

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division
Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan

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Project Name: Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan

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Ward: 2

Neighborhood Organization: Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association

Existing Minneapolis Plan Designations:

- University Avenue SE east of Washington Avenue is designated as a Commercial Corridor; University Avenue SE and 4th Street SE west of Washington Avenue are designated as Community Corridors; Stadium Village’s commercial core is a designated Activity Center; University of Minnesota’s campus is the heart of a designated Growth Center; Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) Area is a designated Industrial Employment District; Stadium Village, Prospect Park, and East Bank Light Rail Stations are the centers of designated Transit Station Areas; University Avenue SE & Bedford Street SE is a designated Neighborhood Commercial Node

Zoning Plate Numbers: 15, 16, 22

Background and Public Process

The Stadium Village LRT Station Area is a unique place along the Central Corridor line. Much of the land is owned and controlled by the University of Minnesota. Many of the primary roads are controlled by the County and feed into the regional network. And the land itself is guided by the City for high density, mixed use redevelopment. The Stadium Village plan even differs with the timing of other station areas. This plan was completed somewhat later to allow for the completion of University planning and projects which shape its core – including the recent completion of the TCF Bank Stadium and the resulting road reconfigurations.

As this plan shows, the dynamics of this area point towards its central location as a prime place for transit oriented development. This is already a dense, dynamic urban place with ample bicycle and pedestrian activity and transit service. It has seen waves of development over time, and is currently experiencing rapid transition and growth.

Due to its unique configuration, the planning effort was led by a three-way partnership of the City of Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, and Hennepin County. Moreover, it was closely coordinated with a simultaneous neighborhood-led development framework process for the Prospect Park station area. In fact, the study area for the Stadium Village plan has been stretched to cover the Prospect Park station area as well, in order to accommodate recommendations from the neighborhood process.

The process began in Fall 2010 with the receipt of a planning grant from the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, which provided for the primary funding for this project. Additional funds were provided by Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, and University of Minnesota via the University District Alliance. A steering committee was formed with representatives from the neighborhood, business associations, the University community, and other stakeholders.

The steering committee met approximately monthly from November 2010 to April 2012. They oversaw the development of the plan, which included the hiring of three consultant teams to complete three technical reports: market study and development opportunities analysis, parking and transportation study, and public realm and connectivity study. These were used to inform the content of the plan, which was drafted by staff. The focus topics were based on the issues identified as most important in an up-front survey of area stakeholders. The technical reports are included as appendices, with recommendations incorporated into the main document.

General public meetings were held on April 27 and May 3, 2011, February 28, 2012 (two meetings), and June 7, 2012. The Spring 2011 meetings focused on priorities and issues for the study area, the February 2012 meetings on review of results from the technical report, and the June 2012 on draft plan review. While these meetings were important, the nature of the study area – highly transient population, diverse mix of stakeholders, strong institutional presence – meant that general purpose meetings were of limited effectiveness in reaching out. Instead, the plan focused on three main alternative strategies for outreach: (1) a widely circulated online survey (since email use is highly prevalent in the study area), (2) a series of focus groups arranged around specific interests and stakeholder sub-groups, and (3) leveraging the extensive neighborhood-focused grassroots outreach conducted by PPERRIA around their Prospect Park station area planning work.

The draft plan was made available to neighborhoods, organizations, residents and City departments via e-mail, the CPED Planning Division website, the PPERRIA office, and the Southeast Library on May 1, 2012 for 45-day review through June 14, 2012.

Overview

Land Use and Design Plan

The land use and development patterns in the Stadium Village have changed in many ways over the years. The historic core of the University campus has expanded greatly. The industrial areas have contracted, as other uses redeveloped formerly industrial sites. Residential areas still contain historic lower density cores, but now include numerous high density multi-family areas, especially around the edges and near the University. Commercial areas, while continuing to do fairly well, have changed in mix and composition of retail and services in response to changing customer base.

The plan largely affirms the current land use policy framework for the area. The Activity Center area and Transit Station Areas continue to be guided for high density mixed use. There is additional detail as to the appropriate mix of uses and character of each subarea. The area around the Prospect Park station is guided for the most significant transformation, as envisioned through the neighborhood planning process, moving from industrial to transit oriented mixed use. The plan does not make specific recommendations for zoning changes – following the previously adopted University & 29th plan, it supports change while allowing for flexibility regarding the timing and character of that change.

Urban Design and Public Realm

As part of this planning process, a Public Realm and Connectivity Framework Plan was completed for the study area. The purpose of this study is to illustrate the intent of the design principles, project goal and objectives and to offer recommendations to guide the evolution of the public realm and connectivity within the Stadium Village Station area.

This study identified a number of design principles and goals and objectives that serve as a foundation on which the recommendations are based:

- Define a framework and hierarchy of vibrant public spaces and linkages
- Integrate a network and hierarchy of street treatments
- Encourage compact mixed-use developments
- Foster environmental and economic sustainability

Consistent with these principles, the study explored a number of elements which contribute to the public realm and connectivity of the area. The plan includes recommendations regarding land use and built form; public realm and streetscape improvements; pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal connectivity; public open space, parks and plazas; and green infrastructure. This section also includes a list of capital projects to implement these recommendations, including preliminary scope and cost estimates.

Housing

An Alliance-sponsored housing market study and a corridor-wide affordable housing study provided the context for housing conditions and issues. Student housing remains a dominant presence in the market at this time. However, other markets – including senior and workforce housing – are also emerging and remain underserved. Plan recommendations are consistent with the goal of providing a variety of housing types to meet varied needs of residents, as well as directly supporting the development of affordable housing.

Economic Development

The retail market was analyzed for the Stadium Village area. The study found a substantial amount of pent-up demand, but with some complications due to site availability and constraints. The office and industrial markets showed more limited prospects, except for the significant opportunity offered to firms that would benefit from close proximity to the University campus. This niche market is expected to develop over time.

Potential redevelopment sites were identified for the study area. Focus areas should not be considered priority redevelopment sites or threatened properties. The goal of this analysis was to identify sites where there appeared to be conditions that might make developers view the redevelopment potential as positive and therefore result in redevelopment pressure.

Parking and Transportation

In terms of transportation, the Stadium Village plan study area is a complex and interesting place. To develop a clearer picture of the transportation network and needs, this plan relies on two technical studies:

- A parking study, which looks at existing public parking supply, projected future needs, and possible solutions
- A connectivity study, which focuses on the bicycle and pedestrian network and what improvements are needed (see Urban Design and Public Realm section)

The parking inventory looked at all available public parking facilities along the corridor. The inventory counted parking spaces available to the general public, located both off street and on street. Average utilization was calculated for a typical weekday versus an event day. The inventory showed generally a surplus of parking was present at most times, with some exceptions. However, the available parking was not always convenient to users or priced attractively.

To address the parking needs of this area, the study created a parking toolbox, presenting a range of parking management options that could be implemented. The study also provided more detailed guidance on parking meter placement, advising they should be placed in areas with fairly high parking demand.

Implementation

The Implementation chapter outlines an implementation methodology for the Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan and offers tools to assist the public and private sectors in the realization of the community vision for the neighborhood. After adoption by the City Council, the Plan will become a part of the City's comprehensive plan. While many implementation strategies will be the responsibility of the City, most of the directives will take a cooperative effort over time to achieve from community organizations, the neighborhood institutions, and private developers and property owners.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The Stadium Village study area has a number of existing land use features, including Community Corridors, Commercial Corridor, Industrial Employment District, Activity Center, Growth Center, and Neighborhood Commercial Node. Relatively recent work determined the boundaries of each of these, and this plan affirms them as shown in the existing comprehensive plan. This plan's land use and design guidance is largely consistent with existing comprehensive plan guidance for the applicable land use features.

There was some discussion of an additional designation around the Prospect Park station area, in addition to its status as a Transit Station Area. However, since this is in reference to a future condition rather than the existing one –with a number of uncertainties with regards to timeline and specifics – it seemed prudent to refrain from adding a purely aspirational designation.

The plan is also largely consistent in terms of its guidance on other topics, including housing, economic development, transportation and parking, and urban design.

The plan is also largely consistent with other overlapping adopted plans that have been incorporated into the comprehensive plan – without fully replicating the detail of these plans, or attempting to completely replace their analysis and recommendations. This plan supports the goals of the SEMI Master Plan for redevelopment of the SEMI industrial area, and the University and 29th Development Objectives and Design Guidelines for the development of the Prospect Park station area. Since neither subarea was the main focus of this plan, it was not the intent to fully replace them, but to incorporate the main points as an affirmation of the primary objectives and recommendations of these earlier plans. The plan does take the opportunity to simplify the complex “mixed use” guidance in the SEMI plan for a simpler format, largely consistent with that earlier plan but more comparable to other small area plans.

Future Related Actions

Implementation of the plan recommendations is part of planning staff's 2012 work plan and will likely continue into the future. Elements of this include:

- Comprehensive plan changes. This small area plan will be incorporated into the update of the city's comprehensive plan, and its future land use map will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan's citywide Future Land Use map.
- Potential text amendment or rezoning. While the plan does not propose major land use changes that would necessarily impact base zoning (at least not immediately), it does suggest some potential zoning

code changes. These largely relate to the unique character of development around the University campus, and therefore might be tied to the recently adopted University Area (UA) overlay. Namely, the potential topics include: (1) revision of parking requirements and standards for the University area, both in terms of parking requirement for private development and how public parking facilities are regulated; (2) evaluation of the code's treatment of units with low bedroom counts and whether policy around them should be reexamined, and (3) clarification regarding wayfinding signage and how it is allowed and regulated.

- Development review. Future development proposals for property in the Stadium Village area will require Planning Commission review of development applications such as rezonings, conditional use permits, and site plan review. In this way, the Planning Commission also has a role in the incremental implementation of the plan.
- Capital project prioritization. The capital improvements process (though the City, County, University, and other public entities) provides an important way to implement recommended projects in the comprehensive plan. This plan's identification of these projects provides additional priority and weight to them in project review and ranking. It also allows for proposals to be made when funding opportunities (such as grants) emerge.

As this is joint plan, there are implied implementation steps for the University, County, and other public entities as well. All major entities listed in the implementation chapter as potential implementers were given an opportunity to review and comment on plan content.

Public Comments

A number of comments were received during the 45-day comment period from individuals, community organizations, and businesses. There were a number changes as a result of these comments, including adding detail and clarification around topics that were considered priorities. These edits did not represent large changes in the direction or intent of the plan but rather added to the existing framework. A table listing the comments and the responses to them is attached.

Some comments were received after the 45-day review period had ended, namely official comments from the neighborhood and University. These have also been incorporated into the draft (they were not in the version available at CPC Committee of the Whole). The letters are included with the staff report, and the comments and responses added to the table.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING DIVISION:

Recommended Motion: The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council **approve** the *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan* document and **amend** the policy guidance for the area into the City's comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan amendment is subject to final review and approval by the Metropolitan Council.

Attachments:

- Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan document
- Written comments received to date
- Table of comments and responses

To conserve paper, only the plan itself is included in the packet. The technical appendices are available online at: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/projects/cped_stadium_village