

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL***Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor**25 West Fourth Street
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February 26, 2015

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman
City Council President Kathy Lantry and Councilmembers
Third Floor – City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Saint Paul Planning Commission, it is my privilege to send you and the citizens of Saint Paul our 2014 Annual Report.

One of the most important jobs of the Planning Commission is to prepare and maintain the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes citywide chapters on Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Parks, Water Resources and Historic Preservation as well as plans for subareas such as the Mississippi River, downtown, planning districts, and Green Line LRT station areas. These plans guide both the City's public investments and the regulation of private development to achieve City goals. The Metropolitan Council requires that all cities in the metropolitan area update their citywide chapters every 10 years, and begins that cycle with work to establish a regional vision and policy plans. During 2014 the Planning Commission provided comments on the Metropolitan Council's Thrive MSP 2040 vision document and the Housing and Transportation Policy Plans. The Planning Commission's work in 2015 will focus on preparing for the citywide plan update, which will get underway in earnest in 2016 with a robust community engagement process.

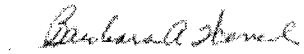
Important neighborhood planning work in 2014 included completion of the Shepard-Davern Area Plan and West Midway Industrial Area Plan, substantial completion of the West Side Flats Master Plan, and significant progress on Gateway Corridor station area plans. All of these plans establish a vision and specific recommendations for how these areas should grow and change in the future to create livable neighborhoods that add new housing, jobs and tax base to the city.

The Planning Commission also spent significant time in 2014 reviewing draft rules from the Department of Natural Resources for the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area, which included holding a well-attended public hearing. These rules will have a major impact on new development as well as natural areas along the river in Saint Paul. Final draft rules are anticipated to be released in mid-2015, and the Planning Commission will provide recommended City of Saint Paul comments to the Mayor and City Council.

In addition, the Planning Commission continued its regular work of updating the Zoning Code and reviewing zoning applications. Six zoning studies were completed and 54 zoning applications were reviewed in 2014.

These are just a few highlights of the Planning Commission's work in 2014. On behalf of the Planning Commission, we thank you for the opportunity to serve the City and engage the community in the important work of planning for the future of Saint Paul.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Wencil
Planning Commission Chair

Saint Paul Planning Commission

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

www.stpaul.gov/ped

ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is a 21-member advisory body made up of citizen volunteers appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Planning Commission and its Zoning, Comprehensive Planning, Neighborhood Planning, and Transportation Committees take on municipal planning issues as required by law. It reviews and makes recommendations on comprehensive planning and zoning recommendations, studies and amendments. It also holds public hearings where members of the public can be heard.



This Annual Report provides a summary of the Planning Commission's major activities and accomplishments in 2014.

Completed Projects

Shepard-Davern Area Plan Update and Zoning Study

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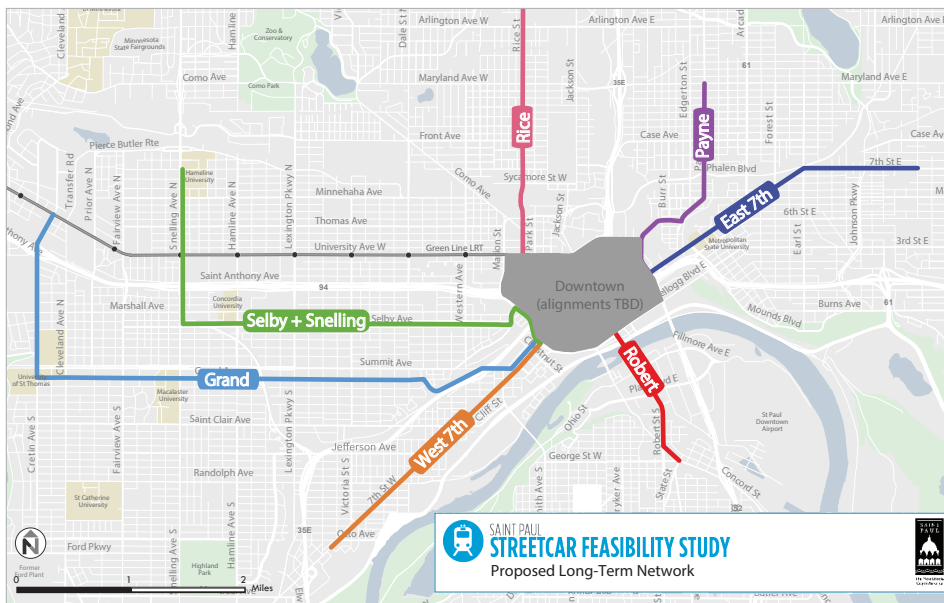
The Shepard Davern Area Plan Update and Zoning Study was initiated by the Planning Commission in December 2012. The Shepard Davern Task Force, co-chaired by Planning Commissioner Gaius Nelson and Highland District Council board member Greg Campbell prepared an update of the 1999 Shepard Davern Plan. The goal of the Plan was to create a cohesive community vision for an area that is targeted for both redevelopment and

transit improvements, and to identify goals to improve quality of life in the area. The Planning Commission sent recommendations on a new Shepard Davern Plan and rezonings to the Mayor and City Council for consideration. A public hearing at City Council was held January 21, 2015.

Saint Paul Streetcar Feasibility Study

After a recommendation from the Planning Commission, the Saint Paul City Council approved a long-term streetcar network in June 2014. This network was developed by the Saint Paul Streetcar Feasibility Study, which analyzed Saint Paul's major arterial

roads for streetcar feasibility, including potential for transit improvements and for economic development. East 7th, Grand, Payne, Rice, Robert, Selby and West 7th were identified as feasible routes, with West 7th and East 7th demonstrating the greatest potential. The Transportation Committee of the Planning Commission acted as the Steering Committee for this project, reviewing three phases of study and the final recommendations. The Feasibility Study was completed by a consultant team led by Nelson-Nygaard with HDR Engineering and Richardson-Richter & Associates. This study sets up Saint Paul for evaluation of further transit improvements across the city.



This map shows the City's proposed long-term streetcar network for Saint Paul

Thrive MSP 2040, Housing Policy Plan, and Transportation Policy Plan Comments

In 2014, the Metropolitan Council updated the long-range plan for the Twin Cities region. Thrive MSP 2040 sets the vision for regional investments and anticipates future needs of communities. The Housing Policy Plan and Transportation Policy Plan set the policy direction for these systems and are aligned with the vision in Thrive MSP 2040. The Planning Commission submitted substantial comments on each policy plan, supporting the Council's vision for a prosperous,

equitable and livable region, while calling on the Council to strengthen its leadership to push local governments across the region to think strategically, sustainably, and regionally about development decisions.

2 West Midway Industrial Area Plan

In May 2010 the Planning Commission convened a community-based task force to work with staff to examine how the West Midway Industrial Area could be strengthened as a strategically-placed industrial area and employment base for the city and the region. The West Midway Industrial Area Plan is intended to foster reinvestment and redevelopment through land use recommendations and strategies for business engagement and retention and public infrastructure investments in the area. After Planning Commission review and recommendation, the Saint Paul City Council voted unanimously on September 17, 2014 to adopt the Plan as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.

Ongoing Projects

DNR Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Rule Making (MRCCA)

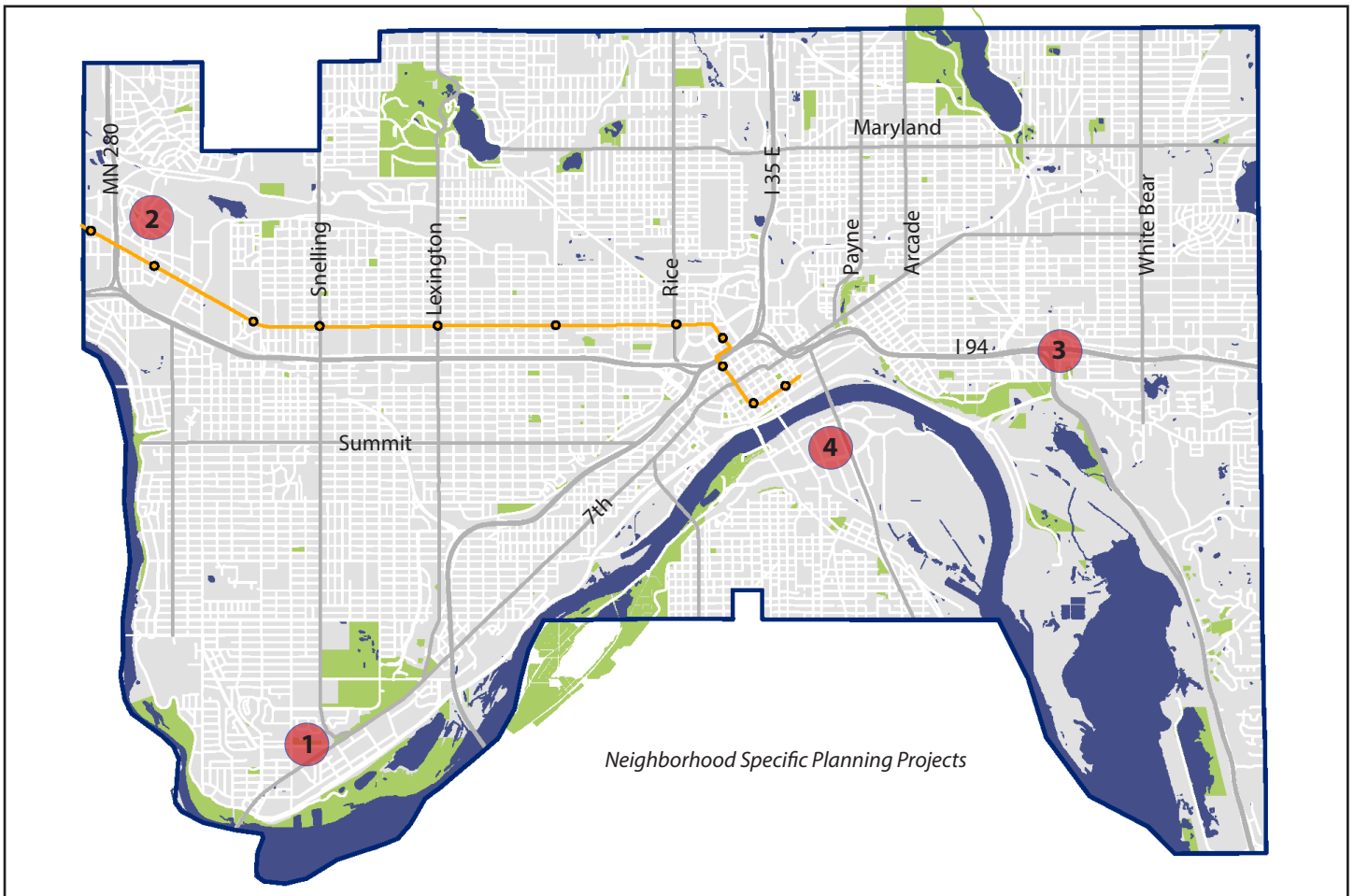
Saint Paul's first Mississippi River Corridor plan was adopted in 1981, and Saint Paul's River Corridor zoning regulations were adopted in 1982 based on the Governor's Executive Order 79-19. In 2013, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), at the direction of the state legislature, restarted a rulemaking process for the MRCCA that had originally begun in 2009 but was never completed. The DNR expects to publish proposed rules in the first half of 2015, beginning the formal rule review and adoption process. In October 2014, the Saint Paul Planning Commission held a public hearing on the DNR's working draft MRCCA rules. The Planning Commission's Comprehensive Planning Committee is currently developing a memorandum summarizing the

draft rules, the potential impacts of the rules, and testimony received. When completed, the memorandum will be forwarded to the Mayor and the City Council to inform official City comments on the MRCCA rules. Once the MRCCA rules are finalized, the Planning Commission will begin development of a new River Corridor Plan and ordinances consistent with the rules. The new plan will incorporate and build upon existing river corridor plans, such as the Great River Passage Master Plan.

Gateway Corridor Station Area Planning

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The Gateway Transitway Corridor is under study by Washington and Ramsey Counties for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Saint Paul's Union Depot to Manning Avenue on the eastern end of Woodbury, running along the I-94 corridor. Up to six stations are being considered in Saint Paul, within the





The proposed West Side Flats Greenway will incorporate stormwater management into a new central park space, creating a major amenity in the heart of West Side Flats

vicinities of Union Depot, Mounds Boulevard, Earl Street, Etna Street, White Bear Avenue, and the Sun Ray shopping center. The City of Saint Paul is undertaking a Station Area Planning process in order to take full advantage of this major potential transportation investment. In April 2014, the Planning Commission appointed the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force and authorized the planning study, which is now underway.

West Side Flats Master Plan



From January 2013-April 2014, a Community Task Force chaired by Commissioner Elizabeth Reveal prepared an update of the 2001 West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines. The Planning Commission released the draft Plan update, along with recommendations for rezonings, for public review on December 5, 2014 and set a public hearing for January 30, 2015. The major issues addressed by the Plan are building height and form, increased job density in the employment district, extension of an urban street and block pattern through Riverview Industrial District, reconnection to the Mississippi River and esplanade, a better balance of travel modes, and a prominent public

realm featuring innovative dual-purpose stormwater infrastructure. The Master Plan will be adopted as part of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.

Parkland Dedication and Park Impact Fee Study

In January 2014, the Planning Commission initiated a new study to examine the City’s parkland dedication requirements in light of 2013 state legislative action granting explicit authority to allow the City to require dedication of land or a fee at the issuance of building permits. The study is also reviewing the existing requirements against the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Kootz v. St. John River Water Management District*. The Planning Commission had previously undertaken a study to revise Section 69.511 Parkland dedication requirement to limit land dedication at the time of platting to new parcels for new development and to determine an alternative metric for density upon which to base parkland dedication requirements at the time of building permits. The 2014 study incorporated these elements and also re-evaluated how different types of land uses generate differing demands for park space. On November 14, the Planning

Commission released draft ordinance recommendations for public review and set a public hearing date for January 16, 2015. It is expected that this study will be completed during the first half of 2015.

Saint Paul Bicycle Plan

The Citywide Bicycle Plan will guide the development of a safe, effective, and well-connected network of bicycle facilities that encourage and facilitate bicycle transportation. The Plan was initiated in 2011 and was led by the Department of Public Works and is in the final stages of development. The Transportation Committee has reviewed and contributed to the Bicycle Plan during its development. A first draft of the plan was released in January 2014, with an updated draft released in October 2014. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Bicycle Plan in December 2014, where over 30 people voiced both support for and concerns about the draft plan. The Saint Paul Bicycle Plan is on track for adoption by the City Council in early 2015.



Downtown Saint Paul is a critical hub where multiple trails and bikeways converge

Street Design Manual and Complete Streets Action Plan

The Planning Commission's Transportation Committee oversaw the completion of the draft Street Design Manual in 2014, which is a technical document comprised of best practices for street design and construction in Saint Paul. The Complete Streets Action Plan outlines the next steps for implementing complete streets policies throughout

the city. Recommendations in the Action Plan are based on lessons learned while creating the Street Design Manual, associated street design workshops and the East 7th Street Better Block event, which was held in the summer of 2013. The manual and the Complete Streets Action Plan will be adopted in early 2015.

The Planning Commission is staffed by the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED).

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

Cecile Bedor, Director to May 2014, PED
Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director, PED
Donna Drummond, Planning Director
Sonja Butler, Secretary to the Planning Commission

2014 Planning Commissioners

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Daniel Edgerton
Gene Gelgelu
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Kyle Makarios
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Paula Merrigan
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An example of Established Neighborhood Streets from the Street Design Manual

The Zoning Committee reviewed 54 cases in 2014, up 10 percent from 2013.

