

Area Plan Summary

Lexington Hamline Small Area Plan and Lex-Ham Tomorrow Plan

Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission - February 9, 2001

Adopted by the City Council - April 25, 2001

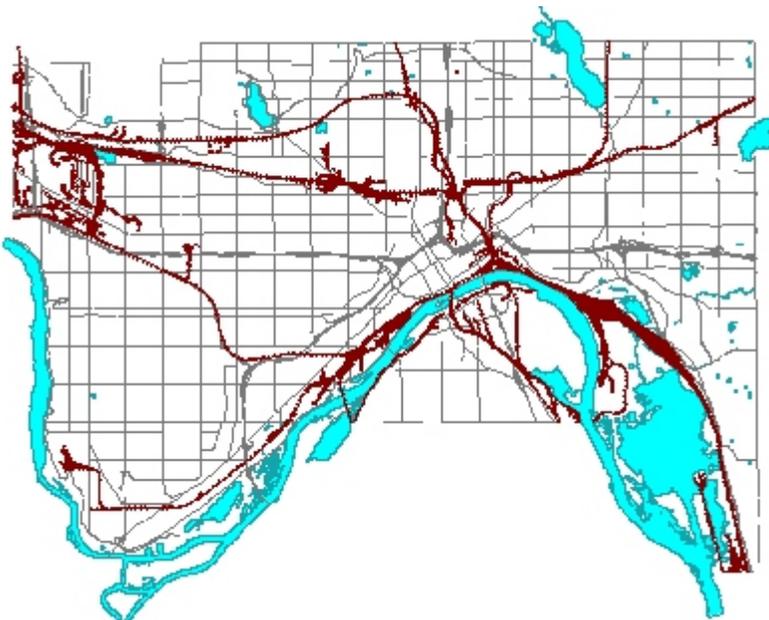
*This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **Lexington Hamline Plan** (adopted in 1993) and the **Lex-Ham Tomorrow Plan**. These plans outline a community agenda based on the following values:*

1. *Providing access for all to programs and destinations throughout the neighborhood*
2. *Thriving, attractive residential areas and neighborhood businesses*
3. *A strong pedestrian realm*
4. *High-quality urban design in redevelopment areas*

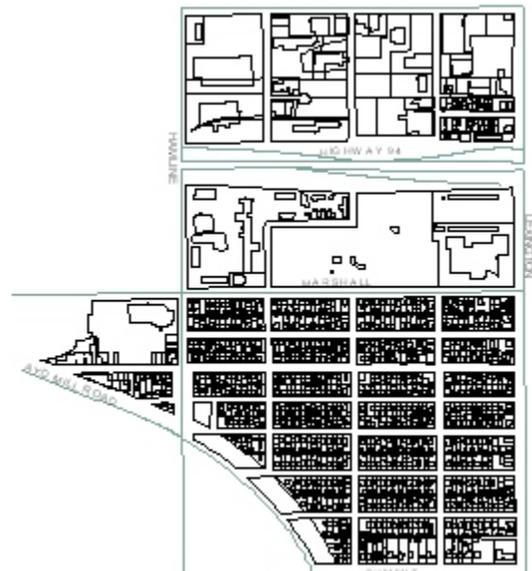
Copies of the full-length plans are available for review at the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development and the office of the Lexington-Hamline Community Council.

Location

The Lex-Ham neighborhood—which constitutes a portion of Citizen Participation District 13—is bounded by Lexington Parkway on the east, University Avenue on the north, Hamline Avenue and Ayd Mill Road on the west, and Summit Avenue on the south. The neighborhood contains approximately 40 blocks, or 320 acres.



Lex-Ham



Vision

The Lexington-Hamline neighborhood will be characterized by well-maintained older homes, streets, and businesses. The neighborhood will be an attractive and stable place where people will choose to live and will want to remain. Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections centered around Griggs Street will unify the neighborhood, connecting gathering places, shopping, offices, residential and recreational areas, thereby creating a more vibrant environment. A trail will be constructed adjacent to Ayd Mill Road, further improving options for pedestrian and bicycle travel in the neighborhood. New construction or rehabilitation will be compatible with the existing urban fabric and neighborhood character. University Avenue will become more pedestrian-friendly, with new development that is mixed-use, pedestrian-scaled, and oriented closer to the street edge.

Specific Action Strategies and Implementation Steps

Neighborhood Character and Identity

The plans emphasize the need to ensure the vitality of residential areas and neighborhood businesses through continued maintenance and improvements. Residential structures that need maintenance should be monitored and the owners notified, and low-cost funding should be made available for exterior improvements. Similarly, community businesses are encouraged to invest in exterior improvements, such as awnings, lighting and high-quality signage. Neighborhood identity should be strengthened by marking major entrances to the neighborhood. In addition, the plans recommend reinforcing an attractive public realm through streetscape improvements (especially along St. Anthony and Concordia Avenues), beautification measures such as tree, shrub and flower plantings, and keeping the neighborhood free of litter.

Neighborhood Connections

The plans recommend a series of actions to enhance the public realm and connections in the Lex-Ham neighborhood. Many of the streetscape recommendations from the 1993 Small Area Plan have already been implemented. Other recommendations include improving existing and providing additional pedestrian connections, particularly along Griggs Street and north of I-94, for better access to key destinations throughout the area. Streets and bridges should better accommodate pedestrians and bicycles. The community will continue to monitor and be involved in planning related to Ayd Mill Road and light rail transit in the Central Corridor.

University Avenue Vitality

The vitality of University Avenue is another major focus of the two plans. Redevelopment opportunities exist at the southwest corner of University and Lexington, and in the former 3M building. These sites represent the opportunity to support a range of redevelopment options, including housing, mixed-use development, or destination businesses. Urban design strategies for University Avenue include strengthening the pedestrian edge on University, especially east of Griggs Street, breaking up large parking lots with landscaped islands and lighting, and ensuring that new development be located closer to the street edge to strengthen the pedestrian realm. Any redevelopment scenario should support the continuation of Central Avenue as a safe, vital residential area.

City Action

To encourage implementation of this vision, the City of Saint Paul should include in its budget and program priorities the following activities. More detail about each proposed action is included in the full-length plan and should be reviewed by the appropriate City staff.

Highest Priority:

1. Establish designated bike lanes and paths -- especially north-south -- within the neighborhood that will connect to major bikeways and destinations outside of the neighborhood. Griggs Street should be emphasized as the as the primary pedestrian and bicycle path from the neighborhood to Dunning Field. (BAB, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Lex-Ham CC)
2. Widen the Griggs Street pedestrian bridge, adding lighting for safety, with connections to pedestrian pathways. (Public Works)
3. The shopping center on the southwest corner of Lexington and University should be redeveloped with housing, mixed-use or destination businesses. Any redevelopment should be pedestrian-scaled and oriented with buildings located close to the street edge. (PED, affected property owners)
4. Provide additional year-round activities at Dunning Park, such as basketball courts to make the park a richer, more diverse environment. (Parks and Recreation)
5. Continue regular maintenance of neighborhood's housing stock. Identify and notify residential structures that require maintenance. Investigate funding sources for grants. (Lex-Ham Community Council, PED)
6. Strengthen and reinforce Central Avenue as a residential area by installing redesigned historic lantern lighting, and installing a landscaped buffer to screen the avenue from adjacent commercial and industrial uses. (Public Works, affected property owners)
7. Ensure that the reconstruction of all bridges and streets in the neighborhood includes or can accommodate bike lanes or, where appropriate, off-road bike paths. (Public Works)
8. Vacate a portion of the Donohue Avenue cul-de-sac north of the Skyline Towers building and convert it to green space. (Saint Paul Real Estate Division, Sentinel Management, Lex-Ham Community Council)

Other Priority Actions:

- Enhance the appearance of businesses along Selby Avenue through improvements that respect their original design and character. (Lex-Ham Community Council, Selby Avenue Business Association)
- Improve the appearance of the neighborhood through regular litter pick-up, improving and maintaining alleys and driveways. (Affected property owners)
- Mark major entrances to the neighborhood, including the intersections of Summit/Lexington, Selby/Lexington, Marshall/Lexington, Marshall/Hamline, and Selby/Hamline. (Lexington-Hamline Community Council, Public Works, PED)
- Install street trees and redesigned historic single-lantern lights on both sides of St. Anthony and Concordia Avenues. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation)
- Widen sidewalks on Hamline and Lexington bridges when reconstruction occurs/is

- feasible. (Public Works)
- Establish other “pedestrian pathways” in the north end of the neighborhood, connecting Skyline Towers and the new Griggs pedestrian bridge to destinations north of I-94, including the Target store. (PED, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, affected property owners)
- Continue to monitor the light rail transit (LRT) planning process for the Midway Corridor for its impacts on the neighborhood. (Lex-Ham Community Council, PED, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority)
- Continue to monitor the AMR EIS process. If the road is reconstructed (with or without connections), ensure that a bicycle/pedestrian trail is accommodated adjacent to the parkway. (Public Works)
- Where commercial buildings do not come up to the sidewalk on University between Lexington and Hamline, strengthen the pedestrian edge with landscaping and/or low walls or decorative fencing -- particularly east of Griggs Street. (Public Works, Parks and Recreation, affected property owners)
- Other new development along University Avenue should be mixed-use, and pedestrian scaled and oriented with buildings located close to the street edge. (PED, affected property owners)
- 3M building should be renovated into professional businesses and/or housing. (PED, affected property owners)
- Lessen the negative visual impact of large parking areas by increasing landscaping along the edges and installing landscaped islands. (affected property owners)

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that *The Lex-Ham Tomorrow Plan* is consistent with the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The Lexington-Hamline Small Area Plan was written with participation of a Small Area Plan Task Force, the Saint Paul Planning Commission, Saint Paul PED, Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

The community planning process for the Lex-Ham Tomorrow Plan was sponsored by the Lexington-Hamline Concordia University Area Collaborative. The Collaborative is comprised of five organizations: Youth Express, Central High School, Higher Ground Academy, Concordia University, and the Lexington-Hamline Community Council. In 1999, community members spent six intensive months articulating a vision for community change, researching community needs and developing strategies designed to move the community toward its vision. This work was done through a combination of large community-wide meetings, small strategy groups and less formal input from community members. Financial support was provided by the St. Paul Companies.