

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan?

Since 2006, when Ford Motor Company announced its intent to close the assembly plant, the City of Saint Paul worked to plan for the site's future. A variety of studies by the City addressed a wide range of topics, such as industrial reuse potential, open space priorities, sustainable design, stormwater management and traffic and multimodal analysis. In addition to these studies¹, there was over a decade of community input and over 100 meetings that resulted in the *Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan (Ford MP)*. The Ford MP was adopted by City Council in September of 2017 and amended in April of 2019.

The Ford MP provides a regulatory framework to guide mixed-use redevelopment of the former Ford Motor Company assembly plant and the adjacent Canadian Pacific railyard. Specifically, the Ford MP details zoning standards for future uses, building form, public realm design, the layout and general design for future public rights-of-way, parks and open space, and stormwater management.

The Ford MP also includes the following goals for affordable housing:

- 5% of housing units should be affordable to households earning 60% or less of Area Median Income
- 5% of housing units should be affordable to households earning 50% or less of Area Median Income
- 10% of housing units should be affordable to households earning 30% or less of Area Median Income
- Affordable units should be a mix of housing types, including townhomes, rental, ownership and senior
- Provide some affordable units within mixed-income buildings – a blend of market-rate and affordable units
- Locate affordable units throughout the site; do not cluster or concentrate them in one area

Ryan Companies committed to meet the Ford MP goal of 20% of housing units being affordable to households at the income levels listed above.

What other city plans are guiding development of the Ford Site?

Development in Saint Paul is guided by the City's Comprehensive Plan. On June 19, 2019 the Saint Paul City Council voted unanimously to approve Saint Paul For All,² the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and the Plan is under final review by the Metropolitan Council. Policy T-3 in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies the following modal hierarchy when designing rights-of-way:

1. Pedestrians, with a focus on safety

¹ The previous studies for the Ford site can be found on the City's website: www.stpaul.gov/Ford.

² Saint Paul for All can be found on the City's website: www.stpaul.gov/stpaulforall

2. Bicyclists, with a focus on safety
3. Transit
4. Other vehicles

The City's Pedestrian Plan identifies actions to support walking in Saint Paul . The Pedestrian Plan was adopted by the City Council on June 5, 2019 and is an addendum to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

The Saint Paul Bicycle Plan (SPBP) is an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. It was adopted by City Council on March 18, 2015, and has subsequently been updated twice, most recently on 7/19/2017.

The SPBP will guide the development of a safe, effective, and well-connected network of bicycle facilities to encourage and facilitate bicycle transportation. The primary objective of the SPBP is to designate alignments throughout the city for future development of bikeways. The vision established in the SPBP will more than double the mileage of bicycle facilities throughout Saint Paul over the next several decades.

These policies and actions related to multi-modal transportation will guide development within the AUAR study area and throughout the city.

Why is an AUAR required for the Ford Site?

The City of Saint Paul, as Responsible Governmental Units (RGU), is utilizing an AUAR as a planning tool to understand how different development scenarios will affect the environment within the AUAR study area before the development occurs. The AUAR process is a hybrid of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review processes. The process is designed to look at the cumulative impacts of anticipated development scenarios within a given geographic area (AUAR study area).

What is the purpose of the Mitigation Plan and how would it be implemented?

This Mitigation Plan is submitted as part of the Draft AUAR to provide reviewers and regulators with an understanding of the actions that are advisable, recommended, or necessary to protect the environment and minimize potential impacts by the proposed development scenarios. This Draft Mitigation Plan will be revised and updated based on comments received during the Draft AUAR comment period³.

This Mitigation Plan is required as part of the AUAR and will be used to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the potential impacts of development within the AUAR study area. This Plan will be formally adopted by the RGU as their action plan to prevent potentially significant environmental impacts.

The primary mechanism for mitigation of environmental impacts is the effective use of ordinances, rules, and regulations. The plan does not modify the regulatory agencies' responsibilities for implementing their respective regulatory programs nor create additional regulatory requirements. The plan specifies the legal and institutional arrangements that will assure that the adopted mitigation measures are implemented.

³ The comment period is open from August 19-September 18, 2019

What is the status of the environmental cleanup?

Ford Motor Company and its environmental consultant Arcadis conducted environmental remediation activities across the site beginning in 2013. Prior to the site cleanup, soil and groundwater contaminants were found in the study area. The most prominent soil contaminants included lead, arsenic, petroleum, and paint solvents, while those found in lesser quantities included chlorinated solvents and wood preservation chemicals. A small volume of surficial soil that contained a concentration of arsenic slightly above typical background levels was removed from one baseball field in 2008. While the soil did not pose a risk to human health or the environment, Ford elected to remove the soil as a precautionary measure. Ford completed its remediation activities in January 2019, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a Certificate of Completion for the site on May 15, 2019.⁴

The main shallow groundwater contaminants found included petroleum and solvents, which have since been cleaned up during the excavation of contaminated soils. Deep groundwater contamination was identified along the western property boundary and in two monitoring wells. The contaminants included trichloroethene, nickel, cobalt, copper, zinc, aluminum, and thallium. It has been determined that the groundwater contamination does not pose a risk to people or the Mississippi River.⁵

Area C

Area C is a 22-acre parcel located west of the Ford Site, along the Mississippi River and up to the bluff edge of Mississippi River Boulevard. This area contains a steam plant and wastewater treatment plant that served the main assembly plant, as well as a former dump site.

Area C is not part of the Ford MP or the AUAR because there are no development plans proposed for this area. Ford is still in process of determining the development feasibility for this parcel.

Ford is the responsible party for Area C and is coordinating with the MPCA. Ford is currently engaged in the following activities related to Area C:

- Ford is preparing a Feasibility Study for Area C, which is expected to be submitted to the MPCA in 2019; however, there is no required timetable. The Feasibility Study is intended to evaluate cleanup alternatives to be presented to the MPCA.
- Ford is completing quarterly collection of groundwater samples from the 11 monitoring wells, with additional sampling events triggered by flood conditions.
- Ford is measuring groundwater levels to see how the water table at Area C fluctuates in response to changing river conditions.

Additional information regarding Area C is available from the MPCA at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/saint-paul-ford-site#areac>.

⁴ For more information on the site clean-up please visit the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's website: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/saint-paul-ford-site>

⁵ Additional information on the history and cleanup of the 122-acre Ford Site parcel can be found at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/saint-paul-ford-site>.

What is required for an air quality analysis?

Motorized vehicles affect air quality by emitting airborne pollutants. Changes in traffic volumes, travel patterns, and roadway locations affect air quality by changing the number of vehicles in an area and the congestion levels. The air quality impacts from the proposed development scenarios are analyzed by addressing criteria pollutants, a group of common air pollutants regulated by the EPA on the basis of criteria (information on health and/or environmental effects of pollution). The criteria pollutants identified by the EPA are ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide. Potential impacts resulting from these pollutants are assessed by comparing projected concentrations to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS, which are national standards for harmful pollutants).

A qualitative analysis provides a basis for identifying and comparing the potential differences among MSAT emissions. The AUAR study area is currently meeting all NAAQS for the criteria air pollutants. For the foreseeable future the trend of lower per vehicle emissions is expected to at least offset growth in vehicle volumes. Therefore, the AUAR study area is expected to continue meeting NAAQS, without or with implementation of the development scenarios. Based on the proposed volumes, the proposed development scenarios do not exceed thresholds that would require a quantitative MSAT analysis; therefore, the project is not expected to adversely affect air quality.

What is required for a noise analysis?

As stated in the AUAR guidelines, construction noise need not be addressed unless there is some unusual reason to do so. No unusual circumstances were identified that would necessitate a detailed noise analysis. Note that county roads are exempt from State noise standards per MN Statutes, section 116.07, subd. 2a(3). Construction activities (i.e., blasting, pile-driving, crushing, and grading activities) will be conducted in compliance with the City of Saint Paul Noise regulations to minimize noise levels and nighttime construction activities.

A sound increase of 3 dBA⁶ is barely noticeable by the human ear, a 5 dBA increase is clearly noticeable, and a 10 dBA increase is heard as twice as loud. For example, if the sound energy is doubled (i.e., the amount of traffic doubles), there is a 3 dBA increase in noise, which is just barely noticeable to most people. On the other hand, if traffic increases by a factor of 10, the resulting sound level will increase by about 10 dBA and be heard as twice as loud.

Traffic volumes in the project area are either on roadways that do not have receivers⁷ that are sensitive to noise, or, the traffic level increases attributable to the project are well below the amount that would generate a sound increase that could be noticeable.

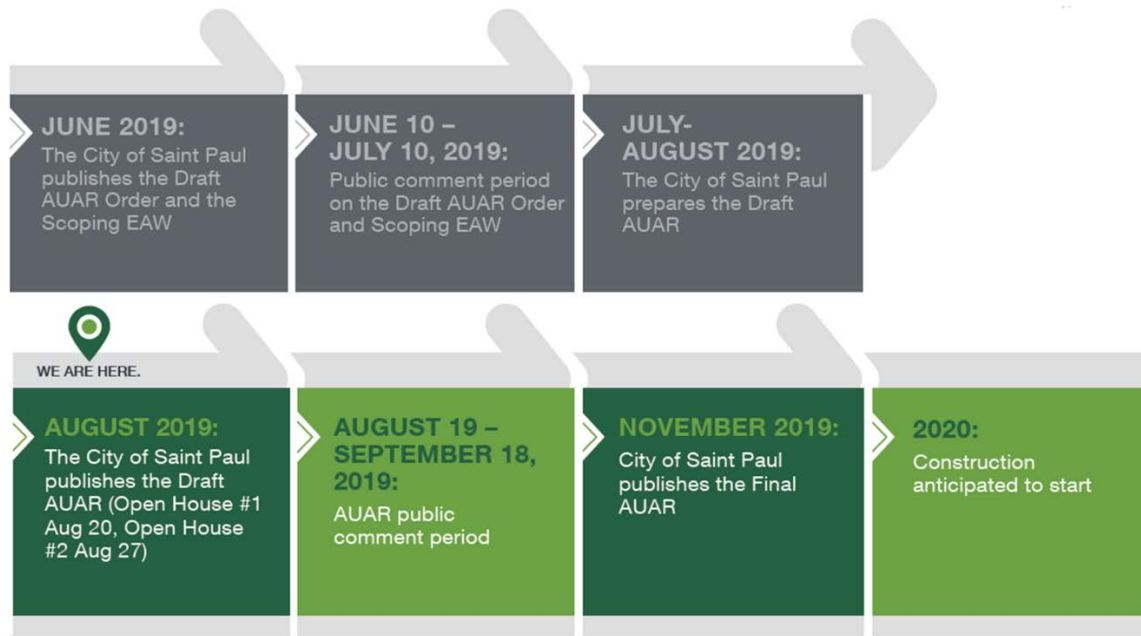
When were the traffic counts conducted?

Intersection TMCs collected in May 2019; majority occurred on Thursday, May 9, Wednesday May 15, or Thursday May 16. All Universities and Schools were in Session, including, but not limited to St Thomas University, St Catherine University, St Paul Academy and Summit School, Highland Village Montessori School, Highland Catholic School, Horace Mann School.

⁶ dBA measures the loudness of sounds in the ear perceived by the human ear.

⁷ defined as homes, parks, schools, and businesses

What are the next steps for development?



How can I comment on the AUAR?

You can provide comments during the public open houses on August 20th and 27th, submit comments on an online form found at www.stpaul.gov/ford-auar or you can provide comments by September 18, 2019 to:

Menaka Mohan, Ford Site Planner
25 W Fourth Street, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102
FordSitePlanning@ci.stpaul.mn.us

How can I stay involved in the project after the AUAR?

You can sign up for email updates and get up to date information about the project www.stpaul.gov/Ford.