

Community Greenspace Initiative

**FOUR PRIORITIES FOR
MORNINGSIDE WEST**

**Graduate Capstone Studio
Wayne State University
Urban Planning Program
Summer Term 2001**



“Too much is expected of city parks. Far from transforming any essential quality in their surroundings, far from automatically uplifting their neighborhoods, neighborhood parks themselves are directly and drastically affected by the way the neighborhood acts upon them.”

-Jane Jacobs



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and

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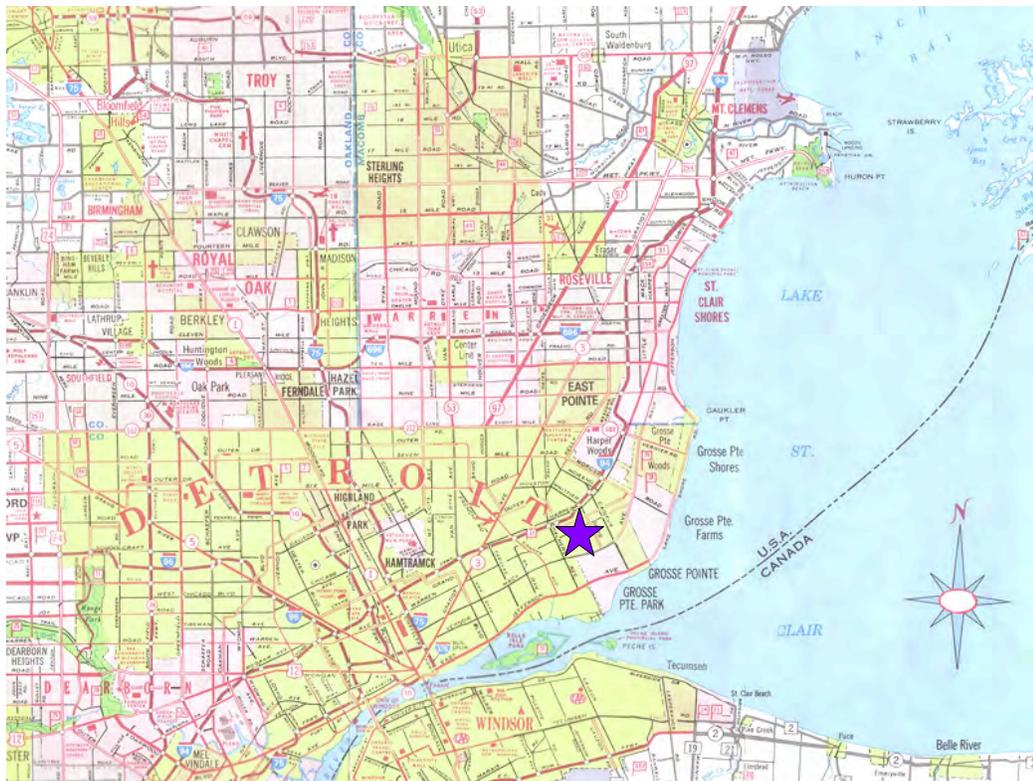
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Introduction

The Wayne State University Urban Planning Capstone Team has prepared this document for United Streets Networking and Planning: Building a Community (U-SNAP-BAC). This report responds to U-SNAP-BAC's desire to develop park design(s) for site(s) within the western portion of the MorningSide neighborhood. This proposal addresses that need while placing it in the larger context of a community greenspace plan for MorningSide West. Existing conditions have been analyzed in the context of both good civic design and the community's goals for the future.

The study area includes a section on the east side of the city of Detroit with the following boundaries: East Warren on the north, Mack Avenue on the south, Alter Road on the west, and encompassing the west side of Beaconsfield as the eastern boundary. This area has been designated as a Neighborhood Preservation Program area. Funding for neighborhood improvements has been obtained from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). The designated portion of the MorningSide West community consists primarily of single-family residential structures, with commercial strips existing along Warren and Mack Avenues.

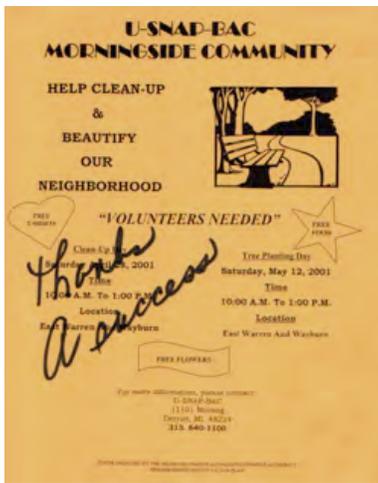


★ = Denotes Project Location within Metro Detroit, Michigan



New single family homes on the west side of Wayburn Ave.

The information for this Community Greenspace Initiative will assist the MorningSide West community and U-SNAP-BAC in their efforts to achieve the overall goal of a healthy and sustainable community. This area has experienced major disinvestment, resulting in a large number of vacant lots where houses once stood. Through the efforts of U-SNAP-BAC, and the utilization of funding from MSHDA and the City of Detroit, new single-family homes have been built and are now occupied. U-SNAP-BAC has developed twenty single-family homes along Wayburn, between Waveney and Lozier. Sixty-four additional rental units are currently proposed for sites along Wayburn and Alter, south of the new single family units. This new housing development has brought new residents into a community whose population has experienced a severe decline over the past several decades.



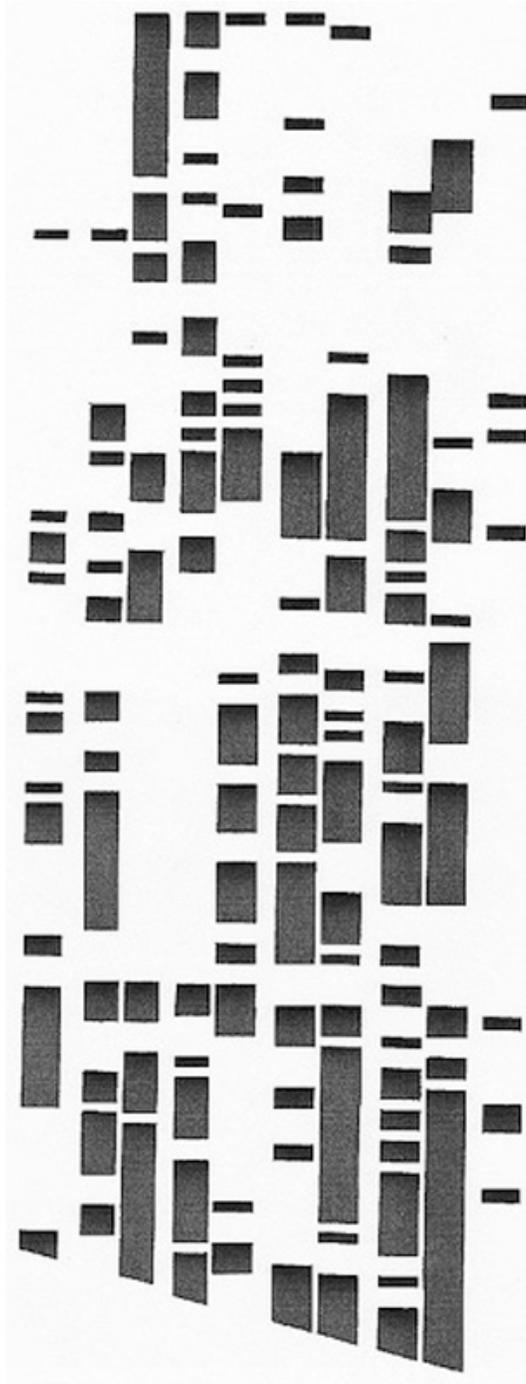
Recent U-SNAP-BAC Beautification flier for MorningSide Community

Commercial beautification example using hanging baskets and flowerpots



In addition to housing development, U-SNAP-BAC has undertaken several initiatives to beautify the surrounding community and complement the new housing development. These initiatives include a façade improvement grant program for homeowners and educational programs for residents on the basics of home repair and preventative maintenance. These efforts, when combined with functioning greenspace and parkland will improve the overall health, safety and appearance of the community.

The MorningSide West community, with support from U-SNAP-BAC, is working to improve the appearance of the Mack-Alter neighborhood area. In addition to the new housing currently under construction and proposed park development, community leaders want to encourage the beautification and maintenance of existing homes and businesses.



The graphic above represents the vacant land opportunities in the MorningSide West project area.

A neighborhood commercial strip is often the most visible aspect of a community. Since the commercial district represents the community to outsiders, it is important to leave them with a positive impression of a safe and welcoming area. Toward this effort, a flyer has been created for distribution among businesses in the Mack and Warren corridors to guide businesses in maintaining and improving their storefronts. Although some improvements may involve a major investment, other improvements cost far less and can make a major difference in the appearance of a store and business. The pamphlet included provides some simple and easy suggestions, which, if followed, will contribute to the reinvestment currently taking place in the community.

There is currently an abundance of vacant land that may be used for the implementation of small-scale pocket parks. Pocket parks are essentially small viable greenspace parks that may contain programmed activities (such as a playscape), and/or non-programmed activities (such as a man-made pond, and/benches for non-specific leisure activities). Historically, parks that provide “play” space for children (and adults) thereby relieve tensions of urban life (Garvin, 2000, 10). They also can help to improve the

physical appearance of a neighborhood, contributing to overall beautification efforts.

A 1999 survey conducted by the US Conference of Mayors, (and reported in the City Parks Forum web site) found that 98% of citizen respondents felt that parks and recreation were important to their quality of life. Seventy-four percent believed that parks would help prevent juvenile crime and delinquency, and 86% of citizen respondents felt that parks and open spaces benefit economic stability and property values in their communities.



An example of a formal community park with a water feature.

Community Greenspace Initiative

This report presents a strategic plan for greenspace within the neighborhood that will contribute to a sense of identity and serve to provide residents with a community gathering area. Additionally, this document identifies neighborhood entries as a way of creating community pride and identification. Lastly, ways to create linkages between greenspaces were explored to allow MorningSide West residents to better utilize these areas for recreational purposes.

Initially a meeting was held with Linda Smith, Executive Director for U-SNAP-BAC to determine the desired scope of the study. Two staff members of U-SNAP-BAC were consulted to ascertain information on what is currently being done to meet the neighborhood's needs and to better understand the challenges faced by the community.

Previous plans, including a housing study commissioned by Shorebank, and completed by The Smith Group (1998) were taken into consideration in the report development. The intention of this document is not to duplicate previous efforts, but to expand upon the concept of community greenspace development. This report also discusses methods for utilizing funding mechanisms currently available, as well as suggest future funding sources for additional greenspace and parkland development phases.

Several means were utilized to obtain input from the community. A Recreation and Open Space survey was prepared and sent out to area residents. A sample of this survey can be found in the Appendix. The team spoke with the newly elected President of the Morningside Board of Directors, as well as two additional board members in an effort to ensure a broad representation of views.

In order to determine the needs and visions of the community residents in the MorningSide West community, a public meeting was held on Tuesday, June 19, 2001, at Café Ricardo's, a neighborhood gathering place. At this community visioning session, the residents and business owners present were encouraged to express their opinions through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. By engaging the participants in SWOT analysis, the Capstone Team was able to solicit valuable information that provided assistance in determining desired and appropriate design elements based on the

recommendations of the participants (community members) themselves.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

U-SNAP-BAC Community Greenspace Initiative <i>Community Meeting, Tuesday, June 19, 2001</i> SWOT Analysis Results			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Home improvement efforts U-SNAP-BAC Community participation Vacant land	Abandonment Vacant land (not maintained) Blight Lack of commercial properties Perception of area being unsafe Lack of community involvement Lack of city services (Example: building codes not enforced) "Slumlords" Dangerous park surrounding	Parks could appeal to different groups (incomes, interests, etc.) Community has option to purchase city-owned property Centralized parks for use by majority of people Funding for parks (MSHDA) Large amount of passerby traffic	Heavy traffic Basketball court users

As depicted in Table1, strengths included the home improvement efforts by new and long-time homeowners, the presence of U-SNAP-BAC within the community, community participation. Vacant land was mentioned as something that would provide potential for future of the area (as maintained greenspace or for residential and commercial re-development).

Vacant land was also seen as a current weakness within the community (opportunity for blight, crime). Other weaknesses noted included abandoned structures inflicting blight, a lack of diversity among retail businesses, crime or the perception thereof, deficient city services coupled with the lack of code enforcement by the city, and absentee landlords of rental

properties. With the exception of a strong core of volunteers, there is a lack of community involvement.

Opportunities discussed included the ability of a park to appeal to different groups (i.e. incomes, age groups, interests, etc.) The majority of the people within the neighborhood could use a community park, and there is available MSHDA funding for park development. Positive options for the community were quickly identified. The community residents have the option to purchase available city-owned property. Neighborhood traffic can spark an “eyes and ears” program for safety.

The participants also listed traffic as a potential threat to the community, due to its pattern of heavy flow. Also mentioned as a threat were basketball courts and the potential of attracting undesirables who may use the courts and other park facilities inappropriately.

In addition to the traditional SWOT analysis, participants were asked to identify a “wish list” of items that they would like to see included in community greenspace. These included:

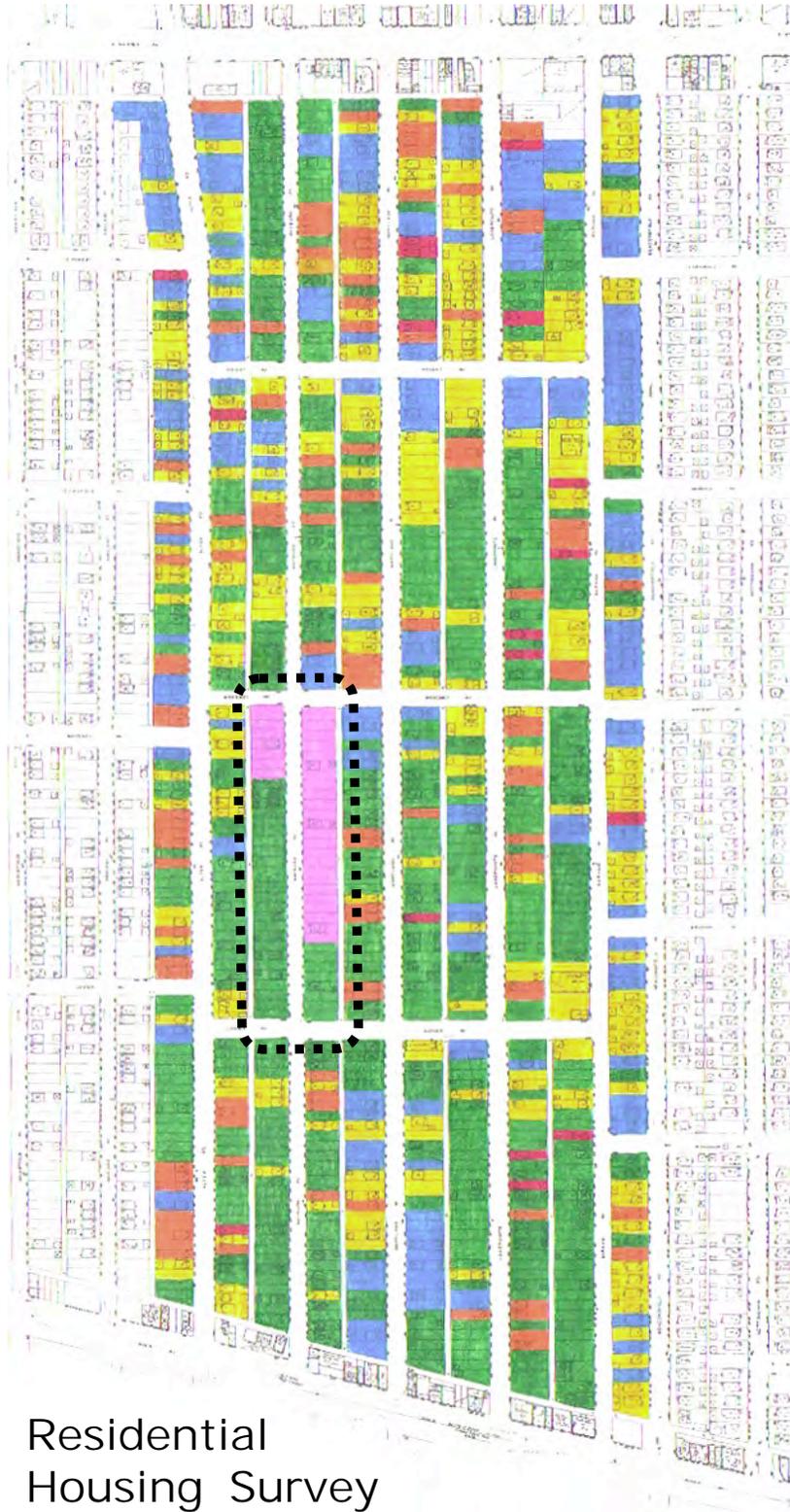
- *Picnic tables*
- *Benches*
- *Lights for beauty and safety*
- *Swingsets/Playscapes*
- *Walking trails*
- *Plants/flowers/trees/shrubs*
- *Trash cans*
- *BBQs*
- *Putting Green/Putt Putt course*
- *Garden(s)*
- *Walking/exercise/recreation opportunities*
- *Bike paths*

Residential Housing Survey

A thorough inventory and analysis of the neighborhood and the surrounding environment provide an initial base for all recommendations. A windshield survey was conducted to assess the current conditions within the designated area to be studied, as well as to gain a better understanding of how community residents might benefit from additional open space and recreational opportunities. The survey allowed the team to interpret the relationships between existing opportunities within the community. Vacant lots were

evaluated and inventoried for possible development into viable community greenspace.

- Legend**
-  Good
 -  Minor Repairs
 -  Major Repairs
 -  Demolition
 -  Vacant
 -  New U-SNAP-BAC Homes



Residential
Housing Survey

Of the 1,053 parcels surveyed within the study area by the Capstone Team, 573 parcels are now vacant lots where houses once stood. In many instances, neighbors located next to these vacant parcels are now maintaining them, creating a positive impact, especially when compared to those lots that are currently not maintained. Table 1 compares the Smith Group survey results with the comparison of the windshield survey conducted via the Capstone Team by designated research area.

Table 2: Smith Group and WSU Windshield Survey Comparison

		Smith Group 1998		WSU 2001	
		Total # Lots	% of Total Project Area	Total # Lots	% of Total Project Area
Blue	Good	126	13%	124	13%
Yellow/Orange	Minor/Major Repair	267	27%	275	28%
Red	Demolition	95	10%	17	2%
Green	Vacant	501	51%	573	58%
Totals		989	100%	989	100%

As shown in Table 2, there are fewer structures in need of demolition and more vacant lots in 2001 than there were in 1998 at the time of the last lot survey in MorningSide West. This can be attributed at least in part to the increased demolition efforts of the City of Detroit. The proportion of structures rated in good condition has remained unchanged while the percentage of the housing stock falls in the category of Minor/Major repair needed has increased by just one percentage point. These results suggest that the MorningSide West housing stock has stabilized over the past four years. In the past few years, new single family unit development by U-SNAP-BAC has further enhanced the quality of neighborhood housing stock. New housing was not included in Table 2.

The implementation of a community greenspace initiative in the MorningSide West community will face difficulty in obtaining the required support from funding agencies. A limited pool of federal and state funding, including grant

money, is available to neighborhood organizations like U-SNAP-BAC. Competition for this funding, and for city resources will make greenspace development a significant challenge for MorningSide West and the many other neighborhoods in the city that are undertaking revitalization efforts.

The City of Detroit Recreation Department currently lacks the resources necessary to effectively maintain existing city parks and cannot commit to aid the MorningSide West community in financially supporting and maintaining its greenspace planning.

There are presently no public park or recreation facilities within the boundaries of the MorningSide West community. Nearby Corrigan Park, located on the northwest corner of Alter and Warren, is the closest existing facility, with large children's play equipment and playing field space. This park is too far north to service the southern end of the MorningSide neighborhood. It should be noted that Corrigan Park is entirely supported and maintained through private funding.

There are two Detroit Public schools within several blocks of the neighborhood. These provide limited recreational opportunities. Further away, Chandler Park and Balduck Park provide larger community recreation opportunities, including picnicking, a water park in Chandler Park (operated by Wayne County), ball diamonds, walking paths and sledding hills at Balduck.

Greenspace Typology and Design Guidelines

A discussion of greenspace typology is necessary to distinguish between the different types suggested as recommendations in this Community Greenspace Initiative. It is important to understand the different functions and elements within each category of the greenspace types. Greenspace can take on numerous characteristics as well as functions. This section describes each category and addresses what is suitable within each greenspace category. The specific types considered for this initiative are community pocket parks, neighborhood gateways, pedestrian linkages, and community centers.

Community Pocket Parks

Community pocket parks can have many personalities. Pocket parks are the gathering places for neighbors, play areas for children, and gardening spaces for the neighborhood block. The activity within the park depends on the size of the park, the location of the park within the community, a sense of safety, the demographics of the community, the funding sources, and the type of stewardship the community has towards their public spaces. Appropriate activities will promote community enthusiasm, but precautionary measures need to be complete up front and on an on-going basis. Clear sightlines into the parks, around the gateways and through the pedestrian linkages need to be maintained. This requires maintenance of the plant material, light fixtures, fencing and pathways.

The size of a pocket park will vary with its function but will generally be in the range of 4,000 to 15,000 square feet, the equivalent of one to four typically sized lots in the MorningSide West area. Some specialized greenspaces may be smaller.

An **Active Pocket Park** may have a small children's playscape, benches, lighting, water fountain, and trash receptacles gauged towards children's active play. The play structure should be the focal point the park and be located where neighbors have open views to it to provide safety within the park. The play structure should have appropriate safety surfacing such as poured-in-place mat made of synthetic materials, loose synthetic material or a special-engineered shredded wood mixture. The park may also warrant a low decorative fence, 3 1/2 feet maximum height,

to keep small children from running into a busy street. The fence should not block views into the park. This increases the chance of undesirables hiding behind the fence. The fence should have pickets that do not exceed 3 1/2 inches apart to avoid children lodging their heads between the pickets.

It is important to address the safety rules and requirements of the play structure. According to the Universal Play web site, almost sixty percent of serious accidents can be prevented if proper safety surfacing is utilized. The image to the right gives an example of a play structure with appropriate safety surfacing underneath. The environment of the Active Park should be one large enough to provide safety zones around each element scheduled for the park without overlapping.



In lieu of a play structure, or in addition to, depending on the size of your active park, should be elements that promote the develop the children’s mind in regards to motor skills and the social skill of “play”. A small children’s fort or playhouse also promote imaginative play and are relatively inexpensive to install and maintain. The playhouse can also serve as stage area for puppet shows and the like. Games, such as hopscotch, jump like an animal, and magic square, painted on paved surfaces promote children’s development of balance, coordination, and counting skills. Individual apparatus may also be incorporated such as a balance beam and swings. Simple elements such as a sandbox and grassy knoll can provide younger children hours of entertainment and are relatively inexpensive to implement and maintain. These play elements and games reinforce creativity, sharing and cooperation.



Recycled Polyethylene Benches are made from 100% post consumer plastics. The framing is powdercoated galvanized steel tubing for strength and longevity.

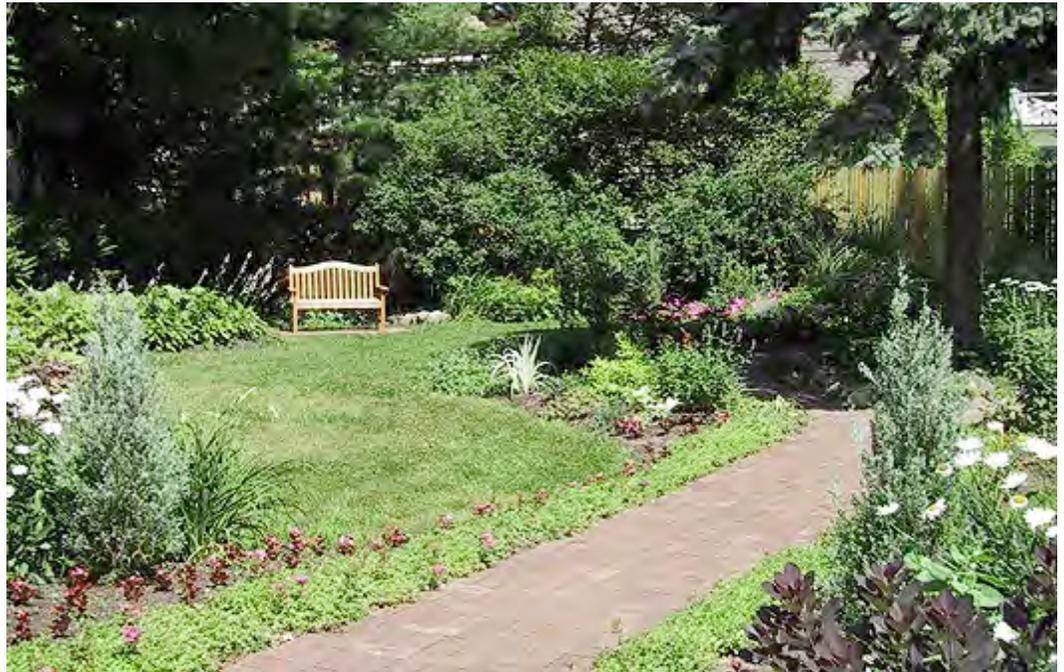
This park can be exposed to full sun but two to three large trees should be planted to provide shade with benches underneath for guardians to comfortably sit and watch or for children to take a break from play. Benches should be

manufactured from durable products that are easy to maintain and free of vandalism. An affordable option would be a bench made from recycled plastic. A careful selection of shrubs and perennials should be taken into consideration to avoid having children eat toxic berries or be injured by sharp thorns. Hearty plants with soft interesting textures and bright colors should also be considered to stimulate children's interest and development of their mind as well as plants that can withstand children tugging and stomping on them.

An Active Park can also provide adults with recreation. A swinging bench and game tables (for chess, checkers and the like) can provide added pleasure for adults watching the younger users. A lawn area can accommodate lawn games such as horseshoes.

A second typical personality is a **Passive Park**: tranquil and relaxing. There is virtually no major activity for this is a place where residents may gather to chat, play chess or read a book while sitting on a bench under a shady tree. The size of the park can be that equal to a common residential lot size (45 feet wide by 90 feet-100 feet deep) or smaller to 20 feet by 20 feet and located in an area threaded by a pedestrian linkage route. The park's character needs to allow users to feel comfortable using the park.

The image to the right shows an example of a bench placed among perennials with a decorative paver path leading into the park. This type of park is an excellent candidate for block garden clubs to maintain.



Passive park amenities may include adequate pedestrian lighting, wood benches, a games table, a gazebo, and trash receptacles. A broad open lawn may fill a majority of this park with colorful perennials borders and shade trees scattered throughout that attract birds, butterflies and the like. Variations of sun exposure are suitable for this type of park. More elaborate and detailed paving material such as decorative pavers and stepping-stones could be used as the pathway within the park.

A community can also have an **Educational Pocket Park** or Community Garden. The scale of this park can vary greatly. The size is based on a few key factors: the stewardship level within the community, the amount of sun exposure, available materials, and condition of the soil. These factors equate to a size that is reasonable to maintain, keeping in mind that this type of park is easily expandable. The location of this park should be mid-block to allow fairly easy access for the entire block.

A Master Gardener should be volunteered for or appointed for each park of this type to oversee the overall production and coordination efforts of the park's produce and goods. The Master Gardener position can be a rotating position either monthly, annually or whatever suits the volunteers.



Within this park are tagged vegetables and perennials in neat rows, cluster patterns resembling a quilt or raised wooden planter boxes where residents can be voluntarily involved in nurturing plants. Raised planter boxes may be the best and most cost effective solution where soil conditions are not generally suitable for growing. The community

should identify vegetation with simple popsicle sticks so others can observe and learn the growing process. Annuals and perennials can be inter-mixed with the vegetables to provide color and texture interest. A planter box may have a plexi-glass panel on the side where residence can see potatoes, onions, beets, and other root plants growing.

Shredded cypress or cedar mulch should be added to perennial beds to maintain moisture and protect the roots of the plants. Lawn, straw or wood chips provide a virtually maintenance free pathway between the rows and planter boxes. This will help keep stray seeds from growing where they shouldn't and prevent weeds. A water faucet should also be considered to provide a means for watering the plants.

Compost areas can also be incorporated within the park layout to provide nutrient-rich organic soil to the garden beds from the decomposition of clippings. Moderate to full sun exposure is needed for an ideal growing environment.



A raised planter box with tagged vegetables

The character of each park, regardless of the type, will reflect the atmosphere and character of the neighborhood. It is encouraged to promote creativity among the residence as to layout of garden beds, what style and type of pots flowers and perennials are planted in, and various artistic features that can be incorporated from a neighborhood artist. It is also important to promote community camaraderie by getting residence involved in building the parks. Many play structure companies help unite community involvement towards these worthy and mutually beneficial causes.

Community Gateways

Community gateways consists of identifying gateways into a community with entry images. These entries are usually located on main thoroughfares within the community. Entry images can also be used as identifiers to community features, such as community centers and parks. The purpose of gateways is to draw attention to the community by acting as an announcement to the community's front door. Signage is often the vehicle that is used to convey this meaning. Signage in its broadest definition not only refers to a specific sign that may read the name of the community, but it also may be a design of plantings, lamp posts, banners, or other aesthetics that allow the community to portray a collective cohesiveness.

Components of a community gateway may include signage identifying the community by name. This can be a simple double wood post and wood panel sign with the name either recessed or a relief. Bright landscaping, such as perennial daylilies and annuals, should be planted in the foreground of the sign to draw attention to the sign. Ornamental grasses also complement and attract attention to gateway signage. Small deciduous and evergreen shrubs should be planted towards the back of the sign (only if the sign is single-sided) to anchor the sign to the surrounding environment and to provide winter interest. The plant material should be easy to maintain and be salt tolerant if located within 3 feet of a curb. If possible and budget permitting, accent (up-lighting) should be used to illuminate the sign. Adjacent street lighting should also be in place an operational to safely illuminate the entry.



An example of a Community Gateway

Careful placement of the signs and plant material should be taken into consideration. It is important not to block view triangles of vehicular and pedestrian traffic when signs are located at the corner of an intersection. The gateway feature should be far enough from the edge of a curb so as not to be struck by a vehicle or snow removal equipment.

Pedestrian Linkages

Pedestrian linkages are the connecting treads that mesh the community together. They connect the community with the sites and facilities that are important to it. These pathways can be used for recreation, getting to and from school or the grocery store.



A pedestrian linkage between two homes.

Recommended design elements include adequate lighting along the path to relate the path to the community network of sidewalks and to provide a safe environment for users of the linkage system. This lighting should also be at a pedestrian scale: ornamental post lighting, bollards, or landscape accent lighting. A path should be no less than 8 feet wide to accommodate two-way pedestrian traffic. The path material should be composed of concrete, asphalt or other appropriate material, such as recycled composite material (aggregate). These materials can have a free edge and require little to no maintenance. Clean non-programmed greenspace with natural vegetation of native species of trees, shrubs and flowers will provide shade, seasonal fragrances, textural interests, and encourage longevity and easier maintenance of the pathways throughout the community. This environment will also create a habitat for wildlife. Special accent paving and appropriate signage that depicts directions and routes (i.e. walking, bicycle, and so on), that also depict and insure safety. Pedestrian linkages

also provide a “connectiveness” between consumers/residents and the area’s commercial and business districts. The pedestrian linkages and recommended design elements may also be used to channel growth in the future (Garvin, 147).



The pedestrian environment along these pathways must be inviting and reflect the character of the MorningSide West community. It must not only appeal to the community residents, but also to consumers from outside the community who support economic growth. Aesthetics such as paint, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and landscaping are all inviting, and in effect, entice consumers to purchase goods inside their own community due to convenience.

Community Centers

Community centers are not a traditional greenspace category. They most typically are buildings, but a greenspace may function as a community center when residents are drawn together to share space and activities.

A community center is included in this Community Greenspace Initiative because of resident interest and the establishment of such a facility may play an important role in establishing community identity. By definition, a community center is not necessarily a recreation center. A recreation center provides programmed space for community activities; these elements may include the provision of highly specialized facilities such as a pool, performance space or a gym. Such a structure is costly, and not currently realistic for a neighborhood initiative.

A community center can be housed in a variety of structures that provide flexible space for a variety of uses. This versatility makes it an appropriate goal for Morningside West. While the actual development of this facility may not occur for some time, several possible sites have been identified. The potential locations have been identified as part of the overall inventory of existing conditions within the neighborhood.

Recommendations The following recommendations are based on several points. These include an understanding of the current issues of the previous and current development patterns of the designated study area. Coupled with the information obtained from a community visionary meeting, interviews with stakeholders of the community, results from the windshield survey, data collected from a residential housing satisfaction survey, and other community input, recommendations were developed.

The following is a list of priorities, based on the expressed interests of the MorningSide West Community. For each priority recommendations are provided regarding what persons or organizations might be responsible for implementation, as well as suggestions of possible funding source(s) for each priority. There are four priorities discussed:

- Pocket Parks
- Gateways to MorningSide
- Pedestrian Linkages
- Community Center

The Community Greenspace Initiative requires a long-term implementation effort for successful sustainability. With this goal in mind, the project may begin immediately to take advantage of current financial resources. Indeed, the currently available funding from MSHDA should be utilized to develop the first element of the program.

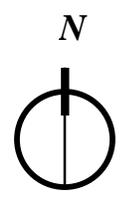
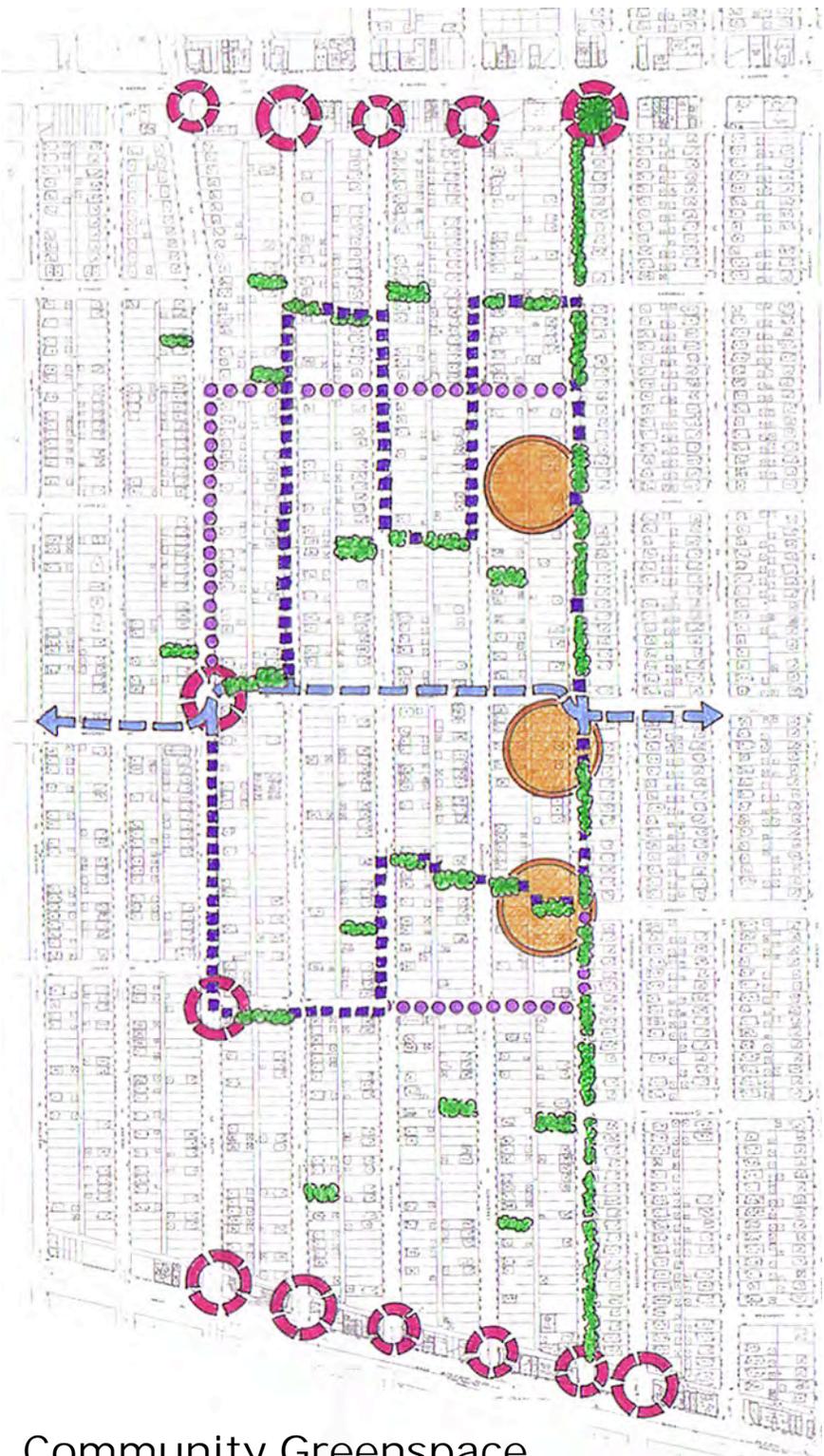
It is important to recognize that the first greenspace to be developed in MorningSide West is only the first step in the overall strategic plan. The Community Greenspace Initiative will evolve based on availability of resources and other community interests and developments. The ranking of greenspace priorities in this document's recommendations does not mean that pocket parks must always precede gateways to MorningSide West, which in turn must precede pedestrian linkages, etc.

Recommendations are based on current community need and economic feasibility. Should financial conditions change or opportunity arise for a particular element of the four greenspace priorities presented, the community must act accordingly to implement that particular priority at that time. For example, if grant funding is obtained pathway

development, the Community Greenspace Initiative recommends building pedestrian linkages at that point to take full advantage of the opportunity.

Legend

-  Community Pocket Park
-  Major Community Gateway
-  Minor Community Gateway
-  Functional Pedestrian Link
-  Recreational Pedestrian Community Loop
-  Recreational Pedestrian traversing the Community
-  Proposed Community Center



Community Greenspace Initiative Plan

Priority 1 :

Pocket Park

Recommended Location:

Northwest corner of Wayburn Avenue and Waveney Avenue



A significant number of children (defined as under the age of twelve years) were observed at play in the MorningSide West neighborhood. Because formal recreation opportunities within the Morningside West Community are extremely limited this play occurs in the street or vacant lots. There is a lack of organized play space within close access for all neighborhood children. Further, it is the first priority of pocket parks to be planned specifically for children.

A small intimate pocket park is recommended to serve children within the range of 3-12 years of age. The proposed park should be adjacent to housing to insure ready-available access. The pocket park should also contain a flexible program to accommodate the diverse economical populations and ages of the MorningSide West community so they can intermingle (Garvin, 2000, 10).



Above is an image of the existing vacant lots of the proposed community park. Costs of the park have been programmed to meet the request of the community, but will require phasing of elements in order to include the community's wish list items. The Appendix contains a schematic drawing of an Active Park layout that shows elements of the wish list of the MorningSide West community. This park is also in the budget range of a MSHDA grant that U-SNAP-BAC received for a park.

The initial development of a Pocket Park should take advantage of vacant property that is already owned or controlled by U-SNAP-BAC. It will positively impact any real estate development in the surrounding areas, and ultimately alter land use patterns, thereby improving quality of life for MorningSide residents.

A neighborhood pocket park fulfills overall goals of the U-SNAP-BAC initiative in that it promotes community investment. Future park development, however, should be closely coordinated with development and revitalization initiatives. This will not only enhance the quality of future developments but also help to ensure the maintenance of the pocket parks.

Priority **2**:

Gateways to MorningSide West

Recommended Locations:

Warren/Wayburn, Waveney/Alter, and Mack/Wayburn



The entry image or gateway to a community is very important. Entry images to a specific community are not only representative of the community's image, but also of its residents. These locations were chosen based on the proximity to recently new single-family homes that were developed nearby and the proximity to the proposed rental units. These three locations will provide a means of announcing the rebirth of the community through as seen through the new homes.

Costs for a sign will vary according to its size and the materials used. It is recommended for the community to repeat the current painted wood-carved MorningSide post and panel sign as the major sign type for the Major



Gateways into the community. A simpler single post and panel sign for minor gateways could also be constructed on a wood post and painted wood-carved sign.

Above is the current condition of the Warren/Wayburn intersection into the MorningSide West community

The responsibility and sustainability of this priority ultimately resides with the given community's residents. The recommended design elements for the entry image/gateway signage program have taken this issue of responsibility into account. Thus, the recommended design elements are relatively inexpensive, and are therefore; easily replaceable if the need should arise. Presumably, if the program is maintained, the land usage will change as well. A community that portrays a clean and safe environment is also one that is healthy community, politically, socially, and economically. While some of the attributes that make up a healthy community are currently questionable in the MorningSide community, it does not mean that all of these attributes can be established now, and in the future.

Priority **3** :

Pedestrian Linkages

Recommended Location:

To be implemented throughout community as the community regenerates, connecting residents to destinations within and around the community.



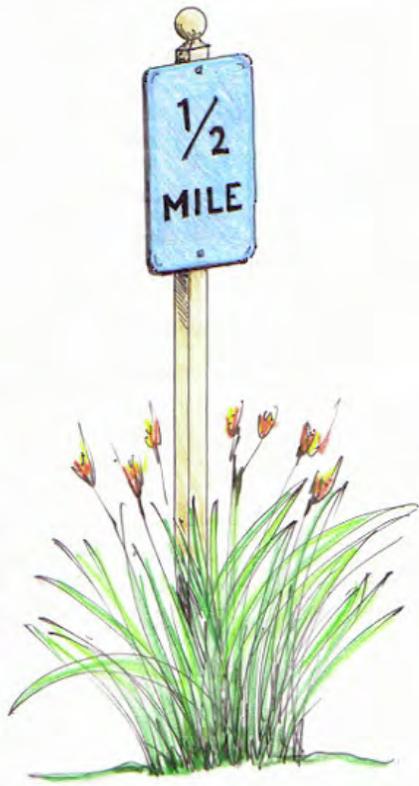
Pedestrian linkages, important as priority two, help facilitate clean, safe and healthy communities. Likewise, pedestrian linkages can also assist changes in land use patterns. Pedestrian linkages serve several purposes, and are more than just exterior decoration (Garvin, *The American City*, 142, 1996).

Pathways already exist in some of the abandoned lots within the MorningSide West community. This identifies the current community patterns and suggests where defined linkages may be most needed to connect users safely to their destinations via a maintained trail system.

Pedestrian linkages provide safer and more direct passageways through the neighborhood for residents on foot and bicycle. In particular, the pathway system will link children to two neighborhood schools, a future community center, and the existing network of sidewalks for access to commercial strips on Warren and Mack.

The paths should be clearly marked and color-coded with signage. The path markers can identify the path and mileage increments to a destination along the path. The marker should be a maximum of 48 inches tall.

The importance of maintenance and support are defining factors in any pedestrian linkage program. Like priority two, pedestrian linkages are sustainable, but do require up-front funding and planning for the initial programming.



Priority **4**:

Community Center

Primary
Location:

Barham and Munich



Community centers are places that provide a venue for uniting the community they serve. Where there are programmed activities, there is cohesion (Corbett and Corbett, *Designing Sustainable Communities*, 145-147, 2000). According to Corbett and Corbett, neighborhoods function well when people experience inner warmth and sense of belonging through participation in community activities, including fun and work groups, (147-148). It is suggested that the activities be diverse to attract various income and interest groups from within the MorningSide West community.



Existing community church within the MorningSide West project area that could be utilized as a future center

It is hoped that residents will actually become involved in the planning of the proposed community center. This should be a small incremental approach, where cohesive decisions are reflected in the design. Sustainable design that includes elements that can be maintained with minimal cost and that are durable will help to absorb the stress of frequent usage.

The lengthy process of development and design of the community center will necessitate the recruitment and retention of community members over several years. This may best be accomplished through the creation of a Homeowners Association. Such an organization would provide continuity in the planning and implementation of this long term project as well as a representative body that could establish guidelines for maintenance fees and scheduling, and discuss programmed activities on an annual basis.

Funding

There are a variety of resources available under the umbrella of community development. Below are some suggestions that are relevant to this Community Greenspace Initiative. There is a great deal of overlap between the priorities in terms of which funding for the projects. This is a positive notion; as proposals to potential funders may encompass at least two, if not all of the priorities; or desired needs of the MorningSide West community.

Funding to implement the pedestrian linkage program(s) for example, can be, parallel to the other priorities, solicited from a number of resources. Although initially, financing for pedestrianization could be quite difficult; indeed it may be difficult to solicit funds from businesses that will profit from the contribution(s) at later dates (Garvin, 149-150). If the pedestrianization is successful, costs will be recouped via business revenues; but there is no guarantee of a successful program, as there is no guarantee for a successful market. This is not to say that local businesses should not be solicited for funds. Pedestrian linkages should be conducted and re-evaluated periodically to prevent negative situations. Soliciting the federal government(s) for block grant or categorical funding is suggested. Local government(s) may provide a match, or provide subsidies for the remainder of funding/project costs.

Some priorities will obviously require different funding strategies. For example, it is relatively expensive to build an adequate community facility that will accommodate its surrounding population. This is of particular importance since the population will increase in the near future. Careful judgment should be used to determine which funders might be more appropriate for a particular activity. The budget should be reflective of the activity/priority as well. The following are some recommendations for the solicitation of local governments for funding. It is not an exhaustive list.

Benefit Assessment District

Another option is a benefit assessment district. A benefit assessment district assesses a defined constituency and provides benefits to its residents. While some benefits may be major improvements, such as new roads, water parks, and recreational facilities, the assessments may also be used for maintenance and operation of the community greenspaces. These districts basically place levies on properties in such a way that the benefit is comparable to the assessment.

Workrecreation	Implementing a "workrecreation" program in the MorningSide West community may be another option for funding. By assigning youth the responsibility for maintenance, in turn they receive access to usage of recreational facilities. Youth also incur responsibility and may (via additional funding from another source), receive tuition assistance and/or a small stipend for labor. Although these programs have traditionally been difficult to design and implement, it may be still worth the effort.
Community Development Block Grant	CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds are available to develop viable communities by providing funding for decent housing and sustainable living environments, and expanding economic opportunities. CDBG funding is flexible and can be used for a variety of development activities. NOF (Neighborhood Opportunity Fund) funding is derived from the CDBG funds, but specifically provides funding for emergency services, education, tutoring and mentoring, and recreation (basketball, baseball, and other league sports). NOF funding may also be used for senior citizen activities, housing counseling and repair, public improvements (i.e. sidewalks, planters, trees, curb cuts, and minor home repair), and legal assistance.
TEA-21	TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century) funding can be sought for not only transportation enhancements, but also for a variety of funding (with specificity towards the MorningSide West community); bike and pedestrian facilities, and landscaping and scenic beautification.
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization	NCR (Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization) funding can be used for activities that will create high quality environments that will enhance and promote new business investment in the MorningSide West community.

Once funding has been secured, and the desired parks are established, we suggest that the MorningSide West community members engage in activities that engage in park usage, and thus, promote sustainability. The following are some activities may engage the community

- Artistic/ theatre performances
- Community fairs (including face-painting and story-telling for children, horseshoes, etc.)
- Holiday events
- Ecological education
- Potluck luncheons
- Music in the park (invite local musicians and school bands to perform)
- Poetry reading
- Religious celebrations

Stewardship

The challenges of implementing the Community Greenspace Initiative do not end when the funding has been received and the community greenspace elements developed. The question remains: who will take care of this community's neighborhood parks and greenspaces? The success of the Community Greenspace Initiative rests with the residents of MorningSide West and planning efforts must include the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of all of the facilities.

Maintenance and security need to be accounted for prior to implementation of any greenspace plan, and stewardship of park space is a major issue within the community. The current lack of density poses security problems for the target area, and so responsibility for the maintenance and security of local greenspace must stem from the neighborhood. This also means that future volunteer efforts must be coordinated with future development.



The community must take ownership of designated park space in order for it to be successful. The continued involvement of the MorningSide West community residents is advocated to provide assistance of the regeneration of their community.

At a recent MorningSide West community gathering, residents suggested developing a core group of volunteers to head volunteerism efforts. Another suggestion advised implementing a neighborhood fee per household to hire a park maintenance crew. Volunteering sounds great at the time people sign up for maintenance tasks, this resident pointed out, and continued, "It becomes hard to keep that promise down the line."

There are reasons why some parks are more successful than others. Money to build a great park is important, but a strong financial base is not the definitive supporting element for healthy community greenspace. A commitment to involve users in both the creative vision and the maintenance of the greenspace plays a larger role in a park's success. There is an argument that people are more likely to care for and take ownership of something that they helped to create.

Two principles seem to direct the fate of popular, well-used parks. First, there must be a community connection. While a survey of existing conditions and poll of neighborhood needs is necessary to deduct physical analyses, it is also a count of the emptiness in an individual or a neighborhood. While this survey method is useful in delving information about a neighborhood's physical elements, the same method shouldn't be used for community-building because it treats people as potential clients and consumers. To thrive, a community must have people who are citizens and producers. The traits and services that community residents have to offer must be shared and celebrated.

The second principle of success can be found in public-private partnership. This goes beyond the usual corporate network to include churches, civic groups, neighborhood associations, and cultural groups. Realistically, every-day neighborhood users can't support the financial requisites of a park system.

The responsibility and maintenance of the pocket park(s), ultimately rest in the hands of the MorningSide West community residents. Due to the suggested lack and inability of City services, the success of this greenspace initiative depends on it.

Conclusion

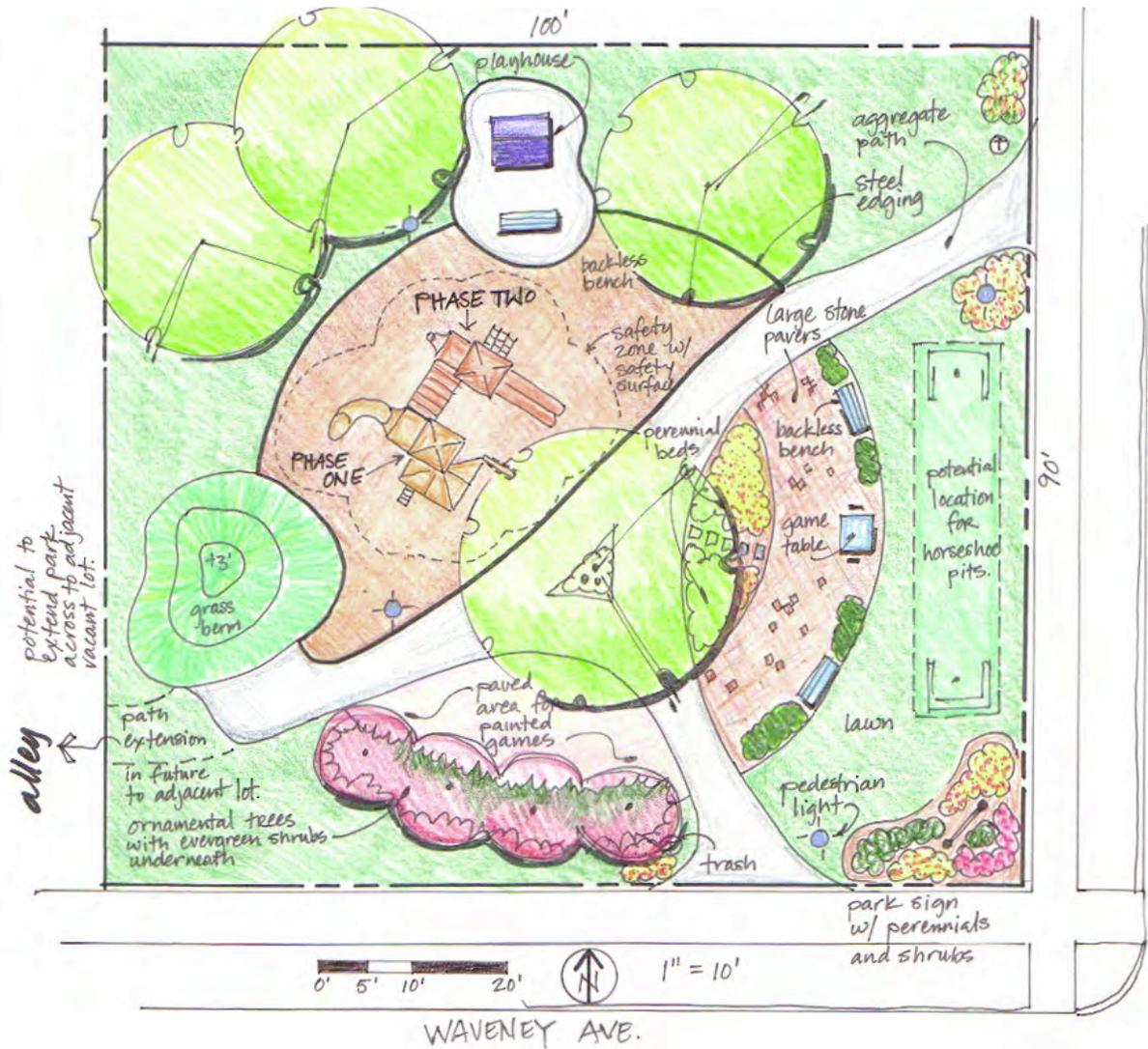
The recommendations illustrated through the Community Greenspace Initiative deliver a tiered program of recreation and beautification goals. These goals have been developed through analysis of existing conditions and community interest. Recommendations have been prioritized in consideration of a realistic schedule and budget cycle for implementation. Analysis indicates that there are several feasible opportunities to create a greenspace plan that will impact the community today and well into the future.

This report itself is not enough to stimulate the creation of useful greenspace for the MorningSide West community. The planner Jane Jacobs said, "People do not use city open space because it is there and because city planners or designers wish they would." Indeed, if this initiative is to be successful, it must be valued, implemented and sustained by the constituents it will serve: the residents of MorningSide West.

APPENDIX

This funding suggestion list is not exhaustive, rather, it is meant to be a reference guide. Soliciting corporate and philanthropic funding to construct physical structures in a park is relatively easy. However, it must be a dedicated task, as much administrative coordination is needed. The following Detroit area corporations have a history of similar philanthropy:

- Detroit Professional sports organizations (Detroit Pistons, Detroit Lions, Detroit Tigers, and the Detroit Red Wings)
- Detroit Media (newspapers, television and radio)
- Detroit Utilities (Detroit Edison, MichCon Gas Co, Ameritech, AT&T, etc.)
- City of Detroit Mayor's Office
- Other Detroit area corporations (St. John Health Care Systems, Inc., Daimler Chrysler, General Motors, Ford Motor Company, Coca-Cola Foundation, Bank One, Comerica, etc.).
- Other funding sources (Mott Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Skillman Center for Children, Community Foundation)
- Federal resources (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), etc.



Proposed Community Park

- Located at the northwest corner of Waveney Avenue and Wayburn Avenue
- Potential to expand west to create a pedestrian linkage path.

Amenities include:

Play structure with safety surfacing

Pedestrian lighting

Games table

Signage

Shade Trees

Flowering Trees

Playhouse

Benches

Trash receptacles

Aggregate pedestrian path

Perennial planting beds

Open lawn for horseshoes

Fencing is not shown but is applicable. This amenity can be added along the perimeter if the need arises.

References

Corbett, Judy, and Michael Corbett. Designing Sustainable Communities, Learning from Village Homes. Washington, DC: Island Press. 2000.

Garvin, Alexander. The American City. New York: McGrawHill, 1996.

Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. New York: Random House. 1961, 1989, 1993.

Smith Group, The. 1998. MorningSide Commons II (development plan).
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Building a Community).

www.planning.org. 2001. The City Parks Forum [SM], US Conference of Mayors, survey of participants (1999).

For further information, please visit the following websites:

www.ci.detroit.mi.us (City of Detroit official website; CDBG and NOF funding)

www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21 (US Department of Transportation)

www.hud.gov (Housing and Urban Development)

www.refdesk.com (Reference desk, NCR funding, definitions)

www.tpl.org (The Trust for Public Land)

www.universalplay.com (Pocket Park Design)

www.urbanparks.org (Urban Parks)