



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: June 12, 2017

TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee

FROM: Anton Jerve, PED staff

RE: 2040 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Chapter

BACKGROUND

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is Saint Paul's "blueprint" for guiding development for the next 20 years. It addresses city-wide physical development, and contains chapters on Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Housing, Historic Preservation and Water Resources. While the policy focus is on physical development, the Plan's core values, goals and policies reflect an understanding that how we arrange the physical elements of our city – streets, parks, housing, public infrastructure – impacts and is impacted by the people in our city. The current update of the Comprehensive Plan also has several overarching issues integrated into each chapter, including racial and social equity, aging in community, community/public health, economic development, sustainability/resiliency and urban design. The policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan are based on Saint Paul's core values; history; community priorities; and emerging social, economic and environmental trends.

Legal Framework

The state Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires that every municipality and other local government in the seven-county metropolitan region have a Comprehensive Plan, and that it be updated every 10 years consistent with the Metropolitan Council's regional plan and system plans for transportation, parks and water. (Note: In Saint Paul, several other plans beyond the six city-wide chapters have been adopted periodically as addenda to the Comprehensive Plan, including the *Central Corridor Development Strategy*, station area plans, master plans, area plans and district plans. These documents are not required by the Metropolitan Council to be updated every 10 years; they are updated as needed at any time.) The guiding regional document for this update of Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan is *Thrive MSP 2040*. The Metropolitan Council also has a Housing Policy Plan that is not required by statute, but provides guidance to municipalities as they prepare their own Housing chapters. The mandated planning time frame for this update of the Comprehensive Plan is 2040.

In addition to *Thrive MSP 2040*, the City's update of the Comprehensive Plan must respond to regional growth projections in population, housing units and employment. The following projections have been established for Saint Paul to 2040: an increase of 40,000 residents, 20,000 households and 30,000 jobs. We have to show how we will accomplish this growth, as well as how our local policies will implement regional policies. In its review, the Metropolitan Council also considers our Comprehensive Plan's compatibility with the plans of neighboring municipalities and agencies with jurisdiction in Saint Paul (e.g. watershed districts, Ramsey County, MnDOT). Saint Paul is designated as an "Urban Center" in *Thrive MSP 2040*.

Planning Commission Role in Review and Adoption

One of the core responsibilities of the Planning Commission is to oversee the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, and to recommend it to the City Council for adoption. Once the City Council has adopted the Plan, it is sent to the Metropolitan Council for final approval. For three chapters – Transportation, Parks & Recreation and Historic Preservation – a Planning Commission committee or other City commission will also review the relevant draft chapter and forward a recommendation to the Planning Commission. A public hearing on the complete draft Comprehensive Plan will be held at the Planning Commission and likely at the City Council prior to adoption. The role of the Planning Commission is to ensure that the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan respond to our regional mandate for growth, maintain a city-wide perspective, are consistent with one another and reflect the city's core values.

2010 LAND USE CHAPTER

In the current Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2010, the Land Use Chapter contained 109 strategies organized under three broad policies: (1) Target Growth in Unique Neighborhoods, which related primarily to a growth strategy (2) Provide Land for Jobs, which related to industrial land uses, and (3) Promote Aesthetics and Development Standards, which focused on urban design. The number of policies and organization of the chapter often made it difficult to find the policies relevant to any particular land use or location in the city. Furthermore, many strategies were more like work plan items than guiding policy. Staff has identified this lack of clarity in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan as a significant issue for effective implementation of the sometimes-conflicting policy guidance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community engagement – far more than in a typical process – has been undertaken to set the community vision and priorities for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and to identify issues to address within it. The engagement approach has been to reach as many people as possible; be genuine about the role of engagement; and be representative by race, age and geography. Major engagement kicked off in May 2016 with three broadly-advertised open house events, and continued throughout 2016 into 2017 with attendance at community festivals, pop-up meetings in public locations, district council meetings, City department meetings, policymaker interviews, radio interviews on WEQY (Voice of the East Side) and KMOJ (The People's Station), Open Saint Paul online input, and discussions with experts and advocacy organizations. As of this writing, staff has spoken with over 2,000 people at 62 events, generating over 3,700 comments. At least one event was held and at least 25 people were

engaged in each of Saint Paul's 17 planning districts, with an average of three events and 100 people per district. During the big engagement push of May-September 2016, the over 800 people of color engaged represented approximately 50% of the total participants, compared to a city-wide population proportion of 40% (in 2010). The age of participants was also mostly representative of the city-wide population, if somewhat older.

Nine themes and priorities emerged from the community engagement. In December 2016 and January 2017, staff sent an e-blast of the preliminary themes and priorities, and posted them in 81 strategically-selected "third places" (gathering spaces like coffee shops, libraries, and community centers) to invite feedback. Seventy-one comments were received, mostly confirming the themes and priorities, with the most commonly-suggested additions relating to climate change resiliency and adaptation. Responding to this feedback, "sustainability" was added to create a modified final list of nine themes:

- **Livability, equity and sustainability.** When we asked about regional themes established by the Metropolitan Council, a majority said livability and equity are the most important for Saint Paul. Further public input established sustainability as also being vitally important. Other regional themes to be incorporated into the updated Comprehensive Plan include prosperity and stewardship.
- **Parks and open space.** Parks and open space, from Como Park to Swede Hollow to the Mississippi River to local playgrounds, were consistently identified throughout the city as cherished places that we should preserve and enhance.
- **Sense of community.** Many people identified social connections, diversity and their neighborhood's character – whether "vibrant" or "quiet" – as key advantages of living in Saint Paul.
- **Public safety.** People want to be and feel safe in their communities, and to have positive relationships with police officers. Strategic investment and thoughtful design can improve public safety. While this issue goes beyond typical development policies covered in the Plan, other ways to meaningfully incorporate this deep concern will be explored.
- **Road safety for pedestrians and bicycles.** Pedestrian safety at crossings and improved facilities were frequently identified as issues, as were bicycle facility improvements and safety.
- **Invest in people.** Whether job training or programming at recreation centers (especially for youth), people identified this as an important issue for Saint Paul. Many commented that these investments pay dividends for livability, prosperity and public safety.
- **Jobs.** People said we need more and better jobs to allow people to provide for their families and lift up the entire community.
- **Quality affordable housing.** People said we need more affordable housing, and that existing housing must be well-maintained.
- **Saint Paul is full of opportunity sites.** The range of "places with potential" identified was astounding, including major projects like Snelling-Midway (soccer stadium area) and the Ford site; large geographies like "the East Side," "the Green Line" or "the riverfront;" commercial corridors like White Bear Avenue or Selby Avenue; and individual sites

throughout the city. People said there are gems throughout the city, ready for (re)discovery and investment.

In addition to the overall themes and priorities, staff sorted through the engagement input to identify public priorities specific to land use:

- Walkability and emphasis on pedestrian friendliness
- Proximity to the river
- A desire to have more “Town Centers/Neighborhood Centers/Urban Villages” city-wide, including proximity to:
 - Neighborhood retail/shopping
 - Libraries
 - Food/Gardens/Grocery
- Increased density
- Children/kid-friendly neighborhoods, infrastructure and urban design
- Access to parks, trails, swimming pools, water

Going beyond priorities and themes, every single public comment has been read by multiple City staff and considered for use in the Comprehensive Plan or in its implementation. A sortable data base was created for additional analysis by topic and geography.

For the Land Use chapter, public comments were also organized to relate to land use categories for both policy and the required Future Land Use Map. The selected categories are Mixed-Use Corridors, Neighborhood Centers and Opportunity Sites. The table below assigns locations mentioned by the public to one of these categories. The locations listed in the table will be compared to the current Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan and vetted with other information to develop the new Future Land Use Map.

Table 1: Land Use Map Outreach Summary

Mixed-Use Corridors	Neighborhood Centers	Opportunity Sites
• Arcade Ave	• Como/Front/Dale	• 1050 Kent N (Jefferson Smurfit site)
• Grand Ave	• Fairview/Montreal	• Boys Totem Town
• E 7th (near CLUES, Swede Hollow café)	• Hampden Park	• Como/Front/Western (port authority)
• Payne Ave	• Hillcrest Area	• East Downtown area between Saints Ball Park and Mounds Bluff
• Phalen Boulevard	• Johnson Parkway/Ames Ave	• Ford Site

Mixed-Use Corridors	Neighborhood Centers	Opportunity Sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selby Ave (Eastern end) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland/Dale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gautier Elementary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snelling Ave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland/Johnson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hafner Center/Hillcrest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria St 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnehaha/Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Areas in West Midway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West 7th St 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mounds Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maryland/Johnson Parkway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Bear Ave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North End 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midway near Milton/Aurora
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payne/Phalen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sears site
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phalen Village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snelling Stadium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroad Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Publishing Ramsey Co Sites
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice + Front/Maryland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weyerhaeuser
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice/Como 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Saint Anthony Park 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University/Dale 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University/Snelling 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University/Western 	

Parallel to broad general community engagement, staff has communicated with experts, advocacy groups and focus groups, including the Saint Paul Business Review Council and other business organizations, Port Authority, colleges and universities, the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Aging and Saint Paul Public Schools. Such outreach is on-going.

LAND USE CHAPTER PROCESS

The Land Use chapter was drafted using the current Land Use chapter as a foundation, and adding community input (including over 900 individual comments related to land use), development trends and related research, and a review of comprehensive plans of peer cities. All this information was presented to an interdisciplinary staff team from the Departments of Planning and Economic Development and Safety and Inspections for review and guidance on chapter structure and content. This staff team also helped to draft, review and revise the goals and policies in the chapter. Guiding principles for this process were to:

- use clear and concise language;
- focus policies on the big picture;
- keep the chapter to a manageable size; and make the document as user-friendly as possible.

DRAFT CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Proposed structure

Most of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan chapters will assign policies to each of the goals stated in the beginning of each chapter. The Land Use chapter, however, will present policies by land use (although there are still goals stated at the beginning of the chapter). This is to improve usability by allowing the reader to focus on the land use category in question. With the current Comprehensive Plan, one is forced to read the entire chapter to know which policies are relevant to any particular zoning case, for example. Additionally, this will provide a direct relationship between the Future Land Use Map and land use policies.

There are some changes proposed for the Future Land Use Map, summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Proposed Land Use Map Organization and Change Summary

Current Map Categories	Proposed Map Categories	Change and Discussion
Established Neighborhoods	Urban Neighborhoods	Categories will be combined to reflect diversity of existing housing densities. New name reflects Saint Paul’s location in the urban core of the region.
Residential Corridors		
Mixed Use Corridors	Mixed Use Corridors	No change.
Neighborhood Centers	Neighborhood Centers	No change. Neighborhood Center designation will be distributed more evenly throughout the city to acknowledge the way the city has developed and reflect the desire to have amenities within walking distance of more areas of the city.
Downtown	Downtown	No change.
Industrial	Industrial	No change.
Transportation	Transportation	Categories will be combined because both are transportation-related.
Airport & Airport Property		
Major Parks & Open Space	Parks & Open Space	Map will recognize larger private open spaces as well.
Major Institutional	Civic & Institutional	No change other than name.
Water	Water	No change.
Opportunity Sites	Opportunity Sites	Opportunity Sites will be updated based on development and land use changes over the last 10 years.
N/A	Semi-Rural	The portion of Highwood zoned R-LL will be designated Semi-Rural to reflect adopted neighborhood plans.

Priorities

Four priorities establish the foundation for the proposed land use policies:

- Focused growth around transit
- Equity
- Access to the Mississippi River
- Neighborhood amenities within walking distance

Focusing growth around transit is a continuation of policies in the current Comprehensive Plan. This approach has been strengthened by plans and policies adopted since 2008, particularly the station area plans around the Green Line LRT and the planned Gold Line BRT. There is evidence that this approach has been successful in that growth projections in the Green Line station area plans have been met or exceeded, even during the Great Recession.

Equity is a new priority in this plan. It is a clear priority for the region and city that was echoed by the community during our outreach process. There are two primary ways this is reflected in land use policy. One way is to have an “equitable distribution” of amenities throughout the city. This could be accomplished by filling service gaps, such as new sidewalks or parks; enhancing existing services, like libraries; or creating new Neighborhood Centers or transit service. In any case, the public investment in services should be appropriate to the needs and demographics of population. The other primary way equity is applied the Land Use chapter is by using “Areas of Concentrated Poverty” as defined by the Metropolitan Council as a frame of reference when applying policy. This designation was analyzed by staff using demographic data (reference maps attached) and was found to be strikingly applicable for Saint Paul. This will help guide City policy and investment. In some cases, it may be more equitable to invest inside the Areas of Concentrated Poverty, perhaps to prioritize new sidewalk connections to transit. In other cases, it may be more equitable to invest outside them with affordable housing, for example, to avoid further concentrating poverty.

The most frequent comments we received as part of our outreach expressed a desire to have amenities within walking distance to home, such as neighborhood businesses and grocery stores, parks, playgrounds and open space, and libraries. This goal is also related to equity in that many neighborhoods do not have the amenities or even infrastructure that residents desire. The draft Land Use chapter proposes to increase number of Neighborhood Centers from those designated in the current Comprehensive Plan, which, over time, will increase neighborhood amenities city-wide.

Access to the Mississippi River was a clear priority of the community regardless of where we were soliciting input or who we were talking to. This was not as emphasized in the current Land Use chapter. Given that Saint Paul would not exist without the river and was built up around it, it is vital to keep it at the forefront when crafting land use policies.

NEXT STEPS

The Comprehensive Planning Committee will review this chapter (and all the chapters) before authorizing staff to release the entire draft plan for public comment in early 2018. Upon revising to respond to public comment at that time, staff will then return to the Comprehensive

Planning Committee to request that a formal public hearing be set in front of the Planning Commission in April 2018.

Additional maps related to the chapter will be drafted in 2017 and presented to the Comprehensive Planning Committee for review at a later date. The plan document is anticipated to be before the City Council in June 2018 for a public hearing and adoption.

Attachments

1. Draft Land Use chapter
2. Draft Future Land Use map
3. Areas of Concentrated Poverty maps