

II. Plan Purpose and Background

Since the late 1800s, the urban landscape of the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District has been shaped by rail yards, warehouses, factories, and many other commercial and industrial businesses. The lasting impact of these former commercial and industrial uses can still be seen today in the many historic buildings, brick paved streets, active loading docks and rail corridors that are the predominant features that shape and reinforce the historic character of the district. The transition of the District to include more residential uses has created a conflict between the need to create a more pedestrian friendly and accessible public right-of-way system to support all modes of transportation and the desire to maintain the historic infrastructure which defines the overall character of the District.

The retention of the historic infrastructure of the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District is critical to understanding and interpreting the historic relationship between the warehousing and manufacturing industries of the district and their transportation needs. The interaction between the buildings and transportation infrastructure formed the essential character of the area and is explained in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Designation Study (2009). The treatments of these infrastructural resources are outlined in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines (2010). The preservation and retention of these resources are paramount to the character of the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District, the North Loop Neighborhood and the City of Minneapolis. The Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan provides an approach to preserve and rehabilitate the historic infrastructure, improve pedestrian accessibility and increase sustainable practices through better stormwater management.

The Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan implements the policy that was adopted by the City of Minneapolis in the North Loop Small Area Plan (2010) and complies with the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines (2010). This plan builds on initiatives to

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enhance the pedestrian realm started by the North Loop Neighborhood Association and provides an approach to retain and rehabilitate historic infrastructure identified in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Designation Study (2009). These documents form the foundation upon which this plan was written and should be consulted when necessary.

Purpose of the Plan

The Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan is extremely important to the City of Minneapolis and the North Loop Neighborhood because the buildings, streets and infrastructure that define the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District reinforce a unique character that cannot be found anywhere else within the City. It is critical to preserve the historic infrastructure that exists within the District because it conveys a story, connects us to the past, and reinforces the urban character and quality of life that so many residents choose to call home. The preservation of the historic infrastructure as identified in this Plan is

therefore critical to maintaining the livability and overall character of the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District.

The purpose for the Heritage Street Plan has been prompted by several key project issues that have been defined through this Plan and recently completed planning studies. These issues are listed below:

- **Transition of Uses** - The transition of the District to a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses has increased the demand to improve the limited public rights-of-way to accommodate all travel modes. The adaptive re-use and rehabilitation of the historic industrial buildings to residential uses will preserve the structures, but usually these changes do little to enhance the public right-of-way areas adjacent to the buildings. These right-of-way areas were originally designed with loading docks that extend to the curb to accommodate trucks and train access. With increased growth and development in the neighborhood these docks have created a challenge to providing an accessible pedestrian environment. The future primary pedestrian circulation will take place at the street level, which will likely require a reduction in automobile space in certain areas.
- **Loading Docks** - Recent rehabilitation projects in the District have resulted in the significant alteration to historic loading docks to provide ADA accessible building entries and/or sidewalks within the public right-of-way. These alterations have resulted in a degradation of the historic fabric of the District. The existing loading docks within the district will continue to maintain their operational ability and appearance. Pedestrian space will need to be clearly delineated from automobile and loading dock space through a physical treatment.
- **Utility and Infrastructure Improvements** - Currently there is not a clearly defined decision making process for how to accommodate existing and new infrastructure with roadway improvements and future redevelopment efforts. A defined plan to address how to deal with the utility and infrastructure needs in the District is critical

to preventing further degradation of the historic character of the District.

- **Historic Preservation** – The plan will need to maintain the character of the project area by preserving the remaining historic paving materials, industrial infrastructure and loading docks.
- **Stormwater Management** – The District will benefit from integrating stormwater innovation and management techniques into the design recommendations. A key challenge will be maintaining historical levels of impervious coverage while meeting current stormwater management regulations.
- **Public Involvement** - Stakeholder involvement resulted in a responsive plan and fostered a core group of advocates to share in its implementation. It will be important to work with the community to understand what exists, review street options, and provide recommendations that reinforce the City’s vision for the Heritage Streets and create a sense of community pride.
- **Potential Funding Opportunities** - It will be important to define creative opportunities for future funding of Heritage Street improvements and recommendations. Additional funding from traditional sources must also be defined.

Plan Outcomes

This Plan takes a comprehensive approach to correcting current piecemeal decision-making for improvements to streets with historic materials and industrial infrastructure while accommodating accessibility needs for all modes of transportation.

Outlined within this document are detailed recommendations for a street-by-street strategy to:

- Preserve the character of the Warehouse District by retaining (and possibly rehabilitating) the remaining historic paved streets and industrial infrastructure
- Improve and accommodate ADA requirements and accessibility
- Resolve urban stormwater management issues

- Preserve, rehabilitate and when necessary reconstruct the historic paved streets
- Address the street paving materials when street, sewer and utility repairs are required
- Inform the individual site decisions regarding historic paving and infrastructure (specifically loading docks) that the City is forced to make when buildings are rehabilitated
- Balance interests related to sustainability, accessibility, and preservation to get to a product that will deliver implementable recommendations.
- This Plan will also be used as the guiding document for the development of City capital improvement projects for the reconstruction and repair of the streets and alleys.



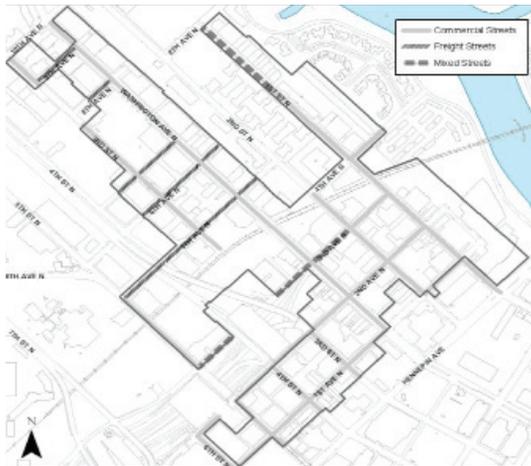
View along 3rd Street N towards 8th Avenue N



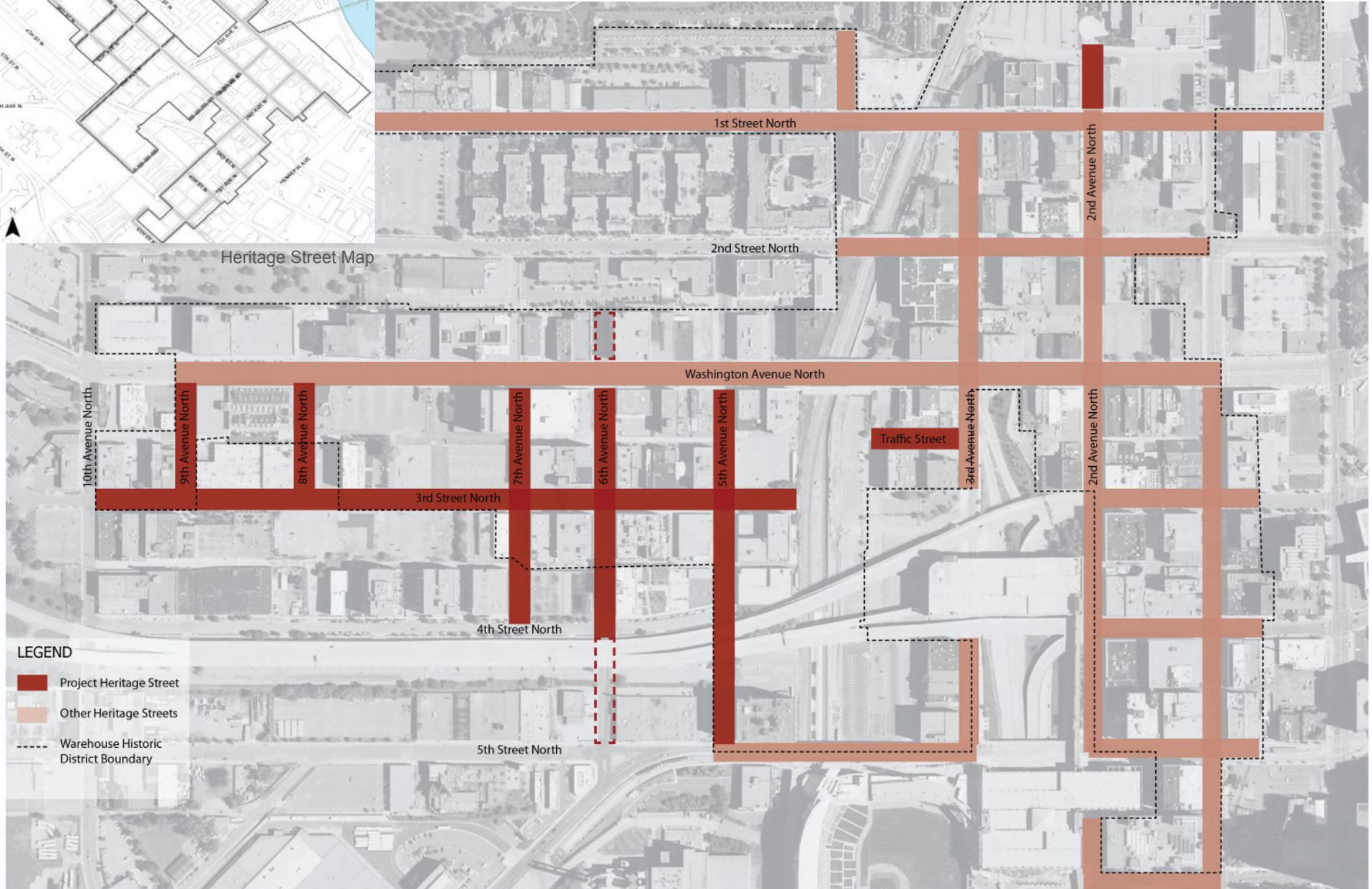
View along 9th Avenue N towards 3d Street N



View along 7th Avenue N towards Washington Avenue



Heritage Street Map



- LEGEND**
- Project Heritage Street
 - Other Heritage Streets
 - Warehouse Historic District Boundary

Study Area Enlargement

Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan

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Project Location/ Boundary

The project boundary for the Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan is defined as the approved boundary for the current Warehouse Historic District as defined in the *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Designation Study (2009)*. The lessons learned from this document related to the preservation and enhancement of the Heritage Streets can be applied to other areas of the City not included within this defined boundary. The preservation of historic streets and infrastructure should be considered on a case by case basis and utilize these recommendations.

The primary heritage streets as defined for this project include (see map on adjacent page):

- Traffic Street
- 2nd Avenue North from 1st Street N to the Federal Reserve parking lot
- 6th Avenue North from Washington Avenue North to 5th Street North
- 8th Avenue North from Washington Avenue North to 3rd Street North
- 3rd Street North from 10th Avenue North to 5th Avenue North
- 9th Avenue North from Washington Avenue North to 3rd Street North
- 7th Avenue North from Washington Avenue North to 4th Street North
- 5th Avenue North from Washington Avenue North to 5th Street North



Planning Process

Public involvement and coordination between public agencies was a critical component of the Warehouse District Heritage Street planning process. The planning process utilized a Task Force for guidance and facilitated a series of meetings with key City departments including Public Works and CPED.

Other groups that provided input into the plan included the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, and the North Loop Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Committee.

The North Loop community residents are the specific users and have the most relevant knowledge of how the streets and sidewalks operate for bicyclists and pedestrians. The planning process was designed to allow the broader membership of the North Loop Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Committee to provide input regarding the type of improvements, costs, benefits and implementation concerns associated with the proposed recommendations.

Public Works staff as well as the broader community stakeholders had opportunities at each stage in the process to participate in the formulation of recommendations and creation of the final concept plans.

Task Force Meetings

The role of the Task Force was to provide insight into City policies, nuances to neighborhood livability, provide project guidance and review suggested recommendations.

The project Task Force was comprised of individuals from CPED-Planning staff, Public Works staff, HPC Members, SHPO and North Loop Neighborhood residents and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities.

The Task Force meetings were held on the following dates:

- December 21st, 2010
- February 3rd, 2011
- March 3rd, 2011
- April 7th, 2011

Additional Technical Input Meetings

A series of additional technical and policy meetings were held with Public Works staff and other key stakeholders during the planning process.

These technical input meetings occurred at key stages in the planning process to allow for technical and policy related feedback prior to making recommendations to the Task Force.

These meetings focused on road geometric design, stormwater management design, sidewalk accessibility issues/ concerns, maintenance concerns, capital project costs and implementation/ funding strategies.

Neighborhood Walking Tour

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) conducted a walking tour on October 6th, 2010 that crisscrossed the Heritage Street study area.

Tour attendees began at Target Field and visited the various streets within the project area to see first hand the condition of the existing streets, accessibility along sidewalk and loading docks and overall character of the District to consider ideas for future improvements. Notes from the walking tour can be found in Appendix 4.



PAC Tour

Background Studies

All previously prepared planning reports, studies, and other policy documents having a bearing on the Warehouse District Heritage Street Plan have been assembled and reviewed to gain an understanding of key findings, objectives and policies that may have a bearing on this current planning effort.

Three important planning studies prepared by the City of Minneapolis that defined the need for the creation of the Heritage Streets Plan to respond to preservation, accessibility, loading, parking and livability issues within the Historic Warehouse District.

The first plan was the *Minneapolis Warehouse District Designation Study* which was to evaluate the NRHP Minneapolis Warehouse District and its individual resources for designation as a combined local historic district. The report is divided into five main sections as identified below:

- Part I: Background & Methodology: Provides a background on the impetus for the designation study. It describes the methodology used to conduct the study.

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- Part II: Historic Significance: Provides a historical context of the area. This section explains how and why the area developed and why that is significant to the history of Minneapolis and the region.
- Part III: Description and Evaluation: Describes the physical features of the historical context. It explains what physical features remain and evaluates the historical integrity of those features.
- Part IV: Conclusion
- Part V: Individual Resource Evaluation: Evaluation of each individual resource contained within the district.

The second significant document is the *Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District Design Guidelines* (adopted in February 2010) which was prepared to serve as a tool to protect the integrity of the historic district and provide guidance to the preservation of the historic infrastructure.

This document outlines and provides guidelines for infrastructure and public realm improvements. Some key guidelines that affect this study include:

- Design and Materials for the Public Realm
- Street Landscape, Parks and Open Spaces
- Maintenance

The third plan is the *North Loop Small Area Plan* (adopted in April 2010), which first identified the desire to create a new category of street classification that would address the needs of streets that serve historic districts. The Heritage Streets overlay was recommended as part of this planning process and was intended to respond to key issues related to preservation, accessibility and livability in the district.

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