

St. Anthony Park

A Community Built on a Solid Foundation

By David A. Lanegran

with support from the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation



May 2003

Acknowledgements

Urban Geography Field Seminar, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, Spring 2003

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Ramsey County GIS Users Group

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Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization and the Center for Urban and
Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota

Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation

All maps and Graphs 1 – 9 were based on the Ramsey County parcel data set prepared by the Ramsey County Assessor's Office. Graphs 10 – 20 were based on community survey data gathered by the research team.

Foreword

This District 12/St. Anthony Park Neighborhood Report is the result of a partnership between the District 12 Community Council and the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation.

Our two organizations came together in response to the need for an updated District 12 planning document for adoption as part of the City of St. Paul Comprehensive Plan. We formed the Profile Task Force to initiate a process for the development of a long-term vision for the future of this unique urban neighborhood.

Since the completion of the last neighborhood plan in 1983, St. Anthony Park has remained a vibrant and attractive residential and business location. However, as population and development expand in the metro area, so will pressures on District 12. As we look ahead to the next 20 years, we face challenges that include managing traffic and transportation issues; noise, air, and light pollution; affordable housing options; support for the aging; changing industrial and retail trends; the viability of our neighborhood schools; and the protection of public spaces and wetlands.

To better understand the social and economic trends shaping the community, the foundation offered to commission a comprehensive community report. This May 2003 profile of the entire St. Anthony Park/District 12 area will not only help to guide the foundation's future grantmaking strategies; it will also provide the basis for the Community Council's development of a final neighborhood plan.

We want to publicly acknowledge those who gave this effort such exceptional support: the Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation for their generous financial support; the University of Minnesota for a Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization grant that allowed us to hire James Hamilton to create the demographic maps included in this report; the urban studies students at Macalester College for their survey research and analysis; Professor David Lanegran for the report itself and his gracious insight; the members of the joint task force for their energy, creativity, and diligence; and finally, the members of both the Community Council and the foundation board for their support and guidance.

A first draft of this report was presented by Professor Lanegran to an invited group of community leaders and elected officials on April 28, 2003. Their feedback was incorporated into a subsequent presentation to the community by Professor Lanegran at a public forum on May 6, 2003. That presentation was followed by small group discussion, which generated the feedback included in this final version of the report. Our hope is that this "snapshot" of our community will continue to provide neighbors with a more complete understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing District 12/St. Anthony Park.

The conversation that will lead to a blueprint for our community's growth over the next decade has begun. Only with vigorous neighborhood participation can the Community Council develop a plan that accurately represents our community values while actively engaging the public and private partnerships necessary for our long-term vitality.

Jon Schumacher
Executive Director, St. Anthony Park Community Foundation

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Executive Summary

St. Anthony Park/District 12 Neighborhood Report

In the winter and spring of 2003, the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation partnered with the District 12 Community Council to develop a process for evaluating the status of the entire St. Anthony Park/District 12 community, including the areas University Grove and 1666 Coffman, which are geographically and socially tied to the neighborhood.

As part of that process, the foundation engaged Macalester Professor David Lanegran to write the first neighborhood report in nearly 20 years—and perhaps the first comprehensive District 12 report ever. This report, funded in part by a grant from the Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation, was meant to achieve two important goals: to serve as the basis for the Community Council's consideration of a neighborhood plan for inclusion in the City of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan, and to help shape the

foundation's future grantmaking and strategic planning.

In order to accomplish these goals, quantitative and qualitative information was gathered. This information consists of analysis of data from the 2000 Census, parcel level data on land use from the Ramsey County Assessor's office, surveys of residents and businesses, interviews with community leaders, and field observation.

Our broad analysis of the accumulated information indicates a vibrant neighborhood faced with the challenge of managing its business and residential assets in order to sustain its success as one of St. Paul's most desirable communities.

The Quantitative Profile

Five primary measures of economic vitality and social change were developed and used as a series of "indicators" of neighborhood health: population growth, housing and commercial markets, household income, and community amenities. Overall, these indicators point in a positive direction for St. Anthony Park.

The Changing Demographic Profile

The community has experienced several decades of moderate decline in total population (6,076 in 2000) primarily due to "aging in place" and a smaller number of people per household. Between 1990 and 2000:

- The total population declined by 9 percent while the city of St. Paul as a whole experienced moderate increases (5.5 percent), primarily in neighborhoods attracting new immigrant households.
- The average number of persons per household declined slightly from 2.27 to 2.16.

- The number of families with children dropped from 29 to 23 percent.
- The greatest population declines were in preschool (ages 0 to 4) down 30 percent to 321 and school-age (ages 5 to 17) down 15 percent to 689.
- The local elementary school's percentage of students living outside the neighborhood grew to more than 50 percent as the total student population declined.

These numbers would normally foretell a weakening of neighborhood vitality; however, there are several factors which contribute to confidence in long-term stability and growth in population.

First, it is centrally located and easily accessible by major thoroughfares. Second, there is compelling evidence of a “commitment to place” by current residents, exemplified by the comparatively high value and number of building permits issued for structural improvements to homes in the area. Next, there is a healthy diversity of quality housing stock providing a wide range of options for people wishing to live in the area. Finally, there are new housing developments, one nearing completion and others in the negotiating stage that will add between 400 to 800 residents to the district over the next few years.

State of the Housing Market

All available information points to a strong housing market in all parts of the district, with ample room for new development in the south along the University Avenue corridor:

- Housing values are in the middle to upper-middle price range for the Twin Cities, averaging just under \$250,000, and have increased steadily over the past

five years, outpacing the average for surrounding communities and the city of St. Paul as a whole.

- Low turnover and rapid sales transactions indicate continued high demand.
- Residents in all parts of the community are investing in a wide range of structural improvements.
- The community offers a diverse range of options, from high-value, single-family homes to subsidized rental properties.
- There is no “student ghetto” developing around the University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary campuses and, while there is a slow increase in owner-occupied units, there is no evidence of gentrification or displacement of lower income households.
- Conversion of existing commercial/industrial land into new mixed commercial/residential developments along University Avenue is evidence of the attractiveness to developers of the District 12 area.

State of the Commercial Market

St. Anthony Park’s distinct commercial districts—in the north along Como Avenue and near the University of Minnesota campus, and in the south centered around the intersection of University and Raymond avenues—face challenges and opportunities unique to their geographic locations.

North St. Anthony Park’s Como Avenue “Main Street” is largely clustered within a three-block radius with limited room for expansion. The core retail and service providers mix with specialty shops to create a commercial district that must increasingly compete with larger shopping venues in nearby suburban locations. This area’s current and future commercial success is tied to its ability to maintain a critical

mass of establishments satisfying local needs while providing the unique goods and experiences necessary to attract consumers from outside the area.

The southern commercial district faces a different set of challenges. The decline of the local manufacturing industry has opened up many buildings and sites for potential redevelopment. Fueled by local and state interest in a central corridor between Minneapolis and St. Paul, this area is fast becoming a major location for residential and commercial redevelopment. The addition of new housing, such as the soon-to-be-completed Emerald Garden townhomes and condominiums, and the potential addition of a new biotech research center in the area, will certainly strengthen the commercial district but will also necessitate a well-considered development plan.

- Core convenience services along Como at Carter Avenue remain, but face strong competition from larger chain businesses in nearby suburbs.
- New businesses along Raymond Avenue near University Avenue bring new energy and new planning needs into this commercial district.
- Many large-scale enterprises engaged in citywide retailing and warehousing have relocated or changed function, creating a need and an opportunity to reinvest in these older commercial structures.
- Potential for a biotech research park in the Midway area could add 1,000 or more jobs over the next decade.

Household Income Profile

St. Anthony Park is home to households with a broad range of incomes but with an overall slight shift toward an upper middle-class income bracket. While difficult to

quantify, human capital is clearly an important factor in the success of any community. Therefore, we used three measures to try to get an understanding of its impact: median income, range in household income, and change in median income per household.

- High median income relative to the rest of St. Paul—\$45,000 compared to \$35,000. Higher income generally correlates with heightened political and economic influence. This, in turn, secures a more stable community by increasing the capacity for property maintenance, philanthropy to local nonprofits, and involvement in local politics.
- Wide range of household incomes due in part to a large number of students and retired residents. (This also lowers median average income.)
- A modest increase in median income provides evidence that no gentrification or displacement of lower income households is occurring despite a strong current market for resale of older homes.

Community Amenities

This category covers those institutional and environmental assets that anchor a community's quality of life. St. Anthony Park has a strong set of public, nonprofit, and private institutions that give it special character and provide stabilizing influences:

- The University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary campuses provide open space and programs for the community; their faculty, staff, and students play significant roles as residents and community members.
- The St. Anthony Park Branch Library provides a landmark and landscape focus for the

neighborhood, offering programs and opportunities for intellectual growth.

- The St. Anthony Park Elementary and Murray Junior High schools consistently test among the top schools citywide and are a strong source of neighborhood pride.
- Parks and recreational centers offer a wide range of opportunities and programs for recreation and community-building events.
- Neighborhood churches and faith-based organizations offer service and worship opportunities for residents in a wide range of denominations.
- Neighborhood businesses take pride in the community and are strong supporters of local nonprofit events and programs.

Opinions and Attitudes of Residents

A survey of residents, feedback from focus group sessions, and personal interviews provided qualitative evidence to balance the empirical data. Two hundred and ninety-four adults who lived or worked in District 12 were surveyed out of a total adult population of around 5,000. Their feedback confirms this is a place where people want to live, work, and play:

- Respondents are proud of their neighborhood.
- Respondents want to retain a diversity of age, income, and housing options.
- Respondents want to retain the mix of convenience shopping, commercial services, and job opportunities.
- Respondents feel strongly about the importance of supporting neighborhood institutions, especially the library, schools, recreation centers, and post office.

- The open green space and environmental quality are symbols of a healthy community; respondents are strongly committed to the preservation of these assets for future generations.

Summary

While the various measures of neighborhood quality document a healthy community, it is clear that St. Anthony Park faces various challenges in securing its future. Residents who attended the May community meeting were obviously aware that there were opportunities for improvements. Feedback at that meeting identified the following values that should be given consideration in the new neighborhood plan. Respondents feel that it is important to maintain the following:

- A healthy mix of “walk-able” services and businesses
- Educational choice and quality neighborhood schools
- A variety of housing options for young families, single persons, and the aging population
- Support for our aging population
- A sense of community through our cultural, social, and religious institutions
- Unity of design in redevelopment projects
- Community spaces such as the library and the parks

There is no doubt that with sensitive planning St. Anthony Park and the entire District 12 area can meet future challenges of managing its assets and continue to enhance the quality of life in this distinctive community.

CHAPTER ONE

A Neighborhood Build on a Solid Foundation

The Proclaimed Landscape

The landscape of St. Anthony Park proclaims that this is a neighborhood with a strong foundation. Nearly every residential street has retaining walls of granite, limestone, fieldstone, concrete block, or landscape timbers. Many of the houses show off their solid foundations and basements. In fact, this neighborhood has more fieldstone or rubble walls, foundations, and fireplaces than any other area of similar size in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

The symbolism of strong walls and foundations underlies this report. Just as architects, homeowners, and landscape designers constructed sturdy houses, the present and former residents of the neighborhood created a strong social and economic foundation for the future growth and development of the greater St. Anthony Park community,

including all of District 12 and the University Grove neighborhood of Falcon Heights.

A Look Back

In the 19th century, the founders and pioneers of St. Anthony Park believed they were creating the best possible urban environment. After the initial dream for an elite bucolic town on the edge of Minneapolis failed, the St. Anthony Park Company, under the leadership of Charles Pratt, created a middle-class suburb based on the ideals of family and on the best urban planning of the time. The layout of the streets and lots was intended to maintain as much of the natural beauty of the area as possible. The distinct boundaries formed by topography, rail lines, and the border between Minneapolis and St. Paul set St. Anthony Park off from the rest of St. Paul and fostered an atmosphere reminiscent of a small town. The presence of several strong educational institutions—such as the University of Minnesota’s St. Paul campus, Luther Seminary, and a public high school—attracted a highly literate and enlightened population. Leaders of these institutions became leaders of the community and, with the help of other residents, developed strong neighborhood organizations before such organizations were common in most urban areas. In addition, the manufacturing, trucking, and printing industries led to numerous commercial and industrial developments on the edge of the community, which provided employment and capital for residents of the neighborhood. All these factors combined to help the St. Anthony Park community establish a strong image and sense of place.

By the mid-1960s, the neighborhood was essentially developed. Apartment complexes were constructed in the few available plots, increasing the overall density of the community to its peak in 1970.

During the 1970s, the population began to decline due to lower birth rates, the leveling off of university growth, and the loss of housing units in South St. Anthony Park to highway and commercial development. The loss of housing in South St. Anthony was only partially replaced by apartment and town-house developments. As St. Anthony Park was further influenced by new commercial and industrial developments, some residents followed the promise of idyllic suburban living and moved to developing communities at the edge of Ramsey and Anoka counties.

Thus, the community was faced with the two common threats to residential neighborhoods: a changing sense of attractiveness caused by the invasion of commercial and industrial establishments into residential areas and a disinvestment caused by the decline in relative value. Concerns about these local issues and more general land use issues in St. Paul prompted a citywide rezoning and the introduction of district planning councils during the 1970s. The purpose was to provide a certain order and set of constraints on the land market which would protect residential neighborhoods like St. Anthony Park. Each major type of land use has its own complicated set of characteristics and St. Anthony Park/District 12 has zoning for almost every type, making it one of the most diverse zoning maps of all St. Paul planning districts.

St. Anthony Park Today

The three major types of land use in St. Anthony Park (residential, commercial, and industrial) have undergone drastic changes in the past three decades. The shift toward railroad-oriented industrial activities contributed to the diminished relative value of the huge swath of land running through the middle of the community. Additionally, the gradual but steady decline in the industrial sector of the

community, primarily caused by changes in the manufacturing industry, has resulted in the creation of underused areas. Although these areas hold potential for blight, they also offer opportunity for interesting and beneficial redevelopments. Likewise, St. Anthony Park's commercial districts have been confronted by dramatic changes in the transportation system and by consumer trends that have removed commercial and business traffic from arterial streets and encouraged shoppers to patronize suburban shopping malls. The recent downturn in the national and regional economies has reduced the demand for commercial spaces and produced numerous vacancies in the industrial and commercial zones. Although residential properties remain attractive and valuable to many residents, homes at the suburban edge continue to lure people away from city neighborhoods such as St. Anthony Park.

Summary

The St. Anthony Park community has a strong economic and social foundation. However, like other urban communities, it faces threats to its long-term vitality. Given this situation, research for this report attempted to determine the community's ability not only to withstand these threats but also to thrive. Quantitative research focused on a set of indicators that can be considered



measures of community health.

CHAPTER TWO

Key Indicators of Neighborhood Health

The single-most important aspect of a neighborhood is the residents' level of confidence in the future of the community. If people are confident, they will continue to invest in their property and engage in social and philanthropic activities that strengthen the bonds among neighbors. It is, however, extremely difficult to measure confidence accurately, which poses the difficult task of finding other measures. Fortunately, several relevant aspects of human behavior, as well as various demographic and economic activities, can be used as substitutes. Although there is no general agreement on a set of social and economic indices of neighborhood health, the set used in this study—housing, income, population, commerce and industry, and community amenities—was selected because it captures the essence of the situation in St. Anthony Park.

Housing Indicators

There are five widely accepted measures of the levels of confidence associated with the housing market: the values of housing, range in housing prices, levels of housing sales, private investment in the housing stock, and mix of owner-occupied and rental units. The St. Paul Community Geographic Information System Consortium provided detailed and current data on these variables for this report.

These measures, however, must be used with caution because of the fact that housing values and sales are influenced by the general economic health of the United States and of metro areas. For example, values can be affected by an assortment of macro-economic variables such as mortgage rates, levels of employment, the number of new housing units entering the market, and regional population growth. Nonetheless, when local values are used in the proper context, they can provide useful insights.

Income Indicators

Three popular measures of community health include an examination of the median income, range in household income, and change in median household income in an area. As with housing indicators, these measures are not easy to interpret in isolation and must be put into context to be useful. This is because the income in an area is not necessarily an accurate indication of the future of a place. For example, higher-income residents can be drawn to newer, more attractive places, leaving the older neighborhood open to negative change. Residents in high-income communities often have the capital to maintain their property and typically have the political and economic influence needed to ensure a safe and pleasant environment. In other situations, however, high-income neighborhoods may not be the best places to live. Such neighborhoods typically contain a large number of professional households whose adult members work long hours. These people may have limited time to contribute to community projects or neighborhood institutions such as schools, churches, or city politics.

Population Indicators

In some parts of metropolitan areas, the size of the population and changes in population size and

characteristics are important measures of health. Obviously, developers of new suburban communities are anxious to see people move into their properties and therefore perceive population growth as the most important indicator for future success. In the older, built-up parts of the city, however, demographics change at a slower pace and are less useful as measures of community health. Although the rapid depopulation of an area would be alarming, most older neighborhoods lose population as households age and children leave home.

Additionally, the limited amount of developable land makes population growth through in-migration unlikely. The population of a neighborhood is also impacted by broad cultural changes—most important is the decline in the number of children per household. Thus, older neighborhoods are not expected to experience significant population growth. Furthermore, the average age of the community is expected to gradually increase in response to the decline in the number of families with children. Because successful neighborhoods can be of any size, demographic change is not always a critical measure of a community's success.

Commercial and Industrial Indicators

Successful communities contain a mix of commercial and industrial enterprises. This business community plays a significant role in promoting the image of neighborhoods. Mutual support between business owners and residents is needed for a successful community. For example, businesses often provide financial support for local programs, and their buildings can reflect pride and investment in the area. The commercial enterprises need to satisfy consumers both locally and outside the community. They provide necessary products and services to the residents while offering unique products or

experiences that make them destinations for shoppers from other areas. Strong local businesses enable residents to avoid long commutes to downtown and suburban shopping centers and provide valued space for social interactions. By the same token, resident patronage of local businesses is essential for their survival. Another measure of confidence in the community is the rate at which underutilized commercial and industrial land is being converted to desirable industrial, office, retail, or housing developments.

Community Amenities as Indicators

The amount of open green space in a neighborhood is also a measure of well-being: the more space available, the more attractive the area. As open space is rarely created in developed regions of the metro area, the focus of this indicator shifts to rates of decline.

The waxing or waning of large institutions in a neighborhood can have an enormous impact on quality of

life as well as the present and future attractiveness of an area. Such institutions include schools, hospitals, nonprofit arts and service organizations. On the positive side, these establishments can offer a range of special features to the local community, including the creation of informal open space and cultural events. Institutions can also offer a great deal of development opportunity. On the negative side, there is almost always a zone of tension surrounding such institutions. For example, they can generate traffic congestion and irritating parking demands. Unsuccessful institutions may close, resulting in major land use changes.

Summary

A key indicator of a community's health is the degree of confidence residents have in the future of their neighborhoods. Community confidence can be measured by factors related to housing, income, demographics, commercial and industrial enterprises, and community amenities. The following chapters describe findings about how St. Anthony Park "measures up" against these factors.

Housing Market

Most people will invest in houses only when they believe a neighborhood is stable and will continue to be so. As a result, housing prices are one of the very best measures of confidence in residential communities. In addition, most households have the majority of their net worth in their homes. These two separate, but closely related, factors provide five data sets associated with the housing market: the values of housing, range in housing prices, levels of housing sales, investment in the housing stock, and the diversity of the housing stock measured by percentage of owner occupied and rented units. As indicated in chapter 2, although these measures must be used with caution, they can nonetheless provide valuable insights when used in the proper context.

Housing Values

An examination of St. Paul housing values in 2003 (Map 1) indicates that the St. Anthony Park, Crocus Hill, Edgumbe Boulevard, bluff at Highland Park, and River Road neighborhoods have the highest home values in the city. It is not too surprising that these areas have other things in common. They are all located on or adjacent to attractive landscape features such as hills and open space. They are close to transportation arteries but are not overwhelmed by automotive traffic. The areas also contain

a mix of housing types, convenient shopping, and easy access to the region's major cultural institutions.

Graph 1 compares the distribution of housing values in St. Anthony Park with the citywide average and a few comparison neighborhoods. It shows that St. Anthony Park generally has a greater percentage of houses in the higher-priced categories than the city as a whole. Macalester-Groveland, a much larger community with two high-income neighborhoods, and St. Anthony Park have about 15 percent of their housing stock valued at more than \$400,000. Although about 25 percent of the houses in St. Anthony Park cost less than \$250,000, this fraction is considerably lower than the city as a whole, and the neighborhoods of Hamline-Midway and Como Park, in particular.

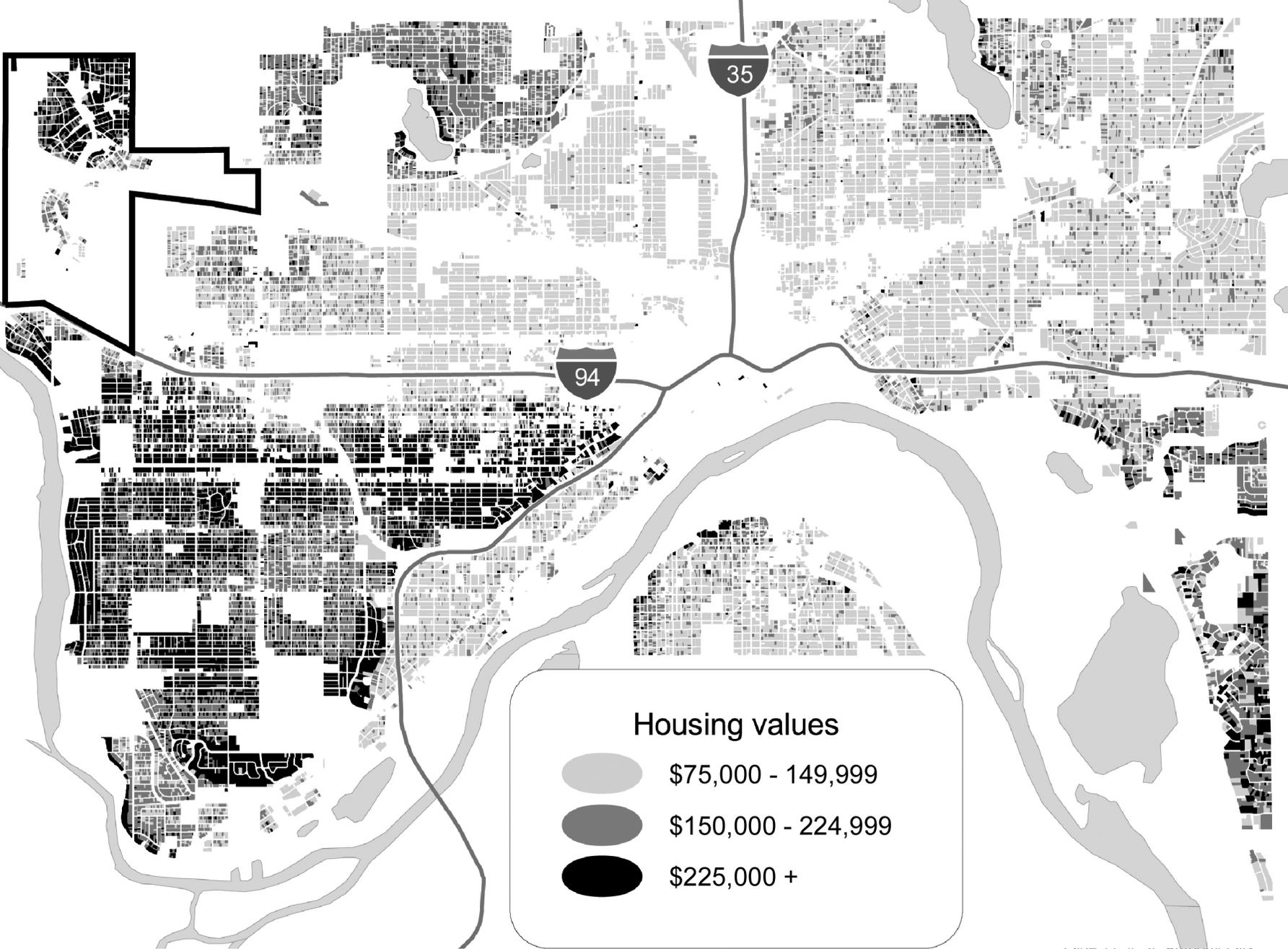
Range of Housing Prices

Map 2 shows a clear pattern of home values inside St. Anthony Park. The majority of expensive homes (\$275,000 and above) are found in the center of the community and its northern edge. However, there are high- and low-value homes in all parts of the community. The majority of the houses are in the middle category of \$175,000 to \$275,000.

Housing Sale Levels

The third critical measure of confidence is an increase in housing prices. Graph 2 shows the changes in average house prices for the city as a whole and the comparison districts. Between 1997 and 2002, the average sale price for houses in St. Anthony Park increased from just over \$150,000 to just under \$250,000, an increase of approximately 60 percent. This increase is greater than the citywide average and about the same as that experienced

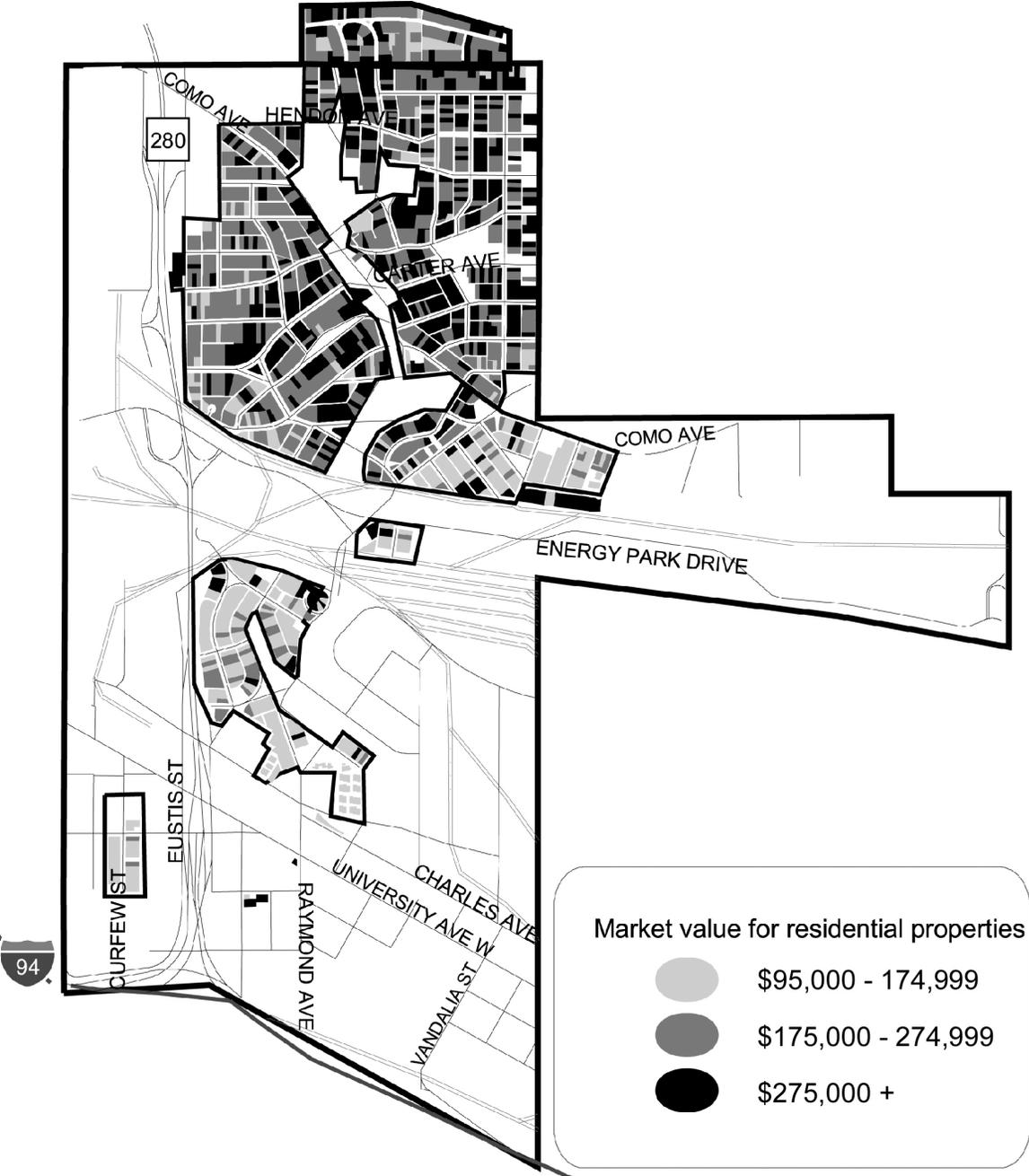
Map 1: 2003 St. Paul Housing Values



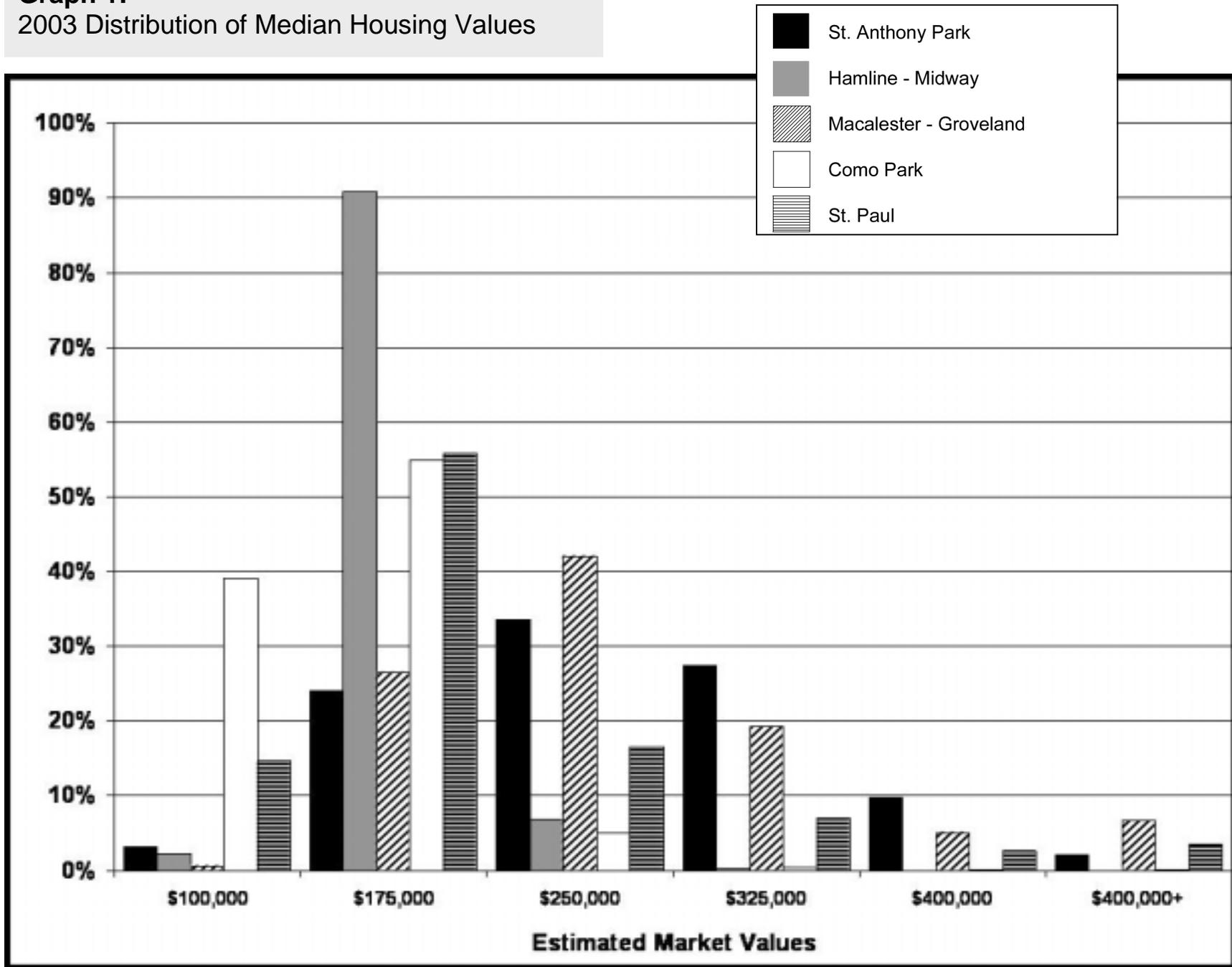
Map 2: 2003 Estimated Market Values of Houses



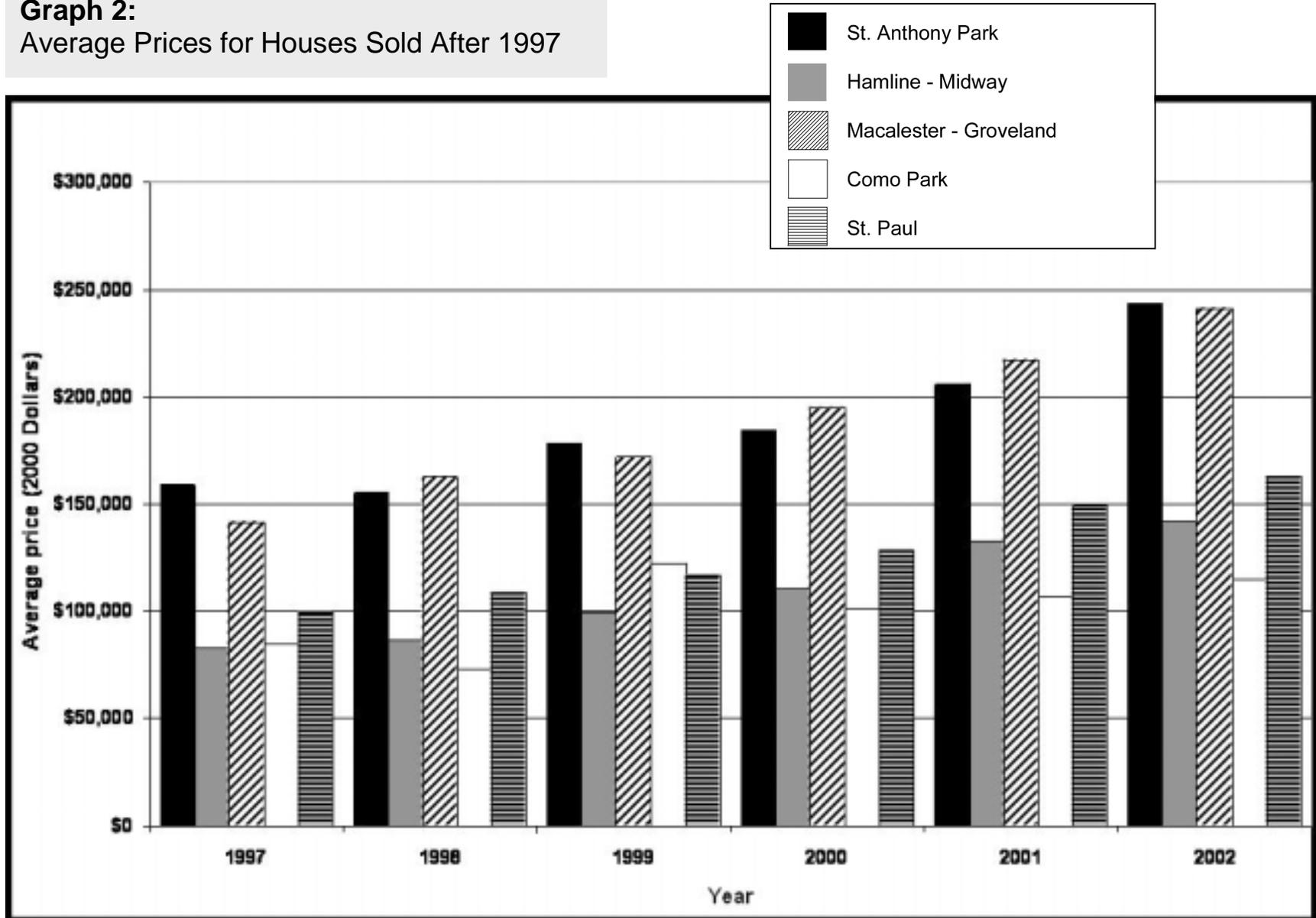
Residents of St. Anthony Park seem to value the unique design and historic quality of their houses.



Graph 1:
2003 Distribution of Median Housing Values



Graph 2:
Average Prices for Houses Sold After 1997



by Macalester-Groveland. The rate is made more impressive by the large number of houses in the community that are priced below \$200,000. Map 3 also clearly indicates a lively demand for all the houses in the community.

Perhaps the most heartening aspect of this increase in housing values is that it has been relatively steady. There is no evidence of a contrived bubble in the real-estate market. Such bubbles usually burst. The fact that housing prices increased in all parts of the city indicates that much of the increase of prices in St. Anthony Park is the result of macro-economic forces such as lower mortgage rates, a growing metropolitan population, and international events. The above-average sale prices for houses in St. Anthony Park—even eclipsing those of Macalester-Groveland—suggest that the majority of the housing is attractive, but the higher cost houses are especially sought after.

Recent data on home sales in the first quarter of 2003 indicate that the demand for housing is weakening and prices are entering a period of lower rates of growth. Furthermore, the average price will be affected by the large number of new units in Emerald Gardens Townhouse and Condominium development in South St. Anthony as they enter the market in 2003.

Resident Investment in the Housing Stock

The data available on building permits issued by local government provide an exciting view of the levels of confidence in the future of the neighborhood. People do not invest in projects they believe will fail or lose money. Therefore, the decision to invest considerable amounts of money in a building is an affirmation of faith in the future. The number, size, and distribution of building permits

issued for commercial and residential projects in St. Anthony Park combine to provide us with an image of a healthy neighborhood. First, the map of permits issued since 1997 (Map 4) indicates that essentially every block in the community received some sort of investment. Projects were undertaken in both the highest- and lowest-value blocks in the community. However, the data do not allow a comparison between the value of the house and the size of the permit. It might be assumed that the ratio between the size of the permit and the value of the house is fairly constant over the community.

Second, comparing the average value of permits issued in St. Anthony Park with the city as a whole, and the comparison neighborhoods, (Graph 3) reveals that in four of the six years, St. Anthony Park had the highest values. The value of building permits is also influenced by forces outside the community. It would seem logical to expect that the recent marked increase in the value of permits is largely due to the downturn in interest rates and to the campaigns of various financial institutions to get consumers to borrow on the increased equity of their houses for such things as home improvements.

Finally, the ratio of permits to total houses in the community (Graph 4) has remained constant with the exception of 1999 when there seems to have been a citywide building boom. This number may tell us even more about the local residents' attitudes toward their neighborhood. In all six of the years, there were relatively more permits issued in St. Anthony Park than in Macalester-Groveland. This could mean that the tendency in Macalester-Groveland is to move rather than expand and remodel.

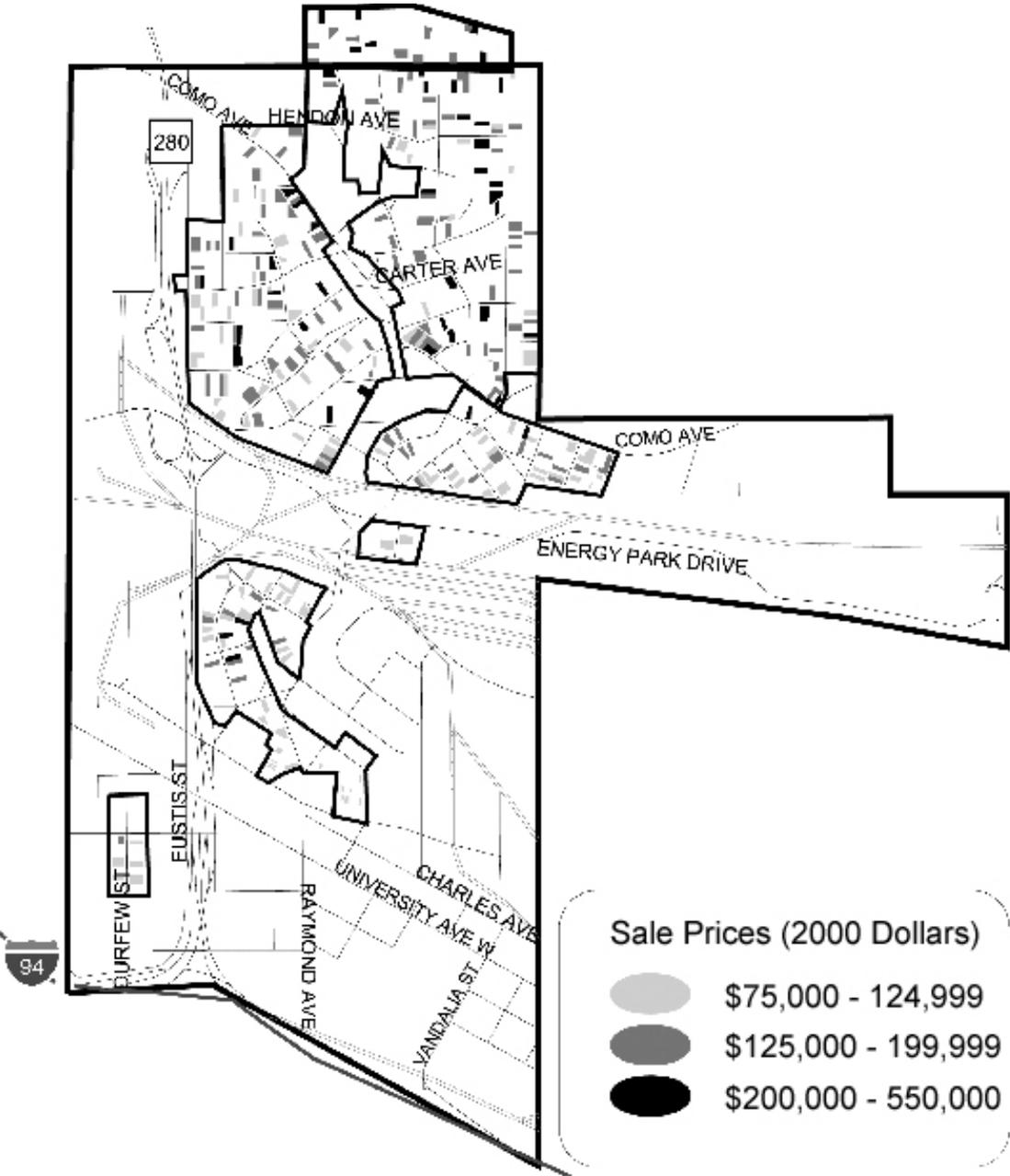
Diversity of Housing Stock

Most of the territory of St. Anthony Park is devoted to single-family, owner-occupied homes (Map 5); however,

Map 3: Sale Prices for Houses Sold After 1997



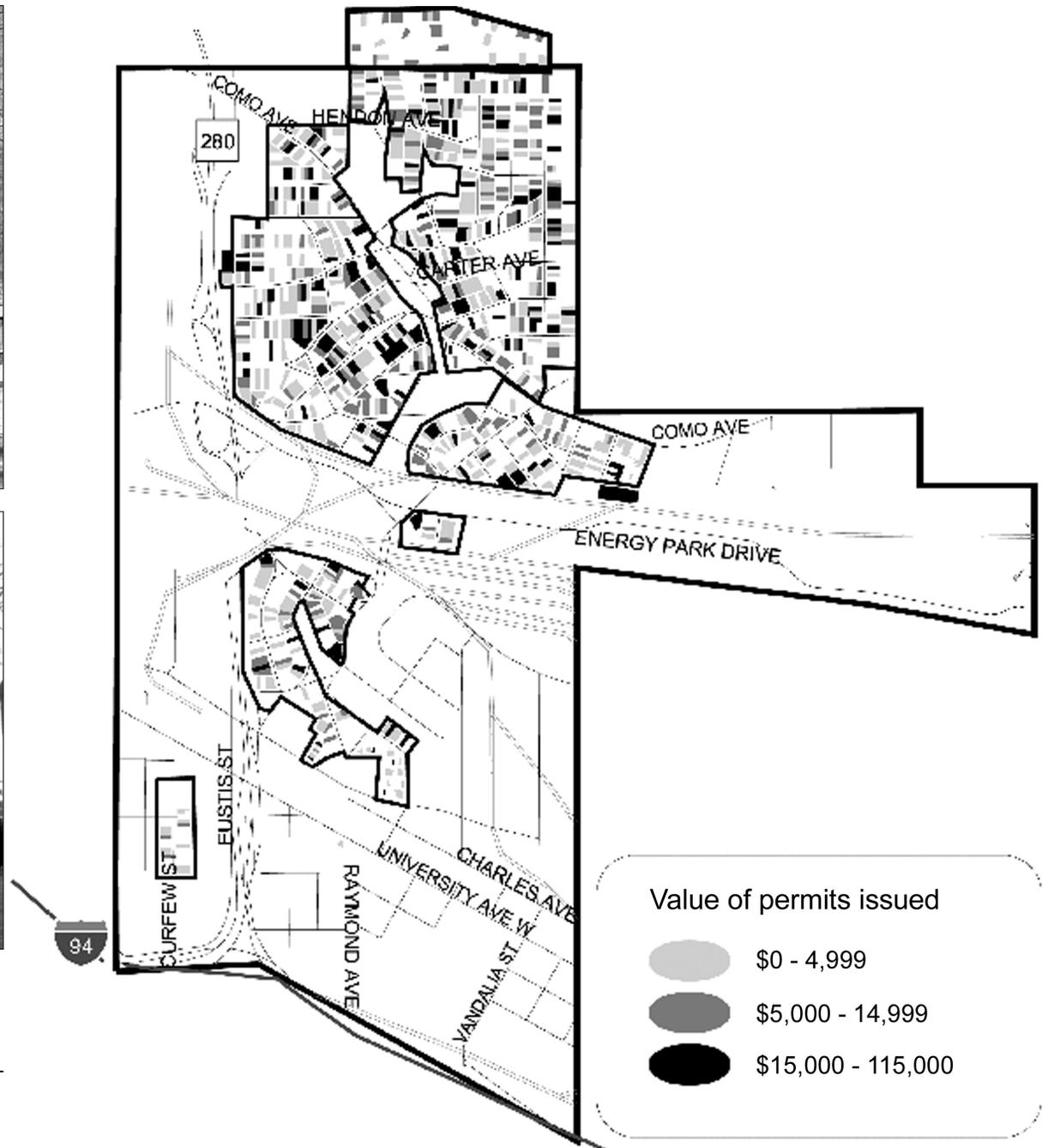
Low turnover and rapid sales transactions indicate that houses in St. Anthony Park are in high demand.



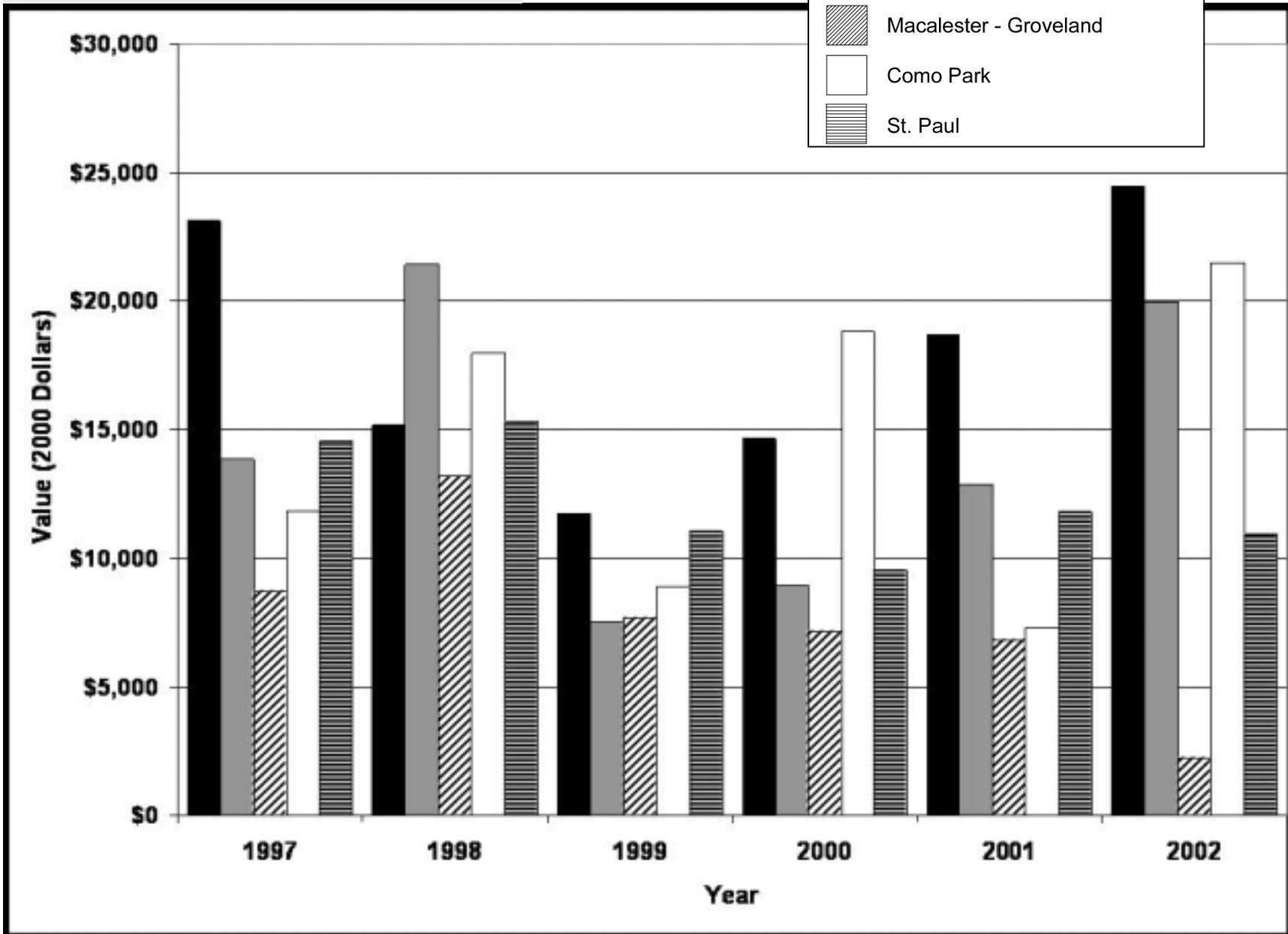
Map 4: 1997-2000 Value of Building Permits Issued to Houses



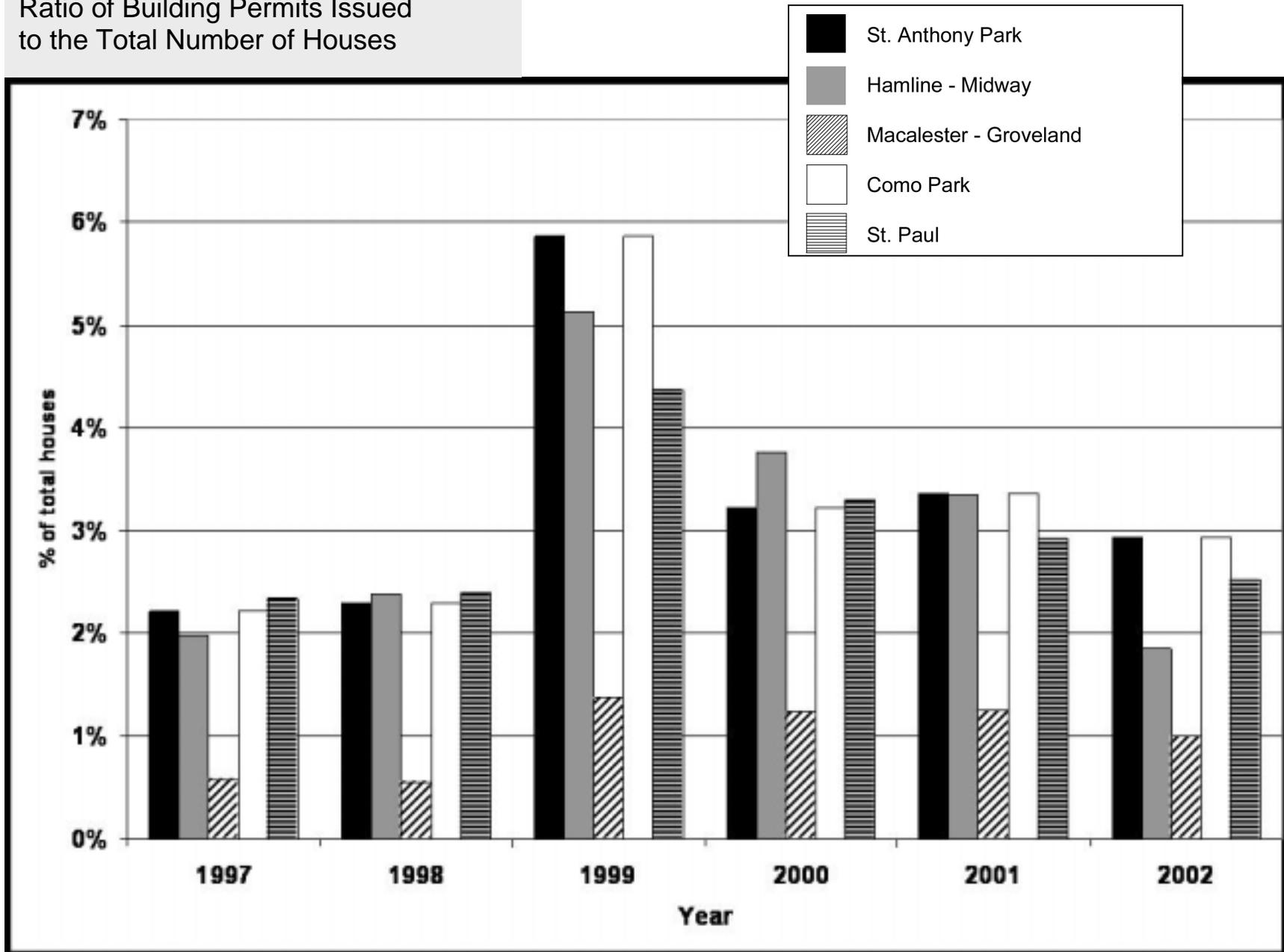
The considerable amounts of money and effort spent on improving the housing stock throughout all of St. Anthony Park give evidence to the confidence residents have in the community.



Graph 3:
Average Value of Building Permits
Issued to Houses After 1997



Graph 4:
Ratio of Building Permits Issued
to the Total Number of Houses



the number of rental units is greater than the number of owner-occupied houses and condominiums (Graph 5). It is significant to note that the ratio between the two types has shifted slightly over the past decade toward a more balanced number. The recent increase in the percentage of owner-occupied houses, as well as their geographic pattern within St. Anthony Park, points toward a healthy community.

St. Anthony Park provides a wide range of options to people wishing to live in the area. There is a higher percentage of rental units here than in Macalester-Groveland, but this is to be expected due to the presence and influence of the University of Minnesota. The fact that the percentage of owner-occupied units has increased indicates that a “student ghetto” is not being created by absentee landlords buying houses and converting them to rental properties. By the same token, the increase in owner occupancy is not so great as to signal a rapid turnover of rental units to occupancy, thereby signaling gentrification and displacement of lower-income households. Because the pattern of units is complex, it is necessary to examine maps showing the distribution of single-family homes (Map 5), duplexes, triplexes, and condominiums (Map 6), and student housing and large, multifamily rental properties (Map 7). Clearly, the presence of the University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary creates a demand for rental properties. Both institutions provide housing for students on their respective campuses, although private and cooperative housing options are available off-campus.

Another measure of confidence specific to St. Anthony Park is the rate at which underutilized commercial and industrial land is being converted to housing. This type of change generally indicates a high level of confidence in the neighborhood and, perhaps more important, a perception

that the area is undergoing a huge change. Normally, the presence of large industrial areas discourages residential development. In fact, the popular models of urban change call for the gradual transfer of residential land into commercial and industrial uses.

Map 9 shows industrial properties in District 12. Changes in both transportation and manufacturing technology have resulted in the movement of many industrial and transportation firms out of the area, leaving a significant amount of inexpensive developable land, especially in the southern areas of District 12 near University Avenue.

Neighboring communities with similar land use have development plans to convert their areas to more intensive office uses. District 12, however, is developing in a different way.

Usually, the conversion of industrial and commercial land into residential has the potential of reducing the property tax base and lowering the area’s employment opportunities. Fortunately, there seems to be enough vacant property in the southern, southeastern, and western areas of the district to allow for the growth of all three sectors. Emerald Gardens, the condominium and townhouse development in the southwest corner of District 12, is the first of what should be several major development projects in the area. While its original promise of adding retail to its housing failed to materialize, other mixed-use plans are currently being considered for the area. Further, there has been consistent growth of retail along the University Avenue corridor, especially near its intersection with Raymond Avenue. The Arts Off Raymond organization, which coordinates the annual art crawl, has been an important force in attracting artists, merchants, and shoppers to this exciting new area.

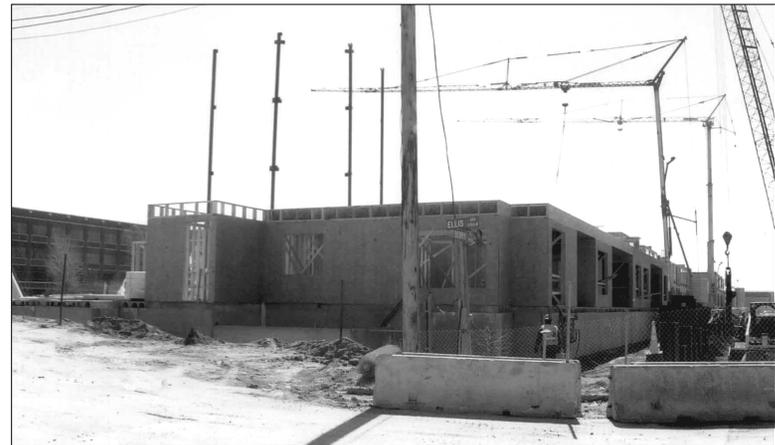
Finally, plans for a government-sponsored biotechnology industry centered in District 12 have taken an important step forward with the St. Paul Housing Redevelopment Authority's July 2003 purchase of part of the Westgate property (west of Highway 280 and north of University Avenue) for a biotech incubator. As that industry grows, there will certainly be an increased need to add housing stock.

Summary

In summary, all measures of the housing market indicate a strong community based on high levels of confidence in the future of St. Anthony Park.

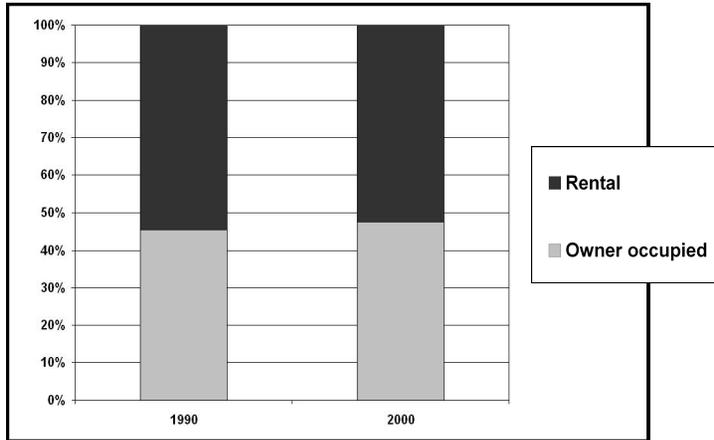
- Housing values are in the middle to upper-middle price range for the Twin Cities, averaging just under \$250,000, and have increased steadily over the past five years, outpacing the average for surrounding communities and the city of St. Paul as a whole.
- Low turnover and rapid sales transactions indicate continued high demand.
- Residents throughout the community are investing in a wide range of structural improvements.
- The community offers a diverse range of options—from high-value, single-family homes to subsidized rental property.
- There is no “student ghetto” developing around the university and seminary campuses and, while there is a slow increase in owner-occupied units, there is no evidence of gentrification or displacement of lower-income households.
- Conversion of existing commercial/industrial land into new mixed commercial and residential developments along University Avenue is evidence

of the attractiveness to developers of the District 12 area.



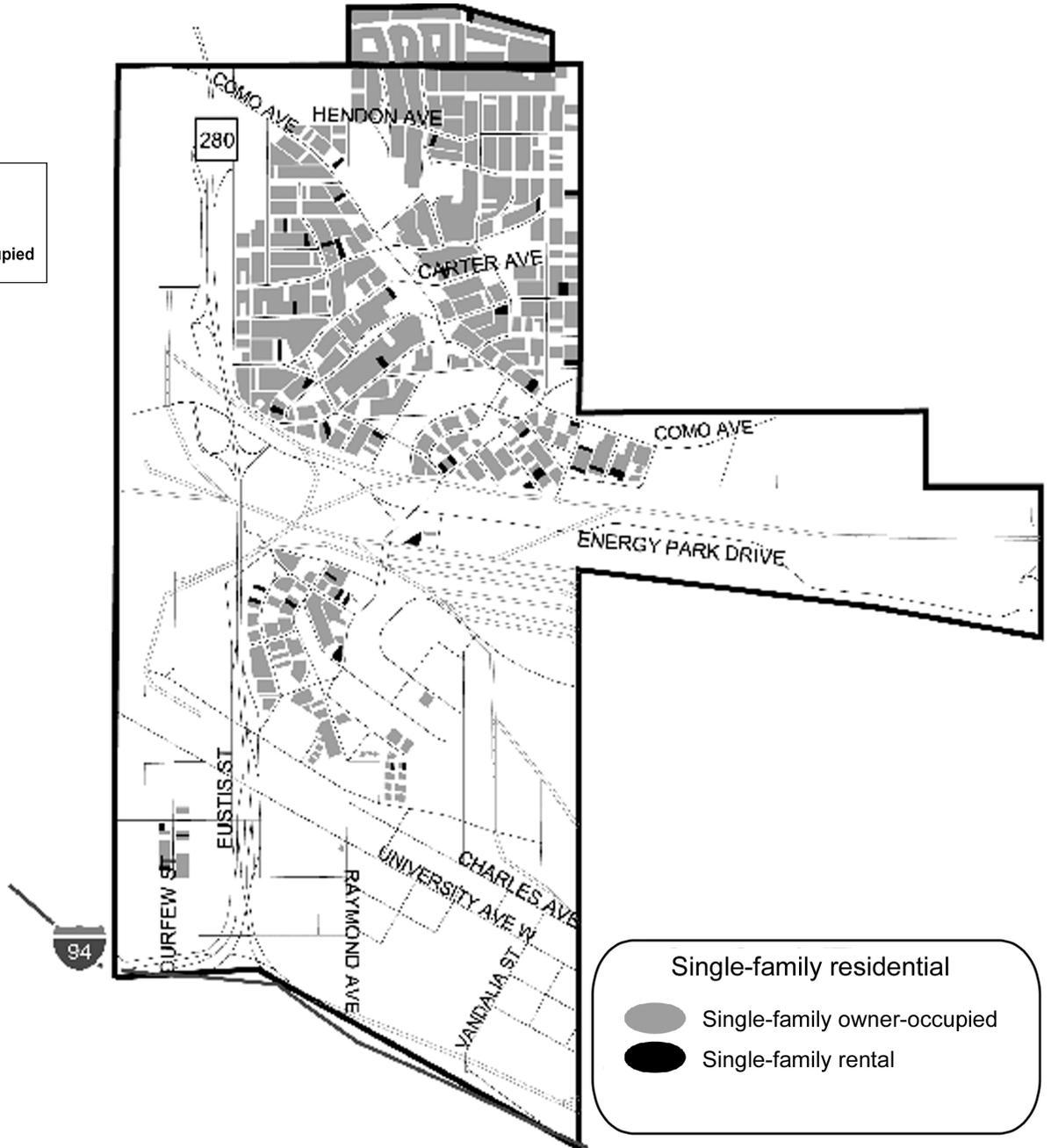
Construction of the Emerald Gardens project is already well under way. The mixed-use development will contribute to the almost 400 new housing units scheduled for construction in St. Anthony Park.

Graph 5: Owner-Occupied and Rental Housing



Many of the houses in St. Anthony Park are built atop strong stone retaining walls.

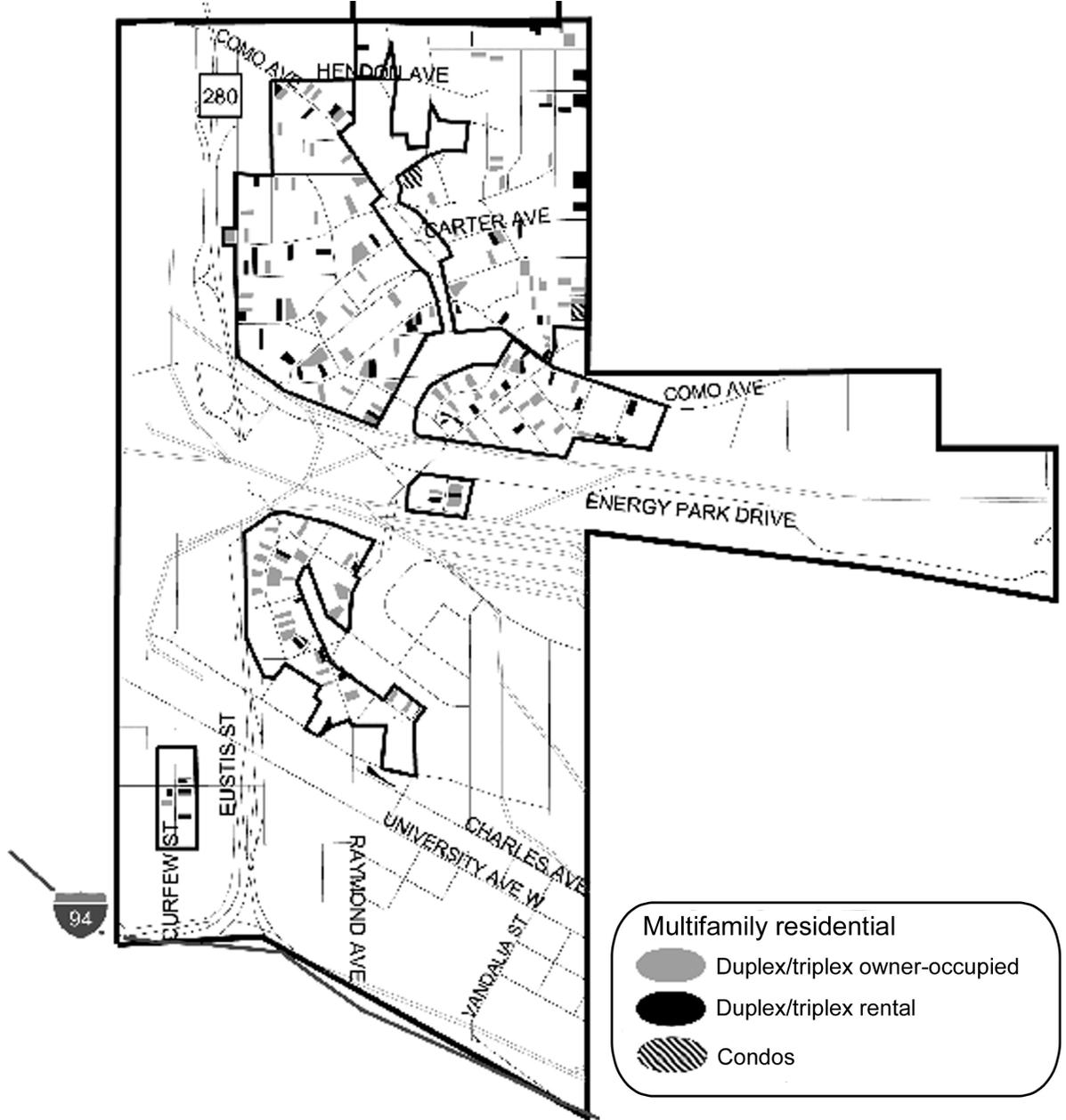
Map 5: Single-Family Houses



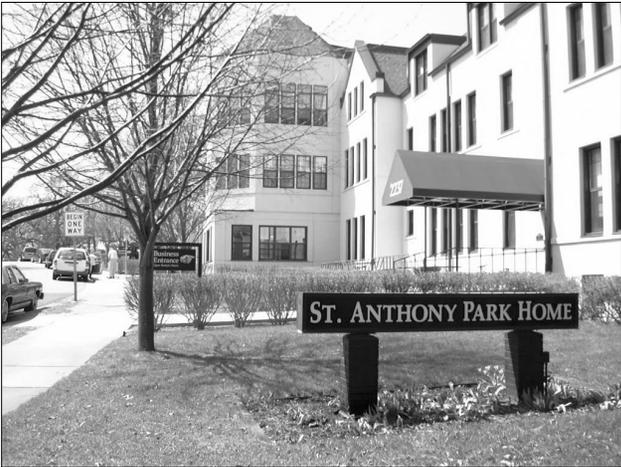
Map 6: Duplexes, Triplexes, and Condominiums



There is a mix of multifamily housing options—both owner-occupied and rental—for residents in St. Anthony Park.



Map 7: Multifamily and Student Housing



St. Anthony Park has a number of housing options for low- and middle-income families, the elderly, and students.



CHAPTER FOUR

Income Levels and Change In Median Income

Although there is not a positive cause-and-effect relationship between income levels and successful communities, the financial well being of neighborhoods is an important factor in the quality of life in an area. As mentioned earlier, the three widely accepted measures of neighborhood wealth—median income of households in the area, range in household income, and change in median income—must be put into context to be useful. However, any indication of dramatic changes in income does warrant close examination. A rapid increase in the income levels of a lower-income neighborhood can indicate displacement and gentrification. On the other hand, a rapid decline of income in a higher income neighborhood can signal that the area has experienced a change in its amenities large enough to trigger an out-migration of residents and make households of similar socio-economic class unwilling to move into the neighborhood and take their places.

The data available from the U.S. Census indicate that according to our three measurements of neighborhood wealth, financial conditions in St. Anthony Park are positive. It is important to note that this data set is different from the one used to describe housing conditions. Most

significantly it does not include those living in the University Grove neighborhood, which is populated largely by university professionals whose income tends toward above average. It does include some of the households living in married student housing in Commonwealth Terrace, whose income tends to be below average.

Level of Median Income

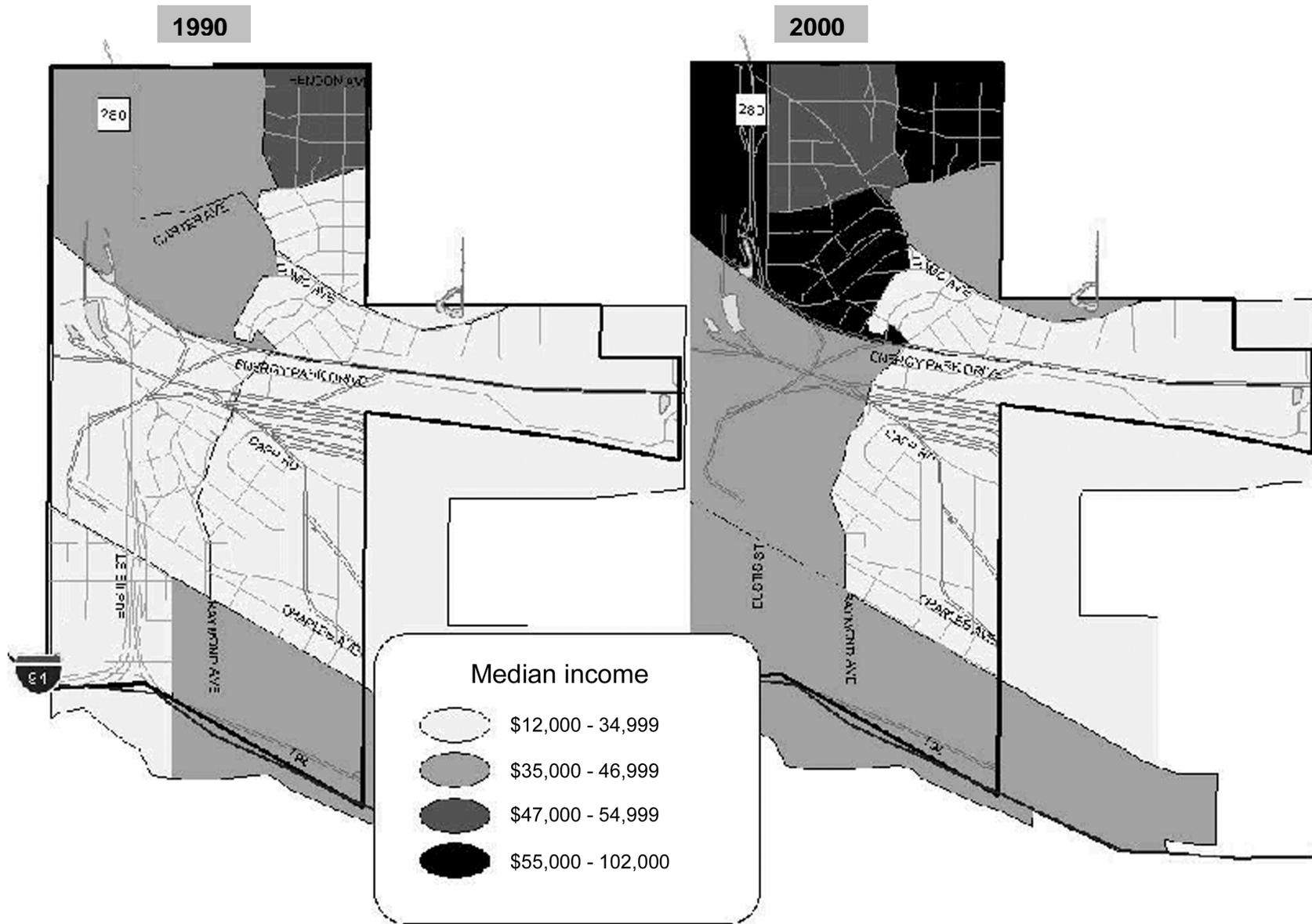
Even though the majority of housing units in the community are rental, which are typically occupied by lower-income households, St. Anthony Park as a whole has a high median family income. Map 8 shows that the higher-income households are concentrated in the single-family home areas of North St. Anthony. The very presence of these households indicates the neighborhood is attracting people who have a choice in housing and find the area appealing.

Range of Incomes

Residents of St. Anthony Park have always seemed to enjoy and support the socio and economic mix that has developed in the area over the past 100 years. After all, the earliest inhabitants included both lunch-pail railroad and manufacturing workers, as well as bank presidents and a former governor. In terms of range of income, the presence of student and retired populations usually produces low-income areas. However, this data must be treated lightly as annual income levels do not indicate total wealth or financial security. Retired households may have considerable equity, and a quiet lifestyle makes it possible to live comfortably on an income below the citywide median. On the other hand, though students have low equities of their own, some have significant discretionary income. This situation is, of course, a function of the levels of support students receive from their parents and

educational institutions. In addition to these populations, there are also the generally lower-income residents of the

Map 8: 1990 and 2000 Median Income (2000 Dollars)



subsidized housing offered by Seal Highrise and Hampden Square in South St. Anthony Park. Even with these special populations, the median income of St. Anthony Park was well above the city median in both 1990 and 2000 (Graph 6).

Change in Median Income

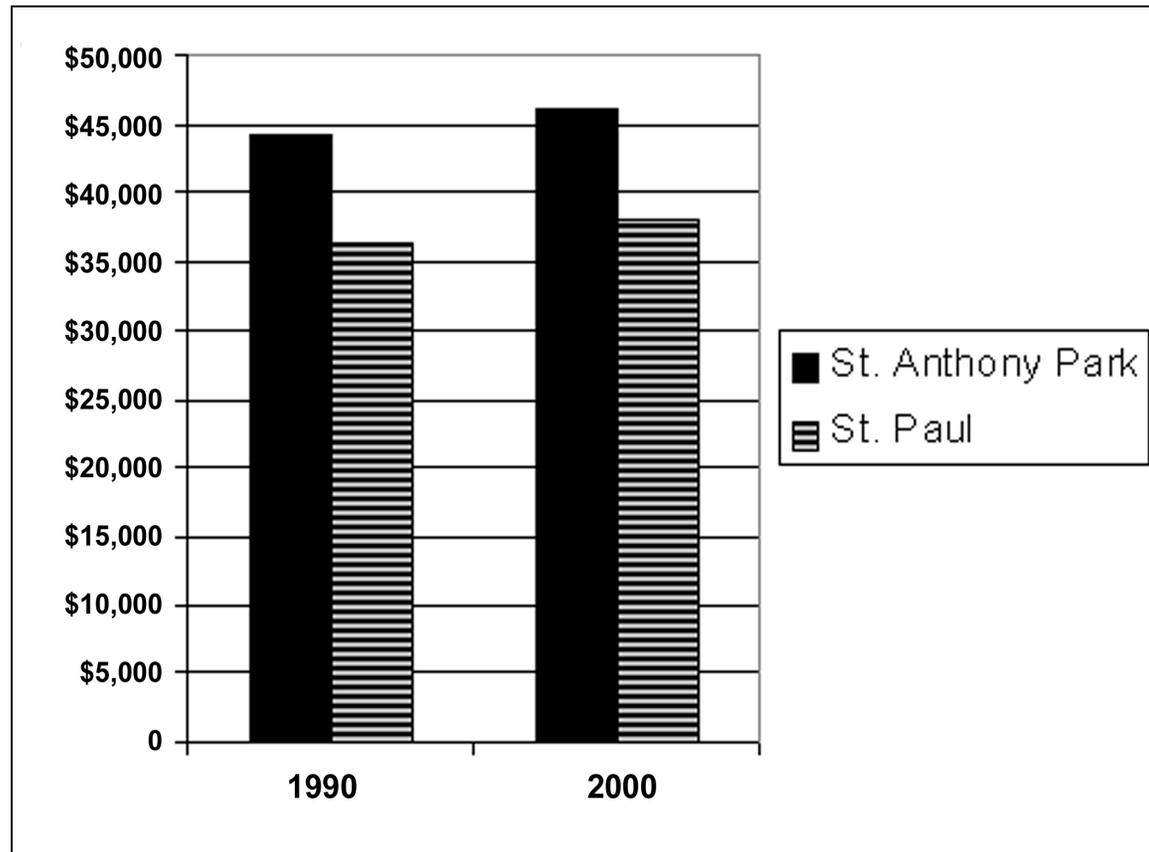
There was no significant change in the median household income during the 1990s. The median income of the city as a whole increased slightly and St. Anthony Park mirrored that change. Given the mix of housing and age groups in the community there is little chance that St. Anthony Park will turn into a high-income area. Nonetheless, the existence of attractive single-family homes of great character and charm seems to suggest that the median

income of St. Anthony Park will continue to be above the citywide averages.

Summary

In summary, by all income measures, the financial well being of St. Anthony Park is secure. In spite of healthy numbers of students, retirees, and subsidized housing residents, the area continues to have a higher-than-average median household income due to its ability to attract higher-income residents. This same population mix guarantees a wide range in incomes throughout the community. The modest increase since 1990 in median income is further evidence that neither gentrification, displacement, nor out-migration are occurring to any significant degree.

Graph 6:
Median Household Income



Demographic Character of the Community

The demographic characteristics of St. Anthony Park resemble other middle-to-high-income communities in the more-established sections of the metropolitan area. Although the last three decades (1980–2000) have shown a gradual population change in the size and mix of age groups, these changes are not cause for great concern. Because there has been little room for new housing construction in the area for several years, a significant expansion of the population, until recently, has not been possible. This is beginning to change with the conversion of industrial sites in South St. Anthony Park to housing developments. Also, since older, built-up parts of the city experience demographic changes at a slower pace than other areas, population indicators are less useful measures of community health.

Most older neighborhoods go through a process of maturation, turnover, and renewal. Communities lose population as households age and children leave home. Neighborhood populations are also impacted by broad cultural changes, most important, the decline in the number of children per household.

Declining Population

The graphs of age-gender structure and numerical change (Graph 7a-c) indicate that St. Anthony Park has indeed followed these general patterns. Between 1990 and 2000 (Graphs 7a and 7b) the population declined by 521 people, or 7 percent, while the population of St. Paul grew 5.5 percent. This decline is essentially in the age groups below 19 years old and results from both the declining family size and the aging in place of families.

If the group attrition rate between 1990 and 2000 was used to predict the potential community population in 2010, the result would estimate a further decline of 321 people or 9 percent. This prediction, however, is not reliable as it does not take into account the in-migration that will occur in response to the construction of Emerald Gardens and other projected residential development projects.

Declining Family Size

Graphs 8 and 9 illustrate the gradual change in the nature of households in the area. There has been a constant decline in family size since 1970 in St. Anthony Park. This citywide decline in family size was somewhat slowed by the international immigration of the 1980s and 1990s that brought larger families from Central America and Southeast Asia to St. Paul.

Declining family size is typical of almost all neighborhoods in the United States with the exception of those that attract a large number of recent immigrants and refugees. Therefore, only those parts of the city with new immigrant populations will show a larger increase in population and in

family size. International immigrants to St. Anthony Park are primarily students who leave the community upon completing their education at the University of Minnesota or Luther Seminary.

In St. Anthony Park, families aging in place, empty nesters, and seniors tend to stay in their homes due to several factors. First, there is the strong commitment to place referred to earlier. The residents want to live in this neighborhood as long as they can. Second, organizations such as the St. Anthony Park Block Nurse Program provide home care services that enable seniors to remain in their homes longer. As long as these populations see no better alternative, they will stay in their houses and slow the rate of neighborhood demographic turnover. St. Anthony Park does not have an abundance of housing options for empty-nesters or seniors. The Emerald Gardens development will no doubt attract some of this population, but for those seeking alternative housing in the immediate neighborhood of North St. Anthony Park, options remain limited. This contributes to the lack of housing options for young families, which will need to be addressed if this trend is to be reversed.

Because successful neighborhoods can be of any size, demographic change is not always a critical measure of a community's success. Nonetheless, the survey of residents initiated to complement the demographic research gathered for this report indicates a strong desire for attracting more families with children to the area.

Summary

Analysis of the available demographic data indicates the community has experienced several decades of moderate decline in total population (6,076 in 2000) primarily due to "aging in place" and a smaller number of people per

household. Between 1990 and 2000 the St. Anthony Park community showed the following demographic changes:

- Total population declined by 9 percent, while the city of St. Paul as a whole experienced moderate increases (5.5 percent), primarily in neighborhoods attracting new immigrant households.
- The average number of persons per household declined slightly (2.27 to 2.16).
- The number of families with children dropped from 29 to 23 percent.
- The greatest population declines were in preschool (ages 0 to 4) down 30 percent to 321 and school-age (ages 5 to 17) down 15 percent to 689.
- The local elementary school's percentage of students living outside the neighborhood grew to more than 50 percent as the total student population declined.

These numbers normally foretell a weakening of neighborhood vitality; however, there are several factors that contribute to confidence in long-term stability and population growth.

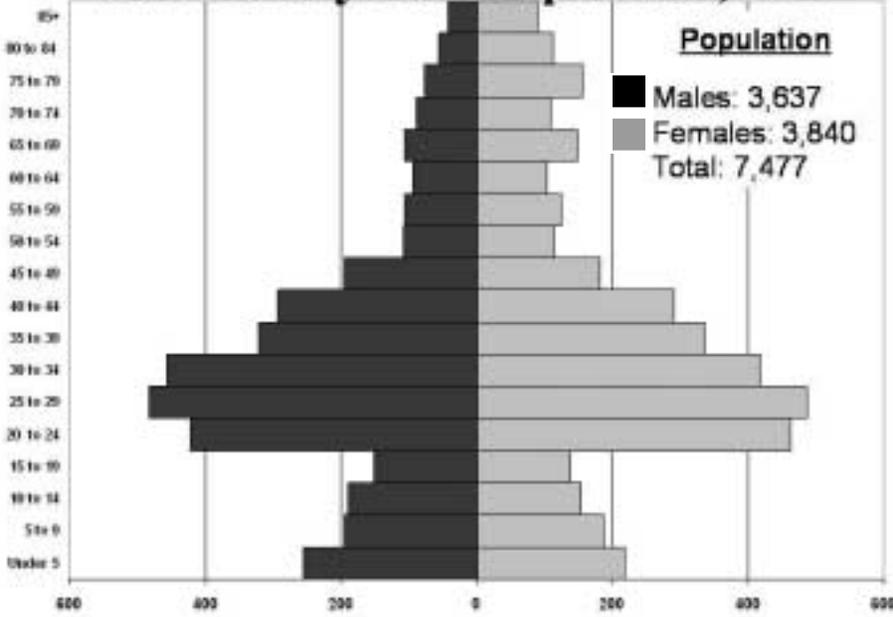
First, St. Anthony Park is centrally located and easily accessible by major thoroughfares. Second, there is compelling evidence of a "commitment to place" by current residents, exemplified by the comparatively high value and number of building permits issued for structural improvements to homes in the area. Third, there is a healthy diversity of quality housing stock providing a wide range of options for people wishing to live in the area. Finally, there are new housing developments—one nearing completion and others in the negotiating stage—that will add between 400 and 800 residents to the district over the next few years.



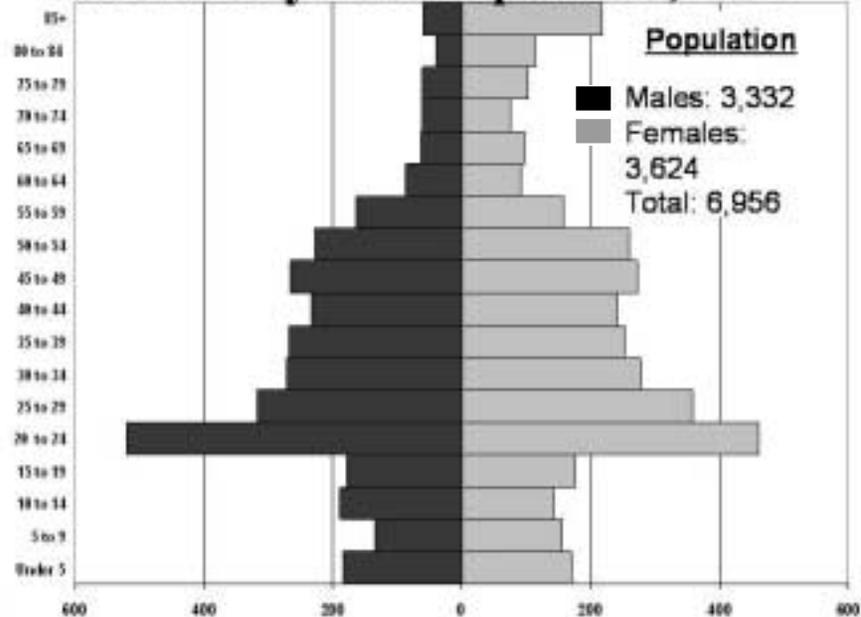
The variety of housing options and numerous neighborhood parks keep the St. Anthony Park community vibrant and attractive to its residents.

Graphs 7a, b, and c:
Change in Total Population and Age Distribution

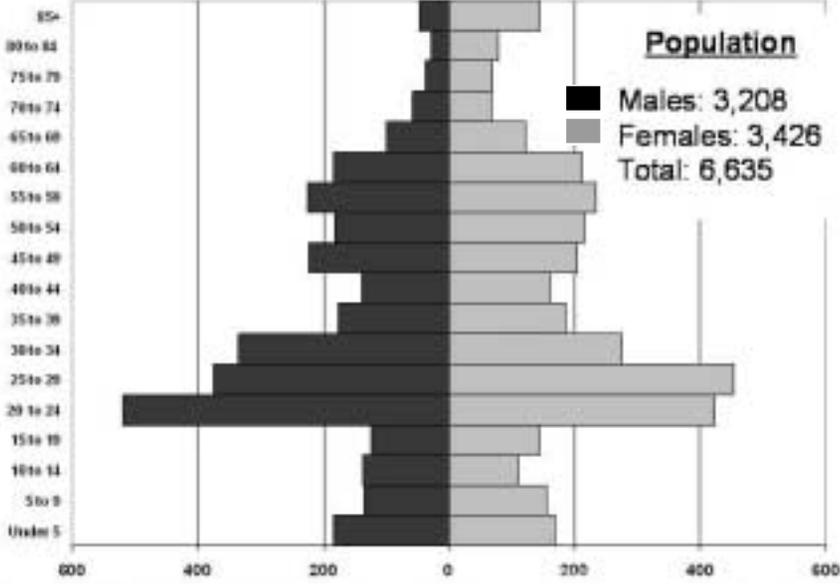
St. Anthony Park Population, 1990



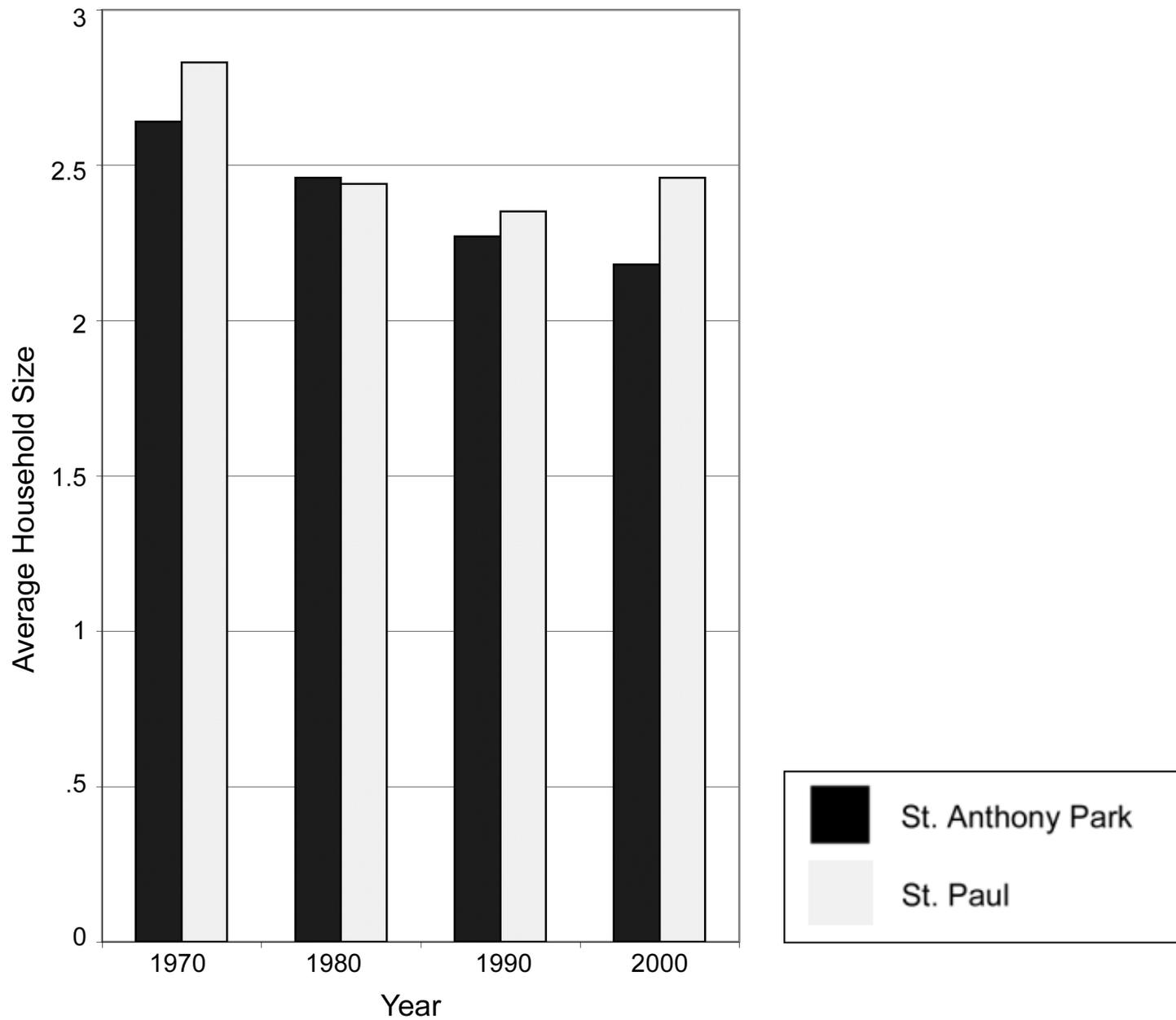
St. Anthony Park Population, 2000



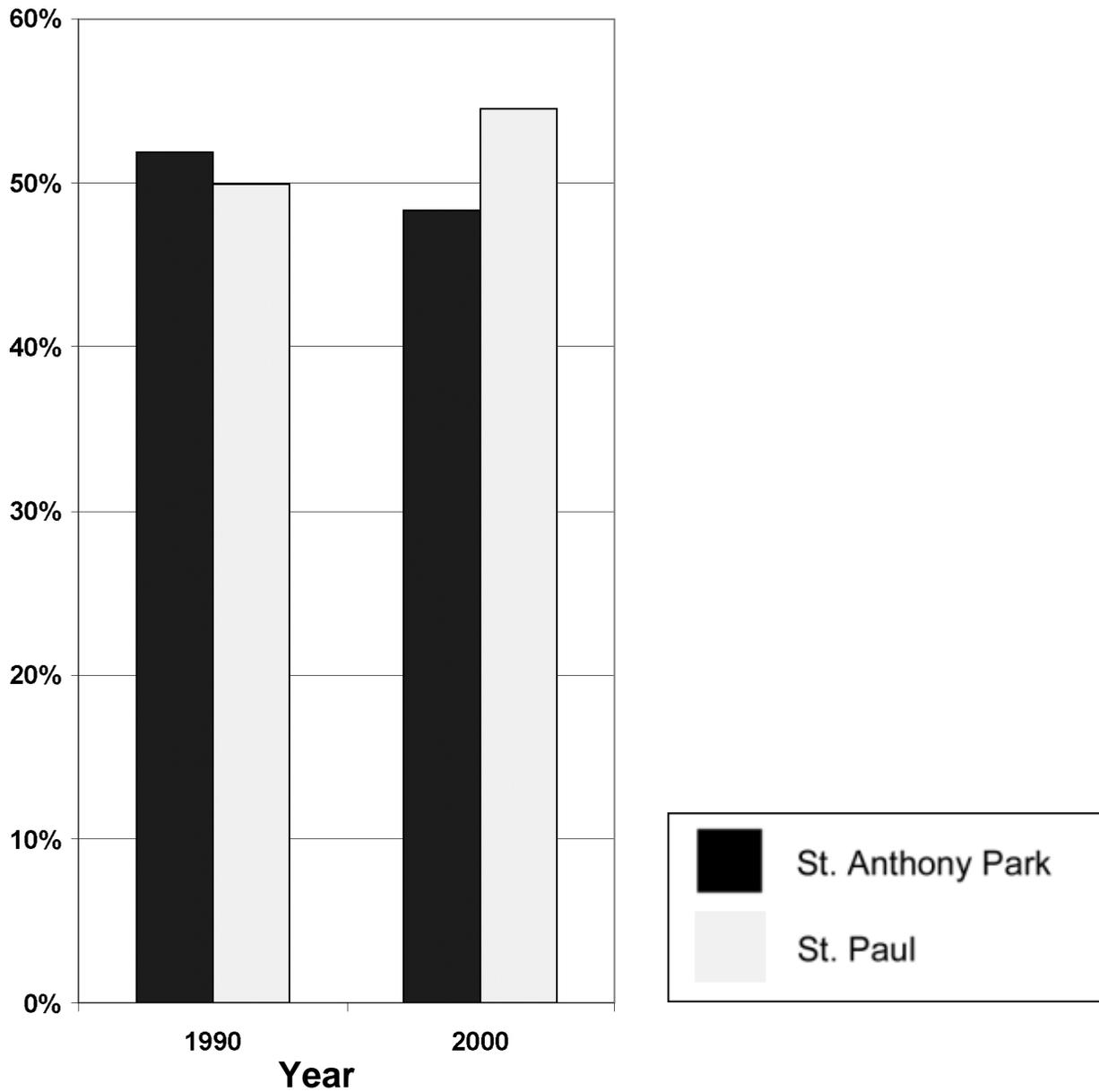
**St. Anthony Park
Population
Projection, 2010**



Graph 8:
Average Household Size



Graph 9:
Percent of Families with Children



Commerce and Industry

As can be seen in Map 10, there are several clusters of commercial land use in District 12. St. Anthony Park's distinct commercial districts—in the north along Como Avenue and near the University of Minnesota Campus, in the southeast along Energy Park Drive, and in the south centered around the intersection of University and Raymond avenues—face challenges and opportunities unique to their geographic locations.

St. Anthony Park's business community plays an important role in the success of the neighborhood. Many of these businesses provide financial contributions to nonprofit organizations and events. Their employees are involved in the community and often take leadership positions in community affairs. This kind of support and involvement is critical to the overall health of any neighborhood.

North St. Anthony Park Commercial District

Como Avenue functions as a “Main Street” for North St. Anthony Park by providing convenience goods and services, as well as more specialized services such as restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty shops. In addition, several establishments adjacent to the University of

Minnesota campus are clearly marketed toward students and staff but also are frequented by non-university residents. Thus, there are two quite different but related business sets in North St. Anthony Park: speedy, service-oriented convenience establishments and establishments that invite a more leisurely shopper or diner. These Como Avenue merchants are highly valued by residents and generally well supported. The resident survey indicates a strong concern for the health of this unique mix of services and retail. But, this area, largely clustered within a three-block radius, faces some important challenges.

First, it has limited room for expansion. Second, even if it was able to expand, it would need to solve the problem of where to locate more off-street parking—a problem that has been a concern for years. Third, it must increasingly compete with larger shopping venues in nearby suburban locations. This area's current and future commercial success is tied to its ability to maintain a critical mass of establishments satisfying local needs, while providing the unique goods and experiences necessary to attract consumers from outside the area.

South St. Anthony Park Commercial District

The commercial area along University Avenue, largely centered around its intersection with Raymond Avenue, has a different set of challenges. It, too, has businesses that provide goods and services to local residents, and several establishments that focus on consumers outside the neighborhood.

The South St. Anthony Park commercial district was formed during the streetcar era, but experienced dramatic changes during the development of University Avenue and the construction of Interstate 94 and Highway 280. This

area is now dominated by broad, high-speed roads that have given the location a new centrality in the metropolitan region. This is both a blessing and a problem for local businesses. On the one hand, it means that there is a large potential customer base; on the other hand, the high volume of traffic and the lack of pedestrian-friendly walkways limit the number of walk-in customers. There are many specialized businesses in South St. Anthony Park, including several stores devoted to services for the blind and other special needs individuals. There is also a growing immigrant population that has resulted in one of the more interesting specialty businesses. This is the Suk, or African Marketplace, located at the intersection of University Avenue and Pelham Street. The marketplace consists of several shops that give new immigrants and refugees a place to learn retail business and to become more acclimated to the American way of life. One of the workers at a shop said, "Older people that have recently immigrated to America own the shops, while many younger people that were raised here are hired to tend the shops and bargain with customers." The marketplace also offers many social services for new immigrants and low-income families in general. African immigrants from all over the Twin Cities use the services and shop at the market. In addition, it draws customers interested in sampling the cultural richness of the Twin Cities.

Most of the business owners who were interviewed for this study expressed hope that South St. Anthony Park might become more like an urban village. Urban villages are characterized by calm, aesthetically pleasing social spaces and accessibility to all basic commercial needs of pedestrians. To achieve this goal, the community must overcome several problems in the local infrastructure: several unkept facades, fast traffic, and noise pollution.

Redevelopment plans along University Avenue could help to achieve many of these goals.

Finally, the stretch of Energy Park Drive between Highway 280 and Snelling Avenue has potential for new or redeveloped commerce. Office buildings, warehouses, and commercial properties mix with vacant lots that could offer additional space for further commercial and industrial development.

There is a relatively high vacancy rate in the office space in the University-Raymond area, probably due to the current generally weak economy. If these begin to fill up, the Energy Park strip could provide room for expansion of that sector.

There is movement toward working together to consolidate the various business communities in the district for mutual support. The Midway Chamber of Commerce provides an umbrella for District 12 businesses as well as the greater Midway area. As the area develops, this type of cooperation could certainly benefit all merchants in St. Anthony Park.

Summary

St. Anthony Park's distinct commercial districts face challenges and opportunities unique to their geographic locations.

North St. Anthony Park's Como Avenue "Main Street" probably needs to expand its retail space and solve its parking problem to maintain the critical mass of establishments necessary to attract consumers from inside and outside the area.

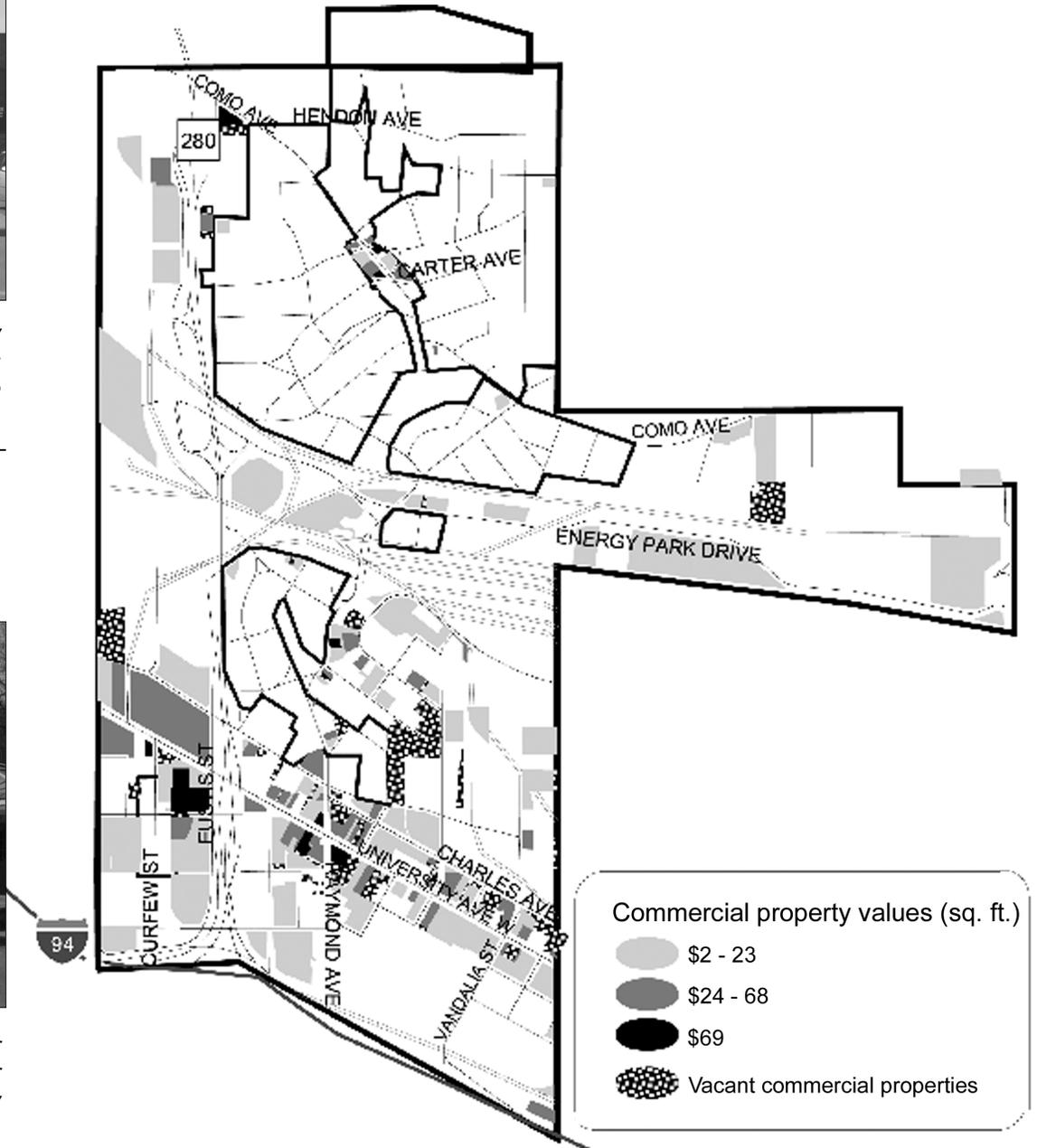
Map 9: Commercial Properties



The African Marketplace is a new addition to the St. Anthony Park business community. Besides providing recent immigrants with entrepreneurial opportunities, it adds diversity to the commercial services available in the area.



The businesses located at the intersection of Como and Carter avenues are valued by the residents of St. Anthony Park for their convenience and unique character and for the social space they provide to the community.

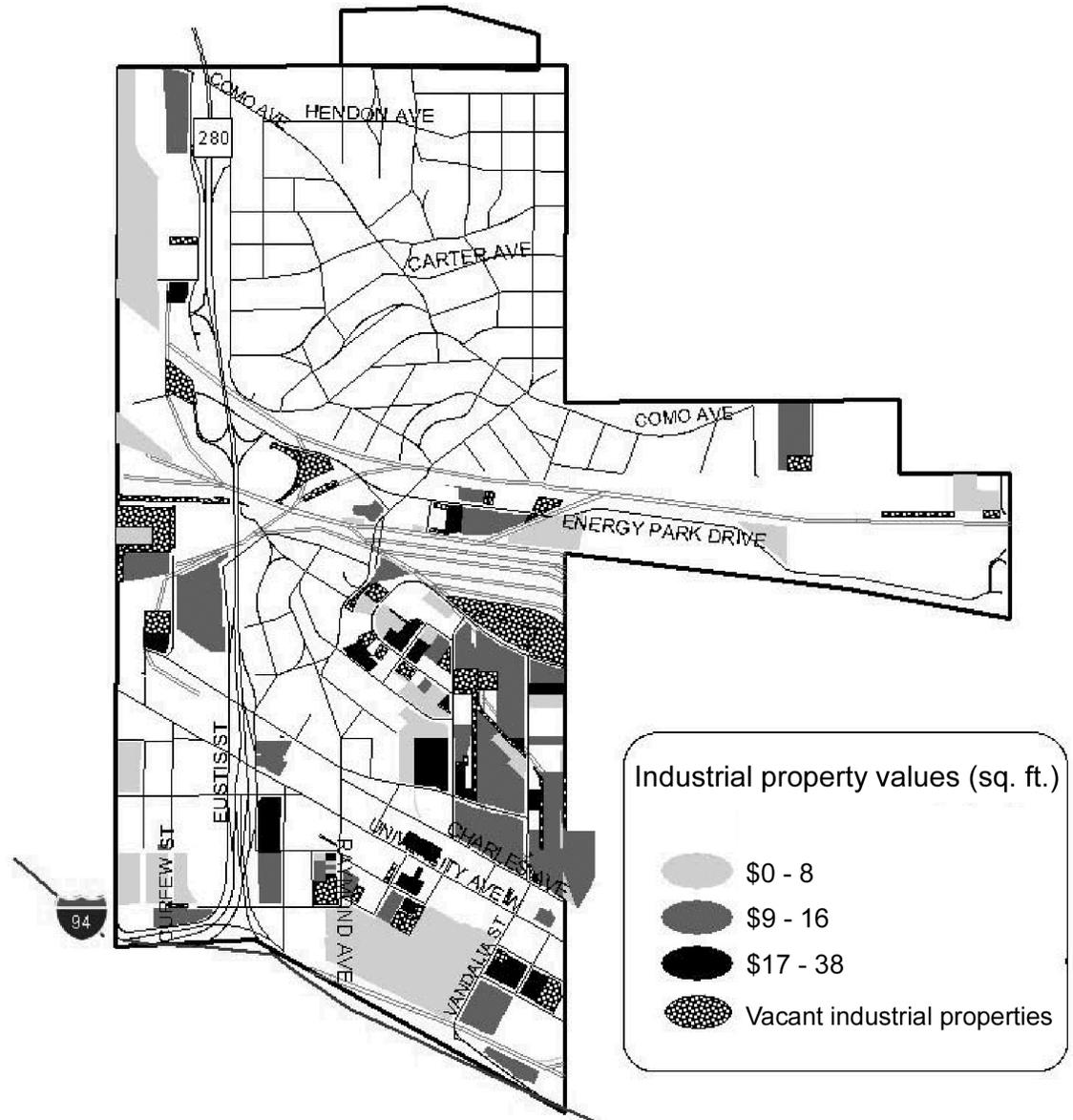


The southern and southeastern commercial districts need a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy for riding the rapidly increasing interest in development of all sectors of its community.

- Core convenience services along Como at Carter Avenue remain but face strong competition from larger chain businesses in nearby suburbs.
- New businesses along Raymond Avenue near University Avenue bring new energy and new planning needs into this commercial district.
- Many large-scale enterprises engaged in citywide retailing and warehousing have relocated or changed function, creating a need and an opportunity to reinvest in these older commercial structures.
- Potential for a biotech research park in the Midway area could add 1,000 or more jobs over the next decade.
- Neighborhood businesses take pride in the community and are strong supporters of local nonprofit events and programs.
- Mutual cooperation among all district merchants can enhance the business climate.

For further discussion of commercial and industrial concerns in the community see chapter 10.

Map 10: Industrial Properties



Community Amenities

A community's amenities can do much to increase the livability of an area. Amenities include parks and other recreational areas, schools, libraries, and religious and cultural organizations.

Recreational Space

The amount of recreational space in a neighborhood is an excellent measure of well-being: the more space available the more attractive the area.

St. Anthony Park has several kinds of recreational space, and the amount of space does not appear to be declining. There are several comparatively large green spaces, Langford and College parks in North St. Anthony, the extended boulevard that runs between Bayless and Cromwell in South St. Anthony, the wetlands that form part of the western border, and University Grove Park in University Grove. The campuses of the University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary are viewed as part of the community green space and are enjoyed by many residents. There are also several "unofficial" spaces that are used by the more active and adventurous members of the community. The slope on the northern edge of the

community, which terminates in "Breck Woods," is one such place. Open space along the rail corridor presents opportunities for biking and walking paths.

Special mention should be made of residents' hard work in preserving the Kasota Pond wetlands. The neighborhood was able to organize and defeat a proposed service station across Kasota Avenue from the wetlands that would have threatened the health of one of the few remaining city wetland areas. The District 12 Community Council has spearheaded these efforts and continues to investigate ways to add to this valuable green space.

There are also well-developed indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. In North St. Anthony, new playground equipment provides grade-school-aged recreational opportunities on one end of Langford Park; on the other end, baseball fields, tennis and basketball/volleyball courts, a horseshoe pit, and a toddler playground surround the recreational center's indoor basketball court and meeting rooms. In addition, there is a new tot playground located next to the refurbished tennis and basketball courts in College Park and playground equipment, a basketball court, and ball fields in University Grove Park. Murray Field, near the intersection of Highway 280 and Como Avenue, also provides fields that are used for baseball and soccer by the community.

South St. Anthony's recreational center has an indoor basketball/volleyball court, meeting room, and houses the offices of the District 12 Community Council. Outside there are tennis courts, ball fields, and playground equipment.

The University of Minnesota campus offers residents memberships to its indoor facilities, including basketball,

volleyball, and handball courts, exercise rooms, and a swimming pool.

Educational Institutions

Most residents of St. Anthony Park view the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary as pillars of the community. These institutions offer a wealth of special features to the community, ranging from informal open space to cultural events. While large institutions can also have an adverse effect on a community, as mentioned in chapter 2, Luther Seminary and the St. Paul campus do not at this time have plans that would appear to impact negatively on the neighborhood. Both institutions are stable and secure. They are in no danger of closing nor do they have plans for large-scale expansion. There are plans to construct a new Bell Natural History Museum on Larpenteur and Cleveland avenues on land owned by the University, and residents generally view this as an extremely positive addition to the neighborhood. Eventually the university may add buildings on the east side of the campus, but these will not adversely affect the residential areas. There is some possibility of relocating the experimental plots in the distant future, but that decision will impact Falcon Heights much more than St. Anthony Park. Luther Seminary has been engaged in a planning process for the last decade and has remodeled and expanded some buildings on campus. Current plans, however, show no intent to expand into the community or significantly increase enrollment.

The community has long treasured its public schools. In most communities, local schools are the building blocks of community identity and spirit. As St. Paul magnet schools have worked to achieve racial balance through school choice within the school district, St. Paul Public Schools now draw a number of students from outside each community. Currently, less than half of the students in St.

Anthony Park Elementary School come from the District 12 area. The challenges facing this school have mostly to do with declining populations of school-age children, expanded choice with the proliferation of charter schools, and the increased cost of educating students, especially the growing number of those with special needs, in the face of annual budget cuts.

Murray Junior High School, a math-science magnet school, has less of a problem attracting students. It currently is the most sought after junior high school in the city of St. Paul, and it has been filled to capacity for the past few years. Like all public schools, Murray struggles with budget issues, but for the time being it seems to have a stable population.

Other Important Amenities

There is an excellent library at the heart of St. Anthony Park. The St. Anthony Park Public Library, a branch of the St. Paul Public Library, is a symbol of the civic life of the area, an important social space for community residents of all ages, and an important physical landmark. One of the last built through the support of the historic Andrew Carnegie Fund, this Beaux Arts–style building is the architectural highlight and centerpiece of North St. Anthony Park. A lovely recent addition houses an extensive children’s section. Its picturesque campus with recent landscaping additions provides passive open space for the population. It is deeply revered by residents and annually rates as one of the busiest branch libraries in St. Paul.

St. Anthony Park has a wealth of nonprofit organizations that support its residents and often serve as prototypes for other neighborhoods locally and nationally. The Children’s Home Society, built in 1903, was one of the earliest adoption agencies in the region. Over the years it has

become one of the largest children and family service agencies in the United States.

Since 1981, the St. Anthony Park Block Nurse Program has provided services that allow older adults to live independently in their homes as long as possible. It has provided the blueprint for many other similar organizations regionally and nationally.

Another important neighborhood institution is the Music in the Park Series. For twenty-five years, through the tireless energy and vision of its director, Julie Himmelstrup, this unique organization has become a major regional showcase for many varieties of chamber music, featuring world-class musicians in an intimate setting at affordable prices.

Churches and faith-based organizations have played an important role in shaping the community since 1885. The faculty, staff, and students of Luther Seminary have impacted many facets of community life. Together with the University of Minnesota's St. Paul Campus, they have broadened the community's cultural diversity with significant numbers of international students, faculty, and their families.

Finally, St. Anthony Park is one of the only neighborhoods in the country that supports its own community foundation. The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation, formed in 1998, has granted more than \$60,000 in five years for initiatives and organizations promoting arts, education, healthcare, and physical preservation.

Summary

St. Anthony Park has numerous amenities that set it apart from other communities in the Twin Cities:

- Green space and wetlands are highly valued and actively preserved and enhanced.
- The University of Minnesota and Luther Seminary campuses provide open space and programs for the community. Their faculty, staff, and students play significant roles as residents and community members.
- The St. Anthony Park Public Library provides a landmark and landscape focus for the neighborhood, as well as programs and opportunities for intellectual growth.
- St. Anthony Park Elementary School and Murray Junior High School consistently test among the top schools citywide and are a strong source of neighborhood pride. They also provide an important socializing process and community social space.
- The parks and recreational centers provide a wide range of programs and opportunities for informal recreation and community-building events.
- Neighborhood churches and faith-based organizations offer service and worship opportunities for residents in a wide range of denominations.
- Its nonprofit organizations provide an important and unique mix of services and support critical to the community's life.



The neighborhood parks and library are valued community spaces for residents as they contribute important gathering and socializing spaces.

Community Perspective: Survey of Residents

To accompany the quantitative information contained in this report, attempts were made to gather as much qualitative information as possible. The bulk of this information came from three sources: a neighborhood survey, statements from selected community representatives, and feedback from small group discussion following the May 6, 2003, presentation of a first draft of this neighborhood report.

Neighborhood Survey

The Profile Task Force created a neighborhood satisfaction survey that was made available to community members in electronic form on the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation's website and in paper form at the St. Anthony Park Branch Library. Copies were also mailed out to local members of the Midway Chamber of Commerce.

Between January and May 2003, 294 adults who lived or worked in District 12 responded out of a total adult population of around 5,000.

Methods

During the winter and spring of 2003, residents of the St. Anthony Park neighborhood were asked by the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation and the District 12 Community Council to fill out a survey intended to better understand the demographics of the neighborhood and residents' concerns. The survey was posted on the Internet and residents were given the URL address. In order to include non-Internet users, there were also hard copies available at the public library and five Macalester College students conducted oral interviews with a range of people. In North St. Anthony Park, oral surveys were conducted at the Hardware Hank store, Gingko Coffee Shop and Lori's Coffee House across the street from the St. Paul Campus. In South St. Anthony Park, oral surveys were taken to the Hampden Square Apartments, Hampden Park Co-Op, and Prairie Star Coffee House. These surveys were shorter than the online survey, with questions asking the respondents to elaborate their concerns and interests eliminated. The oral surveys were then entered into a master online survey analysis system. Complete surveys can be found at the end of this report.

From this pool of respondents, categories were established and responses were analyzed. The categories deemed to have the most interesting comparisons were as follows: residents who lived in the area from zero to three years, residents who lived there for thirty years or more, residents who lived in North St. Anthony Park, and residents who lived in South St. Anthony Park.

One section of the survey asked respondents about their concerns; the responses provide significant insight into the

levels of confidence in the neighborhood. Respondents were asked to select their top two concerns in the categories of: Housing, Community Assets, Transportation, Environment, and Economic Development. The data was then graphed and the groups' responses were compared to one another in each of the five categories.

This survey cannot be construed as a random or representative sample of the residents of the community. Although it is limited to 294 adult responses out of a potential of around 5,000 adult residents, it provides a reasonable idea of what residents think about their community.

Demographics of Total Respondent Group

The connection of the 294 respondents to the neighborhood runs deep. Seventy-four percent of the respondents live in the neighborhood, and 42 percent of the respondents work, own businesses, or are board members of area nonprofits in the neighborhood. The respondent group as a whole has many long-term residents. Although 17.9 percent have been residents for less than three years, 17 percent have been residents for more than thirty years. A total of 66 percent have lived in St. Anthony Park for more than eight years. A total of 82.3 percent of the respondents own their homes. Since St. Anthony Park has a rental property rate of approximately 50 percent, this population subset has a higher rate of homeownership than the larger St. Anthony Park population.

Survey Respondent Profile
<i>294 respondents</i>
<i>69% reside in North St. Anthony Park</i>
<i>82.3% own their homes</i>
<i>42% have children</i>
<i>9% have English as a second language</i>

Most respondents (69 percent) hail from North St. Anthony Park where higher average incomes usually point toward increased Internet access; higher population density and home ownership could also be a factor. Less than 10 percent of respondents chose University Grove, Coffman, or "Other" as the part of St. Anthony Park in which they live. A notable 48 people did not answer the question "which part of St. Anthony Park do you live in?" This is probably due to a lack of familiarity with the boundaries of these neighborhoods. It should also be noted that many people skipped individual questions.

Many respondents also had business/employment connections to the neighborhood: 16 percent operate businesses in St. Anthony Park (3.8 percent own their business property, 4.9 percent lease, and 7.3 percent were home-based). According to the survey responses, the majority of businesses answering the survey are home-based (47 percent). An additional 7 percent are employees of St. Anthony Park businesses, and 7.3 percent are university or seminary students. A relatively high number of respondents (19.2 percent) are employees or board members of St. Anthony Park nonprofit organizations, which suggests that resident-employees or board members of the St. Anthony Park nonprofits that produced the survey probably also took it. However, this might also point to a high level of community participation within nonprofits.

The age structure of the surveyed population includes less than 10 percent of respondents between the ages of 25 and 19 (the minimum age to do the survey); 66 percent of the respondents were between 26 and 65 years old. The age group of 46 to 55 is the most represented age group with 29 percent of total responses. More than half the

group (58 percent) reported no children. Of the 42 percent that have children, 31 percent have children in preschool, 75 percent in elementary school, 23 percent in middle or junior high school, 31 percent in high school, and 2 percent are home-schooled (the total sum of more than 100 percent is due to respondents with more than one child). For 91 percent of respondents, English is their first language.

Economic Development

There is general agreement within the surveyed population on issues of economic development. (See Graph 10.) Mix of Convenience Shopping ranks highest across all groups with between 59 and 80 percent of respondents agreeing. Survey respondents, however, seem to disagree over other possible responses, including Industrial Redevelopment, Meeting Parking Needs, and Job Creation. South St. Anthony Park residents rate Job Creation as a priority at a greater rate than other groups (24 and 26 percent compared to 3 percent for the total group). The rate of concern for Industrial Redevelopment by newer residents was markedly lower than all other groups. Less than 3 percent of newer residents identify this as a concern, while 20 to 30 percent of the other groups do. A differentiation of priorities is also apparent in regard to parking where one-third of long-term residents believe that Meeting Parking Needs is important, while across all other groups less than 20 percent had this concern.

Transportation

Interesting points to note include the support by newer residents of Convenient Bus Service and a concern with Traffic Speeds, but the lack of similar support for a Light Rail Transit System. (See Graph 11.) The concern of South St. Anthony Park for speed control may be the result of their close proximity to University Avenue, Interstate 94,

and Highway 280, main roads with high traffic volumes. Newer residents give [Lower] Traffic Speeds and [More] Traffic Controls (speed bumps, traffic lights, and so on) a higher priority than do other groups. Newer residents are perhaps more likely than longtime residents to have children in preschool and elementary school, and thus be more concerned about measures to ensure children's safety. All groups give Highway/Road Expansion a low priority.

Environment

Overall, respondents give top priority to improving parks and establishing more green space. (See Graph 12.) Air quality concerns rank highest among residents living close to University Avenue, and long-term residents rank [Fewer] Billboards and Wetland Cleanup and Preservation higher than do other groups.

Housing

When respondents were asked to select their top two concerns in the neighborhood regarding housing, Affordable Options for Families (70 percent of all respondents) and Senior Housing (39 percent of all respondents) came in first and second, respectively. (See Graph 13.) More than 80 percent of South St. Anthony Park respondents chose Affordable Options for Families as one of their highest concerns. As might be expected, residents who had lived in St. Anthony Park for more than 30 years, and tend to be older, most frequently chose Senior Housing as one of their top concerns. The third-highest concern overall is Run-Down Properties, chosen by 30 to 50 percent of respondents in each group.

Community Assets

The St. Anthony Park Public Library is the most popular response in the section addressing community assets.

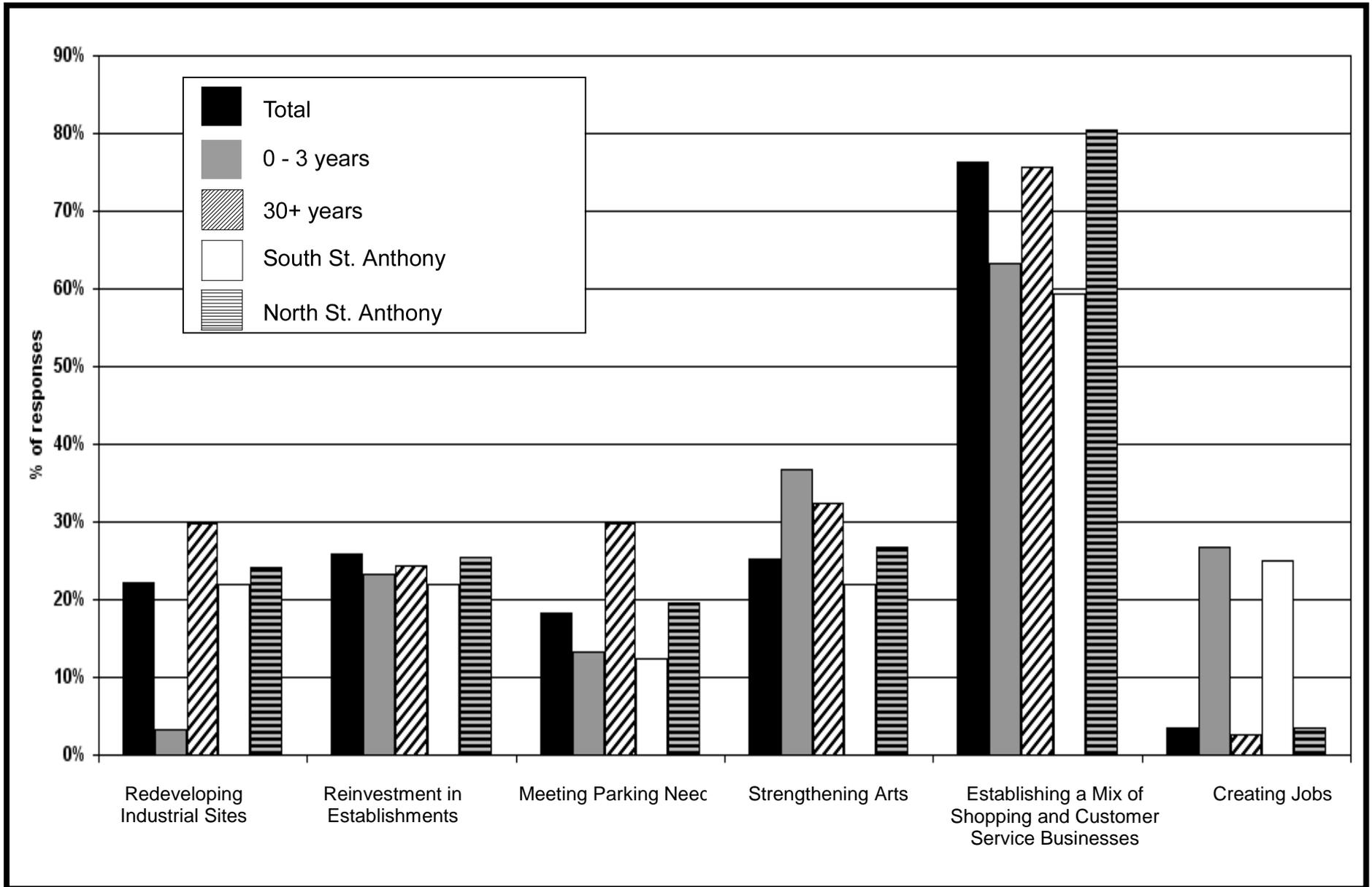
(See Graph 14.) From personal exchanges while conducting oral surveys, it became apparent that South St. Anthony Park residents value the library highly and would like one built in their part of the community. Recreational Centers received second highest response; however, residents who have lived in the St. Anthony Park for more than 30 years chose the post office over recreational centers. The post office has both a functional and symbolic role in the community. It represents the small-town, main-street ambiance that is highly valued by the residents of the area. The public schools are also an asset all groups agree on.

Summary

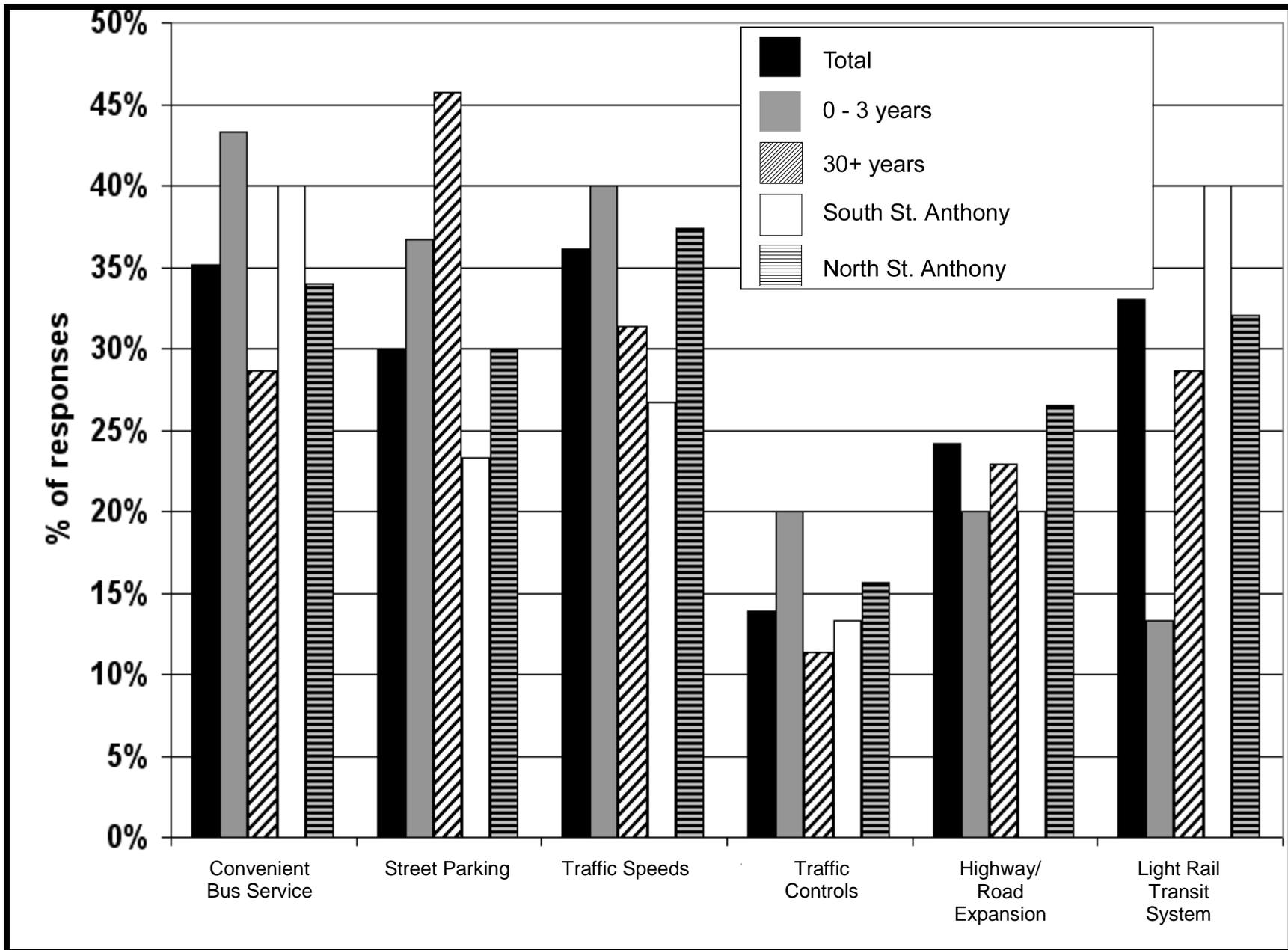
Overall, survey respondents agree on a number of priorities for the community. Here's a summary of the survey results:

- Respondents are proud of their neighborhood.
- Respondents want to retain a diversity of age, income and housing options.
- Respondents want to retain the mix of convenience shopping, commercial services and job opportunities.
- Respondents feel strongly about the importance of supporting neighborhood institutions, especially the library, schools, recreation centers, and post office.
- Respondents are strongly committed to the preservation of green space and the enhancement of the environment.

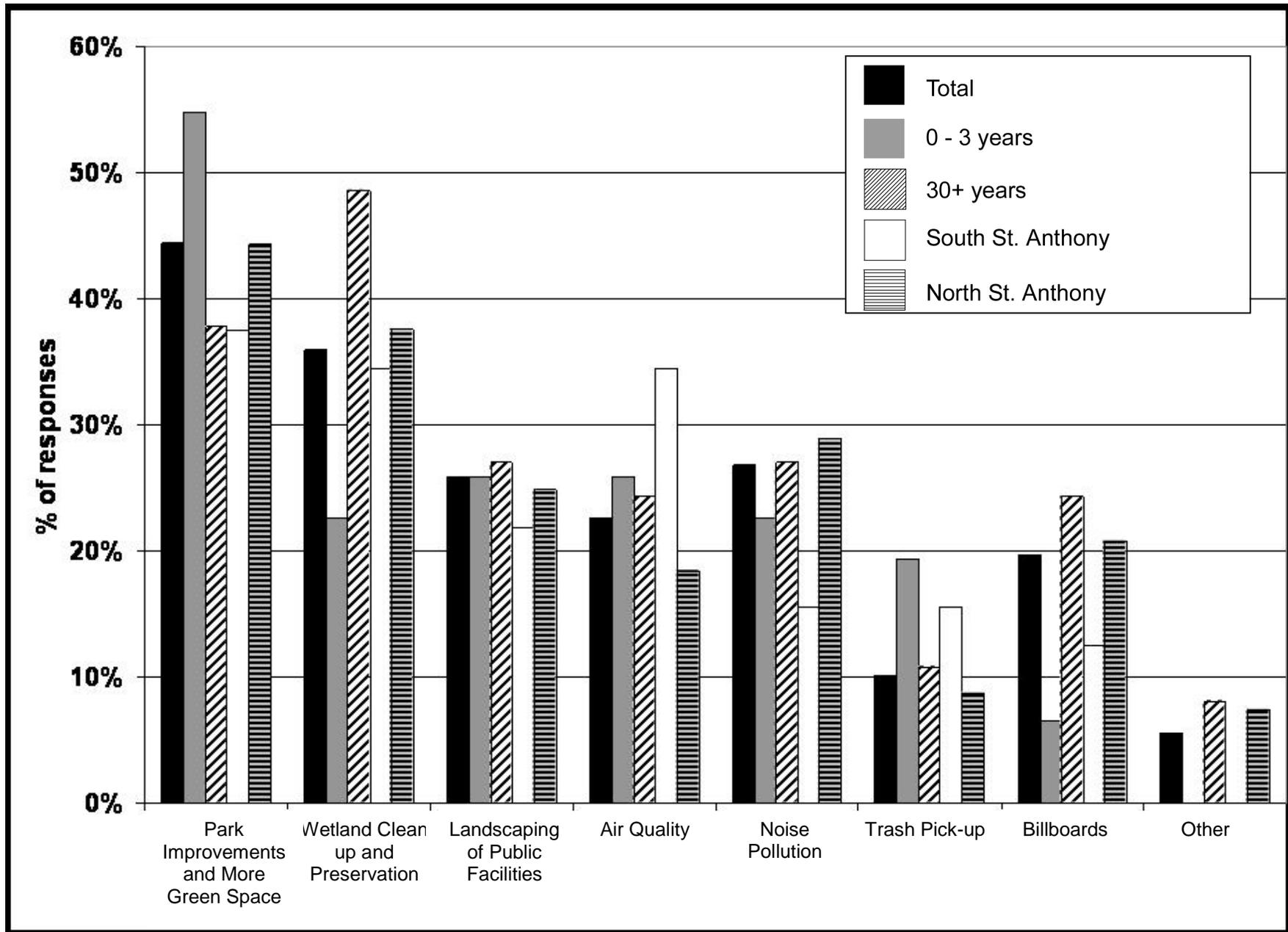
Graph 10: Residential Survey Responses: *Economic Development Concerns*



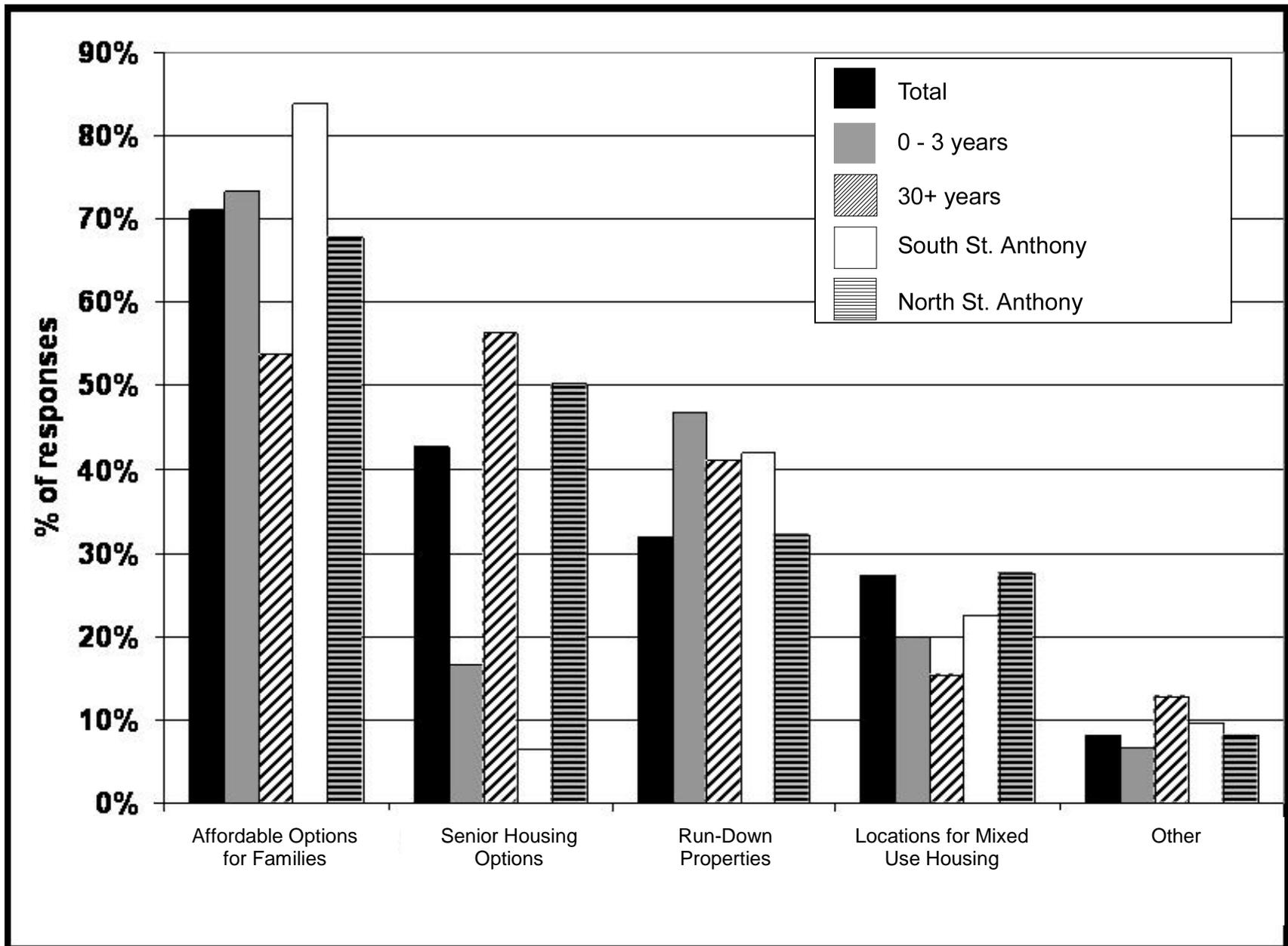
Graph 11: Residential Survey Responses: *Transportation Concerns*



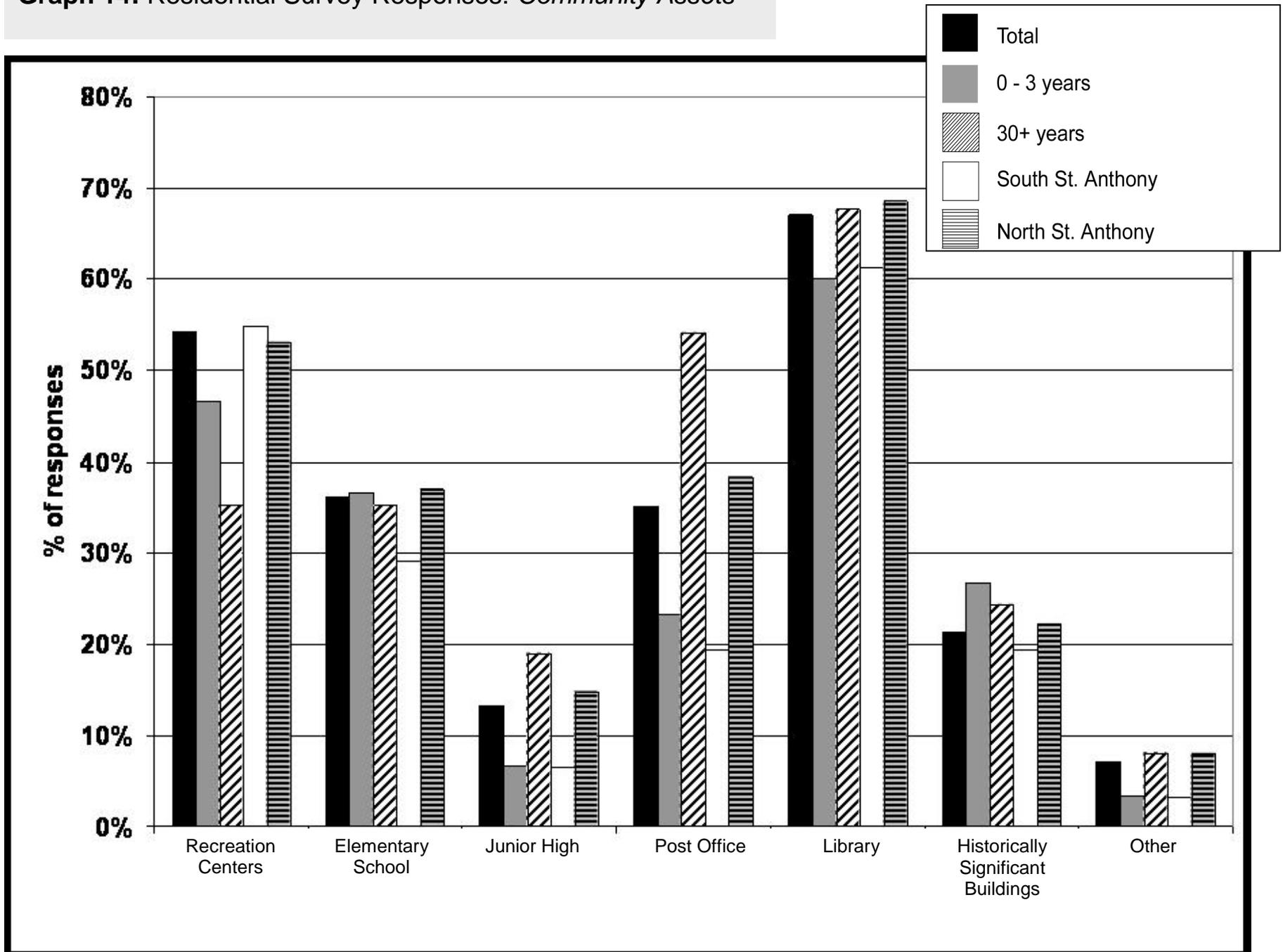
Graph 12: Residential Survey Responses: *Environment Concerns*



Graph 13: Residential Survey Responses: *Housing Concerns*



Graph 14: Residential Survey Responses: *Community Assets*



Community Perspectives: The Business Community

Sixty St. Anthony Park business owners and employees responded to an online survey and the oral survey that was administered by Macalester College students. Note that most of the business community respondents live in St. Anthony Park. In addition, many have lived or have done business in the neighborhood for more than ten years. Of the business respondents, 32 percent feel that St. Anthony Park is a better place in which to live or do business than it was ten years ago; 55 percent feel that it is about the same; and only 4 percent feel that it has gotten worse. (See Graph 15.)

In general, those who believe the area is better cite renovation efforts and the presence of unique businesses and establishments that are individually owned. Most respondents express concern with climbing property taxes and the influx of chain businesses. Further, many see city budget cuts, crime, and traffic (especially along University and Como avenues) as serious potential threats to the neighborhood. In conjunction with these lingering worries is a feeling that St. Anthony Park is losing its sense of “community.” It is no longer the quiet urban village that it used to be.

The survey puts neighborhood concerns into five parts: Economic Development, Transportation, Environment, Housing, and Community Assets. Note that the results are the same for both north and south business communities.

Summary

It is not too surprising to see that the chief concern in the area of economic development is the need to keep the diverse mix of convenience shopping and customer service businesses. Nearly 70 percent of the respondents indicated that this is their primary concern. (See Graph 16.)

Transportation is an interesting topic with a wide dispersion of responses. (See Graph 17.) While the biggest concern is street parking (39 percent), it is closely followed by a call for convenient bus service (35 percent), concern for highway/road expansion (33 percent), and light-rail-transit considerations (also 33 percent).

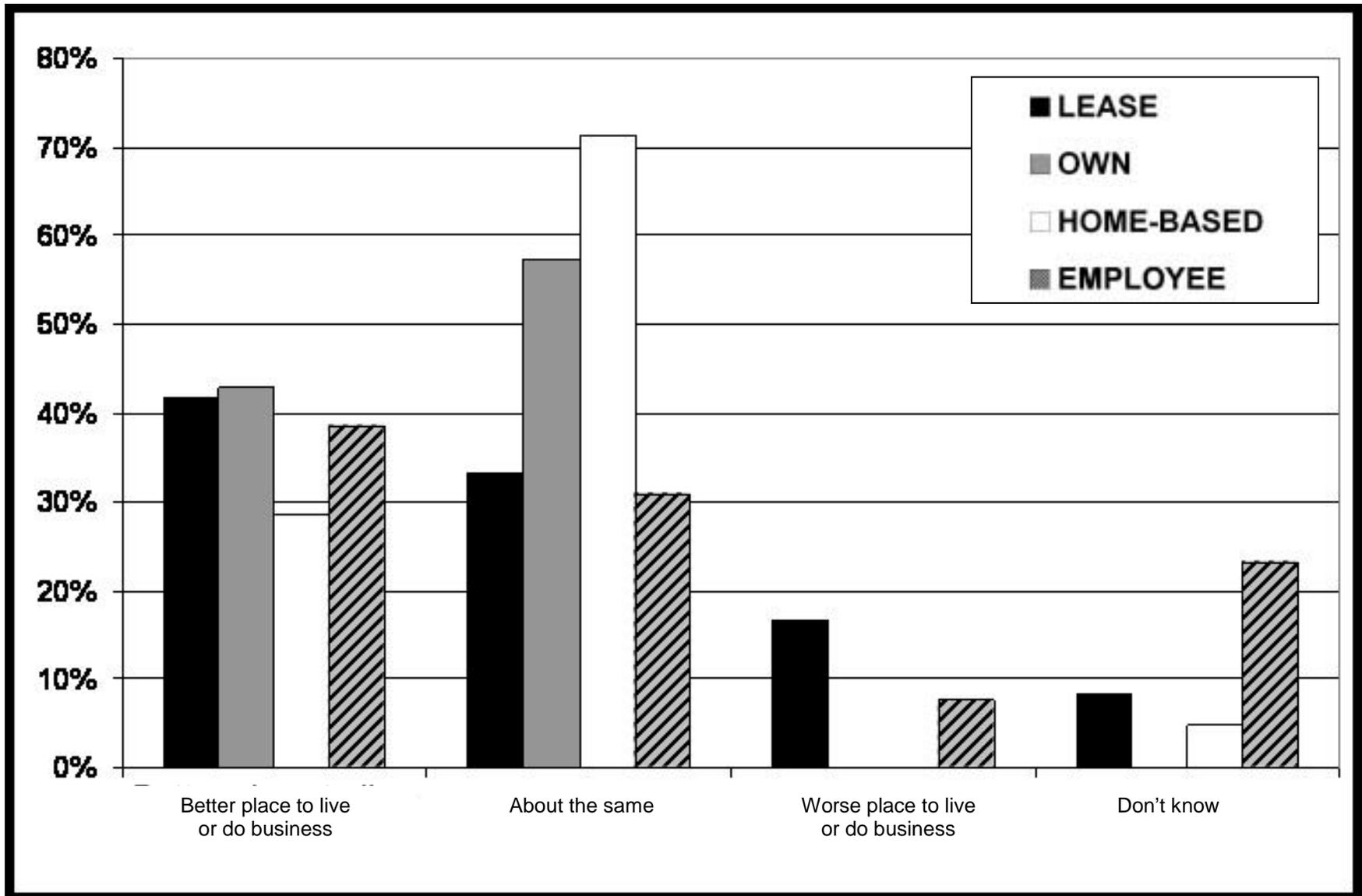
Environmental concerns are more widespread. (See Graph 18.) While 32 percent of respondents are most concerned about wetland cleanup and preservation and 30 percent show concerns for billboards, 28 percent show concern for each of four more options: park improvements and more green space, landscaping of public and semipublic facilities, declining air quality, and increased noise pollution.

Chief among housing concerns (64 percent of the responses) is the need to provide affordable housing options for families with children. A strong concern is also shown for run-down properties (46 percent). (See Graph 19.)

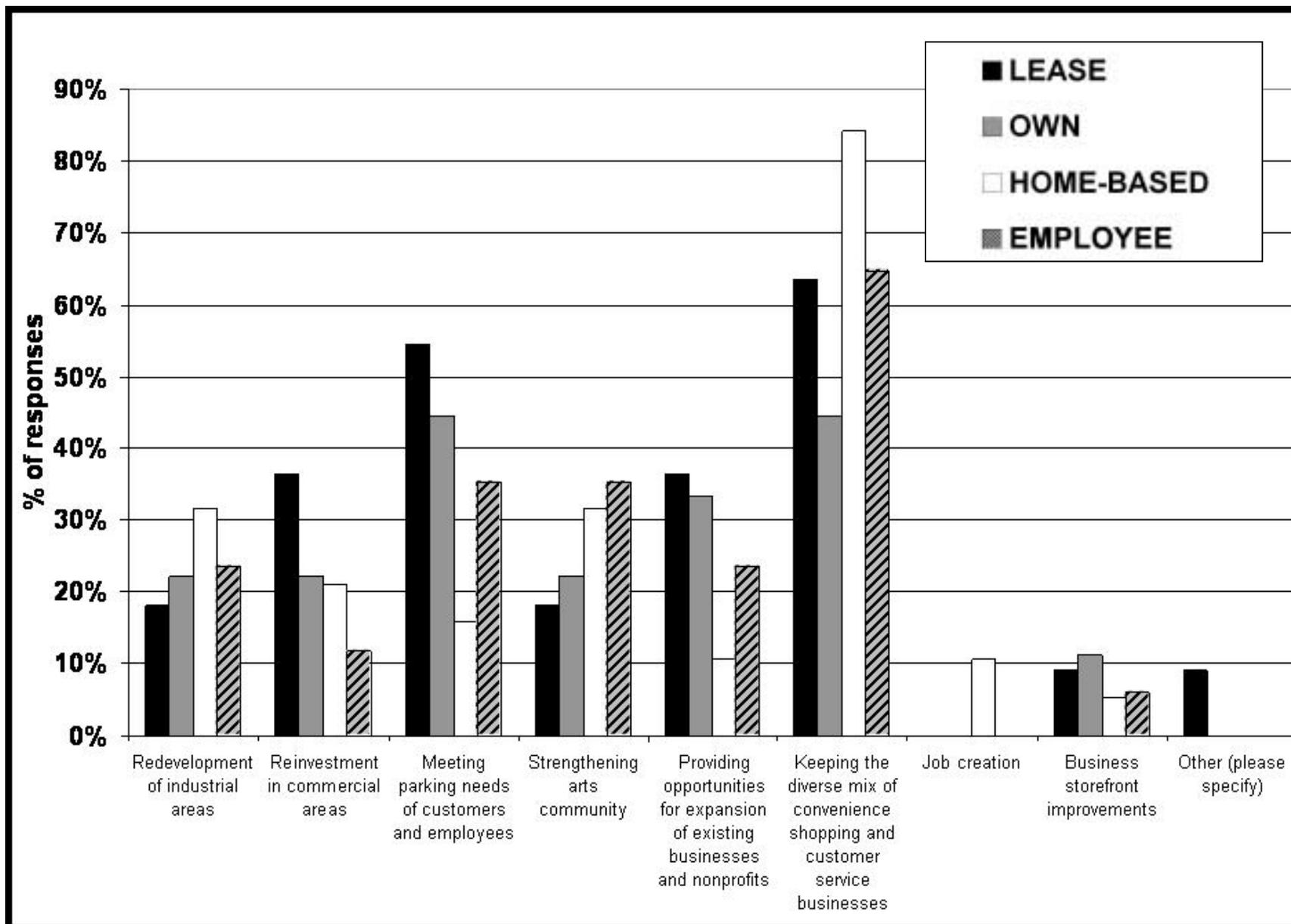
Finally, in regard to community assets, respondents clearly regard the preservation of recreation centers (57 percent)

and the St. Anthony Park Public Library (55 percent) as the most important. (See Graph 20.)

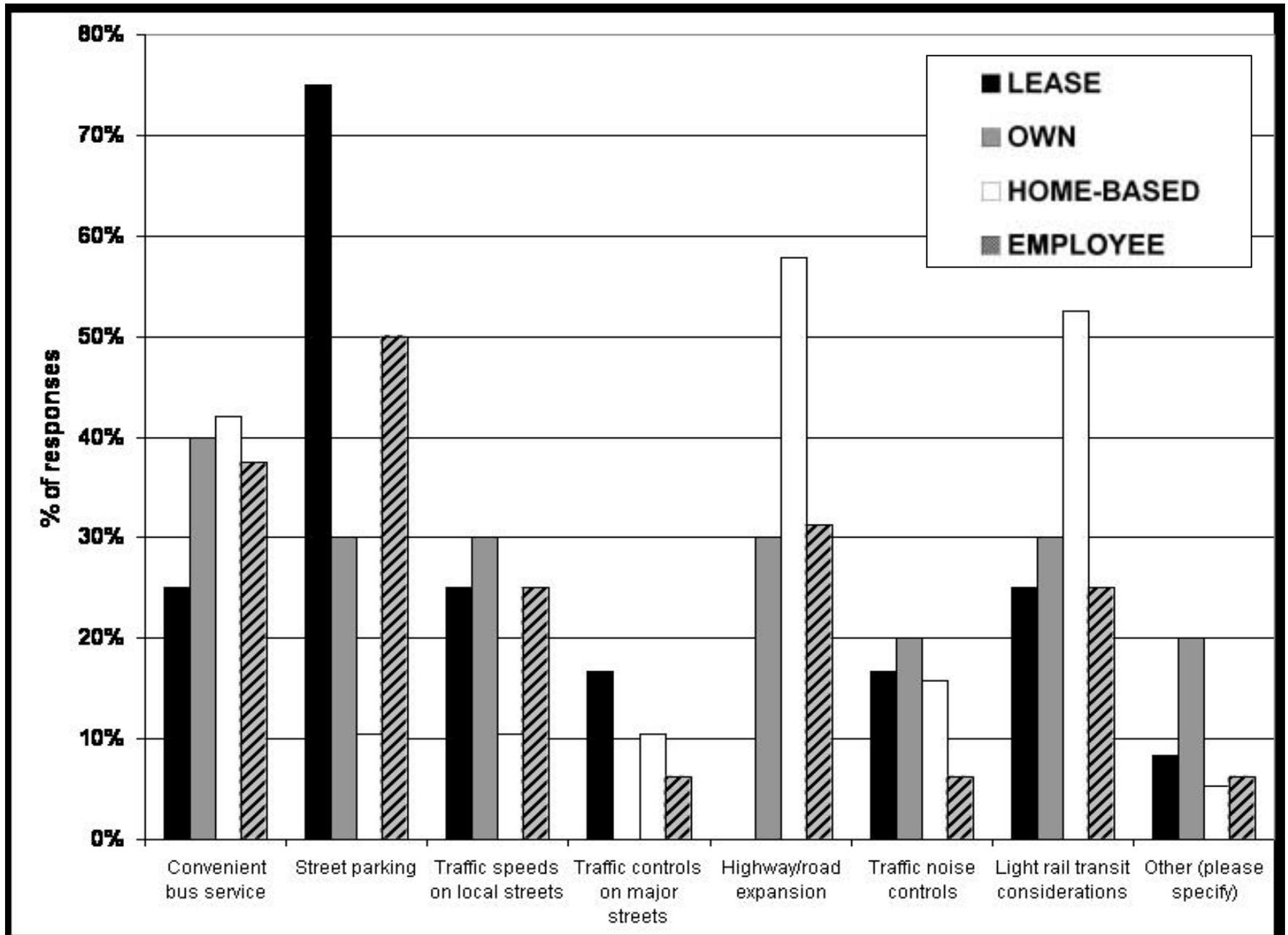
Graph 15: Business Survey Responses: *How Does the Neighborhood Compare to Itself 10 Years Ago?*



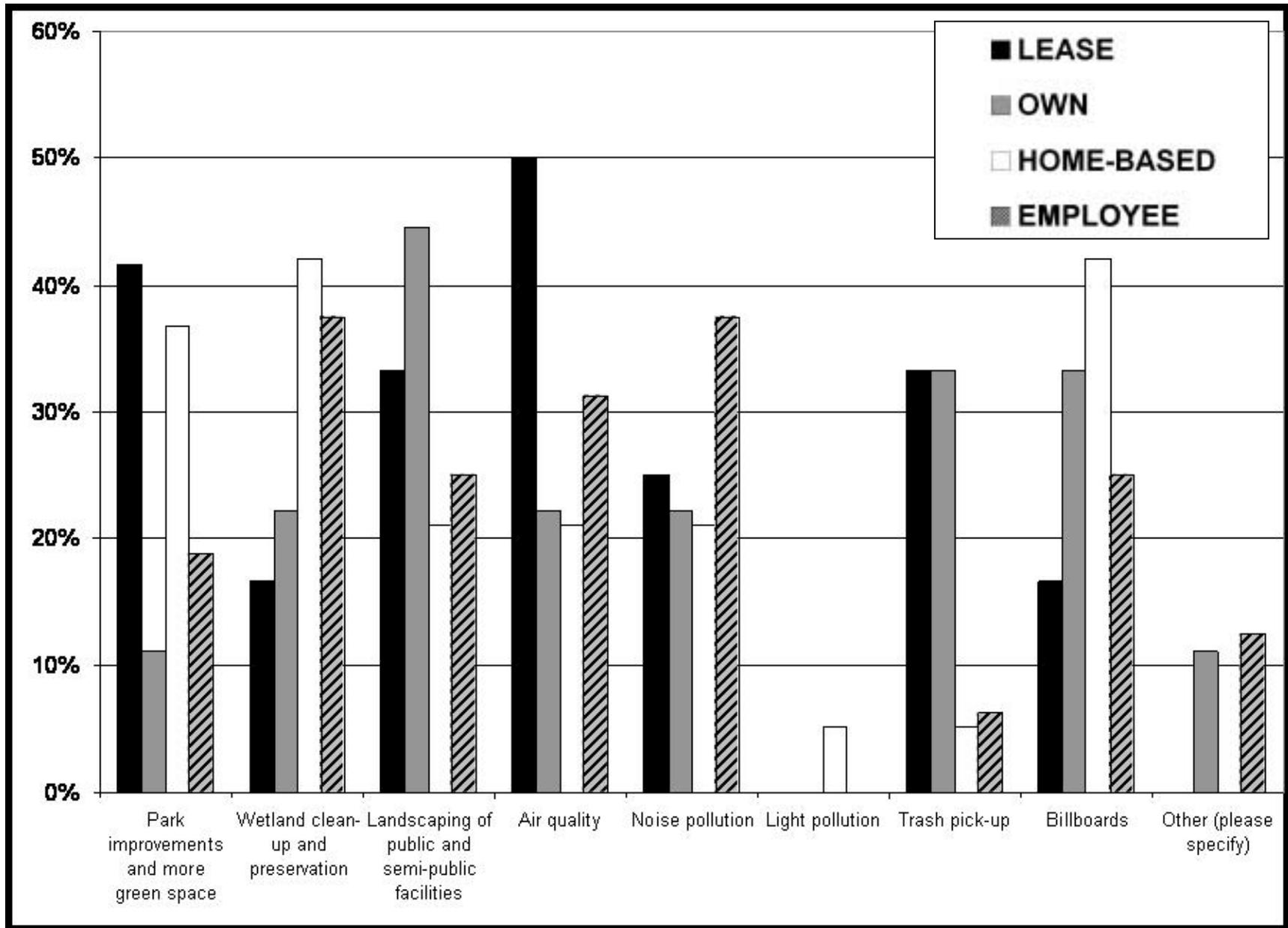
Graph 16: Business Survey Responses: *Economic Development Concerns*



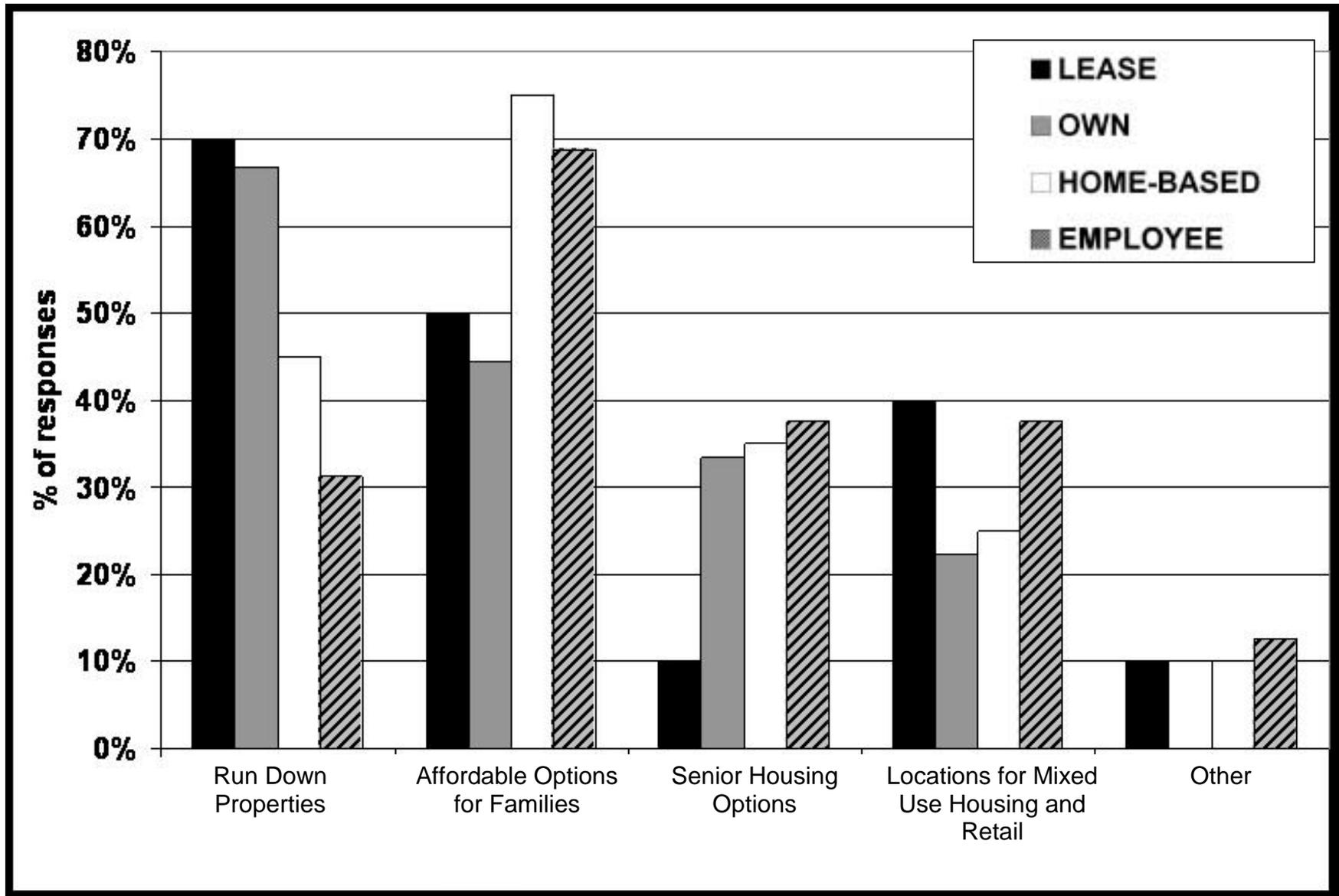
Graph 17: Business Survey Responses: *Transportation Concerns*



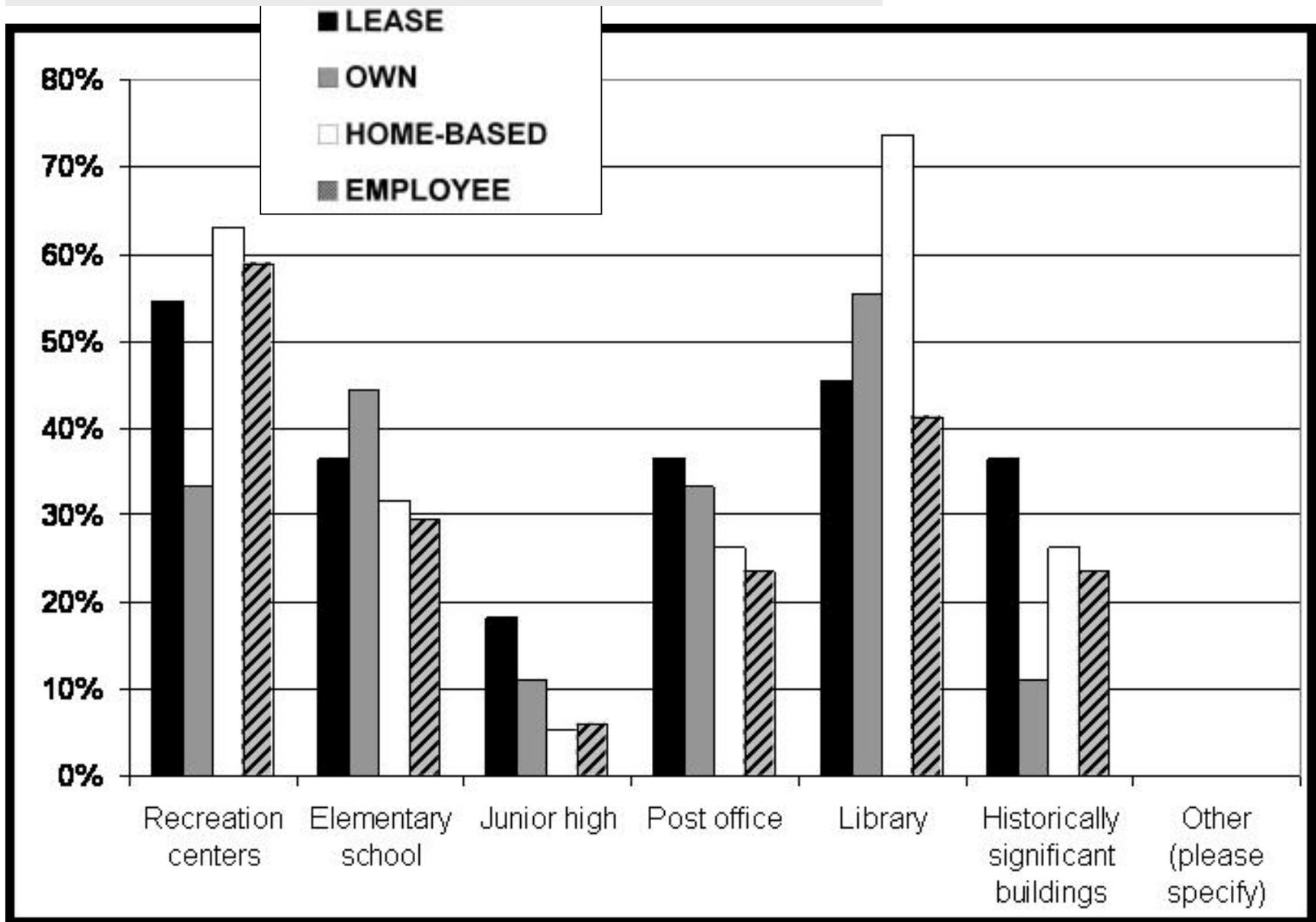
Graph 18: Business Survey Responses: *Environmental Concerns*



Graph 19: Business Survey Responses: *Housing Concerns*



Graph 20: Business Survey Responses: *Community Assets*



Other Perspectives: Challenges for the Community

Statements from Area Stakeholder Representatives

In addition to the survey feedback, representatives from four major stakeholder groups were selected to give a report on the opportunities and challenges facing the community from the perspective of their group. Their comments are printed below.

A Business Perspective

by Ellen Watters, St. Paul Chamber of Commerce
Lori Fritts, Midway Chamber of Commerce
Steve Wellington, Wellington Management Inc.

There are a number of factors to consider when thinking about the state of our business environment.

First, there is and has been underutilized property in and around our area. This is in part due to the changes in global economy and the difficulty of expanding in a developed area. Competition from overseas has led to a decline in manufacturing jobs and a transition to larger warehouse facilities. Expansion is necessary to stay

competitive, but often the advantages of a central location—providing the space to expand exists—are outweighed by the cost of teardown, site cleanup, and/or refitting existing structures. Such costs are not included when relocating to undeveloped land in suburban locations.

Another consideration is that redevelopment plans in Roseville and in the southeastern portions of Minneapolis envision large-scale conversion of areas traditionally dominated by trucking and railroad use toward office and housing uses. This means that many "low-end" industrial users are being displaced nearby. There is a lot of pressure from these companies to relocate in the District 12 area. The goal is to better utilize commercial property without adopting guidelines that would prevent exciting opportunities such as the biotech incubator project.

We are also concerned with the trend of retailers moving to large regional centers. It becomes harder and harder for many small independent businesses to find that perfect niche which satisfies the neighborhood needs while competing with megastores for customers from outside this relatively small geographic area.

The challenge, then, is to preserve our current businesses and the jobs attached to them while making the area as attractive as possible to the developers who have the ability to initiate projects desirable to the community, such as office, retail, or housing uses.

There is a lot of positive energy in the business sector driven by the ongoing focus paid to this community as an important central corridor by the governor and the mayors of both St. Paul and Minneapolis. Partnering with the University of Minnesota and private industry to locate a

major biotech development in this area could add as many as 2,000 workers to the commercial mix. Mayor Randy Kelly has also spurred developers' interest by encouraging the construction of 5,000 housing units for students and workers along University Avenue. The soon-to-be-completed Emerald Gardens and Episcopalian Homes projects are first steps in what could eventually be a significant increase in housing in the area. That increase could also be affected if and when light rail transit ever becomes a viable transportation option for University Avenue.

A City Hall Perspective

By Jay Benanav
Ward 4 City Council Member

Property Taxes

Property taxes are a mixed bag for St. Anthony Park, one of the highest-taxed areas in St. Paul, yet an area that values high-quality public services, such as parks, recreation centers, libraries, well-maintained roads, good public safety, and high-quality public education. The burden of property taxes on elderly residents and low-income families is also top-of-mind for progressive-minded citizens like those in St. Anthony Park.

It will be incumbent on St. Anthony Park to engage in this important debate on local taxes when the City Council considers the 2004 budget this summer and fall.

Private Fundraising

St. Anthony Park has shown enormous initiative in funding otherwise public-service enhancements: the library restoration, College Park tennis courts, the Community Garden, and now stepping up to consider how to save South St. Anthony Park Recreation Center. We need to be concerned about the city becoming too reliant on this approach in St. Anthony Park.

The St. Anthony Park Community Foundation has rightly broached this question, and I share concern that St. Anthony Park not inadvertently take over funding improvements that your tax dollars should cover.

Housing 5000

The mayor's ambitious housing development goals are good for St. Anthony Park, from the standpoint of developing nontraditional sites like 808 Berry and Emerald Gardens. These are new communities in old industrial areas, which is a great way to build the tax base and avoid relinquishing the land to potential industrial polluters.

At the same time, St. Anthony Park should ask the city to bring much-needed, medium-density, empty-nester housing in the form of townhouses and condominiums, as well as independent- and assisted-living options for seniors. We know St. Anthony Parkers are exceedingly loyal to this community and want to stay here when they downsize from their family-sized homes.

St. Anthony Park should be proactive about planning its future housing development, so that it is not saddled with development ideas brought in from outside that don't meet community goals.

Planning

The city is no longer adequately funding planning. The fact that St. Anthony Park is willing to pay for its long-range planning and is writing its chapter for the city's Comprehensive Plan is a good thing, but may represent a dangerous trend if the city abandons this vital function. In order for the city to play a role in the preservation and sensible development of neighborhoods such as St. Anthony Park, we need to fund a planning division and staff able to set a road map for the next decade. We reached the end of that road map in the mid-1990s. It's time to fund planning again.

Long-term City Issues

Privatization of city services is going to be considered by the City Council. As you know, I do not support this

because of the risk of creating private monopolies to deliver services that ultimately are not accountable to the public sector.

Economic development proposals will be a major topic of debate. These include the university/business biotech corridor and sports stadium that are being discussed for sites near the University of Minnesota.

Environmental issues include preserving Kasota Pond. Billboards are another issue. The current parks sponsorship proposal could be the slippery slope for signage in our parks.

On the issue of public safety, we've seen in the mayor's targeting of Engine 20, that when public safety services need to be cut, they'll be proposed first in the low-crime neighborhoods at the outer edges of the city. This is the way to make them higher-crime neighborhoods.

A Neighborhood School Perspective

by Barry Nielsen
Co-Chair, St. Anthony Park Elementary School Site Council

The Site Council is made up of parents, community members, and school staff. Primary responsibilities are to advise the principal on the school budget and continuous improvement plan.

Profile

Great school; professional, respected staff; committed, involved parents; great group of students.

Number of students—435

Number of languages spoken—17

Average Class size All-day kindergarten—24.0

Average Class size 1/2-day Kindergarten—17.00

Average Class size 1–3—25.70

Average Class size 4–6—27.60

Number of students enrolled for more than 160 days—93%

Challenges

St. Anthony Park Elementary is a neighborhood school that depends on attracting about half of its students from outside the boundaries of District 12. The past years have seen an increase in competition from magnet, charter, private, and parochial schools; increasing costs at district level; and declining enrollment. The formula for funding public schools is based on the number of students and their needs. Therefore, the main challenge for St. Anthony Park Elementary is to maintain a quality program with high expectations for excellence in both academics and the arts while facing declining public funding. We wrestle with tough budget decisions annually—trying to do more, or at least the same, with less. We are fortunate to have received grants from the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation and donations from private individuals that have allowed us to minimize the net effect of declining public funding.



St. Anthony Park Elementary School

A Nonprofit Funding Perspective

by Julie Causey
Vice Chair, Western Bank

This year will be a challenging year for nonprofits. They are being asked to do more because the needs are greater in a tight economy. And they have to do it with less money and less personnel. Nonprofits are experiencing state and federal cuts, and grants that are smaller than in former years. Foundations that have relied on higher interest and investment income aren't seeing the same returns.

On a positive note, Minnesota has a proud heritage of volunteers. We continue to invest time and energy in volunteer efforts. This community leadership, such as we

see in St. Anthony Park, helps to ease the disparity between the resources available and the services provided by our nonprofit organizations.

It is imperative that in this time of need we understand that the cuts that are made today in many cases will result in higher costs in years to come. Andy Boss and I met this morning with Ramsey County Commissioner Susan Haig on behalf of a nonprofit called People Incorporated, where we both volunteer. This organization services adults with mental illness through 28 programs throughout the metro area. Ramsey County has cut the People Incorporated funding by 30 percent, although the overall Ramsey County budget was cut by 4 percent. Adults who suffer from mental illness who services have been dramatically cut or eliminated will likely need more services—and more expensive services—in the years to come than they would have if they had received ongoing care. We will see them in increasing numbers in our court system and in our health care system.

We must all work together to maintain the financial and political support for our nonprofits that allows them to do their important work. We must work together to help when funding levels are inadequate. We must be there with our financial support and our volunteer efforts so that years of effort in support of our most needy citizens are not erased in a single budget cycle.

Strong communities, good communication, and a team effort will help to ease this pain.

Small Group Feedback

Finally, immediately after the May 6 presentation of the profile findings, the audience of around 130 community members, was asked to divide up into small groups to discuss their preliminary reactions to the report findings.

Each group offered three to four concerns to be addressed by any neighborhood plan. Then, as the audience members left the forum, they were asked to vote for the one item out of the total list of concerns they thought should receive the highest priority. The complete list of concerns with vote totals appears in the appendix, but the following concerns received the most votes.

Importance of maintaining:

- A healthy mix of “walk-able” services and businesses.
- Educational choice and quality in neighborhood schools.
- A variety of housing options for young families, single persons, and the aging population.
- Support for our aging population.

- A sense of community through our cultural, social, and religious institutions.
- Unity of design in redevelopment projects.
- Community spaces like the library and parks.

Summary

The results of the business survey mirror the feedback of the residents. Both groups are concerned with maintaining the diverse mix of retail businesses, overcoming street parking problems, providing affordable housing options, and preserving institutional and environmental amenities. This shared vision of community priorities predicts continued success in shaping the future of St. Anthony Park/District 12.

Conclusion

For the past 125 years, St. Anthony Park has been one of the premier neighborhoods in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Like Crocus Hill in St. Paul and Kenwood and the lakes area in Minneapolis, St. Anthony Park has attracted individuals and families that treasure distinctive older homes, a walkable neighborhood, and green space, all within easy driving distance of important city and suburban destinations.

When measured by current and traditional quantitative “indicators” of neighborhood health, St. Anthony Park and the District 12 area show important strengths that will serve this community well in the future.

- Population growth is relatively stable and will increase with new high-density developments in the south end of the district.
- There is diverse housing stock that is well maintained and valued.
- The central location and potential of the biotech industry should drive healthy commercial redevelopment.
- Household income remains above city averages, and

- A strong set of public, nonprofit, and private institutions that give some unique characteristics and provide stabilizing influences.

Reinforced by feedback from the neighborhood survey and community forum, the qualitative indicators show that residents of St. Anthony Park enjoy their diverse mix of housing, incomes, occupations, and cultures. They support their cherished institutions with time and money; they create and sustain organizations that provide help to the young and old; they fight to maintain their fragile urban eco-system against encroachment; and they are firmly committed to ensuring that the arts play an important role in the life of the community.

These values are the heritage handed down by generations of residents who created the strong social, economic, and environmental foundation that continues to propel the growth of this successful community. Those stone walls, fireplaces, and foundations that provide the architectural underpinnings of the neighborhood really do symbolize the commitment to place felt by residents throughout its history. In a culture where on average more than 20 percent of families move each year, it’s common in St. Anthony Park to find two- and even three-generation families.

Foundations for a Revised Community Plan

Viewed against this backdrop of tangible and intangible assets, St. Anthony Park’s future success would seem ensured, but residents have always been aware of the outside pressures apparent in its geographic location. Residents expressed their faith in the neighborhood and thoughts about its future through the residential survey, focus groups, and neighborhood forum. The combination of quantitative analysis and community feedback clearly

indicates several community values and contexts upon which a new plan can be based.

1. Plans and programs should focus on continuing to build the demonstrated confidence of property owners who make significant private reinvestment in the local housing and commercial markets over the last five years.
2. Ways should be found to influence the public budgeting processes so that St. Anthony Park can maintain strong community institutions such as its schools, library, post office, parks, music and arts organizations, recreation centers, and open spaces. These institutions serve as social gathering places and strengthen the commitment to place.
3. Because residents of the Park value its diversity, plans should be developed to guard the “small town, close knit” atmosphere of the district and ensure it can provide homes for people of all ages and incomes, especially families with young children and seniors.
4. The community should work with the city and private developers to promote investing in the older industrial/commercial areas to create a broader mix of uses at higher densities and generate a stronger tax base.
5. Residents want to find ways to strengthen the special niche of the North and South St. Anthony commercial and retail businesses. Residents value the mix of convenience shopping and specialty businesses that characterize the district, and make it

especially attractive to households that have a wide choice in where they live and invest.

6. New plans are needed to address traffic and parking problems and to make future transit investments that are compatible with the goal of creating an urban village along University Avenue.
7. The greatest opportunity for enhancing the community spirit and vitality will also be a significant challenge. The new housing developments in South St. Anthony will attract a wide range of people who may not understand the special history of St. Anthony Park. Plans must be made that will cause these new residents to identify with St. Anthony Park and not their immediate neighbor, Prospect Park.

The tradition of civic engagement that has characterized St. Anthony Park for the past century will enable the community to clarify its positions on these issues and develop workable action plans. Based on the community’s strong foundation, residents should be able to develop a neighborhood that will be a model for urban development everywhere.

A common vision and values is a key ingredient to any successful neighborhood. Together with the positive quantitative measurements of neighborhood health, they paint an encouraging picture for this unique community. The findings in this report should reinforce the high level of confidence community members have in the future of St. Anthony Park and the entire District 12 area. There is no doubt that, with sensitive planning, this community can meet the challenge of managing its assets and continue to enhance its quality of life.

Credits

Adrienne Hannert, Gina Nicholas, and Jessica Wineberg, Chapter 9

Nicholas Kraemer and Ivan London, Chapter 10

Adrienne Hannert, photographs on pages 2, 7, and 24

Gina Nicholas, photographs on pages 10 and 11

All other photographs were taken by James Hamilton.

All maps and graphs were created by James Hamilton using data provided by Ramsey County, the city of St. Paul, and U.S. Census data and the Macalester College Geography Department Cartography and GIS Lab funded in part by NSF ILI-IP Grant DUE-975 1308.

Judith Peacock and Kristal Leebrick, additional editing and layout assistance