Area Plan Summary

Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

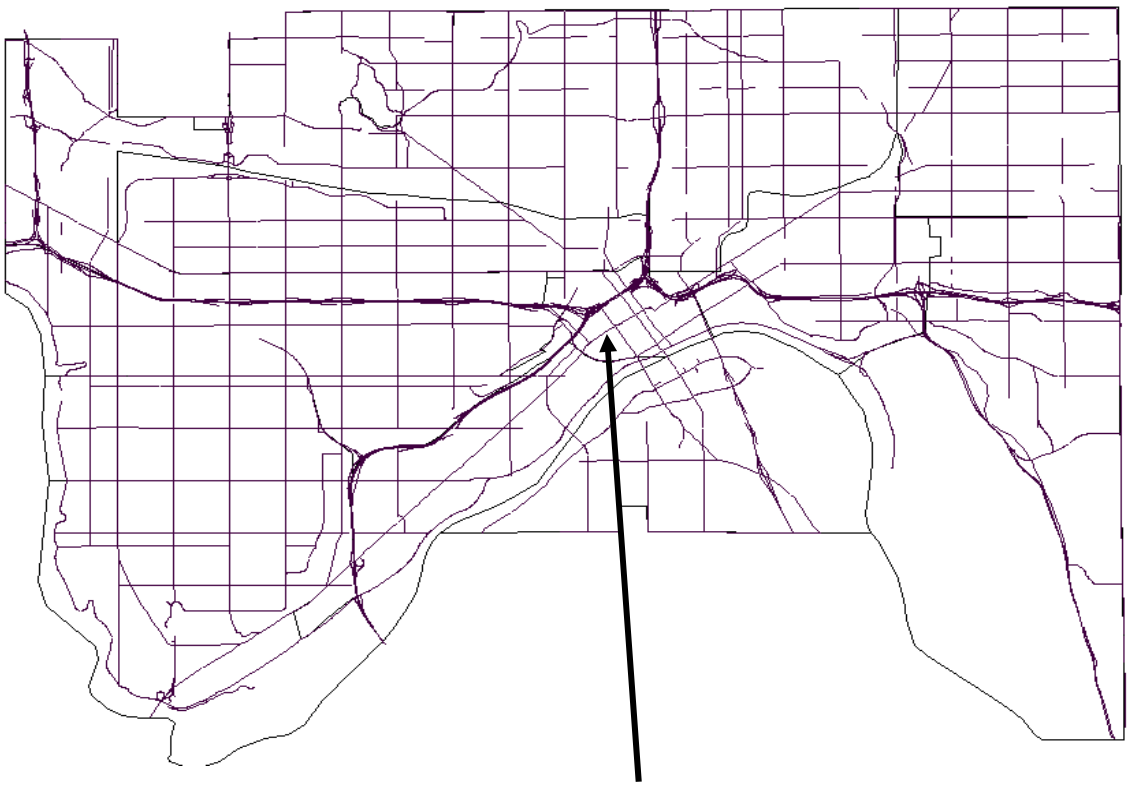
Recommended by the Planning Commission on July 28, 2006.
Adopted by the City Council on August 16, 2006.
Amended by the City Council on _____.

This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the community's vision of a diverse, mixed-use sustainable, human-scaled neighborhood that is pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, safe, beautiful and well-maintained. Historic buildings are maintained, and new buildings are designed to be compatible with them. The needs of pedestrians, bikes, cars, transit and those of limited physical mobility are balanced and met. A central green provides residents and visitors with a place to gather. The neighborhood has a strong sense of place and identity.

Copies of the full-length plan are available at the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center and CapitolRiver Council (District 17).

Location

The Fitzgerald Park neighborhood is located in downtown Saint Paul. The study area for the *Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan* is bounded by I-94 on the north, Seventh Street on the south, Main Street on the west and Jackson Street on the east.



Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan Study Area

Vision

The Fitzgerald Park neighborhood is a diverse, mixed-use sustainable, human-scaled downtown community that is pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, safe, beautiful and well-maintained. Historic buildings are maintained, and new buildings are designed to be compatible with them. The needs of pedestrians, bikes, cars, transit and those of limited physical mobility are balanced and met. A central green provides residents and visitors with a place to gather. The neighborhood has a strong sense of place and identity.

Plan Visions

The plan is informed by the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework* and the *Downtown Development Strategy* chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Each chapter – land use, design and appearance, movement, public realm/public safety, natural environment and neighborhood identity/communication - contains a vision statement and development strategies to accomplish the vision.

Land Use Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a diverse, mixed-use, human-scaled neighborhood that celebrates culture, education and the arts, while providing for the needs of a growing residential population during all hours of every day and evening. First-floor uses activate the street. New retail and service businesses utilize small storefronts so that streets and sidewalks are pedestrian-friendly.

Design and Appearance Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a human-scaled neighborhood that is clean, beautiful and well-maintained, where historic buildings are preserved and new buildings are designed to be compatible with them.

Movement Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a neighborhood with a pedestrian-friendly street character and block pattern that also has safe and convenient connections to the skyway system. The needs of pedestrians, bikes, cars, transit and those of limited physical mobility are balanced and met.

Public Realm/Public Safety Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a neighborhood that has a central green or park where residents and visitors alike can meet and share the common experience of being part of the neighborhood. Streets, sidewalks, plazas and parks are visible, well-maintained, safe and welcoming.

Natural Environment Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a "green" neighborhood that manages the visual, noise and air quality impacts of its location overlooking a major freeway and connected to the Mississippi River.

Neighborhood Identity/ Communication Vision: Fitzgerald Park is a neighborhood that has a strong sense of place and identity, with numerous opportunities for communicating, marketing and publicizing neighborhood news. Public places to gather and share information are abundant.

Priorities for City Action

The following actions have been identified by the community as priorities that require leadership or significant participation by City government. Community groups and City departments should implement the projects identified in this summary by applying for appropriate public funding resources in competitive processes (such as the Capital Improvement Budget and Sales Tax Revitalization Program) and working though the regular operating programs of relevant City departments.

Land Use

1. New development on Blocks 2, 3 and 5 should provide a mix of residential, office and retail uses, with the market determining the final mix (Figure 1). (Housing and Redevelopment Authority)
2. In general, parking should be provided underground to allow for maximum densities appropriate in a downtown. (Housing and Redevelopment Authority)
3. A diverse range of housing types and prices should be available in Fitzgerald Park. (Housing and Redevelopment Authority)

Figure 1

4. Active at-grade uses should be encouraged throughout the precinct, but especially at key redevelopment sites (such as the Penfield and Public Health block) that have the greatest potential to capitalize on the traffic generated by LRT and to support a more vibrant streetscape adjacent to the LRT station. (Housing and Redevelopment Authority)

Design and Appearance

4. Buildings of historical and/or architectural value should be retained, protected and preserved. (Heritage Preservation Commission)
5. Existing buildings of historic and/or architectural value should be incorporated into new development. The Public Safety Building should be retained when the block is redeveloped. (Housing and Redevelopment Authority)
6. The maximum height of new buildings on Blocks 2, 3 and 5 should be 150 feet (Figure 1), including HVAC equipment. Taller buildings may be permitted where necessary to further the visions and strategies in this plan, as long as a strong relationship to the street is maintained. (Planning and Economic Development)

Movement

7. The City and Minnesota Public Radio should cooperate in the construction of a pedestrian-only pathway between Central Presbyterian Church and the new MPR building. Should Naomi Family Center ever close at its current location, the pathway should be extended east on a straight line to Minnesota Street (Figure 2). East of MPR, the street should serve both vehicles and pedestrians.

(Public Works)

8. Ninth Street should be realigned between Robert and Minnesota streets to provide an edge to the new full-block park and provide a larger redevelopment site north of the former Northern Furniture building. The street should be extended west of Minnesota Street should Naomi Center ever close at its current location, where it would connect to a pedestrian-only pathway between Minnesota Public Radio and Central Presbyterian Church (Figure 2). (Public Works)
9. The skyway system should be open during regular, predictable hours and for more hours into the evening. Safe, convenient and visible access into and out of the system should be provided during all hours it is open. Extensions of the skyway system should be considered – north from the World Trade Center ramp, north from City Walk/MPR, north from the 7th Street ramp and north through the Block 19 ramp (Figure 2). (Public Works)
10. Light rail transit should be implemented to increase transit options, beautify Cedar Street and provide an impetus to redevelopment. (Public Works, Planning and Economic Development)
11. All existing street segments should remain open; no further street closings should be permitted to accommodate new development. (Public Works)
12. The extension of Exchange Street west of 5th/6th streets should be explored. (Public Works)
13. Ninth Street should be improved to allow a safe and convenient connection to the regional trail system. (Public Works)
14. Traffic-calming techniques, as well as streetscape amenities, should be installed on 7th and Jackson streets. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)
15. The narrowing of the curb-to-curb width of Wabasha Street between Exchange Street and I-94 should be explored. (Public Works)
16. Ninth and 10th streets should be strengthened as east-west connections between LRT and the precinct with pedestrian amenities (lighting, landscaping, etc.), signage and active at-grade uses. The pedestrian loop should be expanded to include 10th Street. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)

Public Realm/Public Safety

17. Ornamental paving, marked crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, wider sidewalks and street trees should be extended north of 7th Street. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)
18. Ninth, 10th, Cedar between MPR and Exchange, Exchange and St. Peter streets should be redesigned as "park streets" to extend the downtown pedestrian loop through the neighborhood. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)
19. Exchange Street between Cedar and Wabasha streets should be redesigned as a "convertible" street to allow for large community gatherings. (Public Works)
20. For planning purposes only, the preferred future land use on Block 10 is a full-block City park. Until such time as the City is able to take the necessary actions to assemble land and build a park, parcels on the block may be used for any legal use permitted under their current zoning classification, provided that the proposed use meets all applicable conditions and/or standards. Any future use may not be denied exclusively on the basis that the vision for the block is of a public park. (Figure 2). (Parks and Recreation)

A New Park at the Heart
Figure 2

21. A Mobility Enhancement Area should be created adjacent to the 10th/Cedar LRT Station. It should be designed with an enhanced streetscape, wayfinding, arts and cultural expression, and a landscaping strategy that integrates pedestrians, cyclists, buses and LRT, and generally improves the experience of using transit. (Figure 3) (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)

Figure 3
Mobility Enhancement Area

22. Public realm improvements should be designed to create an "urban room" at the 10th/Cedar LRT station. This public room should be a high-quality public space capable of integrating the needs of a wide range of users and accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, transit and cars. (Figure 4). (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)

10th/Cedar Urban Room
Figure 4

23. A comprehensive lighting plan should be prepared for the neighborhood, with an emphasis on avoiding light pollution. (Public Works)
24. The 10th Street gateway should be enhanced to signal it as major entrance to the neighborhood. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)
25. An adequate level of community policing should be maintained. (Police)

Natural Environment

26. Trees and landscaping should be planted wherever possible on public property. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)

Planning Commission Findings

The Saint Paul Planning Commission recommended supplemental language to clarify the legal status of the plan's recommendation for a full-block park on the block bounded by 9th, 10th, Minnesota and Robert streets. This language is found in Priority Strategy #19, shown on page 4 of this plan summary. *Additional language to be added following Planning Commission's actions on the 2010 proposed amendments.*

Planning Process

The *Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan* was prepared, at the request of CapitolRiver Council (District 17) and a coalition of neighborhood institutions, by a Planning Commission task force co-chaired by a Planning Commissioner and a Fitzgerald Park resident. The task force met from April 2004 through February 2006, holding three community workshops in April and May 2004. In March 2006, the task force and CapitolRiver Council co-sponsored a community meeting to get broader feedback before sending the plan on to the Planning Commission. In April 2006, CapitolRiver Council forwarded the *Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan* to the Planning Commission and asked that it be adopted as an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

In 2010, CapitolRiver Council convened its Long Range Planning Committee to work with staff from the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center and Department of Planning and Economic Development to review the *Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan* in light of the certainty of LRT coming through the neighborhood and a station at 10th/Cedar, and to determine if any changes should be made to the precinct plan to reflect the presence of LRT. The committee recommended amendments to the plan to the CapitolRiver Council board in April 2010, which then sent them on to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments in June 2010, and forwarded its recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. The City Council adopted the amendments in July 2010.