

# SOUTHVIEW HILL AREA STUDY



City of South St. Paul



April 23, 2014

# Contents

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Introduction.....	1
Study Purpose .....	1
Existing Land Use and Zoning.....	1
Residential Homestead Status .....	4
Transportation .....	6
Market Overview .....	8
Community Participation .....	10
First Open House/Online Survey Results.....	10
Second Open House/Online Survey Results .....	17
Analysis, Implementation and Recommendations .....	28
Land Use .....	28
Retail .....	31
Retail Recommendations.....	44
City and School District Joint Use Facilities.....	47
City and School District Joint Use Facilities Recommendations .....	47
Residential .....	48
Residential Recommendations .....	56
Appendix A: Open House 1 Open Ended Comments .....	58

# Introduction

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## Study Purpose

The City of South St. Paul commissioned a small study of the Southview Hill area in order to accomplish four main goals:

- Encourage input from the neighborhood and broader community regarding the future of the area
- Provide a path for revitalization of the Southview and Marie businesses
- Seek guidance for redevelopment of current and future HRA owned blight removal properties
- Create momentum that can be utilized during the much larger Southview Boulevard reconstruction process that will be initiated in the Spring/Summer of 2014 and result in reconstruction in 2017

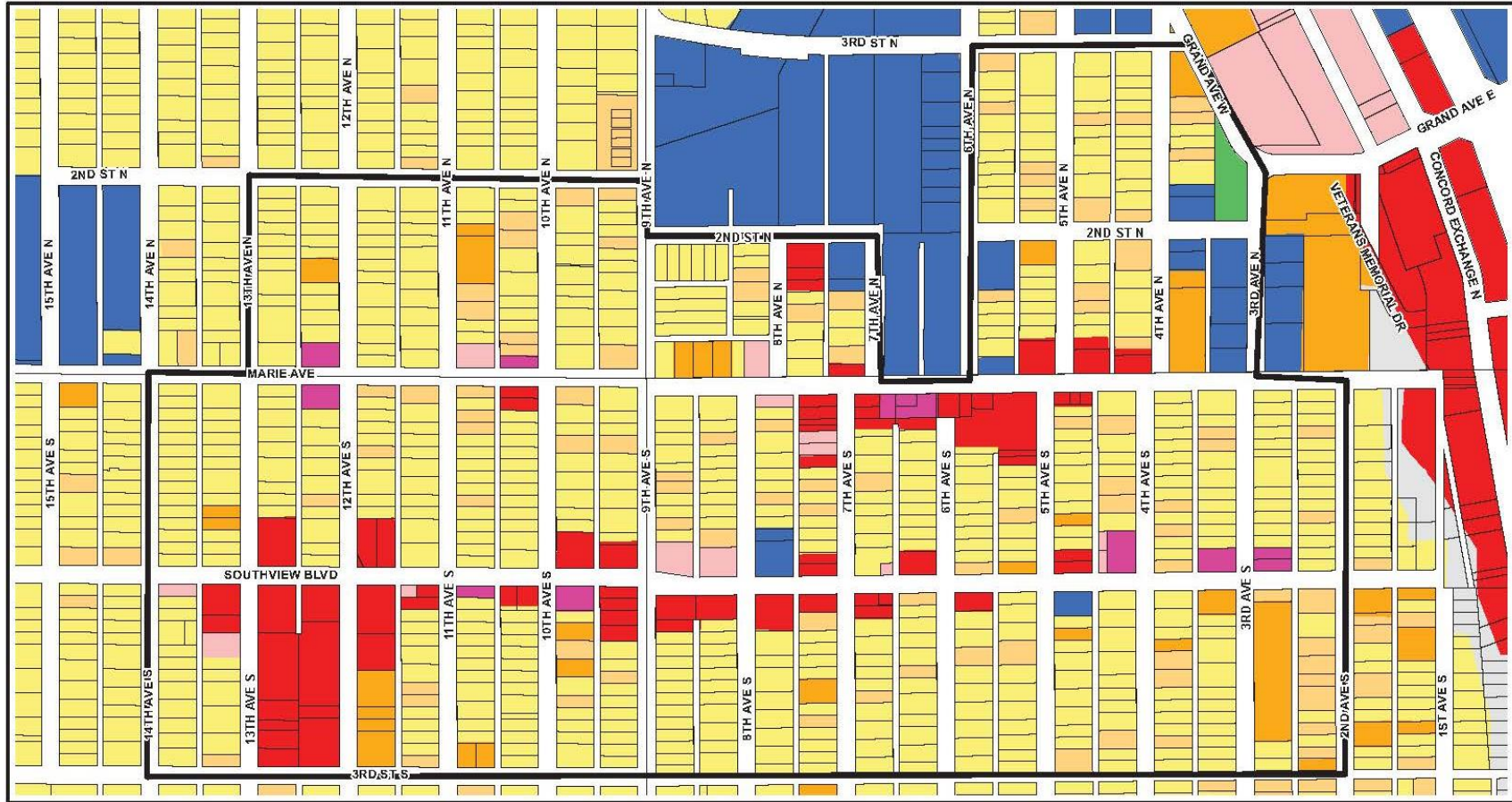
For the purposes of this study, the Southview Hill area was generally described as between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. A map of the study area boundary can be found on the existing land use map (Figure 1).

## Existing Land Use and Zoning

The study area is largely made up of single family residential properties with scattered multi-family properties (Figure 1).

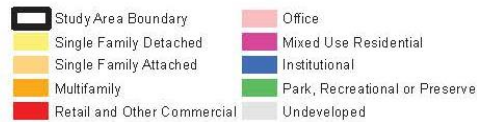
The area has traditionally been the primary retail core for the community. There is a long stretch of relatively shallow C-1 zoning along Southview Boulevard and a smaller C-1 pocket along Marie Avenue between 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North (Figure 2). A small number of additional scattered commercial properties can also be found in the area that generally represents longtime freestanding commercial uses.

In spite of the amount of C-1 zoning found in the corridor, the existing commercial uses have generally not expanded to the full extent of the surrounding zoning, with the exception of the properties around the intersection of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Southview Boulevard.



## 2010 Existing Land Use

South St. Paul Marie Street Area Redevelopment Plan



September 20, 2013



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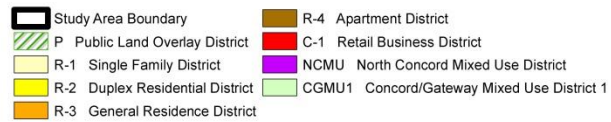
Figure 1: Existing Land Use





## Zoning Designation

South St. Paul Marie Street Area Redevelopment Plan



September 23, 2013



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Figure 2: Existing Zoning

## Residential Homestead Status

The study area is traditionally dominated by older, single family homes. One indicator that should be watched over time is the residential homestead status of the neighborhood. In neighborhoods that are highly desirable, single family homeowners tend to outbid the rental market for homes. As a neighborhood slides into decline, the single family homebuyer will begin to look elsewhere, depressing values and making the single family homes more attractive as rental investment properties.

Rental single family properties are not generally the cause of the decline. Particularly in communities with effective rental licensing and code enforcement, the added capital infusion from landlords can result in better maintained and updated properties. However, the fact that single family homeowners are not outbidding the single family rental investor can point to underlying problems.

Some causes of single family rental conversion include the following:

- Outdated properties that no longer meet the standards of the homeowners
- Oversized properties that no longer attract homeowners but can be subdivided into multiple apartment units
- Changes in surrounding land uses or transportation network

In recent years, pressures on neighborhoods have been exacerbated by the national housing collapse where many property owners ended up needing to rent out their single family homes because the value of their home no longer exceeded the remaining mortgage. As the housing market recovers, the homestead status will need to be monitored to determine if the rental homes return to home ownership or become long term rental properties.

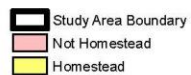
The HRA has actively been addressing the problem of residential decline with its Rediscover SSP program which was established in 1997 and acquires substandard, blighted properties, razes the structures and then seeks new, owner-occupied homes in its place. Approximately 115 houses have been acquired under this program and redeveloped into 110 new homes which helps to upgrade the community's housing stock, increase the variety of housing and support increased home ownership.

The residential homestead map (Figure 3) demonstrates that most blocks in the Southview Hill area have some rental single family homes on them. In areas where there are only a handful of rental single family homes, there is usually no cause for concern. However, in areas where the single family homes begin to approach the dominant ownership pattern, these areas can often create issues and need additional attention. In the study area, the area that appears to be heading down that path may be in the area South of Southview Boulevard and east of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. Not surprisingly, this was also the only area that was mentioned during the public input process as a residential area that might be in decline.



### Residential Homestead Status

South St. Paul Marie Street Area Redevelopment Plan



October 3, 2013



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Figure 3: Residential Homestead Status



## Transportation

The Southview Hill area generally follows the City's traditional grid pattern of streets (Figure 4).

- The grid pattern is broken in a few areas which affects traffic flow through the study area:
  - The high school breaks the grid between 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
  - Central Square Park breaks cuts off 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North
  - The bluff line is a natural breakline along the east
  - Several streets along Marie shift the grid, creating offset intersections between 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South

In addition, although not a break in the grid pattern, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South east of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South reduces its width dramatically and takes on a character more like a paved alley rather than a full through street.

- Southview Boulevard is an intersection with Highway 52 which should generate significant traffic counts. However, the Southview Hill area must pass through a 90 degree, unsignalized turn (at what would have been 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South) in order to reach the highway. This intersection is functional but may be discouraging traffic due to the periodic backups which occur during peak periods.
- Traffic patterns for Southview Boulevard are also a bit indirect on the east end where the access to the area winds around to the Concord Exchange Area along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North or one of the other grid streets.
- The traffic counts in the Southview Hill area are light for commercial areas. The busiest stretch of the study area is near 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Southview Boulevard at 10,700 ADT. Not surprisingly, this is also the area with the most retail activity. East of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, the traffic counts drop dramatically to 5,700 and then 3,550 ADT.
- The traffic on Marie Avenue is even more challenging for commercial activity with a maximum traffic count of only around 5,000 ADT at the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Marie Avenue, but dropping quickly into the 2000s in other stretches of the corridor. These low traffic counts are very challenging for retail uses that generally rely on traffic counts 20,000+ in order to survive.
- The Southview Hill area is served by Metro Transit bus service (Route 68) which runs along Southview Boulevard, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (North and South) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North. Bus stops are located approximately every 1 – 2 blocks along these streets.





## Street Width Variations and ADT

South St. Paul Marie Street Area Redevelopment Plan



October 3, 2013



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Figure 4: Traffic Volumes and Street Widths

# Market Overview

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The Southview Hill study did not have a market study in its scope. However, a market study was completed for the South Concord study and the data that was relevant to this study was reviewed for market context.

As part of the public input phase of this project, stakeholder meetings were conducted with numerous business and property owners along the corridor which was valuable for understanding the localized market conditions.

In addition, as part of the public input process, there was a strong desire expressed for more restaurants and therefore some restaurant concepts were examined to determine their minimum site development thresholds. This information was compared to the conditions on Southview Hill to determine if the retail concept would have a chance of feasibility.

It should be noted that the retail brands chosen are intended to be representative examples with known site location variables. The retail brand is not necessarily a desired choice for any particular site or even within the study area, but is rather used as a representative example.

As a fully developed area in close proximity to the region’s urban core, the Southview Hill area has a good population base in close proximity to draw potential customers. Radii are not a perfect measure in river communities because a radius distance “as the crow flies” could be substantially longer due to needing to find a suitable bridge crossing. However, with that caveat, and the fact that the I-494 bridge is located within South St. Paul, it is likely not as significant in South St. Paul as in other communities where bridge crossings are much further away (Table 1).

The average household income in the 5 mile radius is \$70,110<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1: Southview Hill Population Radii

Radius	Population
1 Mile Radius	16,577
3 Mile Radius	61,728
5 mile Radius	174,627
Growth Rate (2012-2017)	2.5%

Source: Costar, Stantec, 2012

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<sup>1</sup> Costar, 2012

As mentioned previously, a series of chain restaurants concepts was surveyed to determine minimum demographic, income and traffic requirements (Table 2). Chain restaurants were chosen because they have the most readily available and sophisticated site location requirements. However, this does not mean that there is a preference for chain restaurants or that any of these restaurant concepts is desired in the study area.

**Table 2: Selected Restaurant Minimum Site Requirements**

Restaurant	Min. Population (Radius)	Min. Daily Traffic
<b>Applebees</b>	20,000 – 50,000 (5 mile)	20,000
<b>Buffalo Wild Wings</b>	40,000 (3 mile)	25,000
<b>Chipotle</b>	30,000 (2 mile)	25,000
<b>Cracker Barrel</b>	80,000 (10 mile)	25,000
<b>Famous Dave's</b>	75,000 (3 mile)	30,000
<b>Perkins</b>	25,000-30,000 (5 mile)	25,000
<b>Wendy's</b>	12,000 (2 mile)	18,000
<b>Yum! (KFC/Taco Bell/Pizza Hut etc.)</b>	20,000 (2 mile)	20,000

The information in Table 1 and Table 2 seem to indicate that from a population perspective, there should be adequate market to support restaurant activity. However, the minimum traffic counts are significantly higher than what is found on Southview Hill and therefore will likely be a significant challenge for development of restaurant uses.

It should be noted that although chain restaurants and independent restaurants both have common needs for a population base and vehicle traffic, there are examples of independent restaurants that operate successfully further off the beaten path due to their unique location, service offerings and/or quality. Therefore, the fact that the area significantly underperforms the minimum traffic requirements of chain restaurants, does not mean that an independent restaurant couldn't be successful. However, in order to be successful, the independent restaurant would need to overcome the additional hurdle of low vehicular traffic which may contribute to additional restaurant failures in the corridor.

The South Concord market study identified the challenges related to being in the shadow of the retail on Robert Street and this situation was taken into account in the analysis of this study.

# Community Participation

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Community participation has been the key element of this planning effort. As the study progressed, the City Council chose to include additional opportunities for the public and businesses to participate in the planning process. Some key public input efforts included the following:

- Public Open House #1 (October 10, 2013)
- Public Open House #2 (January 23, 2014)
- Public Open House #3 (March 27, 2014)
- Online surveys
- Stakeholder meetings and phone calls (multiple dates)

In addition, there were the following public meetings:

- City Council work session (November 12, 2013)
- Planning Commission (January 8, 2013)
- City Council work session (February 10, 2014)

## First Open House/Online Survey Results

The first Open House was intended to outline some of the baseline conditions in the study area and seek information from the public as to what issues were the top priorities that should be investigated as part of the study. Respondents included Residents, Business Owners, Employees, Customers and Landlords/Developers. Approximately 2/3 of respondents had lived or done business in the area for more than 10 years. A number of open ended questions were also asked and participant open answers can be found in the appendix.



### Planning Priorities

Respondents were asked to list their priorities for the planning process. Concepts that were repeated frequently included the following:

- Create more vibrant business district, particularly restaurants
- Improve property maintenance/code enforcement
- Eliminate blighted properties
- Limit low income housing
- Improve aesthetics
- Improve parking
- Attract younger families

### Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of common quality of life indicators to indicate whether they were or weren't a concern in the Southview Hill study area (Table 3). Items which were viewed to be a concern or major concern by at least 75% of respondents are shown in red print and listed below:

- Deteriorating condition of properties
- Gaps in current retail options and retail mix
- Amount of property crime (vandalism, trespassing)
- Need for clearance of blight, assembly and sale of development sites
- Need for improved visual aesthetics, appearance, beautification
- Need for private investments in site and building improvements

**Table 3: Common Quality of Life Indicators**

Indicator	Not a Concern	Concern	Major Concern
Deteriorating condition of properties	5.4%	43.2%	51.4%
Need for additional community gathering areas	47.2%	47.2%	5.6%
Gaps in current retail options and retail mix	8.1%	32.4%	59.5%
Problems with drainage/stormwater	94.6%	5.4%	0.0%
Unaffordable housing	80.0%	17.1%	2.9%
Traffic congestion or conflicts/safety	70.3%	21.6%	8.1%
Inadequate or poorly placed parking	41.7%	30.6%	27.8%
Parks and Recreation Opportunities	52.6%	39.5%	7.9%
Bicycle and pedestrian safety	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%
Areas where adjacent land uses are not compatible	47.1%	38.2%	14.7%
Amount of personal crime (theft/assault)	30.3%	42.4%	27.3%
Amount of property crime (vandalism, trespassing)	16.2%	45.9%	37.8%
Need for clearance of blight, assembly and sale of development sites	5.6%	58.3%	36.1%
Need for improved visual aesthetics, appearance, beautification	10.8%	51.4%	37.8%

Indicator	Not a Concern	Concern	Major Concern
Need for additional vegetation/green cover along public right-of-way	33.3%	38.9%	27.8%
Need for private investments in site and building improvements	11.8%	50.0%	38.2%

### Market and Business Environment

The respondents indicated frequent use of area businesses with 67.7% indicating they visit local businesses at least once per week.

Most visits were during the work week with only 43.3% indicating they visit neighborhood businesses on the weekend. This spending pattern implies that neighborhood residents are visiting area businesses for convenience, but may be doing their weekend “stock up” shopping in other locations, such as South Robert Street.

The purpose of the neighborhood business trips was generally split between shopping (60.7%) and Services (57.1%). Almost one third of respondents (28.6%) work in the neighborhood.

The Southview Hill area was viewed as the second most important commercial destination for respondents behind South Robert Street. Other retail areas only provided a small amount of competition for shopping trips.

## Land Use

The Southview Hill study area has a variety of land uses that exist or could exist in the corridor. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed the current mix of land uses was correct or should be modified in some manner. There was strong support for expansion of commercial uses, moderate support for expansion of several types of multi-family residential and weak support for expansion of office, moderate rent apartments, single family residential or industrial uses (Table 4).

**Table 4: Land Use Needs**

	Too Little	Just Right	Too Much
Restaurants (with alcohol)	88.0%	8.0%	4.0%
Retail/Commercial	84.6%	15.4%	0.0%
Restaurants (no alcohol)	81.5%	11.1%	7.4%
Luxury apartments	48.1%	48.1%	3.7%
Fast food	44.4%	51.9%	3.7%
Public space/parks	44.0%	56.0%	0.0%
Drive thru businesses	40.0%	56.0%	4.0%
Townhomes/row housing	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%
Condominiums	34.6%	57.7%	7.7%
Senior housing	29.2%	50.0%	20.8%
Office	22.2%	70.4%	7.4%



	Too Little	Just Right	Too Much
Moderate rent apartments	19.2%	53.8%	26.9%
Single family residential	14.3%	67.9%	17.9%
Industrial	8.7%	73.9%	17.4%

### Common Improvement Options

Respondents were asked to comment on the perceived need for a range of common neighborhood planning implementation steps. Respondents rated each possible action step from 1 to 6 with 1 indicating the highest level of support for that activity. Only building façade issues scored a high level of support. Signage enhancements, landscaping/streetscaping, and building design had moderate levels of support. Improvements to parking areas and sidewalk/trail enhancement showed low levels of support.

**Table 5: Perceived Need for Common Improvement Options**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Rating
Building facade (building exterior)	41.4%	27.6% (8)	13.8% (4)	17.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.07
Property signage enhancements	17.2%	20.7% (6)	20.7% (6)	27.6%	13.8%	0.0%	3.00
Landscaping/streetscaping	6.9%	24.1% (7)	20.7% (6)	27.6%	17.2%	3.4% (1)	3.34
Building design (i.e. overall architecture)	17.2%	6.9%	24.1% (7)	24.1%	24.1%	3.4% (1)	3.41
Parking area improvements	13.8% (4)	17.2%	0.0%	3.4%	41.4%	24.1%	4.14
Sidewalk/Trails enhancement	3.4%	3.4%	20.7% (6)	0.0%	3.4%	69.0%	5.03

## Transportation

The Southview Hill area is largely auto-oriented, which is not surprising in a suburban location. The rate of walking is high with almost half of the respondents using walking as a main method of transportation within the study area. The low rate of bus usage is a bit surprising, given the large number of bus stops available in the study area.

In the open comments, there were frequent complaints regarding the pedestrian environment including the design/condition of the sidewalks and vehicle/pedestrian conflicts at crosswalk areas.

Respondents also had generally positive comments regarding the bus system, even though they did not use it themselves. Some expressed a desire for more formal bus stop locations with shelters and/or bus turnouts.

Better accommodation of bicycles was mentioned as a priority as was developing connections to the regional trail system.

**Table 6: Main Methods of Transportation in Neighborhood**

Answer	Response
Automobile/Truck	93.8%
Walking	43.3%
Bicycle	6.7%
Bus	0.0%
Motorcycle/Scooter/Moped	0.0%

## Second Open House/Online Survey Results

The second Open House was very well attended, in spite of challenging weather conditions. At this open house, the respondents were asked to address more specific issues as a result of the study's analysis.

It was discussed that the Southview Hill Area faces a number of challenges both in terms of market conditions (particularly the low levels of traffic) and in terms of community perceptions. The neighborhood has historically expressed a desire to limit some uses that may have market viability or put conditions on uses that are desired but those conditions burden the market to such an extent that the desired use is no longer feasible. This has too often resulted in past plans where the community has expressed a strong desire for change, but then “taken off the table” many of the action steps that would be most likely to generate some of that desired change.

At the second Open House, participants were asked a large number of focused (and often difficult) questions. The community responded and a summary of those results is below:

### Area Wide Challenge Questions

#### Expanding Commercial Sites

There is a strong desire for commercial growth (particularly retail) in the Southview Hill Area. However, many of the commercial lots are too small to support the type of activity that is desired. Participants were asked how to address this situation and indicated a strong desire for direct City/HRA involvement in this issue. Only 7.1% of respondents thought that a “do nothing” approach was an acceptable option. In contrast, two active market involvement options both generated a 61.9% positive response as follows:

- Having the City/HRA actively develop municipal or shared parking lots to support the businesses
- Having the City/HRA develop financial incentives so that businesses can purchase adjacent properties and expand

The City's long time strategy of zoning adjacent properties for commercial uses and then letting the market expand as it wants without direct involvement scored poorly, with only 28.6% of respondents thinking that was an acceptable option.

#### Increasing Traffic on Southview and Marie

One of the primary barriers to retail activity in the Southview Hill Area is a lack of traffic on Southview and Marie. However, the area is also an established single family neighborhood and higher levels of traffic can be detrimental to single family quality of life. Participants were asked about where the balance should be in regards to increasing traffic to support commercial uses or keeping traffic low to support single family residential uses.

The results were clearly in favor of taking actions to increase traffic. Once again, there was a strong opinion against the status quo with only 5.4% finding the “Do Nothing” approach to be acceptable.

**Table 7: Attitudes about Traffic Changes**

Answer	Response
Adjust traffic patterns to increase traffic on Southview	75.7%
Adjust traffic patterns to increase traffic on Marie	56.8%
Encourage retail activity in other parts of the City even if it hurts Southview and Marie businesses	21.6%
Do nothing	5.4%

### **Alcohol**

Historically, there has been an assumed preference for “No Alcohol on the Hill” that appears to originate decades ago. This has been accepted as a given in the area. However, the community meeting participants also expressed a large desire for sit down restaurants that often rely on wine and beer sales in order to be viable.

Participants were also asked about the perception of alcohol sales in relation to grocery, since South St. Paul’s grocery store is small and wine sales are increasingly important to the viability of small grocery stores. The results of the open house indicate that the historic “No Alcohol on the Hill” assumption may have changed dramatically over the years with a majority favoring alcohol expansion.



**Table 8: Attitudes about Alcohol Sales**

Answer	Response
Allow restaurants to serve alcohol	82.9%
Allow grocery related alcohol sales	53.7%
Prevent grocery alcohol sales	7.3%
Prevent restaurant alcohol sales	2.4%

### **Residential Redevelopment**

One of the challenges in the area is that the HRA is acquiring properties as part of blight removal and some of these properties are located in an area that can only support residential uses. In addition, the costs of redevelopment often make it difficult to find a financially feasible method to redevelop properties as single family uses. However, there has been a history of the community resisting the development of multi-family housing, leaving the HRA with few options that are both feasible and popular in the neighborhood.

The results of the open house indicate that this situation is real and is going to be one of the most challenging issues for the City/HRA moving forward because there is no community consensus on what it would like to see happen in redevelopment conditions. None of the residential redevelopment scenarios (including single family) received a majority opinion, so it is likely that whatever actions the City/HRA take in the future regarding residential redevelopment will generate some criticism (Table 9). However, it is important to recognize that this criticism is not related to any particular type of redevelopment, since all types of residential redevelopment had very similar responses. The one exception is affordable apartments, which are clearly not desired. This means that if the City/HRA moves forward on residential redevelopment, there will likely be a level of support and opposition no matter what it chooses. There are a wide range of residential use types that will all generate similar responses and therefore the City/HRA should be able to choose from the one that is the most feasible without significantly reducing support or increasing opposition (except for affordable apartments).

One interesting piece of data is that senior housing received the second lowest level of support. In many communities, senior housing is viewed to be the politically popular option for multi-family redevelopment, but this does not appear to be the case in South St. Paul.

Senior housing should not be avoided, however, because it can be a valuable tool in attracting younger families. Senior citizens are often reluctant to leave the neighborhoods where they have lived for decades due to the friendships, familiarity with services and other connections. If there are not suitable senior options within the immediate area, seniors will often remain in their single family homes

longer than they would prefer. However, when adequate senior housing is available, seniors will move out of their houses and are often replaced with young families that boost the local economy and support the local school system. For this reason, many communities view a senior housing strategy to be central to efforts to entice more young families to the area.

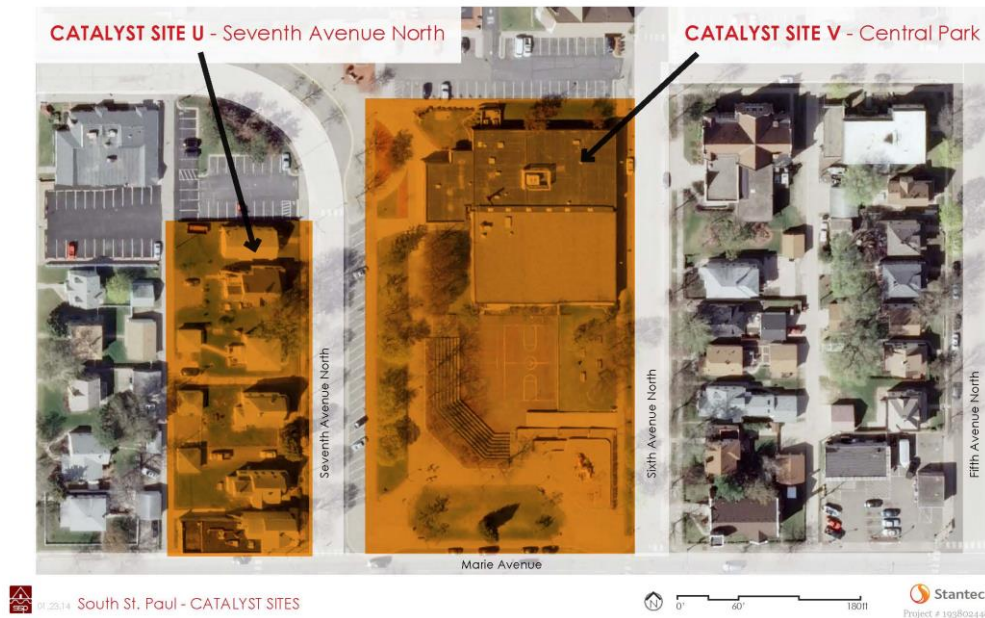
**Table 9: Preferred Residential Redevelopment Types**

Answer	Response
Single Family, even if substantial tax dollars are required to subsidize the development	42.5%
Condominiums	42.5%
Detached Townhomes	40.0%
Attached Townhomes	40.0%
Market Rate/Luxury Apartments	37.5%
Multi-family for Seniors	32.5%
Affordable Rate Apartments	2.5%

### Catalyst Sites

Catalyst sites are locations in the study area where there is a relatively large opportunity or problem that has the potential to positively impact surrounding properties if addressed. Catalyst sites often receive higher priorities because focusing on catalyst site areas can often “jump start” redevelopment.

#### Catalyst Sites U and V (Seventh Avenue North and Central Square Park)



There is a pretty strong community desire for change in this area with only 20.6% indicating that it should remain as it is. Although the Central Square Park is not owned by the City, it does appear to play an important role in the area as the top choices were all about park expansion.

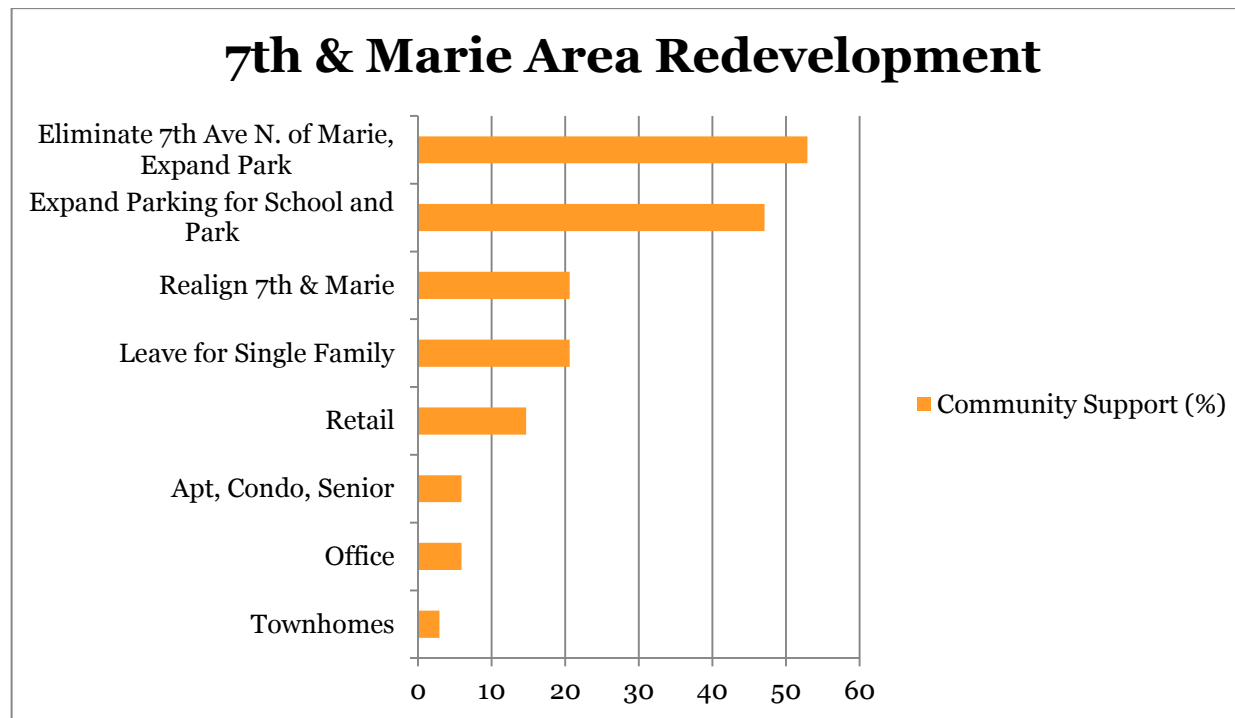
Central Square Park is one of the key assets for support of the Marie businesses and in its current form is not living up to its full potential. The park's proximity to the civic core and local businesses would usually lend itself to creating an urban plaza/park concept that could be a large community attraction. This strategy has been successful in many cities, but the design of the urban plaza needs to be well thought out, flexible and programmed.

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo. Only 10% of respondents indicated that the park should be left in its current condition. 56.7% indicated a preference for an urban plaza concept while 36.7% indicated a preference for active recreation.

Participants were surveyed over a wide range of redevelopment options for the area west of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North (Catalyst U). This area is an area of focus due to its strategic location near the high school, the offset intersection and the beginning of blight. The HRA has already purchased and removed blighted property in this area.

The redevelopment of this area will need to be coordinated closely with the School District due to their circulation, parking and other needs as well as the fact that they own a number of properties in the area.

Respondents preferred that the area be redeveloped into public uses (either park or school) with the possible elimination of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North if feasible..



**Figure 5: Community Support for Redevelopment Options at 7th and Marie**

Catalyst Site W (South Side of Marie and 6th/7th)



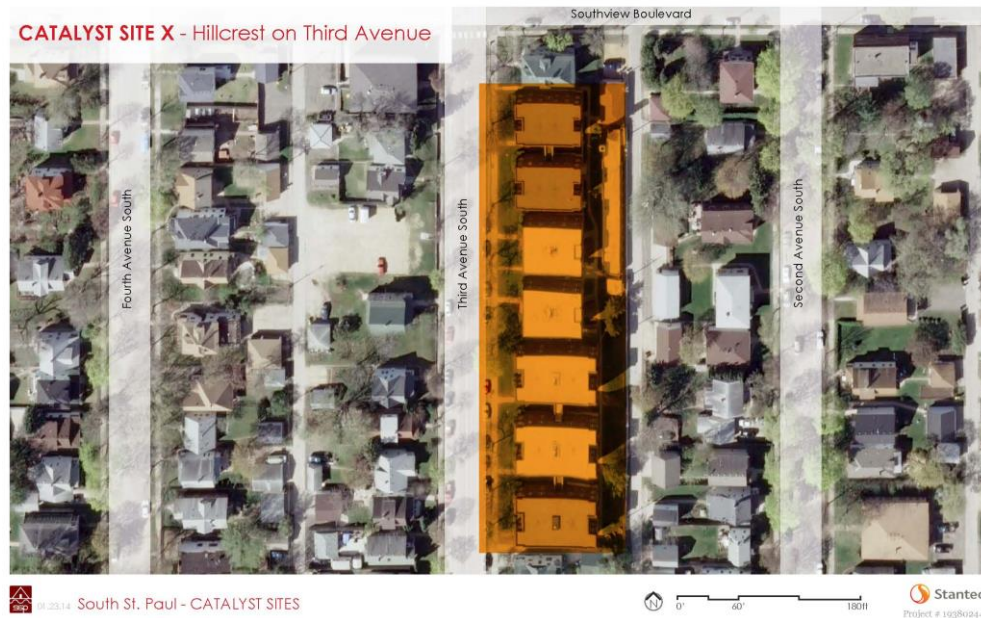
In earlier input, we were informed that there is a level of frustration with parking in this area. Lots are difficult to differentiate between uses and there is what appears to be a temporary cul-de-sac on Sixth Avenue, but is actually intended to be a permanent fixture. This frustration was evident in the open house responses as well with only 6.3% of respondents indicating that nothing should be done. As we have seen in other questions, the neighborhood is calling for the City/HRA to take the most aggressive of the actions presented.

Table 10: Marie Business Parking

Answer	Response
City/HRA should work with property owners to develop a common, shared parking lot/City parking lots	84.4%
City/HRA should explore opportunities to increase parking in the area over time	34.4%
Parking is adequate and no changes should be made	6.3%



### Catalyst Site X (Hillcrest Apartments)



In the stakeholder interviews, the one area that was consistently mentioned as being of concern is the southeastern portion of the Southview Hill Study Area. As a largely single family portion of the Study Area, efforts to bolster this area will likely be a series of smaller actions related to single family blight, upkeep and other stability measures. However, the Hillcrest Apartments do create an option to have a positive impact on the area because they are the largest use in the area.

We want to make it clear that in no part of the public or stakeholder impact process were the Hillcrest Apartments mentioned as being a problem themselves. However, the attractive, historic building architecture is the type of structure where gentrification can occur. Apartment owners, often do not make the investments themselves if they are not experiencing vacancy, but can, at times, be incentivized with an active City/HRA

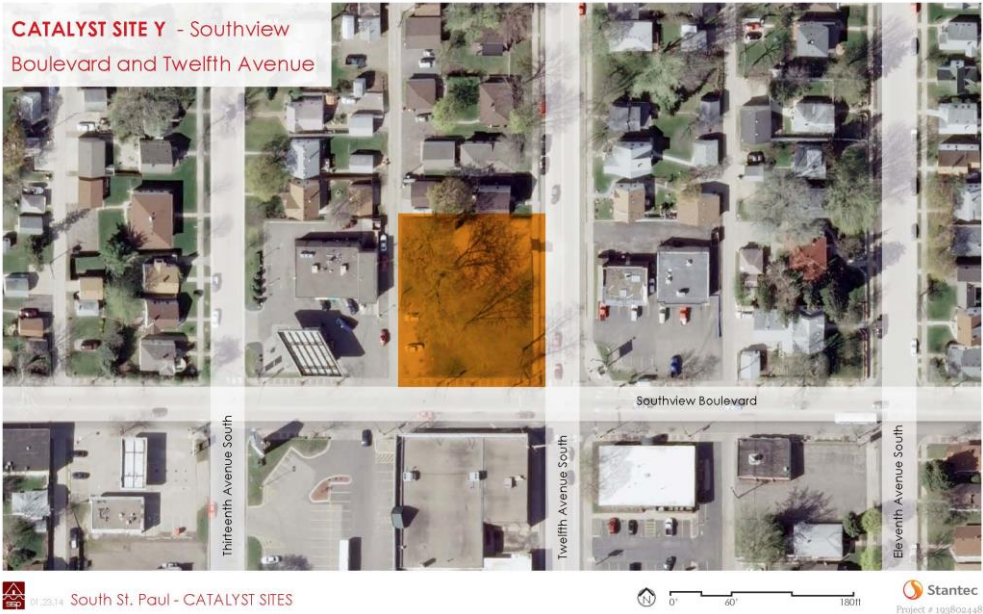
partnership.

The form of this partnership could be a financial incentive for improvements or it could be through actions such as working to find opportunities that might eliminate some surrounding blight while also providing upgraded parking possibilities (which are likely placing a cap on the project's rent potential/incentive to upgrade).

This concept was very popular with the neighborhood with 90.6% of respondents supporting the effort and only 9.4% indicating that nothing should be done.



Catalyst Site Y (HRA Properties at 12th & Southview)



The corner of 12th and Southview is very important from a retail critical mass perspective and the community appears to agree as well. Retail and Mixed Uses received a notable amount of support but there was very little support for any residential redevelopment in this area.

Table 11: Preferred Redevelopment for 12th & Southview

Answer	Response
Retail or Office	64.5%
Mixed Uses	45.2%
Purchase more properties to expand the site to a more marketable size	38.7%
Redevelop for residential uses	9.7%

### Catalyst Site Z (HRA Properties at 9th/10th & Southview)



In verbal comments at the Open House as well as stakeholder meetings, the HRA's recent purchase and blight removal efforts were viewed very positively. One of the challenges of this redevelopment site is that the parcels are significantly undersized for redevelopment in a manner that is compatible with the area's more traditional walkable character. To develop them as they are currently configured becomes very challenging if the goal is to continue with the traditional massing and block continuity.

**Table 12: Preferred Redevelopment for 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> & Southview**

Answer	Response
Retail or Office	51.7%
Mixed Uses	51.7%
Purchase more properties to expand the site to a more marketable size	37.9%
Redevelop for residential uses	10.3%

### Other Areas

We also surveyed the public on the impressions of the areas between the catalyst sites to assist in the plan development. The results were fairly consistent with retail redevelopment favored in most areas, even some that have very little retail market viability.

A few segments did break from the retail desire, however. The portion of Marie Avenue between 5th Avenue and 3rd Avenue was an area where expansion of multi-family was more positively viewed as a redevelopment option. Another area that was viewed more positively for residential redevelopment is Southview Avenue between Third and Fourth Avenue.

# Analysis, Implementation and Recommendations

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There is a clear focus in the neighborhood that the largest problem in the area is a lack of retail vitality. Some issues related to residential were raised, but the vast majority of input, energy and passion was related to retail and particularly a lack of restaurants.

## Land Use

The current linear commercial zoning is a strip commercial pattern that is generally avoided these days because it creates excessive access points which interferes with traffic capacity and safety; is difficult for pedestrians to patronize; and thins out the commercial draw rather than creating a critical mass. Retail is typically now planned so that it concentrates retail activity in a series of nodes which have internal connections between parking areas, create critical mass and attract a wider range of customers (Figure 6).

Although the strip commercial zoning pattern has been in place for decades, the area has some natural nodes due to the lack of retail market pull in some parts of the current commercial strip. Key retail nodes include 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Southview Boulevard, the area between 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South on Southview Boulevard and the area around 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Marie Avenue. Other areas with less retail pull, such as the north side of Southview Boulevard between 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue South still remain single family neighborhoods in spite of decades of commercial zoning.

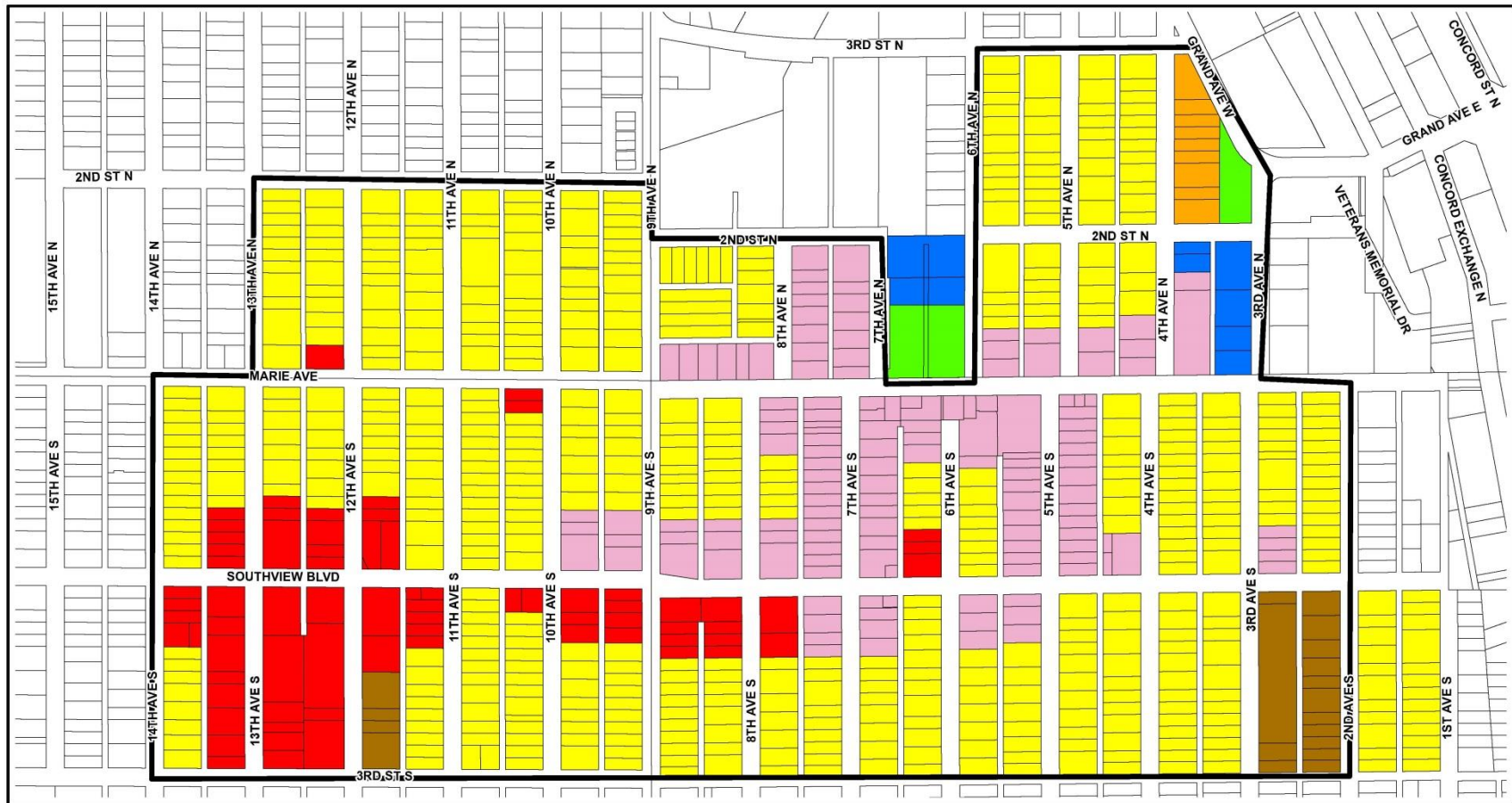
The proposed land use plan will minimize commercial development in those areas that have demonstrated for decades that they have little commercial attractiveness, while providing for slight expansion in those areas that have developed as retail nodes.

Some areas, such as the nodes on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Marie and the corresponding node at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and Southview have some challenging traffic conditions to support retail, but have existing commercial buildings with character. They have therefore been given a mixed use designation which will encourage new development that is more in the character of the traditional buildings and allow residential development to boost market demand.

The two isolated commercial buildings on the west end of Marie Avenue have remained planned for commercial due to the existing building types. However, it is understood that if the current occupants ever vacate those buildings it could be difficult to find another commercial business to occupy them and they may need to be redeveloped for residential uses in the future.

Multi-family guidance was removed from the area just east of the study area (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, south of Southview Boulevard). This is an area that was frequently mentioned as in decline and there is still a viable single family neighborhood in that area, but could lose critical

single family mass if too many more single family homes are lost. Any future multi-family would be better served if it were located closer to the downtown or Southview Boulevard core where there are walkable destinations and services.



## Planned Future Land Use

South St. Paul Marie Street Area Redevelopment Plan



May 29, 2014



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Figure 6: Future Land Use



## Retail

The viability and type of retail an area will receive is generally related to a combination of the following factors:

- Retail district character/placemaking
- Traffic
- Visibility
- Lot size, price and availability
- Critical mass
- Surrounding income and population
- Competitive retail districts

The Southview Hill retail districts face a number of challenges related to low traffic counts, small lot sizes and competition from the South Robert Street retail area. The area's primary opportunities are related to the surrounding population density/income and the possibility of building a retail character district around some of the older buildings that have some architectural character.

Developing a retail district with character can assist in overcoming some of the area's weaknesses because the type of retail that is attracted to character districts often does not directly compete with traditional suburban retail and will attract customers willing to get off the beaten path. One of the key attributes for a successful retail character district is the concept of placemaking.

### Placemaking

The design phases of implementation should build upon the unique character and qualities of the Southview Hill area and overlay new improvements, streetscape enhancements, Central Square Park improvements, redevelopment opportunity sites, pedestrian and bicycle



connections, and stormwater management systems to foster genuine and memorable places.

Improvements within the study area should focus on the creation of high-quality redevelopment that will balance the needs of a wide range of users and accommodate pedestrians, cyclist, transit and vehicular movements.

Placemaking is particularly critical along secondary transportation corridors (such as Southview Boulevard and Marie Avenue) if they are to attract customers and visitors from beyond the immediate neighborhood. This is because the “place” that is created must be special and unique enough to provide a compelling reason for visitors to pass more convenient areas that might offer similar products and services.

Key elements of placemaking:

- Placemaking should strive to make areas fun. Whimsical design elements can be very effective.
- Create animated public spaces.
- Balance public areas for active uses with more quiet and peaceful areas for relaxation.
- Consider the impacts of light and shadows.
- Design spaces for a wide cross section of the community including the elderly, children and the physically impaired
- Consider personal safety when designing pedestrian routes and public spaces. Adequate visibility maximizes natural surveillance.
- Visible security measures can increase feelings of insecurity and therefore should be integrated into the design so they are ornamental in nature.
- Make sure that public areas are programmed so that they serve as activity centers.
- Provide design elements that serve as both aesthetic elements and locations for seating.



### Street Lighting

The lack of pedestrian scale street lighting was frequently mentioned in the open houses. Street lighting is a key organizing streetscape element that defines the nighttime visual environment in urban settings. Quality streetscape lighting helps define a positive urban character and support nighttime activities. The quality of visual information is critical for both traffic safety and pedestrian safety and security. Lighting should be designed not only for vehicular traffic on the roadways, but also for pedestrians on sidewalks and pedestrian paths.



Street lighting includes roadway and pedestrian level lighting in the public right-of-way.

Street lighting fixtures illuminate both roadway and sidewalk and are typically 20' to 30' high.

Pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures, typically 12' to 15' high, illuminate pedestrian-only walkways and provide supplemental light for the sidewalk.

Pedestrian-scale fixtures should be installed along all roadways and areas with high pedestrian activity within Southview Hill area.

In public realm areas with wider sidewalks, the pedestrian level lighting poles can be located closer to sidewalk areas and street lighting can remain closer to the curb. Pedestrian level lighting poles should be located between street lighting poles. Light poles should have a consistent spacing with regard to trees and other street poles. Light fixtures should not be located directly adjacent to street tree canopies that may block the light. The rhythm of the lighting poles should be consistent along each roadway. On wide streets lighting fixtures should be located on both sides of the street, and can be staggered or parallel depending upon lighting level and uniformity considerations.

All lighting poles should be coordinated with other streetscape elements.

### Site furnishings

Site furnishings provide important amenities for pedestrians by adding functionality and vitality to the pedestrian realm. They include: benches and seating, bicycle racks, bollards, gateway monuments, public art, trash receptacles, wayfinding signage, and other elements.

Site furnishings define the public realm as an area for pedestrians and create a more comfortable and visually interesting environment. Site furnishings should be focused on areas with a large amount of pedestrian activity and in areas where pedestrians may linger and enjoy the public realm.

Site furnishings should be considered secondary to street trees and lighting. Street tree and lighting placement should define the major rhythm of design elements along the street, and site furnishings should be placed in relation to trees and lighting, after the best locations for these elements have already been located.



### Public Realm Seating

Public seating is an important component of the public realm because it creates a comfortable, useable, and active public environment where people can rest, socialize, or simply people-watch. Public realm seating is critical to create social places where people can sit and congregate, which is an ingredient in creation of a great and successful public space.



Public realm seating should be designed to complement and visually reinforce design of other streetscape elements. Seating should be located under trees, where possible, to provide shade and comfort and to integrate multiple elements.

## Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks are an important element of the streetscape, both as an aesthetic aspect of the streetscape and as a functional element for those who travel by bike.

- Bicycle rack placement should be frequent in active commercial districts.
- Racks should be provided near major destinations such as the community college, library, recreation facilities and shopping destinations.
- Bike racks placed in the sidewalk furnishings and planting zone should be parallel to the curb so that bikes parked at them do not project into the sidewalk throughway or edge zone.



## Bollards

Bollards are primarily a safety element to separate pedestrians or streetscape elements from vehicles.

Bollards can be designed to relate to other streetscape elements and should be located to define pedestrian spaces.





### Traffic and Visibility

The public input process identified a willingness to explore options to increase traffic, particularly on Southview Boulevard. Southview Boulevard is the dominant roadway in the area, but traffic is not funneled along its full length due to the surrounding grid pattern and its indirect connections with Concord Street and US 52.

To minimize the rush hour backups off of US 52 that may be discouraging traffic from using the Southview Boulevard exit and elevate potential customer traffic in the study area, additional attention should be given to the intersection at Southview Boulevard/20<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. Although the intersection functions from a traffic perspective, the evening rush hour experience is unpleasant enough that it may be encouraging potential customers to use other interchanges to access South St. Paul. Although traffic analysis is not part of the scope of this study, there may be some benefit to exploring the feasibility of a roundabout at this intersection. The upcoming Dakota County project will include extensive traffic analysis that should be able to shed additional light on this issue.

On the east end of Southview Boulevard, there is customer uncertainty as to the best routes that should be taken to and from Concord Street. This situation could be improved with improved use of gateway elements and wayfinding.

Wayfinding and gateways should maintain consistent branding/design elements and not just be functional, roadway directional signage.





### Gateway Monuments

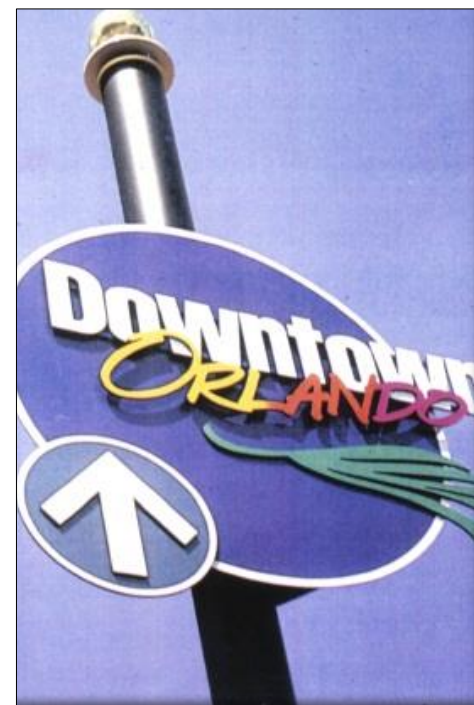
Gateway monuments are typically larger structures that denote an entrance into a special area, neighborhood or district. These monuments should function as a major visual element that can be designed to reinforce a desired character or image of a district or neighborhood. The primary locations within the study area recommended for gateway monuments include:

- 14th Avenue and Southview Boulevard
- 3rd Avenue and Southview Boulevard

### Way-finding Signage

Way-finding signage should be designed to direct and orient pedestrians, bicyclists and visitors to key destinations within the Southview Hill area. The design of the signage should be integrated into proposed streetscape elements to create a distinct identity and reinforce the desired image of the study area. Key locations for wayfinding include:

- 20th Avenue and Southview Boulevard: Wayfinding indicating the direction of “Southview Hill Commercial District”
- 7th Avenue and Southview Boulevard: Wayfinding indicating the direction of “Marie Avenue Commercial District/South St. Paul High School”
- 3rd Avenue and Southview Boulevard: Eastbound wayfinding indicating the direction to Concord Street
- 3rd Avenue and Southview Boulevard: Southbound wayfinding indicating the direction to “Southview Hill Commercial District”
- 3rd Avenue and Marie Avenue: Southbound wayfinding indicating the direction to “Southview Hill Commercial District”
- 3rd Avenue and Marie Avenue: Southbound wayfinding indicating the direction to “Marie Avenue Commercial District/South St. Paul High School”
- 5<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> and I-494: Northbound wayfinding indicating the direction to “Southview Hill Commercial District”



### *Pedestrian, Bicycle and multi-modal connectivity*

One of the important objectives defined in the planning study is to make the Southview Hill area as interconnected, comfortable and accessible to pedestrian and bicycles as possible. Walking and biking to many are preferred modes of transportation and a major force for fostering a livable community. Future plans for the area should promote a safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle experience through the use of pedestrian scaled streetscape treatments and by strengthening the connections between nearby points of interests, neighborhoods, trails and open spaces. Street and streetscape improvements will play a large role in improving the public realm and the environment for pedestrians.

- Improve intersections to provide safe and accessible areas for pedestrian and bicycle crossings. These intersections should include alternative paving materials, improved signalization, signage and other traffic calming techniques.
- Close key gaps in the sidewalk and trail system as
- Provide a minimum of 8'-0" wide sidewalks throughout the area where feasible
- Incorporate streetscape elements such as street trees, planters, monuments, public art, kiosks and benches to create a more inviting and comfortable pedestrian environment and promote more pedestrian activity.
- Sidewalk bump outs are recommended where possible to decrease cross walk distances, moderate vehicular speeds, provide more sidewalk space for large numbers of pedestrians waiting to cross streets, and to define parking
- Improve connections at the edges of the study area to facilitate bicycle travel to adjacent neighborhoods, the broader community and regional bicycle facilities.
- Include provisions for bicycle facilities and improved infrastructure as redevelopment occurs. This may include bicycle racks, bicycle lockers, and/or other amenities to promote bicycle circulation to and from the study area.



- Provide adequate wayfinding in areas where trails move onto streets to ensure bicyclists can locate where the next trail head is located.

### **Streetscape Elements**

The combination, quality, function and scale of the streetscape elements have a great deal to do with shaping the character and identity of the Southview Hill study area. Prior to defining specific streetscape elements, consideration should be given to the following streetscape design & implementation steps:

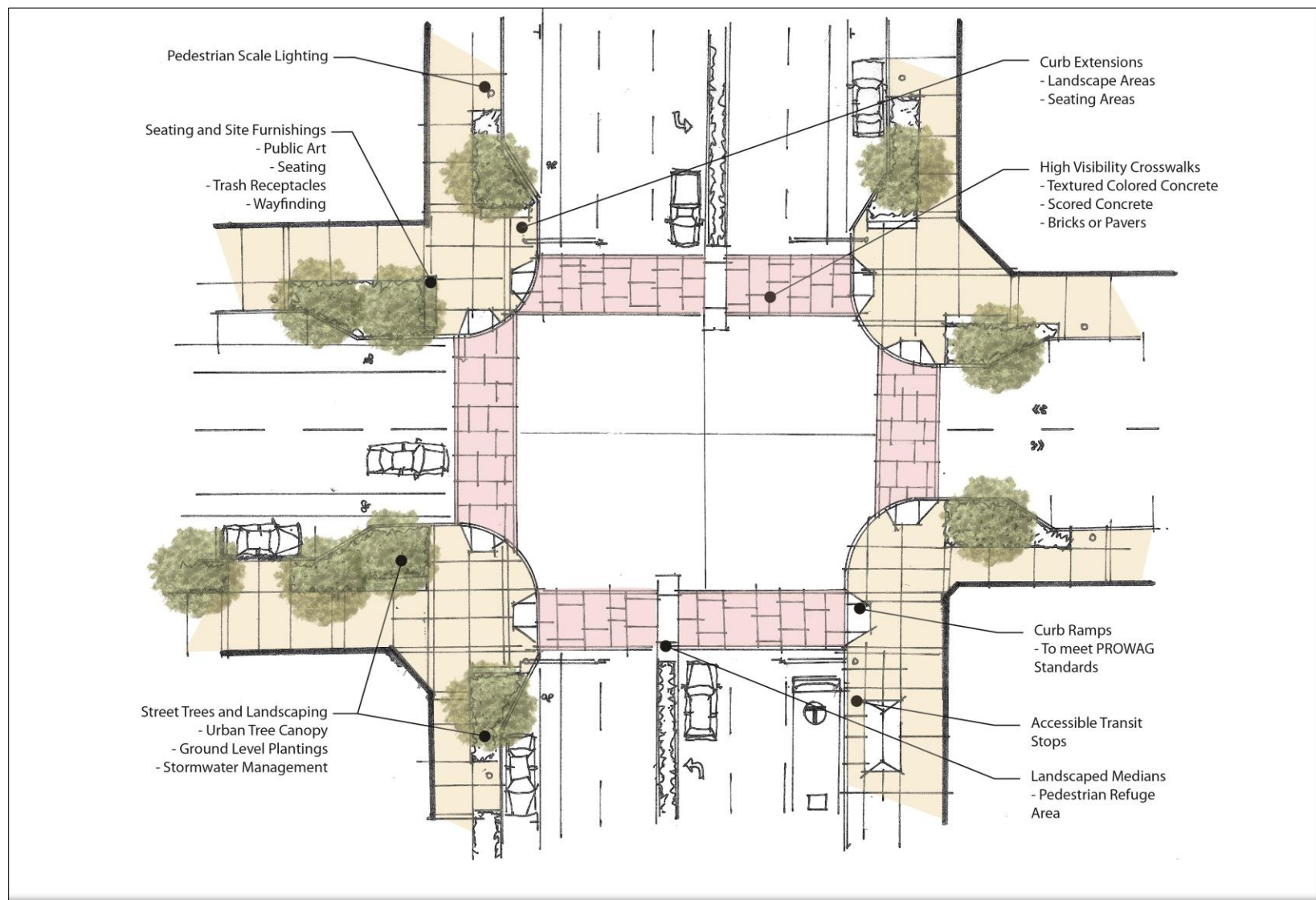
- Define program, theme, and components
- Create an advisory group or sub-committee to guide the creation of a streetscape plan and the design of each component
- Define costs, budget, and funding sources
- Define maintenance expectations, strategy and funding sources
- Design components to meet budgets, phasing, and maintenance requirements
- Prepare interim and long term plans and “Kit of Parts” or design manual to guide future phases
- Prepare design development and construction documents as needed by phase.
- Coordinate with Public Works and redevelopment projects

### **Intersection Treatments and Design**

Intersection improvements within the Southview Hill area should consider the needs of all travel modes. While vehicular traffic flow should be carefully considered, creating safe crossings and accommodating pedestrians and bicycles should be given precedence.

The following principles should be incorporated into the planning of pedestrian crossing improvements:

- Pedestrian safety and convenience measures should be considered as key components of the improvement to the public realm. Pedestrians within the Southview Hill area should have safe and convenient crossing opportunities. For the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists, various pedestrian safety enhancement measures, such as curb extensions, no right-turns on red signals, enhanced pedestrian crossings and improved signalization should be implemented. Pedestrian crossings must meet accessibility standards and guidelines.



**Figure 7: Elements of Good Intersection Design**



Most conflicts between roadway users occur at intersections, where the different modes cross each other's path. Good intersection design provides clear indication to those approaching the intersection what they must do and who has to yield.

The following principles apply to all users of intersections:

- Good intersection designs are compact.
- Unusual conflicts should be avoided.
- Simple right-angle intersections are best for all users since many intersection problems are worsened at skewed and multi-legged intersections.
- Free-flowing movements should be avoided.
- Access management practices should be used to remove additional vehicular conflict points near the intersection.
- Signal timing should consider the safety and convenience of all users and should not hinder bicycle or foot traffic with overly long waits or insufficient crossing times.
- A corner triangle of 30 feet by 30 feet should be kept clear of any unnecessary visual obstruction. In addition, minimal obstructions should be maintained in a sight triangle defined using AASHTO recommended methodologies and appropriate street cross-section and intersection designs.
- For primary intersections, bollards, planters, or other fixed objects should be used where necessary to protect pedestrians and prevent vehicles from driving onto the sidewalk.
- Ramps provide pedestrian access between the sidewalk and roadway for people using wheelchairs, strollers, bicycles, and pedestrians who have trouble stepping up and down high curbs.
- Stop bar markings extend across all approach lanes to indicate where vehicles must stop in compliance with a pedestrian crosswalk at an intersection. These markings reduce vehicle encroachment into the crosswalk and improve drivers' view of pedestrians.
- Advance stop lines should be considered at all primary signal-controlled intersections with marked crosswalks.
- Curb extensions or bump-outs should extend the sidewalk into the parking lane to narrow the roadway and provide additional pedestrian space at key intersections. Curb extensions can be used at street corners and at mid-block locations. Curb extensions are often no wider than the crosswalk, but can be lengthened to create public spaces, landscaped areas, or transit waiting areas. When on-street parking is provided, curb extensions should be provided at all intersections.



- On streets with designated bike lanes or bike routes, curb extensions should not encroach on cyclists' space.
- On lower-speed and volume streets where bikes can travel in mixed flow with vehicles, extensions should not be constructed beyond bicycle and vehicle travel lanes.
- Accessible pedestrian signals (APS) provide information in non-visual format (such as audible tones, verbal messages, and/or vibrating surfaces). APS should be provided at all signalized intersections within the Southview Hill area.
- Pedestrian countdown signals are designed to enhance the effectiveness of pedestrian signals at clearing the crosswalk before a signal changes direction.
- A hierarchy of crossing treatments should be applied to intersection and mid-block crossings based on the location within the Southview Hill area and the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists. Special intersection paving treatments can break the visual uniformity of streets, highlight pedestrian and bicycle crossings as an extension of the public realm, and announce key locations.
- High visibility crosswalk marking is an added feature beyond the use of the standard or enhanced pavement markings, colored pavement, or special pavers. High visibility crosswalk markings can be in the form of signage, special pavement markings, flashers, or in-ground lights. High visibility crosswalk markings should be provided at all mid-block crossings and at intersection crossings where no traffic control is provided. When used, the minimum enhancement should include a stop bar and ladder style markings, which are perpendicular lines that accompany the standard parallel markings to delineate the pedestrian crossing areas.





### Bus and transit stops

Bus and transit stops are critical elements of the public realm that enhance the experience of boarding a bus. The bus stops within the Southview Hill area should be well connected to the local network of sidewalks and bicycle facilities to allow a convenient connection to residential neighborhoods, places of employment and shopping.

The public realm streetscapes should be designed benefit pedestrians while supporting the transit operations. A higher level of streetscape treatments and amenities should occur at the bus and transit stops. Transit stops should be located in places that are active and visible to maximize personal security of waiting transit riders.



### Lot size, price and availability

The lot sizes for most commercial properties is below the minimum depths necessary to adequately support even small retail operations. This creates some difficult transitions between commercial and residential uses and limits the amount of retail activity that can be supported on the site. In addition, parking lots that front on Southview Boulevard breaks up the building massing/district character.

Unfortunately, the commercial uses are not expanding into the adjacent commercially zoned property (usually occupied by a single family house) because the small size of residential lots in South St. Paul means that the costs are generally prohibitive. In other words, commercial uses would have to purchase a lot of building that is of no use to them in order to gain a small amount of land area for additional parking or building area. In some instances, this lack of space may be reducing the potential of the site and in others, (most notably DQ) it has resulted in vehicle movements that spill over into residential neighborhoods (such as 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South), damaging the residential quality of life.

It should be noted that lack of parking was not mentioned frequently during the public input phase (with the exception of the DQ drive through issues). However, given the conditions in the area, this is likely less an indicator of an adequate supply of parking and rather an indicator that the level of business activity is so low that it is not causing parking problems, even though the supply may be inadequate for more vibrant uses. Of particular note is the community's desire for new restaurants. Vibrant restaurants have a much larger parking need than traditional retail. For instance, a 5,000 s.f. retail store might generate a parking demand of approximately 20 – 25 parking spaces. The same space, reconfigured as a successful restaurant, could need 50 – 75 parking spaces to accommodate peak demand which would be very difficult for most of the area's commercial locations to accommodate.

## Retail Recommendations

1. Encourage Dakota County to consider exploring the feasibility of a roundabout at Southview Boulevard and Southview Boulevard/20<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
2. Encourage Dakota County to consider public realm improvements that will support and elevate the Southview Hill area's character and promote placemaking.
3. Encourage Dakota County to consider complete streets concepts in the redesign of Southview Boulevard that will encourage walking and transit use in addition to vehicular efficiency.
4. Redevelop Central Square Park as a high amenity, urban plaza that serves as a key destination for city and regional residents in order to support the surrounding retail uses.
5. The current lack of right-of-way creates sidewalk areas that are too narrow. Work with Dakota County to analyze the feasibility of providing more pedestrian space in the redesign of Southview Boulevard by removing and relocating some of the on-street parking to new public parking lots.
6. Install high quality, branded wayfinding and gateway elements.
7. Develop sufficient design and operational standards for businesses that sell alcohol so that restaurants and the grocery store would be able to sell alcohol on Southview Hill without attracting some of the negative concerns that have been an issue in the past.
8. Work with the business owners on Marie Avenue to combine existing private parking lots into shared parking lots to encourage better usage for all businesses. The City could take over the operations of these lots (snow removal and possible other maintenance) in exchange for the businesses agreeing to share space and post the parking as public. Provide wayfinding on Marie Avenue so that customers are aware of the areas where they can park.
9. Implement form-based or similar development standards to ensure the mixed use character is preserved and enhanced as buildings and parking lots change over time.
10. Work with Dairy Queen to determine if its site can be expanded to provide an adequate drive through stacking area and eliminate/downgrade (i.e. exit only) the access on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to return that street to the residential neighbors. Once

the Dairy Queen issues are resolved (but only once they are resolved), the undersized cul-de-sac at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South should be examined to determine if it is still necessary.

11. Work with Dairy Queen to establish safe and adequate loading provisions. Currently, we have observed trucks unloading materials on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South with vehicles parked across the street/snow narrowing of the street, resulting in no way for residents or emergency vehicles to access 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (since the other end is closed off with a cul-de-sac. This may necessitate relocating trucks, banning parking in certain areas, or limiting the time of day when truck deliveries can be made.
12. Contact properties adjacent to commercial businesses in strategic locations (such as 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South/Southview Boulevard) to let them know that the City/HRA has an interest in someday purchasing their property or relocating their house to another location in order to expand commercial development sites. It is very important when establishing these types of acquisition programs that the homeowner understand fully that they are under no pressure to sell to the City/HRA and that there isn't any time pressure, but just a standing offer that can be called upon at the option of the homeowner. If this is properly communicated, homeowner resistance and fears of eminent domain turn to support because homeowners realize that when they are ready, they can get full price for their home without having to deal with the hassles of selling a home (such as making improvements/repairs, paying a broker, and showing the house). Of course, homeowners can still sell to whomever they want. Participation in a program as described above is completely voluntary.
13. The current commercial retail viability is generally too low to incentivize significant reinvestment in properties. In stakeholder interviews, comments were received that property owners had a desire to upgrade their facilities, but when they analyzed the financial situation, the increase in rent did not justify the expense particularly in older buildings. This is a common problem in older commercial areas and the City/HRA should consider implementing and promoting enhanced financial inducements for facility upgrade which could include programs targeted to difficult but high impact expenses such as the following:
  - a. Façade improvements
  - b. Upgrading obsolete mechanical equipment (electric, plumbing, HVAC)
  - c. ADA compliance issues

Incentives for these types of programs are often supported with revolving loan funds (including forgivable funds) or tax abatement. City funds can be leveraged by promoting other non-City programs that might be useful including state, federal, and private sources (i.e. utility service rebates, foundations)

14. Given that the nature of the Southview Hill area, commercial success will largely be due to the actions of entrepreneurs “Mom and Pops” rather than chain stores. To facilitate these efforts, the City should focus recruitment efforts on attracting successful “Mom and Pop” stores from other parts of the metro that might want to expand rather than chain stores (which are likely to prefer Concord Street).
15. Home grown entrepreneurs can be developed and encouraged through sponsoring regular events for entrepreneurs to come together and seek information. Many entrepreneurs are very busy being entrepreneurs and are not aware of the resources at their disposal including SBA funding, SCORE, licensing procedures, etc. Some communities create a partnership with the local library to schedule a regular entrepreneur day every month, since libraries are often an entrepreneur’s first stop for information. Additional partnerships can be facilitated with local lenders, local vendor fairs, regional economic development agencies, etc.
16. Even with the lot expansion concepts mentioned above, the sizes of commercial lots in the Southview Hill area will remain too small for many retail uses that need an acre or more to function. Uses such as drug stores, small grocery, hardware and some restaurants, for instance, would have a difficult time finding a suitably sized location on Southview Hill. For this reason, the City should continue to develop and support additional retail in other parts of the City where larger sites would be available (such as Concord Street).

## City and School District Joint Use Facilities

Addressing issues around Marie Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South is hampered by the unique ownership situations between the City and the School District. The high school is the dominant use in the area and the School District owns a number of properties that have importance to the City and private sector, including, the community center, Central Square Park and the drug store property. The City also owns facilities that are of particular importance to the School District, such as the hockey arena and controls issues such as streets. In addition, the School District periodically has space needs and could be a partner in redevelopment efforts. Finally, both the City and School District benefit from maximizing benefits of shared parking. A lot of cooperation between the City, School District and even private parties is already occurring, although it appears to be more on an ad hoc basis rather than as part of a strategic partnership.

During the stakeholder interviews with the School District and City staff, there is a lot of common recognition between both groups that the current situation is working, but could be improved. No animosity or hardened positions were expressed, indicating a general willingness at this time to be open to creative ideas and mutual interests. Both groups have a strong desire to enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

The breadth of the nature of these issues and the long term budgetary impacts involved is beyond the scope of this study. However, the lack of a long term, shared strategy for joint use facilities is creating issues that do currently impact the neighborhood. The primary neighborhood issues that could benefit from a joint strategy include the following:

- Redeveloping Central Square Park as the high amenity urban plaza that would assist in the revitalization of the area
- Elimination/relocation of the off-set intersection at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Marie Avenue
- District office needs/Pharmacy ownership
- District parking and other expansion needs that may be closely correlated with some high priority HRA blight removal areas
- Mutual assistance with loading, special events and other vehicular circulation issues

## City and School District Joint Use Facilities Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the City and School District establish a Joint Use Facility Task Force that meets regularly and is made up of high level staff and/or elected officials to periodically review each group's long term strategies and develop a closer, ongoing working relationship related to facilities, parking and streets. The group would facilitate ongoing long range analysis of all joint use facilities and ideally integrate City and School District long range plans for the joint facilities. Creative solutions should be encouraged for this unique intergovernmental situation.



## Residential

Throughout the public input process, residential concerns were significantly lower in frequency or priority than non-residential issues. In general, residents seem generally pleased with the residential portions of their neighborhoods although there was a frequent concern about how the City could do more to attract young families and homeowners.

As mentioned previously, the Southview Hill area is beginning to see some significant turnover to rental single family homes which can indicate that the attractiveness to homeowners needs some support. In neighborhoods of aging homes, the neighborhood often moves in one of three directions:

1. The neighborhood declines with age, is slowly abandoned by homeowners and is eventually redeveloped as part of blight removal efforts
2. The neighborhood is viewed fondly due to the existing character, unique homes, mature trees, affordability, etc. New homeowners move in over time and reinvest in the properties
3. An older neighborhood becomes so desired that new homeowners move in, tear down the existing properties and build new, generally larger, homes

At present, the Southview Hill area appears to be following the second option, although there is a risk that it could slip further into the decline scenario. There are pockets of blight developing and are being addressed by the HRA. The HRA has a broad set of tools to fight decline/blight and a long history of success and therefore is very capable at addressing the current scale of issues.

## Ongoing Neighborhood Evaluation

It is important to establish a neighborhood evaluation process so that neighborhood improvement progress can be tracked over time and new problems identified early when solutions are much less difficult.

One of the challenges with developing a neighborhood evaluation process in a community that has not previously experienced much neighborhood level service delivery is that the data for performing the evaluation is not collected in a form that allows it to be analyzed effectively at the neighborhood level. This is relatively easy to overcome with modern GIS systems, but can still be difficult if information is not stored in a unified GIS environment.

Moving forward, the city's data collection process can usually be modified so that it is more compatible with neighborhood level analysis without excessive strain on the city's departments. In some instances, the data does not exist and would require collection, which would generate additional costs to the public.

A base classification system would include the following components:

*Building Condition* – This is one of the most important pieces of data for tracking neighborhood improvement and decline as well as focusing improvement efforts. Although performing a building condition can involve a significant expense, the City of South St. Paul can reduce the expense significantly if it utilizes interns to perform the work. The Building Condition Survey should be updated periodically, generally on a 3-5 year cycle.

*Housing Unit Growth* – Healthy neighborhoods are characterized by an increasing number of housing units because it demonstrates that neighborhood housing demand exceeds the housing supply. Depending on the characteristics of the neighborhood, this can mean converting undeveloped land to residential uses, but even fully developed areas can experience unit growth as former rural residential lots experience further subdivision or non-residential areas such as brownfields are redeveloped for housing. This data is usually tracked already by municipalities and therefore the only adjustment necessary to utilize for evaluation purposes is to ensure that the data is tracked based on its neighborhood location.

*Building Value/Square Foot* – This information is generally collected by the County Assessor's office and is useful for identifying neighborhoods that are experiencing issues significant to affect property value.

*Ownership Pattern* – Single family/two family home rental patterns should be tracked for each neighborhood. This is not because rental properties necessarily create decline, but rather that in a healthy neighborhood, the amount that homeowners are willing to pay for a home generally exceeds its value as a rental property. This balance can be put off when neighborhood decline causes homeowners to value homes in the neighborhood less or a lack of alternative rental options in the neighborhood forces renters to value rental single family/two family homes more than an owner occupant can justify.

*Infrastructure Condition* – The condition of streets, alleys, sidewalks and streetlights have a direct impact on the perceived character of a neighborhood. Decline in these areas can have a similar spillover impact on private properties in the same way that a blighted neighboring house can have. In addition, failures in the storm water and sanitary sewer systems can be a large impediment to private sector investment. Homeowners are less willing to take a long term view and invest in properties with wet basement or sewage back up problems and the expense of having to regularly deal with these sorts of problems can reduce the household's financial capability to undertake other necessary home repairs.

*Nuisance Violations* – Healthy neighborhoods tend to self-regulate issues that would be considered a nuisance and there is a direct correlation between nuisance violations and neighborhood health. The standards are set based on a three year data update cycle.

*Police Calls* – This standard measures only the call volume and not the type or severity of the activity.

### **Blight and Code Enforcement**

It is important that issues of blight be addressed on a consistent and timely basis for both the underlying property owner and the surrounding neighborhood. For underlying property owners, identification of problems at an early stage can prevent much more significant damage if left untreated. For instance, a simple repair involving painting, caulking or weather stripping on a sound house may involve a minimal cost but prevent hundreds or thousands of dollars of damage to the structure. A minor repair could be a small repair to a roof, windows, site drainage or siding that could be several hundred to thousands of dollars for a homeowner. However, if left unrepaired, the damage can expand into other building systems which increases costs exponentially (particularly water damage). By the time a structure reaches the dilapidated state, the costs of repair can often exceed the cost of demolition and reconstruction.

### **Problems from a Lack of Code Enforcement**

For neighborhood health, delays in code enforcement can frustrate surrounding residents and ultimately drive them from the neighborhood. When the frustration level reaches the point where the innocent neighbor decides to sell their home, the seller may experience a loss of value on the home sale since buyer interest in the property is subdued by the surrounding blight. The lack of enforcement benefits the blighted property and can cause real negative financial impacts to the surrounding property owners (and ultimately the taxing authorities). Over time, this lack of enforcement pushes the residents from the city that value property maintenance and compliance with city regulations and they are replaced by residents that are not bothered by the adjacent blight, which can cause the problem to spread to other properties.

In this light, the investment in effective code enforcement should pay for itself in increased or stabilized property values above and beyond the revenue that is generated in fines and penalties. The positive impacts on quality of life and neighborhood harmony are more difficult to quantify, yet still very real for the city's residents.

### **Community Education**

A key part of effective code enforcement is community outreach and education. Many code enforcement problems are the result of a lack of understanding on the part of residents and can be eliminated without enforcement action once simple steps are taken to ensure basic understanding.

The first step is the creation of a short booklet that outlines the following key points:

- Explanation of the code enforcement process in common language
- Common code enforcement issues
- How to work with contractors and avoid fraud
- Resources for residents suffering financial difficulties

- Key contacts

It is important to create an educational environment that promotes quality housing renovation. Renovating a home can be an intimidating and expensive process, but increased knowledge and access to resources can minimize those problems and facilitate increased private investment. Some elements that can assist with this process include the following:

*Coordination* - Links pointing residents to lists of available rehabilitation funding sources, key contacts and helpful programs should be provided in numerous locations, such as on neighborhood and code enforcement websites, in the Code Enforcement Handbook, Rental Permitting applications, regular newsletters and in the guide for organizing neighborhoods to ensure that local residents are knowledgeable consumers and also able to leverage their private dollars with additional state and federal funds to maximize the benefits to the local community.

*Home Improvement Fair* - Cities have had success at encouraging more interest in home improvements by facilitating annual home improvement fairs that bring local contractors, housing experts, city and agency officials and representatives from lending institutions together so that residents can see products and discuss details first hand with local experts.

### Neighborhood Organization

The desirability of a neighborhood can be positively impacted through the upgrades of the adjacent commercial properties, particularly if proper placemaking efforts are included in that process. However, desirability can also be positively impacted within the residential neighborhood itself through strengthening neighborhood identity and organization. This is a particularly promising strategy in South St. Paul since there is such a strong local loyalty expressed in the community. In several stakeholder meetings, it was mentioned how even when people leave the community, they consider themselves to be from South St. Paul and significant numbers even drive their students back to South St. Paul so they can attend local schools. South St. Paul already has an extensive network of block group organizations that provide the foundation of most neighborhood organizations to build upon.

There is a limit to the impact that local governments can have on neighborhood quality without the active participation by the local residents. It is not a coincidence that many of the best quality neighborhoods also have the most active neighborhood organizations. Active neighborhoods provide many benefits to the city including the following:

- Crime prevention and reporting
- Early identification of neighborhood improvements (sidewalk repairs, missing street signs, etc.)
- Reduction of neighborhood conflict
- Informing residents of regulations and assistance programs
- Increased volunteerism

Undertaking a neighborhood focused process can create initial anxiety in local governments because the experience is that neighborhoods often tend to naturally organize to provide a large negative response to an action or policy change. This can leave the mistaken impression that an active resident population is going to increase negativity. The reality is just the opposite.

Neighborhood organization is just the natural extension of the public participation process and creates opportunities for greater understanding of and participation in municipal issues by the community. In many ways, it is just another step in the continuum of public input activities such as open houses, city web sites, newsletters, and citizen advisory committees. Over time, active neighborhood organizations tend to reduce levels of conflict because the open exchange of ideas leads to an increased understanding of the issues, limitations and constraints that the city must operate within.

Formal neighborhood organizations tend to fall into two categories—the *Neighborhood Association* and *Neighborhood Watch*. Neighborhood Associations are very flexible organizations that may deal with many local government departments, while Neighborhood Watch is a much more focused organization concentrating on issue of crime prevention and safety and largely dealing with the local law enforcement agencies. It is very common for a neighborhood to have both a Neighborhood Association and several Neighborhood Watch blocks and both Neighborhood Association and Neighborhood Watch organizations can work together to solve common problems.

### **Neighborhood Watch**

Neighborhood Watch is one of the oldest and best known crime prevention concepts in the United States. The National Sheriffs' Association created the National Neighborhood Watch Program in 1972. A Neighborhood Watch Program is defined as a group of people living in the same area who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together and in conjunction with local law enforcement to reduce crime and improve their quality of life. The National Neighborhood Watch program has many resources to support residents and local law enforcement officials that are too extensive to include in the appendix, but a good source is the "Neighborhood Watch Manual", found at:

[http://www.usaonwatch.org/assets/publications/o\\_NW\\_Manual\\_1210.pdf](http://www.usaonwatch.org/assets/publications/o_NW_Manual_1210.pdf)

The key participants in the Neighborhood Watch program are as follows:

- Law Enforcement Liaison-A law enforcement or public safety officer who has been assigned to assist Neighborhood Watch efforts
- Neighborhood Watch Coordinator-A volunteer resident who serves as the link between the Law Enforcement Liaison and Block Captains



- Block Captains-A Block Captain serves as the key link between the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator and individual residents. A Block Captain is identified for every 10-15 houses and is the primary contact with individual neighbors. The Block Captain maintains the telephone and email chain of participants and contacts neighbors frequently.
- Neighborhood Watch Members-Individual resident member of the Neighborhood Watch

### **Neighborhood Associations**

Neighborhood associations have a broad range of interests from bringing residents together to solve a problem to presenting a common voice on an issue to purely social events. Although most of the work in a Neighborhood Association is handled by resident volunteers, the city can provide support in key areas to encourage the establishment of Neighborhood Associations and to ensure they remain relevant and vibrant.

### **Neighborhood Association Startup**

The creation of a neighborhood organization can be an intimidating process and many civic-minded individuals may avoid the process because they do not know how to begin. Cities can take steps to encourage and facilitate effective neighborhood organizations.

One of the first steps is for the city to create a guide for residents that explains the process and some of the issues that should be considered when starting a neighborhood organization. The key elements of the resident guide should include are the purpose/benefits, procedures to set up the organization, tips for maintaining a healthy organization and how the organization fits into the structure of the city's other operations. Many cities have put together such guides that are often used as a basis for other cities. A good example of this is the City of Garland, Texas.

Garland Guide: <http://www.ci.garland.tx.us/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=4725>

In addition to the neighborhood organization guide, the City could make available a template for a simple Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as well as links to relevant federal forms, such as the SS-4 (Request of Employer Identification Number) and Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax).

### **Website**

The City can assist Neighborhood Associations by creating a "Neighborhoods" page on the City website that would have some key elements including:

- Maps of Neighborhood Associations
- Key contacts for each Neighborhood Association

- Key contacts for city liaisons
- Startup package
- Neighborhood Association newsletters
- Neighborhood Association meeting schedules

Garland Neighborhood Vitality Website: <http://www.ci.garland.tx.us/gov/lq/pcd/vitalnbhds/office/default.asp>

There are also private sector community intranets that can help a neighborhood easily build neighborhood strength and communication such as [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).

### **Signage**

The City can also assist in the creation and installation of neighborhood signage. Neighborhood signs can be just a simple sign indicating that you are now entering a new neighborhood. However, many cities choose to allow the neighborhood signs to be customized to promote the neighborhood identity. In fact, one of the activities that can bring a neighborhood together is deciding upon the identity that they want to associate with their neighborhood. One local city that has used unique neighborhood identification signs is St. Louis Park.

### **Communications**

The Neighborhood Associations can be used as an extended telephone or email tree for the city. Cities will establish procedures that the heads of a Neighborhood Association will be contacted when a land use application is submitted within the neighborhood or when other city programs are initiated that could have a neighborhood impact, such as an infrastructure project, changes to park facilities or programs, etc. The use of these types of communication are increasing as the widespread use of the internet and email makes electronic communication relatively inexpensive and time efficient.

City staff can also encourage developers, landlords and others are proposing changes to the neighborhood to meet with Neighborhood Associations prior to formal submittal to the city for approval. These preliminary meetings can often work out potential issues of dispute before the developer expends large amounts of money on design and lead to win-win compromises before the project is even submitted to the city.

### **Neighborhood Cleanup**

Cities can work with older neighborhoods to schedule neighborhood cleanup days. This often involves the city supplying dumpsters, trucks and equipment. The neighborhood organization arranges for resident volunteers to assist in removal of large items such as appliances, landscaping debris or other similar items. It is often beneficial to work with the Neighborhood Association to distribute

information about common debris-oriented code violations in advance of the neighborhood cleanup and then publicize that following the neighborhood cleanup, there will be a focused code enforcement action in the area.

### **Neighborhood Block Parties**

Neighborhood Associations should be encouraged to develop regular social gatherings to encourage membership and strengthen the sense of community. Often these take the form of a pot luck affair. Cities can encourage this activity through some techniques such as the following:

- Simplified and inexpensive process for closing streets or renting park/school sites for the party
- Some cities establish a small fund to provide matching funds for the minor common expenses such as location rental, plates, etc. These funds might involve a \$200-\$500 matching fund available to the Neighborhood Associations on a first come, first served basis with a limitation that each neighborhood can only be awarded funds once per calendar year.
- City departments can work with the Neighborhood Associations to use the block parties as educational opportunities including crime prevention, education on code violations, recreation and promotion of applicable programs such as rehabilitation loan programs, etc.

### **Establishing Partnerships**

Due to the numbers and different experiences of residents, Neighborhood Associations are often more effective than local governments at establishing partnerships that can assist with neighborhood problems. This can include partnerships with local businesses, churches, social service clubs, schools and charitable organizations.

### **Code Enforcement Assistance**

The city can periodically provide training for Neighborhood Association leaders to educate them on the common code enforcement issues in the community and the proper procedures for working with the city staff to eliminate the problems. This training will extend the staff resources through the addition of neighborhood eyes and ears but also ensure that the neighborhood understands any limitations or constraints that the city may have in addressing problems so that both sides are working cooperatively towards improving the neighborhood quality. This can be a very effective resource for communities that don't have active code enforcement and should be repeated frequently, such as in the spring when code enforcement problems begin to emerge from the snow melt.

### **Neighborhood Services Team**

One of the challenges facing any city that is establishing a neighborhood based service delivery system is maintaining the efforts over the long term. Cities typically maintain energy for neighborhood service delivery by establishing a Neighborhood Services Team

(NST) that is made up of a representative of each of the groups commonly involved in neighborhood activities such as the Police Department, Code Enforcement Officer, Communications, HRA and the Public Works.

Initially, the NST would be responsible for the implementation stage of this plan. Meetings would be no less than quarterly and be focused on issues such the following:

- Coordination of efforts and strategies to support neighborhood quality
- Sharing feedback on efforts and identification of new problems
- Communications
- Identification of ways to retool existing operations to support neighborhood level service delivery. This can include items such as using the city's GIS capabilities to report data at the planning area or neighborhood level, such as police calls, changes in rental properties, property valuation, etc. or tapping into the system of neighborhood links in order to receive more thorough public input on city activities.

The Neighborhood Services Team is a staff level group coordinating response to neighborhood issues City-wide. This differs from the Neighborhood Association, which is a group of residents focused on the issues of one particular neighborhood. It is expected that there would be a lot of interaction between the Neighborhood Services Team and the various Neighborhood Associations in the City.

### **Residential Recommendations**

1. Continue to support the Rediscover SSP program in order to remove blight, update the community's housing stock and promote home ownership. Areas that have experienced blight problems and a lot of rental conversion, such as in the southeast part of this study area, should receive particular scrutiny for opportunity sites.
2. The City of South St. Paul has already implemented several of these neighborhood organizing steps. However, all steps are repeated to provide an understanding of the overall process and how current efforts with block groups could be enhanced.
  - a. Work with local law enforcement officials to expand Neighborhood Watch program and promote activities such as "National Night Out".
  - b. Provide cooperation, guidance and assistance to encourage the establishment or maintenance of effective Neighborhood Associations. This could include hosting simple web pages for each neighborhood to update events and store neighborhood newsletters.
  - c. Provide periodic code enforcement education for Neighborhood Associations.
  - d. Establish a process for neighborhood organizations to work with the city's resources to schedule "Neighborhood Clean Up" days.
  - e. Establish uniform block party process for Neighborhood Associations.

- f. Develop a process for installation of identification signage for neighborhoods.
  - g. Encourage Neighborhood Associations to reach out and welcome new residents, including renters, so that a positive neighbor relationship can be established from the beginning.
  - h. Establish regular communication links with Neighborhood Associations regarding city actions and approvals.
  - i. Encourage applicants to meet with the applicable Neighborhood Association prior to submittal of formal application to the city.
  - j. Create Neighborhood Services Team.
3. Place “No Parking” signs within and leading up to the undersized cul-de-sac on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The undersized cul-de-sac can make it very difficult to turn around if cars are parked within or immediately in front of the cul-de-sac. This is particularly important because at least one of the residents is dependent on Metro Mobility for transportation and has had difficulties turning around due to parked cars.
  4. Work with the Hillcrest Apartments to reinvest and upgrade the facility. This property is generally well kept and an asset, but due to its architectural charm and challenging parking, is likely not achieving its full rental potential. Due to its large size and key location in a challenged portion of the study area, providing addition incentive to reinvest and upgrade should have benefits beyond the apartment complex itself.
  5. Continue to promote first time homebuyer and rehab programs within study area and within the brokerage community.
  6. Begin tracking neighborhood health statistics as outlined previously so that the effectiveness of intervention programs can be measured and any decline can be identified before it develops into an overwhelming problem.
  7. Review the City’s mixed use zoning standards to ensure they will result in development that is in character with the historic properties and provide adequate buffers with adjacent homes.



## Appendix A: Open House 1 Open Ended Comments

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## 1. Top 3 Priorities for Planning Process

### Priority 1

- Beautification of SSP business area
- Sidewalks currently are a disaster and not ADA
- Need for more retail and small businesses
- Cost to residents/business owners
- We need businesses (stores, restaurants, etc.) to compete with other cities
- Shopping options - more than dollar store
- Hardware store
- Parking
- Fixing roads and adding businesses along Concord
- Place for teens to gather
- On-street parking
- Rental laws
- Parking
- The area on Southview Blvd between 11th Ave S & 8th Ave S needs businesses
- Keep working with rentals; demolition of decrepid buildings
- elimination of blighted properties
- Have a paint party; paint decorating structures
- Decrease low income housing
- Residential development
- SSP is a bedroom community business can't rely on income the first & second of the month.
- Improvement of vacant properties
- Focus on the small business locations - target retail where people can shop.
- It would be best to see more spaces for small businesses to give more opportunities to start off when they make it they will hopefully stay/invest in the town.
- More business options
- Clean up of vacant businesses/properties.
- Parking
- Tear down the vacant and worn out buildings.

## **Priority 2**

- Variety of business to bring in more shoppers
- Allow businesses to make improvements
- Market city as affordable housing (compared to St. Paul) still close but small town feel
- Loss of use during construction
- We need some beautification ordinances on private residences
- Restaurants that can serve wine/beer on the hill
- Bakery
- Property aesthetics
- Renovating southview area
- Zero tolerance for crimes
- Enforce two hour parking
- Rental licenses - limit the number in that area
- Walking sidewalk
- Attract and retain businesses a top priority
- Help with current and new retail enterprises
- encouraging small business to occupy hill area
- Repurpose bulidings
- Attract young families
- General beautification
- we need more to arract people to SSP.
- more businesses (retail & office space)
- If a run-down house is by a business - make parking.
- More business will bring more people to the area.
- Less rentals/ low income housing
- Restaurants
- Traffic at 12th & Southview

## **Priority 3**

- Allow businesses in homes in the area
- Need for more sit down dining options
- Length of project - building portion

- We need something to draw people from outside SSP (riding stable, campgrounds, nice restaurants, etc.)
- Offices/light business for people to work on and then go out to lunch in SSP/Southview
- Fine restaurant
- Safety - personal and property
- Limiting rental housing and section 8
- Traffic safety around schools
- Create more public parking lots near business
- Employment
- More trash cans throughout city - for when I bring my dog on a walk
- Do not get caught up in antiquated ordinances. Times have changed, SSP is deteriorating and we need to adjust our sails.
- Better the communication of "what's happening" in town. Young families are not informed, encouraged, uninvolved
- beautify area with good lighting and landscaping
- Example hat trick liquors - paint hockey sticks on it
- Parking
- more parking
- Think about other businesses, not just concord.
- Allow restaurants to have alcohol, but limit times they can serve. Stop serving at 9 pm or 10 pm. This would hopefully prevent all the after hour noise of a bar open until 2 am or 3 am.
- Parking areas. Only a few, poorly placed lots.

## **2. Vision for the Future**

- Future: A safe attractive place for shopping and socializing; Preserve and enhance: those who have businesses that they keep attractive, cared for, encourage growth; Remove and minimize: Unused and rundown businesses or homes.
- Bunny's and Big Jakes - gone 2. Add entrance on SV to Dr. Z's building and put small businesses in there 3. Make T intersection at 7th and Marie a beautiful entrance to the area 4. Do the same at 21st and SV 5. Redesign store fronts 6. Same style lighting on front of building
- As a 40 something that moved here 11 years ago because of affordability of housing, proximity to highway and downtown St. Paul and relatively safe area, I would like to see more opportunities to support the smaller businesses. I like having Knowlans, Black Sheep for coffee. It would be nice to have something like a wine bar with light food options. A gift store (items similar in nature/scope to Gertons gift section) A Patina or Bibelot would be ideal!!
- More vibrant; more neighborhood nights out; I think the age and history of the city can be preserved while updating to the 21st Century; In the future, more businesses will bring more people, more money and better relationships; Everyone's a winner!

- Less crime and more pride in the city and in taking care of private residences; community gatherings or projects. Maybe a community garden or city center; nicer restaurants and shops. Something to bring people into our city; less of a smell from the meat packing plants, grain elevators, etc.; remove places like the tobacco shop. Keep places like Black Sheep.
- If you google "Niagara on the Lake" you can see what a beautiful city it is and all they did to make it such. The city is very good about sweeping and washing the streets. However, we live across the street from an apartment building. When the streets are cleaned, their cars all lined up in front of our home so most of the time I have to clean the street in front of our own home.
- I would love for this area to be as warm and welcoming as the people of SSP. Working at the library, I have come to be familiar with so many SSP residents, and I would love for other people outside this community to know that too. I would also like to see improved crosswalks/parking to improve pedestrian safety in this area.
- This area could better utilize Concord as an "Uptown" type of area with parks/bars/restaurants and shopping. By renovating Southview and focusing on crime prevention (severe crackdown), we could improve the overall image of the city by beautifying the "heart" of it. By limiting rental housing or heavily regulating housing regulations for rentals (property upkeep and tenant behavior) we will keep the neighborhoods clean and free of crime.
- Compatible neighborhood businesses with compatible architecture, nice sidewalks and safe parking areas. It would be nice to park at one end and walk to a restaurant, park and antique shop - the old "downtown" atmosphere with good lighting, benches and green space amenities.
- The history of the city should be preserved. Revitalize the area/businesses on top of the hill. What are the city's plans for the area?
- I know Bunny's was a "monument" in this town but maybe that kind of service that SSP Automotive had should be relegated to somewhere other than the main street. I think a nice bar and grill on the main street would be great - not just a bar like Big John's. I was a homeowner in this town and am now a renter that works for a landlord. The rental laws and what people can get by with are ridiculous! There are a few sore spots in this neighborhood.
- Safe neighborhood. Want to stay here. Raise my kids here.
- Take demographic into account, but do not sell SSP short. Nice businesses like cafes, a deli, wine bar, hardware store, etc. would be a welcome change. Chain businesses with established brands would also help generate tax revenue. Focus on our proximity to downtown St. Paul. SSP has the geographic advantage of being a first ring suburb. People shop and dine in IGH and WSP because there aren't enough options in SSP. Create opportunities for businesses and offer attractive incentives - we are not in a position to turn them away or worse... drive existing businesses out (Saks off Fifth, for example...which is now a vacant lot and eyesore).
- By generating excitement for the potential of the neighborhood, residents and businesses may buy in. A "rising tide" raises all ships! But people don't want to go looking for information. They need to trip over it. We don't shop in SSP much because they do not have the items I look for. Groceries - Knowlans only for 1 - 2 items, not every week \$; Pro Pharmacy - only for prescriptions; T & T - breakfast or lunch 2 - 3 times weekly; Black Sheep - 1 - 2 monthly; What else is there; school offices - not necessary; Gasoline weekly; bank/insurance/dr/dentist/chiro - not my agents; B & G crossing \$\$ not right size or style (remainder illegible)



- Needs to be like a walk through type neighborhood. A place where people can back and walk store to store. Look clean and fresh so people want to come.
- Public space/parks: Do an interesting story with pictures on plaques about Armour, place it in a park and have Armour and Company pay for it! If pots with flowers or seasonal decorations are hard to maintain, get city or flowers group to maintain them. Get more people on the street, encourage walking. Have good lighting. Take each section of the area, stand back and look at it. How can it be better or improved?
- Row houses/condos on 7th Ave. north of Marie (preferably row houses) 2. Focus on business area with both retail, office, include eatery 3. Eliminate blighted properties - encourage new development
- Get the brick Armour arch moved to a street or park in our area, place flowers around it - get a plaque with history and dates. Get some large cows (fiberglass) maybe, paint, then have a contest and place them all over the area (this was done in DT Chicago in 2000). Put hoof and horn prints all over town on the sidewalk. I just want to live in a pretty area. It will attract visitors and money.
- Remove Bunny's, Pizza place; create walkable retail with street benches & sidewalk dining area; congregate parking area (public); better pedestrian level street lights; create nodes - too spread out
- City Council - City Planner need to step into the present, visit other communities of same size, updated web site - very outdated; check out Woodbury out door mall Excelsior & Grand - St Louis Park, Grand Ave - St Paul, MN
- Should be the hub of this community; General beautification could help distinguish this area from others; More visible foot patrol from SSP PD in this area.
- We need to tear down the old, empty buildings and get some new business in town. We need to get or attract new family in town.
- I foresee an influx of younger families into this neighborhood. Developing retail space for private investment will help grow the area & keep SSP dollars in SSP. More space for small children will encourage more money to be invested in SSP. More green space will encourage a more fostering feel to the neighborhood.
- If a person has never run a business before (has a spot), they should talk to business owners. with the automotive & Big John's gone, build brick buildings (retail on bottom & housing on top), parking in the back. We need people to remember we are there, and not just residential area.
- Sidewalks wide enough for two people to walk side by side (Southview Blvd.) 2. Buildings with small spaces for more small businesses/offices bring more people to the area. Not necessary to have all retail offices would help too.
- Corridor needs updating to attract and compete with surrounding areas, but still have the heart of So. St. Paul.

### 3. Why do you shop elsewhere?

- bulk purchases - Sam's Club, restaurants not available in SSP, variety (MOA)
- not available and selection - knowlans tries
- better selection and not far from my building

- they don't have the stores that I need
- restaurant selection
- large retailers for cheapest price
- There are very few take out restaurants, no hardware stores and limited retail
- variety and selection
- more options
- clothing, furniture, hardware/house improvement
- more upscale restaurants, shops, specialty shops, variety
- More options for retail and food
- don't have a selection, no hardware for instance
- work, shopping, visiting friends in the area
- more retail businesses (not office spots)
- parking, not enough variety/options
- not enough options
- Retail is better; restaurants are better; \*more selection
- price - one stop shops; walmart, great clips, cub, rainbow
- Cub Foods - don't have that in SSP
- nothing to shop at
- support small business man
- Different options than what is in SSP
- variety

#### **4. Traits that are liked about the neighborhood**

- small town feeling
- friendly store owners
- Proximity/grouped together
- Pro
- local owners
- locally owned
- convenience
- small town feel
- convenient location
- City Hall landscaping

- walkable
- convenience
- convenient
- our business
- potential
- local owners
- small town feel
- knowlans convenience
- n/a
- supporting small business
- small town feel
- personal attn
- personally know owners and workers
- helpful owners and employees
- has essentials
- library
- contribute to community
- improvements recently made to12 and southview
- parking usually easy
- Christmas decor
- friendly
- hometown bus.
- businesses that look nice
- decent traffic but not enough stopping at businesses
- small town feel
- bus line
- school dist location
- City Christmas decorations
- everybody knows your name
- friendly/prompt service
- hair dresser
- Park - playground
- our building size

## **5. Traits that are disliked about the neighborhood**

- for the most part, it is shut down at night, no night life
- tobacco stores
- vacant buildings
- no hardware store
- deteriorating buildings
- vacant office spaces
- lack of variety
- unsightly/delapidated bldgs
- All blacktop along southview
- not enough variety
- some closed businesses; looking very run down
- parking
- parking (lack of)
- amount little/none
- small selection/don't have what I need
- nothing to attract people here
- old and worn out/empty
- selection
- lack of care of city plantings (hedges by 820 SV and center bank)
- stores that overdo signs
- dirty/damaged buildings
- no bakery
- not pedestrian friendly
- run down buildings/vacant buildings
- lighting on blvd
- Bad appearance of some bldgs, shops, signs
- parking
- limited locations for retail
- sidewalks not wide enough for 2 people
- parking in the street w/ little kids
- difficulty attracting new business to my building because community isn't "vibrant"
- sidewalks and alley by the dental place on marie
- fine restaurant

- Where does one go to sit and visit
- Curbs and vegetation not maintained
- people know we are there or they don't drive to our area
- not everyone has a business sign, areas look vacant

## 6. Types of businesses you would like to see in the corridor

- Bakers Square type sit down
- health food bar/store
- vehicle repair
- hardware store
- family dining
- bakery retail
- restaurant that serves alcohol
- unique card/book/gift shop
- dry cleaner
- Great restaurant - no chain
- fast food
- health food store or Coop
- sports bar (little more upscale)
- clothing, boutique shop, antique and vintage shops
- small retail (1,000 sq ft spaces)
- bar & restaurant
- restaurants - a restaurant (Applebees) that celebrates the traditions & history of whatever city they're in, would be welcome.
- do not shop SSP, I shop in Inver Grove. they have Cub, Walmart, Walgreen's, McDonald's; all the big retailers!
- coffee shop
- shoe store
- current/trendy businesses
- evening meal establishment
- restaurants
- Insurance Agency
- Chipotle type fast food
- obesity clinic/MD
- restaurants



- bakery
- coffee shops
- additional take-out/delivery restaurant
- unique small restaurants/food/coffee shops
- bakery
- Bakery and coffee shop`
- hardware store
- hardware store
- flower shop, artist spot
- small offices (multiple offices in one building)
- Retail - clothing & sporting goods
- book store
- store clothing
- higher class businesses
- retail
- Retail Outlets
- Hallmark type
- move allom app to Marie or SV
- quick food options like leean chin/chipotle not mcdonalds
- hardware store
- Any reason to come shop, its a pasttime
- Specialty shops like "Mendota Heights" to be able to go walking and shopping ie. even a shoe maker
- more upscale restaurant
- businesses that compliment ours and the coffee shop
- promote the town more (city needs a marketing plan)
- office space - something need to support these restaurants during the weekdays
- Bon Ton
- art, music, food
- Daycare Center



## 7. Primary destinations

- business, chiropractor, DQ, Pharmacy, Dry Goods, Snyders (gone now - I go up to Robert St), Church
- Pro Pharmacy, Knowlans, City Hall

- 1115 Southview Blvd, T & T Galley, Kaposia Store
- Grocery store, drug store, dollar store, library, city hall, cemetery, parks, gas station, high school, church, relatives
- Pro Pharmacy, Community Center, Maple Tree Day School, Kaposia Convenience Center
- Eating
- Work, school events, visit friends homes
- Knowlans, Kaposia Mobil, Central Bank, Grace Lutheran Church, Hat Trick liquors
- Pro Pharmacy, Knowlans, T & T Galley
- Gas station (Kaposia mobil), Knowlans foods
- Drug store, gas station, Knowlans grocery, Liquor - Hatrick, Office (workplace), dentist, hair salon, Black Sheep, Wongs, Sunlight, bank
- Pro Pharmacy, Black Sheep, Library, History Museum, Post Office, Knowlans
- SV Shopping Center, Kaposia, Pro Pharmacy, DQ
- Kaposia, Knowlans, Rondon & Assoc., Dr. Spray (dentist), Dollar store, State Farm Ins., Sams
- all
- exercise
- Kaposia, T&T
- Kaposia, T&T, Knowlans, dollar store, coffee shop
- work, other businesses, friends' homes
- home, business, schools (Lincoln & high school)
- our business, knowlans, angelos, and family dollar
- Central Square, Secondary Building Parent
- work
- Community Center, Kaposia Conv. Store, Knowlans, Black Sheep, City Hall

## **8. Walking obstacles**

- No sidewalks beyond Marie and Southview small business area
- The sidewalks were built to be pretty, not practical. They are hard to shovel and sweep. They tilt - they are not ADA compliant. There were never built with scooters and wheelchairs in mind.
- No
- Need good lighted street, need neighborhood watch signs all over the city, The entrances of South St. Paul are really bad. Gives a bad impression of our whole city.
- No
- unleashed dogs

- No. I live off of 23rd and there is a sidewalk all the way down Southview - I just choose to drive
- Live on north end of SSP
- No
- The brick surface on So. View sidewalk is too uneven, causing stumbling
- I am afraid of crime - get more homeowners
- No just my sorry ass knees
- no
- no
- no
- no
- No. Great area to walk, no sidewalks down 21st to there from Wentworth
- no - sidewalks seem adequate
- the brick sidewalk with obstructions (cement, bushes, tree grates, sidewalk not wide enough in some areas on Southview.
- There isn't many businesses to walk to; there are many office spaces, not retail storefronts
- some of the sidewalks end and then start again a block away
- Sidewalks on West Marie; Street lights

## 9. **Bicycling obstacles**

- NA
- NA
- No
- No
- No
- None, don't bicycle
- No
- NA
- I don't bicycle
- Poor bicycle lanes/areas, sidewalks are poor
- no
- No
- n/a
- Traffic, layout of businesses
- no

- n/a (laziness)

#### **10. Transit obstacles**

- I use my car - our area has no or little shelter for waiting for a bus
- NA
- No
- No
- No
- None, do not use transit system
- No
- NA

#### **11. Areas that feel unsafe**

- There aren't any unsafe areas, but neighborhood watch signs would be good
- I feel safe most of the time in this neighborhood
- Dollar Store - clientele
- Anything below 4th Avenue is out of the question
- The further west from 9th Avenue I get the more "on alert" I become. Maybe from past incidences in the neighborhood - same with 2nd and 3rd Avenue.
- Brick sidewalks on southview
- We should have a neighborhood watch
- NA
- crime - crime is down played in SSP
- n/a
- area south of central square - lots of loitering - may not be a threat at all, though.
- When we have people slam or try to break our storefront windows. kids walking around in groups. in the evening there the town turns into a ghost town.
- I don't feel unsafe in SSP

## 12. Multimodal connectivity needs

- There is bus service if I used it. Cross walks are available, but cars don't observe the stopping law. I usually wait until someone stops, but then the traffic coming from the other direction doesn't stop.
- Bus - ok, Pedestrian - ok, Bicycle - ok, the plows go too fast on Southview Blvd
- Seems adequate, but I don't use on a regular basis
- No opinion - drive only, seems adequate
- No opinion
- I's not the connectivity or convenience that are of my concern, but only walk - where would one walk from to - if at Black Sheep, where would I walk to - there is no retail gift, clothing, book, or assorted browsing store to walk to. You end up @ T & T - not start there. Bank is not on SV or Marie.
- I think it's good never use public transit
- Adequate
- Fine
- See above and below
- to[o] many elec wheel chairs on sidewalks & streets
- The corridor is great, but the adjacent areas in the North side of town are not well connected.
- bus - could be better
- looks good!
- n/a

## 13. Multimodal improvement suggestions

- More stop lights with walk signs
- Study traffic patters - eliminate left turns during certain hours 2. Marie and 7th stop sign or lack of is confusing 3. Design a HS traffic pattern to eliminate back up on Marie
- Not at this time
- No
- No
- Travel wise you're fine - everyone goes by car - thi is no longer a walking town - stores complained about bicycles & skate boards and now its no customers.
- No
- Take out or smooth over bricked sidewalks
- Neighborhood street parties
- Redo both SVB and Marie while using "complete streets" criteria. Bus pull off areas, bike lane, remove street parking
- to[o] much low income housing; intergrade - biking paths from St Paul via River

- bike lanes, landscaping, signage for buses and bikes
- more routes?
- Noisy bus braking (whistling sound) on the corner of 7th Ave and Southview. I don't know what is causing this noise. I have contacted Bus (Metro Transit) and they inspected brakes, but don't think they actually tested brakes while driving. Noise issue continues with most buses at that corner. Not sure what to do. \_\_\_\_\_

**14. What are the main reasons you go to other shopping areas instead of within the neighborhood?**

- bulk purchases - Sam's Club, restaurants not available in SSP, variety (MOA)
- not available and selection - knowlans tries
- better selection and not far from my building
- they don't have the stores that I need
- restaurant selection
- large retailers for cheapest price
- There are very few take out restaurants, no hardware stores and limited retail
- variety and selection
- more options
- clothing, furniture, hardware/house improvement
- more upscale restaurants, shops, specialty shops, variety
- More options for retail and food
- don't have a selection, no hardware for instance
- work, shopping, visiting friends in the area
- more retail businesses (not office spots)
- parking, not enough variety/options
- not enough options
- Retail is better; restaurants are better; \*more selection
- price - one stop shops; walmart, great clips, cub, rainbow
- Cub Foods - don't have that in SSP
- nothing to shop at
- support small business man
- Different options than what is in SSP
- variety