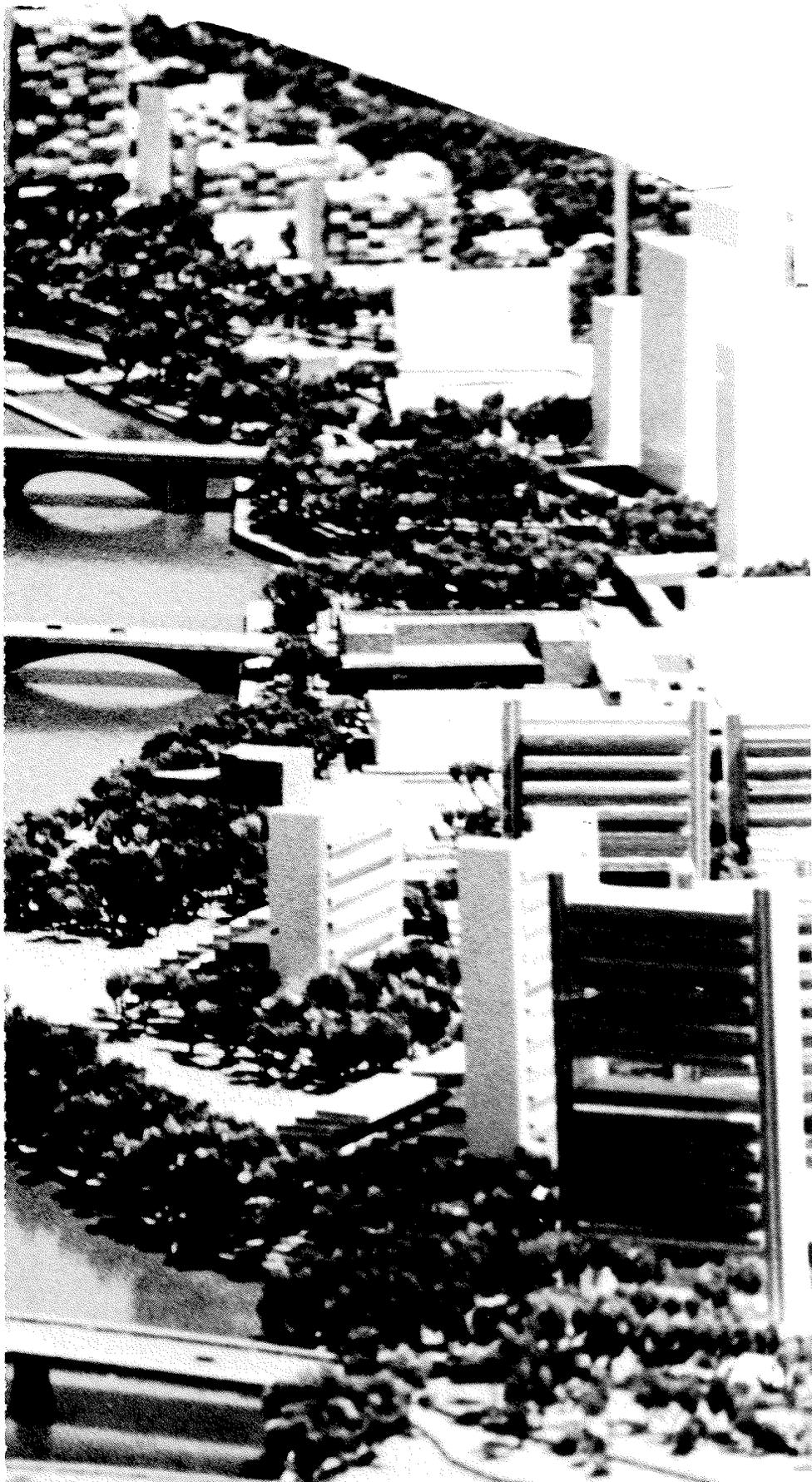




PLAN



The kind of alternative that Minneapolis can offer to the outward drift of its population and the concentric deterioration of its inner areas cannot, of course, rest on any single factor. It must be founded on many diverse attractions such as a vibrant and uncrowded Downtown, well-developed cultural and entertainment facilities, adequate education and employment opportunities, a broad variety of housing choice in safe and secure surroundings, and a multitude of other amenities now required by most people as aspects of everyday life. A number of these amenities exist; but some obviously do not.

Minneapolis is graced with many notable attributes long since obliterated in other cities. Downtown Minneapolis for example offers a fine composite of many of man's achievements and plans for its future will provide much more. Yet a natural amenity with greater potential than the Mississippi River does not exist. Only an asset such as the river and its environs can offer the juxtaposition with nature that people so often find lacking in other places. It can serve as an anchor offering an advantageous surrogate to the suburban life style.

The river can provide in a far more stimulating fashion for needed open space; for the uncrowded state that has been one of the prime causes of expanding suburbanization. And this in-city alternative to present growth patterns can be provided in a location that does not carry with it the stress of long commuting time nor the blatant monotony of many of the outer areas. Minneapolis is on the doorstep to providing the kind of complete environment that has been lacking in American cities for several decades. There is no other part of the City that can better serve to fulfill this long awaited renaissance than the river area.

The latent potential of the Riverfront and the superb opportunity that it offers have been recognized not only by government, business, and community leaders, but by many of the citizens of the City and region as well. Such an awareness is reflected in the volume and variety of completed and ongoing river-related work ranging from regional basin studies to metropolitan river corridor frameworks to localized redevelopment projects. At almost every juncture MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS will affect or be affected by one or another of these efforts. It is of particular note, therefore, that a high level of coordination has been carried out throughout the process of preparing this plan. Proposed MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS policies are, for example, in complete accord with those contained in the river corridor portions of the Metropolitan Development Guide.

MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS, though it incorporates and overlaps other river improvement efforts, is unique in its comprehensiveness and in its focus on all of the river and Riverfront area in Minneapolis. It is larger than neighborhoods or communities and yet is only part of the City. This plan cannot by itself, therefore, fulfill many of the city-wide goals and objectives. But it must, nonetheless, aid in achieving them all. Above all, the river must provide for the kinds of needs and desires demanded of such a city-wide and regional resource. Yet it must at the same time strive to fulfill the area development objectives of a number of neighborhoods and communities that lie partially within its boundaries. In order to meet this diversity of concerns for the river, to solve the many problems and capitalize on the inordinate opportunities, this plan has been conceived.

RIVER OBJECTIVES

Early in the river planning process “River Goals” were developed on the basis of which more detailed policy recommendation could be evaluated. While these have not in themselves been changed, they are herein termed “River Objectives” so as to be more consistent with the Comprehensive Municipal Planning format. As “Objectives” they thus meet the requirement of promoting the City-wide goals; and they do so by defining general areas of concern related to the river.

- Maximize the potential for use and enjoyment of the river and its environs for all.**
- Emphasize the “River Character” of the river and Riverfront area.**
- Achieve economic efficiency and functional effectiveness in land uses and activities.**
- Provide for a variety of land use, activity, and sensory experience in the Riverfront area.**
- Achieve a sense of integrated development and effective transition through all river areas and between these areas and the rest of the City.**
- Recognize, revitalize, and accentuate river-based history.**
- Reduce all forms of pollution to minimum levels.**
- Provide for the safety and security of individuals in all areas of the Riverfront.**

The condition of the Minneapolis river area today, when evaluated in relation to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the objectives of the River Plan, poses a multitude of problems. Such an analysis serves to illustrate the inordinate opportunities for improved use and enjoyment of this unique and diverse segment of the City. A comprehensive listing of problems and opportunities, however, can easily cloud the over-all picture, as in not seeing the woods for the trees. For most, if not all, these many problems and opportunities are intrinsically inter-related; problems tied to problems, opportunities to other opportunities, with problems and opportunities further intertwined.

In all of this, though, there is an order, an hierarchy of importance. Some problems, particularly those most closely related in scale to the over-all goals and objectives will, when solved, provide answers to others.

Other “problems” in fact don’t really exist until the major ones have been tackled. Traffic and parking problems, for example, exist along the river in several locations. Yet for the most part they become factors to be considered only when the intensity of activity increases under major new land uses or substantial redevelopment of existing uses. That is, a parking plan would have little effect on improving the Riverfront, if it alone was implemented.

Just as there is little logic in developing a plan for such a diverse area as the river by assembling functional and visual frameworks (open space systems and housing plans) without looking at the unique attributes of individual subareas, neither is it reasonable to link together detailed subarea concepts without some kind of over-all framework. In reality there is a continual shifting from general to specific and back again, yet because this process cannot be well adapted to written form a more simplified form has been followed. The plan will first establish a set of major development concepts; concepts which are offered as solutions to major problems.

This short segment is the most important part of the plan—the major concepts becoming the recommended basic river policy framework.

After establishing this basic framework, separated districts along the river will be discussed in greater detail. Then, the respective elements of each area will be assembled on a whole river scale to describe in greater detail the overall systems and frameworks.

MAJOR CONCEPTS

Minneapolis, and the area around it, has not only grown in size since its earlier days, but it has become infinitely more complex. Life styles of City residents and the resultant activity patterns and land uses making up the City are more diverse than they have ever been. The river, at the same time, has not expanded; there is the same amount of water, of land, and of river frontage. While much vacant land and numerous redevelopment opportunities exist along the river, a resurgence of river interest would soon demonstrate that neither the land nor the opportunities are limitless. A determination of priorities for Riverfront usage is necessary.

Is an activity or use dependent upon the river? If so, would they in turn provide a public benefit? On the basis of the answers to these questions alone, some uses belong on the river, and others do not.

Activities which generally have a need for Riverfront locations and should have a high priority are:

Recreation which physically uses the water and which capitalizes on an aesthetically stimulating setting.

Industry which uses the water.

Housing which, subject to other conditions, makes the river amenity available to the most people.

Open Space—passive and unprogrammed active types.

Commercial uses which relate directly to other river uses or which create "special atmosphere."

Entertainment and Culture—benefiting from the aesthetic environment.

Education related to studying the river, the natural environment, or river related history.

Activities which have no need for river locations and which would have detrimental effects on a high quality river environment should not be allowed to locate on the river. These are:

Industry—non-river related.

Warehousing—non-river related.

Wholesaling—non-river related.

Railroads.

Outdoor storage—non-river related.

Neighborhood facilities—non-river related.

Commercial—types not related to river, river history, and not directly related to other river uses.

Because the needs of contemporary industry and related uses are different from those of an earlier era, they need not be located near the Falls of St. Anthony, an area so steeped in the history of the river and the City. They need not occupy land along the river near the Downtown that is so vitally necessary and desirable for in-City housing. Yet the City needs these kinds of activities, and some of them in turn need the river. For these reasons:

Industry, warehousing, and excess railroad activities should be removed from the Central River area.

- The Upper River area, from Plymouth Avenue N. to the Camden Bridge, with a few exceptions on the east side, should be essentially preserved as an industrial area.
- Industry and commerce that have need to use the river directly for barging should have the highest priority for river frontage in this area.
- The City's efforts to maintain a favorable freight rate structure should be strengthened by continual improvement of its Municipal Terminal to meet the needs of industries desiring to use barge transport, but lacking river frontage or private terminals.
- Industry located in the remainder of this area should be of high employment types, offering the greatest possible number of jobs to nearby residents.

While the upper stretch of the river is best suited to river industry and related uses, factors related to the character of the central stretch (from I-35W to Plymouth Avenue N.) define a completely new and different development pattern. Present within this part of the river are the most outstanding opportunities for realigning the City with the river. It is here that the river flows within eight blocks of Minneapolis' vibrant commercial center. It is here, also, that vestiges of the City's earliest days can be found. More important than all else, it is here that the natural characteristics of the river have combined with man's past achievements to form a cluster of highly varied and unequalled elements—St. Anthony Falls, Nicollet Island, Main Street, and Hennepin Island. These elements, along with the river edge near the Gateway area, when linked together, can provide opportunities for human activity that are unparalleled anywhere else in the City or the metropolitan area. Much of the land in and around these areas is vacant or underutilized and has for years produced a drain on the City's economy. And the opportunities for development or redevelopment have ripened with each succeeding year. Yet the almost inevitable rebuilding process has been slow in beginning largely due to the lack of an over-all scheme that would insure healthy surroundings for new development.

The fruit, however, is now ready to be picked. It is here and now that the City of Minneapolis must rise to the challenge of rebuilding itself from within, for this is its "New Frontier." It is here, on the banks of the Mississippi, close to the Downtown and the University of Minnesota, near a diversity of jobs, shopping, entertainment and cultural activities, and surrounding a multifaceted theater of space for leisure activity, that the majority of new Downtown housing should be located.

In order to develop this entire area to its fullest potential, however, a carefully integrated set of guidelines must be followed. The major concepts described here are dependent upon the optimum relationship between housing and the aforementioned major amenity areas.

- Nicollet Island, Main Street, Hennepin Island, and the river edge portions of the Gateway area must be recognized as a composite amenity; as the major attraction of not only this central stretch of the river but of the entire Riverfront.
- Each of these areas—Nicollet Island, Main Street, Hennepin Island, and the river edge of Gateway—though they may be developed under a variety of land controls, including both public and private types, should nevertheless be totally oriented to public use. Private development which is inaccessible to the public should not be located within this theater-of-activity.
- In addition to the Cedar-Riverside residences presently planned to focus on University activity, housing of moderate to high density should surround the Central activity core. It should be located in a number of districts including Riverfront West (North Loop), Gateway, Riverfront East (Industry Square), the East Bank between Main Street and University Avenue, and in St. Anthony West behind Boom Island. There should be no residential uses on the river side of Main Street between programmed I-335 and 6th Avenue S.E., nor on the island areas. Several of the districts, notably Riverfronts East and West and the area between Main and University Avenue near Eastgate can, and should, constitute largely self-contained neighborhoods.

□ Residential uses along the Central area banks when juxtaposed with the varied activity spaces surrounding the falls—Nicollet Island, Main Street, Hennepin Island, and Gateway—constitute a development concept based on a high degree of interdependency. Thus, while the housing will be complemented by these unique foci, the foci in turn will be supported in large part by the residential uses.

With the Upper area of the river designated for river oriented industrial usage and the Central area identified as a major new residential-leisure complex, the first order land use framework is established. There are other places on the Riverfront, however, that have special significance. Some of these, including Minnehaha Park, the West River Road, and the East River Road have through the years established their worth to the City. While minor improvements are needed in these areas, their basic functions should remain largely unchanged.

On the other hand, the University River Flats, the Washington Avenue Terminal area, the Northern States Power Dam Flats, Boom Island, Bassett's Creek, and the area known as North Mississippi Park all possess unique but as yet undeveloped opportunities. These areas should be improved to serve as recreational activity nodes. Each should, to some degree, serve the nearby neighborhood and community populations, yet they should function primarily as parts of an integrated Riverfront space that has City-wide and regional significance.

□ Minnehaha Park, the West River Road, and the East River Road should be improved while basically maintaining their present functions.

□ The University River Flats, the Washington Avenue Terminal area, the Northern States Power Dam Flats, Boom Island, Bassett's Creek, and the area known as North Mississippi park should be viewed as nodes of Riverfront activity.

□ All areas mentioned in the above two statements should be developed for uses that are primarily recreational in nature. They may supplement but should not substitute for neighborhood recreation space.

New land use arrangements along the river will go far toward solving many of the major problems that exist. Without adequate movement systems, however, precious little in terms of a functionally coordinated set of river area activity patterns can be accomplished. Movement to, from, along, and across the river must meet a complex set of needs. Both people and goods must move from place to place, not only as they may relate to the river but as the river area itself is part of larger urban and metropolitan systems. Facilitated movement for both people and goods must exist to housing, industry, institutions, and other land use activities on the river, and needs of the larger systems must be met as they relate to bridging this physical barrier between one part of the City and another.

Of special concern in this plan, however, are the various needs and desires to reach the river edge itself and the public leisure uses that would be located there. Since the Riverfront should be considered first of all as a unique place of City-wide, regional, and even national importance, and since it will contain activities that will attract people from these larger geographic areas, it must be provided with adequate vehicular access routes and related parking. In certain instances when compatible uses exist, multiple use of parking facilities would be advisable.

More important than providing vehicular access is the challenge of making the riverscape accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. While convenient vehicular access will knit the Riverfront area into the fabric of the City and the region, it is the human scale pedestrian and bicycle paths that must serve to deliver people to the water's edge. It is at this level that the uses along the river will be linked to each other to form an integrated network of leisure activity nodes. And it is at this level that the movement itself becomes a dominant form of leisure activity.

□ All activities must be conveniently linked to their related needs within the large City-wide, regional, state, and national systems.

□ While the pleasurable experience of driving along the existing East and West River Roads has been aptly propounded, benefits to be gained through proportionately higher pedestrian use of the rest of the Minneapolis Riverfront are even greater. Thus, with only a few notable exceptions, additional vehicular access should be directed "to" the vicinity of the river and not parallel along its edges.

□ A continuous greenway should be developed to link activities along the river's edge and to provide for uninterrupted cycling and walking. This greenway, though widening in selected areas for special leisure activities, should be wide enough to accommodate at least pedestrian paths, cycling paths, and sitting areas. Only industry or commerce, having a need to use the river directly for barging, should have a higher priority for use of the immediate banks, and then only in the area between Plymouth Avenue and the Camden area.

□ The river greenway should be linked perpendicularly from the river to nearby neighborhoods and other population centers—through the use of greenway "windows." When feasible these windows should connect with existing public facilities such as neighborhood parks, school sites, and public open spaces of other sorts. Also, when feasible, these windows should take advantage of existing surface drainageways, such as Bassett's Creek and Shingle Creek. And specific attention should be given to the connection of the river to the Downtown.

□ Physical access to the river whether vehicular, pedestrian, or bicycle, should be reinforced by visual access.

All of the above major concepts will work together to provide the river area with a much higher sense of vitality, order, and identity. And these kinds of qualities themselves will help to promote the continued improvement of the area. Yet the mere existence of new land uses, movement patterns and the like cannot in itself assure the kind of identity and integrity that is needed to re-create the river area. Visual aspects as well as func-

tional ones are important. Each of the above concepts implies some of the elements of a visually ordered environment. The location on the river's edge of uses which need or require the river will imply a sense of meaning. Barging and industry-related uses when well-designed and controlled can provide in a very real sense the feeling of man-in-tune-with-nature. Developing the islands and the edges of the Central segment for public uses and capitalizing on the historic background of the area will provide a major rallying point for a new river sensitivity. The placement of residential uses around these unparalleled assets will symbolize the existence of a balanced community in tune with nature. The development of numerous nodes of activity along with the greenways and windows gives a sense of completeness, of a broadly based concern for all of Minneapolis' citizens.

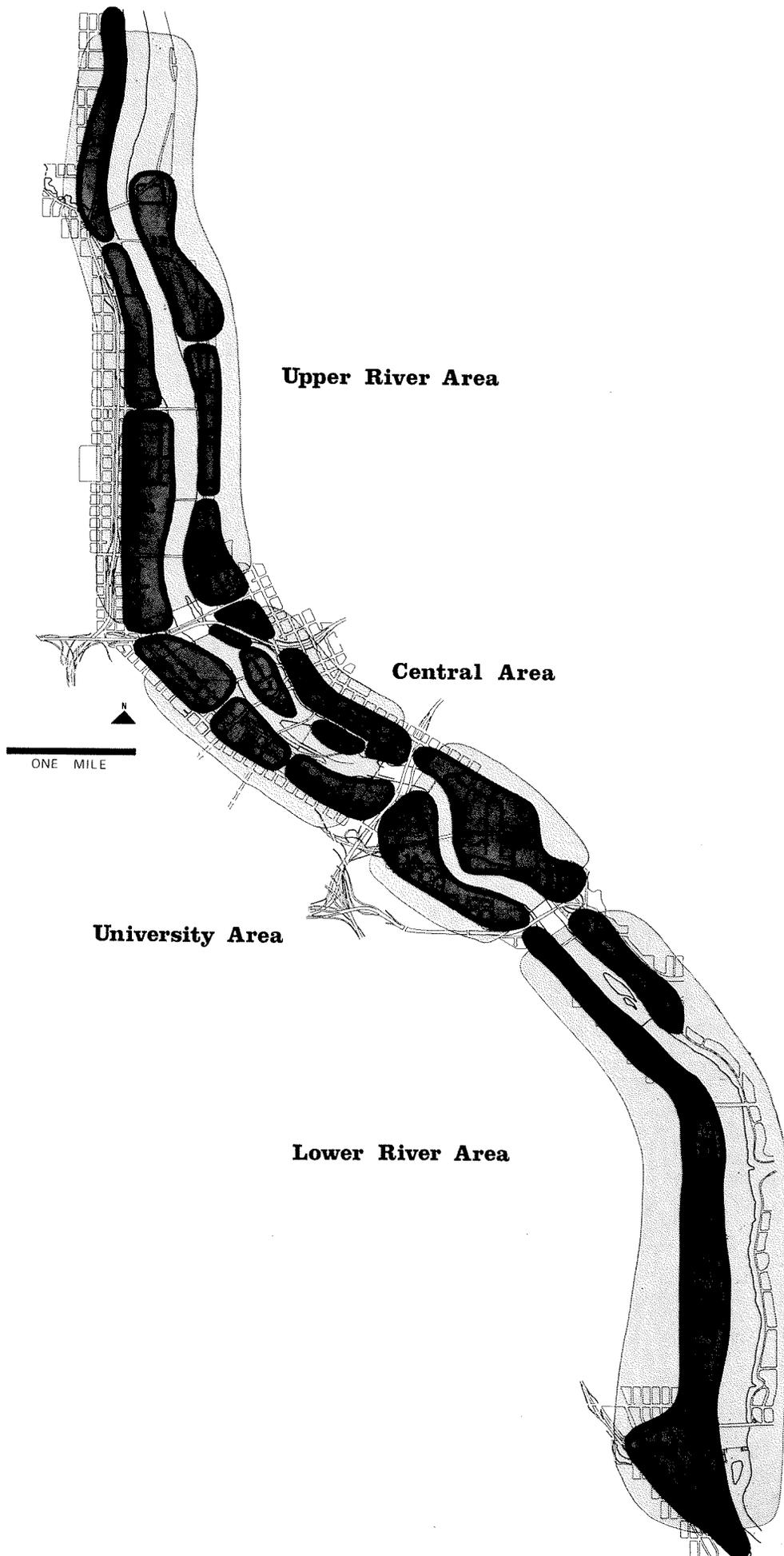
Several additional major concepts, however, provide increased opportunities for developing identity within the river area.

□ A stronger delineation of the river's location and form can and should be achieved by locating high-rise housing on the top edge of the bluffs in the Central and University areas, thereby carrying the line of the bluffs upward. Terraced housing may follow the natural terrain enhancing the topography and taking advantage of better views of the river, better exposure, and greater diversity of housing types.

□ Substantial structures should not rest on the lower flat areas, particularly in places such as the Washington Avenue Terminal area, the University River Flats nor the Dam Flats. Nor should such major structures be placed on the islands, most notably, Nicollet Island and the Hennepin Island area.

□ New structures located along the river should not be oriented in such a way as to block the Riverfront from the surrounding community.

□ Structures of historic merit should be saved from destruction and renovated for new uses whenever possible to preserve the historic flavor of the area.



Design Areas and Districts

Central Area:

- ① NICOLLET ISLAND
- ② HENNEPIN ISLAND
- ③ MAIN STREET
- ④ BOOM ISLAND-ST. ANTHONY WEST
- ⑤ GATEWAY
- ⑥ RIVERFRONT WEST
- ⑦ RIVERFRONT EAST

Upper River Area:

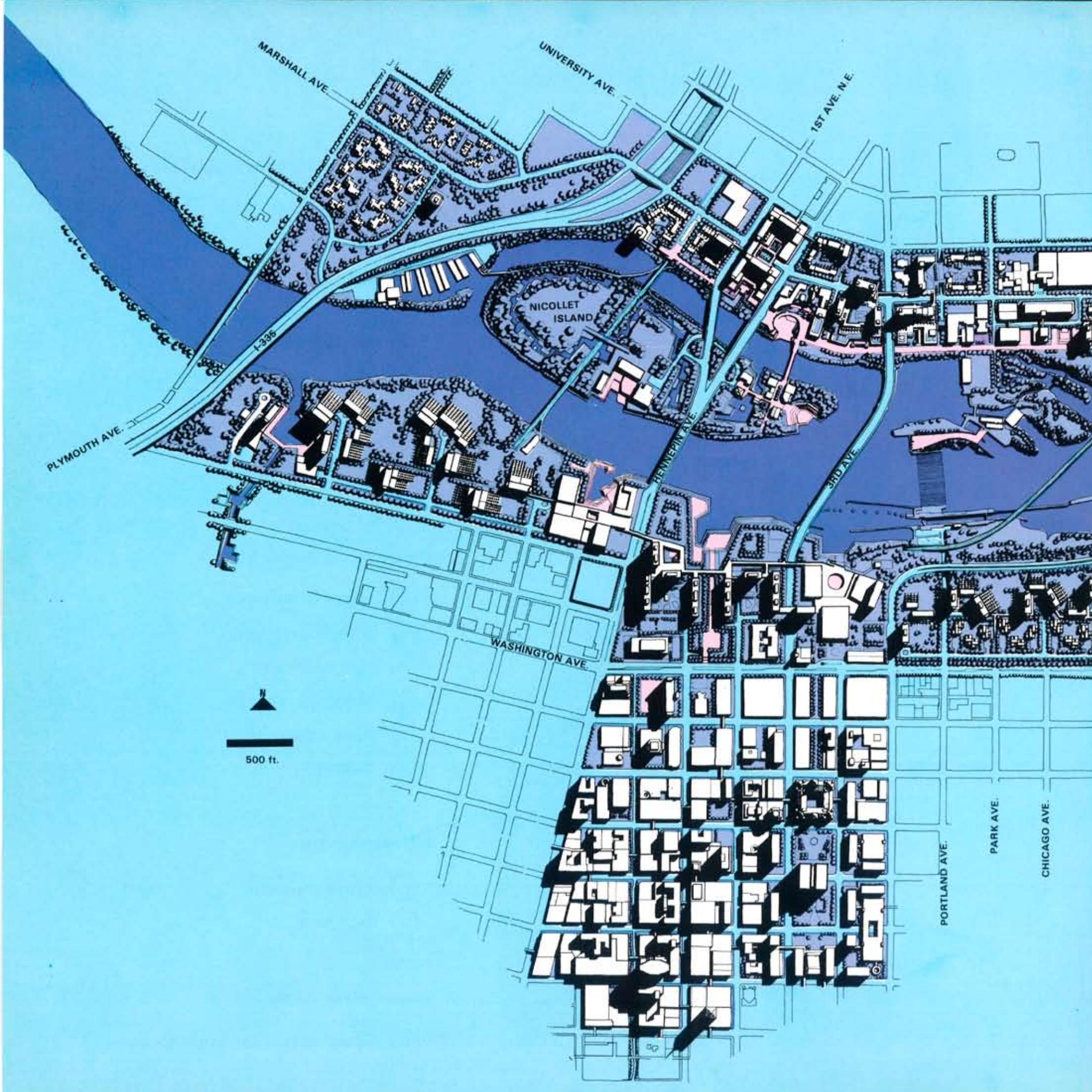
- ⑧ NORTH WASHINGTON
- ⑨ MUNICIPAL TERMINAL
- ⑩ EAST BROADWAY
- ⑪ MARSHALL TERRACE
- ⑫ NSP-MARSHALL
- ⑬ CAMDEN

University Area:

- ⑭ CEDAR-RIVERSIDE
- ⑮ EAST BANK

Lower River Area:

- ⑯ LOWER RIVER, EAST AND WEST BANKS



MARSHALL AVE.

UNIVERSITY AVE.

1ST AVE. N.E.

PLYMOUTH AVE.

L-395

NICOLLET ISLAND

BENNEPIN AVE.

3RD AVE.

WASHINGTON AVE.

N

500 ft.

PORTLAND AVE.

PARK AVE.

CHICAGO AVE.

ILLUSTRATED OBJECTIVES

