

Area Plan Summary

District 15 Highland Park Neighborhood Plan

Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

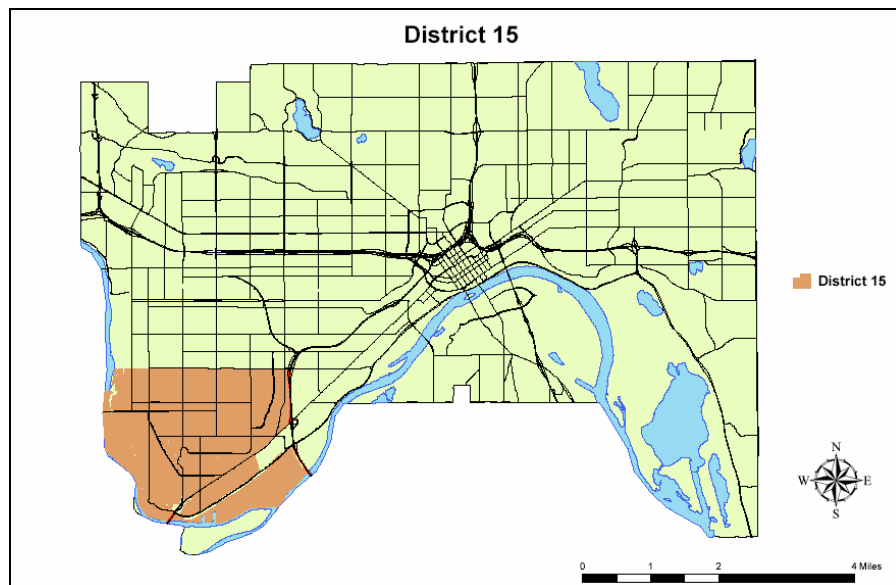
Recommended by the Planning Commission April 20, 2007

Adopted by the City Council July 18, 2007

*This summary appends to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **District 15 Highland Park Neighborhood Plan** and replaces the Highland Park District Plan adopted in 1979. The **District 15 Highland Park Neighborhood Plan** consists of eight major areas of focus, including (1) Commercial Districts, (2) Housing, (3) Urban Design, (4) Transportation, (5) Parks, Recreation, and Libraries (6) Environment, (7) Public Safety, and (8) Education. 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 Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development and the offices of the Highland Park District Council.*

Location

The Highland Park neighborhood is bounded by Randolph Avenue on the north, the Mississippi River on the west and south, and I-35 on the east, with the exception of a small wedge shape east of Homer Street between Shepard Road and West 7th Street that belongs to District 9.



Location of District 15 Highland Park Area in City of St. Paul

Vision

Highland Park seeks to strengthen its place as one of the best places to live, work and recreate in the City of St. Paul. The community aims to foster an environment that respects and enriches the mutually beneficial relationship between residential livability and commercial vitality by stressing its values, including quality of life, diversity of culture and pride in our community.

Through the implementation of this Plan, the community strives to:

- incorporate a mix of uses and a pedestrian-friendly street environment in commercial areas
- provide services that contribute to neighborhood self-sufficiency while improving the District's position in the regional economy
- maintain high-quality housing stock through physical maintenance and community interaction that promotes pride and safety
- welcome residents from a broad spectrum of age groups and income levels with new housing units that are high quality as well as affordable
- protect and expand access to the district's natural amenities including parks, trails, views and recreational facilities
- enhance environmental consciousness to reduce the negative impacts of humans on the environment
- encourage proactive planning for the Ford Plant site, while continuing to support the invaluable asset it provides
- maintain a high level of safety through community engagement, strong relationships with public safety departments, and utilization of crime-preventive urban design features
- enjoy a high level of education due to a successful relationship between the neighborhood, the City, and the education community

Actions for achieving the above vision and goals for Highland Park are presented in several topic areas: Commercial Districts, Housing, Urban Design, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Environment, Public Safety, and Education.

Commercial District

West 7th Street Area

- 1) Amend the Shepard-Davern Gateway Small Area Plan and Overlay [Summary adopted 9/22/1999] with two modifications:
 - a) Reduce the maximum allowed building height to five floors or fifty-five feet while continuing to enforce forty-foot height limits in the Mississippi River Critical Area
 - b) Eliminate convention facilities as permitted uses
- 2) Initiate a TN3 Master Plan to evaluate potential rezonings and implementation of TN design guidelines to replace the design guidelines in the Shepard-Davern Overlay area

Highland Village

- 3) Rezone portions of Highland Village to TN-2 to support mixed-use development and appropriate building design
- 4) Explore options for shared parking agreements and new parking facilities in Highland Village
- 5) Explore the potential for a Parking Benefit District or cooperative special assessment in Highland Village to address parking issues, generate revenue for street improvements, and fund future parking facilities
- 6) Work with Metro Transit to maintain transit access to both Downtown St. Paul and Downtown Minneapolis from Highland Village
- 7) Conduct a planning study of the Ford Plant site and the adjacent railroad corridor to consider future land use options

Snelling-Randolph Commercial Area

- 8) Consider rezoning portions of the Snelling-Randolph commercial area to TN-2 to support mixed-use development and to provide design standards that limit the visual impacts of parking and maintain attractive building facades

Housing

- 9) Utilize zoning mechanisms, such as TN zoning that allow for residential uses in the commercial areas, while limiting the expansion of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods
- 10) Ensure that any redevelopment of the St. Gregory's site—or any future redevelopment in residential areas—is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood
- 11) Encourage mixed-income developments, offering both renter and owner options
- 12) If Sibley Manor or other large market-rate or subsidized affordable housing complexes are redeveloped, District 15 requests that at least 30% of the new units provided on site are affordable to residents making below the St. Paul median income
- 13) District 15 requests that the City implement architectural design standards to ensure that new residential construction is compatible with adjacent houses in scale, form and architectural design

Urban Design

- 14) District 15 encourages the City to enhance the basic design standards in the City code for commercial areas to be more similar to TN zoning district design standards
- 15) Use City's sign code to limit billboards and ensure attractive signage
- 16) Increase the number of street trees with infill planting where gaps exist and with new development projects
- 17) Continue to survey and inventory historic properties in the district in order to provide protection and encourage sympathetic renovation
- 18) Encourage buried power lines

Transportation

- 19) Use traffic calming design techniques—like those outlined in the City’s Transportation Plan—to increase pedestrian and driver safety
- 20) In the West 7th Street Area, make the following changes to the public street right-of-ways to ensure an attractive and safe pedestrian environment:
 - a) District 15 will discuss with MnDOT setting a uniform speed limit of no more than 35 miles per hour along West 7th Street through Highland Park
 - b) Ensure that all realigned streets create a gridiron street pattern with short, urban-sized blocks
 - c) Provide on-street parking when possible
 - d) Install frequent street trees and other streetscaping
 - e) Require wide sidewalks throughout the area and replace existing gaps in the sidewalk network (Davern, Rankin, Madison, Alton and Springfield streets)
 - f) District 15 desires to install count-down pedestrian crossings at major intersections, including West 7th Street and Davern and add new crosswalks and signage at all intersections, and will work with Public Works to pursue these objectives.
 - g) Install a semaphore at the intersection of Shepard and Davern
 - h) District 15 will pursue installation of a left-turn signal with the existing semaphore at the West 7th Street and Davern intersection
 - i) District 15 will pursue redesign of the intersection at West 7th, Montreal and Lexington to increase pedestrian safety
 - j) Redesign intersection of St. Paul and Cleveland Avenues to increase pedestrian safety
- 21) District 15 will pursue reconnecting Shepard Road to the Mississippi River as a parkway extension of Mississippi River Blvd with extensive landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle trails.
- 22) Prioritize resources for the reconstruction of the Edgcumbe-Hamline bridge
- 23) The Highland community strongly desires a reduction in the speed limit on Snelling Avenue from 35 to a uniform 30 miles per hour between Highland Parkway and Montreal
- 24) Study TN rezoning for portions of Highland Village and West 7th Street area to achieve better design standards for parking
- 25) Install bike lanes on Snelling and Randolph, where possible
- 26) Enhance bicycle facilities and construct bicycle routes in the District consistent with the City’s Transportation Plan, however, the Highland District Council opposes adding new bicycle lanes along Mississippi River Blvd.
- 27) Expand and encourage use of and access to transit options
- 28) Increase the number of bus shelters along bus routes
- 29) Protect the Mississippi River Blvd from transportation changes that would increase motor vehicle traffic
- 30) Protect the District from transportation changes that will create new or larger arterial roads
- 31) Ensure that all streets have a sidewalk on at least one side of the street and adequate lighting

Parks, Recreation, and Libraries

- 32) Assess resources for the expansion of services at Homecroft as a community recreational center and enlargement of its meeting and play spaces, which are identified as priorities by the Highland District Council

- 33) Prioritize Capital Improvement Budget monies to build a new park near the existing Sibley Manor, as outlined in the Shepard-Davern Plan
- 34) Assess funding for a new recreation center south of West 7th Street, identified as a priority by the Highland District Council
- 35) Identify and map opportunities for future green and open space acquisition, conservation, public access to the Mississippi River, and creating connections between existing open spaces and parks
- 36) Maximize connectivity between parks and open space through the use of bicycle and pedestrian trails in Highland and with adjacent districts
- 37) Protect views and vistas to and from the Mississippi River while protecting environmentally sensitive areas
- 38) Upgrade historic Highland Golf Course Clubhouse as a multi-use facility that can be rented by the public for events
- 39) Prioritize resources for an expanded library in the West 7th St corridor
- 40) Prioritize resources for renovation of the Highland library and consider expansion
- 41) Support opportunities for the public to comment on potential parks and recreation changes

Environmental

- 42) Provide a variety of educational and community clean-up events
- 43) Identify structures in District 15 that are at risk for lead-based paint and lead pipes and mitigate their negative effects through programs for replacement, rehabilitation and repainting
- 44) Identify areas of high stormwater run-off and alleviate its effects through the integration of best management practices into developments
- 45) Develop creative funding strategies for upgrading infrastructure within the District
- 46) Reestablish Saint Paul's representation on the Metropolitan Airport Commission's Noise Abatement Board
- 47) Support city-wide energy conservation efforts such as the Neighborhood Energy Connection and its "hOurCar" car-sharing program
- 48) Maintain weekly recycling pick-up
- 49) Replace boulevard and park trees that are lost due to disease, damage, etc.
- 50) Plant only native species or cultivars in natural areas while controlling exotic and invasive species
- 51) Preserve and protect natural resources, like the Mississippi River, its floodplain and bluffs by restricting new development from extending past its current boundaries unless such development is specifically allowed in the floodplain or critical area overlay districts
- 52) Strictly enforce height limits within the Mississippi River Critical Area

Public Safety

- 53) Continue to support Neighborhood Block program
- 54) Educate property owners on crime prevention and security improvements in the home and commercial areas
- 55) Increase police patrols—particularly at night—to prevent unlawful behavior
- 56) Increase police presence in parks—particularly Crosby Farm Park and along the Mississippi River
- 57) Upgrade deteriorating sidewalks

- 58) Ensure that strong police community bonds are continued through interactions at both District Council meetings and involvement with the monthly Western District community meetings
- 59) Apply CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Community Design) principles in the design of public projects

Education Strategies

- 60) Encourage public participation in school decisions that will have a large impact on the surrounding neighborhood

Priority Actions for City Participation

The following actions (referenced by number in the plan summary) have been identified as priorities of the community that require leadership or signification participation by city government. Community groups and city departments should 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.

Planning and Economic Development

#1, #2, #3, #7, #8, #9, #10, #12, #13, #14, #48, #52, #53

Public Works

#19, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #26, #29, #46

License, Inspections and Environmental Protection

#5, #15, #43

Parks and Recreation

#26, #32, #33, #34, #50

Libraries

#39, #40

Police

#55, #56

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that the Area Plan Summary of the District 15 Highland Park Neighborhood Plan, as proposed by the District 15 Planning Council, is generally consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The District 15 Comprehensive Plan Update was created through a public participation process and a thorough investigation of the issues that will affect Highland Park in the next ten to twenty years. The community plan process started in January 2004. The Highland District Council created a Task Force to deal specifically with creating goals for Highland's future. The creation of this plan took place in several steps over a twenty-month period. The Task Force was composed of members of the Highland District Council and staff, planners from the City of St. Paul, members of the community, business owners, and student consultants from the University of Minnesota – Humphrey Institute. Residents and business-owners were also asked to give input on the Plan through interviews with key stakeholders and at public meetings.

The Task Force met nearly two dozen times between January 2004 and September 2005 to discuss the issues of primary importance to District 15. These meetings were brainstorm sessions that focused on land use, economic development, public safety, transportation, parks and recreation, quality of life issues, business/commercial, and human services. The outcome of these meetings was a preliminary draft of the District Plan addressing the prominent issues in the District.

In January of 2005, four graduate students from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (HHH) at the University of Minnesota were contracted to develop and organize the updated plan for Highland as part of their final capstone project. The graduate students met with the Highland District Council, the Planning Task Force, and many community members to get further input for the District Plan. They developed a stakeholder analysis to determine who was invested in the Highland District, and whom they should contact about specific issues. The HHH graduate students also developed an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) in the District. The Highland District Council gave their input on the assets and issues for many topics and changes Highland will address in the future. The HHH graduate students compiled this information and used it to create the Plan Elements listed in the plan.

The draft District Plan was presented to the public at the Highland District Council's annual meeting on April 26, 2005. The students gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the plan, and provided draft Plan Element sections for the community to read and respond to. The community members who attended the meeting were encouraged to give input and commentary on the draft. The Highland District Council held a second public meeting for input on the District Plan on June 23, 2005 at the Hillcrest Recreation Center. This meeting was an open forum where the public expressed their ideas about the Plan. Both sets of public meetings lead to positive feedback and significant changes to the final Plan.

After the students finished their work, the District Council hired one of the graduate students to finalize the Plan. At a special meeting on September 22, 2005, the Highland District Council Board voted unanimously to approve the District Plan.