

A. CAPITOL RICE RELATIONSHIP TO THE GREATER CONTEXT

As one moves about Saint Paul, views of the Capitol dome serve as a constant reminder that this is the capital city. Protection and enhancement of important views are important in strengthening ties between the Capitol Area and the capital city. While making sight lines to the Capitol more vivid, it is critical to emphasize the physical linkages that facilitate increased pedestrian and vehicular movement on Capitol approaches.

The development of the freeway system beginning in the 1950s created a physical separation between the Capitol Campus and downtown. This physical separation has wider symbolic effects in diminishing the pre-eminence of the Capitol Building and state government within the capital city. Several efforts have been made in past decades to reconnect and beautify the rift in the urban fabric, as summarized in the second chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area. The Comprehensive Plan calls for the connection of the downtown, the Mississippi River and the Capitol Area, as originally envisioned by Cass Gilbert.

Entry points to the Capitol Area should clearly identify themselves as such, with a higher standard of urban fabric and minimum use of signage. The development of edge conditions at the perimeter of the Capitol Area need not divide the urban fabric into distinct areas of activity, but rather encourage the vibrant interaction of contrasting and complementary neighborhoods.

The development character in the Capitol Rice District should maintain its connection and relationship to the Capitol Building and Mall, as a key entry point into the Capitol Area. *Also see 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2 for Capitol Area-wide policy on Arrivals and View Corridors.*



District-Wide Policy

In the Capitol Rice District, the following policies are ‘best practices’ that will guide decisions by the Board, Staff and the Zoning Administrator when reviewing and approving projects, and will guide revisions to the Zoning and Design Rules:

- a) Leif Erickson Park as the Center and Primary Arrival Point: Leif Erickson Park has been identified as a major arrival point in the Capitol Area as well as the hub of the Capitol Rice District. Public and private development in Capitol Rice should consider connection to this important arrival point in site design and circulation patterns.

- b) Views Into and Out of the District: New developments should emphasize views to the three major landmarks: the Capitol Building, the Cathedral of Saint Paul and downtown Saint Paul. There is opportunity in some locations in Capitol Rice to frame two or three landmarks simultaneously. New development should seek to frame views of these landmarks from comfortable, public locations and make every effort to include these public views in the design of the site.
- c) Building Height Limits: New development should preserve distant views to the Capitol by adhering to height limitations for new construction (as outlined in 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2). The entirety of the Capitol Rice District falls within *Height District 1* with a maximum height of 944' elevation (sea level). This is especially important in large development projects, such as the Sears site, where multiple new buildings may dramatically change access, both visual and physical, to the Capitol Building and Mall. *See 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2 for more information on heights in the Capitol Area.*
- d) Street-Level Connectivity to Surrounding Neighborhoods: New development and street improvements should connect Capitol Rice to the existing surrounding neighborhoods. *See Capitol Area Vision and Principles 3 and 4. Also see Section C: Street Design and Block Pattern.*
- e) North-South Connectivity Through the District: New development and street improvements should enhance north-south connectivity in the district. *See Capitol Area Vision and Principles 3 and 4. Also see Section C: Street Design and Block Pattern.*

Location-Specific Policy

The following are additional *location-specific* guidelines for the Capitol Rice District:

A-1 Arrival at the Center of the District

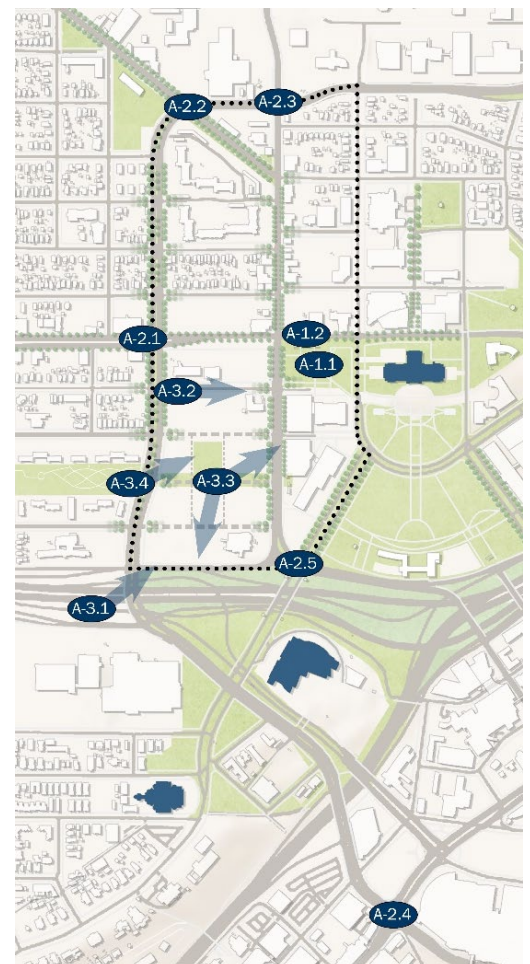
Leif Erickson Park is the primary arrival point to the Capitol Rice District, the Capitol Campus and the Capitol Area. The Green Line LRT and buses along Rice Street and University Avenue with stops near Leif Erickson Park provide connection to the Capitol Area at this location. A strong welcome in the park, with clear visitor signage and wayfinding, will strengthen the sense of arrival in the Capitol Area. *Also see Section B, policy B-1 (Leif Erickson Park) and Section G, policy G-4 (Integrated Mobility Hub).*

- A-1.1 Continue to reinforce Leif Erickson Open Space as an entrance into the Capitol Campus.
- A-1.2 Leverage the investment in the Green Line to transform the Capitol Rice LRT Station into a highly attractive and comfortable location.

A-2 Major Street-Level Connections to Surrounding Urban Fabric

Entry into the Capitol Area from surrounding neighborhoods along major transit corridors should provide a sense of place and orient the visitor to the Capitol. Safe accommodations for all modes of movement should be included, including pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle. These entry points provide a transition from the surrounding commercial and residential fabric to important governmental institution and civic gathering spaces. In some areas, welcome signage (ideally multi-lingual) may be included to orient visitors that they are approaching the Capitol. Key entry points include:

- A-2.1 West connection: Marion Street and University Avenue*
- A-2.2 Northwest Connection: Marion Street and Como Avenue*



A-2.3 North Connection: Rice Street and Pennsylvania Avenue*

A-2.4 South Connection: Kellogg and West 7th*

A-2.5 Downtown Connection: Rice Street and John Ireland / 12th / St. Peter Freeway Bridge*

**See Section C for specific information on each street.*

A-3 View Corridors (Also see 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2.)

A-3.1 Freeway exit from the west at Marion/Kellogg (across the Sears site). As vehicles exit I-94 at Marion/Kellogg, the view of the Capitol provides orientation to the Capitol Area. Height restrictions in the Sears site should be enforced to ensure views of the Capitol Dome as one travels along the exit ramp from I-94.

A-3.2 Marion Avenue, looking east along Aurora Avenue

A-3.3 Within the Sears site to frame the Capitol, Cathedral and Downtown. Views to the Capitol, the Cathedral of Saint Paul and downtown Saint Paul should be maintained from within the Sears site when it is redeveloped. There is opportunity in some locations to frame the Capitol and Cathedral, or the Capitol and downtown simultaneously. New development at Sears should include a comfortable, public location with views to the Capitol, the Cathedral and/or Downtown. Ideally, a minimum of two views would be maintained from one location.

A-3.4 Eastern Edge / Connection of Western Park *[To be determined based on collaboration with nearby stakeholders and Summit-University.]*

A-4 Street Terminations

A-4.1 Where streets end with buildings we have the opportunity to create terminated vistas. These vistas will be determined based on future development. *[Mapping of current opportunities under development.]*