

monitor

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Integrating sex offenders into the community

By JAN WILLMS

They are probably the most vilified of all criminals, even behind prison walls. Lumped into one generic description, no matter the offense, sex offenders are considered impossible to rehabilitate, a danger to the community and a potential crime waiting to happen.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) is partnering with AMICUS, a Minnesota nonprofit with over 40 years of experience in improving public safety by helping inmates and ex-offenders through positive relationship-building, restorative justice practices and individualized transition services. Together, the two are seeking to lower the risk of future sexual victimization with a pilot program, Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (Mn-CoSA).

The project is designed to support released sex offenders in their task of re-entering the community by leading responsible, productive and accountable lives.

"The concept started in 1994 in a community in Hamilton, Canada," said Joann Dillavou, coordinator of MnCoSA for the state. "A Mennonite pastor was faced with the task of finding a place for someone coming out of an institution with no place to go, and the community knew he was coming out." Dillavou said the offender had served his full jail sentence and was ready to re-enter the community, with no supervision.

"Some people in the pastor's congregation assembled a circle of volunteers to assist with the needs this core member had," Dillavou recalled. "With that was formed the idea of circles of support and responsibility."

Dillavou said the idea of circles of support for sexual offenders spread very quickly throughout Canada as a way that communities could reach out, be effective and help in a positive way. They spread across Great Britain and the United States.

The pilot project in Minnesota is for Ramsey, Hennepin and Olmstead counties.

"The project is designed to have 30 circles in operation for one year," said William Donnay, risk assessment/community notification director for the DOC. "We have a research design established and can draw conclusions about the effectiveness (of the program) in public safety."

Donnay said that research design identified which offenders to include in the pilot project.



AMICUS has had a great deal of experience in matching volunteer mentors with ex-offenders in one-to-one relationships. Russel Balenger, community engagement director for AMICUS, says that volunteers come from all walks of life. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

Sexual offenders are assigned levels based on their risk to re-offend. Level 1 offenders are at a lower risk; level 2 offenders are at a moderate risk and level 3 offenders are at the highest risk for re-offense.

Donnay said research was showing that level 2 offenders were re-offending at a higher rate than level 3.

"We wanted a program to address that population, and it is limited to level 2 offenders," Donnay said. "We asked for volunteers, and randomly selected offenders out of the volunteers."

Donnay said there is a circle operating in Saint Paul, and the

next two are scheduled for Minneapolis. Each circle consists of four to seven volunteers meeting with the sex offender on a weekly basis for a year.

"The first circle started meeting on Jan. 2, 2008," Dillavou added.

"The circle will meet with the core offender five or six times before he is released from prison," Donnay said.

After volunteers are recruited, they are carefully screened and have a background check run on them.

"They are introduced to 30 hours of training that takes place over a seven-week time frame,"

Dillavou said. "We want them to be sure they know what they are doing."

The volunteer aspect is where AMICUS comes in. The organization has had a great deal of experience in matching volunteer mentors with ex-offenders in one-to-one relationships. Russel Balenger, community engagement director for AMICUS, said that volunteers for MnCoSA come from all walks of life. He said many who have participated in the one-to-one mentoring programs have also volunteered for this project.

"We're looking for someone who is able to put his or her fears to the side a bit, and be able to listen and get an idea of what this person's (the offender's) life has been like," Balenger said.

"It's also about accountability," he stated. "The volunteer has to be open enough to take this on, and it's not for everyone."

Balenger said working in a group is a whole different dynamic than the one-to-one meetings.

"We need the type of person who is ready to learn about this type of crime," he said.

One individual who has been ready to learn is Shannon Schmidt, a volunteer in the Saint Paul circle.

"In December 2007 I completed a bachelor's degree in criminal justice," Schmidt said. "I was looking for groups to gain experience, and a friend told me about this. I think one of the reasons this program is good is that it generates community awareness."

Schmidt said that if she is asked why she volunteers for MnCoSA, she explains the reasons.

"Not everything is the way people assume it is, especially with criminals or offenders," she said.

"Each circle member discloses as much as he or she wants to about themselves," Schmidt related. She said the group sometimes talks about favorite vacation spots or the best places to find a job.

"We address anything that has happened throughout the offender's life," she said. "Good, bad or frustrating."

Dillavou said MnCoSA is developed around the core values of the Canadian model. She said restorative justice is at the root of a lot that is being done.

"Not everything is the way people assume it is, especially with criminals or offenders."

- Saint Paul circle volunteer Shannon Schmidt

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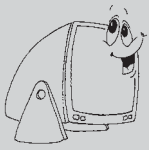
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Local group fights misinformation about sexual offenders...

Project Pathfinder dedicated to ending sexual violence

By JAN WILLMS

Steve Sawyer sits back in his chair and shakes his head.

Sawyer is executive director of Project Pathfinder, Inc., a non-profit group with its main office in the Midway that is dedicated to the elimination of sexual violence and abuse.

He is trying to find a way to describe the multifaceted area of sexual offenses, and he pauses for a moment, considering where to begin.

"Misinformation—there is all kinds of misinformation out there," he said. He cites studies on the Department of Corrections website, and a study done by the Department of Justice.

"Four years ago a study of studies was done," he said. The results of recidivism by sexual offenders vary from 9% to 16%. Much different from the typical belief those sexual offenders cannot be rehabilitated.

"Generally speaking, for people caught and prosecuted, the re-offense rate is not as high as people think," Sawyer said. "It's possible to intervene, and some people do change."

Project Pathfinder provides individual and group counseling, educational sessions for families, workshops and training and research in the field of sexual abuse. It offers programs such as Stop It Now! Minnesota, which provides online information and resources to prevent the sexual abuse of children.

Project Pathfinder, Inc., started in 1992, although an adult treatment program was first created in 1986. The organization has several branch offices throughout Minnesota. "We can make a difference," Sawyer said. And he indicated that part of resolving the problem is to stop the myths and the misinformation.

Sawyer said that in 80 to 90 per cent of abuse cases, the offender and victim know each other.

"People are scared, and think this is some kind of impossible monster. But it's not a problem with strangers. It's people we know," Sawyer added.

He said that approximately 16,000 men are registered as sexual offenders in Minnesota. But

"Generally speaking, for people caught and prosecuted, the re-offense rate is not as high as people think."

- Steve Sawyer, Executive Director, Project Pathfinder, Inc.

there are just as many not required to register.

"And how many people who have thought of it?" he asked. "We only know about a small proportion of sexual offenders."

Sawyer said that even with men attracted to children, it is not the child in the playground they will abduct, but the child they know.

"We don't want a pedophile to sit and look out the window at children in the park. But kids are everywhere. The offender can go to the doctor or the druggist or out to buy groceries. He will encounter a child somewhere. We are not preventing a thing by keeping offenders isolated," Sawyer said.

He said offenders can see children in newspaper underwear ads. Network television with commercials of children is available in the prisons.

"We can't legislate visual encounters," he said. "We can't control people in what they see. These individuals are going to see men, women and children they find attractive. That's not the issue."

Sawyer said there is no evidence that residential restrictions make a difference in the occurrence of sexual offenses.

He said that what does make a difference is treatment. He recommended socializing, helping men understand their disorder and talking about it. He recommended support for making the right choices instead of punishment for making the wrong ones. He said all of that is needed, as well as medication for some men.

Although there are occasional female offenders, he said the number is negligible. The majority of offenders are men.

Sawyer said that when thinking of a sexual offender, there is a wide range and continuum, from the rather innocuous to the most obscene.

He said the sexual offender can include someone who commits date rape, or statutory rape. It can include the 19-year-old with the 15-year-old girlfriend.

"There's a huge range," he said, "but the problem is that people have only one idea when it comes to sexual offenders."

He said that stating that someone is a sexual offender or worse, a sexual predator, does not paint a whole picture.

"Very few fit the definition of a predator," Sawyer said. "Labels unnecessarily constrict our thinking."

He said Project Pathfinder can offer help to someone who even fantasizes about committing a sex crime. The agency created billboards, with messages targeted to people at risk of offending.

"Having sexual thoughts about children? Call 1-888-prevent," was the message on one billboard.

Sawyer said the program is absolutely for people who are concerned about their behavior to get help, as well as those who have already abused.

"If clients are referred by a court, we expect them to finish," Sawyer said. "Even if they come here voluntarily, we ask them to stay, and many do. Some have

other problems, or they may get kicked out of the group for failure to cooperate or lack of progress."

He said that for those coming in for the first time, their first try, about half complete the treatment. Some go out, get in trouble again, but turn themselves around.

He said that as to when they finish, it is open-ended. "Everybody's different," he mused, "with different abilities. Some change a little; some change a lot."

Adults, families and children are seen at Project Pathfinder. Most are seen both in groups and individually, although children are seen more one-on-one. "It's not always appropriate for children to be in a group," Sawyer said.

He said that adults are expected to have a sponsor, someone who can understand things and come with them to meetings.

"Some individuals have a lot of remorse for what they've done," Sawyer said. "Some have very little. But most of the time they can understand that what they did was wrong, and they hurt someone."

"We also expect them to repay the community, maybe through volunteer service," Sawyer said. They are encouraged to examine their families of origin and develop a support network.

"We want them to connect to people, to strengthen and deepen relationships," Sawyer said. The offenders are to tell stories of their offense to family or friends who didn't know about it.

"Treatment is a series of things," Sawyer related. "It's developing self-awareness, understanding, and improving relationships. Reducing isolation."

"Sexual abuse doesn't end life," Sawyer said. "It's the most personal and private thing, and that's why it is so offensive. But sexual abuse can be repaired, if people want to."

To find out more about prevention and resources for sexual abuse, go to stopitnow.org/mn.

Sex Offenders

Continued from page 1

"We help circle members develop trust and decide the things they should share," she said.

She said the volunteers are given an overview of the criminal justice system.

"We bring in experts in the field to present, so volunteers are getting topnotch training," Dillavou said.

She said the training describes police concern and public notification regarding offenders.

"It includes an overview of legislation and an overview of human sexuality and human deviance," Dillavou said. She added that volunteers learn about the effects of long-term institutionalization.

"An offender who used to be in the system, out for many years and leading a positive life, speaks

to them," Dillavou stated. "He shares a story of what it's like."

She said the circle addresses the practical, professional and social needs of the core member, emphasizing the need for accountability.

Dillavou said re-offense prevention and boundaries are addressed. The circle looks at how the offender got where he or she is, and what tools are used to determine the pieces along the way.

The covenant, a written agreement of what will happen in the circles, is covered.

"Circle members are informed of a core member's history and the nature of the offense," Donnay said. "We try to be as transparent as possible with core members, the community and the local police. Our model is to share as much as possible with as many people as possible."

Balenger said the circle is more of a team approach.

"Most people haven't had exposure to this type of thing or visiting an offender, and they are

apprehensive. After a presentation or an opportunity to sit through a sex offender panel, the whole dynamic changes, and there is a lot of interest," Balenger said.

Donnay said that of all the offenders eligible to participate in MnCoSA, only one chose not to participate. Since the program has only been in effect since January, it is too early to look at any results in Minnesota. But findings in Canada resulted in lower recidivism.

"The circle is a group with diverse backgrounds, but we all have something to contribute," Schmidt said of the volunteers.

"These are people saying 'I'm looking out for my neighbor, and I want to be involved in public safety. This is how I can help,'" said Dillavou.

Anyone who might be interested in volunteering for a MnCoSA circle can find more information at the following websites: www.doc.state.mn.us or www.amicususa.org.



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City Council makes requests for Central Corridor design plans

By JANE MCCLURE

Preliminary design plans for the Central Corridor light rail line must include measures to make up lost off-street parking and must provide a net gain in transit service for area residents. St. Paul City Council members included those requests as two of the 25 "outstanding issues" in a letter approving the design plans July 9.

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark said the July 9 vote is significant as it allows the city to spell out issues of concern on the central Corridor project. "This is not our only opportunity to weigh in, but it's an important step."

The light rail project is going through a municipal consent process. St. Paul, Minneapolis, Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) and University of Minnesota must weigh in on the preliminary engineering plans and send their comments on to the Metropolitan Council. The regional government is building the 11-mile light rail line, which extends from downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul.

All of the affected units of government and the university must approve or vote against the engineering plans, and outline issues that need to be resolved as work continues. Central Corridor project staff has agreed to contin-

ue working with city officials on the concerns raised.

All of the units of government voted to unanimously support the municipal consent agreement, including Ramsey County, Hennepin County and Minneapolis.

St. Paul and Ramsey County share many of the same concerns about the project. As for Ramsey County, commissioners worry that their quest to eventually extend the light rail line to the Union Depot concourse and a planned multi-modal transit hub could get lost in the shuffle. The depot connection was set aside earlier this year in a bid to cut project costs. Commissioners want to make sure that issue stays on the table.

City officials didn't address the depot connection issue but did identify a wide range of concerns. Stark and Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III identified the loss of on-street parking as one of the key issues that has to be addressed. Only recently did city officials, business owners and residents learn that so much parking would be lost along the street, said Stark. The resolution adopted July 9 states that "The Metropolitan Council recognizes that the Central Corridor project is directly leading to the loss of significant on-street parking and therefore the Metropolitan Council agrees to work with the city and the county to assist in finding solutions and



The issue of loss of much of University Avenue's on-street parking has been raised by many, including Finn Sisu shop owner Avho Taipale and Chamber and Central Corridor Partnership representatives. Businesses such as Ax Man Surplus (above), may lose valuable spots outside their storefronts where customers utilize short term parking.

funding to help address this issue."

The inclusion of funding in the agreement is key because it isn't clear yet who will have to pick up the tab when additional off-street parking, parking meters and other measures have to be implemented to accommodate lost

parking. City officials have contended that should come out of the project mitigation budget and that the costs shouldn't solely be St. Paul's responsibility.

Another priority for the city and for Ramsey County is to make sure the three infill stations get built. Community groups have lobbied hard for stations to be added at Hamline, Victoria and Western. When the Metropolitan Council voted on the light rail project in February, it agreed to build the infrastructure for all three stations when the rail line is built, with the possibility of adding one station if funds allow. The other two stations would be added later.

Both St. Paul and Ramsey County are calling for additional efforts to make sure all three infill stations are built, sooner rather than later.

The City Council is also asking that Metro Transit maintain the current levels of service on the Route 16 bus, which provides neighborhood bus service along University Avenue. The current Central Corridor plans call for cuts to bus service. Stark said that

would hurt transit-dependent residents, especially during evenings and on weekends.

Preserving Route 16 and getting more rail station added is critical for the transit-dependent communities along Central Corridor, said Carter. He said it's important that the project provide a net gain in transit service.

Another priority for the city is bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The City Council is asking that sidewalks be at least 10 feet wide, that bicycle parking near stations be maximized and that there be convenient bus connections with Central Corridor and for connecting bus routes along the corridor. A number of buses already cross routes along University and along the downtown part of the light rail route, and there is concern that those connections not be affected by the rail project.

One issue linked to parking, sidewalk width and bicycle lanes is that of whether University Avenue should have two lanes or four lanes of motor vehicle traffic. That question, which remains unsettled, is a key question for the St. Paul City Council. The Corridor Management Committee of elected officials, as well as business and community advisory committees for the project, are discussing that idea. The City Council resolution asks for continued study of the traffic lane configuration, with a "through and fair comparison of the costs, benefits and impacts of one through lane in each direction or two through lanes in each direction on University Avenue."

Other issues St. Paul is asking be addressed include working with District Energy to minimize the construction impacts on the downtown heating and cooling system piping, working with the St. Paul Fire Department on how emergency vehicles will cross the light rail tracks, dealing with vibrations that will affect the downtown Church of St. Louis, Central Presbyterian Church and Minnesota Public Radio.

The council is also raising issues that will be addressed later in the planning process, including station design, use of public art and local and minority contractor hiring.

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Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

Facing fall

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

As summers go, I think this one has been great. I am not a lover of hot weather and we have been spared all but a few days of sizzling temps. Some evenings have actually been chilly, which to me is delightful.

Chilly evenings also bring reminders of pending fall. The days are already getting shorter. And by the time you read this we will be well into August. I'd like to offer some tips to help prepare you, and your family, for fall.

The most obvious suggestion I have is to schedule your children's school physicals sooner rather than later. There are only a few weeks remaining until school starts and appointments fill up fast. You will likely be asked about some new vaccination recommendations so you might want to read up about them. For more information about vaccine recommendations, you can check the web site for the Minnesota Department of Health. You can also check the Mayo Clinic web site or the Minnesota Department of Health web site.

Children over age five who have received one varicella (chicken pox) vaccine will be due for a booster. The new tetanus boosters, given every 10 years, also have a booster for pertussis (whooping cough). Girls between the ages of 9-26 years of age are encouraged to begin the HPV vaccine series. Adolescents over age 16 should consider the meningococcal vaccine.

In addition, the State Health Department is conducting a very aggressive campaign to ensure that every child between the ages of 6 months and 5 years of age receive an influenza vaccine. We are not

expecting a shortage of the vaccine this year (as best we can predict). Vaccinations will be available at your clinic as well as at many community sites. Keep in mind that it is convenient to have all your vaccination records at the site of your primary care provider. Many clinics will be scheduling express flu shot appointments to make it quick and easy to get your flu shot this fall.

August is the time for you to think about the sleep patterns in your family and to begin to make small adjustments so everyone is ready to wake up bright and early on the first day of school. One of the most frequent complaints I hear in clinic is that people have trouble sleeping.

There are many causes of sleep disorders. Adolescents have a shifting sleep rhythm which causes them to stay awake later and then need to sleep later as well. Some school districts are beginning to realize this and have adjusted school start times to be more accommodating of this natural change in sleep rhythm.

Adults have sleep struggles because of worries, perimenopausal hormonal shifts, lack of exercise, and a variety of other reasons. Generally people sleep better if they go to bed at the same time every night, and get up at the same time every day. Most of us don't do this - choosing to sleep later whenever possible. Which often makes falling asleep on Sunday nights difficult. People have slept later that morning so are not as ready for sleep. Plus they start worrying about the coming week, which interferes with sleep as well.

The summer break from

school is like one long weekend for children. Their bedtimes have probably been disrupted by extended daylight, increased activities and the opportunity to sleep later in the morning. If you try to fix all of this the weekend before school starts, you are likely to have difficulty. I suggest you begin now to establish more regular sleep times for your children (and perhaps yourself). Planning ahead allows you the luxury of adjusting slowly, so you won't need to make drastic changes all at once.

Determine when your children go to bed now and what time they will need to go to bed during the school year. What is the difference? (Example: if they go to bed at 10 p.m. now, but will need to be in bed by 8:30 p.m. on school nights, you need to make an adjustment of 90 minutes.) If you start bedtime 15 minutes earlier each week for the next 6 weeks, you should be right on target for a good night sleep on the night before school begins.

Begin to adjust wake-up times accordingly. Set the alarm so you wake up a little bit earlier each week so that the required school wake time has already been established for at least a week before school starts.

Other good sleep hygiene habits include: no caffeine after noon, some exercise every day, a period of restful activities for about 1/2 hour before actually going to bed. This means no TV or computer activities during that last 1/2 hour. Instead read a non-scary book, do some crafts, take a warm bath, prepare your clothes and

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Snelling Avenue Green Streets Initiative envisions future for Snelling corridor

By JANE MCCLURE

A greener, calmer Snelling Avenue and other projects are on the drawing boards. The Snelling Avenue Green Streets Initiative has generated a number of ideas for Snelling and the neighborhoods around it. Narrowing down those ideas and deciding which should go on for more detailed engineering work is the task for Hamline-Midway Coalition (HMC), area residents and business owners. HMC and the St. Paul on the Mississippi Design Center hosted two community workshops in July to review plans with residents and business owners.

Several ideas were discussed, but not all can be implemented at one time. HMC Executive Director Michael Jon Olson said that currently the project has about \$45,000 available. That's enough for preliminary engineering work on one or two projects at most. The HMC Board would have to work with city agencies, such as Public Works and Parks and Recreation, to see which ideas should go forward or to advance other ideas.

One of the key questions that came up at community workshops is how to fund projects. Tim Griffin

of the Design Center said sources for planning and implementation could include Metropolitan Council Livable Communities grants. Another source is through the city's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget. This project starts in 2009 for projects to be funded in 2010-2011. Many neighborhoods are already considering capital budget ideas, which have to be submitted for consideration early next year.

The green theme throughout the ideas for Snelling and surrounding areas involves harvesting and managing storm water for many projects, so that it can be used to sustain trees and plantings. Storm water management is a challenge in a built city. Griffin said there are number of ways to capture water, ranging from permeable alley surfaces to green roofs and rain gardens.

The ideas are preliminary and costs haven't been developed in detail. Some of the ideas would have to be done in conjunction with reconstruction of a street. Others could be implemented more easily, through regarding an area or creating a rain garden.

Two of the ideas drawing the most interest at the workshops



On Snelling Avenue, one idea is to look at how to better manage water that drains from building face to building face on both sides of Snelling, while at the same time improving pedestrian crossings and providing a safe refuge for those crossing the street.

center on Snelling and the Snelling-Pierce Butler Route areas.

On Snelling, one idea is to look at how to better manage water that drains from building face to building face on both sides of Snelling, while at the same time improving pedestrian crossings and providing a safe refuge for those crossing the street. One criti-

cism of the current concrete street media is that it is narrow and not safe for pedestrians to stand on.

Channeling water would help trees and plantings in the public right of way. Creating more permeable surfaces and tiling systems would be part of this plan, which would involve rebuilding parts of the street.

Snelling was rebuilt almost two decades ago in a major neighborhood improvement project through the city's now-defunct Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP). Part of that plan called for trees and plantings. But keeping the trees alive has been difficult. Harvesting storm water would be a response to the challenges street trees along Snelling find themselves in now, Griffin said.

Another idea workshop participants liked is that of improving the northern gateway to the community. One area the group looked at is Pierce Butler Route near Hamline University. The area's less-than-attractive appearance is one issue. Another is that in times of heavy rain and snow melt, water drains across Pierce Butler.

Creating community gardens there would not only make a more attractive entrance to the neighborhood and be part of traffic calming, the gardens could be designed in a way to better manage water, Griffin said.

"The area could be designed in a way that announces you are

Continued on page 7

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Green Streets

Continued from page 6

coming into a neighborhood," Griffin said.

Another idea centers on Hamline Park, which has recently been the focus of neighborhood improvement efforts through the HMC-Hamline University LISN Program. Reforesting the park would mean finding a way to harvest and redirect storm water off of the park building roof. Addressing the park's current issues was raised by some residents, who note that the area near the basketball courts and foursquare play space does get swampy in wet weather. One idea Griffin suggested is that of regarding the area and adding a rain garden or other measures to control water.

Griffin said one idea area residents and business owners should consider is whether design

plans should treat Hamline Park and Hancock Elementary-Hancock Recreation Center as one large green park and recreation area, tying to two areas together.

An addition built onto Hancock Elementary several years ago doesn't tie directly into the storm water drainage system for nearby streets. Instead the water drains onto a play area. The water ponds to the point that ducks have been seen swimming there. Ideas to intercept water there include a green or planted roof on the school, a cistern and other drainage improvements.

Connections to the proposed Central Corridor light rail transit are part of other ideas. One proposal drawing interest from Hamline University is that of having the Simpson and Minnehaha area redone as a gateway to the campus. That could tie into aspects of the recently completed campus plan and proposed developments for that part of the campus. Part of this project could include improving north-south connections be-

tween the campus and the light rail line on University Avenue.

Another way to connect neighborhoods to the Central Corridor and to each other would be through creation of bicycle boulevards, streets where bicycles get priority. Simpson and Fry streets as eyed as possibilities here for north-south connections; Charles or Sherburne could serve as east-west route.

Griffin said he understands community sentiments to create space for bicyclists on Snelling and University. But if that isn't possible, connections could be created on nearby north-south and east-west streets.

"It's a different way of using a local street," Griffin said of the bicycle boulevard idea.

Other ideas include looking at light rail station area improvements, and expanding the area for improvements farther to the north. One improvement there that would be storm water-related is that of installing permeable alleys, another way to divert and capture water runoff.

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Community weighs two lane University Avenue given loss of parking spaces

By JANE MCCLURE

Solving the parking issues along the proposed Central Corridor light rail transit line is going to take a variety of solutions. Could one of those solutions be the idea of reducing University Avenue from four lanes to two? That idea is one of several being debated all along the street, where construction of the light rail line means the loss of more than 80 percent of its on-street parking spots. That's about 975 of 1,150 spaces. The impacts would start to be felt when light rail construction starts in 2010. The line is supposed to start operations in 2014.

More than 50 business owners and neighborhood residents met July 28 at Rondo Outreach Library to discuss their concerns about parking. The meeting was organized by the Greater Frog-town Community Development Corporation (GFCDC), which oversees redevelopment on the eastern part of University. The group's board voted July 29 to ask for a number of solutions to the parking concerns.

GFCDC Executive Director Steve Boland said the loss of on-street parking is a huge concern for small businesses. Signage and shared parking could alleviate some of the loss, but some customers will not stop if there is no on-street parking at all. "The message we are sending (by taking away parking) is do not stop here, for God's sake do not stop here," he said.

The extent of parking loss only became apparent this spring. It's not one of the light rail project engineering and operational issues addressed in the supplement draft environmental impacts statement, which is under review this month. (See related story.) The city's station area plans, which promote transit-oriented develop-

ment, are seen by some in the business community as discouraging shared parking and making it more difficult to create parking.

Although there has been talk of shared parking in the many parking lots along University, that typically requires a permit from the city if businesses that don't have an ownership or lease interest in the lot want to use it. It also creates a situation where businesses with parking are concerned that they will either be forced to share parking or will have to fend out commuters looking to use their parking spots and then take the train.

GFCDC is the first University Avenue business group to formally ask the city and Metropolitan Council to address the parking concerns, including the restoration of some of the lost on-street parking spaces. The group is asking that the number of traffic lanes on University be reduced from four to two, at least between Lexington and Marion. They are also asking that some of the non-signalized pedestrian crossings be removed, as Central Corridor calls for a signal intersection at every other block of University.

But whether the two-lane University Avenue configuration will work is open to debate. "We've talked about all of the different things that need to fit within that space," said Dan Soler, an engineer of the Central Corridor project staff.

Last month the Central Corridor's advisory committees heard presentations from Soler on what a two-lane University Avenue would mean. St. Paul City Council members, led by Russ Stark, sought the study when the city signed a municipal consent agreement on the 11-mile light rail project.

The city's rationale is that re-

ducing the number of traffic lanes leave space for bike lanes, parking or wider sidewalks. Soler said the reduction does create space for other uses. But the tradeoff is that traffic delays would increase greatly and 10 intersections would fail if the traffic lanes are reduced. Three additional intersections would be considered marginally functional. Failure for an intersection means that vehicles have to wait through more than one traffic signal cycle. Some of the greatest problems would be at Snelling, Raymond, Prior and Lexington. The amount of traffic currently carried through each segment of the street varies but in some areas it tops 20,000 vehicles per day.

Soler pointed out that there would be significant traffic delays and backups during peak or rush hour periods. The average speed for the afternoon peak hour would be 5 miles per hour eastbound and 10 miles per hour westbound. Currently the speeds are 18 miles per hour eastbound and 19 miles per hour westbound.

Travel time between Eustis and Rice streets, which is now 19 minutes, would be extended to 110 minutes.

That in turn raises the possibility that vehicles would detour off of University and onto other east-west streets.

One possibility Soler suggested is that the traffic be one lane in each direction during non-peak times, allowing some on-street parking then. Parking would be banned during rush hour, allowing two lanes of traffic in each direction. No decision has been made on that yet and it's not clear if it would even work.

At the city level, veteran Planning and Economic Development (ED) project manager Craig Blakely has been appointed to work on parking issues along Central Corridor. Blakely has worked on other neighborhood parking projects and programs over the years.

The city is also seeking funds to alleviate the parking issue, through the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities Program. An application for \$2.2 mil-

lion for a comprehensive parking management plan was approved last month by the St. Paul City Council. Those funds, if they are awarded, would be available for 2009.

Metropolitan County outreach staff has been going door-to-door on University to speak with business and to collect surveys. About 300 surveys have come in, according to Robin Cauffman. She oversees community involvement for the Central Corridor project. That number of surveys concerned some members of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Central Corridor, who think there should be more surveys in.

Some members have asked if Met Council staff has been able to do field surveys to observe actual parking demand. Although Cauffman said the council doesn't have the staff resources to do that level of study, she did say that city and Met Council staff have identified about 15 on-parking hot spots where demand is highest. Those areas will get additional scrutiny.

North End Elementary to open doors of University Academies for Boys and Girls

North End Elementary will open its doors this fall as University Academies for Boys and Girls at North End. Among the exciting new initiatives is a program focusing on the academic needs of children of African descent.

Thanks to a grant from St. Paul Children's Collaborative, North End Elementary and Washington Technology Middle Schools will partner with NdCAD, Network for the development of

Children of African Descent. Students will have the opportunity to attend a reading program taught by Sankofa Reading Program. This program has had great results raising students' reading levels by teaching reading skills, reading strategies, and reading habits that can be applied to any text, any time for any purpose. Their goals are improved reading skills, higher reading test scores, and an enhanced love and appreciation for reading.

Complementing this program is a workshop for parents, called Parent Power. Parents will have the opportunity to develop skills to effectively and easily model the skills taught in their child's reading program. Parents will also be equipped with the tools to advocate for their child and communicate with their child's teacher and the school.

Students whose parent attends the Parent Power workshop

will have the first opportunity to attend the reading program as the results are better when skills can be reinforced at home. Any community member is welcome to attend the workshop. These programs are FREE to members of the North End community.

The first Parent Power session will be held Thursday, August 7th from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Rice Street Library located at 1011 Rice Street. Childcare and refreshments will be offered. Transportation is available if needed. To secure a spot, please pre-register by calling 651-293-8795 ext. 2509. Leave your name and number. If you need transportation, I will get back to you to get you to confirm.

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Rice Street Festival Parade



This quintet of marching drummers has been a fixture in the Rice Street Parade for years. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)



A jovial Jester entertains the crowd during the 45-minute Rice Street Parade. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)



2008 Rice Street Festival Queen, Nicole Duncan in the yellow dress, waves to her subjects. Nicole was sponsored by Mike's Complete Auto Care. Amanda Arnold dressed in pink was elected 2008 Princess. She was sponsored by Schroeder's Milk Company. Other beauties pictured are former princesses and candidates. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)



A parade spectator gets a bird's eye view of the pageantry. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

To see more exclusive photos from the Rice Street Festival Parade, visit us online at: www.MonitorSaintPaul.com



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In Our Community

Zion Lutheran Rally Day scheduled for Sept. 14

Rally Day, the start of the Fall programming year, will be held at Zion Lutheran Church at Lafond and Aldine on Sunday, September 14th. Sunday School registration is at 9 a.m. with worship following at 10 a.m.. This year, the congregation will focus on a theme of faith practices: worship, giving, inviting, prayer, study, service, and fellowship. Alpha, an introductory course on Christianity, will start Sunday, September 24th in the evenings from 6-7:30 p.m.. All are welcome to attend any and all of the events of the congregation.

Hamline Midway Library survey meeting

Since the threat of closure in the fall of 2007, the Hamline Midway neighborhood, library volunteers and staff have rallied in support of the Hamline Midway Library. New volunteers have formed working groups to assist with programming and improvements to the library. A friendly mural in the lower level hallway was painted by volunteers in collaboration with the Hamline Midway Coalition and Valspar Paint. The library continues to invest in improvements to furni-

ture, new carpeting, and more computers.

More recently, 328 people completed the Hamline Midway Library Survey to give input on how they use the library and what improvements would best serve the needs of the community. Please join your neighbors and fellow library supporters to learn about the survey results and possible next steps for the library. Library Director Melanie Huggins will present. All are welcome to attend. Hamline Midway Library Survey Meeting, Tuesday August 19, 6:30-8 p.m., at the Hamline Midway Library Auditorium (1558 W. Minnehaha Ave)

Fireworks at Jehovah's Vacation Bible School

"Survival with the Bible Camping with Jesus" a two-day Vacation Bible School (VBS) for children pre-school through 6th grade kicks off with supper at 6:30 p.m. Friday, September 5, at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue. Bible stories, crafts, music and games will be taught until 8:30 p.m. Friday and continue through Saturday, September 6, starting with a light breakfast at 10:00 a.m. and lasting until 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served.

At 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, the 6th the community is invited to Jehovah's annual free ice cream

social and fantastic fireworks on the parking lot of the church. Boy Scouts will sell hot dogs. A table with free clothing, books and games is planned. Local pyrotechnician Joe Zastrow, whose shows have won him acclaim throughout the state, will shoot off his colorful fireworks set to music about dusk. All are cordially invited to enjoy this free fun evening. For more information call 651-644-1421 or check www.jehovahlutheran.org.

District 6 holds Supply Drive through Sept. 30

District 6 Planning Council is holding a School Supply Drive beginning now and running through September 30th. Please drop off your school supply donations at: District 6 Planning Council, 213 Front Avenue, or Mikes Complete Auto Care, 1174

Rice Street. Supplies will be distributed to local schools. Thanks in advance for your contribution. Contact District 6 Planning Council at 651-488-4485 or district6@qwestoffice.net if you have questions

Presentation on reptiles planned on Sept. 9

"Pearson's Animal Ambassadors," a hands on, informational presentation of live reptiles, vertebra, invertebrates and mammals sponsored by Pearson's Candy will be presented at a luncheon for Hamline Midway seniors on Tuesday, September 9 beginning at 11:30 a.m. at 1514 Englewood Avenue. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations for the luncheon and request free transportation. Hamline Midway Elders provides

volunteer and professional assistance to enable seniors to remain in their own homes. If you are a senior, caregiver or neighbor and would like information about our services, visit www.blocknurse.org

Zion holds September Fest

Zion Lutheran Church will be holding a September Fest, Saturday, September 6th from 4-7 p.m. This event is a fundraising event with lots of food, fun games for the children, and auction items on which to bid. The event is open to all. Tickets will be available for the event for all the activities. The funds raised will go towards enhancing the music program at the church. Thrivent Financial will match all funds raised. Please come and have fun! For more information, please call the church office at 651-645-0851.



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Faculty promoted at School of Law

Hamline University School of Law recently promoted three faculty members—Z. Jill Barclift, Mary Jo Hunter and Sharon Sandeen—all of whom bring superior academic and professional credentials to their positions. Assistant Professor of Law Z. Jill Barclift has been named Associate Professor of Law; Associate Professor Sandeen has been named Professor of Law; and Associate Clinical Professor Hunter has been named a full-time Clinical Professor of Law.

Barclift brings more than 15 years of corporate law experience to Hamline, working first as an attorney for a large financial services firm. In 1996 when she relocated to Minnesota to head the legal department of a large retailer, and, most recently, served as executive vice president and general counsel for a Minneapolis financial services firm. Barclift is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Jeremiah Program, which assists low-income mothers who are striving to become self-sufficient. She received her JD from Columbia University School of Law and a bachelor's degree from Northwestern.

Prior to joining the faculty at Hamline University School of Law, Sandeen practiced law for more than 15 years. She also served as an adjunct professor at the University of Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, teaching and practicing intellectual property law. Focusing her practice on intellectual property, she became the founding member of the Intellectual Property Section of the Sacramento County Bar and a former member to the Executive Committee of the State Bar of California in the Intellectual Property Section. In addition, she serves as chair of the Subcommittee D of the Trade Secret Committee of the Intellectual Property Section of the American Bar Association. Sandeen received her JD from the University of the Pacific and an LL.M. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Hunter has focused her professional and academic efforts in the areas of Child Advocacy and Native American Law. She was elected the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Ho-Chunk Nation and previously worked for the Neighborhood Justice Center and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services in St. Paul. She directed the Native American Law Project clinical Program at the University of North Dakota School of Law, where she also taught Indian Law. Hunter is a frequent speaker on cultural diversity, culture, and the Indian Culture Welfare Act. She received her JD from the UCLA School of Law.

Hamline University School of Law is dedicated to educating students to become competent, professional, and ethical lawyers who apply legal knowledge with disciplined imagination and a global perspective that enables them to strengthen society. The School of Law is ranked fourth in the nation for its Dispute Resolution Institute by U.S. News & World Report.

Creative and innovative teaching and learning attract a diverse student body of nearly 4,600 undergraduate and graduate students to Hamline University. Challenged to create and apply knowledge in local and global contexts, Hamline students develop an individual and community ethic of social justice, civic responsibility, and inclusive leadership and service.

Two area bars face sanctions...

Crackdown on bars underway this summer

By JANE MCCLURE

Bad behavior at St. Paul bars is bringing consequences to patrons and problem establishments. A 120-day crackdown on all bars and restaurants got underway this summer.

Two area bars, one in Frogtown and one in the North End, are facing sanctions. Luxor Lounge, 719 N. Dale St., was fined \$1,000 July 16 and had its 2 a.m. closing license revoked, in response to numerous complaints about business operations and patron behavior. The city is also asking that Luxor Lounge do more to address patron behavior, including patrons in the parking lot and patio areas.

Lonetti's Lounge, 1091 Rice St., is facing a public hearing before the City Council at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 20 at City Hall. The council will hear a report on an administrative law judge hearing and consider whether to impose sanctions against the business for a license violation for liquor service after-hours.

Luxor Lounge faced sanctions because of violations that began last fall. The business is accused of serving alcohol after 2 a.m., not policing the exterior of its premises (a license condition), neighborhood residents have complained about noise, public urination, public sex, shots fired, thefts, assaults, vandalism, auto thefts and garbage in the business's vicinity. One neighbor has called the police more than 150 times. Between September 18-30, 2007 alone, police were called to Luxor Lounge for six fights and one aggravated assault with a gun.

Luxor Lounge owners Dao Hoang and Diem Nguyen have represented themselves at the administrative law judge and City Council hearings. They have

questioned whether the complaints against the business are racially motivated and have claimed police harassment.

All of the city's 170-plus establishments with liquor licenses are under increased scrutiny, with additional attention focused on 11 problem places. St. Paul City Council members heard an update on the crackdown July 9.

The crackdown was recently announced by Mayor Chris Coleman. Coleman and City Council members have been at odds over regulation of problem bars. In June the mayor vetoed a measure that would have set additional sanctions tied to the 2 a.m. closing time at some establishments. When he vetoed the penalties, Coleman said the city would do more to address problems at the city's most troubled bars.

Police Chief John Harrington and Christine Rozek of the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) said the vast majority of bars don't create enforcement problems. Police have stepped up compliance checks at the most troubled establishments, stopping and walking through the premises twice as often. Those are bars where there are high number of police calls for assaults, drunken patron behavior, fighting and disruption for their surrounding neighborhoods.

The list of problem bars was compiled by asking police officers which establishments they are called to most, checking police call records and by checking city licensing staff records. Police are also aware of the license conditions placed on the problem establishments' city licenses, so they know which violations to watch for.

Harrington said the list could change. One consequence of enforcement is that problem patrons may tire of police scrutiny at their regular hangouts and go to another bar.



Luxor Lounge, 719 N. Dale St., was fined \$1,000 July 16 and had its 2 a.m. closing license revoked, in response to numerous complaints about business operations and patron behavior. The city is also asking that Luxor Lounge do more to address patron behavior, including patrons in the parking lot and patio areas.

What is making a difference is that police, licensing staff and the City Attorney's Office are working more closely to monitor problem bars, said Harrington and Rozek. The City Attorney's office staff recently met with police to discuss the crackdown. One focus Rozek noted is that of asking police to make sure their reports contain information needed to uphold any criminal charges or license sanctions.

One group stepping in to help is the Minnesota License Beverage Association (MLBA). The hospitality group is offering to voluntarily mentor owners of bars who are having problems.

District councils and other neighborhood groups have been notified of the 120 day crackdown. City officials said that has met a very positive response. In a

letter, Harrington and DSI Director Bob Kessler have asked neighborhood groups to monitor problem establishments and call when there are problems. They are also asking groups to proactively facilitate meetings between willing bar owners and residents, if those meetings are requested.

The City Council wasn't given the list of 11 problem bars. But the council did receive an update on the four establishments where adverse action was pending, including Luxor Lounge and Lonetti's Lounge. Adverse action is when a license violation or violations are found and city officials must decide whether or not to impose a penalty. A bar owner can contest a violation and request a hearing before an administrative law judge. If the bar owner disagrees with the

judge's recommendation, he or she can then request a hearing before the City Council.

Penalties can include fines, temporary shutdowns, additional license conditions or revocation of all or some of a bar's licenses. The council uses a set matrix of penalties, which is tied to number of past violations, severity of a violation and the type of license condition or criminal violation involved.

The four bars facing adverse action include Dukems Restaurant on West Seventh and the Wild Onion on Grand Av. The latter two businesses are the topic of public hearings in August, with Dukems set for City Council action August 6 and the Wild Onion slated for an administrative law judge hearing this month.

Two moms draft proposal to share post...

Como residents job share for District 10 organizer position



By DEBORAH BROTZ

As a stay-at-home mom, Como Park resident Rhonda DeBough wasn't looking for full-time work but did want something part time since her youngest child is in first grade.

So, when she saw the District 10 Community Organizer job announcement was a full-time job, she was disappointed. But, then she got an idea. After talking to her next-door neighbor, Camille Schafer, who was also a stay-at-home mom, the two decided to write a proposal to share the job. Out of the four other single applicants, the Como Park District 10 Board of Directors chose them. The two women started work as District 10 co-community organizers on July 8.

"Neither of us was interested in doing full-time work," said DeBough. "When I saw it was full-time, my heart sank. I talked

to Camille, and we decided to do a proposal to job share. It's worked out really well."

DeBough's and Schafer's skills complement each other.

"I have a lot of gathering people together skills, but I lack in detail and accounting," said DeBough. "It makes me glaze over. Camille doesn't get to sleep until 3 because she loves it so much. My strength is in the social stuff. You get the two of us which brings everything they want in the position."

Since they have been neighbors for 12 years and have become very good friends, DeBough thinks she and Schafer will work out fine in the shared position.

"I know Camille not only as a neighbor, but we've done a lot of life together," said DeBough. "We have to be diplomatic all the time. She's Ying and I'm Yang."

DeBough feels the work the District 10 Board does is really important.

"Having a say at what goes on at a grassroots level is really important for neighbors," she said. "What I think is important about this neighborhood is that we have Como Park, Como Zoo, and the Conservatory. We have some say over what happens. We're so lucky to have that here in St. Paul."

DeBough's goal is to make Como like a small town.

"Connecting the community is really my goal," she said. "It would be nice if people knew each other. We should take pride when good things happen in the neighborhood and support people when not so nice things happen."

Although Schafer wasn't looking for even a part-time job, she found DeBough's reasons for applying made sense.

"Rhonda said she really wanted this job," said Schafer.

Como neighbors Rhonda DeBough and Camille Schafer started work as District 10 co-community organizers on July 8. (Photo by Matt Schmitt)

Continued on page 13

Port Authority recommendation for Rock-Tenn pushed back to August

By JANE MCCLURE

A St. Paul Port Authority recommendation on an energy alternative for the Midway's Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant had been pushed back to August 4th as this issue of the *Monitor* went to press. That in turn means a series of public meetings on the project will be postponed as well, possibly until fall.

Nina Axelson, who is coordinating public involvement in the Rock-Tenn study process, said the panel and the St. Paul Port Authority still hope to finalize their studies soon. District councils from Union Park, Hamline-Midway, Macalester-Groveland and St. Anthony Park will then hold public meetings so citizens can weigh in, as will the Southeast Como neighborhood association in Minneapolis and St. Paul's Desnoyer Park Improvement Association.

All of these groups, along with labor and business representatives, are represented on the Rock-Tenn Community Advisory

Panel (RCAP), which is studying energy options for Rock-Tenn. The group is expected to spend much of this month preparing its report.

Rock-Tenn is currently using fuel oil and natural gas a power source. The plant had used steam from the old Xcel Energy High Bridge plant for many years. But the steam line was shut off last summer when the old coal-fired plant was decommissioned. A new natural gas-fired High Bridge plant doesn't have the capacity to generate steam.

Recommendations on new Rock-Tenn fuel and technology alternatives were initially expected in June. But the studies, including the possibility of producing biogas through agricultural waste, are continuing. The St. Paul Port Authority recently informed RCAP members that the studies of one technology, anaerobic digestion, are taking more time than anticipated. This form of energy production, which generates biogas from agricultural

waste, has intrigued several RCAP members. But there are questions about the technology, which is not widely used in Minnesota.

RCAP was set up by the 2007 Minnesota Legislature. The group will make a recommendation on a new energy source for Rock-Tenn, which is the state's largest paper recycler. No one has ruled out that possibility that RCAP and the Port Authority could submit separate recommendations.

Over the past several months the panel has debated various fuel sources as RCAP has already set aside the options of solar and wind power, as those wouldn't work at the Rock-Tenn site. The technology costs hinge on the fuels studied, which include natural gas, biogas (such as methane), biomass of wood or agricultural products and refuse-derived fuel.

Recommendations from RCAP and the St. Paul Port Authority will eventually go to the St. Paul City Council. The Port Authority anticipates that the



A St. Paul Port Authority recommendation on an energy alternative for the Midway's Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant has been pushed back to August at the earliest. That in turn means a series of public meetings on the project will be postponed as well, possibly until fall.

council will be given a range of options to choose from. Once the City Council makes a choice on an energy alternative that will be studied in greater detail.

The RCAP process isn't an environmental review but a method to examine fuel sources,

technologies and health impacts of energy alternatives. The detailed environmental review won't be done until a technology is chosen by the St. Paul City Council. That has frustrated some RCAP members and citizens, who want to have more information now.

One of the challenges RCAP members have had is that of sorting out what at times is conflicting testimony, especially on the issue of emissions and public health. Another challenge is how to evaluate highly technical data.

Costs will be one of the driving factors in a decision on which energy technology is chosen for Rock-Tenn. Another driving factor is potential emissions and community health impacts. Much of RCAP's time has been spent discussing emissions, health impacts and potential emissions controls with a number of public health and technical experts. The emissions issue has occupied much of RCAP's attention in recent weeks, with presentations from a variety of experts.

One of those testifying before RCAP, University of Minnesota Associate Professor Ian Greaves, spoke on the health hazards of incineration July 22. The talk was sponsored by Neighbors Against the Burner, a group that is raising concerns about the burning of biomass and refuse-derived fuel as power sources for Rock-Tenn.

Greaves is emphatic in his belief that refuse-derived fuel and biomass aren't good choices for Rock-Tenn, saying both would have serious health consequences. But Gregory Pratt, who is also a University of Minnesota faculty member and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency employee, told RCAP that smaller generators of pollution, such as motor vehicles, fireplace and gas stations, can create greater risks than industrial sources.

More detailed information from RCAP meetings, is posted at www.rtadvisory.org

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Central Corridor station area plans roll through the planning process

By JANE MCCLURE

Station area plans for neighborhoods around Central Corridor planned stops are rolling through the St. Paul Planning Commission process, en route to the St. Paul City Council this fall. Hearings on the plans for Westgate, Raymond, Fairview, Snelling, Lexington, Dale and Rice areas were held in July. The Planning Commission is expected to approve the plans in August and send them on to the City Council for final approval. Once the council adopts the plans they will become part of the city's Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed infill stations at Hamline, Victoria and Western get their turn at 8:30 a.m. Friday, August 22 before the Planning Commission. The hearing will be held at City Hall. That hearing will launch yet another station area planning process this fall.

Earlier this summer the St. Paul City Council asked the Planning Commission to start planning for the three infill stations areas. District Councils Collaborative President Anne White said neighborhoods around those stations deserve the same level of

planning the other stations received. She urged the Planning Commission to start that planning process this fall.

The plans have drawn strong community interest and general support. Some speakers, such as St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Vice President Susan Kimberly, expressed support generally for the plans while cautioning that development will be the result of many individual property owner decisions that take place over time. Other speakers said they want more information.

More than 50 people attended a July 11 hearing on the plans for stations between Snelling and Westgate. About two dozen attended the hearing July 25 for Lexington, Dale and Rice.

The hearings raised familiar themes, including ways to accommodate businesses that will lose on-street parking when light rail is built and incentives versus dictates for redevelopment. Most people spoke in support of the station area plans.

Familiar themes, namely the loss of much on-street parking when light rail is built, ways to encourage redevelopment

through economic incentives and the need for better connections across University and between station areas and neighborhoods.

St. Paul Senior Planner Donna Drummond said the station area plans aren't intended to be prescriptive but to serve as a vision for each area. When and if change happens along Central Corridor, that will be decided by the market. The city cannot legally use eminent domain to take properties for development. Change will happen only if property owners want it. But she and others involved in the station area planning process believe change is likely and that the city needs to be prepared to shape that change.

"We think that changes will happen when light rail is built," Drummond said. Property values are likely to increase. Some owners will decide to sell. Others will stay.

The station area plans are an outgrowth of the Central Corridor Development Strategy, an ambitious vision for neighborhoods around the proposed light rail line. Plans were prepared for the downtown, capitol, and Uni-

versity Avenue areas. More detailed planning then started around stations.

Drummond said the process has involved much community input, with task forces working on both the development strategy and the station area plans. The station area planning process involved community workshops and meetings with affected property owners.

Detailed plans were prepared for each station area, outlining current conditions and ideas for the future. Ideas were proposed for creating public space near the stations and for connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Area district councils and community development groups testified in support of the plans. Union Park District Council Executive Director Theresa Heiland said that council supports the fo-

cus on change in the Snelling area, and the focus on preserving the integrity of the residential neighborhoods to the north and south. The connectivity concern was also raised by Lexington-Hamline Community Council President Chris Wood, who urged that more be done to improve pedestrian connections over Interstate 94.

One issue that should be addressed in station area plans and in the Met Council's plans for the rail line itself is the need for more pedestrian crossings at non-signalized intersections, said White. That's especially critical in the station areas, where riders will want to board trains. She cited the Snelling and Fairview areas as places where more connections are especially needed.

Continued on page 14

District 10 organizers

Continued from page 11

"As a team, we make this perfect person. I feel my job skills are put to good use here. It was an opportunity knocking."

Even though Schafer and DeBough are completely different people, they work well together.

"I bring very strong organizational and detail skills," said Schafer. "I can balance the books and organize. Our strengths are very different. Our weaknesses are covered by each other's strengths. It will work out be-

cause we're so close to each other."

Schafer feels the community organizer position is important because it gives residents a voice.

"The District Council System and community organizer people need a place to get opinions out," she said. "We're that clearinghouse of information and neighborhood news."

Schafer hopes her job will allow her to work and support her family's needs.

"I'm hoping to have a posi-

tive impact on the District," she said. "One of the things we want to do is get the block club program stronger than what it is. We want to get information out there."

DeBough wants to do the community organizer job for a long time.

"I hope I can accomplish what I want to accomplish," she said. "I want to meet my goals. I want to bring people together and empower people when things get loud or out of control."

Cares and Cures

Continued from page 5

lunch items for the coming day. Do something relaxing and calming, not stimulating.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy the rest of the summer. And I hope these simple tips will help you be ready for fall, which is just around the corner.

Have fun. Stay happy and healthy.

(Dr. Kilian is a family practice physician who lives and works in the Midway Como community. She believes that good medicine means caring for people as well as curing diseases. We want to address your health concerns so please let us know what topics you would like to see in future columns. If you have suggestions or questions, write to the Monitor c/o 1885 University Avenue West, #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Or e-mail denisw@aplacetoremember.com.)

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Central Corridor

Continued from page 13

How the plans could be implemented was an issue for several speakers. Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation executive Director Steve Boland urged city officials to place more emphasis on working with community development groups to make the plans a reality.

But the Snelling plans are supported with caveats from the owners of Midway Shopping Center. Eric Galatz, who represented the center July 11, said there are concerns about the degree to which the plans are seen as prescriptive, rather than a vision.

Another concern he raised is the burden of costs of public improvements to private property owners. Galatz asked the Planning Commission to consider those costs and also look at ways the city could provide incentives for developers.

The issue of loss of much of University Avenue's on-street parking was raised by some

speakers, including Finn Sisu ski shop owner Avho Taipale and Chamber and Central Corridor Partnership representatives. Karri Plowman said the station area plans could place limits on parking that would be detrimental to some businesses. He urged flexibility on the parking issues and that parking be accommodated in a way that doesn't hurt businesses.

Ramsey County Commission Janice Rettman said the parking concerns cannot be ignored. "For instance, just one or two parking spaces in front of a small business that turn over frequently is the lifeblood of the business and of University Avenue as a whole," said Rettman. She said parking needs to be created close to businesses that lose theirs. "Creating parking spaces one or two blocks away is not adequate mitigation but simply a preservation of numbers without regard for actual need."

The infill stations are just of several issues addressed in the supplemental draft environmental impact statement (SDEIS). The Metropolitan Council, which oversees construction of the rail line itself, is holding hearings this week on the SDEIS. The first hearing was August 4 at Wilder Foundation, with a second at 6 p.m. Thurs-

day, August 7 at Brian Coyle Center, 420 15h Av. S., Minneapolis.

A third hearing is set for 2 p.m. Saturday, August 9 at Goodwill Easter Seals, 55 Fairview Av. N. Both of the upcoming hearings will be preceded by an hour-long open house.

The SDEIS public comment period ends August 25. The public can comment by calling the project comment line at 651-602-1564 or e-mailing kathryn.obrien@metc.state.mn.us

The St. Paul Planning Commission could vote on the other station area plans for Westgate, Raymond, Fairview, Snelling, Lexington, Dale and Rice as soon as August. The commission will hold a public hearing on the Hamline, Victoria and Western stations at 8:30 a.m. Friday, August 22 at City Hall. The commission will be asked to decide whether to add Hamline, Victoria and Western to the Central Corridor overlay district. That would put additional requirements and restrictions on new developments in areas within one-quarter mile of each station site.

City staff have indicated that they would like to start land use planning around the three infill station areas this fall.

LETTERS

Thanks to the community, for helping with hanging baskets

I hope you have noticed and enjoyed the hanging baskets along Rice Street. This is the second year we've been privileged to have them as a result of a generous commitment by Linder's Greenhouses on Larpentour Avenue. Linder's has worked with Mark Granlund, St. Paul's Arts and Gardens Coordinator, to design and grow the baskets at a minimal cost. When approached with the request to assist us last year, they unhesitatingly said yes, and did the same again this year.

These hanging baskets are just part of the efforts of many throughout our neighborhoods to improve the quality of life for all us. Beautification of an area changes the feel of a community, making it more welcoming to residents, business and visitors. It helps to bring pride in a community, and combats things that are detrimental to public safety.

I am honored that we have

such a committed business in our community, and again extend my thanks to them for playing such a visible role in the continued revitalization of Rice Street. I am also honored to be able to recognize Mark Granlund, a committed public servant, whose efforts to improve our commercial corridor, and many other streets and parks throughout St. Paul, have made summer in the City a beautiful experience.

Lee Helgen
St. Paul City Councilmember,
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Continued from page 14

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Local Bites

By KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON

A taste of Italy on University Avenue

Summertime may bring guests to entertain, a new love to impress, or even an anniversary to celebrate. All of those are good reasons to get dressed up and visit Café Biaggio, a lovely gem of a place on the west side of University Avenue in the Midway, with high quality Italian food to savor and share.

The sleek Streamline Moderne exterior was a retrofitted addition to a three-story 1908 brick furniture warehouse at the southeast corner of the recently created University-Raymond Historic District. Ellerbe & Company architects created what was first the Ace Café and Box Lunch in the 1930s.

Shari Breed and John D'Agostino opened Café Biaggio here in 2002. D'Agostino is the son of local restaurant legend "Mama D." The D'Agostino family moved to Minnesota from Chicago. Mama D had another son who had owned a restaurant called Sammy D's, and they later changed the name to Mama D's. Breed and D'Agostino ran a catering/deli business in White Bear Lake before choosing to expand their business in St. Paul. "We like being in the city versus the suburbs," said Breed. "It's a nice mix of people and businesses, and it's very diverse."

There is a comfortable elegance to the narrow restaurant

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2356 University Ave
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Dinner: 4-9 p.m. M-Th;
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Closed Sunday

space which features exposed brick walls and overhead pipes, original art by Minneapolis artist Leon Hushka gracing the walls, and handmade tiles crafted by Connie Cowles of Shafer, Minnesota. The seating is rather close if you chose to sit along the exterior wall in the bench seats. There are also a few spots at the bar, scattered individual tables, and a semi-enclosed patio outside.

At lunch you should certainly take advantage of the soup, salad, or sandwiches which arrive in good time, making it a great place to do some business or meet friends in a dressier setting. A limited pasta menu is also available at lunch.

At dinner we try to reserve our trips to Café Biaggio for when we're especially hungry

and celebrating as it's one of the few places where you can get the true five course Italian experience. We actually do a "cheater's" five courses, as we just order one item from each course and split it between the two of us.

The "antipasti" choices are varied and we've been happy with the bruschetta sampler, a really large serving of three hunks of bread with three different toppings (\$8.95). We usually go for the "insalata" over the "zuppa," but that's just our preference. The house salad (\$5.95) is just the right size for two with greens, tomatoes, and asiago cheese with a balsamic vinaigrette.

For the "primi" pasta course we're partial to the gnocchi (\$16.95). Theirs is spinach and basil gnocchi served with a hearty marinara sauce, and it's never failed to please us. It's easy for gnocchi (tiny potato dumplings) to become pasty or gluey, and these are perfectly firm and flavorful. For those traditionalists, you will also find lasagna (\$15.95) and spaghetti and meatballs (\$14.95) among more adventurous pasta dishes.

The "secondi" course is where we probably should stop and ask for the check but if you're celebrating and you're hungry, search out a pleasing meat or fish dish you can agree

on. We've enjoyed lovely pork medallions in a rosemary pan sauce with balsamic glazed peaches (\$16.95) and also a nicely done salmon with pesto and mixed vegetables (\$15.95).

Café Biaggio shines at dessert. In fact we recently went in later in the evening just to have a cocktail and dessert. We went with the flourless chocolate torte which is always a winner. Think of fudge pressed into a pan and topped with whipped cream, and there you have it. My husband ordered the peach tart which was served warm with ample fresh whipped cream on top. It was nice to alternate between the two and enjoy each dessert's savory and sweet qualities. The prices range from \$2.00 to \$6.50 for desserts.

Add to that a cup of coffee (for him) and tea (for me) and we

realized we just spent two wonderful hours being treated and fed like royalty, with the children asleep at home with our trusted babysitter. The bill was high enough to remind us that we were celebrating but not outrageous. The waiter was compensated for his attentive service, and we left feeling like we had a mini-vacation abroad in Italy. And isn't that how a good restaurant experience should make you feel?

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