

## **Transportation & the Accessible Location of Payne-Arcade Businesses**

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Transportation to, from and within the Payne-Arcade business district is an important factor in the local economy. Any strategy for improving the community must necessarily include proposals for better access to the business district from surrounding areas, as well as improved options for traveling within and to the East Side from neighboring areas. Ultimately the most important reason to analyze the transportation system is to identify existing assets and problems, including those that contradict current attitudes about transportation issues.

### **Existing Transportation Network**

The Payne-Arcade business district enjoys easy car access for incoming customers. Maryland Avenue provides a direct link to Interstate 35E, which shortens travel time to Payne-Arcade from northern suburbs such as Maplewood. Arcade Street, a U.S. Highway, also provides easy access from the north. Arterial streets (East 7th Street and Mary-

land) connect the district to Downtown St. Paul and neighborhoods east and west.

### **Transit Range of the Payne-Arcade Business District**

Customers of the district can also take advantage of the excellent bus system which provides service along Payne and Arcade in the core business areas of both streets. Without transferring between buses, shoppers can arrive from many parts of northeastern St. Paul and the suburb of Maplewood. Payne-Arcade buses connect to other routes in Downtown St. Paul, allowing people from more distant neighborhoods access to the area (see map next page).

The Metropolitan Transit range is important because it identifies consumers in other residential markets in and around St. Paul who are potential customers of businesses on Payne-Arcade because of their location near transit routes which provide relatively easy access to the district. Additionally, the map tells us which competing areas are accessible to East Side residents. Convenient trans-

it access is as important as convenient auto access to Payne-Arcade businesses, especially considering the demographics and transportation options of local residents.

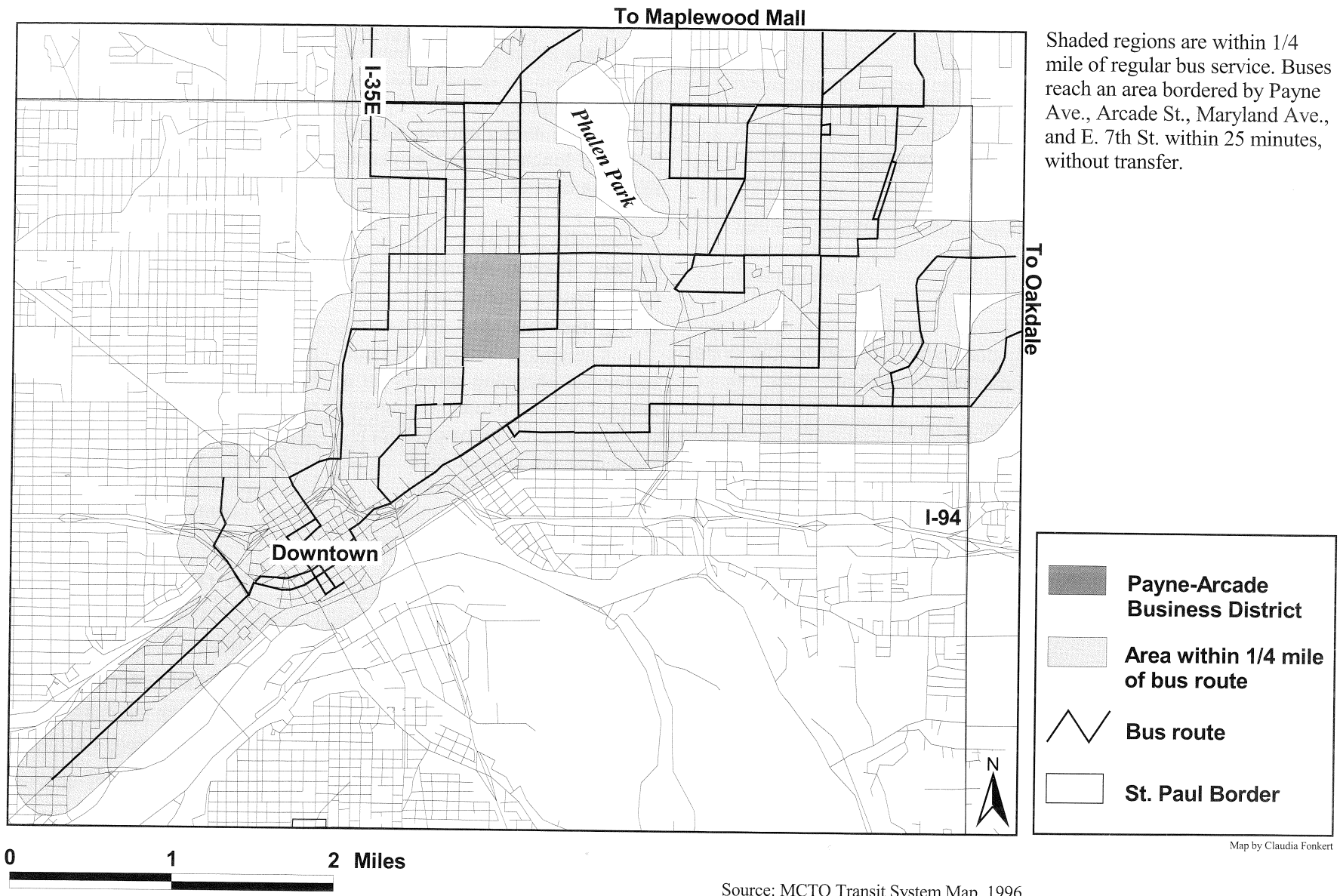
### **Removing Barriers to Accessibility**

The East Side community, particularly the residential area immediately west of Payne Avenue and south of Maryland Avenue has a much lower rate of car ownership than the metropolitan average. Within a one-mile radius from the East Side Neighborhood Development Corporation offices at the intersection of Payne and York (the one-mile market zone), 26 percent of all households have no access to a car (Source: 1990 Census, data prepared by Ken Meter, Metropolitan State University, 1996). Census data regarding commute time and method of transportation, taken from this one-mile market zone, reflect the low percentage of automobile ownership. Five percent of the local population walks to work, while 13.5 percent commute by bus and over four percent work at home (1990 Census). This information is significant because it implies that a large share of the customers and potential customers within the trade area do not, or

would not use on street or off-street parking while shopping Payne and Arcade.

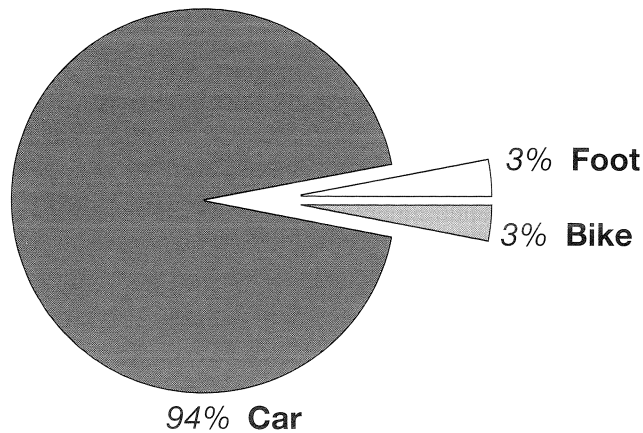
This data from the 1990 census reveals that the Payne-Arcade business district is in the midst of a population which is ideally suited to transit oriented development. Businesses should focus on making the district more attractive to them as well as those who arrive by automobile. Although some Payne-Arcade customers that arrived by automobile mention parking as a problem, it is not apparent that there is a shortage of on-street parking in the district. Customers' difficulties with parking may be explained by other factors such as the perception that the public space on Payne and Arcade is unsafe. Customers may not want to walk to businesses from parking spaces up and down the street because of this fear of crime. In order to make the district more attractive to both segments of customers, efforts should be focused on changing negative perceptions of public space in the Payne-Arcade business district. If this is done, more people would take advantage of the districts' convenient and easily accessible location.

# Bus Accessibility

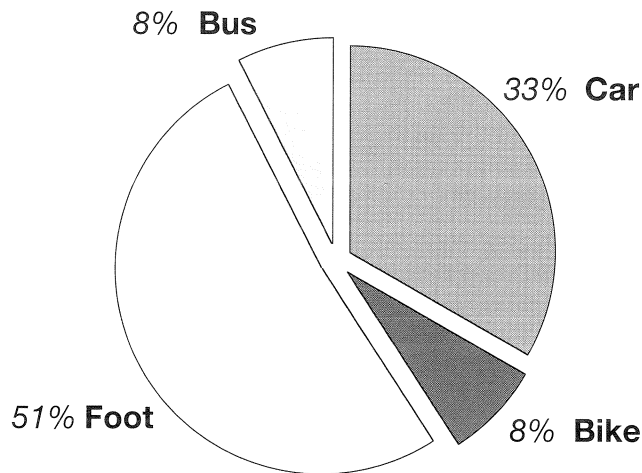


Source: MCTO Transit System Map, 1996.

*Mode of Transportation used by customers to get to medium and high order businesses in Payne-Arcade business district*



*Mode of Transportation used by customers to get to low order businesses in Payne-Arcade business district*



trict would benefit from the added vitality and larger number of customers that could be drawn.

New restaurants and a bakery/coffee shop would complement most existing businesses on Payne Avenue and Arcade Street. These businesses could enhance the appeal of the district as a shopping destination by providing more dining options for the lucrative lunchtime and weekend shopping crowds.

**Competing Areas:  
Where Payne-Arcade  
Customers Shop for  
Other Goods**

Knowledge of Payne-Arcade customers' shopping patterns for a range of goods is particularly important because great potential exists for expanding the amount spent in the district by current customers.

The clear pattern in the clothing sector is that most spending occurs in the retail nodes of suburban shopping malls and downtown St. Paul, while only nine percent surveyed shop at local retailers Donald's and St. Vincent de Paul. The small percentage of expenditures on clothing captured by the local Payne-Arcade business district, combined with the high demand for discount clothing suggests that there is a particularly large gap between the market distribution of clothing retailers and the needs of local residents.

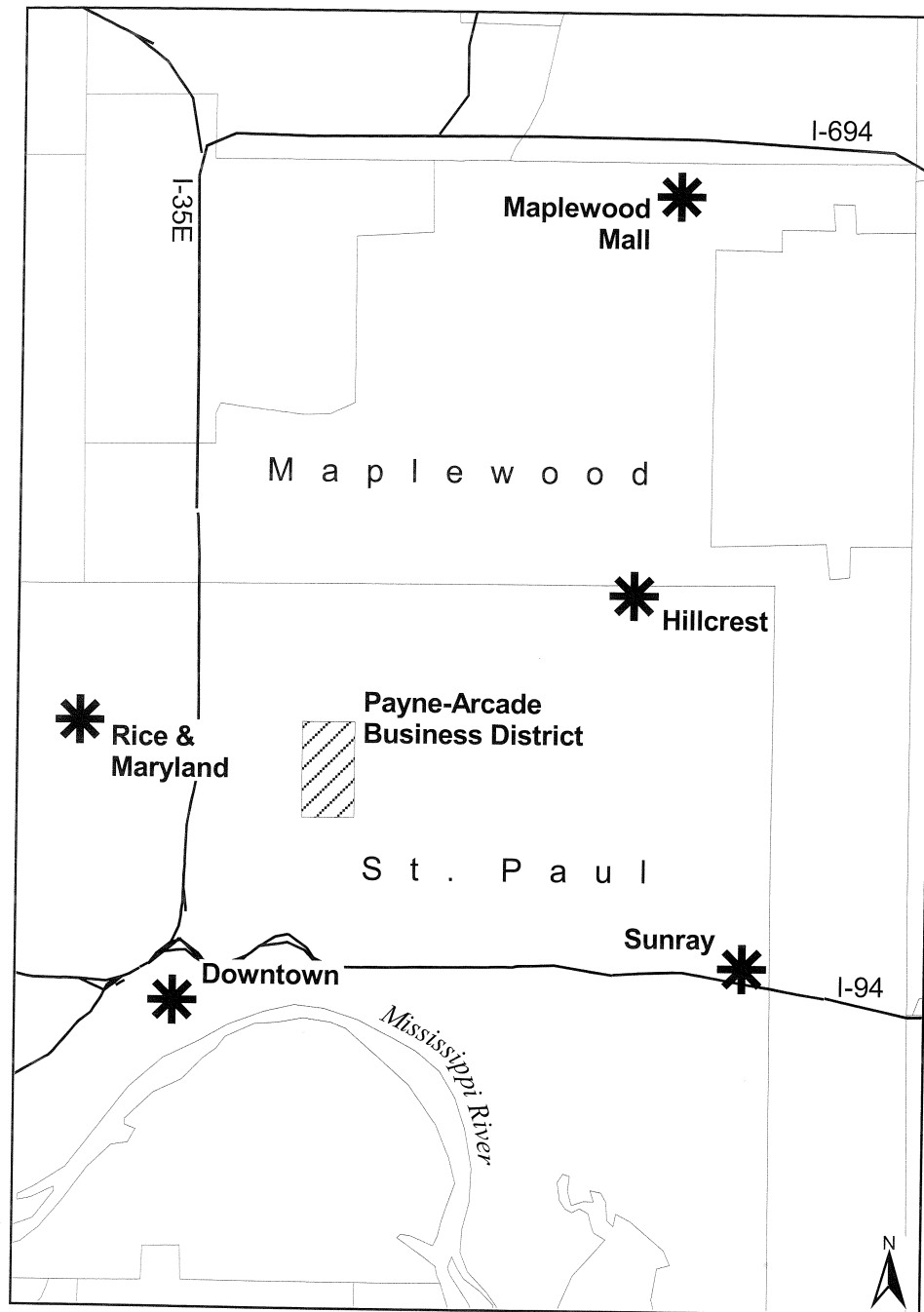
For groceries (52 percent), and hardware (60 percent) a larger share of respondents mention shopping at businesses within the Payne-Arcade district, but still a great deal of money is spent at suburban stores.

**Local Wealth Spent  
Elsewhere: Shopping  
Patterns of Johnson High  
Students**

While the surveys of shoppers in the Payne-Arcade district reveal where existing customers shop for different goods and services, we turned to students at Johnson High School to learn where young residents of the East Side shop. Four hundred-forty students, all residents of the East Side, were polled on where they shop for different products, specifically focusing on clothing, shoes and music. According to survey results, the students rarely

***The responses of  
Johnson students  
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customers.***

# Potential Competing Business Clusters



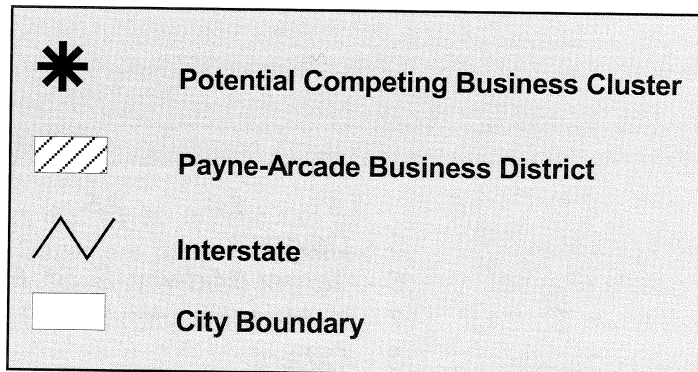
Each cluster contains a mix of goods and services similar to or larger than those offered in the Payne-Arcade district. Each has the potential to attract customers from the immediate neighborhood and beyond.

This map includes only those clusters in the Payne-Arcade trade area (as determined by customer ZIP code mapping).

**Notes:**

Several shopping clusters are located along White Bear Avenue south of Maplewood Mall. These are not marked separately on the map.

The cluster at Sunray includes a half-mile strip of shops along Suburban Avenue between Ruth Street and White Bear Avenue.



Map by Claudia Fonkert

Source: Yellow Pages, White Pages, 1997

patronize the retail shops in the Payne-Arcade business district.

The students reflect the same general trends of suburban shopping demonstrated by the surveys of East Side customers. Nearly 40 percent shop for clothing at suburban malls. The Maplewood Mall is the largest draw, capturing 44 percent of the student market in the clothing sector. Most notably, of the top ten clothing stores listed, none are located on the East Side.

For shoes, Foot Locker had the highest response with 24 percent (118 students). While the majority of students named specific stores (i.e. Foot Locker, Just for Feet, etc.), others simply recognized a nearby mall as their shoe-shopping headquarters. Maplewood Mall and Mall of America were tied for second place with 16 percent (78 students) of the responses. Again, these results establish that although many students live in the Payne-Arcade area, they spend

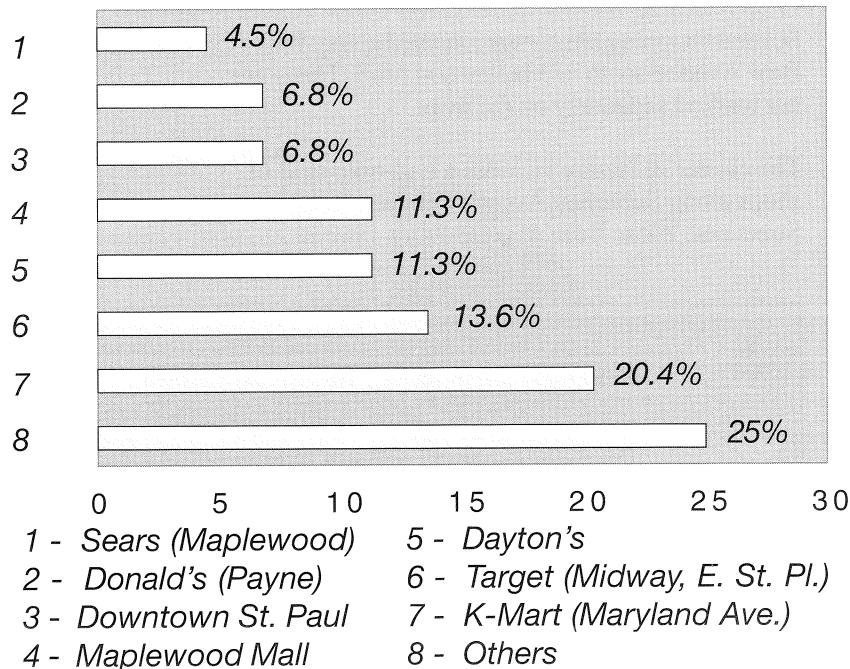
their money in surrounding areas.

For music purchases, 35 percent (143 students) of the students surveyed shop at Sam Goody. Target came in second place with 17 percent (68 students) and Best Buy in third with 14 percent (57 students). These results portray a clearly evident pattern that Johnson High School students are flocking to suburban shopping malls instead of supporting local East Side businesses.

groups of consumers; those who live in the district and shop the local stores because they are convenient, and those who come to Payne and Arcade from surrounding areas because of their historical ties to the neighborhood.

The main asset of the Payne-Arcade Business district is its location within an underserved population which is in large part dependent on non-automobile means of transportation (see transportation section). Brand-name retailers and chains have passed over the local market and East Side businesses have survived by meeting the basic demands of nearby residents. Limited in their mobility, many East Side residents shop at Payne Arcade businesses be-

### Where Payne-Arcade Customers Shop for Clothing



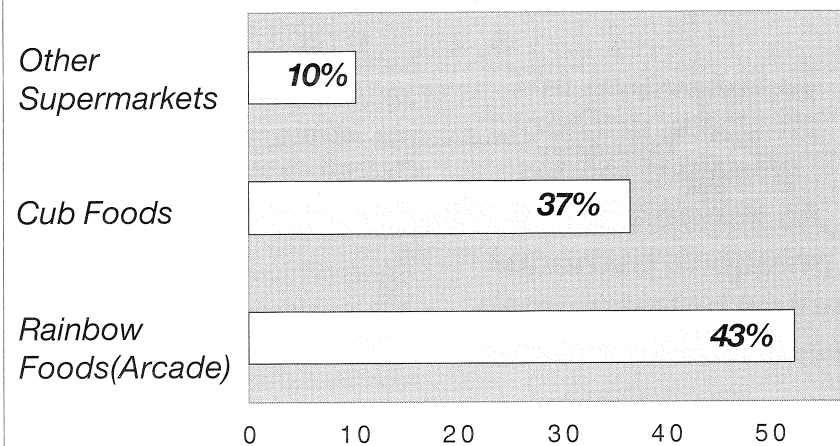
Source: Customer Survey - see appendix 2

## Customer Perspectives:

### Assets of Payne-Arcade

Responses to the customer survey suggest that there are two major

### Where Payne-Arcade Customers Shop for Groceries



Source: Customer Survey - see appendix 2

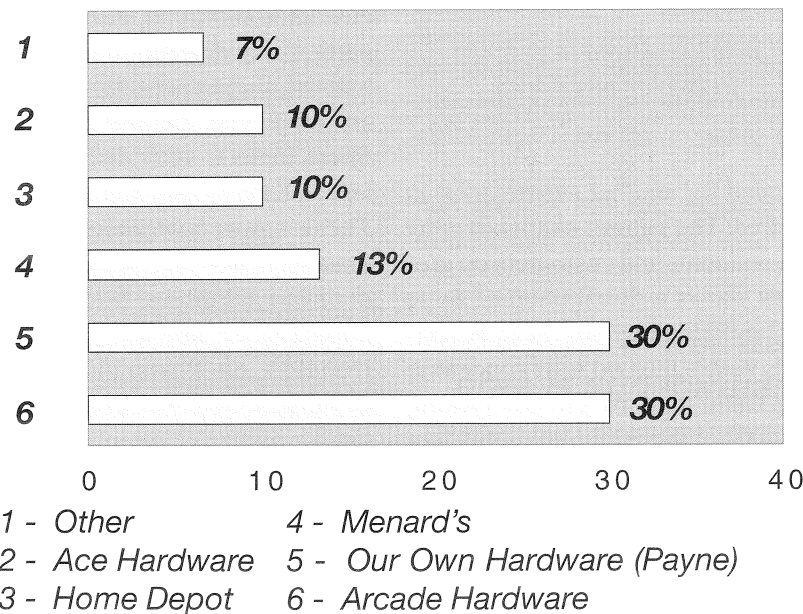
cause they are simply the closest, or most 'convenient' retailers.

The second contingent of customers of East Side businesses are the long-time residents of the district who shop on Payne and Arcade because "they always have", and because they like the "small-town feel" of the neighborhood. This group even includes those who have long since fled to the northern and eastern suburbs. Many of these customers are inclined to continue shopping the Payne-Arcade district because they have built trusting relationships

with business owners and employees in their old community.

Business owners are challenged by the differences between these two consumer groups, especially when considering how to market themselves and what type of clientele to target. The two groups of consumers also have generally different opinions about the keys and barriers to improvement in all sectors of the East Side and Payne-Arcade business district.

### Where Payne-Arcade customers shop for Hardware



Source: Customer Survey - see appendix 2

### Real and Perceived Barriers to shopping the East Side

The customer surveys indicate that shoppers' greatest concerns are crime and the perceived danger of loitering adolescents. When customers were asked to respond in greater detail, they most frequently associated the area's crime and loitering problem with the increase of minority residents in the area and the high number of bars and liquor stores in the district.

Other important obstacles to growth in sales at Payne-Arcade businesses mentioned by customers include rude service, or lack of service at certain businesses (an experience described by minority customers), a perceived lack of parking (particularly off-street parking) and the limited 9:00 a.m.-5:00p.m. or 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. hours of operation at most business.

### Suggestions for Improving Payne-Arcade

Criminal activity in the area and the associated perception of customers that Payne Avenue and Arcade Street are dangerous places were the most often mentioned problems in the district. Correspondingly, customers most frequently recommend action by the city and business

### What Customers Like about Payne Arcade

1. Convenience
2. Friendly community  
Festivals
3. It's home  
Clean neighborhood  
Mix of races  
Small-town feel  
Safety
4. Donald's  
Restaurants  
Low-traffic  
Other customers

### What Discourages Customers from Shopping Payne-Arcade

1. Feels unsafe
2. Crime  
Adolescents
3. Drug trafficking  
Poor service  
Businesses aren't open late  
Payne Reliever  
Lack of Parking  
Minorities in area  
Bars/Liquor stores

*Comments listed in order of frequency mentioned*



Photo by Cathleen Murphy

*The Knights of Columbus float passed Magnolia's Restaurant on Payne during the 1998 Harvest Festival Parade on Payne Avenue. Payne-Arcade customers suggest holding more community events to improve the neighborhood and the business district.*

owners to fight crime and loitering by increased police patrols. To improve the convenience of shopping on Payne Avenue and Arcade Street, customers recommend that businesses advertise more to local residents through flyers, community newspapers and improved signage. This is another sign of the demand for all types of goods and services that is not being met by the current mix of East Side businesses. Customers also suggested that business owners could fight crime and improve the

image of the business district through cooperative efforts. The Payne Arcade Business Association could take a more active role in promoting businesses as part of a cohesive shopping district and unite business owners against vandalism, loitering and crime in the area.

### **Customer Suggestions for New Businesses on Payne-Arcade**

Customers of the Payne-Arcade district most frequently mention

### **Customer ideas for new businesses in Payne-Arcade**

1. Grocery (on Payne)
2. Clothing retailers  
Dollar/dime store  
Woolworth's
3. SuperAmerica  
K-Mart
4. Target  
Seven Miles  
Any Shopping Mall  
Wal-Mart
5. Restaurants  
Music Store  
Teen entertainment  
YMCA

*Comments listed in order of frequency mentioned*

the need for another supermarket in the area. The pattern of spending by area residents and customers on groceries shows a distribution of some \$112 million per year (spent by residents within the two mile concentric ring trade area of Payne-Arcade) throughout the northeast metro area with Rainbow Foods store on Arcade Street being the only major local option. This pattern, along with customers' demands for a grocery store on Payne-Avenue suggests that a new entrant into the local grocery market

***Particularly in the small scale discount retail sector, opportunity clearly exists for new stores to capitalize on the underserved local market.***

could draw consumers back into the city from suburban nodes and thereby enhance the District.

The second important sector highlighted by the responses to the customer survey is discount retail, particularly discount clothing. Customers' suggestions for new retailers on Payne Avenue and Arcade Street include such discount clothiers as Kmart, Target and Wal-Mart. These same customers currently must go to downtown St. Paul or the northeast suburbs to find the nearest department stores aside from Donald's on Payne Avenue. The clothing sector thus demonstrates a similar pattern to the grocery sector. Donald's thrives because it is the only local competitor for discount clothing dollars in the East Side market. Particularly in the small scale discount retail sector, opportunity clearly exists for new stores to capi-

talize on the under-served local market.

A third type of business that could improve the district and be an asset to the community is the family entertainment or youth activity center. Among the businesses mentioned by customers that could create activity options for East Side teens with limited mobility, are a bowling alley, skating rink and a video arcade. Another significant suggestion was the creation of a literacy school for adults.

Customers also mention a music retailer, ice-cream shop, cooperative grocery, bakery and various restaurants as businesses that would improve the district. Food Service businesses would enhance the draw of the Payne-Arcade area to shoppers coming from both inside and outside the district.

### **Johnson Students' Suggestions for New Businesses**

The Johnson students made similar suggestions for additions to the East Side business line up. Asked to name specific stores or restaurants they would like to move into the district, 50 percent mentioned the need for more restaurants. The surveys also expressed a need for clothing stores such as the Gap and Old Navy and department stores including Dayton's, Target and Mervyn's.

## **Summary of Observations**

All indications are that the market potential for the Payne-Arcade business district is enormous due to its large potential trade area. The wealth in this trade area is substantial; potential customers in a two-mile radius alone, spend more than **one billion dollars per year** on goods and services. However, local businesses underserve the area and much of the money in the Payne-Arcade trade area is lost to competing retail centers such as Maplewood Mall. By adopting basic marketing strategies, Payne-Arcade businesses can capture more of this lucrative market and prevent losses to competing areas. In addition, Payne-Arcade businesses can target potential customers from the existing trade area which extends into the wealthy northeastern suburbs, existing customers and commuters who pass

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through the district on the way to and from work. We believe there are opportunities for new businesses to locate in the area and tap into the wealth of the Payne-Arcade trade area.

### **Customer Suggestions: What the City can do to improve Payne-Arcade**

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- 1. More police/ police action**
- 2. Clean streets and sidewalks**
- 3. Maintain streets and sidewalks**
  - Improve bus service**
  - Hold more festivals/events**
  - Remove antique stores**

### **What businesses can do to improve the district**

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- 1. More & better advertising**
- 2. Cooperate more**
- 3. Improve 'presence on street'**
  - Employ more minorities**
  - Improve customer relations**
  - Give back to community**
  - Hold sales/lower prices**

*Comments listed in order of frequency mentioned*



**“Clean and fill up the empty buildings with growing stores. This will hopefully bring customers back to shop at neighborhood stores instead of the malls.”**

**-East Side business owner**

Through our customer surveys we were able to see what customers view as important to a thriving and successful business district. However, what customers see as important to a useful business district is not always the same as what the businesses see as important to making their businesses successful. Throughout our surveying of business owners in the Payne-Arcade

views and needs, businesses and customers have one very essential view and need in common: they both desperately want the East Side business district to be successful.

Even though the business district has a prime location and is easily accessible, businesses have been leaving the East Side and those that have stayed have faced declining revenues. In order to try to address this

even some answers to what can be done to help revitalize a once thriving business district.

We were able to hand-deliver the surveys to approximately 200 businesses. If the owners were not available to discuss the survey we left it with an employee with an attached cover letter stating when we would return to collect the survey. In total, we were able to collect 44 surveys.

Since the survey returns were somewhat low, it was statistically insignificant for us to use some of the data. However, there are several questions from which we got interesting usable data returns.

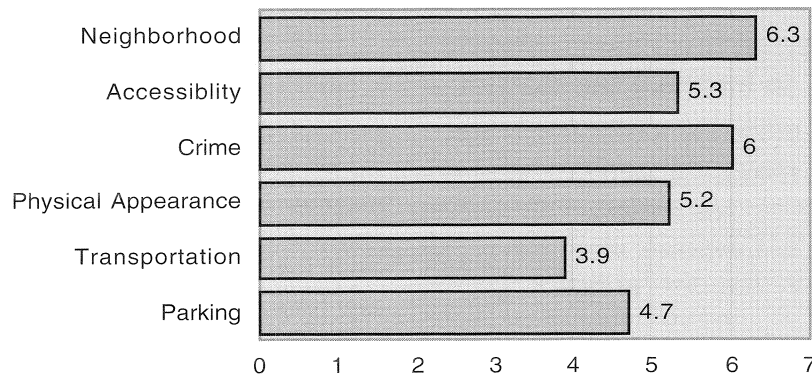
One of the questions on the survey that elicited interesting responses was “What is the worst feature of your location?” Twenty-seven out of 44 surveys returned responded to this question and the most common answer was that people saw the overall deterioration of the neighborhood as the worst feature. The rest of the respondents stated that either parking or crime was the worst feature

There is no quick fix or easy

**What is the best feature of your location?**

- Lot of Antiques shop in area...people can make a day of it.
- Accessibility
- Not far from I-94 freeway and 35 freeway
- Good Friendly people. Regular Clientele. Rustic Atmosphere.
- People are familiar with where it is
- High traffic...Exposure on Arcade.
- Easy to find from anywhere
- Cheap rent
- Central to East Side and downtown
- History
- We have adequate parking

**Please rank the following concerns?**



business district we tried to keep this business-customer relationship in mind. We found that while there are some times when customers and businesses have differences in

state of affairs we developed a survey for owners of businesses in the Payne Arcade business district. We hoped that through this survey we would find some clues and maybe

solution to the problems addressed in the survey responses. Rather, business revitalization on the East Side requires a long term commitment to comprehensive planning that recognizes that all of these issues and problems are intimately connected.



*Johnson High School  
on Arcade Street*

*Chapter Five*

***Through the Future's Eyes:  
Reflections from Johnson High School***



## Chapter Five

# Through the Future's Eyes: Reflections From Johnson High School

- **The Payne-Arcade  
Business District**
- **Summary of  
Observations**

Photo by Punnavith Koy

Everyone has their predictions for what is to become of the East Side neighborhood: business owners, the media, politicians and the City of Saint Paul itself, but who can accurately predict its future? In order to learn more about the perceptions and predictions of the East Side, a survey was distributed to nearly 650 students with the help of Kelly Swanson's AP Geography class. Seventy-five percent of those surveyed are self-proclaimed Eastiders and the future of this historic neighborhood. The survey was developed to gain the perspective of the community from people who live, work and learn nearly every day of their lives on the streets of the East Side. In the City of Saint Paul, there remains a perception that this is a "tough" neighborhood — a run-down community plagued by crime. The major goal of these surveys was to determine how residents describe their community — including the positive and negative aspects — from a viewpoint that a non-Eastsider could never completely understand.

Johnson High School, located at 1349 Arcade Street in the heart of the East Side neighborhood, has served this community since 1893. The current building, constructed in 1963, is the third site for the school. The very first high school burned to the ground and was replaced by a brick building located at 740 York

Avenue, which is still in use by the district. Originally, the school earned its name from Grover Cleveland, but it was later changed to honor John A. Johnson, a well-known Minnesota governor of Swedish heritage. Appropriately, the mascot of Johnson High is the Governor, also known as the "Govies." Today, the school serves grades 9-12 with around 1,500 students and an average class size of about 28.5. The student body at Johnson reflects the diversity of the East Side: 50 percent Caucasian, 30 percent Asian, 15 percent African American, four percent Hispanic and one percent Native American.

All ten students in Kelly Swanson's AP Geography class agreed to participate in this study by helping create and conduct the Johnson High School survey. This is the first year that Johnson High School has offered geography at an Advanced Placement level. The students involved with the project used this opportunity to not only gain a greater insight of the East Side neighborhood, but to work toward a Standard of Distinction award at graduation from Johnson as well.

The students went from classroom to classroom, administering the survey to their fellow classmates. The hope was that the students would respond more favorably to their peers offering the surveys, rather than an outsider visiting the classroom for

**EVERY DAY  
EVERY WAY  
BE SUCCESSFUL  
SHOW PRIDE  
FOR YOURSELF  
AND JOHNSON HIGH**

*Displayed in a series of  
banners in Johnson High  
School.*

the first time. In addition, each student was responsible for one question and the process of compiling the almost 650 responses. It was a daunting task, but they eagerly accepted the responsibility. In addition, each student received a disposable camera to document the neighborhoods of the East Side.

The survey was also beneficial in helping to draw comparisons from previous generations of Johnson graduates. While searching through the Johnson High School web site, the Governor's Club was discovered. The Governor's Club consists of Johnson alumni dating back to the class of 1951. Via e-mail, questions from the survey were sent to graduates, most of whom are now former Eastiders. Their responses, coupled with those from the current students at Johnson, portray an evolving East Side neighborhood with changing

attitudes — a neighborhood in transition.

After sending out the initial e-mails, responses were received from ten members of the Governor's Club, including graduates dating back to the class of 1951. None of the letters received were from graduates still living in the neighborhood, but

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there.  
- Alum, Class of  
1988***

nearly all of them mentioned the word "pride." What exactly is East Side pride? Here is a response from a former Johnson student, Class of 1996, who touches on the topic of

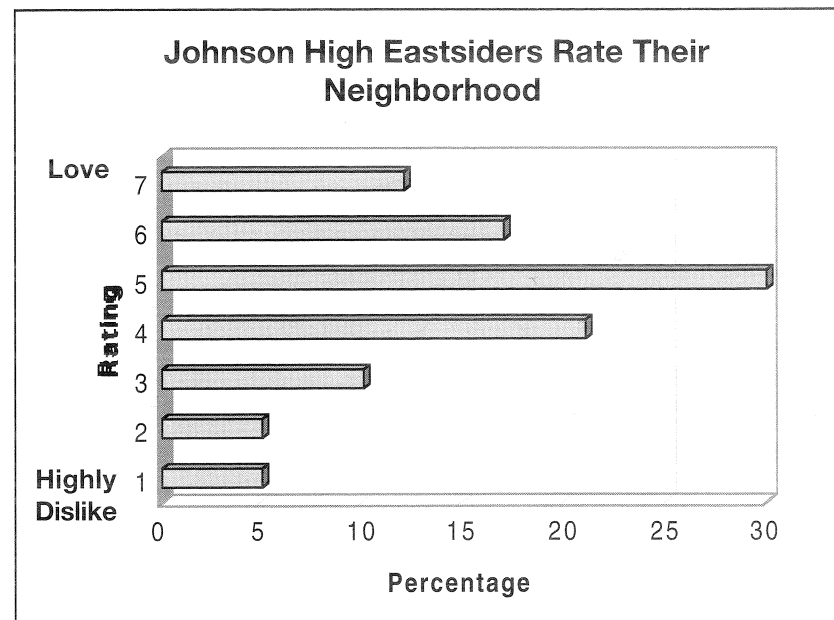
neighborhood pride.

"I like the tough, blue collar, close-knit characteristics that people outside the community classify with the Eastaiders. That's because of what the East Side teaches people that grow up and/or live there. Not only do the social and economical problems of the East Side make the residents "tougher"; those problems also bring those tough people together making them a group to be reckoned with and listened to. The pride of the community is what I like most"

Another graduate from 1988 discusses the "tough-guy" image of Eastsiders, especially from the residents around the Payne-Arcade district, many of them his hockey teammates.

There is a recognition and thread of similarity that accompanies the responses of these Johnson graduates. All of them experienced the East Side neighborhood and have a common bond that one would find in a small rural town, however this is the second largest city in the State of Minnesota. This same graduate from 1988 discusses the bond that links this community together.

"To this day, whenever I meet someone who tells me they're from the East Side, something strange happens. It's almost like an unspoken understanding. We'll smile at each other, knowing we both know how



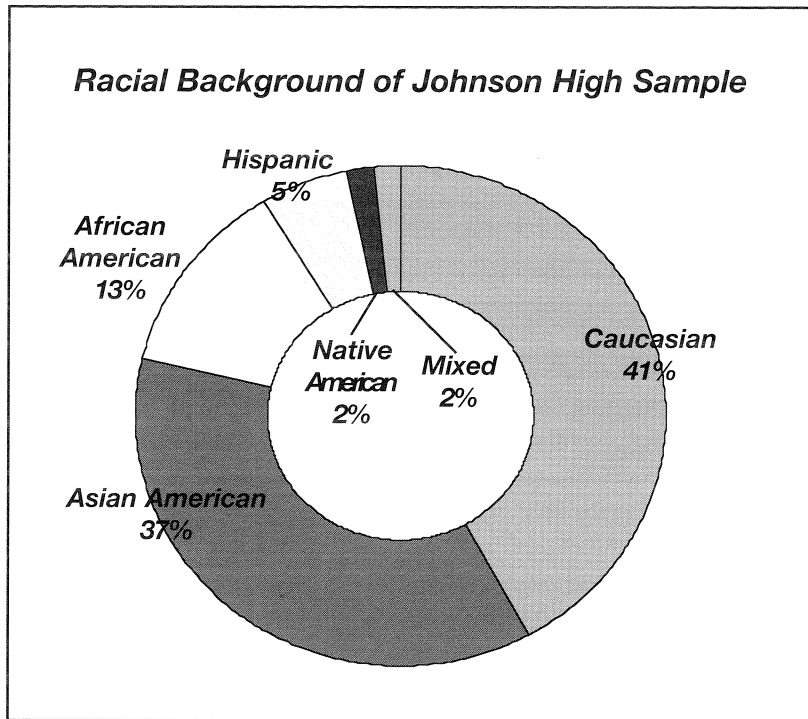
Source: Johnson AP Geography Surveys

special it is to have lived there. It's never about it being "better" than other areas. Frankly, you could probably find a lot of areas that offer more. But few can boast the closeness or the pride that Eastsiders feel."

These responses from recent graduates are still pretty optimistic, and there remains a strong tie to the neighborhood. E-mails received from 1951, 1958 and 1971 graduates talked about East Side pride, but also mentioned their opinions of a neighborhood altered since their departure. "It seems very run down to me, and not much pride in the neighborhoods

or pride in the homeowners keeping their properties nice," wrote one 1958 graduate. From the class of 1971, this former Eastsider felt that when he graduated, the East Side was known as a "safe, middle-class neighborhood," but says that "the situation has changed dramatically" since then.

Do today's Johnson students still have that overwhelming sense of East Side pride? When the question was posed: How do you feel about your neighborhood? On a scale of one (Highly Dislike) to seven (Love), 57 percent of the students



Source: Johnson AP Geography Surveys

surveyed rated their neighborhood as a five or higher. The one-three rating received a percentage of 20, while 94 students (21 percent) responded with a four rating, exactly in the middle. Nearly 60 percent of Johnson's students who live on the East Side give their neighborhoods a positive rating, with only one-fifth giving a negative response.

Students were asked specifically about what aspects they liked about the East Side neighborhood. At least 100 students commented on the importance of their family, friends and neighbors of the East Side. In

many cases, relatives and classmates are in close proximity to the students, who enjoy such convenience. The surveys also gave detailed anecdotes of neighbors helping when kids were locked out and giving gifts during the holidays. "People look out for each other," commented a Johnson student. The alumni also wrote extensively on the friendliness of their neighbors. "I've got a decent set of immediate neighbors, most of whom I could trust with the keys to my house" (Class of 1995).

There remains a strong di-

chotomy from the surveys when describing the people of the East Side. Although there is a strong contention of positive experiences and considerate residents, surveys also contained information about neighbors who make students feel uncomfortable because they are suspected drug dealers. A Caucasian student from Johnson commented about there being "lots of black people who look unsafe." An Asian American student spoke of the "black kids that come by and jam our hoop and talk trash and steal stuff." Another Asian American student wrote that "the prejudiced white kids and adults" need to change "their immature attitude."

Since the 1970s, the East Side has experienced a major shift in population, from a predominantly white neighborhood to a neighborhood including Latinos, Southeast Asians, African Americans and Native Americans. This transformation has caused definite racial tension between residents of the community. Today's Johnson students are experiencing the same tension that a graduate from ten years ago faced.

"The biggest change was the influx of Asians. That influx produced one of my few negative experiences in growing up there. The Asians appeared to not be welcomed, and became scapegoats for a lot of the ills in/out [of the] neighborhood,

i.e.: when crimes occurred, people, my family included, would say things like "you know, this place is changing, stated another graduate from 1988.

In at least three cases, after students made remarks based on racist stereotypes, they followed up with an apology or an explanation that even though I say these things, "I'm not a racist" and "no hard feelings, please." They are aware that their opinions are not acceptable in our current, politically correct climate, yet they truly believe the stereotypes.

Although few, if any white students mentioned it, students of color

***Caucasian students spoke negatively about the changing demographics with comments like "too many Asians" and "all of them will flock to my neighborhood and take over."***

adamantly spoke of their appreciation for the cultural diversity of the East Side neighborhood. They referred to it as a positive change, while a portion of white students tended to link the movement of people of color to their neighbor-

### The Atmosphere of the Payne-Arcade Business District

- BUSY - 31%**
- GHETTO - 16%**
- PLEASANT - 12%**
- DIRTY - 9%**
- O.K. - 9%**
- UNSAFE - 6%**
- SCARY - 5%**
- COOL - 4%**
- UNPLEASANT - 4%**
- BORING - 4%**

hoods with negative aspects such as crime, poverty, and run-down housing. "Trashy, Hmong, Mexican, ghetto," predicted one student. "Crappy, blacks, trash, horrible," wrote another.

When predicting the future of the East Side, at least 15 students commented specifically on the increasing Asian population. Caucasian students spoke negatively about the changing demographics with comments like "too many Asians" and "all of them will flock to my neighborhood and take over." Only the Caucasian students seemed to associate the deterioration of their neighborhood to the arrival of low-income, people of color. They use

the examples of few to stereotype an entire population. When responding to changes that one Caucasian student would like to make, he/she simply stated, "less minorities in one house." White students were the only proponents for the removal of public housing from the East Side, and commented on Minnesota's generous welfare spending. "If welfare continues to be as good as it is in Minnesota, more and more people will come and continue to be lazy. They will run the East Side down."

With a reputation for being unsafe, we asked students if there are indeed areas of the East Side that they feel are dangerous. Overall, the responses were broken down about 50/50 from the students of Johnson High School. The Caucasian students felt the most uncomfortable on the East Side, with 42 percent responding yes to whether or not they felt unsafe. In contrast, only 18 percent of Asian students responding to the questions confirmed that the East Side appears unsafe in certain areas. Out of 40 African American students who responded to the questions, only five (7 percent) felt unsafe in the community.

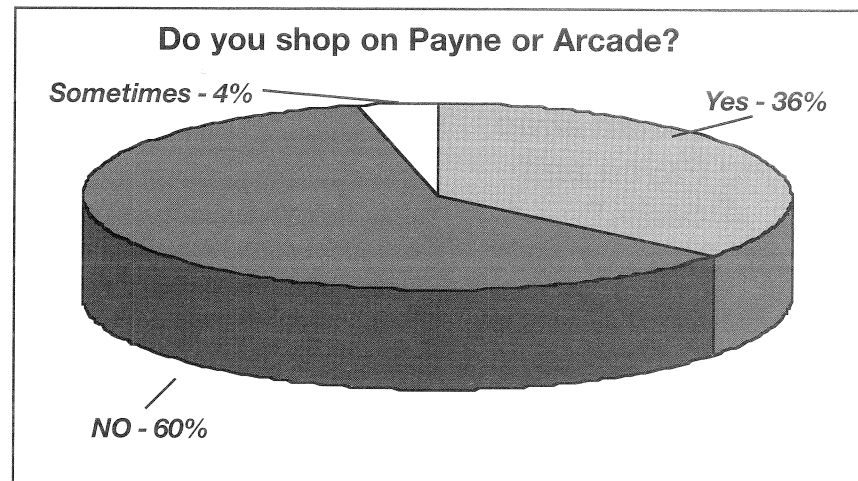
When asked for specific locations, the students answers varied greatly. At least 20 students cited McDonough and Roosevelt, nearby housing projects. People also felt uncomfortable along the trails on the

East Side. At Johnson High School, two Asian students recalled an incident on a trail where some African American kids were throwing rocks and attempting to instigate a fight. The Johnson students said that if they hadn't been on roller blades and a bike, they wouldn't have even considered going on the trail. An alum from 1978 stated that he wouldn't want his wife "south of Case Avenue by herself." Fifty-three of the students responded with specific streets, including Case (3 students) from the East Side where they felt unsafe. Nine people named Payne Avenue, a major corridor and business district on the East Side.

### The Payne-Arcade Business District

The Payne-Arcade district is known to some as the heart of the East Side. With this reputation Johnson High School students were asked to describe this well-known district in the community. The word "busy" was used almost 100 (31 percent) times by Johnson students to describe the district. The second most frequently mentioned comment was "ghetto" with 16 percent (50 students). It is hard to define whether "busy" or "ghetto" are necessarily positive or negative terms.

Although "ghetto" may more often be categorized as negative, the students from the AP Geography class pointed this adjective out as a positive description, as well. They described a type of pride that comes from being considered a tough, "ghetto" neighborhood. There are



Source: Johnson AP Geography Surveys

some examples from the Johnson surveys that portray “ghetto” with a more positive definition. When describing reasons why they like the East Side, a student responded with, “It’s fun, you know everyone, ghetto.” In another student’s descrip-

***“They’re dying business districts. Basically, the young people in this era aren’t content to walk in and out of stores outdoors. I’ve got to admit that I’m guilty of it too. I’d much rather go to the mall, whether Rosedale, Maplewood, or M.O.A. (Mall of America) than shop along Payne and Arcade.”  
-Alum, Class of 1995***

tion of Payne-Arcade Avenues, they wrote, “Loud, interesting, fun, ghetto.” People like the image of the East Side because there “aren’t any rich snobs” in the neighborhood.

Regardless of the statements,

only 12 percent described the East Side as “pleasant,” 28 percent as O.K., and four percent as “cool.” The remaining categories were broken down into negative descriptions, no matter how you interpret them: unsafe, 19 percent; scary, 15 percent; 4 percent unpleasant and boring. In conversations with the AP Geography class, students claimed that there was nothing to do for kids in these business districts. One student recalled having his shoes spit on by a drunken man on Payne Avenue. Most surveys firmly stated that one would not and should not travel to Payne or Arcade after dark. Other students pointed out positive aspects of the Avenue: “like a small town,” “old, with some history,” and “multi-cultural.” Another common theme was the mention of the amount of bars and the types of people exiting such establishments on the Avenues.

Alumni were also asked to describe the Payne-Arcade business district. One alum characterized it as “a place that is not quite caught up to the present (class of 1996). Another alum’s (class of 1988) description adds credibility to the theme of Payne-Arcade as the heart of the East Side.

“Payne -Arcade had a mystique. Certain parts of Payne Arcade were and still are a bit run down. When you drove through the area, it wasn’t uncommon to see stray dogs,

abandoned homes and people asleep in alleyways. It also was known for having its share of drinking establishments, which added to its reputation - be it deserved or not - of being prone to rowdiness.”

An alumni, from the class of 1995, talks about the economics side of the Payne-Arcade district and its inability to compete with large, suburban shopping malls.

“They’re dying business districts. Basically, the young people in this era aren’t content to walk in and out of stores outdoors. I’ve got to admit that I’m guilty of it too. I’d much rather go to the mall, whether Rosedale, Maplewood, or M.O.A. (Mall of America) than shop along Payne and Arcade.”

As a graduate of 1995, this alum’s statement mimics those of today’s students at Johnson High School. Over half of the students surveyed (61 percent, 260 students) who live on the East Side, do not shop on Payne Avenue. That percentage is high considering that the district is within close proximity to many of the students’ homes. If students are not hanging out in their own homes or those of their friends, they are shopping at suburban malls. Over one-third (227 students) of those surveyed on favorite hangouts chose shopping malls. Unfortunately, with no malls on the East Side of St. Paul, students hop on buses or climb in

cars to head out to the suburbs for their shopping. Here is a listing of their preferences: Maplewood Mall, 44 percent; Mall of America, 31.9 percent; Rosedale, 21.1 percent; and miscellaneous others, three percent. The majority of their time and money are spent on evenings and weekends in suburban malls and not on the Payne-Arcade business district. What is to become of the future of this historic business district if the next generation is reluctant to patronize local businesses?

The students were asked to describe the East Side, five years from now: Who lives there? How does it look? Responses were varied, and many felt that the neighborhood could really go either way, depending upon what action does or does not take place. Over fifty percent of the responses felt that the neighborhood will be negatively impacted in the next five years. Students compared the future of the East Side to the metropolitan areas of Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. Here are some negative examples:

- 1) *“It will be dirty and scary and smelly and the old people who can’t afford to move will live there. Get out of this hell hole while you still can!”*
- 2) *East Side is turning to shit!*
- 3) *Trash is moving in.*

Even though there were terri-

bly negative responses, intermingled within were positive outlooks of the East Side neighborhood.

- 1) *It will look much better, probably famous people will live there. It will probably look like a beautiful place.*
- 2) *I love the East Side 'cause its my side and I'm willing to take good care of it and to make it a better place.*
- 3) *Nice place, one of the top ten neighborhoods to live in.*

Survey responses mentioned the changes going on within the neighborhood: the Phalen Corridor, the wetlands project and the closing of Stroh's brewery.

The students were also asked if they are planning to live on the East Side after graduation. Fifty percent of the students at Johnson High School surveyed are not planning on living on the East Side after graduation. There were 765 responses in different categories to this question. The reason most often stated (21 percent, 158 students) as to why students want to leave was because they "want better." Eleven percent (82 students) said they were leaving for college, while 18 percent stated other reasons for leaving. With 50 percent of the students moving away from the East Side, only 35 percent are remaining in the neighborhood after graduation. Sixteen percent of the students are uncertain whether they

will remain on the East Side. Eighty-six students are staying because they like the neighborhood, while others plan to stay because of the familiarity and convenience of family and friends. Regardless, if the students follow-up on their intentions, the East Side will lose a large percentage of their population from this age bracket.

## Summary of Observations

Although 59 percent of the students say they like the East Side, 50 percent are also planning on moving on after graduation. Statistics from the 1997-98 school year at Johnson High School show that 33 percent of Johnson students will go on to four year colleges, 21 percent to technical colleges and 19 percent to two year colleges. Almost 25 percent of the students plan to work after high school with the remaining three percent entering the military.

Fifty percent of the students surveyed feel unsafe in the East Side neighborhood. Although there is an even split regarding the overall totals, the results from the Caucasian and Asian American students are completely opposite. While 60 percent (97 students) of the Caucasian students admitted to feeling unsafe on the East Side, 59 percent (56 stu-

dents) of the Asian American students feel safe in the same neighborhoods. Even the residents of the East Side have a negative outlook of their neighborhood, but does the East Side truly deserve this reputation?

According to many of the Johnson High School students, it does. The surveys portrayed Payne and Arcade as being "ghetto, unsafe, unpleasant, and boring," in the eyes of Johnson High School students. Sixty-four percent of the students' favorite hangouts are at suburban shopping malls or at their friends' homes, not on Payne or Arcade. There are no bowling alleys, movie theaters, pool halls, bowling alleys, coffee shops, or clubs for the students to congregate with their friends. With no other options, the students are forced out to the suburbs for shopping and entertainment.

There is a strong identification with the East Side neighborhood of St. Paul - an East Side pride that permeates the culture of its residents. The students of Johnson High School hold the same ideals of East Side pride as the alumni, although pride has become somewhat tarnished over the years. When the question of pride was posed to a class at Johnson, they all shrugged their shoulders. One student replied, "Johnson is the only thing worth being proud of."

Is this pride enough to save the neighborhood from further deterio-

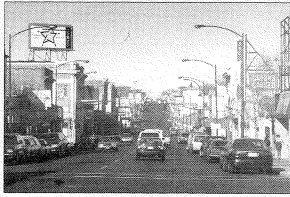
ration? Is this generation of students willing to remain and take responsibility for their neighborhood's current situation? Of the seven alumni that were interviewed, all members of the Johnson High School "Governors Club," none of them still live on the East Side. The example has been set by previous generations who have left the neighborhood, though there remains a loyal base of Eastsiders. Unless people learn to respect differences, take responsibility for themselves and their property, and actively participate in the rejuvenation of the East Side neighborhood, its future is uncertain.





*Looking north  
on Payne Avenue*

## ***Conclusion***



## Conclusion

Photo by Cathleen Murphy

The East Side is anchored by the Payne-Arcade business district. Therefore, using the present strengths of the district and making improvements can benefit the entire community. The results from the customer survey, maps of the potential and actual trade area of Payne-Arcade businesses, population analysis, the reviews of the plans for the East Side, land use maps, architectural analysis, Johnson High School student/alumni survey information and other observations in the district identify several ways in which new and existing Payne-Arcade businesses could attract more revenue and thus aid in the revitalization of the neighborhood as a whole.

Through our research we have identified three general types of customers the business district could attract:

1. Customers who live in the *potential* trade areas identified by the concentric rings, drive-time and bus-time maps have good access to Payne-Arcade businesses and can be targeted through more advertising. Observations of the spending power of populations within these potential trade areas suggest the total amount of money to be tapped into is substantial, totaling well over one billion dollars. Currently these potential customers may not shop Payne-Arcade because they lack information about businesses in the area,

there are not enough medium and high-order retail businesses to draw them to the district and/or because they perceive the East Side as dangerous and unpleasant.

2. Customers who live outside the neighborhood, particularly those identified in the *actual* trade area which extends into the northern suburbs, will do more of their shopping on Payne and Arcade if barriers were addressed and more commercial options were available. The customers from northern and eastern suburbs of St. Paul that have been identified by ZIP code surveys at Payne-Arcade businesses may shop Payne-Arcade because they commute through the district on a regular basis. Advertising targeted at commuters would aid in capturing this market segment.

3. Customers who live in the district shop for many day-to-day (low order) goods on Payne and Arcade because it is conveniently located. Evidence from customer surveys and surveys of Johnson High School students suggests that neighborhood residents do most of their shopping for goods such as clothing, shoes and music at retail centers outside of Payne-Arcade and the East Side. This is in part due to a lack of medium and high order retail in the district, but can also be explained by customer comments which indicate that a barrier between white business owners and minority customers may

exist.

The business district may seek to attract these customers in several ways. In our customer surveys, minority customers commented on rude service and feeling unwelcome at businesses on Payne and Arcade. Unfortunately, this may be explained by perceptions that the influx of minority residents in the East Side neighborhood over the last 15 years has been the cause of an increase in neighborhood crime levels. The racial tension in the business district prevents local businesses from capturing the full extent of the local market for all order goods because

***Eastsiders possess a strong, tangible sense of pride that has remained in this area of Saint Paul for generation after generation.***

minorities are inclined to shop in competing areas, where they get better service.

Businesses can reverse this trend by accepting the diversity of the residents in the local market and catering to this population. This should include hiring East Side residents, particularly youth, who represent a large segment of the population on

the East Side, to work at Payne-Arcade businesses.

In addition, the East Side business community may benefit from the addition of new firms which match the demands of local customers. The high vacancy rate presents many opportunities throughout the district for new retail activity that can begin the revitalization process of the East Side neighborhood. Although new businesses, particularly chain retailers, might push some existing businesses out of the market, the district would benefit from the added vitality and larger number of customers that could be drawn.

New restaurants and a bakery/coffee shop are examples of businesses that could enhance the appeal of the district as a shopping destination by providing more dining options for the lucrative lunch time and weekend shopping crowds.

Another way to increase revenue in the area is to take advantage of the built environment, particularly the historic architecture on Payne Avenue. Restoration and maintenance of business facades is critical to making the district attractive. Aesthetics may also be improved through more uniform signage, a greening initiative, and new and continued involvement of local arts organizations to get sculptures and murals in the business area. Adopting more traditional lighting (such as the lighting on Grand

and Summit Avenues) is another possible aesthetic and safety improvement that should be adopted on Payne and Arcade.

As noted in individual interviews with community leaders and residents and Johnson students' responses - past and present - Eastsiders possess a strong, tangible sense of pride that has remained in this area of St. Paul for generation after generation. Through waves of immigrants and newcomers, this pride is still evident among today's neighborhood residents.

Unfortunately, the changing demographics on the East Side have resulted in a negative perception of this community. Although there are real issues that must be dealt with in this

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neighborhood, racism and ignorant stereotypes tend to amplify the fears of residents of the East Side and the surrounding suburbs. This perception has economic consequences, as East Side residents travel to the suburbs for shopping and entertainment purposes.

Over the years, the East Side

has seen more major corporations leave than enter. The outflow of factories has reduced employment opportunities and retail activity. A fortunate side effect of this neglect is that it allowed family businesses to remain in the neighborhood, preserving historic buildings constructed before the turn of the century. As the Phalen Corridor Initiative promises the return of many jobs, the future of small businesses in the area brightens. Together with the historic restoration of Payne and Arcade, these trends could change the face of the East Side.

The Payne-Arcade business district is a treasure waiting to be discovered on the East Side of St. Paul. There is a history on the East Side that cannot be denied, and must not be forgotten when planning for the future of the neighborhood. Like its history, the diversity of the East Side must be recognized as a unique asset of this community. Its proximity to downtown St. Paul, major thoroughfares and public transportation routes only add to the neighborhood's appeal to businesses and consumers alike. The East Side neighborhood has countless strengths, incredible potential and residents who have an intense commitment to the community and pride of place.

