

D. LAND USE MIX & OPPORTUNITY SITES

The next twenty years will see the completion of a market driven urban village mix in the Capitol Rice District. As of the writing of this plan, the mix of land uses envisioned for the area is only partially realized and is largely spread out and separated by vacant parcels or surface parking lots. While taking care to be sensitive to these current uses, this plan supports the ‘completion’ of the urban village as development and investment increases, adding a vibrant diverse array of new activities, living choices and services, all within walking distance to Rice Street and Capitol Rice Station. New uses that will be encouraged include:

- Local Services
- Evening Dining and Entertainment Destinations (limited number/size)
- Grocery Store
- Diversity of New Housing (-types, sizes, and price-points)
- Workplaces
- Visitor Center, Mobility Hub & Welcoming
- Day Care
- Other missing goods and services supportive of the above, such as a copy center and hardware store

Also see 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapters 6 covering land use diversity.

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) Preservation, Restoration and Re-Use. In each project, from small main-street rehabilitation projects to large block-scale redevelopment, work to document, respect and, where possible, restore the character of the historic urban village and look for opportunities to integrate existing historic buildings and resources into new development. Specifically, preservation guidelines (*see Secretary of Interior Standards in Glossary*) should be an important component of best practices and new development planning in all projects. In general building upgrades in the urban village and in any identified historic buildings, district-wide, special care should be taken that building rehabilitation and legacy commercial repairs are compatible with the district’s historic character.
- b) Anti-Displacement. Support measures at all levels to mitigate the most adverse impacts of rapid new investment on vulnerable populations.
- c) Re-Investment. Encourage local property owners to invest in their holdings to maintain stability and appearance.

What is a Neighborhood Node?

The SAINT PAUL FOR ALL 2040 Comprehensive Plan designates the Rice Station Area as a Neighborhood Node. This municipal designation continues the long standing alignment with the Capitol Area’s vision for the district as an ‘urban village’, and once again affirming the established in the Rice Station Area Plan and the previous Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area:

“Neighborhood Nodes are compact, mixed-use areas that provide shops, services, neighborhood-scale civic and institutional uses, recreational facilities and employment close to residences. They may be neighborhood centers, transit station areas or **urban villages**, and have often developed adjacent to major intersections or at former street car stops. Neighborhood Nodes serve a neighborhood’s daily needs, including access to food; reduce public infrastructure disparities; improve livability; and accommodate growth. The intent is for Neighborhood Nodes to be denser concentrations of development relative to the adjacent future land use categories. Neighborhood Nodes foster an equitable system of compact, mixed-use and commercial centers across the city to increase access to community services (such as health care) and businesses, and support pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. Investment in Neighborhood Nodes will tap the economic, cultural and human assets of Saint Paul’s diverse neighborhoods, and can foster micro-economies that celebrate those assets.” (SAINT

Business Development

- d) Rice Street as Neighborhood "Mainstreet". Future development here should maintain the fine-grained, neighborhood "Main Street" quality of the corridor, with uses and building types geared to accommodate local goods and services.
- e) Activate the Street. First-level Commercial/Retail public use is encouraged along Rice Street and University Avenue to promote pedestrian activity.
- f) Small Business Development Fund. Targeted for tenant business and new entrepreneur development, the City of Saint Paul has established a Business Upgrade Fund (Commercial Vitality Zone) for Rice Street north of University Avenue. Businesses may apply for funding to help with items such as: marketing, graphic design, business consulting, interns, major asset purchases (ex: new stove), and a large array of code compliance issues, with priority given to investment in façade, signage and sidewalk vitality improvements which benefit the entire district. Explore municipal support to assist businesses in purchasing their space or the building in which they are located. This can also be a good approach to mitigating the impact of rising commercial rents. See *Commercial Vitality Zone website: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/economic-development/commercial-vitality-zone-program>*
- g) Lunchtime Strategy. The large workforce in the area is an untapped market to bolster local restaurants. Strategies to encourage area workers to patronize restaurants along Rice Street and Como for lunchtime should be explored by local merchants.
- h) Local community commercial business development. Support the efforts of members of the local immigrant community, as well as others opening businesses, that will contribute to the vitality of the area.
- i) Small Scale Redevelopment. City should support private sector efforts to build out a range of smaller sites (~under 2 acres) that are candidates for rehabilitation, reuse, expansion and/or redevelopment. These smaller sites are often particularly difficult and risky projects for the private sector due to the uncertainties compared to return on investment. Assistance should be targeted to small developers and land-owners with projects that have invested in design and that meet or exceed current standards and best development practices in construction. Collaboratively developed (city/non-profit with private sector) grant applications can provide money for bricks and mortar. Sites could include:
- Billboard sites at Rice/Como and Marion/Como
 - 511 Rice Street Vacant building on northwest corner of Sherburne and Rice
 - 562 Rice Street – formerly Rahn Engineering (just north of Women’s Building)
 - General infill sites along Rice Street
- j) Reintroduce a Day Care Center to serve Capitol Area Workforce. Having supported a state-employee day care center in the east campus in the 1990s, and the need still exists today, support a Day Care Center to serve residents and local workers. The center should be located in a non-government building.
- k) Explore Development and Need for a Full Service Grocery Store. Full service grocery stores (or food co-ops) are important amenities for neighborhoods and often provide a sense of identity. They also can serve as an anchor to the area, increasing customer traffic and thus supporting surrounding businesses. Desire for a grocery store was affirmed during the recent Capitol Rice Planning process (2017-2018). Preferred locations for a new grocery store have been explored*. If a full service store is not feasible, other strategies for delivering a broad array of food options for local residents and workers should be considered, such as providing directional signage to Lunds (just south of the freeway) and Hmongtown Marketplace, building on existing offerings, or support for other local food options.

**In 2017, Perkins+Will explored the Capitol Rice area and proposed locations for grocery stores. See Capitol Rice Commercial Vitality Zone Strategy, Appendix I.*

Housing

- l) Diversity of Housing Within the Neighborhood. Support the retention and development of new “Missing Middle” housing types, both owner occupied and rental, in the Capitol Area, such as duplexes, townhomes, and medium density residential apartments that are compatible with the scale of existing development.
- m) Diversity of Housing Unit Types Within Buildings. Support the diversification of unit type and size within buildings.
- n) Diversity of Housing Affordability. Proactively encourage new development to incorporate a full range of choices from affordable to market rate and luxury.
- o) Accessory Dwelling Units. Continue to support development of Accessory Dwelling Units throughout the Capitol Area where lot and/or structure is of adequate size.

The following Frogtown Housing policies are relevant to and will be supported in the Capitol Area: *(To be integrated as core policy later after consultation and review.)*

- p) Shared Space and Open Space. “Support the incorporation of publically accessible open space into new multifamily residential and mixed use developments.” “Encourage new multifamily housing developments to incorporate features in their designs that foster sharing, and resident interaction.”
- q) Home-based Businesses and Home Occupations. “Support home occupations, live work units, artist studios, and other home based commercial enterprises throughout the district.”
- r) Owner Occupancy. “Work to increase the number of owner-occupied single family houses and multifamily family structures.”

See 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6 for general policy on land use diversity in the Capitol Area.

Location-Specific Policy

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

Opportunity Sites *(see map on page 2)*

D-1 Northwest corner block at University and Rice (League of MN Cities block)

Development of the block currently occupied by the League of Minnesota Cities would provide an opportunity to create new mixed-use buildings along University Avenue and infill housing on the south side of Sherburne.

- D-1.1 Support League of Minnesota Cities redevelopment as a transit-oriented development demonstration site.

Missing Middle Housing *(Also see 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6)*

“The Missing Middle is a segment of the housing market that contains small-scale multifamily or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family neighborhoods. It is a land use, economic development and urban design strategy that allows cities to support walkable, transit-supportive neighborhoods without significantly increasing densities in predominantly single-family neighborhoods. Missing Middle housing provides more housing choice, is more sensitive to neighborhood context, and provides a way for urban neighborhoods to adapt to housing trends. Missing Middle housing types include accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, bungalow courts, mansion-style multi-family and multiplexes. Excellent examples of these housing types can be found throughout Saint Paul.” (SAINT PAUL FOR ALL 2040 Comprehensive Plan, pg 108)



- D-1.2 Encourage, if possible, residential frontages along Sherburne, or, at the very least, well landscaped frontages.
- D-1.3 Provide for a transition in scale from University Avenue to Sherburne Avenue in both height and density and encourage step-backs on south side of Sherburne Avenue to avoid adverse impacts on residential homes on north side of street.
- D-1.4 Marion *Flexible Frontage Type* wrapping both corners 30 ft onto Sherburne and University. *Flexible Frontage Type* on University.
- D-1.5 Strongly encourage retail or other active ground-level frontage within 75 ft. of corner of Marion and University.
- D-1.6 As this corner block is one of the anchors of the Integrated Mobility Hub, strongly encourage participation in district mobility and parking planning. When new development occurs in the west portion of the block, strongly encourage structured parking to replace surface parking on the block. *Also see Section G: Mobility and Parking Planning*

Rice-University Intersection

The four corners at the intersection of University Avenue and Rice Street are critical to the success of the Capitol Rice District, and the Capitol Area as a whole. Improvement of the district has the extended effect of creating a positive work environment for the State of MN workforce.

D-2 Southwest corner block at University and Rice (includes State Lot AA)

Development of this southwest corner block will improve the vitality of the district. Surface parking hinders urban vitality. State of MN leadership in redevelopment on this block could lead to dramatic improvements in the district by encouraging more investment by the local businesses in changing the image of Rice Street today, especially now that the City has contributed to improvements to the area through small business support north of University Avenue on Rice Street.

The southern alignment of the Green Line LRT along University on this block creates a unique situation in the corridor. Building frontages could respond to ...

- D-2.1 Support assembly and complete redevelopment of all undeveloped parcels east of AFL-CIO Building and Sunrise Bank parcels.
- D-2.2 Redeveloped as state building with parking below or...
- D-2.3 Incorporation of Mobility Hub elements.
- D-2.4 Ground-level retail.
- D-2.5 *Flexible Frontage Type* with a step-back. *Refer to Section F: Frontages.*
- D-2.6 Design and Development Steps (State-led, CAAPB with the Administration Department):
 1. Conduct a study to determine scenarios of redevelopment, including site redevelopment guidelines that supply design parameters for future steps.
 2. Pre-Design Study (required by law) to determine need and program for the particular use.
 3. CAAPB-led design competition

D-3 Northeast corner block at University and Rice (includes State Lot C and Ford Building)

As above, development of this block will improve the vitality of the district. The state has a role in community development at the doorstep of the Capitol.

Also see above district-wide policy a) restoration of historic urban fabric and preservation of buildings and Chapter 7 of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

- D-3.1 Complete redevelopment of State parking Lot C including re-use/redevelopment of Ford Building.
- D-3.2 Develop a state office building to accommodate agencies with a strong tie to the Capitol.
- D-3.3 Design and Development Steps (State-led, CAAPB with the Administration Department):

1. Ford Building Re-use Study: Conduct a re-use study to determine scenarios of redevelopment, including site redevelopment guidelines that supply design parameters for future steps. The re-use study should verify the structural stability of the building and explore a full range of alternatives for building disposition (outlining the full range of possible re-uses in each scenario) from full building to partial or complete demolition.
 2. Site Pre-Design Study: Informed by the Ford Building Re-Use Study, conduct a site pre-design study (required by law) to determine need and program for the particular use.
 3. Design Competition: CAAPB-led design competition.
- D-3.4 Strongly encourage full or partial re-use of the Ford Building, recognizing the existing embodied energy and sustainability of re-using a solid structure, the benefit to the urban fabric of a historic building (ADD SIDEBAR?), and to take full advantage of existing tunnel connection.
- D-3.5 Establish active ground-level uses facing University and Rice Streets.
- D-3.6 Follow best practices for structured parking. *Refer to 2040 Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5 for guidelines for structured parking (policy 5.45).*

D-4 Sears Site

Redevelopment of the Sears site (approximately 17 acres), along with the underutilized block to the north, will have a major impact on the Capitol Rice District. This area makes up the entire southwest quarter of the district. Redevelopment will break up the scale of the superblock, establish a substantial population at the doorstep of the Capitol and act as a catalyst for the mixed-use regeneration of the district.

- D-4.1 Support Sears site redevelopment as the core and largest element of the Capitol Rice Urban Village.
- D-4.2 Encourage a master plan that introduces of a broad mix of uses, such as office, residential, retail, services and limited entertainment and dining destinations. *Refer to the general policies above.*
- D-4.3 Development must follow the principles of transit-oriented development. *Refer to Section G: Mobility and Parking Planning.*
- D-4.4 Organizing design principles for a site master plan:
- Provide east-west street corridors through the site to break up the superblock and encourage movement between Marion and Rice Streets. The street and block pattern should be based on an organizing design principle, such as water management, maintaining key views, or restoration of the historic grid. *Refer to Section C. Street Design and Block Pattern.*
 - Encourage at least one north-south connection within the site. *Refer to Section C. Street Design and Block Pattern*
 - Establish walkable connections to Leif Erickson Park, Western Park and the Mall. *Refer to Section A. Capitol Rice Relationship*
 - Protect important view sheds and visual relationships. *Refer to Section A. Capitol Rice Relationship*
 - Incorporate a community park in the site. *Refer to Section B. Open Space and Public Art*
 - Create a greenway street connecting Western Park through the site across Rice Street to the Capitol Mall. *Refer to Section B. Open Space and Public Art*

D-5 Southwest corner block at Como Avenue and Rice Street (Como Place Apartments)

(The following policy affirms previous Comprehensive Plan policy, established in Rice Station Area Plan.) The Como Place residential community, which occupies the wedge-shaped parcel bordered by Rice Street, Como Avenue, Marion Street and Charles Avenue, is a distinct mid- rise residential enclave on the edge of the Capitol Area. In the community's current configuration, it creates fragmented and poorly-defined spaces that are neither public nor private in nature. Traffic conflicts associated with Hmongtown Marketplace farther north on Como Avenue further isolate this residential community. The result is an inward- focused development comprised of underutilized spaces and poorly- defined streets and pathways. Contextually, the development breaks the rhythm

in the Rice streetscape, and creates unwelcoming spaces along the important arterial streets of Como Avenue, Rice Street and Marion Street.

- D-5.1 Measures to stabilize and support the range of housing choices provided to the Capitol Area by this site should be considered. The site currently serves lower and lower-middle income community members. This is a critical housing choice that needs to be preserved in the Capitol Area.
- D-5.2 Redevelopment of edges of the site, dominated by surface parking and garages, will help to reverse this enclave condition by establishing a street wall presence to create a clear network of public streets and private courtyard spaces.
- D-5.3 Long-range, as buildings deteriorate and redevelopment becomes necessary, site should be considered holistically for redevelopment. In a new development, new or expanded surface parking lots should not be permitted. Design focus should be on creating walkable streets and public spaces and reintroducing Edmund Avenue from Marion Street to Rice Street. If affordable options in the Capitol Area or nearby in Frogtown are not available at the time of redevelopment, measures should be taken to reestablish a range of affordable housing choices on this site.

Preservation & Reuse Opportunities

D-6 Housing Preservation and Development

- D-6.1 Sherburne and Charles residential character: The existing low-rise neighborhood block between Charles to the north and Marion to the south is an important and defining part of the community fabric and should be preserved and enhanced. Investment in these neighborhoods will continue to happen slowly over time and consist primarily of restoration, renovation, rehabilitation and small in-fill projects on vacant lots.

D-7 Ford Building Reuse

- D-7.1 Support re-use of the Ford Building within redevelopment of the property to the west on the northeast corner of University and Rice. Encourage an active, pedestrian-friendly first floor use engaging University Avenue. *Refer to Section D: Land Use Mix, policy D-3.4*

D-8 Christ on Capitol Hill Lutheran Church Preservation

- D-8.1 Preserve the Christ Lutheran Church at the corner of Park Street and University Avenue and build upon the rest of the block. Support efforts to find a shared parking solution that solves church parking issues when redevelopment happens on the block.