



# INTRODUCTION



The numbered strategies, policies, figures, and pages in the citywide plans of the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* all employ the following abbreviations as a prefix to distinguish among these elements of the other citywide plans:

- IN - introduction;
- LU - Land Use Plan;
- H - Housing Plan;
- HP - Historic Preservation Plan;
- PR - Parks and Recreation Plan;
- T - Transportation Plan;
- W - Water Resources Management Plan; and
- IM - Implementation.

The word “city” has two meanings. The capitalized City refers to the municipal corporation, the actor that adopts and carries out a compilation of policies and legal documents. The other city, which is not capitalized, is Saint Paul, the geographic area divided into neighborhoods and populated with the people who live, work, and play here.

## Introduction

### WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a city’s “blueprint” for guiding development in ways that recognize Saint Paul’s history, integrate emerging trends, and lay the foundation for responding both to those trends and to changes anticipated in coming years.

The *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* reflects the combined efforts of the Mayor, City Council members, the Planning Commission, the Parks Commission, the Heritage Preservation Commission, and approximately 150 people who served on six community-based task forces.

The *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* focuses on the built environment, or the arrangement of a city’s component parts – land, streets, and buildings – and the infrastructure that supports them. It is a physical plan. Implicitly, however, the plan is not about land and buildings but about the people who live and work in the city. Thus, 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.

### CONTENTS OF THE *SAINT PAUL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

The *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* includes six citywide subject-based plans – Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Historic Preservation, and Water Resources Management – as well as other adopted citywide plans and plans focusing on specific areas of the city. They include the *Central Corridor Development Strategy* and the *Saint Paul Downtown Development Strategy*, as well as small area plans, district plans, and special focus plans.

The Introduction, in part, describes growth targets established for Saint Paul by the Metropolitan Council and overarching trends that will influence Saint Paul’s future.

Each of the six citywide plans in this document includes an introduction that describes the setting for the plan, the key trends affecting the policies, and brief descriptions of the strategies, and policies. A general implementation plan is included in the Implementation section.

The *Land Use Plan* describes an approach for directing growth to areas of the city well-served by transit, including Downtown, the Central Corridor, Neighborhood Centers, and Residential and Mixed-Use Corridors. It also includes policies designed to support the creation of jobs centers. The strategies are:

- Target Growth in Unique Communities;
- Provide Land for Jobs; and
- Promote Aesthetics and Development Standards.

The *Transportation Plan* focuses on the creation of a multi-modal transportation system, as well as the construction and maintenance of streets so they are safer for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit patrons, and motorists. The strategies are:

- Provide a Safe and Well-Maintained System;
- Enhance Balance and Choice;
- Support Active Lifestyles and a Healthy Environment; and
- Enhance and Connect Neighborhoods.

The *Parks and Recreation Plan* focuses on creating opportunities for healthy activities and programs for ensuring that park resources are protected. The strategies are:

- Promote Active Lifestyles;
- Create Vibrant Places;
- Promote a Vital Environment;
- Respond Creatively to Change;
- Innovate with Every Decision; and
- Connect the Entire City.

The *Housing Plan* includes policies for the development of new housing and the preservation of existing housing in established residential neighborhoods. Policies intended to foster the production of affordable housing are also included. The strategies are:

- Build upon Saint Paul's Strengths in the Evolving Metropolitan Housing Market;
- Preserve and Promote Established Neighborhoods; and
- Ensure the Availability of Affordable Housing Across the City.

The *Historic Preservation Plan* includes policies designed to protect and promote the city's cultural and historical resources, as well as to guide the work of the Heritage Preservation Commission. The strategies are:

- Be a Leader for Historic Preservation in Saint Paul;
- Integrate Historic Preservation into the Broader Planning Processes ;
- Identify, Evaluate and Designate Historic Resources;
- Preserve and Protect Historic Resources;
- Further Economic Development and Sustainability through Preservation;
- Preserve Areas with Unique Architectural and Spatial Characteristics; and
- Provide Opportunities for Education and Outreach.

The *Water Resources Management Plan* focuses on maintaining the city's water supply and sewer system and on ensuring clean water in lakes and rivers. The strategies are:

- Ensure a Safe and Affordable Water Supply System;
- Reduce Pollutant Loads to Water Bodies; and
- Operate and Maintain a Cost Effective Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The state Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires that cities and other local governments update their comprehensive plans every 10 years consistent with the Metropolitan Council's *Regional Development Framework* and its system statements for transportation, parks, and water. Assuring that cities grow in ways that use regional systems efficiently and that population and employment growth is consistent with the Metropolitan Council's forecasts is the purpose of the plan update process.

Saint Paul is designated as a "developed community" in the Metropolitan Council's *2030 Regional Development Framework*. A developed community maintains and improves its existing infrastructure, such as sewers and roads; redevelops land to provide for additional growth of population and employment; and provides for additional growth that integrates land uses (i.e., mixed-use development) at locations along transit corridors.

Preparation of the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* provides an opportunity for the City to position itself to respond to emerging trends, such as an increasingly diverse population and an aging population, and to pressures, including changes wrought by energy costs and the global economy. It is also an opportunity for the City to restate its commitment to be part of a regional growth management strategy that has strengthening the urban core as one of its basic goals.

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL GROWTH TARGETS

Saint Paul is about 56 square miles in size, most of it in stable neighborhoods of largely single-family and duplex housing. Policies in the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* provide for smaller amounts of growth in these neighborhoods while, at the same time, anticipating higher density mixed-use development in Downtown, the Central Corridor, Residential and Mixed-Use Corridors, and Neighborhood Centers. Growth in these areas (see Figure LU-B) will satisfy the Metropolitan Council's 2030 targets for Saint Paul population, households, and employment. The targets, compared to the 2000 figures, assume a population increase of 44,160; an increase of 20,890 households; and an increase of 36,000 in employment.

	2000 (actual)	2010	2020	2030
Population	286,840	305,000	320,000	331,000
Households	112,109	120,000	127,000	133,000
Employment	184,589	196,600	210,000	220,600

## SETTING: THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, THE LAND, AND SAINT PAUL'S EARLY HISTORY

Saint Paul's location on the Mississippi River and topography shaped by ancient glaciers have had a profound influence on the city and its patterns of development, beginning with the first settlement and extending into the 21st Century.

Saint Paul was originally settled by fur traders, who were ordered out of cabins near the walls of Fort Snelling when its commandant in the early 1840s became exasperated with them for selling liquor to native Americans and soldiers. The traders moved downstream to Pig's Eye Landing, where Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant was trading furs from a cave. A year later the fur traders renamed their settlement Saint Paul, the name of the log chapel built on top of the bluff by Father Lucien Galtier.

Saint Paul, situated high on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River, is at the head of river navigation because movement further upstream is blocked by Saint Anthony Falls. Moreover, the shallow Minnesota River has treacherous shoals and sandbars. With access to the countryside in three directions, Saint Paul in its early years was the headquarters of the fur trade and the Mississippi River terminus of the oxcart trail that ran northwest to settlements in the Red River Valley.

The railroads were instrumental in the creation of two cities along the Mississippi River. It was the railroads' need for separate power stations, one near Saint Anthony Falls and the mills and a second one near the head of navigation in Saint Paul, which led to the creation of two cities. One central power station during the horse-and-buggy era could not serve both areas – the mills and the waterfront. The railroads connected Saint Paul and Minneapolis to eastern cities and the plains to the west, with the principal products timber, lumber, wheat, and flour.

Saint Paul has always been a city of neighborhoods, each one characterized by the immigrants who settled them. For example, the Swedes, then the Irish and Italians, moved into Railroad Island and Swede Hollow. The earliest inhabitants on the West Side and in Frogtown were French-Canadian voyageurs involved in the fur trade. Germans and Irish settled on the West Side, followed by Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe and Russia. For many years there was an Italian neighborhood on the Upper Landing; it was later abandoned because of periodic flooding. People from Scandinavian countries and Germany settled throughout the city. African Americans, who began arriving when the railroads were developed, lived primarily in the Rondo neighborhood until the 1960s, when many were displaced during the construction of I-94. Mexicans began arriving early in the 20th Century and, in recent decades, Vietnamese and Hmong in the 1970s, and Somalis in the 1990s.

## MAJOR TRENDS FACING SAINT PAUL

Circumstances outside the City's purview have influenced policies in the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and will affect their implementation. Each of the six citywide plans pinpoints trends affecting components of Saint Paul's built environment. Beyond that, there are three overarching trends that shape, and will continue to shape, Saint Paul during the next decade. Many policies in the

### State aid to local governments

Local Government Assistance (LGA) is calculated by comparing a city's tax base to its estimated spending needs. Cities with insufficient capacity for local revenues receive state aid, which was for many years adjusted annually for inflation. In 2003, however, the Governor and the Legislature approved changes in the funding formula and funding levels that, in the following two years, resulted in a 30 percent reduction in Saint Paul's allocation. An increase in 2006 made up for some of the decrease, but the allocation was not large enough to recoup the full reduction. Further reductions are anticipated.

## Ten Principles for city development

These principles were adopted in 1998 as the framework for public and private development activities in Saint Paul. First written for the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*, which focused on Downtown and the central riverfront, they have been incorporated into planning documents for neighborhoods across the city.

- Evoke a sense of place;
- Restore and establish the unique urban ecology;
- Invest in the public realm;
- Broaden the mix of land uses;
- Improve connectivity;
- Ensure that buildings support broader city-building goals;
- Build on existing strengths;
- Preserve and enhance heritage resources;
- Provide a balanced network for movement; and
- Foster public safety.

*Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* are responses to these three trends, as well as part of a broad effort to ensure the sustainability of the city.

### **Rising energy costs and climate change.**

Both energy costs and climate change are having profound effects on how cities function. The cost of energy is fluctuating dramatically. This impacts every facet of contemporary life – including transportation, housing costs, and the price of virtually every product sold for personal, commercial, or industrial consumption. Energy consumption has resulted in greenhouse gas emissions that are altering the environment of Earth and affecting people’s health and lifestyles.

### **Declining financial resources to pay for City services.**

Money to pay for Saint Paul services (e.g., police and firefighters, parks and recreation centers, libraries, snow removal, street maintenance, etc.) has declined in recent years. The money comes primarily from property taxes, state aid to local governments, and user fees for direct services. Since the state aid allocation was reduced in 2003, the City budget has incurred various service reductions, restructured services, and had to increase reliance on one-time revenues. There has also been a reduced investment in the City’s infrastructure, resulting in a backlog of deferred maintenance.

Reductions in state aid allocations have placed a heavier burden on the role that property tax revenues play in paying for City services. The amount an individual pays in property taxes depends on two primary factors: the financial needs of local governments, including the City, the County, and the local school district, as well as the value of an individual property compared to the overall tax base. New growth – whether single-family or multi-family residential, commercial, or industrial – results in an expanded tax base, which means the amount local governments levy in taxes is spread over more properties. In addition, development at higher densities and commercial/industrial uses typically contribute more to the tax base because of the higher relative value of the property and intricacies of the tax code.

### **Changing demographics.**

Census figures describe major changes in Saint Paul’s population. The changes began in the late 1980s and accelerated during the 1990s and early 2000s:

- The population is more diverse. More than a generation ago, Saint Paul’s and Minnesota’s populations were largely white. That changed significantly during the last 10-15 years as ethnic communities – particularly Hispanic, Hmong, and Somali – have grown, often through immigration;
- The population is aging. Baby boomers are a large segment of the population and, as they grow older, their needs and desires will affect how neighborhoods function; and
- The income gap is widening. There are more people in the high income and low income groups, while the middle class is becoming smaller. This affects all elements of the city’s economy, including housing, the workplace, and commerce.

FIGURE IN-A. EXISTING PROGRAMS THAT FURTHER THE THEME OF SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	SUSTAINABLE SAINT PAUL	TWIN CITIES COMPASS
<p>For a city to be sustainable economically, there must be wealth enhancement and job creation. Achieving these objectives, however, lies largely outside the influence of government. Businesses create jobs. Educated and skilled residents earn wealth. The City's role is to create a climate conducive to economic self-sufficiency and growth by fostering economic development activities and attracting businesses to Saint Paul. The challenges at the beginning of the 21st Century are significant, even daunting, as the country shifts from manufacturing to an information-based economy, with businesses and labor markets changing dramatically as a result. The goal of the strategy is to promote high value-added economic development that supports business and provides opportunities for employment.</p>	<p>A healthier human and natural environment is a critical component of a livable city. Standards for clean air and water were established by national legislation decades ago, and the positive results are quantifiable. Much remained to be accomplished, however. In recent years, the scale and the impact of dwindling energy resources and climate change have thrust nations, cities, and people into more complex efforts to protect the natural environment. These efforts, focused on energy and concentrated on conservation and efficiency, are both broader than anything envisioned when clean air and water legislation was first enacted. At the same time, these recent efforts are far more fine-grained.</p>	<p>Opportunities for people to lead successful, rewarding lives are integral to social sustainability. The City can play an effective role in human development through its services to individuals – e.g., public safety, libraries, and recreation – and by making physical development decisions with human development goals in mind. Human development goals for the <i>Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan</i> are borrowed, with approval, from Twin Cities Compass (tccompass.org). A compilation of key community indicators, it was created to measure the region's collective progress toward human and economic development and, then, to inspire action. Saint Paul will monitor the indicators associated with each of these goals and determine which data to use to help policy makers respond effectively and efficiently to the gaps in people's lives and to allow the integration of human development goals with the City's physical development policies.</p>
<p>The strategy includes six broad initiatives designed to create a climate for investment and to enhance workforce readiness and training:</p> <p><b>Business retention and expansion.</b> Existing firms are the greatest source of potential growth. Significant resources will be used to retain businesses and to build the systems needed to foster their growth.</p> <p><b>Business attraction.</b> Industries with the greatest potential for job creation will be strategically targeted, building particularly on Saint Paul's existing sector strengths. Also targeted will be industries less likely to be out-sourced and industries benefiting from efforts to invest in its human, physical, and cultural infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Invest Saint Paul.</b> <i>Invest Saint Paul</i> is a neighborhood improvement and maintenance strategy that addresses the deleterious impact brought about by the substantial numbers of vacant and foreclosed properties, primarily housing.</p> <p><b>Streamlined development process.</b> A smooth development and permitting process, where the rules are clear, consistently applied, and efficiently implemented, is critical to facilitating investment and supporting entrepreneurship.</p> <p><b>Workforce development.</b> An educated and skilled workforce is one of the most important elements in efforts to attract businesses and help them grow and prosper.</p> <p><b>Downtown revitalization.</b> A vital Downtown provides both a vibrant place to live and work and an important recruiting tool for businesses trying to attract the most qualified workers.</p>	<p>The Saint Paul City Council in 2005 initiated Sustainable Saint Paul, which focuses on carbon dioxide reduction activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy-efficient retrofits for existing City facilities;</li> <li>• Clean and renewable energy supply;</li> <li>• Green development;</li> <li>• Green Gatherings;</li> <li>• Green manufacturing initiative;</li> <li>• Green space and urban reforestation.</li> <li>• National Great River Park;</li> <li>• Recycling and waste reduction;</li> <li>• Transportation options – alternative fuels and vehicles; and</li> <li>• Water resources management.</li> </ul>	<p>These human development goals are reflected in policies in the Land Use, Housing, Transportation, and Parks and Recreation Plans of the <i>Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan</i>:</p> <p><b>Civic engagement.</b> The city will foster a climate of inclusion that encourages active participation from everyone living in our community.</p> <p><b>Early childhood.</b> The city's young children enter school ready to learn.</p> <p><b>Economy and workforce.</b> A strong regional and local economy encourages business investment and provides employment opportunities for workers at all skill levels.</p> <p><b>Education.</b> All students graduate from high school and are prepared for post-secondary education.</p> <p><b>Health.</b> All people living in Saint Paul will have optimum physical and mental health.</p> <p><b>Housing.</b> People at all income levels have housing opportunities throughout the city and the East Metro region.</p> <p><b>Public safety.</b> The city will be a safe place to live and work.</p> <p><b>Transportation.</b> The Twin Cities and Saint Paul will have safe, economic, energy-efficient alternatives to move people and goods throughout the region.</p>

## SUSTAINING SAINT PAUL FOR THE FUTURE

The character of Saint Paul lies in its people, who have tended homes, worked, raised families, and played in its neighborhoods through the decades. Though the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* focuses on the built environment, its underlying commitment is to preserve the characteristics that have nurtured Saint Paul's residents for almost 170 years so they can thrive. Its goal is to keep Saint Paul vibrant and healthy without compromising its high quality of life or changing its spirit.

Sustaining Saint Paul and its people is critical to accomplishing this goal, so that future generations have at least as much, or more, opportunity as the current generation. Sustainability, the overarching theme of the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, has three inter-related parts, each of which has an accompanying vision.

*Economic sustainability.*  The city, as a place to live, work, and play, thrives. Workforce development, corporations, and entrepreneurs contribute to a strong economic base. Quality schools, solid housing stock, health care services, public buildings and infrastructure, as well as unique amenities attract new populations, while redevelopment renews the built environment and increases tax revenues. Enhanced transportation provides easy access to all parts of the city.

*Environmental sustainability.*  Buildings, open spaces, and infrastructure are designed with attention to ecological systems and a light environmental footprint. Buildings are rehabilitated and constructed with reused and renewable materials and utilize technologies that are energy efficient and promote conservation.

*Social sustainability.*  The physical design of the city and its neighborhoods, its amenities, and community-based activities draw people together and promote equal opportunity. Enrichment through lifelong learning, healthy lifestyles, and civic engagement contribute to quality of life in each of the city's neighborhoods and the larger community.

These icons illustrate the three elements of the sustainability theme. Throughout the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, they are used to mark policies specifically associated with one or more sustainability elements.

Each element of the sustainability theme has multiple components, reflecting the complex nature of an older core city. Moreover, there is a multiplicity of organizations and people, in addition to the City, that contribute to realizing the potential of each element of the sustainability theme. The strategies of the six citywide plans of the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, for example, illustrate how these elements can be used to guide the growth of the city as its buildings and land are redeveloped.

The City has been working on programs and projects that advance each sustainability element. The *Economic Development Strategy* furthers aspects of economic sustainability, such as promoting strong businesses and a skilled workforce. Developed in collaboration with the Capital City Partnership, Saint Paul Port Authority, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, and the Saint Paul Area

Chamber of Commerce, it complements policies in the *Land Use Plan*. Sustainable Saint Paul relates to environmental sustainability and includes a wide range of programs and projects that focus on carbon dioxide reduction activities. The program was initiated both by the City and environmental organizations. Policy promoting social sustainability can be fold in the human development goals. These goals have been borrowed from Twin Cities Compass and Wilder Research in collaboration with the Itasca Project and several foundations. Twin Cities Compass. The human development goals, in part, measure the region's collective progress toward human and economic development, with the intention of inspiring action. These City efforts and collaborations are described in Figure IN-A on page 6.

