

HOUSING

present themselves.

Foreclosures

Over the last few years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of foreclosures throughout the country and in the Twin Cities. The combined effects have caused the dramatic increase in foreclosures which have placed an enormous strain on many metro area cities; the strain has been especially noticeable in South St. Paul.

Dakota County has indicated that in South St. Paul there were 124 foreclosures in 2007 and 179 in 2008. According to the County, South St. Paul had the second highest number of Sheriff Sales per household, the 3rd highest number of Notices of Pendency (NOP) [*the official notification that the foreclosure process has begun*], and the 2nd largest percent of change from 2007 to 2008 for Sheriff Sales, when compared with other communities within Dakota County. The County also indicates that another wave of foreclosures may occur in 2009 and 2010 because of “Pick-A-Pay” and other adjustable-rate hybrid loans that may have rates adjust up. The City will continue to work with the Dakota County CDA and its Foreclosure Prevention program to attempt to reduce the number of foreclosures.

Additionally, the City has been working on a number of fronts to address the many issues that foreclosed vacant properties can present. The City has been reviewing changes to its ordinances to expedite the process for mitigating dangerous problems at vacant properties.

Housing Density

Housing density is an issue that the Metropolitan Council’s addresses through its policies in its Regional Framework. A majority of South St. Paul’s housing stock was constructed at a density of 7.5 units per acre. Most of the housing stock is located on 40, 50, and 60-foot wide lots. It was not until after 1960 that larger, 75 and 80-foot wide lots were made to be the standard. The Rediscover South St. Paul program continues to utilize existing smaller lots for new home construction. However, there has been increased emphasis on attempting to combine properties or maintain larger sized lots where available. The intent is creating or preserving the larger lot sizes will help facilitate the “move-up” housing that the City is trying to encourage through the Rediscover program.

Environmental issues such as the presence of ravines or steep slopes limit the City’s ability to increase its density in certain areas. While there is still open land in South St. Paul, most of the open land is within ravines, bluffs, other natural features and areas that are not developable. Thus rather than development on vacant land, new high density residential would more than likely be part of a redevelopment within the mixed use zones along Concord Street and Concord Exchange.