Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan

A collaborative effort of residents, businesses, and organizations in the Summit Hill/District 16 community.

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Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul
Recommended by the Planning Commission - _______________.
Adopted by the City Council - ________________.


Location and Current Land Use

The Summit Hill neighborhood is an approximately 75 square block neighborhood in the City of St. Paul, bounded by Summit Avenue on the north, Interstate 35E on the south and east, and Ayd Mill Road on the west. The Summit Hill neighborhood is connected to five unique neighborhoods: Downtown to the east, West 7th to the south and east, Macalester-Groveland to the west, and Summit University and Lexington-Hamline to the north.

The Summit Hill Neighborhood is comprised of mainly single-family residences with a mix of duplex and multi-family housing dispersed throughout. A business and commercial spine runs east-west along both sides of Grand Avenue with a strong presence of multi-family housing and to a lesser degree remnant single-family incorporated within the commercial fabric. Schools, churches and other institutional land uses are found within the neighborhood with the highest occurrence along Summit Avenue. Open space and parkland is limited except for a large neighborhood park that lies between St. Clair and the bluff line that creates the southernmost edge of the Summit Hill Neighborhood. A railroad corridor lies at the toe of the bluff.

Overall Vision

The Summit Hill neighborhood has developed eight planning and development principles which are the core ideals drawn from community input and the Plan Steering Committee discussions. These principles are the philosophical guideposts that will shape all aspects of the neighborhood. Also, they are the criteria that all implementation strategies should be measured against in terms of evaluating success.

Principles:

1. All individuals and interest groups communicate openly as stakeholders and stewards in charting Summit Hill/District 16’s evolution as a sustainable neighborhood.

2. Community spirit continues to be nurtured and expanded through activities for all ages.

3. Neighborhood ambiance is defined and enriched by a well-maintained green urban landscape that includes lively and safe public spaces, arts and culture, pedestrian connections,
healthy natural amenities and open spaces, and well-designed new and old buildings that reflect the character, mass and scale of nearby buildings.

4. Community identity and image is expressed through high quality design that respects the historic and cultural values of the neighborhood.

5. All redevelopment is in keeping with the historic character and scale and includes amenities, such as landscaping and lighting, that are part of a mutually beneficial, collaborative project.

6. Summit Hill/District 16 supports living choices for residents of all ages, incomes and lifestyles.

7. Summit Hill/District 16 respects and enriches the mutually beneficial relationship between residential livability and commercial vitality.

8. Summit Hill/District 16's movement patterns emphasize a safe walking, biking, and driving environment and convenient transit.

Plan Elements: Visions and Strategies

Grand Avenue Mixed Use Corridor

Vision

The Summit Hill neighborhood maintains and reinforces Grand Avenue as an eclectic mix of housing, shops, restaurants, and services for residents and visitors. Grand Avenue shall continue to be a mix of new buildings that respect the historic character of the avenue and neighborhood and old buildings that relate closely to the sidewalk and encourage pedestrian activity at the street level. Beautification efforts on Grand Avenue continue with attention to trees, planters, bench gardens, historical lighting, and attractive design of buildings that blend with the scale and historical character of the avenue. Businesses provide parking that is affordable, inconspicuous, attractive, and underground when appropriate. A balance of residential and business uses on Grand Avenue is maintained, including a mix of small-scale retail stores and services, both locally and nationally owned.

Strategies

G1 Corridor Continuity. Maintain Grand Avenue as a continuous neighborhood retail and residential corridor and contain commercial uses and accessory parking within existing boundaries.

G2 Streetscape Enhancement Plan. Develop a Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan to make Grand Avenue more pedestrian-, shopper-, and bicycle-friendly, to enhance its aesthetic qualities, and to invigorate its public realm, including Grand Avenue between Oakland Street and I-35E.
- G2a Develop a plan in conjunction with businesses, land owners, and developers that includes various improvements such as safer pedestrian crossings, the installation of benches, plantings, public art, cultural activities, and active public spaces.

- G2b Encourage residents to walk to Grand Avenue by conducting a local “Walk to Grand” campaign, selling affordable “shopping bag dollies” to residents, etc.

G3 Design Guidelines. Institute commercial/retail design guidelines that reinforce human-scale building characteristics, promote quality in architectural materials, reinforce a pedestrian-focused streetscape, promote underground parking for mixed use developments, and visually-screened surface parking for smaller, single-use developments, and promote signage that is consistent with building architecture and business function, and complements the eclectic nature of the avenue.

- G3a Recommend adoption of the design standards of the TN2 Zoning District, ideally in an overlay district.

- G3b Compose and implement additional design guidelines, to address side and rear facades for Grand Avenue, with a consortium of residents, business owners, developers, and city staff. Pursue implementation in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

G4 Commercial and Housing Mix. Retain B2-C (commercial uses in residential structures) and residential zoning on Grand Avenue.

- G4a Discourage rezoning of residential uses on Grand Avenue to more intensive uses.

G5 Neighborhood Focus for Commercial Uses. Curtail B-3 zoning.

- G5a B-2 and B-2C zoning allows uses most appropriate to commercial activity on Grand Avenue. No additions of B-3 zoning should be approved. The City should zone B-3 properties to B-2 when such properties are developed for B-2 uses.

G6 Commercial Spillover. Control commercial spillover effects onto Lincoln and Summit Avenues.

- G6a Acknowledging the special characteristics of Grand Avenue and the neighborhood it serves, rezonings and variances are opposed in those areas where parking and traffic problems create undue hardship for neighboring businesses, residents, and visitors.

- G6b The approval of site plans and licenses should be contingent on the mitigation of parking and traffic problems to a level acceptable to the majority of immediately affected businesses and residents.

- G6c New businesses and the manner in which they operate should be in comport with the residential character of the neighborhood.

G7 Locally-owned Businesses. Implement mechanisms for supporting and retaining small, locally-owned businesses.

- G7a Review planning strategies put forth by the Institute of Local Self-Reliance: (1) an upper square footage limit on the size of new retail stores; (2) community impact assessments before approving new retail stores (above a certain size); (3) diversity of retail and services; (4) discouraging the proliferation of national retailers and restaurants.
• G7b  Support GABA in organizing public education and marketing strategies that focus on supporting locally-owned businesses.

• G7c  Consider local incentive programs, such as coupons in “The Summit”, to encourage local spending.

• G7d  Where strategies are best implemented through changes to City regulations or procedures, meet with City staff (Planning and Economic Development, and Licenses, Inspections, and Environmental Protection) to pursue code revisions.

G8  Development Opportunities. Identify opportunities for future development and redevelopment on Grand Avenue.

• G8a  Create a committee including representatives from the Summit Hill Association, GABA, and the City of St. Paul to identify these opportunities and outline the types of businesses or mix of uses that might best be accommodated at those locations, and describe the appropriate scale and design.

G9  Signs. Rigorously enforce the Grand Avenue Sign Guidelines.

G10  Scale and Height Limits. Pursue limitations of the height and scale of new buildings on East Grand Avenue in an overlay district as follows:

• G10a  Limit new buildings to a footprint of 25,000 square feet or less.

• G10b  Limit new building total size, above ground, to 75,000 square feet or less, including parking.

• G10c  Limit building height to thirty feet (30’) for commercial projects and to thirty-six feet (36’) for mixed commercial and residential projects.

• G10d  Work with the City to adopt the desired limitations in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

G11  Formula Business Restrictions. Explore the adoption of standards to limit the number of formula business establishments on East Grand Avenue.

• G11a  Work with residents, businesses, and legal counsel to develop code language to address the community’s concerns about the proliferation of formula retail stores and restaurants on East Grand Avenue.

• G11b  Work with the City to adopt the desired limitations in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

Housing and Residential Life

Vision

The Summit Hill neighborhood is notable for the uniquely historic character of its housing stock, defined by the assembly of compatible buildings in context with their surroundings and the rich tree-lined urban environment. The preservation of that character is of paramount importance to those
who live and visit here. To continue to improve the ambience and the livability of the neighborhood, there must be better enforcement of current zoning and building guidelines, development and implementation of design and beautification guidelines and education of residents on these issues. Through the sensitive renovation of existing housing units and through the development of new well-designed infill and mixed-use developments, the goal is to maintain and expand housing options for current and future residents.

**Strategies**

**H1 Property Maintenance and Beautification.** Develop and implement a district-wide program to educate and encourage residents to better maintain their properties, as well as their alleys, with regard to trash receptacles, planting and weed removal.

- **H1a** Assist block leaders in organizing alley clean-up events and promote alley gardening and maintenance of garages, fences, walls, trash receptacles, and other structures.
- **H1b** Continue to work with the City of St. Paul on the annual clean-up days.
- **H1c** Conduct an education program regarding standards of upkeep and enforcement.
- **H1d** Publish property beautification tips in each issue of “The Summit” newsletter and in the SHA column in “Avenues”.
- **H1e** Enlist “Master Gardeners” and faculty and students from the University of Minnesota Horticulture program to serve as resources for neighbors and to conduct periodic seminars on beautification.
- **H1f** Organize a home/property beautification workshop.
- **H1g** Use and refer to successful examples from other neighborhoods.
- **H1b** Recognize nice landscaping with neighborhood garden tours, awards, and/or features in “The Summit”.

**H2 Historic Preservation.** Preserve the historic character of housing stock in Summit Hill.

- **H2a** In collaboration with the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, consider a historic site survey of properties south of Grand Avenue and explore the feasibility of expanding the Hill Historic District, designating a new district or nominating additional individual sites. Recognize nice landscaping with neighborhood garden tours, awards, and/or features in “The Summit”.

**H3 Design Guidelines.** Coordinate a volunteer group to Develop and implement-design guidelines for new housing and the renovation of existing housing in areas not included in the historic district. The guidelines should encourage high quality design that emphasizes being complementary and contextual rather than strict historic replication.

- **H3a** Consider non-regulatory tools, such as a guidebook, video, and/or workshops to educate homeowners/developers about housing design that complements the neighborhood context. This task should be coordinated with the development of the neighborhood urban design framework.
• H3b  Provide design guidelines and historic preservation goals to persons receiving demolition permits and ensure that replacement housing meets all pertinent zoning.

H4  Code and Ordinance Enforcement. Work with the City of St. Paul to monitor and enforce the appropriate zoning, building code, and maintenance ordinances for housing stock and the properties they occupy.

  • H4a  The Summit Hill Zoning and Land Use Committee should continue to work closely with City zoning staff on Conditional Use Permits, variances, and site plan review to ensure consistency and enforcement.

H5  Tax Incentives and Encouraging Investment in Housing. (1) Lobby the City of St. Paul and the State of Minnesota to reintroduce the “These Old Houses” program to encourage capital improvements to older houses, with an updated valuation ceiling that keeps pace with market conditions. (2) Lobby Ramsey County to remove maintenance projects from the valuation formulas for property taxes to encourage better maintenance of Summit Hill housing stock. (3) Lobby the City of St. Paul to institute a tax abatement program to encourage the purchase and upgrading of old and blighted properties, including condominiums and apartment buildings.

  • H5a  Organize a housing committee to execute the above strategies.

H6  Open Spaces. Advocate for retention of neighborhood green spaces, such as parks, vegetated bluff areas, and undeveloped portions of properties.

  • H6a  Explore innovative use of tax incentives or zoning to maintain current open residential lots.

H7  Housing Density. Ensure that the impact of any increased density within existing or new housing has minimal adverse impact on existing municipal services including, but not limited to, traffic and parking.

  • H7a  Work closely with City staff in the review of development applications.

H8  Single-family and Multi-family Residences. Retain the mix of housing types (single-family, duplex, townhouses, and apartments) that exists in the Summit Hill neighborhood.

  • H8a  Maintain the existing zoning and support a mix of unit types in new housing developments.

H9  Mixed-use Buildings (Commercial Plus Residential). Ensure that new and renovated mixed-use buildings on Grand Avenue respect the historic nature and character of the neighborhood, as well as providing dedicated off-street or underground parking for residents and tenants.

  • H9a  Educate owners of mixed-use buildings about building and site design that complements the neighborhood context.

H10  Housing-related Parking. Encourage residents to fully utilize existing residential parking opportunities in the neighborhood and to create new ones when possible.

  • H10a  Work with the City of St. Paul to enforce ordinances regarding parking in alleys and inappropriate or excessive parking on individual properties.
- H10b  Review parking ordinance requirements that relate to housing.
- H10c  Require that all new housing or renovations of existing housing provide at least the minimum amount of off-street parking mandated by the Zoning Code.
- H10d  Encourage property owners to properly maintain garages and to use them for parking.

H11  Maintenance of Rental Property. Promote maintenance of rental properties and ongoing communication with landlords and tenants in the community.

- H11a  Encourage Summit Hill landlords to participate in St. Paul Association of Responsible Landlords (SPARL).
- H11b  Expand communication between SHA and landlords and tenants, utilizing The Summit, the District 16 website, and an email list serve.

H12  Housing Options. Maintain rental housing options to continue some measure of affordability in the neighborhood.

- H12a  Explore mechanisms for discouraging conversion of multi-unit rental buildings to owner-occupied units.

Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation

Vision

The Summit Hill neighborhood reaches out, publicizes, and communicates to all neighbors the social and cultural events in the community. We maintain a comprehensive and active block leader program that promotes crime prevention, community functions, and recycling to all residents in the neighborhood. We build stronger community/institutional partnerships and better utilize existing public and private facilities in the district for community events and activities. We maintain and enhance use of existing public spaces and parks. We promote maintenance and beautification of our parks, public and private spaces, and the Grand Avenue shopping corridor.

Strategies

CL1  Linwood Recreation Center. Support Linwood Recreation Center programs for all ages, including sports, community education, arts, and group activities.

- CL1a  Continue to support Linwood Recreation Center mission and programs, and the Linwood Booster Club.

CL2  Block Leaders. Recruit and maintain active block leaders for every block in the district.

- CL2a  Continue to identify, support, and train block leaders.

CL3  Volunteerism. Encourage volunteerism between institutions and residents in the neighborhood.
CL3a Create and help coordinate volunteer opportunities such as tutoring at neighborhood schools, assisting the Block Nurse Program, bartering for services for seniors, and assisting with programs and landscape maintenance at Linwood Park.

CL3b Assist GABA and area businesses to organize employees to do voluntary work in the neighborhood, at institutions, with seniors, etc.

CL3c Create a “Community Asset Bank,” a data base that identifies talents or resources in the neighborhood.

CL4 Outreach. Reach out to all residents, including tenants, about community events.

CL4a Utilize the Communications Committee to develop methods to better distribute community information.

CL4b Create community kiosks located along Grand Avenue and at Linwood Recreation Center; working with GABA and local carpenters to implement.

CL4c Encourage block leaders to create voluntary neighbor lists of each block to distribute to block residents.

CL4d Complete a voluntary e-mail network of district residents.

CL5 Community Events. (1) Continue the “Progressive Supper” event two times per year. (2) Continue the “Summit Hill House Tour.” (3) Continue to support the Grand Avenue Business Association on “Grand Old Day” and “The Grand Meander.”

CL5a Ensure that the Communications and Development Committees continues to support these events.

CL6 Using Community Assets. Identify ways that major institutional assets in the Summit Hill area could better serve the neighborhood, such as the Pleasant Avenue skating arena, the William Mitchell Law Library, as well as events (concerts, plays, or speakers) at area schools and churches.

CL6a Have the Communications Committee contact these institutions to develop methods for stronger involvement; get the institutions themselves to suggest ideas; include information about local assets on kiosks.

CL7 Cultural Opportunities. Support local cultural opportunities and the arts.

CL7a Use the Community Assets Bank to identify artists that live in the neighborhood and ask them how the neighborhood could better support arts and cultural opportunities.

CL7b Have the Summit Hill Association sponsor an art/cultural fair, maybe in conjunction with the House Tour, or as part of GABA’s Grand Meander event.

CL7c Include arts and cultural amenities as part of the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Program.
CL8  **Tree Program.** Develop a District boulevard tree preservation and replacement plan that seeks to maintain and preserve our valued large trees and provide planting guidelines for new trees in both urban and residential streetscapes. Designate the vegetated bluff areas that buffer District 16 from I-35 and Ayd Mill Road as a Tree Preservation District in conformance with City Code, Chapter 60.781.

- CL8a  Have the Environment Committee develop the boulevard tree preservation and prompt replacement plan.
- CL8b  Initiate procedures to have the heavily vegetated bluff areas of District 16, as identified in Appendix 3, as a Tree Preservation District.

CL9  **Gateway and Image Plan.** Develop a Summit Hill/District 16 identification plan through the use of urban design techniques including use of banners/graphics and/or historically sensitive signage placed on the streetscape that identifies that one is in the Summit Hill neighborhood.

- CL9a  Have the implementation committee explore mechanisms to have a District 16 Identity Enhancement Plan prepared in conjunction with the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan through the use of consultants and/or graduate students.

CL10  **Greening the Public Realm.** Beautify the public realm throughout the neighborhood to promote increased use and better stewardship.

- CL10a  Seek out opportunities to incorporate bench gardens in existing parks and in new or redeveloped retail or residential spaces on Grand Avenue.
- CL10b  Enhance maintenance of public and private bluff areas by working with residents and the City park staff to remove litter, stabilize slopes, repair retaining walls, and remove buckthorn.
- CL10c  Support and encourage community art in the public realm, such as murals, sculpture, and tree trunk carving.

CL11  **Linwood Park.** Enhance maintenance of Linwood Park and develop a landscape design plan for upper Linwood Park.

- CL11a  Work with Linwood Recreation Center and staff at St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a maintenance program and landscape design plan.

CL12  **Ayd Mill Road.** Support the installation of off-road pedestrian and bicycle paths adjacent to any redesign of Ayd Mill Road.

- CL12a  Work with staff at St. Paul Department of Public Works to implement these features.

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**Pedestrian Safety, Traffic, and Parking**

**Vision**
The Summit Hill neighborhood was created at a time when people walked from place to place or used the streetcar as their primary means of transportation. In order to maintain the character of this neighborhood we must ensure that it continues to be pedestrian-friendly and supports transit use.

Recognizing the value of a healthy balance between the residential and commercial character of the Summit Hill area, we must develop a traffic and parking plan that provides safe access to public and private spaces while limiting the impact of auto and truck traffic. Our vision is to preserve the historic residential and unique commercial character of the Summit Hill neighborhood by providing a healthy balance of transportation options. The ultimate goal is to lessen the impact of vehicles and return the neighborhood to more pedestrian-friendly times.

Finding strategies to address persistent traffic and parking problems in the neighborhood is a priority. These efforts will include significantly reducing commercial spillover to residential streets, greatly enhancing pedestrian safety through traffic calming and enforcement, and significant reduction of the parking deficit. The objectives of traffic calming are to encourage safety and enforcement, create livable neighborhoods and safer streets, and combat disruption, pollution and unlawful traffic activities.

**Strategies**

**P1 Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Study.** Initiate, in cooperation with the City, a thorough, comprehensive traffic and parking study of the neighborhood to determine an appropriate transportation and parking management strategy.

- **P1a Establish a Pedestrian Safety/Traffic/Parking implementation committee to execute the following strategies through three broad implementation task: 1) working with the Department of Public Works and the Police, 2) volunteer and educational programs, and 3) the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan scope of work.**

**P2 Specific Safety Measures.** Improve pedestrian safety and improve the quality of the pedestrian and bicyclist experience.

- **P2a Make crosswalks more visible through a combination of bolder color, striping, texture, and signage.**

- **P2b Encourage the City Police to vigorously enforce laws concerning crosswalks, speed limits, and restricted parking near intersections.**

- **P2c Consider creative alternatives to enhance pedestrian safety at busy and often dangerous intersections.**

- **P2d Investigate the elimination of right turns on red along Summit and Grand Avenues.**

- **P2e Increase pedestrian and driver education by using The Summit newsletter and neighborhood signage.**

- **P2f Emphasize parking restrictions near intersections using signs and yellow paint to clearly indicate no parking.**
- **P2g** Install signs, plantings, and other signals at neighborhood gateways that announce “Welcome to the Historic Summit Hill Neighborhood,” “Slow Down and Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalks,” “20 is Plenty,” and “Slow for Children.”

- **P2b** Work with the City, businesses, and developers to install more bicycle racks, benches, and bus shelters.

**P3 Traffic-Calming.** Utilize traffic calming techniques that include education, enforcement, and engineering resources. Traffic calming includes street design and regulatory features that cause motorists to drive more slowly and with a greater degree of attentiveness.

  - **P3a** Increase driver awareness of speed limits by placing speed monitoring display devices on neighborhood streets.
  
  - **P3b** Encourage the City to rigorously enforce speed limits.
  
  - **P3c** Explore and implement with community and City support specific traffic-calming measures such as, speed bumps, traffic circles, bump outs, center medians and additional stop signs. Make traffic calming a part of all street reconstruction.
  
  - **P3d** Work to modify Mn/DOT street design standards for Municipal State Aid (MSA) streets in residential areas in order to enhance livability and avoid having to widen MSA routes in order to obtain MSA funding.
  
  - **P3e** Seek to reduce speed limits on residential streets to 25 miles per hour.
  
  - **P3f** Retain I-35E at the edge of Summit Hill as a 45 mile per hour parkway and encourage the Minnesota Department of Transportation to maintain its attractive landscaping in the medians and along the roadway.

**P4 Traffic Management.** Manage traffic flow and street capacity to discourage increased volumes and speeds, provide safe and convenient access to properties, and protect pedestrians.

  - **P4a** Provide better enforcement of traffic and parking laws. Encourage towing of violators. Restrict parking within 30 feet of intersections, and within 5 feet of alleys and driveways, to ensure visibility.
  
  - **P4b** Assess the feasibility of additional traffic controls, such as traffic lights and stop signs.
  
  - **P4c** Parking and vehicle access to and from future development on Grand Avenue shall be sensitive to traffic flow, parking needs, and pedestrian safety.
  
  - **P4d** Maintain Summit, Grand, and St. Clair Avenues, Dale and Victoria Streets, and Lexington Parkway as 2-lane streets, not to be widened to accommodate increased traffic.

**P5 Transit.** Promote transit use, recapture ridership, and serve the transit-dependent by matching transit service with travel need.

  - **P5a** Maintain and enhance transit service on Grand and St. Clair Avenues.
  
  - **P5b** Maintain existing transit shelters, install new ones, and eliminate or reduce advertising signs.
P5c Install route maps and schedules at more transit stops.

P5d Encourage the Grand Avenue Business Association and other businesses to adopt a merchant-supported token system to encourage transit use.

P5e Explore additional transit options to cost-effectively increase transit frequency and ridership and to minimize car use and traffic, such as a trolley for Grand Avenue or by interlining the Grand Avenue transit route with a Minneapolis route so that it meets demand for service to the University of Minnesota, University of St. Thomas, and downtown Minneapolis.

P5f Advocate for a reduced fare on Grand Avenue.

P6 Off-street Parking. Adequate off-street parking shall be provided for all residential and commercial uses, in a manner that respects the historic character of the neighborhood.

P6a Screen parking lots using appropriate treatments such as a strong landscaped edge along the street and alley.

P6b Work with the Police Department to develop a plan to dramatically increase enforcement of all existing parking ordinances. Review parking variance history and City parking policies to determine if a revised regulatory approach is required.

P6c Require the majority of parking for the residential portions of new multi-story buildings to be provided underground by seeking a change to the City zoning code in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

P6d Discourage rooftop parking on new developments.

P6e Restrict parking lots from areas that are used primarily for residential purposes.

P6f Facilitate negotiations for the shared use of under-utilized commercial parking lots on Grand Avenue. Encourage businesses to utilize the third floor of Grand Place and the House of Hope lot for employee parking.

P6g Implement more uniform parking zones on Grand Avenue to facilitate more rigorous enforcement.

P6h Continue the option of Permit Parking zones for those residents who request them.

P7 Shared Parking. Facilitate shared parking agreements. Allow and encourage shared parking in institutional lots.

P7a The Summit Hill Association, the Grand Avenue Business Association, and the City shall work with property owners to reach parking agreements for shared use of commercial parking as allowed under Statute 62.103 of the Zoning Code, and shared use of institutional lots as allowed under Statute 60.413(15) of the code. Shared parking options should be explored as part of any application for parking variance.

P8 Building Removal for Parking. Discourage building removal solely for parking.
- P8a  Removal of buildings solely to provide additional parking is discouraged.

P9  Parking Supply. Retain and expand existing commercial and residential parking.

- P9a  Oppose removal of existing parking without substitute parking being provided at a level greater than or equal to current zoning requirements.

- P9b  Require new residential and commercial buildings to provide parking at a level equal to or greater than the current zoning requirements at the time of permit application.

- P9c  Oppose parking variances.

- P9d  Eliminate the “Rule of Five” parking regulation on East Grand Avenue.

- P9e  Seek out opportunities for parking in underutilized spaces.

P10  Employee Parking. Find alternatives for employee parking where customer demand is highest.

- P10a  Discourage employees of Grand Avenue businesses from using on-street parking spaces, including those on Lincoln and Summit Avenues and the north-south streets between Lincoln and Summit Avenues.

- P10b  Employers should encourage employees to use institutional or pay lots where agreements can be reached, or to use transit to commute to work.

- P10c  Encourage businesses to subsidize transit use by employees rather than subsidizing parking.

P11  Customer Parking. Improve awareness of parking options for Grand Avenue customers and visitors.

- P11a  Install parking maps along Grand Avenue that indicate permitted and restricted parking locations in the area.

- P11b  Encourage businesses to provide vouchers to customers using paid parking ramps.

Crime Prevention and Safety

Vision

Summit Hill will continue to be a safe neighborhood with good quality police and fire protection. Personal safety will be reinforced through Summit Hill’s physical and social networks operating within the neighborhood, including the gathering place/community corridor of Grand Avenue. Good design in Summit Hill’s buildings and landscape elements defines Summit Hill’s character and supports the sense of stewardship among residents and visitors. A high level of maintenance of spaces and buildings creates a perception and feeling of safety and belonging. Personal safety is improved through strategies for visibility (sightlines and lighting), readability (a sense of orientation), and mobility (the ability to change one’s course of movement to avoid an undesirable or unsafe situation).
Strategy

**CR1** Crime Watch Program. Promote, use, and expand the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program to organize and mobilize the neighborhood to pro-actively approach personal safety and property protection.

- **CR1a** Continue to support the variety of compatible land uses and densities that characterize the “eyes on the street” safety of Summit Hill.
- **CR1b** Continue to support the Neighborhood Block Watch program.
- **CR1c** Continue to maintain close working relationships with the police and fire departments.
- **CR1d** Educate residents on ways to improve home, apartment, and vehicle security.
- **CR1e** Advocate for the presence of mounted police, bicycle, and foot patrols.
- **CR1f** Educate residents and businesses regarding the benefits of good property maintenance in the reduction of vandalism and other crimes against property.
- **CR1g** Communicate more broadly the Spring Clean-up and Neighborhood Garage Sale to encourage property/garage clean-up and reduce crime potential.
- **CR1h** Educate about the benefits of garage utilization to reduce car break-in opportunities.
- **CR1i** Encourage outdoor lighting for both residences and businesses, e.g., use of solar/motion sensors, working with neighbors on a front porch light program, etc.
- **CR1j** Evaluate street and alley lighting to determine if improvements are needed regarding lighting levels and distribution.
- **CR1k** Pursue greater police patrols of Linwood Park and its slopes, particularly after dark, to discourage repeated problems with car break-ins, graffiti, vandalism, and more serious crimes.

Planning Process

In the early part of 2002, the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council decided to update its 1989 District 16 Plan. This 2004 Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan represents over a thousand hours of volunteer work by community members. The SHA/District 16 Planning Council designated a Steering Committee to work closely with City Officials, and the consultant team of Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH) and Sanders Wacker Bergly Inc. (SWB) in a collaborative program over 18 months. In the course of the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood plan update process, several participation methods were used to solicit and engage a broad and diverse cross-section of the community.

- **A Plan Update Steering Committee** of twelve members was organized to represent the broad interests and constituencies that comprise the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood community. This committee consisted of business owners, property owners, and
homeowners. It met regularly with the planning consultants to discuss, inform, and guide the community participation and planning process and to act as a liaison with the greater community regarding the plan’s progress. The Steering Committee work was supplemented by several meetings of smaller work groups of volunteers who discussed and revised earlier drafts of the various elements, as well as several meetings of the full Summit Hill Association board who met several times to review and revise the final draft.

- **Three community wide meetings** were held in the neighborhood to invite and engage all interested neighborhood members--tenants, homeowners, business owners and employees--in planning process. The first two meetings, held November 23, 2002 and January 25, 2003, focused on two broad tasks: 1) prioritizing neighborhood issues and opportunities and 2) creating focus area visions and implementation strategies. Approximately 90-100 people attended the first meeting and approximately 50-60 people attended the second workshop. A final public meeting was held on February 28, 2004 to present the draft 2004 Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan.

- **A Neighborhood Survey** was prepared to obtain community opinion on a range of neighborhood issues and concerns—particularly on what people liked and disliked about the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood and what they wanted to see improved over the next ten years. This survey was mailed out to 4000 households and distributed to approximately two hundred neighborhood businesses. More than two hundred responses were received.

- **A Community Video** - “Person-on-the-Street” interviews were undertaken to glean community opinion from a broad cross-section of neighborhood users: visitors, residents, business patrons, employees, and property owners. The objective was to go where people gather naturally in the neighborhood and ask them informally about their thoughts on the neighborhood. This community video consisted of over fifty random and informal interviews undertaken by the consultants at various neighborhood gathering places along Grand Avenue and at community events at the Linwood Recreation Center. Interviewees were asked what they liked about the neighborhood, what they disliked, and what improvements they wanted to see over the next ten years.

- **Community Vision Boards** - Three large vision boards that consisted of a neighborhood map, a suggestion box and pens were created and installed at three neighborhood-gathering locations on Grand Avenue and at the Linwood Recreation Center. These boards provided an opportunity for all neighborhood members and visitors to write their comments about neighborhood issues and concern and place these comments on the map or in the suggestion box. These boards were installed for almost a month.

- **Photo Gallery** – For the Issues and Opportunities workshop on November 23, 2002, a dozen or more people took photos of neighborhood scenes and situations they wanted to protect, wanted to improve, and what they believed were the defining features of Summit Hill. These photos were displayed at the workshop.

- **Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) Focus Group** – On November 12, 2002, the consultant team led a focus group of 23 persons representing 18 businesses and GABA staff that addressed customer market area issues, perceptions of Grand Avenue corridor/Summit Hill neighborhood, broader market trends, and what changes or improvements would help them prosper.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The Purpose of the Plan

Our neighborhood is an intricate blend of residents, businesses, owners, customers, visitors, buildings, and places. Our neighborhood has both realities and perceptions, and is constantly changing. This Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan is intended to guide public and private actions in addressing and shaping that change to benefit the long-term sustainability and high quality of our neighborhood. It is intended to act as a policy framework for guiding the decision-making of the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council. Upon review by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, and adoption by the Saint Paul City Council, this Plan becomes part of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Saint Paul.

The Need to Update the 1989 District 16 Plan

As one of the oldest and most popular neighborhoods in Saint Paul, the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood is a regional and local treasure of history, architecture, distinctive pedestrian-oriented shopping and dining experiences, tree-lined streets, and strong community connections. Its dynamic commercial district along Grand Avenue attracts visitors, residents, and workers alike. The neighborhood’s Victorian-era housing stock, which is recognized nationally for its quantity, quality and diversity, continues to be restored and enhanced.

How does the greater neighborhood sustain its “sense of place” as a culturally distinctive, attractive, premium place to live, work, and play as it moves forward into the next decade? What needs to be done to address the challenge to the greater neighborhood that is brought on by the continuing success of Grand Avenue? How does Summit Hill strike a balance between its dynamic commercial district and its aesthetically appealing, high quality and historic residential areas? How can the neighborhood continue to weave its dynamic pieces into a cohesive and richly textured environment that strengthens community life? As change occurs, questions continually face the neighborhood.
In the early part of 2002, the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council began the process of updating its 1989 District 16 Plan to achieve the following goals and objectives:

1. Create a plan that reflects and protects the existing charm and historical values and character of the neighborhood based on current urban design and planning concepts.

2. Seek citizen, resident, and business participation in developing a plan that reflects consensus and ownership by a majority of stakeholders.

3. Create a plan that supports strong and positive communication between the District 16 Planning Council, the Grand Avenue Business Association, and the City of Saint Paul.

4. Maintain and enhance the positive qualities that make the Summit Hill neighborhood a desirable place to live, shop, work, and play while balancing Grand Avenue commercial and traffic pressures.

How This Plan was Developed

This 2004 Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan represents over a thousand hours of volunteer work by community members. The Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council designated a Steering Committee to work closely with City officials, and the consultant team of Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. and Sanders Wacker Bergly Inc. in a process that included two community workshops and other participation methods. This dedicated and creative team worked collaboratively for over 14 months to identify the major issues facing the neighborhood, review demographic changes and previous planning efforts involving the neighborhood, examine all of this information in the larger context of Saint Paul planning and development, and draft planning and development principles to guide the preparation of this Plan update. Subsequently, vision statements, strategies, and implementation measures were developed for the following five dimensions of the community:
Organization of the Plan

The Summit Hill / District 16 Neighborhood Plan is presented in five chapters described as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction – Provides the context and the basis for developing this plan, a summary of the process by which the plan was developed, and recommendations for how the plan should be used.

Chapter 2: Neighborhood Profile – Describes a brief history of Summit Hill, recent demographic trends, land use and zoning.

Chapter 3: Planning and Development Principles – Presents the eight planning and development principles that are the philosophical guideposts that shape all aspects of this Neighborhood Plan, are the foundation for the individual vision statements for the subsequent plan elements, and are the criteria that all implementation strategies should be measured against when evaluating success.

Chapter 4: Plan Elements – Includes present description, vision statements, and strategies for each of the following five elements:
- Grand Avenue Mixed Use Corridor
- Housing and Residential Life
- Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation
- Pedestrian Safety, Traffic, and Parking
- Crime Prevention and Safety

**Chapter 5: Implementation** – Presents a list, in spreadsheet format, of all the implementation strategies, responsible parties/participants, and timing/phasing for carrying out the strategies.

**How to Use the Plan**

The Summit Hill / District 16 Neighborhood Plan presents a vision for the future of Summit Hill neighborhood, and an agenda for community action. The Planning and Development Principles describe the core community ideals or values. The individual elements in Chapter 4 outline in more specific terms the vision statements and the required activities to ensure that the neighborhood retains its high quality of life, livability, charm, historic character, and market strength.

This plan provides very specific recommendations to lead and manage the neighborhood’s growth and development. Since the neighborhood is nearly fully developed, the nature of change will come in the form of reinvestment and redevelopment. As with all land use decisions, implementation of these recommendations will have different levels of benefit and impact on community members. There will be difficult choices in implementing the plan; not every individual in the neighborhood will support each decision. However, this plan was developed to represent the best interests of the community as a whole – including current and future residents as well as business owners and operators.

Implementation will require strong leadership and the on-going active participation and support of the neighborhood’s residents and other community members. This plan is not a blueprint; it is not a zoning code. Rather, this plan is a framework and guide for decision-making.

To maximize the benefit of this plan, it should be used to:

- Determine the Summit Hill Association / District 16 Planning Council annual goals, objectives, and budgets.
- Guide Summit Hill Association/District 16 responses to City of Saint Paul referrals of rezoning applications, site plan reviews, variance reviews, new land use and development regulations, and any funding programs that may benefit the neighborhood.
- Form part of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Saint Paul, guiding the decisions of the Saint Paul City Council, City departments, and the Planning Commission.
- Assist other community groups and organizations, such as the Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA), the Block Nurse Program, and the Linwood Booster Club.
- Guide all private individuals and developer's representatives in initiating, preparing, and finalizing any type of land development or land use request/application to the City of Saint Paul.
- Provide the basis for initiating changes in the City codes required to implement this plan.
To help ensure that this neighborhood plan is a valid and up-to-date working document, it should be reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review may, for example, address the following:

- Evaluate the decisions and activities of the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Council relative to achieving the plan’s strategies.
- Review the plan’s usefulness in providing needed direction for the decisions that were made during the previous year.
- Identify specific action items that were completed or initiated and report on their status.
- Identify any major changes in conditions affecting the neighborhood.
- Re-evaluate the plan’s recommended policy and strategies for their on-going validity.
- Identify any proposed revisions, and/or new policies or strategies to pursue.

Overall, the Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan provides specific direction about what is desired and what should be accomplished as the neighborhood shapes its future. Each proposal, decision, and action that affects the neighborhood should be measured against the following criteria:

1. Is it consistent with the Summit Hill/District 16 Planning and Development Principles?
2. Does it further the neighborhood’s effort to achieve the desired future?
3. Does it satisfy and achieve the neighborhood’s vision statements for the five plan elements?
Chapter 2: Neighborhood Profile

Location and Description

The Summit Hill District is an approximately 75 square block neighborhood in the City of St. Paul, bounded by Summit Avenue on the north, Interstate 35E on the south and east, and Ayd Mill Road on the south and west (see map on page 21). The Summit Hill neighborhood is connected to five unique neighborhoods: Downtown to the east, West 7th to the south and east, Macalester-Groveland to the west, and Summit University and Lexington-Hamline to the north.

Summit Hill/District 16 is one of 17 neighborhood planning and citizen participation districts in St. Paul. The Southwest Quadrant team of the St. Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development provides city planning and development services to the neighborhood. Summit Hill/District 16 is within City Council Ward 2.

Early History

Settlement of the Summit Hill area dates back to 1805 when Lt. Zebulon Pike, under orders from President Thomas Jefferson, purchased a tract from local Native Americans as a site for a fort. The land consisted of nine miles on each side of the Mississippi River upstream from the juncture of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers and included Summit Hill. Squatters occupied this land illegally until 1854 when the land went up for sale at public auction. Summit Hill subsequently became a rural truck and dairy farm area supplying the growing Saint Paul market.

The first residential development of the Summit Hill area took place in the 1850s and 1860s when many wealthy and prominent Saint Paul families relocated from the central riverfront area. In 1862, James C. Burbank built Summit Avenue’s first mansion at 432 Summit. Burbank, who made his fortune in the riverboat and stage business, caused a sensation by incorporating such amazingly modern features as steam heating, hot and cold water, and gas lighting in his new home.

Grand Avenue was first platted in 1871 by William S. Wright, John Mann, and other prominent landowners. These men had one of St. Paul’s first horse-drawn streetcar lines built on Grand Avenue in 1872. Mann was vice president of the Saint Paul Street Railway Company and Wright a director; they foresaw the financial benefits of having a transit line from central St. Paul to their land holdings. The streetcar line they built attracted moderate-income residents to the Grand Avenue area. From its beginnings, Summit Hill has been envisioned as a pedestrian and transit centered neighborhood. Residents settled along Grand and Lincoln as the Grand Avenue line provided inexpensive and convenient transportation to the central business district. The more affluent chose to avoid living along Grand Avenue because of the noise and smell of the streetcars.

In the 1880s and 1890s the Crocus Hill and Grand Hill neighborhoods became fashionable locations for the wealthy families of Saint Paul. Summit Avenue was known as “Rag Row” in the 1890s because many of the leaders of Saint Paul’s growing wholesale clothing industry lived there. Early railroad and lumber barons also lived on Summit Avenue and in the adjacent areas with families such as the Burbanks and Weyerhaeusers leading the social life of the hill districts.

After the turn of the century, the first major wave of middle-income residents arrived in Summit Hill. They settled mainly in the southwestern portion of the district while the affluent families
remained in the north and east. During the 1920s, as Saint Paul grew to the west, the streetcar lines along St. Clair and Grand prompted developers to replace many of the single-family residences with apartment buildings. Grand Avenue’s commercial development continued to grow. The St. Paul zoning ordinance, which went into effect in 1922, made the land along the streetcar lines “Commercial”. The “Commercial” zoning district permitted all residential and commercial uses. The 1922 Zoning Code designated much of the surrounding neighborhoods as “A” or “B” Residential zoning districts that allowed only one and two family houses, which further encouraged the denser growth patterns along Grand Avenue within the district. The late 1920s saw the last major residential developments occurring within the Summit Hill area west of Lexington and on a few scattered bluff sites.
The depression of the 1930s had a major impact on the Summit Hill area, with many families finding they could no longer afford to live in their expensive homes. There are examples of some people simply abandoning their homes. Many single-family homes were converted into duplexes or rooming houses during that period. Following World War II, inner-city neighborhoods nationwide experienced a decline as middle- and upper-income families moved to the suburbs. The Summit Hill district, however, has been an exception, remaining relatively stable. The current boundaries of the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council as recognized by the City of St. Paul are shown on the map below. Besides enjoying residential stability, Summit Hill also supports an unusually healthy inner-city shopping street, Grand Avenue, which has emerged as the premier neighborhood shopping street in Saint Paul, a model of local shops and national and regional chain stores. In June of 1989, the Grand Avenue Task Force approved A Plan for East Grand Avenue, a report that was sent to the City of Saint Paul Planning Commission. This plan provided a comprehensive framework for guiding long-range decisions in the area. Over the years, it has been the focal point for developing a greater degree of consensus among commercial property owners, commercial tenants, and residents regarding the future direction of Grand Avenue.

Recent Past

Over the past three decades, the Summit Hill Association has garnered an impressive list of accomplishments. Some of these achievements reflect joint efforts by the City and neighborhood residential and business interests. Many of the efforts have been the District Council’s alone.

Reconstruction of the Linwood Recreation Center is probably the Association’s most visible achievement. Other accomplishments include installation of double lantern style fixtures along Grand Avenue, providing an attractive, well-lit, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. The renewed landscaping of Triangle Park at Dale and Goodrich with shrubbery, small trees, benches, and a grassy area, and the native prairie restoration project at Linwood Park have enhanced green space in the neighborhood.

Over the past dozen or so years, the neighborhood residential and commercial interests have collaborated to return “Grand Old Day” to a more community friendly event. Held in early June, this daylong street festival features a morning parade, music, sidewalk sales, food and other activities that bring a lot of attention to the neighborhood and Grand Avenue. The “Summit Hill House
Tour,” progressive suppers, and “The Grand Meander” are other major events that showcase the neighborhood and provide opportunities for neighbors to meet.

**Demographic Trends**

The following demographic trends and statistics provide a snap shot picture of Summit Hill. The primary source for this section is the Wilder Research Center Summary of Summit Hill Neighborhood (Saint Paul District 16). The data from this report is from the 1990 and 2000 censuses.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Summit Hill experienced a 7 percent decline in population, from 7,248 persons in 1990 down to 6,741 in 2000, compared to a 5.5 percent growth in Saint Paul as a whole during the same period. In 1980 the population of District 16 was 7,328, which was an 18.1 percent decline from 1970. The greatest decrease from 1990 to 2000 was in preschool children and elderly adults.

**Summit Hill Population**

![Bar chart showing Summit Hill population from 1970 to 2000](chart.png)

**Age Profile**

Preschoolers age 0-4 decreased 20 percent to 297 from 1990 to 2000. School-age children age 5-17 decreased 2 percent to 890. Working-age adults age 18-64 decreased 4 percent to 5,048. Elderly adults age 65+ decreased 23 percent to 506.
Racial and Economic Diversity
There has been a slight increase in racial diversity from 1990 to 2000, but the neighborhood remains predominantly white. The white population decreased from 95 percent to 93 percent. The Asian population increased from 1 percent to 2 percent. The African-American population remained at 2 percent and the American Indian population remained at less than 1 percent of the neighborhood population. Two (2) percent of the residents are multi-racial.

Of the Summit Hill students that attend public schools, 22 percent are children of color. English is not the primary language spoken at home for 6 percent of public school attendees. About one in five of the Summit Hill children attending public schools come from low-income families and 17 percent qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch, compared to 65 percent in St. Paul as a whole.

![Racial Diversity of Summit Hill Residents](image)

**Racial Diversity in Saint Paul 2000**

Households and Housing
The average persons-per-household in Summit Hill has decreased from 1.98 persons per household in 1990 to 1.95 in 2000. This is similar to a city and national trend of smaller household sizes. Eighteen (18) percent of households have children. This is about the same as 1990 when 19 percent of households had children. Seventy-eight (78) percent of the children live in married-couple families; 15 percent live in single-parent families; and 6 percent live in other arrangements.

Land Use and Zoning
The Summit Hill Neighborhood is comprised of mainly single-family residences with a mix of duplex and multi-family housing dispersed throughout. A business and commercial spine runs east-
west along both sides of Grand Avenue with a strong presence of multi-family housing and, to a lesser degree, remnant single-family homes incorporated within the commercial fabric. Schools, churches, and other institutional land uses are found within the neighborhood, with the highest occurrence along the north side of Summit Avenue. Open space and parkland is limited except for Linwood Park, a large neighborhood park that lies between St. Clair and the bluff line that creates the southernmost edge of the Summit Hill Neighborhood. A railroad corridor lies at the toe of the bluff.

The map on the following page shows how land is used in the neighborhood. Land-use categories are broader than zoning classifications, but are closely related. A parcel's land use often appears identical to its zoning. In some instances, however, current land use is different than zoning. The map (dated January 7, 2003) is based on land use records from the City of St. Paul.

The map on page 26 shows current zoning designations for land in Summit Hill. Zoning indicates the legally allowable uses for land. The map (dated January 2, 2003) is based on zoning records from the City of St. Paul.
Chapter 3: Planning and Development Principles

These eight planning and development principles represent the core community ideals drawn from community input and the Steering Committee discussions. These principles are the philosophical guideposts that shape all aspects of the Summit Hill/District 16 Plan Update. Also, they are the criteria that all implementation strategies should be measured against when evaluating success.

Principles:

1. All individuals and interest groups communicate openly as stakeholders and stewards in charting Summit Hill/District 16’s evolution as a sustainable neighborhood.

2. Community spirit continues to be nurtured and expanded through activities for all ages.

3. Neighborhood ambiance is defined and enriched by a well-maintained green urban landscape that includes lively and safe public spaces, arts and culture, pedestrian connections, healthy natural amenities and open spaces, and well-designed new and old buildings that reflect the character, mass and scale of nearby buildings.

4. Community identity and image is expressed through high quality design that respects the historic and cultural values of the neighborhood.

5. All redevelopment is in keeping with the historic character and scale and includes amenities, such as landscaping and lighting, that are part of a mutually beneficial, collaborative project.

6. Summit Hill/District 16 supports living choices for residents of all ages, incomes and lifestyles.

7. Summit Hill/District 16 respects and enriches the mutually beneficial relationship between residential livability and commercial vitality.

8. Summit Hill/District 16’s movement patterns emphasize a safe walking, biking, and driving environment and encourage convenient transit.
Chapter 4: Plan Elements

This chapter provides the true substance of the plan document. It is divided into five sections: Grand Avenue Mixed Use Corridor; Housing and Residential Life; Community Life, Public Spaces and Recreation; Pedestrian Safety, Traffic, and Parking; and Crime Prevention and Safety. Each of these sections provides a brief description of the current situation, a vision statement outlining future goals, and strategies to move the Summit Hill neighborhood toward these goals.

Grand Avenue Mixed Use Corridor

DESCRIPTION

A heterogeneous mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, Grand Avenue has flourished as a “Main Street.” One- and two-story commercial masonry buildings of eclectic style are built right up to the sidewalk and utilize display windows to feature products, offering a very wide range of goods and services. Single-family homes, some used for commercial purposes add to the unique charm of the avenue. Apartments, set back from the sidewalk, line the avenue, usually at mid-block locations.

The business and commercial area of the Summit Hill neighborhood spans approximately 25 blocks along Grand Avenue. This area is comprised of a blend of specialty shops, ethnic and family-owned restaurants, and smaller-scale chain retail and restaurants. The character of this area is defined by a variety of building types used for commercial activities. Some residential homes have been converted to retail and office space. Small shopping malls, some with outdoor seating, serve as retail and restaurant “anchors.” Informal seating outside of coffee shops, ice cream shops, and restaurants exists at random intervals along the avenue. Colorful signage is also found outside of some of the retail shops. Historic street lighting and the use of brick and wrought iron are consistent with the use of these same elements in the residential areas. Shade trees are planted along Grand Avenue in a typical boulevard rhythm of
about 20 to 30 feet on center in raised curb beds. Although living, many trees appear to be having difficulty developing into healthy maturity. Several businesses have supplemented the boulevard plantings by displaying mid-sized planters along their storefronts.

Multi-family housing, often dating from the turn of the century, also adds to the character of Grand Avenue. Many of these apartment buildings are two- and three-story units built of brick and detailed with ceramic inlays and wrought iron. The greatest concentration of the larger apartment complexes is found on the east end of the avenue.

While the avenue can be termed “fully-developed,” there are many who see selective redevelopment opportunities. These situations have proven to be the “battle ground” for neighborhood debates about the proper balance between development and retention of those qualities that make Summit Hill special. Over the past decade, the focus of these debates has been on commercial redevelopment and infill. Pressure to find locations for new commercial enterprises will add fuel to the debate over the appropriate type and scale of change.

In recent years, Smith and Hawken, Restoration Hardware, Pottery Barn, Blockbuster Video, J.Crew, and Starbucks Coffee have opened new stores on Grand, a trend initiated several years earlier by Pier I Imports and Walgreen’s. This trend is defended by developers, and some locally-owned store operators, who say that these chain stores provide diversity, bring purchasing power that is shared with the locally-owned stores, and expand the “marketing” of Grand Avenue in a positive manner that enhances its long-term sustainability. However, many neighbors and some businesses contend that national chain stores fail to participate in neighborhood events or initiatives, increase traffic by attracting regional customers, and, over time, bid up rents. They are deeply concerned with the increasing presence of national chain stores on Grand Avenue and worry that locally owned stores will continue to lose their foothold as rents increase and chains multiply. They prefer locally-owned businesses that are more likely to invest in the neighborhood’s future and be actively involved in civic and cultural organizations and events.
Summit Hill’s Grand Avenue is but one example of a national phenomenon of chain stores discovering the market appeal/purchasing power of successful neighborhood commercial districts, thereby putting a “squeeze” on locally-owned stores. Thoughtfully regulating this trend is important to the historical and cultural integrity of Grand Avenue.

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance, a national non-profit research and education organization, has argued that trends are not destiny, and that communities can, and should, take action to strengthen locally-owned businesses and build strong, self-reliant communities. In a paper entitled Grand Avenue: How to Maintain Small, Locally Owned, Neighborhood-Serving Retail Businesses, research associate Stacy Mitchell states that the “continued proliferation of chains along Grand Avenue threatens the long-term economic and social health of the neighborhood.” She lists the following impacts of chain stores on Grand Avenue:

- Erosion of Grand Avenue’s Unique Appeal
- Loss of Businesses that Serve Neighborhood Needs
- Declining Range of Job Opportunities
- Weakening of Community Fabric
- Increased Car Traffic
- Growing Instability

In terms of the cumulative effect of these impacts, she states that “a growing body of research is finding that, for entrepreneurs, relocating firms, skilled workers, and people who want to invest in homes and raise families, the most attractive communities are those that have maintained their sense of place and protected their unique character and one-of-a-kind businesses.”

Mitchell’s paper offers a number of planning strategies for curbing chain store proliferation, such as setting an upper square footage limit on size of new retail stores, requiring impact assessments, and encouraging diversity by restricting fast-food restaurants and retail stores.

Concurrently, local developers continue to seek opportunities for new businesses to locate on Grand Avenue, either in an existing building or in new infill structures. In nearly all of these cases, local developers want national or regional chain stores that are able to bring instant name recognition and a multi-year rental lease arrangement.

The growing demand for empty nester housing may provide a catalyst for the existing neighborhood interests and the development community to more effectively address this dilemma. Several Grand Avenue properties could be candidates for infill development that incorporates both commercial and residential uses in one building with a design and scale that respects historical patterns. These developments could provide opportunities for new businesses, thereby enabling some existing older buildings to continue to provide space at lower per-square-foot costs. The upper level housing in the newly-developed buildings would cater to existing residents and new households seeking to locate in Summit Hill without the responsibilities of single-family home ownership.
Existing residents of Summit Hill who move into new ownership or rental apartments would free up their existing homes for new families who desire the high quality, larger historic houses in the neighborhood.

The scale required to achieve the commercial/housing mix in these new developments would lead to development economics that could support underground parking, thereby reducing much of the development’s potential negative impact. However, there would remain several issues, including building design and character, scale and massing, and increased traffic from increased density.

As the land values and development pressures on Grand Avenue increase, land owners seek retailers that provide strong profits. High customer volume is beneficial, as well as products that sell well above cost. These trends favor retailers that attract regional customers, and eating and drinking establishments. While having Grand Avenue as a regional destination is beneficial to most stores on the avenue at some level, the increased pressure from traffic and parking that these customers bring begins to degrade the usability and attractiveness of the avenue. Many in the community believe that the fine line between the benefit of regional draw and the detriment has already been crossed, and that the traffic, parking, and increasing behavior problems associated with busy late night bars is compromising Grand Avenue’s long-term sustainability as a successful community retail corridor. As negative consequences of increasing intensity and use grow, the community will begin to see the degradation of commercial and residential property values.

The continued high quality of life in Summit Hill is dependent on the successful resolution of this reinvestment dilemma and the improvement of the neighborhood development review process. The foundation for creating a mutually beneficial dynamic between the neighborhood and the development community begins with recognizing that while some change is inevitable, that change can be shaped to positively influence the future of Summit Hill. The key to moving forward in a positive manner is an updated district plan that articulates a framework for planning, development principles, and action strategies for residents, businesses, developers, and City officials.

VISION STATEMENT
The Summit Hill neighborhood maintains and reinforces Grand Avenue as an eclectic mix of housing, shops, restaurants, and services for residents and visitors. Grand Avenue shall continue to be a mix of new buildings that respect the historic character of the avenue and neighborhood, and old buildings that relate closely to the sidewalk and encourage pedestrian activity at the street level. Beautification efforts on Grand Avenue continue with attention to trees, planters, bench gardens, historical lighting, and attractive design of buildings that blend with the scale and historical character of the avenue. Businesses provide parking that is affordable, inconspicuous, attractive, and underground when appropriate. A balance of residential and business uses on Grand Avenue is maintained, including a mix of small-scale retail stores and services, both locally and nationally owned.

STRATEGIES

G1 Corridor Continuity. Maintain Grand Avenue as a continuous neighborhood retail and residential corridor and contain commercial uses and accessory parking within existing boundaries.

G2 Streetscape Enhancement Plan. Develop a Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan to make Grand Avenue more pedestrian-, shopper-, and bicycle-friendly, to enhance its aesthetic qualities, and to invigorate its public realm, including Grand Avenue between Oakland Street and I-35E.

- G2a Develop a plan in conjunction with businesses, land owners, and developers that includes various improvements such as safer pedestrian crossings, the installation of benches, plantings, public art, cultural activities, and active public spaces.

- G2b Encourage residents to walk to Grand Avenue by conducting a local “Walk to Grand” campaign, selling affordable “shopping bag dollies” to residents, etc.

G3 Design Guidelines. Institute commercial/retail design guidelines that reinforce human-scale building characteristics, promote quality in architectural materials, reinforce a pedestrian-focused streetscape, promote underground parking for mixed use developments, and visually-screened surface parking for smaller, single-use developments, and promote signage that is consistent with building architecture and business function, and complements the eclectic nature of the avenue.

- G3a Recommend adoption of the design standards of the TN2 Zoning District, ideally in an overlay district.

- G3b Compose and implement additional design guidelines, to address side and rear facades for Grand Avenue, with a consortium of residents, business owners, developers, and city staff. Pursue implementation in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

G4 Commercial and Housing Mix. Retain B2-C (commercial uses in residential structures) and residential zoning on Grand Avenue.

- G4a Discourage rezoning of residential uses on Grand Avenue to more intensive uses.

G5 Neighborhood Focus for Commercial Uses. Curtail B-3 zoning.
• G5a  B-2 and B-2C zoning allows uses most appropriate to commercial activity on Grand Avenue. No additions of B-3 zoning should be approved. The City should rezone B-3 properties to B-2 when such properties are developed for B-2 uses.

G6 Commercial Spillover. Control commercial spillover effects onto Lincoln and Summit Avenues.

• G6a Acknowledging the special characteristics of Grand Avenue and the neighborhood it serves, rezonings and variances are opposed in those areas where parking and traffic problems create undue hardship for neighboring businesses, residents, and visitors.
• G6b The approval of site plans and licenses should be contingent on the mitigation of parking and traffic problems to a level acceptable to the majority of immediately affected businesses and residents.
• G6c New businesses and the manner in which they operate should be in comport with the residential character of the neighborhood.

G7 Locally-owned Businesses. Implement mechanisms for supporting and retaining small, locally-owned businesses.

• G7a Review planning strategies put forth by the Institute of Local Self-Reliance: (1) an upper square footage limit on the size of new retail stores; (2) community impact assessments before approving new retail stores (above a certain size); (3) diversity of retail and services; (4) discouraging the proliferation of national retailers and restaurants.
• G7b Support GABA in organizing public education and marketing strategies that focus on supporting locally-owned businesses.
• G7c Consider local incentive programs, such as coupons in “The Summit”, to encourage local spending.
• G7d Where strategies are best implemented through changes to City regulations or procedures, meet with City staff (Planning and Economic Development, and Licenses, Inspections, and Environmental Protection) to pursue code revisions.

G8 Development Opportunities. Identify opportunities for future development and redevelopment on Grand Avenue.

• G8a Create a committee including representatives from the Summit Hill Association, GABA, and the City of St. Paul to identify these opportunities and outline the types of businesses or mix of uses that might best be accommodated at those locations, and describe the appropriate scale and design.

G9 Signs. Rigorously enforce the Grand Avenue Sign Guidelines.

G10 Scale and Height Limits. Pursue limitations of the height and scale of new buildings on East Grand Avenue in an overlay district as follows:

• G10a Limit new buildings to a footprint of 25,000 square feet or less.
• G10b Limit new building total size, above ground, to 75,000 square feet or less, including parking.
• G10c Limit building height to thirty feet (30’) for commercial projects and to thirty-six feet (36’) for mixed commercial and residential projects.
- **G10d** Work with the City to adopt the desired limitations in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

**G11** Formula Business Restrictions. Explore the adoption of standards to limit the number of formula business establishments on East Grand Avenue.

- **G11a** Work with residents, businesses, and legal counsel to develop code language to address the community's concerns about the proliferation of formula retail stores and restaurants on East Grand Avenue.

- **G11b** Work with the City to adopt the desired limitations in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.
Housing and Residential Life

DESCRIPTION

Expressing the full spectrum from lavish to practical, Summit Hill homes represent many styles of turn-of-the-century architecture and detailing, including Victorian, Federal and Georgian, Colonial Revival, English Country/Tudor, Shingle, and smaller houses of the Bungalow and Craftsman styles. Many two and three-story brick apartments were built in the 1920s and 1930s, and continue offering moderate-rate rental accommodation to this day.

Boulevards lined with mature trees and sidewalks on both sides of the street exist throughout Summit Hill, creating a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. The neighborhood is laid out in a grid pattern with alleys on most blocks. Granite curbs, historic lighting, stone and brick walls and columns, and wrought iron fencing are used to varying degrees within yards and along most of the streets in the neighborhood. A few of the streets, especially in the Crocus Hill area, are narrow, curving, and retain their cobblestone paving. These features are historically, architecturally and aesthetically significant to the residential character of the neighborhood.

A strong economy in the 1990s, coupled with low interest rates, drove a real estate boom for the unique historic housing in Summit Hill. Long-time residents simultaneously celebrate the rising home values and lament the fast-rising property taxes. Recent trends in the local real estate market have also created a surge in apartment-to-condominium conversions. There is a clear trend toward decreasing affordability in Summit Hill. However, as home values have increased there has been a surge in housing rehabilitation and additions. The housing stock today is in better condition than a decade ago.

There are currently 3,412 occupied housing units--both owner-occupied and rental--which is 96 less than in 1990. Of these occupied housing units, 1,820 are rental, a decrease of 224 units since 1990 and 1,592 are owner-occupied, an increase of 128 units since 1990. The vacancy rate of all housing units increased to 2.7 percent in 2000, from 2.2 percent in 1990.
VISION STATEMENT

The Summit Hill neighborhood is notable for the uniquely historic character of its housing stock, defined by the assembly of compatible buildings in context with their surroundings and the rich tree-lined urban environment. The preservation of that character is of paramount importance to those who live and visit here. To continue to improve the ambience and the livability of the neighborhood, there must be better enforcement of current zoning and building guidelines, development and implementation of design and beautification guidelines, and education of residents on these issues. Through the sensitive renovation of existing housing units and through the development of new well-designed infill and mixed-use developments, the goal is to maintain and expand housing options for current and future residents.
STRATEGIES

H1 Property Maintenance and Beautification. Develop and implement a district-wide program to educate and encourage residents to better maintain their properties, as well as their alleys, with regard to trash receptacles, planting and weed removal.

- H1a Assist block leaders in organizing alley clean-up events and promote alley gardening and maintenance of garages, fences, walls, trash receptacles, and other structures.
- H1b Continue to work with the City of St. Paul on the annual clean-up days.
- H1c Conduct an education program regarding standards of upkeep and enforcement.
- H1d Publish property beautification tips in each issue of “The Summit” newsletter and in the SHA column in “Avenues”.
- H1e Enlist “Master Gardeners” and faculty and students from the University of Minnesota Horticulture program to serve as resources for neighbors and to conduct periodic seminars on beautification.
- H1f Organize a home/property beautification workshop.
- H1g Use and refer to successful examples from other neighborhoods.
- H1h Recognize nice landscaping with neighborhood garden tours, awards, and/or features in “The Summit”.

H2 Historic Preservation. Preserve the historic character of housing stock in Summit Hill.
H2a In collaboration with the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, consider a historic site survey of properties south of Grand Avenue and explore the feasibility of expanding the Hill Historic District, designating a new district or nominating additional individual sites. Recognize nice landscaping with neighborhood garden tours, awards, and/or features in “The Summit”.

H3 Design Guidelines. Coordinate a volunteer group to develop and implement design guidelines for new housing and the renovation of existing housing in areas not included in the historic district. The guidelines should encourage high quality design that emphasizes being complementary and contextual rather than strict historic replication.

- H3a Consider non-regulatory tools, such as a guidebook, video, and/or workshops to educate homeowners/developers about housing design that complements the neighborhood context. This task should be coordinated with the development of the neighborhood urban design framework.

- H3b Provide design guidelines and historic preservation goals to persons receiving demolition permits and ensure that replacement housing meets all pertinent zoning.

H4 Code and Ordinance Enforcement. Work with the City of St. Paul to monitor and enforce the appropriate zoning, building code, and maintenance ordinances for housing stock and the properties they occupy.

- H4a The Summit Hill Zoning and Land Use Committee should continue to work closely with City zoning staff on Conditional Use Permits, variances, and site plan review to ensure consistency and enforcement.

H5 Tax Incentives and Encouraging Investment in Housing. (1) Lobby the City of St. Paul and the State of Minnesota to reintroduce the “These Old Houses” program to encourage capital improvements to older houses, with an updated valuation ceiling that keeps pace with market conditions. (2) Lobby Ramsey County to remove maintenance projects from the valuation formulas for property taxes to encourage better maintenance of Summit Hill housing stock. (3) Lobby the City of St. Paul to institute a tax abatement program to encourage the purchase and upgrading of old and blighted properties, including condominiums and apartment buildings.

- H5a Organize a housing committee to execute the above strategies.

H6 Open Spaces. Advocate for retention of neighborhood green spaces, such as parks, vegetated bluff areas, and undeveloped portions of properties.

- H6a Explore innovative use of tax incentives or zoning to maintain current open residential lots.

H7 Housing Density. Ensure that the impact of any increased density within existing or new housing has minimal adverse impact on existing municipal services including, but not limited to, traffic and parking.

- H7a Work closely with City staff in the review of development applications.

H8 Single-family and Multi-family Residences. Retain the mix of housing types (single-family, duplex, townhouses, and apartments) that exists in the Summit Hill neighborhood.
H8a Maintain the existing zoning and support a mix of unit types in new housing developments.

H9 Mixed-use Buildings (Commercial Plus Residential). Ensure that new and renovated mixed-use buildings on Grand Avenue respect the historic nature and character of the neighborhood, as well as providing dedicated off-street or underground parking for residents and tenants.

H9a Educate owners of mixed-use buildings about building and site design that complements the neighborhood context.

H10 Housing-related Parking. Encourage residents to fully utilize existing residential parking opportunities in the neighborhood and to create new ones when possible.

H10a Work with the City of St. Paul to enforce ordinances regarding parking in alleys and inappropriate or excessive parking on individual properties.

H10b Review parking ordinance requirements that relate to housing.

H10c Require that all new housing or renovations of existing housing provide at least the minimum amount of off-street parking mandated by the Zoning Code.

H10d Encourage property owners to properly maintain garages and to use them for parking.

H11 Maintenance of Rental Property. Promote maintenance of rental properties and ongoing communication with landlords and tenants in the community.

H11a Encourage Summit Hill landlords to participate in St. Paul Association of Responsible Landlords (SPARL).
- H11b Expand communication between SHA and landlords and tenants, utilizing The Summit, the District 16 website, and an email list serve.

H12 Housing Options. Maintain rental housing options to continue some measure of affordability in the neighborhood.

- H12a Explore mechanisms for discouraging conversion of multi-unit rental buildings to owner-occupied units.
Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation

DESCRIPTION

The three primary organizations that provide the focal points for community participation and representation before City governmental agencies and processes are the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council, the Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) and the Linwood Recreation Center. A portion of Summit Hill lies within the Summit Avenue Historic District. The Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association (SARPA), as well as the Summit Hill Association, represents these interests.

The largest contiguous open space in District 16 centers on Linwood Park, located on St. Clair Avenue and Deubener Street. As part of a nearly continuous bluff line that defines the southern edge of the Summit Hill neighborhood, this space provides the largest and longest views from the neighborhood. The view encompasses the I-35 Corridor, a railroad corridor, and an adjacent neighborhood. The area provides the neighborhood’s most vegetative diversity and habitat potential. The vegetated bluff line and railroad corridor on the southern edge turn into an old streambed which defines the western edge of the district along present day Ayd Mill Road. Many in the community believe this space should provide off road bicycle and pedestrian paths. Several other pocket green spaces exist in the district, including Triangle Park, Kenwood Park, and a handful of empty lots held by private landowners.

and social opportunities exist in the district. The Linwood Recreation Center provides youth sports leagues, child and adult fitness and hobby classes, meeting spaces for organizations and
groups, and outdoor skating, playground, play fields and tennis courts. Pleasant Arena, a Ramsey County indoor skating rink, offers winter skating primarily to ice hockey and figure skating clubs. Two private clubs in the district offer their members dining, swimming, tennis and other recreational activities. Churches and schools provide additional social networks, as do smaller associations and groups in the community involved in varied types of volunteering and recreation.

VISION STATEMENT

The Summit Hill neighborhood reaches out, publicizes, and communicates to all neighbors the social and cultural events in the community. We maintain a comprehensive and active block leader program that promotes crime prevention, community functions, and recycling to all residents in the neighborhood. We build stronger community/institutional partnerships and better utilize existing public and private facilities in the district for community events and activities. We maintain and enhance use of existing public spaces and parks. We promote maintenance and beautification of our parks, public and private spaces, and the Grand Avenue shopping corridor.

STRATEGIES

CL1 Linwood Recreation Center. Support Linwood Recreation Center programs for all ages, including sports, community education, arts, and group activities.

- CL1a Continue to support Linwood Recreation Center mission and programs, and the Linwood Booster Club.

CL2 Block Leaders. Recruit and maintain active block leaders for every block in the district.

- CL2a Continue to identify, support, and train block leaders.

CL3 Volunteerism. Encourage volunteerism between institutions and residents in the neighborhood.

- CL3a Create and help coordinate volunteer opportunities such as tutoring at neighborhood schools, assisting the Block Nurse Program, bartering for services for seniors, and assisting with programs and landscape maintenance at Linwood Park.

- CL3b Assist GABA and area businesses to organize employees to do voluntary work in the neighborhood, at institutions, with seniors, etc.

- CL3c Create a “Community Asset Bank,” a data base that identifies talents or resources in the neighborhood.

CL4 Outreach. Reach out to all residents, including tenants, about community events.

- CL4a Utilize the Communications Committee to develop methods to better distribute community information.

- CL4b Create community kiosks located along Grand Avenue and at Linwood Recreation Center; working with GABA and local carpenters to implement.
- **CL4c** Encourage block leaders to create voluntary neighbor lists of each block to distribute to block residents.

- **CL4d** Complete a voluntary e-mail network of district residents.

**CL5** Community Events. (1) Continue the “Progressive Supper” event two times per year. (2) Continue the “Summit Hill House Tour.” (3) Continue to support the Grand Avenue Business Association on “Grand Old Day” and “The Grand Meander.”

- **CL5a** Ensure that the Communications and Development Committees continues to support these events.

**CL6** Using Community Assets. Identify ways that major institutional assets in the Summit Hill area could better serve the neighborhood, such as the Pleasant Avenue skating arena, the William Mitchell Law Library, as well as events (concerts, plays, or speakers) at area schools and churches.

- **CL6a** Have the Communications Committee contact these institutions to develop methods for stronger involvement; get the institutions themselves to suggest ideas; include information about local assets on kiosks.

**CL7** Cultural Opportunities. Support local cultural opportunities and the arts.

- **CL7a** Use the Community Assets Bank to identify artists that live in the neighborhood and ask them how the neighborhood could better support arts and cultural opportunities.

- **CL7b** Have the Summit Hill Association sponsor an art/cultural fair, maybe in conjunction with the House Tour, or as part of GABA’s Grand Meander event.

- **CL7c** Include arts and cultural amenities as part of the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Program.

**CL8** Tree Program. Develop a District boulevard tree preservation and replacement plan that seeks to maintain and preserve our valued large trees and provide planting guidelines for new trees in both urban and residential streetscapes. Designate the vegetated bluff areas that buffer District 16 from I-35 and Ayd Mill Road as a Tree Preservation District in conformance with City Code, Chapter 60.781.

- **CL8a** Have the Environment Committee develop the boulevard tree preservation and prompt replacement plan.

- **CL8b** Initiate procedures to have the heavily vegetated bluff areas of District 16, as identified in Appendix 3, as a Tree Preservation District.

**CL9** Gateway and Image Plan. Develop a Summit Hill/District 16 identification plan through the use of urban design techniques including use of banners/graphics and/or historically sensitive signage placed on the streetscape that identifies that one is in the Summit Hill neighborhood.
- CL9a  Have the implementation committee explore mechanisms to have a District 16 Identity Enhancement Plan prepared in conjunction with the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan through the use of consultants and/or graduate students.

CL10  Greening the Public Realm. Beautify the public realm throughout the neighborhood to promote increased use and better stewardship.

- CL10a  Seek out opportunities to incorporate bench gardens in existing parks and in new or redeveloped retail or residential spaces on Grand Avenue.

- CL10b  Enhance maintenance of public and private bluff areas by working with residents and the City park staff to remove litter, stabilize slopes, repair retaining walls, and remove buckthorn.

- CL10c  Support and encourage community art in the public realm, such as murals, sculpture, and tree trunk carving.


- CL11a  Work with Linwood Recreation Center and staff at St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a maintenance program and landscape design plan.

CL12  Ayd Mill Road. Support the installation of off-road pedestrian and bicycle paths adjacent to any redesign of Ayd Mill Road.

- CL12a  Work with staff at St. Paul Department of Public Works to implement these features.
Pedestrian Safety, Traffic and Parking

DESCRIPTION

Traffic
Vehicles tend to dominate the movement patterns in the Summit Hill neighborhood. Traffic speed on neighborhood streets and local collectors is eroding neighborhood livability, reducing pedestrian safety, and increasing noise. Traffic and pedestrian crashes in the area are increasing and pedestrians have difficulty crossing streets at both marked and unmarked crosswalks. Vehicles parked too close to intersections are obstructing visibility and restricting safe access into and out of alleys and driveways. These problems need to be corrected by restoring a healthy balance between vehicles and the historic, pedestrian-centered character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Parking
Parking availability in the residential areas of Summit Hill varies from quite convenient to hard to find as proximity to Grand Avenue, apartment buildings, or institutions like William Mitchell College of Law increases. Frustrated residents near Grand Avenue have instituted Permit Parking areas, which provide a break from spillover parking, but also add some inconvenience for residents and their guests. Parking restricted areas vary in effectiveness depending on enforcement.

Both on-street and off-street surface parking exist to serve Grand Avenue businesses and other institutional uses. However, a series of studies conducted between 1991 and 1996 have indicated a significant shortfall in off-street parking on Grand Avenue between Dale Street and Lexington Parkway. A mixed retail and parking facility at Grand Avenue and Victoria was built in 2000 to resemble a two-story building with commercial storefronts. The ramp is rarely fully utilized, despite difficulty finding parking in that area. Cars exiting many of the surface parking lots onto Grand Avenue find the visibility of on-coming traffic hindered by vehicles parked near entrances.
. Some streets, such as Lexington Parkway, while providing sidewalks on both sides for pedestrian movement as well as boulevard plantings, do not accommodate parking on both sides, thereby decreasing the potential traffic calming effect of parked vehicles. Traffic-calming treatments, such as stop signs at every other block on local streets within the neighborhood, encourage traffic to move more slowly. Pedestrian safety is most challenged when crossing Lexington Parkway and St. Clair, Grand, and Summit Avenues. Pedestrian right-of-way laws have had only a modest effect facilitating pedestrian crossings. A pedestrian traffic death at Grand Avenue and Grotto Street in October 2003 illustrates the seriousness of the problem.

**Bicycle Movement Patterns**

Of all transportation modes, bicycles seem to be presented with the most obstacles except along Summit Avenue where the cyclists are provided a marked lane. The Grand Avenue corridor is not welcoming to the cyclist. Its limited street width, the presence of many vehicles, and on-street parking spots are problematic for bicycle travel. Very few bicycle racks exist along Grand Avenue. There is the potential to develop a bicycle path along the Ayd Mill Road corridor, with the primary obstacle being the ability to provide bicycle friendly access to and from the adjacent cross streets.

**VISION STATEMENT**

The Summit Hill neighborhood was created at a time when people walked from place to place or used the streetcar as their primary means of transportation. In order to maintain the character of this neighborhood we must ensure that it continues to be pedestrian friendly and supports transit use.

Recognizing the value of a healthy balance between the residential and commercial character of the Summit Hill area, we must develop a traffic and parking plan that provides safe access to public and private spaces while limiting the impact of auto and truck traffic. Our vision is to preserve the historic residential and unique commercial character of the Summit Hill neighborhood by providing a healthy balance of transportation options. The ultimate goal is to lessen the impact of vehicles and return the neighborhood to more pedestrian friendly times.

Finding strategies to address persistent traffic and parking problems in the neighborhood is a priority. These efforts will include significantly reducing commercial spillover to residential streets, greatly enhancing pedestrian safety through traffic calming and enforcement, and significant reduction of the parking deficit. The objectives of traffic calming are to encourage safety and enforcement, create livable neighborhoods and safer streets, and combat disruption, pollution and unlawful traffic activities.
Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Study. Initiate, in cooperation with the City, a thorough, comprehensive traffic and parking study of the neighborhood to determine an appropriate transportation and parking management strategy.

- **P1a** Establish a Pedestrian Safety/Traffic/Parking implementation committee to execute the following strategies through three broad implementation task: 1) working with the Department of Public Works and the Police, 2) volunteer and educational programs, and 3) the Grand Avenue Streetscape Enhancement Plan scope of work.

**P2 Specific Safety Measures.** Improve pedestrian safety and improve the quality of the pedestrian and bicyclist experience.

- **P2a** Make crosswalks more visible through a combination of bolder color, striping, texture, and signage.

- **P2b** Encourage the City Police to vigorously enforce laws concerning crosswalks, speed limits, and restricted parking near intersections.

- **P2c** Consider creative alternatives to enhance pedestrian safety at busy and often dangerous intersections.

- **P2d** Investigate the elimination of right turns on red along Summit and Grand Avenues.

- **P2e** Increase pedestrian and driver education by using The Summit newsletter and neighborhood signage.

- **P2f** Emphasize parking restrictions near intersections using signs and yellow paint to clearly indicate no parking.
- P2g Install signs, plantings, and other signals at neighborhood gateways that announce “Welcome to the Historic Summit Hill Neighborhood,” “Slow Down and Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalks,” “20 is Plenty,” and “Slow for Children.”

- P2h Work with the City, businesses, and developers to install more bicycle racks, benches, and bus shelters.

P3 Traffic-Calming. Utilize traffic calming techniques that include education, enforcement, and engineering resources. Traffic calming includes street design and regulatory features that cause motorists to drive more slowly and with a greater degree of attentiveness.

- P3a Increase driver awareness of speed limits by placing speed monitoring display devices on neighborhood streets.

- P3b Encourage the City to rigorously enforce speed limits.

- P3c Explore and implement with community and City support specific traffic-calming measures such as, speed bumps, traffic circles, bump outs, center medians and additional stop signs. Make traffic calming a part of all street reconstruction.

- P3d Work to modify Mn/DOT street design standards for Municipal State Aid (MSA) streets in residential areas in order to enhance livability and avoid having to widen MSA routes in order to obtain MSA funding.

- P3e Seek to reduce speed limits on residential streets to 25 miles per hour.

- P3f Retain I-35E at the edge of Summit Hill as a 45 mile per hour parkway and encourage the Minnesota Department of Transportation to maintain its attractive landscaping in the medians and along the roadway.

P4 Traffic Management. Manage traffic flow and street capacity to discourage increased volumes and speeds, provide safe and convenient access to properties, and protect pedestrians.

- P4a Provide better enforcement of traffic and parking laws. Encourage towing of violators. Restrict parking within 30 feet of intersections, and within 5 feet of alleys and driveways, to ensure visibility.

- P4b Assess the feasibility of additional traffic controls, such as traffic lights and stop signs.

- P4c Parking and vehicle access to and from future development on Grand Avenue shall be sensitive to traffic flow, parking needs, and pedestrian safety.

- P4d Maintain Summit, Grand, and St. Clair Avenues, Dale and Victoria Streets, and Lexington Parkway as 2-lane streets, not to be widened to accommodate increased traffic.

P5 Transit. Promote transit use, recapture ridership, and serve the transit-dependent by matching transit service with travel need.

- P5a Maintain and enhance transit service on Grand and St. Clair Avenues.
- P5b Maintain existing transit shelters, install new ones, and eliminate or reduce advertising signs.

- P5c Install route maps and schedules at more transit stops.

- P5d Encourage the Grand Avenue Business Association and other businesses to adopt a merchant-supported token system to encourage transit use.

- P5e Explore additional transit options to cost-effectively increase transit frequency and ridership and to minimize car use and traffic, such as a trolley for Grand Avenue or by interlining the Grand Avenue transit route with a Minneapolis route so that it meets demand for service to the University of Minnesota, University of St. Thomas, and downtown Minneapolis.

- P5f Advocate for a reduced fare on Grand Avenue.

P6 Off-street Parking. Adequate off-street parking shall be provided for all residential and commercial uses, in a manner that respects the historic character of the neighborhood.

- P6a Screen parking lots using appropriate treatments such as a strong landscaped edge along the street and alley.

- P6b Work with the Police Department to develop a plan to dramatically increase enforcement of all existing parking ordinances. Review parking variance history and City parking policies to determine if a revised regulatory approach is required.

- P6c Require the majority of parking for the residential portions of new multi-story buildings to be provided underground by seeking a change to the City zoning code in an overlay district for East Grand Avenue.

- P6d Discourage rooftop parking on new developments.

- P6e Restrict parking lots from areas that are used primarily for residential purposes.

- P6f Facilitate negotiations for the shared use of under-utilized commercial parking lots on Grand Avenue. Encourage businesses to utilize the third floor of Grand Place and the House of Hope lot for employee parking.

- P6g Implement more uniform parking zones on Grand Avenue to facilitate more rigorous enforcement.

- P6b Continue the option of Permit Parking zones for those residents who request them.
P7  **Shared Parking.** Facilitate shared parking agreements. Allow and encourage shared parking in institutional lots.

- **P7a** The Summit Hill Association, the Grand Avenue Business Association, and the City shall work with property owners to reach parking agreements for shared use of commercial parking as allowed under Statute 62.103 of the Zoning Code, and shared use of institutional lots as allowed under Statute 60.413(15) of the code. Shared parking options should be explored as part of any application for parking variance.

P8  **Building Removal for Parking.** Discourage building removal solely for parking.

- **P8a** Removal of buildings solely to provide additional parking is discouraged.

P9  **Parking Supply.** Retain and expand existing commercial and residential parking.

- **P9a** Oppose removal of existing parking without substitute parking being provided at a level greater than or equal to current zoning requirements.

- **P9b** Require new residential and commercial buildings to provide parking at a level equal to or greater than the current zoning requirements at the time of permit application.

- **P9c** Oppose parking variances.

- **P9d** Eliminate the “Rule of Five” parking regulation on East Grand Avenue.

- **P9e** Seek out opportunities for parking in underutilized spaces.

P10  **Employee Parking.** Find alternatives for employee parking where customer demand is highest.
- P10a Discourage employees of Grand Avenue businesses from using on-street parking spaces, including those on Lincoln and Summit Avenues and the north-south streets between Lincoln and Summit Avenues.

- P10b Employers should encourage employees to use institutional or pay lots where agreements can be reached, or to use transit to commute to work.

- P10c Encourage businesses to subsidize transit use by employees rather than subsidizing parking.

P11 Customer Parking. Improve awareness of parking options for Grand Avenue customers and visitors.

- P11a Install parking maps along Grand Avenue that indicate permitted and restricted parking locations in the area.

- P11b Encourage businesses to provide vouchers to customers using paid parking ramps.
Crime Prevention and Safety

DESCRIPTION

Summit Hill features less violent crime and property crime than St. Paul as a whole. The violent crime rate increased from 1996 to 2000, while the property crime rate decreased. Violent crime increased from 318 to 593 per 100,000 people, compared to 851 per 100,000 in St. Paul as a whole. Property crime is down from 6,220 to 6,112 per 100,000 people, compared to 6,439 in St. Paul as a whole.

VISION STATEMENT

Summit Hill will continue to be a safe neighborhood with good quality police and fire protection. Personal safety will be reinforced through Summit Hill’s physical and social networks operating within the neighborhood, including the gathering place/community corridor of Grand Avenue. Good design in Summit Hill’s buildings and landscape elements defines Summit Hill’s character and supports the sense of stewardship among residents and visitors. A high level of maintenance of spaces and buildings creates a perception and feeling of safety and belonging. Personal safety is improved through strategies for visibility (sightlines and lighting), readability (a sense of orientation), and mobility (the ability to change one’s course of movement to avoid an undesirable or unsafe situation).
STRATEGIES

CR1  Crime Watch Program. Promote, use, and expand the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program to organize and mobilize the neighborhood to pro-actively approach personal safety and property protection.

- CR1a  Continue to support the variety of compatible land uses and densities that characterize the “eyes on the street” safety of Summit Hill.
- CR1b  Continue to support the Neighborhood Block Watch program.
- CR1c  Continue to maintain close working relationships with the police and fire departments.
- CR1d  Educate residents on ways to improve home, apartment, and vehicle security.
- CR1e  Advocate for the presence of mounted police, bicycle, and foot patrols.
- CR1f  Educate residents and businesses regarding the benefits of good property maintenance in the reduction of vandalism and other crimes against property.
- CR1g  Communicate more broadly the Spring Clean-up and Neighborhood Garage Sale to encourage property/garage clean-up and reduce crime potential.
- CR1h  Educate about the benefits of garage utilization to reduce car break-in opportunities.
- CR1i  Encourage outdoor lighting for both residences and businesses, e.g., use of solar/motion sensors, working with neighbors on a front porch light program, etc.
- CR1j  Evaluate street and alley lighting to determine if improvements are needed regarding lighting levels and distribution.
- CR1k  Pursue greater police patrols of Linwood Park and its slopes, particularly after dark, to discourage repeated problems with car break-ins, graffiti, vandalism, and more serious crimes.
Chapter 5: Implementation

The following Implementation Task Matrix lists all of the Strategies and Tasks for each of the Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan Elements:

- Grand Avenue Mixed Use Corridor
- Housing and Residential Life
- Community Life, Public Spaces, and Recreation
- Pedestrian Safety, Traffic, and Parking
- Crime Prevention and Safety

Subsequent to Plan adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council, the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council will meet to determine lead responsibility, support, and a timetable for carrying out the required actions.

*(insert Implementation Timetable and Responsibilities chart here)*
Appendices

I. Planning Context

- Implementation Status of the 1989 District 16 Plan
- St. Paul’s Comprehensive Plan
- Relevant Citywide Initiatives

II. Planning Process and Public Involvement

- Summary of Community Participation Methods
- Grand Avenue Business Association Focus Group
- Summary of Vision Boards, Person-on-the-street Interviews, Neighborhood Survey, and Results of November 23, 2003 Community Issues and Opportunities Workshop
- Results of the January 25, 2003 Community Visioning Workshop
Appendix I

Planning Context

Implementation Status of the 1989 District 16 Plan

The Summit Hill Association adopted the current District 16 Plan on March 16, 1989. This Plan was then forwarded to the City and adopted by the Saint Paul Planning Commission on April 28, 1989.

Over the past decade, nearly all of the recommendations and projects have been carried out/completed. Significant successes include the following:

- Construction of a full service community center at Linwood Park (replacing the concrete block structure that housed the recreation programs).
- The maintenance of education alternatives (such as the creation of the Linwood A+ Arts School).
- Developing effective neighborhood communications.
- Obtaining business and institutional cooperation in sharing existing parking facilities along Grand Avenue.
- Maintaining and upgrading Linwood Park.
- Initiation of a comprehensive traffic study of the neighborhood from 1991-1996.

Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Plan

The key relevant chapters of the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan are: Land Use, Housing, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation. The main messages from those chapters are:

- Enhance neighborhoods as urban villages.
- Meet new housing markets, especially empty nesters.
- Use parks and open space to shape city character and build community.
- Support transportation choices.
- Promote transit, increased density, a mix of incomes through both rental and owner-occupied housing, and purchasing power along neighborhood corridors.

In more specific terms, the following Comprehensive Plan chapters direct and shape the Summit Hill/District 16 Plan Update as follows:

Land Use
The City, neighborhood organizations, developers and realtors should use the urban village principles listed below for assessing neighborhoods and promoting the advantages of city living:

- Compact and pedestrian-friendly.
- Mixture of land uses.
- Broad range of housing types.
- Support mass transit.
Commercial, civic, and institutional activities embedded (in mixed-use buildings).
Range of park facilities.
Safe and secure.
Architecture and landscaping physically define the streets and public spaces.

Neighborhoods should consider the social and economic factors implied in the notion of “village” as well as physical design factors.

In traditional neighborhoods, the City will support compatible mixed use within single buildings and in separate buildings in close proximity.

At neighborhood commercial centers, the City, in collaboration with individual neighborhood and business districts, will give more attention to the pedestrian realm and will implement design guidelines for pedestrian districts.

To promote the workability of mixed land uses, the City will use zoning, licensing, and environmental regulations to prevent and mitigate land use conflicts along boundaries between residential areas and commercial or industrial areas, and will encourage buffering and landscaping and intermediate land uses to mitigate potential incompatibilities.

In pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial centers, the City will support the provision of just enough commercial parking in small parking lots fitted into available space. The City will limit the number of curb cuts on commercial blocks. Parking lots should be located at the side or rear of buildings, and primary business entrances should be oriented to the sidewalk.

Many parts of the city have historic character and infill construction and renovation generally should respect the traditional character of the immediate neighborhood, even where it is not legally required.

The City will continue to work with community and business organizations and other units of government on planning and redevelopment projects along corridors where several opportunities are interconnected.

As opportunities arise along neighborhood bus corridors, townhouses, apartments, and condominiums should be built in order to help to support both the public transportation system and neighborhood commercial centers, at a density of at least ten housing units per acre, which is the minimum needed to support local bus service.

**Housing**
Maintaining – and where necessary, repairing – what is here now may be the most important thing the City and its partners can do to encourage new investment in existing housing and the production of new units. Therefore:

- Continue and expand efforts to enhance the city’s traditional neighborhood design.
- Continue a commitment to the preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and neighborhoods.
- Improve management and maintenance of rental property.
- Give priority to projects that commit to the long-term affordability of housing units.
Promote good design solutions for housing that meets newer market needs and complements existing Saint Paul neighborhoods, designs that use the smaller development sites creatively and that provide for housing in mixed-use neighborhood centers.

In the construction of ownership and rental housing, encourage a diversity of building and unit types to meet the diversity of the market. Particular attention should be paid to assessing and meeting the needs of a growing number of older persons who are looking for alternative housing in their own neighborhoods.

**Parks and Recreation**

Saint Paul's population is becoming more racially and culturally diverse. There is also an increased rate of change in recreation trends. Therefore, the delivery of services must be flexible to allow timely response to unforeseen needs, trends, and opportunities. The City must ensure that park and recreation facilities remain safe, attractive, and accessible through effective design, maintenance, and staffing.

Because even stable and cohesive neighborhoods are being threatened by social and economic changes, the City recognizes that recreation centers, and parks in general, can play a vital role in neighborhood stabilization and community building. And finally, there must be balanced park development, i.e., protecting open space and natural resources and accommodating recreation demands.

The following three major strategies will guide future development, operations, and maintenance of the Saint Paul parks and recreation system:

- **Shape City Character**: Parks, parkways, and natural and historic features lend form, character, and identity, which enhance the city and its neighborhoods.
- **Building Community**: Parks and recreation facilities provide opportunities to bring people together, foster community involvement, and build a community support system.
- **Innovative Focusing of Resources**: Explore ways to stretch existing resources, identify new resources, and build partnerships.

**Transportation**

Transportation system should work *for the community*, in that it should be integral, not intrusive, and it should protect and enhance neighborhoods and support economic development. The transportation system should also work *for individuals*, so that different modes of travel comfortably co-exist and individual modes of choice are well accommodated. More specifically, the following objectives will be pursued:

- **Neighborhood Protection**: Improve the behavior and mitigate the unpleasant consequences of local traffic in neighborhoods, as well as keep through-traffic off of local neighborhood streets. Make neighborhood traffic control a priority, with an understandable and accessible process for achieving it.
- **Neighborhood Enhancement**: Consider transportation infrastructure as part of neighborhood physical fabric and as a way to create community and give deliberate attention to neighborhood character and the need for community connections when designing transportation improvements, such as transit stops, pedestrian ways, bikeways, parking lots and facilities, bridges, signs, and lighting.
- **Economic Development**: Preserve and strengthen accessibility to the regional transportation system and target the scale and type of commercial and industrial development to locations with appropriate access and visibility, and where there is adequate carrying capacity in the
street system. Make system improvements in support of business development and job creation.

- **Transit Improvement.** Work with regional transit agencies to recapture ridership and serve the transit-dependent by matching transit service with travel need.

- **Bicycles, Pedestrians, and Accessibility.** Develop a convenient, safe, and attractive system of bicycle routes and facilities. Strengthen the quality of the pedestrian experience in neighborhoods and business areas. Ensure that pedestrian ways, transit, and automobile parking are designed to serve rather than frustrate the transportation needs of persons with physical impairments to mobility and accessibility.

- **Sensible, Safe Automobile Use.** Continue to emphasize automobile safety and reasonable access and mobility while working to better rationalize auto use by encouraging higher vehicle occupancy.

### Relevant Citywide Initiatives

**Transit**

In 1998, the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit embarked on a program to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service throughout the Twin Cities region. The Sector 5 Concept Plan restructures transit service in south Minneapolis, Bloomington, Edina, Richfield, and in an area of St. Paul south of I-94 and west of downtown, including the Summit Hill neighborhood. The key objectives include optimizing effectiveness and efficiency to improve productivity, providing faster and more frequent service to major destinations along major corridors, reallocating transit resources to better fit local development and transit markets, and improving connections between routes and neighborhoods.

Currently, Summit Hill is served by Route 63 along Grand Avenue and Route 70 along St. Clair Avenue. Both routes run east-west and provide “local service.” The nearest north-south route is Route 84 (Snelling Avenue local service) and Route 194 (Snelling/I94 Express/Limited Stop).

Route 63 would remain essentially unchanged in the Sector 5 Concept Plan. Route 70 would have service restructured to serve St. Clair Avenue from West 7th street to Cleveland, which then extends south to West 7th and Davern along Cleveland and Sheridan. Limited weekday peak period service to/from downtown will continue. A possible new route (under the category “Future Service and Facility Considerations”), Route 83, would provide weekday and Saturday service from 7th Street and Albion to University Avenue via Lexington Avenue, with a 30-minute frequency from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm.

This information was derived from Sector 5 Concept Plan: South-Central Metro, December 2002, by Metro Transit.

**Housing: Four Years – 5,000 Units/Saint Paul’s Housing Production Plan**

Over the next four years, the City of Saint Paul is committed to building an additional 5,000 housing units. This Housing Production Plan will allow the City to meet several citywide goals:

- Maintain its population growth (add between 10,000 to 12,000 people)
- Increase its tax base
- Create 8,000 construction jobs
- Add additional housing along transit corridors
- Support increased economic development
- Maintain and revitalize the city’s housing stock
- Enhance the city’s quality of life
- Maintain Saint Paul as an affordable city

These housing units are planned for every area of the city. They will consist of a broad spectrum of housing choices:

- Single-family and multi-family
- Home ownership and rental
- Senior and supportive
- Middle-income, market rate, and low-income
- Riverfront, Downtown, and Neighborhood projects

Through the implementation of this Housing Production Plan, the City will refocus its City/HRA, Tax Increment Financing, and STAR program funds for housing, create a Mixed Housing Income Fund, maintain its “all incomes housing” policy and its “20% policy of affordable housing,” preserve existing and public supported affordable housing units, maintain the City’s commitment to residential rehabilitation and maintenance of existing housing stock, and strengthen the City’s housing development partnership with public, private, and nonprofit partners.

In total, the 5,000 Housing Production Plan will require a public/private investment totaling $1 billion dollars. The City is committing $150 million of its City/HRA/Tax Increment Financing. It hopes to raise another $30 million from its housing partners, $20 million from its STAR program, and $20 million from a new low interest revolving fund. In addition, the City will use about $150 million worth of housing revenue bond proceeds and Low Income Tax Credit proceeds. These funds are intended to generate another $650 million of private sector leverage in the form of mortgages and other financing instruments.

The main message from the City with regard to its citywide 5,000 Housing Production Plan is that the City has made a substantial commitment to addressing the housing shortages it faces and has enlisted the support and cooperation of the full range of financial partners in pursuit of its goals. To reach these goals, the City expects, and needs, every neighborhood of Saint Paul to step forward with initiatives of its own to help reach these goals, and to be responsive and supportive to initiatives of others, public or private, who desire to provide housing through rehabilitation or redevelopment.

**Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework**

The Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework, adopted in 1997, is not just a riverfront plan, nor is it just a downtown plan. This policy guide-plan is about a redefinition of Saint Paul’s relationship with the river, a reconnection of the city and the river, and recognition that strength of the Capital City depends on the links between its healthy neighborhoods and vibrant urban core. The vision for Saint Paul articulated in the Framework is a system of inter-connected urban villages nestled in the lush green of a reforested river valley.

The Land Use Plan of Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Plan states that the City supports the *Ten Principles for City Development* in the Framework, which emphasize the urban design quality of buildings at the street level. Those *Ten Principles* are:

1. Evoke a sense of place.
2. Restore and establish the unique urban ecology.
3. Invest in the public realm.
4. Broaden the mix of uses.
5. Improve connectivity.
6. Ensure that buildings support broader city-building goals.
7. Build on existing strengths.
8. Preserve and enhance heritage resources.
10. Foster public safety.
Appendix II

Planning Process and Public Involvement

Summary of Community Participation Methods

In the course of the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood plan update process, several participation methods were used to solicit and engage a broad and diverse cross-section of community input.

- **A Plan Update Steering Committee** of twelve members was organized to represent the broad interests and constituencies that comprise the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood community. This committee consisted of business owners, property owners, homeowners, and tenants. It met regularly with the planning consultants to discuss, inform, and guide the community participation and planning process and to act as a liaison with the greater community regarding the plan’s progress.

- **A Neighborhood Survey** was prepared to obtain community opinion on a range of neighborhood issues and concerns—particularly on what people liked and disliked about the Summit Hill/District 16 neighborhood and what they wanted to see improved over the next ten years. This survey was mailed out to 4000 households and distributed to approximately two hundred neighborhood businesses. More than two hundred responses were received.

- **A Community Video - “Person-on-the-Street” Interviews** were undertaken to glean community opinion from a broad cross-section of neighborhood users: visitors, residents, business patrons, employees, and property owners. The objective was to go where people gather naturally in the neighborhood and ask them informally about their thoughts on the neighborhood. This community video consisted of over fifty random and informal interviews undertaken by the consultants at various neighborhood gathering places along Grand Avenue and at community events at the Linwood Recreation Center. Interviewees were asked: what they liked about the neighborhood, what they disliked, and what improvements they wanted to see over the next ten years.

- **Community Vision Boards** - Three large vision boards that consisted of a neighborhood map, a suggestion box and pens were created and installed at three neighborhood-gathering locations on Grand Avenue and at the Linwood Recreation Center. These boards provided an opportunity for all neighborhood members and visitors to write their comments about neighborhood issues and concern and place these comments on the map or in the suggestion box. These boards were installed for almost a month.

- **Photo Gallery** – For the Issues and Opportunities workshop on November 23, 2002, a dozen or more people took photos of neighborhood scenes and situations they wanted to protect, wanted to improve, and what they believed were the defining features of Summit Hill. These photos were displayed at the workshop.

- **Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) Focus Group** – On November 12 the consultant team led a focus group of 23 persons representing 18 businesses and GABA staff that addressed customer market area issues, perceptions of Grand Avenue corridor/Summit Hill.
Hill neighborhood, broader market trends, and what changes or improvements would help them prosper.

- **Three community wide meetings** were held (November 23, 2002 and January 25, 2003) in the neighborhood to invite and engage all interested neighborhood members—tenant, homeowners, business owners and employees—to participate in two broad tasks: 1) prioritizing neighborhood issues and opportunities and 2) creating focus area visions and implementation strategies. Approximately 90-100 people attended the first meeting and approximately 50-60 people attended the second workshop. A final public meeting was held on February 28, 2004 to present the draft 2004 Summit Hill/District 16 Neighborhood Plan.
The following provides a summary of the results of the Grand Avenue Business Association Focus Group, the Vision Boards, Person-on-the-Street Interviews, the Neighborhood Survey, the November 23 Community Issues and Opportunities Workshop.

**Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) Focus Group (November 12, 2002)**

1. Which business do you own/manage? What is your name? Where is it located?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditions</td>
<td>Mike Schumann</td>
<td>1039 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mella Martin</td>
<td></td>
<td>1204 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Balloon</td>
<td>Michele Cromer-Porie</td>
<td>891 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixie’s on Grand Rest.</td>
<td>John Wolf</td>
<td>695 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GABA Exec. Director</td>
<td>Merry Beckman</td>
<td>867 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Hill Assoc.</td>
<td>Merritt Clapp-Smith</td>
<td>149 S. Grotto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter Realty</td>
<td>Jim Stolpestad</td>
<td>332 Minn. St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Way Cleaners</td>
<td>Dan Parker</td>
<td>678 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treadle Yard Goods</td>
<td>Roberta Swanson</td>
<td>1338 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Mitchell College</td>
<td>John Stemper</td>
<td>875 Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macalester-Groveland</td>
<td>Derek Tonn</td>
<td>320 S. Griggs St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acropol Inn Restaurant</td>
<td>Nes Apostolou</td>
<td>748 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey Junior High School</td>
<td>Bruce Maeda</td>
<td>1700 Summit Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet Paint</td>
<td>Beth Bergman</td>
<td>1684 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woullet Bakery</td>
<td>Dan Woullet</td>
<td>1080 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Financial Group</td>
<td>Nancy Breyestor</td>
<td>745 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee State Bank</td>
<td>Craig Manz</td>
<td>985 Grand Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos Hill</td>
<td>Neal Lagos</td>
<td>Victoria West Mall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What is your market area? Customer base? How is it changing?

- People who live or had lived in area
- Ambience of avenue; the attractions/occasions
- Non-mall shoppers
- Women 25-60, upper income
- 2-3 mile radius of dry cleaning business
- Church has people coming from all over
- Grand Avenue is main attraction for St. Paul Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Financial planning services are a big draw; people from all over, people that spend money elsewhere on Grand Avenue also
- Children’s book store-people from everywhere; local business is eroding-neighborhood doesn’t support like it used to
- Service Retail-some people walk and some people come from the suburbs.
- There has been a division of client base because of some new businesses that are not desirable
Pottery Barn has helped our business
If there are more national retailers on Grand, more people will come to shops instead of going to malls
The aesthetics is the most important thing about Grand. The market will determine the best uses.
People can’t believe how many chains are on the avenue and some people won’t go to them.
We have to take an opportunity to differentiate from the chains and think about what makes a store special.
People come from Eden Prairie/Forest Lake and other suburbs

3. How does Grand Avenue fit into the larger Summit Hill Community? How does it relate to Selby Avenue? Downtown?

There is some tension between business and residential uses. The residential uses benefit with the proximity to Grand Avenue.
Some residents don’t like Grand Old Day.
Development on Grand is encouraging people to look at businesses on Selby because it is cheaper.
Housing is too expensive
All neighborhoods are inter-connected
A lot of out of town people ask where Grand Avenue is. They want to find it.
Clients want to know where there is entertainment downtown. Grand is more shopping rather than entertainment.

4. How does Grand Avenue work throughout the different times of day…evenings…weekends….the various seasons?

There are a lot of differences
Tried to customize hours, but holidays are busier, some businesses are open at night some aren’t
Parking is always an issue
Interior Design Store- Evenings and weekends have declined with the economy slowing
Security is better with more stores open
Traffic creates some problems but it makes excitement too
Hard to attract client when hours are always changing
Some mall shops are closing at different times it would be beneficial for Grand to have uniform business hours
Some businesses aren’t interested in networking
There is a struggle to find parking spaces during the holiday season
Business is increasing from 4-8 PM on weekdays but it is taking away on weekend activity.
It is easier to shop during the day
Saturday afternoons are “crazy” good
Victoria Crossing defines Grand Avenue especially in terms of hours

5. Strengths, weaknesses, and barriers/threats for the Summit Hill Neighborhood including Grand Avenue.
**Strengths**
- Architectural look, feel, and charm of the avenue
- Unique mix of business/community makes area very vital
- Good mix of small and large businesses-local and chain businesses
- Diverse clientele
- High economic status, affluent homeowners of surrounding neighborhood
- Diverse independent variety of businesses available on Grand Avenue
- Small town service
- Diverse businesses
- Support neighborhoods and charities
- Interesting and beautiful neighborhood
- Residents support business
- Cooperation among businesses/residential/workshop
- Ambiance
- High property values
- Main Street Atmosphere
- Owner-operated small businesses with personal services
- Relationship to neighborhoods
- B-2C Zoning
- Great reputation
- Strong market niche
- Certain retailers are a “destination” which helps all
- Random diversity
- National retailers
- Strong neighborhood economics and aesthetics

**Weaknesses**
- The lack of any kind of plan when dealing with parking
- Parking is not uniform at all
- There needs to be parking uniformity on side streets
- Perception that the neighborhood housing and shopping is very expensive
- We are losing generations that had loyalty, so we need to market differently
- Too many people drive
- Traffic speed; traffic congestion; lack of parking
- Current zoning rules: the City “fictionalizes” parking adequacy
- Conflicts between specific groups
- Lack of connection with other constantly changing populations
- Crime
- Losing its diversity
- NIMBY (Not-in-my-back-yard) attitudes (both businesses and homeowners)
- Periodic isolation from what other neighborhoods and/or business districts are up to
- Ramp at Victoria Crossing is underused
- People don’t want to pay for parking
- Parking time limits are inconsistent
- “Noise” from suburban malls
- National/State economic cycle
- Anti-business-really NIMBY attitudes of residents
Threats/Barriers
- Death of the trees; should have a tree preservation program
- Development that isn’t compatible, isn’t in tune with the look and feel of Grand Avenue
- There are aesthetic threats to the avenue
- Biggest threat is learning to deal with our own success
- Poor signage
- “Corporatization” of Grand Avenue
- Anti-business sentiment of Summit Hill Association
- The elite feeling of the neighborhood
- Better destination marketing from other areas within the city
- Land becoming too expensive for local merchants
- Perception that parking is a problem
- Need vibrant stable businesses
- Turnover of smaller businesses
- Misguided public involvement

6. Opportunities for the neighborhood
- More retail appealing to men
- City should buy old Clark Station site and turn it into a parking lot
- Put a trolley on the avenue
- As rent goes up on Grand – some smaller businesses have to move to Selby Avenue
- Dale Street needs to be changed from residential to commercial to connect to Grand Avenue
- Need to tie more to Selby Avenue commercial district and to downtown both in terms of transportation and mentally, as well
- Focus on all of Grand Avenue as an integrated corridor
- Rising rents are forcing moves to Selby and W. 7th Avenue
- Grand Old Days is a draw; individuality of this area is important
- Continue to attract business and residents to area
- Provide uniqueness to attract more people
- Maintain the beautiful look of the neighborhood
- Better tie-ins with institutional clients for both students and non-students
- Utilize Clark Station lot
- Public Transportation
- Zoning regulations to keep chains off of the avenue and control footprint of buildings
- Broader exposure
- Parking improvements
- Uniform store hours
- Reassure safety concerns
- Increase tourist participation

Summary of Vision Boards, Person-on-the-Street Interviews, Neighborhood Survey, and the Results of the November 23 Community Issues and Opportunities Workshop
I. Qualities the community likes about the neighborhood

- Pedestrian friendly, a walkable neighborhood
- Small town-like—in terms of service, scale—human, cozy, compact—rhythm, streetscape—mature trees, sidewalks
- Beautiful, aesthetically appealing, well-designed and maintained
- Historic values and architectural character
- Strong sense of community—social activities/community-oriented
- Mix of residential and commercial uses; proximity to Grand Avenue
- Diversity/eclecticism of shopping and services, small businesses and some upscale chains
- Diversity of housing
- Good accessibility and location

II. Qualities the community doesn’t like about the neighborhood.

- Traffic speed and congestion
- Concern about pedestrian safety
- Bluff areas are poorly managed
- Declining condition multi-family rentals
- Growing chain stores, losing some local businesses, losing eclectic diversity
- Lack of commercial parking
- Petty crimes, break-ins
- Rowdiness of bar patrons
- Perceptions of community as an expensive area
- Conflicts between some groups, NIMBY attitudes among both business and homeowner groups

III. Issues the community feels needs to be addressed.

Community Image and Identity

- Promote and enhance overall architectural/design aesthetics
- Maintain historic, cultural, small town-like (family feeling—don’t feel out of place—familiar) and aesthetically appealing character; “Victorian casual”
- Maintain eclectic diversity, small cozy shopping, and business area
- Need to promote people walking, not cars, address speed of traffic
- Raise neighborhood’s level of aesthetics: Alley beautification project; buckthorn moratorium campaign; prohibit billboards. Develop architectural review/design and sign guidelines
- Require chain stores to comply with architectural/historic design context and city noise codes
- Encourage broader neighborhood connections to great area—Grand Avenue should tie more to Selby and downtown, both mentally and transportation ways—periodic isolation from other business districts. Summit Hill should be more connected with adjacent neighborhoods
- Tree preservation: trim trees at various places in neighborhood, i.e. along Grand avenue and keep healthy ones
- Clean up woods along and rebuild lower Grand Avenue

**Housing and Residential life**
- Clear, consistent and enforced zoning laws, consistent with city’s vision.
- Maintain and enhance existing single/multi-family housing.
- Provide for a broader range of housing choices while maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood: empty nester, senior town homes, affordable multi-family and homeowner housing, mixed-income projects, co-ops
- New housing should provide realistic parking solution preferably underground
- Increase res. design standards and beautification. Develop design guidelines for rehab and new projects
- Use existing streets for more parking: shared, and parking on both sides
- Address challenge/conflicts of mixed commercial/residential use projects

**Community Life and Public Spaces**
- Enhance and develop more park, open green space i.e. old Clark Station site
- Expand public services: develop a small library, expand use of Linwood Recreation center, i.e. a pool
- Support and enhance the neighborhood’s strong pedestrian focus
- Coordinate/organize more public events in public property
- Increase leisure/relaxation activities
- Expand block program—encourage more parties, more active participation and support, packet training
- Promote and expand community cohesion—make it more inclusive. Support and expand community clubs, provide more community sponsored events, promote family feeling, get the renters at progressive dinner parties, community kiosk at Grand and Victoria, use local institutions more
- Summit Avenue should be recognized as a park space; don’t have much open space
- Provide for more outdoor open spaces, benches and pedestrian connections around the neighborhood
- Increase cultural opportunities

**Shopping and Services**
- Maintain the mix of small businesses and chain stores, introduce zoning regulation changes to restrict additional chains
- Maintain a balance of residential and business uses
- Manage the growth and development along Grand Avenue
- City should buy old Clark station site and turn it into a parking lot/or open space
- Provide for additional cultural amenities: a community theater
- Address aesthetic threats to the avenue, incompatible development, poor signage, and trees need to be preserved
- Keep Grand Avenue unique, eclectic, and beautiful. Strong sense of aesthetics
- Need sporting goods, men’s retail stores
- Identify walking paths and routes
- Address some SHA anti-business feeling
- Increase some tourist opportunities
- Add handicapped access ramps to Grand Avenue
- Provide for more historical signage

Traffic, Parking, Transit and Pedestrians
- Provide better enforcement of parking/traffic laws-towing and booting
- Address district-wide traffic speed, flow
- Increase pedestrian safety
- Provide for additional commercial parking, more employee parking
- Explore and increase shared parking opportunities
- Provide for better maintenance, cross-walks/crossings, striping/marking
- Encourage/require underground parking with new developments
- Provide careful planning of high intensity uses/large business –do not put in already congested area
- Explore transit options, better support to minimize auto traffic/parking, e.g., trolley (electric?) up and down Grand Avenue
- Parking ramp at Grand and Victoria is underused
- Provide a bus route along Lexington
- Eliminate parking variances, rule of five
- Need bike racks and benches

Crime and Safety
- Provide better parking enforcement along avenues, Linwood Park
- Increase police presence /report all crimes
- Improve pedestrian safety, more speed limits signs especially along Lexington Avenue
- Increase participation of Block Watch
- Improve lighting in residential and commercial areas

Results of the January 25 Community Visioning Workshop

The participants at the January 25 Community Visioning Workshop met in small groups to review the prior public input. They collaborated in the preparation of draft vision statements for several topic areas, as well as in the development of initial strategies designed to achieve those visions. The following outlines their accomplishments, which formed the basis of further refinement and addition by the Steering Committee.

Community Identity and Image

Vision Statement

Summit Hill maintains its historical uniqueness, and improves the compatibility of new and existing development through use of community design standards and participation in development approval processes.

Strategies

1. Promote and enhance the intrinsic historical qualities of the neighborhood, including physical, social, and cultural aspects.
2. Recognize that scale and compatibility is incorporated and reinforced by strong design guidelines to help shape the future changes.
3. Encourage community participation to provide direction and guidance to reflect our identity and community character.

**Housing and Residential Life**

**Vision Statement**

Summit Hill maintains and enhances the existing level of housing, both single family and multi-family while preserving open spaces in the traditionally residential areas.

**Strategies**

1. Develop high quality new housing in new or existing multi-use structures with underground parking on Grand Avenue.
2. Develop design guidelines for rehabilitation and new projects.
3. Work with the City to enforce zoning laws.

**Community Life, Public Space, and Recreation**

**Vision Statement**

Summit Hill maintains and better utilizes existing public green spaces and activities, community spaces – public, private, and institutional. Through the Summit Hill Association/District 16 Planning Council, we reach out, publicize, and communicate to all our social/cultural events in the neighborhood. We retain and encourage quality landscaping and create more pocket-sized spaces with benches on Grand Avenue and inside buildings. We build community/institutional partnerships.

**Strategies**

1. Create a community park/plaza for gathering, to function as a neighborhood front porch. Summit Hill Association should fund it.
2. Develop a bench garden (spaces to sit and relax) concept for Grand Avenue. Implement with GABA.
3. Promote better stewardship of the bluff areas along Linwood Park. Maintain and showcase this amenity and environmental resource.
4. Maintain existing open space assets and parks.
5. Nurture community and maintain its social and physical sense.
6. Generate social interaction. (How does this happen?)
7. Traffic congestion might impede relaxed community spot.
8. Create pockets on the ground for relaxing.
9. Create an indoor social space for 6+ months (winter).

**Shopping and Services**

**Vision Statement**
The Summit Hill shopping experience is characterized by physically small-scale businesses that are unique. Grand Avenue presents an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and services for residents and visitors. Businesses provide affordable, inconspicuous parking and contribute to an attractive streetscape that reflects history and has access to good local and regional transportation.

Strategies

1. Assess the feasibility of additional traffic controls on Grand Avenue such as lights, stop signs and speed bumps.
2. Prevent fast food and high traffic congestion and parking problems.

(There were additional strategies, but the sheet they were recorded on was lost.)

Traffic, Parking, Transit, and Pedestrians

Vision Statement

Preeminence of pedestrians over moving cars characterizes movement patterns in the Summit Hill neighborhood. We make more efficient use of the streets and parking spaces we have. The outcome is safe access to public gathering spaces via reduction of auto and truck impacts.

Possible Alternative Vision Statement:
Recognizing the value of a healthy balance between the commercial and residential character of the Summit Hill area, develop a safe traffic and parking plan that provides access to public gathering spaces while limiting the impact of auto and truck traffic in the area.

Strategies

1. Revamp traffic patterns on certain streets to increase parking spaces and circulation.
2. Do things that won’t cost much money.
3. Encourage parking and walking for shoppers.
4. Increase mass transit options, e.g. 25-cent-zones for Grand Avenue (Dale to Cretin), Grand Avenue trolley bus (now or later).
5. Parking with people moving (?)
6. Establish mid-block crossings on Grand Avenue.
7. Reduce speed limits on all arterials and streets.

Crime and Safety

Vision Statement

Summit Hill/District 16 strives to maintain a pedestrian-friendly, safe neighborhood in both the residential and business components. This is accomplished and actively monitored through police services, community unity, and public space lighting.

Strategies

1. Encourage traffic speed monitoring by police, including both streets and alleys.
2. Expand the mounted police and foot patrols.
3. Communicate and evaluate safety issues with the police.
4. Support the Neighborhood Block Watch resurgence.
5. Communicate (more broadly) the Spring Cleanup/Garage Sale events to encourage garage/property and buckthorn cleanup to reduce crime potential.
6. Encourage garage utilization to reduce car break-in opportunities.
7. Encourage community programs to increase awareness of neighbors, e.g., block partners.
8. Make businesses and residents more accountable for the safety risks related to debris; require proper waste receptacles, parking lot/ramp cleanup and maintenance.
9. Develop a Public Space Watch program.
10. Encourage outdoor lighting for both residences (front and rear yard) and businesses, e.g., use of solar/motion sensors, working with neighbors re front porch light program.
11. Increase public lighting; evaluate gaps in the system.

Draft Planning Principles

The following eight draft planning principles were drafted and approved by the Steering Committee. These planning principles were reviewed by the community at large at the January 25 Visioning Workshop.

Principles:

1. All individuals and interest groups communicate openly as stakeholders in charting Summit Hill/District 16’s evolution as a sustainable neighborhood.

2. Community spirit continues to be nurtured and expanded through active and passive activities for all ages.

3. Neighborhood ambiance is defined and enriched by green urban landscape that includes lively and safe public spaces, arts and culture, pedestrian connections, healthy natural amenities and open spaces, and well-designed new and old buildings.

4. Community identity and image is expressed through high quality design that respects the historic and cultural values of the neighborhood.

5. All significant redevelopment includes neighborhood amenities as part of a mutually beneficial, collaborative design process.

6. Summit Hill/District 16 promotes living choices for residents of all ages, incomes and lifestyles.

7. Summit Hill/District 16 respects and enriches the mutually beneficial relationship between residential livability and commercial vitality.

8. Summit Hill/District 16’s movement patterns emphasize a safe walking environment and convenient transit, while accommodating automobiles.

Citizen Comments on Draft Principles
Re #1 (communication): Interaction and positive relations between communities.

Re #3 (community spirit): Maintenance of green space (is very important); take care of these spaces.

Re #4 (identity and image): How do we define “high quality design?”

Re #4 (identity and image): Housing/neighborhood to maintain original identity.

Re #5 (redevelopment): How do we define “significant” redevelopment?

Re #6 (living choices): Does not want to encourage lower income groups.

Re #6 (living choices): Provide room for change, to accommodate broader diversity.

Re #7 (livability and vitality): Use respects; more emphasis on environmental issues.

Re #8 (movement patterns): Incorporate everyone’s interests, not just your own. Soften impacts of automobile traffic, not just accommodate automobiles. Reduce auto impacts and parking congestion and traffic congestion. Increase mass transit options and options for pedestrian safety and traffic calming.

Re #8 (movement patterns): Add bicycles; human scale; increase visibility and knowledge.

Re #8 (movement patterns): Is traffic/parking congestion emphasized enough?

Re #8 (movement patterns): Is public transit emphasized by community?
Appendix III

A map showing vegetated bluff areas that buffer District 16 from I-35 and Ayd Mill Road to be designated as a Tree Preservation District in conformance with City Code, Chapter 60.781, will be developed with the assistance of city staff.