

discover together | South St. Paul



South St. Paul Local Business Gathering

Hosted by Mayor Jimmy Francis
and
Discover Together South St. Paul

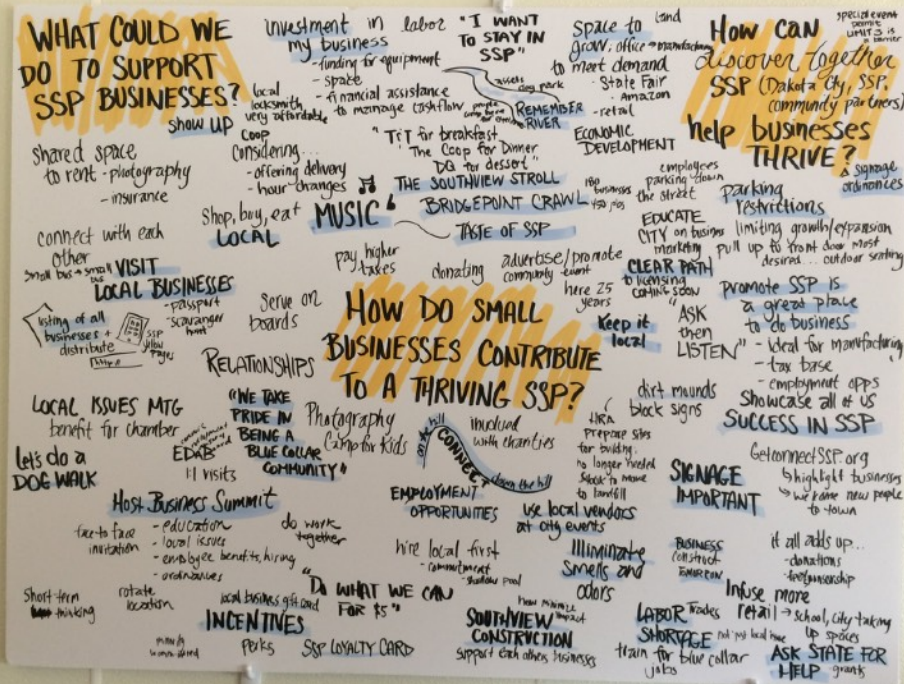
About 30 members of the local business community gathered at T & T Galley on Thursday, August 10 for a conversation that centered around three questions:

- What could we do to support South St. Paul businesses?
- How do small businesses contribute to a thriving South St. Paul?
- How can Discover Together SSP (Dakota County, City of South St. Paul, community partners) help businesses thrive?

Many arrived by 7AM and stayed the whole 2 hours while others stopped in and participated as they were able. Civic leaders from the state, county, chamber and city were also present. The discussion was captured visually on a board that remained up at T & T for a couple days.

Challenges with parking and signage, opportunities for business owners to self-organize and discuss issues, environmental concerns (odor, dirt mounds), work force development for blue collar jobs, promotion and incentives to *Keep it Local*, and recognition of all that small businesses do to give back to South St. Paul were just a few of the topics discussed. It was a time where real issues were brought forward, great questions were asked, and ideas for working together were surfaced.

HOW DO SMALL BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE TO A THRIVING SOUTH ST. PAUL?



- **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Donations
- Advertising and promoting community events
- Been **PART OF THE COMMUNITY** 25+ years
- Involved with various charities
- Serve on boards
- Photography Camp for Kids
- Provide **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** - often hire local
- Pay taxes
- "We take **PRIDE** in being a blue collar community"

WHAT COULD WE DO TO SUPPORT SOUTH ST. PAUL BUSINESSES?

- Create shared spaces for businesses to rent, i.e. photography studio, office space for independent insurance agents
- **CONNECT** with each other, small business to small business, i.e. support the local locksmith who is very affordable
- Show up
- "INVEST IN MY BUSINESS" - equipment funding, space, financial assistance to manage cashflow
- Create a **LISTING OF ALL BUSINESSES** and distribute via hardcopy and web
- Chamber's Local Issues Meeting a Chamber member benefit (SSP Local Issues on 9/27)
- Host regular **BUSINESS SUMMITS** that offer education (hiring, benefits, etc), discussion for local issues, overview of ordinances, do work together - face-to-face invitation, rotate location
- **Shop, buy, eat LOCAL**
- One-on-one visits with the Economic Development Advisory Board
- Offer **INCENTIVES** and perks to keep it local, i.e. SSP Loyalty Card, local business gift card, set goals to support minority-owned, woman-owned businesses
- **MINIMIZE SOUTHWIEW CONSTRUCTION IMPACT** by supporting each others businesses
- **CONNECT** "on the hill" with "down the hill"
- Organize **EVENTS TO HIGHLIGHT LOCAL BUSINESSES** that includes music:
 - ▶ Dog walk through town to dog park
 - ▶ Southview Stroll; ex. "T&T for breakfast, the Coop for Dinner, DQ for dessert"
 - ▶ Bridgepoint Crawl (180 businesses, 450 jobs)
 - ▶ Taste of South St. Paul

HOW CAN DISCOVER TOGETHER SOUTH ST. PAUL (DAKOTA COUNTY, CITY OF SOUTH ST. PAUL, COMMUNITY PARTNERS) HELP BUSINESSES THRIVE?

- **HELP US GROW** our physical spaces to meet demand; office to manufacturing
- Economic development
- Get educated on business marketing - gov decisions have impact
- Clear path to licensing (coming soon)
- When you **ASK** for input, **LISTEN**
- Address **PARKING** restrictions that limit growth and expansion
- Change **SIGNAGE** ordinances, signage is important to small business
- Promote South St. Paul as a **GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS** - ideal for manufacturing, employment opportunities, tax base
- Showcase all of us - **SUCCESS in SSP**
- Use local vendors at city events
- Your asks of small businesses (donations, fees, sponsorships); **IT ALL ADD UP**
- GetConnectedSSP.org to welcome new people to town, highlight businesses
- Infuse more **RETAIL** - caution school, city taking up retail spaces
- Eliminate **SMELLS** and **ODORS**
- Remove **DIRT MOUNDS** - block signs, eye sore. (Note: These were used to prepare sites for building and are no longer needed, challenge to get rid of because no nutrients/value, will cost \$400k to move to landfill)
- Help position SSP businesses to receive **STATE GRANTS** that support growth and development
- Special event permit - limit of 3 is a significant barrier
- Work to address **LABOR SHORTAGE** (not just a local issue) train for blue collar jobs and trades, ex. Business Construct Tomorrow

THANKS FOR STOPPING BY!

Edward Jones	River Heights Media
Sassy Pecan	Sanimax
B & G Crossing	Western Insurance
The Coop	Agency, SSP
Rembrandt's Sister	Little Monarch
City of South St. Paul	Dakota County
River Heights Chamber	JE Dunn Construction
Buggs Bar	Harmony Cedar
Budget Bleachers	Rep. Rick Hansen
Car & Credit	SSP Economic
WishFULL	Development Board

**SPECIAL THANKS TO
T & T GALLEY FOR HOSTING!**



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PURPOSE

discover how community members, community agencies, and Dakota County can continue to work together to invest in making South St. Paul a great place for all who live, learn, work and play here today and into the future

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Magnify and leverage assets of the community

Build and invest in relationships across difference

Identify resources to act on ideas from all parts of the community to support our purpose

Believe that government can co-create capacity and broader solutions to community-wide challenges by helping to facilitate community conversations and enabling collective action

Play together and find joy in this work

For more information about this initiative visit

<http://www.letsdiscovertogether.org/>

The Discover Together | South St. Paul team is interested in identifying next steps from this conversation.

If you have additional thoughts around local business in South St. Paul or would like to be involved in planning efforts that arise from the Discover Together initiative, please feel free to connect with **Mayor Francis** (jfrancis@southstpaul.org) and Economic Development Division Manager **Ryan Garcia** (rgarcia@southstpaul.org) and/or any of the following members of the Discover Together SSP Core Team: SSP Community Affairs Liaison **Deb Griffith** (dgriffith@southstpaul.org), Deputy Director of Dakota County Community Services **Stephanie Radtke** (stephanie.radtke@co.dakota.mn.us), Dakota County Workforce Services Supervisor **Jill Pittelkow** (jill.pittelkow@co.dakota.mn.us).

Jen Mein (jen@umn.edu), Innovation Manager at Future Services Institute of the UMN Humphrey School of Public Affairs, was the facilitator/scribe of this gathering and the creator of this summary.



This summary was prepared by Future Services Institute.
<http://futureservicesinstitute.umn.edu/>