



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: October 8, 2014

TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee

FROM: Michelle Beaulieu, City Planner

RE: Comprehensive Plan Priorities for CIB and STAR proposal review

Background

The Planning Commission, through the Comprehensive Planning Committee, is asked to review applications for City funding through various programs including Neighborhood and Cultural STAR and CIB. The Commission reviews applications for compliance to the Comprehensive Plan, last updated in 2008.

During the most recent review of Neighborhood STAR applications, the Comprehensive Planning Committee requested the opportunity to review existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan, and to have an opportunity to revisit priorities identified therein.

Comprehensive Planning Process

State law requires that communities submit updates to their Comprehensive Plans every ten years to the Metropolitan Council, within three years of receiving system statements from the Met Council. This summer, the Council adopted THRIVE MSP 2040, an update of the 2030 Regional Development Framework. The Council is currently working on updates to the Transportation Policy Plan, the Water Resources Management Policy Plan and the Regional Parks Policy Plan. THRIVE MSP 2040 includes population, household and employment forecasts, which estimate that Saint Paul will grow by approximately 49,500 people, 26,500 new households and 42,000 new jobs. THRIVE MSP 2040 was adopted by the Met Council on May 28 2014.

The 2008 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan

The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan was developed by the Department of Planning and Economic Development under the direction of the Saint Paul Planning Commission. It was adopted by the City Council on February 24, 2010. Area Plans, including both district plans and small area plans, are officially adopted as amendments or addenda to the Comprehensive Plan.

The introduction to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan includes the purpose of each section.

...policies in the Land Use Plan are intended to foster the creation of jobs so that residents can earn income. The Parks and Recreation plan focuses on recreational

facilities where children can play safely. Transportation policies are geared toward ensuring that people have the means to get between home, job, and services. In short, underlying the strategies and policies in the plan is a concern for the social and economic well-being of those who live and work in Saint Paul. (IN: 1)

The introduction also describes the importance of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Throughout the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan each of these three components is called out with icons as relevant.

Comprehensive Plan policies

The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan has a total of 436 strategies spread across Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Water Resources Management and Historic Preservation. Of these, only 146 were used by staff in the latest rounds of CIB and Neighborhood STAR proposal review. STAR proposals are typically reviewed by different staff members looking at projects by District Council. CIB proposals are reviewed by topic: Streets and Utilities, Residential and Economic Development, and Community Facilities.

Attached to this memo is an Excel workbook with 8 individual spreadsheets, labeled in the tabs accessed at the bottom of the document's window:

- Citations: This tab shows the policies from each section of the Comprehensive Plan, and indicates the number of times that they were each cited in reviewing proposals
- Priorities: This lists the 10 "High Priorities for Action" as identified by the Implementation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan
- LU: All land use policies
- T: All transportation policies
- PR: All parks and recreation policies
- H: All housing policies
- WRM: All water resource management priorities
- HP: All historic preservation priorities

This review is provided to help committee members understand what types of applications are typically received and is not to say that other strategies are not be applicable. Below is a selection of the most frequently cited strategies:

- LU 1.29: Implement the Central Corridor Development Strategy and individual transit station area plans as the vision for development in the Central Corridor in connection with the construction of LRT.
- LU 1.45: Maintain and enhance retail commercial areas throughout the city by promoting standards that make them vital and attractive.
- H 2.1: Maintain the vitality and high quality of life in existing stable neighborhoods by engaging in a variety of actions...
- H 2.14: Promote existing and innovative new programs and incentives that support rehabilitation of one- to three-unit residential properties, especially in areas with less vibrant housing markets.
- PR 2.2: Ensure attractive, functional, and engaging four-season public spaces.
- PR 5.3: Make parks and recreation facility and improvement decisions based on a system-wide evaluation of citizen needs and available resources.
- T 1.1: Complete the Streets
- T 1.4: Implement reconstruction projects for improved safety.

- H 1.11: Give equal consideration to projects with historic preservation factors when reviewing all Capital Improvement Budget funding requests. This may include adding historic preservation as a point category in the scoring process.

Priorities as applied to CIB and STAR proposals

The STAR and CIB programs each has a separate board or committee that is charged with reviewing proposals and making their recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. They consult the Planning Commission for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. For the past several years, PED planning staff have reviewed applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and any relevant district and small area plans, which are then submitted to the Planning Commission. Below is a summary of those recommendations:

2014 Neighborhood STAR:

- 38 applications found to Address Comp Plan goals
- 4 applications found to be Neutral – does not address or conflict with Comp Plan goals
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals

2013 Neighborhood STAR:

- 20 found to Specifically address Comp Plan goals*
- 26 found to Generally address Comp Plan goals
- 2 found to be Neutral – may address or conflict
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals

2012 Neighborhood STAR:

- 15 found to Specifically address Comp Plan goals
- 1 found to Generally address Comp Plan goals
- 0 found to be Neutral
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals

(*After the review of 2013 Neighborhood STAR program applications, in response to staff recommendation, the Comprehensive Planning Committee recommended shifting to simpler review, discontinuing the practice of finding applications “Specifically” or “Generally” addressing Comprehensive Planning goals. This was in part due to the ambiguity of what these terms mean, and due to the broad nature of many of the goals in the Comprehensive Plan.)

2014-15 CIB Streets and Utilities:

- 43 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan
- 11 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan
- 1 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan

2014-15 CIB Community Facilities:

- Police, library, fire and OTC facilities are not covered by the Comprehensive Plan
- 17 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan
- 20 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan

2014-15 CIB Residential and Economic Development

- 11 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan
- 8 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan

These reviews also include an overview of relevant policies from the district plans and small area plans as applicable. In order to provide more diversified information about the City’s Comprehensive Planning priorities, the Comprehensive Planning Committee has expressed a

desire to come up with priorities from the Comprehensive Plan for these reviews.

Trends in Saint Paul

Attached to this memo is the Spring 2014 Market Watch report. This report summarizes the changes in Saint Paul, culling data from the Census, MnDEED, and the City. In particular, this report focuses on housing and development, employment, and social and demographic characteristics. Highlights from this report include:

- Saint Paul ended 2013 with the fewest number of foreclosures in a year since 2005. From 2012 to 2013, there was a 31% decrease in foreclosures.
- Commercial, Mixed-Use and Institutional Construction is strong. In 2013, a total of 39 projects were issued at least one permit that had a value of more than \$1 million. The largest projects include a remodel and repair of the State Capital and additions to the Ordway and the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center at Macalester College.
- Single family home remodeling is on an upward trend. There were 1,043 permits issued from in 2013 for single family remodels.
- Home sales are improving. For 2013, the average number of days on the market was down to 88, the lowest it has been since 2007. Median home sale price was \$144,000, a marked improvement from depressed sales prices of 2009-2011.
- Through the end of 2013, Saint Paul residents held 141,091 jobs, and increase of 1.2% more jobs from the year prior.
- The unemployment rate continues to improve, and was at 4.5% for the last quarter of 2013, compared to 5.6% one year prior, but still higher than the metro area average of 4.1% unemployment.
- The latest estimates show a 23.7% poverty rate for Saint Paul, which is a marked increase from 15.6% in 2000, and more than double the state's rate of 11.7%.

Staff recommendations

CIB and STAR applications are reviewed for Comprehensive Plan conformance by the Planning Committee. This is only a part of the full review process, one factor considered by the respective committees. However, it is a relatively time-consuming process for staff involved in the review. Furthermore, there tends to be variation in assessment of similar projects depending on which staff is reviewing a given application. Staff approach is to attempt to find a Comprehensive Plan strategy that is consistent with an application.

Prioritization

In examining the existing Comprehensive Plan for priorities, staff recommends that the Comprehensive Planning Committee first undertake an exercise that will *identify priorities for City investment*. These priorities can be topical (eg, commercial corridor investments, parks support facilities, maintenance of sidewalks) or geographic (eg, University Avenue business support, Grand Rounds bike facilities).

Question #1: Are the 10 High Priorities for Action still applicable? Are there specific projects or geographies identified in the Comprehensive Plan that need to be prioritized? Does the Saint Paul Trends Report indicate that there are new investment priorities that the City should be focusing on?

In order to facilitate uniform application of these priorities across application reviews, to avoid adding additional steps to the review process, and to ensure a more meaningful outcome, staff recommends that *a limited number of narrowly-focused strategies in the Comprehensive Plan be identified as "priority strategies."* As the review process stands, the distinction between

“general” and “specific” support is difficult to ascertain for staff working on Comp Plan review, for commissioners reviewing staff recommendations, and for the committees completing the final scoring.

Question #2: For the identified priorities, which strategies from the Comprehensive Plan are most applicable? Limit the total number of strategies prioritized, for example, identify 30 priority strategies which represents 20% of the total number of strategies utilized in application review in the most recent CIB and STAR application reviews.

Process and review

The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan is comprised not only of these six topics, but also of the district plans and small area plans that cover the city in more detail. Staff recommends that *applications for projects be reviewed by topic, with a single staff assigned per topic*. This is consistent with previous recommendations from the Comprehensive Planning Committee, and will ensure a more consistent review across applications in a single category. This may be a difficult undertaking for the STAR proposals, which tend to be varied in their topic areas.

City priorities may change over time. The Saint Paul Trends Report showcases the way that Saint Paul’s development scene and demographics have changed over the past few years. Therefore staff recommends that *the prioritization take place every year prior to STAR and CIB** proposal review for Comprehensive Plan compliance. (**CIB applications are on a 2-year cycle, but this prioritization exercise should take place every year for the STAR applications.)*