



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: July 1, 2015

TO: Neighborhood Planning Committee

FROM: Michelle Beaulieu, City Planner, 651-266-6620

SUBJECT: Snelling Avenue South zoning study

Background

In early 2016 Metro Transit will be opening the region's first Arterial BRT line, the A Line, along Snelling Avenue / Ford Parkway in Saint Paul. Snelling Avenue is a mixed-use corridor, with a variety of building forms including a number of auto-oriented buildings and surface parking lots.

Arterial BRT is a new form of transit service for the Twin Cities. The A Line will be the first such line implemented by Metro Transit. Arterial BRT is an all-day, frequent service that operates buses in mixed-traffic with transit advantages and improved customer amenities. Stations will be sited approximately ½ mile apart.

Snelling today is primarily auto-oriented. The zoning along the corridor is diverse, with concentrations of commercial zoning and multiple-family residential at nodes, and single-family and duplex zoning immediately adjacent to these areas.

Humphrey Capstone Study

In the spring semester 2015, a student capstone group from the Humphrey Urban and Regional Planning program completed a study of Snelling Avenue south of I-94 to Ford Parkway entitled "Snelling Avenue After the A Line." The team interviewed stakeholders along the corridor, including the three District Councils and other community members. The study made recommendations on how to create a more pedestrian and transit-friendly Snelling Avenue. This included a number of rezoning recommendations, which could better facilitate development that is transit-supportive along Snelling Avenue, paying particular attention to the nodes where stations will be located.

Comprehensive Plan and District Plan Support

As part of the report, the student group looked at the District Plans for each of the neighborhoods along Snelling Avenue between I-94 and Ford Parkway. Some of the relevant policies in the City Council-adopted District Plans are listed below, with a more comprehensive

list found on pages 11 and 12 of the student report (attached), which includes policies in the full district plans and the draft 2014 Macalester-Groveland plan:

Highland District Plan

Snelling-Randolph Commercial Area

- 8) Consider rezoning portions of the Snelling-Randolph commercial area to TN-2 to support mixed-use development and to provide design standards that limit the visual impacts of parking and maintain attractive building facades.

Housing

- 9) Utilize zoning mechanisms, such as TN zoning that allow for residential uses in commercial areas, while limiting the expansion of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods.

Macalester-Groveland

Land Use

- 2) Encourage mixed use housing development with commercial uses on the first floor and residential uses upstairs in selected commercial clusters.
- 3) Limit commercial expansion to existing commercial clusters.

Transportation

- 14) Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Union Park

Merriam Park

Land Use

- 2) Major new development should be mixed-use and located along transit routes or on underused or inappropriately developed sites.

Economic Development

- 13) New development should emphasize mixed uses. New mixed-use development is encouraged in Iris Park and at the intersections of Cleveland and Marshall, Fairview and Selby, and Snelling and Selby.

Snelling Hamline

Urban Design

- 2) Promote Transit Oriented Development, a street design that provides for efficient automobile, bus and rail transportation while at all times respecting and encouraging the safety of pedestrians.

The Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan (2010) designates most of Snelling Avenue between I-94 and Ford Parkway as a Mixed-Use Corridor, save for the very northern end which is designated Industrial, and the west side of Snelling from Summit Avenue to St Clair Avenue, which is designated Major Institutional as part of the Macalester College campus. The Comprehensive Plan includes the following strategies which support a zoning study of Snelling Avenue:

Mixed-Use Corridors

LU 1.21 Balance the following objectives for Mixed-Use Corridors through the density and scale of development: accommodating growth, supporting transit use and walking, providing a range of housing types, and providing housing at densities that support transit.

LU 1.28 Promote conditions that support those who live and work along Mixed-Use Corridors, including frequent transit service, vibrant business districts, and a range of housing choices.

Residential Development

LU 1.40 Promote the development of housing that provides choices for people of all ages, including singles and young couples, families, empty-nesters, and seniors.

LU 1.42 Promote the development of housing in mixed-use neighborhoods that supports walking and the use of public transportation.

Commerce

LU 1.46 Encourage the expansion of compact commercial areas in Neighborhood Centers and Mixed-Use Corridors to further the objectives of both categories of neighborhoods.

LU 1.52 Prioritize the development of compact commercial areas accessible by pedestrians and transit users over commercial areas more readily accessed by automobile. Discourage new and expanded auto-oriented uses.

LU 1.53 Encourage changes to the design of existing auto-oriented commercial buildings and areas with elements of traditional urban form to minimize impacts on the pedestrian realm.

These goals can be achieved more successfully with T zoning than the zoning districts that are present along Snelling today.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the NPC forward a resolution initiating a zoning study for the area ¼ mile around the A Line station areas south of I-94 along Snelling Avenue, using the Humphrey student project "Snelling Avenue After the A Line" as the starting point for rezoning recommendations.

The purpose of the study is to explore rezoning parcels to Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts, therefore making zoning in the area more consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan's priorities to develop compact commercial areas accessible by pedestrians and transit users, and encourage changes to the design of existing auto-oriented commercial buildings and areas, with elements of traditional urban form to minimize impacts on the pedestrian realm.

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

Initiation of Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study

WHEREAS, Sec. 61.801(b) of the Zoning Code authorizes the Planning Commission to initiate an amendment to the Zoning Code as provided in Minnesota Statutes Sec. 462.357, Subd. 4;

WHEREAS, Metro Transit is planning on opening the first Arterial Bus Rapid Transit line (the A Line) in the region along Snelling Avenue in 2016; and

WHEREAS, in a report dated May 2015, a UMN Humphrey School Capstone class recommended a Traditional Neighborhood Zoning study to rezone certain properties along Snelling Avenue South, at the future A Line station areas, as a strategy to maximize the land use and economic development benefits of this transit investment; and

WHEREAS, the proposed boundaries of the study are one-quarter mile, or walking distance, around the station locations for the A Line on Snelling Avenue between I-94 and Ford Parkway; and

WHEREAS, a study to consider the appropriateness of rezoning portions of the corridor to Traditional Neighborhood zoning is consistent with the *Highland Park Neighborhood Plan Summary* (2007) strategies "8. Consider rezoning portions of the Snelling-Randolph commercial area to TN-2 to support mixed-use development and to provide design standards that limit the visual impacts of parking and maintain attractive building facades", and "9. Utilize zoning mechanisms, such as TN zoning that allow for residential uses in commercial areas, while limited the expansion of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods"; and

WHEREAS, such a study is consistent with the *District 14 Macalester-Groveland Community Plan* (2001) strategies "2. Encourage mixed use housing development with commercial uses on the first floor and residential uses upstairs in selected commercial clusters" and "14. Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment"; and

WHEREAS, a study would similarly be consistent with the relevant plans in District 13 Union Park, being the *Merriam Park Community Plan* (2004) strategy "2. Major new development should be mixed-use and located along transit routes or on underused or inappropriately developed sites", and the *Snelling-Hamline Neighborhood Plan* (2007) strategy "2. Promote Transit Oriented Development, a street design that provides for efficient automobile, bus and rail transportation while at all times respecting and encouraging the safety of pedestrians"; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, the *Land Use Plan*, adopted by the City Council as a chapter of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan in 2010; designates Snelling Avenue through these neighborhoods as a Mixed-Use Corridor that is a primary thoroughfare through the city served by public transit, where two or more uses including residential, commercial, retail, office, small scale industry, institutional and open space, could be located either within a single building or in close proximity, and which is consistent with Traditional Neighborhood zoning; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission hereby initiates the Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study for a study area generally defined as one-quarter mile around the stations on the A Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit, between I-94 and Ford Parkway.