



Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota:  
Redevelopment project files

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## NARRATIVE REPORT OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Project UR Minn. 1-2

### 1. Scope of this Report

This report reviews the main factors governing the proposed redevelopment plan 1/ and furnishes a number of supporting exhibits. Separate reports were prepared on: Relocation Plan, Financial Plan, Acquisition Procedures, and Development Standards. The order of contents of this report is as follows:

1. Scope of this report.
2. Review of selection of project area.
3. Review of condition of area.
4. Review of selection of land uses.
5. Basis for the land use pattern.
6. Jurisdiction of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority in development of new land uses.
7. Staging of clearance and development.
8. Marketability of land for new uses.

### 2. Review of Selection of Project Area

Four major considerations govern the selection of this area for redevelopment: (1) The City Planning Board and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority have determined that this area requires immediate redevelopment, the only alternative to its present condition. 2/. (2) This area is vitally related to the adjacent Capitol Approach development 3/ which is also a slum-clearance project, and which thereby creates a healthy core for extended redevelopment.

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1. See Exhibit A, Site Photos and Proposed Site Plan
  2. See Exhibit B, City Planning Board Recommendations
  3. See Exhibit C, Capitol Approach Plan

Project UR Minn. 1-2 is designed as a counterpart of the Capitol Approach, joining in blight elimination, creation of new major streets and park area; the Capitol Approach offers direct benefits to Project UR Minn. 1-2. It provides new civic character in place of former blighted private land uses, provides major streets beneficial to the projects, and contributes substantial, measurable improvement of marketability of land for new private uses. (3) Approximately one-half of the project area is needed for certain public uses (public school site, Rondo Parkway, park) regardless of private redevelopment potentialities; these uses are now made possible by large scale planning, acquisition, and relocation under Title I 4/. (4) In drawing boundaries of the project area, it was necessary to create buffer zones of public land use such as Rondo Parkway and the school site 5/ .

### 3. Review of Condition of Area

The characteristics of all parcels to be acquired in this project have been tabulated and summarized as follows: 6/

(a)	Size of project, 78 acres	508
(b)	Total number of buildings: (excepting accessory buildings)	508
	Residential	472
	Mixed commercial-residential	22
	Commercial	12
	Churches	2
(c)	Types of wall construction:	
	Frame	248
	Brick	21
	Stucco	22
	Asphalt siding	143
	Other shingling	71
	Sheet Metal	1
	Concrete block	1
	Stone	1
(d)	Total number of dwelling units:	911
(e)	Vacant lots:	39
(f)	General condition:	
	Good	26
	Fair	252
	Bad	230

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4. See Exhibit D, Statements of Participating Public Agencies  
 5. See Exhibit E, Boundary Map  
 6. See Exhibits F and G on housing conditions in area

- (g) Percentage of buildings suffering environmental nuisances: 7/ 94%
- (h) Building coverage of land:
- |                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| 30% lot coverage | 245 |
| 60% lot coverage | 248 |
| 90% lot coverage | 16  |
- (i) Percentage of buildings over 60 years old 74%

In addition to the foregoing indication of poor residential conditions, the area presents a serious tax deficit to the community. A study was made of the area bounded by Rice, Fuller, Farrington, Carroll. It cost \$371,800 in city expenditures and county welfare expenditures in 1950, but is repaying only \$64,350 on these portions of the 1950 tax rate; thus leaving a deficit of \$325,450 for the single year 1950, equivalent to \$106 per person residing in the area. For comparison, Ward 7, an old but stable residential area lying west of the St. Paul Cathedral, bounded by Pleasant, St. Clair, Hamline and Carroll, cost \$2,586,800 in city expenditures and county welfare expenditures in 1950; it will repay \$1,464,700 on these portions of the 1950 tax rate. The resulting tax deficit of \$1,122,100 divided by the Ward 7 population, comes to \$30 per person.

#### 4. Review of Selection of Land Uses

Three types of land uses are proposed 8/, each occupying approximately one-third of the project: (1) public use, (2) private residence, (3) restricted commerce. Each of these uses meets a community-wide need; at the same time

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"Environmental Nuisances": Source of information is field inspection. Environmental nuisance is charged where there is a very obnoxious single nuisance or combination of minor nuisances of the following types:

- (a) Heavy or fast through traffic adjacent to residence,
- (b) Lack of nearby play space off the street,
- (c) Lack of light and air, and fire hazard caused by crowding of structures,
- (d) Obnoxious adjacent commercial uses,
- (e) Disrepair or inadequacy of street or storm drainage,
- (f) Prevailing noise, odor or air pollution,
- (g) Prevailing civil insecurity

8. See Exhibit H, Redevelopment Data



these uses reinforce each other in the site plan. There will be created an integrated neighborhood including residence, school, park and shopping. The excess capacity of the parkway, the park and shopping will not be detrimental to project residence.

Feasability of Residential Land Use Residential new use in this project is supported by the following considerations: (a) St. Paul's prevailing house shortage, and the displacement of some 800 dwelling units by project clearance, (b) the desirability of this location for residence to accommodate white collar workers employed downtown and in the State Capitol offices 9/, (c) public understanding that the tax levy for redevelopment will result in replacement of demolished housing.

Extensive research in the demand for centrally-located residence indicated the specific dwelling unit sizes and features desired 10/. Results were applied in site planning and in establishing development standards. Two fundamental types of housing are appropriate for the project: (1) the management-maintained apartment (one or two bedrooms) for individuals and adult families, and (2) the family house of three or more bedrooms. For the apartment, the best architecture is the multi-story elevator building permitting the concentration of service space and garage space within lower floors of the single, large, efficient structure, and making possible a large surrounding park area useful and pleasant to apartment dwellers. For the family house -detached, duplex, or row house- private yard space for each family is customary in the local residential tradition and should be provided. The "Three-story Walkup", over-produced favorite of the "608" era, should be eliminated from consideration as good permanent housing. The worst of its disadvantages are: stairs for two-thirds of the families, no circulation privacy, no private yards, high ground coverage, inadequate open space, inefficient auto accessibility and/or overpaving of open space.

Feasability of Public Land Use 11/ The proposed school in this general location is part of the city-wide school building program. The entire community needs a recreational park, the nearest such park, Dunning Field, is over two

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9. See Exhibit J, Realtors Statements on New Residential Use
  10. See Exhibit I, Summary of Survey to Anticipate New Residential Occupancy
  11. See Exhibit D, Statements of Participating Public Agencies  
and Exhibit B, City Planning Board Recommendations

miles away. The city requires a major traffic artery properly located along the line of present Rondo Street and extending across the Capitol Approach and thence northeastward, entering the eastern redevelopment project (UR Minn. 1-1). Rondo parkway will permit channeling the heavy thru-traffic around the edge of the project and thereby protect the entire of the project for residential use. The parkway also serves as a 200 ft. wide protective buffer separating the new project from the old residential area lying to the south.

Feasability of Commercial Land Use 12/ The basic considerations in designing commercial use along Rice Street are (a) the need in downtown St. Paul for additional large scale office space, (b) the suitability of this new site adjacent to the downtown area, facing the Capitol Approach and served by major traffic streams, and (c) the relatively greater marketability of this frontage for commercial use than for residence, according to unanimous opinion of St. Paul land developers.

#### 5. Basis for the Land Use Pattern

Street Pattern The gridiron pattern of present streets is to be eliminated, replaced by a simple form of super block which will restrict through circulation and thereby protect the interior space for residential use. Through traffic is diverted to the major streets: Rondo, Rice, Western, and University. Traffic maps were developed to show traffic flow before and after redevelopment 13/. Minor streets within the project are designed solely for the functions of project circulation and service to residential buildings. They may be suitably located in old street beds, thus utilizing existing underground utilities.

Location of Park and School Public school and park facilities are a sizeable element in the land use pattern. The park is designed to serve as a central open space around which to group residential buildings. The school site is located at one end of the park, in effect enlarging the open space. This public open space provides for recreation and pedestrian crossing; it visually integrates the large residential development.

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12. See Exhibit K, Statements on New Commercial Use

13. See Exhibit L, Traffic Flow Maps



Location of Residential Buildings In locating residential buildings, the distinct characteristics of the two major types (elevator apartment and two-story residence) are taken into consideration. The special character of elevator buildings is their primarily adult occupancy (one and two-bedroom units). A large proportion of elevator apartment residents will travel downtown in their daily routine, therefore elevator apartments are located on the side of the project nearest downtown, along Rondo Parkway. Apartment residents will have a great concentration of cars per acre, therefore the plan indicates off-street parking for each building. On the other hand, two-story residences are characterized by larger families with children (three-bedroom dwelling units). They require private yards and protection from main traffic. A relatively small proportion of these residents travel downtown in their daily routine. Therefore low density housing is located on the quiet northern side of the project, adjacent to similiar existing housing. Both types of housing share a common park space, which will effectively unify the new community.

Location of Commercial Uses Commercial uses are located on the eastern end of the project along the major traffic artery. These commercial uses have a capacity far greater than required by project residents, the majority of their business will come from the traffic stream. Therefore, the design clearly isolates commercial buildings from the residential portion of the project. In order to preserve an effect of a continuous mall reaching entirely through the project and into the Capitol Approach, commercial development will be restricted from the area which is in the line of this mall. Underground parking will be permitted, and will be essential to achieve the maximum permitted development of commercial uses. Adjacent commercial buildings will be able to utilize an unusually pleasant park vista created by the mall, and at the same time gain necessary off-street parking capacity.

#### 6. Jurisdiction of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority in Development of New Land Uses

In planning redevelopment, the Authority set up two general objectives:

- (1) the elimination of blight and satisfactory relocation of families, and
- (2) the determination, by research, of an appropriate land use pattern. In order to accomplish the latter objective, city planners were employed. All factors of project design were studied: (a) city planning objectives, (b) local

conditions and requirements, (c) general housing demand and the potential occupancy of new apartments, (d) the demand for commercial uses, (e) architecture possibilities, (f) subsequent requirements for public facilities, (g) demands of efficient site design. The resulting site plan represents (1) a definite pattern of land uses, streets and utilities, and (2) suggested building types for optimum development permitted by Development Standards 14/.

A counterpart of this redevelopment plan is the statement of Standards for new development specifying, for each land use (a) maximum land coverage, (b) maximum population density, (c) building set-back and spacing, (d) minimum off-street parking, (e) review of developers' proposed plans prior to property sale. Standards are broad enough to allow considerable choice in architecture and siting, but specific enough to co-ordinate the activities of separate developers who may build at different times. The Authority will make clear to interested developers that they have considerable freedom to determine building details within the broad limitations established by the Standards.

From the public standpoint, it is necessary to extend site control this far. Public acceptance of redevelopment, including specified public works and costs, can be based only upon such a site plan.

From the standpoint of promoting private development, this degree of site planning is essential because of the fact that a project of this scale is an entirely new concept to local builders. The proposed plan and standards have proven valuable in conferences with representative groups of realtors, builders and city officials. In case a number of developers participate, the plan will assure them of a high character of future environment.

Thus the proposed plan and standards serve as the starting point of co-operation between the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and private developers. The justification for Authority jurisdiction over building plans will be obviously based upon its responsibility to achieve a sound plan of permanent benefit to the community. In the exercise of this jurisdiction the Authority will be guided by a policy of permitting latitude to the developers' initiative, and to adapt the project to fundamental changes of economic circumstances. Essentially, project development will be guided by a co-operative purpose and a long-range perspective.

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14. See separate report, Development Standards



### 7. Staging of Clearance and Rebuilding

Acquisition, family relocation, and building demolition will have to be scheduled in gradual stages. Private building is also expected to develop gradually, due to its problems of organization and obtaining construction materials.

The first stage of clearance and development will include the major public uses; Rondo Parkway, the public school site, and a beginning of the park.

The later stages of clearance for residential and commercial development will be possible after the first stage has been accomplished and marketing commitments for the later stages have been entered into with private developers.

Staging will make possible a uniform rate of relocation and new building. By first accomplishing public improvements, optimum conditions are established for marketing land for private uses.

This is the extent of a staging plan which may be set forth prior to project approval. It would be impractical at this time to propose a precise calendar of successive stages. During the several years required for the initial stage of clearance and public improvements, subsequent stages will be arranged.

### 8. Marketability of Land for New Uses

The marketing policy of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority will be to reserve any negotiations or commitments on land sale until the way is open to acquire and clear the land to be sold. Reasons for this policy are (a) detail planning, acquisition and relocation will always be in a state of flux depending upon immediate circumstances, (b) momentary economic conditions and material difficulties will govern current building, and (c) an advance commitment to furnish land for any particular builder would subject redevelopment to political complications.

However the general aspects of marketability for new uses have been explored; broad considerations of economic feasibility of proposed uses support the plan at this time. Economic and planning criteria, rather than immediate marketing prospects, govern the plan. It is admitted and expected that economic fluctuation during the years of project development will affect the marketability of the land.

Numerous conferences were held in recent months with representative groups of merchants, land developers, bankers, builders, and participating public agencies to determine the feasibility of the proposed land uses and the acceptability of the general site plan. These conferences contributed to the final proposals shown on the site plan. Selected testimony supporting the proposed land uses is included in exhibits 15/.

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15. See Exhibit K, Statements on New Commercial Use

AMENDMENT TO NARRATIVE REPORT  
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN - PROJECT UR MINN-1-2

The Narrative Report Redevelopment Plan Project UR MINN-1-2 is hereby amended as follows:

1. An introduction is added at the beginning of the report to read as follows:

"INTRODUCTION

The Redevelopment Plan for Redevelopment Project UR MINN-1-2 consists of: (1) Narrative Report of Redevelopment Plan (including maps titled "Development Plan, Project UR MINN-1-2 and "Utility Plan Project UR MINN-1-2"). (2) Development Standards, (3) Procedures for Land Acquisition and <sup>Disposition</sup> ~~Inspection~~, (4) Relocation Plan, and (5) Financial Plan.

The various exhibits presented with the Redevelopment Plan and referred to in the Narrative Report (identified as Exhibit A through L), are presented as supporting material for the purpose of explaining the plan and illustrating possible methods of carrying out its objectives. However, the exhibits and material therein are not a part of the Redevelopment Plan, and are not intended to control its operation."

2. Section "1. Scope of the Report" is amended by adding the following to the contents of the report as listed in this section:

"9. Development Plan"

3. A new section "9. Development Plan" is added to read as follows:

9. Development Plan

The development plan for Redevelopment project as described in this report is illustrated by the following attached maps.

- a. Development Plan, Project UR MINN-1-2
- b. Public Utility Plan, Project UR MINN-1-2.