

## **Area Plan Summary**

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### **Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan**

Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission - April 20, 2007

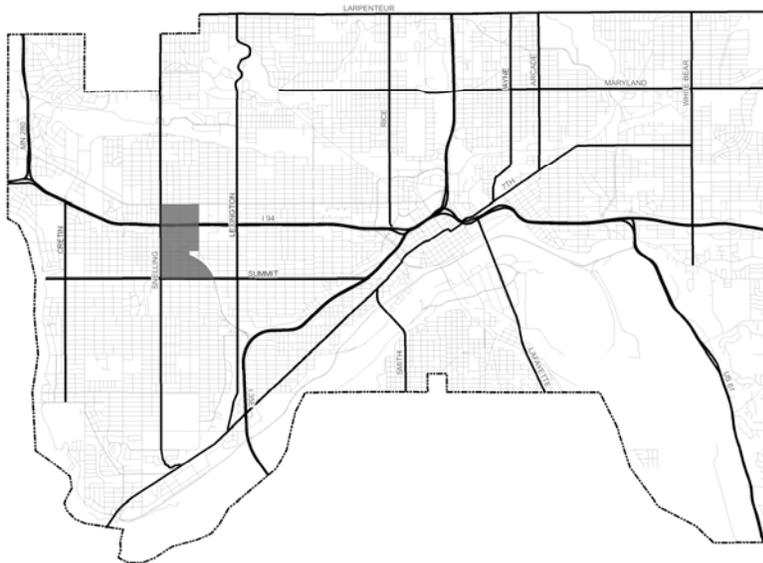
Adopted by the City Council - June 6, 2007

*This summary appends to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan** and replaces that portion of the District 13 Plan adopted in 1978. The **Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan** consists of eight major areas of focus, including (1) Land Use, (2) Urban Design, (3) Transportation, (4) Housing, (5) Economic Development, (6) Public Safety, (7) Environmental Protection and Management, and (8) Parks and Recreation. 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 Snelling Hamline Planning Council.*

### **Location**

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The Snelling Hamline neighborhood sits between the south side of University Avenue and the north side of Summit Avenue, with Snelling Avenue its western boundary and Hamline Avenue and Ayd Mill Road its eastern boundary.



Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan Area

## **Vision**

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The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood intends to support land use as a responsible land steward by monitoring the enforcement of zoning standards, protecting the limited amounts of greenspace and parks from non-recreational uses, and protecting the architectural character of the district from undesirable elements. The neighborhood is resolute about promoting a walkable, healthy, and safe environment through the use of design principles, while maintaining and improving landscaping and greenspace based on earth friendly principles. The Snelling Hamline Community Council will work to nurture and provide care for natural landscapes, support the Watershed District standards, promote recycling, and limit pollution. The neighborhood supports protecting and creating open spaces in order to provide safe, accessible public spaces where all residents may gather for recreation, physical activity, and social interaction.

The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood desires streets, roads, and sidewalks that provide safe travel for vehicles and pedestrians while promoting transportation alternatives. It seeks to preserve, rehabilitate, and maintain the housing stock and support housing opportunities for both home ownership and rental properties in a range of incomes. The neighborhood will continue to support its mix of businesses in order to maintain a healthy balance between economic development and neighborhood character. The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood will ensure safety for all residents by supporting the maintenance of appropriate levels of police and emergency respondents, fostering resident involvement in crime prevention, and ensuring pedestrian safety.

## **Specific Strategies**

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The following strategies are new initiatives for the City of Saint Paul, or policies that the Snelling Hamline Community Council wishes to pursue itself or in cooperation with the City and other partners. The full list of strategies for the Snelling Hamline District Council and other neighborhood partners can be found in the full-length plan.

### **Land Use**

- 1) The Snelling Hamline Community Council supports and encourages the following land use strategies:
  - a. Support and recommend Capitol Region Watershed District standards whenever possible for development, such as treatments to prevent soil erosion during construction, installation of alternative semi-permeable surfaces on parking areas to aid in water run-off control, installation of rain gardens, and reduction in the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
  - b. Ensure that zoning violations are investigated and corrected. Report suspected zoning violations to the St. Paul Citizen Service Office. Areas of particular concern include illegal conversion of housing to too many rental units, and upholding business signage, lighting and billboard regulations, as mandated in the Special Sign District ordinance.
  - c. Locate cellular phone antennas on existing nonresidential buildings or structures when possible, seek locations as far away from residential uses as possible, avoid

placement of cell phone towers in limited green space, and recommend designs that blend in with the architectural character of the neighborhood.

### **Urban Design**

- 2) Promote **Transit Oriented Development**, a street design that provides for efficient automobile, bus and rail transportation while at all times respecting and encouraging the safety of pedestrians.
- 3) Snelling Hamline requests utilization of the **Development Principles for University Avenue** for development on University Avenue. (The Principles were prepared by the City of St. Paul planning staff in collaboration with numerous community groups and adopted January 4, 1999 by University United.) These principles include placement of buildings in relation to sidewalks and vehicle access points, good lighting design, trees and green space that are compatible with and attractive to pedestrians, and parking in the rear of commercial buildings where possible. Consider rezoning to Traditional Neighborhood Districts (TN-1, TN-2 or TN-3) to achieve the type of design guidelines described in the Development Principles for University Avenue.
- 4) Implement **Urban Village Principles** as described in the Saint Paul City Comprehensive Plan for new development projects in the district.
- 5) Implement the 10 principles of city building described in The Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework.
- 6) The Snelling Hamline Community Council desires new construction and remodeling which complements existing structures while providing variety to the neighborhood.

### **Transportation**

- 7) Enforce pedestrian safety laws and find innovative ways to improve pedestrian safety and crosswalk enforcement throughout the neighborhood.
- 8) Introduce traffic calming elements along Snelling Avenue to improve aesthetics, reduce speeding and increase safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. Focus first on intersections with high accident rates. Five intersections of particular concern are Snelling Av with: Spruce Tree, University Av, St. Anthony Av, Selby Av, and Concordia Av.
- 9) Install traffic calming solutions as needed on local streets, such as traffic circles and other methods described in The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.
- 10) Continue to implement solutions to mitigate speeding and congestion problems associated with traffic entering and exiting Ayd Mill Road at the western abutment of the Selby Avenue Bridge.

- 11) Enhance the safety and aesthetics of local streets as part of the Public Works' Residential Street Vitality Program, scheduled for 2008. This includes:
  - a. Repaving outdated oiled local streets, with appropriate work on curbs and drains.
  - b. Testing and implementing traffic calming measures, such as traffic circles.
  - c. Installing pedestrian scale, antique-style lighting.
  
- 12) The Snelling Hamline Community will work with the City and the two other Councils in our District to promote transportation alternatives in the following ways:
  - a) Assess how the District could be better served by public buses, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council.
  - b) Plan for Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit in the Midway Central Corridor. Seek routes that enhance the neighborhood and contribute to its economic development rather than merely shuttle riders through the area.
  - c) Plan streets that include bike lanes and make streets without a striped lane safer for bicyclists. There is particular need for safe, accessible north-south bicycle routes.
  - d) Develop Midtown Greenway – St. Paul extension, an off-road bike path along Ayd Mill corridor and crossing Snelling Avenue on the railroad bridge just north of Marshall Ave.
  - e) Ensure sidewalks are well maintained and streetscapes are aesthetically pleasing, so residents are more likely to choose to walk for transportation and recreation. The Snelling Hamline Community Council will notify City officials of snow removal problems, street conditions, and traffic calming problems so the streets are safe to cross.
  
- 13) Snelling Hamline requests that the City increase parking enforcement, with particular attention to vehicles parked too close to intersections.
  
- 14) Support clear distinctions of street classifications, as described in the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan – Travel and System Management chapter Policy 11: “The City should use traffic controls, enforcement, design practices, and land use policies to maintain the current function of streets, especially relative to one another, as designated and defined in the functional classification map [for the City], specifically ensuring use of arterials (principal, minor A and minor B) for longest trips, collectors for intermediate and local trips, and local streets for local access.” Of particular interest, maintain Ayd Mill Road as an “A” Minor Arterial street, and discourage its use as an interstate substitute, including where Selby Avenue and Ayd Mill Road intersect.
  
- 15) The Snelling Hamline Community Council requests that Ayd Mill corridor be converted into a linear park, to achieve green space for safe recreational activities, improved environmental quality, New Urbanist design principles, aesthetics, health, and livability. If the City of Saint Paul moves forward with plans for the corridor as an extended roadway, the Snelling Hamline Community Council strongly recommends public forums for issues to be

discussed, solutions to be developed, and grievances to be settled. Issues that would need to be addressed include:

- a. Traffic calming, speed and truck traffic control, and enforcement
- b. Aesthetic and safety improvements on Concordia, St. Anthony, Selby, Hamline, and at intersections
- c. Residential access between Pascal and Marshall
- d. Increased mass transit usage of the corridor to reduce traffic pressure
- e. Development of recreational space, including designation of Ashland Park as a City park and connecting it to the Summit/Syndicate green space
- f. Development of a new park in the Snelling Park area
- g. Bike route connections using and crossing the corridor
- h. Historic interpretation of Ayd Mill with signage.
- i. Safe, accessible pedestrian-oriented development both in and to the corridor
- j. Water quality assurances
- k. Closure of the direct connection of Ayd Mill with I-35E during construction, to reduce neighborhood traffic pressure and increase safety and efficiency for construction personnel.
- l. Remediation tools such as sound barriers or thick vegetative screening to protect the neighborhood from increased traffic noise and pollution.

*[Planning Commission Comment and Recommendation for Strategy 15: Strategy 15 represents the official policy of the Snelling Hamline Community Council at the time of its dissolution and merger into the Lexington-Hamline and Merriam Park Community Councils as ordered by the City Council on December 6, 2006. At the Snelling Hamline Annual Community Meeting on October 25, 2006, the Community Council had requested input as to whether the Community Council should reconsider its position on Ayd Mill Road in light of changing community sentiment about Ayd Mill Road's future after the south end of Ayd Mill Road was opened to I-35E. However, because the Community Council was dissolved soon after the October 2006 annual meeting, the Community Council's position never changed.]*

*Snelling Hamline's Strategy 15 is included here for informational purposes. It is not adopted as City policy. The Planning Commission finds that Strategy 15's request for a linear park in the Ayd Mill corridor is inconsistent with the City's adopted Transportation Plan Policy 20 which states: "The City should complete environmental assessment of alternatives for the future of Ayd Mill Road and implement the resulting recommendations."*

*Consistent with Transportation Plan Policy 20, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed in June of 2005. Strategy 15 conflicts with the EIS Record of Decision issued by the Federal Highway Administration which provides that the Preferred Alternative will maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction following the existing Ayd Mill Road alignment for 1.6 miles with a posted speed limit of 40 mph. In addition, the Preferred Alternative will result in an extension of the Ayd Mill Road (via a spur railroad track alignment) on the north end to connect to St. Anthony Avenue (I-94) and will have a permanent connection to I-35E on the south end.*

*The Snelling Hamline Community Council acknowledges that Ayd Mill Road remains a sensitive issue and that any reevaluation of their position in the future should be a careful process involving the new District 13 board.]*

## **Housing**

- 16) The Snelling Hamline community supports and requests continued funding for City programs such as the City's Pride in Neighborhood Housing program, which allowed residents to apply for economic assistance when making improvements to the exterior surfaces of their homes.
- 17) Maintain the character of Snelling Hamline as a predominantly residential area with quality housing opportunities for both homeowners and renters with a range of incomes.

## **Economic Development**

- 18) Support **the Midway Business District**, (located between University Avenue and I-94, along Hamline and Pascal), for use by the local community as well as regional consumers. The Snelling Hamline Community Council will continue to work with the center's management, local businesses, community members, and the St. Paul Police Department to address issues of crime, safety, and physical attractiveness.
- 19) Support the healthy operation of **the Marshall Avenue businesses**, (located on Marshall Avenue between Snelling and Hamline Avenues. Encourage businesses to comply with city ordinances where problems exist. If changes to Ayd Mill Road occur, assist to reduce the negative impacts of business relocation and support appropriate mitigations for businesses and residents impacted by construction.
- 20) Foster a healthy environment for local businesses by developing and maintaining attractive streetscapes and buildings in cooperation with district councils and business owners.
- 21) Balance economic development and neighborhood character by encouraging economic development that enhances the pedestrian environment and keeps traffic off residential streets, with the exception of new mixed-use developments.
- 22) Study and evaluate mechanisms to support and retain locally-owned, independent businesses, such as "Buy Local" campaigns and standards that limit the number of formula businesses/chain stores in the community.
- 23) Seek opportunities to locate a new motel or hotel in the Snelling Hamline area, to replace the old Sheraton hotel.

## **Public Safety**

- 24) Re-institute a Saint Paul Western District Police Satellite Office in the Midway area, possibly on Concordia Avenue between Snelling and Pascal Avenues if Ayd Mill Road is extended.

- 25) Snelling Hamline Community Council supports and encourages the following public safety strategies:
- a. Support the existence and funding of Local Fire Stations by working with any and all agencies to help continue a great tradition of local stations.
  - b. The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Council seeks a stable source of funding from the City of St. Paul to develop a consistent alley lighting program.
  - c. Install or replace pedestrian scale, antique-style lighting whenever streets in the neighborhood are redone by the city.
  - d. Continue to support strong working relationships through on-going meetings between the St. Paul Police Department, District Community Councils and area residents.
  - e. Address issues of crime and public disturbances in **Snelling Park Neighborhood**, (bounded by Snelling Avenue, I-94, Hamline Avenue, and Marshall Avenue), that result from the high volume of traffic passing through the area and patronizing its many auto oriented businesses.

### **Environmental Protection and Management**

- 26) Support strong recycling programs and encourage widespread community participation.
- 27) Control and curb pollution in and around the community, by planning for neighborhoods where walking, biking, and public transportation are attractive alternatives to driving. In particular,
- a. Work to decrease negative environmental effects from auto pollution, based on the data from the monitoring station at Lexington Parkway and University Avenue.
  - b. Snelling Hamline requests that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency continue to monitor pollution from industry and neighborhood businesses of concern, and Snelling Hamline will work with the State, the City and other agencies to make reasonable efforts to substantially decrease negative environment effects from such pollution.
- 28) Support the removal of invasive, non-native species with continuing education for residents, periodic events for removal and disposal, and promotion of native plants for landscaping.
- 29) The Snelling Hamline Community Council supports the City's efforts in meeting the standards set forth by the Kyoto Protocol.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- 30) The Snelling Hamline Community Council desires the following parks and recreation strategies:
- a. Maintain the very limited parks and green spaces in the Snelling Hamline neighborhood and expand them whenever possible.

- b. Designate and develop the green space known as “Ashland Park” by the community, at the southeast corner of Ashland and Hamline avenues, as a City park and playground, in the event that the Ayd Mill Road preferred alternative is constructed. Retain the Eleanor Graham Community Garden as a garden and community gathering space. Install new play equipment, a new sign, new fencing, and plantings. Work with City to improve accessibility to the park for all residents. (This area is not considered a true park because it is part of the Ayd Mill Road right-of-way and is under the jurisdiction of Saint Paul Public Works.)
- c. In the event that the Ayd Mill Road preferred alternative is constructed, connect “Ashland Park” with the green space along the eastern edge of Syndicate Avenue, between Ashland and Summit. If the Ashland Avenue ramp from Ayd Mill is vacated, connect the additional land to the Eleanor Graham Community Garden and “Ashland Park” for a play field or recreational open space.
- d. Replant boulevard trees as needed in cooperation with property owners and civic organizations that sponsor annual tree sales for the City.

### **Priority Actions for City Participation**

The following actions 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 though the regular operating programs of relevant city departments.

### **Planning and Economic Development**

- 2) Promote **Transit Oriented Development**, a street design that provides for efficient automobile, bus and rail transportation while at all times respecting and encouraging the safety of pedestrians.
- 3) Snelling Hamline requests utilization of the **Development Principles for University Avenue** for development on University Avenue.
- 4) Implement **Urban Village Principles** as described in the Saint Paul City Comprehensive Plan for new development projects in the district.

### **Public Works**

- 8) Introduce traffic calming elements along Snelling Avenue to improve aesthetics, reduce speeding and increase safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. Focus first on intersections with high accident rates. Five intersections of particular concern are Snelling Av with: Spruce Tree, University Av, St. Anthony Av, Selby Av, and Concordia Av.
- 10) Continue to implement solutions to mitigate speeding and congestion problems associated with traffic entering and exiting Ayd Mill Road at the western abutment of the Selby Avenue Bridge.
- 25-b) The Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Council seeks a stable source of funding from the City of St. Paul to develop a consistent alley lighting program.

### **Planning Commission Findings**

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The Planning Commission finds that the Area Plan Summary of the Snelling Hamline Neighborhood Plan, as proposed by the Snelling Hamline Community Council, is generally consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and adopted City policies, except as noted. In particular, Strategy 15 is in direct conflict with Saint Paul Transportation Plan Policy 20, and is included only for informational purposes and does not reflect a change in City policy.

### **Planning Process**

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The community plan process started in January 2004 with a task force of four volunteers and grew as new members joined. The new plan replaces the previous District 13 plan from 1978 and is intended as a ten year vision for the community. The task force reviewed the previous plan and other St. Paul District Plans. They then prioritized issues and key areas of focus for the neighborhood. The task force met once a month until summer 2005, and then more frequently. The committee sent letters to all businesses in the community to solicit input and direction for the plan. The rest of the community was invited to two public meetings in June 2005 to provide input on the future of the neighborhood. Most of the neighbors' concerns centered on traffic levels and speeding. During the first half of 2005, Shawntera Hardy, Planner II from St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development provided helpful guidance on plan development. The Snelling Hamline Community Plan was submitted to the City for review at the end of 2005.