About the Partner

Saint Paul is the capital of Minnesota and the county seat of Ramsey County. The city is divided into seventeen neighborhood planning districts and its estimated population is 316,000 residents.

Project Description

Per the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan, industrial land in Saint Paul will “remain adaptable, relevant and supportive of well-paying jobs with low barriers to entry and a growing tax base.” Therefore, the City seeks to maximize its industrial land use efficiency and job availability in order to maintain a diversified economy and improve economic resiliency and opportunity for residents of Saint Paul.

To achieve this, the City wants to plan for, support, and attract the right mix of employment-rich sectors and make sure residents can access those jobs. Stronger connections between our workforce and jobs is especially urgent considering recent increases in unemployment due to the pandemic, which has further exacerbated income disparities for city populations of color.

This project seeks to identify specific traditional and emerging economic sectors that Saint Paul should target for growth and recruitment, as well as strategies to implement various policies of the 2040 Plan which include:

- facilitating business creation, attraction, retention and expansion;
- supporting family-sustaining jobs and enhancing workers’ skills to excel at those jobs;
- supporting business, real estate and financial models that keep more money locally, such as locally-owned businesses, local-prioritized employment, employee-owned businesses and commercial land trusts;
- retaining and protecting current industrial land from conversions to residential or institutional uses;
- encouraging investment in new employment uses, such as medical technology, maker space, and small-scale or custom production.

How Student Work Will Be Used to Build Community Resilience

- To advance policy and/or program changes to address the current and future job market, especially in industrial sectors and in ways that are replicable across metro cities.
- To ensure the City has a supply of family-supporting jobs with low barriers to entry that will make progress to reduce the persistent income and employment racial disparities faced by communities of color in Saint Paul.
Determine Existing Conditions and Inventory Resources: Which industrial sectors provide the most jobs and quality employment (family-sustaining wages and benefits) for Saint Paul residents?

What are characteristics of people hired by various industrial sectors (nationally, regionally, locally), and how do they compare to current and projected demographics in Saint Paul?

What training and career pathway programs exist to help Saint Paul residents access these employment-rich sectors (apprenticeships; associates and technical degree programs, technical certificate programs, business-specific training, nonprofit/private workforce developers, etc.)?

Case Studies: How have similar municipalities addressed these issues and better connected employment-rich sectors/employers to the workforce - particularly populations of color?

Analysis: Based on the characteristics of employment sectors, local workforce, and available resources, which employment-rich industrial sectors should be recruited or protected by policy or ordinance?

What are the gaps in employment-rich sectors? In local workforce skills or other attributes? In workforce and employer support resources?

Implementation: What are some strategies to address issues identified in #5 and 6?

How can the City and its partners support private business recruitment and workforce developer efforts to better match and connect residents to available jobs? For example, how could access to training or career resources for residents be improved?

Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas to Explore

1. Determine Existing Conditions and Inventory Resources: Which industrial sectors provide the most jobs and quality employment (family-sustaining wages and benefits) for Saint Paul residents?
2. What are characteristics of people hired by various industrial sectors (nationally, regionally, locally), and how do they compare to current and projected demographics in Saint Paul?
3. What training and career pathway programs exist to help Saint Paul residents access these employment-rich sectors (apprenticeships; associates and technical degree programs, technical certificate programs, business-specific training, nonprofit/private workforce developers, etc.)?
4. Case Studies: How have similar municipalities addressed these issues and better connected employment-rich sectors/employers to the workforce - particularly populations of color?
5. Analysis: Based on the characteristics of employment sectors, local workforce, and available resources, which employment-rich industrial sectors should be recruited or protected by policy or ordinance?
6. What are the gaps in employment-rich sectors? In local workforce skills or other attributes? In workforce and employer support resources?
7. Implementation: What are some strategies to address issues identified in #5 and 6?
8. How can the City and its partners support private business recruitment and workforce developer efforts to better match and connect residents to available jobs? For example, how could access to training or career resources for residents be improved?

Potential Community Partners or Stakeholders

- Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
- DEED’s Divisions of Economic Development and Workforce Development
- Workforce and business development community partners (e.g. Merrick Community Services; CLUES; Hmong American Partnership, African Economic Development Solutions, Asian Economic Development Association)
- Midway Chamber of Commerce
- GreaterMSP
- Saint Paul Port Authority (SPPA)

Existing Plans & Reports

- Saint Paul’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Plans and Data Sources at the State, Regional, County and City Levels
- Workforce and Neighborhood Nonprofit Plans and Reports

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