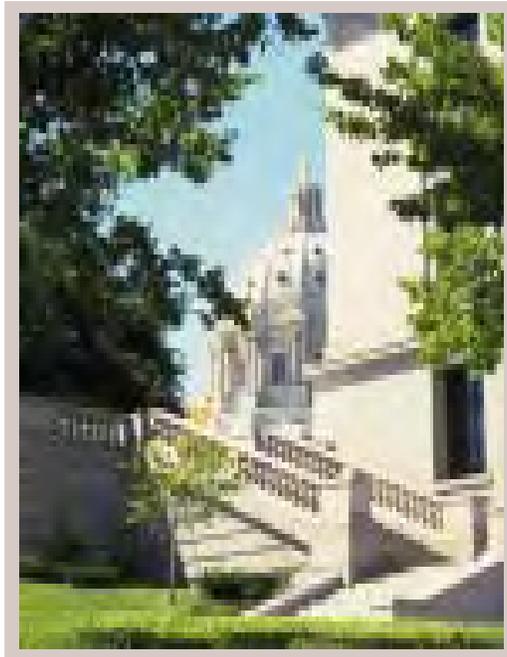


SPECIFIC ACTIONS  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FOR THE MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL AREA



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# ***1***

## **Making the Vision a Reality**

## Making the Vision a Reality

### Purpose

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to give form to the vision for a Capitol Area that is memorable as the symbolic heart of the State, and as a good and responsive neighbor to those who live and work nearby. In recent decades, a physical separation and cultural distance have grown between the Capitol Area and the Capital City. As the centenary of the Capitol Building approaches, a clear consensus is emerging to reunite these two entities, so that they may enter the next millennium with a shared sense of pride and purpose. The Comprehensive Plan, as the embodiment of the vision for the Capitol Area, is expected to remain in effect as a consistent guide to planning and architectural policies in the Capitol Area for many years to come.

This document, *Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*, is not part of the Comprehensive Plan. Rather, its purpose is to provide an implementation strategy for making the vision of the Comprehensive Plan a reality. The objectives, taken from the Comprehensive Plan, provide a baseline by which the status of implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be measured. The specific action items are some proposed steps by which the Plan will be realized.

The unique nature of the Capitol Area requires both individual and joint efforts to implement this Specific Actions plan. The status of that implementation is of concern to all affected parties and is of particular concern to the Legislature and Governor. As specific action items are carried out or rejected as not appropriate under the circumstances, this document will change. Its change will provide a continuous means to gauge the status of implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

This document begins where the Comprehensive Plan ends. However, specific action items in Sections 2, 3 and 4 are arranged in the same order as in the Comprehensive Plan. Where the Comprehensive Plan provides a commentary and a list of design guidelines under each topic, only the concluding objective is repeated here, as a point of reference for the list of actions that follows.

This document will enable the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) to fulfill its responsibilities related to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Funding and Development Strategy**

The CAAPB's Zoning and Design Rules have the power to restrict but not initiate changes. The CAAPB largely depends on State funding for any improvements which are to be made. Initiatives described in the Comprehensive Plan and Specific Actions must depend either on State funding or on funding from other sources, possibly leveraged using State money. The following strategies are recommended to make the vision a reality.

- n Support the role of existing Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in revitalizing the Capitol Area. These non-profit, community-based development organizations would enable reinvestment in the Capitol Area by rehabilitating residential and commercial properties and supporting small business enterprises. These organizations include the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation and North End Area Revitalization, Inc. (NEAR). There are opportunities to expand the mission and capability of CDCs to make improvements in the Capitol Area. Capital appropriation in the Twin Cities area vies with requests for capital improvements for Greater Minnesota. In a time of diminished State funding, it is imperative that new sources be identified and cultivated. Saint Paul's Capital Improvement Budget provides funding for such efforts as the predevelopment and purchase of private housing for rehabilitation by a CDC, construction of new CDC housing and planning for housing developments.
- n Support a non-profit redevelopment corporation to act as the developer to realize the planning goals and objectives of the CAAPB and to promote development in the Capitol Area. This organization would be similar to the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), which set up a design center in 1978 for generating ideas, actively pursued funds from the City and foundations, provided gap financing of their own in the form of loans and loan guarantees, and aggressively marketed their vision. Lessons can be learned from the success of this organization in creating a vibrant urban village in Lowertown.
- n Seek to broaden capital budget reform to improve the tracking of funds already appropriated and available for capital projects to improve efficiency and accountability. This eliminates requests for legislative funding for improvements for which appropriations have previously been made.
- n In addition to design competition and traditional building construction, examine alternative tools to build new State buildings faster and more economically including design/build as a delivery method.
- n Develop a realistic budget for streetscaping in the Capitol Area to be implemented within a fixed period, and create a revolving fund for streetscaping by increasing State agencies' "rental cost." A general account may also be the source of funding for feasibility studies and detailed pre-design studies.
- n Seek private financial support for improvements through foundations and private contributors that may be activated by providing opportunities for direct involvement in the implementation process. The redesign of the Capitol Mall was an effective way of bringing in citizens' groups, such as the "Friends of the Capitol Mall," to assist with maintenance, programming and fundraising. The inclusion of all segments of the larger community in this process produces common goals. This shared effort instills a sense of pride in the completed project and lays the groundwork for future cooperative partnerships. Such a process supports statewide unity and positive achievement.

## **Public-Private Partnerships**

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Capitol Area is effective partnering and joint development with the Department of Administration and the City. Just as the broad-based support of the Mall redesign resulted in the State funding of capital improvements, a similar partnership will enable the State, City and private sector to join planning efforts in implementing the shared vision to create a mixed-use Capitol City. Opportunities for State and local governmental agency cooperation should be explored.

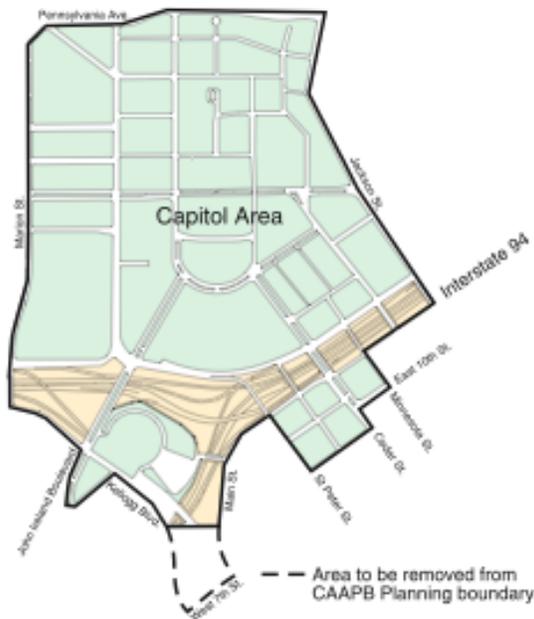
- n Continue to partner with the Department of Administration on restoration efforts in the Capitol Building and on the Capitol grounds, on implementation of the Strategic Plan through the capital budgeting process, and on development of the Capitol Area.
- n Form partnerships to guide and implement development off-campus with the State, City, County, District Councils, Business Associations (Midway Chamber of Commerce, the Southeast Asian Business Association and University UNITED), Foundations (McKnight, Saint Paul Companies, Saint Paul Foundation and Wilder Foundation), Capital City Partnership, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation and major employers such as Health East and Regions Hospital.
- n Establish a working group to review development in the Capitol Area.
- n Incorporate the vision emerging from this plan into the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework* and join in the outreach and public involvement programs (i.e. speakers program, design center, etc.)
- n Joint venture with institutions adjacent to the Capitol Area to respond to common needs and realize efficiencies and cost savings. For example, State and Regions Hospital planners could investigate the feasibility of building joint parking facilities and power plant to meet the needs of their organizations more economically.
- n Work with other institutions and government units to consolidate public efforts and create public benefits at reduced costs. For example, the City of Saint Paul recognizes Cass Gilbert Park and the Capitol Mall as valuable additions to the city's open spaces system as well as to the State's Capitol Campus.

It is time to invest in partnerships for the enhancement of the Capitol Area in spirit with the concurrent revitalization of downtown and greater Saint Paul.

## Governance Strategy

Safeguarding the vision requires that CAAPB staff and its advisors assume proactive roles with decision-makers, especially legislators and legislative staff. As the CAAPB authorizes design review and control, it must take “ownership” of the Capitol Campus and enter into partnerships with the community for the enhancement of Capitol Area Neighborhoods. Specific responsibilities should extend into areas concerning:

- n Formalizing CAAPB role in design review process.
- n Establishing architectural guidelines for individual projects.
- n Addressing the pedestrian environment.
- n Developing infrastructure that helps to shape public space.
- n Creating opportunities to draw the private sector into the public environment, creating mutually beneficial results from partnerships.
- n Periodically updating the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Design Rules.
- n Support initiatives such as the Saint Paul Design Center, the Task Force on Transit and Parking and others to accomplish mutually beneficial improvements.



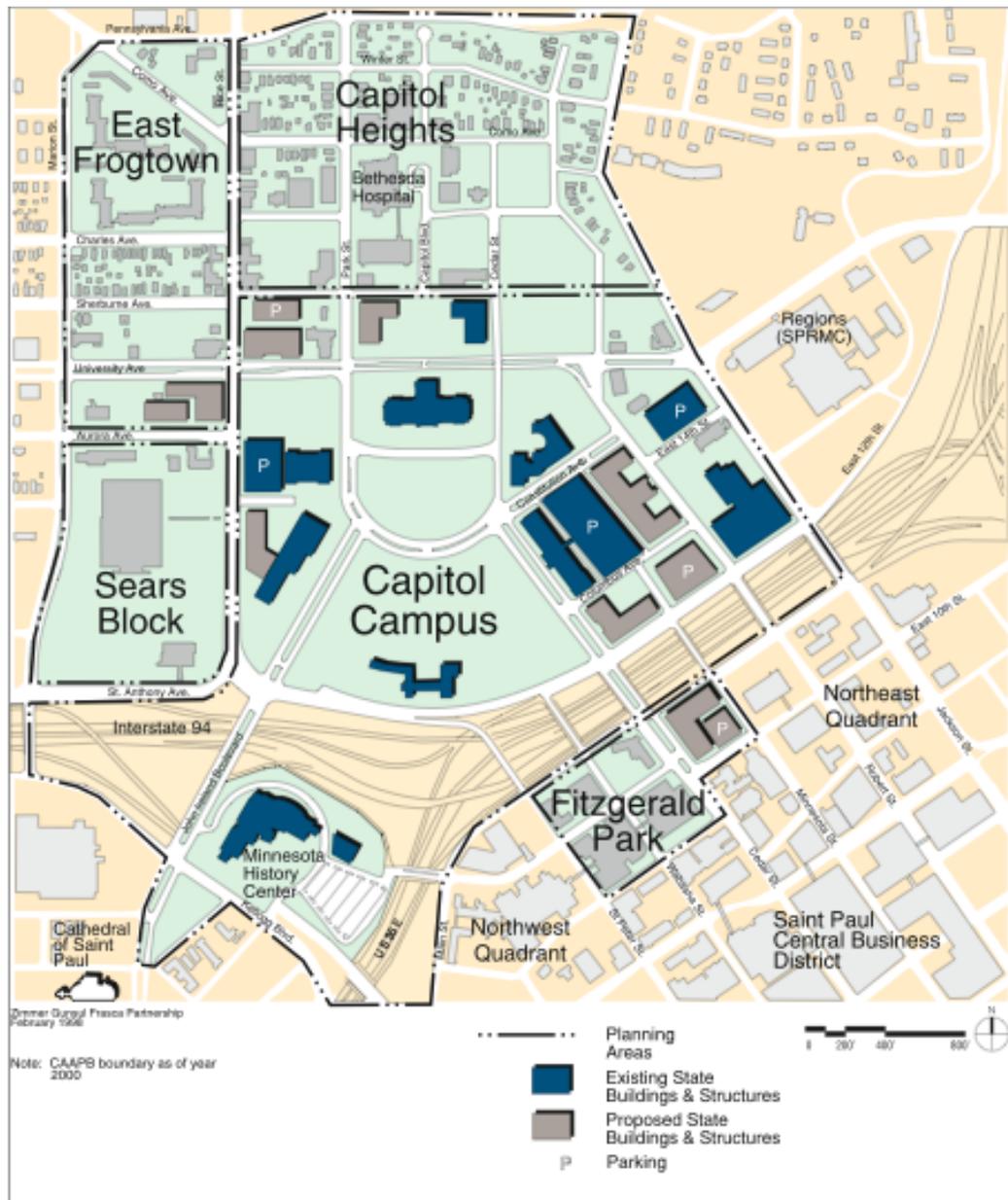
## Keeping the Plan Current

However broadly conceived in its origin, the Comprehensive Plan should be kept current through steady reevaluation of the objectives and guidelines. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Design Rules be revised and updated every 10 years. This Specific Actions document should be continuously updated to respond to changing conditions in the Capitol Area.

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*The area extending south to West 7th Street is the former intended site for the Labor Interpretive Center (LIC). While currently within the Capitol Area boundary, it will be returned to City jurisdiction in the near future. This piece will therefore not be illustrated in subsequent images of the Capitol Area.*

## CAAPB Planning Areas



CAAPB Planning Areas distinguish purely residential and mixed-use areas from the area that is exclusively used by the State: the Capitol Campus.

## 2

## Capitol Campus

*Rice Street to Jackson Street; History Center and  
Freeway to Sherburne Avenue*

## Approaches and View Corridors

### General

Glimpses of the Capitol dome as one moves about Saint Paul constantly remind one that this is the Capital City. For neighborhoods close to the Capitol, this identity is of even greater significance. Consequently, protection and enhancement of important views are important in strengthening ties between the Capitol Area and the Capital City - part of the vision which underlies the Comprehensive Plan.

### General Objective:

**Connect the Capitol to and from downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.**

### Specific Actions:

- n Expand the tunnel system rather than develop a pedestrian "skyway" system crossing major streets north of the freeway. Skyways would violate view corridors and should be considered only in the least sensitive locations.
- n Evaluate the necessity for the skyway between the Science Museum and the Science Museum Annex which obstructs the view corridor between the Capitol, Fitzgerald Park and the river.

### Gateways

### Objective:

**Create distinct and comprehensible gateways into the Capitol Campus.**

### Specific Actions:

- n Capitalize on the potential for gateways at the intersections of University Avenue and Rice Street; University Avenue and Jackson Street; John Ireland Boulevard, Wabasha, Cedar, Minnesota, Robert and Jackson streets south of I-94 and 35E. These need not be literally gateways - see the design guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan, Section 2.

## Streetscapes

### Objective:

Invest in streetscaping to reinforce physical and visual cues leading to and from the Capitol.

### Specific Actions:

- n Support City improvement of University Avenue as a boulevard with planted medians, large-scale street trees and sidewalks on both sides to decrease the width of the street.
- n Add a special-paved crosswalk across University Avenue to Capitol Boulevard and possibly pedestrian-actuated signals in order to make a pedestrian connection to the Capitol Heights neighborhood, improve pedestrian safety and slow traffic. [Note that University Avenue is to remain at its present elevation].
- n Redesign and rebuild Aurora Avenue immediately in front of the Capitol Building to make permanent the "temporary" devices used to reconfigure the roadway since 1993-94: new curbing, gutters, drainage, landscape improvements, gateway bollards, and redesigned and relocated traffic monitor booths.
- n Make street improvements along Cedar, Robert and Jackson streets. The enhancements, which include lighting, wider sidewalks, and tree canopies, will improve the sloping street edges, reinforce the links to the Saint Paul Central Business District, create a better pedestrian environment, and solidify the campus character.
- n Support City improvement of the streetscape south of the freeway on Cedar and Wabasha streets, further affirming the connections to downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.

## Capitol Views and Vistas

### Objective:

Recognize the Capitol Building as the dominant feature and primary visual focal point of the Capitol Area.

### Specific Actions:

- n Seek to preserve views to the Capitol Building from the east campus where the shift of the street grid limits view opportunities.
- n In the eventuality that a mutually agreeable decision is reached with Regions Hospital, remove the Saint Paul Ramsey Medical Center (SPRMC) computer facilities building to establish a view from University Avenue toward the Judicial Building and Capitol Building, and from Robert Street toward Cass Gilbert Park.
- n Encourage the relocation of The Travel Inn which visually obstructs the University approach to the Capitol from the east and hinders views of Cass Gilbert Park on the crest of the hill.
- n Restrict parking immediately surrounding the Capitol and in other visually sensitive areas.
- n Enhance views of the Capitol from the west along University Avenue, and from the north along Capitol Boulevard by implementing streetscape features that frame and focus the view.
- n Promote distant views of the Capitol from Wheelock Parkway, Lexington Parkway, Dayton's Bluff and Smith Avenue.
- n Strengthen the axial relationship to Smith Avenue as envisioned by Cass Gilbert and preserve the viewshed, both for the long distance vista from High Bridge and Smith Avenue south of the river as well as along the same axis at West 7<sup>th</sup> and Kellogg Boulevard (the western gateway to downtown Saint Paul, site of the new arena and RiverCenter, and former site of Cass Gilbert's Seven Corners).

## **Street Level Activity**

### **Objective:**

**Promote pedestrian activity along view corridors.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Strengthen Rice Street imagery, both north and south of University Avenue, by rehabilitating storefronts that are in disrepair or improving the landscaping of parking lots or area ramps.

## **Building Frontages**

### **Objective:**

**Along view corridors, provide interesting and diverse building frontages to engage pedestrians and motorists.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Review and monitor the design of building frontages on the west side of Rice Street opposite Leif Erikson Park.
- n Develop Rice Street and University Avenue with minimal setbacks.
- n Encourage street level retail or similar pedestrian-oriented activity for all new buildings west of Rice Street, as originally called for in the 1993 Strategic Plan.

## Capitol Campus Drives and Footpaths

### Streetscapes

#### Objective:

Establish design standards for the streetscape to respond to people as well as to place.

#### Specific Actions:

- n With the Department of Administration and the City, explore realignment of University Avenue between Robert and Jackson streets, with proper attention to its potential impact to the operation of Regions Hospital.
- n Explore the viability of maintaining Minnesota Street for access and building service. This provides views to the north and block-length continuity with the area south of the freeway.
- n Install pedestrian-scaled security lighting on all major walkways on the Capitol Mall and update lighting that does not conform to lighting design standards.
- n Narrow Constitution Avenue with bump-outs at the central crossing and possibly at intersections for pedestrian safety.
- n Explore sites other than Constitution Avenue for staging of buses and redesign the road in order to lessen conflicts with pedestrians.
- n Preserve historic theme bridges as the link across the freeway and avoid a deck over the freeway to maintain visual orientation to the Capitol dome and Capital City.

### Building Frontages

#### Objective:

Establish design standards for building frontages consistent with the civic architecture of the Capitol Campus.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Redevelop blocks along 12<sup>th</sup> Street to form the southern edge of a distinctly identifiable district using continuous building fronts and arcades that accommodate sheltered sidewalks.
- n Interrupt frontages only at bridgeheads with an appropriate treatment of entry points for incoming traffic and pedestrians from Lowertown, the Northeast Quadrant and the Saint Paul Central Business District.

## Landscape Framework

### Open Spaces

#### Objective:

Set the highest standards for civic space, providing for the protection, development and enhancement of the public open space essential to the beauty of the Capitol Campus.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Preserve Cass Gilbert Park, a landmark site, as open space. Improve the site to maintain the prominence of the Capitol, for use as an overlook of the downtown area and as a visual terminus to Robert Street. Attractively plant the steep, weedy hillside that rises from University Avenue to Cass Gilbert Park in a way that reinforces its park setting and enhances its physical as well as visual connection to the area below.
- n Maintain University Avenue at or near its present grade and enhance grade-level pedestrian crossings. [Lowering University Avenue and building a pedestrian overpass at Capitol Boulevard would compromise the historic relationship of the street to the Capitol and isolate its north face. This plan has therefore been abandoned].
- n Extend the Mall to surround the Capitol Building (as was originally envisioned by Cass Gilbert). This includes the potential long-term replacement of the Power Plant with landscaped open space terracing down to the sidewalks at University Avenue and Robert Street.
- n Shape the land into a series of terraces stepping up the Mall along Cedar Street. The result of reshaping of the present mall should be a clearly organized array of self-contained but interconnected green spaces, giving the whole a more human scale. Employ bosques and terraces as settings for a variety of activities or commemorative art, and improve campus drives, boulevards and the Columbus Promenade as indicated by the Mall Plan.
- n Develop parks and open spaces on axis with street ends and visual corridors where possible.
- n Improve Leif Erikson Park on the west side of the Capitol to open the view of the Capitol to University and Aurora avenues and enhance its art and monuments.
- n Develop Robert Street with a series of mini-parks or pedestrian areas.
- n Develop Summit Park as an important open space relating to the Saint Paul Cathedral, the Minnesota History Center and John Ireland Boulevard.
- n Maintain the landscaping along the freeway corridors to reinforce the concept of a "green river" that flows along the south edge of the Capitol Area. Landscaping is required to soften the highway environment and create attractive vehicular corridors with memorable glimpses of the Capitol. However, landscaping should give way to buildings that narrow the gap between the Capitol and downtown Saint Paul.
- n Explore a possible partnership with the University of Minnesota Arboretum and other groups to plant and maintain perennial beds or other landscape elements at the Capitol.

## **Building Foundation Landscaping**

### **Objective:**

**Provide a dignified setting for Capitol Area buildings that will enhance their relationship to the civic landscape and the Capitol.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Consistent with Cass Gilbert's original plan and the 1993 Strategic Plan, close Capitol Boulevard between University and Sherburne avenues to create an open space. This plaza will link the Capitol visually and physically with Capitol Heights.
- n Develop a public square at the south steps of the Capitol, which will serve as an entry and principal public forum for activities related to the Capitol.
- n Maintain the integrity of the Judicial Building Plaza as an urban space that connects the Capitol and the Judicial Building.

## **Parking Lots**

### **Objective:**

**Make parking lots safe and parked vehicles inconspicuous, following guidelines as generated and documented by the CAAPB.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Provide parking lots and ramps in less visible areas of campus or within developed blocks.
- n Improve directional signage to parking lots and within them, using a consistent graphic vocabulary.
- n Remove parking from around the Capitol that detracts from its grandeur.
- n Screen parking areas with trees and planting at the perimeters and in the interior of parking lots.
- n Plant trees to screen exposed vehicles on the rooftops of parking ramps.
- n Design parking ramps to blend with other buildings, using frontages that mask the function of the ramps.

## Buildings

### **Preservation, Renovation, and Redevelopment Planning**

Prioritization of long-term concerns for the Capitol Building has been accomplished through the development of a strategic plan for projects to be completed over the next few years. These projects fall into three general categories: exterior stabilization; updating the building's electrical, mechanical, fire and life safety systems; and restoration of interior public areas. Serious structural deficiencies in the building were revealed during the renovation of the carriage entrance in 1994. Some of these have been addressed, and additional funds will be sought in 1998 to rebuild the south side terraces. Procedures to implement a preventive maintenance program began with the preparation and completion of a preventive maintenance manual for the Capitol Building in 1996.

#### **Objective:**

**Preserve and enhance the dignity, beauty and architectural integrity of the Capitol and other governmental buildings in the Capitol Area.**

#### **Specific Actions:**

- n Renovate the Capitol Building for the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in the year 2005.
- n Provide support facilities to allow phased renovations.
- n Complete restoration of the Capitol cafeteria to its original appearance and coordinate the restoration with replacement of terraces surrounding the Capitol Building.
- n Relocate or replace facade lighting for the Capitol Building.

### **Potential Building Uses**

#### **Objective:**

**Explore opportunities for joint developments that support public functions as well as for meeting the needs of the State.**

#### **Specific Actions:**

- n Use the redevelopment of 11<sup>th</sup> Street as a transition zone into the Fitzgerald Park neighborhood.
- n Maintain open dialogue between the CAAPB and the affected institutions, recognizing that emergency traffic patterns may be affected by Capitol Area development and street improvements.
- n Partner with the Department of Administration to encourage joint development in the east campus with Regions (Saint Paul-Ramsey Medical Center), perhaps including the consolidation of a power plant for Regions Hospital and the Capitol.
- n Encourage joint development north of the Capitol Building with Bethesda.

## Potential Development Sites

### Objective:

**Support the concept of a cohesive Capitol Campus in the siting of buildings.**

**Specific Actions:** The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board will work with the Department of Administration to implement the recommendations of the adopted 1993 Strategic Plan:

- n Complete renovation of the Transportation Building and study a west addition to accommodate the agency's long-term space needs, unless programmed needs change significantly.
- n Develop a Capitol Office Building (Phase 1) on University between Rice and Park streets to accommodate agencies with a strong tie to the Capitol. Restrict the height of buildings on the site to 250' above Saint Paul datum (944' USGS). The capacity of 260,000 SF suggested in the Strategic Plan may prove to be too large given current level of parking needs. A lower number might be tested with inclusion of at least a large share of the parking need handled by an underground ramp on-site.
- n Preserve the Christ Lutheran Church at the corner of Park Street and University Avenue and build upon the rest of the block to the maximum prescribed height noted above.
- n Link the existing Capitol underground tunnel system to the new Office Building and extend Capitol Mall landscaping to encompass the new site.
- n Develop a Capitol Office Building (Phase 2) on University Avenue between Park Street and Capitol Boulevard for executive and legislative functions and parking structures. Restrict the height of buildings on the site to 250' above Saint Paul datum (944' USGS). Construct an underground parking ramp on the remainder of the block with a landscaped garden above.
- n Locate the Department of Administration into one of the two aforementioned office buildings at least on a temporary basis to allow for renovation of the current Administration Building.
- n Explore the establishment of a Visitor Center to serve the City of Saint Paul and the Capitol Area.
- n Redevelop the former Taystee Bakery site, Lot Y.
- n Maintain the lot east of the Judicial Building for surface parking until a future addition to the Judicial Building is needed.
- n Clear the Armory site for redevelopment.
- n Consolidate education and childcare functions in a building on the site of the Armory and Lot Y following relocation of Armory activities.
- n Prohibit above-ground buildings at the corners of 12<sup>th</sup> and John Ireland Boulevard or Cedar Street.
- n Consider the long term use of the Veterans Building and its site, and the re-establishment of Cass Gilbert's view axis between the Capitol and the Mississippi along the central axis that extends to Seven Corners and beyond.

## **Architectural Design Criteria**

### **Objective:**

**Enhance the design quality of all Capitol Area architecture to strengthen the image of the State Capitol.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Remodel the Centennial Building's exterior to correspond to the classicism of the Capitol and Judicial Building. Enclose the rooftop mechanical space.
- n Terrace building heights from the northwest to southeast between Cedar and Jackson streets.
- n Maintain design quality through continued use of architectural design competitions.

## Monuments and Public Art

### Mall

#### Objective:

Honor Minnesota's history with appropriate siting of selective works of art on the Capitol Mall or elsewhere in the Capitol Area.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Complete the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Memorial Garden, the first of three terraced gardens along the Cedar Street side of the Mall, having first assured that resources will be available for its continuing maintenance (possibly in collaboration with the Minnesota Arboretum or other institution).
- n Complete the Minnesota Korean War Veterans Memorial, east of the Court of Honor, just north of the Columbus walkway.
- n Realize the Humphrey Memorial, slated for a reflecting pool on the central axis in the lower Mall.
- n Assure that the necessary resources are available for the on-going maintenance of memorials and other works of art.

### Streets and Boulevards

#### Objective:

Increase the emphasis on expanding the Capitol Area's monumental nature beyond the Mall into other areas of the Capital City, especially along boulevard axes and visual corridors.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Seek opportunities to strengthen axial links between the Capitol and the river along Wabasha Street.
- n Identify streets which could be established or enhanced as important axial routes.

## **Parks, Squares and Plazas**

### **Objective:**

**Promote identity and uniqueness of open spaces with public and commemorative art.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Renovate the Court of Honor, and the Lindbergh and Floyd B. Olson plazas as well as the statuary immediately in front of the Capitol Building.
- n Support the development of a sculpture garden at Western Park with exhibitions to change every 12 months and work to connect this park to the Mall with a greenway through the Sears Block.
- n Support Public Art Saint Paul "20 x 2000 Program".

## **Buildings**

### **Objective:**

**Plan buildings with provisions for public and commemorative art.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Support use of a portion of the building cost of major City and State construction projects for the acquisition, display and maintenance of art on-site through Percent-for-Art Programs, and explore ways to incorporate into the building design and architecture.

## Signs and Visitor Information

### General

Refer to the *Minnesota State Capitol Area Schematic Design Manual, 1994*, when applicable.

#### Objective:

**Provide clarity in directions to, and the identity of Capitol Campus features.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Design and implement gateway markers at each major entrance to the Capitol Area.
- n Implement an exterior sign system, and interior signage for the Capitol, State Office Building, all other Capitol Area office buildings, and the tunnel system.
- n Develop an icon (such as a dome, building figure-ground image) to be used as a recognizable logo for city-wide use in directional signage to the Capitol.
- n Encourage maintenance of the signage system, including timely replacement of obsolete information and supply of new signs, meeting all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- n Promote Capitol Area information via the Internet and other means.

### Directional Signage

#### Objective:

**Direct visitors to the Capitol and other destinations within the Capitol Campus.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Work with others to develop a map brochure of State services and destinations, including information on public parking, accessible entrances to each building, and areas for disabled parking.
- n Improve signs at access points to create an information hierarchy for visitors, parking and customer services.
- n Provide information on access to the Capitol by public transit with all printed materials sent to potential visitors. Include information on parking fees, location of visitor parking and bicycle facilities.

## **Identity Signage**

### **Objective:**

**Clearly identify Capitol buildings and grounds.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Develop transit stop signage particular to Capitol routes using distinct logo and color.
- n Standardize color and graphics for building signage throughout the campus.
- n Encourage special streetscaping in Capitol Area commercial areas to reinforce the identity of each neighborhood.

## **Interpretive Signage**

### **Objective:**

**Maximize the education value to visitors, especially the young.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Create an educational exhibit in the Visitor Center.
- n Promote placement of information kiosks off-campus to promote walking tours and development of the pedestrian corridor between the campus and the downtown area.
- n Publish maps for self-guided tours via interpretive markers.

## **Visitor Center**

### **Objective:**

**Extend a welcome to Capitol Campus visitors and enhance the quality of their visit by providing helpful information.**

### **Specific Actions:**

- n Provide short-term parking near the Visitor Center.
- n Encourage development of visitor information on the Internet and through other means.
- n With the Department of Administration and the City, establish a Visitor Center, seeking operations support and other resources from the Chamber, the Saint Paul Visitors and Convention Bureau, Capital City Partnership and others.

# 3

## Capitol Area Neighborhoods

*Capitol Heights, East Frogtown, Sears Block and Fitzgerald Park*

## Neighborhood Residential Streets

### General

Part of the vision for the Capitol Area is for the State to become a better and more responsive neighbor to those who live and work nearby, and to overcome the physical separation and cultural distance that have grown between the Capitol Area and the Capital City. Much of this is to be accomplished through initiatives in the adjoining neighborhoods. The specific actions that follow are intended to make a substantial start on a task that will take many years to complete.

#### General Objective:

**Reinvest in neighborhood residential streets to build stronger communities.**

### Streetscapes

#### Objective:

**Strengthen neighborhoods' sense of identity through their streetscapes.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Encourage screening the north edge of Capitol Heights residential blocks by fence, berm, shrub and trees along Pennsylvania Avenue.
- n Restore the former street grid and connections across the Sears Block to Rice Street, providing pedestrian promenades and greenways between Western Park and the Capitol Mall. These streets could also provide for a future right-of-way for LRT alignment, local and service access to buildings and parking ramps.
- n Encourage improvements to Park and Cedar streets and Capitol Boulevard by providing evenly spaced trees and lighting. Remove existing lighting that does not conform with the *Light Design Framework for the Capitol Area, August, 1991*.

### Building Frontage

#### Objective:

**Design neighborhood streets to cultivate community.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Organize a group to evaluate building frontages on a street-by-street basis, according to guidelines set forth for neighborhood building frontage.
- n Orient front doors to the street to promote neighborhood stewardship and safety.
- n Configure buildings, windows and landscaping to provide clear views into streets and front yards to enhance a shared sense of responsibility for safety.

## Neighborhood Commercial Streets

### Streetscapes

#### Objective:

Develop commercial streets to serve a variety of users and add diversity and quality to public spaces.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Develop street design guidelines for each type of street identified in the plan.
- n Reduce the visual scale of the Sears Block by developing street edges, thus providing enclosure.
- n Make streets more attractive to pedestrians with improved civic amenities such as renewed paving, kiosks, seating, awnings, signage, artwork and flowers on Rice Street and University Avenue.
- n Improve pedestrian safety with better lighting and safer crosswalks. Shorten crosswalks with sidewalk extensions where practicable.
- n Use special details, natural finishes, signage, display window retail space, street arcades and artwork to enrich the sidewalk zone in existing commercial streets.
- n Improve the streetscape along Wabasha Street, further affirming the connection to the Mississippi River and consistent with the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*.
- n Return Aurora Avenue in front of the Capitol Building to ceremonial and public functions.

### Building Frontages

#### Objective:

Develop storefronts in continuous building frontages on neighborhood commercial streets to heighten urban vitality.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Encourage buildings to have a height of at least one-half the width of the public right-of-way up to prescribed height limits.
- n Encourage direct pedestrian access into buildings at maximum intervals of 50 feet.
- n Line up building fronts on Aurora Avenue with the All Nations Insurance Co. building.
- n Encourage the expansion and rebuilding of the Sears, Roebuck & Co. store with street frontage on Rice Street, incorporating display windows and active public entrances.

## Landscape Framework

### Open Spaces

#### Objective:

**Establish a system of linkages to and between parks in the Capitol Area.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Encourage prospective developers of Lot V to incorporate a public plaza open to neighborhood residents.
- n Develop an open space in the East Frogtown neighborhood at the intersection of Rice Street and Como Avenue to serve area residents as a pocket park on Rice Street, and provide visual terminus to Como Avenue.
- n Encourage the reduction of pavement and the development of a greenway on the Sears Block in order to link Western Park with the Capitol Campus and provide outdoor places for use by area residents and State employees.
- n Develop a small park on the east side of Marion Street on the Sears Block to frame the east entrance to Ravoux Street and reach south to Saint Anthony Avenue.
- n Improve Summit Park at the intersection of Kellogg and John Ireland boulevards.

### Parking Lots

#### Objective:

**Reduce the physical and visual impact of parking lots in the neighborhoods.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Promote the removal of parking from State lots in the Capitol Heights neighborhood and explore possible long-term re-uses such as residential and public open space development, and mixed-uses that complement existing activities.
- n Break up large asphalt parking lots into pedestrian-scaled blocks, with curbs, sidewalks, and street trees to maintain the pedestrian network and to prepare for future infill development.
- n Redesign and reduce the size of the Sears and Kelly Inn parking lots. Meet the parking needs of shoppers with possible underground or structured parking to be entered from Marion Street and Aurora Avenue. Provide contract parking spaces for State employees.

## Buildings

### Preservation, Renovation and Development Plan

#### Objective:

Improve neighborhoods through preservation, renovation and selective new development.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Support the efforts of members of the local Southeast Asian community opening businesses in the commercial districts of their neighborhoods.
- n Encourage the rehabilitation or construction of Capitol buildings along University Avenue and Rice Street north of Aurora Avenue. An opportunity to view the Capitol dome from this vantage is particularly strong. New structures should conform to relevant planning and design guidelines.
- n Support initiatives to upgrade living and housing quality in the East Frogtown, Capitol Heights and Fitzgerald Park neighborhoods.
- n Encourage infill development, renovation and rehabilitation.

### Potential Building Uses

#### Objective:

Encourage a diversity of housing choices and improvements throughout the Capitol Area neighborhoods.

#### Specific Actions:

- n Support a revolving loan fund to finance the acquisition of problem properties for rehabilitation and resale.
- n Advise and involve neighborhood residents in the process of selecting sites for new housing construction and the design of the housing units themselves when public development funds are used.
- n Work in partnership with the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, Housing Program Committee, District Seven Planning Council, Frogtown Action Alliance, Thomas Dale Block Clubs, the City of Saint Paul, Twin Cities, Habitat for Humanity and The Wilder Foundation to rehabilitate vacant houses, and create programs to help property and rental property owners make improvements to their homes.

## Commercial and Institutional Uses

### Objective:

Encourage a mix of commercial and institutional uses and improvements throughout the Capitol Area neighborhoods.

### Specific Actions:

- n Encourage expansion of the Boys & Girls Club and available day-care options to serve the youth in the Capitol Heights neighborhood.
- n Require new buildings fronting University Avenue to use the street level for pedestrian-friendly spaces.
- n Encourage relocation of commercial activities incompatible with design guidelines of "Neighborhood Commercial Streets" in the Comprehensive Plan, Section 3, in favor of more appropriate uses.
- n Prohibit new warehouses, unenclosed auto sales lots, and exterior storage areas.
- n Encourage community amenities that are user-friendly and easy to access, including grocery stores, dry cleaning, entertainment, bank/ATM, bookstores, retail stores, copy/printing, ice cream parlors, cafés, information center, convenience stores, pharmacy, office space, bars, community meeting facilities, restaurants, international language/signage, and health club facilities.

## Potential Development Sites - Residential

### Objective:

Capitalize on existing opportunities for residential development in areas undergoing transition.

### Specific Actions:

- n Allow for redevelopment of Lot V in the Capitol Heights neighborhood.
- n Support Bethesda Hospital's tentative proposal for moderately-sized short-term residential development on their property across Cedar Street from Lot V, including both therapeutic facilities and townhouse-like assisted living facilities for longer-term patients and their families.
- n Encourage infill housing in the Capitol Heights residential neighborhood north of Bethesda Hospital.
- n Encourage development of townhouses, condominiums, and multi-family housing in the Capitol Heights neighborhood west of Jackson Street between University and Como Avenues. This variety is compatible with the character of Jackson Street which skirts the Mount Airy neighborhood of multi-unit buildings.
- n Support reconfiguration or other improvements of existing multi-unit buildings in East Frogtown on the block bounded by Rice Street, Charles Avenue, Marion Street and Como Avenue.
- n Support redevelopment of the northwestern quadrant of the block north of University Avenue between Marion and Rice streets, presently occupied by semi-deteriorated houses, as medium- to high-density residential, with rental or condominium units that would provide a transition to the adjacent East Frogtown area.
- n Support moderate-density residential use to the east side of Marion Street.
- n Encourage market-rate housing east of Saint Peter Street in the Fitzgerald Park neighborhood and upgrade of the Colonnade apartments.
- n In the eventuality that the City and County health departments consolidate at a new site, redevelop the lot south of the freeway, west of Cedar Street as mid-rise or market-rate housing, or for other neighborhood-compatible mixed-uses, including State programs such as a Visitor Center.

## Potential Development Sites - Nonresidential

### Objective:

Strengthen neighborhoods with local employment and service opportunities that also benefit the Capitol Area.

### Specific Actions:

- n Encourage neighborhood leaders to discover intentions and future plans of current landowners, employers and residents in the Capitol Area. Devise plans and contingencies to be as flexible as possible to accommodate owners staying or leaving.
- n Encourage discussion with Sears, Kelly Inn and University Avenue owners.
- n Encourage discussion with the Department of Administration.
- n Encourage discussion with Bethesda and Regions (Saint Paul - Ramsey Medical Center) within the context of the neighborhood and its vitality.
- n Encourage discussion with neighborhood residents.
- n Identify "deal makers" for design, development, management and funding.
- n Advocate buildings on University Avenue and Rice Street of an architectural quality appropriate to the Capitol surrounds. Restrict the height of buildings on the site to 250' above Saint Paul datum (944' USGS).
- n Should regional commercial uses become uneconomic in the long term, consider the Sears and Kelly Inn sites for State agency development, neighborhood commercial development, and public open space.
- n Vacate and replace the Capitol Square building. Initiate a design competition to provide up to 400,000 SF for State offices on the Capitol Square site. Restrict the building height to be in scale with its environment and to match the buildings across the highway, 170' above Saint Paul datum (864.1' USGS). Consider inclusion of a collective home on the Capitol Square site for high contact, small agencies. However, the need to provide at least some of the parking on site may dramatically reduce the total square footage of any office building.
- n Redevelop the County Health Building (in conjunction with the Capitol Square site) with a small intervening park in and around the future Labor Interpretive Center to form a natural "bridge" of transition between the Capitol Campus and Capital City.
- n Redevelop the current Science Museum East Building for the Labor Interpretive Center (1999), preserving and expanding Museum Park if possible. In the eventuality that Labor Interpretive Center moves elsewhere, evaluate conversion of the entire lot into a park to balance Mears and Rice parks and create a stronger focus for the emerging urban village, as recommended in the *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*.
- n Support appropriate reuse of the remainder of the Science Museum.

## Architectural Design Criteria

### Objective:

Ensure that the quality of buildings in the Capitol Area is consistent with their proximity to the Capitol and in keeping with their neighborhood context.

### Specific Actions:

- n Develop a set of architectural design criteria and adapt them to the specific circumstances of each Capitol Area neighborhood.

# **4**      **Transportation**

## Transportation Management Plan

### **General**

A critical component of *The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies*, a twenty-year plan affecting State facilities on and outside the Capitol Area, is control of parking demand. Unrestrained demand by State employees has claimed a disproportionate share of both land and development resources; some of which could be diverted into more productive use if the appetite for more parking was curbed. The adopted Transportation Management Plan is therefore a key component of the State's twenty-year strategy, and is no less important in improving the civic and human aspects of the Capitol Area as prescribed by the Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of the Transportation Management Plan is a very high priority.

### **Objective:**

Work with the Department of Administration and Plant Management Office's Transportation Coordinator to implement the following specific actions.

## Access and Circulation

### Objective:

Make streets compatible with their neighborhoods' variety of vehicular and pedestrian access needs.

### Specific Actions:

- n Review and revise as necessary, existing design guidelines for traffic, parking, transit, pedestrian and bicycle uses.
- n Develop a consistent Capitol Campus signage program and set in place, referring to the *Minnesota State Capitol Area Schematic Sign Design Manual, 1994*.

## Parking

### Objective:

Serve the diverse needs of the Capitol Area with a parking system that conflicts with, or pre-empts, other uses as little as practicable.

### Specific Actions:

- n Aggressively pursue implementation of the Capitol Campus Transportation Management Plan to reduce State employee parking demand.
- n Promote coordination of Capitol Campus Transportation Management Plan with Saint Paul's transportation plan.

### Existing and Proposed Parking

As the Capitol Campus and surrounding neighborhoods continue to redevelop, many opportunities will arise to alter the area's parking system.

### Objective:

Make the parking system clearly defined and logical; it should be obvious where visitors, customers, employees and residents can properly park.

### Specific Actions:

- n Eliminate parking on Capitol Building terraces.
- n Assist in developing a designated area for media parking.
- n Study with the City options for development of a bus layover area to eliminate the need for parking along Constitution Avenue.

## Transit

### Objective:

**Make and keep transit service an integral feature of Capitol Area access.**

### Specific Actions:

- n In conjunction with the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County and the area's major institutions, identify transit needs and highlight opportunities for improving service.
- n Promote alternative forms of transit.

### Bus System

#### Objective:

**Promote transit as the most economical mode of travel for individual trips between the Capitol Area and other destinations in the metropolitan region.**

#### Specific Actions:

- n Support Capitol Campus parking rates comparable with market rates (it is currently less expensive to drive alone and park on the campus than to buy a bus pass).
- n Promote use of the trolley, free to all State employees between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on weekdays.

## **Pedestrian and Bicycle**

### **Pedestrian**

#### **Objective:**

**Enhance the pedestrian environment throughout the Capitol Area.**

#### **Specific Actions:**

- n Improve pedestrian crossings on University Avenue at Capitol Boulevard with special pavement texture and pedestrian-actuated signalization.
- n Encourage the development of marked, educational walking tours between the Capitol Building and downtown Saint Paul.

### **Bicycle**

#### **Objective:**

**Make bicycle facilities an integral feature of the Capitol Area circulation system.**

#### **Specific Actions:**

- n Bring the Willard Munger/Gateway bike trail, planned to extend from Duluth to Saint Paul, to the Capitol Area.

## Acknowledgments

### Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)

Lt. Governor Joanne Benson, Chair

Margaret Bracken, Vice-chair \*

M. Ann Buck

Marcia Farinacci

David Lanegran

John Mannillo \*

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\* Indicates those board members who served on Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

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