

BRAINERD PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

6:00 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome New Member Sarah Hayden
3. Approval/Amendment of Agenda
4. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting of February 13, 2013
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Interpretation Request - Use Allowed in a B-4 (General Business) District
 - b. Review Zoning - Brook Street Area
 - c. Whittier School Repurposing - Zoning Discussion
 - d. Mobile Food Units - Discussion
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Variance History Review
 - b. The (micro) City Beautiful - Barret Steenrod Community Design Plan - Discussion
7. Commissioners' Questions/Comments
8. City Planner's Comments
9. Adjournment

Any individual needing special accommodations please call 218/828-2309

PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Chairman Mike Jay called the meeting of the Brainerd Planning Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

Noted present were Commissioners Jay, Lambert, Norwood and Cole. Commissioner Plantenberg were noted absent. Commissioner Pritschet arrived at 6:17 p.m. Also present was City Planner Ostgarden.

Commissioner Jay welcomed new Commission Member James Norwood.

#2 Approval/Amendment of Agenda

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND COLE, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

#3 Approve minutes of the regular meeting of January 9, 2013

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND COLE, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2013.

#4 NEW BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing – Variance 1201 Brook Street – Harvey Doucette

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:02 p.m.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the owner desires to construct an additional twenty-six (26) foot by forty (40) foot accessory structure where two (2) accessory structures, one twenty-five (25) feet by forty (40) and the other twenty-six (26) by forty (40) feet, already exist. He noted the lot size is one hundred twenty-two and one-half (122.50) feet wide by three hundred forty (340) feet deep which is larger than a standard lot in the city.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the Zoning Ordinance only allows two accessory structures in a Single Family Residential District. He noted with the uniqueness of this lot and the building being located on the north end of the property, the additional building will be secluded and will not be visible from Brook Street. He stated the accessory building will only be seven (7) percent of the total lot area where the Zoning Ordinance permit up to ten (10) percent. The total lot coverage including the dwelling will be far less than the permitted sixty (60) percent. He also noted the pitch of the roof on the proposed building will be 5/12, making the height approximately 11-1/2 feet to midpoint which is less than the maximum height allowance and will match the current accessory structure.

Mr. Harvey Doucette, 1201 Brook Street, gave a review of what the current accessory buildings are used for and how they plan to use the new accessory structure. He also noted as City Planner Ostgarden stated that it will only less than the 10% allowed total lot area coverage.

Commissioner Jay asked if the shed in the back corner will be removed. Mr. Doucette stated it will be removed prior to construction of the proposed building.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:18 p.m.

Commissioner Lambert read the findings-of-fact into the record as follows: 1. The property is zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential) District; 2. The variance is to allow a third accessory building on the lot; 3. The lot size is 122.5' wide by 340' deep or 41,560 square feet. The lot is unique in that it has considerably more depth and lot area than a typical single family lot in the city; 4. The total square footage of all accessory buildings is 3,080 square feet is less than the maximum 10% lot area coverage for accessory buildings; 5. Total lot coverage is limited to 50% of lot area or 20,280 square feet. Total lot coverage is less than 6,000 square feet; 6. The roof pitch is 5/12 and the garage height will be approximately 11-1/2 feet. This will match the height of the exiting accessory building; 7. The character of the locality will not be adversely affected because: (a) The accessory building placement will not be visible from a public street, (b) Dwellings along Brook Street are located along the street setback line creating a distance of over 200' to the nearest adjacent dwelling along Brook Street, (c) The dwelling to the north is buffered by woodlands and wetland; 8. An additional accessory building is not contrary to the Comprehensive Plan Goals and Strategies; 9. A small accessory building will be removed prior to construction of the proposed accessory building; 10. There are no City or agency concerns; 11. There is no neighborhood opposition.

Additional findings-of-fact: 12. The petitioner spoke in favor, no one spoke in opposition.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS COLE AND LAMBERT, DULY CARRIED, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF VARIANCE 377 TO ALLOW A THIRD ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A SINGLE FAMILY LOT WITH THE TWELVE (12) FINDINGS-OF-FACT.

b. Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit South 9th Street between Pine Street and Quince Street – ISD #181

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:29 p.m.

City Planner Ostgarden stated this request is an amendment to Conditional Use Permit 238 to allow the expansion of the parking lot located on South 9th Street between Pine Street and Quince Street. City Planner Ostgarden stated additional District employees will be relocated to the Washington Education Services Building (WESB) requiring an expansion of the parking to allow for ninety-seven off-street parking spaces. Off-street parking was a condition of the original CUP issued in 2005 and would be based on the number of staff located in the building versus the standard ratios applied to off-street parking.

City Planner Ostgarden stated the existing buildings located on the site will be moved and staff from those building will also relocated to the WESB. He noted providing the additional off-street parking will prevent a chaotic parking situation from occurring and also prevent day to day right-of-way congestion. He also stated when there are school function or community events in the

building there will still be on-street parking and providing off-street parking for these types of events would not be practical.

City Planner Ostgarden stated a few outstanding issue would include finalizing a stormwater plan which will be handled through sheet drainage as noted in preliminary discussions, landscaping which is not shown on the current site plan, a lighting plan, and possibilities of sidewalks along Pine Street. He stated other than these few outstanding issues, there are no other City Departmental concerns.

Commissioner Lambert asked if there have been complaints from the neighborhood regarding on-street parking. City Planner Ostgarden stated a couple of years ago there were complaints, but after meetings with the School District and additional notification to the neighborhood when events were going to occur, there have been no additional complaints.

Mr. Earl Wolleat, Director of Buildings and Grounds for ISD 181, first addressed the issue of complaints from the neighborhood noting after telling employees not to park on South 9th Street there haven't been complaints in last couple of years. He then reviewed possible plans for landscaping around the parking lot noting he would like to keep the planned sidewalk in the center island for safety purposes and add trees or shrubs at the end corners of the sidewalk. He discussed the plan to use sheet drainage for stormwater runoff noting it will go to the greenspace to the south of the parking lot. He also reviewed the lighting plans and handicap parking. He stated the School District will meet all City requirements on landscaping, lighting, and stormwater.

A new site plan was submitted to the Commission from Hy-Tec Construction.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:02 p.m.

Commissioner Norwood read the findings-of-fact into the record as follows: 1. The property is located in an R-1 (Single Family Residential) District and school uses are permitted as a conditional use in this zoning district; 2. In 2005 the School District was granted a CUP to permit the Washington School now the Washington Education Services Building to be used for District administrative purposes, community related school functions and general community events; 3. In 2005 it was determined that off-street parking will be provided to meet the day to day District staffing needs. A fifty-nine (59) space off-street parking lot was built to accommodate District staff parking; 4. Additional staff is planned to be located at the WESB requiring the need for additional off-street parking; 5. The District is proposing to add forty-six (46) employees at the WESB increasing the total to ninety-four (94) employees and the parking lot expansion will create ninety-seven (97) spaces; 6. It is understood that providing off-street parking will not meet the demand for school related functions and community events; 7. There are no residential uses on the block and the lot will be screened to buffer the lot from residential uses located across the street; 8. The area has some transition with the District owning two blocks and an industrial use located to the east; 9. The use is consistent with Zoning Ordinance Intent and Purpose section in that: (a) The additional off-street parking will protect the neighborhood in that the expansion does not result in a loss of residential dwellings and the expansion will prevent a chaotic parking situation from occurring on a day to day basis, (b) The off-street parking permits the reuse of an existing historical and significant building in the community, (c) The additional off-street parking will help prevent right-of-way congestion on a day to day basis; 10. There are no agency concerns

and the only City department concern is a stormwater plan has not been approved by the City;
11. There is no neighborhood opposition.

Additional findings-of-fact: 12. The petitioner spoke in favor, no one spoke in opposition.

The Commission agreed to the following conditions:

Submittal of a:

1. Lighting plan.
2. Landscaping plan identifying trees around the periphery of the lot and trees/shrubs on the ends of the interior islands.

The Commission also agreed to not require a sidewalk along Pine Street which would require removal of trees which provide adequate screening and the sidewalk in the center island should remain as planned for safety purposes.

MOTION AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS LAMBERT AND PRITSCHET, DULY CARRIED, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 238 FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE PINE STREET PARKING LOT WITH THE TWELVE (12) FINDINGS-OF-FACT AND TWO (2) CONDITIONS.

c. 2012 Year End Review

City Planner Ostgarden stated the Commission was interested in seeing a recap of the activities from the past year. Those activities were:

- Zoning Ordinance Language
 - Amended the Zoning Ordinance regarding nonconforming buildings and property
 - Discussed a requirement for single family garage construction
 - Discussed regulations on camper top storage
 - Interpreted the definition of "building height"
 - Interpreted the definition of "restaurant"
- Variances/Conditional Use Permits/ Interim Use Permits
 - Considered five (5) variances, three (3) conditional use permits and one (1) interim use permit request
- Rezoning
 - Considered two (2) rezoning requests
- Nonconforming Building Use
 - Heard a request to permit reuse of a building with a nonconforming use
- Off Street Parking Requirements
 - Recommended approval for a parking deferment at the East Brainerd Mall
- Surveys
 - Heard a presentation on three (3) community surveys
- Other
 - Had a presentation on the Stormwater Pollution Prevent Plan (SWPP)
 - Initiated discussion about using golf carts on city streets
 - Initiated discussion about a possible land exchange between Brainerd and Baxter
 - Recommended submittal of a Smart Growth America grant

Heard a presentation from a Capstone Project student regarding suggestions for Brainerd's future

- Workshop
Held a February workshop

Commissioner Cole asked for a historical review of conditional use permits and variances to see if the number of applications have increased over the years.

#5 OLD BUSINESS

a. Report on 1st City Council Strategic Planning Meeting

Commissioner Pritschet stated the City Council met with the Department Heads and representatives from BLAEDC. The first step was to get a mission statement and the Council has it narrowed down to two options. The next step is for the Council to rate certain issues/projects based on priority and long term versus short term. He stated the point of these meetings is to determine what we are doing, who we are doing it for, and how will it be accomplished.

Discussion was held regarding the Commission's role in this planning and the importance of knowing what is a priority for the Council and what is the Council's vision.

#6 Commissioners' Questions/Comments

Commissioner Lambert asked about Safe Routes to School and what would need to be done to possibly double fines in those "safe zones" if there is an injury. City Planner Ostgarden stated he would look into this further.

Commissioner Jay stated he still has concerns about the lowering of the manholes along College Drive and asked City Planner Ostgarden to speak to the Engineering Department.

Commissioner Jay asked about the status of the mobile food truck issue. City Planner Ostgarden stated there is a meeting on Friday between area restaurants, the food truck owner, and the City Council committee. At this time there has not been definitive direction taken by the City Council on what they want to do.

Commissioner Jay stated he feels there should be snow removal times in school zones and it should not be done at the beginning of the school day.

#7 City Planner's Comments

City Planner Ostgarden pointed out a couple articles included in the packet:

- Our Town – Creating Livable Communities for All Ages
- Toward the Walkable City

Commissioner Jay stated he feels "small house districts" should be looked into more and noted they are not just for senior citizens. This led to discussion on median house prices in Brainerd along with the average income and employment in Brainerd.

City Planner Ostgarden asked the Commission to refer to the map he handed out earlier showing Brook Street. He stated when the Zoning Map review was done the map got modified to bring the manufactured house zoning came all the way up to Brook Street. He stated that will be brought forth at the next meeting to correct that error.

Commissioner Lambert asked about discussion on the review of the Comprehensive Plan. City Planner Ostgarden stated this is an item that will hopefully be reviewed by the City Council during their strategic planning sessions but encouraged the Commission to bring this forward to the Council.

#8 **Adjournment**

As there was no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Ostgarden AICP
City Planner

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MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: March 4, 2013

RE: Zoning Ordinance Interpretation – Allowed Use in a B-4 (General Business) District

Recently the Planning Department received an inquiry about whether a vegetation management product sales business is an allowed use in a B-4 District. My conversation with Patrick Selter, Vice President of PLM Lake and Land Management Corp led me to believe that the principal property use where the business will be located is warehousing product to be used off site. A use not allowed in a B-4 District. I explained to Mr. Selter that if he would like to challenge my decision he can appeal it to the Planning Commission. Attached is a letter from Mr. Selter that describes his business and why he thinks it's allowed in a B-4 District.

In his letter Mr. Selter suggests calendar use or revenues should be used to determine whether the use is allowed. Neither has been an acceptable method in determining whether a use is allowed in a zoning district. A decision should be made based on an evaluation of the principal use of the land and/or building(s) and/or structure(s) on a property.

The location selected by Mr. Selter is the B-4 District located on B371 south of Buffalo Hills Lane. This area is arguably one in which the proposed use would be appropriate. However the decision on whether a use is allowed should not be based on whether the use is appropriate for an area.

Mark Ostgarden,

I would like to request The City of Brainerd Planning to review and clarify whether PLM Lake & Land Management can operate in the B-4 General Business District at its March Meeting. I will be present to answer any additional questions.

Background: PLM Lake & Land Management (PLM) is seeking clarification from the planning commission to operate its business in the B-4, General Business District. PLM is an environmental management firm currently residing in Pequot Lakes. PLM has been seeking new residence and is excited about an opportunity to relocate to the City of Brainerd. Specifically after several months, PLM has found some locations in the city of Brainerd in the City of Brainerd's B-4 General Business District that which would allow PLM to grow its business, satisfy our current space needs and allow more interaction with customers. Brainerd is very appealing to PLM as it has the potential to generate additional revenue, decrease logistical costs, provide a good labor pool, and provide opportunities to capitalize on market growth.

The primary business of PLM is the sale of, application of, and installation of vegetation management products. Due to the uniqueness of PLM's business, there are no clear primary use categories in the zoning ordinances which PLM could exclusively operate.

If principal use is defined by a calendar then PLM's Principal use would be "Office Business" as nearly 75% of the calendar year PLM utilizes only its office space in an administrative fashion such as clerical services, management planning, permitting and regulatory compliance.

If PLM's principal use is defined by revenue its principal use might be defined by retail business contained within a principal building or Service business off site.

To clarify, all products are available for retail sale and account for nearly 60% of total revenue but many times are accompanied by a service of application or installation. The primary products in which PLM offers are herbicide and algicides, mechanical tools and devices for management of vegetation.

The purpose and Intent of the B-4 General Business District in the zoning ordinance states "allow more intensive commercial uses that require extensive highway access for customer contact."

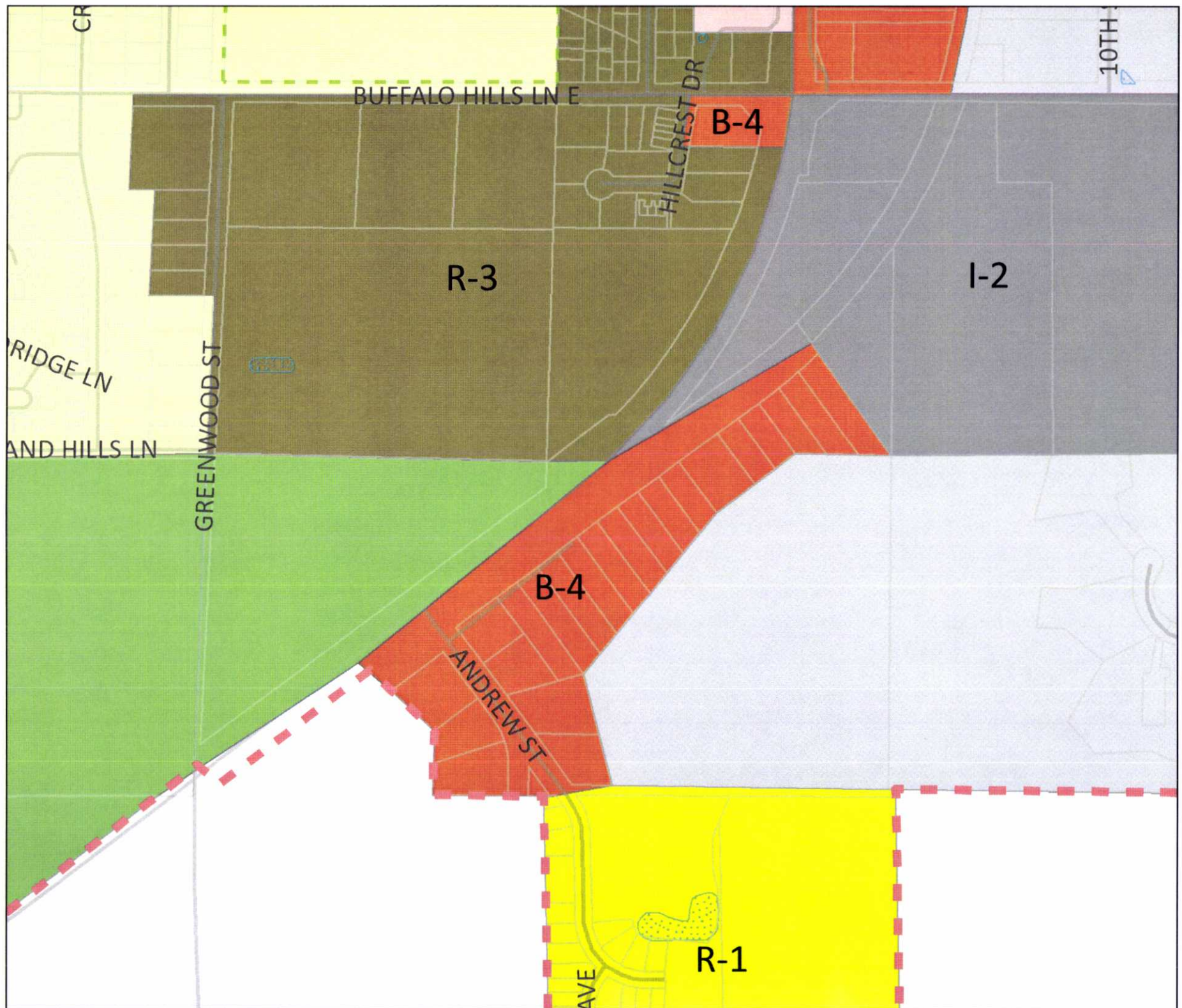
PLM would benefit from the B-4 purpose and intent for a few reasons;

1. Extensive highway access will allow PLM to expand its on site retail business by granting customers an easy to find location with direct access to its location.
2. Extensive highway access will allow PLM easy access to its customers and increase field service production and again enhance its customer contact.

Sincerely

Patrick Selter, Vice President

PLM Lake & Land Management Corp.



MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: March 4, 2013

RE: Zoning Map Correction – Brook Street

The south side of Brook Street from South 10th Street to South 13th Street was included in the R-MH (Residential Mobile Home) District located to the south when the new Zoning Map was adopted. This area of Brook Street is developed with detached single family dwellings and should be part of the R-1 (Single Family Residential) District zoning as it was zoned prior to adopting the new map.

A public hearing to initiate the rezoning process to correct this error can occur at the April Planning Commission meeting.

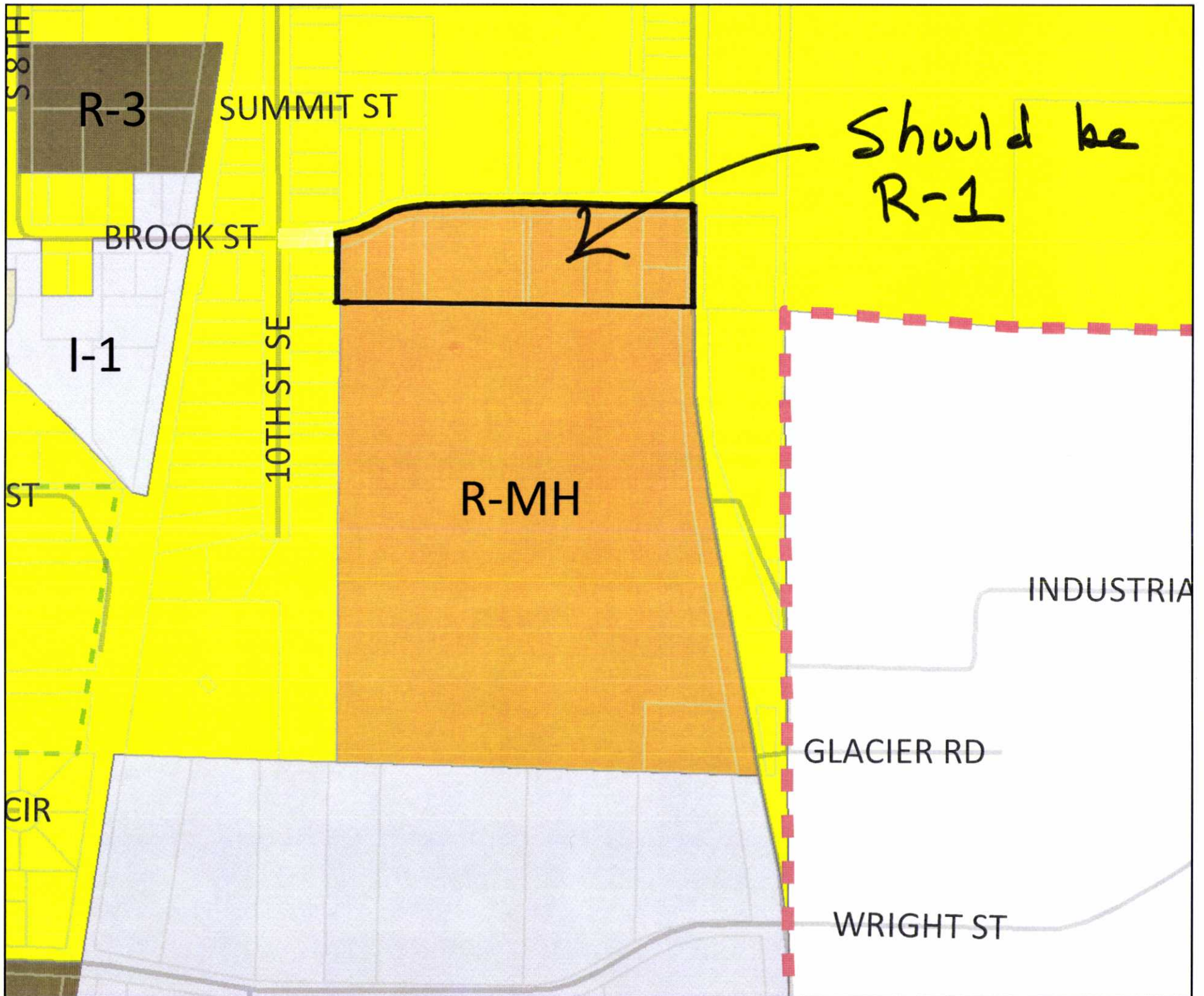
Attached is a copy of the area as identified on the Zoning Map and an aerial photograph of the area.



Brook Street Rezoning

Tuesday, Mar. 5, 2013 at 10:43 AM

These data are provided on an 'AS-IS' basis, without warranty of any type, expressed or implied. Including but not limited to any warranty as to their performance, merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose.



MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner



DATE: March 4, 2013

RE: Whittier School Repurposing

Attached is report from Steve Lund, ISD #181 Director of Business Services, to the School Board regarding the Whittier School repurposing process. It describes the history of the review process, describes the task force assembled by the School District to recommend a reuse(s) for the building and property, and the process it used to make its recommendation. Following fourteen (14) months of review it has recommended a reuse proposal by Northern Pines Mental Health Center as the proposal that best meets the guiding criteria for reuse. A copy of the Northern Pines reuse proposal is attached.

Also attached is a letter to Northern Pines in which I list several City of Brainerd reuse requirements. One of which is the property zoning. At the March meeting, I am suggesting that we begin some conversation about the options available for a process to determine whether the proposed use can be located at the property.

ISD #181 – Brainerd Public Schools

Board of Education

☐ Approval Requested

☐ Information Only

☐ Other:

Review Date:

March 7, 2013

Subject:

Whittier Task Force Committee Report

Submitted by:

Steve Lund – Director of Business Services on behalf of the Whittier Task Force Committee.

Summary:

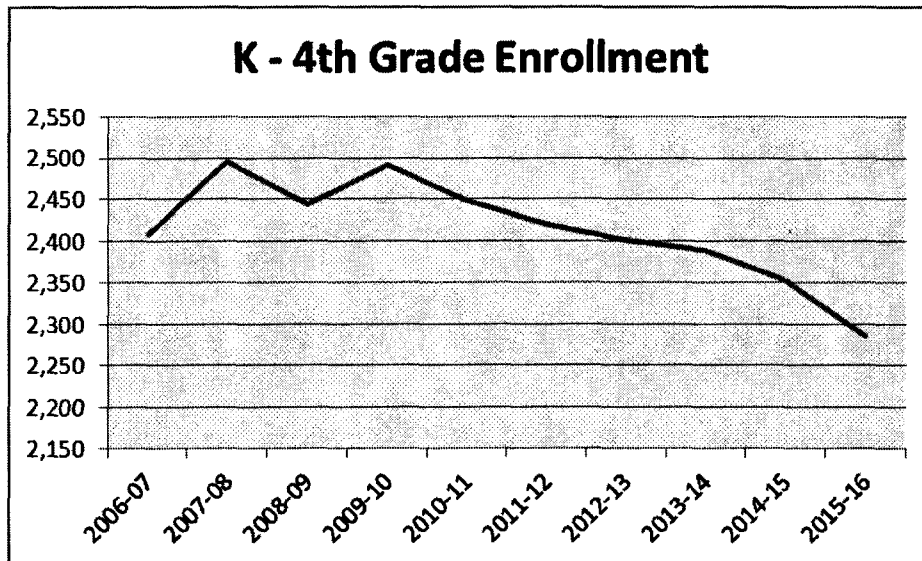
The school district closed two elementary schools as part of its \$5.5 million budget reductions plan following the 2007-08 school year.

Because of its proximity to BHS and cost savings from eliminating a leased facility at the former State Hospital site, the Lincoln elementary building was re-purposed for use as a specialized program that serves referral based students with emotional and behavioral issues in a mainstream educational setting has not proven to be successful. This program not only serves students from Brainerd, but is also an approved program that serves students from other Districts in our region on a fee-based tuition basis.

The Whittier school has remained closed since the conclusion of the 2007-08 school year and has been held and maintained as a vacant building as the school district continued to monitor its projected and actual enrollments over the past five school years in an effort to best understand if a need for classroom space would present a need for the building in the foreseeable and predictable future.

Taken from the school district's budget for the current 2012-13 school year, below is the enrollment history for the most recent five years and the projections for the next five years in its elementary student population in kindergarten through grade 4:

	Actual 2006-07	Actual 2007-08	Actual 2008-09	Actual 2009-10	Actual 2010-11	Forecast 2011-12	Projected 2012-13	Projected 2013-14	Projected 2014-15	Projected 2015-16
K - 4th Grade										
Kindergarten	485	513	484	522	499	485	492	460	455	466
Grade 1	499	507	500	490	502	500	485	492	460	450
Grade 2	489	499	490	504	476	483	492	477	483	447
Grade 3	462	499	478	498	494	457	476	485	470	446
Grade 4	473	478	492	477	477	495	456	475	484	476
Total K - 4	2,407	2,496	2,444	2,491	2,448	2,420	2,401	2,389	2,352	2,285
Classes	102	103	90	99	102	99	101	101	101	101
Class Size	23.6	24.2	27.2	25.2	24.0	24.4	23.8	23.7	23.3	22.6



In the most recent 5 – 6 years, kindergarten through fourth grade enrollments have experienced some expansion and contraction. The school district has best and most cost effectively managed this with shifting of staff resources and consolidation of the early childhood spaces from some of the elementary buildings and consolidating them to the Washington Educational Services Building (WESB), where additional, appropriate spaces have been purposed for this reason and to accommodate a growth in the number of students qualifying for early childhood special education services.

Again, this has been cost effective, as the district currently pays the fixed operational costs for this building for both student and staff uses, such as the Fun and Friends program, training spaces for district staff and community adult education, administrative offices for both ISD 181 and the Paul Bunyan Special Education Cooperative.

The Washington Educational Services building is also home to the single largest auditorium venue in our community and will remain operational in the foreseeable future. Maximizing the use of WESB only makes good financial sense in terms leveraging existing fixed costs versus committing to additional costs.

Also, as part of the budget reductions following the 2007-08 school years, boundaries we established for the six remaining elementary schools. This was a significant change that has now been part of the school district's operations for the past five school years. The school district has historically experienced a higher level of families moving within the boundaries of the elementary schools in Brainerd. Despite that the district's overall kindergarten through fourth grade student population is slightly declining, changes occurring in the number of students within our established school boundaries have presented both challenges and opportunities in meeting space needs across the six elementary schools, but the school district has been responsive by reviewing and maximizing all usable space in these schools to center the focus and attention on keeping the average class sizes in the elementary schools at 25 or less.

Even though as a result of the established school boundaries and families moving within these boundaries each year, expanding and contracting the student populations at individual school

buildings, the overall student enrollment has decreased by approximately 100 students in the past five years.

To best forecast the school district's elementary student population, and its entire enrollment for that matter, the school district currently uses a forecast model that calculates the rolling average of births that have occurred in the zip codes that are served by the school district, which then become enrolled kindergarteners five years later. Because of the ability to use this actual birth data and apply it to our historical incoming kindergarten class size trends, the forecast of enrollment for next five years can be done with a higher degree of accuracy. However, knowing that the projected enrollment number can fluctuate as a result of students and their families moving in and out of our District, the best and most accurate predictions will always change.

The current and forecast enrollment information as well as the current and continued ability to provide space to meet the desired average class sizes in our kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms forecasts that this additional school site and the eight additional classrooms is not needed for the foreseeable future.

To add the eight classrooms and maintain the current level of student population at the existing six elementary buildings, would mean that the district's kindergarten through fourth grade enrollment would need to increase by approximately 160 - 190 students to maintain the district's current average class size of 24 with 8 additional classrooms added to the current 100 classrooms in the district.

Adding the space back into the system without an increase in student population, would require the commitment of additional funds to cover the fixed costs associated with maintaining and operating another independent school site.

Thus, in the fall of 2011, after beginning the fourth year of the facility being closed, and a need for the space driven by expanding enrollment not presenting itself, the school board directed administration to identify and assemble a volunteer community task force to help lead a process of identifying a potential future re-use for the former Whittier school building and property.

In January of 2012, the first committee meeting of the Whittier Task Force was held at the Whittier building. The committee consists of the following individuals from our community and school district.

Mark Ostgarden – Brainerd City Planner
Steve Northway – Northway Construction/Builders
DeAnn Barry – Lakes Area Senior Center
Paul Bloom – Community Member
Jeff Torfin – Positive Real Estate Group
Krista Soukup – Community Member/North Side Neighborhood Group
Steve Lund – ISD 181 Director of Business Services
Kelly Bevans – Brainerd City Council
Kevin Donnay – WSN – Engineers/Architects
Sheila Haverkamp – BLADC
Earl Wolleat – ISD 181 Director of Buildings and Grounds
Kathleen Hermerding - Community Member/North Side Neighborhood Group
Kent Montgomery – School Board Member
Steve Razidlo – District Superintendent

This group has met monthly since January of 2012. During this time, the committee learned details of the building, its operational costs, its opportunities and limitations.

The group has been focusing its time of how to gather and review the best opportunities and ideas for the re-purposing of this facility.

At the April, 2012 task force meeting, it was decided by the group that ideas and input should be sought and gathered from the community and residents of the school district. As a result, the group developed a basic, two question survey to help engage with the residents of the school district; further engaging the broader community in this process.

The survey would allow the group to gather feedback from our community and review resulting ideas and concepts, and provide the group with useful information to develop trends or idea categories to help focus the group's efforts.

The survey (attached) was bulk mailed to the nearly 24,000 households in our school district. From this, people could respond by completing the form and mailing back or dropping off at Washington, BHS or FMS, or they could take the survey online at a website that was developed for information regarding this project at:

www.whittierproject.org

The survey asked two open ended questions:

- 1) What future use of the Whittier site could significantly benefit or improve our community?
- 2) How will our community pay for the new use of Whittier?

The Survey was mailed on June 7th and closed on June 30, 2012. The Brainerd Dispatch covered the survey as a story in the newspaper in their weekend edition on June 9, 2012. We received 225 responses. Of the 225, 15 were dropped at Washington, 109 were returned by mail, and 100 responded online.

From here, the responses were organized into a spreadsheet and were placed into the following categories:

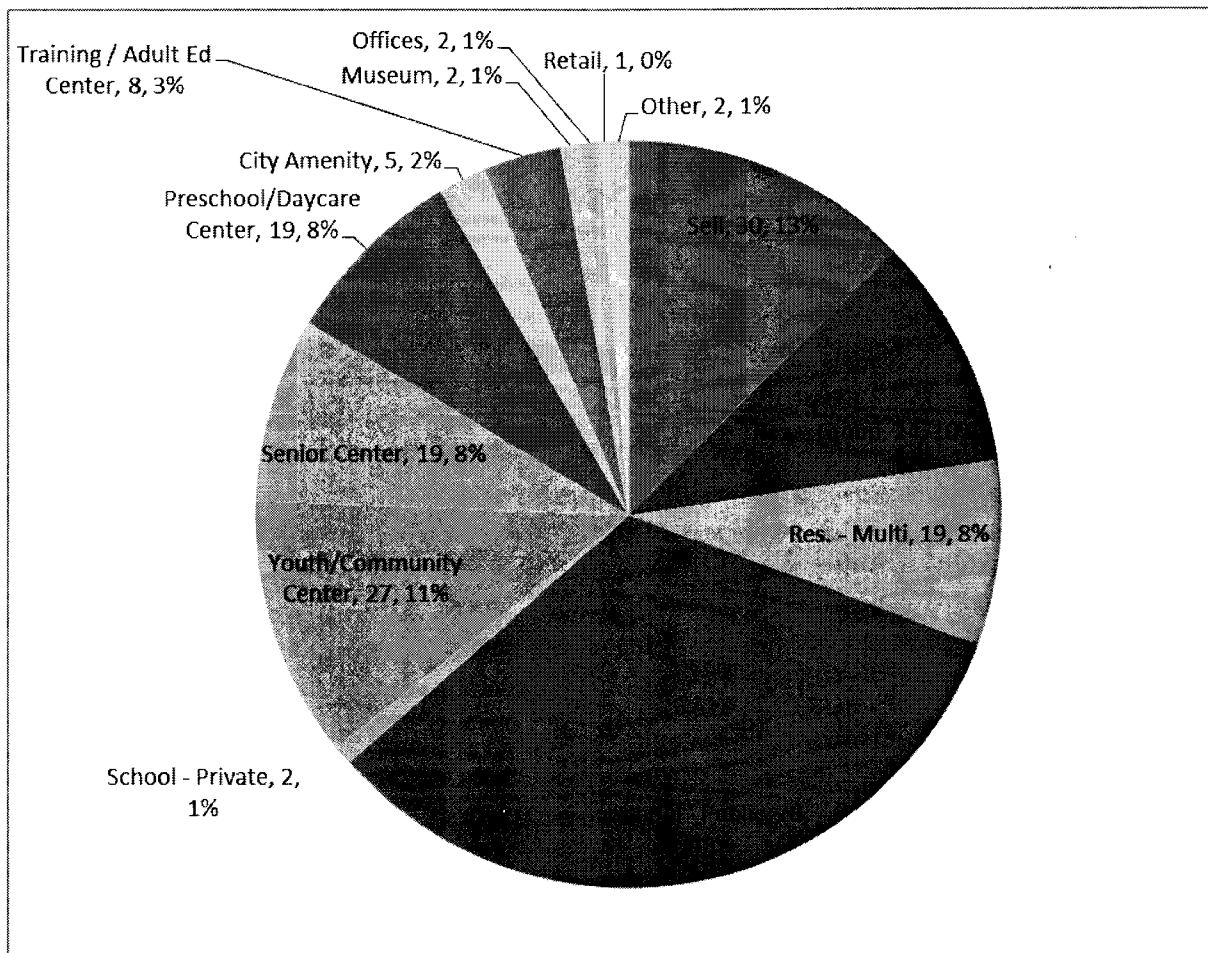
- **Sell** – Simply sell the building and save the current costs of preservation
- **Residential – Group** – Create a group home concept for various segments of community need.
- **Residential – Multi** – Create multi-family housing for either restricted use (senior or low income) or unrestricted use.
- **School – Public** – Re-open the facility for either general or specific public school programming.

- **School – Private** – Sell building to facilitate additional or expanded private schools
- **Youth/Community Center** – Create a use for the building and site that will be a place for community functions and/or a place for an organized youth activity center.
- **Senior Center**- Use for expanded needs for the Community's senior center programs
- **Preschool/Daycare Center** – Use facility for either private or public preschool programs or an institutional daycare facility
- **City Amenity** – use building an property for expanded city services, such as the building as a rentable facility as an extension of Gregory Park or for a splashpark, etc.
- **Training / Adult Ed Center** – Use the facility for training space needs for private and public organizations and for adult educations classes.
- **Museum** – 2 responses. One for a science museum concept and the other for Children's Discovery Museum concept.
- **Offices** – General office space for either private or public organizations.
- **Retail** – General retail space
- **Other** – 2 responses 1 bingo hall and 1 restaurant & boutiques

The total ideas that were categorized were 238. Even though there were only 225 responses, some responses contained multiple suggestions/ideas.

Again, there were approximately 24,000 surveys distributed via bulk mail, with less than a 1 percent response rate.

Of the responses received, below is a graph of the concentration of the idea categories described above:



The survey results reinforced much of what the task force discussed in this process, that indeed the highest and best use for the facility is a school.

However, the purpose of the task force was to identify what could exist as the next highest and use for the facility.

During the time in which the survey was open, several formal inquiries were made from organizations in our community that expressed an interest in the facility. The organizations were primarily non-profit organizations that currently existed in our community. Most were looking to the building as an expansion and enhancement of their existing programs and services.

With this interest that surfaced during the process of further engaging with the community with the survey, and after reviewing the number and preliminary uses of expressed interests from existing organizations that have a history of successful operations and services in our community, it was supported by a majority of the committee members to move forward with the development of a request for proposals (RFP) process that would provide equal opportunity for organizations to submit their proposals for re-use of the facilities under a uniform and objective process.

The development of this request for proposals was critical in that it needed to best identify and communicate the main objectives in identifying the next highest and best use of the facility.

The entire request for proposals format was developed around three guiding criteria that were established based on the primary objectives to be achieved in identifying the building's potential future use.

The guiding criteria are as follows:

1. A use which is appropriate and conducive to the surrounding neighborhood and meets the needs of our community.
2. A use that is financially sustainable, ensuring consistency in the use of the property and continued maintenance of its condition.
3. A project time table that ensures the property will not remain vacant and jeopardize the integrity of its current condition.

The School Board reviewed and approved the request for proposals to be released on November 1, 2012, with responses due at 4:30 pm on February 1, 2013.

While the RFP was being reviewed and approved by the School Board, the question was asked by the School Board... "Before continuing to move ahead with this process, are we certain that Whittier, as a paid for asset, is not the most cost effective option to accommodate a 200 student increase in our enrollment?"

This was a specific question asked of administration during the RFP approval process by the School Board. Task Force was not involved in the process of a financial review and analysis completed to answer this question, but an analysis was completed by school administration with a presentation that was provided to the school board at the December 6, 2012 Facilities Committee meeting and the December 10, 2012 School Board meeting. A copy of this analysis is contained within the attached School Board presentation. The comparison used in this analysis was for illustrative purposes only and the school has no immediate plans for significant changes in the 6 existing elementary buildings.

The release and response time table of the request for proposals allowed potential respondents three months to best complete the research and planning needed to submit as qualified proposal as possible in meeting the three guiding criteria above.

Four proposals were received for the re-use of the former Whittier Elementary School.

The proposals are as follows:

- Northern Pines Mental Health Center Inc. has submitted a proposal which is titled, Whittier Elementary Community Center for Health and Wellness
- The North Side Neighborhood, with the proposal being prepared by Daniel Thornton, has submitted a proposal which is titled, North Side Community and Athletic Center.
- Laura A. C. Leckband and Richard T. Russell have submitted a proposal which is titled, Brainerd Lakes Area Science and Technology Center. (BLAST)

- Duane Halvorson of Hugo, MN submitted a proposal which is titled, Halvorson Whittier Enterprises, LLC for operations of a chemical dependency treatment program.

During the process in which the request for proposals was developed, a proposed evaluation format was also reviewed and developed. This would guide the task force in evaluation of the proposals, as well help the potential respondents in best understanding how their proposals would be reviewed and evaluated.

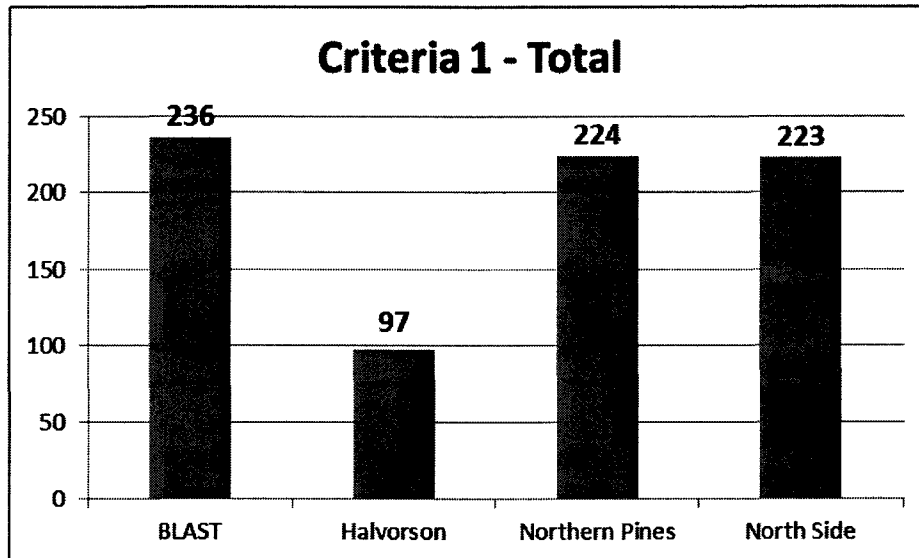
A copy of this evaluation format is attached. It provided an equal 30 point ranking score for the three main guiding criteria; thus allowing each proposal a maximum evaluation score of 90 points.

Based on this evaluation method, the following are the results from the evaluations completed by the members of the task force.

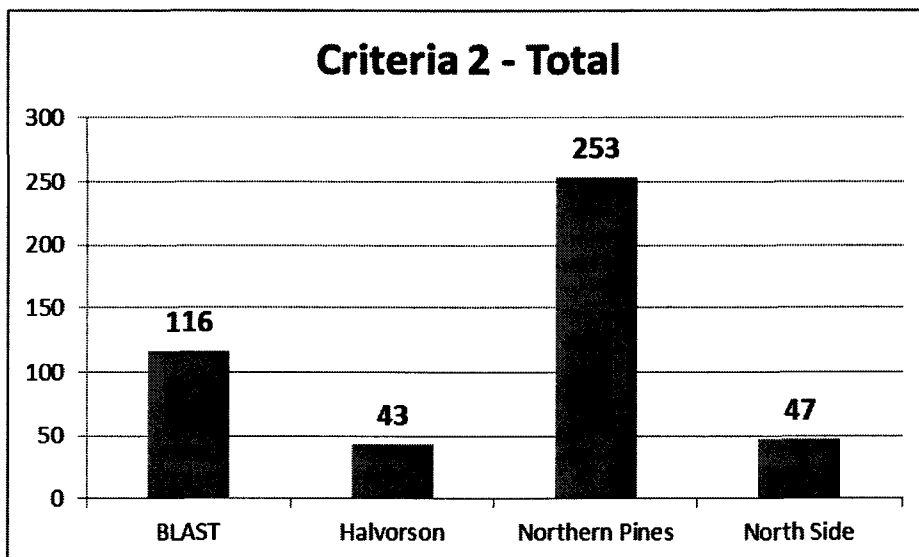
Evaluator Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		Total	Avg
BLAST														
Criteria 1	16	8	22	26	30	8	30	28	28	25	15		236	21
Criteria 2	9	2	12	14	5	4	15	18	17	15	5		116	11
Criteria 3	4	5	3	12	10	2	20	16	20	10	10		112	10
Total	29	15	37	52	45	14	65	62	65	50	30		464	42
Halvorson Whittier Enter. LLC														
Criteria 1	8	0	18	6	10	1	10	19	13	7	5		97	9
Criteria 2	0	0	7	4	5	1	0	15	9	2	0		43	4
Criteria 3	0	0	5	2	5	1	0	13	5	2	0		33	3
	8	0	30	12	20	3	10	47	27	11	5		173	16
Northern Pines														
Criteria 1	19	6	26	15	27	19	25	22	28	25	12		224	20
Criteria 2	27	11	26	28	25	23	30	26	29	28	0		253	23
Criteria 3	22	16	28	27	25	26	30	27	30	28	10		269	24
	68	33	80	70	77	68	85	75	87	81	22		746	68
North Side Neighborhood														
Criteria 1	9	5	21	18	30	23	25	27	25	25	15		223	20
Criteria 2	0	1	7	2	3	6	0	16	7	5	0		47	4
Criteria 3	1	2	7	8	5	1	5	17	7	5	5		63	6
	10	8	35	28	38	30	30	60	39	35	20		333	30

With 11 evaluations completed by the task force members, (DeAnn Barry was excluded from the proposal review and evaluation process due to her direct connection with the Northern Pines Proposal) each proposal had a total of 330 possible points available for each of the criteria and an overall of 990 points available.

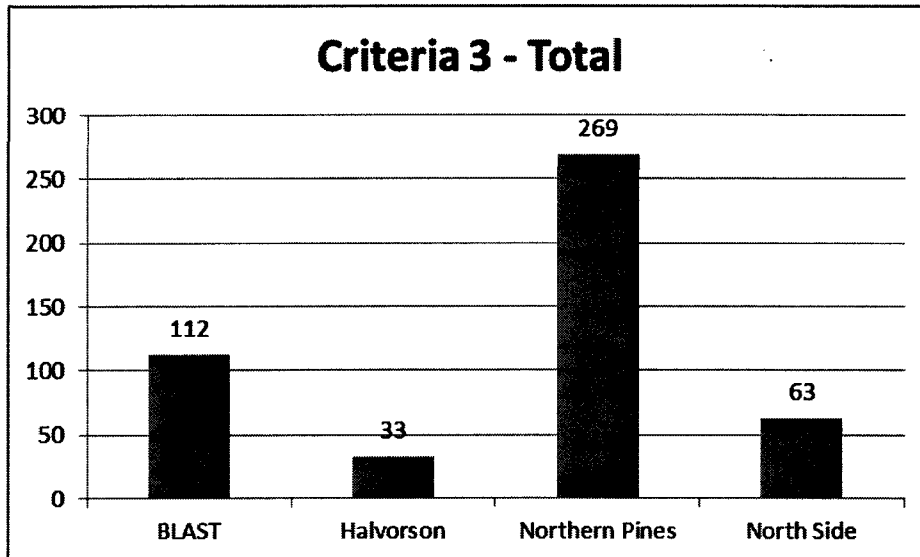
Criteria 1 - A use which is appropriate and conducive to the surrounding neighborhood and meets the needs of our community.



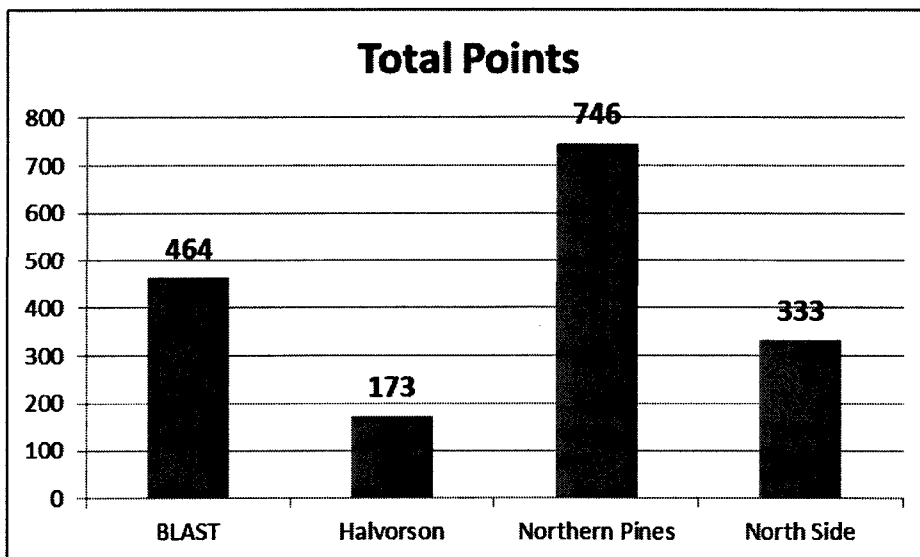
Criteria 2 - A use that is financially sustainable, ensuring consistency in the use of the property and continued maintenance of its condition.



Criteria 3 - A project time table that ensures the property will not remain vacant and jeopardize the integrity of its current condition.



TOTAL – With 30 points possible for each of the criteria, each proposal had 990 points possible from the 11 evaluations completed by the task force members.



As part of the evaluation and format, each evaluator was provided opportunity and space to include any comments regarding the proposal relative to each of the guiding criteria categories.

These comments have been organized by proposal for each evaluator and are attached for review.

From the review of this evaluation, the task force decided to invite the top three scoring proposals for an interview process. This interview process allowed each proposal respondent the opportunity to briefly summarize the details of their proposal and also allowed for ample time for the task force to directly ask questions of each proposal respondent.

As part of this interview process, each task force member in attendance was provided a form and asked to take any notes or comments and at the end, provide a one through three ranking, with one representing the organization that met the guiding criteria best as a result of the interview process.

All of the task force members were in attendance and participated except DeAnn Barry, Steve Northway and Kent Montgomery. All of the interview assessments completed by the task force members ranked the proposals the same, with Northern Pines receiving one, BLAST receiving two and the North Side proposal receiving the ranking of three.

These sheets are attached for review.

Thus, over a time and commitment by this group of community volunteers that has spanned the last fourteen months; the task force has facilitated a process that further engaged with our community in seeking a next highest and best use for the facility that included a survey that lead to an equitable process of seeking proposals from interested parties.

These proposals were evaluated in both a quantitative and qualitative manner, providing opportunity for the task force to best understand all the strengths and weaknesses of each of the proposals.

While the building and site was developed and operated for nearly 70 years as an elementary school, making this it's highest and best use, the task force was charged with the opportunity to take an instrumental role in identifying the next highest and best use for this community asset.

As a result of all of the process described above, the task force has determined that the proposal submitted by Northern Pines best meets all of the criteria that was established early in the process; criteria that prioritizes a use that is appropriate for the neighborhood and meets the needs of the community, a use that demonstrates its sustainability over time and best preserves this community asset.

As part of this determination, the task force also has identified issues with this re-use that will need to be addressed if a process moves forward:

- An accountability mechanism to ensure that the uses by Northern Pines remain appropriate for the building and its location. It would be recommended that a mechanism include a reasonable review period with proper means and measures for enforcement.
- An evaluation and consideration of possible changes in traffic patterns and the possible need for off-street parking.
- A clearer understanding and commitment for their proposed capital improvements to the building and ongoing maintenance for continued preservation of the integrity of the building.
- A clearer understanding of the steps and timing for Northern Pines to address the change in use of the building in its current City of Brainerd residential zoning classification.

Exhibits/Attachments:

- Survey Form
- Survey Comments
- School Board Presentation - cost comparison to accommodate unforeseen student growth
- Request for Proposals Form
- Halvorson Whittier LLC Proposal
- BLAST Proposal
- Northern Pines Proposal
- North Side Neighborhood Proposal
- Task Force Evaluation Comments
- Task Force Interview Comment and Ranking Sheets



Whittier Elementary Community Center for Health and Wellness

Proposal by
Northern Pines Mental Health Center

Whittier Elementary Community Center for Health and Wellness

Northern Pines is a charitable non-profit corporation 501(c)3 and a community mental health center that provides mental health services in the region. Over the next several years Northern Pines proposes to develop the Whittier Elementary facility as a community center of health education and wellness and open it to a variety of community organizations and uses. We propose to use the facility initially as office space for several pre-school and school-age programs (In-Home and Behavioral Health Aides) while providing access to The Center (formerly The Senior Center) for several of its programs. These uses together will ensure sustainability for the Whittier Elementary facility. Any needed upgrades or modifications will be funded out of user fees or grants.

How will the proposed use be appropriate and conducive to the neighborhood?

The community survey responses make very clear the sense of grief at the loss of a neighborhood elementary school and the hope that, to the greatest degree possible, the site's original purpose could be preserved and retained. A jewel of a Works Progress Administration facility, Whittier Elementary was designed and built to meet the needs of the families and children of the neighborhood and in a historical and community sense, it belongs to the neighborhood.

To the highest degree consistent with sustainability, there is the desire that the needs of the neighborhood should be a priority in any repurposing of the facility. The neighborhood survey responses included a number of uses that meet local needs:

- A youth/community center
- A preschool/daycare center
- A senior center
- A training/adult education center
- A school, public or private
- A city amenity that can be rented by a variety of users for special events

All of these uses are compatible with and complementary to the Northern Pines' community mission. As a community mental health center, Northern Pines' mission is to serve individuals of all ages, families and communities by providing comprehensive, integrated services, prevention and community education.

The mission of community mental health involves building healthy communities at every level of community from the regional to the neighborhood level. This can be accomplished in a number of ways but one of the best ways is by playing a stewardship role and collaborating with other organizations whose missions overlap with that of community mental health. Northern Pines has been a member of the community since 1964 and has a long history of working cooperatively with other community-based private non-profit and public agencies, but has never had such an opportunity to ground itself at the neighborhood level as is envisioned in this proposal. Whittier Elementary School is an ideal place to advance several mission components, including:

- Community Education and Prevention
- Wellness and Healthy Lifestyle Education
- Services to Pre-school children and Youth
- Services to families with young children
- Integration with other community-based service organizations
- Integration at the neighborhood level

Northern Pines will use Whittier Elementary for staff office space for several children's programs and a pre-school daycare center. Classroom space will be used to provide community education and prevention, and wellness and healthy lifestyle education sessions as well as made available to other community agencies and groups.

The gymnasium has great potential for multi-use community activities such as sports/recreational, theater productions, community meetings, etc. The gym's proximity to a full-service serving kitchen allows for even greater flexibility and utilization for the space. Another possible uses include the use of the gym and a classroom for after school activities for neighborhood youth (suggestion received by neighborhood member).

The playground area will be converted into a community garden space for use by neighborhood residence as well as Northern Pines and The Center's members. We intend to use the garden as a source for nutrition and cooking classes.

Our initial "tenant" and integrative partner will be The Center, which will utilize the gymnasium/stage/kitchen area for senior activities plus a designated classroom for its Model Railroad group. Other uses contemplated by The Center include:

- Intergenerational activities: grandparents and grandchildren or great-grandchildren
- Community garage sale for the Northside neighborhood
- Community garden spots for Northside residents
- Historical log book and walking tours of Whittier Elementary
- Possible neighborhood "free clinic"
- Gymnasium uses: theatre productions, intergenerational dinner theatre, concerts, exercise classes, Silver Sneakers, Zumba Gold, 55+ volleyball, basketball, indoor tennis, pickle ball, kick ball, dodge ball, walking groups including the Northside Neighborhood.
- Day care services
- Rotating art classes
- Community Education classes during the day
- Greenhouse and Community gardening classes
- Bingo events
- Exercise equipment rooms with workout equipment available for Center members, Northern Pines clients and neighborhood residents
- Rental of space for birthday parties, anniversary parties, community celebrations

In addition to the above, Northern Pines will offer free, permanent office space for the Neighborhood Association and make its public spaces available for association meetings and events.

How will the proposed use of the facility be financially sustainable ensuring use consistency and continued maintenance of its condition?

Northern Pines' Assertive Community Treatment and Mobile Crisis Outreach programs together currently spend more per year on occupancy expenses than the average annual facility operational cost when Whittier Elementary was still being used as an elementary school. By moving these programs (and their facility funding) to our Maple Street facility and relocating our Children's In-home and Mental Health Behavioral Aide programs to Whittier Elementary, operational sustainability will be largely secured. This stable funding will provide a solid base to operate and maintain Whittier Elementary while Northern Pines reaches out and collaborates with other community agencies to improve and broaden the facility's community uses.

Additional expenses associated with items such as handicapped accessibility, full furnishing and equipping the gym, stage and kitchen area, conversion of the playground area into a community garden, and other modifications needed to accommodate other community users will be financed through lease and usage fees and in-kind contributions made by partner organizations.

Project time table that ensures the property will not remain vacant

If selected, Northern Pines can begin the move-in and/or takeover of operational expenses within 90 days of selection. Several programs could move in immediately. The Assertive Community Treatment program's lease requires a 90-day notice.

Other community partner/users such as The Center would be able to begin to use the gym and stage area for community activities immediately. The Neighborhood Association would also be offered meeting and office space immediately.

QUALIFICATIONS/PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Name and contact information - Glenn Anderson, Executive Director, 218-390-9020, ganderson@npmh.org
2. General Company/Organization Description - Northern Pines is a charitable non-profit corporation (501(c)3), that provides mental health services in the region.
3. Organization History and Management Qualifications - Northern Pines Mental Health Center was incorporated in 1964 by a group of counties that agreed to pool their resources in order to establish a community mental health center. Northern Pines began offering co-located services within the Brainerd School District in 1992 with one staff assigned full time to work at the Level IV setting known as MLC in those days. The following year mental health services were designed for the 6th and 7th grade students attending Washington Middle School. The following year co-located services were established at Lincoln and Harrison Elementary Schools and the following year they were expanded to Franklin Jr. High. The successful integration of academia and mental health services has been offered continuously.
4. Executive Summary for Proposed Property Use - Northern Pines proposes to use the Whittier Elementary facility initially as office space for several youth-oriented and educational programs and provide access to The Center for several of its programs. These uses together will ensure sustainability for Whittier Elementary facility. Over the next several years Northern Pines will develop the facility as a community center of health education and wellness and open it to a variety of community organizations and uses. Any needed upgrades or modifications will be funded out of user fees or grants.
5. Services to be provided with the use of the property - See application narrative.
6. Startup Expenses, Property Improvements and Capitalization/Funding Plan - Building operational expenses will be funded by Northern Pines as part of the budgeted expense of programs housed in the facility. Property improvements, especially ADA handicapped accessibility will be financed through leasehold expenses paid by the "anchor tenant," The Center.
7. Marketing Plan - Availability of space and utilization of the Whittier Elementary Center for health and wellness education will be marketed to the community and its stakeholders. Descriptions of available meeting and event space, along with fees and reservations procedures will be posted on Northern Pines' web site. Community organizations such as Master Gardeners, Co-ops, 4H and other sustainable agriculture entities will be invited to propose ways to organize and implement a community garden. Selected proponents will become stakeholder/tenants in the Whittier facility.
8. Operational Plan - The plan will have several phases.
 - A. Initial occupancy phase: In this phase, Northern Pines will move the programs whose facility expenses will be dedicated to Whittier Elementary into the building.
 - B. New Program phase: Northern Pines pre-school therapeutic day care facility will open, using the former kindergarten space. Other uses by The Center will begin scheduled use of the gym, the stage, kitchen and other areas of the facility. A community garden partner will be chosen and begin implementation of its plan to develop a community garden.
 - C. Community Center phase: Areas of the facility designated for public and community use will be made available for community use.
9. Financial Plan and Credit References - See attached financial audit.

**NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA**

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2011 AND 2010
TOGETHER WITH INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

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Additional Information	
Selected Historical Information	10

Dean R. Ager, CPA
Michael S. Altman, CPA
Deborah J. Medlin, CPA
Daria R. Benoit, CPA
Ronald E. Peterson, CPA/ABV
Thomas J. Eling, CPA
Thomas L. Sykes, CPA of Counsel

Independent Auditor's Report

April 27, 2012

To the Board of Directors
Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc.
Little Falls, Minnesota

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc. (Center), a Minnesota corporation organized not-for-profit, as of December 31, 2011 and 2010, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Center's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc. as of December 31, 2011 and 2010, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The schedule of Selected Historical Information on page 10 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Eikill & Schilling Ltd.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31,

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 838,795	\$ 990,973
Certificate of deposit		250,000
Accounts receivable		
Client (net of allowance of \$310,000 and \$225,000, respectively)	395,745	271,462
Other	227,123	131,898
Grants receivable	11,500	22,100
Prepaid expenses	92,173	101,552
Total current assets	<u>1,565,336</u>	<u>1,767,985</u>
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation of \$1,062,595 and \$911,287, respectively	<u>1,176,718</u>	<u>1,094,563</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 2,742,054</u>	<u>\$ 2,862,548</u>
 LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 154,138	\$ 162,204
Revenue refund payable	84,000	50,000
Accrued vacation pay	335,810	241,627
Payroll related accruals	21,517	12,961
Total current liabilities	<u>595,465</u>	<u>466,792</u>
Net assets		
Unrestricted		
Current	969,871	1,301,193
Property and equipment	1,176,718	1,094,563
Total unrestricted net assets	<u>2,146,589</u>	<u>2,395,756</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 2,742,054</u>	<u>\$ 2,862,548</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31,

	2011			2010		
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Revenues and other support						
Contributions and grants	\$ 16,340	\$	\$ 16,340	\$ 28,563	\$	\$ 28,563
County government contracts						
and fees for services	1,366,893		1,366,893	1,314,204		1,314,204
Other fees for services	7,823,674		7,823,674	6,928,376		6,928,376
Other revenues	41,030		41,030	31,616		31,616
Interest income	6,806		6,806	6,821		6,821
Total revenues and other support	<u>9,254,743</u>		<u>9,254,743</u>	<u>8,309,580</u>		<u>8,309,580</u>
Released from temporary restriction				<u>1,565</u>	<u>(1,565)</u>	
Expenses						
Program services-						
Mental health	7,996,188		7,996,188	7,061,762		7,061,762
Supporting services-						
Management and general	<u>1,507,722</u>		<u>1,507,722</u>	<u>1,146,216</u>		<u>1,146,216</u>
Total expenses	<u>9,503,910</u>		<u>9,503,910</u>	<u>8,207,978</u>		<u>8,207,978</u>
Changes in net assets	(249,167)		(249,167)	103,167	(1,565)	101,602
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>2,395,756</u>		<u>2,395,756</u>	<u>2,292,589</u>	<u>1,565</u>	<u>2,294,154</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 2,146,589</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$ 2,146,589</u>	<u>\$ 2,395,756</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$ 2,395,756</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31,

	2011			2010		
	Program Services	Supporting Services		Program Services	Supporting Services	
	Mental Health	Management and General	Total	Mental Health	Management and General	Total
Salaries and professional contracts	\$ 5,856,315	\$ 875,082	\$ 6,731,397	\$ 5,000,576	\$ 747,213	\$ 5,747,789
Employee health benefits	365,715	45,201	410,916	268,108	33,137	301,245
Payroll taxes and worker's compensation	474,144	64,656	538,800	394,444	53,788	448,232
Retirement		144,812	144,812		118,693	118,693
Total salaries, professional contracts and related expenses	6,696,174	1,129,751	7,825,925	5,663,128	952,831	6,615,959
Recruitment	6,066	1,516	7,582	7,422	1,856	9,278
Other professional fees	19,843	13,229	33,072	25,488	16,975	42,463
Supplies	109,274	20,814	130,088	121,929	23,225	145,154
Telephone	153,383	17,042	170,425	124,015	13,779	137,794
Postage	9,313	490	9,803	7,965	419	8,384
Occupancy		166,499	166,499	133,951	14,223	148,174
Cleaning and maintenance	70,335	7,815	78,150	58,748	6,528	65,276
Equipment repair and maintenance	95,273	15,509	110,782	55,711	9,069	64,780
Travel	468,562	76,278	544,840	353,058	57,474	410,532
Conferences, conventions, and meetings	86,157	14,026	100,183	118,535	19,296	137,831
Board per diem		1,870	1,870		1,892	1,892
Printing	1,811	481	2,292	1,812	482	2,294
Dues and subscriptions	13,180	1,464	14,644	11,558	1,284	12,842
Discounts and bad debts	85,000		85,000	225,000		225,000
Advertising	14,960		14,960	24,857		24,857
Interest		1,353	1,353	726		726
Miscellaneous	32,082	15,801	47,883	13,667	6,731	20,398
Depreciation	134,775	23,784	158,559	114,192	20,152	134,344
Total functional expenses	<u>\$ 7,996,188</u>	<u>\$ 1,507,722</u>	<u>\$ 9,503,910</u>	<u>\$ 7,061,762</u>	<u>\$ 1,146,216</u>	<u>\$ 8,207,978</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31,

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Cash flows from operating activities		
Changes in net assets	\$ (249,167)	\$ 101,602
Adjustments to reconcile changes in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		
Depreciation	158,559	134,344
Increase (decrease) in allowance for bad debts	85,000	(265,000)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase) decrease in		
Accounts receivable		
Client	(209,283)	312,628
Other	(95,225)	142,276
Grant receivable	10,600	1,411
Prepaid expenses	9,379	(30,776)
Increase (decrease) in		
Accounts payable	(8,066)	83,521
Revenue refund payable	34,000	49,998
Payroll related accruals	102,739	83,435
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(161,464)</u>	<u>613,439</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Maturity of certificate of deposit	250,000	
Payments for property and equipment	(240,714)	(593,080)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>9,286</u>	<u>(593,080)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(152,178)	20,359
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>990,973</u>	<u>970,614</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 838,795</u>	<u>\$ 990,973</u>
Supplemental disclosure of cash flow information		
Non-cash transactions		
Disposal of fully depreciated assets	\$	\$ 340,726
Interest paid	1,353	726

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2011 AND 2010

NOTE 1 NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Nature of Activities - Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc. (NPMHC) was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1964 for the purpose of providing direct and indirect services in the areas of mental illness, developmental disabilities, and chemical dependency to residents of Todd, Morrison, Wadena, Crow Wing, and Cass counties. Billings are largely to third party providers.

Basis of Presentation - Under accounting standards, NPMHC is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets.

Cash and Cash Equivalents - For purposes of the Statements of Cash Flows, NPMHC considers all unrestricted highly liquid investments with an initial maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Concentration of Credit Risk - Financial instruments that potentially subject NPMHC to concentrations of credit risk consist principally of cash deposits in a financial institution in excess of the FDIC insured limit. Cash balances in excess of this limit at December 31, 2011 and 2010, were \$5,627 and \$308,621, respectively. At December 31, 2011, none of the uninsured amount was pledged by the financial institution. At December 31, 2010, \$289,167 of the uninsured amounts was pledged by the financial institution.

The Center also grants credit without collateral to patients, most of whom are local residents and are insured under third party payor agreements.

Grants Receivable - Grants receivable consist of amounts due from public entities. Management believes collection of this amount is reasonably certain.

Accounts Receivable - Accounts receivable is reported at the amount management expects to collect on balances outstanding at year-end. Management provides for probable uncollectible amounts through a charge to earnings and a credit to a valuation allowance based on its assessment of the current status of individual accounts. Balances that are still outstanding after management has used reasonable collection efforts are written off through a charge to the valuation allowance and a credit to the accounts receivable.

Deferred Revenue - Income from revenue not yet earned is deferred and recognized over the periods to which the revenue and other support relate.

Unrestricted Net Assets - Used to account for resources currently available for use over which the Governing Board has discretionary control in carrying on the operations and purpose of the Center.

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets - Used to account for resources whose use is limited by donor-imposed stipulations that either expire by passage of time or can be fulfilled and removed by actions of the Center pursuant to those stipulations. At December 31, 2011 and 2010, there were no temporarily restricted net assets.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets - Used to account for resources required by donor to be maintained in perpetuity by the Center. The Center had no permanently restricted net assets at December 31, 2011 and 2010.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2011 AND 2010
(Continued)

NOTE 1 NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
(Continued)

Contributions and Grants - Contributions and grants are recognized when the donor makes a promise to give to the Center that is, in substance, unconditional. Contributions that are restricted by the donor are reported as increases in unrestricted net assets if the restrictions expire in the year in which the contributions are recognized. All other donor-restricted contributions are reported as increases in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets depending on the nature of the restrictions. When a restriction expires, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets.

Net Patient Service Revenue - The Center has agreements with third-party payers that provide for payments to the Center at amounts different from its established rates. Billing arrangements include determined rates per visit and discounted charges. Net patient service revenue is reported at the estimated net realizable amounts from patients, third-party payers, and others for services rendered.

- **Medicare.** Outpatient behavioral health services rendered to Medicare program beneficiaries are billed at prospectively determined rates per service. The rates vary according to a patient classification system that is based on clinical and diagnostic factors.
- **Medicaid.** Outpatient behavioral health services rendered to Medicaid program beneficiaries are billed at determined rates based on clinical and diagnostic factors.

Charity Care - The Center provides care to patients who meet certain criteria under its sliding fee schedule policy without charge or at amounts less than its established rates. Because the Center does not pursue collection of amounts determined to qualify as reduced fee care, they are not reported as revenue.

The Center also has entered into payment agreements with certain commercial insurance carriers and preferred provider organizations. The basis for payment to the Center under these agreements includes prospectively determined rates per service and discounts from established charges.

Estimates - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates. The allowance for doubtful accounts is a significant estimate.

Advertising Costs - The Center expenses advertising costs as incurred.

Expense Allocation - The costs of providing various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the Statements of Activities and in the Statements of Functional Expenses. Expenses incurred for program or supporting services are assigned directly to program or supporting service. Expenses which affect both program and supporting service are allocated among the program and supporting service by the staff of Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Inc. in a manner to reflect a fair breakdown of expense by function.

Income Tax Status - NPMHC is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and from state income tax under Minnesota Statute 290.05. Tax years prior to 2008 are closed for tax authority examination.

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2011 AND 2010
(Continued)

NOTE 1 NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
(Continued)

Property and Equipment - Property and equipment are carried at cost or, if donated, at the approximate fair value at the date of donation. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of the property and equipment. Amortization of capital leases is also computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of the assets and is included in depreciation expense. Assets donated with explicit restrictions regarding their use and contributions of cash that must be used to acquire property and equipment are reported as restricted contributions. Absent donor stipulations regarding how long those donated assets must be maintained, NPMHC reports expirations of donor restrictions when the donated or acquired assets are placed in service as instructed by the donor. NPMHC reclassifies temporarily restricted net assets to unrestricted net assets at that time.

Subsequent Events - In preparing these financial statements, the Center has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure through April 27, 2012, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

NOTE 2 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Property and equipment at December 31 are summarized by major classification as follows:

	<u>Estimated Useful Lives</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Land		\$ 52,501	\$ 42,501
Buildings	30 yrs.	1,206,005	1,116,829
Land improvements	10 yrs.	6,022	6,022
Furniture, fixtures, and equipment	5 - 10 yrs.	634,512	544,081
Vehicle	5 yrs.	340,273	296,437
Total		<u>2,239,313</u>	<u>2,005,850</u>
Less accumulated depreciation		<u>(1,062,595)</u>	<u>(911,287)</u>
Net property and equipment		<u>\$ 1,176,718</u>	<u>\$ 1,094,563</u>

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2011 AND 2010
(Continued)

NOTE 3 RETIREMENT PLAN

NPMHC has a defined contribution pension plan for all eligible employees. An employee is considered eligible upon successful completion of six months of service. Employees must work 1,000 hours in the plan year to be eligible for a contribution. NPMHC is required to contribute up to 4 percent of an eligible employee's salary. Retirement expense for the years ended December 31, 2011 and 2010 was \$144,812 and \$118,693 respectively. For those employees hired after September 1, 2001, contributions made by NPMHC up to the safe harbor amount of 4 percent will be 100 percent vested. Other NPMHC contributions will be 100 percent vested after six years. Employees hired prior to September 1, 2001 are 100 percent vested.

NOTE 4 COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

NPMHC has entered into various lease agreements for rental of office space in the counties served. All the leases are considered operating leases and are on a month to month basis. Total rent expense for the years ended December 31, 2011 and 2010, was \$57,257 and \$60,439, respectively.

The Center is subject to retroactive audits by third party payors.

It is possible that the Minnesota Department of Human Services will request a refund of some of the 2011 profits generated by the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services. If such a refund is requested it is expected to be less than \$100,000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NORTHERN PINES MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.
LITTLE FALLS, MINNESOTA

SELECTED HISTORICAL INFORMATION
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31,

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Total revenues and other support	\$ 9,254,743	\$ 8,309,580	\$ 8,052,502	\$ 6,689,035	\$ 4,693,069
Increase (decrease) in unrestricted net assets	(249,167)	101,602	931,747	576,459	124,331
Depreciation	158,559	134,344	98,679	90,086	74,988
Capital expenditures	240,714	593,080	167,062	113,002	65,711
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents and short-term investments	(152,178)	20,359	509,304	(211,234)	646,580

MEMO

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner



DATE: March 4, 2013

RE: Variance History

At the February meeting, Commissioner Cole inquired about the number of approved variances since the new Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2009. Following is a yearly total back to 2005.

05 – 9

06 – 5

07 – 10

08 – 5

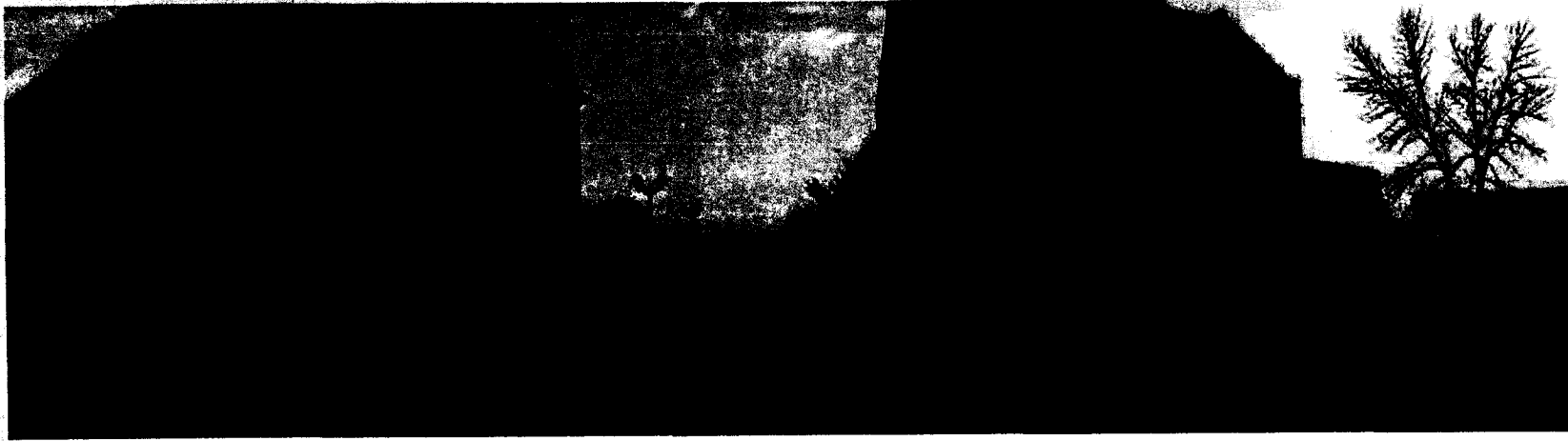
09 – 3

10 – 1

11 – 4

12 – 3

Agenda Item 5b.



THE {micro} CITY BEAUTIFUL |

A THREE ACT CAMPAIGN TO
USE THE BEST PRINCIPLES AND
PRACTICES WITHIN DESIGN &
PLANNING TO IMPROVE QUALITY
OF LIFE & FOSTER ECONOMIC
GROWTH IN A MICRO CITY

MEMO

TO: Mayor and City Council
Planning Commission

CC: Theresa Goble, City Administrator
Jeff Hulsether, City Engineer
Tom Fitzpatrick, City Attorney

FROM: Mark Ostgarden, City Planner 

DATE: February 28, 2013

RE: Riverside School Parking Lot Project

ISD #181 has submitted a plan to construct a parking lot on the block it owns bounded by NW 3rd Street, Charles Street, NW 4th Street and Williams Street. A copy of the plan is attached. The plan is to create a well-designed flow of bus, car and student traffic, as well as increase both daily and school event parking capacity. The Planning Department has made a determination that a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is not required for its construction. This memo is to inform the City Council about this determination and to make it aware of the project before construction begins this spring.

Riverside School and grounds are located in an R-3 (High Density Residential) District and the adjacent block on which the parking lot will be located is a B-4 (General Business) District zone. In evaluating the parking lot plan, the Planning Department's Zoning Ordinance review determined there is no language specifying whether parking lots are allowed as a principal use or by CUP in a B-4 District. They are however listed as a permitted accessory use to an allowed use in a B-4 District. This is perhaps an omission in the District list of uses because without the listing public or private parking lots by themselves (not associated with a use permitted in the district) are not permitted.

If the parking lot property was planned for an R-3 District, it is clear that a CUP is required for the construction. However, because the split zoning places the parking lot property in a B-4 District and parking lots can commonly be considered permitted uses in general business zoning districts and because parking is an allowed accessory use in a B-4 District, the Planning Department concluded that the use can be permitted without a CUP.

Although the CUP process is not required, the parking lot design will need to comply with city requirements such as storm water and zoning (e.g. parking stall sizes, drive isles widths, screening, lighting, etc.). There are several activities occurring within the lot such as general parking, bus parking, vehicle stacking and child drop off/pick up. In addition this project design will have a significant effect on site access and neighborhood traffic circulation in an already congested and dangerous area. Staff thinks additional conversation with the school district is needed to discuss these issues. The Planning Department has suggested to the Engineering Department that a civil engineer with traffic planning and engineering expertise be retained by the school district to review the plan. The school district has not yet been asked to retain this expertise.

The Planning Department has suggested to the school district that although a CUP is not required it would be good community relations for it to have a neighborhood meeting to present the plan to area property owners and businesses.

ON LINE RAIN GARDEN
1.5' x 10' x 6" @ 6.50 ft depth = 750
total infiltration = 750 cu ft

STORM CALCS
proposed impervious surface = 88,505 sq ft
existing impervious surface = 71,847 sq ft
total impervious surface = 160,352 sq ft
infiltration required MPCA requirements
16,035 @ 1/2" = 801 cu ft
rain garden provides 750 cu ft
100 year storm infiltration surface
16,035 @ 1/2" = 801 cu ft
total needed = 801 cu ft
total provided = 750 cu ft

raise existing catch basin
from 6' dia = 1184.20
to 6' dia = 1184.20
storm pond provides
7,079 cu ft water storage

Riverside School

Charles St.

Williams St.

PROPOSED SITE
1" = 60'-0" (1:180)
1" = 50'-0" (1:150)

REVISIONS
1
2
3
4

I hereby certify that this plan, specification, or report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Registered Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota.
Stanley H. Weber
Date
Reg No. 40203

11360 BUSINESS 371
BRAINERD, MN 55401
PHONE 218/823-8523
FAX 218/823-5383
www.hytec.com
Lic #BC-20050646

HYTEC
CONSTRUCTION
ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL
PARKING LOT

DATE:
2/13/13

SHEET:

C-2

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City Council

STRATEGIC PLANNING CATEGORIES

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Multi-media
- Partnerships/collaborations (BLAEDC, Chamber etc)
- Celebration of successes

CITY COUNCIL:

- Establish/Re-define Council's role in policy
- Open dialogue with staff, each other and citizens
- Set up work sessions
- Vetting of applicants for committee appointments

CITY DEPARTMENTS OPERATIONS:

- Staffing needs
- Licensure requirements
- Job descriptions updated
- Citizen contacts involving permits and inspections
- Laserfiche documents/scanning timeframe
- Tracking of fixed assets
- Update employment policy manual
- IT upgrades and support

CITY IMAGE/IDENTITY:

- Neighborhood reinvestment and redevelopment
 - Physical growth potential
 - Highway 210 aesthetics
 - Neighborhood schools
 - Downtown development
 - Mississippi River marketing
 - Code Enforcement
 - Park improvements
 - Comp plan revisions
 - Lighting plan
- Quiet Zone*

TRANSPORTATION:

- Multi-modal
- Airport growth

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Government interactions (Baxter, CWC, Townships, Region 5, ISD 181)
- Local option sales tax continuance – testifying in St. Paul
- Expansion of utilities to the airport
- Management and improvement of infrastructure
- Public utilities in general

FINANCES/FINANCIAL:

- Continue obtaining GFOA Award for outstanding financial reporting
- Maintain Bond Rating
- Maintain adequate fund balances
- Develop a library of financial resources
- Capital Improvement planning and budget
- Anticipation/preparation for future LGA changes/property tax values and levy freezes
- Define the grant application process

CITIZENS:

- Address the opportunities for an aging population
- Address the opportunities for youth in the community
- Families/range of appropriate affordable activities
- Emergency preparedness plans
- Parks and trails

ECONOMIC GARDENING:

- Industrial park property sales,
- Keep established businesses and help them grow
- Enhancing the arts/cultural opportunities as a way to cultivate growth
- Development of the Mississippi Corridor

America Is a Walking Disaster

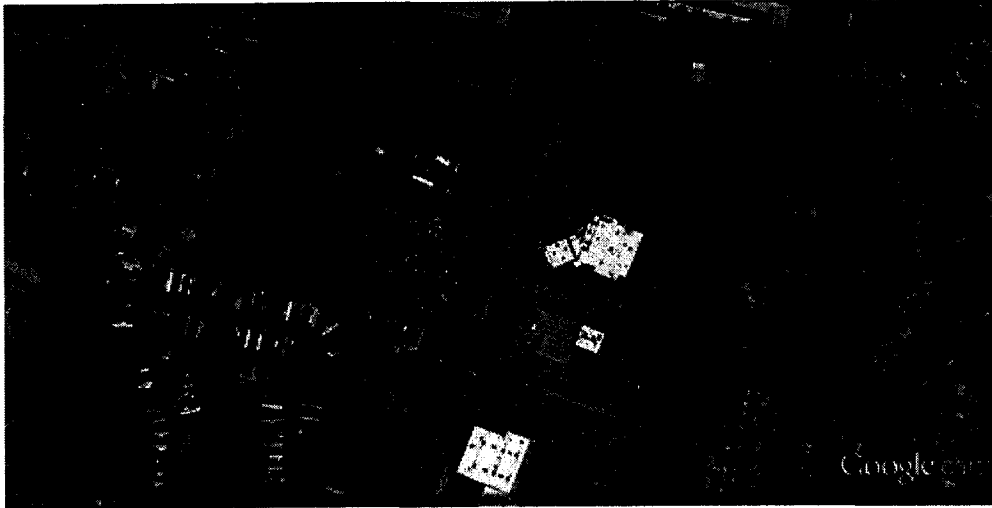
- KAID BENFIELD
- JAN 16, 2013



Complete Streets Coalition

In much of America, walking – that most basic and human method of movement, and the one most important to our health – is all but impossible. Maybe not literally impossible, but inconvenient at best, and tragically dangerous way too often.

Chances are that, no matter where we are from, the stretches of road shown in the photos accompanying this article look somewhat familiar. They might as well be labeled Anywhere, USA. The one above is from Denver. The Google Earth image below shows the US Route 1 corridor in Woodbridge, Virginia, about 25 miles south of downtown Washington, DC. I'm going to spend some time on Woodbridge today because of some incidents that have occurred there.



Home to the Potomac Mills discount mega-mall and not far from the Quantico Marine Corps base, Woodbridge is a diverse "census-designated place and magisterial district" whose population is 42 percent white, 28 percent black, and 32 percent Hispanic. It was mostly farms and light industrial complexes until the 1980s, when it began to be more suburbanized. What you see in the satellite view are, among other things, several auto dealerships and automobile service facilities, some single-family homes, some apartments, a trailer park, and a self-storage facility; all seem sort of plopped down by happenstance.

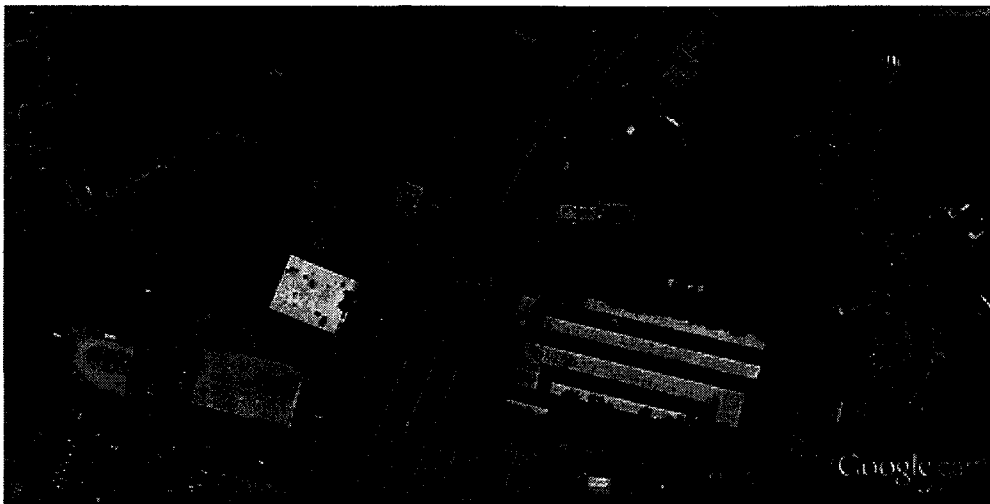
What you don't see are any but the crudest accommodations for walking. This particular part of Woodbridge is a place for being either indoors or in a motor vehicle. If you were, say, an employee at the Pep Boys auto parts store, didn't have a car on a given day, and wanted to grab a sandwich for lunch at Wendy's *right across the street*, you'd have to walk nearly a mile, round trip, to cross the road with the benefit of a traffic signal. Even then, half your trip would have no sidewalk.



What many people with limited time would understandably do in that situation, instead, is attempt to cross the road using the shortest and most direct route between Pep Boys and Wendy's, and hope their instincts and powers of observation would enable them to do so without getting hit. Some people do exactly that, without consequence.

But other pedestrians aren't so lucky. If they do get hit by a motor vehicle, under Virginia law the pedestrian is at fault for "interfering with traffic." Cars come first in the eyes of the law, and anyone who fails to respect that axiom takes chances in more ways than one.

I mention all this because it's more or less what actually happens on this stretch of Route 1. Videographer Jay Mallin has made a video about it. It's at the bottom of this post, it's good, and you should watch it. But first allow me to take a bit more of your time by setting the context.

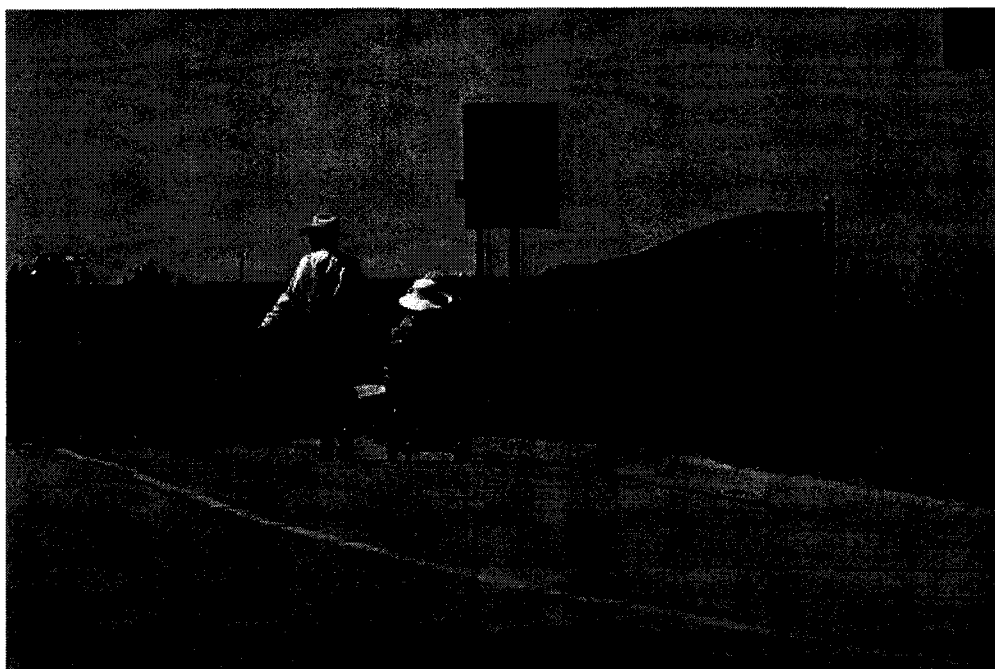


I was reminded of this story while browsing some articles I had saved on my Google Reader, one of which was "How pedestrians interfere with traffic," written by the astute and prolific David Alpert on the *Greater Greater Washington* blog. David was impressed with Mallin's video, which tells the story of two men who were hit by motor vehicles while trying to cross the road in separate incidents near the section of Route 1 that I marked. (You can see the Wendy's in the background of the video.) Both pedestrians were evacuated to the hospital, and both were charged by police with interfering with traffic. The drivers were not charged.

Some would-be pedestrians in similar circumstances suffer far worse consequences, unfortunately. As some readers may remember, in 2011 a working single mother named Raquel Nelson was convicted of homicide after her four-year-old son was killed while

both were trying to cross a busy road in suburban Atlanta. They were on their way home, carrying groceries after getting off the bus at a stop with no convenient crosswalk. As I wrote then, whatever Nelson's legal culpability, I find it shocking that Atlanta officials chose to exercise their discretion to prosecute her for homicide under those circumstances. At least in that case the driver, who had been drinking and taking painkillers, and who had fled the scene, was also charged.

The nonprofit advocacy coalition Transportation for America (NRDC is a member) has found that, from 2000 through 2009, more than 47,700 pedestrians were killed in the United States. This is the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of passengers crashing roughly every month. On top of that, more than 688,000 pedestrians were injured over the decade, a number equivalent to a pedestrian being struck by a car or truck *every 7 minutes*.



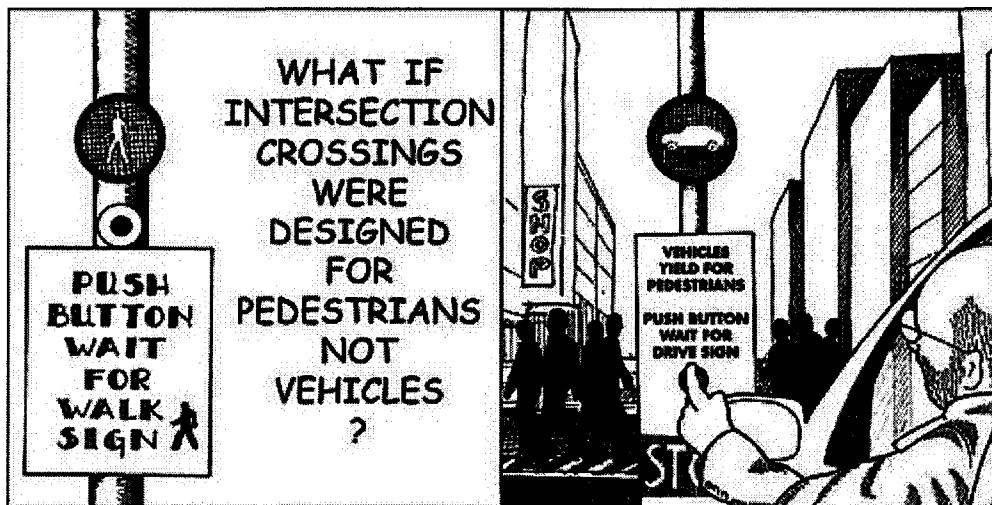
Cheyenne, Wyoming. Tom Mason, via Transportation for America.

Even if you're not killed or injured, you can't help but find much of suburban America inhospitable to walking. Just this week, Ben Ross reported in *Greater Greater Washington* that it took him eight and a half minutes to cross legally to the other side of a Maryland street, traversing 28 traffic lanes along the way. Two pedestrians had been severely injured at the same intersection earlier this month. Is it any wonder that, in the U.S., those with a choice choose to drive even the shortest of distances?

In 1973, sixty percent of American kids walked to school; by 2006, that portion had dropped to a paltry 13 percent. As a sign that times have changed, a story surfaced a

few years ago that a mom and her 12-year-old son in Saratoga Springs, New York, were actually forbidden to ride bikes together to the son's school, even on a bike path separated from car traffic. On the other side of the country, Laguna Beach refused to join over 400 California communities participating in International Walk to School Day, a supervised event, because "there are few sidewalks, winding roads with blind corners and a considerable distance for our students to travel and we cannot endorse walking or biking to school."

In Montgomery County, Maryland, the local Department of Transportation refused parents' request for a crosswalk linking a large residential development to an elementary school right across the street because "the safest way is to have them bused to school" instead. If walking is no longer safe and convenient in relatively upscale Saratoga Springs and Laguna Beach, how are we going to fix a suburbanizing place whose residents may struggle to afford cars and arguably are even more in need of good alternatives?



Dhiru Thadani

Jeff Speck's current book *Walkable City* provides some answers, but they aren't going to work everywhere. His "ten steps of walkability" to create urban environments more conducive to foot travel include such effective measures as placing more housing downtown, restricting free parking, and coordinating transit with nearby land uses. If we do these things in Boise or Houston or Greensboro or even Bakersfield, it is likely that we will, indeed, make the city more walkable.

But can we have a walkable city where we don't have a city in the first place? What if the location is just a "census-designated place" with a bunch of uncoordinated and unplanned properties that somehow ended up near each other along a high-speed

road? The stretch of Route 1 in Woodbridge is not remotely ready for sophisticated measures.

I suppose one answer is that, as the economy allows new businesses and homes to be built in and around the bad stuff, we gradually can make the newer land uses better and more "walk-ready" over time, so that the place can function better for pedestrians when the good stuff reaches critical mass. That might take a while, though, because many of these places are not the kind of prosperous communities where change can occur rapidly and with the degree of investment necessary to do it right.

Maybe Jeff could write a sort of prequel to his book (easy for me to say), with ten preliminary steps to get a mess of a place such as Route 1 in Woodbridge ready for the ten steps of walkability featured in his current one.



Arthur Wendel, via Transportation for America

Whatever the right approach, it matters: a lot of places in America are a lot like Woodbridge. And, if we don't start exercising more, including by walking, the prospects for our collective health are daunting. The single most alarming public health trend in the United States today is the dramatic rise in overweight and obesity, bringing serious risks of heart disease, diabetes and other consequences leading to life impairment and premature death.

While these are complex challenges, and there are many factors at play, our country's sedentary lifestyle is an important one. In a massive study of half a million residents of Salt Lake County, researchers at the University of Utah found that an average-sized man weighed 10 pounds less if he lived in a walkable neighborhood – "those that are

more densely populated, designed to be more friendly to pedestrians and have a range of destinations for pedestrians" – versus a less walkable one. A woman of average size weighed six pounds less. Other research has found that men and women age 50-to-71 who took a brisk walk nearly every day had a 27 percent reduced death rate compared to non-exercisers.

This isn't the first time I have written on this subject, and it certainly won't be the last. It's too important to ignore.

Now, as promised, here's the video:

Interfering with Traffic from Jay Mallin on Vimeo.

This post originally appeared on the NRDC Switchboard blog, an Atlantic partner site.

Keywords: Atlanta, Washington, DC, smart growth, Malls, Walkability, sprawl, Pedestrians, Cities, driving



Kaid Benfield is the director of the Sustainable Communities and Smart Growth program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, co-founder of the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system, and co-founder of Smart Growth America. He writes (almost) daily about community, development, and the environment. For more posts, see his blog's home page. All posts »

Conspiracy Theorists Fear Loss of Control

Open, Honest Dialogue Helps Facilitate Civil Discourse

By Julianne Couch

According to the United Nations, sustainable development is a “mode of human development in which resource use aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come.”

Yet according to conservative talk show host and commentator Glenn Beck, “sustainable development means centralized control over all of human life on planet earth.”

Most observers would characterize the differences between these points of view as major. Indeed, Beck, via his television program on Fox News, now available on YouTube, claims that individuals, industry, business groups, governments and non-governmental agencies are part of a “massive movement” whose real motives are masked.

As Beck asserts, some of these entities may have a “pure heart,” but most do not. “They have to trick you into more governmental control. It is time to ring the bell, and protect your own community.”

The bell has been rung, and now some individuals and groups around the country are coalescing around the idea that the government of the United States is in danger of being overtaken by the United Nations. For example, the 9/12 Project is a nationwide group founded on a theory proposed by Beck that imagines the U.S. the way it was on the day after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorists attacks. Among a variety of causes, these organizations fight against United Nations Agenda 21, a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations drafted for a 1992 conference on the environment and development. It has been affirmed and modified at subsequent U.N. conferences and demonized by Beck and groups motivated by his thesis.

Various groups with ideas similar to the 9/12 Project have a presence online and often their members attend city council meetings or other public sessions to exercise their right of free speech. Because opposition exists to the sort of projects that take place under the umbrella of sustainable development, dealing with these groups and their concerns seems inevitable for today's sustainability professionals.

That is why Laurel Sukup, sustainability assistance coordinator with the Wisconsin Division of Natural Resources, has given a great deal of thought to interacting with individuals who argue against what she is doing, in ways that invite civil discourse.

Sukup manages and directs the Wisconsin Legacy Communities program. She said her program "supports municipalities to move toward sustainability goals, further and faster than if they were working alone." However, this is the sort of thing that opposition groups resist.

"I have had a number of instances where I've encountered folks that have been alarmed by municipalities' participation in my program, which they feel is directly tied to U.N. Agenda 21," Sukup said.

Ironically, Sukup speculates that many of those who feel upset when they hear words like "sustainability and smart planning" actually do support clean air, clean water, and governments that do not waste taxpayer dollars on energy inefficiency. But she has heard from individuals who identify as being motivated by concerns over Agenda 21.

"They don't want the government to take action; they don't want public/private partnerships. They feel it is a slippery slope because they are losing sovereign rights and autonomy. They argue this will lead to a relinquishing of power from the United States to the United Nations."

Sukup uses the example of a super pool cover, a product that reduces the cost of heating a pool by 40 percent. While members of 9/12-type groups who are citizens of a municipality considering such a product might favor its purchase, they want the impulse to be a monetary decision, not one driven by sustainability.

For such a project, municipal and sustainability professionals might argue that it is important because it saves money, reduces long-term maintenance costs, is good for the environment, and has positive effects on citizens.

Sukup has had opportunities to consider useful communication approaches at various public meetings. "A man who testified at a council meeting mentioned that he was caring for his terminally ill wife, but he left her bedside because he felt this was an important topic, to discourage municipalities from participating in programs," she recounted. "He felt that by taking on these sustainability actions, the city was undermining its ability to govern and turning over those abilities to the U.N."

"This is incredibly real to them," she said.

Sukup has become interested in research that studies how people take in information when they are in an acute emotional state. She understands that if people have an emotional reaction to something, they cannot be persuaded by logic. So, how can a municipality or a sustainability professional reach these individuals and promote discussion?

"A municipality might lay out facts of a program, but depending on the level of concern by the people who are against it, they will need to determine the best way to message and dialog with them," Sukup suggested. "We need to also learn more about the emotional side of the brain and how to dialog in high stress situations. It starts with listening, allowing people to talk through their fears."

She understands people who believe that Agenda 21 would take the United States down the road to ruin are in a different category from those who are unhappy about a malfunctioning streetlight, for example.

"Make sure facts and goals are crystal clear," Sukup advised. "Make sure that you are really actively listening and understanding their point of view. With any dialog there will be things that are true, and yet they are interpreted in a way that was never intended. Make sure you listen to what they are saying, and make sure they know that you are. Then try to establish true, two-way communication. It doesn't happen readily, it takes dialoging and patience. For municipalities and

public servants, that is just part of the job. We need to be really, really good at it in those situations.”

The need to be good at interacting with the public is important for any municipal professional, of course, but Sukup believes the movement of people who hold ideas she finds difficult to understand is not going away.

“This movement has not peaked. It is on an upward trajectory,” she said. She finds that to be true whether working on her projects in Wisconsin, or in her role as board member with the International Society of Sustainability Professionals. She has heard from her colleagues in that group that there are people who believe “sustainability masks a sinister agenda” all over the country, and beyond.

Sukup noted that groups of this sort consider themselves constitutionalists. “It stems from the fact that they also believe that the states do not have to follow federal laws. There are many issues these groups take up, and their uncomfortableness with sustainability is tied to the idea of the government telling them what they can and cannot do,” she said.

“My perspective is that there is no doubt in my mind, when they are at these commission meetings, testifying in front of councils, that they are truly scared. That is why they are making impassioned pleas that the councils will wake up and see what they are doing to the community.”

Sukup has confidence that sustainability is a healthy model for individuals and governments to use for making decisions. “Sustainability professionals are fortunate to be able to evaluate our work through the sustainability lens and make sure the project is economical, good for the environment and good for the community. That’s how we live our lives and how we want to see decisions made,” she said.

PC



From: Public Works 2013
Posted on: January 14, 2013

Digital signs don't cause traffic accidents

By International Sign Association

ALEXANDRIA, VA – January 10, 2013 – The installation of on-premise electronic message centers does not result in an increase in traffic accidents, according to a new study conducted at Texas A&M University on behalf of the Signage Foundation, Inc. The study covered 135 signs in four states over the span of four years, and used crash/accident data from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Highway Safety Information System (HSIS) database.

The study, "Statistical Analysis of the Relationship between On-Premise Digital Signage and Traffic Safety," included on-premise signs installed in 2006 and 2007 in California, North Carolina, Ohio and Washington. By including only those signs erected during that time frame, researchers had a significant amount of data in the period before and after the signs' installations. The four states were chosen because they contribute to the HSIS database.

Researchers found:

- No statistically significant change in crashes after the installation of on-premise digital signs. The results were consistent in each of the four states.
- There were no statistically significant differences when comparing single vehicle crashes and those involving multiple vehicles.
- There was no measurable difference for signs with single or multi-colored EMCs.

"This study provides empirical evidence for what common sense and experience have always told us: that EMCs do not constitute a safety hazard," said David Hickey, ISA's vice president of government relations. "This only adds to the body of research and information available to local officials and community leaders so that they can draft reasonable sign codes based on objective standards and academic research, not personal opinion."

The complete study can be found on the SFI [website](#).

ISA has developed numerous resources related to EMCs, helping communities to better understand the technology. Those resources are available at www.signs.org/emc.

Keywords

Subject

Traffic Control, Safety

Organization

International Sign Association



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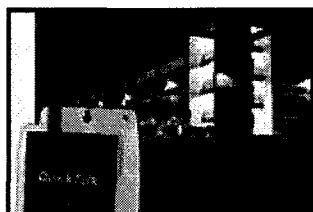
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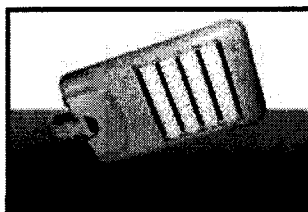
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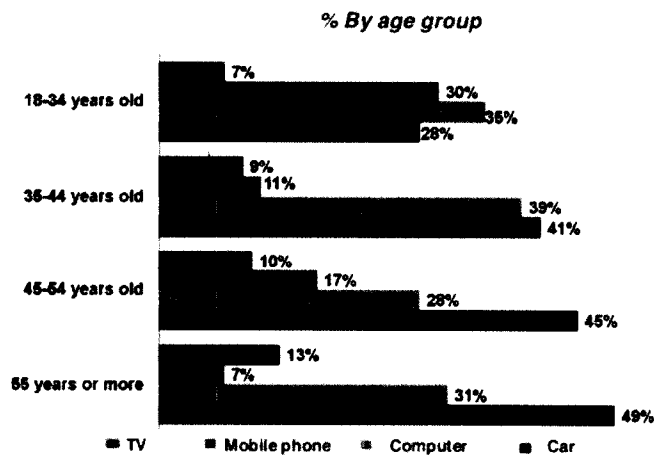
Millennials Say They'd Give Up Their Cars Before Their Computers or Cell Phones

EMILY BADGER FEB 28, 2013 32 COMMENTS

Once a week or so we come across yet another sign that Millennials care much less about car ownership than previous generations. They're less likely to drive than their parents. They've got less debt tied up in cars. They'd rather hang out with their friends on Twitter than get in a car to go see them.

And here's yet another: Ask Millennials which piece of technology they could least live without, and it turns out they'd more happily part with their cars than their computers or cell phones. That question, graphed below, comes from the third installment of Zipcar's annual Millennial survey.

In your daily routine, losing which piece of technology would have the greatest negative impact on you?



According to those results, which are based on a national online survey of 1,015 adults, cars are the most prized piece of technology (at least among those offered here) among every age group but the under-35s. Our other big takeaway from this report: No one cares about the lonely TV any more.

Keywords: Computers, car-sharing, Sharing, Millennials, Zipcar



Emily Badger is a staff writer at The Atlantic Cities. Her work has previously appeared in *Pacific Standard*, *GOOD*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The New York Times*. She lives in the Washington, D.C. area. All posts »

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