

Summit-University (District 8) Plan Area Plan Summary

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission – April 24, 2009

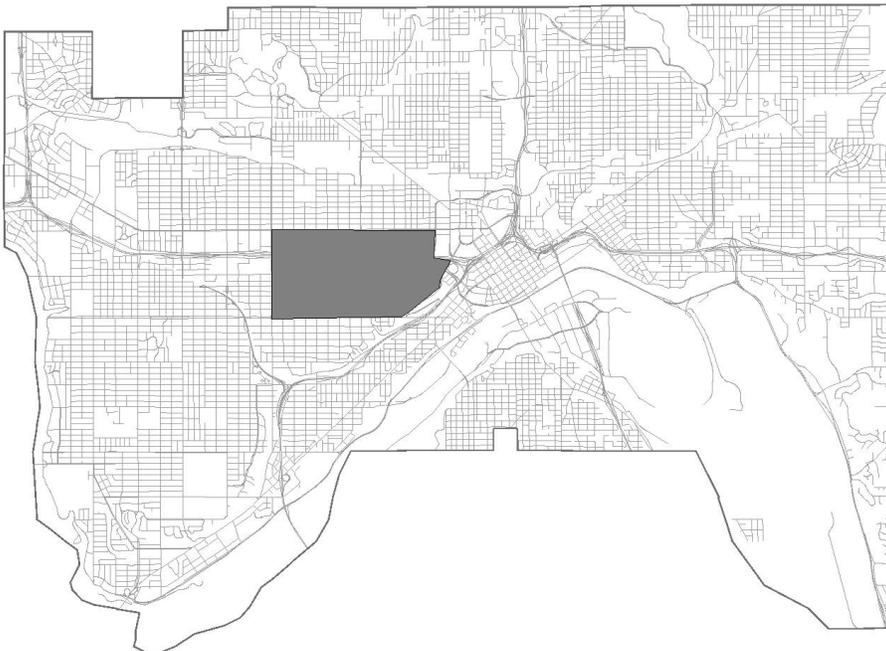
Adopted by the City Council – June 3, 2009

*This summary appends to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **Summit-University (District 8) Plan** and replaces the **1980 Summit-University (District 8) Plan**. The **Summit-University (District 8) Plan** consists of eight major areas of focus, including (1) Empowerment, (2) Connectivity/Community Building, (3) Land Use and Zoning, (4) Economic Development, (5) Housing, (6) Education, (7) Transportation, and (8) Safety. The full-length plan, used for reference in the creation of this Area Plan Summary, was not itself adopted by the City and may include some policy differences. Copies of the full-length plan are available for review at the City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development and the offices of the Summit-University Planning Council.*

Location

Summit-University (District 8) is located west of downtown Saint Paul. It is bounded by University Avenue on the north, Summit Avenue on the south; Summit Avenue, John Ireland Boulevard and Marion Street on the east and Lexington Parkway on the west (see Figure 1). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the district has approximately 18,249 residents.

Figure 1. Location of Summit-University (District 8)



Source: City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development

Vision

Summit-University (District 8) will be a strong, vital community that celebrates its diverse residents, businesses and housing stock. The neighborhood will be a destination for people who want to experience the unique flavors of the community. Residents will have the resources to engage in the social, cultural, physical and economic development of the neighborhood.

Residents, neighborhood organizations, and the City of Saint Paul will work together to preserve and strengthen what is valued by and valuable for the neighborhood -- respect for each other among the diverse residents, opportunities that facilitate life-long residency, protection of historically significant structures, quality arts and history activities, and wonderful restaurants and other small businesses. Extraordinary efforts will be expended to protect and retain these assets during challenges caused by changes such as property tax increases, greater density, and development (especially the Central Corridor). Increased job opportunities and creation of greater individual resident wealth will be priorities in providing assistance in these efforts.

Summit-University will be a community in which parents, their children, neighbors, neighborhood organizations, and schools all contribute to the success of every young person so that each reaches her/his full potential. Residents will use collective action to enhance community power and contribute to the improvement of the common good in the areas of land use; economic, business and job development; housing; education; transportation; and safety.

Specific Action Strategies and Implementation Steps

The Summit-University (District 8) Plan recommends action strategies in eight areas: empowerment, connectivity and community building, land use and zoning, economic development, housing, education, transportation, and safety.*

Empowerment

Residents must have substantial and timely access to the same public and community information in order to have the greatest power to address individual needs and participate in neighborhood decision-making.

Recommendations for Empowerment include:

1. The plan for neighborhood action calls for strengthening existing communication tools and creating new ones.
2. Continue to pursue timely notification regarding applications for permits, zoning changes, variances, and other city decisions for which public neighborhood comment is provided.
3. The SUPC and PED will keep copies of the full District 8 Plan and Summary in locations that are accessible to residents.

* The recommendations are a summation of the full plan and are not arranged in order of priority. They are the desires of Summit-University Planning Council and the community and not to be assumed to be the full responsibility of the City of Saint Paul.

Connectivity and Community Building

The plan calls for engaging all residents in strengthening neighborhood organizations and block clubs and participating in government actions.

Recommendations for Connectivity and Community Building include:

4. The SUPC, Aurora Saint Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation and Ramsey Hill Association will work to organize block clubs on every block. Crime-Prevention funds provided through the City should be maintained and leveraged to hire staff.
5. Block clubs will be encouraged to work with Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments to develop programs on their blocks that nurture and protect green space in the public right-of-ways, keep boulevard trees trimmed, repair broken sidewalks and keep the blocks free of debris.
6. City departments and the SUPC will work together to implement adopted small area plans.
7. The SUPC supports full funding to develop, operate and maintain the new Oxford Community Center, the Martin Luther King Recreation Center, Carty Park and all other parks in the district.
8. Complete implementation of the Residential Street Vitality Program (RSVP) in the Summit-University neighborhood.
9. Develop strategies to respond to the Western Park Neighborhood Assessment.

Land Use and Zoning

Land use and Zoning recommendations should preserve the quality of the neighborhood and reflect the desires of residents.

Recommendations for Land Use and Zoning include:

10. In Summit-University, priority will be given to commercial development on the vacant lots and buildings at Selby and Victoria as well as vacant commercial buildings on Selby Avenue west of Dale Street. Conversion of residential properties on Selby to commercial use is generally discouraged, recognizing Summit-University's opposition to these conversions.
11. Development at the University and Dale intersection will be done in accordance with the Dale Station Area Plan to achieve a "robust" mixed-use development.
12. Continue to improve and enhance the City's early notification system (ENS) regarding pending applications.
13. Work to ensure that zoning and variance statutes and procedures are followed and that citizen input is strongly considered in decision making.
14. Develop city-wide infill design guidelines to help neighborhoods maintain the fabric of existing residential character.
15. Preserve the brick alleys in the Historic Hill District.
16. Public space improvements made in conjunction with the Central Corridor light rail project will be high quality and reflect the diversity of the neighborhood.

Additional District 8 Summit-University Planning Council priorities include:

- The SUPC supports maintaining the existing historic carriage houses in the Historic Hill District and will request that the Heritage Preservation Commission conduct a survey of the historic carriage houses in the Summit-University district in order to establish an inventory.
- The SUPC may support variances on secondary structures on larger lots when such variances would result in superior design or placement of the secondary structure in relation to the primary structure, the lot and the surrounding properties.

Economic Development

Recommendations for Economic Development include:

17. Foster cultural tourism as an economic driver for business and workforce development and explore formal designation of the neighborhood as a cultural heritage district.
18. Maintain and enhance the arts in the proposed cultural heritage district including active encouragement to the Penumbra Theatre to remain in the neighborhood and capital support for physical improvements, continued support for Stepping Stone Theatre and its programs, and funding to improve Western Sculpture Park.
19. Develop strategies to help retain small businesses that may be impacted by the Central Corridor light rail project.
20. Encourage development that responds to the purchasing demands of neighborhood residents.
21. Continue the improvement of commercial streets (i.e. Selby and University Avenues) and add cultural components on the public right-of-ways. The city will work with the Selby Avenue Action Committee, composed of representatives from Selby Avenue district councils, business associations, community organizations and residents and businesses, which will continue to meet and move forward ideas and initiatives that promote Selby Avenue's revitalization.
22. Continue efforts to foster minority business start-ups, retentions, and expansions from within the community.
23. The City and the neighborhood development corporations should partner with educational institutions and non-profits to provide workforce training and job preparedness in tandem with plans to meet the Selby Area CDC and District 8 Plan Economic Development Task Force goal of creating 500 to 1000 "livable wage" jobs in the area.

Additional District 8 Summit-University Planning Council priorities include:

- The Selby Area Community Development Corporation and Aurora Saint Anthony Development Corporation will work together to develop a culturally centered revitalization plan to encourage economic activity.
- The SUPC will work with the City, residents and businesses to ensure that small businesses are maintained in the neighborhood during and after the construction of the Central Corridor light rail project.

Housing

Housing in the Summit-University neighborhood is very diverse. Over 50% of the housing units are 65 years or older. The community supports quality housing that provides life-long options for residents at all stages of their lives.

Recommendations for Housing include:

24. Preserve the existing housing stock with special commitment to the preservation of affordable housing.
25. Adopt policies and create programs that enable residents to improve or maintain owner-occupied homes.
26. Increase the housing options for seniors that wish to continue living in the neighborhood.
27. Encourage development of housing on the north side of Selby Avenue between St. Albans and Grotto.
28. Pursue high quality development at 940 Selby Avenue consistent with the underlying zoning and acknowledging a community interest in live-work housing at the site.

Additional District 8 Summit-University Planning Council priorities include:

- The SUPC encourages the City Council to increase funding available for programs focused on the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock.
- The SUPC will encourage the City to partner in the creation of an annual housing fair that provides both financing and construction information.
- The SUPC continues to support the Rondo Land Trust in their work to provide affordable housing.
- The SUPC continues to support the development of MCASA homes in the neighborhood.
- The SUPC requests that the City and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, when accepting proposals for housing, give preference in granting tentative developer status for parcels in Summit-University to proposals that incorporate life-cycle housing.

Education

Education is a lifetime process that is dependent upon all facets of a community. The Summit-University community has a strong commitment to creating a culture that values life-long learning.

Recommendations for Education include:

29. Continue educational efforts beyond the schoolroom such as the 2nd Shift Program, with support and participation from the Summit-University community and residents, particularly seniors.

Transportation

Timely and accessible transportation options benefit both residents and visitors. Thus, the community desires a variety of transportation options that increase mobility for all residents.

Recommendations for Transportation include:

30. Create an environment in which traveling from one place to another is safe and convenient for all modes of travel including walking and biking.
31. Maintain and improve public right of ways with public art and block club projects.
32. Encourage the Metropolitan Council to maintain the 21 and 65 bus routes at their current level of service.
33. Encourage the Metropolitan Council to provide north-south routes connecting to University Avenue.
34. Work for the addition of light rail transit stops at Hamline, Victoria, and Western.
35. Plans for light rail should retain existing semaphore locations along University Avenue to maintain the current level of opportunity for pedestrian and vehicular crossing at those intersections.
36. Partner with small businesses to address the loss of on-street parking caused by the construction and addition of light rail to the University Avenue corridor.
37. Reconstruct bridges over Interstate 94 at Victoria, Dale and Western in ways that enhance the appearance and connectedness of the areas north and south of the freeway.
38. Encourage businesses to make parking lots available to others during non-peak or non-business hours.
39. Develop strategies that provide for safe and efficient walking and biking within the neighborhood.
40. Continue adding bus shelters and benches decorated or designed to enhance the cultural diversity and history of the neighborhood.

Additional District 8 Summit-University Planning Council priorities include:

- The SUPC will work with the City to develop means that prevent patrons of the light rail from parking within the neighborhood.

Safety

Positive quality of life is achieved when the community comes together to eliminate criminal activity and nuisance behavior.

Recommendations for Safety include:

41. Continue the Saint Paul Police Department's community policing program.
42. Support programs to educate residents to identify signs of domestic violence and methods for reporting incidents to police.
43. Provide youth with positive alternatives to unstructured free time, such as after school activities, programs that provide leadership opportunities, and mentorship.

Additional District 8 Summit-University Planning Council priorities include:

- Focus on proactive community actions to prevent crime rather than relying on after-the-fact punishment to discourage crime.

Priority Actions for City Participation

The following actions have been identified as priorities of the community that require leadership or significant participation by the City of Saint Paul. To promote development that is consistent with the recommendations of this plan, the City of Saint Paul and community groups should work to implement the projects identified in this summary by applying for City resources in competitive processes, such as the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) and Sales Tax Revitalization program (STAR), and working through the regular operating programs of relevant City departments. These items are not arranged in priority and/or funding order.

Public Works (PW): #8

Planning and Economic Development (PED) and Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI): #3, #10, #11, #12, #13, #15, #16, #19, #36

Police Department (PD): #41, #42

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that *Summit-University (District 8) Plan Summary* is generally consistent with the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The Summit – University (District 8) plan was prepared under the leadership of Carl Nelson and Harry Oda. A questionnaire was sent to residents to provide their likes and dislikes about the neighborhood. Utilizing this research, six task forces were formed to develop segments of the plan. The task forces consisted of residents and business owners. Fourteen provisions were formed from the task force recommendations. Plan drafts were reviewed and modified by residents, business owners, and City staff. The final draft of the plan was reviewed at an open neighborhood meeting and adopted by the Summit-University Planning Council April 2007.