



Saint Paul Planning Commission

City Hall Conference Center Room 40
15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Steering Committee Meeting – 8:00 a.m., Room 41

Christopher B. Coleman,
Mayor

Agenda

Saint Paul
Planning Commission

April 18, 2014
8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Chair
Barbara A. Wenzel
First Vice Chair
Elizabeth Reveal
Second Vice Chair
Paula Merrigan
Secretary
Daniel Ward II

I. Approval of minutes of March 21, 2014.

II. Chair's Announcements

III. Planning Director's Announcements

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

NO BUSINESS

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Thrive MSP 2040 – Consider and recommend to the Mayor the draft City of Saint Paul comments that will be sent under the Mayor's signature.
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Gateway Station Area Planning – Initiate planning process, establish task force and initiate zoning study. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

VII. City of Saint Paul's 2014 Legislative Agenda and Session Update – Presentation by Katie Knutson, Government Relations, Mayor's Office.

VIII. Transportation Committee

IX. Communications Committee

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

XI. Old Business

XII. New Business

XIII. Adjournment

Pat Connolly
Anne DeJoy
Daniel Edgerton
Gene Gelgelu
William Lindeke
Kyle Makarios
Gaius Nelson
Rebecca Noecker
Christopher Ochs
Trevor Oliver
Julie Padilla
Emily Shively
Terri Thao
Wendy Underwood
Jun-Li Wang
David Wickiser

Planning Director
Donna Drummond

Information on agenda items being considered by the Planning Commission and its committees can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ped, click on Planning.

Planning Commission Members: PLEASE call Sonja Butler, 651/266-6573, if unable to attend.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission &
Heritage Preservation Commission**
MASTER MEETING CALENDAR

WEEK OF APRIL 14-18, 2014

Mon (14)

Tues (15)

3:30-5:00 p.m. Comprehensive Planning Committee
(Merritt Clapp-Smith, 651/266-6547)

13th Floor – CHA
25 Fourth Street West

Thrive MSP 2040 – Review and make a recommendation regarding City comments to the Metropolitan Council. (Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Weds (16)

Thurs (17)

7:00-8:30 p.m. West Side Flats Master Plan Community Task Force
(Lucy Thompson, 651/266-6578)

Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA)
481 South Wabasha Street

Review of building height recommendations
Update on conversations with the Saint Paul Port Authority
Decide whether to meet one last time to sign-off on final plan draft

Fri (18)

8:00 a.m. Planning Commission Steering Committee
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 41 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

8:30-11:00 a.m. Planning Commission Meeting
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Room 40 City Hall
Conference Center
15 Kellogg Blvd.

Zoning..... SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

NO BUSINESS

**Comprehensive Planning
Committee.....**

Thrive MSP 2040 – Consider and recommend to the Mayor the draft City of Saint Paul comments that will be sent under the Mayor's signature.
(Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Neighborhood Planning

Committee.....

Gateway Station Area Planning - Initiate planning process, establish task force and initiate zoning study. (*Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617*)

Informational Presentation....

City of Saint Paul's 2014 Legislative Agenda and Session Update – Presentation by Katie Knutson, Government Relations, Mayor's Office.

**Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West**

Minutes March 21, 2014

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, March 21, 2014, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Present: Mmes. DeJoy, Merrigan, Noecker, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Underwood, Wang, Wencil; and Messrs. Edgerton, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, and Oliver.

Commissioners Absent: Ms. *Padilla, and Messrs. *Connolly, *Gelgelu, *Ward and *Wickiser.
*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Tom Beach, Department of Safety and Inspections, Allen Lovejoy, Christine Boulware, Anton Jerve, Hilary Holmes, Bill Dermody, Jamie Radel, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes February 21st and March 7, 2014.

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of February 21, 2014. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

and

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of March 7, 2014. Commissioner Thao seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencil announced the new committee appointments. New chair for the Transportation Committee will be Commissioner Lindeke, and the two new Zoning Committee members are Commissioners Edgerton and Makarios. Commissioner Makarios will be on the Ford Site Task Force and all other committee and task force members will remain the same.

Chair Wencil also announced that the Great River Gathering dinner will be on May 8th. There are five commissioners that have made reservations so far. Normally it is held at the Saint Paul River Center but this year's event will be at the Union Depot.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the Hamline Midway Coalition had appealed the Planning Commission's approval of a variance for the proposed Goodwill retail store at University and Griggs. The public hearing on the appeal was supposed to be at City Council last Wednesday but

district council decided to withdrawal its appeal.

Also a resolution will be considered in honor of Allen Lovejoy who is retiring at the end of March. The resolution will be read immediately after the public hearing.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: West Midway Industrial Area Plan – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. (Allen Lovejoy, 651/266-6226)

Chair Wencil announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the West Midway Industrial Area Plan. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on March 6, 2014, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

Allen Lovejoy gave a presentation about the West Midway Industrial Area Plan at the Planning Commission a few weeks ago so he briefly summarized the plan and process. He noted that after his retirement at the end of March Hilary Holmes will be the staff person for the project.

Chair Wencil read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke.

1. Roberto de Freitas representing Arnellia's business on University Avenue, one block west of Lexington Parkway. Arnellia is concerned about her business and the loss of on-street parking due to light rail construction. He asked who she can talk to at the City regarding parking for her business.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director said that there is a program run by the City called the Central Corridor Parking Program and the staff person for that is Craig Blakely @ 651/266-6697.

2. Lorrie Louder, Senior Vice President of Business and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Saint Paul Port Authority. Ms. Louder gave kudos to Cecile Bedor and Donna Drummond on this plan and for their leadership on it. She said that Allen Lovejoy has done an incredible job on this plan, which is much appreciated and she is just one of many people who believe that. Mr. Lovejoy has been a long-term good friend of the Port Authority. She has known him for over 20 years and he is savvy, brilliant, and eloquent and he has done such an incredible on this plan and this is indicative of the work that Allen has done over the years.

Ms. Louder served on the task force on behalf of the Port Authority. Other people on the task force were from the community and the business community and they all felt heard, and there was plenty of time for input. As to the strategy itself, they believe this is the way an industrial strategy should be, with coordination between the City and the Port Authority. They appreciate this strategy because it honors industrial development. This city has 33% of its land mass in tax exempt status that means trouble for the City's piggy bank. Industrial pays more in property taxes then it receives in City services which is the opposite of residential. Industrial wages are very good, speaking on behalf of the Port Authority's business centers. Possible future cuts to local government aid and a 23% poverty rate in the

city are both reasons to say there should be no net loss of industrial land. This strategy is a way to get to those answers in a way that honors everyone.

Commissioner Merrigan asked what percentage of the land in Saint Paul is zoned industrial now.

Ms. Louder said that she thinks it is 25% and she will go back and look and get back to Commissioner Merrigan.

Commissioner Merrigan also asked how much of that is currently actively used and how much are you trying to seek a tenant or developer for.

Ms. Louder said that they do not know out of all the industrial land in the industrial zoning category how much is being used. This is a fully built city so it is going to high but they just do not track that. However whenever they purchase industrial property for redevelopment it gets used within a 1-2 years even during recessionary times.

Ms. Drummond added that they did analyze those statistics in depth for the industrial zoning study so they can pull those out and bring those to the committee meeting.

3. Joe Van Ornum, Vice President with Capp Industries Incorporated. They own several buildings on Vandalia Street in the West Midway area. They have been a 50+ year owner and builder of the buildings on Vandalia. They want to know what the Planning Commission or the study will do to help them with the Bolander Concrete crushing operation at the end of Capp Road and Vandalia Street. There is a constant battle on the street with the severe dust problem from that operation 365 days a year. Capp Industries has contacted them and tried to work with the City to find a solution. He has lost tenants because the dust gets into the warehouses and every lawn on Vandalia is about a foot and half taller than when it was installed because of the dust over the years. Not one of his tenants on Vandalia Street is able to keep a clean car longer than 3-4 hours. So as we try to better the industrial area, it might be prudent to do a study of the Bolander Concrete crushing operation to determine if getting rid of them and moving them somewhere more appropriate would be beneficial to the whole midway industrial area. Bolander are not owners of the property. They are tenants and they are good people but their operation is a messy operation and he hopes the City would look at that as a part of the planning for this community.

He also asked if there has been any evaluation of the roadways on Vandalia, Capp Road, Ellis and some of the roads north of University because those roadways are in poor shape. If the plan is to keep good industrial then you need good access, good roads and the appropriate care that it takes to maintain an industrial area.

Commissioner Ochs thanked Mr. Van Ornum for bringing his concerns to light and as a member of the Transportation Committee he knows the roads in and out of the midway area are a concern.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if this dust issue was brought up during the planning and were there any suggestions.

Mr. Lovejoy replied that it was not as long as he has been working on it, but it is something

that they will look into.

4. Tom Bergin, Sr., representing Bergin Fruit and Nut Company at 2000 Energy Park Drive. They moved to Saint Paul seven years ago and the Port Authority was of great help to them. At this point their company is interested in building a new building and they are trying to find the best place to direct those questions and where they might get the answers.

Chair Wencil noted that Lorrie Louder with the Port Authority was in the audience and could assist him.

Two letters were received in response to the West Midway Industrial Area Plan; Nicki Jones, owner of Kuk Sool Won of St. Paul, a business located at 800 Transfer Road and Sue Abderholden, Executive Director, NAMI Minnesota also located at 800 Transfer Road.

MOTION: *Commissioner Merrigan moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, March 24, 2014 and to refer the matter back to the Comprehensive Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner DeJoy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

Chair Wencil announced that Allen Lovejoy is retiring and presented a resolution of appreciation for consideration by the Planning Commission. Chair Wencil read the resolution.

MOTION: *Commissioner Reveal moved to approve the resolution honoring Allen Lovejoy. Commissioner Makarios seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

V. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. *(Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)*

Two items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, March 18, 2014:

- Metro Transit, addition to Metro Transit Overhaul Base (locker rooms, break room and paint booth) at 515 North Cleveland Avenue.
- Cremation Society of Minnesota, addition to an existing building for use as a funeral home (no cremations will be done on site) at 1979 Old Hudson Road.

One item to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, March 25, 2014:

- Apex Auto Salvage, review changes to the site (including changes and expansion that were done in the past) at 198 East Minnehaha Avenue.

NEW BUSINESS

#14-098-714 Sola Salon Studios – Reestablishment and change of nonconforming use to a beauty salon. 688 Hague Avenue, SW corner at St. Albans. *(Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)*

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the re-establishment and change of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.*

#14-098-309 Metropolitan State University Parking Ramp – Variance of minimum parking space width (50% are required to be at least 9' wide; all spaces proposed are 8.5' wide). 400 Maria Avenue. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variance. The motion carried 14 with 1 abstention (Edgerton) on a voice vote.*

#12-220-122 Metropolitan State University Parking Ramp – Site plan review for a new 760 car parking ramp. 400 Maria Avenue. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

Commissioner Lindeke asked how the fee structure for the parking will be done, as one of the goals of parking policy is to decouple as much as possible parking fees from other sorts of fees. When trying to do management of travel it makes sense to pay for parking à la carte instead of having it bundled up into your tuition. He asked if that was discussed at the committee hearing.

Commissioner Nelson said there was no specific discussion regarding that but they will ask about this for future parking ramp projects.

Commissioner Ochs asked if there was any discussion or concern from the neighborhood about sharing of the parking? There are a couple of restaurants in the neighborhood that relied upon Metro State's parking facility before and will that be the same going forward?

Commissioner Nelson said that the goal of building this parking ramp is to minimize the on-street parking of students and staff. There is a growth that they see with the campus and they want to work towards meeting their on-site parking requirements. There was not any discussion during the committee meeting regarding shared parking arrangements or anything of that sort. That was not part of the approval that they were looking at.

Commissioner Ochs noted that the Comprehensive Plan encourages shared parking facilities and he hopes that Metro State continues that conversation.

Chair Wencil said that there are representatives from the college in the audience and they probably are listening carefully to what you're saying.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 14-0 with 1 abstention (Edgerton) on a voice vote.*

#14-094-970 Metropolitan State University Student Center - Site plan review for a new two-story, 27,000 square foot student center. 690 E 7th Street. (Tom Beach 651/266-9086)

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the site plan review. The motion carried 14-0 with 1 abstention (Edgerton) on a voice vote.*

#14-088-188 Verizon Wireless – Conditional use permit for 6 cellular antennas and associated equipment on a residential structure less than 60 feet high. 1160 Grand Avenue, SW corner at Dunlap. (*Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614*)

Commissioner Noecker was not convinced that they did an exhaustive job talking to the other institutions in the area. None of the letters point out Kowalski's; they mentioned five institutions in the half mile radius and she is wanting to know if the Zoning Committee heard more than what they have here about their attempts to find other locations where this can be put.

Commissioner Merrigan said that they were provided with a map within a half mile radius that showed who they contacted but there was not any additional information.

Commissioner Noecker's concern is that the Commission is letting people off the hook with these conditions by leaving it up to them as to which businesses in the half mile area they talk about. If we're asking them to look at everyone in the half mile they should be talking about everyone and why that one does or does not work for whatever reason. She is not convinced that they really done their due diligence here or that we required it.

Commissioner Thao said that she hears what the neighbors are saying, but at the same time the Planning Commission has seen many cases like this before and there are equity concerns. Just because the neighbors complain about this neighborhood remember there are other neighborhoods where we have approved cell towers and even free standing poles. The arguments about aesthetics and property values are hard to believe on Grand Avenue. She is going to support the approval of the conditions, because they did the due diligence and have met all of the standards.

Commissioner Reveal is not sure that they actually have evidence of a huge community outpouring against this. No one spoke in opposition, and they received 8 letters and a petition with 13 names. The petition was done by a group and they certainly have had other applications where the opposition from the community is much clearer. Secondly they have a letter that raises two issues, one about the process. The District 16 Planning Council did request a postponement of the hearing but they have no legal standing to make that request; only the applicant can make a request to postpone. And the other comments go to what Commissioner Thao just raised. While there are many occasions where they would like to make a decision based on aesthetics and on property values those are not legally allowable logic for the Commission to make a zoning decision.

Commissioner Oliver also addressed the letter they received, especially the part about it being the democratic process. He made it clear that we all share those concerns. We want this to be an open process but people have to realize that this is not strictly a democratic process, but one of applying conditions. And the conditions that are in our ordinance were also done through a democratic process. This is now carrying forward what was decided earlier and applying it. The fact is that the City allows cell towers by conditional use in residential neighborhoods so that by itself says the City does not consider cell antennas inappropriate for residential neighborhoods. Regarding due diligence, we have our conditions but we also have to recognize the realities of who we're dealing with. The cell phone company does get to say this is why we are putting an antenna at a certain place and the area being covered and how it will work. The half mile rule is a good rule, but that doesn't necessarily drive us to force companies into decisions that are technically not that helpful. What this company was looking for is the height of the land and the

height of the buildings. Kowalski's is significantly shorter than most of the buildings in the area, so as far as that particular item being singled out as a reason to deny this he cannot go with that.

Commissioner Noecker clarified her views that this is not about the amount of community opposition. She has voted many times against community opposition to applications. This is more about the fact that there was so much opposition that it made her look more closely at the conditions to see if they are being met. It's also not about aesthetics. It's really about the conditions and whether or not they're being followed. There may be more of a reason why Kowalski's was not looked at but we don't know that. She thinks that we need to be clearer as to what we need to see to know whether or not all of the institutions within a half a mile have been looked at, so she is voting against this.

Commissioner Nelson commented on the letter that was at their places, saying there were significant accommodations made in this particular item by the applicant. Design work had been done, fees paid in order to design that application. After meetings and hearing concerns of the neighbors regarding property values and aesthetics it was moved further away from those properties. The project was redesigned so there was quite a lot of accommodation was made to the concerns of some of the neighbors. From a zoning perspective and the fact that this attachment could be made as of right for any other use on that building also had an impact on the committee recommendation.

Commissioner DeJoy asked if the recommended conditions were in response to the letters or did the letters come after?

Commissioner Nelson said that condition #3 about removing the antenna is a standard condition that is put on these particular applications. The condition about removing the enclosure for the antenna was added because of that was unique to the particular case and the first two conditions were put on the application to codify the design being proposed to be sure that what was being proposed and shown was the design that was actually implemented.

Chair Wencil added that the change of location of the antenna was done after the letters.

Commissioner DeJoy said the conditions that were placed on this satisfies some of the objections that were raised in the letters.

MOTION: *Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 13-1 (Noecker) on a voice vote.*

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, March 27, 2014.

V. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan announced that the meeting was cancelled on Tuesday, March 18th but their next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 1st to continue with the West Midway Industrial Area Plan along with two other items that will be on that agenda.

VI. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Oliver announced that they had not met in a couple of weeks but they will be meeting on Wednesday, March 26th to initiate a study, and release a draft for public review on vertical subdivisions.

VII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Lindeke reported that the committee met last Monday with a full agenda. They heard from the Mayor's Office about City bonding priorities and how those are going with Legislature. The Public Works Department talked about the Hamline bridge over Ayd Mill Road which is up and running. There was also a long conversation about the study considering whether University Avenue should be a two lane road with parking back on the street. The next Transportation Committee meeting is on Monday, March 24th. On the agenda is the Gateway Corridor scoping report, a presentation about urban freight movements within the city of Saint Paul, and 2014 mill & overlay update from Public Works.

VIII. Communications Committee

Commissioner Thao had no report.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Reveal announced that they continued to have discussion on two issues relative to the West Side Flats Master Plan. They are tentatively scheduled for their last or next to the last task force meeting on April 22nd. There are 4 parcels in the plan where they originally recommended T4 zoning which is the issue now and this is what will be discussed on April 22nd with the task force. Hopefully they can get this plan in front of the Planning Commission sometime in May and get it completed.

Commissioner Nelson announced that the Shepard Davern task force's next meeting will be the second week of April and will be focused on zoning recommendations for the study area.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

Commissioner Wang said that more and more they see people who are trying to engage in the Commission's process but don't understand how the Planning Commission works and that their hands are tied a lot of the time. Should there be some kind of statement that informs the public what they do and what they have to judge cases by? She runs into not only the public but people who she thinks would understand and they don't understand why the Planning Commission makes certain decisions.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, said that they did work on a statement to be read by the chair before the Zoning Committee meetings and there is information on the web site.

Commissioner Wang said maybe staff could think about what the entry points into the process are.

Ms. Drummond said they also have been working with the district council's liaison staff person to do a basic zoning 101 for district council staff people and others on boards that are interested or new to the process on zoning. But there are always going to be people who don't quite understand that process so we will continue to think of ways to get the word out on what we have to consider.

Chair Wenzl added that commissioners when approached are good ambassadors for this information. Issues that come up are not always the same issues and there are new people all the time. It is an education process so it's probably something that we just need to listen to people and give them the information.

Commissioner Noecker said it seems that this happens mostly at the public hearings so evaluate what kind of information is included in the public hearing notices so that message could be really clear.

Ms. Drummond said Commissioner Noecker is asking whether we can provide more information on the notice on how this process works. She said we can certainly look at that, however for the zoning public hearing notices they are post card size, which limits the amount of information that can be put on it, but maybe we could make bigger post cards or there are all sorts of ideas that can be considered.

Commissioner Merrigan said that this is the ongoing concern of trying to get enough participation when anything happens, and what's the best way to do outreach. The suggestion that there may be some kind of public hearing or zoning type workshop at the district council is a good place to start. She suggested if there's a way to continue to solidify the relationship with the district councils about some of these more complicated issues that it behooves us to do it.

Commissioner Nelson said maybe it would be clearer to people if they could get a copy of the staff report. If they read it and came prepared to address the staff report that would be a huge thing, because that is what we are basing all of our findings on.

Commissioner Wang thinks that there could be a one of two sentence description that says what the Planning Commission has to consider when considering an application. Something that is front and center so that anytime anyone is looking at our materials (in whatever form that is) they understand that we welcome comments, but there is all this other stuff that we're considering as well.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved _____
(Date)

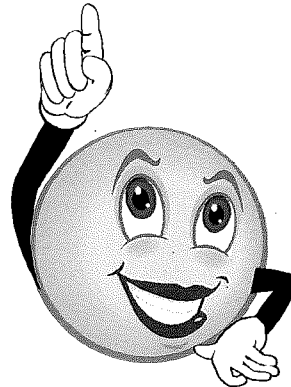
Daniel Ward II
Secretary of the Planning Commission

Planning Team Files\planning commission\minutes\March 21, 2014

**The Zoning Committee
meeting on Thursday,
April 10, 2014
was
CANCELLED**

**The next Zoning
Committee meeting
is Thursday,
April 24, 2014.**

Thank you





CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700
Facsimile: 651-266-6549

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Donna Drummond, Director of Planning
DATE: April 8, 2014
RE: City of Saint Paul Comments on Thrive MSP 2040

The Metropolitan Council has released for public review and comment a draft of its regional vision, which will serve as a policy foundation for the City's next Comprehensive Plan update. Comments on Thrive MSP 2040 are due to the Metropolitan Council by April 28th. Attached for your consideration and recommendation to the Mayor are draft City of Saint Paul comments that will be sent under the Mayor's signature. Because of the time required to coordinate comments from multiple City departments and relatively short timeline for review, the Comprehensive Planning Committee will be reviewing these comments at its meeting on April 15th, and will be bringing its recommendation to the Planning Commission for consideration at the April 18th meeting.

This memo and the draft City comments will be included in the packet for the April 18th meeting. However, the Thrive document itself is lengthy, so we will only print copies upon request. If you would like a printed copy, please let Sonja Butler know as soon as possible. Links to the document and more information about the process are below.

Here is a link for more information about *Thrive MSP 2040*:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Planning/Projects/Thrive-2040.aspx>

Here is a link to the draft *Thrive MSP 2040* Plan:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Planning/Publications-And-Resources/Thrive-for-Public-Review-and-Comment.aspx>

Please let me know if you have any questions prior to the meeting at 651-266-6556 or donna.drummond@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Comments on the THRIVE MSP 2040 Plan – DRAFT 04/08/14

To: Metropolitan Council

From: City of Saint Paul

Overall Comments:

The Right Direction

THRIVE MSP 2040 is organized around five outcomes: Stewardship, Prosperity, Equity, Livability, and Sustainability, with three guiding principles to inform the way they will be achieved: Integration, Collaboration, and Accountability. The City of Saint Paul believes these are the right goals for our region, with the right tools to help us achieve them. And in general, the City believes that the THRIVE plan represents a great step forward for the region.

However, the implementation policies outlined in THRIVE should be strengthened. The density goals are uninspiring, and there is insufficient leadership on economic development. The balance between providing regional guidance and allowing local governments to develop policies that are right for their communities is a difficult one to find, but not enough effort has been made to push local governments to think strategically, sustainably, and regionally about their decisions. The challenge needs to be put to communities to think about how they will be growing, particularly if low-density developments are not a regional priority. Measurable and significant metrics should be put in place for the various systems to assure that regional investments are providing regional benefits, and are moving the region in the direction laid out by THRIVE MSP 2040.

Role of the Metropolitan Council

The Metropolitan Council's role is laid out in state legislation, and focuses on systems plans for transportation, regional parks, and wastewater. However, state law also calls on the Met Council to more generally address the physical, social, and economic needs of the region. In that regard, the Met Council is uniquely positioned to take on the role as a convener on key issues, as the Thrive draft acknowledges. However, consideration should be given to expanding the list of issues to include economic development and climate mitigation and resilience. This is a politically difficult task, but the absence of this leadership has left the region lagging behind its peers. The City recommends that the Met Council seriously consider how its role can evolve to help us all face the challenges of the coming decade.

The following comments are organized around major topics addressed in THRIVE, including Land Use, Economic Development, Affordable Housing and Racially Concentrated Areas of Poverty, Transportation, Parks and Open Space, Water Resources, and Climate Change.

Land Use

THRIVE emphasizes the importance of redevelopment and infill development. This is an important priority, and one the City of Saint Paul strongly supports.

Density expectations. The density expectation of 20 units/acre for the Urban Core is certainly achievable for Saint Paul. Virtually all of the city's new residential developments exceed this standard. However, the average density goals of 3-5 units/acre for the Suburban, Suburban Edge, and Emerging Suburban Edge are clearly insufficient to achieve development that can support transit investments or create walkable, mixed use neighborhoods. There is little guidance or direction to these communities to prevent continuation of the same pattern of single-family residential subdivisions where residents must use a car to get to virtually any destination for work, shopping, recreational or cultural activities.

Job and activity centers. The focus on job and activity centers in THRIVE is very much appreciated from a sustainability, a livability, and an economic competitiveness standpoint. However, as stated elsewhere in these comments, the City strongly believes there should be an increased focus on facilitating redevelopment and infill development for new business development rather than expansion onto green fields at the fringes of the metropolitan area.

Orderly and efficient land use. The community roles identified for the Urban Core are appropriate and consistent with the way the City has approached planning for redevelopment:

- As stated above, the City is exceeding the 20 units/acre average for new residential development.
- The City has identified opportunity areas and is actively planning for areas with the potential for major redevelopment and intensification, including the West Midway Industrial Area, West Side Flats, and the Ford Plant site.
- The City has aggressively planned for increased density and the creation of walkable, mixed-use development along Central Corridor and is initiating station area planning along the Gateway Corridor. Page 45 of THRIVE references technical assistance to communities to support station area planning. The City's greatest needs are for financial resources to build the public infrastructure needed to create a walkable, urban and connected street network adjacent to and connected to transit.
- The City's Land Use Plan identifies opportunity areas for new development and guides growth to downtown and our major commercial corridors.
- The City has approached consideration of industrial uses along the Mississippi River with a more nuanced approach than p. 16 of THRIVE recommends, focusing on retaining industrial businesses that need a riverfront location but generally encouraging redevelopment for greater intensity of job-producing uses at key riverfront locations.

Economic Development

Regional economic development strategy. THRIVE identifies regions as the primary drivers of economic growth in today's economy and states the importance of a regional economic development strategy for the Twin Cities, calling on the region's public jurisdictions and private interests to work together. The City endorses this direction, as laid out in the Economic Competitiveness section on pages 80-81.

- The Metropolitan Council should play a stronger convening role in bringing together cities, counties, business chambers, Greater MSP, schools, workforce training providers, and non-profit and philanthropic organizations to create a regional economic development strategy that goes beyond a real estate and marketing focus to include education, workforce development, and targeted investments in key industry clusters. Greater MSP is actively working with the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis on an “urban core strategy” and this effort should be incorporated into the larger regional strategy.
- Without a strong regional economic competitiveness strategy, or similar, it is hard for local communities to understand their role in the regional economy, or to understand it with any consistency among various local communities. The Met Council should consider offering technical assistance to local communities to understand their place in the regional economy and require that comprehensive plans address regional economic competitiveness.
- Many other regions have developed successful regional economic development strategies such as San Diego, Pittsburgh, Portland, Seattle, Charlotte, and New York State’s 10 regional development councils.
- The City of Saint Paul’s Department of Planning and Economic Development is considering including an Economic Development chapter in the City’s next Comprehensive Plan update. Guidance from the Metropolitan Council, will assure that the economic development perspective uses a regional lens.

Financial tools for redevelopment. THRIVE emphasizes the importance of redevelopment and infill development to take better advantage of existing public infrastructure investments. This is an important priority, and one the City of Saint Paul supports.

- The City is working toward a more comprehensive and aggressive approach for redevelopment of industrial lands. The City takes the growth projection (for 43,000 new jobs) very seriously and is developing redevelopment strategies for two industrial areas (West Side Flats and West Midway). The City and its primary industrial and manufacturing economic development partner the Saint Paul Port Authority are able to attract new development to any parcel that has been assembled, cleared and cleaned-up. More such parcels are needed for industrial development.
- The City needs more financial tools and resources to prepare sites, particularly industrial sites, for redevelopment. Business location decisions are typically made in a 6-12 month time frame, and cannot wait the 24-36 months it might take to assemble, clear, and clean-up a site so it is ready for development. Companies are naturally drawn to green field sites that are ready to go. For the region to take better advantage of existing infrastructure and avoid further sprawl, more tools and financial resources are needed to prepare shovel-ready sites in redevelopment areas. Existing state and regional resources for redevelopment (Metropolitan Council and DEED) require that a developer be in hand in order to apply. Serious consideration should be given to doing a pilot program that prepares sites for redevelopment prior to having an identified end user.

- Industrial jobs have higher average wages than retail or service jobs with lower barriers to entry than white collar jobs. Aggressively redeveloping and intensifying the job density of our industrial areas along with job training and education may be one of the best ways to address the pressing problem of racially concentrated areas of poverty in the region.
- Explore advocating for limited legal authority for site assembly to purchase from recalcitrant property owners – within the context of assembling a larger site.

Affordable Housing and RCAPs

The City agrees with the need to address the dramatic racial disparities in income, employment, poverty, homeownership, and education in the Twin Cities. These problems will undoubtedly worsen as the region becomes increasingly diverse unless they are seriously addressed. THRIVE rightly identifies *Equity* as one of the five desired outcomes of this regional vision. Racially concentrated areas of poverty is a critical issue for Saint Paul and one that the City is addressing in a multitude of ways, from after-school programming to targeted investments in single-family housing rehabilitation. We welcome a more focused regional effort to address these issues. In that spirit, we offer these comments:

- THRIVE is inconsistent on the topic of concentrating subsidized affordable housing, stating that affordable housing should generally be available throughout the region but also that affordable housing should be focused along transit corridors. Concentrating investment in affordable housing along transit corridors helps lower the *Housing + Transportation Cost* total, leaving more income for other basics like food, clothing, child care, and health care, and provides more access to jobs throughout the region.
- Affordable housing investment along the Green Line LRT is bringing high-quality new construction housing to Saint Paul's RCAP. This is meeting the need for housing in communities where people want to stay and thrive, close to cultural and religious institutions. The City believes these visible investments will create confidence and demonstrate success in the marketplace, leading the way for private market investment that will result in mixed-income neighborhoods.
- A regional economic development strategy that is focused on bringing new companies into the region that offer household supporting entry-level jobs and locating them along transit corridors would be a strong tool to address RCAPs.
The map showing the specific boundaries of RCAPs on p. 44 could potentially cause more harm than good, causing redlining. While Saint Paul wants to help facilitate the flow of investments into these areas, removing the map from the body of this document may be a way of avoiding this potential pitfall.

Transportation

Road and highway infrastructure. THRIVE talks of “pivoting from expanding to maintaining” the region’s highway infrastructure, noting that certain lower-cost/high benefit safety and

capacity improvement projects on existing highways should also be pursued. THRIVE also notes the insufficient financial resources available for maintenance.

- The City supports these directions but THRIVE should include much stronger language identifying the need for more transportation funding from the state and federal governments to adequately maintain the region's existing road and highway infrastructure. This is critical to the region's economic growth and sustainability in the future. For example, the City of Saint Paul has 191 miles of arterial roads that are aging and in dire need of being rebuilt due to the heavy use placed upon them as key transportation links in a densely developed urban area. Yet, the City only receives enough Municipal State Aid funding to rebuild approximately four miles of arterial roadways per year, which translates to a 50 year timeline to rebuild the network.
- The definition of capacity improvement projects on existing highways should include projects that improve the capacity of existing urban roadway networks to function efficiently and handle future demands from the increased density forecast by the Metropolitan Council. For Saint Paul, this would include projects such as bringing an Ayd Mill Road connection to Interstate 94, and extending Pierce Butler Route to the east to connect with Interstate 35E.
- Page 78 (and 87) includes language about distinctions between regional and local transportation systems. It includes the language that County arterial roadways should not be carrying short distance trips, that they are designed to provide faster travel, and that the local roadways are ultimately providing the destinations. This does not accurately describe the role of the A-minor and B-minor arterials (and even some principal arterials) in Saint Paul. This language is perhaps appropriate for more suburban communities, where development is often discouraged adjacent to minor arterials (or with direct access to minor arterials), but it is not appropriate for Saint Paul. The role of minor arterials and CSAH's in Saint Paul is much more complex. On one hand, they are handling longer trips, as they tend to be the through roadways that make connections across barriers (like railroads). On the other hand, it is not to Saint Paul's advantage for these to be high-speed trips, and these also tend to be highly commercial corridors, where the City is also encouraging more density, slower speeds, and a greater emphasis on non-motorized transportation and transit. MnDOT's Snelling Multi-modal study is a good example of a recent study that places emphasis on lower speeds and increasing densities. Higher speeds are not advantageous for county and state arterial corridors such as Maryland, Marshall, Arcade, White Bear, University, W 7th, E 7th etc. On these corridors, faster speeds are viewed as problematic by surrounding residents, and are a deterrent to the City accomplishing its land-use goals. The Council is applying a one-size-fits-all approach to minor arterials. THRIVE should acknowledge that minor arterials in the Urban Core are playing a substantially different role than minor arterials in suburban communities, rather than suggesting that they play a similar function, as this has significant funding implications and puts urban arterials at a disadvantage in funding allocations. This speaks to a need for the Transportation Policy Plan to define the roadway classification system in a way that incorporates anticipated land use objectives and urban design along the minor arterials.

Transit investments and Transit-Oriented Development. THRIVE clearly acknowledges the importance of transit for the region, but missing is a strong and clear statement of intent to build out the regional transitway network laid out in the current Transportation Policy Plan. The City calls for a balanced and equitable approach to future transit investments throughout the region. In addition, consider these changes to strengthen wording around support of TOD:

- **Page 68: Orderly and efficient land use - Council role.** Add a stronger statement about continuing to fund strategic investment along transit corridors.
- **Page 79: Access, mobility and transportation choice – Council role.** Support TOD as a way to build and grow ridership.
- **Page 85: Urban center: Orderly and efficient land use – Community role.** Implement station area plans.
- **Page 87: Urban center: Access, mobility and transportation choice – Council role.** Support TOD as a way to grow ridership.

Parks and Open Space

Equity of access. The City supports the Met Council taking the lead in providing and coordinating equity of access to the regional parks and trail system across the metropolitan area for under-represented populations so that they may benefit from the system's educational, health and recreational opportunities. The THRIVE draft supports this, calling for strengthening equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all the region's residents on p. 49. To accomplish this, the Met Council should:

- Develop better tools for engaging these communities through improved methods of outreach. We know that we need to appeal to different people in a variety of ways, including asking questions and providing information in different ways. Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other applicable methods to make sure the methods are working, and revise if needed.
- Provide, coordinate and implement marketing plans, programs and activities that will attract under-represented populations to the more 'natural' parks, so they can have experience of being truly immersed in nature.
- Fund and coordinate studies to determine why some parks are more attractive to various demographic groups than others.
- Work with schools and other partners to combat "Nature Deficit Disorder."
- Leverage new and emerging technologies that are in wide use, such as smartphones, to connect and educate residents about the regional parks system.

Improve multi-modal transit access. The Metropolitan Council should take the lead in the coordination of multi-modal transit options to encourage more visits by all populations to the regional parks and trails. In order to accomplish this, the Met Council should:

- Form a trail management organization that coordinates system wide trail development with all other forms of transit. Both local and regional trails should be integrated into the overall transportation system plan to realize the best efficiencies in system design.

- The Met Council should provide leadership in marketing the regional parks system, developing strategies and leveraging partnerships (e.g., Explore Minnesota) that will encourage visibility and the perception of safety and welcoming access, in order to bridge cultural barriers. Research and promote the benefits of using transit, including cost savings over car ownership, pollution reduction, congestion, etc.
- Invest in infrastructure that overcomes natural and artificial barriers to visiting the regional parks and trails, and helps to attract multiple groups and cultures to each facility. Advocate for state funding amounts sufficient to match other major programs. For example, federal TIGER grants require a minimum request of \$10 million with a 20% or larger local match. In reality, only a small fraction of all applications are approved, and those applications that can show a local match of 3 times the federal request stand a much better chance of being approved.

Resources for stewardship of natural areas. The City of Saint Paul supports the Metropolitan Council taking the lead in providing more resources for stewardship of natural areas such as lakes, forests, prairies and wetlands; operations and maintenance (O&M), sustainability, and resiliency against climate change. Preventive maintenance can be much less costly over the long run and extend the life of a project significantly, compared to simply letting a facility fall into severe disrepair, eventually causing the much more expensive need for complete replacement. In order to accomplish this, the Met Council should:

- Lead advocacy with the 10 Implementing Agencies (IAs) at the legislature to appropriate the approved 40% state match level for local operations and maintenance (O&M) spending on regional parks. Historically, the state has never appropriated the 40% match to local O&M investments.
- Advocate with the IAs to greatly increase the metro. area's share of Legacy Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funds, since there are many natural areas in the metro. area that need to be acquired and/or restored. Since most of the state's population resides in or near the metro. area, this would provide the greatest benefit per capita, as well as save some areas from being lost forever to development. Many bird and other species also use the metro. area as part of their Mississippi River migration route, therefore, maximizing natural areas in the metro. area benefits the entire state and all residents and park visitors, as well as the environment.
- Encourage a balanced allocation of some Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment Park and Trail funds for operations and maintenance, as most is now used for acquisitions and development. Education and volunteer coordinators have wages accounted for, but no budget for supplies, marketing, transportation and programs.
- The Met Council should consider other methods to increase funding. This can encourage long range planning for lower maintenance, natural ecosystems, such as a prairie restoration, that doesn't need as much upkeep (e.g., mowing, weeding, spraying, fertilizing, and other inputs that also introduce their own pollutants into the environment). Such natural systems are also more effective at controlling stormwater runoff and quality, and have a much higher wildlife value as well.

Water Resources

THRIVE recognizes that appropriate management of water resources is critical to the future health of the region. The City strongly agrees, and offers these additional comments:

- The plan should be direct in stating the role of impervious surfaces in water resource management and sustainability. There is no place in the entire document that includes the word impervious. Instead, euphemisms such as “land use patterns” or “loss of natural areas” are used.
- Green infrastructure is only referenced twice in the plan and defined as integrating natural resources into our development patterns. The plan should more thoroughly include a green infrastructure discussion as well as policies, for instance, in areas referencing stormwater runoff or best management practices. This is critical to adequately frame the 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan.
- The section title “Promoting the Wise Use of Water” seems myopic and could be better phrased as “Respecting Water.”
- The water sustainability definition, and bulleted actions, is overly focused on use and supply. The plan should more clearly position strategies for achieving sustainable water resources which transcends dimensions of water use, supply and consumption behaviors. The plan needs to more genuinely and explicitly acknowledge the critical link between land use and surface water health.

Climate Change

The effects of climate change are already being seen around the globe, across the country, and right here in the Twin Cities. The Metropolitan Council lays out actions it is willing to take to address this issue, but it can and should do more. From page 32: “The Council’s approach to climate change will focus on softer approaches... unless and until the lack of action poses a threat to orderly and economical development or portends a significant collective financial cost.” This time has arrived. Climate change has been exacerbated by the metropolitan area’s pattern of sprawl that the Council has permitted and supported with public infrastructure over the last 40 years. Recent extreme weather events have imposed tremendous costs across the country, more so than here in the Twin Cities. Will we wait until our own Hurricane Sandy imposes billions of dollars of costs before attempting to do something to stem the tide? Will we only begin thinking of resiliency when drought decimates our region’s agriculture? Or are we ready to change the way we do business?

There are a number of policies the City supports in particular, which are listed below. There is an opportunity to expand on some of them, and provide more specific guidance as appropriate.

Page 12: Leveraging transit infrastructure investments with higher expectations of land use. This is an essential component of transitway planning that must be emphasized, and must be discussed in detail with any local authority planning for such investments.

Page 18: Encouraging redevelopment and infill development across the region.

Redevelopment and infill development provide opportunities to intensify areas that have infrastructure in place to support those developments, and to limit the region's impact on the environment.

Page 27-8: Supporting the region's bicycle and pedestrian facilities to promote bicycling for transportation, recreation and healthy lifestyles. Communities should be strongly encouraged to actively plan for improving their bicycle and pedestrian facilities in their comprehensive plan updates.

Page 28: Aligning resources to support transit-oriented development and walkable places. This is critical in the urban center. For those communities beyond the urban center, there should be more aggressive support for transit investments and the densities that make them feasible.

Page 79: Access, Mobility and Transportation Choice

The language below **must** be preserved or even strengthened as this moves through drafts. "Use Council investments and policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and carbon per unit of fuel, which are key drivers of the region's generation of greenhouse gas emissions."

Page 83: Building in Resilience

This section should be strengthened. The Council Roles are essential in two areas in particular:

- "Use the Council's investments and planning authorities to contribute toward meeting statutory goals for reductions in the generation of regional greenhouse gas emissions, and convene regional discussions about goals for climate change mitigation and adaptation." These contributions should be spelled out more clearly. The Met Council should recognize the role it can and should play in curbing the region's sprawling pattern of development, which has been a major contributor to this problem.
- "Develop, collect, and disseminate information about climate change, including energy and climate data, GreenSteps best practices, the next generation of the Regional Indicators data, and potentially a regional greenhouse gas inventory."

It is also important to maintain language about the Community Roles:

- "Address climate change mitigation and adaptation throughout the local comprehensive plan."
- "Identify local measures that would result in reductions in water use, energy consumption, and emission of greenhouse gases."



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

*25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

*Telephone: 651-266-6700
Facsimile: 651-228-3220*

DATE: April 10, 2014

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Neighborhood Planning Committee

RE: Initiate Gateway Corridor Station Area Planning process, establish task force, and initiate zoning study

BACKGROUND

The Gateway Transitway Corridor, which is identified conceptually in the regional Transportation Policy Plan, is under study for Light Rail Transit (LRT) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Saint Paul's Union Depot to Manning Avenue on the eastern end of Woodbury, generally running along the I-94 corridor. The study is currently in the scoping comment phase with a scoping decision due in June, at which time the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) work will commence under direction from the Washington County Regional Rail Authority (a responsibility that eventually transitions to the Metropolitan Council). Though the mode and precise alignment are still undetermined, it is clear that the proposed transitway represents a major transportation investment with significant opportunities for portions of Saint Paul. The City of Saint Paul can best optimize the transitway benefits through thoughtful planning and coordination, especially around proposed stations.

There are several reasons to initiate a station area planning process now rather than waiting until after the Draft EIS. First, the Draft EIS is contributing resources to the station area planning process in all cities in the study area, including a market analysis conducted by HR&A and, for the City of Saint Paul, design/graphics assistance of a nature to be determined. It is an efficient use of City resources to leverage these external resources. Second, the transitway's odds of receiving capital funding are improved by conducting planning now, which shows a commitment to the corridor and improves projected ridership numbers prior to submission of the project to the Federal Transit Administration in early 2015. Third, station area planning conducted now can leverage the outreach resources of FESTECC (Fostering East Side Transit Equity Conversations), which has received funding for continuing its transit equity-oriented organizing work in 2014, but not beyond. FESTECC is making a concerted effort to meaningfully involve underrepresented populations in transit planning processes, including the Gateway project and any associated station area planning.

The Gateway Transitway Corridor runs through geographic areas covered by several City-adopted plans: the *Sun Ray – Suburban Small Area Plan* (2004), the *Sun Ray – Battle Creek – Highwood District 1 Plan* (2004), the *Dayton’s Bluff District 4 Plan* (2009), and the citywide *Comprehensive Plan* (2010). Neither the District 1 Plan summary nor the District 4 Plan summary specifically addresses the Gateway Transitway Corridor, though District 1 did specifically address it in their Transportation Plan Update of 2012 (not yet officially adopted by the City), in which they generally support the Corridor and call for station locations and several related improvements that benefit the community. The Sun Ray- Suburban Plan summary does not address the Gateway Transitway Corridor or transit in general. The citywide Comprehensive Plan recognizes Gateway as part of a “preferred transit network,” identifies the Sun Ray/Suburban area as a “neighborhood center,” and identifies the land surrounding the I-94 corridor east of Kennard Street as being within a “mixed use corridor.” It is probable that portions of the affected plans will need to be amended or perhaps decertified through any station area planning process.

Staff has solicited applications for a Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force in anticipation of Planning Commission action. The solicitation has been publicized through the Dayton’s Bluff Forum newspaper, the District 1 newsletter, the Districts 1 and 4 Council leadership, the East Side Review newspaper, the East Side Area Business Association, and Engage East Side (a nonprofit organization).

A distinctive aspect of the proposed planning process is that non-binding, but plausible high/low population and employment estimates for each station area could be forwarded separately to the City Council (via Neighborhood Planning Committee and Planning Commission) ahead of full station area plan adoption. This approach may be necessary to allow the Draft EIS consultants to begin ridership forecasting in Autumn 2014, while the City of Saint Paul maintains its thorough public process for the full adopted area plans.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Neighborhood Planning Committee recommends approval of the attached draft Planning Commission resolution initiating a station area planning process, forming a task force that is representative of certain stakeholder groups and includes a Planning Commissioner as co-chair, initiating an accompanying zoning study, and authorizing plausible population and employment estimates to be forwarded by the task force ahead of the full station area plans.

Attachment

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

GATEWAY CORRIDOR STATION AREAS

INITIATION OF PLAN PREPARATION AND ZONING STUDY

AND FORMATION OF A TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes 462.351 ff. and 469.002, subd. 14, grants a municipality the authority for the planning and redevelopment of lands; and

WHEREAS, Section 107.02 of the City of Saint Paul administrative code authorizes the Planning Commission to organize and facilitate the preparation of planning studies and to transmit its recommendations to the Mayor and to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 107.04 of the City of Saint Paul administrative code authorizes the Planning Commission to appoint task forces as advisory bodies to study technical issues identified by the Commission and to report their findings to the Commission for its consideration; and

WHEREAS, a proposed transitway between Downtown Saint Paul and eastern Woodbury known as the Gateway Transitway Corridor is currently being studied by other governmental bodies as part of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), with up to six (6) transitway (Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit) stations being considered in Saint Paul, including in the vicinities of Union Depot, Mounds Boulevard, Earl Street, Etna Street, White Bear Avenue, and Sun Ray shopping center; and

WHEREAS, a new transitway such as is being studied could have significant impacts on Saint Paul citizens and redevelopment of property near the proposed transitway stations, including positive benefits that can be best optimized through planning and coordination; and

WHEREAS, the Union Depot area is subject to the previously adopted *Downtown Station Area Plan* adopted in 2010 in anticipation of three (3) Green Line LRT stations located in Downtown Saint Paul, including one at the Union Depot; and

WHEREAS, the *Downtown Station Area Plan* is still relevant and sufficient to plan for transit impacts in the Union Depot area, including any additional impacts from the Gateway Transitway Corridor; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the *Sun Ray – Suburban Small Area Plan* (2004), *Sun Ray – Battle Creek – Highwood District 1 Plan* (2004), the *Dayton's Bluff District 4 Plan* (2009), and the citywide *Comprehensive Plan* (2010) cover geographic areas that could be significantly affected by a proposed transitway in the Gateway Corridor, and therefore may require amendment (all plans) or decertification (*Sun Ray – Suburban*) in the course of creating new station area plans; and

WHEREAS, federal transit ridership models incorporate future land uses that are within adopted plans and for which zoning work has commenced prior to submission of the project by the Metropolitan Council to the Federal Transit Administration, anticipated in early 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Draft EIS consultants will start calculating ridership in Autumn 2014, which is probably before the City of Saint Paul will complete adoption of any station area plans; and

WHEREAS, the Draft EIS consultants' ridership work could commence with sets of estimated high and low potential population and employment numbers for each station area; and

WHEREAS, the station area plans will address topics such as land use planning and zoning, density and design of new development, housing, pedestrian connections, streetscape design, and parks and open spaces; and

WHEREAS, the station area planning process will also present opportunities to inform the transitway study being conducted by other governmental bodies with regard to preferred station locations; and

WHEREAS, an additional focus will be a zoning study to implement the planning recommendations in the planning study; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Economic Development, in collaboration with other City departments, will provide staff to facilitate the planning process, provide technical assistance and, with input from stakeholders and residents, will produce planning documents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby initiates the formation of the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force to assist the Commission in the preparation of station area plans along the Gateway Corridor for up to five (5) planned stations in the vicinity of Mounds Boulevard, Earl Street, Etna Street, White Bear Avenue, and Sun Ray shopping center; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby initiates an accompanying zoning study, which can be completed concurrently with the station area plans or afterwards, with proposed rezonings in the zoning study that reflect the recommendations of the station area plans, and with the proposed rezonings, once adopted, becoming amendments to the Zoning Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the chair of the Planning Commission appoint one member of the Commission to serve as co-chair of the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force (with the other co-chair to be selected by the Task Force membership); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force include representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- District 1 residents (at least 2)
- District 4 residents (at least 2)
- Business owners and operators (at least 1)
- Senior citizens (at least 1)
- Youth (at least 1)
- Racial/ethnic groups that reflect the affected neighborhoods to the extent plausible

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force may forward non-binding population and employment estimates to the Planning Commission prior to full station area plan adoption so that the Planning Commission may in turn forward a recommendation to the City Council for their consideration that would result in a resolution identifying said population and employment estimates that could be used by the Draft EIS consultants for preliminary ridership calculations; and

FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gateway Station Area Planning Task Force will submit its recommendations to the Planning Commission for its consideration.



City of Saint Paul

2014 Legislative Agenda



PRIORITY ITEMS

Local Government Aid (LGA)

The 2013 Legislature and Governor increased Local Government Aid by \$80 million, representing a significant, positive step forward in helping cities stabilize their budgets and restore the state-local government relationship. This additional LGA funding assisted the City in maintaining a flat levy for 2014 without cutting critical services. For 2014, the City supports the continued restoration of previous cuts to LGA, a reduction in the year-to-year volatility of aid levels that cities receive, and the addition of a growth factor to account for the continued rising costs of providing city services.

Capital Investment Bonding

The City supports the following capital investment bonding projects during the 2014 legislative session:

1. Minnesota Children's Museum Expansion ~ \$14 million
2. Como Park Transportation Access & Circulation Improvements ~ \$8.9 million
3. The Historic Palace Theater Renovations ~ \$6 million
4. Twin Cities Public Television Renovations / Media Public Commons ~ \$9 million
5. Regional Public Safety Facility in Saint Paul ~ \$6.5 million
6. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center (Design) ~ \$1.56 million
7. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation ~ \$13.83 million
8. Dorothy Day ReVision: Emergency Shelter and Connection Center ~ \$18 million

Transportation Financing

The City of Saint Paul supports an increase in state transportation funding to allow for improvements to state and local roadways, bridges and transit service, while also reducing the pressure on local property taxes to pay for needed infrastructure. Additionally, the City supports continued investment in East Metro transit ways, including Gateway, Riverview, Rush Line, Red Rock and Robert Street. Finally, the city supports increasing and diversifying revenue to fund future transit projects in the city including, but not limited to, streetcars and other transit modes.

REVENUE, TAXES AND FINANCE

Local Government Aid (LGA)

The 2013 Legislature and Governor restored \$80 million of Local Government Aid, and updated the LGA funding formula. This new increase and formula change provided an additional \$10.1 million for the City of Saint Paul. As a result, the City was able to stabilize its budget for 2014, resulting in a flat levy without cutting critical services. Without this aid, the combination of service reduction or property tax levy increases would have been approximately \$7-9 million or 7-9%.

However, after adjusting for inflation, the City will still receive over \$50 million less in LGA than it received in 2003. Without a continued investment in LGA in the future, cities will continue to face the prospect of having to choose service reductions or above-inflation increases in property taxes, or both.

The City of Saint Paul is thankful to the Legislature and Governor for this new infusion of LGA, and for their efforts to begin rebuilding a strong relationship between the state and local governments. Moving forward, the state should continue to restore previous cuts to LGA, reduce the year-to-year volatility of aid levels that cities receive, and add a growth factor for the cost of providing city services.

Should the State fail to increase critically-needed funding for Local Government Aid, it must provide local governments with options to generate additional revenue to reduce reliance on local property taxes.

Fiscal Disparities

The City supports the fiscal disparities program, and supports a continued discussion about the importance of fiscal disparities and the need to equalize tax base to provide for a common level of services.

Levy Limits

The City does not support state-sanctioned levy limits which undermine the relationship between local officials and residents in determining the appropriate balance of taxation and service delivery.

Event District Tax Increment Financing

In 2008, the state provided Saint Paul the authority to create an Event Tax Increment Financing District. Increment from this TIF must be used to pay debt service on 1996 Civic Center bonds. The City supports legislation extending use of this increment for repayment of bonds outstanding on the RiverCentre/arena complex.

City Sales Tax Exemption

The City supports the sales tax exemption for all city purchases granted by the Legislature in 2013, and encourages the Legislature to clarify the rules and application of the exemption to ensure all cities receive the full benefit of the sales tax exemption.

Other Revenue, Tax and Finance Items

- Support the removal of property tax exemptions for property of the Metropolitan Airport Commission surrounding the airport at Holman Field.
- Support the Saint Paul Port Authority's New Market Tax Credit initiative.
- Oppose elimination of the Solid Waste Management Tax.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS

The City of Saint Paul will support and advocate for the following projects in the 2014 state bonding bill:

1. Minnesota Children's Museum Expansion ~ \$14 million
 - a. This request is for \$14 million to renovate and expand the Minnesota Children's Museum flagship building. Working primarily within the museum's current footprint, a 50 percent increase in galleries and programming area will create capacity to serve 550,000 visitors annually. Total projected cost is approximately \$28 million.
2. Como Park Transportation Access & Circulation Improvements ~ \$8.9 million
 - a. This request is for \$8.9 million in state funding to pre-design, design, and construct transportation and access improvements to Como Regional Park. Como Regional Park welcomes more than 4 million visitors annually and transportation and accessibility are critical issues.
3. The Historic Palace Theater Renovations ~ \$6 million
 - a. This request is for \$6 million to renovate and restore the Palace Theater in the heart of downtown Saint Paul. A renovated Palace Theater will be an economic development catalyst for downtown Saint Paul, bringing 60 event nights in Saint Paul annually, drawing approximately 130,000 people to downtown in the first year, and increasing each year thereafter. Total projected cost is approximately \$12 million.
4. Twin Cities Public Television Renovations / Media Public Commons ~ \$9 million
 - a. This is a request for \$9 million in state bond funding to construct new public spaces as well as refurbish and equip existing spaces in the current Twin Cities Public Television building. TPT has been serving the state of Minnesota for over 50 years and has an opportunity to reuse its current home to reach more viewers

and bring more awareness to its services. Total projected cost is approximately \$18 million.

5. Regional Public Safety Facility in Saint Paul ~ \$6.5 million
 - a. This request is for \$6.5 million for acquisition, design and construction of a regional public safety facility and indoor firing range in the City of Saint Paul. This fills a need to house a permanent public safety facility site for communications, maintenance, training facilities and narcotics and vice unit. Total projected cost is approximately \$13 million.
6. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center (Design) ~ \$1.56 million
 - a. This request is \$1.56 million in state funding to pre-design and design a waterfront marina along the Mississippi River. This is a continuation of planning for the Great River Passage, a true connection of all 17 miles of Mississippi riverfront in Saint Paul. Total estimated cost of the project is \$19,783,000.
7. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation ~ \$13.83 million
 - a. This request is for \$13.83 million in state funding for planning, design and construction of the renewal of the Seals and Sea Lions exhibit at Como Zoo. The Seals and Sea Lions exhibit has been a fixture at Como Zoo for over 50 years; yet due to changing federal regulatory requirements for marine mammals, asset preservation of the exhibit is needed. The new exhibit will provide year-round use that meets or exceeds all regulatory and collection management requirements. Total estimated cost of the renewal exhibit project is projected to be \$14.88 million.
8. Dorothy Day ReVision: Emergency Shelter and Connection Center ~ \$18 million
 - a. This request is for \$18 million for a new shelter and daytime service center facility located in Saint Paul to serve homeless individuals from throughout the region and the state. The project also includes a request of \$17 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds.

Other Bonding Support Items:

- The *Building Jobs Coalition* legislative bonding position for 2014.
- Metropolitan State's Metro State Science Center construction project request.
- Saint Paul College's Culinary Arts Lab and Machine Tool renovation project requests, and the Health and Science Alliance Center addition project request.
- The Ordway Center renovation project request.
- The Minnesota Museum of American Art predesign project funding request.
- MnDOT Bridge Funds for the following projects:
 - Replacement of the Dale Street Bridge over I-94;
 - Replacement of the Aldine pedestrian bridge over I-94; and
 - Betterments and facade improvements to I-94 bridges east of downtown.

- Saint Paul Port Authority's bonding priority requests, including:
 - Saint Paul harbor infrastructure improvements, as part of the Minnesota Ports Association's bonding request; and
 - University Enterprise Laboratories expansion.
- Capital investment appropriation of \$500,000 to predesign, design, and engineer improvements to Pig's Eye Regional Park and Pig's Eye Lake.
- Capital investment appropriation of \$3.5 million for renovation of the Wakan Tipi Center at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.
- Metropolitan Council's \$11 million request in state bonds to match \$7.33 million of Metropolitan Council bonds to improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Park system.
- Ramsey County's bonding request list.
- Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission's request for planning dollars to design an Urban Regional Sports Center.
- The *Homes for All Coalition* request of \$100 million in bonds for affordable housing.
- The Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project Violence Center project.

TRANSPORTATION

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

Legislation was introduced during the 2013 session that creates a new type of tax increment financing (TIF) district to finance improvements and cost related to rail and bus rapid transit lines. Increments from the districts may be spent on public and private costs related to transit, such as funding public infrastructure (e.g., station and related improvements, but not the transit line or rolling stock itself) and encouraging private development adjacent to the line (e.g., more dense land uses).

The City will support legislation that furthers the goals of Tax Increment Financing for Transit-Oriented Development. Further, the city encourages the legislature to include parks and open space development as an eligible expense within any TIF for TOD legislation. The city also encourages the legislature to allow the use of increment from the districts to assist in the development of affordable housing.

Transportation Financing Package and Alternatives

The availability of transportation funding resources continues to significantly lag behind need, including for local units of government. As our transportation system continues to deteriorate, our costs will only increase and our service levels decrease. This includes costs to our local roads, bridges, transit service and alternative modes of transportation, including bikes systems.

The City supports a new comprehensive transportation financing package that gives cities the resources and funding tools they need to meet our growing needs.

Transit Investments

The state must prioritize transit investments across the entire region, including the East Metro. The Union Depot, for example, is a critical hub for transportation in eastern Minnesota, with the Central Corridor serving as a lifeline of that hub. In order to build a 21st century transit system, any new transit funding from the state must recognize the need for a geographic balance across the Metro Area.

The City supports additional funding for transit projects across the region, including a ½ cent sales tax increase for metro transit, and strongly encourages a renewed and balanced look at transit projects in the East Metro

Streetcars

Streetcars have become an important element in the complement of regional accessibility programs in many regions, with substantial success. Currently, neither C-TIB nor Metro Council/Metro Transit lists streetcar development as eligible activities, so local efforts to develop them are independent activities from regional transit plans and programs. The City supports the implementation of streetcars, including recognition of streetcars as a potential transitway mode for metropolitan regional planning, and the identification of funding for planning, study and construction.

Other Transportation Items

- Oppose any efforts to increase the speed limit on I-35 through Saint Paul, as determined by a federal lawsuit settlement.
- Support additional funding for the transit network in the City of Saint Paul. Saint Paul encourages the Metropolitan Council to maintain much needed bus service during and after the construction of Central Corridor.
- Support MnDOT's efforts in continued maintenance funding and other additional resources to better meet the department's needs.
- Support funding for the statewide Complete Streets policy, requiring that all new and reconstructed streets accommodate all users of those streets, including motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and people in wheelchairs.
- Support funding of a statewide effort to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians about the rules of the road and best practices in order to increase safety and decrease crashes, injuries, and fatalities. Support an increase in penalties to those causing injuries and fatalities.

PARKS AND TRAILS

Legacy

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) increases the sales tax by 3/8 of 1 percent, and lasts until 2034. Proceeds of the tax are distributed into four funds: Outdoor Heritage, Clean Water, Parks and Trails, and Arts and Cultural Heritage. The fund appropriated approximately \$313 million in FY2013, which are to supplement – not supplant – existing state funds.

Legacy resources support projects and programs including regional parks, libraries, Como Zoo, improvements to the Mississippi River, and a host of other items. The City of Saint Paul works closely with nine other metro regional park implementing agencies to ensure an equitable funding formula for the Parks and Trails Fund, specifically.

The City of Saint Paul supports the following positions regarding the Legacy Amendment:

- Overall Fund – Support the equitable distribution of all funds.
- Parks and Trails Fund – Support projects with clear regional or statewide significance and that will ensure equitable funding across metro, outstate, and DNR programs.
- Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund – Support more equitable geographic distribution of this fund, recognizing the unique circumstances the Metropolitan area presents related to gaming, habitats, wetlands, prairies, and forests.
- Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund – Support distribution of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund in a fair and equitable way. This includes support for Como Zoo, as well as the Minnesota regional library systems in order to provide educational opportunities in the arts, history, literary, and cultural heritage of Minnesota.

Regional Parks Funding

The City of Saint Paul Parks Department is one of 10 parks implementing agencies supported by the Met Council's Metro Parks and Open Space Commission. This agency is funded by the Legislature. The Minnesota Constitution requires the State to meet Parks financial needs by 40 percent; current Parks funding by the State is at 11 percent.

The City supports fully funding the Metro Parks biennial budget at 40 percent. Additionally, it opposes cuts to the budget.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer invasive species that is fatal to all untreated ash trees was first discovered in Saint Paul in 2009. Since then, it has already infested hundreds of ash trees

throughout Saint Paul and its spread is expected to kill tens of thousands of ash trees, both public and private, within the next decade. Management strategies designed to reduce or slow the spread of EAB are projected to cost Saint Paul over \$15 million dollars over the coming ten years. The City supports state or other funding designed to help Saint Paul and other communities slow the spread of EAB and move toward reforestation of their urban forests, including trees that provide millions of dollars in economic, environmental and social benefits.

Other Parks and Trails Items:

- Monitor efforts by state agencies to fund Asian Carp mitigation and population control programs.
- The Legislature amended the Critical Areas statute during the 2013 session to allow for the restart of the rulemaking process, while also addressing the economic development concerns raised by Saint Paul and other local units of government, as well as other issues. The city is an active participant in the rulemaking process, and will continue to monitor any legislation related to this process.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Early Childhood Development

Support legislative efforts that increase access to high quality early care and education opportunities, particularly for 3- and 4-year olds whose families are the most financially challenged, to ensure all children are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

Youth Job Corps

The Saint Paul Youth Job Corps has a demonstrated track record in securing funds for youth jobs during both the summer and school year. These funds may only be used for year-round employment opportunities for youth who reside in Saint Paul, who are between the ages of 14 and 24, and are economically disadvantaged, or considered to be “at risk” youth. Saint Paul has consistently employed hundreds of youth with these funds.

The Legislature during the 2013 session maintained the competitive grant process for summer youth jobs funding through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Although the City received a grant under this program, the amount was \$110,600 less than the prior year’s allocation for the summer program. The City did not receive a grant award from DEED for their year round program.

The City urges DEED to reexamine their grant allocation criteria and process, and place a greater emphasis on demonstrated ability to successfully manage funds and partnerships that support alignment across systems when determining grant award winners. The City also recommends that DEED base their funding decisions on factors including the number and percentage of youth in poverty, youth of color and the youth unemployment rate.

Workforce Training

Residents of Saint Paul continue to face a challenging employment marketplace as state and national economies move out of the recession. To maintain the City's current job base and attract new employers, Saint Paul must have a well-trained workforce. While the City works with community partners to build opportunities for employment in the manufacturing, health care, and construction industries, the State must increase funding and provide further opportunities for city residents to receive job training that leads to employment in living-wage jobs.

The City supports efforts to increase funding for job search assistance, skills training, childcare, and related programs to help people find and retain employment. Specifically, this includes:

- Continued funding for the Job skills Partnership and other workforce training programs administered by the state;
- A payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in skilled employees; and
- The Regional Competitiveness project, a collaboration of the Regional Council of Mayors and the Business and Workforce Investment Boards with the goal of implementing a regional economic and workforce development competitiveness strategy for short and long-term economic growth.

Green Jobs and Energy Investment

The overarching objective and recommendations from the *Mayors' Green Jobs Initiative* is to recruit and retain green business in the core cities. A second objective is to espouse green manufacturing policies that benefit core cities (i.e., use of existing infrastructure). To these ends, these are supporting objectives:

- To manufacture green products to be used in construction.
- To assist manufactures in incorporating green practices in their production of goods.
- To use green construction products in the development of new businesses or rehabilitation of existing businesses. This would apply both to the buildings housing the business, as well as the equipment within the buildings.
- To provide funding to support these local initiatives.

The City supports additional state resources and policies to encourage green energy investment for revitalizing communities and creating jobs.

Other Education and Workforce Training Items

- Support tax incentives for companies that hire and retain disadvantaged workers.
- Support legislation prohibiting discrimination for school lunch, including no child turned away, no child stigmatized, and no collection agencies for school lunch debt.
- Support efforts to implement the City's *Promise Neighborhood* initiative.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Criminal Trespass Statute

Support legislation to amend criminal trespass statutes to make the third offense a gross misdemeanor when there are two prior convictions within the past 10 years.

Filing Fraudulent Financing Statements

Support legislation setting as a felony the filing of fraudulent or other improper financing statements against a police officer, chief of police, or a Department of Corrections employee, for performing official duties.

Permanent State Funding for the Survivor Resources Program

Survivor Resources has sought permanent funding from the State via the Public Safety Finance bill. Funding has been provided in the past as one-time grants, making it difficult for Survivor Resources to budget and accomplish long-term planning.

Survivor Resources inspires hope, healing and wholeness after a homicide, suicide or accidental death of a loved one. It serves as the liaison between law enforcement and the family by helping them to navigate unfamiliar territory, to understand the criminal justice system, and how and why it works as it does. Long term support is provided through a variety of loss specific weekly groups. The city supports permanent funding for Survivor Resources.

Support Items

- Legislation to allow access to Department of Vehicle Services records, including photos, for processing a permit to purchase/permit to transfer firearms application.
- Legislation establishing a 90-day retention period for Automated License Plate Reader data, in order to balance law enforcement's use of ALPR data for public safety purposes and the public's interest in the protection of their privacy.
- Legislation requiring a half-way home or other government-sponsored housing to report when a person deemed a predatory offender makes an unplanned move to another location away from their documented housing.
- Creation of a model affidavit of the right to sell a scrap vehicle, standards for implementation, and the use of the Automated Property System (APS).
- Legislation to address the challenges with investigating and prosecuting the manufacture, sale, use and possession of synthetic drugs.
- Support a classification for criminal intelligence data consistent with our partners in law enforcement.

- Support inclusion of Saint Paul public safety services in the planning and design of a Statewide Emergency Operations Center, and use of the current statewide plan for regional training centers.
- Support establishment of a Disaster Contingency Fund.
- Support appropriations changes to the Minnesota Fire Safety Account to fund critical services.
- Support initiatives in favor of community policing.
- Support efforts to reduce prostitution and human trafficking, streamline statutes in order to more effectively prosecute prostitution-related offenses, and support legislation designating funding for treatment and creation of transitional housing programs to support prostituted people.
- Support for the driver diversion program.
- Support efforts at the State and Federal levels to reduce gun violence by supporting:
 - The total ban on the sale of semi-automatic weapons which include, but are not limited to, the weapons listed in Minnesota Statute 624.715 Subd. 7 (1), 624.712 Subd. 7 (2), 624.712 Subd. 7 (3).
 - The ban on the sale of any high capacity magazines with larger than 10 rounds.
 - Repealing the preemption provision currently in Minnesota law.
 - Granting further discretionary authority to local law enforcement in the granting or denying of gun permits.
 - More vigorous background requirements and checks for purchasing a gun.
 - The creation of a legislatively – mandated, multi-disciplinary gun violence policy committee to look in-depth at Minnesota’s gun laws, and to make recommendations to the legislature.

Items to Monitor

- Monitor legislation mandating criminal forensic lab accreditation.
- Monitor legislation extending term sentences for electronic communications used in the commission of certain offenses.
- Monitor legislation to allow for use of racketeering statute for prosecution against organized criminal groups.
- Monitor legislation to require termination of a peace officer who has lied or deceived in an official capacity.
- Monitor legislation to authorize/mandate officers to carry naloxone hydrochloride to administer in overdose situations under the Good Samaritan laws.
- Monitor legislation dealing with *Secure Communities* and immigration issues.
- Oppose legislative changes to the state’s forfeiture laws.

HOUSING, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY STABILITY

Housing Recovery and Foreclosure Prevention

Cities throughout the state continue to bear the brunt of the impact of the national mortgage foreclosure epidemic. While several positive measures have taken place supporting homeowners in an effort to prevent foreclosed and abandoned properties, there is still a need to address properties once they have been foreclosed on and/or abandoned.

The City will advocate for the passage of local government tools to address housing and community challenges brought on by the mortgage foreclosure crisis, including support for more incentives for the mediation and avoidance of foreclosures when feasible.

The City will also support legislative efforts to:

- Implement a foreclosure mediation program to facilitate mutually beneficial alternatives to foreclosure;
- Require that mortgage companies assign struggling homeowners a single point of contact, who knows about the homeowner's loan, has access to decision makers, and will handle the flow of documentation between the homeowner and the mortgage company;
- Allow homeowners a private right of action to sue their banks for wrongful foreclosure or violating the legislation; and
- Protect tenants of foreclosed properties from being unfairly evicted.

Other Housing, Economic and Community Stability Support Items

- Support an increase in the minimum wage of at least \$9.50.
- Support land use and economic development incentives to benefit redevelopment and job creation at the Ford Plant Site.
- Support legislation to grow the micro-distilling industry in Minnesota to allow for both the sale of cocktails and the sale of bottled products on the site of the distillery.
- Support dedicated State funding for programs at the Department of Employment and Economic Development focusing on women and minority-owned businesses, redevelopment areas and transit improvement areas.
- Support UFCW efforts to create a fund for construction of grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods in urban and rural areas.
- Support modifications to liquor laws clarifying a city's ability to impose license restrictions.
- Renewable and Distributed Generation: Support incentives, mandates, and policies that increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities.

- Support expansion of programs to provide low cost financing to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes and buildings, particularly those in low and moderate income communities hit hard by the foreclosure/vacant housing crisis.
- Support programs to fund loans and grants to businesses along Central Corridor during construction of Light Rail Transit.
- Oppose all constitutional amendments as a way to circumvent the legislative process.
- Monitor activities regarding governance of the Metropolitan Council.
- Monitor efforts to change current practices with regional watershed districts.
- Support legislation that allows a city to assess the costs of installing new sewer and water pipes at a demolished building.

For more information about the City of Saint Paul's 2014 Legislative Agenda, please contact:

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