



City of Saint Paul's *Central Corridor Development Strategy*: Plans for Seven University Avenue Station Areas

On October 22, 2008, the Saint Paul City Council adopted plans for the areas around seven proposed University Avenue LRT stations, which include Rice, Dale, Lexington, Snelling, Fairview, Raymond, and Westgate. The set of seven station area plans have an introduction chapter and an implementation chapter (called "Moving Forward"). The seven plans, with the introduction and implementation chapters, are adopted as addenda to the ***Central Corridor Development Strategy***, which is a chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

What are Station Area Plans?

The plans address the areas approximately 1/4 mile around the proposed light rail transit (LRT) stations along University Avenue. Plans address issues of building scale; public realm and open space; public art; and bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and automobile movement. They do not, however, address the actual station design. The design, engineering and construction of the LRT line itself is the responsibility of the Metropolitan Council. Their project website is www.centralcorridor.org.

Process

In October, 2007, Mayor Coleman and the City Council adopted the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, which is a vision and set of strategies for how University Avenue, the Capitol area, and Downtown should grow and change over the next 25-30 years in response to the planned investment in light rail transit (LRT). At that same time, the City began the process of planning in more detail for the areas around the seven planned University Avenue LRT stations.

The Planning Commission appointed a steering committee of community representatives to oversee this process. A series of three public roundtable events took place in October, 2007 and were designed to look at the challenges and opportunities associated with each station area. Comments from the roundtables fed into seven day-long workshops that were held in November and December, 2007. The roundtables and workshops were attended by residents, business owners, property owners, institutional representatives and others. Based on input from the roundtables and workshops, draft plans for the seven station areas were developed and reviewed by the community steering committee. On May 27, 2008, the steering committee forwarded the plans to the Planning Commission for formal public review and public hearing. On August 22, 2008, the Planning Commission recommended the plans to the Mayor and City Council with minor changes.

Contents of Plan Documents

Introduction Chapter

- Purpose of a station area plan.
- Station area planning process.
- How the plans are structured.
- Guiding principles for all plans.
- How study areas were defined.
- Movement – corridor-wide map and typical station mobility enhancement area map.

Each Station Area Plan

Section 1: The Station Today

- a) Brief overview of area history and existing conditions.

Section 2: The Future of the Station Area

- a) Planned location of LRT platform.
- b) Forecasted market opportunities.
- c) Definition of study area boundaries.
- d) Vision statement.

Section 3: Public Realm - Creating Places

Common themes:

- a) Public realm (streetscape, open spaces) should relate to adjacent buildings and to the station platforms.
- b) Public realm will contribute to a sense of place and improved environmental health of the city.
- c) Public realm provides opportunities for public art.
- d) All public and private investment will contribute to the betterment of the public realm.
- e) Each plan identifies specific opportunities for new green spaces and public art.

Section 4: Future Character Areas – Policy Directions

Common themes:

- a) Identifies distinct subareas (character areas) within each station area and defines policies for land use, development patterns and built form for each of these areas.
- b) Defines an “area of change” within the station area where future change and redevelopment will be encouraged, and “areas of stability” where reinvestment in the existing neighborhoods is encouraged.
- c) Within the “area of change” calls for lower maximum building heights for new development next to low-density residential areas, and higher maximum building heights in other areas (such as south of University Ave. between Lexington and Snelling).
- d) Encourages a broad range of land uses and densities at station areas, including: medium to high density residential, office uses, retail, institutions, and others that

result in more housing and employment opportunities, active uses at grade, and complete communities with daytime and evening activities.

- e) Recommends development of a street and block structure that improves connectivity and allows urban development patterns to evolve.
- f) Recommends that design of vehicular access and parking become more transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly.

Section 5: Movement – Balancing Modes

Common themes:

- a) Facilitate walking as a safe and viable option.
- b) Encourage enhanced pedestrian improvements in areas of highest pedestrian activity, such as adjacent to station platforms.
- c) Strengthen east-west routes to and from station areas for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists (for example – defining a continuous east-west street through the Midway area from Snelling to Lexington to break up existing “super blocks”).
- d) Strengthen north-south connections to the corridor for pedestrians, buses, bicycles.
- e) Improve street crossings for better pedestrian and bicycle access to important nearby destinations.

Section 6: Getting There

- a) Identifies strategies, tools, and partnerships for implementing plan recommendations.

Moving Forward (Implementation Chapter)

Nine sections including:

- Securing Parkland and Public Spaces.
- Securing Streets and Blocks.
- Enhanced Mobility Strategies.
- Innovative Parking Strategies.
- Public Art.
- Transition Over Time.
- Building Momentum – TOD Demonstration Sites.
- Green Development.
- Innovative Financial Resources.

Each section includes: key opportunities and challenges; potential tools and strategies; and strategic partners.

Questions or More Information?

Complete copies of the seven station area plans and the introduction and implementation chapters (nine documents total) may be viewed or downloaded from the City’s website at www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor. Click on “Reports.” You may also request a copy of the documents on a CD by contacting Donna Drummond at 651-266-6556 or donna.drummond@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Planning for the Central Corridor is a major initiative of Mayor Christopher B. Coleman.