



Living Off Campus

Macalester Students in the Neighborhood

Produced by the Urban GIS Class and the Urban Studies Senior Seminar
Macalester College, St. Paul, MN • Spring 2002

Living Off Campus Macalester Students in the Neighborhood

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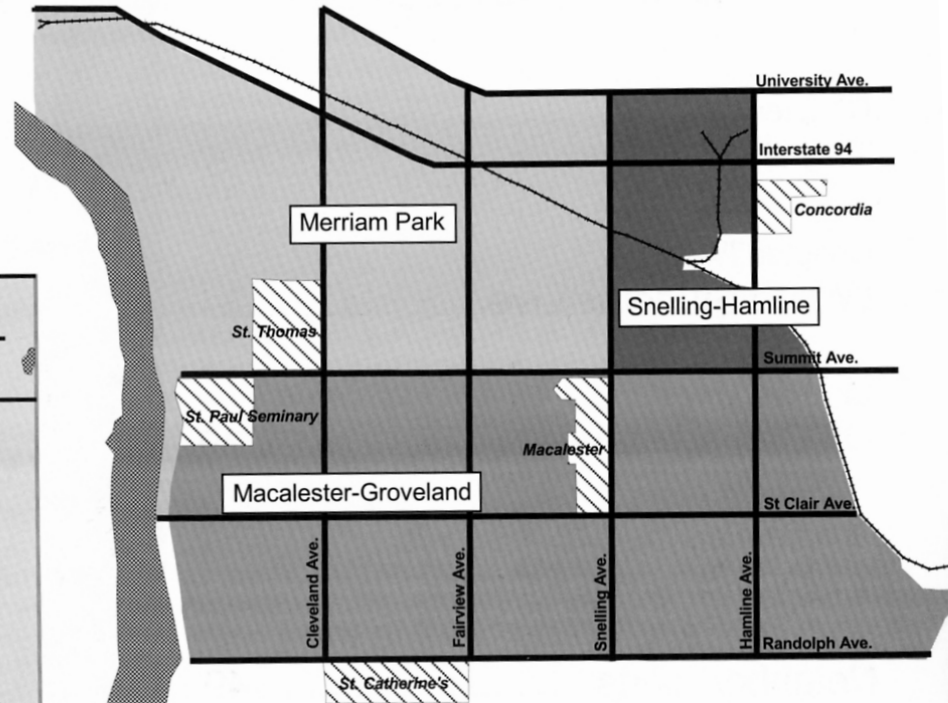
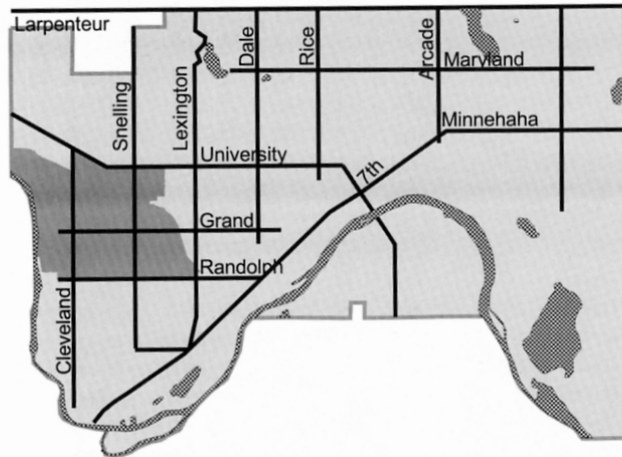
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Macalester College and Surrounding Neighborhood



Macalester College and its surrounding neighborhoods are located in western St. Paul. The neighborhoods in our study area are bounded by University Avenue to the north, Hamline Avenue and the shortline railroad to the east, Randolph Avenue to the South, and the Mississippi River to the west.

Macalester College's campus is in the Mac-Groveland neighborhood, but its northern edge forms the southern edge of the Merriam Park and Snelling-Hamline neighborhoods. Most off-campus students live in these three neighborhoods.



*Tangletown,
west of Macalester
in Mac-Groveland*

Chapter One

The Neighborhoods



Chapter One

The Neighborhoods

- Population Trends
- Age and Household Type
- Race
- Housing
- Land Use

Macalester College is located on the western edge of St. Paul, about three and a half miles from downtown St. Paul and seven miles from downtown Minneapolis. It enjoys a central location in the metropolitan area with good bus access and is surrounded by pleasant, middle and upper-class residential neighborhoods. Historic Summit Avenue forms the northern edge of the campus and the Mississippi River, a mile to the west, provides abundant recreational land.

Existing as it does in the middle of a residential area, Macalester affects and is affected by the three neighborhoods that surround it: Macalester-Groveland, Snelling-Hamline, and Merriam Park. The college campus is in Mac-Groveland, but many off campus students also live in Merriam Park, directly north and west of campus, and Snelling-Hamline, to the north-east. In this chapter, we will examine some of the dynamics taking place in the three neighborhoods and try to determine how off campus students fit into the larger community.



The Mississippi River provides recreational opportunities

Population Trends

Macalester-Groveland is by far the largest of the three neighborhoods in terms of population and housing units. Bounded by Randolph Avenue to the south, the Mississippi River to the west, Summit Avenue to the north, and the railroad and Interstate 35E to the east, it encompasses Macalester College and borders the College of St. Catherine to the south. Merriam Park is notably smaller than Mac-Groveland,

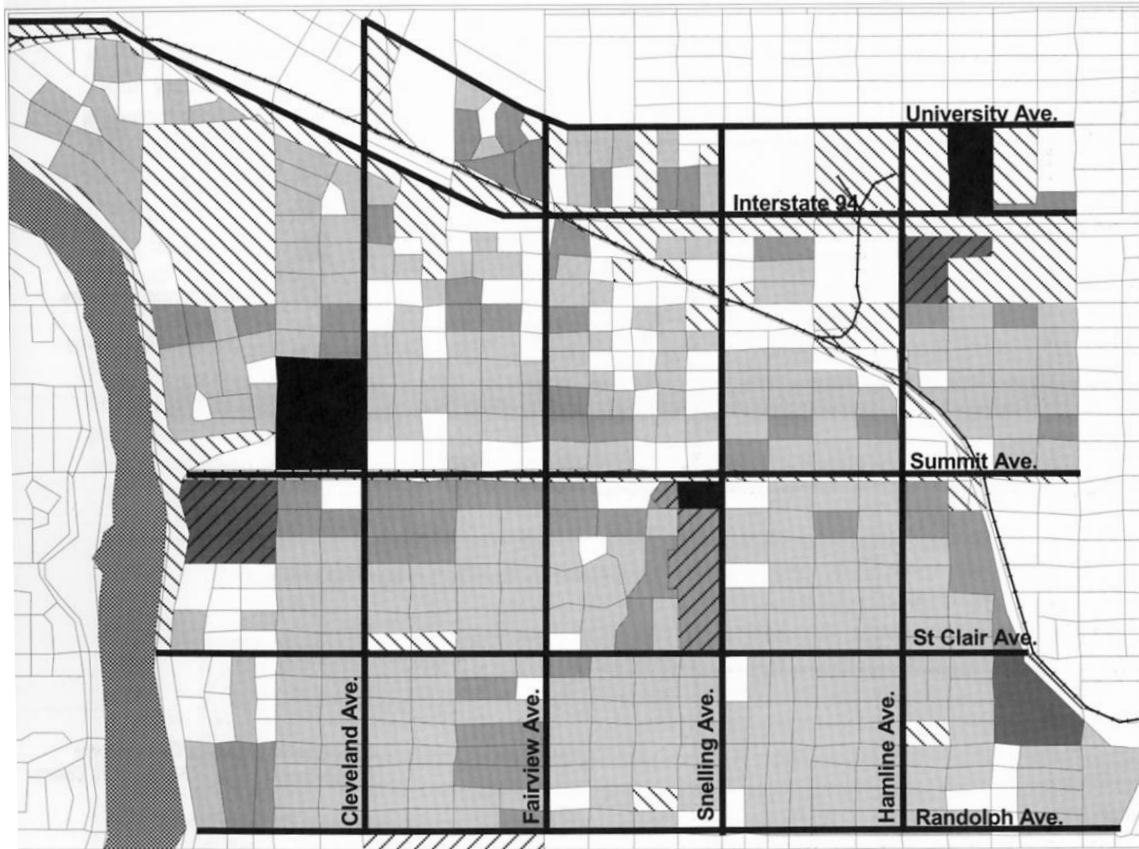
and Snelling-Hamline is only about one-tenth its size. Both neighborhoods extend from Summit Avenue north over Interstate 94 to University Avenue. Merriam Park is bounded by the Mississippi River to the west and Snelling Avenue to the east, and includes the University of St. Thomas with its large resident and off-campus student population. Snelling-Hamline includes the area east of Merriam Park to Hamline Avenue and Ayd Mill Road.

Population in the area is

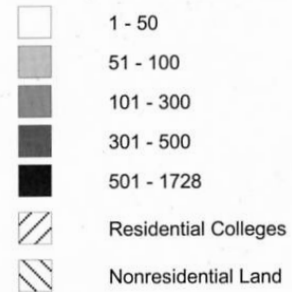
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Total Population

2000 by Block



Total Population

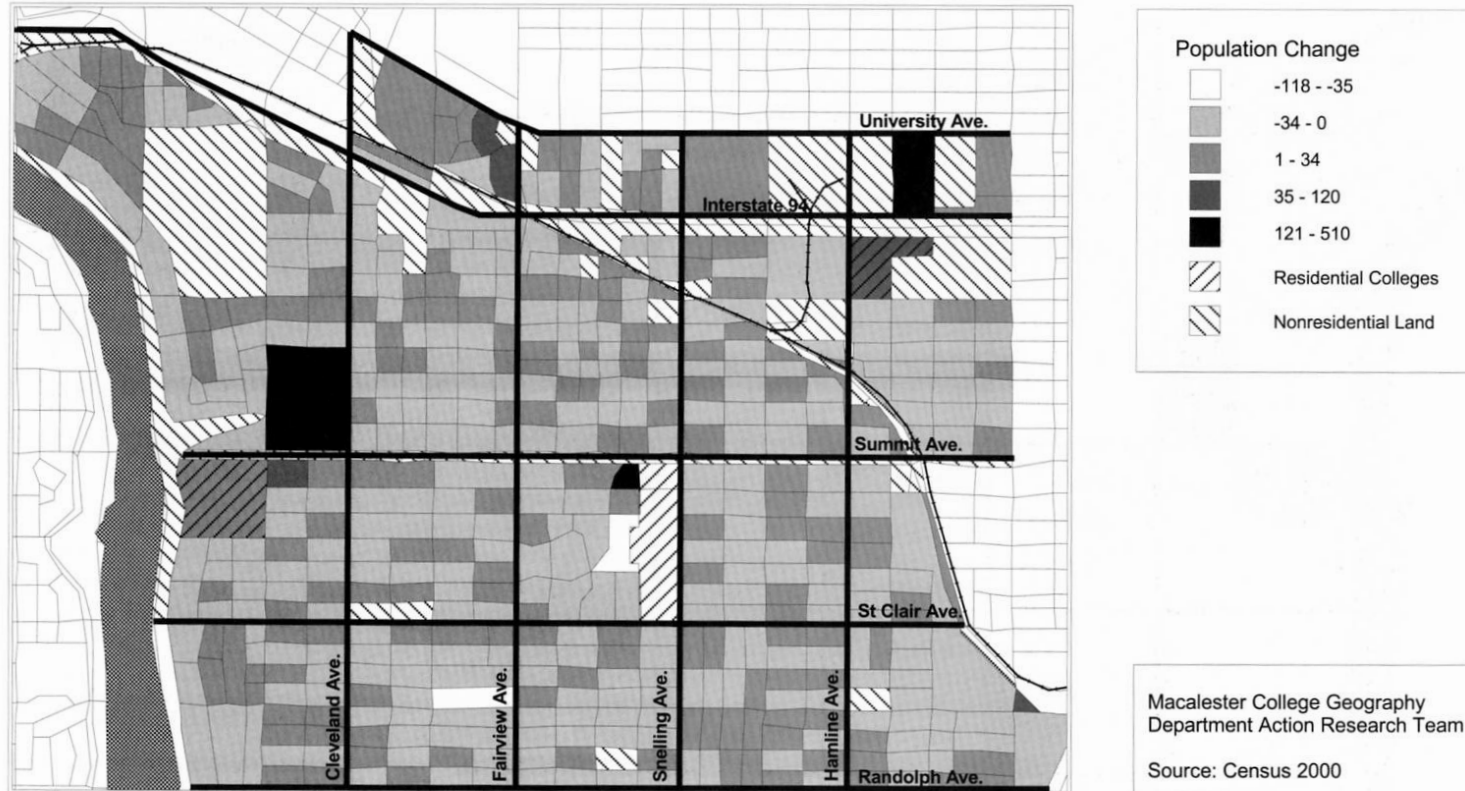


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Department Action Research Team

Source: Census 2000

Total Population Change

1990-2000 by Block

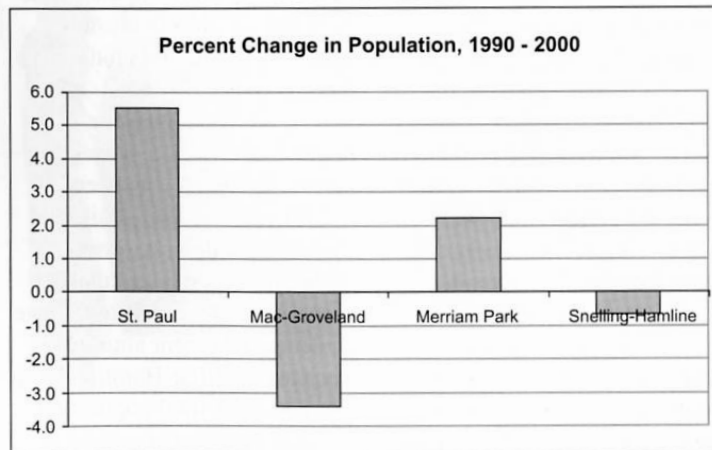


concentrated at and around the colleges and east of the Snelling-Hamline neighborhood in the Skyline Towers housing project. Smaller concentrations exist in the apartment buildings along Grand Avenue and in the elderly housing on the eastern edge of Mac-Groveland. The St. Thomas and Macalester College dormitory populations show up particularly strongly on the map, highlighting the sheer number of residents that live on the college campuses. Aside from the colleges, the neighborhoods have relatively low population densities, giving the area a suburban feel.

Most blocks did not

experience drastic changes in population between 1990 and 2000, reflecting the general stability of the neighborhoods. Major population gains and losses are generally associated with the colleges (for example, the building of George Draper Dayton Hall at Macalester shifted population from one block to another), and Skyline Towers. Between Cleveland and Fairview north of the interstate, population increased due to the construction of elderly housing. Elsewhere, there does not appear to be a dominant pattern of population gain or loss, and most changes were small.

None of the neighbor-



hoods grew as quickly as St. Paul as a whole, reflecting the area's smaller household sizes, lower density, and lack of immigrant population. Merriam Park grew slightly in population between 1990 and 2000 while Snelling-Hamline remained about the same and Mac-Groveland declined slightly. However, such small fluctuations may be largely due to changing student populations at the colleges.

Age and Household Type

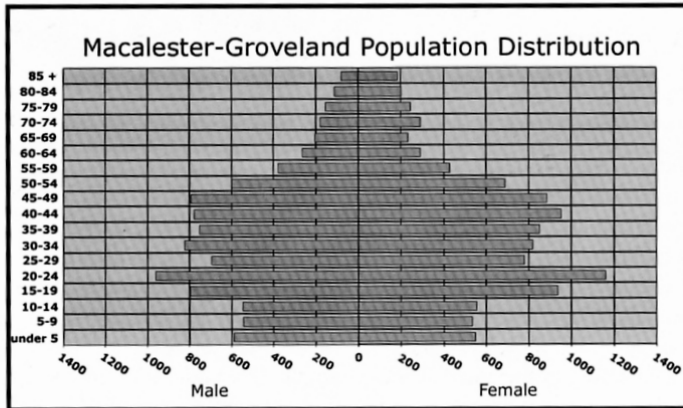
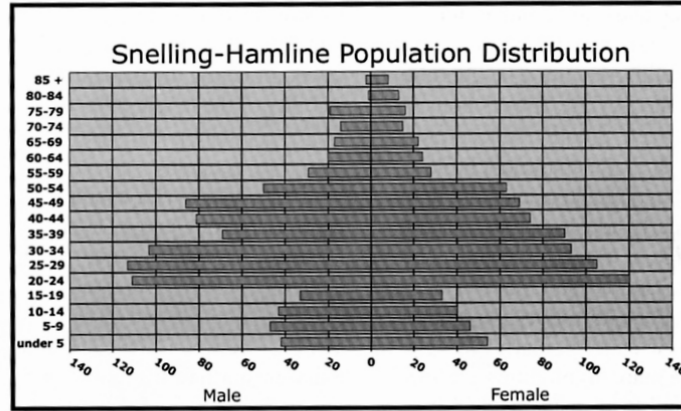
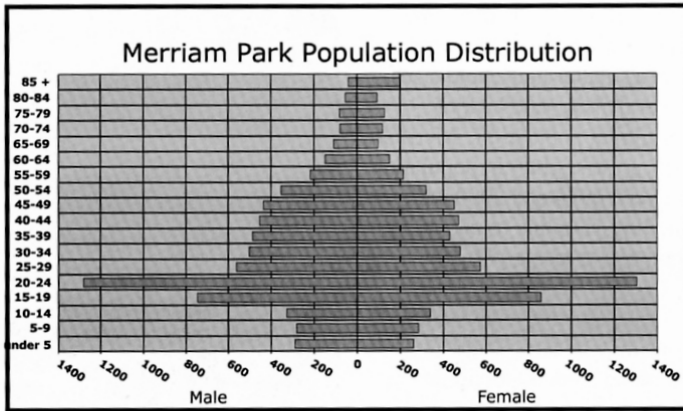
To what extent does the abundance of colleges in the neighborhoods influence their age distributions? In all three neighborhoods, the number of residents aged 20-24 outnumbered all other cohorts. Population pyramids show the unbalanced nature of the age distribution, with a small base suddenly widening upon reaching the young adult cohort, and then again thinning into older cohorts. This may not be due solely to the college population, and the pattern is more drastic in



A crossing guard from Nativity School in Mac-Groveland

some neighborhoods than in others. But the colleges undeniably have an impact. Most Macalester students, for example, live either on campus or in its immediate vicinity, throwing 1700 extra young adult bodies into the neighborhoods.

The presence of Macalester students as well as a still larger number of St. Thomas students is reflected in Merriam



Park's enormously skewed age distribution. In Merriam Park, the 20-24 age cohort is at least double the size of any other age group besides the 15-19 cohort, which also includes college-

aged people. As age increases, cohort size declines, and children are not particularly well represented. The large number of elderly women in the population pyramid is due to the

elderly housing on University Avenue. Clearly, the colleges are influencing the demographics of the neighborhood quite dramatically. Maps of median age and population aged 18-21 show that while some clustering of younger residents is occurring, particularly near St. Thomas, they are also scattered throughout the neighborhood.

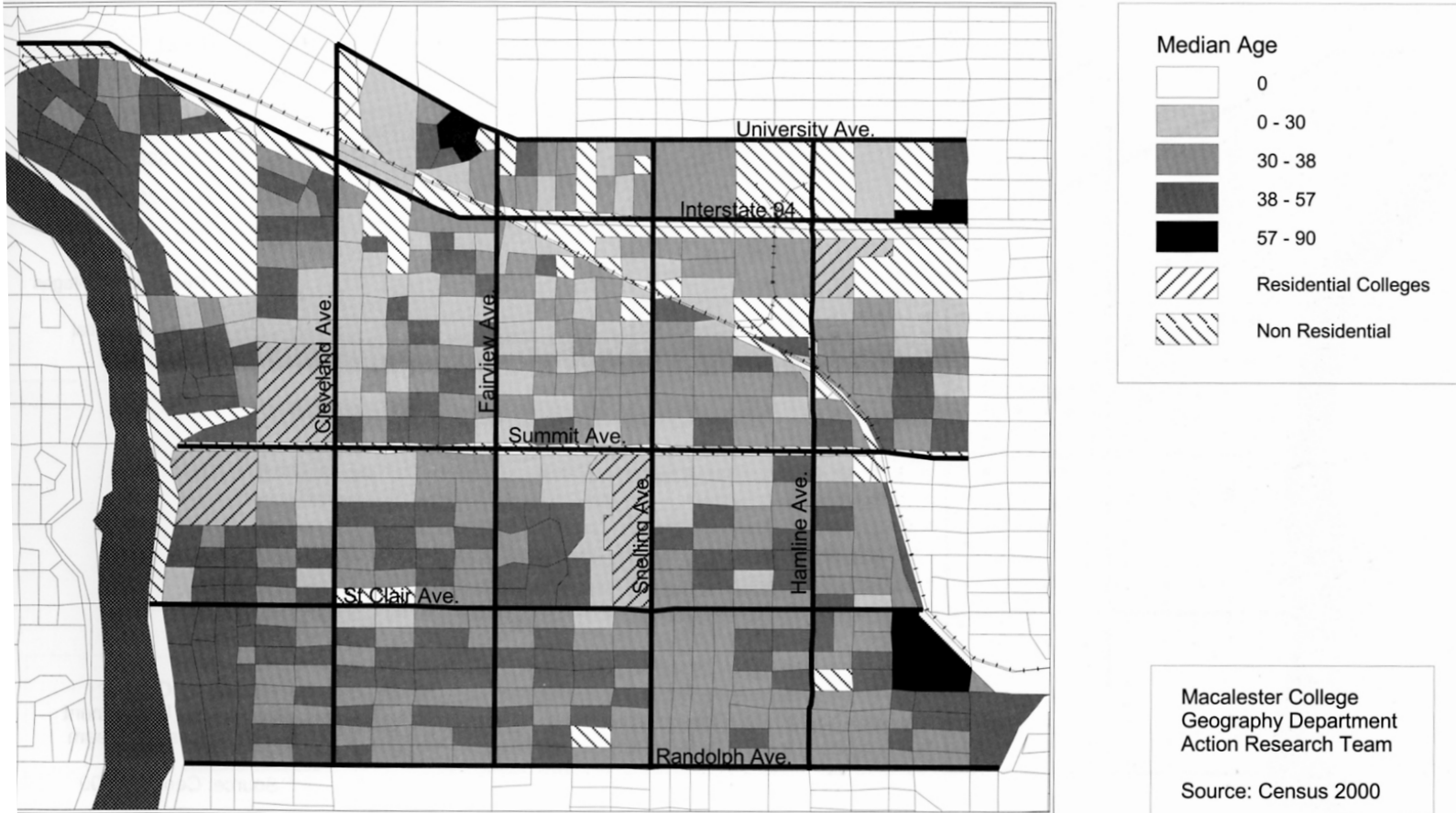
In Mac-Groveland, the age distribution is more balanced. The 20-24 cohort only slightly outnumbers middle-aged cohorts, and the larger number of children and middle-aged adults indicate the more family-oriented nature of the neighborhood. The median age

in Mac-Groveland south of Grand is significantly higher than the median age north of Summit, and fewer 18 to 21-year-olds live there. The majority of young adults in the neighborhood are closely clustered near Macalester and along Grand Avenue.

Snelling-Hamline's population pyramid shows a bulge of residents between 20 and 49 years of age. Children and older adults are fewer. Young adults are particularly numerous, due in part to college students and recent alumni. Because Snelling-Hamline has a much smaller total population than either Mac-Groveland or

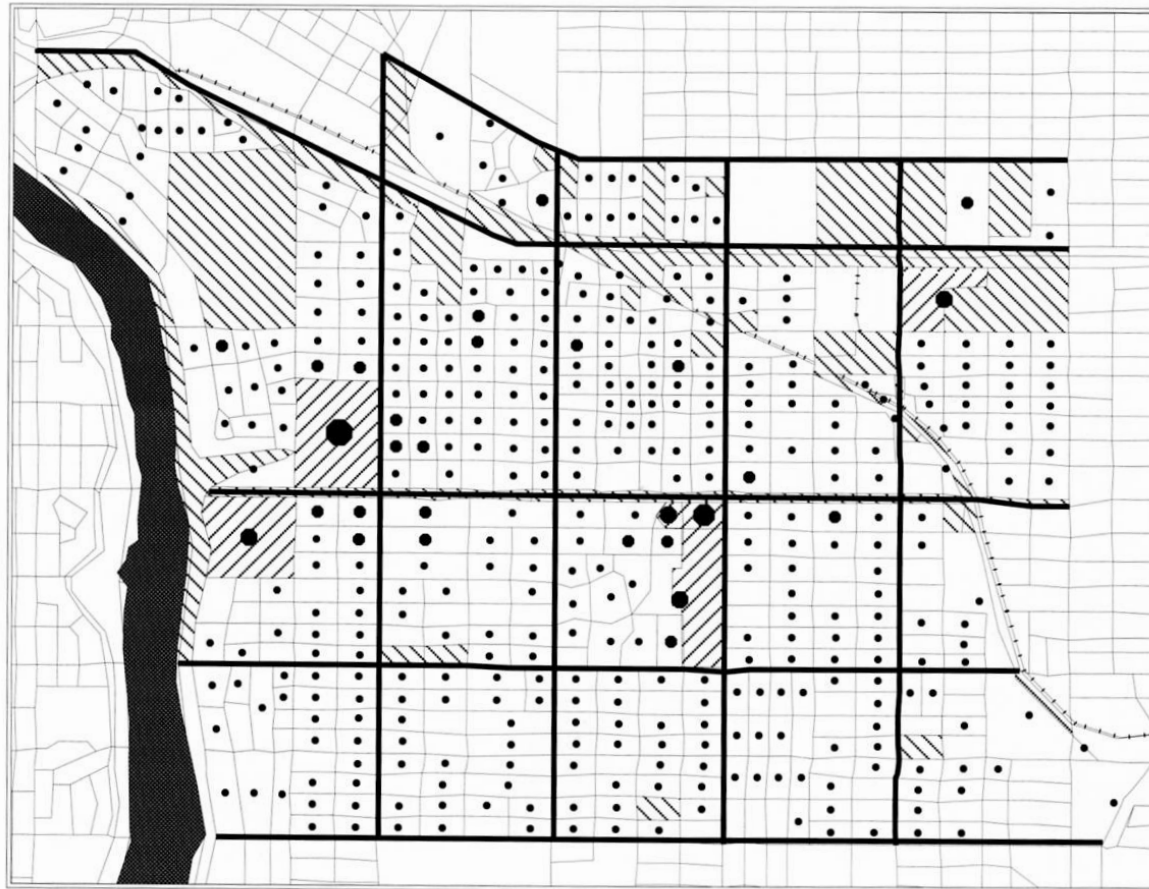
Median Age

2000 by Block



Number Aged 18 - 21

2000 by Block



Number 18 - 21

- 1 - 19
- 20 - 96
- 97 - 369
- 370 - 759
- 760 - 1543

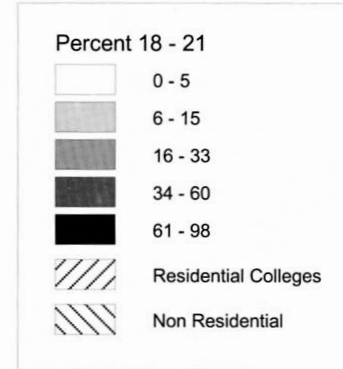
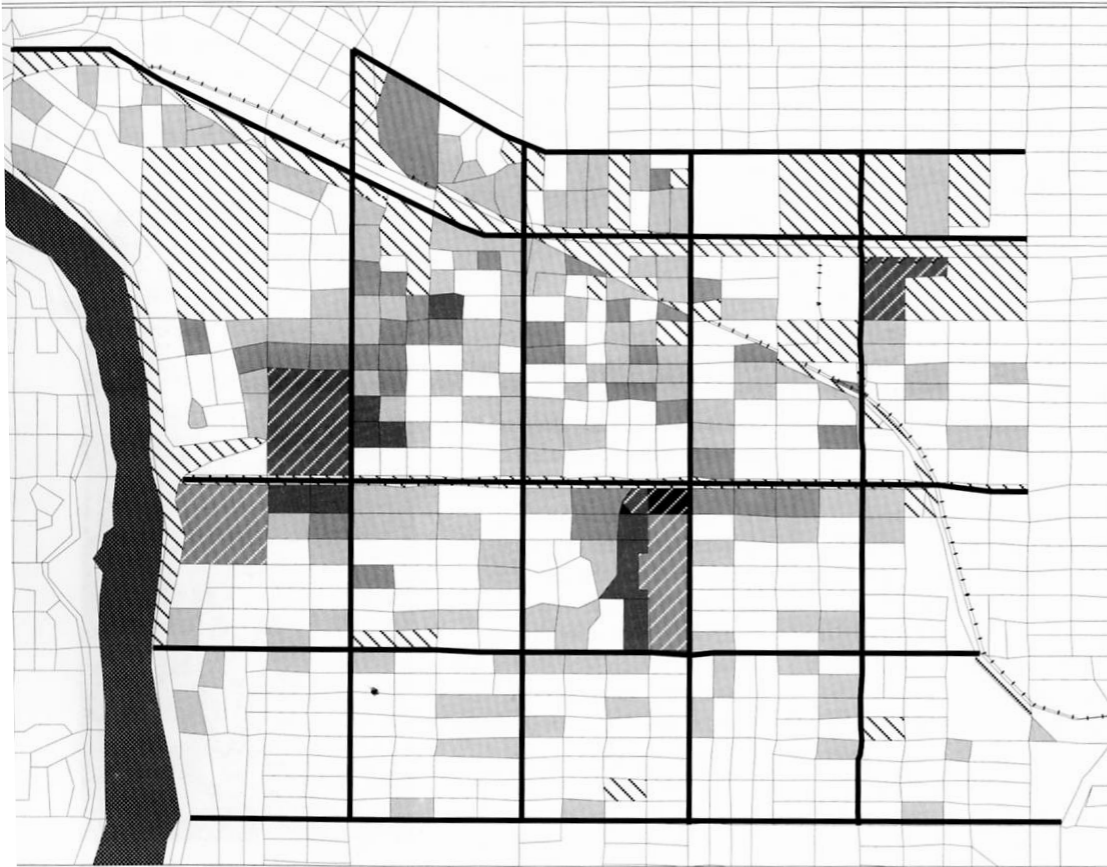
- Residential Colleges
- Non Residential

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Geography Department
Action Research Team

Source: Census 2000

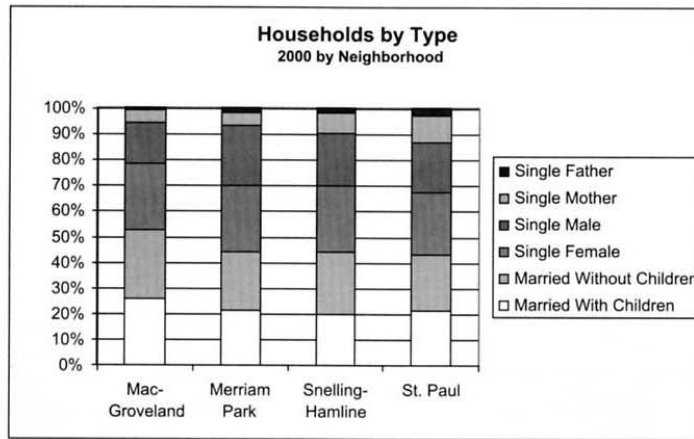
Percent Aged 18 - 21

2000 by Block



Macalester College
Geography Department
Action Research Team

Source: Census 2000



Merriam Park, its distribution is more easily skewed by individual buildings or groups of residents.

Although the colleges significantly influence age distributions, household types in the three neighborhoods resemble those in St. Paul as a whole. In St. Paul, married couples make up 43.3% of all households, with an essentially even split between those with children and those without. Merriam Park and Snelling-Hamline follow a similar pattern. In Mac-Groveland, however, married couples are more common, making up 52.5% of all households. The abundance of married couples in Mac-

Groveland can be partially explained by its large amount of owner-occupied housing and solidly middle-class orientation.

In St. Paul as a whole, single people make up 43.1% of all households, with more females than males, probably due to the dominance of women in older age cohorts. In Merriam Park, singles make up 50.1% of all households, and in Snelling-Hamline, 46.8%, placing these neighborhoods somewhat above the city average. This is not surprising considering their large numbers of young adults. The most noticeable difference in household composition between the

city as a whole and the neighborhoods around Macalester is the relative lack of single-parent families in the area. Single parent families make up 13.5% of households in St. Paul, but only 5.7% (Mac-Groveland) to 9.5% (Snelling-Hamline) of households in the neighborhoods surrounding Macalester.

Race

Unlike some parts of St. Paul, the neighborhoods surrounding Macalester are overwhelmingly white. Their racial composition is related to the relatively high incomes and high property values in the area. Residents of Mac-Groveland, Merriam Park, and Snelling-Hamline are generally well-established and the area receives few immigrants or new migrants. St. Paul's southwest sector, of which Macalester and surrounding neighborhoods are a part, is a white, high-income enclave in the central city.

Along with their large white populations, Mac-Groveland, Merriam Park, and Snelling-Hamline contain small numbers of black, Asian, and

Hispanic residents. The numbers of Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, Multi-race respondents, and respondents choosing "other" for race are too small to examine meaningfully. The pattern of nonwhite residents in the area is striking, with a clear "across the tracks" phenomenon. Few minorities live south of the



A Mac-Groveland mother with her two small children

railroad tracks and Interstate 94, but north of these barriers, the number of nonwhite residents increases dramatically. In these areas, property values are lower and land use is less residential and more commercial/industrial. Although these areas are technically a part of the Merriam Park and Snelling-Hamline neighborhoods, they are functionally a part of the Midway corridor which extends along University Avenue and is characterized by lower incomes, lower property values, and larger immigrant and domestic minority populations.

Black residents are the most spatially segregated group, with Asian and Hispanic residents more evenly dispersed throughout the study area. Macalester College has a higher percentage of nonwhite residents than the surrounding neighborhoods; Asians, in particular, are relatively well-represented proportionally given the College's active minority and international student recruitment policies. The Skyline Towers housing project just east of the Snelling-Hamline neighborhood also houses a large number of

