

**AGENDA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
AUGUST 8, 2022
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

"An opportunity for members of the public to address the City Council on items on/or not on the current agenda. Items requiring Council action maybe deferred to staff or Boards and Commissions for research and future Council Agendas if appropriate. You will be limited to three (3) minutes and we ask that you conduct yourself in a professional, courteous manner, and refrain from the use of profanity. Failure to abide by this policy may result in the loss of your privilege to speak".

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. To consider approving the minutes of the "Regular Meeting" of the Wyoming, Minnesota City EDA for July 11, 2022.

COMMUNICATIONS:

OLD BUSINESS:

2. To continue discussions regarding a downtown plan/study for the City of Wyoming

NEW BUSINESS:

3. All Boards Meeting, August 30th, 2022 at 6:00PM

UPDATES

4. Wyoming EDA Feature Business of the Month

ADJOURN

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF WYOMING, MINNESOTA
JULY 11, 2022
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

CALL OF ROLL:

On a Call of the Roll the following members of the Wyoming EDA were present:

EDA Members: Mayor Iverson, Mike Soule, Andrew Buccanero and Alex Bulmer

Also Present: Robb Linwood - City Administrator

ABSENT: Prigge and Schilling

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

OPEN FORUM:

"An opportunity for members of the public to address the EDA on items not on the current Agenda. Items requiring EDA action maybe deferred to staff for research and future EDA Agendas if appropriate."

1. Consider approving the minutes of the "Regular Meeting" of the Wyoming, Minnesota City EDA for June 6, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY EDA MEMBER SOULE SECONDED BY EDA MEMBER BUCCANERO TO APPROVE THE "REGULAR MEETING" MINUTES OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR JUNE 6, 2022

Voting Aye: Iverson, Bulmer, Soule, and Buccanero

Voting Nay:

Abstain:

SCHEDULED BID LETTINGS: NONE.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

CONSENT AGENDA:

Items under the "Consent Agenda" will be adopted with one motion; however, council members may request individual items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and action if they choose.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS:

COMMUNICATIONS

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

2. A presentation from Siri Simons of MNDOT to discuss the potential of Electric Vehicle charging stations along the I-35 corridor and potentially in the City of Wyoming. The EDA

Seri Simons of MNDOT gave a presentation to the EDA about a Federal Electric vehicle program

Ms. Simmons gave the following information. The new federal NEVI Formula Program provides funds for states to strategically deploy fast chargers for electric vehicles (EVs) along designated corridors. The new program aims to provide reliable, long-distance EV travel, while also recognizing the unique needs of different regions and communities. Initially, states must spend NEVI Formula Program funds to build out federally-designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFCs). Full build out includes installing fast chargers every 50 miles within 1 mile of the AFC and providing at least four 150kW direct current fast chargers that are capable of simultaneously charging 4 EVs. Once the state's AFCs are fully built out, funding may be used on any public road or in other publicly accessible locations. Minnesota expects to invest about \$68 million in federal funding from this program over 5 years, along with a 20% non-federal match of \$17M. Minnesota will finalize and submit this document by August 1, 2022, for eligibility for federal funding. The Minnesota Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan is a first step toward the planning, prioritization, and implementation of a statewide network of high-powered direct current fast charger (DCFC) stations along state highways. The plan's vision is a network that provides all Minnesotans the choice to drive or ride electric vehicles, with a goal of developing a convenient, reliable, affordable, and equitable charging experience. Minnesota will start by building out the two existing AFCs: Interstates 35 and 94. These are two of the highest volume corridors in the state and provide important regional and national connections. Building out these two AFCs will help Minnesota establish an efficient and effective procurement process before expanding to additional corridors.

The EDA had questions regarding where these types of units would be placed and who would pay for the use of them.

Ms. Simmons explained that the car users pay to use the electric chargers and that they are looking for feedback from communities. She explained that most communities like them in downtown areas as it takes time to charge a vehicle and may be beneficial to the retail and commercial businesses of the city to have patrons.

3. To consider approving a booth for the MNCAR Expo on October 26, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY EDA MEMBER SOULE SECONDED BY EDA MEMBER BULMER TO APPROVE A BOOTH AT THE MNCAR EXPO, ITEMS FOR A BOOTH DISPLAY AND GIVEAWAY ITEMS IN AN AMOUNT OF \$1,500

Voting Aye: Iverson, Bulmer, Soule, and Buccanero

Voting Nay:

Abstain:

4. To continue discussion on a downtown redevelopment plan

The EDA discussed different areas of the city and what areas would be included in the plan. Is it all the way down near the motel and the commercial area owned by Hallberg. The EDA discussed having a plan that has realistic goals. The EDA asked Administrator Linwood to provide examples at the next meeting of potential small area plans or downtown studies for review.

5. To discuss the Wyoming Economic Authority's 2023 Budget Request

The EDA requested a budget of \$10,000 for the levy amount in 2023.

ADJOURN

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY EDA PRESIDENT IVERSON ADJOURNED THE JULY 11, 2022
“REGULAR MEETING” OF THE WYOMING, MINNESOTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING AT 7:08PM**

Voting Aye: Iverson, Bulmer, Buccanero and Soule

Voting Nay:

Abstain:



Request for EDA Action

Date: August 5, 2022

Presented to: EDA Members

Presented by: Robb Linwood, City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: Downtown Plan/Study Discussion

Method: New Business

Background Information:

During the EDA's 2022 work plan it was discussed that there was not a small area plan or Downtown Study plan currently and could be a goal for the EDA and City to work towards. Small-town community downtown areas are in a renaissance. Downtowns serve as both vital economic engines for a local economy and also gathering places to celebrate together.

Although the Downtown area could be considered larger area encompassing a larger area of the downtown core of Wyoming. A Small Area Plan study area is much smaller that could focus on an area around east Viking and Hwy 61. Small Area Plans specifically explore issues, opportunities and solutions within a confined geographic area that has a cohesive set of characteristics. The long-term success of Downtown depends heavily on a strong and well-designed core. It is this area where the integration of commerce, residential living, community activity – and parking – need to fit together like puzzle pieces.

I have supplied multiple downtown and small area plans for the EDA's review at the meeting.

Topics for consideration could be as follows:

- What portion of the downtown would the study include
- Redevelopment strategies
- Streetscape enhancements
- Bike and pedestrian networks/Leverage Sunrise Trail
- Parking needs
- Building on Heritage
- Community gathering spaces
- Wayfinding
- Placemaking
- Trails
- Stormwater
- Stakeholders (Businesses, Residents, Wyoming council and boards)
- What type of community engagement is desired – stakeholder meetings, open house, virtual engagement?

- Are there groups/businesses/property owners that you want incorporated into the process? If so, who are they and do you know how you want them to be involved (individual meetings, group meetings, public meetings)?
- How does the EDA want to be involved – are there specific meetings that they want to have?
- If the EDA is the main body – how does that relate to the City Council – or even are there are advisory groups that will need to be involved?
- What deliverables are you seeking?
- What is the project timeline?
- What is the budget? A budget range helps folks adjust their process to be realistic and/or evaluate whether the proposed scope of work is reasonable.



LAKEVILLE

Downtown Development Guide Update

August 2018





Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc.

123 N 3rd Street

Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN 55401



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

- » Douglas P. Anderson, Mayor
- » Bart Davis
- » Luke Hellier
- » Colleen LaBeau
- » Brian Wheeler

Planning Commission

- » Jason Swenson
- » Pat Kaluza
- » Scott Einck
- » Brooks Lillehei
- » Jeff Witte
- » Karl Drotning
- » Jason Kelvie
- » Paul Reuvers

Economic Development Commission

- » Lowell Collman
- » Bob Gillen
- » Jack Matasosky
- » Quenton Scherer
- » Don Seiler
- » Glenn Starfield
- » Jim Emond
- » Sheila Longie
- » Steve Rajavuori
- » Tom Smith
- » Dan Vlasak
- » Derik Dautel

On August 20, 2018, the Lakeville Development Guide Update was adopted by the City Council as guidance for future actions regarding Downtown development.

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1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Purpose

This document contains the Downtown Development Guide Update for Downtown Lakeville. The Guide is a tool for establishing and sustaining the Downtown over the next 10-20 years by:

- » Describing the contents, character and qualities desired for Downtown.
- » Providing examples of streetscape design and development character so that Lakeville can retain its unique historical characteristics while supporting new development.
- » Identifying opportunities for investment in public improvements that strengthen connections to Downtown and enhance the pedestrian environment (in terms of walkability and bikeability).
- » Identifying locations for organized civic events, activities, and gathering places that will help accommodate people who visit during entertainment and festivities.
- » Explaining how to guide private and public improvements to achieve this vision.
- » Outlining the public actions and investments required for change.

This Guide can also be framed in terms of what, why and how. In broad terms, “what” is the vision for the future of Downtown. Within this broad vision lies a series of specific steps to be taken to achieve this vision. “Why” explains the relevance of these steps. This understanding is essential. It brings the commitment to make difficult decisions. The stakeholders understand why each decision is important to Downtown. This understanding creates the ability to adapt to changing conditions. Future opportunities may lead to other paths that produce the same outcome. “How” provides the knowledge and the means needed to implement the Guide. Many critical elements of the Guide will not happen without action by the City. The City is not, however, solely responsible for the success of this Guide. The majority of investments called for in the Guide come from private development. Downtown must be a place that attracts and sustains businesses.



Approach

Update to the 2006 Lakeville Downtown Development Guide

In 2006, the City of Lakeville adopted the first version of the Downtown Development Guide. The planning process spanned a 13-month period from September 2005 to October 2006. The City Council appointed a “Downtown Planning Task Force” to provide guidance and shape concepts for Downtown. The Task Force aimed to create a useful and meaningful tool to guide future actions and investments in the Downtown. Over the past decade, Downtown has evolved considerably and now includes new development and public realm improvements (see Existing Conditions Chapter for more information).

In response to the City’s commercial and residential growth, the Lakeville City Council decided in 2017 to begin the process of updating the Downtown Development Guide, in order to “facilitate an effort to create a long-term plan to promote downtown economic viability while maintaining its unique and historical characteristics.” This update will be incorporated into *Lakeville Thrive!*, the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Community Engagement

The Downtown Development Guide Update’s process involved a collaboration between the consultant, Lakeville’s City Council, City Staff, the Economic Development Commission, Planning Commission, stakeholder groups, and the general public over approximately eight months.

Public Meetings

Community meetings were held on January 30 and March 6, 2018. The first meeting focused on providing attendees with updates on what has occurred in Downtown Lakeville since the 2006 Guide, and on gathering information on the area’s assets, issues, and big ideas from the community. After hearing from meeting attendees and building on their understanding of the background information, Hoisington Koeigler Group, Inc. prepared conceptual approaches to redeveloping Downtown and held a second public meeting to review the feedback from the first open house, evaluate an urban design framework for Downtown, and consider strategies for Downtown revitalization.

Online Engagement

207 people responded to an online questionnaire about issues, opportunities, and visioning for Downtown Lakeville. The feedback influenced the urban design framework and was used as a benchmark to ensure that proposed projects are in line with the desires of the community.

Public Input Themes

Comments reiterated throughout the engagement process helped to paint a picture of the biggest priorities for the community. Residents desire a destination Downtown that has a variety of thriving businesses to meet day-to-day needs and has options for dining and entertainment that allow them to stay in town and spend money locally. People want Downtown Lakeville to have a strong identity and to be an integral part of and source of pride for the community.

Stakeholder Meetings

Meetings with stakeholders occurred over the course of the project. Groups involved in these meetings included Downtown business owners, property owners, and ISD 194 representatives.

City Council, Planning Commission, and Economic Development Commission Updates

City Council was updated three times throughout the Downtown Development Guide process, between January and May of 2018. The Planning Commission was updated in a joint meeting with the City Council and Economic Development Commission on January 23, 2018, and again on February 1 and April 19, 2018. The Economic Development Commission was updated on February 27 and April 24, 2018. The final Guide was approved by the Lakeville City Council on August 20, 2018.

Project Area

For the purposes of this Guide, Downtown Lakeville's planning area is as shown:

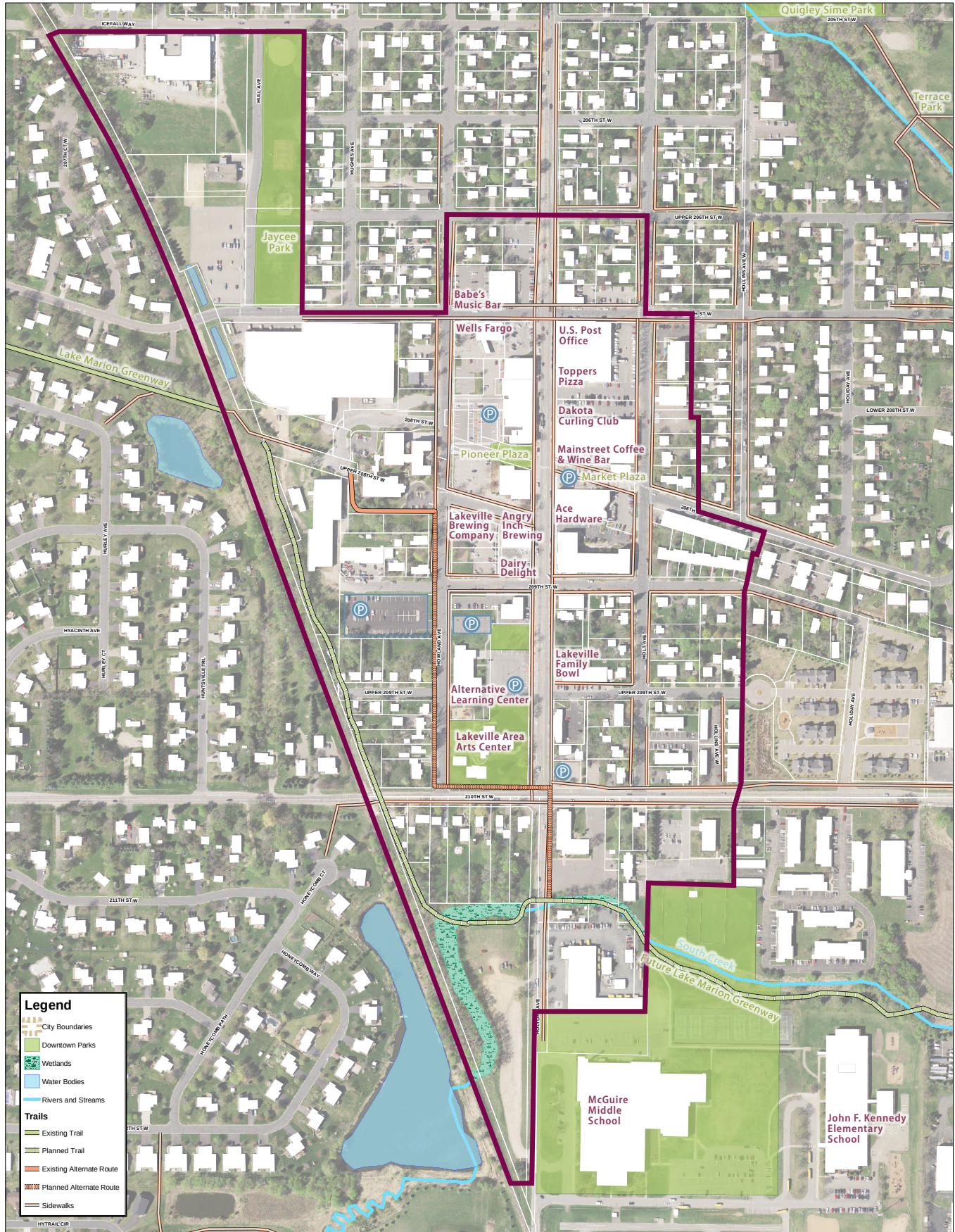


Figure 1.1 | Downtown Development Guide Project Area

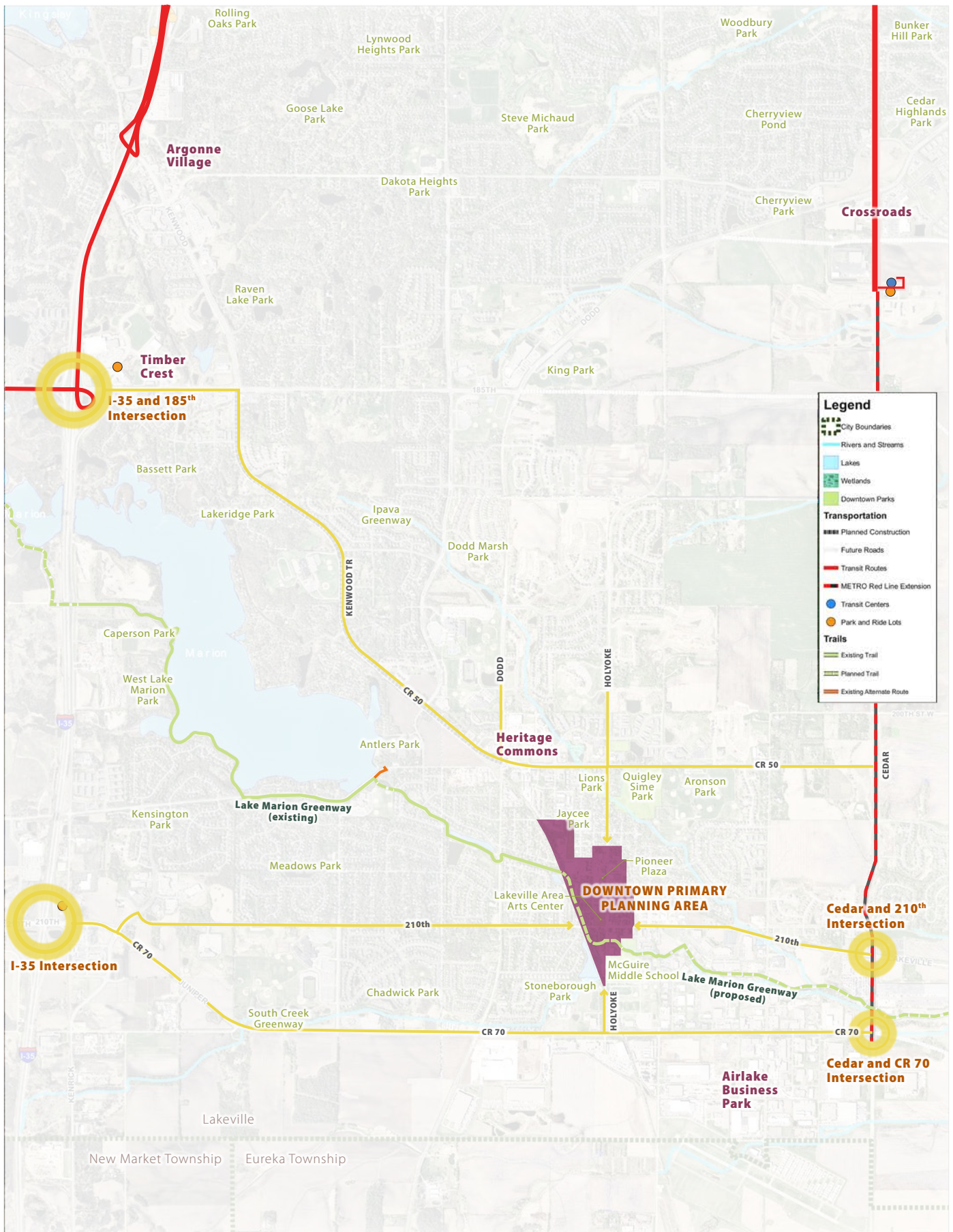


Figure 1.2 | Downtown Lakeville Context Map



History and Context

Lakeville is a city of approximately 64,000 residents about 20 miles south of the Twin Cities. Founded in 1858 as Lakeville Township, the town grew up along a military road from Fort Snelling and was largely rural until the second half of the 20th century, after Interstate 35 was completed. The City of Lakeville was incorporated in 1967 and has continued to grow as an outer-ring suburb as Minneapolis and Saint Paul have expanded.

Downtown Lakeville is on the southern edge of the City about two miles east of Interstate 35. Other commercial districts have developed to the north along I-35 and Cedar, which makes them more convenient to greater numbers of people; however, having the Downtown tucked away beyond the busy roads makes it seem like a destination and its historical character cannot be found elsewhere in the City.

Lakeville's Downtown centers around Holyoke Avenue and has historical buildings dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. While Holyoke Avenue has evolved to include some parking-fronted lots with set back buildings, the street still maintains some continuous frontage. Buildings of note include the bank building, fire station, and the former All Saints Catholic Church building which is now the Lakeville Area Art Center.

Past Planning

Planning for Downtown Lakeville is not a new endeavor. The initial Downtown plan was adopted more than 40 years ago. Previous plans help to explain the evolution of the vision for Downtown. Issues and objectives brought up repeatedly throughout the plans demonstrate both the enduring qualities of Downtown and the challenges of redevelopment.

1975 Central Business District (CBD) Area Concept Plan

The first Downtown plan was prepared in 1975 (adopted in 1976). The 1975 Plan was initiated by the City Council in recognition of “the need for both a short and long range area planning framework and delineating the specific geographic area of concern.”

Some of the most thoughtful results of this planning process include initiatives to:

- » Maintain and improve the Central Core as the primary commercial/service center of the community.
- » Establish a cohesive and unified image for the Central Core.
- » Establish an orderly transition between the Central Core and residential neighborhoods through the introduction of either higher density residential or limited business commercial development.
- » Order the residential density patterns in a manner of decreasing density relative to the Central Core and major retail areas.
- » Establish a pedestrian circulation system within the Central Core which connects major economic activity areas and is compatible with the overall CBD area pedestrian network..
- » Establish a clear land use separation between the Central Core and peripheral commercial areas to avoid strip type development
- » Encourage clustering of peripheral commercial uses in concentrated locations to avoid sprawl.
- » Avoid further expansion of existing industrial activity within the Central Core.
- » Encourage any new industrial development within the CBD area to locate in the existing industrial park.

1980 Lakeville Comprehensive Planning Program Implementation: Redevelopment Needs and Approach

The 1980 Plan pointed out that many of the initiatives from the 1975 Downtown Plan were not yet being implemented, and expressed concern about:

- » The future of existing low density residential neighborhoods. The Plan noted that the vast majority of these homes were in good condition and should be maintained as an integral part of the CBD area. However, as growth and change occur with respect to commercial, industrial, and higher density residential development, adequate protective measures will be required in order to maintain the existing residential character and environment of these neighborhoods.
- » The potential emergence of dysfunctional strip commercial pattern. The Plan noted that there was a strong potential for the emergence of a strip commercial pattern if the City allowed development to occur without the benefit of a structured and planned development policy.

Design Guidelines

In 1999, the Downtown Lakeville Business Association and the City of Lakeville undertook a study to determine a vision for future growth and redevelopment of the historic Downtown area. This process led to the Design Guidelines for the Historic Fairfield District of Downtown Lakeville. These Design Guidelines sought to:

- » Create a pedestrian-oriented place where the citizens of Lakeville can show their pride, experience their community’s history, and improve their quality of life.

- » Reflect and enhance the historical character of the original Downtown district.
- » Set expectations for the City of Lakeville who will be assisting prospective developers with the planning of future projects.

The Design Guidelines incorporate the vision and image established by the 1999 Corridor and Gateway Design Study.

The primary area of focus for the Design Guidelines was the core of Downtown. This area was bound by 207th Street, Holt Avenue, Upper 208th Street and Howland Avenue. The remainder of the property along Holyoke Avenue from 202nd Street to 210th Street was a peripheral focus area.

The Design Guidelines contain criteria for site and building development. The City uses zoning regulations in the C-CBD district to implement the Design Guidelines.

Parking Study

In 2000, the City of Lakeville and the Downtown Lakeville Business Association undertook a study of parking in the Downtown area. The study assessed parking needs (current and future) and recommended strategies for enhancing the parking system. The study contains extensive information about the supply and use of parking in Downtown. The study used a parking demand model based on land use and parking counts at the time. The model concluded that with 1,528 parking spaces in the study area, there was an excess of supply over demand of 825 spaces. Parking surveys did note periodic shortages behind the Lakeville Mall and for the prime on-street locations. The analysis also projected a continuation of an overall surplus of supply into the future.

Corridor and Gateway Design Study

A 1999 study resulted in a review of key corridors and gateways throughout Lakeville. An outgrowth of the Economic Development Commission's (EDC) strategic planning process, the study aimed to establish standards for "future physical enhancement of designated corridors and gateways of the City". As it relates to Downtown, the study viewed Holyoke Avenue as Lakeville's "historic Main Street." Gateways on Holyoke Avenue were noted at 202nd Street and County Road 70.

2006 Downtown Development Guide

The 2006 Downtown Development Guide built upon these past planning efforts and worked to unite new initiatives under a cohesive vision:

DOWNTOWN IS A UNIQUE, IDENTIFIABLE AND THRIVING BUSINESS DISTRICT.

The development objectives represented in the 2006 Concept Plan included:

- » All buildings should be oriented to the street with commercial activities occupying the ground level.
- » Housing will be encouraged as needed to undertake redevelopment of parcels.
- » An ample supply of on and off-street parking will be located throughout the Core.
- » Public spaces will be used to provide beauty and places to gather.

The land uses shown in the plan on the following page sought to strengthen the character of Holyoke Avenue as a commercial street.

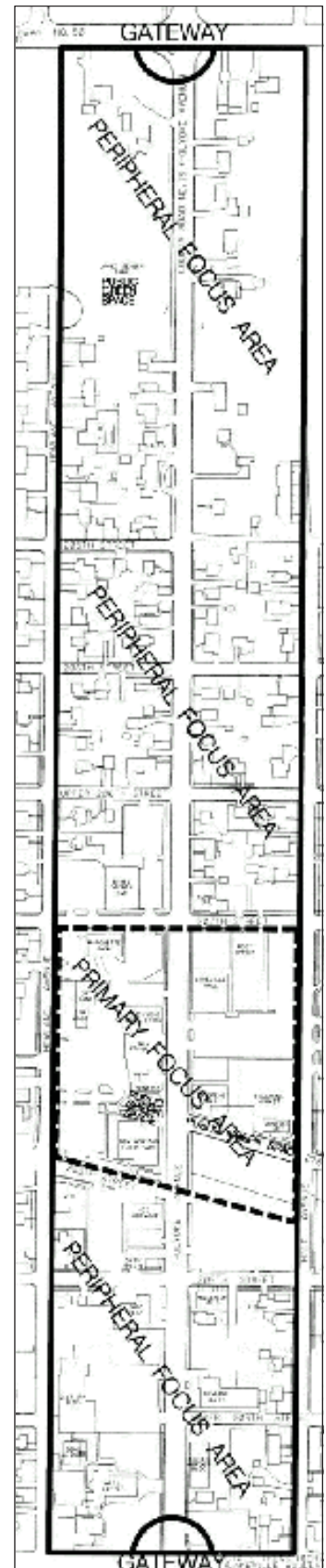


Figure 2.1 | 1999 Design Guidelines Focus Areas

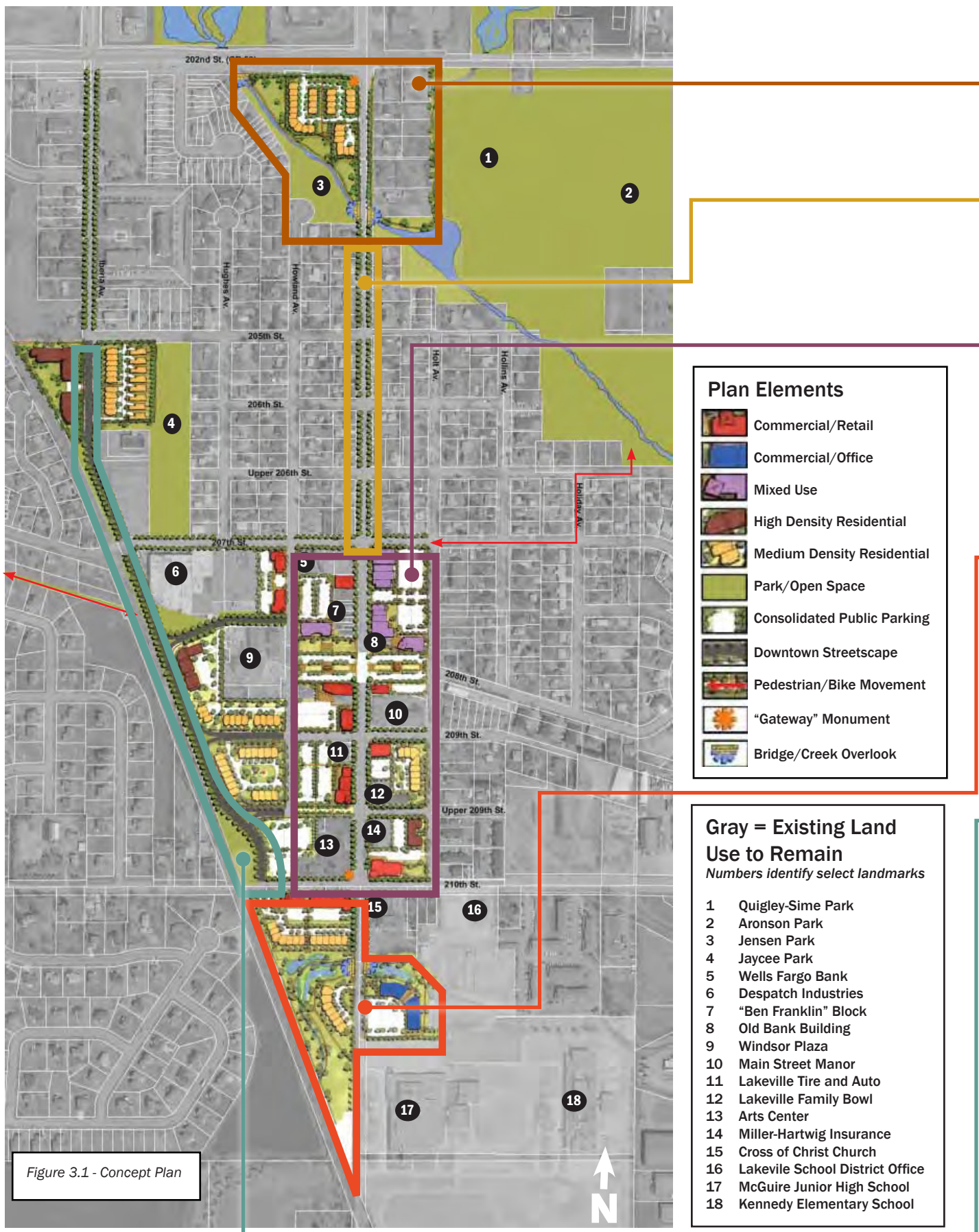


Figure 2.2 | 2006 Downtown Lakeville Concept Plan

The 2006 Plan identified several project areas where development was targeted to achieve the Downtown vision.

North Gateway

The properties on the southeast and southwest quadrants of the Holyoke Avenue and CR 50 intersection were proposed to function as a gateway into Downtown for visitors entering from the north.

North Holyoke Avenue

Holyoke Avenue from 207th Street to CR 50 was envisioned to have streetscape and non-motorized transportation improvements that preserve the single-family residential character of the area, while providing a strong connection into the Downtown Core from the North Gateway.

Downtown Core

Within the “Downtown Core” along Holyoke Avenue between 207th Street and Upper 209th Street, these projects included:

- » Creation of a 208th Street Plaza
- » Retention and enhancement of buildings on the “Ben Franklin” Block
- » Mixed-use development scenarios for the Enggren’s Mall and Lakeville Mall that make facade improvements so that it’s more in line with the Downtown vision

South Gateway

Creating a well-defined southern entrance into Downtown was a part of the 2006 plan. Projects within this district included:

- » Identifying ways to use the Arts Center as a catalyst for related development, and a sort of visitor center for Downtown
- » Guiding the bus garage toward future office use if the adjacent school use transitions and the bus garage moves to a different location
- » Adding a mixed-use commercial development to the southwest quadrant of Holyoke Avenue and 210th Street

Iberia Avenue Extension

The 2006 plan proposed creating a new access into Downtown by extending Iberia Avenue south from 205th to 210th Street. Adjacent properties within the right-of-way of the new road would be redeveloped in phases along with street construction, with a focus on medium to high-density residential.

Achievements Since the 2006 Downtown Development Guide

Using the past planning work as a foundation to attract and guide development, Downtown Lakeville has added more than \$4.8 million in private investment since the 2006 Guide. The public sector has also invested \$1.65 million in the Downtown. Together, these investments have resulted in a steady transformation of Downtown, including:

- » A mixed-use project on 209th Street W and Holyoke Avenue
- » Ace Hardware Store
- » Improvements to the former "Ben Franklin" Block
- » Improvements to the former Enggren's Market and Mall
- » Improvements to the bank building
- » Market & Pioneer Plazas
- » Holyoke Avenue Streetscape Improvements
- » County & Local Wayfinding Signs
- » Gateway Signage
- » Arts Center upgrades and Holyoke Avenue parking lot
- » Zoning Code changes for taproom/food trucks/outdoor patios
- » Two surface parking lots
- » More than a dozen new businesses, including:
 - » Angry Inch Brewing
 - » Alibi Drinkery
 - » Mainstreet Coffee & Wine Bar
 - » Dakota Curling
 - » Lakeville Brewing Company
 - » Frenchies
 - » Toppers Pizza
 - » EXIT Realty Leaders
 - » Hypointe Childcare
 - » AccuTac Arms



Existing Land Uses & Development

Public objectives for development are grounded in the Comprehensive Plan. It is the blueprint for the growth and development of Lakeville. Zoning regulations provide more detailed controls on the use of land. These tools have already shaped Downtown. Moving forward, they will act to maintain existing beneficial uses and to facilitate change where desired.

Comprehensive Plan

Lakeville's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008. State Law requires that the Comprehensive Plan be updated before the end of 2018. *Lakeville Thrive!*, the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, is being written concurrently with this Guide and will incorporate Downtown development and land use recommendations. The results of the Downtown planning process will determine plans and policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to these areas of Lakeville.

Land Use Plan

The Comprehensive Plan contains a land use plan that prescribes the desired land use for all parcels in the City. The plan serves as a guide for private and public investments. The draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan's land use plan appears in Figure 1.5. The land use plan shows the City's intentions for development in the Downtown area. (The explanation of the categories shown in the land use plan can be found in the Land Use Plan chapter of Lakeville's 2040 Comprehensive Plan.)

For most parcels, the Comprehensive Plan designation and the current use are the same. City policy seeks to maintain the existing land use on these parcels. Downtown also includes parcels where the Plan and use are different (especially on the western edge of Downtown). For these properties, the Comprehensive Plan seeks to guide future use of the property in a different direction.

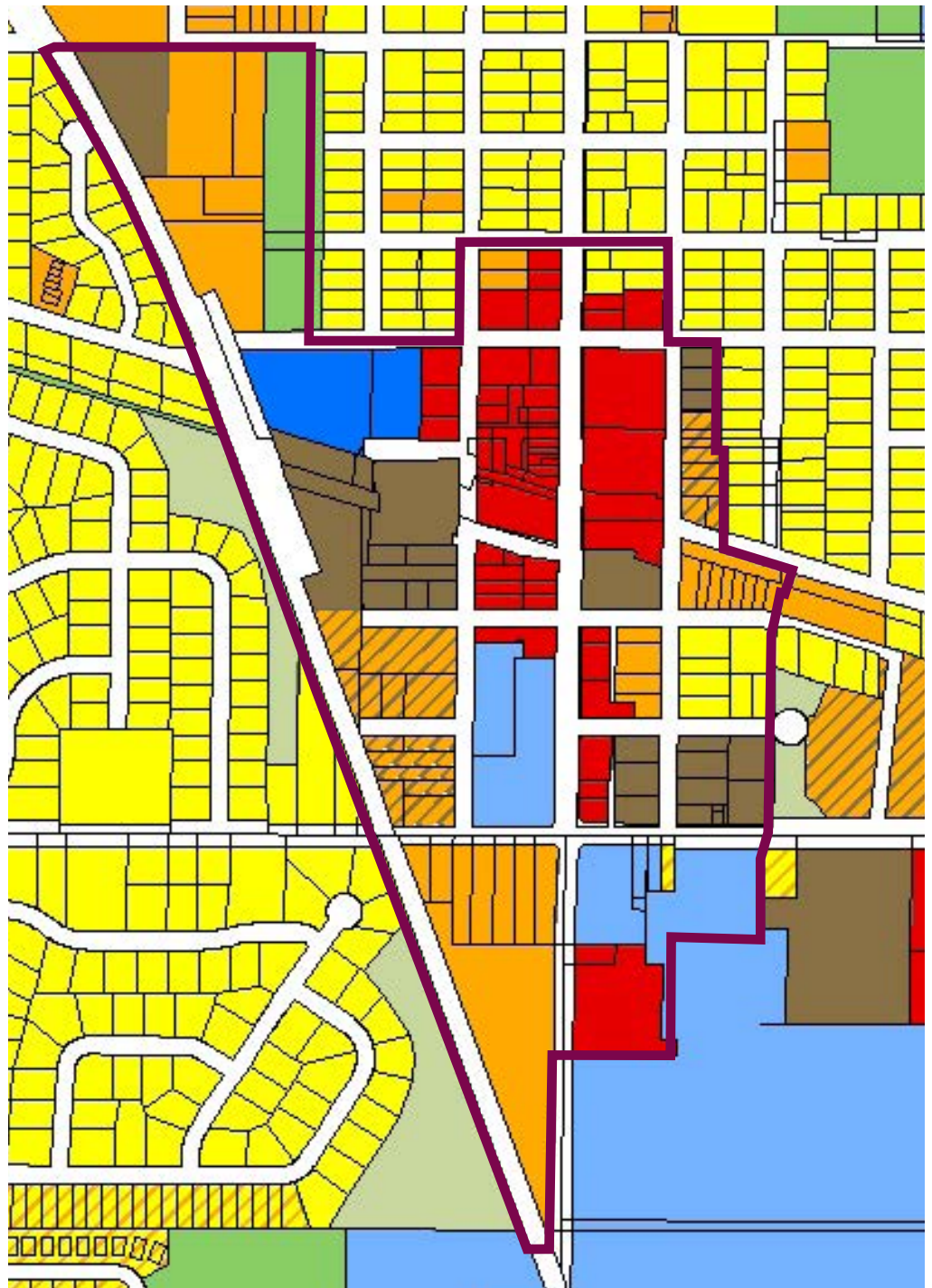


Figure 2.3 | DRAFT Land Use Plan (2018)

Zoning Regulations

Zoning is the primary form of land use controls. Zoning regulations address the location, construction, alteration and use of structures and land. The zoning ordinance can be found in Title 11 of the City Code. This portion of the City Code also contains regulations on signs and off-street parking.

Zoning is a tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. State law requires that Lakeville's zoning ordinance be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Changes in land use recommended by the Downtown Development Guide will result in corresponding changes in zoning.

Zoning regulations are imposed using a series of districts. Each district has unique permitted uses and performance standards. The zoning districts for property in and around Downtown appear in Figure 1.6. Three of these districts relate specifically to the CBD:

- » The purpose of the Central Business District Area - Commercial District (C-CBD) is to provide specifically for the regulation of high intensity commercial uses located within the CBD. With the exception of pawnshops, the district permits the use of businesses allowed in the C-3, C-2, and C-1 districts. The C-CBD district also allows performing arts facilities. A key factor in this district is the application of design standards. Site and building design within the C-CBD district shall maintain a high standard of architectural and aesthetic quality in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and the historic Fairfield District of Downtown Lakeville Design Guidelines.
- » The purpose of the Single-Family Residential District - Central Business District Area (RS-CBD) is to provide regulations which accommodate the unique and desired development character of single-family residential uses in the area surrounding the central business district of the City, as defined by the City's Comprehensive Plan. This district allows single family homes as permitted in other single-family residential zoning districts. The RS-CBD district contains unique lot dimension and setback requirements to provide flexibility for historically smaller lot sizes and homes. It also has different conditional use regulations than other residential districts.
- » The Central Business District Area - Industrial District (I-CBD) seeks to provide specifically for the regulation of manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing uses located within the central business district of the City as defined by the Comprehensive Plan. Permitted uses in this district include governmental and public utility buildings and structures, manufacturing, warehousing/storage, and wholesale sales.

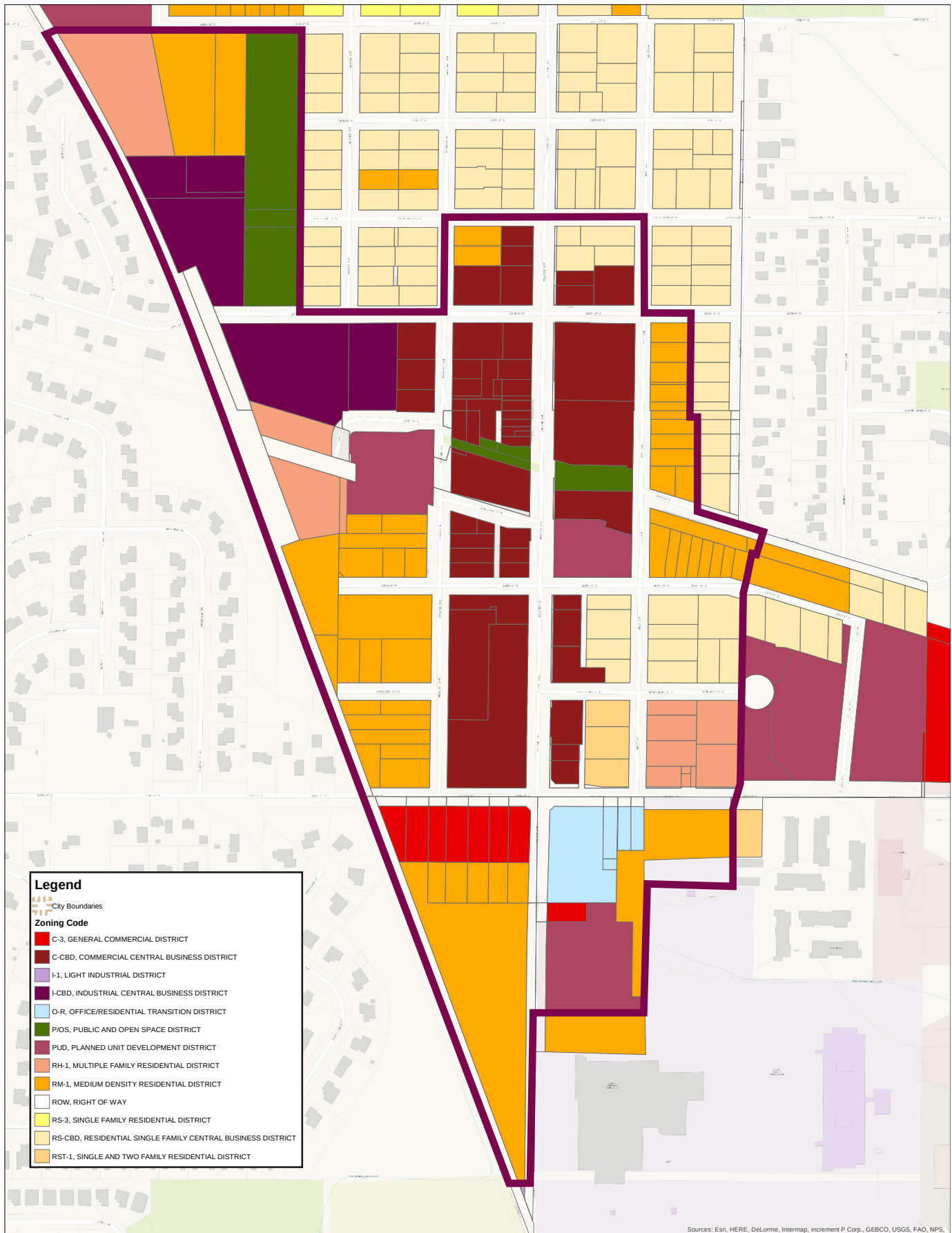


Figure 2.4 | Existing Zoning



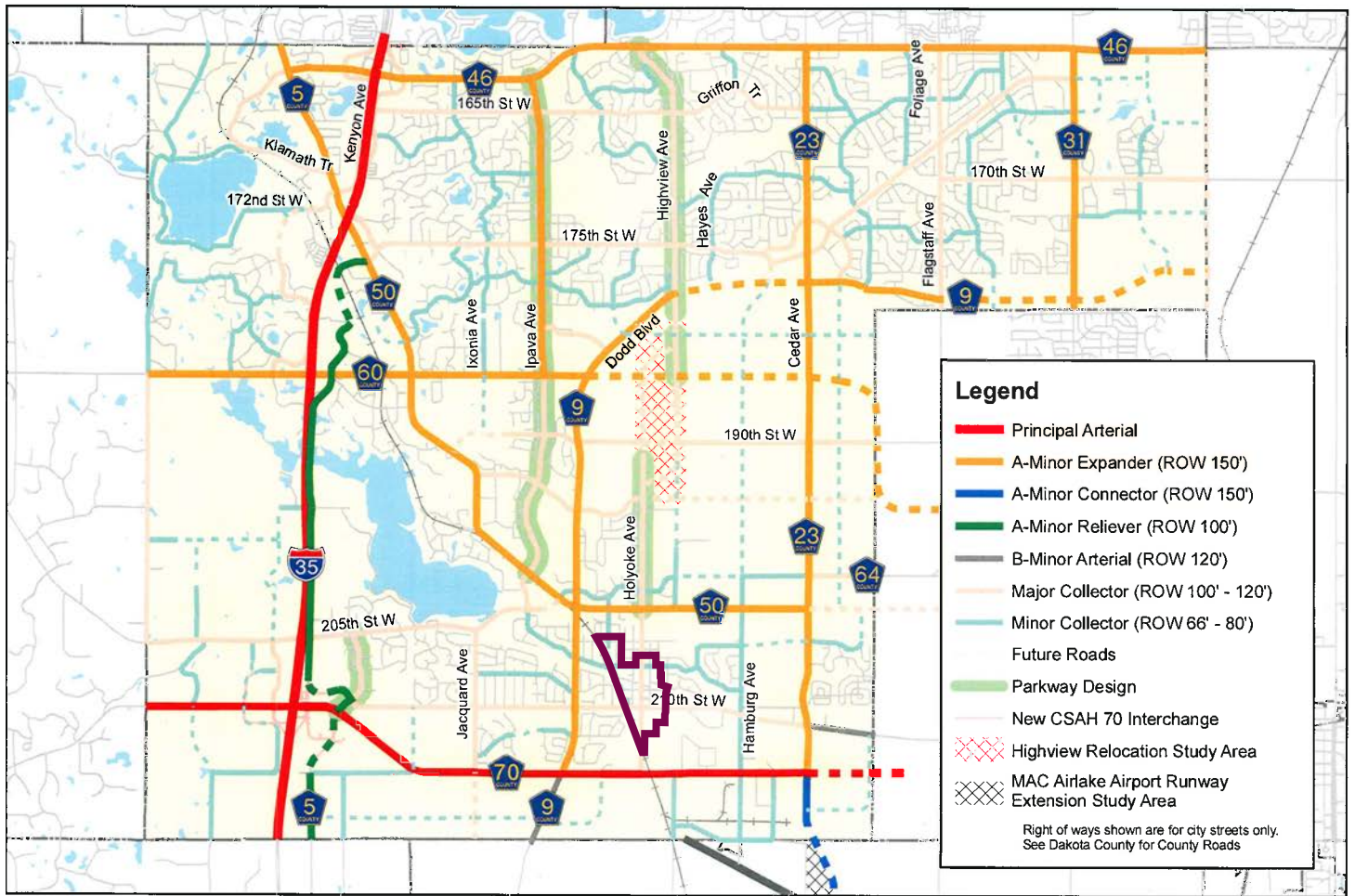


Figure 2.5 | Future Roadway Functional Classes per the Lakeville Transportation Plan Update

Market Summary

Overview

Demographic and market trends in Downtown Lakeville, as well as in the rest of Lakeville and surrounding communities, impact the viability of different kinds of land uses and development in the Downtown district and influence how the Downtown will evolve over time. This section presents various background information and takeaways concerning demographics and market conditions influencing Downtown Lakeville.

Demographic and Geographic Background:

The overall area “South of the River” will continue to grow steadily over the next few decades. Data from Metropolitan Council indicate that the various communities in the area may add nearly 100,000 more residents through 2040. This increase in population will drive increased demand for housing, places to work, and places to shop and eat throughout the area.

Projected Population Growth	1990	2000	2010	2020 (Forecast)	2030 (Forecast)	2040 (Forecast)	Projected Growth 2010-2040
Apple Valley	34,598	45,527	49,084	55,500	59,200	63,600	14,516
Burnsville	51,288	60,220	60,306	63,500	66,000	68,500	8,194
Bloomington	86,335	85,172	82,893	86,100	89,400	93,300	10,407
Eagan	47,409	63,557	64,206	67,400	69,800	72,300	8,094
Farmington	5,940	12,365	21,086	24,300	28,300	32,500	11,414
Lakeville	24,854	43,128	55,954	64,300	74,600	83,500	27,546
Rosemount	8,622	14,619	21,874	25,900	31,700	38,000	16,126
Total			355,403	387,000	419,000	451,700	96,297

Table 2.1 | Projected Population Growth in the Region

Source: Metropolitan Council

Drive Times

As indicated on the map, Downtown Lakeville is located within a 15-minute drive of most of the suburban area located south of where I-35 splits near Burnsville. However, the southern half of the “drive time area” (in areas to the south of Lakeville) is currently rural and undeveloped.

The area located within a 15-minute drive of Downtown Lakeville will continue to add population and economic strength over the next five years. ESRI, a national database of economic information and projections, anticipates that the area will gain an additional 10,000 residents between 2017 and 2022. The median household income will increase from around \$88,000 to nearly \$97,000 and the median home value in the area will increase from \$259,000 to nearly \$287,000 during the five-year period.

Downtown Lakeville is located at the far south end of the suburban growth area in Dakota County and fights the natural tendency of residents in the area to travel north to do their shopping, eating, and entertaining. In addition, Downtown Lakeville does not have direct access to I-35 and many residents don’t know where the Downtown is located.

In general, the challenge for Downtown Lakeville is to attract more residents to travel south (or remain in Lakeville) rather than heading north, and to increase its recognition in the local area.

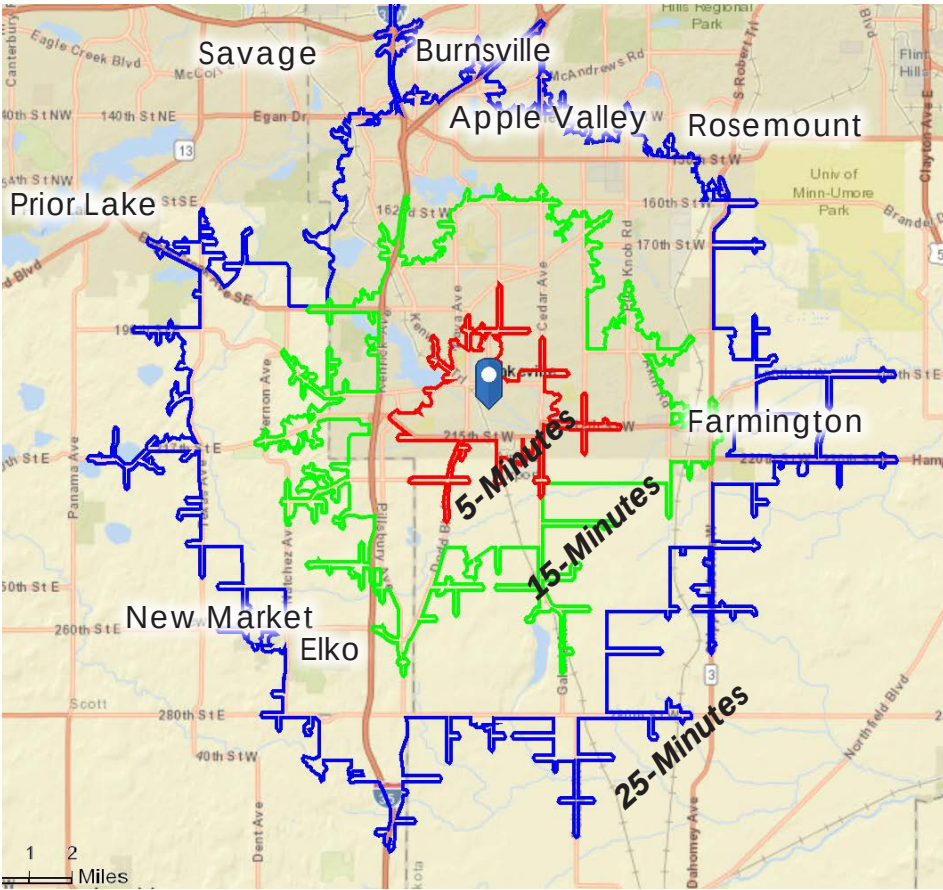


Figure 2.6 | Drive Times from Downtown Lakeville

15-minute Drive Time	2017	2022 (Projected)
Population	149,555	159,715
Median Household Income	\$88,312	\$96,512
Median Home Value	\$259,263	\$286,874

Table 2.2 | Projected Population, Income, and Home Values in the Region

Source: ESRI

Population by Age (within a 15-minute drive time)	2017		2022 (Projected)		Total Change (2017-2022)
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-4	10,433	7.0%	11,094	6.9%	661
5-9	11,585	7.7%	11,734	7.3%	149
10-14	12,031	8.0%	12,458	7.8%	427
15-19	10,130	6.8%	10,948	6.9%	818
20-24	8,185	5.5%	7,627	4.8%	(558)
25-34	20,029	13.4%	21,642	13.6%	1,613
35-44	22,253	14.9%	24,634	15.4%	2,381
45-54	22,477	15.0%	21,357	13.4%	(1,120)
55-64	17,702	11.8%	19,321	12.1%	1,619
65-74	9,993	6.7%	12,476	7.8%	2,483
75-84	3,512	2.3%	5,049	3.2%	1,537
85+	1,226	0.8%	1,374	0.9%	148

Table 2.3 | Projected Population by Age in the Region

Source: ESRI

As illustrated in the table above, the geographic area within a 15-minute drive of Downtown Lakeville is aging, with growth anticipated in the 55 to 84 year old segments. In addition, the population of residents age 25 to 44 will increase over the next few years, representing the continued growth of families in the area. This reflects the increasing influence of empty nesters and senior citizens in the local market. In addition, the growth in the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 year old segments reflects the growth of people in their prime parenting years. This trend reflects the reputation Lakeville has as a good community for families and raising children.

These trends will influence demand for different kinds of housing in the Downtown area, as well as for various types of places to eat, drink, and shop. For example, the increase in empty nesters and senior citizens may increase demand in the local area for apartments, townhomes, and similar maintenance-free living options, as well as for various forms of senior housing products. The growth of families in the community may drive additional demand for family-oriented restaurants and stores in Downtown Lakeville.

Demographic Tapestries

As a national economics database, ESRI is able to analyze the psychographic segments of households located within a particular geographic area. Information concerning these segments highlights the lifestyle choices and financial metrics of the various types of households, including their preferences regarding hobbies, leisure activities, personal spending, and housing choices. This information can help retailers or marketers target the needs and wants of households in a given area appropriately.

The following outlines the top ten psychographic segments within the 15-minute drive time surrounding Downtown Lakeville.

Top Tapestries within a 15-minute Drive Time	Households	Percentage
Soccer Moms	14,586	27.3%
Up and Coming Families	6,247	11.7%
Professional Pride	4,863	9.1%
Parks and Rec	4,403	8.2%
Savvy Suburbanites	4,284	8.0%
Home Improvement	3,744	7.0%
Boomburbs	3,517	6.6%
Bright Young Professionals	3,115	5.8%
Enterprising Professionals	2,951	5.5%
Middleburg	1,450	2.7%

Table 2.4 | Regional Tapestries

Source: ESRI

The following provides highlights concerning the lifestyle preferences and demographic data for the top five psychographic segments in the local area. Please keep in mind that data provided concerning the various segments reflects data for these types of households on a national level. Data for households in Minnesota may differ somewhat from national metrics.

Soccer Moms:

- » Soccer Moms are an affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents of this segment tend to favor new housing away from the bustle of the city, but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Most families in this segment include two working parents with growing children. Therefore, these households in particular favor time-saving devices and family-oriented pursuits.
- » Soccer Mom households are connected, with a host of wireless devices in use.
- » Family-oriented purchases and activities dominate. Households, on average, have more than four televisions, tend to purchase children's apparel or toys, and make visits to theme parks or zoos.



- » Outdoor activities and sports are characteristic of life for this suburban group, including bicycling, jogging, golfing, boating, and target shooting.
- » On a national basis, this segment has a median household income of \$84,000 and a median net worth of \$252,000.

Up and Coming Families:

- » Up and Coming Families is a segment in transition – residents are younger and more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation. Members of this segment are ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals. The Great Recession impacted their financial well-being, but they are optimistic. Their homes are new and their families are young.
- » Up and Coming households are careful shoppers, aware of prices, willing to shop around for the best deals, and open to influence by others opinions.
- » This segment is seeking the latest and best in technology.
- » Members of this segment are still feathering the nest and establishing their style.
- » Up and Coming families are busy with work and family and use home services and landscaping services to save time.
- » This segment finds leisure in family activities, movies at home, trips to theme parks or the zoo, and sports from backpacking and baseball to weight lifting and yoga.
- » On a national basis, this segment has a median household income of \$64,000 and a median net worth of \$96,000.



Professional Pride:

- » Professional Pride consumers are well-educated career professionals that have prospered through the Great Recession. To maintain their upscale lifestyles, these goal-oriented couples work, often commuting far and working long hours. However, their schedules are fine-tuned to meet the needs of their school age children. They are financially savvy, invest wisely, and benefit from interest and dividend income. Their homes are furnished with the latest in home trends, including finished basements with in-home theaters.
- » Professional Pride consumers are highly qualified in the science, technology, law, or finance fields. They have worked hard to build their professional reputation or their start-up businesses.
- » Residents of this segment take pride in their picture-perfect homes, which they continually upgrade. They shop at Home Depot and Bed Bath & Beyond to take the smaller home improvement and remodeling tasks but contract out the larger projects.
- » Consumers in this segment find time in their busy schedules for themselves. They work out in their home gyms, owning at least a treadmill, an elliptical, or weight lifting equipment. They also visit the salon and spa regularly.
- » Residents of the segment, both young and old, are tech savvy. They not only own the latest and greatest in tablets, smartphones, and laptops but actually use the features each has to offer.
- » All family members in these households are avid readers. They read on their smart phones, tablets, and e-readers but also read hard copies of epicurean, home service, and sports magazines.
- » On a national basis, this segment has a median household income of \$127,000 and a median net worth of \$540,000.



Parks and Rec:

- » Parks and Rec households are practical suburbanites that have achieved the dream of home ownership. They have purchased homes that are within their means, including older homes, townhomes and duplexes. Many of these families are two-income married couples approaching retirement age. They are comfortable in their jobs and their homes, budget wisely, and do not plan on retiring anytime soon or moving. The neighborhoods of Parks and Rec households are well established, as are the amenities and programs of schools in the area.
- » More than half of Parks and Rec households are college educated and the workforce is diverse, with professionals in health care, retail trade, and education, as well as skilled workers in manufacturing and construction.
- » Parks and Rec households include budget-conscious consumers that stock up on staples at warehouse clubs.
- » Residents in this segment take advantage of local parks and recreation activities. Their exercise routine is a balance of home-based exercise, a session at the local community gym, and a quick jog, swim, or run.
- » On a national basis, this segment has a median household income of \$55,000 and a median net worth of \$98,000.



Savvy Suburbanites:

- » Savvy Suburbanites residents are well-educated, well-read, and well-capitalized. Families include empty nesters and empty nester wannabes, who still have adult children at home. Located in older neighborhoods outside the urban core, their suburban lifestyle includes home remodeling and gardening, plus the active pursuit of sports and exercise. They enjoy good food and wine, plus the amenities of the city's cultural events.
- » Savvy Suburbanites includes well-connected consumers that appreciate technology and make liberal use of it for everything from shopping and banking to staying current and communicating. They are informed shoppers that do their research prior to purchasing and focus on quality.
- » This segment uses housekeeping and personal care services extensively, and they like to cook and prefer natural or organic products.
- » This segment is physically fit, and residents actively pursue a number of sports, from skiing to golf, and invest heavily in sports gear and exercise equipment.
- » On a national basis, this segment has a median household income of \$104,000 and a median net worth of \$502,000.



Takeaways from Psychographic Segment Analysis:

- » The household groups most prevalent in the areas near Downtown Lakeville are family-oriented and enjoy events and activities focused on families and children.
- » Most households have a focus on health, fitness, and wellness. This focus includes various exercises and activities including yoga.
- » Many of the segments include foodies who enjoy good food and drink. This tendency may support a greater emphasis in Downtown Lakeville on eating and drinking places.





Market Context

Research of local market data and discussions with local stakeholders and business people revealed the following takeaways concerning the market for various types of land uses in Downtown Lakeville.

Office:

- » Downtown Lakeville has a relatively small amount of office space, geared mainly to small companies, including professional services firms.

As outlined in the table that follows, Downtown Lakeville has a very small amount of office space relative to the city as a whole and has not added any office space over the last ten years, according to data from CoStar (a national database of market information). The City of Lakeville has added over 20,000 square feet of office space (net) over the last decade, and the overall vacancy rate has decreased as the local economy has improved.

Office Data	Downtown Lakeville		City of Lakeville	
Year	Total Inventory (SF)	Vacancy %	Total Inventory (SF)	Vacancy %
2008	13,240	N/A	597,007	20.8%
2009	13,240	N/A	597,007	10.9%
2010	13,240	N/A	597,007	6.0%
2011	13,240	N/A	597,007	5.9%
2012	13,240	N/A	597,007	5.9%
2013	13,240	N/A	597,007	4.0%
2014	13,240	N/A	606,262	3.2%
2015	13,240	N/A	618,762	8.5%
2016	13,240	N/A	618,762	8.2%

Table 2.5 | Office Space Availability Comparison

Source: Costar

- » The Downtown district is likely to remain fairly limited in terms of the amount of supportable office space, given its location in the metro area. Larger office properties are more likely to locate along I-35 or major arterials (such as Cedar Avenue or County Road 42) given the greater degree of connectivity between these locations and the rest of the metro area.
- » Downtown Lakeville can continue to appeal to medical office users and small companies in the future as the Downtown continues to add amenities.
- » The overall quantity of office space in Downtown Lakeville may not increase very much over time. However, with enhancements and overall improvements, Downtown can improve the quality of office space offered and benefit from increased office rent rates.

Residential:

- » Downtown Lakeville has a relatively small number of apartments compared to the larger metro area.

As outlined in the table below, the Downtown area has 452 multi-family units and has not added any units over the last ten years. The average lease rate (per month) has steadily increased over the last three years, from \$0.98 per square foot in 2013 to \$1.16 per square foot in 2016. Meanwhile, the City of Lakeville as a whole added over 100 units from 2012 to 2013, and average lease rates have increased from \$0.98 in 2011 to \$1.27 in 2016.

Multi-family Data	Downtown Lakeville			City of Lakeville		
	Total Units	Average Rent/ SF	Vacancy %	Total Units	Average Rent/ SF	Vacancy %
2008	452	\$0.99	6.7%	1,309	\$0.99	6.2%
2009	452	\$0.98	7.2%	1,396	\$0.97	9.3%
2010	452	\$0.98	6.8%	1,396	\$0.98	5.7%
2011	452	\$0.99	6.1%	1,396	\$0.98	5.4%
2012	452	\$0.99	5.6%	1,396	\$1.13	4.8%
2013	452	\$0.98	4.9%	1,497	\$1.14	7.4%
2014	452	\$1.03	4.8%	1,497	\$1.18	5.0%
2015	452	\$1.07	4.0%	1,497	\$1.24	3.7%
2016	452	\$1.16	3.6%	1,497	\$1.27	3.4%

Table 2.6 | Multi-family Housing Availability Comparison

Source: Costar

- » Continued job and population growth in the metro area is driving long-term demand for additional apartments throughout the metro area.
- » Demand for multi-family has moved beyond Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and more suburban downtowns are attracting residential projects of various types.
- » The continued growth of Dakota County will drive ongoing growth for more residential. The Downtown area may be able to attract, in particular, empty nester and senior renters and buyers seeking maintenance-free living with access to amenities. Younger families and young adults could also represent a target market for more residential growth in Downtown Lakeville.
- » The areas between the heart of Downtown Lakeville and the railroad tracks, to the west, may represent good areas for residential projects in the future.
- » Adding more residential units in the Downtown area would add to the vitality of the district and also add to demand in the market for places to shop, eat, drink, and enjoy entertainment.
- » Additional residential in the Downtown area could also be developed as part of mixed-use projects that combine residential with office or retail land uses.





Retail:

- » Downtown Lakeville contains a relatively small amount of retail and related space (including restaurants) compared to the City as a whole. The challenge for a Downtown the size of Lakeville's is to maximize the potential of the retail space available (and any additional space that could be developed) in the district.

Downtown Lakeville contains less than 160,000 square feet of retail space, which represents a small percentage of the city-wide total of retail space, of over 3.1 million square feet. Downtown Farmington actually has slightly more retail, at around 235,000 square feet.

Retail Data	Downtown Lakeville		City of Lakeville	
Year	Total Inventory (SF)	Vacancy %	Total Inventory (SF)	Vacancy %
2008	159,801	2.5%	2,857,158	5.3%
2009	159,801	2.5%	2,866,658	4.5%
2010	159,801	10.9%	2,866,658	5.4%
2011	159,801	10.4%	2,866,658	6.0%
2012	159,801	8.0%	3,037,258	4.9%
2013	159,801	11.1%	3,041,758	4.4%
2014	159,801	13.5%	3,053,099	5.7%
2015	159,801	8.2%	3,053,099	4.7%
2016	159,801	1.6%	3,143,099	3.6%

Table 2.7 | Retail Availability Comparison

Source: Costar

- » Analysis of retail spending indicates that Downtown Lakeville is missing out on untapped spending in the local market in a variety of categories, in particular Restaurants (Eating and Drinking places), stores geared to Health and Personal Care, and stores geared to Sports, Hobbies, Books, and Music.

Specifically, data from ESRI indicates that within the five-minute drive time radius, the local retail market in particular is capturing less retail in the categories of Furnishings, Health/Personal Care, Apparel, General Merchandise, and Eating and Drinking Places. The presence of the Cub Foods store to the north and west of the Downtown area, in particular, means that the immediate area absorbs more than its share of grocery spending from the Lakeville community. The table indicates that the area within a five-minute drive of Downtown is underserved in terms of Eating and Drinking places by **nearly \$11 million in spending per year**.

Retail Capture Rates Within a 5-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville	Household Spending	Sales	Market Capture
Furnishings	\$5,403,856	\$3,123,244	57.8%
Electronics / Appliances	\$6,189,495	\$5,452,208	88.1%
Building Materials	\$12,005,994	\$18,057,238	150.4%
Food / Beverage Stores	\$25,810,243	\$40,188,233	155.7%
Health / Personal Care	\$11,276,243	\$453,816	4.0%
Apparel	\$8,893,186	\$621,190	7.0%
Sport / Hobby / Books / Music	\$5,161,422	\$3,149,406	61.0%
General Merchandise	\$29,159,953	\$9,347,563	32.1%
Miscellaneous	\$6,321,347	\$4,288,239	67.8%
Eating and Drinking Places	\$18,246,416	\$7,043,618	38.6%

Table 2.8 | Retail Capture Rates Within a 5-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville *Source: ESRI*

The pattern of leakage (or failing to capture retail spending within a given geography) is similar for the area within a ten-minute drive of Downtown Lakeville, as indicated below.

Retail Capture Rates Within a 10-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville	Household Spending	Sales	Market Capture
Furnishings	\$30,494,783	\$18,342,326	60.1%
Electronics / Appliances	\$34,861,742	\$9,616,384	27.6%
Building Materials	\$69,509,189	\$40,817,956	58.7%
Food / Beverage Stores	\$143,359,764	\$148,911,909	103.9%
Health / Personal Care	\$63,208,528	\$35,340,942	55.9%
Apparel	\$50,340,422	\$2,588,961	5.1%
Sport / Hobby / Books / Music	\$28,937,015	\$5,247,417	18.1%
General Merchandise	\$162,934,308	\$92,670,173	56.9%
Miscellaneous	\$35,187,179	\$12,335,642	35.1%
Eating and Drinking Places	\$102,303,424	\$66,116,690	64.6%

Table 2.9 | Retail Capture Rates Within a 10-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville *Source: ESRI*

Given the presence of other small and mid-size shopping centers in the broader area, (including various shopping areas along I-35 and in Apple Valley), the area within a 15-minute drive time captures a much greater share of the retail spending market. The Health / Personal Care and Miscellaneous spending categories, however, continue to be underserved within the 15-minute drive time area.

Retail Capture Rates Within a 15-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville	Household Spending	Sales	Market Capture
Furnishings	\$78,665,206	\$63,852,407	81.2%
Electronics / Appliances	\$90,404,073	\$71,811,757	79.4%
Building Materials	\$178,072,080	\$157,667,400	88.5%
Food / Beverage Stores	\$374,039,534	\$361,149,015	96.6%
Health / Personal Care	\$164,304,600	\$94,107,518	57.3%
Apparel	\$130,770,819	\$148,710,651	113.7%
Sport / Hobby / Books / Music	\$75,019,278	\$62,549,097	83.4%
General Merchandise	\$423,229,906	\$422,973,460	99.9%
Miscellaneous	\$91,472,205	\$55,581,528	60.8%
Eating and Drinking Places	\$265,504,996	\$250,055,185	94.2%

Table 2.10 | Retail Capture Rates Within a 15-minute Drive Time from Downtown Lakeville Source: ESRI



Analysis of the local market and discussions with local businesses and stakeholders indicates that the following types of retail could potentially succeed in Downtown Lakeville:

- » A total of two to four additional sit-down restaurants, geared to different types of customers and with different offerings
- » Spa, wellness, and health and beauty stores or outlets
- » Stores and services geared to children and to pets (in particular, dogs)
- » Stores geared to arts and crafts
- » Experience-oriented retail, including stores that offer cooking classes, art classes, wine pairings, and related experiences. Restaurants in the district could also offer some or all of these types of experiences.
- » Additional boutiques, geared to different product segments and target markets
- » Entertainment-oriented retail in general, including wine bars and the experience-oriented retail noted above

Issues and Opportunities

Given the recent investments made in Downtown Lakeville and the strong market potential of the surrounding area, there are significant opportunities for redevelopment and new development to continue to transform the Downtown. The following graphic illustrates some of the driving forces that influence the Urban Design Framework found in the next chapter.

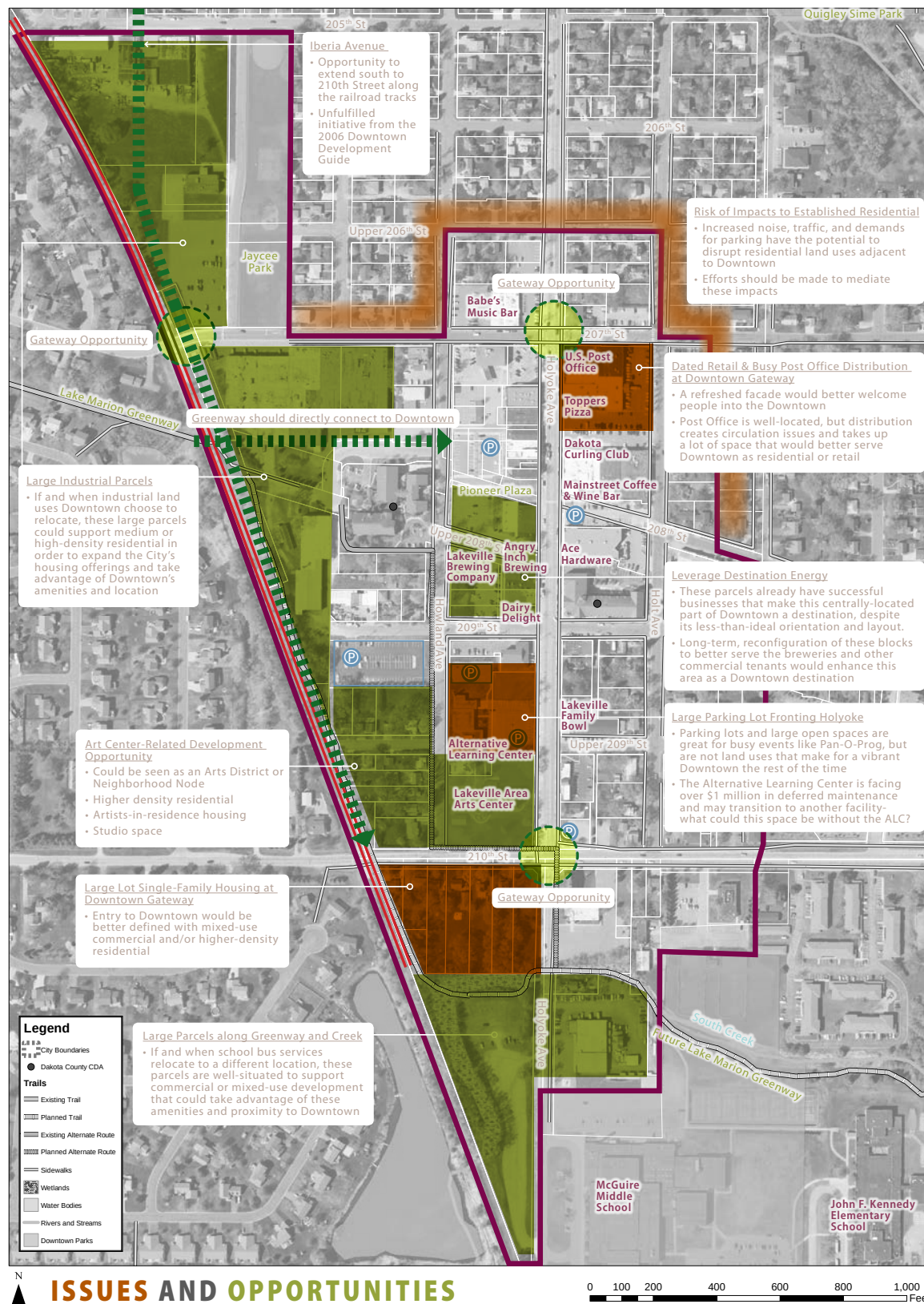


Figure 2.7 | Downtown Issues and Opportunities

Community Feedback

In order to craft a well-informed approach to the Downtown Development Guide, the process solicited the community's feedback in addition to meeting with stakeholders and City staff. Over 200 people responded to an online questionnaire with their thoughts on the issues facing Downtown today, the City's biggest opportunities moving forward, and their vision for the future of Downtown. A summary of the most frequently heard responses follow.



"Needs to be revitalized. Needs more businesses to attract people to Downtown, but it needs a facelift."

What are the issues facing Downtown today?

1. Lack of businesses
2. Loss of businesses
3. Need small, local, and more upscale restaurants
4. Lack of identity and in need of revitalization
5. Needs entertainment options

What opportunities should be leveraged moving forward?

1. Leverage market desire for restaurants and food trucks
2. Room for new businesses to come in
3. Downtown has good bones, needs facade updates and investment
4. Room for public spaces, parks, and plazas Downtown
5. Leverage market desire for entertainment, family-friendly destinations



"Walkability/bikeability, locally owned stores and restaurants, easily accessible transit, and year-round activities."

What elements and features make for a strong Downtown?

1. A variety of business options (especially small and local)
2. Eating and drinking establishments
3. Public space for community gathering
4. Entertainment and events
5. Attractive and walkable environment

What is distinctive about Downtown today?

1. Unique small businesses
2. Historic, small town feel
3. The breweries
4. The Arts Center
5. Pan-O-Prog



"A thriving, bustling Downtown with small shops, various businesses, cafes, restaurants, and activities of all sorts."

What do you envision for Downtown Lakeville in 10-15 years?

1. A variety of unique business options (especially small and local)
2. Eating and drinking establishments
3. A vibrant destination with entertainment options and events
4. Public spaces for community gathering
5. Amenities and things to do for people of all ages



3. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Approach to the Downtown Development Guide

The updated Development Guide uses an Urban Design Framework to summarize the reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities that should be pursued over the next decade. This chapter details the proposed improvements to Downtown using four elements.

1. **Downtown Land Use and Development Character Initiatives**

The Guide identifies where Downtown's land uses may transition, given potential redevelopment opportunities. This section also outlines commercial, residential, and employment initiatives that will help to achieve a development character that is compatible with the overall vision for Downtown.

2. **Transportation and Wayfinding**

This section considers the implications of transportation on redevelopment and provides initiatives to improve streets, parking, signage, and gateways into Downtown. These strengthen wayfinding and organize travel within Downtown while improving broader connections to it.

3. **Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces**

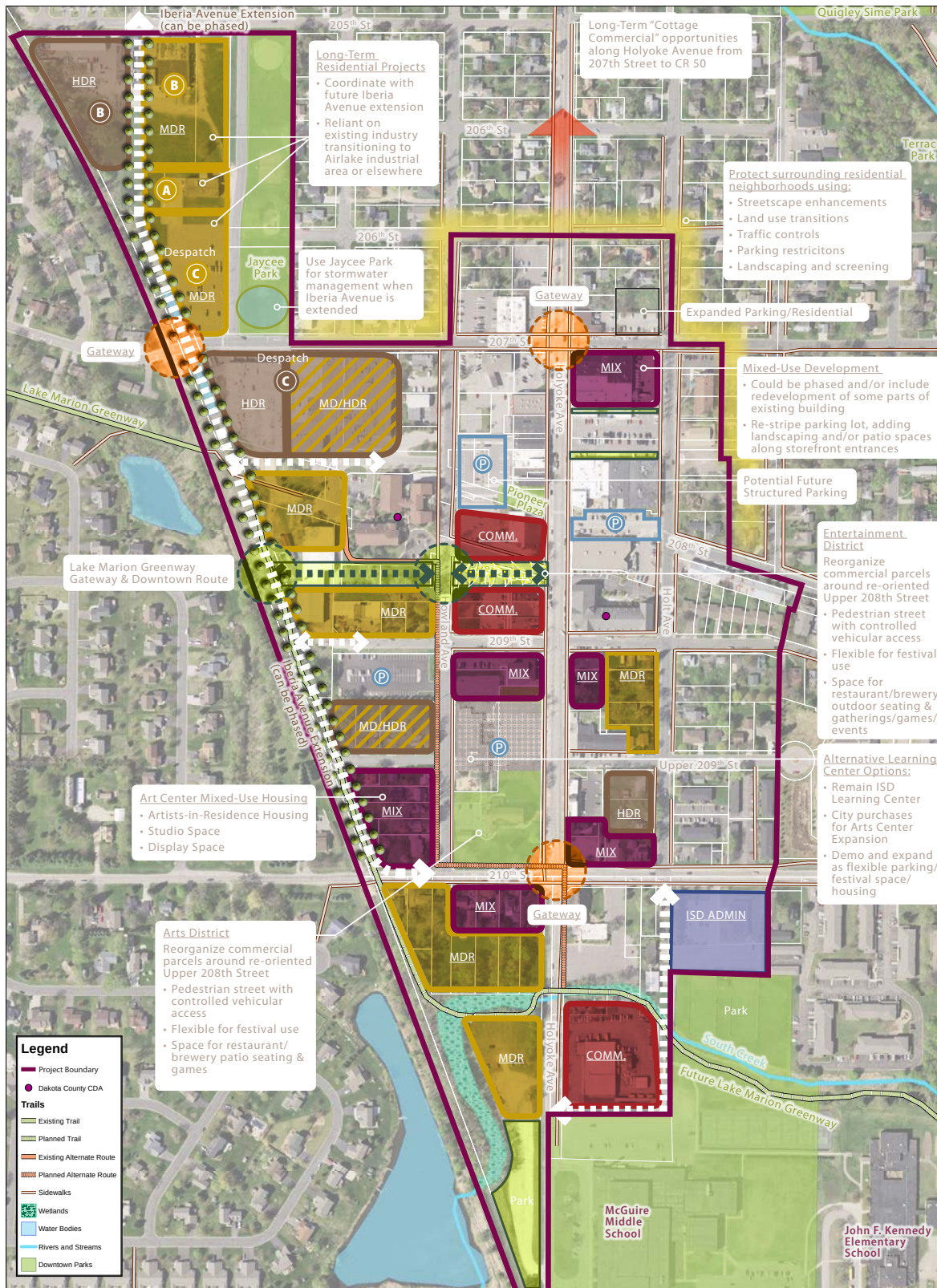
This section explores how Downtown can support community gathering, connect to the surrounding region via the Lake Marion Greenway, and provide visitors and residents with a healthy, vibrant public realm.

4. **Downtown Reinvestment Strategies**

Finally, the Downtown Development Guide Update looks to facilitate redevelopment through reinvestment strategies. These recommended actions, policies, and procedures will guide Downtown business development and help to create a destination that sustains businesses and celebrates local heritage.

Urban Design Framework

The Urban Design Framework for Downtown Lakeville builds upon the issues and opportunities provided by City staff, stakeholders, and the general public. The following graphic illustrates the proposed redevelopment initiatives that are covered in this chapter.



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Figure 3.1 | Urban Design Framework

The Downtown Development Guide's approach involves creating a flexible framework that allows for the ongoing evolution of Downtown Lakeville as the market allows.

The Framework:

- » Supports increased density and building height where they do not impact existing land uses
- » Plans for parking now, but leaves future parking requirements flexible
- » Incorporates walkability and bikeability as key strategies
- » Engages entrepreneurs and potential developers at this early stage
- » Markets Downtown as a destination for the "South of the River" crowd
- » Enhances gateways into the Downtown
- » Improves public spaces for community gathering
- » Sets the stage to attract desirable tenants and uses over time

Downtown Land Use and Development Character Initiatives

While the Land Use Plan shown in Figure 1.5 will continue to guide development in Lakeville for the next decade, the Urban Design Framework includes a few areas where, should the opportunity arise, certain parcels could transition to a land use different than that shown in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The following initiatives describe aspects of the Urban Design Framework where guiding redevelopment in a specific direction will help Downtown to achieve the desired character.

1. Redevelop Isolated Industrial Areas West of Downtown into Housing

The primary changes involve long-term residential projects on the western edge of Downtown, some of which are already designated as future residential land uses. The current Despatch properties will continue to be designated industrial/warehouse until Despatch Industries decides to relocate, at which point the parcels make sense to transition to a residential land use. Concentrating medium and high-density housing along the western edge of Downtown takes advantage of the existing railroad as a transitional space, which acts as a buffer for the single-family neighborhoods to the west. Increasing the density of housing available in Downtown Lakeville is in line with market projections, allows a greater number of people to enjoy Downtown's amenities, and will help to support local businesses. This area's proximity to the Lake Marion Greenway offers a major benefit to future residents.



2. Explore Redevelopment of Strategic Sites in the Downtown

The Lakeville Mall Site

Lakeville Mall sits at a gateway intersection into Downtown. With two of the four corners unoccupied by structures due to parking lot frontage, this corner functions as an important anchor. The block houses several businesses and Lakeville's Post Office, but the building's dated aesthetic contrasts with the historic brick buildings of the "Ben Franklin" block across Holyoke Avenue.

Concept A below illustrates a partial redevelopment of the block that maintains the Mall shops along Holyoke Avenue, but suggests facade improvements to update the look and create a more inviting entry to Downtown from the north. Brickwork, larger windows, neutral awnings, and unique signage would better complement the existing historic character found elsewhere in Downtown.

On the back of the block, the Post Office moves to the base of a mixed-use building as a retail storefront, with their warehousing and distribution activities relocated out of the Downtown.

Parking could be added across 207th to the north by expanding the current lot into the adjacent vacant parcel. To the south, the shared parking lot between the Lakeville Mall and the former Enggren's Mall is shown with enhancements that improve pedestrian access, create more welcoming entries into the buildings, and add landscaping to break up the large lot.

Concept B illustrates how the block could be completely redeveloped with a mix of uses. Commercial storefronts along Holyoke Avenue, including a new Post Office, could have office or residential above. As in Concept A, the Post Office's warehousing and distribution activities would be relocated and the parking lot to the south would undergo enhancements to improve the experience for pedestrians. A parking structure serving the new development would occupy a portion of the interior of the block. Townhomes along the eastern facade of the building orient the back of the block to the neighborhood. The addition of medium-density residential across 207th Street to the north rounds out the mix of housing options at this prime location.



Figure 3.2 | Lakeville Mall: Concept A



Figure 3.3 | Lakeville Mall: Concept B

Upper 208th Street W Block

Oriented around an old railroad line, Upper 208th Street is skewed at an odd angle between Holyoke Avenue and Howland Avenue. With successful breweries on the south side of the street and the institution that is the Dairy Delite, this block is the closest thing Lakeville has to an entertainment destination; however, the businesses are successful in spite of their strangely arranged block, not because of it. In order to make a more inviting public realm that feels less like a repurposed industrial corridor, the concepts below explore improvements to Upper 208th Street W and the surrounding properties.

Concept A preserves the brewery buildings on the south side of 208th Street, but transforms the street into a shared-use plaza street that expands their patio space, adds pedestrian-scaled amenities and landscaping, and can function as a festival plaza during large events like Pan-O-Prog. The adjacent daycare facility to the north is envisioned as a new mixed-use development with a restaurant and rooftop patio space that overlooks the new plaza street. The development is shown extending farther west than the current building in order to form a more continuous facade along 208th Street that hides parking behind. The presence of additional dining options in Downtown Lakeville is strongly desired, and siting a new restaurant in this location would draw on the existing energy of this block to reinforce its role as a destination.

Concept B illustrates what a full redevelopment of this block could look like, including a re-orientation of Upper 208th Street W to form a more direct east-west connection between Holyoke and Howland Avenues. This shared-use plaza street would be a prime location for Lake Marion Greenway users to enter Downtown, and would function as a festival plaza during large events like Pan-O-Prog. The Upper 208th Street plaza would be flanked by a new mixed-use building to the north, and updated commercial buildings to the south built to suit the existing businesses. A shared beer garden/patio space would provide a dedicated outdoor space for the breweries.

The existing parking lot north of Upper 208th Street could transition to a district parking ramp if parking becomes an issue Downtown.



Figure 3.4 | Upper 208th Street W Block: Concept A

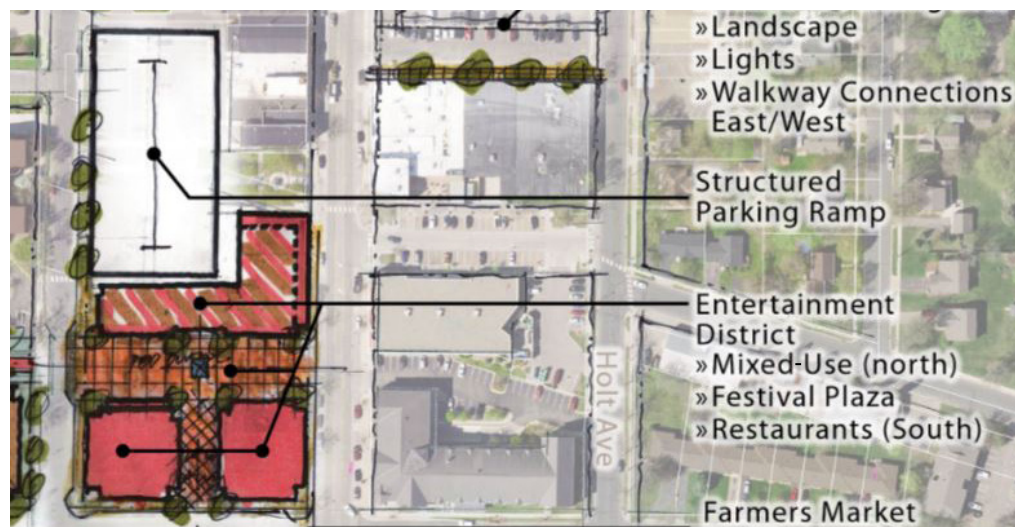


Figure 3.5 | Upper 208th Street W Block: Concept B

Downtown Market & Plaza Space



Festival Plaza Set-Up



Flexible Food Truck Court Set-Up



Farmers Market Pavilions



Lakeville Tire & Auto Site and the Lakeville Learning Center (ISD 194)

The land south of 209th Street W and north of the Lakeville Area Arts Center has only two structures on it, one of which, the Lakeville Area Learning Center, is facing more than \$1 million in deferred maintenance costs. If ISD 194 decides to relocate the Learning Center elsewhere, the City will have the opportunity to expand its land holdings on this block. With the Arts Center attracting visitors on a regular basis and Pan-O-Prog transforming this area into a hub of activity during the festival, this site is positioned as a prime location to host large community events. The Festival Plaza and Pavilion Concept illustrates how this land could transform into a flexible plaza anchored on the north by a new Farmers Market Pavilion and on the south by the Arts Center. The plaza could function as a district parking lot during non-event times. During markets, events, and festivals, the space would be activated as a town square of sorts, where large crowds could gather to enjoy food and drinks, browse vendors, and people watch. The space could host food trucks, a portion of it could be set up seasonally as a pop-up park, or the City could erect a temporary rink and warming tent for a winter festival.

The market pavilions could be phased in when Lakeville Tire & Auto chooses to relocate. The spaces could be rentable for large gatherings when not reserved for markets. A destination playground and splash plaza would add to this community space, making it a truly vibrant Downtown attraction.



Splash Plaza Examples

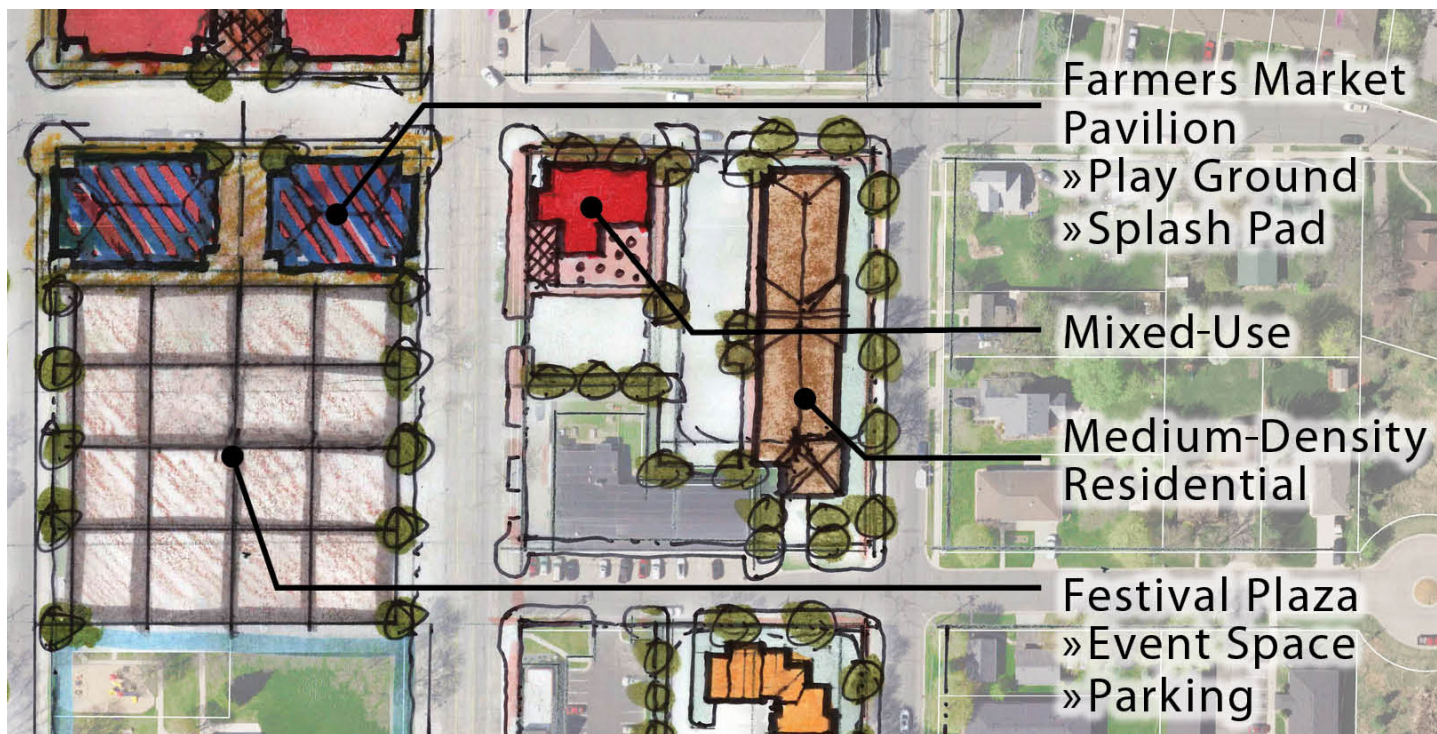


Figure 3.6 | Festival Plaza and Pavilion Concept



Seasonal Festival Set-Up



Pop-Up Park Spaces



Destination Playground / Splash Plaza

3. Explore Future Redevelopment of Underutilized and Industrial Land in the Central Business District

Industrial uses and single-family homes within the Downtown boundary are likely to transition away from the highest and best uses of this valuable land as the population grows and increases demand for well-located housing, office, and commercial space. There are several locations where redevelopment could occur.

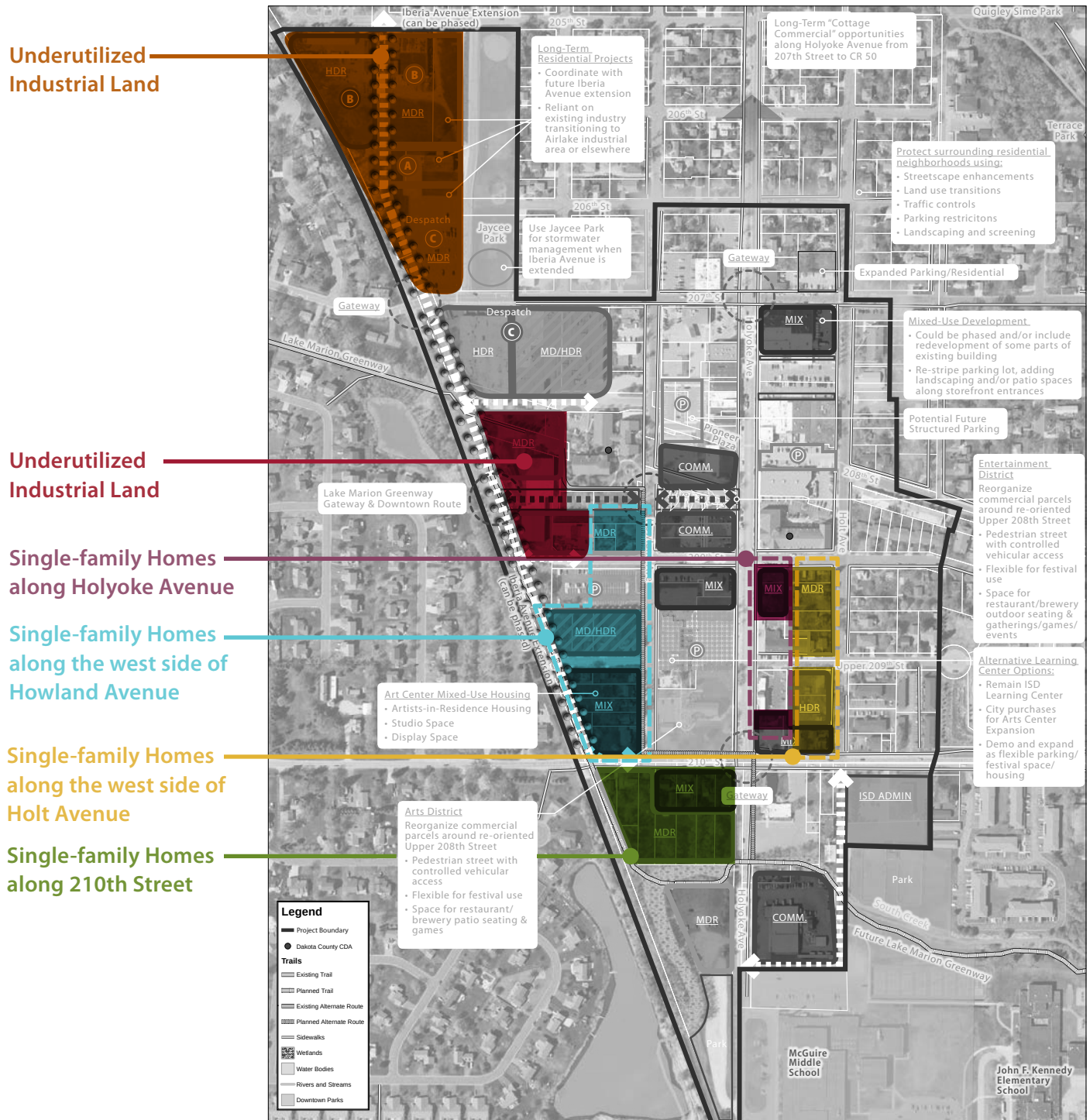


Figure 3.7 | Single-Family Home Redevelopment Areas

4. Consider Mixed-Use Redevelopment Along Holyoke

Areas shown in the Urban Design Framework as “Mix,” indicate the potential for a mixed-use development, which can occur horizontally or vertically, involving commercial, office, and/or residential units. Currently, there is no mixed-use land designation in the Lakeville Comprehensive Plan, so the majority of these parcels are simply designated commercial. The addition of housing as an option in these commercially-designated areas expands their flexibility for development, would add additional tax base, and increases the number of people present in the Downtown on a daily basis, which contributes to a vibrant public realm. Parking could be accommodated below grade, or in district parking lots or structures if demand for parking is projected to outpace supply.

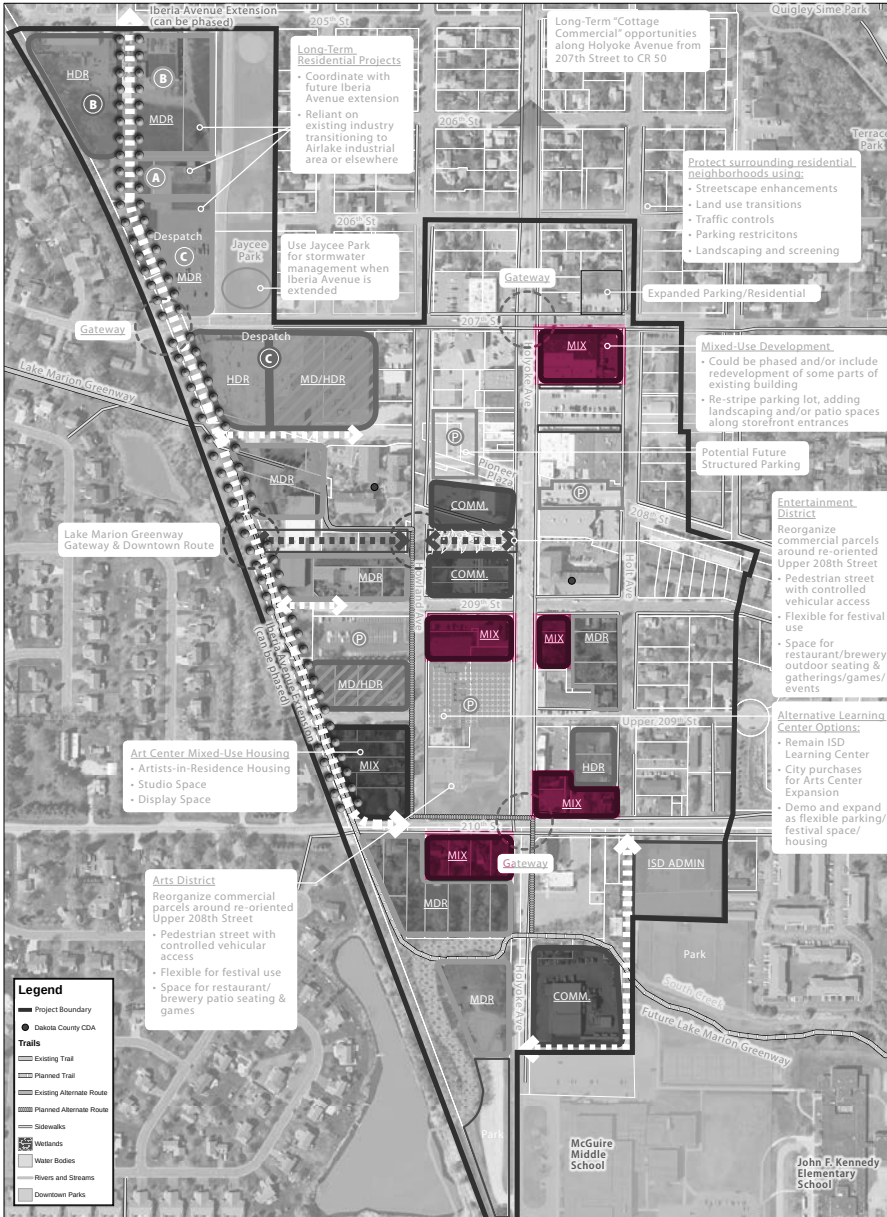


Figure 3.8 | Mixed-Use Redevelopment Along Holyoke Avenue



Reinvest in Historic Commercial



5. Reinvest in Historic Commercial Buildings

Historic brick buildings are what make Holyoke Avenue feel like one of the only proper main streets in the south metro. Maintaining and investing in these buildings is key to Downtown Lakeville's character and charm.

Add Upper-Level Residential Units



6. Enhance Upper Levels of Commercial Buildings as Living Spaces

Retrofitting second-story commercial or office spaces as residential can expand the types of housing available in Lakeville and capitalize on the Downtown's prime location for those who want a more urban lifestyle.

Encourage Upkeep & Reinvestment



7. Support the Improvement of and Reinvestment in the Housing Stock in Surrounding Neighborhoods

The existing housing stock surrounding Downtown is some of the most affordable in the City and meets the needs of both first-time home buyers and those looking to downsize. Programs and incentives that encourage upkeep of these homes is important to maintain their quality.

8. Focus Residential Development Along Lake Marion Greenway

Market forces may encourage industrial and single-family residential land uses along the future Lake Marion Greenway to relocate over time. As they become available, redevelopment of these parcels should focus on high and medium-density residential land use. Increasing the number of people living along the Greenway will promote active living and attract new residents to Downtown to take advantage of the location and amenities.

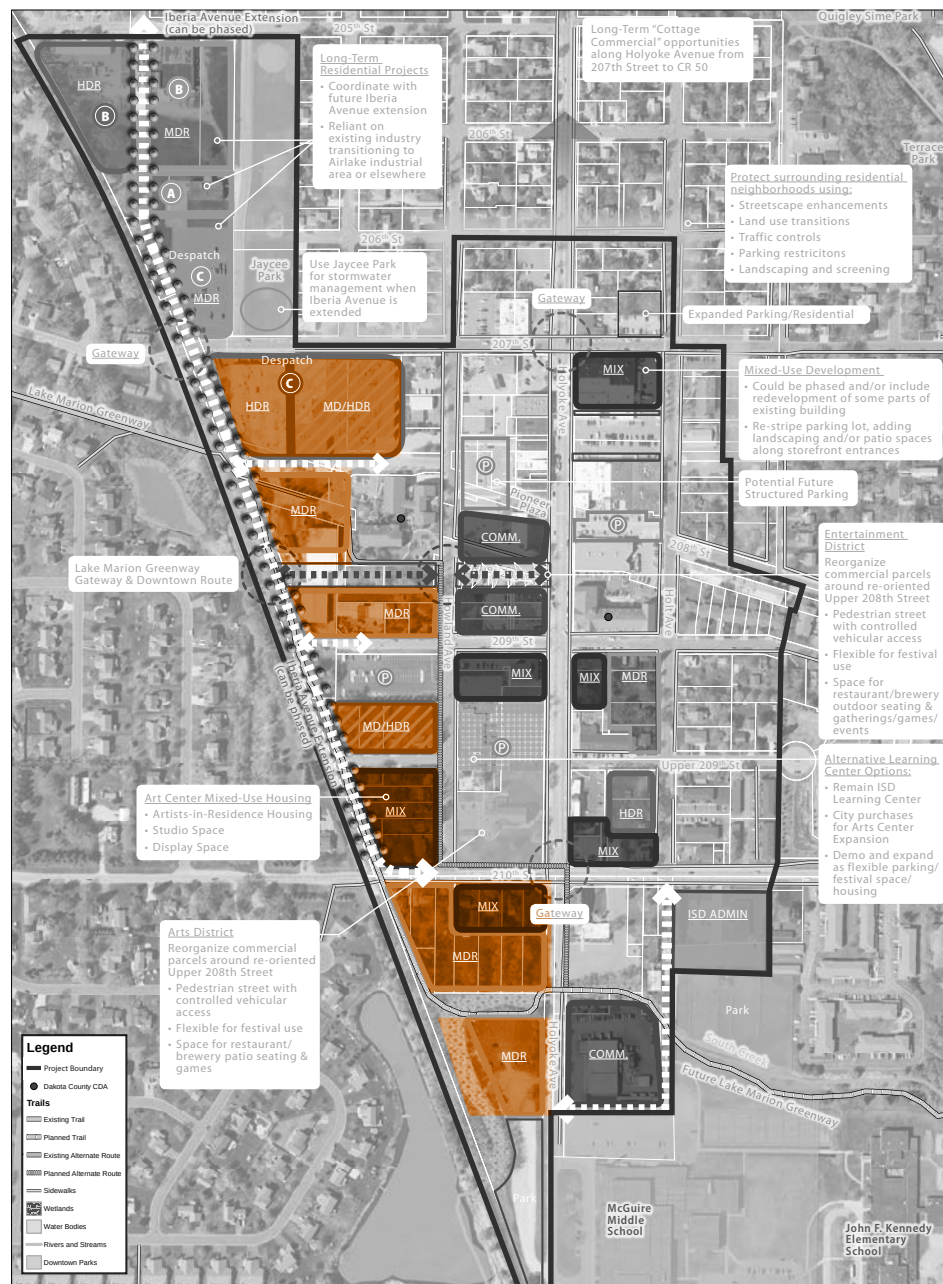


Figure 3.9 | Residential Redevelopment Along Lake Marion Greenway





Transportation and Wayfinding

The following initiatives work to improve Downtown’s streets, parking, signage, and gateways. These projects aim to strengthen wayfinding and organize travel within Downtown, while improving broader connections to it.

1. Extend Iberia Avenue south as a Parkway

Downtown begins to lose its form as it approaches the railroad to the west. Extending Iberia Avenue south along the western border of Downtown creates a defined edge to the district and offers dedicated access to new development opportunities. A parkway character would complement the planned Lake Marion Greenway trail and is compatible with the proposed residential land uses. The Iberia Avenue extension could be phased from 205th to 207th Streets, around the west side of Despatch Industries, and finally from 208th down to 210th Streets, as properties are able to be acquired and developments are proposed.

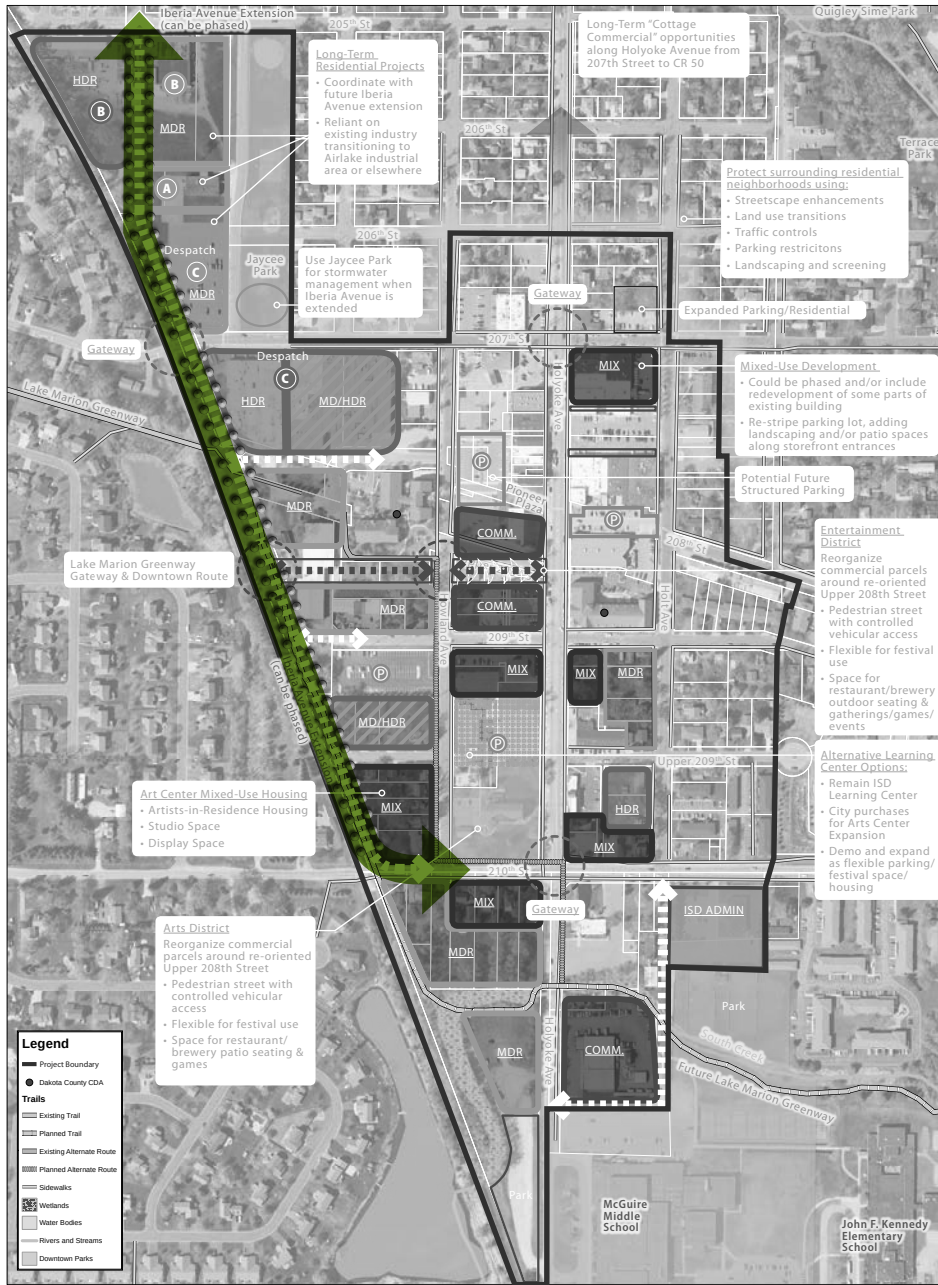
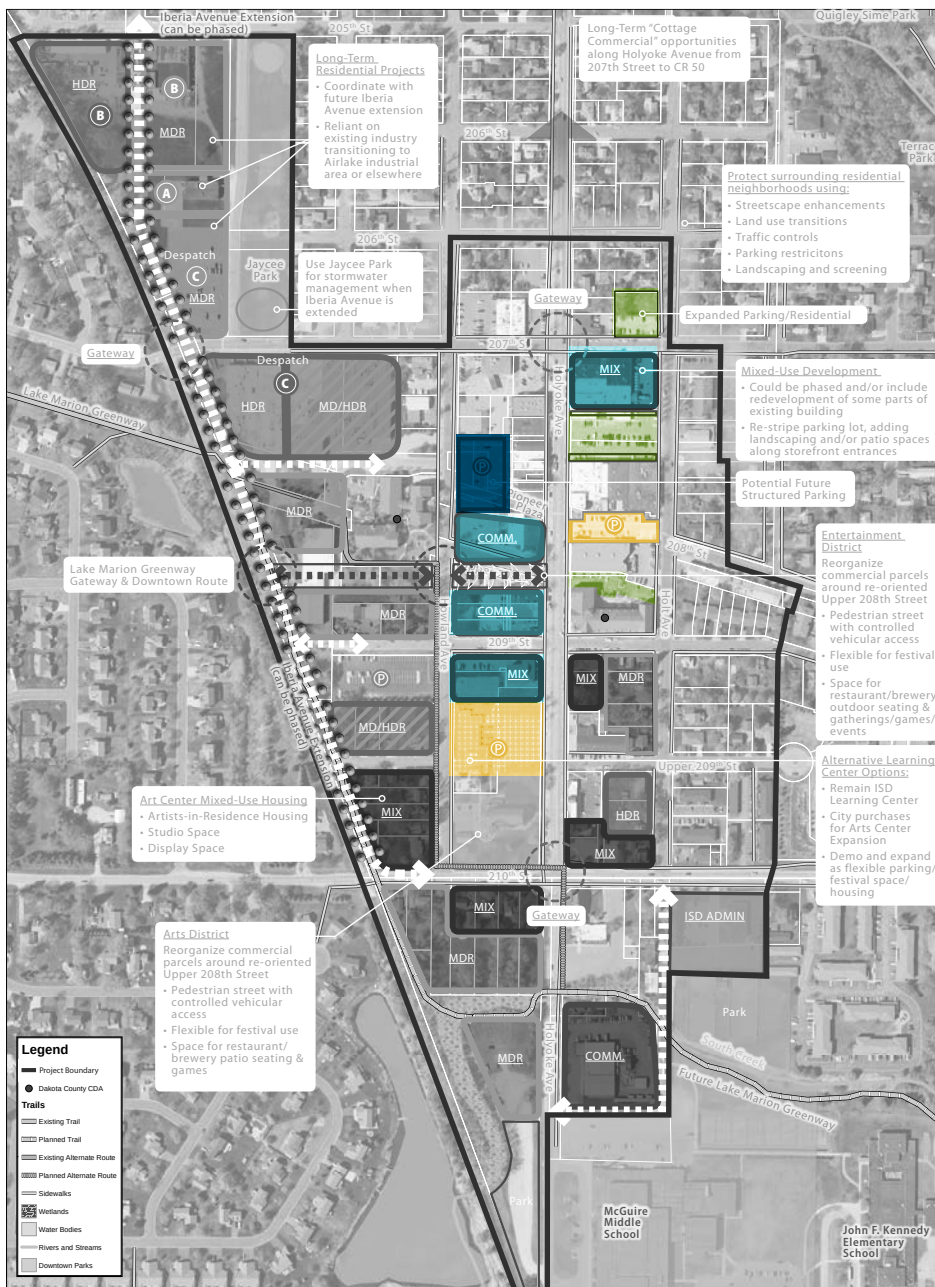


Figure 3.10 | Iberia Avenue Parkway Extension

2. Maintain Adequate Parking Capacity Throughout All Stages of Redevelopment

Maintaining adequate parking is important to the continued success of Downtown. As Downtown undergoes redevelopment, the need for additional parking facilities may arise. These may range from additional surface lots, as is the case with the proposed festival plaza area north of the Arts Center, or potential structured parking. Options for structured parking could include underground parking for new mixed-use and higher-density housing developments within Downtown. Longer-term, stand-alone parking structures could also be developed, as identified for the existing municipal parking lot behind the commercial businesses along the west side of Holyoke Avenue. Any future structures should have facades that complement Downtown's historic aesthetic and should consider future reuse, incorporating flat-floor design. Downtown should strive for a balanced distribution of parking facilities to serve all businesses and to ensure parking doesn't spill over into the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The combination of municipal and private surface parking lots, on-street parking, and structured parking (in the long-term) will be needed to match development demands.



Legend

- Potential Future Parking Structure (Long-term)
- Surface Parking (Private)
- Potential for Structured Parking Integrated with Development
- Surface Parking (Public)

Figure 3.11 | Future Potential Structured Parking Locations

Parking Lot Public Realm Improvements



3. Enhanced Parking Lot Landscaping and East-West Connections

The private parking lot between the Lakeville Mall and Dakota Curling Club should be enhanced in conjunction with any future development or redevelopment of the Lakeville Mall site. The lot should include wide sidewalks along the storefronts that provide safe, comfortable passage for pedestrians travelling between Downtown and the neighborhood to the east. The fronting businesses should have welcoming landscaping and adequate spaces for outdoor seating.

Civic Gateway Roundabout



4. Create a Civic Gateway at CR 50 and Holyoke Avenue

CR 50 is slated to undergo construction that includes a proposed roundabout at the Holyoke Avenue intersection. This project provides a good opportunity to integrate a Civic Gateway feature leading into Downtown.

Wayfinding and Intersection Improvements



5. Enhance Trail Wayfinding and Signage to Downtown

As the Lake Marion Greenway is constructed, trail wayfinding and signage directing trail users to Downtown Lakeville should be included. Connections between Downtown and Terrace, Quigley Sime, and Aronson Parks should also be strengthened with signage and wayfinding.

Bike Lane(s) on 207th



6. Identify and Strengthen East-West Bike Connections

A dedicated bike route along Upper 206th Street W should be established in order to safely link Jaycee Park, Downtown, Terrace Park, and the other parks northeast of Downtown. Upper 206th Street W could be converted into a bike boulevard, or a bike lane could be added.

Because 207th Street is the only passage through Downtown linking the neighborhoods on the east and west (and is slated to connect to Cedar Avenue in the future), it should be upgraded with bike lanes and intersection crossing improvements to better accommodate bike traffic.

Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces

Parks, trails, and open spaces are essential to a healthy, vibrant neighborhood. Downtown Lakeville has several parks within walking distance that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, but its biggest challenge lies in accommodating the masses of crowds that come to enjoy Pan-O-Prog in the summer. Providing this type of open space is a unique task for a Downtown of this size. If done right, Downtown Lakeville has the potential to be known as a lively environment that attracts people from across the region and can play host to more than just Pan-O-Prog throughout the year. The Development Guide Update proposes several features that will help facilitate Downtown's transformation as an event destination, while providing quality public space for the people of Lakeville on a day-to-day basis.

1. Downtown Festival Park and Plaza

If the Lakeville Area Learning Center relocates, the City will be primed to own a large parcel just north of one of Lakeville's biggest community attractions—its Arts Center. This area already functions as a hub during Pan-O-Prog, so making it into a dedicated Festival Park and Plaza could serve both Arts Center and City-wide events. As a flexible plaza space, all or a portion of the site could provide parking when not hosting gatherings.

The Downtown Festival Park would include activating elements like a water feature or play fountain and a focal art piece to maintain interest and attract visitors even when no events are scheduled. Moveable seating and planters could be set up in order to create more intimate and comfortable gathering spaces on the plaza. A destination playground with climbable features would ensure that the Festival Park attracts users throughout the week and functions as a neighborhood park for nearby residents and those visiting Downtown. The Festival Park would provide space for smaller-scale weekly events and programs like exercise classes, movies in the park, and food trucks. These types of programming energize the Downtown, attracting a variety of people together to enjoy each other's company, and building community.

2. Permanent Farmers Market Pavilion

A permanent Farmers Market Pavilion is envisioned as a northern anchor to the Downtown Festival Park and Plaza. This feature would provide a protected location for the farmers market, and could be rented out for other events as a covered gathering space.



3. Lake Marion Greenway Downtown Trail Connection

The Lake Marion Greenway Master Plan suggested a connection to Downtown Lakeville. Given the Iberia Avenue extension, the surrounding residential development proposed, and the potential for a reorientation of the brewery block to improve the Downtown's entertainment district, Upper 208th Street W becomes an attractive location for a Greenway spur.

Short-term, the Greenway's Downtown connection could be achieved with lane painting and better signage along 208th Street W, where the Greenway currently crosses the railroad tracks. Long-term, as Iberia Avenue is extended and the surrounding medium-density residential gets developed, the Greenway Connection should be integrated into the developments as a trail between Iberia and Howland Avenues. A portion of the Howland Avenue and Upper 208th Street W intersection should function as a Greenway Gateway and Trailhead, where a kiosk can provide trail users with information about the Greenway and things to do in Downtown Lakeville. Adequate bike parking and amenities (water, repair station) should be situated here as well, so that riders can stop and rest or dismount their bikes and move about Downtown on foot.

4. Festival Street

The Lake Marion Greenway Downtown Trail Spur leads directly to the proposed Festival Street at the reoriented brewery block. Flanked by the breweries on the south and a proposed commercial building with a restaurant and rooftop patio to the north, this shared-use street is envisioned as an entertainment destination. The street could be closed to traffic using pop-up bollards and provide containment for outdoor beverage consumption during events. A stage could be set up for outdoor music during Pan-O-Prog or other festivals.

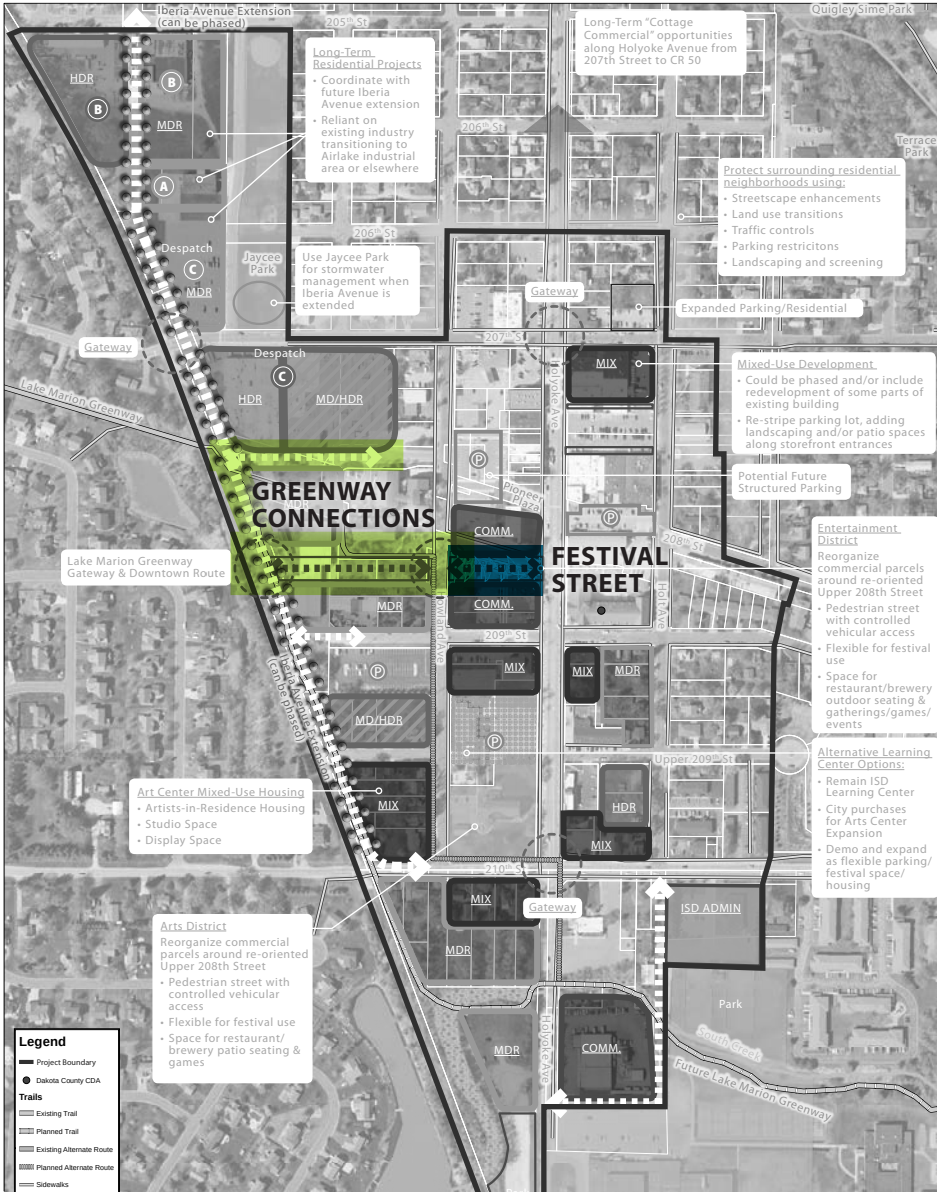


Figure 3.12 | Lake Marion Greenway Downtown Trail Connection and Festival Street

5. Integrate Public Art Throughout the Downtown

The arts can play a strong role in attracting people to Downtown Lakeville. The creation of an Arts District harnessing the energy of the Arts Center and its unique downtown setting could create a strong Downtown node focused on events, galleries, and exhibitions. Nationally, small historic downtowns have economic development strategies that focus on attracting resident craftspeople (jewelers, glass workers, wood workers, potters, metal smiths, sculptors, etc.) to drive retail shopping, support local restaurants, and aid in tourism. Downtown Lakeville can look to this model to help spur redevelopment or champion reinvestment and transform existing buildings into workshops, studios, and galleries.

Additionally, providing locations for more prominent displays of public art can also help to advance Downtown Lakeville's brand as an artistic destination. Public artworks can include street furniture, decorations, paving, and landmarks that can take many forms, including sculpture, decorative ironwork, mosaic installations, and murals. Public art brings creativity into everyday life, energizes public spaces, and provokes thoughtfulness and imagination. Creating an organized and well-promoted collection of artistic opportunities in the Downtown can attract a new audience. The Arts Center and partner organizations should be involved in implementation of the Downtown Development Guide as it relates to arts and economic development strategies.

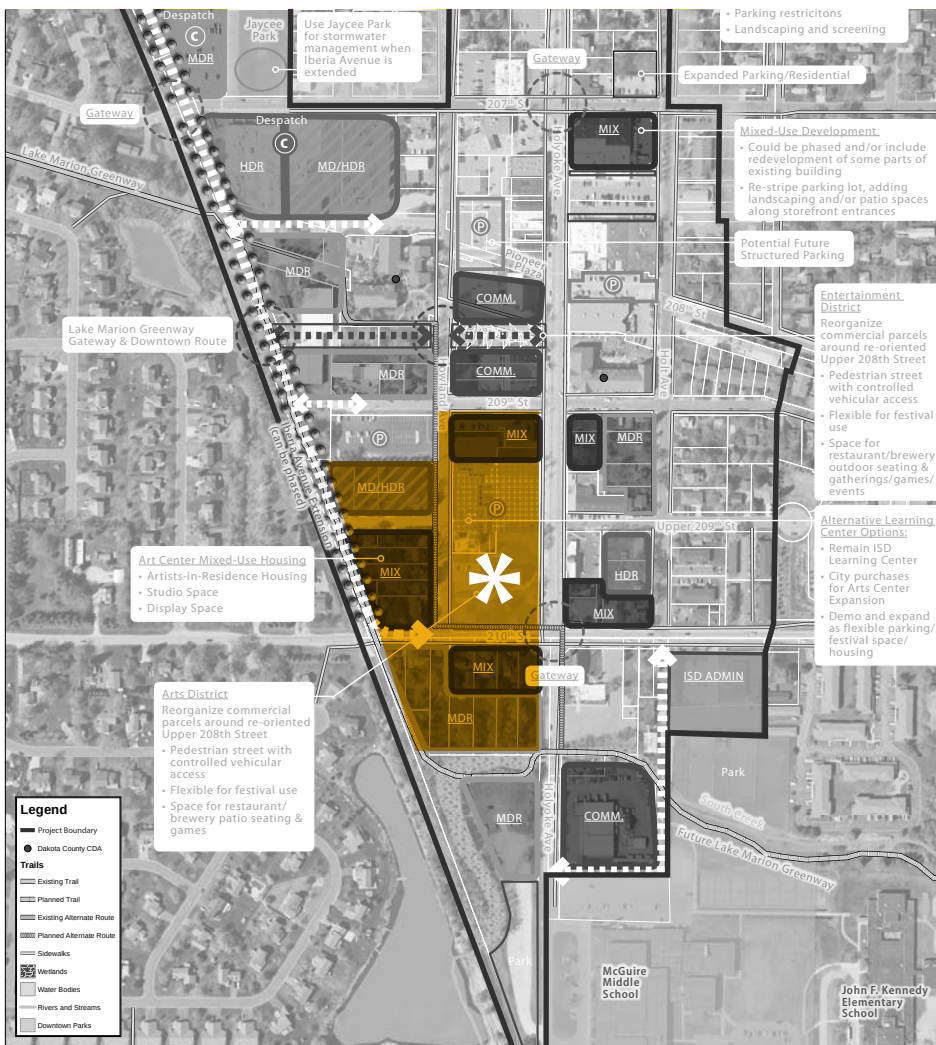


Figure 3.13 | Arts District



Redevelopment and Rehabilitation



Promote Downtown Businesses



Business Incubator Space



Downtown District Standards



Downtown Reinvestment Strategies

These recommended actions, policies, and procedures will guide commercial development and help to create a destination that sustains businesses and celebrates local heritage.

1. Establish Potential Performance Targets and Metrics

- » Changes in the number of households/businesses in the Downtown area
- » Attendance at community events and venues
- » Employment in Downtown
- » Property values, rents, and vacancy rates in the Downtown district
- » Pedestrian counts on key streets in the Downtown area

2. Consider a Special Overlay District for Downtown that Establishes Standards for:

- » Increased building height and density
- » Reduced parking ratios
- » Shared parking
- » Vertical mixed-use development
- » Pedestrian-oriented site and building design

3. Utilize Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Finance Tools

- » Clarify the criteria for the use of Tax Abatement and Tax Increment Financing
- » Explore a reduction or reallocation of special service district funds to provide for maintenance and ongoing improvements
- » Explore various opportunities for grant funding, loans, and technical assistance
- » Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- » Historic-related grants and incentives (State of Minnesota, Federal government)

4. Integrate Business Incubators & Recruitment

- » City, DLBA, and Chamber of Commerce to partner with ISD 194 or private landowners for space in the Downtown

5. Use Public Art as an Economic Generator

- » Install public art pieces and murals with an eye to attracting visitors and families
- » Encourage businesses to integrate art into their interior spaces and facilities
- » Encourage temporary or pop-up public art pieces and performances
- » Create partnerships and relationships between the City, the DLBA and the Arts Center and other organizations in the region
- » Build partnerships with local and regional educational institutions and art schools to involve students and faculty in the development of art projects in Downtown
- » Explore the creation of a fund or incentives to support temporary art performances during specific times, especially during local festivals
- » Pursue tenants geared to public art
- » Encourage developers to engage and work with artists throughout the design and planning for projects
- » Provide criteria to guide the design and placement of public art in the Downtown



4. IMPLEMENTATION

Keys to Implementation

The Downtown Development Guide is intended to be a relevant and useful tool for guiding public and private actions in Downtown. To serve as such a tool, the Guide must provide direction on the steps that are needed to convert ideas into realities. This chapter focuses on the keys to creating and sustaining the Downtown desired by Lakeville's residents and businesses.

The experience of other cities shows that several factors are important ingredients for the successful implementation of Downtown plans.

Patience:

The vision for Downtown cannot be implemented overnight. The time frame for implementation reflects its evolutionary nature; it looks forward over a period of years. The desired change often requires the patience to wait for the right things to happen, rather than making changes simply to be seen as doing something.

Commitment:

Commitment to this Development Guide and patience go hand-in-hand. This Guide does not simply seek to attract development to Downtown; it also seeks to move Downtown toward a vision for the future. There is a difference. Commitment to the Development Guide means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that achieve the vision, and to deter developments that do not fit. Not all of these decisions will be easy.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Implementation of this Development Guide requires a continuation of the public-private partnerships that have been found in Downtown Lakeville for many years. Both city government and businesses must actively work to achieve the vision for Downtown.

Financial Reality:

Implementing the Development Guide requires the careful investment of public funds, but the private side of the financial equation must not be overlooked. New development and existing businesses will pay for part of the improvements called for in the Guide. Implementing the Development Guide seeks to balance the investment in public initiatives with the creation of a financial environment that sustains businesses.

Strategic Investments:

If financial support for the Guide was unlimited, the need for strategic decisions would be less important. With limited funds, though, every expenditure is crucial. It is not possible to undertake immediately all of the initiatives described in this Development Guide. Needs and opportunities not contemplated in this Guide may arise in the future. Every investment must be evaluated for its impact on achieving the vision for the future of Downtown Lakeville.



Roles and Responsibilities

There is a temptation to give responsibility for implementation of the Downtown Development Guide to the City of Lakeville. Many of the powers and resources needed to undertake the actions described in this Guide are held by the City. The success of Downtown Lakeville cannot be made the sole responsibility of City government. Achieving the vision for Downtown requires ongoing collaboration of both public and private stakeholders. This section describes the roles and responsibilities of key parties.

Business and Property Owners

While the City influences the physical setting, Downtown remains a place of private activity. Individual businesses determine the type of goods and services available in Downtown. Individual businesses make decisions about how they operate. Property owners decide how to maintain and improve their buildings. Each of these factors plays a role in the long-term success of Downtown.

DLBA

The Downtown Lakeville Business Association (DLBA) has been an active participant in this project and previous planning for the Downtown. This involvement should continue into the implementation of the Guide.

Downtown is a collection of independent businesses. This independence adds to the character and quality of the Downtown environment. This same independence may also be a barrier to beneficial collective actions. The DLBA provides a means of organizing and engaging Downtown businesses. Roles for the DLBA include:

- » Provide a forum for discussion, consensus and action on issues of importance to the Downtown.
- » Advocate for City actions needed to undertake redevelopment projects and public improvements.
- » Provide business-oriented input to public decision making.
- » Collaborate with the City to attract businesses to Downtown.

City Council

The City Council sets the foundation for implementing this Guide consistent with the overall mission of the City. While other bodies (Planning Commission and EDC) play key roles in the implementation process, important redevelopment powers reside solely with the City Council. Among the powers that may be needed to undertake public initiatives in the Downtown are:

- » Allocate money in the annual budget to capital improvements in Downtown.
- » Approve the establishment of tax increment financing (TIF) districts.
- » Levy of special assessments for public improvements.
- » Issuance of general obligation bonds to finance redevelopment and improvement projects.





The City Council must be engaged in the vision for Downtown and prepared to take action as needed. Actions by the City Council can enhance the Downtown in other ways. Some examples include:

- » Community events to make Downtown a focal point
- » Keep civic institutions concentrated in Downtown
- » Avoid subsidizing projects that include businesses that should not be located in Downtown
- » Provide staff capacity and resources needed to plan and undertake projects in Downtown
- » Maintain the support of the Arts Center

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission has the lead responsibility for evaluating the application of land use controls needed to implement the Guide. The Planning Commission advises the City Council on issues involving the establishment of and compliance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Commission also reviews residential, commercial, and industrial development proposals and makes recommendations to the City Council according to the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan and requirements of the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Planning Commission plays a key role in integrating the Development Guide with the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) plays a role in shaping City participation in specific projects and support programs. The EDC assists with the development of a comprehensive plan designed to enhance the quality of, and provide balance to, the business and residential communities. The EDC seeks to encourage business development and promote long-term economic growth in Lakeville.

Arts Center Board

The Lakeville Area Arts Center Board will provide advice and guidance on aspects of the plans for Downtown that affect the Arts Center. The Board advises the City Council on matters pertaining to the promotion, development and accessibility of the arts. Its purpose is to promote the Arts Center as a community gathering place that fosters creative expression and offers a variety of artistic and educational opportunities.

School District

Independent School District 194 is an important stakeholder in Downtown. There are six public schools located within 1.5 miles of Downtown. The Area Learning Center is located in Downtown. If the School District decides to relocate this function, its current site becomes available for redevelopment.

Priority Actions

Update the Comprehensive Plan

It is essential that the Downtown Development Guide Update be considered in the Comprehensive Planning process. The “Land Use Controls” section of this chapter discusses options for using the Comprehensive Plan to implement this Guide.

Lakeville Mall

The key to the future of the Lakeville Mall is the Post Office. Action should focus on discussions with the Post Office about long-term plans. The desired outcome would be a plan to relocate the distribution functions and retain the retail functions in Downtown. The plan for postal facilities influences other decision making for the Lakeville Mall.

Residential Development

The City should encourage residential redevelopment, particularly in the western portion of the study area with a variety of medium and higher-density developments. Isolated industrial and single-family residential uses within the study area boundary offer the best opportunity for transition to higher-density residential uses. A mixture of apartments, condominiums, townhomes or row-houses, and even slab-on grade patio homes could create a broad mix of new construction housing offerings, all of which will help support Downtown businesses and bring continuous vitality to the Downtown.

Circulation

Iberia Avenue

The transportation planning process should be used to conduct a technical evaluation of extending Iberia Avenue to 210th Street. If the Iberia Avenue extension improves the local system, then a preliminary engineering study would be desirable. This study would better define the design and cost of the improvements. If the proposed extension is found to be undesirable, then the City must review land use plans and evaluate the implications for future development.

North Holyoke Avenue

The North Holyoke Avenue area, as well as other single-family neighborhoods surrounding Downtown, should receive special attention in the Comprehensive Plan update. This review should evaluate the need to change land use policies and regulations to encourage the long-term stability of these neighborhoods. Another implementation step is to determine the commitment to additional proposed sidewalk and streetscape improvements. If supported by the City, the next step is to explore timing and funding options.

Pedestrian Connections

The Guide identifies several public initiatives to improve pedestrian connections to Downtown. These initiatives should receive additional attention:

- » Proposed trail and bike lane improvements should be added to the Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan.
- » The wayfinding concept should be evaluated for application outside of the Downtown.
- » The design for a wayfinding system should be established.
- » Funding for these initiatives should be included in the City’s capital improvements program.



Land Use Controls

Implementation of the Downtown Development Guide will benefit from a review, assessment, and updating of land use controls relevant to Downtown Lakeville to support the future Downtown vision and initiatives. The Downtown Development Guide's Urban Design Framework envisions Downtown redevelopment that benefits from an increased mix of uses, flexibility in building heights and density, flexibility in parking solutions, and pedestrian-oriented design of buildings and sites. A preliminary review of existing land controls relevant to Downtown Lakeville has identified issues and opportunities related to potential inconsistencies, redundancies, and confusion with the various requirements.

The primary land use controls in place for the Downtown area are part of the City's zoning ordinance, including but not limited to the following:

- » zoning districts,
- » off-street parking requirements,
- » general yard, lot area and building requirements,
- » signs, and
- » fencing/screening/landscaping.

Downtown Lakeville is controlled by a wide range of existing zoning districts which include the following:

- » Commercial
 - » C-CBD, Commercial – Central Business District
 - » C-3, General Commercial District
 - » O-R, Office/Residential Transition District
- » Industrial
 - » I-CBD, Industrial – Central Business District
- » Residential
 - » RS-CBD, Residential Single-Family – Central Business District
 - » RST-1, Single and Two-Family Residential District
 - » RM-1, Medium-Density Residential District
 - » RH-1, Multiple-Family Residential District
- » PUD, Planned Unit Development District
- » P-OS, Public and Open Space District

In addition to the zoning ordinance, other land use controls currently applicable to Downtown Lakeville include the Historic Fairfield District of Downtown Lakeville Design Guidelines and the Corridor & Gateway Design Study (referenced in the Fencing/Screening/Landscaping section of the Zoning Ordinance) from 1999. As these two documents are guidelines rather than ordinances, they are not requirements today. It appears that some aspects of these guidelines may be incorporated into the zoning ordinances, such as building heights and outdoor seating areas in the C-CBD, while other aspects are not. This situation can cause confusion and inconsistencies between what is required and what is recommended but not required.

It is recommended that the City consider developing a Downtown overlay district that would apply to all properties in the Downtown area, or at least the Downtown

core area, while leaving the base zoning districts in place. An overlay district could address an increased mix of uses, flexibility in building heights and density, flexibility in parking solutions, and pedestrian-oriented design of buildings and sites. Other standards that could be considered include maximum building setbacks, minimum building frontages, and front facade building materials.

As part of creating a new downtown overlay district, it is likely that the three CBD districts (C-CBD, RS-CBD, and I-CBD) will also need to be updated to avoid redundancies and inconsistencies. Since these three zoning districts are only applicable to Downtown, it may be appropriate to address mixed uses within these base zoning districts rather than the new overlay district; essentially evolving the CBD districts into mixed-use districts.

Design guidelines for mixed-use and residential uses should be developed in concert with the Downtown zoning overlay district to ensure the desired character of development can be achieved.

In addition, the off-street parking, signs, fencing/screening/landscaping, and general yard, lot area and building zoning sections should be reviewed and updated as necessary to avoid redundancies and inconsistencies, as well as address existing references to the historic downtown district and corridor/gateway design guidelines.

Tools for Public Investments

The vision for Downtown will continue to require investment by the City of Lakeville. Downtown has benefited from City investment in public improvements. The City may find public benefit from further investment in Downtown through the participation in private redevelopment projects.

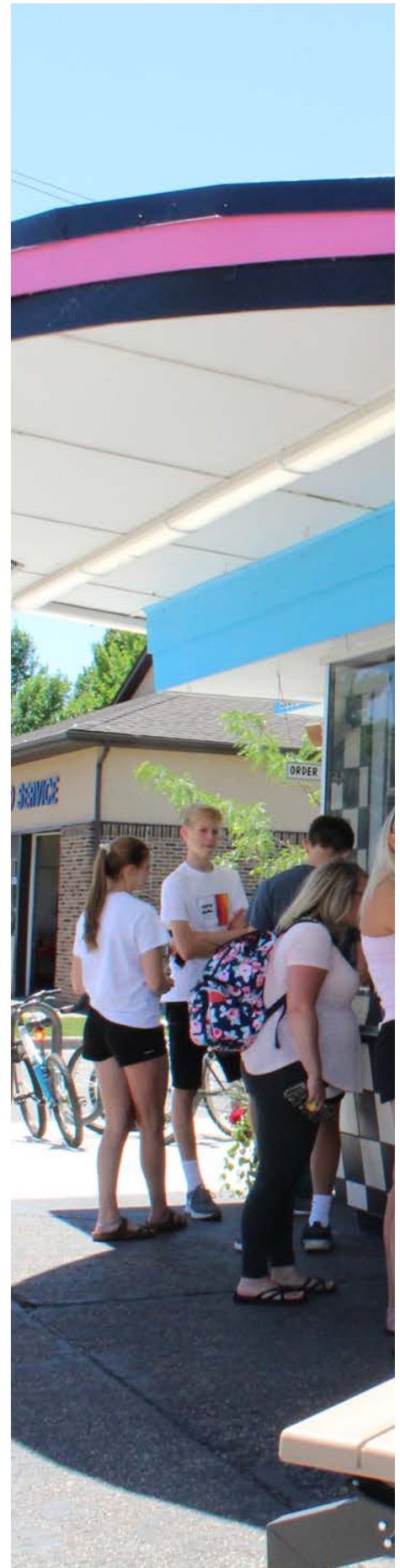
This section highlights the primary finance tools available to support public investments in Downtown, both through public improvements and participation in private redevelopment projects. The primary finance tools available to cities have not changed significantly over the years and are limited. This information is not intended to be an exhaustive guide, but rather a high level overview, a starting point, for further investigation. The use of these tools may be subject to requirements not discussed in this section. In addition, the statutes that govern these tools can be changed by the State Legislature.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.1794). TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. Through tax increment financing, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and statutory limitations. These complexities make it impractical to provide a thorough explanation of tax increment financing as part of this plan. Instead, this section highlights the use of TIF as it relates to the implementation of the plan.

Past Use of TIF

Tax increment financing has played a role in Downtown Lakeville for many years. The initial use of TIF was in 1980 with the establishment of Redevelopment Project No. 1 (Central Business District). It provided the legal framework for the establishment of TIF districts, the collection of tax increment revenues and the expenditure of funds.





The boundaries of Redevelopment Project Area No. 1 are geographically defined and generally encompass the Downtown and the adjacent surrounding commercial and residential areas. Project Area No. 1 defines target area for the use of TIF in and around the Downtown. The City has the authority to modify the boundaries as needed to meet its objectives.

The City has made effective past use of tax increment financing as a tool for improving Downtown. An example of a few of the past projects undertaken with TIF include:

- » Winsor Plaza Senior Housing Project
- » Main Street Manor Mixed-Use Project
- » Lakeville Senior Center
- » City-owned parking lot at 207th Street and Holt Avenue
- » Holyoke Avenue sidewalk between 202nd Street and 205th Street
- » Downtown Street Reconstruction Project
- » Lakeville Area Arts Center

These projects show the potential importance of TIF as a tool for implementing the Downtown Development Guide. Although changes in state law have prohibited some of these uses (i.e. governmental buildings), TIF has a variety of useful applications.

Future Use of TIF

Tax increment financing can be used to finance many actions needed to facilitate redevelopment, including land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. In addition, TIF creates a means to borrow money needed to pay for redevelopment costs. The City can issue general obligation bonds to finance certain qualified expenses. These bonds may be supported with tax increments and other legally available revenues.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the City controls the entire local property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the City, County and school district have independent authority to grant tax abatement. Acting alone, the City cannot generate the same amount of revenue from tax abatement as TIF. Nonetheless, tax abatement provides a valuable tool for the Downtown initiatives. Certain projects may be of sufficient importance to encourage County and/or school district abatement and achieve additional funding capacity.

Uses

Tax abatement in Minnesota works more like a rebate than an abatement. The City (and other units abating taxes) adds a tax levy equal to the amount of taxes to be abated. The revenue from the abatement levy can be returned to the property owner (developer) or retained by the City and used to finance development activities. Tax abatement can be used to finance key redevelopment actions in the Downtown; such as land acquisition, site preparation and public improvements.

Tax abatement is perhaps best suited as an incentive for reinvestment in existing property. While TIF deals with only the value from new development, abatement can apply to both new and existing value of property. This power provides the means to

encourage building rehabilitation and storefront improvements. The City could agree to abate all or part of the city share of taxes to encourage reinvestment tied to the plan for Downtown.

The statute grants the authority to issue general obligation bonds supported by the collection of abated taxes. The proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay for (1) public improvements that benefit the property, (2) land acquisition, (3) reimbursement to the property owner for improvements to the property, and (4) the costs of issuing the bonds.

Limitations

State law places several important limitations on the use of tax abatement:

- » In any year, the total amount of property taxes abated by a political subdivision under this section may not exceed (1) ten percent of the net tax capacity of the political subdivision for the taxes payable year to which the abatement applies, or (2) \$200,000, whichever is greater;
- » If one political subdivision declines to abate, then the abatement levy can be made for a maximum of 20 years. If the city, county and school district all abate, then the maximum period drops to 15 years;
- » Taxes cannot be abated for property located within a tax increment financing district.

The statutes governing tax abatement should be reviewed to understand other limitations and procedural requirements for tax abatement.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments. The use of special assessments for the majority of public improvements is governed by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429. Additional authority related to parking facilities comes from Minnesota Statutes, Section 459.14.

Uses of Special Assessments

A special assessment is a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. The method of spreading the assessments and the terms of the assessments are set by the City. The primary legal constraints on special assessments are:

- » The amount of the assessment cannot exceed the benefit the property receives from the improvement. The benefit is measured by the increase in property value.
- » The method assessment must be uniformly applied to the same type of property.

Special assessments can be used to finance all of the public improvements needed to implement the Guide. Eligible improvements include streets, sidewalks, street lighting, streetscape, and parking.

This authority provides a tool for borrowing money to finance public improvements. Chapter 429 conveys the power to issue general obligation improvement bonds to finance the design and construction of public improvements. Important factors in the use of improvement bonds include:

- » A minimum of 20% of the cost of the improvement must be assessed against benefited properties.
- » Beyond the 20% threshold, any other legally available source of municipal revenue may be used to pay debt service on improvement bonds.





- » Improvements bonds are not subject to any statutory debt limit.
- » Improvement bonds may be issued without voter approval.

Housing Improvement Area

The City has the power to establish a special taxing district to make improvements in areas of owner-occupied housing (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 428A.11 through 428A.21). This tool may have application both in Downtown and in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The housing improvement area is similar in concept to the special service district. It is a special taxing district that can be used to finance a variety of improvements. However, there is an important administrative difference with the housing improvement area: the City has the ability to assign the procedures for imposing fees and administering the area to another “authority,” such as a local HRA/EDA or the Dakota County CDA.

A housing improvement area is a defined collection of parcels. The area may cover a single redevelopment project or a broader section of the Downtown area.

The City has the power to levy a fee on the housing units in the area. This fee may work like a property tax or may be spread using another approach determined by the City. The fee can be collected through the property tax system.

Uses of Housing Improvement Area

The statute allows each city to define the nature of housing improvements. This tool can be used to finance any form of public improvement, including streetscape, parking and trails. A housing improvement area can also be used for private improvements that are part of new or existing housing developments.

Limitations for Housing Improvement Area

The City does not have the unilateral power to establish a housing improvement area. The process must be initiated by petition of property owners. In addition, the actions to establish the area and impose the fees are subject to veto by the property owners. These potential complications become moot if the area is set up at the beginning of the development process. Typically, there is a single property owner at this stage of the process. In existing neighborhoods, this tool allows residents to take the initiative to improve local parks.

The establishment of a new special service district after June 30, 2028, will require enactment of a special law authorizing the establishment.

General Property Taxes

General property taxes can be used to finance many of the services, improvements, facilities and development activities needed to implement the master plan. Taxes may be levied through the General Fund, to pay debt service on bonds, and as a levy for the EDA or HRA. The ability to use property taxes provides another resource for Downtown.

Other City Funds

While property taxes are the largest and most obvious source of City revenues, other funds may play a role in implementing the Guide. The use of other City funds should be factored into capital improvements planning and earmarked for Downtown. Some potential funding sources include:

- » Utility revenues. Monies from municipal utilities may be available to certain portions of Downtown improvement projects.
- » Park dedication fees. New development contributes money (or land) towards the creation of the local park system. Revenues from park dedication may be available to support park and trail improvements.
- » State aid for roads. The City receives money from the State for the construction and maintenance of roads. These roads must be part of the City's designated state aid street system.

Commercial Rehabilitation Loans and Grants

Through HRAs and EDAs, cities have broad powers to facilitate the revitalization of existing buildings. State law also creates specific statutory authority for loans by cities. The City may establish a program to make loans to finance the rehabilitation of small and medium-sized commercial buildings (Minnesota Statutes, Section 469.184). The program can be funded through the issuance of revenue bonds or obligations payable solely from all or a portion of the revenues derived from or other contributions to the program. Other revenues of the City (tax increment or tax abatement proceeds, for instance) could be used to assist the program.

Other Revenue Sources

The City should continue to be informed and pay attention to other revenue sources that exist or may become available from Dakota County, the State of Minnesota, the Metropolitan Council or other sources. Downtown redevelopment projects often rely on a myriad and ever-changing source of revenues and programs to achieve City objectives. There are examples of other cities within Dakota County successfully securing other revenue sources, including from the Metropolitan Council's Livable Community grant program funds. The grant program funds innovative redevelopment projects that efficiently link housing, jobs, services, and transit in an effort to create inspiring and lasting livable communities.

Achieving the Vision

Lakeville's Downtown has a rich past and a promising future. This Guide builds on the momentum from the 2006 Downtown Development Guide, with the goal of evolving Downtown into a vibrant and beloved destination for Lakeville's residents and visitors. This update seeks to leverage market opportunities for additional retail and restaurants, expanded housing options, and focuses public investments on key amenities and infrastructure to create a dynamic district for the community. For more information, or to play a part in helping to achieve the vision laid out in this plan, contact the Community and Economic Development Department:

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LAKEVILLE

Downtown Development Guide Update





MERLE HAY ROAD

GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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CHAPTER 1 – PROJECT BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

The primary goal for the Merle Hay Road Gateway is to create a unified vision for district transformation. The Gateway area is truly at the front door to the community and the current condition of the vacant hotel property and other underutilized properties in the area creates an eyesore and public safety concern that detracts from other potential in the district. The master plan will guide and shape the transformation of the district and create a strategy for implementation to allow this area to become a unique and thriving destination for the city of Johnston and the Des Moines metro area.

APPROACH

In order to implement the recommendations for the Merle Hay Road Gateway identified in the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan, a more detailed look at the area was required. Examination of this district can best be accomplished through the creation of a master plan for the Merle Hay Road Gateway area that can guide and provide a framework for development and redevelopment in and around what is a primary entrance to the community. The City of Johnston hired the consulting firm Hoisington Koegler Group, inc. to assist the city in the creation of a unified vision for the area. Key aspects of the planning process include establishing a better understanding of the existing conditions, exploring the possibilities for the area, and ultimately developing a master plan based on the critical evaluation, stakeholder and community feedback and the current market conditions for the study area.

The first step in the process was to integrate the findings from the Market Analysis Update developed by AECOM Economics completed in 2012. The information in the study was used to help establish a potential development program and appropriate uses based on market conditions post-recession. The redevelopment master plan also includes an integrated community and stakeholder engagement process to better align the goals and aspirations of the community with property owners in the district. A combination of one-on-one meetings with stakeholders including the owner of the hotel site, the owners of the car dealerships, smaller commercial land owners along the corridor, existing homeowners and land developers who own property in the Heard Gardens area, were conducted to identify long-term property owner interests and goals. In addition the planning process included numerous touch points with the Johnston Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and

city staff to better understand the goals for the district and specific dynamics surrounding land use, transportation, utilities and parks and recreation components related to the district.

Following the market analysis summary and listening sessions, a range of concept alternatives were developed, exploring various land uses, densities, development programs, levels of amenities and innovative design approaches to open space stormwater management. These alternatives were reviewed by city staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, stakeholder groups and unveiled at a community open house to gather additional feedback about the ideas generated. Synthesizing the input from the community and key stakeholders, a preferred master plan was developed that outlines the vision for gateway area in terms of land use, development form, transportation and parks and recreation improvements. The identification of practical, strategic tools and financial mechanisms needed for successful implementation were identified and vetted with the City's public finance consultant Northland Securities to better understand the viability of redevelopment. The consultant team also prepared a promotional brochure that can be used by the City and the Johnston Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO) to attract developer interest to the district.



Merle Hay Road in Johnston near the Interstate 35/80 interchange.

PROJECT AREA MAP

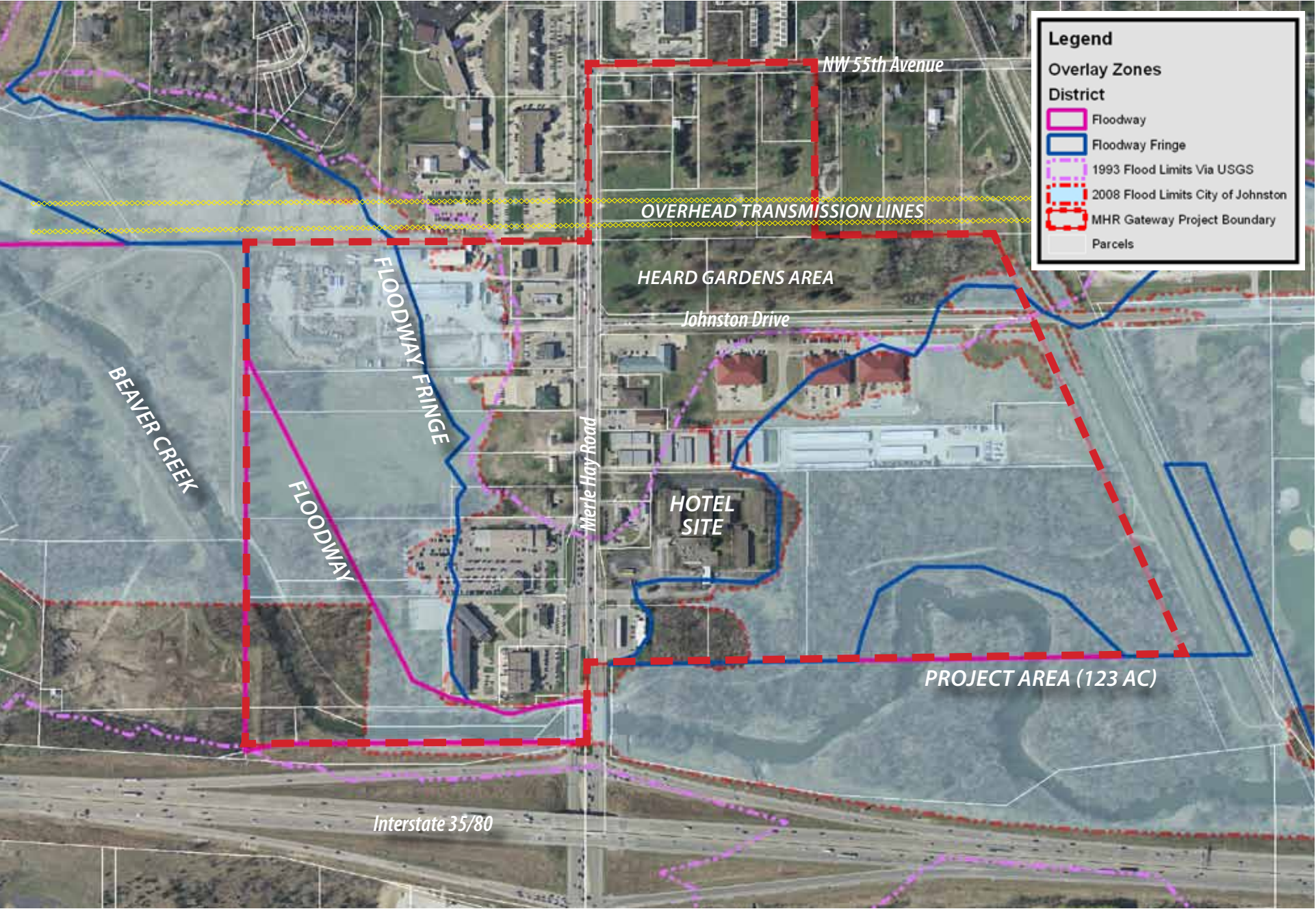


Figure 1.1 - Project Area Map

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, ADJACENCIES & CONFLICTS:

Through the combination of stakeholder listening sessions, working meetings with City Staff and conversations with the City of Johnston Planning and Zoning Commission numerous challenges to redevelopment became apparent, however, the districts location near the Interstate 35/80 interchange, the surrounding natural amenities and the City of Johnston's overall quality of life provide tremendous opportunities for redevelopment. The following is a summary of the issues and opportunities apparent in the redevelopment of the Merle Hay Road Gateway area:

Issues:

- There is no vision or continuity for the district. A master developer could be utilized in conjunction with a unifying redevelopment framework providing the necessary guidance and vision for the Gateway area.
- There is no identity or brand for the Gateway area and no continuity.
- Traffic on Merle Hay Road is a significant problem and must be solved for the district to be successful. Currently, people avoid this corridor as traffic backs up to the north waiting to get onto the interstate.
- The visibility into the site is poor, especially traveling westbound on Interstate 35/80. A coordinated effort between the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Department of Natural Resources and the City of Johnston will be needed.
- Floodplain impacts. Approximately half the study area is encumbered by floodplain from Beaver Creek and coordination with the DNR and the Army Corp of Engineers is needed for redevelopment planning.
- Not all sites are immediately ready for redevelopment. Relocation, demolition and site assembly will be needed to unlock the true value of land in the corridor.

Opportunities:

- There is an opportunity to create unique draw for the Des Moines metro area due to the central location and interstate interchange proximity.
- There is an opportunity to create a significant, marquee project at the hotel site to create a draw for the district and the Merle Hay Road corridor in Johnston.
- Unifying the entire stretch of Merle Hay Road from the Heard Gardens area to the hotel site to create a distinct and identifiable district.
- The redevelopment plan should take advantage of the natural surroundings. Potential opportunities include:

- » Higher end retail and restaurants with a strong orientation to the creek amenity;
- » Corporate office site along the creek;
- » Market rate to luxury rental properties with access to the natural amenities and trails;
- » Water recreation including canoe/kayak along the creek, and;
- » New hotel with a sustainable / ecological theme.
- Create a stronger connection to the regional recreational amenities. The current boating and water recreation at Saylorville Lake and the Beaver Creek Bike Trail are strong assets.
- Longer-term regional recreation opportunities to the east including the quarries and the floodplain area for the Des Moines River. Potential opportunities include regional recreation centers, conference centers and facilities to create a draw and economic engine tied to natural resources and recreation.

Additional Considerations:

- There should be a balance between achieving as much density, intensity and value on the buildable sites of the district as possible in order to preserve and enhance the existing natural resource areas and transform other flood prone areas into better functioning active and passive park uses, stormwater treatment and restoration areas.
- Consider the long-term viability of the auto dealerships in the corridor. The Merle Hay Road corridor used to be defined as the Merle Hay Auto Mile, but over the last ten years more and more dealerships are relocating the west metro.
- Reaching out to larger metro area employers as potential end uses for the hotel site should be explored.



The vacant hotel and diner create an eyesore and nuisance problem today, but represent a strong redevelopment opportunity.

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES MAP



Figure 1.2 – Issues and Opportunities Map

IDENTIFYING REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Currently there are multiple properties that are underutilized within the district. The hotel site is the prime example, and when combined with the smaller parcels immediately adjacent to the site on Merle Hay Road a stronger opportunity for redevelopment exists. The Budget Storage facility immediately north of the hotel property also fits in the category of potential site assembly. The existing Quik Trip has expressed interest in updating or redeveloping their property with a newer facility, and potentially slightly expanding their site. This project should be considered with redevelopment of the hotel property.

West of Merle Hay Road, the Christenson property has development potential on the upper tier of the property out of the floodplain. The industrial property within the floodplain should be relocated and the entire floodplain area below the commercial businesses as an opportunity to develop into both active and passive park uses.

The Heard Gardens area is the most readily available for redevelopment, but is constrained by a large transmission line bisecting the site east to west. The northern portion of this area possesses a handful of older single family homes intermixed with land currently owned by a prospective development company. Areas along Merle Hay Road are likely candidates for earlier redevelopment.



A handful of single family homes remain on the northern portion of the Heard Gardens site.



Portion of the Budget Storage facility east of Merle Hay Road are located within the Floodfringe and are susceptible to flooding.



The industrial area below the upper tier of commercial businesses on Merle Hay Road is not seen as a long-term use for the district.



The Heard Gardens area is most readily available for redevelopment and land abutting Merle Hay Road will likely develop earlier.

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES MAP

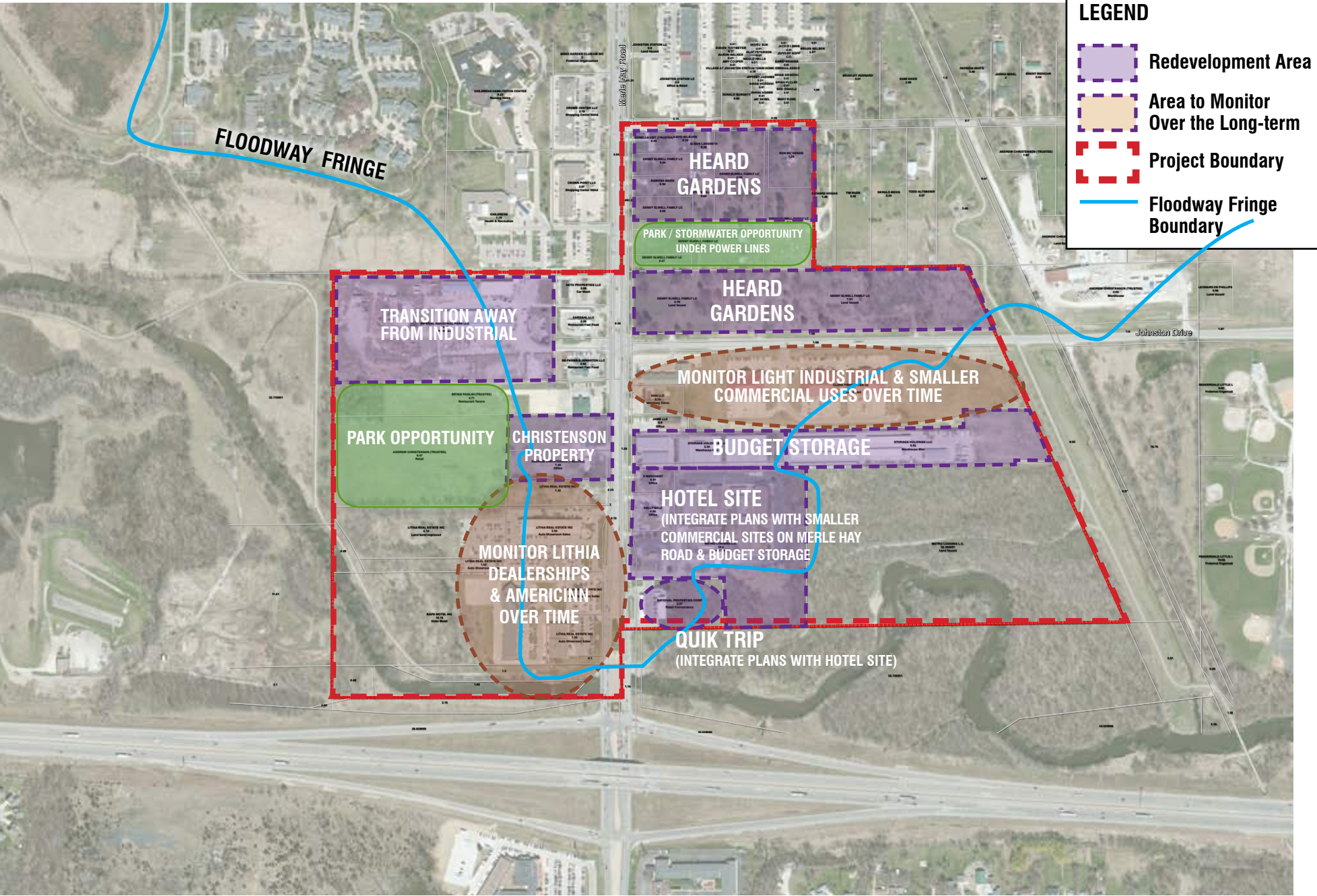


Figure 1.3 - Redevelopment Opportunities Map

CHAPTER 2 – EXISTING CONDITIONS

HISTORY AND CONTEXT:

Merle Hay Road is a significant north/south corridor in the Des Moines Metropolitan Area. The Gateway area is at the extreme southern end of corridor in Johnston. The roadway connects to the regional recreational amenities at Saylorville Lake and Camp Dodge on to the north and the Cities of Urbandale and Des Moines to the south. Historically, the corridor was identified as the “Merle Hay Auto Mile” and emerged as the premier commercial corridor in the mid-century with a heavy focus of automobile dealerships and the Merle Hay Mall as a primary destination. The corridor is the central spine for the eastern half of the City of Johnston. Bound on the west by Beaver Creek and the associated natural area and to the east by the expansive floodplain of the Des Moines River, development potential is limited surrounding the study area influencing what can be developed in this area from a market perspective.



The industrial area below the upper tier of commercial businesses on Merle Hay Road is not seen as a long-term use for the district.

As previously identified in the 2030 Land Use Plan, improvements to the roadway, the bridge over Beaver Creek and the addition of community entry signage and landscaping improvements create an attractive entrance to the community. The expanded roadway width seeks to accommodate the large volumes of traffic entering and exiting Interstate 35/80. Beyond the infrastructure and aesthetic improvements over the last 10 years however, the presence of the vacant, deteriorating hotel and the general scattered nature of businesses in the area creates a less than desirable “front door” entrance into Johnston along the Merle Hay Road.

The currently boarded up hotel has outlived its useful life and needs to be demolished. The complex of metal storage and service/warehouse buildings on the west side of Merle Hay Road, just below the tier of frontage businesses is also not viewed as a long-term land use, and the same can be said for the Budget Storage facility just north of the hotel site. Additionally, there are a combination of older commercial buildings that are too small to accommodate change, some are former houses, and should be replaced over time by larger, more permanent commercial uses reflective of the corridors scale and significance. The Merle Hay Road Gateway will always have more of an auto orientation adjacent to the roadway and will likely see larger scale users in the future.

Redevelopment of the Merle Hay Road Gateway area is complicated due to a number of factors including multiple property ownerships, the designated floodplain that largely surrounds the area, periodic flooding, and market conditions. Flood-prone areas greatly impact the land use pattern as roughly half of the total study area is encumbered with floodplain and the combination of flood forest canopy limits the viability of certain parcels to see significant future real estate investments.

CONTEXT MAP:

JOHNSTON 2030 LAND USE MAP

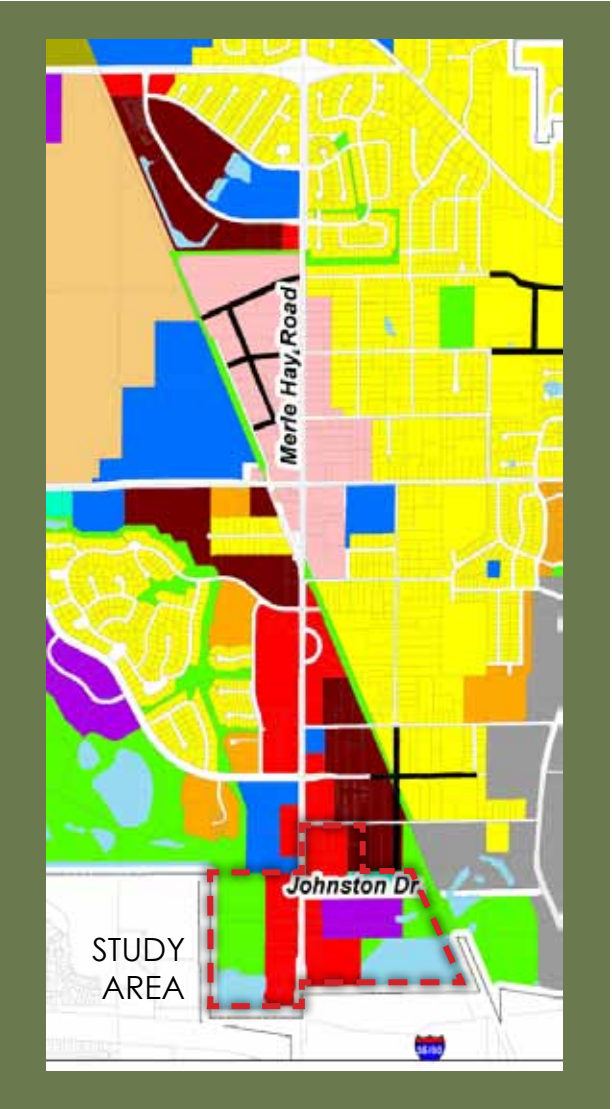


Figure 4.1 - Current Planned Land Use Map

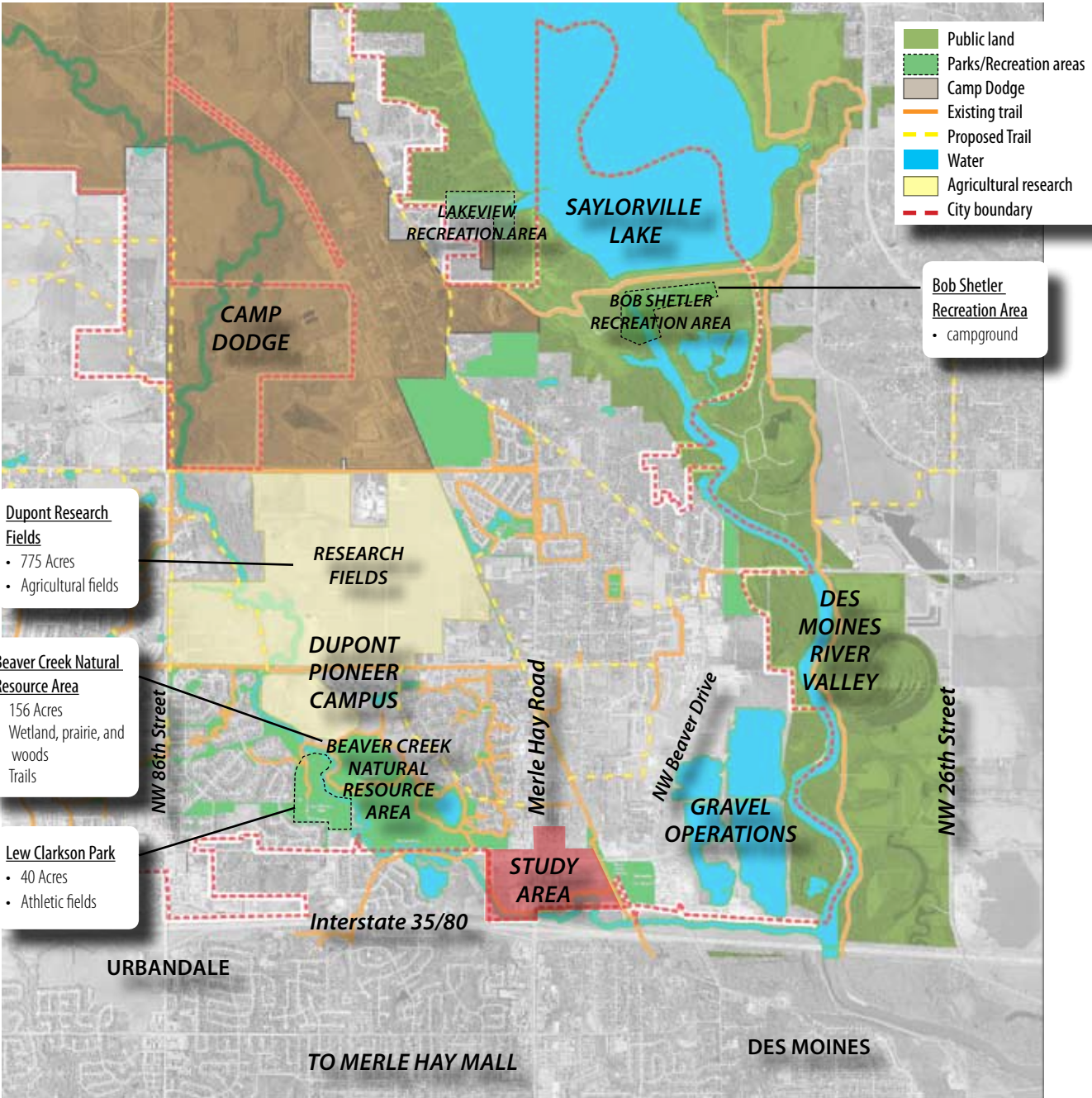


Figure 4.2 - Context Map - Highlighting the surrounding regional and city recreation areas.

EXISTING LAND USES

Commercial:

The Lithia family of auto dealerships (Audi, Acura and Volkswagen) anchor the larger scale commercial users in the district and are envisioned to remain for the long-term in the corridor. The recently upgraded AmericInn Hotel is situated behind the dealership on the west side of Merle Hay Road. Smaller retail and service uses line the corridor to the north and include fast food and fast casual restaurants, a veterinary hospital, car wash, used car lot and a Quik Trip gas station at the off-ramp of Interstate 35/80.

Industrial:

There are two areas of industrial use in the district today. A newer, multi-tenant light industrial set of buildings exist along the southern side of Johnston Drive. These buildings have commercial front toward Johnson Drive and due to topography, walk out to the south with outdoor storage behind. To the west of Merle Hay Road below the commercial tier of uses a larger area of metal sheds, contractor yards and outdoor storage exists. This area is periodically flooded and possess numerous environmental concerns and is not seen as appropriate long-term land use in this location.

Office:

Smaller professional office spaces are more or less integrated with multi-tenant, commercial type buildings near the intersection of Johnston Drive and Merle Hay Road. Limited office development exists in the study area today.

Single Family Residential:

Currently a few, scattered single family homes remain in the study area, most of which are older and in disrepair and some have been converted to commercial uses on the southern end of the district. Single-family housing exists along Merle Hay Road north of the Heard Gardens site and range in size and depth, a common pattern on the eastern side of the community. Assembly of these properties is anticipated over time to create a more unified redevelopment pattern for the area.



The Dragon Car Wash and other smaller fast food and fast casual restaurants line Merle Hay Road on the west.



Multi-tenant light industrial buildings with outdoor storage exist south of Johnston Drive.



The former hotel and diner building need to be demolished to create redevelopment interest in the corridor.

Open Space:

The natural area surrounding Beaver Creek and the trail corridor running along the creek are a true asset to the district. However, today the wooded area behind the hotel does not feel safe as it is enclosed and isolated from view. The creek provides and water recreation potential and scenic views. The trail connects to the regional system to the south and east under interstate 35/80 and back to the northwest of the community and neighboring park amenities such as Terra Lake and Lew Clarkson Park.

TRANSPORTATION

Merle Hay Road is the signature street for district and sees heavy traffic at peak times in the morning and evening and is often thought of as a corridor to avoid. However the long distances between interchanges to the east and west funnel traffic to the interchange at Interstate 35/80. Saylorville Lake, Camp Dodge and the Dupont Pioneer Headquarters are major destinations in the region and traffic through the corridor will continue to exist. Today the roadway is a five lane road section with two lanes of traffic in both directions and a shared center turn lane to allow cross or left turning movements to individual business on either side of the corridor. As traffic volumes continue to grow overtime, access management strategies may be needed to enhance safety improve traffic flow. The investigation of sequenced signal timings could aid in managing traffic both north and south of the Interstate 35/80 interchange.

Truck traffic also exists in the district as gravel trucks and tractor trailers navigate Merle Hay Road and Johnston Drive to reach the quarries to the east and the industrial district along NW Beaver Drive. The potential exists east of the study area for an additional interchange at NW 26th Street, while this isn't planned at this time, it's construction could alleviate truck traffic through the Gateway area.



A small collection of single family homes still remain in the Gateway area west of Merle Hay Road in the Heard Gardens area.



The Quik Trip and Lithia dealerships have both expressed interest in upgrades to their properties during the planning process.



Additional roadway connectivity should be considered in the district, particularly from the hotel site north to Johnston Drive.

MARKET SUMMARY:

During the summer of 2012, AECOM Economics was hired by the City of Johnston to update the real estate market analysis for the Merle Hay Road Corridor originally conducted in 2007, in order to examine the impact of the recession and adjust the recommendations to fit the current market demands and potential for the corridor. The analysis revisited key findings from the 2007 study to both frame the pace of regional recovery from the recession and to place greater emphasis on the southern portion of the corridor. The Market Analysis update focused efforts on the following elements:

- The inclusion of key stakeholder insights on district transformation;
- Demographic and economic analysis for the southern Merle Hay Road Gateway, and;
- Market analysis for the office, retail and residential segments as well as commentary on potential re-use opportunities for the vacant hotel site.

Findings from the market study are summarized below, organized around the general real estate implications for the district and the corresponding market potential and considerations for individual land uses. Key findings from the market study include:

GENERAL REAL ESTATE IMPLICATIONS:

- The population in Johnston doubled from 2000 to 2010 with a significant increase in affluent, well-educated households.
- Low unemployment rates, a strong GDP per capita and a strong financial sector are indicators of a positive business environment in Johnston.
- Modest amounts of retail combined with high incomes suggest that residents are spending their retail dollars elsewhere. There is potential to capture some of that retail by developing new destination retailer areas.
- There has been a steady increase of community, neighborhood and big box retail in the Des Moines area between 2002-2012.



Merle Hay Road is anticipated to remain a strong commercial corridor.



The hotel site possesses a great redevelopment opportunity to transform the district into a unique destination.



The industrial areas create an environmental concern as portions of the buildings and storage areas are located in the floodfringe.

Hotel Site

- The hotel site has potential due to its adjacent interstate access but lacks good visibility from the highway.
- There is potential to reuse the site for senior housing, office/flex, or retail although concerns about noise were addressed when considering housing.
- There is potential to link the site to adjacent bike trails to improve connectivity to outdoor recreation.

Housing

- Johnston's residential housing sales have maintained stability even through the recession and the median home values grew slightly between 2007 and 2012.
- With limited land opportunity and Johnston's construction of multi-family units lagging behind the regional trend, the city should consider opportunities for higher density residential to use along the corridor.
- Residential markets are expected to gradually shift towards owner-occupied units including condominiums and senior housing.
- Recreational amenities, such as parks and trails are critical in developing a scenario for housing.

Retail

- Pull Factor: Even though Johnston has seen growth, its retail potential versus sales revenues are weak, with a pull factor slightly above 0.5, indicating dollars are leaving Johnston to adjacent communities.
- Johnston's retail revenues are significantly below its spending potential in all retail categories, with the exception of food stores.
- There is potential to make better use of recreational assets in the area, including parks and trails, which are both currently underutilized.

Office

- Office inventory is slowly expanding in all areas but the Western suburbs and the Des Moines Central Business District (CBD) have seen the most growth.



The light industrial buildings south of Johnston Drive are anticipated to remain until the last stages of redevelopment phasing.



The industrial areas below the commercial businesses on Merle Hay Road are not seen as a long-term land use.



There is some vacancy within the corridor today.

CHAPTER 3 – VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Merle Hay Road Gateway Master Plan is a dynamic document. It is not a set of strict “rules” but instead, a flexible framework that guides decisions about redevelopment. The plan addresses both public initiatives from infrastructure to park improvements and physical redevelopment projects to be undertaken by the private sector. It supports and shapes regulations; it accommodates dreams and aspirations; it recognizes reality; it prioritizes projects and ideas; it holds the community accountable; it creates a new age development district at a key gateway for Johnston; and it communicates what is desired. The plan is a valuable tool that is intended to be embraced and actively used by the community.

The vision for the Merle Hay Road Gateway is drawn from the City’s comprehensive plan and the current master planning effort. It defines what the Merle Hay Road Gateway is to become. It provides a basis and a framework from which the plan and supporting strategic actions can be identified. The vision sets the tone for a future direction for the district while the guiding principles help establish a path that results in a plan that “fits” with the character of Johnston and reasserts the significance of this critical gateway to the community.

The guiding principles should be used as a yardstick on an ongoing basis as the primary filter for determining what projects and initiatives are appropriate and desired. Together with the Merle Hay Road Gateway vision, the guiding principles become the critical elements for measurement and assessment of initiatives and results.

VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE MERLE HAY ROAD GATEWAY

The Vision and Guiding Principle for the Gateway area serve many important functions:

- They orient the community to the future, even to a future that is twenty years distant.
- They require imagination, recognizing that the direction they set will be the reality of the future.
- They look to current conditions and community traditions for clues to the appropriate future.
- They are based on a shared understanding of what the community desires for itself.

- They will be used as tools for evaluation of proposals, projects, ideas and future directions.
- They will be an anchor during conflict, a way of finding common ground and shared values.
- They become a basis for coordination and cooperation.
- They are a source of energy and enthusiasm for maintaining a commitment to the future of the Merle Hay Road Gateway in Johnston.

VISION:

Merle Hay Road is a significant gateway to the community off of Interstate 35/80. The roadway, bridge, entry signage and landscaping improvements create an attractive entrance and accommodate large traffic volumes due to the proximity of the interstate. However the presence of the vacant, deteriorating hotel and the scattered nature of businesses in the area create a less than desirable “front door” entrance to Johnston.

The vision for the Merle Hay Road Gateway is to become a unified district with a mix of commercial, retail, residential and new park uses. The hotel site provides an opportunity to create a unique and memorable development at the front door to the community. A development that is truly a destination, either as a specialized retail destination, new hotel and conference center or a corporate office headquarters would serve as a catalyst for transformation.

The Merle Hay Road Gateway vision also suggests a new, more urban neighborhood will be created with diversity in development and housing form, types, target market and price points. A more compact development pattern with pedestrian focused streets and a high level of public realm enhancements will accompany new development. A new network of urban streets, infrastructure and public spaces will form the backbone of a new urban village highlighted by a new community park and a stronger connection to the natural surroundings of the trail, floodplain forest and Beaver Creek Natural Resource Area. The Merle Hay Road Gateway will be respectful of the natural environment and balance new development with enhanced stormwater treatment and habitat and flood protection.

The Merle Hay Road Gateway is looking toward the future, becoming a true model for transformation as well as maintaining the high quality of life that already exists in Johnston today.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Create coordinated and harmonious development of functionally related uses including commercial, retail, entertainment, office, higher density residential, and public facilities, including a new community park.
- Ensure quality design and superior aesthetics for development.
- Enhance and improve the image of the Johnston along the Interstate 35/80 corridor
- Create a unique destination within the Des Moines area metro.
- Possess a progressive image for redevelopment while maintaining a sense of the community heritage and environmental stewardship.
- Achieve redevelopment along the Merle Hay Road Gateway that includes a mix of uses rooted in today's market reality.
- Grow the community's tax base.
- Consider new forms of housing such as apartments, condominiums, townhomes, villas, live / work and senior housing blended together to create a new, urban neighborhood.
- Create a new community park on the west side of Merle Hay Road with unique activities that can become a draw for the entire community and surrounding region and embrace the natural environment of Beaver Creek.
- Minimize adverse effects of neighboring uses.
- Provide adequate provisions for open space and floodplain protection / management.
- Develop a diversified and legible transportation network including a strong focus on a fluid automobile environment, strong pedestrian networks and the opportunity for expanded transit within the district.
- Transform Merle Hay Road into a functionally and aesthetically pleasing "community street" with enhanced landscaping, lighting and signage, and necessary access management.
- Maintain a pedestrian friendly environment along streets throughout the community.
- Maintain, upgrade and implement new infrastructure in the district to include buried utilities, new roadway connections and cross-parcel access opportunities.
- Institute a "complete street" design philosophy for new neighborhood streets to create an enhanced public realm through appropriate street design which includes, on-street parking, tree lined boulevards and the integration of bike facilities where appropriate.

- Enhance pedestrian and vehicular circulation throughout the district by adding new streets and a complete network of sidewalks and trails.
- Build on the existing streetscape character and entry monuments to create new landmarks and gateways to better signal the arrival into Johnston and the Merle Hay Gateway District.
- Establish a theme or brand for the Merle Hay Road Gateway District to provide long-term economic viability and to instill confidence in property owners and developers.
- Utilize financial incentives to begin and sustain improvements in the District, such as a tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement, a revolving loan fund, special service districts and other economic incentives.

From the Johnston 2030 Comprehensive Plan:

Merle Hay Road Gateway Policies:

Actively promote and support redevelopment efforts in the Merle Hay Road Gateway that improve the function and appearance of the area consistent with the 2030 Land Use Plan.

Merle Hay Road Action Steps:

MHRGA.1.

Support immediate demolition of the vacant hotel/restaurant building and redevelop with office and other high traffic commercial uses.

MHRGA.2.

Encourage and support the consolidation of small parcels to create larger scale development opportunities.

MHRGA.3.

Investigate the long-term construction of new loop roads on either side of Merle Hay Road to clearly define and separate redevelopment areas from the floodplain area.

MHRGA.4.

Examine the potential of creating access to the Beaver Creek Natural Area from the Merle Hay Road Gateway.

CHAPTER 4 – REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

THE APPROACH TO REDEVELOPMENT

The Redevelopment Master Plan for the Merle Hay Road Gateway is described in detail throughout this chapter, but can be summarized with the “Big Ideas” driving the transformation of the area over the next twenty years. These “Big Ideas” are encapsulated in the Master Plan Approach Diagram (Figure 4.1). The initiatives outlined in the master plan are focused around three primary geographic areas within the study area, the East Merle Hay District (former hotel area), the West Merle Hay District and the Heard Gardens District. These areas each have unique land uses and urban design aesthetics that are detailed as a part of subsequent areas in the master plan. The primary elements at the foundation of the redevelopment master plan are to:

- Create a unique gateway to the eastern portion of the community along the City’s most identifiable corridor;
- Develop destination oriented commercial redevelopment project on the hotel site with an outdoor recreation theme;
- Establish a vision for a long-term housing village with mix of higher density housing options including townhomes, apartments and condominiums;
- Transform the underutilized industrial properties into a destination community park and open space areas;
- Create a destination community park with unique program elements such as a multi-use facility, skate park, bmx track, dog park and trailhead facility as well as multi-purpose fields for soccer and other uses;
- Embrace the Beaver Creek natural area by making strong pedestrian connections to the regional trail and water oriented amenities;
- Create a district stormwater treatment strategy for the whole Merle Hay Road Gateway area the allows for enhanced stormwater storage and filtration;
- Maintain necessary floodplain and habitat protection in balance with logical development patterns.

A COLLECTION OF DISTRICTS

The redevelopment Master Plan organizes similar land uses and urban design relationships into three distinct districts. These districts: the **East District** (the hotel site and areas east of Merle Hay Road and south of Johnston Drive), the **West District** (the area west of Merle Hay Road, and **Heard Gardens District** (the area east of Merle Hay Road and Johnston Drive), all have distinctly unique characteristics. Many of the proposed development projects are of similar use, size and scale and overall aesthetics. The following is a summary of the unique characteristics each district exemplifies:

East District:

- Hotel site redeveloped with destination retailers, potentially targeting outdoor recreation enthusiasts and natural foods grocer as anchor tenants.
- Either Quik Trip remains in current configuration or site is redeveloped into restaurant use.
- Long-term redevelopment mini storage, smaller scale commercial and light industrial uses to a more urban pattern of development including mixed use and high density housing such as apartments and condominiums and luxury townhomes.
- Modifications to the creek alignment to expand the storage capacity for flooding events and to open views to the site from I-80. Additional areas for canoe and kayak launches and expanded park areas developed with creek modifications.
- Additional street connections between Merle Hay Road and Johnston Drive through the district. Streets should be designed with a high level of pedestrian amenities and features.

REDEVELOPMENT APPROACH DIAGRAM

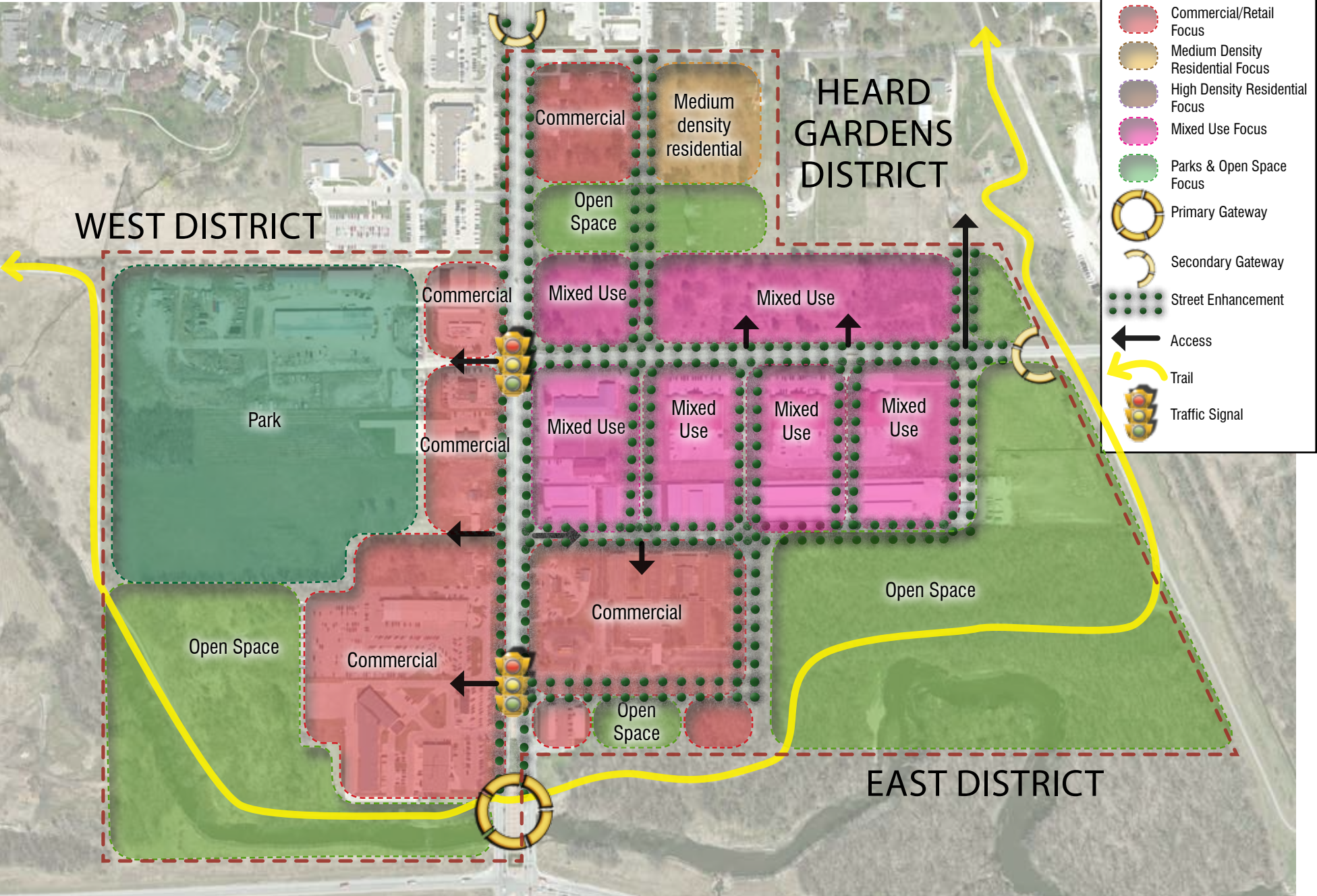


Figure 4.1 - Redevelopment Approach Diagram

West District:

- Auto dealerships and AmericInn Hotel remain.
- Auto dealerships redevelop new building on site.
- Auto dealership expands parking on lot to the north.
- New commercial / restaurant development along Merle Hay Road.
- Community park below the commercial businesses on Merle Hay Road with multi-functional recreational facility, soccer fields, trailhead and terrain park/skate park/technical riding course for active recreation enthusiasts.
- Second entrance to the community park from Merle Hay Road.

Heard Gardens District:

- Commercial uses fronting on Merle Hay Road.
- New north/south street connection between Johnston Drive and NW 55th Street.
- Townhomes to the north and south of the of the power lines behind commercial development along Merle Hay Road.
- Stormwater treatment and trail connections located under power lines within easement.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE

Today, the Merle Hay Road Gateway district comprises approximately 118,000 square feet of commercial / retail / office space (not including the vacant hotel property), 189,000 square feet of industrial / light industrial use in mostly metal sheds, and ten single-family housing units. The master plan assumes a 20 year (+/-) transformation to the area that will see and increase to the existing commercial /retail / office square footage by approximately 230,000 sq. ft. and the total housing units in the district increases by over 600 units.

The implications on the community's tax base are significant. The existing total assessed tax value of the 123 acre study area is \$21,885,990, with numerous buildings in disrepair and too small to accommodate significant growth beyond what exists today. The Merle Hay Road Gateway Master Plan indicates a potential new tax base for the area to reach nearly \$75,950,718 based on the combination of the approximate range of new development (Table 4.1) and existing development planning to remain within the district. This increase in tax base is nearly four times the existing value of the area.

Merle Hay Road Gateway Master Plan Development Summary:
Table 4.1

Use	Sq. Ft.	Units
COMMERCIAL / RETAIL	+/-	+/-
Commercial / Retail	142,000	
Retail / Restaurant	10,000	
Convenience Retail	5,000	
MIXED USE		
Ground Level Retail	40,000	
Upper Level Off. / Prof. Service	80,000	
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL		
Apartment / Condominium		490
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL		
Townhomes		138
PARK / OPEN SPACE		
Community Park		
Total:	277,000	628

Merle Hay Road Gateway Master Plan - Tax Base Comparison:
Table 4.2

District	Total Assessed Value (2012)	Total Estimated Value
East District	\$9,950,000	\$53,724,738
West District	\$11,236,220	\$11,946,000
Heard Gardens	\$699,770	\$10,279,979
Total:	\$21,885,990	\$75,950,718

REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN



Legend

- Study Area (123 acres)
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Parks
- Open Space

Figure 4.2 - Redevelopment Master Plan

COMMERCIAL

The Merle Hay Road Gateway maintains a commercial presence on both sides of the roadway with a combination of new and maintaining existing development. At the hotel site, the goal is to attract a designation retailer with a unique development niche to create a strong landmark and defining project at the gateway to Johnston. Targeted uses include outdoor recreation / sporting goods stores such as REI, natural food store, restaurants with a strong orientation to Beaver Creek and trail and other, smaller associated retail uses. The master plan shows an integrated development pattern with an expanded Quik Trip with a reconfigured orientation toward Interstate 35/80.

To the west, the existing Lithia car dealerships remain along with the AmeriInn Hotel. The Lithia dealership has plans for a new building in the same location as the former Infiniti dealership building, and north of the existing Volkswagen dealership, a new parking lot could be added to increase inventory capacity on property already owned by Lithia. A similar pattern of smaller scale single user commercial buildings would continue to the north on the west side of Merle Hay Road at the Christenson property.

A combination of single and multi-tenant commercial buildings are planned along the Merle Hay Road frontage in the Heard Gardens area with the addition of a new public street to the east, separating the commercial uses from the planned residential adjacent. Vertical mixed use including ground-level retail, and second or third story office is planned for the southeast intersection of Johnston Drive and Merle Hay Road.



LAND USE: COMMERCIAL



Figure 4.3 - Commercial Areas

ALTERNATIVES FOR HOTEL SITE

NEW HOTEL, CONFERENCE CENTER & RESTAURANTS

The possibility exists for a new hotel, conference center and event space at the vacant hotel site. There is a lack of new conference center facilities in this portion of the Des Moines metro area, and the natural setting along Beaver Creek and the proximity to interstate access make this site a strong candidate for a new hotel. Envisioned as a 100-150 room hotel with conference space, pool and a restaurant this facility would have a strong orientation to both the interstate and Beaver Creek. The site also holds potential for stand-alone retail along Merle Hay Road and restaurants overlooking the creek.

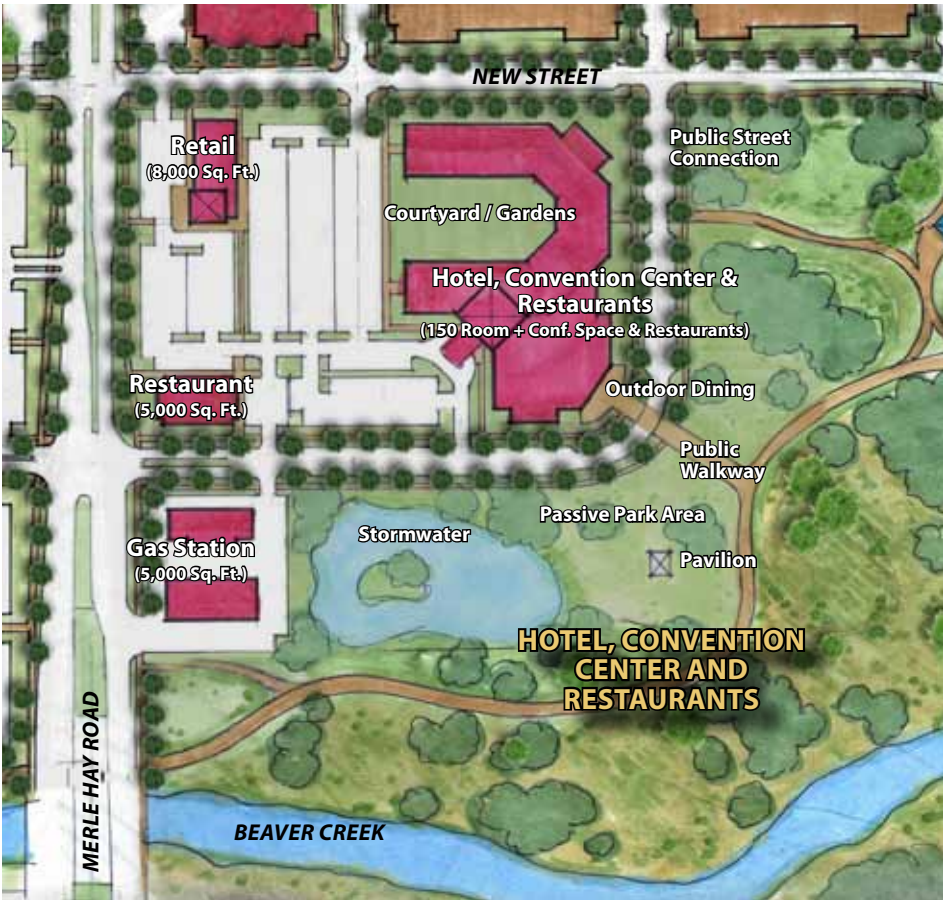


Figure 4.4 – Alternative Hotel, Convention Center and Restaurant Concept for the Hotel Site.

CORPORATE OFFICE HEADQUARTERS

Another alternative development type for the hotel site is a corporate office user, or a corporate headquarters. This alternative would likely yield a 3-5 story office building and utilize structured parking to accommodate the parking needs. The orientation of the building should have prominent views toward Interstate 35/80 and the Beaver Creek natural area. Again, the Quik Trip gas station could be incorporated into the redevelopment plans and the possibility exists for smaller commercial buildings, such as restaurants and service commercial uses, to locate along Merle Hay Road. Pedestrian connections continue from Merle Hay Road and the housing village to the north and link to the existing trail along Beaver Creek.

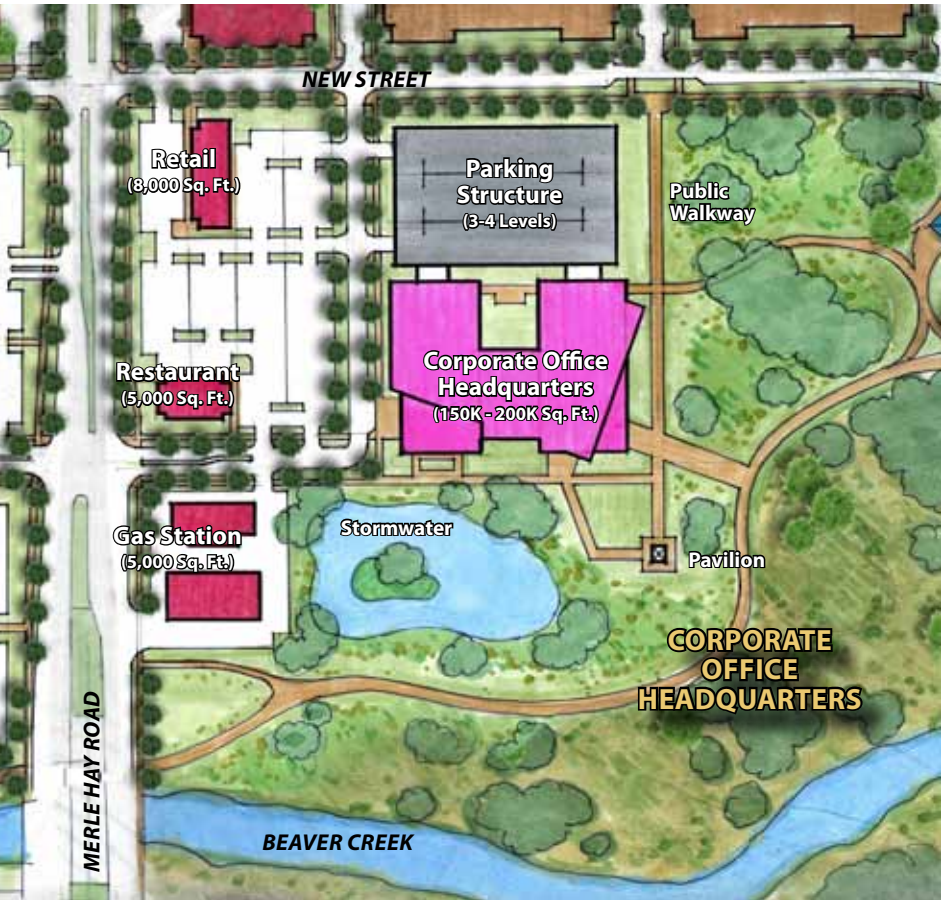


Figure 4.5 – Alternative Corporate Office Headquarters Concept for the Hotel Site

ALTERNATIVES FOR AUTO DEALERSHIP & WESTERN HOTEL SITES

POTENTIAL AUTO DEALERSHIP REDEVELOPMENT

The master plan suggests monitoring the long-term plans for the auto dealerships and the western hotel site on the west side of Merle Hay Road, in the event these uses no longer see themselves in the corridor. Depending upon the final redeveloped use of the vacant hotel site to the east, this area could potentially transform a few different ways. The plan below shows an alternative with a new hotel and conference center space on the north end of the site and a retail shopping district with boutique stores and restaurants. The plan shows a strong pedestrian connection from the hotel south to the shopping district and ultimately to the trail along Beaver Creek. A street connection is made to the northwest toward the community park and sidewalks and trails complete the pedestrian linkages to surrounding uses.

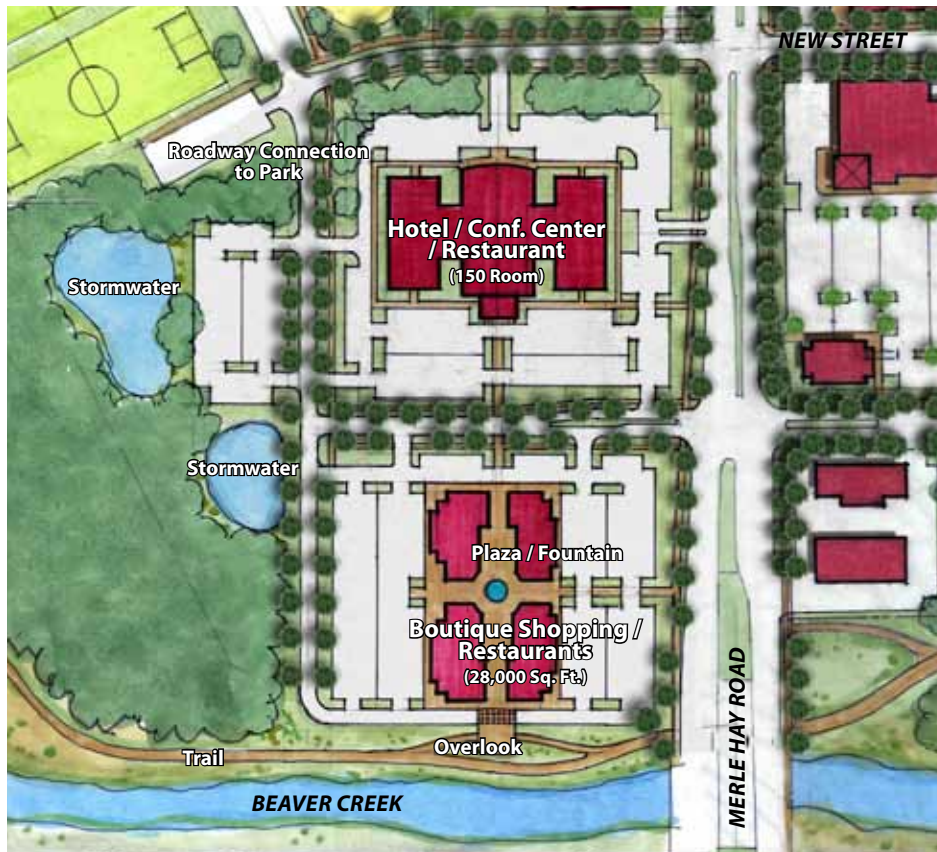


Figure 4.6 - Alternative Concept for Lithia Car Dealerships and Americinn Hotel Sites



A new hotel & conference center could be a future use for either the old hotel site or on the Lithia / Americinn sites should they relocate.



An development alternative should the Lithia dealerships leave the Gateway area could include a collection of boutique shops and restaurants with a high-level of pedestrian amenities and unique features such as interactive fountains and outdoor dining.

MEDIUM DENSITY HOUSING

Located toward the north and eastern portions of the study area in the Heard Gardens and East Districts, these areas range in densities from 6-18 units/acre and create a compact development form. Primarily in the form of townhomes with two-three story construction, these units would have attractive front entries with a walk-up front door and high quality architecture. All units should be rear loaded, meaning garage access should come from an alley or internal parking court, not a public street. The pattern of development shown in the master plan allows for phased construction and blends well with the more urban block pattern associated with the housing village concept. Strong pedestrian amenities are built into the design with sidewalks on all public streets, trail connections in the transmission line easement and more private amenity spaces within each townhome development area.



LAND USE: MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

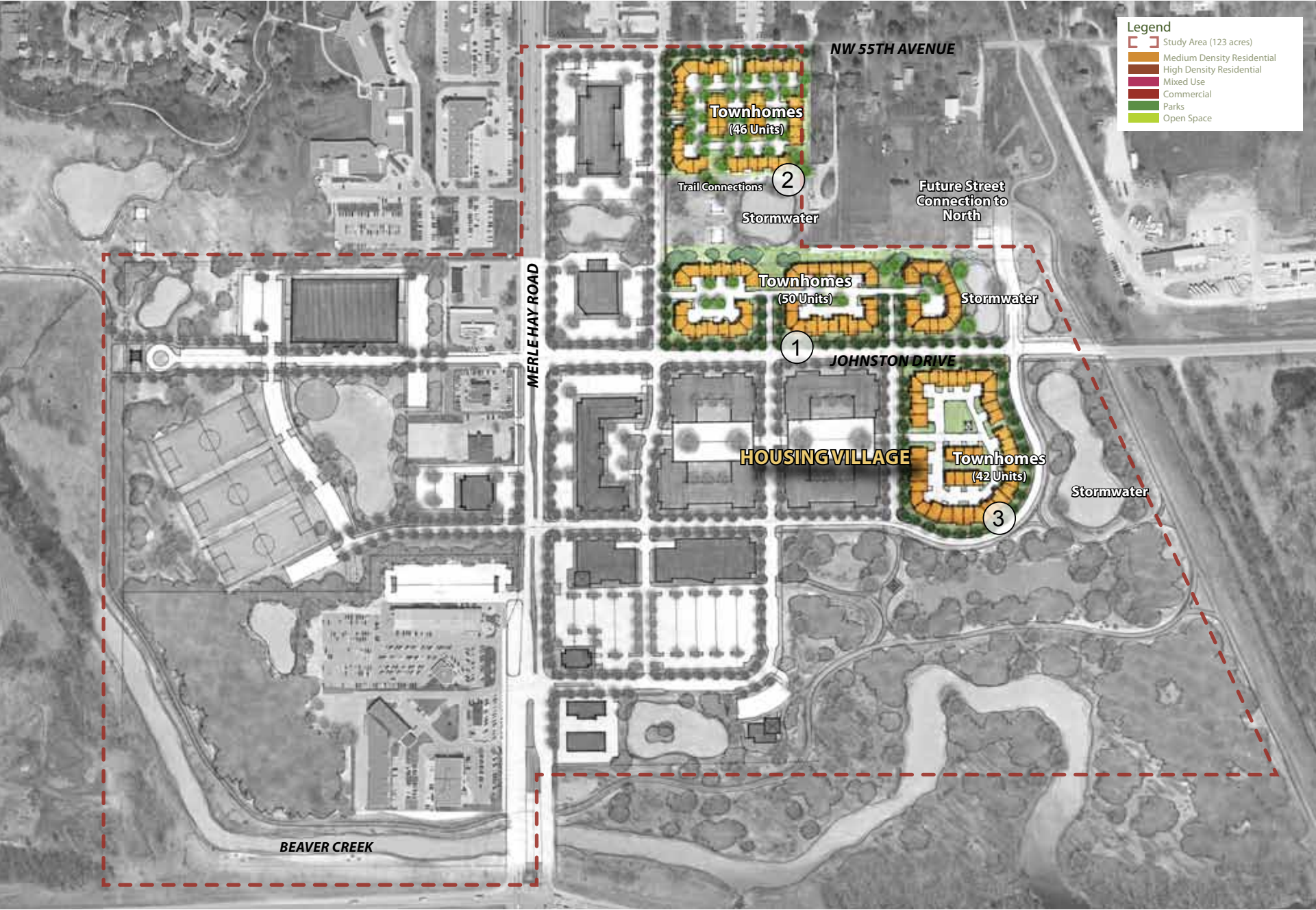


Figure 4.7 - Medium Density Residential Areas

HIGH DENSITY HOUSING

Centrally located south of Johnston Drive between the commercial / mixed use area toward Merle Hay Road and the townhomes to the east, the master plan envisions two blocks of high density housing. This housing type is anticipated to be there to five story in height and either apartments or condominiums with densities ranging from 18-32 units/acre. The urban development form envisioned here would create at grade walk-up units on the main floor with upper level units having balconies overlooking the new public streets, while interior facing units would overlook a common courtyard space. A combination of underground and/or above ground structured parking would be needed to achieve the higher densities and urban development form envisioned. New, tree-lined streets with on-street parking and broad sidewalks would connect to the commercial areas along Merle Hay Road and the park and open space amenities along Beaver Creek.



LAND USE: HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

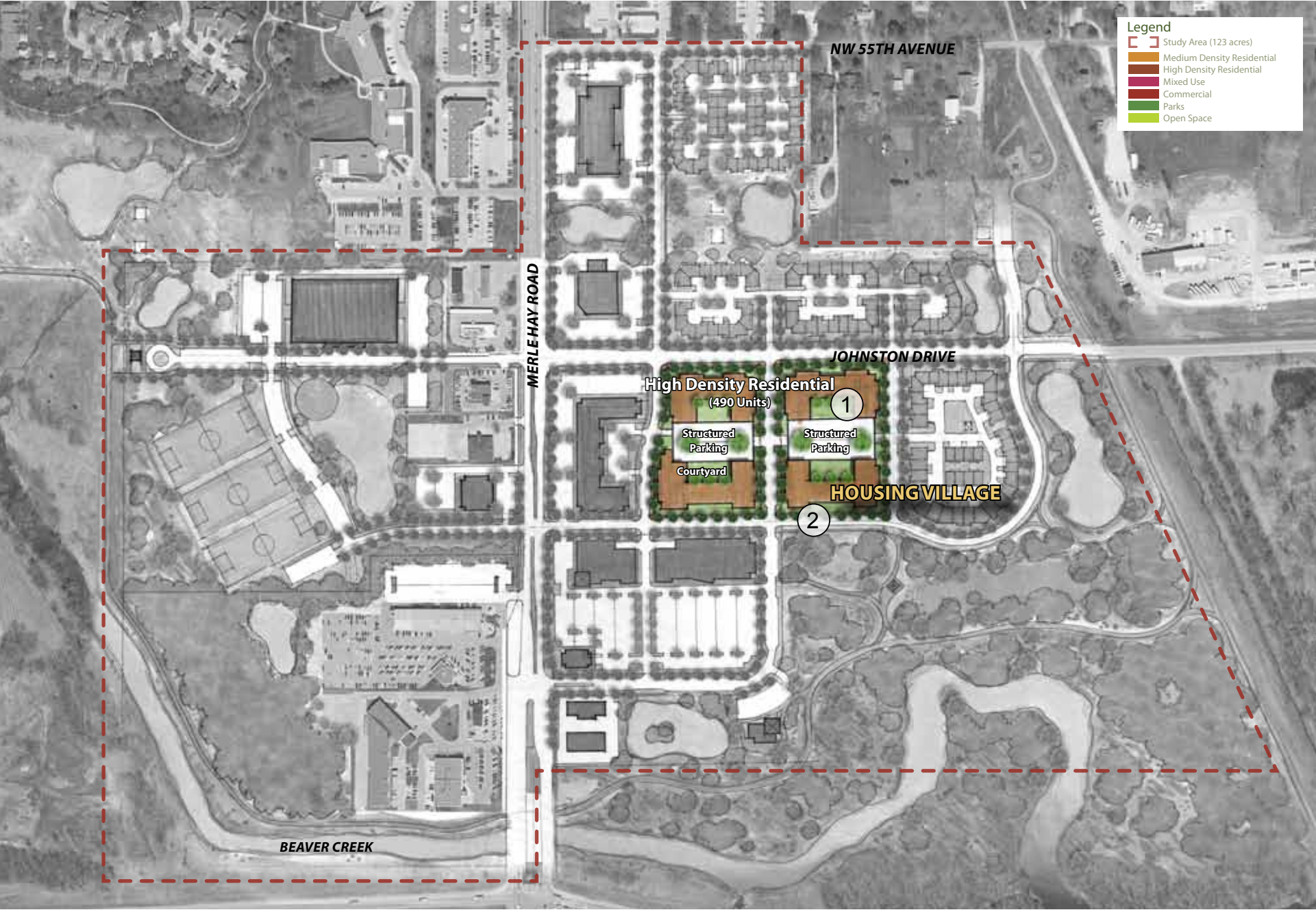


Figure 4.8 - High Density Residential Areas

PARKS & TRAILS

Beaver Creek and the natural open space that surrounds the creek truly set the Merle Hay Road Gateway apart from other major interchanges in the Des Moines metropolitan area. Leveraging this great natural resource for the district is a key element to the transformation of the Gateway area as the planned development of outdoor recreation retailers, an urban housing village and new community park collectively work to support this unique and identifiable brand for the district.

Currently, Beaver Creek is noted as a water trail, a four to six mile canoeing / kayaking route through the City of Johnston. The master plan sees an opportunity to expand recreation and tourism in this regard with the addition of more canoe/kayak launches along the creek to provide more opportunities to get on the water. The planned outdoor recreation retailer could even use portions of the creek to test equipment and provide training and educational opportunities for those interested in watersports on the creek or nearby Saylorville Lake.

A new community park is planned as a primary component to the West District on the former industrial property and open fields below the upper tier commercial businesses. This new park facility is envisioned as not only a destination for the community of Johnston, but potentially the broader Des Moines metropolitan area boasting unique recreational opportunities, strongly tied to outdoor recreation and adventure sports. Potential park programs and facilities could include:

- Multi-use facility (indoor facility for summer time sports, soccer, baseball, lacrosse, etc.)
- Skate park / BMX park / Technical mountain bike riding course
- Multi-purpose fields
- Playground
- Trailhead
- Dog Park

The existing trail connections along the creek edge provide a tremendous opportunity for walking and biking and create a strong connection under Merle Hay Road between the East and West Districts and to the broader community. The trail network ties into the Trestle Trail under Interstate 35/80 and to the northwest through the Beaver Creek Natural Resource Area.



A skate park could be one element within the community park that is a true destination for the Des Moines metro area.

The combination of the Merle Hay Road Gateway's central location within the Des Moines Metropolitan area, at a major interchange and at the hinge of major regional recreation areas provide a unique opportunity for a parks and recreation focus for redevelopment (See Figure 2.4). With the Des Moines River Valley to the east, Saylorville Lake, Bob Shetler and Lakeview Recreation areas to the north, and Beaver Creek Natural Resource Area, Lew Clarkston Park and the Beaver Creek Water Trail on the east side of the district, the confluence of recreation, natural resources and economic development opportunity all occur at the Merle Hay Road Gateway Area. Providing enhanced connections to these open space amenities and becoming the primary hub for recreation activities has strong potential to become the identifying brand for the Gateway Area.



A BMX or technical mountain bike riding course could be the foundation for a unique recreation / adventure sports destination.



Muilt-use trails should form the edge of natural areas along Beaver Creek and create linkages between each development district.



Promote water recreation uses such as canoeing/kayaking on Beaver Creek and Saylorville Lake



A multi-use recreation center and community playground are additional features to consider in the community park.



A dog park could be a low impact use in the more flood prone areas of the planned community park location.

OPEN SPACE & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

While the natural area of primarily flood plain forest and scrub trees surrounding the creek is a valued natural resource, today the area is seen as unsightly and not very safe by trail users. During flooding events, backwater floods the area and as the waters recede, they leave behind everything from downed floating trees to trash. The hotel property has been a dumping ground for old tires, mattresses and brush. Cleaning up the area behind the hotel should be a top priority.

A tree inventory for the floodplain forest area should also be considered. As early as the 1970s much of the treed area east of the hotel site was in active agriculture. Removing dead, downed trees, selective clearing of invasive and scrub trees and the limbing up of and native trees to open sightlines for security purposes should be a focus for this area. Overtime, as residential development is planned for the areas to the north, opportunities for passive recreation areas, a small natural themed playground and pavilion building could be great park assets for adjacent residents.

The community should also continue to explore opportunities to mitigate flooding in the area. One opportunity discussed during the planning process was to lengthen the channel of Beaver Creek to create additional storage capacity as floodwaters backup from the confluence of the Des Moines River and Beaver Creek. Initial ideas explored stretching the oxbow area east of the hotel site to the north and would accommodate roughly 700 linear feet of creek length. On-going coordination with the Army Corps of engineers is needed to pursue this idea further.

Green infrastructure or stormwater treatment areas are integrated within the open space systems of the Gateway district and treated as an amenity. Balancing water quality, flood protection and development potential is a key element to the success of the Merle Hay Gateway. To do so, utilizing a sub-district or sub-regional approach to stormwater treatment is recommended. The combination of smaller, on-site treatment techniques such as rain gardens, bio-swales, permeable paving and green roofs to address water quality issues, larger district-wide stormwater ponds should be developed to accommodate volume and flood control. Stormwater areas identified in this plan generally form the edge between developed areas and natural, open space areas.



Utilize stormwater treatment as an park/ open space amenity.



On-site stormwater treatment techniques such as rain gardens and bio-filtration areas should be utilized with larger sub-district stormwater ponds

LAND USE: PARKS AND TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

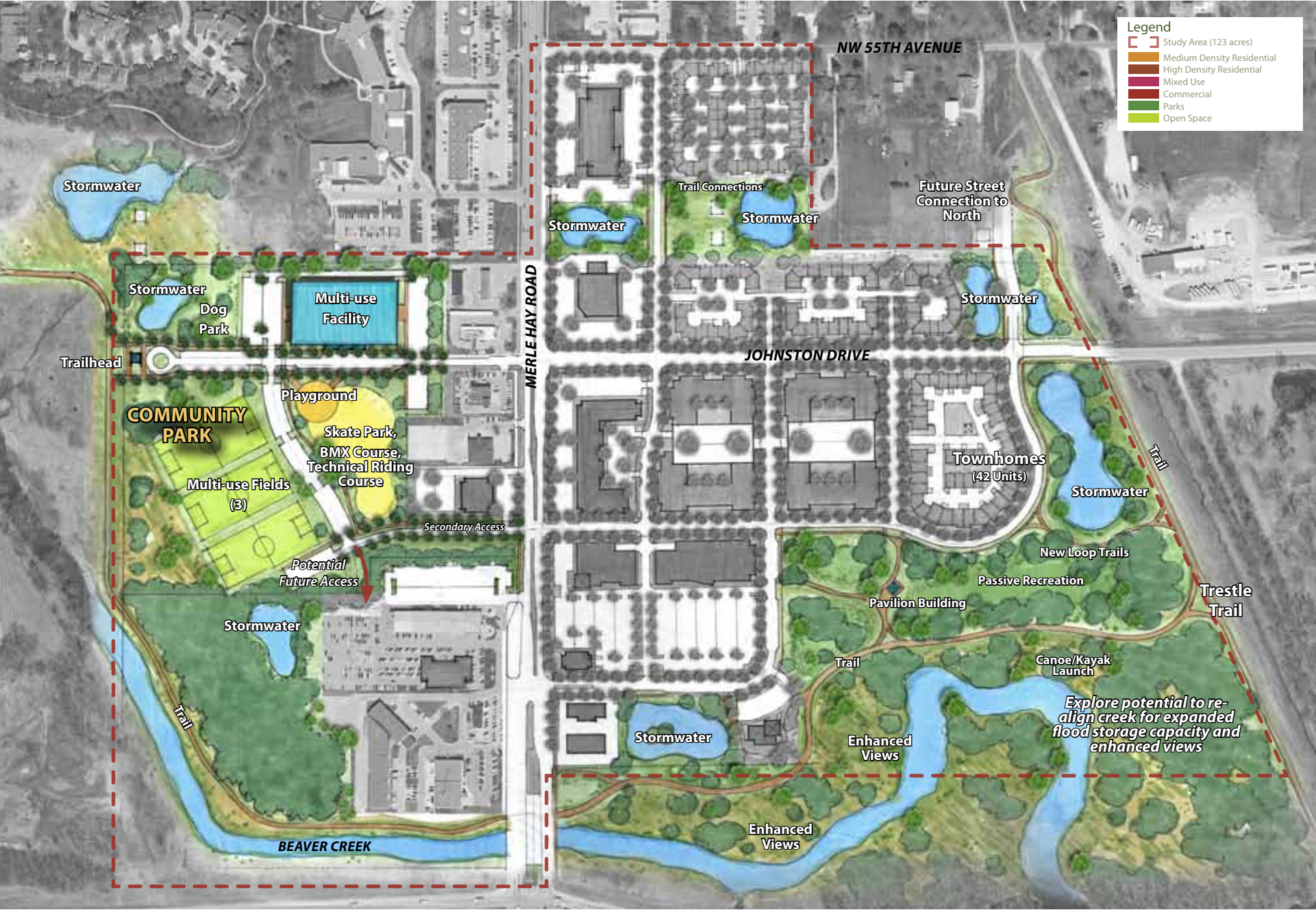


Figure 4.9 - Parks and Trails, Open Space and Green Infrastructure

TRANSPORTATION:

Merle Hay Road is the front door to the community, and the image of this corridor is very important. First impressions matter and evolving the existing entry signage and landscaping within the center median just north of the Beaver Creek bridge to include the entire Merle Hay Road streetscape should be explored. Enhancements to the street lighting, landscaping and district signage such as seasonal banners etc. could help signify a special place along the corridor. Bus shelters at transit stops and bike facilities should also be considered as a part of the streetscape enhancements. Utility coordination and the potential burying of overhead powerlines (smaller distribution lines) could also provide an enhanced streetscape appearance.

As traffic increases over time along the corridor, access management strategies may include the creation of new center medians in-lieu of the shared center turn lane and a combination, access closures and interconnected drives to reduce the curb-cuts and turning conflicts on Merle Hay Road. The reduction in access points directly to Merle Hay Road would need to be supported by a network of interconnected streets with controlled access to and from Merle Hay Road. The master plan suggests funneling traffic to the two existing signal locations and the creation of a new intersection near the mid-point between the two existing signals.

New streets include a north/south street between Johnston Drive and NW 55th Avenue through the Heard Gardens district. The East district sees a new urban block pattern with new public streets making connections between Merle Hay Road and Johnston Drive. The streets through the residential area would have on-street parking, tree-lined boulevards, and sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Access points to the West district are located at the primary intersections along the Merle Hay Road corridor. Coordination on the signal timings at the Interstate 35/80 interchange and other traffic lights along the corridor could allow for smoother traffic flow. This will take a coordinated effort between the cities of Urbandale, Des Moines, Johnston and the Iowa Department of Transportation as the signals at the interchange are integral to the traffic flow to the regional system.



Enhanced landscaping, pedestrian features and gateway elements will create a unified Gateway district.



Attractive streetscape design may include additional center medians in the future as traffic volumes increase on Merle Hay Road.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

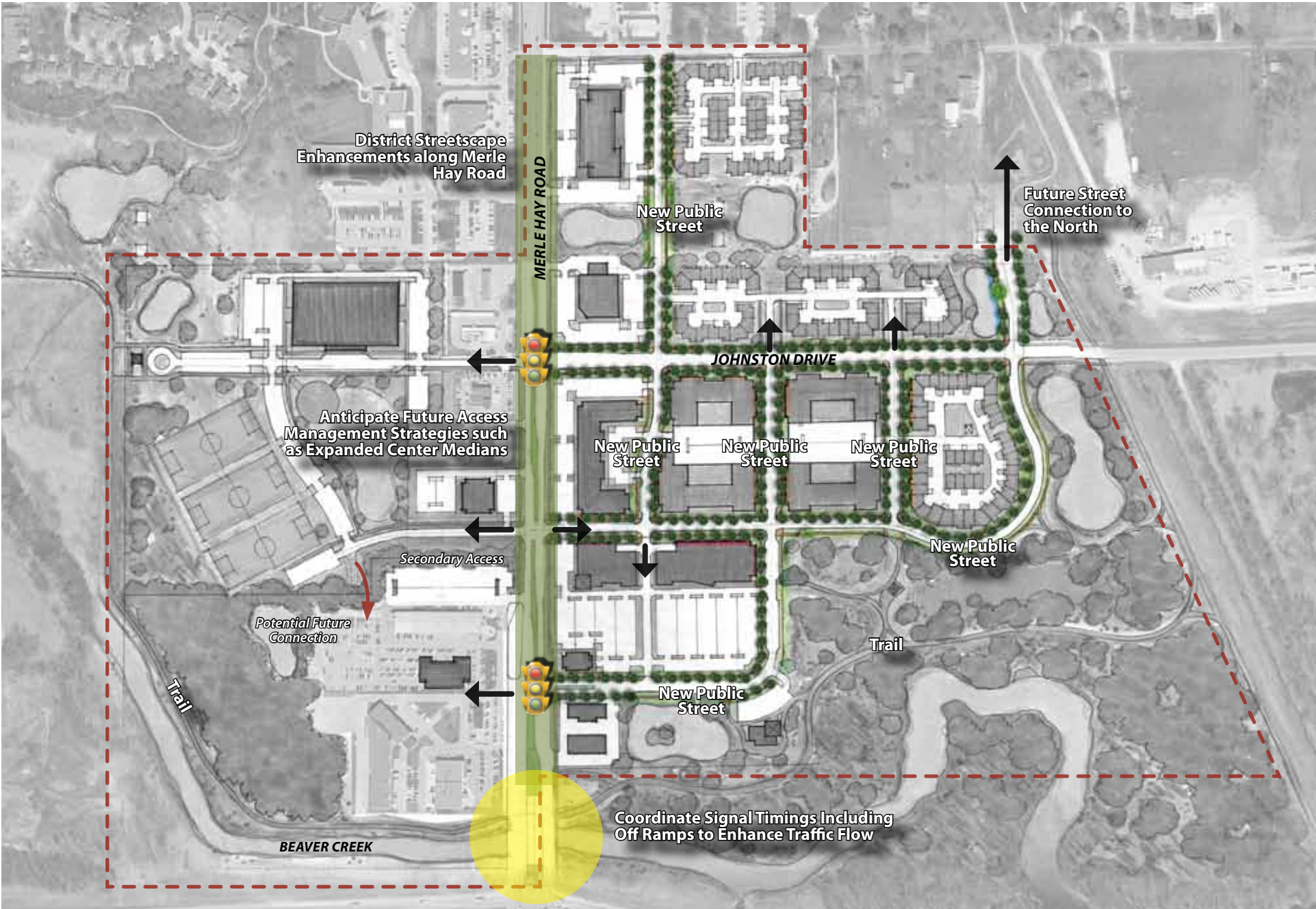


Figure 4.10 - Transportation Improvements Diagram

CHAPTER 5 – IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

KEYS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Several factors will be crucial in successfully realizing the vision set forth by the community, stakeholders, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council within this redevelopment master plan. These factors apply regardless of the actual form and timing of redevelopment:

- ***Patience & Commitment to Vision.*** Commitment to the plan and patience go hand-in-hand. This plan does more than simply seek to attract new development to shovel ready sites in the Gateway district; it provides a road map to move the area toward its vision. Commitment to the plan means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that align with the objectives of the master plan. It also requires the willingness by decision makers to deter developments which do not meet the objectives of the plan. Not all of these decisions will be easy or will they occur exactly as analyzed in this master plan.
- ***Strategic Investments.*** If financial support for the plan was unlimited, the need for strategic decisions would be less important; however, with limited funds every expenditure is crucial. It is not possible to immediately undertake all of the initiatives described in this plan. Additional needs and opportunities not contemplated in the plan may arise in the future. Every investment must be evaluated for its impact on adding to the City of Johnston and the Merle Hay Road Gateway district.
- ***Public & Private Partnerships.*** Removal of the physical and economic barriers to redevelopment in the Merle Hay Gateway area will require public financial assistance. The complexity of redevelopment envisioned for the area clearly demonstrates the need for public financial participation. Private investment will not be sufficient to pay for all costs associated with every redevelopment project. Strong public/private partnerships will make redevelopment projects more financially feasible, promote the desired types of development and build continual momentum in the area. The needs established in this plan do not make public financial assistance an entitlement and on-going planning will define the nature of assistance and amount available for each step throughout the implementation process. This

approach ensures that public monies are used to achieve desired public outcomes and not simply make development more affordable (or profitable) for the developer.

- ***Financial Planning.*** The ability to make strategic investments relies on the continued evolution of the preliminary financial planning found in this document. Implementing the plan cannot be viewed as a series of independent projects but rather a series of interrelated actions. Certain public improvements serve a broader area and not a single project. Revenues will come from multiple projects. Some public investments will be required prior to private redevelopment. The ability to coordinate public actions with the revenues from private development will be critical to the success of the plan. Failure to consider the implementation relationships between elements of the plan will lead to missed opportunities and increased risk for the City.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementing this plan will rest with many entities in the community that share a common vision for the future of the Merle Hay Road Gateway district in Johnston. A clear understanding of implementation roles and responsibilities promotes the effective use of limited resources.

City of Johnston

The ultimate responsibility for implementing this redevelopment master plan rests with the City of Johnston. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review and recommend actions to the City Council and the City Council will determine appropriate actions, focus public investments, and provide direction on staff resources. The lead role in managing redevelopment for Johnston will primarily fall to the Community Development department of the City. The actions to be taken by the Community Development Department to implement the plan include:

- Application of land use controls and redevelopment guidelines to shepherd private development;
- Review of development plans and proposals to ensure that proposed development projects and public improvements are consistent with the plan;

- Coordination of planning for capital improvements needed to facilitate redevelopment;
- Create an annual redevelopment “action plan” to monitor progress toward implementation. This action plan would outline key steps to occur during the year, including descriptions of actions, responsible parties and funding resources. It forces the parties to not only consider what needs to be done in the coming year, but also why identified steps were not taken in the prior year, and;
- Creation of financial plans (with assistance from the Finance Department) for public redevelopment investments and continued monitoring.

The Public Works Department leads the design of public infrastructure improvements needed to support development and redevelopment in the district, including necessary utility and transportation improvements. The Public Works Department plays a significant role in numerous key initiatives including; new streets, floodplain mitigation, district stormwater treatment facilities, access management strategies and on-going conversations with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), Polk County and Urbandale on the coordination of signal timings on Merle Hay Road at the interchange to alleviate traffic congestion.

The Parks Department working with the Park Board will play a significant role in the planning, programming and development of the new community park. Enhancing the natural areas and strengthening connections to the existing trail network and nearby Terra Lake and Lew Clarkson Parks are other important consideration for the Parks Department. The Finance Department should work closely with Community Development Department to create a financial plan for implementation allocating appropriate resources, public finance strategies and public private partnerships to ensure fiscally sound redevelopment projects.

Johnston Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO)

The Merle Hay Road Gateway area is a significant location for economic development and job creation in the City of Johnston. JEDCO must help the City continue the momentum created by the master planning effort envisioned. JEDCO and City Council will need to determine their specific roles for a coordinated effort. Several potential JEDCO actions make them an important player in the successful implementation of the plan:

- Provide a framework for coordinating efforts of the community. With limited resources, it is essential that the community work in unison to undertake redevelopment. The knowledge and experience gained from the planning process allows JEDCO members to efficiently and effectively take steps needed to implement the plan.
- Work to ensure that economic development initiatives within Merle Hay Road Gateway area are a recognized priority for the City Council.
- Work with business owners and landlords to promote and help finance the maintenance and revitalization of downtown businesses and buildings in the downtown core.
- Host annual developer roundtables or site tours showcasing the potential of the Merle Hay Road Gateway area and potential sites to perspective developers.
- Recognize the individual assets of each of the three primary districts (East – the hotel site and surrounding properties, West – the commercial area along Merle Hay Road, and the Heard Gardens) for economic development and steer the appropriate uses to those areas.
- Lead the marketing efforts for available sites in the corridor, particularly the hotel site.
- Promote development projects with sustainable design practices.
- Continue to find the appropriate funding options for various redevelopment projects.
- Collaborate with private brokers marketing the Merle Hay Road Gateway district and leverage marketing efforts.

Community-at-Large

The community of Johnston must stay involved as the redevelopment continues over time. The community must work together with decision-makers and provide the necessary input for any new development, respecting existing land owners and meeting the vision established for the Merle Hay Road Gateway established by the community. Ultimately, the community must:

- Provide a singular focus for the plan. The knowledge gained from the planning process will allow members of the community to efficiently and effectively comment on redevelopment proposals.
- Continue public involvement. Continue to attend public meetings, provide comments and suggestions to proposals as they come forward.

LAND USE CONTROLS

The initial focus of implementation will be on actions needed to establish the redevelopment master plan as the official guide for development and redevelopment for the Merle Hay Road Gateway area in Johnston. These procedural steps involve the adoption of key policy documents and the modification and updating of development controls.

Approve the Master Plan

The first implementation step is for the City Council take necessary action to approve this master plan. These approvals set the stage for subsequent actions such as amending the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, capital improvement programs and the allocation of financial resources.

Amend Land Use Controls

Plan approval is the trigger for taking other actions needed to guide land use for the area in accordance with this master plan. Land use controls not only promote the desired development outcomes, they also prevent development that is not consistent with the plan.

Comprehensive Plan

The City will need to update the Comprehensive Plan with the new “Redevelopment Master Plan,” including the land use plan designations (Figure 4.2) and appropriate policies consistent with the vision and guiding principles of Gateway master plan. Amending the Comprehensive Plan creates the foundation for all other implementation actions. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is a statutory requirement for zoning regulations, capital improvements and redevelopment projects.

Zoning Regulations

More direct control of development comes from zoning regulations. The existing regulations within the Merle Hay Road Overlay District will require modification to conform to this plan. Part of the necessary modification is enabling the type and form of development proposed in this master plan, for example, allowing vertical mixed use and high density residential within the district.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines serve as an important communication tool between the City, property owners and developers. Aspects of potential design guidelines are outlined as a part of chapter four, and could be incorporated into the Merle Hay Road Overlay District (see previous section). Design guidelines should become a standard tool in evaluating proposed developments for the area. These guidelines should be rooted in the Preferred Approach Diagram, Redevelopment Master Plan, individual system elements surrounding parks, open space, stormwater and transportation and the phasing diagrams outlined in subsequent pages in this implementation chapter. Application of desired (but not absolutely necessary) Design Guidelines could be connected to an incentive based approach whereby achieving certain design characteristics could lead to fast tracking entitlements or public financial assistance.



Figure 5.1 - Future Land Use Map

REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Implementation of the master plan is not a single action, but a series of sequenced and interrelated steps. These actions will be taken over time and across multiple phases. Initial focus should be on several implementation initiatives that lay the foundation for change. Development projects on available property such as the Heard Gardens site, particularly the near the intersection of Johnston Drive and Merle Hay Road could showcase new energy and the desired look of the buildings and site improvements in the district. Actively preparing sites through site assembly, relocation of undesired businesses, demolition and environmental clean-up are additional steps needed that are less visible to the public, but allow for continued momentum in the future phases.

During the early years of redevelopment, there are several critical actions the City of Johnston can take to reduce development constraints, allow for greater investment in public amenities and infrastructure and enhance the market viability of key sites such as the hotel site.

Suggested activities to enhance project success include:

- **Recruit a desired user for the hotel site:** In recruiting new businesses, the initial inquiry requires the City to focus on a targeted business type. Based on the market findings and community desires, such targeted businesses are likely to include a destination-oriented retailer, a new hotel, conference center and restaurant, or a larger corporate office user. Forming a public-private partnership with the owners of the hotel site for example could allow for the targeted marketing of the property, rather than waiting for just any business to respond to “now leasing” signs. Working collectively with the property owner could allow for the request of proposals from the development community to create a plan for a development project that aligns with the vision and guiding principles for the district.
- **Explore unique district branding or theming:** To the extent possible, Johnston should explore the recruitment of end users, institutions, and the development of facilities and land uses that can promote synergies and thematic connections. The combination of an outdoor recreation retailer(s), natural food stores and a community park with programmed

elements such as the skate park, bmx track and technical riding course have the opportunity to brand this district as a unique destination. Coupled with the natural resources surrounding the Beaver Creek area, extensive trail networks and the opportunity for canoe/kayaking on the creek create a distinct market niche not found in the Des Moines metropolitan area.

- **Start small but with key catalytic projects/actions:** Strategically stage development so that it builds market momentum and early projects act as positive demonstrations of great things to come in the Gateway area. Starting with a combination of small, achievable projects on sites that are ready to go and a coordinated effort to prepare future sites and remove barriers are critical to lay the ground work for success. Having a diversity of projects types that are viable in the market place today is critical. This will allow the individual projects within the Merle Hay Road corridor to not directly compete with one another. Allowing this depth of and range of early projects should be guided carefully with extensive examination as to which projects should or should not receive financial assistance.
- **Recognize the potential for more significant projects should emerge in later years:** Clean, available sites present the most likely potential in the early stages of redevelopment for smaller scale commercial and residential projects. Tactical steps (site assembly, remediation, financial planning) will help set the stage for larger projects in later years, particularly the hotel site and the smaller commercial sites that surrounding it.

PHASING

The approach to redevelopment phasing outlined below builds upon known investments and responds to site readiness and necessary public improvements. It is anticipated that full redevelopment highlighted with this report could take over 20 years to accomplish assuming a return to a relatively stable & growing real estate marketplace.

To act as a basis for analyzing the critical implementation issues and to focus the first steps needed to begin development and redevelopment, as well as best assess the fiscal implications for redevelopment, the master plan phasing strategy is structured around four general phases:

- Immediate, 0-5 years;
- Short-Term, 5-10 years;
- Mid-Term, 10-20 years;
- Long-Term, 20 + years.

These four plan phases sequentially build to the Redevelopment Master Plan (Figure 4.2) outlined in the master plan chapter. The following represents a summary of the four identified redevelopment phases, the associated projects within each phase, both public and private. The Immediate and Short-Term phases also examine the anticipated sources and uses of funds needed to facilitate redevelopment summarized into general categories. The breakdown of each phase is outlined over the following pages.

IMMEDIATE PHASE (0-5 YEARS)

In the immediate phase, the City must lay the ground work for future improvements and build momentum for subsequent phases. A key step is to work with prospective developers to assemble necessary property at the hotel site and the Heard Gardens area, as well as begin the investigation of removal or relocation of businesses that do not fit with vision for the Gateway area.

Certain properties are available for development today, and any development there should fit with the long-term vision of the entire Gateway area. An important element to development in the immediate phase is to treat these projects as model development for the future. Highlighting the appropriate

design aesthetics, long-term planning and strong public-private partnerships will add tremendous value going forward.

Key elements of the Immediate Phase include:

- Coordinate redevelopment preparation at the Hotel site including:
 - » Assembly of necessary parcels;
 - » Demolition of the Hotel;
 - » Creating improved sightlines for development visibility with tree clearing;
 - » Creating a more attractive setting for future development by cleaning out dead / downed trees;
 - » Opening sightlines along trail for increased security;
 - » Review sign ordinance for future compliance or necessary ordinance modifications;
 - » Recruit potential users targeting destination retailer with outdoor recreation focus (REI / Gander Mountain) as primary use;
 - » Investigate potential for corporate office headquarters or hotel, conference and restaurant use as secondary options for redevelopment;
- Develop commercial / retail building at intersection of Merle Hay Road and Johnston Drive.
- Develop medium density housing north of Johnston Drive in the Heard Gardens District.
- Establish future development pattern for Heard Gardens District with new street east of Merle Hay Road.
- Expansion of auto dealership parking lot to north.
- New auto dealership building developed.
- Investigate the relocation and or acquisition of industrial property west of Merle Hay Road and the Budget Storage on the east side.
- Promote assembly of parcels by the private sector for the parcels north of the transmission lines in the Heard Gardens District.

IMMEDIATE PHASE: 0-5 YEARS

#	Project	Sq. Ft.	Units
1	New Auto Dealership Building	15,000	
2	Commercial Bldg. at MHR & Johnston Dr.	15,000	
3	Townhomes at Heard Gardens		18
Immediate Phase Total:		30,000	18

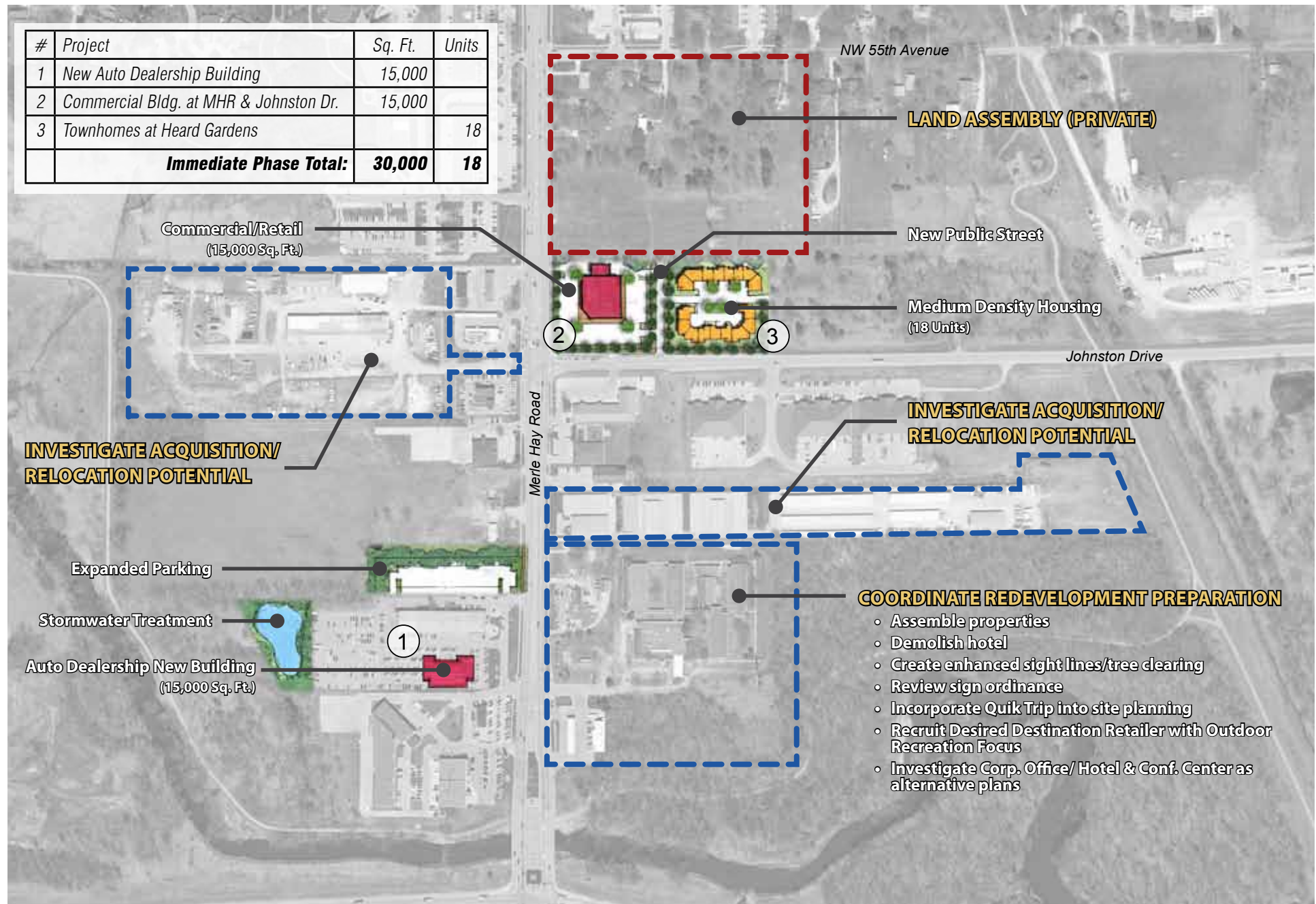


Figure 5.2 - Immediate Phase

SHORT-TERM PHASE (5-10 YEARS)

Following the site readiness steps taken in the immediate phase, the redevelopment of the hotel site with a catalyst project (unique destination retail / new hotel-convention center / corporate office headquarters) will set the table for broader transformation of the district. Combined with the removal or relocation of non-compatible industrial yard and storage uses, the Gateway District will truly begin a physical transformation. Continued developments at the Heard Gardens area with expanded residential will further solidify this area. The City should also begin the demolition and site clean-up for the industrial properties and begin planning for the future Community Park improvements.

Key elements of the Short-Term Phase include:

- Development of the Hotel Site
 - » Destination Retail / Corporate Headquarters / New Hotel and Convention Center with Restaurants
 - » Integrate Quik Trip plans for new store
 - » New restaurant on the creek
 - » Create connections to the trail
 - » Plan for future street connection to the north
- Acquire / Relocate industrial property and Budget Storage and demolish structures and prepare sites for redevelopment.
- Allow commercial development on the Christensen property.
 - » Work with property owner to acquire portion of property within the flood fringe for future park fields.
 - » Preserve second access to future community park
- Continue residential development in the Heard Gardens District
- Complete the new street connection north to south on east side of Merle Hay Road.



Destination retailers with an outdoor recreation focus are targeted users for redevelopment of the hotel site.



Townhomes would be built as part of the mid-term phase in the Heard Gardens site.

SHORT-TERM PHASE: 5-10 YEARS

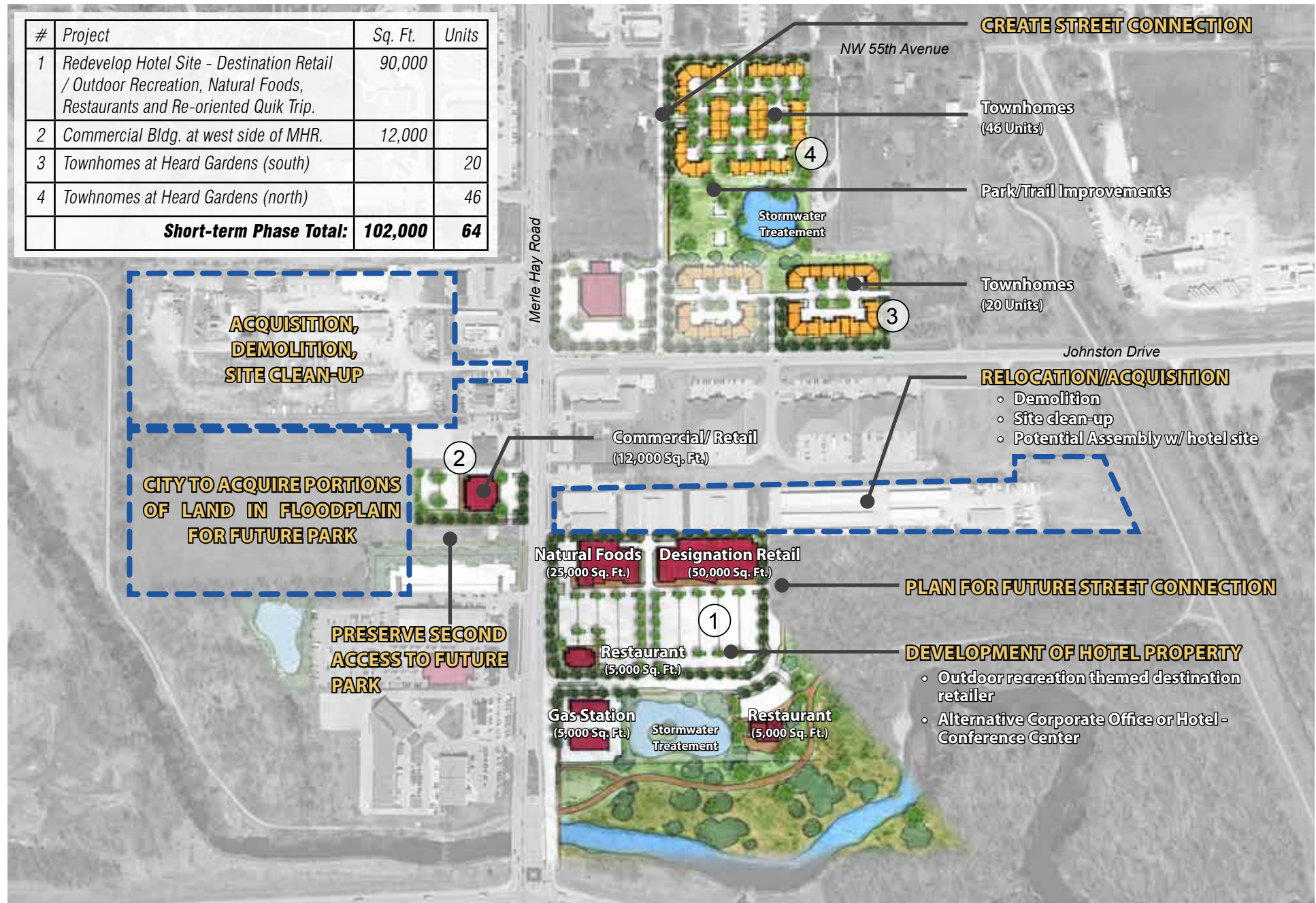


Figure 5.3 - Short-term Phase

MID-TERM PHASE (10-20 YEARS)

In this phase, the new community park west of Merle Hay Road is developed and depending upon an assessment of park needs and capital budgets can be phased in a number of different ways. The Heard Gardens District continues to develop with a combination of commercial and residential uses and necessary stormwater treatment and open space improvements in the transmission line easement.

The City should also investigate land assembly and relocation of the smaller commercial and light industrial uses south of Johnston Drive and work with the DNR and Army Corps of Engineers to fully understand relationship between potential development and flood controls in this area, setting the table for future redevelopment into an urban village. The city should also continue to monitor the car dealerships and hotel property on the west side of Merle Hay Road to anticipate redevelopment should these uses decide to relocate or upgrade their sites.

Key elements of the Mid-Term Phase include:

- Development of the new Community Park which may include some or all of the following options:
 - » Multi Use Facility
 - » Skate Park / BMX Park
 - » Playground
 - » Multi-use fields (3)
 - » Trailhead
 - » Dog Park
 - » Parking
 - » Second access to Merle Hay Road
 - » Plan for future access to south
- Stormwater improvements northeast of park under transmission lines.
- Commercial development east of Merle Hay Road at Heard Gardens.
- Final component of residential development at Heard Gardens.
- Investigate relocation /acquisition of light industrial and older commercial business south of Johnston Drive.
 - » Focus on eastern portion (light industrial)
 - » Plan for transformation of commercial properties to more increased density



Multi-use indoor recreation facility could be a component of the new Community Park



Commercial / Retail development along Merle Hay Road

MID-TERM PHASE: 10-20 YEARS

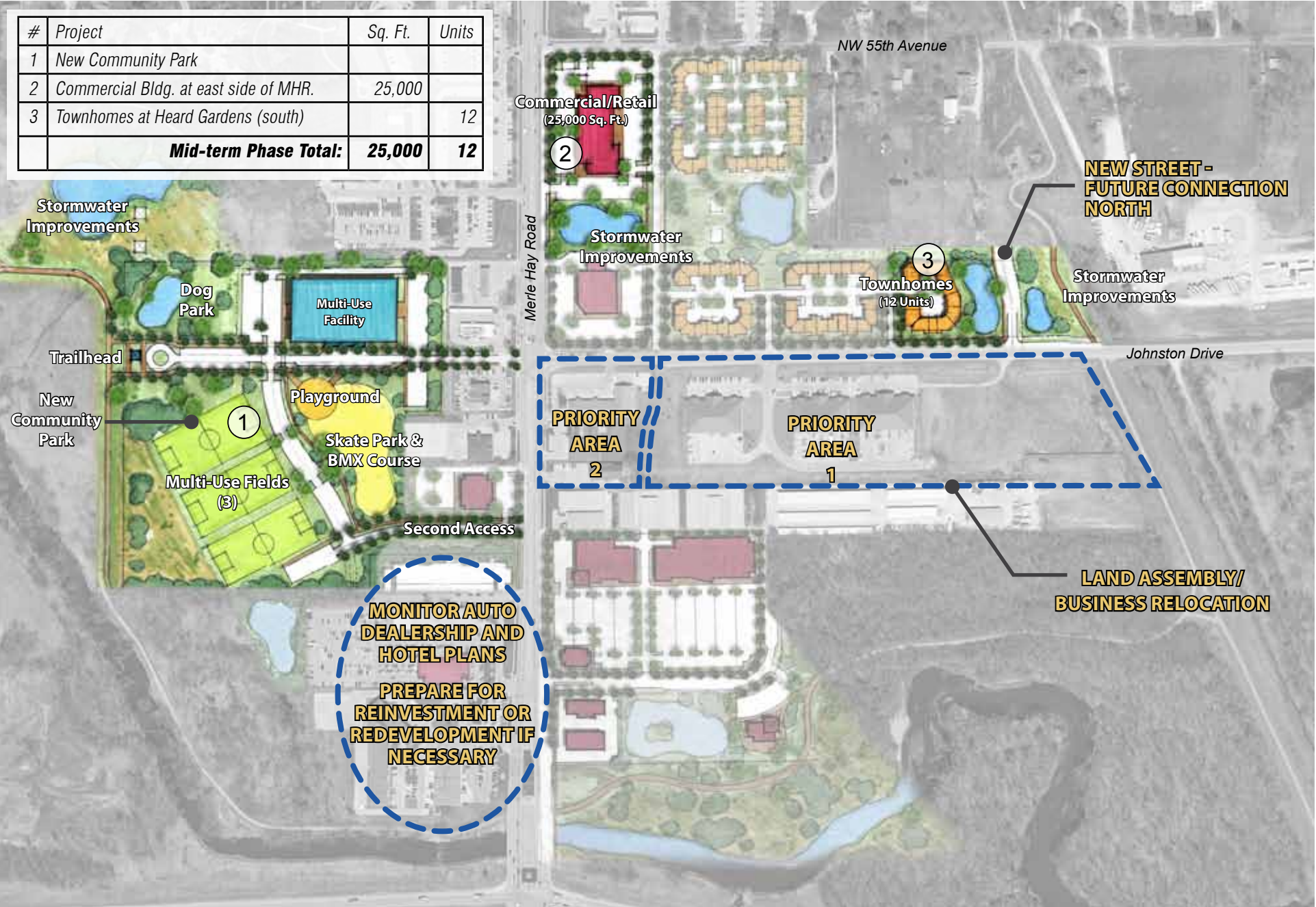


Figure 5.4 - Mid-term Phase

LONG-TERM PHASE (20 YEARS +)

Depending upon the pace of the evolution in the preceding phases, the transformation of the area south of Johnston Drive into a new housing village could occur sooner. This new housing village would be a combination of vertical mixed use, high density housing (apartments or condominiums) and townhomes all within a more urban, compact development pattern. As redevelopment takes shape here, the city should explore opportunities for enhanced amenities adjacent to the new neighborhood which could potentially include the realignment of the creek, expanding the overall length of the creek for increased flood storage capacity and providing enhanced views to and from the development. Regardless of the creek realignment option, improved open space aesthetics and enhanced trail connections will be important elements to include for the marketability of the new urban housing village. Again, the city should monitor the car dealerships and hotel property on the west side of Merle Hay Road to anticipate potential redevelopment.

Key elements of the Long-Term Phase include:

- Development of a new housing village south of Johnston Drive
 - » New urban blocks of housing (mixed use, apartments, condos & townhomes)
 - » New street connections
 - » New park improvements
- Stormwater improvements on eastern portion of district.
- Investigate long-term potential for enhancements to the flood fringe area.
 - » Relocation of the creek for expanded flood storage & views
 - » Enhanced native plantings and passive recreation opportunities



Vertical mixed use is envisioned to the east of Merle Hay Road.



High density housing is envisioned as part of the long-term phase, and could include senior housing.

LONG-TERM PHASE: 20+ YEARS

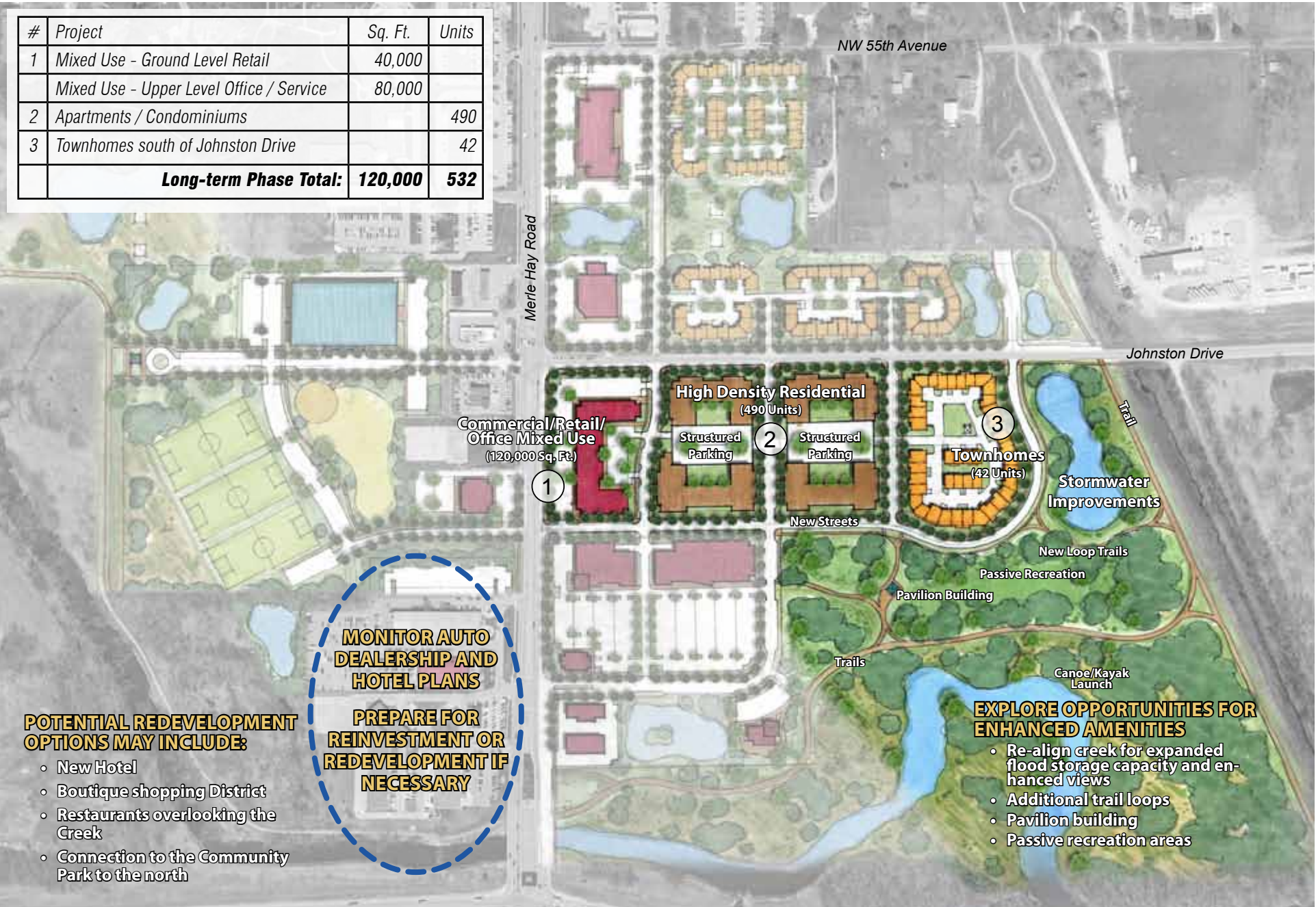


Figure 5.5- Long-Term Phase

FINANCING

There are many financial variables involved with complex redevelopment planning projects which can inform the financial analysis differently and these variables can change over time. The following information highlights the key tools currently available to finance the implementation of the redevelopment master plan:

Tax Increment Financing:

The costs of development and redevelopment may be too great to allow new projects to be financially feasible. The situation poses the classic “but for” situation in State law governing tax increment financing. “But for” the use of TIF, the development as proposed would not occur. It is clear that the desired redevelopment will not take place without the removal of physical and economic barriers by the City. Tax increment financing is the only tool with the capacity to accomplish these objectives.

As with other elements of the master plan, projections for the use of TIF are both comprehensive and conservative. The plan seeks to provide a clear understanding of what might be required with the goal of reducing public financial commitments as the plan is implemented. The result can be found in other large redevelopment settings. As redevelopment begins to transform an area, market forces improve. As the potential income from rents and sales grow, private development can carry more costs of redevelopment.

This master plan assumes that all of the redevelopment projects will be included within the existing TIF district. In simplest terms, TIF allows the City to capture the property taxes from redevelopment and use these monies to pay for the investments required to undertake the development. Private development alone will likely not support the investments required for implementing the master plan. The costs of desired development and redevelopment are most likely too great to consider all new projects to be financially feasible.

A key step the City must undertake immediately following the adoption of this master plan should be to determine the exact extents to which TIF will be used as a tool in the district (i.e. through either development rebates, assembly of property, public infrastructure, etc.). Careful review and potential amendments to the current TIF policy as it relates to the Gateway area are critical first steps in the redevelopment process.

Other Public Finance Tools:

Although the planning process focused on tax increment financing, it is likely that other public finance tools will be needed to achieve the longer-term redevelopment investments within the Merle Hay Road Gateway area. This section highlights potential tools and their application. Additional investigations will be undertaken as finance plans are prepared relative to specific public improvement and redevelopment projects.

Tax Abatement:

Tax abatement cannot be used for property in a TIF district, the best opportunity for this tool lies with any potential developments that are removed from the existing TIF district. Residential projects east of Merle Hay Road could potentially fit within this category.

Self Supporting Municipal Improvement Districts:

A Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) has the capacity to finance the construction and maintenance of portions the public improvements for the Gateway area. In simplest terms, a SSMID is a special taxing district and allows the City to collect money to support services and improvements in commercial areas. Potential applications of SSMIDs for implementation of this master plan include:

- Construction and maintenance of commercial streetscapes, particularly Merle Hay Road.
- Construction and maintenance of sidewalks, trails, wayfinding signage and other improvements to enhance pedestrian movement and connectivity between the development districts, Beaver Creek Trail and to the new community park.
- Other services and improvements can be undertaken and financed by a special service district if authorized by the enabling ordinance.

Iowa House Bill HF 641:

A bill currently awaiting the Governor’s signature after moving through the state legislature this spring, would create small state sales tax and state hotel/motel tax rebate areas. These areas (not exceeding 50 acres size) would have to be approved by the Iowa Economic Development Authority before they can be established.

The bill would allow a rebate to a city at 4% of the total sales. The entire state hotel/motel excise tax generated by new businesses created within the 50-acre district, could be used by cities to pay for improvements made to buildings located within the district.

The bill does not touch the local option sales tax or local option hotel tax revenue streams. Another significant restriction contained in this bill is that funds generated by this rebate can only be used for "vertical improvement" projects, which are defined as a building and its appurtenant structures, which are not as broad as a typical TIF. These new sales tax areas should be further explored as potential funding alternatives for redevelopment.

GRANTS

Grants should be continually explored for their potential assistance in bridging financing gaps in redevelopment. Grants could range from environmental cleanup to recreational improvements. Continual monitoring of grants opportunities that align with the Gateway area vision should be explored.

PARK DEDICATION

New residential projects are required to dedicate or provide improvements of an equivalent value to 5 acres per 1,000 residents. The redevelopment master plan assumes roughly 600 units, which would be approximately 5.8 acres or equivalent value that could be used for the noted park improvements.

STORMWATER UTILITY FEE

The City of Johnston utilizes a stormwater utility fee for the creation of regional stormwater improvements such as larger regional detention basins and storm sewer infrastructure. Water quality improvements such as filtration areas and erosion control measures can also be funded through the stormwater utility fee. While this is not a likely funding source for local or site specific improvements, this fee would be targeted for the larger infrastructure and stormwater treatment needs of the Gateway area.

SUMMARY

In summary, the Merle Hay Road Gateway Redevelopment Master Plan outlines a strategy for positive, incremental change throughout the area. The plan outlines a series of achievable goals over the next ten years, within the immediate and short-term phasing plans. The proposed redevelopment projects have a reality in the marketplace, are financially viable and a true foundation for transformation.

While the master plan prescribes a detailed redevelopment approach for specific projects and likely steps, the plan is also flexible in its application to allow the City of Johnston to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. The master plan should be utilized as a living document, continually referenced and checked against as development and redevelopment projects occur over time.

North Saint Paul

Redevelopment Master Plan

December 7, 2012 **Final Report**

Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc.

W-ZHA

WSB

Springsted

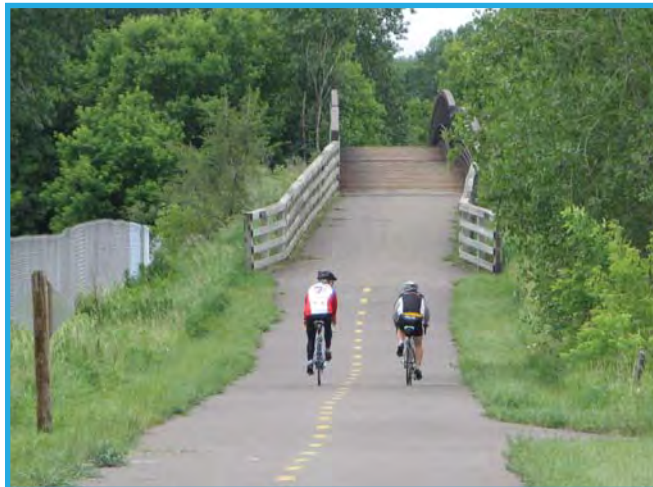


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Acknowledgements

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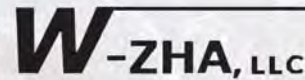
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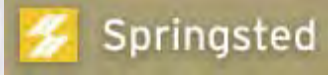
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1. Project Background

Purpose

Livable Community

In 2011 the City of North Saint Paul applied for a grant to the Metropolitan Council through the Livable Communities program. This grant program is designed to help cities with pre-planning activities that remove barriers and position redevelopment projects for implementation. The grant application highlighted the importance of master planning to identify ways to improve the connection between potential redevelopment sites, downtown North Saint Paul, the Gateway Trail, regional transit systems and community facilities. Upon completion of the planning process, key redevelopment sites will be identified, studied, and better positioned for implementation.

Throughout the planning process, the goals of the Livable Communities Act have been considered and integrated into the final plan. The City recognizes the shared goals of the program with the City's own vision for the area.

Revitalization

This plan is also about revitalizing the traditional commercial hub of North Saint Paul. The city is fully built out and the revitalization focus is on the redevelopment and reuse of land. Revitalization encourages denser development, but also requires creativity to fit new pieces into the existing fabric of the community. The planning process plays an important role in explaining and defining the future so residents, businesses, and developers know how the area around them is anticipated to evolve.

Changing Conditions & Context

Part of the challenge facing the area is the changing regional context that surrounds North Saint Paul. The city originally developed as a small railroad town. As the Minneapolis/Saint Paul metropolitan region grew, suburbs such as Maplewood and Oakdale developed with more of a suburban character. Development in these cities was oriented around the automobile. Retail centers developed around high traffic corridors in high visibility areas, competing with North Saint Paul's downtown.

Not all changes have been challenges for North Saint Paul, however. Increased interest in bicycling and active living are bringing new visitors to North Saint Paul through the Gateway Trail Corridor. The city has also put significant investments into downtown, with the new City Hall, the Police and Fire Station, and adjacent streetscaping enhancements along Margaret Street. These public investments create opportunities to leverage private development and attract new investment to North Saint Paul.

Approach

The approach to this plan followed an established series of tasks that have yielded positive results in similar redevelopment planning efforts.

- Organize the Effort
- Define the Context
- Understand What is Desired
- Explore the Possibilities
- Prepare the Master Plan
- Agree to Move Forward

This approach works, using analysis to generate alternative options. Those alternates are honed to create a single plan that is further developed and refined. Finally direction is given to begin implementing the plan.

Multi-disciplinary approach

The study area is a complex set of sites, each with their own individual characteristics and potential. In order to understand and address the many moving parts of the area, a multi-disciplinary approach was necessary. The planning process included a team of professionals from a wide range of disciplines. Planners understand the regulations and help define the vision and goals of the process. Landscape architects contributed urban design work and principles, developing and translating the vision into site design. Market research consultants provided insight into the current market conditions, emphasizing what developments are feasible. Engineers assisted in measurement and design of the infrastructure, especially focusing in places where existing infrastructure inhibits redevelopment possibilities because of access or capacity limitations. Finally, public finance experts clarified the options for funding these improvements.



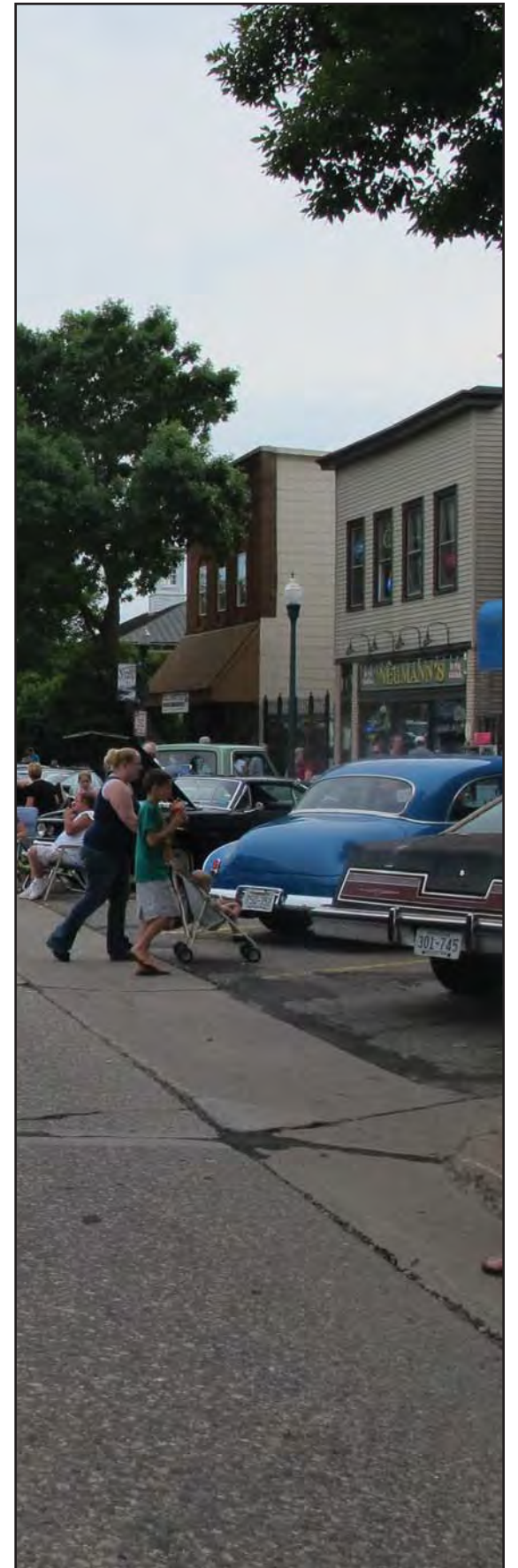
Downtown North St. Paul



Housing



North St. Paul Historical Society



Downtown North Saint Paul

Issues and Opportunities Context Report

The first step in the process was to analyze the existing conditions. Understanding the current status of the district helps to inform the rest of planning process. By recognizing the issues, we can identify and prioritize necessary actions taken by the plan.

The analysis also provided insight into the opportunities for redevelopment. We begin to get a clearer picture of where immediate efforts should be focused in order to leverage those initial investments into longer term, sustained transformation.

Prior Plans

North Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan

In 2008 the City completed a comprehensive plan for 2008-2030. The plan outlines directions and policies to guide North Saint Paul toward the community’s vision. One of the key directives is derived from the city’s vision: “An extraordinary small town in the cities.” North Saint Paul is a place where people can live, work, shop and recreate; “an extraordinary small town.” North Saint Paul is also part of a larger metropolitan area, connected to a number of communities by the Gateway Trail and Highway 36, drawing visitors from all over for car shows and museum tours, and providing a quality home for businesses and residents that rely on the greater region, thus “in the cities.”

Diversified District Plan

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the City updated the Diversified District Guide Plan. Located between Highway 36 and 7th Avenue, between McKnight Road and Century Avenue/Division Street the Diversified District is intended to encourage more intense, mixed land uses and facilitate high quality redevelopment. Redevelopment in the Diversified District should elevate both the tax base and the identity of North Saint Paul.

Part of the vision discusses balancing development and land uses along McKnight Road and Century Avenue/Division Street while retaining the strong Main Street character along 7th Avenue. The illustrative master plan envisioned large scale office development on the western third of the district and a hotel/entertainment focused area as a gateway from Division and Highway 36, both of which are not feasible in the marketplace today. Residential densities are planned to increase and develop west of McKnight and retained in existing locations. The plan includes placemaking principles, considering views from offices and homes, building plazas, and developing stormwater management as an amenity.

Other plans

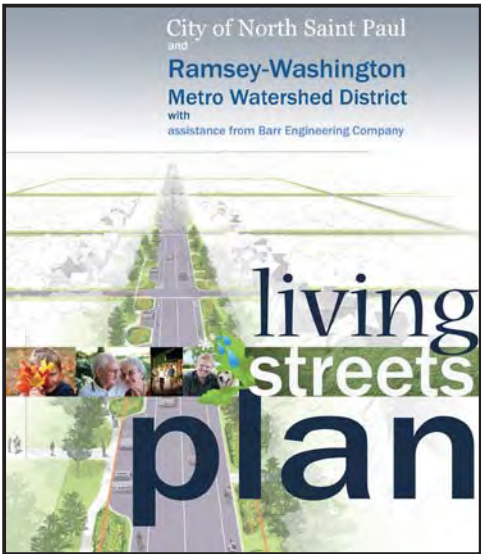
Numerous other plans, studies, and design guidelines adressing the project area, either in part or as a whole, include:

- North Brook Redevelopment Study (2011)
- North Brook Redevelopment Feasibility Plan (2012)
- Living Streets Plan (2011)
- Draft Bicycle and Sidewalk Plan (2011)
- Downtown North Saint Paul Housing Study (2011)
- Downtown Design Manual (2005)
- Numerous Commerce Park Redevelopment Plans (2010, 2011, 2011)
- Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan
- MNDOT Metro District and Statewide 20 Year Highway Investment Plans
- MNDOT Highway 36/Division Interchange Study (estimated 2013)

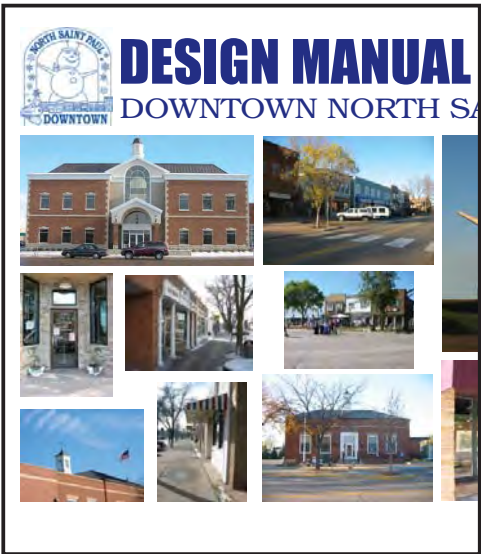
These documents have been studied and incorporated into the North Saint Paul Redevelopment Master Plan. (More detailed summary of the plans can be found in the Context Report). Currently, MNDOT’s Highway 36/Division Interchange Study is looking at the interchange between Highway 36 and Division/Century. It has not been completed but will have significant effects on the northeast portion of the study area. When the study is completed, the Redevelopment Master Plan may need to adapt in this area based on the transportation recommendations.



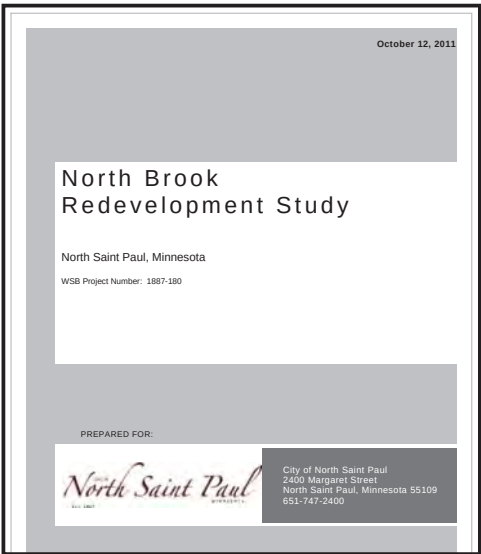
Metropolitan Council
2030 Transportation Plan



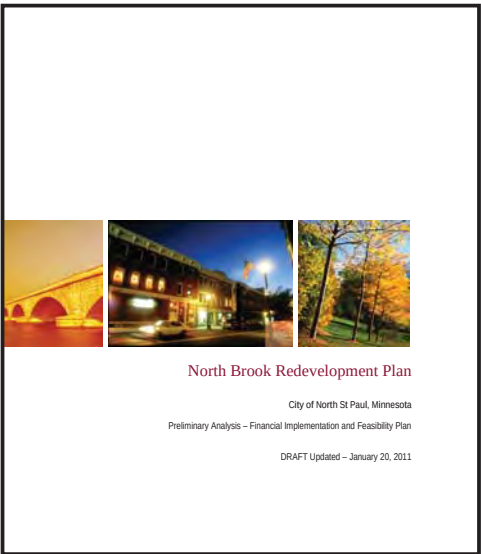
North Saint Paul Living Streets Plan



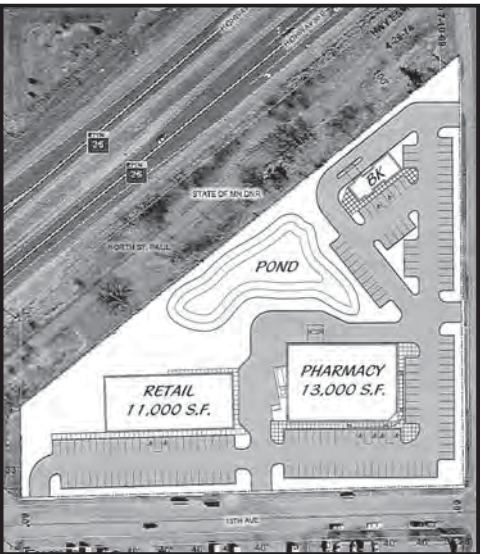
Design Manual -
Downtown North Saint Paul



North Brook Redevelopment Study



North Brook Redevelopment Plan



Commerce Park Development Concepts

Identifying Redevelopment Opportunities

In addition to examining previous planning efforts, it was necessary to evaluate property within the area for redevelopment potential. Moving forward on a 20 year plan can appear daunting without a place to start. By finding the “low hanging fruit” it was possible to identify locations that make sense as starting points.

Part of the process for identifying priority sites (Figure 1.1) was an attribute based evaluation of the properties within the study area. By assigning points based on characteristics of all of the parcels, the consultant team was able to get an initial view of where to focus redevelopment efforts. These characteristics included vacancy, age, land and building values, land use, size, ownership, location and visibility. This evaluation produced an initial framework (seen at right) to begin identifying redevelopment parcels.

Because the model could not take every variable into account, and because different redevelopment types have different needs, further analysis was conducted on a case-by-case basis, examining the physical characteristics, market realities, and other redevelopment demands of individual and combined sites.

Adjacencies

One of the issues that became immediately clear regarding potential redevelopment, was the need to understand the relationships between proposed redevelopment projects and existing land use adjacencies. Because of the externalities associated with some of the industrial land uses (noise, truck traffic, appearance), other uses such as residential or office are less likely to develop until mitigation measures (buffering, rerouting of truck traffic) are in place or a change in land use occurs. These adjacencies were examined as part of the master planning effort, and the phasing strategy in the implementation chapter reflects these relationships in the context of redevelopment timing.

Identifying Immediate Projects - Catalysts

Currently the City of North Saint Paul has numerous land holdings (Figure 1.2) in the study area, which combined with the Anchor Block site present opportunities for immediate redevelopment in the study area. Publicly owned and already cleared land shall be leveraged to showcase desired development and to create momentum for subsequent phases of development.



Some of the existing land uses pose challenges for redevelopment of neighboring parcels. Managing adjacency issues is a key component of the master planning process.

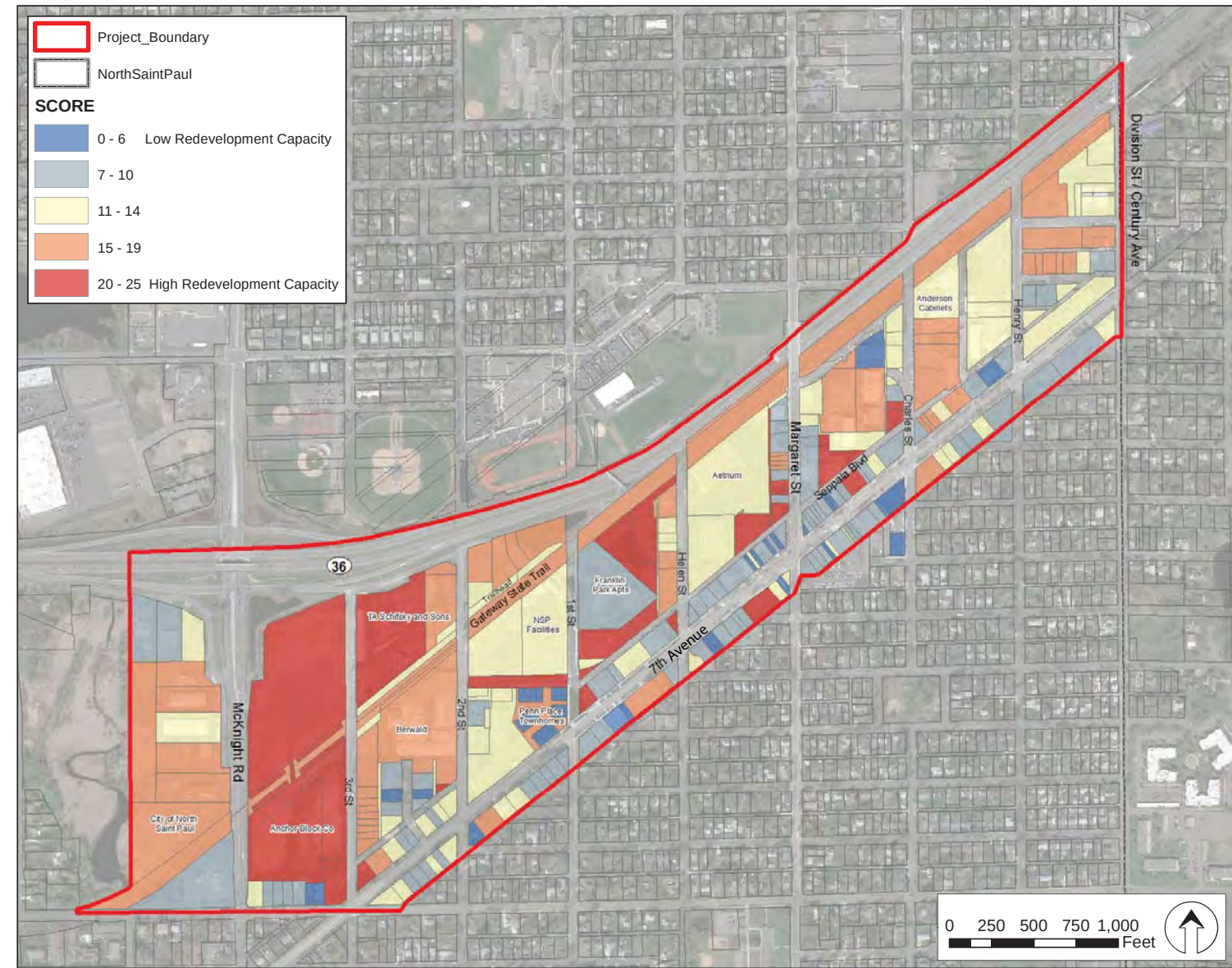
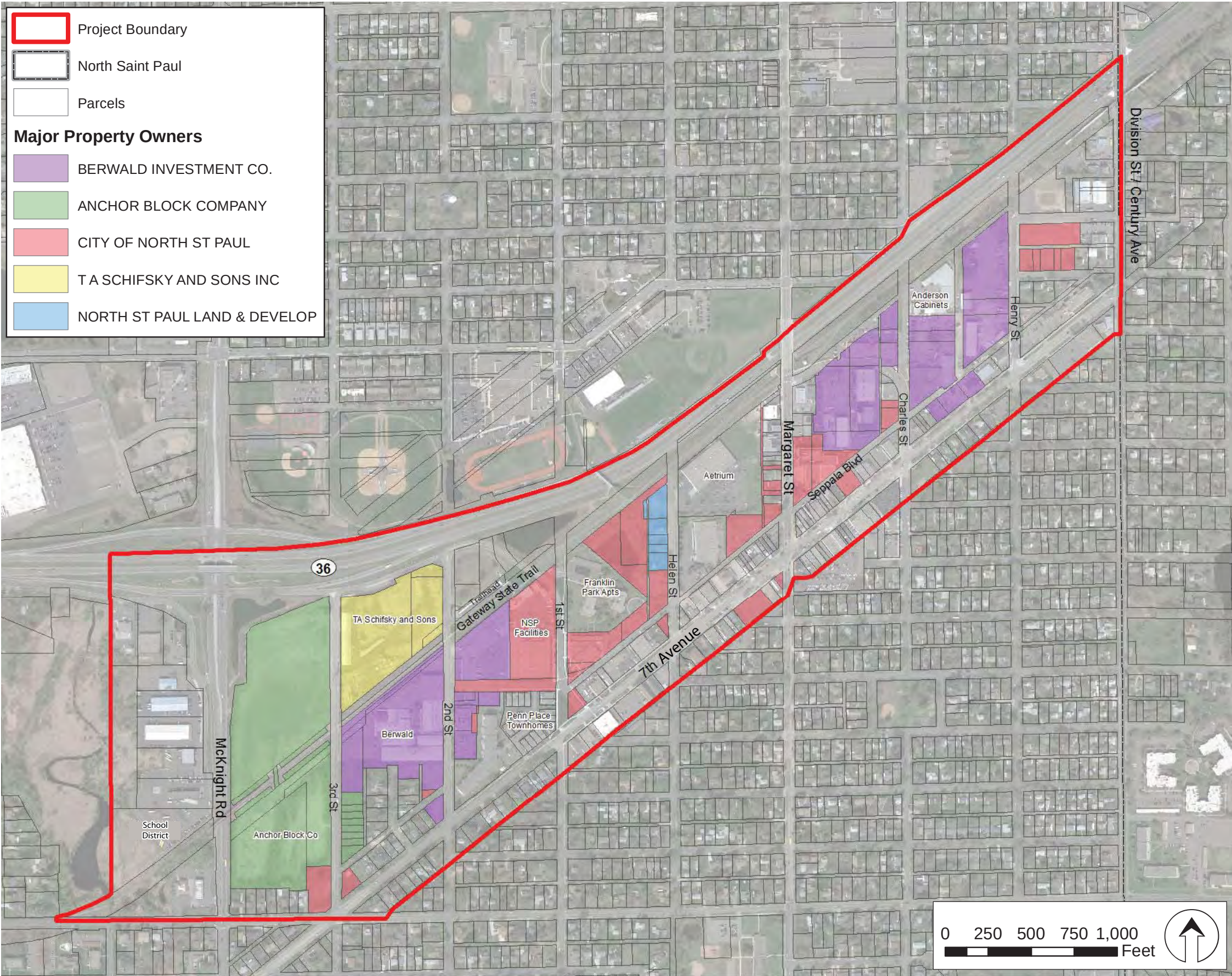


Figure 1.1 - An evaluation of redevelopment potential. The Anchor Block site scored well due to a number of factors including vacancy, visibility, proximity to McKnight and Highway 36, size, and an owner that is actively trying to sell the property. At the same time, Franklin Park Apartments do not make sense as a redevelopment site because of the large number of people already living there, limited access and visibility, and the high cost of acquisition.



Owner	Acres	Parcels	% of tot.
Berwald Investment Co	25.1	29	15.6%
Anchor Block Co	20.3	13	12.6%
City of North Saint Paul	17.7	33	11.0%
MN DNR (Trail)	14.6	3	9.0%
T A Schifsky & Sons	7.2	4	4.5%
Triple Shot LLC (Aetrium Bldg)	5.3	4	3.3%
Franklin Apts.	3.7	1	2.3%
Yocum Properties (Holiday Gas)	3.2	1	2.0%
Oak Hill Condominiums	2.7	1	1.7%
Beam Properties	2.3	1	1.4%
Heritage National Bank	2.1	1	1.3%
Andersen Cabinet Inc.	1.7	1	1.1%
E H Properties	1.6	1	1.0%
Regnier Properties	1.4	1	.9%
Elmstrand Properties	1.3	1	.8%
Thomas Jalonak	1.2	1	.7%
North St. Paul Land & Dev.	1.2	5	.7%
Cihon Matteson Partnership	1.2	3	.7%

Figure 1.2 - Major landowners in the North Saint Paul study area.

2. Existing Conditions

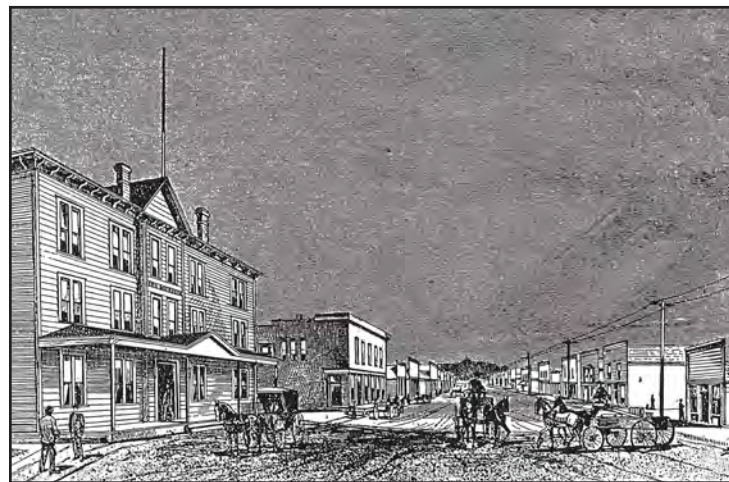
History

In the mid-1880s, with St. Paul booming as a railroad hub, Henry Castle recognized the opportunities for a manufacturing town to capitalize on the increasing national rail based trade occurring in the area. He purchased and developed land south and east of Silver Lake, including land around the newly laid Wisconsin Central Railway Line (in the same location as Highway 36 today). Castle and others worked to recruit industry to the new town and succeeded in bringing in manufacturers along the rail line. Some of the first industries included furniture manufacturers, farm implement fabricators, and brick makers. In conjunction with industrial expansion, a number of residential lots were platted and built, with new residents attracted by the offerings of factory jobs.

Throughout a number of ups and downs in the first half of the 20th century, North Saint Paul continued to grow with manufacturing and industry at its base. Starting in the 1930s although not completed until 1955, Highway 36 was built alongside the rail line, connecting North Saint Paul to Minneapolis by highway, with a pedestrian overpass at Margaret Street. During the post-war era, the expansion of the highway system allowed many suburban communities to grow. While North Saint Paul expanded, so did neighboring communities such as Maplewood. At the same time, industrial activity declined in the area, with few of the original factories remaining. As early as the 1950s and 60s, efforts to promote and pursue manufacturing and commercial activity were in place. T. A. Schifsky and Sons started in 1959 and the city improved the downtown commercial area. This time period represented a shift towards a city that was part of a regional system of economics, social activity, and transportation. While this transition created challenges, it allowed the city to distinguish itself as a great place to live in the region.

In 1972 the city decided to build the iconic snowman that sits along Margaret Street. Created by resident Lloyd Koesling, the sculpture recalls the Snow Frolics celebrations where the North Saint Paul Jaycees would build a large snowman downtown. The snowman was adopted as the city logo and the sculpture serves as a welcome to North Saint Paul.

Based on information from A Century of Good Living - North St. Paul by Rosemary Palmer



Historic 7th Avenue
(Image: A Century of Good Living-North St. Paul)



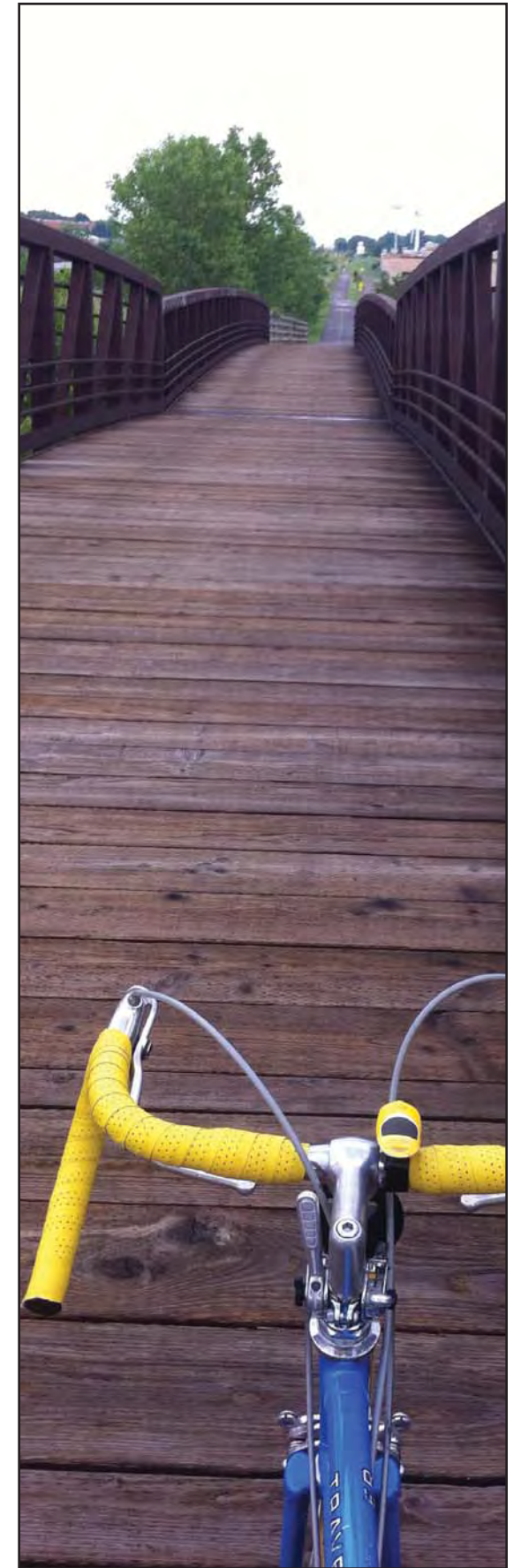
Repairing the tracks at the historic North St. Paul Depot
(Image: A Century of Good Living-North St. Paul)



The North Saint Paul Public Works Facility and iconic wind turbine.



Reflex Medical, a recent redevelopment project in North Saint Paul.



The Gateway Trail Bridge over McKnight Road.

Land Use

The study area as it sits today contains a mix of very different land uses, ranging from high density residential to a heavy industry asphalt and recycling plant. Some of the mixes work well together, such as offices and retail, while the combinations of others create significant conflict.

Civic

The downtown district is a civic center for the City of North Saint Paul. Significant investments have gone into the City Hall building and the Fire and Police Station along Margaret Street. The library is integrated with a civic building at Seppala and North Saint Paul Drive and the U.S. Post Office is in the downtown along 7th Avenue. Beyond the government buildings, the North Star Museum of Boy Scouting and Girl Scouting and the North St. Paul Historical Society Museum both sit along the south side of 7th Avenue on either side of Henry Street. North High School is just north of the study area across Highway 36 and the school district operates bussing from a new facility next to the North Saint Paul Urban Ecology Center.

Commercial

The majority of commercial uses in the study area are situated downtown on 7th Avenue between 1st Street and Division Street as well as Margaret Street between 7th Avenue and Highway 36. Most of the stores are independent retailers, providing a mix of services ranging from restaurant and bars to auto parts to antiques. The district has also built up a base of health care providers including medical doctors, physical therapy, dentistry, psychology, and chiropractic professionals. Other professional offices exist throughout the neighborhood, including the newer three story Jarvis Court Building on the south side of 7th Ave. It is also worth noting that Target anchors a retail area northwest of Highway 36 and McKnight interchange.

Industrial

Light and heavy industrial uses are situated between Highway 36 and Seppala Boulevard. This area still retains some of the industrial character established by the railroad focused businesses in the late 19th Century. The uses vary greatly, from high tech light industrial such as Aetrium semiconductor manufacturing to T.A. Schifsky & Sons’ asphalt and recycling plant.

Residential

Residential uses exist with a mix of densities and conditions. Older single family homes exist along South Avenue, portions of 7th Avenue, in the Commerce Park area and . This is also the land use that defines the area immediately south of the study area. Newer townhomes and high density housing have been built between 2nd Street and Helen Street, and a new senior housing development is planned to be constructed along Helen Street in 2013.

Vacant

Some of the redevelopment opportunities are on land that is already vacant. This land exists throughout the study area, but key vacant sites include the Anchor Block property, Commerce Park property and the former location of City Hall. All three are in various stages of development. All are cleared, graded, and have access to utilities.



Civic - City Hall



Commercial - Downtown Retail



Office / Light Industry - Aetrium



Heavy Industry - T.A. Schifsky & Sons



Residential - Penn Place Townhomes



Vacant - Anchor Block Site

Transportation

Highway 36 and The Study Area Roadway Network

Highway 36 at the north end of the study site functions as the regional connection for much of North Saint Paul, as well as other suburbs such as Mahtomedi and Stillwater. South of Highway 36, 7th Avenue East serves as the “Main Street” for the city. 7th Avenue mirrors the old railroad line that used to run through town at a diagonal, rather than follow the traditional grid along the cardinal directions. This creates some access and connectivity challenges for the area. The major roadways include McKnight Road on the west, Century Avenue/Division Street on the east, and South Avenue to the south. Seppala Boulevard is a unique street in that it provides loading and access to many of the buildings that front on 7th Avenue like an alley, but also functions as a street. Streets continue to follow the north/south grid that defines much of the city, while many of the east/west avenues are halted before reaching 7th Avenue.

Public Transit

Public transit options exist in North Saint Paul. Route 64 runs from downtown St. Paul to the Maplewood Mall, running through North Saint Paul along East 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. Route 219 travels from the Sun-Ray Mall and I-94 to Century College and Maplewood Mall, stopping along East 7th Avenue. While no direct express options exist from the area, the Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan projects Highway 36 as a transitway with potential BRT/LRT/Commuter Rail service.

Gateway Trail

The Gateway Trail runs through North Saint Paul and the study area connecting to St. Paul and Stillwater. In North Saint Paul, the trail follows the old railroad line. The North Saint Paul Trailhead sits off of 2nd Street and provides interpretive signage, temporary restrooms, and parking.



Transportation in the study area varies from a state highway and planned rapid transit route (overpass shown) to a street-alley hybrid to a regional bike trail.

Market Summary

Retail

The study area does benefit from fairly strong traffic counts, with roughly 35,000 daily trips passing along Highway 36 between McKnight Road and Century Avenue/Division Street, and 15,000 trips on McKnight Road and Century Boulevard, respectively. These numbers are not at the levels of typical interstate traffic, but would be sufficient to meet the needs of many retailers.

While the study area does see significant traffic, part of the challenge is connecting people traveling along Highway 36 to the downtown retail hub along 7th Street. The routes into downtown from Highway 36 are indirect and confusing. eastbound traffic from Highway 36 travels along North Saint Paul Drive, around industrial land uses and it is not immediately clear this is the route to downtown. While it is an improved roadway (street trees, lights, striping), it lacks visual connectivity or adequate signage to direct people to the downtown. For westbound traffic, the route is also indirect and lacks signage to direct people to the downtown core. The Minnesota Department of Transportation will be undertaking an interchange/overpass study for Highway 36 and Century Blvd this spring, which should clarify some of the long-term connection questions.

Located less than one mile west of McKnight Road, White Bear Avenue comprises a major commercial corridor. The Maplewood Mall, a 900,000 square foot regional mall, is located less than two miles north of the White Bear Avenue/ Highway 36 interchange and serves as the dominant retail district in the region. The Maplewood Mall also sits between North Saint Paul and the St. John’s Hospital, a major local employer. Additionally, traffic counts on Highway 36 and White Bear Avenue are higher than in the North Saint Paul study area.

Currently the retail market in North Saint Paul is not underserved. The retail along White Bear Avenue is mostly sufficient to serve the community, which means that it will be difficult to add large amounts retail into an already saturated market. In order to measure if an area’s retailers are meeting the demand of a community, “pull factors” are used. Pull factors measure the extent to which an area’s retail stores achieve net inflows of retail spending. The “pull factor” is calculated by first dividing local sales (provided by the Minnesota Dept. of Revenue) in the area’s stores to the population, and thus deriving per-capita sales in the area. This ratio is then divided by the per-capita sales figure in a broader area, such as the County or State. Where local per-capita sales exceed those in the broader areas, the local market achieves a net inflow of spending. Conversely, where local per-capita sales fall below those in the broader area, the local market sustains a net spending outflow.

While downtown North Saint Paul occupies a good location, it cannot provide the most desired location for retail stores in the area, and the local market is neither growing nor underserved.

This general finding does not eliminate the potential for new retail endeavors, however. While significant new retail development is not likely in the Study Area, opportunities will be available for new retail tenants. Such opportunities include small scale businesses that can focus on the immediate (<1 mile) area, niche retail, or the development of a distinct “district” focused on specific retail needs. These opportunities will be discussed in more length in the Master Plan and Implementation chapters.

Industrial

Currently the market for industrial real estate is weak throughout the region. Within the Twin Cities Metropolitan area, approximately 20 percent of existing industrial space is available for lease. This equates to about 20 million square feet of available space, while typical absorption averages less than 1 million square feet per year. With a large surplus of space, speculative industrial development is low, although there are opportunities for build-to-suit owner occupied industrial development.

Fortunately for North Saint Paul, the prospects for industrial growth are better than the rest of the metropolitan area. With a varied and established industrial base, the city has more opportunities than most communities. Additionally, high-quality, reliable power and telecommunications infrastructure gives the city an advantage for activities such as data processing and storage and customer service.

At the same time, redevelopment of other industrial areas around the Twin Cities to new uses is anticipated to leave a demand for developable industrial land. Demand will be for industrial land that is relatively central to the regional work force; and accessible to the highway system. North Saint Paul will be well positioned to capture a portion of this demand.

North St. Paul/Maplewood Retail Pull Factors					
	MN	Ramsey Co	NSP/Maplewood	NSP/Maplewood Pull Factor	
				Within State	Within Co.
Furnishings	\$1,750,539,834	\$175,868,336	\$13,349,056		
Sales/capita	\$328	\$344	\$278	0.85	0.81
Electronics	\$3,546,246,705	\$429,143,598	\$56,302,942		
Sales/capita	\$665	\$840	\$1,171	1.76	1.39
Food & Gen. Merch.	\$22,213,745,539	\$1,971,689,067	\$240,190,784		
Sales/capita	\$4,164	\$3,859	\$4,996	1.20	1.29
Health, Pers. Care	\$4,427,329,539	\$443,280,750	\$48,145,084		
Sales/capita	\$830	\$868	\$1,001	1.21	1.15
Apparel	\$3,176,153,175	\$349,922,610	\$112,844,154		
Sales/capita	\$595	\$685	\$2,347	3.94	3.43
Leisure Goods	\$2,512,185,588	\$223,477,060	\$36,918,887		
Sales/capita	\$471	\$437	\$768	1.63	1.76
Miscellaneous	\$3,821,726,811	\$820,075,994	\$85,108,313		
Sales/capita	\$716	\$1,605	\$1,770	2.47	1.10
Restaurants	\$7,348,680,684	\$839,130,546	\$84,875,478		
Sales/capita	\$1,378	\$1,642	\$1,765	1.28	1.08
Source: Minnesota Dept. of Revenue; ESRI; W-ZHA, LLC					

Figure 2.1 - Retail Pull Factors for North Saint Paul / Maplewood.

Office

The local and regional office market will offer very limited opportunities for new development. Developers of higher-end, large-scale corporate office space seek established concentrations of office tenants close to professional labor amid high-image surroundings. Class A accounts for only 27% of the office space in the Northeast submarket, the lowest share of any Twin Cities submarket. Additionally there is a significant unfilled supply of headquarter/office campus locations throughout the metropolitan region that would likely be filled before developers would come to North Saint Paul.

While large scale office development is unlikely, there may be scattered small scale opportunities. These are likely to include:

- Office/Warehouse users who are looking for industrial space that can include a company’s offices.
- Back office tenants, such as data processing and customer service centers. This represents a growing industry sector. In addition, this type of use would realize a competitive advantage in North St. Paul, which offers excellent and secure utilities and fiber optic infrastructure connections.
- Public and Nonprofit organizations including higher education or technical college.
- “Household-serving” businesses: these businesses engage in a broad range of industries encompassing legal services, financial services, insurance, real estate, design, and physical and mental health providers, but serve individual consumers rather than corporate clientele.

Residential

The recent Downtown North Saint Paul Housing Study determined that over the next five years, downtown North Saint Paul has the potential to capture new market-rate residential development including:

- 276 units of new rental apartments;
- 100-120 units of independent senior housing, as well as 40 assisted living units and 10-25 memory care units.

Along with these findings, there is little to no potential for new condominium development in the short term future.

It should be noted that this is an estimate of potential, and the market is competing with other, nearby municipalities. There are strategic steps the city can take to promote and encourage residential development. The market study suggests that the provision of parks, pedestrian connections, and streetscapes help elevate the identity of the area. Likewise, allowing lower-end developments could wind up precluding later, high-quality development and may detract from the downtown environment. Additionally, the city should coordinate commercial and residential mixed-use development, as new housing could strengthen the downtown commercial market.

3. Vision and Guiding Principles

The Master Plan is dynamic. It is not a set of strict “rules” but instead, a flexible framework that guides decisions about redevelopment. The plan addresses both “public” infrastructure and “private” redevelopment initiatives. It supports and shapes regulations; it accommodates dreams and aspirations; it recognizes reality; it prioritizes projects and ideas; it holds the community accountable; it tells the North Saint Paul story; and it communicates what is desired. The plan is a valuable tool that is intended to be embraced and actively used by the community.

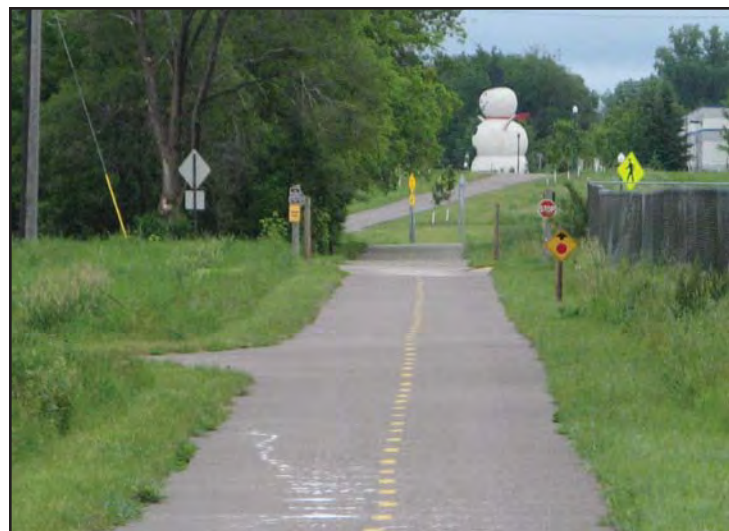
The vision for this project is drawn from past comprehensive planning and master planning efforts. It defines what the community is to become. It provides a basis and a framework from which the plan and supporting strategic actions can be identified. The vision suggests a way of thinking about possible directions for the community while a set of guiding principles helps establish a path that results in a plan that “fits” North Saint Paul.

Guiding principles can be used on an ongoing basis as a yardstick - a primary filter for determining what is appropriate. Together with the vision statement, the guiding principles become the critical tools for ongoing measurement and assessment of initiatives and results.

Vision & Guiding Principles for North Saint Paul

What do they mean?

- They orient the community to the future, even to a future that is twenty years distant.
- They require imagination, recognizing that the direction it sets will be the reality of the future.
- They look to current conditions and community traditions for clues to the appropriate future.
- They are based on a shared understanding of what the community desires for itself.
- They will be used as tools for evaluation of proposals, projects, ideas and future directions.
- They will be an anchor during conflict, a way of finding common ground and shared values.
- They become a basis for coordination and cooperation.
- They are a source of energy and enthusiasm for maintaining a commitment to the future of North Saint Paul.



Gateway Trail



Post Office

Vision

We say North Saint Paul is “An extraordinary small town in the cities!”

Identity

We are a town of 3.1 square miles, with a six block long Main Street. A small industrial village turned first-ring suburb, we embrace our small-town feel but also recognize we are part of a larger region. With 125 years of history, we are a tight-knit community with bonds to our town, our neighbors, and our shared past. But we are also a town that looks to the future, embracing technology and seeking new ways to capture the next wave of innovation and ingenuity to propel our community forward.

Image

Our community has the appearance and feel of a small town as evident in the architectural character of our main street, our safe and peaceful neighborhoods, our appreciation for parks and open space, and our thriving community events. Although we seek to become more “urban” by investing in progressive infrastructure improvements and more compact development, we will strive to preserve our small-town atmosphere by ensuring that future projects adhere to our design standards and aesthetic character.

Enduring

We are a town in which quality development contributes to a lasting quality environment. The proper density and mix of development helps build and, more importantly, sustain our public infrastructure system, community facilities, and public spaces. Development projects are planned and constructed in a manner that lasts over time, using quality building materials and innovative site design. Our development is not overly dependent on any single economic sector or type of energy resource so that we endure both physical and economic challenges.

Quality of Life

With an abundance of city parks, schools, churches, a quaint downtown district, and peaceful neighborhoods, North Saint Paul is a town with a great quality of life. We are connected to a thriving metropolitan region, and we appreciate how this enhances our residents’ access to a diversity of jobs, cultural and recreational opportunities, quality health care, and higher education opportunities. However, looking to the future, it is important for North Saint Paul to offer this same diversity closer to home. We must be forward-thinking about our land use and continue to explore new ways to transform uses that have moved on or that could better contribute to realizing our vision.



The North Saint Paul Snowman

Guiding Principles

- Create coordinated and harmonious development of functionally related uses including high density residential, office, commercial, entertainment / recreation, quality industrial and public facilities.
- Ensure quality design and superior aesthetics of development.
- Minimize adverse effects of neighboring uses.
- Provide adequate provisions for open space.
- Develop a diversified and legible transportation network including transit, strong pedestrian networks and links to the downtown.
- Enhance and improve the image of the City in Downtown, along the Highway 36 Corridor and within the residential neighborhoods.
- Possess a progressive image for redevelopment while maintaining a sense of the community heritage.
- Consider new forms of housing such as condominiums, senior housing, townhomes, villas and live / work.
- Grow the community's tax base.
- Maintain a pedestrian friendly environment along streets throughout the community.
- Concentrate development on 7th Avenue between 1st Street and Division Street, and compress commercial / retail development near the intersection of 7th Avenue and Margret Street.
- Establish a theme for the downtown to provide long-term economic viability.
- Utilize financial incentives to maintain downtown's viability, such as a revolving loan fund, special service districts and other economic incentives.
- Transform Seppala Street to a functionally and aesthetically pleasing "business lane" to accommodate loading and service needs and secondary pedestrian circulation.
- Maintain and upgrade infrastructure in the Downtown (roads, walks, utilities, streetscape and public realm enhancements.)
- Enhance pedestrian and vehicular circulation throughout the district.
- Create new landmarks and gateways to better signal the arrival into downtown.
- Redevelopment along the Highway 36 corridor should include a mix of uses rooted in today's market reality.



From a new City Hall...



To a celebration of historic cars...



With locally focused retail...



And investment in jobs...



North St. Paul is a place to play...



With plenty of opportunity.

4. Redevelopment Master Plan

The Approach to Redevelopment

The Redevelopment Master Plan for North Saint Paul is described in this chapter can be summarized with the “Big Ideas” driving the transformation of the area over the next twenty years. These “Big Ideas” are encapsulated in the Master Plan Approach Diagram (Figure 4.1). The initiatives outlined in the master plan are focused around three primary geographic areas within the study area, the Downtown Core, Commerce Park and the McKnight Road area. These areas are further defined with more specialized districts of common uses and urban design aesthetic and detailed as a part of subsequent areas in the master plan.

The primary elements at the foundation of the redevelopment master plan are to:

- Create retail compression at the downtown core;
- Develop vertical mixed use intensity in the downtown core;
- Support and grow a diversity of jobs surrounding the downtown core;
- Develop a contemporary convenience retail / service area near the intersection of Highway 36 and Century Avenue / Division Street;
- Redevelop the Commerce Park area with a collection of office showroom, office flex and light industrial uses;
- Transform the McKnight Road area including the Anchor Block site north of the Gateway Trail as a focus for a future employment center that could include a range of opportunities from adaptive re-use, intensification and development of “back office uses” in the near-term and longer term office headquarters, light assembly, and warehouse uses over the long-term.
- Create a housing redevelopment and intensification area south of the Gateway Trail on portions of the Anchor Block site;
- Utilize parks and open spaces as amenities for future development;
- Provide enhanced wayfinding and signage for visitors arriving via Highway 36 and the Gateway Trail into the heart of downtown;
- Create stronger connections to downtown with the creation of a new “parkway” or “gateway” corridor through the Anchor Block site and connecting with the existing North Saint Paul Drive;
- Utilize stormwater treatment as an amenity throughout the district.



Compress retail along 7th Avenue to a block east or west of Margaret Street.



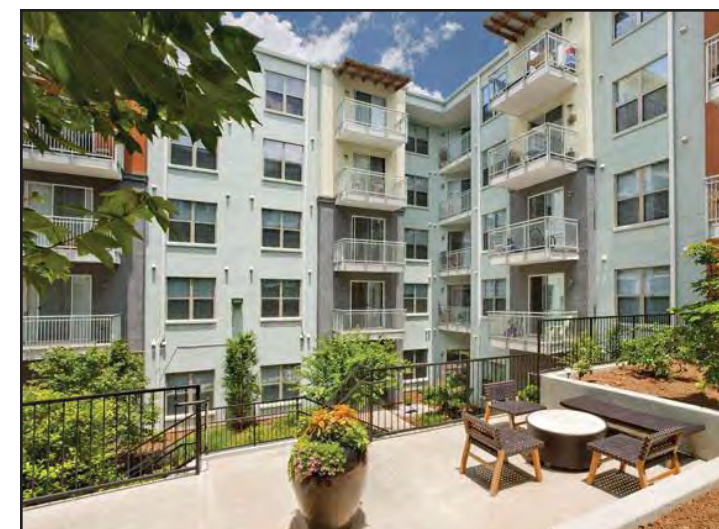
Mixed Use is envisioned in the downtown.



Convenience retail in Commerce Park.



Business headquarters, office space, light assembly and warehouse uses at the Anchor Block site.



High density housing is envisioned for the southern portion of the Anchor Block site.



Parks will plan an instrumental role in the future of the district.

Redevelopment Approach Diagram:

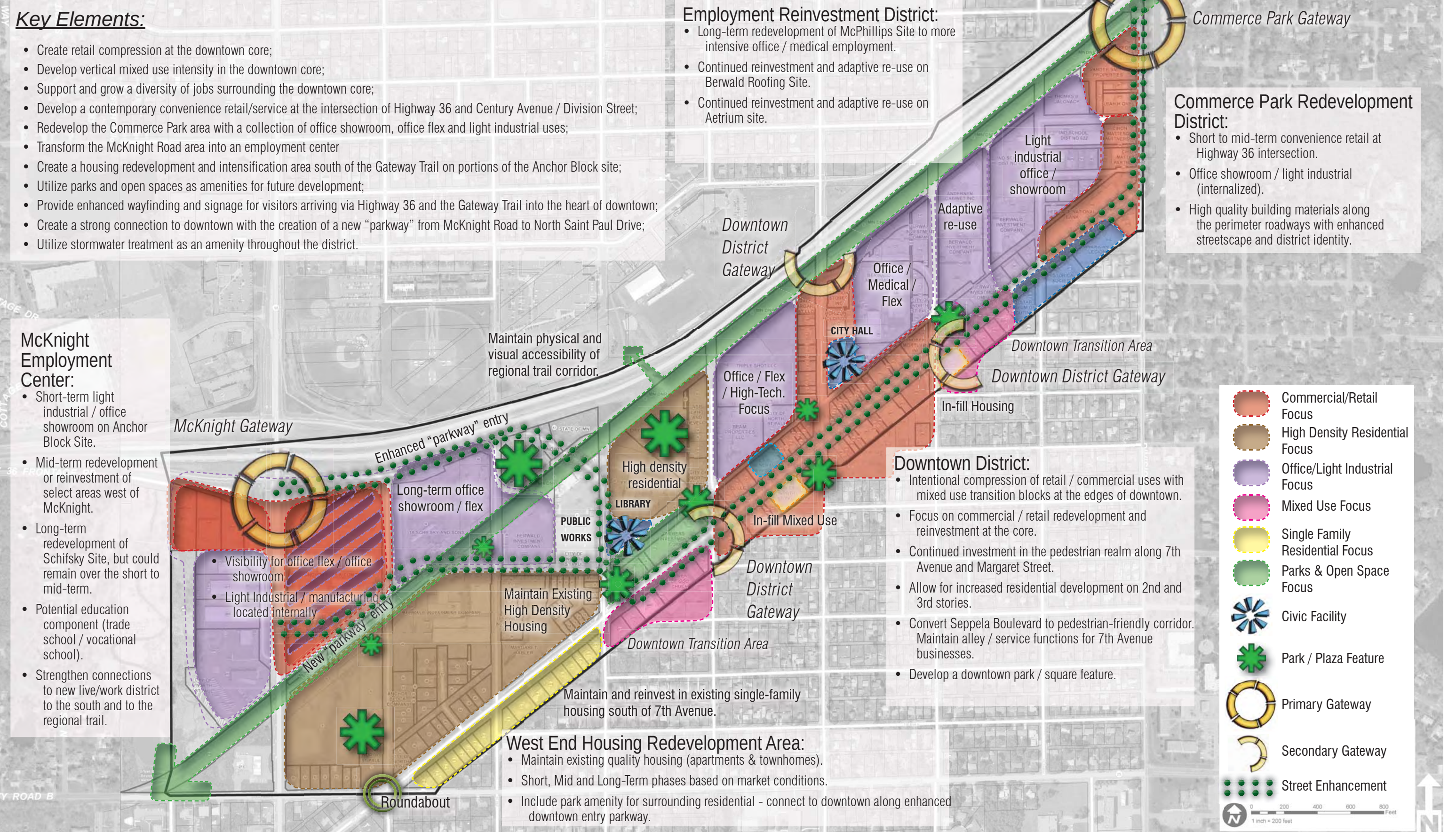


Figure 4.1 - Redevelopment Approach Diagram

A Collection of Districts

The redevelopment Master Plan organizes similar land uses and urban design relationships by a series of districts. These districts (The Downtown District, Commerce Park Redevelopment District, Core Employment & Reinvestment District, West End Housing & Redevelopment Area, and the McKnight Employment Center) all have distinctly similar characteristics. Many of the proposed development projects are of similar use, size and scale and overall aesthetics. The following is a summary of the unique characteristics each district exemplifies:

Downtown District

- Focus on commercial / retail redevelopment and reinvestment at the core.
- Create an intentional compression of retail / commercial uses at the core with more mixed use transition blocks at the edges of downtown.
- Continue to invest in the pedestrian realm along 7th Avenue and Margaret Street.
- Allow for increased residential development on 2nd and 3rd stories.
- Convert Seppela Boulevard to pedestrian-friendly, multi-functional corridor.
- Maintain alley / service functions for 7th Avenue businesses.
- Develop a downtown park / square feature as a community destination and gathering space.

Commerce Park Redevelopment District

- Redevelop convenience retail near the Highway 36 intersection.
- Develop office, flex or light industrial internalized and focused on Henry Street.
- Utilize high quality building materials on sites along the perimeter of the district.
- Design roadways with enhanced streetscape and district identity.
- Make a stronger connection to the Gateway Trail.

McKnight Employment Center

- Develop light industrial / office flex, office warehouse, limited production on the northern portion of the Anchor Block Site.
- Utilize a combination of redevelopment and reinvestment for select areas west of McKnight for office / office flex / and commercial uses.
- Plan for long-term redevelopment of Schifsky Site, but recognize and mitigate the impacts on immediate and short term development.
- Investigate a potential educational component (trade school / vocational school) as a potential user and integrate the environmental learning center.
- Strengthen connections to new live/work district to the south and to the regional trail.

West End Housing & Redevelopment Area

- Maintain recent, existing quality housing (apartments & townhomes).
- Balance housing redevelopment across all phases of redevelopment based on market conditions.
- Develop a neighborhood park as an amenity for surrounding residential
- Create a strong connection to downtown along a newly created parkway and enhanced 7th Avenue

Core Employment Reinvestment District

- Redevelop the McPhillips site to more intensive office / medical employment.
- Continue reinvestment and adaptive re-use on Berwald Roofing Site.
- Continue reinvestment and adaptive re-use on Aetrium site.

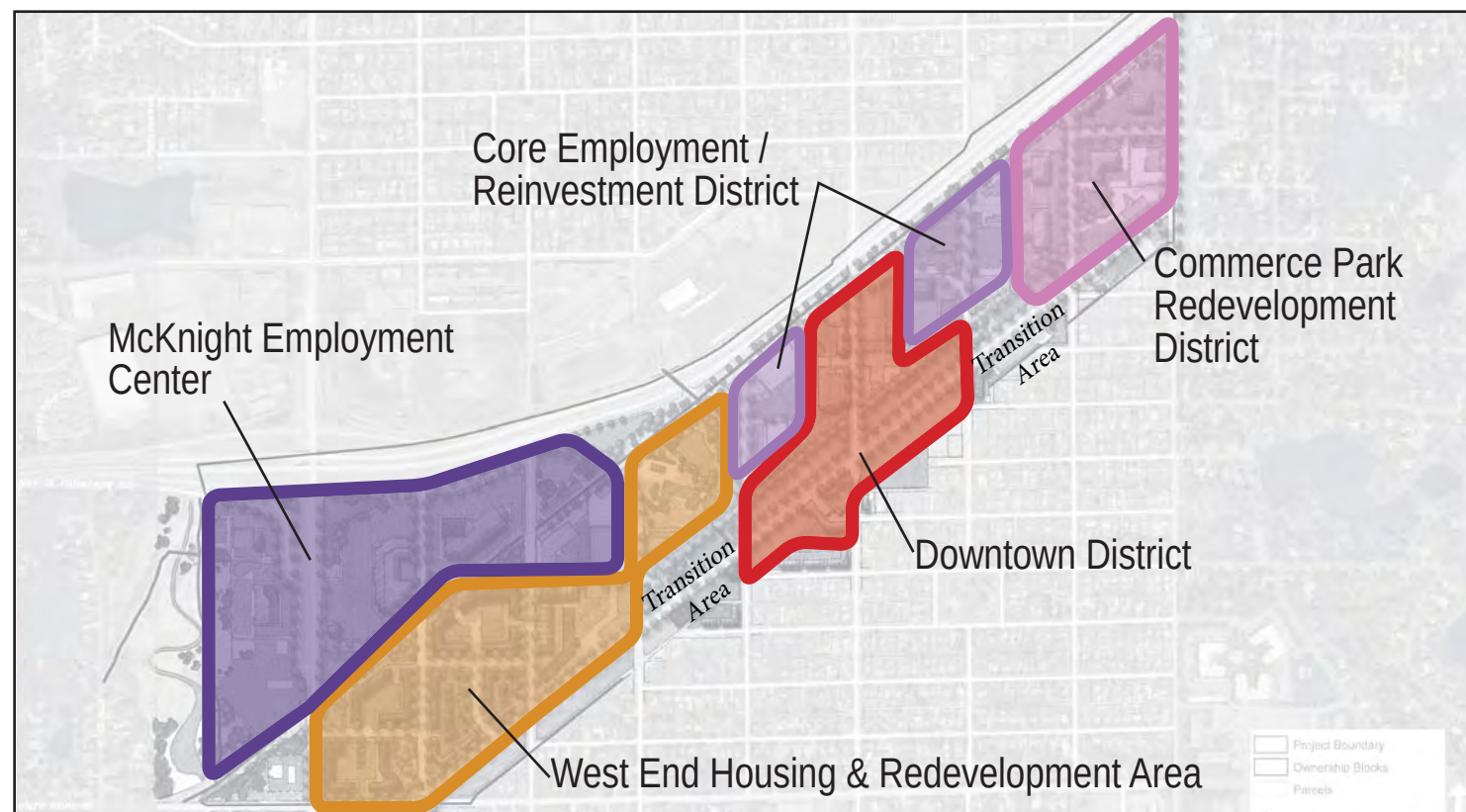


Figure 4.2 - Land Use and Urban Design Districts Map

The following pages of the Redevelopment Master Plan overview the various systems (Parks and Open Space system, Stormwater System, Transportation System as well as break down the allocation of Commercial, Employment and Residential uses in the study area.

Redevelopment Master Plan

Legend:

Employment (Industrial, Office, Professional)

Commercial / Retail

Housing

Mixed Use

Civic

Parks/Open Space

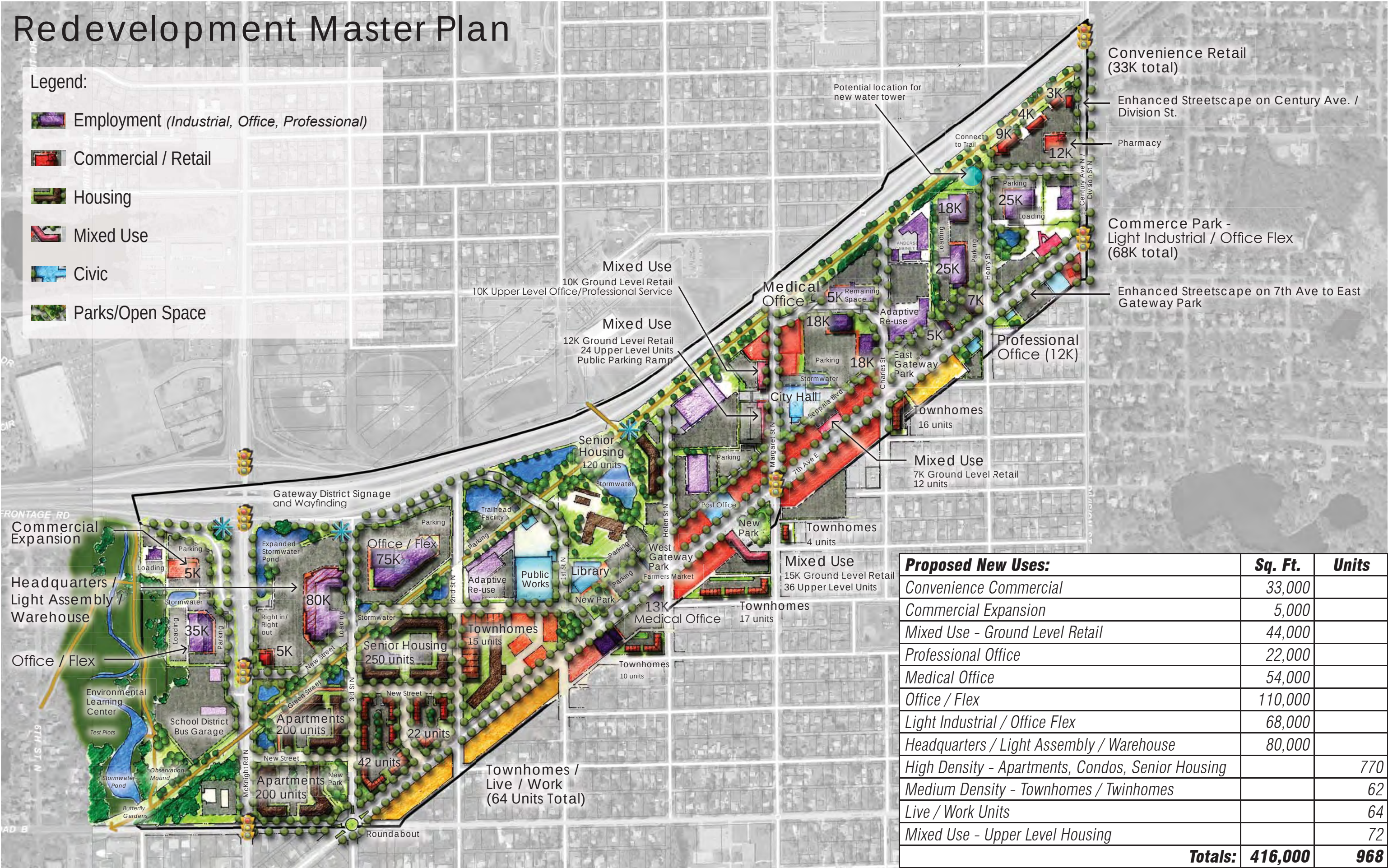


Figure 4.3 - Redevelopment Master Plan

Retail Compression at Core

In general, the study area faces substantial obstacles for substantial new commercial development; however there are certain opportunities in the near term to build a strong foundation for the future. One opportunity is to create a concentration of commercial “showcase” uses in a compact area. Here retailers can form an identifiable district, and this district is more likely to offer the critical mass needed to attract customers and visitors on a regular basis. The master plan suggests the compression of retail between Helen Street and Charles Street along 7th Avenue and from one block south of 7th Avenue north along Margaret Street to Highway 36. To the extent possible, these retail uses should be built within a mixed-use building with ground level retail and upper level office or housing uses.

Downtown businesses should grow market support from the immediately surrounding area. Businesses within the central commercial area maintain competitive advantages by having workers and residents in the immediate surroundings. Most of the businesses in the downtown commercial core will be small-scale, and would derive substantial benefits from relatively incremental increases to the local daytime as well as residential populations. Local employment would likely increase through increased small business development and the local population would likely grow through new apartment and other multi-family development.

Within the concentrated commercial area, enhancing local advantages to help commercial businesses capture the immediately surrounding market should be pursued. Assisting local businesses through the enhancement of pedestrian and vehicular connections, shared or district parking, and by creating new community recreational amenities such as parks with active programmed uses will all help to promote habitual visitation.

Convenience Retail at Century Avenue and Highway 36

This triangular shaped area in the northeast corner of the study area is envisioned to reposition itself as contemporary convenience retail node. Anticipated uses would likely include traditional convenience retail businesses, such as in-line, multi-tenant retail, fast and quick serve restaurants, and a pharmacy. The existing owners of the Burger King have expressed interest in repositioning their building to better take advantage of cycling traffic along the Gateway Trail, and it should be a priority to integrate all stakeholders in this area as redevelopment occurs.

Retail near McKnight Road

On the west end of the study area along McKnight Road the potential exists for a combined retailing space with an office showroom or similar use on the norther portion of the Anchor Block Site. The creation of the newly controlled intersection at McKnight Road and the new parkway connection could allow for potential commercial or retail pad sites adjacent to the intersection.

Additionally, with the newly planned intersection and entry parkway to downtown, small retail or pad sites may be viable. The existing hardware store on the west could also be a candidate for potential for expansion to the east.



Convenience retail could posses drive-thru on the end caps of in-line retail buildings.



Mixed use in the Downtown District.



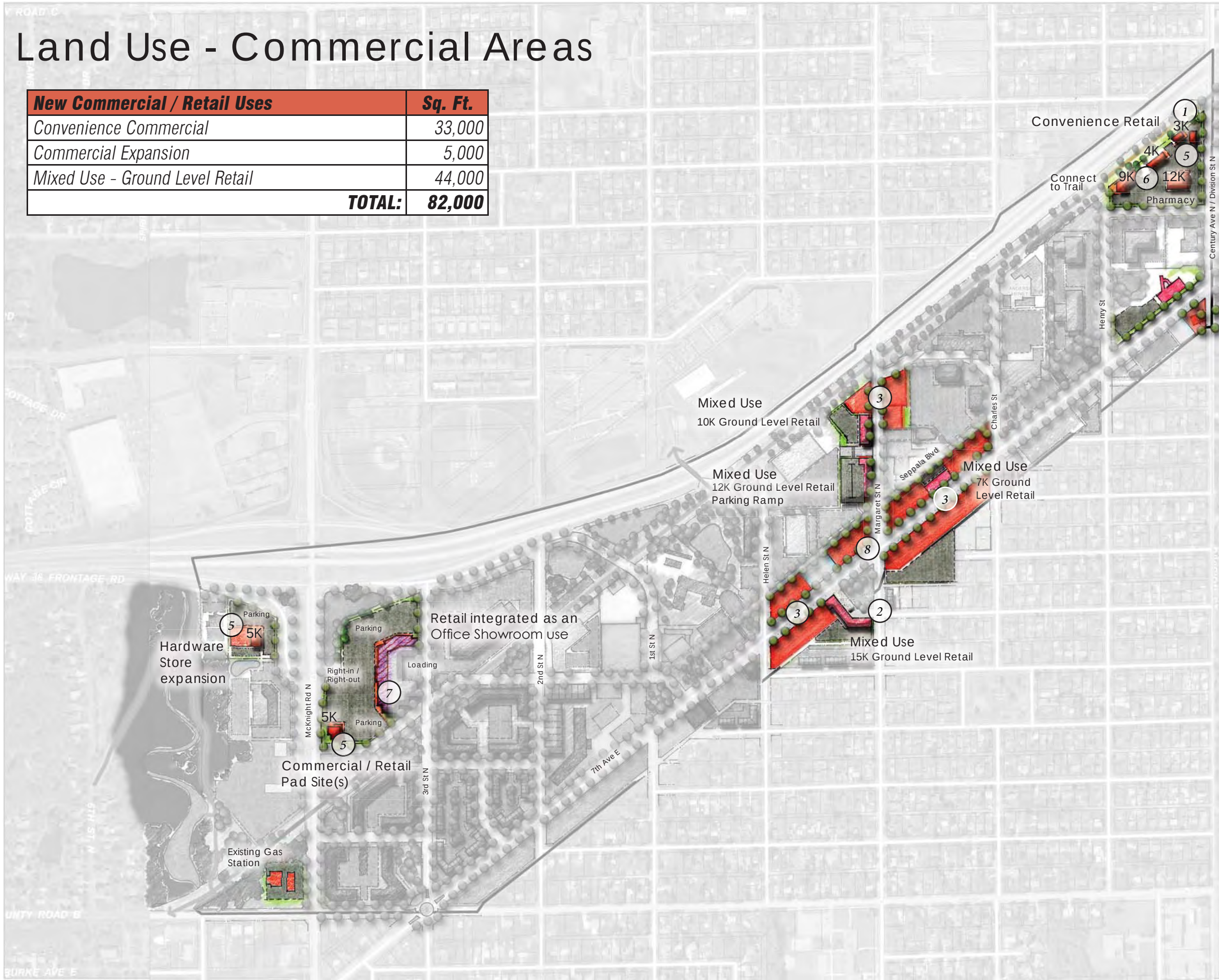
Develop appropriate scale of buildings and public realm amenities downtown.



Convenience Retail

Land Use - Commercial Areas

New Commercial / Retail Uses	Sq. Ft.
Convenience Commercial	33,000
Commercial Expansion	5,000
Mixed Use - Ground Level Retail	44,000
TOTAL:	82,000



New commercial development should utilize high-end materials.



Multi-tenant in-line retail is a likely use in Commerce Park.



Retail could be integrated with portions of the north Anchor Block site.



A pleasing downtown environment with outdoor dining and gathering areas.

Figure 4.4 - Land Use - Commercial Areas

Housing uses are focused in three primary areas throughout the study area. Upper-level rental apartment units are envisioned within the downtown core, and immediately adjacent to the downtown urban townhomes are anticipated. These medium density units create a transition between the more intensive downtown development and the existing single family neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. New townhomes are likely to be rental in the early stages of development due to market conditions, but could transition to owner occupied units over time as conditions improve. The general form of these types of units work well for either rental or owner occupied units.

The most significant area of new housing is anticipated in the West End Housing Redevelopment Area which encompasses the southern portion of the Anchor Block site and the existing single-family neighborhood to the east. As the market study indicates, downtown North Saint Paul has the potential to capture new market-rate residential development, which are the anticipated uses for the West End Housing Area within the short-term (five-year) future. However, there is little potential for new condominium development in this same timeframe. Over longer-term time periods however, additional market demand may increase if and when North Saint Paul is able to offer an increasingly attractive location with increased amenities.

Over the next five years the Stantec Housing Study from 2010 indicates approximately 276 new units of rental apartments, 100-120 units of independent senior housing as well as 40 assisted living units and 10-25 memory care units have potential in the study area. However, the attainment of this market potential is still subject to competition from other locations throughout the trade area and challenges regarding financial feasibility. Buildings will be limited by lot sizes on smaller urban blocks as well as developers likely proceeding cautiously in the marketplace, thus buildings will likely be in the 50-100 unit range. Ultimately the demand for multi-family residential is there, but challenging development economics provide a significant barrier.

Additionally, rent levels in new market-rate developments are likely to require high-quality development and the City should not promote lower-end developments that are not likely to enhance the downtown environment. High-quality residential developments provide the best vehicle for creating retail space in an urban, street-front configuration (as opposed to conventional suburban strip centers with parking lots fronting the street). Development within the downtown business district should encourage (or even require) multi-family development to offer commercial ground-floor space.

Wherever possible, the City should seek to maximize amenities near additional multi-family sites. In the West End Housing Redevelopment Area a new urban neighborhood park with recreational amenities, strong pedestrian connections and streetscape improvements is planned as a key amenity to attract buyers and renters to the area.

Live / Work

One additional residential unit type introduced within this master plan is the notion of live/work units, where individual owner-occupied units also function as independent storefronts or shop spaces for start-up businesses. These uses were envisioned within the redevelopment of the existing single-family neighborhood to allow for more flexibility of use and provide more time for redevelopment of this area.

Case Study: Live / Work Housing

The community of Boulder, Colorado was faced with the issue of what to do with underutilized industrial land in transitional neighborhoods. In response they created a land use category for “neighborhood industrial.” This category allowed for mixing of light industrial and residential.

Many of the neighborhood industrial buildings are townhome style with a workshop on the ground floor, usually owned by the resident above.

The aerial photo of the development to the right shows 17 units, most tied to downstairs workshops. Residents have started and operated a number of businesses out of their units, including a light fixture designer, adventure sports tours headquarters, a yoga studio, an electrician, a graphic designer and an energy bar maker, among others.



High density, market rate rental housing has opportunity early in the marketplace.



Live/Work Townhomes (see case study)



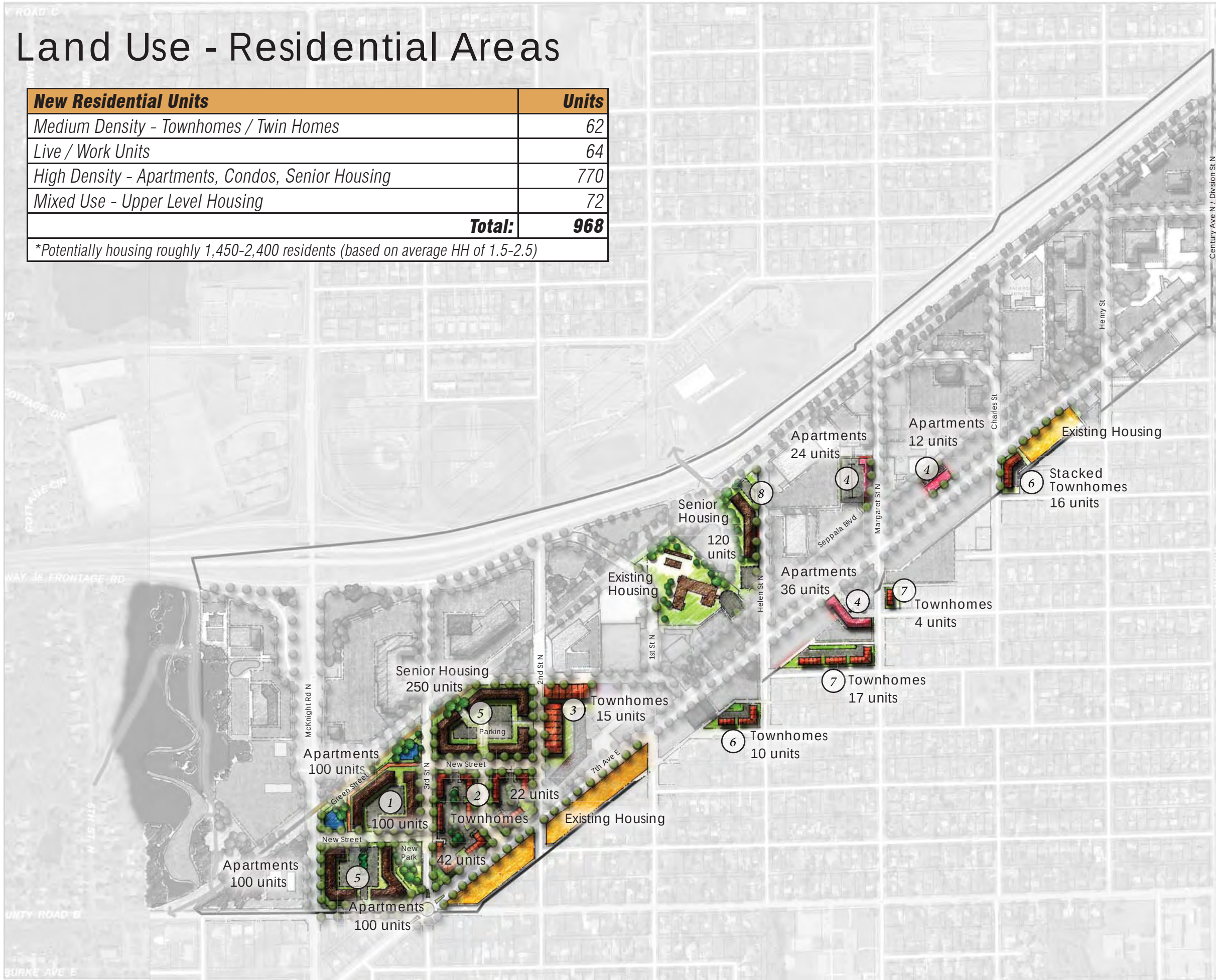
Urban infill townhomes should have a strong street presence with parking in the rear of the unit.



Upper levels of mixed use buildings in the downtown core should integrate housing.

Land Use - Residential Areas

New Residential Units	Units
Medium Density - Townhomes / Twin Homes	62
Live / Work Units	64
High Density - Apartments, Condos, Senior Housing	770
Mixed Use - Upper Level Housing	72
Total:	968
*Potentially housing roughly 1,450-2,400 residents (based on average HH of 1.5-2.5)	



Market rate rental apartments



Urban infill townhomes



Urban infill townhomes.



Senior Housing.

Figure 4.5 - Land Use - Residential Areas

Office

As the market study indicates there is very limited potential for high-end corporate tenants. The market study found the study area most suitable for lower-profile, small-scale businesses, and with that finding limited potential for substantial new development for employment uses.

In general, developers of smaller-scale office space will seek smaller tenants as well as institutional (public, nonprofit, etc.) tenants, typically in lower-rent buildings. Given the scarcity of “anchor” tenants that can occupy entire floors and at least 15,000 square feet, new development will likely be limited to small buildings – generally ranging from 25,000 to 45,000 square feet. Overall, given these considerations, it is likely that many of the office tenants seeking a North Saint Paul location would find typical “office showroom” properties suitable for their needs.

Typical office tenants are likely to include small businesses occupying 200 to 8,000 square feet with the following characteristics:

- Public and non-profit organizations including higher education or technical colleges;
- Back office tenants represents a growing industry sector, such as data and service uses. In addition, this type of use would realize a competitive advantage in downtown North Saint Paul, which offers excellent and secure utilities and fiber optic infrastructure connections.
- “Household-serving” businesses are businesses that engage in a broad range of industries encompassing legal services, financial services, insurance, real estate, design, and physical and mental health providers, but serve individual consumers rather than corporate clientele.

Medical Office

Medical office holds some potential and is anticipated in both the short and long term as a viable market option. Early expansion of this use will be driven by internal growth such as the Reflex Medical Expansion south of 7th Avenue. The combination new specializations in medical providers and the demand for space upgrades will likely fuel this use. Medical office is also anticipated as a redevelopment focus on the existing McPhillips Roofing site in concert with the existing medical office / clinic site immediately to the north over the long-term.



Headquarters / Light Assembly / Warehouse



Light Industrial / Office Flex

Light Industrial / Office-Flex / Office-Warehouse / Office-Showroom

Ramsey County maintains a competitive advantage in manufacturing, and is likely to outperform other counties in this sector when (if) national economic and industry cycles turn positive. As the national and regional economies return to health, development trends in other parts of the Twin Cities will continue to seek opportunities for the redevelopment of aging industrial properties. This ongoing trend will have the dual effect of diminishing the market’s inventory of unoccupied industrial properties and increasing the costs for remaining industrial properties. These effects will be most pronounced in redeveloping urban locations as well as aging suburban industrial parks.

The result of these effects will likely allow North Saint Paul an increasingly rare ability to offer developable industrial land in a location that is relatively central to the regional work force and accessible to the highway system via Highway 36.

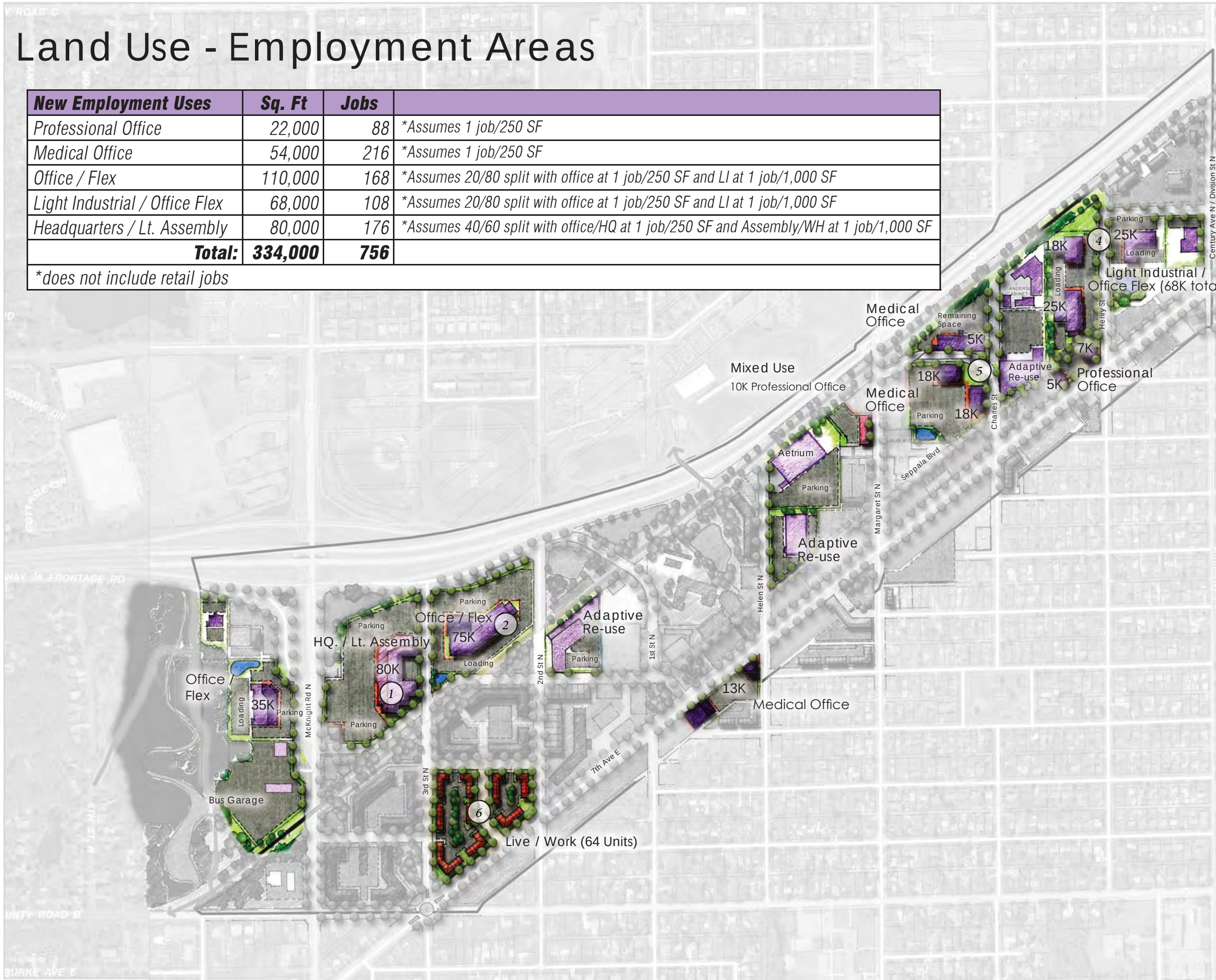
The market study also indicates North Saint Paul may provide a suitable and desirable location for employment in sectors such as manufacturing, administrative and support services, and some non-profits. The largest opportunity probably lies in niches that fly “below the radar.” Available statistics analyzed in the market study address the market for properties of a certain “minimum stature” – multi-tenant buildings with 20,000+ square feet. The statistics exclude small manufacturing buildings (which are usually owner-occupied) as well as many aging, independently owned properties. These buildings are most of North Saint Paul’s industrial inventory, including properties owned by Berwald Investments as well as owner-occupied buildings such as the Reflex Medical building.

Overall, the following present a general range of the types of industrial buildings and businesses that are likely to continue to seek locations such as North Saint Paul. Portions of the study area could capture new industrial development of roughly 100,000 to 200,000 square feet, most likely in buildings of 20,000 to 50,000 square feet over the life of the plan. Industrial buildings are most likely to include:

- “Office showroom” buildings, with relatively small spaces (e.g., 2,000 – 5,000 sq. ft.) for tenants seeking inexpensive office space. Office showroom represents a “higher-end” industrial property with higher levels of finish than other types, and would face ample competition from locations in communities such as Oakdale, Shoreview, and Woodbury. Nonetheless, this type of development could be feasible in North Saint Paul.
- Owner-occupied buildings with manufacturing space: businesses seeking such buildings may create new space even as they leave leased space and thereby increase market vacancy rates. Such buildings are likely to range in size from 20,000 to 50,000 square feet. Areas along McKnight Road and larger sites in Commerce Park are anticipated to develop in this manner.
- Small “office warehouse” buildings: These buildings feature lower finish levels than office-showroom properties. While the study area cannot accommodate a large number of large-scale bulk warehouse buildings, smaller office warehouse buildings combining storage with production and office uses may find suitable locations in North Saint Paul. These uses are planned for Commerce Park.
- The admin/support/waste remediation category - the largest portion of professional/business services - contains a high number of jobs, and fairly strong growth is anticipated in this category. This category encompasses jobs in ‘back office’ centers engaged in activities such as data processing and storage and customer service (as well as industrial activities such as recycling and recovery of materials). The anticipated growth in this sector may present opportunities for North Saint Paul, which offers high-quality, reliable power and telecommunications infrastructure.
- Forecasts are positive for some manufacturing sectors (e.g., computer & electronic products) as well as specialty trade contractors, and nonprofit institutions (“religious/grantmaking/civic/professional organizations”). These sectors are well represented in North Saint Paul; employers in these categories may continue to seek relatively centralized locations such as North Saint Paul at reasonable costs.

Land Use - Employment Areas

New Employment Uses	Sq. Ft	Jobs	
Professional Office	22,000	88	*Assumes 1 job/250 SF
Medical Office	54,000	216	*Assumes 1 job/250 SF
Office / Flex	110,000	168	*Assumes 20/80 split with office at 1 job/250 SF and LI at 1 job/1,000 SF
Light Industrial / Office Flex	68,000	108	*Assumes 20/80 split with office at 1 job/250 SF and LI at 1 job/1,000 SF
Headquarters / Lt. Assembly	80,000	176	*Assumes 40/60 split with office/HQ at 1 job/250 SF and Assembly/WH at 1 job/1,000 SF
Total:	334,000	756	
*does not include retail jobs			



Office Showroom / Office Flex



Office / Flex



Medical Office



Live / Work

Figure 4.6 - Land Use - Employment Areas

Parks and open space will play a critical role in the evolution of the study area. Parks provide the necessary amenities for adjacent residential development, serve as catalysts for nearby improvements, enhance property values and add to the quality of life for North Saint Paul residents.

A series of park spaces throughout the study area are intended to help shape adjacent development projects and provide a distinction or brand for the community. Parks planned as a part of this redevelopment master plan vary in size and function, but combined together they contribute to a transformative placemaking element for the community. An overview of the parks and recreation improvements are as follows:

7th Avenue Square – A New Downtown Park

This new park provides an excellent opportunity to create a central, iconic space for downtown North Saint Paul. The 7th Avenue Square Park would be the hub of activity for all downtown events. Combined with the planned redevelopment of the Old City Hall site, this park and adjacent development have the ability to create increased activity for the downtown business district. Programmatic elements could include a bandshell or pavilion for outdoor performances, fountains and gardens and broad lawn or plaza space for impromptu gatherings and events. This park should have a strong relationship to nearby development and intensive pedestrian amenities such as benches, tables, bike racks, and pedestrian scaled lighting.

Library / Farmers Market Plaza

At the gateway to 7th Avenue, arriving from either existing North Saint Paul Parkway, 7th Avenue or the planned new parkway connection from McKnight Road, this area represents a significant gateway to downtown North Saint Paul. The site is currently anchored by the public library and will continue to maintain a strong civic presence. The master plan suggest developing a more celebrated park space with a splash pad or interactive play fountain, a new parking lot and combined plaza space for larger events and a new Farmer's Market Pavilion on the eastern edge of the block near Helen Street.

Gateway Parks

Gateway parks are located on the east and west sides of the downtown business district at Charles Street and Helen Streets, respectively. These small pocket parks, approximately a quarter acre in size serve as thresholds to the downtown business district and provide an added amenity to nearby businesses and residents with well landscaped gardens, benches and informational kiosks and maps promoting downtown businesses. These small parks provide an added dimension of placemaking to the downtown and enhance the way-finding throughout the district.



Community Gathering Space



Interactive Water Feature

A New Urban Neighborhood Park

This park is intended to be the focus of development in the West End Housing Redevelopment Area. Anticipated to grow incrementally with increased redevelopment, this park is a key amenity feature to attract housing redevelopment in the immediate future. Having a designated recreational space for perspective residents is a key advantage for housing developers. This park, at full build out, is approximately one acre in size and would likely have a small playground, pavilion and picnic area for neighborhood gathering. The park should feel safe and be well lit with pedestrian scaled lighting and numerous pedestrian amenities. Surrounding development should directly face onto the park to create a strong edge and reinforce the space as a public park for all neighborhood residents.

Strengthen Connections to the Gateway Trail

The master plan recognizes the significance of the regional trail as an amenity for the downtown; however, getting from the trail to the downtown can be difficult because of the lack of pedestrian connections, either trails or sidewalks. The master plan suggests increased connectivity with the trail at the terminus of Henry Street in Commerce Park where a potential “lunch-time” park or plaza space could be integrated with the redeveloped convenience commercial near the trail. Margaret Street provides the most direct connection to the downtown business district. Increased signage and entry monumentation from the trail combined with enhanced streetscape along Margaret Street with broad sidewalks and pedestrian features could lead people directly to the downtown. Lastly, at the current location of the pedestrian bridge over Highway 36 combined with the enhancements to the Helen Street stormwater pond area and the new East Gateway Park would provide a third strong connection back to downtown from the trail. This area must feel more public with a well-articulated trail and improved signage directing trail uses to the downtown.

Gateway Trail Trailhead Facility

The future plans for an expanded trailhead building with permanent restrooms and information about downtown businesses will also be a beneficial addition to the downtown. This location becomes another portal to the community. Increased wayfinding and signage from this facility along North Saint Paul Parkway to the new park features planned near the library and ultimately 7th Avenue should be further developed.

Environmental Learning Center

Along the western edge of the study area incorporating a large wetland complex is the Urban Education Outdoor Environmental Learning Center. The area is owned and operated by school district and contains test plots for native vegetation, an observation mound for bird watching and a series of butterfly gardens. Development on the western side of McKnight Road may reorient toward the wetland depending on use and one opportunity to fully integrate new development with the Learning Center could be partnerships with institution and technical education facilities specializing in urban development issues and green or sustainable technologies.

Stormwater Treatment as an Amenity

Strategic locations for both on-site stormwater features and larger, sub-district stormwater basins provide yet another opportunity to strengthen open space in the district. The combination of the bio-filtration swales and a collection of stormwater ponds along the new entry parkway to downtown provide a tremendous opportunity to create an iconic and welcoming connection to the downtown showcasing creative and attractive stormwater treatment techniques such as tree trenches, bio swales and rainwater gardens.

Parks & Recreation System Map

- Legend:
- Civic Use
 - Park & Open Space Areas
 - Stormwater
 - Wetland
 - Gateway Trail



Movies in the park



Adventure Play



Creative Water Play



Additional Bicycle Facilities



Farmer's Market Pavilion



Environmental Learning Center

Figure 4.7 - Land Use - Parks & Recreation System Map

There are both issues and opportunities for stormwater management that should be considered by the City as a part of the redevelopment planning efforts. The following provides an overview of the anticipated storwater treatment network, identifies potential issues and highlights the opportunities to utilize stormwater treatment techniques to enhance the overall aesthetic of the district.

Flooding Issues

Several locations within the study area have had a history of flooding. Some of these problems have been partially alleviated through the construction of the Helen Street Pond. However, several localized flood issues remain in the downtown areas. As a part of ongoing work throughout the study area, the City should identify any remaining flood problems and work with developers to help ensure that adequate flood protection is incorporated into the redevelopment projects. In general, this flood storage will be provided as a part of water quality treatment systems that are constructed as a part of the redevelopment projects. The City may also consider partnering with developers to establish regional flood storage features.

Water Quality

Several opportunities to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff have been identified for the study area. Along with these opportunities, there are several challenges that will need to be addressed, including water quality requirements that will need to be satisfied for proposed redevelopment projects. The Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District requires volume control / water quality treatment for any site one-acre or greater as it becomes redeveloped. As discussed below, the watershed will also require water quality improvements for any new or reconstructed street within the City.

A drainage area of approximately 185 acres will need to be treated once the entire area is redeveloped and once all streets in the study area are constructed / reconstructed. It is expected that a combination of the following practices will be used to meet these requirements:

- **Individual basins for private developments (approximately 50% of required volume).** Individual basins will be used by private development to achieve a portion of the stormwater requirements needed within the study area. It is expected that larger development areas will need to dedicate approximately 10% of their space toward storwater basins unless they are able to provide unconventional treatment practices under parking areas.



Tree Trenches



Rainwater Gardens

- **Regional basins for public streets and cooperative agreements with private development (approximately 45% of required volume).** It is anticipated that approximately 10% of the treated area will need to be used for these regional basins. Based on this estimation, 8.3 acres of land will need to be dedicated to stromwater treatment basins in order to treat 45% of the study area.
- **Boulevard filtration systems in planter boxes for public streets (approximately 5% of required volume).** It is expected that a portion of the treatment requirements will be achieved through planter boxes that can filter runoff before it reaches storm drains. Approximately 1,500 linear feet of roadway would need to be constructed with these features (on both sides of the road) in order to meet 5% of the water quality requirements for the entire study area (based on providing 10 cubic feet per linear foot for one side of road).

Several other options may be available that the City could use toward meeting these requirements. These options should be investigated with the Watershed District to help assess the viability of these options:

- Compensatory treatment outside of study area
- Chemical treatment system to retain phosphorus loads
- Reuse / irrigation system within or outside of study area

Other Issues and Opportunities

Volume Control Challenges: Several challenges exist throughout the study area that could make volume control / water quality requirements difficult or expensive to achieve. These include poor infiltration characteristics such as tight soils, high groundwater levels, and a high probability for contamination presence.

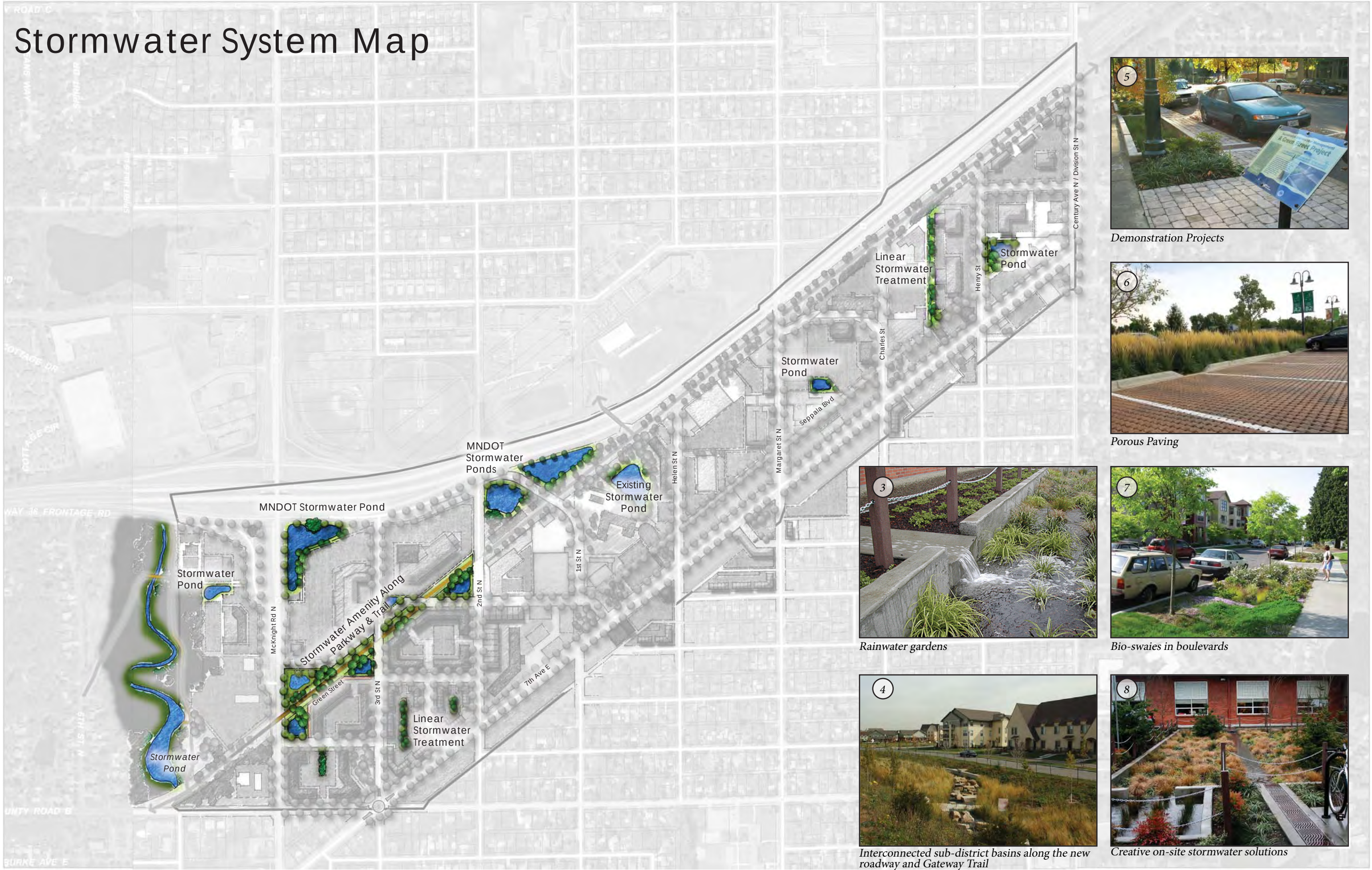
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Requirements: In addition to the Watershed District requirements, several lakes downstream of the study area are listed as impaired since their water quality is worse than the State's standards. The study area has been identified as an area where the quality of stormwater runoff must be improved in order to improve the water quality of these Lakes. Furthermore, the City's 2008 Stormwater Management Plan indicates that the area between McKnight and 1st Street has a high potential for water quality improvements.

Partnerships: The City's street reconstruction projects also must address these volume control standards of the Watershed District. This offers the City and developers an opportunity to collaborate and to establish partnerships to construct and maintain water quality treatment features in the project area. By pooling land resources for both the street reconstruction and redevelopment efforts, the overall footprint of stormwater facilities can be reduced, resulting in a larger footprint for buildings, streetscapes or other uses. Use of DNR's land surrounding the Gateway Trail could also be pursued by the City for stormwater improvements; however it is unknown at this time if the DNR would accept this proposition.

Streetscapes: A significant opportunity exists to combine landscaping and stormwater management features as a part of the streetscapes projects. This will allow a visually appealing landscape amenity to also serve as a stormwater treatment feature in public spaces.

Education: Through the redevelopment process, several opportunities are available to better educate residents about the water quality of stormwater runoff, including: public information meetings, redevelopment project updates in the official newspaper, educational signage near treatment facilities.

Stormwater System Map



Demonstration Projects



Porous Paving



Rainwater gardens



Bio-swaies in boulevards



Interconnected sub-district basins along the new roadway and Gateway Trail



Creative on-site stormwater solutions

Figure 4.8 - Stormwater System Map

Long-term MNDOT interchange

One of the yet-to-be-determined transportation improvement impacting the study area is the potential for a future interchange at the intersection of Highway 36 and Century Avenue. Currently, MNDOT is studying the potential to transition the at-grade intersections at Century Avenue in North Saint Paul and Hadley Avenue in Oakdale into a single grade-separated interchange at one of these two locations. Further study will be conducted prior to a decision on the preferred interchange location. Access into the Commerce Park area and subsequent intersection design and spacing along Century Avenue to the south should also be a top priority for resolution, thus working with the city of Oakdale, Ramsey and Washington County Transportation Departments is necessary to resolve access and traffic congestion issues for this corridor.

Gateway Improvements - Century Avenue & McKnight Road Corridor

The functional and aesthetic design of both McKnight Road and Century Avenue are important aspects for redevelopment planning and directing patrons to downtown North Saint Paul Businesses. Combining multi-modal transportation and transit facilities such as park and rides, bus shelters, and trails should be integral to the future planning for these important corridors. Aesthetically, these corridors should provide appropriately scaled lighting and pedestrian amenities, balanced with the heavy traffic volumes on the roadway. Intersection crossings must be designed safely with controlled, signalized intersections or round-a-bouts, as is suggested at 7th Avenue, South Avenue and 3rd Street.

Transit Opportunities

McKnight Road holds the most potential for a transit corridor in the future. With the combination of the additional housing density planned on the south side of the Gateway Trail on the south Anchor Block site and the potential for a long-term bus-rapid-transit (BRT) corridor along Highway 36, the integration of transit use on the west end of the study area could evolve over time. The integration of a park and ride facility should also be explored as design of the Highway 36 BRT corridor evolves. Locally, 7th Avenue, Margaret Street and Century Avenue are strong candidates for enhancing transit use in the study area as these primary corridors connect multiple housing and commercial areas.

District Parking Downtown

Over time, as intensification of the Downtown District occurs additional parking will be needed. Today, multiple, small surface lots provide adequate parking for downtown businesses combined with the on-street angled parking on 7th

Avenue. The redevelopment master plan suggests integrating a public parking structure with mixed use development on Margaret Street across from City Hall in the long term. This will provide a centralized location for public parking at the core of downtown. Providing signage from 7th Avenue and Margaret Street and reconfiguring Seppala Boulevard to allow two way traffic will also help patrons utilize this parking structure.

Street Types:

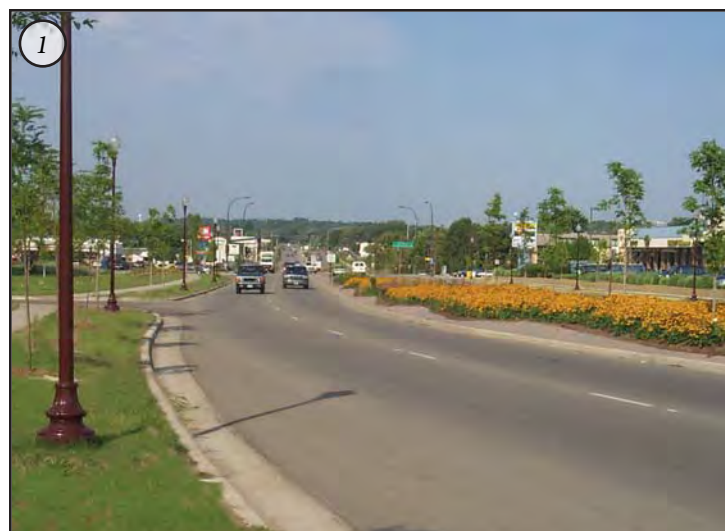
The map to the right (Figure 4.9) indicates a hierarchy of street types for the study area. The design character of these streets are detailed on the next page. Street types provide a guide for future improvements for all streets in the district.



Century Avenue/Division Street and Highway 36 interchange and Gateway Regional Trail



Round-a-bout



Large Corridor Streetscape



Transit Buildings / Bus Shelters



Park and Ride Facility



Structured Parking

Transportation & Transit System Map

- Legend:
- Highway 36 & Off-Ramps
 - Major Thoroughfares
 - Downtown Entry Street (New Parkway / North Saint Paul Drive)
 - Downtown Entry Streets (7th Avenue / South Avenue)
 - Downtown Mixed Use Streets
 - Seppala Boulevard
 - Local Streets
 - Trail

Potential for future grade separated interchange at Highway 36 and Century Avenue / Division Street.

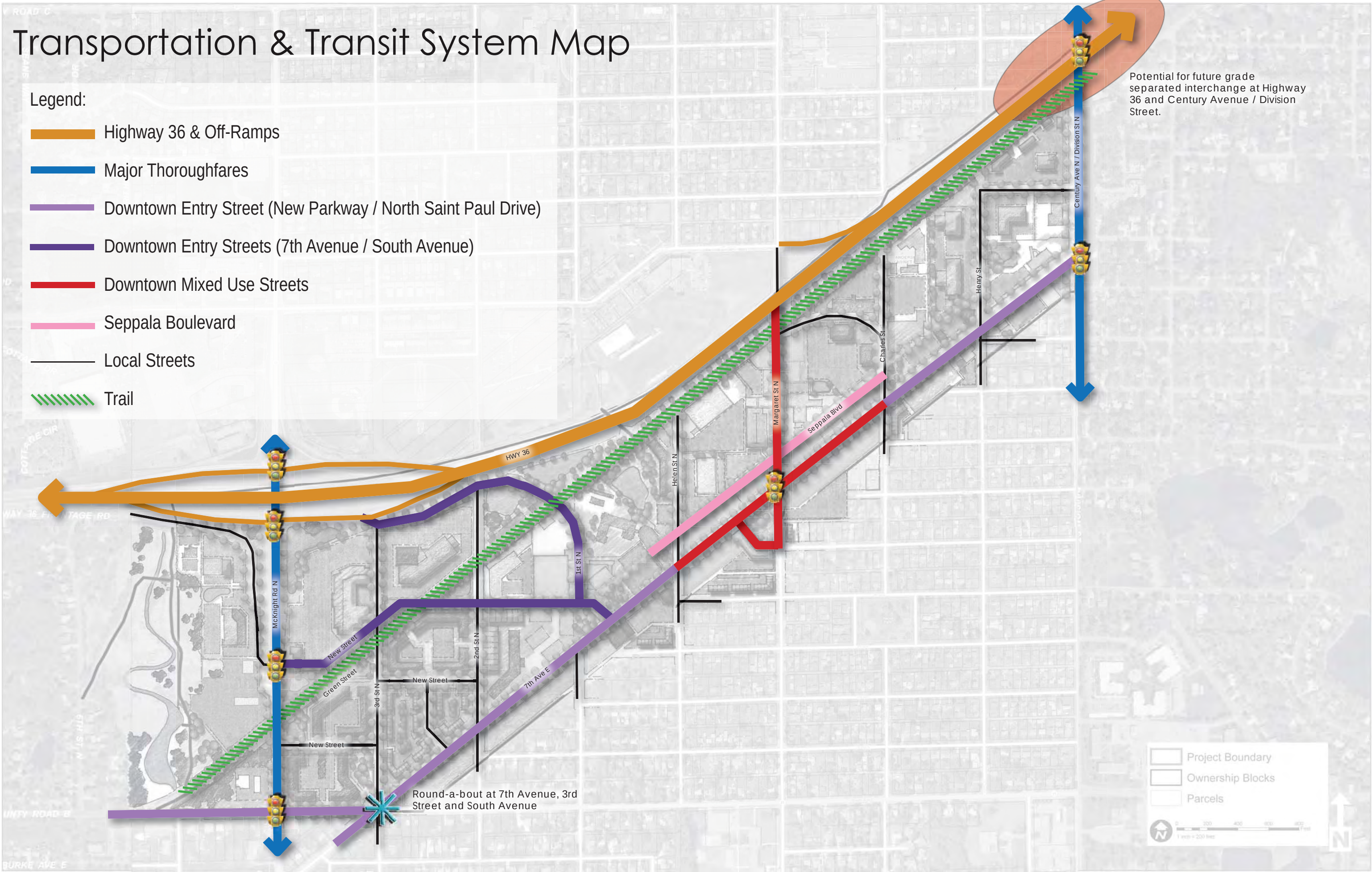


Figure 4.9 - Transportation & Transit System Map

The public realm, particularly the design of streets and streetscapes are critical elements to successful and memorable places for communities. Not all streets are created equal. Streets and the uses that front them become unique environments that are a product of the necessary vehicular and pedestrian function as well as the overall design aesthetic and character. In North Saint Paul, the design of streets are very important. They provide the community gathering interface in the downtown, the primary entry experience to the community and the necessary truck access for the industrial and employment uses throughout the study area, balancing these functions are paramount.

The following provides design suggestions for streets and the public realm. Organized by streetscape types, the community should strive for these design aesthetics when streets need to be reconstructed or when public realm improvements are necessary adjacent to new development needs to takes place.

Downtown Entry Streets - New Parkway & Enhanced North Saint Paul Drive

The new parkway connection between McKnight Road and 7th Avenue will provide another opportunity to enter the community from the west. In combination with a roadway alignment running parallel to the Gateway Trail and the remnant development parcel shapes that are envisioned for stormwater treatment, this corridor has tremendous opportunity to make a statement as a community entry feature. Incorporating the stormwater treatment facilities in and along the trail corridor allows the parkway to create a new, attractive edge for development to address and provide a memorable and simple route into the community’s Downtown District.

Downtown Entry Streets - 7th Avenue & South Avenue

The enhancement of 7th Avenue outside of the downtown core should resemble the existing improvements near the Reflex Medical site. Here, broad boulevards with enhanced landscaping, street trees and pedestrian scaled lighting separate the roadway from the newly improved sidewalk for pedestrians.

Downtown Mixed Use Streets

Downtown Mixed Use Streets include the more intensely developed downtown commercial and mixed use core along 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. These streets should have a high level of pedestrian amenities including wide sidewalks, benches and site furnishings like waste receptacles, bicycle racks and newspaper corals. The streetscape zone should include boulevard trees at planting islands integrated into the diagonal parking lot islands, similar to what exists today. Lighting should be pedestrian in scale with the potential to hang seasonal or event banners and be equipped with outlets for holiday lighting.



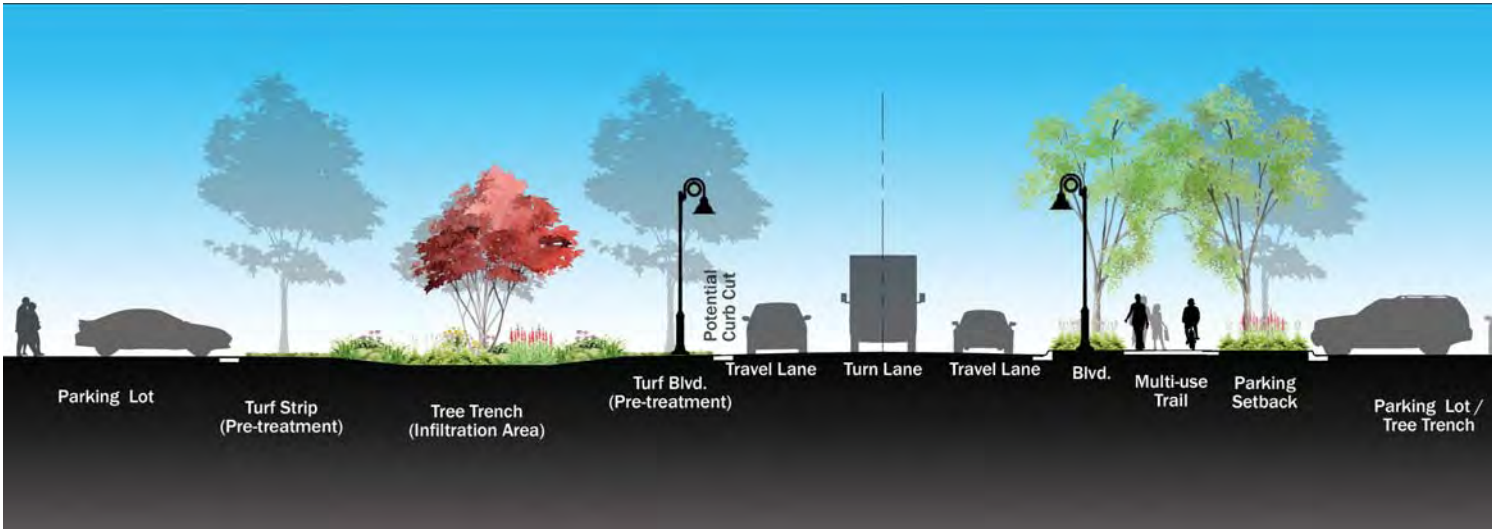
7th Avenue should be a comfortable public realm, inviting to all in the community.



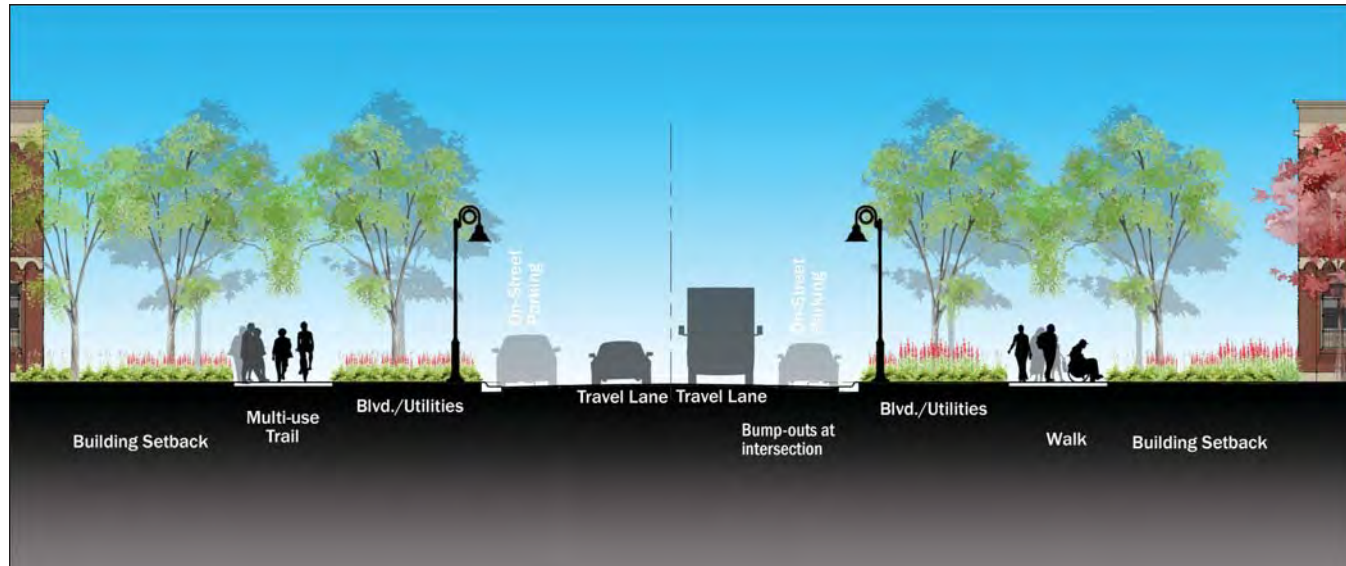
Pedestrian features along 7th Avenue should include benches, awnings, boulevard trees at specified intervals and pedestrian scaled street lighting providing a well-lit, safe evening environment.

Local Streets

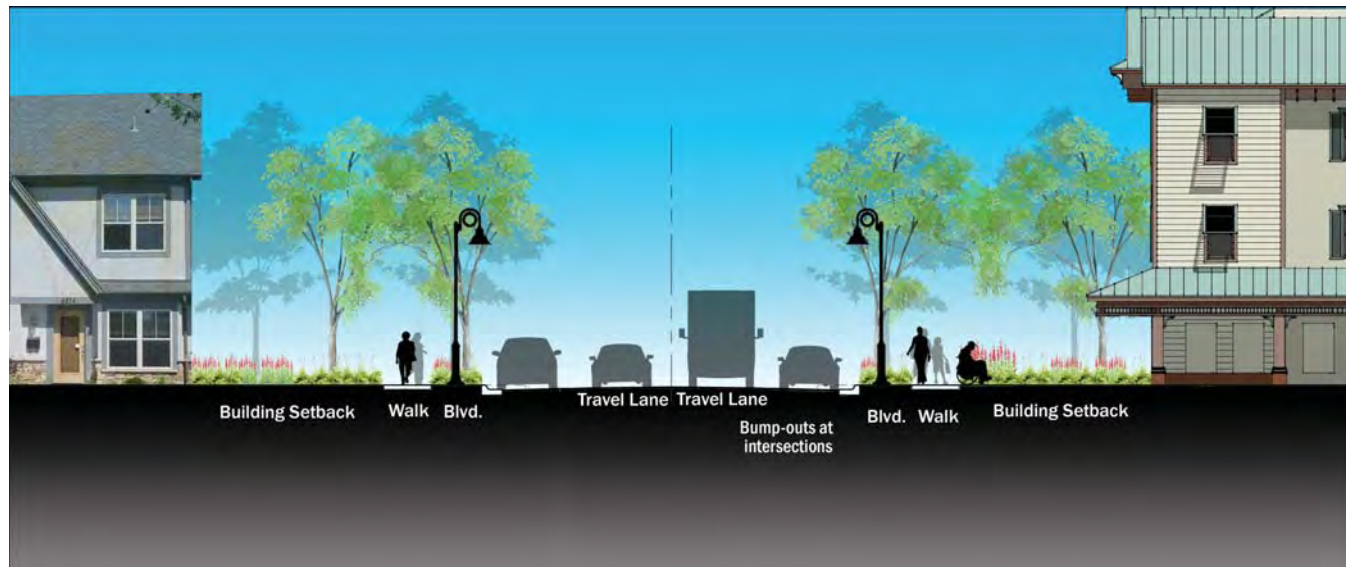
Local streets in the study area should be designed with adjacent uses in mind. For industrial uses the streets should be wider to accommodate truck turning movements and provide designated areas for on-street parking. In residential areas, streets should be narrower at intersection crossings and must provide on-street parking for adjacent residences. All local streets should be reviewed for potential opportunities to integrate stormwater treatment techniques outlined in the Living Streets Plan, such as tree trenches and rain gardens.



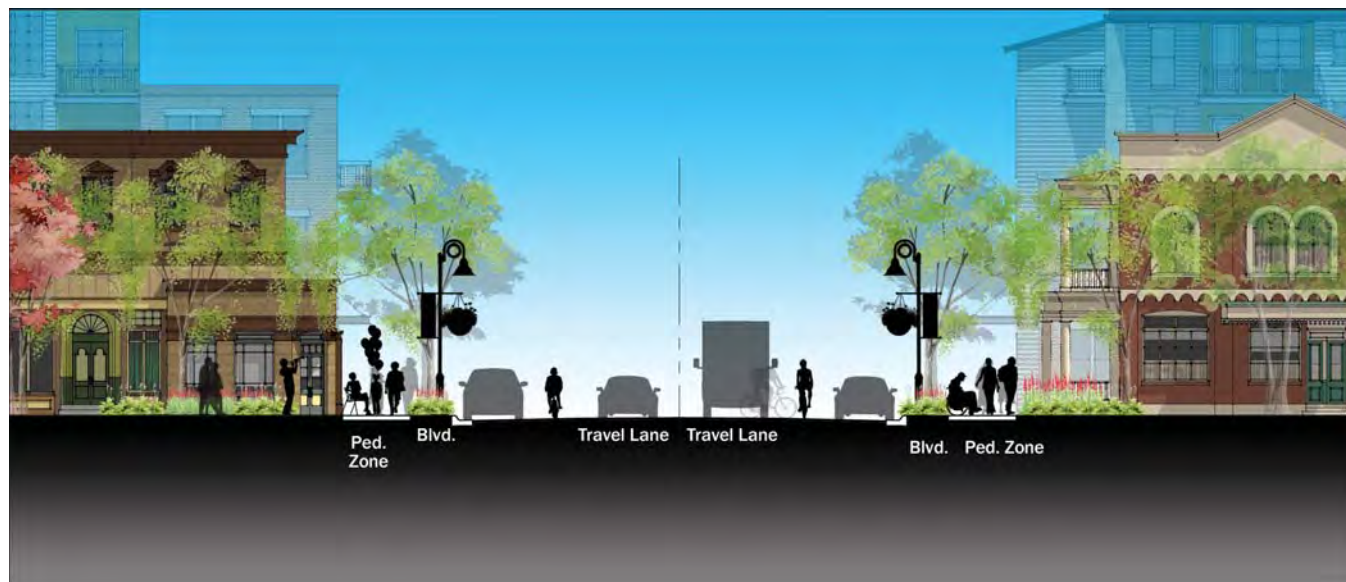
Section - Downtown Entry Street (McKnight Road to & 7th Avenue)



Section - Downtown Entry Streets (Urban Parkway / 7th Avenue Entry Streets)



Section - Local Streets (Urban Residential uses shown)



Section - Downtown Mixed Use Street (7th Avenue, Margaret Street & new street at downtown park)

Seppala Boulevard:

A unique condition exists in North Saint Paul with Seppala Boulevard. Portions of the street are signed for one-way traffic through what is essentially an alley condition. An opportunity to create a special street type, combining the service needs of the alley with enhanced pedestrian and auto circulation should be explored. Reintroducing two-way traffic could allow for better circulation.



The area along Seppala Boulevard could transform into more of an attractive edge with pedestrian scaled features.



The back side of buildings on 7th Avenue should create a strong pedestrian presence along Seppala Boulevard.

Water Demand and Wastewater Flow Assumptions

Wastewater flow and water demands generated by development were estimated in accordance with MCES SAC criteria with a few exceptions. Water demand and wastewater flow estimates were based on the following assumptions.

- Office/Flex – 274 gal/day/2400 SF
- Lt. Industrial/Flex - 274 gal/day/7000 SF
- Lt. Industrial/Office Showroom – 274 gal/day (30% Office, 70% Manufacturing)
- Commercial/Retail/Showroom – 274 gal/day/3000 SF
- Restaurant – 274 gal/day/300 SF
- Medium/High Density Development - 250 gal/day/unit
- Senior Housing – 200 gal/day/unit
- Existing development to remain in master development area – 1,000 gal/day/acre
- A substantial portion of the City’s existing wastewater generated in the southeast residential area is upstream of sanitary sewers in the Master Plan area. Therefore, wastewater generated by existing development outside of the Master Plan area was estimated based on total wastewater City flow and sewer shed area upstream of Master Plan area.
- City wide water demands influence water system available capacity to the Master Plan area. Water demands were estimated based on historical water usage, but demands vary annually and seasonally depending on climate conditions and customer water usage patterns.

Sanitary Sewer

Evaluation results indicate the existing sanitary sewer system has adequate capacity to convey wastewater generated from the proposed development. Evaluation included analysis of the impact to the 24-inch trunk sewer downstream of the proposed development in the Master Plan area.

This evaluation was completed on a planning level basis including estimates of wastewater flow generated based on typical metro area planning assumptions for development type and wastewater flow peaking factors. Wastewater flows vary annually and seasonally depending upon climate conditions and customer water usage patterns. Prior to any specific development a detailed evaluation of the proposed development should be completed to complete a more refined estimate of existing wastewater flow, including infiltration and inflow (I/I) due to the age of the sewers, potential flow monitoring, and a more detailed evaluation of the tributary sewer system including sewer conditions (I/I, tree roots, maintenance).

The existing sanitary sewer system provides sewer access to all parcels through public sanitary sewers in the master plan area constructed in easements and street/alleyway right-of-way. The following was assumed:

- Existing sanitary sewers will remain in place at their current location and were constructed within public right-of-way.
- Properties that will be redeveloped, with existing sewers on the property, will be redeveloped around the sewer or it will be relocated at the cost of the developer.
- Sewer services will be extended from properties to the main at the cost of the developer.

In the immediate and short term phases there is only one property where sewer location is impacted, in the McKnight area.

Water

Evaluation results indicated the following:

- Inadequate water storage capacity (condition existing prior to development)
- Areas with inadequate available fire flow capacity: (Anchor Block site, Hardware Store Area, Commerce Park)

Necessary fire flow for this study was based on the International Building Code (IBC), upon which the Minnesota State Plumbing Code is based. Available fire flow of 3,000 gpm for 3 hours (540,000 gallons) was recommended to determine the required storage capacity for the entire City and required water main capacity to the Master Plan area.

Evaluation results indicated water storage capacity does not meet 10-State Standards recommended storage volumes. Based on the evaluation the system has capacity for immediate development under normal operating conditions, but it is recommended to construct additional water storage in the short term. Currently the City’s significant well supply capacity compensates for the minimal storage capacity during normal operations, but may be unable to should an emergency occur or historical water usage patterns change.

This evaluation was completed on a planning level basis including estimates of water demands based on historical water demands in the City and typical metro area planning assumptions for development type and water usage patterns. Water demands vary annually and seasonally depending upon climate conditions and customer water usage patterns. Prior to any specific development a detailed evaluation of the proposed development should be completed to complete a more refined estimate of existing water demands and condition of existing water mains.

The existing water system provides water access to all parcels through public water mains in the master plan area constructed in easements and street/alleyway right-of-way. The following was assumed:

- Existing water mains will remain in place at their current location and were constructed within public right-of-way.
- Properties that will be redeveloped, with existing water mains on the property, will be redeveloped around the water main or it will be relocated at the cost of the developer.
- Water services will be extended from properties to the main at the cost of the developer including adequate sizing for fire protection sprinkler systems.

Immediate phase and short term phase projects include the following:

- 0.75 Million Gallons (MG) to 1.0 MG water tower
- 150’ x 150’ area for water tower construction
- 12-inch water main along DNR trail, connecting existing 12-inch main from 2nd Street to existing 8-inch main on McKnight (cost includes surface restoration, it is a new water main location)
- 30’ wide easement along DNR trail for 12-inch water main parallel to existing sewer main
- 8-inch water main upsize for fire protection improvement in Commerce Park commercial district area (no surface restoration included)

District Energy opportunities

While the density and intensity of development may never reach the opportunity to take a district wide approach to heating and cooling found in more urban environment, a number of additional alternative, sustainable energy solutions should be pursued for future development. The combination of these technologies could dramatically decrease the overall energy consumption for the district.

Alternative Energy Solutions

Solar power

Where possible, new development should orient buildings to take advantage of solar heat gain and look to incorporate solar hot water heating and photovoltaic panels for additional energy generation. Heating water accounts for roughly 10 percent of the energy needs for a typical home, and solar energy can satisfy a significant portion of the energy demand in the district.

Wind power

North Saint Paul should continue to develop small-scale wind generation facilities, particularly along the Highway 36 and Gateway Trail corridors. The existing wind turbine at the public works facility already serves as an icon for the community, and other locations more industrial areas of the study area should be explored. One potential opportunity is to utilize smaller, helical wind turbines that work more efficiently within an urban environment. Appropriately placed throughout the community, these turbines - ranging in 30-50 feet in height - could provide iconic wayfinding in addition to a renewable energy resource.

Geothermal

An additional opportunity to integrate sustainable energy production in the district comes from the use of geothermal heating and cooling technologies. Geothermal heating and cooling coils could be installed below surface parking lots in a horizontal application and where space is limited, vertical wells could be drilled to achieve the same effects.



Sun Screens for Building Efficiency



Geo-Thermal



Tree Canopy for a reduction in the urban heat island effect.



Smaller, helical wind turbines could be utilized in select areas throughout the district, particularly along the Gateway Trail.

5. Implementation & Phasing

Keys to Implementation

Several factors will be crucial in successfully realizing the vision set forth by the community, City Council and the Economic Development Authority within this redevelopment master plan. These factors apply regardless of the actual form and timing of redevelopment:

- Patience & Commitment to Vision. Commitment to the plan and patience go hand-in-hand. This plan does more than simply seek to attract new development to shovel ready sites in North Saint Paul; it provides a road map to move the area toward its vision. Commitment to the plan means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that align with the objectives of the master plan. It also requires the willingness by decision makers to deter developments which do not meet the objectives of the plan. Not all of these decisions will be easy or will they occur exactly as analyzed in this master plan.
- Strategic Investments. If financial support for the plan was unlimited, the need for strategic decisions would be less important. With limited funds, every expenditure is crucial. It is not possible to immediately undertake all of the initiatives described in this plan. Needs and opportunities not contemplated in the plan may arise in the future. Every investment must be evaluated for its impact on adding to downtown North Saint Paul and the overall district.
- Public & Private Partnerships. Removal of the physical and economic barriers to redevelopment in North Saint Paul will require public financial assistance. The complexity of redevelopment envisioned for the area clearly demonstrates the need for public financial participation. Private investment will not be sufficient to pay for all costs associated with every redevelopment project. Strong public/private partnerships will make redevelopment projects more financially feasible, promote the desired types of development and build momentum in the area. The needs established in this plan do not make public financial assistance an entitlement; on-going planning will define the nature of assistance and amount available for each step throughout the implementation process. This approach ensures that public monies are used to achieve desired public outcomes and not simply make development more affordable (or profitable) for the developer.
- Financial Planning. The ability to make strategic investments relies on the continued evolution of the preliminary financial planning found in this document. Implementing the plan cannot be viewed as a series of independent projects but rather a series of interrelated actions. Certain public improvements serve a broader area and not a single project. Revenues will come from multiple projects. Some public investments will be required prior to private redevelopment. The ability to coordinate public actions with the revenues from private development will be critical to the success of the plan. Failure to consider the implementation relationships between elements of the plan will lead to missed opportunities and increased risk for the City.

Roles & Responsibilities

Implementing this plan will rest with many entities in the community that share a common vision for the future for North Saint Paul. A clear understanding of implementation roles and responsibilities promotes the effective use of limited resources.

City of North Saint Paul

The ultimate responsibility for implementing this redevelopment master plan rests with the City of North Saint Paul. The City Council and Economic Development Authority (EDA) will provide direction on staff resources, review of proposed development projects and focus public investments. Managing redevelopment for North Saint Paul will primarily fall to the Economic Development and Community Development Departments of the City.

The lead role in managing implementation for the City falls to the Community Development Department. The actions to be taken by the Community Development Department to implement the plan include:

- Application of land use controls and redevelopment guidelines to shepherd private development;
- Review of development plans and proposals;
- Coordination of planning for capital improvements needed to facilitate redevelopment; and
- Creation of financial plans for public redevelopment investments and continued monitoring.

The Engineering Department leads the design of public infrastructure improvements needed to support development and redevelopment in North Saint Paul, including necessary utilities and roadway improvements. The Engineering Department is a also key player in planning for future roadway and transportation improvements, including on-going conversations with MNDOT on Highway 36 improvement projects and the potential for a future interchange at Century Avenue. Engineering will also work closely with Ramsey County Engineering staff regarding transportation enhancements and access controls along McKnight Road and Century Avenue / Division Street to the east.

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

The study area is an important location for economic development and job creation in the City of North Saint Paul. It is the EDA that will keep the momentum of development and redevelopment moving in a direction envisioned by the plan and adopted by the City. The EDA and City Council will need to determine their specific roles for a coordinated effort. Several potential EDA actions make them an important player in the successful implementation of the plan:

- Provide a framework for coordinating efforts of the community. With limited resources, it is essential that the community work in unison to undertake redevelopment. The knowledge and experience gained from the planning process allows EDA members to efficiently and effectively take steps needed to implement the plan.
- Work to ensure that economic development initiatives within North Saint Paul are a recognized priority for City Council members.
- Maintain an active role. Actively pursuing critical properties for redevelopment or educating business owners on improvement or reinvestment programs with low interest loans should be continued and expanded roles for the EDA.
- Create an annual redevelopment “action plan” to monitor progress toward implementation. This action plan would outline key steps to occur during the year, including descriptions of actions, responsible parties and funding resources. It forces the parties to not only consider what needs to be done in the coming year, but also why identified steps were not taken in the prior year.
- Work with business owners and landlords to promote and help finance the maintenance and revitalization of downtown businesses and buildings in the downtown core.
- Host annual developer roundtables or site tours showcasing the potential of North Saint Paul sites to perspective developers.
- Recognize the individual assets of the three primary locations (Downtown, Commerce Park, McKnight Employment Area) for economic development and steer the appropriate uses to those areas.
- Lead the marketing efforts for available sites in the Commerce Park area and at the Anchor Block Sites.

- Provide guidance to the City to ensure that proposed development projects and public improvements are consistent with the plan.
- Promote development projects with sustainable design practices.
- Continue to find the appropriate funding options for various redevelopment projects.
- Collaborate with private brokers marketing North Saint Paul sites and leverage marketing efforts.

Community-at-Large

The community of North Saint Paul must stay involved as the redevelopment continues over time. The community must work together with decision-makers and provide the necessary input for any new development, respecting existing land owners and meeting the vision for North Saint Paul. Ultimately, the community must:

- Provide a singular focus for the plan. The knowledge gained from the planning process will allow members of the community to efficiently and effectively comment on redevelopment proposals.
- Continue public involvement. Continue to attend public meetings, provide comments and suggestions to proposals as they come forward.

Land Use Controls

The initial focus of implementation will be on actions needed to establish the redevelopment master plan as the official guide for development and redevelopment for the Diversified District Area in North Saint Paul. These procedural steps in implementation involve the adoption of key policy documents and updated development controls.

Approve the Master Plan

The first implementation step is EDA and City Council actions to approve this master plan. These approvals set the stage for subsequent actions such as amending the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, capital improvement programs and the allocation of financial resources.

Amend Land Use Controls

Plan approval is the trigger for taking other actions needed to guide land use for the area in accordance with this master plan. Land use controls not only promote the desired development outcomes, they also prevent development that is not consistent with the plan.

Comprehensive Plan

The City will need to update the Comprehensive Plan with the new “Redevelopment Master Plan,” including the land use plan designations (Figure 4.2) and appropriate policies consistent with the vision of this master plan. Amending the Comprehensive Plan creates the foundation for all other implementation actions. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is a statutory requirement for zoning regulations, capital improvements and redevelopment projects.

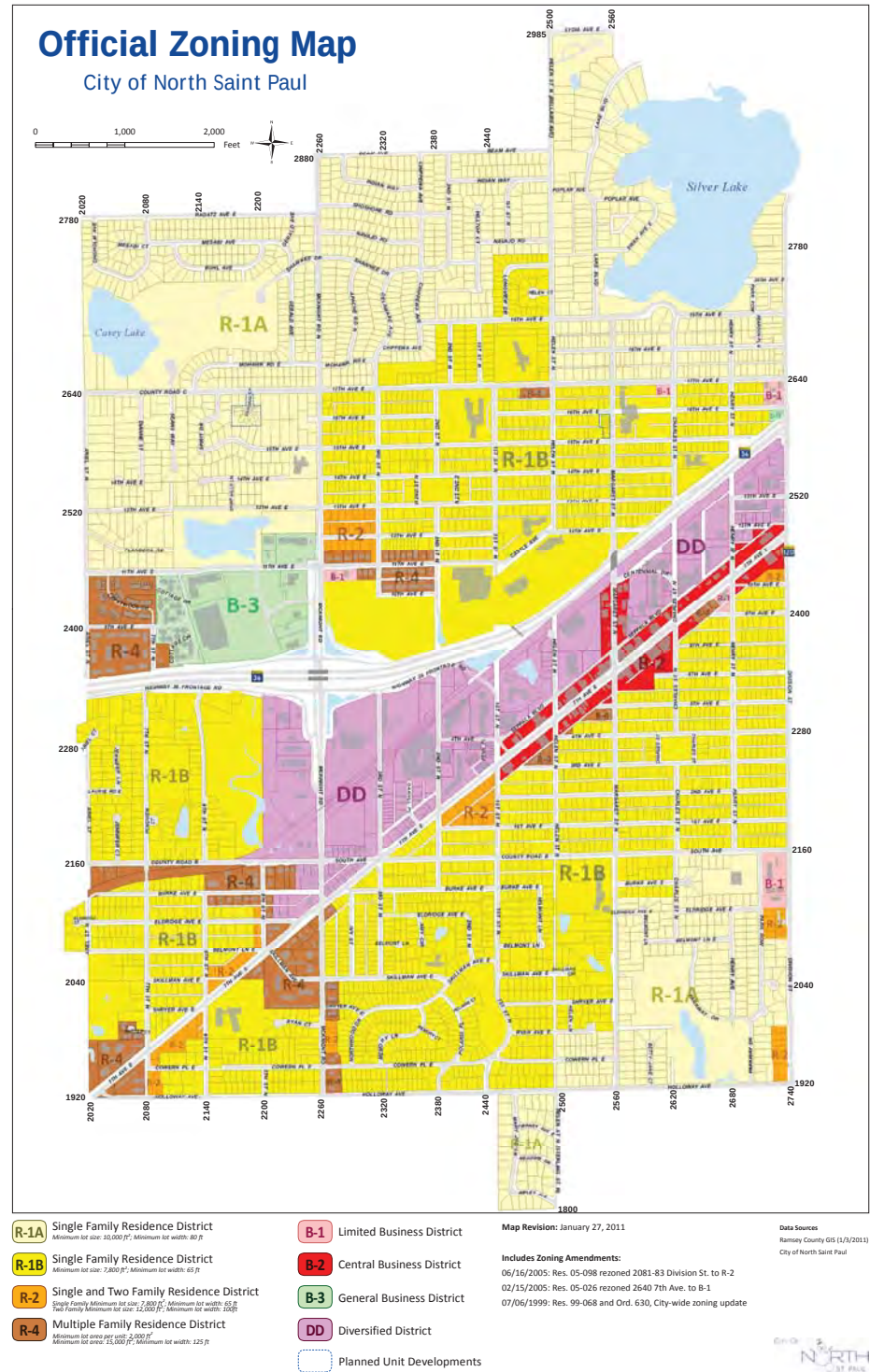
Zoning Regulations

More direct control of development comes from zoning regulations. The existing regulations within the Diversified District will require modification to conform to this plan. Part of the necessary modification is enabling the type and form of development proposed in this master plan, for example, allowing single story office and light industrial development within the district. The Diversified District in its current form is intentionally restrictive, forming a barrier for private investment. Zoning changes are likely needed in order to implement the Redevelopment Master Plan. Detailed analysis and formal recommendation of any zoning changes will be handled by the City of North

Saint Paul along with approval of this master plan. Two approaches should be further explored. One approach is to modify the existing diversified district to loosen key design standards (such as the requirement for all development to be a minimum of two stories or for the site to be fully developed to a minimum FAR of 0.7) and to ease the entitlement process (for example allowing certain uses to occur “as of right” or streamlining the review process). A second approach that could be considered would be to rezone the area to logical existing base districts while retaining key design standards that would be applied more selectively through an overlay district approach rather than simply applying to the entire area. This second approach could then be coupled with use of a design guideline approach that establishes desired or preferred aesthetic qualities and characters.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines serve as an important communication tool between the EDA, the City, property owners and developers. Aspects of the design guidelines are outlined as a part of chapter four of this document, and could potentially be incorporated into a redevelopment overlay zoning district for portions of the Diversified District (see previous section). Design guidelines should become a standard tool in evaluating proposed developments for the area. These guidelines should be rooted in the Preferred Approach Diagram, Redevelopment Master Plan, District Diagrams and subsequent phasing diagrams established in the master plan chapter of this document. Application of desired (but not absolutely necessary) Design Guidelines could be connected to an incentive based approach whereby achieving certain design characteristics could lead to fast tracking entitlements or public financial assistance.



Implementation of the master plan is not a single action, but a series of sequenced steps. These steps will be taken over time and across multiple phases. Initial focus should be on several implementation initiatives that lay the foundation for change. Development projects on current City-owned property within Commerce Park and redevelopment of the EDA owned parking lot on 7th Avenue will serve as models for future private development in North Saint Paul.

During the early years of redevelopment, there are several critical actions the City of North Saint Paul can take to reduce development constraints, allow for greater investment in public amenities and infrastructure and enhance the market viability of multiple locations including the Downtown Business District, the Commerce Park area and the Anchor Block site and others near McKnight Road.

Suggested activities to enhance project success include:

- **Business retention:** this is equal in importance to the next activity, business recruitment. Effective retention focuses primarily on communication with existing businesses, so that public sector leaders are aware of – and thus able to address - potentially negative issues confronting businesses.
- **Business recruitment:** In recruiting new businesses, the initial inquiry requires the City to focus on a targeted business type. Based on the market findings, such targeted businesses are likely to include small manufacturers, light industrial businesses, public and nonprofit organizations, small-scale professional services providers, back office operations, and small-scale retailers. Instead of relying on various brokers to market individual properties, it must be recognized that many prospective tenants will be new or emerging independent businesses. Rather than wait for these businesses to respond to leasing signs, the City would benefit from the creation of an internal marketing entity responsible for outreach.
- **Small business development:** The traditional vehicles for encouraging small-business development involve financing and the development of small-business incubators. An alternative vehicle might involve an “incubator without walls,” which focuses on small business counseling and coaching, and has yielded positive results in other communities.
- **Explore thematic connections:** to the extent possible, the City should explore the recruitment of institutions, facilities and land uses that can promote synergies and thematic connections. Such synergies and connections might involve links to vocational and technical educational institutions, artisan organizations, and uses that can benefit events such as the City’s established car shows, antique auctions, etc.
- **Recognize additional potential should emerge in later years:** While industrial and residential projects present the most likely potential in the early (0-5 years) stages of redevelopment, such developments, along with additional public improvements, should enhance opportunities for small-scale commercial business and development.
- **Start small but with key catalytic projects:** Strategically stage development so that it builds market momentum and so early projects act as positive demonstrations of great things to come in North Saint Paul. Start with small, achievable projects to build success and have a diversity of projects that are viable in the market place today so individual projects within the community don’t directly compete with one another. Allowing this depth of and range of early projects should be guided carefully with extensive examination as to which projects should or should not receive financial assistance.

Case Study: Thematic Connections

When a local district gains a reputation for a specialized product niche or feature, it can attract visitors from broad areas. Such specialized niches usually evolve over time; examples include areas known for furnishings, brewpub/micro brew, bike shop and or other active sporting goods specialty stores. For North Saint Paul, such specialties may emerge in relation to existing distinguishing features such as car shows, antique auctions, building trades, the Gateway Trail, or others.

Encourage creative solutions when developing theme or niche developments. Bruno Silikowski turned his love of cars into a development opportunity in Chanhassen, MN. Silikowski began building and selling “Car Condominiums,” garages with a upscale finishes, room to store vehicles, and a clubhouse. He found a market for motorsport enthusiasts, providing them a place to get together, talk about cars, and show off their vehicles. The site is now 97% full, having grown through the most recent recession.



Car Events in Chanhassen (right) and North Saint Paul (below)



Case Study: Business Incubator

Washougal Washington is an old railroad city of about 14,000 residents with an idyllic Main Street. As Portland grew, Washougal became a part of the metropolitan area. In its new regional context, the downtown struggled as it tried to compete with outside shopping centers.

Wes Hickey, a developer who grew up in the city, began focusing many of his efforts on the Main Street. He built an office building to attract business to downtown, but also wanted a space for new ideas to grow. A block down from his office project, he built a business incubator to provide affordable start-up space for new businesses, as well as give them a shared space for new business owners to talk and learn from each other and share facilities such as conference rooms, kitchens and copiers. Finally, he brought in business experts who could help the new businesses grow.



- Build high-quality development: Directing and building high-quality commercial, industrial and residential development is critical to setting the table for future success. Early projects in the ground will provide the model for future development and establishing a high finish with proper selection of building materials will make great strides in transforming the image of North Saint Paul area toward a desired location for housing, commerce and employment. Buildings should be respectful of adjacent properties and be designed with the appropriate scale. Both commercial and housing development should have a strong street presence and varied materials.
- Build a high-quality public realm: Continued investment in the public realm, particularly along the main corridor of 7th Avenue, will provide an added boost to the creation of a downtown destination, or district identity which will help to drive future market interest. The creation of new streets and the enhancement existing streetscapes paired with stronger pedestrian links between the Gateway Trail and downtown will also benefit the area as a whole over time with enhanced connectivity.
- Enhance community identity and legibility: Expanding and enhancing district wayfinding and signage early in the redevelopment stages will create a unified and more legible / navigable environment for downtown business patrons. Strengthening the connections between the Gateway Trail uses and the Downtown District, and clearly identifying the preferred transportation route to the downtown will strengthen North Saint Paul's greatest asset.

Case Study: Temporary Uses - Storefronts

During the summer of 2012, construction along University Avenue in St. Paul created a negative effect on traffic patterns, reducing the number of cars and customers who were willing to brave the construction zone. This had a detrimental effect on the businesses and property owners, leading to over 25% vacancy on the corridor.

At that time, a group of planners and landscape architects started The Starling Project, an effort to get short term leases for interim uses to fill spaces that would otherwise sit vacant. Many of the uses were galleries or theaters that had a cheaper rate and a shorter length than is typical for a lease. Landlords, while initially skeptical, used the short term leases to pay some of the holding costs and get more potential long term renters viewing the space. The City, recognizing the value of activity and “eyes on the street” worked with short term renters to navigate regulations for an easy process. These “pop-up” storefronts required coordination efforts as well as buy-in from landlords, the city, the community and potential renters, but enlivened the streetscape



Case Study: Temporary Uses - Property

As property sits vacant awaiting redevelopment, one opportunity to provide additional revenue could include construction of temporary uses on the property. When considering temporary uses for vacant property, it is important to consider a few questions:

- What are the goals of the interim use? economic? placemaking? replacing negative activity?
- What is the schedule? intermittent or sustained? Predetermined end point or does it go on indefinitely until a “higher and better” use comes along?
- What regulations need to be addressed? Taxable? Food/Safety inspection? Traffic/Parking?

One option for large vacant properties would be food or plant production. Greenhouses are relatively easy and cheap to build. Projects with low startup costs / low capital investment are ideal.



The approach to redevelopment phasing outlined below builds upon known investments and responds to site readiness and necessary public improvements. It is anticipated that full redevelopment highlighted with this report will take over 20 years to accomplish assuming a return to a relatively stable & growing real estate marketplace.

To act as a basis for analyzing the critical implementation issues and to focus the first steps needed to begin development and redevelopment, as well as best assess the fiscal implications for redevelopment, the master plan phasing strategy is structured around four general phases:

- Immediate, 0-5 years;
- Short-Term, 5-10 years;
- Mid-Term, 10-20 years;
- Long-Term, 20 + years.

These four plan phases sequentially build to the Redevelopment Master Plan (Figure 4.2) outlined in the master plan chapter. The following represents a summary of the four identified redevelopment phases, the associated projects within each phase, both public and private. The Immediate and Short-Term phases also examine the anticipated sources and uses of funds needed to facilitate redevelopment summarized into general categories. The breakdown of each phase is outlined over the following pages.



Housing will be a primary focus for redevelopment efforts in the Immediate Phase of redevelopment

Immediate Phase (0-5 Years)

In the initial phases of redevelopment, efforts are focused on projects already with some momentum and others that will provide a needed spark for future redevelopment steps. A range of project types and sizes are anticipated each helping to showcase a range of opportunities in the area. Housing will take on a stronger presence in the near term with four project anticipated in this phase; senior housing along Helen Street, rental townhomes on vacant land at the edge of downtown, upper-level apartment units within a small mixed use building and market rate rental apartments as a first step to development on the southern portion of the Anchor Block site. Commerce Park will also redevelop with a light industrial use, on the recently cleared property as part of the previous land swap with the bus garage.

Commensurate with these development projects, enhancements to adjacent streets will also take shape and a new segments of streets will be constructed near the Anchor Block multi-family housing project to facilitate better access and circulation and reduce truck traffic through the residential neighborhood. Park improvements include the creation of the first phase of a new urban neighborhood park and enhancements and connectivity improvements between the Helen Street pond area and 7th Avenue. Additionally, strategic acquisition of key properties will be explored to facilitate future phase redevelopment. Key elements of the Immediate Phase are:

- Finalize development plans and construct the senior housing project on Helen Street;
- Provide pedestrian realm enhancements to Helen Street such as sidewalks, street lighting and boulevard trees to provide a strong connection for pedestrians back to 7th Avenue;
- Enhance the pedestrian connection from the Gateway Trail behind the proposed senior housing development to a new West Gateway Park to the downtown at 7th Avenue;
- Redevelop the EDA owned vacant lot on 7th Avenue into a two-story mixed used development;
- Develop a light industrial or office / flex use on the former bus garage site in Commerce Park as a model for future development in the area;
- Redevelop the corner of 7th Avenue and Charles Street with urban infill townhomes. Extend the project limits to the south to include the vacant lot immediately south to provide adequate project size and necessary off-street parking in combination with a reconfigured alley;
- Enhance the streetscape and public realm immediately adjacent to the proposed redevelopment projects;
- Finalize and construct the expansion of the Reflex Medical operations on 7th Avenue;
- Develop the southern portion of the Anchor Block site with high density housing;
- Create new street connections through the Anchor Block site to facilitate redevelopment and reroute existing truck traffic directly to McKnight Road;
- Develop the initial phase of a new public park feature to provide an amenity for nearby new development;
- Provide stormwater improvements for the McKnight sub-district;
- Provide necessary utility improvements and upgrades for development, particularly water main extensions that will likely follow or overlap portions of the Gateway Trail corridor;
- Expand district signage to include signage and wayfinding for trail users to better navigate to the downtown commercial district.

Immediate Phase

#	Project	Sq. Ft	Units
1	Senior Housing at Helen Street		120
2	Mixed Use on 7th Avenue - EDA Site	7,000	12
3	Light Industrial at Commerce Park - Old Bus Garage	25,000	
4	Market Rate Housing at Charles Street & 7th Ave.		16
5	High Density Housing at McKnight Road		200
6	Reflex Medical Office Expansion	13,000	
Immediate Phase Total:		45,000	348



Figure 5.2 - Immediate Phase

Short-Term Phase (5-10 Years)

In the Short-Term Phase, a number of projects are proposed which build on the previous improvements and redevelopment efforts of the Immediate Phase. In Commerce Park, the development of a district stormwater facility will allow for increased stormwater storage and provide the necessary capacity for light industrial or office / flex development along Henry Avenue and portions of a redeveloped commercial corner at Century Avenue and Highway 36. This commercial corner would include a relocated Burger King, reinvented gas station / convenience store, in-line, multi-tenant retail and a potential pharmacy use all with a stronger orientation to Highway 36 and the Gateway Trail.

In the Downtown District, the redevelopment of the Old City Hall site into mixed use takes place. In conjunction with this redevelop effort, the downtown park or town square is created as a primary focal element for downtown and community events. A new street would be constructed around the park edge allowing development to frame the new park. In addition to the new mixed use development, opportunities for urban infill townhomes exist behind the new development at the City Hall site to provide transition from the downtown uses to the existing single-family housing to the south and east.

Near McKnight Road, the second phase to the high density housing occurs on portions of the southern Anchor Block site and former areas of single-family housing along South Avenue. Traffic control upgrades are made at intersections including a round-a-bout at the current five-legged intersection of 7th Avenue, South Avenue and 3rd Street N. Additionally, areas of property currently owned by Anchor Block and the City of North Saint Paul intermixed with the existing single-family neighborhood between 3rd Street N. and 2nd Street N. could be redeveloped. Long-term, this housing area is planned to intensify, and early phases of development could be townhomes or live-work units that utilize the existing infrastructure and portions of enhanced alleys without significant disruption to the fabric of the neighborhood. Key elements of the Short-Term Phase include:

- Redevelop the Old City Hall site and necessary adjacent properties into vertical mixed use with ground level retail and housing above;
- Integrate the creation of a new downtown park with the redevelopment of the Old City Hall site;
- Provide a new street connection between 7th Avenue and Margaret Street to frame the park and provide a development frontage;
- Redevelop the northeastern portion of Commerce Park between Highway 36, Century Avenue and East 13th Avenue into a contemporary, neighborhood convenience retail / service node with stronger visibility toward Highway 36 and the Gateway Trail;
- Develop a sub-district stormwater location for future development in Commerce Park;
- Redevelop a portion of the Berwald site into light industrial or office / flex uses to the west of Henry Street;
- Enhance the streetscape and gateway identification along Century Avenue to announce the arrival to North Saint Paul;
- Develop the second phase of high density housing on the southern Anchor Block site including the second phase of park improvements to enhance the neighborhood amenity;
- Implement traffic and streetscape improvements such as improved intersection lighting at South Avenue or the proposed round-a-bout at 7th Avenue, 3rd Street N. and South Avenue and upgraded streetscape improvements to South Avenue and 7th Street including sidewalks, lighting and boulevard trees;

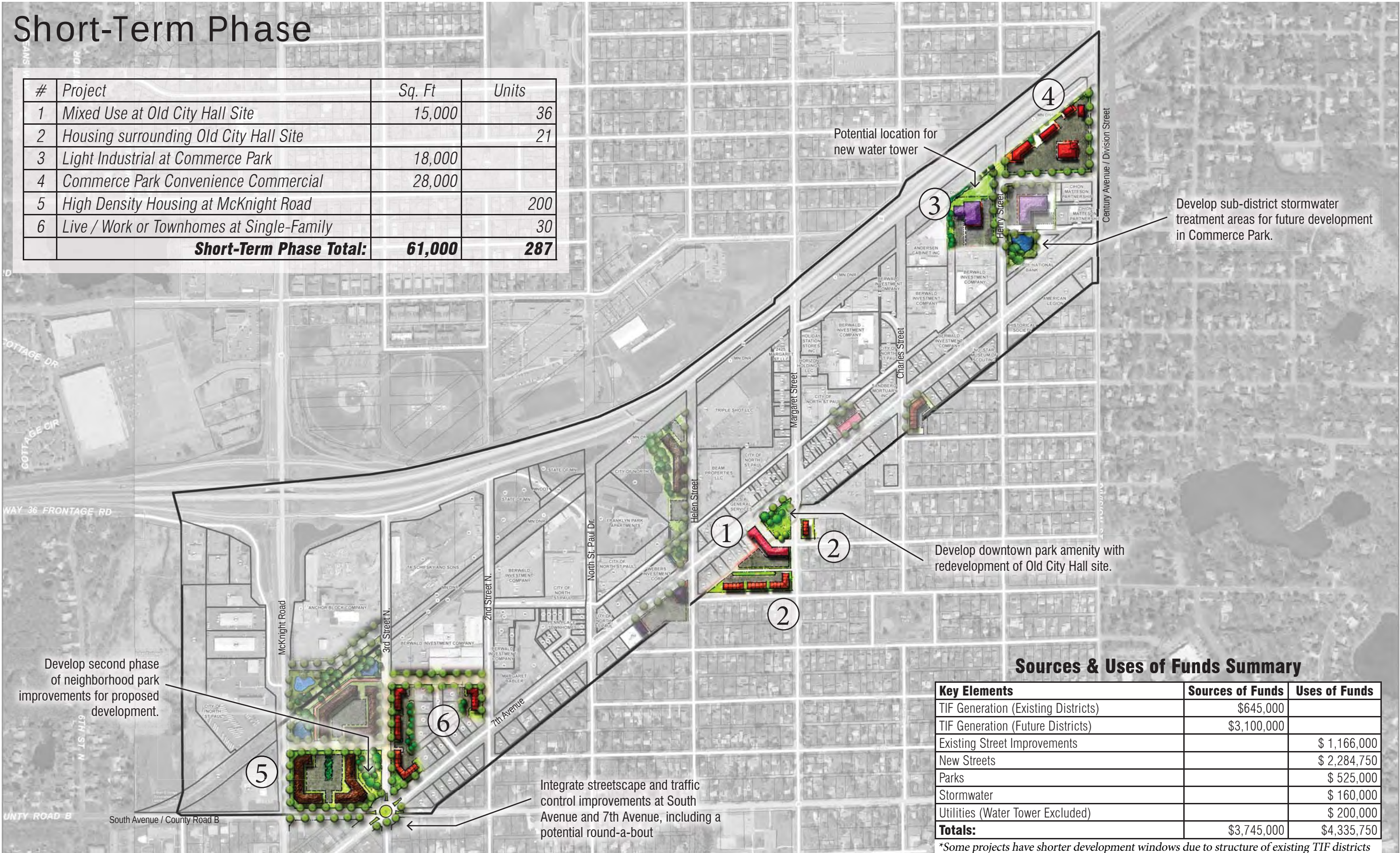
- Extend a new street connection between 3rd Street N. and 2nd Street N. south of the existing Berwald property for additional connectivity;
- Develop urban infill townhomes on City owned or Anchor Block owned vacant parcels within the existing single-family neighborhood;
- Investigate the need for a water tower to provide adequate capacity.



Redevelopment of the Old City Hall site with vertical mixed use and the creation of a new downtown park are important projects in the Short-Term Phase.

Short-Term Phase

#	Project	Sq. Ft	Units
1	Mixed Use at Old City Hall Site	15,000	36
2	Housing surrounding Old City Hall Site		21
3	Light Industrial at Commerce Park	18,000	
4	Commerce Park Convenience Commercial	28,000	
5	High Density Housing at McKnight Road		200
6	Live / Work or Townhomes at Single-Family		30
Short-Term Phase Total:		61,000	287



Sources & Uses of Funds Summary

Key Elements	Sources of Funds	Uses of Funds
TIF Generation (Existing Districts)	\$645,000	
TIF Generation (Future Districts)	\$3,100,000	
Existing Street Improvements		\$ 1,166,000
New Streets		\$ 2,284,750
Parks		\$ 525,000
Stormwater		\$ 160,000
Utilities (Water Tower Excluded)		\$ 200,000
Totals:	\$3,745,000	\$4,335,750

*Some projects have shorter development windows due to structure of existing TIF districts

Figure 5.3 - Short-Term Phase

Mid-Term Phase (10-15 Years)

The Mid-Term phase again expands on momentum from previous projects in the three primary areas of redevelopment activity in the Commerce Park, Downtown and the McKnight Districts. In the Commerce Park District, additional redevelopment of light industrial or office / flex uses are planned along the west side of Henry Street along with redevelopment near the corner of 7th Avenue and Henry Street into an office / service use. The creation of the East Gateway Park is also integrated into this phase.

Areas in front of the Library are anticipated to transform into an active, urban park space. The combination of an interactive water feature and permanent farmer's market pavilion are envisioned to create another strong community destination for the downtown around the Library building. Townhomes could also be developed adjacent to the expanded Reflex Medical site south of 7th Avenue to create a transition from the office uses to the existing single-family neighborhood.

On the west side of McKnight Road, redevelopment is anticipated for three properties located north of the relocated bus garage into a more intensive light industrial / office showroom or office flex space. At the far northern edge, the hardware store remains and could potentially expand to the east in this scenario. On the east side of McKnight Road, the northern Anchor Block site is anticipated to redevelop into an all-in-one business headquarters, light assembly and warehouse space, likely for a single user with the opportunity for individual outlots for pad commercial sites at the intersection of McKnight Road and the new roadway connection to the east. Lastly, the remaining single-family properties would likely redevelop into townhomes or live work housing along the existing Oak Hill Place street alignment. The key elements of the Mid-Term Phase include:

- Develop light industrial uses in Commerce Park;
- Develop office services uses near the intersection of 7th Avenue and Henry Street;
- Create the East Gateway Park;
- Integrate new community park features at the existing Library such as an interactive fountain and permanent farmer's market pavilion and enhanced parking for the Library;
- Infill housing between the Reflex Medical expansion and the existing single-family housing;
- Redevelop the northern Anchor Block site into a business headquarters, light assembly, and warehouse facility or an office / flex space with the opportunity to develop small retail pad sites near the intersection of McKnight Road and the new parkway road connection to downtown;
- Redevelop older areas on the west side of McKnight Road into light industrial or office / flex uses north of the bus garage;
- Allow for the expansion of the hardware store or more intensified commercial / retail space at the northern portion of the west side of McKnight Road;
- Redevelop the older single-family neighborhood with more intensive housing such as townhomes or live / work units;
- Provide enhanced streetscapes and public realm improvements adjacent to all new development.



The Mid-Term Phase involves the redevelopment of the northern portion of the Anchor Block site into a combined business headquarters, light assembly and warehouse facility with small commercial pad sites near McKnight Road.



A permanent farmer's market pavilion is envisioned with urban park enhancements and improved parking and visibility to the Library as a part of this phase.

Mid-Term Phase

#	Project	Sq. Ft	Units
1	Business Headquarters/Lt. Assembly/Warehouse	80,000	
2	Retail Pad at McKnight Road	5,000	
3	Urban Infill Townhomes		10
4	Commercial Intensification / Expansion	5,000	
5	Office / Flex west of McKnight	35,000	
6	Light Industrial / Office Flex	25,000	
7	Professional Office at 7th Avenue	12,000	
8	Live Work Townhomes at Single Family		34
Mid-Term Phase Total:		162,000	44



Figure 5.4 - Mid-Term Phase

Long-Term Phase (15+ Years)

The Long-Term phase includes the redevelopment of the Schifsky asphalt & recycling facility, the Berwald industrial area immediately to the south, and the McPhillips Roofing property located behind City Hall. The Schifsky site is envisioned as an office / flex use capturing the strong visibility from Highway 36. South of the Schifsky site, the older Berwald owned industrial buildings are envisioned to redevelop into high density housing or senior housing, potentially as three individual projects. This redevelopment effort will also facilitate the final connection for the new parkway linking McKnight Road to North Saint Paul Drive and 7th Avenue at the Library.

Another significant redevelopment would occur at the McPhillips Roofing site behind City Hall. Here, two or three story, intensive professional office or office medical uses are envisioned to infill. On Margaret Street, across the street from City Hall, the opportunity exists for two vertical mixed use redevelopment projects on either the north or south side of the access to Aetrium. The southern mixed use project could potentially integrate a public parking structure for all downtown businesses as well as the proposed development. Key elements of the long-term phase include:

- Redevelopment of the Schifsky site into office;
- Redevelopment of the Berwald industrial area into a mix of high density or senior housing projects;
- Connection of the new parkway from McKnight Road to 7th Avenue;
- Redevelopment of the McPhillips Roofing site behind City Hall into an intensive office or medical office use;
- Infill and redevelopment along the western side of Margaret Street with vertical mixed use, including ground-level retail, upper story housing or office uses and the potential for an integrated parking structure to help serve all downtown businesses.



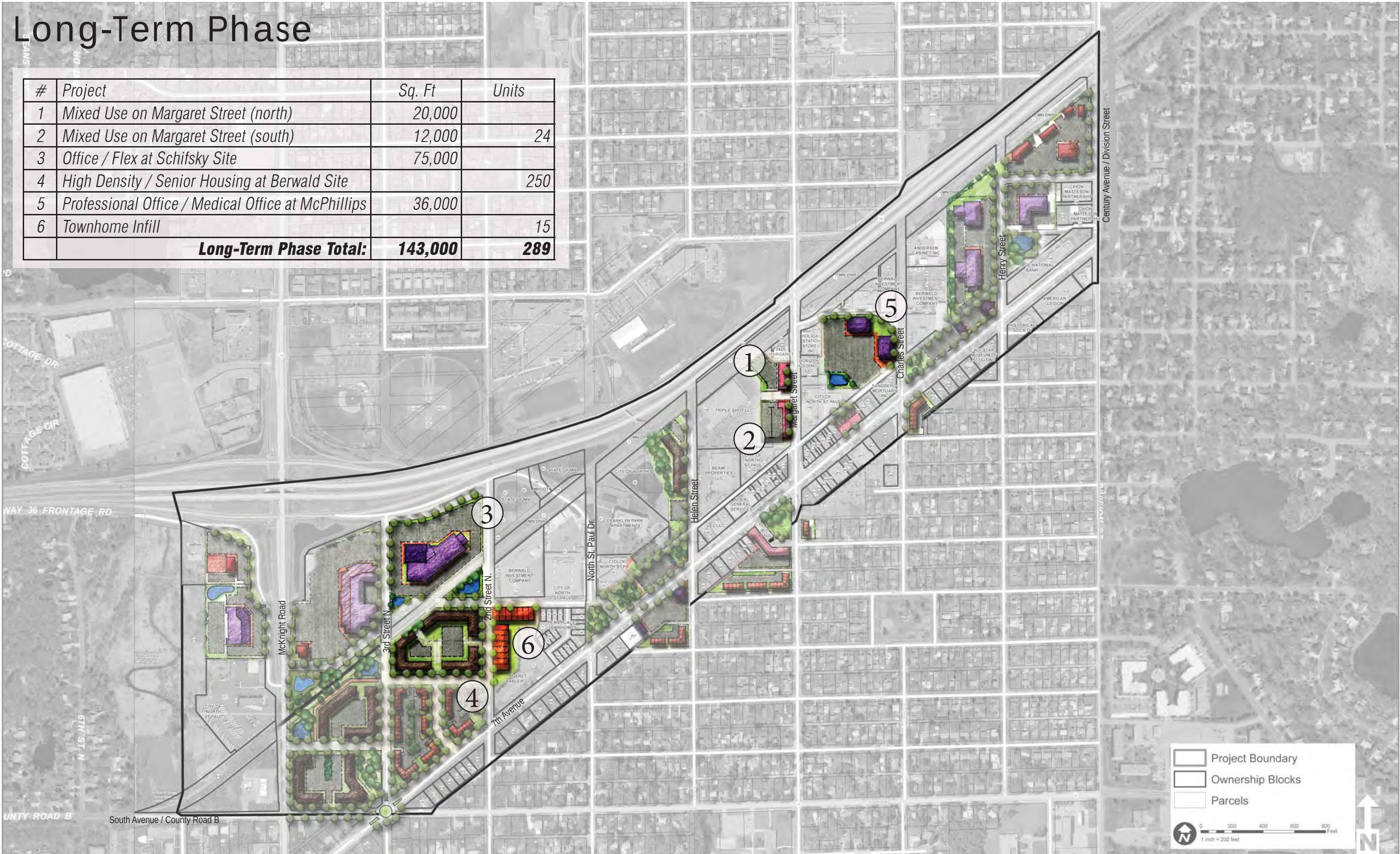
Margaret Street holds potential for vertically integrated mixed use development over the long-term.



High density housing and or senior housing developments are envisioned as part of the redevelopment of the older Berwald industrial buildings between 3rd Street and 2nd Street N, south of the new parkway connection.

Long-Term Phase

#	Project	Sq. Ft	Units
1	Mixed Use on Margaret Street (north)	20,000	
2	Mixed Use on Margaret Street (south)	12,000	24
3	Office / Flex at Schifsky Site	75,000	
4	High Density / Senior Housing at Berwald Site		250
5	Professional Office / Medical Office at McPhillips	36,000	
6	Townhome Infill		15
Long-Term Phase Total:		143,000	289



A preliminary financial analysis on the proposed redevelopment planning was performed with the assistance from the City’s finance consultant, Springsted Inc. Initial findings of this analysis indicated the actions identified in the Immediate and Short-Term phases were financially realistic with some public finance assistance, while aspects of the longer term initiatives were too far into the future to fully examine the financial feasibility.

There are many financial variables involved with complex redevelopment planning projects which can inform the financial analysis differently and these variables can change over time. The following information highlights the key tools currently available to finance the implementation of the redevelopment master plan:

Tax Increment Financing

The costs of development and redevelopment may be too great to allow new projects to be financially feasible. The situation poses the classic “but for” situation in State law governing tax increment financing. “But for” the use of TIF, the development as proposed would not occur. It is clear that the desired redevelopment will not take place without the removal of physical and economic barriers by the City. Tax increment financing is the only tool with the capacity to accomplish these objectives.

As with other elements of the master plan, projections for the use of TIF are both comprehensive and conservative. The plan seeks to provide a clear understanding of what might be required with the goal of reducing public financial commitments as the plan is implemented. The result can be found in other large redevelopment settings. As redevelopment begins to transform an area, market forces improve. As the potential income from rents and sales grow, private development can carry more costs of redevelopment.

This master plan assumes that many of the redevelopment projects will be included in TIF districts at some point during the redevelopment planning. Springsted Inc. provided an analysis of existing and potential future TIF districts used to calculate TIF generation in the Immediate and Short-Term time frames. In simplest terms, TIF allows the City to capture the property taxes from redevelopment and use these monies to pay for the investments required to undertake the development. The results of the financial analysis conducted through the planning process clearly shows that private development alone will not support the investments required for implementing the master plan. The costs of desired development and redevelopment are likely too great to consider all new projects to be financially feasible.

This plan does not offer a primer on the use of TIF since the City is familiar with the intricacies of TIF from its use on other redevelopment projects. Instead, implementation of the plan requires attention to the key issues that influence the use of TIF including:

Project Area:

TIF relies on two types of areas. The “project area” is a broader area with common development goals. The “tax increment financing district” is the specific parcels from which tax increment is collected. The project area is important because it defines where tax increments can be used (see discussion of “Pooling” that follows). The project area defined for this master plan should also be designated as the project area for the purpose of establishing TIF districts.

District Criteria:

The plan assumes that the TIF districts in North Saint Paul project area will be classified as “redevelopment” under state law. The establishment of a redevelopment TIF district relies on three basic criteria (Minnesota Statutes Section 469.174, Subd. 10):

- Parcels consisting of 70% of the area of the TIF district are occupied by buildings, streets, utilities, or other improvements;

- More than 50% of the buildings, not including outbuildings, are structurally substandard to a degree requiring substantial renovation or clearance, and;
- These conditions are reasonably distributed throughout the district.

The presence of improved parcels should not pose a constraint. The majority of the redevelopment sites in the study area include properties that meet these criteria. The existence and distribution of structurally substandard buildings has not been studied.

The inspection of buildings and the related analysis of identified deficiencies are typically used to determine the ability to meet these statutory criteria. This work was not included in the master planning process for North Saint Paul.

Pooling:

Some aspects of the redevelopment plan may be financially feasible while some projects must close a financial gap before they occur. Ideally, projects that produce financial surpluses should be used to support those with gaps. This distribution of financial recourses can occur if the projects are located within the same TIF district. If not, then State law limits the flow of funds between TIF districts.

The need to carefully plan the boundaries of the project area and TIF districts is tied to the issue of pooling. The term refers to the statutory limitation on spending tax increment beyond the boundaries of the TIF district. Items to be funded by TIF must be located within the TIF district or be an amount that falls within pooling limits. For redevelopment TIF districts, not more than 25% of tax increment may be spent outside of the district. The actual application of pooling limits is often more restrictive. Administrative expenses of the TIF district count against the 25% maximum. The amount of revenue available to support eligible costs outside of the district may fall in the 15% to 20% range.

Time Constraints:

In a perfect world, the City would establish a TIF district and wait for redevelopment to happen. Current State law makes this approach a risky proposition. TIF districts are subject to several time limitations. The most important of these limitations is the five-year rule. After five years from the date of certification of the TIF district, the use of tax increment is subject to new restrictions. Generally, tax increment can only be used to satisfy existing debt and contractual obligations after this date. This rule creates a five year window to make commitments for the use of TIF. Additionally, the geographic area of the TIF district can be reduced, but not enlarged, after five years from the date of certification. Therefore, if a TIF district is established without a specific plan for development, there should be reasonable certainty that development will occur within five years.

The City has the ability to decertify all or part of a district and create a new one. This action sets a new five year clock. There is a risk that the conditions used to establish the original district will not be present in the future.

Use Limits:

Several specific statutory limitations will influence the use of tax increments on implementation of the plan. State law requires that at least 90% of revenues from a redevelopment TIF district be used to finance “the cost of correcting conditions that allow designation” of the district. The majority of redevelopment and public improvement expenditures in this plan meet these criteria. Several important limitations must be noted:

- Tax increments cannot be used for “a commons area used as a public park”; thus the park improvements outlined in this plan cannot utilize TIF funds for the development and improvement of parks, plazas and other open space areas.

- Tax increments cannot be used for public facilities used for “social, recreational, or conference” purposes. As with parks, the statute does not define these terms. Special rules apply to public improvements, equipment, or other items located outside of the TIF district.
- Tax increments cannot be used for these costs if their purpose is primarily decorative or aesthetic. If the items serve a functional purpose, tax increments can be used unless “their cost is increased by more than 100 percent as a result of the selection of materials, design, or type as compared with more commonly used materials, designs, or types for similar improvements, equipment or items”. To avoid this restriction, the right-of-way of street to be improved should be included within the boundaries of a TIF district.

Other Public Finance Tools

Although the planning process focused on tax increment financing, it is likely that other public finance tools will be needed to achieve the longer-term redevelopment investments within North Saint Paul. This section highlights potential tools and their application. Additional investigations will be undertaken as finance plans are prepared relative to specific public improvement and redevelopment projects.

Tax Abatement:

The name “tax abatement” is misleading. No taxes are abated using this tool. In reality, tax abatement functions similar to TIF (see Minnesota Statutes Sections 469.1812 to 469.1815). Each taxing jurisdiction (city, county, school district) has the ability to levy a property tax equivalent to taxes paid by a parcel of property. The proceeds of this levy can be used to finance any of the public improvements and other redevelopment activities discussed in this plan. Since tax abatement cannot be used for property in a TIF district, the best opportunity for this tool lies with locations that do not qualify for a TIF district.

Special Service Districts:

A special service district has the capacity to finance the construction and maintenance of portions the public improvements for North Saint Paul, particularly in the Downtown. In simplest terms, a special service district is a special taxing district. It allows the City to collect money to support services and improvements in commercial areas.

The general statutory authority (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 428A) contains few limits on the potential uses of special service districts. The nature of the improvements that can be funded with a special service district are not defined (or limited) by statute. The special service district cannot be used to finance services that the City provides through the general fund throughout North Saint Paul, unless the services are provided at a higher level. The statute does not impose any other limitation on the nature of services. Potential applications of special service districts for implementation of this master plan include:

- Construction and maintenance of downtown streetscapes, particularly 7th Avenue.
- Construction of sidewalks, trails, wayfinding signage and other improvements to enhance pedestrian movement and connectivity between the Downtown and the Gateway Trail.
- Construction and maintenance of sidewalks, trails and other public open space adjacent to the Gateway Trail.
- Construction and maintenance of public parking facilities, both surface parking lots and planned, long-term parking structures.

Other services and improvements can be undertaken and financed by a special service district if authorized by the enabling ordinance.

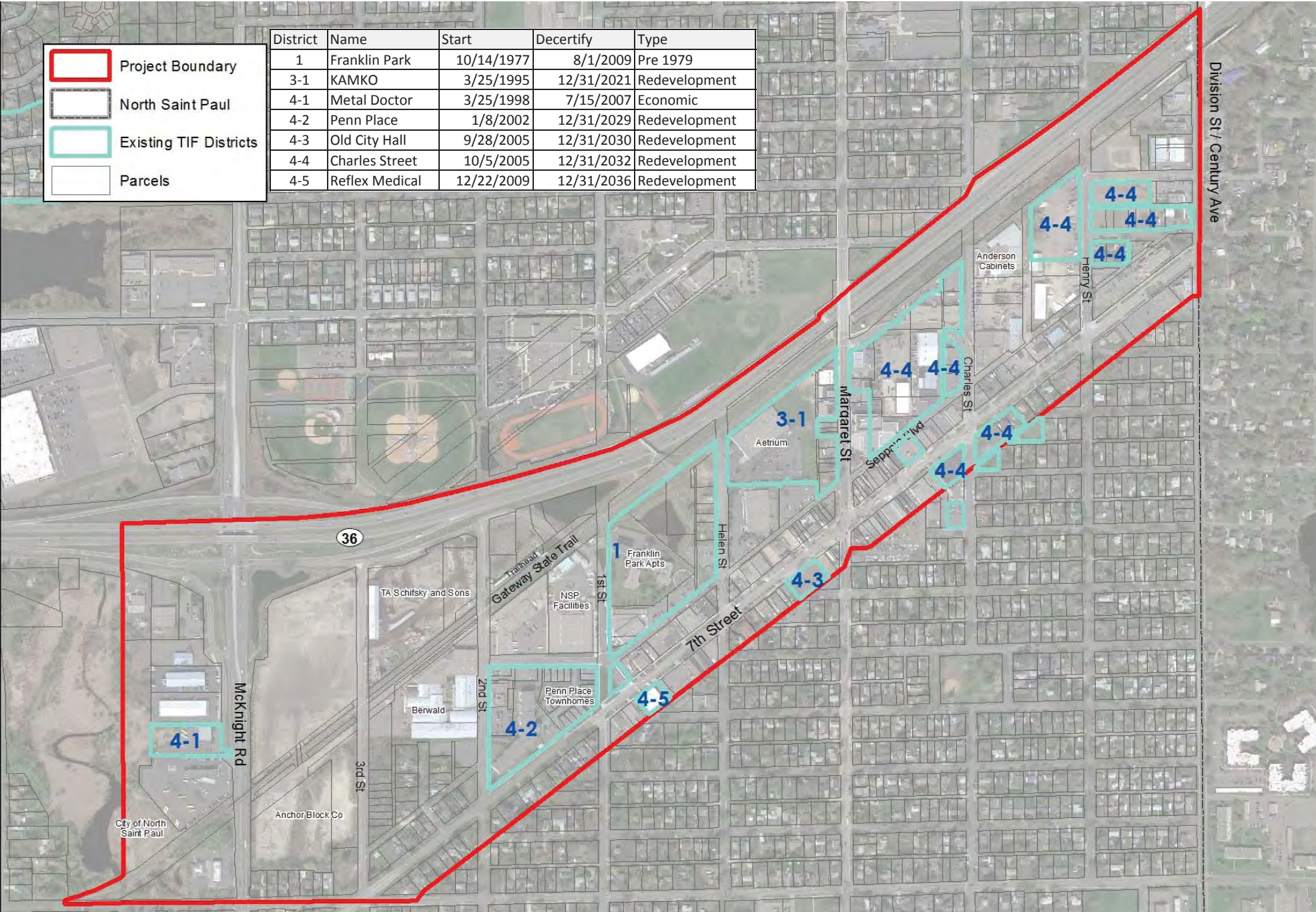


Figure 5.6 - Existing TIF Districts in North Saint Paul

Grants

Metropolitan Council - LCDA

The Metropolitan Council provides Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) Grants for redevelopment projects within the Twin Cities Metro area for both planning (from which this project was funded) and pre-development projects where proceeds could be used for acquisition, demolition and construction for redevelopment projects. The time frame for use of funds for planning projects is two years, while projects awarded development grants have recently been extended to five years from the time the grant was awarded.

Development grants provide funding for basic public infrastructure and site assembly to support development. To that end, these funds could be utilized for acquisition of the single-family homes along Henry Street in Commerce Park or the properties adjacent to the Old City Hall site to help facilitate the initial stages of the redevelopment process. LCDA grants could also be utilized for public infrastructure investments that create strong linkages to housing, jobs and services such as the new entry parkway to downtown from McKnight Road.

DEED

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) offers grants, loans and technical assistance for redevelopment projects and activities for communities. Qualifying projects include housing and commercial rehabilitation, wastewater treatment facilities and drinking water systems, and contaminated site clean-up. Eligibility of financing through DEED depends on a number of factors including the type of business, size, location and type of financing needed.

The Business Development Public Infrastructure Program is a potential grant through DEED which provides funding for infrastructure projects in support of economic development. This program would be a great fit for the infrastructure improvements for portions of Commerce Park, as well as the new entry Parkway through the Anchor Block site to facilitate economic development. The DEED website (<http://www.deed.state.mn.us>) provides a number of potential financial resources for development and redevelopment projects in North Saint Paul to spur business growth in Commerce Park and the surrounding employment areas.

MPCA

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has various opportunities available for receiving grants and other financial assistance for environmental projects in Minnesota. Clean-up of industrial sites and water quality projects may qualify for MPCA grants in Commerce Park and near the McKnight Employment Center District.

Environmental Assistance (EA) Grant

The Minnesota Legislature established the EA grant program to provide financial assistance for the development of environmentally sustainable practices in Minnesota through voluntary partnerships and goal-oriented, economically driven approaches to pollution prevention and resource conservation. The Environmental Assistance Grant Program consists of a competitive, two-stage application process used to identify and assist projects that will be most beneficial in furthering the Agency's mission of working with Minnesotans to protect, conserve, and improve our environment and enhance our quality of life, particularly within the focus areas identified each fiscal year.



The City of North Saint Paul should investigate the creation of a park dedication requirement as an additional means to fund important parks, plazas, open space and wayfinding elements indicated within this master plan.

Grants Focused on Clean Water / Stormwater

The City should investigate the following items which may be available opportunities to help generate funds for improvements to the public drainage infrastructure. Grant funds may be available to help construct stormwater treatment facilities, flood improvement projects, streetscapes, and other amenities throughout the study area. In particular, the City should consider Legacy grants for water quality improvements and the DNR grants for flood improvement projects. The Watershed District may also have grant funds available to help the City with redevelopment efforts.

Park Dedication

State law governing subdivision regulations (Minnesota Statutes, Section 462.358) authorizes the City to require that a reasonable portion of the property be dedicated to the public or preserved for conservation purposes or for public use as parks and recreational facilities. The City may also elect to receive payment in lieu of dedication. This tool could be used to acquire the additional land needed for parks, trails and open space for North Saint Paul.

Stormwater Utility Fee

The City may wish to review its existing stormwater utility fees to ensure that drainage infrastructure funds will be adequate to complete public improvements associated with the study area’s redevelopment. Modifications to the fee structure may be needed to assist with funding sub-district wide stormwater improvements in advance of development.



A modified stormwater utility fee should be explored to help fund sub-district wide stormwater improvements in advance of multiple stages of redevelopment.

SUMMARY

In summary, the Redevelopment Master Plan for North Saint Paul outlines a strategy for positive, incremental change throughout he area. The plan outlines a series of achievable goals over the next ten years, within the immediate and short-term phasing plans. The proposed redevelopment projects have a reality in the marketplace, are financially viable and a true foundation for transformation.

While the master plan prescribes a detailed redevelopment approach for specific projects and likely steps, the plan is also flexible in its application to allow the City of North Saint Paul to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. The master plan should be utilized as a living document, continually referenced and checked against as development and redevelopment projects occur over time.





Downtown Redevelopment Study 2019



Acknowledgements

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- » Joe Bucheger, Vice Chair
- » John Lyche
- » Ann Brandau
- » Ron Johnson
- » Jim Olson, Alderperson
- » Jim Binash, Alderperson

Common Council

- » Joe Chilsen, Mayor
- » Jim Binash, First Aldermanic District, 2018-2019 Council President
- » Jim Olson, First Aldermanic District
- » Diane Wulf, Second Aldermanic District
- » Jerry Every, Second Aldermanic District
- » Kim Smith, Third Aldermanic District
- » Ron Gjertsen, Third Aldermanic District

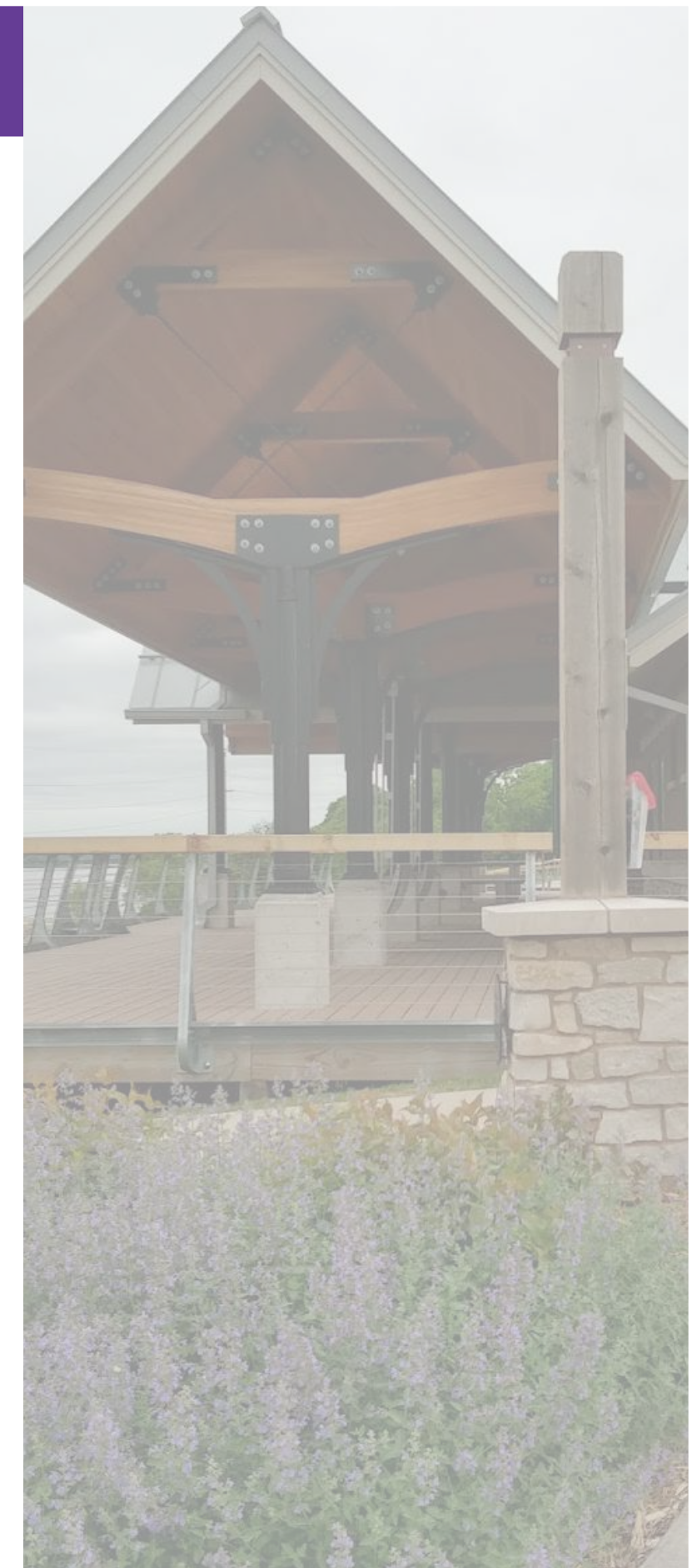
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Project Background



Purpose

Downtown Onalaska is continuing to become a desirable destination locally and regionally. A major transformation of the downtown core and its connection to the City's riverfront and the state trail is occurring through public and private initiatives. The purpose of this downtown redevelopment study by the Onalaska Community Development Authority (CDA) is to build upon downtown's revitalization momentum by establishing a framework for the next phase of downtown property redevelopment projects and public improvements. The Downtown study area is shown in Figure 1.1, which includes the downtown core, riverfront, Hwy 35 corridor, and residential (west side of 3rd Avenue).

Historically, while the City has experienced significant growth and prosperity, the downtown area has lagged behind the rest of the City in terms of new investment and tax base increases. Similar to many cities, nearly all of the new retail development occurred at the City's edges, near the regional mall, and oriented to the major highways. While located adjacent to the riverfront, downtown is separated from the riverfront by the rail line and Hwy. 35 and its historic development turned its back toward the riverfront. In general, downtown lacked identity, connection to the river/open space, and was experiencing disinvestment. Onalaska functioned

more as a pass-through area than a destination. In 2008, the river's natural landscape was not even visible from Main Street.

Downtown's environment has been improved dramatically in recent years with the reconstruction and widening of the Great River Road, development of the Great River Landing, Dash-Park, new commercial buildings and businesses, and revitalization of existing commercial buildings and businesses on Main Street. The Great River Landing's upland area encompasses major regional trail connections and trailhead facility, main street plaza, river overlook, and parking, as well as future plans for river's edge development and a pedestrian bridge providing a vertical connection between downtown and the river's edge. Downtown's mix of businesses now includes desirable restaurants, a wine bar, bike shop, specialty clothing & gift shop, and salon/spa/massage. As a result of these improvements, downtown now has an identifiable center and much stronger connection to the riverfront. Main Street now offers a wide and long vista of the beautiful river valley and its bluffs.

Beginning in 1994 with the adoption of the City of Onalaska Comprehensive Plan, the City has made a commitment to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of the downtown area and to take advantage of the aesthetic, recreational, and tourism



Great River Landing trailhead.

opportunities afforded by the riverfront. Centering Onalaska was a major non-profit organization composed of businesses and citizens who further stimulated interest in downtown and riverfront revitalization.

The City's 1999 Downtown Onalaska Redevelopment Plan was the foundation for most of these improvements. With the 2018 proposal by a developer for the redevelopment of the old City garage site, the redevelopment sites identified in this plan will be completed. To keep downtown's revitalization moving, there is a need for the city to provide guidance for future redevelopment opportunities.

The vision for downtown is to continue its revitalization as a destination for Onalaska residents, La Crosse area residents, and regional visitors. At the same time, downtown has the opportunity to evolve into a unique neighborhood within the City that offers a greater variety of housing options with convenient access to commercial businesses, services, and recreation amenities. Downtown's center is where Main Street intersects with the linked open spaces of Dash-Park and Great River Landing. To enhance and leverage these downtown assets, the focus is to create a cluster of destinations surrounding this area through future redevelopment.



Rendering of Main Street looking toward Great River Landing Trailhead

1999 Main Street Revitalization Illustration

- » Attract a greater variety of specialty retail, services, and tourist-oriented businesses
- » Storefront enhancements including signage, awnings, and large windows
- » Streetscape enhancements including streetlights, trees, planters, and sidewalk pavers



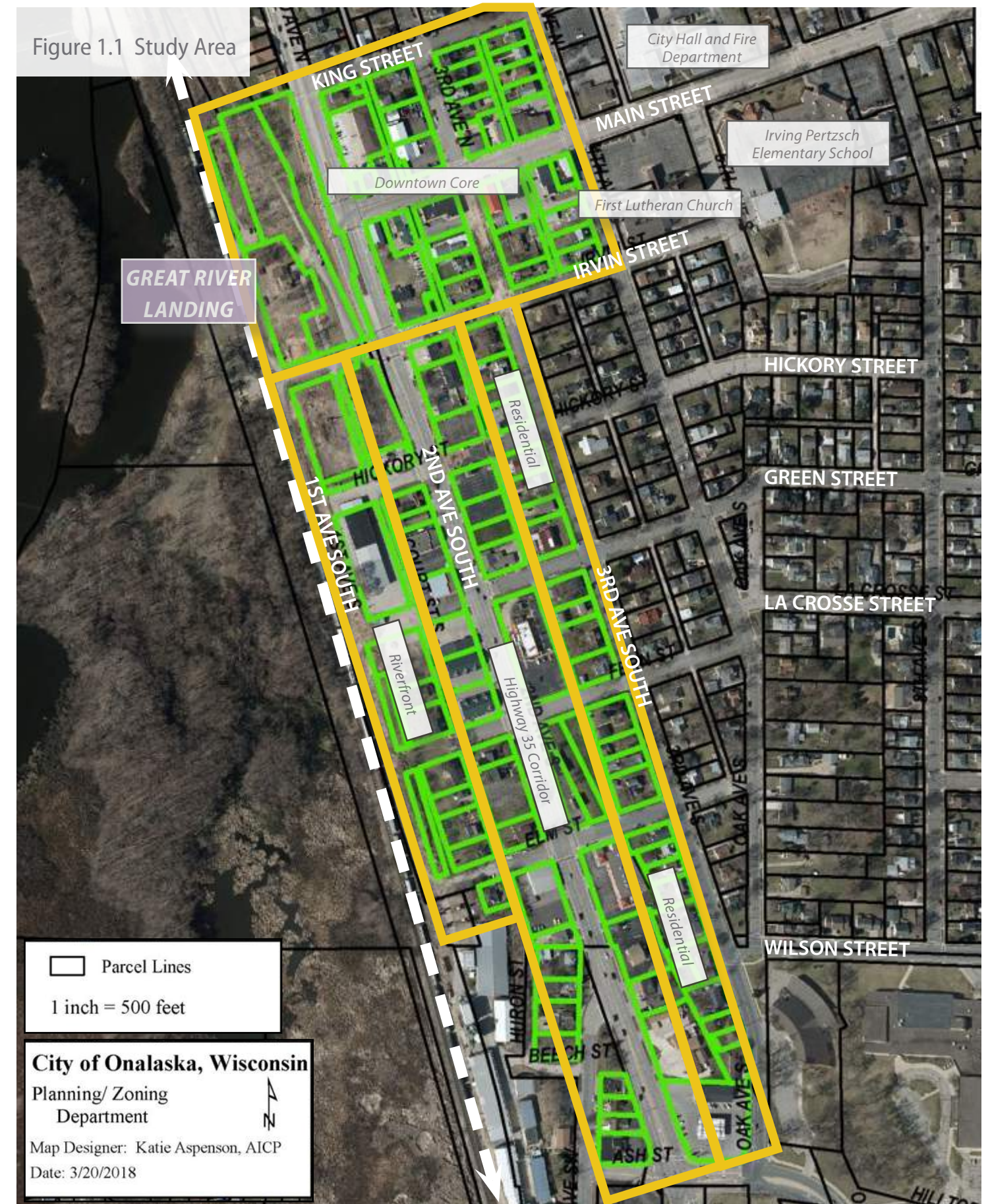
Approach

The planning process consisted of three phases as follows:

- 1 **Phase 1 – Understand What Exists (July – September 2018)**
 - » Conduct Project Kickoff Meeting with CDA and City Staff
 - » Assemble Background Data
 - » Review Past Relevant Studies
 - » Understand Future Market Potential
 - » Understand Current Issues and Opportunities
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff (Background and Market Summary, Stakeholder Questions)
 - » Meet with Key Property Owners/ Stakeholders
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff (Review Comments from Stakeholder Meetings)
- 2 **Phase 2 – Explore the Possibilities (September – November 2018)**
 - » Develop Redevelopment Concept Alternatives
 - » Conduct a Design Workshop/ Review Meeting with CDA and City Staff (Evaluate the Alternatives)
 - » Refine the Concepts and Prepare for Second Round of Stakeholder Engagement
 - » Meet with Key Stakeholders
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff (Review Comments from Stakeholder Meetings)
 - » Conduct Developer Roundtable
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff (Review Comments from Developer Roundtable & Provide Overview of Community Meeting Approach)
 - » Conduct Additional Developer Review
- 3 **Phase 3 – Refine to a Preferred Redevelopment Plan & Seek Approvals (December 2018 – March 2019)**
 - » Conduct Public Meeting (January 8, 2019 at Irving Pertzsch Elementary School)
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff (Review Feedback from Public Meeting, Discuss Implementation Priorities, Review Outline of Draft Report)
 - » Prepare Draft Redevelopment Plan Report
 - » Meet with CDA and City Staff to Review Draft Report
 - » Refine Draft Document Based on CDA & Staff Feedback
 - » Final Redevelopment Plan to CDA for Approvals



Figure 1.1 Study Area





Prior Planning

1999 Downtown Onalaska Redevelopment Plan

The City's current downtown plan was completed in 1999 by City Staff, the City's Long Range Planning Committee, and Centering Onalaska working collaboratively with a planning consultant. The plan has a larger downtown core study area, extending east to 8th Avenue South and from Locust Street to Oak Forest, but its identified redevelopment sites were all focused near the intersection of Main Street and 2nd Ave South/Hwy 35. The key site redevelopment and public improvement projects recommended were:

- » Main Street Streetscape Improvements
- » Privately Owned Redevelopment Sites
 - Platz (Woolen Mill Site) and Skaff Properties west side of Hwy 35
 - Wiley and Wakeen/Harter Properties east side of Hwy 35 between Main St and Irvin Street
- » Publicly Owned Redevelopment Sites
 - Police Department Site on Main Street
 - City Garage and Shop Site on the riverfront (Court Street South)
- » Great River Trail Improvements and Routing
- » Sias Isles Marina Improvements
- » Wetland Conservancy Area Acquisition and Access Improvements

The implementation recommendations had a 5 to 10 year timeline, however, actual implementation has taken 20 years with the redevelopment of the last identified site (City garage site) anticipated to begin in 2019 or 2020.

2015 Great River Landing Plan

The Great River Landing Plan was completed in 2015. The project's goal was to develop a plan to revitalize the Onalaska waterfront by providing safe and accessible access to the waterfront with clear connectivity to the downtown and Main Street. The project involved the Mayor, Common

Council, Community Development Authority, Great River Landing Waterfront Committee, multiple City Departments, an urban design consultant, and numerous stakeholder groups.

The Great River Landing design concept envisions an extended Main Street to be directly connected to the waterfront. This connection will be achieved through a large pedestrian bridge and overlook that would span the railroad tracks to provide safe and accessible connection to the waterfront as a direct extension of Main Street. The uplands portion of the Great River Landing has been built, which includes a trailhead building with a visitor center, overlook, restroom facilities, parking (that could double as a farmers market), and Main Street Plaza for passive relaxation and enjoying views of the waterfront.

The planned lower waterfront portion of the project has been designed for both passive and active recreation. The proposed design concept includes a nature playground, picnic grove, log rolling boom, kayak launch along with other informal water's edge access, and a boardwalk system to connect the active area to the adjacent spillway.



1999 Riverfront Connection Concept Plan

- » Create vistas of the riverfront from downtown
- » Attractive and walkable connection between downtown and the riverfront
- » More trees and plantings along Irvin St



2015 Great River Landing Plan

- » Extend Main Street to be directly connected to the waterfront.
- » Connection will be achieved through a large pedestrian bridge and overlook spanning the railroad track

2016 Historical and Architectural Resources Survey

The purpose of this project was to provide a survey of the architectural and historical resources located within the City of Onalaska. This material may be useful in the development of a local preservation plan; to identify buildings, structures, sites and historic districts that meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and to increase public and private sector awareness of the community’s historical and architectural heritage. This 2016 survey resulted in identification of a total of fifty-five properties that meet current survey standards. No historic districts were identified. Of the total seven properties that were considered for National Register eligibility, six are recommended as potentially eligible for the National Register. In the downtown study area, only two properties were identified to offer a sufficient degree of historical intrigue and/or architectural integrity to suggest potential for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The two properties are:

- » 201 Main Street, Onalaska State Bank (1912)
- » 414 4th Avenue South, Thomas & Mary Thompson House (ca. 1885)



2016 Historical and Architectural Resources Survey

- » Provided a survey of architectural and historical resources located in Onalaska
- » Onalaska State Bank (1912), 201 Main Street

The Onalaska State Bank building had previously been officially deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2011 and it is also listed as a City of Onalaska Historic Landmark.

Other downtown properties that are part of this survey are:

- » 205 Main Street, Luedtke Walgreen Agency, Inc. (1964)
- » 330 Main Street, Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge (1882)/Onalaska Lodge No. 214, F. & A.M.
- » 401 Main Street, Dickinson Funeral Home (1974)
- » 410 Main Street, First Lutheran Church (1954) and First Lutheran Church Education Center (1963)

2016 City Comprehensive Plan

The City’s current Comprehensive Plan was completed and adopted in 2016. The City’s Long Range Planning Committee served as the steering committee for updating the comprehensive plan with monthly meetings and coordinating feedback from the Plan Commission, City committees, City Staff, and the general public. The Comprehensive Plan includes the following chapters: Issues & Opportunities, Housing, Transportation, Utilities & Community Facilities, Agricultural/Natural/ Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Land Use, Intergovernmental Cooperation, and Implementation.

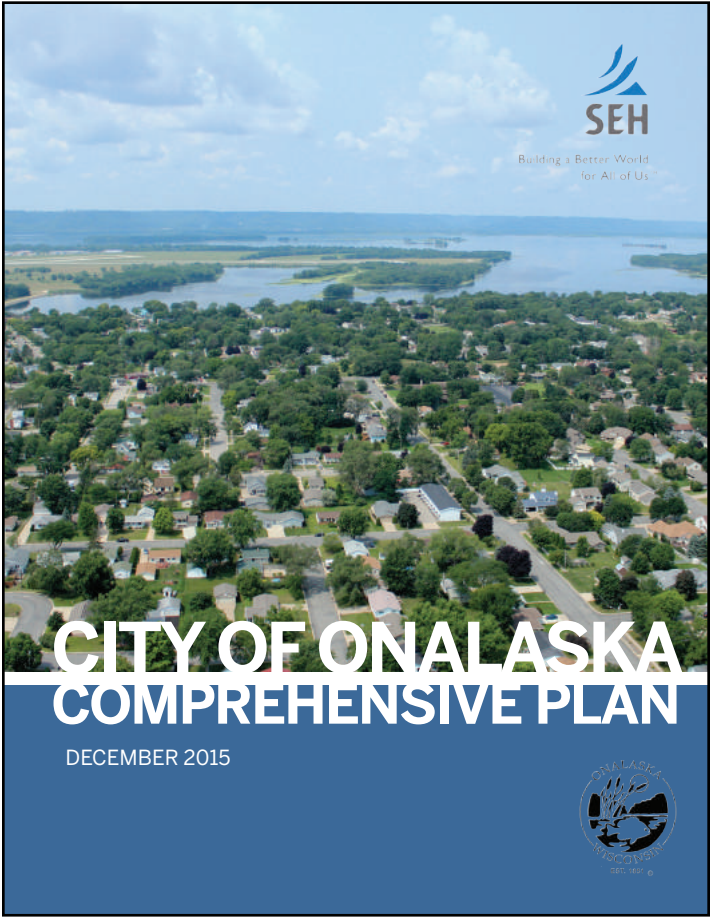
Key guidance for downtown from the 2016 City Comprehensive Plan includes the following:

- » The Future Land Use Map guides the entire downtown study area for the Downtown Mixed Use land use district.
- » One of the Land Use chapter’s five goals is downtown-focused.
 - Goal 2: Revitalize Downtown. Establish downtown Onalaska as a vibrant community and regional gathering place, destination, focal point, and source of city pride.
 - Objectives:
 - By identifying a core downtown area.

- By implementing the Great River Landing Plan.
 - By promoting infill and redevelopment downtown.
 - By ensuring the transportation system is adequately designed to serve the downtown.
 - By ensuring that new development is well designed, high quality (materials), pedestrian/ bicycle oriented, and environmentally friendly.
- » The Economic Development chapter identifies the properties along the Hwy 35 corridor in downtown as an Economic Development Site.
 - » The Implementation chapter identifies an implementation goal to update or create a new Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Railroad Quiet Zone Study

A Quiet Zone Study for the BNSF rail line that runs along the waterfront was completed in 2014. Due to some significant changes since 2014, including the large investment in the Great River Landing (which is immediately adjacent to the Irvin Street grade crossing) and the train/roadway traffic volumes, a Quiet Zone Field Diagnostic Meeting took place in 2018. The Irvin Street crossing is Quiet Zone eligible with the installation of some fencing. Future planning for Irvin Street and the lower portion of the Great River Landing project will need to be coordinated with Quiet Zone planning.





Existing Conditions



Zoning

A variety of zoning districts exist in the downtown (Figure 2.1). The following provides a summary of the existing zoning districts in the Downtown, organized by individual districts identified in the Redevelopment Planning Framework chapter.

Downtown Core

- » Primarily Neighborhood Business (B1)
- » Three properties are zoned Community Business (B2)
- » Dash-Park and Great River Landing are zoned Public/Semi-Public (P1)
- » Entire district is also located within the Downtown-PUD overlay district

Highway 35 Corridor

- » Primarily Neighborhood Business (B1)
- » Three properties are zoned Community Business (B2)
- » Entire district is also located within the Downtown-PUD overlay district

Riverfront

- » Primarily Public/Semi-Public (P1)
- » Southernmost block is zoned Neighborhood Business (B1) with one property zoned Community Business (B2)
- » Entire district is also located within the Downtown-PUD overlay district

Downtown Residential

- » Primarily zoned Single Family and Duplex Residential (R2)
- » One property zoned Multiple Family Residential (R4) at corner of Fern St
- » One property zoned Neighborhood Business (B1) at corner of King Street/Hwy 35 north of the downtown core.
- » Entire district is also located within the Downtown-Residential overlay district with exception of the one property at corner of King Street/Hwy 35 that is within the Downtown-PUD overlay district

Figure 2.1 Zoning Map





Land Use

Current land uses in the downtown are generally a mix of commercial, residential and park uses (Figure 2.2). The following provides a summary of the current land uses in the Downtown, organized by individual districts identified in the Redevelopment Planning Framework chapter.

Downtown Core

- » Concentration of commercial businesses (retail, personal service, restaurant, auto repair/towing) along Main Street and 2nd Avenue South/Hwy 35
- » One small two-story multi-unit residential building on Main Street
- » Two buildings have second floor residential apartments above commercial businesses
- » Single-family detached homes on 3rd and 4th Avenues South
- » Great River Landing recreational visitor/trailhead facility and parking lot
- » Dash-Park
- » Municipal parking lot
- » School District's administrative offices and parking lot
- » Electrical substation

Highway 35 Corridor

- » Wide variety of commercial businesses (retail, personal service, restaurant, professional office, lodging, funeral home, gas station) along 2nd Avenue South/Hwy 35
- » Small number of single-family homes at south end of corridor
- » Five vacant properties

Riverfront

- » City-owned land, City garage and shop buildings
- » Six single-family homes
- » One tri-plex

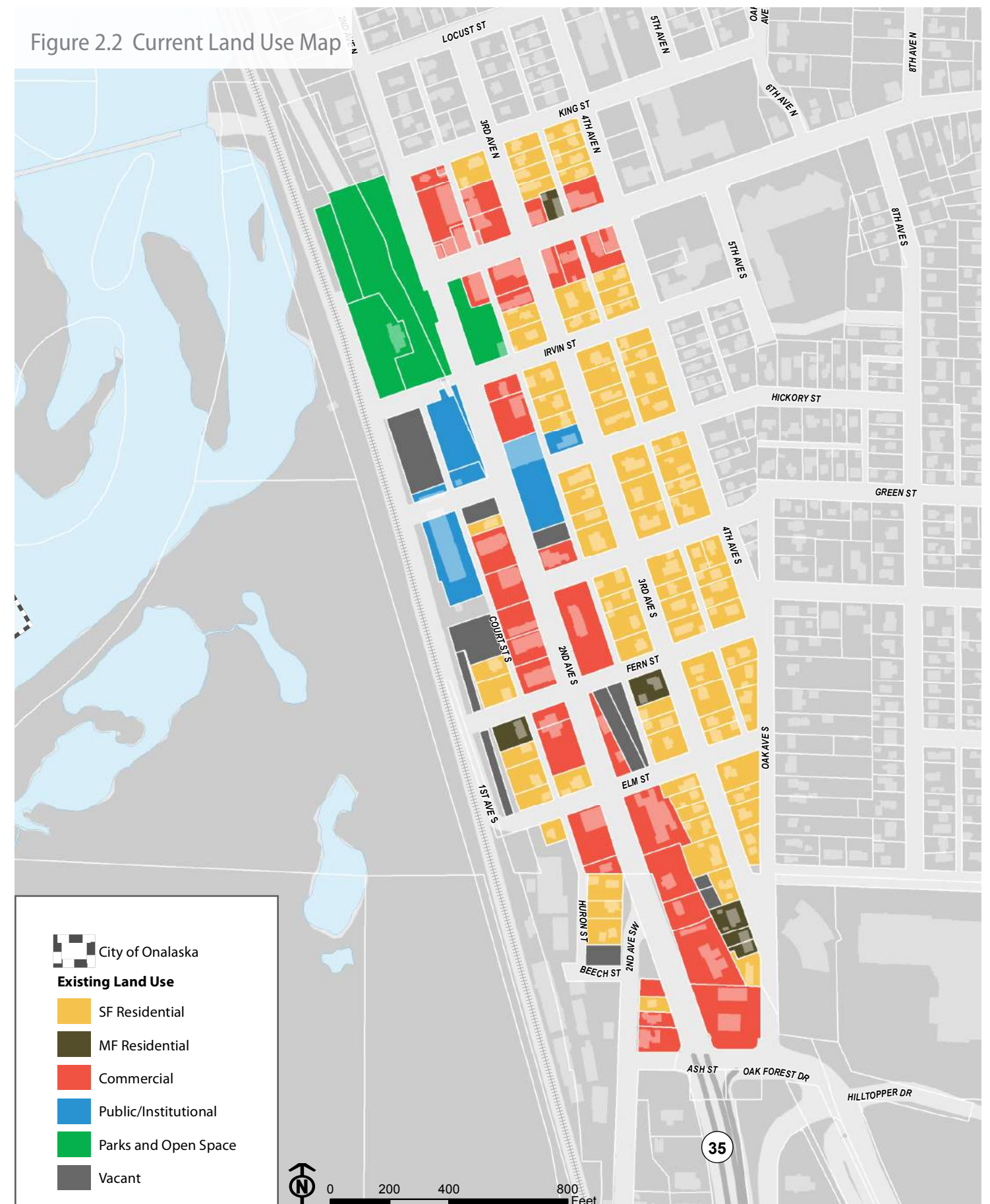
Downtown Residential

- » Single-family homes along with two duplexes
- » Two small vacant lots on southernmost block but with no street or alley access



Downtown Core prior to recent public open space improvements.

Figure 2.2 Current Land Use Map



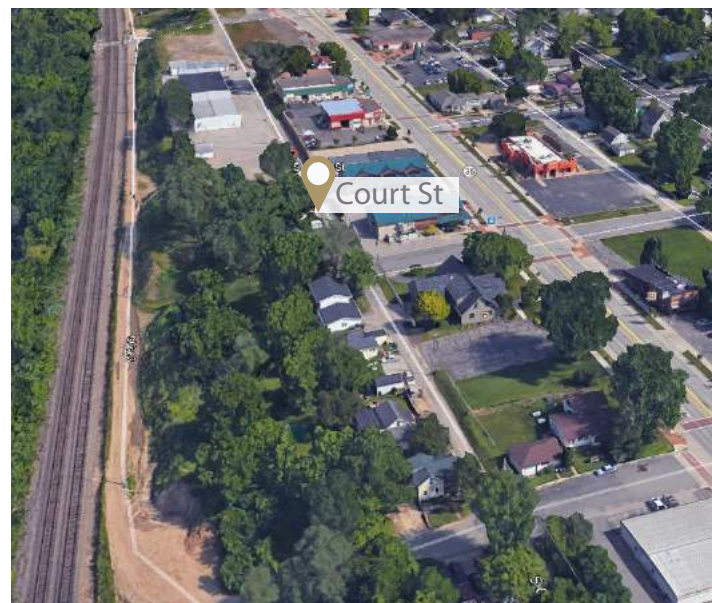


Transportation

Downtown circulation benefits from its traditional street grid and access to major roadways (2nd Avenue South/Hwy 35 and Main Street). Hwy 35 and Main Street (Hwy 157) are both State roadways. Hwy 35/2nd Avenue South is designated as “The Great River Road”, which is Wisconsin’s only National Scenic Byway. This roadway was designated as a National Scenic Byway by the Federal Highway Administration and extends from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. In Wisconsin, this route parallels the Mississippi River for 250 miles along the state’s western border. These roads are known for their scenic qualities and are promoted as driving vacation destinations. Roadway functional classifications are as follows:

- » Principal Arterials – Hwy 35 (south of Main Street), Main Street
- » Minor Arterials - Hwy 35 (north of Main Street)
- » Collectors – 3rd Ave (south of Main Street), 4th Avenue North (north of Main Street)
- » Local Streets – all other streets

Almost all of the blocks east of Hwy 35 have an alley. In addition, Court Street functions as an alley west of Hwy 35 (Figure 2.3).



Court Street, west of Hwy 35, functions as an alley.

Downtown is well-served by sidewalks on many streets, including Main Street, Hwy 35, 3rd Avenue, and 4th Avenue South (see Figure 2.3). Many gaps exist along the east-west streets, including Irvin, King, Hickory, Green, Fern, and Elm, as well as Oak Avenue near the library and high school. Almost no sidewalks exist west of Hwy 35.



Existing sidewalks along Irvin Street.

The Great River State Trail travels through downtown with the Great River Landing serving as a major trailhead facility. The Great River State Trail is an approximately 24-mile rails-to-trails conversion that is a part of the Mississippi River Trail, which is a 3,000-mile designated bicycle route that travels from the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Itasca, MN all the way to the Delta of the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana. In 2013, the WDNR estimated that 69,000 individuals utilized the Great River State Trail, with a high percentage utilizing the Onalaska portion of the trail. It was also estimated that the economic impact to the trail’s gateway communities - Trempealeau and Onalaska, was nearly \$1.8 million. On-street bike routes exist on Hwy 35, Main St, 3rd Ave (south of Main Street), and 4th Avenue North (north of Main Street).



The Great River State Trail in La Crosse, WI.

Pedestrian/bike crossings of Hwy 35 include two traffic signals - Main St and Ash St/Oak Forest. Additional street crossings are indicated with colored pavement markings at four intersections in between the two traffic signals. Striped pavement markings and pedestrian-friendly corner bump-outs exist at intersections along Main St.



Existing bike/ped crossing at Ash and Main Streets.

Transit is provided by La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU). Route 9 runs on Hwy 35 and Main Street with bus stops at 5th Avenue S/City Hall, Main Street/3rd Avenue, Hwy 35/Irvin Street, Hwy 35/Fern Street, and north of Hwy 35/Ash Street.

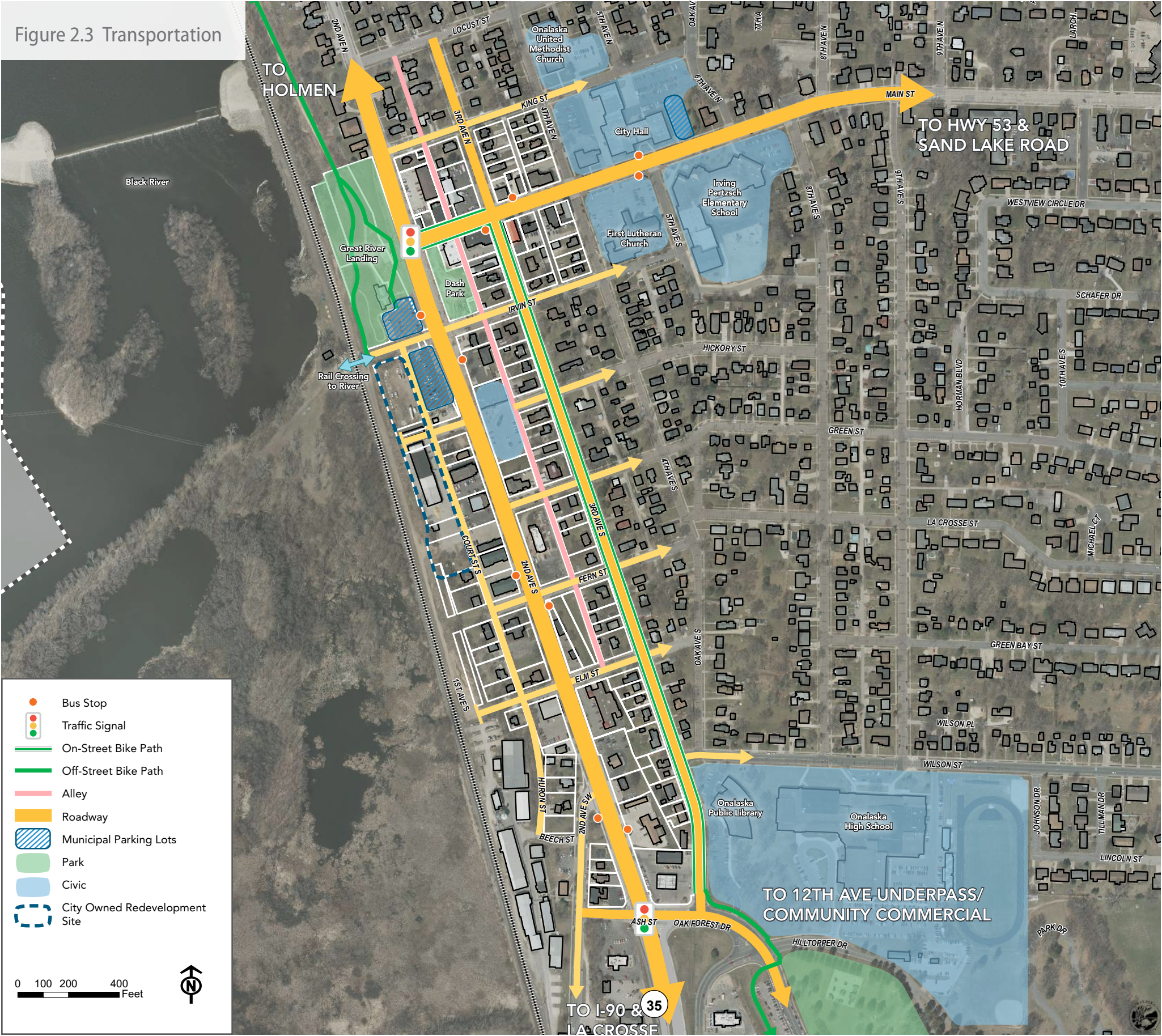


Burlington Northern Railroad along the shore of Onalaska, WI.

The Burlington Northern Railroad runs north/south along the shore of Lake Onalaska on the west side of downtown. This track is heavily utilized for freight traffic travelling between Chicago and the Twin Cities. Passenger rail service via Amtrak is available in La Crosse. In 2014 it was estimated that 60 trains travel through Onalaska daily. There is no public street access across the rail corridor in the downtown area. The only vehicular crossing is the driveway at the end of Irvin Street to the waterfront.



Figure 2.3 Transportation



Great River Landing.



Dash-Park.



Main Street.



Highway 35/Great River Road.



Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Downtown is located along the riverfront and its open space, most notably the Great River State Trail and Great River Landing. Dash-Park, a new signature central downtown park, was completed in 2018. Downtown's access to active parks includes Rowe Park, a large community park at the southern edge of downtown, and the playground at the elementary school. Downtown lacks a neighborhood park. In addition to the Great River State Trail, bicycling facilities exist on Hwy 35, Main St, 3rd Avenue South (south of Main St), and 4th Avenue North (north of Main St) (Figure 2.4).

A state snowmobile trail runs along Oak Ave south of downtown then crosses Hwy 35 and heads north to connect with the Great River State Trail. In fact, Lake Onalaska is connected to Lake Superior through a series of snowmobile trails. The Great River State Trail also accommodates cross country skiing and snowshoeing.



Existing public space at Dash-Park.



The Great River State Trail in Onalaska, WI.



Entry sign at Rowe Park.



Great River Landing trailhead.



State snowmobile trail.

Figure 2.4 Parks, Trails, and Open Space



Figure 2.5 Great River Landing Concept





Redevelopment Scoring

In addition to examining previous planning efforts, it was necessary to evaluate property within the downtown for redevelopment potential. By finding the “low hanging fruit” it was possible to identify locations that make sense as starting points.

Part of the process for identifying priority sites (Figure 2.10) was an attribute-based evaluation of the properties within the study area. By assigning points based on characteristics of all of the parcels, the consultant team was able to get an initial view of where to focus redevelopment efforts. These characteristics included vacancy, age, land and building values, land use, size, ownership, location and visibility (Figures 2.6-2.9). This evaluation produced an initial framework to begin identifying redevelopment parcels.

Because the redevelopment scoring model could not take every variable into account, and because different redevelopment types have different needs, further analysis was conducted on a case-by-case basis, examining the physical characteristics, market realities, and other redevelopment demands of individual and combined sites.

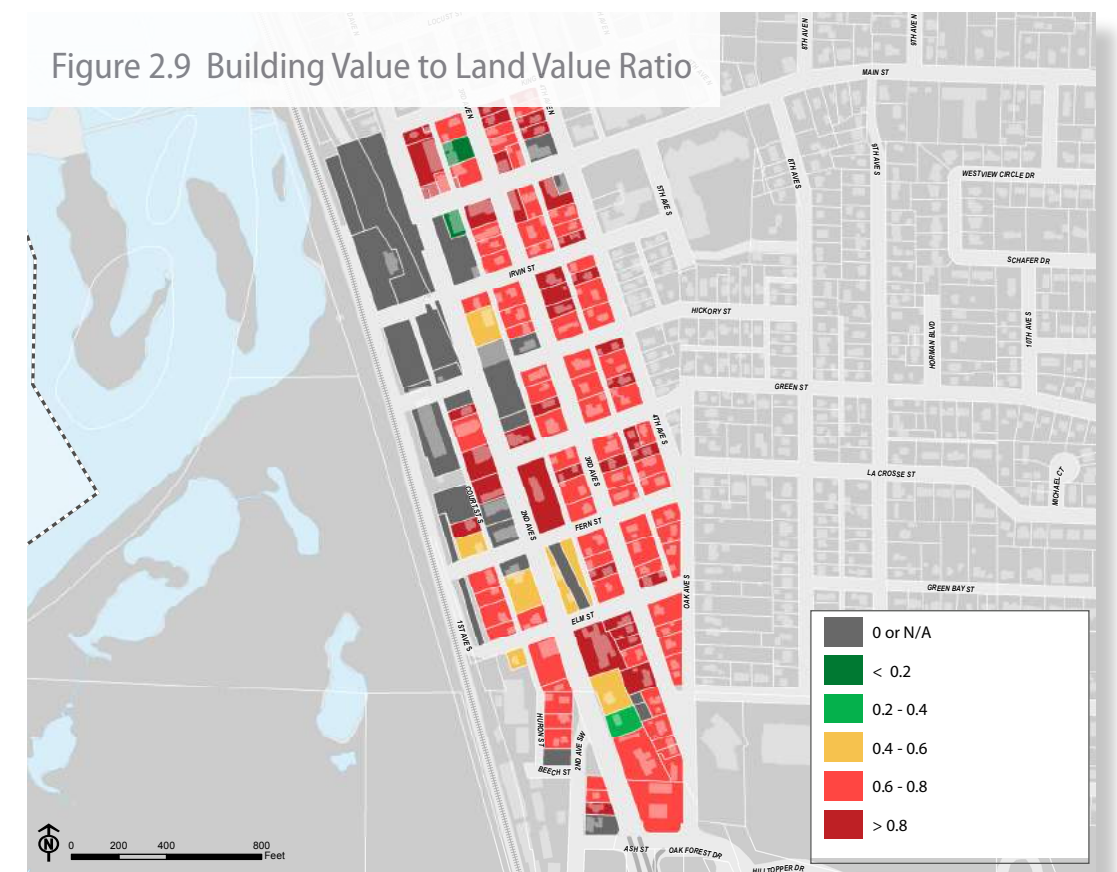
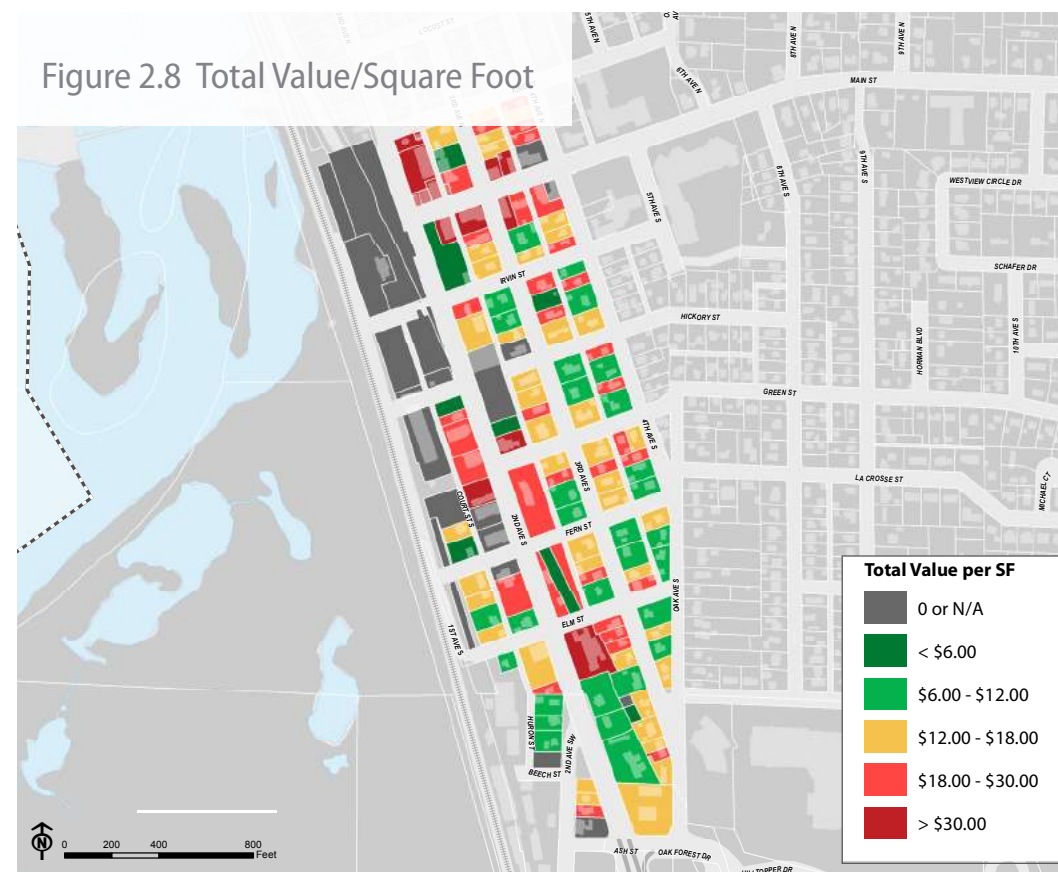
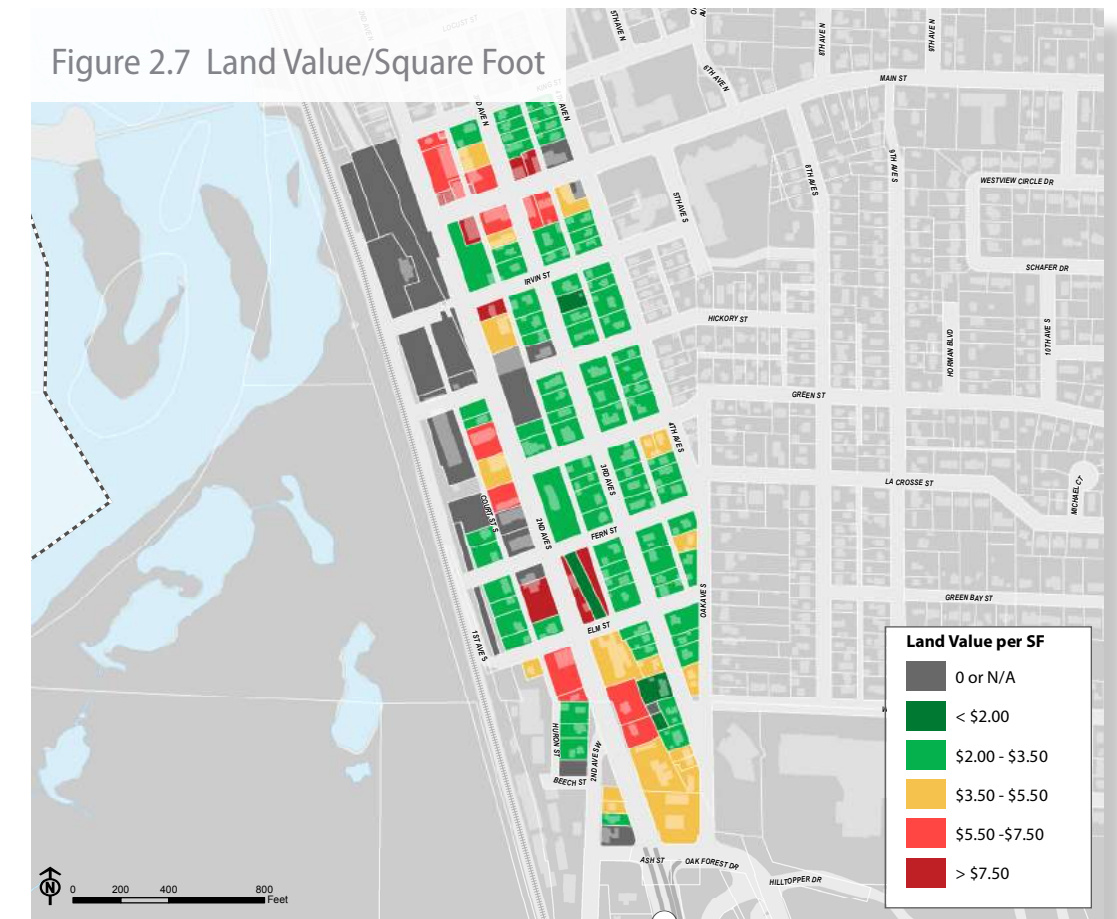
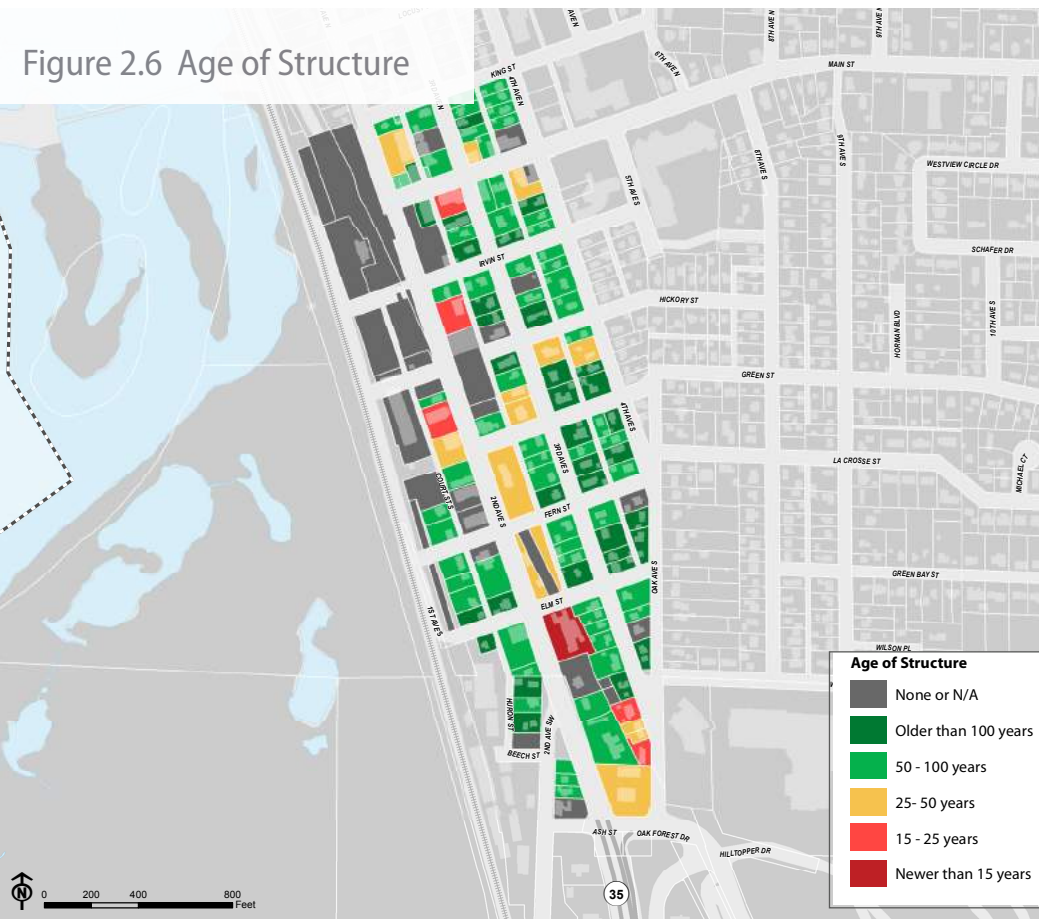
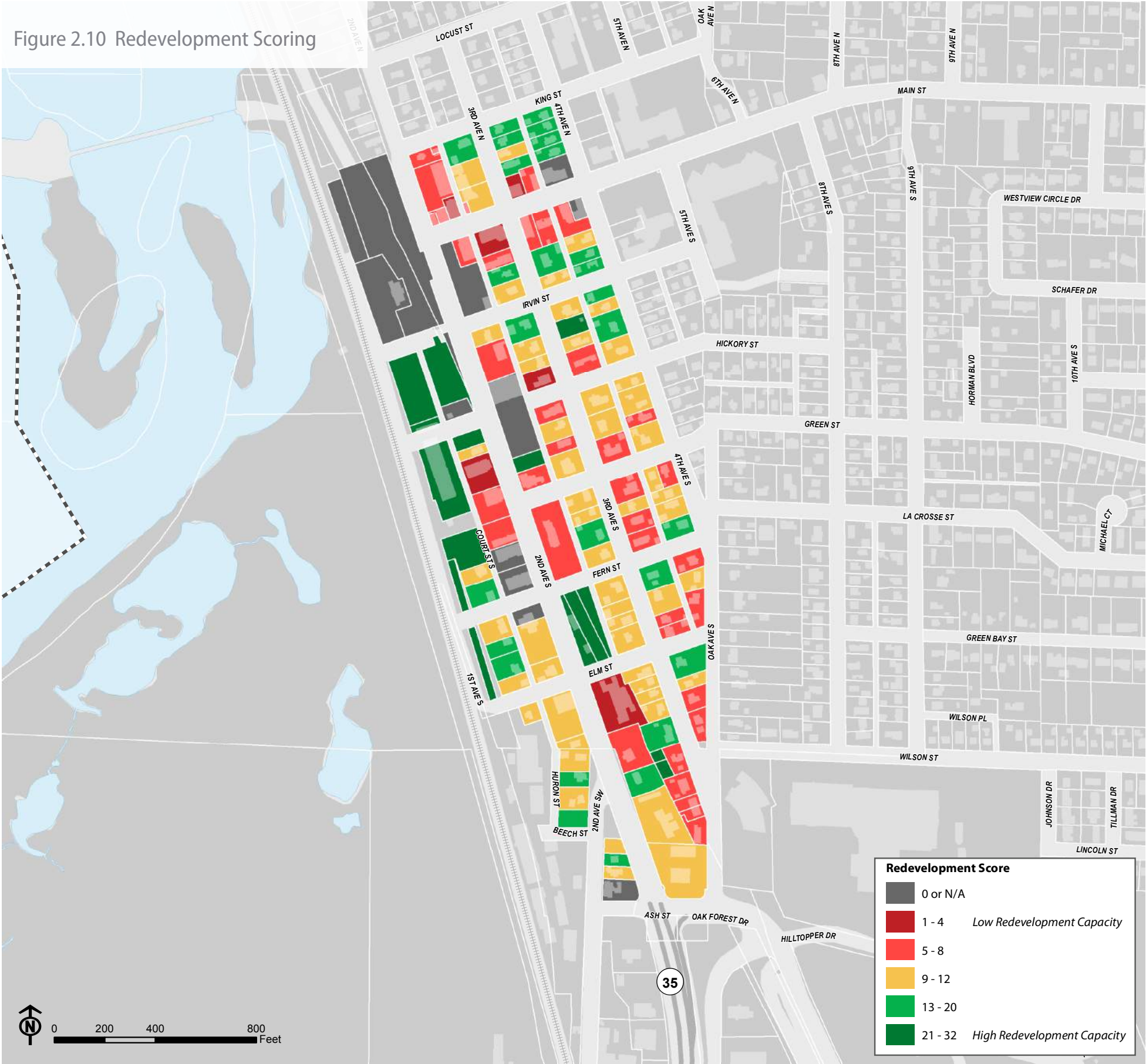


Figure 2.10 Redevelopment Scoring



Redevelopment Scoring

This map shows the redevelopment potential as identified by scoring a number of variables for each parcel. This information should be considered as a baseline to start identifying potential redevelopment parcels, but should not be considered as definitive. The model cannot take everything into account and sites should be checked against ground conditions. (For example, some publicly owned parcels are missing information such as building improvement value.)

Vacant:

No.....	0
Yes	20

Age:

Over 100 yrs	1
50 - 100 yrs	5
25 - 50 yrs	3
15 - 25 yrs	1
Less than 15 yrs	0

Land Value \$ / Square Foot:

< 2	4
2 - 3.5	3
3.5 - 5.5	2
5.5 - 7.5	1
> 7.5	0

Total Value \$ /Square Foot:

< 6	4
6 - 12	3
12 - 18	2
18 - 30	1
> 30	0

Building Value to Land Value Ratio:

< 1.0	4
1.0 - 2.0	3
2.0 - 3.0	2
3.0 - 6.0	1
> 6.0	0

Building Value to Total Value Ratio:

< 0.2	4
0.2 - 0.4	3
0.4 - 0.6	2
0.6 - 0.8	1
< 0.8	0

Non-conforming Use:

Yes (SF or MF zoned commercial).....	3
No.....	0

Parcel Size:

> 5 ac.....	4
2 - 5 ac.....	3
1 - 2 ac.....	1
< 1 ac.....	0

City Ownership:

Owned by Onalaska	5
Not owned by Onalaska	0





Market Summary

The strength of the downtown Onalaska market is derived from the City’s social and economic demographics. The city benefits from positive perceptions of the community as a desired place to live, strong schools, and a good location relative to La Crosse.

Challenges facing the community will be the increase in older residents as a proportion of the overall population, the dwindling supply of developable land for subdivision, adaptability or right-sizing of the retail and commercial offerings along Hwy 35 to meet demand, and competition with surrounding communities.

As lifestyle and shopping preferences continue to change, downtown Onalaska should continue to position itself as a walkable, experience-driven destination with a desirable small town character. In this manner, the downtown can be important to the identity of the community and a marketable asset to new and existing residents.

Businesses along the Highway 35 corridor will maintain a focus on providing convenient, “on-the-way” retail and services that benefit from more traffic and can serve residents of Onalaska and Holmen that are commuting through the area.

Strong demand for housing remains, although supply is becoming constrained. There are fewer options within the City limits to create new neighborhoods, so it will be important to enable the development of new housing options in existing neighborhoods.

Key Social and Economic Demographics

Within the La Crosse region, Onalaska has historically been a more affluent area than many other communities. Economic measures from household discretionary income to housing prices reflect this reality. It also means that the community has the means to support amenities such as restaurants and upscale retailers that may not work in other cities.

The community is also getting older. Based on population and housing age, many residents moved to Onalaska around the 1990s and early 2000s. Many of these residents are now in or entering the “empty nester” phase of their lives. They are reaching the highest earning potential of their careers as they near retirement and have more disposable income than ever before. In the next decade, many of these residents may be downsizing and looking for attractive, amenitized, but also lower maintenance housing options.

Households (Head of Household Age)	Onalaska	La Crosse	Holmen
Young Families (<45)	33.2%	49.0%	38.9%
Prime Earners (45-64)	37.7%	29.1%	42.2%
Retired (65+)	29.1%	21.1%	18.9%

The aging/empty nester population also has impacts on the schools where the enrollment numbers are not growing as much as in the past.

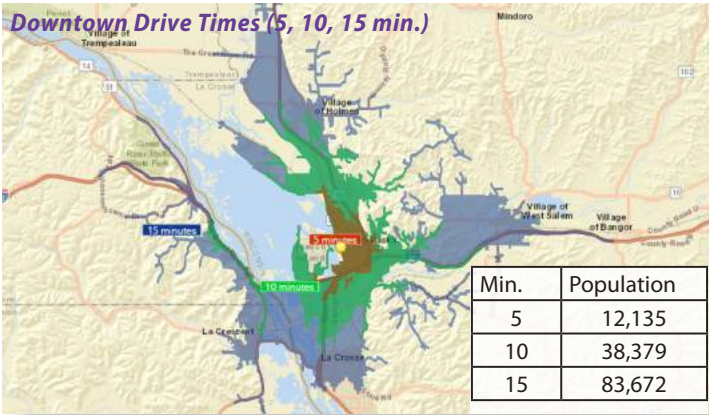
Based on higher housing prices relative to other communities and the lower supply of housing, Onalaska can be a more difficult place for young families to move into. The ability of Onalaska to attract the next generations of residents will be key to the long term success of the community.

Commercial/Retail

From a retail and commercial perspective, the Hwy 35 corridor draws from other towns in the La Crosse region. However, in contrast to the State Road 16 Corridor, which is a larger regional draw, the smaller downtown commercial area is more likely to draw from a +/-15 minute drive (Figure 2.11). Downtown’s power to draw customers also depends on its ability to offer something unique from surrounding commercial areas. These competing areas include Onalaska as well as Holmen, West Salem, Bangor, and La Crescent. It also includes the north side of La Crosse, but downtown La Crosse may represent the greatest competition.

There are two distinct styles of retail within the downtown/ Highway 35 study area. The first is the experience-driven retail and restaurants along Main Street and near Dash-Park. This downtown core area functions as a place where someone might spend a few hours eating/drinking, shopping, biking, walking, and relaxing/rejuvenating. Because of the “destination” nature of this area, people are more comfortable parking once and walking to their destinations. Public and shared district parking facilities could work here. Downtown Onalaska is developing a strong brand based on creating a family friendly place that is focused on experiences more than the specific goods offered. Concerts, restaurants, biking and walking trails, spas, and access to the river are all examples of the experiences that people desire and can find in downtown Onalaska.

Figure 2.11 Commercial/Retail Market



The second type is the convenience focused retail along Highway 35. This retail benefits from the higher traffic counts from residents of Onalaska and Holmen commuting back and forth to the I-90 / Highway 16 areas or La Crosse (Figure 2.12). 57 percent of the working residents of Holmen are employed in La Crosse or Onalaska, and many of these workers are traveling along Highway 35 to get to and from work.

Figure 2.12 Traffic Counts



Highway 35 corridor uses are more focused on providing goods and services to people who are traveling to work or home. These include retail/ food uses such as gas stations and takeout food, as well as services such as tax preparation, insurance offices, and auto shops. Because customers are in a hurry and unlikely to linger, convenient parking for each business is more important here than in the downtown core area.

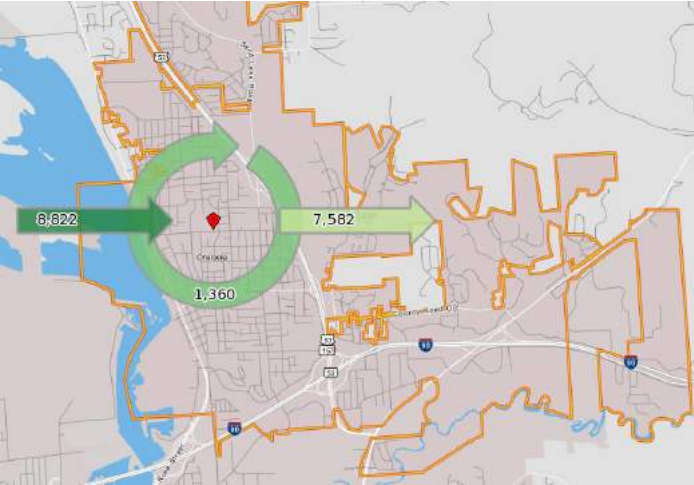
Employment

While many residents travel into La Crosse for work, Onalaska also has built and maintained a strong employment base. The city’s jobs-to-population ratio is 0.64, which means there are more residents than jobs in the city. While the city has a strong employment base for a suburb, many residents are reliant on La Crosse as a job center.

City	Jobs/Population Ratio
Onalaska	0.64
Holmen	0.31
La Crosse	0.93

- When examining commuting patterns, there is a large shift between the permanent and daytime populations (Figure 2.13).
- » 17,764 people employed in Onalaska
 - » 8,822 people come into Onalaska to work
 - » 1,360 residents live and work in Onalaska
 - » 7,582 people commute out of Onalaska to work

Figure 2.13 Employment Patterns



Within the downtown study area (including the High School) there are approximately 1,300 jobs. Approximately 13% of these jobs are second jobs.

Among the primary jobs, 34% pay more than \$40,000/year. Employment is focused largely on education (16%), public administration (15%), business administration and support (15%), management (14%), and accommodation, food, and retail services (12%).

Residential

There are many draws that create demand for housing within the community. A positive perception of the City, combined with strong schools and great access to La Crosse and beyond have made Onalaska a desired place to live. The City has seen drastic growth from the 1970s through the early 2000s. Residential growth has slowed as the city is reaching a fully built out status. There are not many opportunities for new neighborhoods, although some un-built lots remain in some active subdivisions.

Neighborhood Characteristics

As a generalization, there are two main areas when it comes to housing in Onalaska. The downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods offer older, but also achievable entry level housing. These residents are largely new families and longtime residents.

The east side of the City has many more bluffs that offer views, but also restrict the ability to build affordable housing efficiently. Built more recently, these homes are more accessible to households with higher earnings, often further along in their careers.

Single-Family Housing

The large scale development of single-family housing will become increasingly difficult as the City runs out of undeveloped land. Opportunities to improve the single-family housing stock will likely come in the form of infill lots and housing rehabilitation. As homes age, continued upkeep and rehabilitation will be important to keeping the housing stock competitive with other communities. The median year of a home built in Onalaska is 1983, compared with 1995 in Holmen.

Decade	Average Housing Units Per Year
1970s	~190 / year
1980s	~115 / year
1990s	~165 / year
2000s	~140 / year
2010-2016	~75 / year

Multi-Family Housing

As the ability to add population through single-family housing is restricted, denser housing products such as apartments, condominiums, and townhomes will be the primary way for Onalaska to keep growing. Apartments appeal to many younger people as they begin careers and wait longer to start families. Similarly low maintenance housing appeals to many downsizing empty nesters. Most of the rental units that are in Onalaska are older stock and do not have the updated amenities that a more affluent clientele may expect.

- The demographics of Onalaska suggest there could be untested demand for higher end for-sale and rental apartment products.
- » Median Household Income: \$61,299
 - » Average Household Income: \$79,816
 - » 4,693 (60%) of households make over \$50,000/year

Monthly Rent	Units	Affordable For Household Income of:
\$1-249	85	\$9,960
\$250-499	193	\$19,960
\$500-749	1,181	\$29,960
\$750-999	430	\$39,960
\$1000-1249	113	\$49,960
\$1250-1499	37	\$59,960
\$1500-1999	115	\$79,960
\$2000-2499	32	\$99,960
\$2500+	0	

Senior Housing

A large, affluent, aging population will continue to increase the demand for senior housing. Senior housing includes everything from active adult housing, through assisted living, memory care, and nursing homes.

The community has many of the amenities desired by seniors, including trails and activities such as the concerts at Dash-Park.

- Key Takeaways: Residential**
- » Economics and the School District help keep Onalaska as a premier, desired location.
 - » The City is quickly approaching full build out and will not be able to develop new neighborhood subdivisions.
 - » While demand remains high, residential land supply is becoming increasingly constrained, which may hinder growth moving forward.
 - » If there are not opportunities for new families to move into Onalaska, the City will continue to lose them to other communities such as Holmen.
 - » The downtown neighborhoods are more accessible for starter homes.
 - » New civic improvements and possibilities of expanding employment options continue to draw people to the community.
 - » An aging population has and will continue to drive growth in downsizing, active adult, and senior housing.

- Key Takeaways: Commercial**
- » Market area economics (incomes, spending, etc) are good.
 - » Benefit from “experience” based retail as a draw.
 - » Build on existing brands and promote area as family friendly, outdoors, and culturally focused.
 - » Market will rely on Onalaska & Holmen residents, with opportunities to draw from West Salem, Bangor, French Island.
 - » Continue to capture “on the way” retail and convenient service for Onalaska and Holmen residents.

Stakeholder & Community Input



2014 Community Survey

The Downtown Redevelopment Study was informed by input from the community-at-large and key downtown stakeholders. A summary of this input is provided here:

2014 Community Survey

In 2014, the City of Onalaska conducted a community survey to gather residents' opinions and feedback regarding the quality of life in the city, desired types of future development, and their satisfaction with the performance of city government and service delivery. Out of the 9,296 surveys distributed within the 54650 Zip Code, 1,059 surveys were fully completed and returned to the city, which represents an overall return rate of 11.4% and a 12.8% return rate from Onalaska residents.

Particularly relevant to downtown, one of the survey's questions invited residents to share their opinions related to the question "If you could change one thing in the City of Onalaska, what would it be?" A total of 579 residents responded to this question. The top concerns identified were the following:

- » Traffic improvements
- » Downtown redevelopment including desired business types and redevelopment of underutilized buildings through renovation or demolition
- » Recreational improvements including more sidewalks (fill the gaps), more bike lanes and other bike accommodations, and more parks/open spaces for enjoying the community's natural features
- » Waterfront development to better utilize the waterfront along Lake Onalaska/Black River



2018 Downtown Stakeholder Meetings

Two rounds of stakeholder input meetings were conducted in August and November 2018. Stakeholder input focused on land use/redevelopment, circulation/access, parking, and parks/open spaces.

Land Use/Redevelopment

- » Continue to redevelop downtown and the highway corridor as a unique destination, such as food & drink places, artisan shops, brewery /distillery
- » Support the addition of local, small businesses downtown, including retail, restaurants, personal services, and offices
- » Promote the addition of housing in and surrounding downtown and along the waterfront including both condominiums/apartments (high density/mixed use) and townhomes/rowhouses (medium density)
- » Reinvestment in existing surrounding neighborhood homes
- » Some additional potential early phase redevelopment sites exist beyond current on-going projects
- » Promote assembly of undervalued properties to create larger and more viable redevelopment sites by both the city and interested developers

Circulation/Access/Parking

- » Improve pedestrian and bicycling facilities throughout downtown, particularly along Hwy 35 and 3rd Avenue South
- » Address perceived and actual parking issues today and for future redevelopment with effective parking solutions, including increased parking facilities and more effective parking management approaches

Parks/Trails/Open Spaces

- » Leverage downtown's natural amenities, outdoor recreation opportunities, and existing park amenities, including outfitter / canoe-kayak / bike shop businesses, public and private programming
- » Consider upgrading existing crushed gravel trail to a paved bike trail to increase accessibility and usage





2019 Community Public Meeting

The community public meeting was held on January 8, 2019, at Irving Pertzsch Elementary School. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting.

Land Use/Redevelopment

- » Support for adding new housing options in downtown and along the riverfront
- » Additional food and drink businesses, including coffee shop, grocery store, etc.
- » Make the downtown core and riverfront area more walkable, including paths and routes from the surrounding neighborhoods
- » Preserve views to the riverfront
- » Support for some of the new downtown housing to be affordable, including senior housing, so that current downtown residents could afford to sell their houses and move into the new housing
- » Preserve a balance between low income and market rate housing in downtown

Circulation/Access/Parking

- » Ensure good vehicle access to Hwy 35 from new residential developments
- » Additional parking in downtown, including shared parking opportunities
- » Need for crosswalks on Main Street and other key streets
- » Add sidewalk on west side of 3rd Avenue South near high school
- » Improve public transportation options
- » New housing development should provide adequate on-site parking
- » Balance approach to future parking needs

Parks/Trails/Open Spaces

- » Don't change the plans for completing the Great River Landing
- » Support for streetscape improvements to both Irvin Street and the alleys connecting to Main Street
- » Community gateway/entry feature at south end of Hwy 35
- » Beautification that attracts visitors and businesses
- » Evaluate desire for paved vs. gravel trails



January 2019 community open house.



Summary of Public Meeting Notification for January 8, 2019 Open House

Formal Meeting Announcements:

- » Common Council on December 11th, 2018
- » CDA on December 12th, 2018

Social Media:

- » Event information promoted through Onalaska's Park & Recreation, Police Department, and Fire Department Facebook pages

Press Release:

- » Sent on 12/31/18 to all news media (television, newspaper, and radio) promoting the event
- » Sent on 1/4/19 on Irving Pertzsch Elementary School Email Mailing List

Individual invites to Onalaska Common Council, Committees, Boards, and Commissions:

- » Common Council, Long Range Planning Committee, Great River Landing Committee, Park & Recreation Board, Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Community Development Authority

Paper Flyers:

- » Installed at various department offices in City Hall

Mailings:

- » Letter to over 500 residents/business owners in "Downtown Onalaska" area on 12/14/18. Postcard reminder to same list on 12/27/18



Redevelopment Framework



Downtown Districts

In order to help describe the desired future character of downtown redevelopment, the recommendations in this redevelopment framework are organized into four unique downtown districts (Figure 4.1). The following highlights each of these district's land uses, parking, site access, and building design characteristics that are essential to creating an attractive downtown environment.

Downtown Core Mixed Use

This district encompasses the core of downtown including the four blocks, both sides of Main Street, between 2nd and 4th Avenues, as well as the Great River Landing. Since the new Great River Landing and Dash-Park have now become the center of downtown, the blocks adjacent to these public open spaces are also included in the Downtown Core including the two blocks along the south side of Irvin Street and the School District administrative property. A mix of uses is desired in this district, including commercial, residential, civic, and park/open space.

Riverfront Residential

This district encompasses the riverfront land between the Great River Landing/Irvin Street and Elm Street, which is located on a terrace between the riverfront and Court Street South. Residential uses are desired in this district in order to enable people to live on the riverfront, expand available housing types in downtown, bring more residents to downtown that will attract and support downtown businesses, and concentrate commercial businesses in the downtown core and along Hwy 35.

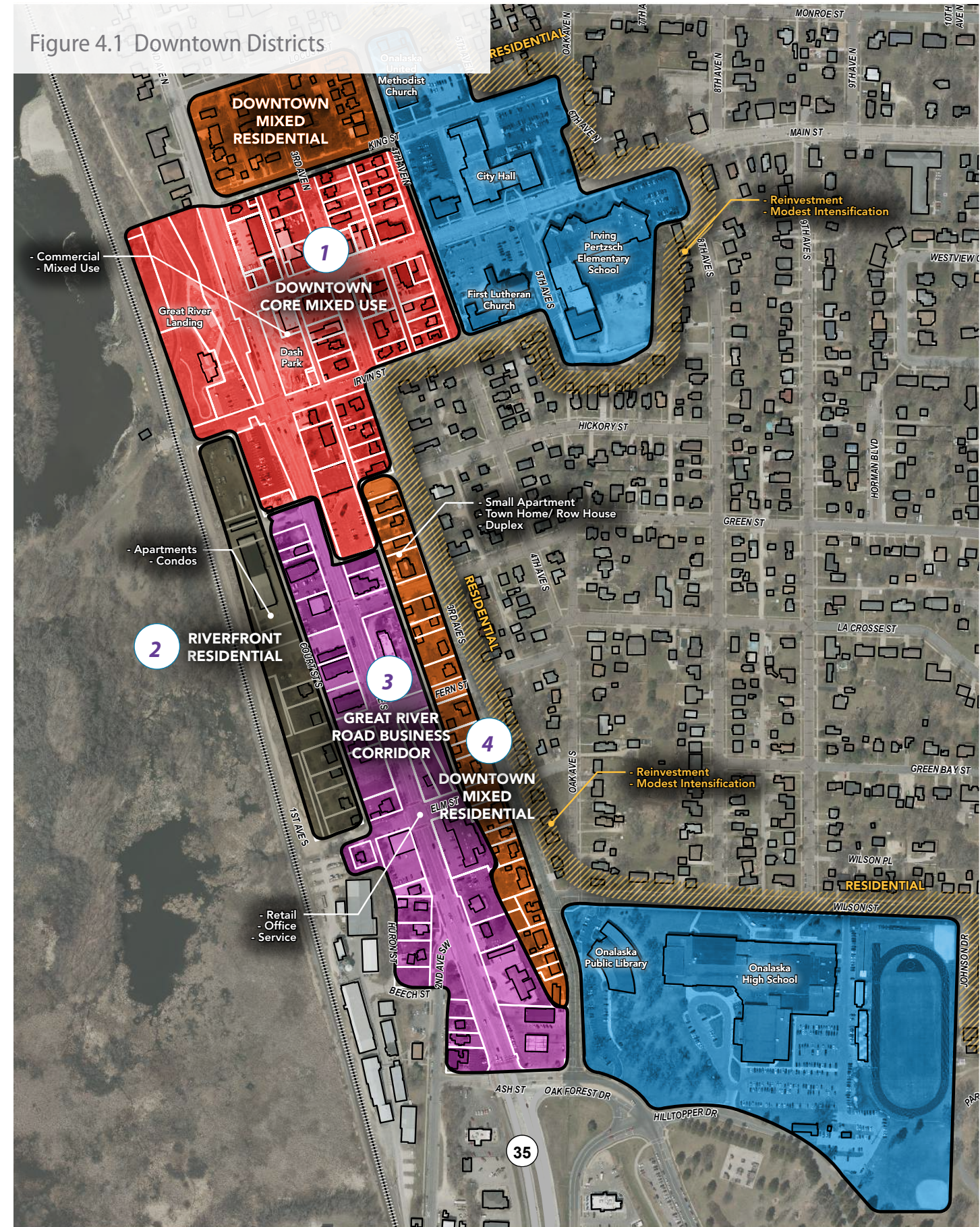
Great River Road Business Corridor

This district includes the Hwy 35/Great River Road corridor south of the downtown core from Hickory Street to Ash Street. This district is envisioned to continue filling in and redeveloping with a wide variety of commercial business serving both local and regional customers.

Downtown Mixed Residential

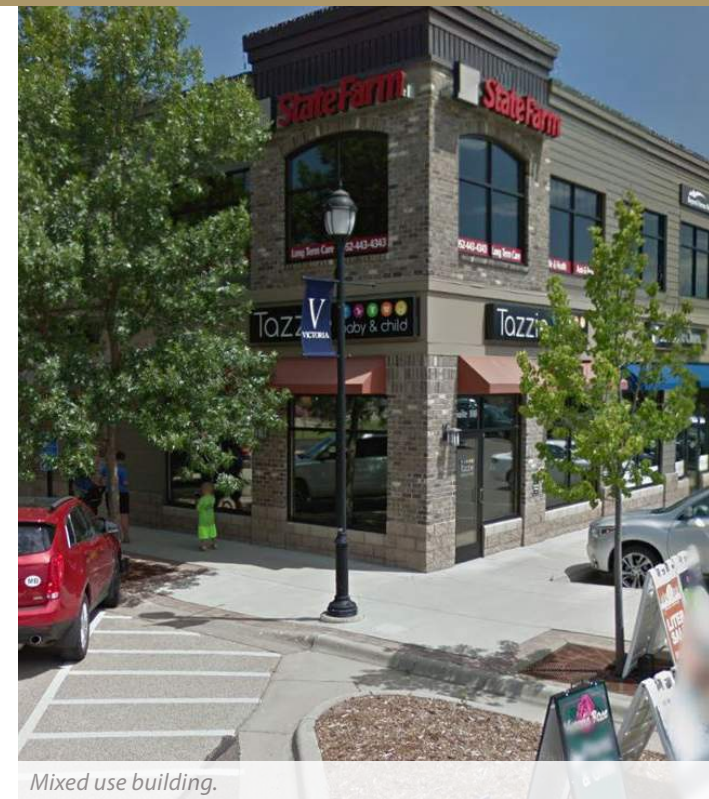
This district includes two residential areas immediately adjacent to the downtown core and/or the Hwy 35 corridor – the west side of 3rd Avenue which shares the alley with Hwy 35 businesses and the two blocks north of King Street which are located adjacent to the downtown core, Hwy 35, and the public/semi-public area to the east. A mix of residential types is desired in these two areas over time since they are conveniently located to commercial areas, could provide opportunities for expanding available housing types in downtown, and serve as transition areas between the commercial areas and smaller scale neighborhoods of detached houses.

Figure 4.1 Downtown Districts





Mixed use building.



Mixed use building.



Mixed use building.

Land Uses

- » Primarily retail, personal services and restaurants at street level facing Main Street, Dash-Park and Hwy 35
- » Business services
- » Professional offices
- » Civic
- » Apartments/condos
- » Walk-up townhouses/rowhouses
- » Vertical mixed use buildings
- » Park/open space

Parking

- » On-street parking
- » Parking behind buildings
- » Parking under buildings using site grades
- » Municipal parking (surface or ramp)
- » Shared parking

Site Access

- » Alley as a shared vehicle access and pedestrian-friendly paseo
- » Eliminate driveways on Main Street to maximize on-street parking
- » Limit driveways on 3rd Avenue South to maximize on-street parking

Building Design

- » Multi-story buildings desirable
- » Zero building setback from the sidewalk
- » Portion of building can be setback from sidewalk to provide usable open space, e.g. outdoor dining/gathering spaces
- » Primary building entry faces street
- » Street and alley facades are dominated by transparent windows
- » Buildings wider than a typical lot have articulated street/alley facades



Mixed use building.



Mix of walk-up townhouses and apartments.

Land Uses

- » Apartments/condos
- » Walk-up townhouses/rowhouses
- » Limited retail, personal services, and restaurants

Parking

- » Parking under buildings using site grades
- » Limited surface parking
- » Surface parking away from riverfront, accessed from Court Street South

Site Access

- » Use Court St as a shared vehicle access and pedestrian-friendly paseo
- » Publicly accessible path or parkway/street along terrace
- » Place driveways on east-west streets whenever possible

Building Design

- » Multi-story buildings (3 or 4 stories) desirable
- » Building fronts face the river
- » Usable open space and pedestrian access between building and riverfront
- » Buildings wider than a typical lot have an articulated street facade



Private amenities for residents.



Proposed Great River Residences Project.



Multi-story buildings.



Retail/office mixed use.

Land Uses

- » Retail, personal services and restaurants
- » Business services
- » Professional offices

Site Access

- » Parking behind and between buildings
- » Shared parking

Driveways

- » Use alley as a shared vehicle access and pedestrian-friendly paseo (east side of Highway 35)
- » Place driveways on east-west streets whenever possible
- » Share driveways on Hwy 35 whenever possible

Building Design

- » Buildings placed at block corners
- » Minimal setback from the sidewalk
- » Larger setbacks allowed to provide usable open space, e.g. outdoor dining/gathering spaces
- » Primary building entry faces Hwy 35
- » Street facades are dominated by transparent windows



Artist lofts/housing



Commercial use with structured parking behind and above.



Pedestrian friendly paseo.



Multi-story residential with underground parking.

Land Uses

- » Apartments/condos
- » Walk-up townhouses/rowhouses
- » Artist housing

Parking

- » Parking under buildings using site grades
- » On-street parking
- » Limited surface parking

Site Access

- » Use alley as a shared vehicle access and pedestrian-friendly paseo
- » Place driveways on east-west streets whenever possible
- » Limit driveways on 3rd Avenue South to maximize on-street parking

Building Design

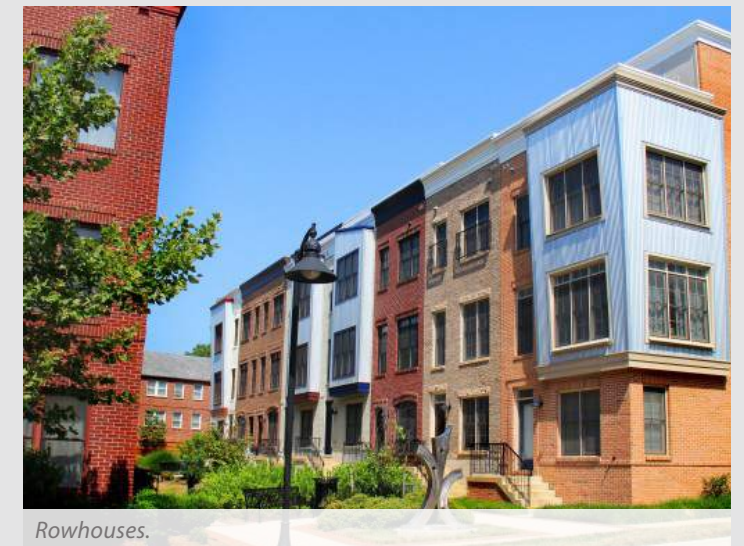
- » Multi-story buildings (3 or 4 stories) desirable
- » Small setbacks from sidewalk to provide transition/buffer between residential and public sidewalk
- » Primary building entries face street
- » Street and alley facades are dominated by transparent windows
- » Buildings wider than a typical lot have an articulated street facade



Townhomes.



Townhomes.



Rowhouses.

Desired Redevelopment Concept

As part of the redevelopment planning process the consultant team explored redevelopment concepts for new commercial, residential and mixed use buildings in the downtown. These concepts also studied alternatives for parking to support the potential development including additional surface and/or structured parking integrated with the development. The following desired concepts are shown to illustrate potential size, scale and types of redevelopment for study purposes. Any future development will involve coordination between individual property owners, developers, reality of market conditions, and the City of Onalaska.

Targeted Redevelopment Concept

In this concept, the focus for redevelopment occurs in the Downtown Core Mixed Use District and in the Riverfront Residential District primarily with some additional targeted redevelopment/ infill on underutilized sites along 3rd Avenue South and Great River Road (Figures 4.2-4.3). The focus of redevelopment for the city should continue to center around and build upon the recent investments of the Great River Landing and Dash-Park.

- » Downtown Core Mixed Use focus for redevelopment/ reinvestment
- » Expand parking options (shared, surface, and integrated with development)
- » Riverfront housing
- » Infill redevelopment that requires limited site assembly

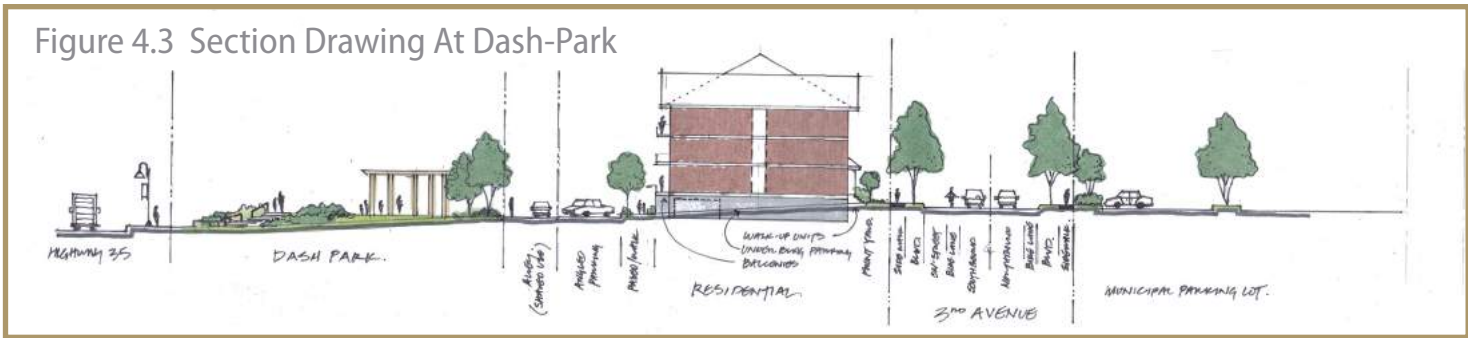


Figure 4.2 Targeted Redevelopment Concept

Parking numbers do not reflect existing single family homes or self parked townhomes.



Figure 4.3 Section Drawing At Dash-Park



Broader Redevelopment Concept

With the broader redevelopment concept, the focus for redevelopment still occurs in the Downtown Core Mixed Use District and Riverfront Residential District, but expands south along the Highway 35 and 3rd Avenue to explore options for commercial and residential redevelopment (Figures 4.4-4.5).

- » Continued Downtown Core Mixed use focus for redevelopment with mixed use and expanded ground-level commercial use along 3rd Ave.
- » Expand parking options (shared, surface, and structured)
- » Expanded riverfront housing south – adjust orientation, maintain grid.
- » Site assembly (¼ block to ½ block sites) along the Great River Road Business Corridor and the Downtown Mixed Residential District



Downtown Mixed Residential example.



Public parking integrated with development (street view) example.



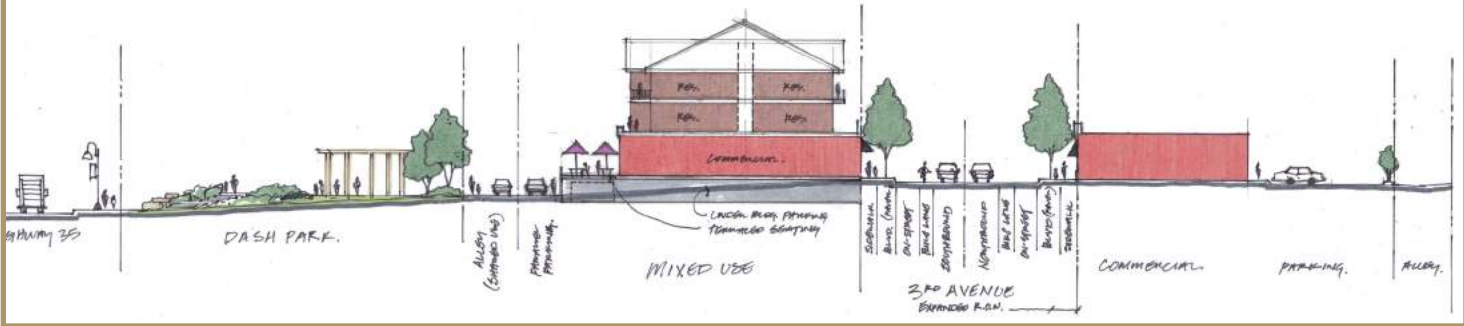
Public parking integrated with development (from above) example.

Figure 4.4 Broader Redevelopment Concept



Parking numbers do not reflect existing single family homes or self parked townhomes.

Figure 4.5 Section Drawing At Dash-Park



Goals:

- » Improve downtown's walking environment with highly connected, convenient, and attractive streetscapes
- » Expand downtown's walking/biking environment to include Irvin Street and Elm Street as key connections to a riverfront trail in the 1st Ave right-of-way along the rail line
- » Enhance alleys (east side of Hwy 35) and Court Street South as pedestrian-oriented paseos
- » Improve walking/biking crossings of Hwy 35
- » Potential new street connections to complete the street grid
- » Consider opportunities for additional parking and shared parking facilities in conjunction with redevelopment



Transportation Streets

As downtown continues to add desirable destinations, diversify its land uses, and intensify its development, downtown's transportation system also will evolve to balance the increase in volume and variety of users (Figure 4.7).

Arterial & Collector Roadways

As designated arterial roadways under WisDOT jurisdiction, Hwy 35 and Main Street (Hwy 157) should continue to be maintained and improved as multi-modal roadways throughout downtown. Both streets should continue to facilitate comfortable, safe and convenient movement for walking, biking, and driving, as well as bus riders. 3rd Avenue South is designated as a collector street under the City's jurisdiction. All three streets have sidewalks and dedicated on-street bike lanes. Recommended improvements for these arterial and collector streets include the following:

Main Street (Highway 157)

- » Improved and more visible pavement markings for pedestrian crosswalks at every intersection
- » Elimination of driveways to increase the quantity of on-street parking spaces
- » Wayfinding signage oriented to pedestrians in addition to existing signage oriented to vehicles

Hwy 35

- » Addition of a pedestrian refuge space in the median where there are crosswalks
- » Potential pedestrian/bike flashing beacon, e.g. Irvin Street, Elm Street
- » Wayfinding signage oriented to pedestrians in addition to existing signage oriented to vehicles

3rd Avenue

- » Minimize number of driveways to increase the quantity of on-street parking spaces
- » Add street trees in boulevards

Local Streets

Local streets in downtown are primarily the east-west streets between Hwy 35, 3rd Avenue, and 4th Avenue. Some of these streets extend west of Hwy 35, while others do not. Recommended improvements for local streets include the following:

Irvin Street (Figure 4.6)

- » Improved pedestrian streetscape features, e.g. sidewalk both sides, pedestrian scale lighting, trees
- » Additional on-street parking both sides
- » Wayfinding signage oriented to pedestrians

Other Local Streets

- » Fill in sidewalk gaps
- » Add street trees in boulevards
- » Consider connecting Wilson St between Hwy 35 and 3rd Avenue in conjunction with any future redevelopment in that area

Alleys / Court Street (Figure 4.6)

- » Redesign as attractive shared access routes (paseos) for pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles

Parking

- » Maximize on-street parking opportunities, e.g. minimize number of driveways, consider diagonal parking on east-west streets
- » Consider opportunities for additional on-street parking facilities in conjunction with redevelopment
- » Require new medium and high density residential developments to provide adequate on-site parking
- » Consider opportunities for shared parking facilities, including businesses, churches, school, City hall
- » Explore opportunity for a municipal parking lot or structure in the Downtown Core; not fronting on Main Street or Dash-Park but nearby (potential locations shown on Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6 Irvin Street and Paseo Concept

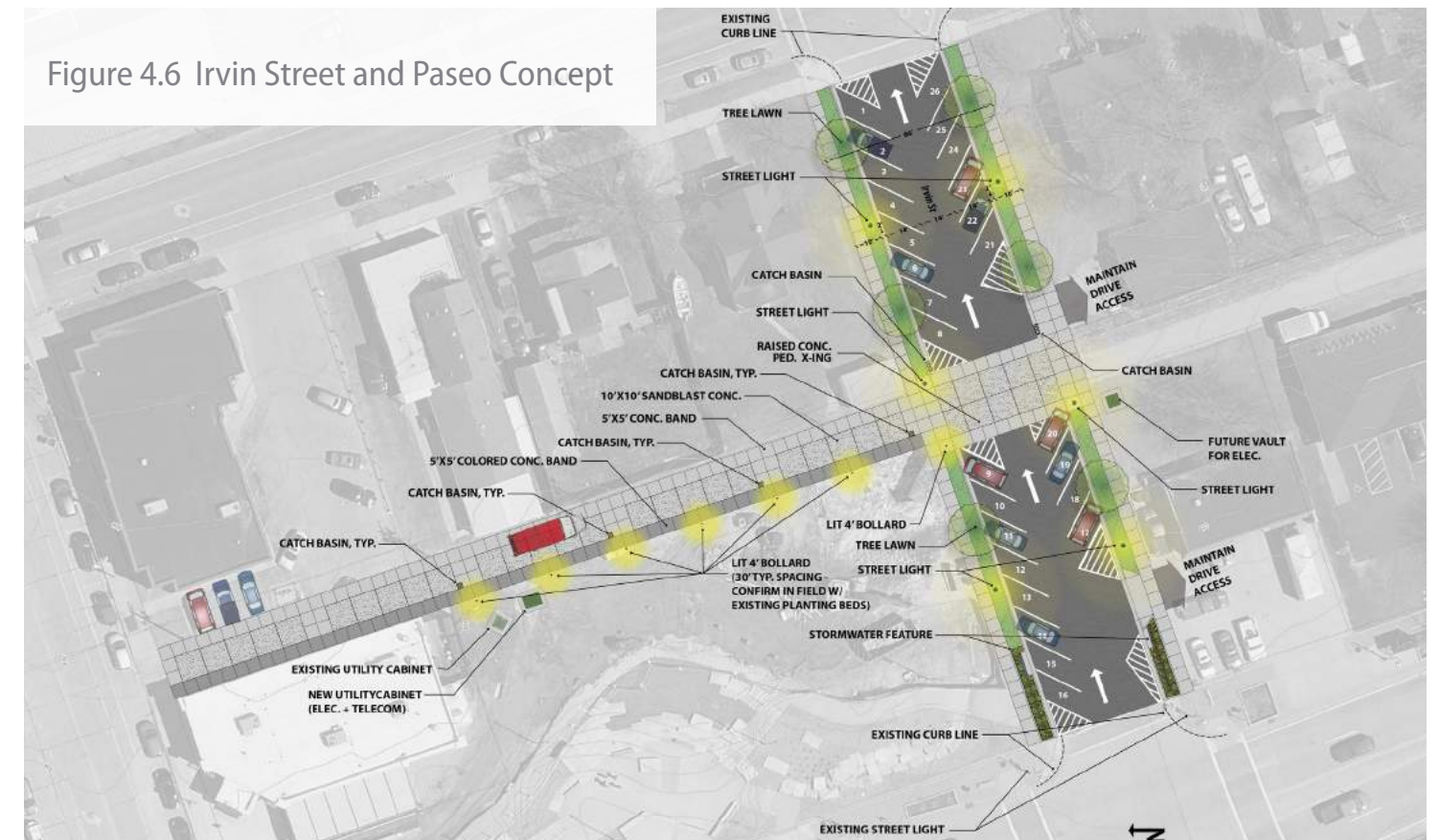


Figure 4.7 Transportation Concept



Enhanced Alley "Paseo" Concept

Goals:

- » Expand downtown's walking/biking environment to include Irvin Street and Elm Street as key connections to a riverfront trail in the 1st Avenue South right-of-way along the rail line
- » Enhance alleys (east side of Hwy 35) and Court St as pedestrian-oriented paseos
- » Improve walking/biking crossings of Hwy 35
- » Implement the water's edge portion of the Great River Landing concept with connections to downtown via Irvin Street and a potential pedestrian bridge over the rail line
- » Continue to maintain and enhance the Great River State Trail as a high quality scenic and accessible trail for both regional and local users.
- » Continue to support the state snowmobile trail's route and access to downtown



Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Completion of the upland portion of the Great River Landing has transformed the character of downtown from a place that historically developed with its back toward the river to a place that now affords a grand view of the river valley. The Great River Landing was the introduction of parks and open spaces into downtown. While the Great River Landing is both a regional open space and a local park, in the form of the Main Street Plaza, the subsequent development of Dash-Park brings a park literally into the heart of the downtown core. Prior to these parks, downtown residents did not have convenient access to a neighborhood park.

The future development of the water's edge portion of the Great River Landing will be another great asset for downtown. Irvin Street should be improved as a key trail connection between downtown and the waterfront (Figure 4.9).

Trails

The current designated route of the Great River State Trail includes a segment of on-street bike lanes along Main Street for a block and then south on 3rd Avenue South. It is recommended that this route is kept because it brings regional bicyclists into downtown. In the past, the designated route on Court Street South bypassed downtown. Future pavement of a portion of the trail north of the Great River Landing should be considered to make it accessible to more users. Downtown is also a destination on the state snowmobile trail that connects to the Great River Landing, which also provides snowmobile parking.

To enhance the trails in downtown for both regional recreational users and downtown residents, it is recommended that a trail loop be created in downtown (see Figure 4.9). This loop would use Irvin Street and Elm Street to create a loop between downtown and the riverfront, including a trail down along the rail line.

Figure 4.8 Great River Landing Concept



The future expansion of the Great River Landing design concept envisions an extended Main Street to be directly connected to the waterfront. This connection will be achieved through a large pedestrian bridge and overlook that would span the railroad tracks to provide safe and accessible connection to the waterfront as a direct extension of Main Street. A second connection to the heart of the planned lower waterfront activity area is Irvin Street, which currently crosses the rail line. The planned lower waterfront portion of the project has been designed for both passive and active recreation. The proposed design concept includes a nature playground, picnic grove, log rolling boom, kayak launch along with other informal water's edge access, and a boardwalk system to connect the active area to the adjacent spillway.

This trail loop as well as the 3rd Avenue South on-street bike facility will also provide a trail connection between all of the parks and open spaces in downtown, including Great River Landing, Dash-Park, the playground at Irving Pertzsch Elementary School, the High School playfields, and Rowe Community Park.



Enhanced trail connection.

Figure 4.9 Parks, Trails, and Open Space Concept



Enhanced paddling connections along the Black River/Lake Onalaska.



Fishing the Black River/Lake Onalaska.



Enhanced bike trail connections.



Implementation



Keys to Implementation

Several factors will be crucial in successfully realizing the vision set forth by the City of Onalaska within the Downtown Redevelopment Study. These factors apply regardless of the actual form and timing of redevelopment:

Patience

The vision for downtown cannot be implemented overnight. The time frame for implementation reflects its evolutionary nature; it looks forward over a period of years. The desired change often requires the patience to wait for the right things to happen, rather than making changes simply to be seen as doing something.

Commitment

Commitment to the Downtown Redevelopment Study and patience go hand-in-hand. This study does more than simply seek to attract redevelopment in downtown; it provides a road map to move the area toward its vision. Commitment to the plan means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that align with the objectives of the study. It also requires the willingness by decision makers to deter developments which do not meet the objectives of the plan. Not all of these decisions will be easy or will they occur exactly as analyzed in this study.

Public & Private Partnerships

Removal of the physical and economic barriers to redevelopment in Onalaska will likely require some public financial assistance. The complexity of redevelopment envisioned for the area clearly demonstrates the need for public financial participation. Private investment will not be sufficient to pay for all costs associated with every redevelopment project. Strong public/private partnerships will make redevelopment projects more financially feasible, promote the desired types of development and build momentum in the area. The

needs established in this study do not make public financial assistance an entitlement however. On-going planning will define the nature of assistance and amount available for each step throughout the implementation process. This approach ensures that public monies are used to achieve desired public outcomes and not simply make development more affordable (or profitable) for the developer.

Financial Reality

Implementing the Downtown Redevelopment Study requires careful investment of public funds, but the private side of the financial equation must not be overlooked. New development and existing businesses will pay for part of the improvements called for in the study. Implementing the Downtown Redevelopment Study seeks to balance the investment in public initiatives with the creation of a financial environment that sustains successful businesses.

Strategic Investments

If financial support for the plan was unlimited, the need for strategic decisions would be less important. With limited funds, every expenditure is crucial. It is not possible to immediately undertake all of the initiatives described in this plan. Needs and opportunities not contemplated in the plan may arise in the future. Every investment must be evaluated for its impact on enhancing downtown.



Architect's Rendering of Proposed Great River Residences Project



Roles & Responsibilities

There is a temptation to give sole responsibility for implementation of the Downtown Redevelopment Study to the City of Onalaska. While the City does possess many of the powers and resources needed to undertake the actions described in this redevelopment study, successful implementation will require actions by other stakeholders as well. Achieving the vision for downtown redevelopment and public improvements will require ongoing collaboration between public and private stakeholders. This section describes the roles and responsibilities of key parties.

Business and Property Owners

While the City influences downtown's physical setting, downtown remains a place combining public and private activities. Individual businesses determine the types of goods and services available in downtown. Individual businesses make decisions about how they operate. Property owners decide how to maintain and improve their buildings. Individual property owners need to ensure that adequate convenient parking is provided for their customers and employees. Each of these factors plays a role in the long-term success of the corridor.

City of Onalaska

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the recommendations of this redevelopment study rests with the City of Onalaska. The Common Council and Community Development Authority (CDA) will provide direction on staff resources, review of proposed development projects and approve public investments. Responsibility for managing redevelopment in downtown will be a priority for the Community Development Authority and the Planning / Zoning and Engineering Departments of the City.

Planning / Zoning Department

The Planning / Zoning Department will share a lead role in managing implementation for the City.

The actions to be taken by the Planning / Zoning Department to implement the study include:

- » Application of land use controls and redevelopment guidelines to shepherd private development;
- » Review of development plans and proposals;
- » Coordination of planning for capital improvements needed to facilitate redevelopment; and
- » Creation of financial plans for public redevelopment investments and continued monitoring.

Engineering Department

The Engineering Department also plays a major role in the design of public infrastructure improvements needed to support development and redevelopment in downtown, including utility and roadway improvements. The Engineering Department is also key player in planning for future roadway and transportation improvements, including ongoing conversations with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) on State Roads 35 and 157 (Main Street) safety and potential future intersection improvements in downtown.

Community Development Authority (CDA)

Downtown is an important location for economic development in the City of Onalaska. The CDA will promote and monitor downtown redevelopment momentum. The CDA will need to determine their specific roles for a coordinated effort with the Common Council. Several potential CDA actions make them an important player in the successful implementation of the plan:

- » Provide a framework for coordinating efforts of the community. With limited resources, it is essential that the community work in unison to undertake redevelopment. The knowledge and experience gained from the planning process allows CDA members to efficiently and effectively take steps needed to implement core objectives of the study.

- » Work to ensure that economic development initiatives within Onalaska are a recognized priority for Common Council members.
- » Maintain an active role. Actively pursuing critical properties for redevelopment or educating business owners on improvement or reinvestment programs with low interest loans should be continued and expanded roles for the CDA.
- » Create an annual redevelopment "action plan" and report summary to help monitor progress toward implementation. This action plan would outline key steps to occur during the year, including descriptions of actions, responsible parties and funding resources. It forces the parties to not only consider what needs to be done in the coming year, but also why identified steps were not taken in the prior year.
- » Work with business owners and landlords to promote and help finance the maintenance and revitalization of businesses (both buildings and properties) in downtown.
- » Host annual developer roundtables or site tours showcasing the potential of Onalaska sites to perspective developers.
- » Provide guidance to the City to ensure that proposed development projects and public improvements are consistent with the study.
- » Promote development projects with sustainable design practices.
- » Continue to find the appropriate funding options for various redevelopment projects.
- » Collaborate with private brokers marketing Onalaska sites and leverage marketing efforts.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission has the lead responsibility for evaluating the application of land use controls needed to implement the Study. The Plan Commission advises the Common Council on issues involving the establishment of and compliance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Commission also reviews residential, commercial, and industrial development proposals and makes

recommendations to the Common Council according to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and requirements of the zoning, subdivision, and sign ordinances. The Plan Commission plays a key role in integrating the Downtown Redevelopment Study with the update of the Comprehensive Plan and Unified Development Code.

Common Council

The Common Council sets the foundation for implementing this study consistent with the overall mission of the City. While other bodies (Plan Commission and CDA) play key roles in the implementation process, important redevelopment powers reside with the City Council. Among the powers that may be needed to undertake public initiatives in downtown are:

- » Allocate money in the annual budget to capital improvements in downtown.
- » Approve the establishment of tax increment financing (TIF) districts.
- » Levy of special assessments for public improvements.
- » Issuance of general obligation bonds to finance redevelopment and improvement projects.

Community-at-Large

The community of Onalaska must stay involved as redevelopment continues over time. The community must work together with decision-makers and provide the necessary input for any new development, respecting existing land owners' desires and meeting the vision for the Downtown Redevelopment Study. Ultimately, the community must:

- » Provide a singular focus for the plan. The knowledge gained from the planning process will allow members of the community to efficiently and effectively comment on redevelopment proposals.
- » Continue public involvement. Continue to attend public meetings, or provide comments and suggestions to proposals as they come forward.



Development Guidance and Controls

The initial focus of implementation will be on actions needed to establish the Downtown Redevelopment Study as the official guide for development and redevelopment in downtown. These actions involve the adoption of key policy documents and updated development controls.

Approve the Downtown Redevelopment Study

The first implementation step is for the CDA and Common Council to approve the Downtown Redevelopment Study. These approvals set the stage for subsequent actions such as amending the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, and capital improvement program, as well as the identification of potential funding sources.

Amend the Comprehensive Plan

The City will need to amend the Comprehensive Plan (Figure 5.1) to incorporate the new Downtown Redevelopment Study’s recommendations, primarily the Land Use chapter. Land use guidance not only promotes the desired development outcomes, it also prevents development that is not consistent with the redevelopment study. These amendments will include the Future Land Use Map designations, Downtown (Land Use Goal 2) Objectives, and appropriate Land Use Policies/Recommendations consistent with the redevelopment study’s direction and recommendations. Amending the Comprehensive Plan creates the foundation for all other implementation actions. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan is a statutory requirement for zoning regulations, capital improvements and redevelopment projects.

It is recommended that the properties in the Riverfront Residential and Downtown Mixed Residential Districts be changed from the Downtown Mixed Use land use to the Mixed Density Residential land use on the Future Land Use Map.

Amend Zoning Regulations

More direct control of future development and redevelopment comes from zoning regulations in the city’s Unified Development Code (UDC). The existing zoning districts within the downtown study area will require modification to conform to the redevelopment study. Part of the necessary modification is enabling the type and form of development proposed in this study, for example, allowing vertical mixed use and residential use in downtown that currently zoned as commercial, as well as adjusting parking space requirements.

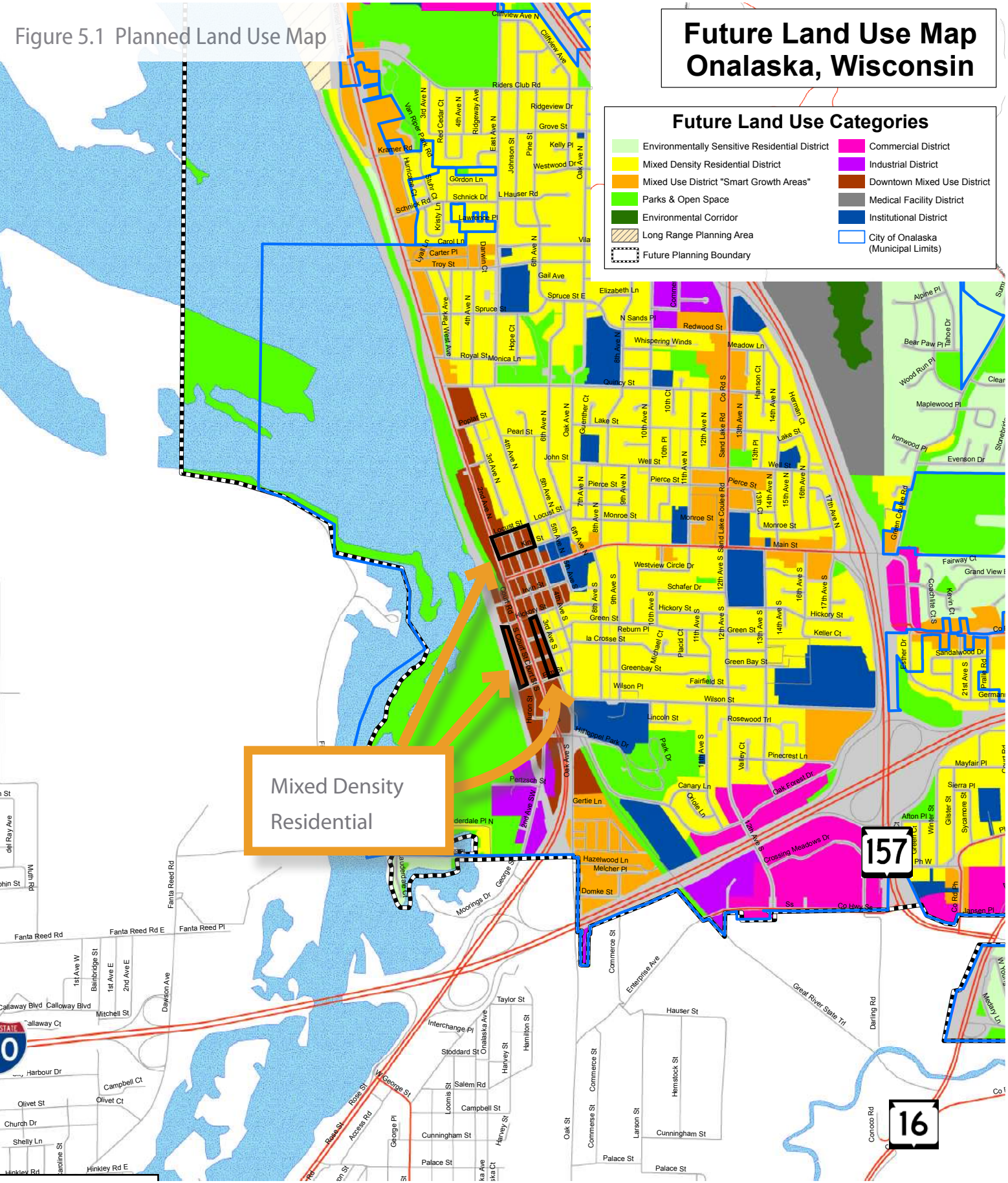
The following changes should be considered:

- » Rezone Riverfront Residential District properties from P1, B1 and B2 to R4
- » Rezone Downtown Mixed Residential District properties from R2 to R4
- » Consider rezoning entire Downtown Core District as B1 rather than its current mix of B1 and B2
- » Consider rezoning Great River Road Business Corridor District from B1 to B2

More detailed analysis and formal recommendation of any zoning changes will be handled by the City of Onalaska through the UDC Rewrite project which is scheduled for completion at the end of 2019.

The city’s UDC also has two downtown design overlays districts in place: Downtown-PUD and Downtown-Residential. One option is to incorporate the Downtown Redevelopment Study’s design guidelines into the overlay districts.

Figure 5.1 Planned Land Use Map





Redevelopment Initiatives

Implementation of the Downtown Redevelopment Study is not a single action, but a series of sequenced steps. These steps will be taken over time and across multiple phases. Initial focus should be on several implementation initiatives that lay the foundation for change.

During the early years of redevelopment, there are several critical actions the City of Onalaska can take to reduce development constraints, allow for greater investment in public amenities and infrastructure and enhance the market viability of multiple locations. Suggested activities to enhance project success include:

Focus on the momentum around downtown's new open space assets

Strategically target redevelopment sites and public improvements that will leverage downtown's desirable new open space assets. Focus on redevelopment that will continue to build market momentum and early projects act as positive demonstrations of great things to come in downtown. Start with achievable projects to build success and create a diversity of projects that are viable in the market place today so individual projects within the community don't directly compete with one another. Allowing this depth and range of early projects should be guided carefully with extensive examination as to which projects should or should not receive financial assistance. Key steps to advance this initiative include:

- » Explore opportunities to provide and manage parking conveniently and efficiently in downtown, including on-street, small lots behind buildings, public lot/ramp, shared parking lots.
- » Establish street design standards for downtown streets and enhanced alleys/paseos (Figure 5.2).
- » Reconstruct Irvin Street (between 2nd and 3rd Avenues South) and the enhanced alley/paseo between Main Street and Irvin Street.
- » City partnership and support for the proposed

- Great River Residences housing development
- » Continued progress on completing the Great River Landing waterfront project.
- » Pursue public acquisition of key properties or public-private partnerships to assemble adequate redevelopment sites, particularly in the Downtown Core.

Build high quality development

Directing and building high quality commercial and residential development is critical to setting the table for future success. Early projects in the ground will provide the model for future development and establishing a high finish with proper selection of building materials will make great strides in elevating the image of Onalaska. Buildings should be respectful of adjacent properties and be designed with the appropriate scale. Both commercial and housing development should have a strong street presence and varied materials.

Build a high quality public realm

Continued investment in creating a high quality and memorable public realm that will attract local residents, regional visitors, new businesses, and developers. Key steps to advance this initiative include:

- » Completion of the Great River Landing.
- » Consider paving some portions of the Great River State Trail to make it accessible and attractive to a broader group of users.
- » Improvements to downtown core streets.
- » Extend enhanced alleys/paseos and Court Street South
- » Work with WisDOT to improve walk/bike crossings of Hwy 35 and Main Street (Hwy 157), particularly at Hwy 35/Irvin Street.
- » Programming of public spaces, e.g. farmers market, art fairs in School District or Great River Landing parking lots.
- » Accommodate needs of snowmobiles to access downtown.

Complete update of the zoning code

Collaborate with property and business owners on appropriate parking requirements and the desired application of mixed use development in downtown as part of the UDC Rewrite Project in 2019.

Broader redevelopment opportunities

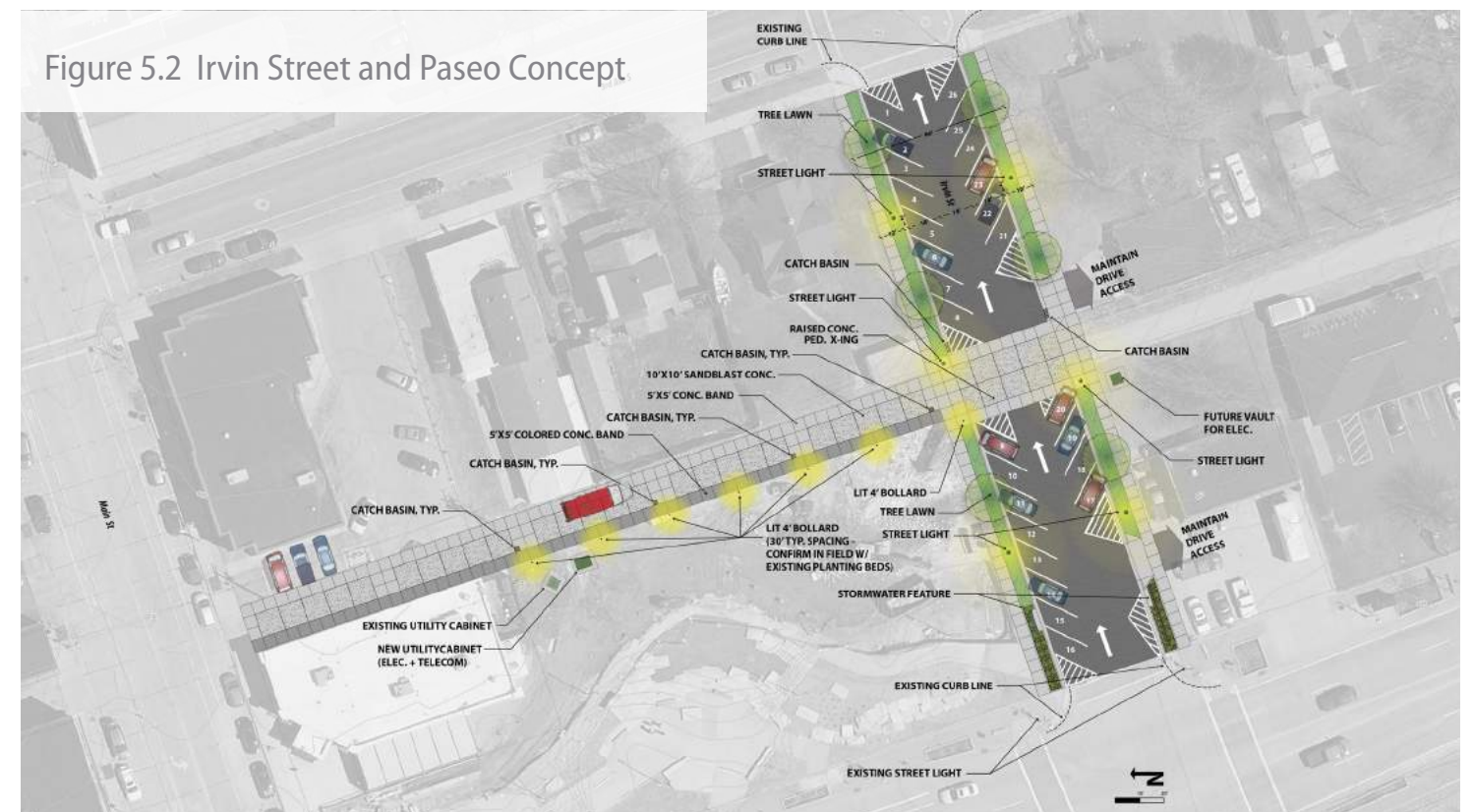
Keep an eye on opportunities for redevelopment beyond the downtown core. Key steps to advance this initiative include:

- » Work with utility company on future relocation of the electric substation.
- » Bury overhead power lines with infrastructure improvements and development projects.
- » Complete Quiet Zone improvements at Irvin Street.
- » Work with property owners of potential housing redevelopment sites, particularly adjacent to new riverfront housing and along west side of 3rd Ave.



Improved downtown public parking example.

Figure 5.2 Irvin Street and Paseo Concept

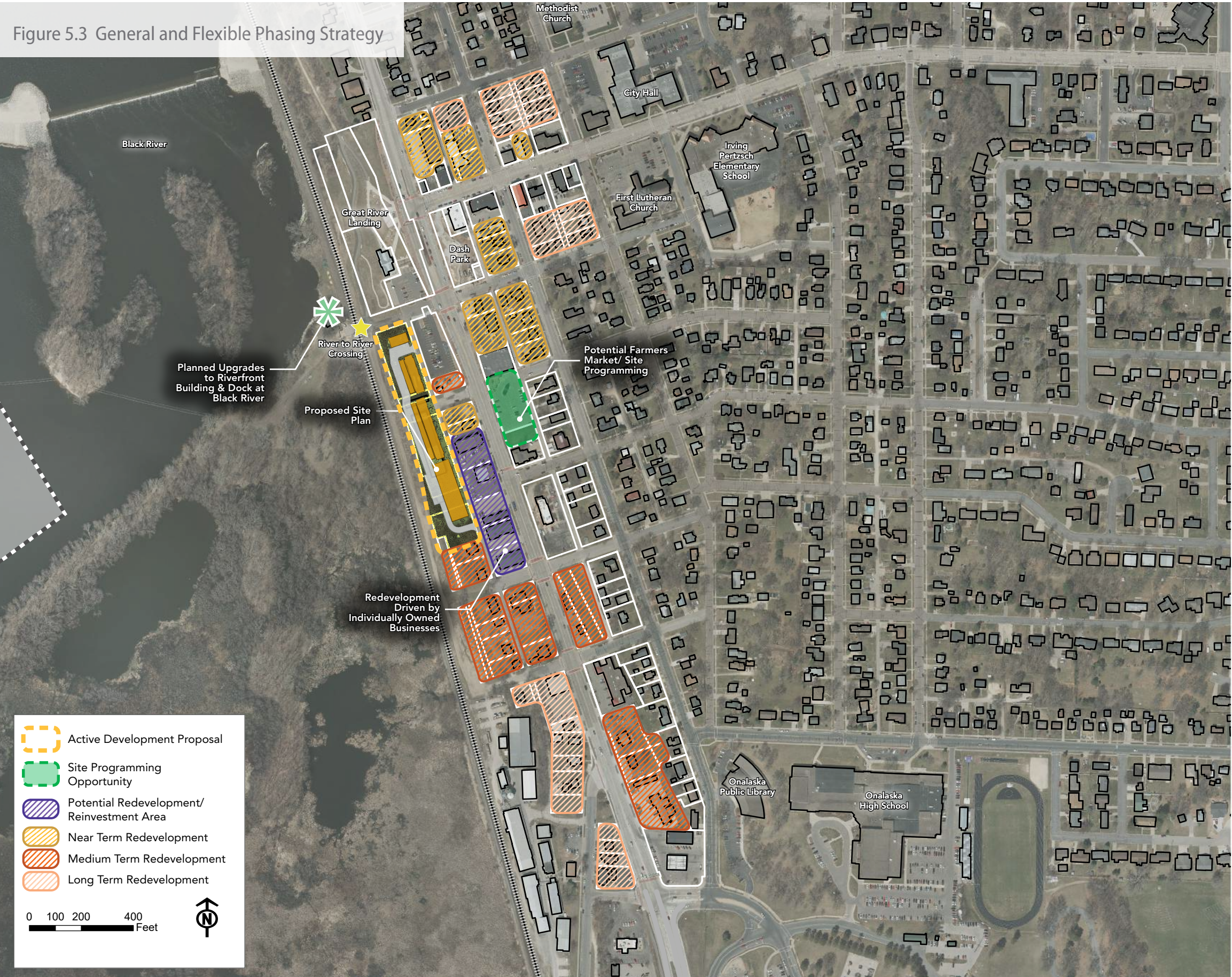


Create a General and Flexible Phasing Strategy

Achieving the desired redevelopment goals of the Downtown study area will need to be approached in phases for a number of reasons including:

- » The large physical size of the study area
- » The large number of property owners
- » The need and complexity of assembling properties for redevelopment
- » The significant financial investments needed to facilitate redevelopment
- » Time needed for market absorption of new development

Figure 5.3 provides a general phasing strategy that starts with near term redevelopment in the Downtown Core, leveraging and complementing recent public and private investments including the Great River Landing, Dash-Park, and two new Main Street commercial buildings. Redevelopment of sites adjacent to these downtown amenities are identified as near term. In addition, near term redevelopment also includes the planned redevelopment of the City's public works site with the Great River Residences project and two vacant sites on the west side of Hwy 35. Medium term redevelopment areas include additional riverfront residential, relocation/expansion of the electric substation, and vacant/underutilized Hwy 35 properties. Long term redevelopment areas include the northeast and southwest corners of the study area.





Municipal Tools for Public Investments

The vision for downtown will continue to require investment by the City of Onalaska. As larger scale redevelopment opportunities present themselves downtown, the City may also find public benefit through participation and investments in private redevelopment projects. This section highlights the primary municipal finance tools available to support public investments in downtown, both through public improvements and participation in private redevelopment projects. The primary finance tools available to cities are limited. This information is not intended to be an exhaustive guide, but rather a high level overview, a starting point, for further investigation. The use of these tools may be subject to requirements not discussed in this section. In addition, the statutes that govern these tools can be changed by the State Legislature.

Tax Incremental Finance

Tax incremental finance (TIF) is one of the primary development finance tool available to Wisconsin cities. TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. Through TIF, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The City approved a TID for the Great River Residences Redevelopment Project in February 2019. TIF can be used to finance many actions needed to facilitate redevelopment, including land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. In addition, TIF creates a means to borrow money needed to pay for redevelopment costs. The City can issue general obligation bonds to finance certain qualified expenses. These bonds may be supported with tax increments and other legally available revenues.

The City has the authority to create a Tax Incremental District (TID) for a redevelopment site or area. The current value of all the taxable property within the defined TID boundaries is established prior to any redevelopment. New construction and investment increases the property's value which results in increased/incremental tax value.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments. The use of special assessments for the majority of public improvements is governed by state statutes. Essentially, special assessments are a means for benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements, and to spread the impact over a period of years. Special assessments can be used to finance public infrastructure improvements outlined in this study including streets, sidewalks and trails, streetscape, lighting and parking.

The method of spreading the assessments and the terms of the assessments are set by the City. Typically, the primary legal constraints on special assessments are:

- » The amount of the assessment cannot exceed the benefit the property receives from the improvement. The benefit is measured by the increase in property value.
- » The method assessment must be uniformly applied to the same type of property.

General Property Taxes

General property taxes can be used to finance many of the services, improvements, facilities and development activities needed to implement elements of the Redevelopment Study. Taxes may be levied through the General Fund, to pay debt service on bonds, and as a levy for the CDA. The ability to use property taxes provides another resource for downtown.

Other City Funds

While property taxes are the largest and most obvious source of City revenues, other funds may play a role in implementing the Redevelopment Study. The use of other City funds should be factored into capital improvements planning and earmarked for the Downtown/Highway 35 Corridor. Some potential funding sources include:

- » Utility revenues. Monies from municipal utilities

may be available to certain portions of Downtown or State Road 16 Corridor infrastructure improvement projects.

- » Park dedication fees. New development contributes money (or land) towards the creation of the local park system. Revenues from park dedication may be available to support park and trail improvements.
- » State aid for roads. The City receives money from the State for the construction and maintenance of roads. These roads must be part of the City's designated state aid street system.

Commercial Rehabilitation Loans and Grants

Typically, through HRAs and CDAs, cities have broad powers to facilitate the revitalization of existing buildings. State law also creates specific statutory authority for loans by cities. The City may establish a program to make loans to finance the rehabilitation of small and medium-sized commercial buildings. The program can be funded through the issuance of revenue bonds or obligations payable solely from all or a portion of the revenues derived from or other contributions to the program. Other revenues of the City (tax increment or tax abatement proceeds, for instance) could be used to assist the program.

Non-Municipal Revenue Sources

The City should continue to be informed and pay attention to other revenue sources that exist or may become available from La Crosse County or the State of Wisconsin or other sources. Redevelopment projects often rely on a myriad and ever-changing source of revenues and programs to achieve City objectives.



Farmers market.



Great River Landing's river overlook.



Regional Resources

Coulee Region Business Center

The Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC) provides facilities, resources, mentoring and coaching to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the La Crosse area. The Center offers shared services and a network of professional assistance, giving entrepreneurs access to a wealth of business knowledge and support services. They can help to prepare a business plan, access funding, and market and grow a business.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

Look to Dairyland's Business Development Assistance and Economic Development Loan Programs for site location assistance and an array of financing programs for new or expanding businesses.

La Crosse Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau

This non-profit organization represents the convention and tourism industries of the La Crosse/ Onalaska Area business community, actively marketing the area to tourists and meeting planners both nationally and internationally.

La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO)

Founded in 1971, the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) focuses on attracting businesses, retaining businesses, and they co-manage the Coulee Region Business Center. Services include: business attraction & retention assistance, site search/analysis, financial program coordination, assembly of private/public sector project teams, workforce development service, and regional transportation initiatives. LADCO also coordinates the Oktoberfest in the Capitol event and the La Crosse Area Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club.

La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC)

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization designated to perform transportation planning activities for the La Crosse and La Crescent Area. The main objectives of the LAPC are to develop and maintain a long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and a short-range Transportation Improvement Program, and other regionally significant projects.

La Crosse County Economic Development (LCED)

The LCED provides information on County industrial parks, available sites, economic profile, and their other business assistance programs, including their revolving loan fund program.

Mississippi River Regional Plan Commission (MRRPC)

Organized in 1964, MRRPC is a commission of nine counties along the Mississippi River in western Wisconsin. The organization is charged with planning for the physical, social and economic development of the region. The Commission provides administrative and technical assistance to several community, county or multi-county revolving loan funds.

7 Rivers Alliance

The Alliance is a regional leadership group that boosts economic growth by fostering collaboration in western Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota, and northeast Iowa. The Alliance brings together public and private resources to forge entrepreneurial growth and serves as a clearinghouse of vital information to enhance quality of life in the region.

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University Wisconsin – La Crosse, is one of ten university-based SBDCs in Wisconsin. The SBDC mission is to provide learning opportunities

and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The La Crosse SBDC serves seven counties in the region and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling.

UW-Extension La Crosse County

The community and economic development agent can provide information and technical assistance on economic development in La Crosse County.

Xcel Energy

Xcel offers a variety of programs and services for expanding companies or new industries wishing to relocate in their service area. They offer customized programs designed to help businesses and communities grow.



State Programs

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

WEDC is a public-private corporation that replaced the State Department of Commerce in 2011 and leads the state's economic development efforts. WEDC provides a number of programs and services focused on business and community development including:

- » Community Development Investment Grant – Funds may be used for building renovation, historic preservation, demolition, new construction, infrastructure investment, and project/site development planning. Grants are limited to 25% of eligible project costs, with a maximum of up to \$250,000, and grant recipients must provide a 3:1 match investment in project costs.
- » Brownfield Site Assessment Grant – Funds may be used to identify and quantify the degree and extent of soil, vapor and groundwater contamination.
- » Brownfields Grant - Funds may be used for brownfield redevelopment or associated environmental remediation activities such as environmental investigation, remediation or monitoring of the site; removal of hazardous waste containers; soil removal, capping, barrier installation and vapor intrusion systems; and demolition activities that will facilitate redevelopment in a brownfield project.
- » Downtown Development Programs
 - *Wisconsin Main Street Program* – A free technical assistance program, rather than a direct funding program, provides training, façade renderings, small business consultations, and hiring of outside consultants to address topics such as business recruitment & retention, branding, historic preservation planning and event development.
 - *Connecting Communities Program* – Also a technical assistance program designed to provide training and networking for communities or organizations working on revitalization topics.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

WHEDA works with developers to finance affordable rental housing and support economic development through its small business guarantee programs. Look to them for New Market Tax Credits, Small Business Financial Products, and Multifamily Financing and Tax Credits.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WisDOT allocates federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds to transportation improvement projects that “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.” The categories of eligible TAP projects include: trail facilities for non-motorized transport; constructing safe routes for non-drivers; converting abandoned railroad corridors for non-motorized transportation; constructing turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas; community improvement activities; any environmental mitigation activity; the Recreational Trails Program; the Safe Routes to Schools program; and projects in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. All TAP projects are funded 80% federally, with a 20% local match. The minimum project cost is \$50,000 for non-infrastructure and \$300,000 for infrastructure projects.



Federal Programs

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)

The low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program, created in 1986 and made permanent in 1993, is an indirect federal subsidy used to finance the construction and rehabilitation of low-income affordable rental housing. This program was created as an incentive for private developers and investors to provide more low-income housing. Without this incentive, affordable rental housing projects do not generate sufficient profit to warrant the investment.

The LIHTC gives investors a dollar-for-dollar reduction in their federal tax liability in exchange for providing financing to develop affordable rental housing. Investors’ equity contribution subsidizes low-income housing development, thus allowing some units to rent at below-market rates. In return, investors receive tax credits paid in annual allotments, generally over 10 years.

Financed projects must meet eligibility requirements for at least 30 years after project completion. In other words, owners must keep the units rent restricted and available to low-income tenants. At the end of the period, the properties remain under the control of the owner.

<https://www.novoco.com/resource-centers/affordable-housing-tax-credits/lihtc-basics/about-lihtc>

(Source: City of La Crosse, 2018)

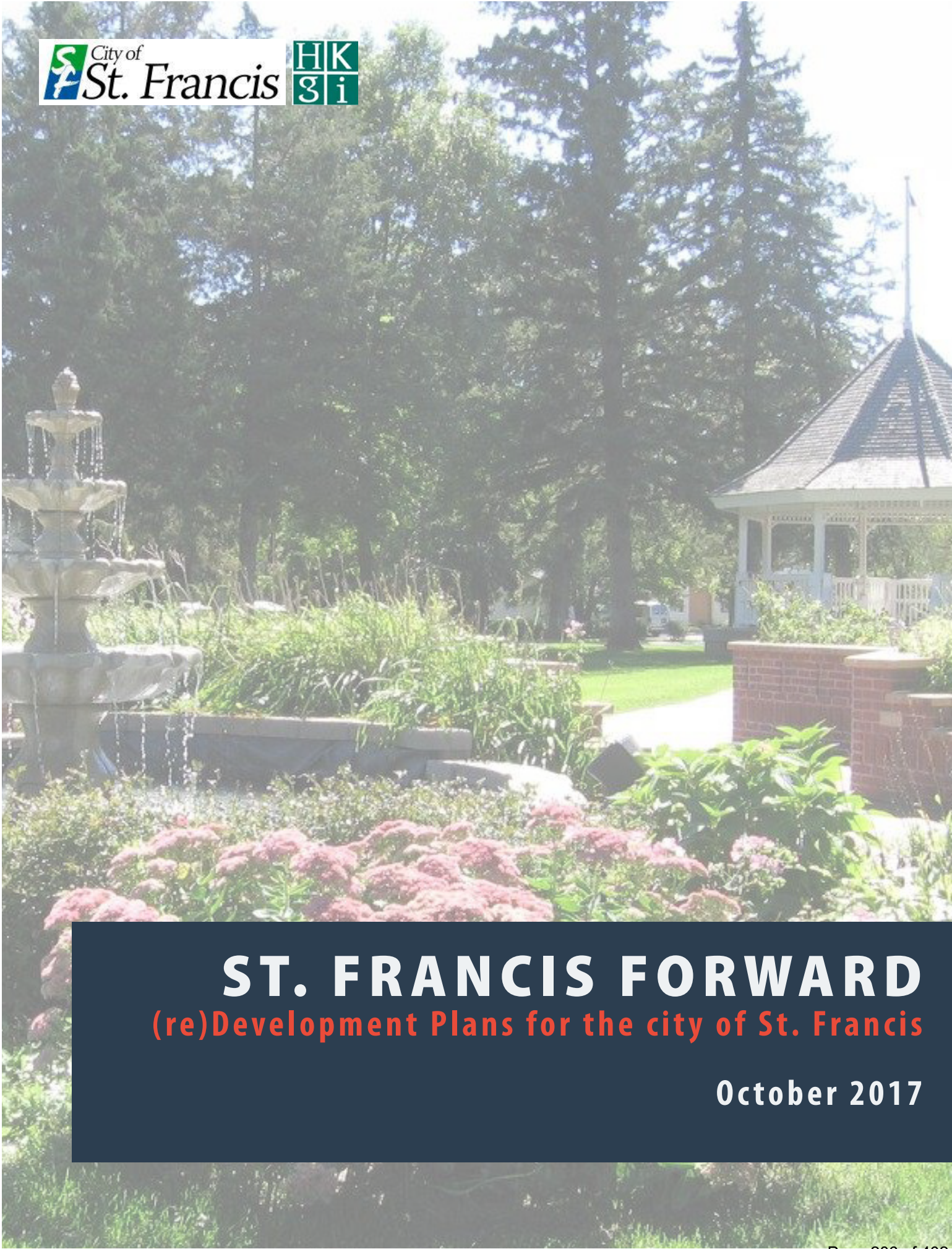
Achieving the Vision

In summary, the Downtown Redevelopment Study outlines an approach for positive, incremental redevelopment, reinvestment and intensification throughout the area. The plan outlines a series of achievable goals over the next ten years with potential redevelopment projects that have a reality in the marketplace today and provide a true foundation for transformation.

While the Redevelopment Study prescribes a detailed redevelopment approach for specific projects and likely steps, the plan is also flexible in its application to allow the City of Onalaska to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. The Redevelopment Study should be utilized as a living document, continually referenced and checked against as development and redevelopment projects occur over time.





The background of the slide is a photograph of a park. On the left, there is a multi-tiered stone fountain with water cascading down. In the center, there are lush green plants and a path leading towards a white gazebo with a dark roof on the right. The scene is surrounded by tall evergreen trees under a clear sky.

ST. FRANCIS FORWARD

(re)Development Plans for the city of St. Francis

October 2017



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The St. Francis Forward planning team would like to extend a big thank you to the residents and business owners who have participated in creating this plan. Your input and insights have made this a better plan.

CITY COUNCIL:

Mayor Steve Feldman
Councilmember Robert Bauer
Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer
Councilmember Rich Skordahl
Councilmember Jerry Tveit

Images in this document are courtesy of the City of St. Francis

**THIS PLAN WAS ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS ON
OCTOBER 16TH, 2017**



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STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to develop a plan for the future development and redevelopment of the core of St. Francis. This is done through four actions:

- » Develop a Vision and set of Guiding Principles to guide future public and private investments.
 - *These are the driving forces that shape the master plan. The plan and proposed projects will help the City get closer to its vision.*
 - *When other potential projects arise, the vision and guiding principles should be the yardstick by which the projects are evaluated. Even if the proposed land use or development differs from what is shown in the plan, policy makers can ask, “does this project get us closer to our vision for St. Francis?” If the answer is yes, the project should be explored further.*
- » Provide a Master Plan to guide public and private redevelopment investments.
- » Establish “springboard” project ideas for key sites most ready for redevelopment or new development.
 - *Project ideas can help stimulate developers and see what a site could be. By preliminarily vetting them for financial and physical feasibility, there is a level of reassurance to the private sector that a project can be done.*
 - *By incorporating project ideas into a City’s policy documents, developers know the City is willing and enthusiastic about supporting new projects.*
- » Identify and define key metrics that can be used to measure progress and the value of the master plan and planning process.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building upon previous planning efforts in St. Francis, the City launched the completion of a Redevelopment Plan for the “core” areas of the community in Fall 2016. The planning efforts provide a vision for the ongoing redevelopment and growth of the Bridge Street corridor on either side of the Rum River, the Highway 47 corridor, and adjoining and nearby areas of vacant lands and redevelopment opportunity in St. Francis. These areas comprise the heart of St. Francis, including the area traditionally considered “Downtown” and the main retail and commercial corridor, Highway 47 (also known as St. Francis Boulevard).

The community provided input through community meetings, stakeholder meetings, and online surveys as the planning effort progressed. The St. Francis community envisions Bridge Street as its “downtown” and expressed a desire for better community gathering places and amenities in this key district. Residents and other stakeholders expressed a desire for a wider range of retail, shopping, dining, and entertainment options in St. Francis, as well as housing options for various segments of the population. The community strongly embraced the idea of extending Bridge Street west to Highway 47, across the existing school campus. The community sees this move, previously discussed on several occasions over the last two decades, as a key move to link the east and west sides of St. Francis and to create a safer and more prominent intersection at Highway 47 and Pederson Drive / Bridge Street. Community members also expressed strong support for leveraging the redevelopment plan to attract new businesses and more jobs to St. Francis. The community believes that tying St. Francis to the Rum River and leveraging this key natural asset will help strengthen ongoing redevelopment efforts.

The overall master plan resulting from this effort reflects the general desire of the St. Francis community to reach for more transformative types of development in the heart of the community. The Downtown area, along Bridge Street, could include a civic campus including various uses, to draw more visitation and activity to the district. Retail redevelopment along Bridge

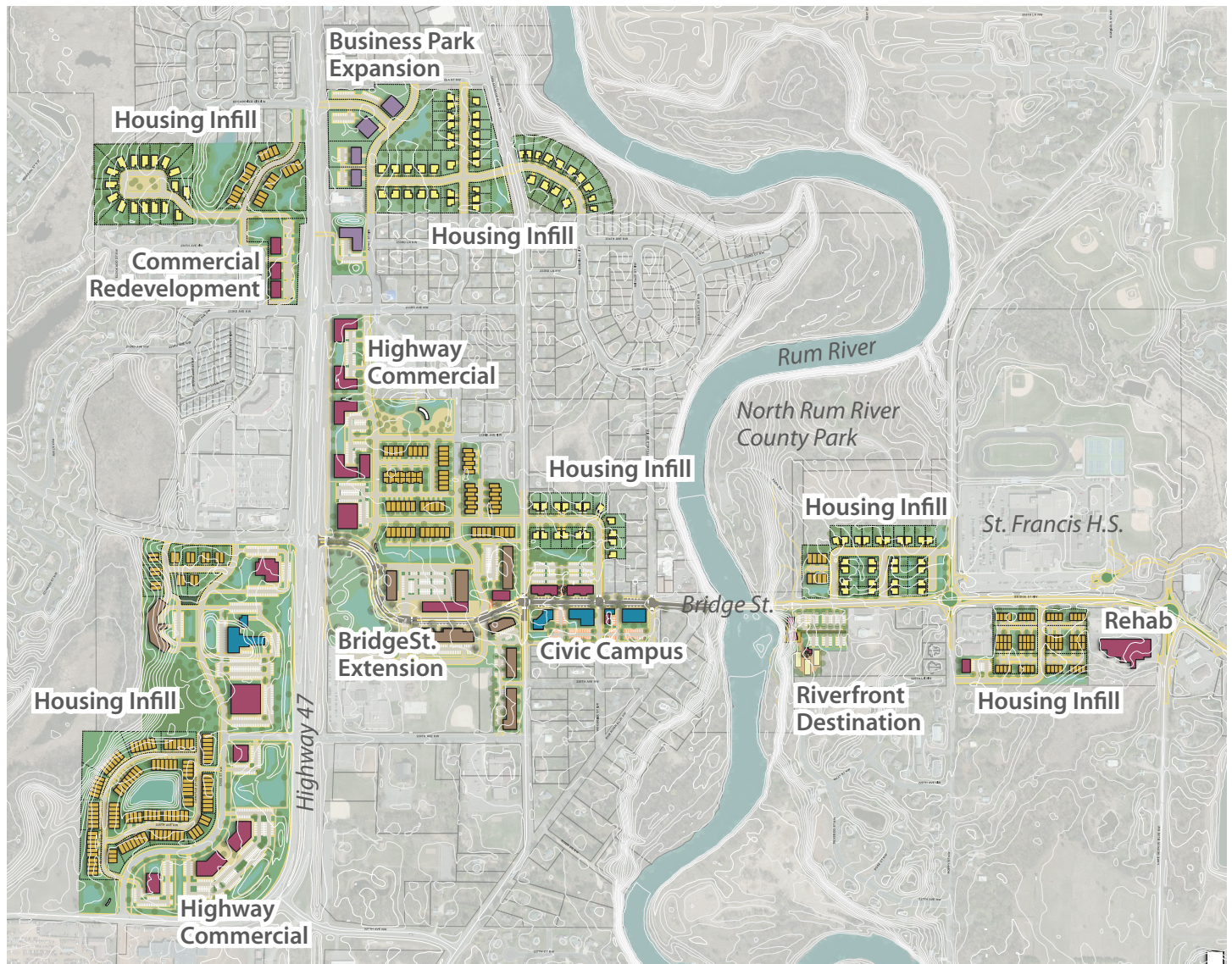
Street would also build the retail base in Downtown and establish it as a more prominent district in Anoka County. On the east side of the river, the City has the opportunity to market the City-owned property as a potential venue for a restaurant or entertainment facility, coupled with an outdoor recreation-oriented business (such as an outfitter offering fishing or kayaking along the Rum River). The extension of Bridge Street to Highway 47 would help link the current Downtown to the main north-south road in this part of Anoka County and create a key community entrance. Furthermore, if the school district elects to move the Middle School to a new facility at a different location, the Middle School campus could be redeveloped as a western extension of the “Main Street” orientation of Bridge Street, including attractive retail shops and eateries, and a mixture of residential housing types catering to a range of potential residents. This potential redevelopment has the potential to create a true, vibrant heart at the junction of the two major streets in St. Francis over time. Elsewhere, the master plan calls for the infill redevelopment of various parcels along Bridge Street and near Highway 47 as residential land uses of varying densities. It also calls for the infill development of vacant parcels along Highway 47 as a variety of retail and service uses.

The overall plan also articulates a range of additional elements that should enhance the quality of life and attractiveness of the core of St. Francis. Improved wayfinding and signage at key entrances to the community and at key junctions will help guide visitors to key destinations and amenities. Streetscape enhancements along Bridge Street and other key streets will enhance the attractiveness and marketability of the core of St. Francis to potential businesses and residents. Improvements to parks and enhanced linkages to the Rum River corridor will enhance the quality of life as well. The overall plan calls for the creation of higher quality public realm throughout the area, in order to create a community of quality.

The implementation plan outlines a range of action items the City should pursue in order to move the plan forward, over the short term and longer term. The City has a range of tools, including incentives and regulatory strategies that can assist the variety of potential projects outlined in this master plan. Importantly, the ongoing success of this plan will depend on strong leadership from elected leaders and city staff, and the pursuit and strengthening of working relationships and partnerships between City staff and St. Francis leaders and their counterparts in the school district, and at the county and state levels. Through ongoing efforts and the creation of some momentum over the next few years, St. Francis has the opportunity to create a great “heart” to its community over time.

Recognizing that the plan may change over time, and that portions of the plan may not be realized, the development as shown reflects the following numbers:

Residential	Single Family Residential: +/- 100 units Townhome: +/- 300 units Multi-Family Residential: +/- 175 units
Commercial (Retail and Office)	+/- 200,000 Square Feet
Industrial	+/- 50,000 Square Feet



The Master Plan envisions:

- » A Civic Campus on the south side of Bridge Street
- » Office Redevelopment on the north side of Bridge Street
- » A restaurant/entertainment anchor on the east side of the Rum River
- » Housing redevelopment between Bridge Street and Rum River North County Park
- » Housing redevelopment south of the High School
- » Industrial growth along Highway 47
- » Residential infill along Ambassador Boulevard
- » Residential infill off Highway 47
- » Redevelopment of Office/Commercial along Highway 47



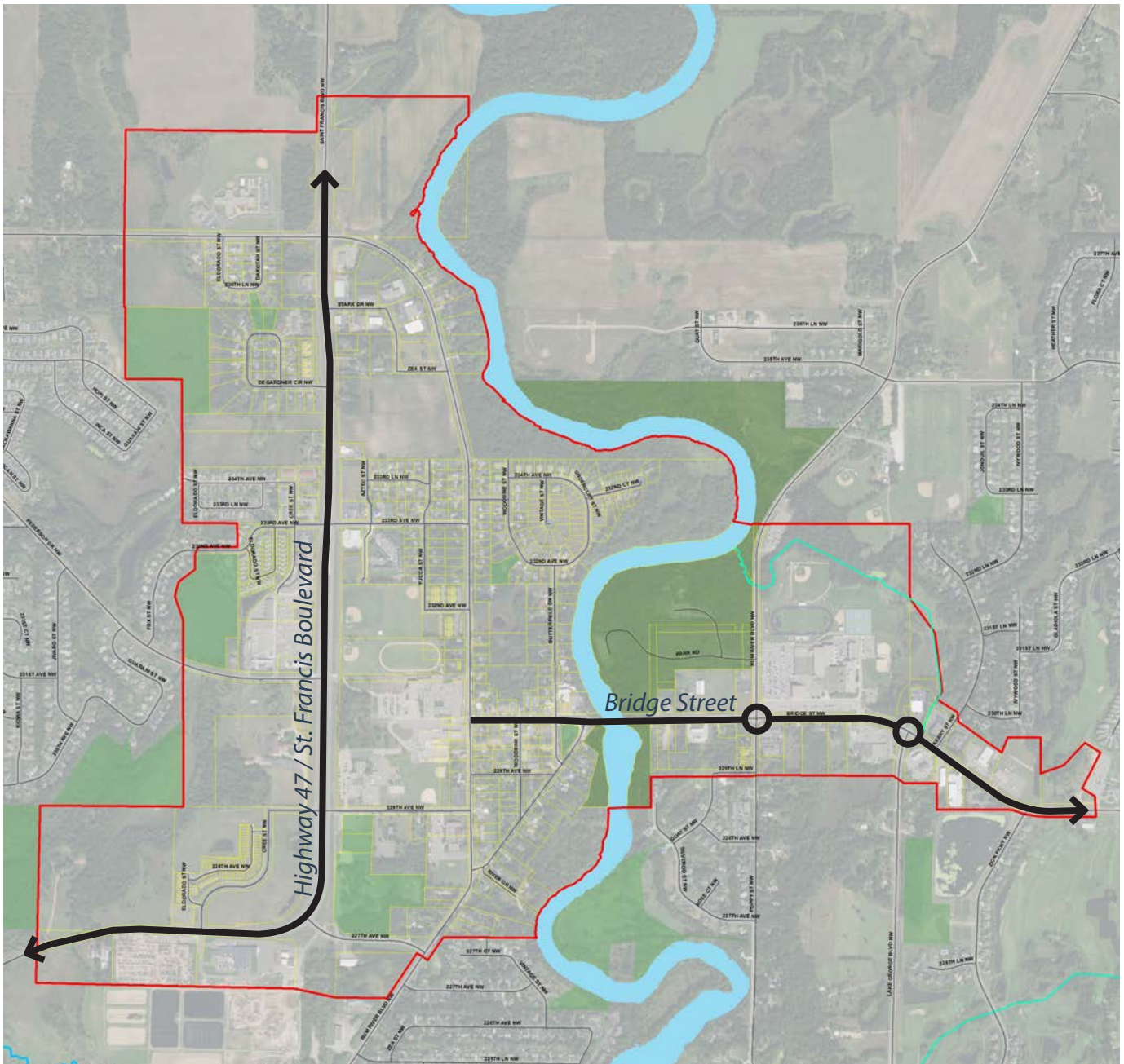


FIGURE 1.2 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD STUDY AREA

Study Area

The study area for this plan roughly follows the Bridge Street and Highway 47 Corridors. These are the two primary commercial corridors in St. Francis. Both have a mix of uses and potential for development and redevelopment.

It is also worth noting that although the study area encompasses a large area, existing development covers a large portion of the area, and therefore the plan focuses on specific opportunity sites. These sites are selected for their possibilities to affect change. Much of the land in the study area is private property, and will only be developed if supported by the landowner in a willing seller/willing buyer situation.

The aerials on the opposite page show the change in the City since 1991, and are a helpful reminder that the City has not always looked the way it does today. It will continue to grow, change, and mature in the future.

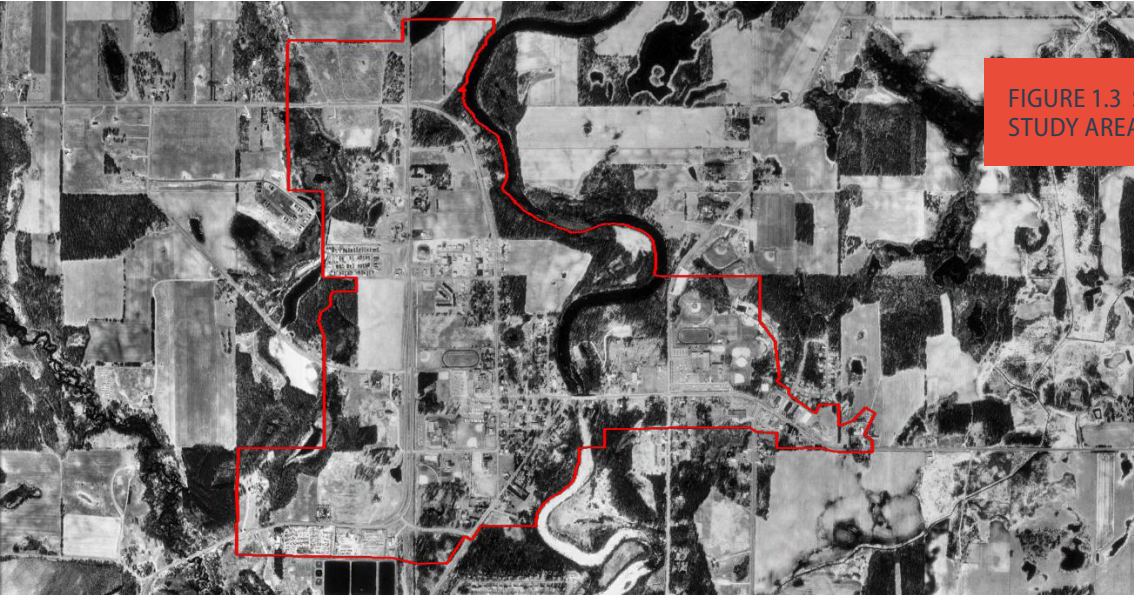


FIGURE 1.3 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
STUDY AREA - 1991

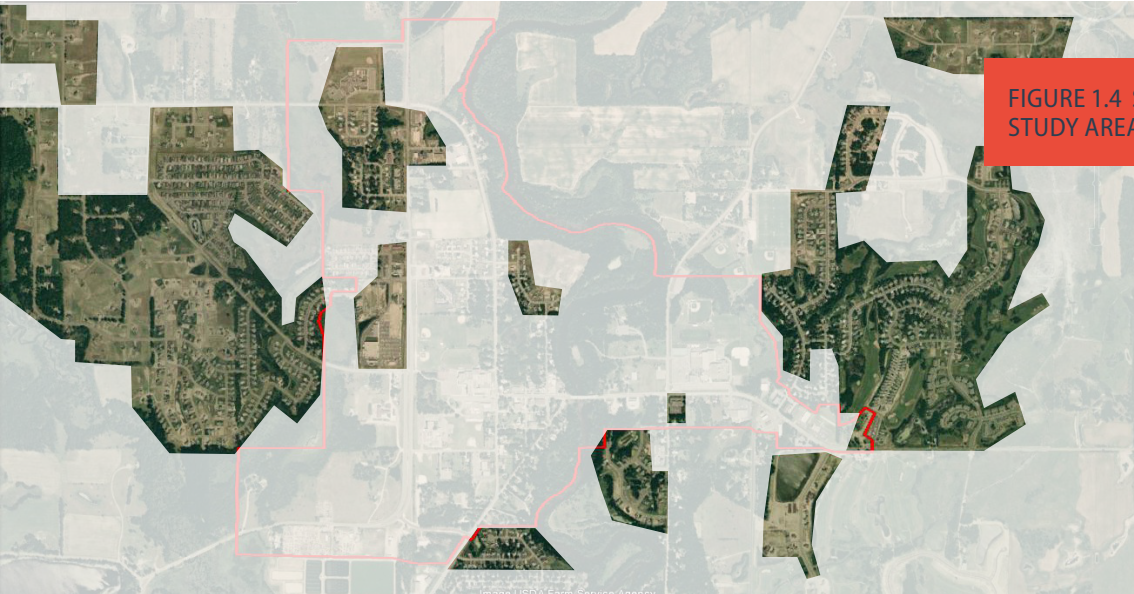


FIGURE 1.4 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
STUDY AREA - 2003

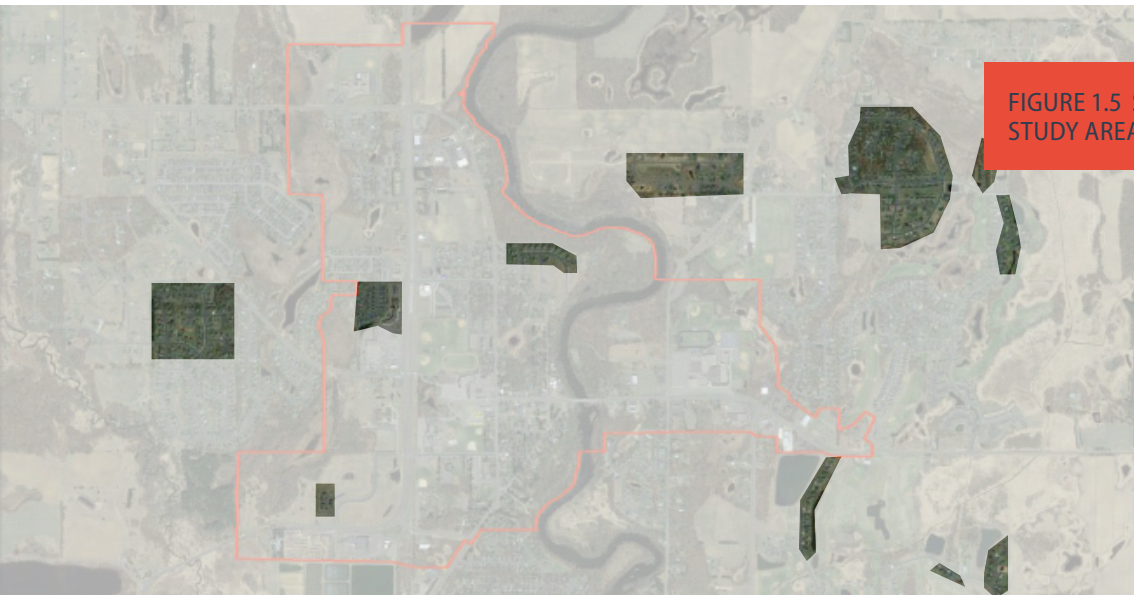


FIGURE 1.5 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
STUDY AREA - 2015

Existing Plans, Studies, and Policy Tools

As part of the planning process, the project team examined a number of city policies and previous planning efforts in St. Francis. The following provides a list and summary of the documents that have been considered as part of this process, with key takeaways relating to re/development planning along Highway 47/St. Francis Boulevard and Bridge Street.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2008)

Summary: The City of St. Francis completed the most recent comprehensive plan in 2008, covering land use, parks, water resources, transportation, and implementation strategies. St. Francis was classified as a Rural Center and a Diversified Rural Community by the Metropolitan Council, as part of this process. Much of the city is in agriculture with the largest concentration of residential and commercial development present along and near Highway 47/St. Francis Boulevard and Bridge Street. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan anticipated that ongoing growth would occur in the form of infill, in older parts of the community, as well as in greenfield areas in the northwest part of St. Francis.

Key Takeaways:

The City seeks to

- » Establish continuity between residential areas and downtown
- » Preserve its small town character
- » Focus more intense development, especially multifamily residential and commercial development, downtown and along Highway 47
- » Elevate the level of design quality (architecture, streetscape, etc.), especially in downtown
- » Improve pedestrian facilities
- » Enhance linkages to the Rum River
- » Address parking needs with the creation of centralized facilities to serve the downtown area

The City is currently completing an update to the Comprehensive Plan in conjunction and following this redevelopment planning process, and the outcomes of this plan will influence the components of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

2016 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Summary: This document analyzes the potential for economic development in the City of St. Francis. The plan examines demographics, location, access to highways, current job and commuting patterns, and market perceptions of St. Francis. The plan also identifies potential re/development sites within St. Francis and opportunities for industrial and commercial development.

Key Takeaways:

- » Based on population size and access to transportation corridors, St. Francis is not well positioned to compete with other cities at a regional level
- » Development that occurs in St. Francis will likely result from users that desire to be in St. Francis (as compared to finding a spot in the northern metro, or elsewhere in Anoka County)

- » The City does have tools to support development
- » The ability of the City to simplify and clarify the development process will aid potential development (including assisting with site preparation, the streamlining of regulations, and completing market studies, marketing efforts, and the estimating of potential project costs)
- » Residential growth and retail will support the needs of the local population and make St. Francis more attractive for other types of development
- » In addition to fostering residential growth, the City should be focusing on helping existing business grow

CSAH 24 (BRIDGE STREET) IMPROVEMENTS (2014)

Summary: Relocation of Highway and High School access, with roundabouts and trails added. The road was reconstructed during the summer of 2016.

Key Takeaways:

- » High School access moved off of Bridge Street.
- » Right In/Right Out access to mall, from Bridge Street
- » Full median installation between Rum River Blvd and Lake George Blvd
- » Improved biking and walking facilities

BRIDGE STREET EXTENSION STUDY (2005)

Summary: An examination of options for connecting Bridge Street to Highway 47/St. Francis Boulevard. Currently the two major roads in St. Francis, Bridge St. and Highway 47, do not connect as the middle school and elementary school campus are located at the western terminus of Bridge St. If the school campus was not there, a connection would be desired for improved traffic efficiency and economic development. School bus operations are located within this campus and the bus barn sits at the terminus of Bridge St.

Key Takeaways:

Options presented include:

- » A shift of the Bridge Street alignment to the south, intersecting Ambassador Drive in a roundabout. This option would avoid existing school buildings but would require the relocation of the existing bus facilities.
- » A shift of the Bridge Street alignment to the south, without a roundabout intersection at Ambassador Drive. This option would avoid existing school buildings but would require the relocation of the existing bus facilities.
- » A more direct connection from Bridge St, requiring substantial modification or relocation of the middle school building.

Options cost \$1,000,000 or more (in 2005 dollars), not including Right-of-Way acquisition and relocation of existing facilities.

A number of factors have impeded the completion of the Bridge Street connection over the last twelve years, including the project cost, the lack of establishing the project as a key priority, and other challenges.

NORTHERN ANOKA COUNTY RIVER CROSSING STUDY (2012)

Summary: An analysis of river crossing capacity for the Rum River in northern Anoka County (specifically St. Francis, Oak Grove, and Nowthen). CSAH 22/Viking Boulevard and CSAH 24/Bridge street provide the current crossing locations. The study considered various alternatives based on land use, the spacing of arterial locations, environmental issues, traffic projections, and safety and pedestrian issues.

Key Takeaways:

- » By 2030, CSAH 24 would be over capacity in a no-build condition
 - *Capacity 10,000 ADT*
 - *Projected at 12-15,000 ADT by 2030*
- » Expansion of CSAH 24 would lead to increased traffic volume on CSAH 24, as well as CSAH 28, CR 72, and Rum River Boulevard
- » A 4 lane configuration results in too many impacts (Right-of-Way, acquisition) to be considered as a final plan
- » Current Bridge Street reconstruction resulted in a reduction in the number of access points and a 2 lane roadway section.

A MARKET FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR ACTIVE ADULT SENIOR HOUSING AND AFFORDABLE GENERAL OCCUPANCY HOUSING IN ST. FRANCIS, MINNESOTA (2012)

Summary: An analysis of the demand for various forms of housing (including active senior and general occupancy, market and affordable). The market study examined numerous factors to determine demand for various housing products, including changing demographics, commute and economic patterns, and the location of a project along Bridge Street.

Key Takeaways:

The study anticipates that a market exists for the following real estate program elements:

- » 22 market rate, owner occupied, active adult units
- » 28 market rate, rental, active adult units
- » 43 affordable, active adult units
- » 24 affordable, rental, general occupancy units
- » The project is anticipated to draw from St. Francis, Nowthen, Oak Grove, and Stanford Township.

A senior housing project is underway along Bridge Street near the golf course that will meet some of the demonstrated demand.

BUSINESS SUBSIDY POLICY (2016)

Summary: The City of St. Francis and the Economic Development Authority provide business subsidies that meet a “public purpose” standard (although meeting the standard does not guarantee a subsidy). For businesses meeting the standards (outlined below), there are required application and reporting processes, in compliance with MN Statutes, Section 116J.993-116J.995.

Key Takeaways:

In order to remain consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other plans and guides, projects receiving a subsidy in St. Francis must serve a “Public Purpose”, including:

- » Increasing in tax base
- » Notable job creation
- » Producing jobs providing wages at least twice the federal minimum wage
- » Other economic or redevelopment goals
 - *Creating a “multiplier effect” of increased business elsewhere in St. Francis*
 - *Providing for economic diversity*
 - *Contributing to a “critical mass” of business in the community*
 - *Providing goods/services not available in St. Francis*
 - *Increasing the range of goods available*
 - *Encouraging growth*
 - *Encouraging private re/investment to remove blight or pollution*
 - *Supporting the retention/re-use of historic buildings*
 - *Encouraging the full utilization of infrastructure*

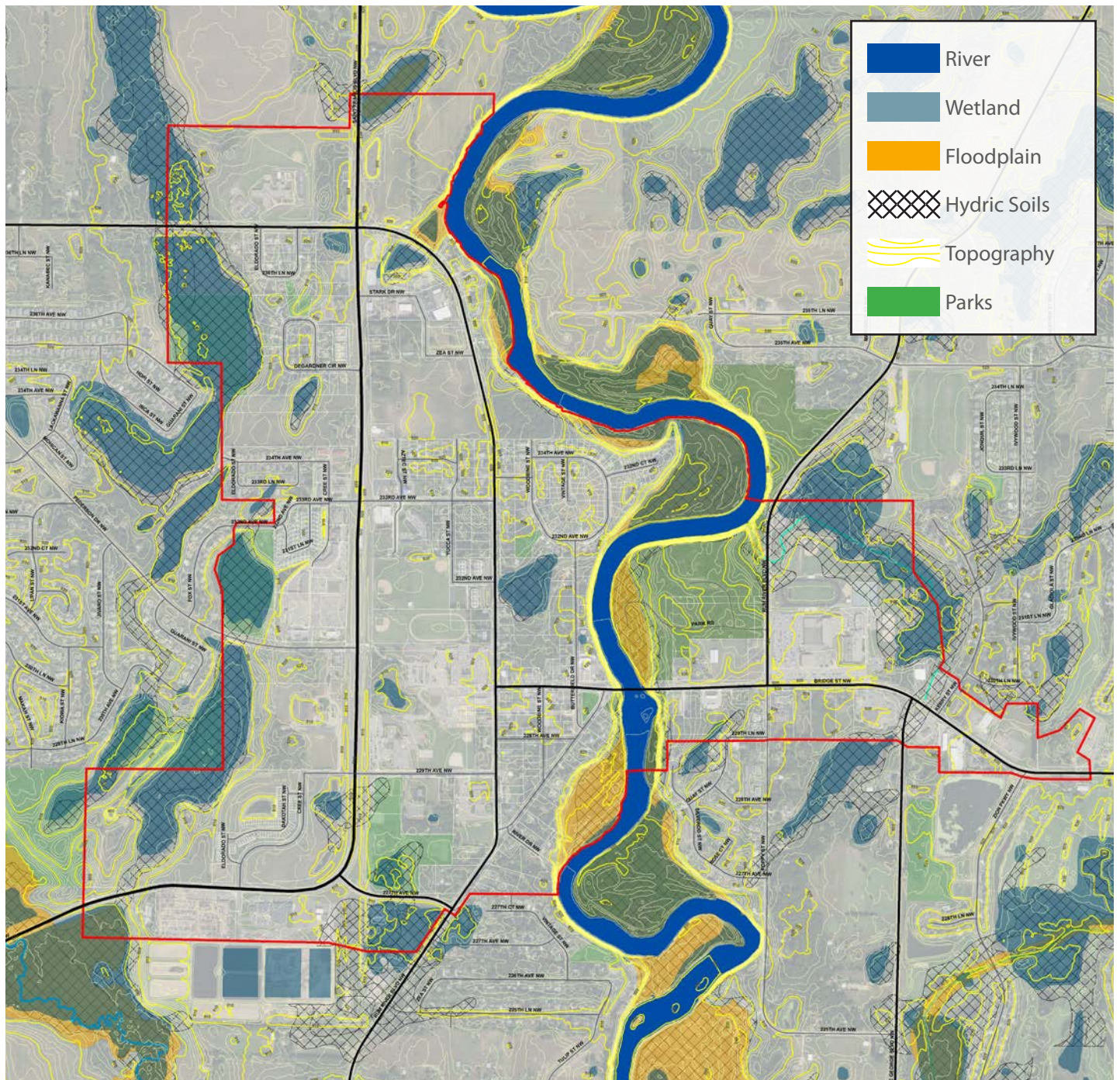
TIF POLICY (2016)

Summary: The City of St. Francis reserves the right to approve Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as permitted through MN Statutes 469.174-469.1794. The City may use TIF when desirable re/development would not occur but for the TIF assistance. TIF funds may be used for, in order of priority, 1. public improvement, legal, administrative, and engineering costs; 2. site preparation, site improvement, land purchase, demolition and environmental remediation; and 3. Capitalized interest, bonding costs.

Key Takeaways:

TIF is used to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- » Retaining or increasing jobs and wages
- » Coordinating with infrastructure improvements that provide value for the community
- » Encouraging additional private, unsubsidized development
- » Facilitating development that would not otherwise happen
- » Removing blight
- » Offsetting higher costs of redevelopment such as contamination cleanup
- » Creating affordable housing
- » Improving the quality of life in St. Francis by meeting unmet needs
- » Contributing to policies and goals of the City



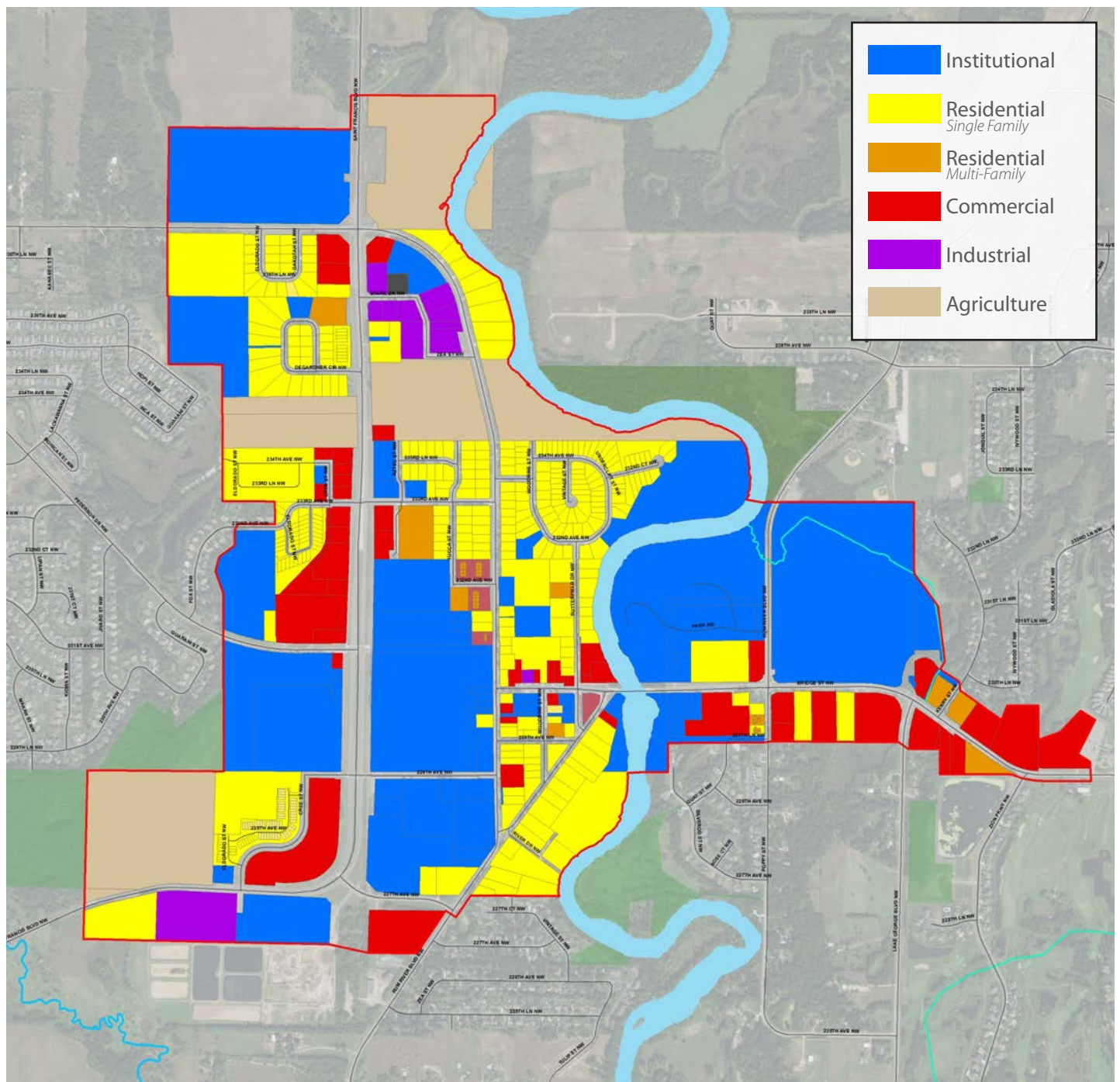
Data: Minnesota DNR

**FIGURE 1.6 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
NATURAL FEATURES**

Natural features in St. Francis can both inhibit and enhance development.

Elements such as the Rum River, ponds, and parks provide amenities for the community. These amenities can bring people to the area and serve as a selling point for development. The wild and scenic Rum River is a feature that few other cities have, and should be celebrated.

Conversely, these natural features can make transportation and connections more difficult, as well as restrict the developability of certain parcels. Given the availability of developable land, efforts should be made to discourage development in floodplains, and over wetlands and hydric soils.



Data: City of St. Francis

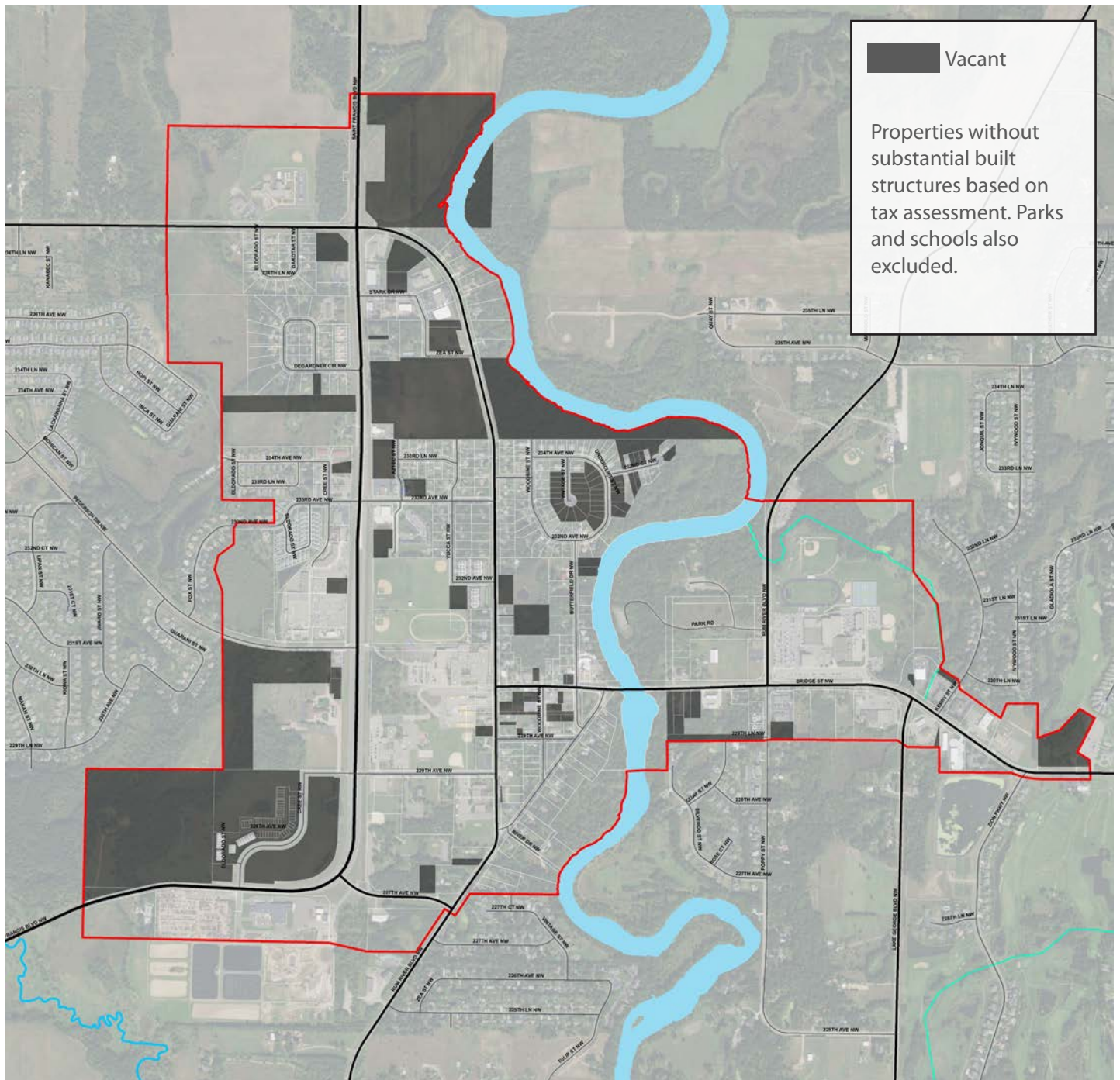
Land uses in the study area are as follows:

There are three main commercial areas: the Highway 47 Corridor, Bridge Street between the Middle School and the River, and Bridge Street from the River to the golf course.

Industry is mainly situated in the area to the south and east of Ambassador and Highway 47. This is the City's main business park, although other outlying areas do have industrial land uses.

The majority of the housing is single family, spread out throughout the study area. Medium density housing is present along the east end of Bridge Street and next to the Middle School along Ambassador Drive.

FIGURE 1.7 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD LAND USE

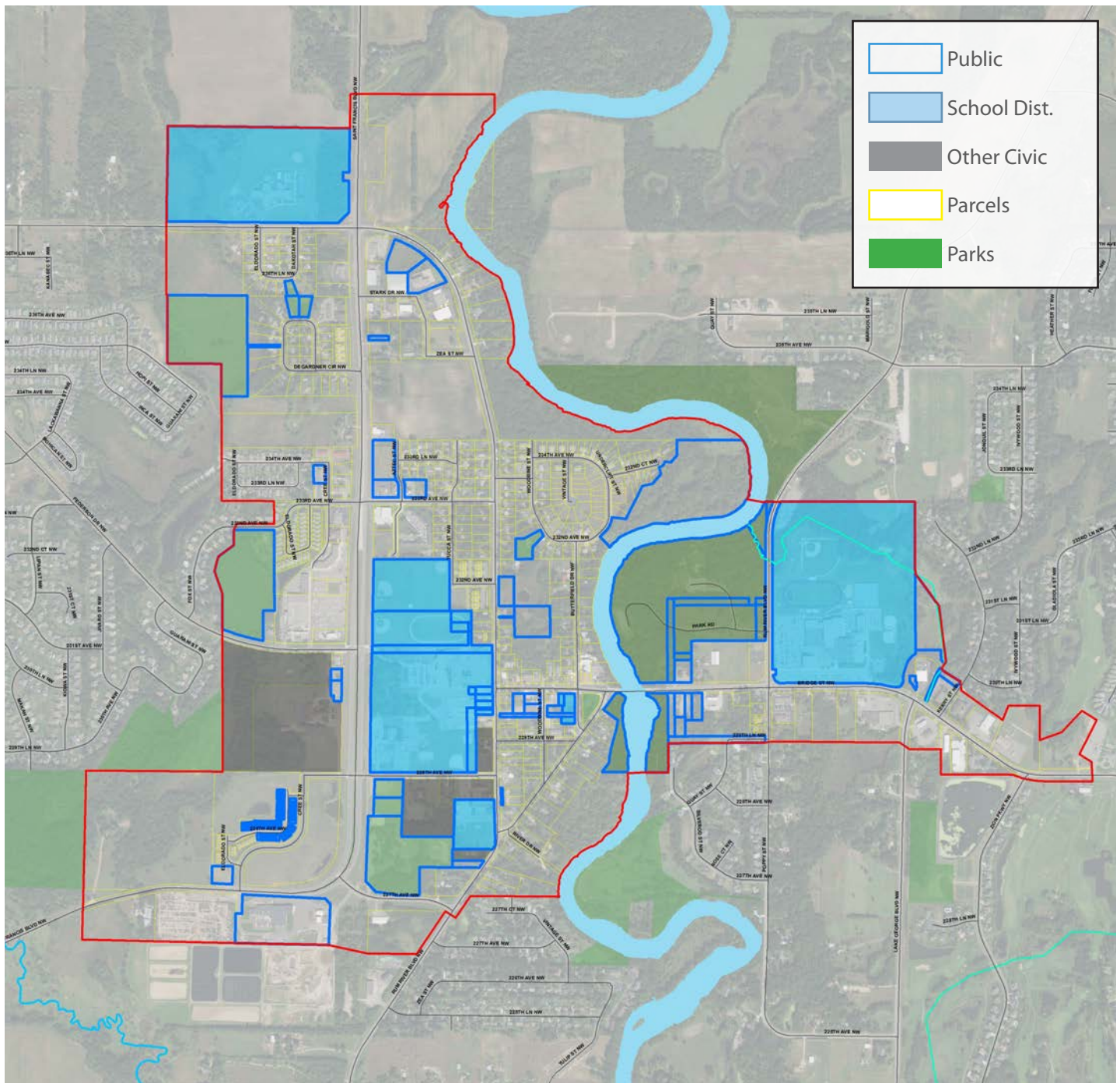


Data: Anoka County Assessor

**FIGURE 1.8 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
UNBUILT PARCELS**

An important element of the analysis considers the size and location of unbuilt parcels in the study area. This analysis considers properties with no significant structure according to tax assessor’s data. The analysis does not include parks, school buildings, or areas that are “underbuilt”, such as the farmstead located to the north of City Hall that could be more intensely developed in the future.

Large plots of land such as the property between the business park and residential areas, or next to the curve along Highway 47 are more logical potential redevelopment locations. Other key parcels, such as the City-owned property along the east side of the Rum River, or the various vacant parcels south of Bridge Street and west of the Rum River, are other logical candidates for development.



Data: Anoka County Assessor

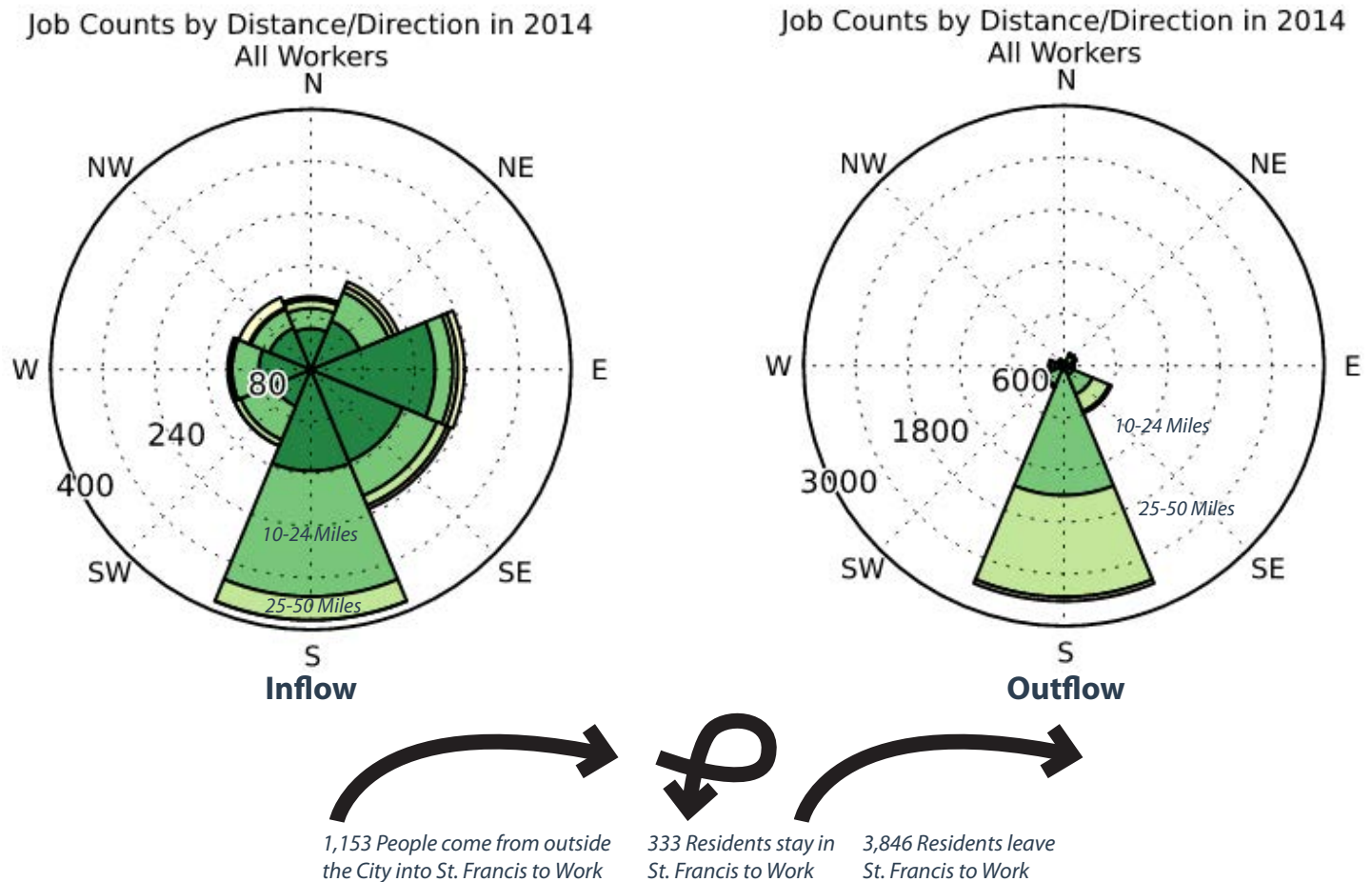
A significant amount of land in the downtown area is publicly owned or owned by private civic uses such as churches or other non-profits. As a result, the amount of land available for development in the core of the community is limited, and the tax base in the community has not been maximized.

Public ownership of land, however, does allow for development and redevelopment opportunities in some key locations. The City may be able to sell certain parcels to private developers with the conditions that new development meet the vision for the area. Likewise, the School District and churches may be able to strategically encourage development that can provide funding for or align with mission-based projects and initiatives.

**FIGURE 1.9 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL PROPERTIES**

FIGURE 1.10 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
INFLOW AND OUTFLOW OF WORKERS

Source: US Census "On the Map"



Current Employment Trends

The City of St. Francis employment trends illustrate a typical suburban/exurban pattern. From the City, more than 90% of workers who live in St. Francis leave the City and 70% of those workers head south to Anoka or the Twin Cities.

In 2014, the largest industries for St. Francis residents were educational/health/social services (21.1%), manufacturing (17.3%), retail (11.6%), and construction (8.7%). Compared with Minnesota as a whole, St. Francis has a larger percent of the population working in construction (1.6x), transportation/warehousing/utilities (1.6x) and manufacturing (1.3x), and a lower than average rate working in professional services (.7x) and educational/health/social services (.85x)

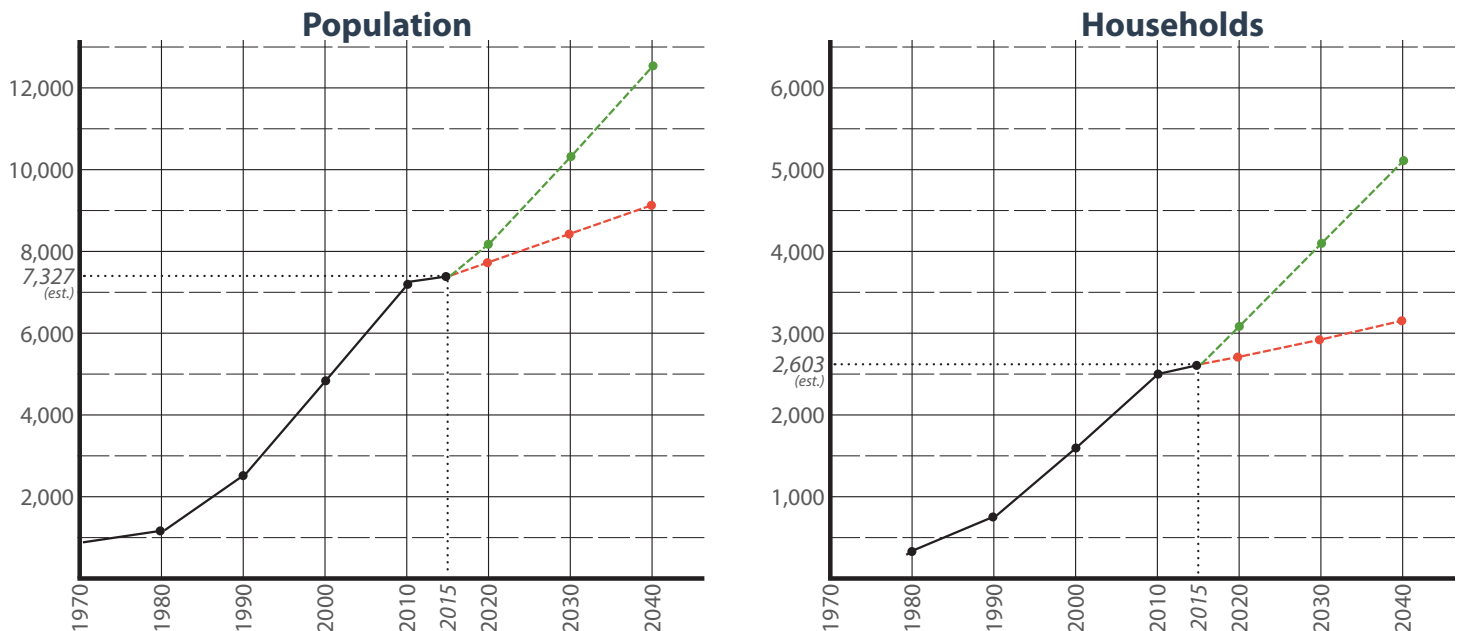
There are a number of people who live outside of the City limits and commute to St. Francis to work. The highest number come from the south, but residents from places to the southeast and east such as East Bethel and Oak Grove are also well represented.

Jobs in Located in St. Francis	
Jobs earning less than \$1,250/month	576
Jobs earning between \$1,250-\$3,333/month	435
Jobs earning more than \$3,333/month	475

Source: US Census "On the Map"

**FIGURE 1.11 ST. FRANCIS FORWARD
POPULATION & HOUSEHOLD GROWTH**

Source: HKGi, Metropolitan Council



By 2030	Density	Conservative Estimates (from 2010)		High Growth Estimates	
Residential		Population	Households	Population	Households
		1,000	400	3,182	1,580
All Single Family	3 du/acre	~135 Acres		~525 Acres	
All Townhome	10 du/acre	~40 Acres		~160 Acres	
All Apartment	20 du/acre	~20 Acres		~80 Acres	
Employment		350 Jobs		1,013 Jobs	
All Industrial	1 Job/500SF @ .2 FAR	~20 Acres		~60 Acres	
All Office/Retail	1 Job/250SF @ .3 FAR	~7 Acres		~20 Acres	

Source: HKGi, Metropolitan Council

Demographics and Anticipated Growth

Since the City's incorporation in the 1960s, St. Francis has grown dramatically. While the population growth slowed significantly starting with the last recession, the City is still growing, and may be poised to begin expanding in line with historical trends. That being said, the City is also cautious about relying too heavily on *possible* future growth to address issues facing the community today.

Recognizing the stop and start realities of future growth, and uncertainty about when regional growth will reach St. Francis again, projections consider two scenarios. A more conservative scenario looks at future growth if the City follows more recent trends. Another higher growth scenario illustrates what happens if the City follows historical trends for population. The likely reality is that growth will occur somewhere between these two scenarios.

While the two scenarios show different rates of growth, the master plan is compatible with either scenario. More rapid growth simply means more rapid change.

The table above illustrates the potential need for developable land, based on anticipated growth and varying levels of development intensity.

Public Outreach and Input

As part of the planning process, the St. Francis Forward team conducted various meetings and online surveys to learn from residents, other stakeholders, and developers. While the planning team brings technical expertise to the process, residents, business owners, and community leaders bring insider insights, information, and perspective that cannot be replicated.

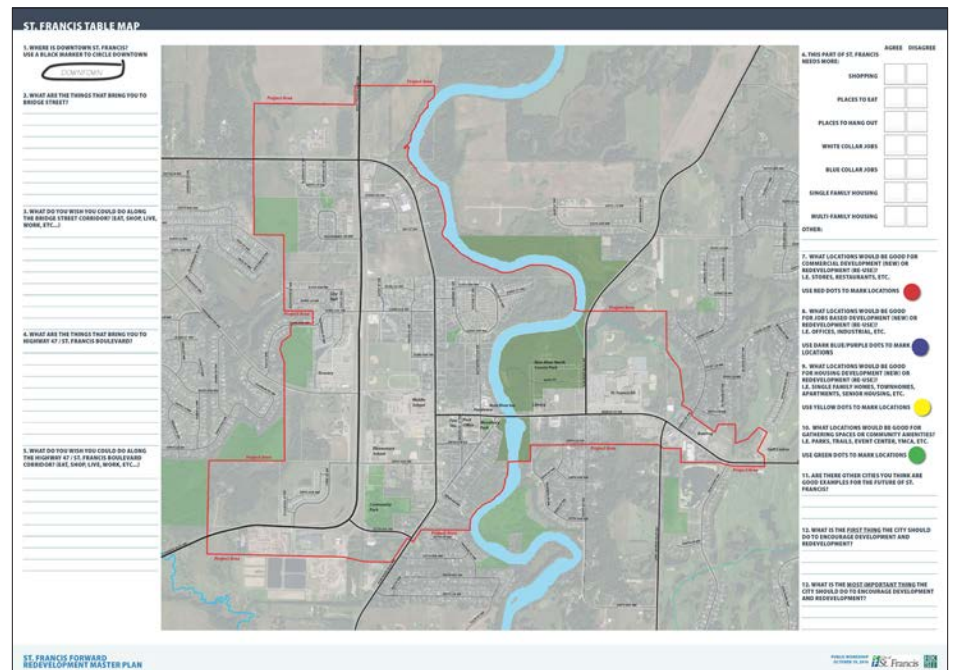
Ultimately the success of the plan depends on local interests making sure it is carried out, and is fitting with the community.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Fourteen stakeholders were interviewed in person or on the phone regarding specific elements of the study area, their role, and what they see changing. People interviewed included County officials and staff, local business and civic leaders, and local realtors and property developers.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

Approximately 25 attendees attended a kickoff meeting to help the planning team learn more about the city, understand the positives, challenges, and opportunities that exist for residents and business owners in St. Francis, and to hear about people's vision for the City. Participants used a game-board of St. Francis to point out traffic problems, where they thought growth should go, and what they think of downtown.



ONLINE SURVEY #1

In addition to the Public Workshop, an online survey was created to get at similar questions asked in person. Nearly 800 people replied to the survey. Respondents envisioned Bridge Street as a place to eat, shop, and hang out and was most often cited as the City's downtown. Highway 47 was envisioned more as a commercial corridor, with highway style places to eat and shop, but also as the place to work in both office and industrial jobs.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

The second workshop was a chance to evaluate and modify the vision and guiding principles, as well as evaluate plans showing different levels of change in St. Francis. Approximately 35 attendees provided feedback and direction.



ONLINE SURVEY #2

After the second workshop, an online survey was utilized to give people who had not been able to attend the meeting a way to be heard, and to give additional feedback. There were 165 responses. In both the open house and the online survey, there was a demonstrated desire for medium to large change in both the Bridge Street and Highway 47 corridors. Ninety percent of respondents favored Bridge Street Extension, with more than half of those people saying it is “a big priority” and should be done “as soon as feasible.”

DEVELOPERS ROUNDTABLE

In addition to the public meetings, the planning team also held a meeting with residential, mixed use, and commercial developers to better understand what they are seeing in the market, and what potential for development exists. It was also an opportunity for City staff and officials to meet with potential developers.

Key messages from the developers included:

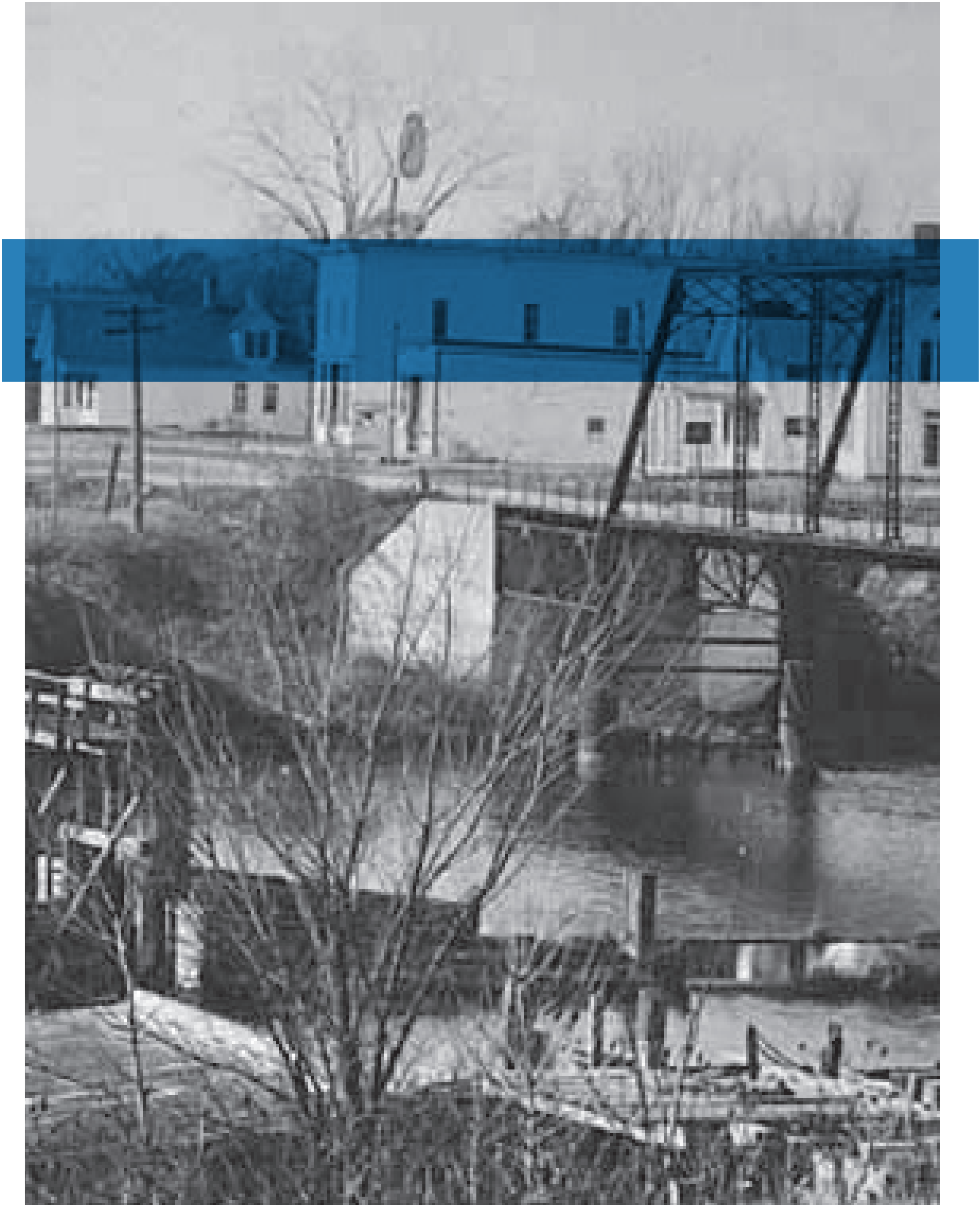
- » Capitalizing on St. Francis as an affordable place to buy a house
- » Developing trails as an amenity
- » Understanding the high development potential of a Bridge Street extension
- » Recognizing that the market will need to mature or additional financing may be necessary to make projects happen now.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #3

Approximately 35 people attended a third meeting to review a preferred master plan that generally aligns with the plan shown in this report. It was an opportunity to provide final feedback on the concepts.

ONLINE SURVEY #3

An additional 56 people provided responses to a third online survey reflecting the information shown at the third workshop. With both the survey and the meeting there is a large desire to see Bridge Street extended, opportunities to connect to the river as a local asset, and bring new businesses to town, while also making sure to supporting the ones that are here already.





02. VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The 25 year vision for the core of St. Francis:

Our vision for St. Francis is an active small town on the Rum River, enjoying a high quality of life that meets the day to day needs of residents, workers, and visitors.

Our commercial districts are vibrant and bustling. Businesses are growing. Residents can buy gifts, groceries, and any number of day-to-day goods. Visitors and those passing through make it a point to stop in St. Francis on their way.

While our proximity to Minneapolis and St. Paul provides our residents access to a diversity of jobs and activities within the region, residents of St. Francis have options for a variety of jobs locally.

A full range of households enjoy living in St. Francis. Families, empty nesters, and senior citizens can gather, learn, celebrate, move safely and conveniently around town, and obtain the services they need.

What is a Vision Statement?

A vision statement is an overarching description of where we are trying to go as a city.

The Vision statement, while rooted in the history and present of St. Francis, is not necessarily focused on reflecting the current conditions. Rather it has an orientation toward the future, and represents a statement that someone might use fifteen years from now to describe St. Francis.

The plan is drawn up and written to reflect a future that is consistent with the vision. Ideas, policies, and projects in the plan help bring the vision closer to reality.

What are Guiding Principles?

If the Vision statement is all about the destination, the Guiding Principles are about how we get there.

Guiding Principles help define the character, values, and priorities identified by the community.

Guiding Principles are also a tool for future decision making. As new projects arise, the City can use the Guiding Principles as a measuring stick to decide if a particular project moves the city closer to the Vision.

Guiding Principles:

CHARACTER/FORM

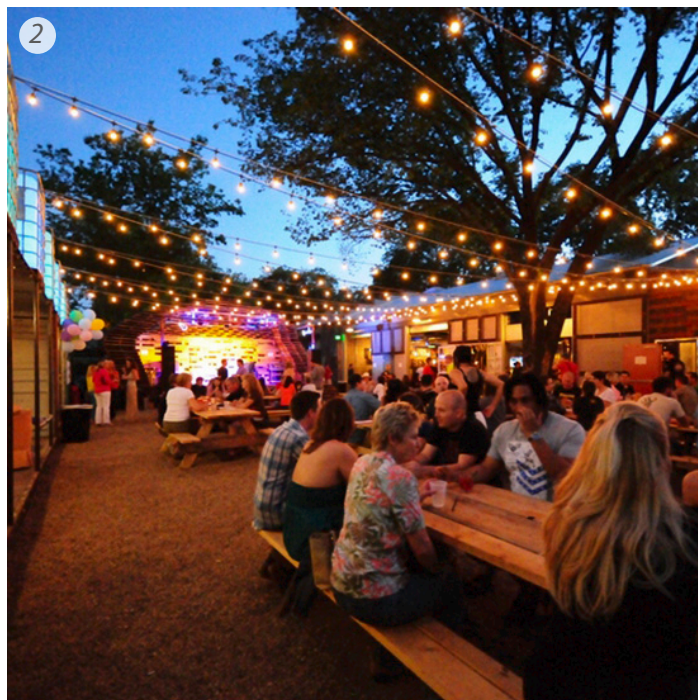
We will create buildings and public spaces that contribute to a high quality small town character and the sense that St. Francis is an important local destination.

- » Promote a vibrant and bustling downtown in St. Francis
- » Utilize the river for identity and as a destination for activities
- » Coordinate with the school district to strengthen St. Francis' identity and welcoming nature
- » Create new landmarks/gateways to welcome people to St. Francis
- » Enhance the image of St. Francis
- » Strengthen and establish community locations (including parks, community centers, and privately owned "3rd places")
- » Maintain the small town feel that many residents appreciate
- » Improve wayfinding to help people navigate St. Francis

BUSINESS

We will support and help expand the business community in St. Francis. We recognize the role that businesses play in building our jobs base and improving quality of life. We will support and pursue businesses that make St. Francis a better community, by providing employment, or goods or services desired by residents and visitors.

- » Pursue new businesses that enhance quality of life, by providing jobs or desired goods or services



- » Create a business-friendly environment, balancing taxes and fees and making it attractive to establish and sustain businesses in St. Francis
- » Expand the community's tax base and support new development
- » Help redevelop underutilized locations and those in need of revitalization
- » Emphasize and support "home grown" businesses and create a culture of entrepreneurship
- » Pursue opportunities to provide desired goods and services for residents and visitors to St. Francis

INFRASTRUCTURE

We will strategically invest in infrastructure, in order to provide the greatest returns on this investment in supporting the viability and long term sustainability of businesses and the overall quality of life in St. Francis.

- » Improve all modes of connectivity, including roads but also trails and sidewalks
- » Connect Bridge Street to Highway 47 (through street connection, trails, and signage and wayfinding)
- » Provide infrastructure to serve existing and new development (water, sewer, etc.) efficiently as possible
- » Manage traffic to provide for the safety of people driving, bicycling, and walking
- » Decrease the speed of traffic flowing through St. Francis, to enhance the viability of retail shops and restaurants along the main arterials
- » Provide sufficient access to development parcels (new, or existing)

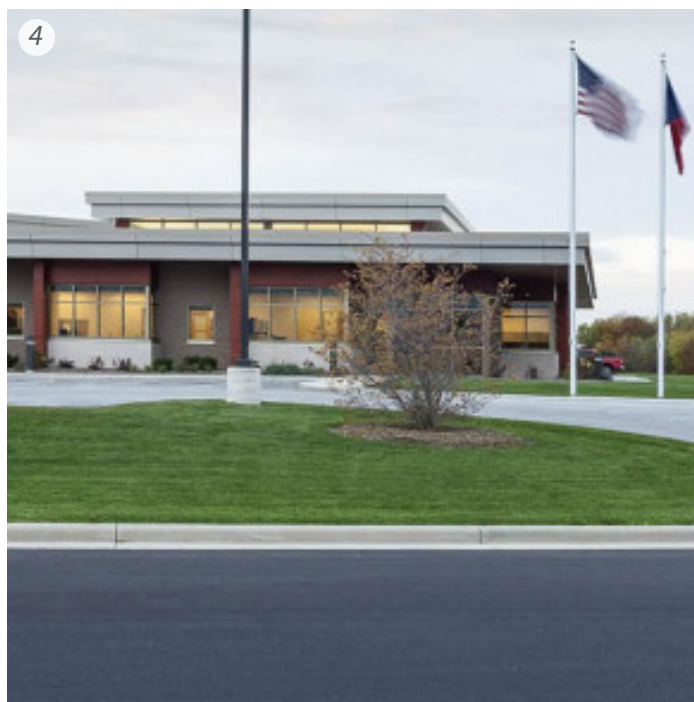
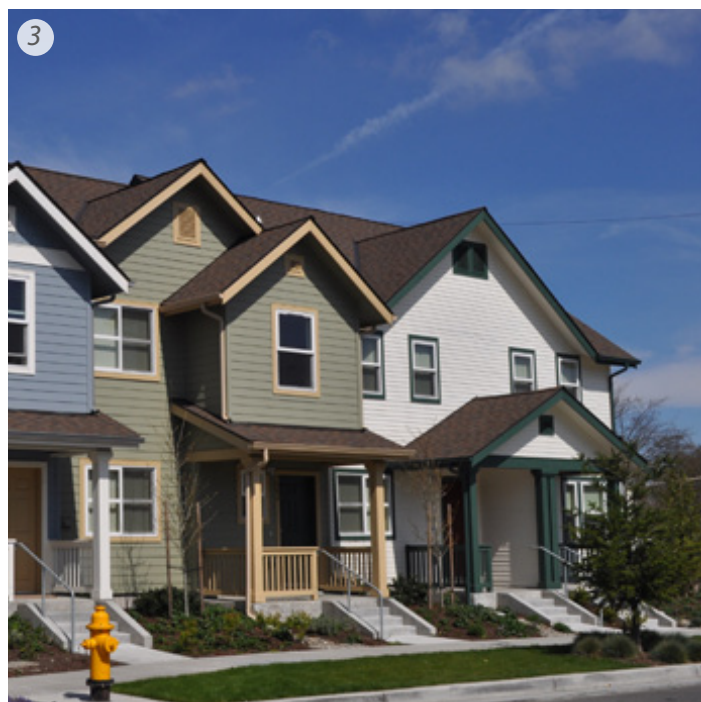
EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

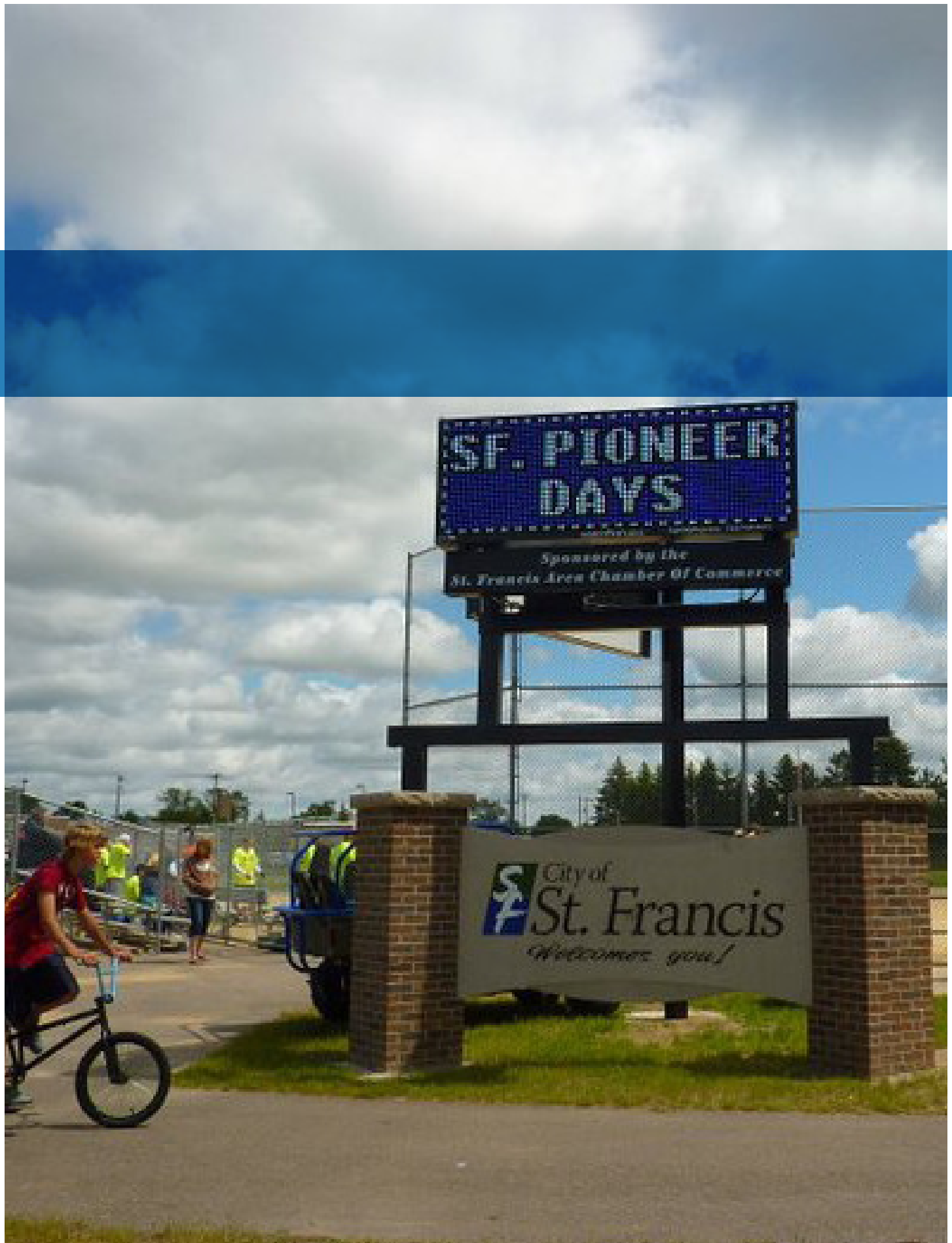
1: Develop buildings that enhance a downtown feel with a good relationship to the street, high quality materials, and appropriate scale to the surrounding neighborhood.

2: Create and promote destinations within St. Francis, especially along the Rum River. Projects should draw residents and visitors to the City.

3: Create additional housing to grow the city, and facilitate other positive outcomes for businesses and the schools. Provide a mix of housing options including single family, townhomes, apartments, and senior housing. Allow people to live in St. Francis at all life points, including rentals, starter homes, move-up housing, and senior housing.

4: Facilitate new jobs by supporting the growth of new and existing businesses







03. MASTER PLAN

Evaluating Options

In order to arrive at the preferred master plan, the St. Francis Forward team developed a number of different concepts to be vetted with the public, city staff and officials, and the development community.

Any plan needed to fit into the existing fabric of the City, being thoughtful and strategic about where interventions would have the greatest impact. Existing districts (right) were respected and opportunities to grow them and enhance them were explored.

The variation in plans were all based on achieving the vision and guiding principles, albeit in different ways and with different magnitudes. Three main ideas were explored:

SURGICAL MOVES

- » Based more in policies
- » Market driven
- » Strategic sales of land

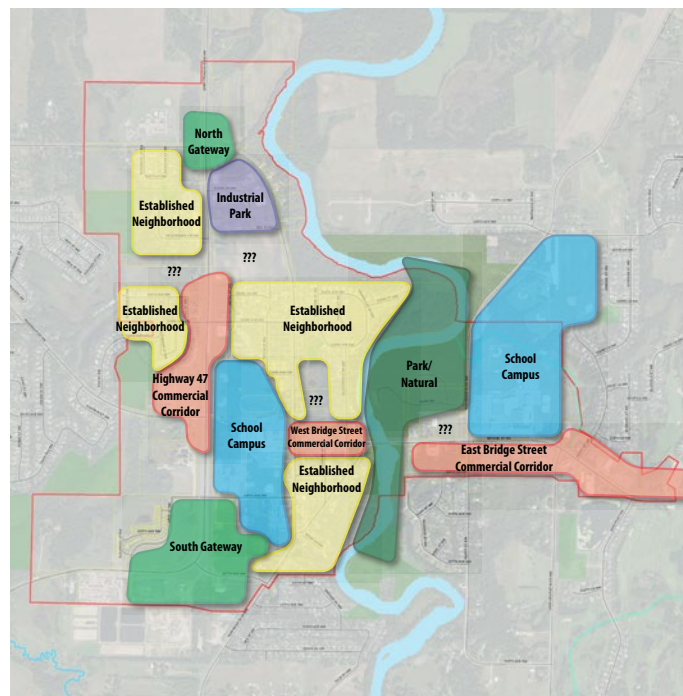
MIDDLE GROUND

- » Focused on filling in the gaps in the city
- » Continuation of existing land uses and intensities already in the City
- » Some public investment

THE BIG IDEA

- » More intensive land uses
- » Aggressive investments by the public sector

The final plan reflects elements of all three ideas in different locations, but is primarily a hybrid of the Middle Ground and Big Idea concepts.



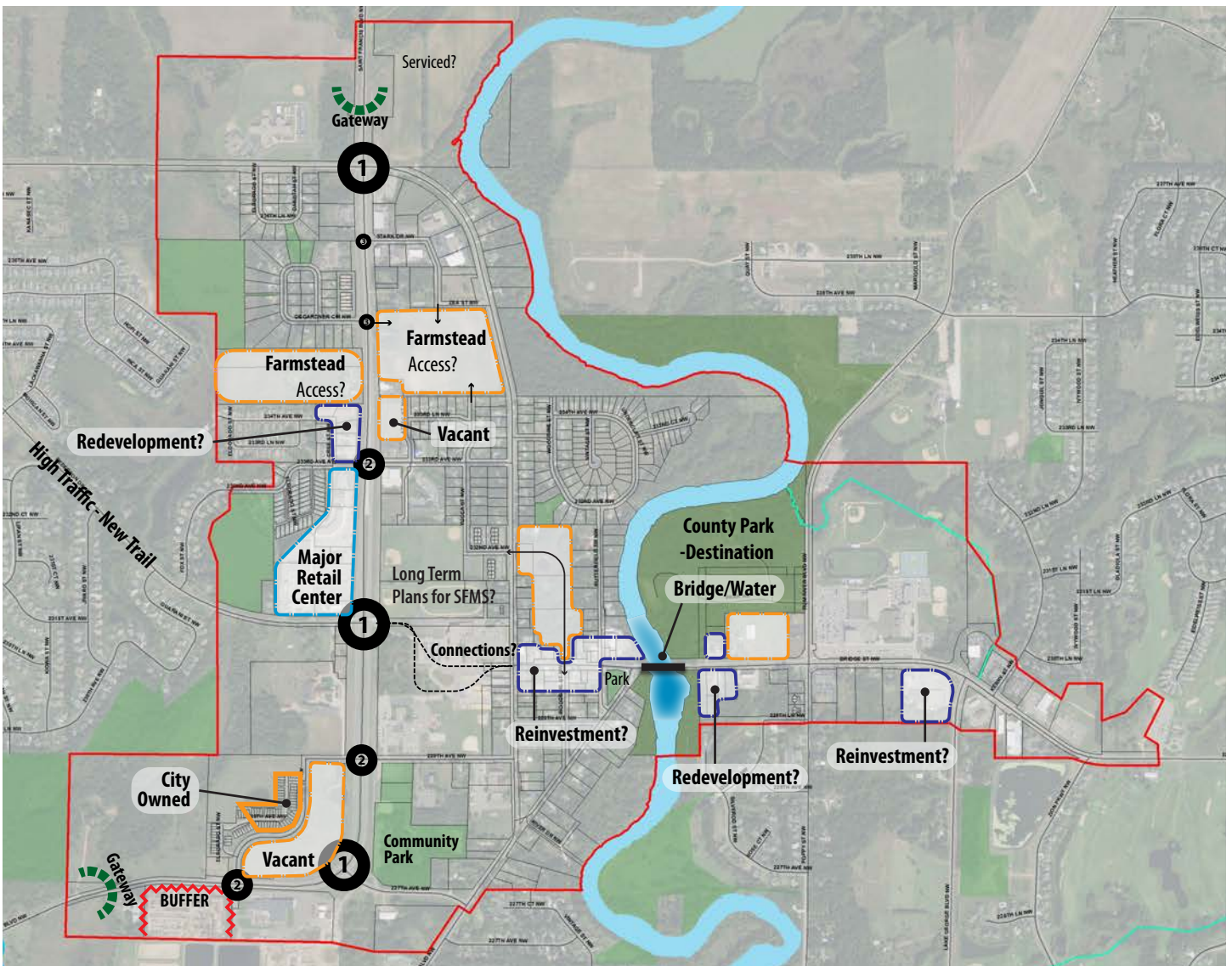
Overall Master Plan

The master plan represents a big picture for the transformation that will help the City achieve the vision outlined for St. Francis' core districts along Bridge Street and Highway 47.

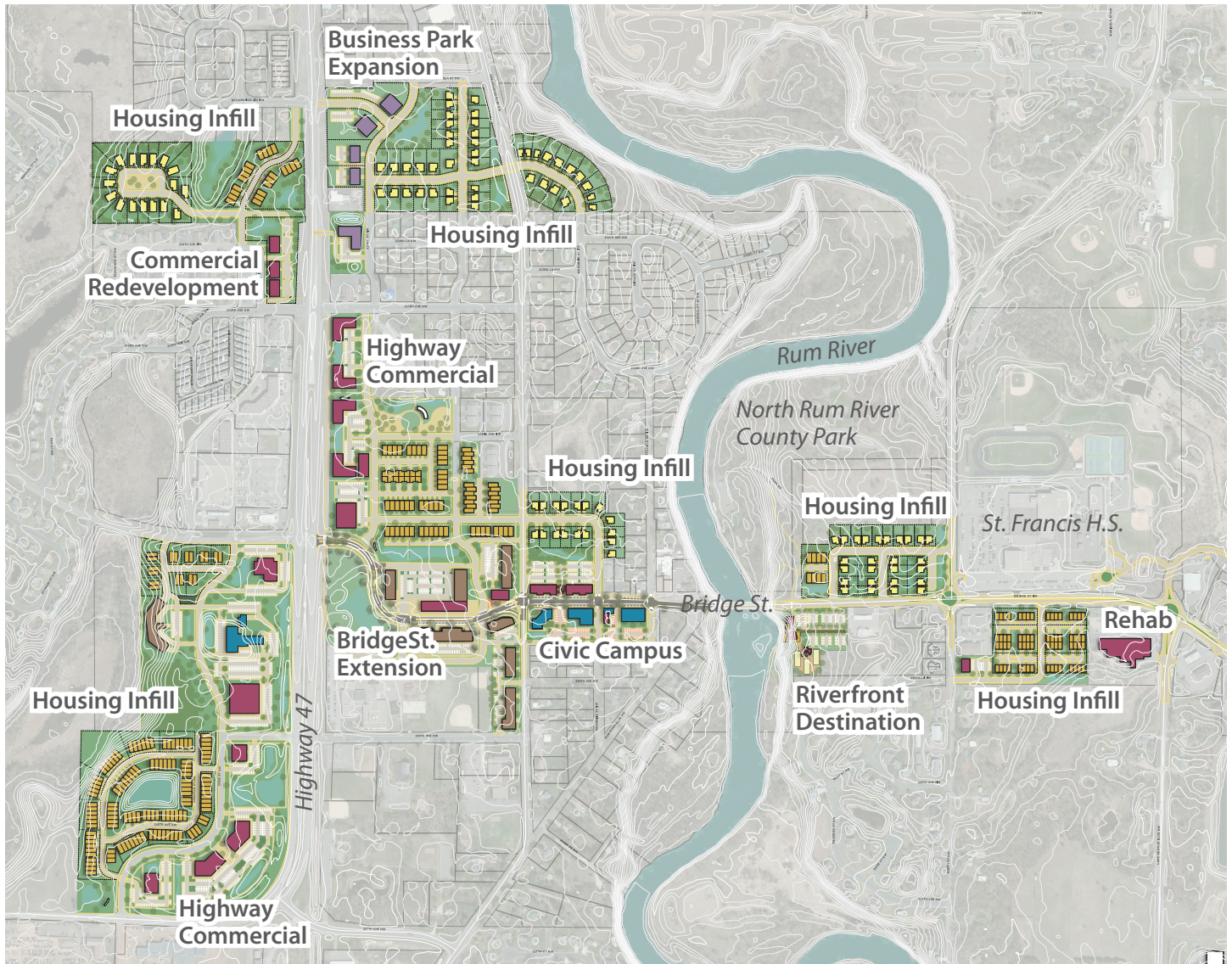
This plan may take 20 years to achieve. Some of these projects may not come to fruition, and others may look different when they are built. However, aiming at this vision helps the City direct limited resources in order to realize measurable results.

The primary points of the master plan are as follows:

- » Create a better defined downtown along Bridge Street
- » Connect Bridge Street to Highway 47
- » Develop more housing and bring more residents to St. Francis
- » Grow industrial and highway commercial uses along Highway 47
- » Connect to and capitalize on the Rum River



This diagram illustrates some of the areas identified for potential development or redevelopment in the master plan



In order to accomplish these four points, the plan outlines key development and redevelopment sites:

- » A Civic Campus on the south side of Bridge Street
- » Office Redevelopment on the north side of Bridge Street
- » A restaurant/entertainment anchor on the east side of the Rum River
- » Housing redevelopment between Bridge Street and Rum River North County Park
- » Housing redevelopment south of the High School
- » Industrial growth along Highway 47
- » Residential infill along Ambassador Boulevard
- » Residential infill off Highway 47
- » Redevelopment of Office/Commercial along Highway 47

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Utilize streetscape elements such as islands, crosswalks, and plantings to calm traffic and create a safer pedestrian environment

Top Right: Work with MnDOT to install a stoplight on St. Francis Blvd/Highway 47 at the Bridge St extension to Pederson Drive to improve safety and give drivers an opportunity to better see stores.

Bottom Left: Install HAWK beacon along the Bridge Street extension to improve crossings between the middle and elementary schools.

Bottom Right: Use high visibility markings and signage at crossings near the schools.

Connecting Bridge Street and Highway 47

Currently, St. Francis Middle School lies between the western terminus of Bridge Street and St. Francis Boulevard/Highway 47. This has the effect of disconnecting downtown from one of the most highly traveled thoroughfare in St. Francis, and many of the neighborhoods served by Pederson Drive. Bridge Street feels “hidden” and people traveling on Highway 47 pass by entirely unaware of the businesses, parks, and river on the other side of the Middle School.

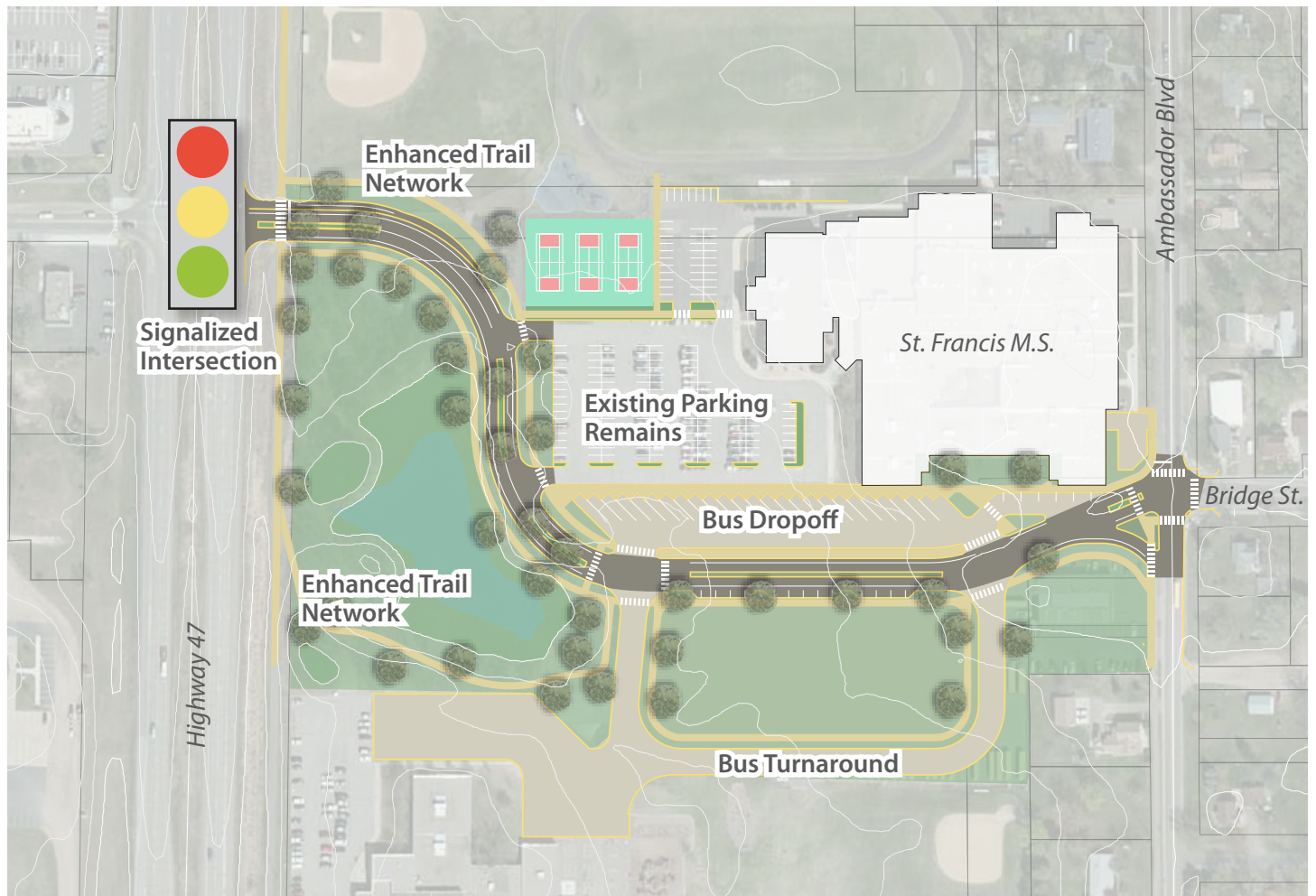
A road connecting across the school properties will strengthen businesses on both the St. Francis Blvd/Highway 47 corridor and the Bridge Street corridor.

It will be important to design the road with safe routes for students to walk to and from school. A stoplight at the intersection with Highway 47 will greatly improve safety.

The design shown accommodates the existing school program and bus drop off, but requires the relocation of the bus barn elsewhere in the community. The City may be able to work with the School District to locate and secure a new location.

Keeping Bridge Street a local street may benefit the City and School District, as it may be easier to implement decreased speed limits at the school and the ability to install user-activated signals as-needed. This will have to be evaluated further as the plan moves forward.





Development Summary

Uses	New Roadway connection with trails and improved crossings. Bus Barn Relocation
Length of Road (As shown)	0.3 Miles
City Actions:	-Develop and execute a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the school district and other parties including the County and MnDOT, formalizing the preferred design for the Bridge Street connection. The MOU would ideally also articulate the expectations of each party with regard to funding and ongoing maintenance of the street extension project. The MOU may also articulate the location for the relocation of the bus facility and the funding source for this change in the bus facility. -Formally identify and secure funding for the street extension program, through a mixture (potentially) of TIF or other funds from the city, county, or state. -Complete detailed / final design documents and commence construction of the street extension, including the installation of a traffic signal at Highway 47.

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Provide a dining/entertainment destination

Top Right: Capitalize on outdoor setting and develop outdoor seating, music/entertainment, and views to the river

Bottom Left: Incorporate outfitter/retail component into development

Bottom Right: Develop river access to support the outfitter concept

River Entertainment District

The City-owned property adjacent to the Rum River is envisioned as a restaurant with entertainment space. This development would complement the Rum River Inn to help develop more of a dining and entertainment destination in St. Francis along the Rum River. In addition to gaining business from St. Francis residents, it would also benefit from proximity to the High School and Middle School with athletic tournaments, concerts, and other events bringing people into the community. Based on resident feedback at public meetings and through online surveys, there is a desire for additional dining options, as well as “third places” (the spots other than work and home where people can gather, spend time, and find entertainment).

In coordination with the restaurant, an outfitter could benefit from the location, as a starting or ending point for kayak, canoe, or float trips on the Rum River. The area of slower current on the east side of the river, just south of the bridge, provides a safe launching spot for these excursions. As an interim step, the outfitter could utilize the North Rum River County Park as a starting point.





Development Summary

Uses	Restaurant/Entertainment Outfitter/Outdoor Retail
Square Footage (As shown)	Commercial: +/- 7,500 SF
City Actions	-Prepare marketing materials for the City-owned property on the south side of Bridge Street, using the language and message conveyed in this master plan document. -Prepare a package of incentives or tools the City is prepared to offer a prospective developer of the City-owned parcel. -Prepare and issue a City-led RFP for the property, communicating the expectations of the City for potential development concepts and outlining anticipated incentives available from St. Francis. -Formalize development agreements with the entity selected from the RFP process, for the City owned property.

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Community space such as reservable rooms or a youth center should be integrated into the Community Campus

Top Right: When building new facilities, ensure the architecture is at an appropriate scale for the area. Project designs should bring buildings to the street, thereby creating a more traditional downtown feel.

Bottom Left: Make sure new civic buildings reflect a sense of pride in the community

Bottom Right: Enhanced streetscape can improve safety and bring a district feel to the area

Community Campus

Civic uses create a steady draw to an area. While the market for more commercial uses may take longer to mature and rely on residential growth, the City can work towards relocating civic uses to the south side of Bridge Street, building on some existing uses including the fire station, various school buildings, and the post office.

The Anoka County Library is reaching the end of its functional lifespan. The City should coordinate with the county to incorporate a new library into the Civic Campus area. As part of the relocation of the library, there is a desire for additional community space. This may take the form of a coffee shop linked to the library as well as community rooms, reservable space for meetings or gatherings, and an updated library program to reflect changing technologies and needs.

While there is not room for a large community/activity center as has been discussed with the school district or through the YMCA, there is an opportunity to incorporate a smaller youth center that would give nearby students a safe and fun place to spend time.

By moving civic uses to Bridge Street, the City sends the message that this area is an important place and the heart of the community.

If additional office or commercial space redevelops to the north, ensure the buildings contribute to a downtown feel and character.





Development Summary

Uses	Civic Uses: Fire Station, City Hall/Offices, Library, Post Office, Community Space
Square Footage (As shown)	Civic: +/- 36,000 SF
Key City Actions	-Coordinate with the county to relocate the Library west of the Rum River -Develop a formal plan for future operations, incorporating uses into the Civic Campus concept. -Complete more formal plans for the Civic Campus components, in collaboration with the County and other partners. -Identify funding for the civic campus in the future Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). -Complete more detailed design of streetscape elements desired along Bridge Street, in order to be prepared to move forward with construction once funding is available. -Formally reach out to developers interested in redevelopment in the area (including retail and residential components, to the north of the Bridge Street corridor).

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Retail with a nice street presence. May be appropriate as part of a potential longer term redevelopment at the corner of Bridge St and Highway 47/St. Francis Boulevard

Top Right: Commercial/Retail uses

Bottom Left: Industrial/Flex building with high quality architectural finishes

Bottom Right: Office building with appropriate scale and quality design

Highway 47 Infill

Development along Highway 47 will include a mix of service commercial and industrial/flex infill land uses. These land uses are more compatible with higher traffic/higher speed roadways. Commercial and industrial uses benefit from the increased visibility and access provided by major roadways.

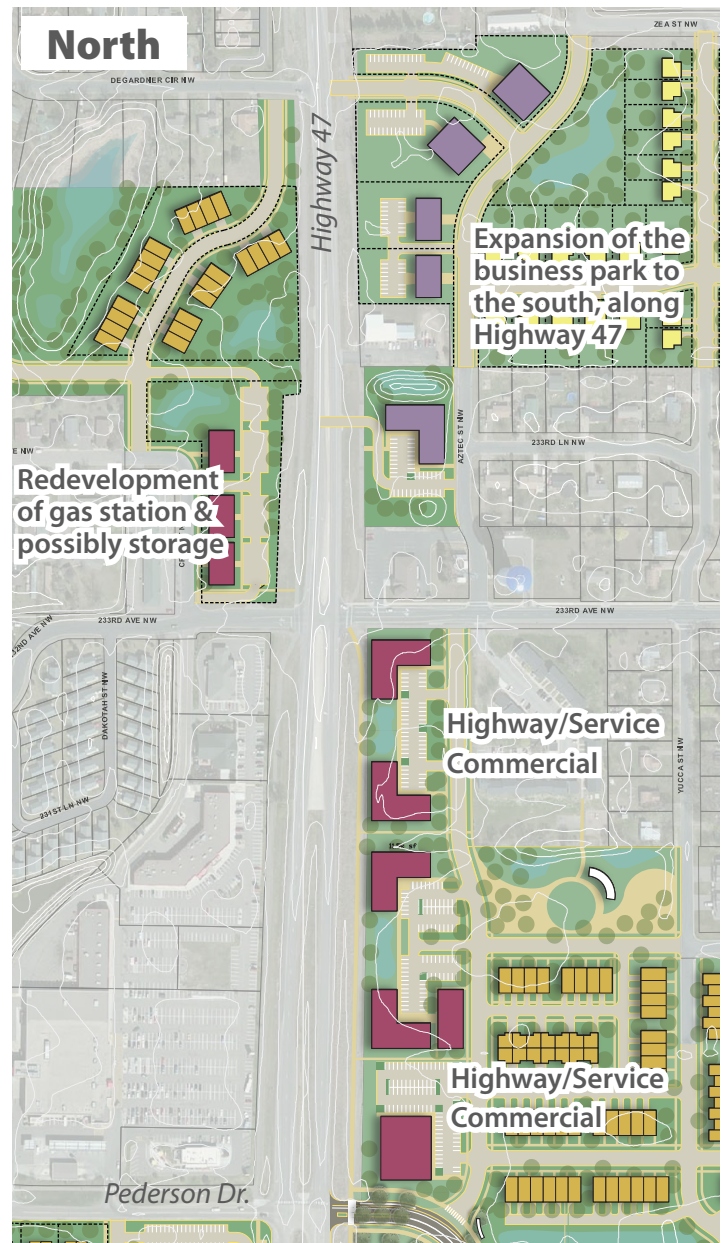
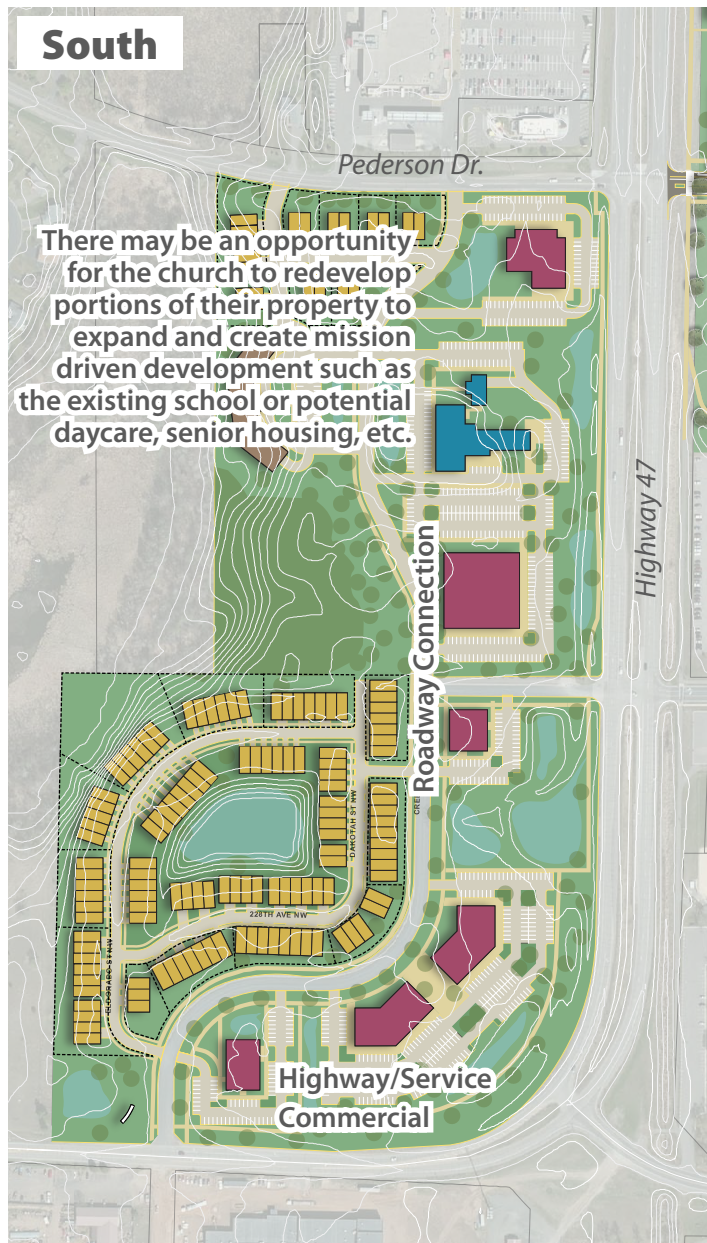
Commercial uses are envisioned to develop as convenience retail and service commercial uses. This could include in-line multi-tenant retail, stand alone pad sites, larger community scaled retail, pharmacy, office, and convenience retail.

The property in the corner where Highway 47 turns north has the potential to serve as a “gateway development,” welcoming people driving on the highway into St. Francis. Convenience retail and service commercial fits this site well, as it represents some of the first commercial buildings drivers along Highway 47 see after 10 miles of residential and rural landscapes when coming from the south.

If desired, the First Baptist Church has the opportunity to both expand their mission based land uses such as the school, and capitalize on their land, by extending Cree Street to Pederson Drive and developing more of the property. There is also City owned property in this area, south of Mansetti’s that could be incorporated into a development project.

Industrial development is anticipated to grow to the south of the existing business park, along Highway 47. Housing orientation and buffer space such as a park or natural area will improve the housing/industrial relationship along the edge of a completed Aztec Road.





Development Summary

Uses	Commercial Industrial
Square Footage (As shown)	Commercial: +/- 150,000 SF Industrial: +/- 50,000 SF
City Actions	-The City could proactively rezone parcels along and near Highway 47, to make entitlements of projects easier in the future. -The City should prepare a marketing package of properties and opportunities available along Highway 47. This information can be shared with prospective parties at local, regional, and national venues.

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Townhome products are being constructed off of Highway 47 and could be incorporated into other developments around St. Francis

Top Right: Smaller single family home lots may improve the feasibility of residential projects.

Bottom Left: In key locations, larger and higher quality housing may be appropriate, such as along the Rum River

Bottom Right: Multi-family and senior housing fits into the community in certain locations, based on adjacent land uses.

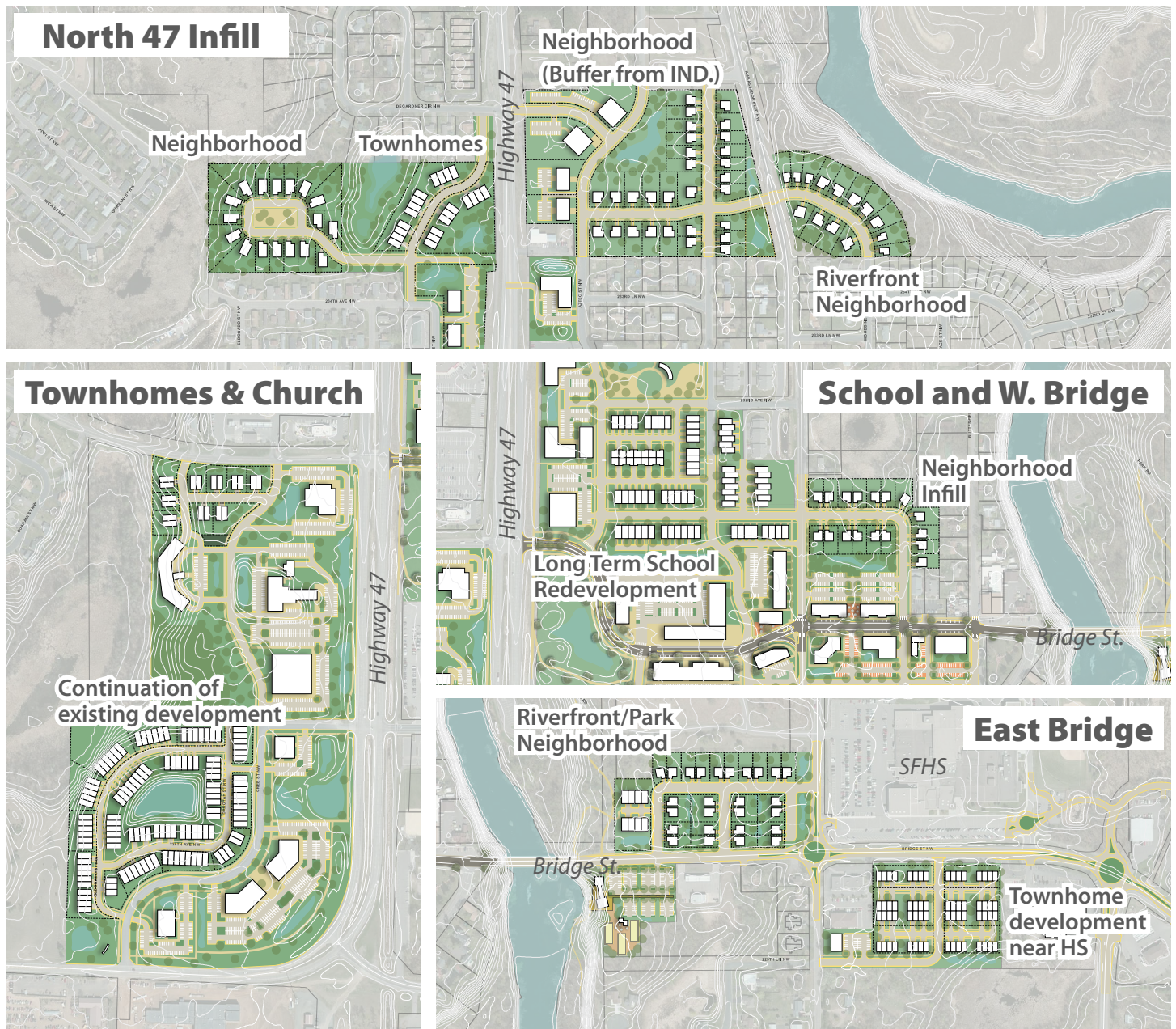
Residential Infill

Adding residents to the core areas of St. Francis will assist the community's overall efforts over the next several years. New residents provide spending to support existing and new businesses in the community, including grocery stores and other retail shops. New residential construction would provide additional property tax revenue to the city to fund various projects. Furthermore, the City currently has significant utility capacity, and the addition of more residential customers could help the City pay for previously completed utility improvements (including the new wastewater treatment plant). In addition, adding more residents in the core areas of the city would add to the overall level of vitality and activity in the Downtown area and along Highway 47, and would allow the city to add residents without incurring significant expenses related to the extension of major roads and utilities into new growth areas.

As illustrated in the graphics, residential infill could occur in various locations throughout the core of St. Francis. The areas on either side of Ambassador Drive, toward Highway 47, could include lower density single family houses. Areas west of Highway 47 and north of city hall could include medium density homes (such as townhomes). The Middle School campus could be developed into a mixture of apartment units and medium density housing (townhomes). The area between the existing Anoka County Library and the high school campus could primarily include medium density residential, as well as a few apartments. Areas to the east along Bridge Street would likely develop as higher density housing, including potentially senior housing. An infill area located north of Bridge Street and east of Ambassador Blvd could be developed with traditional single family homes.

The City of St. Francis has already experienced an increased interest in residential development in 2017, as the local housing market has continued to recover. The City should leverage the increasing strength of the local market to help encourage development of the various infill areas in St. Francis as residential, where appropriate.





Development Summary

Uses	Housing: Single Family, Townhomes, Multi-Family
Units (As shown)	SFR: +/- 100 TH: +/- 300 MFR: +/- 175
City Actions	Rezone parcels appropriately to articulate the desired density of housing and the overall parameters for planning for various residential types. Proactively market potential residential infill parcels to residential developers from the Twin Cities and throughout Minnesota. Identify any incentives that could be used for residential projects (including, potentially, low income housing tax credits, and other affordable housing incentives)

School Redevelopment

EXAMPLE IMAGERY:

Top Left: Commercial/Retail use at the corner of Bridge Street and St. Francis Blvd. Design and elements should introduce and strengthen the downtown Bridge Street Corridor.

Top Right: Commercial uses along the highway could benefit from increased visibility

Bottom Left: Apartments and/or condominiums with a strong street presence along Bridge Street

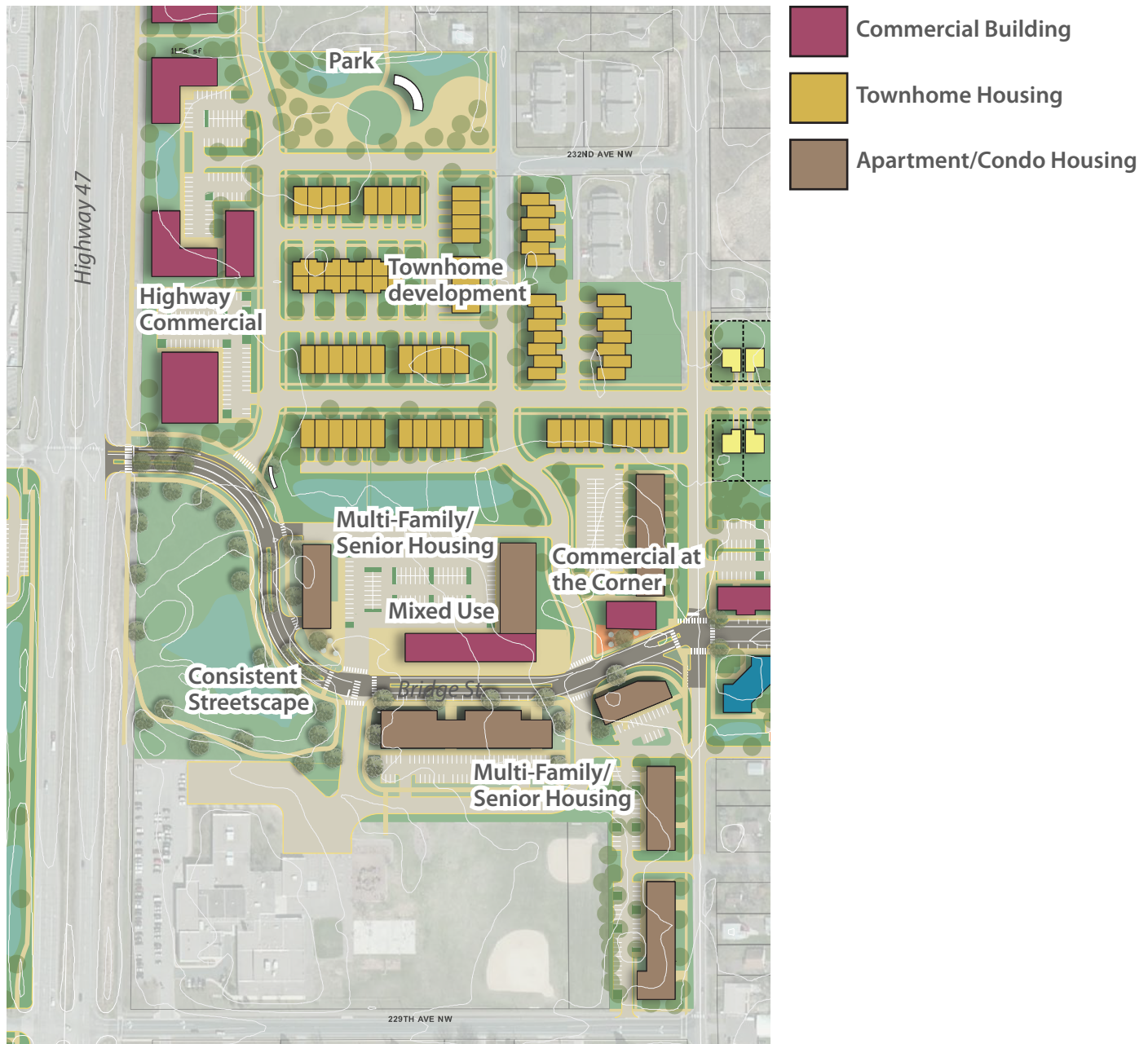
Bottom Right: Townhomes and single family homes

The Middle School campus, between Ambassador Blvd and Highway 47, could represent a key area for redevelopment in St. Francis in the future, in the event the school district elects to relocate the Middle School to a new location, rather than continue to maintain the middle school building. Parts of the existing facility are several decades old, and it may make more sense to construct a new building than to continue to retrofit an aging facility. In addition, redeveloping the Middle School site could provide the school district a significant windfall from the sale of the land to a prospective developer.

Under this scenario, the school district would likely work jointly with the City to refine plans for potential desired development at the Middle School site and then market the campus site to potential developers. Given the size of the parcel, the City and school district could market this opportunity to larger scale and more experienced developers at the regional or even national levels.

As illustrated in the graphics, potential redevelopment of the Middle School site could include a mixture of general retail uses fronting on to Highway 47 and Bridge Street, as well as a mixture of medium and higher density residential uses, located farther from Bridge Street. The redevelopment concepts call for the integration of land uses along Bridge Street in a “Main Street” orientation, in order to establish the development area as a “western extension” of the existing Downtown area to the Highway 47 corridor. Plans for future development at the middle school site should establish Bridge Street as a key entrance into the heart of St. Francis for visitors to the community. The integration of various residential types at the school campus site should add greater vitality to the development project and make the project more marketable to a variety of potential residents in the local area (including younger adults, Empty Nesters, and seniors).





Development Summary

Uses	Commercial, Mixed Use, Multi-Family residential, Senior Housing, Townhomes, Park
Square Footage/Units (As shown)	Townhomes: +/-80 units Multi-Family: +/- 175 units Commercial: +/- 70,000 SF
City Actions	The City, along with the school district, may complete a formal RFP for development of lands on the school campus (in the event the middle school relocates). The RFP should communicate the expectations of the City regarding the quality and character of development desired. The City and school district may then complete formal development agreements with the chosen developer. The development agreement may formalize incentives offered to the project (including potentially abatements, public funding of infrastructure improvements, etc.). The City may then work with the developer jointly to market the project to prospective home builders and other development partners and tenants.

Other Initiatives: Streetscape & Public Realm

Developing an attractive and safe streetscape for downtown St. Francis will help spur development, and demonstrate a commitment to investing in the area on the part of the City. More importantly, it will facilitate the safe movement of people around downtown and make it a more enjoyable place to spend time and money.

Bridge Street: Could build off of what has been started with the round-a-bout reconstruction and enhanced.

Bridge Street Extension: Creating a safe street will be paramount. The design should also be an extension of other Bridge Street elements to achieve a consistent “destination downtown” appearance.

Highway 47: Use design to distinguish the segment of the highway passing through the city. Provide visual interest to make drivers more aware of their surroundings.



Streetscape and public realm improvements can help create a district feel and identity, both in downtowns (above), and highway corridors (below)



Other Initiatives: Signage & Wayfinding

Gateway signage is the large signage that welcomes visitors to an area and helps show off the identity of a place. St. Francis should utilize signage at logical gateways into the city. These could include:

- » At the curve on Highway 47
- » At the intersection of Ambassador and Highway 47
- » Lake George Boulevard before the roundabout

In addition to gateway signage, wayfinding signage will help people move around the city and find destinations. This can be at either a pedestrian scale in walking districts, or at a vehicular scale when informing drivers where to go. This signage would be invaluable in showing people where to go to get from Highway 47 to Bridge Street and vice-versa. Destinations such as the schools, city facilities, parks, and the river should be shown.



Gateway signage (above) would go a long way to welcoming visitors. Wayfinding signage (below) will help them find their way around town once they are here.



Other Initiatives: Trails/Connect to the River

Residents are eager to capitalize on the Rum River as a unique feature and destination that few other cities can boast. In addition, residential developers have stated that trails are one of the amenities that their clients value the most. Efforts are already underway with the most recent Bridge Street improvements, and the City should continue to connect the trail networks to community destinations:

- » North Rum River County Park
- » Along the Rum River
- » Middle School and Elementary School
- » High School
- » Retail Destinations
- » Residential Neighborhoods

This could also include exploring the potential for public land along the river, especially in the floodplain where other development is not appropriate



Trails are one of the most sought after amenities when people are choosing where to live. This is consistent for people of all ages.



Other Initiatives: Promotion

The City should continue and grow efforts to promote St. Francis as a great place to live and do business.

This is a wide ranging set of initiatives:

- » Branding efforts
- » Events to bring people to town and raise awareness of St. Francis
- » Continue and strengthen the City's social media presence
- » Selling St. Francis to developers and real estate agents
- » Promotion to businesses (retailers as well as professional and industrial) looking to expand
- » Countering challenging stories with positive stories about the community.



The City should work to promote themselves both locally to potential residents and at a larger scale to developers and businesses



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04. IMPLEMENTATION

How-To: Achieving the Vision

The vision will take time, perseverance, hard work, cooperation, and tough decisions. But if it was easy, it would be done already...

PATIENCE

The project ideas will not come to fruition overnight. Some ideas will take time to proceed through a regulatory process, while others will need the market to mature somewhat before becoming reality. Continuing to promote the vision for St. Francis, while continually checking in with the plan to measure accomplishments, will provide results over time.

DEDICATION

Real and perceived roadblocks have stymied other projects in St. Francis, but there is a new and tenacious attitude in the City to “get stuff done.” This may mean “refusing to take no” for an answer. It may mean demonstrating a financial commitment to change. It may also mean holding potential projects to a higher standard.

PARTNERSHIPS

While the City will be the champion of the vision, there are many other entities that will need to be involved if it is to be accomplished. Public entities such as the ISD 15, Anoka County, MnDOT, and the City and County EDAs will need to be a part of the process of implementation, as well as private developers, property owners, businesses, and residents.

Roles and Responsibilities

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS

Moving forward, the City will be responsible for implementing this plan. Managing new development and redevelopment will be the task of the City staff.

Community Development will lead the way when it comes to promoting the City's vision. Attracting new development, and supporting the growth of existing businesses, will be key tasks. This includes helping developers and business owners through the process:

- » Explaining and applying land use controls
- » Review of development plans and proposals
- » Coordinating with Public Works to ensure that infrastructure and other capital improvements are in place
- » Developing financial plans to incentivize development and fund the investments that are the responsibility of the public sector.

The Public Works Department will be responsible for ensuring the infrastructure needed to facilitate development is being provided to meet safety and future growth requirements. When public resources are going to support development, it will be done in an efficient and cost effective manner. Public Works staff will coordinate with MnDOT and Anoka County for infrastructure improvements.

Elected officials will be the public face of the plan. They will need to promote the vision. Having leaders and decision makers in the community that are excited about growth and development provides reassurance to developers looking at St. Francis.

Elected officials will also use the plan to evaluate new projects. When looking at whether to approve a project or not, provide public funding, or in negotiating with developers, the plan provides a direction and basis for defending policy decisions.

ST. FRANCIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

- » The EDA has the potential to acquire parcels in the study area with potential for redevelopment and to sell these properties to prospective developers or entities from the private sector who can complete redevelopment projects.
- » The EDA will increase its efforts to promote existing businesses in the study area and to recruit new businesses and developers to the redevelopment area.
- » The EDA has the potential to serve as a limited financial partner, along with the private sector, in individual redevelopment projects.
- » The EDA has the potential to issue revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, or other credit enhancements or guarantees, to support redevelopment projects.

THE COMMUNITY

The community of St. Francis must continue to stay involved and active as development occurs. Knowledge and insights gained as part of this process help residents and business owners know where the city is headed. It also gives community members an informed point of view to offer additional support and critiques of potential development projects.

Public Finance

TIF (FROM THE CITY'S TIF POLICY)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool cities can use to support development. It does this by bonding for money that can be used for eligible project costs for projects that would not have happened but for the additional funds. The bonds are then paid off by the increase in property taxes that comes along with the new project.

The City of St. Francis has the power to utilize TIF as granted by the Minnesota Tax Increment Financing Act, Minnesota Statutes 469.174 through 469.1794, as amended. The fundamental purpose of tax increment financing in the City of St. Francis is to encourage desirable development or redevelopment that would not occur but for the assistance provided through TIF.

The City reserves the right to approve or reject projects on a case by case basis, taking into consideration established policies, project criteria, and projected demands on City services relative to the potential benefits from the project. Meeting policy criteria does not guarantee the award of business assistance to the project. Approval or denial of one project is not intended to set precedent for approval or denial of another project.

The City has the following objectives when considering whether or not to use TIF:

- » To retain local jobs and/or increase the number and diversity of jobs that offer stable employment and/or attractive wages and benefits. Preference will be given to higher paying jobs that also provide benefits such as health care coverage.
- » Projects that provide value in the forms of needed transportation and other utility infrastructure improvements that would be completed in conjunction with the project.
- » To encourage additional unsubsidized private development in the area, either directly or indirectly through "spin-off" development.
- » To facilitate the development process and to achieve development on sites which would not otherwise be developed but-for the use of TIF.
- » To remove blight and/or encourage redevelopment of commercial and industrial areas in the City that results in high quality redevelopment and private reinvestment.
- » To offset increased costs of redevelopment (i.e. contaminated site clean-up) over and above the costs normally incurred in development.
- » To create opportunities for affordable housing.
- » Projects that improve the quality of life in the City by providing a desirable good or service and addressing an unmet demand in the community.
- » To contribute to the implementation of other public policies, as adopted by the city from time to time, such as the promotion of quality urban or architectural design, energy conservation, and decreasing the capital and/or operating costs of local government.

For additional information on the City's requirements and policy, consult the City of St. Francis Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Policy (2016)

TAX ABATEMENT

The City of St. Francis may consider offering tax abatements for economic development within the study area. Minnesota statutes allow abatements to be used for the following purposes, related to the redevelopment plan:

- » General economic development
- » Construction of public facilities or infrastructure (such as streets or roads)
- » Redevelopment of blighted areas
- » Providing access to services for residents (including housing and retail)

The City (and EDA) may grant abatements no longer than 15 years in length, although the term can be extended to 20 years if only two of the three political subdivisions (city/town, county, and school district) grant an abatement.

The total amount of property taxes abated may not exceed the larger of 10 percent of the net tax capacity of the political subdivision, or \$200,000.

BUSINESS SUBSIDIES

The City of St. Francis along with the St. Francis Economic Development Authority (EDA) may, from time to time, consider offering subsidies to businesses in accordance with the City of St. Francis Business Subsidy Policy (2016) and complying with Minnesota Statutes, Sections 116J.993-116J.995 as amended.

The City has established the following criteria for considering business subsidies (although meeting criteria does not guarantee a business subsidy will be granted)

- » Increase in Tax Base
- » Job Creation
- » Creates an Increase in Average Wages
- » Economic or Redevelopment goals, including blight removal, providing goods and services not currently available, utilizing public infrastructure improvements, and/or adding to a critical mass of commercial or industrial development

STORMWATER UTILITY FEE AND OTHER STORMWATER INVESTMENTS

The City of St. Francis may offer rebates on stormwater utility fees, water bills, or other public utility costs to private sector clients, in exchange for installing rain gardens or other green building technologies.

The City of St. Francis may waive water and sewer access fees (known as WAC and SAC fees) in order to financially provide an incentive to new development or redevelopment within the study area.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

As the City moves forward with investments in infrastructure and incentives, it will be important that each of these is weighed carefully.

Grants

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL LIVABLE COMMUNITIES GRANTS

The Metropolitan Council maintains a series of “Livable Communities” grants:

- » The Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) provides grants that can fund basic infrastructure and site assembly when they link housing, jobs, services, and transportation.
- » Affordable housing is supported through the Local Housing Incentives Account. Money can go towards gap financing, demolition, site preparation, construction, and alterations/rehabilitation. This can include single family and multi-family residential projects.
- » The Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) is used to investigate and clean up brownfield locations. Goals of the program include adding/preserving jobs, housing, and supporting redevelopment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE GRANT (THROUGH THE MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY)

Grants provided by MPCA each year for various aspects of promoting sustainable environmental practices

Examples from the last few years include the FY 2018 Sustainable Brewing and Distilling Environmental Assistance Grant and the FY 2017 Greater Minnesota Recycling Collection grants.

MINNESOTA INVESTMENT FUND

The Minnesota Investment Fund is a revolving loan fund that is awarded to cities (or other local units of government) to support expanding businesses. Businesses must meet job creation goals and contribute to the project as well.

Promotion

PERCEPTIONS OF ST. FRANCIS

Part of the strategy to improve the study area involves a community-wide effort to improve the overall perception of St. Francis in the Twin Cities region. These efforts may involve strategies to reduce drug use among youth and other age segments, and working with local media to promote positive activities in St. Francis (including festivals and other community events).

WORKING WITH DEVELOPERS

The City should work with developers to craft effective marketing messages for individual projects that articulate the positive aspects of particular projects along with the benefits of locating in St. Francis.

Collaboration

WITH THE COMMUNITY

The City should work with local community groups to promote potential redevelopment ideas and projects in the study area.

WITH ANOKA COUNTY

The City should partner with the County to help secure funding necessary for public improvements in the study area, and in particular should work with the County to coordinate improvements with the County road system.

WITH ANOKA COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The City should work with the county's EDA to secure grants and incentives for particular projects.

WITH ISD 15

It is important to remember that what is good for St. Francis will be good for the district in terms of residential growth and competing for employees. Likewise, the school district is one of the City's biggest employers and the tournaments, events, and even students getting lunch or grabbing a bite of food after school serve as major economic drivers for the Bridge Street corridor. ISD 15 will need to work with the City to organize the transfer of land for the Bridge Street connection, and to find a suitable location for a new bus garage.

WITH MNDOT

The City will need to collaborate with MnDOT to coordinate traffic signal improvements along Highway 47, including at Pedersen Drive, and to explore strategies to make the overall corridor safer for people biking and walking.

WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

There are opportunities to work with public institutions to study and accomplish some of the initiatives outlined in the plan.

At the University of Minnesota, The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), The Center for Rural Design (CRD), The Minnesota Design Center (MDC), and the Metropolitan Design Center may be partners on projects.

Action Items

LAND USE CONTROLS & COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being updated. Following the update of the Comprehensive Plan, the City will update its Land Use Zoning to reflect the planned land uses outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning is the strongest tool cities have to shape development. Ensuring the zoning meets and allows the vision to be accomplished, without being so restrictive as to deter development, will be key.

ANNUAL DOWNTOWN PLAN REVIEW

Every year, the City should revisit the St. Francis Forward plan to measure and celebrate progress, set goals for the next year, and evaluate what changes need to be made. This will help keep the plan alive and everyone responsible for its implementation.

STREETSCAPE/PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Improve the streetscape along Bridge Street, especially from the Rum River to the Middle School and beyond to the intersection with Highway 47. An attractive and high quality streetscape helps create a “destination downtown,” while improving safety (pedestrian and vehicular) and enhancing community image.

STOPLIGHT AT HIGHWAY 47 & PEDERSON DRIVE

Work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to secure a stoplight at Highway 47 and Pederson Drive. The traffic counts are nearing the standards that would warrant a stoplight. The potential Bridge Street connection would likely create the traffic conditions that would justify the installation of a stoplight.

SIGNAGE PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The City would benefit from improved signage to both greet and direct visitors. Monument signage at the corner of Highway 47 and Cree Street (either on the City owned parcel to the northeast, or at the Public Works and police station property) would welcome people to St. Francis. Similar signs could be used in other key locations in the City.

Likewise, wayfinding signage will help people find their way across town and to major destinations like schools, public facilities, parks, and the river.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Establish design guidelines for new construction in the area. Design elements such as build-to lines, plantings, enhanced materials, and parking locations will strengthen the built form.

PROMOTIONAL/MARKETING PLAN

Develop and implement a plan to market St. Francis. This could include targeting developers, business owners, and prospective residents. Promote the strengths of St. Francis.

STAY AWARE OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES

Changing technologies have the ability to affect how people are working and shopping. Some of these may have larger impacts on exurban places like St. Francis.

The online retail revolution with companies like Amazon makes many goods available to St. Francis residents from a home computer, tablet, or smart phone. The flipside of this means that St. Francis retailers are now competing with national and global suppliers.

Some jobs are also becoming less dependent on location. Employees who can work online may choose to live in a community like St. Francis where schools, lower housing prices, access to nature, and small town character don't have to compete with a longer commute.

Other future technologies such as driverless cars and alternative energy sources may have impacts on St. Francis as well, although it is too soon to tell what the effects will be.

Initiative	Action Item	Timing
Connecting Bridge Street and Highway 47	Develop and execute a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the school district and other parties including the County and MnDOT, formalizing the preferred design for the Bridge Street connection. The MOU would ideally also articulate the expectations of each party with regard to funding and ongoing maintenance of the street extension project. The MOU may also articulate the location for the relocation of the bus facility and the funding source for this change in the bus facility.	Short
	Formally identify and secure funding for the street extension program, through a mixture (potentially) of TIF or other funds from the city, county, or state.	Short/ Mid
	Complete detailed / final design documents and commence construction of the street extension, including the installation of a traffic signal at Highway 47.	Short/ Mid
River Entertainment District	Prepare marketing materials for the City owned property on the south side of Bridge Street, using the language and message conveyed in this master plan document.	Short
	Prepare a package of incentives or tools the City is prepared to offer a prospective developer of the City-owned parcel.	Short
	Prepare and issue a City-led RFP for the property, communicating the expectations of the City for potential development concepts and outlining anticipated incentives available from St. Francis.	Short
	Formalize development agreements with the entity selected from the RFP process, for the City owned property.	Short
Community Campus	Coordinate with the county to relocate the Library west of the Rum River	Mid
	Develop a formal plan for future operations, incorporating uses into the Civic Campus concept.	Short
	Complete more formal plans for the Civic Campus components, in collaboration with the County and other partners.	Short/ Mid
	Identify funding for the civic campus in the future Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).	Mid
	Complete more detailed design of streetscape elements desired along Bridge Street, in order to be prepared to move forward with construction once funding is available.	Short/ Mid
	Formally reach out to developers interested in redevelopment in the area (including retail and residential components, to the north of the Bridge Street corridor).	Short/ Mid
Highway 47 Infill	The City could proactively rezone parcels along and near Highway 47, to make entitlements of projects easier in the future.	Short
	The City should prepare a marketing package of properties and opportunities available along Highway 47. This information can be shared with prospective parties at local, regional, and national venues.	Short
Residential Infill	Rezone parcels appropriately to articulate the desired density of housing and the overall parameters for planning for various residential types.	Short
	Proactively market residential infill parcels to residential developers from the Twin Cities and throughout MN.	Short/ Mid
	Identify any incentives that could be used for residential projects (including, potentially, low income housing tax credits, and other affordable housing incentives)	Short



Initiative	Action Item	Timing
School Redevelopment	The City, along with the school district, may complete a formal RFP for development of lands on the school campus (in the event the middle school relocates). The RFP should communicate the expectations of the City regarding the quality and character of development desired.	Long
	The City and school district may then complete formal development agreements with the chosen developer. The development agreement may formalize incentives offered to the project (including potentially abatements, public funding of infrastructure improvements, etc.).	Long
	The City may then work with the developer jointly to market the project to prospective home builders and other development partners and tenants.	Long
Land Use Controls & Comprehensive Plan	Integrate land use recommendations from this plan into Future Land Use Map and the rest of the updated Comprehensive Plan document in 2018.	Short
	Update zoning classifications for various parcels in the study area based upon the recommendations of this plan document.	Short
Annual Downtown Plan Review	Conduct yearly review session by the City Council of the Downtown Plan for progress made and areas of further action.	Short
Streetscape/Public Realm Improvements	The City should complete detailed designs for streetscape and public realm improvements along Bridge Street, and coordinate these designs with County staff.	Short
	The City and County should secure future funding for streetscape and public realm improvements along Bridge Street.	Short
	The City and County should formally schedule for the completion of streetscape and public realm improvements, as part of future capital planning.	Mid
Stoplight at Highway 47 & Pederson Drive	The City should fund and complete a warrants study to examine the need for a stoplight at Highway 47 & Pederson Drive	Short
	The City should identify funding for the future stop light and include it in the City's Capital Improvements Program over the next few years	Short
Signage Plan and Implementation	The City should complete a signage and wayfinding plan to identify locations and types of signage and wayfinding features to be installed (at the edge of town, and at key locations).	Short
	The City should identify future funding for signage and wayfinding improvements and include them on the City's Capital Improvements Plan.	Mid
Design Guidelines	The City should complete a formal set of Design Guidelines to support private sector development as well as public sector improvements within the study area.	Short
Expand the trail network/Connect to the River	The City should coordinate with Anoka County to expand the trail network leading out of the county park and along the river where feasible. This should be included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan	Short/ Mid
Promotional/Marketing Plan	As plans for particular parcels within the study area continue to evolve, the City should work with local developers to complete a promotional package and marketing plan for the various areas within the study area. This plan will guide outreach by the City and others to the private sector and potential partners.	Short

Measuring

In preparation for the annual downtown plan review, city staff should evaluate the progress the City has made in the previous year.

METRICS

The table on the opposite page provides a tracking worksheet to measure the progress the City has made towards the plan. This can be a helpful tool when it comes to seeing where the City has done well and can celebrate achievements, as well as those spots where the City could improve and should redouble efforts. The items to measure are:

- » Identified Projects Accomplished: How many boxes were checked off on the previous page?
- » Residential Units Built (including by type)
- » Additional square footage added (in terms of office, commercial, and industrial space)
- » Vacancy rates for various property types
- » Jobs
 - *Jobs added at New Companies*
 - *Jobs added at Existing Companies*
- » Average hourly rate of jobs created
- » Property Tax Revenue
- » School district enrollment

SURVEYS

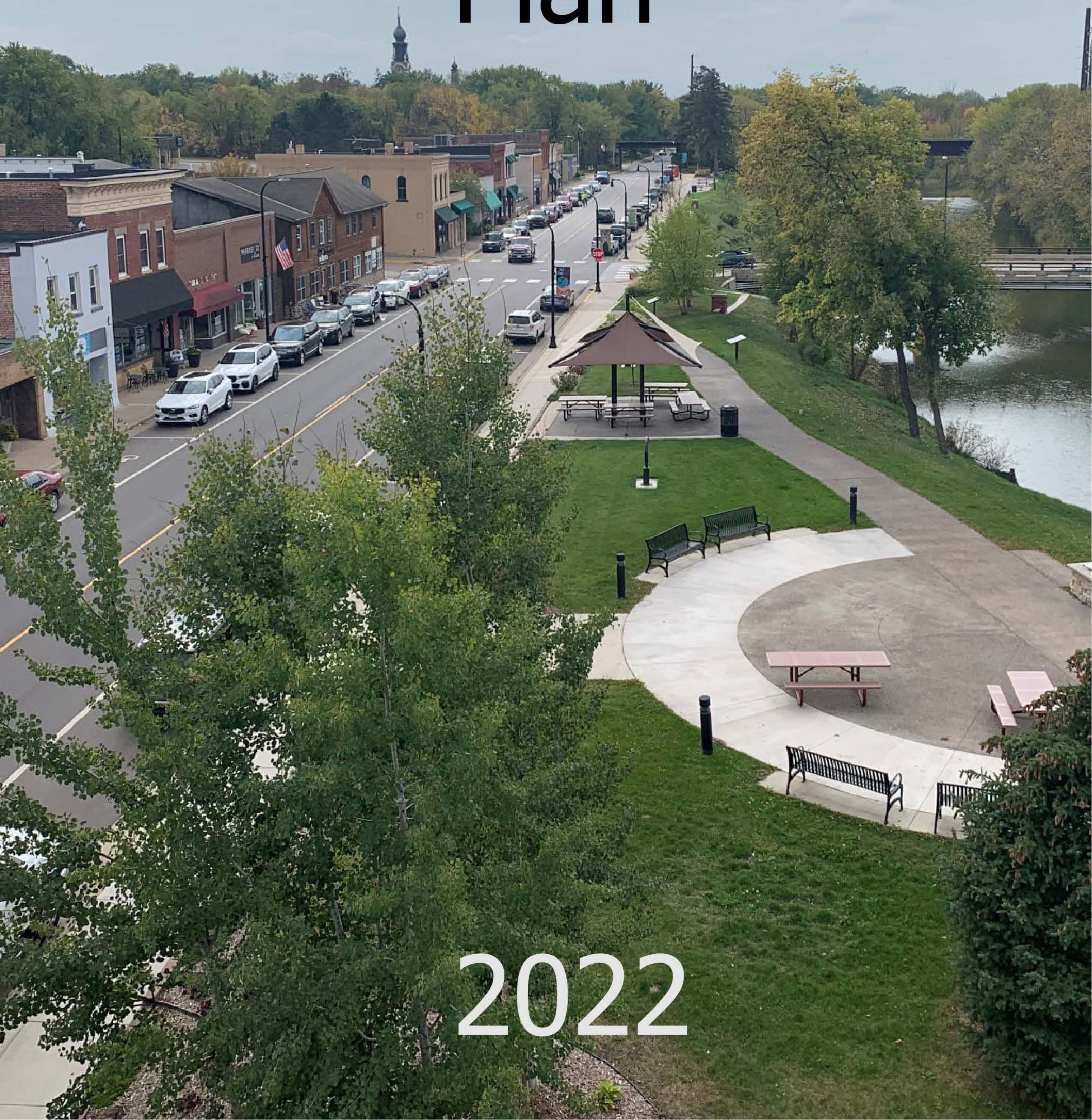
As part of the effort to keep residents and business owners engaged and to keep getting feedback, the City may choose to put out surveys from time to time to see how the efforts are being received. This could also happen in concert with surveying about how the City is doing in general. Options for surveys specific to the plan are:

- » Ongoing surveys of the community's perception of the redevelopment area
- » Periodic surveys gauging the community's interest in particular projects, over time

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Number of tasks accomplished from the action items table										
Residential Units Built										
Additional Square Footage added (office)										
Additional Square Footage added (commercial)										
Additional Square Footage added (industrial)										
Office vacancy rates										
Commercial vacancy rates										
Industrial vacancy rates										
Jobs added at new companies										
Jobs added at existing companies										
Average hourly rate of jobs created										
Property tax revenue										
School district enrollment										



Delano Downtown Plan



2022

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INTRODUCTION

While the first European settlers arrived in the Delano Area in the 1855, Delano's commercial and industrial growth began with the introduction of the railroad through the area in 1868. With the availability of the railroad, Delano attracted residents and businesses. Between 1868 and 1888, the Delano Downtown was established with new businesses such as hotels, a general store, drug store, jeweler, saloons, and clothing stores. New industries such as a grist mill, sawmill, and lumber yard were established along the railroad and Crow River. The Delano Downtown businesses served residents of the community and surrounding farm areas.

Growth of the downtown created a hub for government services, community activities and special community events. The downtown provided a location for residents to gather, socialize, recreate and take pride in their City.



Since its origins in the late 1800's, the Delano Downtown has evolved in response to changing physical, environmental, economic, and retail commercial trends. In the 1980's, the Delano Downtown exhibited signs of fatigue and deterioration. Located along the Crow River, the Downtown is subject to seasonal flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps, prior to 1988, placed all of the Delano Downtown and much to the surrounding residential neighborhoods within the 100-year floodplain. The 100-year floodplain boundary and the related floodplain regulations made reinvestment, renovation, redevelopment of the Downtown buildings and properties impractical. Delano's Downtown buildings and properties suffered neglect during this period. The circumstances were so dire that the 1980 Delano Comprehensive Plan explored relocation of the Downtown commercial land uses to either the east or west edges of the City outside the Crow River floodplain.

In 1988, the Army Corps of Engineers studied the South Fork of the Crow River floodplain through the City of Delano. The 1988 study resulted in a lowering of the 100-year floodplain through the City by 4 feet. This action removed the Delano Downtown from the 100-year flood plain. This change in floodplain designation allowed property owners to make improvements to their properties. With this new opportunity for reinvestment in the Delano Downtown, the City adopted the 1992 City of Delano Central Business District Redevelopment Plan. This plan emphasized the Downtown as a greatly valued focal point of the community and outlined recommendations to physically improve both the public and private properties within the area and well as strategies to attract people to the Downtown.

Subsequent Delano Comprehensive Plans 1993, 2002, 2012, (2030) have all embraced the Delano Downtown as a highly valued community asset and outlined goals and strategies to maintain and strengthen the Downtown.

In the fall of 2021, the Delano City Council directed the formation of a Delano Downtown Task Force to examine the Delano Downtown area and provide recommendations to further enhance the area with regard to access, land use, zoning, streetscape design and branding.



Through a variety of meetings, the Task Force has inventoried, analyzed, and prepared recommendations to address the needs of the Downtown. The Task Force outlined strategies to continually maintain and enhance the Delano Downtown as an attractive and inviting community environment well into the future.

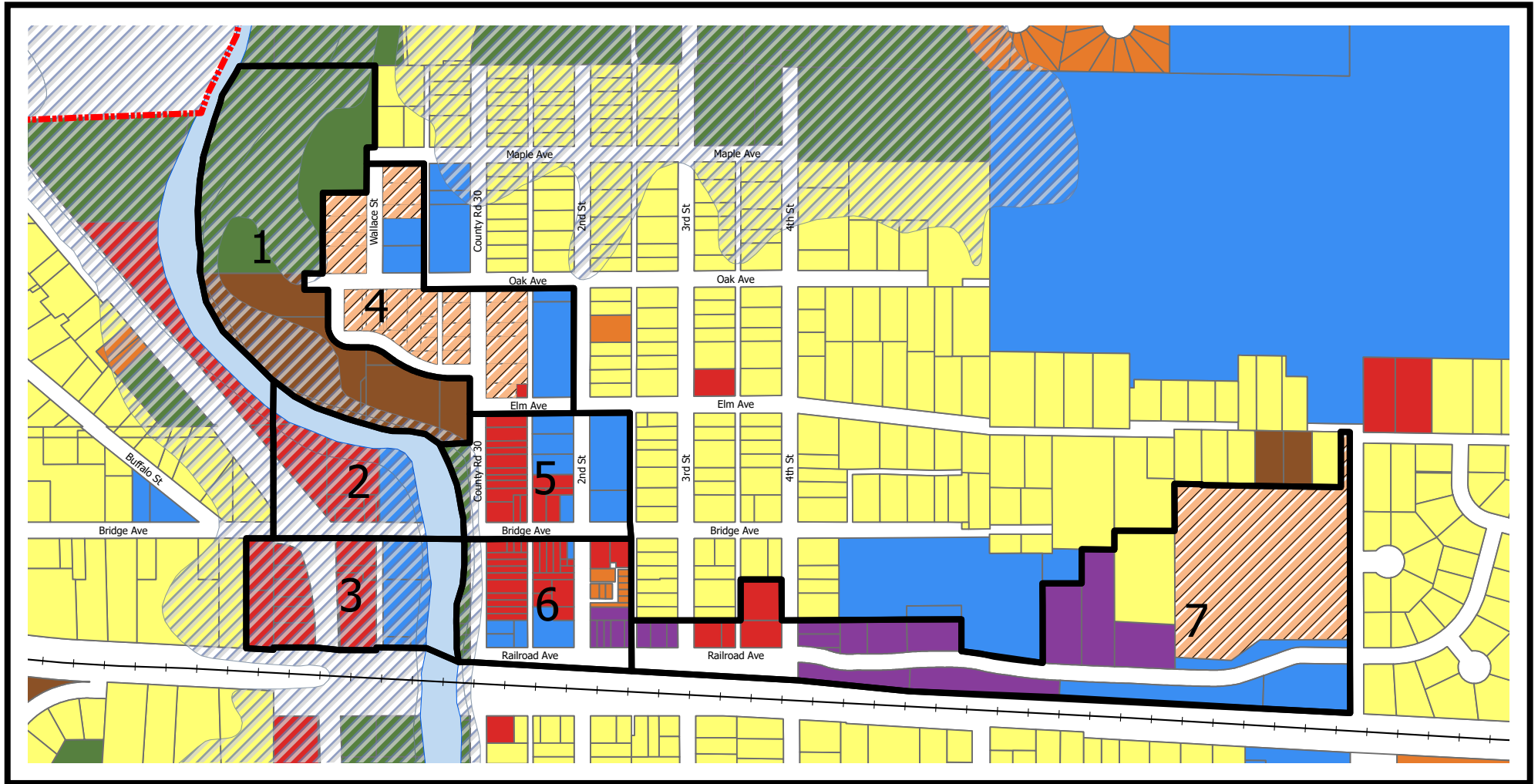
DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES

The map on the following page outlines the boundaries of the downtown study area as determined by the Task Force. The study area extends west to include properties surrounding the Bridge Avenue Highway 12 intersection. Bridge Avenue represents the main entrance to the Downtown. The eastern boundary of the study area extends along Railroad Avenue to Tiger Drive. Railroad Avenue represents another travel route into the downtown. The balance of the study area includes the Granite Works redevelopment site and the commercial, residential and industrial properties lying between the railroad and Oak Avenue.

The study area has also been divided into sub areas to allow analysis and recommendations to these specific geographic locations.



Downtown District - Future Land Use Plan



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Low Density Residential | Commercial | BNSF Railroad |
| Low / Medium Density Residential | Industrial | Crow River |
| Medium Density Residential | Parks / Open Space | 100 Year Floodplain |
| High Density Residential | Semi Public / Public | Downtown District Zones |
| Mixed Use | Delano City Boundary | Downtown District Boundary |



INVENTORY AND ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

Through a tour of the downtown area and research of existing conditions the Downtown Task Force undertook a SWOT Analysis for the downtown area identifying the following strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats that will impact the future role that the downtown will have for the City.

The inventory and issue identification creates the foundation for establishing the downtown goals, policies and plans which will guide decision making, improvement and future investment within the Delano Downtown area.

Strengths:

1. Delano has a traditional downtown offering a compact, pedestrian friendly, commercial area. The downtown has solid blocks of the commercial development, few vacant store fronts.
2. The historic architecture and compact design presents an attractive commercial area that provides unique environment for shopping, entertainment, and services.
3. Recent building renovations by downtown property owners have demonstrated how some of the older buildings can be rejuvenated, aesthetically enhanced; and improving in their function and operation. These buildings have set the example for other property owners and other buildings in the downtown.



4. The City has established an attractive streetscape along the portions of select streets in the Downtown.
5. The Local businesses, property owners and business groups are active in the enhancement and promotion of the Delano Downtown through building improvements and special events to draw people to downtown and promote business interchange between available stores and restaurants.
6. The Crow River and the River Front Park provides a natural amenity and public open space that contributes to the unique downtown environment.



7. The surrounding residential neighborhoods and the introduction of the high density housing (River Town Townhomes, and Granite Works Apartments) provide a nearby consumer population within walking distance to the Downtown.
8. The Delano Downtown is the center for municipal services including the City Hall, License Bureau, Fire Station, Library, Early Childhood Education Center and

Heritage Center. The City has made significant investment in blending the architecture of the newer public buildings to be compatible with the historic buildings in the downtown. These public buildings contribute to the drawing people to the downtown on a daily basis contribution the accumulative attraction of the area.

Weaknesses:

1. The main portion of the Delano Downtown does not have visibility or direct access from Highway 12, the major traffic carrier through the City. Its location presents challenges for Downtown identity and access; bringing people to the area.
2. Physical barriers including Crow River, Railroad and Highway 12 present obstacles for access to the Downtown for motorists, bicyclist and pedestrians.
3. While the historic Architecture is listed as a strength, it also a challenge for the downtown property owners with regard to building renovation, building code, and building size. The renovation of these older building present challenges related to maintaining the integrity of the historic architecture while dealing with current building and fire code issues with any change of building use.
4. Some of the River Street buildings have front facades that detract from their historical architectural features.



5. The size and floor area of the existing downtown buildings, present challenges for contemporary retailers. The downtown buildings require businesses that can fit within the limited sizes of the buildings.
6. The City designed streetscape is not uniformly applied along all the streets in the downtown (River Street, Second Street). In some areas, streetscape landscaping is in need of replacement.
7. River Street is County Road 17, the County jurisdiction on this road could be an obstacle to implementing city plans for streetscape improvements.
8. Fruit bearing trees in the downtown have created issues with fruit being dropped onto the sidewalks and tracked into stores.
9. Downtown businesses are reliant on shared on-street parking and public parking lots. Businesses may not have convenient parking at their storefront and will compete with other businesses within the same block for the available parking. The need for adequate and convenient parking is a challenge for the downtown businesses.
10. The downtown's proximity to the Crow River makes it susceptible to seasonal flooding. Some areas of the river are in need of clean-up of litter and debris.
11. The Downtown alleys are unattractive and are underutilized.



12. Industrial uses and site conditions along Railroad Avenue require clean-up and screening to improve their appearance along this secondary route into the downtown.

Opportunities:

1. The City of Delano has made the preservation and enhancement of the Delano downtown a community priority in its planning and capital improvements.
2. The City has proactively pursued redevelopment in the downtown (Rivertown townhomes, Granite Works apartments, etc.) to remove blighted properties and to introduce land uses that complement the downtown businesses and downtown design.
3. The Downtown has a number of city owned public open spaces that can contribute the overall aesthetic appeal of the downtown.
4. The City has acquired riverbank properties along the Crow River that will allow it to undertake improvements for riverbank stabilization, vegetation, trail development, river clean-up and flood control.
5. South River Front Park provides opportunity for the creation of an attractive public open space that will contribute the downtown aesthetic and functions.
6. The implementation of the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines provides standards for the upgrade and improvement of the downtown buildings.
7. The implementation of a uniform streetscape throughout the downtown will provide cohesive identity and appeal to the downtown area.
8. Improved area identification and wayfinding signs will contribute to the downtown identity and accessibility. Improved downtown directional signs at Bridge Avenue and Highway 12 will identify this intersection as an entrance to



the downtown. Identify addition downtown directional sign locations at the City's other major travel routes.

9. Opportunities exist to improve the available parking supply and the functions in the alleys of the downtown.
10. Continuation of special events to attract people to the downtown and promote business interchange.
11. Working with the Chamber of Commerce and business groups to promote the downtown.
12. Expand a uniform streetscape throughout the downtown and along Railroad Avenue over to Tiger Drive.

Threats:

1. Inactive property owners, buildings that are not maintained detract from adjoining properties.
2. Vacant or underutilized buildings that do not contribute to drawing customers to the downtown.
3. Seasonal flooding.



POLICY PLAN

Goal 1: Maintain and improve the Delano Downtown as a vital commercial and community service Center within the City.

Policies:

- A. Maintain Delano’s historic downtown as a focal point within the community.
- B. Land use planning in the downtown shall be consistent with the Downtown Future land use plan.
- C. Promote a broad range of office, retail, service, entertainment land uses within the downtown commercial sites.
- D. Businesses or land uses identified as needed or desired for the downtown area will be actively pursued, promoted and assisted by the City.
- E. Promote the attraction of new businesses into the downtown that are complementary to the existing businesses and will contribute to customer attraction to the area and contribute to business interchange.
- F. Identify public financial incentives such as revolving loan funds, loan interest buy-downs, reduced SAC/WAC charges, tax increment financing, tax abatement or other incentive programs to encourage businesses to locate to the downtown or to promote private reinvestment in the downtown buildings.
- G. Examine opportunities for expanding downtown commercial uses along Railroad Avenue.
- H. Continue to maintain the Delano downtown as the government service center of the City.



- I. Expand the supply of shared parking in the downtown.
- J. Work with local businesspeople and business organizations to gain an understanding of the changing needs and trends of the business environment.
- K. Promote both public and private special events to draw people to Delano downtown.

Goal 2: Establish a cohesive identity for the Delano downtown through architecture, site design, streetscape, public amenities, and open spaces.

- A. Apply the Delano Central Business District design guidelines with all building renovation, rehabilitation, or redevelopment to take advantage of the existing historic architecture.
- B. Encourage private property owners to renovate the downtown building storefronts consistent with the Central Business District Design Guidelines to establish a cohesive downtown identity.
- C. Proactively pursue the rehabilitation or redevelopment of blighted or underutilized buildings in the downtown to provided usable space for new businesses and uses.
- D. Establish a uniform streetscape treatment along all streets in the downtown study area. Streetscape elements will include sidewalks, lighting, signage, landscaping, and utilities.
- E. Continue to allow the private use of the public sidewalk for awnings, canopies, projecting signs, seating, outdoor dining, and display provided the private uses do not obstruct pedestrian use of the sidewalk.
- F. Utilize public signs to identify the downtown access points and way finding signs to direct motorists, bicyclist, and pedestrians to downtown destinations.



- G. Improve open space properties in the downtown which will contribute to the downtown aesthetic and functions.
- H. Improve River Front Park south of Bridge Street.
- I. Use the Crow River as a natural amenity that complements and contributes to the theme and identity of the Delano downtown.
- J. Promote the clean-up and improvements within the downtown alleys to accommodate parking, business deliveries, and customer access to the downtown businesses.

Goal 3: Implement transportation improvements that will bring people into the Delano downtown.

- A. Establish signs at the intersection of the Bridge Avenue and Highway 12 to introduce motorists to Delano's downtown.
- B. Design the Bridge Avenue Bridge as the gateway entrance into downtown.
- C. Identify, locations along River Street, Elm Avenue and Railroad Avenue for the placement of signs directing people to Delano's downtown.
- D. Provide wayfinding signs at key locations to direct people to downtown destinations.
- E. Maintain the available on-street parking supply; investigate options for expanding the downtown parking supply along the alleys at the back of the buildings and along Railroad Avenue.
- F. Properly sign the locations of public parking to direct motorist to these locations.
- G. Design the downtown for pedestrian friendly movements. This must address sidewalk widths, preserving appropriate pedestrian ways where private uses and



streetscape amenities share the sidewalk, properly design pedestrian crossing at the street intersections.

- H. Provide pedestrian and bicycle friendly amenities, lighting, open spaces, seating areas, bike racks, water fountains, etc.
- I. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle sidewalk or trail connections into the downtown from all areas of the City. The trail planning must overcome the physical barriers (Crow River, Highway 12, Railroad tracks) that separate the downtown from growing residential neighborhoods of the City.

DOWNTOWN LAND USE

The City of Delano has a traditional Downtown. Over the past half century contemporary commercial developments have moved away from traditional downtowns in favor of locating along major transportation routes (U.S. Highway 12). This migration of commercial development can detract from older traditional downtowns that do not offer the space for large retail buildings and large suburban parking lots. However, Cities that have traditional downtowns have discovered that their downtown gives their community an identity, a place for residents to gather, enjoy a unique shopping experience, to recreate and participate in community events. The City of Delano appreciates the all the attributes offered by its downtown and intends to maintain this valued area as a focal point of the community.

To address the specific land use, redevelopment and promotional issues of the Delano Downtown, the City prepared and adopted this 2022 Delano Downtown Study. The recommendations and strategies of the 2022 study focus on maintaining the downtown as a community focal point and will continue to guide land use decisions and redevelopment efforts as follows.

The following map illustrates the ultimate land use plan for the downtown area. As individual development proposals are submitted by property owners and developers, efforts will be made to follow the downtown land use plan. While it is recognized that proposals may not be identical to the land use plan and that there may be more than one way for the land uses to function successfully, a series of common factors must be considered. In order to ensure the compatibility of land uses in association with the proper functioning of adjacent roadways, the following factors should be evaluated against future development proposals:

1. The Generalized Land Use Plan should build on the strengths of the existing land uses in the downtown area.
2. Maintain the downtown commercial core as a commercial activity area within Delano through the promotion of retail, service, entertainment, and office uses in this area.
3. Maintain and promote the downtown area as the community service focal point of



the community through the retention and expansion of community and government facilities in the downtown area.

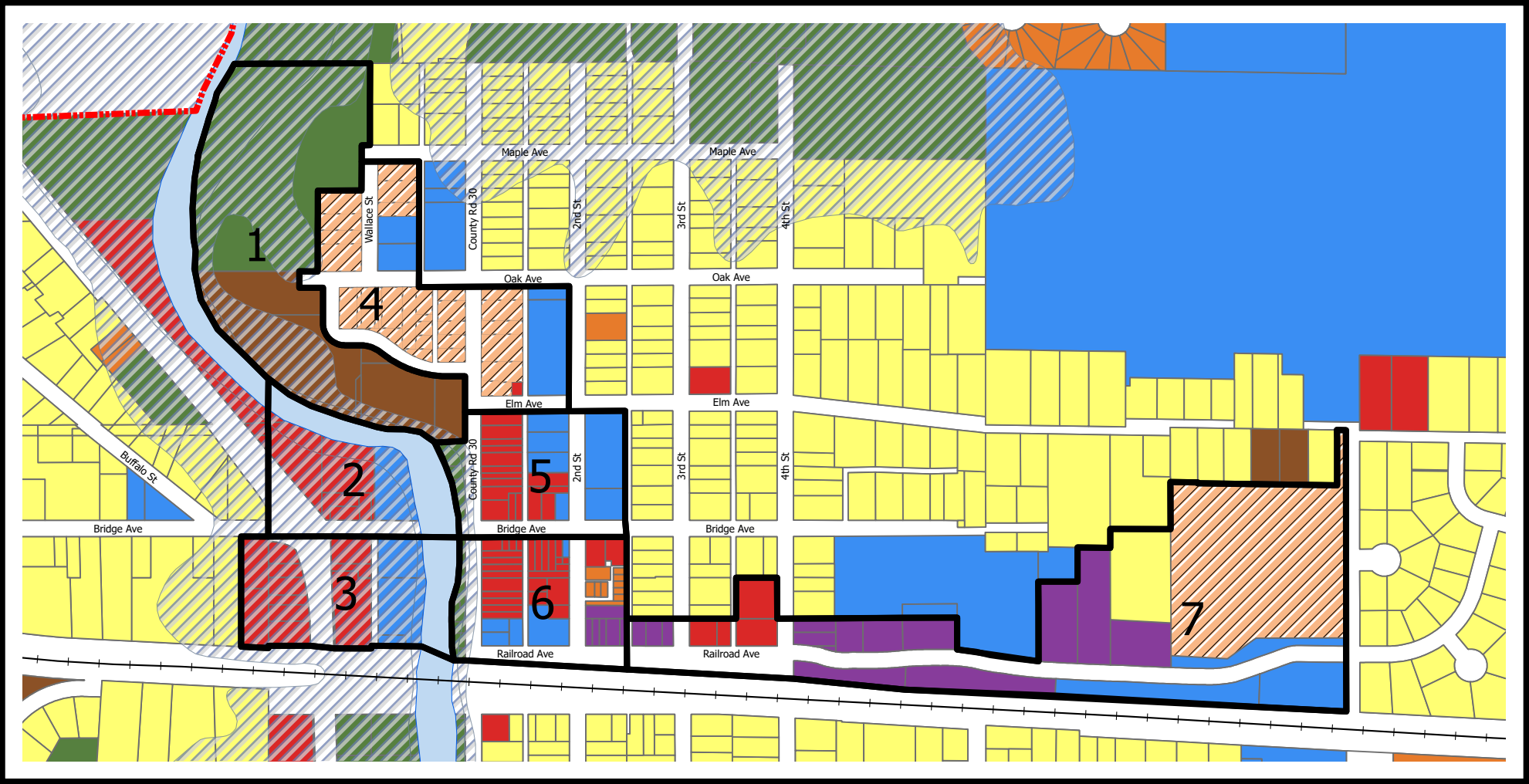
4. Encourage and promote the physical renovation of existing commercial, government, and residential structures in the downtown area to establish a user friendly environment and a community attraction.
5. Promote the infill development of vacant and under-utilized properties in a manner consistent with the land use plans.
6. Redevelop the Downtown alleys to promote shared parking, attractive and functional truck service areas, and attractive secondary building entrances.
7. Provide for attractive, safe, and convenient downtown amenities which complement and serve the downtown businesses. Amenities include streets, parking, sidewalks, way finding signs, public open spaces, public art, and lighting.
8. Non-conforming or incompatible land uses should be phased out when the market provides replacement uses and the community can implement the redevelopment in a financially responsible manner.
9. Code enforcement should be implemented to relieve potentially hazardous or nuisance land use situations and to improve the appearance of the downtown area.
10. Examine opportunities to expand the downtown along Railroad Avenue from 4th Street to Tiger Drive to take advantage of this street access into Delano's downtown.
11. Examine the B-4, Central Business Zoning District for opportunities to expand the allowable land uses that may be complementary to Downtown businesses. Said uses may include production and limited manufacturing such as microbreweries, art studios, or unique product lines that may contribute to the downtown attractions.
12. Undertake improvements to the Heritage Center to restore the historic exterior appearance and undertake interior building improvements that enhance the building's accessibility and functionality. Introduce an information center and public restrooms that are available to the public during the evening and weekend store hours of downtown businesses



13. Expand River Front Park south of Bridge Avenue in a manner that replicates efforts north of Bridge Avenue. The park design must complement the downtown both aesthetically and provide functional amenities that contribute to the on-going events and operations in the area. Implement a flood wall into the River Front Park design as a means of protecting the downtown and improving the Delano flood emergency response.
14. Maintain and enhance the single-family neighborhoods surrounding the downtown by restricting land use intrusions, code enforcement, building renovation and scattered site redevelopment.
15. Provide multiple family housing opportunities as a redevelopment land use option at the periphery of the Downtown's commercial core.
16. Acquire single family houses within the CBD Study Area when they become available for sale through scatter site redevelopment program.



Downtown District - Future Land Use Plan



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Low Density Residential | Commercial | BNSF Railroad |
| Low / Medium Density Residential | Industrial | Crow River |
| Medium Density Residential | Parks / Open Space | 100 Year Floodplain |
| High Density Residential | Semi Public / Public | Downtown District Zones |
| Mixed Use | Delano City Boundary | Downtown District Boundary |

DOWNTOWN ACCESS AND PARKING

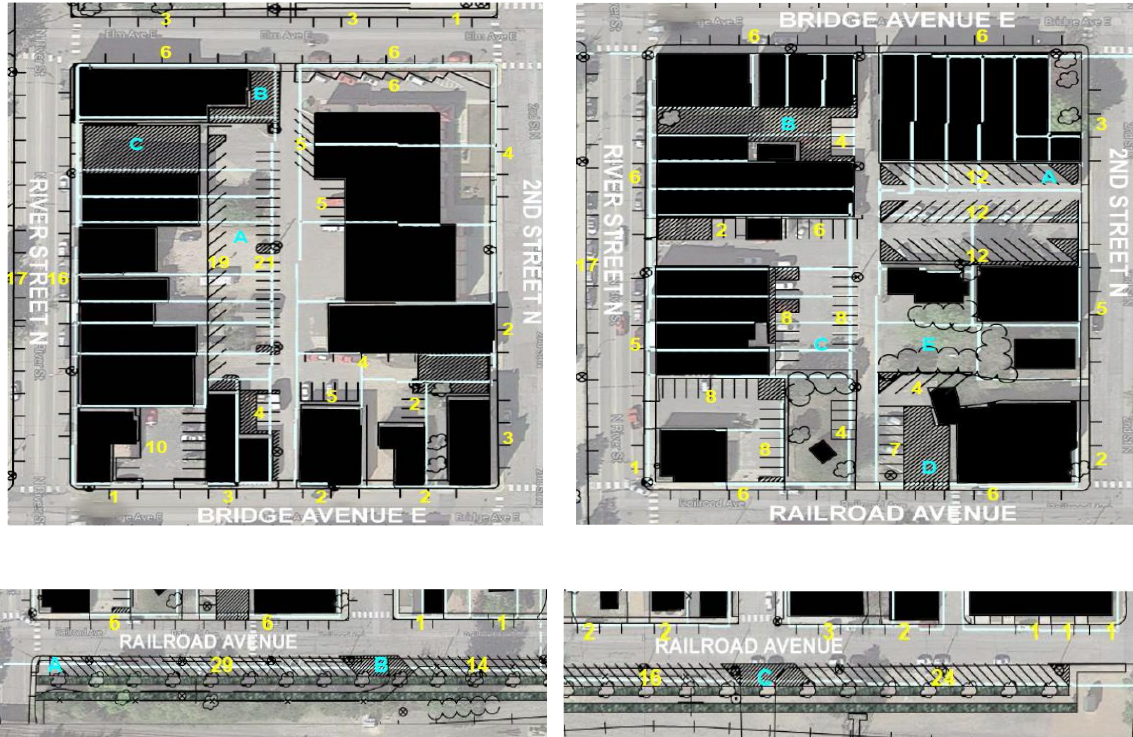
As noted in Chapter 3 Inventory and Issues Identification, the physical elements of the downtown offer both obstacles and opportunities for continued revitalization. The Delano downtown is located away from the City's major traffic thoroughfare. As such, it is at a competitive disadvantage with larger highway commercial sites with regard to visibility, access, and parking.

To combat the location concerns, a number of strategies have been developed:

1. Enhanced existing downtown identification and directional signs located along U.S. Highway 12. This will provide downtown recognition to the highway motorists.
2. Extend the downtown streetscape improvements (i.e., lighting, sidewalks, wayfinding signs, banners, and landscaping.) west along Bridge Avenue to U.S. Highway 12. Create an identifiable entrance to the Delano downtown at the intersection of Bridge Avenue and Highway 12.
3. Extend and/or improve the downtown streetscape along River Street, 2nd Street and Railroad Avenue. The downtown streetscape elements will create a comprehensive and uniform theme that will define the limits of the downtown area.
4. Identify locations for wayfinding signs along the major streets leading into the downtown to direct motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to downtown destinations.
5. Open up riverfront properties to increase and enhance downtown visibility from the west.
6. Create/improve River Front Park as a community amenity that enhances the appeal of the downtown and draws people to the area.
7. Provide sidewalk and trail connections from community neighborhoods to the Delano downtown. Make the downtown an attractive destination for pedestrians and bicyclists. Create safe and convenient pedestrian / bicyclist crossings over Highway 12 and the Crow River to provide improved access to the downtown.



8. Expand the available parking within the downtown. Work with the downtown property owners to create public parking lots along the alleys. See the following exhibits for potential parking layouts. The City will require access and parking easements to be created to allow parking improvements across property lines and to allow shared parking access on the properties.



DOWNTOWN DESIGN

Building Design

The Delano downtown commercial core consists of older buildings constructed in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The downtown historical architecture is unique to the area and offers an architectural theme of which to take advantage. Recognizing the value of the downtown's historic architecture the City adopted the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines to guide building maintenance and improvements within the downtown. These design guidelines address block design which includes setbacks building location, building heights, first floor commercial use. The building design guidelines emphasize the need to preserve the original character of the buildings by maintaining the historic storefronts with regard to building materials, architectural elements (cornices, parapets, corner features, awnings, windows and building entrances). The City has incorporated the Design Guidelines into the B-4 Central Business District zoning district.

In addition to the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines, the City has also tailored the B-4 Central Business Zoning District to the specific development patterns existing within downtown Delano. The B-4 zoning district includes the following performance standards unique to the downtown area.

1. The B-4 District allows for a broad range of retail, office, hospitality, entertainment, recreation and service uses land uses.
2. The B-4 District has no minimum lot area, lot width or setback requirements representative of the existing lot sizes in the downtown area.
3. The downtown businesses are exempt from the City's commercial parking requirements. Businesses are reliant on public parking and on-street parking.
4. Businesses within the B-4 District are allowed to encroach over the public sidewalk with canopies, awnings, projecting signs. These elements contribute to the downtown's unique character.



5. Businesses are allowed to utilize portions of the public sidewalk for seating, outdoor dining, product displays, planters provided these uses do not obstruct the sidewalk for pedestrian movements.

In recent years, there have been efforts by individual property owners to improve and revitalize many of the downtown's historic buildings. These private efforts have been very successful in bringing new life to these buildings both through aesthetic architecture and new businesses. The City wishes to promote the continuation of these private efforts.

The downtown has a number of building and sites characterized by deterioration, vacancy, and under-utilization. These buildings detract from the balance of the downtown buildings and can discourage private reinvestment in adjoining buildings. Recognizing these weaknesses and building on the downtown strengths, the following strategies are proposed to improve Delano Downtown. These strategies are heavily dependent on private investment and property owner cooperation to rehabilitate private property. Public funds and efforts can assist as incentives for private investment, improvement of public utilities and facilities, and enforcement of City Codes.

1. Promote private rehabilitation of buildings in a manner that follows the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines. The design guidelines establish architectural standards for the downtown promoting of façade improvements for buildings with false fronts. These architectural standards shall be applied to all building development, redevelopment, or renovation within the downtown.
2. Encourage the private business expansion, redevelopment, and new businesses in the downtown that complement the existing commercial base. To assist in the development and expansion of commercial uses in the downtown, the City can establish the downtown study area as a community economic development district to allow the City to participate in redevelopment efforts with public financial assistance such as tax increment financing or tax abatement.
3. Public or private acquisition of blighted or underutilized buildings and solicit private developers who are interested in the renovation or rehabilitation of the downtown building consistent with the goals of this study and the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines.



4. City capital improvements programming and planning offer a means to replace failing infrastructure and streetscape amenities to enhance the appearance of the downtown.
5. Reserve liquor license opportunities for the downtown to promote opportunities for entertainment businesses and restaurants.
6. Investigate the establishment financial incentives through the City (loans, grants, loan interest buy downs) that would be available to downtown property owners for the renovation, rehabilitation, of face lift of downtown commercial buildings.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

The downtown streetscape consists of a number of private and public elements that are unique to the area and give the downtown its defining character. The private elements include the storefronts, building facades, awnings, canopies, signs, outdoor seating, dining, and business displays. The public elements include sidewalk lighting, landscaping, signs, banners, utilities, etc. Both the private and public streetscape elements must fit between the storefront and the street curb. Within this limited area the City must balance both the aesthetic and function of the sidewalks.





The following strategies will guide the streetscape improvements.

1. Streetscape improvement will not interfere with the transportation functions of the street and sidewalks.
2. Public streetscape elements will include; Sidewalk design, lighting, landscaping, signs, banners, utilities, street furniture, and the development of public open spaces.
3. Private street scape elements will include: Storefront façades, canopies/ awnings, signs, façade lighting, and seating, outdoor dining and planters.
4. The public streetscape improvements will have a uniform application throughout the downtown to define the identity and boundaries of the downtown.



5. Streetscape elements shall be extended along Bridge Avenue to Highway 12 and along Railroad Avenue to Tiger Drive to identify these corridors as part of downtown.
6. The City will work with Wright County to bring the streetscape elements to River Street. This may include adjustments in the sidewalk widths or bump outs along River Street.
7. Replace or relocate pedestal street tree light electric receptacles that pose a tripping hazard.
8. Improve the River Front Park south of Bridge Street and the other City owned lots in a design and manner that contribute to the character, function and appeal of the downtown. Provide amenities and points of interest that will draw and retain people to the downtown area.
9. Create attractive entrances to City Hall and the Library that will enhance these buildings and streetscape.

DOWNTOWN BRANDING AND SIGNAGE

The Downtown image and rehabilitation strategies cited above require a cooperative effort between the private and public sectors of the community. These image elements focus on improving the physical appearance of the downtown.

Downtown businesses must come together and function as a team. They must recognize the changed market trends and existing competition both locally and regionally in establishing a downtown marketing strategy. Small towns all over Minnesota face similar traditional downtown revitalization concerns; competition from regional shopping centers and large discounters have impacted small town retailing. The Delano downtown competes with the Ridgedale area of Minnetonka, Wayzata, and Buffalo regionally and competes locally with U.S. Highway 12 businesses for the consumer dollars. The Delano downtown businesses cannot provide the discount prices, product



volume, or variety of stores offered at larger regional retail locations. In this light, Delano's downtown should not attempt to compete with the regional facilities in a head to head basis, but rather find a niche which makes the Delano shopping experience unique.

The following strategies focus on the changing role of the Delano downtown and to make suggestions to work toward its functional operations.

1. Work with the downtown businesses to help satisfy their operational and growth needs. This effort reinforces the City's confidence in the established business community and helps solidify the existing downtown anchor businesses.
2. Encourage local businesses to consider ways to avoid directly competing with larger regional retailers:
 - a. Emphasizing customer service.
 - b. Changing inventory levels.
 - c. Carrying higher quality product lines than discounters.
 - d. Offer product servicing and repair.
3. Promote the accumulative attraction of the downtown businesses and business interchange among the businesses:
 - a. Establish common store hours that accommodate the commuter population of Delano.
 - b. Encourage joint advertising of downtown businesses.
 - c. Maintain a downtown business directory.
 - d. Continue with the City and Chamber of Commerce programs of active promotion of the community through special events such as Fourth of July celebration and Oktoberfest.



- e. Participate in private redevelopment efforts to rehabilitate buildings under a common downtown historical theme.
4. Promote the introduction of a variety of new land uses and businesses in the downtown area:
- a. Promote medium and high-density residential redevelopment on sites at the periphery of the commercial core to increase local customer base and customer convenience in the downtown area.
 - b. Continue to allow second story apartments above the commercial buildings as an alternative tenant option and revenue source for the property owner.
 - c. Promote development of commercial uses that complement existing businesses but do not directly compete with regional retailers. This may require a change in focus from general retail to other businesses including, but not limited to, specialty retail, restaurants, entertainment, professional offices, service-oriented businesses, limited manufacturing, and production of custom products.
5. Continue to maintain the downtown as the community service focal point of the City. The Downtown includes numerous public buildings and services which help provide some identity and attraction to the area:
- a. Continue to maintain existing City government services in the downtown including City Hall, senior citizen center, library, Fire Station, and community center.
 - b. Work with the Delano School District to promote the use and operation of the continuing education services offered at the Delano Community Education Center.
 - c. Investigate redevelopment options to keep the Delano Post Office in the downtown.



6. Create a complementary set of brand imagery and a gateway and wayfinding signage family to be used to advertise and promote the Downtown and its businesses.
 - a. Establish gateway locations introducing people to the downtown.
 - b. Establish a color palette for the downtown signs, banners and advertising that will be used to identify the downtown and downtown promotional efforts.
 - c. Create a downtown logo that can be utilized by the City, business organizations, or individual businesses in promoting the Delano Downtown.
 - d. Establish a uniform downtown wayfinding signage family of gateway and informational directional signs to identify the Downtown and major destinations within it (City Hall, River Front Park, Heritage Center, etc.)

BANNER EXAMPLES



DOWNTOWN DELANO - SIGNAGE AREAS



- e. Encourage periodic special events that will draw people to the downtown to the benefit of all the downtown businesses. Coordinate these special events with the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations to take advantage of a larger public outreach and greater community benefit.
- f. Encourage joint business advertising using downtown branding materials to promote special events to draw people to the downtown.
- g. Utilize a broad range of traditional and social media to advertise downtown businesses and events.

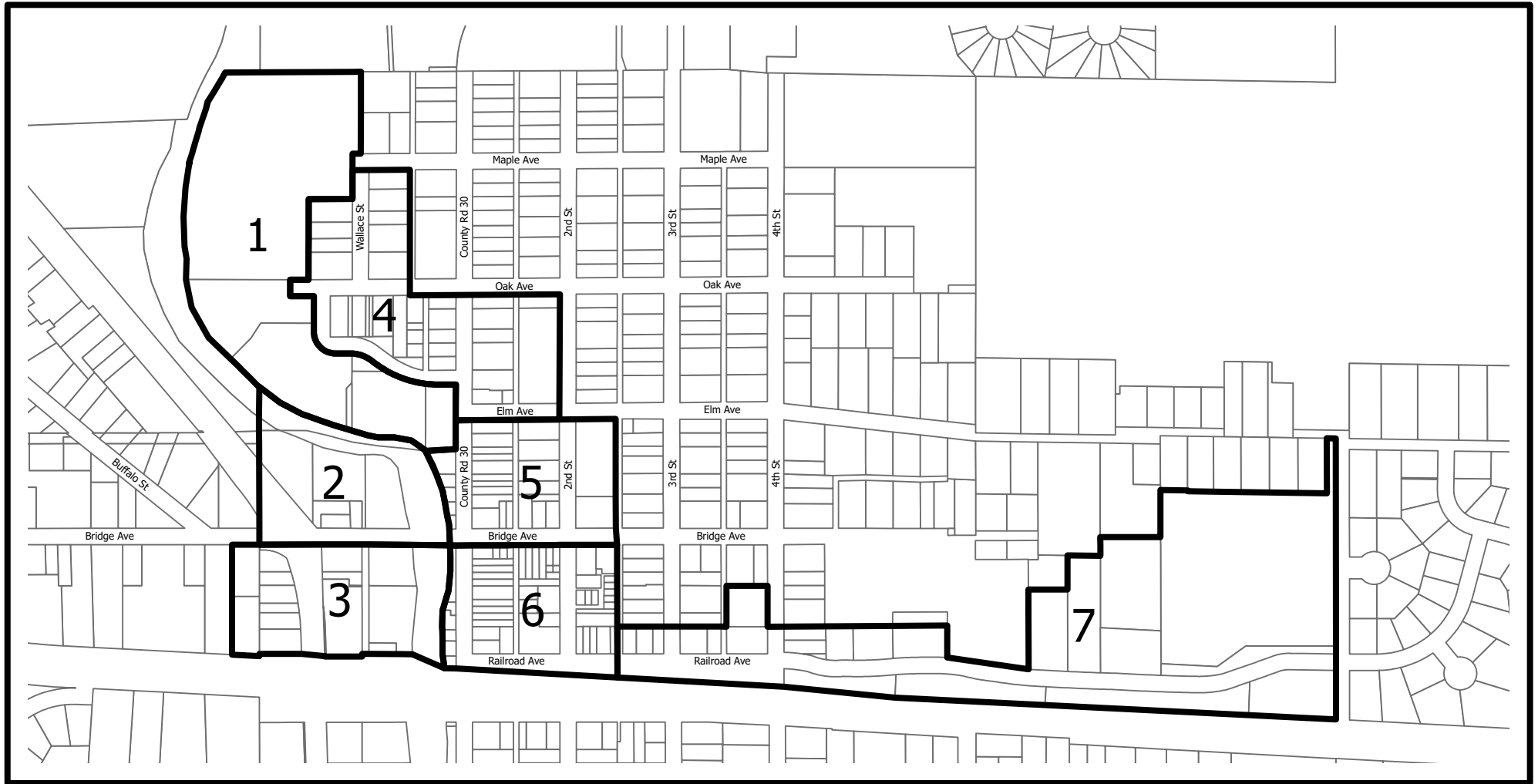


SUBAREAS

The downtown study area has been divided into seven subareas to allow a detail evaluation and recommendations of these geographically distinct portions of the downtown. This chapter of the downtown plan outlines the land use and development objectives of each subarea.



Downtown District - Sub Areas



- Downtown District Zones
- Wright County Parcels



SUBAREA 1.

Subarea 1 consists of the Granite Works Redevelopment site, located between River Street and the Crow River at the north end of the downtown study area. This area was approved as a redevelopment site in 2021, to remove a blighted, unsafe, and contaminated industrial site and the development of high density multiple family rental units. The introduction of high density housing to the subarea is to build population and market support in close proximity to the downtown commercial core. The recommendations for Sub Area 1 are listed below.

SUMMARY OF SUBAREA 1 RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Building out the site with three apartment buildings not to exceed 200 total dwelling units per the City approved Planned Unit Development site plan.
2. Subarea development shall comply with all floodplain standards and protections.
3. Clean-up the riverbank of debris, granite waste and litter. Restore the riverbank and shoreland impact zone with native plantings to stabilize the bank and enhance the river.
4. Provide convenient and safe pedestrian connections from each of the apartment buildings to the public sidewalks in downtown to encourage residents to patronize the downtown businesses.
5. Construct a riverbank, overland trail through subarea 1 connecting the downtown with Central Park.
6. Integrate the northern portion of subarea 1, into the open space design of the larger Central Park. Preserve areas for flood storage and flood protections.
7. Work with adjoining single family property owners on flood protection measures.





① MASTER PLAN
1" = 100'-0"



SUBAREA 2

Subarea 2 is the northeast quadrant of the Bridge Avenue and Highway 12 intersection. This subarea is located at the Highway 12 entrance into the downtown. The subarea contains the American Legion and the Riverside Commons building. The recommendations for Subarea 2 are listed below.

1. Reexamine the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection signage, monuments and landscaping to establish an attractive gateway introduction to the downtown.
2. Promote a broad range of uses and activities within the Riverside Commons to attract people to the downtown on a frequent basis.
3. Clean-up the river and stabilize the riverbank.
4. Improve the pedestrian crossing at Bridge Avenue and Highway 12 intersection.
5. Create a recognizable gateway feature at the bridge to establish identity for downtown.
6. Improve sidewalks across the river bridge for safe pedestrian passage.
7. Establish Subarea 2 as a long-range redevelopment district for potential redevelopment of both the American Legion and Riverside Commons properties. Through redevelopment, construct a signature building that introduces the start of Delano downtown. The new building shall provide space for the new businesses or all-season community events that contribute to accumulative attraction of the downtown and promote business interchange with the other downtown businesses.



SUBAREA 3

Subarea 3 consists of the southern quadrants of the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection. The recommendations for Subarea 3 are listed below.

1. Work with private development interests in redevelopment of the southwest quadrant of the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection to accomplish:
 - Assembly of properties
 - Removal of substandard and underutilized buildings.
 - Construction of a signature commercial building that complies with the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines.
 - The extension of the Delano downtown streetscape treatments to the southwest quadrant of the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection with the redevelopment of this subarea.
 - Provide proper screening of parking lots, sale lots and outdoor storage areas.
2. Reexamine the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection signage, monuments and landscaping to establish an attractive gateway introduction to the downtown.
3. Clean-up the river and stabilize the riverbank. Landscape the west riverbank to enhance its appearance from River Street.



4. Create a recognizable gateway feature at the bridge, to establish identity for downtown.
5. Improve the trail and sidewalk connection from trails south of the railroad tracks into subarea 3 and improve the pedestrian crossing at the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection.
6. Establish a pedestrian river crossing south of subarea 3 to bring people to the downtown.
7. Fence and screen the DMU's outdoor storage and work staging areas.

SUBAREA 4

Subarea 4 is located north and east of the subarea 2. Border on the north by Oak Avenue and 2nd Street to the east. Subarea contains single family homes along Oak Avenue and River Street; at tire repair and sales business on Elm Avenue and the Delano Continuing Education Center along 2nd Street. The recommendations for Subarea 4 are listed below.

1. Establish a redevelopment district over the single family homes along Oak Avenue west of River Street. Acquire the single family homes in the redevelopment district as they become available for sale. Assemble acquired lots for future redevelopment consistent with the future land use plan.
2. Promote private reinvestment in the single family homes along River Street. Utilize scatter site redevelopment, to acquire blighted homes within the block and their redevelopment with a contemporary single family home.
3. Work with single family property owners in subarea 4 on flood protection measures.
4. Undertake improvements at the Elm Avenue / River Street intersection to prevent left turn movements from Elm Avenue onto River Street.
5. Improve the pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Elm Avenue and River Street.
6. Improve the pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Elm Avenue and 2nd Street.
7. Work with the School district to maintain and improve the Continuing Education Center building and site to keep this site as an attraction within the Delano downtown.



SUBAREA 5

Subarea 5 is part of the commercial core of the Delano downtown. Its boundaries are the Elm Avenue on the north, Bridge Avenue to the south, the Crow River on the west and 2nd Street on the east. The land uses in this subarea consist of a public park along the river, commercial store fronts along the east side of River Street and government buildings fronting 2nd Street. The recommendations for Subarea 5 are listed below.



1. Improve and expand the uniform streetscape amenities along River Street with regard to storefront improvements, streetlights, sidewalk design, landscaping, signs and banners.
2. Extending streetscape amenities along 2nd Street north of Bridge Avenue.

3. Improve pedestrian crossings on River Street at Bridge Avenue and Elm Avenue to promote pedestrian access into the downtown core.
4. Clean-up the riverbank of debris, granite waste, and litter. Restore the riverbank and shoreland impact zone with native plantings to stabilize the bank and enhance the river.
5. Construct a riverbank, overland trail connection into subarea 1 connecting the downtown with Central Park.
6. Infill vacant buildings with commercial businesses that will contribute to the accumulative attraction of the downtown and encourage business interchange with other downtown businesses.
7. Pursue the rehabilitation of the 260 River Street building and the adjoining parking lot.
 - Demolish the unsafe and damaged portions of the building.
 - Solicit a developer to renovate the building consistent with the Delano CBD Design Guidelines.
 - Pursue a new business for the building that will complement the existing business in the downtown.
 - Investigate use options for using the parking lot adjoining the 260 River Street building including a building expansion, parking, outdoor dining and drinking for adjoining businesses, public gathering area, etc.
 - Clean up existing refuse, debris and vegetation at the site.
8. Continue to allow second story residential apartments above first floor commercial businesses as a means of providing rental income for the property owners.
9. Encourage private use of the sidewalk area for awnings, canopies, projecting signs, seating, outdoor dining, and landscaping provided it does not interfere with pedestrian movements on the sidewalk.



10. Work with downtown property owners in subarea 5 to create public parking lots along the alleys. Obtain cross access and parking easements to allow parking improvements across property lines and to allow shared parking over these different properties. Undertake alley and parking lot improvements as a City project to establish a uniform design standard and appearance for the downtown parking lots. Provide wayfinding signs to direct motorists to available public parking areas. Define pedestrian routes that connect the alley parking lots to the River Street and Bridge Avenue storefronts.
11. Work with downtown property owners in subarea 5 to improve the appearance of the alley corridor through site improvements to screen outdoor storage areas, screen trash dumpsters and remove junk and clutter. Improve lighting along the alley and enhance the appearance of the back of the buildings.
12. Wayfinding designations in subarea 5 include: City Hall, Heritage Center, Fire Station, License Bureau, and the Community Education Building located north to subarea 5 and public parking lots.
13. Renovate the Delano Heritage Center by restoring its historic exterior Architecture. Install interior improvements to make the entire building accessible and available for a variety of community events and functions. Provide public restrooms that are available during the evening and weekend store hours of the downtown businesses.





14. Improve the vacant parcel between the Heritage Center and the Delano License Bureau building as a public open space that is aesthetically attractive and may offer seating or a point of interest within the downtown. This public open space shall be designed to complement the events and functions of the Heritage Center.
15. Redesign the City Hall entrance at the corner of Bridge Avenue and 2nd Street to improve its appearance and function related to community events.
16. Install signs to direct motorists to the public parking lot north of City Hall.

SUBAREA 6

Subarea 6 is part of the downtown commercial core. Subarea 6's boundaries are Bridge Avenue to the north, the Crow River on the west, 2nd Street on the east and the Railroad to the south. The land uses in subarea 6 include parkland on along the river, commercial businesses fronting River Street, Bridge Avenue and 2nd Street. The subarea 6 also has public land uses including the Post Office, Library and a public parking lot. The recommendations for subarea 6 are listed below.

1. Develop a master park plan for River Front Park south of Bridge Avenue with design components that address the following elements.
 - The park design shall be a continuation of River Front Park north of Bridge Avenue.
 - The park design must address access to the river throughout the year and the uses and functions along River Street.
 - Enhance and stabilize the riverbank with structures and landscaping.
 - The park aesthetics must complement the downtown streetscape providing views into downtown businesses from Bridge Avenue; provide attractive park amenities that will contribute to the character of the downtown and assist in downtown events.
 - Incorporate amenities such as seating, tables, public art, waste disposal containers, lighting, signage, and sidewalk design within the park design.



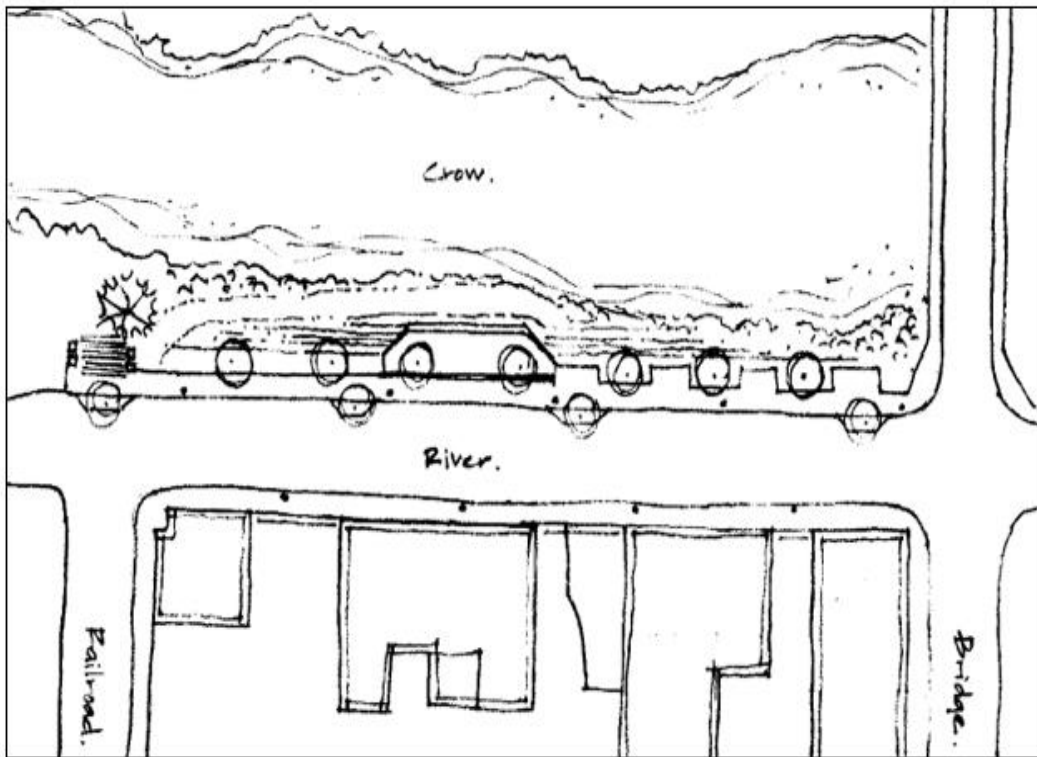


Figure 1: River Front Park - conceptual sketch



Figure 2: Precedent imagery examples

2. Expand and improve the streetscape design along River Street to alleviate the runway appearance of the street. Work with Wright County on streetscape elements such as pedestrian crossings, bump outs, traffic calming measures, sidewalk design, street lighting, on-street parking, and street and traffic signs to enhance the street appearance and to improve pedestrian movements along River Street.

3. Encourage private property owners to remove false storefronts and restore the original, historic storefronts consistent with the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines.
4. Encourage private use of the sidewalk area for awnings, canopies, projecting signs, seating, outdoor dining, and landscaping provided it does not interfere with pedestrian movements on the sidewalk.
5. Work with downtown property owners in subarea 6 to create public parking lots along the alleys. Obtain cross access and parking easements to allow parking improvements across property lines and to allow shared parking over these different properties. Undertake alley and parking lot improvements as a City project to establish a uniform design standard and appearance for the downtown parking lots. Provide wayfinding signs to direct motorists to available public parking areas. Define pedestrian routes that connect the alley parking lots to the River Street and Bridge Avenue storefronts.
6. Investigate options for the use of the vacant parcel located next to Rieder's Meats. Options may include landscape enhancements, pedestrian way to access alley parking, seating area, building expansion, etc.
7. Install signs to direct motorists to the public parking lot north of the Rivertown Townhomes.
8. Wayfinding destinations in subarea 6 include: Library, Post Office, and public parking lots.
9. Establish a redevelopment district over the residential land uses fronting on Railroad Avenue. These residential land uses do not meet current zoning standards for parking and site conditions. Redevelopment will provide opportunities to bring new contemporary housing to the downtown.



10. Design and construct the public open space at the southwest corner of Bridge Avenue and 2nd Street with improvements that may include:

- Remove the crabapple and replace with non-fruit bearing trees and/ or shrubs.
- Design the site with amenities such as a seating, tables, landscaping, lighting, public art, and/or a social media moment location that contribute to the character and draw of the downtown.
- The site design shall be integrated with streetscape amenities.



11. Integrate the public open space lot at the corner of Railroad Avenue and the alley with the Library site in the following ways:

- Relocate the library parking stalls on the west side of the library to the parcel west of the alley and create an attractive entrance to the library featuring a decorative plaza.
- The plaza would include seating and activity areas for library users.
- The plaza would include landscaping to enhance the hardscape elements, provide shade and vertical design elements.
- The plaza design would serve to provide a sense of separation between pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- The library parking stalls shall be relocated to the lot west of the alley. The design of the parking lot will meet the City design standards. The perimeter of the parking area will be landscaped in a manner that enhances the site and screens the outdoor activities occurring at the rear of the Post Office.



12. Replace damaged streetscape trees along 2nd Street.
13. The City shall pursue the cooperation of the Railroad in an effort to expand public parking along the south side of Railroad Avenue. The City improvements would include: building parking stalls along Railroad Avenue; extending the downtown streetscape amenities along Railroad Avenue; fencing and screening those areas of the railroad property used for equipment storage and / or active railroad functions.

SUBAREA 7

Subarea 7 consists of the Railroad Avenue corridor extending from the alley east of 2nd Street to Tiger Drive. This subarea is relevant to the downtown in that it provides another entrance to the downtown and includes a number of commercial buildings that have historically been included in the downtown area. Subarea 7 includes commercial buildings, multiple family residential uses and industrial land uses. The recommendations for Sub Area 7 are listed below:



1. Subarea 7 shall be developed and maintained consistent with the Downtown Future Land use plan. This includes a variety of commercial, industrial and residential uses.
2. Expand and improve the streetscape design along Railroad Avenue to tie this street corridor to the downtown.
3. Establish a downtown gateway directional sign at the corner of Tiger Drive and Railroad Avenue.
4. The City shall pursue the cooperation of the Railroad in an effort to expand public parking along the south side of Railroad Avenue. The City improvements would include: building parking stalls along Railroad Avenue; extending the downtown streetscape amenities along Railroad Avenue; fencing and screening those areas of the railroad property used for equipment storage and / or active railroad functions.
5. Work with industrial property owners along Railroad Avenue to undertake site and building improvements that correct non-conforming site conditions, define the limits of the industrial sites, improve the overall appearance of the industrial buildings and sites. Screen outdoor storage and outdoor activity areas from the Railroad Avenue and remove nuisance issues related to on-going industrial operations.
6. Utilize the City owned properties along the south side Railroad Avenue on the east side of subarea 7 as a natural open space that will buffer the railroad tracks from land uses to the north.
7. Establish a redevelopment district over the residential land uses fronting on Railroad Avenue between 2nd and 3rd Streets. These residential land uses do not meet current zoning standards for parking and site conditions. Redevelopment will provide opportunities to bring new contemporary housing to the downtown.
8. Target the industrial site at the northwest Corner of Railroad Avenue and 4th Street for redevelopment and change of land use. This site consists of two lots



with an active industrial building on the south lot and outdoor storage to the north lot. The building fills the entire south lot and is reliant on the public streets for parking and truck access to the building. The north lot is a gravel area used for outdoor storage and business staging. This industrial use is not compatible with the adjoining low density residential neighborhood or consistent with the goals for the downtown. The future land uses may be a mix of commercial and residential land uses that can fit the site and be compatible with the single family neighborhood to the north.



IMPLEMENTATION

The previous chapters of the Delano Downtown Study identify the goals and policies. This chapter outlines the steps available to implement the study's goals

Plans, Regulations and Guidelines.

1. Ratify the Delano Downtown Study, through a public hearing held by the Delano Planning Commission and approval of the City Council, to become part of the Delano 2040 Comprehensive Plan which will guide growth within this area of the City.
2. The Downtown Study area will be developed or redeveloped in accordance with the Downtown Future Land Use Plan.
3. The current zoning will remain in place. Zoning changes will be considered for the targeted redevelopment areas when redevelopment opportunities become available. The City will determine the appropriate zoning classification for these sites based on the proposed land use and the policies of the Delano Comprehensive Plan.
4. Periodically, evaluate the B-4 Central Business Zoning District land uses and performance standards to determine that they work toward the goals and policies of the Delano Downtown Study.
5. Investigate opportunities to expand the range of B-4 zoning district land uses to attract new businesses to the downtown
6. Enforce the Delano Central Business District Design guidelines with all new building renovations, rehabilitation, redevelopment or new development.
7. Utilize the special event licensing to promote special events to attract people to the downtown.
8. Consider code amendment to the City special event regulations that address:
 - a. Annual outdoor sales license allowing downtown businesses to display products on the public sidewalk during business hours.



- b. Allow mobile food units accessory to downtown special events to be located on/within the public street right of way or within public parks.
 - c. Require notification of downtown business owners of all special events and street closures.
 - d. Require a special event plan layout with each permit application to prevent obstructing access, or sight lines to the permanent businesses in the area of the special event.
9. Enforce current codes and regulations to correct current violations, avoid nuisance issues and maintain the downtown appearance.

Downtown Branding

Downtown Branding is intended to define the identity of the Delano Downtown, creating a common theme for community promotions and business advertising as a method of the encouraging the accumulative attraction of the downtown and to promote business interchange.

1. Create a complementary set of brand imagery and a gateway and wayfinding signage family.
2. Identify locations for gateway signs / monuments introducing people to the downtown.
3. Identify locations for wayfinding signs directing people to the significant destinations within the downtown.
4. Establish a Delano Downtown logo and color palette to be used in City, civic organizations, business organizations and downtown business in the promotion / advertising of the Delano Downtown, special events, and business events.
5. Create Banners that reflect the central themes of the downtown such as "community. Togetherness, etc."
6. Encourage joint advertising of downtown businesses.



7. Utilize the Chamber and other business or civic organizations to advertise and promote downtown businesses and events.
8. Utilize social media platforms to advertise and promote the downtown.

Rehabilitation / Renovation / Redevelopment / Development

Maintain the identity, function and appearance of the Delano downtown through the combined private and public efforts in site and building rehabilitation, renovation or redevelopment.

1. The City will provide financial assistance where appropriate to private rehabilitation efforts that are consistent with the goals and policies of the downtown study and the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines.
2. Enforce the Delano Central Business District Design Guidelines on the all the renovation and rehabilitation of downtown buildings.
3. Establish a downtown rehabilitation / renovation financial assistance program (i.e. loan, commercial loan interest buy down, grants, etc.)
4. Pursue State and Federal grants that would assist in public and private downtown efforts.
5. Pursue the rehabilitation of 260 River Street. Remove the blighted, damage portions of the building; renovate the building to a usable state; and introduce a new active business to the downtown. Clean up and reuse the adjoining parking lot.
6. Pursue the build out of the Granite Works Redevelopment site to expand the population in close proximity to the downtown.
7. Establish redevelopment districts over Subarea 2 and the residential properties fronting on Railroad Avenue to promote commercial and residential land uses



that fit the identity of the downtown and contribute to the accumulative attraction of the downtown.

8. Utilize tax increment financing to assist in the targeted redevelopment efforts.
9. Work with the property owner of the land in the southwest quadrant of the Bridge Avenue and Highway 12 with regard to land use, site and building design to blend this site with the balance of the downtown.

Capital Improvements

Through the Downtown Study the following public improvements have been identified. Through the capital improvement process these public improvements can be prioritized and scheduled through the City's budgeting process. The following list of improvements is offered without any suggestion of priority.

1. Replacement or renovation of the signs, monuments, landscaping at the Bridge Avenue and Highway 12.
2. Bridge improvements that create a gateway entrance to the downtown. Improve sidewalks crossing the bridge.
3. Construction of a pedestrian Bridge over the Crow River south of Subarea 3.
4. Improve pedestrian crossings at the Bridge Avenue / Highway 12 intersection and the intersections on River Street.
5. Design and construct River Front Park south of Bridge Avenue.
6. Expand streetscape improvements along River Street. Work with Wright County to create uniform street lighting and landscape treatments along River Street.
7. Improve pedestrian crossings over River Street at Elm, Bridge and Railroad Avenues.



8. Expand the downtown streetscape elements along Railroad Avenue from River Street to Tiger Drive.
9. Work with the Railroad to the construction of public parking along Railroad Avenue. Screen the Railroad outdoor storage and active work areas.
10. Replace damaged or dying streetscape trees.
11. Raise the streetscape ground mount electrical outlets to avoid tripping issues.
12. Design and construct new plaza entrance at the Library and replace Library parking.
13. Design and construct a new use of the open space at the southwest corner of Bridge Avenue and 2nd Street. Remove the Crabapple tree.
14. Design and construct a new plaza entrance at City Hall.
15. Design and construct a new use of the open space between Delano Heritage Building and the License Bureau.
16. Heritage Center Building improvements. Provide public restrooms in the Heritage Center that are available during the evening and weekend business hours of the downtown businesses.
17. Design and construct downtown gateway signs along River Street and Railroad Avenue.
18. Design and construct wayfinding signs at key downtown locations.
19. Acquire access and parking easements across the properties along the alleys, design and construct public parking lots along the alleys. Parking design shall include drainage, paved parking, striping, lighting and landscaping.
20. River clean-up and river bank stabilization and landscaping.



21. Construct a riverbank overland trail connecting the downtown with Central Park.
22. Investigate the acquisition of residential properties within targeted redevelopment districts as they become available for sale.





FOREST LAKE

DOWNTOWN PLAN

DRAFT: June 22, 2022



Forest Lake
AS GOOD AS IT SOUNDS



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Thanks to all those who contributed to preparation of the Forest Lake Downtown Plan and especially those devoted substantial time, energy, wisdom, and creativity.

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Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN



PLAN FOCUS

This Plan is intended to coalesce and communicate a vision, guide public investment and influence private investment in downtown Forest Lake. Communities that do this, best position themselves to strive for the future they seek.

Downtowns are districts with an interdependence between public and private spaces, amenities, infrastructure and activities. Planning for the future of downtown as a district rather than just individual properties or projects over time has an inherent power that is simply good business.

Forest Lake recognizes the power of envisioning the future of its downtown district. Community leaders prepared for a planning process for months and launched the creation of a downtown plan in 2021. The plan has taken roughly a year to prepare and with ongoing attention, it will serve as a guide to investments and actions over the next fifteen (or so) years.

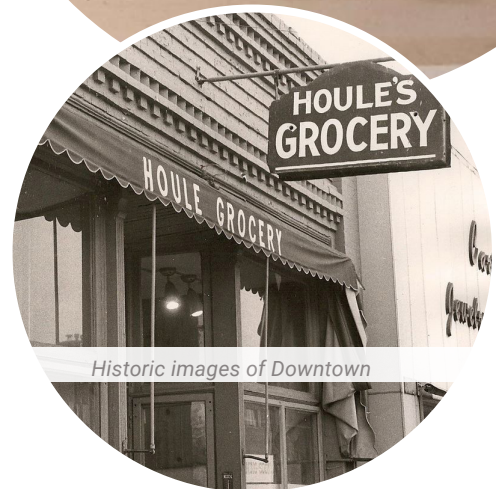
By engaging the community, understanding the district and its context, and suggesting creative and targeted solutions, the plan will be a vital tool in accomplishing the community's vision.

Of course, the plan is only step one. Implementation is the real work and will demand continued attention to the vision and investments (public and private) necessary to accomplish it.

The Vision, Downtown Guide Plan and associated directives described in Chapters 4 and 5 will take time to accomplish. Across the lifespan of the plan, it will be easy to lose track of "why." Although it is recognized that circumstances will no doubt change, the plan will act as a guidepost to decision-making.

Although the Plan has many graphic sketches and depictions that are used to express a notion of urban patterns and character, the intent of the plan is not to suggest the actual architectural design of improvements. Imagery is intended to express architectural and urban design parameters that communicate plan directives and character rather than suggest actual building or site design.

The Plan for Downtown Forest Lake is focused on preparing for opportunities, directing public investments, and ensuring that property reinvestments are accomplished in ways that not only benefit the investor but contribute to the urban fabric and vitality of the district.



Historic images of Downtown



Historic images of Downtown

Some of the directives expressed in the Downtown Guide Plan are dependent on other actions happening first. That's okay. This plan is an expression of long-term vision and Forest Lake will be presented with opportunities to accomplish directives that, today, seem unlikely. Those of us helping the community prepare the Downtown Master Plan see this situation often with our client communities. There is something about the act of preparing a vision that leads to new opportunities popping up.

The goal of the plan is to arrange the building blocks of urban place in inspired and innovative ways that guide downtown Forest Lake to a dynamic and vital future. The three fundamental building blocks present in any urban place and around which the plan is built are development patterns, urban systems and design character.

In addition to these three, it is important to think of downtown's physical attributes as a stage upon which downtown life happens. The stage needs to be functional and safe and inspiring but people are the actors that bring downtown to life. The better we design and build the stage, the more dynamic the performance. In the plan, we call this **ACTIVATION** and Chapter 6 is devoted to it.

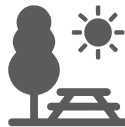
Finally, Chapter 7 outlines an implementation strategy and budgets for the projects suggested in the plan. Some may believe the plan represents an extraordinary amount of public investment. It certainly is not insignificant. A few things to consider around expense are:

1. Forest Lake will find partner agencies, grants, public/private partnerships and other forms of assistance to reduce Forest Lake's share of the overall investment demand.
2. The Forest Lake Downtown Plan represents a fairly typical level of public investment compared with other communities with robust downtown districts (some of which you may wish downtown Forest Lake were more like).
3. The vision Forest Lake has expressed in its Downtown Plan and the implementation of the plan will draw private investment that will increase downtown property tax capacity that, in turn, will help offset public investments.



Development Patterns

represent broad patterns of land use and density. Suggestions in regard to development patterns are expressed in the Plan in the form of a modified land use plan and modifications to the zoning regulations



Urban Systems

are the infrastructure, public facilities, superstructure, and ecology that make a place function and allow an urban environment to sustain itself. Suggestions in regard to urban systems are expressed in the Plan in the form of a composite master plan and series of initiatives



Design Character

is the site design, architectural character, and relationship between public and private space expressed in the Plan by a series of site concept drawings and design guidelines



STUDY AREA

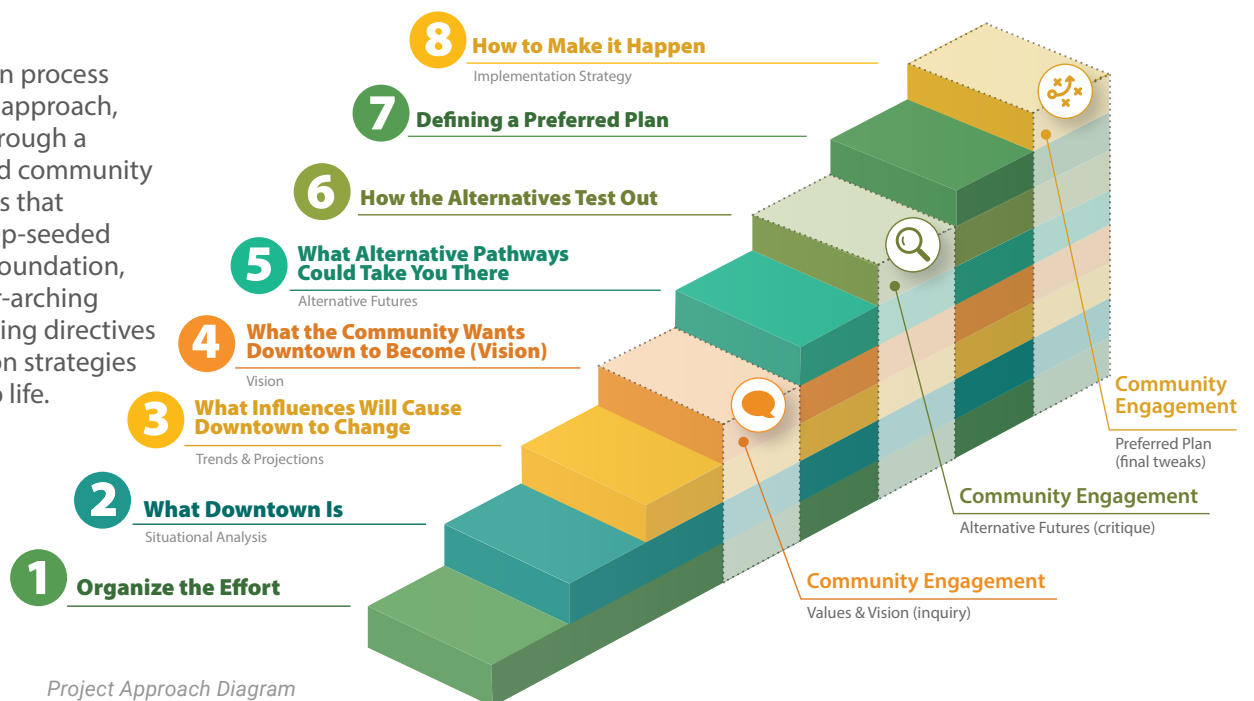
The plan is focused on roughly 72 acres centered on the Lake Street and Broadway Avenue intersection. The study area extends between 3rd Avenue SW and 4th Avenue NW and between 3rd Street SW and the Forest Lake, Lake 1 shoreline. The study area generally represents the historic downtown core of Forest Lake. The primary gateways into the district are either end of Lake Street, Broadway Avenue and, more recently, either end of the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail.

The study area includes a broad mix of development patterns, architectural character, building age and other factors. The unifying features, however, are (or can be) the draw of the Lake, the street network, the urban forest and the common interests of the community.



PLANNING PROCESS

The Downtown Plan process follows a stair-step approach, guiding the City through a series of phases and community engagement efforts that investigate the deep-seeded questions, set the foundation, and lead to an over-arching vision with correlating directives and implementation strategies to bring the Plan to life.



Project Approach Diagram

TIMELINE FOR CREATING THE PLAN

The planning process spanned 14 months, beginning in March 2021 and included a number of Downtown Committee, City Council, and Stakeholder meetings. Three community workshops were held (both in person and online) to gather feedback from the community on the Plan's vision, alternative directives, and preferred approach.

STEP 1	ORGANIZE THE EFFORT March 2021	• Downtown Committee Meeting
STEP 2	WHAT DOWNTOWN IS (SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS) March - April 2021	
STEP 3	STEP 3 - WHAT INFLUENCES WILL CAUSE DOWNTOWN TO CHANGE (TRENDS & PROJECTIONS) April 2021	• Downtown Committee Meeting
STEP 4	WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTS DOWNTOWN TO BECOME (VISION) May - June 2021	• Community Workshop • Downtown Committee Meeting • City Council Meeting
STEP 5	WHAT ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS COULD TAKE YOU THERE (ALTERNATIVE FUTURES) June - August 2021	• Downtown Committee Meeting
STEP 6	HOW THE ALTERNATIVES TEST OUT September - December 2021	• Downtown Committee Meeting • Community Workshop
STEP 7	DEFINING A PREFERRED PLAN January - April 2022	• Downtown Committee Meeting
STEP 8	HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN (IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY) April - July 2022	• Community Workshop • Downtown Committee Meeting • City Council Meeting





A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

Understanding what downtown is today offers a basis for achieving what is desired tomorrow. In the following pages we will explore the existing conditions of the downtown district in four layers of analysis:

- **Land Use:** The framework of residential, office, commercial, institutional, and parkland parcels that comprise downtown.
- **Public Realm:** Shared spaces accessible to all, including street and trail corridors, parks, and privately owned public spaces.
- **Private Properties:** If a property is not a part of the dedicated public realm, it falls under the category of private property. This includes commercial, residential, and office spaces.
- **Downtown Activation:** Community events and adequate parking to support local happenings and businesses.

In examining these categories, we will take a closer look at the features that make up each layer:

 Land Use	 Public Realm	 Private Properties	 Downtown Activation
• Residential • Office • Commercial • Institutional • Parkland	• Green Space and Nature • Sidewalks and Trails • Pedestrian Amenities	• Real Estate • Business • Visitor Base	• Attractions • Parking





LAND USE



Mixed-use development (office, residential, retail) with commercial retail street frontage on Lake Street



Commercial retail frontage on Lake Street



Office development adjacent to Lakeside Memorial Park

LAND USE

Downtown has a healthy mix of retail, office and residential land uses. The presence of residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors helps ensure activation throughout the day and seasons.

Commercial retail uses in combination with retail frontage predominate the east side of Lake Street between 1st Street SE and 2nd Avenue NW with a lesser presence on the west side in the same stretch. Beyond this stretch to the north and the south, commercial retail has a more minor presence.

Office is mixed throughout the downtown district. While the presence of office uses is a very healthy sign of downtown, when it predominates the street frontage, it can have negative impacts on retail traffic. It brings employment to the district which bolsters retail services like dry cleaning, daycare, dining, pharmacy and entertainment. Changes in work patterns accelerated by the pandemic have had profound impacts on office tenancy and it is unclear what the lasting impacts will be. Current projections favor district-scale office location like downtown Forest Lake over regional locations.

Pockets of medium-density and low-density residential are present within downtown, which is beneficial for the overall land use mix. Increasing the density of residential within the district, or transitioning single-family residences to live-work spaces or retail shops is a strategy often seen in successful downtown realms.

Downtown has a only a few vacant parcels along Lake Street that, once developed, will help stitch together the fabric of downtown by providing a more active street frontage.

FRONTAGE

An important aspect of downtown retail strategy is establishment of the retail loop. This concept suggests that retail success of a district is dependent on the unbroken cadence of activated storefronts + dining. Gaps in storefronts caused by service commercial, office or residential uses or through vacant parcels diminish retail viability and lessen shopper enthusiasm. The downtown district has experienced a significant transition away from retail storefronts and toward office/service - a trend addressed with strategies in the Downtown Plan.

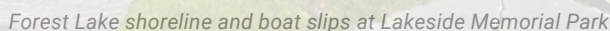
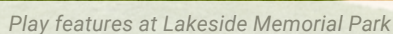
DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Forest Lake is to be commended for maintaining a traditional pattern of building frontage at the street with parking behind in its downtown district. For decades, it has not been easy for communities to resist the suburban development pattern of buildings set back with parking in front. Having the traditional pattern in place provides the opportunity to focus on “next-level” investments rather than attempt to reverse unfortunate past patterns.





FIGURE 2.1 LAND USE AND FRONTAGE DIAGRAM



PROXIMITY TO PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

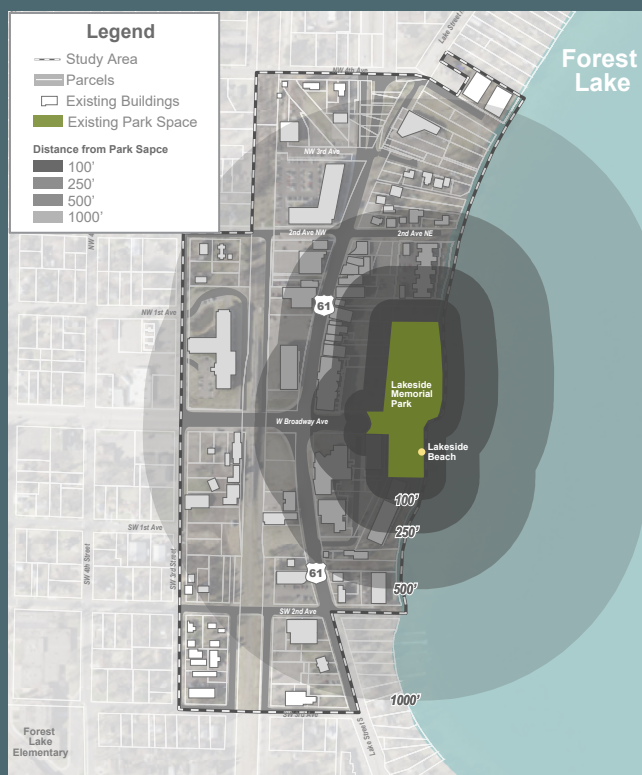


FIGURE 2.2 PARK PROXIMITY DIAGRAM

GREEN SPACE & NATURE

An adequate amount of well-located, well-connected, and well-cared for parks and green spaces are important within a thriving city and public realm.

LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK

Lakeside Memorial Park is a 4-acre park in the core of downtown along the shore of Forest Lake. It is the most prominent downtown green space, beloved by the community, and a primary downtown recreational destination. Park features include:

- Open lawn
- Gazebo
- Beach
- Playground
- Benches/seating
- Beachhouse w/restrooms
- Private boat club dock
- Public-use transient boat dock
- Picnic facilities
- Walking paths

Located at the termination of W Broadway Ave, the park can be reached by vehicles via Broadway Avenue, 1st Street SE or 2nd Avenue NE. Numerous concrete sidewalks and alleyways in the retail district lead and connect to paved trails within the park, and many crossings throughout the parking area are marked for pedestrian access. Lastly, both public and private boat slips are available for lake users, and a sandy swimming beach can be used for paddboarders and other watercrafts to access the water. Unfortunately, a lack of clear wayfinding signage is a barrier to visitors attempting to locate entrances, safe crossing points, parking for both boats and vehicles, and even the park itself, given its obscured location behind local shops and restaurants and the large expanse of parking.

"BORROWED" OPEN SPACES

Formal parks provide the clearest example of greenspace in a district, but vegetation such as tree cover and permeable ground allow for “borrowed” greenspace even though it may exist on private land. Examples of this in the study area today are the numerous vacant parcels along Highway 61, open landscaped areas surrounding local businesses, alleyways between buildings that offer glimpses of the park and lake, and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail corridor lined with trees and lawn. Trees and vegetated ground cover are not only great contributions to a welcoming public realm, but play an important role in combatting urban heat island effects and helping to manage runoff.



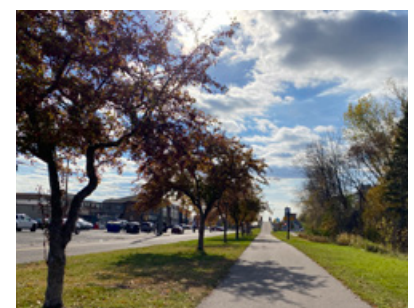
Existing sidewalk planter



Existing permeable "borrowed" green space



Only lake view as visitors enter the downtown area off of Broadway



The regional trail corridor provides sparse shade that contributes to the overall tree cover for Downtown

FIGURE 2.3 GREEN SPACE AND NATURE DIAGRAM

CIRCULATION

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

A robust sidewalk network into and within the district will be important to its continued success as a commercial district. Today, numerous streets in the adjacent neighborhood are without sidewalks and many that do exist offer a less than pleasant walking experience due to sidewalk placement/design and adjacent traffic. The adjacent neighborhood is within walking proximity and is therefore, downtown's "built-in" constituency but these downtown guests need sidewalk infrastructure and pleasant sidewalk environments to convince them to walk downtown. There are six pedestrian access points into the study area, most along street corridors with few pedestrian comfort amenities or clear wayfinding. While the current sidewalks generally meet universal access standards, some access barriers exist in the southern portion of the study area and varying sidewalk widths impact guests choosing to use them. FYI - pedestrian crossings are addressed in the Pedestrian Amenities section of this chapter.



Hardwood Creek Regional Trail overpass of W Broadway Avenue

SOCIAL SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks over the 5' foot "magic minimum" measurement with ADA compliant design contribute to a social sidewalk network. Sidewalks narrower than 5 feet are better than nothing but lose the social value of walking side-by-side; a critical aspect of robust use. 95% of the sidewalks in the study area today meet the minimum width requirement to contribute to the social sidewalk network.



FIGURE 2.4 SOCIAL SIDEWALK NETWORK

BIKE NETWORK

Currently, three entrance points within the downtown study area support cyclists including either end of the Hardwood Creek Trail and W. Broadway Avenue. Within downtown, there is not a bike network or support amenities (lock-ups, water, wayfinding, identified routes, etc.). This leads to bikers passing by the district.

The Hardwood Creek Regional Trail connects with 36 miles of regional trail and several local trails beyond the downtown district. The Hardwood Creek Trail offers significant opportunity for downtown identity, visitorship and economic activity. However, there is little to no invitation of trail users to stop and explore downtown Forest Lake. The regional trail crosses local streets at three intersections within the study area and bridges over West Broadway Avenue, which acts as a visual gateway into downtown and offers outstanding views of the downtown and Forest Lake, Lake 1.

The W. Broadway Avenue shared-use trail extends from the I-35 corridor to Lake Street. It is an important element of pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Although it provides a functioning bike/ped corridor, it has several challenges from a user-comfort standpoint that cause it to not be robustly used. Those challenges include the number of driveway and street crossings, the trail's close proximity to the curb, and adjacent traffic volume and speeds. The trail lands in the downtown district at the Lake Street roundabout, which many residents perceive (accurately or not) as a challenging bike/ped crossing point.

ACCESS TO DESTINATIONS

The Lake Street commercial corridor the central economic engine of the downtown district. It is obviously centered on transportation routes. True "access" to storefronts and services however, is much more nuanced with a focus on parking (car or bike) and the pedestrian experience once a visitor parks then walks to their destinations. In these ways (wayfinding and visitor experience of parking and walking), downtown has many opportunities to improve.

Lakeside Memorial Park and beach is one of downtown Forest Lake's most popular destinations. It can be reached directly as a pedestrian from Lake Street via the W Broadway Avenue intersection. Other pedestrian links are nearly but not quite complete and require manoeuvring through parking lots for some stretch to reach the park.



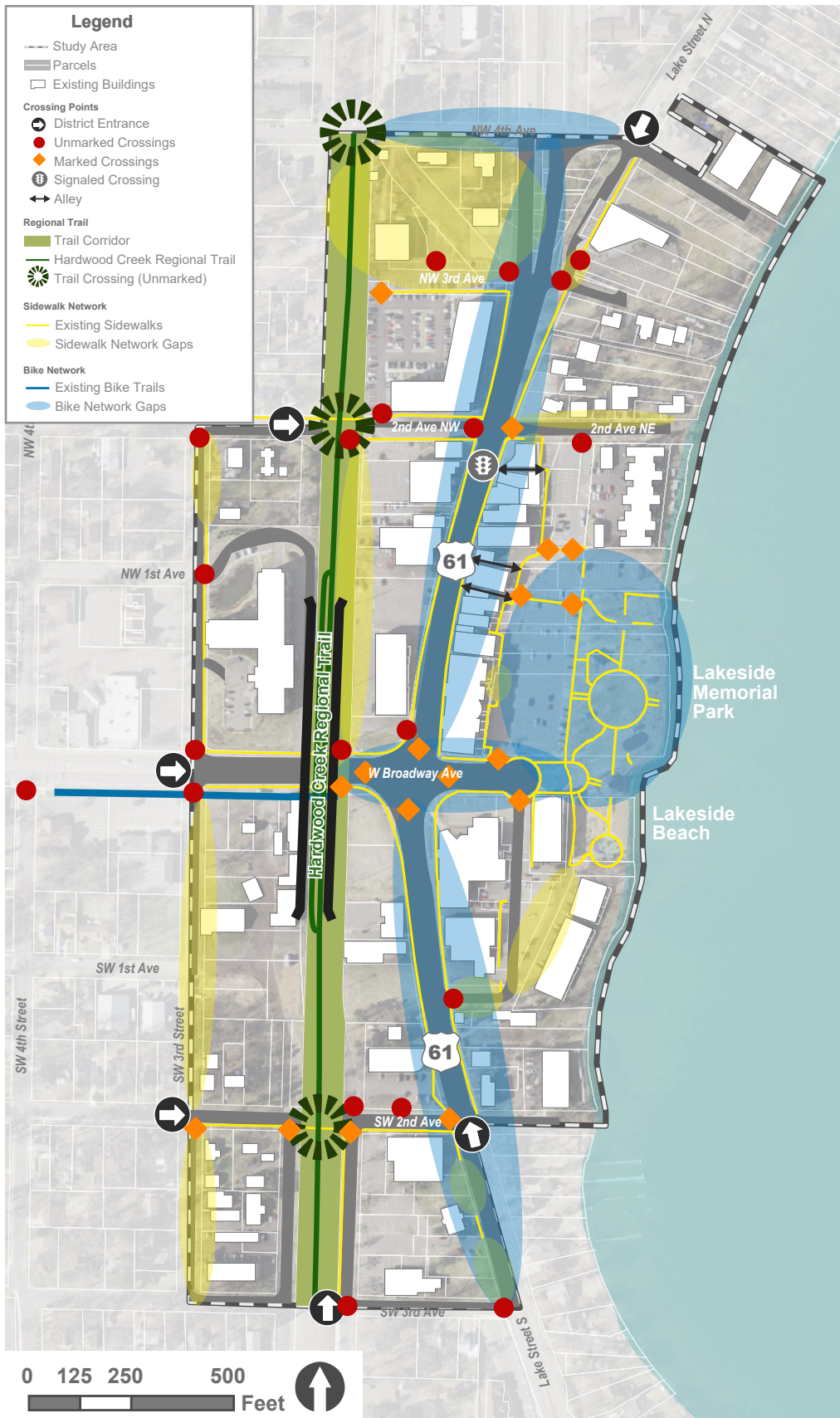
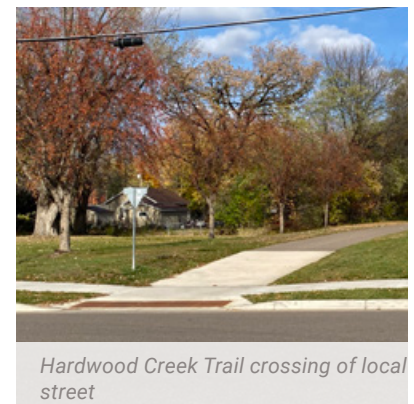
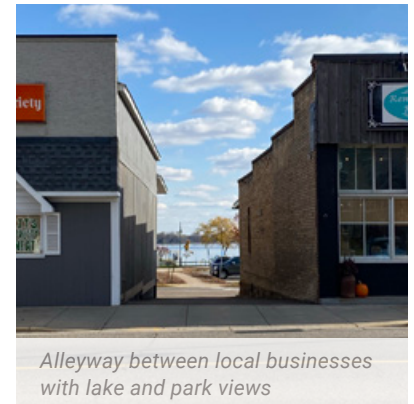


FIGURE 2.5 SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS DIAGRAM





Lake Street streetscape and parking bay



W Broadway / Lake Street roundabout



Pedestrian-activated mid-block ped crossing of Lake Street



Trash and recycling receptacles

PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

Pedestrian comfort and security (both real and perceived) are important to creating and maintaining a bustling public realm. Comforts and functional amenities such as well-scaled and connected sidewalks (addressed earlier), comfortable street crossings, traffic calming, inviting lighting, tree canopy, cared-for landscaping, and visitor comforts are central to the set of amenities needed to support pedestrian activities and a successful district.

CROSSINGS & CALMING

Figure 2.6 illustrates street crossings of various type in the downtown district. In general, crossings of local streets are in good locations, function well and meet basic universal access design standards. However, crossings and calming of Lake Street are not as robust as needed to support a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented shopping district.

Both the quantity and comfort of pedestrian crossings of Lake Street are primary barriers to downtown visitorship. Community feedback in the planning process had a strong focus on perceptions of traffic safety at the W Broadway roundabout but traffic speed, the lack of a controlled crossing at the south end of the district and confusion about how to use the pedestrian-activated crossing at the north end of the district also contribute to feelings of unsafe conditions for pedestrians. We know through research that successful retail districts provide visitors with a shopping *loop* experience, which makes street crossings and traffic safety pivotal elements.

LIGHTING

Lighting in the downtown district is primarily vehicle-oriented and most prominent along Lake Street with lower levels of lighting along local streets and in parking areas. Lakeside Memorial Park is the primary area of pedestrian-oriented lighting (lower height and closer together). Light levels vary through the district, which is common and expected. Lighting, however, when designed strategically at the district scale is a form of wayfinding and a cue that this place is meant for people as pedestrians. Lighting can be used to create safe environments, guide visitors along preferred routes and as an invitation to linger/socialize at key downtown destinations.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

Trees are one of the most important elements of creating an inviting pedestrian environment. The shade they provide is critical in encouraging walking and their presence, like pedestrian lighting is a cue that this is a place for people. Because Lake Street is a State highway constructed in a certain era, street trees were not allowed. The lack of trees on the street has a significant negative impact on the corridor's character and the level of pedestrian activity it realizes. Street trees are present elsewhere in the district and are instrumental in creating pleasant pedestrian spaces.

Landscaping in addition to trees provides aesthetic interest to visitors and sends a message that this place is cared for (or not). Landscaping in Lakeside Memorial Park is excellent while landscaping on Lake Street and Centennial Drive is generally lacking.

COMFORT AMENITIES

Comfort amenities can have a significant impact on visitor's length of stay in a downtown district as well as their interest in returning. Today, most of downtown's comfort amenities like restrooms, benches, drinking water, and waste receptacles exist within Lakeside Memorial Park. They exist sparingly on Lake Street and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail. Future strategies for both trail and streetscape amenities will, no doubt have a strong focus on comfort amenities.



FIGURE 2.6 PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES DIAGRAM - FULL STUDY AREA

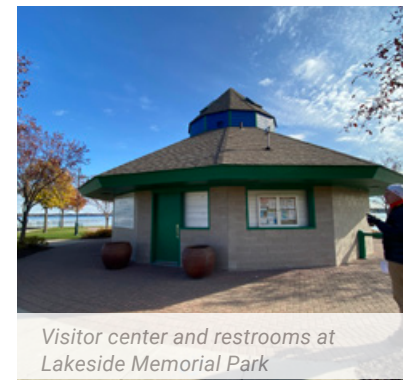


FIGURE 2.7 LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK ZOOM VIEW



PRIVATE PROPERTIES



Downtown's newest redevelopment - a mixed-use project with commercial and residential street frontage and 4 stories of residential above.



A wide gap between buildings is temporarily used as space to advertise



Business for sale



Vacant parcel along Highway 61

REAL ESTATE VALUES

Real estate value is derived by an intangible combination of history and prospect. Thriving downtown districts translate into good property investments. This is generally a very good thing although there is an interesting dynamic many communities face between real estate value and the interest/need to assemble multiple properties for redevelopment.

Forest Lake has downtown properties arguably in need of redevelopment and many of them are too small or too narrow for today's development interests. Developers have been and continue to be interested in downtown Forest Lake and patiently assemble properties for their future development interests. This ongoing activity will be an important adjunct to Forest Lake's public realm investments that are an outgrowth of the Downtown Plan.

COMMERCIAL LEASE RATES

There are many nuances to lease rates of downtown properties but at their core, they are a direct outgrowth of property value, which is a direct outgrowth of district vibrancy or sales potential.

Although a detailed analysis of lease rates in downtown Forest Lake has not been conducted, anecdotal feedback suggests that office lease rates are comparable to other similar districts and retail lease rates are somewhat lower than other downtown districts recognized for their vibrancy. These realities are likely the result of 1) strong interest in locating professional and retail services in proximity to the broader Forest Lake community, 2) the challenging pedestrian environment and public realm aesthetics of downtown that lead to a difficult retail setting, and 3) some downtown buildings in poor condition that do not meet the needs of contemporary retailing.

OCCUPANCY

Downtown occupancy is relatively strong. There are few vacant storefronts, most of which are in buildings in poor condition. There is also some low occupancy in very new development that still gaining a foothold in the commercial mix of downtown.

There are several sites where buildings have been torn down (in some cases for many years) and new buildings have not replaced them. This is likely due to the dimensions and access configurations of particular sites. Many of these sites will need assembly with adjacent parcels to make for viable redevelopments.



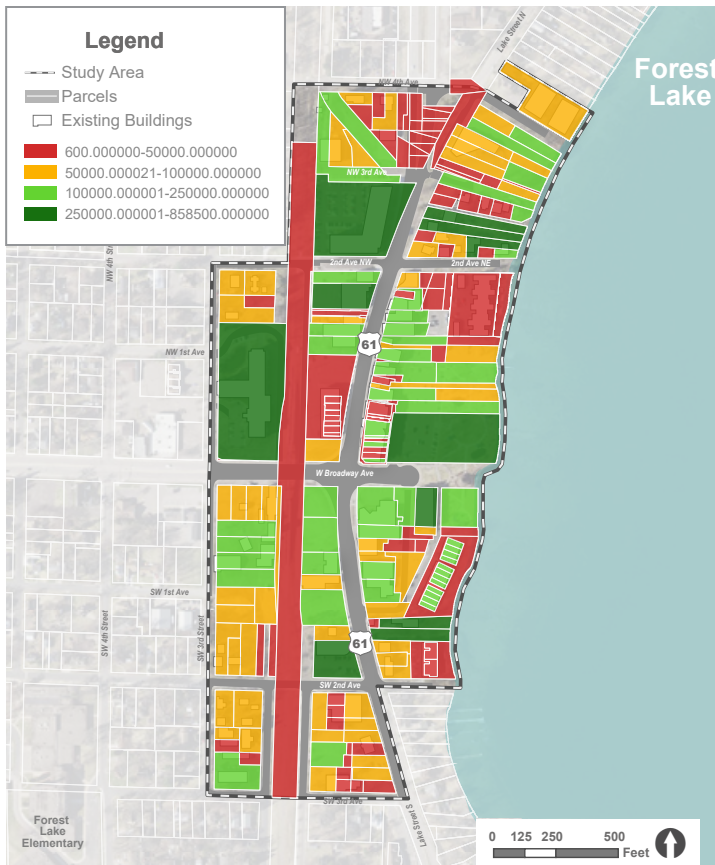


FIGURE 2.8 LAND VALUES DIAGRAM

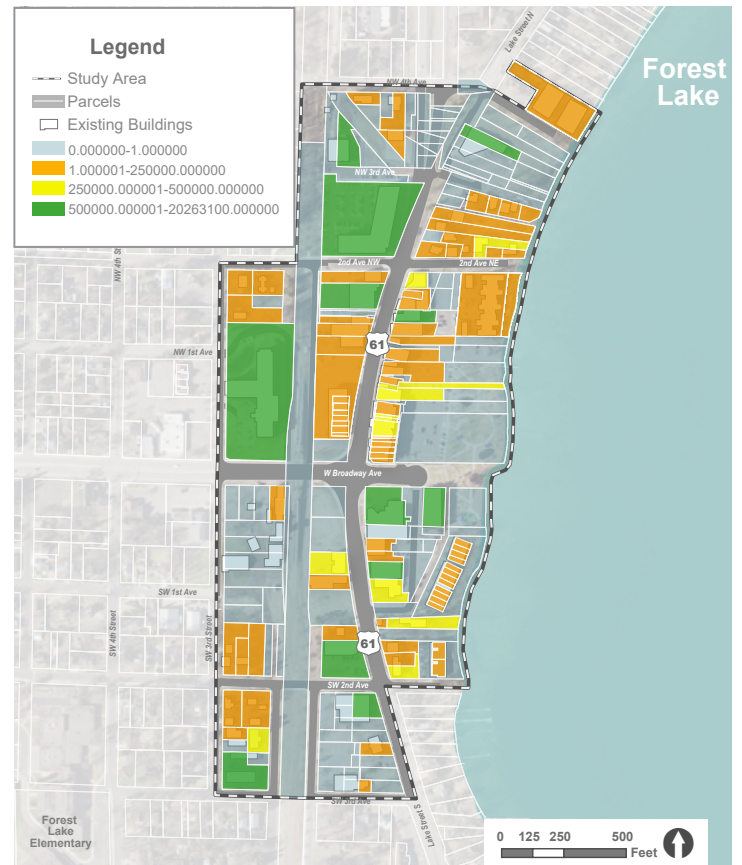


FIGURE 2.9 BUILDING VALUES DIAGRAM



FIGURE 2.10 VACANT PARCELS DIAGRAM





Local business with small patio space out front



Restaurant building on Lake Street with rear outdoor patio overlooking the lake.



Vacant theater building on Lake Street.



Mixed-use redevelopment with frontage on Lake Street and commanding views to the lake.

BUSINESS INVENTORY

Businesses in the study area have been inventoried as part of the planning process. The inventory is further evidence of the healthy mix of retail and commercial uses in the downtown district. While the mix of uses is a good one, placement of the varying uses is challenging the functionality and guest attraction of downtown as a whole.

Businesses seem to be making location decisions around two key factors; the convenience of parking and the condition/functionality of buildings. These are important, logical, and smart factors to drive location on a business-by-business basis. However, the community interest is to lift up the whole district as a vibrant destination. Therefore, many of the directives recommended later in the Downtown Plan are meant to help overcome parking and access disparities, property condition, the discomfort of walking in the district, and the aesthetics of the Lake Street corridor.

These issues are strategically important because they mitigate for shortcomings with a particular property and allow downtown to be experienced by visitors as district rather than a collection of one-visit/one-use commercial destinations.

What other communities find as they move through the process to implement a district vision is that 1) challenging properties become less difficult to lease and their investment levels increase, and 2) storefronts that have been transitioning over time to office or service retail begin to be reoccupied by storefront retail. These shifts begin to reestablish a cohesive retail loop (discussed earlier in this chapter) and draw more pedestrians willing to circulate the district for multiple stops in a single visit.





FIGURE 2.11 BUSINESS INVENTORY

Retail

- ② The Lash Lounge
- ④ Liquor Works
- ⑧ Diamond Find
- ⑨ Trade Wins Sports
- ⑩ LiQuiVape
- ⑭ La Grande Beauty Spa and Boutique
- ②③ Verizon
- ②⑤ iLash Beauty Bar
- ②⑦ North Woods Optics
- ②⑧ Downtown Barbers
- ③① Sienna Cole Bridal
- ③② Remodeled Relics
- ③③ Rolseth Drug
- ③④ Parrot Adoption Education Program
- ③⑤ Forest Lake Pets
- ③⑧ Salon EnV
- ④① Dick's Tattoo
- ④① TitleSmart, Inc.
- ④③ Snap Fitness
- ④⑤ Reub's Tire Shop, Inc.

Restaurant/Dining

- ⑥ Kodiak Coffee
- ⑪ New Bangkok Thai
- ⑫ Vannelli's by The Lake
- ⑱ Rancho Loco Grill & Bar
- ③⑥ Domino's Pizza
- ③⑦ Fireside Getaway Restaurant & Bar
- ④④ Mallards Restaurant

Office

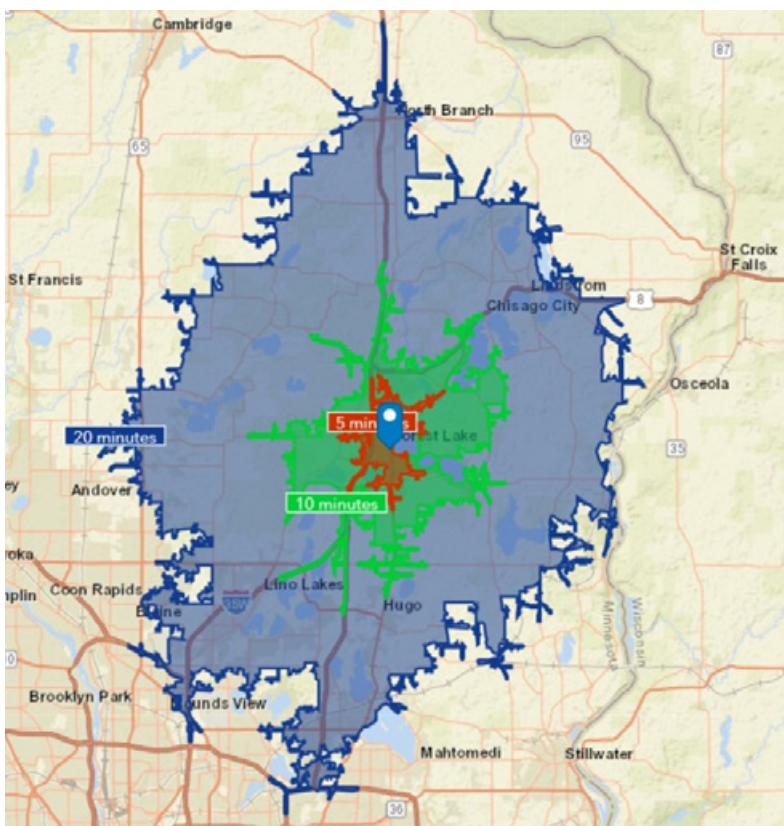
- ① Wells Fargo Bank
- ③ Butts, Schneider & Butts, LLP
- ⑤ Miller & Stevens Law
- ⑦ E J Houle Inc
- ⑬ Brian Leneweaver Coldwell Banker Realty
- ⑮ Johnson / Turner Legal
- ⑮ Timothy Garry, Coldwell Banker Burnet
- ⑰ VerBout Services
- ⑲ Five Star Financial Resources
- ⑳ St Croix Endodontics
- ㉑ Fry & Associates
- ㉒ iSmile Orthodontics
- ㉔ Fairview Health Services
- ㉖ American Family Insurance
- ㉙ Sewing and Fitting Mentor
- ③⑩ LaBelle Real Estate Group
- ③⑨ St. Croix Valley Peach
- ④② Aaron M Peterson: Allstate Insurance
- ④⑥ Chad Smoley, White Oaks Real Estate, LLC
- ④⑦ Mattson Funeral Home

VISITOR BASE

The visitor base is the population that is most likely to patronize businesses within the downtown. A larger visitor base means more potential activity and revenue for the district. Having potential customers nearby supports local business and generates regular visits into downtown.

While contemporary travel patterns tend to favor retail districts adjacent to highway interchanges for their convenience, downtown main streets offer a slower, more pleasant experience, and can see major success when they strategically lean into this aesthetic. The study area's population is not large enough to support the market alone, so attracting visitors from outside the downtown boundary is essential. Marketing downtown Forest Lake as a unique destination, limiting barriers to knowledge and access, and investing in the public realm can help to position the district to capture more of the visitor base's potential spending.

Study Area restaurants only capture 14% of the restaurant spending within a 5 minute drive time and 3% of the restaurant spending within a 10 minute drive time. There is significant spending capacity to be captured by attracting nearby residents to downtown.



POPULATION WITHIN DRIVING TIMES OF THE DEFINED STUDY AREA:

Drive Time	Population
Study Area	383
5 Minutes	8,869
10 Minutes	31,228
20 Minutes	191,777

SPENDING BY PEOPLE LIVING WITHIN DRIVING TIME OF THE DEFINED THE STUDY AREA:

Drive Time	Retail	Food/Drink
Study Area	\$3,480,028	\$376,160
5 Min	\$108,368,308	\$11,628,585
10 Min	\$438,171,379	\$47,172,001
20 Min	\$2,859,340,261	\$309,845,616

HOW DO SALES NUMBERS IN THE STUDY AREA RELATE TO SPENDING BY PEOPLE LIVING NEAR THE STUDY AREA?

Study Area Sales		
Study Area	\$28,744,855	\$2,990,014

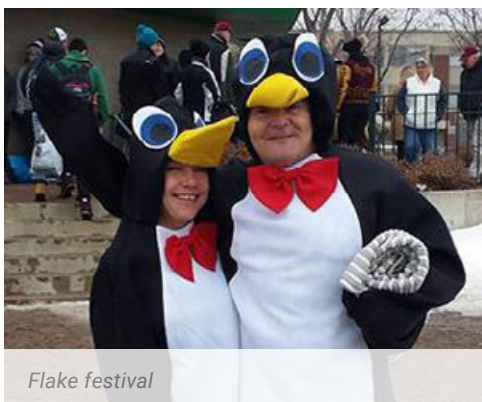
Drive Time	Retail	Food/Drink
Study Area	826%	795%
5 Min	27%	26%
10 Min	7%	6%
20 Min	1%	1%







Arts in the Park



Flake festival



Arts in the Park



4th of July festivities

ATTRACTIONS

Downtown Forest Lake holds several well-attended events throughout the year that attract people to the district and help to support local businesses, including:

- 4th of July
- Flake Festival
- Hometown Holiday
- Arts in the Park
- Winter Plunge

These large events are major undertakings and provide memorable experiences for attendees, but do little for the day-to-day perception of downtown. In order to encourage a more consistently vibrant atmosphere, the city should incorporate small-scale activation on a weekly basis, so that visitors feel downtown always has something interesting going on. If there are events or attractions that happen elsewhere in the community, consider relocating or inviting them to take place in downtown, in order to draw energy to the district and position it as an activity hub.



PARKING

Parking is an essential part of a successful retail corridor and should be convenient and easy to use.

LAND USE ISOLATION

Currently, large surface parking lots for local businesses along Highway 61 are oriented towards the rear, which isolates shops and services from assets such as Lakeside Memorial Park and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail. These parking lots also prevent restaurants and eateries from taking advantage of park or lake views, make bike and pedestrian connections difficult to establish, and affect businesses' ability to draw in customers from all sides. With a busy highway corridor down the center, visitors who park on the east side of Highway 61 may find it hard to cross over to reach retail on the west side, deterring potential business.

BOAT/TRAILER PARKING

Insufficient boat and trailer parking near the public lake access causes chaos and confusion for those trying to launch their crafts and store their trailers and vehicles nearby. The connected commercial lot results in unofficial boat parking during the warmer seasons when boating is at its peak.

SEASONAL USE

Like any city, Forest Lake faces the obstacles of seasonal parking shortages. Finding the balance between having too much parking in the colder months, and too little in the summer months when festivals and events are being held, the beach is in use, and the park is a popular destination, can be a challenge. Lack of vehicular wayfinding causes confusion and makes pedestrians feel uncomfortable crossing surface lots to reach their destinations.



FIGURE 2.12 PARKING DIAGRAM



Existing boat parking



Parking between Lakeside Memorial Park and local businesses



Parking along Highway 61



Parking spaces being utilized by vendors at the Arts in the Park Event

DOWNTOWN PARKING ANALYSIS

Understanding where parking is and how much of it exists is only one aspect of determining whether or not there is “enough.” The definition of “enough” parking has evolved over time, and is influenced by several factors. The following analysis uses existing development and parking quantities to assess parking surplus or shortfall under three different scenarios.

SCENARIO 1:

This scenario uses Forest Lake’s current zoning standard of 5 stalls per 1,000 sf of retail/office, and 1 visitor stall per residential unit as the definition of “enough” parking. This was a fairly normal downtown parking standard in years past, but across the past decade, most communities have reduced downtown parking requirements to be similar to Scenario 2 below.

	NW Quadrant	NE Quadrant	SW Quadrant	SE Quadrant
Retail / Office (in gross square feet)	82,000	82,000	9,000	57,000
Parking Demand	410	410	45	285
Residential Units	-	12	-	-
Parking Demand		12		
Total Parking Demand	410	422	45	285
Current Parking Count	239	274	48	133
<i>Surplus / Shortfall by Quadrant</i>	171	148	3	152
District-wide Shortfall	468			

SCENARIO 2:

This scenario considers today’s standard for a primarily auto-oriented downtown setting, utilizing a metric of 4 stalls per 1,000 sf of retail/office, and 0.3 visitor stall per residential unit.

	NW Quadrant	NE Quadrant	SW Quadrant	SE Quadrant
Retail / Office (in gross square feet)	82,000	82,000	9,000	57,000
Parking Demand	328	328	36	228
Residential Units	-	12	-	-
Parking Demand		4		
Total Parking Demand	328	332	36	228
Current Parking Count	239	274	48	133
<i>Surplus / Shortfall by Quadrant</i>	89	58	12	95
District-wide Shortfall	230			

SCENARIO 3:

This scenario illustrates typical metrics for downtown parking in a transit-oriented district: 2.5 stalls per 1,000 sf of retail/office, and 0.15 visitor stall per residential unit. Downtown Forest Lake does not fit the transit scenario, but it is interesting to see that there would be more than enough existing parking under this scenario.

	NW Quadrant	NE Quadrant	SW Quadrant	SE Quadrant
Retail / Office (in gross square feet)	82,000	82,000	9,000	57,000
Parking Demand	205	205	23	143
Residential Units	-	12	-	-
Parking Demand		2		
Total Parking Demand	205	207	23	143
Current Parking Count	239	274	48	133
<i>Surplus / Shortfall by Quadrant</i>	34	67	26	10
<i>District-wide Surplus</i>	117			



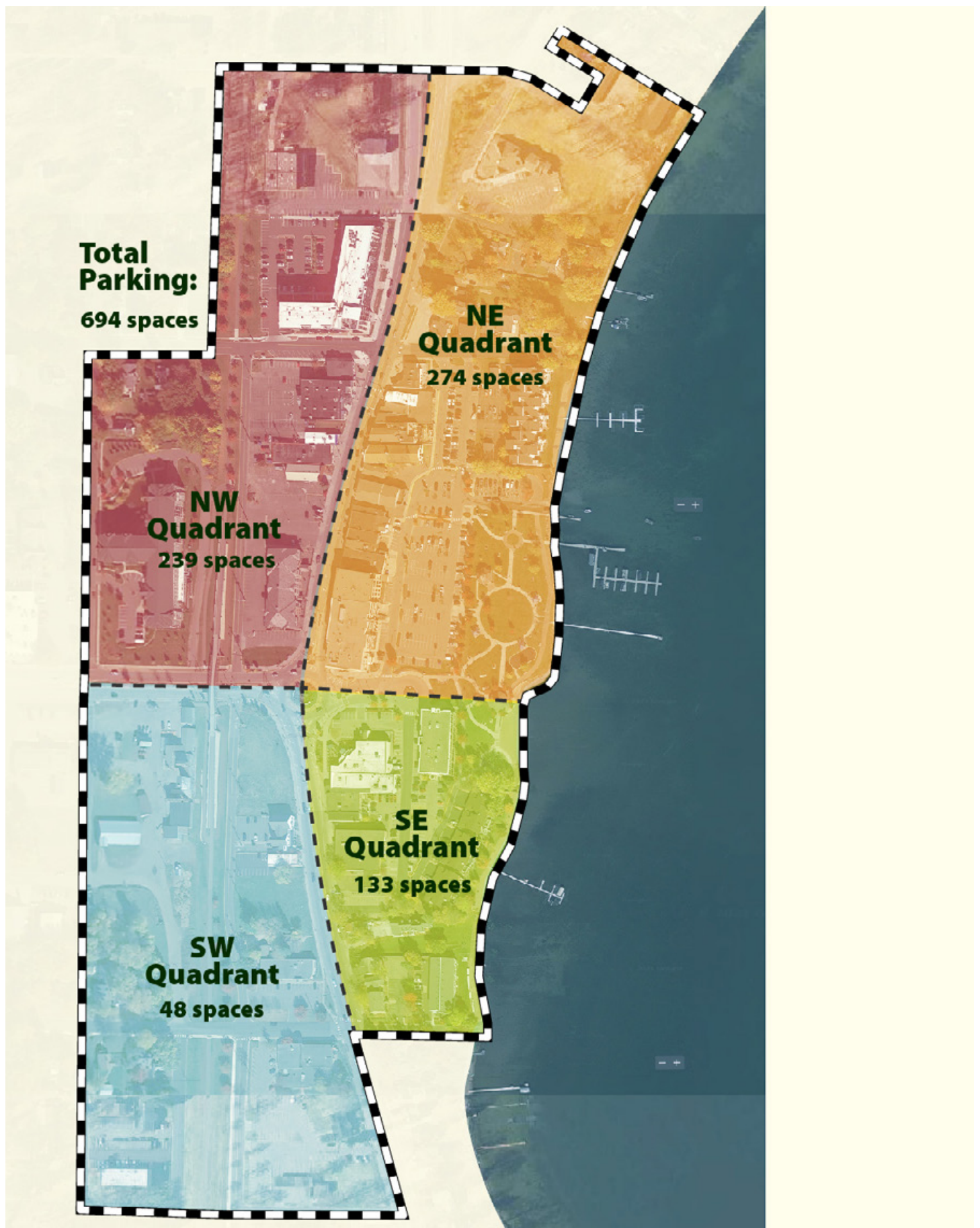


FIGURE 2.13 EXISTING PARKING QUANTITIES BY QUADRANT



Lake Street and Lakeside Memorial Park are isolated from one another



Poor connections from the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail



Busy roundabout is an intimidating pedestrian crossing



Lake Street is an uninviting pedestrian corridor

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Forest Lake's Downtown faces a number of challenging design factors that inhibit its ability to be the thriving downtown center it has the potential to become. Figure 2.14 pinpoints specific locations where improvements could be made.

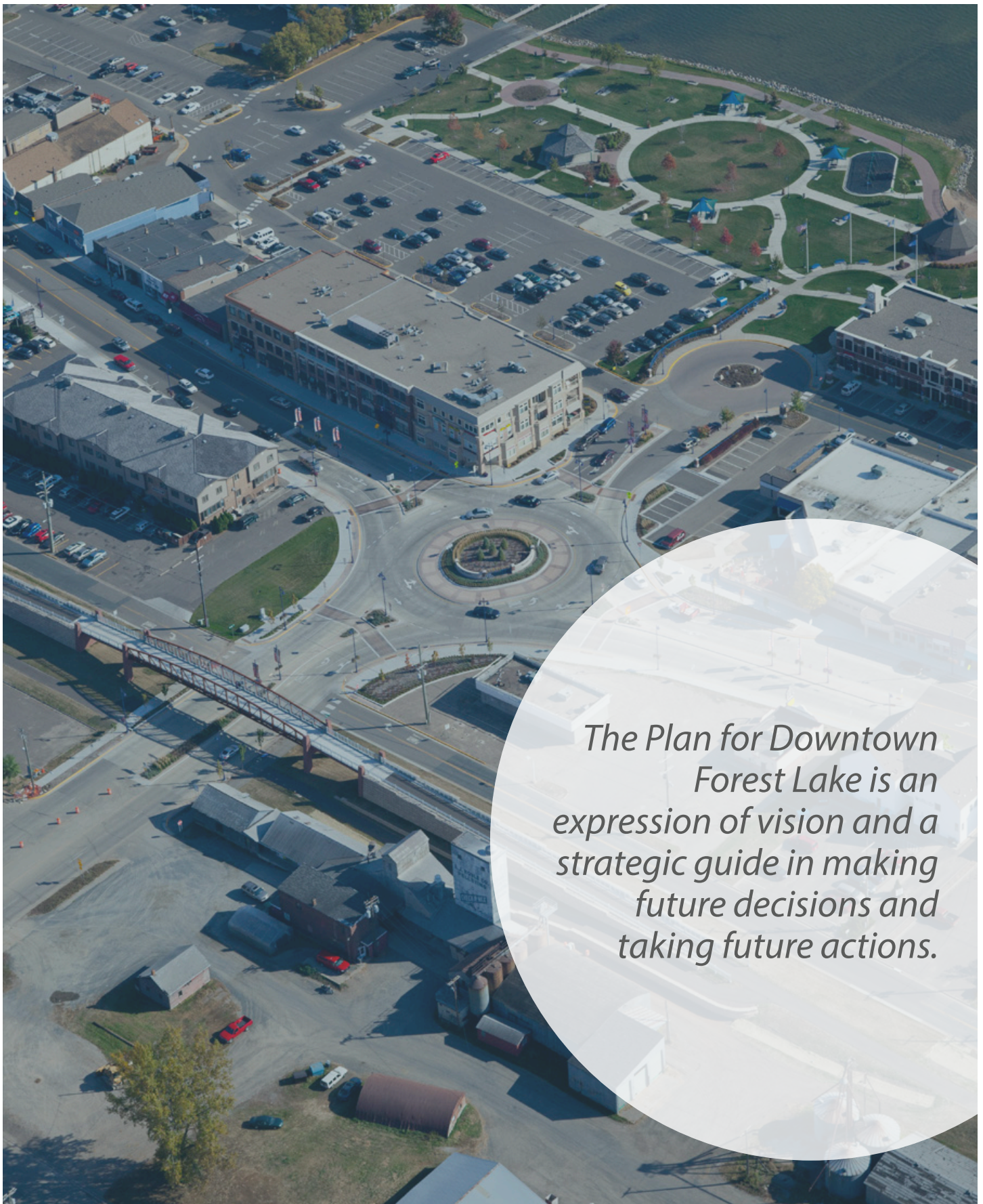
- 1 *LAKE STREET COMMERCIAL SPINE AND LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK ARE ISOLATED FROM ONE ANOTHER*
Large expanses of surface parking lots separate the retail corridor from Lakeside Memorial Park and its many amenities.
- 2 *LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK DOES NOT "FLOW" BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY*
Currently, the only buildings located within close proximity of the park are medium-density residential and office retail uses.
- 3 *PEOPLE LIKE WALKING AND STROLLING CIRCUITS - DOWNTOWN LACKS PLEASANT/INTERESTING WALKING LOOPS*
There are many existing gaps in the bike and pedestrian network within downtown that make loops and circuits difficult to use or establish.
- 4 *POOR CONNECTIONS FROM THE HARDWOOD CREEK REGIONAL TRAIL INTO DOWNTOWN LIMITS "BIKE-INS"*
Lack of well marked or signaled crossings, busy traffic, vacant parcels, and expansive parking lots isolate the trail from the rest of the downtown core.
- 5 *THE LAKE IS A BIG RECREATIONAL DRAW*
Forest Lake is popular with local residents and visitors, especially in the summer months. More could be done to make it a winter destination.
- 6 *BOAT TRAILER PARKING CONFLICTS WITH OTHER PARKING DEMANDS*
Seasonal use challenges between boat users, park users, and retail or other services has parking in short supply during the warm weather months.
- 7 *PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY ALONG LAKE STREET IS NEARLY NON-EXISTENT - CUSTOMERS USE REAR BUILDING ENTRANCES MOST OF THE TIME*
The busy highway and lack of available parking along Lake Street pushes most visitors to use the large surface lots behind buildings.
- 8 *MOST STOREFRONTS HAVE TRANSITIONED RETAIL MERCHANDISE TO SERVICE RETAIL AND OFFICE*
Many small local shops and eateries have been short-lived in downtown, and buildings have transitioned to offices and other services.
- 9 *ROUNDAABOUT IS AN INTIMIDATING PEDESTRIAN CROSSING*
Lack of signaled crossings and the need to cross two lanes of moving traffic makes the roundabout feel chaotic and dangerous for pedestrians.
- 10 *LACK OF SIDEWALKS AND PLEASANT WALKING CORRIDORS FROM SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS LIMIT "WALK-INS"*
Many of the sidewalks from downtown end at the entrance of surrounding neighborhoods and don't continue onto local streets.
- 11 *SOME PARKING IS NOT WELL-CONNECTED TO SPECIFIC DEMANDS AND WAYFINDING IS LACKING*
Despite the number of large surface lots in the downtown area, the overall ratio of stalls to businesses and other destinations causes a shortage.





FIGURE 2.14 DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS DIAGRAM

- 12** *LAKE STREET IS AN UNINVITING PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR*
Lack of bike and pedestrian amenities, wayfinding, human-scale lighting, and busy vehicular traffic make Lake Street an uninviting space for visitors to spend time.
- 13** *MANY DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS HAVE ARCHITECTURAL POTENTIAL BUT ARE NOT WELCOMING*
Many of the buildings along Lake Street are historic and retain some of their traditional charm and character, but are in varying states of disinvestment or vacancy.
- 14** *CONTINUOUS HIGHWAY TRAFFIC IS A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE*
Lack of signals, crossings, or other traffic calming measures along the corridor give vehicles the right of way, forcing pedestrians to take a back seat.



*The Plan for Downtown
Forest Lake is an
expression of vision and a
strategic guide in making
future decisions and
taking future actions.*



Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN



STAGES OF ENGAGEMENT

The public input process for the Forest Lake Downtown Plan was designed to gather feedback from the general public and important stakeholders through both formal and informal community engagement events.

Community engagement was organized around three stages of the planning process: 1) expression of vision/values, 2) critique of concept alternatives, and 3) draft plan review. Each stage employed in-person and online tools and tactics that provided the community multiple ways of staying informed about progress and providing meaningful input.

1

STAGE 1: VISION AND VALUES

2

STAGE 2: EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

3

STAGE 3: CONVERGING ON A PREFERRED PLAN

STAGE 1: VISION & VALUES

To start off community engagement, the consulting team attended one of Downtown Forest Lake's most popular events, Arts in the Park, to speak with locals and visitors and gather input on existing conditions. Guests were directed via handouts to an online project portal where they could participate in surveys and leave geographically relevant markers on an interactive map to discuss issues and opportunities within the downtown study area.

JULY 2021 | ARTS IN THE PARK

The local Arts in the Park celebration is an annual summer event held in Forest Lake's Lakeside Memorial Park. Popular with locals and visitors alike, the live music, local artisan market, and food trucks always yields a great turnout of attendees. In late July of 2021, the consulting team set-up a booth alongside City Staff to meet with locals and discuss their thoughts and concerns regarding the existing conditions of the study area and introduce the project to the public. Within the booth was a map for collecting comments, some fun props for social media, and fliers that were handed out to passersby directing them to the project website, online survey, mapping tool, and ideas wall.



Participants at Arts in the Park 2021



ONLINE SURVEY, IDEAS WALL, AND INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

The consulting team used a public engagement platform to set up an online survey, ideas wall, and interactive map to collect public input through a variety of questions, conversational prompts, and drag-and-drop map elements. These tools all launched at similar times and were interconnected to make navigation easy from one exercise to the next. They were featured on the project website created by the City to keep residents updated on project opportunities, and the City of Forest Lake Facebook page. Each tool received thousands of site visits from hundreds of unique users who actively engaged with the site in some manner, and a variety of helpful comments on how users view the downtown study area as it sits today.

ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

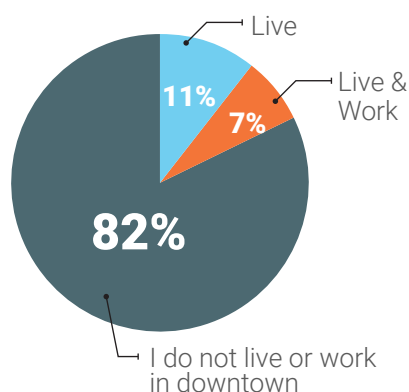
The online survey, located in a tab alongside the interactive mapping tool, consisted of four multiple choice and open-ended questions that asked participants to describe the way they currently interact with the study area. Do they live nearby? How frequently do they visit and why or why not? The survey received 28 responses from unique stakeholders, many of whom also left comments on the mapping tool. A summary of the survey results can be seen in the graphics below.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The numbers below capture different analytics measured to show the total activity on both sites:

Word Wall	Map Tool
Total Visits (Total number of visits to the site)	Total Visits (Total number of visits to the site)
1516	2233
Unique Users (Number of individual IP addresses to visit the site)	Unique Users (Number of individual IP addresses to visit the site)
530	697
Comments (Number of unique individuals to engage with the site)	Comments (Number of unique individuals to engage with the site)
81	252

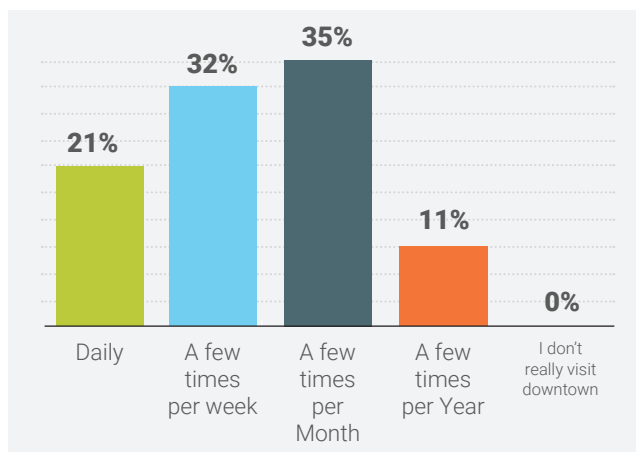
Do you live or work Downtown?



Why do you go Downtown?



How frequently do you visit Downtown?



If you don't visit Downtown often, why?



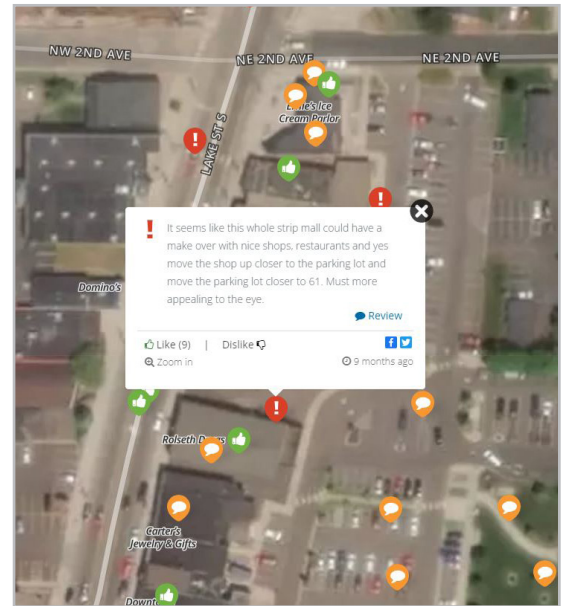
INTERACTIVE MAP SUMMARY

The interactive mapping tool features a drag-and-drop function that prompts users to select a category that best aligns to the comments they wish to make, and then drops a digital pin at the desired location to leave feedback. Users may also use a like/dislike function on comment boxes to agree or disagree with comments made by other users. The pins were split into four separate categories to be used on a plain aerial map of the existing site with the study area outlined. The map received over 250 comments left by 96 unique stakeholders.

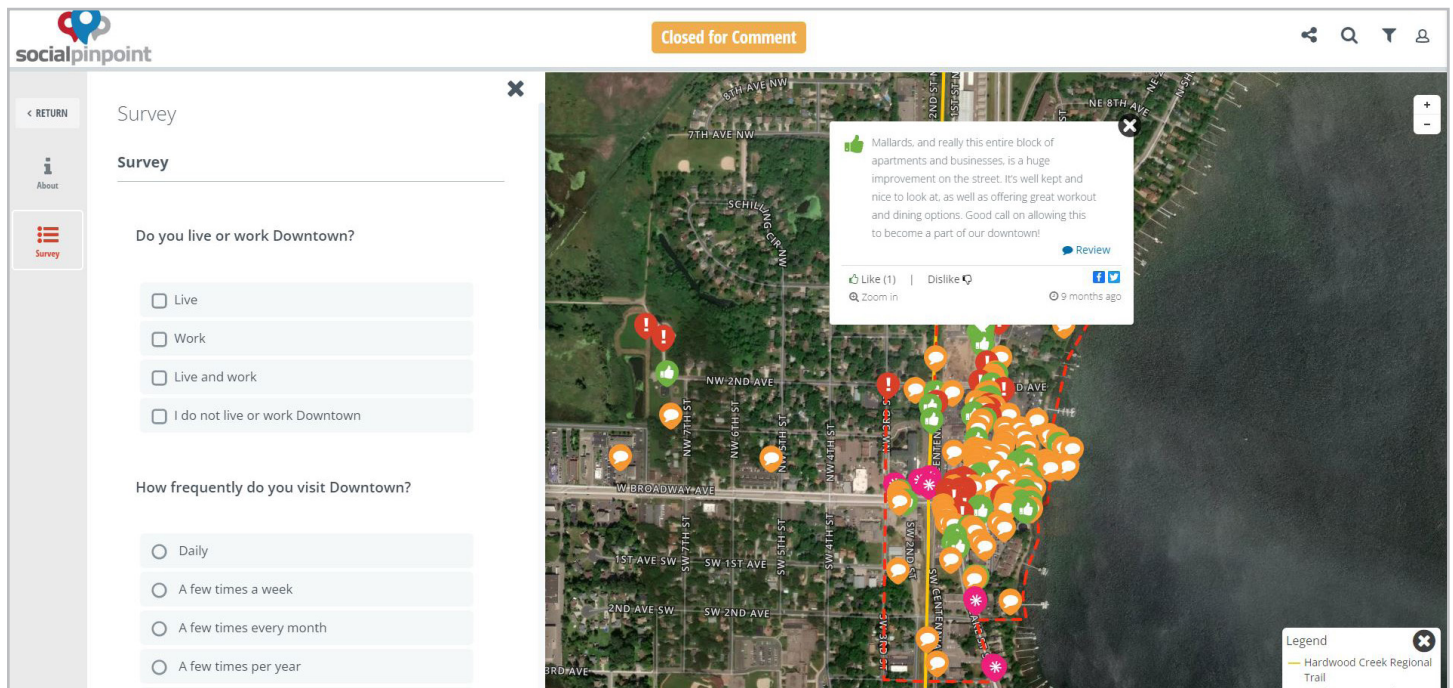
A summary of the comments received can be seen on the following pages. *A table with all comments organized by marker/category can be found in the document appendix.*

COMMENTS ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN RETAIL CORE:

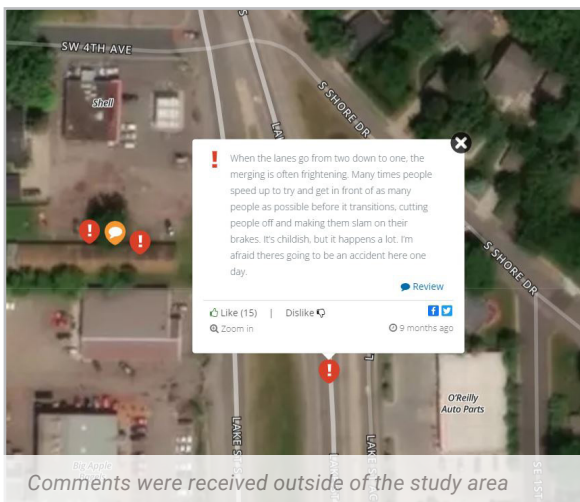
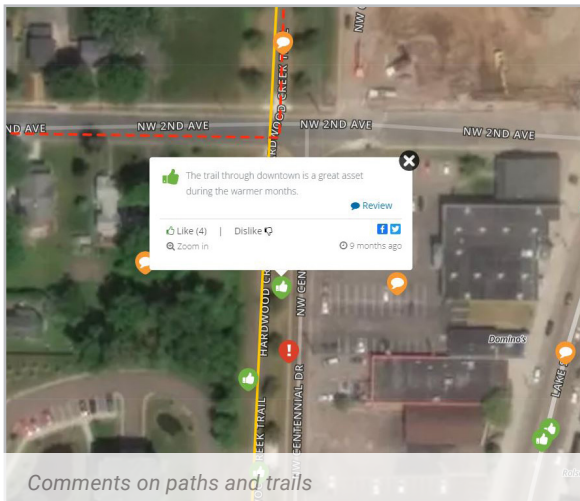
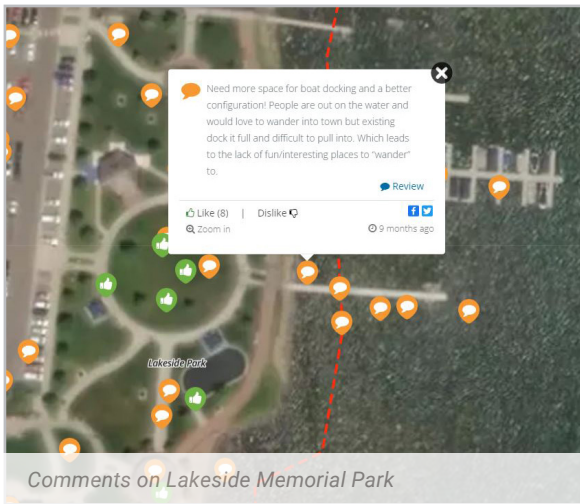
- Locals visitors have seen many great restaurants and shops come and go over the years. What do we need to change or do to keep them around? Residents don't want to see chain shops end up in this area; they love locally-owned and unique retail in this setting.
- Too much prime real estate has been taken over by office uses and services. Would like to see more boutique retail and eateries on the ground floor and facing the park and lake.
- Many who engaged in the mapping exercise agree that downtown holds huge potential to be a great lakefront attraction with the right changes.
- Participants think many of the old buildings have charm and architectural promise if they were fixed up and invested in, and the fronts would be more inviting with pedestrian amenities along the sidewalks. Shops like Daniella's and Kodiak Coffee are a point of pride within the community.
- People would like to visit and support downtown more often, but confusing parking, busy traffic, and a lack of destinations often result in the decision to find a nearby lakefront experience elsewhere.



Comments about the downtown retail core



The interactive mapping tool and corresponding online survey



- The street is very uninviting and scary to pedestrians, lacks signage and wayfinding, bike racks, benches, and other comfort amenities. Crossings feel unsafe and are sparse. Many avoid the noise and bustle of the fast traffic and use the backside of businesses instead, leaving the street without life or a pedestrian presence.
- There needs to be more of a focus on accessibility (for wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, etc.)
- The roundabout is a huge safety concern for motorists and pedestrians.
- Participants want more branded, visual gateways into the downtown area that would give it a unique identity.

COMMENTS ABOUT LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK:

- The park updates made years ago have been seen as a huge improvement to the space, but people would like to see more programming that appeals to all age groups.
- Visitors love the playgrounds and beach area, many wish both were a larger portion of the park.
- Participants are definitely interested to see more events in the park, and all-season programming/activation/events.
- Having public boat docks is great in the summers, people like the idea of arriving by lake to grab a bite to eat downtown. They want a roll-up and roll-out atmosphere and connection with lake recreation/traffic. However, "Your boat Club" was controversial in the comments, and boat parking needs a better configuration and or/separate location to resolve parking conflicts.
- People want to see more walking and biking opportunities. They find the downtown retail district so scary to cross, it's a barrier to visiting the park.
- The park is small with limited paths, a path around the lake would be desired by many.
- The park is the only green space along main street, but there are plenty of vacant parcels that could be used for dog parks, pocket parks, etc.

COMMENTS ABOUT PATHS AND TRAILS:

- People view the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail adjacent to the downtown as a huge asset all year long.
- People would love to see more amenities along the trail and wayfinding that highlights the downtown area.
- Many areas of downtown need to be cleaner. This segment of the trail received many comments about trash and animal waste.





Favorite Places/Primary Destinations



Safety Concerns



Where Do You Enter Downtown?



Ideas/Suggestions for Downtown

This area is constantly full of canine feces. It's disgraceful and doesn't look good for anyone passing through. It's also not sanitary and dogs can carry diseases and it can get into the ground and infect many other dogs and even humans.

The Fireside and Glazing Memories businesses have done a fantastic job of breathing new life into this building! Our town is capable of having such a fantastic downtown area.

The noise from vehicles and motorcycles exiting the roundabout really takes away from enjoying outdoor seating at the establishments near the roundabout.

For this to be the center of the city, it is too dangerous for walkers, bikers. There is no where to walk or bike that is away from fast cars in this area except the path. We should have something along the lake and going into the downtown area as well where it would bring a lot more business.

Love the decorative trees however, I think we should consider some edible fruit bearing trees.

I think many people from town enter from the south. The approach from this direction is pleasant until the roundabout, but north of that it leaves much to be desired.

This should be considered the entrance area despite it not being in your dotted line area. Also, this is a dangerous spot.

While this specific area is outside the corridor presented, it is certainly a major entrance point to the downtown district and one could argue that the corridor in this direction should be considered and constructed similar to downtown.

I'd love to see the store here connected to the bike path. It'd open the opportunity for the city or the business to operate bike rentals!

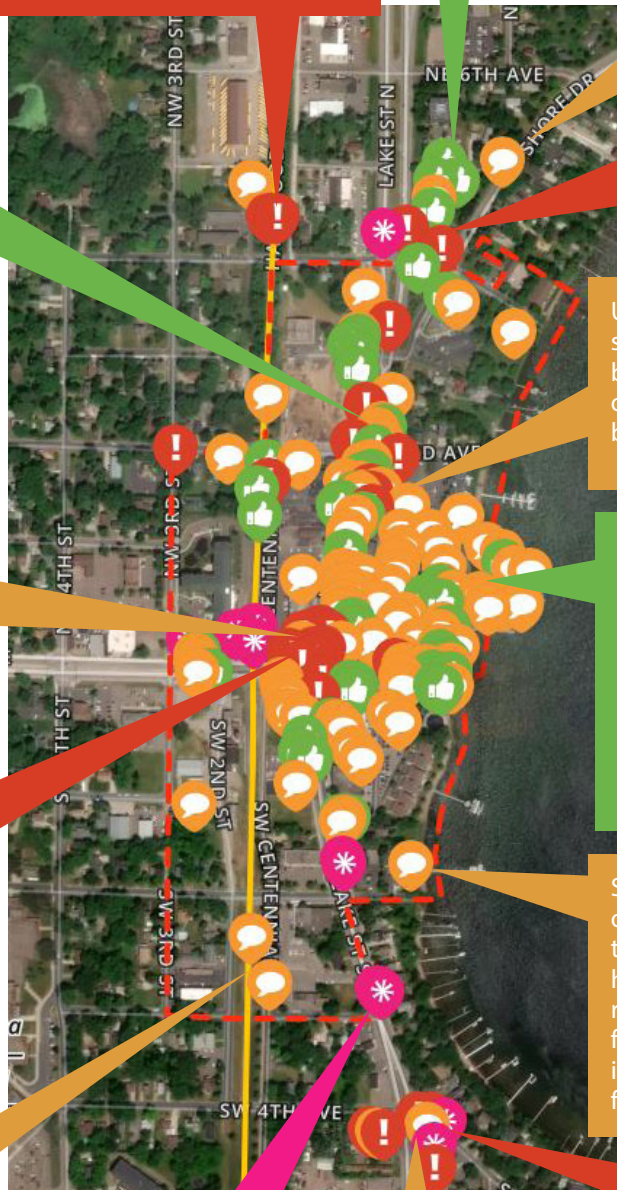
Personally wish there was a safe way (paved) to go for bike rides or walks around the lake!

Trying to leave North Shore Trail by taking a left on 61 is frustrating on a busy day or in the evenings.

Unfortunately the ice cream/sandwich shop did not survive but this area could be so cute updated with bistro tables out for people to gather. Ice cream? Wine bar? You'd have my business!

Your Boat Club has brought many people to try out our beautiful lake and get to know our shops and restaurants which is good for our economy. The members and staff are required to clean up and all is tidy. I agree perhaps a new contract to help pay for additional parking may be something to consider when time to renegotiate.

Snowmobiles. There is a missed opportunity that there is not a dedicated trail providing access to the lake. We have an amazing major dedicated trail running through town bringing people from hundreds of miles, but it is almost impossible for anyone to stop and frequent dining establishments.





Slides from the workshop's results presentation

IN-PERSON AND ONLINE VISION WORKSHOP

An in-person workshop was held at Forest Lake City Hall at the end of September, 2021. The event was attended by 36 in-person participants and 6 online attendees. After a brief project introduction and presentation, participants were asked to form groups and discuss current and hoped-for motivators that attract locals and visitors to visit Downtown Forest Lake, and determine the audience that future investment in the downtown should strive to attract.

The audience and motivators exercises prompted dozens of in-depth conversations that helped identify who is currently visiting the downtown area, who and what is missing, and narrowed the groups' selections down to the top five most important among all attendees.

The information gathered was then used to produce a vision statement and guiding principles that will act as a guide for future investments and changes within the study area, giving the City a community-founded direction for the future of Downtown Forest Lake.



Sharing ideas at the September 2021 Vision Workshop



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of focus groups and stakeholder interviews were held throughout the length of the project, creating a space where owners of small local and franchise businesses, property owners, chamber members, and Forest Lake Association representatives could meet with City staff and the consulting team to discuss current issues and concerns surrounding the identified study area. These events were attended by 27 downtown stakeholders, 16 downtown business owners, and 5 downtown property owners.

A summary of the main topic areas discussed in these sessions are located below. *See the report appendix for full meeting minutes.*

COMMENTS ABOUT PARKING:

- Parking is downtown's greatest challenge.
- Some perceive there isn't enough.
- Some believe the parking lot next to Memorial Park should be converted to expanded parkland.
- If you look at an aerial photo of downtown, most of it is parking lot.
- Customers sometimes can't find place to park.
- Structured parking could be an option – look to Edina 50th & France as model.
- No one can find place to park on Tuesday nights (Arts in the Park).
- Signage about the other two boat launches might reduce parking conflicts at downtown launch.
- The City should consider purchase of land elsewhere to reduce traffic at downtown boat launch.

COMMENTS ABOUT PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY:

- The shopping circuit (reason/ability to stroll through downtown) is broken.
- Downtown is not pedestrian-friendly and that fact is a major barrier to downtown success.
- Crossing Hwy 61 within the downtown district is a hazardous venture.
- Roundabout doesn't work as a pedestrian-friendly crossing location.
- Roundabout at the high school has good pedestrian safety measures, could be a model.

COMMENTS ABOUT AREA CHARACTER:

- Downtown looks like a mess – a hodgepodge of building styles and not well invested/cared for.
- The City doing a downtown plan signals positive change because the city is trying to establish a vision.
- There used to be more of a small-town atmosphere.
- 61 has gotten way worse – more traffic, less downtown character.
- Landscape care is lacking, especially on vacant properties.

COMMENTS ABOUT BUSINESS CLIMATE:

- Businesses facing the lake are not well supported by pedestrian amenities and public realm improvements.
- There is very little reason for shoppers to come downtown.
- Highway 61 is not a business-friendly street.
- Forest Lake has not been a business-friendly local government.
 - More transparency needed
 - More communication needed
 - More participation of city leadership in the business community needed
 - People worry about repercussions of voicing concerns about local government

COMMENTS ABOUT ACTIVATION:

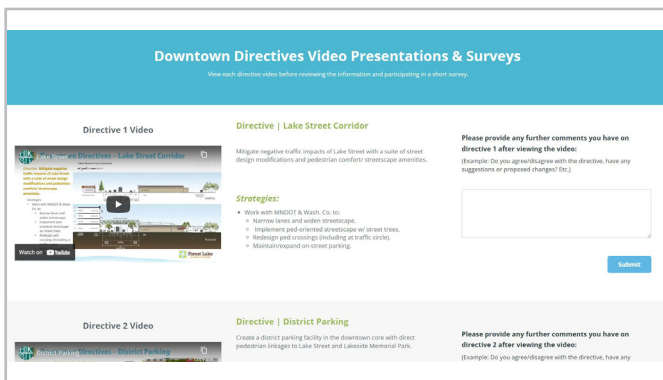
- Downtown businesses are told they cannot participate in Arts in the Park because they are not arts & crafts makers/retailers.
- As a way to engage, downtown businesses may be willing to sponsor Arts in the Park.
- More winter events are needed.
- Downtown businesses are unsure how snowmobiling fits into the retailing picture in Forest Lake.
- Skating rink would be a hit – maybe it could be groomed on the lake for space consideration.
- Need added attractions to draw people downtown in winter.
- Downtown access to/from Heartland Trail needs to be greatly improved.

STAGE 2: EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

Phase 2 community engagement efforts focused on collecting feedback on eleven directives for Downtown by identifying issues and opportunities based on the existing conditions analysis. These findings were then used to develop and study alternative scenarios that might provide solutions to big concerns. Draft Downtown Framework and Downtown Plan diagrams were presented as a part of the workshop to illustrate how each of the directives could be applied to the Downtown District and form the basis for a successful Downtown Plan.



Participants were notified of and able to register for the upcoming in-person workshop via the online website.



Visitors to the site could be walked through each directive with a voiced-over video from the design team.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The numbers below capture total activity on the Phase II Social Pinpoint site:

Total Visits
(Total number of visits to the site)

517

Unique Users
(Number of individual IP addresses to visit the site)

215

Survey Responses
(Number of unique individuals to engage with the site surveys)

66

JANUARY 2022 | ALTERNATIVES REVIEW, PROJECT DIRECTIVES

Both an online discussion and in-person workshop at City Hall were held to gather feedback from the community on the directives and draft diagrams. The in-person event was attended by (x) individuals, and (x) more joined the online discussion. Both were led through a detailed presentation with intermittent Q&A, and a large group discussion at the end to address any further concerns. A Social Pinpoint project landing page was launched shortly before the alternatives review workshop to give those who were planning to attend a chance to review content beforehand, as well as to provide a resource for those who were unable to attend either meeting.

Short videos voiced-over by the design team were uploaded to the site to walk visitors through the details of each directive, and the draft plan diagrams were uploaded to the site as downloadable links for at home printing. Each of the directives was accompanied by an open survey for comments, and a larger general comments box was provided for additional or non-specific thoughts. A summary of these comments, as well as the feedback collected from the public and online workshops, can be viewed on the following pages. To see all comments collected, please visit the appendix.

GENERAL COMMENTS SUMMARY

- The roundabout seems to cause more problems than it solves for Lake Street. Need better traffic calming measures.
- Need to find a balance between bringing more people to the area and causing congestion during peak times
- The Downtown Framework and Plan are big steps in the right direction.
- The downtown needs to be attractive to all generations and age groups.
- Concerns about adding more parking
- Concerns about adding more housing
- More assistance and support to keep local businesses thriving and afloat



DOWNTOWN DIRECTIVES COMMENTS SUMMARY:

Below is a list of comments received from the online project portal for each of the directive video presentations.



LAKE STREET CORRIDOR

- I like what I hear and see. This is definitely going in the right direction.
- Will trees slow down the commuting traffic? There are studies that imply that trees close to the road slow down residential traffic, but I don't see anything on commercial traffic being slowed due to trees.
- I would agree with making the area pedestrian-friendly. As one who lives right in this zone, I find the current setting uncomfortable and unfriendly. The shade from trees will go along way to help that. I would also suggest slower traffic speeds which will help with safety and noise.
- I think this is a good idea. I have crossed at the walkway at the traffic circle and not everyone stops.
- The pedestrian crossings at the roundabout are DANGEROUS! As you are coming around the circle you can't see anyone crossing there.

P

DISTRICT PARKING

- I assume this means a parking structure, and if so, it must be attractive and be buffered by green space to soften the impact on the area. Also, a strong downtown core must be a blend of commercial and residential facilities. Strong downtowns must have a strong residential component. More places like Lighthouse Lofts are imperative. I love being able to walk to restaurants and shopping. Office space may be a thing of the past with remote working. Shared offices, mixed with residential and commercial may be what is needed. Also, auto charging stations must be a part of this plan.
- I'd want to know more about how much parking might be needed under different scenarios. Things like: summer vs. winter, weekends vs. weekdays, and parking needed under different commercial build-out scenarios.
- No skyway!! Waste of funds.
- Will the skyway be locked after a certain time at night? If you reduce the parking requirement for the zoning code, you adjust it for the entire city of Forest Lake located in that Commercial Zone. Does this have a negative impact on future growth with limited parking being built for businesses? Or do you plan to create a new zoning code and have to reconstruct or update every code for the city?
- Yes. Absolutely vital for the downtown.



CENTENNIAL DRIVE

- I drive Centennial every day. It is boring. It is not welcoming. I support this directive. Realistically I don't see how it can be narrowed any further. I don't support parallel parking on the trail side. That green space is important. I do support both green space and sidewalk and lighting on the business side. Wayfinding signage is an excellent idea. Also, more benches on both sides in the green spaces. Pedestrians want to be able to stroll and sit and right now the area has only one bench over on the trail.
- That street is too narrow to begin with! Especially right off of Broadway.
- This seems like it has potential. In some ways it is suggesting turning Centennial Drive into a secondary "main street." Are businesses willing to embrace this concept and create attractive entrances facing Centennial Drive? Have you also considered doing something similar with traffic to what Lindstrom has done, splitting Highway 61 as it passes through this corridor?
- Will this street continue to be utilized as a 'short cut' to avoid the roundabout on Lake Street and Broadway? Will it increase thru traffic? What is the purpose? Is it to pull into new parking lots? Or is it to circumvent the cluster at the roundabout?



RETAIL LOOP

- Excellent! However, retailing is best served on the first floor of a residential building. This model is used extensively in Europe and is now also being pushed in Minneapolis. You need people living in a downtown area to give it viability. And, again you need to add more benches.
- Fully agree and support this idea. Stillwater is a prime example of what to strive for. At the same time, DT Stillwater has been dramatically changed (improved) with traffic volume shifted to the new bridge across the St. Croix river. What if Centennial Drive became Highway 61 as it passes through DT Forest Lake? That would allow what is now Lake Street to be completely transformed into a pedestrian and retail oasis.
- I agree with the strategy of Directive 4. This aspect of Forest Lake needs to be reclaimed. As a Forest Lake resident and small business owner I would welcome the opportunity to move my business closer to home. I have hesitated to do so and have even started looking at downtown White Bear Lake as a new location once my lease is up. The condos, apartments and generic office buildings have done more to separate the community then bring it together.
- I think much of downtown needs to be services such as accountants, law firms etc. I don't think it can be exclusive retail any more.
- Nothing is mentioned of the buildings that have these store front gaps being demolished, or if the owners will be responsible for the new unanimous/continuous store fronts. I believe a lot of people would like to see the intended plans to envision the sight-line and feel of downtown. Is there a rendering available to view?
- Parking is a concern. Narrowing the street would only make things more dangerous to those getting out of vehicles.



DOWNTOWN GREENWAY LOOP

- I feel Directive 5 emphasizes a core problem/issue - Highway 61 is and will continue to be the barrier to so many possibilities. I think about what could be done if Lake Street was "gone" in this corridor. Shifting the highway 61 traffic to the west.... Expensive and wild idea - elevate highway 61 traffic as it passes through DT. That opens up tons of possibilities for development.
- Prioritize fixing some roads around the city that are not downtown first. North Shore Trail might wash into the lake before you figure out how to fund this.
- Wonderful idea, but not enough. The park is too small to begin with and needs to incorporate coffee shops or gathering space along the lake. The residential units between the current park and the funeral home need to be removed and the park should be further developed. The lake is the selling point for Forest Lake but is totally not being utilized. Yes, there will be screams. But for the good of the whole, it needs to happen. Bikers coming down the trail could be encouraged to stop and take a break, have lunch, or just sit and look at the lake. Note some of the developments on the Greenway Trail.



LAKE RECREATION

- A dedicated snowmobile access would be welcome.
- Love the idea of having winter recreation available here!
- Love this idea!! Year round activities is a must for community engagement.
- This directive is essential and the proposals excite me a lot. These types of things are imperative but also point out that the park shoreline MUST be expanded. This directive is exciting.
- Yes! More transient boat slips are necessary if you want boaters to come into the area to dine or shop. Thank you for thinking of this component. Again, consider the cost of bio-engineering as well.





TRAIL INVITATION

- Another park for our parks and rec to maintain. Will the cost of this upkeep be supported by eliminating another park in Forest Lake? Who monitors the building? Will bikers really stop to play games and bring a large amount of revenue to downtown? I have difficulty understanding the feasibility and likelihood of this directive to generate enough revenue to pay for itself.
- Excellent! Excellent! Excellent! I live in the Light House Apartments and my windows overlook the trail. Many users already use the 2ndAve/Trail green space to stop and rest because there is a table there with benches. This proposal is excellent!
- Good - I think about how the towns along the Root River Trail connect to and connect to the bike trail.
- Splash pad possible?
- Yes, the trail needs a reasonable connection to the park plus signage to encourage its use.



SOCIAL SIDEWALK NETWORK

- 100% agree with Directive 8.
- A waste of funds. The sidewalks are already adequate.
- I have noticed worn areas in the grass where pedestrians walk in this area, so yes, the sidewalks are warranted. Remember to add this into the cost of snow removal budget calculations.
- Wonderful idea. The trail is wonderful but it is also a visual and psychological barrier that keeps people from thinking about crossing it. In addition, there are no neighborhood sidewalks. If I want to walk to Grillium on a sidewalk, I have to go up to Broadway and then over. To go through the neighborhood I have to walk in the street. Also, beating this drum again, put benches for resting.



VIEWSHED TO THE LAKE

- I have little doubt that lots of people traveling through DT Forest Lake on Lake St. can hardly see or even notice the lake.
- Not sure how it would be done, but an excellent idea.
- We have a lot of issues with drivers at this roundabout already, so another distraction (oh look! The lake!) is a good thought on paper, but reality is that drivers will be distracted and they all pretty much can't figure out how round-a-bouts work now.



WAYFINDING

- Absolutely. Plus it will not cost so much.
- Great idea! This can be a low cost, efficient way to direct people to our local businesses.
- This is great stuff. Create a brand, and help visitors and users find and explore what they want- need. Also incorporate historical displays with information - tell the story of Forest Lake.
- Wonderful!



- ## STEP 2: EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES

Online participants used an interactive tool called Mural to vote on their top 5 priority directives from the complete list, and leave comments on the Framework Diagram and Downtown Plan.



STAGE 3: CONVERGING ON A PREFERRED PLAN

The final stage of engagement included gathering feedback from community members, city leaders, and direct stakeholders. Feedback was obtained via online engagement, a public open house and direct stakeholder engagement. The feedback has been documented in the following pages. It has lead to both modifications and clarifications in the final plan document.

JUNE 2ND OPEN HOUSE

A final community open house was held June 2, 2022 to gain feedback on the draft plan. Review materials were placed around the room, plan directives were presented and a robust q&a session was held. Attendance, at over 60 people, was tremendous. The key topic attendees wanted to discuss was relocation of the downtown boat launch. There were questions about its viability, cost, and potential relocation sites. In addition to the boat launch, there was a broad range of discussion topics. Several comment cards were collected and are reflected in following participation summary.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The numbers below capture total activity on the Phase III Social Pinpoint (online) site:

Total Visits
(Total number of visits to the site)

334

Unique Users
(Number of individual IP addresses to visit the site)

151

Comment Responses
(Number of unique individuals to provide comments)

21

ONLINE FEEDBACK

Housed on the Social Pinpoint site for Forest Lake Downtown Plan public engagement, was comment opportunity complimented by 7 short videos explaining the master planning process for Downtown Forest Lake. After each video, residents were asked to offer comment and feedback to help shape the final plan.

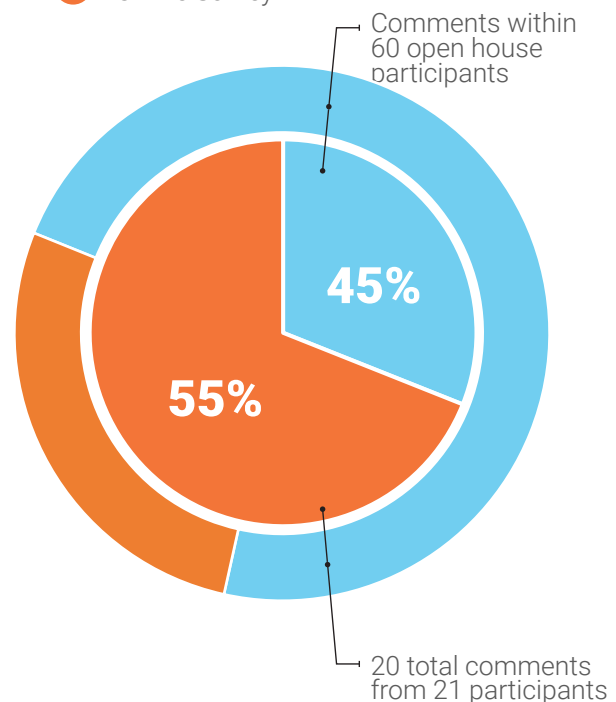
DIRECT STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Washington County Transportation staff and the Parks, Trails & Lakes Commission provided direct stakeholder feedback that is specifically in the pages to follow.

Quantification of open house participant comments compared with online comments

● Open House

● Online Survey



OVERALL FEEDBACK

Feedback summaries of the third and final stage of engagement are provided below.



COMMENTS FROM OPEN HOUSE

- Concerns: written comments from the Open House show concerns about Forest Lake not being bike friendly and the Downtown area not being boater friendly. Other concerns are that the playground is not in a good location and that future planned activities should not be directly adjacent to residential.
- Design Suggestions: community members gave many design suggestions, the most prominent being the desire to spur business development in the Downtown area. There were also 3 comments to move the boat launch, and 2 people suggesting to relocate funeral home and move the launch in its place. Finally, there were multiple suggestions to move parking to the West side of Lake Street to preserve the lake front appeal.

COMMENTS FROM ONLINE SURVEY

- Concerns: comments from the online survey show the most concern about projects being too expensive for the city. There were also comments about not eliminating the boat launch.
- Design Suggestions: the most prominent comments about the future design of Downtown were to spur small business in the area.

COMMENTS & CONSIDERATIONS FROM WASHINGTON COUNTY:

- Many proposed directives impact Lake Street, Broadway Avenue, and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail. Washington County should be included in the design process of any of them.
- Proposed additions or relocations of pedestrian-activated crossings of Lake Street will require close analysis to understand feasibility and appropriate approaches.
- Addition or change to pedestrian crossings at the Broadway & Lake roundabout could compel similar changes to other roundabouts in the city to ensure uniform user expectations.

CONCERNS FROM PARKS, TRAILS, & LAKES COMMISSION:

- Concern about relocating the playground in Lakeside Memorial Park.
- Response: The final document does not include a suggested alternative location for the playground.
- Concern about the cost and user impact of relocating the boat launch.
- Response: Clarifying language has been added to the final document about conducting a boat launch relocation study that analyzes feasibility/possibilities to relocate downtown boat trailer parking and the boat launch. The document notes the recommended actions that would be contingent on boat launch relocation.
- Concern about feasibility, cost and impacts of constructing a band shell in Lakeside Memorial Park.
- Response: Clarifying language has been added to the final document about proposed band shell orientation to minimize (and improve from current conditions) noise impacts to surrounding residential properties. Detailed feasibility and structural analysis of a band shell would be conducted as an early implementation step.
- Concern about relocating the beach house and especially relocating it to a lease situation in an adjacent building.
- Response: A suggested alternative to relocate to an adjacent private building has been removed from the final document. Clarifying language has been added to the document that the current beach house will likely reach the end of its useful life within the implementation window of the Downtown Plan and, if that occurs, to consider an alternative location that will keep the view to the lake as open as possible from Broadway/Lake Street intersection.
- Questions about the proposed lakeside parkway.
- Response: A lakeside parkway would include an on-street parking bay that could accommodate food trucks. The parkway would represent a shift in parking and traffic configuration from the current parking lots but would not equate to reduction in parking.
- Expressed support for lake recreation, added transient boat slips, canoe/Kayak launch, Hardwood Creek Trail Wayside Park,





The information gathered was used to produce a vision statement and plan directives that will act as a guide for future investments within the study area, resulting in a community-founded direction for the future of Downtown Forest Lake.

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VISION

OVERVIEW

The vision for downtown Forest Lake was built on an engagement process that involved nearly 700 participants. Truly a community-grounded endeavor, people collaborated to:

1. Explore various approaches to a vision for downtown,
2. Understand the audiences downtown will serve in the future, and
3. Establish consensus around a downtown vision that captures the nuanced interests of downtown's audience.

VISION STATEMENT

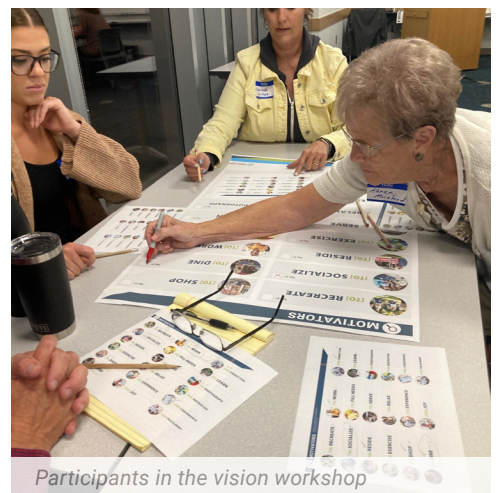
The Vision Statement for downtown Forest Lake built through community consensus and adopted by the City Council is:

"TO CREATE A DISTRICT WELCOMING TO A BROAD AUDIENCE OF BUSINESSES, VISITORS, AND NEIGHBORS, AND A VIBRANT PLACE WITH DISTINCTIVE AND MEMORABLE WAYS TO EXPERIENCE IT, INCLUDING DINING, SOCIALIZING, RECREATING, SHOPPING, AND LIVING LIFE."

The vision statement was adopted by the Forest Lake City Council on October 11, 2021.

AUDIENCES

Care was taken to identify the variety of audiences that downtown does or will serve in the future and to project their needs and interests. The audience profiles detailed on the following pages were developed as part of the visioning exercise, in which participants selected their top five. Ultimately, audience categories of **businesses, visitors, and neighbors** were broadly incorporated into the final vision. Together, they provide a fascinating look into the variety of audiences downtown will serve.



Participants in the vision workshop



Participants in the vision workshop

CUSTOMER

Description:

A customer visits downtown to fulfil a need for goods or services. Customers are the lifeline of a downtown and tell others about their experience. Customers take in a broad and complex set of inputs to determine whether what they buy in addition to what they experience in the process of buying aligns with their value judgement. Customers visiting a shopping "district" tend to place more value on the experience outside the store than other types of destinations.

DINER

Description:

A diner seeks food and drink. With that desire, they carry a broad range of connected interests in speed, socialization, quality, uniqueness, and experience. Parking convenience and/or sidewalk connectedness are usually paramount values. Options within a district is usually important to the diner, especially for return visits.

BOATER

Description:

One of the Downtown Forest Lake's greatest asset is its lake front. Boaters may be permanent or seasonal lakeside dwellers, seasonal fisherman, recreation-seekers, or even nature enthusiasts, but they all have the potential to turn into other subcategories of visitors if the downtown area has enough to offer.

FOODIE

Description:

A foodie is an individual who will travel far and wide for a delicacy and the experience and atmosphere that is attached to food or drink. These visitors mostly come to an area with the intention of supporting restaurants, breweries, bakeries, distilleries, ice cream parlours, etc. for a taste of local flavor. Often influenced by or influencers of social media, these guests can have a powerful impact on the local economy and the well-being of locally owned or travelling businesses (i.e. food trucks).

SHORT-TERM RENTER

Description:

Short-term renters are individuals who may be passing through an area for means of short-term employment or renting as a way to vacation and explore an area (i.e. Airbnb, VRBO). These visitors have selected an area for a short time can provide economic benefits to a downtown area, they can be future return visitors, and influence the visits of others based on their experience.

FAMILY GUEST

Description:

A family guest in a visitor who may be long-term or short-term, often staying with a permanent resident in the area but may use hospitality services. If an area has great spaces for hosting family reunions, baby showers, birthday parties, etc., it is more prone to attracting these types of guests. Depending on how many positive experiences this type of guest has, having family in the area may influence their decision to stay.

PROSPECTIVE RESIDENT

Description:

A prospective resident may use local real estate services to attain a permanent or seasonal property within the area. They may have already used short-term rental services in the past to experience the downtown, frequent retailers and restaurants, or attend events. Prospective residents are often a good sign that an area or downtown has a draw, enough balance of employment and character to attract a desire to live in the area. Any of the other subcategories may eventually fall into this one.

Intentional Visitor

AUDIENCE SUB-CATEGORIES:

SHOPPER

Description:

A shopper visits the downtown with the purpose of supporting a retailer. Whether they are running daily errands or an out-of-town guest antiquing, they are vital to supporting a small-town economy. Not all shoppers leave with the intended purchase, and some may find more than they were looking for, prompting a future visit.

RECREATION-SEEKER

Description:

A recreation-seeker is an individual or group who values uniqueness and visits an area for purpose of experiencing an often specific feature. From beach-goers, to regional trail cyclists, boaters, fisherman, and even photographers, a downtown that offers a variety of options or rentals and uses its natural resource assets to attract tourism does well in this category. These visitors often turn into customers of other means and help support the local economy and retailers around the downtown area. They are often looking to make an experience and memory out of their visit.



BRICK & MORTAR RETAILER

Description:

A brick and mortar retailer has a shop in downtown. They value the things their customers value – convenient parking, safety and security and inviting atmosphere. They want to be part of a robust business district because their business success is, to some degree, dependent on the district's climate. Positive working relationships and mutual values with City government reduce their stress.

OFFICE BUSINESS

Description:

An office business operates a non-retail company in downtown. Customers or clients may periodically visit their office but customer traffic is not a large part of their location decision. They want their location to reflect their values, to be convenient to both their homes and their client universe and for their property expenses to be affordable. They value convenient parking, a safe environment and access to goods and services important to their lifestyles and businesses.

EMPLOYEE

Description:

An employee works downtown. Working in a district with walkable convenience or gift shopping as well as dining options are all bonuses to their day. They would like some peaceful green space to visit on breaks and over lunch. As surrounding and in-district pedestrian and bike facilities improve, they may have the opportunity to ditch the car for their commute but usually, safe, secure and convenient parking is very important.

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS

Description:

The hospitality business serves dining, meeting events and overnight stay. Quality of the district's environment and fun close-by activities are paramount to location. Venues will cause peak parking demands that, if not well strategized, may cause conflicts with district retailers. Venues may bring visitors to the district that would otherwise not experience downtown so good impressions will lead to return visits. With dining, return visits are critical. They often employ significant numbers making safe, convenient employee parking strategies important.



MAKER/ARTIST

Description:

A maker or artist may also fall into a category of retailer and/or neighbor but in this case, they are actually creating and making their wares in downtown. They may have special space and equipment needs for manufacture, assembly and display. The activity of things being made in public view can contribute to the excitement of the downtown district (think of the North House Folk School in Grand Marais).

Business Interest

AUDIENCE SUB-CATEGORIES:

POP-UP RETAILER

Description:

The pop-up retailer takes short-term advantage of an unused building or vacant lot to merchandise and sell retail wares. They often rely on their retail activity itself along with social media rather than traditional advertising to draw customers. Pop-up retailers can contribute to district excitement by revolving in new retail energy and they sometimes have a following that will find them wherever they "pop up". Flexible and fast permit procedures are important to them.

EVENT ORGANIZER

Description:

An event organizer coordinates activities or events in downtown. They sometimes have intense permit needs with city government. Their events will cause peak parking demands that, if not well strategized, may cause conflicts with district retailers. They may bring visitors to the district that would otherwise not experience downtown so good impressions will lead to return visits.

INVESTOR

Description:

An investor believes financial returns of the money they put in will outweigh the costs + risks of a capital investment in real estate or business. They have a vested interest in district success. As a result, investors are often attracted and emboldened by surrounding investments being made in private or public properties.

LIVE-IN

Description:

A live-in neighbor lives within the downtown district. This group values places to socialize, exercise, and grab good food. They demand secure, proximate parking for themselves and convenient parking for their guests. They want quietude through the evenings. They love showing off their downtown to guests and bumping into friends. The lake made them consider living in downtown but the quality of the public realm and walking-distance businesses that meet their daily needs will keep them there.

BIKE-IN

Description:

A bike-in neighbor lives within a ten-minute casual ride of the downtown district. They share value and needs with walk-in neighbors with the primary additions of an accommodating street network (inherently quiet traffic or dedicated lanes/trails) all the way to the downtown core and bike services (repair, secure storage) in multiple, strategic locations throughout downtown.



WALK-IN

Description:

A walk-in neighbor lives within a convenient, ten-minute walk of the downtown district. They must have continuous, social sidewalks from their front door to the downtown core in order to become and remain a loyal constituent. This is especially important to child and elderly caregivers. Downtown is part of their routine walking network for exercise, socialization, recreation, dining and shopping. Downtown needs regular happenings and seasonal surprise to keep their walks interesting. Walkers beget walkers so if they have the infrastructure they need, numbers will grow, social bonds will strengthen and, over time, walking-distance neighborhoods will care for downtown as their own.

Neighbor AUDIENCE SUB- CATEGORIES:

DRIVE-IN

Description:

A drive-in neighbor lives outside of a ten minute casual bike ride or walk, and outside of the downtown district. This group places value on convenience, easy parking, and clear wayfinding. They moved outside of the downtown area for proximity to major highways, larger lots, or larger homes, but love to visit the downtown when events are happening, to get a bite to eat, or take a stroll in the park near the lake. Downtown needs regular events, ample parking, and clear signage to make their trips enjoyable.

DAILY COMMUTER

Description:

The daily commuter passes through downtown by auto or bike but needs compelling reasons to stop. Unless downtown is convenient, interesting, dynamic and "peopled" it is only an inconvenience to their commute – something to get through as quickly as possible. If downtown provides convenience retail, they may stop for essentials. If downtown intrigues them, they will come for a visit with friends and family to explore more. If they like downtown enough, they may start envisioning themselves living or working here.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL USER

Description:

The recreational trail user is on Hardwood Creek Regional Trail and needs compelling reasons and inviting infrastructure to be drawn into downtown. They will be in search of food or service or may just want to explore a new place. They need wayfinding, inviting routes into downtown from the trail and secure lock-up facilities once they arrive. If they like what they experience, they'll be back with friends and family.



PERIODIC DRIVE-THRU

Description:

The periodic drive-through visitor might use downtown as a route to the cabin or to visit relatives. They have more time-flexibility than the commuter but similar needs and interests. Like the commuter, if downtown offers convenience retail, they may make a quick stop for essentials. If downtown intrigues them, they will come for a visit with friends and family to explore more. If they like downtown enough, they may start envisioning themselves living or working here.

Pass-through Visitor

AUDIENCE SUB- CATEGORIES:

REGIONAL EXPLORER

Description:

The regional explorer is intentional about finding and visiting places that are unique, cool, or quirky. They want to know the region in which they live and will spend their free time visiting new places. They will return to their favorites over and over but making it to this category means a place is both interesting and accommodating of visitor needs. If they like downtown enough, they may start envisioning themselves living, working or starting a business here.





PLAN DIRECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter manifests the vision for downtown Forest Lake into 1) a set of directives built from key findings and translate into recommended actions and 2) a physical plan for improvements called the **Downtown Guide Plan**. Some of the recommended actions are policy or program shifts w/o physical change to downtown while others translate into physical downtown changes that are illustrated in the Downtown Guide Plan.

DOWNTOWN GUIDE PLAN

The Downtown Guide Plan on the following page illustrates the recommended actions that will lead to physical downtown change. Features of the Downtown Guide Plan include:

- Transformed Lake Street streetscape with wider sidewalks, narrower traffic lanes, pedestrian/aesthetic amenities, and ped-activated crosswalks.
- As more redevelopment occurs, creation of a district parking ramp.
- Creation of a 1-mile downtown loop trail that interlinks the Hardwood Creek Trail, Lake Street, Lakeside Memorial Park, and downtown shoreline.
- Creation of a Lakeside Parkway with on-street parking bay that establishes a coherent, continuous and pleasant vehicle loop between Lake Street and Lakeside Memorial Park.
- Establishment of a concentrated and continuous loop of retail storefronts along Lake Street between Broadway Avenue and 2nd Avenue NW.
- Gateway enhancements to Broadway Avenue.
- Streetscape enhancements to Centennial Drive.
- Addition of district wayfinding signage throughout the downtown district.
- Establishment of a social sidewalk network linking the surrounding neighborhood with the downtown district.
- Establishment of a trail wayside park that draws Hardwood Creek Trail users into downtown and offers teen recreation in the form of a skate park/spot.
- Securing of alternative boat trailer parking and boat launch site to allow for relocation of downtown trailer parking and, if feasible, boat launch.
- Enhancements to Lakeside Memorial Park including: canoe/kayak landing, bandshell, expanded transient boat slips, beach house upgrade, winter ice recreation, shoreline rehabilitation, and a veteran's memorial plaza.
- Better snowmobile access between Hardwood Creek Trail and the lake.



Speed skating on Forest Lake's proposed oval



Street-oriented dining with views of the lake

Forest Lake Downtown Guide Plan

0 200 400 Feet



Downtown Loop Trail

Lakeside Parkway

Relocate Existing Boat Launch

Lake Street Skyway

Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

Optional District Parking Structure Locations

-100 to 200 stall capacity

Continuous Retail Loop

-Concentrated retail storefronts from Broadway to 2nd Ave NW

Canoe / Kayak Launch and Secure tie-Up

Gateway Landscaping

Veteran's Memorial

Possible Beach House Relocation (Adjacent to Playground)

Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

Neighborhood Trail Connector

Centennial Drive Streetscape Improvements

Downtown Loop Trail

Regional Trail Wayside Park

Lake Street Streetscape

Pedestrian Activated Crossing

2nd Ave NW

Lake Street

Option 1

Paseo

Option 2

Option 3

Lakeside Parkway

Bandshell

Lakeside Memorial Park

Beach

"Wild Ice" Recreation Area

Forest Lake, Lake 1

Transient Boat Slips

Boat Club Docks

Transient Boat Slips - Alt. Location

1st Ave SW

2nd Ave SW

SW 2nd St

Hardwood Creek Trail

Centennial Drive

Lake Street

Lakeside Pkwy

Pedestrian Activated Crossing

Snowmobile Route

FIGURE 5.1 FOREST LAKE DOWNTOWN GUIDE PLAN



Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN

Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN

DOWNTOWN DIRECTIVES

The following pages identify key findings, associated plan directives and action steps resulting from each directive. Written actions on the following pages are encapsulated in the Downtown Guide Plan on the previous page.



LAKE STREET CORRIDOR

FINDING:

Because traffic noise, volume, and speed on Lake Street are not mitigated with pedestrian comforts and amenities, pedestrians avoid the corridor and over time, so have the types of retailers that seek pedestrian districts in which to locate.

DIRECTIVE:

Mitigate negative traffic impacts of Lake Street with a suite of street design modifications and pedestrian comfort/ streetscape amenities.

ACTIONS:

Work with MNDOT and Washington County to:

- Narrow lanes and widen streetscape.
- Implement a ped-oriented streetscape w/ street trees.
- Redesign ped crossings (including at traffic circle).
- Maintain/expand on-street parking.

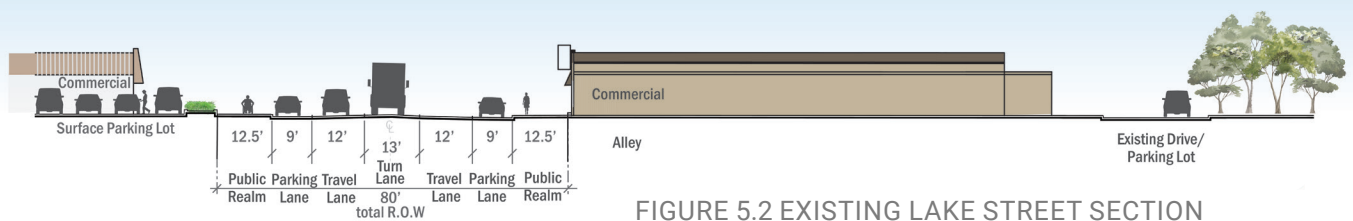


FIGURE 5.2 EXISTING LAKE STREET SECTION

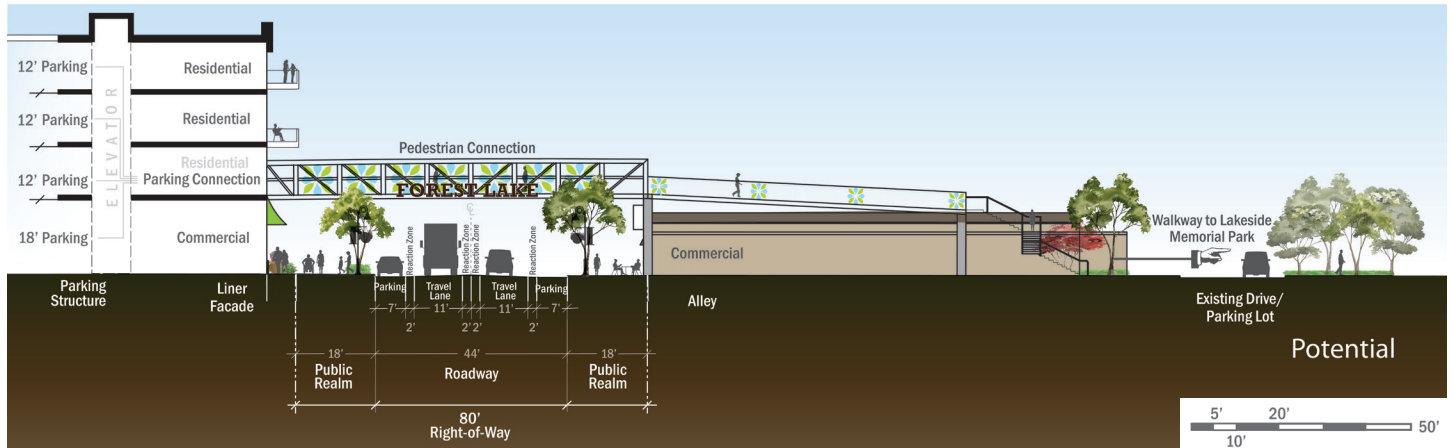


FIGURE 5.3 DISTRICT PARKING SECTION, OPTION 1 (SHOWING IMPROVED LAKE STREET STREETScape)

DISTRICT PARKING

FINDING:

Based on preliminary analysis, three of the four downtown quadrants are shy of adequate parking capacity and the greatest parking demand is east of Lake Street. Parking shortage east of Lake Street is a limiting factor in downtown carrying capacity; however, surface parking in that quadrant is currently maximized, pinched by boat trailer parking and would require structured parking.

DIRECTIVE:

Implement approaches that increase downtown parking capacity open to downtown visitors. Identify alternative scenarios for a district parking facility in the downtown core with varying approaches to creating direct pedestrian linkages to Lake Street and Lakeside Memorial Park.

ACTIONS:

- Coordinate with future redevelopments for district parking opportunities.
- Relocate the downtown boat launch and associated trailer parking to a location outside the core downtown to reduce parking conflicts and free up surface parking.
- Conduct feasibility/impact study of creating structured parking in the current parking lot adjacent to Lakeside Memorial Park.
- With district parking option west of Lake Street, consider skyway.
- Conduct a detailed downtown parking study as part of the first opportunity for district parking.
- Consider zoning code adjustment to reduce parking requirements.

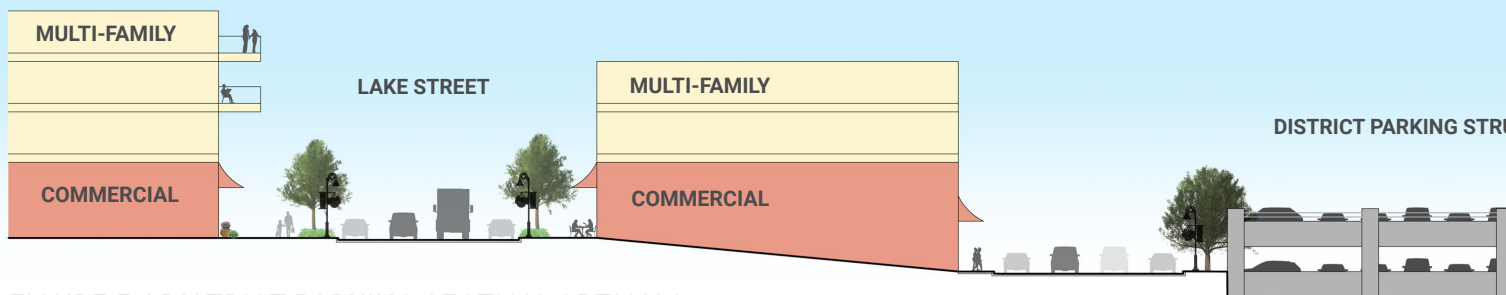


FIGURE 5.4 DISTRICT PARKING SECTION, OPTION 2

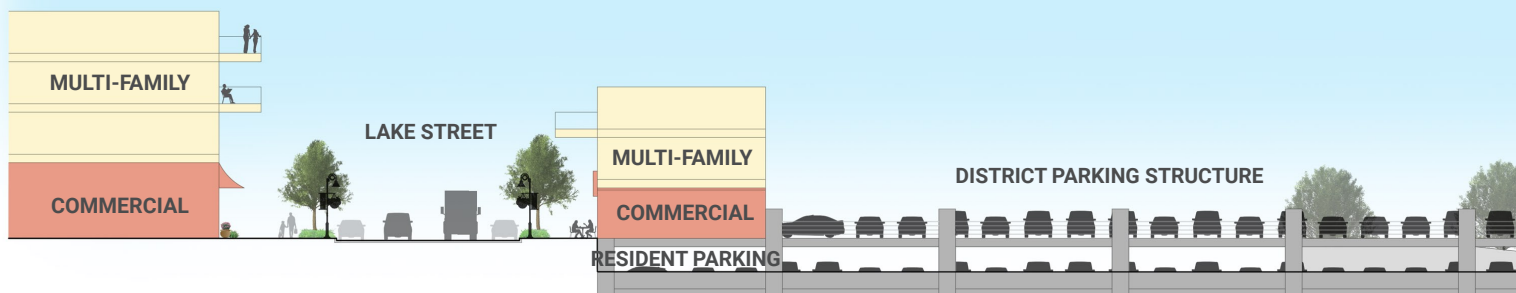


FIGURE 5.5 DISTRICT PARKING SECTION OPTION 3

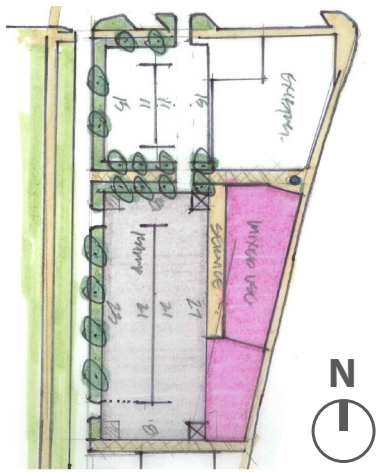


FIGURE 5.6 DISTRICT PARKING PLAN, OPTION 1

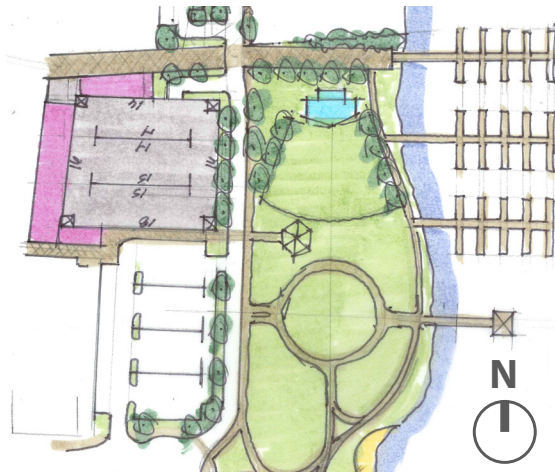


FIGURE 5.7 DISTRICT PARKING PLAN, OPTION 2

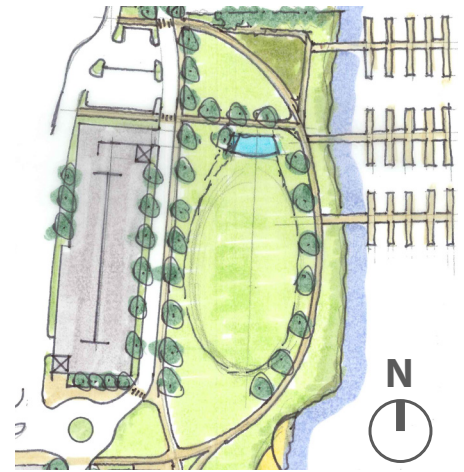


FIGURE 5.8 DISTRICT PARKING PLAN, OPTION 3



RETAIL LOOP (BROADWAY TO 2ND NW)

FINDING:

The evolution of retailing suggests that downtown will likely not support the volume of traditional storefronts needed to re-establish the extent of downtown shopping that once existed. There are currently many gaps in storefronts, causing the district to struggle as a cohesive shopping loop. Other directives will transform the pedestrian experience. This one is focused on establishing a continuous pedestrian circuit of storefronts within a subset of the district.

DIRECTIVE:

Tighten the land use pattern between Broadway Avenue and 2nd Avenue NW to establish continuous retail storefronts on both sides of Lake Street.

ACTIONS:

- Make minor adjustments to zoning code to compel retailing at the streetfront.
- Offer financial incentives to establish continuous retail frontage.



SOCIAL SIDEWALK NETWORK

FINDING:

Few sidewalks link the surrounding neighborhood to the downtown district. Sidewalks that do exist lack door-to-door links, social design, or pedestrian comfort. As a result, few neighbors choose to walk downtown from their homes even if they live within a convenient, 10-minute walk.

DIRECTIVE:

Establish a door-to-door sidewalk network designed as “social” sidewalks through the surrounding neighborhood with direct connections into downtown.

ACTIONS:

- Expand sidewalks using the door-to-door and social sidewalk philosophies.
- Concentrate sidewalk investments within the 10-minute walking loop of downtown.



WAYFINDING

FINDING:

Navigating downtown can be confusing to those who don't know it well.

DIRECTIVE:

Establish district wayfinding to direct visitors to popular destinations and district parking.

ACTIONS:

- Create a district-wide wayfinding signage strategy that incorporates previously-prepared branding strategies.



INTEGRATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCE

FINDING:

Because of its isolation from the “circuit” of downtown, Lakeside Memorial Park and the Hardwood Creek Trail are only a marginal economic and experiential contributors to the downtown district.

Also, there are few recreational activities in the downtown to support teens.

DIRECTIVE:

1. Create new ways to integrate Lakeside Memorial Park with the broader downtown district and link the park with Hardwood Creek Trail and Lake Street.
2. Establish an inviting gateway and teen-centered experience into downtown from the Hardwood Creek Trail on a currently vacant parcel.

ACTIONS:

- Establish an amenity-rich, pedestrian trail loop around downtown and through Lakeside Memorial Park.
- Reconfigure circulation from Lake Street to the Park by creating a continuous parkway loop with on-street parking bay adjacent to the park and connecting with Lake Street via 1st Street SE and 2nd Avenue NE.
- Create a broad and amenity-rich pedestrian promenade or “paseo” from Lake Street to the Park mid-way between Broadway Avenue and 2nd Avenue NW.
- Create a trail and teen-focused wayside park on the 1st Street SE alignment between Lake Street and Centennial Drive. Program could include skate park / spot, bike lockers & service, picnic facilities & shelter, play features / games, drinking fountain, lawn & shade, wayfinding & information kiosk.



VIEWSHED TO THE LAKE

FINDING:

Visitors barely gain a glimpse of Forest Lake, Lake 1 from the downtown street network. Seeing the lake as they travel through offers visitors a subtle yet powerful connection to Forest Lake's core identity.

DIRECTIVE:

Maintain the viewshed to Forest Lake, Lake 1 from the Broadway Avenue / Lake Street intersection.

ACTIONS:

- Consider design solutions such as art and lighting for the Broadway Avenue round-about that allows visitors to see beyond it to Forest Lake.
- Create gateway landscaping along Broadway Avenue at Lake Street.
- When the current beach house reaches the end of its useful life, modify its location to a place that does not obscure the view to Forest Lake from Broadway Avenue.
- Analyze viewshed impacts in future landscaping decisions.



CENTENNIAL DRIVE

FINDING:

Centennial Drive is functional to those familiar with downtown but not an inviting or understood access/circulation route to most.

DIRECTIVE:

Redesign Centennial Drive as a strategically-important access route to parking and businesses.

ACTIONS:

- Narrow the street to extent feasible while maintaining two-way travel.
- Collaborate with adjacent property owners to implement streetscape enhancements including lighting and a sidewalk on the business side.
- Where feasible, add on-street, parallel parking.
- Incorporate the corridor into district wayfinding signage strategy.



ACTIVATION

FINDING:

Regular happenings in the categories of recreation and entertainment through all seasons will provide ongoing reasons for downtown visits.

DIRECTIVE:

In addition to larger and more prominent events, expand routine / regular downtown happenings.

ACTIONS:

Collaborate with the Forest Lake Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to develop every-day / routine downtown district events and happenings, especially through the winter.

- Music
- Sales
- Tours
- Art
- Crafts
- Recreation



REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FINDING:

Key sites within the downtown district are well-suited to redevelopment.

DIRECTIVE:

Identify and prepare for private redevelopment opportunities as they arise.

ACTIONS:

- Identify potential redevelopment sites and continue to build relationships with downtown property owners and development interests.
- Ensure zoning and design guidance is in place to appropriately direct development proposals.
- Ensure a spectrum of financial participation tools are in place to leverage development for public interests.
- Use the Downtown Master Plan as a guiding document in developer coordination.



LAKEFRONT RECREATION

FINDING:

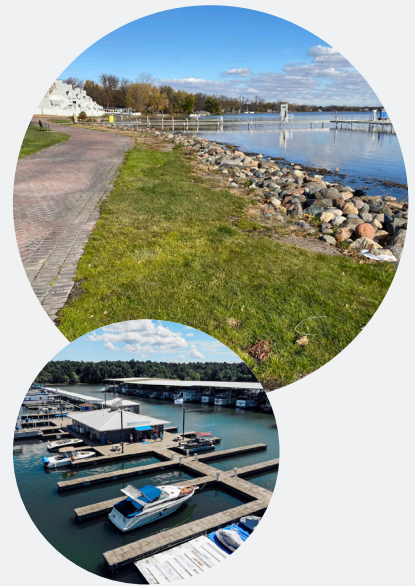
Lakeside Memorial Park is a tremendous asset that could accomplish even more visitor/recreation benefit. The lake itself is an under-utilized recreational asset that holds potential for greater programming through all seasons to draw people into downtown.

DIRECTIVE:

Expand recreational programming in all seasons in Lakeside Memorial park and at the downtown shoreline.

ACTIONS:

- Conduct boat launch relocation study to identify potential alternatives to downtown trailer parking, boat launch, or both.
- Secure and develop alternative boat trailer parking / boat launch site to allow for relocation of downtown facilities. Ideal location would be close to downtown but outside the core.
- Expand Lakeside Memorial Park across the relocated boat launch.
- Construct a performance venue (bandshell) in the Park with an orientation/design that will not impact surrounding residential neighbors. This action is dependent on boat launch relocation.
- Install expanded and more guest-friendly transient boat slips.





*“Placemaking
is like turning
a house
into a home.”*
- David Engwicht



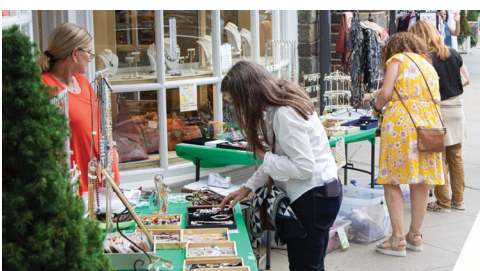


ACTIVATION PLAN

THE VALUE OF ACTIVATION

Investing in a public realm that looks the part sets the stage for an attractive downtown, but does not itself ensure a lively, animated environment. For that, activation is key. Activation creates a critical mass of energy that supports retail and restaurants, fosters healthy social settings, provides a feeling of safety and security, and motivates people to live and work in a downtown. When done well, events, commercial businesses, and the environment combine to draw a representative swath of the community together along with visitors, making a welcoming and comfortable place where people want to spend time. Diverse and changing programming that flows from morning to evening, links weekdays to weekends, and spans seasons ensures repeat visits and increases time spent downtown. Pairing a pedestrian-friendly environment with a variety of things to see and do leads to chance meetings as well as planned gatherings, transforming Lake Street into a living room for the community rather than just a thoroughfare. Over time, residents will have memories and traditions anchored in the downtown, fostering feelings of attachment and connection that will encourage additional investment and stewardship. Property values will increase and economic activity will be self sustaining. Activation breathes life into a downtown, celebrating local character, history, and identity. It makes a house a home.





METHODS AND TOOLS

Successful activation plans utilize a variety of events to keep people coming to the area throughout the year. Encountering even a few of these can help to transform a person's idea of downtown into an interesting destination where, at any time, something fun might be happening.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

SEASONAL EVENTS / OFFERINGS

Seasonal events are easy to schedule into a calendar and repeat year after year. These types of programming can become an annual tradition, and grow into a beloved part of a community's identity. Examples include:

- Business district trick-or-treating
- Speed skating races / training on the Wild Ice Oval
- Open skating on the lake
- Ice carving / snow sculptures
- Ice castles/bars/mazes
- Hockey or broomball games and tournaments
- Art Fairs
- Snowmobile or Speedboat races
- Fun runs
- Parades (boat and street)
- Cultural celebrations
- Farmers markets
- Makers markets
- Spring cleanups
- Holiday festivities
 - Light displays
 - Caroling
- Easter egg hunt
- Scavenger hunts
- Movies in the Park

DAY-TO-DAY INTERACTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

Daily interactions are touchpoints with the public that ideally showcase a revolving set of activities from week to week. Using the streetscape as an interface, businesses can pique the interests of passersby to generate future business. Examples include:

- Setting up sidewalk sales
- Scheduling food trucks / carts
- Booking musicians or performances
- Holding weekly tastings
- Changing daily specials
- Selling business district coupon books
- Offering Forest Lake-themed coloring pages
- Advertising happy hours
- Hosting trivia nights
- Having local newspapers available
- Setting up lawn games
- Yoga or fitness classes in the park





CURATED INSTALLATIONS

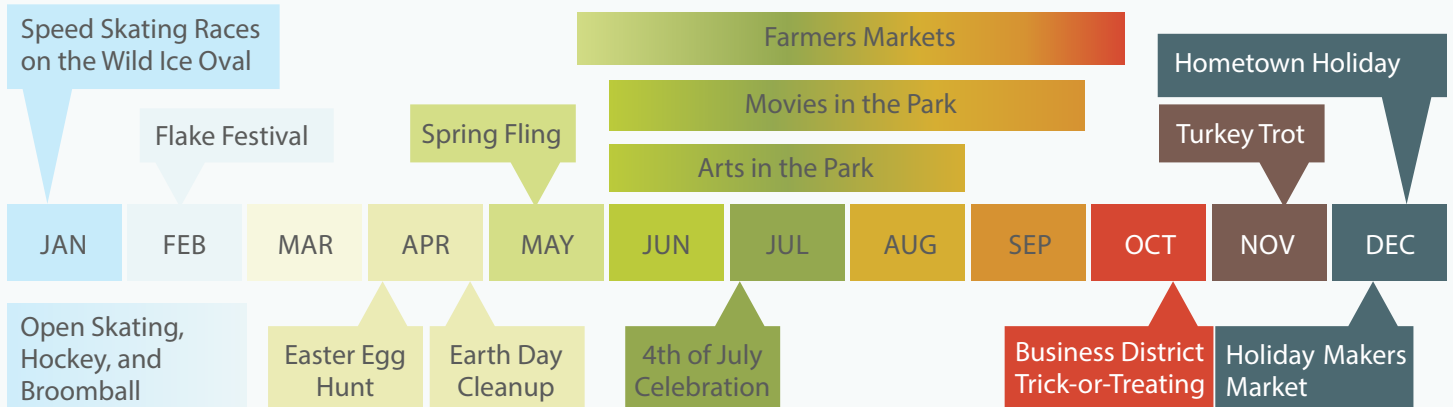
Investments in public art allow a community to express itself, celebrating the unique identities that set it apart from others. When local artists are involved, these commissions give back to the community and inspire local pride. Art, especially when interactive, can be a thoughtful, playful, and memorable way to activate the downtown realm. Examples include:

- Photo-worthy and “instagrammable” places
 - Framed views
 - Wings on walls
- Themed sculpture installations (think Chicago’s “Cows on Parade”)
- Historical interpretation
- Word walls
- Revolving or temporary artworks
- Storefront window displays
- Murals
- Projection art

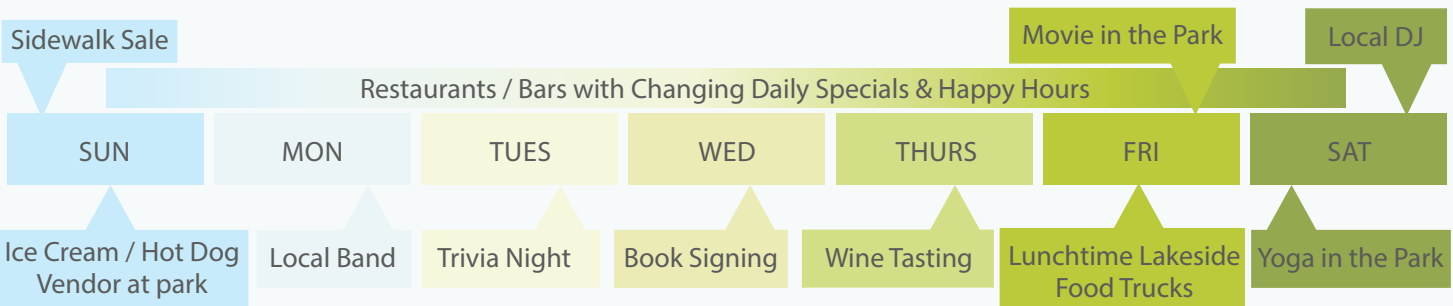


SAMPLE CALENDARS

SAMPLE SEASONAL EVENT CALENDAR



SAMPLE WEEKLY CALENDAR



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations will help to get an activation program off the ground:

1. Hire an activation coordinator to determine a public art and activation strategy and manage its curation across the downtown
2. Identify interested partners and champions
3. Form a subcommittee of business district stakeholders interested in activation
4. Determine an annual budget
5. Set fundraising goals
6. Plan to test out two new activation endeavors per year
7. Develop success metrics and track progress:
 - spending at local businesses
 - number of events planned
 - attendance at events



“The street is the river of life of the city.
[People] come to these places not to escape, but to partake of it.
William H. Whyte”

4	Paseo Project	\$879,336	Early Phase	Memorial Park quadrant of downtown.
5	Downtown Loop Trail Project	\$1,714,705	Early Phase	Broad pedestrian way from Lake Street to the Forest Lake shoreline roughly in line with the current boat launch.
6	Hardwood Creek Trail Wayside Project	\$888,129	Early Phase	A nearly one-mile recreational trail loop around the downtown district.
7-a	Lakeside Parkway Project (Broadway - 2nd NE)	\$2,716,254	Later Phase	A pocket park as a downtown gateway adjacent to the Hardwood Creek Trail.
7-b	Lakeside Parkway Project (1st St SE - Broadway)	\$1,918,145	Opportunistic	A parkway loop from the Lake Street/1 st St. SE intersection, past Lakeside Memorial Park to the Lake Street/NE 2 nd Avenue intersection.
8-a	Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (Broadway - 2nd NW)	\$804,071	Opportunistic	A parkway loop from the Lake Street/1 st St. SE intersection, past Lakeside Memorial Park to the Lake Street/NE 2 nd Avenue intersection.
8-b	Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (2nd SW - Broadway)	\$804,071	Opportunistic	Streetscape enhancement to the Centennial Drive corridor.
9	Broadway Avenue Gateway Project	\$141,648	Catalyst	Streetscape enhancement to the Centennial Drive corridor.
10	1st Avenue SW Neighborhood Trail Connector Project	\$174,208	Opportunistic	Rehabilitation of gateway landscaping, lighting and furnishings on either side of Broadway Avenue between the Hardwood Creek Trail and Lake Street round-about.
	Ramp Relocation Project	\$1,000,000	Later Phase	A short trail link from the proposed wayside park, across the Hardwood Creek Trail, to SW 2 nd Street a block east of the regional trail.
	Downtown Boat Launch Project	\$1,594,200	Early Phase	Removal of the downtown motorized boat launch and associated parking to a predetermined location away from Lakeside Memorial Park.
	Great Rondell Project	\$2,430,530	Later Phase	Expansion of transient, short-term stay camps at downtown's Lakeside Memorial Park.
				A performance venue in the portion of Lakeside Memorial Park

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Forest Lake Downtown Master Plan is not a single step. It is considered a fifteen to twenty-year plan, although experience tells us that implementation will find its greatest success if organized across the next decade. Achieving the vision established in the plan involves a series of interrelated actions. This chapter provides a guide for actions and investments required to implement the master plan and set a vibrant trajectory for downtown Forest Lake. Several factors will be key to successfully realizing the vision. They apply regardless of the actual form and timing of the actions.

Commitment to the plan and patience go hand-in-hand. This plan does not simply seek to invest in downtown. It seeks to move the district toward a cohesive vision for the future. There is a difference. Commitment to the plan means the willingness to actively promote public and private investments that achieve the vision, and to deter actions that do not. Not all decisions will be easy.

Comprehensiveness. The master plan is a comprehensive framework for guiding public and private investments in the downtown district. Viewed in its entirety, undertaking the plan may seem to be an overwhelming task. Implementing the plan, however, is not a single step but a series of actions that will span more than a decade.

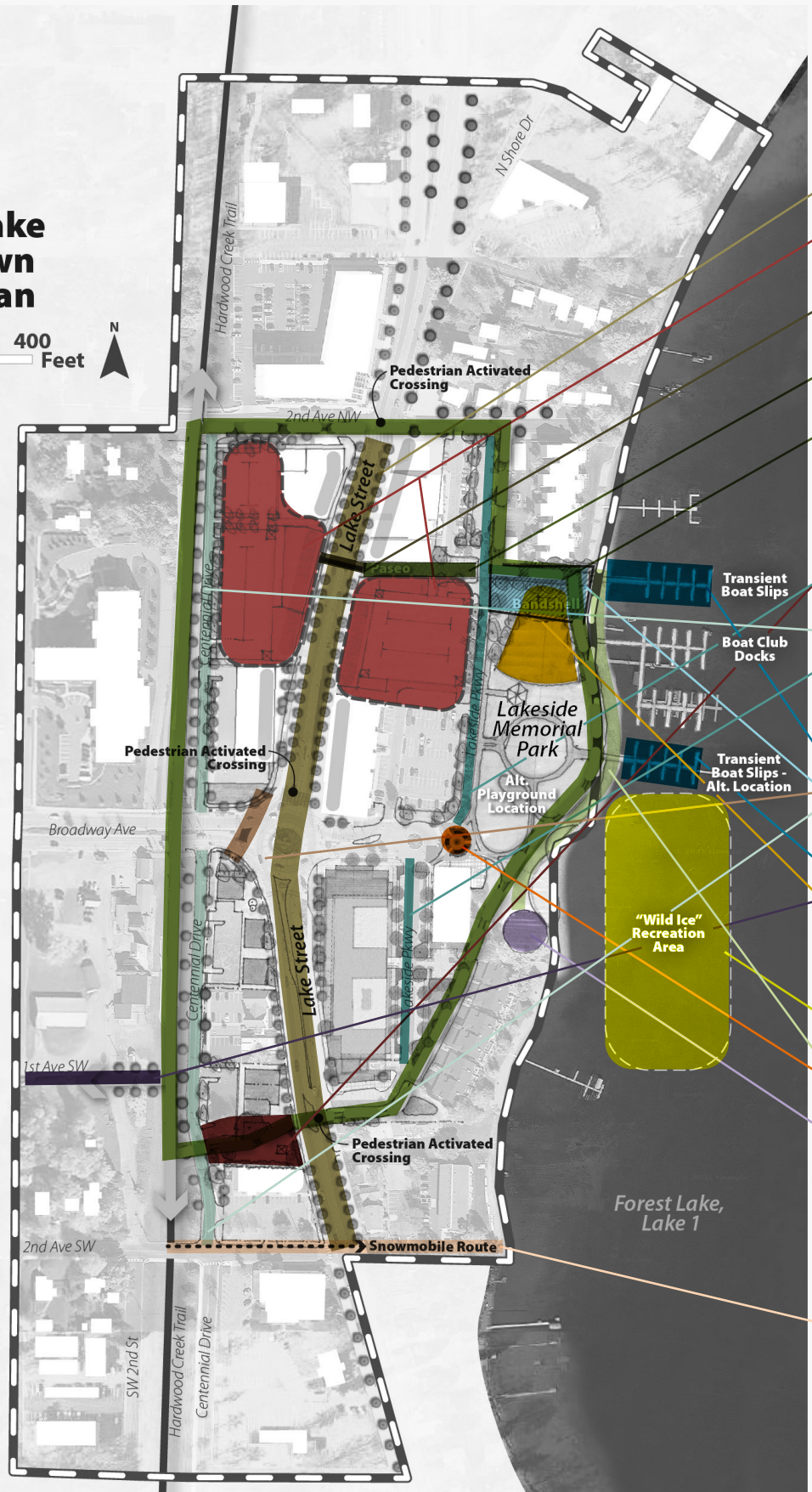
Public/Private Partnerships. Leveraging public/private partnerships will make plan implementation achievable. This approach ensures that public monies are used to leverage desired public outcomes in combination with the interests of private investors.

Strategic Investments. With limited funds, every expenditure is strategic. It is not possible to immediately undertake all of the actions described in the plan. Needs and opportunities not contemplated in the plan may arise in the future. Every investment should be evaluated for its impact on achieving the vision for downtown.

Financial Planning. The ability to make strategic investments relies on the City's wise financial planning. Implementing the plan should be viewed as a series of interrelated actions. In some instances, downtown investments will yield revenues (such as TIF) that can offset related public investment demands. Other instances will require up-front public investments to attract private ones. The ability to coordinate public actions with private development will be key to implementation success. Failure to consider the implementation relationships between elements of the plan will lead to missed opportunities and increased risk for the City of Forest Lake.

Forest Lake Downtown Guide Plan

0 200 400
Feet



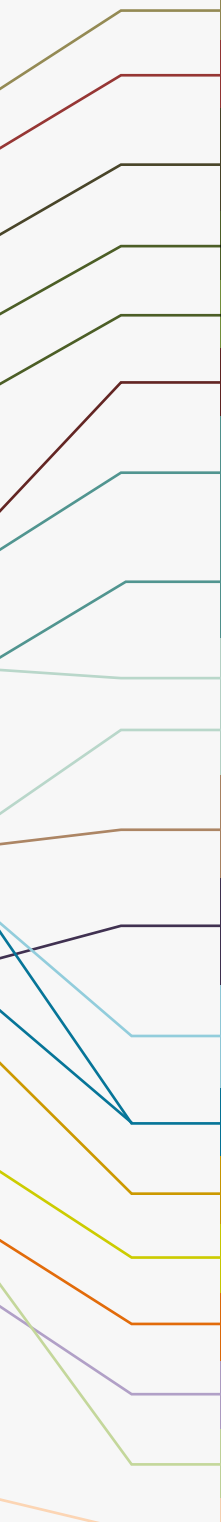
DOWNTOWN GUIDE PLAN PROJECTS

The Downtown Guide Plan illustrates a full-spectrum vision for downtown change. Identified projects that translate into capital investments are highlighted in the figure above and listed at right.



Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN

Downtown Plan
Forest Lake, MN



Project Legend		Project Estimates	Phase
1	Lake Street Streetscape Project	\$7,398,912	Early Phase
2	District Parking Ramp Project	\$8,119,540	Opportunistic
3	Lake Street Skyway Project	\$3,894,912	Opportunistic
4	Paseo Project	\$879,336	Early Phase
5	Downtown Loop Trail Project	\$1,714,705	Early Phase
6	Hardwood Creek Trail Wayside Project	\$888,129	Early Phase
7-a	Lakeside Parkway Project (Broadway - 2nd NE)	\$2,716,254	Later Phase
7-b	Lakeside Parkway Project (1st St SE - Broadway)	\$1,918,145	Opportunistic
8-a	Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (Broadway - 2nd NW)	\$804,071	Opportunistic
8-b	Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (2nd SW - Broadway)	\$804,071	Opportunistic
9	Broadway Avenue Gateway Project	\$141,648	Catalyst
10	1st Avenue SW Neighborhood Trail Connector Project	\$174,208	Opportunistic
11	Boat Ramp Relocation Project	\$327,175	Later Phase
12	Transient Boat Dock Project	\$265,942	Early Phase
13	Lakefront Bandshell Project	\$3,430,528	Later Phase
14	Wild Ice Winter Recreation Project	\$95,904	Catalyst
15	Veteran's Memorial Project	\$0	Catalyst
16	Beach House Project	\$941,850	Opportunistic
17	Shoreline Enhancement Project	\$275,649	Catalyst
18	Snowmobile Lake Trail Project	\$25,415	Catalyst
19	Downtown Plan Implementation Budget	\$400,000	Catalyst
Total Budget		\$35,216,394	

FIGURE 7.1 DOWNTOWN GUIDE PLAN PROJECTS, COSTS, AND PHASING

PROJECT BUDGETS

The projects outlined in this chapter are key to the incremental implementation of the Downtown Plan. The project budget estimates represent a preliminary, high-level accounting of hard and soft project costs plus escalation (inflation) based on the preliminary phasing strategy. This level of budgeting will be fundamental in building Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) if future Forest Lake budgets and conducting informed decisions with potential financial partners.

- The budgets are built from high-level cost estimating based on a quantification of elements included with each project along with past project experience. Budgets include a full spectrum of anticipated construction, contingency, and professional service costs, which are referred to as hard and soft costs.
- Contingencies are included with each project budget. Project budgeting at this preliminary stage cannot anticipate all the obstacles each project will face. Carrying contingencies within the budget is an increasingly-used hedge against unanticipated costs.
- Design/Administration fees are included with each project budget. The budget generally identifies the industry norm for this category of cost although some projects use lower percentages based on their simplicity.
- Project hard and soft costs are calculated at the “current value of money.” However, escalation/inflation has also been factored into project budgets based on the preliminary implementation phasing strategy.

PHASING

The phasing categories identified with each project are as follows:



Catalyst Projects: Relatively lower-cost that are ready to implement over the next two years from plan adoption.



Early-Phase Projects: Projects identified for implementation within five years.



Later-Phase Projects: Projects identified for implementation five to ten years out.



Opportunistic Projects: Projects that are either dependent on other efforts or could be opportunistically coupled with the efforts of others. Forest Lake should be prepared and looking for opportunities to leverage in completing projects in this category.



PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

E

1. LAKE STREET STREETScape PROJECT: \$7.4M

This project enhances pedestrian comfort and character along both sides of Lake Street through the district. The project includes narrowing parts of Lake Street to create wider sidewalk spaces and adding decorative lighting, electrical hookups, street trees, landscaping, decorative pavement, pedestrian-activated crossing signals, irrigation, furnishings, and wayfinding.

Some elements could be implemented opportunistically with adjacent redevelopment.

O

2. DISTRICT PARKING RAMP PROJECT: \$8.1M

This project constructs a parking ramp in one of three alternative locations identified in the Downtown Plan. The quantity of parking to be built (which drives cost) will remain fluid until a specific site is chosen and detailed parking analysis completed. Cost estimating is based on a 150-stall ramp, which does not fully satisfy but approaches what has been preliminarily identified as the current district parking shortfall. Two of the three identified sites are redevelopment opportunity sites and, as a result, a parking structure could be coupled with private redevelopment. Also, the identified site west of Lake Street could be a more expensive project than the other options if the skyway project is determined essential to connecting parking with the lakefront.

O

3. LAKE STREET SKYWAY PROJECT: \$3.9M

This project constructs a pedestrian skyway over Lake Street from an optional district parking ramp location to the Lakeside Memorial Park quadrant of downtown. The skyway would connect with the parking ramp elevator core on one end and include a rampway/stairs touching down on the paseo on the other end. Discussion through the downtown planning process suggests consideration of the skyway project only if a district parking ramp is constructed west of Lake Street.

E

4. PASEO PROJECT: \$880K

This project constructs a broad pedestrian way from Lake Street to the Forest Lake shoreline roughly in line with the current boat launch. The project includes decorative paving, street trees, landscaping, decorative lighting, furnishings, and wayfinding. The project could be implemented in conjunction with private redevelopment and is reliant on some form of land procurement (acquisition or otherwise) for the portion closest to Lake Street.

E

5. DOWNTOWN LOOP TRAIL PROJECT: \$1.7M

This project establishes a nearly one-mile recreational trail loop around the downtown district. Part of the loop is already in place with the Hardwood Creek Trail. The remaining project includes trail pavement, street crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping, furnishings, and wayfinding. Note that the cost of pedestrian-activated crossing signals at Lake Street are included with the Lake Street Streetscape Project rather than this one.

E

6. HARDWOOD CREEK TRAIL WAYSIDE PARK PROJECT: \$890K

This project creates a pocket park as a downtown gateway and teen-centric space adjacent to the Hardwood Creek Trail. The wayside includes skate park/spot, picnic facilities, shelter, lighting, landscaping, water, bathrooms, bike lockers/racks, and wayfinding. The project could be implemented in conjunction with private redevelopment and is reliant on some form of land procurement (acquisition or otherwise).

L

7. LAKESIDE PARKWAY PROJECT

A. BROADWAY AVE TO 2ND AVE NE: \$2.7M

O

B. 1ST ST SE TO BROADWAY AVE: \$1.9M

This project constructs a parkway loop from the Lake Street/1st St. SE intersection, past Lakeside Memorial Park to the Lake Street/NE 2nd Avenue intersection. The north segment (A) is from Broadway Avenue to 2nd Avenue NE. The south segment (B) stretches from 1st Street SE to Broadway Avenue. The project will unify/make coherent the circulation to the park rather than vehicles circulating through a series of parking lots. The project includes reconfiguration of current parking lot adjacent to the park, an on-parkway parking bay and parkway paving, curb & gutter, decorative lighting, street trees, streetscape elements, and wayfinding.

The south segment (B) is placed in the opportunistic implementation category to suggest it can be coupled with adjacent redevelopment.

O

8. CENTENNIAL DRIVE STREETScape PROJECT

A. BROADWAY AVE TO 2ND AVE NW: \$800K

B. 2ND AVE SW TO BROADWAY AVE: \$800K

This project enhances the Centennial Drive corridor. The north segment is from Broadway Avenue to 2nd Avenue NW. The south segment stretches from 2nd Avenue SW to Broadway Avenue. Because the current right-of-way is too narrow to accommodate most of these improvements, the project will be implemented in cooperation with adjacent landowners. As a result, the project may be implemented incrementally and opportunistically. The project includes sidewalks, decorative lighting, ornamental street trees (to accommodate overhead power lines), landscaping and wayfinding.

C

9. BROADWAY AVENUE GATEWAY PROJECT: \$140K

The project includes the rehabilitation of gateway landscaping, lighting and furnishings on either side of Broadway Avenue between the Hardwood Creek Trail and Lake Street round-about.

O

10. 1ST AVENUE SW NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL CONNECTOR PROJECT: \$170K

This project creates a short trail link from the proposed wayside park, across the Hardwood Creek Trail, to SW 2nd Street a block east of the regional trail. The alignment generally follows 1st Avenue SW. The project includes the trail, pedestrian lighting, and landscaping. The project could be implemented in conjunction with adjacent site improvements and in cooperation with the landowner.





11. TRAILER PKG / BOAT RAMP RELOCATION PROJECT: \$330K

If a suitable relocation site can be determined and secured, this project relocates the downtown boat trailer parking and, if feasible, motorized boat launch to a yet-to-be-determined location away from Lakeside Memorial Park. The project includes demolition of the current launch, restoration of the launch area to parkland, and parking lot re-striping. Project budgeting does not include land procurement for a new launch or construction of new parking or launch. Costs and strategies for these items will be determined with a boat launch relocation study identified in the Downtown Plan Implementation Activities category.



12. TRANSIENT BOAT DOCK PROJECT: \$270K

This project expands the number of transient (short-term stay) boat slips at downtown's Lakeside Memorial Park. The project also creates a more inviting and secure docking experience by building finger docks from a primary or terminal dock (today, boats tie up directly to a terminal dock, which many boat owners dislike). The Guide Plan illustrates two potential locations for the docks. One is reliant on relocation of the downtown boat launch.



13. LAKEFRONT BANDSHELL PROJECT: \$3.4M

This project constructs a performance venue in the portion of Lakeside Memorial Park currently occupied by the boat launch. The project includes a bandshell structure with built-in restrooms, reconfiguration of surrounding walkways, landscaping, furnishings, and site lighting. The project is dependent on relocation of the downtown boat launch.



14. WILD ICE WINTER RECREATION PROJECT: \$100K

This project establishes a lake-ice recreation facility on Lake One at the downtown lakefront. Most of the costs associated with the project are in the O&M category but there are capital costs in temporary lighting, rink boards, skate ramp and miscellaneous furnishings.



15. VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PROJECT: NOT ESTIMATED

This project is currently being designed by a community group to be located the apex of Broadway Avenue in Lakeside Memorial Park. The project includes decorative paving, sculpture, landscaping, interpretive panels, furnishings, and decorative lighting.



16. BEACH HOUSE PROJECT: \$940K

This project replaces the current beach house in an alternative location adjacent to the beach but less obstructive to views of the lake. The project includes public bathrooms, changing facilities, and a warming room for wintertime lake recreation. The project is placed in the opportunistic phasing category to leverage other park investments and because the current beach house has useful life remaining but will likely reach the end of its useful life within the implementation window of this plan.



17. SHORELINE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT: \$280K

This project rehabilitates the Lakeside Memorial Park shoreline to be more esthetically-pleasing, to protect the shore from erosion and to provide greater foot-traffic access to the water. The project also creates a canoe/kayak beach

landing with lock stanchions so boaters can secure their craft while visiting downtown.

C

18. SNOWMOBILE LAKE TRAIL PROJECT: \$30K

This project formalizes and clarifies the snowmobile access route from Hardwood Creek Trail to Forest Lake, Lake 1 via 2nd Avenue SW. The project includes wayfinding, landscape modifications and minor grading/soil stabilization.

C

19. DOWNTOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS: \$400K

There are studies and budget allocations apart from construction projects that will support project implementation. They include:

- Wayfinding Plan that leverages previous signage plans to create a district-wide wayfinding strategy that will guide visitors.
- Boat Launch Relocation Study to identify potential locations, costs and actions necessary to relocate the downtown boat launch.
- Ongoing Planning Services that “work the plan,” maintain partner communications and continually pursues implementation.



- Land Acquisition Fund that allows for seizing on acquisition opportunities needed to accomplish the plan.

ACTIONS MATRIX

The vision for downtown Forest Lake will be achieved by the cohesive implementation of the actions adopted through the Downtown Plan. The following table outlines all the actions identified in the Directives chapter and the translation of

ACTIONS	Budget	Phase
Incentives for retail frontage	\$100,000	Catalyst
Broadway Avenue Gateway Project	\$141,648	Catalyst
Shoreline Enhancement Project	\$275,649	Catalyst
Snowmobile Lake Trail Project	\$25,415	Catalyst
Downtown Land Acquisition Fund	\$200,000	Catalyst
Wild Ice Winter Recreation Project	\$95,904	Catalyst
Veteran's Memorial Project	\$0	Catalyst
Zoning code adjustments for parking, retail frontage and subdivision.	\$5,000	Catalyst
Coordinate with development interests.	N/A	Catalyst
District wayfinding strategy.	\$5,000	Catalyst
Keep development financial tools up-to-date.	N/A	Catalyst
New activation strategy.	N/A	Catalyst
Boat launch relocation study	\$15,000	Catalyst
Ongoing downtown planning services	\$50,000	Catalyst
Lake Street Streetscape Project	\$7,398,912	Early Phase
Paseo Project	\$879,336	Early Phase
Downtown Loop Trail Project	\$1,714,705	Early Phase
Hardwood Creek Trail Wayside Project	\$888,129	Early Phase
Transient Boat Dock Project	\$265,942	Early Phase
Lakeside Parkway Project (Broadway - 2nd NE)	\$2,716,254	Later Phase
Boat Ramp Relocation Project	\$327,175	Later Phase
Lakefront Bandshell Project	\$3,430,528	Later Phase
District Parking Ramp Project	\$8,119,540	Opportunistic
Lake Street Skyway Project	\$3,894,912	Opportunistic
Lakeside Parkway Project (1st St SE - Broadway)	\$1,918,145	Opportunistic
Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (Broadway - 2nd NW)	\$804,071	Opportunistic
Centennial Dr. Streetscape Proj. (2nd SW - Broadway)	\$804,071	Opportunistic
1st Avenue SW Neighborhood Trail Connector Project	\$174,208	Opportunistic
Beach House Project	\$941,850	Opportunistic
District parking feasibility/impact study.	\$25,000	w/redevelopment
Expand sidewalk network in adjacent residential neighborhood.	N/A	ongoing

TABLE 7.1 DOWNTOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS



EDA Communication

Date: July 29, 2022

Presented to: EDA Members

Presented by: Robb Linwood, City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: All Boards Meeting for Draft Comprehensive Plan

Method: New Business

Background Information:

The Planning Commission has completed a final draft of the Comprehensive plan and it will be going back to WSB for final edits, pictures and diagrams. Staff believes it would be a good opportunity to have an all boards meeting and review the document in its draft form and provide feedback to both the Planning Commission and City Council. Staff has proposed Tuesday, August 30th, 2022 at 6:00PM for the meeting.



CITY OF WYOMING

P.O. Box 188, 26885 Forest Blvd., Wyoming, MN 55092
Phone: 651-462-0575 Fax: 651-462-0576



EDA Communication

Date: July 29, 2022

Presented to: EDA Members

Presented by: Robb Linwood, City Administrator

Department: Administration

Reference: Wyoming EDA Business of the Month

Method: Updates

Background Information:

As part of the EDA's activities in 2022 staff has developed a business of the month that will be sent out in our social media campaigns that include Facebook, our weekly city email and constant contact. Staff has been completing business retention visits this year and one of our most recent was Widseth Engineering. I have attached a screenshot of the section on our weekly email, constant contact and facebook. Staff will be sharing these out the first week of every month.

 **City of Wyoming, MN**
August 1 at 10:00 AM · 🌐

Wyoming's EDA Business Of The Month: [Widseth](#) - Architects, Engineers, Scientists and Surveyors

Widseth recently moved to a new location in Wyoming and renovated the building located at 5368 266th Street. With 14 unique disciplines spanning dozens of markets, their team of 200 professionals can help you with any project from start to finish. Widseth is a full-service architecture, engineering, environmental, and surveying firm with eight offices in Minnesota and one in North Dakota. The Wyoming office has approximately 20 employees and can be reached at 651-464-3130 or <https://widseth.com/contact-us/>

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: WIDSETH



👍❤️ 15

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: WIDSETH



City of Wyoming's EDA Business of the Month:
Widseth
Architects, Engineers, Scientists and Surveyors

Widseth recently moved to a new location in Wyoming and renovated the building located at 5368 266th Street. With 14 unique disciplines spanning dozens of markets, their team of 200 professionals can help you with any project from start to finish. Widseth is a full-service architecture, engineering, environmental, and surveying firm with eight offices in Minnesota and one in North Dakota. The Wyoming office has approximately 20 employees and can be reached at 651-464-3130 or <https://widseth.com/contact-us/>.