



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Melvin Carter, Mayor

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February 08, 2018

Mayor Melvin Carter
City Council President Amy Brendmoen 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 2017 Annual Report.

The second year of work on an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan continued throughout 2017. The Planning Commission's Comprehensive Planning Committee, serving as the steering committee, worked with planning staff on refining drafts of the plan chapters. The drafts have been informed by extensive community outreach in 2016, and interdepartmental staff working groups. Equity is an important theme that runs throughout the plan. The Planning Commission anticipates releasing a complete draft in March for additional community review, with a formal Planning Commission public hearing in September, followed by an anticipated City Council public hearing in October. City-approved comprehensive plan updates are due to the Metropolitan Council by the end of 2018.

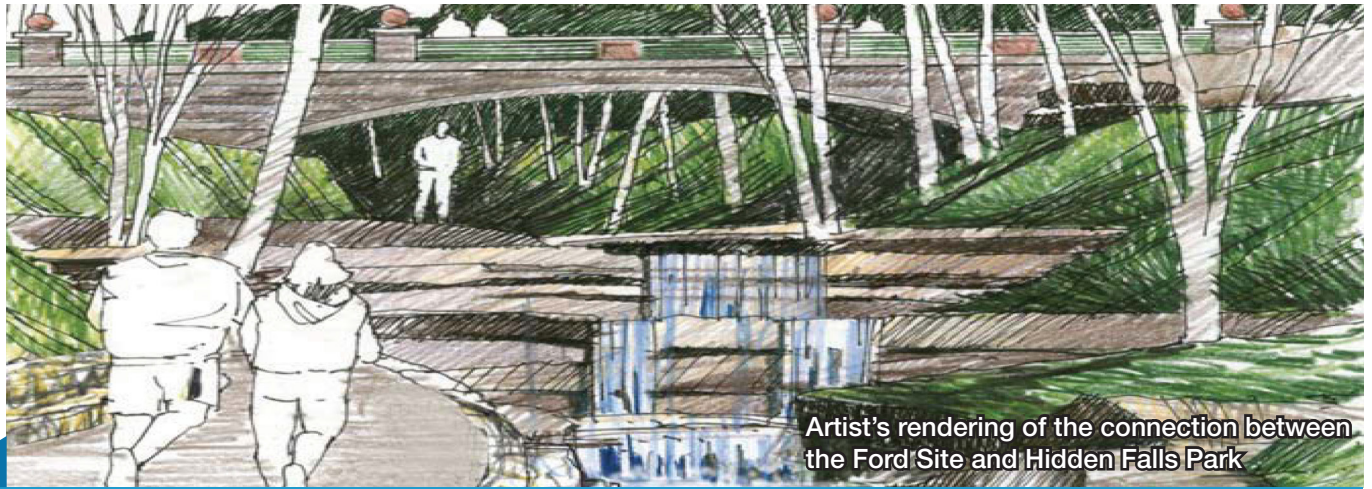
Review and recommendation in July of a master plan and new zoning for the Ford site, followed by Mayor and City Council adoption in September, was the culmination of almost ten years of studies, community engagement, and plan development for this 122 acre opportunity site. Ford Motor Company has completed building demolition and site remediation is projected to be completed in 2018. Ford put the property on the market in late December. Once a master developer is selected, the City will be working proactively with that developer to review any proposed changes to the master plan and complete an environmental review. Site development is anticipated to begin in 2020.

An example of how the Planning Commission and staff work to keep the Zoning Code relevant to changes in technology and the economy was the Short-Term Rental Study. The new zoning regulations that resulted are designed to facilitate growth of this business type in a way that protects both visitors and neighborhoods. Other notable work included the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study, which rezoned portions of the avenue to facilitate transit-oriented development along the new A-Line bus rapid transit route, and the Rice-Larpenteur Area Plan, a unique partnership between Saint Paul, Roseville, and Maplewood to plan for improvements in this gateway area.

The Planning Commission looks forward to working with Mayor Carter and the City Council in 2018 by providing thoughtful recommendations that help guide Saint Paul's growth into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betsy Reveal".
Betsy Reveal, Chair



Artist's rendering of the connection between the Ford Site and Hidden Falls Park

SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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 and Neighborhood Planning, and Transportation Committees take on municipal planning issues as required by law. It reviews and makes recommendations on comprehensive planning and zoning issues, 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 2017.**

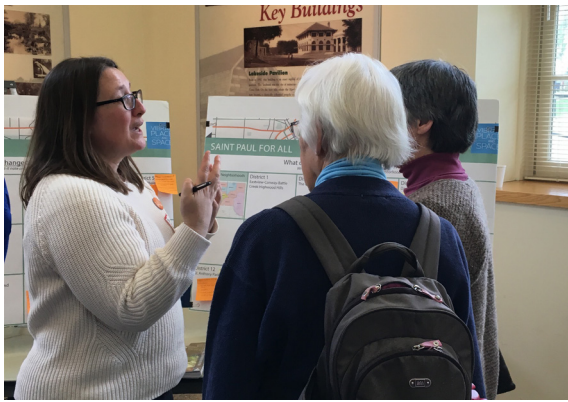
City-Wide Projects

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The Comprehensive Plan, the bread-and-butter of the Planning Commission's work, is required by the Metropolitan Council to be updated every 10 years. As Saint Paul's "blueprint" for guiding physical development, the 2040 document will contain chapters on Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Heritage and Cultural Preservation, and Water Resources. In 2017, the Planning Commission was intensively involved in community engagement to identify citizens' vision for the future of Saint Paul, and in reviewing draft chapters of the Plan. The Commission will recommend the full Plan to the City Council for final adoption in 2018.

SUSTAINABLE POWER (WIND & SOLAR) ZONING AMENDMENTS

In December, the Planning Commission recommended amendments to the zoning code to allow wind energy conversion systems (wind turbines) in most zoning districts. The amendments define wind energy conversion systems and standards for their implementation. The language was adopted in response to several similar use determinations for wind turbines. Late Planning Commissioner Paula Merrigan was instrumental in initiating the study. As part of the study, the Commission also developed provisions for solar installations as a principal use, in response to state enabling legislation for so-called "solar gardens."



City Staff working with community members during the Comprehensive Plan's engagement process.



Existing wind energy conversion systems in place at Capitol Lien, 1010 Dale St N.



SHORT-TERM RENTAL STUDY & ZONING AMENDMENTS

Technology and the sharing economy have enabled the online short term rental of houses, apartments, and condominiums on websites like *Airbnb* and *Expedia*. To keep the Zoning Code current with this new use, the Planning Commission guided development of a zoning amendment permitting the use and recommended approval of the ordinance in August. In December short term rentals became a permitted use in the city. Making sure neighborhoods and visitors to Saint Paul are safe and protected were key considerations of the Planning Commission.

Area/Corridor Projects

1 FORD ZONING & PUBLIC REALM MASTER PLAN

The Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan was adopted by the City Council on September 27, 2017. The plan establishes a vision and framework for development for the former Ford Twin Cities Assembly Plant site that will result in a mix of uses, diverse public spaces, and strong connections through the site and to the Mississippi River. It also sets ambitious goals for sustainability and affordable housing. The plan was approved after a robust process of engagement and review by the Planning Commission, and was informed by professional studies on topics ranging from transportation to district energy.

Work will continue on related projects in 2018 that will set the stage for plan implementation. Some highlights include development of design standards, completion of an energy plan, and stormwater system planning.



Rendering of the green stormwater feature which runs through the planned Ford development

2 CENTRAL STATION BLOCK DESIGN GUIDELINES

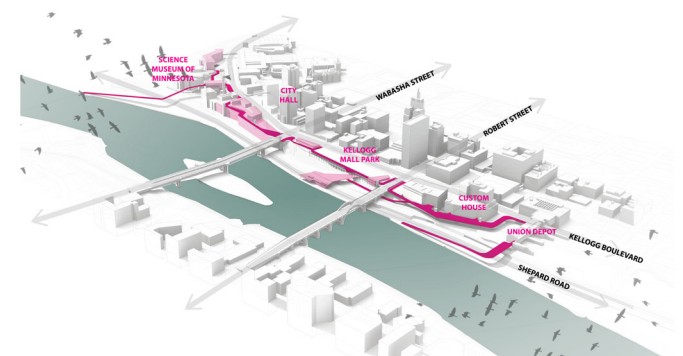
The guidelines were approved by the Planning Commission for final adoption by the City Council as an amendment to the Downtown Station Area Plan. The Central Station Block is bounded by Cedar, Minnesota, 5th and 4th streets, and is the location of the busiest Green Line LRT station in downtown Saint Paul. The guidelines will ensure that future development on the block is compatible with the defining features of the Urban Renewal Historic District, as well as those of adjacent, early 20th century buildings also determined eligible for the National Register, such as the St. Paul Athletic Club, First National Bank Building and Minnesota Building.

3 SOUTHPORT AREA STUDY

The Southport study, initiated by the City Council in December 2015, asked the Planning Commission to address safety and health issues in the industrial area located on the City's West Side. Environment and health issues and the single point of access to businesses on Barge Channel Road were topics identified by area residents and included in the study. Several community forums were held during development of the study. The Planning Commission began review of the study in fall 2017 and anticipates approval in early 2018 after a public hearing and final recommendations.

4 RIVER BALCONY MASTER PLAN

The River Balcony Master Plan was approved by the Planning Commission for final adoption by the City Council as an amendment to the Great River Passage Master Plan. The River Balcony is envisioned as a 1.5-mile publicly-accessible pathway connecting public spaces and bluff-side redevelopment sites from the Science Museum to Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul. It will be designed to accommodate walking, outdoor seating, gathering and related public activities; and to be a catalyst for economic development.



Rendering of the River Balcony's eventual alignment

2017 PROJECT LOCATIONS



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

5 SNELLING AVENUE SOUTH ZONING STUDY

In 2015 the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study was initiated by the Planning Commission. The study was initiated in anticipation of the Snelling Avenue BRT line and in response to a number of policies outlined in the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and in the three applicable neighborhood plans. The study recommended rezoning a number of parcels within the study area to a mix of T1, T2, and T3 traditional neighborhood zoning districts. The Planning Commission's recommendations were approved by the Mayor and City Council and have been in effect since October 15, 2017.

6 RICE/LARPENTEUR AREA PLAN

The Cities of Saint Paul, Maplewood, and Roseville are developing a strategy to improve the area around the intersection of Rice Street and Larpenteur Avenue. Two concurrent efforts have been taking place during 2017—the development vision plan for the Rice-Larpenteur area and the Urban Land Institute Health Corridors project.

A \$50,000 planning grant from Saint Paul's Commercial Vitality Zone program and financial contributions from the other two cities led to the hiring of Perkins + Will (P+W) to undertake the vision planning effort. P+W has collaborated with the 18-member Gateway Planning Committee to create a set of recommendations to create a safe, walkable, and green gateway area by calming traffic and redeveloping key sites. A draft of the plan is expected to be released in January 2018. The Planning Commission will review the portions relevant to Saint Paul for adoption into the City's Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to this, the Rice Street Corridor was one of four locations in the country to receive an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Healthy Corridor's technical assistance award. A local leadership team was formed to gather input that would be sent to a national panel of experts on redeveloping automobile-oriented commercial corridors to support individual and community health. In November, ULI brought experts in real estate development for a three-day work session, which created a number of recommendations for the partner cities.



Regional Transit Corridor Planning

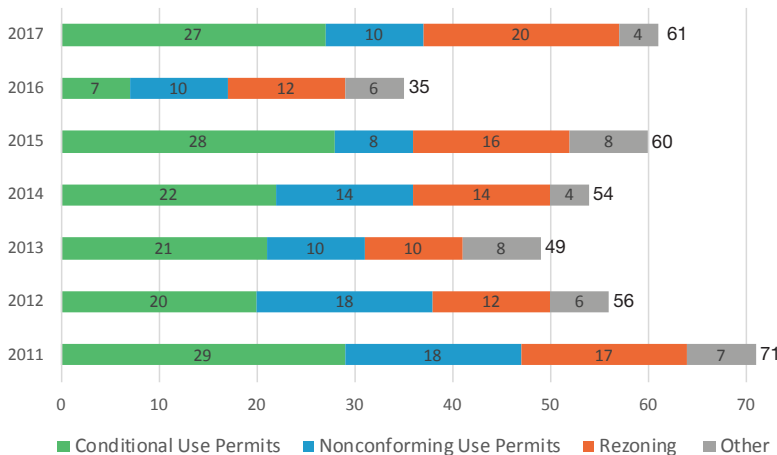
RIVERVIEW CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY

The Riverview Corridor, a planned transitway connecting downtown Saint Paul to MSP Airport and the Mall of America reached a milestone in 2017. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Advisory Committee for the project recommended a Locally Preferred Alternative, indicating the route and mode for the corridor that will move on to environmental review. The route through Saint Paul will follow W. 7th Street from downtown to the Highway 5 Bridge and the mode will be "Modern Streetcar." A Modern Streetcar will allow portions of the railway to be shared with automobiles. Planning Commissioner Bill Lindeke served on the TAC for the project. Planning will continue in 2018 and beyond.

RUSH LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT

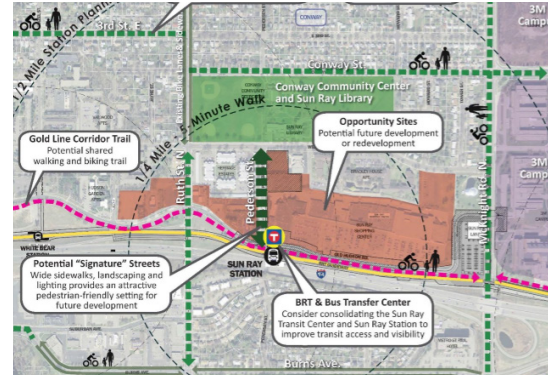
In July, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council support the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Rush Line Transit Corridor, which was eventually adopted. The LPA is for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), generally within a dedicated guideway following Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way (Vento Trail) and Highway 61, extending approximately 14 miles, and connecting downtown Saint Paul to its East Side neighborhoods and to Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, White Bear Township and White Bear Lake. The next phase of environmental study and station area planning have recently commenced.

The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission reviewed 61 cases in 2017, up 74% from 2016. In addition to the rezoning cases initiated by property owners, the Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Planning Commission proactively rezone properties by developing small area plans and conducting zoning studies.



GOLD LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Corridor-wide station area planning led by Washington County commenced in 2017 for the planned BRT line between downtown Saint Paul and Woodbury, generally along the north side of I-94. The City of Saint Paul adopted station area plans in 2015, so the work here is limited mainly to refining the planned bicycle and pedestrian connections, and to re-evaluating a couple of the station locations. Any follow-up plan amendment proposals will be evaluated by the Planning Commission in mid-2018. Also, the final environmental work and project development will begin in 2018.



Station Area Analysis around Sun Ray Shopping Center for the Gold Line

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

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor (2017)
Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director, PED (2017)
Donna Drummond, Planning Director
Sonja Butler, Secretary to the Planning Commission

2017 Planning Commissioners

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Aquanetta Anderson | Kathy Mouacheupao |
| Cedrick Baker | Christopher Ochs |
| Anne Dejoy | Trevor Oliver |
| Shannon Eckman | Adrian Perryman |
| Daniel Edgerton | Luis Rangel Morales |
| Kris Fredson | John Reich |
| Gene Gelgelu* | Betsy Reveal (Chair) |
| Taqee Khaled | Jeffrey Risberg |
| Chong Lee | Terri Thao |
| William Lindeke | Wendy Underwood |
| Kyle Makarios* | Lue Vang |
| Melanie McMahan* | Eric Wojchik |

* served a partial year

For more information:

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