



## Grand Avenue Working Group Meets with City Leaders, Proposes Community-Driven Partnership



In mid-2023, SHA partnered with the Grand Avenue Business Association to set up the Grand Avenue Working Group, charged with working on projects to revitalize Grand Avenue. As a series of high profile closures made headlines over the holidays, our group was already working on solutions. Its membership grew to over 40 as community volunteers, business leaders, real estate brokers, developers, and others came forward to help, and we defined 5 key strategic anchors.

We knew we needed the City's support and partnership to be successful. In January, SHA and GABA co-signed a letter to City leaders to request an urgent meeting. In late February, we met with Mayor Carter, Director of Planning Nicolle Goodman, Director of Community Initiatives Noel Nix, and Ward 2 Council Member and Rebecca Noecker to discuss the issues Grand Avenue is facing and potential solutions and next steps.

City leaders were excited about the group's work and want to see Grand Avenue back to its best. We agreed to identify initial projects for Grand Avenue where the City could help, conduct more outreach to Grand Avenue businesses and the surrounding communities, and to work with them to

engage STRS Ohio, with the goal of helping them fill the high-profile vacancies in their buildings. All of this work will be underpinned by a corridor-wide vision for Grand Avenue, which businesses and the community will help define.

We also shared insights from the group's work to date, including from our business listening session on 2/20/24 that was attended by more than 20 Grand Avenue business owners. Businesses highlighted the need for better maintenance, physical infrastructure improvements and placemaking, events and promotion, as well as finding ways to help businesses mitigate higher taxes, assessments, and rent increases.

This meeting would not have been successful without the efforts of our volunteer-led Working Group. There's plenty of work still ahead of us, but our community-led partnership model is already proving its value. We're looking forward to working with GABA to restore Grand Avenue's status as Saint Paul's destination main street, including a pleasant, safe, walkable streetscape, engaging events throughout the year, and interesting and unique places to eat, shop, hang out and play.

### Working Group Strategies:

1. Fill existing vacancies, especially the long-term vacancies. This includes building vacancies attributable to the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio.
2. Improve the built environment. This includes cosmetic updates to the avenue, making Grand Avenue a more attractive place to explore.
3. Bring more community-oriented programming and events to Grand Avenue.
4. Highlight and promote existing businesses on Grand Avenue.
5. Establish partnerships, funding, and regulatory changes to help Grand Avenue respond to a changing retail environment.



To follow along with the group's work, visit

[summithillassociation.org/grandave](https://summithillassociation.org/grandave) or subscribe to SHA's email newsletter.



# Announcing major developments for the Reimagine Linwood Park project!

First, the City of Saint Paul approved its list of projects slated for improvement thanks to the recently approved 1% sales tax increase. Linwood Community Center will receive over \$1 million in these funds!

This \$1 million is in addition to dollars already committed by nonprofit partner KABOOM!\*. City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation recently shared with SHA that first phase investments will be as follows:

- \$400,000 to replace the 30-year old playground. (This funding will also come from the non-profit KABOOM!\* and the St. Paul Parks Conservancy.\*\*)
- \$375,000 for pre-design work for the lower field.
- \$192,000 for the retaining wall between the playground and the sidewalk on the south side of St. Clair Ave.
- \$78,000 to replace the fire alarm system within the recreation center.
- \$75,000 for sidewalk and asphalt repairs within the footprint of the entire Linwood campus.

We anticipate that KABOOM! will be working toward a fall 2024 installation for the playground. SHA will be coordinating with KABOOM! to ensure that our community has input on playground design.

## But what about the rest of the park?

These investments represent the first phase of the Linwood campus overhaul. SHA will continue to work with city staff and our community on the entire projects - from possible bandshell or amphitheater to a splash pad, pickleball courts, and more.

You will soon see SHA launch a capital campaign to position us to engage the community and philanthropic partners in this work. Whether you are able to donate your time, talent, or dollars, we welcome you to this work and are excited about the next few years at Linwood!

## What's next?

Over the course of the next few months, SHA will be asking for your help. This is likely to be in three ways:

**Your time:** We will need help assembling the KABOOM! playground equipment to replace the existing playground. We are hoping this can be a one-day, all-hands-on-deck project for neighbors.

**Your support:** Ensuring that this first phase is the launching point for a full transformation of Linwood Park means that SHA will be embarking on a capital campaign to raise money for projects where public and philanthropic dollars fall short.

**Your voice:** This is a significant undertaking for SHA. Not only do we need your ideas on the future of Linwood, we need you to share the great news with your friends, family, and neighbors.

More info at the  
Spring Clean-up Event  
April 20 | 9-11:30 a.m.  
Linwood Recreation  
Center



Keep connected to this work by checking out the SHA website, following us on Facebook, or signing up to receive our newsletter at [summithillassociation.org](https://summithillassociation.org).

\*KABOOM! is a national nonprofit that works with communities to build kid-designed playspaces that can spark joy and foster a sense of belonging for the kids who are often denied opportunities to thrive. Its mission is to end playspace inequity.

\*\*St. Paul Parks Conservancy is a local nonprofit that generates support from individuals, corporations and foundations for park enhancements, programs and facilities. It defines its work as carrying out the vision for active lifestyles, vibrant places and a vital environment in St. Paul.

**Summit Hill Association**  
District 16 Council  
501(c)(3) non-profit organization

**Stay Connected!**

 [summithillassociation.org](http://summithillassociation.org)

 Summit Hill Association

 Summit Hill Parents Group

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 [summithillassociation.org](http://summithillassociation.org)

**Contact SHA:**

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651-222-1222

Monica Haas  
Executive Director  
[director@summithillassociation.org](mailto:director@summithillassociation.org)

Office located at:  
Linwood Recreation Center  
860 St. Clair Avenue  
St Paul, MN 55105

**Support SHA: Become a Sustaining Member or make a one-time donation.**

A donation to the Summit Hill Association is an investment in your community!  
[summithillassociation.org/donate](http://summithillassociation.org/donate)

**Reach the Summit Hill neighborhood!**

Advertise in the next newsletter.

For more information, email [info@summithillassociation.org](mailto:info@summithillassociation.org)



**It's a genuinely exciting time for our neighborhood.**

A year ago, we started rebuilding the Summit Hill Association (SHA) to make a meaningful impact in our community. We oriented our work around three goals – rebuilding Linwood Park, revitalizing Grand Avenue, and creating a stronger community.

A year later, we're delivering on that promise. As I write this, the City Council has just approved over \$1.1M towards Phase I of rebuilding the park at Linwood Rec Center. **A new playspace**

**for our community is slated to be built this fall!** Improvements to the rest of the park will be studied this year for implementation next year and beyond. This is a generational investment in our recreational amenities and an incredible outcome for our community. It will help reestablish Linwood Park as our community's gathering place for decades to come, as well as drawing new visitors and residents to Summit Hill. It's exciting and inspiring in equal measure. And it's happening because a group of neighbors came together through SHA a year ago and dared to believe it was possible. Over the past year, we conducted extensive community engagement, activated Linwood Park through community events, and forged strong partnerships with Parks & Rec, KABOOM! and the Saint Paul Parks Conservancy. All of which helped turn an idea into reality.

Similarly, when we saw the warning signs for Grand Avenue last year, we sprang into action. We used every channel and resource we had to put out a call for volunteers to step up and help. We partnered with the business association and other stakeholders. Our Grand Avenue Working Group now numbers over 40 community volunteers and stakeholders. Similarly, when we saw the warning signs on Grand Avenue last year, we sprang into action. We used every channel and resource we had to put out a call for volunteers to step up and help. You can read about our progress in this newsletter. Our approach to commercial corridor revitalization puts business and community at the heart of the process. We're working closely with City leadership on everything from street activation to infrastructure improvements and small business assistance. If this approach works for Grand Avenue, it could be a model for every commercial corridor in the City.

These are just two examples of what SHA is already achieving in Summit Hill and beyond. I haven't even mentioned all the other work we do throughout the year – Spring Cleanup, Parents' Group, Summer concerts, zoning applications and city studies, amongst other things.

But how is an organization like ours able to have this kind of seismic local impact? What's the secret? In a word: partnerships. As a District Council, we're uniquely placed to leverage our connections to the City, other groups, and the broader community - the families, renters, business owners, employees, and others who live here or whose lives intersect with our neighborhood - to deliver real change for Summit Hill. We're at our best when we're a conduit through which the community's ideas take shape and are made real. And by inviting the entire community into our work, we're able to multiply our impact many, many times over.

This is only possible when neighbors step up and participate. To that end, we've welcomed 7 new board members and over 30 new volunteers to work on our Grand Avenue and Linwood Park projects in less than 3 months. We'd love to have you join them and help contribute directly to building your community. Consider serving on our board. Volunteer to help organize events, plan engagement, or help us deliver a successful House Tour. Or have your organization advertise with us or sponsor our work. If nothing else, make a regular donation to directly support the impact we're making in Summit Hill and beyond.

Now is an incredibly exciting time to get involved. It's a once in a generation opportunity to make a lasting contribution to our neighborhood and help write Summit Hill's next chapter. **I'll promise you one thing above all else: it's some of the most rewarding work you'll ever do.**



Pictured above is the Summit Hill Association Board of Directors planning for the future of SHA at the January Retreat.

# SHA welcomes new board members, officers

One of our main goals for 2024 is to multiply our impact by inviting the entire community into our work. In just three months, we've welcomed seven new board members to SHA and over 30 community members as volunteers. They come from all walks of life: they are renters, homeowners, parents, and business owners. They bring new voices and life experiences to everything we do. Our new board members are already having an impact – contributing to our communications, development, and events work, as well as the Reimagine Linwood and Grand Avenue Working Group projects.

2024 officers elected at January board meeting:

- Simon Taghioff (President)
- Cole Trace (Vice President)
- Maggie Wenger (Secretary, Zoning and Land Use committee chair)
- Eva Mastbuam-Wensing (Treasurer)

*Officers serve through January 2025*



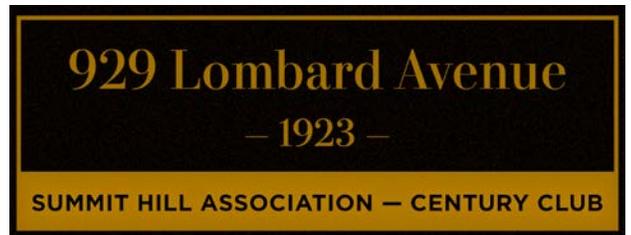
If you are interested in serving on the SHA board or have questions, please visit [summithillassociation.org/get-involved](https://summithillassociation.org/get-involved)

## Join the Century Club!

Summit Hill Association is renewing a neighborhood tradition.

If your home is at least 100-years old, you are eligible to join the Century Club. Honor your 100-year old (or more!) home by purchasing a Century Club plaque AND support the work of Summit Hill Association.

Samples of the plaques will be available in the SHA office. To take a look, please contact [director@summithillassociation.org](mailto:director@summithillassociation.org).



TWO OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

Bronze Plaque (8"x5"): \$450

Composite Resin Plaque (8.5"x3.25"): \$125

To order a Century Club plaque for your home, visit [summithillassociation.org/centuryclub](https://summithillassociation.org/centuryclub)

### Special Offer

Become a Summit Hill Association Sustaining Member at \$10/month and receive \$100 off the cost of the bronze plaque – for a reduced price of \$350. This is a great way to commemorate your membership and commitment to Summit Hill.

Go to [summithillorganization.org/donate](https://summithillorganization.org/donate) today to become a sustaining member!



# Upcoming Neighborhood Events



## Spring Fling Party

Thursday, April 18 | 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Linwood Recreation Center

SHA is partnering with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation for the Spring Fling Party. Save the date for a fun evening of games, food, and face paint!



## Spring Cleanup Event

Saturday, April 20 | 9-11:30 a.m.  
Linwood Recreation Center  
(upper parking lot)

Join SHA in celebrating Earth Day at our annual neighborhood cleanup day! This is a great opportunity for students needing volunteer hours, Scouts looking to earn a merit badge, or those that simply want to help beautify our neighborhood and create community.

SHA will provide bags, gloves, and the tools you need. Refreshments will also be on hand for volunteers. We will also have updates on the Linwood Park project at the event to share with neighbors. Join us rain or shine!

If you can't join us, make any day Earth Day by picking up rogue trash on your next neighborhood walk. A little can go a long way.



## Grand Old Day

Sunday, June 2

The Grand Avenue Business Association will once again put on Grand Old Day, the largest free one-day festival in the Midwest.

Whether you're interested in being a vendor, walking in the parade, fun running, or just strolling the sights and smells of the day, there is something for everyone!

Visit [grandave.com/events/grandoldday](http://grandave.com/events/grandoldday) for details and follow Grand Old Day on Facebook and Instagram.

## Garage Sale Extravaganza

June 21 & 22nd | 9-3 p.m.

Once again, Summit Hill Association will be partnering with Mac-Groveland and Highland Park district councils in a garage sale extravaganza.

This year's entry fee is \$25/household, \$30/business to cover advertising, signage, and program support. Maps specifying garage sale locations will be available online June 19th.

Register at [summithillassociation.org](http://summithillassociation.org)

If you have immediate questions, please contact [director@summithillassociation.org](mailto:director@summithillassociation.org).



Don't miss a thing!  
[summithillassociation.org/calendar](http://summithillassociation.org/calendar)



## Recycling Bins Available

As part of its work encouraging zero waste, Eureka Recycling, the City of Saint Paul's recycling provider, has given a grant to SHA. In exchange, we have recycling and compost receptacles available for residents and businesses within Summit Hill.

If you're interested in recycling or compost bins, please contact [director@summithillassociation.org](mailto:director@summithillassociation.org) to arrange a pick-up date and time. **First come, first serve.**



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# Summit Hill ASSOCIATION

860 St. Clair Ave | St Paul, MN 55105



## Become a Valued SHA Sponsor

◀ Summer Puppet Show in the Park – just one of the many events available to sponsor!

At Summit Hill Association, we are committed to fostering community engagement, promoting local businesses, and enhancing the quality of life in our community. We invite you to support our work and show the community that you care! There are many ways to become an SHA sponsor:

**Advertise in our quarterly newsletter:** Reach thousands of engaged community members with eye-catching quarter-page or half-page color advertisements in our print newsletters.

**Advertise in our e-newsletter:** Associate your brand with our digital communications by sponsoring content in our twice-monthly e-newsletters. Gain exposure to our subscribers and demonstrate your support for community initiatives.

**Sponsor an event:** Enhance your brand visibility by sponsoring one of our signature events, such as our popular house tour. Customize your sponsorship package to include print advertising, logo placement, and other promotional opportunities, maximizing your impact and reach.

**Advertise on our website:** Feature your brand on our website, reaching a broad online audience interested in community news, events, and resources. Benefit from prominent placement and frequent visitor traffic to our site.

**Create your own package:** Tailor a sponsorship package to suit your marketing goals and budget. Whether you're looking to increase brand awareness, drive foot traffic, or demonstrate your commitment to the community, we can create a customized solution to meet your needs.

**Ready to elevate your brand and support our community? For more information on sponsorship opportunities or to discuss custom packages, please contact [director@summithillassociation.org](mailto:director@summithillassociation.org).**

**What is a District Council?** The district council system in Saint Paul is comprised of 17 autonomous 501(c)(3) non-profit agencies that provide residents in each neighborhood an opportunity to become involved in city planning. The primary focus of most district councils is land use, community development and transportation. Other issues that district councils may focus on include parks and recreation centers, community gardens, environmental action, crime prevention and neighborhood beautification. District councils rely on community building activities and events as the basis for convening residents to become involved in their neighborhood. You can learn more at [stpaul.gov](http://stpaul.gov)