

# **Thomas-Dale District 7 Planning Council Area Plan**

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Conducted on behalf of the District 7 Planning Council  
May, 2006**

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# Thomas-Dale District 7 Planning Council



## Area Plan



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## Summary

City streets are arched with trees. Blocks' small city lots are dotted with houses and often anchored by corner stores. There are houses of one, two and three stories, some close to the sidewalks, others sit in mid-lot and others set back toward the rear. An eclectic mix of homes: small scale Victorians with gingerbread trim, solid square brick colonials, craftsman bungalows and wooden cape cods fill the neighborhood. Front, back, side yards and boulevards are filled with flower and vegetable gardens. Kids are playing in yards and streets. Adults are taking leisurely strolls or walking purposely to public transportation, work, church or a store. Given this description, you could be in a District 7 neighborhood in 1850 or in 2005.

You can tell it is 2005 because the streets are wider, traffic is faster and residential blocks are lined with cars. Post World War II bungalows, suburban style ramblers, townhouses and clever newly constructed turn of the century replicas now fill empty lots and replace condemned buildings. Recent immigrants speak Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, Cambodian and Spanish rather than German, Polish or Swedish. Church suppers now include egg rolls and tacos along with pork roast and sauerkraut.

For more than 150 years District 7 has been one of the first places immigrants

settle in St. Paul. Its vitality comes from the blending of established and new. Schools, churches, community groups and neighbors learn how to welcome, reach out, respect and adapt to new groups of people. Both consciously and intuitively, the community tries to find common values and then put them into words and actions. The community resembles a "global village" a place that is safe, accepting, welcoming and meeting the needs of people in all of life's stages.

The area is economically, ethnically, educationally, linguistically and socially diverse. The community values comfortable homes, safe streets, popular parks, inviting businesses and congenial neighbors.

District 7 was part of the initial march outward from downtown Saint Paul. Much of it has historically been home to immigrant and working class families. It continues the tradition today as home to one of the nation's largest Hmong populations.

Although District 7 has fewer parks and recreation facilities than other Saint Paul neighborhoods, the green space that is in the district is highly valued. Many of the neighborhood streets are lined with trees and the recreation centers and school playgrounds are well used. District 7 community members are always on the lookout for new green space and recreation opportunities.

District 7, though made up of smaller neighborhoods each with its own character, has a strong identity. People living, working, or visiting the district know they are in a special part of Saint Paul. The effort over the last 20 years to stem crime and improve safety has led to a connected and involved community, even after the problems eased. Even so, there is a continual effort to engage groups who, because of language barriers, transience or other factors, are not consistently engaged in neighborhood development or civic processes.

Land use in District 7 is somewhat segregated. Light industrial use runs along the Pierce Butler Route, commercial use tends to congregate along the major transportation corridors and residential use fills in the middle. In the coming years, community members see this melding with more apartments and mixed-use buildings to complement commercial use on the transportation corridors and more commercial use focused on neighborhood residents sprinkled within the largely residential areas.

Housing in District 7 is primarily small-lot single family residences mixed with an occasional number of duplexes, triplexes, and some large apartment buildings. Maintaining the character and good condition of the existing homes and encouraging the growth of new, quality, affordable housing is important to the community.

Although the residents rely on public transportation more than the average resident of Saint Paul or the Twin Cities Metro Area, public transportation in the district is less than adequate. The neighborhood would benefit from more bus routes and more extended schedules.

Community members see education as a life-long pursuit. Some residents are involved in gaining skills for employment while others hope to learn a new subject or develop a hobby. Education from early childhood through young-adulthood is important to the district as over half the population of the district is under 25 years of age.

Because of District 7's diversity it is home to many ethnically owned and focused businesses. Some serve as local gathering places. However, there are many empty storefronts that residents would like to see filled by establishments that contribute to the economy and character of the neighborhood.

### *Community participation*

This plan was researched via a series of nine focus groups held between September 2004 and March 2005. The focus groups consisted of residents and business owners representing diverse groups within the neighborhood. In an effort to reach all segments of the neighborhood, one group was attended by a Hmong translator. Utilizing previous research and the community input, a graduate student from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public

Affairs drafted seven goals with objectives and action steps for the plan. The drafts were reviewed and modified by a committee of residents, business owners, employees of the City and non-profit organizations (see Acknowledgements, page ii) to ensure constancy with district values. The completed plan was reviewed in an open neighborhood meeting and several small gatherings.

# District Map



All aerial maps: Minnesota Department of Administration. World Wide Web site <http://www.lmic.state.mn.us/chouse/mmmapper.html/>.



## Background

District 7 is located northwest of the downtown Saint Paul. It is bounded by University Avenue on the south, the Great Northern Railroad on the north, I-35 East on the east, and Lexington Parkway on the west. It includes the East Midway, Thomas-Dale/Frogtown, Capitol Heights, and Mt. Airy neighborhoods. It is roughly 1.5 square miles and had 17,425 residents in 2000.

## History

District 7 has been a “global village.” Since long before the term became a cliché people from around the world have molded the district over the past 150 years into the distinctive cultural center and hopeful, forward-looking community it is today. Although it has been called “a plain Jane neighborhood woefully deficient in parks” (Ervin, 66), its modest homes, adapted and remodeled over the years for each new family, its corner stores, nestled under second-floor apartments, and oak trees that canopy many neighborhood streets are the physical manifestations of the flow of life through the district.

The cozy lots were platted beginning in the mid 1850s in the Mt. Airy neighborhood and settlement of the area continued westward until all the lots had been divided and the streets named by 1880. The original neighborhood was full of “mixed-use” with neighborhood shops on nearly every other corner (Joyce 1993, 37). Although some of these shops were

converted to apartments, many of the original buildings remain.

The first residents were German immigrants. While the successive groups of immigrants who have called this area home have come from distant countries, they share the same aspirations of working for a secure home, being safe from want and having lives full of friends and family.

As late as 1850, the area around the intersection of Thomas Avenue and Dale Street and south to University Avenue was predominantly marshy wetlands (Lanegran 1983, 28). A Sioux trail from Little Crow’s village at Kaposia to lakes Johanna and Josephine ran on the path of the present day Lexington Parkway (Empson 1975, 89).

The westward expansion of the city was rapid. In 1854, L’Orient Street to Western Avenue was the western most plat in this area of Saint Paul (Empson 1975, 161), by 1871, Lexington Parkway was the western most street of the City (Empson 1975, 89). Most of the streets were named for the developers who platted them and their kin. Lafond Avenue is named after Benjamin Lafond who platted the street in 1858 (Empson 1975, 88). Thomas Avenue was named by the developer James Stinson for his father, Thomas, in 1856 when he platted the area. The two were probably the largest land owners in Ramsey County in the nineteenth century (Empson 1975, 148). Not all the streets were named for the friends and family of developers’. John Wann, an Englishman, platted much of the western part of District 7 and named the

streets, like Avon and Chatsworth, after British landmarks. His wife, a Yankee, felt that there ought to be at least one with an American name. She insisted on naming the western most street after the first battle of the American Revolution, the Battle of Lexington (Empson 1975, 89).

As the streets were laid and the lots designated, new residents flowed in. Houses were built on the lots without a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood. They were at different locations on the lots, with some right next to the sidewalk and others set at the back of the lot. They varied in size, too. Some residents built additions or second houses that could be rented for additional income (Joyce 1993, 37). The houses “scattered among the mud holes and choruses of frogs were quite remarkable” (Lanegran 1983, 28). This was possibly the genesis of the name “Frogtown”.

Because of the swampy ground in the central part of the district, many of the original houses began to sink (Lanegran 1983, 28). Some of the houses doubled as places of business either with the storefront on the first floor and the residence on the second or with the business in front and the residence in back (Joyce 1993, 27). On nearly every other corner there was a neighborhood business. There are records of cigar shops, confectioneries, groceries, butchers, and taverns, among others (Joyce 1993, 27; Lanegran 1983, 28). Although illegal until 1915, the taverns would often

host boxing tournaments for a small purse and the area turned out a few contenders (Lanegran 1983).

The boxers, like the other residents around the turn of the century, were largely Irish and German (Austro-Hungarian) with some Scandinavians and Poles (Joyce 1993). The communities were often centered around a church. The best known of these old churches is St. Agnes, a traditional German Catholic church founded in 1887. The present St. Agnes Church building was completed in 1912 and sits across the street from the original site (Joyce 1993). It was constructed in reverse, with its bell tower on the trolley line, Thomas Street, but the entrance was located on the less crowded and safer Lafond Street (Ervin). Trollies ran on Rice Street, Como Avenue, Dale Street, Thomas Avenue, Lexington Parkway, and University Avenue. The last streetcar trip in the Twin Cities was made in 1954 (Carlson 2004).

The first locomotive ran on the Great Northern Railroad track in 1882 (Ramsey County Historical Society). Frogtown was an ideal location for the new immigrants, many of whom worked on the railroad. The lots were small and inexpensive and close to residents' jobs (Lanegran 1983). Many houses were passed down through families. In the mid-1950s, the Saint Paul Dispatch columnist Oliver Towne (a.k.a. Gareth Hiebert), wrote about wandering through Frogtown on a fall day and smelling "the aromas of baking bread, broiling sausages and sauerkraut, pot roast or roasting turkey

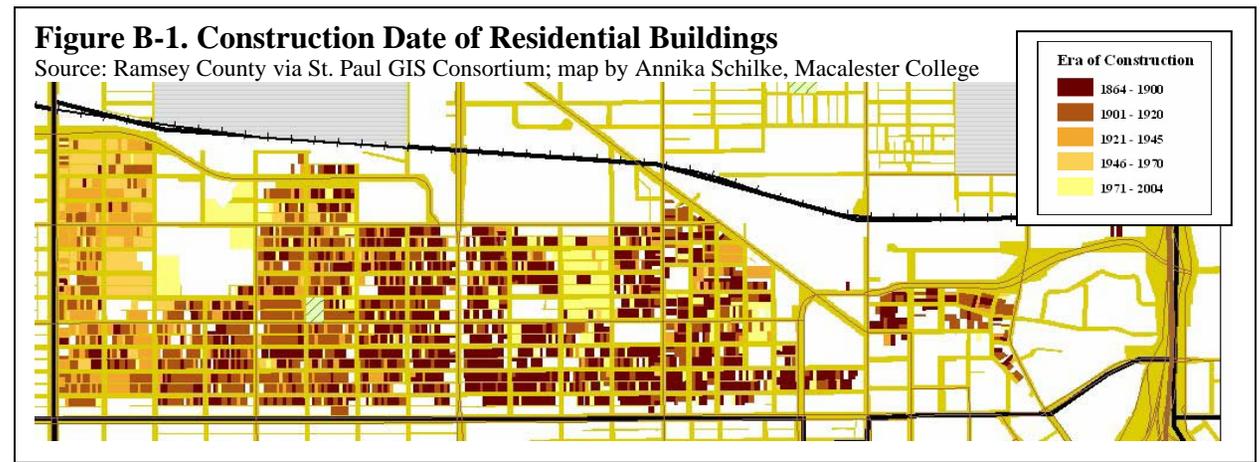
in the fullest Germanic traditions" (Hiebert 1999, 131).

Soon after, in 1959, construction was underway in the Mt. Airy neighborhood on the Mt. Airy Homes (Saint Paul Public Housing). Unlike many other cities, Saint Paul's urban renewal efforts mid-century were focused less on urban renewal efforts and more on the construction of town houses (Saint Paul Public Housing). I-35 East was constructed at about the same time right next to the development (Janicke 2000).

In the 1970s the older residents began to die or move away and a new wave of immigrants began to dominate the neighborhood, attracted by the same attributes that drew the original settlers: inexpensive, small lots and buildings (Huie 1996). The 1970s were also the years when more African-Americans moved into the area after the Rondo Community was displaced by the construction of I-94.

## Places

The charm of District 7 stems from the architectural styles that have been interpreted and reinterpreted over the years through additions and remodeling as each new occupant customized the home (Lanegran 1983). The district was largely built to suit the needs of working-class people. The modest size of the homes helps to keep the area more affordable than the rest of St. Paul. However, in the past five years, house prices have been rising more steeply in District 7 than in Saint Paul as a whole (Regional Multiple Listing Service). In addition, because most of the houses are over 50 years old, and many over 100 (Figure B-1), they require considerable maintenance.



While many of the factors governing the real estate market are out of the control of the district, two factors that contribute to more affordable housing are strengths of this area. The usual width for a single-unit residential lot in District 7 is 40 feet wide (although there are some smaller lots), the smallest width allowed for new construction by Saint Paul’s zoning code. The dwellings also tend to have fewer rooms than houses in St. Paul as a whole. Together these factors may help District 7 to remain more affordable than the rest of Saint Paul.

Roughly half of the housing in the area was built before 1920 (Figure B-1). The oldest buildings are in the Frogtown and Capitol Heights neighborhoods. Most are private residences. Ramsey County Historical Society maintains a list of notable properties on their web site. The Society records the oldest standing houses near Rice Street and Como Avenue. The Society also mentions St. Adalbert’s Church at 256 Charles Street, University Avenue Congregational Church at 868 Sherburne Avenue, and the Beaux Arts Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church at 105 University Avenue, among other churches. St. Agnes Catholic Church, built in 1912, is the only building in the district on the National Register of Historic Places, making it eligible for additional funding and subject to additional restrictions.

Mt. Airy Neighborhood hosts the Mt. Airy Homes, one of the largest public housing developments in Saint Paul. District 7 also has two large sites that are currently

under-used. The Dale Street Shops, at the corner of Dale Street and Minnehaha Avenue, and the Minnehaha Mall, between Chatsworth and Milton streets on Minnehaha Avenue, are not being used to their full capacity. The Dale Street Shops site is currently being redeveloped as an industrial park (Rausch 2004) and alternative uses for the Mall are being discussed.

Up-keep can be a challenge in any older neighborhood, but it is an especial challenge in District 7 where the rental rate is over twice that of the Twin Cities Metro Area. In District 7 about 53 percent of the units are rented, compared to 27 percent in the Twin Cities Metro Area (Figure B-2). Only 42 percent are occupied by owners. About 5 percent of the units are for rent, for sale or otherwise unoccupied where as in the entire Twin Cities, only about 3 percent of units are vacant. Although there are responsible landlords and conscientious renters, generally renters and landlords are less invested in the up-keep and appearance of their property, this presents a challenge for the neighborhood in maintaining its buildings.

## People

District 7 is one of the most unique neighborhoods in Saint Paul. It has a rich blend of cultures and backgrounds that contribute to the interest, vitality, and excitement of the neighborhood experience. District 7 has three primary racial groups:

Asian, White and Black as well as a growing Hispanic population. Asians make up over a

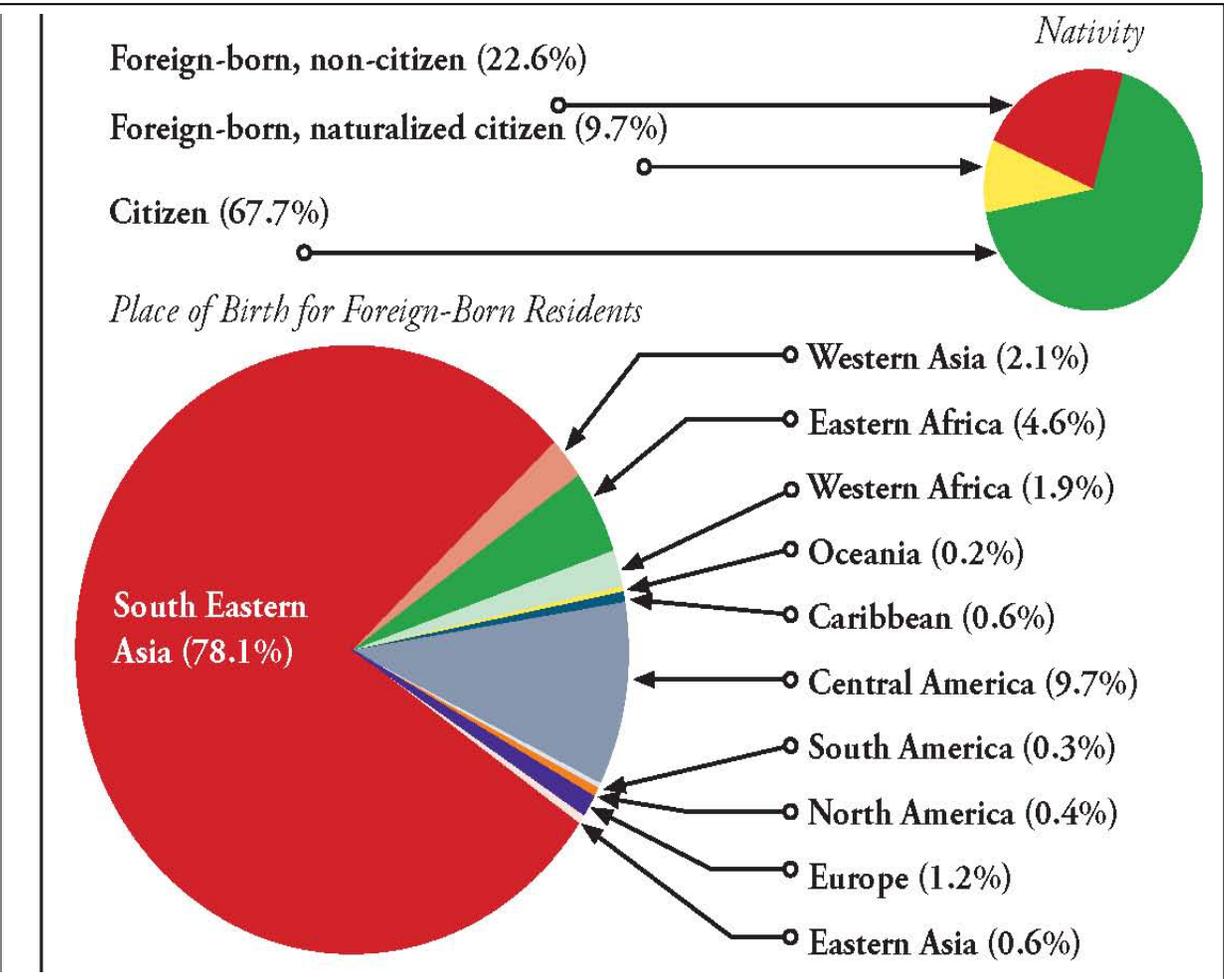
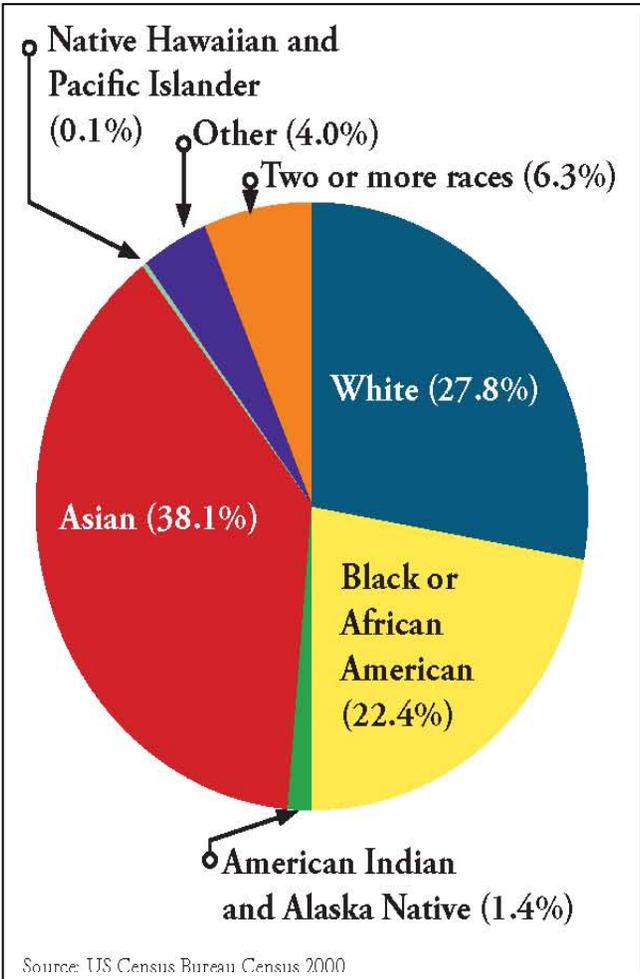
### Figure B-2. Vacant, Rented and Owned Housing Units

Percent of units that are vacant, rented and owned in District 7. In the entire Twin Cities, about 70 percent of units were owned, 27 percent rented, and the vacancy rate was about 3 percent.

	<i>Number of Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Units</i>
Vacant	263	4.9
Rented	2,863	53.0
Owned	2,275	42.1
Total Units	5,402	

Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000

third of the population and Whites and Blacks make up about a quarter a piece (Figure B-3). Most of the Asian residents are Hmong immigrants from Laos (Figure B-4). The Hmong newcomers have brought with them a colorful cultural background that has enriched the community identity.



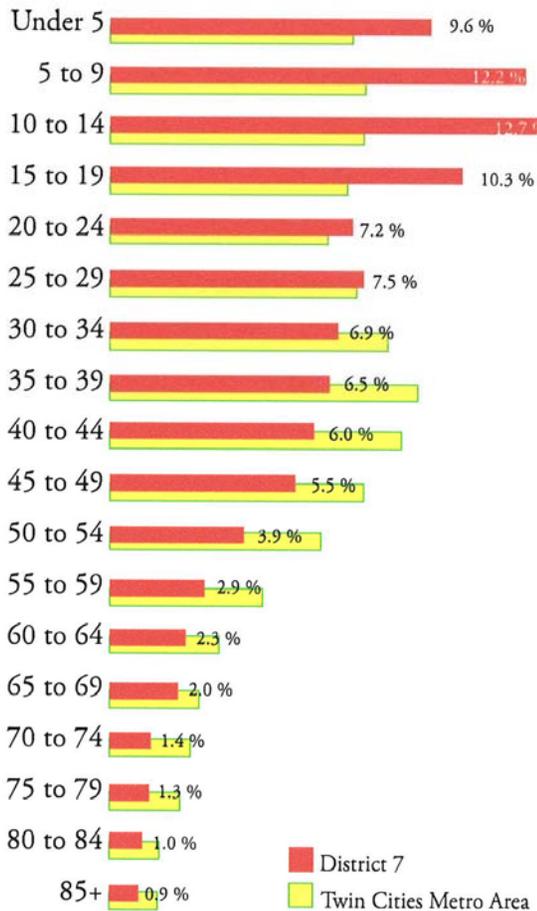
Children are a major part of the district. About half of the population is under 25 and 40 percent are under 18 (Figure B-5). This puts extraordinary demand on the schools, recreation centers and other youth services.

The City of Saint Paul projects about a 4 percent increase in population by 2010 and a 6.5 percent increase by 2020 (City of Saint Paul, Land Use, 64). Assuming District 7 grows at the same rate, the 2000 population of 17,425 can be expected to

grow to about 18,122 by 2010 and 18,558 by 2020. District 7 is projected to grow by about 325 households by 2020 (City of St. Paul Comprehensive Plan, 2002 and Metropolitan Council Regional Development Forecasts 2030, n.d.)

**Figure B-5. Age Distribution**

Percent of people in each age group. District 7 has a high concentration of children compared to the Twin Cities as a whole, which has the greatest number of people in the peak working ages of 20 to 55.



Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000

The increase in the city’s population will necessitate the addition of housing and jobs to the neighborhood.

District 7 has been known for its high crime rates. While the crime rates are still higher than most of Saint Paul, they are dropping. The decline is most precipitous in property crimes (Figure B-6). The number of residential burglaries dropped by 28 percent between 1996 and 2003. Reports of auto theft dropped by 43 percent and robbery dropped by half over the same period (Saint Paul Police 1997, 2003). These gains are remarkable but there is still room to improve. District 7 is still well above the average rate per capita in Saint Paul.

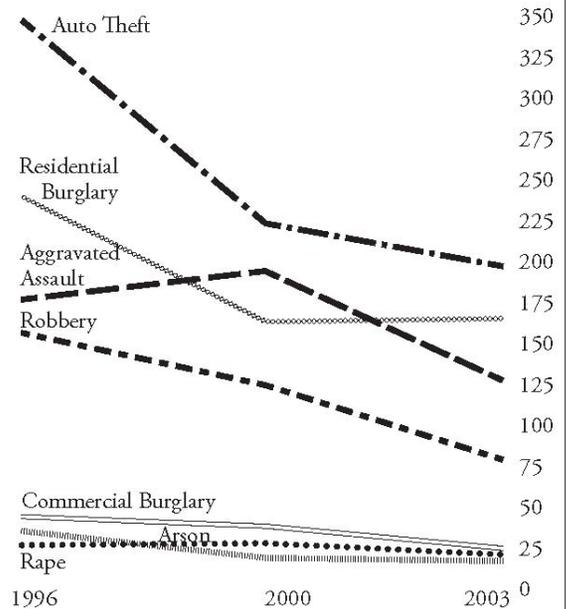
District 7 has a long tradition as a gateway community for new immigrants and many of the issues associated with immigration are still relevant. About half of the residents are bilingual (compared to about 10 percent of Twin Cities Metro Area residents) but roughly 15 percent of the residents speak limited English (US Census Bureau Census 2000). In addition, about 34 percent of residents over 25 do not have a high school diploma and about 84 percent do not have a degree beyond high school (US Census Bureau Census 2000). Both of these present barriers to employment.

District 7 residents average well below the Twin Cities average income and support a larger household. Part of the reason for the lower wage is that District 7 workers are disproportionately in low-wage and low-skill jobs.

The median household income for residents in District 7 is about 50 percent of that for Twin Cities residents (Figure B-7). In addition, primarily because of the number of children in District 7 (Figure B-5), each member of the workforce in the district must support a larger number of people. These additional demands on resources mean that the household income will go less far in meeting household expenses effectively.

**Figure B-6. Crime Rate**

The number of reported crimes has been declining over the past decade.



Source: Saint Paul Police Department 1997, 2000,

### Figure B-7. Income

Income of residents in District 7 and the Twin Cities. Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000



Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000

Perhaps because of low educational attainment and limited English language skills, District 7 workers are disproportionately working in low-wage occupations (Figure B-8). Most wage-earners in District 7 work in service, sales, or transportation jobs. These three areas have the lowest average wages (excluding farming, fishing and forestry).

A significant portion of the workforce in the district uses public transportation to get to work. One challenge that faces the neighborhood, given its reliance on public transportation is the residents' work schedules. According to the 2000 census, not only do residents leave for work in the morning but part of its workforce leaves in the afternoon, presumably for evening shifts. This unusual type of commute means that frequent transit options are needed throughout the day in District 7.

District 7 continues to be a "global village." Residents and other stakeholders continue to address challenges such as quality of life issues, crime, education, and employment, and there is evidence that their efforts are helping the area. Further investment by district stakeholders, the City of Saint Paul, and non-profits will support this positive trend. Recreation options must be expanded, the safety and quality of life for district residents must be improved, land in the neighborhood must be used to contribute to the well-being of the community, housing must address the needs of the diverse population of the district, the transportation options must be increased, education must address the needs of all residents from childhood through retirement, and businesses must contribute to the economic vibrancy of the district by both providing meaningful employment and addressing the needs of the district residents.

### Figure B-8. Occupations

District 7 tends to specialize in low-wage occupations. The "location quotient" is the ratio of the number of people in an occupation to the number of people employed in District 7 divided by the ratio of the number of people in an occupation to the number of people employed in the Twin Cities. A number over 1 indicates that District 7 has a larger share of that type of occupation. A number less than 1 indicates District 7 has a smaller share of that occupation.

	Percent of People in District 7	Percent of People in Twin Cities	Location Quotient	Average Annual Pay (2000)
<i>Management, business and financial operations occupations</i>	5.9	16.4	0.4	\$58,810
<i>Professional and related occupations</i>	13.2	22.5	0.6	\$45,720
<i>Service occupations</i>	21.8	12.4	1.8	\$20,374
<i>Sales and office occupations</i>	24.9	28.0	0.9	\$24,615
<i>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</i>	0.2	0.2	1.0	\$25,890
<i>Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations</i>	6.8	7.5	0.9	\$42,310
<i>Production, transportation and material moving occupations</i>	27.2	12.9	2.1	\$27,185

Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000, Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Goal 1: Recreation

Recreation options will meet the leisure desires of the residents and enhance the visual appeal and natural resources of the neighborhood.

Community members of District 7 use public space in different ways. Some member's desire places to play organized games, such as soccer. Others want a bench and pocket of lawn to take their lunch to on a summer afternoon. Some folks just want a barrier between them and the traffic as they walk down the street. Meeting these objectives will improve the quality of life for the District 7 neighborhood by encouraging an active lifestyle and creating and enhancing places for neighbors to gather and get to know each other.

**Objective 1: Work with the sponsoring organizations and partners to assure that the proposed Kroc Center meets community expectations for openness and cultural sensitivity as well as having programming that meets the needs and interests of community members.**

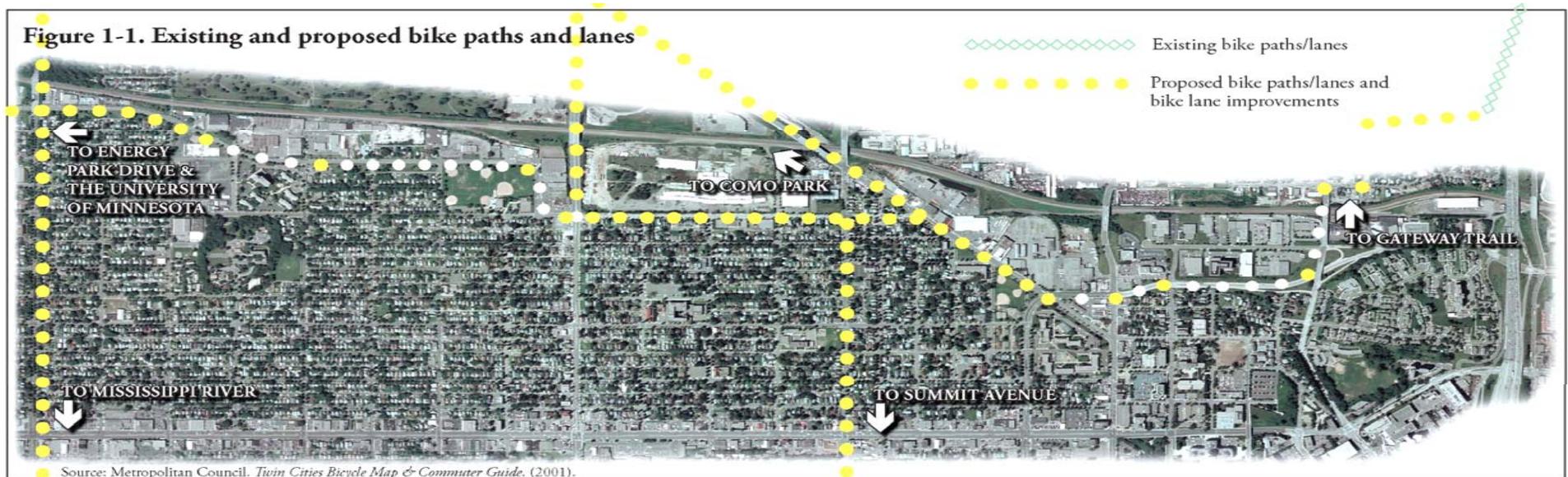
The current proposal is derived from a community developed plan. However, in the reported discussions between the Salvation Army and the City of St. Paul, the role of the community is unclear. Concerns have been raised that other programs run by

the Salvation Army have a religious focus, not appropriate to a public entity or sensitive to the cultural differences in the community.

Action 1: Continue to participate in meetings and help shape the development of the Kroc Center.

Action 2: As appropriate, involve other district councils and community groups in the area to assure that service delivery meets public standards and programming meeting community needs.

Collaborators: St. Paul Parks and Recreation, Salvation Army, city council members, adjacent district councils, youth serving organizations.



**Objective 2: Increase the amount of recreational, natural landscape, and public space.**

Because District 7 has been so densely developed there is little land available for the addition of new parks. However, public open space is important to community members' quality of life. Currently District 7 hosts a neighborhood park, two play fields adjoining elementary schools, and three St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department recreation centers with play fields. Two of these are operated and maintained by the City, while the third one is leased to and operated by a non-profit. All of these include playground equipment and some have basketball and tennis courts. Some private land, such as the Wilder complex, also includes play fields, playground equipment, and open green space.

When new development occurs, whether it is carried out by a public agency or by a private developer, it is important to include recreational and social amenities. The form of this space may differ depending on the location of the development and it should complement the existing immediate neighborhood.

Action 1: Encourage the inclusion of public or quasi-public space in all large-scale new development and extensive structure remodeling.

Action 2: Add landscaped buffers, including boulevard gardens, between the sidewalk and road when roads are remodeled.

Action 3: Consider the conversion of vacant lots smaller than 40 feet into pocket parks, community gardens, or tot lots and ensure their continued maintenance. Collaborators: City of Saint Paul Department of Planning, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, private developers and builders.

**Figure 1-2. Public Space**

Public space and buffers should be incorporated into the design of new construction and extensive remodeling. This can take many forms. An example of public space is the sidewalk café shown below. It is screened from the street with trees and shrubs and offers a neighborly social point.



Illustrated by Kate Nesse

**Objective 3: Provide recreation opportunities that reflect the diversity of cultures, ages, and resources in District 7.**

The district is home to three Parks and Recreation Department recreation centers (West Minnehaha, Scheffer and Valley) and may gain another recreation center owned and administered by a non-profit. These parks include fields that are designed for baseball. Two are large enough that it can be used for football, soccer, and other field sports as well (Figure 1-3). The recreation centers, as well as area schools currently offer programmed activities for youth and adults.

District 7 is home to a wide variety of people with many differing needs. In developing recreational options, care and attention must be paid to the recreational preferences of the many groups of people.

Action 1: Include soccer fields in the addition of amenities to recreation centers.

Action 2: Maintain recreation options affordable to neighborhood residents and encourage the addition of new leisure activities that are inexpensive or free.

Action 3: Provide programmed activities that appeal to area adults as well as

Action 4: Advocate the development of quiet meditative space, possibly by returning some land to wetland.

Collaborators: Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, other recreation centers and providers, youth programs, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

**Objective 4: Connect the district to Saint Paul's existing park system by extending current bike lanes and paths.**

Currently there are no off-road bike trails and a few on-road bike lanes within the district. Many trails in the current bike system extend along a road from a city park but end as they approach the borders of the neighborhood. As District 7 is a central



neighborhood of St. Paul, extending these trails through the neighborhood will connect the residents with the city park system and give park users from around the city a connection between the city's parks (Figure 1-1).

Action 1: Extend the bike lane down

Lexington Avenue and connect Como Park to the Mississippi River parks.

Action 2: Extend the bike lane from Como

Park along Como Avenue and connect it with the Gateway Trail that runs along 35 East.

Action 3: Improve the bike lane on Pierce

Butler Route by marking it well and extend it East onto Minnehaha Avenue West.

Collaborators: Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Saint Paul Department of Public Works, bike groups

## Goal 2: Community

Community members will be involved in caring for each other and their shared surroundings, contributing to the diversity, safety, and vitality of the neighborhood.

District 7 has historically been a district with a strong identity. That identity has changed over the years, from a German Catholic working class suburb of the city at the beginning of the century to a friendly home to young families in the middle of the century (Lanegran 1983). It became known for crime at the end of the twentieth century. The rise of crime has brought the district closer as community members joined together to make the area safer.

Building on this sense of community will not only improve safety in the district, it will contribute in immeasurable ways to the well-being of District 7 residents and businesses.

**Objective 1: Establish District 7 as a model for citizen involvement in all aspects of community life.**

Action 1: Continue to research and experiment with different modes of involving individuals and groups in community planning, decision making, organizational and social activities.

Action 2: Continue to explore the methods by which residents can become aware of community activities and informed about

decisions and decision-making processes that affect them.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, existing block clubs, Saint Paul Police Department

**Objective 2: Increase the numbers of ways in which residents can meet, work together on common objectives, and expand the sense of community involvement. This would include block clubs, groups of people with other shared interests, and initiatives to solve particular problems or accomplish objectives.**

Block clubs and other groups perform many functions. They may improve safety, address common issues or threats, empower people to take action, increase a sense of belonging and expand individual and collective knowledge and skills.

Currently District 7 has worked only with block clubs that are assisted in becoming independent, self-organized groups to meet local needs. There are nine formal blocks clubs, half of which are active and meet regularly.

Action 1: Re-establish a neighborhood-wide event organizing team.

Collaborators: Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, District 7 Planning Council, former Frogtown Festival participants.

### Figure 2-1. Community Event

Kids and adults work together on a “duck pond” at a community event at the Minnehaha Recreation Center.



Photo Courtesy of District 7 Planning Council

**Objective 3: Involve non-resident community members in neighborhood activities.**

Business owners, their employees, teachers, church members, and absentee landlords all have a stake in the well-being of District 7. They also have special knowledge and resources that can be useful to the neighborhood. As both resources and stakeholders their voices should be heard. Currently there is a consistent effort to involve business owners and they have been quite engaged in the community.

Action 1: Specifically target advertising of events and community meetings to these groups.

Action 2: Collaborate with organizations that represent these groups, such as neighborhood businesses, churches and schools, to ensure their representation.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, neighborhood churches, schools and businesses

**Objective 4: Ensure collaboration and cooperation among organizations within District 7.**

There are many organizations within the neighborhood that are working to improve the area and the lives of its residents. Collaboration and sharing of information will help to effectively serve the community members.

Action 1: Support the continued cooperation

among youth program providers to ensure efficient, high-quality and diverse programming and a safe environment for children.

Action 2: Re-establish the Frogtown Networking Group and create a forum, such as a newsletter, meeting, or web site, where the exchange of information about programs and initiatives between organizations is possible.

Action 3: Maintain a list of contacts at neighborhood and city organizations and make it available to organizations.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, West Minnehaha and Sheffer recreation centers and providers, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation

**Objective 5: Ensure the area's health care providers are meeting the needs of the residents, particularly those who are poor or uninsured.**

Health care continues to rise in importance and cost across the nation. It is a particular issue in District 7 where just under half of the population is not in the workforce (US Census Bureau Census 2000) and many households are earning well below the City's median income.

Action 1: Establish a health care collaborative that communicates regularly to address these issues.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, health care centers

### Goal 3: Land Use

Neighborhood land will be used to reflect the area’s history, its role in the City of Saint Paul and the residents’ pride of place.

Effective land use will meet the needs of both residents and businesses. It will create space for neighborhood jobs, meet the majority of the consumption needs of residents, and contribute positively to the district’s identity. It will mix business and residential without creating nuisances for either. The use of land in District 7 should have a healthy impact on the quality of life in the district.

In spite of its high population density, land is under-used in District 7. There are empty lots and a great deal of surface parking. Many of the major transportation corridors are not developed as intensely as they might be. Increased transit options on University

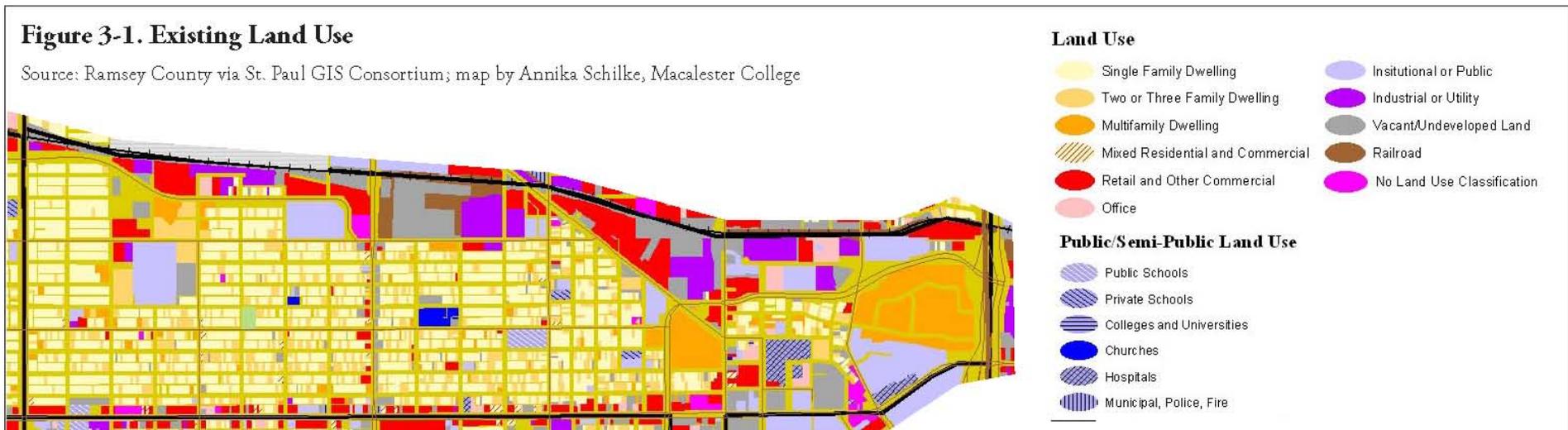
Avenue will help to support the development of land to compliment the use of public transit.

The maps on this and the following page demonstrate how land is currently used (figure 3-1) and how the community hopes land will be developed (Figure 3-2). The maps do not show how land is zoned, only how it is used. While the zoning of a particular parcel in the district must be specific to the context of that lot, to give a general picture of how land should be developed in the future, Saint Paul’s zoning categories have been grouped in this section. These broad-brush definitions are meant to

highlight the salient features of the uses in the categories. In addition, they emphasize the features that are important to the district: *Multi-unit residential* (RM1, RM2, RM3) means two-story and taller apartment buildings that house a variety of family sizes.

*Residential* (R1-4, RT1, RT2) indicates houses and duplexes housing between one and three families on 40 to 60 foot lots. Both high- and low-density residential are sprinkled with neighborhood institutions like churches and schools.

*High-density commercial* (B4) refers to two-story and taller buildings with retail on at least the first floor and offices, residences, or retail on the upper floors. High-density commercial generally requires more auto traffic than neighborhood commercial.



*Neighborhood commercial* (BC) refers to commercial uses located off of the major transportation corridors that serve primarily neighborhood needs and require little parking such as laundromats/dry cleaners, corner grocery stores, and take-out pizza.

*Mixed use* (TN1, TN2, TN3) indicates the close proximity of residential, retail, and office space either in the same building or in neighboring buildings. These buildings are generally two stories and taller and retail occupies most of the street-level space. In combination with an improved transportation network, it will help to create an urban village.

*Light industrial* (B5, I1) refers to buildings, usually with larger footprints than any of the previous categories, that house businesses involved in the manufacturing or assembly of products. Because these spaces are in such close proximity to residences, businesses are encouraged to minimize the nuisances, such as noise and noxious smells, sometimes associated with this type of land use.

The two remaining substantial tracts of land in District 7 are the Minnehaha Mall which is underutilized and the Wilder site which may be vacated. Either or both sites may be more easily developed for housing or commercial uses. However, this assessment of local needs indicates that the needs for

parkland or a destination location may be of greater value to District & and the larger St. Paul community.

**Objective 1: Determine the best socio-economic use of the Wilder and Minnehaha Mall properties and determine which should be used for parklands and which for a "destination" focus.**

Action 1: In cooperation with the city and other community organizations, obtain environmental and topographical data to determine the most appropriate use of each location.



Action 2: Convene a community=city group to advocate for best use of each site.

Action 3: Mobilize local residents to advocate on behalf of selected positions.

Collaborators: Greater Frogtown CDC, St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, US Federal Environmental Protection Agency. citizen based environmental groups, Headwaters Foundation.

**Objective 2: Orient businesses to address pedestrians, making the street experience a pleasure for walkers.**

Businesses benefit from more people walking by their establishments, pedestrians benefit from a safe and pleasant travel experience. While some of the commercial space is already developed, where there is room for more development or remodeling, the resulting building should incorporate the principles of pedestrian oriented design, including those described here.

Action 1: Encourage buildings scaled to pedestrians with awnings and fixtures that enhance the sidewalk experience so that people feel comfortable walking.

Action 2: Encourage parking at the back of buildings.

Action 3: Encourage placing garages and services on the alley for both residential and commercial buildings.

Action 4: Advocate the creation of underground parking in large-scale developments.

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, District 7 Planning Council, developers, businesses

**Objective 3: Preserve the character of the neighborhood and ensure its future success.**

District 7 has a distinctive character, rich in history. Its architecture, though modest, has an enduring beauty and the regular organization of its streets through most of the neighborhood has a classic feel that is comfortable to live with. Maintaining the strengths of the neighborhood is essential to the livability of the area.

Within District 7, the small neighborhoods have unique character. Mt. Airy, in spite of the high-rise is like a mini-suburb with curving streets and similar housing types. Capitol Heights is an unusual mix of institutional uses, historic homes and industrial buildings. Thomas-Dale/Frogtown and East Midway are row after row of older, distinctive working-class homes.

Action 1: Keep single-family residential lots to the current standard and the blocks a walkable length.

Action 2: Promote the rehabilitation and preservation of older buildings.

Action 3: Create safer spaces through lighting and thoughtful design

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County Historical Society, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, developers, property owners.

**Objective 4: Intensify the density of development along University Avenue, Dale Street and Como Avenue.**

Intensify development on major transportation corridors will bring both more jobs and more housing units to the area. It will also help to convert the streets from car-oriented thoroughfares to pedestrian-friendly commercial districts. The development should minimize visual and physical barriers and facilitate communication by encouraging pedestrian circulation through the district.

Action 1: On University Avenue, combine high-density multi-family residential with high-density commercial uses so that it responds to pedestrians, bus and possible future light rail commuters.

Action 2: On Dale Street, create a pedestrian friendly environment by increasing the density of commercial uses, particularly at the intersections and adding high-density multi-family residential units.

Action 3: On Como Avenue, increase the density of commercial uses that respond to the area's commercial and institutional character.

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, SPARC, developers, businesses

***Objective 5: Advocate for the extension of Pierce Butler Route along the existing BNSF railroad east to connect with Phalen Boulevard.***

For over 30 years, community members have supported the re-alignment and extension of Pierce Butler Route through District 7 area. Doing so will remove unwanted truck traffic from residential streets, while also creating needed east-west industrial corridor to span the city.

*Action 1:* Continue to support Pierce Butler realignment and extension in multiple arenas.

*Action 2:* Seek funding to implement the realignment.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, District 6 Planning Council, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, SPARC, Great Northern Corridor, City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, State of MN, Federal Government

## Goal 4: Housing

A variety of quality housing options will help the community be a diverse and inclusive part of Saint Paul.

To maintain the diversity in the District 7 community, it is important to house people at all stages of life and at many different income levels. Quality housing is one of the basic needs of every person.

In 1999, 73 houses were sold in District 7, with an average sales price of \$65,690 (\$121,756 for St. Paul as a whole) (Figure 4-1). In 2004, 75 houses were sold, and the average sales price is \$144,438 (\$214,692 for Saint Paul as a whole). The increase in sale price rose much more sharply in District 7 (about 120 percent), than in Saint Paul as a whole (about 76 percent). The average foundation size remained the same in District 7 (762 vs. 766 sq ft), but the average finished area

increased from 1,021 to 1,276 sq ft, suggesting that people are finishing basements and attics to add more space (Regional Multiple Listing Service 2005). District 7 homes are generally smaller and less expensive than homes in other parts of Saint Paul. Most housing units are single-unit homes on relatively small lots. The district is central to the city and will become even more connected with improved transportation on University Avenue.

These factors make the district attractive to young families, however it is important to consider the housing needs of people at all stages of life and provide options so people

need not leave the neighborhood when their family structure changes.

**Objective 1: Promote investment in the district through an increase in homeownership for people with a variety of income levels and housing needs.**

Action 1: Support the efforts of the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation and other organizations with similar goals to construct affordable housing for low-income families in District 7.

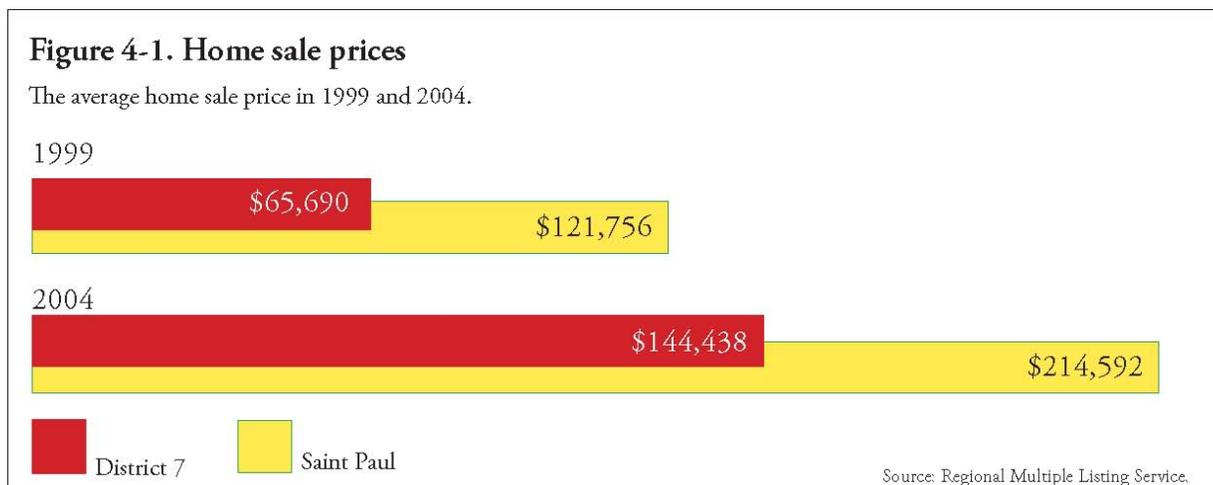
Action 2: Encourage the creation of land trust properties to mitigate gentrification.

Action 3: Encourage housing rehabilitation to help maintain existing housing stock.

Action 4: Support programs that encourage residents to start on the path to homeownership and inform them about the process.

Collaborators: Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, Homebuilders Outreach Foundation, Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Wilder Foundation, University of Minnesota, Urban Homeworks, District 7 Planning Council, state and federal programs

**Objective 2: Promote understanding and cooperation between renters, owners and landlords.**



District 7 has slightly more renting households than owning households. Many landlords live on the property but some are absent. All three groups contribute to the flavor of the neighborhood but have different needs and concerns. While homeowners are concerned about long-term effects on their property and the district, renters often have a much shorter horizon. Landlords primary concern is that their properties remain rentable.

Association among these groups can be effective in promoting understanding. It is important to help each group be good stewards of the neighborhood.

Action 1: Support the emergence of homeowners', renters', and landlords' associations and work with them to facilitate collaboration.

Action 2: Through block clubs, facilitate a "Pride of the Neighborhood" association that can encourage involvement in the district and work on issues important to community members.

Collaborators: homeowners, renters, landlords, ACORN, block clubs, tenant's union, District 7 Planning Council

**Objective 3: Ensure that there are a variety of housing types and prices so that residents can find housing within the district as their family structure changes.**

District 7 currently has many small single-family homes but is lacking inexpensive housing units for large families and units for elderly residents who need

**Figure 4-2. Number of people in a household**

Number of people in a household as a percent of all households. Source: US Census Bureau Census 2000



something that is more accessible for people with limited mobility. While roughly a third of households have just one occupant,

District 7 has a disproportionate number of households with six or more members compared to St. Paul (Figure 4-2).

Action 1: Encourage the construction of units with more than three bedrooms that can house large families.

Action 2: Encourage the construction of housing options that meet the needs of elderly residents, such as single-story townhomes and apartments in buildings with elevators and are near transportation.

Action 3: Maintain publicly assisted housing

in the district both physically and financially.

Collaborators: Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, City of Saint Paul, Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, private developers.

**Objective 4: Increase the number of housing units in District 7.**

District 7 is projected to grow by approximately 325 households by 2020 (City of Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, 2002; Metropolitan Council Regional Development Forecasts 2030, n.d.). To house this many people, District 7 will need to construct more housing units.

Action 1: Encourage infill housing that is in

keeping with the current aesthetic of the district.

Action 2: Advocate the addition of multi-unit residences on high-traffic corridors like Dale Street.

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, private and non-profit developers

## Goal 5: Transportation

A variety of transportation options will increase the mobility of all neighborhood residents.

Safe, timely and accessible transportation options, whether they are on foot, bicycle, public transit or car, benefit all district residents as well as visitors. Residents of District 7 rely comparatively more on their feet and the public transportation system to move about the city. District 7 has a larger portion of residents who take public transit to work – 12 percent – than the Twin Cities Metro Area – 4.5 percent (US Census Bureau Census 2000). In addition, 26 percent of households don't have an available car, compared to 8 percent in the entire Twin Cities (US Census Bureau

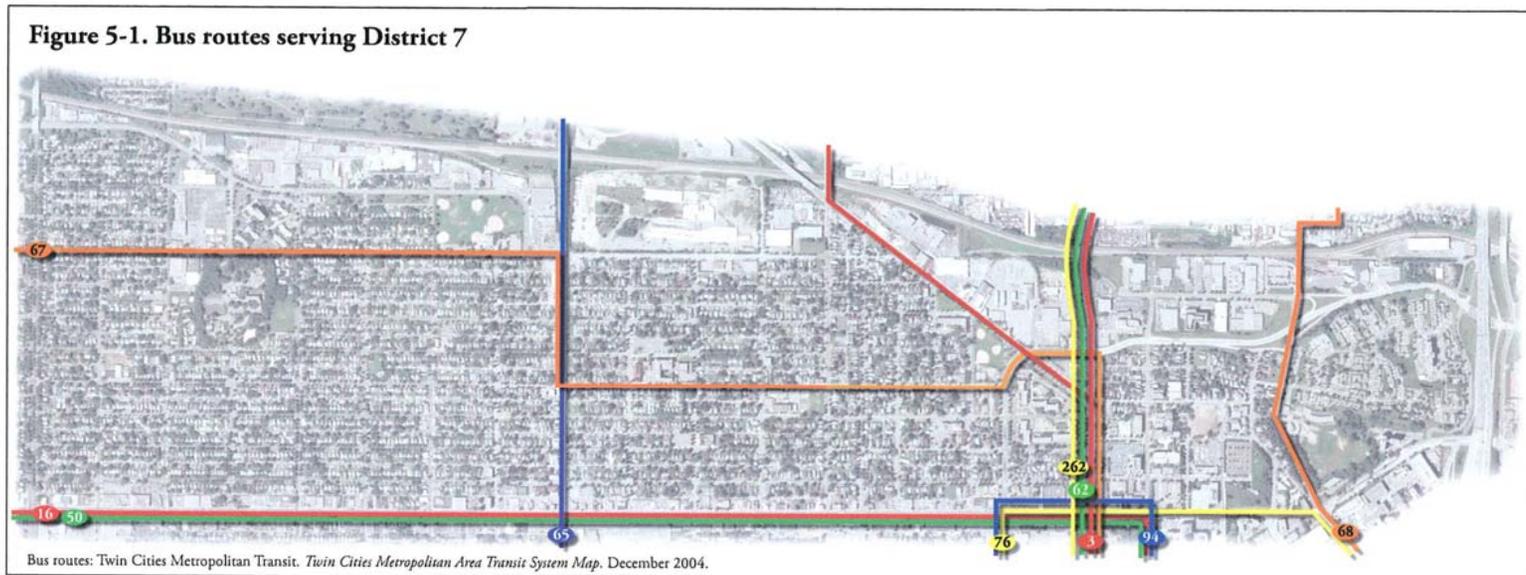
Census 2000). Yet the neighborhood must also accommodate the cars and parking needs of the residents and visitors.

There are concerns in moving through and within the neighborhood. The busses serve disproportionately the east half of the district. The main streets in the neighborhood (Figure 5-3) can be intimidating to cross for pedestrians. Parking is a continual concern for both the district's business patrons and its residents.

**Objective 1: Better connect the district to the rest of the Metro Area by carefully**

**orchestrating the public transportation options to take community members where they need to go.**

Transportation is only as effective as far as it meets the needs of its potential users. District 7 is served by ten bus routes. Three of these have limited schedules, running during just one part of the day (Figure 5-2). Most of the busses connecting downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul through the neighborhood (routes 3, 16, 50, and 94) run frequently on weekdays. Busses that connect to the north, south, or both, (routes 62, 65, 67, 68, 76, and 262) run less frequently. Service to the western half of the district is sorely lacking. Of the four routes that cross the area, one is an express bus with a limited schedule (route 50), one goes primarily south to West Saint Paul



(route 67), one goes to downtown Minneapolis (route 16) and the fourth goes primarily north to the Rosedale Shopping Center (route 65). Only route 16 runs more frequently than every half hour on a regular basis in the western half. Because the residents of District 7 are unusually dependent on public transportation, it would benefit the neighborhood to increase the

routes and their frequency though the neighborhood.

Action 1: Advocate increasing the number and frequency of north-south bus routes between Dale and Lexington.

Action 2: Advocate increasing the number and frequency of busses connecting to Minneapolis.

Action 3: Advocate increasing the frequency

and length of east-west bus routes.

Action 4: Create a task force to follow the potential change in transit on University Avenue (and elsewhere in District 7) to ensure that, should it be implemented, it meets the needs and desires of neighborhood residents.

Collaborators: Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit, District 7 Planning Council, University United, Metropolitan Council, Regional Rail Authority, other District Councils along University Avenue.

**Objective 2: Make streets in the neighborhood safe for pedestrian, bike, and other non-auto travelers.**

Many streets in District 7, especially the main thoroughfares, University Avenue, Thomas Avenue, Minnehaha Avenue, Pierce Butler Route, Dale Street, Como Avenue, Rice Street and Jackson Street, do not have amenities to make the pedestrian feel safe or comfortable. In addition, while most neighborhood streets have landscaped buffers between the sidewalk and the street as well as on-street parking, the district continues to have problems with cars moving too fast for drivers to be well aware of pedestrian movement. This problem is of particular importance in District 7 because of the large number of children. While it is important to recognize the significance of cars in the transportation network and their need to navigate easily, it is imperative to ensure the safety of everyone else as well.

Action 1: Advocate traffic calming measures

**Figure 5-2. Bus route frequency**

Number of minutes between busses at different times of the day.

Route	6-9am & 3-6:30pm		Weekday Evening	1-5 am Owl	Saturday	Sunday/Holiday
	Weekday Rush-hours	Weekday Midday				
3 (downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul)	10-15	10	15-30	none	30	60
16 (downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul)	10	10	15	60	10	15-30
50 (downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul)	12	none	none	none	none	none
62 (Shoreview Community Center to downtown St. Paul)	30	30	60	none	30	60
65 (Rosedale Center to downtown St. Paul)	30	30	60	none	60	60
67 (Hamline University to Signal Hills Transit Center)	20-30	30	60	none	60	60
68 (McCarron Hills Shopping Center to South St. Paul Airport)	10-30	30	60	none	30-60	30-60
76 (Midway Shopping Center to downtown St. Paul)	none	70	none	none	none	none
94 (downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul)	5-10	15	30	none	30	30
262 (Lino Lakes to Little Canada Transit Center)	30	none	none	none	none	none

Source: Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit. World Wide Web site, <http://www.metrotransit.org/serviceInfo/findRoutes.asp/>.

on neighborhood streets, such as traffic islands, speed bumps, more stop signs, or one-way streets.

Action 2: Advocate increasing safe cross walks on Dale Street which may include increasing stop lights or adding more designated cross walks at intersections.

Action 3: Encourage including landscaped buffers with trees between the sidewalk and street when streets are remodeled, particularly on Jackson Street, Pierce Butler Route, Como Avenue and University Avenue.

Action 4: Advocate reducing the width of streets at cross walks by bumping the curb out at that point or other measures, especially on Como Avenue, University Avenue and the

wider portions of Minnehaha Avenue.

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit, Twin Cities Metropolitan Council, District 7 Planning Council

**Objective 3: Encourage parking that enhances the business district without reducing the availability of parking for neighborhood residents.**

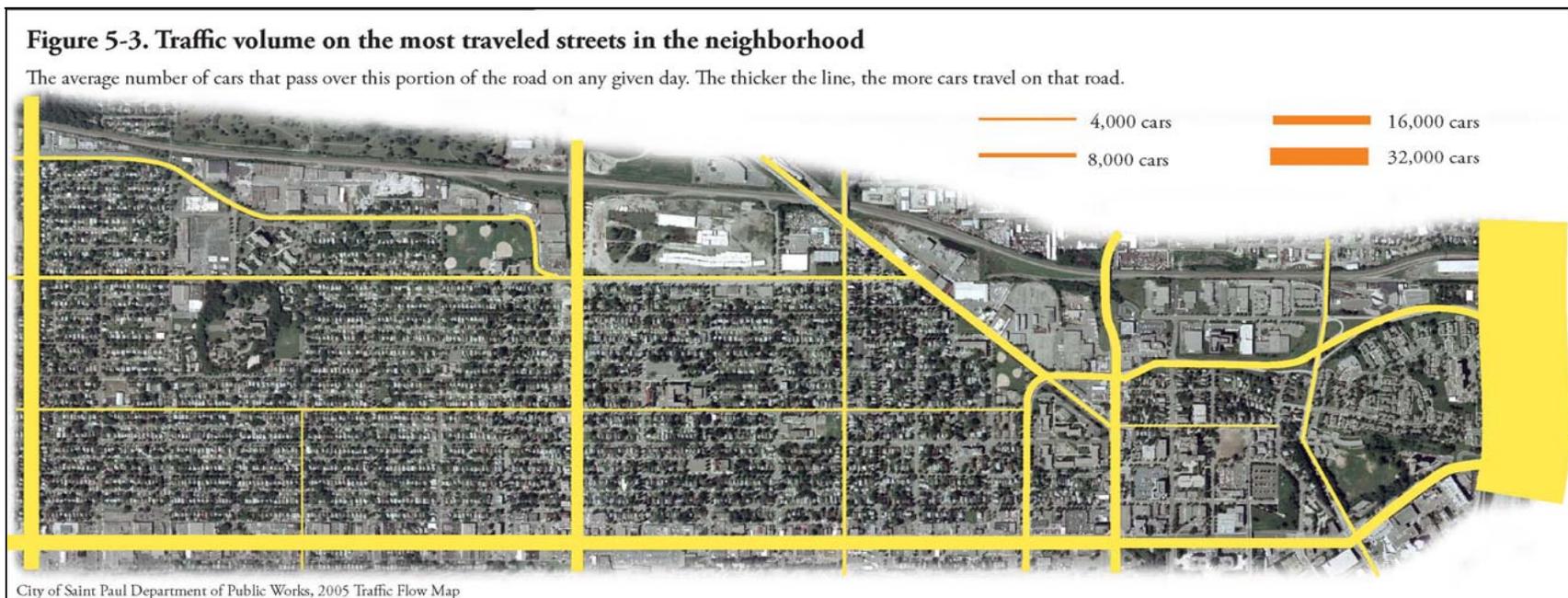
It is essential to take care of the parking needs of the neighborhood's residents. At the same time, it is important for the area to have adequate parking to accommodate the patrons of the neighborhood's businesses.

Many businesses throughout the neighborhood have parking next to or in front of the buildings. This reduces the

dependence on on-street parking for the patrons but when it is not carefully planned, it can also reduce the perceived density and walkability of the neighborhood.

District 7 has very few restrictions for on-street parking, especially on neighborhood streets. It has been adequate thus far since the neighborhood does not contain a major transportation mode. However, improved transit on University Avenue and additional bus routes through the neighborhood may bring park-and-ride visitors that could soon clog the neighborhood's parking space.

Action 1: Advocate restricting parking on neighborhood streets by limiting parking time during the day for non-residents.

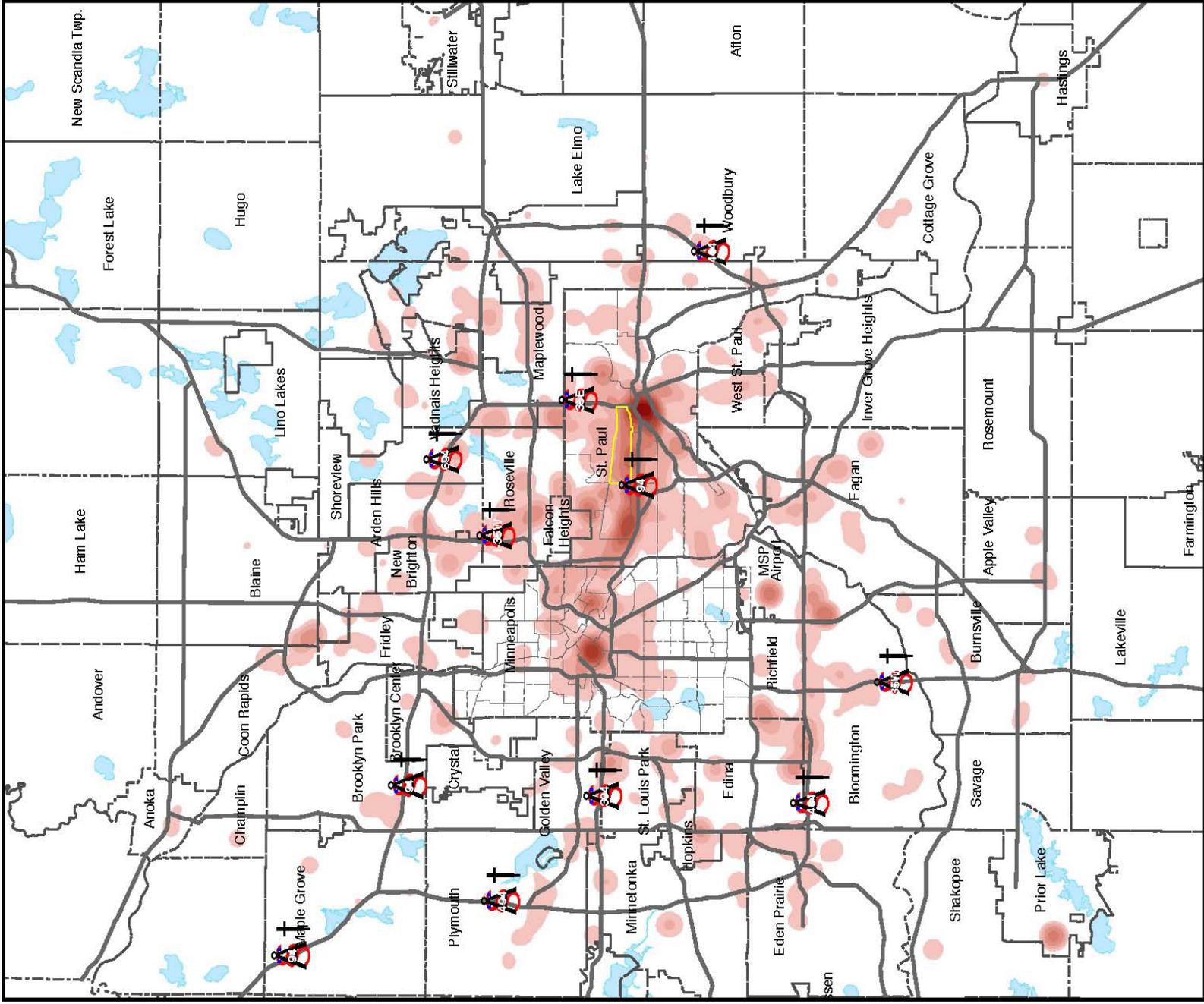


Action 2: When new commercial property is designed or existing commercial property is remodeled, encourage placing parking at the back of buildings or when feasible, underground.

Collaborators: City of Saint Paul, District 7 Planning Council, neighborhood businesses

**Figure 5-4. Where District 7 residents work**

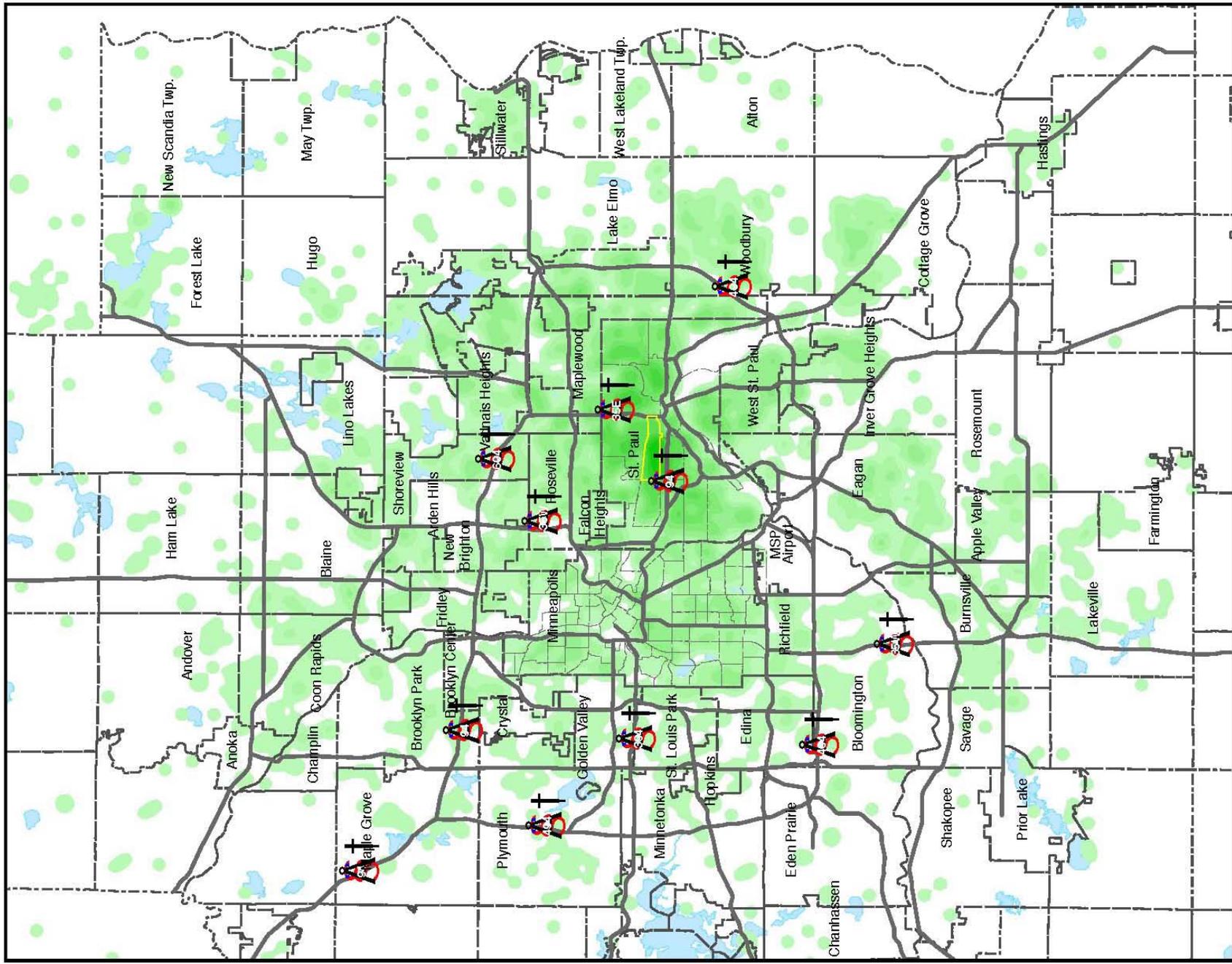
The red represents the location of District 7 residents' workplaces. The darker the red, the more people who live in District 7 work in that area. Residents' workplaces are most densely distributed in the downtowns of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and on University Avenue.



Created by Brian Sheffer at Neighborhood Program for Community Revitalization

**Figure 5-4. Where people who work in District 7 live**

The green represents the location the homes of people who work in District 7. The darker the green, the more people who work in District 7 live in that area. Workers' residences are most densely located in District 7 and neighboring districts, however workers' residences are spread throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area.



## Goal 6: Education

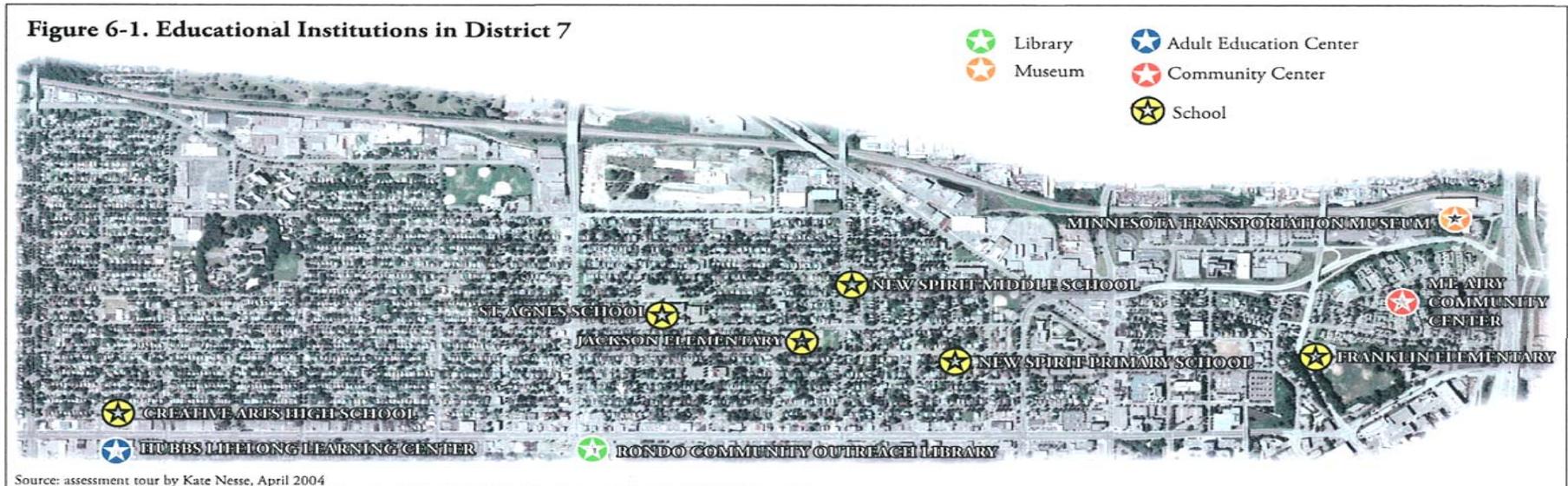
Education will begin before kindergarten and continue throughout a lifetime, focusing on capacity building skills, personal development, citizenship and civic engagement and workforce development.

Education is essential for a productive and creative workforce. Beyond the necessities of basic reading and math skills, education has the potential to introduce new thoughts and skills that expand people's world and ideas. It is not just children that education can benefit. People at every stage of life can be enriched by learning.

District 7 has two public elementary schools (Jackson and Franklin), a public high school (Creative Arts) as well as a private elementary and high school (St. Agnes) and a charter elementary and middle

school (New Spirit). In addition, there is a Saint Paul Public Library branch at the corner of Lexington Parkway and University Avenue (Lexington Outreach Branch). This branch is being replaced with an expanded branch at the corner of Dale and University to open in 2006. (Both the current and new branches are technically not in the district, since they are on the south side of University Avenue, but will serve District 7 residents.) Although there are no higher education institutions in District 7, there are many within walking distance or a short bus ride.

There are two locations that offer a variety of extra-curricular and adult education. The Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning focuses on adult education. The Mt. Airy Community Center offers a variety of adult classes and after-school tutoring and mentoring for children. Saint Paul Public Schools' Community Education has locations in and around District 7. It offers a variety of classes for adults, including high-school equivalency test, English language and many classes in arts, crafts and recreation.



**Objective 1: Ensure that every district resident has the basic skills required for employment.**

Every resident needs to have basic reading and math skills and an understanding of workplace conventions. About 34 percent of District 7 residents over age 24 have less than a high school diploma, over twice the rate of Saint Paul as a whole, 16 percent (Figure 6-2). Plus, about 15.5 percent of residents say they speak very little English or do not speak it at all (US Census Bureau Census 2000).

Action 1: Connect residents with education providers.

Action 2: Support the expansion of basic skills classes within the district.

Action 3: Continue to support the expansion of technology resources, such as computers, in local schools and the library branch.

Collaborators: Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, The Minnesota Workforce Center of Downtown Saint Paul, Saint Paul Public Schools' Community Education, District 7 Planning Council

**Objective 2: Help district children gain a quality, well rounded education that will contribute to achieving their goals.**

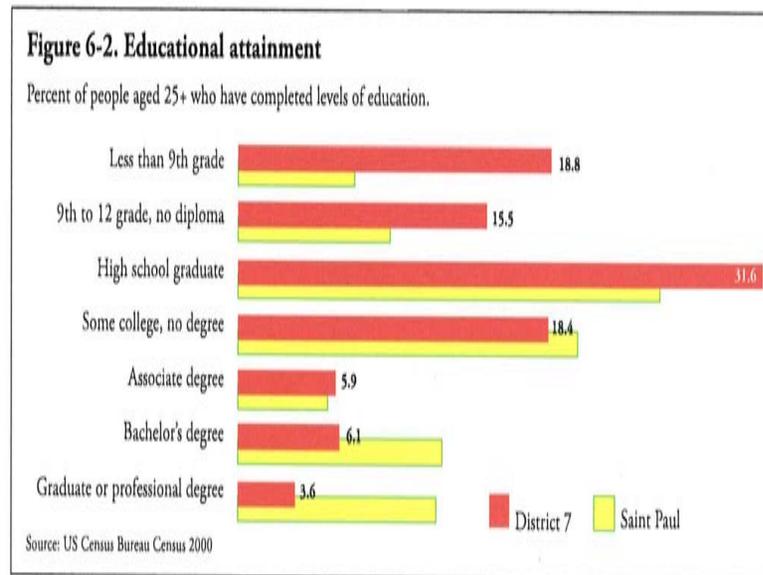
Education is one of the key means to improve the quality of life, expand opportunities, and increase their adult earning potential. Childhood and young adult education is of particular importance in District 7 because of the large population of young people. Over a third of the population in District 7 is under the age of 18 and over half is under 25 years of age (Figure B-7; US Census Bureau Census 2000).

Action 1: Advocate developing pre-kindergarten schooling within the district.

Action 2: Pair students with internships in local businesses that will help the gain skills and give them responsibility.

Action 3: Advocate the creation of more after school programs including a mentoring program for district teenagers.

Collaborators: Saint Paul Public Schools, Saint Paul Public Library, Boys and Girls Club of the Twin Cities, District 7 Planning Council, neighborhood kids, teens, parents, residents, businesses, Mt. Airy Community Center, faith-based organizations, West Minnehaha and Sheffer recreation centers, Boy and Girl Scouts of America



**Objective 3: Connect residents with opportunities that will enrich their lives and the community they live in.**

The purpose of education is not only to expand a person's employment prospects. It also has the potential to foster understanding new ideas and cultures, to contribute to personal growth, and to just be fun.

Action 1: Promote bi- and polylingualism by connecting residents with classes in the languages of their neighbors.

Action 2: Advocate developing senior-focused classes and activities within the district.

Action 3: Encourage adult programming at recreation centers in District 7.

Action 4: Work to engage residents in civic dialogue and civic action to ensure all the voices of District 7 are represented in the political process.

Collaborators: St. Paul Public Schools' Continuing Education, Senior Housing, West Minnehaha Recreation Center, Sheffer Recreation Center, District 7 Planning Council

## Goal 7: Economic Development

Maintain and attract a mix of businesses that will fulfill the needs of the residents and contribute to meaningful employment in the area.

Businesses in District 7 contribute to the character of the neighborhood. Ideally they provide goods and services needed by residents and visitors. The success of business enterprises in District 7 is integral to the continued positive quality of life in the area.

Commercial activity in District 7 is most concentrated on University Avenue, Dale Street, Rice Street, and Como Avenue. A few small businesses that serve primarily the needs of residents within walking distance are sprinkled throughout the district.

There are many programs around the Twin Cities that business owners and entrepreneurs can take advantage of. Within District 7, there is a business incubator. In addition there are several chambers of commerce that cover all or part of the district. The Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation serves businesses in the Frogtown area and Neighborhood Development Corporation serves people throughout the Twin Cities interested in starting their own business.

**Objective 1: Develop a strong economy in the neighborhood that meets resident**

**needs and includes local entrepreneurs and home based businesses, local and regional businesses, national corporations that meet local employment and consumer needs as well as those of the non-profit and government sectors.**

Action 1: Work with other organizations to determine the kinds of businesses that will meet the needs of the local economy.

Action 2: Work with responsible entities to meet needs and utilize existing underused commercial property.

Action 3: Support the revitalization of existing neighborhood business networks, such as the Frogtown Business Association.

Action 4: Establish "preferential" purchasing policies to increase local organizations' use of local businesses.

Action 5: Encourage neighborhood residents to become entrepreneurs.

Action 6: Work with organizations and individuals to create "destination locations" within the neighborhood economy to draw customers from outside the area.

Collaborators: University United, Midway Chamber of Commerce, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, District 7 Planning Council, landlords, business owners, professionals, banks

**Objective 2: Create a strong role for the District 7 neighborhoods in economic development that is occurring in and adjacent to our geographic area so that residents are informed and involved and developers have a forum for sharing their plans.**

Action 1: Create a standing committee of residents and business owners to participate in economic development initiatives, to serve as liaisons to and from community organizations, and to recommend additional economic development activities in the area.

Action 2: Support The Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation in strengthening its role and increasing its staffing and financial resources to carry out commercial and business development activities in District 7.

Action 3: Continue to represent the interests of District 7 in on-going and ad hoc economic development initiatives

being undertaken by governmental, non-profit and private organizations.

Collaborators: University United, Midway Chamber of Commerce, City of Saint Paul, Neighborhood Development Corporation, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, other business development organizations, District 7 Planning Council, Greater Frogtown CDC

**Objective 3: Support neighborhood businesses and professionals.**

It is imperative that local organizations demonstrate their appreciation of the neighborhood businesses by patronizing them. While each business will certainly rely on their daily customer base for economic stability, patronizing neighborhood businesses, particularly at public meetings and events, is a potent gesture of goodwill and appreciation. There are a number of artists living in District 7. ArtSpace recently constructed artist live-work housing at Elfelt Street and Blair Avenue.

Action 1: Continue to use products and services bought within the neighborhood at neighborhood events.

Action 2: Employ neighborhood artists in the creation of public works projects, such as streets and parks, within the neighborhood.

Action 3: Initiate a “buy local” campaign to highlight the goods and services available to residents in District 7.

Action 4: Encourage businesses in the

district to find ways to become “destination points” that will draw people from outside the district.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, City of Saint Paul, business organizations, ArtSpace, other arts associations, artists, professionals, business owners

**Objective 4: In the acquisition and development of commercial and industrial sites, advocate the occupation of these sites by employers that will offer good jobs and draw from the District 7 labor pool.**

Unemployment and under-employment continue to be a problem in District 7 yet with the comparatively large supply of commercial and industrial land; there is an opportunity to alleviate the situation. Not every employer will be a good fit for the district. Residents are already employed in occupations that average the lowest wages (Figure B-8). Encouraging the use of the land by employers who will offer living wages and benefits will be good for the community. Locating in District 7 will be good for the employers because it will encourage residents to train for those living-wage jobs, thereby creating a more skilled labor pool for the employer to draw from.

Action 1: Advocate the formation of a city-level committee to oversee the sale of the Minnehaha Mall site and the occupation by a business that will draw from the district’s labor pool and provide a living-wage job.

Action 2: Coordinate business development efforts on the Great Northern Corridor sites with workforce development efforts in the district.

Collaborators: District 7 Planning Council, City of Saint Paul, potential businesses

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