



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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January 27, 2012

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 2011 Annual Report.

Work related to Central Corridor light rail transit continued to be a focus of the Planning Commission and planning staff's work in 2011. Three station area plans, for Hamline, Victoria, and Western, were approved by the Commission and adopted by the Mayor and City Council in October. Eleven station area plans have now been completed, and are part of the City's Comprehensive Plan along with the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, adopted in 2007. Another significant achievement during the year was completion of the Central Corridor Zoning Study, which included zoning code amendments and property rezonings to facilitate the type of development envisioned in these adopted plans. Planning staff work on the Central Corridor *Transit-Oriented Development Guidebook* and Brownfield Assessment Program are also highlighted as examples of how work is proceeding on plan implementation.

Significant work on the Ford Plant site began in 2006 with the announcement that the plant would close. The Ford Site Planning Task Force, co-chaired by a planning commissioner, led a community visioning process to create five alternative development scenarios for the Ford property. Additional studies related to green manufacturing, sustainability, and open space followed. With the plant's closing last December, work on Ford will pick up again in 2012, focusing on plant decommissioning, environmental assessment and development of a zoning framework for eventual redevelopment of the site.

The Solar Energy and Tobacco Shop zoning studies are examples of how the Commission and staff continually work to keep zoning requirements up-to-date and responsive to changes in technology or the marketplace. Neighborhood-level zoning studies resulted in recommended property rezonings for the Highland Village shopping area and commercial and residential areas in the West Seventh/ Fort Road area, which were eventually adopted by the Mayor and City Council. The Planning Commission also processed a total of 71 zoning applications in 2011, up 16% from 2010.

These are just a few highlights of the Planning Commission's work in 2011. 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara A. Wencil".

Barbara A. Wencil
Planning Commission Chair

Saint Paul Planning Commission

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

www.stpaul.gov/ped

PLANNING FOR CENTRAL CORRIDOR LRT



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 2011.

The Central Corridor continued to be a major focus of the Planning Commission's work in 2011. To implement the vision in the Central Corridor Development Strategy, the Commission spearheaded work on transit oriented zoning for properties in the Corridor and completed station area plans for Hamline, Western and Victoria. Planning staff worked on implementation related to contaminated sites and encouraging redevelopment.

Central Corridor and Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study

Significantly expanding the development capacity in the Central Corridor and ensuring that new development in the corridor is pedestrian friendly and transit oriented are the objectives of the Central Corridor and Traditional Neighborhood Zoning Study. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the zoning study and proposed property rezonings in March, followed by Council adoption in April. The 18-month study focused on Zoning Code amendments and property rezonings needed to facilitate the type of development envisioned in the Central Corridor plans. Extensive input and feedback from all segments of the Central Corridor community contributed to the study's success.

1 Hamline, Victoria, and Western Station Area Plans

Station area planning for Central Corridor stations is now complete. The Hamline, Victoria, and Western Station Area Plans were approved by the Planning Commission in April and by the City Council in October. Similar in format and scope to previously adopted station area plans, they address issues of mobility, public realm, land use, and built form. The plans were developed through an extensive public engagement process that included a community steering committee co-chaired by a Planning Commissioner, roundtable discussions, public workshops and open houses.

Central Corridor Transit Oriented Development Guidebook

To assist businesses, property owners, developers, and those who want to realize the vision of the Central Corridor, the *Central Corridor Transit Oriented Development Guidebook* offers a concise overview of plans, reports, zoning, and resources. It helps readers know the questions to ask as they consider investing in the Central Corridor with business tips, summaries of guiding plans, and illustrations of development design requirements. Development of the guidebook was led by planning staff and the Saint Paul Design Center.

Central Corridor Brownfield Assessment Program

A pivotal element of achieving the vision for redevelopment in the Central Corridor is the remediation of contaminated sites. The Central Corridor Brownfield Assessment Program, managed by planning staff and funded by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), focuses on potentially contaminated sites in the corridor. Twelve sites, with another six non-adjacent parcels, have enrolled in the program and have completed, or are undergoing, an environmental site assessment. All but one are sites of planned redevelopment projects in the Central Corridor. The City and EPA anticipate expanding the program to other sites and fashioning a more strategic focus to the program.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

North End-South Como District 6 Plan and Zoning Study

The Industrial Area Task Force, appointed by the Planning Commission, analyzed the land use pattern in the area southeast of Como/Front/Dale. The scope of the plan was expanded to include the entirety of District 6 using the Planning Commission's area plan template. Existing policies in the adopted District 6 plans were reviewed by the District 6 Land Use Task Force and incorporated into the plan. Proposals for improvements to the Como/Front/Dale intersection are also included.

2 Near East Side

The Near East Side Task Force, co-chaired by a Planning Commissioner and a community representative, began meeting in March to develop a series of specific and implementable economic and community

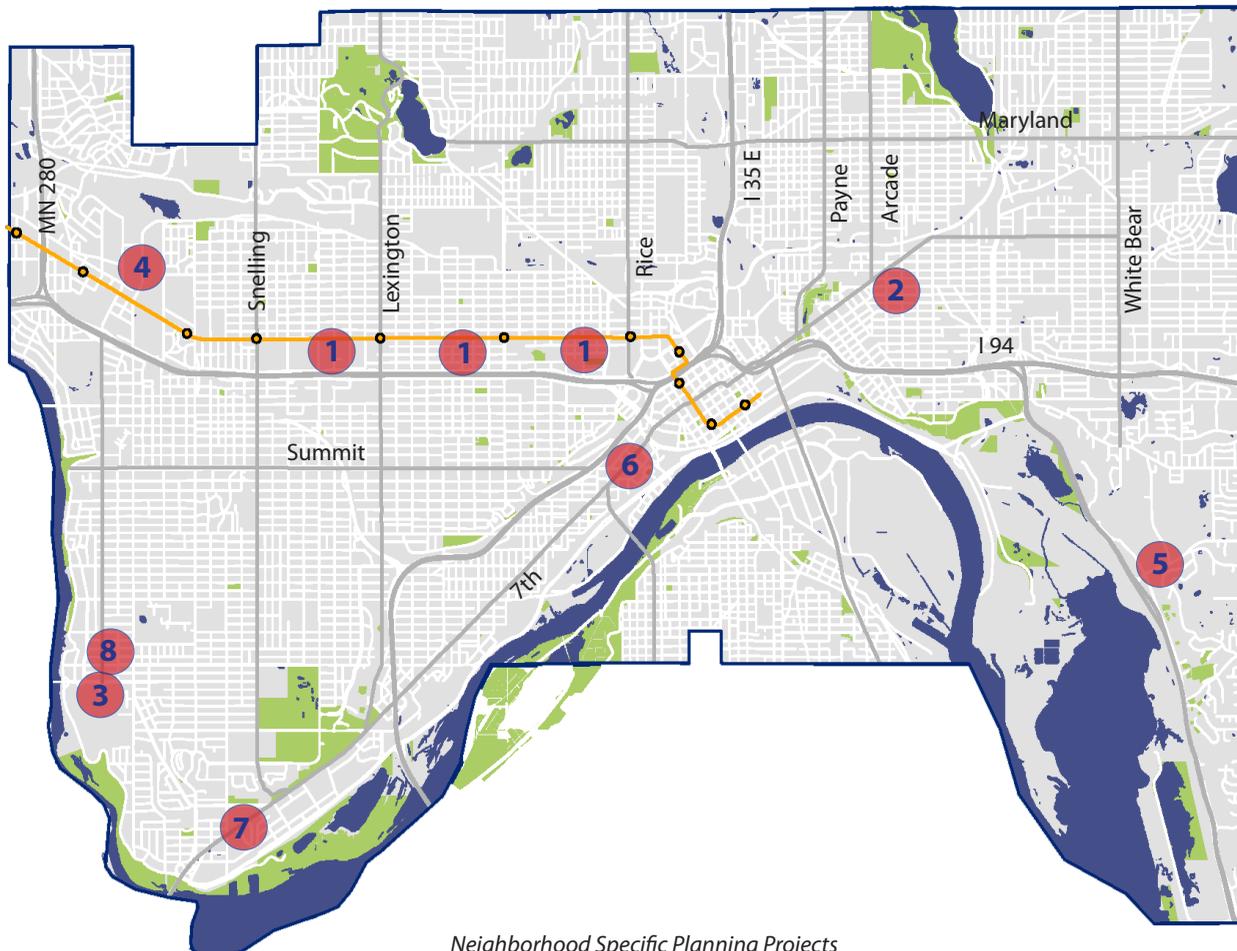
development action steps. The task force includes Dayton's Bluff and Payne-Phalen district councils, large property owners, institutions, and businesses. A subcommittee worked through the spring and summer to develop a block-by-block assessment of development opportunities, including vacant building rehabilitation/re-occupancy and possible new real estate development projects. A rezoning study and a Near East Roadmap document will be developed during the first quarter of 2012, for Planning Commission review, to implement the proposed action steps.

3 Ford Site

After 86 years, the Ford assembly plant closed on December 19, 2011. City work on the Ford project continued through 2011, focusing on completion of the Ford Site sustainable redevelopment reports. In follow-up to this work, the City



applied for and received a \$100,000 Met Council Livable Communities Pre-Development Award to prepare a Ford site zoning framework to advance City, community, and sustainability goals. Work for 2012 will focus on the zoning framework study, to be overseen by the Planning Commission, decommissioning activities at the site, the initiation of an Alternative Urban Area-wide Review, tracking the environmental assessment results, and marketing of the site.



Neighborhood Specific Planning Projects

4 The West Midway Industrial Area Study and Industrial Zoning Study

The West Midway Industrial Area Task Force, co-chaired by a Planning Commission member and a representative of District 12, continued discussions on how the area can be used to strengthen the city's industrial sector and employment base. Much of the task force's focus was on the industrial clusters in the West Midway and how they fit into the regional economy, as well as connections that make the area vital, including pedestrian and bicycle paths, highways such as I-94 and Highway 280, and major streets. Completion of the study awaits the findings and conclusions from the Northwest Quadrant Transportation Study, a project of the Department of Public Works. The citywide Industrial Zoning Study, which is running parallel with the West Midway study, has been focusing on revisions to the industrial use list in the Zoning Code, the design standards for the IR district, and minor text amendments for industrial uses.

5 Lower Afton Station Area Plan for Red Rock Corridor

After review and recommendation by the Transportation Committee and Planning Commission, the City Council approved the Lower Afton Station Area Plan in November. The plan calls for an improved park and ride facility to accommodate expanded bus service that may transition to commuter rail in the Red Rock Corridor. Topics addressed include multi-modal transportation access, platform location, and cultural, historical, and environmental context. Long-term concepts include a low-profile 275-stall parking facility located north of Lower Afton Road, and a pedestrian bridge over Highway 61 to the rail platform. The plan also calls for restoring and enhancing green space, as well as connecting to local and regional trails and parks.

ZONING

Solar Energy Zoning Study

The Solar Energy Zoning Study, completed by the Planning Commission in August and adopted by the City Council in October developed clearer zoning regulations for the development of solar energy systems. There are now specific regulations for both the height of building mounted and freestanding solar energy systems. These regulations are more flexible than those recommended in the Minnesota model solar energy ordinance or currently in place in the Minneapolis ordinance.

Tobacco Shop Zoning Study

This update to the Zoning Code provides a definition and standards for a 'tobacco products shop' that is based on state statute and requires a one-half mile separation between individual tobacco products shops.

Sign Regulation Follow-up Zoning Study

These amendments to the Zoning Code regulate window signs that have a dynamic display, limit temporary signs in windows to 30% of window area between 4 and 7 feet above grade, and reduce the permitted level of sign illumination in residential districts.

6 District 9 Residential and Commercial Zoning Studies

The purpose of both studies was to ensure that future commercial development is consistent with the Jobs & Economic Development and Housing objectives in the District 9 Area Plan and to have a finer-grained residential zoning pattern that better reflects current residential land uses. Following Planning Commission review in

August, the City Council adopted rezoning of all B2, B3 (commercial) and VP (parking) parcels along West Seventh Street and Grand/Ramsey to T2 (traditional neighborhood), and rezoning of RT2 (townhouse) and RM2 (multi-family) parcels in the area bounded by Grand Avenue, I-35E, Smith Avenue, and Shepard Road, and Grace Street to R4 (single-family).

7 Shepard-Davern Residential Overlay Amendment

The minimum parcel size for new development was reduced to one acre, which is consistent with the Shepard-Davern Commercial Overlay. An analysis showed that no new development had occurred within the residential overlay district that met the site size standard.

8 Highland Village Zoning Study

Fifty-four properties along Ford Parkway and Cleveland Avenue were rezoned, most of them to T2 (traditional neighborhood). The rezonings brought the commercial area into compliance with the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and the District 15 Plan.





Parking Code Revisions for Establishments Serving Alcohol

Following adoption of comprehensive revisions to off-street parking requirements in 2010, the City Council requested additional study of parking requirements for establishments serving wine, beer and liquor. Staff from PED and the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) considered how these places vary in parking demand, operation, and their impact on surrounding areas. With this information, staff drafted zoning and licensing amendments that differentiate between these establishments. The Planning Commission reviewed the draft amendments and forwarded them to City Council. The City Council has not yet scheduled a public hearing on the draft amendments.

Nonconforming Use Zoning Study

The Neighborhood Planning Committee has begun reviewing changes to the nonconforming use regulations in the Zoning Code. The changes will bring City regulations in compliance with state statutes, correct errors, clarify confusing language, and streamline administration. The study also focuses on changes to nonconforming sign regulations. The study should be completed in 2012.

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

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

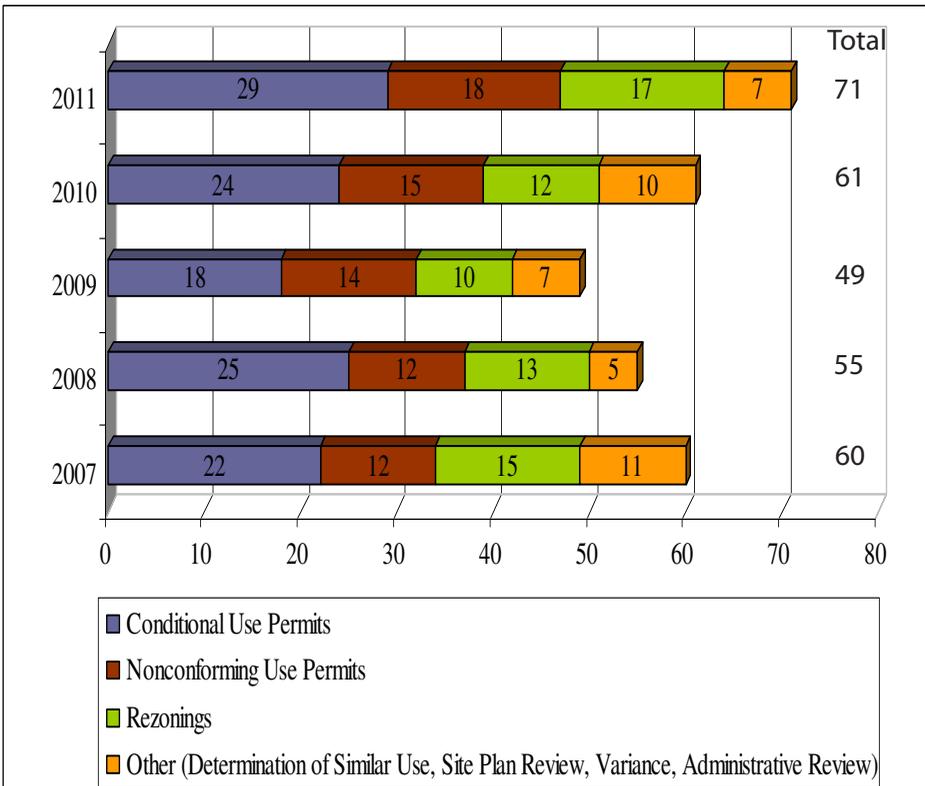
Cecile Bedor, Director, PED
 Donna Drummond, Planning Director
 Sonja Butler, Secretary to the Planning Commission

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- Terri Thao
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- Daniel Ward, Secretary
- Barbara Wencil
- David Wickiser
- Roxanne Young*

* Served for part of 2011

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