

Area Plan Summary

WHITE BEAR AVENUE SMALL AREA PLAN

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

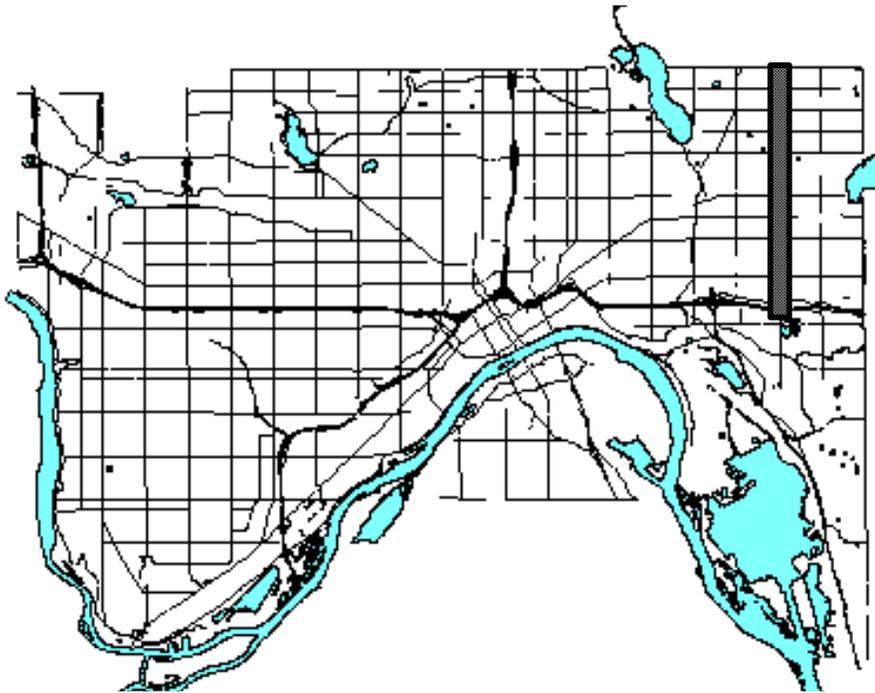
Recommended by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, April 27, 2001

Adopted by the Saint Paul City Council, July 5, 2001

This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the community vision for the improvement of White Bear Avenue and the homes and businesses along it.

Location

The White Bear Avenue study area encompasses one block either side of White Bear Avenue from Larpenteur Avenue on the north to I-94 on the south.



Goal/Vision

Improve White Bear Avenue from I-94 to Larpenteur, making it a safer, more attractive and inviting street for residents, businesses, shoppers, and motorists and a greater asset to the neighborhoods through which it runs.

Specific Recommendations and Implementation Steps

Street Design

White Bear Avenue should be reconstructed with two through lanes in each direction. The street should not be widened except at key intersections where left turn lanes are recommended to reduce the number of accidents:

- White Bear Avenue at Old Hudson Road;
- White Bear Avenue at Minnehaha;
- White Bear Avenue at East Seventh Street and Stillwater Avenue; and
- White Bear Avenue at Maryland Avenue.

The intersection of Case, Ames Place, and White Bear Avenue should be made safer by closing off access from Ames Place to White Bear Avenue using a cul de sac on Ames Place (see Figure 1).

Street reconstruction should also include installation of lantern lighting along the full length of the study area, with double lantern lights at key areas; crosswalks should be clearly marked with continental striping; street trees should be planted along the entire length of the street; and the railroad bridge should add decorative elements that improve its appearance and its function as a link between schools and neighborhoods.

Other street recommendations include eliminating on-street parking in the study area; providing additional off-street parking for businesses where possible and encouraging shared parking among businesses; constructing fences and walls that are decorative and of high quality as well as functional; adding durable, well-designed, and coordinated street furnishings; and providing a way to maintain these improvements. The plan also recommends working to bury utility lines or relocating them.

Commercial Recommendations

The plan encourages the existing organizations, including the district councils, the White Bear Avenue Business Association, and the community development corporation to work on maintenance of property, facade improvements, joint activities, and marketing the avenue in accordance with the *Retail Potential Study* conducted by Maxfield Research, Inc.

Land Use Recommendations

The plan includes a 40-acre study that proposes rezonings that more accurately reflect current uses. No uses are made nonconforming by these rezonings. The proposed rezonings are shown on the attached map. The plan also includes a special district sign plan that provides additional regulations to make signs along White Bear Avenue more attractive and effective for businesses, motorists, and pedestrians and an overlay zoning district that ensures a more neighborhood-oriented commercial district.

Redevelopment Recommendation

The plan includes a proposed redevelopment plan for the Hillcrest area. The redevelopment district outlined in the plan should be an attractive gateway to the city and neighborhood. New development should balance land uses by adding housing and reducing the total amount of commercial space. The business district is envisioned as a vital community business center that

serves a variety of local needs in an environment more attractive and comfortable for pedestrians. The plan area also needs to be designed to enhance the existing and proposed transit service for the Hillcrest area.

City Action

Actions the City of Saint Paul can take to help implement this plan are:

For the Public Works Department:

- Work with Ramsey County on reconstructing White Bear Avenue according to the plan's recommendations, including left turn lanes, street lighting, and crosswalk markings.
- Create a clearer, safer intersection at Case/Ames Place/White Bear Avenue by closing Ames Place with a cul de sac.
- Work with Ramsey County to close off unneeded driveways, alleys, and business entrances on White Bear Avenue.
- Ban on-street parking on White Bear Avenue.
- Improve transit stops in coordination with Metro Transit.
- Locate the bicycle route along Ruth and Hazel streets, Furness Parkway, and the former street car right-of-way between Maryland Avenue and Ivy Avenue.
- Improve design of bridges and bridge approaches as opportunities arise.

For other City departments and elected officials:

- Improve enforcement of traffic laws.
- Help to develop shared parking arrangements where possible.
- Ensure that the East Side is well-served by transit.
- Help preserve existing housing.
- Adopt the accompanying 40-Acre Study, the special district sign plan, and the redevelopment plan.
- Work with the City of Maplewood to make the Hillcrest Village area a stronger entrance to both cities and a more pedestrian-friendly, compact, mixed use development.
- Strictly interpret and enforce the existing distance requirements for pawn shops, currency exchanges, and similar uses and not approve variances to these requirements.
- Explore changes to the zoning code that would further regulate the location options for pawn shops, currency exchanges, and similar uses.

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds:

1. The White Bear Avenue Plan is consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan.
2. The Plan Summary should be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The rezonings in the 40-Acre Study provide assurance that White Bear Avenue will remain a mixed use street, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and should be adopted by the City Council.
4. The zoning overlay districts (White Bear Avenue Overlay District and Hillcrest Village Overlay District) are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and will help to stabilize the properties along the street. A provision should be added to the building regulations stating that commercial buildings should be built as close to the sidewalk as is practical. The boundary line between the two districts should be moved 1 block south, to Nevada Ave. The parking lots adjacent to commercial uses on White Bear Avenue should be included in the overlay districts.

5. The special district sign plan should be adopted by the City Council. The advisory minimum building setback for buildings with ground signs should be reduced to 15 feet.
6. Between Old Hudson Road and East Third Street, on-street parking should be banned between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p. m. Monday through Friday. Areas along this part of White Bear Avenue currently signed for no parking any time will not be changed.
7. The Redevelopment Plan for the Hillcrest Village Area is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and is recommended for adoption by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The boundary should be extended one block south to Nevada Avenue.
8. When new development occurs along White Bear Avenue, negotiations for up to 10 feet of additional right of way to accommodate pedestrian amenities (not traffic lane widening) should be part of the city's request to developers.

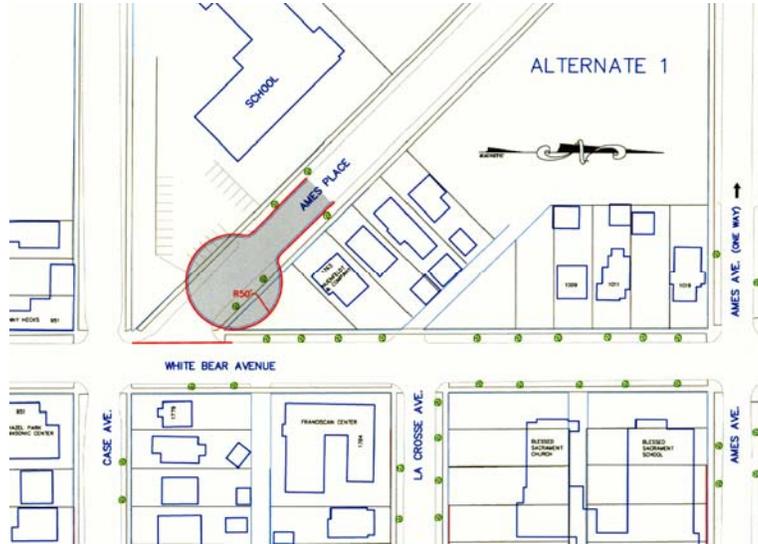
Planning Process

The White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan and 40-Acre Study was initiated by the Planning Commission by resolution 97-49 on July 11, 1997. A task force made up of representatives from the District 1 and District 2 Community Councils, the North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation, the White Bear Avenue Business Association, and other neighborhood residents, business owners, and institutions met over a period of three years to develop the plan. The task force was co-chaired by a member of the Planning Commission.

The Plan and 40-Acre Study was approved by the District 2 Community Council on September 20, 2000 and by the District 1 Community Council on December 18, 2000.

FIGURE 1: AMES PLACE ALTERNATIVES

Recommended Alternative:



Other Alternatives Considered:

