

Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan Summary

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission on December 19, 2003

Adopted by the City Council on January 21, 2004

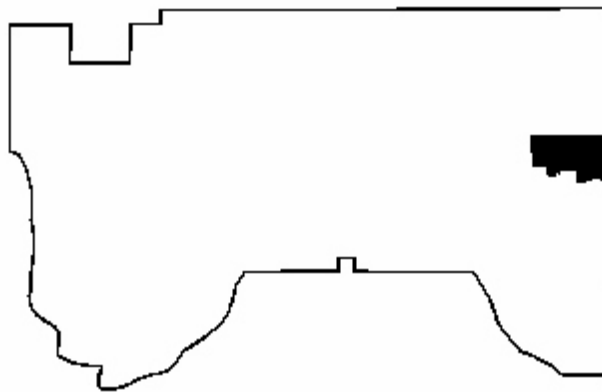
This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the vision of the Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan for revitalization of the Sun Ray and Suburban commercial areas of Saint Paul. This includes adoption of an amendment to the general land use plan map, designating the Sun Ray-Suburban area as "Neighborhood Commercial-Pedestrian." Key strategies include:

- *Refocusing the commercial area to serve primarily neighborhood residents and employees of nearby employment centers.*
- *Creating a mixed-use Village Center that incorporates housing.*
- *Creating a pedestrian-oriented environment with streetscape amenities and traffic calming strategies, such as two-lane streets, grid streets and on-street parking.*

Location

The area addressed in the *Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan* includes land between McKnight Road on the east, Third Street on the north, Kennard Street on the west and Suburban and Burns Avenues on the south.

Sunray - Suburban Vicinity Map



Framework

The concepts included in the *Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan* are:

- A connected, pedestrian-oriented community. Connections would be within the commercial area and to nearby neighborhoods. Connections would be enhanced with streetscape amenities.
- A mix of land uses, including residential uses. New development will expand the residential character of the community and attract retail that serves the residents of the community.
- A revitalized retail center that builds on the strengths of the commercial area and focuses on the needs of nearby neighborhoods.

To implement these concepts, the focus of the retail center will shift to serve primarily neighborhood residents and employees from nearby employment centers. Moreover, the total amount of acreage devoted to retail will be reduced, reflecting the loss of customers in recent years to large regional retail centers. As land becomes available, residential uses will be introduced. Three nodes within the Sun Ray-Suburban area will incorporate some features of the existing suburban strip mall design; urban elements will be introduced to provide a foundation for commercial stability and foster community identity. The nodes are:

- the Highway Access (I-94/White Bear) node
- the Village Center, on both sides of Suburban between Ruth on the east and, on the west, the point where Burns and Suburban intersect.
- the Sun Ray center node

Recommendations

The *Small Area Plan* includes 52 strategies focused on movement, land use, public spaces, urban design and stormwater management.

Movement

- collaborate with MN/DOT on the design of the I-94 expansion project, including ramp improvements
- reconfigure the White Bear and Ruth bridges and ramps as community gateways, including the addition of decorative street lights and railings and an upgrade of pedestrian sidewalks on the bridges
- redesign and reconfigure the local street network to provide a connection between the Sun Ray-Suburban nodes and optimal access to housing, retail and public spaces; includes grid streets in the Village Center; provide streetscape amenities and short-term, on-street parking
- work with owners and tenants of fast food restaurants northeast of Suburban and White Bear to consolidate the internal circulation, thus reducing the numbers of driveways along Suburban
- explore the possibility of a circulator bus
- create a pedestrian plan
- provide for bicycle paths and bicycle parking in commercial and residential developments
- prepare a parking utilization study of existing surface lots

Land Use

Retail

- promote the creation of a management entity to strengthen and market the commercial area

- provide for mixed use development in the Village Center, combining residential, office and small-scale retail providing convenience goods and services and shoppers' goods and utilizing the existing full-service supermarket as an anchor
- prepare a precinct plan for the Village Center that will address such design issues as buildings, sites, open spaces, parking location, landscaping and the relationship to the streetscape
- promote the full-service supermarket as the anchor for other community-oriented retail businesses in the Sun Ray center
- encourage businesses attractive to pass-by highway traffic to take advantage of the I-94/White Bear intersection, thus concentrating vehicular traffic where the infrastructure can best accommodate it
- encourage the following businesses to locate in Sun Ray-Suburban: those that appeal to demographics of the residents; a balance between locally-owned and national retailers
- restrict new fast food restaurants to the I-94/White Bear node and require that they be designed on an urban model
- restrict outdoor sales to seasonal items sold by businesses already located on the site; discourage outdoor sales by itinerant businesses
- require commercial properties have lighting with elements that direct illumination away from adjacent properties

Housing

- incorporate housing into the Village Center through the development of mixed use projects with residential units and ground-floor retail
- provide for a range of life-cycle housing types, including family units and senior units; provide a range of price options in housing and a balance between ownership and rental units. Ensure that new housing meets the City's adopted policy that ten percent of units developed with the assistance of City funds be affordable to a family of 50 percent of the metro area median income and ten percent be affordable to a family at 30 percent of the metro area median income

Zoning

- adopt zoning that will enable the implementation of proposed redevelopment scenarios.

Public Spaces

- create a landscaped plaza with streetscape amenities in the Village Center; design the plaza as a visual connection to the Ramsey County parkland/wetland southeast of the White Bear/Suburban intersection
- provide for a civic building in the Village Center adjacent to the plaza
- collaborate with Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department on two trail projects: the extension of the McKnight Road trail as part of the I-94 reconstruction project; and, a trail around the lake in the parkland southeast of the White Bear/Suburban intersection that extends into the corridor connection to Battle Creek Regional Park
- provide pedestrian access to Conway and Battle Creek city recreation centers
- support efforts to maintain the Conway and Battle Creek recreation centers and to sustain their programs

Urban Design

- incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into new residential and commercial developments, as well as in public spaces
- create and implement a streetscape plan for Suburban, Burns between Suburban and Ruth, Ruth, Wilson, Old Hudson Road, Pederson and the grid streets emanating from Suburban; streetscape amenities will include street trees, decorative street lights, street furnishings, planter boxes; sidewalks 6-10 feet wide; and accessible pedestrian connections.

Buildings and Building Sites

- locate buildings in a continuous (but not monotonous) facade along the street, with setbacks not exceeding 10 feet; and, where buildings are not located at the street edge, provide fencing, low walls, landscaping, etc., between the buildings and the street edge
- design buildings with a base, middle and top, and the facades that are modulated with a variety of planes and architectural details and building materials of masonry with a limitation on the use of stucco; face buildings to the street, with windows in commercial buildings of clear glass and entryways from the sidewalk
- open spaces in private development should complement public open spaces and should be active spaces

Parking Lots

- locate surface parking to the rear or sides of buildings; extend streetscape amenities into parking lots and provide landscaped areas, low walls and fences between parking lots and streets. Screen trash, service and loading storage areas from customer parking
- minimize the number of curb cuts; when parking lots adjoin each other, share curb cuts and circulation patterns where possible. Access parking lots on corner lots from side streets, with curb cuts at least 30 feet from the corner.
- provide one square foot of landscaped area for every 10 square feet of paved area in parking lots; provide landscaped islands and landscaped rows in lots with more than 50 parking stalls
- locate convenience drive-throughs to the side or rear of buildings.

Signs

- signs should be in scale to a pedestrian environment and not to highways and streets, and not to the vehicle; business signs should be used to identify businesses and not to advertise products.
- locate roof signs parallel to the wall of the building; use roof signs to match rooflines and unify sign bands on adjacent buildings; locate wall signs on the bands of building facades and they should not be used to cover windows or architectural details and should not be painted directly on the wall of a building. Encourage the use of ground signs for institutional, professional and industrial buildings. Use grouped signs to identify multiple businesses in a larger building or contiguous buildings, or for businesses that are not directly accessible from the sidewalk. Limit the use of projecting signs to no more than one for every 40 feet of lot frontage. Use pole signs for individual buildings occupied by a single business that is set back from the street right-of-way by at least 35 feet

Stormwater management

- encourage sustainable stormwater management techniques that integrate landscaping into new development areas to increase the amount of infiltration of stormwater runoff
- provide for landscaped rows and landscaped islands in parking lots, to provide for infiltration of stormwater runoff and to provide for a more aesthetically pleasing area, using the following criteria: at a minimum, ten percent of the parking lot surface shall be devoted to landscaped rows and landscaped islands; one landscaped island, each with a shade tree, shall be provided for every 50 parking spaces; for parking lots with more than 100 spaces, one landscaped island, each with a shade tree, shall be provided for every 25 parking spaces
- determine the feasibility of ponding sites the Village Center area

City Action

To encourage development according to the concepts and recommendations, the priorities of the City should be:

1. Adopt this summary as an amendment to the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*.
2. Adopt zone changes that will encourage development reflecting the concepts in the plan summary.
3. Collaborate with other agencies and community organizations to implement the recommendations in this summary; key among these is the collaboration with MN/DOT on the I-94 reconstruction project.
4. Encourage redevelopment of sites in the Village Center as properties become available; implement other recommendations so as to create the Village Center.
5. Provide for the development of streetscape amenities along the Suburban/Ruth/Wilson seam street, in the Village Center and surrounding the Sun Ray center.
6. Implement the urban design recommendations as redevelopment occurs.

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that the *Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan* is consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The *Sun Ray-Suburban Small Area Plan* was prepared by a task force established by the Planning Commission and the District 1 Community Council. Membership included members of the District 1 Community Council; representatives of businesses and community organizations, including the faith community; Planning Commissioners; and, residents. Co-chairs of the task force included representatives of the District 1 Community Council and the Planning Commission. The task force was assisted throughout the planning process by staff from the City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center. The task force began its work in March 2003 and concluded in October 2003. The District 1 Community Council held a community meeting on the small area plan in November 2003 and recommended its adoption on November 17, 2003.