



**City of North St. Paul
Redevelopment Master Plan Review
Regular Meeting Agenda**

**March 28, 2022
6:30 PM**

The Redevelopment Master Plan Review Meeting will be conducted on **March 28, 2022** at 6:30 p.m. The meeting location is the Sandberg Room at City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

The Redevelopment Master Plan Review will also be meeting by interactive TV under Minn. Stat. 13D.02. Members of the public are permitted to attend the meeting in person, however, it is encouraged to participate in the meeting remotely. Instructions can be found below.

The **March 28, 2022 Zoom meeting can be accessed via:**

<https://tinyurl.com/NSPMasterplan>

(from a PC, Mac, tablet, iPhone or Android device)

or by phone at 1 301 715 859, webinar ID: 880 5661 7628 Passcode: 732537

The Redevelopment Master Plan Review Zoom meeting will be ‘open to the public’ to listen in, but will be muted from contributing at all times with the exception of a Public Hearing and open to the public forum.

Please join the meeting early to test your audio and video settings. If you join via a device and your audio is not working, you may need to use the dial-in phone number option in order to be heard.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Committee Members
Robert Dew, Chair EDA
Rick Gelbmann, Planning Commission
Donald Jensen, EDA
John Monge , Planning Commission
Scott Thorsen, Council Liaison
Lisa Wong, Council Liaison

Staff
Morgan Dawley, City Engineer
Brandy Howe, Planning Consultant
Lisa Ritchie, Commission Secretary

- III. Adopt Agenda**
- IV. Approval of Minutes**
- V. Meeting Open to the Public**
- VI. Public Hearings**
- VII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations**
 - A. Review and Discuss:
 - Revised Chapter 4: Redevelopment Master Plan
 - Revised Transportation maps
 - New Chapter 5: Implementation and Implementation Matrix
- VIII. Old Business**
- IX. Reports from Staff**
- X. Reports from Commissioners**
- XI. Reports from Council Liaison**
- XII. Adjournment**

The next regularly scheduled Redevelopment Master Plan Review meeting is April 25

Chapter 4: Redevelopment Master Plan

To create this 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan, the 2009 plan was evaluated and certain policies and directions reaffirmed. This document aims to build on the momentum and success of the earlier plan by articulating a long-term vision and action strategy for areas where redevelopment has not yet occurred. This 2022 plan also builds in flexibility to allow the city to be nimble and responsive in redevelopment projects.

Redevelopment Districts

This 2022 plan is focused on seven redevelopment districts within the study area: McKnight, Schifsky's, Downtown Core, West End Mixed Use, Core Employment, and Commerce Park. These districts are established based on the existing and proposed character of the area, land uses, urban design relationships, and redevelopment objectives. Broad goals and specific implementation projects and activities for each district are described in the pages that follow. They are intended to build on the momentum garnered from recent redevelopment activities in the downtown and to implement the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans. The following is a summary of each district and the goals, strategies, and projects proposed to achieve the vision and guiding principles over the next 10+ years.

MCKNIGHT DISTRICT

The McKnight District is located just south of and highly visible from Highway 36. The east side of the district includes the successful Anchor Block redevelopment projects that includes a new Kwik Trip, Extra Space Storage, Anchor View Apartments, and a new connector road, Anchor Drive.

The west side of this district remains ripe for redevelopment. It is presently characterized by aging commercial buildings that are



accessed from Castle Avenue, a frontage road that parallels McKnight Road and curves to follow Highway 36 to the west. The North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale school district bus garage was relocated to this area in 2010 and to the north of that is a mix of commercial and construction uses. The existing urban form is heavily paved with limited landscaping; however, a multiuse trail runs north-south along the west side of McKnight Road that connects to the Gateway State Trail.

The Urban Ecology Center (UEC) lies to the immediate west of this district, which is a former sod farm that has been reclaimed as a 24-acre wetland restoration project. It contains walking trails, test plots for

native vegetation, an observation mound for bird watching, and a series of butterfly gardens. It serves as an educational resource for area schools and natural and recreational amenity for residents.

DISTRICT GOAL: Continue the momentum of the Anchor Block redevelopment by leveraging the visibility from Highway 36 and adjacency to the UEC and Gateway Trail.

PROPOSED USES: Office, mixed-use, live-work, or educational uses.

PLANNED CHARACTER AND DESIGN:

- Buildings 2-5 stories.
- Design sites to be oriented to the street.
- Parking and loading areas located in the rear.
- Underbuilding parking should be encouraged.
- Given visibility and “gateway to the city,” utilize high quality building materials on sites along the perimeter of the district.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving where appropriate.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Leverage access and visibility of Highway 36 and McKnight Road as well as the adjacency and amenities provided by the Urban Ecology Center and Gateway State Trail.

Leverage McKnight’s Locational Advantage

Redevelopment options for this area can be fairly flexible and may include a combination of office, flex, commercial employment uses, though live-work or upper-level residential may be supported if the market demands it. As redevelopment is proposed, sites should be designed to orient the building to the street with parking and loading facilities in the rear and provide underbuilding parking where possible or necessitated. Buildings should be at least two stories in height, though five stories may be permitted under existing regulations. Promote depaving, develop landscaped areas, and integrate onsite stormwater facilities where possible.

Redevelopment in this area can leverage the adjacency of Urban Ecology Center’s wetland complex and the nearby Gateway State Trail. Partnerships with the UEC, school district, and other agencies may yield the potential for a trade, vocational, or satellite campus specializing in urban development issues or sustainable technologies.

SCHIFSKY’S DISTRICT

The Schifsky’s District includes the 7-acre Schifsky site as well as Rotary Park and the main trailhead to the Gateway State Trail to the east. 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 its original location as an industrial use and is presently understood to meet the needs and demand of the business.

Notably, this area is one of the prime redevelopment parcels in the City of North St. Paul given its size and 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, this plan considers the potential future for this site.

DISTRICT GOAL: Long-term redevelopment of the Schifsky’s site that captures visibility from Highway 36 and adjacency to the Gateway State Trail and proximity to downtown.

PROPOSED USES: Light industrial, office, or mixed-uses.

CHARACTER AND DESIGN:

- Buildings 2-5 stories.
- Design sites oriented to the street.
- Parking and loaded in the rear.
- Underbuilding parking should be encouraged.
- Connect to Gateway State Trail.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving where appropriate.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Work with the property owner on timing of and type of redevelopment activities at the Schifsky’s site.
- Install wayfinding and interpretive maps at Rotary Park.

Long-term Redevelopment

Plan for long-term redevelopment of the Schifsky site but recognize and mitigate any negative impacts on adjacent land uses in the meantime and as surrounding areas redevelop. Depending on the timing and market demand, a variety of reuse opportunities could occur on this site ranging from new light industrial, office, or mixed-use. Any of the “lighter” or “people-focused” uses, such restaurants, retail, or residential would benefit from the adjacent Gateway State Trail. Ultimately, the City will work with the property owner on the timing and type of redevelopment proposals for the Schifsky site.



Wayfinding at Rotary Park

This location is a prime portal to the community where increased wayfinding and signage from this facility can direct visitors to the downtown. Recent improvements to Rotary Park have created a more inviting atmosphere, such as construction of open-air shelters, restroom, and bicycle fix-it stations. The addition of art/interpretive signs should be added in the near term as well as wayfinding to direct visitors to the downtown and destination points. (See also wayfinding discussion on page ##).

WEST END MIXED USE DISTRICT

The West End is presently a mix of service, industrial, and residential uses. The Berwald Investment Company, another longstanding North St. Paul company and landowner, holds approximately 10 acres on the northside of this district. The City of North St. Paul’s public works facility is also located here.

Newer condos at Penn Place, the Gateway at McKnight townhomes, and a collection of modest, medium-density single-family housing are also located here. This Gateway State Trail separates this district from Schifsky's and the Anchor Block redevelopment to the north.

DISTRICT GOAL: Promote the West End as a thriving, mixed-use district with housing focused on the south side (i.e., along 7th Avenue) and mixed-use and/or employment uses on the north side of the district.

PROPOSED USES:

- Mixed-uses, employment, townhomes, live-work units, and existing single family.

CHARACTER AND SITE DESIGN:

- Buildings 2-5 stories.
- Mixed-use housing should have a strong street presence with parking underbuilding or in the rear.
- Connect to Gateway State Trail.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving where feasible.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Focus redevelopment in two “zones” – one mixed-use or employment focused on the north side, and housing/live-work opportunities on the south end.
- Establish a West End passive open space for area residents.



Employment Zone

The Berwald holdings in this district are proposed for employment-focused and/or mixed-use. Presently, impervious surfaces cover nearly 100 percent of the non-residential areas of this District. As this area redevelops, de-paving should be promoted where feasible to support a healthy stormwater system and increase landscaped areas. In the interim, screening incompatible but adjacent uses should be a prime focus if necessary.

Urban Townhomes and Mixed Housing

Per the Comprehensive Plan, the existing single family along 7th Avenue and up Oak Hill



Place is pegged for future mixed-use redevelopment. This could occur fully as residential or as a combination of at least 30 percent residential with a commercial uses mixed in.

While the character of existing housing near downtown is in keeping with North St. Paul's historic, small-town charm, there are opportunities additional townhouses and upscale apartments that may cater to younger demographics and/or those looking for a more "urban" feel. New townhomes could be rental in the early stages of development but could transition to owner occupied units over time; these types of units work well for either rental or owner-occupied units.

Live/Work Housing

Another residential type is the live/work unit, where individual owner-occupied units also function as independent storefronts or shop spaces for start-up businesses. These uses were envisioned in the 2009 plan but have yet to be developed. The zoning within the downtown area is flexible enough for this type of housing unit to occur where the market drives it.



Passive Open Space for Area Residents

Lastly, an approximately 2-acre strip of land abuts 3rd Street on the west side of this district. The site is narrow, sloped, and wooded, which make redevelopment less feasible. A small, minimally developed natural area is proposed that could include walking path connectivity to the townhome residences to the west and the neighborhood to the east. A small, nature-focused playground might be included to provide safe and convenient play place for nearby residents.

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core is the heart of North St. Paul. It lies along 7th Avenue between Helen and Henry Streets and turns north onto Margaret Street from 7th Avenue to Highway 36. Seventh Avenue is North St. Paul's historic downtown where buildings are 1-2 stories in height, set up to the property line, many of which have historical character with brick facades, awnings, and large display windows.



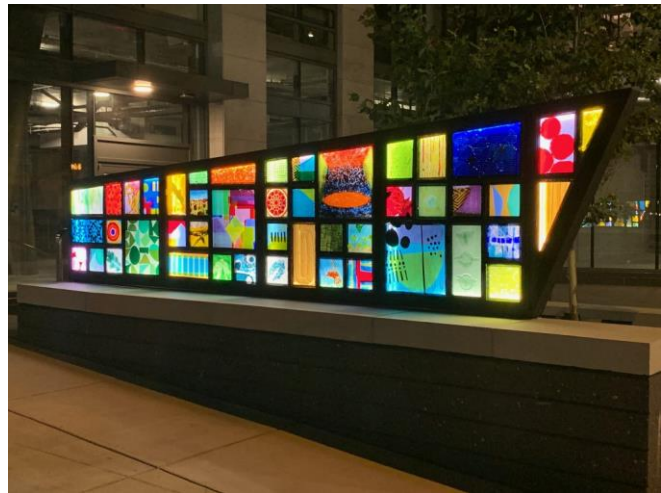
DISTRICT GOAL: Enhance the historic character and create an inviting, pedestrian-friendly environment where visitors and residents feel encouraged and welcome to linger on the sidewalk, in gathering spaces, or wander in and out of shops.

PROPOSED USES:

- Vertically mixed-use development.
- Residential, commercial, service, civic, community gathering spaces, and potential future parking garage.

CHARACTER AND SITE DESIGN:

- Apply the Downtown Design Manual to facades and streetscape improvements.
- Buildings 2-3 stories.
- Design sites oriented to the street.
- Underbuilding parking is strongly encouraged and may be required based on site specifications.
- Connect to Gateway State Trail.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving where appropriate.
- Integrate public art, open spaces, and gathering areas.



STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Redevelopment activities should focus on creating and retaining retail, restaurants, and services that will serve the growing downtown population.
- Encourage incrementally taller buildings to increase residential density and maintain businesses at street level.
- Support infill development that enhances the historic character to ensure it remains the symbolic heart of Downtown North St. Paul.
- Convert Seppala Boulevard to a pedestrian-friendly, multi-functional corridor while maintaining alley and service functions for 7th Avenue businesses.
- Strengthen the connection from the Gateway State Trail to the Downtown Core by improving trailheads.
- Residential developments must have adequate parking to support residents; under building parking is strongly encouraged and may be required based on site specifications.
- Evaluate public parking options and plan for the future development of a public parking garage.

Downtown Infill and Built Form

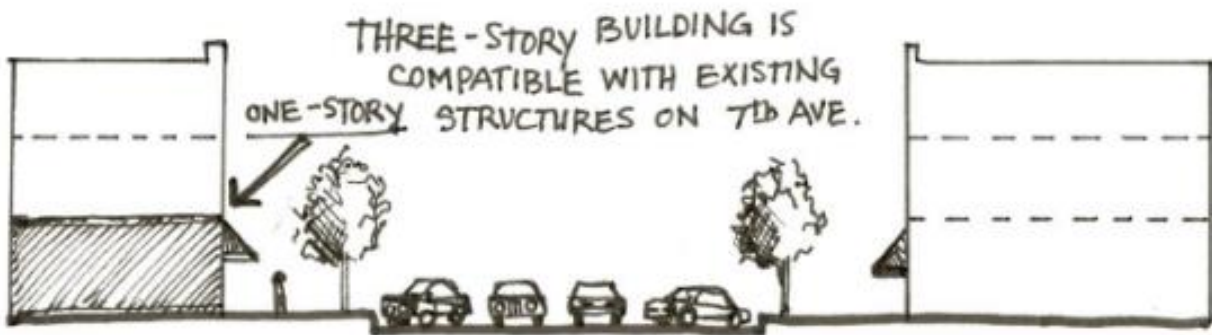
Downtown businesses maintain a competitive advantage by having workers and residents in the immediate surroundings. North St. Paul's residential population has increased in the past ten years, which will soon reach a critical mass to generate new demand for services, such as restaurants, retail, and personal services. Recent additions to the downtown indicate such demand is already occurring,

such as Brother’s Bistro and Mac’s Diner (to open soon in the lower level of the Sentinel Residences). As the downtown continues to see public and private investment, the city can anticipate developers will jockey for opportunities to create more housing followed by more retail and services.

To capture this growth, the incremental upward expansion of buildings along 7th Avenue is encouraged. New construction should, where feasible, provide housing and offices in upper floors and retail and service spaces reserved for street level. The vertical and horizontal mix of uses in downtown buildings provides for vibrancy that attracts visitors day and night.



To maintain the character and historic image of the downtown, new development should adhere to design standards in the Downtown Design Manual, which may be reviewed and amended. Presently, up to four stories is permitted for new mixed-use buildings per zoning; however, the Downtown Design Manual suggests that three story structures are optimal for downtown North St. Paul when considering the height of existing structures and street and sidewalk widths.



Several vacant sites within the downtown present opportunities for infill development on 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. The City and Economic Development Authority should work with property owners to actively market these sites for redevelopment in addition to vacant buildings and underutilized sites. New construction, infill, and façade renovations should be designed to support a small-town and pedestrian-friendly character while facilitating retail and service business functions. Development of a façade improvement incentive program could be established.

Convert Seppala Boulevard to a Living Street

Buildings on the north side of 7th Avenue back up to Seppala Boulevard, the former Twin City Lines streetcar. The streetscape of Seppala is narrow with a 28-foot right-of-way, as such, it presently has the function and feel of an alleyway. Some businesses have taken advantage of the dual frontage and have opened store fronts on both streets Seppala and 7th Avenue. Additional public and private improvements could be implemented to further activate the street and transform Seppala Boulevard to a pedestrian-friendly, multi-functional and aesthetically pleasing street.



For example:

- Install features that make people feel welcome such as streetlights, special paving, furnishings, bike racks, planters, and murals.
- Encourage businesses to activate outdoor space with patio seating and sidewalk sales.
- Consolidate trash pick-up so businesses do not have individual dumpsters.
- Encourage other building owners to create rear entrances with façade enhancements such as awnings, display windows.
- Incorporate green infrastructure to handle stormwater.
- Create a picnic park on the ¼-acre city-owned property at the northwest corner of Seppala Boulevard and Margaret Street.



Downtown Plaza / Urban Open Space

The City owns a vacant property on 7th Avenue (2577-2579 7th Avenue) that is conveniently situated for conversion as a downtown plaza or urban open space. The site is presently utilized as a parking lot, but the area has the potential for greater use, such as a focal point for gatherings. Local art and urban landscaping would create a more welcoming presence to the downtown area. The existing hardscape could be removed to create the feel of a greenway bridging 7th Avenue and Seppala Boulevard.

Three on-street parking spaces presently exist on 7th Avenue facing side of the south side of the property. The vision for the future design of this site would remove the on-street parking and extend the wider sidewalk onto the south side of the street for a pedestrian-friendly and walkable streetscape. The space would further integrate 7th Avenue and Seppala Boulevard by providing another way for pedestrians to move through the downtown.



Gateway Trail Enhancements

Margaret Street provides the most direct connection from the Gateway State Trail to the downtown; however, the existing access to the trail from Margaret Street is lackluster visually and difficult to navigate due to lack of pedestrian connections. Recognizing the significance of the trail as an amenity and connector for the community, functional and aesthetic improvements to the trail access are suggested. A thematic gateway should welcome trail users to North St. Paul and direct them to the restaurants and shops along 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. Entry monumentation or artwork combined with an enhanced streetscape along Margaret Street with broad sidewalks and pedestrian features could lead people directly to the downtown.

Future Garage Parking

As residential density increases and intensification of the Downtown Core occurs, additional parking will be needed. Today, multiple, small surface lots and on-street angled parking on 7th Avenue provide adequate visitor parking for downtown businesses. New residential development is required to provide off-street parking for its residents at a rate of two spaces per



dwelling. Adhering to this requirement will be necessary to ensure adequate public parking for those who work and visit the downtown. As a future, long-term solution, a public parking structure with ground floor mixed uses could provide a centralized location for public parking at the core of downtown.

In the short term, existing city-owned surface parking should be reconfigured to improve pedestrian access and safety and to accommodate electric vehicles.

CORE EMPLOYMENT REINVESTMENT DISTRICT

The core employment reinvestment district is divided into an east and west side that sandwich the Margaret Street. The west side has an office park or campus-feel with the two large structures that are 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, or potential shared parking with neighboring uses. The east side of the 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.

DISTRICT GOAL: Leverage North St. Paul's increasingly rare ability to offer light industrial land that is relatively central to the regional work force and highly visible and accessible to Highway 36.

PROPOSED USES:

- Light assembly, medical office, professional office, or live-work uses.

CHARACTER AND SITE DESIGN:

- Buildings 2-5 stories.
- Parking and loaded in the rear; under-ground or building parking should be encouraged.
- Connect to Gateway State Trail.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving.



STRATEGIES:

- Reinvigorate this district as North St. Paul's premiere employment district.
- Reinvest and adaptively reuse Berwald Roofing land holdings while working with the property owner on timing and type of redevelopment activities.

Employment-Focused Reinvestment and Adaptive Reuse

Office, manufacturing spaces, and household-serving businesses are anticipated for the Core Employment District. Office showroom buildings offer relatively small spaces (e.g., 2,000-5,000 sq. ft.) for tenants seeking inexpensive office space. These spaces represent 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 St. Paul. Household-serving business 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 could also be a focus developed in concert with existing medical offices/clinics in the vicinity.

COMMERCE PARK DISTRICT

Commerce Park represents both the terminus of the downtown as well as an entry to the City of North St. Paul. As a major gateway for visitors entering from Highway 36, it is essential that this area impart a welcoming entry to the downtown business district. This area 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 recent construction of 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.

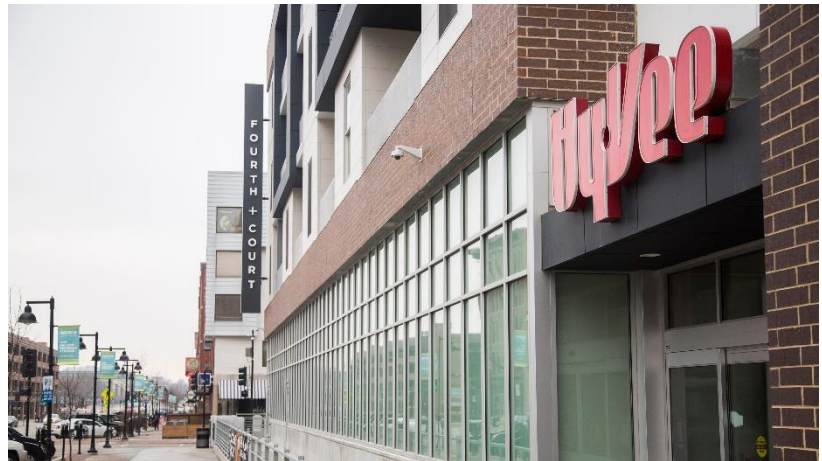
DISTRICT GOAL: Reposition this district as a contemporary retail and service node.

PROPOSED USES:

- A mix of restaurants, service, office, civic, and multifamily uses.

CHARACTER AND SITE DESIGN:

- Buildings 1-5 stories.
- Design sites oriented to the street.
- Parking and loaded in the rear; underbuilding parking should be encouraged.
- Connect to Gateway State Trail.
- Develop landscaped areas, integrate onsite stormwater, promote depaving.



STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Redevelop the Commerce Park area with a mix of community-serving commercial, office, multifamily uses.
- Given visibility and “gateway to the city,” utilize high quality building materials on sites along the perimeter of the district.
- Position buildings and sites to take advantage of cycling and pedestrian traffic from the Gateway Trail.
- Work with overlapping and neighboring jurisdictions on projects of shared interest.

Century Avenue as Community Gateway

The functional and aesthetic design Century Avenue are important aspects for redevelopment planning and directing patrons to downtown North St. Paul. Combining multi-modal transportation and transit facilities such as park and rides, bus shelters, and trails should be integral to the future planning for this important corridor.

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.

Gateway State Trail Connections

The existing owners of the Burger King have expressed interest in repositioning their building to better take advantage of cycling trac along the Gateway Trail, and it should be a priority to integrate all stakeholders in this area as redevelopment occurs. Increased connectivity with the trail at the terminus of Henry Street is also suggested where a potential “lunch-time” park or plaza space could be integrated with redevelopment projects near the trail.



AREA-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

The foundation of this Redevelopment Master Plan lies with creating a downtown and economic environment that realizes the vision: **Identity, Image, Enduring, and Quality of Life.**

AREA WIDE STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

To achieve the vision, this plan focuses redevelopment activities by district, discussed in the following pages. Some activities and strategies can be implemented area wide. These include:

- Foster the creation of public art.
- Invest in outdoor public realm enhancements.
- Improve wayfinding signage to the downtown.
- Vacate unused right-of-way to enhance redevelopment opportunities.

Encourage Public Art

One of the many recommendations from the 2009 redevelopment master plan was to create new landmarks and gateways to better signal the arrival into downtown. This plan supports this general idea but expands on it to encourage the creation of public art in North St. Paul. Presently, the City is known for its iconic snowman that sits in the study area next to the Gateway State Trail at Margaret Street. This plan suggests that the City support the newly formed Arts Commission and encourage the creation of public art, especially at key gateway locations within the study area.

With the goal of establishing public art in the downtown, a program could be developed that encourage art projects in publicly accessible spaces, sponsored by the public and private sectors. Such a program could require a financial contribution from public and private developments (e.g., 1% of the construction budget) to be used for onsite for a public art project or pooled to fund a downtown public art grant program.



Invest in Outdoor Public Realm Enhancements

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan recommends that the City establish and implement a Downtown Improvement Plan that enhances the character of the downtown as a distinctive place that embodies the heritage of the community. This plan suggests several categories of improvements that could feed into or be completed in lieu of a larger planning document.

- Enhance the appearance of streets through boulevard landscaping, careful placement of necessary signs, underground utilities when improvements are made and by providing decorative streetlights.
- Bury utilities when street reconstruction occurs.
- Create public gathering spaces into new development opportunities as they arise.
- Establish an outdoor seating program or regulations for sidewalk cafes.

Continue to Implement the City's Wayfinding Program

A well-designed and executed wayfinding system will not only eliminate directional guesswork, but it can also encourage those walking or on bikes to explore new areas they were not aware of previously. A professionally planned and designed wayfinding system improves navigation for pedestrians, trail users, and vehicles traveling in and through the downtown. In 2016, North St. Paul developed a city-wide wayfinding plan. Implementation of Phase 1 signage has been installed, however, downtown directional signs, kiosks, monument, and gateway signs have yet to be funded and completed.



Vacate Right-of-Way to Facilitate Parcel Consolidation

Much of the property in the study area was platted before 1900. Property boundaries no longer accurately 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 which has created dead ends and instances where development encroaches onto former street or alley right-of-way. To assist in land consolidation efforts, the city should consider vacating unused alley and street right-of-way to assist in property consolidation and enhance redevelopment opportunities. Such actions should consider cost and benefits to all parties involved.

Land Acquisition

Land assembly places control of the property in the hands of the City, which can remove red tape and enhance the potential for redevelopment. The City will consider land acquisition at key locations as opportunities arise, such as through direct purchase or through tax auction.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A key transportation goal for this Redevelopment Master Plan is to increase opportunities for bicycling and walking to and through the downtown and reduce vehicular demand on city streets for local trips. This plan also integrates planned transportation improvements as detailed in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the 7th Avenue Urban Design Plan, Living Streets Plan, MnDOT’s Highway 36 and Highway 120 Corridor Studies.

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS:

- Improve bike and pedestrian connections to and through the study area.
- Continue 7th Avenue and Margaret Street reconstruction.
- Construct a five-point roundabout at 7th Avenue, South Avenue, and 3rd Street.
- Interchange, streetscape improvements, and trail connections at Highway 36 and Century Avenue.

7th Avenue and Margaret Reconstruction

North St. Paul has been implementing the 7th Avenue Urban Design Plan in recent years to improve the streetscape and extend the life of the pavement of 7th Avenue. The new construction and design have enhanced the functional and aesthetic character of the road or facility. As part of this project, the City will construct a roundabout at the 7th Avenue, South Avenue, and 3rd Street intersection. Two options have been proposed for the design of which require varying levels of right-of-way acquisition. The City should work to acquire property within the footprint of the proposed roundabouts, where possible.



In addition to improving traffic flow and safety, roundabouts provide an additional opportunity for art and gateway features to announce the arrival to North St. Paul or the downtown.

Highway 36 and Century Avenue Interchange

MnDOT is studying the transition to an at-grade intersection at Highway 36 and Century Avenue in North St. Paul. The configuration and timing of the future interchange is yet to be determined; however, the City has acquired a 0.6-acre parcel at the southwest corner of the intersection in anticipation of future right-of-way needs.



This City should partner with MnDOT, neighboring City of Oakdale, and the Ramsey and Washington County Transportation Departments on the timing, funding, and preferred configuration of this interchange.

In addition to improvements to Century Avenue/Highway 120, MnDOT is partnering with Metro Transit on options to establish arterial bus rapid transit (aBRT) on this corridor in the future.

Sidewalks and Trails

Establishing a walkable downtown with bike-friendly amenities is a high priority for the City. This plan proposes multimodal trails on the east side of McKnight Road and west side of Century Avenue to connect to regional trails and implement the Living Streets and Comprehensive Plans. This plan also promotes that all sidewalks are continuous in the downtown. Sidewalk gaps should be filled where possible when reconstruction occurs. Sidewalk infill is planned as 7th Avenue and Margaret Street is reconstructed through the downtown, sidewalks.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure goals for this Redevelopment Master Plan consider recent system plans and studies completed for the city and build on recommendations of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Sanitary Sewer

The sanitary sewer system was evaluated during the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process. The downstream 18-inch, 21-inch, and 24-inch trunk sewer mains have sufficient residual capacity to convey wastewater within this Redevelopment Master Plan study area; however, wastewater flows vary annually and seasonally depending on climate conditions and customer water use. To account for such fluctuations, an evaluation of the residual capacity of the sewer trunks should be completed prior to any new development or redevelopment activities. Such evaluations should include flow monitoring or infiltration and inflow (I/I) assessments to verify sewer age and condition.

Water System

A Water Storage Siting Study was completed in 2020 found that the City has inadequate water storage capacity compared to industry-standard recommended storage volumes. Storage capacity was calculated using the City's water consumption data and available fire flow of 3,500 gallon per minute for 3 hours (540,000 gallons). Under normal operating conditions, the City's ample well supply capacity can compensate the minimal storage capacity. However, the existing wells may be unable to meet water demands and maintain adequate storage if an emergency were to occur (large fire, severe drought, large watermain break, etc.). Therefore, it is recommended to increase the City's water storage capacity as soon as possible to meet industry-standard recommended storage volumes.

Some areas near along 7th Avenue E. have inadequate available fire flow capacity. Fire flow requirements were based on the International Building Code (IBC), upon which the Minnesota State Plumbing Code is based. Water demands can vary significantly depending upon climate conditions and customer water usage patterns. For that reason, a detailed evaluation of the water demands, and condition of existing water mains should be completed prior to any new development or redevelopment activities.

Stormwater System

There are areas of historic flooding in the study area. Some of these problems have partially been alleviated through the construction of a pond at Helen Street; however, some localized flood issues remain within the study area. As the study area redevelops, projects will be required to adhere to Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (RWMWD) rules. Any site that is one acre or larger is required to implement stormwater infiltration, or filtration where infiltration is infeasible, best management practices (BMPs) with treatment volumes equivalent to 1.1" of runoff from new or reconstructed impervious surfaces. This requirement is not unique to the study area and is like other watershed district rules throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Soil conditions and high groundwater tables in the study area make infiltration generally infeasible. For this reason, both surface and subsurface filtration BMPs have typically been favored. In fact, there are several successful installations of both on redeveloped parcels throughout the study area. To put this in a numeric perspective, redevelopment sites can expect to dedicate at most 15% of the site to a surface filtration BMP, which can cost \$5 to \$7 per cubic foot of BMP volume required. If subsurface filtration

BMPs are selected, total construction costs can be expected to range from \$10 to \$15 per cubic foot of BMP volume required and require an underground footprint of 5 to 10%. In industrial, commercial, or multifamily residential projects, there is typically sufficient footprint beneath the parking lot and green space to accommodate subsurface systems.

In the decision to select either a surface or subsurface BMP, maintenance costs must also be considered as, like other watershed districts, RWMWD requires operations and maintenance agreements. Surface filtration BMPs are generally more expensive to maintain but require much less frequent maintenance than do subsurface BMPs. Where storm sewer tie-in grades and the other limiting factors listed previously do not allow for either surface or subsurface infiltration or filtration BMPs, RWMWD provides for an alternative means of compliance through payment into its Stormwater Impact Fund. The current cost is \$75,000 per acre of impervious acre.

ENERGY

Energy goals for this Redevelopment Master Plan consider how to redevelopment actions can minimize energy consumption and maximize efficiency. The following are some options for energy conservation.

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 (PV) panels for additional energy generation. Existing buildings with nearly flat roofs should evaluate installing a rooftop solar array with any roof replacement. If bi-facial PV solar panels are used, roofing material with a high albedo value should be considered. Low 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. If on-site PV solar is not feasible, off-site solar subscriptions or credits can be considered.



Wind Power

North St. 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. Utility scale wind generation is not feasible in an urban environment due to the noise, light flicker and ice throw nuisances created.

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.

Cold Climate Air-Source Heat Pumps

Cold-climate heat pumps (CCHPs) are the latest evolution in efficient air-source heat pump design. Thanks to an inverter—or variable speed drive—compressor design, these heat pumps achieve high levels of efficiency even during the winter season. And just like other heat pumps, a CCHP doubles as a cooling system during the summer season.

Electric Vehicles (EV)

Demand for electric vehicles (EV) is increasing as fuel costs rise and the impacts of carbon dioxide emissions on climate change continue to be a grave concern. More and more electric vehicles are on the roads now than ever and the demand is only projected to rise in the coming years. The City has demonstrated leadership and a strong desire to provide public electric vehicle options in the City. For example, in addition to resurfacing, updates to the municipal lot south of 7th



Avenue include plans to install EV charging stations. In addition to public options, the City should consider policy or regulatory requirements for the installation of EV charging stations for private development projects.

The City should evaluate three factors to provide effective EV charging opportunities throughout the redevelopment area:

- Funding sources and grant opportunities for the purchase of EV charging stations.
- Determine appropriate standards for EV charging station location and consider regulations that would require the installation of EV charging stations with redevelopment.
- Consider third-party payment systems to allow for EV charging stations to function likely may urban semi-automated parking meter systems.

Chapter 5: Implementation

This Redevelopment Master Plan is not intended to be static, but rather a living document that can evolve as priorities shift based opportunities, private redevelopment projects, and on funding availabilities. The plan should be monitored and updated from time to time to respond to changing conditions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

No one entity has the sole authority or resources to carry out this plan. Implementation will require partnership and action by multiple agencies, each with shared or individual interests in enhancing downtown North St. Paul. The following is a list and brief description of the known actors in North St. Paul. In addition to these groups, other agencies will also have a role in fulfilling the vision of this document.

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

The EDA will take a prominent role in business recruitment and retention and promoting the downtown to developers. It will work hand in hand with the City on private redevelopment projects.

- Work to ensure that economic development initiatives within North St. Paul are a recognized priority for City Council members.
- Actively pursue 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 St. Paul sites to perspective developers.
- Provide guidance to the City to ensure that proposed development projects and public improvements are consistent with the plan.
- Continue to find the appropriate funding options for various redevelopment projects.
- Collaborate with private brokers marketing North St. Paul sites and leverage marketing efforts.

City of North St. Paul

The City Council will be a key decision-maker in programs and projects within the study area. The Council is the authority that sets city budgets, prioritizes projects, and approves development projects. In addition, the City of North St. Paul hosts several commissions that shape the community. Each of the following will likely have a role in implementing this Redevelopment Master Plan based on their role and functions: Planning Commission, Environmental Advisory Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Arts & Culture Commission, and Housing & Redevelopment Authority.

In addition to the City’s elected and appointed officials, City staff will play an integral role in advancing projects. Community development, public works, finance, and engineering staff will be responsible for:

- Assist with
- 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.
- Creation of financial plans for public redevelopment investments and continued monitoring.
- Lead the design of public infrastructure improvements needed to support redevelopment including necessary utility and roadway improvements.
- Coordinate with state, county, and other agencies on project coordination and permitting.

Other Partners

Other partners within or involved with the study area can be tapped to finance projects or move them through regulatory processes. For example, state of Minnesota and Ramsey and Washington Counties will be key partners in transportation and other multijurisdictional efforts. Other key partners include businesses and property owners as many of the revitalization priorities described in this plan will occur on private property, thus collaboration with these entities will be paramount to reinvestment in the study area.

POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The City of North St. Paul recently adopted its 2040 Comprehensive Plan and updated its zoning ordinance shortly thereafter. As of early 2022, the sign ordinance was in the process of being updated by the City and is anticipated to be completed later in the year. Thus, the planning and regulatory framework are fairly current and do not require significant modifications to implement this plan. Rather, this plan assists in realizing the policy goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning ordinance offers an appropriate level of regulation and flexibility to implement this Redevelopment Master Plan.

As described previously, the Downtown Design Manual was developed to communicate design ideals for the downtown. While much of the document is still relevant, the zoning and sign ordinance updates do not conform to some provisions of the design manual. To ensure consistency between policy, guidelines, and regulation, an update to the Downtown Design Manual is recommended.

PROGRAMMING

Solicitation of Proposals

The city may establish a request for proposal (RFP) process to identify private development partners for a redevelopment project or site. The RFP allows the city to explain its objectives and to find the developer best suited to bring the segments of the design framework to fruition in this area. The steps in the RFP process include:

- Prepare and distribute RFP
- Select preferred development partner
- Negotiate preliminary development agreement.

- Approve final development agreement by EDA.
- Planning review and approval process

FUNDING

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The capital improvements plan is a fiscal planning tool for public infrastructure projects. North St. Paul's CIP is a prioritized list of public improvements to be constructed over a seven-year period. Projects such as 7th Avenue reconstruction and Seppala conversion are candidates for the CIP.

Special Service Districts

[Chapter 428A, Minn. Stats.](#), authorizes cities to establish Special Service Districts (SSD), which are special taxing districts where revenue may be used to support services and improvements in commercial areas. The general statutory authority contains few limits on the potential uses of SSDs; however, funds cannot be used to finance services that the City provides through the general fund unless the services are provided at a higher level.

Parkland Dedication Fee

As authorized by [462.358, Minn. Stats.](#), the City of North St. Paul collects parkland dedication fees for residential and nonresidential developments. The 2022 rate is \$900 per residential lot and \$2,795 per acre for nonresidential development.

Surface Water Management Utility Fee

As authorized by [444.075, Minn. Stats.](#), the City of North St. Paul collects a surface water management utility fee for all properties in the city that contribute surface water to the storm sewer system. The 2022 rate is \$10.88 per residential unit and \$10.88 multiplied by the percent of impervious site coverage for multifamily, commercial, and public properties.

Public Art Dedication Fee

The City of St. Paul has a [Public Art Ordinance](#) that has been in effect since 2009, which supports their public art program by dedicating 1 percent of capital projects on city property to be used for public art.

Grants and Tax Incentives

The [Metropolitan Council](#) administers grant funding through the Livable Communities Act to help communities achieve development goals that create more housing choice, support living wage job creation, and connect jobs, housing, and regional amenities to create a more equitable region. There are currently seven categories of Livable Communities grants:

- Housing, jobs, efficient growth
- Transit-oriented development
- Pre-development
- Policy development
- Clean-up/investigation
- Affordable housing

- Affordable homeownership

The [Minnesota State Arts Board](#) offers and connects artists and agencies to numerous state and federal grant programs.

[Minnesota Department of Natural Resources](#) provides grants through the [Outdoor Recreation Grant Program](#), provides matching grants for acquisition, development outdoor recreation and natural areas. Eligible projects include park acquisition and development, internal park trails, picnic shelters, playgrounds. All park projects must be maintained for outdoor recreation into perpetuity. The DNR also administers the [Local Trails Connections Program](#) which is intended to complete connections between where people live (e.g., residential areas within cities, entire communities) and significant public resources (e.g., historical areas, open space, parks and/or other trails).

[Minnesota Department of Transportation](#) (MnDOT) distributes funding to cities through its state aid for local transportation (SALT) program. The program funds street and bridge construction and maintenance, active transportation projects, safe routes to school, and flood and disaster relief.

The [Minnesota Employment and Economic Development](#) (DEED) provides financial assistance to communities for infrastructure projects to assist with economic growth to help attract businesses, jobs, and people. DEED's 2021 [Economic Development Resource Guide](#) offers a synopsis of each assistance program currently provided. Specific DEED grant programs that have potential use for the study area include:

[Redevelopment Grant Program](#) which helps communities with the costs of redeveloping blighted industrial, residential, or commercial sites and putting land back into productive use. Grants pay up to half of the redevelopment costs for a qualifying site, with a 50-percent local match. Grants can assist with the cost of public land acquisition (if public ownership is necessary to facilitate redevelopment), building and site demolition, infrastructure improvements, soil stabilization, ponding or other environmental infrastructure, and costs necessary for the adaptive reuse of buildings, such as asbestos abatement and lead paint mitigation.

[Small Cities Development Program](#) helps cities with funding for housing, public infrastructure, and commercial rehabilitation projects. Eligible projects fall within three general categories: housing grants, public facility grants, and comprehensive grants, which can include economic development activities.

[Contamination Cleanup and Investigation Grant](#) for assessing and cleaning up contaminated sites for redevelopment. Grants pay up to 75 percent of the costs to investigate and clean up polluted sites. Both publicly and privately owned sites with known or suspected soil or groundwater contamination qualify. Applications are accepted May 1 and November 1 each year.

Certain sites within North St. Paul may be historically significant and eligible for tax credits through the [Minnesota Historic Preservation Office](#). For example, a 20% state tax credit is available for qualified historic rehabilitations and parallels the existing federal rehabilitation tax credit.

The [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) (MPCA) offers a variety of grants for brownfields, sustainability, and water, wastewater, and stormwater projects, to name a few. Additionally, funding from

Minnesota's [Volkswagen settlement plan](#) will provide \$47 million in cleaner transportation infrastructure; of which \$3.5 million will be available for electric vehicle charging stations.

[Minnesota Public Facilities Authority](#) helps municipalities construct projects to meet their water infrastructure needs through several loan and grant programs. The Water Infrastructure Funding (WIF) program is established in Minnesota Statutes, Section 446A.072. The WIF program provides supplemental grants to municipalities based on affordability criteria established by statute.

Implementation Matrix

Priority

Low, Medium, High

Cost Estimate

\$ \$0 - \$100,000

\$\$ \$100,000 - \$500,000

\$\$\$ \$500,000+

Timeframe

Short Term 1-5 years

Mid Term 6-10 years

	Non-Infrastructure Projects <i>(i.e., Program Development or Studies)</i>	Estimate	Priority	Timing	Potential Funding	Responsible Parties
	Market vacant sites and buildings	\$		Ongoing	EDA	EDA, City, PO
	Create percent for art funding program	n/a		Ongoing	n/a	City (ACC, CC)
	Outdoor dining ordinance	\$		Short	TBD	City (PC, CC)
	Update Downtown Design Guidelines	\$		Short	TBD	City (PC, CC)
	Development story map	\$		Short	TBD	City, EDA
	Seppala Boulevard conversion design plan	\$		Short	SSA	City, EDA
	Off-street parking study	\$		Short	TBD	City (PC, CC)
	Create a façade improvement program	\$		Mid	SSA	City, EDA
	Assist property owners and developers with grant writing	\$		As needed	Property owners Developers	City, EDA
	Replat and ROW vacation where appropriate	\$		As needed	TBD	City, PO

	Infrastructure Projects	Estimate	Priority	Timing	Potential Funding	Responsible Parties
	HWY 36 interchange / Century Avenue improvements	\$\$\$		ASAP	TBD	City, Counties, Oakdale, DOT
	Trail access improvements at Helen, Margaret, Henry, and Century Avenue	\$		Short	CIP DNR LTCP	City (PR, CC)
	Wayfinding kiosk and gateway features at Rotary Park	\$		Short	CIP	City (PR, CC), DNR
	Establish a passive open space area	\$		Short	Park dedication fees ORGP	City (PR, CC)
	District-wide wayfinding and gateway signs	\$\$		Short-Mid	CIP	City
	Establish a downtown plaza/urban open space	\$\$\$		Short-Mid	CIP SSA	City
	5-point roundabout at 3 rd Street/South Avenue/7 th Avenue	\$\$\$		Short – Mid	TBD	City
	Roundabout art / gateway feature (combined with 5-point roundabout)	\$\$		Short – Mid	CIP % for art	City
	Multiuse paths along McKnight and Century Avenue	\$\$		Mid	DNR LTCP	City, Ramsey, DOT
	Seppala Boulevard conversion to Living Street	\$\$\$		Mid	TBD	City
	Central picnic park on Seppala (combined with Seppala conversion project)	\$		Mid	Park dedication fees ORGP	City
	Water tower at Tower Park (benefits study area)	\$\$\$		Mid	CIP, DEED PFG	City
	Bury utilities (combined with street reconstruction)	\$\$		Ongoing	CIP	City
	Sidewalk infill	\$		Short	CIP	City
	Public EV charging stations	\$-\$		Short	MPCA grants	City
	Parking ramp	\$\$\$		Long	TBD	TBD
	Stormwater management	\$		Ongoing	MPCA grants	City
	Public art	\$		Ongoing	% for art	City (ACC)

Acronyms

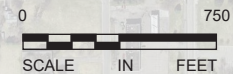
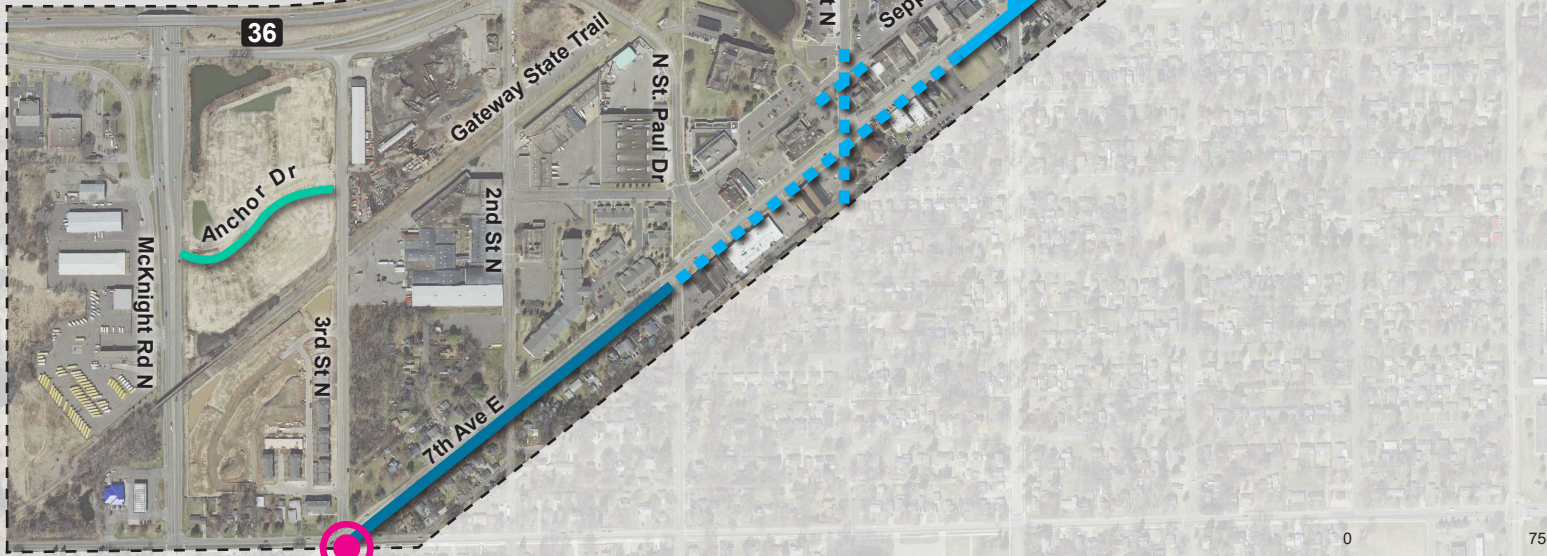
ACC	Arts & Culture Commission
CC	City Council
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
DEED	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
DNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
DOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
EDA	Economic Development Authority
LTCP	Local Trail Connections Program
MPCA	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
ORGP	Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
PC	Planning Commission
PFG	Public Facility Grant
PO	Property owners
PR	Parks & Recreation Commission
ROW	Right-of-way
SSA	Special Service Area
TBD	To be determined

LEGEND

- - - - - Project Boundary
- Completed Reconstruction
- ⋯⋯⋯ 2022 Street Reconstruction
- Planned Street Reconstruction
- New Right of Way
- ↔ Proposed aBRT Corridor
- ⊙ Proposed Roundabout

Urban Ecology
and Environmental
Learning Center

North High
School



LEGEND

- - - - Project Boundary
- ↔ Existing Multiuse Trail
- ↔ Proposed Multiuse Trail
- Existing Sidewalk
- - - Sidewalk Infill
- ↔ Regional Bike Route
- X Trail Access

