



## Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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**Date:** Updated November 23, 2021  
**To:** The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)  
**From:** Peter Musty, CAAPB Principal Planner  
**Subject:** **Planning, Zoning and Design Review Update** (*Memo for 09.28.21 CAAPB meeting*)

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This board memo contains staff member updates on projects. Board members are invited to contact staff with questions before, during or after the meeting. In this update: St Paul City School Groundbreaking; Sears Site Predevelopment Design Process; Rush/Purple Line BRT Station Area Planning by Metro Transit/Ramsey County; Capitol Area Stormwater Management Study; and Chart: Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

### **Groundbreaking October 20<sup>th</sup> at Saint Paul City School**

Questions: contact Peter Musty, 612-743-5994 / [peter.musty@state.mn.us](mailto:peter.musty@state.mn.us)

Staff continues to work with school director Dr. Meg Cavalier and her development team. Following CAAPB approvals earlier this year, the school design and development team finalized building and infrastructure entitlements with the City of Saint Paul, and this fall received Certificate of Design Compliance from CAAPB. A small ceremony (below) was coordinated on site to celebrate beginning of construction, with goal of opening for (or during) the 2022-23 school year. Mayor Carter surprised a full class of Saint Paul City School kids, several of whom were the dignitaries for the groundbreaking.



## Sears Site Predevelopment Design Process Questions: contact Peter Musty

The Sears site design process continues to move forward. The public-private staff team of site designers, Saint Paul Planners, and CAAPB staff continue to collaborate on the four-tiered public outreach and engagement framework approved by the Board in March. The work builds on the previous framework planning and comprehensive planning, by building connections and gauging broad feedback on design choices for the urban village vision. The engagement activities will inform three iterations of ownership team's 'MX Master Plan' submittal to CAAPB later in 2021/early 2022. Next steps:

- Seritage leads from California and Boston will be in the Twin Cities for meetings December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> regarding our Sears site and two other sites in the region.
- The developer hopes to submit a first design plan in their CAAPB MX Master Plan application this winter, allowing Seritage and their local lead Kimley Horn to articulate specifically how 2021 stakeholder input, the pandemic, and their market research have impacted the site plan since the concept vision forwarded in March. The plan will likely reflect (as previewed in staff's September board update):

**A mixed and walkable *urban village* with green street connections and green space is still supported in the community and by developer.** However, more options may come forward than a single central green space surrounded by uniform building heights, and there may be...

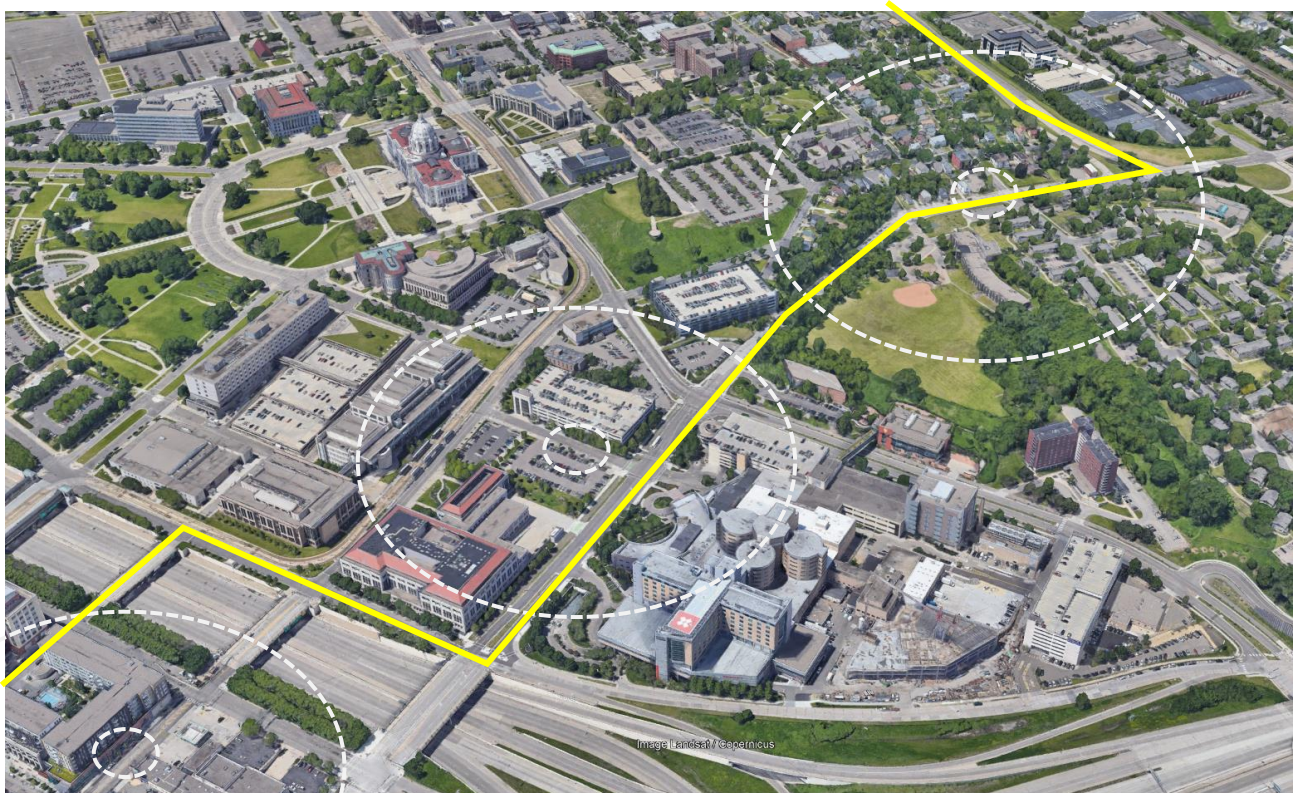
- **More focus on broad residential mix (vs broad commercial mix).** Community is asking for more and more affordable living choices in Saint Paul and along Central Corridor. Market research by developer and emerging commuting trends match what is being heard from community: there is more housing need than the demand (or desire) for new office space, especially in this location. Concepts for entertainment or office may be reduced in the next (first formal) version of the plan. As a result, the next plan may show that some blocks get smaller, and the housing types in the plan may increase and diversify, ranging from 3 – 6 stories.
  - **Safe crossings and street design along Rice and Marion are big opportunities.** The community, the developer's site design team, and various public works agencies are aligned on this.
  - **Recognition of Saint Paul culture and history in the public space design, art and programming.** There are layers of history that are important and will become a factor in the planning and design for spaces in collaboration with the community. This has been expressed as a desire in many meetings.
- The overall process and schedule will continue to be tracked at [CAAPB's Sears Site Design Process webpage](#), where a summary of community engagement activities in 2021 will be posted soon.

## Purple Line (formerly Rush Line) BRT Station Area Planning

Questions: contact Peter Musty

After years of study, Ramsey County and Metro Transit have moved into [Station Area Planning](#) for the Purple Line. Several key updates relevant to the Capitol Area:

- Station Area Planning happens in parallel and/or to complement Station design/engineering and environmental work.
- Community Engagement will be a key driver of the planning.
- The Capitol Area will host two BRT stations on the line, and both have received funding for Station Area Plan work:
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Street Station / Station Area (between Robert and Jackson) - (middle circle in image)
  - Mt Airy (@ Winter) Station/ Station Area – (top right circle in image)
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Street Station / Station Area (serving Capitol Area downtown blocks)
  - (Capitol Area boundary shown in yellow line below)
- Station Area Planning brings the expertise of an interdisciplinary consultant team to conduct community engagement along the corridor and then to translate the input into implementation plans near each station. The team is equipped with public engagement, housing, land use, landscape and urban design, historical expertise.
- CAAPB Staff (Musty) has been involved in November and December of 2021 on the consultant selection team for the corridor.
- As called for in the Comprehensive Plan chapter 7B, there is great potential for the process to serve as an update to Comp Plan policy for the district as a policy update to [Chapter 7B of the Comprehensive Plan \(Capitol Heights Development Framework\)](#). Capitol Heights stakeholders will be part of the planning process in 2022.



## Capitol Area Stormwater Study/Strategic Planning Questions: contact Peter Musty

As [presented in September](#) to the Board, the Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) and CAAPB are partnering with a goal of facilitating baselining, strategies, best practices, and implementation of four planning efforts identified in the Comprehensive Plan: The Capitol Mall Development Framework, the Capitol Heights Development Framework, The Sears Site MX Master Plan, and visioning for the Capitol Rice Corridor. The work beginning later this year will include analysis of the Capitol Area's overall sub-watershed, its current conditions, and will baseline stormwater patterns. This information will inform creation of a framework of district level practices and interventions that will help to solve identified stormwater management problems. The study will also include development of strategic actions focused on the four planning and design initiatives mentioned above. Next steps:

- The [CAAPB resolution in September](#) was presented to CRWD Board. The Board authorized a study budget of up to \$150,000 for the study.
- Capitol Region Watershed and CAAPB staff are collaborating on consultant selection process.
- Given the collaboration and dedication of CAAPB staff time to co-lead the study, the State of Minnesota's Office of Equity in Procurement was engaged by CRWD and CAAPB project manager to review and suggest ideas for CRWD's approach to team selection.
- Four teams are expected to submit proposals by Thanksgiving, with interviews of finalists and selection to be completed by the end of the year.
- There is a component of the study that dedicates consultant support to collaboration on opportunities at the Sears site.
- The study is scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 2022.
- Community outreach activities will be conducted early in the study. CAAPB Board Members will be updated along the way and be presented the study findings.



## Implementing the Comprehensive Plan Questions: contact Peter Musty

Updated for December Board Meeting. Implementation of the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan policies will take many years, but it starts in 2021. There are several tracks that continue, and several that are new. All of which will be brought forward to the Board where the timing dictates, or when action is required. For many items, Board Members may be offered chances to observe or even to advise on steering committees or for discussions with community.

| Planning   | Sponsor/Lead Agency                              | CAAPB role              | Timing                |
|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sears MX District Plan</b>                                | public/private team (Developer, CAAPB, City)     | process and review lead | underway              |
| <b>Commemorative Works Policy (Update to Rules)</b>          | Task Forces>CAAPB                                | lead                    | underway              |
| <b>Capitol Area Stormwater Management Study</b>              | CRWD   | co-lead                 | 2021 start            |
| <b>Capitol Mall Design Framework</b>                         | CAAPB (w Dept of Administration)                 | lead                    | 2022?                 |
| <b>Rethinking I-94</b>                                       | MNDOT  | committee(s)            | underway (2018 start) |
| <b>Downtown Commons Study (off-shoot of Rethinking 1-94)</b> | MNDOT  | steering                | 2021 start            |
| <b>BRT Station Area Planning: Rush Line (Purple Line)</b>    | Ramsey County and Metro Transit                  | steering                | early 2022 start      |
| <b>Update to Rules Governing Zoning and Design</b>           | CAAPB  | lead                    | 2022?                 |
| <b>Capitol Heights Development Framework</b>                 | CAAPB (leveraging Station Area Planning process) | lead                    | 2022?                 |
| <b>BRT Station Area Planning: Robert Rice Line</b>           | Ramsey County and Metro Transit                  | steering                | 2023?                 |
| <b>Capitol River Council Development Committee</b>           | CRC  | staff has seat          | ongoing               |