area to ensure its competitiveness into the future.

Recommendations:

In order to maintain a solid economic base and be prepared for changing market conditions and potential redevelopments, a long-term strategy should be considered. The strategy should include the following:

1. Define the City's Role in Redevelopment: Historically, the City has encouraged the private sector to take the lead on redevelopment efforts in terms of acquiring and assembling parcels, relocating businesses, clearing and preparing sites, and other components of the process. The City should take the lead in all public infrastructure improvements. In addition, there are key opportunity sites within the Gateway District, in which the City should consider participating more significantly. Recommendations include:

- a. The City should first develop an official map and have parcel owners dedicate easements for the right-of-way as redevelopment occurs.
- b. The City should secure and hold for the purpose of furthering the plan, the Mn/DOT-owned lot at the southeast corner of Second Street and the east frontage road.
- c. The SuperAmerica site has a significant impact on the redevelopment potential and vision for the corridor. For redevelopment to occur as recommended in the framework plan for the Gateway District, the City may have to play a more significant role and consider securing an option on the SuperAmerica site to hold for purposes of assembly.

2. Define a Redevelopment Strategy for Key Sites:

Each targeted site has a unique set of ownership, physical, financial, phasing, and

other development parameters. The City should work with its legal, planning, and engineering staff to refine building and site value assessments and the City's role in redeveloping, financing, acquiring, and marketing key sites.

3. Consider Redevelopment Financial Incentives such as Tax Increment Financing and /or Tax Abatement: It is our understanding the City of Rochester has not used TIF for blight removal other than in the downtown. A fair amount of redevelopment has occurred without the use of TIF dollars.

4. Assemble Parcels Where Possible: The City should work with individual property owners to enable the City to have the first right of purchasing parcels in the redevelopment district. This will give the City more control over assembling parcels where possible and the type of redevelopment to occur on each site.

5. Solicit Development Proposals: The City staff, working with a potential advisory group, should begin the process of soliciting proposals from developers for key sites. This will entail defining the City's role in the redevelopment of key sites, writing a request for proposals, selecting a preferred list of developers to submit proposals, and defining a process for final selection of the developers and preparing development agreements.

6. Other considerations include:

- a. Define business retention and recruitment issues.
- b. Provide current businesses with tools and the environment to sharpen their competitiveness. Consider including incentives for developers to meet the design criteria such as a streamlined review process and/or reduced parking requirements if public parking is available, shared parking agreements are in place, on-street parking is available, or transit passes are provided to employees.
- c. Provide the City with tools to recruit new businesses and institutions to diversify and promote a solid economic base.
- d. Establish tenant improvement incentives and low-interest loan programs for buildings, signs, and site improvements.
- e. Build public private partnerships.

C. Community Organization and Promotion

No revitalization effort can succeed without a strong organization to support and guide it. The redevelopment strategy should build public/private partnerships and consensus among all the important players, property owners, bankers, civic groups, government, merchants, and individual citizens, to ensure that the redevelopment benefits from a community-wide vision of the future.

Currently, there are no civic organizations or public bodies involved in the management, promotion, and economic development of the Second Street area. A key to long-term success will be organizing a diverse group of people to achieve the work tasks, build public/private partnerships, foster ongoing leadership, program events and promotions, and provide a voice for the area.

Successful redevelopment requires coordinated marketing projects. The businesses within the Second Street Corridor should present a welcoming, consistent image from simple graphics to sophisticated events and festivals.

Recommendations:

Within the next year, it is important to maintain the interest and momentum generated as part of the planning process and establish the organizational and planning tools to foster involvement over time. These short-term steps include:

1. Establish the “Second Street Alliance” A group modeled on the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) could be formed to see that redevelopment occurs according to the goals and objectives of the plan, to act as an advocacy group for the area, and to coordinate promotional campaigns, redevelopment, and public improvement projects. The Alliance could be a public/private nonprofit corporation composed of a broad range of people representing property owners, business leaders, bordering neighborhoods, the City, and others with a direct stake in enhanced business and economic development conditions within the Second Street Corridor. As with the RDA, the Second Street Alliance could be a membership organization with a paid executive director and a special services district to help meet its goals.

2. Define Roles in Redevelopment The proposed Second Street Alliance should determine its’ role in redevelopment such as, offering financial incentives, assembling properties, soliciting development proposals and marketing each site.

3. Implement Simple, Short-term Seed Projects such as:

a. Interim streetscape Improvements

- Seating nodes and benches
- Gateway landscaping, street trees
- Public art
- Interpretive monuments/linear library
- Bicycle facilities

b. Banner designs, flower plantings.

c. Create a website, newsletter or column in a local newspaper, and/or poster to educate and promote the framework plan and overall objectives.

d. Establish annual special events such as a farmers’ market, arts and music festivals, and fundraisers for improvements or maintenance.

e. Celebrate all accomplishments.

D. Public Improvements

The public improvements associated with the Second Street Framework Plan will act as a catalyst for reinvestment and represent a positive step toward ensuring a vital long-term business climate and livability for the area. This section includes action steps that should be considered to integrate the improvements into an ongoing and community-building strategy, and to gain the most benefit from transportation, streetscape, and other public improvements.

1. Coordinate Objectives with all City Departments

The planning, engineering, and inspections departments, as well as a potential advisory group, should refer to the guidelines and associated public/private improvements and amenities when reviewing individual development proposals within the study area. Each proposed development should comply with the guidelines, reinforce the desired character of development, and contribute to creating a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly, memorable, and economically viable place.

Developers should work with City staff and refer to the Framework Plan prior to generating design concepts, in order to better understand how their property fits into the context of the framework plan and expectations for public/private amenities.

The guidelines for site planning, building placement, parking lot edge treatments, and landscaping should be referenced during the site design phase of the project. Developers should also discuss the options for their particular site with City staff to determine if parking lot edge treatments will be constructed as part of the site redevelopment or a larger public street improvement project.

2. Place Projects in the Capital Improvement Plans: City departments should refer to the components in this manual to coordinate, design, and budget for capital improvements and to define public/private partnerships to finance and maintain public realm projects. City departments should refer to the designs for the individual areas as a basis from which to develop more detailed plans.

Project Phasing

Phasing of redevelopment is a dynamic process and is somewhat dependent on the issues and timing associated with each property and business. If the City is proactive in making redevelopment occur, as recommended by the task force, and is prepared to seize opportunities as they are presented, then the City can exercise more control over its future. The project area includes relatively few but large parcels and street projects that lend themselves to distinct separate redevelopment projects. Following is an outline of a preliminary phasing plan:

Potential Public Improvements

Short-term (Next 2-5 years)

- a. For the Gateway District, the City should first develop an official map and have parcel owners dedicate easements for the right of way as redevelopment occurs.
- b. Refine interim and long-term streetscape improvement plans.
- c. Implement interim streetscape improvements, including:
 - Seating nodes and benches

- Crosswalk improvements
 - Gateway landscaping, street trees
 - Wayfinding signs
 - Bus shelters/schedules
 - Distinctive pedestrian-scaled lighting
 - Bicycle facilities
 - Demonstration/testing area for long-term streetscape improvements -could be done along with a redevelopment project
- d. Initiate a Streetcar Feasibility Study: A Streetcar Feasibility Study should be conducted to lay the groundwork for transportation improvements that are designed to meet the long-term objectives of the 2nd Street Corridor Framework Plan and the City of Rochester as a whole. Much can be learned from the experiences of numerous North American cities that have functioning streetcar systems or new lines under active planning. The City of Minneapolis recently completed a streetcar feasibility study which offers a model that the City of Rochester could consider for defining planning criteria, implementation steps and funding mechanisms. The City of Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study <http://tcstreetsforpeople.org/sites/tcstreetsforpeople.org/files/StreetcarFinalReport.pdf>

Mid-Term (3 to 15 years)

- a. Detail design of street and streetscape improvements.
- b. Implement road and streetscape improvements:
 - Medians
 - Turn lanes
 - Roadway lighting
 - Subway/tunnel crossing
 - Distinctive sidewalk paving
 - Transit improvements (improved bus facilities/streetcar)
- c. Implement remaining short-term improvements,

- d. Update regional traffic growth modeling studies and projected volumes on Second Street. Consider ongoing research regarding the effect of mixed-use development on regional vehicle miles traveled and traffic generation.
- e. Identify and evaluate short-term and long-term public projects to relieve traffic use/congestion of Second Street Corridor (i.e. Civic Center Drive).

3. Coordinate Staging and Funding Sources: The City should share the redevelopment and public improvements objectives with other agencies and private entities that may be potential sources of funding.

4. Coordinate Staging and Funding with Redevelopment Projects: Each major development parcel has associated street, streetscape, open space, and utility improvements that should be coordinated to reinforce the objectives of the Framework Plan. Many of the associated public improvements can be phased in as the private parcel develops. A determination of which improvements are public versus private, and where the funding comes from, will have to be made for each element on a site-by-site basis.

5. Define a Maintenance Strategy for Each Project: The long-term maintenance tasks and associated costs are a critical consideration for the success of the public amenities. A strategy should be created that defines a funding source, such as a special maintenance assessment district that assigns responsibility for maintenance of the various streetscape or park components. Responsibilities may be delegated between the City staff, property owners, volunteers, or a private contractor.