

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL**  
**REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN UPDATE**  
**TASK FORCE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**DECEMBER 27, 2021**  
**6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – The Sandberg Room  
2400 Margaret Street

Brandy presented the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the proposed Redevelopment Master Plan (Chapters 1 – 3)  
The Redevelopment Master Plan Review team reviewed and provided their input of the draft.

Chapter 1 – PROJECT BACKGROUND

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Project Approach

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Market Study

Chapter 3 – VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Collection of Districts ([Figure 8: Collection of Districts](#)) (Page 30)

Discussion:

- Links will be added to the website for the planning documents
- Need to maintain access to parking lots in Seppala
- Living Streets plan – rain gardens
- West End – keep the trees – retain as passive open space / parkland
- West End Employment – re-read the ROW vacation suggestion
- Topography in the area make construction difficult – apartments with underground parking would be appropriate for the West End.
- Name of the areas as Berwald District
- Entira Clinic in the east end of the Core Employment District. Berwald was developer of that site.
- Downtown District – do not require a percentage of the first floor of a property to be retail – don't want to discourage potential development downtown. Consider whether this should continue to be required. Look at case study – Sentinel Project – look at how that strayed from the code so that it could be developed in the manner that it did. PUD worked.
- Need to be flexible with parking
- Look for limitations in the code that might prevent redevelopment – eliminate them. Like parking or height restrictions.
- Parking improvement fund – might be in the comp plan to consider a parking ramp in the future
- City bought the old gas station – it might be NSP's contribution to MnDOT's intersection improvement project at Hwy 36/Century Avenue
- Demonstration bike lane on Margaret Street

- Public comment in July
- Plan Commission and Council in August
- Transportation/transit – a priority identified by City Council at their last retreat.
- Snow clearing – beneficial to the community as a whole if the city covers this activity
- Sidewalk prioritization based on traffic study

# CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND



NORTH  
ST. PAUL

*extraordinary*

# CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION

Originally drafted in 2012, the initial Redevelopment Master Plan was prepared as a joint effort by the City of North St. Paul and the Economic Development Authority (EDA). The project was funded through the Metropolitan Council’s Livable Communities program to identify barriers to redevelopment and position projects within the downtown area for implementation. The 2012 plan focused on the downtown area, which is the traditional commercial hub of North St. Paul. It identified key redevelopment sites and focused on improving connectivity between those sites, the Gateway Trail, and regional transit systems and community facilities. Many projects and initiatives have been completed under the guidance of the 2012 plan; however, many more revitalization opportunities exist. Thus, in summer 2021, the EDA and Planning Commission determined that an update to the Redevelopment Master Plan would be prudent to ensure that previously expressed goals and objectives are still applicable ten years later and to identify areas for continued investment.



## Project Approach

This plan is about revitalizing the traditional commercial hub of North St. Paul. As a fully built out city, the focus of this document is on redevelopment and reuse of land in the city’s core. Revitalization can encourage denser development; it also requires creativity to fit new pieces into the existing fabric of the community. This plan will explore priority areas for reinvestment, both public and private. The planning process for the 10-year update was led by a task force with representatives from City Council, Planning Commission, and the Economic Development Authority. This group evaluated the successes that have occurred since 2012 and noted inconsistencies between the 2012 plan and activities that have taken place. The task force took a fresh look at the downtown area and identified potential priority areas for reinvestment, both public and private, considered which land uses are appropriate within the study area, and identified opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian connections. The task force engaged residents, businesses, and property owners to ensure the plan update is in alignment with the local mindset. This plan is intended to demonstrate the vision for the area to residents, businesses, and developers and can assist in catalyzing reinvestment.

# Downtown Redevelopment Study Area

Downtown is the heart of the North St. Paul community. It is a unique resource that other inner-ring Twin Cities suburbs do not have and is a key contributor to the City's identity. It has also been the subject of much discussion and planning over the past decade, including the initial Redevelopment Master Plan, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Living Streets Plan, Downtown Design Manual, and the Strategic Plan, each of which are described on page 10.

The downtown redevelopment study area is bounded by Highway 36 on the north, property adjacent to 7th Avenue E. on the south, Division Street on the east, and generally the Urban Ecology and Environmental Learning Center on the west. The Gateway State Trail passes through the study area which connects downtown to St. Paul and Stillwater. The study area includes the Highway 36/McKnight Road and Division Street interchanges; both are primary gateways into the City of North St. Paul.

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# Historical Context

According to the North St. Paul Historical Society, the city was planned by Civil War veteran Henry Castle as a “workingman’s community with industries and housing in a resort atmosphere.” The city was connected to St. Paul and Stillwater by the Twin City Lines streetcar that is now Seppala Boulevard. The Wisconsin Central Railroad also connected the city to the region, and it became a burgeoning manufacturing hub. Some of the city’s first industries included furniture manufacturers, farm implement fabricators, and brick makers. Berwald Roofing was founded in 1936, at which time the company primarily installed shingles and siding. In 1958, T. A. Schifsky and Sons built an asphalt plant along the former rail corridor which spurred investment to the downtown commercial area. Both companies remain in operation today and are among the largest landholders in the study area. Neumann’s Bar is another historic link unique to the city; it was built in 1887 and it claims to be the oldest bar in continuous operation in Minnesota.

One of the benefits and challenges facing the study area is its historical context in the Twin Cities metro. North St. Paul originally developed as a distinct and separate community from Minneapolis/St. Paul. Dissimilar to other Twin Cities neighbors, when the metropolitan area grew, communities like Maplewood and Oakdale developed as suburbs with auto-oriented character. Retail centers developed around high traffic corridors in high visibility areas, which competed with North St. Paul’s historic downtown. However, development trends and desires have shifted away from cookie-cutter and toward authenticity; the historic character, diagonal streets, and greenway connection with the Gateway State Trail make this downtown a unique destination for those seeking a non-suburban environment.

## A SAMPLING OF LONGTIME NORTH ST. PAUL BUSINESSES



T. A. SCHIFSKY AND SONS



BERWALD ROOFING



NEUMANN'S BAR

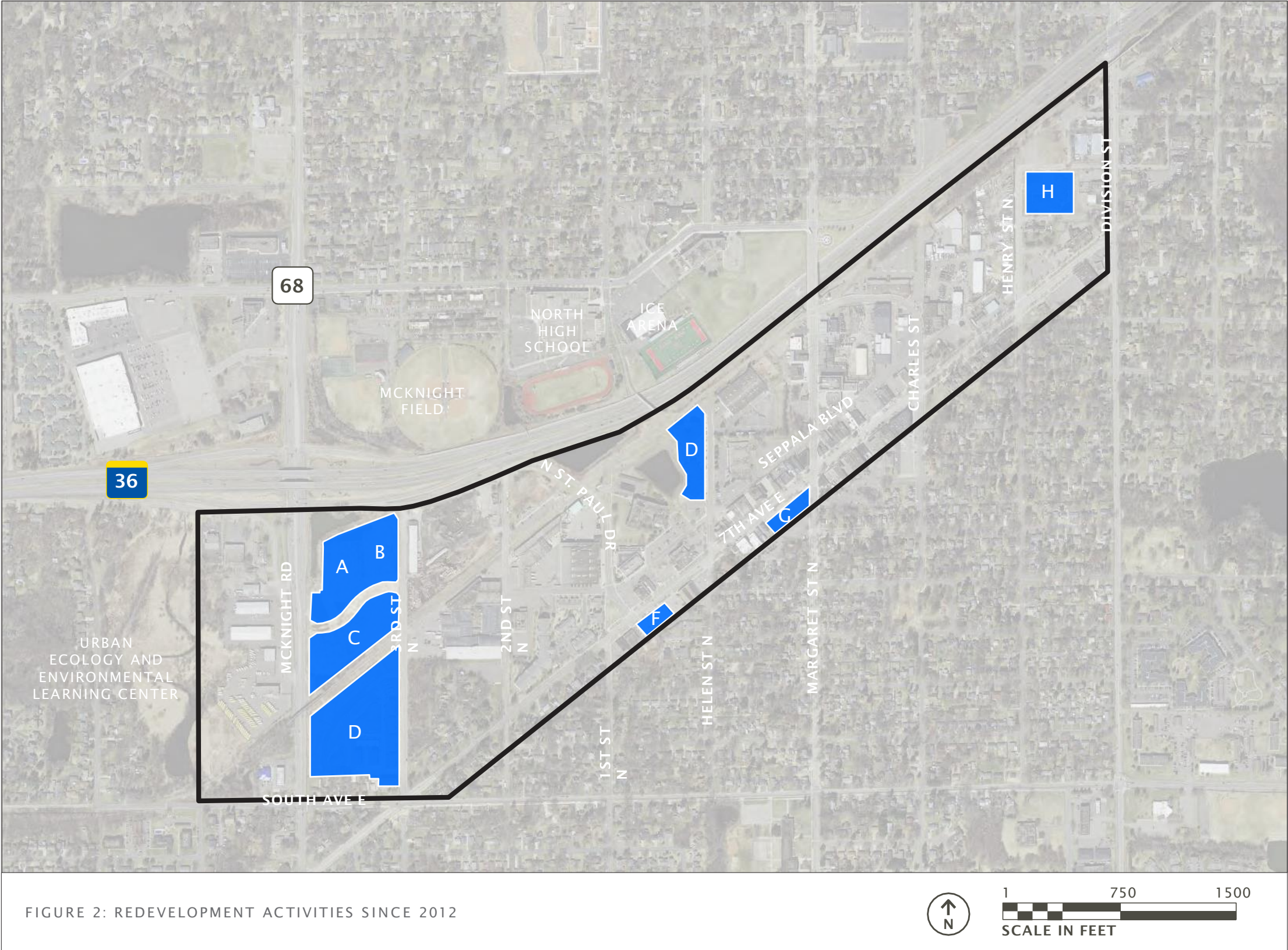


In 1972, Lloyd Koesling built the iconic snowman that sits along Margaret Street. The sculpture recalls the Snow Frolics celebrations where the North St. Paul Jaycees would build a large snowman downtown. The snowman was adopted as the city logo and the sculpture serves as a welcome to North St. Paul.

# Recent Progress

Significant investment has occurred in the downtown since the 2012 plan was adopted. Polar Ridge senior living facility was completed in 2015. The facility has 39 units of senior independent living, 54 units of senior assisted living and 21 units of memory care. The site formerly known as Anchor Block has redeveloped into Anchor Commons with Kwik Trip, Extra Space Storage, and Anchor View Apartments. The combined taxable value of these improvements is \$33.5 million. In 2021, M&I Homes completed construction of Gateway at McKnight, a 100-unit townhome neighborhood with direct access to the Gateway Trail and walking distance to downtown amenities. Most recently, the three-story Sentinel Building has been constructed on the former City Hall site and adjoining parcels. This 89-unit, market-rate apartment building includes a 3,000 square foot mixed-use space at the corner of 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. Suite Living senior facility opened in 2020 with 18-units of senior assisted living and 14-units of memory care. The facility is located on the site formally occupied by the ISD 622 bus garage. This project was made possible by a \$700,000 environmental remediation grant through Ramsey County.

In addition, Reflex medical expanded their facility and countless new tenants have opened on main street (7th Avenue). Streetscape improvements have occurred along 7th Avenue to the southwest of the study area; similar improvements are anticipated to continue to the northeast within the study area. Additionally, the city updated its comprehensive plan in 2019 and overhauled the zoning ordinance in 2014.



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A- KWIK TRIP



B- EXTRA SPACE PERSONAL STORAGE



C - ANCHOR VIEW APARTMENTS



D - GATEWAY AT MCNIGHT



E- POLAR RIDGE SENIOR LIVING



F - REFLEX MEDICAL EXPANSION



G - SENTINEL APARTMENTS & MIXED USE



H - SUITE LIVING MEMORY CARE



# Planning Framework

In addition to being a stand-alone document, this plan builds on the foundation of other local planning efforts and must recognize regulatory constraints. The following are a brief summaries of planning documents that relate to the study area. Goals, priorities, and implementation actions identified later in this document advance each of these earlier plans.



## NORTH ST. PAUL 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan sets city-wide goals and policies and was developed with community feedback in mind.

During the comprehensive planning process, several community cafés were held to gather feedback on the future of downtown North St. Paul. This is what we heard:

- The downtown area needs a variety of business types, including family-friendly restaurants and activities.
- The car show is a beloved staple of the community and should be continued.
- The downtown should be connected by sidewalks and trails to key destinations within the city, like schools, churches, parks, and especially the Gateway Trail.
- A park or activity space is needed downtown.
- Improve and revitalize the downtown with mixed use development.
- More housing is needed downtown within walking distance of businesses.



## NORTH ST. PAUL STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2013, the city engaged in a strategic planning effort that developed organizational goals

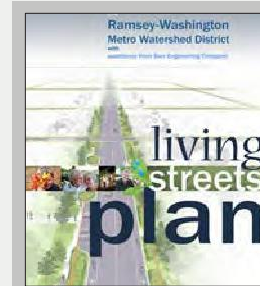
and a clear and strategic direction for the community.



## DESIGN MANUAL - DOWNTOWN NORTH ST. PAUL

The downtown design manual was developed to illustrate portions

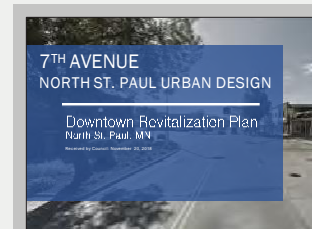
of the North St. Paul city code to depict the desired built environment within the downtown district. The Manual is used by the Design Review Commission to review projects within the Downtown Mixed-Use district.



## LIVING STREETS PLAN

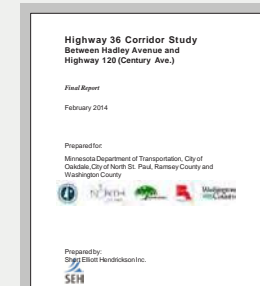
The 2011 Living Streets Plan was a partnership between the City of North St. Paul and the

Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RMMWD). This plan details the water-quality issues facing North St. Paul and how they can be alleviated with implementation of stormwater best management practices that are an integral component of living streets.



## 7TH AVENUE NORTH ST. PAUL URBAN DESIGN: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

This plan establishes the visual quality and design preferences for the reconstruction of 7th Avenue, from McKnight Road to Division Street. It also includes a segment of Margret Street, extending from the 7th Avenue intersection to the south edge of the bridge going over Highway 36.



## MNDOT HIGHWAY 36 CORRIDOR STUDY

This 2014 study was developed to address safety and mobility issues along Highway

36, with a focus on the segment between Highway 120/Century Avenue and Hadley Avenue, which contains the only remaining at-grade intersections west of I-694.

## OTHER PLANS

The 2012 planning effort reviewed the following additional plans, studies, and design guidelines and incorporated into the original redevelopment plan.

- Draft Bicycle and Sidewalk Plan (2011)
- Downtown North Saint Paul Housing Study (2011)
- Commerce Park Redevelopment Plans (2010, 2011, 2011)
- Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan
- MNDOT Metro District and Statewide 20 Year Highway Investment Plans

# CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS



NORTH  
ST. PAUL

## Land Use

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

The North St. Paul Urban Ecology Center anchors the west end of the study area. Institutional uses in the area include the school district bus garage, churches, City Hall, the Public Works building, North St. Paul Historical Society, North Star Museum of Boy and Girl Scouting, and the American Legion. Much of the residential is on the south and west end of the study area. Single family home line the east and west ends of 7th Avenue and extends into the neighborhoods to the south. The mix of retail and services in the downtown are a draw for residents in these neighborhoods, particularly.

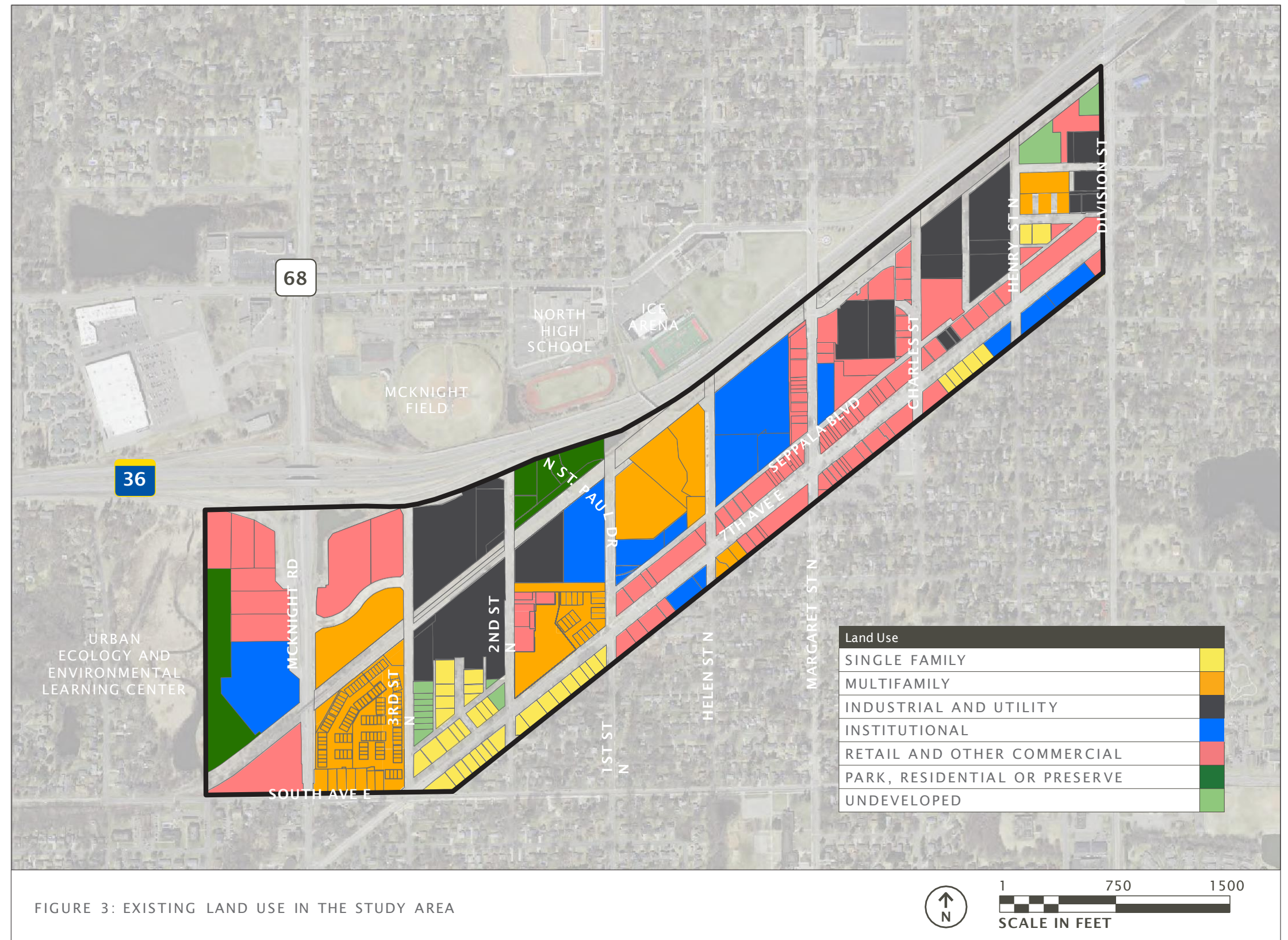


FIGURE 3: EXISTING LAND USE IN THE STUDY AREA

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## CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL



The downtown is the civic center for the City of North St. Paul. Over the past 20+ years, many significant public investments have occurred within the downtown, including a new City Hall and fire and police station along Margaret Street. Other civic uses include a community center at Seppala and North St. Paul Drive, the U.S. Post Office, the North Star Museum of Boy Scouting and Girl Scouting, American Legion, and the North St. Paul Historical Society Museum. North High School lies just north of the study area across Highway 36 and the school district operates bussing from a new facility next to the North St. 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 and services 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 Gervais Court Building on the south side of 7th Ave at Charles Street. 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 and include high tech light industrial such as Aetrium semiconductor manufacturing, T.A. Schifsky & Sons' asphalt and recycling plant, Sheltertech Corporation, Anderson Cabinet, Inc., to Berwald Roofing & Sheet Metal.

## RESIDENTIAL



Residential uses are located throughout the study area at a mix of densities and conditions. Older single-family homes exist along South Avenue, portions of 7th Avenue, and in the Commerce Park area. This is also the land use that defines the area immediately south of the study area. As mentioned previously, many new higher density housing developments have been built in the past ten years including Polar Ridge Senior Housing, Anchor View apartments, Gateway at McKnight townhomes, Suite Living senior and memory care, and Sentinel Apartments.

# Future Land Use

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan future land use designations in the study area are depicted, right. The intent of each is described as follows.

- Low Density Residential:** Detached single-family, duplexes, and townhomes with a density range of 3 to 5.5 dwelling units per acre.
- Medium Density Residential:** Small-scale attached dwellings with a density range of 6-12 dwelling units per acre.
- Multifamily Residential:** Apartment buildings, condominiums, and other multistory structures with densities ranging from 13-20 dwelling units per acre.
- Corridor Mixed Use:** A combination of retail, housing, offices, live-work spaces, employment activities, and other complementary uses. This district will develop with a minimum of 30 percent residential component throughout the district.
- Downtown Mixed Use:** Development that reflects a small-town, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. Redevelopment should be consistent with the historic character. Vertical and horizontal mixed use is encouraged and high density residential is appropriate.
- Park:** North St. Paul Urban Ecology Center



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# Zoning

Zoning in the study area is depicted in Figure 5.

The Downtown Overlay District is intended to preserve cultural aspects of the historic commercial area, encourage the physical development of the city as intended by the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Design Manual, encourage harmonious development and appearance of structures and property within the district, and maintain and improve property values of the district and throughout the city.

**R-1 Single Family Residential** is established to allow, preserve, and protect areas of lower-density residential and development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**R-2 Mixed Residential** is established to maintain or increase compatibility of the essential characteristics of varying residential housing types and development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**R-3 Multiple Family Residential** is established to stabilize, protect, and encourage the essential characteristics of higher density residential and development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

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**MU-1 Downtown Mixed Use** is the traditional downtown area. Development in this district shall give due regard to the standards in the Downtown Design Manual. The primary differentiator between the MU-1 and the MU-3 districts is that the MU-3 requires a minimum front yard setback of 25 feet, which creates a more suburban environment than the downtown area where buildings are not required to be setback from the property line.

**MU-3 Corridor Mixed Use** is established to encourage the development or redevelopment of mixed-use centers that combine new or existing retail development with a variety of housing, offices, studios, live-work space, civic building, employment activities, research, limited industrial and other complementary uses which combine to create a lively environment.

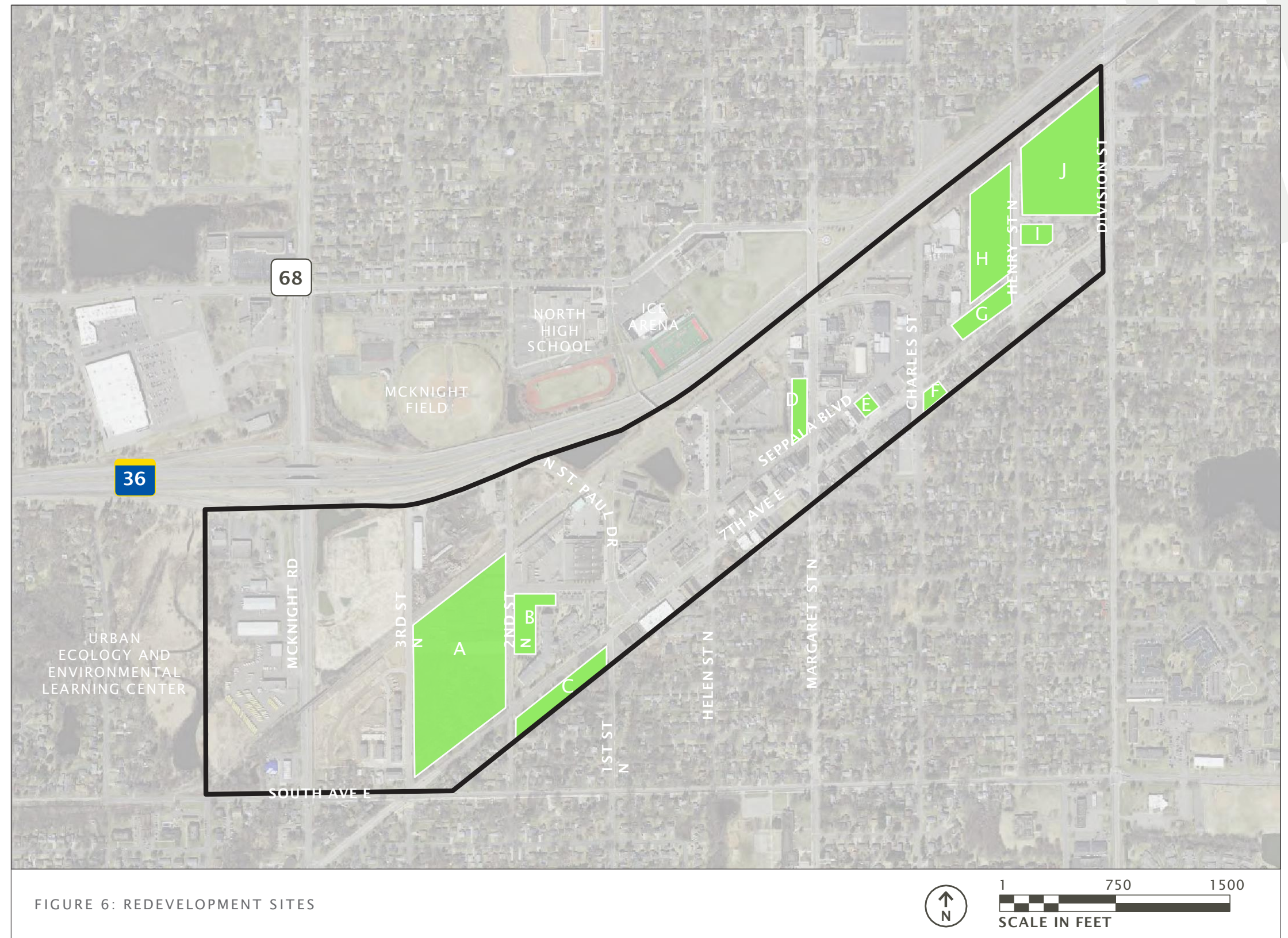
**The Downtown Overlay District** was established to preserve cultural aspects of the historic commercial area, encourage the physical development of the city as intended by the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Design Manual, encourage harmonious development and appearance of structures and property within the district, and maintain and improve property values of the district and throughout the city.

# Redevelopment Sites

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identified numerous sites in the study area as “likely to redevelop” based on the following three criteria:

- **Vacant land:** These areas were highlighted by participants in public engagement efforts as needing attention, revitalization, change, or intensification of uses.
- **Underutilized sites:** Some sites were identified as “under-utilized”, meaning that they have an excessive amount of parking that could be used for other uses, or there are vacant portions of a site that could be built out.
- **Areas with redevelopment potential:** These areas were highlighted by participants in public engagement efforts as needing attention, revitalization, change, or intensification of uses.

The redevelopment sites are depicted in **Figure 6**.



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A- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SITE



B-



C -



D -



E-



F -



G -



H -



I -



F-



# Transportation

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## STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

Highway 36, the northern boundary of the study area, is a regional transportation facility that connects North St. Paul to the northeast metro as well as other suburbs such as Mahtomedi and Stillwater. Most of Highway 36 has been converted to a freeway; however, the eastern portion an expressway where there is an at-grade signalized intersection at Century Avenue.

McKnight Road and Century Avenue are north-south roads that connect the city to Maplewood and Oakdale. Century Avenue is a 2-lane road and McKnight is a minor arterial that transitions from a 4-lane divided roadway in the vicinity of its overpass wat Highway 36 down to a 4-lane undivided roadway.

The secondary east-west artery of North St. Paul is 7th Avenue E., which functions as a traditional “Main Street.” Rather than follow the traditional grid along the cardinal directions, 7th Avenue mirrors the old railroad line that used to run through town at a diagonal, which creates some access and connectivity challenges for the area, such as a 3-legged intersection at 7th Avenue/South Avenue E/3rd Street. Seppala Boulevard also runs on a diagonal and 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 it 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.

In 2020, 7th Avenue underwent reconstruction from 3rd Street N to 1st Street N. Improvements included street reconstruction, concrete curb and gutter, sidewalks, medians, sanitary sewer rehabilitation, water main replacement, storm sewer improvements, street lighting, and street trees and landscaping. Improvements to the Margaret Street and 7th Avenue area were completed in 2021 that included installation of new utilities (sanitary sewer, water main and storm sewer), concrete street surfacing, sidewalks, and a new traffic signal. Landscaping and streetscape amenities (i.e., street lighting, benches, street trees and a variety of plantings) will be installed in 2022.



## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Metro Transit serves as the main form of public transit in North St. Paul. Route 64 is an east-west route that connects the study area to downtown St. Paul and the Maplewood Transit Center. Route 219 runs north-south along Division Street. While no direct express options exist from the area, the Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan anticipates Highway 36 will be a transitway with potential BRT/LRT/Commuter Rail service.



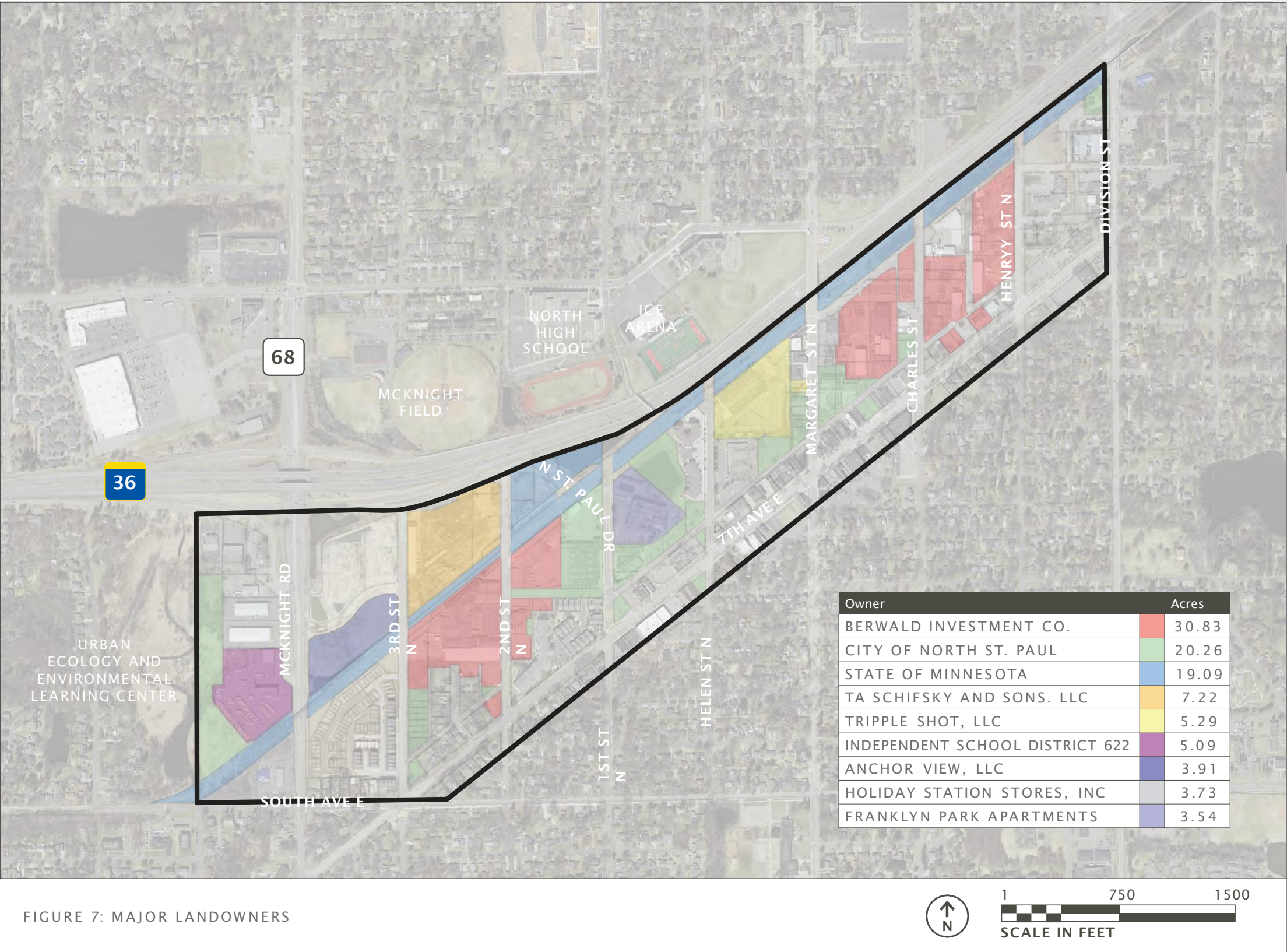
## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The pedestrian network within the study area is incomplete. Sidewalks are located along both sides of the street on 7th Avenue from 1st Street N. to Henry Street and along Margaret Street. Sidewalk in is recommended in the Living Streets plan to improve pedestrian connectivity in the downtown as well as communitywide.

Limited multiuse trail is located near and connecting to the Gateway State Trail, an 18-mile multiuse trail that begins in St. Paul, connecting Maplewood, North St. Paul, Oakdale, Washington County, and Stillwater. The Gateway Trail follows a former Soo Railroad, as such, it has a generally level grade which makes it an excellent recreational trail as well commuter route for cyclists. The North St. Paul trailhead located on 2nd Street and provides interpretive signage, temporary restrooms, and parking.

# Study Area Landowners

Major landowners are depicted in **Figure 7**, to the right. Berwald Investment Company owns the largest share of property within the study area at 30.83 acres. The City of North St. Paul presently holds 20.26 acres, and the State of Minnesota holds 19 acres primarily related to the Gateway State Trail. Most of the larger vacant parcels have been redeveloped since the 2012 plan; those that remain are of a smaller scale (1.5 to less than 1-acre) and scattered throughout the study area.



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# Market Summary

## Demographic Profile

As of 2021, the city's population was reported to be 11,779 with a median age of 40. The median household income in North St. Paul is \$70,687 and the median home value is \$240,543.

ERSI's Tapestry market segmentation is a geodemographic system that identifies distinctive markets in the U.S. based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Reflecting the diversity among American neighborhoods, Tapestry includes 67 distinct market segments that are further summarized by 14 life mode groups that share similar demographic characteristics and consumer behavior patterns.

According to ESRI's Tapestry data, nearly 83 percent of the city's residents fall within the GenXurban life mode, which is the second-largest tapestry group composed of Gen X married couples and a growing population of retirees. Individuals in this group tend to own their own homes, own 1-2 vehicles, and live and work in the same county.

However, nearly 9 percent of the city's population falls within the Senior Styles life mode. This group tends to be married empty nesters or singles living alone in single family homes, retirement communities, or apartments. The more affluent of this group travel or relocate to warmer climates while the less affluent are settled and may still be working toward retirement. This group can provide a significant workforce opportunity for the community's service-based industries that have traditionally been filled by a younger demographic.

The remaining 8 percent of the population are in the Middle Ground life mode. These are the millennials in the middle; they are both married and unmarried, renters and homeowners, and middle/working class. The majority of this group, as with the community, has attended college or attained a college degree.





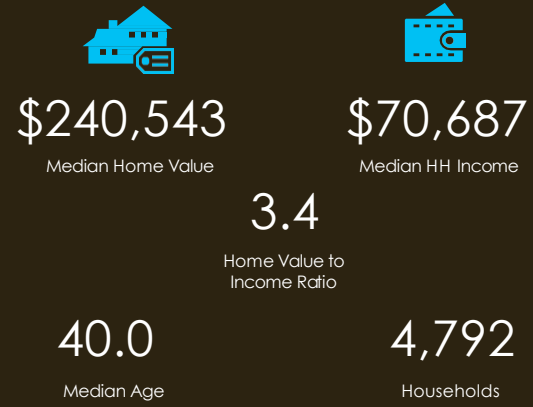
# TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

The Fabric of America's Neighborhoods

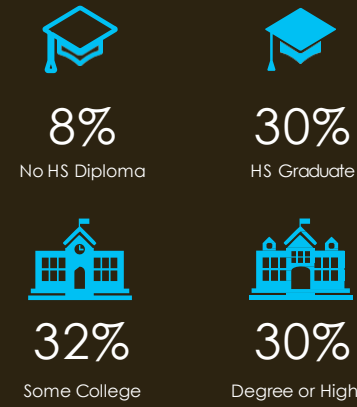
## Tapestry LifeMode

	Households	HHs %	% US HHs	Index
<a href="#">learn more...</a>				
Affluent Estates (L1)	0	0.00%	10.00%	0
Upscale Avenues (L2)	0	0.00%	5.55%	0
Uptown Individuals (L3)	0	0.00%	3.58%	0
Family Landscapes (L4)	0	0.00%	7.63%	0
GenXurban (L5)	3,955	82.53%	11.26%	733
Cozy Country Living (L6)	0	0.00%	12.06%	0
Sprouting Explorers (L7)	0	0.00%	7.20%	0
Middle Ground (L8)	404	8.43%	10.79%	78
Senior Styles (L9)	433	9.04%	5.80%	156
Rustic Outposts (L10)	0	0.00%	8.30%	0
Midtown Singles (L11)	0	0.00%	6.16%	0
Hometown (L12)	0	0.00%	6.01%	0
Next Wave (L13)	0	0.00%	3.78%	0
Scholars and Patriots (L14)	0	0.00%	1.61%	0

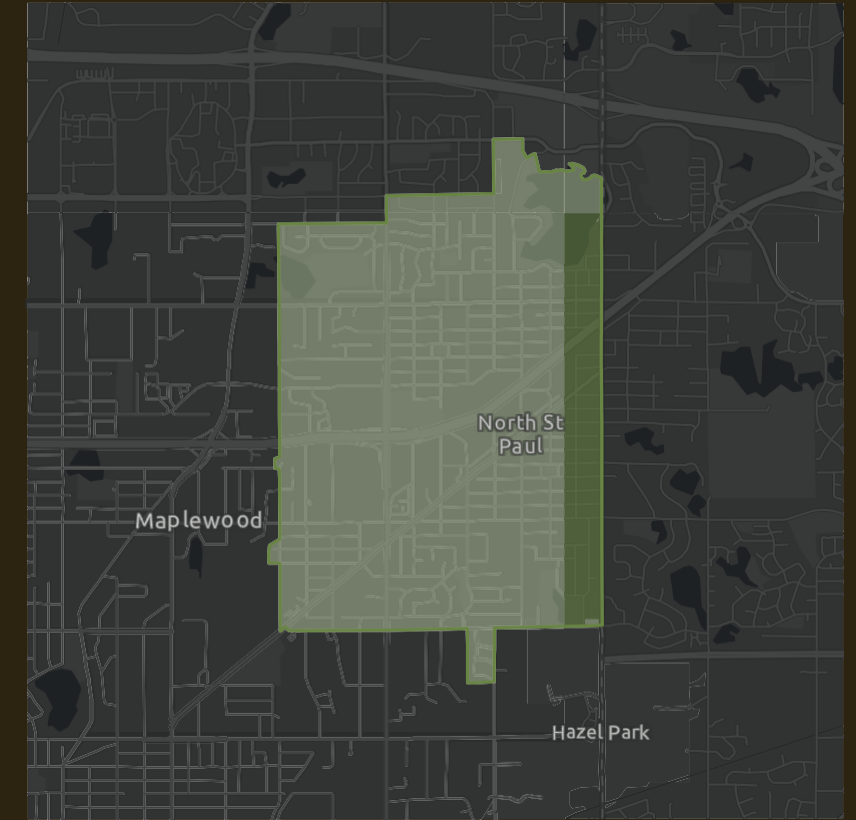
## Key Facts



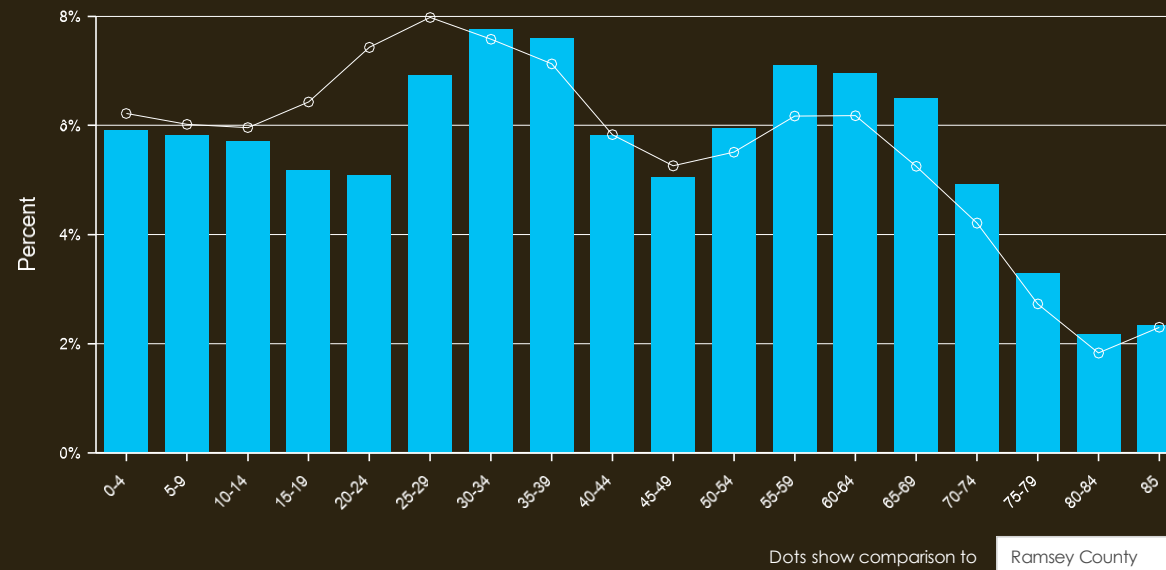
## Education



## North St. Paul City, MN 3



## Age Profile



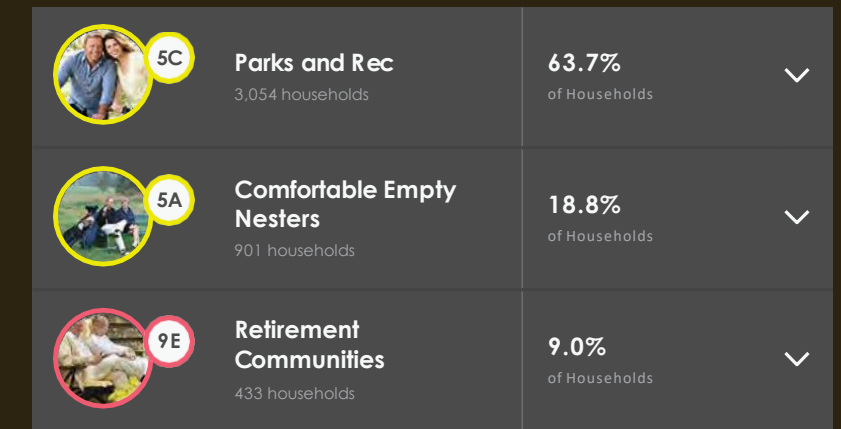
## Households By Income

The largest group: \$100,000 - \$149,999 (22.2%)  
The smallest group: \$200,000+ (4.8%)

Indicator ▲	Value	Diff
<\$15,000	7.0%	-1.9%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	6.2%	-0.7%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	6.9%	-0.6%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13.4%	+1.0%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	18.9%	+1.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15.1%	+1.1%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	22.2%	+3.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	5.5%	-1.9%
\$200,000+	4.8%	-2.0%

Bars show deviation from Ramsey County

## Tapestry Segments



This infographic contains data provided by Esri. The vintage of the data is 2021.

© 2021 Esri



## Economic Conditions

In 2021, there were a total of 305 businesses employing 4,423 individuals identified in North St. Paul. These businesses are spread across the following industries with service and retail representing a majority of the businesses in the city.

- Services 43.6%
- Retail 15.1%
- Finance, insurance, real estate 9.8%
- Construction 8.9%
- Unclassified 8.2%
- Government 3.3%
- Agriculture and mining 2.3%
- Manufacturing 3.9%
- Transportation 2.0%
- Communication 0.7%
- Utility 0.7%
- Wholesale trade 1.6%

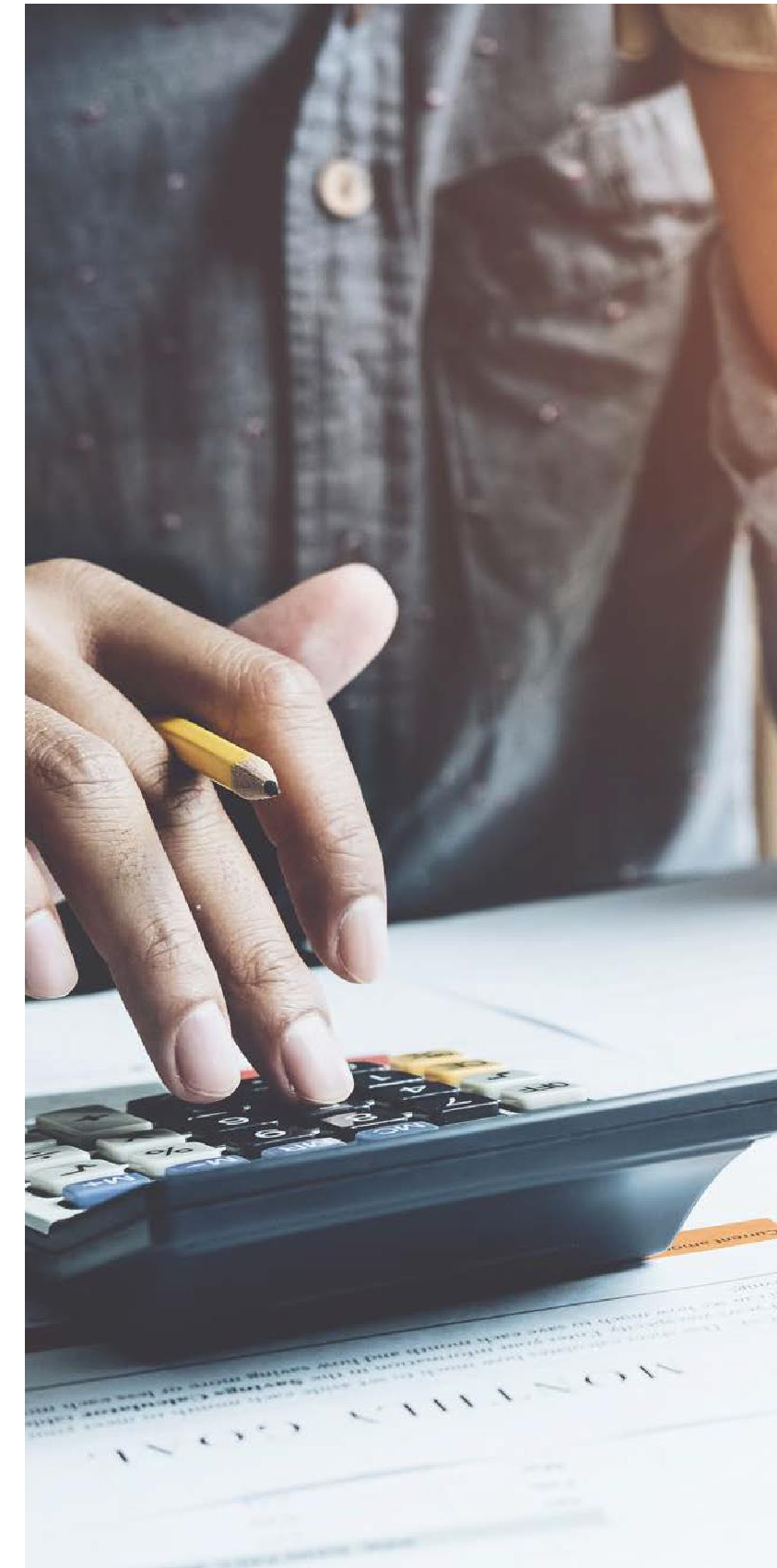
When considering the economic strength of a community, one tool that is often used is “pull factors.” Pull factors are used to measure the demand of a particular industry within a given area. This demand is determined by dividing gross sales data by population to derive the per-capita sales in the area. This ratio is then divided by the per-capita sales in a broader area, such as the county or state. A pull factor of 1.00 is a perfect balance of trade. Pull factor values greater than 1.00 indicate that local businesses are pulling in trade from beyond the border. A pull factor value less than 1.00 indicates that more trade is being lost than pulled in.

The industry pull factors for North St. Paul are depicted in Table 1. As indicated, North St. Paul is pulling in sales from outside of the city in miscellaneous retail, gas stations, and construction-special trades. These industries coincide with the primary retail businesses in the city being specialty boutique, antique, and booksellers, and key industries in the city have historically been construction-related (i.e., roofing, windows, cabinetry, asphalt, etc.).

North St. Paul Market Pull Factors SIC Industry	2018 Gross Sales			NSP Pull Factor	
	MN	Ramsey Co	North St. Paul	State	County
Retail (Misc. Store Retailer)	\$4,824,688,069	\$849,215,980	\$61,999,881	0.44	3.21
Retail (Gas Stations)	\$10,379,984,701	\$673,458,524	\$25,736,754	0.08	1.68
Construction (Special Trades)	\$10,684,742,702	\$1,459,023,642	\$40,795,471	0.13	1.23
Manufacturing (Misc.)	\$8,934,658,086	\$284,872,741	\$5,685,744	0.02	0.88
Repair, Maintenance	\$3,943,432,089	\$302,929,754	\$4,876,378	0.04	0.71
Food Service, Drinking Places	\$10,342,987,720	\$1,184,432,494	\$8,550,507	0.03	0.32
Wholesale (Durable)	\$33,312,971,872	\$1,804,533,423	\$11,276,357	0.01	0.27
Construction (Buildings)	\$6,284,874,959	\$787,622,114	\$4,236,042	0.02	0.24
Religious, Civic, Prof. Organ.	\$905,473,343	\$153,467,422	\$700,288	0.03	0.20
Admin, Support Services	\$7,515,012,415	\$710,439,357	\$3,018,645	0.01	0.19
Professional, Scient, Tech Ser.	\$17,827,032,789	\$1,437,461,140	\$4,250,534	0.01	0.13
Performance Art, Sports	\$668,247,257	\$172,255,740	\$501,800	0.03	0.13
Real Estate	\$1,440,626,878	\$140,443,845	\$279,635	0.01	0.09
Retail (Leisure Goods)	\$2,246,996,581	\$175,370,092	\$316,117	0.00	0.08
Health (Ambulatory Care)	\$9,481,578,709	\$1,262,957,963	\$2,002,249	0.01	0.07
Retail (Nonstore Retailers)	\$7,738,311,175	\$95,066,131	\$143,618	0.00	0.07
Info (Other Services)	\$3,448,922,934	\$608,969,681	\$714,434	0.01	0.05
Personal, Laundry Service	\$2,199,486,190	\$284,522,366	\$133,536	0.00	0.02
Amusement, Gambling	\$2,256,753,940	\$754,315,840	\$210,436	0.00	0.01

Source: MN Department of Revenue

TABLE 1: INDUSTRY PULL FACTORS



## Retail Market Potential

Another tool in understanding an area's economy is the market potential index (MPI). An MPI compares the demand for a specific product or service in an area with the national demand for that product or service. An MPI of 100 represents the US average. An MPI value greater than 100 represents higher demand, and a value of less than 100 represents lower demand.

Table 2 presents a compilation of North St. Paul's retail market potential. It measures the relative likelihood of the adults or households within 1-mile of downtown to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the general population in the country. As indicated by MPI, adults within 1-mile of the study area spend more than the average American on the following:

- Apparel
- Books and newspapers
- New and leased vehicles
- Gasoline
- Digital cameras/photos
- Home computers
- Convenience store shopping
- Dining out
- Bars/clubs
- Insurance

The analyzing of the data further indicates that while the residents of North St. Paul are cost conscious, they are also keenly aware of place of manufacture and how it affects purchasing decisions. Presently, eating and drinking establishments make up 5.6 percent of the businesses in North St. Paul. As with retail, there is some market potential for sit-down restaurants in North St. Paul, as indicated in Table 2.

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected # of Adults	Percentage	MPI
Went to fast food/drive-in restaurant in last 6 months	8,362	89.3	99
Went to family restaurant/steak house in last 6 months	6,879	73.5%	101
Spent \$1-30	663	7.1%	95
Spent \$31-50	895	9.6%	108
Spent \$51-100	1,396	14.9%	103
Spent \$101-200	813	8.7%	97
Spent \$201+	335	3.6%	84
Went to fine dining restaurant last month	1,030	11.0%	115
Spent \$1-100 at fine dining	431	4.6%	118
Spent \$101+ at fine dining	401	4.3%	101

Source: These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to local demographic composition. Usage data were collected by MRI-Simmons in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

TABLE 2: PRODUCT/CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes to the retail environment and continues to evolve to meet customer purchasing habits. These changing habits, including greater on-line purchasing, will continue as the demand for easy, flexible online shopping is unlikely to weaken. To ensure growth and stability into the future, the city will need to create a downtown that is appealing for businesses and shoppers alike. This may require regulatory changes or infrastructure improvements to attract people.



## Office



As with retail, the COVID-19 has altered the landscape for the market for office space as many workers have shifted to working from home. After growing optimism surrounding the introduction of the COVID vaccine in the spring of 2021, the third quarter was marked with uncertainty as the Delta variant sprouted up in the United States. July 2021 began with fewer than 15,000 new daily cases, but the new surge peaked at over 160,000 cases in September 2021, causing some businesses to delay their return-to-office plans until early 2022. The introduction of the Omicron variant further put these plans in disarray for the return to a more normal environment. However, the percentage of U.S. employees in the office did increase post-Labor Day from 31 to 35 percent by the end of September

The office market is still adjusting to the effects of the pandemic and will see significant changes as companies evaluate their space needs. Some companies have adjusted their work culture to allow or even encourage fulltime work from home schedules, which is decreasing demand for office spaces. This trend is occurring nationwide but can also be observed in North St. Paul.

Some companies are seeking combination manufacturing/warehouse space that includes limited office space. It is anticipated that this type of commercial real estate will see strong growth in the coming years, which may provide a significant opportunity for future tax base growth.

## Industrial



The U.S. industrial market ended the third quarter of 2021 with record-setting statistics and demand outpacing supply for the third quarter in a row. The third quarter industrial report shows strong performance of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan statistical area (MSA). The current market for industrial property is very active with a vacancy rate under 6 percent for the MSA. The northeast region, which includes North St. Paul, has a lower vacancy rate of 4.7 percent. These low vacancy rates for space across the metro area, and specifically in the northeast region, will provide significant opportunities for North St. Paul with the development or redevelopment of new industrial space.

While the northeast region is experiencing a low vacancy rate, it is lagging in the construction of new space which has been led by the northwest quadrant of the MSA. The demand and market focus has been predominately on large sites; however, there will still be the opportunity for smaller projects located on redevelopment sites in North St. Paul.

## Housing Trends



According to recent housing data from ESRI, the median home value in North St. Paul is \$240,543 and the home value to income ratio is 3.4. The annual average spent on mortgages in North St. Paul is \$10,453 and the annual average income spent on a mortgage is 14.3 percent. The Housing Affordability Index (HAI) in North St. Paul is presently 155. An HAI above 100 signifies that families earning the median income have enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home without being cost burdened. These figures signify that the City is in a strong position in terms of housing affordability compared to some of its neighboring communities. Additionally, it would suggest that North St. Paul is a great community for first time homebuyers.

In addition to single-family housing, the city seen the construction of several new multifamily developments in the study area resulting in 335 new units of both senior and standard units. As housing affordability continues to impact the larger metropolitan area, North St. Paul may be able to fill some of that need as the downtown continues to densify, which supports downtown businesses.



# CHAPTER 3: VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



NORTH  
ST. PAUL

## CHAPTER 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 St. 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 St. 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 and Guiding Principles for North St. 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 St. Paul.





## Vision

We say North St. 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 St. 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.

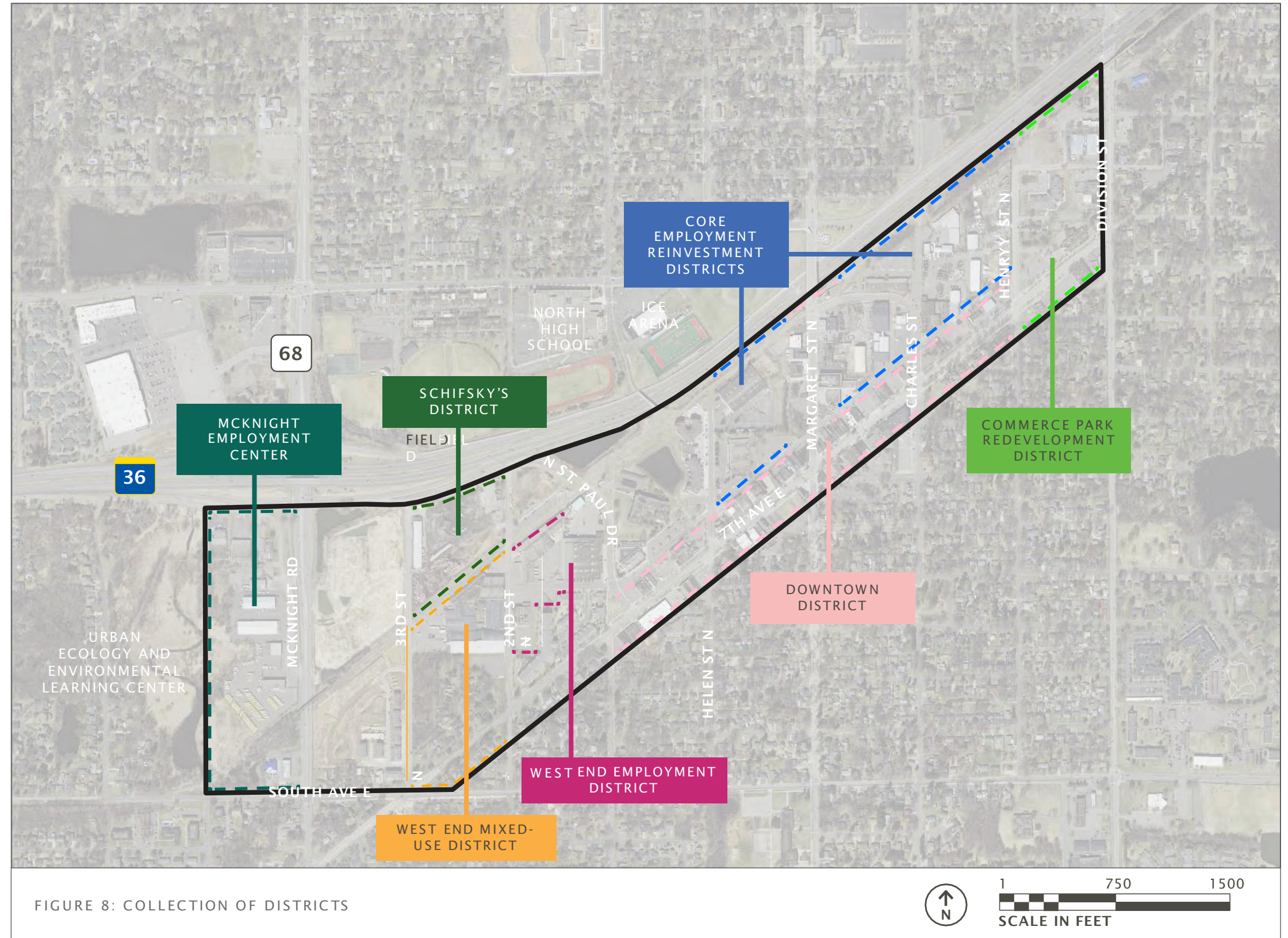


## Guiding Principles

- Create coordinated and harmonious development of functionally related uses including high density residential, office, commercial, entertainment / recreation, quality industrial and public facilities.
- Redevelopment should endeavor to be cohesive with quality design and minimize adverse effects to neighboring uses.
- Provide adequate provisions for open space.
- Develop a diverse transportation network that supports transit, creates strong pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- 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.
- Integrate public art as appropriate throughout the downtown study area.

# A Collection of Districts

This plan focuses redevelopment activities into a series of districts based on the character of the area, land uses, urban design relationships, and redevelopment objectives. The following is a summary of each district and goals to achieve the vision over the next 10 years.



[Return to Links Page 1](#)

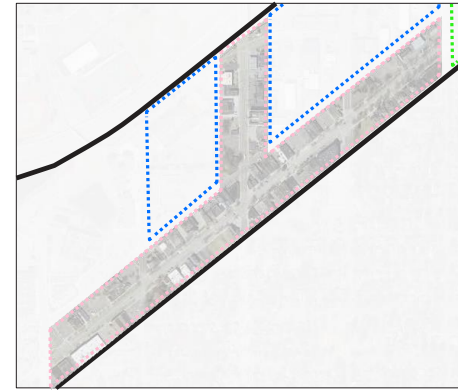


### MCKNIGHT EMPLOYMENT CENTER DISTRICT

The McKnight Employment Center is located on the west side of the study area, north of South Avenue and south of Highway 36. The Gateway Trail runs through this district. This district is currently characterized by aging commercial buildings that are accessed from McKnight Road as well as Castle Avenue, a frontage road that parallels Highway 36. The North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale school district bus garage was relocated to this area in 2010. The Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center (UEELC) lies west of this district. The UEELC is a former sod farm that has been reclaimed as a 24-acre wetland restoration project. It provides open space and walking trails, and it serves as an educational resource for area schools.

The greatest opportunity for the McKnight Employment Center lies with its highly visible location at the southwest interchange of Highway 36 and McKnight Road. The goal for this area is to transition the auto-focused, highly paved commercial properties to well-designed commercial, office, and flex uses. The adjacent UEELC and Gateway Trail are locational amenities that can and should be leveraged. The following activities are recommended for this district.

- Support a combination of office, flex, and commercial employment uses in this district.
- Investigate a potential educational component (trade school / vocational school) as a potential user.
- Strengthen connections to downtown, live-work opportunities provided by new housing, and Gateway Trail.



### DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

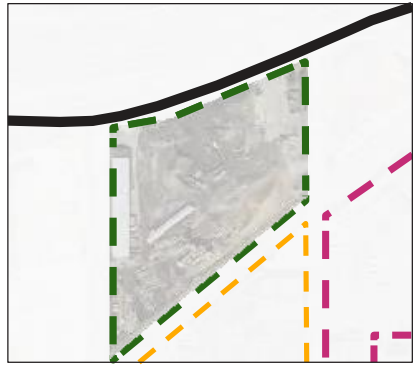
The Downtown District lies along 7th Avenue between Helen and Harry Streets and along Margaret Street between 7th Avenue to Highway 36. Seventh Avenue is North St. Paul's historic downtown where buildings are one to two stories in height, set up to the property line, many of which have historical character with brick facades, awnings, and large window displays. Buildings on the north side of 7th Avenue back up to Seppala Boulevard the former Twin City Lines streetcar

right-of-way. As such, the streetscape of Seppala presently has the function and feel of an alleyway. Some businesses have taken advantage of this dual frontage and have opened store fronts on both Seppala and 7th Street. Additional opportunities exist to further activate this street and provide a safe place for pedestrians.

The primary goal for the Downtown District is to create an inviting, pedestrian-friendly environment where visitors and residents feel encouraged and welcome to linger on the sidewalk, in greenspaces, or wander in and out of shops. Redevelopment activities in the Downtown District should focus on creating and retaining retail, restaurants, and services that will serve the growing downtown population while leveraging its location along the Gateway Trail.

To achieve this goal, the following activities are recommended.

- Support façade improvements and upward expansion of existing buildings to increase density and create new office spaces.
- Encourage businesses to activate outdoor space with seating and sidewalk sales.
- Continue to invest in streetscape improvements along 7th Avenue and develop a streetscape design plan for Margaret Street.
- Convert Seppala Boulevard to a pedestrian-friendly, multi-functional corridor while maintaining alley and service functions for 7th Avenue businesses. Bike boulevards or living streets are example of how Seppala could be transformed.
- Develop public gathering spaces to promote use of the outdoor space, including a pocket park on the existing greenspace owned by the City at Seppala Boulevard and Margaret Street.
- Promote de-paving to support a healthy stormwater system and increase landscaped areas.

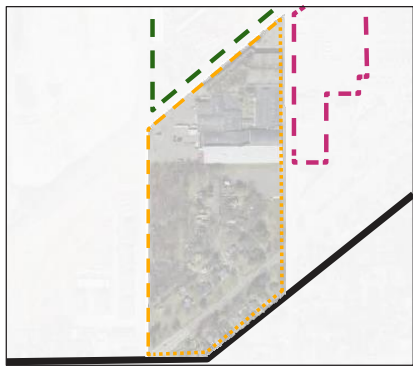


### SCHIFSKY'S DISTRICT

As noted earlier in this report, T.A. Schifsky & Sons is a business with a long history that is deeply rooted in North St. Paul. This business continues to operate at this site as an industrial in use and is presently understood to meet the needs and demand of the business. This district is also one of the prime redevelopment parcels in the City of North St. Paul given its visible location along Highway 36 and adjacency to the downtown. While this plan does not direct this business, or any others in

the downtown, to transition or redevelop, it is the purpose of this plan to consider the potential future for this site. As such, the future vision for the property is a redevelopment to leverage its downtown location and adjacency to the Gateway Trail. A variety of reuse opportunities could occur on this site ranging from new housing, office, mixed-use, restaurant, or retail.

- Plan for long-term redevelopment of the Schifsky site but recognize and mitigate the impacts on adjacent land uses in the meantime.
- Seek redevelopment opportunities that can leverage the connections to downtown and the Gateway Trail.
- Work with the property owner on the timing of redevelopment activities.

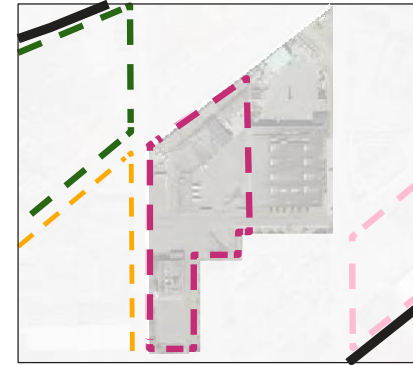


### WEST END MIXED USE DISTRICT

The West End Mixed Use District is presently a collection of modest, medium-density single-family housing. Property boundaries are somewhat blurred due to the former streetcar right-of-way that parallels the houses along 7th Street and unpaved alley right-of-way. The city owns nine undeveloped lots in this district, eight of which are adjacent to each other and abut 3rd Street. These lots likely have not developed due to steep slopes. The comprehensive plan identifies this area for

mixed-use with the potential for redevelopment by 2030. The mixed-use classification could mean that this area remains fully residential, or it could redevelop as a combination of at least 30 percent residential with a commercial uses mixed in.

- Promote the district for mixed-use development.
- Balance housing redevelopment across all phases of redevelopment based on market conditions.
- Develop a neighborhood park as an amenity for surrounding residential uses.
- Create a strong connection to downtown along a newly created parkway and enhanced 7th Avenue.

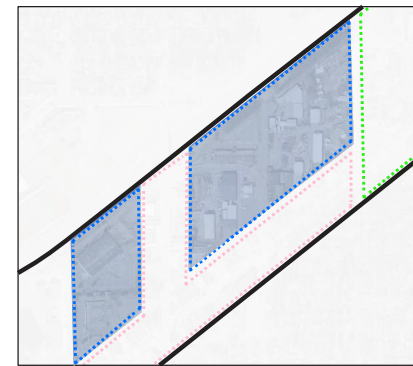


### WEST END EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT

The West End Employment District is presently a mix of service and industrial land uses. The impervious coverage of this area is presently near 100 percent. The Berwald Investment Company, another long-standing North St. Paul company and landowner, holds most of the land within this district. The City of North St. Paul owns the remainder, which is where the Public Works facility is located. This district benefits from the abutting Gateway Trail and adjacent residential uses.

The comprehensive plan identifies this area for redevelopment as mixed-use. As this area redevelops, reduction of impervious surfaces and screening for incompatible but adjacent uses should be a focus.

- Promote the district for mixed-use development.
- Consider vacating unused alley and street right-of-way to enhance redevelopment opportunities.
- Make a stronger connection to the Gateway Trail.
- Promote de-paving to support a healthy stormwater system and increase landscaped areas.



### CORE EMPLOYMENT REINVESTMENT DISTRICT

The core employment reinvestment district is divided into an east and west side. The west side presently has an office park or campus-feel with the two large structures that are presently used for academic purposes: Lionsgate Academy and North Metro Flex Academy. At present, the building uses are mismatched to the amount of surface parking on the site. Reevaluation of the building and parking capacities may yield redevelopment or reuse opportunities.

The east core employment reinvestment area is presently characterized by industrial buildings and uses, some of which have been expanded over time to create structures that may be challenging for reuse should existing businesses ever decide to relocate. Berwald's historic brick manufacturing building is also located on the site and has been converted to a multi-tenant office building. Additionally, Berwald's large outdoor storage area occupies about half of a city block, which presents a prime opportunity for reinvestment.

- Promote the district for mixed-use development.
- Continue reinvestment and adaptive reuse on Berwald Roofing site.
- Make a stronger connection to the Gateway Trail.
- Promote de-paving to support a healthy stormwater system and increase landscaped areas.



## COMMERCE PARK REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The Commerce Park Redevelopment District lies between 7th Avenue to Highway 36 and Century Avenue to Henry Street. This district is the east gateway to downtown North St. Paul. It is currently characterized by a mix of suburban development, auto-oriented businesses, new multifamily residential, vacant parcels, and two single family homes. This is an area in transition. In addition to the new construction of Suite Living senior housing, investments have been made in several businesses, and two sites have been cleared to make way for redevelopment opportunities.

Some of the parcels in this district are presently vacant or underutilized. Platted parcels no longer reflect ownership as land development has occurred over the years which resulted in misalignments of buildings and parcel boundaries. In addition, street patterns have changed over the years which has created a dead end at 12th Avenue and Century Avenue, and development has occurred over top of alley right-of-way and a portion of Seppala Boulevard.

- Create a distinctive community gateway at 7th Street and Century Avenue.
- Utilize high quality building materials on sites along the perimeter of the district.
- Promote the district for mixed-use development.
- Design roadways with enhanced streetscape and district identity.
- Make a stronger connection to the Gateway Trail.
- Consider vacating unused alley and street right-of-way to enhance redevelopment opportunities.