

SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plan Approval

Culminating almost four years of preparation, the Metropolitan Council approved the *Comprehensive Plan*, completing the Planning Commission's work on the update. The City's update of the Plan was a process involving six community-based task forces, each lead by a Planning Commission member. The chapters of the Plan – Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Water Resources, and Historic Preservation – respond to the issues an older core city faces while, at the same time, crafting a vision that will sustain Saint Paul in the coming decade. The draft approved by the Metropolitan Council will be formally recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council in early 2010.

Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project

Downtown Station Area Plan ①

Throughout 2009, under the guidance of a planning task force, co-chaired by a planning commissioner, Planning and Economic Development (PED) staff prepared the *Downtown Station Area Plan*, which addresses the issues of mobility, land use, public realm and built form adjacent to downtown LRT stations. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft Downtown Station Area Plan in December, and anticipates forwarding it to the City Council for final approval in January 2010.

Hamline, Western, Victoria Station Area Plans ②

Station area planning for future LRT stations at Hamline, Victoria, and Western began in late 2009. The Planning Commission appointed a Station Area Planning Steering Committee (co-chaired by a Planning Commission member) to oversee the station area planning process. Roundtable discussions began in November. Intensive public workshops, discussions with the Steering Committee, and open houses will continue, leading to draft plans to be sent on to the Planning Commission in mid 2010.

Central Corridor Development Strategy Implementation

The *Central Corridor Development Strategy* was developed under the supervision of two community task forces, each co-chaired by Planning Commission members, and was adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2007. This plan guides the long-term vision of the LRT corridor along University Avenue. Several initiatives were undertaken in 2009 to implement the plan, including the *Bike Walk Central Corridor Action Plan* addressing bicycle and pedestrian needs and issues in and around the Central Corridor; the report, *Mitigating the Loss of Parking in the Central Corridor*, which identified both corridor-wide and localized strategies for parking management; the \$1M grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct environmental assessments of contaminated sites along the Central Corridor; and finalization of the streetscape design for the LRT project.

Excerpts of illustrations from the *Downtown Station Area Plan*. Renewed connection to the riverfront along Sibley (top, left). Opportunity for market expansion along 4th Street (top, right). Current photo (bottom, left) and potential streetscape improvements (bottom, right) along Minnesota.





ZONING

Zoning Amendments & Studies

Design Standards Zoning Amendments

In February 2009, the City Council requested that the Planning Commission study and recommend a set of design standards to be used in the construction of single- and two-family residential dwellings. A draft ordinance was reviewed by the Neighborhood Planning Committee and approved by the Planning Commission in October 2009 and by City Council in December 2009. New standards include requirements regarding primary entrances of principal structures, minimum window and door area percentages facing a public street, a more objective definition of "hold the corner," and limits on the percent of a residential lot area that can be used for surface parking spaces.

Dynamic Display Zoning Amendments

In December 2009, the City Council adopted amendments to Chapter 64, Signs, of the Zoning Code pertaining to dynamic display signs, which were revised based on Neighborhood Planning Committee recommendations. The amendments update regulations on electronic messages signs, introduce new regulations, and remove redundant language regarding billboards with dynamic displays.

Parking Code Study

An interdepartmental staff team, under the direction of the Comprehensive Planning Committee, proposed revised off-street parking requirements and design standards based on more accurately estimating parking demand, consolidating similar use requirements to facilitate commercial corridor reuse, encouraging more efficient land use, supporting multi-modal transportation, and improving environmental stewardship. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed code revisions in January and will forward its recommendations to City Council in early 2010.

Central Corridor Zoning Study

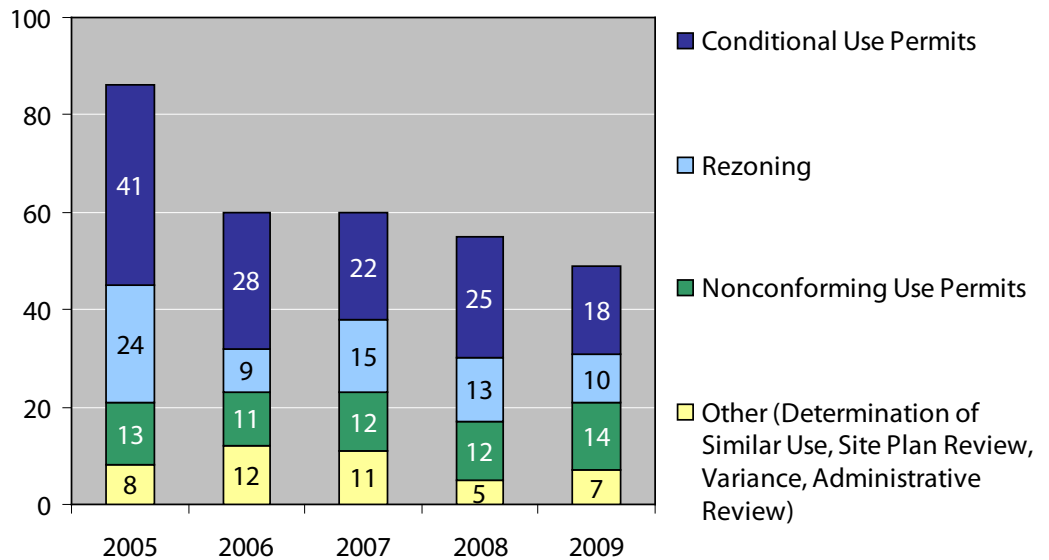
It was determined during the *Central Corridor Development Strategy* process that the City's toolbox of existing zoning districts and requirements would not facilitate the type of development envisioned for University Avenue, where the goal is to have higher density development, a reduced demand for parking, and a more pedestrian- and transit-oriented environment. In late 2009, staff began preparing revisions to the existing TN districts and crafting a new TN4 district with an anticipated draft for Planning Commission and public review available in mid 2010.

Airport Zoning Overlay

Under the guidance of the Joint Airport Zoning Board, which includes a planning commissioner, PED and Metropolitan Airports Commission staff began drafting airport zoning overlay districts for the Minneapolis-St. Paul International and Downtown St. Paul Airports in 2009. Draft ordinances are expected for Zoning Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council review in 2010.

Zoning Cases 2005 - 2009 (right).

The Zoning Committee reviewed 49 cases in 2009. Cases have maintained their general decline coinciding with the nation-wide economic downturn. While rezoning, nonconforming use permit, and other cases have remained substantially constant since 2006, conditional use permit cases declined by 13% from 2008 to 2009.





REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Ford Site 3

Ford Site Redevelopment Studies The Ford Site Task Force (co-chaired by a planning commissioner) will review several reports produced in 2009 as they consider the next steps in planning for the Ford site redevelopment. These reports include the *Ford Site Green Manufacturing Reuse Study*, which identified some green industrial reuse potential and assessed the potential to attract green manufacturing industries, the *Ford Site Redevelopment Team Report*, which recommended sustainable design tools, performance measures, and implementation mechanisms to be used in redevelopment, and the *Best Management Practice Stormwater Pre-Design*, which recommended best management and planning practice stormwater techniques relating to the unique characteristics of the site.

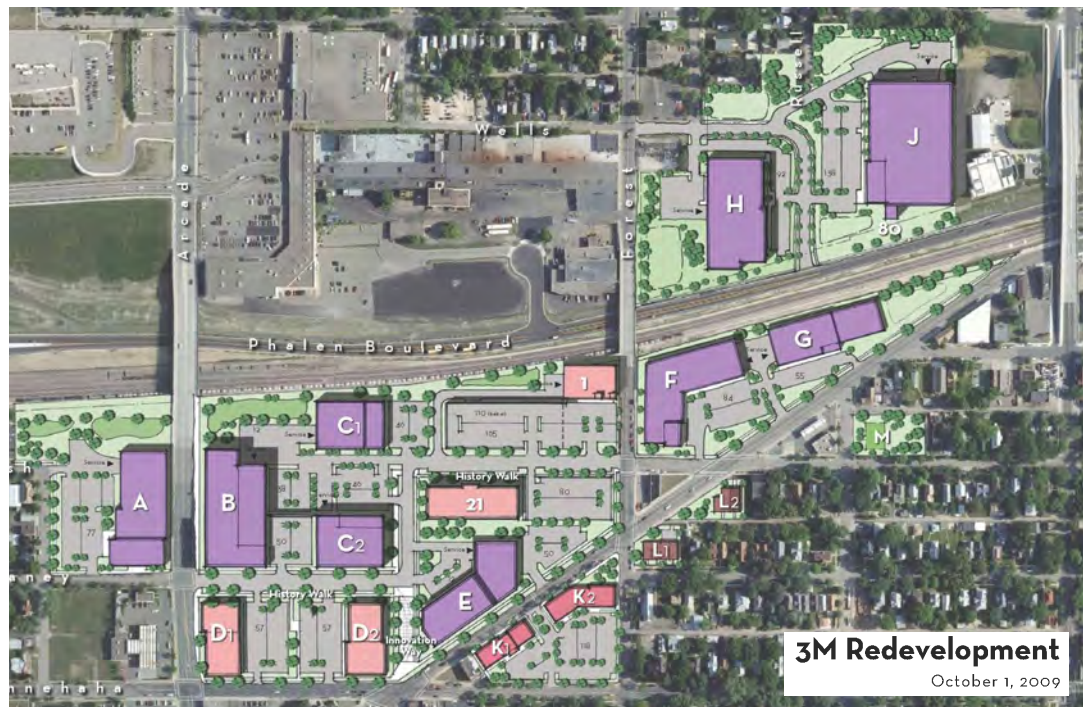
3M Site 4

3M Site Redevelopment Planning The Saint Paul Port Authority acquired 35 acres of the 3M Company's main plant campus in December 2008. With guidance and support from Council Ward offices 6 and 7, and PED, the Port Authority began an advisory community planning process for the former 3M site's reuse and redevelopment. The 3M Community Advisory Committee (CAC) included the participation of several planning commissioners in workgroups on historic resources, job creation, and urban design. A year later, after the 3M CAC developed and approved two development concepts for the site, the Port Authority acquired the site's remaining 11 acres. The 3M Design Workgroup and CAC will continue to meet in 2010.

Smith Avenue 5

Small Area Plan and Rezoning A planning initiative for Smith Avenue commenced in 2009. The work is a joint effort by the cities of West St. Paul and Saint Paul. A Planning Commission member is co-chairing the effort along with a representative from West St. Paul. The initiative seeks to direct the revitalization of the Smith Avenue corridor from the High Bridge in Saint Paul to Dodd Road in West St. Paul through a small area plan and related zoning study.

Potential redevelopment plan (right) of 3M site.





NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Neighborhood District Plans

Three additional district plan updates were overseen by the Neighborhood Planning Committee and recommended by Planning Commission in 2009, including District 2, the Greater East Side; District 4, Dayton's Bluff; and District 8, Summit University.



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CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

2009 NOTES

2009 Task Forces & Committees

Planning Commissioners participated in the following planning-related committees during 2009:

- Board of Zoning Appeals
- Downtown Station Area Planning
- Duplex-Triplex Committee
- Ford Site Task Force
- Joint Airport Zoning Board
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- 3M Site Planning Committee
- Smith Avenue Planning
- Western, Victoria, Hamline Station Area Planning
- Lexington Station Public Art

The Planning Commission is staffed by the Department of Planning and Economic Development

Cecile Bedor, *Director*

Donna Drummond, *Planning Director*

Sonja Butler, *Secretary to the Planning Commission*

New Planning Director

Former Planning Administrator, Larry Soderholm retired in 2009 after many accomplishments and more than thirty years in Planning and Economic Development (PED), with many of them as staff to the Planning Commission. Donna Drummond has assumed the position of Planning Director and the responsibility of staffing the Planning Commission.

2009 Planning Commissioners

- Brian Alton, *Chair*
 - Eduardo Barrera*
 - James Bellus*
 - Jon Commers
 - Kathi Donnelly-Cohen
 - Carole Faricy
 - Erick Goodlow
 - Steven Gordon
 - George Johnson
 - Richard Kramer
 - Yung-Kang Lu
 - Michael Margulies
 - Gladys Morton
 - Gaius Nelson
 - Marilyn Porter
 - Anthony Schertler
 - Kristina Smitten
 - Robert Spaulding
 - Terri Thao
 - Daniel Ward II
 - Barbara A. Wencil
 - David Wickiser
- *Resigned during 2009

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