

Saint Paul Ward 5 Update

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Community Notes:

[Streetcar Study](#)--Could Rice Street be a future streetcar line? Open Houses Jan 15-16.

Spotlight on Saint Paul City Blog: "[Our Karen Neighbors](#)" by Amy Brendmoen

The "Mother of Rice Street", [Vivian Clausen](#), celebrates her 100th birthday at Tin Cups, Pioneer Press.

[St. Paul ousts Como Pavilion food, beverage vendor](#), Star Tribune.

[Rice Street Library](#) re-opened after renovations.

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Happy New Year from your Ward 5 City Council Office!



From: Amy, Kim and Donna

New Community Office Hours

We are announcing a new schedule for Community Office Hours in 2014. Starting in January, we will hold office hours twice per month at the Rice Street Library, on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 4:00-5:30pm. The Rice Street Library has proven the most conducive to constituent meetings and is located in the center of the Ward. Please stop in to discuss a neighborhood or citywide issue or just to say hello--no appointment necessary. If this time doesn't work for you, call 651-266-8650 for an appointment or schedule a lake lap!

Two Years in Review

It's officially the halfway mark of my first term serving Ward 5 as City Councilmember. It has been a wonderful and humbling experience, and I am proud of the work we have done so far. Below is just a small slice of my experience in the last two years. We move forward with hope for a strong future for the Como, North End and Payne-Phalen communities of Saint Paul.

The issue that greeted me on my first City Council meeting was the poor conditions and management at Westminster Court Apartments. After decades of being a blight with concentrated crime, unsafe and undignified living conditions at that location, Westminster Apartments are now cleaned up and revitalizing the intersection at Maryland and 35E. The landlords of this community have a huge impact on the condition of our housing stock and the feeling of our community. Good landlords (and there are many) strengthen our community just as much as the bad ones decimate it. I will continue to hold landlords accountable for providing safe, dignified housing and work to bolster the efforts of those that work towards stronger neighborhoods.

Maryland Ave. intersections top the list of streets with some of the most dangerous intersections in the city. To make our roads safer, Maryland Ave intersections at both Rice and Arkwright have been widened and made safer in partnership with Ramsey County over the past two years. Compounding this work is a brand new Maryland Ave. bridge over 35E, which is only the beginning of the huge [MN-DOT reconstruction of I35E](#) that will add a new interchange at Cayuga Street and an additional MN-PASS lane to reduce congestion in the area.

Along this same stretch, the [Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary](#) is officially under construction and will be open in 2015. A project decades in the making is finally coming to life! The effort cleans up a large polluted and underused swath of land and will provide a beautiful place to visit and enjoy peace in nature for generations to come. Take a moment to stop at the intersection Jackson St and Maryland Ave to get a glimpse at the site and what lies ahead. Exciting!

We worked shoulder-to-shoulder with passionate North Enders to advance the Central District Police Station project for funding in the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. While the proposal was not successful in this budget cycle, the community advocacy for the project has made a strong impression, and I remain confident that the North End will see the return of the St Paul Police Central District Team in the near future. The assurance of public safety is key to a thriving business district, and the North End will welcome a more visible presence of our police team.

We have welcomed new businesses including Action Auto Parts on Rice Street that recently completed brand new construction and a new, attractive Walgreens store on Lexington Pkwy. A new gas station and deli are currently under construction on Maryland Ave at Rice Street. The Como neighborhood and other stakeholders will soon participate in a community process to establish a plan and expectations for finding a new partner for the restaurant at the Pavilion overlooking Como Lake. These past and future developments are examples of how community participation can yield a great result when the city and community come together with business owners to build something that fits with the character of the neighborhood. Conversely, the heartbreaking loss of Linder's Garden Center was a significant blow to the community, especially for the people who worked there. A major focus of 2014 will be identifying the best and highest use of the Linder's site and ensuring that the redevelopment of the area will add jobs.

Railroad Island, the neighborhood in the Southeast corner of the Ward, is our spotlight neighborhood. Early in my term I took note of the high need and high potential of this unique community. We've focused much effort on outreach to support the community. In 2014, the Riverfront Development Corporation will partner with the Railroad Island Task Force and the City to make a comprehensive plan for a re-designed lower Payne Ave. that supports our wonderful Railroad Island businesses and creates a walkable community for residents. Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services is moving forward with the Rivoli Bluff housing development, a cluster of single family homes taking advantage of Railroad Island's lovely bluff area that overlooks downtown St. Paul.

Sadly, we were reminded of the struggle this neighborhood faces when a rash of unspeakable violence erupted this summer, most notably, the vicious assault of bystander Ray Widstrand. Despite the tragedy, the bravery of Ray and his family amidst his terrible ordeal has inspired me to continue the fight for Railroad Island and redouble our efforts here. The 2014 budget included funding to combat youth violence through shoring up our outreach programming in challenged neighborhoods and replicating and expanding the programs that we know work to help at-risk youth.

In my role, I believe it is important to raise the voice of residents on community issues. Beginning January 1st, South Como neighborhood is now a part of District 10 and residents can run for Board seats and weigh-in on issues of local importance. The community process that brought about this change was bumpy at times, but I am incredibly pleased by the way that Districts 10 and 6 listened to impacted neighbors and worked together to make the transition smooth for all. In early 2014, the City Council will consider an ordinance developed by District Council representatives charting a course for future disputes about boundaries. This is an improvement for the democratic principles of neighborhood participation, and I am pleased by the outcome.

Whatever the future brings, I will continue to listen to you and work hard to represent Ward 5 to the best of my ability. I hope to see you at our new Community Office Hours at Rice Street Library. Also, reach me through my [Ward 5 Wire Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#) account. Or visit Donna, Kim and I in our office at City Hall and enjoy the current Ward 5 Featured Artist installment.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your City Councilmember. Let's get 'em in 2014!

Sincerely,
Amy Brendmoen

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