

# HAWTHORNE ECOVILLAGE AND RAILROAD ISLAND: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION 8203

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comparative analysis of the context of a sustainable neighborhood development in Hawthorne neighborhood in Minneapolis and a potential redevelopment plan for Railroad Island in St. Paul. In partnership with Project for Pride and Living (PPL) and East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC), our student group assessed the critical similarities and differences between the two neighborhoods to determine recommendations for the potential redevelopment and revitalization strategy in Railroad Island.

Our group approached this project through multiple methods to understand the contexts and dynamics of both neighborhoods individually. We began by visiting both neighborhoods to get a sense of the places in order to make our own observations, conducted a housing condition survey in Railroad Island, interviewed stakeholders from both Hawthorne and Railroad Island, and paired this information with a literature review for case studies. In addition, our student team, comprised of five Master of Urban and Regional Planning candidates at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, researched and synthesized the dynamics of each community in areas such as demographics, transportation, political actors, housing market, and community infrastructure. We conducted interviews for a stakeholder analysis to better understand the role of community organizing and political will in Hawthorne EcoVillage and to inform the next steps for Railroad Island. In addition, we researched case studies of green building strategies focused around community development, both nationally and locally.

The last section of the report documents a comparison of the two neighborhoods, next steps, and recommendations for PPL in the implementation of an equitable green redevelopment plan as a neighborhood revitalization strategy in Railroad Island. Collaboration, perfect timing, and other unique structures and forces drove the development process for Hawthorne EcoVillage. Of these factors, the well-executed collaboration between the Minneapolis stakeholders, grounded in committed resident participation, is the most influential and indispensable. No matter the specific type of development pursued in the Railroad Island Focus Area, this project has potential to serve as a pilot for future St. Paul collaborative and community-driven development. Based on our research and findings, a summary of our recommendations for successful community driven development in Railroad Island is:

- Understand and respond to residents' perspectives and values
- Build partnerships for collaboration
- Define the purpose of the redevelopment and the project goals to guide engagement
- Build off the unique local history for branding of the initiative

Although this began as a compare and contrast study, we found that there are few similarities between Hawthorne EcoVillage and the Railroad Island Focus Area. The success associated with Hawthorne EcoVillage resulted from the alignment of political will, timing, and opportunity. However, there are several development opportunities in Railroad Island and potential for collaboration between residents and stakeholders in the neighborhood that could lead to successful development outcomes.

This report's findings draw from coursework from PA 8203 Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies and Theories, taught by Lauren Martin of the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) and Neeraj Mehta of the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

## ECOVILLAGE HISTORY AND PROGRESS

The Hawthorne EcoVillage was a bold collaborative effort by City, nonprofit, and neighborhood leaders in a formerly crime-filled area of Minneapolis. With efforts that lasted over ten years, the EcoVillage is now considered by many to be a successful example of small-scale neighborhood revitalization. An infusion of public and private funding, dedicated political support, and patience over a lengthy timeline were all necessary ingredients for the EcoVillage.

The following is a summary of the history of the EcoVillage, a year-by-year breakdown of major EcoVillage milestones can be found in Appendix G.

In the late 1990s, the Hawthorne Neighborhood Council (HNC) examined the potential for infill housing in Hawthorne. The HNC approached PPL with neighborhood-wide goals. Later, PPL

received a grant from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) that was shared with HNC. PPL provided technical assistance to develop capacity among Hawthorne leaders. The neighborhood showed leadership while an architect brought green concepts and a charrette produced an architectural model in 2002.

In 2003, Northside leaders called the City of Minneapolis requesting assistance regarding community problems. In response, the City developed the Northside Partnership. Over \$65 million were committed to the Northside Partnership. A key component of the Northside Partnership's housing effort is the Northside Home Fund (NHF) which focused on redevelopment of properties from the City's 249 List, which is the City's primary tool for tracking, monitoring, and managing nuisance vacant properties in the City. About \$1 million of the Northside Partnership's funds were used to seed the NHF. NHF had six cluster developments, of which the EcoVillage was the most successful. The NHF was evidence of the new approach to the Northside: instead of scattering resources around the area, resources would instead be focused in clusters. Successfully revitalized clusters, in theory, will provide stability that will ripple outward.

The City helped direct neighbors to choose the location of local clusters for focused redevelopment strategies. HNC chose PPL as the developer for the four block area between Lowry Avenue, 4th St., 30th Avenue, and Lyndale Avenue as their cluster.

By many measures, the EcoVillage area was struggling in the mid-2000s. Between 2006 and 2008, over half of the properties in the EcoVillage cluster went through foreclosure. Foreclosures are thought to have a significant negative impact on surrounding properties by reducing the marketability and property values of neighbors. In turn, perceptions of the area can decrease, depressing values even further.



610 31th Ave N

In tandem with foreclosures, criminal activity in the area was notorious. The central intersection of 31st Ave N and 6th St N was especially dangerous. A cheaply constructed apartment building was specifically problematic. Prostitution and drug dealing were common.

Unexpectedly, the recession from 2007 to 2009 allowed for the acquisition of parcels within the cluster area due to the increase in foreclosures. The federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) assisted with two rehab properties within the EcoVillage. By 2008, vacant structures were being demolished. Hennepin County bought many blighted buildings along Lowry in order to widen the avenue for the Lowry Avenue Community Works project. Elsewhere in the cluster, the foreclosure crisis enabled buildings (including a key apartment building) to be acquired.

The clear vision and leadership of PPL grounded the effort in times of acute stress. A few dedicated neighborhood stakeholders (homeowners) had an outsized impact on the continued efforts. Since its official start in 2007, the project has been regionally and nationally noted for its success at addressing crime, foreclosure, and property abandonment while creating a “green neighborhood with wide appeal” (Five Year Progress Report, 2012).

A stroll around the cluster today provides visible evidence of the developments. Within the Hawthorne EcoVillage, 10 units have been completed and sold, five rehabs have been completed, and six new homes are under construction for a total of 19 homes. The Five Year Progress Report calls for a goal of 120 new homes in the cluster upon its completion and planned multi-family development will add a substantial amount of new homes. The homes for sale can be viewed online at [ecovillageminneapolis.com](http://ecovillageminneapolis.com). The EcoVillage plan calls for multi-family housing along Lowry that has not yet broken ground.

**Figure 1: EcoVillage Development Diagram (December 2014)**



## Housing Stock and Prices

While North Minneapolis contains some exceptional historical properties, the EcoVillage has a scarcity of notable or historical structures. The relative mediocrity of the architecture in the cluster allowed for the razing of several problem properties throughout the EcoVillage process. Most homes in the cluster are two-story single-family structures.

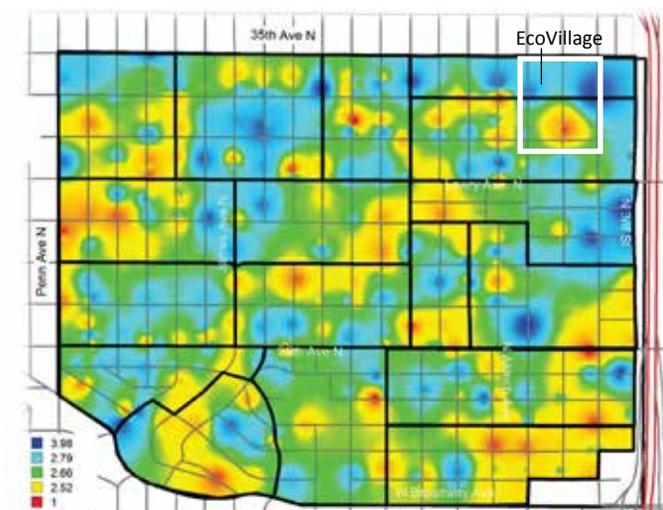
The current prices in the EcoVillage range from about \$150,000 to \$170,000. The newly constructed 610 31st Ave N is listed for \$172,900 while 3016 6th Ave N. sold for \$159,900. At the NHF October meeting it was mentioned that property sale prices ranged from \$145,000 to \$205,000 across the North Minneapolis program area.

Havenbrook Homes, a Georgia-based investment firm, has acquired 109 properties in North Minneapolis as of August 2014. While it is expected that a large firm such as Havenbrook will manage its properties responsibly to maintain their reputation, it is unclear when or how they will sell their properties. The scale of their purchases and their future tactics could have a strong impact on North Minneapolis. It is assumed that their disposition strategy will play out over the next three to seven years.

## Northside Achievement Zone Study

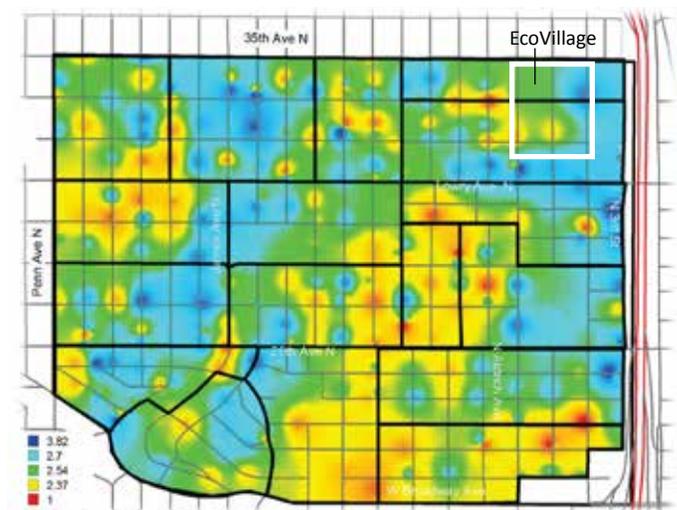
The Northside Achievement Zone, a collaborative focused on strengthening educational achievement in North Minneapolis, produced a community survey to identify strengths and needs in North Minneapolis neighborhoods including Hawthorne. A baseline study conducted using an in-person, door-to-door survey method was completed in 2010 and repeated in 2013. The results are reported in Northside Achievement Zone 2013 Community Survey Results: a Follow-up to the 2010 Baseline Survey. While about half of the residents felt the neighborhood was safe and “did not prevent them from doing the things they would like to do,” about an equal proportion of respondents felt the opposite way (Community Survey Results: a Follow-up to the 2010 Baseline Survey, 2013). The study also focused on the strength of the neighborhood’s collective efficacy defined as “the sense of community connection and willingness to take action together for the well-being of the community.” The EcoVillage area showed relatively strong perceptions of social control and perceptions of informal social control, as can be seen in the NAZ maps below. The cluster area was rated lower regarding “fear of crime” and “perceptions of neighborhood safety.”

**Figure 2: NAZ Map of respondents’ perceptions of informal social control in the Zone**



Note: The above illustrates mapped responses to the informal social control subscale on the collective efficacy scale. Response scale = strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Lower scores (i.e., red areas on the map) indicate lower levels of informal social control.

**Figure 3: NAZ Map of respondents’ perceptions of social cohesion in the Zone**



Note: The above illustrates mapped responses to the social cohesion subscale on the collective efficacy scale. Response scale = strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Lower scores (i.e., red areas on the map) indicate lower levels of social cohesion.

## EcoVillage Partners and Leadership

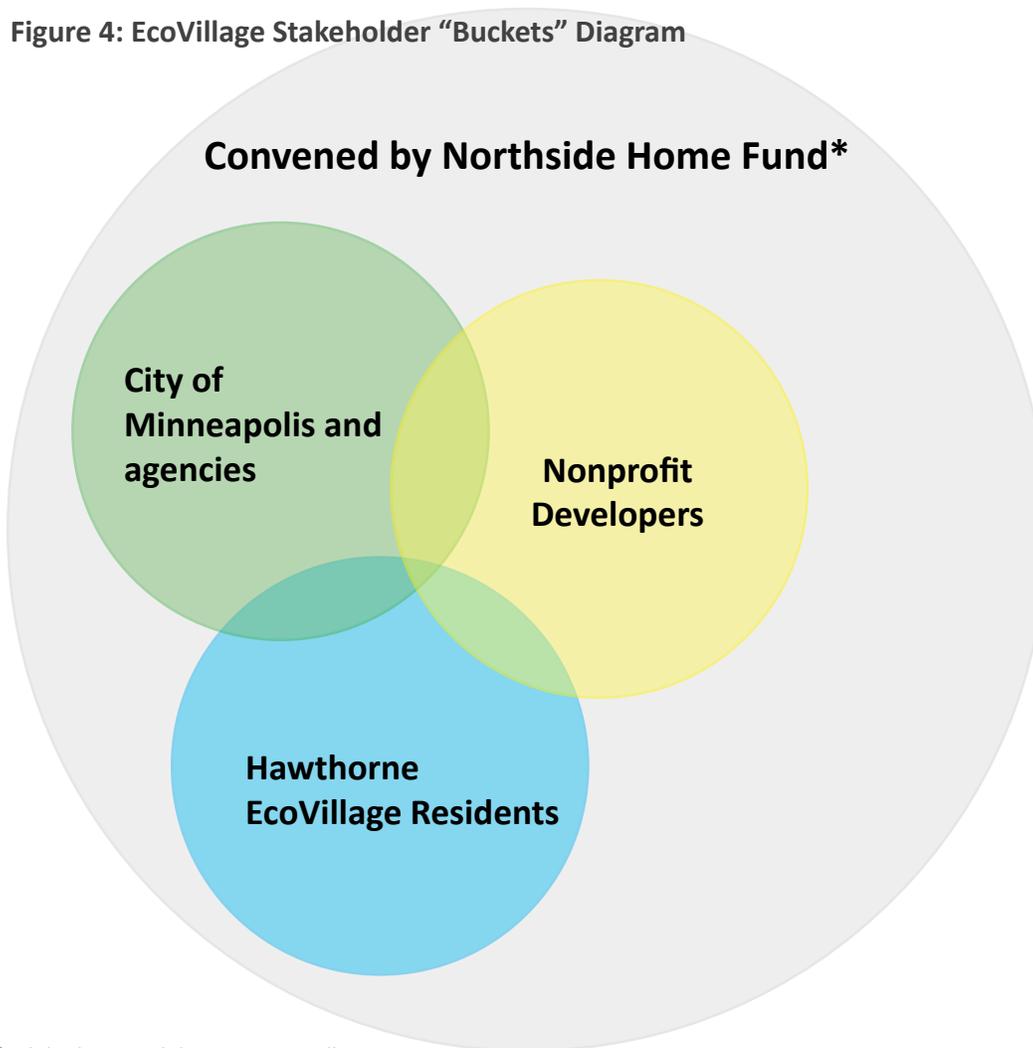
The EcoVillage was made possible through a variety of partners and stakeholders who shared a unified vision for the community. Leadership on the project was shared as the different core stakeholders collaborated strongly to achieve the vision. The skill and knowledge of various parties aided the overall mission. The following “buckets” of stakeholders were critical for the EcoVillage:

- City of Minneapolis and City agencies
- Neighbors and neighborhood groups
- Nonprofit developers
- Northside Home Fund (funded by the MN Housing Finance Agency)

The work, organization, and coordination of each of these “buckets” was critical for the continued progress of EcoVillage. As the City cleared out problem properties, the nonprofit developers were able to step in to redevelop or rehabilitate the lots. All the while, the NHF convened meetings with leaders to maintain and refine the cluster strategy.

Four EcoVillage professionals were interviewed for this report (interview notes can be found in Appendix F). All interviewees stated that the City agencies were encouraged to work collaboratively, across standard organizational “silos.” Collaborative and comprehensive City actions were important due to the complexity and severity of the problems of the EcoVillage cluster. At one point, eight different City departments worked on one problem

**Figure 4: EcoVillage Stakeholder “Buckets” Diagram**



property. Coordination and communication between the public agencies and nonprofits was a challenge in the EcoVillage. For example, Hennepin County sold a parcel to an external party that would have contributed to the neighborhood’s strategy. A key factor to surmounting the coordination problem was the ability of the NHF to convene parties to discuss and strategize.

The leadership within the police department was noted as a major component of success. Police responded to calls as they were received and long-term residents assisted police by providing surveillance. According to Northside blogger and former Hawthorne Neighborhood Council Housing Director Jeff, “Hawthorne Hawkman,” Skrenes, digital photography and videography are useful

\*While the NHF did not convene all meetings, their unique capacity to convene City agencies was critical for the success of the EcoVillage

tools for arresting drug dealers. Neighbors provided surveillance - often at their own risk - to assist the police in the apprehension of criminal neighbors. Once the demolition and reconstruction process had begun, neighborhood-building activities such as National Night Out helped long-term residents and newcomers build positive connections. These community-building efforts aligned with the new “green” brand.

The importance of the leadership of PPL was mentioned more than once in the interviews. The organization’s skills and expertise in construction and redevelopment activities, combined with a high level of community trust, were invaluable. PPL’s long-term relationship to residents and the HNC was fostered for several years prior to the official EcoVillage opening in 2007. It should be noted that renters of “slumlord” buildings, including the highly problematic apartment building at the northwest corner of 31st Ave and 6th St, were forced to relocate during the process of condemnation. The HNC was reportedly composed mostly of white homeowners which does not reflect the diversity of the Hawthorne population, both in terms of occupancy and race. One interviewee mentioned Homeline as a potential resource for tenants with problematic landlords. As is common with planning and community-related developments, renters were reportedly not as engaged as homeowners.

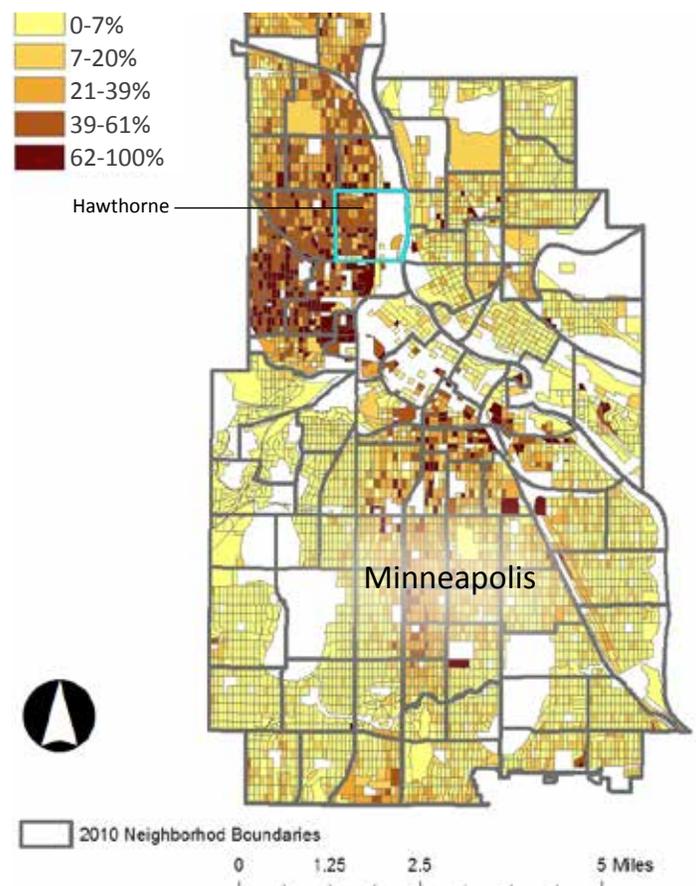
The EcoVillage process benefitted from a clear strategy in response to an extreme amount of crime, dedicated homeowner buy-in and participation, and external factors such as the recession and foreclosure crisis that enabled property acquisitions. The project was complex and multifaceted with support and leadership from a variety of sectors. Think Big Start Small: The First Five Years of the Hawthorne EcoVillage (2012) lists seven partners and 26 supporters for the EcoVillage project. The political will, leadership, and financial support for the cluster was substantial and unique.

### EcoVillage Demographics

The EcoVillage is located in Census Tract 1016. Overall, the tract was 70.6% renter in 2010 and 29.4% owner-occupied. The area, as with many areas in North Minneapolis, has a majority of black residents. In 2010, the tract was 18% white alone, 50.3% black alone, 18.6% Asian alone, 7.4% two or more races, and 2.5% American Indian alone. The map to the right shows the percentage of Non Hispanic Black in the City of Minneapolis by U.S. Census block group normalized by Total Population of each block group. According to Census Block data from 2010, the four block area of the EcoVillage contained 42 Non-Hispanic Black residents, 18 Non-Hispanic whites, four Native Americans, and seven Hispanics. With the exception of a small store, Bangkok Market and Video Rental, the cluster is entirely residential.

The Minnesota Compass profile for Hawthorne indicates that the average population between 2008 and 2012 is 4,418 with a median household income of \$23,683. By contrast, the City of Minneapolis had a median income of nearly \$49,000 (Minnesota Compass, 2014). The Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ), a youth education initiative in North Minneapolis, encompasses the neighborhood of Hawthorne. According to the NAZ website, 51% of NAZ households are single parent and the median income is just \$18,000 (Northside Achievement Zone, 2014).

**Figure 5: Non Hispanic Black Population by Block Group Normalized by Total Population of each Block Group**



These data paint Hawthorne as a community that has much higher amounts of poverty and a higher black population than most other communities in the City of Minneapolis.

## EcoVillage Crime

According to Jean Bain, current Northside Home Fund Coordinator, the spike in crime over the summer of 2014 (and resultant media coverage) may have slowed home sales in Hawthorne due to negative perceptions of North Minneapolis as a whole.

The Five Year Progress Report for the EcoVillage states that violent crime decreased by 73% between 2007 and 2009 in the cluster due to the strategic crackdown on crime in the cluster. This is no doubt due to the eviction and removal of blighted properties that were run by slumlords. The change in crime in Hawthorne from 2010 to 2014 is shown below. Overall, crime decreased by 3% in the Hawthorne neighborhood between 2010 and 2014.

**Figure 6: Hawthorne Crime 2010-2014**

HAWTHORNE CRIME 2010 - 2014									
	Total	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	AggAssault	Burglary	Larceny	AutoTheft	Arson
Jan - Oct 2010	489	2	13	64	62	77	216	48	7
Jan - Oct 2011	447	1	8	45	67	134	131	54	7
Jan - Oct 2012	418	3	6	45	59	115	143	45	2
Jan - Oct 2013	476	1	4	66	91	104	169	35	6
Jan - Oct 2014	475	1	7	49	93	70	186	60	9
	-3%	-50%	-46%	-23%	50%	-9%	-14%	25%	29%

## EcoVillage Transportation

Without rush hour traffic, the EcoVillage is an approximately 11-minute drive to downtown Minneapolis. The same trip on a bicycle would take about 22 minutes, according to Google Maps. Walking the three miles to downtown Minneapolis would take about one hour from the EcoVillage.

Bus route 22 provides north/south service on Lyndale Avenue connecting Brooklyn Center, downtown Minneapolis, and the VA Medical Center and runs every 20-30 minutes. The EcoVillage is approximately 17 minutes by bus to downtown Minneapolis. Route 32 runs East/West on Lowry between the Rosedale Shopping Center (a 30 minute travel time from the EcoVillage) and Robbinsdale (runs about every 30 minutes throughout the day). The METRO Blue Line Extension, also known as the Bottineau Transitway, is planned to open in 2021 and runs through North Minneapolis. Stops may eventually be located at Golden Valley Road near Bassett Creek and in central Robbinsdale about two to three miles west of the EcoVillage cluster. The proposed Chicago-Fremont Arterial BRT (ABRT) would service the EcoVillage. Proposed high-frequency bus services would run on Fremont Ave N, about 0.6 miles from the center of the EcoVillage.

In order to assess the EcoVillage's Walk Score, a central (429 31st Ave N) parcel was selected. The Walk Score is 58 ("somewhat walkable), 45 for transit ("some transit), and 68 for biking ("bikeable").

## Zoning

The EcoVillage is zoned R3 while the northern edge along Lowry is zoned OR2. The City of Minneapolis states that R3 is a "medium density district [that] allows for a mix of single-family, two-family, and multiple-family dwellings." R3 development is typically no more than 2.5 stories. The OR2 zoning allows "for a mixed-use environment of moderate to high density dwellings and large office uses, with additional small scale retail sales and services uses" (City of Minneapolis Zoning District Descriptions, 2014).

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The Hawthorne EcoVillage project was possible due to a unique confluence of factors including financing, foreclosures, and strong leadership. The wide appeal of the “green” branding combined with collaborative efforts from the neighborhood, City, and nonprofits allowed the project to surmount various challenges. The next section will examine the geographical, demographic, political, and physical attributes of Railroad Island (RRI) within the context of Saint Paul. A summarized compare and contrast of the EcoVillage and Railroad Island is located prior to the recommendations section.



Green Homes on 6th St N in the EcoVillage

# RRI GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The Railroad Island neighborhood is situated in the southwestern portion of the Payne-Phalen District 5 area in Saint Paul, just northeast of downtown. Railroads bound the neighborhood to the north and west, Payne Avenue and Swede Hollow Park serve as a joint boundary to the east, and 7th Street East forms the boundary to the south. Although our group looked at Railroad Island as a whole for certain demographics, such as crime, transportation, and community and political organizing, PPL aided in the selection of the Focus Area in the northeast corner of the neighborhood based on the concentration of City owned vacant lots and development opportunity. Railroad Island is mostly located in Census Tract 330. However, Tract 330 was not sufficient because it only included one parcel within the Focus Area. Therefore, Census Tract 315 was included in the demographic analysis. Since the following analysis only provides highlights of the data gathered, Tables 1 through 6 in Appendix C contain the demographics in detail using 2010 Census data and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2008-2012 5-year Estimates. See Map 1 and Map 2 in Appendix D for the boundaries of Railroad Island and the relevant census tracts.

According to the 2010 Census, the combined population in Census Tracts 315 and 330 is 5,095. The majority of residents are between 25 and 35 years old (16%) with a median age of 28.1 years. Whites and African Americans represent the two largest groups at 34.6% and 28.8%, respectively. Asians comprise the next largest portion of the population at 22.8%, and 13.3% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. Of the Hispanic population, the majority specifies Mexico as their place of origin (10.7%). According to ACS 2008-2012 data, the dominant language second to English is Hmong, at 16.9%. 7.1% of Hmong speakers speak English less than “very well.”

In Census Tracts 315 and 330, 13.6% of the 1,574 housing units were vacant in 2010. Of the occupied housing units in the census tracts, around one third are owner-occupied and two-thirds are renter-occupied. White householders make up a majority of the homeowners at 55.7%, and 80% or higher of each of the non-white populations rent their homes. 63.7% of the households are family households.

According to the ACS 2008-2012 5-year Estimates, the highest proportion of residents in Census Tracts 315 and 330 have household incomes less than \$10,000 (in 2013 inflation adjusted dollars) at 21%. The median household income in 2012 was \$31,060, which is 37% of the 2012 HUD Area Median Income (AMI) of \$83,900 for a family of four (Metropolitan Council, 2014). Additionally, Asian householders have the highest median income at \$41,188 (49% of AMI), while African American householders have a median income of only \$8,979 (10.7% of AMI).

The ACS 2008-2012 data also reveals that 37.3% of the population in the census tracts is below the poverty level, 56% of which are people of color. Of the total African Americans for whom the poverty status is determined, 61.2% are below the poverty level. Housing cost burden is defined as paying 30% or more of income for housing costs. Figure 7 reveals the proportion of households with cost burdens by tenure. Overall, 42.6% of total occupied housing units are defined as cost burdened in Census Tracts 315 and 330.

In Census Tracts 315 and 330, 65.8% of the population is either a high school graduate (including the equivalency) or attended some college, while 26.1%

**Figure 7: Railroad Island Housing Cost Burden**

<b>ACS 2008-2012 Housing Cost Burden Census Tracts 315 and 330, Ramsey County, MN</b>		
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>1,326</b>	
Total occupied housing units paying 30% or more of income for housing costs	565	42.6%
<b>Total Owner-Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
Total owner-occupied housing units paying 30% or more of income for housing costs	178	35.5%
<b>Total Renter-Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>62.2%</b>
Total renter-occupied housing units paying 30% or more of income for housing costs	387	46.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

of the population achieved less than high school. Around 8.1% of the population has a higher education degree. Almost 22% of the civilian population 16 years and over in the labor force are unemployed. Of the same population, 5.4% do not have a vehicle and take public transportation to work. Most residents (85.8%) drive to work either alone or carpool.

## Summary of Demographics

Notable demographic findings from Census Tracts 315 and 330 include the following:

- The area is racially diverse with three different races composing the majority of the population (Whites, 35%; African Americans, 29%; and Asians, 23%)
- The population is young with a median age of 28 years old
- Two-thirds are renter-occupied units
- AMI is 37% of the 2012 HUD defined AMI for a family of four
- 58% of the residents below the poverty level are people of color
- Almost 43% of occupied housing units are cost burdened, meaning they are paying 30% or more of income towards housing costs

These unique characteristics should inform any community engagement processes for Railroad Island. It is also important to remember that the population is not homogeneous and there may be different needs and agendas within the community as a whole.

## A Study of the Railroad Island Focus Area

### Zoning

There are five zoning types found in the Focus Area: R4, RT1, and RM2, which allow for low to medium density one to two-family dwellings along with civic and institutional uses; and B2 and T2, which are intended for compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use areas of limited size, with a variety of residential, office and service. Figure 8 breaks down the proportions of each type, with R4 being the dominant zoning type at 49%. Map 8 in Appendix D details the zoning and land use in the Focus Area. Most current uses are compatible with the zoning type with the exception of single-family homes that may have been converted to duplexes or multi-family units and are zoned R4. Additionally, there are a two three-family homes zoned RT1, which is not compatible either. Many of the vacant parcels are zoned as R4, so zoning variances would be needed to develop any multi-family housing.

**Figure 8: Railroad Island Focus Area Zoning**

Zoning Codes	Definition	Number	Percent
R4	R4 One-Family	35	49.3%
RT1	RT1 Two-Family	11	15.5%
RM2	RM2 Multi-Family	5	7.0%
B2	B2 Community Business	1	1.4%
T2	T2 Traditional Neighborhood	19	26.8%

Source: St. Paul PED

**Total Properties 71**

\*629 Reaney Ave is on the same lot as 627 Reaney Ave, and is counted here as a separate property.

# Housing Tenure and Vacancy Status of Residences

Map 4: Land and Building Vacancies shows 70 parcels in the Railroad Island Focus area, 73% of which have structures. One parcel is unique in that there are two separate residences on the property (627 and 629 Reaney), so even though only 51 parcels have structures, there are technically 52 properties. The number of structures rather than parcels is used when calculating percentages associated with housing. Of the 52 structures, about 12% appear to be unoccupied (see Figure 10). Of all 52 structures, there are 46 occupied and six unoccupied structures – 43 and four of which are residential uses, respectively. Of the unoccupied buildings, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Saint Paul (HRA) own four. A large proportion of the land in the Focus Area is vacant at 27% (19 parcels); however, three of these parcels are parking lots and two parcels are owned by adjacent properties as side yard. Therefore, the proportion drops to 20% if those parcels are not included in the count (see Figure 1. Pie Chart Current Use in Appendix ). The Saint Paul Public Works Department owns two parcels and the HRA owns 12 parcels (Figure 9 details the status of each of the HRA owned parcels). The other parcels in the Focus Area are privately owned (see Map 3 in Appendix D for full information on parcel ownership in the Focus Area). See Table 7: Land Uses and Zoning in Appendix C for complete information on ownership and current use types.

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN

Map 4: 2014 Land and Building Vacancies



Figure 9

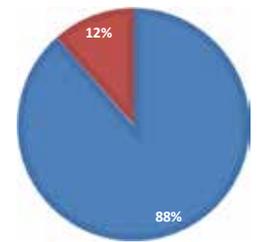
Analysis of Properties Owned by Housing & Redevelopment Authority of Saint Paul	
Address	Status
604 Bush	Splinter Parcel Program, on hold as side yard sale due to excessive police calls at neighboring
648 Bush 656 Bush 621 Minnehaha 629 Minnehaha 587 Reaney 618 Reaney 622 Reaney 626 Reaney	Categorized as Inspiring Communitis Large Site Redevelopment, disposition method is TBD
721 Payne 767 Payne 788 Payne	Splinter parcels held by economic development department for potential development

Source: St. Paul PED

Figure 10

**RAILROAD ISLAND FOCUS AREA  
OCCUPIED STRUCTURES**  
(HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY, OCTOBER 2014)

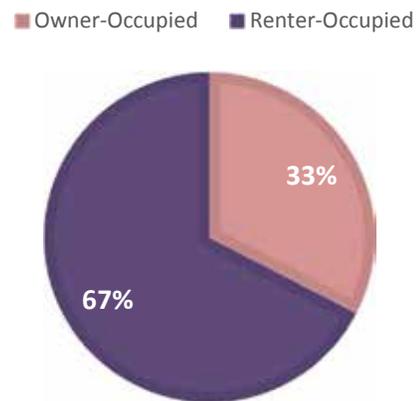
■ Occupied ■ Unoccupied



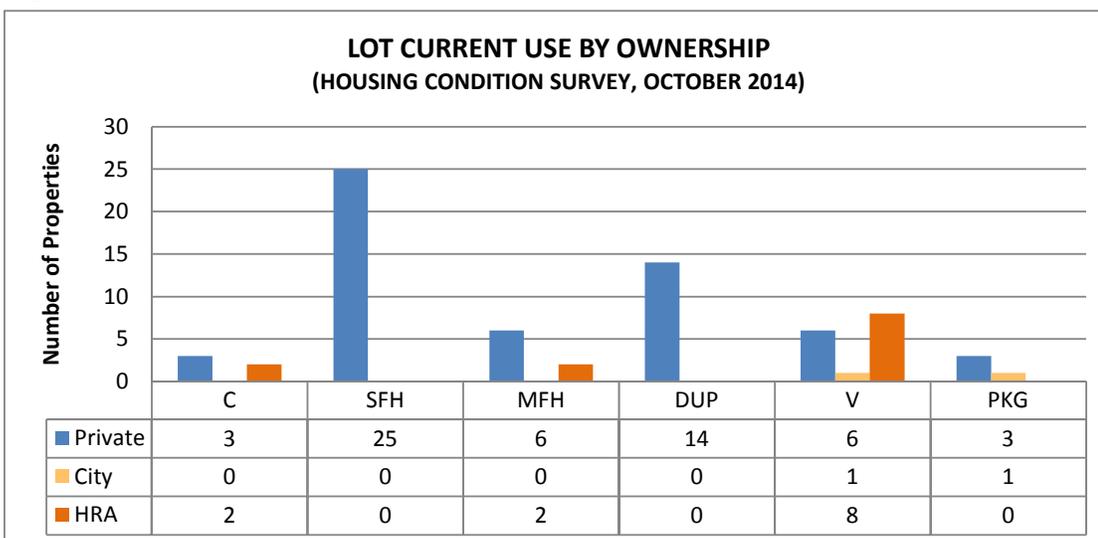
Unoccupied residences in Railroad Island Census Tracts 315 and 330 differ in terms of sale or rental status. In Census Tract 315, in which the Focus Area lies, 36% of unoccupied structures are for rent, 21% are for sale, and 43% are neither for sale nor for rent (see Figure 2 Percent Unoccupied by Tenure in Appendix E). Map 5 in Appendix D marks tenure of all structures located within the Focus Area. In Tract 330, a greater percentage of unoccupied structures are for rent (63%), and a lesser percentage is for sale (4%). The remaining 33% are neither for sale nor rent in Census Tract 330 (see Table 8. Summary of Residential Occupancy Tracts in Appendix C). Although current sale or rental status for properties in the Focus Area is unknown, all four of the current vacant structures are duplexes and small multi-family homes (four to six units), which are traditionally rentals. However, three of the four currently vacant structures in the Focus Area match the architecture and style of the surrounding single-family homes very closely. While both Census Tracts 315 and 330 have seen rising vacancy rates, the Focus Area has significantly fewer vacant structures; however, it has a greater percentage of vacant land than the rest of Railroad Island (see Figure 3 in Appendix E).

The Railroad Island Focus Area contains a variety of housing types including single-family homes, duplexes, and multi-family homes (see Figure 11 below for totals). Of these types, 75% of the multi-family homes, 86% of the duplexes, and 100% of the single-family homes appear to be occupied (see Figure 4 Occupancy Status by Current use in Appendix E, which details the occupancy status of residential properties in the focus area). Analyzing the 47 residential structures of the Focus Area more closely using Ramsey County Parcel Data, the majority of occupied residential properties are owner-occupied and the remaining are renter (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12**  
**RAILROAD ISLAND FOCUS AREA HOUSING TENURE BY OCCUPIED RESIDENTIAL UNITS (HOUSING CONDITION SURVEY NOVEMBER 2014)**



**Figure 11**



# Housing Condition Survey

At the request of PPL, a housing condition survey was conducted using a template developed by ESND on October 16th, 2014, which revealed the baseline condition of all structures in the Focus Area. This survey involved the observation of property exteriors from the street level, including the estimated level of repair required for numerous aspects of structure exteriors, including the siding, windows, roofing, and foundation – among other aspects. Ideally, the initial survey of housing conditions is to be followed up with a detailed door-to-door survey of key properties. The comprehensive housing condition survey of the Focus Area, as well as the original forms used to perform the survey, can be found in Appendix E (Figure 5: Housing Condition Survey Form) and the accompanying booklet of parcel data for each Focus Area property.

The housing condition survey also includes an overall evaluation of the housing exterior conditions, which takes into account observed necessary repairs. As illustrated in Table 9: Overall Quality of Residences in Appendix C structures were classified as “very good” (high quality, likely no or minimal repairs), “good” (in need of minor repair), “poor” (significant repairs needed), and “very poor” (major repairs or reconstruction). Among the Focus Area’s 47 residential structures, only one was found to be in “very poor” condition. This property is HRA-owned 656 Bush Avenue, constructed in 1880. Map 6: Housing Condition Survey shows the results of the housing condition survey as a map of the Focus Area below.

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN

Map 6: Housing Condition Survey



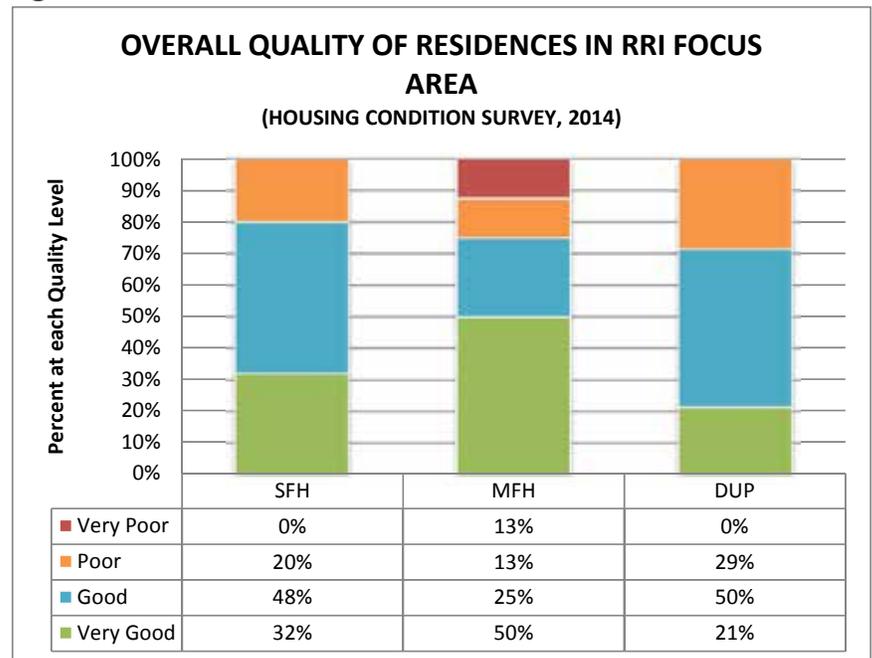
Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Ramsey County Housing Condition Survey on 10/16/14 (detached structures not included)

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Figure 13 to the right shows the quality breakdown of residential structures by residence type, revealing no significant difference in overall residential condition by property type. Overall, 75% of multi-family homes were either in “good” or “very good” condition, while 80% of single-family homes and 71% of duplexes were identified as such. When breaking down the housing condition survey data by tenure, no clear trends in terms of owner-occupancy versus renter-occupancy arise (See Table 10: Housing Condition by Tenure in Appendix C).

Although this survey provides some guidance as to the current condition of the housing stock of the Railroad Island Focus Area, it should only be used as a guide for future study and research. As this study was completed from street-level by a team of researchers, it is subject to potential bias or observer error. In addition, this study does not take into account interior conditions or structural quality of buildings, which was not visible in this cursory study.

Figure 13



## Age of Housing Stock

The age of the housing stock in the Railroad Island Focus Area echoes the housing condition survey, with many of the older structures of the area being in significantly poorer overall condition (see Map 9 on the next page). The median age of the housing stock within the Focus Area is 126 years. The average is slightly younger – 117 years – since there was a recent cluster of a few homes built in the 1960s. The newest multi-family homes constructed in 1964 are some of the properties in the best condition in the Focus Area (see Figure 14 below). The newest structure was built in 2001, though significant rehabilitation of another property, 586 Reaney Ave, took place from 2011 to 2012. Figure 15 shows the age of the residential properties in the Focus Area.

Figure 14

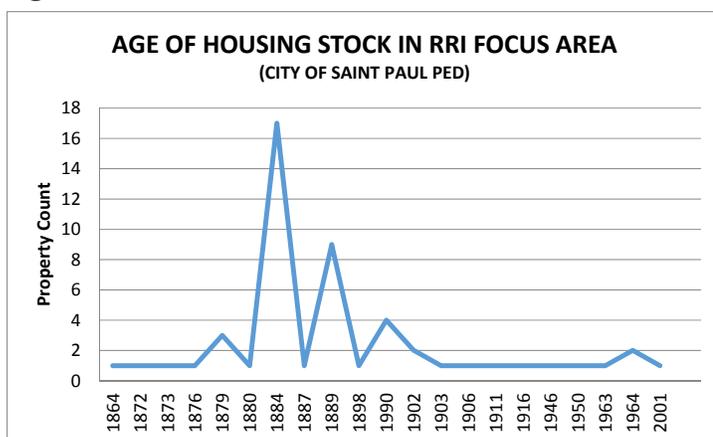
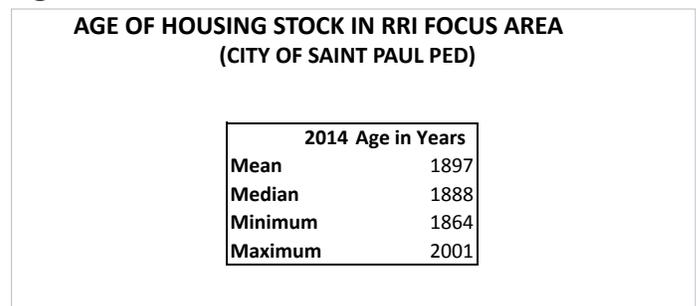
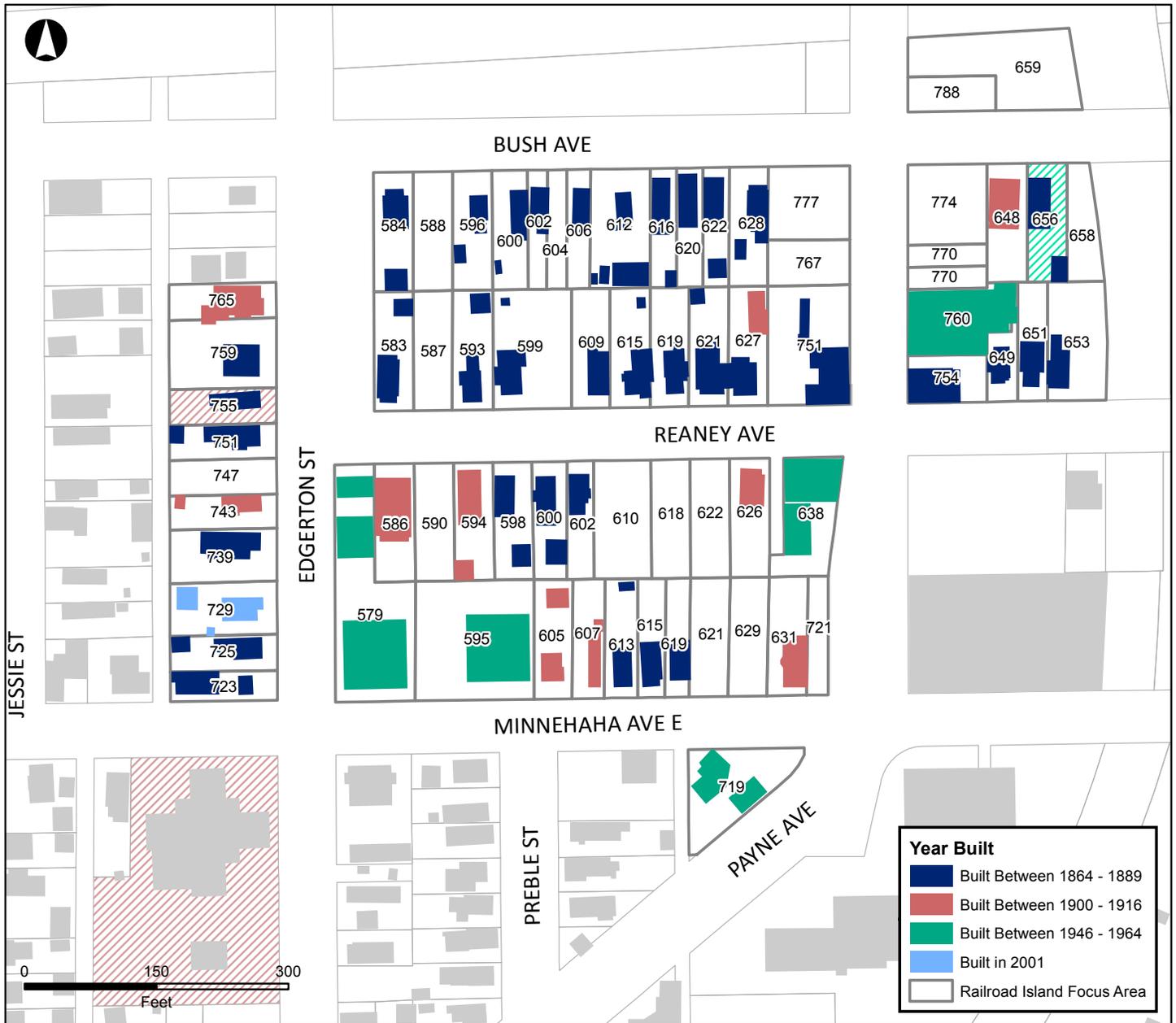


Figure 15



### Map 9: Age of Structure and Architectural Value



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Saint Paul Historic Preservation Commission; Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014



Resurveyed - this property was previously evaluated in the 1983 survey as holding significance and potential eligibility under the National Register. This property appears to continue to possess significance and is recommended for intensive-level research to determine eligibility for local and/or National Register designation.



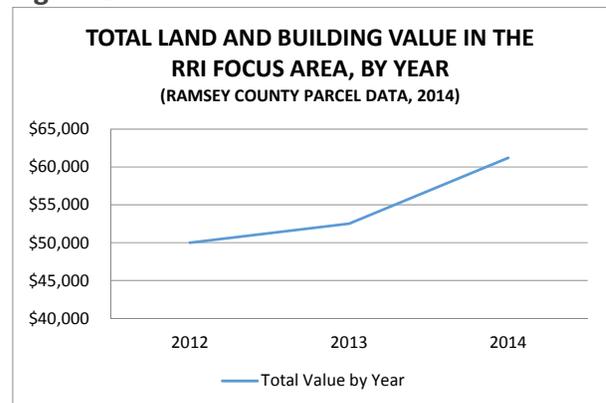
This property appears to possess significance and is recommended individually for intensive-level survey and research.

Three structures were identified as having potential historic importance due to their age and structural features. Two of these were surveyed in 1983 and again in 2011 and identified for intensive-level research to determine eligibility for national or local register designation (Mead & Hunt, 2011). One is the oldest structure in the focus area, 755 Edgerton Ave, which was built in 1864 and is currently vacant. The property in the poorest condition in the Focus Area, 656 Bush Avenue (built in 1880) was the second structure to be identified. Additionally, the shed behind 656 Bush may be of notable historic value because it is thought to have been moved from the historic Swede Hollow settlement before it was burned down in the 1950s. During the course of the housing condition survey, 626 Reaney Ave (built in 1903) was identified as a third property that should be carefully studied for potential architectural significance. It is currently vacant and owned by the HRA and sits adjacent to five vacant lots also owned by the HRA.



626 Reaney Ave

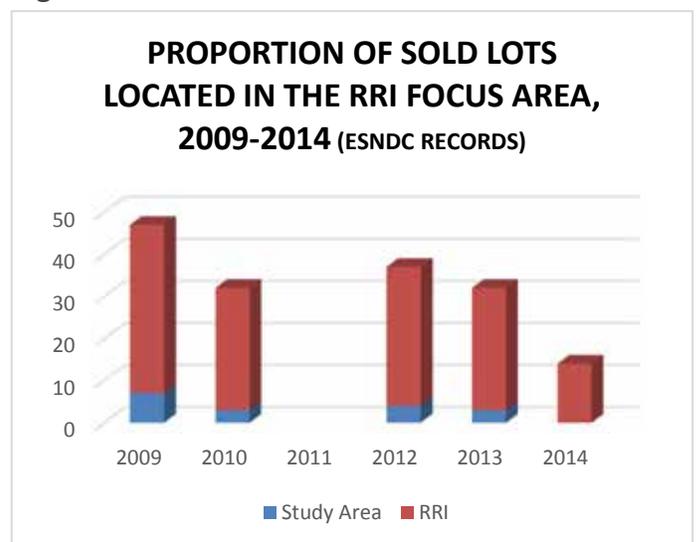
**Figure 16**



## Housing Values and Home Sales

According to ACS 5-year estimates for 2012, the median home value in Census Tracts 315 and 330 was \$130,824 (in 2013 inflation adjusted dollars). Data from the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County between 2012 and 2014 guided an analysis of the Railroad Island housing market, with particular attention to housing supply in the Focus Area. A map illustrating the data on property values in the Focus Area can be found in the Appendix D. Overall, estimated property values in the Focus Area increased from a median of \$50,000 in 2012 up to \$61,200 in 2014 (see Figures 16, as well as Table 11: Total Value of Parcels and Table 12: Lot Size and Value in Appendix C). Based on home sales data provided by ESNDRC realtors for 2009 through 2014 (excluding the year 2011), between 10% and 18% of all home sales in Railroad Island occurred in this approximate four-block area (see Figure 17). Generally this percentage has been decreasing since 2009 (see Table 13: RRI Home Sales and Table 14: Focus Area Home Sales Detail in Appendix C).

**Figure 17**



The Focus Area has an overall lower median sale price for homes (\$27,870) than Railroad Island as a whole (\$85,000). There were some outliers within the Focus Area, however, including one home (586 Reaney) that sold for \$230,000 in 2012. Overall, properties in the Focus Area sold for an average of 22% less than the original list price between 2009 and 2014, as compared to 15% less in Railroad Island overall. Two four-unit multi-family structures, four duplexes, and 11 single-family homes were sold in the Focus Area in the years observed for a total of 17 properties. The construction dates of these residences ranged from 1872 to 1906.



586 Reaney Ave

Overall, residential property sale prices have risen in Railroad Island since 2009. Generally, home sales in the Focus Area were about \$30,000 less than the average overall sale price in Railroad Island, with average sale differences ranging from \$1,000 (2012) to \$42,785 (2010; see Figure 6: Chart Average Sale Price in Appendix E). Homes in the Focus Area tend to spend fewer days on the market – a mean of 32 days as compared to 47 in Railroad Island.

Ramsey County also has records of the last sale price for most properties in the Railroad Island neighborhood, going back approximately 23 years. According to Ramsey County, the median last sale price for a property in the Focus Area from 1991 to 2014 was \$48,705, ranging from \$4,500 to \$650,001 (a multi-family structure at 579 Minnehaha Ave). However, some home sale data may be missing from this documentation (see Table 12: Lot Size and Value in Appendix C).



579 Minnehaha Ave

## Summary of Housing Characteristics

Notable housing characteristics from the Focus Area include the following:

- The Focus Area has a greater percentage of vacant land than the rest of Railroad Island
- The average housing age is 117 years
- Two-thirds are renter-occupied units
- Of the varying types of structures, an average of 24% are in Poor or Very Poor condition
- The median home value in Census Tracts 315 and 330 was \$130,824 in 2012

## Home Affordability Conclusions

As noted in the demographic analysis, Census Tracts 315 and 330 fall at about 37% of the HUD Metro AMI in 2012, which comes to an annual median income of \$31,060 in Railroad Island as compared to the Metro Area's \$82,900 for a family of four. According to the Livable Communities Act Ownership and Rental Affordability Limits for 2012, an affordable home for a family of four in Railroad Island would be priced at \$99,750. An affordable rent for a one-bedroom unit would be \$585 per month and \$698 per month for a two-bedroom unit (see Figure 18 below for details on other household sizes).

**Figure 18**

**Housing Affordability Levels by HUD AMI**

	Year	Year	Homeownership	Monthly Gross Rent Including Tenant-Paid Utilities			
	2012	2014		2014	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms
<b>Metro AMI</b>	\$83,900	\$82,900	\$266,000	\$1,558	\$1,870	\$2,156	\$2,404
<b>80% AMI</b>	\$67,120	\$66,320	\$212,800	1,247	1,496	1,725	\$1,923
<b>60% AMI</b>	\$50,340	\$49,750	\$162,500	\$935	\$1,122	\$1,284	\$1,445
<b>50% AMI</b>	\$41,950	\$41,450	\$133,000	\$779	\$935	\$1,078	\$1,202
<b>RRI AMI (37%; 37.5%)</b>	\$31,060	\$31,060*	\$99,750	\$585	\$698	\$809	\$902
<b>30% AMI</b>	\$25,150	\$24,850	\$74,000	\$466	\$560	\$646	\$721

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates from the US Census Bureau were used to approximate current AMI for Railroad Island. 2014 AMI calculations were used from the Livable Communities Act Ownership and Rent Affordability Limits for highest accuracy.

As median household income varies significantly by race and other demographics within the community, a mix of housing options – including very affordable and higher market-rate – are recommended.

The high rental and ownership cost burden levels within Railroad Island suggest that more affordable housing is needed in the community. Given local stakeholder concerns regarding quality of housing and a desire to see property values increase, future residential development should seek to infill existing vacant lots, upgrade existing structures of potential architectural value, and provide housing and rental options affordable at just below Railroad Island's AMI and up to 80% of the Metro AMI. This would mean constructing homes priced between \$100,000 to \$212,000 and rentals of all sizes ranging from \$466 per month to \$1,202 per month (Figure 19 details this recommended range).

**Figure 19**

**Recommended Mix of Housing Options for Railroad Island Focus Area**

	% Total New Stock	Home Price	Rental Range (1-4 BR)
<b>80% AMI</b>	25%	\$212,800	-
<b>60% AMI</b>	20%	\$162,500	-
<b>50% AMI</b>	30%	\$133,000	\$779-\$1,202
<b>30% AMI</b>	25%	\$99,750	\$466-\$721

Source: 2014 AMI calculations were used from the Livable Communities Act Ownership and Rent Affordability Limits for highest accuracy.

## Sites Identified for Possible Cluster Development

Lots in the Railroad Island Focus area are an average of 0.14 acres each, and homes have an average area of 1,540 square feet (see Figure 20 for summary data on Focus Area parcels). According to Ramsey County parcel data, an average of \$2,322 per parcel was paid in property taxes in 2013. Parcels have a median land value of \$7,200 and structures have a median value of \$64,000 by 2014 Ramsey County estimates. The average total value of Focus Area parcels, including land value and structures, is \$97,120, ranging from \$400 (the vacant lot at 658 Bush Ave) up to \$887,300 (the multi-family structure at 579 Minnehaha Ave).

Map 10: Development Areas in Appendix D shows proposed cluster development sites shaded in blue. In all, 18 adjacent parcels and one stand-alone HRA-owned lot (587 Reaney Ave) have been identified for potential future cluster development. These sites were chosen due to affordability, current ownership, proximity to each other, visibility from Payne Ave, and development potential. The HRA owns nine of these, five are owned by four different private owners, and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority owns one parcel. Detailed data on ownership, current land use, and total value of each parcel is available in the Appendix (See Table 15 Value and Ownership Focus Area Development in the Appendix C). The adjacent parcels cover 2.5 total acres, and are just over \$1 million in total value by 2014 Ramsey County estimates (see Figure 21 below).

**Figure 20**

### Total Value of RRI Focus Area Parcels

Value By Year	2012	2013	2014
<b>Average</b>	\$ 92,576	\$ 90,139	\$ 97,120
<b>Median</b>	\$ 50,000	\$ 52,500	\$ 61,200
<b>Minimum</b>	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400
<b>Maximum</b>	\$ 765,000	\$ 858,800	\$ 887,300

Source: Ramsey County Parcel Data, 2014.

**Figure 21**

### Summary Data for Potential Development Sites in RRI Focus Area, 2014

	Lot Size	Total Value	Property Taxes	Last Sale Price
<b>Mean</b>	0.145847	\$ 61,076	\$ 1,416	\$ 138,860
<b>Median</b>	0.139042	\$ 32,000	\$ 308	\$ 38,500
<b>Total</b>	2.479399	\$ 1,038,300	\$ 24,080	\$ 694,300

Sources: Data on value, property taxes (tax year 2013), and last sale price taken from Ramsey County data for 2014.

Current use, age of structure, size of lot, and ownership from Saint Paul PED, 2014.

It is highly recommended that PPL work closely with all stakeholders in Railroad Island, including local residents, to develop a project plan that is both economically viable for PPL as well as appealing to current and future residents. While this report does not intend to dictate how the future development will look, given the size, location, and zoning of the lots, the following are some potential future uses (see Table 16: Possible Uses in Appendix C for a summary of these recommendations).

- **Blocks 1 and 3:** The 1.7-acre cluster located in blocks one and three on either side of Bush Ave should be connected to the trail network of Swede Hollow Park and developed consistent with its current multi-family use, but with an attractive community gathering space, structured parking, and other community amenities. As a corner lot on a main arterial road, this site will likely become the flagship project of PPL in Railroad Island and should be an attractive addition to the community. Traffic calming measures will need to be taken in order to make this site viable for development. It is zoned T2, and so it will accommodate a variety of residential, community, and commercial uses.
- **Block 2:** A 0.3-acre vacant lot in block two at Bush Ave and Payne Ave faces the first cluster site. Currently zoned T2, it is suitable for clustered townhome development, apartment offices, or other similar uses. Given its proximity to the larger site on the other side of Payne, it would be a valuable addition to the development and likely an affordable purchase from the City of Saint Paul.
- **Block 5:** The one-acre cluster of vacant HRA-owned lots in block five (and the architecturally-interesting home at 636 Reaney Ave) would be an affordable purchase for PPL in development of townhomes or Eco-homes. Some of the higher-priced single-family homes could be built on this block, surrounded by privately owned homes that could take part in a PPL rehabilitation project.
- **Block 6:** The vacant gas station located at 719 Payne Ave might be an expensive investment in terms of acquisition from a private seller and by environmental clean-up costs, but its visibility on Payne Ave and proximity to Hope Academy make it an ideal location for potential community center or commercial development. This 0.22-acre site should be considered for development.



Blocks 1 and 3



Block 2



Block 5



Block 6

## Existing Transit System in Railroad Island

Railroad Island is comparatively well served by Metro Transit’s public transportation system. According to Walkscore.com, a website that evaluates neighborhoods based on their levels of non-automotive access; Railroad Island (defined here by a central address of 751 Payne Avenue) has a transit score of 47 on a 100 point scale. This level is considered “some transit” by the site. The Route 64 bus, a part of the Hi-Frequency Network, goes directly through the neighborhood by way of Tedesco Avenue, Burr Street, Minnehaha Avenue, and Payne Avenue. Traveling westward, this route goes directly into downtown Saint Paul and deposits downtown-bound riders in the central business district roughly ten minutes after departing Railroad Island. Traveling eastward, Route 64 diverges into two separate spurs that provide riders with access to the Maplewood Mall on a route through either North Saint Paul or Maplewood.

Route 64 is a high ridership route, which explains its robust service levels (see Figure 22 to the right). It is crowded throughout the course of the day and actually has even higher ridership levels during its non-peak times than it does during typical commuting hours (Metro Transit: Saint Paul East Side Transit Existing Conditions Report, 2013). Route 64 serves, by far, the largest proportion of Railroad Island’s residents. Route 64 bus stops within the boundaries of Railroad Island and has an average of 226 boardings each weekday and maintains high ridership even on the weekends with 180 boardings on the average Saturday and 122 boardings on a typical Sunday (MetroGIS Datafinder, 2014). Figure 23 shows comprehensive boardings data.

Railroad Island also has access to Metro Transit’s 74 and 61 lines along its southern border. At the intersection of East Seventh Street and Payne Avenue, riders can use these buses to access many parts of the Twin Cities. According to Google Maps, the walk from PPL’s study area in Railroad Island to the pickup point for these two routes is roughly 0.6 miles. This exceeds the routinely accepted half-mile that most riders will walk to reach transit. Transit dependent riders may have no choice but to make the walk to access these lines but it seems likely that choice riders may eschew them in favor of automobile usage. Based on boarding statistics for the routes, it is evident that most Railroad Island residents do not use these buses as their primary transit service. The bus stop serving these lines at the southern tip of Railroad Island averages just 16 boardings of the 74 bus on an average weekday and just 7 boardings of the Route 61 bus.

Figure 22

Figure 28a-Chart Passengers per In-Service Hour by Route Weekdays - 2012

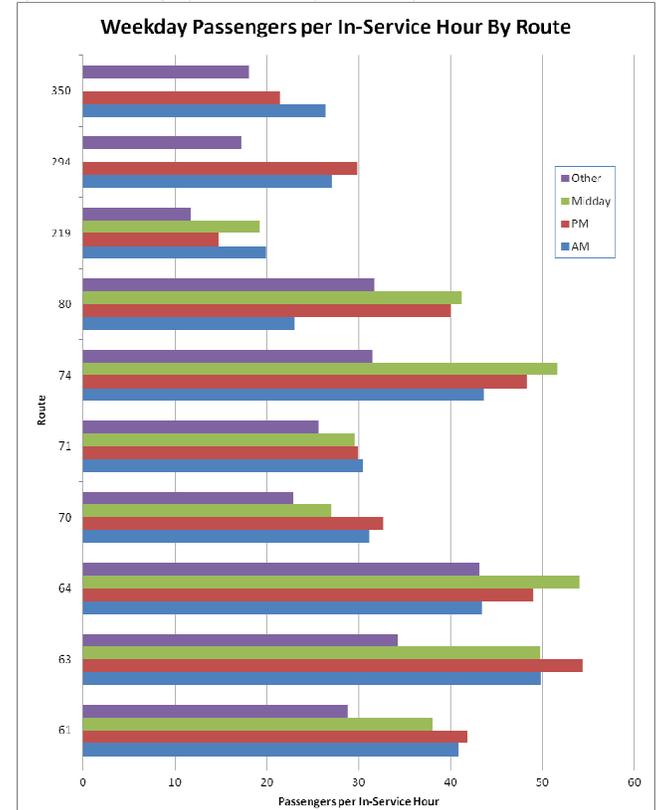
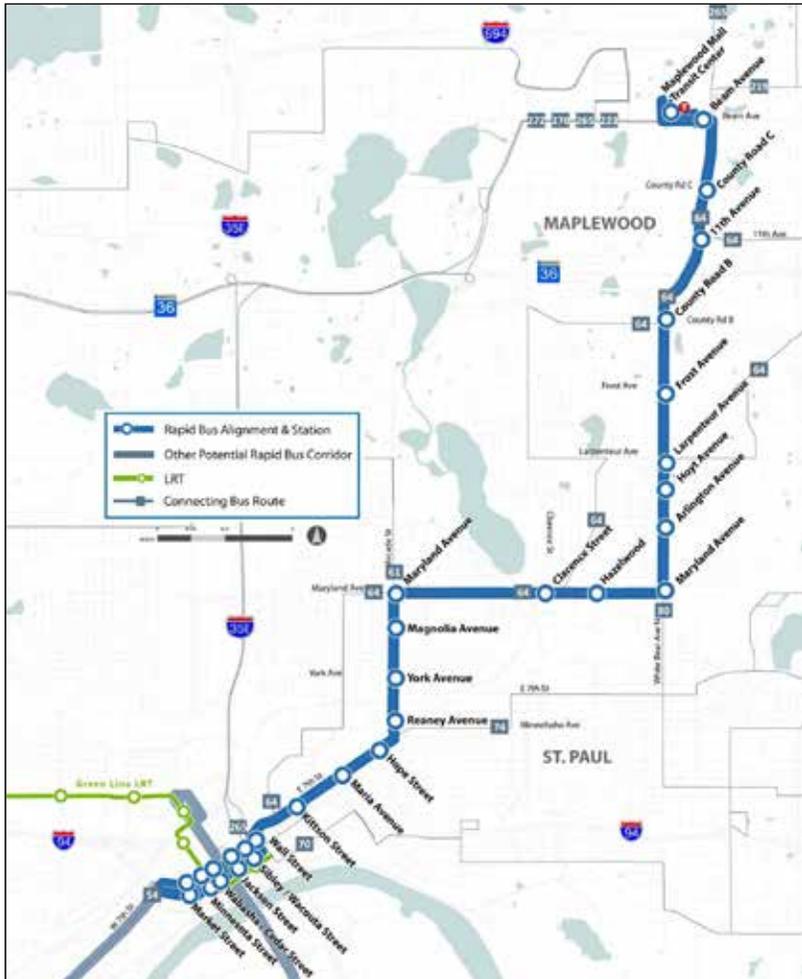


Figure 23

Route	Day	Boarded in RR Island	Got off in RR Island
61	Weekday	7	5
	Saturday	2	2
74	Weekday	16	16
	Saturday	11	16
	Sunday	7	8
64	Weekday	226	246
	Saturday	180	187
	Sunday	122	127

Route 74 travels westward to parts of West Seventh Avenue before servicing the Mac-Groveland and Highland Park Neighborhoods of western Saint Paul. Traveling eastward, riders have access to several East Side neighborhoods, the Sun Ray Shopping Center, and parts of Maplewood. Route 61 travels north from downtown Saint Paul skirting along the edge of Railroad Island and heading up to the border with Maplewood before heading westward towards Minneapolis. Route 61 provides service to the University of Minnesota Saint Paul campus, Saint Anthony Main, and downtown Minneapolis with several commercial and residential corridors along the way also receiving service.

Figure 24: East 7th Arterial BRT



## Potential Transit Improvements in the Area

Railroad Island would directly benefit from the East Seventh Street Arterial BRT, a premium bus service that was examined as part of Metro Transit’s Arterial Bus Rapid Transit study in 2012. Arterial BRT seeks to improve local bus corridors by increasing the presence of desirable amenities and improving speed and convenience. Not every corridor in the Twin Cities is a strong candidate for a light rail line, and Arterial BRT is seen as a way to confer many of the benefits of a premium service like light rail with far less expense and disruption to the neighborhood fabric. Arterial BRT routes would feature high amenity stations roughly every half mile with level boarding, prepaid ticketing machines, a schedule display with real-time updates, and potential shelter improvements like lighting and heat. The East 7th Street BRT, which has only been talked about in a very rough form, would provide additional service to some of the same service zones currently covered by the 64, 74, and 61 routes. It would travel from downtown Saint Paul to the Maplewood Mall and would serve the corridor in addition to the bus services already in place. The only route reduction discussed in the study was a culling of the downtown Saint Paul portion of the Route 61 bus.

At the time of the Arterial BRT study in 2012, Metro Transit evaluated 11 different corridors for inclusion in the planned Arterial system. The different corridors were ranked in terms of feasibility based on expected ridership increases, cost effectiveness, how much of a speed advantage the service had over existing buses, and several other metrics. For a number of reasons including the fact that East Seventh BRT would only reduce travel times by 11% and would yield fewer net “user benefits” than other corridors, the corridor did not perform as well as others. The study’s authors ultimately ended up recommending that the agency focus on several other routes before the East 7th Street alignment. While Arterial BRT is not forever off the table in the corridor, it should not be considered an impending catalyst for change in adjacent neighborhoods (Metro Transit: Metro Transit Arterial BRT Study, 2012).

## Future Transit Opportunities and Concerns

Transit projects yield benefits for neighborhoods when they bring increases in mobility and access. This often makes up for the fact that physically hosting transportation infrastructure often can have some unwelcome effects on neighborhood space. It is possible for a community to host cumbersome transportation infrastructure but experience no real direct benefit from its presence. Sometimes these situations might be unavoidable.

Swede Hollow Park is arguably one of Railroad Island’s most highly valued amenities, a serene natural oasis tucked into an otherwise bustling urban environment. The park has existed in its current form for many decades and has been maintained and improved by the City and committed community members. Parts of the park currently devoted to walking paths, are in all actuality, railroad right-of-way owned by the Ramsey County Railroad Authority. There has been talk of utilizing the right-of-way as part of the construction of a commuter rail service to the northern metro since as far back as the 1980s.



Bus stop at University Ave and Lafayette Ave

This alignment, known as the Rush Line Corridor, would bring workers between downtown Saint Paul and areas potentially as far north as Hinkley (Rush Line, 2014). Railroad Island residents would be unlikely to derive much direct benefit from such a service and could potentially see the park degraded by the infrastructure. Transit planners conducted walking tours of the park in November this year in order to solicit feedback from stakeholders in the project (Mohr, 2014). While rail proponents express confidence that the park is large enough to host both rails and trails comfortably, some local interest groups including Friends of Swede Hollow are ardently opposed to that sort of co-location. This discussion should be watched closely by any organization seeking to do community revitalization in the area since Swede Hollow Park is such a major local asset.

## Swede Hollow Park

In addition to its natural splendor, Swede Hollow Park is laden with historical significance having once hosted several immigrant communities in makeshift housing. Swede Hollow's charm derives largely from the fact that it is isolated from the surrounding urban fabric. One can wander into the park and quickly forget that one is in the center of a major American city. The downside to this separateness is that Swede Hollow is difficult to access from Railroad Island. Currently, the park can only be accessed at two points and neither one is especially intuitive from Railroad Island. One access point requires the user to walk all the way down to East 7th Street and reach Swede Hollow via the Bruce Vento Trail. The other access point requires a treacherous walk across busy Payne Ave into a small section of houses containing a garden with a small sign inviting pedestrians to explore Swede Hollow Park. There is no wayfinding signage anywhere else in the community and minimal traffic signaling to assist pedestrians in crossing Payne Ave to get to the park. This connectivity problem could be greatly improved by highly visible signage on Payne Ave and an additional bike and pedestrian connection connecting the neighborhood directly with Swede Hollow Park.



## Walkability and Bikeability in Railroad Island

Railroad Island residents, even those lacking motorized transportation, have a great deal of access to other Saint Paul neighborhoods. With its close proximity to downtown and the presence of commerce in the neighborhood, residents can get to a lot of resources fairly quickly by walking or biking. Walkscore.com also evaluates neighborhood walkability, making it possible to get a fairly comprehensive look at Railroad Island's transportation characteristics. Again, using 751 Payne Ave as the central address, a walkability score of "78" was calculated, which is considered highly walkable. The area also received a score of "78" for biking, which is considered highly bikeable. The neighborhood is in close proximity to many resources, which does make it technically quite bikeable and walkable. However, most of the infrastructure is not designed with the comfort of non-motorized users in mind and the lack of bike trails and harshness of much of the street environment likely deters many users who have other options. The next section lays out some recommendations for ways to make the environment more comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians.



Entrance to Swede Hollow

## Bicycle Infrastructure in Railroad Island and Potential Improvements

Railroad Island is currently nestled in the midst of a great deal of high quality bicycling infrastructure. However, a lack of straightforward connectivity means that many residents are not aware of how much access they actually have to these facilities. The Bruce Vento Trail is to west of Railroad Island and bike paths are also in place in Swede Hollow Park to the east of the neighborhood. Despite the excellent infrastructure that surrounds it, Railroad Island does not feel like a cyclist's utopia. The bicycling experience is disjointed and the trails are hard access. Payne Avenue needs to be crossed by any bicyclist hoping to get to either trail and it is neither bike friendly nor pedestrian friendly. The only assisted crossing in the study area is at Minnehaha Avenue. Generally, pedestrians are not willing to walk blocks out of their way in order to safely cross a street and will instead make risky crossings at the more convenient site.

Bike connectivity for Railroad Island would be greatly enhanced by some sort of bikeway that fed directly into Swede Hollow Park. Such a connection would allow for convenient recreational biking as well as more task-oriented and commuter biking throughout the region. Bush Ave, on the northern border of Railroad Island, has ample space to host some sort of bicycle infrastructure. This could be in the form of an off-street trail along the northern side of Bush, an area that is already occupied by green space. If for cost or engineering reasons this proved to be prohibitive, it would be a strong start simply to restripe part of the street for biking or to set the street up as a "bike boulevard." Bush Ave's intersection with Payne Ave would be an excellent location to place some sort of assisted crossing, perhaps a flashing light that could be illuminated by hand by bikers in need of safe passage. Currently, it is exceedingly difficult to cross Payne Avenue in Railroad Island.

Finally, on the eastern side of Bush Ave, the City should implement some sort of infrastructure connecting the point where the street currently dead-ends to the Swede Hollow Park trail system that is just down the bluff. Partially worn grass and shrubbery on the slope suggest that some pedestrians are already using Bush Ave as an access point. Reaney Ave, to the south of Bush Ave would also be a good candidate for this trail connection if Bush were deemed logistically infeasible. Making the trail connection paved and formal would allow cyclists, the elderly, the disabled, and all other groups access to the park system, improving quality of life in the area.

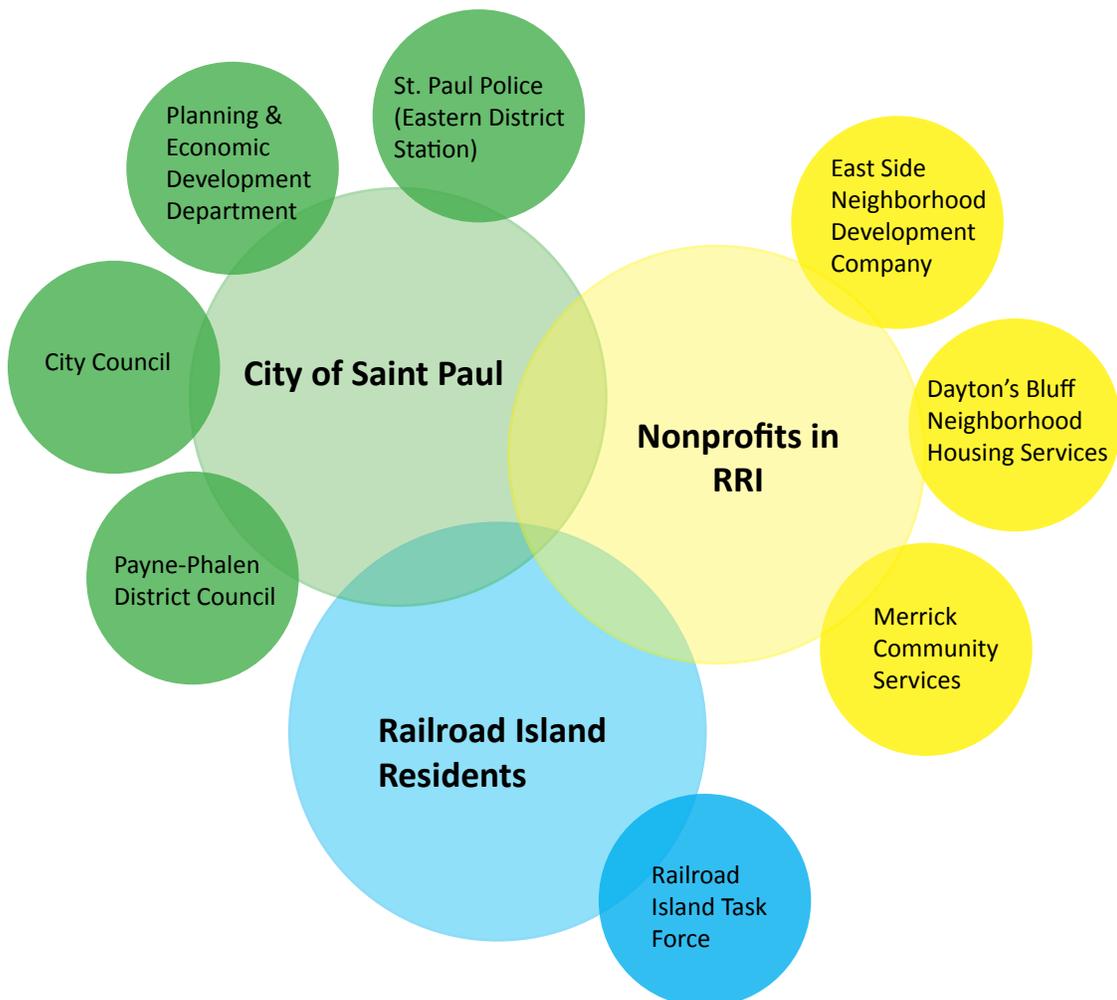
# RAILROAD ISLAND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Many stakeholders contributed to the design, construction, and implementation of Hawthorne EcoVillage. The buy-in and collaboration between these different groups was crucial for making the EcoVillage a reality. Understanding the political and community context of Railroad Island is an important factor for moving forward on this project. Through research and interviews, our group identified a list of stakeholders and their connection with the Railroad Island neighborhood. We found that multiple stakeholders are currently involved in varying types of redevelopment projects in and around Railroad Island. The diagram below shows stakeholders who are heavily involved in community projects in Railroad Island and their connection to one another. From the individuals we interviewed, we identified three main groups of stakeholders that have an investment in this neighborhood of Saint Paul: the City, nonprofits, and residents (See Figure 25 below).

Potential stakeholders are listed below that are in other ways involved in the community and could be promising partners for development projects. This is not a comprehensive list but is a starting place for stakeholders who could be included in the conversation for a future development plan:

- Merrick Community Services
- Friends of Swede Hollow
- Saint Paul City Council
- Local Businesses (A+, Morelli’s, Yarusso Italian Restaurant, La Palma Supermercado, Flat Earth)
- City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation
- Hope Academy Charter School
- Metro Transit

**Figure 25: Railroad Island Stakeholders**



## The City

The City of Saint Paul has two departments that currently have a presence in Railroad Island: Planning and Economic Development and the Saint Paul Police. In addition, the Saint Paul City Council and the Payne-Phalen District Council represent and support the residents' interests and goals.

### Planning and Economic Development Department (PED)

From speaking with City staff and reading over future planning documents, it is evident that there are a number of economic development and housing projects that are in the works in Railroad Island. The Saint Paul HRA has focused investment in cluster areas in neighborhoods most impacted by foreclosure and vacancy, and Railroad Island is at the top of the list. The City's PED Department "has chosen Railroad Island as a target cluster area for redevelopment of additional homes and vacant lots to create quality housing options" (Brendmoen, 2013). This is seen through the Inspiring Communities program, which offers assistance to developers with gap financing for construction of new housing on vacant lots and structures. The Saint Paul HRA owns 12 of the parcels in the Railroad Island Focus area, eight of which will be released through a Large Site Development Request for Proposals. The structure of the RFP is yet to be determined, so there is an opportunity to work with Inspiring Communities staff to help shape the process in a way that would be most beneficial for the neighborhoods of Saint Paul. Eventually, the Large Site RFP will be an annual occurrence similar to the existing Inspiring Communities Single Family RFP. Once the RFPs are released, both nonprofits and for-profit developers can bid on the sites. In an interview about the City's selection of nonprofits for these projects, the director of PED explained "nonprofits are typically chosen for their connection with the community, keeping those interests present during the development choices, and their understanding of the community context. Sometimes because of the lower overhead costs the City chooses to work with private developers; however, nonprofits are especially important because they usually work harder to make sure that their project will fit in with the neighborhood" (Sage-Martinson, 2014).

In general, PED will get involved and help fund a redevelopment project if the scale of the project fits in with the rest of the citywide goals. However, if the proposed project is small, for example at the single family house scale, the direction to get involved will typically come from the Council members, who work with the District Councils to find out the neighborhood's priorities. The City could also get involved depending on how many other players/partners are already involved.

Unlike Saint Paul, "Minneapolis is structured so that they are city council strong, meaning that the city will get involved in projects based on the council's interests whereas Saint Paul takes more direction from the Mayor and is more place-based. Typically, the Mayor is important for setting the 'themes' for the City and how it lands in the neighborhoods is usually set up by local partners" (Sage-Martinson, 2014). In addition, Mayor Coleman just announced this year that part of the 8-80 Vitality Fund will be used to reconstruct and streetscape the last remaining segment of Payne Ave between East 7th Street and Edgerton Ave. The 8-80 Vitality Fund is a unique funding opportunity that will contribute to the City's goals of bringing economic development, neighborhood livability, and pedestrian safety to this important commercial corridor. The goal of the reconstruction is to place more greenery, attractive lighting, and public art on Payne Ave. Earlier this year Saint Paul Public Works, PED, and the Saint Paul Design Center facilitated a public workshop to bring community members together to create design concepts for the Payne Ave street improvements. In addition, other recent City-assisted economic development projects include the redevelopment of Hamm's Brewery, Lower Payne street reconstruction and design, and clustering development.

## **Architectural Study for Payne-Phalen Area**

The City of Saint Paul is dedicated to protect and promote the heritage of the City by surveying and designating historic properties with appropriate significance. The City of Saint Paul's Historic Preservation Department conducted an architectural survey in 1983 and then again in 2011 to re-survey the Payne-Phalen neighborhood for structures that could be a historic site (Map 9 in Appendix D). Amy Spong at the City of Saint Paul explained that "in 2011, Railroad Island was recommended for further study because of the number of individual sites still present that have historic potential, but much was lost between the 1983 survey and 2011 and the consultants did not feel there was potential for a historic district anymore. An alternative could be a Conservation District, but Saint Paul does not have an ordinance for creating such a district" (Spong, 2014). Although the survey came back inconclusive for many sites, future redevelopment in the Railroad Island neighborhood should consider this study when moving forward with demolition projects.

## **City Council**

Railroad Island is unique in that three city wards intersect in the neighborhood. Although Railroad Island geographically falls under City Council Member Amy Brendmoen (Ward 5); Dan Bostrom (Ward 6), and Kathy Lantry (Ward 7) have support for and interest in Railroad Island as well. Finding an approach they agree on may be a challenge; however, all seem to be aware and supportive of neighborhood revitalization in Railroad Island. Council members will want to see results in a future redevelopment project in this area and will support a project if they hear about it from the residents. With the new city council election coming up in 2015, this could potentially change the political climate for Railroad Island. Saint Paul City Council president "Kathy Lantry announced that after nearly 16 years in office, she will not seek re-election in 2015" (Melo, November 20, 2014). Despite a possible change in City Council members, the message for any redevelopment in this neighborhood should explain to the Council how it will bring the neighborhood together and will reduce poverty and crime that this neighborhood has been dealing with for decades. Amy Brendmoen is committed to the issue of crime specifically and wrote an article recently that stated: "I remain committed to shining the spotlight on Railroad Island and surrounding neighborhoods" (Brendmoen, 2013).

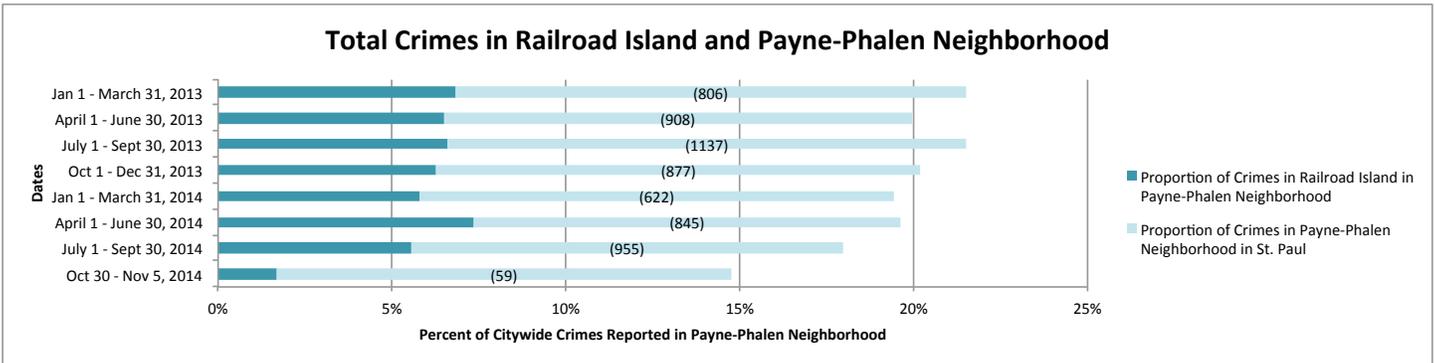
## **Payne-Phalen District Council**

The Saint Paul District Council system is unique in that it creates another level of community participation in the decision-making process and "provides a channel for communication with elected officials, City department staff, and other relevant agency representatives" (City of Saint Paul, n.d.). The governing board on the District Council is an elected group of residents that volunteer their time to "planning and advising on the physical, economic, and social development of their areas; identifying needs; initiating community programs; recruiting volunteers; and sponsoring community events" (City of Saint Paul, n.d.). The Railroad Island neighborhood lies at the southern tip of the Payne-Phalen District 5 Planning Council. The District 5 Council is very active about engaging and empowering all residents in the district and offers many events for the community to participate in. The District Council has subcommittees that also assist with community organizing; one of those is the Railroad Island Task Force (RRITF). The District Council supports and listens to the recommendations and advice from the RRITF and the executive director of the District Council sits in on their meetings to help with any questions that residents or business owners might have (See more about the Task Force on page 35).

## Police

Historically, the Railroad Island neighborhood has struggled with ongoing street crime and organized violence. The “seriousness of these problems was underscored recently when a Metro State student who lived in the area suffered a random, brutal attack by gang members” (Brendmoen, 2013). According to data provided to our team by the Saint Paul Police Department, the Payne-Phalen Neighborhood is the highest crime community of all of the district council neighborhoods of Saint Paul in the past eight quarterly crime reports (about 15% citywide).

**Figure 26**



The following chart shows, however, that Railroad Island itself has had a crime rate much less distressing over the past two years. From the crimes in Payne-Phalen, about 6 - 7% of the total crimes were located in Railroad Island and that statistic has stayed very consistent over the past eight quarters, from January 1, 2013 to present (see Figure 21). Since the beginning of 2013, the Railroad Island neighborhood has only experienced 86 crimes, with the majority being burglaries and small-scale thefts. Railroad Island does not have a crime profile as deleterious as the Hawthorne neighborhood did prior to the intervention of PPL and its partners.

**Figure 27**

Crime in Railroad Island Proper Since 1/1/2013	
Type of Crime	Occurrences
Aggravated Assault	9
Attempted Rape	1
Attempted Burglary	2
Auto Theft	8
Burglary	30
Highway Robbery	3
Forcible Rape	5
Robbery	2
Theft from Autos	4
Theft of Auto Accessories	4
Other Theft under \$500	14
Other Theft under \$501-\$1000	3
Other Theft Over \$1000	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>

However, unlike in the Hawthorne neighborhood, the Saint Paul Police are already very present in Railroad Island. Their Eastern District Police Station is located on Payne Ave directly adjacent to the Focus Area and the police station has traditionally been where the RRITF and Community Policing meetings are held due to lack of options in the neighborhood. The underlying feeling within the community is that the crime mostly comes from youth. In a recent letter to the Capital Improvement Budget Committee at the City, the RRITF expressed that they “see a clear need for expanded programs to effectively serve youth ages 14 to 18. There have been outbreaks of violence and neighborhood disturbances that could be curtailed with effective programs and supervised activities” (Railroad Island Task Force, 2013).

To keep the residents updated on these statistics, the Saint Paul Police host Community Policing meetings for the whole East Side of Saint Paul at the Eastern District Station. These meetings have been ongoing for a long time and are held twice a month. We interviewed RuthAnn Eide, who is the Eastern District Crime Prevention Coordinator in charge of responding to PED applications for Emergency Rehab Funding and the Minnesota Crime Free Rental Housing Program. The program is designed to partner and educate rental property owners and managers to keep drugs and illegal activity out of rental property. To get a sense of how the police view new developments in Railroad Island we asked for Eide’s perspective and she explained that “there is opportunity for

higher density housing in Railroad Island, but that it also could create more police calls because of people living in close proximity of each other. The police frequently receive calls about noise, smoking, and overall fear of other neighbors” (Eide, 2014). For more information on crime in Railroad Island she suggested contacting Marcia Moermond, a research analyst for the City, and Matt Toupal, Senior Commander.

## Nonprofits

The community based organization infrastructure is represented in Railroad Island by three nonprofits: East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC), Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (DBNHS), and Merrick Community Services.

### East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC)

ESNDC is a “36 year old locally governed community development corporation (CDC) whose mission is to foster a safe, diverse, and thriving neighborhood by engaging the community to create affordable housing and support commercial development” (ESNDC). The CDC works with multiple partners to support the East Side by building affordable housing and commercial development. ESNDC is currently proposing a multi-story affordable family apartment building, with units at 60% AMI with limited street-level commercial space on an HRA owned site at Bush and Payne Ave. The CDC has recently been awarded Metropolitan Council’s Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) Grant (to be discussed in greater detail). This project is part of a proposed six-block transit-oriented development redevelopment area, south of the intersection of Payne Ave and Phalen Blvd. New single-family, cluster and renovated housing is also being planned.

### Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (DBNHS)

DBNHS was established in 1980 and is a prominent nonprofit single family and multifamily housing developer in the Dayton’s Bluff area and in Railroad Island. DBNHS has been working on a housing development plan in Railroad Island called “Village on Rivoli”, which will be located off Minnehaha Ave and Rivoli St. The plan was created in the early 2000s and has been conceptualized for years, including being detailed in the community’s small area plan. Our group interviewed Jim Erchul, the executive director of DBNHS, who had a lot to say about the project and the neighborhood.



Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services  
Source: [dbnhs.org/](http://dbnhs.org/)

Erchul explained that Rivoli Plan was put on hold when the foreclosure crisis hit but is now gaining momentum again and is planned to break ground in Spring 2015 with 35 new construction, single family homes that he is estimating with take about three or four years to sell. In addition to the new construction, DBNHS will continue to rehab older housing units around the neighborhood. The plan is to sell houses that are affordable to a range of incomes and generate upward mobility for non-white, young families. The Rivoli Plan consists of courtyard

houses, similar to Milwaukee Street in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, but with more shared backyard green space. In addition, the plan calls for a solar garden to produce net zero energy for the houses not only in the Rivoli Plan area but the whole Railroad Island neighborhood. DBNHS is working on a study right now to determine the financing methods for this; however, the difficult part will be getting the contract figured out with Xcel Energy. DBNHS is focusing on renewable energy sources because reducing utility costs are a shared objective by both homeowners and renters. The hope is that this will incentivize renters to get involved and participate in the planning process since traditionally they do not have the time or interest to get involved. The plan will be implemented in phases and is staggered because it depends on how much money DBNHS secures. The first phase was multifamily brownstones on Payne Avenue that the City provided assistance to construct. Erchul explained that while the brownstones are now seen as a success by the community, they were extremely hard to sell because they were market rate and required more built in amenities to attract the middle-income families to the neighborhood.

In addition to funding restraints, the Rivoli Plan has been put on hold a few times due to residual effects from the foreclosure crisis, and low interest rates coupled with rising construction costs because of tight labor. After the brownstones were built, the City appeared to be more reluctant in providing financial support because the City wants to see more multi-family housing and higher density. The issue Erchul explained is that long time residents are wary of drastic change and feel that it would change the character of the neighborhood. Another issue is that there have been many plans and studies of this neighborhood but they have lacked implementation and follow through.

The main partners for the Rivoli plan have been the RRITF, the City, and a youth building program that employs youth for construction projects. Recently, DBNHS has received \$100,000 in grant money from the City and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) to begin construction. DBNHS has a request before the City's Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) Board for about \$300,000 and more than \$200,000 in STAR funding has already been devoted to the project. As Jennifer Jordan from the City of Saint Paul also confirmed, Erchul explained that there are really only two places to receive funding for affordable housing development: the City and MHFA. There are not any specific green building grants available because green building requirements are now integrated into all housing grant requirements. In addition, much has changed in the amount of money the City can award for affordable housing projects. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program started in the 1970s with a large pot and has dwindled down over the years.

Despite being put on a hold a few times, it is one of the key objectives for the District Council and the RRITF, and both groups have a long history of support for this plan. In addition to the Rivoli Plan, over the last decade the City has worked with DBNHS in developing and rehabilitating over 40 units of ownership housing.

## **Merrick Community Services**

Merrick Community Services has been working in Saint Paul's East Side since 1908 and provides services to thousands of individuals and families "in transition from poverty to independence" (Merrick Community Services, n.d.). These services include a food shelf, employment services, family services, and after-school programming at Hope Community Academy located in Railroad Island. Merrick has been an essential part of the Railroad Island community for over 100 years and the RRITF vocally supports Merrick's plans: the "RRITF's primary purpose is to revitalize Railroad Island and Merrick is an essential part of our future in making it a more vibrant community" (Railroad Island Task Force, 2013). Merrick has partnered with the RRITF



Source: [www.dbnhs.org/](http://www.dbnhs.org/)

in multiple events, including National Night Out earlier this year. Merrick previously had an office and community center in Railroad Island and is now trying to move back to the area again. According to the chair of the Task Force, they are looking at a site on the southwest corner of the neighborhood.

## **Residents**

### **Railroad Island Task Force**

The Railroad Island Task Force is a volunteer staffed community group recognized by the Payne-Phalen District Council, whose role is to advise and provide recommendations on projects in Railroad Island. The Task Force originally came together as a group of concerned residents in the 1970s to revitalize the community after multiple large industries left resulting in a loss of jobs. Directly east of Railroad Island was the location for big businesses with large factory jobs (Hamm's, 3M, Whirlpool) and in about 15 years these companies moved their headquarters and jobs to Maplewood and other places, which resulted in about 5,000 to 7,000 lost jobs. At around the same time, Payne Ave used to be a red light district and families were wary of living near this area. Houses were used for drugs and later were demolished but this was impetus that brought people together. Coming out of the 1980s the group of residents that were still left formed the Task Force to continue efforts to revitalize the area. ESND and the formation of the Saint Paul District Councils also came together around this time and the Task Force continues to meet and work on community issues with the District Council and City Council members.

Currently, Don Lorr and Mike Pennig are co-chairs for the Task Force and are the only two that are elected (nominated). Both started in January 2014. The executive board also consists of a secretary who takes notes and a representative from the Payne-Phalen District Council, which is currently Leslie McMurray. McMurray helps facilitate meetings and is a resource if any questions come up during the meeting. All residents and business owners who live and work in RRI are welcome to participate in the Task Force. When projects come to the Task Force, the group advises through a voting process to the District Council who provides the recommendations to the City. The City is not legally obligated to take the recommendations from the Task Force but when development is happening or there are changes to the neighborhood, the City is required to provide a role to help with the process.

The RRITF partners with many groups for these projects such as, but not limited to, the City, Ramsey County, police force, Jim Erchul from DBNHS, Dan Rodriguez from Merrick, and sometimes other people in specific areas depending on the topics in the meetings. This can range from City staff, Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) staff, current local business owners, Friends of Swede Hollow in Dayton's Bluff, and residents and business owners who are interested in moving to the area.

The RRITF meets at the Eastern District Police Station, which is somewhat problematic for encouraging a diverse group of meeting participants. The Police Station location could be a barrier to some potential attendees who may be distrustful of the police. Because the catalyst for many of the past meetings was crime, the meetings have historically been at the station. Another barrier is that typically renters are not present at the RRITF meetings. On a positive note, the station is well-known and recognizable.

The RRITF is currently working on a number of projects, in addition to writing plans for the neighborhood. In 1997 and 2007 the RRITF wrote an updated small area plan, which is their vision for the future of the neighborhood. The main issues addressed in the 1997 plan included the rundown buildings, crime, a surfeit of rental housing and not as many options for homeownership, and street improvements. In 2007, the plan was more focused on District Council objectives and addressing the issues that had not changed in the last 10 years. During one of their planning meetings, the RRITF participated in exciting workshops to help design the new brownstones on

Payne Ave in a charrette-style process. The stretch of Payne Ave that the brownstones were built on “used to be prime real estate for drug dealers, prostitutes and other ne’er-do-wells” (Havens, 2009). The Task Force saw these brownstones as a success. The homes are geared for middle-income homeowners and are intended to draw a mix of income levels to the neighborhood and connect the neighborhood to downtown.

As previously mentioned, an ongoing objective includes DBNHS’s Rivoli Bluff Plan. Residents have written letters of support and have gone in front of City Council to support the plan. Because Railroad Island has some of the highest proportion of rental units and land vacancy in the city, the Task Force is very supportive of homeownership. The chair of the Task Force expressed that “they are open to fresh ideas but it needs to fit into the historic character of the neighborhood. The Task Force does not want their neighborhood to be a place to drive through or around but a place that people go to visit. The residents want to be excited about new development and they want to participate in the discussion to plan for it” (Lorr, 2014).

The Task Force has also been working on forming a neighborhood identify and branding initiative. Railroad Island has many great assets, both historical and new, and the Task Force is looking for an identity that ties the two together. Other plans that the Task Force are involved with are the Rush Line transitway, City redevelopment plans, and the Payne/Bush redevelopment that ESNDP recently proposed to the Task Force at the November 2014 meeting. In addition, the RRITF does community clean ups, hosts National Night Out, and a few other events a year. The chair of the Task Force expressed that they would like to do more community outreach and organizing but since it is a volunteer position the capacity and resources are limited.

## **PPL's Prior Experience with Green Development and Clustered Revitalization**

PPL has extensive experience in green development and typically tries to incorporate sustainability elements into its projects. One of their larger projects in Saint Paul, the Fort Road Flats on West Seventh Street, features several elements of sustainable building design. According to PPL's website, the complex has energy efficient features and appliances and a rainwater management system that retains over 90% of rainwater for irrigation. The apartment also has ample bike parking and was strategically located on a transit corridor to facilitate non-automotive means of conveyance (PPL, 2014).

PPL's primary experience with "cluster revitalization" to date is their work with the Hawthorne EcoVillage in North Minneapolis. The EcoVillage name was derived from the community's desire for a neighborhood that modeled innovative sustainability techniques. PPL rehabbed properties that were deemed salvageable by enhancing them with green features. High-efficiency water heaters were installed, new windows and better insulation were put into place and other minor tweaks were made to make the properties comfortable and marketable. PPL also constructed a new house at 400 31st Ave North which is LEED for Homes Platinum Certified. In addition to PPL's housing contributions, other organizations such as Habitat for Humanity have also stepped in to contribute housing projects. The neighborhood is well on its way to recovery thanks to the combined efforts of these different organizations clustering their efforts and resources on one specific place in need (Hawthorne EcoVillage, 2012).

## **Green Building Strategies: Enterprise Green Communities**

The City of Saint Paul, through its Inspiring Communities Program, recommends that developers pursuing a green strategy familiarize themselves with Enterprise Green Communities certification criteria and seek to develop in accordance with their design guidelines. It is likely that PPL already has a firm understanding of most of the green building initiatives and certifications that are relevant in the context of the Twin Cities market, including this program. If, however, some elements of the Enterprise Green Communities are unknown to PPL, they would be well served by a careful reading of the very comprehensive documents available on Enterprise Green Communities' website. Their criteria fall into eight different categories. They gauge a project's "greenness" based on integrative design, location + neighborhood fabric, site improvements, water conservation, energy efficiency, materials beneficial to the environment, healthy living environment, and operations + maintenance. Each section has achievements that are mandatory and others that result in the gaining of additional optional points towards certification.

The integrative design component requires the holding of a green development plan meeting and the drafting of a document detailing how the project will be setting out to achieve the Enterprise Green Communities certification. Additional points are allocated for meeting accessibility goals. The "location and neighborhood fabric" components mandate that the project pay attention to such measures as the walkability of the neighborhood, the preservation of open space, the ability for the project to be smoothly integrated with all existing city infrastructure, and the protection of wetlands and other sensitive lands. Optional additional points are available for achieving transit accessibility, converting former brownfield sites, and for situating the project in a pre-certified LEED for Neighborhood Development area.

The site improvement components section compels the builder to be mindful of such elements as landscaping, low impact development, efficient irrigation, and erosion control. It also gives additional points for surface stormwater management. The water conservation section requires that water conserving fixtures be implemented in the building. It also advises that water be reused whenever possible and awards additional points if this can be achieved. The energy efficiency section has mandatory prescriptions for energy efficient lighting, right-sizing the heating/cooling system, and installing an electricity meter in all of the dwelling units. It also incentivizes the use of renewable energy and building in such a way that the house can later be easily converted to a solar hot water system.

The “materials beneficial to the environment” section mandates that care be taken to use paints, sealants, and adhesives that are minimally environmentally destructive. It also requires that at least 25% of the non-hazardous construction waste and demolition waste be diverted, salvaged, or recycled. This section awards additional points to developers who commit to using recycled materials in their project or using materials that were sourced from a local supplier within 500 miles of the build site. The “healthy living environment” section mandates that composite wood products that are used emit either no or low amounts of formaldehyde. It also requires exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens, a house-wide ventilation system that meets certain standards, and a series of mold prevention measures. The final section, “operations and maintenance,” requires that the builder provide a maintenance manual that informs tenants of maintenance policies and schedules. A comprehensive orientation and walk-through of the building is required for all residents and new managers. Finally, a significant amount of additional points are available if the developer collects data on the project’s performance on energy, water, and the living environment for at least five years.

Enterprise Green Communities appears to be the environmental certification most favored by the City of Saint Paul. As PPL works to further deepen their relationship with the City, it seems like it would be helpful to embrace these green metrics if it has not already been done. PPL has expressed a strong confidence throughout the course of this project in their ability to keep up with new developments in the field of green development. It would be in keeping with the principles of the organization to explore new green building opportunities whenever they present themselves (Enterprise Green Communities, 2014).

## **Green Building Strategies: The Twin Cities Green Products and Services Directory**

The City of Saint Paul also recommends that sustainability-oriented developers seeking to build in the City familiarize themselves with the Green Products Guide. The guide, a compendium of green materials and service providers in the Twin Cities metro area, was originally compiled in 2009 at the request of the mayors of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. It is routinely updated to reflect additions to the green services community in the Twin Cities. The most recent updates to the list were made in May of 2014. The list is divided up into the following five sectors: manufacturing/products, business/professional services, renewable energy/utilities, conservation/efficiency/reuse, and water processing. As “buying local” is often seen as an important component of an environmentally friendly development approach, this list could be a useful resource in PPL’s green strategy (Marcus, Triemstra, and Miel, 2014).

## **Cluster Development Strategies from Around the Country**

The following section contains brief synopses of several different groups that are engaged in cluster revitalization the United States at this time. The goal of this section is to provide PPL with an overview of best practices associated with cluster development to inform future plans.

### **City of Sheboygan “Gateway Revitalization Program”**

The City of Sheboygan, Wisconsin recently partnered with the Gateway Neighborhood Revitalization Program (GNRP) to bring about a slew of changes in the Gateway neighborhood area. The initiative targets two specific clusters in the Gateway Neighborhood, the Huron Avenue West Cluster, and the Erie Avenue Area cluster. The GNRP is recommending using affordable housing infill to achieve much of the revitalization, coupled with a new bike path and streetscaping measures (City of Sheboygan, 2011). Habitat for Humanity is involved with the project and recently broke ground on the first of six planned single-family homes in the area. The City of Sheboygan has invested about \$400,000 in the project, using Community Development Grant funds. Their approach includes demolishing blighted houses, readying the resultant sites, re-platting them, and selling the new lots to Habitat for \$10,000 (Weyandt, 2014).

### **Cultural Clusters**

A research paper by Mark Stern and Susan Seifert (2010) titled “Cultural Clusters: The Implications of Cultural Assets Agglomeration for Neighborhood Revitalization” looks at how neighborhoods with a significant presence of “culture” can use that as a foundation for revitalization. They found that local culture could play a major role in making a neighborhood more vibrant and livable, and often did so even in situations where the public sector made almost no effort to nurture the creative environment. The authors contend that government and philanthropic interests could stand to take a more active role in guiding the success of some of these creative placemaking endeavors. At some level, after all, cities are getting free benefits from artists and artisans who provide vibrancy to the area free of charge. At a minimum, the City needs to provide safe and clean streets, taking care of all the background atmospheric issues so that local talent has a good environment in which to produce revitalization.

Railroad Island has the potential to be a cultural cluster with its commercial strip full of multinational restaurants, the presence of a nearby brewery, and the vibrant history that is throughout the neighborhood and in Swede Hollow Park. PPL and other nonprofits working in the area could partner with the City to help accentuate Railroad Island’s heritage. There is a great deal of existing value in the Railroad Island name and PPL, the City of Saint Paul, and other nonprofit developers should work towards building up the Railroad Island identity rather than trying to impose a new brand identity upon the area as was done for the Hawthorne EcoVillage.

### **Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven**

This nonprofit organization takes a similar approach to what PPL and its partners accomplished in Hawthorne. They are specifically targeting “Newhallville,” a neighborhood in the New Haven that is, for many, associated with elevated crime and substandard housing. The organization is gutting and rehabbing clusters of housing throughout the neighborhood and striving to bring about increases in owner-occupancy. The refurbished houses are sold at an affordable level to qualifying families (Carter, 2011).

## Jamestown Renaissance Blocks

The Jamestown Renaissance Corporation hosts a yearly contest in which different clusters of neighbors in Jamestown, New York compete for grant money with which to perform minor upgrades to the exteriors of their houses. In 2014, 12 clusters of neighbors competed for the funding opportunity and seven were selected to receive funding, totaling in 97 property owners. Each owner is eligible for a matching grant of up to \$1,000 to complete a wide range of exterior improvements on their property. They still need to contribute towards the project, but the Renaissance Block program makes their money go further. The program is designed to encourage neighborhood residents to work proactively and make connections with each other for the aesthetic and financial betterment of the whole neighborhood (Jamestown Renaissance Corporation, 2014).

## Neighborhood Development Zones and Model Blocks in Miami

Miami has neighborhood development zones but recognizes that the neighborhood level is too large for community revitalization to have real impact. They focus on Model Blocks within each of these neighborhoods and hope that visible and concentrated revitalization of these blocks will be contagious and spread throughout the rest of the neighborhood. A major focus of the initiative is economic revitalization so each of the Model Blocks that is selected is near to a commercial corridor. The Model Blocks receive added prioritization from the City for receiving community development funding within the neighborhood development zones which receive prioritization over the rest of the city (City of Miami, 2014).

## Rebuilding Together: Rebuilding Day

Rebuilding Together, a national organization with a chapter in the Twin Cities, employs the cluster strategy more informally with a daylong event each year where a large group of community volunteers comes together to make targeted improvements in low-income neighborhoods. In cities where the organization operates, it selects one or two neighborhoods each year to target with the program. For a one-day event each year, an army of volunteers is sent into the target neighborhoods to tackle small maintenance problems for residents who lack the resources to do repairs themselves. The focus is on increasing safety and quality of life for residents. In addition to the once yearly intensive day of volunteer rehabilitation, the organization provides ongoing home maintenance support to communities in need, mostly with volunteer labor.



**Rebuilding Together at the EcoVillage.**  
Image from [adventuresofjohnnynorthside.blogspot.com](http://adventuresofjohnnynorthside.blogspot.com)

Rebuilding Together has a Twin Cities branch that contributed to the EcoVillage project in 2008. If it is determined that Railroad Island needs mostly minor rehabilitation instead of the dramatic overhauls of Hawthorne EcoVillage, it may prove beneficial to tap into programs like this to improve the housing stock (Rebuilding Together, 2014).

## **Federal Programs Available to Assist with Place Based Neighborhood Revitalization**

The Federal Government makes a concerted effort to give localities resources with which to conduct community revitalization projects. There are several programs available to accomplish these ends.

Some such programs are as follows:

**Choice Neighborhoods:** This HUD program is designed to support efforts to transition low quality public and assisted housing into attractive and financially viable mixed-income housing. It greatly stresses the mixed-income component.

**Promise Neighborhoods:** Spearheaded by the Education Department, this program supports projects that create place-based educational initiatives.

**Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation:** Part of the Department of Justice, this program provides funding to support partnerships between law enforcement and community-based organizations. It focuses heavily on proactive policing and crime prevention in struggling neighborhoods.

Source: The White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, 2014

# COMPARE AND CONTRAST SUMMARY

Figure 28

	HAWTHORNE ECOVILLAGE	RAILROAD ISLAND
SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of crime was notorious</li> <li>• Neighborhood requested help from the City of Minneapolis</li> <li>• Residents had a strong relationship with PPL staff and selected the cluster themselves</li> <li>• Long-term resident (homeowner) buy-in for EcoVillage Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Railroad Island has comparatively low crime for its district</li> <li>• Emergency intervention not needed, but the area may benefit from a gradual revitalization process</li> <li>• Residents are unfamiliar with PPL</li> <li>• Railroad Island Task Force buy-in for Rivoli Bluff Plan (DBNHS)</li> </ul>
POLITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of support from political leaders was visible and ongoing</li> <li>• Northside Home Fund was the convener of multiple stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council members support Railroad Island Task Force and Payne-Phalen District Council’s plans but there is no singular political champion for RRI</li> <li>• Multiple groups without a designated convener</li> </ul>
ECONOMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% foreclosure rate between 2006-2008</li> <li>• Great recession and foreclosure crisis enabled buildings to be acquired</li> <li>• Hawthorne neighborhood is integrated into the surroundings through a traditional grid network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of parcels in focus area are vacant land, 12% of buildings appear unoccupied</li> <li>• Geographically separate from the downtown grid and surrounding neighborhood</li> <li>• Land availability and opportunity</li> </ul>

Railroad Island and the EcoVillage are substantially different in almost all aspects. To start, the EcoVillage project began with a relationship between PPL and community members that steadily matured into a partnership with a foundation of trust. Railroad Island residents and leaders are currently developing different plans for the community, but there is little or no familiarity with the work of PPL. Prior to the cluster redevelopment, the EcoVillage area was plagued by intense criminal activity compounded by an astronomical foreclosure rate and the recession. Railroad Island has a moderate level of crime, a growing list of amenities, and is a relatively stable historic area. While Hawthorne was predominantly Black, Railroad Island demography is split roughly into thirds. The EcoVillage benefited from a district-wide cluster redevelopment strategy, timing that aligned with federal grant funding for neighborhood stabilization, and broad political backing in Minneapolis. Saint Paul does not have an equivalent cluster strategy, nor is there a convener to bring various stakeholders to the table (as the NHF did for the EcoVillage). In short, the baseline conditions of these two areas are fundamentally different and will require different strategies.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Collaboration, perfect timing, and other unique structures and forces drove the development process for Hawthorne EcoVillage. Of these factors, the well-executed collaboration between Minneapolis stakeholders is the most influential and indispensable. No matter the specific type of development pursued in the Railroad Island Focus Area, this project has potential to serve as a pilot for future Saint Paul collaborative and community-driven development. The following section will provide initial steps followed by a three-part action plan and other considerations, which aim to build support for development in Railroad Island.

## First Steps

As clarified in the Railroad Island stakeholder map, there are numerous entities that either take ownership of or are connected to the neighborhood. In order for any development to be successful, all involved entities must be on the same page. The overarching goal encompassing the first steps is trust building. As development in the Focus Area is explored, there is value in adopting the perspective that this project may be more about building relationships than purely the execution of development. A critical first step is to acquaint District 5 and the Railroad Island Task Force with PPL as a partner in development. Representatives from PPL should attend a task force meeting to present on past projects, especially those that leveraged community input throughout the process. Additionally, a clarification of PPL's intent and role in Railroad Island development should be provided to facilitate mutual understanding.

## Action Plan I: Garnering Political Support

If one of the goals of this redevelopment project is to bring awareness to the City level, the messages to the City departments should come from the residents and District 5 Council. In addition, the objectives should be clear how this type of development is contiguous with Saint Paul's vision and goals that are outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and how it represents what the residents want for their neighborhood. Specifically, we encourage talking more with Leslie McMurray, the executive director for the Payne-Phalen District Council. McMurray sits on both the RRITF and the District 5 Council meetings and is a strong advocate for the residents in Railroad Island. Relationships should also be built with the Saint Paul Inspiring Communities staff members to drive successful development and for financial assistance. Specifically, we recommend contacting Sarah Zorn, a Senior Project Manager in PED to begin building and strengthening City support.

Another important actor to include in the process is Jim Erchul of DBNHS. As aforementioned, Erchul has long-standing involvement in the area, particularly in the planning and acquisition of funds for the Rivoli Bluff development. Funding may be difficult to acquire for two separate projects happening in the neighborhood simultaneously. DBNHS is growing close to acquiring necessary funds for Rivoli Bluff and this must be considered when applying for Focus Area funding. In order to navigate any conflict effectively, it would be best to include Erchul in discussions related to the Focus Area development.

## Action Plan II: Collaborate to Define Goals

It is clear from the stakeholders we interviewed that there are multiple ongoing projects occurring in Railroad Island, so partnering and collaborating with existing stakeholders will aid in engaging a diverse group of residents and ensuring successful implementation. At this point, there does not appear to be a convener similar to that in Hawthorne EcoVillage but it is clear that there are multiple nonprofits doing similar work already in Railroad Island. Goals among the nonprofits may align. Organizations should seek collaboration to define specific goals so that implementation of redevelopment happens successfully, in a timely process.

## **Action Plan III: Bolstering Civic Engagement and Strengthening Partnerships**

Before a redevelopment process begins, understanding and responding to residents' perspectives and values is key. This also requires understanding the goals and visions that have been established in previous planning work. These perspectives should be taken into consideration with any projects moving forward. In addition, building relationships and staying in touch with residents throughout the planning process will be critical to the success of this redevelopment plan. This will help keep the residents engaged and excited for the project.

PPL should collaborate with the RRITF to formalize the project's goals and objectives and include them early and often in the process. The Task Force is cognizant of the neighborhood's assets and is worried developers will soon recognize this and somehow dilute the character of Railroad Island. It is imperative the Task Force and other residents have input in potential redevelopment to assist in the branding of the neighborhood to retain its character and identity. The best way to do this is to pursue community-driven development. A charette style workshop worked well in the past when the City and DBNHS were in the predevelopment phase for the brownstones on Payne Ave. The Task Force has mentioned their appreciation for that process and thought it brought a representative group of people to the table to help create design concepts. ESNDG also plans to execute a resident satisfaction survey and could leverage those efforts to build a list of residents interested in the planning process. If PPL has the capacity, they should engage residents outside of the RRITF meetings since there is not always a diverse and representative group present at meetings. There should be specific efforts to reach out to residents that have not been previously present, such as renters and non-white populations. These groups need to be included in the decision making process early to continually build trust throughout the process.

### **Other Considerations**

#### **Define the Purpose of the Redevelopment**

A vital question to continually ask is who benefits? One of the goals of the community engagement process should be to answer that question. At the RRITF meeting, it was mentioned that they wanted to bring money into the neighborhood with market rate housing. However, if the AMI of the neighborhood is around 37% of the HUD defined AMI, then is market value what the neighborhood needs? Even the provision of 60% AMI housing would increase socio-economic diversity. Therefore, our recommendation is to not become narrowly focused on bringing in a single type of housing, but rather focus on providing diversity in the housing stock while considering residents' needs.

The general idea behind bringing in more market rate units is that substantial investment in the area will encourage other homeowners or landlords to improve their properties. On the surface this seems completely positive. However, this benefit can also negatively impact current residents by raising rents to an unaffordable level causing displacement. If it is determined that the majority of residents do want more market rate housing in the neighborhood, then there must be mechanisms in place to preserve affordable units of high-quality housing to support cost-burdened households in the area.

Another important consideration is the fact that two-thirds of the housing units in the area are renter-occupied, so there must be specific efforts to engage renters in participation to avoid their displacement. The aforementioned ESNDG resident experience survey could help reach renters and get an understanding of their needs and what they would like to see in the future for their neighborhood. In the past, this survey has been conducted by door knocking to gauge residents' level of satisfaction with their community. Currently, ESNDG utilizes a template provided by NeighborWorks but PPL could also request the inclusion of specific questions to determine levels of resident support. The survey may be administered online, by door-knocking, mail, or any combination of

techniques to provide renters with multiple ways to participate.

## **Specific Opportunities for Branding and Development**

Redevelopment and new construction may also serve as a catalyst for clarifying the “brand” of Railroad Island. The neighborhood already has a distinctive local flavor and unique history, so existing characteristics should be strengthened rather than imposing a new brand. There should also be a focus of preserving architectural value, considering the age of the housing stock. New development in Railroad Island should not necessarily be branded as an EcoVillage but rather a development with green, sustainable principles and goals to retain the historical character of the neighborhood.

An important conclusion drawn from our analysis on cluster strategies is that there is no black and white way to pursue this type of development, which is why this style is so suited for collaboration. The Jamestown Renaissance Block project in particular is a unique way to engage residents with one another and local stakeholders. Local organizations that are assets for green cluster development include Enterprise Green Communities and Rebuilding Together.

There are a number of opportunities for redevelopment in Railroad Island. Swede Hollow Park is an example of a distinctive asset in the neighborhood. The aforementioned connectivity and accessibility improvements to the park, along with the provision of extended bike trails would benefit Railroad Island residents substantially. Although we mentioned specific development ideas for the vacant land in Railroad Island, our recommendation is to be careful not to draft official plans until the community has given input.

## **Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) Grant**

Prior to any community engagement efforts, PPL and ESNDC should work to define project goals. Structures need to be provided to guide engagement while simultaneously remaining flexible. Regardless of preliminary decisions made, PPL and ESNDC should strive to be transparent and clear in intentions to avoid any misunderstandings especially in relation to LCDA fund allocation. The Payne and Bush Predevelopment Proposal received a Metropolitan Council LCDA award in January 2015 for a total of \$20,000 to be used by the end of 2016 in the following ways:

- \$12,000 to complete site plans and renderings for three different options
- \$5,000 for outreach, community engagement, and promotion of a public design process done at the site to include diverse participants and the business community
- \$3,000 for pro forma development and education for the community in regards to how project changes play out financially (Met Council CDC, Business Item 2014-315)

Several of our recommendations are already incorporated into the proposed funding uses. It would be beneficial to approach the process as an update to the 2007 Railroad Island Small Area Plan. Local stakeholders should collaborate to tailor a participation process to the residents of Railroad Island for this development and any potential developments in the future.



## CONCLUSION

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**As a whole, there are few similarities between the Hawthorne EcoVillage and the Railroad Island Focus Area. The success associated with the EcoVillage resulted from the alignment of political will, timing, opportunity, and collaborative stakeholders. We hope that after reading this report, it is evident that there are several development opportunities in Railroad Island and potential for long-term collaboration between residents and stakeholders in the neighborhood.**

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## APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS

AMI - Area Median Income  
BRT - Bus Rapid Transit  
CDBG - Community Development Block Grant  
CDC- Community Development Corporation  
CPED - Community Planning & Economic Development (at the City of Minneapolis)  
DBNHS - Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services  
DC - District Council  
DSI - Department of Safety and Inspections  
ESNDC - East Side Neighborhood Development Company  
GNRP- Gateway Neighborhood Revitalization Program  
FHF - Family Housing Fund  
HFH - Habitat for Humanity  
HNC - Hawthorne Neighborhood Council  
HRA - Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
HUD- Housing and Urban Development  
LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design  
LISC - Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
MHFA - Minnesota Housing Finance Agency  
NHF - Northside Home Fund  
NSP - Neighborhood Stabilization Program  
PED - Planning and Economic Development  
PPL - Project for Pride in Living  
RFP - Request for Proposal  
RRI - Railroad Island  
RRITF - Railroad Island Task Force  
STAR- Sales Tax Revitalization  
TF - Task Force

# APPENDIX C: RAILROAD ISLAND TABLES

Table 1

<b>Railroad Island: 2010 General Demographics</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Population Density (per sq. mile)</b>						
Total Population	2,730		2,365		5,095	
Population Density (per sq. mile)	7,190.7		3,963.4		5,218.3	
Area (Land)	0.38		0.60		0.98	
<b>Age</b>						
<b>Total Population:</b>	<b>2,730</b>		<b>2,365</b>		<b>5,095</b>	
Under 5 years	323	11.8%	138	5.8%	461	9.1%
5 to 9 years	262	9.6%	139	5.9%	401	7.9%
10 to 14 years	264	9.7%	133	5.6%	397	7.8%
15 to 17 years	190	7.0%	98	4.1%	288	5.7%
18 to 24 years	378	13.9%	325	13.7%	703	13.8%
25 to 34 years	381	14.0%	434	18.4%	815	16.0%
35 to 44 years	297	10.9%	367	15.5%	664	13.0%
45 to 54 years	255	9.3%	376	15.9%	631	12.4%
55 to 64 years	212	7.8%	230	9.7%	442	8.7%
65 and 74 years	103	3.8%	81	3.4%	184	3.6%
75 to 84 years	49	1.8%	31	1.3%	80	1.6%
85 years and over	16	0.6%	13	0.6%	29	0.6%
<b>Median Age By Sex</b>						
<b>Median age:</b>	<b>23.9</b>		<b>33.0</b>		<b>28.1</b>	
Male	22.0		34.4		29.8	
Female	25.2		28.4		26.9	
<b>Households By Household Type</b>						
<b>Households:</b>	<b>829</b>		<b>531</b>		<b>1,360</b>	
Family households:	564	68.0%	302	56.9%	866	63.7%
Married-couple family	228	27.5%	128	24.1%	356	26.2%
Other family:	336	40.5%	174	32.8%	510	37.5%
Male householder, no wife present	67	8.1%	48	9.0%	115	8.5%
Female householder, no husband present	269	32.5%	126	23.7%	395	29.0%
Nonfamily households:	265	32.0%	229	43.1%	494	36.3%
Householder living alone	214	25.8%	177	33.3%	391	28.8%
Householder not living alone	51	6.2%	52	9.8%	103	7.6%
<b>Occupancy Status</b>						
<b>Housing units:</b>	<b>969</b>		<b>605</b>		<b>1,574</b>	
Occupied	829	85.6%	531	87.8%	1,360	86.4%
Vacant	140	14.5%	74	12.2%	214	13.6%
For rent	52	37.1%	28	37.8%	80	37.4%
For sale only	33	23.6%	15	20.3%	48	22.4%
Other vacant	55	39.3%	31	41.9%	86	40.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Social Explorer

Table 2

<b>Railroad Island: 2010 Race and Ethnicity Characteristics</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Race</b>						
<b>Total population:</b>	<b>2,730</b>		<b>2,365</b>		<b>5,095</b>	
White alone	803	29.4%	962	40.7%	1,765	34.6%
Black or African American alone	735	26.9%	732	31.0%	1,467	28.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	83	3.0%	59	2.5%	142	2.8%
Asian alone	741	27.1%	419	17.7%	1,160	22.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	1	0.0%	6	0.3%	7	0.1%
Some Other Race alone	174	6.4%	102	4.3%	276	5.4%
Two or More Races	193	7.1%	85	3.6%	278	5.5%
<b>Hispanic Or Latino By Specific Origin</b>						
<b>Total population:</b>	<b>2,730</b>		<b>2,365</b>		<b>5,095</b>	
Not Hispanic or Latino:	2,333	85.5%	2,087	88.3%	4,420	86.8%
Hispanic or Latino:	397	14.5%	278	11.8%	675	13.3%
Mexican	329	12.1%	217	9.2%	546	10.7%
Puerto Rican	19	0.7%	12	0.5%	31	0.6%
Cuban	8	0.3%	3	0.1%	11	0.2%
Dominican	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
Central American (excluding Mexican):	28	1.0%	33	1.4%	61	1.2%
Costa Rican	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	2	0.0%
Guatemalan	10	0.4%	1	0.0%	11	0.2%
Honduran	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	5	0.1%
Salvadoran	18	0.7%	25	1.1%	43	0.8%
South American:	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	5	0.1%
Argentinean	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Colombian	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Ecuadorian	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Peruvian	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	2	0.0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	11	0.4%	7	0.3%	18	0.4%
<b>Tenure</b>						
<b>Occupied housing units:</b>	<b>829</b>		<b>531</b>		<b>1,360</b>	
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
White alone	259	63.6%	145	45.5%	404	55.7%
Black or African American alone	23	19.3%	17	16.4%	40	17.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Asian alone	31	16.7%	11	19.3%	42	17.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Two or More Races	15	42.9%	0	0.0%	15	20.8%
Hispanic or Latino	24	20.2%	5	6.5%	29	14.8%
<b>Renter occupied</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>67.0%</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>64.8%</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>66.1%</b>
White alone	148	36.4%	174	54.6%	322	44.4%
Black or African American alone	96	80.7%	87	83.7%	183	82.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	23	100.0%	0	0.0%	23	100.0%
Asian alone	155	83.3%	46	80.7%	201	82.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race alone	22	100.0%	17	100.0%	39	100.0%
Two or More Races	20	57.1%	37	100.0%	57	79.2%
Hispanic or Latino	95	79.8%	72	93.5%	167	85.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Social Explorer

Table 3a

<b>Railroad Island: ACS 2012 Income Characteristics</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Median Housing Value (In 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)</b>						
Median Value	\$123,100		\$143,400		\$130,824	
<b>Household Income (In 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)</b>						
<b>Households:</b>	<b>792</b>		<b>534</b>		<b>1,326</b>	
Less than \$10,000	156	19.7%	123	23.0%	279	21.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	75	9.5%	93	17.4%	168	12.7%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	44	5.6%	47	8.8%	91	6.9%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	54	6.8%	21	3.9%	75	5.7%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	28	3.5%	3	0.6%	31	2.3%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	64	8.1%	39	7.3%	103	7.8%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	60	7.6%	11	2.1%	71	5.4%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	63	8.0%	5	0.9%	68	5.1%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	31	3.9%	25	4.7%	57	4.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	59	7.5%	32	6.0%	90	6.8%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	42	5.3%	42	7.9%	84	6.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	74	9.3%	73	13.7%	147	11.1%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	25	3.2%	14	2.6%	38	2.9%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	10	1.3%	5	0.9%	15	1.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	6	0.8%	0	0.0%	7	0.5%
\$200,000 or More	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Median Household Income By Race (In 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)</b>						
<b>Median household income:</b>	<b>\$32,976</b>		<b>\$20,420</b>		<b>\$31,060</b>	
White Alone Householder	\$30,666		\$40,042		\$31,558	
Black or African American Alone Householder	\$10,597		\$9,401		\$8,979	
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone Householder	-		-		-	
Asian Alone	\$44,510		\$33,370		\$41,188	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone Householder	-		-		-	
Some Other Race Alone Householder	\$39,036		-		\$39,569	
Two or More Races Householder	\$35,196		\$13,655		\$14,942	
Hispanic or Latino Householder	\$38,260		\$66,325		\$36,503	
White Alone Householder, not Hispanic or Latino	\$29,875		\$39,680		\$30,778	
<b>Gross Rent As A Percentage Of Household Income In 2012</b>						
<b>Renter-occupied housing units:</b>	<b>464</b>		<b>361</b>		<b>825</b>	
Less than 10 percent	20	4.3%	0	0.0%	20	2.4%
10 to 29 percent	190	41.0%	187	51.8%	377	45.7%
30 to 49 percent	102	22.0%	77	21.3%	179	21.7%
50 percent or More	121	26.1%	87	24.1%	208	25.2%
Not computed	31	6.7%	10	2.8%	41	5.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, Social Explorer

Table 3b

Railroad Island: ACS 2012 Poverty Status in the Last 12 Months	Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN			Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN			Total		
	Total	Below poverty level	Percent	Total	Below poverty level	Percent	Total	Below poverty level	Percent
<b>Population for whom poverty status is determined</b>	2,493	813	32.6%	1,499	676	45.1%	3,992	1,489	37.3%
<b>Age</b>									
Under 18 years	845	381	45.1%	308	150	48.7%	1,153	531	46.1%
Related children under 18 years	839	375	44.7%	297	139	46.8%	1,136	514	45.2%
18 to 64 years	1,429	361	25.3%	1,092	455	41.7%	2,521	816	32.4%
65 years and over	219	71	32.4%	99	71	71.7%	318	142	44.7%
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	1,114	284	25.5%	837	380	45.4%	1,951	664	34.0%
Female	1,379	529	38.4%	662	296	44.7%	2,041	825	40.4%
<b>Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin</b>									
One race	2,381	782	32.8%	1,357	607	44.7%	3,738	1,389	37.2%
White	910	351	38.6%	715	261	36.5%	1,625	612	37.7%
Black or African American	406	273	67.2%	287	151	52.6%	693	424	61.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	35	23	65.7%	0	0	0.0%	35	23	0.0%
Asian	952	79	8.3%	298	195	65.4%	1,250	274	21.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Some other race	78	56	71.8%	57	0	0.0%	135	56	41.5%
Two or more races	112	31	27.7%	142	69	48.6%	254	100	39.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	285	79	27.7%	288	94	32.6%	573	173	30.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	741	346	46.7%	524	185	35.3%	1,265	531	42.0%
<b>Ratio Of Income In 2012 To Poverty Level (Summarized)</b>									
<b>Population for whom poverty status is determined:</b>	<b>2,493</b>			<b>1,499</b>			<b>3,992</b>		
Under 1.00 (Doing Poorly)	813	32.6%		676	45.1%		1,489	37.3%	
1.00 to 1.99 (Struggling)	902	36.2%		373	24.9%		1,275	31.9%	
Under 2.00 (Poor or struggling)	1,715	68.8%		1,049	70.0%		2,764	69.2%	
2.00 and over (Doing ok)	778	31.2%		450	30.0%		1,228	30.8%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

Table 4

<b>Railroad Island: ACS 2012 Education and Employment</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Educational Attainment For Population 25 Years And Over</b>						
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>2,498</b>		<b>1,869</b>		<b>4,367</b>	
Population 25 Years and over:	1,232	49.3%	1,302	69.7%	2,534	58.0%
Less Than High School	276	22.4%	385	29.6%	661	26.1%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	471	38.2%	361	27.7%	832	32.8%
Some college	368	29.9%	467	35.9%	835	33.0%
Bachelor's degree	81	6.6%	62	4.8%	143	5.6%
Master's degree	29	2.4%	20	1.5%	49	1.9%
Professional school degree	7	0.6%	7	0.5%	14	0.6%
Doctorate degree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>School Dropout Rate For Population 16 To 19 Years</b>						
<b>Civilian Population 16 to 19 Years:</b>	<b>274</b>		<b>113</b>		<b>387</b>	
Not high school graduate, not enrolled (dropped out)	0	0.0%	21	18.6%	21	5.4%
High school graduate, or enrolled (in school)	274	100.0%	92	81.4%	366	94.6%
<b>Unemployment Rate For Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over</b>						
<b>Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over:</b>	<b>1,058</b>		<b>707</b>		<b>1,765</b>	
Employed	866	81.9%	518	73.3%	1,384	78.4%
Unemployed	192	18.2%	189	26.7%	381	21.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, Social Explorer

Table 5

<b>Railroad Island: ACS 2012 Language Acquisition</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Language Spoken At Home By Ability To Speak English For The Population 5 Years And Over</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,245</b>		<b>1,742</b>		<b>3,987</b>	
Speak Only English	1,315	58.6%	1,245	71.5%	2,560	64.2%
Spanish Or Spanish Creole	226	10.1%	296	17.0%	522	13.1%
Speak English "very Well"	129	5.8%	48	2.8%	177	4.4%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	97	4.3%	248	14.2%	345	8.7%
French (Incl. Patois, Cajun)	15	0.7%	1	0.1%	16	0.4%
Speak English "very Well"	15	0.7%	1	0.1%	16	0.4%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Italian	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	5	0.1%
Hmong	528	23.5%	147	8.4%	675	16.9%
Speak English "very Well"	338	15.1%	56	3.2%	394	9.9%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	190	8.5%	91	5.2%	281	7.1%
Laotian	30	1.3%	0	0.0%	30	0.8%
Speak English "very Well"	8	0.4%	0	0.0%	8	0.2%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	22	1.0%	0	0.0%	22	0.6%
Vietnamese	11	0.5%	8	0.5%	19	0.5%
Speak English "very Well"	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	11	0.5%	8	0.5%	19	0.5%
Other Asian Languages	105	4.7%	0	0.0%	105	2.6%
Speak English "very Well"	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	105	4.7%	0	0.0%	105	2.6%
African Languages	0	0.0%	17	1.0%	17	0.4%
Speak English "very Well"	0	0.0%	9	0.5%	9	0.2%
Speak English Less Than "very Well"	0	0.0%	8	0.5%	8	0.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates, Social Explorer (Languages totaling less than 0.4% were omitted)

Table 6

<b>Railroad Island: ACS 2012 Housing Cost Burden by Tenure</b>	<b>Census Tract 315, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Census Tract 330, Ramsey Co, MN</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>792</b>		<b>534</b>		<b>1326</b>	
<b>Owner-occupied housing units:</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
<b>Less than \$20,000:</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>22.6%</b>
Less than 20 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	35	45.5%	0	0.0%	35	31.0%
30 percent or more	42	54.5%	36	100.0%	78	69.0%
<b>\$20,000 to \$34,999:</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
Less than 20 percent	12	33.3%	0	0.0%	12	23.5%
20 to 29 percent	11	30.6%	4	26.7%	15	29.4%
30 percent or more	13	36.1%	11	73.3%	24	47.1%
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999:</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>20.8%</b>
Less than 20 percent	31	49.2%	12	29.3%	43	41.3%
20 to 29 percent	0	0.0%	7	17.1%	7	6.7%
30 percent or more	32	50.8%	22	53.7%	54	51.9%
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999:</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
Less than 20 percent	25	62.5%	18	37.5%	43	48.9%
20 to 29 percent	15	37.5%	23	47.9%	38	43.2%
30 percent or more	0	0.0%	7	14.6%	7	8.0%
<b>\$75,000 or more:</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>34.1%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
Less than 20 percent	73	65.2%	9	27.3%	82	56.6%
20 to 29 percent	34	30.4%	14	42.4%	48	33.1%
30 percent or more	5	4.5%	10	30.3%	15	10.3%
<b>Zero or negative income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Renter-occupied housing units:</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>62.2%</b>
<b>Less than \$20,000:</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>36.6%</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>62.0%</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>47.8%</b>
Less than 20 percent	0	0.0%	35	15.6%	35	8.9%
20 to 29 percent	9	5.3%	79	35.3%	88	22.3%
30 percent or more	161	94.7%	110	49.1%	271	68.8%
<b>\$20,000 to \$34,999:</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
Less than 20 percent	31	27.0%	0	0.0%	31	18.8%
20 to 29 percent	22	19.1%	0	0.0%	22	13.3%
30 percent or more	62	53.9%	50	100.0%	112	67.9%
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999:</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
Less than 20 percent	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20 to 29 percent	88	100.0%	0	0.0%	88	100.0%
30 percent or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999:</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>9.8%</b>
Less than 20 percent	25	41.7%	17	81.0%	42	51.9%
20 to 29 percent	35	58.3%	0	0.0%	35	43.2%
30 percent or more	0	0.0%	4	19.0%	4	4.9%
<b>\$75,000 or more:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
Less than 20 percent	0	0.0%	24	42.9%	24	42.9%
20 to 29 percent	0	0.0%	32	57.1%	32	57.1%
30 percent or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Zero or negative income</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>No cash rent</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

Table 7

**RRI Focus Area Summary Land Uses and Zoning, 2014**

Type (Current Use)	Current Use	Number	Percent
C	Commercial	5	7%
SFH	Single Family	25	35%
MFH	Multi-Family	8	11%
DUP	Duplex	14	20%
V	Vacant	15	21%
PKG	Parking	4	6%
Land Use Codes	Land Use		
R	Residential	48	68%
M	Multi-Family	4	6%
I	Industrial	2	3%
E	Exempt	11	15%
C	Commercial	6	8%
Zoning Codes	Zoning		
R4	R4 One-Family	35	49%
RT1	RT1 Two-Family	11	15%
RM2	RM2 Multi-Family	5	7%
B2	B2 Community Business	1	1%
T2	T2 Traditional Nbhd	19	27%
Ownership Summary	Owner		
P	Private	57	80%
C	City	2	3%
HRA	HRA	12	17%
<b>Total Properties</b>		<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: St. Paul PED

\*629 Reaney Ave is on the same lot as 627 Reaney Ave,  
and is counted here as a separate property.

Table 8

**Summary of Residential Occupancy Rates by Census Tract in RRI**

	Tract 315			Tract 330			Focus Area	RRI Overall
	2000	2010	2013	2000	2010	2013	2014	2010
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	1045	969	970	621	605	652	47	1574
<b>Number Occupied</b>	978	829	771	597	531	542	43	1,360
<b>Percent Occupied</b>	94%	86%	80%	96%	88%	83%	91%	86%
<b>Percent Owner-Occupied</b>	41%	33%	43%	38%	35%	32%	33%	34%
<b>Percent Renter-Occupied</b>	59%	67%	57%	62%	65%	68%	67%	66%
	2000	2010	2013	2000	2010	2013	2014	2010
<b>Total Unoccupied Units</b>	67	140	199	24	74	110	4	214
<b>Total Unoccupied</b>	6%	15%	21%	4%	12%	17%	9%	14%
<b>Unoccupied For Rent</b>	36%	37%	NA	63%	38%	NA	0%	37%
<b>Unoccupied For Sale Only</b>	18%	24%	NA	4%	20%	NA	100%	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data 2000 and 2010, ACS 5-year estimates 2009-2013. Ramsey County Parcel Data, 2014.

Table 9

**Overall Quality of Residences in Railroad Island Focus Area, 2014**

Current Use	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Not Salvageable	Total
SFH	8	12	5	0	0	25
MFH	4	2	1	1	0	8
DUP	3	7	4	0	0	14

Housing Condition Survey, October 16, 2014.

Table 10

**Housing Condition by Tenure, 2014**

	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Total
OWN	0	3	7	6	16
RENT	0	5	14	10	29
OWN %	0	19%	44%	38%	100%
RENT %	0	17%	48%	34%	100%

Housing Condition Survey, October 16, 2014.

Table 11

**Total Value of RRI Focus Area Parcels**

Value By Year	2012	2013	2014
Average	\$ 92,576	\$ 90,139	\$ 97,120
Median	\$ 50,000	\$ 52,500	\$ 61,200
Minimum	\$ 400	\$ 400	\$ 400
Maximum	\$ 765,000	\$ 858,800	\$ 887,300

Source: Ramsey County Parcel Data, 2014.

Table 12

**RRI Focus Area Lot Size and Value Statistics, 2014**

	Lot Size (Acres)	Bldg Size (Sq Ft)	Property Taxes	Land Value	Building Value	Total Value	Last Sale Price
Mean	0.14	1,540	\$ 1,985	\$ 27,813	\$ 94,631	\$ 97,120	\$ 100,470
Median	0.14	1,440	\$ 2,013	\$ 7,200	\$ 64,000	\$ 61,200	\$ 48,705
Minimum	0.05	711	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,000	\$ 400	\$ 4,500
Maximum	0.42	4,270	\$ 2,013	\$ 255,000	\$ 632,300	\$ 887,300	\$ 650,001

Source: Data on Building Size, Property Taxes, Values, and Last Sale Price from Ramsey County estimates for 2014.

Lot size in acres from the City of Saint Paul, 2014.

Table 13

**Railroad Island Home Sales from 2009 to 2014**

RRI Year	Mean			Median			
	Sold Price	% Change in List Price	Days on the Market	Sold Price	% Change in List Price	Days on the Market	Number of Sales
<b>2009</b>	\$ 52,474	14%	44	\$ 29,900	6%	30	40
<b>2010</b>	\$ 72,570	22%	112	\$ 47,560	14%	68	29
<b>2011</b>							
<b>2012</b>	\$ 103,206	7%	64	\$ 110,000	4%	47	33
<b>2013</b>	\$ 98,850	17%	97	\$ 85,000	9%	47	29
<b>2014</b>	\$ 116,764	13%	139	\$ 101,000	5%	35	14
<b>Total</b>	\$ 88,773	15%	91	\$ 85,000	6%	47	29

Source: ESND C realtor records, 2014. Data incomplete for 2011.

Table 14

**Focus Area Home Sales from 2009 to 2014**

Year	% RRI Homes Sold Located in Focus Area	Mean			Median		
		Sold Price	% Change in List Price	Days on the Market	Sold Price	% Change in List Price	Days on the Market
<b>2009</b>	18%	\$ 27,677	13%	30	\$ 25,000	9%	32
<b>2010</b>	10%	\$ 29,785	54%	49	\$ 29,785	50%	26
<b>2011</b>							
<b>2012</b>	12%	\$ 102,250	10%	67	\$ 77,750	8%	60
<b>2013</b>	10%	\$ 72,500	27%	48	\$ 30,000	39%	28
<b>2014</b>	0%						
<b>Total</b>	10%	\$ 60,971	22%	45	\$ 27,870	12%	32

Source: ESND C realtor records, 2014. Data incomplete for 2011.

Table 15

Value and Ownership of Potential Development Sites in RRI Focus Area, 2014											
Address	Block	Lot Size (Acres)	Current Use	Age of Structure	Condition	Total Value	Property Taxes	Last Sale Price	Ownership	Address of Owner	
788 Payne Ave	1	0.09	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 32,000	\$ 536	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
659 Bush Ave	1	0.3	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 106,000	\$ 3,572	\$ 13,300	Naegele Outdoor Adv Co	San Antonio, TX	
777 Bush Ave	2	0.1794	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 5,600	\$ -	\$ -	City	Saint Paul, MN	
767 Payne Ave	2	0.1108	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 44,700	\$ 436	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
774 Payne Ave	3	0.1888	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 5,800	\$ -	\$ -	City	Saint Paul, MN	
770 Payne Ave	3	0.0519	Parking	NA	NA	\$ 18,000	\$ 1,108	\$ -	Land D Investments	Saint Paul, MN	
770 Payne Ave	3	0.0519	Parking	NA	NA	\$ 18,000	\$ 1,108	\$ -	Land D Investments	Saint Paul, MN	
648 Bush Ave	3	0.1435	MFH	1902	Poor	\$ 200,000	\$ 308	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
656 Bush Ave	3	0.14	MFH	1880	Very Poor	\$ 200,000	\$ 308	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
658 Bush Ave	3	0.1075	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ -	Ramsey Cty Regional RR Authority	Saint Paul, MN	
610 Reaney Ave	5	0.2021	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 10,700	\$ 504	\$ 284,000	Robert Metcalf	Saint Paul, MN	
618 Reaney Ave	5	0.1386	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 3,900	\$ 185	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
622 Reaney Ave	5	0.1390	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 3,900	\$ 185	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
626 Reaney Ave	5	0.1410	Commercial	1903	Poor	\$ 101,000	\$ 308	\$ -	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
621 Minnehaha	5	0.1384	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 36,500	\$ 196	\$ 38,500	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
629 Minnehaha	5	0.1377	Vacant	NA	NA	\$ 36,500	\$ 196	\$ 38,500	HRA	Saint Paul, MN	
719 Payne Ave	6	0.2188	Commercial	1964	Poor	\$ 215,300	\$ 15,130	\$ 320,000	Michael F Drieling	White Bear Lake, MN	

\*587 Reaney Ave is a vacant HRA-owned lot in the Focus Area that will also be released in a large site RFP.

Sources: Data on value, property taxes (tax year 2013), and last sale price taken from Ramsey County data for 2014. Current use, age of structure, size of lot, and ownership from Saint Paul PED, 2014.

Recommendations: Tear Down: 648 Bush Ave, 656 Bush Avve, 719 Payne Ave

Historic: 626 Reaney Ave

Table 16

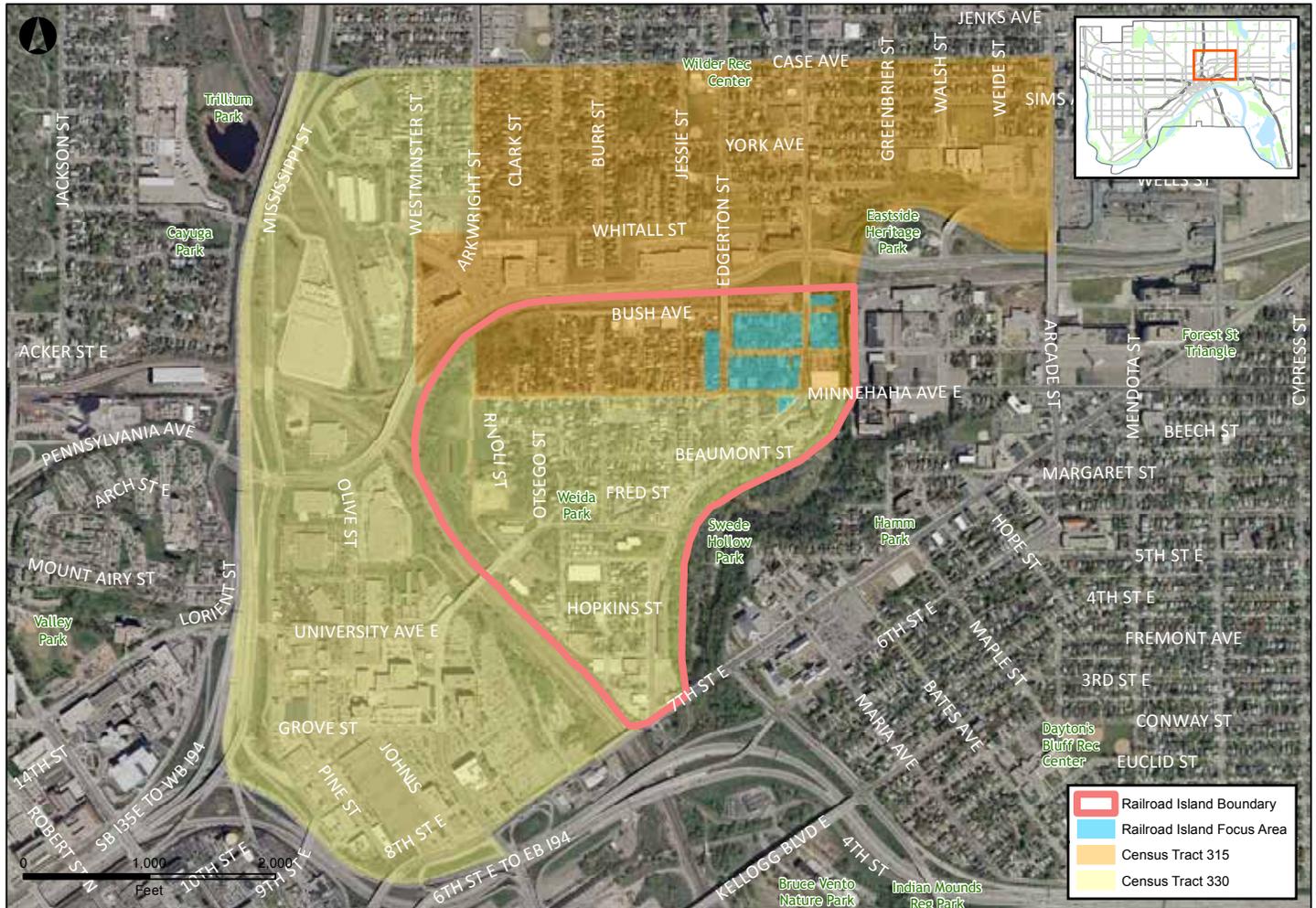
**Possible Uses for Adjacent Development Sites in RRI Focus Area**

Block	Total Adjacent Lot Size	Total Value	Total Taxes Paid	Potential Recommended Uses
1	0.39	\$ 138,000	\$ 4,108	Trail Access, Gathering Space, Community Services/Apartment
2	0.2902	\$ 50,300	\$ 436	Clustered Townhomes
3	0.6836	\$ 442,200	\$ 2,832	Mid-Rise Apartments with Structured Parking
5 (Reaney)	0.6207	\$ 119,500	\$ 1,181	Townhomes
5(Minnehaha)	0.2760	\$ 73,000	\$ 196	Eco-SFH
6	0.2188	\$ 15,130	\$ 15,130	Services/Commercial/Retail for Lease

# APPENDIX D: RAILROAD ISLAND MAPS

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN

Map 1: Focus Area and Census Tracts 315 and 330 in the Context of Railroad Island

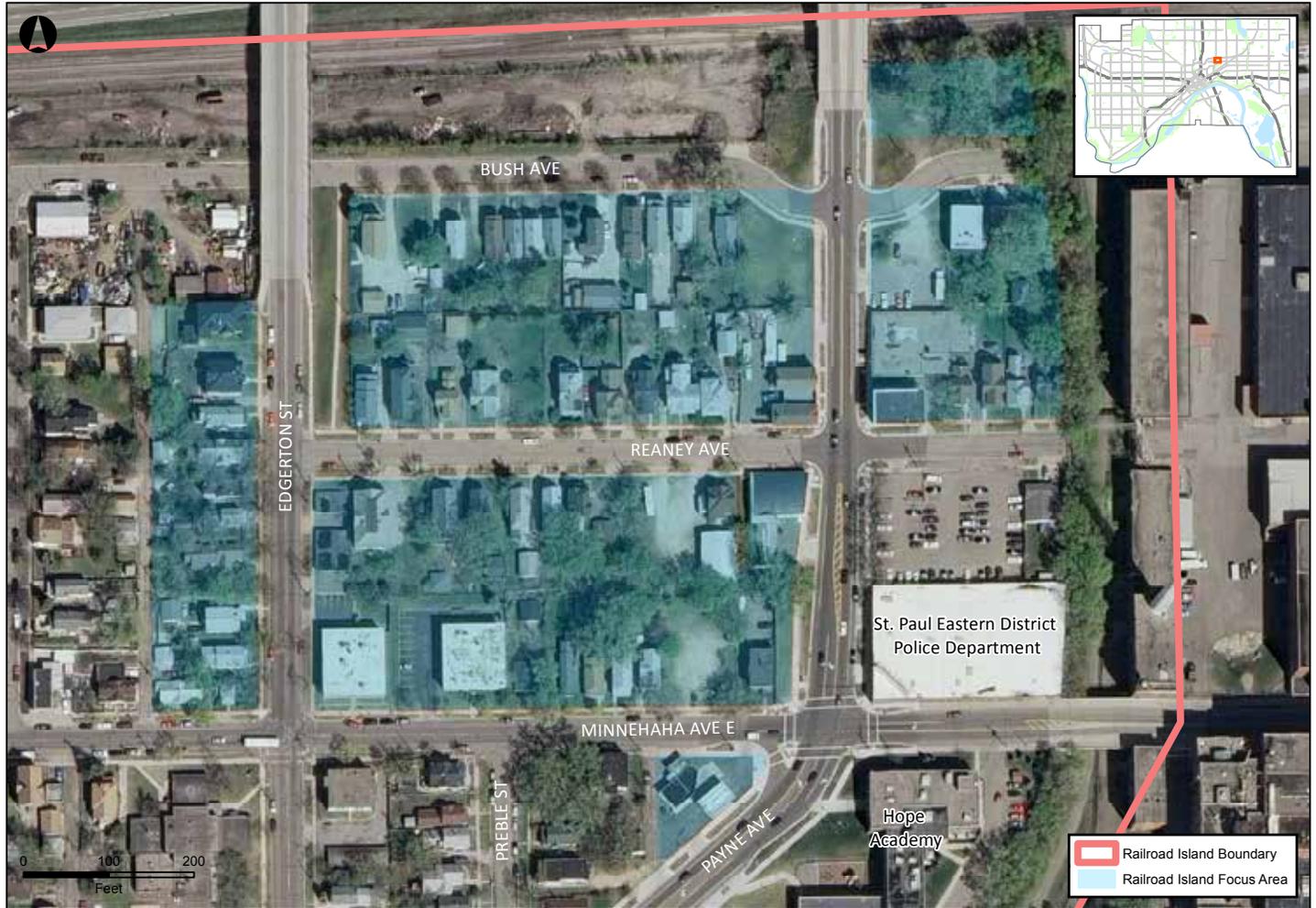


Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Ramsey County; U.S. Census Bureau  
 Aerial Imagery: MnGeo - Minnesota Composite Aerial Imagery

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN

Map 2: Focus Area Context in Railroad Island



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County  
Aerial Imagery: MnGeo - Minnesota Composite Aerial Imagery

Map Created on 12/14/2014

### Map 3: Properties Owned by the City of Saint Paul



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Map 4: 2014 Land and Building Vacancies



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN  
 Map 5: 2014 Housing Tenure



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN  
 Map 6: Housing Condition Survey



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Ramsey County Housing Condition Survey on 10/16/14 (detached structures not included)

Map Created on 12/14/2014

Map 7: Estimated Housing and Land Values



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014

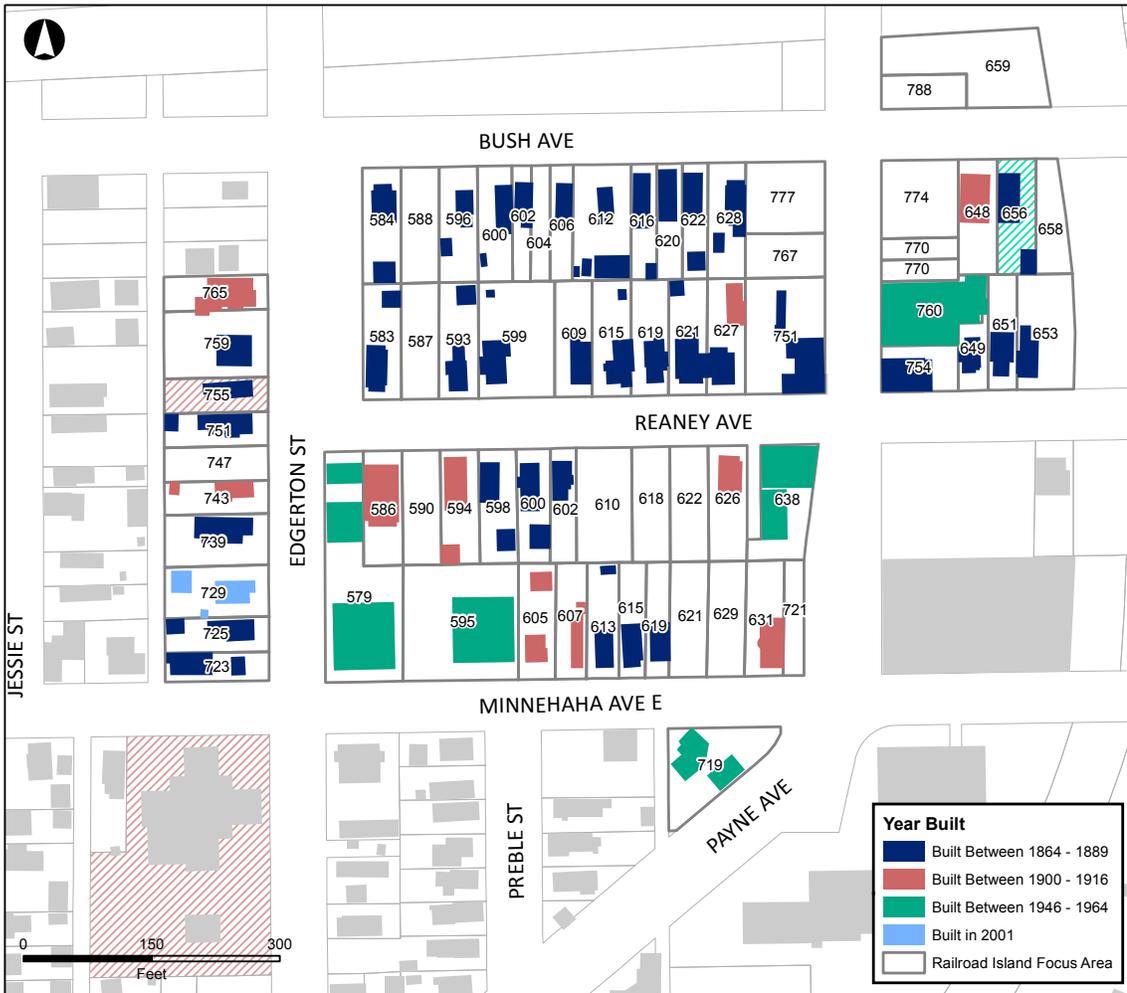
Map 8: City of Saint Paul Zoning Type and Current Use



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County

Created on 12/14/2014

Map 9: Age of Structure and Architectural Value



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development; Saint Paul Historic Preservation Commission; Ramsey County

Map Created on 12/14/2014

# Railroad Island Focus Area, St. Paul, MN

## Potential Development Areas



Sources: Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development, Ramsey County

Map Created by Ashley Foell, 12/5/2014

# APPENDIX E: RAILROAD ISLAND CHARTS & ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Figure 1. Railroad Island Current Use Pie Chart

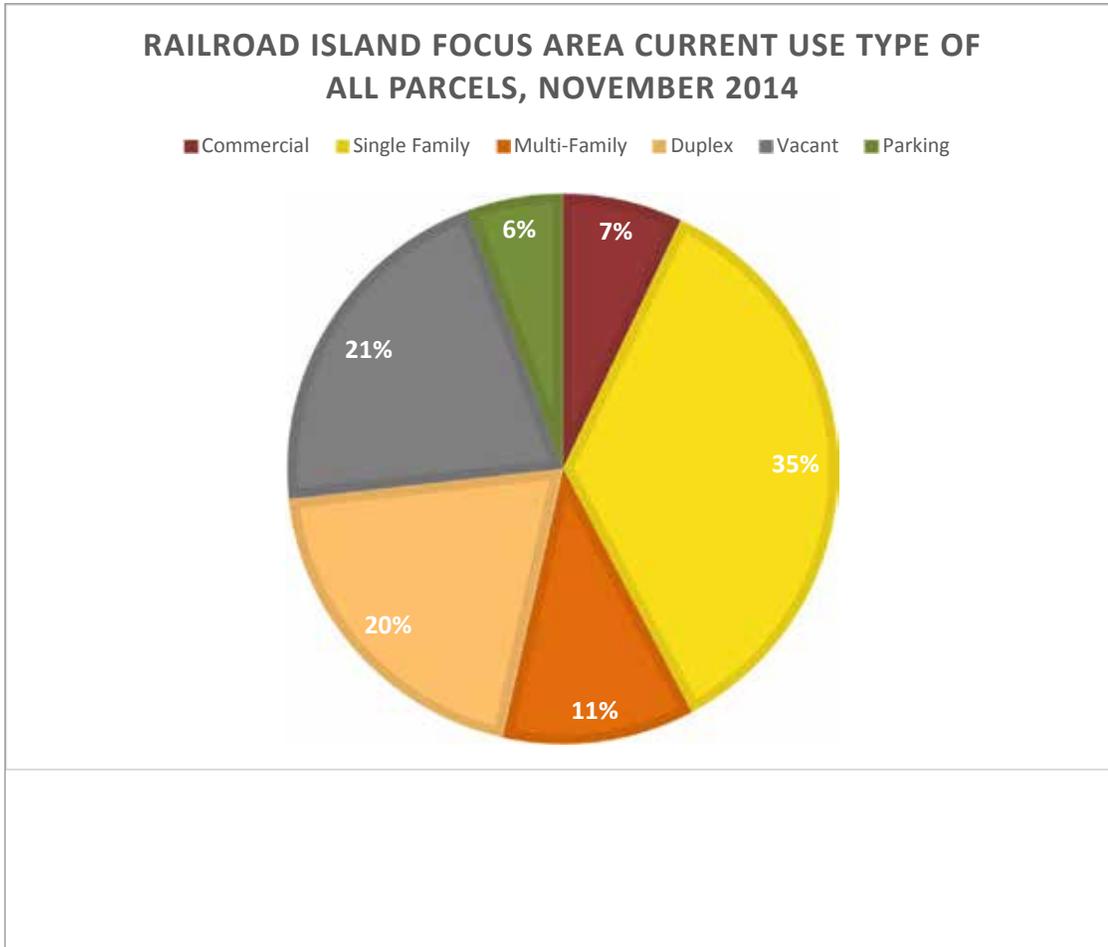


Figure 2. Percent Unoccupied by Tenure

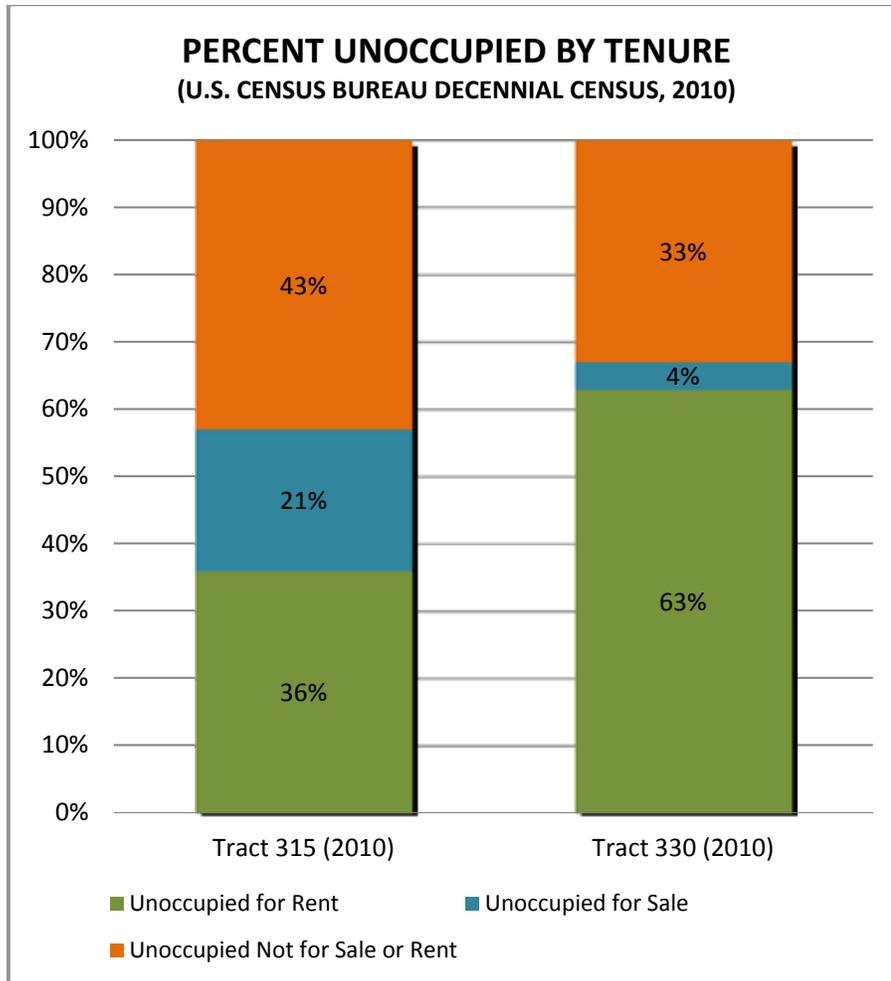


Figure 3. Percent of Residential Properties in RRI

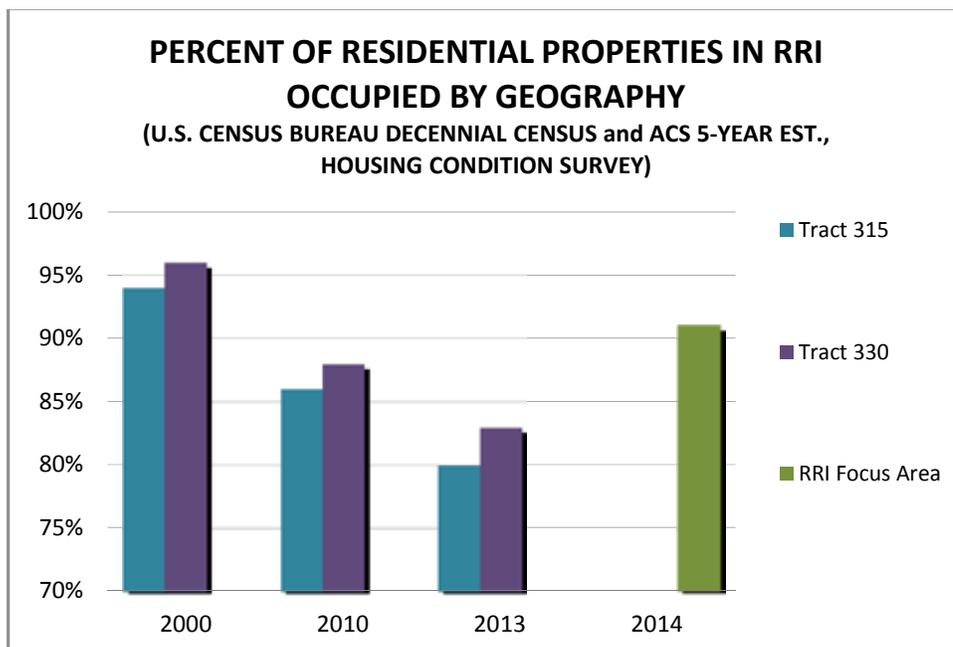


Figure 4. RRI Focus Area Occupancy

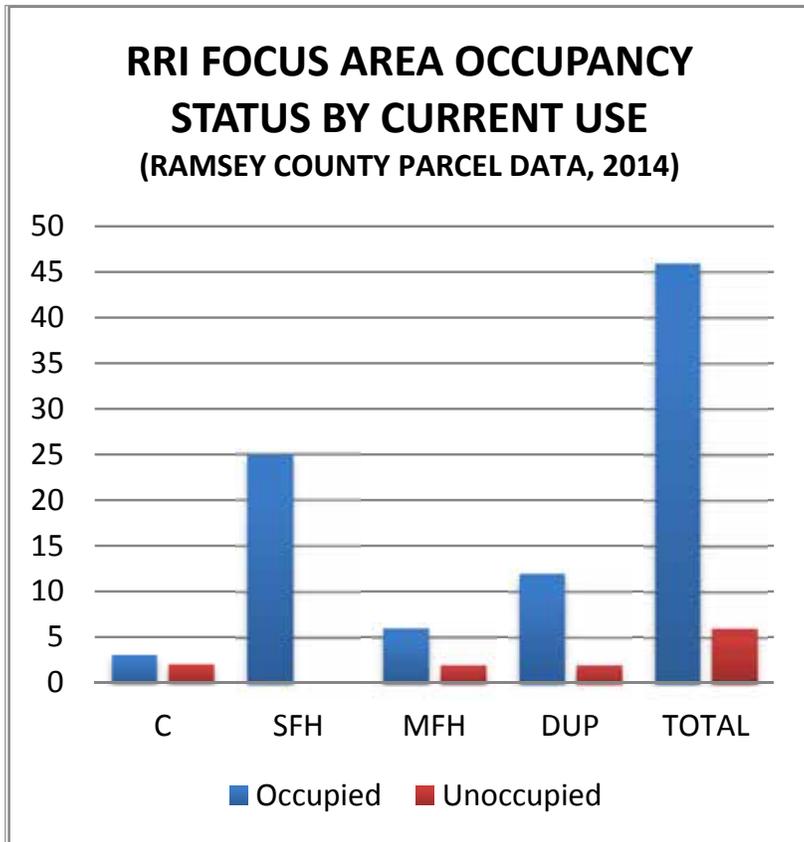


Figure 5. Housing Condition Survey

Date:  Block:  Type:

Address: 950 Edgerton If commercial, name (type) of business:

Lot size:  Standard  Larger  Smaller Outwardly, building appears:  Vacant  Occupied

Keys to codes:  
 Material: Ab=asbestos, Al=aluminum, B=brick, L=Limestone, P=poured concrete, R=railroad ties, V=vinyl, W=wood  
 Condition: NR=no repairs needed, MiR=minor repairs needed, MaR=major repairs needed, R/C=reconstruction required,  
 X=tear down, NV=not visible, NA=not applicable

**EXTERIOR CONDITION** Overall:  (VG=very good, G=good(needs minor repair), P=Poor (needs major repair(s)), VP=very poor (needs comprehensive renovation), NS=not salvageable)

	Material	Cond.		Material	Cond.		Material	Cond.
Siding/exterior walls		NA	Doors			Roof		
Gutters/downspouts		NA	Porch			Chimney		
Exterior trim		NA	Stairs			Other		
Windows		NA	Foundation			Comment:	<input type="text"/>	

**OTHER BUILDING FEATURES**

	Y	N		Y	N
Electrical outlet(s)			South-pitched roof		
Attached power lines			Flat roof		
Fuel oil tanks					

**OTHER PROPERTY FEATURES**

	M	Cond.		Material	Cond.
Sidewalks			Retaining wall		
Driveway			Fencing		

**OUT-BUILDINGS**

	Material	Cond.		Material	Cond.
Detached garage			Storage		

**OTHER**

	None	Some	A lot		Y	N
Trash, debris, litter				Signage		
Abandoned vehicles				Building permit		
Abandoned property				Foreclosed property		
Trees too near foundation				Condemned		
				Vacant		
				For sale		
				For sale by owner		

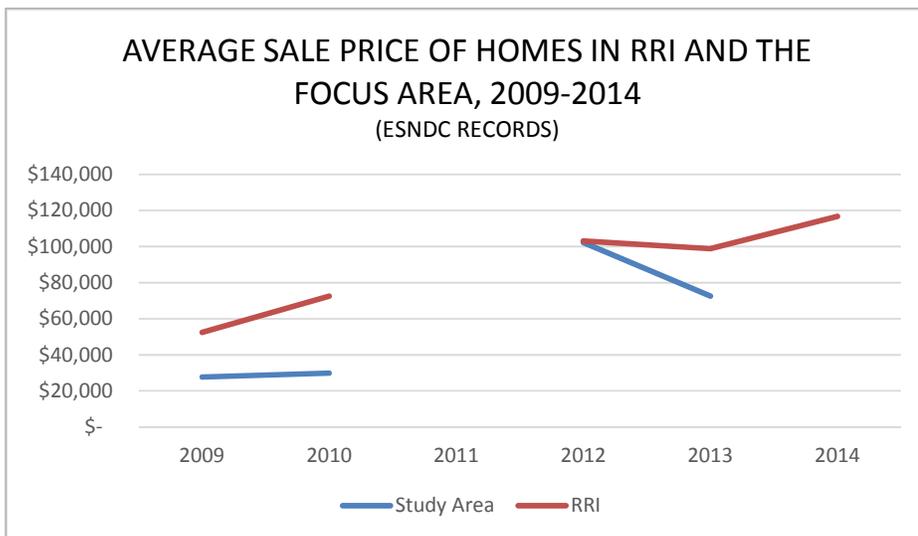
**Lot drainage**

	Level lot, no apparent problems	Drains toward neighbor, no apparent problem
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Can building go higher?**

	Yes	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 6. Average Sale Price of Homes in RRI



## Housing Market Trends, Current Developments, and Media Presence of Railroad Island

The Railroad Island Focus Area lies within the southwestern-most corner of Ward 6, a region actively re-branding itself as the East Side: historic, diverse, and demographically youthful (Pratt, 2013). Developments that have taken place just north of the Focus Area at Payne Ave and Phalen Blvd have favored “green and sustainable approaches” and drawing on neighborhood assets, like its strong community identity (Pratt, 2013). In many ways, the identity expressed in the 2007 Railroad Island Area Plan pairs nicely with the re-branding of Ward 6, and the two overlapping geographies can benefit mutually from a shared long-term vision.

Railroad Island began receiving significant positive press since 2009, and has gained momentum with the return of the housing market since the recession. Since 1983, it has been identified for future naming as a historic district (Historic Resources Inventory, 1983). Railroad Island is located in the middle of many positive transit and private-



751 Edgerton Ave

sector developments in the region, namely the Kayuga Interchange and Phalen Bus Rapid Transit planning, which further increase its accessibility to downtown and other Saint Paul neighborhoods. It is a highly walkable community with appealing natural amenities, including close proximity to Swede Hollow Park and the Bruce Vento Trail. The Arlington Hills Community Center, Flat Earth Brewing, La Palma Supermercado, and a new Mississippi Market Cooperative off 7th Street surround the Railroad Island Focus Area. Railroad Island lies in the center of the Phalen Corridor Development Strategy (2001) and within ESND’s identified 90-block “Community of Choice” (ESND). In the early 2000s, several multi-family structure improvements led to increases in property values and improved housing stock even among some of the area’s oldest structures, upgrading the units located inside 754 Payne Ave to sell for over \$200,000

in 2009 (Havens, 2009). Housing developments on the horizon, including the impending development on Rivoli Bluff planned by Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (DBNHS), are promising catalysts for the future success of a small ecovillage to be developed on the Focus Area identified in this study.

Home values across Saint Paul have risen significantly since 2009. According to an article published on August 16, 2014 in the Pioneer Press, median home values in the city increased from \$130,500 to \$145,000, and apartment buildings increased in value by about seven percent on average (Melo, August 16, 2014). Similarly, future transit developments in Railroad Island may increase home values and rents (Melo, May 15, 2014).

As home values throughout Railroad Island and Saint Paul’s East Side are on the rise, property taxes are also increasing significantly. In September 2014, the Saint Paul City Council approved a maximum tax levy limit – the total amount of property taxes collected from property owners – of \$103.64 million for 2015 (Melo, September 24, 2014). This levy setting is a 2.4% increase from 2014 (when the levy limit was set to \$101.2 million) and would translate to about a \$16 increase on the average household’s tax bill citywide (Melo, August 16, 2014). It includes specific levies for Saint Paul’s public library system and the Saint Paul Port Authority (Melo, September 24, 2014).

As a reaction to rising housing costs, decreased confidence in the housing market, and increased numbers of renters nationwide, the National Association of Realtors has seen a marked increase in multi-family home sales since 2009 (Passy, 2011). Despite this increase in renting, many renters still aspire to homeownership. Approximately 70% of individuals who lose a home to foreclosure will own again, and an estimated 83% of renters aspire to owning a home (Schmit, 2012). With this in mind, a resilient neighborhood will seek a mix of housing types, including both rental and ownership opportunities, at a range of price points to protect residents from losing their homes in difficult economic times.

# APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW INFORMATION AND NOTES

## Saint Paul and Railroad Island Contacts

Jim Erchul

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Phone: 651.283.1682

RuthAnn Eide

Title: Eastern District Crime Prevention Coordinator, St. Paul Police

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Jonathan Sage-Martinson

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## Railroad Island Interview Notes

Jonathan Sage-Martinson – Current St. Paul PED Director  
Interviewed by Leila Tripp on 11.24.14

What is St. Paul's current relationship with nonprofits/CDCs working on housing in St. Paul?  
Jonathan's background is in nonprofit management so he brings that knowledge to PED. From his experience the relationship between nonprofits and the City ebbs and flows throughout the years. In the early 2000s, there was a strong relationship with the City and because of the recent recession the City is again working with nonprofits more again around affordable housing, mostly for single family housing because there's a lot that the City owns in their inventory that they want to sell. There were a lot of tax forfeitures in the early 2000's and again more recently so the City is in a somewhat similar position.

What's your view on the role and selection of CDCs/nonprofits for RFPs for PED projects?  
When the City releases an RFP on larger projects it's open to both nonprofit and for profit developers so just depends on the type of project, scope, and context. Nonprofits are typically chosen for their connection with the community and keeping those interests present during the development choices and their understanding of the community context. There is also some money specifically set aside for working on multifamily housing but nonprofits are especially important for the rehab or construction of affordable single family homes. Because of the lower overhead sometimes the City will decide to work with private developers. However, nonprofits usually work harder to make sure that their project will "fit in" with the neighborhood.

How do PEDs plans for redevelopments get decided? Does it always come from the Mayor?  
Minneapolis is structured so that they are city council strong, meaning that the city will get involved in projects based on the council's interests whereas St. Paul takes more direction from the Mayor and is more place-based. PED looks also at the scale and how it fits in with the rest of the citywide goals. If the proposed project is small at the single family house scale that direction will typically come to the council members (who work with the District Councils to find out the neighborhoods priorities) but the City could get involved depending on how many other players/partners are involved already. The direction from the Mayor recently in Railroad Island is focused the redevelopment of Hamms Brewery, lower Payne Ave street reconstruction and street design, and clustering of development. The Mayor's role is important for setting the "themes" and local partners usually set up how it lands in the neighborhoods.

Generally, what do you think of Railroad Island neighborhood in the next few years?  
There are a lot of investments and growth happening around RRI right now with Hamms, Lowertown, Payne Ave street reconstruction and the city will get involved depending on the specific context and broader community agenda. The 8-80 vitality fund is a unique funding source for St. Paul that totals to \$4.2 million to be used for citywide priorities and some of those include investment in neighborhoods (\$10 that the city council will allocate). This money became available after the State assisted the city in paying off its bonds on the River Center. The economic development tax that was in place to pay off those bonds became available for other economic development. Some of that money is planned to go to lower Payne Ave. Jonathan knew about Jim Erchul's Rivoli Plan (from Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services) and is aware that this was new development.

Don Lorr – Chair of RRITF  
Interviewed by Leila Tripp on 11.20.14

When did the RRITF become a group and why?  
RRITF became a group around the 1970s and has been meeting for multiple decades. Originally, it was a group of residents that got together because of community issues from businesses leaving and loss of jobs. Directly east of RRI was the location for big business with large factory jobs (Hamms, 3M, Whirlpool). In about 15 years these companies moved their headquarters -- and jobs -- to Maplewood and other places, which resulted in about 5-7,000 lost jobs for the residents that lived in Railroad Island and that worked at these companies. Blue collar past and tough economic present is why this area is struggling. This along with white flight and long time

residents disappeared with the jobs. Payne Ave used to be the red light district and people didn't want to live there or raise their children near this area. Houses were used for drugs and demolished and this was impetus that brought people together. Coming out of the 80s the group of residents that were still left formed the Task Force to revitalize the area. ESNDC and the District Council process also came together around this time. Today, the Task Force is part of the district 5 planning council. Don has lived in RRI for 15 years and has been chairing the TF since January this year. RRI has 3 different wards intersecting in it so there's conflict that comes along with it.

Who are the people in the RRITF?

Don and Mike Pennig are co-chairs for the Task Force and are the only two that are elected (nominated). The previous chair of the RRITF retired last year so Don and Mike co-chair since they are both new to the position. There is also a secretary who takes notes (Kate) and Leslie McMurray (paid position on the District Council) that helps facilitate meetings and is a resource if any questions come up during the meeting. Anyone is automatically included and can participate in the Task Force if you live or work in RRI.

How did the people currently on the RRITF get involved?

Any resident or business owner can join that lives/work in RRI and it is not defined or limited by homeowner or rental. It's a loose executive board. Vice chair and chair are elected (but right now Don and Mike are co-chairing). People are nominated to take over once someone wants to leave the position.

What is the RRITF working on currently?

Many things, including development (this is how they are connected to district 5 council). The RRITF is an advisory role to the District Council who provides those recommendations to the city. The city doesn't have to take the advice, however when development is being planned or there are changes to the neighborhood the city needs to provide a role to help with the process. RRI is in some ways separated from the Payne-Phalen area but they have a long relationship with the DC and vice versa. The RRITF votes and then makes recommendations to the DC, which then brings to the rest (city council, city, etc). In 1997 and 2007 the RRITF wrote and updated the small area plan, which is their vision for what they want to see changed in the community such as: run down buildings, crime, a lot of rental housing and not as many options for homeownership, street improvements, collecting together an idea of what they want to see for the neighborhood. As a result from the plan, there were a series of brownstones built on Payne Ave in partnership with DBNHS. The RRITF participated in exciting workshops to help design the new brownstones of Payne Ave in a charrette style. These brownstones are geared for middle income residents and the hope was to draw a mix of income levels to the neighborhood and connect the neighborhood to downtown. They want their neighborhood to not be just a place to drive through or around but that people go to visit.

What's on the radar for the future?

- Rush line, city redevelopment plans
- Rivoli Bluff long on going plan, many years into developing a large scale of 40-50 homes, they hope it will draw people into the area instead of RRI being a pass through place
- Payne/Bush redevelopment from ESNDC- vision for development that includes housing but Don didn't know much else about the plan
- They are trying to solidify the history of the area from Swede Hollow and the immigrants that lived there and tying it to people who are there today (not just the immigrants that used to live there and who are living there today)

Who does the RRITF partner with for projects?

The City, Ramsey County, police force, ESNDC (Jim Erchul), Merrick (Dan Rodriguez) and sometimes other people depending on the topics in the meetings. This can range from people the city, DSI, Joe Morelli, Friends of Swede Hollow and Dayton's Bluff, and people and new business owners who are interested in moving to the area. This year the RRITF helped coordinate National Night Out and partnered with Merrick and Hope Academy (the school primarily provides education for Hmong students).

Why does the RRITF meet at the Police Station?

For the neighborhood it's a location that people know and they can reuse the space for different events. It's been used in the past for the size of the space. Don thinks it might not be the best and recognizes that it could be a barrier for people. It could work in Hope Academy or the church in the area but they haven't tried to move the

meetings yet. They have met once outside at Weida Park for their august meeting. Past meetings began because of crime so that's why the meetings were there historically. Merrick used to have a building in RRI and held meetings there when they still were located in the neighborhood. Now, it's just been convenient to continue having the meetings in the Police Station but because people are busy and it's been convenient to have it at the police station they haven't moved it but it's been on a back of the agenda for awhile. Don doesn't think there would be a decrease in people who come to the meetings if it were to change locations (except for the police possibly). It has been proposed by others to move location but his concern would be how do you tell people where it is if it moved because it's been at the station so long. People don't want to walk far either. If they had a community center or a religious location in the neighborhood they could move it there but that might have baggage as well attached to it. Merrick is trying to move back to RRI and is looking at a site on the southwest center. If someone else were to propose a community center Don wonders what the developers motives would be.

What is the average attendance at the TF meetings?

Anywhere from 8-50 people come to the events depending on what's on the agenda. When there are issues around crime more people come to see what's happening or if they are concerned about an item on the agenda. Does the RRITF do any community outreach or engagement?

The RRITF does community clean ups and national night out and a few other things a year but want to do more. They want to reach out to people, be available for people to contact them, and be a communication tool for people to raise their concerns/hopes/desire to the District Council and the city. The RRITF wants to continue to attract people and not lose any more people. Being on the TF is a volunteer position so there's only so much they can do and community involvement is always a struggle. Another issue is that their neighborhood has the lowest voters in the city. Typically renters are not present at the meetings but a representative amount of residents came to national night out.

What are the community's feelings about Jim Erchul's Rivoli Plan?

There is a long history of support for the plan. Residents have written letters of support and have gone in front of city council to support the plan. RRI has some of the highest percent of rentals (60-70%) in the city so homeownership is something they want to see more of. The TF wants to see more homes built to reduce the amount of vacancy, which is also a problem. Don wonders how ESNDCs plan will show density and how it will actually be realized. If it's a square/traditional building or a high rise people probably won't be excited about it. There are already a lot of rental buildings in the area that could use a rehab first before a new structure is built. There are mixed feelings about this among residents: some people want RRI to look like it was in the 60s and 80s but that's problematic too because they don't want concentration of poverty or bad landlords (if there's one bad landlord in the area then they attract each other). As a neighborhood they want to participate in the discussion for development plans and the starting place should come out of existing plans. There are many ways that developers/planners don't look at the problematic aspects of high density and concentration of poverty. The residents want a variety of housing and income levels. People want to be excited about the project and want to be involved in the discussion. They support anchor businesses along Payne Ave and want vital businesses. Longer term residents are skeptical of plans that don't involve them or seemingly don't involve them. Also, how does any new development tie into the transit that's being planned for the area? Mixed use development could benefit the area and they are open to fresh ideas but it needs to fit into the historic character of the neighborhood.

Jim Erchul – Executive Director of DNBHS

Interviewed by Leila Tripp on 11.13.14

Where does the Rivoli Plan stand right now?

Rivoli Plan is still very much in the works. This isn't a new plan at all, it has been conceptualized for years and the small area plan was created in the early 2000s. However, the foreclosure crisis hit and stopped the project and is now gaining momentum again. Jim mentioned that they plan to break ground Spring 2015 with 35 new construction, single-family houses that he is estimating with take about 3-4 years to sell. A few rehab projects

around the area as well.

In Mr. Erchul's experience it's actually been cheaper to build new construction than rehab because the market price is lower in RRI. It takes about \$270,000 to build but they are selling houses for \$170,000-\$180,000. Because of that gap in financing DBNHS is still working to find funding so they can sell it at affordable pricing.

The plan is to sell these houses for a range of incomes. I asked why not just affordable housing and Mr. Erchul explained that they don't need to put those restrictions on the housing to sell it to low-income families/individuals. People want to live with people like them and with their families, friends, or places where generations of family have lived. He said it's actually harder and costs more to get middle income families to come to this area even if it's market rate because you have to put in more amenities for them to move there (ex: the brownstones on Payne Ave).

DBNHS already knows whom they are going to sell the houses to because they conduct interviews and focus groups with families to know what they want. The people this plan will benefit the upwardly mobile, non-white, young families.

The plan consists of courtyard houses (he compared it to Milwaukee St in Seward for similarity but with more green space), with a shared backyard/green space. Also, the plan consists of a solar garden to produce net zero energy for the houses not only in the Rivoli Plan area but the whole RRI neighborhood. DBNHS is working on a study right now to determine the financing methods for this (which is easy) the difficult part is getting the contracts figured out with Xcel Energy. Another reason why they're focusing on renewable energy sources is to reduce the utilities bill for both homeowners and renters, which will incentivize renters to get involved since traditionally they don't have the time/or care to get involved.

Did the place receive any green building grants?

It hasn't won any specifically for green building because there aren't grants specifically for green building because green building requirements are now integrated into all housing grants.

Are you partnering with anyone for the Rivoli Plan?

The main partners for this plan are the RRITF, the City, and a youth building program that employs youth for construction projects. DBNHS has received grant money (\$100,000) from the City & MHFA recently to begin on this, which in Mr. Erchul's opinion are really the only places get money for building affordable housing.

What is the City's involvement with this plan?

The plan is being implemented in phases because it depends on how much money DBNHS receives. The first phase was the multifamily brownstones on Payne Ave (not rental) that the City gave DBNHS money for. Those were extremely hard to sell because they were market rate and required more built in amenities. A lot has changed in the amount of money the City can award for affordable housing projects. The CDBG program started in the 1970s and had \$15 million to give away- now it has dwindled to \$5 million.

The 2 things that are holding this project back in addition to funding is that the system doesn't want it (the city, the market) and low interest rates coupled with construction costs going up because of tight labor. The reason why the City hasn't been as involved recently in this project is because they want multi-family housing so it makes sense financially for them but the long time residents don't want to see that kind of drastic change to their neighborhood. They feel that it would change the character of the neighborhood. Also, the slow progress has not been from lack of planning. There have been so many plans and studies in this area but the problem has been implementation and lack of follow through.

## **EcoVillage Interview Notes**

Jean Bain - current Northside Home Fund Coordinator

Interviewed by John Pierce on 10.17.14

The EcoVillage was successful because it had PPL as the lead partner as well as police input, the land bank, and regulatory services. The EcoVillage is arguably the strongest of the cluster development attempts in the Northside.

The EcoVillage situation is difficult to replicate because of the foreclosure crisis. Many of the foreclosed

homes were investor-owned.

Although located at the City of Minneapolis offices, the Family Housing Fund is the primary funder for the Northside Home Fund Coordinator.

Some cities do not require rental management classes before a landlord can operate. This lack of oversight can allow slumlords to fill degraded buildings with tenants before inspection. Once the tenants are in place, it is difficult to do the necessary improvements for dilapidated buildings.

Jean believes that cities could look more at economic development as a way to spark residential interest.

She stated an example of a restaurant causing an upswing in real estate inquiries in the surrounding area in Robbinsdale.

The shootings of the summer of 2014 have decreased the pace of sales and marketability in North Minneapolis.

Jeff Skrenes - former Hawthorne Neighborhood Council Housing Director

Interviewed by John Pierce on 11.6.14

In his capacity as neighborhood housing director, Jeff spent about 30-60% of his time on the EcoVillage but this estimate fluctuated yearly.

The EcoVillage project was notable for its grassroots, resident-driven effort (as opposed to top-down) vision.

Most of the Hawthorne Neighborhood Council was white and the long-term resident Hawthorne advocates were white. Residents contributed key ideas (and pioneered the “green” mentality) and their willingness to stay put through difficult times was vital for the success of the EcoVillage.

City coordination was a challenge on the EcoVillage because of the many departments necessary to participate in the project. At one point, there were eight city agencies working on a single problem property. The Hawthorne Neighborhood Council and the Northside Home Fund encouraged the City to work collaboratively on the EcoVillage project.

The condition of the EcoVillage area prior to redevelopment was unique in the intensity of blight. PPL brought “critical resources” to the table.

On a Northside blog, the Adventures of Johnny Northside, Jeff describes the coordinated efforts in the EcoVillage in a post from January 7th, 2010: “We went down the list of properties and issues and tackled each one individually. [Former CPED Director] Mike Christenson was especially great at keeping everyone on task and making sure there was a clear understanding of who was going to do what. We held each other accountable, and we met every few weeks to update each other on our progress.” The post continues that the outcome of the EcoVillage are “the fruits of labor that came from the community standing its ground and the police department and city government delivering on their promises to do so in solidarity with us.”

Blog source: <http://adventuresofjohnnynorthside.blogspot.com/2010/01/ecovillage-at-hawthorne-huddle.html>

Jill Kiener - former Northside Home Fund Coordinating Consultant

Interviewed by John Pierce on 11.7.14

The Northside Home Fund money was strategic in that it helped to incentivize the convening of various groups.

Cluster redevelopments benefit from the completion of highly visible physical change/modification to galvanize community interest and create energy. Similarly, clusters benefit when they have a clear brand/identifying feature. Cottage Park is another example of a strong cluster development with a visible physical change and a clear park-based neighborhood identity.

PPL’s strategy and professional capabilities enabled the process to move forward during difficult times. Habitat for Humanity brought energy and press coverage (including Jimmy Carter’s visit) to the EcoVillage.

Tom Streitz - former Director of Housing and Policy Development at the City of Minneapolis  
Interviewed by John Pierce on 10.29.14

Tom mentioned the Homeline Tenant Advocacy Organization as a resource for renters who have problematic landlords or who were forced to move from blighted properties in the EcoVillage. Tom emphasized the importance of private philanthropy. In order to gain funds, the narrative of “market failure” must be clearly communicated to funders.

The politics of council members has an effect on cluster redevelopments and must be considered.

Rather than suggest economic development in an underdeveloped market to stimulate residential interest, Tom stated that businesses will naturally follow stable residential areas.

## APPENDIX G: ECOVILLAGE TIMELINE

The following timeline illustrates key moments and milestones, broken down by year, in the Hawthorne EcoVillage process.

### Early 2000s

PPL provided consultation to the Hawthorne Neighborhood Council including technical assistance to develop capacity among neighborhood leaders.

An architect brought green concepts to the neighborhood strategy and a charrette produced a architecture and landscape model (2002).

### 2003

North Minneapolis community leaders asked the City to commit to developing sustainable solutions for North Minneapolis. City Planning and Economic Development (CPED) established the Northside Partnership to create “a comprehensive action plan to increase employment options, improve economic development, increase housing and environmental opportunities, and address public safety concerns in North Minneapolis” ([http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/convert\\_261237.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/convert_261237.pdf)).

### 2005-2006

Minneapolis experienced an increase in foreclosures that led to high concentrations of vacant and boarded properties. In response, the City and partners created the Northside Home Fund which adopted a new strategy to maximize the impact of available resources by concentrating redevelopment in targeted geographic areas, or “clusters.” The Hawthorne Neighborhood Council identified the four-block site bounded by Lowry Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, 30th Avenue, and 4th Avenue as the cluster.

### 2006

The cluster strategy attracted \$500,000 grant from Home Depot Foundation which allowed PPL and residents to pursue their project as a model of sustainable revitalization.

Over half of the properties in the EcoVillage went through foreclosure between 2006 and 2008. The central intersection, 30th Ave N and 6th Ave N, was notorious for drugs.

2007

The EcoVillage project officially launched in 2007.

The neighborhood of Hawthorne had the highest rate of foreclosed properties in Minneapolis at 15.5%.

Northside resident and blogger, Jeff Skrenes, nicknamed the “Hawthorne Hawkman,” joined Hawthorne Neighborhood Council as Housing Director.

2008

A long term resident called City Hall to say she intended to move out as a result of the continued crime in the area. This call helped spur officials to increase the public/private intervention that had already begun.

Thirty volunteers came together in the EcoVillage through the ReBuilding Together project to assist with home repairs to help occupants stay in the community.

Vacant structures were demolished and a temporary tree nursery is put in its place with donations from the City Trees program. Incubated trees from the nursery were planted throughout North Minneapolis by 2011.

2009

Violent crime decreased 73% from 2007 to 2009 in the EcoVillage.

PPL partnered with the University of Minnesota College of Design and volunteer architects for design workshops.

The workshops produced sustainability ideas with input from the neighbors.

2010

The first new completed home in the EcoVillage was unveiled. The EcoVillage project was designated a “MetLife Foundation Community Police Partnership Award Winner.” A “green” LEED Platinum home (400 31st Ave N. ) was completed and sold less than a month after construction ended to a household earning less than 80% AMI.

2011

Project partners organized a National Night Out and over 50 Hawthorne residents attended.

The neighborhood had its inaugural growing season for the EcoVillage community garden.

A tornado hit the Northside, but not the EcoVillage specifically.

A master plan and a set of specific sustainability goals was created through the winters of 2011-2012 guides the future of the EcoVillage.

2012

The City of Minneapolis launched “Green Homes North.” The initiative was inspired by the EcoVillage project.

2013

By 2013, foreclosures in the EcoVillage decreased to zero. Since 2007, narcotics arrests decreased 88% and the owner occupied rate grew to 75% within the EcoVillage.

2014

Within the EcoVillage cluster, three home rehabs have been completed, ten new homes have been built, and six homes (either completed or under construction) are currently on the market. The total of 19 homes includes four homes adjacent to the four-block area: 415 30th Ave. N, 3020 4th St. N, 2018 4th St. N, and 329 31st Ave. N.