



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: November 3, 2014
TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee
FROM: Michelle Beaulieu, City Planner
RE: Comprehensive Plan Priorities for CIB and STAR proposal review; Additional information

Background

In preparation for the conversation on Comprehensive Plan priorities for CIB and Neighborhood STAR application review, the Comprehensive Planning Committee requested that staff compile a list of any projects that were found to conflict with the Comprehensive Plan, which were then funded. This memo summarizes the applications made for CIB and STAR funding, what level of Comprehensive Plan conformance the applications were found to have, and how many applications were funded.

Funded Applications: Neighborhood STAR

In the past three cycles of the Neighborhood STAR program, 104 applications for funding were made, with 60 applications funded. Of these applications, only seven were found to “not address Comprehensive Plan goals,” and of these, three were funded. Below is a summary of all applications and their funding status.

2014 Neighborhood STAR: (42 applications; 25 funded)

- 38 applications found to Address Comp Plan goals (23 funded)
- 4 applications found to be Neutral – does not address or conflict with Comp Plan goals (2 funded)
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals

2013 Neighborhood STAR: (28 applications; 19 funded)

- 20 found to Specifically address Comp Plan goals* (8 funded)
- 26 found to Generally address Comp Plan goals (11 funded)
- 2 found to be Neutral – may address or conflict (0 funded)
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals

2012 Neighborhood STAR: (34 applications; 16 funded)**

- 15 found to Specifically address Comp Plan goals (8 funded)
- 17 found to Generally address Comp Plan goals (7 funded)
- 1 found to not address Comp Plan goals (1 funded)
- 0 found to conflict with Comp Plan goals
- 1 unrated (0 funded)

(*After the review of 2013 Neighborhood STAR program applications, in response to staff

review, discontinuing the practice of finding applications “Specifically” or “Generally” addressing Comprehensive Planning goals. This was in part due to the ambiguity of what these terms mean, and due to the broad nature of many of the goals in the Comprehensive Plan.) (**Some of the numbers in this memo are inconsistent with those found in the October 8th memo on this topic, due to inconsistent sources. The numbers on this memo are correct, and the change is indicated through text formatting.)

The three funded projects that “do not comply or conflict with Comp Planning goals” are:

- (2012) Cool Air Mechanical New Building Expansion Project: Construct a new, two-story building on-site for additional office, warehouse and conference space.
 - Citation given in 2012: Strategy #4 in the Rice Street Small Area Plan does not recommend additional industrial uses on Rice, but does support continuation of existing uses near railroad corridors. This site is not near a rail corridor.
 - However, this is not a new industrial use, but an expansion of an existing industrial use to include office space. The Rice Street plan Action Steps call for providing financing to improve commercial vitality.
- (2014) East Side Community Radio: Establish a 100-watt radio station with the construction of a 6 x 12 ft. transmission room and installation of a cable broadcast antenna.
 - This application could very well have been cited as a “neighborhood supportive service” and thereby been found to support Comprehensive Plan goals.
- (2014) Roof Replacement & Update: A required improvement by tenants of a City-owned historic site (the Arlington Hills Carnegie Library) leased for a new use. The first leasehold improvement is to replace the 27-year-old roof on the main library building.
 - This application was found to specifically comply with Historic Preservation goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

It would be reasonable to believe that each of these applications could have been found to comply with Comprehensive Planning goals, at least “generally,” were the same applications being reviewed by different members of the division’s staff.

Funded Applications: CIB

In the last round of the CIB process, 122 applications were made for funding. 55 were funded. Of these applications, only one was found to “not support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan,” and that project was funded. Below is a summary of all applications and their funding status. Additionally, the Capital Improvements Budget includes an additional 24 projects and programs that did not come from this applicant pool.

2014-15 CIB Streets and Utilities (55 applications; 26 funded)

- 43 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan (21 funded)
- 11 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan (4 funded)
- 1 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan (1 funded)
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan

2014-15 CIB Community Facilities (48 applications; 15 funded)**

- 9 Police, library, fire and OTC facilities, which are not covered by the Comprehensive Plan (1 funded)
- 17 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan (3 funded)
- 20 21 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan (11 funded)
- 0 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan
- 1 unrated (0 funded)

2014-15 CIB Residential and Economic Development (19 applications; 14 funded)

- 11 found to Significantly address specific goals of the Comp Plan (8 funded)

- 8 found to Generally support goals of the Comp Plan (6 funded)
- 0 found to Not support goals of the Comp Plan
- 0 found to Directly Conflict with a recommendation of the Comp Plan

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The one funded project found to “not support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan” was:

- (Streets & Utilities) Redesign of Ames Place-Case-White Bear Intersection: Cul de sac Ames Place at the intersection of Case and White Bear. Addresses Policy T-4.11 to promote and fund traffic calming measures, *through an appropriate combination of techniques. Does not address Transportation Chapter Strategy to connect neighborhoods.*
 - Though the closure of this intersection does decrease connectivity, this project is specifically mentioned in White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan (2001). This again could have been listed as “specifically” addressing goals of the Comprehensive Plan were a different staff member completing the review.

For CIB proposal review, staff once again finds that projects determined not to support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan could have been found to support goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Summary

No proposals were found to conflict with the Comprehensive Plan in any of the rounds of applications reviewed. A small number of projects were found to be neutral or to not support goals of the Comprehensive Plan, without being in direct conflict with the Plan. Of these, four were funded. The rest of the funded projects were roughly split between generally and specifically supporting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan (when this breakdown was used).

Staff Recommendation

There seems to be little consistency between what is deemed “significantly/specifically” or “generally” supportive of the Comprehensive Plan. In completing this review, staff found that there were several times when two projects had the same Comp Plan citations, and were given different rankings (one generally and one significantly or specifically supportive). Therefore staff maintains the recommendation that *Comprehensive Plan review no longer make use of these distinctions, unless they are defined in more detail.*

[For example, determining that a project is “significantly” supportive of Comprehensive Plan goals is an entirely subjective call and should be stricken. However, “specifically” could be used in a very narrow definition. If that project itself, not just the type of project (for example “improve the sidewalk condition on West Seventh between Randolph and Jefferson” as opposed to “support businesses at commercial nodes across the city”) is listed in the Comprehensive Plan or one of its addenda, then it could be determined to be “specifically” supportive of Comprehensive Plan goals.]

Of all 226 applications, only 8 were found to be “neutral” or to “not support or conflict” with Comprehensive Plan goals. Of these, 4 were funded. The Comprehensive Plan generally has both enough breadth to its goals and sufficient input and support from the City’s departments and other applicant organizations that even these projects that were found to “not support” Comprehensive Plan goals could likely be found to “support” goals that were perhaps

overlooked by individual staff reviewers. The “pass-fail” test is too simplistic, as most projects being proposed will be able to be found to “pass.” Therefore staff recommends that *the Comprehensive Planning Committee define specific priorities from within the Comprehensive Plan and it’s addenda to be applied to the review of CIB and STAR applications.*