THE **COMO** BLUEPRINT

A SMALL AREA PLAN FOR THE COMO NEIGHBORHOOD OF MINNEAPOLIS

PREPARED FOR:
The Southeast Como Improvement Association

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Como is a place with cozy homes, tree-lined streets, and delightful gardens, where people come and stay for generations

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thank you – tak

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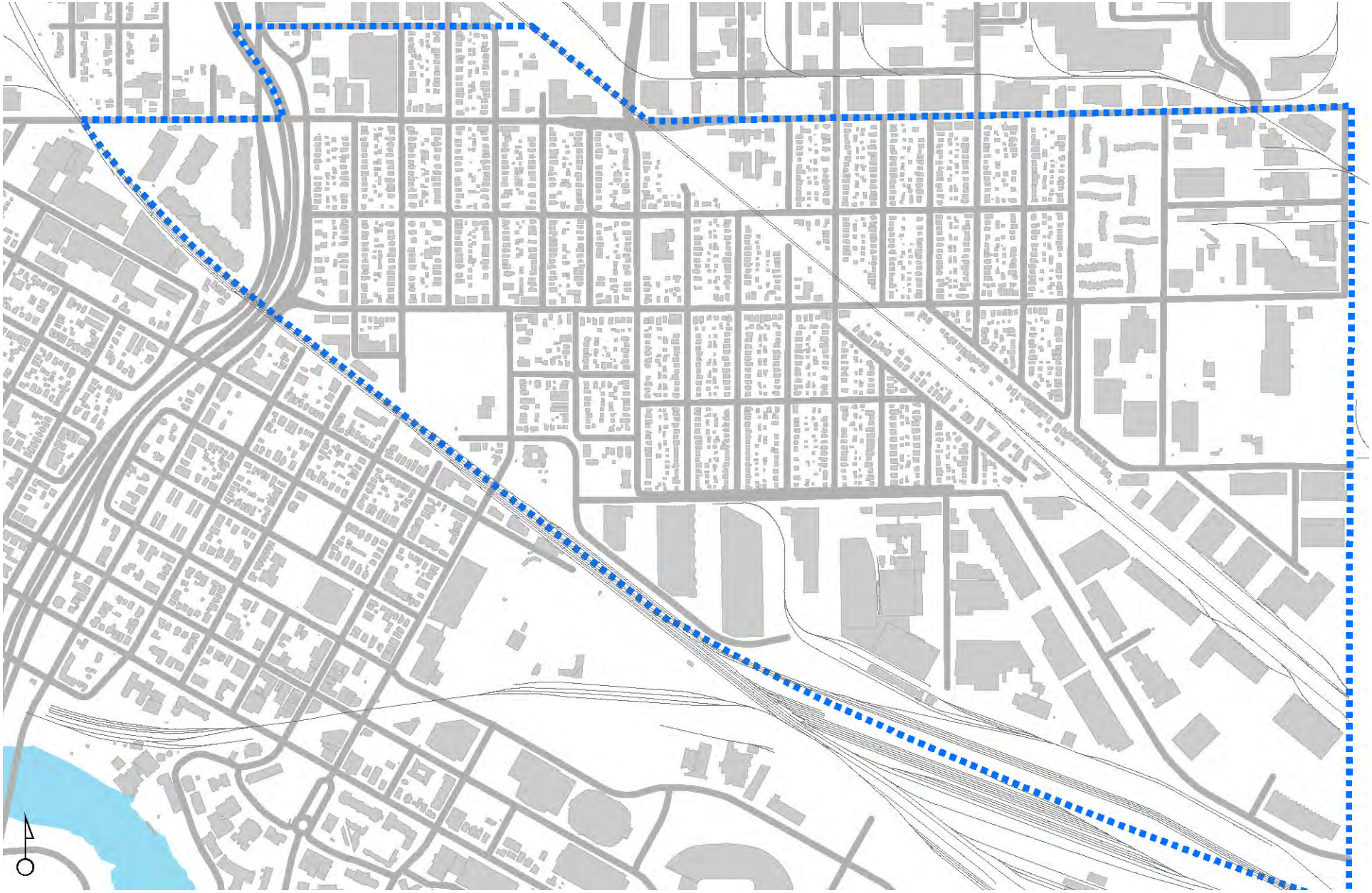


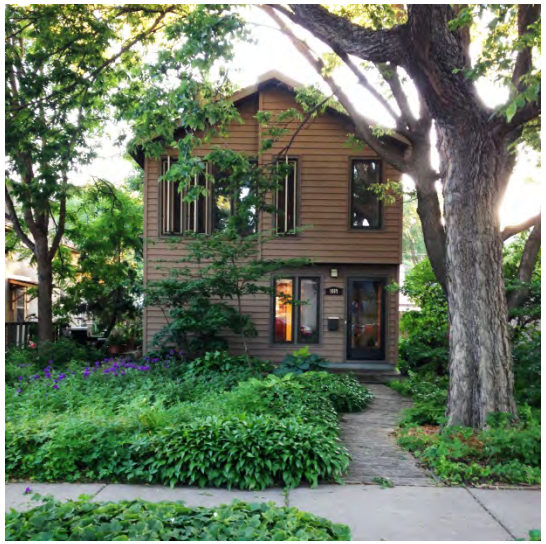
PROJECT AREA: THE ROADS AND BUILDINGS IN AND AROUND THE COMO NEIGHBORHOOD

1 Executive Summary

In this section

1.1 Document Structure
1.2 Summary of Recommendations
1.3 Previous Neighborhood Plans
1.4 Other Plans
1.5 Eminent Domain
1.6 Important Terms

the Como Blueprint can help guide development for the next twenty years



In the fall of 2012, members of the Como neighborhood of Minneapolis embarked on a small area planning process. This document, *The Como Blueprint*, is the result of their efforts. The purpose of the Como Blueprint is to help guide development in the neighborhood for the next 20 years. The document articulates a vision for the neighborhood based on stakeholder input, research, Minneapolis City policy, and Minnesota state law. The Como Blueprint is intended for neighborhood residents and business owners, elected officials, city staff, neighborhood volunteers, real estate developers, and other stakeholders.

1.1 Document Structure

The Como Blueprint contains 17 sections in three parts. Part One sets the stage; it includes this executive summary, the vision statement, a description of the community engagement process, a history of the Como neighborhood, and a profile of the community. Part Two sets a course for the future of the Como neighborhood; it contains sections on land use, transportation, housing, economic development, the environment, parks and open space, heritage preservation, arts and culture, public safety, and institutions. Each of these sections contains a series of recommendations that are based on input gathered during the community engagement process, research conducted by the Como Blueprint consulting team, and direction from the steering committee. Part Three contains background and reference materials, including maps, appendices, and sources.

1.2 Summary of Recommendations

The Como Blueprint contains more than 75 recommendations and this section provides a snapshot of them.

LAND USE (SECTION 6)

The recommendations within the Land Use section are designed to protect core low density residential areas of the neighborhood and support mixed-use and medium density residential development in designated locations. The vast majority of land use in the Como neighborhood will remain unchanged. Areas of potential change include Transitional Industrial land and along the neighborhood's Community Corridors – East Hennepin Ave, and portions of Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE. It is imperative to understand that the recommendation to support development does not constitute a call for wholesale demolition of existing buildings or the use of eminent domain.

Future Land Use (Section 6.1)

- Support mixed-use and medium density residential development in Transitional Industrial areas and along the neighborhood's Community Corridors.

Community Corridors (Section 6.2)

- Evaluate the existing land use along the neighborhood's Community Corridors;
- Develop a framework addressing the differences between East Hennepin Ave, Como Ave, and 15th Ave SE; and
- Identify desired development styles, including mixed-use and medium density housing.

Aggregate Lots (Section 6.3)

- Consider aggregation of lots along Community Corridors to facilitate the development of mixed-use buildings and medium density housing.

Lot Orientation (Section 6.4)

- Consider reorienting lots along Community Corridors to face the main thoroughfare.

Street Pattern (Section 6.5)

- Encourage fine-grained street pattern if industrial land is redeveloped.

Land Trust (Section 6.6)

- Promote and pursue the land trust ownership model.

TRANSPORTATION (SECTION 7)

The recommendations within the Transportation section focus on evaluating and improving the network, especially for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. Long-term design and development policies that support pedestrians and transit use are also recommended.

Pedestrians (Section 7.1)

- Evaluate the pedestrian infrastructure;
- Identify network gaps and needs; and
- Determine the feasibility of pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

Parking (Section 7.2)

- Evaluate neighborhood parking conditions; and
- Install additional limited parking signs near transit stops and Tuttle School.

Bicycles (Section 7.3)

- Assess the existing bicycle infrastructure;
- Evaluate potential bicycle infrastructure improvements;
- Review the bicycle policies that impact the Como neighborhood;
- Monitor and participate in the Missing Link (see Section 11.3) project; and
- Promote bicycle sharing programs.

Bus Stops and Bus Rapid Transit (Section 7.4)

- Encourage Metro Transit to make bus stop improvements along Como Ave and 15th Ave SE; and
- Encourage Metro Transit to evaluate implementing bus rapid transit service on Route 3.

Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design (Section 7.5)

- Promote Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design (PTOD) principles.

HOUSING (SECTION 8)

The recommendations within the Housing section support the concomitant Land Use recommendations and identify desired housing types.

the Como Blueprint recommends evaluating and enhancing the pedestrian network

the Como neighborhood is home to thousands of jobs and many businesses

Housing Density (Section 8.1)

- Encourage medium density housing development in Transitional Industrial areas and along Community Corridors and maintain low density housing patterns elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Senior Housing (Section 8.2)

- Encourage the development of senior housing.

Workforce Housing (Section 8.3)

- Encourage the development of workforce housing.

Neighborhood Promotion (Section 8.4)

- Promote the Como neighborhood to the workers of nearby businesses and institutions.

Student-Oriented Housing (Section 8.5)

- Encourage the development of housing types that appeal to a broad range of people; and
- Discourage rental practices and the development of housing that targets only students.

Single Family Dwelling Reuse Strategies (Section 8.6)

- Investigate strategies and programs that return single family dwellings currently being used as student rental housing to owner occupied, senior, or workforce housing.

Code Enforcement (Section 8.7)

- Develop housing maintenance and rental code enforcement strategies.

City Programs (Section 8.8)

- Explore the Higher Density Corridor Housing Program.

Accessory Dwelling Units (Section 8.9)

- Initiate talks with the City about practices that will ensure reliable adherence to the ADU owner-occupancy requirement and impacts on duplex properties;
- Encourage property owners considering an ADU to evaluate off street parking options.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SECTION 9)

The recommendations within the Economic Development section are designed to support Housing recommendations and respond to stakeholder's desire for additional small-scale retail in the neighborhood.

Economic Activity and Employment Inventory (Section 9.1)

- Conduct an economic activity and employment inventory.

Workforce Survey (Section 9.2)

- Survey local workers to gather their housing and neighborhood preferences.

Great Streets Program (Section 9.3)

- Promote participation in the Great Streets program.

Mixed-Use Buildings (Section 9.4)

- Promote mixed-use buildings.

Improvement District (Section 9.5)

- Investigate improvement district options and partnerships.

Community Development Corporation (Section 9.6)

- Investigate community development corporation (CDC) options and partnerships.

ENVIRONMENT (SECTION 10)
The recommendations within the Environment section focus on supporting existing programs and providing information to residents.

Como Green Village (Section 10.1)
- Promote and participate in Como Green Village activities.

University District Alliance (Section 10.2)
- Participate in University District Alliance environmental programs.

Informational Resources (Section 10.3)
- Connect neighborhood stakeholders with existing informational resources.

Urban Agriculture (Section 10.4)
- Promote and support urban agriculture.

Litter, Trash, and Graffiti Removal (Section 10.5)
- Enhance litter, trash, and graffiti removal efforts.

Pack & Give Back (Section 10.6)
- Promote the Pack & Give Back program; and
- Promote reduce, reuse, and recycle programs and activities.

TCE Cleanup (Section 10.7)
- Continue to work with the City and other agencies and actively monitor TCE cleanup.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE (SECTION 11)
The recommendations within the Parks and Open Space section focus on policy, evaluation, and future park planning.

Existing Resources (Section 11.1)
- Evaluate existing park programs and facilities.

Future Parks (Section 11.2)
- Provide input on the location of future parks in the Como neighborhood.

The Missing Link (Section 11.3)
- Monitor the Missing Link project.

Parks and Open Space Policy (Section 11.4)
- Review parks and open space policies.

Minneapolis Park Board (Section 11.5)
- Collaborate and coordinate policies with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION (SECTION 12)
The recommendations within the Heritage Preservation section focus on research and documentation of existing and potential historic properties in the neighborhood.

Little Free Libraries can build social capital, share knowledge, and support reduce/reuse habits

Existing Resources (Section 12.1)
- Document existing Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) designated properties.

Potential Resources (Section 12.2)
- Document properties being considered by Minneapolis HPC for designation.

Research and Evaluation (Section 12.3)
- Research, evaluate, and nominate worthy properties for Minneapolis HPC designation.

Partnerships (Section 12.4)
- Investigate partnerships with historic preservation advocacy groups.

Architecture Styles Guide (Section 12.5)
- Revise and update the Como architecture styles guide.

Museum in the Street (Section 12.6)
- Research implementing a Museum in the Streets project.

Conservation District (Section 12.7)
- Pursue a conservation district for core areas of the Como neighborhood.

ARTS AND CULTURE (SECTION 13)

The recommendations within the Arts and Culture section focus on identifying resources, building upon existing successes, and sharing information with the neighborhood.

Resource Inventory (Section 13.1)
- Create an arts and cultural resource inventory.

Como Festival (Section 13.2)
- Expand the Como neighborhood festival.

Public Art (Section 13.3)
- Promote public art; and
- Pursue public art funding.

Public Libraries (Section 13.4)
- Strengthen connections with public libraries.

Creative Placemaking (Section 13.5)
- Research Creative Placemaking and other strategies that support the arts.

Little Free Libraries (Section 13.6)
- Promote Little Free Libraries.

PUBLIC SAFETY (SECTION 14)

The recommendations within the Public Safety section include bolstering existing programs and evaluating technology in the near term and implementing design strategies in the long term.

Law Enforcement (Section 14.1)
- Work with local law enforcement agencies.

Neighborhood Watch (Section 14.2)
- Enhance the Neighborhood Watch program.

Junk In Your Trunk (Section 14.3)
- Consider implementing a "Put Your Junk In Your Trunk" style public safety campaign.

Street Lighting (Section 14.4)
- Evaluate street lighting.

Security Cameras (Section 14.5)
- Evaluate adding security cameras at key locations.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (Section 14.6)
- Evaluate real estate development proposals using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles; and
- Create CPTED toolkit for property owners.

INSTITUTIONS (SECTION 15)

The recommendations within the Institutions section focus on building connections with local and neighboring organizations.

Religious Institutions (Section 15.1)
- Strengthen connections with religious institutions.

Minneapolis Public Schools (Section 15.2)
- Strengthen connections with Minneapolis Public Schools.

University of Minnesota (Section 15.3)
- Strengthen connections with the University of Minnesota;
- Work with the Office of Housing and Residential Life; and
- Strengthen connections with the Office of Student and Community Relations.

The University District Alliance (Section 15.4)
- Maintain connections with University District Alliance.

Minneapolis Park Board (Section 15.5)
- Strengthen connections with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

1.3 Previous Neighborhood Plans

The Southeast Como Neighborhood Action Plan is the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) plan for the Como neighborhood and it was completed by SECIA and various working groups in 1999. The Como NRP plan was adopted by Minneapolis City Council early in 2000. While not a small area plan, the NRP plan addressed some topics also found in the Como Blueprint. The NRP plan included Housing, Environment, Public Safety, Schools, Parks, Business & Economic Development, Community Service, Transportation, and Community Building. The bulk of NRP resources, over $1.2 million dollars, were allocated to Housing programs.

the Como Blueprint recommends several design strategies to help reduce crime

the Como Blueprint does not occur in a vacuum – many other plans need to be accounted for

1.4 Other Plans

The Como Blueprint small area plan does not occur in a vacuum. Many other plans need to be accounted for. The Metropolitan Council and the City of Minneapolis produce the large system and policy plans that have the most influence on the Como Blueprint. Also important are the small area plans and corridor plans of the surrounding neighborhoods.

1.4.1 Metropolitan Council – The Metropolitan Council is the Twin Cities regional planning agency and policy-making body. The Metropolitan Council also provides essential services to the region including mass transit and wastewater treatment. The Metropolitan Council has developed a regional comprehensive plan called Thrive MSP 2040. The Metropolitan Council also has developed specialized plans for transportation, regional parks, housing policy, and water resources. These specialized plans are coordinated with the long-range comprehensive plans of cities in the region. (Source: www.metrocouncil.org/Communities/Planning.aspx)

1.4.2 Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth – The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth is the City's comprehensive plan and it was unanimously adopted by the City Council in 2009. The comprehensive plan addresses land use, transportation, housing, economic development, public services and facilities, the environment, parks and open space, heritage preservation, arts and culture, urban design, and implementation. The comprehensive plan aims to make Minneapolis a more livable and sustainable city. The plan forecasts significant population growth in the next 25 years. The comprehensive plan is a high-level citywide document and it does not address certain neighborhood level details. It is the role of the small area plan to fill in these details in a manner that is consistent with the comprehensive plan. As of this writing, the plan is in the process of being updated. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/plans/cped_comp_plan_2030)

1.4.3 Access Minneapolis – Access Minneapolis is the City's ten year transportation plan. Access Minneapolis addresses the full range of transportation modes and policy issues, including pedestrians, bicycles, mass transit, automobiles, and freight transportation. The purpose of Access Minneapolis is to identify specific actions that the City and its partner agencies (Metro Transit, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Minnesota Department of Transportation) need to take within the next ten years to implement the transportation policies articulated in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/transplan/)

1.4.4 Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan – The purpose of Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan is to "establish goals, objectives, and benchmarks that improve safety and mobility for bicyclists and increase the number of trips taken by bicycle. The Bicycle Master Plan includes bicycle policy, existing conditions, a needs analysis, a list of projects and initiatives, and funding strategies to be implemented to complete the plan." (Source: Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan) The Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan includes

several recommendations that will affect the Como neighborhood, including the completion of the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway (also known as the Missing Link project), the addition of a bikeway on East Hennepin Ave, and the extension of the Elm St Bikeway. For more on bicycle planning, see section 7.3.2 of this document. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/bicycles/WCMS1P-135610)

1.4.5 Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan – The Minneapolis Urban Agriculture Policy Plan was adopted in 2011 by the Minneapolis City Council. The plan is the City's first Urban Agriculture Policy Plan. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/plans/cped_urban_ag_plan)

1.4.6 Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture – The purpose of the Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture was to develop a ten-year strategic plan that defined the City's role in supporting the arts and culture. The plan set priorities that are supported by policy and a range of City resources. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/dca/dca_rfp)

1.4.7 Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan – The Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted by City Council in 2009. The plan includes seven goals, including: A Well-Connected Walkway System; Accessibility for All Pedestrians; Safe Streets and Crossings; A Pedestrian Environment that Fosters Walking; A Well-Maintained Pedestrian System; A Culture of Walking; Funding, Tools and Leadership for Implementing Pedestrian Improvements. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/pedestrian/projects/pedestrian_pedestrian-masterplan)

1.4.8 Minneapolis Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan – The Minneapolis Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan (Industrial Plan) was adopted by the City Council in November of 2006. The intent of the plan is to "provide the City with a clear policy direction for industrial land uses and industrial sector employment within the City of Minneapolis. The plan evaluates the long-term viability of existing industrial uses and proposes a range of industrial uses to retain for the future. The plan identifies where existing and new industrial uses should be located and what components, either existing or new, these uses will require. In addition to land use, the plan provides a comprehensive examination of current and future industrial sector employment within the City of Minneapolis in relation to national and regional trends." (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/plans/cped_industrial-landuse)

The Industrial Plan is more important to the Como neighborhood than most other Minneapolis neighborhoods because the Como neighborhood is flanked by two of the industrial areas identified in the plan. The Mid-City Industrial neighborhood is immediately north of the Como neighborhood and the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial Area (SEMI) is south of the Como neighborhood and includes a large portion of the southeast corner of the neighborhood.

1.4.9 Minneapolis Public Schools – Schools play an important role in neighborhoods. The Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) long range plan is called the Strategic Plan 2020. MPS has also developed a Five

the Como neighborhood is bordered by two large industrial areas

the 15th Avenue Plan is important because the study area is adjacent to the Como neighborhood

Year Enrollment Plan and this plan has near term implications for the Como neighborhood. See Section 15.2 for more on this topic.

1.4.10 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board – The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2007 - 2020 Comprehensive Plan articulates the vision, goals and strategies for the park system through 2020. (Source: www.minneapolisparks.org/_asset/9h52lq/comprehensive_plan.pdf)

1.4.11 University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus Master Plan – The University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus Master Plan of 2009 established a framework for guiding the change and development of the campus to support the academic mission of the University.

1.4.12 Master Plan for the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood – The Marcy-Holmes neighborhood is immediately south of the Como neighborhood and the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (MHNA) recently completed an update to the neighborhood master plan.

1.4.13 15th Avenue SE Urban Design Plan – The 15th Avenue SE Urban Design Plan was prepared for the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association in 2008. The plan area encompasses three and one-half blocks between 14th and 15th Ave SE and 5th St SE to the railroad tracks (approximately one-half block northeast of 8th St SE). The purpose of the plan is to "articulate to the development community and potential implementation partners the community expectations for new, aggressive, high-quality development on 15th Avenue SE. The document outlines a design strategy, makes recommendations, and shows conceptual plans for the three and a half block area." (Source: 15th Avenue SE Urban Design Plan, p. 4)

The 15th Avenue Plan is important to the Como neighborhood because the study area is immediately south of the Como neighborhood and the plan calls for major high-density redevelopment. The 15th Avenue Plan is also important because 15th Ave SE is an important gateway to the Como neighborhood. The block within the planning area closest to the Como neighborhood is identified as Block 4. This block is located along the railroad tracks and overlooks Van Cleve Park. "New development should create a strong 4 to 6 story street enclosure with front doors on 8th St SE, 14th Ave SE and 15th Ave SE. A small footprint residential tower (approximately 10,000 sf) oriented east west can be located anywhere on the block so long as it is set back from the street." (Source: 15th Avenue SE Urban Design Plan, p. 22)

1.4.14 Beltrami Neighborhood Action Plan – The Beltrami Neighborhood Action Plan was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in July of 2000. The Beltrami neighborhood is located northwest of the Como neighborhood.

1.5 Eminent Domain

Urban planning has at times been intertwined with the use of eminent domain. Eminent domain is the right of government to take private property for public use by virtue of the superior dominion of the

sovereign power over all lands within its jurisdiction. (Source: Merriam-Webster) The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation. Similar provisions exist in the Minnesota Constitution (Article 1, Section 13, and Article 13, Section 4). (Source: www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/issues/issues.aspx?issue=eminent domain)

After the 2005 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Kelo v. City of New London*, (545 U.S. 469) the Minnesota Legislature took action to clarify Minnesota law regulating eminent domain. The law now states that "eminent domain may only be used for a public use or public purpose", and further clarifies that the "public benefits of economic development, including an increase in tax base, tax revenues, employment, or general economic health, do not by themselves constitute a public use or public purpose". The Legislature also addressed the issues of condemnation for blight mitigation or contamination remediation, local government public hearing requirements, and compensation procedures. (Source: 2013 Minnesota Statutes 117.025, Subdivision 11 www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/issues/issues.aspx?issue=eminentdomain)

The Como Blueprint does **not** call for the use of eminent domain to implement the plan.

the Como Blueprint does not call for the use of eminent domain to implement the plan

1.6 Important Terms

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan identifies seven categories of future land use in the City: Urban Neighborhood, General Commercial, Mixed-Use, Public & Institutional, Open Space & Parks, Industrial, and Transitional Industrial. The plan also identifies several land use features, including: Community Corridors, Growth Centers, Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, and Activity Centers. The Como neighborhood includes some of these uses and features and they are defined below. All quoted text is from the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 1: Land Use, pages 7-11.

1.6.1 Urban Neighborhood – Most of the Como neighborhood has been designated Urban Neighborhood in the Comprehensive Plan. This land use is intended to be a “predominantly residential area with a range of densities and may include other small-scale uses, including neighborhood serving commercial, and institutional and semi-public uses (for example, schools, community centers, religious institutions, public safety facilities, etc.) scattered throughout. More intensive non-residential uses may be located in neighborhoods closer to Downtown and around Growth Centers. Residential density of Urban Neighborhoods varies, but is predominantly low density (8-20 dwelling units per acre) and urban neighborhood areas are not intended to accommodate significant new growth or density.”

1.6.2 Community Corridors – East Hennepin Ave and portions of Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE have been designated Community Corridors. These are “primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections in nodes. Commercial uses, generally small-scale retail sales and services, serving the immediate neighborhood. Residential density of Community Corridors is medium (20-50 dwelling units per acre) transitioning to low density in surrounding areas.” Because the three streets are

land use designations ***do not*** *automatically change existing zoning*

very different in terms of land use patterns, scale of the built environment, and bicycle and pedestrian patterns, the Como Blueprint has refined the recommended densities further so that they better suit these differences. On Como Ave SE – 20-30 units per acre, on 15th Ave SE – 20-40 units per acre, and on East Hennepin Ave – 20-50 units per acre. Note: A Community Corridor designation does not automatically change the existing zoning on the corridor.

1.6.3 Neighborhood Commercial Node – Several parcels along Como Ave SE between 15th Ave SE and 17th Ave SE have been designated a Neighborhood Commercial Node. These nodes "generally provide retail or service uses on at least three corners of an intersection and serve the surrounding neighborhood, with a limited number of businesses serving a larger area. A mix of uses occurs within and among structures. The Minneapolis Plan "encourages the development of medium- to high-density housing *where appropriate* within the boundaries of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, preferably in mixed-use buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor." (emphasis added) Note: The City recognizes some nodes are too small to support high density development.

1.6.4 Industrial – Large portions of the Como neighborhood are Industrial land. This "includes areas suited for industrial development and limited supporting commercial uses." Industrial land is "generally found within Industrial Employment Districts, with a high level of policy protection and an emphasis on job retention and creation. Industrial uses have primacy over other uses."

1.6.5 Transitional Industrial – Small portions of the Como neighborhood have been identified as Transitional Industrial land use. These are "industrial areas located outside of Industrial Employment Districts and will be labeled 'transitional' since they may eventually evolve to other uses compatible with surrounding development. Although they may remain industrial for some time, they will not have the same level of policy protection as areas within industrial districts."

1.6.6 Residential Density – Residential density is often quantified in terms of the number of dwelling units per acre. An acre is 43,560 square feet. Most residential lots in the Como neighborhood are about 5,000 square feet. This means in areas of single family homes, the Como neighborhood has a residential density of about 8 dwelling units per acre. It is critical to keep in mind that land use designations are "not intended to specifically guide parcel-level land use decisions" and do not automatically change existing zoning. Also, residential "densities… may vary depending on a variety of conditions, including site size and orientation, surrounding neighborhood character, unit mix, and other factors."

2 Vision Statement

"Any polis which is truly so called and is not merely one in name must devote itself to the end of encouraging goodness." - Aristotle

The Southeast Como Improvement Association works to enhance the physical, social, environmental, and economic well-being of the Como neighborhood of Minneapolis. To this end, the Southeast Como Improvement Association formed the Como Blueprint Steering Committee and charged the committee with the task of writing a small area plan to guide the neighborhood for the next 20 years. Following an extensive community engagement and public participation process, and in conjunction with research into best practices and Minneapolis City policy, the Steering Committee and its consultants created this document, The Como Blueprint.

The Como Blueprint strives to:

- Enhance the livability of the neighborhood;
- Encourage real estate development at suitable locations and at an appropriate scale;
- Protect valued neighborhood and cultural resources;
- Engage neighborhood stakeholders and represent their hopes and concerns for the future;
- Promote homeownership as part of a balanced approach to address the housing needs of multiple populations;
- Increase housing options, especially for seniors, workers, and long-term renters;
- Foster responsible economic development;
- Steward natural resources and the environment;
- Benefit from participation in the University District Alliance;
- Benefit from proximity to the University of Minnesota;
- Promote responsible maintenance of property;
- Encourage responsible rental property management and responsible landlord and tenant conduct; and
- Enrich opportunity for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Como neighborhood.

3 Community Engagement

In this section

3.1 Steering Committee
3.2 Surveys
3.3 Public Meetings
3.4 Focus Groups
3.5 Electronic Communications
3.6 Other Activities

Community engagement is a fundamental component of urban planning, especially small area planning. The City of Minneapolis is committed to community engagement and endorses the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core principles of community engagement. These principles include:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process;
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers;
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision;
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate;
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. (Copyright IAP2. All rights reserved. Adopted by Minneapolis City Council December 2007)

The Southeast Como Improvement Association and the Como Blueprint Steering Committee are committed to meaningful community engagement. Furthermore, because the Como neighborhood small area planning process was initiated and directed by stakeholders of the neighborhood, the Como Blueprint document exemplifies the IAP2 principles of community engagement. This chapter provides an inventory of the community engagement activities undertaken during the Como Blueprint small area planning process.

3.1 Steering Committee

The Como Blueprint Steering Committee was created by the Southeast Como Improvement Association Board of Directors. The Steering Committee was chaired by a longtime Como neighborhood resident and the committee included a diverse group of stakeholders. (For a complete list of Steering Committee members see the Acknowledgements page of this document.) The Steering Committee generally held monthly working meetings that were open to the public and conducted at Van Cleve Park. The date, time, and location of meetings were advertised in community news sources including the Como-tion and the Como Tidbits. This information was also published on the Como Blueprint's website.

The Steering Committee commenced a robust community engagement and public participation process as part of the small area planning effort. The process included electronic and paper surveys, public meetings, neighborhood flyers, focus-group meetings, a website, direct mailings, and electronic newsletters. The Como Blueprint took longer to complete than a typical small area planning processes. This was due, in part, to the extensive community engagement efforts, the fact that nearly all who worked on the project were volunteers, and the lengthy Steering Committee discussion of topics and

recommendations in the document. The Steering Committee also worked with several planning and landscape architecture consultants who participated in most aspects of the small area planning process.

3.2 Surveys

The Steering Committee created a survey to gather input from neighborhood stakeholders. The survey questions followed a modified SWOT (strength-weakness-opportunity-threat) format. The survey was available in both paper and electronic formats and included the following questions:

1) What do you see as the strengths of our neighborhood?
2) What do you see as its weaknesses?
3) What amenities would you like to have in Como? (e.g., streetscape with planters; outdoor cafes, dog park, more community events)
4) What improvements would you like in Como? (e.g., better street lighting, spruced up houses & yards, cleaner streets, bus shelters, public art)
5) What safety concerns do you have?
6) What new businesses would you like in the neighborhood?
7) What opportunities could improve the livability and well-being of Como?
8) What do you see as a threat to the livability and well-being of the neighborhood?

Survey respondents were also encouraged to ask questions and submit comments. An inventory of survey responses appears in Section 17.1 of this document.

3.3 Public Meetings

Minneapolis City policy requires at least three widely advertised public meetings be held during a small area planning process to ensure enough public involvement to justify adoption by the City Planning Commission and City Council. The Como Blueprint Steering Committee conducted four large public meetings in the neighborhood. The purposes of these meetings was to inform stakeholders about the process, gather input and feedback, answer questions about the small area planning process, and recruit volunteers to join the process.

The first public meeting was held on April 25, 2012 at Van Cleve Park. A total of 38 people signed in, and a Steering Committee member counted 44 people in attendance. The meeting was intended as a project kick-off and to introduce the Como Blueprint project and team members to the neighborhood. The meeting also served to explain the process, invite stakeholders to get involved, and gather feedback, questions, and comments. Speakers at the meeting included the Steering Committee chair, a Senior Planner from the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), a member of the Como Blueprint consulting team, and a member of the Minneapolis Planning Commission. All who attended the meeting were encouraged to sign-in and sign-up to be a part of the small area planning process. Participants were also encouraged to consider taking part in the upcoming focus group meetings.

the Como Blueprint process included surveys, public meetings, fliers, and focus groups

Como Blueprint Public Meeting

Common Focus Group Themes

Strengths named included:

- Near Downtown and the University of Minnesota;
- Good bicycle and mass transit connectivity;
- Effective neighborhood association (i.e. SECIA); and
- Diversity.

Concerns expressed included:

- Single-family homes being converted to rental property;
- Poor maintenance of rental property;
- Vandalism and Graffiti.

Desires identified included:

- More green space;
- More restaurants; and
- More attractive mixed-use development.

Solutions suggested included:

- Request stricter enforcement of codes and ordinances;
- Work with City for more street lighting;
- Encourage completion of the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway with a new park.

The second public meeting was held on February 21, 2013 at Van Cleve Park. The primary purpose of the meeting was to present the results of a series of focus group meetings. The presentation was given by Biko Associates, a Minneapolis planning consultancy retained by SECIA and directed by the Steering Committee to conduct the focus group meetings. Additionally, the meeting served to introduce the project and Como Blueprint team members to those who missed the kick-off meeting, and again invite stakeholders to get involved, ask questions, and gather their feedback. The meeting was well attended and 30 people signed-in.

The third public meeting was held on March 27, 2014 at Van Cleve Park. At the third public meeting a draft outline of the Como Blueprint document was presented and discussed. The outline included the recommendations developed for each chapter of the document. These recommendations had been developed by analyzing the feedback gathered from surveys, focus group meetings, and other stakeholder input, in conjunction with the work of the Steering Committee and Como Blueprint consulting team. Participants at the third public meeting were encouraged to circulate among several tables, each staffed by members of the Steering Committee, and ask questions and provide feedback on the recommendations or any other topic related to the Como Blueprint. Participants also were asked to write comments and questions and submit them to the Steering Committee for incorporation into the process. The meeting was well attended, and 32 people signed in.

The fourth public meeting was held on September 30, 2015 at Van Cleve Park and a final draft of the Como Blueprint was presented. The document was available prior to the meeting, giving people a chance to prepare questions. The presentation focused on Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Public Safety and answering questions. The meeting was well attended, and 38 people signed in.

3.4 Focus Groups

The Como Blueprint Steering Committee was awarded a Good Neighbor Fund grant and retained Biko Associates, a Minneapolis based planning consultancy, to facilitate a series of focus group meetings in the fall of 2012. A wide cross-section of neighborhood stakeholders participated in this process. The Como Blueprint Steering Committee and Biko Associates elected to assemble stakeholders who volunteered to participate into the following six focus groups:

1) Homeowners
2) Landlords, Business Owners
3) Seniors, Bicyclists, Park Users, Gardeners
4) Renters, Gardeners, Bicyclists, Park Users
5) Developers
6) Public Agency Staff, Government Employees, Institution Staff, Elected Leaders

In addition to the six focus group meetings facilitated by Biko Associates, a seventh focus group meeting was conducted by members of the Como Blueprint Steering Committee. This meeting was for residents

of Brook Commons and Charlotte Commons, two residential rental properties in the Como neighborhood owned by Project for Pride in Living, a Minneapolis nonprofit organization. Many common themes emerged from all seven focus group meetings. (See Text Box on page 3-3) The full Biko Associates report can be found here: https://sites.google.com/site/comoblueprint/focus-groups. Funding for the focus group portion of the Como Blueprint small area planning process was provided by a Good Neighbor Fund grant. The Steering Committee would like to thank the Good Neighbor Fund for this generous support.

3.5 Electronic Communications

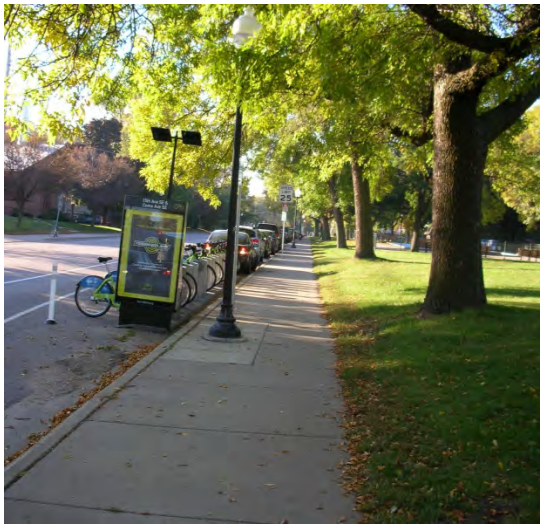
The Como Blueprint Steering Committee created, publicized, and routinely updated a website (comoblueprint.org) to inform stakeholders and the public about the small area planning process. The website contains information about the Como Blueprint small area planning process, a list of the steering committee members, announcements, a calendar of events, meeting minutes, a draft timeline, contact information, links to other small area planning resources and comparable plans, basic information about the Como neighborhood, a photo archive, and electronic copies of the Biko Associates Focus Group Report. The website also included an announcement about foreign language interpretation and disability related accommodations. The Steering Committee also published information about the small area planning process in two SECIA news outlets, the Como-tion, and the Como Tidbits. The Como Blueprint was also listed on the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) website of active planning projects.

3.6 Other Activities

3.6.1 Community Events – Members of the Como Blueprint Steering Committee attended several open-house and community events to share information about the small area planning process, gather feedback and ideas from stakeholders, and recruit volunteers to help with the project. Events included: the Como Annual Meeting, National Night Out, and the Como Cookout.

3.6.2 Dotmocracy – At the 2011 Como neighborhood Annual Meeting, a Dotmocracy exercise was conducted by members of the Como Blueprint Steering Committee. Dotmocracy is a facilitation method used to collect and register levels of support for written statements from large groups of people. The Steering Committee wrote ideas on several large sheets of paper. Participants were given two dot-stickers and asked to vote for the ideas on which they thought the Como Blueprint should focus. Voting twice for the same idea was allowed. “Single Family Housing” and “Schools and Education” received the most votes. Chart 3.6.2 (overleaf) depicts the results.

3.6.3 Flyers – To help ensure that all stakeholders in the Como neighborhood were aware of the small area planning process, members of the Steering Committee distributed informational flyers to every house in the neighborhood. Flyers were also posted in local businesses. Additionally, the Southeast Como Improvement Association sent several direct mailings to every household in the neighborhood on their mailing list.



comoblueprint.org helped to inform stakeholders about the planning process

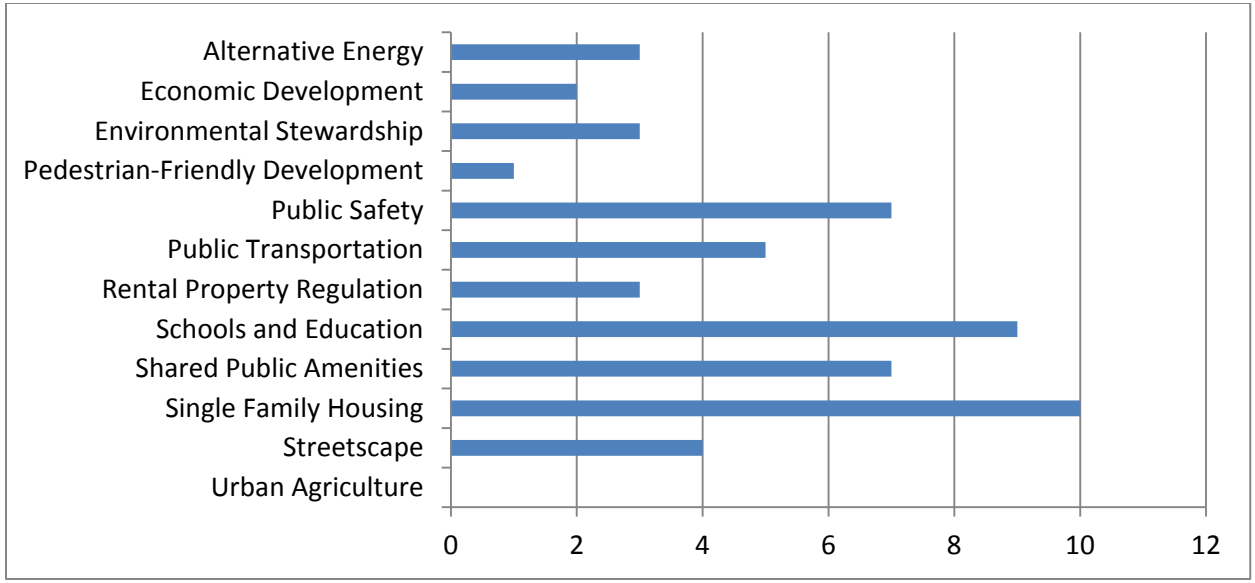


CHART 3.6.2 – DOTMOCRACY RESULTS

single family housing and schools were top vote getters in the Dotmocracy exercise

15th and Brook Ave SE

3.6.4 Dream Book – Members of the Como Blueprint Steering Committee also created a Dream Book. The book was brought to meetings and events where people of all ages were encouraged to write, draw, or add pictures of ideas and goals for the neighborhood. All ideas and comments were welcomed. People contributed ideas big and small, including:

- A land-bridge over Interstate-35W;
- Speed bumps;
- Trash cans – one every block;
- More painted crosswalks;
- A water park;
- Planted boulevards along East Hennepin Ave; and
- More garage sales.

See Appendix 17.3 for more Dream book pictures and ideas.

An Art Fair

Art Under Bridges

Creative Crosswalks

images and ideas submitted to the Como dream book

Painted Utility Boxes

4 History

In this section

4.1 Land and Boundaries
4.2 Neighborhood Founding
4.3 Middle Class Community
4.4 Moments of Great Change
4.5 Important Institutions

This section of the Como Blueprint was written by Connie Sullivan. The Como Blueprint Steering Committee extends a special thanks to her for this work.

Tuttle School, circa 1926 Photo Courtesy of Minneapolis Public Schools

4.1 Land and Boundaries

The Como neighborhood sits on Decorah Shale and Platteville-Glenwood rock formations. This bedrock emerged in roughly its present state at the end of the last ice age, approximately 12,000 years ago. The land was originally flat oak savannah dominated by a deep peat bog with sporadic sandbars and ponds, lying at the foot of the rocky glacial ridge that rises at the neighborhood's northeastern edge, at 33rd Ave SE and East Hennepin Ave. A creek called Tuttle's Brook drained some of the neighborhood's marshy ground, coursing from the area of Brook Ave SE through what is now the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) area and Dinkytown. The creek emptied into the Mississippi River at a waterfall called the Silver Cascade, at approximately 12th Ave SE. Development eliminated the creek, but the Como neighborhood's ground water continues to flow in the same southwesterly direction. Just beyond the southeast edge of the Como neighborhood, another stream drains some marsh water: Bridal Veil Creek, now much modified and without the pond that existed east of the neighborhood until about 2009.

The Como neighborhood's census tract, which extends from Broadway St NE to the north section of the SEMI area, and from west of I-35W to the east city limits at 33rd Ave SE, more closely approximates the historical neighborhood than does today's smaller residential area. There has been some erosion of the housing stock as commercial and industrial uses continue to exert pressure on it. For example, a 1922 sociological report on the Como neighborhood included its easternmost section and sections north of East Hennepin Ave that were platted as residential—and partially developed—as the family area served by Columbus School, an elementary school at Winter St NE and Hoover St NE from 1907 to 1931. The small community of homes that existed until the 1970s in the Mid-City Industrial Area north of East Hennepin Ave has disappeared. Elwell's Second Addition extends north to Winter St NE for three blocks, a residential northern edge that has seen sustained industrial pressures.

When the Como neighborhood was founded in 1882, the eastern limit of Minneapolis was Oak St SE/18th Ave SE. That boundary quickly extended eastward in the 1880s, and in 1920 the city limit was 34th Ave SE. When Highway 280 was built to connect I-94 with I-35W at the border between St. Paul and Minneapolis, 33rd Ave SE became the eastern city limit. The western limit of the Como neighborhood is a curious tiny sliver of industrial land west of I-35W and south of East Hennepin Ave. The former Great Northern Railway line, 8th St SE, and Elm St SE together form Como's southern boundary.

4.2 Neighborhood Founding

Pioneers in St. Anthony considered the area north of the village that would be called "Elwell's Addition" to be "unbuildable" because of the depth and prevalence of its peat bogs and ponds. In 1882, when James T. Elwell bought several hundred acres of land along the western section of the Como Road, (named for St. Paul's Como Lake), the area contained only a few scattered buildings; besides an occasional isolated farm house, there was a substantial new house at today's 13th Ave SE and East Hennepin Ave (still extant) that was the home of a brick maker whose business was adjacent to the house.

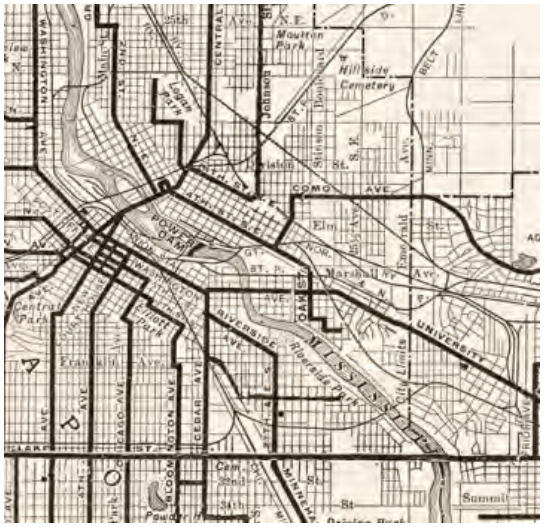
Elwell platted three Additions to Minneapolis in 1882 (and later, a fourth between 19th and 21st Ave SE) and proceeded to lay out, drain, raise with sand, and grade the streets of those Additions, where he built 55 frame houses. Elwell's main early attention was to the streets platted north of Como Ave SE, from 11th Ave SE to 18th Ave SE, including the three blocks north of East Hennepin Ave that form part of Elwell's Second Addition. This is the oldest part of the Como neighborhood.

Elwell almost single-handedly developed the original neighborhood. Besides laying out the streets and building a significant number of houses, he also established the Congregational Church on 14th Ave SE (extant – former home of the Oakeshott Institute); arranged for an elementary school at 14th Ave SE and Talmage Ave SE that he successfully urged be named for pioneer Calvin A. Tuttle (the school's program, in different buildings, existed in the Como neighborhood from 1883 until 2009); and saw the Minneapolis Park Board buy two blocks of land south of his Addition for the 1890 Second Ward Park, re-named Van Cleve Park in 1895. Elwell's Additions quickly had water and sewer lines, gas service, and telephone lines, and he finagled a horse-drawn streetcar service up 14th Ave SE to Como Ave SE, from downtown Minneapolis and Dinkytown, in the 1880s.

James T. Elwell, circa 1907 Photo Courtesy of 35th Minnesota Legislative Manual via Minnesota Digital Library

In the boom years of that decade a number of other real estate speculators bought and platted residential areas of the neighborhood that lay east of Elwell's Additions. But no other part of the Como neighborhood developed so quickly and with such coherent activity as these first Elwell Additions. Despite its residential platting, no one lived in the area east of 27th Ave SE, which remained primarily open country until the University of Minnesota built temporary veteran housing there in 1945 and 1946.

Subsequent residential development of the Como neighborhood was directly related to the Como-Harriet streetcar line, which traveled 15th Ave SE and turned east onto Como Ave SE from 1898 until 1954. With that good transportation option, people built homes along the line. However, a 1922 report stated that there was still a lot of empty residential land in the Como neighborhood, and that continued to be true, especially south of Como Ave SE, until the housing boom that followed the post-World War II years when infill development was intensive. The variety of the Como neighborhood's residential architectural styles stems in part from the slow and irregular housing development of the neighborhood over its 130 year history. (For more, see Section 12.5) Two retail clusters rose along Como Ave SE during the streetcar decades, at the corners of 15th Ave SE and 22nd Ave SE. The avenue itself remained residential until the gas station "fever" of the 1920s.



Twin Cities Street Car Map, circa 1913

There has also been some erosion of the neighborhood's housing stock from encroaching commercial and industrial interests. The first instance of replacements of houses by commercial land uses occurred in the 1920s, when gas and service stations popped up where houses had been at many corners along Como Ave SE and East Hennepin Ave. Almost all of those gas stations have since disappeared, but they were not replaced by housing. All the houses on the west side of 21st Ave SE were demolished or removed in the mid-1930s when the General Mills Research Labs expanded to the east of 2010 East Hennepin Ave. The block that lies north of East Hennepin Ave between 15th and 16th Ave SE—part of

Van Cleve Park, circa 1901 Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Elwell's Second Addition of 1882—today has only two remaining houses that speak to its original residential identity; the others that had been on the block have been replaced by businesses.

4.3 Middle Class Community

James T. Elwell platted his Additions with streets that were 66 feet wide and average lots of 40 feet by 132 feet deep. These streets and lots were significantly smaller than those in the original St. Anthony (today's Marcy-Holmes), and the houses Elwell built were not mansions but simpler single-family homes and duplexes he meant for the families of "salaried men of the middle classes." While the Como neighborhood had a number of very substantial single-family homes, many of them on two or three lots, there were no tenements for lower-class workers, or multi-unit apartment buildings (a handful of four-plexes were built in the 1920s). From the beginning, the Como neighborhood was a low-density residential community with the pastoral feel of a New England town until big changes in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Elwell was not able to sell all the houses he built in the Como neighborhood in the 1880s, so he rented some houses to laborers, some of whom had helped in the grading of the streets and construction of those very houses. Other residents included professional men, bankers, industrialists, bookkeepers, clerks, teachers, and business entrepreneurs of some wealth. The University's first major expansion on its original campus in the 1910s brought an influx of young professors to the Como neighborhood. Thus, from its beginnings, the history of the neighborhood has been characterized by its interesting mix of socioeconomic classes in its residents. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Como neighborhood lost many of its moneyed families in a gradual exodus to more fashionable areas of south and southwest Minneapolis. More were lost to the suburbs with the postwar expansion of the automobile culture.

By the 1930s the Como neighborhood was still middle-class but it had a strong blue-collar population, and the Great Depression was keenly felt. So were the labor conflicts of those years, in which a large number of Como neighborhood residents participated. Adult children with jobs lived at home with their parents to save money, and few people had cars. Many of the largest houses in the Como neighborhood became rooming houses, and others were converted to duplexes. It was during the Great Depression that the Como neighborhood began to have a reputation as a poor neighborhood.

The Como neighborhood's population has been predominantly Caucasian, including Anglo-Irish, German, and Scandinavian, with a strong presence of French Canadians. There was little racial or religious diversity in the Como neighborhood until some years after World War II; it has been a white, Christian neighborhood until very recently.

After World War II, the neighborhood experienced its first intensive presence of University of Minnesota students as part of the population. War veterans who used the G.I. Bill to finance a college education descended on the Twin Cities, and the pressure to provide housing was so great that, for the first time,

the University of Minnesota purchased large tracts of land in the Como neighborhood. With federal money, University officials built a small village for G.I. families in trailers and Quonset huts east of 27th Ave SE along Como Ave SE. Although the need for veterans' housing disappeared by the mid-1950s (University Village was torn down by 1962), the University kept the land and in the 1980s built a student co-op housing development on the Hallowell's Addition section it owned. The University subsequently expanded its service facilities on land that had been devoted to postwar student housing, both north and south of Como Ave SE.

The Como neighborhood was not considered a University student area until after the late 1980s. It helps to remember how few people finished high school in the early 20th century, and how even fewer attended college. Before the end of World War II, only the elite attended the University of Minnesota. Historically, Como neighborhood residents who attended the University of Minnesota were the children of families who lived in the neighborhood, or families who might host an occasional student boarder. There were as many University faculty and staff living in the Como neighborhood as there were students. That situation temporarily changed with the sudden postwar explosion of GIs, but that moment subsided again until the late 1980s.

1901 Hennepin Ave, circa 1928 Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Policy changes by the University of Minnesota, with their real estate consequences, have had strong effects on the Como neighborhood. In the late 1960s the University demolished hundreds of rental properties it owned south of 8th St SE and east of Dinkytown to build athletic facilities. At the same time the University greatly increased its student population, and emphasized on-campus living as the appropriate undergraduate student experience, but stopped building dormitories. The Como neighborhood saw an influx of student renters in the 1970s and 1980s; this became a tidal wave in the 1990s when investors began to buy single-family homes and duplexes. By the 2010 Census, approximately 50 percent of the neighborhood's population was student-age renters—a dramatic reversal of what had existed in 1980—and the numbers of families with school-age children had declined.

The Como neighborhood has two subsidized housing developments for families: Talmage Green (1970s) on the western edge of Como; and Charlotte Commons (2009), on the site of the former Bunge grain elevators at 12th -13th Aves SE and the rail line.

4.4 Moments of Great Change

Two further historical forces have brought major changes to the Como neighborhood: the first has been the pressure of commerce and industry on the residential community, which included the creation in 1913 of the massive Minneapolis Industrial Area (today called the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood) and its development after the First World War. No zoning rules existed in the city when the Como neighborhood was first developed, which is why there are some industrial uses adjacent to housing that would not be permitted today. Minneapolis began to restrict land uses in certain "districts" in early 1913, and it was in that context that James T. Elwell sold to a consortium of Minneapolis businessmen land

Como Ave SE, circa 1962 Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

along Stinson Blvd, to Broadway St NE, that he had used as a dairy. The Northwestern Terminal complex of warehouses was constructed in the 1920s, and a number of factories were built along East Hennepin Ave from 11th Ave to the east city limit. The sudden presence of industry (paint, asbestos, iron and steel foundries, barrel and bag manufacturers, farm machinery makers, metal machining, expansion of a stone quarry) on its north edge changed what had been a rather pastoral suburban environment in the Como neighborhood. That industrialization of former open farmland did mean more jobs for neighborhood residents, who had previously worked in other areas of Minneapolis or for grain mills, lumber yards and a wood door factory in the neighborhood. The de-industrialization of Minneapolis since the 1970s changed the nature of the industrial uses of the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood, which now has more warehouses and light industry. Increased industrial uses on the Como neighborhood's east edge, from 27th Ave SE to the city limits, appeared later, and on a slower and more ad hoc basis, with little planning.

The second major change to the Como neighborhood's housing stock occurred in the 1960s as the result of dislocations from the construction of I-35W on the neighborhood's western edge and the city planning department's determined push for "urban renewal." The Como neighborhood experienced up-zoning of some of its residential areas and demolition of dozens of large Victorian homes—and their replacement by apartment buildings—in the interests of urban renewal and density. In addition to the intensive in-fill construction of the postwar period in the vacant land of south Como east of 20th Ave SE, these multiple tear-downs changed the look and feel of the Como neighborhood.

In the late 1950s and 1960s there were extensive teardowns of Victorian homes: along Como Ave SE from the new freeway to 15th Ave; up 12th Ave SE from Como Ave SE; the Charles M. Way mansion and the Calderwood house on 15th Ave SE; the area of 17th Ave SE and Elm St; at 14th Ave SE and East Hennepin Ave. These substantial homes were replaced by 2 1/2 story walkup apartment buildings with a dozen or more units, or by small brick duplexes. In addition, in 1969 two blocks of large Victorian homes and apartment buildings between 13th and 14th Ave SE were demolished for an expansion of Van Cleve Park that also included a replacement for the Marshall High School ball field located at 10th Ave SE and Como Ave SE. That former ball field's space is now part of I-35W and the Talmage Green housing complex. That same year the 1883 at-grade crossing of the Great Northern Railway line at 14th Ave SE was closed for safety reasons. Two blocks of 14th Ave SE leading to that crossing were vacated for the park expansion and the school ballfield.

During the 1960s when the city planning department was determined that the neighborhood should become more densely populated, the Zoning Code permitted conversion of single-family homes to duplexes or triplexes. Many such quick and easy conversions occurred. The Southeast Como Improvement Association did a 40-Acre Study in the mid-1980s that resulted in down-zoning of large parts of the neighborhood's residential area from higher densities to their original low densities, and such conversions were no longer permitted on the small lots in the neighborhood. Large single-family homes that nevertheless retained a high-density zoning—along 15th Ave SE across from Van Cleve Park,

along the north side of East Hennepin Ave just east of Garfield St, or at 16th Ave, the brick mansion at 1022 15th Ave SE—were chopped up into multiple units.

4.5 Institutions

The Como Congregational Church, on 14th Ave SE from 1883 until 1985 when the congregation left (the church closed definitively in 2013), was the only church in the Como neighborhood until 1963, when the Southeast Christian Church replaced the Way mansion on 15th Ave SE. In the late 1990s, the new Somali community in Minneapolis established a mosque, Dar al Farooq, in a former factory on 17th Ave SE.

There are two public amenities in the Como neighborhood: an elementary school and a park. The Southeast Como Improvement Association, using several hundred thousand dollars of its Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds, provided both the school and the park with significant upgrades to their physical plant and programs at the turn of the 21st century. Both of these public institutions in the Como neighborhood were created before 1890, and only the park remains as a public facility for the neighborhood.

Tuttle Elementary School existed in the Como neighborhood from 1883, when it was first a two-room frame building and then a three-story yellow brick Victorian structure, at 14th and Talmage Ave SE. It moved to a new building on 18th Ave SE in 1910, where it was closed after nearly a hundred years and significant renovations. The building, still owned by the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), now provides space for MPS contract alternative school programs. Columbus School, at Winter St NE and Hoover St NE from 1907 to 1927, was underfunded from the start and sat in the middle of a developing industrial area with an active Minnesota Transfer Railway line to factories, a location unsuitable for small children. The school was relocated for a short time to Talmage Ave SE and 26th Ave SE until it was closed in 1931.

Van Cleve Park was expanded when 14th Ave SE was vacated in 1969 and baseball fields were added to the site. In 2010, the Minneapolis School Board fenced off and improved the field's turf for use by Minneapolis high school baseball teams. The effect of fencing off the field has been the impression that the publicly-accessible area of Van Cleve Park has been made much smaller, especially for informal recreational activities. For more, see Chapter 15.

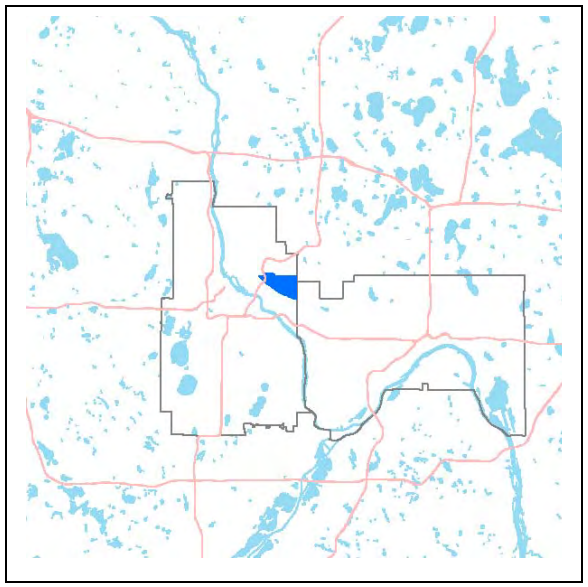
Van Cleve Park, circa 1936 Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

5 Neighborhood Profile

In this section

5.1 Geography
5.2 Demography
5.3 Geographical Mobility
5.4 Commute to Work
5.5 Income and Poverty

over half of Como neighborhood residents are between 18 and 24 years old



The Como neighborhood is one of 87 officially recognized neighborhoods in the City of Minneapolis. Within the City, the Como neighborhood is a part of the University Community, one of 11 City defined communities. This chapter presents a profile of the Como neighborhood and places it within the City and region.

5.1 Geography

The Como neighborhood is approximately 1.2 square miles in area within a city that is approximately 58 square miles. The Como neighborhood is slightly larger than the average Minneapolis neighborhood, which is about 0.8 square miles. The Como neighborhood boundaries include Winter St NE and East Hennepin Ave, 33rd Ave SE, and a series of railroad tracks southwest of 17th Ave SE.

5.1.1 Census Geography – The Como neighborhood constitutes a major portion of Hennepin County Census Tract 1040 (GeoID 27053104000). The remainder of Census Tract 1040 includes the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood. According to U.S. Census figures, in the year 2010, the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood had a population of 201. Therefore, population based figures reported for Census Tract 1040 are, generally, accurate figures for the Como neighborhood. (Source: MetroGIS, DataFinder, MnGEO, City of Minneapolis)

5.1.2 Neighbors – The Como neighborhood is bordered by the Beltrami neighborhood and Mid-City Industrial neighborhood to the north. To the south and west, the Como neighborhood is bordered by Prospect Park, the University of Minnesota, and the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. To the east, the Como neighborhood is bordered by the Saint Anthony Park neighborhood of St. Paul and the City of Lauderdale.

5.2 Demography

5.2.1 Population – The population of the Como neighborhood is increasing. In 1990, approximately 5,617 people lived in the neighborhood. By 2000, the population had increased slightly to 5,691. As of 2010, the population had increased by approximately 10% to 6,288 according to U.S. Census figures. The Como neighborhood has a larger population than the average Minneapolis neighborhood, which has a population of about 4,500, but the Como neighborhood is much smaller than the most populous neighborhood in Minneapolis, which has a population of over 13,000. The Como neighborhood constitutes less than 2% of the population of the City of Minneapolis, which is now an estimated 400,000. (Source: http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27/2743000.html)

5.2.2 Age Distribution – The age distribution of the population in the Como neighborhood is lopsided when compared with the City of Minneapolis as a whole. More than 50% of Como neighborhood residents are between the ages of 18 and 24. By comparison, approximately 15% of Minneapolis residents fall into this age cohort. The lopsided age distribution in the Como neighborhood is due in large part to the proximity of the University of Minnesota and the availability of rental housing in the neighborhood.

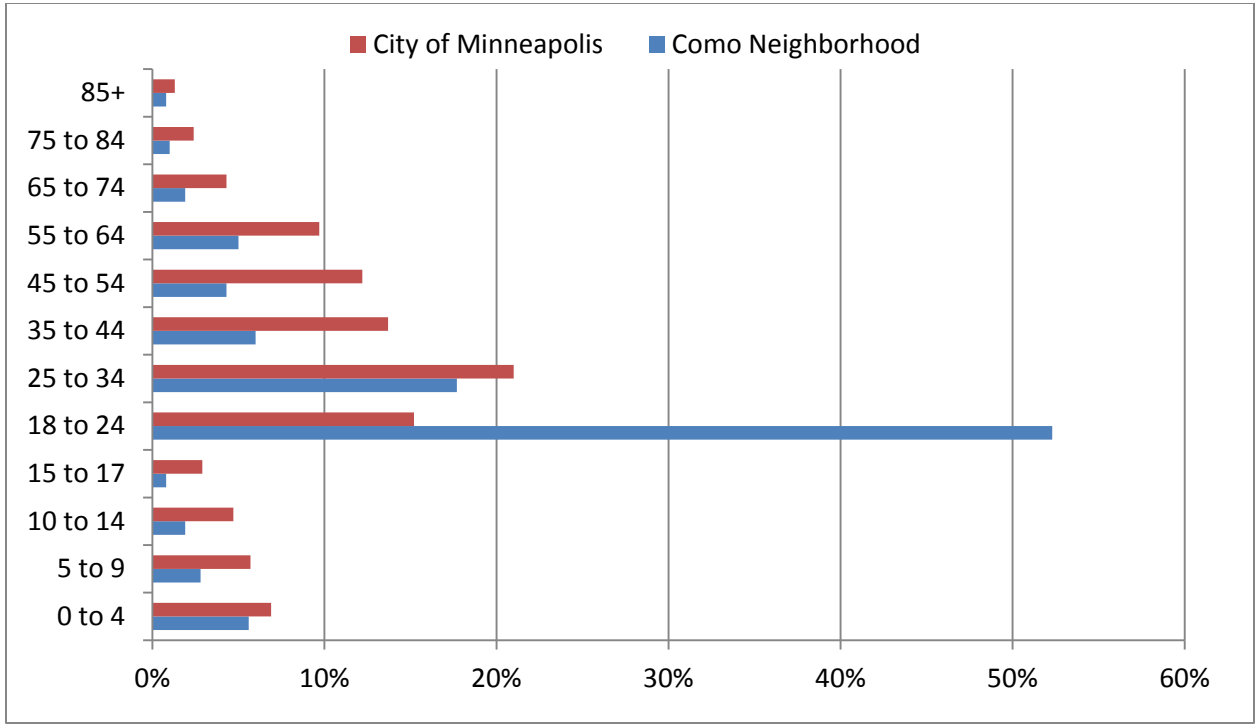


CHART 5.2.2 – AGE DISTRIBUTION

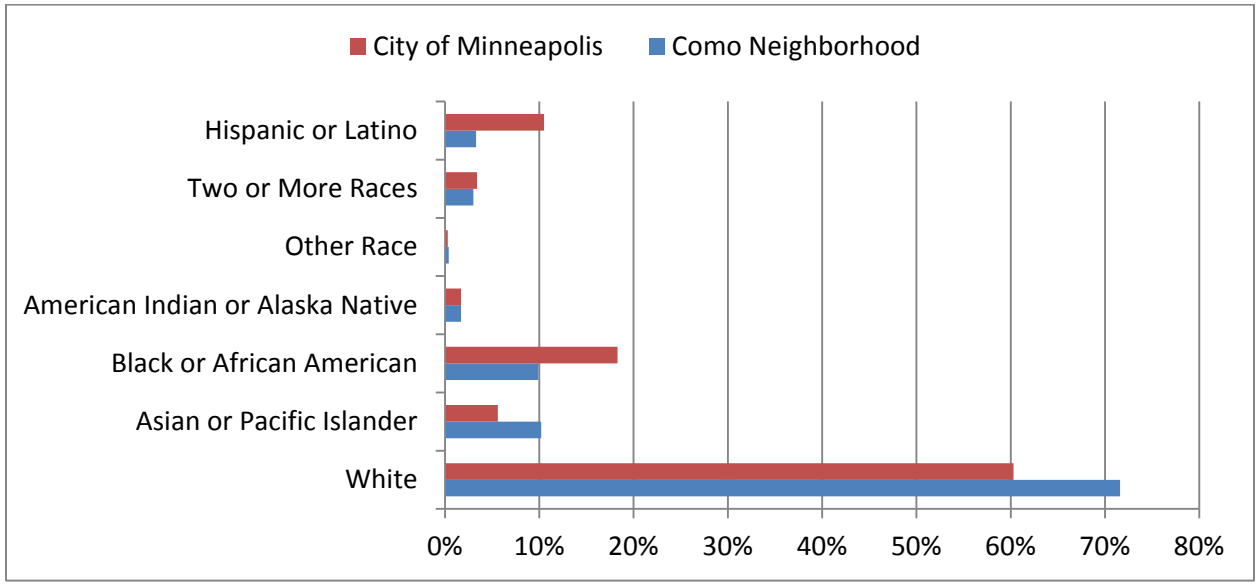


CHART 5.2.3 – RACE AND ETHNICITY

family households constitute about 35% of all households in the Como neighborhood

5.2.3 Race and Ethnicity – The majority of residents in the Como neighborhood, about 71%, are non-Hispanic whites. This is a higher percentage than the City of Minneapolis as a whole, in which about 60% of the population is non-Hispanic white. The largest racial or ethnic minority group in the Como neighborhood is Asian or Pacific Islanders, comprising about 10% of the population, followed by Black or African Americans comprising about 9.7% of the neighborhood population. (Source: U.S. Census, MN Compass) Chart 5.2.3 (above) displays the racial and ethnic composition of the Como neighborhood (in blue) compared with the City of Minneapolis (in red).

5.2.4 Household Size and Composition – In 2010, the U.S. Census counted 2,326 households in the Como neighborhood. The average household size was 2.63 and the average family size is 2.78. Non-family households constitute the majority of households in the Como neighborhood, comprising nearly 65% of all households. Family households constitute the remaining 35% of households. Of all households, roughly 24% are people living alone. Note, a person living alone is not counted as a family, but is counted as a household. A family household is two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing together.

5.2.5 Health Insurance and Disability – In the Como neighborhood, an estimated 5% of the population has a disability. This is significantly lower than the population of Minneapolis, in which an estimated 10% have a disability. This discrepancy can probably be accounted for when considering the age distribution of the neighborhood as older people tend to report disabilities at a higher rate than younger people. An estimated 5.5% of the Como neighborhood population is without health insurance. This is substantially lower than the City of Minneapolis in which an estimated 12.9% of the population lacks health insurance. (Source: MN Compass)

5.3 Geographical Mobility

In the Como neighborhood, geographical mobility is very high. An estimated 43.4% of the population lived at a different residence one year ago. By comparison, about 26% of the population in the City of Minneapolis lived at a different residence one year ago. Geographical mobility in the Como neighborhood varies widely by age, with young adults moving far more often than older adults.

TABLE 5.3 – GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

	Como		**Minneapolis**	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Same House One Year Ago	3,824	56.6%	287,031	74.6%
Different House One Year Ago	2,932	43.4%	100,440	25.4%
Total	6,756	100%	387,471	100%

Source: Table B07001 Geographical Mobility In The Past Year By Age For Current Residence In The United States - 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

5.4 Commute to Work

Most residents of the Como neighborhood drive alone to work. A sizable percentage, nearly 23%, uses public transit. This constitutes a higher percentage than the City of Minneapolis. A higher percentage of Como residents also walk, ride a bike or work at home.

TABLE 5.4 – COMMUTE TO WORK

	Como	Minneapolis
Car, Truck, Van	55.3%	69.7%
Public Transit	22.7%	13.9%
Walk, Bike, Work at Home	22.0%	16.4%

Travel Time	Como	Minneapolis
Less than 10 minutes	10.5%	8.5%
10 to 19	37.5%	35.2%
20 to 29	29.1%	30.1%
30 or more	22.9%	26.2%

Source: MN Compass, U.S. Census - American Community Survey 2008 - 2012

the median household income in the Como neighborhood is about $36,600 per year

5.5 Income and Poverty

In the Como neighborhood median household income is lower and poverty rates are higher than the Twin Cities 7-county metropolitan region. This fact is due in large part to the significant number of college students who live in the neighborhood. Median household income in the Como neighborhood has declined since 1999 by approximately $10,000 from roughly $46,700 to $36,600 per year (in 2012 dollars). Nearly half of all households (48%) earned less than $35,000 per year. About 35% of households earned between $35,000 and $75,000 per year. The remaining 17% of households earned $75,000 or more. The decline in median household income parallels the region where median household incomes dropped from about $75,700 in 1999 to about $65,700 in 2012. (Source: www.mncompass.org/profiles/region/twin-cities-region) A large percentage of people in the Como neighborhood live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold. Again, this is due to the fact that a large number of college students live in the neighborhood. College students often have little earned income; therefore they are often counted as poor. For a single-person household, the poverty threshold in 2012 was approximately $11,700. For a household of four, the poverty threshold in 2012 was about $23,500. In the Twin Cities 7-county metropolitan region, about 10% of the population lives in poverty. In the Como neighborhood, an estimated 45% of the population lives in poverty. (Source: U.S Census – Table S1701: Poverty Status In The Past 12 Months 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

6 Land Use

In this section

6.0 Existing Land Use
6.1 Future Land Use
6.2 Community Corridors
6.3 Lot Aggregation
6.4 Lot Orientation
6.5 Street Pattern
6.6 Land Trust

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Defining future land use lies at the center of many planning efforts. In the City of Minneapolis, the comprehensive plan and small area plans are the primary documents in land use planning. The Como Blueprint Vision Statement includes one specific land use goal: encourage real estate development at suitable locations and at an appropriate scale. The Vision Statement also includes several goals that relate to land use, they include: enhance the livability of the neighborhood; protect valued neighborhood and cultural resources; promote homeownership as part of a balanced approach to address the housing needs of multiple populations; increase housing options, especially for seniors, workers, and long-term renters; foster responsible economic development; and, steward natural resources and the environment. This section lays out a series of recommendations intended to help achieve these goals. This section also includes photos of mixed-use and medium density residential development suitable for locations along the Community Corridors and within Transitional Industrial areas of the neighborhood. However, inclusion of these examples does not constitute approval of any particular project or design.

6.0 Existing Land Use

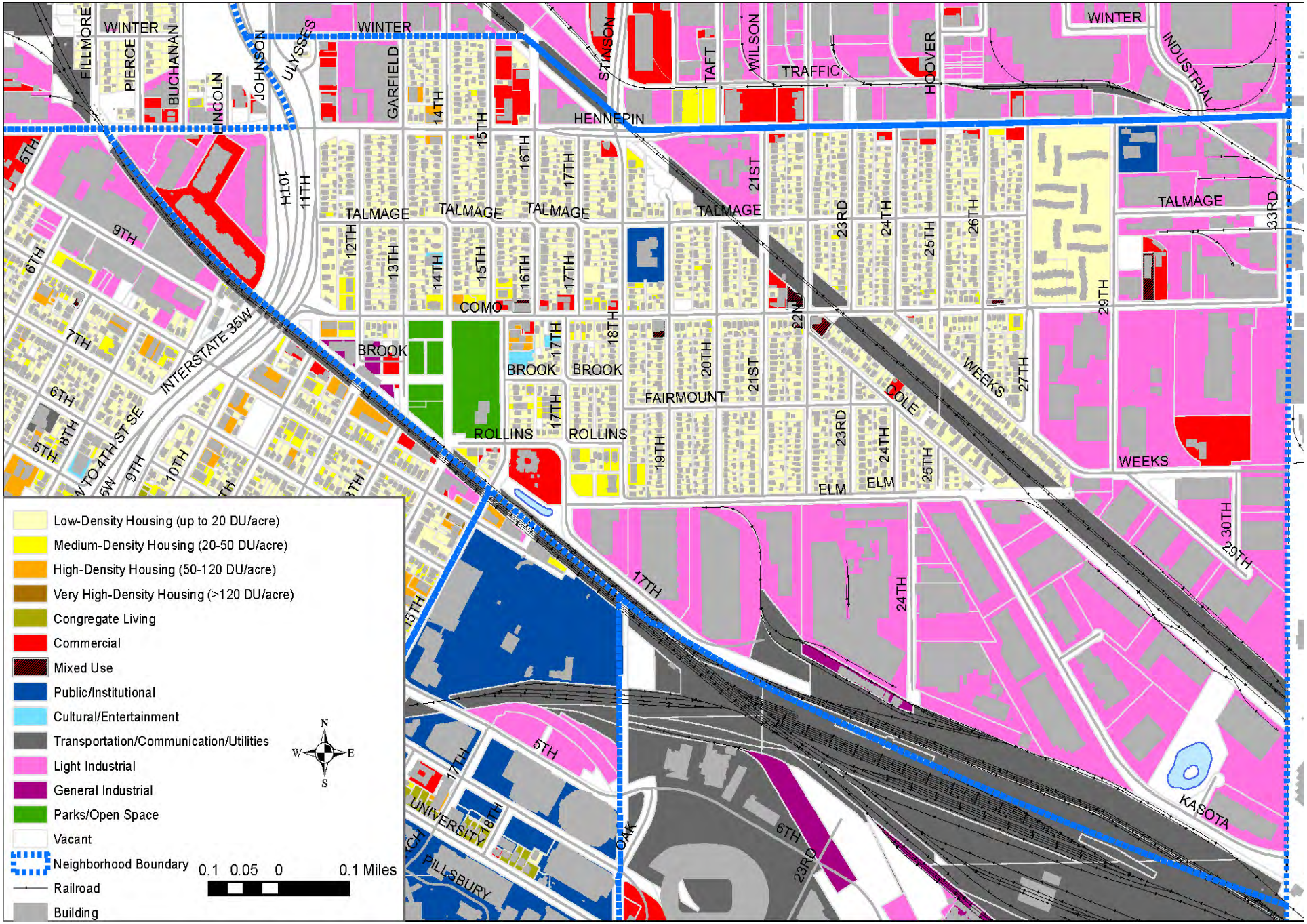
The land use patterns in the Como neighborhood have been relatively stable for many years. The neighborhood contains large areas of residential and industrial land, as well as smaller amounts of commercial and institutional land uses. The residential land use is predominantly single-family detached dwellings. The neighborhood also has several blocks with a significant number of two-family dwellings and a scattering of multifamily buildings. The commercial uses are mostly dispersed along East Hennepin Ave and Como Ave SE and are generally small scale neighborhood-serving establishments. The Como neighborhood is surrounded in large part by industrial land and transportation infrastructure, including Highway 280, the BNSF railroad tracks, the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) area, and the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood. Map 6.0 (following) depicts the current land use in the neighborhood as well as streets, railroad tracks, and buildings.

6.1 Future Land Use

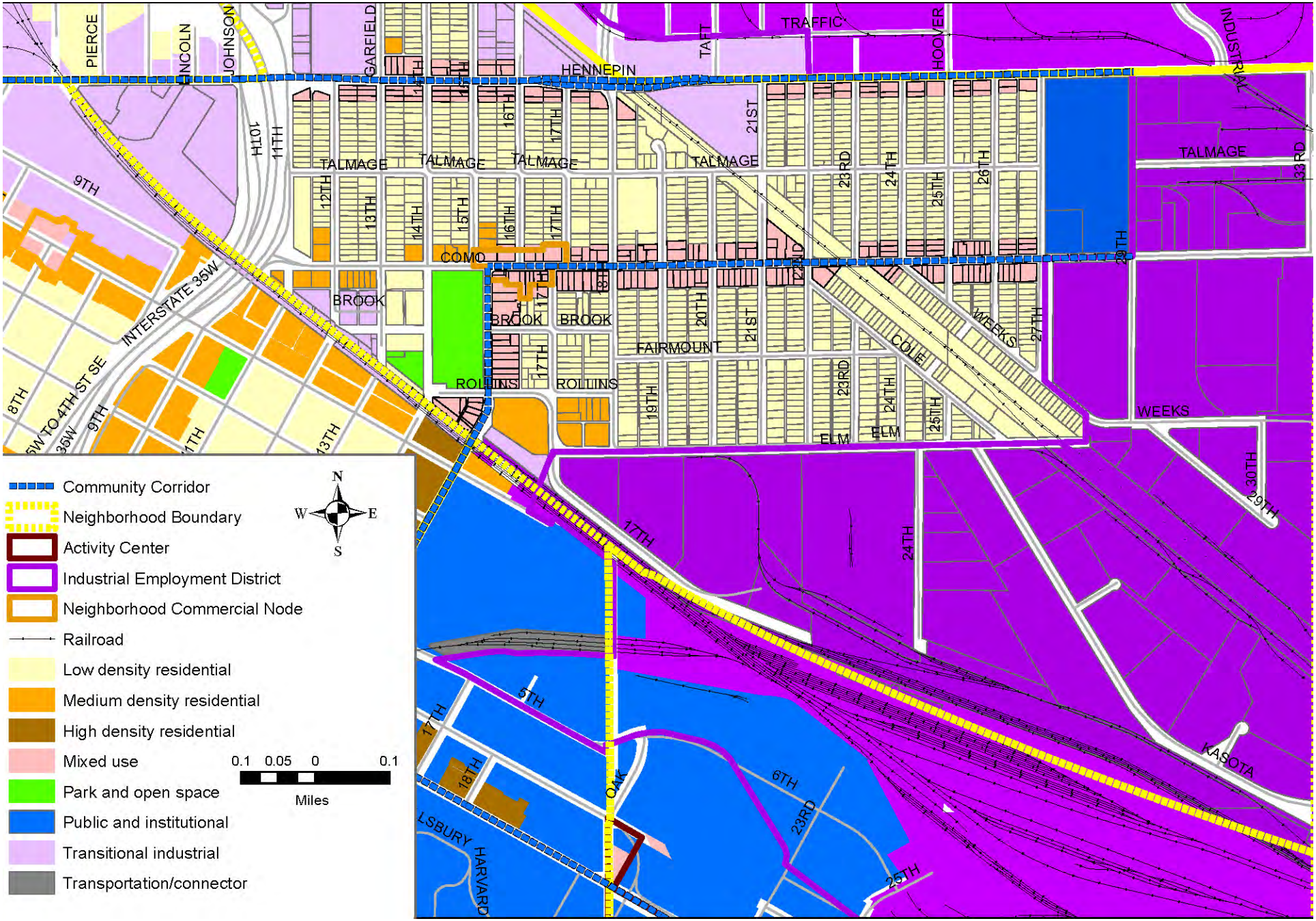
Recommendation:

- Support mixed-use and medium density residential development in Transitional Industrial areas and along the neighborhood's Community Corridors.

Every parcel of land in the City of Minneapolis is given a future land use in the City's comprehensive plan. This practice is required by state law and is overseen by the Metropolitan Council. The purpose of this practice is to accommodate growth in an orderly and efficient manner. However, in established neighborhoods, future land use plans do not necessarily call for significant change. This is the case for much of the Como neighborhood where the Minneapolis Plan calls for no major change in future land use for large areas of the neighborhood. There are two areas where change is possible; within the Transitional Industrial areas (See Section 6.1.4) and along the neighborhood's Community Corridors (See Section 6.2).

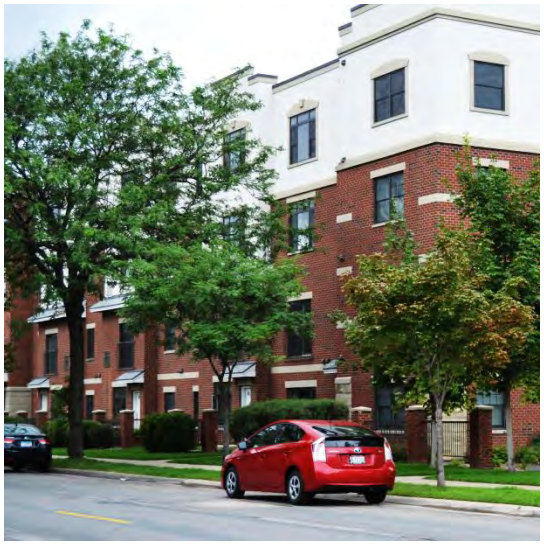


Map 6.0 – Current Land Use with Streets, Railroad Tracks, and Building Footprints (Source: City of Minneapolis)



Map 6.1 – Future Land Use with Streets, Railroad Tracks, and Property Lines (Source: City of Minneapolis)

6.1.1 Urban Neighborhood – The Minneapolis Plan designates much of the Como neighborhood as Urban Neighborhood. This land use is a "predominantly residential area with a range of densities, [and] may include other small-scale uses, including neighborhood-serving commercial, institutional, and semi-public uses (for example, schools, community centers, religious institutions, public safety facilities, etc.) scattered throughout. More intensive non-residential uses may be located in neighborhoods closer to Downtown and around Growth Centers." The residential density of Urban Neighborhoods "varies, but [is] predominantly low density" (8-20 dwelling units per acre) and urban neighborhood areas are "not intended to accommodate significant new growth or density." The existing residential density in large portions of the Como neighborhood is low, and many blocks have approximately eight dwelling units per acre. On a few blocks, two-family duplex structures are common. In these areas residential density is roughly 16 dwelling units per acre. (See Section 8.1) This is in keeping with the Urban Neighborhood guidelines and the Como Blueprint supports the continuation of this policy.



6.1.2 Neighborhood Commercial Node – The Como neighborhood contains one Neighborhood Commercial Node. The node consists of properties on Como Ave SE from 15th Ave SE to 17th Ave SE. This is a key location in the neighborhood and it includes several businesses, a major transit stop, a work of public art, and is adjacent to one corner of Van Cleve Park. Motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic are all heavy (See Section 7). The Minneapolis Plan "encourages the development of medium- to high-density housing *where appropriate* within the boundaries of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, preferably in mixed-use buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor" (emphasis added). Because the node is small, and the surrounding area is low density residential property, the Como Blueprint supports only medium density housing within the node. Furthermore, because the node has been a longstanding location for valued neighborhood-serving commercial establishments, the Como Blueprint strongly supports the City preference for mixed-use buildings with commercial uses the on the ground floor. See Section 9.4 for more on mixed-use buildings and Section 17.1 for a list of businesses Como neighborhood stakeholders indicated they would like to see added to the community.

6.1.3 Industrial – The Como neighborhood has large areas of industrial land and this land use supports a large number of jobs (See Section 9). Industrial land includes areas suited for industrial development and limited commercial uses. This land is generally found within Industrial Employment Districts, which provide a high level of policy protection for job-generating uses and an emphasis on job retention and creation. Industrial uses have primacy over other uses. The Como Blueprint recognizes the value of the employment this land use generates. And while not anticipated, if industrial areas in and around the Como neighborhood were to be redeveloped, the Como Blueprint recommends following the housing, transportation, and land use recommendations described in this document.

6.1.4 Transitional Industrial – Portions of the Como neighborhood are designated Transitional Industrial land use by the Minneapolis Plan. This designation is used for industrial land located outside of Industrial Employment Districts and these areas may eventually change to other uses compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. While Transitional Industrial areas may remain industrial for many years,

PHOTO COURTESY TMIARCHITECTS.COM

these areas will not have the same level of policy protection as areas within Industrial Employment Districts. In the Como neighborhood, Brook and Charlotte Commons are examples of redevelopment in Transitional Industrial areas. The majority of Transitional Industrial land in the Como neighborhood is located west of I-35W and north of East Hennepin Ave. The Como Blueprint supports additional medium density housing development in these Transitional Industrial areas if they transition, especially owner occupied, workforce, and senior housing. In locations where Transitional Industrial land is adjacent to Community Corridors, the Como Blueprint supports mixed-use development in conjunction with medium density residential development. Any redevelopment in these areas should be consistent with other Como Blueprint recommendations, especially, Section 6.5 (Street Pattern) Section 7.5 (Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design) and Section 14.6 (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). Redevelopment in Transitional Industrial areas should also be evaluated alongside the benefits of current and potential employment if the land use were to remain intact.

6.2 Community Corridors

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the existing land use along the neighborhood's Community Corridors;
- Develop a framework addressing the differences between East Hennepin Ave, Como Ave, and 15th Ave SE; and
- Identify desired development styles, including mixed-use and medium density housing.

The Como neighborhood contains three City designated Community Corridors; East Hennepin Ave, and portions of Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE. The Minneapolis Plan defines Community Corridors as "primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections in nodes. Commercial uses, generally [are] small-scale retail sales and services, serving the immediate neighborhood." Suitable residential development is generally "medium density (20-50 dwelling units per acre), transitioning to low density in surrounding areas."

PHOTO COURTESY BALDWINPARKFL.COM

The Como Blueprint recognizes these City policies and identifies the Community Corridors in the neighborhood as the principle areas of potential change. This change should be guided by a framework that addresses the differences between East Hennepin Ave, Como Ave SE, and 15th Ave SE. The land use patterns on Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE are different than those found on East Hennepin Ave. The scale of the built environment on Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE is also different than the scale of the built environment on East Hennepin. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic on Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE is much higher than on East Hennepin Ave. Transit ridership on Route 3 (which travels on Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE) is much higher than on Route 61 (which travels on East Hennepin Ave). Because of these and other important differences, the Como Blueprint has developed the following recommendations.

6.2.1 Como Avenue Southeast – In many ways Como Ave SE is the spine of the Como neighborhood. A large portion of the neighborhood is located within two blocks of the avenue and many neighborhood

businesses are located on it. The portion of Como Ave SE from 15th Ave SE to the neighborhood's eastern boundary is designated a Community Corridor by the City. This segment of Como Ave SE is served by Metro Transit Route 3 and is heavily traveled by cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.

PHOTO COURTESY BALDWINPARKFL.COM

The land use along Como Ave SE from 15th Ave SE to 27th Ave SE is a mix of commercial and residential property. Most of the buildings along this portion of avenue are between one and three stories tall. In several places, the existing low density residential land use is below the comprehensive plan's general guidance for housing density for a Community Corridor. Therefore, if the opportunity presents itself, the Como Blueprint recommends development at a range of around 20 to 30 dwelling units per acre along this portion of Como Ave SE. Appropriate building types include townhomes or row houses, small scale mixed-use buildings, and small scale condominium and apartment buildings. These buildings should face Como Ave SE, rather than the north-south side streets, and should interact appropriately with the pedestrian environment. These buildings should incorporate principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6) to the fullest extent possible. Particular attention should also be given to the design of the back of these buildings, as this will be the transition to the existing lower density residential properties.

From 27th Ave SE to 29th Ave SE, the land use is industrial and multifamily residential. The land is owned by the University of Minnesota and this use is expected to continue. If redevelopment were to occur, buildings should incorporate the same principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design indicated for previous portions of Como Ave SE. From 29th Ave SE to the eastern neighborhood boundary, the land use is industrial and both the Como Blueprint and the Minneapolis Plan anticipate this land uses to remain unchanged.

On the south side of the portion of Como Ave SE designated a community corridor, most of the parcels already face the street. Generally, these lots are 40 feet wide (east-to-west) and between 125 and 140 feet deep (north-to-south). These parcels could be aggregated (See Section 6.3) but do not need to be reoriented (See Section 6.4). The recommendation to consider redevelopment along this portion of Como Ave SE only applies to parcels adjacent to the corridor or those within 140 feet of it. On the north side of this portion of Como Ave SE, many of the parcels do not face the street. These parcels could be aggregated to facilitate redevelopment and should be reoriented if redevelopment occurs. Only parcels located entirely within 125 feet of the corridor are included in this recommendation. Because Como Ave SE is a central feature of the neighborhood, it is imperative to understand the recommendation to consider redevelopment holistically, keeping in mind other recommendations in this document, in particular those pertaining to Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) Senior Housing (See Section 8.2) Workforce Housing (See Section 8.3) Student-Oriented Housing (See Section 8.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6).

6.2.2 15th Avenue Southeast – In many respects, the segment of 15th Ave SE that stretches southwards from Como Ave SE to the railroad underpass is the front door of the Como neighborhood.

The street is the principal connection to points south, including the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood, Dinkytown, and the University of Minnesota. This segment of 15th Ave SE is designated a Community Corridor by the City, is served by Metro Transit Route 3, and is heavily traveled by cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. This segment of 15th Ave SE also constitutes the eastern edge of Van Cleve Park, a key feature of the Como neighborhood.

The current land use along this stretch of 15th Ave SE includes commercial, residential, and institutional properties. Many of the structures date from the early 1900s and some are in need of improvement. The Como Blueprint recommends development along this portion of 15th Ave SE occurs at a range of around 20 to 40 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate building types include townhomes or row houses, small scale mixed-use buildings, and small scale apartment buildings. Buildings should face 15th Ave SE and should interact appropriately with the pedestrian environment. Buildings should also take advantage of views of the park. These buildings should incorporate principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6) to the fullest extent possible. Most of the parcels along this portion of 15th Ave SE already face the street. These parcels could be aggregated to facilitate redevelopment (See Section 6.3) but generally do not need to be reoriented (See Section 6.4). Because this portion of 15th Ave SE faces Van Cleve Park, a key neighborhood asset, it is imperative to understand the recommendation to consider redevelopment holistically, keeping in mind other recommendations in this document. In particular those pertaining to Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) Senior Housing (See Section 8.2) Workforce Housing (See Section 8.3) Student-Oriented Housing (See Section 8.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6).

6.2.3 East Hennepin Avenue – East Hennepin Ave is the northern boundary for much of the Como neighborhood and the avenue is a busy working thoroughfare. East Hennepin Ave is also a major connection to I-35W and Hwy 280. A portion of East Hennepin Ave constitutes the southern boundary of the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood and the numerous employers in the Mid-City Industrial neighborhood generate significant traffic. Several small retail establishments are also located along the south side of East Hennepin Ave. The land use along East Hennepin Ave consists mostly of low density residential uses. This is not suitable for a wide, busy street that is also a Community Corridor. The Como Blueprint recommends housing development of a medium density, ranging around 30 to 50 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate building types include mid-sized mixed-use buildings, mid-sized condominiums, and mid-sized apartment buildings. These buildings should face East Hennepin Ave, rather than the north-south side streets, and should interact appropriately with the pedestrian environment. These buildings should incorporate principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to the fullest extent possible. Particular attention should also be given to the design of the back of these buildings as this will be the transition to the existing lower density residential properties. The 1901 Lofts building (pictured) is a good example of medium density housing along East Hennepin Ave.

On the south side of East Hennepin Ave, most of the parcels do not face the street. These parcels could be aggregated to facilitate redevelopment and should be reoriented to face the street if redevelopment occurs. Only parcels located entirely within 125 feet of the corridor – or roughly three lots – are included in this recommendation. (See Maps 6.3.1 and 6.3.2) On the north side of East Hennepin Ave, the same strategies outlined above should be used.

6.3 Aggregate Lots

Recommendation:

- Consider aggregating lots along Community Corridors to facilitate the development of mixed-use buildings and medium density multi-family housing.

Many of the lots located along the Community Corridors in the Como neighborhood are a typical residential size, generally about 40 x 130 feet. Parcels of this size will not generally accommodate the mixed-use buildings and medium density residential development suitable for locations along Community Corridors. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends evaluating real-estate development proposals that aggregates lots into larger parcels. Map 6.3.1 depicts the existing lot configuration along a portion of Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE. Map 6.3.2 depicts potential lot aggregation scenarios. Small parcels along the Community Corridor are combined into larger lots. Note that only properties on the Community Corridor (or within a specified distance of it) are eligible for aggregation (shaded in blue). This recommendation is intended to focus development along the Community Corridors while preserving the low density single-family detached character of other portions of the neighborhood. Only those lots designated mixed-use on the Future Land Use map would be eligible. Lot aggregation is intended to attract the desirable development types described in this document but the process is neither automatic nor arbitrary. It is also imperative to understand, this recommendation does not constitute a call for wholesale demolition of existing buildings or the use of eminent domain.

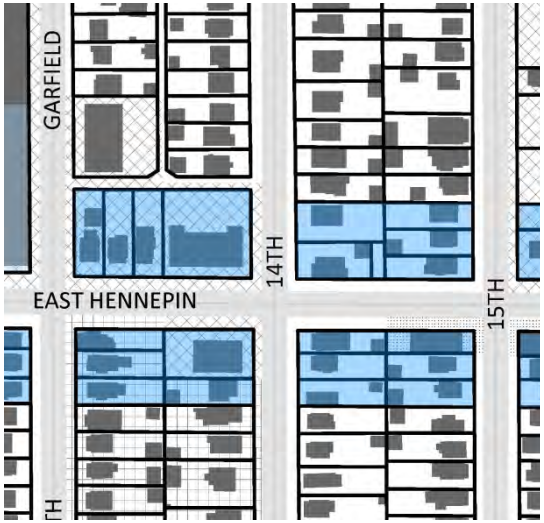
6.4 Lot Orientation

Recommendation:

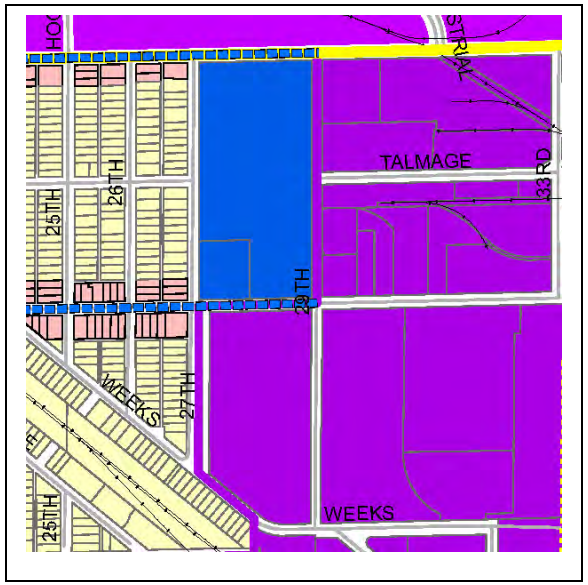
- Consider reorienting lots along Community Corridors to face the main thoroughfare.

Many of the lots located along East Hennepin Ave, and a smaller number located along Como Ave SE, are oriented east-west, and the front of the building faces the street perpendicular to the Community Corridor. (Maps 6.4.1 and 6.4.2) Lots in this configuration will not easily accommodate the mixed-use buildings and medium density multi-family housing development suitable for parcels located along Community Corridors. Consequently, the Como Blueprint recommends evaluating real-estate development proposals that reorient lots located along Community Corridors in the neighborhood. This recommendation will likely need to be carried out in concert with the aggregation of lots. Again, as with Section 6.2, it is imperative to understand, this recommendation does not constitute a call for wholesale demolition of existing buildings or the use of eminent domain.

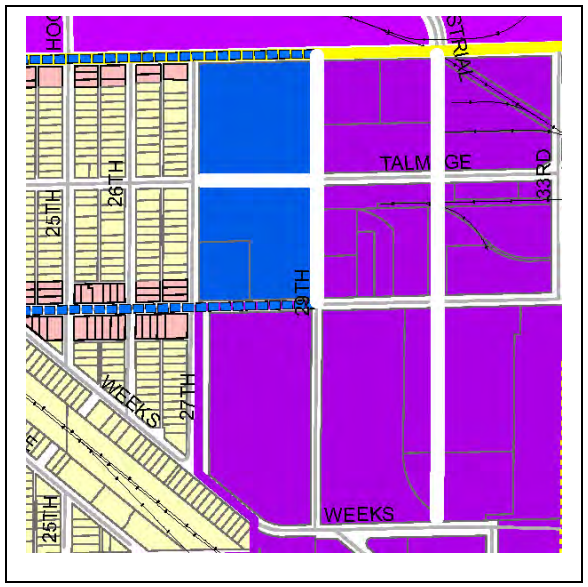
Map 6.4.1



Map 6.4.2



existing street pattern (above) and hypothetical expansion of fine-grained street pattern (below)



By way of clarification, neither lot aggregation nor reorientation needs to be done in advance of a development project. Both can be pursued and approved as part of a development application.

6.5 Street Pattern

Recommendation:

- Encourage fine-grained street pattern if industrial land is redeveloped.

Changes to the street grid are rare in developed cities. However, because there are many large industrial and transitional industrial parcels in and around the Como neighborhood, the Como Blueprint recommends a fine-grained street pattern be implemented, if redevelopment does occur. A fine-grained street pattern is one where blocks are short to medium length and streets are narrow to medium in width. A fine-grained street pattern would be in keeping with the existing pattern in the residential areas of the Como neighborhood. Fine-grained street patterns are also a component of Pedestrian- and Transit-Oriented Development (See Section 7.5), a collection of strategies endorsed by the Como Blueprint.

6.6 Land Trust

Recommendation:

- Promote and pursue the land trust ownership model.

A community land trust is a nonprofit community-based organization that works to provide perpetually affordable home ownership opportunities. In the truest sense, a community land trust acquires land and removes it from the speculative, for-profit, real estate market. Community land trusts hold the land they own "in trust" in perpetuity for the benefit of the community by ensuring that it will always remain more affordable for homebuyers. In Minneapolis, the City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT) has worked to accomplish this for over a decade. The mission of the CLCLT is to provide and foster stewardship of perpetually affordable home ownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income families throughout Minneapolis. This is achieved through three major activities:

1. Assisting households that otherwise would never be able to purchase a home responsibly in having the ability to do so;
2. Ensuring that, if the homeowner decides to sell, the land trust model keeps the home affordable for other income-qualified families; and
3. Provide support to CLCLT families to ensure success in homeownership. (Source: City of Lakes Community Land Trust, www.clclt.org)

The University District Alliance has entered into a partnership with CLCLT. The partnership intends to apply for grant funding to expand the land trust model to the entire University District, including the Como neighborhood.

Map 6.3.1 – Existing Lot Configuration

Map 6.3.2 – Hypothetical Lot Aggregation

7 Transportation

In this section

7.0 Existing Conditions
7.1 Pedestrians
7.2 Parking
7.3 Bicycles
7.4 Bus Stops and Bus Rapid Transit
7.5 Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design

Transportation is a vital part of the Como neighborhood's social and economic wellbeing. While the Como Blueprint Vision Statement does not include specific transportation goals, several of its goals relate to transportation, transportation infrastructure, and the impact transportation choices have on the neighborhood. These Vision Statement goals include; enhancing the livability of the neighborhood; protecting valued neighborhood and cultural resources; fostering responsible economic development; and, stewarding natural resources and the environment.

7.0 Existing Conditions

Transportation has shaped the geography and development of the Como neighborhood. The railroad predates the neighborhood and the railroad tracks interrupt the street grid and form a major boundary of the neighborhood. The Como-Harriet streetcar, which traveled along 15th Ave and Como Ave SE from the late 1890s to the mid-1950s, spurred the development of the neighborhood. The construction of the Interstate highway also shaped the neighborhood. Today, the neighborhood's transportation network supports cars, buses, trucks, trains, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

7.0.1 Automobile Traffic – Automobiles account for the vast majority of trips and miles traveled in the United States. (Source: National Household Travel Survey) This reliance on automobiles creates traffic. Automobile traffic in the Como neighborhood is heavy on six streets; East Hennepin Ave, Elm St, Como Ave, 11th Ave, 15th Ave, and 18th Ave SE. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) compiles Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volume data for streets and highways around the region. AADT data indicates that approximately 9,900 vehicles travel daily along Como Ave between 15th Ave SE and 18th Ave SE. Traffic volume to the west of this section of Como Ave is lower, while traffic volume to the east was higher. Traffic volume on East Hennepin Ave was recorded at 13,800 AADT along portions of the street in the western end of the neighborhood and 16,100 along portions of the street in the eastern end of the neighborhood. On 15th Ave SE, from the railroad bridge north to Como Ave, the traffic volume was 10,300. The traffic volume along 18th Ave SE between Como Ave and East Hennepin Ave was 4,700 AADT. On 11th Ave SE traffic was reported to be 9,100 AADT. On Elm St, traffic was reported at 5,700 AADT. By way of comparison, over 120,000 vehicles per day travel along Interstate 35-W as it passes through the Como neighborhood. Traffic on other streets in the neighborhood is relatively low. The railroad tracks, large industrial parcels, and the layout of the street grid funnel traffic to the streets mentioned above. Traffic diverters in the Como neighborhood also account for the low volume on many streets. These diverters are mainly located on Talmage Ave between 13th Ave and 18th Ave SE, and on 17th Ave between Como Ave and Elm St. While parking (Section 7.2) was identified by stakeholders as a concern, traffic was not a frequently mentioned issue. Therefore, the Como Blueprint makes no specific recommendations pertaining to motor vehicle traffic.

7.0.2 Local Bus – The Como neighborhood is served by several Metro Transit local bus routes, including: Route 3, 4, 25, 30, and 61. Route 3 travels between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St Paul via Washington Ave, 15th Ave SE, Como Ave SE, Energy Park Drive, and Rice Street. Route 3 passes through the heart of the Como neighborhood and is heavily used, especially by people traveling

between the neighborhood and the University of Minnesota. (See Table 7.0.2) Route 4 travels between the cities of New Brighton and Richfield via Johnson St, Hennepin Ave, Lyndale/Bryant Ave, and Penn Ave S. Route 4 passes through the Como neighborhood near its western edge on 10th/11th Ave SE. Route 25 travels from the Northtown Mall in the City of Blaine to the Kenwood neighborhood in south Minneapolis. In the Como neighborhood, Route 25 travels along East Hennepin Ave. Route 30 travels between the city of Golden Valley and the Raymond Ave LRT Station in St Paul. In the Como neighborhood, Route 30 travels on East Hennepin Ave. Route 30 is relatively new, and is intended to serve crosstown travelers and connect workers with the Mid-City Industrial Area. Route 30 also connects the Como neighborhood with the Quarry, a major retail center a short distance north of the neighborhood. Route 61 travels between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St Paul via East Hennepin/Larpenteur Ave and Arcade St. Route 61 passes through the Como neighborhood along its northern boundary, East Hennepin Ave.

7.0.3 Light Rail Transit – The Green Line, Metro Transit's newest light rail transit (LRT) service, opened in June 2014. The line connects downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul via Washington Ave and University Ave. While the line does not pass through the Como neighborhood, the Stadium Village and Prospect Park stations are less than two miles away and several Metro Transit bus routes that pass through the Como neighborhood connect with the Green Line. After the Green Line began operations, Metro Transit implemented changes to these bus routes, including an increase in trip frequency on Route 3 and adjustments to timetables on Route 61 to better interact with LRT schedules.

Mass transit investments, particularly rail projects, can have an impact on real estate development patterns. This is clearly the case for the Green Line where developers have announced approximately $2.5 billion worth of projects within one-half mile of the line in the past five years. (Source: Metropolitan Council) The impact this trend is having on the housing and real estate market in the Como neighborhood is difficult to measure, but the development of large multi-unit residential buildings near the Green Line may change the rental market in the Como neighborhood.

7.0.4 Modern Streetcar – In October 2013, the Minneapolis City Council approved a resolution recommending that modern streetcar be implemented on the Nicollet-Central transit corridor. The corridor runs from Lake Street north on Nicollet Ave, through downtown Minneapolis on Nicollet Mall, crosses the Mississippi River on the Hennepin Ave Bridge, and runs along Hennepin Ave/1st Ave to 5th St NE. While the proposed route does not pass through the Como neighborhood, planned stations on the line would be less than one mile away in the Nicollet-Island East Bank neighborhood. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/nicollet-central/WCMS1Q-071592) Although the impacts of the Nicollet-Central streetcar project on the Como neighborhood are difficult to forecast, it is reasonable to anticipate that real estate development will occur near the line.

7.0.5 Freight Rail – Two major sets of railroad tracks impact the Como neighborhood; one forms the southwest boundary of the neighborhood and the other bisects the neighborhood from northwest to

TABLE 7.0.2 ROUTE 3 WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP

Location	Direction	Boarding	Alighting
15 Ave SE & 4 St SE	E	320	83
15 Ave SE & 4 St SE	W	64	226
15 Ave SE & 8 St SE	E	23	75
15 Ave SE & 8 St SE	W	83	13
15 Ave & Como Ave SE	E	33	473
15 Ave & Como Ave SE	W	558	37
15 Ave SE & Rollins Av	E	22	156
15 Ave SE & Rollins Av	W	187	9
Como & 18 Ave SE	E	17	206
Como & 18 Ave SE	W	236	17
Como & 19 Ave SE	W	128	15
Como & 19 Ave SE	E	20	116
Como & 22 Ave SE	E	33	356
Como & 22 Ave SE	W	375	41
Como & Weeks/24 Ave	E	15	147
Como & 24 Ave SE	W	165	14
Como & 26 Ave SE	E	14	127
Como & 26 Ave SE	W	110	16
Como & 27 Ave SE	E	20	277
Como & 27 Ave SE	W	247	18
Como & 29 Ave SE	W	137	27
Como & 29 Ave SE	E	19	90
Como & 33 Ave SE	E	7	19
Pleasant & Eddy Hall	W	504	1773
Pleasant & Jones Hall	E	1692	405
Anderson Hall	E	481	136
Willey Hall	W	223	623
Washington & Cedar	E	121	75
Washington & Cedar	W	58	83
Source: Metro Transit			

southeast. These tracks are owned by the BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) Railroad and right-of-way is shared with Amtrak and other railroads. These are both active rail lines and their continued use is expected for the duration of this plan. The 15th Ave SE railroad bridge underpass is a source of concern for many Como residents. Excessive rainwater, ice, and snowmelt runoff is a safety concern, as is lighting under the bridge. Residents of the Como neighborhood have also expressed concern about the environmental impacts of herbicides used to keep rail beds clear of vegetation.

In addition to concerns about railroad track infrastructure and maintenance, Como neighborhood stakeholders also expressed serious concern about the quantity of volatile Bakken crude oil shipped by rail, which has increased dramatically in the past five years. BNSF hauls a great deal of Bakken crude oil, (Source: www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/crude-by-rail/crude_faqs.html#six) and these oil trains are a safety concern of the neighborhood. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends every opportunity be taken to work with railroad, public safety, and elected officials to help ensure the safety and livability of community.

7.1 Pedestrians

Recommendations:

- Evaluate the pedestrian infrastructure;
- Identify network gaps and needs; and
- Determine the feasibility of pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

For many, walking is the most basic form of transportation. A well-built, properly maintained, and ADA accessible pedestrian network facilitates walking and can reduce driving, traffic congestion, and pollution. High quality pedestrian infrastructure can also facilitate physical activity, and improve access to businesses, transit stops, and other destinations. The City of Minneapolis reports pedestrian counts for key segments of the network, and, in several places in the Como neighborhood, pedestrian traffic is very high. Along Como Ave SE between 14th and 18th Ave SE, pedestrian counts are estimated at 1,200 per day. Along 15th Ave SE from Como Ave SE to 8th St SE, pedestrian counts are estimated to be 950 per day. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/pedestrian/data/pedcounts) Many Como neighborhood stakeholders identified locations where pedestrian infrastructure is lacking or needs improvement. These locations include 15th Ave SE at Brook Ave (to get to Van Cleve Park), and four locations on Como Ave SE; between 12th and 13th Ave SE, between 14th and 15th Ave SE, at 19th Ave SE, and between 22nd and 27th Ave SE. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends an evaluation of the pedestrian infrastructure, especially in areas where pedestrian and automobile traffic is high. This evaluation should consider:

- Sidewalk and pavement conditions;
- Pedestrian crossing signage;
- Crosswalks and painted street crossings;
- Curb ramps and detectable warning strips;
- Accessible pedestrian signals; and
- Street lighting (See Section 14.3).

Pedestrian bridge over railroad tracks

The Como Blueprint also recommends evaluating the feasibility of implementing the following pedestrian infrastructure improvements:

- Curb extensions (pictured right) at key intersections;
- Pedestrian crosswalk signage and painted street crossings;
- Street furniture and amenities (e.g. bus shelters, benches, planters, recycling bins); and
- Repairing or replacing the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks at Van Cleve Park.

Curb extensions reduce the width of the street at crosswalks and improve pedestrian visibility to drivers. Street furniture and amenities enhance the pedestrian environment and make walking more enjoyable and comfortable. The pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks at the south end of Van Cleve Park (Picture 7.1B) is owned by the University of Minnesota and is in need of maintenance and improvements. Como neighborhood stakeholders identified safety (such as better lighting and security cameras) and ADA accessibility as top priorities for improvement.

Even with high quality pedestrian infrastructure, snow can be a major barrier to pedestrian movement. Many stakeholders identified the lack of timely and thorough snow removal as a problem in the Como neighborhood and some stakeholders contend absentee landlords are a major source of this problem. Minneapolis City Ordinance requires property owners to clear snow and ice from sidewalks within 24 hours (for single family homes and duplexes) and within four daytime hours (for apartments and commercial buildings). (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/snow/shovel/) Property owners of corner lots are required to clear pedestrian ramps and crosswalks to the street gutter, but are not responsible for clearing snow piles beyond the gutter left by snowplows. Clearing snow beyond the gutter is the responsibility of the City. However, with more than 16,000 corners, timely snow removal is a challenge. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/snow/shovel/) This often means that sidewalks, no matter how well shoveled by property owners, are not accessible. Contract snow removal can be expensive, especially for an individual. If the Como neighborhood were to form, or be a part of, an improvement district, the district could contract for snow removal at key intersections to improve pedestrian access in winter months.

Implementation:

- Convene a transportation improvement working group;
- Identify gaps and needs in the pedestrian network; and
- Petition the University of Minnesota to improve and repair or replace the pedestrian bridge.

7.2 Parking

Recommendation:

- Evaluate neighborhood parking conditions; and
- Installing additional limited parking signs near transit stops and Tuttle School.

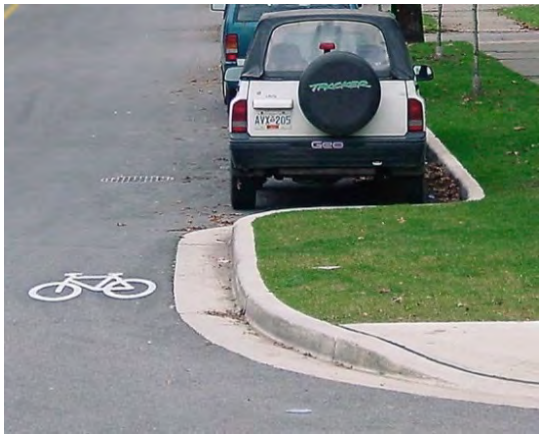


TABLE 7.2 – VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

Vehicles	Como	Minneapolis
None	9.6%	18.5%
One	44.2%	42.7%
Two	22.7%	30.1%
Three or more	23.5%	8.7%

Source: MN Compass, U.S. Census

Many households in the Como neighborhood have access to three or more vehicles. This is likely due to the significant number of large non-family households in which each person has a car.

GOOD TO KNOW

In Minneapolis, it is illegal to park on the lawn of residential or commercial property. If you allow parking on your lawn, or if your tenants allow parking on the lawn, you can be fined $200. The fine doubles for each additional violation at the property, up to $2,000. Cars may also be towed. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/parking/other/parking_gameday)

PROCESS NOTES

The Steering Committee discussed recommending the establishment of critical parking areas (CPA) in portions of the neighborhood. A CPA requires a petition be signed by at least 75% of residents within the proposed area, an engineering study be completed, and approval of the CPA by City Council. Once established, licensed drivers who live or own a business in the CPA are eligible to buy permits, which cost $25 per year. After extensive discussion, the Steering Committee opted not to recommend CPA's as part of the Como Blueprint.

A shortage of on-street parking is a problem and source of complaints in many neighborhoods and the Como neighborhood is no exception. One source of this parking shortage is the fact that households in the Como neighborhood have more vehicles than other households in the City of Minneapolis. Table 7.2 (left) displays the availability of vehicles to households in the Como neighborhood and to households in the City of Minneapolis. Most notable, the percentage of households in the Como neighborhood with access to three or more vehicles is 23.5%, compared to only 8.7% of households in the City of Minneapolis. This situation is almost certainly due to the high number non-family households where each person has a car. Also notable, the percentage of households with no vehicle; in the Como neighborhood the rate is about half that of the City of Minneapolis.

In addition to the high numbers of vehicles per household in the Como neighborhood, stakeholders also identified non-resident commuters traveling to the University of Minnesota and people attending University sporting events as a source of parking shortages. Driving to the Como neighborhood, parking for free on the street, and then busing, biking, or walking to the University is believed to be a common practice. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends conducting a survey to determine if resident or non-residents are the sources of the problem. The Como Blueprint also recommends that the City's Regulatory Services Department send parking monitors on a regular basis to the neighborhood to check for illegal parking on residential streets, including parking too close to corners, parking across corners, and parking along the traffic diverters.

Along with strategies that address parking shortages (such as ensuring that new development provides sufficient off-street parking), the Como Blueprint supports strategies to reduce driving and concomitant parking. These strategies include:

- Promoting and facilitating transit use;
- Promoting car-sharing programs (e.g. Car2Go, Hourcar, Zipcar);
- Promoting the use of taxis and ridesharing services (e.g. Uber, Lyft); and
- Promoting and facilitating non-motorized transit (e.g. biking, walking).

Como neighborhood stakeholders identified two locations where additional parking limit signs would be beneficial; near Tuttle School, and near busy transit stops, especially along Como Ave SE which is served by Route 3.

Implementation:

- Convene a transportation improvement working group;
- Research parking survey methods and options;
- Promote strategies to reduce driving;
- Petition the City to add limited parking signs at appropriate locations, and
- Request routine enforcement by Minneapolis Traffic Control Agents, especially during the first two weeks of each semester.

7.3 Bicycles

Recommendations:

- Assess the existing bicycle infrastructure;
- Evaluate potential bicycle infrastructure improvements;
- Review the bicycle policies that impact the Como neighborhood;
- Monitor and participate in the Missing Link (See Section 11.3) project; and
- Promote bicycle sharing programs.

Minneapolis is known for its bike culture and has been ranked one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country in recent years. (Source: bicycling.com) Bicycling is an excellent alternative to driving in some situations for many reasons. The Como Blueprint recommends promoting bicycling as an alternative to driving and also recommends promoting bike share programs, including Nice Ride.

Picture 7.3.1 – Nice Ride Station

7.3.1 Existing Bicycle Infrastructure – In order to support biking, the Como Blueprint recommends an evaluation of the existing bicycle infrastructure in the neighborhood, including the painted bicycle lanes, and bicycle racks and bike parking spaces. The Como neighborhood has several miles of painted bicycle lanes, on East Hennepin Ave, Como Ave, Elm St, 10th/11th Ave SE, and 15th Ave SE. Some of these bike lanes are very heavily used. According to the City of Minneapolis estimated daily traffic counts, over 1,200 bicyclists travel along 15th Ave SE. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/bicycles/res/WCMS1P-135614) An adequate amount of bike parking helps facilitates bicycling and reduces the nuisance of bikes being locked in places where they block sidewalks or cause other inconvenience.

7.3.2 Bicycle Infrastructure Improvements – Safety can be an important factor when considering bicycle infrastructure improvements. Between 2009 and 2013, virtually all recorded crashes involving bicycles in the Como neighborhood occurred on one of three streets; 15th Ave SE, Como Ave SE, and East Hennepin Ave. (Source: www.mprnews.org/story/2014/05/07/bicycle-safety-minneapolis) One of the best methods to prevent bicycle-vehicle crashes is to build protected bikeways. A protected bikeway is essentially a bicycle lane that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic. A bike trail that is completely off-street is a common type of protected bikeway. A protected bikeway may also be on a street but separated from traffic by parked cars, planters, bollards, or curbs. The City of Minneapolis has a small number of on-street protected bikeways. (Source: City of Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan Protected Bikeway Update) At the time of this writing, the City has recently completed an update to the Bicycle Master Plan that includes protected bikeways. Criteria for adding a protected bikeway include: high bicycle ridership, high traffic conflict, a lack of alternative routes, and public input. Planned protected bikeways within Southeast Como include 15th Ave SE, Rollins Ave SE, and 18th Ave SE.

Picture 7.3.2 – Protected Bikeway

7.3.3 Bicycle Policies – Two Minneapolis City policies have impacts on bicycling in the Como neighborhood. The primary group of policies is in the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan which was completed in 2011. "The purpose of the Bicycle Master Plan is to establish goals, objectives, and

Transit Stop Lacking Amenities

benchmarks that improve safety and mobility for bicyclists and increase the number of trips taken by bicycle. The Bicycle Master Plan includes bicycle policy, existing conditions, a needs analysis, a list of projects and initiatives, and funding strategies to be implemented to complete the plan." (Source: Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan)

The second group of policies is found in the zoning code. The University Area Overlay (which includes the Como neighborhood) requires bicycle parking as follows: "Residential uses shall provide at least one (1) bicycle or motorized scooter parking space per one (1) bedroom. Such bicycle or motorized scooter parking space shall not be located in any required yard or between the principal building and a public street, except as allowed…" (Source: Title 20, Chapter 551.1330) The zoning code also specifies where bicycles can be legally parked and states: "No person shall secure, attach or connect in any manner … any bicycle to any tree, parking meter post, street light post, traffic signal post or post sign; except as follows: bicycles shall be permitted to be parked upon a sidewalk and to be temporarily attached to sign posts and bicycle racks. When parked or attached as permitted, motorized and non-motorized bicycles shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of pedestrian or other traffic." (Source: Title 18, Chapter 490.150).

7.3.4 The Missing Link – The Como neighborhood is home to a large portion of The Missing Link, a project to complete the three mile gap in the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway. Bicycle infrastructure will be a major component of this project. For more on this topic, see Section 11.3 in Parks and Open Space.

Implementation:

- Convene a bicycle working group;
- Review the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan as applied to the Como neighborhood; and
- Review the implementation and effectiveness of bike parking requirements (UDA Overlay) and assess compliance with bicycle parking ordinance.

Transit Stop With Basic Amenities

7.4 Bus Stops and Bus Rapid Transit

Recommendation:

- Encourage Metro Transit to make bus stop improvements along Como Ave and 15th Ave SE; and
- Encourage Metro Transit to evaluate implementing bus rapid transit service on Route 3.

As described in Section 7.0.2, Metro Transit's Route 3 is very heavily used in the Como neighborhood. Despite this fact, many bus stops have few if any amenities, such as benches, shelters, lighting, time-tables, maps, security enhancements, or shelter heaters. Improvements of this nature would enhance the safety and livability of the Como neighborhood as well as make transit more appealing, thereby reducing driving, traffic, and pollution.

As noted in Section 7.0.3, transit improvements can spur real-estate development. While not suitable for LRT, Route 3 may be suitable for bus rapid transit (BRT). BRT is a bus-based mass transit system that

typically includes enhanced service, infrastructure, and design when compared to regular local bus service. BRT systems can include stations/stops with lighting, heating, benches, ticket machines, real-time schedule information, and security cameras. In 2012, Metro Transit completed an Arterial Transitway Corridors Study. "The purpose of [the study] was to develop a … plan to enhance efficiency, speed, reliability, customer experience, and transit market competitiveness on 11 high-demand urban transitway corridors…" (Source: Arterial Transitway Corridor Study) While the study did not evaluate Route 3 for upgrade to BRT service, the route does meet many of the parameters used to evaluate the suitability of upgrading to BRT service. Picture 7.4 (right) depicts an enhanced bus shelter.

Picture 7.4 (Source: Metro Transit)

Implementation:

- Contact Metro Transit and request improvements along Route 3 and evaluation of BRT.

7.5 Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design

Recommendation:

- Promote Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design Principles.

There are many strategies available to reduce dependence on private automobiles and increase walking, biking, and transit use. One such group of strategies is known as Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design (PTOD). Broadly speaking, PTOD is a collection of policies that help create a built environment where it is easy to walk, bike, or ride transit instead of driving a private car. The Como Blueprint recommends the neighborhood promote and support Pedestrian & Transit-Oriented Design principles, including:

- Encourage mixed-use buildings on appropriate sites (See Section 9.3);
- Maintain and encourage short to medium length (fine-grained) city blocks (See Section 6.5);
- Maintain and encourage narrow streets;
- Ensure sidewalks are appropriately scaled;
- Require appropriate buffers between automobile traffic and pedestrians;
- Encourage street-oriented buildings that interact with sidewalk;
- Design comfortable and safe places to walk and wait for transit;
- Allow certain retail / commercial land uses (e.g. bakery, dry cleaner, barbers shop, etc.);
- Investigate traffic calming strategies such as street narrowing, chicanes, and speed bumps. (Note: Traffic diverters are already present in the Como neighborhood.);
- Maintain closely spaced shade trees;
- Build landmarks;
- Install public art (See Section 13.3);
- Allow outdoor dining; and
- Move utilities from overhead to underground.

Some PTOD strategies are only applicable when large parcels of land are developed / redeveloped. While many neighborhoods in Minneapolis lack parcels of this size, there are many large industrial

parcels in and around the Como neighborhood. At this time, the Minneapolis Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan calls for the continued presence of industry on these large parcels in and around the Como neighborhood. However, if this changes, the Como Blueprint recommends PTOD principles be included in the redevelopment process.

Implementation:

- Provide a summary of PTOD principals to SECIA Zoning Committee to help ensure future real estate development proposals are evaluated in part using these strategies.

8 Housing

In this section

8.0 Existing Conditions
8.1 Housing Density
8.2 Senior Housing
8.3 Workforce Housing
8.4 Neighborhood Promotion
8.5 Student-Oriented Housing
8.6 Single Family Dwellings
8.7 Code Enforcement
8.8 City Programs
8.9 Accessory Dwelling Units

Housing is perhaps the most fundamental component of a community. A diverse and well maintained housing stock strengthens a community by providing people with a variety of choices to meet their housing needs. The Como Blueprint Vision Statement includes two specific housing goals, including; promoting home-ownership as part of a balanced approach to address the housing needs of multiple populations; and, increasing housing options, especially for seniors, workers, and long-term renters. The Vision Statement also includes several goals that are related to housing, including; promoting responsible maintenance of property; encouraging responsible rental property management and responsible landlord and tenant conduct; and protecting valued neighborhood and cultural resources. The Como Blueprint seeks to craft a housing strategy that adheres to its Vision Statement, accommodates population growth, and complies with Minneapolis City policy and other regulations. In order to achieve this, the Como Blueprint has developed the following housing policy recommendations.

8.0 Existing Conditions

The housing stock in the Como neighborhood includes structures of a variety of styles, ages, and sizes. With homes dating from the 1880s, the neighborhood contains examples of many architectural styles, including Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and Neoclassical, to name just a few. One dwelling is a recognized landmark while others may be worthy of heritage preservation. (See Section 12 for more on architectural styles and heritage preservation.) A large portion of the houses in the neighborhood (roughly 40%) were built prior to 1940 and nearly all were built prior to 1980. Table 8.0.1 (below) provides estimates of the number and era in which housing in the neighborhood were built. The same series of estimates for the City of Minneapolis is also provided for comparison.

TABLE 8.0.1 – AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

	Como Neighborhood		**City of Minneapolis**	
Built	Units	Percent	Units	Percent
2000 or later	178	7.4%	13,311	7.3%
1970 to 1999	650	27.1%	35,204	19.4%
1940 to 1969	625	26.1%	45,265	25.0%
1939 or earlier	943	39.4%	87,416	48.2%

Source: MN Compass, U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey

A large percentage of the housing units in the Como neighborhood (about 42%) are single family dwellings. This percentage is comparable to the City of Minneapolis. The Como neighborhood contains a higher percentage of duplexes than the City (17.8% versus 9.2%) and a comparable percentage of apartments. Table 8.0.2 (below) provides estimates of the number of housing units in each type of structure. The same series of estimates for the City of Minneapolis is also provided for comparison.

TABLE 8.0.2 – UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Como Neighborhood		City of Minneapolis	
Units In Structure	Number of Units	Percentage	Number of Units	Percentage
1 (House)	1,010	42.1%	88,044	48.6%
2 (Duplex)	428	17.8%	16,610	9.2%
3 or 4 (Tri- / Four-Plex)	94	3.9%	7,986	4.4%
5 or More (Apartment)	865	36.1%	68,056	37.6%

Source: MN Compass, U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey

When compared with Minneapolis, the housing stock in the Como neighborhood contains a slightly lower percentage of small units (i.e. dwellings with one, two, or three rooms) and a slightly higher percentage of large units (i.e. dwellings with eight, nine, or more rooms). Table 8.0.3 (below) provides estimates of the number of rooms per dwelling in the Como neighborhood. The same series of estimates for the City of Minneapolis is also provided for comparison.

TABLE 8.0.3 – ROOMS PER DWELLING

	Como Neighborhood		City of Minneapolis	
Rooms	Number of Units	Percentage	Number of Units	Percentage
1 room	81	3.2%	8,540	4.8%
2 rooms	38	1.5%	10,791	6.0%
3 rooms	363	14.4%	30,548	17.0%
4 rooms	396	15.7%	29,052	16.2%
5 rooms	546	21.6%	26,649	14.8%
6 rooms	343	13.6%	25,891	14.4%
7 rooms	227	9.0%	18,227	10.1%
8 rooms	227	9.0%	12,376	6.9%
9 or more	302	12.0%	17,657	9.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey. Table B25017 – Rooms

The total number of housing units in the Como neighborhood has been relatively stable for more than two decades. Between 1990 and 2010, the total number of housing units increased about 4.6%. By comparison, the total number of housing units in the Minneapolis-St. Paul seven-county region increased by about 28%. (Source: Metropolitan Council, http://metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps.aspx) While the total number of housing units in the Como neighborhood has remained fairly constant, housing tenure has changed dramatically. The 2012 City of Minneapolis Healthy Housing report documented the decline in homesteaded single family dwellings in the neighborhood. In 1995, approximately 84% of the single-family homes in Como were homesteaded. By 2012, that percentage had fallen to 52%. (Source: Results Minneapolis: Healthy Housing, p. 30) This change in housing tenure is

the number of houses in the Como neighborhood has been relatively stable for more than two decades

the change in housing tenure is a major concern for the Como neighborhood

a major concern for the Como neighborhood. Table 8.0.4 (below) provides estimates of the number (and percentage) of owner occupied, renter occupied, and vacant housing units in the neighborhood. It is important to note these figures includes all dwelling units, some of which (i.e. apartments) are not eligible for owner occupancy. Nevertheless, because the total number of housing units has changed only slightly, these figures again show the decline in owner occupancy.

TABLE 8.0.4 – HOUSING TENURE IN COMO

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Total
1990	859 (36%)	1,401 (59%)	99 (4%)	2,359 (100%)
2000	847 (36%)	1,495 (63%)	34 (1%)	2,376 (100%)
2010	570 (23%)	1,756 (71%)	142 (6%)	2,468 (100%)

Source: MN Compass, City of Minneapolis, U.S. Census Bureau

The City of Minneapolis is not experiencing this same decline in owner occupancy. The percentage of owner-occupied housing in the City has fluctuated between 45% and 49% since 1990. (Source: U.S. Census, Metropolitan Council) While the Como neighborhood may never mirror the rate of homeownership in Minneapolis, the Como Blueprint asserts that increasing the rate of homeownership, especially among the single-family dwellings, will strengthen the neighborhood by reducing the rate of geographical mobility and diversifying the age demographics of the population.

8.1 Housing Density

Recommendation:

- Encourage medium density housing development in Transitional Industrial areas and along Community Corridors and maintain low density housing patterns elsewhere in the neighborhood.

The existing housing density in much of the Como neighborhood is low. Many of the residential blocks in the neighborhood are roughly 3.8 acres and contain between 28 and 30 dwellings, making the existing housing density about eight dwelling units per acre. (Note: This density would roughly be doubled on the few blocks where two-family duplex structures predominate.) Both the Como Blueprint and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth call for this low density pattern to remain unchanged. The Minneapolis Plan also calls to "support housing density in locations that are well connected by transit, and are close to commercial, cultural and natural amenities." In the Como neighborhood, this includes locations East Hennepin Ave, and portions of Como Ave SE and 15th Ave SE. The Minneapolis Plan designates these streets as Community Corridors. Along Community Corridors the City generally recommends medium density housing development – which is defined as a range of between 20 and 50 dwelling units per acre. (Note: Low density is defined as less than 20 dwelling units per acre, and high density is 50 to 120 dwelling units per acre.) The Como Blueprint recognizes these City guidelines and supports their implementation in a manner that acknowledges the Como Blueprint's Vision Statement and reflects the differences among the Community Corridors within the neighborhood. The scale of the

built environment and the land use mix along Como Ave and 15th Ave SE are quite different from that of East Hennepin Ave. Therefore, the Como Blueprint calls for a housing policy that recognizes these differences, as outlined below. A concomitant land use policy can be found in Section 6.

As described in Section 5, the age-distribution of the Como neighborhood is lopsided and the rate of geographic mobility is very high. Also, as outlined above, the number of owner-occupied housing units has been declining for more than 20 years. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends housing development that serves a broader range of age groups and is geared towards owner occupants. The Como Blueprint recommends real estate developers consider building owner-occupied housing types, such as townhomes, row-houses, and condominiums. If apartments are built, the Como Blueprint recommends that buildings contain more studio, one, and two-bedroom units, rather than apartments with more three, four, and five-bedroom units.

In locations outside of Transitional Industrial areas and not adjacent to Community Corridors, the Como Blueprint recommends maintaining the single-family housing stock to the extent practicable. When replacement occurs, the Como Blueprint recommends housing of a similar scale to the existing housing stock. A conservation district (See Section 6.5) may also be an effective tool in this matter.

8.1.1 Como Avenue Southeast – Como Ave SE is in many ways the spine of the Como neighborhood. A large portion of the neighborhood is located within two blocks of the avenue and many neighborhood businesses are located along it. Como Ave SE is served by Metro Transit Route 3 and is heavily traveled by cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Currently, the housing along Como Ave SE from 15th Ave to 27th Ave SE is a mix of single and multifamily structures. Most of the buildings along this portion of Como Ave SE are between one and three stories tall. In several places, the existing low density residential land use is below the comprehensive plan's general guidance for housing density for a Community Corridor. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends housing development along this portion of Como Ave SE occurs at a range of between 20 and 30 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate residential building types could include townhomes or row houses, small scale mixed-use buildings, and small scale condominium and apartment buildings. These buildings should face Como Ave SE, rather than the north-south streets, and should interact appropriately with the pedestrian environment. These buildings should incorporate principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6) to the fullest extent possible.

From 27th Ave SE to 29th Ave SE, the housing is multifamily and owned by the University of Minnesota; this use is expected to continue. If redevelopment were to occur, buildings should incorporate the same principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design indicated for previous portions of Como Ave SE. From 29th Ave SE to the eastern neighborhood boundary, the land use is industrial and the Como Blueprint and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth anticipate this use to remain unchanged.

Medium Density Residential Development

the Como Blueprint recommends housing development that serves a broad range of age groups

Medium Density Mixed-Use Development

Medium Density Housing

8.1.2 15th Avenue Southeast – In many respects, the segment of 15th Ave SE that stretches south from Como Ave SE to the railroad underpass is the front door of the Como neighborhood. The street is the principal connection to points south of the neighborhood, including the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood, Dinkytown, and the University of Minnesota. This segment of 15th Ave SE is designated a Community Corridor by the City and is served by Metro Transit Route 3. The avenue is heavily traveled by cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians. This segment of 15th Ave SE also constitutes the western edge of Van Cleve Park, a key feature of the Como neighborhood.

The current housing stock includes a mix of duplex and multi-family properties. Many of the houses date from the early 1900s. The Como Blueprint recommends housing development along this portion of 15th Ave SE occurs at a range of between 20 and 40 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate building types include townhomes or row houses, small scale mixed-use buildings, and small scale condominium and apartment buildings. These buildings should face 15th Ave, rather than the east-west streets, and should interact appropriately with the pedestrian environment. These buildings should take advantage of views of the park and incorporate principles of Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design (See Section 7.5) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (See Section 14.6).

8.1.3 East Hennepin Avenue – East Hennepin Ave is the northern boundary for much of the Como neighborhood. (Between Garfield St NE and 15th Ave SE the boundary is one block north). East Hennepin Ave is a major County road with heavy traffic and freeway access. East Hennepin Ave also has transit service to downtown Minneapolis. The housing stock along East Hennepin Ave is mostly single family buildings. This is not suitable for a wide busy street and Community Corridor. The Como Blueprint recommends housing development of a medium density, ranging between 20 and 50 dwelling units per acre. Appropriate residential building types include mid-sized mixed-use buildings, mid-sized condominiums, and mid-sized apartment buildings. The 1901 Lofts building (pictured below) is an excellent example of desirable medium density housing along East Hennepin Ave.

Medium Density Housing – 1901 Lofts

8.2 Senior Housing

Recommendation:

- Encourage the development of senior housing.

Many Como neighborhood stakeholders expressed a desire for senior housing in the neighborhood. While not specifically defined by stakeholders, senior housing generally refers to housing that is intended for people who are at least 55 years old. The desire for senior housing in the neighborhood is in tune with the general desire for housing options that do not require a person to move out of their neighborhood. In a 2010 report by the AARP, two-thirds of respondents said they strongly agree with the statement "what I'd really like to do is remain in my local community for as long as possible." (Source: AARP Research, www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-11-2010/home-community-services-10.html) The intent of the Como Blueprint is not to select a specific type of senior housing, but to express a general desire for senior housing development. This could include a variety of

building types, such as single family or multi-family buildings, and a variety of housing tenure models, including owner, renter, or co-op.

Implementation:

- Invite senior housing developers to review the Como Blueprint, particularly portions calling for medium density housing and mixed-use development along Community Corridors.

Goal: 50 new units of senior housing in the Como neighborhood by 2030.

Mixed-Use Senior Housing

8.3 Workforce Housing

Recommendation:

- Encourage the development of workforce housing.

As described in Section 9.1, the Como neighborhood is home to several thousand jobs but the vast majority of these workers do not live in the neighborhood. The unavailability of suitable workforce housing may be one factor contributing to this situation. Workforce housing is generally understood to refer to housing that is affordable to people with earned income that is insufficient to obtain quality housing at market rates. Workforce housing can include owner-occupied or rental housing and can include single family or multi-family building types. In order to help rebalance the current age-distribution of the Como neighborhood, and to help provide a diverse range of housing choices for a variety of people, the Como Blueprint recommends the development of work force housing in the neighborhood. Multi-unit workforce housing would be well suited to certain locations along the Community Corridors in the neighborhood, all of which are served by transit and are a short distance from major job and retail centers as well as cultural and natural amenities.

Implementation:

- Invite workforce housing developers to review the Como Blueprint, particularly portions calling for medium density housing and mixed-use development along Community Corridors.

Goal: 50 new units of workforce housing in the Como Neighborhood by 2030.

8.4 Neighborhood Promotion

Recommendation:

- Promote the Como neighborhood to the workers of local businesses and institutions.

As described in Section 9.1, the Como neighborhood is home to several thousand jobs and the University of Minnesota and industrial areas near the Como neighborhood boast thousands of additional jobs. Downtown Minneapolis, the largest cluster of jobs in the state, is only a fifteen minute bus ride from much of the Como neighborhood. This abundance of employment and easy access to jobs makes the Como neighborhood an excellent location for workers seeking to make their commute shorter,

easier, and more sustainable. The Como Blueprint seeks to encourage local workers to consider living in the neighborhood by promoting the neighborhood to them. The Como Blueprint also recommends identifying local businesses and institutions that offer housing incentive programs and working with them to promote the neighborhood to their workers.

Implementation:

- Create promotional materials to target local workers;
- Identify and connect with local employers that offer housing incentive programs; and
- Work with the Como Housing Strategies Committee (See 8.6.4) to further housing goals.

8.5 Student-Oriented Housing

Recommendation:

- Encourage the development of housing types that appeal to a broad range of people; and
- Discourage rental practices and the development of housing that targets only students.

Some property owners in the Como neighborhood have engaged in rental practices and real estate development that caters largely to undergraduate college students. This style of housing development is frequently characterized by apartment buildings that contain a small number of units where each unit has a large number of bedrooms. These apartments are sometimes leased by the bedroom for semester or school-year length terms, further catering to college students. As described in Section 5, the age-distribution of the Como neighborhood is predominantly college-aged and the number of owner-occupied housing units has been declining for more than 20 years. The Como Blueprint seeks to encourage housing development that serves a broader range of age groups. The Como Blueprint therefore recommends real estate developers consider building owner-occupied housing, such as townhomes, row-houses, and condominiums. If apartments are being built, the Como Blueprint recommends these buildings contain more studio, one, and two-bedroom units, rather than apartments with three, four, and five-bedroom units.

Another strategy to mitigate the impacts of housing marketed exclusively to students would be to ensure a thorough consideration of potential community impacts of a project when making the required legal findings for granting of zoning variances or other land use approvals. When property is developed owners are required to obtain various approvals from the City. Sometimes developers also seek variances from established zoning standards. Commonly requested variances include reductions in required off-street parking and reductions in required side and/or rear yards. It is also common for developers to seek increases in residential density. Variances are awarded by the Minneapolis City Planning Commission, Minneapolis Zoning Board of Adjustment, or City Council, depending on the overall scope of the project and land use approvals requested. “A variance may be granted from the regulations of the zoning code only when the applicable board, commission, or council makes each of the following findings based upon the evidence presented to it in each specific case: (1) Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The

unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone. (2) The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan. (3) The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties." (Source: Minneapolis Zoning Title 20, Chapter 525.500) The Como Blueprint contends that some variances, particularly increases in density and reductions in required off-street parking, are requested only to make rental property *more* profitable and greater return on investment does not constitute a legitimate reason to grant a variance. Additional requirements can be found in Chapter 598.310.

Implementation:

- Support SECIA's efforts to encourage the development of housing for a diverse population;
- Ensure a thorough consideration of community impacts when student-oriented developments are proposed; and
- Encourage alternatives housing types, especially senior and workforce housing.

8.6 Single Family Dwelling Reuse Strategies

Recommendation:

- Investigate strategies and programs that return single family dwellings currently being used as student rental housing to owner occupied, senior, or workforce housing.

A large number of single family dwellings in the Como neighborhood are owned by investors who rent out the properties, especially to college students. This practice contributes to the current age distribution of the neighborhood and the high rate of geographic mobility among Como neighborhood residents. The Como Blueprint recommends investigating strategies to reduce this phenomenon, as outlined below.

8.6.1 Land Trust – A community land trust is a nonprofit, community-based organization that works to provide perpetually affordable home ownership opportunities. In the truest sense, a community land trust acquires land and removes it from the speculative, for-profit, real estate market. Community land trusts hold the land they own in perpetuity for the benefit of the community by ensuring that it will always remain more affordable for homebuyers. (See Section 6.6 for more on this topic.)

8.6.2 Homeownership Programs – Several programs exist to encourage and support homeownership in the City of Minneapolis. These programs can be grouped into two broad categories; those that support mortgages and those that support home improvement. The Como Blueprint recommends continued pursuit of these programs to help people become, and remain, owner occupants in the Como neighborhood.

8.6.3 Relative Homestead – Another practice that contributes to the conversion of owner-occupied property to rental property in the Como neighborhood is the phenomena of relative homesteading. Minnesota State Law (273.124 Subdivision 1c) allows a person to purchase a home for their child or other relative and retain the homestead designation for tax purposes. In the Como neighborhood, the practice typically involves parents buying a home for their child, who is a University student. The student then gets roommates and the house becomes rental property. The Como Blueprint recommends considering eliminating the relative homesteading loophole to discourage this practice, although it recognizes this is outside the jurisdiction of the City as it would require a change to state law.

8.6.4 Como Housing Strategies – Three housing issues are of major concern to the Como neighborhood. One, the conversion of single family homes from owner occupied to rental property; two, the deterioration of property; and three, tenant behavior problems due to poor management. SECIA formed a committee and retained a consultant to work in-depth on housing issues and a Como Housing Strategies report was completed. This document can be found on SECIA's website.

Implementation:

- Pursue the land trust model of ownership;
- Investigate City homeownership programs;
- Lobby the Minnesota Legislature and Governor to eliminate the relative homestead loophole; and
- Implement the recommendations in the Como Housing Strategies report.

8.7 Code Enforcement

Recommendation:

- Develop housing maintenance and rental code enforcement strategies.

Many Como neighborhood stakeholders expressed frustration with lax housing maintenance and code enforcement. Illegal over-occupancy is seen by some stakeholders as a major problem. The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Chapter 546.50 limits occupancy as follows:

> *The maximum occupancy of a dwelling unit located in the R1 through R3 Districts shall not exceed one (1) family plus up to two (2) unrelated persons living together as a permanent household, provided that the family plus the unrelated persons shall not exceed a total of five (5) persons. The maximum occupancy of a dwelling unit located in the R4 through R6 Districts shall not exceed one (1) family plus four (4) unrelated persons living together as a permanent household, provided that the family plus the unrelated persons shall not exceed a total of five (5) persons.*

Much of the Como neighborhood is zoned R1 and R2. Dwelling units in these districts are limited to three unrelated adults but over-occupancy is widespread. In a *Minnesota Daily* survey, 40% of rental

housing in the Como neighborhood was found to be over occupied. (Source: www.mndaily.com/2010/04/11/renting-against-ordinance)

In addition to concerns about over-occupancy, poor property maintenance was a key concern of many Como neighborhood stakeholders. The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances includes significant regulations about property maintenance which can be found in Chapter 244, which:

> *(a) Establishes minimum standards for basic equipment and facilities; for light, ventilation and heating; for safety from fire; for space, use and location; for safe and sanitary maintenance of all dwellings;*
> *(b) Determines the responsibilities of owners, operators and occupants of dwellings;*
> *(c) Provides, as an incident to the primary regulation, for registering the operation of certain dwellings; and*
> *(d) Provides for administration and enforcement.*

A close examination and synthesis of the code could provide Como neighborhood stakeholders with the knowledge required to spot and report common maintenance code violations.

Implementation:

- Convene a code enforcement working group;
- Work with UDA code enforcement efforts supported by their Livability committee;
- Develop a neighborhood watch style housing maintenance and rental code enforcement program and distribute materials to educate stakeholders;
- Circulate lists of known problem properties established by the City and target neighborhood enforcement efforts to these properties; and
- Work with Minneapolis Housing Inspections Services and Problem Properties Unit to bring all properties into compliance with City codes.

8.8 City Programs

Recommendation:

- Explore the Higher Density Corridor Housing Program.

The City of Minneapolis' Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) oversees the Higher Density Corridor Housing Program (HDCHP). The program provides a funding source for public acquisition of sites for multifamily housing development on or near community, commercial and transit corridors (as defined by the City). Funds can be used to assemble larger sites for new mixed-income rental and owner occupied multifamily housing development. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/rfp/cped_higher_density_home) The HDCHP program could be used to facilitate the development of senior housing, workforce housing, or mixed-use buildings along the Community Corridors in the Como neighborhood.

ADU Above 2-Stall Garage

Implementation:

- Review the current HDCHP policies and determine eligibility;
- Identify suitable site(s) along the Community Corridors in the Como neighborhood; and
- Draft proposal(s) for suitable locations.

8.9 Accessory Dwelling Units

Recommendation:

- Initiate talks with the City about practices that will ensure reliable adherence to the ADU owner-occupancy requirement and impacts on duplex properties;
- Encourage property owners considering an ADU to evaluate off street parking options.

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is an additional self-contained housing unit on a residential lot where a primary dwelling already exists. An ADU can be located entirely within, attached to, or detached from, the primary dwelling. In December 2014, the Minneapolis City Council approved an ADU ordinance that applies to many one and two family residential lots in the City. (Source: www.minneapolis mn.gov/cped/projects/ADU) ADU's are only allowed when either the primary dwelling or accessory dwelling is occupied by the owner of the property and this restriction is recorded on the deed. ADU's are also required to be smaller than the primary dwelling.

There are many benefits to ADU's, including:

- Allowing seniors to age-in-place or live near relatives as their housing needs change;
- Improving housing affordability in a tight rental market;
- Accommodating the demand for growth without disturbing existing neighborhood character;
- Adding needed housing without contributing to urban sprawl;
- Generating income for homeowners;
- Diversifying the housing stock and provide greater opportunity for single-person households to live in low-density residential areas; and
- Improving walkability of neighborhoods by adding housing near local retail, transit, and public spaces.

Despite the benefits of ADU's, a consensus of the Como Blueprint Steering Committee expressed concerns about their implementation in the neighborhood. The primary concern is the ability of the City to enforce the owner-occupancy requirement. This skepticism is rooted in the neighborhoods experience with lax code enforcement, particularly occupancy limits. (See Section 8.7) Without owner-occupancy, ADU's may add more units of absentee landlord housing. Therefore, the Como Blueprint discourages the construction of ADU's until the City has met with neighborhood stakeholders to discuss enforcement of the owner-occupancy requirement.

The Steering Committee also expressed concern about the additional demand for street parking that could accompany the development of ADU's. The zoning ordinance does not require the construction of off-street parking when building an ADU (Source: Title 20, Chapter 541.170). Households in the Como neighborhood have a high level of access to vehicles (See Section 7.2) and adding ADU's may create additional parking problems. For this reason, the Como Blueprint recommends property owners considering an ADU consider providing off street parking.

Finally, the Steering Committee observed that adding an ADU is, in some ways, similar to creating a duplex, which are already allowed in some portions of the Como neighborhood. (See Zoning Map p. 16-3)

Implementation:

- Initiate talks with the City about practices that will ensure reliable adherence to the ADU owner-occupancy requirement and impacts on duplex properties;
- Encourage property owners considering an ADU to consider providing off street parking

ADU Above Garage

9 Economic Development

In this section

9.1 Employment and Economic Activity
9.2 Workforce Survey
9.3 Great Streets Program
9.4 Mixed-Use Buildings
9.5 Improvement District
9.6 Community Development Corp

the Como Blueprint supports appropriately scaled development at suitable locations

A vibrant and sustainable economy is a critical component of a healthy community. Several goals identified in the Como Blueprint Vision Statement relate to economic development, including; encouraging real estate development at suitable locations and of an appropriate scale for the neighborhood; increasing housing options, especially for seniors, workers, and long-term renters; and, fostering responsible economic development. The Como Blueprint is committed to these goals and makes the following recommendations.

9.1 Economic Activity and Employment Inventory

Recommendation:

- Conduct an economic activity and employment inventory.

9.1.1 Economic Activity – The Como neighborhood is home to a range of retail, commercial, and industrial ventures. Most of the neighborhood's retail establishments are located on the neighborhoods Community Corridors; East Hennepin Ave, and Como Ave SE. The cluster of businesses located around the intersection of 15th Ave SE and Como Ave have been designated a Neighborhood Commercial Node by the City. For more on this topic, see Section 9.3 (below) and Section 6 Land Use.

9.1.2 Employment – The Como neighborhood is fortunate to be home to several thousand jobs and the neighborhood is adjacent to the Mid-City Industrial Area which boasts several thousand additional jobs. The Como neighborhood is also a short distance from two of the largest employment centers in the region; downtown Minneapolis, and the University of Minnesota. The large number of jobs in and around the neighborhood can be attributed to land use and zoning. The Como neighborhood has a significant amount of industrial land (See Map 6.0), and the Mid-City Industrial Area is nearly all industrial land. The U.S. Census Bureau's On The Map web application reports an estimated 15,060 jobs within Census Tract 1040 (For more information on Census Tract 1040, see page 4-1), which includes the Como neighborhood and the Mid-City Industrial Area. (Source: On The Map, U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 2010) Employment in Census Tract 1040 is dominated by four sectors:

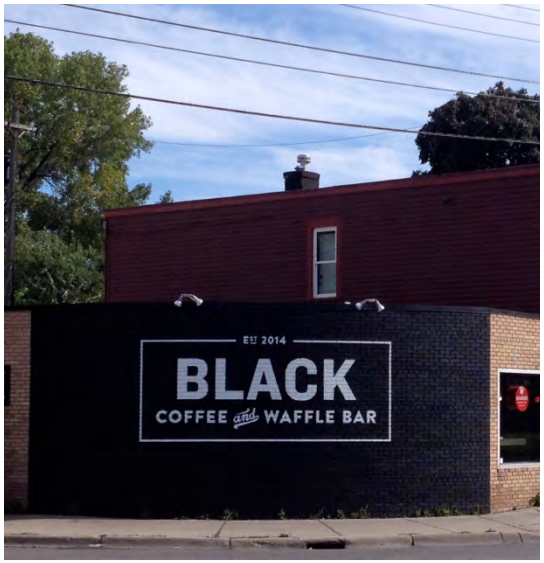
- Manufacturing : 3,400 Jobs
- Administration and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services: 2,670 Jobs
- Wholesale Trade: 2,320 Jobs
- Health Care and Social Assistance: 1,940 Jobs

These four categories account for approximately 10,300 of the 15,060 jobs in Census Tract 1040. Other important employment sectors include:

- Professional, Scientific, Technical Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Retail Trade

Despite the large number of jobs in and around the Como neighborhood, the vast majority (99.4%) of people employed in Census Tract 1040 live outside of it. The reverse is also true; of the estimated 1,900

workers who live in Census Tract 1040, the vast majority (95.6%) work outside of it. The wages of workers in Census Tract 1040 are more middle-income when compared with the overall Minneapolis-St. Paul region. Approximately 43% of workers in the tract earn more than $3,333 per month. In the region about 46% of workers earn this wage. In the tract about 40% of workers earn between $1,251 and $3,333 per month. This is a much larger share than the region as a whole where 30% of workers earn between $1,251 and $3,333 per month. Only 16% of workers in the tract earn $1,250 per month or less. This is a lower share than the region, where about 24% of workers earn $1,250 per month or less. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 2010) A more detailed employment and economic activity inventory could inform future neighborhood goals and policies related to workforce housing, economic development, and the environment.



Implementation:

- Convene an employment and economic activity inventory working group.

9.2 Workforce Survey

Recommendation:

- Survey local workers to gather their housing and neighborhood preferences.

A survey of people who work in or near the Como neighborhood could gather their housing and neighborhood preferences. This data would help SECIA respond to their preferences and craft programs and policies that would attract workers to the Como neighborhood which would help rebalance the lopsided age-distribution of the neighborhood. The data collected would also help SECIA refine and implement its workforce housing goals. (See Section 8.3) The data could also help inform the strategies used when promoting the neighborhood. (See Section 8.4) Neighborhood preferences are also often based on the neighborhood public schools and a survey of workers with school-age children could help direct strategies to reopen Tuttle School. (See Section 15.2) While paper and pencil surveys can be expensive and difficult to administer, online surveys are generally low cost and easy to share via email and social media.

Implementation:

- Convene a workforce survey working group; and
- Evaluate options for conducting a workforce survey, including web based tools.

Picture 9.4.1 – Mixed-Use Building with Ground Floor Neighborhood-Serving Retail and Two Floors of Condominiums

Picture 9.4.2 – Mixed-Use Building with Ground Floor Retail and Two Floors of Condominiums

9.3 Great Streets Program

Recommendation:

- Promote participation in the Great Streets program.

The shops and restaurants located near the intersection of 15th Ave and Como Ave SE are a great feature of the Como neighborhood and the Como Blueprint supports the continued presence of neighborhood retail at this location. The City of Minneapolis also recognizes the value of retail establishments of this scale and has designated certain properties around the intersection a Neighborhood Commercial Node. To help support these nodes, the City created the Great Streets program in 2007. The program is intended "to cultivate and sustain vibrant neighborhood commercial districts in the City" (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/ba/cped_great_streets_home) The Great Streets program can provide:

- Business District Support Grants;
- Technical Assistance Grants;
- Façade Improvement Matching Grants;
- Business Loans;
- Real Estate Development Gap Financing;
- Market Profiles; and
- Case Studies.

The Como Blueprint recommends making business and property owners within the node aware of the program and encouraging participation in it. The Como Blueprint also recommends promoting the program to local entrepreneurs to help them establish new businesses in the neighborhood. For a list of new businesses Como stakeholders would like in the neighborhood, see Question 6 in Appendix 18.1.

Implementation:

- Contact eligible businesses and bring the Great Streets program to their attention; and
- Promote Great Streets to entrepreneurs looking to start a business in the Como neighborhood.

9.4 Mixed-Use Buildings

Recommendation:

- Promote mixed-use buildings.

In order to foster economic development in a manner that is compatible with the Como Blueprint Vision Statement, as well as respond to the demand for business expansion and housing, the Como Blueprint recommends the development of mixed-use buildings, of an appropriate scale, and at appropriate locations, along East Hennepin Ave and on Como Ave SE from 15th Ave SE to 29th Ave SE. A mixed-use building typically consists of retail or commercial space on the ground floor and housing or office space on the upper floors. The three-story mixed-use buildings (Picture 9.4.1 & 2) are good examples of mixed-use buildings of an appropriate scale for Como Ave SE. The building includes retail on the ground floor with storefronts that are close to the street which activates the sidewalk. The building also has two upper floors of condominium homes, and includes off-street parking for residents. (Photo 9.4, above left, Mixed-Use Building at East 38th St & 28th Ave, Minneapolis)

Mixed-use buildings could provide space for the businesses Como stakeholder's indicated they want to see added to the neighborhood, including a bakery, tea house, flower shop, hairdresser, bike shop, and "more restaurants like Obento-Ya". (For a complete list of businesses stakeholder's indicated they would like in the neighborhood, see Appendix 18.1)

Implementation:

- Consider rezoning parcels along Community Corridors to allow mixed-use buildings; and
- Consider allowing aggregation of lots (See Section 6.2) along Community Corridors to provide developable sites.

9.5 Improvement District

Recommendation:

- Investigate improvement district options and partnerships.

An improvement district, sometimes called a special service district, is a defined area within a city where unique or additional services are rendered. Within the improvement district an additional tax is levied in order to fund these services. A special service district can pay for street cleaning, security cameras, landscaping, holiday decorations, graffiti removal, or a variety of other services, as determined by the district. Special service districts are governed by Minnesota State Law (Chapter 428A) and Minneapolis City Ordinance. Many Como neighborhood stakeholders voiced concern about problems that could be addressed by an improvement district.

Implementation:

- Continue discussions with University District Alliance and other organizations to study the feasibility of creating a special service district.

9.6 Community Development Corporation

Recommendation:

- Investigate community development corporation options and partnerships.

A community development corporation (CDC) is a not-for-profit organization created to provide programs, services, and engage in activities that promote and support community development. CDCs usually serve a specific geographic location such as a neighborhood, district, or a city. CDCs often focus on serving lower-income residents or struggling neighborhoods. CDCs can be involved in a variety of activities including:

- Business and economic development
- Education
- Community organizing
- Housing and real estate development

Picture 9.5 – Obento-Ya

a vibrant and sustainable economy is a critical part of a healthy community

Picture 9.6 – Manning's

A CDC could be useful for the Como neighborhood, and the wider University District, particularly in the realm of non-profit real estate development. Currently, investors buy single-family residential properties with the expectation they will reap a profit by renting to students. A not-for-profit entity could responsibly rent to students without needing to make a profit. A CDC could also partner with land trusts (See Section 6.6) and others to help ensure single-family homes remained owner-occupied.

Implementation:

- Continue discussions with the University District Alliance, the Marcy-Holmes and Prospect Park East River Road neighborhoods, and other organizations to study the feasibility of creating a community development corporation.

10 Environment

In this section

10.1 Como Green Village
10.2 University District Alliance
10.3 Informational Resources
10.4 Urban Agriculture
10.5 Litter, Trash, and Graffiti Removal
10.6 Pack & Give Back
10.7 TCE Cleanup

A healthy environment is essential to a vital community. The Southeast Como Improvement Association and the Como Blueprint are committed to the stewardship of the Como neighborhoods environmental resources. This chapter includes several recommendations pertaining to the environment of the neighborhood. As with other aspects of this plan, implementation of recommendations would be subject to conformance with existing citywide plans and policies.

10.1 Como Green Village

Recommendation:

- Promote and participate in Como Green Village activities.

The Como neighborhood has a successful environmental advocacy initiative known as the Como Green Village. The Como Green Village is a program of SECIA and has accomplished numerous goals, promoted many sustainable practices, and implemented several programs in the neighborhood, including;

- Community Gardens;
- Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels;
- Grow Barrels;
- Soil Quality;
- Solar Energy;
- Transportation;
- Water Quality;
- Wind Power;
- Air Quality;
- Urban Agriculture;
- Urban Forestry; and
- Move-In Move-Out (MIMO) Free Store.

To duplicate these efforts would be counterproductive. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends promoting and participating in ongoing Como Green Village activities. For more on the work of the Como Green Village, visit their website at www.comogreenvillage.org.

10.2 University District Alliance

Recommendation:

- Participate in University District Alliance environmental programs.

The University District Alliance (UDA) is a partnership of neighborhood organizations, institutions, and the City of Minneapolis. The UDA works to make the area surrounding the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus one that:

- Capitalizes on its exceptional resources;
- Is vibrant, safe, healthy, and sustainable; and
- Is a preferred place for people of all ages to live, learn, work, visit, and conduct business.

At the time of this writing, the UDA was in the process of forming a task force that will identify capital projects with multi-neighborhood district-level impacts, such as the Granary Corridor project. These projects could include environmental components, such as brownfield remediation, green building

techniques, or alternative energy generation. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends continued participation in UDA activities.

10.3 Informational Resources

Recommendation:

- Connect neighborhood stakeholders with existing informational resources.

Information is a critical component of environmental stewardship. Awareness of existing resources and timely access to them can help the neighborhood achieve its environmental goals and help people make informed choices. The Como Blueprint recommends connecting residents and other stakeholders with existing informational resources, in particular the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) What's In My Neighborhood (WIMN) database. The WIMN database is a web-based mapping application that allows users to access a wide range of environmental data including the location of potentially contaminated sites. The WIMN database also includes the location of entities that have applied for and/or received various types of environmental permits and registrations from the MPCA. (Source: www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/data/wimn-whats-in-my-neighborhood/whats-in-my-neighbor hood.html) Picture 10.3 (below) is a screenshot of the WIMN database for a portion of the Como neighborhood. Each dot represents a location monitored by the MPCA.

The Como Blueprint recommends further research into existing data sources and the sharing of relevant findings with the neighborhood through existing communication channels, including the Como-tion and Como Tidbits. Additional data may be available from sources including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which publishes the Toxic Release Inventory Program database (Source: www2.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program) and the AirNow mapping tool (www.airnow.gov) which publishes Air Quality Index data.

Implementation:

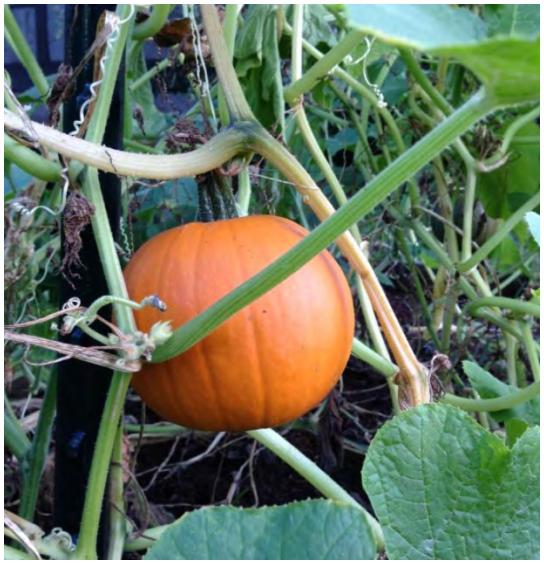
- Send WIMN database information to the neighborhood via the Como-tion and Como Tidbits; and
- Investigate available neighborhood-level data from the EPA and other sources.

10.4 Urban Agriculture

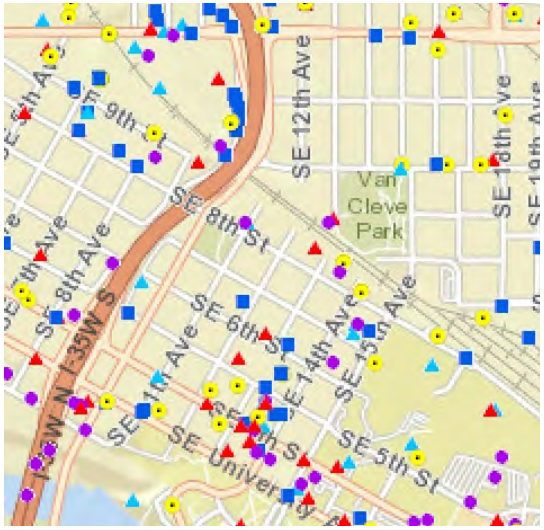
Recommendation:

- Promote and support urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture is generally defined as the practice of growing, processing, and sometimes selling food in a city. The City of Minneapolis has developed an Urban Agriculture Policy Plan that was adopted by the City Council in April, 2011. The primary aim of the plan is to support a healthy, sustainable, local food system. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/planning/plans/cped_urban_ag_plan) According to the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan, the area northeast of the University of Minnesota, including the Como neighborhood, is underserved in terms of access to local food production. The policy plan



timely access to Information is a critical component of environmental stewardship



Picture 10.3 - WIMN (Credit: Minnesota PCA)

the fairshare farm is a great example of urban agriculture in the Como neighborhood

assessed the existing conditions within the City and found the Como neighborhood had, at the time, one garden for food production. (This does not include private gardens.) In addition, the closest farmers' market to the Como neighborhood was located on the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus.

Despite the findings of the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan, there are opportunities in the neighborhood to increase urban agriculture. Minneapolis Public Schools allow gardens on school property if the organization overseeing the garden is deemed a community partner. Such gardens are governed by a license agreement between the gardening group and the school district. The school principal or site administrator assumes responsibility for the oversight of such gardens. (Source: Urban Agriculture Plan: Existing Conditions, 2011) Tuttle School could be a location for such a gardening partnership. Another opportunity to expand urban agriculture exists at Van Cleve Park. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) provides hands-on gardening programs at the park to educate youth about gardening. In addition, the MPRB is willing to hold land for groups, provided the group has liability insurance, the support of the neighborhood, and the approval of the district park commissioner to establish the community garden. (Source: Urban Agriculture Plan: Existing Conditions, 2011) Another potential urban agricultural resource in the Como neighborhood may be its industrial neighbors. According to the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan, the industrial areas adjacent to the Como neighborhood contain licensed food handling and food processing facilities. These facilities could provide a useful partnership opportunity for neighborhood food production and processing. Furthermore, the nearby industrial areas provide the potential for rooftop gardens on top of large warehouse buildings. (Source: Urban Agriculture Plan: Issues and Opportunities, 2011)

Implementation:

- Approach Tuttle School and Van Cleve Park about community garden partnerships; and
- Investigate feasibility of roof-top agriculture in industrial areas of the neighborhood.

10.5 Litter, Trash, and Graffiti Removal

Recommendation:

- Enhance litter, trash, and graffiti removal efforts.

Litter, trash, and graffiti are perennial problems in many neighborhoods, and the Como neighborhood is not spared these nuisances. Excess trash is especially problematic near the start and end of the school year when many students move. Graffiti is a form of vandalism and a violation of State Statute. See Section 14.7 for more on the public safety aspects of this topic.

Implementation:

- Apply for a Minneapolis innovative graffiti prevention micro-grant;
- Obtain free graffiti remover solvent from a Minneapolis Fire Station;
- Promote Pack & Give Back (see below) program; and
- Educate property owners and tenants about trash handling regulations.

10.6 Pack & Give Back

Recommendations:

- Promote Pack & Give Back program; and
- Promote reduce, reuse, and recycle programs and activities.

As described in Section 5.1, geographical mobility in the Como neighborhood is very high. The start and end of the school year is a time when many residents in the Como neighborhood move. When people move they often throw away a lot of personal property – some of which can be reused. The University of Minnesota, Hennepin County, and the City of Minneapolis have several initiatives designed to reduce, reuse, and recycle some of what previously ended up in the trash. The Pack & Give Back program, as well as the ReUse-A-Palooza program, helps the environment, students, and neighborhoods manage the moving season. (Source: www.facm.umn.edu/about/central-services/reuse/packandgiveback/) The Como Blueprint endorses these programs, and recommends their promotion, especially to students who move more often than typical residents. The City and County programs, such as hazardous waste disposal and curbside pick-up of reusable items, are done in conjunction with Pack & Give Back and should be promoted simultaneously.

The Free Store

Implementation:

- Promote Pack & Give Back, ReUse-A-Palooza, and other programs.

10.7 TCE Cleanup

Recommendation:

- Continue to work with the City and other agencies and actively monitor TCE cleanup.

Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a chlorinated hydrocarbon commonly used as an industrial solvent. TCE was used and improperly disposed of from the 1940s until the early 1960s at a General Mills facility in the Como neighborhood. The location has been a known contaminated site for over 30 years. In November of 2013, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) sent a joint letter to owners and occupants of residences in parts of the Como neighborhood to alert them to the ongoing investigation of potentially harmful TCE vapor from contaminated groundwater that may be intruding into their homes. (Source: pca.state.mn.us) The Como Blueprint recommends actively following the cleanup efforts and recommends continued work with the City and other agencies to resolve this problem as quickly as possible.

11 Parks and Open Space

In this section

11.1 Existing Resources
11.2 Future Parks
11.3 The Missing Link
11.4 Parks and Open Space Policy
11.5 Minneapolis Park Board

Parks and open space play a vital role in the health and livability of a neighborhood. Parks and open space give people places to gather, recreate, exercise, and socialize. The Southeast Como Improvement Association and the Como Blueprint are committed to enhancing the livability of the neighborhood, the stewardship of natural resources, and enriching opportunity for all who live, learn, work, and play in the neighborhood. Parks and open space play an important role in all of these goals.

11.1 Existing Resources

Recommendation:

- Evaluate existing park programs and facilities.

The Como neighborhood has one public park – Van Cleve Park – located at 901 15th Ave SE. The park was established in 1890 and was originally referred to as Second Ward Park. Later the park was renamed to honor Charlotte Van Cleve (1819 – 1907), the daughter of a military family and an advocate for the rights of disadvantaged people. (Source: Parks, Lakes, Trails and So Much More, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2008, David C. Smith) The block that contains Van Cleve Park is over 12 acres in area. However, several parcels on the block belong to the Minneapolis Public School system, making the actual parkland about 8.7 acres.

Van Cleve Park amenities include a baseball field, broomball rink, garden, ice rink, public art, soccer field, tennis court, wading pool, basketball court, drinking fountain, picnic area, restroom facilities, softball field, and a playground. The park also includes the Van Cleve recreation center. The recreation center contains a basketball court, drinking fountain, kitchen, craft room, gymnasium, meeting rooms, restrooms, and a volleyball court. (Source: Van Cleve Park, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, www.minneapolisparks.org/default.asp?PageID=4&parkid=230)

The park grounds are open from 6 AM to midnight in developed park areas and from 6 AM to 10 PM in undeveloped park areas. (Source: www.minneapolisparks.org/default.asp?PageID=1347) These hours are established by Ordinance PB2-33. The park building is open from 3 PM to 9 PM Monday to Friday, from 9 AM to 6 PM Saturday, and is closed on Sunday. Van Cleve Park offers a variety of programs, including adult open gym, archery, arts and crafts, computers, family gym time, movies, flag football, soccer, Halloween party, nature groups, teen open gym, youth open gym, preschool camp, ping pong, seniors group, teen night, yoga, baseball, ceramics, softball, and volleyball. (Source: Activity Search, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2014, https://apm.activecommunities.com/minneapolisparks/Activity_Search?Page=1)

Implementation:

- Convene parks and open space working group; and
- Survey neighborhood stakeholders to ascertain if park facilities and programs are adequate.

11.2 Future Parks

Recommendation:

- Provide input on the location of future parks in the Como neighborhood.

Van Cleve Park is located near the western end of the Como neighborhood. (See Map 6.0) This leaves residents of the eastern end of the neighborhood without close access to a park. According to the Trust for Public Land, good park access is defined as the ability to reach a publicly owned park within a half-mile walk on the road network, unobstructed by freeways, fences, or other obstacles. (Source: 2012 City Park Facts, The Trust for Public Land, 2012, Peter Harnik, Ryan Donahue and Linden Weiswerda). Approximately 94 percent of Minneapolis residents live within a one-half mile of a park. People who live in the eastern portion of the Como neighborhood are part of the six percent of residents who do not live within one half-mile of a park. (Source: Minneapolis Minnesota Parkscore Index. The Trust for Public Land, March 21, 2014)

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Comprehensive Plan states that future growth of the Minneapolis park system is anticipated in two areas. To reduce parkland service gaps, the system will focus on providing parkland within walking distance for each resident, specifically in north and northeast Minneapolis. Park installation will focus on serving areas of redevelopment, especially growth areas of the city that were formerly non-residential areas. (Source: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Comprehensive Plan 2007-2020, Approved October 17, 2007, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Implementation:

- Convene a parks and open space working group;
- Gather input from Como stakeholders on future park location;
- Research Minneapolis Park Board community engagement policies; and
- Contact Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board regarding preferred locations.

11.3 The Missing Link

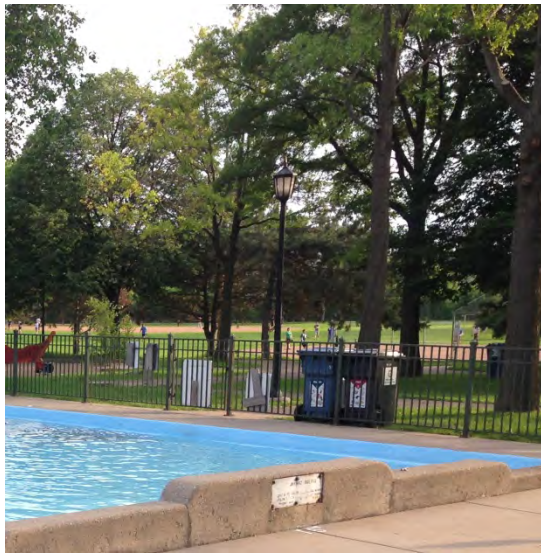
Recommendation:

- Monitor the Missing Link project.

The Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway is considered one of the nation's preeminent urban parkway systems and is comprised of a series of linked parks and green spaces that roughly follows a circular path through the City of Minneapolis. The system contains 50 miles of parkways, bike trails, and pedestrian paths. Much of the Byway was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Despite its impressive scope, the Grand Rounds contains a three mile gap that runs through the Como neighborhood. This gap is called the Missing Link. In September 2008, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the Grand Rounds Missing Link route alignment. The route through the Como neighborhood will be near the eastern edge of the neighborhood, close to Hwy 280. At the time of this writing, the precise alignment has yet to be

GOOD TO KNOW

Consuming alcohol is not allowed in parks unless it is served at an MPRB eatery licensed to serve alcohol or you have a special use permit. Occasionally, the MPRB provides permits for events or facilities to distribute alcohol. In those cases, alcohol may be consumed in designated areas. (Source: https://www.minneapolisparks.org/about_us/ordinances_and_tickets/alcohol_and_tobacco/)



determined. The Como Blueprint supports the implementation of the Missing Link project and urges the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to ensure a high degree of connectivity with existing bike paths.

Implementation:

- Continue to monitor the Missing Link project; and
- Participate in public meetings.

11.4 Parks and Open Space Policy

Recommendation:

- Review parks and open space policies.

Aside from Van Cleve Park, the Como neighborhood contains little public green space. However, there are some options for access to green space and City policies in place to help build more green space. The grounds at Tuttle School may be used for non-school related recreational purposes under the rules of the Board of Education. Permits can be obtained for political meetings, parade drills, and other similar activities. (Source: Facility Use Manual, Minneapolis Public Schools Community Education Department, August 2011) Additionally, the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan outlines the city's policy for green space in new developments. The City provides private landowners and developers with incentives to create and maintain public green space. The city also implements land use regulations to preserve open space in certain new developments. (Source: Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 7: Open Space & Parks)

In January 2014, a Parkland Dedication Ordinance went into effect in Minneapolis. The ordinance was enacted by joint action of the Minneapolis City Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The ordinance requires developers dedicate land and/or pay a fee when developing certain property. The ordinance may be met in one of three primary ways:

1) Dedicate to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board a reasonable portion of the land for public use for parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, wetlands, trails or open space as an alternative to paying the park dedication fee.
2) Propose a privately owned park or plaza for public use. This option would need to meet the standards outlined in the ordinance, including a development agreement between the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the developer.
3) Pay a fee in lieu of a land dedication. (Source: Minneapolis Parkland Dedication Ordinance – FAQ)

Implementation:

- Consider using Tuttle School grounds for Como neighborhood activities; and
- Monitor Parkland Dedication Ordinance implementation and impacts on development in the Como neighborhood.

"How about a dog park?"

11.5 Minneapolis Park Board

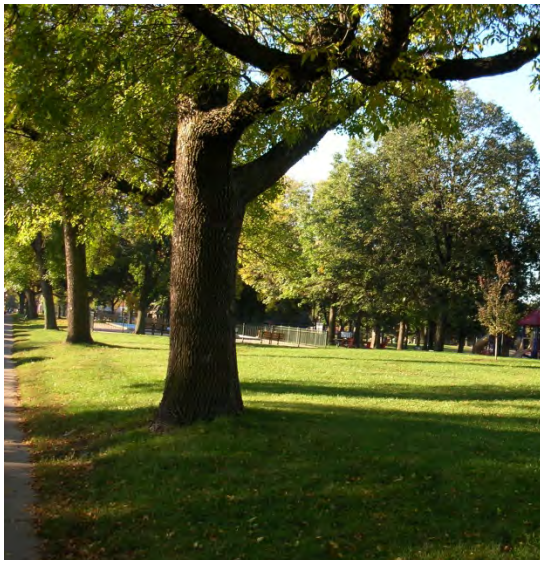
Recommendation:

- Collaborate and coordinate policies with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board requires that all park projects have a community engagement plan. The community engagement plan is developed with neighborhood stakeholders and organizations. Each community engagement plan includes a community advisory committee comprised of various interest groups impacted by the proposed park project. (Source: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Board Policy: Community Engagement, February 2012) The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan articulates the vision, goals, and strategies for the park system.

Implementation:

- Research Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan and identify any shortcomings or gaps pertaining to the Como neighborhood.



12 Heritage Preservation

In this section

12.1 Existing Resources
12.2 Potential Resources
12.3 Research and Evaluation
12.4 Partnerships
12.5 Architecture Styles Guide
12.6 Museum in the Street
12.7 Conservation District

Preserving important pieces of the past is part of planning the future, and the Como Blueprint is committed to protecting valued neighborhood historic resources. In the United States, heritage preservation can include a federal, state, or local component. At the federal level, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places deemed worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and under the auspices of the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places is part of a nationwide program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic resources. (Source: www.nps.gov/nr) In Minnesota, the National Register program is administered by the Minnesota Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office. In the City of Minneapolis, the preservation of architecturally and culturally significant buildings, landmarks, and districts is overseen by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). Historic designation is a form of protection and has benefits and drawbacks for property owners and the community. Once designated for local heritage preservation, a property cannot be modified or demolished without review by the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development and the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. (Source: http://www.mnhs.org/shpo/local/faq.htm)

12.1 Existing Resources

Recommendation:

- Document existing Minneapolis HPC designated properties.

The Como neighborhood contains one building on the list of historic landmarks and districts established by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The Donald Cattanach House (Photo 12.1) is located at 1031 13th Ave SE and was built in 1893. “A cottage right out of a fairy tale” the house was likely built by Cattanach himself, who was a mason. (Source: AIA Guide to the Twin Cities, p. 139. Larry Millett) Pending permission of the property owner, the Como Blueprint recommends photographs and other documentation of the Cattanach House be obtained and incorporated into a revised Como architecture styles guide. (See Section 12.5)

Picture 12.1

Implementation:

- Convene a heritage preservation working group; and
- Contact the property owner.

12.2 Potential Resources

Recommendation:

- Document properties being considered by Minneapolis HPC for designation.

Since the year 2000, the City of Minneapolis has been conducting surveys of historic resources in the City, and in 2011, the City conducted a survey that included the Como neighborhood. Six properties were identified as potential historic sites, including:

1) August Nimmer House – 890 19th Ave SE (HE-MPC-3367)
2) Blanche La Du House – 1075 14th Ave SE (HE-MPC-3392)
3) General Mills Laboratories Building – 2010 Hennepin Ave E (HE-MPC-3360)
4) Woolery Machine Company Building – 2115 Como Ave SE (HE-MPC-3357)
5) Calumet Elevator (Pictured 12.2) – 648 24th Ave SE (HE-MPC-03606)
6) Murphy Warehouse Co. / Wabash Screen Door – 2222 Elm St SE (HE-MPC-3369)

Pending permission of the property owners, the Como Blueprint recommends photographs and other documentation of these properties be obtained and incorporated into a revised Como architecture styles guide. (See 12.5)

Implementation:

- Convene a heritage preservation working group; and
- Contact the property owners.

12.3 Research and Evaluation

Recommendation:

- Research, evaluate, and nominate worthy properties for Minneapolis HPC designation.

The list of properties generated by the City survey was by no means exhaustive. The Como neighborhood contains several buildings worthy of consideration for heritage preservation. The most visible of these buildings is the Bunge Tower (circa 1935) located at 937 13th Ave SE. Sometimes referred to as the "head house", the Bunge Tower is a 200 foot tall concrete building adjacent to a series of abandoned grain storage containers. The property is owned by the Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a Minneapolis nonprofit organization. At the time of this writing, PPL was in the process of redeveloping the site, and SECIA was following the project.

Other buildings worthy of consideration are less visible than the Bunge Tower and may be unnoticed by even astute Como neighborhood residents. The following properties may be worthy of consideration for historic preservation:

1) Double Bungalows (circa 1948-50) on 23rd and 24th Ave SE between Elm Street and Fairmount Ave;
2) Quinn Violins (circa 1930s) at 1081 21st Ave SE (Picture 12.3); and
3) Bunge Tower (circa 1935) at 937 13th Ave SE.

Protecting valued neighborhood and cultural resources is a guiding principle of the Como Blueprint and there may be other places in the neighborhood that have yet to be recognized for their historic value. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends further evaluation, keeping in mind the City of Minneapolis has specific criteria to determine whether a building, district, or site is worthy of designation as a

Picture 12.2

protecting valued cultural resources is a guiding principle of the Como Blueprint

Picture 12.3

Picture 12.4

historic landmark. The complete criteria can be found in the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances §599.210 and these criteria include:

1) The property is associated with significant events or with periods that exemplify broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history;
2) The property is associated with the lives of significant persons or groups;
3) The property contains or is associated with distinctive elements of city or neighborhood identity;
4) The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural or engineering type or style, or method of construction;
5) The property exemplifies a landscape design or development pattern distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or quality of design or detail;
6) The property exemplifies works of master builders, engineers, designers, artists, craftsmen or architects; and/or
7) The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (Source: Minneapolis Code of Ordinances - Title 23 - Chapter 599 - Article V. Designation)

Implementation:

- Reconvene the SECIA History Group for discussion and research on historic sites and buildings.

12.4 Partnerships

Recommendation:

- Investigate partnerships with historic preservation advocacy groups.

The Como Blueprint recognizes that historic preservation can require substantial expertise and this expertise may best come from outside organizations or consultants. One potential source of expertise is the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM), a nonprofit organization that has been working to preserve old buildings for over 30 years. The organization "unites people, businesses, neighborhoods, and decision-makers to enhance communities by protecting and promoting old buildings and sites." (Source: www.mnpreservation.org/about-us/about-the-alliance/) Another potential source of expertise is Preserve Minneapolis, a volunteer organization that is "dedicated to improving the quality of life in Minneapolis by recognizing, preserving, and revitalizing the architectural and related cultural resources of the city of Minneapolis" (Source: www.preserveminneapolis.org/wpfile/about-us/) Organizations such as these could make excellent partners in historic preservation activities in the Como neighborhood.

Implementation:

- Contact local preservation advocacy groups and discuss partnership opportunities.

12.5 Architecture Styles Guide

Recommendation:

- Revise and update the Como architecture styles guide.

In 2008, the Southeast Como Improvement Association and the SECIA History Group published Como Architecture Styles: A Guide. The eight page document is a valuable resource and contains photos and descriptions of the many styles of architecture found in the Como neighborhood. Research for the document was primarily conducted by Naomi Austin and the SECIA History Group. The Como Blueprint recommends revising and updating the guide, and recommends considering the following improvements:

- Obtaining additional photos of included properties;
- Creating a map of the locations of included properties;
- Converting the PDF document into a web-based document; and
- Integrating the information in the Como guide with similar documents produced by other neighborhood associations and heritage preservation organizations (e.g. PAM).

Implementation:

- Reconvene the SECIA History Group for discussion and research on revising the style guide.

Picture 12.5

12.6 Museum in the Street

Recommendation:

- Research implementing a Museum in the Streets project.

The Museum in the Streets: Lake Street is a project of the Lake Street Council in Minneapolis and the Museum in the Streets organization. The project created three self-guided walking tour of historic points of interest along Lake Street. The tour uses a series of bilingual plaques, maps, and historic photos. The project is intended to educate, encourage the preservation of landmarks, and foster a sense of historical identity. (Source: www.themuseuminthestreets.com/) Each walking tour takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes. (Source: www.lakestreetcouncil.org/programs/museum-in-the-streets)

Picture 12.6 – Courtesy Lake Street Council

12.7 Conservation District

Recommendation:

- Pursue a conservation district for core areas of the Como neighborhood.

In October 2014, Minneapolis City Council passed a conservation district ordinance. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/newsroom/WCMS1P-132650) Conservation districts can stabilize a neighbor-hood by protecting designated design features and are often intended to preserve the character of a neighborhood. This is accomplished in a manner that is typically more protective than zoning alone, but less restrictive than the design guidelines used in historic preservation districts. A conservation district ordinance typically includes a design review process for building projects within the district. The size, scale, and massing of the proposed building is usually evaluated. In some instances, the architectural details and building materials are also evaluated. The interior of a building is rarely evaluated. Conservation district criteria have no bearing on life-safety or other building codes. In the

Como neighborhood, areas not adjacent to Community Corridors, or certain other main thoroughfares, could be suitable for inclusion in a conservation district. Parcels adjacent to Community Corridors are not suitable for inclusion, as these parcels are intended to accommodate mixed-use and multi-family redevelopment. Map 12.7 (Page 12 – 6) roughly depicts three areas suitable for a possible conservation district in the neighborhood. A conservation district paired with enhanced enforcement of occupancy limits (See Section 8.7) could help enhance the livability of the Como neighborhood. The conservation district ordinance has two important thresholds; first, at least 75 percent of properties in the proposed district must possess the visual character for which the district is considered notable, and second, at least 66 percent of property owners in the proposed district must agree to abide by the design guidelines before the City Council can consider approving the district.

Map 12.7 – Potential Areas of Conservation Districts (Shaded Green)

13 Arts and Culture

In this section

13.1 Resource Inventory
13.2 Como Festival
13.3 Public Art
13.4 Public Libraries
13.5 Creative Placemaking
13.6 Little Free Libraries

the Como neighborhood is fortunate to have numerous art and cultural resources

A vibrant community includes the arts of all kinds. The Como neighborhood is fortunate to have numerous art and cultural resources located within its boundaries, and many more resources nearby. Some of the more well-known assets in the neighborhood include the Atelier, Fired Up Studios, and Foci Minnesota Center for Glass Arts. The Como Blueprint strives to support existing art and cultural resources and to foster the creation of additional resources in the neighborhood.

13.1 Resource Inventory

Recommendation:

- Create an arts and cultural resource inventory.

While the Como neighborhood is home to many art and cultural resources, some Como neighborhood residents are unaware of these assets. This is likely due, in part, to the high rate of geographical mobility of neighborhood residents. (See Section 5.2) Como neighborhood stakeholders identified the need to raise awareness of neighborhood art and cultural resources and connect residents and the broader community with these resources. Ideas to help connect people with art and cultural resources include creating maps, databases, or a website. A resource inventory may also help people understand the cultural, social, and economic context of the Como neighborhood which can help build a sense of place. An example of an arts inventory map can be found on the City of Minneapolis website: www.minneapolismn.gov/dca/dca_map

A resource inventory could focus on people, places, or some combination thereof. A people-based resource inventory could include artists who live in the Como neighborhood but work outside of it. A place-based resource inventory could include the artists who work in the Como neighborhood, whether or not they live in the neighborhood. A resource inventory could also include people in the Como neighborhood who have talents and skills but who do not consider themselves artists. The neighborhood surely has capable painters, cooks, woodworkers, writers, bakers, sewers, storytellers, photographers, and musicians, to name just a few, who might enjoy being part of a cultural resource inventory. While some art belongs in the museum, concert hall, or gallery, art in everyday places and in everyday lives is also important.

Implementation:

- Convene a resource inventory working group; and
- Identify and evaluate options for creating an arts and cultural resource inventory.

13.2 Como Festival

Recommendation:

- Expand the Como neighborhood festival.

The Minneapolis–St. Paul region is home to many festivals, fairs, and community events. (Source: www.exploreminnesota.com/events/fairs-festivals/) The Como neighborhood has two annual

neighborhood events, the Como Corner Como-tion and the Como Cookout. The Corner Como-tion is a neighborhood art, music, and garden festival. The event is sponsored by SECIA, and in 2014, was held in August. The Cookout is the neighborhood's annual fall gathering at Van Cleve Park. The gathering includes food, entertainment, and a variety of activities. In 2014, the 12th annual Como Cookout was held in September.

Several Como neighborhood stakeholders voiced a desire to add another festival, or expand one of the existing neighborhood festivals. The nature of the expansion was not determined, but suggestions include a larger art fair, a music festival, or a Como Green Village / sustainable living expo. Expanding the neighborhood festival will require time, expertise, and financial resources. A location, sponsors, permits, staffing, and other logistics will all need to be addressed.

Implementation:

- Convene a festival working group; and
- Research funding, sponsorship, location, permits, etc.

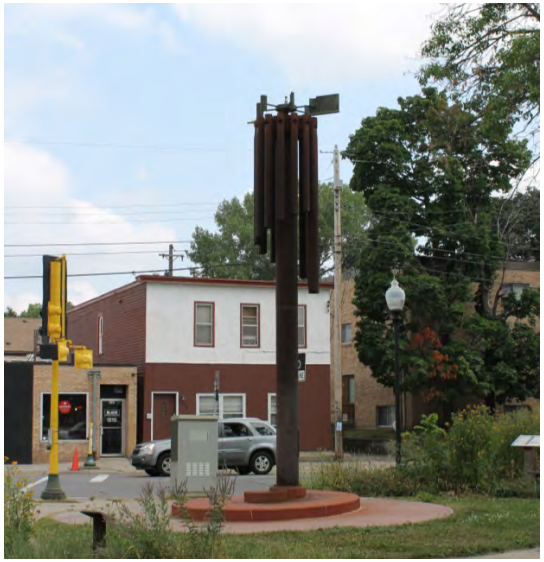
15th Ave SE Mural

13.3 Public Art

Recommendations:

- Promote public art; and
- Pursue public art funding.

If cities are crucibles of culture, public art is a sign of success. Many Como neighborhood stakeholders voiced a desire to promote public art and pursue additional public art in the neighborhood. A lack of funding and expertise can be a barrier to the creation of public art. Fortunately, there are several resources in the Twin Cities that can provide assistance, including; Forecast Public Art, Springboard for the Arts, mnartists.org, the Minneapolis Public Art Administration, and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. Forecast Public Art could be especially helpful to the Como neighborhood because the organization strengthens and advances public art by providing expertise, inspiration, and assistance. Forecast Public Art helps its partners in creating public art that expresses a community's sense of place and pride and is respected for its unique combination of consulting services, grant making and resources. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/dca/WCMS1P-121740) Forecast Public Art also has developed a toolkit to help guide organizations interested in pursuing public art. Sections in the toolkit include; Idea Development, Location Analysis, Permissions and Permits, Financing and Funding, Artist Selection, Community Engagement, Fabrication and Installation, and, Conservation and Restoration. (Source: www.forecastpublicart.org/toolkit/)



National organizations could also be a source of funding and expertise, in particular ArtPlace America, a "collaboration that exists to position art and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities." (Source: www.artplaceamerica.org/about/)

the Como neighborhood is fortunate to have numerous art and cultural resources

Implementation:

- Convene a public art working group;
- Identify funding sources and grant opportunities;
- Promote public art as part of the resource inventory (See Section 13.1);
- Invite representatives from arts organizations to discuss opportunities for public art;
- Encourage real estate developers to consider adding public art installations to projects; and
- Encourage business owners to consider public art on their property (e.g. exterior wall murals).

13.4 Public Libraries

Recommendation:

- Strengthen connections with public libraries.

The Como neighborhood does not have a public library within its boundaries. The nearest public library is the Hennepin County Southeast Library, located at 1222 4th St SE, a short distance from the Como neighborhood. The facility was built in the early 1960s and was designed by noted local architect Ralph Rapson. In 2013 Hennepin County undertook a facility assessment of the building, and in 2014 a process of research and community engagement was begun to identify the needs of the community and plot a course for the future of the library. (Source: https://apps.hclib.org/buildingprojects/library.cfm?library=Southeast)

Also a short distance from the Como neighborhood is the Saint Anthony Park Library located at 2245 Como Ave in St Paul. Designed by Saint Paul City Architect, Charles Hausler, the Saint Anthony Park Library was built in 1917 and paid for by steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie. The building has undergone several renovations: the most recent in 2000 added a reading room for children. These renovations have helped ensure the facility will be a community resource for many years. (Source: www.sppl.org/about/locations/saint-anthony-park) While the region has several large public libraries, including the Minneapolis Central Branch in downtown, the Como Blueprint recommends maintaining connections with these local libraries to help enhance the neighborhoods sense of place.

Implementation:

- Connect with Hennepin County Libraries Southeast Library Project;
- Promote Saint Anthony Park Library in the Como-tion and Tidbits; and
- Promote Southeast Library events in the Como-tion and Tidbits.

13.5 Creative Placemaking

Recommendation:

- Research Creative Placemaking and other strategies that support the arts.

Supporting the arts can take many forms and can be a complex process. Several strategies are worthy of further research including creative placemaking. Creative placemaking is a process in which "partners

from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood… around arts and cultural activities." (Source: National Endowment for the Arts Mayors' Institute on City Design, Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus) Creative placemaking can animate public and private spaces, rejuvenate structures and streetscapes, improve local business viability and public safety, and bring diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired. (Source: www.metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/) An excellent local example of creative placemaking is the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District.

Implementation:

- Convene an arts and culture research working group; and
- Research Creative Placemaking strategies and opportunities.

13.6 Little Free Libraries

Recommendation:

- Promote Little Free Libraries.

In its most basic form, a Little Free Library (Picture 13.6) is a box full of books where anyone may stop by and borrow a book (or two) and bring another book (or two) to share. (Source: www.littlefreelibrary.org) Little Free Libraries can help build social capital, share knowledge and ideas among community members, and help the environment by supporting reduce/reuse habits.

Implementation:

- Promote Little Free Libraries in the Como-tion and Tidbits;
- Hold a Little Free Library design competition;
- Consider hosting a Little Free Library building charrette; and
- Identify high visibility locations for Little Free Libraries (e.g. Van Cleve Park) and sponsors for them.

Picture 13.6 – Little Free Library

14 Public Safety

In this section

14.0 Crime Statistics
14.1 Law Enforcement
14.2 Neighborhood Watch
14.3 Junk In Your Trunk
14.4 Street Lighting
14.5 Security Cameras
14.6 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
14.7 Vandalism

Public safety is paramount to neighborhood livability. A neighborhood that lacks adequate public safety can suffer from disinvestment and experience a loss of population. The crime rate in the Como neighborhood is lower than the City of Minneapolis as a whole. Larceny-theft and burglary are the two most frequently reported serious crimes, and vandalism is the most frequently reported minor crime in the neighborhood. Despite the relatively low crime rate, many Como neighborhood stakeholders indicated that public safety should be a priority of the Como Blueprint. Therefore, this chapter presents recent neighborhood crime statistics and makes a series of recommendations that are intended to reduce crime and make the neighborhood safer. As with other aspects of this plan, implementation of recommendations would be subject to conformance with existing citywide plans and policies.

14.0 Crime Statistics

Crime statistics are often reported using a two-tiered classification system. The most serious crimes are reported as Part 1, while less serious crimes are reported as Part 2. (Source: www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/about/offense_definitions.html) Part 1 crimes include: criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, auto theft, and arson. Part 2 crimes include: simple assault, fraud, vandalism, driving under the influence, liquor law violations, and disorderly conduct. Part 2 crime statistics generally do not include minor traffic violations.

14.0.1 Part 1 Crime – The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) reports Part 1 for each of the 87 neighborhoods in the City on a regular basis. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/police/statistics/crime-statistics_codefor_statistics) Table 14.0.1 (below) details the Part 1 crimes reported in the Como neighborhood in 2013 as well as for adjacent neighborhoods for comparison.

TABLE 14.0.1 –NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME STATISTICS, 2013

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny Theft	Auto Theft	Arson
Como	0	5	10	10	85	150	26	2
Mid-City Industrial	0	0	1	1	8	58	14	0
Marcy-Holmes	0	7	26	18	104	431	41	0
Prospect Park	0	6	12	11	37	165	18	0
University of MN	0	2	5	3	16	71	6	0

Source: Minneapolis Police Department

The University of Minnesota Police Department reports crime for the Minneapolis Campus separately from the Minneapolis Police Department which creates a second set of statistics. Table 14.0.2 (overleaf) details the serious crimes reported on campus in 2013. It is important to note, many serious crimes go unreported. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, “more than half of the nation’s violent

crimes… went unreported to the police between 2006 and 2010." (Source: www.bjs.gov/content/pub/press/vnrp0610pr.cfm)

TABLE 14.0.2 – UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MINNEAPOLIS CAMPUS CRIME STATISTICS, 2013

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny Theft	Auto Theft	Arson
University of MN	0	2	7	3	18	440	13	2

Source: University of Minnesota

The number of reported Part 1 crimes in the Como neighborhood has been relatively stable for the past few years. Robbery and aggravated assault have trended upwards, but burglary has declined. Table 14.0.3 (below) details the number of reported Part 1 crimes from 2010 to 2013.

TABLE 14.0.3 – REPORTED PART 1 CRIMES IN THE COMO NEIGHBORHOOD, 2010 TO 2013

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny Theft	Auto Theft	Arson
2013	0	5	10	10	85	150	26	2
2012	0	4	13	11	72	136	38	0
2011	0	4	8	15	108	110	24	0
2010	0	2	4	5	126	156	35	1

Source: Minneapolis Police Department

14.0.2 Part 2 Crime – With the exception of vandalism, Part 2 crime in the Como neighborhood is not a major problem. In 2013, a total of 224 Part 2 crimes were recorded by Minneapolis Police. Of the nineteen different categories of Part 2 crime, seven categories had no reported instances in the neighborhood for the entire year. (These categories include: forgery / counterfeit, embezzlement, stolen property, prostitution / commercialized vice, gambling offenses, vagrancy, and curfew / loitering.) Chart 14.0.3 (overleaf) depicts the number of Part 2 crimes in the Como neighborhood for 2013. Most Part 2 crimes in the Como neighborhood occur at night. Of the 224 Part 2 crimes recorded in the year 2013, 124 occurred between 10 PM and 4 AM. Table 14.0.4 (overleaf) depicts the number of Part 2 crimes by two hour time block for the year 2013.

14.1 Law Enforcement

Recommendation:

- Work with local law enforcement agencies.

The Como neighborhood is served by multiple law enforcement agencies including: the Minneapolis Police Department, the University of Minnesota Police Department, the Minneapolis Park Police, Metro Transit Police, and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office. The Como Blueprint recommends working with

these agencies, especially within their established community outreach and crime prevention programs, to help reduce crime and build partnerships in the neighborhood.

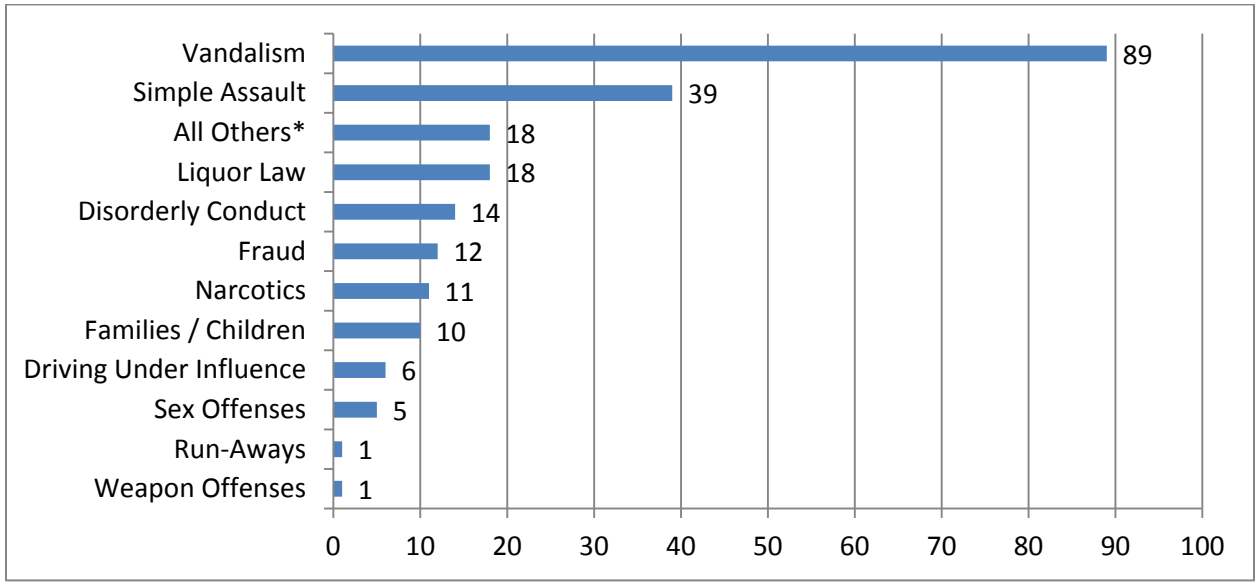


CHART 14.0.3 – PART 2 CRIME, 2013
Source: Minneapolis Police Department
*All Others includes crimes not otherwise categorized, but does not include minor traffic violations.

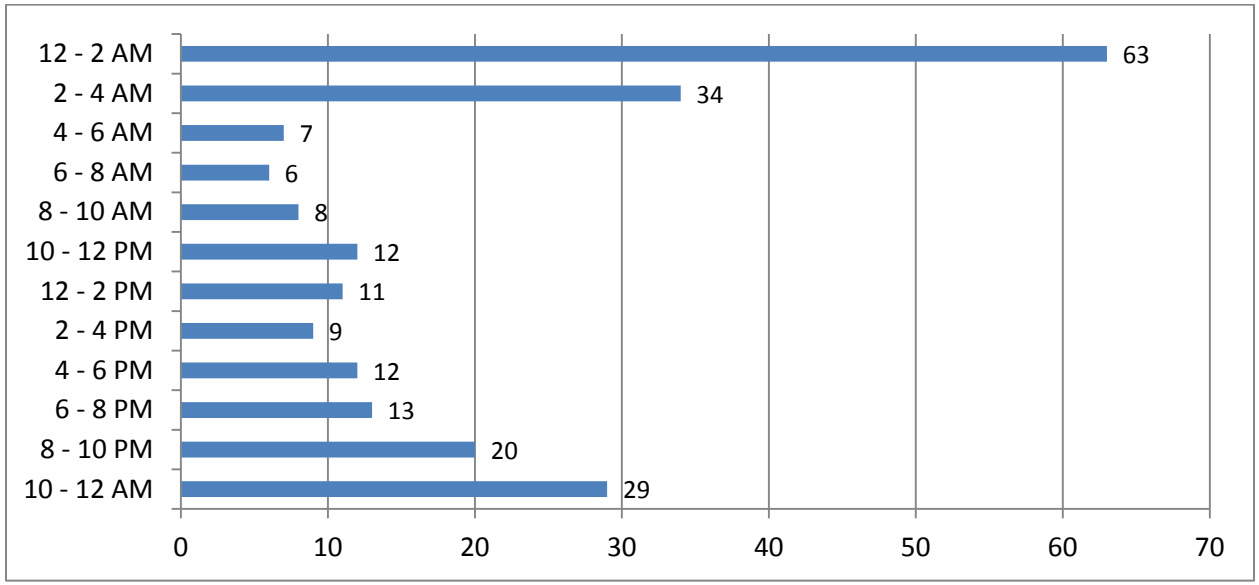


CHART 14.0.4 – PART 2 CRIMES BY TIME OF DAY, 2013
Source: Minneapolis Police Department

14.1.1 Minneapolis Police Department – The principal law enforcement agency in the Como neighborhood is the Minneapolis Police Department. The department offers a number of crime prevention resources, and the Como neighborhood has taken advantage of many of these resources in the past. Two effective resources include the department's Crime Prevention Analysts and Crime Prevention Specialists who work with residents, neighborhood organizations and businesses to:

- Recruit and train block leaders to start block clubs;
- Maintain block clubs;
- Present safety and neighborhood livability information to the public;
- Publish and distribute crime alerts;
- Promote National Night Out;
- Resolve complaints about problem properties; and
- Respond to crime trends.
  (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention/police_outreach_safe-teams)

Implementation:
- Continue to work with Crime Prevention Analysts and Crime Prevention Specialists;
- Identify public safety concerns not being adequately addressed;
- Raise public safety concerns; and
- Report any concerns to Minneapolis Police.

14.1.2 University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) – The UMPD is a licensed law enforcement agency that has served the campus for over 70 years. The UMPD provides a range of police services including crime prevention and education, student monitor and escort services, and parking enforcement. (Source: http://police.umn.edu/) The UMPD is not responsible for off-campus law enforcement. However, one service, the security escort program, includes a portion of the Como neighborhood. (Map 14.1.2 Source: http://police.umn.edu/home/escort) The program offers free walking and biking security escort to and from campus locations and nearby destinations for University of Minnesota students, staff, faculty and visitors. The current security escort boundary excludes areas more than one block north of Como Ave and areas more than one block east of 19th Ave SE. This boundary excludes the Como Student Community Cooperative, and excludes other areas where University students, staff, and faculty likely live in the Como neighborhood.

Implementation:
- Evaluate University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus escort boundary; and
- Work with UMPD to adjust the boundary if needed.

Map 14.1.2 – Security Monitor Boundaries

feeling safe on transit and at bus stops can influence transportation choices

14.1.3 Metro Transit Police – In order to ensure the safety of its customers and employees, Metro Transit has its own licensed police force. Metro Transit Police are focused on the public safety onboard transit vehicles and near transit stations. (Source: www.metrotransit.org/transit-police) As described in Section 7, several Metro Transit local bus routes serve the Como neighborhood, and Route 3 in particular is heavily used.

Implementation:

- Identify any public safety needs at transit stops; and
- Report any concerns to Metro Transit Police.

14.1.4 Minneapolis Park Police – The Minneapolis Park Police is an independent law enforcement agency governed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). While public safety in Van Cleve Park was not specifically identified by Como neighborhood stakeholders, crime around the park is an issue. Map 14.1.4 (left) depicts clusters of crime around the intersections of 15th Ave SE and Rollins Ave, and 15th Ave SE and Como Ave.

Implementation:

- Identify any public safety needs at Van Cleve Park; and
- Report any concerns to MPRB Police and Van Cleve park staff.

14.1.5 Hennepin County Sheriff's Office – The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) serves the residents of Hennepin County and most HCSO duties, from managing the county jail to securing the district court, are mandated by state law. The HCSO crime prevention and community outreach efforts include the Special Deputies program and the Community Engagement Team. Special Deputies can assist with search and rescue, community events / parades, National Night Out, prescription medication collection, and traffic / crowd control. (Source: www.hennepinsheriff.org/special-deputies) The HCSO Community Engagement Team works to increase public safety and develop trusting relationships between the HCSO and multicultural communities in Hennepin County. (Source: www.hennepin sheriff.org/community-engagement-team)

Implementation:

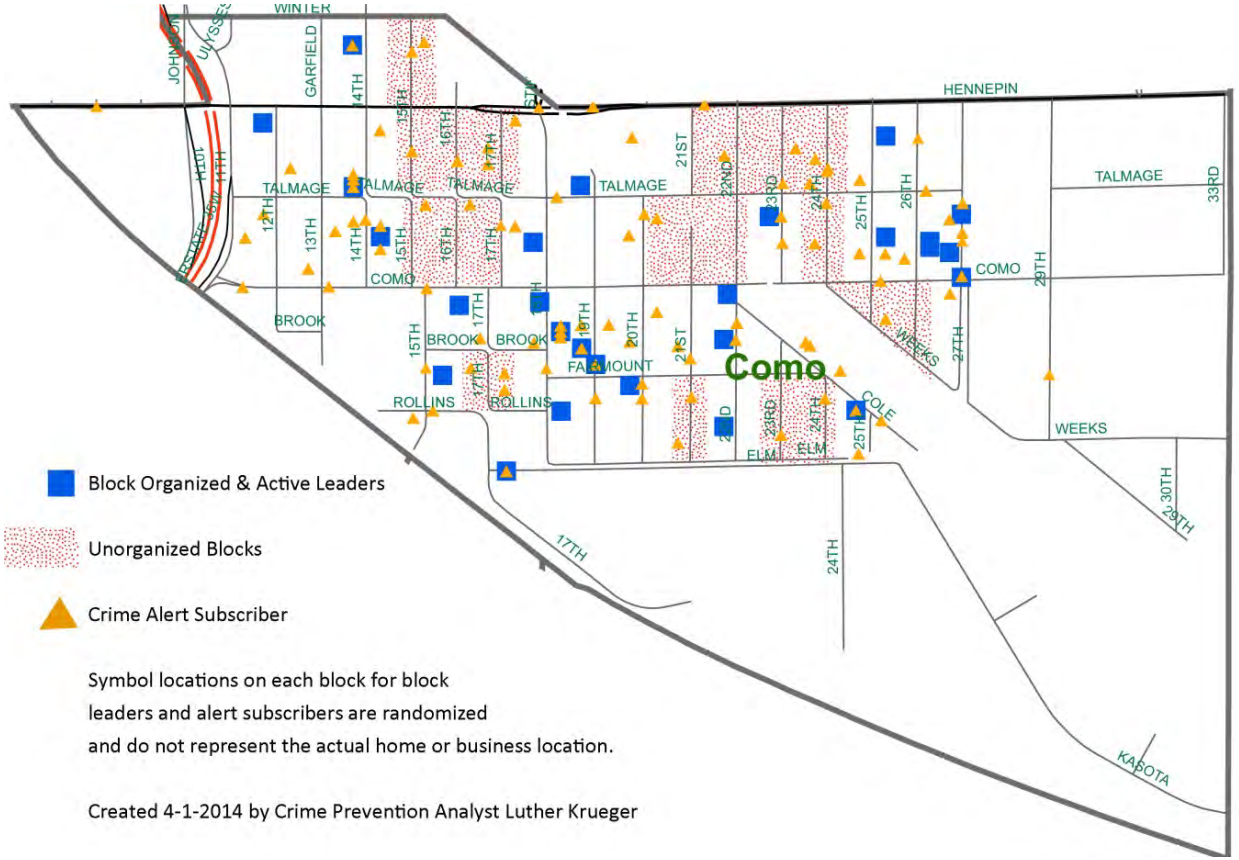
- Promote Special Deputy program to Como residents;
- Identify any public safety needs pertaining to the HCSO; and
- Report any concerns to the HCSO.

14.2 Neighborhood Watch

Recommendation:

- Enhance the Neighborhood Watch program.

Block and apartment clubs are a long established community outreach program of the Minneapolis Police Department. The Como neighborhood has several active block clubs, but many blocks lack an active leader.



Map 14.2 – Neighborhood Watch

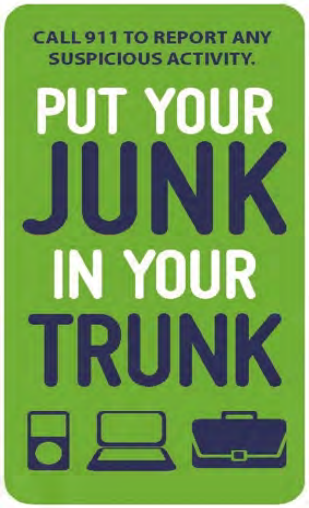
Implementation:

- Convene a public safety working group;
- Reach out to the residents and business owners of unorganized blocks;
- Encourage more people to subscribe to MPD crime alerts; and
- Schedule block / apartment club meetings in the fall after the start of the school year.

14.3 Junk In Your Trunk

Recommendation:

- Consider implementing a “Put Your Junk In Your Trunk” style public safety campaign.



Source: Minneapolis DID

Theft from motor vehicles is a common problem in urban areas. In 2013, the University of Minnesota Police Department reported 54 instances of theft from motor vehicles. In the same year, the Minneapolis Police Department reported 55 incidences of theft from motor vehicle in the Como neighborhood. (Source: Minneapolis Police Department RAIDS Online Crime Mapping) To help reduce theft from motor vehicles, the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) and the Minneapolis Police Department have teamed up and created the Junk in Your Trunk public safety campaign. By simply moving valuables, such as computers and cellphones, from the car seat or dashboard to the trunk of a car, theft from motor vehicles can be reduced. The Minneapolis DID has created signs to promote public safety signage. (Left) The Minneapolis DID works with organizations located outside of downtown and can customize the design to suit the Como neighborhood. Signage can be produced as an all-weather sign, magnet, or static window cling. (Source: www.minneapolisdid.com/page/show/496640-junk-in-your-trunk-campaign)

Implementation:

- Contact Minneapolis DID about custom signage;
- Work with law enforcement to identify areas where theft from motor vehicles is highest; and
- Implement a Put Your Junk In Your Trunk campaign in identified areas.

14.4 Street Lighting

Recommendation:

- Evaluate street lighting.

Street lighting can be a key component of public safety and can have an effect on the perception of public safety. Many Como neighborhood stakeholders identified the lack of adequate street lighting in certain locations as a key concern. Street lighting also has environmental and urban design implications as different types of lamps use differing quantities of electricity and light fixtures come in a variety of styles. The City of Minneapolis has a detailed Street Lighting Policy document that describes street lighting standards, the process for installing street lighting, and mechanism for funding street lighting improvements. Lighting improvements are generally implemented in one of two ways: as part of a capital improvement street reconstruction project, or as a stand-alone project. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/streetlighting/index.htm)

Capital Improvement Street Reconstruction Projects

New lighting systems will be installed with street reconstruction projects in Residential areas and the cost will be assessed using the Uniform Street Lighting Assessment method, unless the area submits a petition to the City requesting that lighting not be installed.

Stand-alone Street Lighting Project

Residential areas that are not likely to have the street reconstructed in the near future (within 5 years) are able to have street lighting installed by opt-in petition and paying an assessment

for the cost of installation. Opting-in to a lighting project will follow a two-phase petition effort. Phase 1 will be used to document general support and shall equal or exceed 35% within a six month time period. If successful, then the Phase 2 petition is conducted via a formal petition mailing sent out from the City of Minneapolis. In order to move forward with a street lighting project, 70% of the affected owners have to agree to support and fund the project using the Uniform Street Lighting Assessment. Other funds may be used to buy down the assessments such as grant dollars or neighborhood funds. The minimum project size to install street lighting is 4 contiguous blocks, both sides of the street, in Residential areas.
(Source: Minneapolis Lighting Plan)

In addition to the process established by the City, Xcel Energy has a process for street lighting in Minneapolis, but the type and spacing of fixtures is different than City installed lighting. Therefore, the Como Blueprint recommends an evaluation of all street lighting options be undertaken and that public safety, the environment, and urban design factors be included in the evaluation. The Como Blueprint also recommends an evaluation of the existing street lighting conditions be undertaken in conjunction with a survey of residents to identify areas where street lighting is considered inadequate and to gauge support for the assessments that may be required to improve street lighting.

Implementation:

- Compare City street lighting options with Xcel Energy options;
- Survey neighborhood residents to identify areas where lighting is lacking;
- Survey property owners in identified areas to gauge support for street lighting assessments; and
- Investigate grant and other funding opportunities to offset the potential cost of street lighting assessments.

14.5 Security Cameras

Recommendation:

- Evaluate adding security cameras at key locations.

Security cameras can be an effective crime deterrent and can provide valuable information to law enforcement after a crime has occurred. The City of Minneapolis has several fixed and mobile security camera units. Security cameras are also required by City Ordinance in certain businesses. (Source: www.minneapolismn.gov/licensing/business-licensing_surveillance-cameras) Adding security cameras at key locations in the Como neighborhood could provide greater security to residents, business owners, and visitors.

Implementation:

- Work with law enforcement and/or security consultants to identify optimal location(s) for security cameras;
- Obtain cost estimates for security camera installation and ongoing monitoring; and

- Identify funding sources. (See also Section 9.4)

14.6 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Recommendation:

- Evaluate real estate development proposals using CPTED principles; and
- Create CPTED toolkit for property owners.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) are a series of guidelines that use design strategies to reduce the incidence and fear of crime. The guidelines include: informal surveillance, natural access control, natural territory reinforcement, property maintenance, and activity support. The following are adopted from *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*, Third Edition, by Lawrence Fennelly and Timothy Crowe.

14.6.1 Informal Surveillance – Informal surveillance strategies can help reduce crime by increasing eyes on the street (or on the alley or the parking lot). Informal surveillance strategies include:

- Street design that increases bicycle and pedestrian traffic;
- Window placement in buildings that enhances views of sidewalks and parking lots;
- Short fences or fence materials that do not block sightlines (e.g. metal railings vs. wood planks);
- Landscaping that does not block views to entry points or important paths;
- Large windows in business vestibules; and
- Adequate lighting, especially at critical points, including entryways, paths, stairs, parking lots, ATMs, bus stops, parks, and trash / recycling areas.

14.6.2 Natural Access Control – Natural access control strategies can help reduce crime by limiting unintended access to a property. Natural access control strategies include:

- Using a single and visible building entrance;
- Using low, thorny plantings in front of ground level windows; and
- Eliminating design features that give easy access to roofs.

14.6.3 Natural Territory Reinforcement – Natural territory reinforcement strategies can help reduce crime by defining space, especially public and private spaces. By clearly making a space private, owners and rightful users are more likely to report intruders to police. Building elements, landscaping, pavements, signs, fences, and lighting can help define spaces and convey private versus public property.

14.6.4 Property Maintenance – Property maintenance can help reduce crime by expressing ownership and control of space. Property maintenance can be especially effective in deterring vandalism (See

Section 14.7). If graffiti is promptly removed, vandals may be less inclined to repeat the offense because few people saw their tag. Well-kept properties also convey a sense of pride.

14.6.5 Activity Support – Supporting safe and desirable activities and spaces, including playgrounds, community gardens, and outdoor dining, increases natural surveillance and thus can help reduce crime.

Implementation:

- Prepare a summary of CPTED principles for Zoning Committee and real estate developers; and
- Create CPTED toolkit for property owners to help them make safety improvements.

14.7 Vandalism Reduction

Recommendation:

- Research vandalism reduction strategies.

As described in Section 14.0.2, vandalism is the most frequent Part 2 crime in the Como neighborhood. Typical acts of vandalism include graffiti, dumping trash, stealing or damaging street signs, breaking windows and light fixtures, and other defacing of property. Vandalism is a burden to property owners who typically bear all costs of repair. Strategies to reduce and prevent vandalism include: enhancing neighborhood watch programs (Section 14.2), adding security cameras (Section 14.5), using graffiti resistant paints or films, and installing protective window coatings. Property maintenance, as described in Section 14.6.4, can also help deter vandalism. The Como Blueprint recommends further research into vandalism prevention and reduction strategies. (See also Section 10.5 Litter, Trash, and Graffiti Removal)

Implementation:

- Research vandalism prevention and reduction strategies; and
- Work with law enforcement to identify vandalism prone areas.

utility box graffiti and decorative solution implemented in the Como neighborhood

15 Institutions

In this section

15.1 Religious Institutions
15.2 Minneapolis Public Schools
15.3 University of Minnesota
15.4 University District Alliance
15.5 Minneapolis Park Board

Dar Al-Farooq

The Como neighborhood is home to several important institutions and has strong connections with several more located nearby. Institutions are unusual stakeholders in small area planning because they can possess substantial resources in a neighborhood but may have little interest in the planning process because their core mission lies elsewhere. Institutional stakeholders can also be difficult to deal with due to complex bureaucratic governance. Nevertheless, institutions are important stakeholders because they are often a longstanding presence in the community and the people who work for them can be a valuable resource for the neighborhood. In an effort to engage with key institutions, the Como Blueprint Steering Committee and its consultants held a focus group meeting for staff of local institutions. (See Section 3.4 and Appendix 17.2) This chapter makes several recommendations pertaining to the institutions in and around the Como neighborhood.

15.1 Religious Institutions

Recommendation:

- Strengthen connections with religious institutions.

Several religious institutions are located in the Como neighborhood including; Dar Al-Farooq, Southeast Christian Church, and Spirit United Interfaith Church. The Como Blueprint recommends fostering active connections between SECIA and members of these institutions to strengthen the neighborhood and build social capital.

Implementation:

- Invite members of religious institutions to join SECIA boards, committees, and activities.

Goal:

- At least one member from each religious institution actively involved in SECIA activities.

15.2 Minneapolis Public Schools

Recommendation:

- Strengthen connections with Minneapolis Public Schools.

The Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) own a major community asset in the Como neighborhood, Tuttle School. Located at 1042 18th Ave SE, the Tuttle School building was built in 1911 and is named for Calvin Tuttle, an early settler of Saint Anthony. The school building sits on roughly two and one-half acres and functioned as an elementary school from 1911 until 2007, when it was closed by the school district. (Source: mpshistory.mpls.k12.mn.us/tuttle)

A public school is viewed by many as a critical element of a vibrant neighborhood. Many Como neighborhood stakeholders view the closing of Tuttle School as a major loss to the community. Education, and school closings in particular, are politically charged topics and education is often left out of, or dealt with only minimally, in urban planning documents. This is due, in part, to the fact that

Minneapolis Public Schools is an independent unit of local government. Despite this disconnect between education and urban planning, schools have an impact on neighborhoods in ways that go beyond education. It is common for families with school-age children to make housing choices based, in part, on school districts and school attendance areas. (Source: www.realtor.org/field-guides/field-guide-to-schools-and-the-home-buying-decision)

Student enrollment is a driving factor in school closures. While the MPS Five-Year Enrollment Plan calls to "create an additional 4,800 student seats districtwide through fall 2018" (Source: www.mpls.k12.mn.us/five-year_enrollment_plan) the district is not currently seeing enrollment expand as anticipated. (Source: www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/279640292.html) Despite this district wide decline, enrollment at the Marcy Open School, the school closest to the Como neighborhood, is at record levels. "Our current enrollment is 693… This is our highest enrollment numbers that we are aware of. The district is aware of this issue and will be looking at this issue. We are over in 4th grade, 6th grade, and in middle school." (Source: http://marcy.mpls.k12.mn.us/9-10-13_mopsc_meeting_minutes.html) One possible solution to the crowding at Marcy Open School would be to implement a two campus model, similar to the Lake Harriet Community School, which operates at K-8 school in two buildings approximately one and one-half miles apart. Tuttle School and Marcy Open School are also about one and one-half miles apart. The Hale and Field Schools also use a two campus model, where Hale teaches grades K-4 and Field teaches grades 5-8. The Como Blueprint acknowledges the complexity of public education policy. Nevertheless, in order to attract families with school-age children to the neighborhood, and help rebalance the age-distribution of the population, the Como Blueprint calls to reopen Tuttle School.

the Como Blueprint calls to reopen Tuttle school

Implementation:

- Research two campus model for Tuttle School and Marcy Open School;
- Petition Minneapolis Public Schools to reopen Tuttle School; and,
- Petition Minneapolis Public Schools for other MPS programs, such as Early Childhood and Family Education, which will be an asset for neighborhood residents and provide a pathway to Minneapolis Public Schools.

15.3 University of Minnesota

Recommendation:

- Strengthen connections with the University of Minnesota;
- Work with the Office of Housing and Residential Life; and
- Strengthen connections with the Office of Student and Community Relations.

The University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus (and to a lesser extent the Saint Paul campus) has a significant impact on the Como neighborhood. With over 28,000 undergraduate students, another 13,000 some graduate students, more than 3,500 faculty, and nearly 10,000 employees, the University of Minnesota is juggernaut. (Source: www.oir.umn.edu/) The University provides a vast number of

educational, employment, and health care related opportunities, as well as myriad cultural, sporting, social, and artistic events. While being near a major University has many benefits, it also has some drawbacks. Loud parties, excess drinking, vandalism, and disorderly conduct are problems associated with University students. Unscrupulous landlords take advantage of the high demand for rental housing and lease dwellings to students, sometimes without proper rental licensure. Over-occupancy and poor maintenance of rental housing are commonly reported problems (See Section 8.7). Automobile traffic congestion and a shortage of parking, due to residential over-occupancy and commuters looking for free parking near bus stops or walking distance to the University, is also sometimes a problem in the Como neighborhood.

15.3.1 Housing and Residential Life – Every year several thousand new undergraduate students enter the University. After first year, most students live off campus. To facilitate the renting of housing near the campus, the Office of Housing and Residential Life operates a website and "more than 10,000 students, staff, faculty, and others use our listing service each year to find rental vacancies near campus and in the Twin Cities area." (Source: www.hrl-ochls.oit.umn.edu/ochls/) Property owners who list housing on the University website do not have to prove they possess a valid rental housing license from the City of Minneapolis, but do attest they are legally allowed to lease their property.

while being near a major University has many benefits, it also has some drawbacks

15.3.2 Student and Community Relations – The University's Office of Student and Community Relations provides information and resources to students who live near the Minneapolis campus. The information helps students become aware of all that the surrounding communities have to offer – and asks of – them, including information about block clubs, garbage and recycling, graffiti, city ordinances, parking, partying, safety, trash and litter, and volunteer opportunities. The Office of Student and Community Relations also operates the Student Neighborhood Liaison Program. The mission of the program is "to improve the livability of the neighborhoods near the U of M campus… by partnering with neighborhood organizations and residents to bridge the gap between students and their neighbors and create opportunities for all to be engaged in the neighborhood." (Source: www.scr.umn.edu/assets/pdf/SNL_selfprint.pdf)

15.3.3 University Assets and Real Estate – In addition to the large number of people associated with the University who live in the Como neighborhood, the University also owns a substantial amount of land in the Como neighborhood. The Child Development Center (1600 Rollins Ave SE), the Como Student Community Cooperative (1024 27th Ave SE), the Como Recycling Facility (3009 Como Ave. SE), and Printing Services (2818 Como Ave SE) are all located in the Como neighborhood. The Como Blueprint recommends working with the University in the event these properties are ever redeveloped or repurposed.

Implementation:

- Maintain connections with University Student Liaisons;
- Work with Student and Community Relations;

- Work with Housing and Residential Life to improve landlord conduct and require proof of valid rental license to list housing on the University website; and
- Investigate partnerships with departments and colleges (e.g., the Department of Architecture regarding sustainable and urban design).

15.4 The University District Alliance

Recommendation:

- Maintain connections with University District Alliance.

The University District Alliance (UDA) is a partnership of neighborhoods, institutions, and the City of Minneapolis. The UDA works to make the area surrounding the University of Minnesota Minneapolis campus one that:

- Capitalizes on its exceptional resources;
- Is vibrant, safe, healthy, and sustainable; and
- Is a preferred place for people of all ages to live, work, learn, do business, and visit.

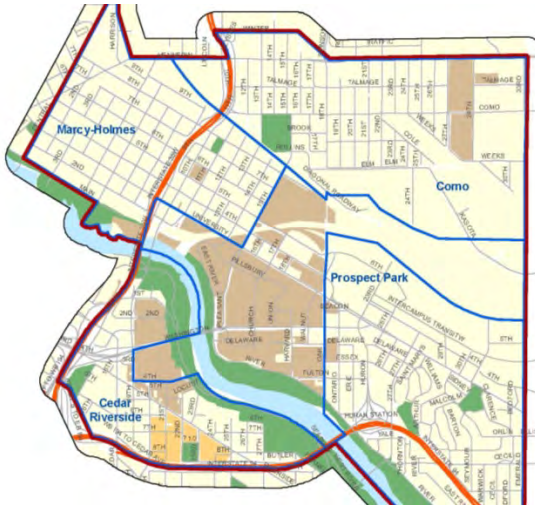
The UDA brings organizational leadership and fiscal capacity to district wide issues, including planning, housing, and environmental. Because certain projects require a scale larger than the Como neighborhood, the Como Blueprint recommends continued participation in the UDA. Large-scale projects could include an improvement district (See Section 9.5), a land trust (See Section 6.6), or a community development corporation (See Section 9.6).

15.5 Minneapolis Park Board

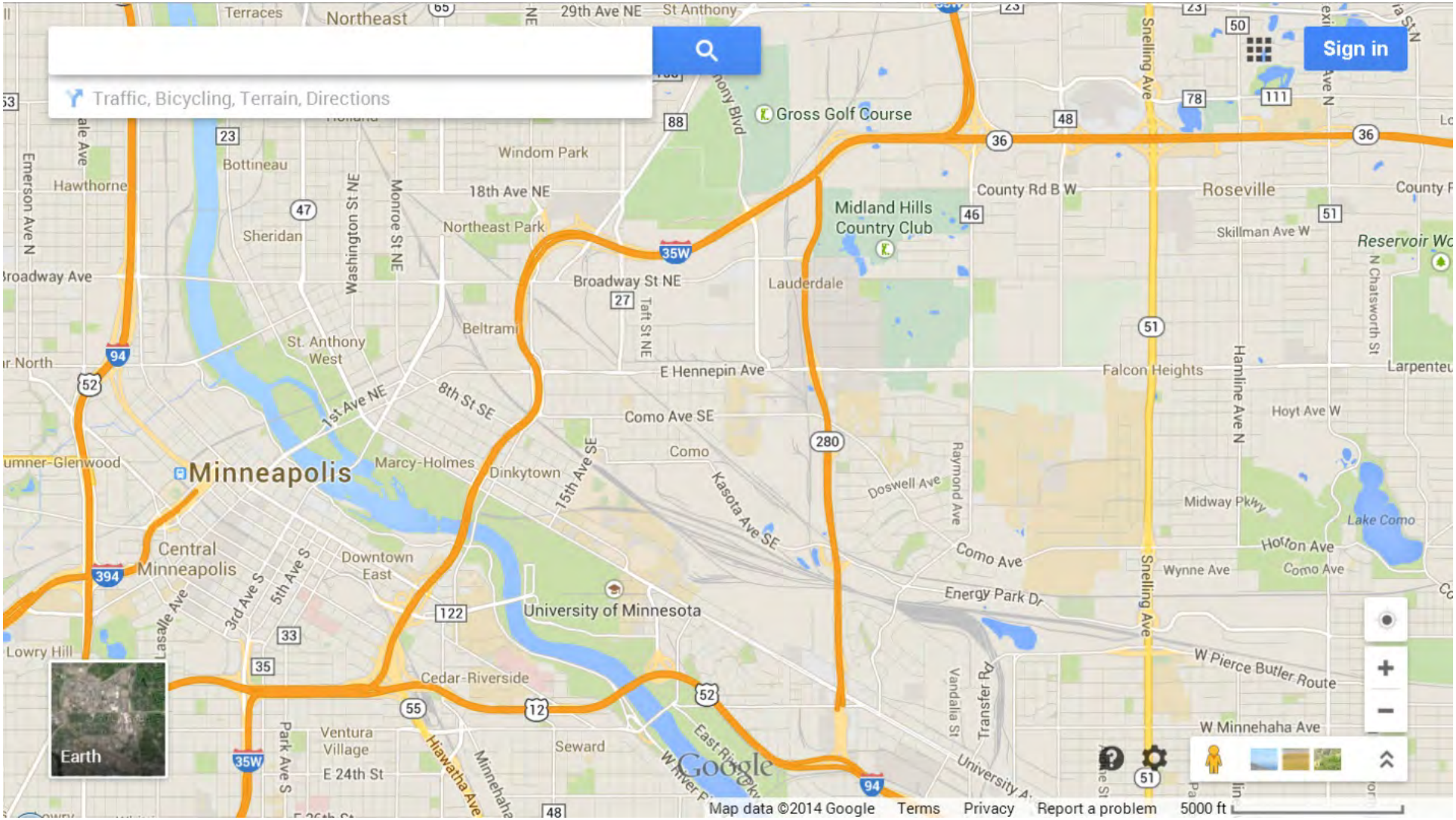
Recommendation:

- Strengthen connections with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

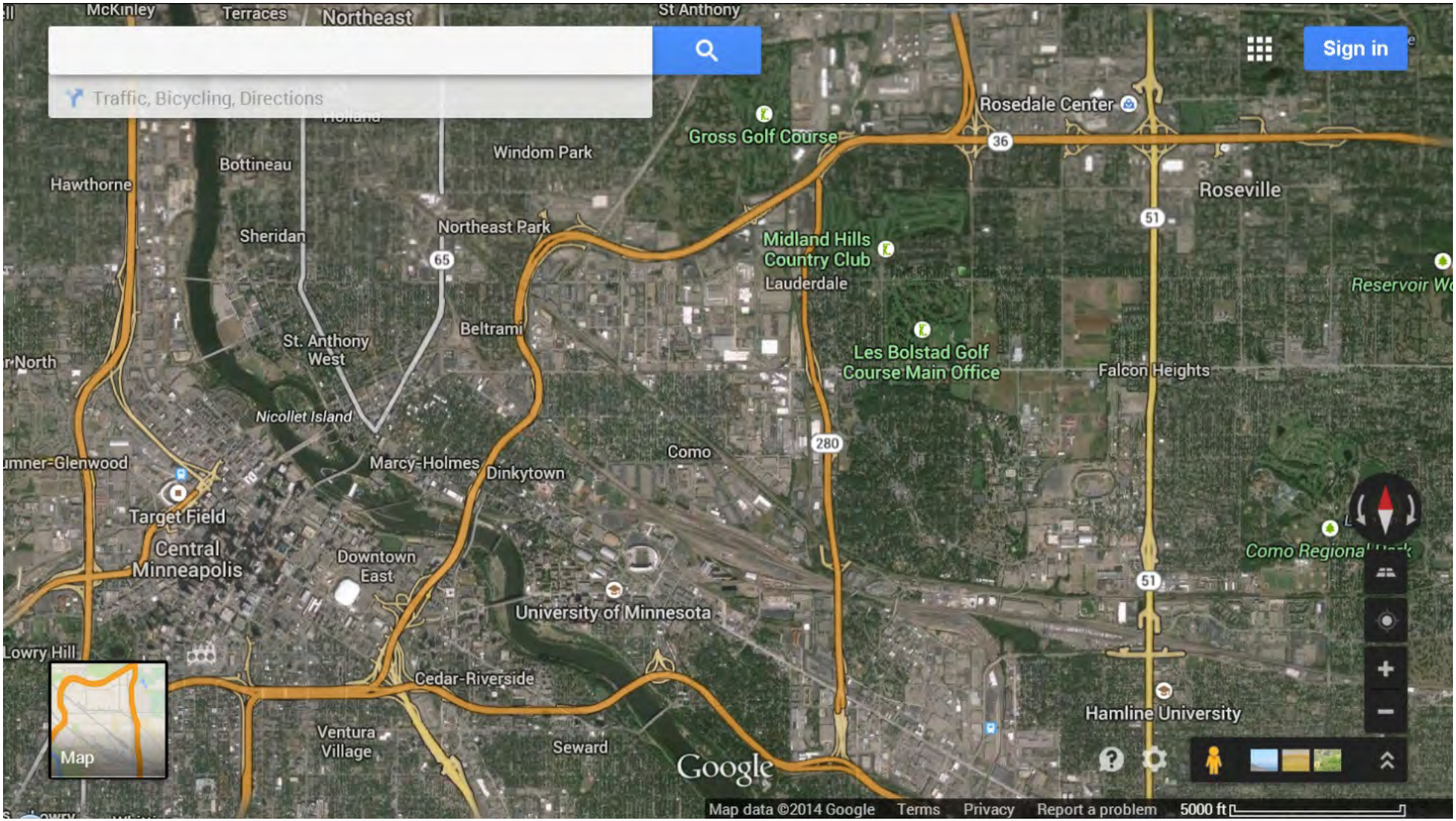
As the owner of Van Cleve Park, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is a major institutional stakeholder in the Como neighborhood. The MPRB is an elected, semi-autonomous body responsible for maintaining and developing the Minneapolis Park system. Because Van Cleve Park is a central feature of the Como neighborhood and provides important recreation areas, green space, programs, and meeting space, it is important to maintain strong connections with the MPRB. The Como neighborhood is located within MPRB District 1, represented by Liz Wielinski. For more on Parks, see Section 11 of this document.



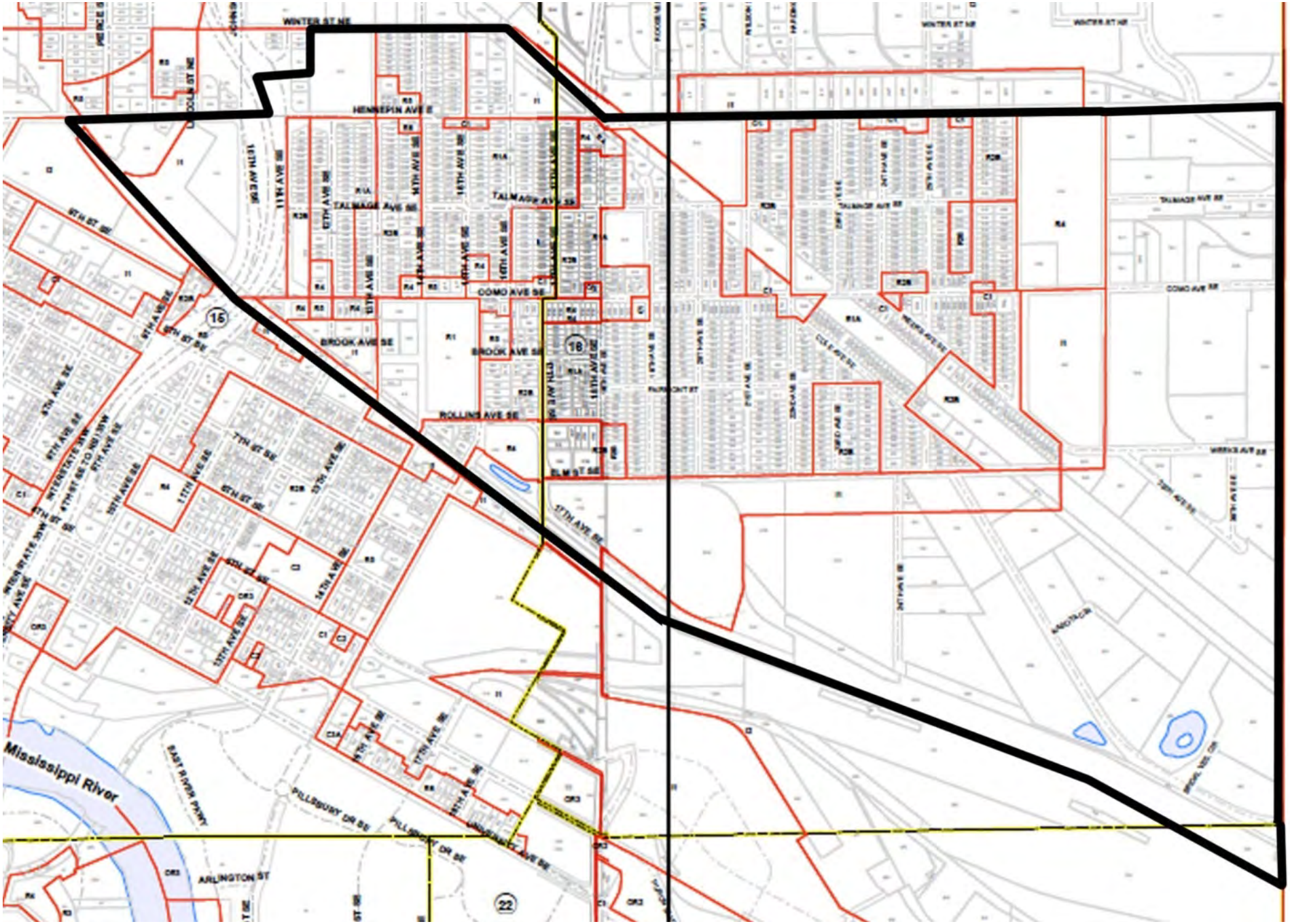
The University District



Map 16.1 – The Region (Source: Google Maps)



Map 16.2 – The Region (Source: Google Earth)



Map 16.3 – Zoning (Source: City of Minneapolis)

17 Appendices

In this section

17.1 Questionnaire Results
17.2 Como Housing Strategies Report
17.3 Dream Book

17.1 Questionnaire Results

The following is a compilation of responses gathered from the Como neighborhood Blueprint survey (See Chapter 3.2). Each bullet point represents a different person's answer to the question. Answers have not been altered and the opinions expressed are that of the respondent alone.

1. What do you see as the strengths of the neighborhood?

- Small town feel near the big city; knowing neighbors; lots of walkers and bikers; low crime; safe; good people
- New to Como SE; bought the service station on Como and 17th two months ago
- Proximity to U of M (East Bank, West Bank, and St. Paul campus) and downtown; increase in bike paths
- Students (short-term renters) are high energy, friendly people who care about each other; people who can work together and accomplish things; centerpiece school and park
- Small and walkable; houses suitable to moderate income buyers; many gardens and dedicated gardeners; community gardens; low crime; lots of walkers and bikers; extensive bikeways; close to downtown and University.
- Educated diverse community; idealistic; friendly University; friendly and safe; walkability and bus system
- The parks; SECIA; gardens; history; dynamic population; U of M student neighborhood liaisons
- Convenient location (including by bike); good bus service; O-bento-Ya restaurant; discrete island-like setting; it's my home; Como Green Village initiatives; great gardens and soils for gardeners and trees
- Transportation; location close to the University and downtown
- Neighborhood ties; neighborly-ness

2. What do you see as its weaknesses?

- Streets overcrowded; not enough parking for businesses; too many people just drive through
- New to Como: just bought service station at 17th and Como two months ago
- Transient resident population; lack of parking / green space
- No neighborhood school and people [are] not getting involved with the contract schools; too many irresponsible landlords; landlords don't screen their tenants or keep their properties up; no designated over 55 managed housing – all my neighbors move to Kenzie Terrace!
- Shabby, deteriorating rental properties; irresponsible landlords not screening renters adequately; using Como streets as U overflow parking lots; neighborhood apathy, so no concerted effort to improve weaknesses (the same small group do the work to improve)
- High turnover – would be nice if more of the students settled here to raise families; Tuttle school no longer open for neighborhood students; no lake
- Landlords are a serious problem, I'm sick of slanted rooms and settling foundations; being close to industry; lack of real population representation at meeting (not just students, all pop.); we need to try to move past the resistance to student population and embrace it / adapt to it
- Over occupancy; noisy parties; deteriorating residential properties; too little retail within easy walking distance
- Encroachment of high density housing
- Not getting the word on events or situations – I get the Comotion after some dates of events

3. What amenities would you like to have in Como?
(For example: streetscape w/ planters, outdoor cafes, dog park, more community events, such as... Other)

- All of the above; public wastebaskets; community events such as midsummer & midwinter festivals; get MIMO [move-in move-out] back
- More restaurants like Obento-Ya, especially with outdoor dining; livable, walkable community
- Soccer field; extension of Van Cleve and more Van Cleve parking; we have no overall "beautification" plan; Hennepin Ave. is a disgrace—it looks like a field of devastation; all planners ever say is they want to widen Como—leave Como alone and focus on E. Hennepin
- Free use of Van Cleve Park meeting rooms
- All of the above; a mid-summer art fair in the park; more diversity of businesses; 55+ housing; greening up of Como and East Hennepin
- Healthy outdoor cafes; plantings on boulevards; Art; painted electrical boxes; have Como Community Co-Op open its playgrounds to [the] rest of community; health club w/ reasonable rates and exercise equipment
- More cafes; a dog park; more neighborhood events that incorporate the large student body; if we are going to build a good relationship between students / residents this is the way to do it; acknowledging that family friendly events will not attract students; more bike paths; a bike hub
- More community gardens—with people to take care of them; farmers market; store with produce, great bread, and fresh meat
- Curb cuts on each of the traffic diverters to permit bicycling through the neighborhood
- A school!

4. What improvements would you like in Como?
(For example: better street lighting; spruced up houses and yards, cleaner streets, bus shelters, public art, other?)

- All of the above, plus the alleys too; some of the streets need resurfacing (18th from Como to Elm, for example)
- Good question – need to think about it

- Hold landlords to a consistent standard; combat graffiti on an organized basis - let's get it OFF (neighborhood sweeps, maybe?); more pocket gardens; better outreach and support for senior citizens; no fireworks!
- Like to see the railroad grades handle drainage better – i.e. the 'waterfall' at 15th Ave underpass;
- Regulations on how close cell towers can be to residents' homes; EMF level mitigation
- All of the above; clean up houses on 15th; Prevent railroad from poisoning foliage on margins of tracks; more outdoor art!; no infill houses built without neighborhood input / approval of design!
- BNSF railway crossing – improvements to be made; we at Talmage Crossing Garden have tried to improve an eyesore where there has been erosion and run-off because BNSF sprays herbicides, we have cleared noxious weeds; would like City to remove asphalt of closed street at 21st and Talmage and to fix drainage and hardscape for a rain garden for us to maintain
- Public Art!; diversification of businesses; walking / hiking trails; Muddsuckers and Van Cleve can't be the only places where people can meet / lounge / study
- Bike connection to Rollins from middle of neighborhood; biggest priority – spruced up houses and yards; nice public art; full replacement of street trees, including replacement of all ash over next 5 years; room for trees (and planting them) along Hennepin Ave; more rain gardens
- Curb cuts on traffic diverters for bikes; development of residential properties for more than one family unit should be contingent on off-street parking
- To continue what NPR started – improving homes

5. What safety concerns do you have?

- Too many cars on the streets (rental properties should be required to provide enough off-street parking or limit tenants)
- Lots of walkers / bikes on Talmage: more traffic calming needed
- Consistent record of auto theft in far east part of Como—no one sees anything;
- 4-way stop at 19th and Talmage needed;
- More after dark patrols in Van Cleve and around Tuttle school; move bikes off 18th between Como and Hennepin—there is a bike lane marked that would do that
- Too much vandalism, burglary and graffiti; need better street lighting
- Teaching about road and rail safety; too many fire pits; too many folks walk in the street; binge drinking
- Peeping Toms and break-ins / burglaries
- None
- The neighborhood is pretty safe – some occasional vandalism – probably juveniles

6. What new businesses would you like in the neighborhood?

- Tea house; farmers market; craft center and gathering place; a bakery; a plant or flower shop; a hairdresser; a small clothing of general store (look what they're doing at 29th & Johnson)
- Good question – need to think about it
- Bike shop would probably do well; more assistance for people who are frail but want to stay in their homes (for pay, fine, of course); anything that won't go broke! (But I don't want another head shop!)
- A BAKERY; another 'bistro' like Obento-Ya
- Community health club, at reasonable cost; exercise equipment for all; Arts
- Apparel stores or small boutiques like Sara Cura in Dinkytown; another grocer to keep prices down
- Store with produce, great bread, and fresh meat
- A fitness center; snow removal (business)

7. What opportunities could improve the livability and well-being of Como?

- Level sidewalks; more green space; more trees; better streetlights; more and better parking near businesses
- More emphasis on sustainability
- Get neighborhood involved with kids at Tuttle – they need more 1 on 1 reading time, maybe math and science too but mostly reading and English – these kids need us; more public art; strong zoning and code enforcement
- Whole streets sign-up and pay (small amount) for snow removal; improving the housing stock by innovative programs and incentives using input/ideas of U students in Architecture, landscape design, environmental studies, urban planning, etc.; aggressive, proactive programs to attract home buyers
- Continue sidewalks on both sides of streets and boulevards planting
- Opportunities like the mural that will allow Como to express its unique identity; think about ways Phillips expresses its diverse, rich, colorful identity—this could be in the form of businesses, art, park concerts, etc.
- More homeowners; more engaged residents; very long term renters; well designed infill replacement- housing and commercial- in scale with green village
- I would like someone to offer block-long snow clearing – I would encourage the neighbors on my block to sign-up

8. What do you see as a threat to the livability and well-being of the neighborhood?

- The City's non-funding of SECIA; the economy
- Continued neglect
- Too high a percentage of bad landlords; responsible landlords screen their tenants, coach them like Dutch Uncles, keep their properties up; not enough new home owners coming in for the long term; no lively, quickly responsive neighborhood communication; no phone alerts; little central email communication
- Lack of assertive, concerted efforts to rid neighborhood of irresponsible and scofflaw landlords; lack of strong enforcement of housing and zoning codes; lack of effort by neighborhood leadership to dispel neighborhood pessimism; no widespread, strong neighborhood involvement;

lack of vision for innovative solutions to neighborhood problems
- Too many single-family homes made into rentals; head shop; binge drinkers; fire safety; (Grand Rounds threaten to take my house!)
- Giving up because it seems like things are going downhill
- Deteriorating housing and poor upkeep of yards and houses; high turnover of residents (50%/yr)
- Overflow parking by U students on our streets
- The imbalance of families and U students (rentals)

17.2 Como Housing Strategies

(over leaf)

SOUTHEAST COMO HOUSING STRATEGY

Draft for Review

September 24, 2015

I. Executive Summary

This document presents a strategy and roadmap for addressing housing issues and conditions in the Southeast Como neighborhood—and to some extent in the University District neighborhoods in general.

Housing issues are a primary concern in Southeast Como. They include:

- Conversions of single family homes from owner occupancy to rental
- Deterioration of property conditions
- Tenant behavior issues due to poor management

These are longstanding concerns, and the neighborhood has devoted considerable attention to them over the years.

Housing impacts in the University District neighborhoods were highlighted as a key concern in the 2007 "Neighborhood Impact Report," which led to a set of pilot programs to address the issues. There was hope this initiative would lead to a scaled-up intervention. But the pilot programs were largely completed several years ago, without a plan for continued action. There is a sense among neighborhood leaders that momentum needs to be reestablished.

The housing concerns of Southeast Como are largely shared by the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood, which is actively grappling with similar issues. Marcy-Holmes took the initiative in 2014 to hire consulting services to create a "Housing Diversity Strategy." That strategy report is the predecessor to this document.

The following pages provide additional historical and market-based context, and offer detailed information on strategies that can be pursued to advance the neighborhood's housing goals. Some of the strategies are available for Southeast Como to pursue on its own. The more ambitious strategies would require a close partnership with the other University District neighborhoods, and the University of Minnesota.

Recommendations

The following is a summary of the report recommendations. Recommendations fall under two headings—Partnership Strategies, and Neighborhood Strategies.

Neighborhood Strategies

The Southeast Como Housing Strategy Task Force acted as a steering committee for this work, and was instrumental in guiding and prioritizing the strategies that the neighborhood might undertake independently. Based on their input, the following two strategies are recommended as priorities for near term neighborhood action.

- **Marketing the neighborhood.** As more and more households desire an urban living experience, without paying downtown rents or mortgages, Southeast Como has much to offer, and can be active in communicating that in various ways.

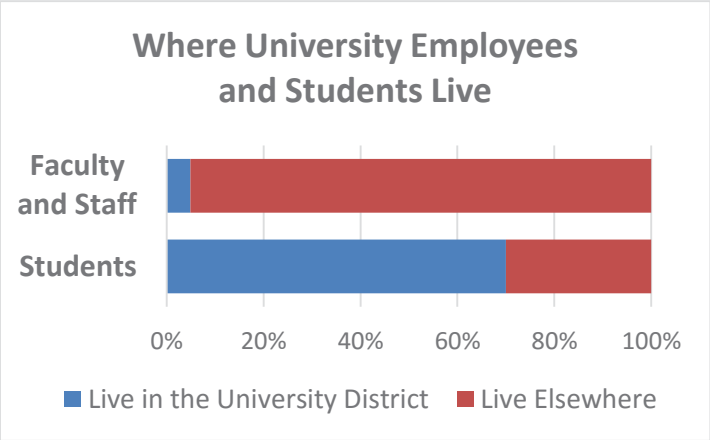
Audiences include University departments, surrounding employers, the media, real estate professionals, and developers. (See Strategy 1 below.)

- **Building connections with surrounding employers.** Southeast Como is sandwiched between two of the City's biggest employment districts. Thousands of workers come to these areas to work in industrial production, in creative enterprises, in transportation and health care. Many of these employees could benefit from living near their work, in Southeast Como. (See Strategy 2 below.)

Partnership Strategies

Conversations with University District stakeholders were critical in understanding that a broad collection of disparate strategies would not by itself capture the imagination and energy of a University/Neighborhood partnership. A singular compelling focus was needed, under which a set of strategies could be organized.

Because of this guidance, partnership strategies have been packaged as a single overarching initiative, which builds on an important opportunity—which is to build a sense of connection and attachment between University faculty and staff and the University District neighborhoods. The idea is for University staff to see the University District neighborhoods as their neighborhoods, to live and recreate in, just as University students do.



In four words:

"U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods"

This would be a collaborative initiative of the University of Minnesota, and the University District neighborhoods, over the next decade. It could have a clear and measurable target—to double the number of University staff that live in University District neighborhoods by 2025.

A range of creative efforts can advance this goal. This report recommends consideration of the following as potential components of the campaign.

- **Outreach to staff.** Systematically, assertively, and creatively market the neighborhoods to University of MN faculty, staff and graduate students as the perfect place to live. (Strategy 3 below provides additional details.)
- **Improvements to housing stock.** Improve the condition of the housing in the University District neighborhoods. (Strategy 4 is relevant to this objective.)
- **Branding through new development.** Identify catalytic sites in the neighborhoods, and develop projects attractive to University staff. (Strategies 5 and 7 are relevant to this objective.)

- **Employer Assisted Housing.** Provide incentives to staff in the form of downpayment assistance to live in one of the U neighborhoods. (Strategy 6 offers more information about this.)

Implementation

These are promising strategies, which can make a difference in longstanding issues. Action on these strategies is dependent on the ability of stakeholders to renew their energy, and to embark on new paths. It requires consensus-building, and harnessing the collaborative capacity of the University District partners.

Beginning is in itself a big step forward—at both the neighborhood and partnership level. Renewing a University District focus on housing issues would be another.

II. Introduction

Housing issues are a primary concern in the SE Como Neighborhood. They include conditions such as the following:

- Ongoing conversions from owner occupied to rental housing
- Deterioration of property conditions
- Tenant behavioral issues due to poor management

These impacts are longstanding. While the neighborhood embraces the youthful energy that comes from the presence of university students, the neighborhood also benefits from retaining a mix of owners and renters, and from having households and residents in different life stages. These foundations of neighborhood stability are weakening.

The neighborhood is not alone in raising these concerns. They are shared by the other University District neighborhoods, and to some degree by the neighborhood's important institutional partners—the University of Minnesota and the City of Minneapolis—who have themselves taken important and innovative steps to address neighborhood stability issues.

A key moment of consensus building around these challenges was the development and publication of the 2007 report titled, "Moving Forward Together: U of M Minneapolis Area Neighborhood Impact Report." This report identified housing impacts in University District neighborhoods as a critical challenge to be addressed.

A number of pilot actions followed that report, as well as the creation of the University District Alliance, which offered a venue for neighborhood-University dialog, and provided institutional capacity for some housing related actions.

The pilot actions were supported by an allocation of funding by the Minnesota state legislature. They were modest in scale, but provided important lessons with regard to the three programs that were funded. The programs were:

1. The acquisition and rehabilitation of three homes in the University District, and their subsequent sale to owner occupants
2. The provision of downpayment assistance to 15 households purchasing homes in the University District
3. The purchase of first rights of refusal options from 21 homeowners, with the intent of keeping those homes in owner occupancy status

The Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood directed new attention to these issues with a decision to create a neighborhood housing strategy, with consultant support. Over a period of six months in 2014, working closely with the neighborhood Task Force, the consultant investigated the unique housing context, and a set of promising strategies was developed. These are laid out in a report to the neighborhood, titled Marcy-Holmes Housing Diversity Strategy.

After its completion, and its presentation to the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood board, there was interest in Southeast Como to pursue a similar type of neighborhood housing strategy, and advance the dialog

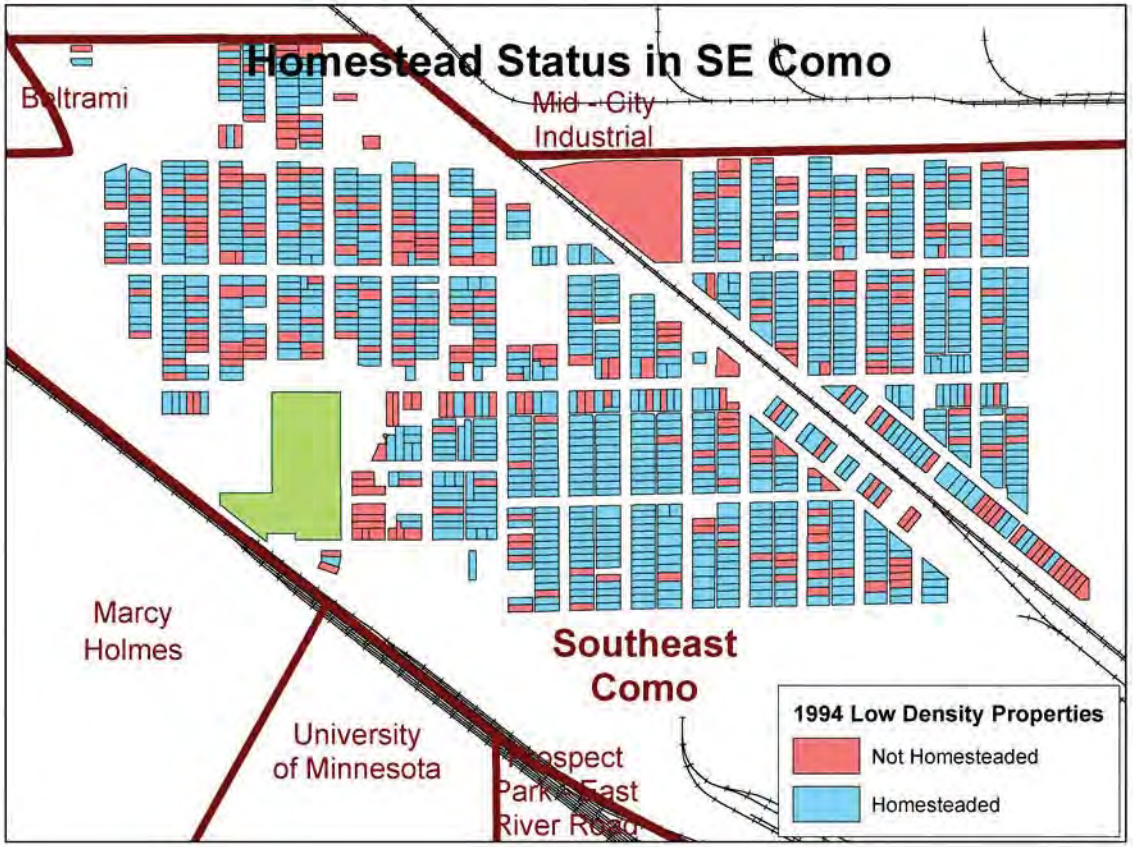
with important collaborators such as the University of Minnesota.

The neighborhood hired the same firm, Tangible Consulting Services, to support a process that would:

- Further the exploration of the housing strategies contained in the Marcy-Holmes report, with a focus on those that are also applicable to Southeast Como
- Broaden the partnership building conversations with implementation partners

This report is the outcome of that process. It offers an overview of the market context and issues experienced in the neighborhood. It provides a menu of promising strategies for the neighborhood to pursue—strategies that can be pursued by the neighborhood on its own, as well as the identification of a collaborative initiative that could be pursued with the other University District neighborhoods, and the University of Minnesota.

Its purpose in the narrow sense is to outline a set of actions that can be taken to address areas of concern. In a broader sense the analysis and candidate strategies of this



report can be utilized to build coalitions with other University neighborhoods, the City of Minneapolis, and the University of Minnesota, to undertake collective endeavors at a scale that could arrest or reverse troubling trends.

The process encompassed close engagement with the neighborhood's Housing Strategies Task Force. Over 20 developers and community stakeholders were interviewed. The earlier pilot projects undertaken in the

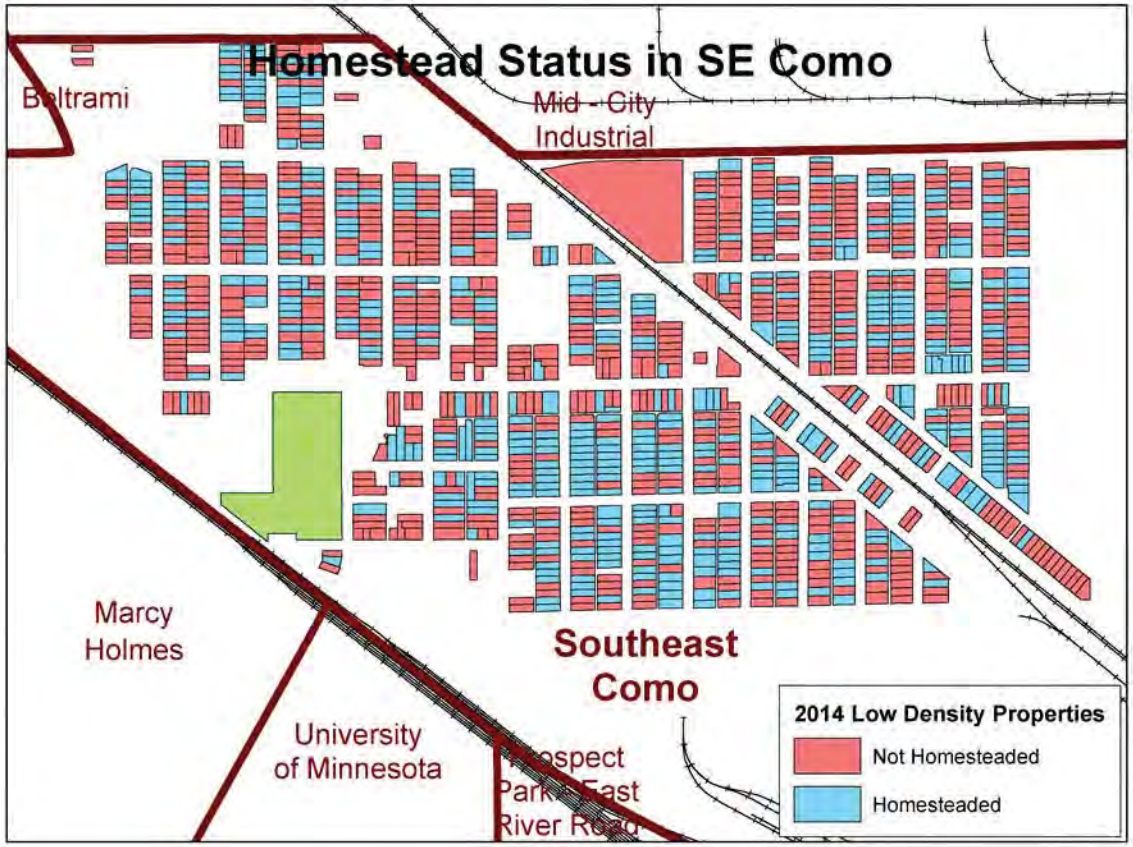
University District neighborhoods were investigated. Best practices research was conducted into the successful programs of other universities and university neighborhoods nationwide.

This Housing Strategy is being completed at the same time as the neighborhood's small area plan, The Como Blueprint. The analysis and recommendations of this report are intentionally consistent with the values and recommended actions of The Como Blueprint.

Housing Challenges

Of the three housing challenges identified as high neighborhood concerns, two have been the target of efforts that have resulted in improvements to conditions in recent years.

Tenant behavior issues. Behavior of student tenants has shown noticeable improvements as a result of two initiatives. The City of Minneapolis passed a social host ordinance that makes it a crime to knowingly allow underage alcohol consumption at one's home/event. And the University of Minnesota expanded its student conduct code such that students can suffer academic consequences for their behavior off campus as well as on campus.



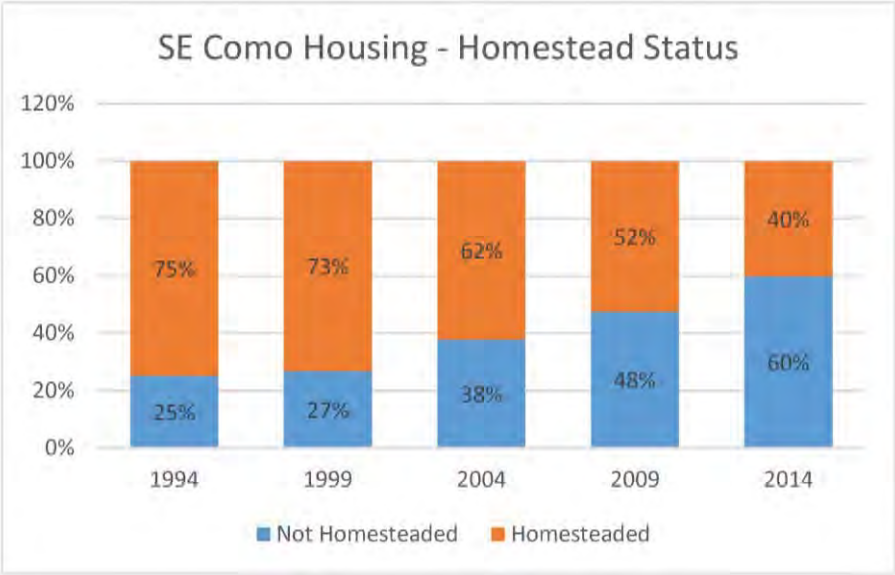
Property conditions. The City of Minneapolis has taken new and assertive steps in recent years to hold property owners and property managers accountable for the conditions of their properties, and their responsiveness to housing code violations. This is having an impact on neighborhood housing conditions.

Rental conversions. In contrast to the promising measures being taken to address issues of tenant behavior and property conditions, the conversion of single family

homes from owner occupied homes to rental property has not abated, nor has it slowed. It has continued, in fact, at an alarming rate.

Over the last twenty years, the ownership to rental ratio for all properties that can be homesteaded (single family homes, duplexes and triplexes) has flipped. As late as 1994, there were three homesteaded properties for each such property that was rented. Just 20 years later, in 2014, 50% more of the properties were rented than were owner occupied. How fast are properties being converted? In the last five years alone, (from 2010 to 2015) a full 22% of all remaining owner occupied single family homes in the neighborhood were converted to rental properties.

This is a cause for concern not because renters make bad neighbors. On the contrary, well managed rental housing is an asset to a neighborhood, particularly where residents are long-term renters, and become rooted in the community.



But single family homes are considered the category of rental property that is most difficult to manage well. Its scattered site nature makes it difficult to maintain effectively. It does not have the scale to support an on-site property manager who can pick up on tenant behavior issues promptly when they arise.

A concentration of single family rental property on a block can also dampen interest by prospective owner occupants for housing on that block. Such blocks can reach a tipping point where neighborhood household balance is lost.

The following section of the report provides market observations concerning the growth in student housing demand that has contributed to this phenomenon, and the recent response in the form of new student housing construction. It also points out the logic of identifying and attracting other market interest in neighborhood housing from populations that would be owner occupants and longer term renters.

III. Market and Development Context

University District neighborhoods are attractive to students and nonstudents alike. The resulting mix of households contributes to their unique character and vitality.

To preserve and strengthen neighborhood health and balance, we must understand how to attract and retain owner occupants and longer-term renters, and how to maintain a diversity of household types in the neighborhood. This requires understanding the market forces behind student housing demand and supply, and those of other market sectors.

Student Housing Market

What are the market attractors and challenges for each of these markets? Students clearly value proximity to the University. Transit service in the University District neighborhoods is strong and reliable. And additional student-oriented services and amenities have multiplied in Dinkytown and Stadium Village—including new grocery and retail offerings, convenience food, services and entertainment.

Over the last 15 years, the demand for off-campus student housing has steadily grown, in response to three University enrollment and housing trends. (See sidebar, summarized from the University's online enrollment statistics.) These policies are to be applauded from an academic and student experience perspective. But they have also served to significantly increase off-campus student housing demand.

Student Housing Demand Growth: Why?

- **Overall Enrollment Growth.** From 2000 to 2014, student enrollment at the University's Twin Cities campus increased 12%. Current enrollment is around 51,000.
- **Full-Time Status.** Over the same period, the share of students enrolled full-time increased from 74% to 83%. Taken together, enrollment of full-time students increased 26% from 2000 to 2014. Full-time students are more likely to want to live near campus.
- **Freshmen On Campus.** Over the last five years, the University has prioritized bringing as many Freshmen as possible into on-campus housing. 88% lived on campus in Fall 2014. Once accustomed to the benefits of proximity, students are much more interested in living close to the University in subsequent years.

The growth in demand has elicited a huge development response in the last few years. Student apartment buildings have sprung up in Stadium Village, Dinkytown, Seven Corners, and extending into neighboring communities.

The construction boom continues, and the dust has not yet settled with respect to rent levels, vacancy rates, and the impact on older apartment buildings and smaller scale rental housing.

Rents in the new buildings tend to be pretty high, so they are not meeting the needs of all students. Students with less to spend on housing presumably continue to compete for space in single family homes, duplexes, and older apartment buildings. But anecdotal evidence is accumulating that that the new apartment supply is having a ripple effect through the market. Vacant apartments are filling more slowly in some of the older apartment buildings, and in the single family rentals. Rents are reducing in some instances.

If the new supply is reducing student rental demand, it should slow the conversion of single family houses to rental property. And it could thus reduce the market advantage that rental property owners have frequently had over owner occupants when single family homes come up for sale.

Non-Student Housing Market

Southeast Como has assets that are attractive to non-student households. There is an abundance of classic single family homes and duplexes, with yards—in a neighborhood that is surrounded by an unparalleled employment base, and that is not that far from the center of the City. It has strong transit service that connects to both downtowns. It contains unique neighborhood businesses, is right around the corner from Dinkytown, and is nearly as close to The Quarry—which has an entirely different range of destination and big box retail stores.

The school in the neighborhood is no longer a neighborhood-based school. But the schools that are available to SE Como families are strong. This includes both Marcy School, and the rehabbed Webster School—which is being repositioned to serve downtown, Marcy-Holmes, and Southeast Como families

Southeast Como also faces some market challenges. As has been discussed, the concentration of rental housing can dampen interest in a block or a neighborhood. A second factor relates to the typical age of Marcy-Holmes housing. Much of it built around the turn of the century, the neighborhood's housing is commonly due for significant rehabilitation in order for the home to be suitable for today's living sensibilities. Less extensive investment is often required in order for the structure to be serviceable for renters. The plume of underground contaminants in certain parts of the neighborhood clearly presents an additional challenge.

Setting aside these strengths and weaknesses for a moment, the most encouraging element of the non-student housing market may be its untapped potential. What an ideal location for University faculty and staff to live. And yet only 3.7% of family and staff live in the University District neighborhoods. These neighborhoods should be seen as their neighborhoods too. And they represent a lot of market demand that can be wakened.

The same could be said of the employees of the Fairview University hospital and clinics—and of the myriad of additional employees that work in the two employment districts that border on Southeast Como—SEMI, and Mid-City Employment Areas. The businesses in these areas include production facilities, creative class businesses, and the back-office staff of health insurance companies.

Neighborhood Housing Types

The market dynamics described above play out differently for three major types of neighborhood housing. And the neighborhood's interests and concerns are also different for these housing categories.

New Development. Southeast Como has not experienced the volume of new development that has overrun Marcy-Holmes and Prospect Park in recent years. New development represents an opportunity for Southeast Como to be strategic—in the tone it sets, and in providing additional neighborhood amenities.

Legacy Apartments. Most of the apartment buildings in the neighborhood are older buildings. They are termed "Legacy

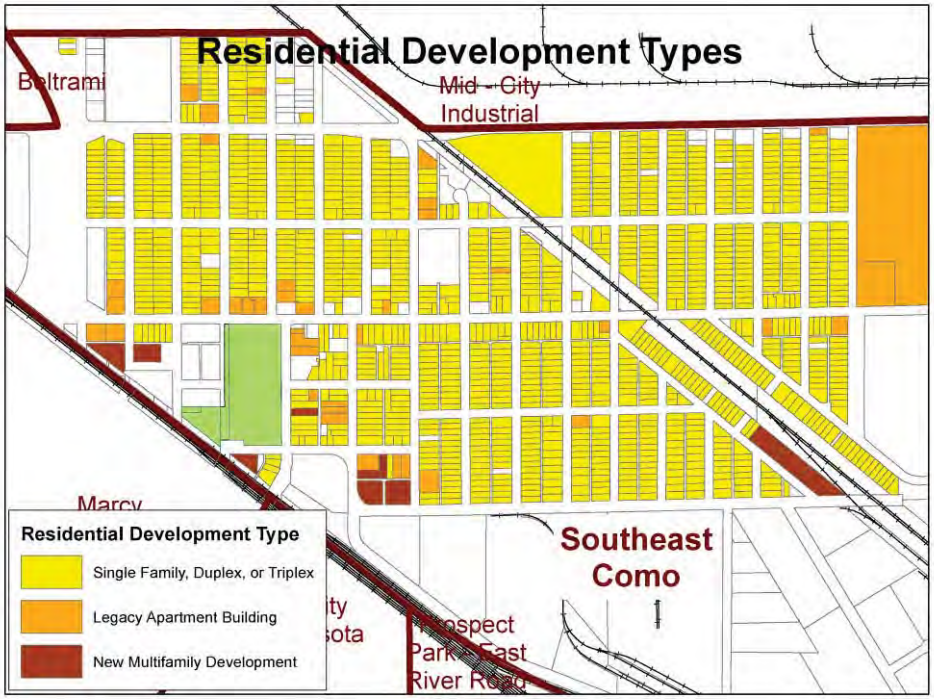
Apartments" in this report if they are constructed in 1980 or earlier.

Legacy apartments support neighborhood goals of household diversity in that these buildings are the "affordable housing" of the neighborhood. And they often house a flexible mix of students and nonstudents.

Well managed buildings are neighborhood assets. Poorly managed buildings have detrimental impacts on the surrounding area.

Because the maintenance and management of these buildings is the key determinant of their impact on the neighborhood, this report offers strategies related to rental licensing and enforcement of regulation (including occupancy requirements). And it offers information strategies that would make prospective tenants aware of license requirements, and the performance of building management.

1, 2, 3 Unit Buildings. Single family dwellings to triplexes are the dominant form of housing in Southeast Como. They may be owner occupied or rented, and their condition is an important barometer of neighborhood health and balance.



Lower density rentals are uniquely challenging to manage because they are not of a scale that supports on-site property management. Maintenance of buildings can suffer, and it is difficult to oversee tenant behavior. Student rentals have additional challenges because of the association that some students have between college life and partying, and because many student tenants lack the life experience that it takes to be a good neighbor.

Several strategies in this report would have an impact on the issues pertinent to lower density housing. For example, a rehab program is proposed, which would put some properties back into owner occupancy.

IV. Housing Strategies

The core recommendation of the Southeast Como Housing Strategy is to go in two directions in the short run:

- Focus some neighborhood energy on a set of strategies that don't require the support of a broader coalition
- Work with the broader partnership (the University of Minnesota, and the University District Neighborhoods, etc) to organize its housing work under a primary district-wide focus—a "U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods" Initiative.

There are a number of distinct strategies that support these two strategic directions. They are listed in the table at right, and described in this chapter of the report. Note that this chapter also highlights a couple of strategies that are promising but do not fit neatly under either of the near-term strategic focus areas.

Southeast Como Neighborhood Focus	1	Build Connections with Neighboring Businesses
	2	Market Southeast Como
"U Neighborhoods/ Your Neighborhoods" Initiative	3	Promote U Neighborhoods to University Staff
	4	Rehabilitate Neighborhood Housing
	5	Facilitate New Development
	6	Offer Home Ownership Incentives (Employer Assisted Housing)
	7	Increase Organizational Capacity for Development
Other Strategies	8	Support the City's Rental Licensing Improvements
	9	Create Housing Information Exchanges

All of the strategies were selected because they meet tests of relevance, impact and feasibility. In particular they were weighed against the following criteria:

- Does the strategy further the identified housing objectives of the neighborhood, and address the identified issues?
- Does the strategy have the potential to make an impact commensurate with the scale of the challenge?

- Is the strategy potentially feasible, financially and politically?

The strategies are an intentional mix of efforts that address a range of neighborhood objectives. Strategies 1, 2, 3, and 5 build the area's cachet with non-student populations, in order to retain a diverse neighborhood that is acceptable to many types of households. Strategies 4 & 6 are at least partly about strengthening the owner occupant housing market. Strategies 7 & 8 incentivize good management practices on the part of rental property owners.

The strategies require different levels of collaboration, and include some that could be pursued independently. They vary in the scale of resources that need to be marshalled for their implementation.

The strategies are described individually in the pages that follow. There is a lot to be learned from others who have faced similar challenges, and undertaken similar efforts. So for most of the strategies, a precedent project is highlighted, which illustrates a successful initiative mounted in another location.

Strategy 1: Build Connections with Neighboring Businesses

Part of Southeast Como's identity and strength comes from the number of businesses located within and adjacent to the neighborhood. The surrounding employers should be seen as a resource to be tapped, because their many employees have a strong reason to consider living in the neighborhood. Connecting with area businesses can include extending a welcome to nearby workers, and gaining information from them about how to build an environment that is attractive to them.

The Context

SE Como is a primarily residential neighborhood, but it is surrounded by a great number of businesses of many kinds. They are largely located along the larger avenues in the neighborhood: SE Como Avenue, East Hennepin Avenue and Southeast Kasota Avenue.

While there are some businesses with a lot of employees - UCare, for example, has 550 employees - many businesses in SE Como have few employees. Approximately 41 businesses have 50 or more employees; 18 businesses have 100 or more employees. Businesses are focused in multiple areas. Many are industrial businesses, focused on production of some kind, or distribution. There is also a concentration of businesses that are in the information and/or creative sector. As members of the neighborhood, these businesses can contribute to the stability and vitality of the neighborhood. Their owners and employees could potentially live in the neighborhood as well.

Reaching out to area businesses to understand their needs and their reasons for locating in SE Como would provide the neighborhood with more information about how to encourage an environment conducive to homeowners and long-term renters.

The Program

A program to connect with neighborhood businesses and encourage business owners and their employees to live in Como could take a number of forms. For example, SE Como could contact area businesses with 50 or more employees to gauge interest in a downpayment assistance program for employees to encourage them to buy a home in the neighborhood. Would business owners be interested in contributing to such a program and would employees be interested in participating? Currently, the median value of a single family home in SE Como is $200,000. A loan of $3,000 - $5,000 could help a homeowner reach a 10% downpayment. Twenty-five loans at $5,000 each would cost $125,000 (plus administrative costs). The neighborhood, the city and the businesses could potentially all contribute. Partnering with other University District neighborhoods in creating such a program might make sense. (Median Home value in Marcy-Holmes is $224,000 and in Prospect Park is $280,000.)

It seems SE Como is an environment that works for information and arts related businesses. Given this, the neighborhood is encouraged to find out why this is the case and how to facilitate the location of more of these businesses. Perhaps two story office over retail buildings along Como and Hennepin Avenues are attractive and need to be improved and marketed. Perhaps proximity to the University of Minnesota and downtown, combined with lower square footage costs is attractive and should be understood and marketed. Lastly, maybe these businesses are connected to the arts related businesses in northeast Minneapolis and are a southward extension of that business climate. More exploration is needed to inform some strategies. The connection between these businesses and the neighborhood's goal of increasing the number of homeowners and long term renters is clear.

Implementation Steps

The following are implementation actions that can further the purpose of building a closer relationship with neighborhood businesses, and inviting their interest in living in the neighborhood.

1. Do a marketing piece that could be mailed to all businesses. Elements of the piece could include:

- We are SE Como
- We want you to live in our neighborhood
- We offer:
  - A mix of living opportunities, including small single family homes
  - Affordable homes with yards
  - Proximity to U of M, downtown, Van Cleve Park, transit, NE Mpls., Hwy 280, etc
  - A mix of attractive and useful retail environments
- Our neighborhood vision and values make us distinctive
- (If/when applicable) Participate in our downpayment assistance program
- We offer live/work opportunities: live in Como, work on Como Ave. for ex.

2. Maintain a strong internet presence so that area businesses can find out about neighborhood information and potential homebuyers or renters can learn about the amenities of the neighborhood.

3. Ask businesses why they locate in SE Como and whether they are interested in living in the neighborhood as well.

4. Host community events (such as the annual picnic) and reach out in-person to local businesses to encourage their participation.

5. Connect businesses with home sale listings in the neighborhood.

Strategy 2: Market Southeast Como

An important component of achieving the vision of more homeowners and longer term renters living in the SE Como neighborhood is letting the community know about this vision and actively marketing the neighborhood as the great place to live that it is. SE Como neighborhood—with its great transit access, its proximity to the University of Minnesota and unique and varied shopping environments, and the availability of single family homes as well as apartments, offers a unique location with appeal to a wide variety of households. The neighborhood is eager to have people buy homes, and choose to rent homes for the long term. It can further these goals by taking a range of actions to spread the word about itself, rather than leaving the marketing indirectly to others. Getting the word out - and creating the message - is critical.

The Context

The SE Como neighborhood is not new to intentionally promoting itself. Recent efforts include the leadership role it has taken in a Live Near Your Work campaign.

The Como Blueprint is a master plan for the neighborhood that is under development. It offers a clear vision statement, and includes other elements that clarify the neighborhood's distinctive character and community assets. These elements can be featured in marketing and communication about the neighborhood.

The Program

A Como neighborhood marketing campaign would have the explicit goal of increasing homeowners and long term renters in the neighborhood. This effort can start with an internal conversation about how the neighborhood presents itself: digitally, over the phone and in person. The strategy can be two pronged. Initially, the neighborhood can evaluate its own website and strengthen how it markets itself to potential residents. For example, an active listing of homes for sale and rent could be maintained on the website, and information about such properties could be available at Van Cleve Park and at neighborhood events. Also, the neighborhood organization can actively prepare for any phone call from potential buyers/renters or realtors; office staff and board members can be prepped to be ready to discuss the neighborhood's attributes and any available property listings.

The second focus of the marketing campaign could be identifying where people currently get their information about the neighborhood and partnering with these entities. An initial scan points to the following as potential sources of disseminating information: University of Minnesota, area realtors, landlords, the website Zillow, and word of mouth communication among neighborhood residents.

As the neighborhood has experienced, the University of Minnesota is a decentralized institution when it comes to providing information about residential opportunities for faculty, staff and students. There are a couple of places where SE Como might begin in encouraging the University of Minnesota to play a more proactive role in how Como is described as a place to live. The University's Office of Relocation Program (RAP) works with U of M departments and their new hires to find housing. SE Como could contact this office to discuss its vision of attracting residents and review the materials about neighborhoods that RAP distributes as well as how its partner company, Relocation Today, portrays SE Como in both its materials as well as on its tours of the city. Contact with individual university departments is advisable as well. As with other University of Minnesota related strategies, SE Como would

benefit from working with other University District neighborhoods in this effort.

To reach realtors SE Como could invite them to a meeting to discuss how the neighborhood is marketed. With the shared goal of selling/renting properties within the neighborhood, the neighborhood and realtors could work together. It would be useful to show realtors what the picture of the neighborhood is today so that they are not relying on outdated information or impressions. There has been a lot of change for the better, especially with regard to student behavior. And current neighbors know best what there is to love about living in the neighborhood: park, gardens, proximity to the U of M events and activities, etc. The neighborhood can also relay the negative outcomes of the real estate community promoting neighborhood housing as investment opportunities.

Implementation Steps

There are a range of actions that can be taken to support this strategy. So the implementation steps should follow the creativity of the neighborhood volunteers who get involved in implementing this strategy.

The following actions are potential starting places. Most of them emerged from a brainstorming session of the Southeast Como Housing Task Force.

1. A neighborhood marketing piece is an essential first step. Elements of the piece could include:

- We are SE Como
- We want you to live in our neighborhood
- We offer:
  - A mix of living opportunities, including small single family homes
  - Affordable homes with yards
  - Proximity to U of M, downtown, Van Cleve Park, transit, NE Mpls., Hwy 280, etc
  - A mix of attractive and useful retail environments
- Our neighborhood vision and values make us distinctive
- (If/when applicable) Participate in our downpayment assistance program
- We offer live/work opportunities: live in Como, work on Como Ave. for ex.

Make a plan to distribute the marketing materials, along with Como's vision for attracting homeowners and long term renters, to neighborhood residents so that everyone is working towards the same goal.

2. Maintain a strong internet presence so that potential homebuyers and renters can learn about the amenities of the neighborhood.

3. Reach out to the University of Minnesota, Office of Relocation Assistance, to discuss SE Como (and other University District neighborhoods) as attractive places to live for faculty and staff. Identify residents in Como with connections to particular U of M departments. These residents can contact those departments to encourage them to suggest Como as a place to live to incoming faculty. This is a great way to distribute Como's marketing piece as well.

4. Reach out and distribute marketing materials to other nearby employers.

5. Create a script for SE Como neighborhood association office staff and board members about why people live in Como, and information about current property listings. Board members obviously know this information, but having a script at the ready makes it easy to take advantage of unexpected opportunities that arise to market the neighborhood.

6. Organize a forum for realtors. Discuss Como's attributes and distribute neighborhood materials. Identify methods for ongoing partnership in marketing the neighborhood's housing.

Strategy 3: Promote U Neighborhoods to University Faculty and Staff

The University of Minnesota is a dominating presence in the University District neighborhoods, employing and providing educational services to tens of thousands. Many of its influences on University District neighborhoods are related to the concentration of University students that live in the neighborhood. But its presence also represents a unique opportunities to achieve neighborhood housing objectives if faculty and staff are invited to connect with the surrounding neighborhoods in the same way that students have been. This is a positive message. Rather than discouraging anyone from residing in University District neighborhoods, this is about extending an invitation to faculty and staff to live in the University neighborhoods as well—to also find a home there, and to grow in their attachment to the University neighborhoods as a place to live and recreate.

The Context

This strategy is a key element in the "U Neighborhoods: Your Neighborhoods" Initiative, which invites collaboration between University District neighborhoods and the University of Minnesota on promoting the neighborhoods to University faculty and staff, and to undertaking neighborhood stabilization and improvement to make them more suitable to University faculty and staff households.

Encouraging faculty and staff to take a look at the University neighborhoods is not a new idea. The "Live Near Your Work" website and communication strategy had some success in getting the word out to University faculty and staff about housing opportunities in nearby neighborhoods.

Having acknowledged this recent effort, there is so much more that can be done in this regard if it is a consensus object of focused effort and creativity.

The opportunity is enormous. According to the Census Bureau's On the Map application, there are around 26,000 people who work within the campus boundaries. Of these, 974, or less than 3.7%, live in one of the University District neighborhoods. A doubling of that number, to only 7.5%, would result in nearly a thousand additional faculty/staff households living in the University District neighborhoods. They would contribute to neighborhood stability, because they would typically be owner occupant households, or long-term rental households.

The Program

The "U Neighborhoods: Your Neighborhoods" Initiative came out of a series of discussions with both University personnel and neighborhood representatives who care about the important relationship between the University and the nearby neighborhoods. There was an interest in identifying a focal point for collaboration between these parties. Materials describing the Initiative as a whole are located at the end of this Housing Strategy document.

This element of the Initiative would be pursued in a collaborative fashion, since there are actions that can be taken by the University, by the neighborhoods, and by others, that can serve to promote neighborhood living to University faculty and staff.

An early step is thus to further the communication with the neighborhoods and the University, and to invite agreement to adopt this strategy as a collaborative priority undertaking.

The details of the promotional campaign will be developed collaboratively between the partners, and there is tremendous opportunity for creativity. It can involve existing communication channels (such as the University's Relocation Services office), or new ones. It can offer unique events in the neighborhoods or on campus to expose faculty and staff to the opportunities. It can involve neighborhood representatives or real estate professionals in providing information or making connections.

There are many connections already in place among the University District neighborhoods and

between the neighborhoods and the University of Minnesota. SE Como should utilize and build on this relational infrastructure/capacity to create consensus around the vision to develop and promote this outreach. Conversations begun with University of Minnesota administration should be continued. And the University District Alliance (UDA) may be the natural convener for discussions about fleshing out this strategy, and coordinating what roles the various parties will play on it.

Implementation Steps

1. Share the "Initiative" with the other University District neighborhoods and the University District Alliance to get comment and gain support.

2. Follow up with the University of Minnesota personnel at the University of Minnesota Foundation, Real Estate Services, and University Community Relations, to share the "Initiative" and discuss next steps.

3. Work collaboratively with partners to outline the elements of a prominent, assertive, and multifaceted promotional program.

Strategy 4: Rehabilitate Neighborhood Housing

One of the factors behind the dramatic and ongoing transition from owner occupied to rental housing in the University District neighborhoods is the era of the housing stock. The age of the homes means that many of them are due for significant rehabilitation so that they can remain suitable for the next generation of owner occupants. This may be quite costly, and the high cost of the improvements required for ongoing owner occupancy provides an advantage to a buyer that wants to rent out the property rather than occupy it—since the home is likely to need less investment to make it suitable for renters. Once a home is converted to rental housing, it may experience a higher level of wear and tear, making reversion to owner occupancy more costly.

Although there are signs that the non-student-oriented housing market may be strengthening in Marcy-Holmes and SE Como, the restoration of a healthy ownership/rental balance is not likely to happen on its own. A robust rehab program, which operates over a number of years restoring structures to a market-acceptable condition for ownership, can play a role in furthering this objective. The improvements can generate momentum for owner occupancy. And they continue to exert an effect over time, since homes rehabbed to owner occupancy condition put future homeowners on more equal footing w/ rental property owners when the house next comes on the market.

The Context

This strategy is at the top of the first phase strategy list because the legislature has shown some willingness to consider a state funding allocation to address University neighborhood impacts, dating from the time that the new Gophers football stadium was funded. But the prospects for state support diminish as the 2007 Neighborhood Impact Report, and the Progress Report that followed it, become more distant in time. The success of a legislative request is not assured, but because it has the potential to be a real difference maker, it is worth pursuing with vigor.

There was a legislative allocation to the University District Alliance (UDA) in 2007, following the creation of the Neighborhood Impact Report. The funds were utilized in a range of pilot efforts to address conditions in the University Neighborhoods. One of these was a rehab program, in which three homes were rehabilitated. (Two of them were in Southeast Como.) The projects were resource intensive. They were administered by Greater Minneapolis Housing Corporation, with oversight by the University

UDA Housing Rehab Pilot: Lessons Learned

- Housing development and organizational expertise are critical to managing a successful rehab program. But partnering with an outside organization for program management can present difficulties if the organization is not able to adequately prioritize the program.
- The organization that manages the program must take on educating the community about the rationale for property selection, and the nature of property improvements, without empowering the community to oversee program details.
- Personal contact is critical to successfully promoting the program. The program will benefit from utilizing known and trusted community organizations such as Southeast seniors to advertise and support the program.

District Alliance. The legislature has not allocated additional funds to this effort. Some lessons from that pilot are in the box above.

There is another interesting rehab program precedent in the Marcy-Holmes and Southeast Como neighborhoods. "First Southeast" was a grassroots rehab program initiative that was capitalized by the community in $100 shares from Marcy-Holmes and SE Como neighborhood residents. Properties were acquired, and then rented out to build up capital to fund a rehab. Some of the property management was provided by active community member "investors". At a certain point, rehab work occurred, and the houses were sold to owner occupants. One or two houses would be owned at a time by First Southeast. By one estimate, around 30 homes were rehabbed over a period of 35 years.

The Recommended Program

The recommended program model is for a third party organization to select and acquire properties, oversee the rehabilitation work, and facilitate the sale to the owner occupant. It takes specialized expertise to select properties for acquisition that can be repositioned to be of interest to owner occupants. And it takes specialized expertise to choose the specific property improvements that will add market value and utility for a future owner occupant, and build the neighborhood brand, at a reasonable cost. Therefore, it is recommended that organizational capacity be created to carry out such a program, whether through a community development corporation or a development cooperative. See Strategy 9 for further discussion of creating this kind of an organization.

The program could be University District wide. It would target single family homes, and duplex, triplex or townhome properties that could be made suitable for owner occupancy. Properties would be rehabbed to a high level of quality. The program should be seen as a 10-year effort, with a total of 80 houses being rehabbed overall. An estimated $50,000 to $75,000 of rehab costs per home would not be recouped at the time of sale. Full funding of the program would cost $5,000,000.

Implementation Steps

To mount a successful state funding request will require building a coalition to make the case. There must be a common sense of purpose between the University of Minnesota and the University District neighborhoods. The legislators that represent the University District must be brought on board, and they will provide important strategic guidance. Initial discussions have been conducted with city elected officials and staff at the University of Minnesota.

Precedents

Rehabilitation programs in university districts are not uncommon. A form of rehabilitation program occurred at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and at Ohio State University in Columbus.

We highlight a CDC-led initiative in St Paul in the box despite not being in a university district because it is a good example of the CDC-led model that we recommend, and it was effective. One of the key actors in the program said the

NeDA Single-Family Rehab Program

Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA) is a non-profit community development organization, located on St. Paul's West Side. Its mission is to strengthen the vitality of low income neighborhoods in the City of Saint Paul through the creation and preservation of housing and business opportunities for residents of all income levels.

In the last 20 years, NEDA has rehabilitated and built 82 homes on St. Paul's West Side. These homes are developed to appeal to different family living styles from single family detached homes, to a LEED Gold Twin Home, to 100 year-old row houses, to owner-occupied duplexes and triplexes. NEDA's goal is to ensure that all West Side residents are served, regardless of family size or income level. NEDA partners with the City of St. Paul, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and Habitat for Humanity.

carefully selected and executed rehabs had lots of positive ripple effects, which "turned part of the neighborhood around." It helps too that the folks who ran the program are close at hand to learn from.

Another local program for rehab and long-term owner occupancy should be highlighted. The City of Lakes Community Land Trust purchases and rehabilitates homes, and puts them in a perpetual ownership status for low income homeowners. It is searching for one or two properties suitable for its model in the University of Minnesota neighborhoods, with funds received for this purpose. Once accomplished it has expressed interest in pursuing additional projects in the University District.

Strategy 5: Facilitate New Development

Southeast Como neighborhood sees itself as a desirable place to live, for families, seniors, first-time homebuyers, those who want to live close to work downtown or at the University of Minnesota, and those who want the amenities of good transit connections and a walkable environment. Como wants to position itself for the future through both rehab of existing housing as well as new development. New development could offer housing as well as retail that would meet residents' and businesses' needs. New housing development provides benefits in terms of demonstrating neighborhood growth and vitality, and supporting local retailers. If built for non-student households, it supports the goals of maintaining a balanced household mix, including young couples, families, empty nesters and seniors.

The Context

The recent building boom in housing in Minneapolis provides a supportive environment for meeting neighborhood goals in this regard. There is interest in living near the center of the region, and neighborhoods like Southeast Como can offer that at a more reasonable cost than downtown developments.

There are many locations in Southeast Como that may support new housing development. But attracting a development to one or more of these locations is complex. It involves building neighborhood support, communicating a vision for change, identifying transformative sites, and then marketing sites and working with developers.

Building neighborhood consensus around new development may itself be difficult. The homeowners who are often the active civic leaders in the neighborhood do not always see new high-quality rental housing in the neighborhood as a high priority, or even necessarily desirable, despite the positive impacts it could have.

The SE Como Neighborhood Improvement Association can pursue redevelopment by gaining support for a vision and building strength to influence the kind of development it wants.

The Program

Direct participation in new development requires deep expertise. SE Como is advised to focus initially on marketing and communication approaches to attract the attention of the development community, as well as working across the neighborhood to build a vision for what will make the neighborhood increasingly attractive to homeowners and long term renters.

There are several activities that can be engaged by the neighborhood to advance this goal. One is building agreement around the kind of development that is desired. Some questions to consider are:

- What kinds of housing does SE Como need?
- What retail amenities would complement the neighborhood's housing?
- Are there properties with historic value that could might open up historic funding sources for redevelopment? (North of Van Cleve Park there are homes from the 1880s, and the home of the University of Minnesota's first female dean is in this area.)
- Where might there be space for co-working locations or for artist living/work space?

A second activity would be to identify a small number of potentially transformative sites. They might be in visible locations. They might be places where a retail component would make sense.

A third activity would be about reaching the development community. One could, with the permission of the property owner, organize a developer forum to discuss development concepts for a selected neighborhood opportunity sites. This event could be leveraged through media attention to create a buzz among developers.

The neighborhood could also pursue a networking strategy to bring the assets and opportunities of the neighborhood to developers that do the type of new development that it is interested in. This may be an effective strategy, for example, in attracting the consideration of one or more developers that does senior housing development.

New development also could encompass projects such as University-affiliated faculty/staff, graduate student, or seniors developments, which would be developed in close collaboration with the University of Minnesota.

Implementation Steps

Implementation of this strategy will require one or more community members who see its value, and are interested in building interest in it in the neighborhood.

Networking in the development community to raise the profile of the neighborhood in the eyes of certain developers requires dedicated time on the part of someone who speaks the language of development. There may be one or more individuals in the neighborhood who have this expertise and can dedicate time to this effort. It may also be useful to develop an information packet containing the most salient market information about the neighborhood.

The neighborhood organization has existing expertise in neighborhood marketing and communications strategies, and could participate in creating information pieces, or could host an exercise like the proposed developer forum.

If at some point a University District Community Development Corporation is created, there would be new capacity to pursue this strategy, in a way that furthers neighborhood goals.

Precedents

Intentionally fostering development activity in university neighborhoods is not uncommon. The more ambitious of these have proceeded with the support of a district focused fund, or with the facilitation of a district oriented CDC. Both University of Pennsylvania and Ohio State have worked in collaboration w/ others to undertake the development of "flagship" projects that combined housing and retail. These were intended to jumpstart change in the neighborhood. There is more on these examples in Strategy 9 below.

Strategy 6: Offer Home Ownership Incentives (Employer Assisted Housing)

Maintaining community stability and livability in the SE Como neighborhood involves retaining and restoring a demographically mixed neighborhood. This in turn requires attracting households at various life stages to the neighborhood. The faculty and staff of the University of Minnesota, and the staff of other nearby employers such as University and Fairview hospitals and clinics, represent huge pools of academic, professional and administrative staff that span a broad age range, and who would have natural interest in considering a house, condominium or apartment in the SE Como neighborhood.

SE Como is spearheading an initiative to encourage more University of Minnesota faculty, staff, and graduate students to live in the University District Neighborhoods. (See the appendix: "U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods.") This initiative involves a range of communication and asset-building strategies. But efforts to encourage workers to consider moving to a University District neighborhood would be greatly strengthened if there were a financial incentive offered to employees who choose to live near their work. Employer assisted housing is a category of programs that offers such an incentive in many settings nationwide. It has great promise for University neighborhoods, although there are significant hurdles to overcome in implementing the program locally.

The Context

Employer Assisted Housing programs generally offer financial assistance to employees for purchasing a home within a certain distance of the employer. In some cases it also offers a financial incentive to employees who rent in nearby areas.

Employer assisted housing programs result in win-win situations for employees, employers, neighborhoods, and the environment. Employees benefit from the financial assistance. And in living closer to their jobs they have reduced stress from shorter commutes and lower fuel costs. Employers have found that providing employees incentives to live near their work is a good recruiting tool. Days off work are reduced. And employee turnover is lower. Neighborhoods benefit from a new diverse market for their housing. There are environmental and public benefits from reduced gasoline-based carbon emissions and less traffic congestion.

Employer assisted housing has proved successful in various settings across the country, but the few Minneapolis-based experiments have been modest and showed few results. This can be explained by the absence of some of the cornerstones of successful programs. The most important of these is an independent organizational infrastructure to support program administration.

In locations where Employer Assisted Housing programs have achieved the greatest results, the bulk of the program administration is handled through a third party organization. That means a company that wants to offer the benefit to its employees does not have to take on many aspects of marketing and administering the program—which can be time intensive and technical.

The most successful programs also utilize a public sector matching grant to incentivize participation by employers. A City of Minneapolis matching program would make a big difference locally. And in the case of the University of Minnesota and nearby hospitals and clinics, University District neighborhoods could also choose to offer a matching grant, so that employer funds could be matched twice.

The Program

The recommended program design would be for the University of Minnesota, and/or University/Fairview hospitals and clinics, to offer

their employees downpayment assistance if they purchase a home or condominium in the University District neighborhoods. The program would be administered by a third party administrator to take the burden of administration off the employers, and it would be matched by the City of Minneapolis, and possibly by neighborhood funds as well.

ImplementationSteps

Employer assisted housing is a partnership intensive program. Implementation requires securing sequential support from partners, as well as identifying an organization that is well suited to developing the required administrative capacity.

An initial step might be to convene the parties that stand to gain from the program for exploratory conversations. If there is shared interest, a critical path toward further exploration and ultimately program implementation can be defined by the group. Program development should bear in mind the following considerations.

- There may be a more direct decision process for the University and Fairview hospitals and clinics to undertake this program than the University of Minnesota, since they do not have as many layers of accountability as a public university does. For this reason, the hospitals and clinics might be the focus of initial efforts.
- The neighborhood may find it easier to engage the interest of necessary partners if it has committed to a neighborhood match of some kind.

Ohio State University EAH

In 1998 Ohio State University initiated the Faculty and Staff University District Homeownership Incentive Program. Ohio State committed $500,000 and targeted the incentive to two areas within the University District neighborhoods around its campus. The program offers $3,000 in down-payment assistance (in the form of a zero interest forgivable loan) to employees who purchase homes within the targeted area. The program does not leverage matching funds from other parties. This homeownership incentive program is part of a larger initiative by the university to assist with the continuing revitalization of University District neighborhoods in cooperation with the City of Columbus, Campus Partners (a university-created nonprofit neighborhood redevelopment corporation) and neighborhood civic leaders.

Precedents

A number of colleges and universities across the country have instituted some form of employer assisted housing program. Institutions that have instituted an employer assisted housing program include Ohio State University, Clark University, Washington University and University of Pennsylvania. The Ohio State University example in the text box is a University sponsored program targeted to neighborhoods near the university.

Strategy 7: Increase Organizational Capacity for Development

Some of the strategies in this report would be difficult to pursue, at a scale that makes a difference, without creating new development capacity. Organizational capacity, paired with strong development competency and expertise, is needed to:

- Play a role in unlocking and facilitating some of the potential new development that meets neighborhood needs
- Serve as a go-to collaborator for the University in pursuing acquisition and development opportunities that meet specific University needs
- Pursue sources of affordable housing or heritage preservation funding for development activities
- Administer a neighborhood housing rehab program

These activities are often advanced by a community development corporation (CDC). They are unlikely to be addressed by an existing CDC because the organizational missions of most CDCs in the Twin Cities are focused on addressing a particular development need—most often creating and preserving affordable housing—at any location where there is need and opportunity. The attention of an existing CDC could be captured for a given development project. But it would be difficult to engage the focus of an existing CDC in ongoing neighborhood-focused programs of the kind that have been outlined above.

The creation of a geographically-focused CDC is the most straightforward way to build capacity for addressing these strategic priorities. There are local and national models of successful neighborhood-based CDCs to learn from. (Seward Redesign is a great example.) However, creating a new community development corporation faces great challenges in terms of identifying start-up capital, attracting appropriate staff expertise, and developing a sustainable financial model—all in a philanthropic and public sector environment that would be skeptical about supporting a new organization, and a funding environment more oriented to affordable housing and job creation than it is to holistic community asset building.

A community investment cooperative is an alternative model of an organization that brings new capacity to take on community development objectives. Some information about Northeast Investment Cooperative is provided below.

As part of this project, Tangible Consulting Services researched university-community partnerships around the country. The table in the appendix outlines the different models we encountered and delineates their missions, some of their activities and areas of focus.

The Context

Neighborhood based CDCs were once the typical CDC model, but now there are few in the Twin Cities. Programmatically focused CDCs, such as those that are focused on providing affordable housing, are more prevalent in part because they tap a more certain and consistent funding stream for their activities. Neighborhood-based CDCs by contrast need to be more nimble and innovative in funding their varied activities, and paying the organization's staffing and operating costs. This is a major challenge for neighborhood-based CDCs.

Any new CDC would face additional challenges in establishing credibility with partners and the

funding community, and with building a sufficient capital base to be an active agent in its real estate environment. However, there are unique attributes in the University District that might assist a new CDC in surmounting these hurdles.

The Program

To gain credibility w/ the funding community, to be an effective collaborator with the University of Minnesota, and to achieve the scale and capacity to pursue the identified objectives, a new CDC should see the entire University District as its area of focus—with the possible exception of the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, which is the focus of the existing West Bank CDC.

The University District CDC could play an initial primary role with respect to executing and administering a low density housing rehab program—i.e. making the smart acquisitions and improvements required for effective program execution. And it could grow to engage with the additional identified needs and opportunities as it is able.

There are interesting avenues for a University District CDC to establish rapid credibility in the CDC community, and initial financial capacity. These include:

- **Pursue a grassroots crowdfunding initiative as a component of its capitalization.** In other words, neighborhood resident contributions could be solicited as part of the organization's startup funds. This would generate great buzz for the organization, and concretely demonstrate a level of community buy-in and support that would be difficult to discount. There's an interesting history of this approach being used in a past initiative, as referenced in the Rehab Program Strategy above.
- **Leverage a close University relationship to secure below-market financing rates or provide access to capital.** These actions would confer a concrete financial advantage that would allow the CDC to be a player in a challenging and competitive real estate market.
- **Establish a close organizational relationship with the University District Alliance**. The UDA could serve as the primary community sounding board on the design of CDC programs.

Crowdfunding for Community Development

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money in smaller amounts from a large number of people, often utilizing internet platforms as one of the outreach platforms. While much crowdfunding to date has been for private start-up ventures, crowdfunding for civic or community projects is growing. Federal Reserve Bank Governor Jeremy Stein says crowdfunding "can be adapted to community development investing." Chicago and San Francisco have launched crowdfunding projects - in Chicago to secure funding for five neighborhood economic development projects including job training and community garden development, and in San Francisco to revitalize a major thoroughfare. Crowdfunding is an innovative way of financing community projects and strengthening public-private partnerships.

An exciting local application of crowdfunding is the Northeast Investment Cooperative (NEIC). NEIC is a cooperative that serves as a vehicle for residents of Northeast Minneapolis to "pool their resources to collectively buy, rehab and manage commercial and residential property" in the neighborhood. Nearly 200 members have purchased $1,000 shares. Over $270,000 has been raised in member capital. NEIC has acquired and rehabbed a commercial building on Central Avenue, and attracted a bakery and a brewery as building tenants.

- **Establish a source for an Executive Director salary.** With modest contributions from multiple organizations—the University of Minnesota, the University District Alliance, and the several neighborhood organizations—this core organizational cost could be ensured. This gives important flexibility to the Executive Director, so that he or she does not need to focus entirely on whatever project(s) generates the most immediate cash flow for the organization. This action would also serve to attract highly competent candidates for the position.

The composition of the CDC Board of Directors should be defined with an eye to what the CDC needs to be successful. Strong real estate expertise is needed. A meaningful community voice is essential. And there should be strong representation by University leadership, in order to develop the desired close financial relationships, and to increase the likelihood that joint projects would be undertaken by the University and CDC for such things as University-related housing.

While the preceding describes the creation of a brand new CDC organization, it may be possible to build the needed development capacity in other ways—e.g. by funding a dedicated University District focus in an existing CDC.

Implementation Steps

The creation of a University District CDC or other organizational model would require extensive partnership with other University neighborhoods, the University District Alliance, the University of Minnesota, and others. The SE Como and Marcy-Holmes neighborhoods could take leadership in convening potential partners for early conversations.

For an effective crowd-funding capitalization program, the neighborhood should expect to hire outside expertise and horsepower. This would be a great use for neighborhood dollars, because of its potential to leverage additional resources.

Precedents

There are many examples of CDCs that operate in urban areas adjacent to Universities. And there are many variations on the relationship between the University and the CDC. In some cases the University initiated the development of the CDC and in others it partnered with a CDC created by the surrounding community. In all cases the university and the surrounding communities held shared goals that the CDC worked to carry out.

There are two precedents highlighted in the text boxes. One describes an aspect of the relationship between Clark University and a local CDC. The other overviews the growing use of crowdfunding for community development activities.

Clark University Line of Credit

Clark University, in Worcester, MA, has made a long-term commitment to the University Park Partnership, a targeted comprehensive approach to urban revitalization in its surrounding neighborhoods. It works closely with the Main South Community Development Corporation (CDC). The mission of the Main South CDC is comprehensive: improve quality of life, create safe affordable housing for low-moderate income people, support opportunities for businesses, enhance the physical image of the area and instill a sense of neighborhood pride and commitment. Clark University guaranteed construction financing for a project to acquire, rehab and resell 8 triple decker homes near campus with a $1 million line of credit from the university (through an area bank).

Strategy 8: Support the City's Rental Licensing Improvements

Well-managed rental property can be a neighborhood asset. But rental housing can have a negative impact on neighborhood livability when there is unmanaged tenant behavior, or the physical condition of property is allowed to deteriorate. This dampens market interest in the neighborhood, particularly from potential homeowners.

Most adverse impacts from rental property come from a minority of properties that are poorly managed. Low density rentals in particular tend to be problematic, since they are not large enough to have on-site property management. Where rental properties are poorly managed, the impacts are borne by surrounding neighbors, and by the public sector in the form of responses by Police and Fire Department personnel, and City Inspections staff. In effect, the landlords are sharing management responsibilities with the public sector without sharing the rent stream. If impactful rental property owners are levied a fee that corresponds more closely to the cost of the public services they consume, they are likely to improve their management practices, and negative neighborhood impacts are then reduced.

The Context

The City's Housing Inspections Department has been impressively entrepreneurial in this regard, and the SE Como neighborhood has an opportunity to support its efforts and leadership. The Department has made several important adjustments to the rental licensing program to encourage responsible management of rental properties. For example, conditions can now be placed on the granting or renewal of rental licenses. Rental licenses can be revoked for over-occupancy, if that occurs twice in the same building. A landlord that is persistently unresponsive to issues can lose rental licenses on all of his or her buildings in the City of Minneapolis.

Another change to the structure of the rental licensing program is a work in progress that holds great promise. The Housing Inspections Department has developed a tiered rental licensing system, in which a property is assigned to one of three tiers based on its property management performance. Higher tier properties have more issues and have shown less responsiveness to regulatory requirements. They are, therefore, inspected more frequently than lower tier properties. The City's goal is to shift from a 10-year to an 8-year inspections cycle. Tier 1 properties would be inspected every 8 years, Tier 2 properties every 5 years, and Tier 3 properties every year.

The strong market for apartment construction and rental conversions, together with the new tiered inspections strategy, has meant the City's Rental Licensing staff are inspecting many more buildings today. The Department is reviewing its inspections processes and its available resources. SE Como is encouraged to continue its engagement and collaboration with Rental Licensing staff, to follow the review process, and encourage the continued implementation of the tiered inspections strategy.

On another front, Inspections staff has met with SE Como residents to discuss particular rental violations, and has shown interest in reducing the discrepancy that sometimes occurs between community perceptions about a property's conditions, and the city's code-based requirements. "Co-inspecting " some properties can improve neighborhood-City alignment, so that rental licensing inspections are better able to achieve the desired result of improved housing condition in SE Como.

A recent regulatory success has been the work of the SE Strategic Compliance Team in the university neighborhoods. City Housing Inspections, Police Department, the University of Minnesota and the neighborhoods collaborated

to be more strategic in identifying properties with multiple problems (those costing the City the most in regulatory staff time), and targeting them. The team linked noise/unruly assembly violations with physical problems at certain properties. The U of M worked with tenants in these properties, and the action prompted landlords to improve their properties. This is ongoing work.

Relative Homesteading. Residents of University District neighborhoods have voiced repeated concerns about relative homesteading. This is a category of rental properties which, under state law, is still considered homesteaded for purposes of determining property taxes. In the University area, parents of a University student may buy a property for their son or daughter to live in, who in turn takes on roommates to the legal or perceived capacity of the home. Once rented in this fashion for a time, it is typical for the home to be sold to a rental property owner.

There was a large increase in the number of relative homestead properties in SE Como during the 1990s and 2000s, from 20 in 1994 to 46 by 2009. Since then, however, the number has decreased to 34 in 2014.

Neighbors believe these properties violate housing laws, such as by being over-occupied, but are not on the radar of Rental Housing Inspections because they are relative homestead.

There have been some changes that affect relative homestead properties and their neighborhood impacts. Most importantly, the City now treats all relative homestead properties as rental properties. And they are subject to rental licensing oversight and inspections as other rental properties are. All properties with relative homestead status must have a rental license. The cost is $69/year. (There is no rental conversion fee for relative homestead properties.) The fine for not completing a rental license application is $500, and then an additional $1000 if there is no response to the first citation.

The Recommended Program

The neighborhood, or a community collaboration, can take action to support the proactive initiatives of the City's Housing Inspections Department. It may particularly need the support of the public as it takes steps toward full implementation of the three-tiered rental licensing system—since increasing fees on Tier 2 and Tier 3 rental property owners may generate resistance from the rental housing industry. The neighborhood should be prepared to show its support of allocating the resources necessary to making this happen, and to levy these resources from the property owners that require the heightened oversight.

Over-occupancy is an area that needs further discussion with Housing Inspections. A mutual understanding of where and when this occurs is critical, and process improvements that will flag the problem could be made - for example, when a relative homestead property receives its rental license or when a permit is issued for egress window construction.

Implementation Steps

Additional and ongoing communication with the Housing Inspections Department is required to clarify the implementation of the 3 Tier inspections system. Included in this effort should be continued regular joint meetings among Housing Inspections, neighborhoods, U of M and UDA to discuss particular properties, and new issues.

The Southeast Como neighborhood might benefit from a neighborhood resident taking responsibility for gaining special expertise in this area. Then he or she can monitor ongoing systems improvements, and be a constructive partner in bringing neighborhood support and encouragement when that is timely.

Strategy 9: Create Housing Information Exchanges

Rental housing for University of Minnesota students has been part of the diverse array of housing available in Southeast Como for many years. Students and other neighborhood residents share an interest in having well maintained and managed rental housing. Rental units that are well cared for provide good housing for students and contribute to neighborhood stability. However, because student housing turns over frequently and many students are new to living on their own, some of these rental properties fall into disrepair. Information for students about good rental properties and how to be a good renter can help reduce poor quality rental housing in Como.

Students looking for housing have difficulty knowing if a property will be a good place to live—whether the property has been the subject of police calls or license violations, whether the property owner is responsive or unreachable, and what the experience of former tenants has been. Mechanisms that bring good information to students when and where they are weeding through apartment options can help students find safe and stable rentals. And effective information exchange improves the housing itself, since it provides an additional incentive for landlords to maintain their buildings, and be responsive to complaints. Conversely, good and timely information dampens interest in housing that has had recent problems or gets consistently poor reviews.

The Context

Como neighborhood has worked with the University of Minnesota and the City of Minneapolis to improve the quality of life for both student renters and other residents in the neighborhood. Improved information exchange among these partners has contributed to these improvement. In particular, three initiatives undertaken in recent years have been successful:

- The City of Minneapolis' social host ordinance. This makes it a crime to knowingly allow underage alcohol consumption at one's home/event.
- The expansion of the University of Minnesota's student conduct code to follow students off campus. Students can suffer academic consequences for their behavior off campus as well as on campus.
- The work of the SE Strategic Compliance Team. This team strategically identifies properties with property condition and/or tenant behavior violations.

The University of Minnesota's Department of Housing and Residential Life has an Off-Campus Housing service. It is housed in Comstock Hall and has a website. This service provides students with a list of available off-campus rentals, as well as basic educational information about being a renter - including what to know before signing a lease, price guidelines, and contact information for city housing inspections, neighborhood associations, owner/tenant groups and tenant legal resources. The rental listings on this website have been reviewed by Student Legal services. The website is also geared toward landlords who, for a fee, can list their available properties on this site and find resources such as lead paint regulations and the Minnesota Mediation Program. The Office of Student and Community Relations operates the Neighborhood Liaison program. It connects the University and nearby neighborhoods through a student worker, and provides the opportunity for information and perspectives to be shared.

Information about housing has never been easier to distribute. The City of Minneapolis is in the process of making tenant-relevant information on police and inspections history available in a portal for public use. It will provide details on whether a rental property is Tier 1, 2, or 3, and whether there are housing violations, police calls, and/or other complaints. Students are familiar with information platforms for rating and commenting on everything from the classes they

take to the movies they watch. And geographic technologies allow information to be easily correlated with the student's location. Because of all of these advances, it is an opportune time to bring detailed information about rental options to students as they walk neighborhood streets and shop for their living quarters.

The Program

Any approach that increases the information exchange between the City, the University, and students is beneficial to everyone involved. The following strategies are seen as new actions with high promise.

- Students could benefit from the development of a phone app that would put rental property records literally at their fingertips, on a map display, as they tour neighborhoods and prospective living quarters. The performance of the property on various measures could be essentially scored using graphically attractive charts on a summary page. The app could also include reviews by tenants and former tenants, in the fashion of services such as AirBNB and TripAdvisor. Poorly managed properties would be avoided, giving property owners an incentive to improve their rental management practices. Conversely, Tier 1 rental properties might advertise that status to students. Office of Student Affairs staff said that while students might be less interested in property or inspections data, they need and want to know who the problem landlords are so they can steer clear of their properties.
- The app, or something similar, could also be hosted on a tablet platform at the University's Department of Housing and Residential Life, in addition to being download-able on students' smart phones.
- The fact that Tier 3 rental properties owners and managers have been unresponsive to issues and complaints is relevant to prospective student renters. The City could consider adopting a requirement that Tier 3 property owners post the Tier 3 status in a visible location on the property, in a similar fashion to the posting of a building permit, or of condemned property status. Tier 1 properties could advertise their status as meeting standards and responsive.

The University of Minnesota's Department of Housing and Residential Life would be an ideal steward of the information platforms, once developed, because they can market and distribute it as part of their mission of giving students good resources for finding high quality housing.

Implementation Steps

Development of the proposed information platforms would be relatively inexpensive. It could be paid for by neighborhood funds from the SE Como and Marcy-Holmes Neighborhoods, or a broader coalition. A decision would need to be made about how to solicit a software developer for the platform. It could, for example, be an exercise engaged by University of Minnesota students in a service learning format.

Neighborhood residents in Marcy-Holmes have taken some first steps in advancing this idea, including reaching out to the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the U of MN to discuss the development of an app.

Further steps will include the development of linkages to the public data, and conversations with the University of Minnesota about their willingness to play a hosting role for the information platforms, once developed.

The University's Department of Housing and Residential Life and Office of Student Affairs are key players in continued efforts to improve the behavior of students living in neighborhoods. Southeast Como is encouraged to stay engaged in the ongoing conversations them, and to work closely with them on joint initiatives.

The University of MN has moved its annual housing information fair for students to late Fall, and successfully increased student participation in it. Neighborhoods should continue to participate in and support this annual information exchange.

The neighborhood liaison program, coordinated by the Office of Student Affairs, pairs students with neighborhood organizations and residents to bridge the gap between students and their neighbors and create opportunities for all to be engaged in their neighborhoods. While the liaisons often turn over year to year because they are students, the program provides an important link for the U of M to neighborhoods.

The Office of Student Affairs relies on the staff in neighborhood organizations to carry out its outreach programs. The importance of this staff role should, perhaps, be regularly communicated to neighborhood board members, and changes to neighborhood organization staffing must be communicated to the U of M.

Finally, the website of the University's Relocation Assistance Program, in the Office of Human Resources, is incomplete when it comes to their descriptions of neighborhoods around the University. While seemingly a small detail, University staff use this website when searching for housing. SE Como could offer an improved description of itself as a place for University staff to live, and clarify its advantages.

Precedents

Colleges and universities have experimented with many different approaches to information exchange among college housing offices, city regulatory departments, and students. For example:

- Ohio State promotes off-campus housing excellence by maintaining a list of student housing owned by responsible landlords. "To be on the list landlords must allow inspectors to check safety, security and sustainability of their properties, and meet city housing codes" (online article from The Columbus Dispatch, Mike Wagner, 11/11/13).
- The University of Pennsylvania has actively worked with Philadelphia Housing Inspections to pursue housing code enforcement in neighborhoods around campus.

The precedent in the text box describes a non-collegiate but well-known mobile information platform. AirBNB makes use of a technology platform very similar to what the recommended student housing app would have.

The housing rental listings on Craig's List are another example of information on a geographically based platform with similarities to what is proposed.

AirBNB

AirBNB is a website that connects travelers looking for lodging with homeowners who want to rent out rooms in their homes. The traveler creates an online profile, searches the website for lodging possibilities, then contacts potential hosts. A critical component of AirBNB's success is the review the traveler writes about his/her stay in a particular home. Future travelers are then able to assess the experience offered by a particular host, and can base decisions on these reviews.

The application is map-based, so all prospective accommodations are illustrated in their actual locations. Clicking on the rental location on the map opens a portal to all of the information available on that property and host.

V. Next Steps and Implementation

This Housing Diversity Strategy contains two main components: a near-term initiative to encourage university-affiliated employees to live in the University District ("U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods"), and a set of strategies to be pursued independently by the neighborhood. Tangible Consulting and the SE Como Housing Diversity Steering Committee have begun the work of meeting with University District neighborhoods and University of Minnesota staff to discuss the "U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods" strategy. An initial conversation with PPERRIA was positive and encouraging. Continuing this outreach is an immediate next step. Meetings centered on discussion and feedback should occur with Marcy-Holmes, Cedar Riverside and the UDA.

An initial meeting with the University of Minnesota Foundation, Real Estate Advisors, guided the articulation of the "Live Near the U" strategy. SE Como should close the loop with them and identify next steps.

Each of the housing strategies in this report include some suggested implementation steps, but it's worth making some general observations about where this process leaves off, with the submission of this report.

The strategies are a unique set of innovative and distinctive actions for the SE Como Neighborhood. They have been formulated based on housing trends, planning analysis and conversations with a range of stakeholders, but they still need to be considered a starting point for further conversation. Communication with partners is incomplete. In all strategies where collaboration is required, there are key staff and decision makers in the proposed collaborating organizations that may not even be aware of the initial conversations, let alone had an opportunity to provide input that could shape and refine the strategy. The next step on near-term strategies is to advance the communication with prospective partners, and invite them into a collaborative relationship in refining the strategy and its implementation program.

Neighborhood Capacity

After receiving this report, and going through a process to accept or adopt it in some form, the neighborhood should engage in a decision process on what strategies to prioritize for near-term action, considering questions like:

- Which of the strategies are addressing the most pressing issues?
- Which strategies have a window of opportunity?
- Which strategies are generating enthusiasm or energy?

This being determined, the neighborhood will face the perennial problem of how to get stuff done with limited resources and finite time available on the part of the most committed neighborhood activists. It's important in this process to keep in mind that people are the key.

Strategy Champion and Task Force. Each strategy is likely to require the attention of its own task force. And putting this together

can be strategic, similar to recruiting an organization's board of directors.

A task force assigned to implementing a strategy requires an engaged and competent individual to play a leadership role. This could come from a neighborhood activist who has been active in the neighborhood organization for a long time. Alternatively, leading an initiative around a specific strategy may interest someone who does not have the time for or interest in ongoing neighborhood process.

In recruiting task force members, the relationships people bring are important considerations. For strategies that require collaboration between neighborhoods, the task force could include people who have close personal relationships with people in other University District neighborhoods. Personal connections can supplement formal organizational connections in a helpful way. Another consideration is at the decision maker level. Can neighborhood people be identified who have historical connections to key decision makers? This may help with surmounting credibility thresholds, as well as provide practical support in things like getting time on people's calendars.

University District Capacity

The collective support and/or participation of other University District neighborhoods is essential to accomplishing some of the more ambitious of the recommended strategies.

But of course the University District is comprised of neighborhoods with distinct organizations and organizational cultures, and with legitimately different issues and needs. Getting stuff done on key neighborhood objectives means intentionally fostering a culture where neighborhoods help each other to achieve the pressing priorities of each. Building that culture of alliance is a capacity building exercise—and one that requires intentional time and attention in its own right.

The University District Alliance is ideally constituted and situated to play a role in enhancing the collaborative culture between neighborhoods. Its very name suggests an understanding that neighborhoods should support one another in pursuing objectives that contribute to the common good—and also that neighborhoods should be allies to the University in the many areas where there are shared objectives, and vice versa. Beyond the key role the UDA can play in this regard, building a culture of mutual support can and should extend to neighborhood structures and activities on other levels that increase the sense of common cause between the University District neighborhoods.

A specific next step to be taken in this regard would be for the SE Como neighborhood to update its partner neighborhoods and the UDA about the process it has been engaged with, the major findings of this report, and the strategies that require the collective support or collaboration of the partners.

VI. Acknowledgements

This report was guided, informed and improved through the high quality engagement of the Southeast Como Neighborhood's Housing Strategy Steering Committee.

SE Como Housing Strategy Steering Committee

Mary Kay Dooley
Carole and Jim Drake
Katie Fournier
Charlie Lakin
Hilary Lovelace
Derek Nord and Kristin Hamre
Marcus Mills
Natalie Reciputi
Jane Smith
Vicki Speidel
Pierre Willette

Staff of Tangible Consulting Services also met with numerous individuals who play a role in the vitality of SE Como, and learned from their areas of expertise and the feedback they offered on strategy ideas. These meetings were critical not only for the housing expertise they provided, but also for the relationships that were established and/or strengthened. Further progress on proposed strategies will require ongoing conversation, partnership and commitment to a shared vision. We want to acknowledge and thank them for their time and contribution.

University of Minnesota

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Sarah Harris, University of Minnesota Foundation Real Estate Advisors

Pierre Willette, University of Minnesota Foundation Real Estate Advisors

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Peggy Lucas, University of Minnesota Board of Regents

City of Minneapolis

Council Member Kevin Reich, Ward 1

Council Member Cam Gordon, Ward 2

Council Member Jacob Frey, Ward 3

JoAnn Velde, Housing Inspections

Kellie Jones, Housing Inspections

Neighborhood Organizations

Marcy-Holmes Housing Diversity Committee

Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA) Executive Committee

Appendix A: "U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods" Campaign

The Goal

Boost the numbers of University of Minnesota faculty and staff that live in the University District Neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods around the University of Minnesota have always had close ties to the University. They are places where:

- Many undergraduate and graduate students over the years have lived in their first apartments
- The University has located a number of its facilities and the reach of its campus
- Faculty and staff live and raise families
- People park or pass when going to work, class or events on campus

These neighborhoods are gateways. They provide an initial impression of the campus to potential students, staff and faculty coming to the University from the region, the nation and around the world, and ultimately become the home of those who choose to come.

The University District Neighborhoods - Como, Marcy Holmes, Cedar Riverside and Prospect Park - want a strong yet evolving relationship with the University of Minnesota, focused on the shared vision of a vibrant campus with attractive residential neighborhoods around it.

The Opportunity

Build the natural synergy between the university neighborhoods and the University.

The University of Minnesota is world-renowned and the center of life and work for many in these neighborhoods. The neighborhoods are the physical environment in which U of M faculty, staff and students live every day. And they provide a cafeteria of housing options for faculty and staff, just as they do for its students. These include single family homes with yards, new condominiums, apartments in historic buildings—all connected to parks, transit, retail and dining options, and easy access to downtown. University neighborhoods offer an attractive lifestyle to people affiliated with the University of Minnesota.

The opportunity is to improve the housing options available in the University District Neighborhoods, and systematically market the neighborhoods to University employees, so that U of M faculty and staff find what they want, and the neighborhoods grow more vital, diverse and desirable.

The Benefits

For University faculty and staff:

- Convenience
- Reduced stress, better mental health (no nerve-wracking commute)
- Improved physical health - walk, bike, bus, train to workplace
- Savings on transportation and health expenses

For the University, a work force that:

- Is in better mental and physical health
- Is invested in the well-being of the University community
- Can participate in leisure time U of M activities
- Has lower turnover
- Arrives to work on time - no traffic or weather delays

For the neighborhoods:

- Increased household diversity and owner occupancy
- Less turnover in occupants
- Housing that is attractive to a wide variety of potential owners and renters

The Partnership

The opportunity will be realized through partnership. The neighborhoods will help the University meet its goal of offering faculty and staff a campus setting that is beautiful, with quality housing, in unique neighborhoods—neighborhoods that combine the heart of a large city with quality residential neighborhoods within walking distance, and with great natural, commercial, and cultural amenities. The neighborhoods continue to build their stability, their range of amenities, and their housing options—continuing to develop into long-term, desirable residential areas for renters and homeowners.

The Actions

The menu of options for collaborative action is extensive. Some are resource intensive and others are not. All require a shared commitment to the overarching goal. The following strategies are encouraged for consideration.

- **Outreach to staff.** Systematically and assertively market the neighborhoods to University of MN faculty, staff and graduate students as the perfect place to live.
- **Improvements to housing stock.** Improve the condition of the housing in the University District neighborhoods.
- **Branding through new development.** Identify catalytic sites in the neighborhoods, and develop projects attractive to University staff. These might include townhome, apartment and condominium projects with the amenities desired by professional singles, couples and families; live/work space; neighborhood retail and restaurants.
- **Employer assisted housing.** Explore the adoption of a downpayment assistance program as an incentive for University staff who choose to buy a home in a University neighborhood.

The Target

"U Neighborhoods/Your Neighborhoods" should consider setting a goal of doubling the number of University staff that live in University District neighborhoods by 2030.

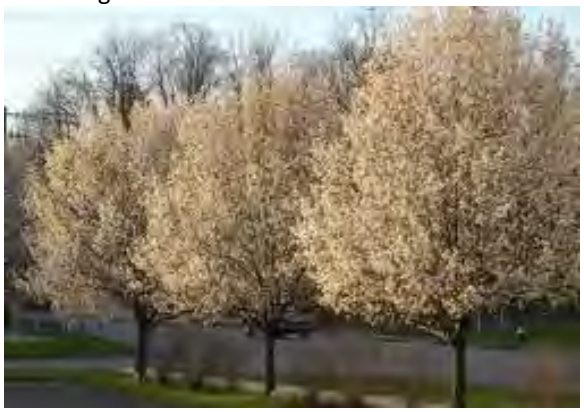
17.3 Dream Book

Ideas Submitted to the Como Dream Book

Adult Education at Van Cleve Park

Health Clinic in Vacant Houses

Flowering Trees



Garbage Can On Each Block – Residents Empty Them

Fire Hydrant Gardens

Speed Bumps

Talent Shows

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