

North Quadrant Precinct Plan

Saint Paul on the Mississippi

Development Framework



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Prepared by:

Saint Paul on the Mississippi
Design Center

2000

January, 2000

Since the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework* was released in June 1997, downtown Saint Paul and our Mississippi Riverfront have witnessed investment, growth and developer interest unlike that seen for decades. Thanks to the vision laid out in the *Framework*, Saint Paul now has a coordinated strategy to guide the transformation of its downtown and central riverfront, a vision that reconnects the city to its defining natural feature and revitalizes downtown as a place to live, work and play.

The North Quadrant, bounded by Jackson Street, E. Seventh Street and I-94, presents a unique opportunity to create one of the mixed-use urban villages proposed in the *Framework*. Informed by several workshops and community meetings, the *North Quadrant Precinct Plan* envisions hundreds of units of new housing, oriented towards a central green space, and connected to transit, adjacent neighborhoods and the river.

Transformation of the North Quadrant is underway. With strong developer interest, as well as the support of several public agencies and the community as a whole, we look forward to being a partner in the creation of this new neighborhood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Quess". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font with a prominent vertical stroke at the end.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Crealey". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font with a prominent horizontal stroke at the end.

5.6
North
Quadrant
Precinct

5.6.1 The role of the North Quadrant: strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

The North Quadrant is uniquely poised to become downtown’s next mixed-use urban village. Specifically, within the next several years, it presents one of the best opportunities to increase the number and type of housing units downtown. The unique physical characteristics of the area (its compact size, intact traditional street network, prominent entry points and well-defined edges) facilitate the creation of a new neighborhood with its own sense of place and identity. Redevelopment of the North Quadrant will fill in the “hole in the urban fabric” between the downtown core and the Capitol, Dayton’s Bluff and Lafayette Park, and repopulate an area that has become primarily a surface parking district.



The North Quadrant is a prime location for the development of new housing units adjacent to the downtown core, Lowertown and the Mississippi River.



A mix of residential and commercial uses is proposed.



Viable businesses and community institutions still exist in the North Quadrant, including the Gopher Bar and Kat Keys (above), and St. Mary's Church (below).



The North Quadrant has strong edges, such as this row of historic commercial buildings on the south side of East 7th Street.

Strengths

The North Quadrant enjoys a unique location between the office and cultural core of downtown and the Capitol, Dayton's Bluff and Lafayette Park. Its proximity to the thriving Lowertown Urban Village and the Mississippi River is an asset that has yet to be fully taken advantage of. The North Quadrant enjoys excellent transit and freeway access.

While much of the original building stock has been removed to provide surface parking for downtown businesses and employees, a variety of viable businesses remain, many of them with a long history of serving residents and employees, and a strong future of serving residents in the new neighborhood. These businesses are significant assets in the area's redevelopment, community anchors for the new North Quadrant. The two churches particularly stand out in this regard.

The North Quadrant is large enough to create a critical mass of land for redevelopment, and the area has strong boundaries that help define it as a unique place. The area is already served by public infrastructure, such as streets and utilities.

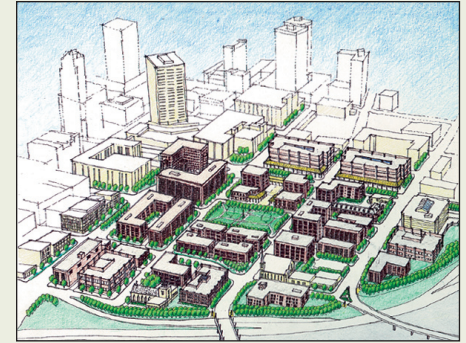
Weaknesses

The North Quadrant is currently underutilized. While the surface parking lots support downtown employees and businesses, and are themselves viable businesses, they create the impression of neglect, abandonment and disinvestment. Surface parking lots are not vibrant people places, and they often signal that an area is in a "holding pattern," waiting for "higher and better" uses.

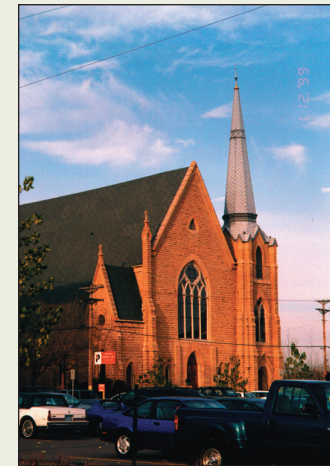
The loss of most of the original building stock is very evident. The Quadrant lacks green space or other obvious physical amenities, and it has no physical connection to the Mississippi River, even though it is relatively close to it. Separated from the downtown core by major arterials and cut off from adjacent neighborhoods by I-94, the area feels isolated.

Opportunities

The exceptional opportunity in the North Quadrant is to bring life back to an area suffering from years of actions that have sapped its vitality. In an improving downtown economy, with support and leadership from the public and private sectors, the Quadrant can once again be a thriving neighborhood where people live, work and play. Perhaps the most significant opportunity is to increase the amount and variety of housing within downtown, where new residents can support and take advantage of existing businesses, proximity to the downtown core and Mississippi River, and the resurgence of downtown. The real opportunity is to create a place for people, not cars. Because of its compact size and location, the North Quadrant can be a walkable, tight-knit community, where diversity and cohesiveness co-exist. Current interest in redevelopment of the area by local and national developers signals a perception in the real estate sector that this is a site to meet the increasing demand for downtown living. Not only will new high-quality development in the North Quadrant increase property values, it can also act as a catalyst for additional reinvestment in the downtown core.



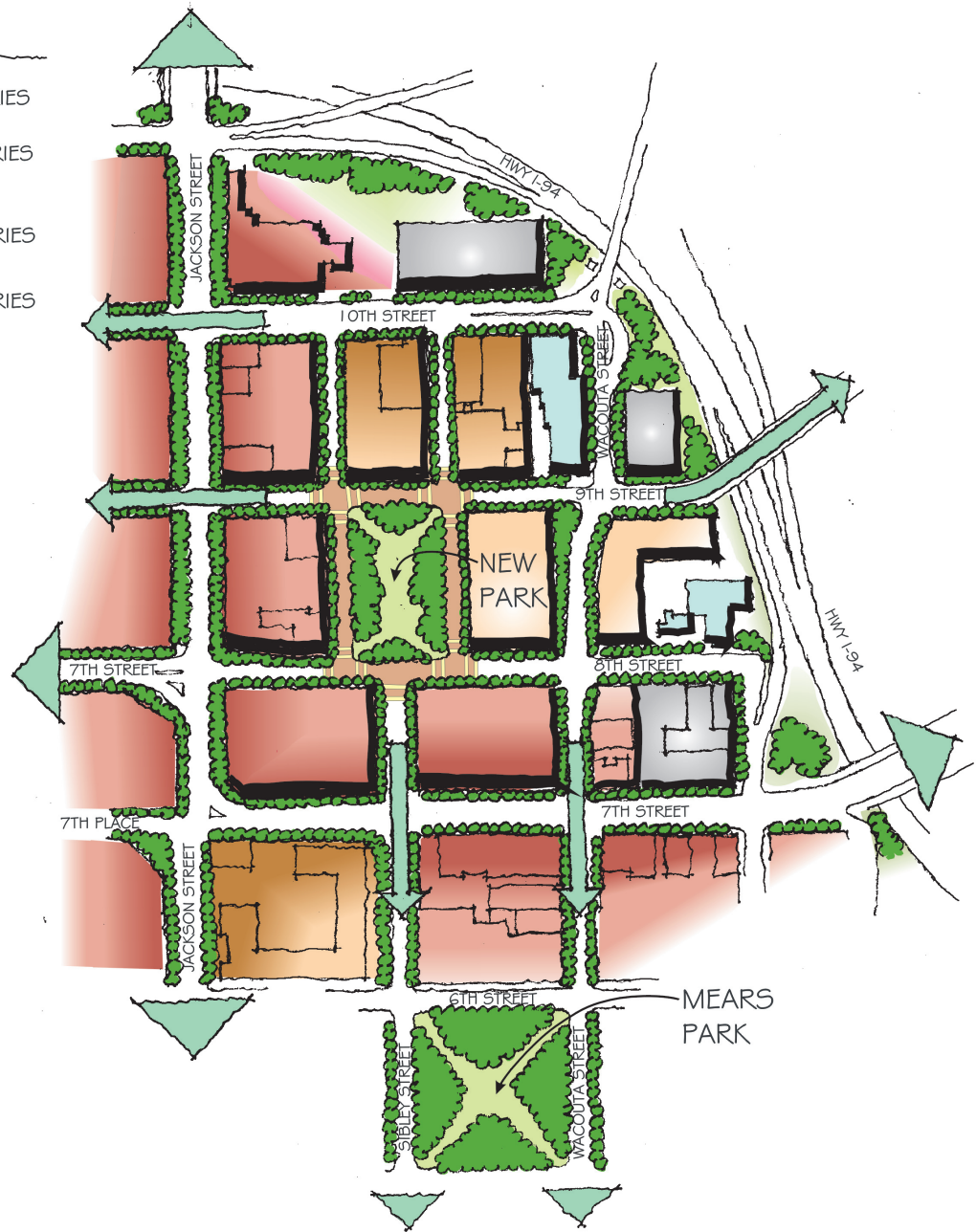
An early character sketch by Town Planning Collaborative demonstrates the type of massing, building arrangement and public spaces envisioned in the North Quadrant. The central green is a key defining feature.



First Baptist Church is one of two churches in the North Quadrant that will continue to serve as important community anchors in the new neighborhood.

KEY

- GROUND FLOOR - COMMERCIAL
UPPER FLOORS - OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL
UNDERGROUND PARKING IN NEW BLDGS.
 - ± 6 STORIES
 - ± 4 STORIES
- PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL
WITH UNDERGROUND PARKING
IN NEW BLDGS.
 - ± 6 STORIES
 - ± 4 STORIES
- INTERCEPT PARKING RAMP
WITH FIRST FLOOR COMMERCIAL
AND POSSIBLY SOME RESIDENTIAL
 -
- PARK SPACE
 -



The North Quadrant Precinct Plan envisions a thriving neighborhood reconnected to downtown and the Mississippi River, where people live, work and play.

5.6.2 The Vision.

The North Quadrant Urban Village is a low-to-mid-rise, medium-to-high-density, mixed-use (but predominantly residential) neighborhood adjacent to the downtown core that integrates new infill construction with rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of existing warehouse buildings, preservation of the two churches, and retention of those existing businesses appropriate for a predominantly residential community. Key features include a mix of commercial, residential, cultural and recreational uses, centered on a public green, within a small, compact and walkable neighborhood linked to transit and other residential and employment opportunities. A range of housing types, sizes and costs foster a demographically diverse community. The existing network of streets is retained and enhanced with landscaping, pedestrian-scale ornamental lighting and street furniture to improve the neighborhood's public realm as well as to connect the new neighborhood to the downtown core, adjacent neighborhoods, the Capitol area and the Mississippi River.

5.6.3 Objectives and guidelines.

Based on the broad Framework goals, the following objectives and guidelines are intended to direct the development of the North Quadrant toward the achievement of the Vision.



Planting trees on all streets will transform this “hardscape” into a more natural landscape.



Mixed-use buildings with active first floors enliven the street.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Objective: Increase the amount of landscaping – trees, lawns, plantings, etc. – throughout the North Quadrant.

Guideline: Plant native vegetation along the freeway edges.

Guideline: Plant trees on all streets to create a network of green pathways connecting the Quadrant to adjacent neighborhoods, districts and the Mississippi River.

Guideline: Provide a variety of natural environments, from a public central green space to semi-private/private courtyard green spaces, to private gardens.

Objective: Use landscape and streetscape initiatives strategically to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Guideline: Redesign 7th and Jackson streets as “linear parks,” with extensive landscaping and other pedestrian amenities, to soften them as edges for the new neighborhood.

LAND USE

Objective: Redevelop the North Quadrant as a low-to-mid-rise, medium-to-high-density, mixed use (but predominantly residential) urban village where people live, work and play.

Guideline: Provide a range of housing types (owner, rental, townhome, apartment, live/work, rowhouse), sizes and costs to foster a diverse community.

Guideline: Concentrate predominantly commercial uses along the 7th Street and Jackson Street edges of the neighborhood.

Guideline: Concentrate predominantly residential uses in the core of the neighborhood, clustered around a new central green.

Guideline: Encourage new buildings to provide technology features and amenities, as an extension of the Lowertown CyberVillage.

Objective: Encourage mixed-use buildings.

Guideline: Develop mixed-use buildings along Jackson and 7th streets with ground-floor commercial, upper-floor office and/or residential, and underground parking (for new buildings).

Guideline: Develop predominantly residential buildings in the core of the new neighborhood (some with ground-floor retail/neighborhood services), with underground parking and courtyard green space for residents (in new buildings).

Objective: **Encourage the retention of as much of the existing building stock and land uses (except for surface parking) as possible; incorporate them into the new neighborhood.**

Guideline: Retain the existing warehouse buildings with their current uses or convert them to mixed-use (mostly residential) buildings.

Guideline: Retain the two churches (St. Mary’s Catholic Church and First Baptist Church) and Embassy Suites Hotel as vital anchors for the new neighborhood.

Guideline: Retain on-street parking.

Guideline: Retain those other existing businesses that are appropriate for a predominantly residential neighborhood, whether in their existing buildings or incorporated into new mixed-use buildings.

Guideline: Phase in new infill development around existing commercial buildings; strategically redevelop existing buildings over time as market demand warrants.

Objective: **Provide off-street parking to replace surface parking lost to redevelopment and to meet parking demand created by new construction.**

Guideline: Construct perimeter “intercept” parking ramps on the freeway edges of the Quadrant to provide replacement parking for surface parking displaced by redevelopment.

Guideline: Locate active, street-oriented and/or auto-service uses on the ground floor of above-ground parking structures.

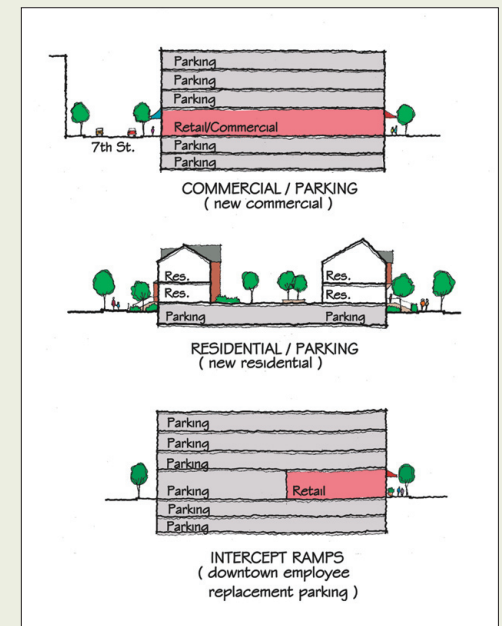
Guideline: Provide parking below-ground in new mixed-use buildings to serve building residents, employees and customers.



Embassy Suites Hotel is a vital anchor for the new neighborhood.



The provision of off-street parking can be approached in various ways, depending on the primary use of the parcel.





The Walsh Building is designated as a local heritage preservation site and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Individual residential unit entrances and enough setback to allow a smooth transition from public to private space lend a sense of beauty and “human-ness” to the street.



Above-ground parking structures can be designed to look like other residential and commercial buildings.

BUILT FORM

Objective: Design new buildings to be generally compatible in height, scale, massing, materials, configuration and fenestration with the historic buildings in Lowertown.

Guideline: Construct mixed-use buildings of ± 6 stories along Jackson and 7th streets, compatible with the scale, height, materials and massing of buildings across 7th and Jackson (e.g. Butwinick’s).

Guideline: Construct predominantly residential buildings of ± 4 stories in the center of the neighborhood and facing the central green.

Guideline: Encourage the use of high-quality masonry exterior materials, primarily brick or stone.

Objective: Preserve buildings of architectural, cultural and historic merit.

Guideline: Retain the Walsh Building (189-191 E. 7th Street) and the First Baptist Church (499 Wacouta Street), which are locally designated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Objective: Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Design for Public Safety Saint Paul principles to foster a safe and vibrant community.

Guideline: Design buildings to provide “eyes on the street,” especially around the central green, with active street-level uses, transparent windows, porches, stoops, etc.

Guideline: Increase pedestrian-scale street lighting

Guideline: Design both public and private green spaces to be well-lit, visible and active.

Guideline: Design the ground floor of townhome and similar residential buildings to have individual unit entrances; design all buildings with ground-floor commercial uses to have individual storefronts on the street.

Objective: Design new buildings to fit in with their context.

Guideline: Build new residential and mixed-use buildings close to the property line, but allow enough setback for a comfortable transition from public space to semi-public space to semi-private space to private space.

Guideline: Design new buildings to match the type of street they face, taking into account height in relation to street width, setback from the front property line and ground-floor uses.

Guideline: Design above-ground parking structures with the appropriate scale, massing, height, fenestration, materials and setback to read as occupied buildings.

MOVEMENT NETWORKS

Objective: Reconfigure streets as necessary to reinstate the street grid/small block pattern of the area.

Guideline: Work with Public Works to determine the feasibility and impacts of straightening out the 7th Street curve around the block bounded by Jackson Street, 7th Street and 7th Place.

Guideline: Extend Temperance Street one block north between 9th and 10th streets.

Guideline: Create a “standard” (90°) intersection at Sibley and 7th Street.

Objective: Calm traffic as it enters the neighborhood.

Guideline: Redesign the 10th/Wacouta entrance from I-35E to slow down traffic, improve the safety of pedestrians in the area and signal that traffic is entering a residential neighborhood.

Objective: Integrate street design, land use and building form.

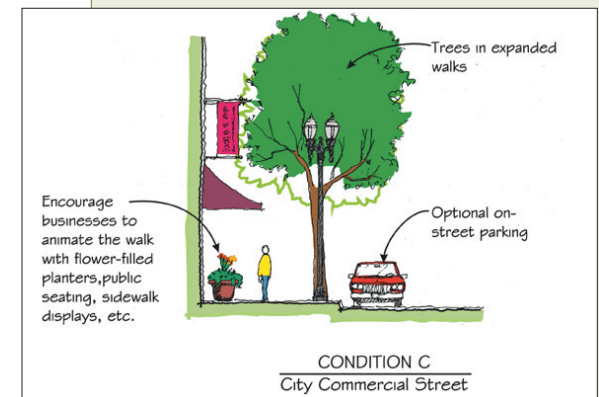
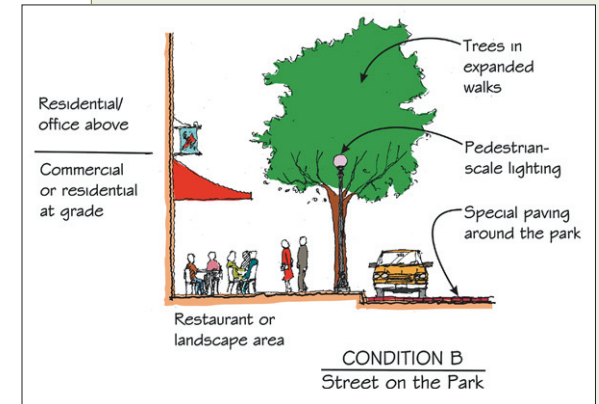
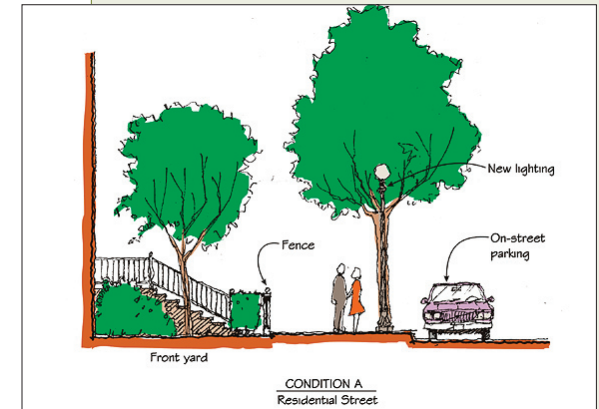
Guideline: Create a new hierarchy of street types for the Quadrant:

- residential streets - those with residential uses fronting on them.
- streets on the square - around the central green, with animated street-level uses and ornamental street paving.
- perimeter boulevards, which accommodate vehicles but are heavily-landscaped and redesigned with the pedestrian in mind - 7th, Jackson.

Objective: Connect the “intercept” parking ramps to downtown businesses and employers.

Guideline: Provide a circulator shuttle/trolley to serve the new intercept ramps and other parking ramps throughout downtown.

Streets should be designed to provide a pedestrian-oriented, lively environment.





PUBLIC REALM

Objective: Repeat the historic (and successful) land use pattern in downtown Saint Paul of a central green space tightly surrounded by buildings.

Guideline: Create a “park at the heart” of the new neighborhood, surrounded by predominantly residential buildings.

Objective: Use the existing street network and block pattern as a framework for new building placement and the arrangement of open spaces.

Guideline: Keep existing streets open.

Guideline: Design new buildings to fit the existing urban pattern of small blocks formed by streets arranged on a grid.

Guideline: Prohibit street closures to accommodate super-block structures.

Guideline: Extend Temperance Street one block north between 9th and 10th streets.

Guideline: Work with Public Works to determine the feasibility and impacts of straightening out the 7th Street curve around the block bounded by Jackson Street, 7th Street and 7th Place.

Guideline: Preserve significant views into and out of the neighborhood, especially of the First Baptist Church and Capitol, and to the Mississippi River valley.

Objective: Redesign 7th and Jackson streets to provide a safer, more comfortable and higher-quality pedestrian environment, keeping in mind their function as major vehicular routes.

Guideline: Design 7th and Jackson streets as “linear parks,” with extensive landscaping, ornamental and pedestrian-scale lighting, and bump-outs at the intersections.

Guideline: Remove the median on Jackson Street and use the extra right-of-way to widen the planting strips next to the sidewalks.

Objective: Create a lively, safe and vibrant street environment.

Guideline: Repeat the ornamental street paving pattern currently used around Rice Park around the central green.

Guideline: Restrict extension of the skyway system beyond 7th Street and Jackson Street.

Guideline: Provide landscaping, pedestrian-scale ornamental lighting and street furniture on all streets within the Quadrant to promote use by pedestrians.

Guideline: Provide and maintain on-street parking.

Objective: Connect the North Quadrant to adjacent neighborhoods, districts and significant physical/natural features.

Guideline: Preserve views along public rights-of-way, especially towards the Mississippi River and Capitol.

Guideline: Extend landscaping, ornamental lighting, street furniture and sidewalks into the Quadrant.

Guideline: Improve the safety and appearance of pedestrian crossings along Jackson and 7th streets, especially at the Sibley/7th intersection.

Guideline: Improve Sibley Street as the main pedestrian connection between the new central green in the Quadrant, Mears Park, Lower Landing Park and the river's edge.

Objective: Create focal points in key public spaces (e.g. the central green), at the terminus of view corridors (e.g. at First Baptist Church) and at key gateways (e.g. 7th Street, 10th/Wacouta).

Guideline: Use public art to accent these focal points.



Landscaping along sidewalks helps frame the street and provides a park-like setting for new residential development.



First Baptist Church terminates a stunning view up Wacouta Street.

North Quadrant

Workshop Participants

January 22, 1999

Agness, Tim	Englund, Bill	Lander, Michael	Rafferty, Craig
Baillon, Paul	Esterman, Greg	Low, John	Ramos, Miguel
Baker, Kay	Favour, Joe	Lunning, Robert	Reese, Greg
Barrett, Mary	Fehrenbacher, Margot	Maczko, John	Reese, Pat
Barthol, Kelly	Fields, Gary	Madson, Paul	Remke, Stacy
Basten, Mark	Fuller, Roger	Mandell, Paul	Renke, Sara
Billig, Jennifer	Gall, Rich	Maust, Doug	Ross, Sally
Blackman, Ruth	Gall, George	Menard, Dee	Sander, Jon
Bradshaw, David	Geisser, Anne	Merz, Greg	Simon, Bob
Brand, Patty	Gerten, Jack	Miller, Jim	Skwira, Mike
Brintnall, Sandy	Glueckstein, Geoff	Montez, Janet	Sommerdorf, Norma
Brooks, Jauncie	Graner, Richard L.	Munnich, Lee	Stark, Nancy
Burow, Eldon	Greenberg, Ken	Mutschler, John	Steele, Bernie
Buxell, Jack	Hammel, Bette	Nardini, Connie	Tark, Michelle
Carlson, Al	Hansen, Robyn	Needels, Roger	Theis, Andrea
Cermak, Daniel S.	Harris Reynen, Penny	Nelson, Mary	Thomas, Jim
Close, Bob	Herbert, Betty	Nielsen, Roger	Thompson, Lucy
Edwards, Errol	Hinsdale, Tracy	Page, Gregory	Wehrle, Randall
Eggum, Tom	Hurtgen, Wanda	Pedro, Carl S.	Widder, James
Eide, Jean	Joleuron, Emmett	Peterson, Gayle	Wittgenstein, Vic
Eisenberg, Peggie	Kerr, Jon	Podas-Larson, Christine	
Eisenberg, Max	Kohns, Bob		