



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
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**Date:** May 21, 2014  
**To:** Neighborhood Planning Committee  
**From:** Michelle Beaulieu, City Planner  
**Subject:** **Shepard Davern Area Plan Update and Zoning Study, Status Report**

**Background:**

This memo summarizes the progress to date of the Shepard Davern Area Planning and Zoning Studies, and to update the committee on planned activities moving forward. Attached is a draft of the Plan Update.

In December 2012, the Neighborhood Planning Committee and Saint Paul Planning Commission initiated the Shepard Davern Planning and Zoning Studies, and authorized the creation of a community task force to advise the work of City staff.

The Shepard Davern Task Force, co-chaired by Planning Commissioner Gaius Nelson and Highland District Council board member Greg Campbell, met for one year, from March 2013 through April 2014. The committee was comprised of residents, property and business owners and representatives, and other interested members of the community.

Early in the process, it was determined that the clearest course of action would be to create a Plan Update that would be an updated chapter of the District 15 Highland Park Plan. The Plan Update will replace the existing "West 7<sup>th</sup> Street" Commercial District chapter, and a new executive summary will be written for that chapter. This Plan Update also allows the decertification of the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan from 1999.

The Zoning Study has been strongly informed by the conversations and recommendations of the Task Force and the strategies identified for the Plan Update. The Zoning Study will include a number of public meetings in June-July 2014 before recommendations are completed. The Plan Update and Zoning Study recommendations will proceed through the Neighborhood Planning Committee (NPC) and Planning Commission process together for the sake of efficiency and clarity.

**Progress Report:**

Attached is a draft of the Plan Update. The Plan Update was written by staff with input from the community Task Force. The Task Force reviewed, by topic area, the goals and strategies in the Highland District Plan (2007) and the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan (1999), as well as any other relevant plans (Great River Passage Plan, etc.). Based on these discussions, goals and strategies were maintained, edited, removed, or new ones created. The Task Force also reviewed the complete list of strategies to set implementation priorities.

The majority of strategies identified by the Task Force are similar to those in past plans, including an emphasis on safety concerns along West 7<sup>th</sup> and a desire for better access to the Mississippi River area across Shepard Road. One substantive shift was the desire to remove the following provision in the Highland District Plan:

“If Sibley Manor or other large affordable housing complexes are redeveloped ensure that an allocation of at least 30% of the new units provided on site are affordable to residents making below the St. Paul median income.” (pg 26)

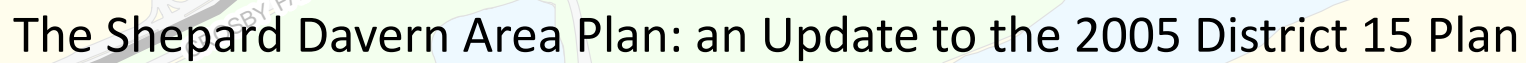
The Task Force felt that the area has a surplus of affordable housing, and that it would be unfair to single out particular properties to carry an additional burden of affordable housing. There was a strong desire to see a greater mix of housing type in the area. Through discussion at the Task Force, which included multiple District Council board members and the owner of the Sibley Manor property, it was determined that the existing Citywide requirements for affordable housing (for developments that receive government subsidy) would be sufficient to ensure the maintenance of a mixed income community.

The top priorities of the Task Force are to:

- Create a neighborhood park between Shepard Road and West 7<sup>th</sup> to better serve both the elderly and youth populations in the area. In particular, to look for opportunities that would be easily accessible to Sibley Manor.
- Support a better balance of housing types, tenures and ownership models, including high quality housing that will serve as an amenity for the neighborhood.
- Improve the safety and walkability of West 7<sup>th</sup>, including slowing traffic coming into the city off the Highway 5 bridge onto West 7<sup>th</sup>, and creating the feeling of a Gateway to Saint Paul.
- Improve neighborhood accessibility to Crosby Farm Park and the trails on the south side of Shepard Road, particularly through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle crossings as identified in the Great River Passage Plan.

**Next Steps:**

Staff intend to bring a final draft of the Plan Update to the Highland District Council for review and recommendation to the NPC. Staff will also be holding community meetings for the zoning study this summer. Once both are in final draft form, staff will bring the draft Plan Update and draft zoning recommendations to the NPC together.



Adopted by the City Council \_\_\_\_\_

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## Credits

### Area Plan Task Force Members

Lynn Bach  
Greg Campbell (Co-Chair)  
Laura Deuberry  
Jack Dobier  
Ken Henk  
Larry Kaiser  
Lisa Moe  
Laura Nichols  
Bill Rosenbloom  
Jerry Rothstein  
Kathy Soderberg  
Michael Waldman

### Saint Paul Planning Commission

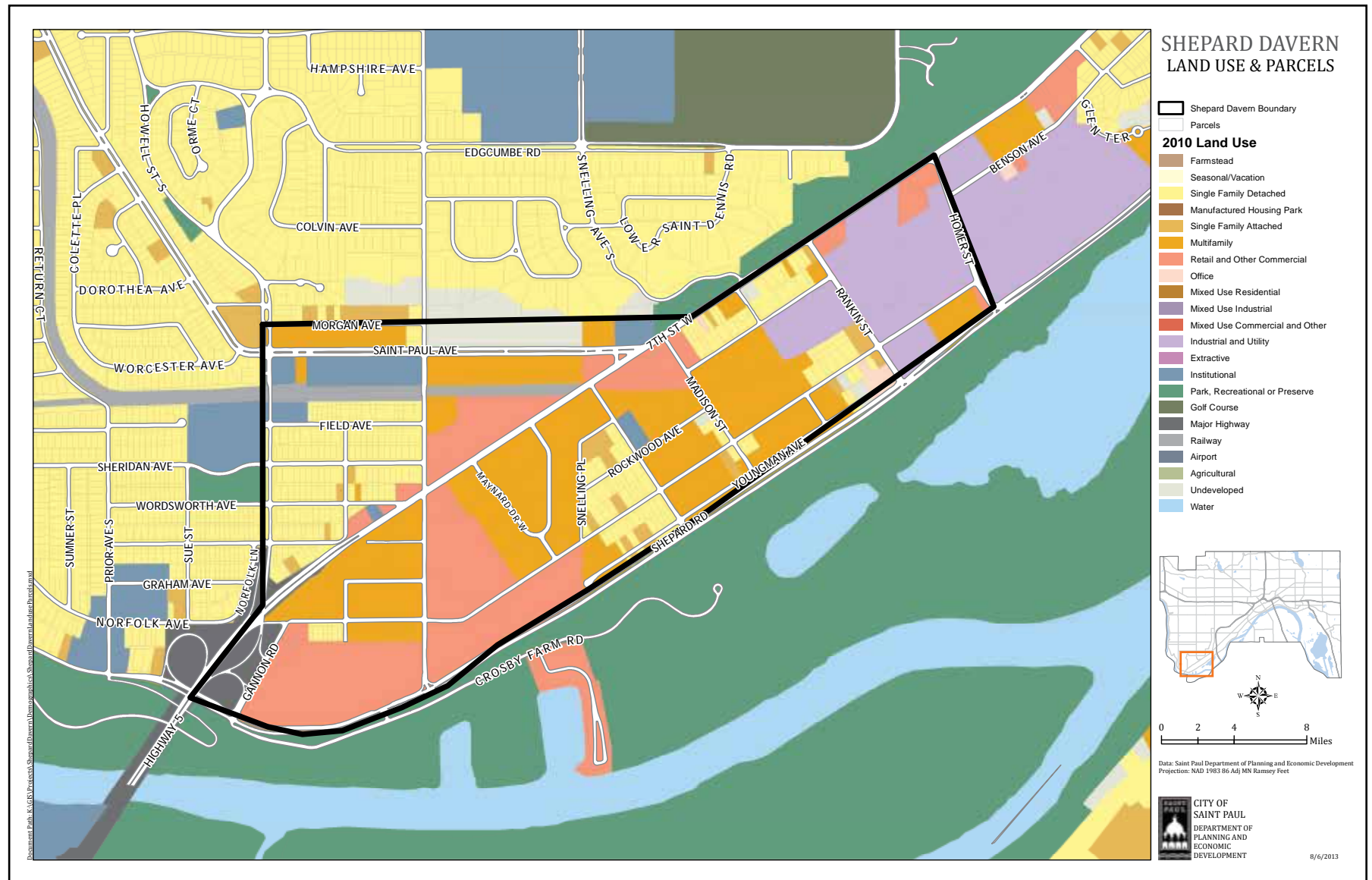
#### Representative / Co-Chair

Paula Merrigan (January - June 2013)  
Gaius Nelson (June 2013 - April 2014)

### Key City Staff

Michelle Beaulieu  
Merritt Clapp-Smith  
Michael Richardson  
Kathryn Purcham

## Study Area



## The Shepard Davern Area Plan

An Update to the 2007 D15 Plan - page 1

## Planning Background

The Shepard Davern area is at the southwestern-most edge of Saint Paul, just across the Mississippi River from the MSP International Airport and the Mall of America, and easily accessible from Downtown Saint Paul via Highway 5 / West 7th Street or Shepard Road. This strategic location has been the focus of many planning efforts in recent years, including a 1999 Small Area Plan, as part of the Fort Road Development Plan of 2005, a chapter of the District 15 Neighborhood Plan (also 2005), and as a component of the Great River Passage Plan (2013). Much of the Shepard Davern area is covered by two Overlay Districts that are part of the Saint Paul Zoning Code: the Shepard Davern Residential and Shepard Davern Commercial Overlay Districts (see map below).

The existing Shepard Davern Overlay Districts exclude a number of key commercially-zoned properties along West 7th Street, and do not include the full area discussed in the Shepard Davern Small Area Plan (1999). These districts also include certain standards that have made it difficult to attract development, and may be prohibitive to the redevelopment of some of the properties in the area.

Since the creation of these overlay districts, the City has adopted new Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts which include many of the pedestrian-friendly qualities and design standards that are included in the Shepard Davern Overlay Districts. TN zoning districts may be a more straightforward and comprehensive replacement for these overlay districts.

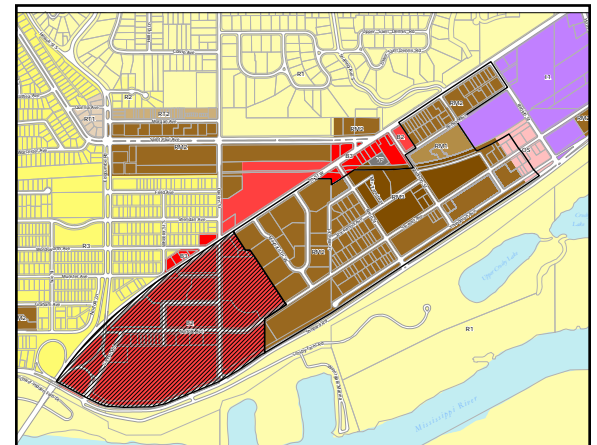
This plan addresses the key goals from past planning efforts to create a modern, relevant vision for the Shepard Davern area, develop goals for the neighborhood, and will inform the zoning study which will replace the Overlay Districts.

## Purpose of Update

The 2005 Highland District Plan recommends either enforcing the Shepard-Davern Overlay Districts or rezoning the area to Traditional Neighborhood District 3, to “ensure that developers have not only the flexibility to be creative, but also the regulations to guarantee high-quality design.” In 2011, after an amendment to the Residential Overlay District, the Highland District Council requested that the existing small area plans be reviewed and updated, and that a zoning study be completed for the areas under both the Residential and Commercial Overlay Districts.

## Format of Update

This plan update is intended to form a seamless part of the existing Highland District Plan from 2005, as requested by the Saint Paul Planning Commission. When adopted it will replace the 1999 Shepard Davern Gateway Small Area Plan, effectively retiring that plan.



*Area zoning and Shepard Davern  
Overlay Districts*



## Study Area

The Shepard Davern area is centered on West 7th Street, a high-traffic, high-speed thoroughfare that bisects the area of District 15 between the Highland Bluffs and the Mississippi River. The area currently contains mostly auto-oriented uses including a combination of airport-serving surface parking lots, strip malls, light industrial uses, multi-family dwellings and detached single-family homes. The Mississippi River provides a beautiful natural border on two sides of the area and its floodplain provides the location for some of the most scenic public parks in St. Paul.

The West 7th Street Area has numerous natural, locational and social assets that provide a base for a bright future. The area includes the vast majority of Highland Park's affordable housing and contributes substantially to the neighborhood's ethnic and socio-economic diversity. The affordable housing units are found almost exclusively in Sibley Manor, a well-maintained and well-managed complex of 550 housing units in three-story apartment buildings. Sibley Manor provides an invaluable asset to Highland as a privately-operated source of affordable housing. For half a Century, Sibley Manor has been an entry points for immigrant families in St. Paul. Without Sibley Manor, Highland would be a much less diverse place.

In addition to affordable housing and diversity, other assets in the area include: Crosby Farm Park and the Mississippi River, easy access to Downtown St. Paul and the Airport, the potential commercial visibility offered by West 7th Street, a substantial amount of underdeveloped land (mainly in surface parking lots) that is ripe for redevelopment, good transit access on West 7th Street and a mix of commercial, industrial and residential land use. The Minnesota

In spite of this strong set of assets, the West 7th Street Area must address some current issues and potential concerns. Among the most worrisome issues are: high traffic speeds on West 7th Street, lack of a connection to the Mississippi River and a lack of a pedestrian-friendly street environment. The concerns are: development that is incompatible with the rest of the Shepard Davern area and Highland Park in scale or use, the risk of development overshadowing the natural environment along the Mississippi River and the possible future loss of Sibley Manor and the ethnic diversity and affordable housing it provides.



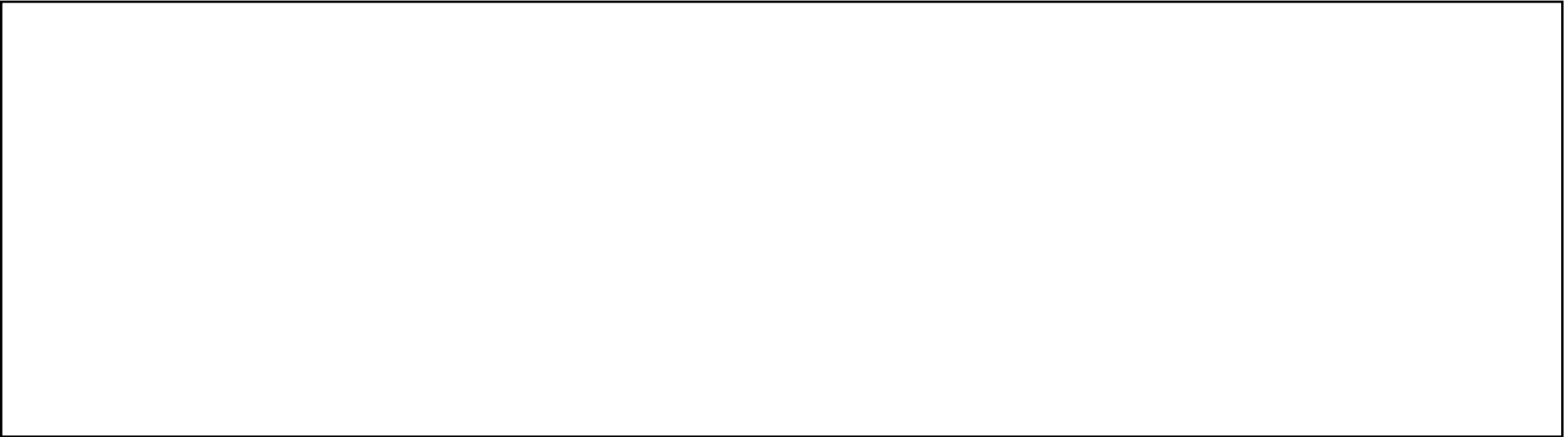
*Sibley Plaza, photo by  
City of Saint Paul 2013*



*Graham Place Apartments, photo by  
City of Saint Paul 2013*

## Study Area, continued

The Shepard Davern Area will ideally become a place that capitalizes on its assets, effectively addresses its issues and minimizes the risk posed by external threats. The realization of this ideal will have to include an interconnected set of pedestrian-oriented and mixed-use urban villages. These urban villages replace most of the area's underutilized land with new 3-5 story mixed-use buildings with a combination of first-floor convenience retail and affordable and market rate housing for people throughout the life cycle. The vision may include some hotels, but should avoid overly-tall buildings and large regional uses such as a movie theater complex that would disrupt the character of the neighborhood and would not meet a local need. The majority of the existing single-family homes and light industrial uses will stay to support a diverse housing stock and jobs. The street environment will support pedestrian and bicycle travel as well as transit and automotive travel. The area will be an attraction for the neighborhood and the entire City.



*image credit*



## Land Use Goals

The Shepard Davern study area is a truly mixed-use district, with a range of land uses from light industrial to retail and office spaces, to both single- and multi-family housing. The mixed-use character is a strength, and provides local businesses and services for the many residents of the area as well as for those passing through the corridor. As the neighborhood's residential density increases, maintaining a balance between these land uses will be important, so that industrial uses fit into the character of the neighborhood, to strengthen the commercial businesses to serve new residents, and to retain single-family housing without dwarfing it in scale.

## Land Use Objectives and Strategies

LU1. Attract more neighborhood serving businesses to the area, to better serve the needs of residents in the area.

LU1.1 Encourage mixed-use developments with first-floor retail spaces on primary roadways, particularly West 7th.

LU1.2 Work with developers to attract a mix of neighborhood serving businesses and regional businesses to create a strong retail base.

LU2. Work to address property crime issues in the neighborhood, making it a safer more attractive place to work, shop and live.

LU2.1 Increase police presence in the neighborhood, to address areas where criminal activities have been identified.

LU2.2 Work with crime specialists to address particular issues in the area, through methods that may include increased lighting, camera surveillance, and/or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), particularly in reviewing retail area parking lot design.

LU3. Encourage public/private partnerships to create vibrant open spaces welcoming to the community.

LU4. Encourage light industrial uses in existing industrially zoned areas and adjacent to existing industry, for example, light manufacturing and data processing.

LU5. Work with existing industrial businesses to create a more enticing area.



*Buca Restaurant, Shepard Park Office Center, and Highland Auto, photo by City of Saint Paul, 2013*



## Parks and Recreation

**DRAFT**

The Shepard Davern area is surrounded by parkland, not the least of which being Crosby Farm Park on the south side of Shepard Road, and including McDonough Park along Saint Paul Avenue. These parklands, however, are not well-used by residents in part due to their inaccessibility, but also because of the desire to keep these spaces natural. Access to these parks should be enhanced for residents of the area, but the need for more active park spaces should also be addressed to better serve the community's recreation and gathering-space needs.

### Parks and Recreation Objectives and Strategies

PR1. Create a new neighborhood park between Shepard Road and West 7th to better serve both the elderly and the youth populations in the area. In particular, look for opportunities that are easily accessible to Sibley Manor.

PR1.1 Work with private developers to take advantage of parkland dedication and stormwater management requirements.

PR2. Look for opportunities for community gardening and/or urban agriculture in the area.

PR2.1 Explore alternative uses for McDonough Park.

PR3. Maintain the natural areas adjacent to the river as a unique asset, in accordance with the recommendations of the Great River Passage Plan.

PR4. Enhance the river area to create a destination that will attract more regional visitors to the area. Include signage to help people move through the park, and work with schools to encourage more visits.

PR5. Improve neighborhood accessibility to the Crosby Farm Park and trails on the south side of Shepard Road.

PR5.1 Enhance access points through improved pedestrian crossings at the four points identified by the Great River Passage Plan: South Davern Street, Alton Street, South Madison Street and South Rankin Street.

PR6. Improve access to the Two Rivers Outlook on the south side of Shepard Road and the east side of West 7th Street.

PR7. Improve and maintain the appearance of City-owned land on the hill adjacent to West 7th Street north of Saint Paul Avenue (including McDonough Park), in particular to enhance the area and create a Gateway to Saint Paul.



*Great River Passage Plan, pg 106*



## Housing

The Shepard Davern area is unique in the mix of housing types and tenures. It is one of the most densely populated areas in Highland Park and the City of Saint Paul. The area has a high renter population and a relatively high density low-income residents compared to the rest of the Highland Park District. The diversity of housing types and range of affordability is valued by the community, and efforts should be made to assure that one housing type or tenure does not dominate the marketplace. While this diversity is an asset to the Shepard Davern area, there should also be a concerted effort to create a sense of identity and community among the various populations that live there.

### Housing Objectives and Strategies

H1. Support a better balance of housing types, tenures and ownership models, including high quality housing that will serve as an amenity for the neighborhood.

H2. Attract more neighborhood serving businesses to the area, to better serve the high density of residents in the area (see Land Use Objectives and Strategies).

H3. Retain the existing clusters of single-family houses, particularly in areas where the single-family residential structure is the primary building type on a given block.

H3.1 Use zoning to protect the single-family character of these areas.

H3.2 Work with the Highland District Council and housing organizations to encourage and incentivize maintenance and rehabilitation of single-family dwellings in targeted areas as necessary.

H4. Create new block clubs, and support existing block clubs, to foster sense of community.

H4.1 Work with the Highland District Council to raise the awareness of the block club system and to sign people

up to organize block clubs.

H4.2 Work with apartment and rental property managers to set up block clubs for people living in multi-family structures.

H4.3 Create a stronger community connection to Highland Village.

H5. Identify, promote and support social service organizations that serve the diverse populations living in the area.

H5.1 Create a resource list of service organizations available to property owners.

H6. Assure that landlords are complying with housing and maintenance regulations and standards.

H6.1 Work with the District Council and pertinent City departments to identify and address problem properties.



*The Regency Apartments, photo by City of Saint Paul 2013*



## Transportation

Shepard Davern is the first neighborhood of Saint Paul that people experience when coming into the city off the Highway 5 bridge. The area is well-connected to three major regional job centers (Downtown Saint Paul, the MSP Airport, and the Mall of America). And the Mississippi River area provides opportunities for recreation. Taking advantage of these three attributes through improved streetscaping, maintaining and widening public transportation options, and improving pedestrian access across both West 7th and Shepard Road, will improve the Shepard Davern neighborhood for residents, encourage patronage of local businesses, and bring more visitors to the area.

### Transportation Objectives and Strategies

T1. Improve transportation options, including the walkability, of the area to better accommodate the high density of residents in the area.

T1.1 Work with City and County staff and other stakeholders during upcoming transportation studies to further the goals of the immediate community. Participate in public hearings, workshops, and open houses, and encourage neighbors to engage as well.

T1.2 Work to develop priorities to create Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) proposals for improvement projects.

T2. Slow the traffic coming into the city off the Highway 5 bridge onto West 7th, both to improve the safety of the pedestrian environment along West 7th, and to help create the feeling of a Gateway to Saint Paul.

T3. Maintain Shepard Road as a truck route.

T4. Improve the safe access to and safety of bus stops along the north side of West 7th Street.

T4.1 Work with Metro Transit, Saint Paul Public Works, and private developers of adjacent sites during redevelopment, to identify potential new shelter locations along West 7th.

T5. Improve pedestrian spaces and overall safety and condition of Davern Street.

T5.1 Improve the sidewalks and install bike lanes on Davern.

T5.2 Improve the condition of Davern at the CP rail crossing.

T5.1 Seek ways to reduce vehicle speeds on Davern north of West 7th Street.

T6. Implement bicycle improvements throughout the area, as identified in the St Paul Bikeways Plan, to encourage bicycling as an affordable means of transportation for area residents.

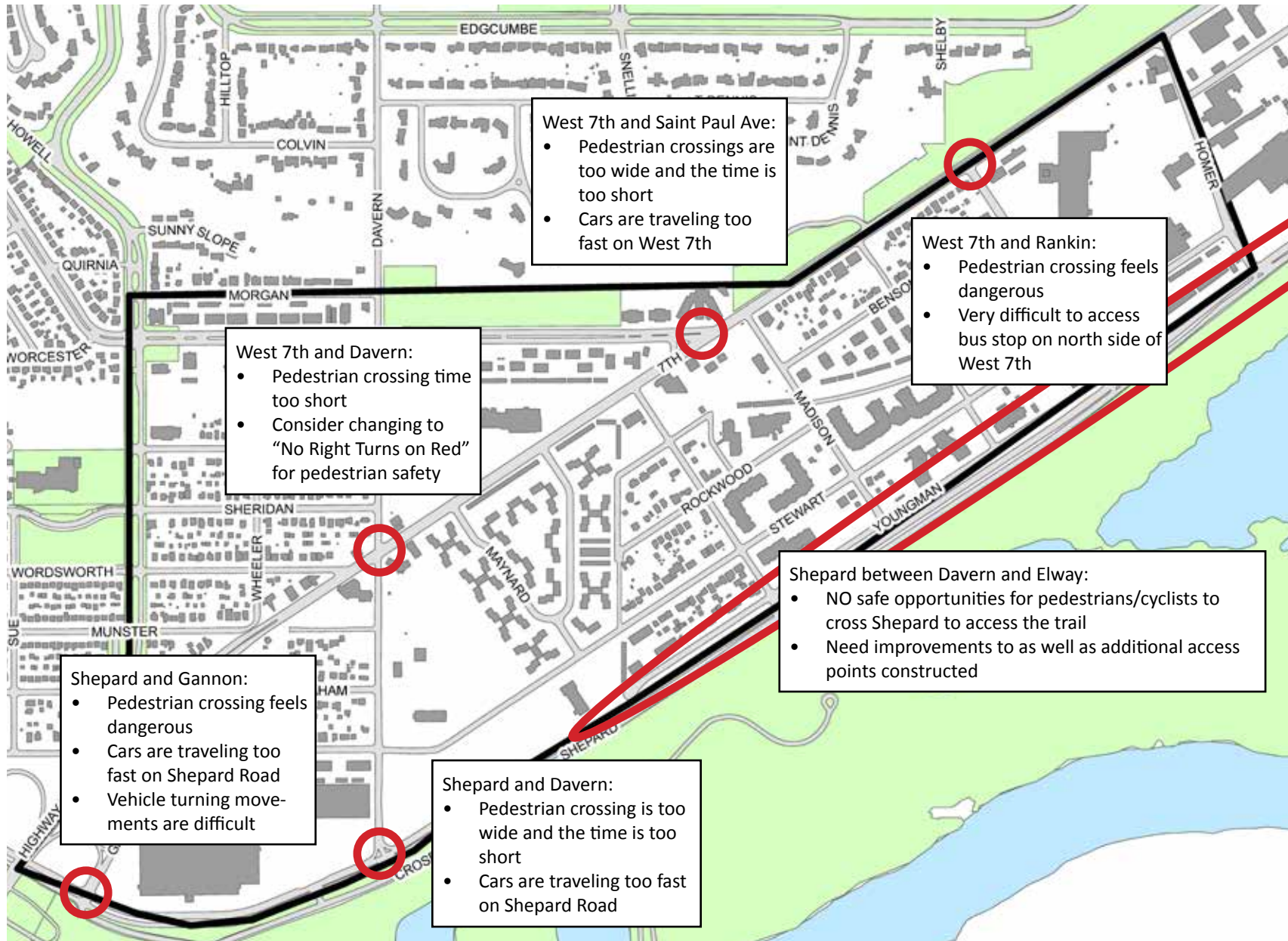
T6.1 Install bike parking consistent with the bike parking program for Highland Village and the rest of the District.

T7. Make improvements at problematic intersections for the safety of all users (see map for identified areas). Use these opportunities to bring higher value and amenity to the neighborhood through streetscaping.

T8. Study the Canadian Pacific rail spur for bicycle and pedestrian trail use, and actively engage and seek input from neighborhood stakeholders, adjacent property owners and tenants.

T9. Use the Saint Paul Great River Passage Plan to guide streetscape and connectivity improvements, to improve access through the neighborhood and to the river area. In particular, seek ways to implement the improvements identified in for Shepard Road.





## Implementation

Land Use Strategies			
#	Strategy Summary	Responsible Parties	Community Priority for Implementation
L1	Attract neighborhood-serving businesses	PED	High
L2	Address property crime issues, other safety concerns	PED, PW, Police	High
L3	Create vibrant urban spaces	PED, HDC	Low
L4	Encourage light industrial uses in I-zoned areas	PED	Medium
L5	Improve industrial areas of neighborhood	PED	Low

Parks and Recreation Strategies			
#	Strategy Summary	Responsible Parties	Community Priority for Implementation
PR1	New neighborhood park btwn W.7th and Shepard	Parks, PED	High
PR2	Improve appearance of parks along W. 7th	Parks, PW	High
PR3	Community gardening opportunities	Parks, HDC	Low
PR4	Maintain natural river areas	Parks	Medium
PR5	Attract regional visitors	Parks	Low
PR6	Improve accessibility of Shepard Road trails and Crosby Farm Park	Parks, PW	High
PR7	Improve access to Two Rivers Park Outlook	Parks, PW	Medium

*Note: HDC=Highland District Council, PED=Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development, PW=Public Works, DSI=Department of Safety and Inspections*

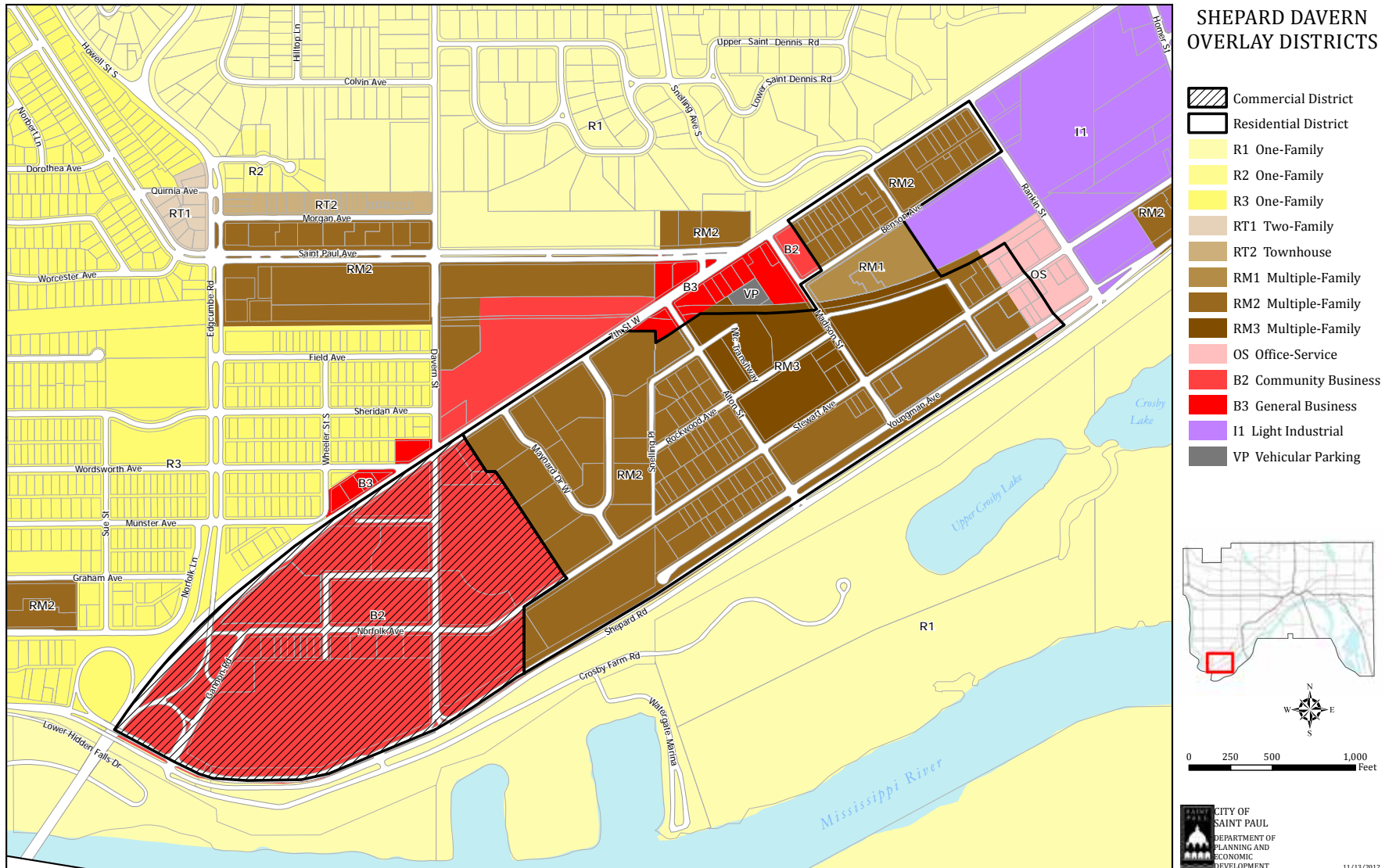


## Implementation

Housing Strategies			
#	Strategy Summary	Responsible Parties	Community Priority for Implementation
H1	Better balance of housing types	PED	High
H2	Attract neighborhood-serving businesses	PED	High
H3	Retain existing single family housing areas	PED	High
H4	Create new block clubs	HDC	High
H5	Raise awareness of social services and other resources	HDC, PED	High
H6	Work with landlords and identify problem properties	HDC, PED	High

Transportation Strategies			
#	Strategy Summary	Responsible Parties	Community Priority for Implementation
T1	Improve transportation options, particularly walkability	PW, PED, HDC	High
T2	Slow traffic off Highway 5 onto W. 7th	PW, MnDOT	High
T3	Maintain Shepard Road as truck route	PW, MnDOT	Medium
T4	Improve bus stops on W. 7th	PW, MnDOT, Metro Transit	High
T5	Improvements to Davern Road	PW, PED	Medium
T6	Bicycle improvements	PW	Low
T7	Intersection safety	PW, PED, MnDOT	Medium
T8	CP rail spur study	PW, PED, RCRRA	High
T9	Great River Passage recommendations	PW, Parks, PED	Low

## Appendix A: Zoning



## Appendix A: Proposed Zoning

To Be Completed

## Appendix A: Current and Proposed Zoning

### Name of Location

Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning	Proposed Rezoning
description of location ex: Elm north of Riverside	Ex: B3 Business	Ex: T3 Traditional Neighborhood

### Name of Location

Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning	Proposed Rezoning

### Name of Location

Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning	Proposed Rezoning

## Appendix B: Basic Census and Market Information

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1.  
Esri forecasts for 2012 data.  
2010 data unless otherwise noted.

### Population

- Total Population: 5,465
- 59.3% White Alone
- 26.9% Black Alone
- 0.3% American Indian Alone
- 4.8% Asian Alone
- 0.0% Pacific Islander Alone
- 6.0% Some other race Alone
- 2.6% Two or more races
- 10.2% Hispanic Origin

### Housing

- Households: 2,846
- Average Household Size: 1.91
- Housing Units: 3,187
- *Owner Occupied Units: 16.9%*
- *Renter Occupied Units: 72.4%*
- *Vacant Housing Units: 10.7%*
- Households with children: 17.9%

### Income

- Average Household Income (2012):\$44,974
- Households with income <\$15,000: 26.4%

Data source: Esri and Dun & Bradstreet, 2012

### Market Profile

- Total Retail Trade Demand(/Potential): \$48,427,107
- Total Retail Trade Supply (/Sales): \$11,671,773
- *Retail Gap: \$36,755,333*
- Total Food & Drink Demand: \$5,655,567
- Total Food & Drink Supply: \$11,041,826
- *Food & Drink Gap: -\$5,386,259*

### Notable Gaps

- *Grocery Stores Gap: \$6,523,479*
- *Health & Personal Care Stores Gap: \$3,101,885*
- *Building Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores Gap: \$486,673*
- *Electronics & Appliance Stores: \$1,041,954*
- *Full-Service Restaurants Gap: -\$2,584,706*
- *Gasoline Stations Gap: -\$2,133,931*