A City In Transition
Retail Market Niche Analysis for Downtown North Saint Paul

Introduction
As a part of the redevelopment effort of Downtown North St. Paul (NSP), a team of students from the Course PA 5511 were asked to participate in a project called Economic Restructuring: Establishing Niche Market Segments.

Purpose:
• Strengthen economic competitiveness of core retail district
• Diversify and revitalize downtown area

Methodology and Approach
The team used the following approach to achieve project objectives:
1. Building and business inventory of the North St. Paul downtown
2. Business inventory in primary market area (outside of NSP downtown)
3. Analysis of spatial reports of downtown businesses and built environment
4. Market analysis to identify potential market gaps in retail sales in the NSP downtown
5. Recommendations for business recruitment strategies targeting niche businesses

Findings
Business Inventory Results
- Lots of underutilized space and surface parking lots
- Vacant space in downtown for compression of medical and office space to open up space for pedestrian-oriented retail and services
- Diversity of businesses and land uses (industrial, retail and office)
- Use diversity of businesses as way to build unique identity for downtown NSP.

Recommendations
Niche Summary
- Past
  - Antiques
  - Classic cars
  - Museums
- Present
  - Brewing
  - Woodworking
  - Temporary Uses
- Future
  - Wind
  - Solar
  - Cycling

Past – A City Proud of its Past
• Create antiques retail guide
• Use downtown business association to strengthen relationships
• Use classic cars as a way to draw complementary industries

Present – A City in Transition
• Use space and buildings creatively
• Find industries that fill current retail needs
• Provide opportunities to start small and grow
• Utilize materials from existing industries

Future – A Green Tomorrow
Clean Energy
• Expand project to include additional wind turbines
• Continue to diversify energy generation
• Develop fund to assist retrofitting for businesses

Bicycle Friendliness
• Connect the trail with NSP
• Bicycle friendly streetscape
• Promote local bicycle mode choice

Conclusions
Strong Building Blocks
• Traditional Downtown
• Existing antiques niche
• Unique mix of land uses
• Green Infrastructure

Bright Future
• History – Connect museums, classics cars and antiques
• Present – Use industrial land for new purposes
• Future – Make a commitment to continue green investments

Leverage unique existing community attributes to maintain competitive position.
Establish a unique sense of place that is driven by high-wage jobs and quality of life

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Instructor: Robert Streeter
Poster Design: Robert Clarkson and Tashto Silburn
Student Team: Alyssa Chiumento, Robert Clarkson, Tony Damiano, Wesley Johnson, and Tashto Silburn
City of North Saint Paul Project Lead: Paul Ammenman