

# THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

## IN DEPTH: STRUCTURES

From the May 25, 2001 print edition

### Developers take to the riverfront

Land cleanup was required before groundbreaking

[Beth Mattson-Teig](#)

Contributing Writer

Decades of hard work are finally coming to fruition in the form of riverfront development in both Minneapolis and St. Paul.

It has taken a lot of hard work and persistence to bring development back to the river. Many sites were challenging to work with due to soil contamination and pollution. Both Minneapolis and St. Paul have paved the way for revitalization by working to clean up industrial land, relocate uses that were not compatible and improve infrastructure and access.

Planning for riverfront redevelopment dates back to the 1960s in Minneapolis. "Changes occurred because the city recognized, going back many decades, that the old uses were becoming obsolete, and there was a greater potential for using the Mississippi as a huge asset," says Steve Cramer, executive director of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. Over the years, the city paved the way for this development by acquiring and cleaning up former industrial sites, he said.

St. Paul's push for riverfront development can be traced to the mid -1980s, when former Mayor George Latimer established a commission to study opportunities along the Mississippi. The revitalization was further mobilized in 1994 when Mayor Norm Coleman set riverfront development as a priority, said Patrick Seeb, executive director of the Saint Paul Riverfront Corp.

Some of the many improvements have included installing infrastructure such as West River Parkway, relocating a sand and gravel business, and acquiring property such as an old grain elevator. All of those changes have made riverfront land more attractive for new development, he said.

Land availability helped attract CSM Corp. to projects near the Minneapolis riverfront, said Murray Kornberg, a vice president at the St. Paul-based company.

CSM is in the process of completing work on the Milwaukee Depot mixed-use project, which includes an ice-skating rink, Marriott Residence Inn and a Marriott Courtyard hotel. CSM also recently proposed a \$44 million development on an adjacent block that would include a housing component, a 160,000-square-foot office building and a new facility for MacPhail Center for the Arts.

Minneapolis' master plan for riverfront development encompasses a mix of projects that include housing, cultural attractions, recreation, supporting retail and restaurant businesses, as well as commercial office development. More than a dozen new projects are currently under construction or proposed near the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.

St. Paul also has been aggressive in making its riverfront more desirable with efforts such as improvements to Harriet Island, as well as infrastructure upgrades that include the planned relocation of Shepard Road. Now that the groundwork is in place, developers are flocking to the riverfront.

"Riverfront sites are becoming prized addresses for development," said Seeb.

Minneapolis and St. Paul are certainly not alone in their quest to reclaim valuable riverfront land. Similar riverfront redevelopment projects are sweeping the country from Omaha to Philadelphia. "There is a certain cachet, particularly on the residential side, for being located along the river," Kornberg says.

Encouraging housing development is a priority for St. Paul. St. Paul first stabilized its economic base with a core commercial district in downtown, then added amenities such as Harriet Island, the Science Museum and the Xcel Energy Center, Seeb said. "The third leg of that stool is housing," he added.

New St. Paul housing projects include the Upper Landing project. Texas-based Centex is planning a mixed-use housing and retail project that will include 587 housing units and about 23,000 square feet of commercial space. The first housing units are expected to be completed by late 2002.

Nearly every neighborhood in St. Paul has experienced rising home values, reversing a downward trend that had occurred in past years. "That has stimulated people to look at these vacant sites as housing opportunities," Seeb says.

© 2001 American City Business Journals Inc.  [Add RSS Headlines](#)

**Become an Edward Jones Investment Representative.**

Run your business.  
Determine your compensation.  
Create your future.  
Apply today.

» [View all jobs from this company](#)



**Today's Featured Jobs** powered by [bizjournalsHire](#)

- [QUALITY ENGINEER - Reliable](#)
- [Sr Design Engineer - Qwest Communications](#)
- [Community Manager - None Specified](#)
- [Truck Driver - No Experience Needed! Ask about Hol - CR England](#)
- [Capacity Provisioning Special - Qwest Communications](#)

[More Local Jobs](#)

→ [Post Jobs](#) | → [Post Your Resume](#) | → [Search Jobs](#)

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.