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DECEMBER 4-17, 2013

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Site plan for 5-story building at Snelling and Selby gets final hearing on Dec. 12

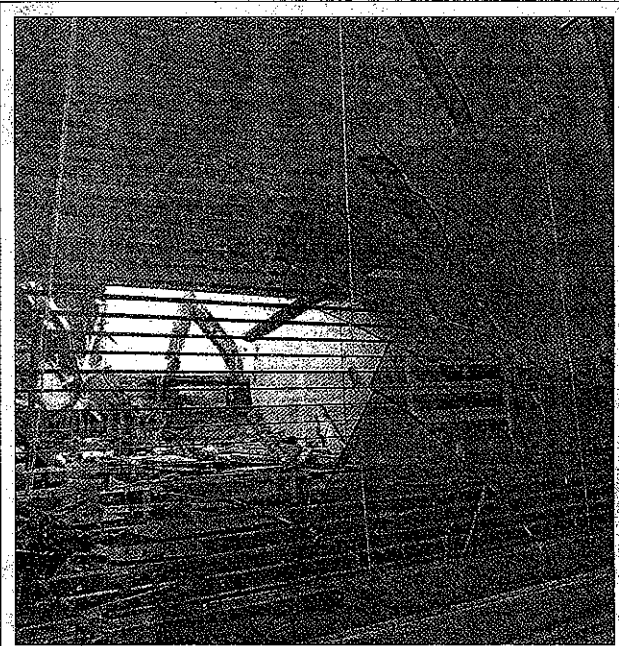
Traffic study says project will not make congestion any worse than it already is

BY JANE McCLURE

The day of decision approaches for The Vintage on Selby, the five-story development that has been proposed by Ryan Companies and Associated Bank for the northeast corner of Snelling and Selby avenues. The site plan for the new 208-unit apartment building and 39,100-square-foot Whole Foods Market will be the subject of a public hearing at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, December 12, before the Zoning Committee of the St. Paul Planning Commission. A new traffic study has also been released for the development, which has the potential to transform a neighborhood business district that has remained largely unchanged for decades.

The local Union Park District Council's Land Use Committee will review the site plan at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 3, at Anchor Bank, 1570 Concordia Ave. The full Union Park District Council (UPDC) is expected to make a recommendation on the site plan at 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 4, at Concordia

SNELLING-SELBY SITE PLAN ▶ 4



The final withdrawal. Demolition of the former U.S. Bank office building, shown reflected in a window at the facility, got underway on November 19 at Shepard Road and Davern Street. The building, which has been vacant for two years, is being removed to make way for new development. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

Center for torture victims consolidating in St. Paul

Dayton Ave. headquarters is light for those subjected to humanity's darkest side

BY JAMES MCKENZIE

The Center for Victims of Torture will observe International Human Rights Day on December 10 with an open house for staff, volunteers and donors at its former clinic on the University of Minnesota campus. The event will also serve as a farewell to that building while celebrating the healing of hundreds of torture survivors who have rebuilt their lives at that facility.

"It's more than just a building," said executive director Curt Goering, "it's a sacred place where miracles occur and lives are forever changed for the better."

By early next year, the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) will consolidate operations at its two St. Paul locations—its national headquarters at the Healing Center, 649 Dayton Ave., and its offices at University and Raymond avenues, where 15,000 square feet are being added to more than double that space.

The Dayton Avenue headquarters also has become a sacred space after nearly a decade of providing a safe place for torture survivors to mend. "Staff and clients have a deep emotional and spiritual attachment" to the place where they do the difficult work of healing together, Goering said.

West End resident Abbey Weiss Kanzer, a psychotherapist and trainer who has worked at the CVT on Dayton for more than seven years, compared work with torture survivors to the more visible trauma of victims of natural disasters, like the typhoon in the Philippines.

"After such disasters, we see story after story of people and organizations helping each other," she said. "It's all very visible, but torture is private, intimate, isolating."

The CVT, which is the oldest and largest of 38 such programs in the United States and more than 200 worldwide, has learned much about healing over its 28 years. Sometimes it occurs from simple recognition that arrives only after trust and safety have been established. Kanzer told of a farmer from a West African nation who was tortured by soldiers. She was forced to flee for her life, leaving her children behind. She spoke a rare dialect so it was some time before an interpreter was located and treatment could begin.

Several years had passed since her escape, but she was still immobilized by depression and

HEALING CENTER ▶ 3

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Psychotherapist Abbey Weiss Kanzer and executive director Curt Goering stand before a display of African masks at the Center for Victims of Torture at 649 Dayton Ave. PHOTO BY BRAD STAUFFER

1◀ HEALING CENTER

plagued by nightmares.

"How long would it take those soldiers to find me?" she asked one day. Taking out a map, Kanzer and her client found her home country and traced her route of escape across the Atlantic to St. Paul. Her torture had obliterated a geographic understanding of where she had ended up and the realization that her torturers could not simply drive a long way to find her.

"She came back the next week and said her nightmares had ended," Kanzer said.

CVT's pioneering work has led to frequent invitations from such institutions as Doctors Without Borders, the UN Refugee Agency and the U.S. State Department to advise and train others and sometimes to directly treat torture victims all over the world.

"It's a responsibility," said Neal Porter, director of international services, who compared CVT's globally recognized expertise to that of heart surgeons. "You wouldn't want to be the first patient alone in an operating room with an unsupervised surgeon on a first case. It's the same for the specialized mental health treatment for torture survivors."

Porter added that CVT is a secondary nongovernmental organization (NGO), carefully assessing situations anywhere it is invited before committing its resources. "We'd never be the first agency into a country," he said. "People can't work on mental health if they're hungry, chronically sick or there are serious security issues."

Over the decade since the Dayton Avenue center opened, CVT has "grown substantially, from a Minnesota center with some international projects on the side to an international organization with a presence in multiple countries while remaining headquartered in Minnesota," Goering said. "But the healing work we do here feeds what we do abroad, and the reverse is also true."

Porter agreed, citing cultural learning and group work done in Africa that has been applied at the St. Paul center.

A new three-year, \$3 million partnership with HealthEast Roselawn Clinic embodies what Goering calls CVT's ongoing effort "to reach more people while reducing health care costs." CVT is embedding a team with a group of Roselawn primary care physicians to work with the east metro area's Karen population, measuring the effective-

CVT TIMELINE

1985—Founded as the first such treatment center for victims of torture in the United States. Clinical staff included two part-time volunteer doctors at St. Paul Ramsey Medical Center (now Regions Hospital).

1987—Established a clinic for torture survivors in a home near the University of Minnesota.

1992—Office opened in Washington, D.C., to work with Congress and other agencies.

1993—First international work involving CVT psychotherapists training care providers in Bosnia and Croatia.

1999—First direct international client treatment when the U.S. State Department invited CVT to work with Sierra Leone refugees in Guinea camps.

2004—St. Paul Healing Center opened in a remodeled and expanded three-story Victorian home at 649 Dayton Ave.

2004—CVT awarded United Nations NGO Special Consultative Status.

2008—CVT Jordan opened to treat Iraqi refugees, now including a large and growing number of Syrian refugees.

2011—CVT Kenya opened in the world's largest refugee camp, treating Somalis, Sudanese, Ethiopians and refugees from other Horn of Africa conflicts.

2013—The organization begins a three-year collaboration with HealthEast Roselawn Clinic to provide on-site mental health care for Karen refugees from Burma.

ness of primary care and mental health under one roof.

"Our clinic in St. Paul has five full-time staff who are themselves refugees from Burma," said Dr. Jim Lettis, Roselawn's medical director. "The clinic now cares for more than 2,500 Karen patients."

CVT schedules regular, free one-hour tours of the Dayton Avenue facility where the public can hear first-hand from psychotherapists, social workers and other staff members about their work. To schedule a tour, contact Steve Hall at 612-436-4820 or shall@cvt.org.