

Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

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MY ASSIGNMENT is to present a series of case histories of joint development of transportation rights-of-way over a period of several years in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. These examples had their beginnings back as far as 1949 and cover a range of activities up to the present time. The idea of joint development is certainly not new and I am sure it dates back just as far in many other communities. However, its potentials for achieving improvements in development, construction and land utilization economies, opportunities for aesthetic achievements, and its importance as a means of achieving total urban development concepts are not being fully realized. Examples I will relate to you do not represent some of the more dramatic ideas that may be currently under consideration. However, I believe they illustrate the importance of a continuous process of searching for opportunities for improvements in urban development via joint efforts by all of us who are responsible for a variety of governmental and private development operations. This positive attitude of cooperation is vital if we are to be successful in maintaining and improving our living environment in the face of the tremendous growth taking place in our urban areas.

Many of the best examples of joint development in the Twin Cities Area relate to urban renewal programs in both the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. They represent a variety of achievements resulting from joint development activities. Probably the most dramatic is the redevelopment of major portions of both cities achieved through joint transportation and renewal activities. Redevelopment was not only ac-

complished through the efforts of the redevelopment process itself, but the transportation system contributed to substantial improvements via the private market, without other public assistance. These joint efforts also aided the community in reaching decisions on transportation plans. They represent achievements in accomplishing community design objectives and the preservation of neighborhood values. Although joint programs offer great opportunities, objectives are not achieved easily.

St. Paul

One of the most dramatic of joint development activities undertaken in the Twin Cities Area is the renewal and highway developments adjacent to the State Capitol in St. Paul. These were initiated after World War II when the program for improvement of the Capitol Approach was proposed as an alternative to a proposal for establishment of a typical War Memorial. The State Capitol in Minnesota is a large attractive building that, in 1946, was surrounded by an area of dilapidated buildings, "skid row" in character. The plans proposed for the area followed original ideas presented at the turn of the century by Cass Gilbert for a very large plaza that would extend through the heart of downtown St. Paul. This concept was followed but foreshortened to provide a visual tie between the Capitol and the Cathedral.

Development of the Capitol Approach plan was carried out in conjunction with the State Highway Department, City of St. Paul, and a Capitol Approach Commission created for that purpose. The initial plans provided for a major freeway to pass through the city, between the Capitol Approach and the downtown area. A model of the Capitol Approach shows the existing buildings, a mall, the new Veterans Service Building, and the John Ireland Boulevard connecting the Capitol building to the Cathedral.

With the redevelopment of some 75 to 80 acres for the Capitol Approach in prospect, the city gave consideration to the redevelopment of adjacent areas to the east and west that were seriously blighted. As a result the Capitol Approach and two adjacent redevelopment projects known as the Eastern and Western Redevelopment Areas were carried out simultaneously. The redevelopment plans did not initiate detailed freeway schemes since there was no funding for the freeway system at that time. The redevelopment plans were prepared to provide for a wide right-of-way for a parkway and median strip that could serve the area in event the freeways were not ultimately built but at the same time would reserve substantial rights-of-way for freeway at such time as it could be approved for construction. This procedure permitted the redevelopment project to proceed as planned with a degree of flexibility to coordinate with freeway plans. At the time this plan was proposed there was some doubt as to whether the Veterans Service Building and two major state office buildings would be required. The plan has now been essentially completed and the buildings are in place essentially

as proposed with the addition of one more building, an Armory. The Veterans Service Building itself was not fully completed with the office structures above it, but this is expected to be under construction this year.

Between the Cathedral and the Capitol is located a new Vocational High School as a part of the Cathedral renewal project. This project involved joint development activities in connection with the provision of storm drains and sewer facilities which were jointly financed by the City of St. Paul, the State of Minnesota, and the Highway Department. Adjacent to the Capitol Approach area to the west is the Western Redevelopment Area, which includes a substantial commercial development by a department store and a major motel constructed almost identically to the plan originally proposed. This motel fronts on what was the initial plan Rondo Parkway and the plan was ultimately constructed with the freeway in the foreground as originally contemplated. The remaining land became a service drive to serve adjacent development. This provides an indirect access from the freeway.

As a result of the Capitol Approach, the redevelopment improvements, and the freeway, many seriously dilapidated old buildings have been removed and new development has taken place privately on the downtown side of the freeway. The improvements have been a catalyst for a major redevelopment for the heart of downtown St. Paul, which is rapidly being completed. The freeway provides a visual separation between the Capitol area and downtown St. Paul. A view to the east carries into the Eastern Redevelopment Project and a view from the center of one of the bridges provides the kind of picture that you might see on a publication criticizing the design of freeways in the center of a city. However, this depressed freeway with the bridge crossings actually provides the close visual tie between the Capitol Approach and downtown which is most critical. Other new buildings have been built adjacent to the Capitol Approach development, such as the new Capitol Square office building, apartment buildings, and the new Arts and Science building.

Moving to the Eastern Redevelopment Area is the new St. Paul Ramsey Hospital, which was constructed and related to the highway circulation pattern. Beyond this there is a low-rent housing project, also a part of this total development of close to 300 acres of land in the heart of the city, which is now essentially complete. A new high-rise building for the elderly is set against the high ground adjacent to a neighborhood park overlooking the freeway area and hospital area.

Another early example of coordination of development was the McDonough low-rent housing project begun in 1949. Much of the land here was tax forfeited. The Housing Authority acquired a substantial portion of the land required for the housing purposes but the city retained a large area on the eastern side for potential playground and school use and reservation for an anticipated future freeway. The

school was ultimately built, and finally, many years later, the freeway which then could be constructed with adequate service facilities without disrupting the project. After construction of the freeway some land remained that permitted the addition of a small group of buildings along the eastern boundary.

Another example of joint participation in St. Paul is the West Seventh Street overlook. Here a new bridge was constructed over the Mississippi River, and the old bridge connecting St. Paul and Fort Snelling was torn down. The removal of the old structure afforded an opportunity to construct an overlook focusing attention to the new Fort Snelling State Park across the river. This includes the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Proceedings to accomplish this began in 1964. The Highway Department took bids to construct the scenic overlook but the State Attorney General ruled that State Trunk Highway funds could not be spent, so the project was cancelled. It was ultimately taken over by the city after numerous correspondence and a clear title was provided to the property by the Highway Department and the Corps of Engineers. The result was a very attractive overlook that will be much used as a viewing point of the restored Fort Snelling Park. The new freeway through this part of old Fort Snelling was tunneled to preserve the continuity of the park.

Some of the less dramatic joint efforts include efforts at financing storm sanitary sewer separation programs jointly with highway construction. This has been undertaken to a substantial degree in both Minneapolis and St. Paul with resulting savings both to the city and to the Highway Department. An additional joint venture has been the interim financing by the central cities to expedite the timing of highway projects. In both cities local bond funds have been made available to the Highway Department to finance certain highway improvements that could not have otherwise been scheduled for several years. In these cases, the cost of the improvement is ultimately repaid by the Highway Department, with the city bearing the interest cost.

Minneapolis

The City of Minneapolis renewal program got under way somewhat later than that of St. Paul. After initial projects, the city did a detailed study of housing conditions and developed a program that recognized that freeway projects would be undertaken within the heart of the city and that the opportunity existed for development of adjacent blighted lands as the lands for freeways were being cleared. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority undertook condition studies primarily following the proposed rights-of-way of freeways and set a system of priorities that was based on the needs for renewal and related to highway development. An up-to-date map of the urban development activities in Minneapolis would show the actual projects that are being carried out to closely follow these rights-of-way. There are examples of joint de-

velopment activities in addition to the overall concept of encouraging renewal processes adjacent to freeway rights-of-way. Almost the entire ring of the freeway system is enveloped by renewal projects under way or in planning. The major area to the south has been designated as the city's model city area.

The first project was the Glenwood Redevelopment Project in North Minneapolis. Here the redevelopment agency acquired right-of-way for a future proposed portion of the Interstate System in 1958 and designed its housing and industrial development to meet the proposed highway program. This project has been essentially complete for several years. The freeway right-of-way is still reserved and construction is expected to begin next year. During the interim period a major arterial street runs through that area and provides service to the project area. This was done merely by an exchange of letters with the Highway Department and Redevelopment Authority. Under present regulations this would not be permitted and would require a binding contract that could not have been accomplished at the time this project was undertaken. This would have required either a substantial advancement of the freeway construction program or a curtailment of renewal to properly coordinate. Low-rent housing adjacent to this portion of the freeway was constructed. The ground was raised, and grade levels and service drives were set to conform with proposed freeway plans several years in advance of construction.

To the west of the Glenwood Redevelopment Project a rehabilitation area was initiated adjoining an existing highway, which is to be upgraded to freeway standards several years in the future. This required widening and acquisition of the properties currently adjoining that highway. A substantial portion of these buildings were commercial structures and immediate questions had to be answered as to whether these structures would remain to be acquired at some future date for freeway purposes. The obvious result of such a decision would be the gradual depreciation of these properties in anticipation of their eventual acquisition. This would obviously contradict the objectives of the renewal program for rehabilitation of existing structures. In this case the redevelopment agency made an agreement with the Highway Department to acquire these buildings immediately and to develop a service drive which would eventually be tied into the upgraded freeway system. This improvement provided an open-space attractive buffer between the highway and the adjoining residences. The result was an asset to adjoining residential properties, which encouraged the rehabilitation of this area rather than detracted from it.

To the north of this area is a large general neighborhood renewal project consisting of a series of renewal activities to be accomplished over a period of several years. Here Interstate 94 traverses the area from north to south and will connect ultimately in the center of the project area with a future northwest diagonal.

Again this creates the serious problem of depreciation and deterioration of neighborhood pending ultimate construction of the freeway system. In this case, the City of Minneapolis was to proceed immediately with the acquisition of the freeway right-of-way within areas to be cleared by redevelopment, with the land to be acquired by the Highway Department and held until the freeway was ultimately constructed. The Highway Department could not proceed with the acquisition and the renewal agency would not in turn allow the area to be redeveloped without such an agreement. As a result the initial project, the Grant Renewal Project, had to be reduced in size and the portion of the area within the highway right-of-way was deleted. This was a seriously blighted area and as a result it deteriorated further and caused serious problems in the neighborhood. Ultimately an agreement was reached to purchase the property and hold it with potential interim use for recreational purposes or other short-term uses. The remaining portion of the freeway running to the north is in the rehabilitation area. Here agreement must be reached to permit the rehabilitation of these properties pending the ultimate construction of the freeway several years in advance. Even though this would maintain the property values or increase them, the alternative would result in the deterioration and decrease in value of other adjacent property, contrary to the objectives for rehabilitation of the neighborhood — ultimately that would have been a more expensive solution.

The St. Anthony Renewal Area represented an effort at preservation of community values through the joint programming of renewal and highway development. The initial proposal for the Interstate System provided for the freeway to go through the center of this neighborhood, which was bordered on one side by a railroad and on another side by a major arterial. The freeway would have bisected the area served by several churches, schools, and playground facilities. The freeway was ultimately moved to the south border of the project adjacent to the railroad and industrial area. This provided industrial sites adjacent to the railroad and preserved the residential area to the north. As a result of this change, substantial support was gained from the community, both for the freeway system and the rehabilitation program proposed.

The Minneapolis Housing for the Elderly Program provided a large number of tower buildings that fulfilled two purposes in addition to providing needed housing for the city's large elderly population. It provided for spot renewal of the city, coordinated with the urban renewal objectives, and provided sites adjacent to freeway rights-of-way. These were carefully selected to point out the advantages of tower buildings at strategic locations along the freeway and to demonstrate their usefulness in carrying out community design objectives. For example, a single tower along the vista of a freeway or other major arterial provided a variety in the landscape and an attractive image of the city. The

first project of this kind was adjacent to the major interchanges on the Interstate System, which was not to be constructed for several years. Here some joint acquisition programs were carried out by the Highway Department and the Housing Authority, and easements were provided on highway lands to provide access to the parking area for the housing projects. In northeast Minneapolis another project was developed adjacent to the freeway where lands had been acquired for slopes in connection with the freeway system. These lands were made available to the Housing Authority to enable it to proceed with its project.

Another development is adjacent to Interstate 94 bordering the heart of downtown Minneapolis. Here a joint agreement was reached with the Highway Department whereby the Housing Authority could make use of the slope areas adjoining the depressed freeway to provide necessary open space setting for a tower building. A tower building in turn creates a very attractive structure along the freeway and carries out the cities objectives for creating attractive vistas and community design image along the freeways. This project is currently being completed. Another project involves additions to existing homes for the elderly. Here landscape treatment is being developed jointly with the Highway Department to make use of slope areas on the adjacent raised freeway to provide a more attractive setting for the housing development and a better buffer between housing and the freeway system.

Additional programs are being considered. The city of Minneapolis is currently undertaking, together with the Highway Department, a program for improvement of freeway design in landscape treatment both as to the landscape treatment along the freeway itself and its relationship to adjoining properties. This relates to the city's community design studies. A key feature is the consideration of attractive vistas as you move about the city on its transportation systems. This has again been accomplished to a degree by the city housing and renewal programs as illustrated by the Elderly towers near downtown and the tower buildings in the Seward East renewal project.

The City Planning Commission, the school board, and the Highway Department are also considering a multiple-use development in southeast Minneapolis to provide for the construction of an elementary school over the freeway. This is an unusual school district adjoining the university where the neighborhood is small and the land availability is limited. The use of a substantial amount of land for an elementary school would in turn substantially decrease the number of families in the community to use a school. Therefore, the land is of critical concern regardless of the price in order to maintain a proper balance. This project has been under consideration for some period of time. It has strong support in the community and there is optimism that the development can be carried forward.

A similar type of development is proposed in the city of St. Paul where the City Center for Learning in the city's model neighborhood

area is proposed for construction over the adjacent Interstate System. The Center for Learning contemplates pooling a number of elementary schools, junior and senior high school, community facilities, and vocational training into a large center for learning to serve a major sector of the community. This proposal would provide greater learning opportunity, greater community facilities, and a thoroughly integrated school system. The center for learning concept is still under study as well as the proposal for multiple use of the freeway rights-of-way.

The examples that have been discussed have been developed over a period of many years and to a great extent the joint efforts have been designed not only to achieve immediate advantages of joint development efforts in a particular location, but also to accomplish the development and execution of long-range highway plans. In more recent years a metropolitan highway network has been designed and the joint development efforts are turned to the implementation of the transportation program in a manner that will take maximum advantage of opportunities for joint development consistent with a total system plan.

The Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area has been recently created as a successor to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Council has been designated by state legislation as the regional review agency for any programs requiring regional review by the Federal Government. In addition, it has review functions and the right to suspend plans of multipurpose special districts, when such plans are not in conformance with the guide for metropolitan development.

The Council has developed a three-year work program. As a part of this plan, the Council is setting aside certain sums of money for case studies. These case studies are designed to provide the opportunities to assist local communities in carrying out particular development objectives as well as to assist the Council in carrying on special studies in real-life situations to implement broad metropolitan objectives.

Here is an opportunity for joint planning for transportation. An obvious example would be a program to provide for interim use of acquired freeway rights-of-way in areas like the one mentioned in north Minneapolis. Here interim housing use might be explored. The Metropolitan Development Guide for the Twin Cities Area provides for the development of a number of major centers as the concept for future metropolitan development. These centers will be located largely through the shaping effects of transportation, the timing of service, and construction of utilities and open space. Here standards and designs for intra-center circulation access and service to major industrial parks and access to these diversified centers might be appropriate. Model development controls for local communities pending the actual development of a major center would also be helpful to local units of government.

It is imperative that a major center be located adjacent to a freeway and have access by directional interchanges rather than following the policy of locating adjacent to interchanges between major highway routes. Here we have found difficulties because of the reluctance to provide directional interchanges to commercial centers that may benefit a particular developer. It seems to us that this is short-sighted since the service of the transportation system depends on such directional interchanges. The alternative would be to locate on a typical interchange between routes, which only serves to decrease the capacity of the interchange and to provide poor access to development. Another problem relating to such access is the limitations on signing the system to advise the motorist as to the location of the center.

Joint development efforts can be an important tool to aid in the implementation of metropolitan transportation goals. However, the policies of the many public agencies involved and the attitudes of all of us having responsibilities for development activities are as important as the ideas and projects that may be conceived.

This means that policies must be established by all agencies that actively encourage interfunctional relationships and joint development opportunities as a continuous process beginning early in the planning process and carried forward in mutual confidence.