

**West 7th / Fort Road Federation**

**Board of Directors**

April 2018 - 2019

[www.fortroadfederation.org](http://www.fortroadfederation.org)

651.298.5599

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Becky Yust

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Denise Wickiser

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Walt Wietzke

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Mark Fangmeier

Wendy Underwood

**Area II Coordinators (2)**

Jeannie Farrell

Andrea McDonald Marboe

**Area III Coordinators (2)**

Dana DeMaster

Meghan Redmond

**Becky Yust  
President**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The Federation mission is meaningful to me because it encompasses all aspects of “community,” That is, it works on:

- housing/commercial/faith/education/recreation facilities to support living and working in the neighborhood,
- developing an inclusive community through engaging individuals to build social connections, and
- sustaining and building the economic vitality of the neighborhood for its residents and businesses.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

The primary challenges, I see, are to:

- Continue to serve current residents and businesses while attracting new residents and businesses.
- Ensure that transit improvements serve all residents and businesses
- Manage the pressure of new development in order to maintain the uniqueness of the neighborhood

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

The greatest opportunities are to:

- Developing the next generation of leaders in the neighborhood.
- Encouraging positive change for our neighborhood.
- Realizing the Great River Passage plan to advance our neighborhood
- Celebrating the vibrancy of our small-town atmosphere in a big-city area.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

A strength that I bring to the Board is that I know the struggles and successes of the Federation and how the Board can be most effective in dealing with those. It is important for the President to work with the Board and the neighborhood with dignity and respect and I believe that I have been effective in doing so. I try to live a culture of radical hospitality in welcoming everyone to the neighborhood and to the Board to join together in accomplishing our goals.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

We moved to our home in West 7<sup>th</sup> in 1974 and have raised our three children here--one of whom still lives in the neighborhood--and my husband’s business is located on West 7<sup>th</sup>. Our family has been involved in the many issues that have been championed by the Federation for more than 40 years.

**Denise Wickiser**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The mission is meaningful because I believe the neighborhood we live in benefits greatly from a coordinated effort to support our community needs. These needs have changed over the years, and the Federation has and will continue to respond to these needs as West Seventh changes. The Federation has been an important piece of our community fabric and history, and I am honored to do my small part to bring neighbors together—even when we don't always agree on everything.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

One of the biggest challenges is making sure we continue to bring the community together when there are differences of opinion on what is best for the neighborhood. For example, I know many smart “West Seventh Streeters” who don't see rail transit as a benefit to the neighborhood. I also know many smart “West Seventh Streeters” who think rail transit would be one of the best things to happen to the neighborhood in decades. I think both groups have valid points, and the challenge is keeping folks together and focused on the details/impact any possible projects/developments would have on our neighborhood.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

We have so much momentum going in West Seventh right now, with new restaurants, breweries, and other upcoming exciting projects. We have a great opportunity to continue this positive momentum while making sure we are maintaining our neighborhood feel. Preserving our historic homes and buildings and keeping our independent small business base that make West Seventh unique and special are at the top of my list. But there is no question about it—West Seventh is the place to be.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I have been on the Federation Board for about four years as an Area Two Coordinator, and I also head up our neighborhood block club. In my work life, I am an Executive Director for a small non-profit organization that serves seniors in Ramsey County. I feel the mix of my neighborhood/FRF board experience along with my professional skills as an ED are a good fit for the executive board position I am running for.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

My husband and I bought our home (a Fort Road Federation Rehab!) in the Brewery Neighborhood in 2001. Since then, we had two kids who now attend school in the neighborhood (Linwood Monroe Arts Plus). My husband, Dave, owns a real estate company headquartered in the neighborhood, and we own/have owned a few residential and commercial properties here in West Seventh also.

**Walter Wietzke**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The Federation is an advocate for our neighborhoods and their health and safety, the businesses, community schools, senior housing, affordable housing, transit, the spirit, addressing Riverview concerns, cultural events (German/October Fest). As well to contribute and be a voice to city-wide issues.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

Being vigilant in addressing the above listed missions. Transit is an immediate concern.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

The awareness of how good it is to be involved in neighborhood living and civic responsibility.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I have contributed to the concerns of our neighborhood schools (Monroe and Monroe-Linwood, Adams and Nova), affordable housing (Superior Street Cottages), businesses, and safety concerns. I have been active to coordinating involvement with our faith community parishes.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I live on Randolph and I work at St. Mark Lutheran Church. I have raised my family here.

**Camille Morse Nicholson**  
**Secretary**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The Federation’s mission centers around the concepts that the organization must advocate for *all* its residents in building a vibrant community, as well as that the organization’s goal to empower residents to organize for improvements in our district. This resonates with me because it alludes to increasing the capacity for community-level action. Additionally, I am excited by the work of building a better neighborhood and strengthening the role of our community in designing our city’s future.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

Our identity as a community centers around the vitality of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, however, the safety of West 7<sup>th</sup> is of massive concern to all of us and needs to be addressed in the immediate term. If we continue to be defined by a street that is unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, we miss an opportunity to build a stronger and healthier community. And, as our neighborhood continues to evolve, we have a unique opportunity to develop a vision for ourselves and define our own future by being proactive about zoning and planning, being creative about placemaking and art in our neighborhood, and ensuring that the residents for whom we advocate include the wide diversity of individuals who call our neighborhood “home.”

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

I see our community’s greatest opportunities as an extension of our challenges; we have an opportunity to create a strategic vision for our community so that we are better positioned to be proactive in protecting and enhancing our neighborhood’s assets. We can continue to improve our neighborhood to be one that is connected, resilient, and a place where people want to work, live, play, move, age, and raise families. We have a massive number of people who have lived in the neighborhood for years (if not generations), in addition to newcomers who moved here for the quality of life – bridging these two groups will be essential in ensuring that the direction that our community grows is respectful to these experiences.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I currently serve as an Area Coordinator and am running to be the Fort Road Federation’s Secretary. As the only renter on the current board, I believe I offer a unique perspective; as a transplant to Saint Paul, I sought out neighborhoods that had the sense of community that our neighborhood has, and I’m constantly thinking about how to strengthen it even more. My professional work involves community engagement, and I’m passionate about experimenting with ways to improve the way we, as individuals and as an organization, can improve connection between residents, the Federation, and the City.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I moved to West 7<sup>th</sup> five years ago, after graduating from college. Since then, I’ve made my home

here, as much as one can do without owning a house, and (successfully!) encouraged several young people to buy houses here and make this neighborhood their home, as well. I've been a member of the Fort Road Federation for the past year and I am excited at the prospect of deepening my connection to the neighborhood and connecting more West 7<sup>th</sup> folks with opportunities to improve our community.

**Nicole Loran**  
**Treasurer**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

It embodies a sense of community and community pride. It says to me we want to make West 7<sup>th</sup> neighborhood a place people want to come to and can thrive in.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

We have a very diverse community where I think everyone thinks they know what the community needs. The challenge is trying not to do too much at once but being able to strategically plan and organize what will have the most impact and do that the best we can.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

Again I go back to the diverse community. The opportunities to tap into all the different views of both those living in the community and those working or owning business here. West 7thers are very proud of being West 7thers and using that pride to make the neighborhood somewhere businesses want to open or people want to live will only help the community thrive.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors and to the position for which you are running?**

Treasurer - I have worked in the accounting world for 15 years. I have mainly worked with small to midsize growing companies establishing budget processes and cashflow investment scenarios.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I live in the neighborhood for 3 years now.



**Mark Fangmeier**  
**Area I Coordinator**

**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The Federation plays a vital role in making West 7th a great place to live, work, and play. I love living here, and I want to contribute to our community and help make it strong and thriving.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

Fostering smart growth and keeping pace with a growing St. Paul and West 7th is our biggest challenge. With growth comes issues around housing, transit, pedestrian safety, thriving businesses, and neighborhoods.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

West 7th has faced many challenges and is now poised for strong growth and plenty of opportunities. We need to pick the right opportunities that set us up for success - now and into the future.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I have experience working with neighbors to bring improvements and address needs in our community. Through my role as co-chair in the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association, I've helped improve and support housing, safety, businesses, historic preservation and update the aging 35-E bike path.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

My wife, Lindsay, and I own a home in the Little Bohemia Neighborhood, where we are co-chairs of the neighborhood association. Our daughter attends MacDonald Montessori School. We are beer club members at Bad Weather, and on Sundays, you can find us with our daughter at the Palace Community Center tot gym time.





**Wendy Underwood**  
**Area I Coordinator**

**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

Providing “physical opportunities” speaks to the power of roots in the West 7th neighborhood. Whether it be the elderly couple who graduated from Monroe and worked at the brewery or the young family next door facilitating neighborhood engagement through a robust social media site, people are committed to West 7th and find themselves deeply rooted in its individuality, commitment to inclusion, and belief in community. It’s one of the reasons why I choose to live here.



**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

West 7th’s growing vitality is inherently it’s biggest challenge; as we navigate this growth, it is critical we maintain affordable single family homes and business rents, improve pedestrian and bike safety, and ensure new developments honor and maintain West 7th’s identity. Collectively we must ensure future investments such as Riverview Corridor, the CP Spur Line, and housing developments put West 7th families and businesses first. We also need to do more as a community to address the needs of our children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

Through our growing vitality, we are showing the region it is possible to meld old and new, leverage artistry for economic development, and blend generations of West 7th neighbors with new, diverse families. Our awesome neighborhood associations are drivers of this success; they need our consistent support. I am also excited for Fort Road to work with Mayor Carter and his new administration on ways to ensure equity and inclusion in every city investment in our community.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I am a person who gets to Yes; I have focused my public service on bringing together diverse interests to reach a common goal, and I will bring that strength to Fort Road. As a Saint Paul Planning Commissioner, I will bring to the Board my knowledge of current and upcoming opportunities and issues facing us. Having worked for the City of Saint Paul, I understand local government finance and economic development tools that will benefit Fort Road’s community development efforts.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

My husband and I joined the West 7th community nearly 10 years ago when we had the opportunity to purchase one of three Lauer Houses in neighborhood. The previous homeowners chose us over other buyers because of our commitment to and investment in community. Since that time I have been a member of the West 7th Community Center and Community Reporter Boards, I have helped small businesses navigate the complexities of City Hall, and I was a founding member of the Cool Kids page to help neighbors share our interests, questions, and cute photos of snakes.

**Jeannie Farrell**  
**Area II Coordinator**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

The mission of the Federation is to provide opportunities to engage neighbors in a number of ways. Engagement is meaningful to me; if we are engaged, we are more connected. When we are more connected we are able to tackle big issues together, create a neighborhood that is safe and have a better quality of life.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our neighborhood?**

We have a rich history and a bright future and sometimes it can feel that those two things collide with one another. The challenge for us will be finding solutions that value and honor our neighborhood's past but also keeping an eye on the future needs of West 7<sup>th</sup> residents and businesses when it comes to transit, housing and jobs.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

West 7<sup>th</sup> has a robust and vibrant community with many new neighbors – I would like to see that energy and potential harnessed through more civic engagement. As neighbors and people who love our community, we have a lot of power and potential to continue to create an engaged and active community. I look forward to seeing this next generation of residents and business owners do great things. We already are.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I have been on the board for two years. One of my strengths is the ability to view issues from someone else's perspective and step away from my own lens or self-interest. As an area coordinator, serving the community's interest and not just one's own is important.

**5. What is your connection to West 7<sup>th</sup>?**

I started working at the West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center in 2007 and I fell in love with the neighborhood. Six years ago this summer, my partner and I decided to move our family to West 7<sup>th</sup>. It was one of the best decisions we have made.

**Andrea McDonald Marboe**  
**Area II Coordinators**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

I've lived in the West 7<sup>th</sup> area since 1995 and have seen and appreciated what the Federation has accomplished in the best interests – long term – of the community.

The neighborhoods have become more attractive and (I think) stable with FRF and residents' involvement, while retaining historical perspectives of a diverse socioeconomic population. I believe the FRF is integral to making West 7<sup>th</sup> more welcoming and accessible to

people interested in creating and sustaining a vibrant residential and business community.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

West 7<sup>th</sup> neighborhoods have become very desirable for new homebuyers and renters – especially young adults and families -- and the business community is thriving. We will continue to be challenged by our position as a major transit corridor into downtown and need to remain vigilant about balancing the best interests of the people who live and work here with the city's need for efficient (and attractive) transit options. Affordable housing and senior living options are also increasingly difficult challenges in West 7<sup>th</sup> neighborhoods.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

In the coming decade, the FRF – with West 7<sup>th</sup> residents and businesses – will have important opportunities --

- to influence significant changes/improvements to the landscape/land use of the corridor,
- to advise new and potential business owners and developers regarding development and design, and
- to open wider channels of communication between and among area residents, business owners and the FRF to share issues, concerns and ideas that will shape our community.

We need to make intentional outreach to engage people who have an interest in neighborhood developments, and to cultivate cultural and age and socioeconomic diversity in all of our community-building efforts.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

Through my consulting business, Magpie Solutions, LLC, I bring 25 years of experience to health care, government and nonprofit sector clients to

- develop and implement communications strategies,
- create or improve programs or processes, and
- redesign internal and cross-sectoral systems to achieve the most effective outcomes.

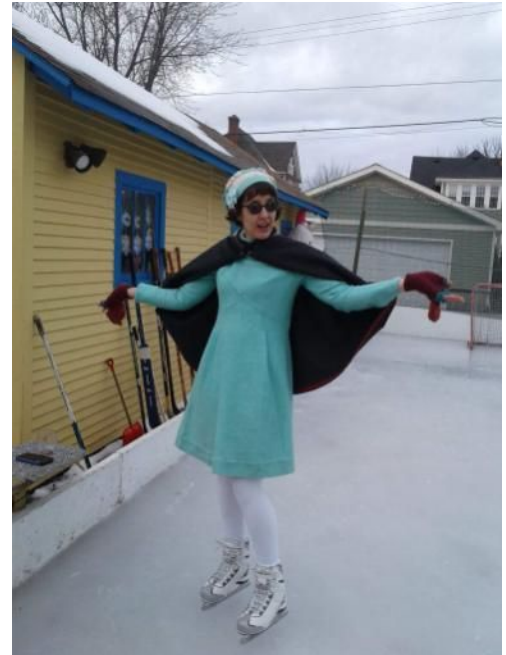
I've served on the boards of the West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center and United Family Medicine, and was board chair of UFM during the planning, capital campaign, construction and grand opening of the new Peter J. King Family Health Center at Randolph and West 7<sup>th</sup>. The FRF has brought an exceptional new leader on board, and together we are facing really exciting – and challenging – opportunities to shape the future of our community, and I bring planning, facilitation and collaboration expertise to the work.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I began working in West 7<sup>th</sup> as United Hospital's community relations liaison (early 1990s) and then became the executive director of Partners for Violence Prevention, a \$1 million nonprofit created to develop violence prevention, intervention and response strategies among West 7<sup>th</sup> area schools, community centers, businesses, and with United Family Medicine and United Hospital. I soon realized this is where I wanted to plant, and bought my first home (of three) in the Uppertown neighborhood in 1995. I live with my husband John, daughter Charlie, and dog Toivo, on Western Avenue South.

**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

It is important “bloom where you are planted,” meaning that I have a responsibility to contribute positively in my community. There are many ways to do that, but for me, board leadership with the Fort Road Federation is a clear and direct way to influence and shape my community. I want to live in a community with schools, businesses, and social/recreational opportunities nearby so that the community is supportive to all – whether that is families like mine, an elderly person who wants to age in place, a business looking to expand, or a new resident looking for connections.



**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

The primary challenge for the West End are related to managing change while maintaining the qualities that make the West End unique. Demographic changes are impacting the city and region, and the West End is not exempt. New immigrants, younger people with different expectations around housing and transportation, and the needs of an aging Baby Boomer population will all be challenges over the coming years. How do we support long-term residents who bring a sense of place and continuity, while incorporating new residents and new ideas? How do we influence and shape development and infrastructure along West 7<sup>th</sup> that supports the business community, increases safety for all road users, and makes our main street an enjoyable space people want to be in?

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

Our biggest challenges are also our greatest opportunities. While people have many different opinions on Riverview, the project brings great opportunities to improve transportation for all, improve the pedestrian/bicycle environment on and along West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and bring new customers for local businesses. With redevelopment of the Schmidt Brewery/Keg and Case, along with more transportation choices to get here, there are great opportunities to draw attention to the area, make it a regional destination, and draw other development along West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Changes in city leadership also bring opportunities, such as collaborating with the new Saint Paul Downtown Alliance to make West 7<sup>th</sup> Street an entertainment and business gateway into downtown.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I bring previous board experience so I understand the duties and responsibilities of a board member. While living in Hamline-Midway I organized neighborhood activities like two Paint the Pavement events and a block party that drew more than 200 people each year. Professionally, I work in program evaluation and bring more than 15 years' experience in strategic planning, performance measurement, and program development.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I have been a resident of the neighborhood since 2015 and a Saint Paul resident for 16 years.



**Meghan Redmond**  
**Area III Coordinator**



**1. What makes the Federation mission meaningful to you?**

In order to have a vibrant community where all can live, learn, and grow, there needs to be physical, social, and economic opportunities for all. The Fort Road Federation is a steward of the community to ensure that the neighborhood has these qualities into the future. As a neighbor who loves this community and has one child in a neighborhood school and another in a neighborhood child care center, I am very invested in making sure that our community remains vibrant.

**2. What do you see as the primary challenges for our community?**

West 7<sup>th</sup> is in the midst of multiple transitions--whether it be our longtime residents needing to access amenities and services changing to meet their needs, our new residents needing community resources for growing families, or our growing artistic community needing opportunities to interact with the public and showcase their work. In addition, our neighborhood is hot, with new restaurants and breweries, small businesses, and housing coming online on a daily basis. Ensuring that our neighborhood is diverse and inclusive ethnically, economically, and socially; be walkable, approachable, and supportive of all of our resident's needs, is our primary challenge and our greatest need to continuing to have a vibrant community.

**3. What do you see as the greatest opportunities for our community?**

The greatest opportunity is to be a strategic player within the development of the Riverview Corridor. The community is at a critical juncture and we must acknowledge our history, but not let history limit our potential to grow and evolve our community in a healthy and productive way. Included in this is to be forward thinking to the challenge all communities will face as our population ages and the importance of developing and stewarding the growth of a neighborhood that is relevant to all people across the spectrum of age, economic status and ethnicity.

**4. What strengths would you bring to the Fort Road Federation Board of Directors?**

I am currently finishing my Masters in Public Affairs at the U of M and have served on multiple volunteer boards focused on volunteer and community engagement. I also have extensive professional experience organizing community projects and managing volunteer-based projects--currently with AARP. I have worked with diverse communities and understand the issues that individuals of all ages and families across the economic spectrum face.

**5. What is your connection to the West 7th neighborhood?**

I have been living in the West 7<sup>th</sup> Neighborhood for six years and my husband bought our home 10 years ago. Our children attend school (Upper Mississippi Academy) and child care (Sandcastle) here, and on a typical weekend can be found at Palace or the West 7th Community Center. We both work nearby (downtown), have built up our social network around the great people here, and when not working can usually be found in Bad Weather, Skinners, JR Mac's, Joe and Stan's, or soon to be Clutch Brewing in which we have invested, and we would never miss the Annual Spaghetti Dinner in support of the West 7<sup>th</sup> Community Center.