Wooddale Valley View Small Area Plan
Background Information - Summary of Interviews & Survey with Property Owners and Business Owners

Summary of Interviews & Survey with Property Owners and Business Owners

Structured interviews were conducted with 5 property owners, the leasing agent for the Edina Village Market, and Gordon Hughes, the long-serving, former city manager of the City of Edina. In addition, 6 businesses completed a survey that assisted the consulting team in defining the trade area and provided business owner insights into the node's strengths and challenges.

This research was intended to complement the more quantitative market analysis. The interviews focused on the business aspects of the node:

- Description of properties and businesses
- A changing context for the commercial node
- Property owner perceptions
- Business owner perceptions

<u>Property Owner Perceptions</u>

Property owners note the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the node.

Strengths as a Housing Location

- Proximity to employment, hospital/health care, parks, Southdale, 50th and France
- Location in the Edina School District
- Transportation access including
  - Generally good transit service and very attractive express bus service to downtown
  - Proximity to Highway 100 and Highway 62
  - Good neighborhood context, good views – including the pond

Weaknesses as Housing Location

- "In between" neighborhood
- Commercial node not as vibrant as it was in the past
- Traffic noise and traffic back-ups at rush hour
- On-street parking no longer available. Facilities were built with on-street access available for guest parking.

Opportunities as a Housing Location

- Redevelop the northwest quadrant to be largely housing, with some mixed use. Take advantage of the elevation change on the SW corner of the property to access underground parking. Have a courtyard on the deck above the parking. Views much better here; more residential feel here than the Southdale area.

Strengths as a Business Location

- Edina address
- Edina Community Center & French immersion program
- Neighborhoods, demographics, families

- Lots of tear downs/new construction – with families
- City is genuinely supportive
- Accessible to neighborhood residents
- Parking not as difficult as other retail locations (50th and France, Southdale)
- Properties aren't performing well for several owners
- Feeling of being integrated with the neighborhood – not just commercial

Weaknesses as a Business Location

- Lacks clear identity/market position
- Limited synergy and cross-selling between businesses
- There may be too much retail space for the market to support, given traffic patterns and the competition
- Some businesses aren't oriented to local customer base and don't contribute to driving traffic and sales at the node
- Valley View backs up in both directions due to traffic
- Hospital staff use Valley View as a short cut to Highway 100
- Too many curb cuts
- Poor image - some properties lack good design, maintenance and updating. It's a tough cycle to address. If you don't get good rent, you can't update the buildings....so you don't get tenants and a good revenue stream.

Opportunities as a Business Location

- Be a magnet for sports, schools, Pamela Park, and community center activities
- Critical to get the right tenant mix
- Be something different and down home
- The node should hold the community together, keep it walkable & bikable
- Needs to be self-sustaining
- Lower rents and flexible hours compared to commercially-operated malls and strip centers can be attractive to independent businesses. However, irregular hours can be a detriment to building synergy and activity at the node.
- Reduce amount of retail space to reduce the vacancy rate and increase housing to strengthen the market
- Improve bike/ped access to the Southdale area
- Coffee shop – only problem is they all want a drive-through and traffic back-ups are bad enough already

<u>Business Owner Perceptions</u>

Business owners noted these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths

- Easy to get to/from Hwy 62, France and Hwy 100
- Exposure, traffic
- Close to Southdale
- Small, friendly and easily accessed
- Our business is more multi-generational since locating at Wooddale Valley View

Weaknesses

- Not enough open to support confidence in customers
- We need more businesses for the convenience of residents
- Lighting – it's not evening friendly
- Some outdated tenants

Opportunities

- Serving the neighborhood residents; small, friendly, easily accessible
- Bring in more family-friendly business
- Making it too upscale would take away from the neighborhood comfort
- Need "small town" lighting - make it attractive
- Advertise and market the area
- Develop a clear identity
- Be unique, stay quaint and small
- Be different from 50th and France or Southdale. Be more funky.
- Develop all available land & get more tax base
- Bring in the art center and pool population before, during or after their outings instead of going to Southdale and Richfield
- Unlimited; destination

Threats

- Avoid national chain restaurants, keep the charm. Be more like a small Linden Hills area
- Not enough commercial quality or curb appeal
- Making it too upscale would take away the neighborhood comfort

Business owner perceptions of businesses that would complement their businesses and strengthen the node

- Coffee shop (5)
- Bakery (2 - one specified like Great Harvest)
- Restaurants (5 - one specified like Pizzeria Lola)
- Hardware store
- Lively 55+ retirement housing
- Convenience store
- Grocery store
- Get quality "neighborhood feel" tenants with great products
- Business that generate sidewalk traffic
- Believe it or not – more salons

Traffic, Access and Parking

Business and property owners offered numerous comments about traffic, access and parking

- Major cut-through for employees at the hospital
- Cars stack up in both directions on Valley View; something needs to happen to improve traffic flow
- The bicycle plan on Wooddale was a disaster, but that's better now

- I think it would be foolish to be out there on a bicycle at rush hour
- The turn lane on Valley View confuses people
- People run the stop sign on Valley View regularly
- Cars on Valley View don’t pay attention to cars coming up the hill from the south on Wooddale

Elimination of parking on Valley View has created challenges for properties located to the south.

The Properties in the Study Area

The dominant feature of the northwest corner of Valley View Road and Wooddale Avenue is the 15,000 square foot **Edina Village Market**. Anchored by a Superette until the early 2000s, the largest space was then occupied by a bicycle shop that was reportedly successful until ~2012, but is now vacant.

A video rental business succeeded in the mall until that market disappeared because of technological changes.

Edina Village Market

Another long-term tenant, Corelli's Pizza was a successful neighborhood business until the owner retired.

The space was then leased to **Snuffy's Malt Shop**, a busy, family-oriented restaurant appreciated by neighborhood residents and businesses.

Two smaller tenants are located in the mall just west of Snuffy's. **EJ's Sunglasses** is a web-oriented business offering a large selection of brand-name sunglasses and goggles. The other is **Scoopy Poo**, a "DoggyDoo PickUp" service that serves the Twin Cities area. Neither generates retail traffic with the potential to support other businesses.

A hardware store was located in the mall for many years, but closed in late summer of 2014 due to lack of sales. Jerry's, a larger hardware store located at Grandview adjacent to the grocery store is perceived as a dominant player in the local market.

Stable long term tenants oriented to the needs of area residents include the **Salon 4512**, **Stu's Valley View Barber Shop** and **Artistic Floral**.

The 2,000 square foot service station property in the northwest quadrant is under same ownership as Edina Village Market. **Wally's service station** reportedly struggled in recent years and closed in the late summer of 2014.

The former Wally's service station

Northeast Corner @ Wooddale: Closest to the Wooddale Valley View intersection is **Valleywoo**d, a 14,000 square foot office building that served for many years as a medical office building with an adjacent pharmacy. Several years after acquiring the clinic, Fairview closed it. The property was purchased in October 2009 and renovated by a local developer.

The ValleyWood office building

There are two major tenants: The **Welcyon Group of Companies** occupies most of the space, and is operating a locally-oriented 55+ fitness/wellness facility, offices associated with nursing home management for facilities in several states, and related companies. The other major tenant, **Cavalier Club West Alano**, is a meeting facility for alcoholics' anonymous groups. Approximately twenty-five meetings per week are held at the facility. Other tenants include **Sonus Center** (hearing aids) and an internet-oriented baseball card buyer.

City-owned Site @ Kellogg

Just east of the Noonan property is a former service station / U-Haul operation known as Roster's. It was acquired and tanks were removed by the **City of Edina** in approximately 1990 using TIF funds from a pooled district. The site is currently owned by the City.

The City-owned property

Mixed Use Building(s) @ Kellogg

East across Kellogg Avenue is commercial space last purchased in 2006. Current occupants of 6,900 square feet of retail space include **Pappagallo**, the **Neighborhood Ice Cream Shoppe**, **Red Robin Dry Cleaners**, and **Zoom Groom**, a pet grooming business. There are seven office tenants in the space above Pappagallo; most are focused on external markets (e.g. manufacturers' rep, lobbyist, publisher).

Mixed use building at Kellogg and Valley View

Hair Salon @ Oak Lawn/61st/Valley View
An Aveda Concept Salon is located in a 1,475 square foot owner-occupied facility located on two lots at Valley View and Oaklawn Avenue. The owner purchased the facility in 2004 and reports that sales have tripled over the 10 year period since he relocated from 50th and France.

Burley's Hair Salon Edina

South Side of Valley View Road

The area of the node located south of Valley View includes multi-family housing, **New Horizons Academy childcare services,** and the offices of a remodeling contractor focused on the Edina market **– MA Peterson**. All uses appear to be stable.

The **MA Peterson** property was purchased by its current owner in 2001 and has been renovated.

Office building occupied by MA Peterson

A **17-unit apartment building** was developed in the 1969 by a local builder and developer.

A **14-unit apartment building (#11)** was developed in 1963 by local builder/developers. The same owner acquired the **17-unit property (#10)** in 1986 and various family entities continue to own the 14- and 17-unit properties. They feature larger units often found in older properties, underground parking, and shared laundry facilities. Well-maintained, the properties have not been updated substantially in recent years.

Victorsen apartment building

Economic Development Services, Inc.

Wooddale Valley View Commercial Node
Property Owner Interview Guide
September/October 2014

The City of Edina is currently developing a small area plan for the Wooddale and Valley View neighborhood commercial node. As a property owner your opinions and insights are valued by the Small Area Planning Team. Economic Development Services, Inc. will **aggregate** your **responses** with those of other businesses prior to presenting a summary to the team. More information about the small area planning process can be found at www.edinamn.gov/wvv.

Contact:_____ Property owned: _____ Phone: _____

1. How long have you owned the property and what attracted you to the area? Do you know how many SF?? Acres?

2. What have been your experiences in leasing this property? What's worked well? What hasn't worked? Why?

   - Probe on customer base targeted by businesses (age, gender, geography)

3. What are the strengths of the Wooddale Valley View commercial node?

4. What are its weaknesses?

5. What opportunities do you see for strengthening the node?

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6. Do you perceive any threats to this node?

7. Are there other commercial nodes in the metro area that you think Wooddale Valley View could emulate? or maybe learn some lessons?

8. If you were to imagine/think up a new and vibrant future for this node, what would that entail?

9. I'm trying to get a ball park on rental rates in the area. I won't be sharing them with anyone.... I'll blend all the rental rates together and provide a range. Typically x to y psf +taxes, insurance, maint.

Thank you for your time. How would you like to stay in touch with this process? Encourage participation.

Woodale Valley View - Business Survey

The City of Edina is currently developing a small area plan for the Wooddale and Valley View neighborhood commercial node. As a business owner/manager, your opinions and insights are valued by the Small Area Planning Team. Economic Development Services, Inc. will aggregate your responses with those of other businesses prior to presenting a summary to the team. More information about the small area planning process can be found at www.edinamn.gov/wvv.

Please complete the following survey online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WVVbiz or mail a printed version to Economic Development Services, Inc., 1769 Lexington Ave N #339, St. Paul, MN 55113 no later than October 1, 2014.

Thank you for your time and insights.

1. In which neighborhoods or cities do your typical customers live? Please estimate a percentage of customers for each neighborhood or city.

2. When did your business locate at Wooddale-Valley View and how has your trade area changed over time?

3. Please describe the general characteristics and mix of your customer base. (e.g., families with children, empty nesters, single person households, on-line)

4. When do you have the highest sales volume? (e.g., time of day, week, year, after certain activities)

5. What are your hours of operation?

6. Estimate the number of parking stalls your business needs.

For employees at peak times

For employees typically

For customers at peak times

For customers typically

7. What types of businesses would complement your business and strengthen the Wooddale Valley View neighborhood commercial node?

8. What are the strengths of the Wooddale Valley View neighborhood commercial node?

9. What are the weaknesses of the Wooddale Valley View neighborhood commercial node?

10. What opportunities do you see for strengthening the Wooddale Valley View neighborhood commercial node?

11. Please identify any threats to Wooddale Valley View neighborhood commercial node.