

**April 3, 2025
6:30 PM**

The Planning Commission Meeting will be conducted on **April 3, 2025** at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

You can watch the meeting on our YouTube channel here: <https://tinyurl.com/NSPYouTube>

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

COMMISSION

Patrick Blee, Chair

Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair

Arthur Alvarez, Jr. Commissioner

Stephanie Kane-Burback, Commissioner

Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner

Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

Jim Rathe, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison

Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

III. Adopt Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of January 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes

V. Meeting Open to the Public

This Open Forum is an opportunity for persons to address the Planning Commission on items not on the agenda. A completed public comment form should be presented to the staff liaison prior to the meeting. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person. While the Commission may ask clarifying questions of the speaker, no formal action by the Commission or discussion will be held on these items.

VI. Public Hearings

VII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

A. Review of Parks and Open Space Master Plan

B. Discussion: Downtown Design Manual

VIII. Reports

IX. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting is May 1, 2025.



To	Date
Planning Commissioners	April 3, 2025

Agenda Placement #
Approval of Minutes

Subject
Approval of January 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Background/Facts
N/A

Recommended Action
Staff recommend approval of the January 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Attachments
1. PC Minutes 01-02-2025

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Cherne, Community Development Administrative Assistant



**Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2025
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Blee called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Patrick Blee, Chair	
Andrew Wise, Vice-Chair	Absent
Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner	
Stephanie Kane-Burback, Commissioner	
Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner	Absent
Cameron Muhic, Commissioner	
Jim Rathe, Commissioner	

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison
Riley Grams, Community Development Director

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Blee asked for a motion to adopt the January 2, 2025 meeting agenda.
M/Rathe, S/Muhic.
Motion carried 5-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of December 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Blee asked for a motion to approve the December 5, 2024 meeting minutes.
M/Rathe, S/Alvarez.
Motion carried 5-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
Chair Blee called for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair.
Rathe nominated Blee for Chair.



Muhic nominated Wise for Vice-Chair.

There were no other nominations.

On motion by Rathe, seconded by Muhic, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to elect Patrick Blee as the 2025 Chair and Andrew Wise as the 2025 Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission.

B. Discuss and Review 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Amendments

Grams presented the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Amendments item to the Planning Commission. Each year the CIP is updated, reviewed, and approved by City Council. The CIP is a means to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. City Code §32.27 indicates that the Planning Commission shall review all proposed capital improvements within the City and make findings as to the compliance of the proposed capital improvements with the Comprehensive Plan. Grams stated the Commission should consider if any major edits need to be made to the CIP and direct staff accordingly.

Muhic expressed his concern that the City Council may adopt by a two-thirds vote a Resolution dispensing of the requirement that the Planning Commission shall review all proposed capital improvements if in its judgement it finds that the proposed capital improvement has no relationship to the Comprehensive Plan.

Nordby stated that some of the 2025 CIP items have been moved further down the road during the previous year's budgeting process. Nordby and Muhic recommended the Planning Commission review the 2026 CIP items in late spring of 2025 and offer their recommendations.

VIII. REPORTS

Nordby stated he is pleased to continue serving as the City Council Liaison for the Planning Commission in 2025.

Rathe wished everyone a happy new year.

Muhic asked if there has been any interest from developers in the City-owned lot downtown next to Sidewinders. Grams responded that there are no updates on the lot.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Blee asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM.

M/Rathe, S/Muhic.

Motion carried 5-0.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 6:30 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

Chris Cherne
Planning Commission Secretary
651-747-2440
chris.cherne@northstpaul.org



To	Date
Planning Commissioners	April 3, 2025

Agenda Placement #
Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject
Review of Parks and Open Space Master Plan

Background/Facts
The attached Parks and Open Space Master Plan, contributed by the North St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council, and Community Development Staff, lays out an organizational framework for improving parks and recreation facilities to better serve the public. If referred to regularly by staff and officials, it can help the City responsibly manage its park system. This plan is intended to:

- Evaluate community input and analyze demographic changes, the existing park system, and future trends in recreation.
- Offer guiding principles to prioritize improvements to ensure our park system is relevant and functional into the future.
- Provide guidance and rationale for capital improvement planning for our parks.
- Be a 10-year road map for the maintenance and improvement of our parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the City's growing and changing population.

Recommended Action
Staff recommend the Planning Commission recommend approval to City Council of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

Attachments
1. Park and Open Space Master Plan Jan 2025

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Frandle, City Manager

City of North St. Paul

Parks and Open Space Master Plan

January 29, 2025



**NORTH
ST. PAUL**
extraordinary.



Acknowledgements

City Council

John Monge, Mayor
Tim Cole, Council Member
Jason Nordby, Council Member
Cassidy Schweer, Council Member
Lisa Wong, Council Member

Parks and Recreation Commission

Lloyd Grachek, Chair
Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice Chair
Ben Hansen, Commissioner
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Sue Springborn, Commissioner
Sarah Zahradka, Commissioner
David Andren, Commissioner
Cassidy Schweer, Council Representative

Community Development Staff

Riley Grams, Community Development Director
Ron Ritchie, Public Works Director
Sara Lang, Administrative Assistant

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01

INTRODUCTION

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- » Introduction
- » Plan Purpose
- » Related Planning Efforts
- » Role of Parks and Recreation Commission

INTRODUCTION

North St. Paul is located on the east side of Ramsey County in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Our fully built-out community occupies just 3.1 square miles, but enjoys 146 acres of parks and open space, including three nature preserves and two recreational lakes. Parks contribute to our community's quality of life by providing residents and visitors numerous recreational opportunities as well as land and water to enjoy.

North St. Paul is an evolving city, with an increasingly dense and diverse population from different backgrounds and countries. As density increases, so does the demand on the park system. This 2023 plan looks to determine if the system adequately provides for North St. Paul's diverse and growing population and to identify how to equitably and thoughtfully apply its resources to provide quality park access for all residents wishing to utilize the park system.

PLAN PURPOSE

A park and open space master plan lays out an organizational framework for improving parks and recreation facilities to better serve the public. If referred to regularly by staff and officials, it can help the City responsibly manage its park system. Specifically, this plan is intended to:

- Evaluate community input and analyze demographic changes, the existing park system, and future trends in recreation.
- Offer guiding principles to prioritize improvements to ensure our park system is relevant and functional into the future.
- Provide guidance and rationale for capital improvement planning for our parks.
- Be a 10-year road map for the maintenance and improvement of our parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the City's growing and changing population.

Additionally, completion of this report improves the City's ability to qualify for key funding opportunities, such as DNR grant funding available from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Our Promise

As citizens and customers, our residents deserve the best possible service, programs, and facilities.

We, as members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, promise to do everything within our duties to serve you cheerfully and respectfully by providing clean and safe facilities, enjoyable programs, and timely and effective services, which includes listening and responding to your suggestions and concerns.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

This document incorporates and refines the park and recreation-related findings and recommendations presented in the 2022 Park Improvement Plan, 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and other city-approved planning documents. Key plans, reports, and surveys that helped inform and guide the development of this plan include:

- » 2040 North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan
- » 2022 Park Improvement Plan
- » 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan
- » 2022 Housing Needs Assessment
- » 2018 ADA Transition Plan
- » 2011 Living Streets Plan
- » Ramsey County Parks & Recreation System Plan, 2018
- » Minnesota Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2020-2024



Why Plan?

One of the key reasons for a park and open space plan is to take a critical look at facilities and services and ask hard questions about performance.

- *Are they still relevant?*
- *Are they meeting the needs and priorities of the community?*
- *Is the city investing an appropriate level of resources into them?*
- *Are ADA requirements being met with new developments of parks?*

Addressing these questions can ensure the City can responsibly and equitably appropriate resources to ensure our parks continue to improve the quality of life in North St. Paul.



VALUE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Residents and visitors value our parks and trails for many reasons: to walk a dog, ride a bicycle, play sports, or engage in a wide variety of other recreational activities. Parks provide health benefits, such as physical activity, contact with nature, and social interaction. Open space provides wildlife habitat and absorbs storm water runoff. A well-designed and maintained park system also contributes to quality of life, increases property values, and enhances the City's ability to attract new residents and promote economic development.

ROLE OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The North St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) was established in 1978. The PRC is a seven-member commission that serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council. The duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission are to:

- » Prepare operating policies and procedures for the use of parks.
- » Give due regard to the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to parks, open space and trails when making recommendations to the City Council.
- » Make recommendations to the City Council related to park land dedications, recreational programming, and park and trail improvements.

This Commission welcomes comments, recommendations, and input from the community to help maintain and improve our park facilities.

02

OUR COMMUNITY

SECTION CONTENTS

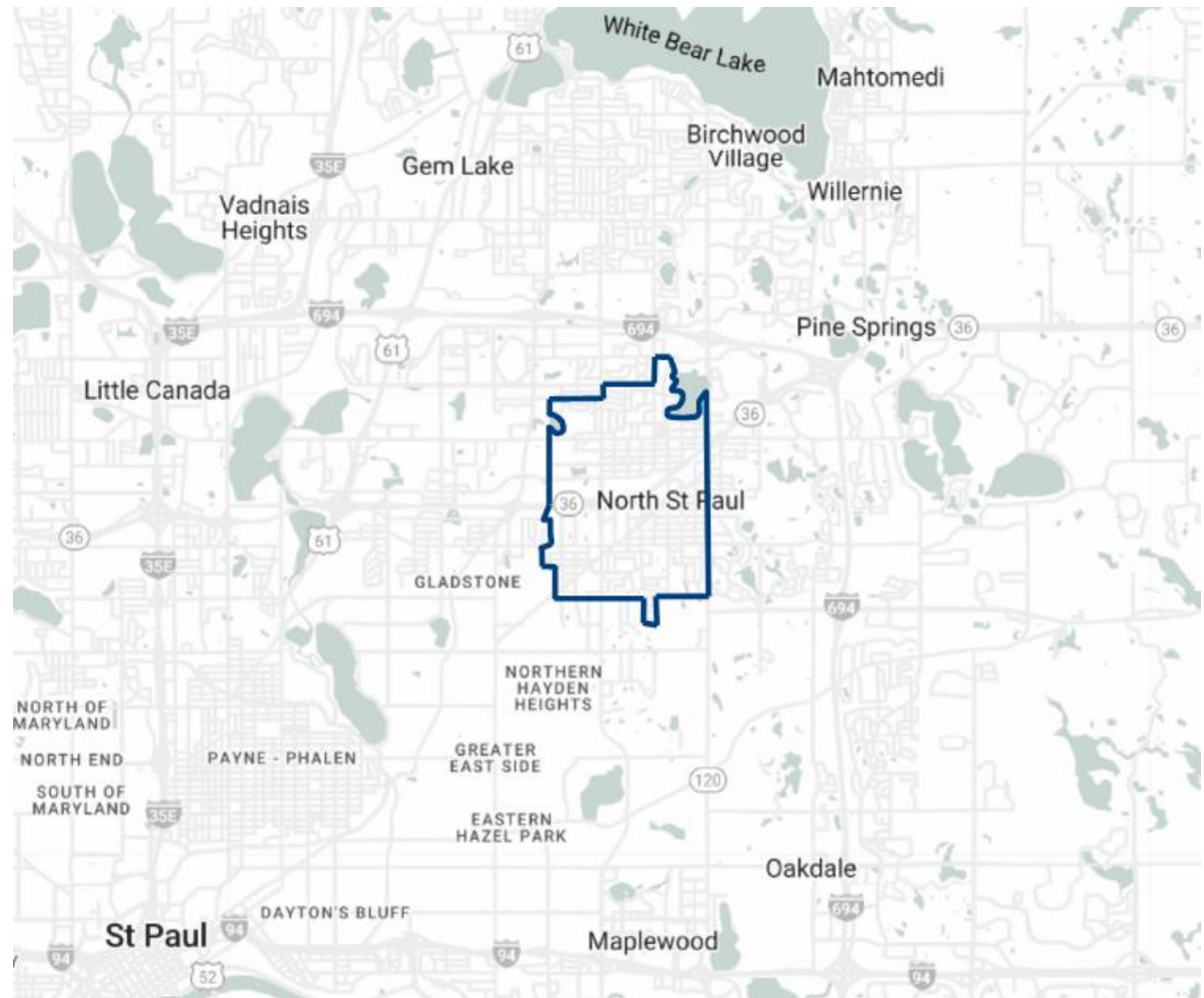
- » Our City
- » Demographics
- » Housing Development Trends

OUR CITY

North St. Paul (NSP) is a city of 3.1 square miles located on the near east side in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

NSP is different from its suburban neighbors that are composed mostly of new, auto-dependent developments. NSP is a distinct city with a history as a small village that is now fully built out. It is known for its industrial and blue-collar roots, but also its abundance of parks, schools, and churches for a city of its size, as well its distinct downtown.

NSP is a town with a great quality of life that embraces its small-town character while recognizing its place in the larger region. As a community, NSP seeks to become more "urban." By investing in progressive infrastructure improvements and more compact development, it will strive to preserve its small-town character while ensuring that future projects adhere to a quality design standard and aesthetic character.



Regional Proximity

Situated on the near east side in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, North St. Paul is connected to the thriving metropolitan region, and appreciates how this enhances residents' access to a diversity of jobs, cultural and recreational opportunities, quality health care, and higher education opportunities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Any discussion about park planning must be based on an understanding of the community that the system serves. The following pages examine North St. Paul's (NSP) demographic data.

Population

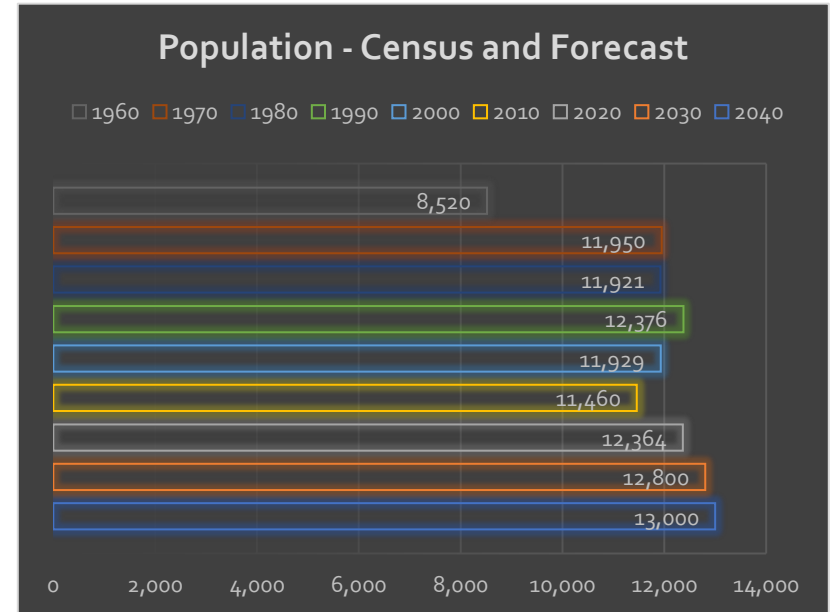
As of the 2020 Census, the NSP's population was 12,800. The City's population has remained relatively steady since 1970, and, according to the Metropolitan Council, it is expected to remain steady with only a slight increase by the year 2040. The anticipated trend may relate to the built-out nature of the City; however, numerous larger-scale multifamily redevelopments have been built in the City's core and will likely continue which may increase NSP's population beyond that which is forecast.

Households

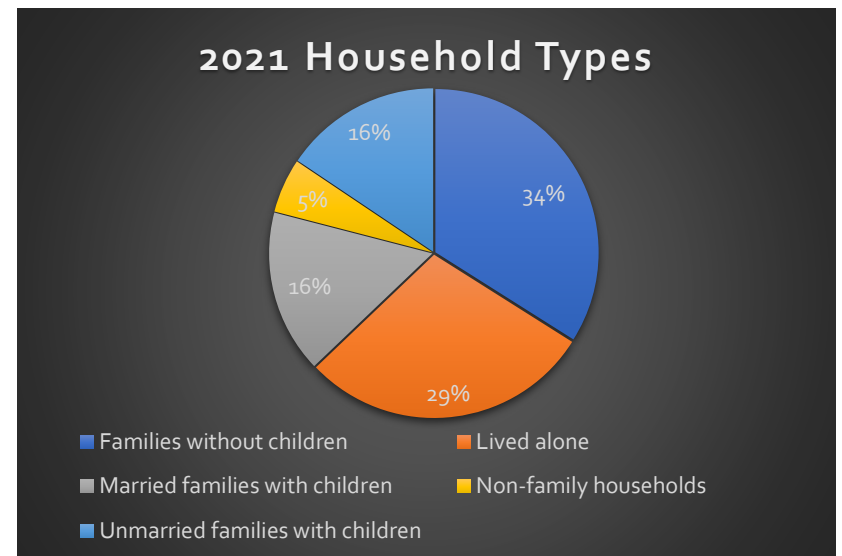
There are 4,593 households in NSP with an average household size of 2.68. Of the total households, 32% are families (married or unmarried) with children; 34% are families without children; 29% live alone; and 5% are nonfamily households (living arrangements with unrelated people). This means that nearly one third of the City's households have children under 18.

Educational Attainment

In 2021, 90% of NSP residents aged 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher; 27% have a bachelor's degree or higher; and over 5% a graduate or professional degree. Comparatively, 91% of Ramsey County residents have earned a high school diploma or higher and 44% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Educational attainment is often linked to income, which may translate to slightly lower incomes in NSP.



Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council projections



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

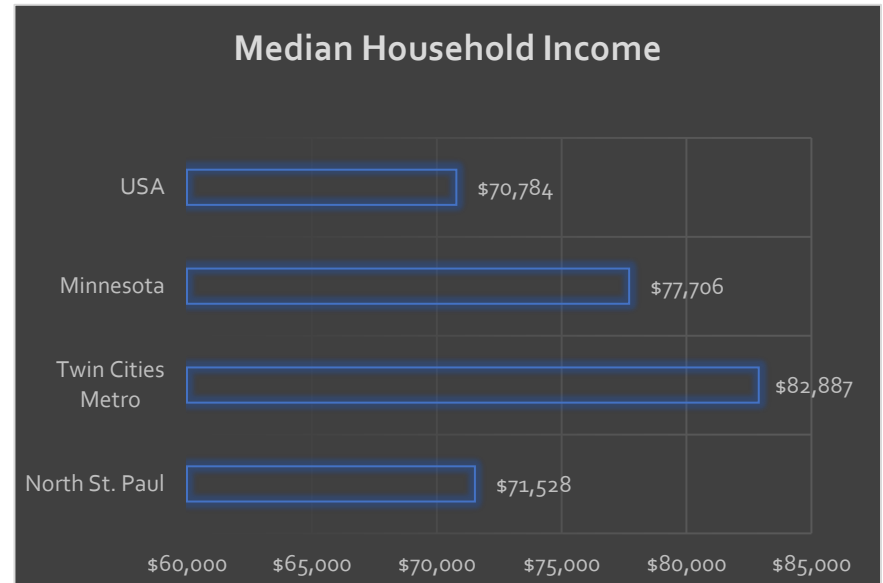
Income and Workforce Statistics

NSP's median household income is currently \$71,528. In comparison, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area median household income is \$80,485 and the average median household income of Ramsey County is \$70,518.

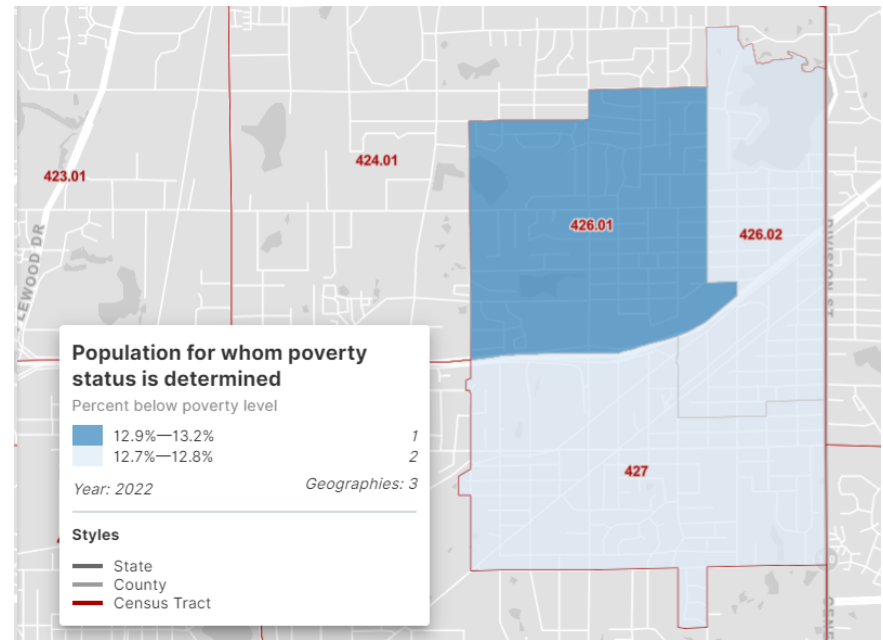
According to the 2021 American Community Survey, white-collar workers make up 80% of the working population in NSP, while blue-collar employees account for 20%. There are also 465 entrepreneurs in NSP (8% of the workforce); 4,225 workers employed in private companies (69%); and 787 people working in governmental institutions (13%).

Poverty Statistics

The official poverty rate in the NSP is 13% according to the 2022 American Community Survey, which is quite higher than the state at 9%, but lower than the national poverty rate of 15%. The figure on the lower right indicates poverty rates by Census Tract in NSP. As indicated, a greater share of the City's population is below the poverty level on the City's northwest side. Consideration of how well our City's parks and recreation system serves residents with limited incomes will be an important consideration when developing the system implementation plan.



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2022

Age Characteristics

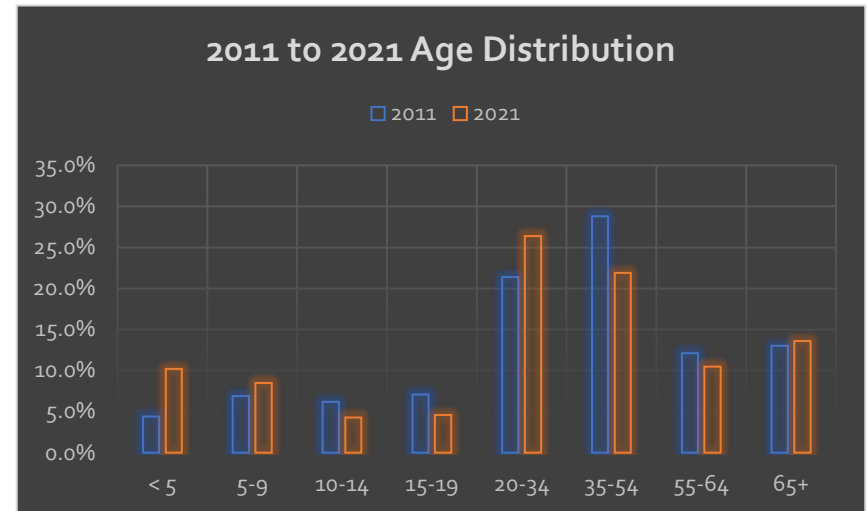
While there is a significant share of older residents in the City, NSP's population is becoming younger overall. Between 2011 and 2021, the share of those aged 19 and below increased by 3%, whereas the 55+ population decreased by 1% during the same period. Presently the largest demographic is those aged 25-34, who are in their child rearing years, which suggests another period for growth in the younger demographic for the next 10+ years to come.

Age is a factor that comes into play when planning for recreational spaces. Senior users may desire facilities that facilitate social interaction or provide physical support, such as benches or wheelchair accessibility. Similarly, small children have much different needs than even elementary school aged children or those in middle or high school.

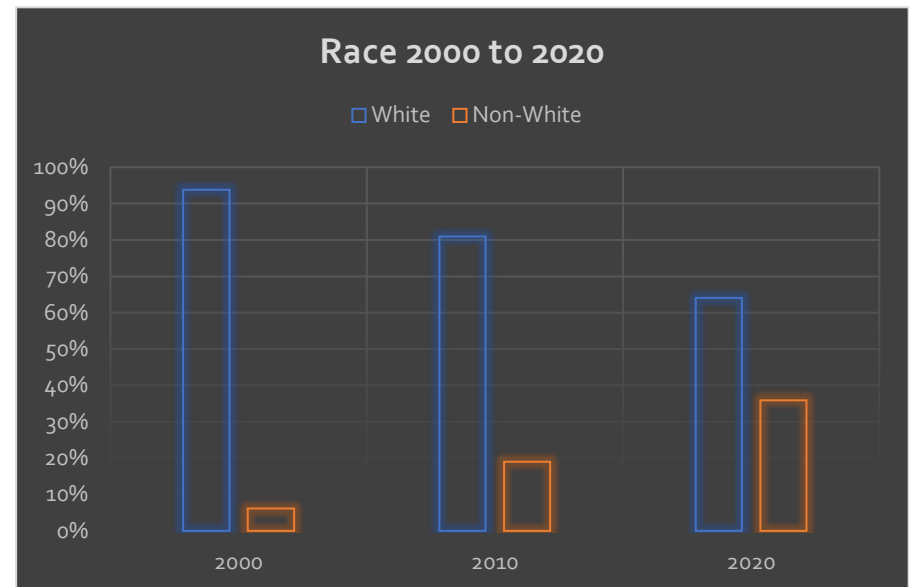
Race Characteristics

NSP's population is also becoming increasingly more diverse. In 2010, white residents accounted for 81% of the population. In 2020, the white residents accounted for 64%, Asians 15%, and African American's 10% of NSP residents. School District 622, which serves 10,770 students in grades K-12 in the cities of North St. Paul, Maplewood, and Oakdale, is also very diverse. Diverse student populations make up about 60% of the student body. At least 57 different languages are spoken by ISD-622 students and their families. English, Hmong, Spanish, and Somali are some of the most frequently spoken languages.¹ These demographic changes may require a shift in how parks are planned and programmed.

¹Minnesota Department of Education, ISD-622 District Demographics.



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

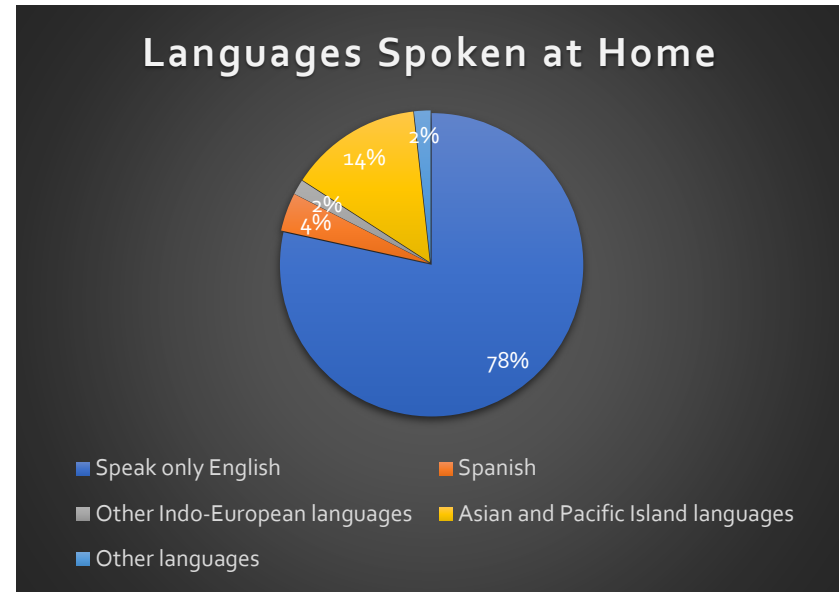


Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

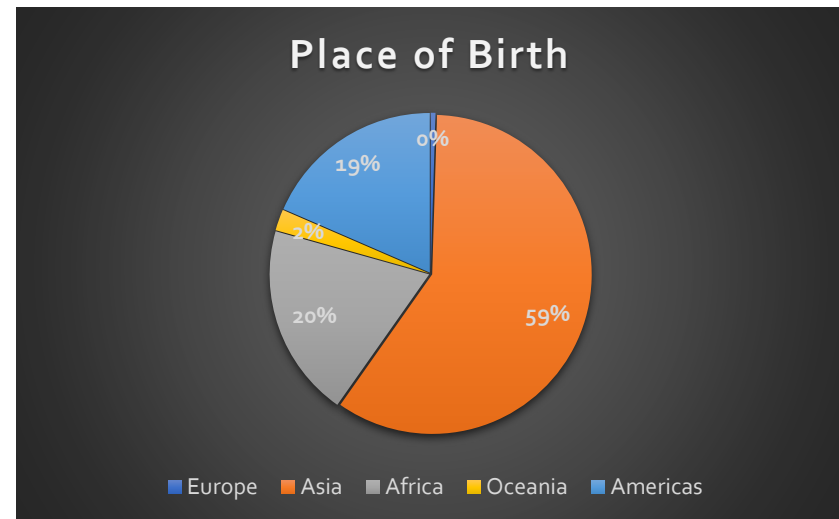
Language and Nationality

While the majority (78%) of NSP residents speak English as their first language, 22% of households speak a language other than English at home. Nearly 12% of North St. Paul's overall population is foreign born. Of these, 59% were born in Asia, 20% from Africa, 19% from South and Latin America, 2% from Oceania, and less than 1% from Eastern Europe. Immigrants are bringing a variety of new traditions from across the world into our City and neighborhoods.

Europe	Romania	7
Asia	China	64
	Japan	9
	Korea	8
	Burma	40
	Laos	351
	Philippines	11
	Thailand	180
	Vietnam	193
	Africa	Ethiopia
	Kenya	21
	Cameroon	37
	Other East Africa	10
	Morocco	1
	Sudan	13
	Liberia	36
	Nigeria	59
Oceania	Australian and New Zealand Subregion	31
Americas	Belize	145
	Guatemala	20
	Mexico	102



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

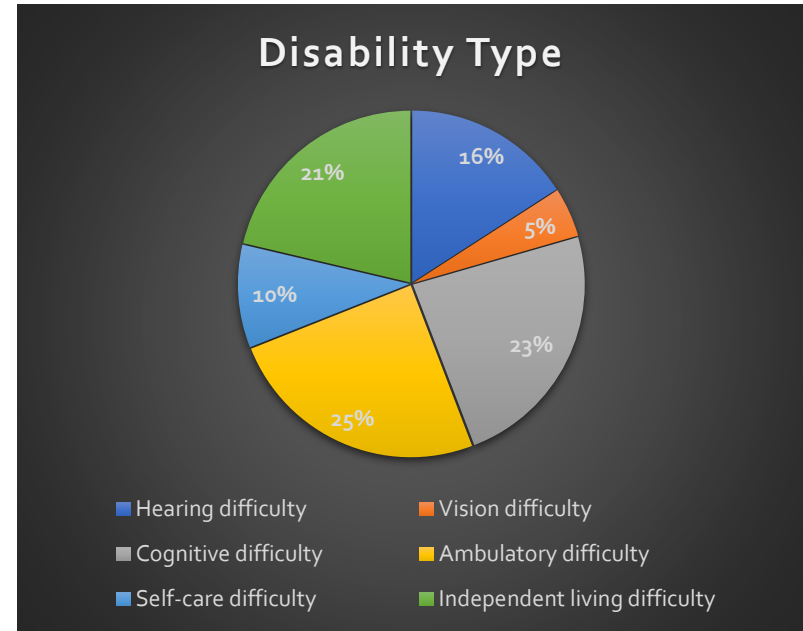


Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021

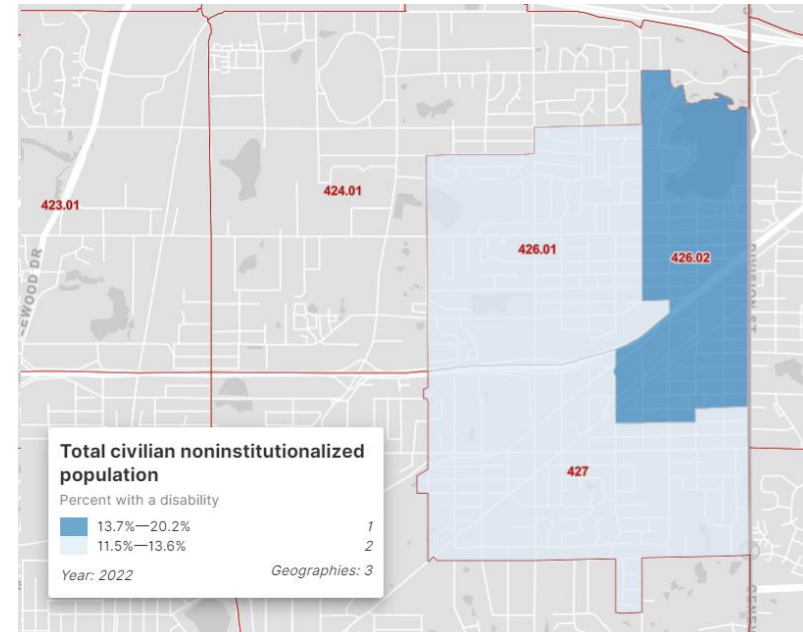
Disability Characteristics

Approximately 13% of NSP’s population reported a disability in the American Community Survey. Comparatively, 12.9% of Ramsey County residents reported a disability. According to the Census Bureau, disabilities range from ambulatory (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), hearing, and vision to independent living and cognitive difficulties. The chart to the right indicates the share by type of disability that NSP residents reported. The figure on the lower right indicates the percent of population with a disability by Census Tract in NSP. As indicated, a greater share of the City’s population with disabilities is on the City’s northeast side.

In planning for new park improvements, the needs of all residents should be considered and planned for. Universal design is intended to make public spaces truly public by providing equal opportunity not only for persons with disabilities, but a variety of situations, such as a parent pushing a stroller, a person on crutches, a person with arthritic knees.



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2021



Data Source: American Community Survey, 2022



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

In a city of only 3.1 square miles, there is a premium on maintaining parks and open space areas. While our City isn't growing physically, the population is expanding, which has a profound impact on our parks and ability to provide quality recreational amenities.

Recent Development

There has been a significant amount of investment and redevelopment in North St. Paul over the past ten years, particularly in the area closest to the downtown. The projects listed below have contributed an additional 563 new dwelling units since 2015. Each of these new dwelling units places an increased demand on the park and recreational system.

- » 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.
- » Suite Living senior facility opened in 2020 with 18-units of senior assisted living and 14-units of memory care.
- » 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.
- » The 128-unit Anchor View Apartments, 20% of its units contribute to the city's affordable housing stock, was constructed in the site formerly known as Anchor Block in 2021.
- » The three-story Sentinel Building was constructed on the former City Hall site and adjoining parcels in 2022. This structure is an 89-unit, market-rate apartment building on a prominent corner in the downtown.
- » Construction of the last of the 18 new townhomes were completed on 7th Street and Kari Lane as of 2024.
- » Most recently, construction has begun on the redevelopment of the former Lillie Newspaper site and adjoining parcels with an 82-unit, market rate apartment building.

Housing Forecast

In 2022, the City engaged Maxfield Research and Consulting, LLC to prepare a housing study that calculated the anticipated housing demand by product that may occur between 2022 and 2030. Several construction projects have been initiated since the completion of that study. The remaining demand is shown based on permits pulled or development approvals.

	2022-2030	2022-2023	
	DEMAND	Planned/Built	DEMAND
PRODUCT	No. Units	No. Units	No. Units
Market rate rental	455	82	373
Affordable rental (60-80% AMI)	164	0	164
Subsidized rental	36	0	36
For sale single family	57	17	40
For sale multifamily	243	0	243
Senior			
Active adult ownership	62	0	62
Active adult rental	105	0	105
Active adult affordable	78	0	78
Independent living	64	0	64
Assisted living	36	0	36
Memory care	24	0	24



Sentinel Apartments



Suite Living Senior Care

Key Findings

- North St. Paul offers 12 parks/open space areas in a city of just 3.1 square miles.
- The City's population is stable but growing slowly. It is also becoming increasingly more diverse. Understanding what our residents value and consider to be quality of life amenities should be a key factor in park planning.
- A third of the City's households have children, but there is also a growing senior population as those aged 35-54 transition to the next demographic category. Parks need to be accessible to all residents and contain amenities of interest to various age groups.
- The City's median income is comparatively lower than the Twin Cities metropolitan area as well as the state of MN. This plan must consider how to provide a park system to serve all residents, particularly those that most need access to outdoor recreation.
- Almost 12 percent of the City's population is foreign born, bringing in cultures and traditions from 21 countries and five continents. Again, consider how our changing demographics will influence park planning.
- Approximately 13% of North St. Paul's population reported a disability, such as ambulatory (difficulty walking or climbing stairs), hearing, and vision to independent living and cognitive difficulties. The City should work toward including universal-design in all parks—meaning facilities that are intended to make public spaces truly public.

03

OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

SECTION CONTENTS

- » Park Inventory
- » Community Parks
- » Neighborhood Parks
- » Undeveloped Parkland
- » Nature Preserves
- » Trails and Other Park Systems

PARK INVENTORY

The following chart presents an inventory of the total acreage and existing amenities and facilities at each of NSP park and open space areas.

	ACRES	UNDEVELOPED	BALLFIELDS	BASKETBALL	BEACH	BIKE FIX-IT STATION	BOCCEBALL	CANOE STORAGE	EXERCISE EQUIPMENT	FISHING PIER	GRILL	HOCKEY RINK	ICE RINK	NATURAL AREAS	PICKLEBALL/TENNIS	PICNIC TABLES	PLAYGROUND	PUBLIC RESTROOM	SAND VOLLEYBALL	SHELTER (ENCLOSED)	SHELTER (OPEN AIR)	MEMORIAL	WALKING TRAILS	
CENTRAL PARK	0.2	x																						
COUNTRY CLUB PARK	0.2	x																						
COLBY HILLS	0.5									x						x	x					x		
DOWNTOWN LOT	0.3	x																						
DOROTHY PARK	0.9						x									x	x							
HAUSE PARK	2.1									x					x	x	x			x	x			
NORTHWOOD PARK	5.6		x	x						x	x	x			x	x	x			x	x			
POLAR PARK	2.3									x							x							
TOWER PARK	2.2			x						x						x	x		x		x		x	
CASEY LAKE PARK	42.1		x							x	x	x				x	x		x	x				x
MCKNIGHT FIELDS	14.9		x												x							x		
SILVER LAKE	5.3				x					x	x				x	x	x		x		x			
ROTARY PARK	2.8					x										x		x			x			x
SOUTHWOOD	28.0													x		x								x
ENVIRO. LEARNING	13.8	x																						
URBAN ECO CENTER	24.3													x										x
VETERAN'S MEMORIAL	0.6																					x		
TOTAL ACRES	146																							

COMMUNITY PARKS

Casey Lake Park, 2089 17th Avenue E.

Casey Lake Park is a 42-acre community park established in 1960. This park boasts a highly scenic natural setting along Casey Lake and was ranked as the favorite of all NSP parks in 2023 online survey.

Casey Lake is the City's largest park with a variety of active and passive amenities as well as an abundance of open space and natural areas. Amenities include a fishing pier, grills, picnic tables, four ballfields, hockey rink, sand volleyball, open air shelters, and a ½ mile walking trail around the lake. The park also features an indoor pavilion, the Fire Department's Booya building, and "Janie's Playground," a whimsical playground named in honor of 18-month-old Janie Zahradka who loved going to the park with her parents.

The NSP Fire Department and NSP Athletic Association built the Booya and storage building in 1981. This building hosts a variety of events including the annual Firefighter's Booya. With volunteer help and funding from the two groups, the building was completed and given to the City with a 99-year lease issued to each group for their respective parts of the building.

Casey Lake Park has hosted to numerous City events over the years including Music in the Park, Autumn Arts Festival, Star Watch, and Easter egg hunts.

"I think Casey Lake Park is a prime example of a wonderful park. It has so much to offer and is cared for so well."

~North St. Paul resident



Casey Lake Pavilion



Janie's Playground

Table 1: Casey Lake Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Aeration system	The aeration system contributes to improving Silver Lake water quality by sustaining desirable aquatic species and preventing hard-freeze fish-kill. The aeration system was installed in 2013.	Maintenance every 5 years. Replacement of submersible pumps and baffles every 20 years.
Ballfields	Field 1, Lower Casey Field, is a youth baseball field with fencing, backstop, bleachers, dugout, and night lighting. Field 2, Upper Casey Field, is a youth baseball field fencing, backstop, and bleachers. Field 3, Middle Casey Field, is a youth baseball field with 65' bases and 50' pitching rubber. Field 4 is a softball field with throw down bases and either 38' or 50' pitching rubber.	Maintenance every 10-15 years.
Booya Building	The Booya building was renovated in 2016. The NSPAA still uses the building for equipment storage.	50+ years.
Fishing Pier	The fishing pier was installed in 2015.	Plan for replacement by 2040.
Hockey Rink	The hockey rink has poor orientation (east-west versus north-south) and is in poor condition.	Replacement needed in next few years.
Park Sign	A new freestanding park sign was installed in 2023, which has a 10-year warranty. The monument sign with electronic message center (EMC) installed at the 17th Avenue entrance in 2018.	Replace EMC in 3-5 years, 15-20 years for freestanding sign, and 30+ years for monument sign base.
Pavilion and Shelter	The indoor pavilion was rebuilt in 2016. This ADA-accessible building features a catering kitchen, indoor seating for 120, outdoor picnic tables, restrooms, and Wi-Fi. Floors were refinished in 2023. The chairs and tables need to be replaced.	50+ years.
Picnic Area(s)	Numerous picnic tables and grills are located within the park. The picnic tables under the shelter are in good condition. Outlying picnic tables are in fair to poor condition.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Picnic Shelter	An open-air shelter is located on the northwest side of Casey Lake by Ballfield 4. This shelter is past its useful life and needs replacement. It is not available for rent.	Plan to replace soon (within 1-year) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Playgrounds	Janie's Playground is located on the south side of the park next to the pavilion. This playground was constructed in 2014. The Upper Playground is located on the northeast side of Casey Lake Park and can be accessed via Shawnee Drive as well as the walking trail. This playground was built in 2016.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located at the south side of the park adjacent to Janie's Playground.	N/A
Walking Trail	A ½-mile asphalt walking trail meanders through the park was constructed in 1989. The Public Works Department resurfaced half of the trail in 2023; the remaining half is planned to be resurfaced in 2027.	Once reconstruction is completed, the trail will last 7-15 years.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends the redevelopment or replacement of some of the Casey Lake Park amenities. The 2023 park and recreation survey also offered some insight into future improvements at Casey.

- » The former “Army Playground” on the southeast side of the park was installed in the 1970s and removed in 2022 due to wear and safety concerns. There is some desire by the community to have it replaced.
- » The open-air picnic shelter on the northwest side of the park by Field 4 is in poor condition and beyond its useful life. This structure should either be removed or replaced. Consideration should be made for the necessity of this shelter given the Booya shelter as well as the Pavilion in Casey Lake Park.
- » The PIP made several suggestions for new improvements including a warming house with restrooms, cross-country ski trails, new exercise equipment along the paths, and a new nature-based play feature.
- » The hockey rink has poor orientation (east-west versus north-south) which can be an issue when sunlight is shining into the faces of one team. The rink is also a distance from the parking lot which was noted as a concern in the 2022 PIP. Prioritization of improvements to the hockey rink should be considered before significant changes are made to this structure.
- » Fields 3 and 4 are noted to have poor orientation in the PIP. Prioritization of improvements to the ballfields should be considered before changes are made to ensure the need and desire of ballfields at this park and in the community overall.

Before any major new improvements are considered at Casey Lake, a master plan should be developed as described under Evolution of a Park Construction Project on pages 60-61. Because of its status as a community park, as well as the number of amenities at Casey Lake, the master planning process should include a robust community engagement component.



Casey Lake and fishing pier

Silver Lake Park, 2601 19th Avenue E.

Silver Lake Park is the second favorite and second most frequented park in North St. Paul. This park is located on the south end of Silver Lake on land originally donated by Henry Castle in 1889. The historic land donation stipulates that Silver Lake Park only be used for public park facilities, which assures that this park will continue to be an amenity for residents into the future.

Silver Lake Park is a linear park with a variety of recreation amenities including picnic spaces and a very popular swimming beach. This 5.3-acre park also features two playground areas, tennis/pickleball courts, a sand volleyball court, a restroom and shower facility, walking path, and an open-air shelter.

Silver Lake Park has an accessible fishing pier that is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The City has worked with the MNDNR to help provide native landscapes to improve water quality and enhance the overall appearance of the park for visitors.

In the past, Silver Lake Park hosted Silver Lake Splash, an annual beach party and fundraiser.

Silver Lake beach (above); Silver Lake picnic shelter (below)



Silver Lake Shelter

Table 2: Silver Lake Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Aeration system	The aeration system contributes to improving Silver Lake water quality by sustaining desirable aquatic species and preventing hard-freeze fish-kill.	Maintenance every 5 years; replacement of submersible pumps and baffles every 20 years.
Beach	Silver Lake features North St. Paul's only and very popular swimming beach.	N/A
Fishing Pier	The first fishing pier was built in 1987 on the south side of the lake. It was reconstructed at its current location in 2014.	Plan for replacement by 2040.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Grills and picnic tables are located throughout the park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Pickleball/ Tennis Courts	Tennis courts were installed in the 1970s. A pickleball overlay was painted onto the courts in 2020.	Concrete pavement is estimated to last for 20-30 years with proper maintenance. Bituminous is expected to have new color coating every 3-5 years.
Playground	The playground equipment on the east side of the park was installed in 2006. The west side playground equipment was installed in 2015. Both playgrounds are in good condition.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Public Restroom	The restroom building was constructed in approximately 1980. The building was repainted, and a mural was painted on three sides in 2023 (muralist Taylor Berman). There are also port-a-potties located within the park.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located on the east side of the park. This court has concrete curbing installed around the perimeter.	N/A
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2015.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Walking Trail	The 0.37-mile walking trail was first built in 1987. New lighting along the trail was installed in 2023.	Resurface every 7-15 years.



Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends ongoing maintenance and accessibility-related improvements. In addition, the 2023 park and recreation survey offered some insight into potential modifications to Silver Lake Park.

- » The PIP suggests that more unique or challenging playground equipment be considered to meet the needs of varying demographics and ages when the eastern playground is replaced.
- » Residents are appreciative of park improvements but noted in the 2023 survey that shade trees near metal playground equipment would be desired to protect children from burns.
- » No lifeguards are on duty at the beach; however, this was a service provided by the city until 2019. Residents have indicated a desire for this service to return.
- » Trail connectivity around Silver Lake is desired by area residents. This idea has been conceptually investigated to connect existing multiuse trails around the east and north sides of Silver Lake. Multiple attempts have been made to interest the state legislature in assisting with funding for this project.
- » The concrete border around the volleyball court is a potential hazard.

McKnight Fields Complex, 2310 10th Avenue E.

McKnight Fields is a large community park at the NE intersection of McKnight Road and Highway 36. This park is adjacent to North High School and is primarily focused on athletics. Amenities include a baseball field, four softball fields, T-ball field, announcing building, central concessions area, restrooms, tennis courts (no longer in use), and an indoor batting cage. The facility is currently used for North St. Paul High School softball and baseball and has been used for football, soccer, and tennis programs.

A portion of this park is located on land that was originally part of North St. Paul Land Company holdings. The area was a low wetland that was used as a dump site for many years. In 1970, the City purchased a 16-acre tract through condemnation of private property and the purchase of state highway land. The total cost of the land purchase was \$120,551, which was partially funded by a HUD grant that the City received in 1972, for \$23,533. Originally, the City and School District were to enter the venture jointly, but the City was concerned about the delays in negotiations and decided to pursue the grant and purchase without a commitment from the School District.

This complex is a direct result of the community, school, and City working together to provide quality recreational facilities for the entire community. From 1972 to 1974, the City made minor improvements such as adding hockey rinks and a warming house. In 1974, the City and School District signed an agreement to develop the east part of McKnight Field. This development included four lighted softball fields, a new baseball field in conjunction with American Legion Post 39, tennis courts, and playground equipment. In 1980, the American Legion funded the placement of lights on the baseball field. In 1993, upgrading of the park took place through funds donated by local community groups and organizations.



Table 3: McKnight Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Baseball field (McKnight Field)	Kuenkel field is in fairly good condition. Some updates have been funded by the school district; they covered the cost to rebuild the pitching mound which cost the district \$14,000. The project included regrading, re-sodding, and spreading ag lime. The school district also built the press-box at Kuenkel field in 2003.	Add ground limestone every other year; replace facility components as needed.
Concessions Building	The concessions building includes the announcing booth, concessions stand, and restrooms. The bathrooms were remodeled in 2016. The concession stand has been leased to nonprofit groups over the years.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Exterior fencing	New fencing is needed around the entire McKnight athletic complex site.	Replace as needed; 10+ years.
Indoor batting cage	In 1992, the City entered into a lease agreement with Mark Motz and Dennis Bartholomew (Triple Crown Batting Cages, LLC) wherein the lessee agreed to construct the batting cage facility in exchange for no rent. The lease has been extended several times, most recently in the fall of 2023 with a termination date of 2030.	Expected life of 50+ years.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Path	An asphalt path connects the softball fields to the sidewalk along 10 th Avenue E. Portions of the path are upheaved and crumbling and replacement is recommended.	Plan to replace soon (within 1- years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Shelter	An open-air shelter is on the site—the date of construction is unknown but estimated to have been built in the 1970s.	Plan to replace soon (within 1- years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Softball fields	There are four softball fields at McKnight Fields Complex. Fields #2 and #3 require refurbishment and maintenance; the ag-lime warning track and outfield fence need to be replaced and the fields need to be regraded. Fields #1 and #4 were refurbished with new backstops and dugouts.	Maintenance every 10-15 years.
T-ball field	The t-ball field (field #5) is in poor condition. It requires regrading, a new backstop, and an outfield fence. Field 5 is rarely used.	If this is to remain, it should be maintenance every 10-15 years.
Tennis Courts	The two tennis courts are in complete disrepair and are no longer open to the public for recreational use.	Replacement needed.

Issues and Opportunities

Given the level of reconstruction needs at McKnight, the 2022 Park Improvement Plan (PIP) recommends the preparation of a master plan to guide development of new improvements (refer to Evolution of a Park Construction Project on pages 60-61). Like Casey Lake, because of its status as a community park, the master planning process for McKnight should include a robust community engagement component. The 2024-2033 capital improvement plan set aside funding for the master plan. The City intends to hire a consultant in 2024 to complete a concept plan for this work.

The 2023 park and recreation survey offered some insight into future improvements at McKnight.

- » Consider construction of a playground; this can be beneficial for children in attendance but not playing at ballgames.
- » Consider new parking layouts to improve the capacity and circulation.
- » Evaluate the need for tennis courts; consider removal or replacement with pickleball or other park amenities.
- » Consider the potential for community gardens at McKnight.



East Tennis Court at McKnight



McKnight Field

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Colby Hills Park, Corner of 7th Street N. and Belmont Lane E.

This 1/2-acre park is located on the north side of Belmont Lane. Colby Hills was part of the residential area plotted in 1888 in what was called the 5th addition to North St. Paul. The name refers to a depot owned by the Wisconsin Central Railroad that was located near what is now South Avenue and 7th Street. The land was used as an unofficial park (a skating rink was flooded by the residents). This site was a state-owned, tax delinquent property that sat vacant since the 1920s. In 1939, the Colby Hills Community Club was started by residents to improve recreational and social facilities in the area. This group successfully petitioned the City Council to purchase the land from the state to be used as a park.

Issues and Opportunities

There are no imminent improvements required at Colby Hills Park other than the replacement or removal of the chain-link fence.



Colby Hills Shelter

Table 4: Colby Hills Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Park Sign	New park sign was installed in 2023.	Replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Picnic tables, grills, benches, and a water fountain are located in this park. Benches were installed in 2021.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment was installed in 2019, but the swings have been in place since 2009. A chain-link fence surrounds the playground that needs replacement.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2010. An ADA-accessible concrete sidewalk was added to Colby Park in 2019 to connect the shelter to the street.	Expected life of 20+ years.

Dorothy Park, 2916 Lake Blvd.

Dorothy Park is located just off Lake Boulevard on the northwest side of Silver Lake, a short distance north of Poplar Avenue. The park is part of the designated floodplain for Silver Lake. The City obtained the land in 1911 and in 1989 the City placed playground equipment and picnic tables in the area after completing limited landscaping. Although it is a small park, residents appreciate the opportunity to play and enjoy the Silver Lake shoreline. The on-again, off-again flooding of the area prevents more development, but it does afford visitors the opportunity to see firsthand the impact the lake has on the shoreline and surrounding area. This is a nice park to enjoy Silver Lake in a more natural setting.

Issues and Opportunities

No specific issue or opportunities were identified in the PIP or the 2023 community survey for this park.



Table 5: Dorothy Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Canoe storage	A canoe storage rack is available for rent in Dorothy Park for a nominal annual fee.	Replace as needed.
Park Sign	New park sign installed in 2023.	Replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Picnic Area(s)	Benches and picnic tables are in this park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment and swings were installed in 2017.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.

Hause Park, 2616 4th Avenue

Hause Park is located near downtown, just four blocks from City Hall. The 2-acre park features a small indoor pavilion, open-air shelter, playground, tennis court, and numerous picnic tables and grills.

This park was originally known as 'Park A', was one of three parks platted out by the North St. Paul Land Company as part of the planned community. In 1955, the City Council renamed the park, Hause Park, to honor former Police Chief Walter Hause who spent many hours improving the park located across from his home.

In 2023, the City was awarded grant funding from the MNDNR to replace the dilapidated tennis court with four pickleball courts. Pickleball is a high demand sport and there are no courts on the south side of NSP. This project will also construct an accessible path to connect the playground, pickleball courts, picnic shelter, and pavilion to the street. The ballfield will not be connected by the path and will be removed for compliance with the accessibility requirement of the DNR grant.

Hause Park is host to numerous events throughout the year including Food Truck Night and Fire and Ice. The Fire Department held their annual Booya at Hause Park for many years before moving to the new building they built at Casey Park.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2023 community survey indicated potential interest in volleyball, basketball and/or a water amenity at Hause Park.



Fire and Ice at Hause Park



Hause Park Playground

Table 6: Hause Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Ballfield	A small ballfield is located at the southwest corner of the park. As mentioned above, the ballfield will be removed for compliance with DNR grant.	N/A
Park Sign	New park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Pavilion	The pavilion was constructed in 1979 and remodeled in 2018.	20+ years.
Picnic Area(s)	Numerous benches, grills, and picnic tables are in this park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground equipment was installed in 2017 with a merry-go-round that was installed in 2015.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air park shelter was built in 2012.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Tennis/Pickleball courts	The existing tennis court will be reconstructed in the spring of 2024 with four pickleball courts. This project will be funded by a MNDNR grant.	Concrete pavement is estimated to last for 20-30 years with proper maintenance. Bituminous pavement color coat is expected to have new color coating applied approximately every 3-5 years.

Northwood Park, 1995 1st Street N.

Northwood Park is nestled on the corner of Skillman Avenue and 1st Street. This 5-acre park features a playground area, ballfields, picnic shelter, and skating rink with warming house. The City acquired this property in 1946, but the land went undeveloped until 1958. The 500,000-gallon water tower was built in 1960.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan recommends the redevelopment of most amenities at Northwood Park as well as the addition of proper trail connections. The 2023 community survey identified the following for Northwood Park:

- » The basketball court is in poor condition and there is no dedicated pickleball court.
- » The playground should be expanded and include amenities that are more inclusive.
- » Northwood could potentially hold a community skate park.



Northwood Park Playground



Northwood Park Shelter

Table 7: Northwood Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Ballfield	The ballfield donated by the North St. Paul Athletic Association in 1981. It was most recently renovated in 2018. According to the 2022 PIP, the ballfield has less than ideal orientation for programmed games but is meant for younger aged players.	Add ground limestone every other year; replace facility components as needed.
Basketball Court	The basketball court is in poor condition.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Ice Skating Rink	The A hockey/ice skating rink in fair condition. The 2022 PIP indicated that hockey rink boards should be replaced.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.
Park Sign	A new park sign was installed in 2023.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding sign.
Playground	Modernized playground equipment was initially installed in 1995. New playground equipment was installed in 2016.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located north of the ballfield. It is presently in fair condition.	N/A
Shelter	The picnic shelter was built in 1980 and is nearing the end of its useful life.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Warming House	The recreation building was completed in 1971 and is nearing the end of its useful life.	Plan to replace soon (within 3-5 years) if this amenity is deemed necessary.

Polar Park, Hilltop Court (Shawnee Drive)

Polar Park was purchased in 1956 as tax forfeiture land. This park is surrounded by private property and has public access from narrow easements off 19th Avenue and Shawnee Drive. Amenities at Polar Park include a playground, picnic tables, grills, and mature shade trees. A new ADA-accessible concrete walk from Shawnee along the north entrance point of the park to the playground was recently completed per the park concept plan, right. It was determined the path would not continue to the south access point based on the desires of the neighborhood. Because the park is surrounded by private residential housing, park improvements to date have been governed by the desire of adjacent residents.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan recommends that future improvements follow the 2020 conceptual plan except for the trail extension to the south. The remaining improvements include an internal park trail loop, expanded playground equipment with engineered wood fiber surfacing and new site furnishings to include benches, tables, grills, bike racks, etc. The proposed improvements should continue to be confirmed by the City and residents to meet the actual needs and desires. The 2023 community survey did not identify specific or suggestions specific to Polar Park.



Polar Park Conceptual Plan, 2020

Table 8: Polar Park Amenities

AMENITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Playground	The playground was installed in 1997 and new swings were added in 2020.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.

Tower Park, 2375 13th Avenue

Tower Park is a 2.23-acre park located on a full City block between 2nd Street and East 2nd Street. This park is halfway between North High School and Richardson Elementary School on a water tower site. It has a lot of mature trees and recent updates have added to the overall character and appeal.

Issues and Opportunities

The concrete around the perimeter of the volleyball court is hazardous to players.



Sand Volleyball at Tower Park

Table 9: Tower Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Basketball	A basketball court is located to the northwest of the water tower.	Pressure cleaning every 1-2 years; resurfacing of asphalt or concrete courts every 4-5 years.
Picnic Area(s)	Picnic tables and grills are located on the northeast side of the park.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Playground	The playground structure was installed in 2015, the swings were installed in 2009 and the merry-go-round dates to 1999.	Commercial grade playgrounds can last 15-20 years.
Shelter	The open-air shelter was built in 2012.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Sand Volleyball	A sand volleyball court is located on the southwest side of the park. This court has concrete curbing around the perimeter that was installed in 2020.	N/A

Veteran's Memorial Park, 2480 Margaret Street N

Veteran's Memorial Park is 0.60-acre located next to Highway 36 on Margaret Street N. This park was established in 2015 after years of planning and fundraising by the North St. Paul Veteran's Park, Inc. Funds were contributed by Governor Dayton, who signed a bonding bill that contributed \$100,000 in state funding for the project. Those funds, plus a \$9,900 State Legacy Grant, was added to the more than \$124,525 in private donations for the park (including \$10,000 from the North St. Paul Park Fund).

The park features a walk of more than 1,200 engraved pavers commemorating those who served our country. The marble wall is inscribed with each branch of the Armed Forces and the names of North St. Paul-area citizens who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our continued freedoms. The entrance to the park is marked by statute of an American serviceman of the modern era.



Veteran's Park Memorial

Issues and Opportunities

None identified.

Table 90: Veteran's Memorial Park Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Memorial	The memorial statue, walls, and benches were installed in 2015.	As needed
Memorial pavers	The park features memorial pavers that can be purchased annually and installed in the summer of the same year. Pavers are placed randomly in the three red striped areas or may be requested to be placed in rows with other pavers of family members or comrades.	As needed

UNDEVELOPED PARKLAND

Central Park, 2375 Margaret Street N.

Central Park (formerly known as Seppala Park) is a 0.23-acre minimally developed located on land that was part of the original plat. The City obtained the property in 1966. Because the location is within the downtown business district, the city decided to landscape the area with a circular flower bed and add a resting bench. This site is adjacent to City-owned land to the north and has been considered for inclusion in redevelopment activities that may occur on that land.

Country Club Park, 2300 block of Eldridge Avenue E.

Country Club Park (also known as Eldridge Tot Lot) is a 0.15-acre site located in the 2300 block of Eldridge Avenue E. It is part of three lots of the Northwood Heights Addition (lots 26, 27, and 28, Block F). Records suggest that this property has a clear title and the City may use it for any purpose. A swing set, slide, spring toys, and a picnic table were located on the site for many years, but the park is currently undeveloped. A storm sewer runs along the east side of this property and sanitary sewer are reportedly stubbed out to the property line. An unimproved alley lies to the west where utilities run north south. The measures 6,700 square feet, which meets zoning requirements for a single-family home. The site should be investigated by the City Engineer to determine if it would be suitable for the student-built housing program, a joint initiative by the City of North St. Paul Housing & Redevelopment Authority and NE Metro Intermediate School District 916, Career and Technical Center (CTC).



Central Park



Country Club Park

Downtown Lot, 2475 7th Avenue E.

The undeveloped downtown lot is located at approximately 2475 7th Avenue E. The address is the site of a former service station. The undeveloped greenspace was established when the City purchased 2475 7th Avenue E. in 2008 from Hillcrest Brakes and Alignment. The structure was determined to be blighted and the structure was razed to realign street right-of-way that is now North St. Paul Drive. The site is adjacent to a transit stop and is located within walking distance to downtown as well as many new high density residential developments.

Amenities

None.

Issues and Opportunities

The 2022 Park Improvement Plan indicates that this park should be developed to serve the growing population in surrounding neighborhoods while also serving as a gateway to the downtown business district. Per the 2022 PIP, the design could accommodate a plaza area with unique elements, public art, or recreation while providing gathering space that would fit appropriately within this space.



NATURE PRESERVES

Southwood Nature Preserve

1975 Henry Street (North entrance) / 2651 Holloway Avenue E. (South entrance)

Southwood Nature Preserve is a 28-acre nature park (with a 5-acre pond) on the south side of the City that provides valuable green space and walking trails for residents. Formerly a fill site in the 1960s, the City acquired this land as a future park in 1969 with the assistance of Federal HUD and MN Natural Resources grant funds. Per the 1969 grant agreement, the public body agrees to retain the land for permanent open space purposes.

Today, this park is home to a diverse population of wildlife, particularly waterfowl and turtles, as well as urban wildlife. The land is mostly low wetlands which were designated as open space areas. All facilities in the park are made of natural materials. Many local schools use this land as an extension to the classroom where students can learn about nature and ecology. Turtles migrate between Southwood Nature Preserve and the Holloway Marsh to the south.

Many volunteer activities have occurred at Southwood Nature Preserve over the years to maintain and protect this natural area, such as buckthorn removal, Earth Day cleanups, garlic mustard pull, fall workdays, and Eagle Scout projects. In late 2023, the City Council adopted a statement of policy to provide guidance for the coordination of volunteer groups.



Southwood Nature Preserve



Southwood Nature Preserve

Issues and Opportunities

- » Numerous invasive species have been reported in the preserve, including buckthorn, burdock, curly dock, dame’s rocket, honeysuckle, Japanese Knotweed, and garlic mustard. This issue has been addressed with numerous volunteer activities as well as prescribed burns performed by the Fire Department.
- » The presence of the Emerald Ash Borer was reported in 2021.
- » Runoff from streets, houses, and lawns impact water quality which affects the kinds of aquatic life in the pond and stream. For example, the use of chemicals containing phosphorous from lawn fertilizers creates a large amount of algae growth on the pond.
- » There is no parking lot for visitors. Although Holloway is a wide road with large shoulders, it is not an ideal spot to park or unload groups of children visiting the park for educational purposes.

Table 10: Southwood Nature Preserve Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Benches	Benches are placed throughout the park on small spur trails off the main trail.	Commercial grade benches can last 15-20 years.
Interpretive signs	There is an interpretive kiosk at the south entrance near the trailhead. There are small signs near the ground in the northwest quadrant that identifies different plant species that were placed by volunteers of the Minnesota Master Naturalists Program.	The replacement schedule is 15-20 years for freestanding signs.
Picnic Tables	Picnic tables are scattered around the main entrance at Holloway Ave.	Replace as needed. Commercial grade picnic tables can last 20 years.
Overlook deck	A wooden deck overlooking the pond was initially built in 2010.	Expected life of 20+ years.
Walking trails	Approximately 1.5-miles of woodchip trail runs through the park and around the pond.	Periodic maintenance when woodchips deteriorate.

Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center, West of McKnight Road along South Avenue E.

The Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center (ELC) is a 24-acre wetland restoration project in North St. Paul along the Gateway Trail. The city acquired approximately 19-acres in 1989 from Ramsey County for parks, recreation, open space, and storm water storage purposes. The city acquired the remaining 5-acres in 1997.

In 1995, the District’s Natural Resources Board, with the help of the University of Minnesota Department of Landscape Architecture, authored a restoration plan. The design established multi-basin wetland ecosystem that provides opportunities for urban ecology education, water quality improvement, and vegetation restoration. Construction and initial planting took place in 1997 and 1998. This site includes an open space and walking trail, and it has also served as an educational resource for area schools.



Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center

Issues and Opportunities

While the pond buffer and observation mound now have established native plant communities, invasive plant management on the site continues to be a challenge. Reed canary grass and Canada thistle populations have so far proven difficult to contain and reduce. Tatarian honeysuckle and buckthorn have been largely removed from the public lands but continue to re-invade from adjacent private property.

Table 11: Urban Ecology ELC Amenities

AMENITIES	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE
Observation Deck	A boardwalk and overlook deck provide access to overlook the pond and wetland areas.	Expected life of 20+ years.



TRAILS AND OTHER PARK SYSTEMS

North St. Paul is not the only provider of recreational opportunities in North St. Paul. Regional trails, school playgrounds, sports fields, and private gyms owned by other organizations also provide space for fitness and play. All of these facilities are valued components of the City's recreational amenities and they play an important role in the community. They're largely not discussed in this document because the City has no authority to plan, manage, or improve private and school-owned facilities.

Trails

The Gateway State Trail is an 18-mile multiple use trail that begins in St. Paul and continues northeast through Maplewood, North St. Paul, and Oakdale, through Washington County, and ends just four miles northwest of Stillwater. The Gateway also provides connections to many local and regional trails, including Phalen-Keller Regional Park and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail.

Rotary Park

Rotary Park is owned by MnDOT and serves as a trailhead for the Gateway State Trail, which also provides connections to the downtown business district. This land was part of the old Soo Line Railroad M property obtained by the City in 1957. In 1996, the Rotary Club funded construction of a paved trail with a small bridge coming from the state trail to a park area. Amenities at Rotary Park include restrooms, picnic tables and benches, open air shelters, drinking fountain, and a bicycle fix-it station. The open-air shelters were built in 2014 and 2016. The restroom building was constructed in 2021.

ISD-622 Facilities

The City and ISD 622 have collaborated on recreational facilities at the McKnight athletic complex since the 1960s. As mentioned, a joint effort by the City and school district identified a need for public athletic facilities and subsequently resulted in the purchase and construction of 11.7-acres to establish McKnight Field. The two parties entered into their first shared use agreement for facilities in 1974.

The current shared use agreement under which the City and school district have been operating was approved in 2011. The agreement addresses fees, maintenance, capital improvements, insurance, etc. In general, the agreement designates field maintenance to the owner of the field, and, per the agreement, user fees are to be as listed in the fee schedule of each governing body.

The 2011 agreement has been in place over a decade and numerous changes have occurred in city and school district staff and city and school operations since that time. Chiefly, the city no longer offers a youth recreation program and no longer has a need for school district facilities.

Polar Arena, located at 2444 11th Avenue E., is an indoor hockey area that is home to the North High School boys and girls teams, the Tartan Area Youth Hockey Association, and the Maplewood Figure Skating Club. The area was opened in built in 1969 and is owned and operated by ISD-622. Open skate is available at limited times throughout the winter months.

Private Facilities

Ramsey County's Goodrich Golf Course is in St. Paul with a portion that spills over into North St. Paul. Goodrich Golf course is a fun and challenging 18-hole, par 70 course. Its gently rolling hills create a relaxed atmosphere in a beautiful environment.

04

NEEDS ANALYSIS

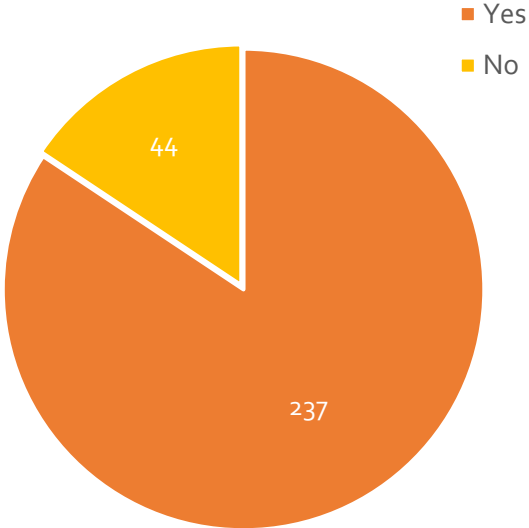
SECTION CONTENTS

- » Community Engagement Overview
- » Plan Review
- » System Gaps
- » Equity

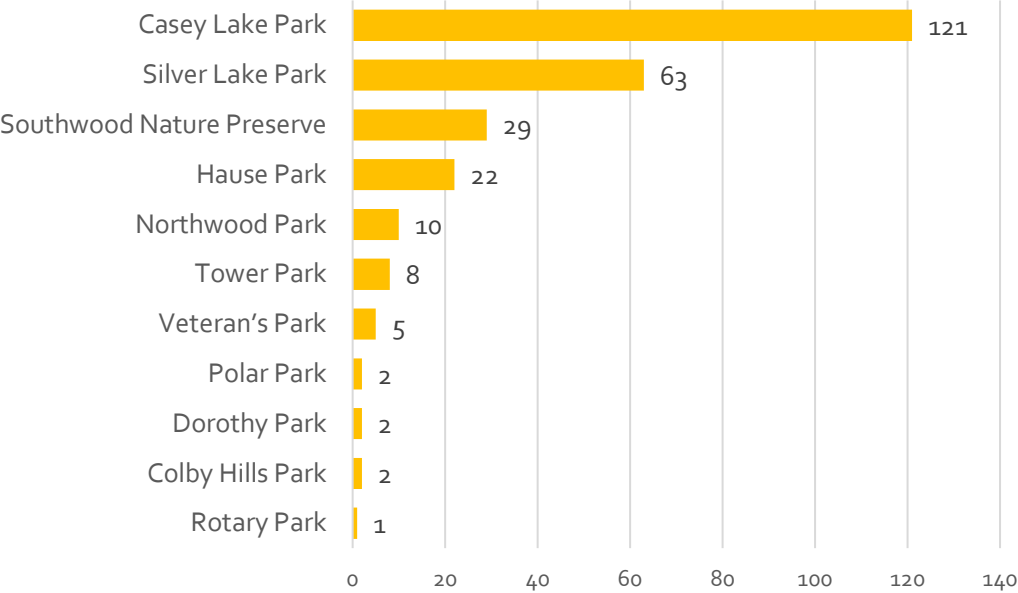
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

During the summer of 2023, City staff and Park and Recreation Commission members reached out to community members at City-sponsored events to discuss this plan and encourage participation in a city-wide park survey. The survey was available online or as a paper form from June through September. A total of 286 surveys were completed. The following summarizes input collected from the city-side survey.

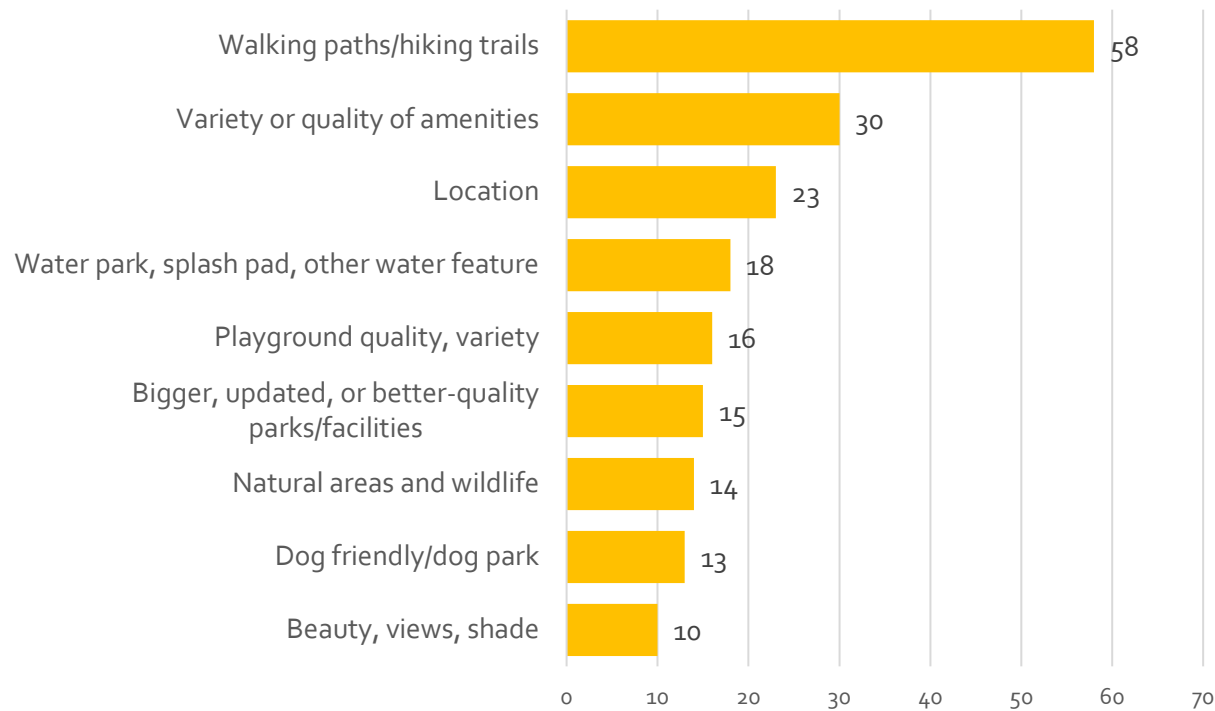
Are you a resident of North St. Paul?



What is your favorite North St. Paul Park?



Why do you visit parks outside of North St. Paul?

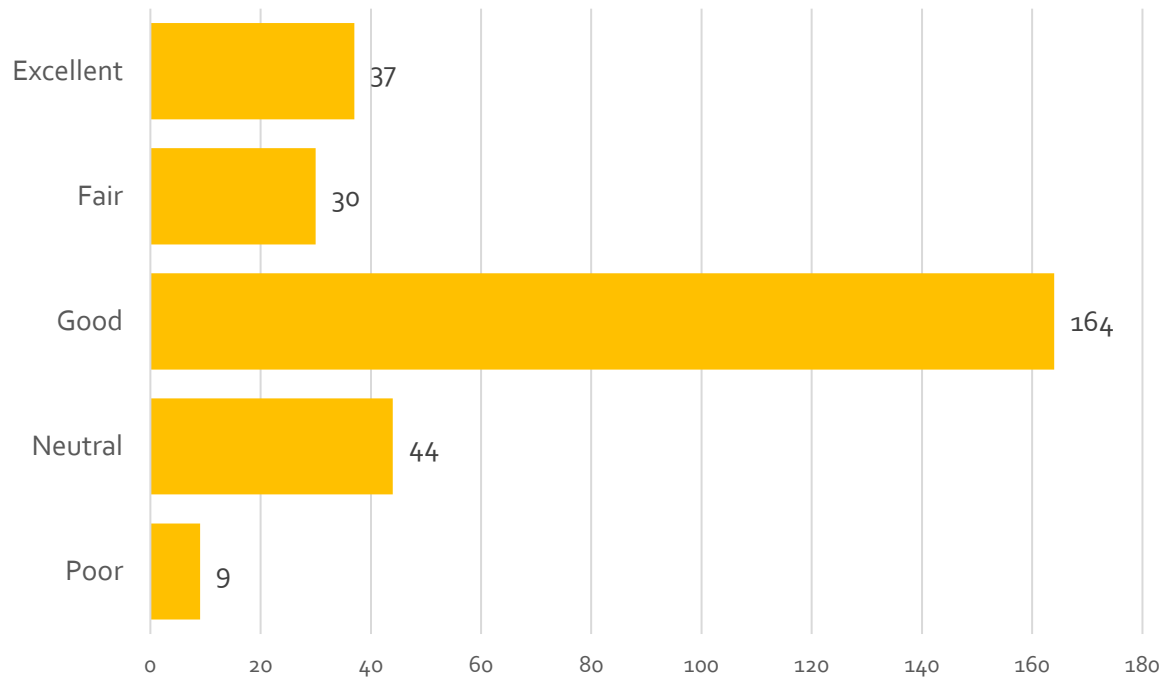


29%

OF RESPONDENTS LEAVE NORTH ST. PAUL FOR WALKING PATHS AND HIKING TRAILS

"Parks are a core backbone to a community. We need to stay focused on park improvement and update existing part with more modern equipment outside of swings and slides."

How would you rate the physical condition of the parks in North St. Paul?



"We visit North St. Paul parks often but wish they had more amenities."

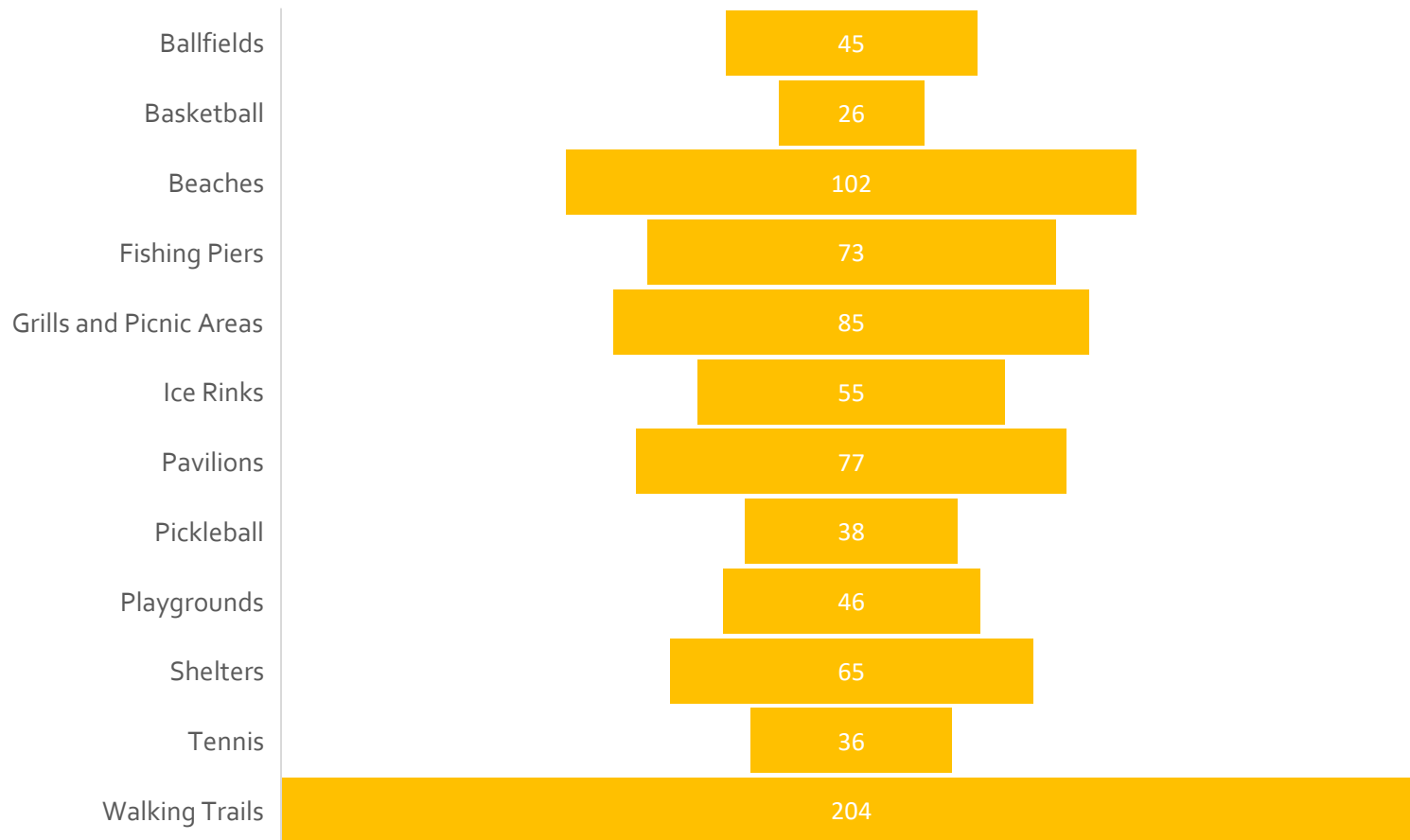
58%

OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDER NORTH ST. PAUL PARKS TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION

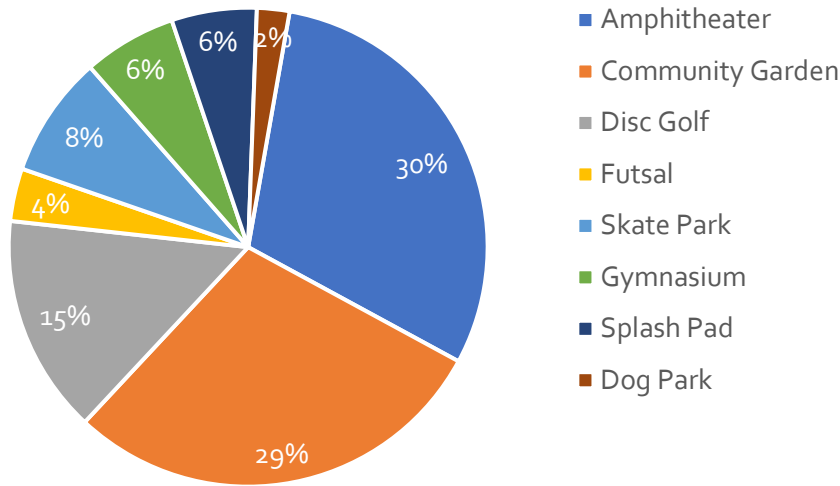
3%

OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDER NORTH ST. PAUL PARKS TO BE IN POOR CONDITION

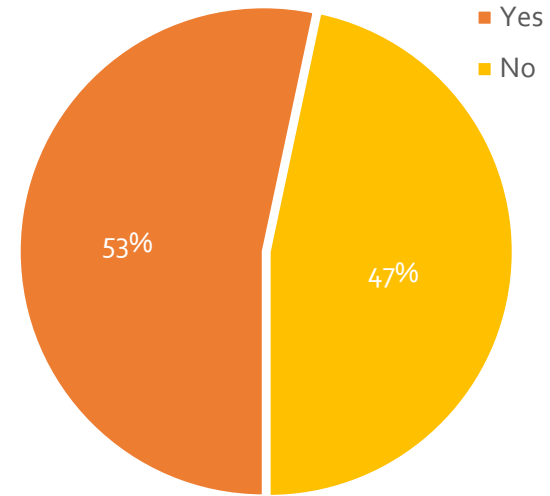
What facilities do you use in North St. Paul?



What park facility would you most want in North St. Paul?



Would you support an increase in the tax levy for park and recreational improvements or services?



As the city creates its park and open space master plan, what park facilities should the city prioritize?

1	Parks and trails most in need of maintenance
2	Neighborhood parks and trails
3	Parks and trails evenly throughout the city
4	The most heavily used parks and trails
5	Parks and trails in the downtown
6	Under-used parks and trails

“Overall, excellent maintenance yet lacking in comprehensive overview of the park system as a whole.”

SYSTEM GAPS

Level of Service

For many years, the accepted National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) practice was to adopt a uniform national standard expressed in total parkland acreage per 1,000 of the population. This methodology has been questioned because cities and agencies are as diverse as the communities they serve. Cities with high densities found the required amount of acreage needed over time to achieve the recommended standard was exceptionally challenging due to high land values and low availability. In response, NRPA established an annual agency performance review which provides metrics based on a survey of park and recreation agencies nationwide. The 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2020 and 2022.

Table 13 reports the prevalence of various types of outdoor park facilities based on agency responses. While the NRPA report details data for jurisdiction of sizes, this table focuses only on the overall agency report and those with populations less than 20,000. As indicated in Table 13, NSP has a greater focus on baseball, basketball, and pickleball for its population compared to peer communities. Areas of potential deficiency include community gardens, dog parks, soccer fields, skate parks, swimming pools, and tennis courts. Notably, each of these facilities were noted in the community survey as reasons to visit parks outside of North St. Paul or amenities that residents desire to have available in the city.

Table 12: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities – Population per Facility

Type of Outdoor Facilities	Median No. of Residents per Facility			
	Percent of Agencies	All Agencies	Agencies w/ Population Less than 20,000	North St. Paul (Pop. 12,800)
Basketball	86	7,404	3,729	4,267
Baseball (adult)	55	20,228	7,627	12,800
Baseball (youth)	79	6,863	3,114	2,560
Community garden	52	31,395	8,178	0
Dog parks	68	43,532	11,100	0
Ice rink	18	17,741	8,045	6,400
Pickleball	31	13,922	3,252	4,267
Playgrounds	95	3,759	2,014	1,280
Soccer (youth)	50	7,228	3,600	0
Softball (youth)	62	11,384	5,079	2,560
Skate park	41	53,144	10,726	0
Swimming pool	51	38,635	9,745	0
Tennis courts	76	5,860	2,805	0
Volleyball	49	17,475	5,093	4,267

Source: 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, National Recreation and Park Association

Other key findings from the NPRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, as well as the Trust for Public Land's Park Score, indicate that North St. Paul is providing greater value for residents than average for the following:

» **Number of Parks.**

There is typically one park per every 2,287 residents (average of all agencies). In cities with populations of less than 20,000 the median is one park per 1,225 residents. In NSP, there is one park per 753 residents.

» **Acres of Parkland.**

The typical park and recreation agency offers 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction; NSP has 11.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

» **Distance to Parks.**

A distance of 1/4 to 1/2 mile is seen as representative distance of mobility or how far most individuals can walk comfortably depending on age, health, and other factors. According to the Trust for Public Land's Park Score, 100% of NSP residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.



Programming, Staffing, and Operations Budget

As of 2023, North St. Paul does not formally offer any recreational programming, however, City staff does assist in coordinating with other local organizations to provide recreational activities in its parks throughout the year. All other recreational programming is provided by the school district and local sports groups and leagues. According to NRPA, operations and maintenance are the primary work responsibility of park and recreation professionals. But staff also devote their energies to other areas. On average, an agency's full-time park and recreation staff dedicate their time to the following general activities: operations/maintenance, programming, administration, and capital development.

According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency has 8.9 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in the jurisdiction served by that agency. In the 2023 and 2024 budget, NSP allocated 2.0 FTE to park and recreation positions and approximately 2.0 seasonal employees.

According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$94.77 on a per capita basis. Applying this figure to NSP’s population would yield an annual operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million. North St. Paul’s 2024 operating and maintenance budgets for parks and recreation is \$538,807. According to the NRPA 2023 Agency Performance Review, the median operating expenditure is \$7,388 per acre of park sites managed by the typical agency. NSP budgets \$3,690 per acre of parkland.

EQUITY

According to the National Park and Recreation Association, when people have just and fair access to parks, health and social wellbeing improve. Communities can also better recover from environmental, social, and economic challenges. As mentioned previously, NPS’s population is increasingly more diverse. To stay relevant to the changing needs of the community, it is important to create a park and recreation system that is accessible to the entire community. When developing park design plans and funding construction projects, run an analysis to determine how individual residents will be able to benefit from a system that is intended to benefit *all* residents.

What is Equity?

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but they mean different things. Equality is when everyone receives the equal amount of investment. While that sounds fair, it assumes that all people start from the same place, which isn’t true. Equity is about ensuring everyone receives the appropriate investment for where they are. Consider the bike image.



Source: National Park and Recreation Association

As mentioned previously, this plan incorporates park and recreation-related recommendations of earlier city-approved planning documents. Key park improvements and park recommendations are itemized, below. Note that recommendations that have been implemented since the adoption of the parent plans are not included in the list.

Acronyms:

ADA 2018 ADA Transition Plan

CP 2040 Comprehensive Plan
 PIP 2022 Park Improvement Plan
 RMP 2022 Redevelopment Master Plan

	Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
	Casey Lake Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Extend the park and trail system along the south and west side of Casey Lake. » Redevelopment/replacement of some of the park amenities. » Prepare a master plan. 	CP PIP
	Central Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Modify and upgrade consistent with changes on Seppala and downtown redevelopment. » Improve the park based on the Seppala conversion project (refer to the Redevelopment Master Plan). 	CP RMP
	Colby Hills Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Replace playground equipment, fence, and retaining wall. » Develop a new neighborhood park plan. » Consider converting the street between the two park parcels to use as park. 	CP PIP
	Country Club Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Consider alternatives including maintaining and upgrading the park or selling the land to build a house. » Evaluate and confirm community need prior to implementing new park amenities. 	CP PIP
	Dorothy Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and make minor upgrades when the trail is constructed. 	CP
	Downtown Park (2475 7 th Avenue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Prepare a master plan to meet the needs and desires of the growing population in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. 	PIP
	Downtown Park (2579 7 th Avenue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish a downtown plaza/urban open space. 	RMP
	Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
	Gateway State Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Protect this trail, enhance its appearance by making it more parklike. » Use it effectively to support redevelopment. » Establish trail access improvements at Helen, Margaret, Henry, and Century Avenue 	CP RMP
	Hause Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point. 	CP
	McKnight Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Continue to provide a high level of maintenance and make improvements as appropriate. » Prepare a park master plan. 	CP PIP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Replace existing amenities that are in poor condition. 	
Northwood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upgrade the facilities and parkland on an ongoing basis. » Construct a new shelter building. » Redevelop most park amenities at Northwood and include proper trail connections. 	CP PIP
Polar Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point. » Continue to develop the park based on the 2020 concept plan, with the exception of the trail extending to the southern street. 	CP PIP
Rotary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upkeep park. » Install a wayfinding kiosk and interpretive maps to provide directions to the downtown and additional destination points. » Install gateway features. 	CP RMP PIP
Silver Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upgrade the park on an on-going basis. » Expand the park and extend the trail on the east shore (a segment of the Lakes Links Trail network) if the area is redeveloped/ re-platted. » Enhance connection between Silver Lake Park, Dorothy Park, and Joy Park. » When the playground on the eastern side is replaced, more unique or challenging pieces could be considered to meet the needs of varying demographics and ages. » The existing restroom building should be evaluated for code compliance to determine if improvements are necessary, or if complete replacement is a better value. 	CP PIP
Southwood Nature Preserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upkeep park. » Install wayfinding and educational/interpretive maps. » Improve the creek bed by encouraging natural habitat and removal of debris. » Consider additional uses. » Prepare a plan to create a link between Cowern Elementary School and Southwood Park. » Improve the site by protecting the creek and natural amenity and construct a trail from Helen Street and the school site to Margaret Street. 	CP PIP
Specific Park Improvement	Recommendations per Plan	Plan
Tower Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upgrade to keep the park the neighborhood focal point. 	CP
Urban Ecology Environmental Learning Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Continue to implement the restoration plan. » Consider construction of a shelter/educational building. » Ongoing maintenance and replacement as needed in partnership with RWMWD with new educational / interpretive maps. 	CP PIP
Veteran's Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain and upkeep park. 	CP

West End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a neighborhood park as residential development occurs in the West End Housing and Redevelopment District. » Establish a passive open space. 	CP RMP
Overall Park System Improvements	Recommendations per Plan	
ADA Compliance Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a plan for all parks to comply with the American Disabilities Act and accessible for all. 	CP
Park Buildings, Facilities, and Parking Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Perform ADA evaluation as required by the state building code and ADA at the time of future improvements. » Install bicycle racks at city parks. 	ADA
Park Equipment and Surfacing (All Parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Upgrade and replace park equipment as necessary. 	CP
Wayfinding and Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Design a strategy that provides better wayfinding and navigation to and from parks and trails. 	CP

05

MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

SECTION CONTENTS

- » Operations and Maintenance
- » Partnerships, Agreements, and Donations
- » Evolution of a Park Construction Project
- » Park System Funding
- » Park System Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Park Maintenance

The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of the City's infrastructure, which includes parks, open spaces, and trails. Our dedicated Public Works staff keep parks and recreation areas clean, safe, and functional. Routine maintenance relative to parks, open spaces, and trails include:

- Athletic field maintenance (mowing, dragging, trash disposal, set chalk lines, etc.).
- Turf management and urban forestry (mowing, planting, and pruning).
- Snow removal (remove snow from sidewalks and trails).
- Trail maintenance and upgrades (reconstruction and patching).
- Playground safety inspections (evaluate for durability of equipment, proper surfacing materials, ADA compliance, and safety).
- Park buildings and facilities maintenance (installation and repair of assets, such as park signs, surveillance equipment, HVAC systems, roof, etc.).
- Park maintenance (install and repair assets, such as playground equipment, picnic tables, shelter structures, etc.).

The Public Works Department aims to operate in a fiscally responsible way that does not exceed the approved maintenance and operations budget; however, doing so can be a challenge without park system expectations firmly established.

Operations and Maintenance Planning

The Public Works Department does not currently have an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan. An O&M plan establishes standards for the frequency of maintenance and rules and policies that affect management of specific parks. An O&M plan typically includes the following: maintenance responsibilities, maintenance schedule, inspection schedule, standards (level of maintenance), hiring policies for contractors, budget, and funding sources.



PARTNERSHIPS, AGREEMENTS, AND DONATIONS

As mentioned previously, the City of North St. Paul has partnered with other agencies over the years to purchase parkland and provide recreational facilities and programs. Some of these arrangements have been fairly informal, which can create issues down the line in terms of expectations and reciprocity. Moving forward, the City should enter into defined agreements that are approved by the City Council and the partner agency.

General Agreement Parameters

Shared-use agreements establish a mutually beneficial partnership that serves the community at large. While shared-use agreements have legal standing, it is important that they be written to be understandable and implemented. The following are general guidelines for shared use agreements associated with recreational facilities:

- Site Description. Clearly defines the property limits, including legal descriptions as appropriate.
- Lease Agreement. Clearly define the conditions of the lease arrangement.
- Operations and Maintenance Responsibilities. Establish each party's responsibility related to operation and maintenance.
- Scheduling. Define each party's use of the facilities and the manner in which they are scheduled, including which party or uses have priority status.
- User Fees. Define manner of collection of user fees, if collected.
- Rules. Clearly define the standard operational rules, such as time of operation, reservations, use of facilities, etc.
- Insurance. Define the level of insurance each party must carry; typically, each party carries liability insurance for the site and lists each other as "additional insured."

Donations

The City of North St. Paul accepts donations to its park fund from community members and business owners which help the City preserve and enhance the park system. Community members may also choose to donate trees, park benches, picnic tables, bike racks, and customized brick pavers to memorialize a loved one. All contributions to the North St. Paul Park Fund are tax deductible. All donations, per state statute, must be approved by the City Council. Donations should be accepted by resolution of the City Council with conditions of acceptance clearly identified and memorialized. For example, donations should become the property of the City without any commitment for further expenditure of funds toward its maintenance or repair unless stated and accepted by Council.

EVOLUTION OF A PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Establishing a new park or redeveloping an existing park is a multistep process that can occur over many months and generally involves the following phases: Conceptual Design, Design Development, Construction Documents, Contract Bidding, Construction.

Conceptual Design

The conceptual design, sometimes called a master plan, defines project goals, the park use, identifies potential features, and includes schematic drawings to depict what it will look like when completed. This phase should involve public outreach to understand the park user's needs and desires for the space. During this phase, information from existing plans, documents, and input from the community informs an initial design. The final products of this phase may also document site constraints, initial cost estimate, and a project timeline.

Design Development

The design development phase refines technical details including materials and products, costs, and schedules. Final products of this phase may include a final site plan, product cutsheets, plant and material palettes, and revised cost estimates. As the design process proceeds and focuses on the more technical aspects of the project, the level of community input often decreases.

Construction Documents

The construction documents (CDs) are the technical drawings and specifications that are used to permit and construct the park. CDs are typically developed in stages to ensure that the evolution of the design in this phase remains true to the overall vision for the project. Final products of this phase include a complete set of technical drawings that are detailed enough for any contractor to build the project, written technical specifications for all materials and products, a final cost estimate, and a project construction schedule.

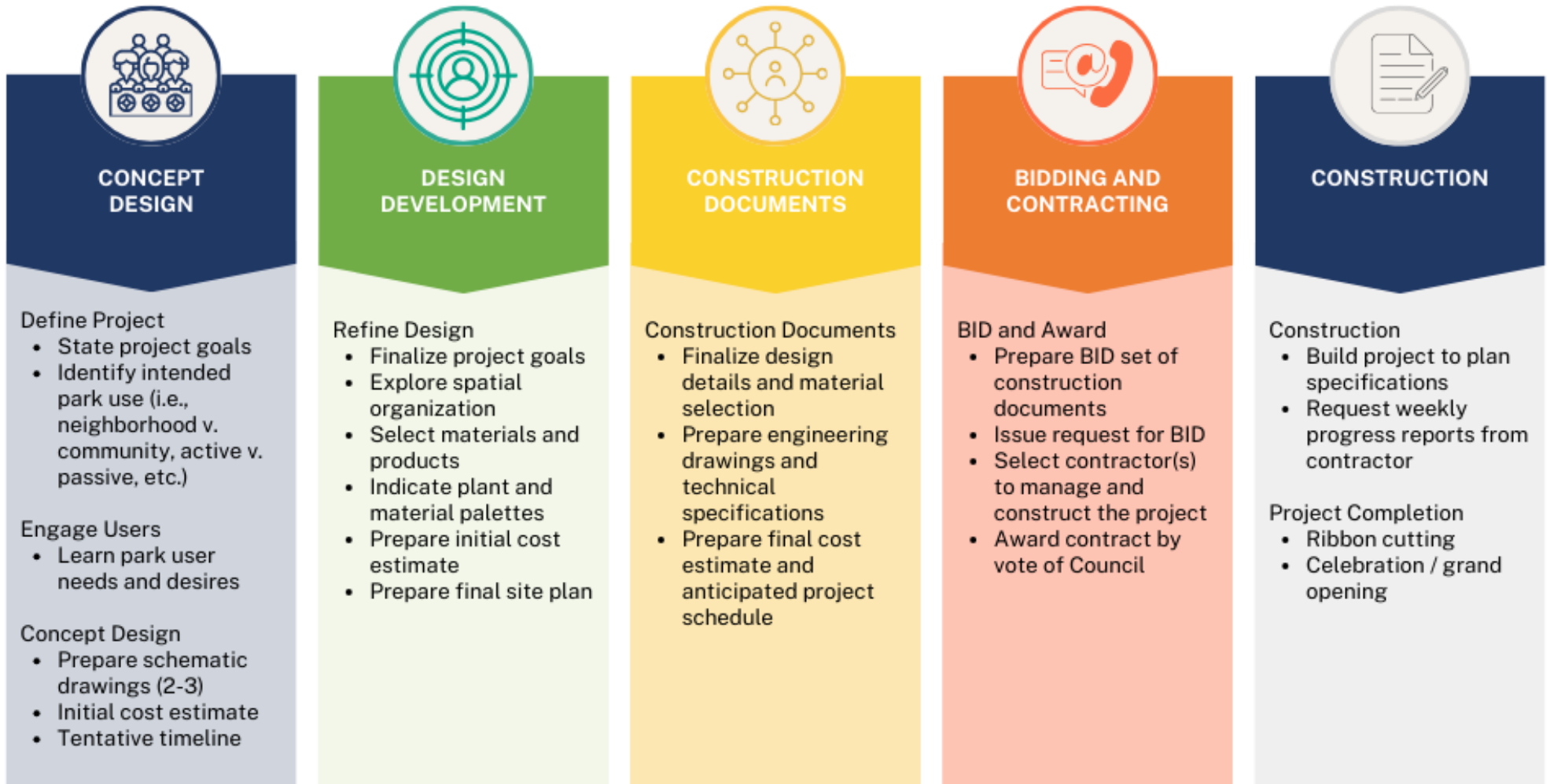
Bidding and Contracting

The bidding process allows the City to select the best contractor(s) for managing and constructing the project. In general, the bidding process includes the issuance of a Request for Bids and a bid set of CDs. In addition to the complete set of CDs, the materials provided to potential bidders may include the project purpose, scope of work, and attachments regarding other requirements of the jurisdiction.

Construction

The construction phase is when the project is built. All construction is based on the requirements specified in the CDs. The construction work is often divided into different phases to help track progress, ensure the project is built to the plan specifications, and resolve any issues that may arise. Project managers are usually responsible for subcontractor approvals, submittals, change orders, and payments. Construction staff oversee daily operations of the project and should submit weekly progress reports to your agency or otherwise meet your agency's documentation requirements.

EVOLUTION OF A PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECT



PARK SYSTEM FUNDING

The City's budget and capital improvement plan set annual priorities for operational and capital project spending. This plan is intended to help guide the City in making equitable decisions for park improvements. Once a need is identified, funding must be put in place through the annual budget and capital improvement planning process.

North St. Paul's park system is presently supported by three funds: General Fund, Park Fund, and Park Dedication Fund.

General Fund

Operations and routine maintenance, such as mowing grass, repairs, and trash removal, are funded by the General Fund.

Park Fund

The Park Fund is a capital project fund that is used for park improvements, such as new equipment, building remodels, and new infrastructure or amenities. The City generates revenue for the Park Fund through facility rentals, canoe rentals, advertising at McKnight Fields, and by accepting donations. In addition, in 2023 the City Council approved an annual 0.5% levy to contribute to the Park Fund.

Park Dedication Fund

Per MN statute 462,358, the City may collect park dedication fees for new lots created through subdivision of land. The City also collects park dedication fees for larger multifamily development projects where a development agreement is in place. Per statute, park dedication fees may only be used for the acquisition and development, or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, or open space based on an approved park system plan. These funds cannot be used for ongoing maintenance or operation.

Grants

Grants can also help fund park facilities. Below are some examples of grants that may be available to fund park improvements. Note that most grants will not cover the entire cost of a project; many grants have a matching requirement, which is often met by general funds.

- The Minnesota DNR provides funding for parks and trails and technical assistance to develop park or for trail amenities such as shelters, restrooms, lighting, and seating.
- Minnesota DOT offers funding for trail or bikeway improvement projects which may utilize a portion of federal dollars.
- The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent to fund clean water, outdoor heritage, arts and cultural heritage, and parks and trails. The program began in 2009 and continues until 2034.
- The Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund provides funding for activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

The Parks and Recreation Commission's vision is to adequately provide for our diverse and growing population and equitably and thoughtfully apply City resources to provide quality park access for all residents wishing to utilize the park system.

When deciding how resources are allocated, tough decisions may be necessary. This plan is intended to provide a basic roadmap for decision makers but provides flexibility to pivot when other priorities or opportunities arise.

Goals

- Create a park and open space system that is accessible to and serves all North St. Paul residents.
- Preserve and invest in existing recreational spaces, parks, and lakes.
- Increase the variety and improve the quality of amenities and ensure amenities are well distributed across the overall park system.
- Ensure all park projects, including maintenance and new development, are fiscally sustainable.

Objectives

- Before investing in new improvements, answer the following key questions:
 - Who has access to the park?
 - Who are the primary or intended users of the park?
 - Are the proposed uses/amenities for the park desired by the primary users?
 - Is adequate funding available to build the improvement without eliminating key features (i.e. ADA requirements)?



Action Items

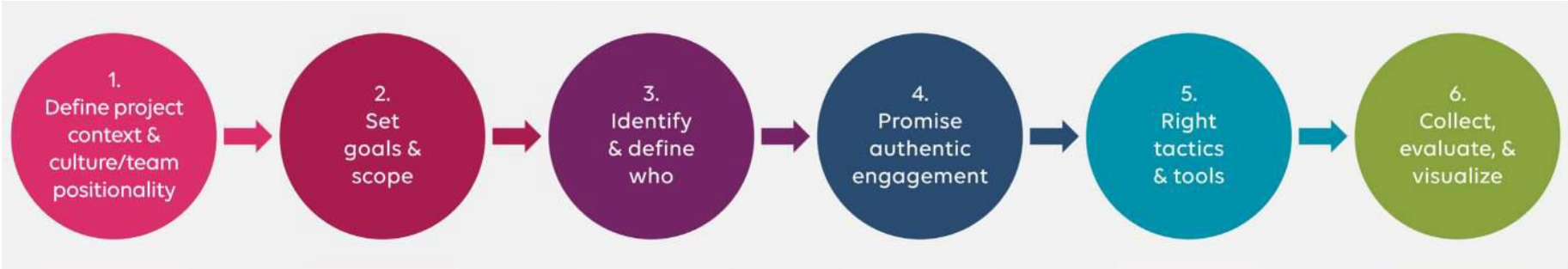
- Perform ADA evaluations for park improvements as required by the state building code and ADA.
- Prepare an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan to provide the Public Works department a guide for maintenance responsibilities, maintenance schedule, inspection schedule, standards (level of maintenance), hiring policies for contractors, budget, and funding sources.
- Revisit this document each annually to track progress, reaffirm priorities, and/or modify goals/priorities (if necessary).
 - Determine what progress has been made from prior years and what areas of focus are required for future projects. Specifically revisit Chapter 4: Needs Analysis to complete this analysis.
 - Prioritize plans, projects, and improvements based on the step above. This prioritization should be used to aid in the development of the budget and Capital Improvement Plan.
- When redeveloping or constructing new parks, following the evolution of a construction project process as indicated on pages 60-61.
 - Determine construction delivery method: in-house, design-build, or design-bid-build.
 - Secure funding sources for capital and operational costs before going out for bid.



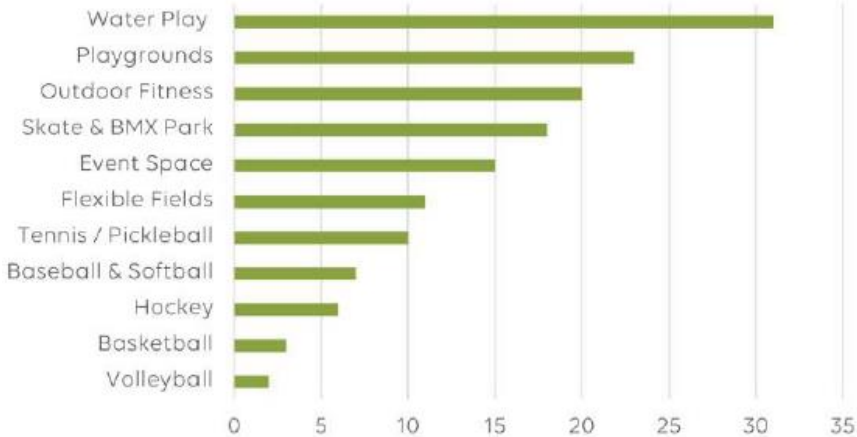
HGA CONSULTANT FINDINGS (2024)

In 2024, the City of North St. Paul hired HGA consultants to develop concept designs for three community parks. Two of the parks would be new additions to the current park system, while one would be a revitalization project.

HGA used a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy to guide the process and vision for the project. Using local demographics and the city's developing Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, HGA worked with the Community Development Department and Park and Recreation Commission, as well as a sub-committee from the Park and Recreation Commission and local stakeholders to develop a strategy for gathering qualitative insight from a diverse mix of community voices, following our six-step process:



AUTUMN ARTS FESTIVAL DOT VOTING OUTCOMES



Graph shows votes for programs, as indicated with green dots on example images



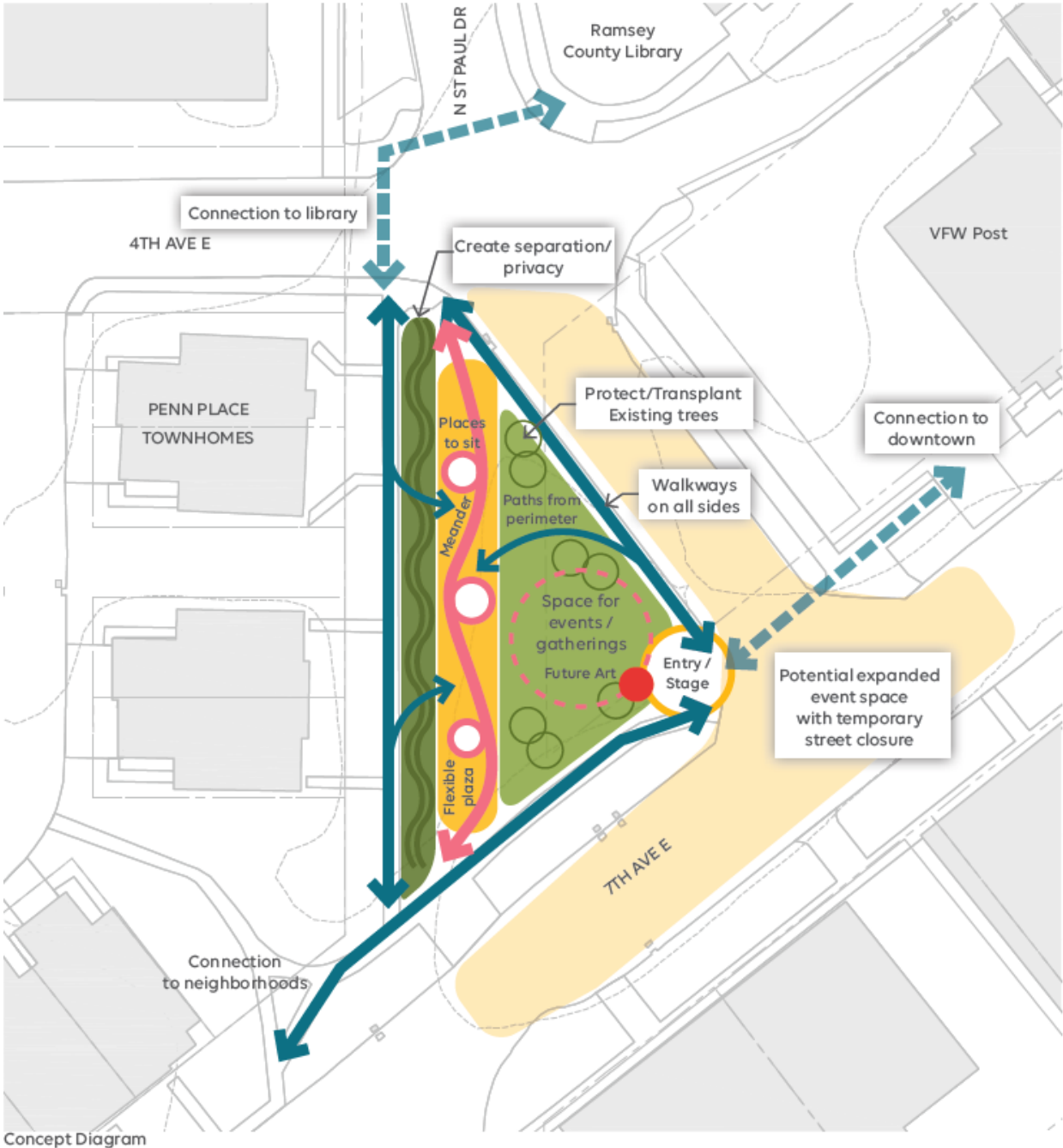
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE DOT VOTES



DOWNTOWN OPEN SPACE

This space is located at 2475 7th Ave, on the edge of downtown. The lot is currently greenspace that was created in 2011 after the realignment of North St. Paul Drive. The space is highly visible with easy access. A challenge of the space is limited on-street parking next to the site, however there are parking lots and additional street parking within a short distance.

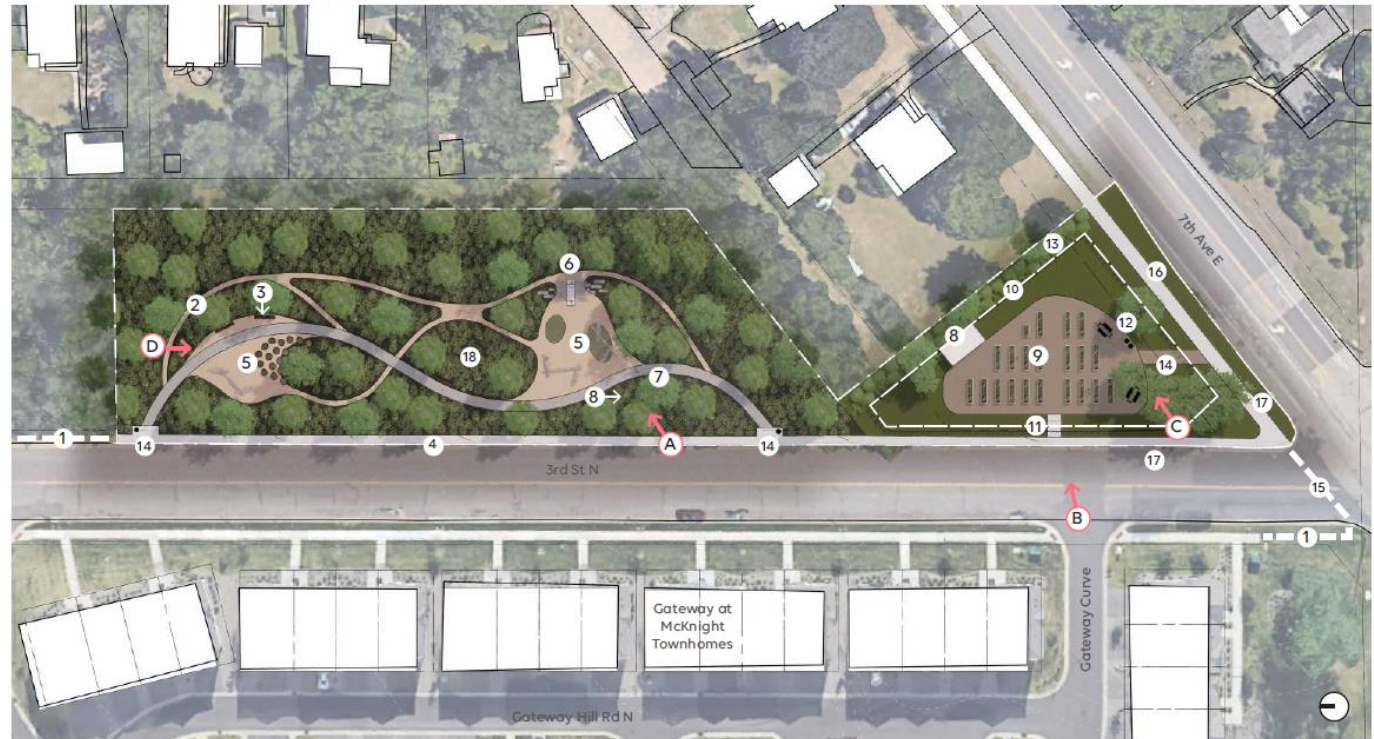
The concept developed by HGA was influenced by the community engagement process which noted an interest in a flexible space for gathering and relaxing. The concept design includes walkways, greenspace, a flexible plaza with seating and a flexible space for a potential stage.



3RD STREET OPEN SPACE

This space is located along 3rd St N near the five-way intersection on 7th Ave, across from the Gateway Townhomes. The lot is currently a mixed forest with no development. The current grading of the property has been the leading factor in the non-development. The site is close to the Gateway Trail as well as several townhomes and apartment complexes.

The concept includes a new sidewalk along 3rd St N, walking paths throughout the park, seating areas, nature play areas and a community garden. The community garden has been requested by community members for several years. The challenge for the community garden in this location is the current limited utilities.



KEY

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. POTENTIAL SIDEWALK EXTENSION | 8. STORAGE SHED WITH WATER SUPPLY | 15. CROSS WALK |
| 2. WOOD MULCH TRAILS | 9. COMMUNITY GARDEN, (20) 3'X12' RAISED BEDS, GRAVEL SURFACING | 16. EXISTING SIDEWALK |
| 3. BENCH | 10. 5' WIRE MESH FENCE WITH (2) GATES | 17. EXISTING BUS STOP |
| 4. NEW CONCRETE SIDEWALK | 11. CONCRETE STAIR | 18. SELECTIVE PLANT & INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL, & CLEAN UP; SEEDED UNDERSTORY PLANTING |
| 5. NATURE PLAY AREAS, WOOD MULCH SURFACING - WITHIN EXISTING CLEARINGS | 12. PICNIC TABLES | 19. EXISTING ON STREET PARKING |
| 6. HILL SLIDE | 13. SCREEN PLANTING | |
| 7. ASPHALT PATH (ADA ACCESSIBLE) | 14. ENTRY WITH WASTE RECEPTACLES | |

MCKNIGHT ATHLETIC COMPLEX

The McKnight Athletic Complex is located at the NE intersection of Highway 36 and McKnight Road. The current complex includes four softball fields, one premiere baseball field, one t-ball field, two tennis courts, a concession building, indoor batting cages and parking. The two tennis courts are in disrepair and the t-ball field is rarely used. The softball fields and premiere baseball field are primarily used by North High. A shared-use agreement is currently in place with ISD 622. In addition, in 1979, the City Council passed resolution 79078, permitting the American Legion Post #39 to use the premiere baseball field for Legion team games, free of charge indefinitely due to the donation of field lights. A lease between the City and Triple Crown Batting Cages, Inc. is in place until August 31, 2030 for the use of the indoor batting cages.

HGA developed a concept that allows for development in two stages. Phase 1 includes the replacement and reprogramming of the parking lot, tennis courts and t-ball field. This would allow for improvements to the underutilized portions of the park without impacting the current agreements. This phase would include the development of a small event plaza, green space, playground, skate/bike park and a flexible mini pitch. The addition of sidewalks throughout would be key to connect each element for users. An important feature that will be kept is access for Public Works to access snow storage.



KEY

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Flexible Mini-Pitch | 5. Playground |
| 2. Parking Lot | 6. Skateboard / BMX /Bike Skills |
| 3. Event Plaza | 7. Public Works access |
| 4. Greenspace | |

The second phase proposes alterations to the two most northern softball fields. The plan sees the change to artificial turf to allow for flexibility, including the continued use of softball.



F - Birds-eye view from southeast (Phase 2)

Both phases were developed using the feedback from the community engagement process as well as the feedback from local community liaisons. A lack in soccer fields for residents within North St. Paul was highlighted and stressed as a need by the community.

COST ESTIMATE & IMPLEMENTATION

HGA provided the City with high-level cost estimates. The project did not have an established budget therefore the costs provided were based on an aggressive approach allowing for future cost decisions to be made.

		DOWNTOWN CONCEPT DESIGN			
		QUANTITY	UNIT \$	TOTAL COST	
		20,000	sqft		
CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE					
Site demo	<i>surfacing, trees, equipment, e&s, etc</i>	1	lsum	\$10,000.00	\$10,000
Clear and grub	<i>brush, small trees</i>	20,000	sqft	\$0.50	\$10,000
Grading	<i>finished areas</i>	20,000	sqft	\$1.00	\$20,000
Concrete sidewalk paving	<i>typical, plain grey, tie-in to existing</i>	4,200	sqft	\$15.00	\$63,000
Concrete plaza paving	<i>typical, colored/textured</i>	3,200	sqft	\$20.00	\$64,000
Soft surfacing	<i>mulch, stone, turf or sim</i>	3,000	sqft	\$2.50	\$8,000
Tree plantings	<i>typical, 3" cal</i>	15	each	\$1,200.00	\$18,000
Buffer/decorative plantings	<i>plants & shrubs</i>	5,000	sqft	\$5.00	\$25,000
Site art/features infrastructure	<i>footings, pads, ut connections</i>	1	lsum	\$15,000.00	\$15,000
Seating	<i>linear & unit, prefab product</i>	160	lnft	\$350.00	\$56,000
Stormwater management	<i>infiltration basin, piped connections</i>	3,200	sqft	\$20.00	\$64,000
Water service	<i>utility connection & hose bibbs</i>	1	lsum	\$35,000.00	\$35,000
Electrical infrastructure & distribution	<i>utility connection, xfmr, ug pathways</i>	1	lsum	\$35,000.00	\$35,000
Site lighting	<i>ped poles</i>	8	loc	\$3,500.00	\$28,000
DIRECT CONSTRUCTION COST					\$451,000
<i>Contractors GC's/Gen Req/OH&P</i>		15.00%			\$67,650
<i>Design Contingency</i>		15.00%			\$77,798
<i>Escalation 1 yr allowance</i>		5.00%			\$29,822
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST					\$626,270
<i>A&E Fees allowance</i>		7.50%			\$46,970
<i>Construction Contingency unforeseens, scope adjustments</i>		5.00%			\$31,313
<i>Owner Development Costs testing, permits, inspection, etc</i>		5.00%			\$31,313
<i>Furnishings & Equipment allowance</i>		1 lsum	\$50,000.00		\$50,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST					\$785,867
Potential Additional Scope (total project cost)					
Functional art installation/seating	<i>allowance</i>	1	lsum	\$80,000.00	\$80,000
Contaminated soils removal	<i>potential additional costs</i>				<i>tbd</i>

Concept design Construction Estimate is a planning tool and does not represent an approved project construction budget. Estimate includes conceptual information provided at the time of preparation and may not include all requirements to complete a future construction project.

		3RD STREET CONCEPT DESIGN			
		QUANTITY	UNIT \$	TOTAL COST	
		65,000	sqft		
CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE					
Site demo & set-up	<i>surfacing, trees, equipment, e&s, etc</i>	1	Isum	\$20,000.00	\$20,000
Clear and grub	<i>brush, small trees</i>	22,414	sqft	\$1.50	\$34,000
Grading	<i>finished areas</i>	34,414	sqft	\$1.50	\$52,000
Asphalt path paving	<i>6'-8' path</i>	500	lnft	\$85.00	\$43,000
Concrete sidewalk paving	<i>typical, plain grey, tie-in to existing</i>	5,200	sqft	\$15.00	\$78,000
Retaining walls & stairs	<i>allowance, minor, low walls</i>	1	Isum	\$40,000.00	\$40,000
Soft surfacing	<i>mulch, stone, or sim</i>	9,800	sqft	\$2.50	\$25,000
Tree plantings	<i>typical, 2" cal</i>	20	each	\$750.00	\$15,000
Buffer/decorative plantings	<i>plants & shrubs</i>	12,000	sqft	\$2.50	\$30,000
Play equipment/structures	<i>allowance</i>	1	Isum	\$100,000.00	\$100,000
Planter boxes (possible Owner provided)	<i>wood construction</i>	24	each	\$1,000.00	\$24,000
Storage shed (possible Owner provided)	<i>prefab or pole construction</i>	240	sqft	\$100.00	\$24,000
Garden fencing (possible Owner provided)	<i>split rail or similar</i>	320	lnft	\$50.00	\$16,000
Secure fencing	<i>vinyl coated chain link or sim, secure gates</i>		lnft	\$85.00	\$0
Water service	<i>utility connection & hose bibbs</i>	1	Isum	\$35,000.00	\$35,000
Electrical infrastructure & distribution	<i>utility connection, xfmr, ug pathways</i>	1	Isum	\$50,000.00	\$50,000
Site lighting	<i>ped poles</i>	20	loc	\$3,500.00	\$70,000
DIRECT CONSTRUCTION COST					\$656,000
<i>Contractors GC's/Gen Req/OH&P</i>		15.00%			\$98,400
<i>Design Contingency</i>		15.00%			\$113,160
<i>Escalation 1 yr allowance</i>		5.00%			\$43,378
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST					\$910,938
<i>A&E Fees allowance</i>		7.50%			\$68,320
<i>Construction Contingency unforeseens, scope adjustments</i>		5.00%			\$45,547
<i>Owner Development Costs testing, permits, inspection, etc</i>		5.00%			\$45,547
<i>Furnishings & Equipment allowance</i>		1 Isum		\$50,000.00	\$50,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST					\$1,120,352

Concept design Construction Estimate is a planning tool and does not represent an approved project construction budget. Estimate includes conceptual information provided at the time of preparation and may not include all requirements to complete a future construction project.

MCKNIGHT

	PHASE 1			PHASE 2		
	QUANTITY	UNIT	TOTAL COST	QUANTITY	UNIT	TOTAL COST
	310,000	sqft		310,000	sqft	
CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE						
<u>Phase 1 Scope</u>						
Site demo & set-up	prep for new construction	178,400 sqft	\$1.50	\$268,000		
Flexible field	complete construction	44,700 sqft	\$20.00	\$894,000		
Skate/BMX	complete construction	12,500 sqft	\$26.00	\$325,000		
Court sport	complete construction	12,500 sqft	\$24.00	\$300,000		
Playground	complete construction	10,000 sqft	\$36.00	\$360,000		
Parking - expand & overlay	complete construction	68,500 sqft	\$5.00	\$343,000		
Hardscape/Plaza	gathering & circulation	30,200 sqft	\$16.00	\$484,000		
Softscape	lawn & plantings	43,600 sqft	\$7.00	\$306,000		
Minor upgrades to existing	allowance	80,000 sqft	\$2.50	\$200,000		
Stormwater management	infiltration/storage basin, piped connections	8,000 sqft	\$25.00	\$200,000		
Water service	utility connection & hose bibbs	1 lsum	\$35,000.00	\$35,000		
Electrical infrastructure & distribution	utility connection, xfmr, ug pathways	1 lsum	\$75,000.00	\$75,000		
Site lighting - athletic	tall, stantion, LED	12 loc	\$10,000.00	\$120,000		
Site lighting - parking/ped	typical, LED	20 loc	\$5,000.00	\$100,000		
<u>Phase 2 Scope</u>						
Park pavillion building	allowance				7,500 sqft	\$320.00 \$2,400,000
Larger Flexible field	complete construction				168,000 sqft	\$15.00 \$2,520,000
Green Space	refurbish existing				44,700 sqft	\$4.00 \$179,000
Parking - new	complete construction				22,300 sqft	\$10.00 \$223,000
Utilities - water & elec/lighting	field & bldg area				1 lsum	\$150,000.00 \$150,000
DIRECT CONSTRUCTION COST						\$4,010,000
Contractors GC's/Gen Req/OH&P		15.00%		\$601,500	15.00%	\$820,800
Design Contingency		15.00%		\$691,725	15.00%	\$943,920
Escalation	1 yr allowance	5.00%		\$265,161	5.00%	\$361,836
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST						\$5,568,386
A&E Fees	allowance	6.00%		\$334,103	6.00%	\$455,913
Construction Contingency	unforseeens, scope adjustments	5.00%		\$278,419	5.00%	\$379,928
Owner Development Costs	testing, permits, inspection, etc	5.00%		\$278,419	5.00%	\$379,928
Furnishings & Equipment	allowance		1 lsum	\$200,000.00		\$200,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST						\$6,659,328
						\$9,014,325

FLEXIBLE FIELD NOTE:
 Cost estimates for flexible fields include initial construction of artificial turf surface and associated infrastructure but do not include regular maintenance and future cost considerations. Typically, the carpet (grass & infill) requires replacement every 8-12 years, depending on multiple factors. Additionally, flexible fields provide revenue and programming opportunities that should be considered in budgeting and planning.

Concept design Construction Estimate is a planning tool and does not represent an approved project construction budget. Estimate includes conceptual information provided at the time of preparation and may not include all requirements to complete a future construction project.

PARK PRIORITIZATION TABLE (APPROVED IN 2024 CIP)

Timeline	Park	Improvement	Estimated Project Cost	Funding Source
Short Term (1-5 Years)	Casey Lake Park	Rebuild Existing Shelter	\$44,200	Park Fund
	Casey Lake Park	Hockey Rink Replacement	\$210,200	Park Fund
	Casey Lake Park	Active Playground Installation	\$500,000	Park Fund
	Casey Lake Park	Reutilization of Softball Field	\$100,000	Park Fund
	Polar Park	Playground Improvements	\$90,000	Park Fund
	Polar Park	Internal Trail, New Playground, New Site Furnishings	\$191,000	Park Fund
	Passive Park	New Installation	\$150,000	Park Fund
	McKnight	Fencing	\$60,000	Park Fund
	McKnight	Sports Complex Redesign	\$500,000	Park Fund
	McKnight	Parking Lot	\$500,000	Park Fund
Mid Term (5-10 Years)	McKnight	Softball Field Dugout Replacement	\$60,000	Park Fund
	Silver Lake	Playground Repairs	\$45,000	Park Fund
	Southwood	Bridge and Observation Deck Replacement	\$45,000	Park Fund
	Northwood	Park Reconstruction	\$1,430,000	Park Fund
	Colby Hills	Sport Field	\$25,000	Park Fund
	Various	Pavilion Maintenance	\$64,000	Park Fund
	Urban Ecology	Park Improvements	\$100,000	Park Fund
Long Term (10+ Years)	Casey Lake Park	Parking Lot Repairs	\$40,450	Park Fund
	Casey Lake Park	Fishing Dock Replacement	\$32,900	Park Fund

SHORT TERM PROJECTS (1-5 YEARS)

Project Name: Casey Lake Park Hockey Rink Replacement

Description: Replace and relocate the hockey rink close to the eastern parking lot.

Justification: The hockey rink has poor orientation and is in poor condition and a long distance from any parking. The PIP recommends this as a short-term project to be completed within 1-5 years (from 2022).

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$210,200	Park Fund	2028

Project Name: Casey Lake Park Open Air Shelter

Description: Rebuild an existing shelter that is past its useful life.

Justification: Shelter is past its useful life.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$44,200	Park Fund	2026

Project Name: Polar Park Improvements

Description: The PIP recommends an internal trail loop, expanded playground equipment, and new site furnishings including benches, picnic tables, grills, and bike racks.

Justification: Project recommended by the PIP.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$191,000	Park Fund	2027

Project Name: West End Passive Park

Description: Develop a passive park on city-owned property along the east side of 3rd Street between 7th Avenue and the Gateway State Trail. The site is narrow, sloped, and wooded, which makes 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. small, nature-focused play area might be included to provide safe and convenient play place for nearby residents. Not started in 2024, moved out 1 year.

Justification: Passive open space recommended in the Redevelopment Master Plan to serve new residents at M&I Townhomes, Anchor View Apartments, and existing residents in the vicinity.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$150,000	Park Fund	2026

Project Name: Park Fencing at McKnight

Description: Replace the fencing around the four softball fields at McKnight softball complex.

Justification: Existing fence is reaching the end of its useful life.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$60,000	Park Fund	2027

Project Name: McKnight Dugouts – Four Total

Description: Replace dugouts at the softball fields.

Justification: Dugouts have reached the end of their useful life.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$60,000	Park Fund	2027

Project Name: McKnight Sports Complex Redesign

Description: Currently, there is \$500,000 in the CIP for the McKnight Sports Complex. This item will need to be updated once the cost estimates are completed. Will need some additional design fees associated with this work.

Justification: The McKnight Sports Complex is aging and needs an overhaul and redesign. Currently, the City is working with HGA to develop updated concept plans for future constructions. Total cost to be determined.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$500,000	Park Fund	2026

Project Name: Casey Lake Park Reutilization

Description: Recommendation is to remove Casey Field 3 due to underutilization and create an open green space or small soccer field. Could also include Casey Field 4 as well.

Justification:

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$100,000	Park Fund	2027

Project Name: Casey Lake Park Active Playground

Description: Recommendation to construct a new ninja course or other "active" playground area on the east side of the park. Repair existing hockey rink and create a service road for vehicles to access. Also include a new ADA accessible path in the park.

Justification:

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$500,000	Park Fund	2027

Project Name: Polar Park Playground Improvement

Description: Replace the aging playground equipment in North St. Paul's oldest park.

Justification:

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$90,000	Park Fund	2026

Project Name: McKnight Field Parking Lot

Description: Mill & overlay is a street maintenance technique that requires the removal of the top layer (2") of a street by the grinding of a large milling machine. After the top layer is removed, a new layer of bituminous pavement is put in its place.

Justification: It is recommended that you mill and overlay a parking lot every 15-20 years to improve its longevity.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$500,000	Park Fund	2026

MID TERM PROJECTS (5-10 YEARS)

Project Name: Silver Lake Park Playground

Description: The Silver Lake Park playground equipment will need to be replaced in the next 8-10 years. Currently the 2022 Park Improvement Plan calls for approximately \$941,000 in park improvements. Likely the playground replacement will cost less than that amount.

Justification: Replacement of aging playground equipment provides residents with a safe area for children to play.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$500,000	Park Fund	2032

Project Name: Southwood Park Bridge/Observation Deck Replacement

Description: The metal bridge over the existing creek should be replaced in the next 5-10 years. Additionally, the observation deck needs to be replaced in the next 5-10 years due to weathering issues.

Justification: The bridge allows users to access the entire park by traversing over the creel, and the observation deck allows users to experience and appreciate the park’s water ways.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$45,000	Park Fund	2030

Project Name: Northwood Park Overhaul

Description: The recommendation is for a complete overhaul of the entire Northwood Park area. Remove the underutilized hockey rink. Replace the aging playground equipment. New park and other various play structures.

Justification: The aging park needs a complete overhaul in order for it’s continued use.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$1,430,000	Park Fund	2033

Project Name: Urban Ecology Center Improvements

Description: Add new nature play areas and picnic tables due to it's proximity to the Gateway Trail.

Justification:

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$100,000	Park Fund	2029

Project Name: Colby Hills Sport Field

Description: Create a new sport field at Colby Hills Park.

Justification:

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$25,000	Park Fund	2032

Project Name: Pavilion Maintenance

Description: Pavilion maintenance at Silver Lake, Hause, Northwood and Rotary Parks.

Justification: Structures require regular maintenance, such as exterior painting and necessary repairs.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$64,000	Park Fund	2028-2033

LONG TERM PROJECTS (10+ YEARS)

Project Name: Casey Lake Fishing Dock

Description: Plan for the replacement of the fishing dock at Casey Lake by 2040.

Justification: The dock was installed in 2015.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
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\$32,900	Park Fund	2033-2040
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Project Name: Casey Lake Parking Lot

Description: Mill & overlay is a street maintenance technique that requires the removal of the top layer (2") of a street by the grinding action of a large milling machine. After the top layer is removed, a new layer of bituminous pavement is put in its place.

Justification: It is recommended that you mill and overlay a parking lot every 15-20 years to improve its longevity.

Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Timeline
\$40,450	Park Fund	2034



To

Planning Commissioners

Date

April 3, 2025

Agenda Placement #

Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject

Discussion: Downtown Design Manual

Background/Facts

The Downtown Design Manual was prepared by Kari Haug Planning and Design, Inc. and Claybaugh Preservation Architecture, Inc. for the City of North St. Paul Design and Historical Review Commission in 2005. The Downtown Design Manual was developed to illustrate portions of the North St. Paul City Code and to clearly depict the desired built environment within the North St. Paul Downtown District. It was also developed to communicate, facilitate, educate, guide, and inform the reader about the design review process and regulations contained within the North St. Paul City Code.

This manual was developed to facilitate the Design and Historical Review Commission's design review process, which was required for building renovation plans, property restorations, facade changes, new development, site work, lighting, sign applications, and other design or visual aesthetic issues. This manual, the Comprehensive Plan, and the City Code served as the criteria by which the Design and Historical Review Commission evaluated new development. The Downtown Design Manual was developed as a tool to:

- Help existing business owners and developers design, construct, and maintain storefronts in the downtown district.
- Provide predictability to existing businesses and potential developers about what is going to be built around them in the future and the expected appearance and maintenance of these structures.
- Facilitate the design review process.
- Provide clear illustration of design standards and guidelines according to the North St. Paul City Code.
- Prevent and eliminate conditions that depreciate property values, that cause blight, or are detrimental to personal safety, health, welfare or the environment.

- Provide ideas and encourage use of traditionally successful storefront design concepts.
- Provide an easy application and approval process for projects consistent with the design standards.
- Catalog successful design concepts and locally unique characteristics that collectively form a blueprint for revitalization of downtown.
- Reinforce the vision of a vibrant community center in downtown North St. Paul.
- Provide business owners and potential developers tangible ideas that can be applied in North St. Paul's downtown to improve the potential for economic viability, and make the commercial district a welcome atmosphere for pedestrians.
- Ensure that the built environment embodies the values set forth by the guiding principles.

It is requested that the Planning Commission review the Downtown Design Manual to determine its current relevancy and consistency with the North St. Paul Zoning Ordinance ([Chapter 154 of the City Code](#)).

Recommended Action

Staff recommend the Planning Commission review and discuss the Downtown Design Manual.

Attachments

1. Downtown Design Manual

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Frandle, City Manager



DESIGN MANUAL

DOWNTOWN NORTH SAINT PAUL



DESIGN MANUAL

DOWNTOWN NORTH SAINT PAUL

Prepared for:

The City of North St. Paul
Design and Historical Review Commission

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2005

*North St. Paul Depot circa 1910
Photo from Minnesota Historical Society
Photograph Collection*

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BOUNDARIES OF THE DESIGN DISTRICT

The Downtown Design District includes properties located on the north and the south side of 7th Avenue between 1st Street and Henry Street, properties on both sides of Margaret Street from Highway 36 to 7th Avenue, properties with frontage on the south side of Centennial, and properties on the west side of Charles Street through the block to Margaret Street.



PART I - INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Design Manual

Part I is an introduction to the manual. This introduction provides the reader with background and definitions of terms used in this manual, and an explanation of the design review process, and its purpose. This section concludes with the six guiding principles that form the basis for development of the design standards and guidelines.

Part II lists the standards and guidelines for Downtown North St. Paul. Many different topics are covered from architectural controls to signs, landscapes, lighting, etc.

Part III contains appendices with application forms, checklists, and other helpful information.

Purpose of The Design Manual

The Design Manual was developed to illustrate portions of the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance and to clearly depict the desired built environment within the North St. Paul Downtown District. It also was developed to communicate, facilitate, educate, guide, and inform the reader about the design review process and regulations contained within the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance. Furthermore, this tool was developed to *facilitate* the Design and Historical Review Commission's design review process, which is required for building renovation plans, property restorations, façade changes, new development, site work, lighting, sign applications, and other design or visual aesthetic issues. This manual, the North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan, and the *North St. Paul Code of Ordinance* will serve as the criteria by which The Design and Historical Review Commission will evaluate new development. Please refer to the section titled *Types of Projects that Require a Review* for a complete list of project plans that must be submitted to the Design and Historical Review Commission. In summary, the North St. Paul Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC) developed ***The North Saint Paul Downtown Design Manual*** as a tool to:

- Help existing business owners and developers design, construct, and maintain storefronts in the downtown district
- Provide predictability to existing businesses and potential developers about what is going to be built around them in the future and the expected appearance and maintenance of these structures

Purpose of The Design Manual Continued...

- Facilitate the design review process
- Provide clear illustration of design standards and guidelines according to North St. Paul City Code of Ordinances
- Prevent and eliminate conditions that depreciate property values, that cause blight, or are detrimental to personal safety, health, welfare, or the environment
- Provide ideas and encourage use of traditionally successful storefront design concepts
- Provide an easy application and approval process for projects consistent with the design standards
- Catalogue successful design concepts and locally unique characteristics that collectively form a blueprint for revitalization of downtown
- Reinforce the vision of a vibrant community center in downtown North St. Paul
- Provide business owners and potential developers tangible ideas that can be applied in North St. Paul's downtown to improve the potential for economic viability, and make the commercial district a welcome atmosphere for pedestrians.
- Ensure that the built environment embodies the values set forth by the guiding principles.

Who Should Use This Manual?

This manual has been produced as a general reference for business property owners, tenants, and design professionals engaging in new construction, expansion, remodeling and rehabilitation in North St. Paul's Central Business District also referred to in this manual as the Downtown District or simply Downtown. The manual is also a reference tool for City staff, the Design and Historical Review Commission, the Planning Commission, community leaders, and other decision-makers in evaluating the appropriateness of design proposals.

The Role of Developers and Business Owners

The appearance of a town and the related civic pride of a town can be powerfully impacted by the actions and inactions of its Downtown property owners, influential business leaders, and also by developers choosing to build in the community. In this regard, the citizens, appointed officials, civic leaders, and small business owners respectfully request that those who have the power to impact civic pride do so in the following ways:

Expectations for Developers

The citizens, business owners, and City of North St. Paul expect that developers will:

- Be receptive and responsive to community input
- Consider mixed-use development
- Maintain the small-business/small-town atmosphere through development and retention of small-scale storefronts
- Create and maintain a pedestrian-friendly character
- Create transparent building facades and avoid blank walls
- Develop creative parking designs that respect the pedestrian and streetscape
- Develop buildings in proportion with surrounding buildings
- Respect the public realm and connect to it whenever possible
- Avoid building stand-alone structures
- Respect the future of the community by implementing sustainable building and landscaping practices in your development

Expectations for Existing Business Owners

The citizens, business owners, and City of North St. Paul expect all business owners to:

- Employ as many of the Design Manual recommendations as applicable and economically feasible to enhance the potential for economic prosperity of *all* businesses within the downtown.
- Ensure that storefronts and general building maintenance is in compliance with city ordinances.

The Desired Character of Downtown

The purpose of this section is to clearly communicate the desired character of Downtown. The intention is that by clearly communicating what the desired character is, there will be appropriate actions that will compliment and improve the aesthetic appearance and pedestrian-related function of Downtown, thereby enhancing its economic potential.

North St. Paul would like to preserve and enhance its small-town and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere while at the same time encouraging development that can contribute to a more economically successful Downtown. To do this, new construction, infill buildings, and renovated facades along 7th Avenue should be designed such that they support the small-town and pedestrian-friendly character and facilitate retail and service business functions. This manual contains many illustrations of guidelines and standards that may promote development and renovation that will achieve these ends.

To enhance the special character described as small-town, particular design elements are recommended that will bring forth the unique and distinctly identifiable characteristics associated with a small town. These characteristics have to do with smaller scale buildings, a variety of stores on a main street, convenient services often provided by local merchants, safe and walkable streets, and well-maintained public areas. To enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment, architectural details that create visual interest, safe street crossings and low speed traffic, well lit signs and walkways, appropriate scale and mass of buildings, planted areas, and comfortable, clean seating areas are desired. Clearly visible store entrances; convenient, but unobtrusive parking; housing; and transparent storefronts are desirable elements to improve the economic potential of the district.

Since people tend to travel to destinations to shop and recreate, it is also desirable to bring forth or enhance the distinguishing characteristics of North St. Paul. Without distinguishing elements, every place would look like every other place. The location of a place with a uniquely identifiable character should have clearly defined edges and a center. In other words, it is desirable for a distinct place to have walls, a boundary, or enclosure to define it. A distinguishing name or landmark helps to make a place special and give it a distinct identity. Often landmarks are born out of the history of the place, or a natural or man-made local amenity or resource. In North St. Paul, railroad history, manufacturing history, town traditions, and the local culture all provide potential collective memories waiting to be recalled or icons waiting to be recognized and celebrated.

When considering 7th Avenue, the buildings are what create the walls for the street. Buildings that are too short (one-story) do a poor job of defining the street, providing enclosure, or creating *walls* for the place. Buildings that are too tall (more than three stories) are out of proportion with the existing buildings and would disrupt the existing character of Downtown. For these reasons, we would like new development to be at a scale of two to three stories, a scale compatible and harmonious with the present scale of buildings and one that will allow sunlight to continue to reach our streets while at the same time providing walls to define the place.

Building Height and its Effect on Place-making



If you were to think about a street as an outdoor room, the buildings that line the street would create the walls (streetwalls) for the room. Streets lined with only single-story or occasionally two-story buildings do a poor job of defining the street and therefore do a poor job of *place-making*.

The proportion of one-story buildings to street width is approximately 1:6 or 1:7. Most buildings to the east of Margaret are one-story, while most on the northwest side of the 7th & Margaret intersection are two-story, or 1:4. Given the desire to create a sense of enclosure to establish a sense of place, the height of these buildings should increase over time by one to two stories in order to better define the space and create a *place*.

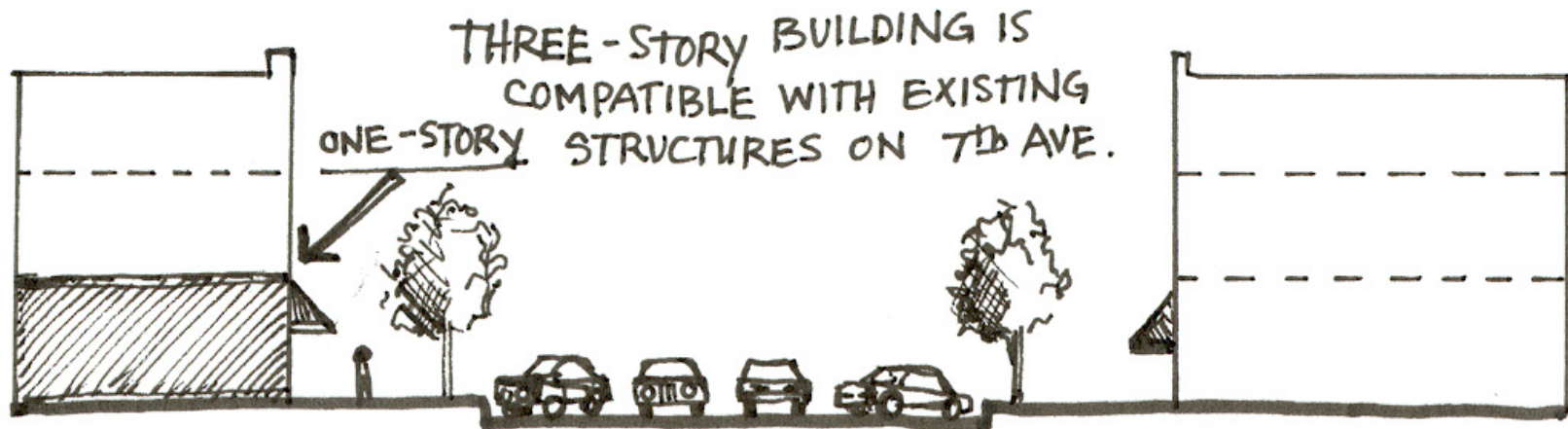


The ideal building to street-width proportion (according to some literature) is 1:2. In the case of North St. Paul, this would be a 50 foot high building or approximately four stories. (Seventh Avenue is 100' wide.) ***BUT, this is NOT the ideal proportion when all factors are considered.***

Buildings four stories in height would provide the necessary height of the streetwall to define the street and create the sense of enclosure that people desire; ***however***, this building height over-powers and appears out of proportion with the one and two-story buildings currently existing on 7th Avenue.

Image below: Southern streetwall of 7th Avenue between Charles and Margaret. Notice the one and two-story buildings, and the parapet on Shangri-La. The ***parapet*** increases the effective height of the building.

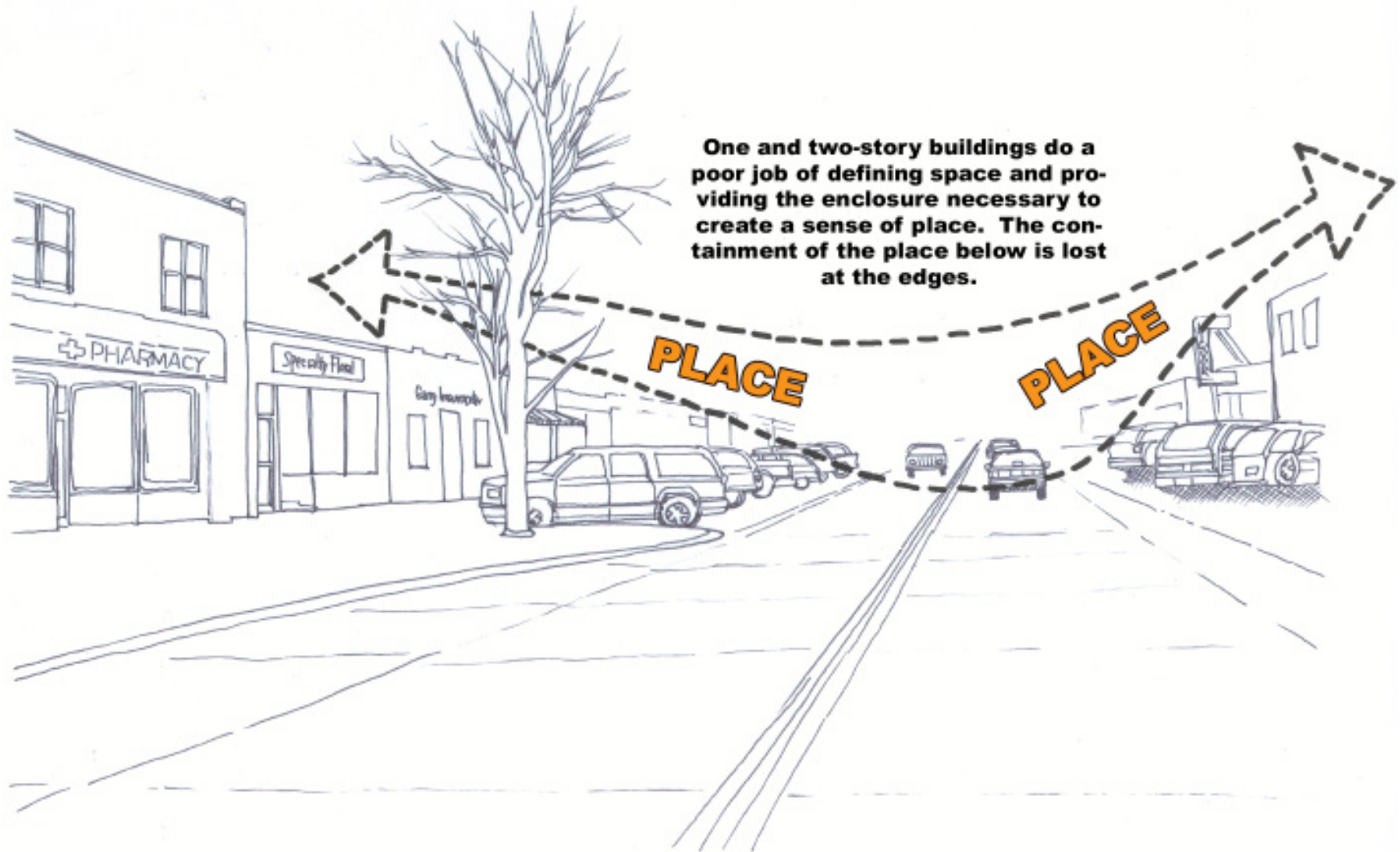




The appropriate building height when *all factors* are considered is approximately 1:3, or two to three-stories. This height is in proportion with existing structures, the width of the street, the desire of the citizens to maintain a small-town atmosphere, and the scale of the pedestrian. The approximate 1:3 proportion would allow three-story buildings up to 40 feet, a size that creates the desired enclosure to make Downtown a “place” while not dwarfing the existing structures.

Image below: Northern streetwall of 7th Avenue between Margaret and the post office. Notice the characteristic two-story buildings.





One and two-story buildings do a poor job of defining space and providing the enclosure necessary to create a sense of place. The containment of the place below is lost at the edges.

PLACE

PLACE



This place has well defined edges.

MAIN STREET AS A "PLACE"

The height of the buildings contains the space creating the sense of enclosure needed for place-making.

Design Review Defined

Design Review is an evaluation of a proposed project to determine if the proposed development will be harmonious with the desired character of the city, and if it is in conformance with the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance, the standards in this design manual, and the North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan 1998 - 2020.

Important Note: If there is any discrepancy between this manual and the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance, the Code of Ordinance shall govern.

The Design and Historical Review Commission conducts a design review of any proposed new construction, architectural, landscape, or elemental change (including sign changes) that may have an impact on the aesthetics of the City of North St. Paul. The review ensures that the design standards are being met by new development and that renovations make upgrades necessary to meet the standards.

The Purpose of Design Review

The purpose of design review is to:

- Secure the general purposes of the North St. Paul Comprehensive Plan
- Maintain the character and integrity of North St. Paul's neighborhoods and commercial districts by promoting excellence of design and development
- Prevent traffic hazards
- Provide adequate services
- Encourage development in harmony with its surroundings

The Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC)

The Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC) is a seven-member advisory commission appointed by the City Council. Each of five commissioners at large are appointed by the City Council for a two-year term. One City Council member and one city staff member fill the other two commission positions. The Commission meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4:00 P.M. at the North St. Paul City Hall. The city code governing the commission can be found under Title III – Governance, Chapter 32, Section 32.50 of the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance.

The Commission was established for the purpose of ensuring the preservation of North St. Paul’s historic landmarks and ensuring that public and private property are maintained and developed in harmony with the desired character of the city and in conformance with the North St. Paul Code of Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan 1998 - 2020. Its objectives are to:

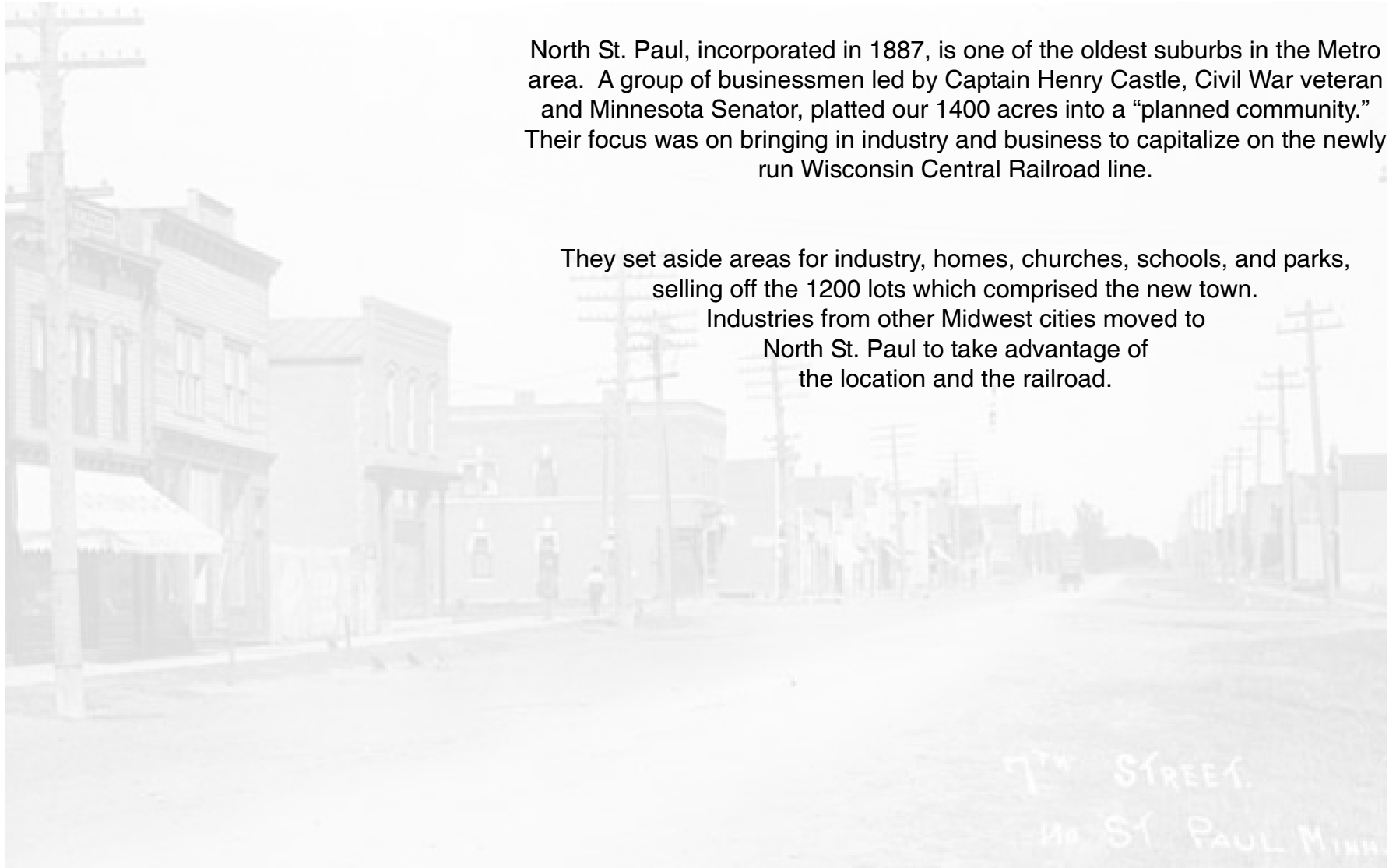
- (A) Encourage the harmonious growth and appearance of structures and property within the city;
- (B) Preserve the historical heritage of the city;
- (C) Maintain and improve property values throughout the city by insuring property owner compliance with the design regulations of the Zoning Code; and
- (D) Encourage the physical development of the city as intended by the city’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.

The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council. After reviewing proposals for new construction, renovation, facade changes, or other proposals requiring review, the Commission may recommend approval, denial, or approval with certain conditions. Upon completion of a design review, the Commission makes necessary reports and recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council. Occasionally it is necessary to have a joint meeting with the Planning Commission, which is scheduled as needed. Final decisions on proposals are made by the City Council.

HISTORY OF NORTH ST. PAUL

North St. Paul, incorporated in 1887, is one of the oldest suburbs in the Metro area. A group of businessmen led by Captain Henry Castle, Civil War veteran and Minnesota Senator, platted our 1400 acres into a “planned community.” Their focus was on bringing in industry and business to capitalize on the newly run Wisconsin Central Railroad line.

They set aside areas for industry, homes, churches, schools, and parks, selling off the 1200 lots which comprised the new town. Industries from other Midwest cities moved to North St. Paul to take advantage of the location and the railroad.



East 7th Street

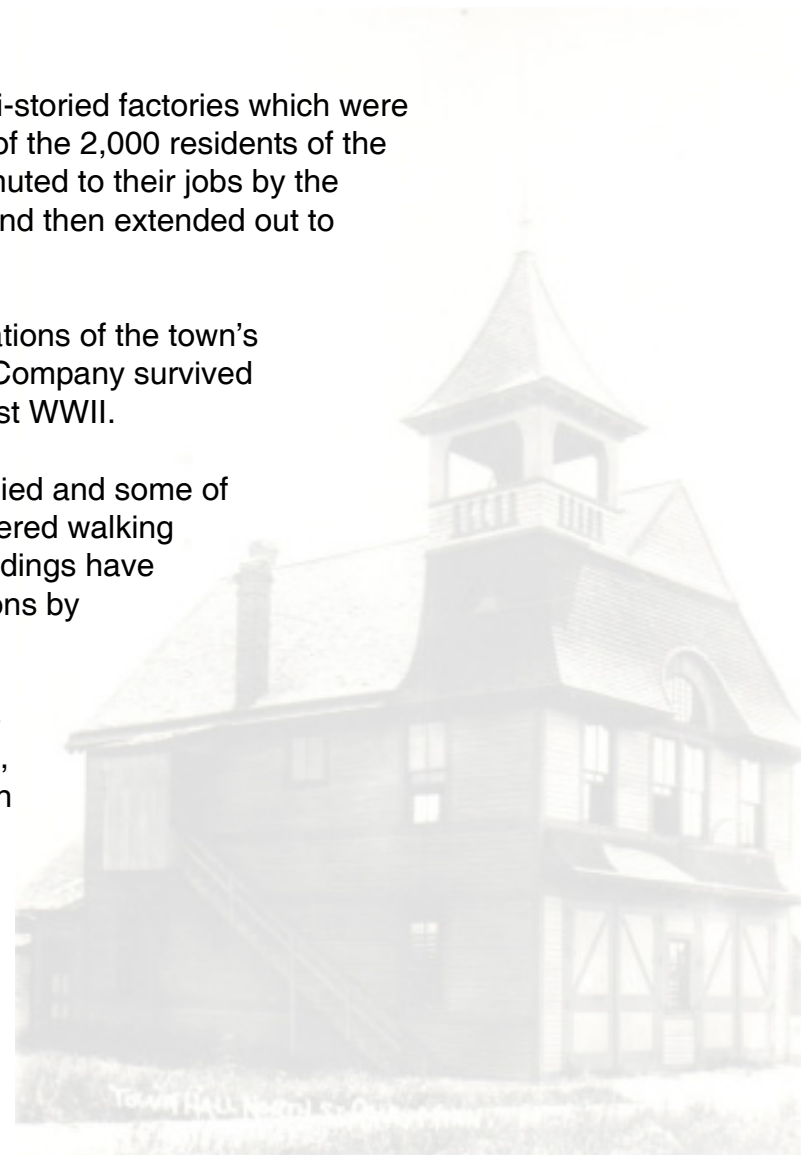
A brickyard was established to manufacture bricks for the multi-storied factories which were built to produce furniture, caskets, pianos, and organs. Many of the 2,000 residents of the town worked at the various companies in town. Others commuted to their jobs by the streetcar line which ran between St. Paul and North St. Paul and then extended out to Mahtomedi and White Bear Lake.

A national recession in 1893 dealt a severe blow to the aspirations of the town's leaders, but the Luger Furniture Company and Luger Lumber Company survived the down turn and furnished jobs and industry well past WWII.

Many of the original homes built in the late 1880s are still occupied and some of the original business buildings are still in daily use. The numbered walking tour of North St. Paul points out these sites. Some of these buildings have been identified as eligible for National Historic Site designations by Ramsey County.

Local news and information has been published weekly by the Ramsey County Review, successor to the Sentinel, since 1887, and Neumann's boasts the oldest continuously operating saloon in Minnesota.

Current industries have contributed much to the development of the industry in North St. Paul, and plans for economic development will continue to insure the future of the community.



Old Town Hall - North St. Paul

Types of Projects in the Downtown Design District That Require a Review

- I. All new construction requires review.
- II. Proposals to construct, expand, restore, remodel, or otherwise change a building in the Central Business District require a review if the square footage involves more than:
 - a.) 400 square feet or more of a building
 - b.) 24 lineal feet of the facade of a building fronting on a street
 - c.) 24 square feet of a facade fronting on a street
 - d.) A significant architectural detail of the building
 - e.) A change in land use involving a conditional use permit
- III. All new signs larger than 15 square feet and/or numbering more than 2 per business require a review. Repair or replacement of signs that do not comply with the standards contained herein also require review. If signs are not within code, they must be brought up to code if altered, repaired, or replaced.
- IV. All new landscaping projects.

Application Procedure and The Design Review Process

A goal of the City of North St. Paul is to provide developers and business owners with the most uncomplicated building and renovation process possible, thereby facilitating the downtown revitalization process. One of the objectives in striving for this goal is to provide developers and business owners with an efficient review process. When a change in the built environment is proposed within the city of North St. Paul, the procedure is to pick up the **Design Manual, Building Permit Application**, and the appropriate **Supplement(s) to the Building Permit Application** at the Community Services Department desk. The Community Services Department will facilitate the movement of your project to the appropriate review commission(s) and department(s) necessary to obtain approval(s) for your project. Some of the application forms can also be obtained on the web at www.northstpaul.net, or in the appendix of this manual. The following steps comprise the review procedure:

Step 1: File Application. Ten (10) days prior to the next (2nd Tuesday of every month) Design and Historical Review Commission meeting, file a *Building Permit Application* **with the appropriate submittal materials and supplemental form(s)** at the Community Services Desk, North St. Paul City Hall, 2400 Margaret Street, North St. Paul, MN 55109.

Step 2: Schedule a Review. Contact the Community Services Department (phone: 651-747-2440) to schedule your review date(s). Most likely your application will be reviewed at the next scheduled DHRC meeting if it was received at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting. **NOTE:** You may also have to schedule meetings with the City Building and Zoning Official and Planning Commission.

Step 3: DHRC Review. Your project will be reviewed by the Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC) and you will have the opportunity to discuss it with them. If you are asked to make amendments to your application, you will be given the opportunity to make minor amendments. If changes are not that simple, you will be scheduled for a follow-up review. After review by the DHRC, your application will be forwarded as necessary to planning and/or engineering and then will be returned to the Community Services Desk. If your proposal is approved by the DHRC, they will write a report to the City Council informing them of the approval. If your proposal is not approved, you and the Council will receive a report stating the reasons it was not approved. **NOTE:** For new development, developers are encouraged to participate in review at each phase of planning, starting with design concept. This may save developers a considerable amount of time and planning expense.

Step 4: City Council Approval. The DHRC report will recommend **approval, denial, or approval with certain conditions** to the City Council. The City Council will take this information into consideration when they vote on your project.

Step 5: Obtain Permit(s). Upon City Council approval of your proposal, the Building Official will complete the review of your building plans for compliance with state building codes. Upon approval of the Building Official, you will be notified and appropriate permits may be obtained from the Community Services Department. Projects CANNOT be started without appropriate permit(s).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Through careful consideration and planning, the City of North St. Paul has developed six guiding principles that the City believes will foster a strong local economy; and a cohesive, vibrant, and livable community. These design principles are based upon the successes of traditional city planning and the recognition that a new planning paradigm for the 21st Century is imperative for sustenance of livable communities.

The six principles are:

- 1.) The public domain (public parks, trails, town squares, civic buildings, streetscapes/sidewalks) must be reintroduced as an *important* component of suburban community planning. Stand-alone buildings and developments will not be allowed in the Central Business District.

Private development and the public domain should mutually reinforce each other. New development should contribute to the community, be aesthetically pleasing, and physically connected to the public realm/community as a whole. Stand-alone developments break continuity and unity of the community.

Existing public structures should be repaired, renovated and maintained, and new development should articulate and connect to the public domain wherever possible. The public domain is that which belongs to all citizens, but which no one owns. When cared for, it is the wellspring of collective civic pride and the geographical expression of American unity and identity. The public domain is furthermore the physical form of the common good and provides the public places necessary for expression of civil liberties such as the right to assemble and speak freely in public. It is the connective tissue of healthy communities and its importance should be recognized and highlighted.



2.) The scale of buildings and speed of cars on the streets should be in proportion to the human dimension and pace, and in proportion with the existing Downtown streetscape.

In places that humans live and play, the size and speed of technology should not overpower the humanity that produced it, unless one is seeking a thrill. An everyday environment that overwhelms the human being can create a sense of discomfort and undermine ones sense of personal security. Automobiles tend to have the capability of overwhelming humans with their speed and size; therefore, traffic-calming techniques and design techniques that separate the pedestrian realm from that of the auto are encouraged.

In order to maintain and enhance the comfortable small-town atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul, building scale should be harmonious and in proportion with our community and the people who live here. Building scale includes all elements of a proposed development: the building footprint, height, width, and associated parking.

Humans prefer to be in places that enclose them, and seek out places with pleasing proportions (Kunstler, 1996.) We believe that two to three story buildings in Downtown will enhance the streetscape proportion, be harmonious with the existing buildings, and provide the desired sense of streetscape enclosure without compromising the integrity of the small-town atmosphere.

3.) The streetscape and storefronts should be designed for the pedestrian.

The building design should help make the street enjoyable, visually interesting and comfortable. Individual buildings should be integrated with the streetscape to bring activity in the building in direct contact with the people on the street.





Storefronts should have a recognizable entryway and transparent display windows. A storefront that is clearly permeable is more welcoming to the potential patron and will likely be more economically successful than one that has a difficult-to-find entrance and blank walls without windows.

The streetscape should provide an interesting, safe and walkable atmosphere for persons of all abilities. Architectural detail, proximity of parking that is accessible but unobtrusive, traffic calming techniques and well-designed and safe walking surfaces/pathways contribute to a pedestrian-oriented environment.

4.) Downtown properties should be diverse in use and serve a diverse population.



Diversity and interdependence are fundamental to a healthy community ecosystem. Communities built upon a singular industry or monoculture are less likely to survive fluctuations in the economy. Buildings that provide urban living and commercial space bring people to downtown and provide easy access to the commodities and services that they need and want.

This type of development is a departure from traditional “zoned” development where residents live in remote locations from the places they work and shop, requiring a trip in the automobile or bus to meet the needs of everyday life. A return to urban residential living in a mixed-use environment will give new freedom to adolescents who don’t yet drive or the elderly who no longer drive.

5.) New development and renovation projects should integrate environmentally responsible and sustainable development practices whenever possible.



We are stewards of our earth and we must respect the delicate balance of nature. Environmentally responsible and sustainable development recognizes the need for a new design paradigm for the 21st Century, a

paradigm that respects our environment and meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Although the rights of private property owners are recognized and appreciated, it is because of the concern for the well-being of future generations and the finite nature of our natural resources that we support environmental conservation and compact development as opposed to uncontrolled consumption and sprawl. Application of knowledge and technology that conserves water and land, and protects air quality is supported.

- 6.) Development and renovations should strive to preserve the character, place identity, and the “small town atmosphere” of downtown North St. Paul.

Certain characteristics that people tend to associate with small towns are becoming more desirable in the 21st Century as we are beginning to recognize how much long commutes and the isolating effects of the automobile have eroded the quality of American life. The small town characteristics of accessibility and proximity of commodities, entertainment, and personalized service are being sought out by many individuals. In addition, small towns provide a sense of simplicity, stability, security, community and belonging; characteristics that North St. Paul would like to maintain and continue to provide for its citizens in future.

Architectural detail, proportion, spatial form and configuration should be thoughtfully considered as they contribute to community character/place identity and impact citizens’ sense of civic pride, attachment and responsibility for their community. These details also contribute to fulfillment of certain psychological needs of people, such as the need for personal security, spatial orientation and understanding, and beauty.



*Lawson's Grocery Store
Photo from Minnesota Historical Society
Photograph Collection*

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Based upon the guiding principles, this Design Manual has been developed. The guidelines and standards that follow are the building blocks that will give the principles life and ensure harmonious design. They are also intended to move the overall design of Downtown North St. Paul toward a more successful specialty retail and service-oriented street design while at the same time maintaining a character that is compatible with the existing small-town character of Downtown North St. Paul. The guidelines and standards form a consistent framework that will guide development so that rather than ending up with a hodgepodge of disconnected design, the city may present itself as a united entity. On the following pages you will find good design examples for the layperson as well as information that will help shop owners to express their individuality through storefront design, signage, architectural features, etc.

What are Design Guidelines?

Design ***guidelines*** are intended to provide business owners and potential developers with examples of and ideas for well-designed Downtown spaces. While ***some guidelines are also standards, others are merely suggestions*** for improving the appearance of Downtown. We hope that all business owners will find beneficial design recommendations that will help their businesses thrive.

What are Design Standards?

A design ***standard*** is a ***specific criteria limitation*** placed on development and uses which is intended to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Development and uses include ***infill development*** and existing building renovation or alterations of the built environment including sign or lighting changes. ***Standards*** establish the performance requirements that must be met when renovating, rehabilitating, or otherwise making changes in the built environment. The standards also include maintenance requirements that are enforceable by code in order to prevent public nuisances. Some standards are intended to prevent and eliminate conditions which depreciate property values, that cause blight, or are detrimental to the environment.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *It is important to note that the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance is the governing document. Standards included in this manual may be in abbreviated form and are presented here for reference. If there is any discrepancy between the standards in this manual and the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance, the Code of Ordinance will govern.*

Streetscape Elements and Materials Palette

Often when discussing design, one will hear the phrase “*variety within unity*” as a desirable design feature. When applying this to community design, the *variety* is provided by the individual expression of business owners through storefront design; while the *unity* is provided by the elements within the public realm, ie., the sidewalks, streets, benches, lights, parks, town squares, planters, bus stops, civic plazas, public buildings, and a plan for connection and arrangement of these public elements.

One way that unity is established within the public realm is through *consistency* in the palette of materials and elements that make up the public domain. The **Streetscape Materials and Elements Palette** found on the following pages includes the palette of materials and elements that North St. Paul has chosen to use whenever a repair or renovation of the streetscape is necessary. By replacing materials and elements that have fallen into disrepair with a consistent palette, and installing new elements from a given palette, greater unity will be established on 7th Avenue.



The bench, trash can, and planter are from DuMor, Inc. The color is green. The local provider is Earl F. Anderson, Inc.



The trash cans can be modified for recycling with lids that designate cans and bottles versus trash.

Streetscape Elements and Materials Palette Continued...

Intent: To create a strong place identity by providing uniformity and consistency in the character of the streetscape. The streetscape is the connective framework that creates unity and continuity for the Downtown. The individual storefronts provide elements that create variety within the unity.

Guideline: When making improvements to private property that connects with the public domain, including the addition of bike racks, trash receptacles, parking structures, fences, or benches, property owners should match approved North St. Paul styles whenever possible.

Standard: When a renovation, redevelopment, or new construction damages existing public streetscape elements, those elements must be replaced with approved North St. Paul streetscape elements.



The paving pattern in front of city hall is herringbone with a soldier course perimeter. The pavers are the Holland paver from Anchor Block in the North Oaks color.



Brick planters, seatwalls, partial walls with a concrete cap or wrought iron fencing with plantings are examples of the preferred type of screening structure for private property that connects with the public realm.



Tree guards should be placed on trees that are in danger of being damaged by City plows.



Whenever possible, combining signs should be considered. The Downtown signs should have a camelback shape versus the rectangular shape of signs outside of the district.

Site Design and Layout

Building Orientation - Setbacks

Intent: This guideline ensures the visibility of all business storefronts along the street and encourages business activity that is in close proximity to the sidewalk. Furthermore, this guideline helps to establish unity and continuity of the streetwall.

A building that is set back from the streetwall interrupts the continuity of the streetwall structure. It is the streetwall that creates the space or volume within the street that is a critical component of place-making which in turn is a component of many successful business districts.

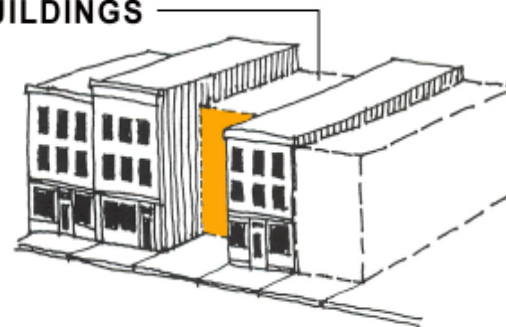
Guidelines: Buildings should be built flush to the sidewalk and flush with adjacent buildings.

Standards: Infill buildings shall be built flush to the sidewalk and flush to adjacent buildings. No side setbacks are allowed unless next to a public pedestrian way or residential district where setback is required. If the property owner applies for a variance, special provision for signage and architectural structure contiguous with the streetwall (such as a brick planter or seat wall) must be part of the design. Furthermore, the design and specified use must contribute to the activity of the street and meet all other design criteria. For example, the plan must still have a clearly identifiable entrance and pedestrian-oriented design.



Build in Line with Adjacent Buildings

AVOID SETBACK FROM ADJACENT BUILDINGS



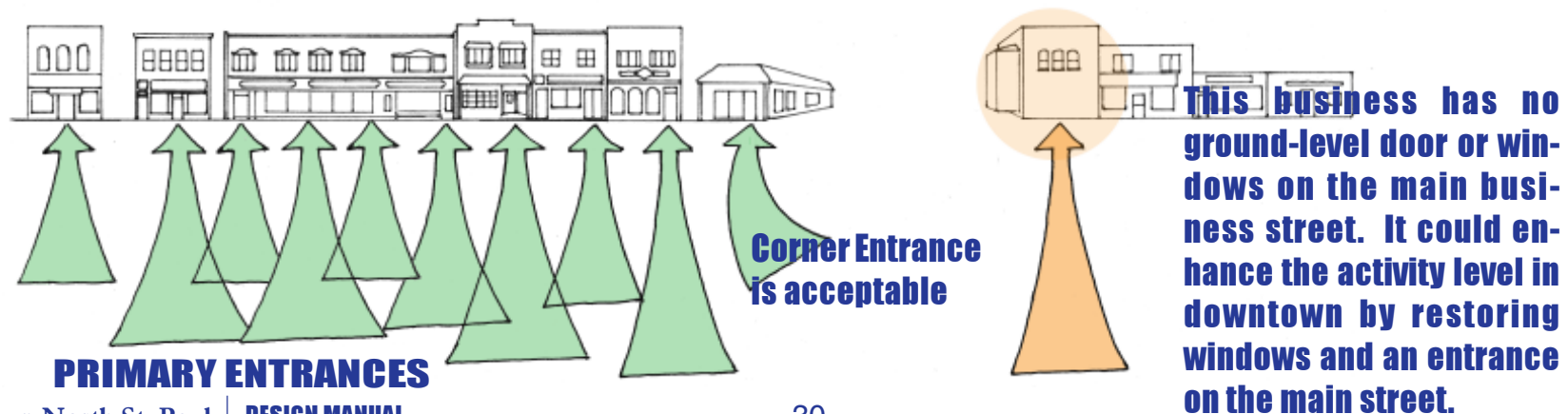
Building Orientation - Entrances

Intent: To provide clearly identifiable, welcoming, and convenient primary entrances to businesses from the main business corridor(s.)

People traveling along the main streets in the central business district should be able to easily see storefronts, windows, doors, and other aspects of business activity. Primary entrances that are not easy to find or that are located “around back” or “to the side” may confuse patrons or make the shopping experience less convenient. Patrons coming and going from businesses create a vibrant shopping atmosphere. It is desirable to keep this activity concentrated on the main street.

Guidelines: If your building is on 7th Avenue, there should be a clearly identified primary entrance for your business opening directly onto 7th Avenue. If there is opportunity for a secondary entrance to open onto a secondary street, it should not have the same prominence as the primary entrance. If your business occupies the “back” half of a building on 7th Avenue, your primary entrance may be on Seppala Blvd. In this case, you should have a primary entrance that is clearly marked opening directly to Seppala. Businesses should consider dual access points for corner lots, a primary access on the main commercial street and a secondary one on the secondary commercial street.

Standards: All buildings on 7th Avenue must have a clearly marked 7th Avenue entrance opening flush to the sidewalk. The primary entrance to a business in the Downtown Design District must be at grade with the sidewalk and there shall be visibly and functionally clear access. Entrances must be ADA compliant where required. If the building is on a corner, a corner access is allowed provided it is clearly marked. A secondary access is allowed at the rear of the building or on a side street. All businesses that have a public entrance on Seppala Boulevard shall have a clearly marked entrance.



Rear Entrances

Intent: To encourage the development of double street frontages and to establish rear building entrances that have a welcoming appearance.

Guideline: If there is a public rear entrance, it should be clean and well maintained and present a welcoming appearance. A small sign, awning, display window, or planter box can improve the appearance and make the entrance more visible and welcoming.

Standard: If the primary entrance to a business is in the rear portion of a building, it must be clearly marked. Trash containers must be a minimum of 12' from any entrance.

Examples of enhanced rear entrances



Landscaping and Impervious Surfaces

Intent: To reduce storm water runoff; to screen out undesirable views; to provide shade; to buffer residential districts; and to enhance the pedestrian atmosphere.

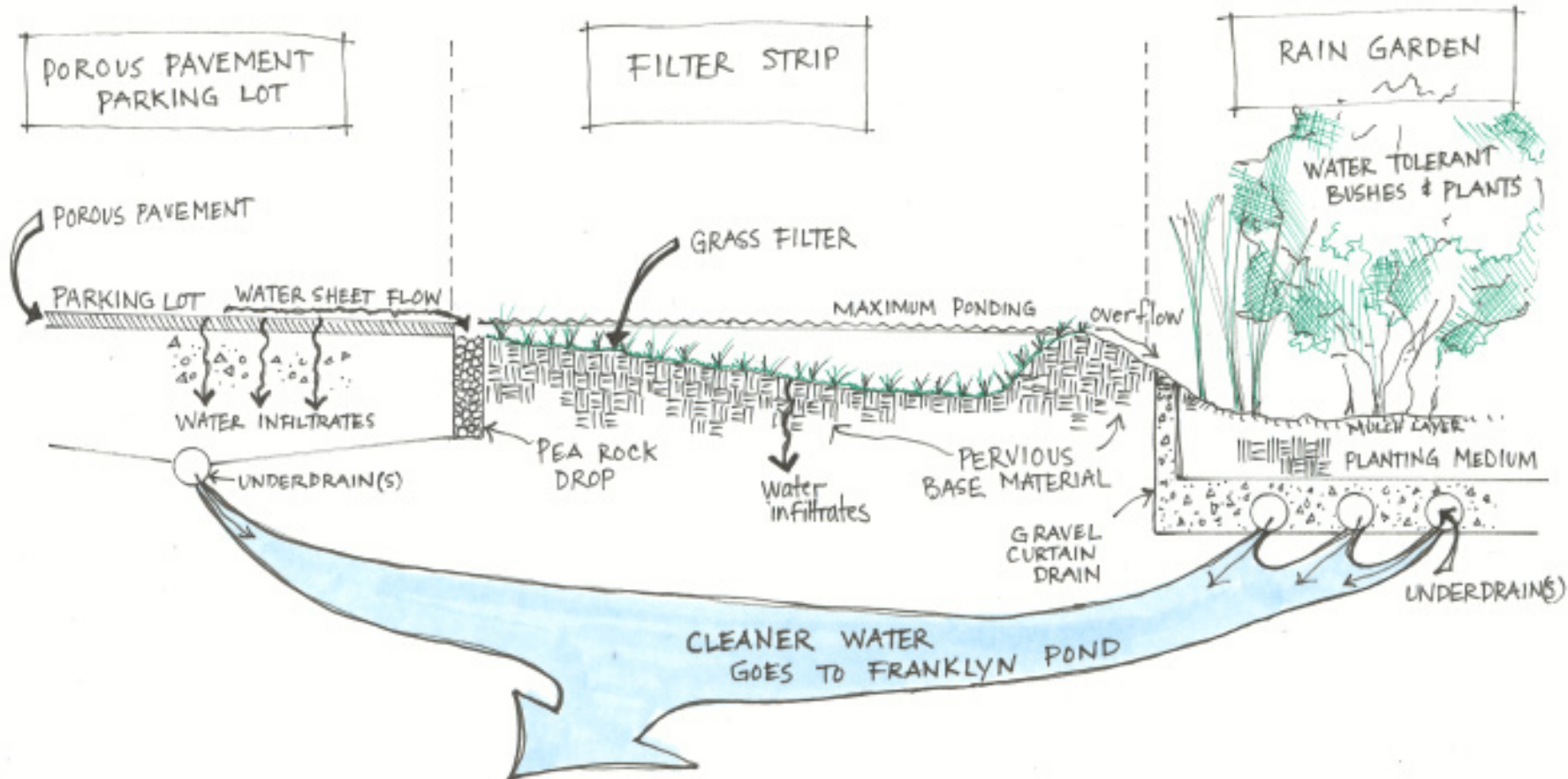
The benefit of plants and the color green has been the topic of many researchers. In the 19th Century, Central Park was built to “solve the ills of the tenements in New York City” and the new Minneapolis Public Library is using green roof technology to mitigate storm water runoff and manage rooftop temperature. Although North St. Paul is not a big city it can still do its part to be sensitive to the environment and the pedestrian experience; therefore, the following landscape guidelines are encouraged.

Guideline: The use of flower boxes, large flower pots, and public landscape areas in Downtown is encouraged. Surface parking lots should consider avoiding use of curbs to direct storm water; instead, consider the use of vegetated filter strips at the edge of the lot, rain gardens in below grade median islands, and porous pavements with infiltration beds below the parking surface. Landscaping can be used to mitigate impervious surfaces like parking lots and to enhance the pedestrian realm.

Standard: Parking lots shall have landscaping, including berming where appropriate, along the outside edge. Parking bays shall, wherever appropriate, have landscaped islands. Parking of more than 20 cars in a row shall be broken up by a landscaped island or a landscape feature having a width of at least eight feet and a depth of at least 15 feet. A minimum of 2% of the gross lot size of infill development must provide for landscaping that allows infiltration of storm water. Curb and gutter shall be used where necessary according to the Planning Commission and City Engineer.



Examples of the use of potted plants to enhance the pedestrian experience.



The storm water management techniques illustrated above are just three of the many possible ways to improve water quality and reduce runoff through landscape design.

Parking Lots

Intent: To maintain a contiguous and safe pedestrian walkway along storefronts; to encourage more productive use of land; and to encourage the building of a more sustainable environment in North St. Paul.

Surface lots consume valuable land (contributing to sprawl) and create large *impervious surfaces* that contribute to excessive *storm water runoff* and the *heat island effect*. Surface temperatures on asphalt parking lots can reach up to 150 degrees and can contribute to rainwater runoff greater than 90% in some urban areas. Furthermore, when parking lots separate storefronts from pedestrians or their driveways interrupt strolling shoppers, the pedestrian shopping experience is adversely affected.

Guideline: When undertaking an infill development project, underground parking and/or parking ramp structures should be considered over surface parking lots. Parking structures adjacent to public right of ways should be designed using the recommended *North St. Paul Streetscape Elements and Materials Palette*. Design of entrance drives that do not cross pedestrian walkways is encouraged.

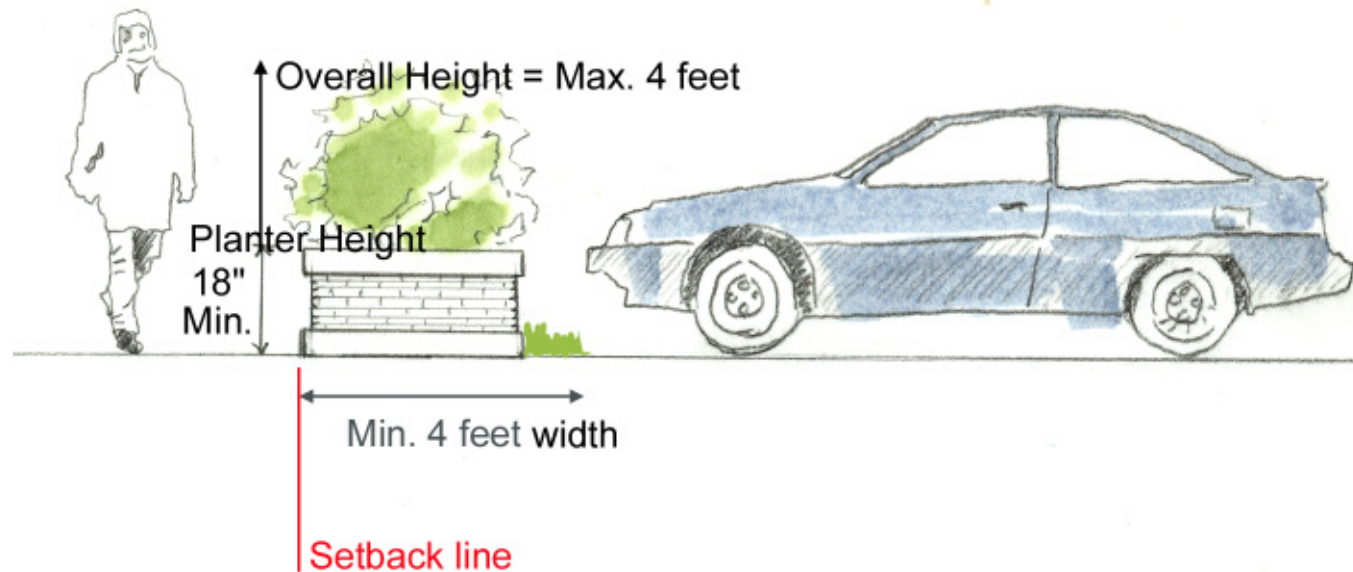
Standard: If parking structures are built, they must be designed to avoid blank concrete facades where visible to the public. The same materials standard that applies to building facades applies to parking structures (ie., 50% brick facade adjacent to public right-of-ways.) Entrance to parking lots between buildings and behind buildings must be provided from streets other than 7th Avenue. No private parking lot entrance drives are allowed to cross the sidewalk on 7th Avenue; however, one entrance per block is allowed for municipal lots.

Parking Screening

Intent: To reduce the visual impact of parking lots; to provide convenient and sufficient parking to serve the patrons in the Downtown District without compromising the pedestrian character of the District.

Guidelines: *Seatwall* planters with plantings are the recommended screening structure. The property owner should consider constructing the screen with North St. Paul Streetscape Palette materials. Plantings should be some type of native vegetation that provides a mix for year-round interest and/or bird habitat in the form of evergreen vegetation, berries, or colorful stems and seed heads.

Standards: Surface parking lots must be screened from the public street and sidewalk by decorative fences and plantings, or brick planters with cement caps with plantings. The minimum width of the screening buffer is four feet, minimum planter height is 18 inches and maximum overall height is 4 feet. Minimum wall or fence height is three feet and maximum height is 4 feet. The parking “screen” shall be continuous, not exceeding 50 feet in length without providing a pedestrian exit/entrance point that doesn’t exceed five feet in width. The “screen” must maintain the same setback requirements as buildings in Downtown and must not encroach on public sidewalks or streets. Plantings must be properly maintained. Examples of improperly maintained plantings are: dead or brown plants, weeds or garbage in planters, excessive height or width due to lack of pruning.



Utility Areas and Mechanical Equipment Screening

Intent: To enhance the pedestrian experience by blocking odors, noise and visual pollution from garbage collection areas, loading docks, HVAC and other service areas.

Guideline: Visually pleasing service area fencing is encouraged. Use of brick or natural stone is preferable. Wood fencing is discouraged as it is difficult to maintain. If it is used, detail for visual interest is encouraged. Co-location of garbage and recycling receptacles is encouraged.

Standard: Trash and storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers and air conditioning units, if located outside, shall be contained and screened from view of nearby streets and adjacent structures in a manner that is compatible with the building and site design. For new construction, the same architectural materials used on the building must be used to contain mechanical equipment and utility areas.

The use of non-transparent fencing is required to screen dumpsters, but only to a maximum height of 72 inches immediately enclosing the dumpster and a maximum of two additional 32-gal. garbage cans. If a common service area has been designated, it must be used and all service related items must be contained within it. If wood is used for the screen, it must be stained and maintained. Examples of poorly maintained dumpster screens are those where parts of the screen are cracked, broken, or missing; hinges are loose or broken; or wood is unfinished or weathered. All waste and recyclables shall be stored in metal dumpsters or approved plastic waste containers with secure lids that prevent intrusion by rain or animals. Waste containers must be screened on all four sides (one side gated for waste collection access) with screening material that is compatible with the principle structure of the business.



Rooftop Mechanical Equipment Screening

Intent: To screen rooftop mechanical and communications equipment where visible from surrounding properties and the public right-of-way.

Guideline: When undertaking new construction, mechanical equipment should be integrated into the design of the building such that it is not visible from adjacent properties or to pedestrians and motorists on public right-of-ways.

Standards: All rooftop equipment shall be designed to minimize undesirable views when viewing rooftops from higher elevations, abutting property; and public right-of-ways. Screening shall be accomplished through the use of architectural elements and materials which are consistent with the building design and architectural controls of the area. Painting equipment, building a fence, or using screening material inconsistent with the rest of the building is not allowed.

Fences

Intent: To maintain a safe, welcoming, small-town and pedestrian-oriented environment; to prevent visual blight caused by fencing maintenance issues; to promote the design of an environment of trust and one that invites people in as opposed to keeping people out.

Guideline: If fencing is needed, a sustainable product like wrought iron or brick should be used to prevent deterioration and maintenance problems that could arise from use of wood or another unsustainable product. Although fences constructed to serve an intended function such as containment or protection of a specific area will have certain structural requirements, property owners should also consider use of decorative elements in the construction of the fence to contribute to visual interest for the pedestrian. Good visibility of property creates a safer environment, so if fencing is necessary, it should be easily seen through or over (see photo below.)

Standard: Fences shall not be allowed unless absolutely necessary for a functional reason. Fencing is allowed for the following purposes:

1. To contain or protect a planted area.
2. To contain an area for sidewalk dining (must allow for a minimum of six feet free passage on the sidewalk.)
3. To separate parking areas from sidewalks.

When allowed, only sustainable fencing material shall be used such as powder coated wrought iron or anodized metal fencing. If fencing is on the public right-of-way, it must utilize the *North St. Paul Streetscape Elements and Materials Palette*. Wooden fences tend to deteriorate and lack the sustainable quality of metals; therefore, they are not allowed except in designated service areas to screen dumpsters (see *Utility Area Screening*.) Permanent bars on windows are not allowed. Solid security gates are not allowed. Fences must be no higher than necessary to serve the intended functional purpose. All fences must be easily seen through above 48 inches unless the fence is used to conceal a dumpster.

Recommended Fence Material

If the purpose of this fence was to merely separate diners from the sidewalk area, it should be shorter; however, this fence also secures the property located within while at the same time allowing clear visibility to the interior of the space.

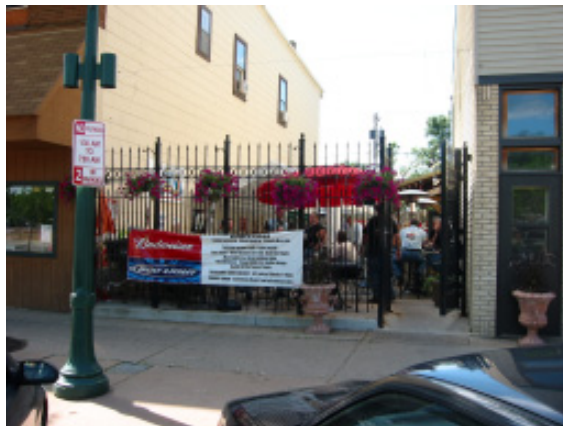


Outdoor Seating

Intent: To encourage outdoor seating as an amenity that compliments the pedestrian atmosphere and activity level in the downtown district and to ensure adequate space for pedestrians to pass adjacent to sidewalk dining areas and in and out of neighboring businesses. Furthermore, guidelines below are intended to prevent automobiles from interfering with diners and to ensure that vehicles have clear traffic sight-lines at corners.

Guidelines: Restaurants or food service establishments in Downtown are encouraged to set up outdoor dining areas. Dining areas are especially recommended along the sides of buildings where no other use is designated. It is recommended to define the dining area with a railing and planters to enhance the dining experience.

Standards: Food service establishments may only use public space directly in front of or directly to the side of their storefront and must not encroach on neighboring storefronts or properties (a one foot buffer at the property line must be maintained.) The seating area must also maintain a two foot buffer distance from the curb where there is parallel or angle parking. Where there is angle parking, tire stops are required such that car bumpers will not cross the curb-line. Tire stops must be removed in the winter. At corners, and in other areas where traffic is not buffered by parking, seating must maintain a six foot distance from the curb, and again, planters are recommended within the buffer zone. Umbrellas and other such objects that may impair sight-lines at corners must be set back 15 feet from the corner. Dining areas must be defined by an ADA compliant temporary railing at the border, must be visible to pedestrians, and must maintain six feet of clearance for pedestrian passage on the sidewalk. The six-foot “clear zone” shall be designated by the city. Because of seasonal needs such as snow removal, outdoor seating is only allowed from April 15 to Oct. 15 and must be removed from the sidewalk during non-business hours.



**Outdoor seating
is encouraged.**

Mixed Use

Intent: To provide a mix of uses so that the street stays active throughout the day and into the evening; to encourage housing Downtown that will not adversely affect activity at street level, but rather contribute to activity by putting people in proximity to goods and services; to prevent street-level building uses that don't contribute to an active streetscape.

A partial list of mixed uses that are encouraged in the Downtown District includes housing, retail, services, offices, entertainment, and food service. Examples of passive uses that are discouraged include: non-service offices, housing. For a complete list, refer to the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance.

Guideline: Housing and office space on the second story or above is encouraged in Downtown buildings. Uses should be mixed vertically within buildings and horizontally from building to building. A vertical mix of uses might include retail or services on the ground floor and residences or offices on the upper floors. A horizontal mix of uses might include different kinds of stores and services interspersed. A door to upper-level housing may open onto the main street provided the doorway has architectural treatment(s) that distinguish the private space from the public space. The doorway may not take up more than 25% of the lineal store frontage.

Standard: The street-level floor of all buildings in the Downtown Design District must contribute to an active streetscape. Examples of active uses include: retail, entertainment, or service-oriented uses. Housing and non-service office space is not allowed on the ground floor.



Franchise Architecture

Intent: To maintain the unique small-town character of Downtown North St. Paul and to ensure that all buildings connect to the public realm and are not stand-alone structures.

Standard: Trademark architecture (building design that is identified with a particular chain store and is reproduced in the same form and color regardless of location) is not allowed in Downtown North St. Paul. Franchises that wish to locate in Downtown North St. Paul must build a building that is compatible with the architectural scale and character in the district. The main entrance of the building must connect to the public realm and not to a parking lot.



Examples of trademark architecture



Examples of franchise businesses that have designed storefronts that are compatible with the surrounding architecture



Proportion, Height, and Width

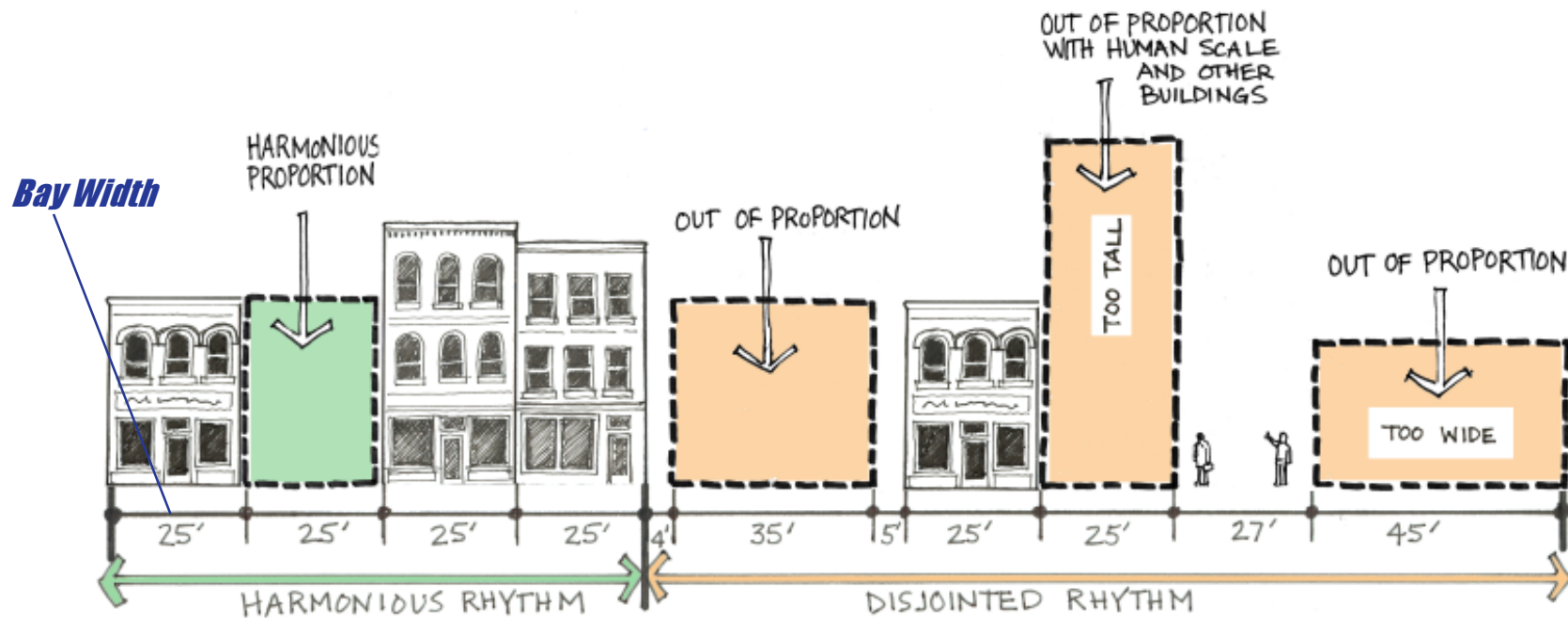
Proportion and Rhythm

Intent: To ensure that development and building additions or renovations are compatible and in proportion with neighboring buildings, 7th Avenue, and human beings.

Proportion is the relationship of one object to another and often determines if a design is harmonious or not. Like proportion, rhythm often determines whether or not a design is harmonious or “out-of-sync.” As you will notice in the drawing below, the section of buildings that are harmonious have compatible proportions in all respects: height, width, window pattern, and vertical layering. The section that is not harmonious has disjointed rhythm and disproportionate building width, side setback, and height.

Guideline: The proportion of infill buildings should be sympathetic to the proportion of the buildings adjacent to them, to the street width, and to the human scale.

Standard: No building may exceed three stories or 40 feet in height, whichever is less. No building may be constructed less than two stories. No building may be more than 24 feet higher (or two stories, whichever is less,) than the building directly adjacent to it. Although the overall width of a building may be greater, *bay width* is a maximum of 25 feet.

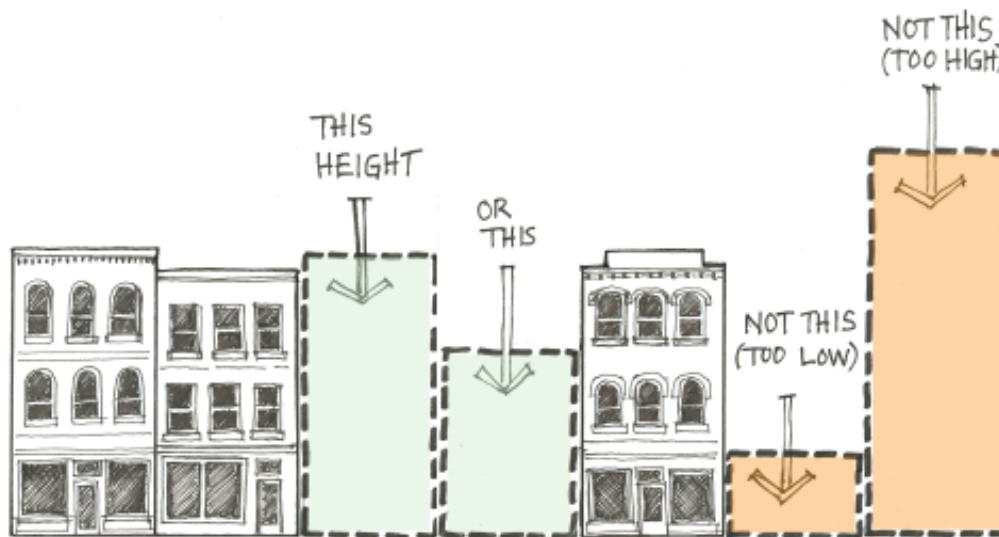


Height

Intent: To promote the construction of infill buildings that is compatible with the existing character of Downtown buildings; to promote a slightly increased overall height of buildings to strengthen the sense of place and economic potential in Downtown; to prevent further construction of buildings that are too low (one story) to define the street or contribute to a mixed-use environment; and to prevent construction of buildings that are so high that they will dwarf existing buildings, detract from the small-town character, and interrupt the harmony of the commercial corridor of Downtown North St. Paul.

Guideline: The optimum building height in Downtown is a two or three-story with a two or three-foot parapet. Construction of three story buildings is encouraged. If an infill building is constructed adjacent to a one-story building, it should be two stories for maximum compatibility with the adjacent one-story while still complying with code. If the infill building is three stories and longer than one bay, it is recommended that it be designed to step down to two-story adjacent to the one-story. Two-story buildings should be built to accommodate a third story at a later date.

Standard: The heights of new buildings shall contribute to the desired character of Downtown. The height of new buildings shall enhance the small-town atmosphere *and* contribute to economic welfare of the district, therefore, no building may be less than two stories or 22 feet, whichever is greater. Maximum building height is three stories or 40 feet, whichever is less. No building may be greater than 24 feet higher than an adjacent building.



The height of infill construction and facade renovations should contribute to the desired character for Downtown and be compatible with surrounding buildings (see “The Desired Character of Downtown” included in the Introduction of this manual.)

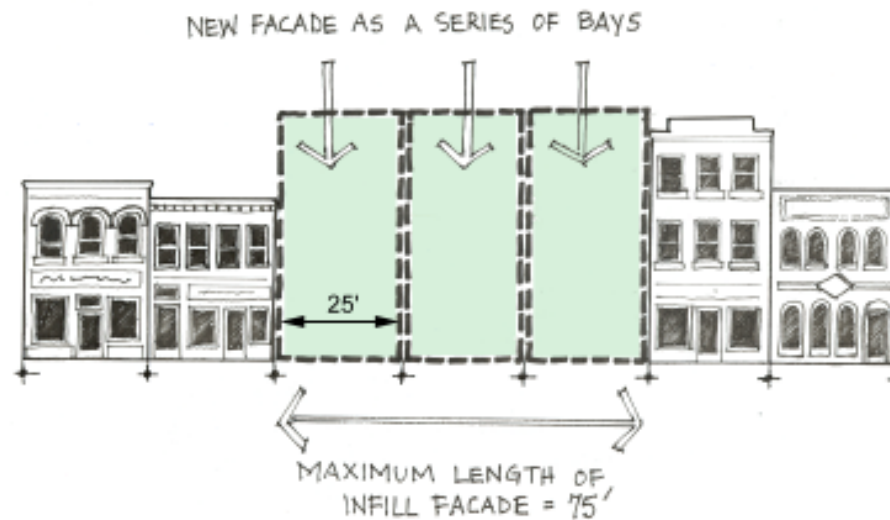
Width (Length of the Façade on 7th Avenue & Margaret Street)

Intent: To encourage enhancement and development of a Downtown shopping area where people can easily stroll from storefront to storefront; to ensure rhythm and proportion of infill development is in harmony with the existing streetscape structure; to avoid long monotonous façades that have no interest value to the pedestrian.

Many buildings built today are designed for the scale and speed of the automobile. A building with a façade a full block long may be fine to pass by in an automobile, but pedestrian shoppers tend to stroll from door to door, window to window. Window shopping and pedestrian traffic is discouraged where the building façades are lacking doors and windows or if doors and windows are too far apart to catch the curious eye of the casual shopper. In the heart of Downtown North St. Paul, the typical width of a storefront is 25 feet.

Guideline: Infill development should consider the existing rhythm of the streetwall which is determined by building width. The ideal width of an infill development should be 25 feet wide to preserve the character of Downtown North St. Paul. As this width would generally not be a realistic expectation in today's development climate, it is recommended that those considering infill development design buildings with bays 25 feet in width and numbering no more than three.

Standard: A single building façade shall not be greater than 75 feet in width/length on Margaret St. or 7th Avenue E. If a building is greater than 25 feet in width, there must be bays established every 25 feet and no two adjacent bays may be blank walls.



Façade

The facade of a building is the exterior wall usually at the front of the building. The word comes from the French language meaning face or frontage and is used by architects to refer to the principle frontage of a building that is often given the greatest design consideration. Well-designed facades have a carefully considered pattern and placement of door and window openings (fenestration) and architectural details such as cornices, sills, lintels, parapets, and trim work.

Façade - General

Intent: To maintain the distinguishing features of historically significant buildings and to ensure sound pedestrian-oriented design of new development; to maintain building facades so that they convey a sense of authenticity, quality of construction, welcoming appearance, and business identity; to prevent actions that close up doors and windows, “the eyes on the street.”

General Guidelines: It is recommended that property owners renovate and construct buildings with the pedestrian in mind. Creating visual interest value for the pedestrian through use of quality materials, architectural detail, roofline variation, and fenestration is recommended. Make sure that the person on the street has clearly visible functional and visual access to the interior of a building.

For Buildings on the Historical Register

Guidelines: Property owners should strive to restore buildings to their original appearance.

Standards: The removal of architectural features on historically designated buildings is not permitted. Deteriorated architectural details shall be repaired rather than replaced. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristics are to be preserved. If changes in the use of a building are contemplated, changes must be accomplished without alterations of facade and structure wherever possible.

For New Construction

Guidelines: Except for fenestration, architectural detail, and trim work, the façade of new structures should be constructed of 100% brick. Trim and architectural detail should be constructed of natural stone, anodized aluminum or similar metals. All publicly visible facades should be of 100% brick including side walls adjacent to pedestrian walkways or rear approaches visible to a pedestrian.

Standards: The design of the building and material choice must take into account the view of the building from abutting streets and from other land uses. Fifty percent (50%) of the building material must be brick. Trim and architectural detail must be constructed of natural stone, a secondary brick material, anodized aluminum or similar metals. Painted wood is limited to trim. Unacceptable facades are those using wood, veneer siding, efface, synthetic or stamped veneers or shiny materials (example: unpainted metal or chrome, polished stone, shiny plastics, etc.) Metals may only be used as an accent material if appropriately integrated into the overall building design and in the case of wood, not subject to damage caused by heavy use or exposure.

Façade - General

Renovation of Buildings That Are Not Historically Significant

Intent: To maintain building façades so that they convey a sense of authenticity, quality of construction, welcoming appearance, and business identity; to allow renovation to occur in stages so that the financial burden is reduced for those working on improving the appearance of their business.



Guideline: When making façade repairs or renovations, use of brick with compatible material for trim and architectural detail is encouraged. When brick is not feasible, the use of material that is the same as, or that compliments the existing structure is recommended. Property owners are encouraged to restore brick façades, open up covered windows and doors, and restore transom windows and quality architectural details if any. Lighting to accentuate the architectural features of the building and construction of parapets to increase the effective height of one-story buildings is encouraged. Installation of awnings that reflect the door or window beneath them is also encouraged.

Standard: Façade renovations that meet criteria requiring design review must submit plans for a full façade renovation even if renovating only a portion of the facade. Partial renovation may or may not be approved depending upon whether or not a smooth transition between renovation phases is possible in regard to building appearance.



Not Recommended: Covering any part of the building façade with false veneer materials, ie., false brick veneer (split brick, if authentic brick material is okay,) stucco, aluminum siding, or any sheet siding over the top of the an existing material; filling in doors or windows with brick, wood, or any material that obscures the original opening; creating windowless blank walls or destroying architectural detail; removing existing *quality* materials and details from a building.

Not Recommended

Façade - Blank Walls

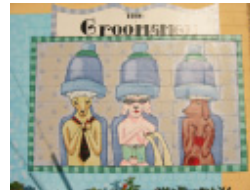
Intent: To limit the monotony and unwelcoming atmosphere of walls that are long, blank, and fortress-like.

Guideline: Blank façades can be enhanced with detailing, artwork, landscaping or other visually interesting features.

Standard: Murals are encouraged on blank walls; however, no brick wall may be painted unless it has been previously painted or is a pale brick that is detracting from the vitality of the street (murals must be approved by the Design and Historical Review Commission.) Murals on two walls adjacent to one another are not allowed. For infill development, walls greater than 25 feet in length must be divided into bays not greater than 25 feet in length. There may not be two bays adjacent to one another without fenestration comprising at least 70% of the wall space. In the bays where there is not fenestration, two of the following techniques must be employed to minimize the apparent mass and monotony:

- Landscaping with vines or columnar plants
- Setbacks or wall modulation not to exceed one (1) foot
- Application of architectural detail
- Mural, inlaid tile, or other artwork

Although a first choice would be to restore display windows and doors, the photos to the right illustrate how murals can be applied to provide visual interest on blank walls of a building. Below are walls that present opportunities for improved fenestration, landscaping with vines, and/or artwork.



Facade Fenestration - Windows

Intent: To provide a welcoming atmosphere for shoppers by ensuring that the person on the street is able to visually connect with the interior of a store; to prevent use of window materials that block visual access to the interior of a building.

Windows and doors create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that encourages people to stroll and shop. If there are blank walls or if windows are blocked by signs, too much merchandise, curtains, or other objects, the potential shopper is less likely to see something inside the store that would encourage him/her to enter.

Guideline: Transparent storefronts are desirable and encouraged. It is best if you can see all the way into the interior of the store. Empty display windows and those that are cluttered are discouraged. It is *not* recommended to use display windows for storage or to block display windows with signs. Lighting the display window at night with a light on a timer is encouraged.

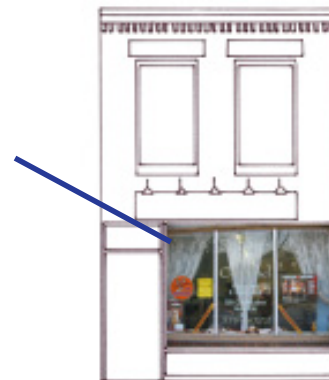
Standard: Buildings must be comprised of 70% transparent window material on ground-level facades facing streets and there must be a minimum of 40% on second or third-story levels. The window must be made of glass and the glass must be clearly transparent. Colored, tinted, opaque, or smoked glass is not allowed, except in transom windows. Reflective glass is not allowed. Boarding up windows is not allowed. Signage must not cover more than 20% of the window. Permanent bars on windows are not allowed. Solid security gates are not allowed. Vacated shops and buildings otherwise in transition must cover windows.



The windows in the photos above allow nice visibility into the interior of the store. The windows in the photo directly above open up in the summer to allow a very good connection between the interior of the building and the seating outside.

Covering display windows with curtains or too many signs, or using the ledge for storage is not recommended.

Opaque windows are not permitted.



Facade Fenestration - Doors

Intent: To encourage a welcoming atmosphere by providing ease of physical access to buildings in the Central Business District for all persons; to prevent use of doors not compatible with the business district.

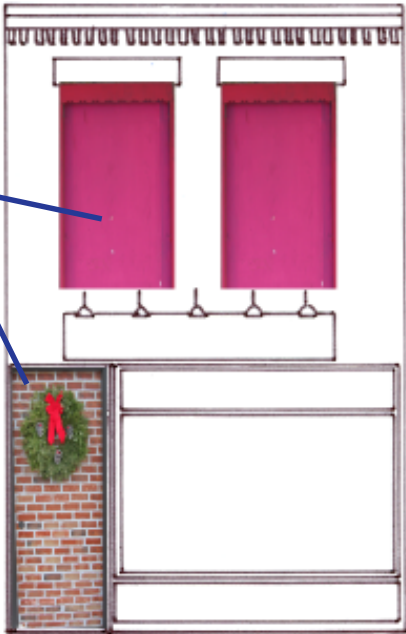
Guideline: Doors comprised of 70% or greater glass with visibility through the door six feet into the interior of the business space are encouraged. Lighting at night is encouraged. Choosing a door that is compatible in overall size and material of the facade is recommended. Closing one half of a double door, replacing a door with one smaller than the original, or placing merchandise behind the door is not recommended.

Standard: Primary entrances must allow visibility through the door a minimum of six feet. Seventy (70%) of the door size must be transparent glass and not be curtained. All doors on 7th Avenue and Margaret St. must be of a commercial grade. ADA access must be provided where required. Windows in doors must be made of glass and the glass must be clearly transparent. Colored, tinted, opaque, smoked, or reflective glass is not allowed. Boarding up doors is not allowed. Signage must not cover more than 20% of the door window. Permanent bars on windows are not allowed. Solid security gates are not allowed.



Although the windows provide nice visibility, this business opens the door on cool summer days to improve visibility into the interior of the store.

Avoid infill panels. Boarding up windows and doors is not allowed.



Facade - Awnings

Intent: To enhance and encourage a pedestrian atmosphere for window-shopping by providing protection from the elements; to provide sun protection for window displays; to provide a signage panel for businesses; to prevent blight from improper maintenance.

Awnings provide protection from the elements for shoppers walking from shop to shop. For shop owners, they can help set forth the unique identity of each shop and define the storefront and entryway for customers. Awnings add color and shade to a building façade as well as providing an area for signage.

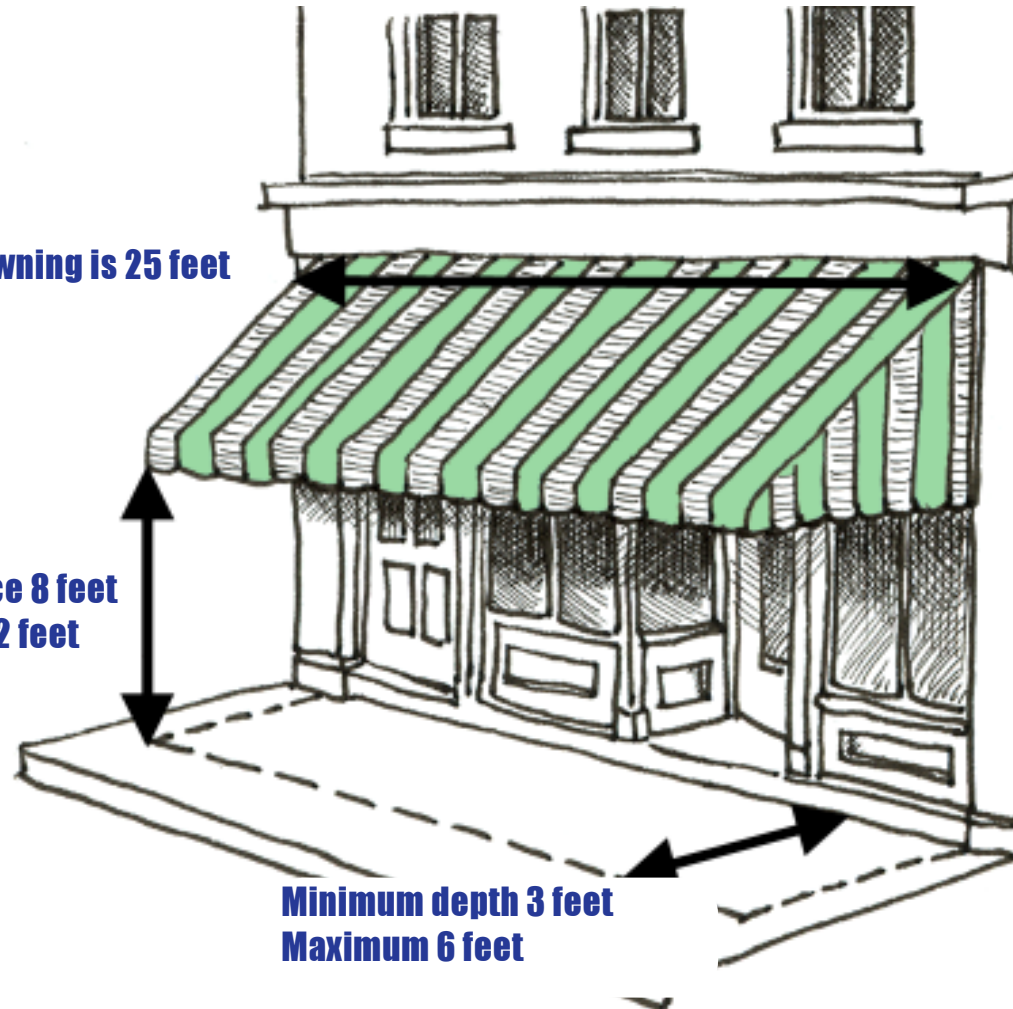
Guidelines: Although retractable awnings are allowed, canvas stretched on a fixed frame is less maintenance intensive than retractable and would be preferable. Awnings should be broken into segments that reflect the door or window openings beneath them. Awnings should compliment the building, shape, and color and should be in proportion to the facade.

Standards: Only awnings that compliment the building shape and color will be permitted. Awnings must be made of canvas or another durable, protective, and water repellant cloth-like material. Anodized metal awnings will be considered if of superior architectural design, detail, and construction. Wind and weight load calculations may be required for metal awnings. Fiberglass, wood, shingle, or plastic awnings are not permitted. If lighted, awnings must be lit from above. Internal illumination (under-lighting or back-lighting) of awnings is not allowed. Retractable canvas awnings are allowed if properly maintained. Ripped, torn, dirty, or awnings with broken framework or retraction devices are examples of improperly maintained awnings. Fixed-frame awnings must be likewise maintained. All awnings must be covered on the lateral ends. Clearance under the awning must be a minimum of 8 feet from sidewalk and a maximum of 12 feet. Minimum overhang depth from the building is 3 feet and a maximum of 6 feet. Overall canvas height maximum is 5 feet. Whatever measurements are used, they must be in proportion to one another, to the building, and the same proportion must be used across the facade of a single storefront. (See diagram.) If signage is hung below the awning, the bottom of the sign must not hang lower than 8' and therefore, the bottom of the awning must be set at the appropriate height to allow for the signage. Linear length of an awning panel must not exceed 25 feet. Awnings cannot extend across multiple storefronts, multiple bays, or more than one building and should reflect fenestration. The awning must be in proportion with the building façade and of a height compatible with neighboring storefronts. A variance will be considered if the above dimensions do not create such a proportion.

Facade - Awnings

Maximum length per awning is 25 feet

**Minimum clearance 8 feet
Maximum height 12 feet**

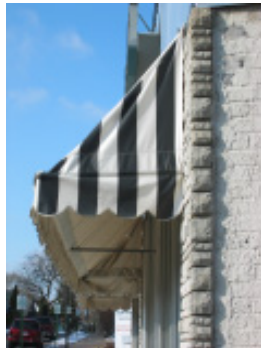


**Minimum depth 3 feet
Maximum 6 feet**

Not recommended:

- Covering architectural detail with awnings.
- Awnings that span long distances.

Facade - Awnings



Awnings must be covered at the lateral ends. This one is covered.



The lateral ends on this one are not covered.



These two awnings reflect the window opening beneath them, are in proportion with the facade, and have proportionate overall length per awning.



Metal awnings must be of exceptional quality, architectural detail and craftsmanship.

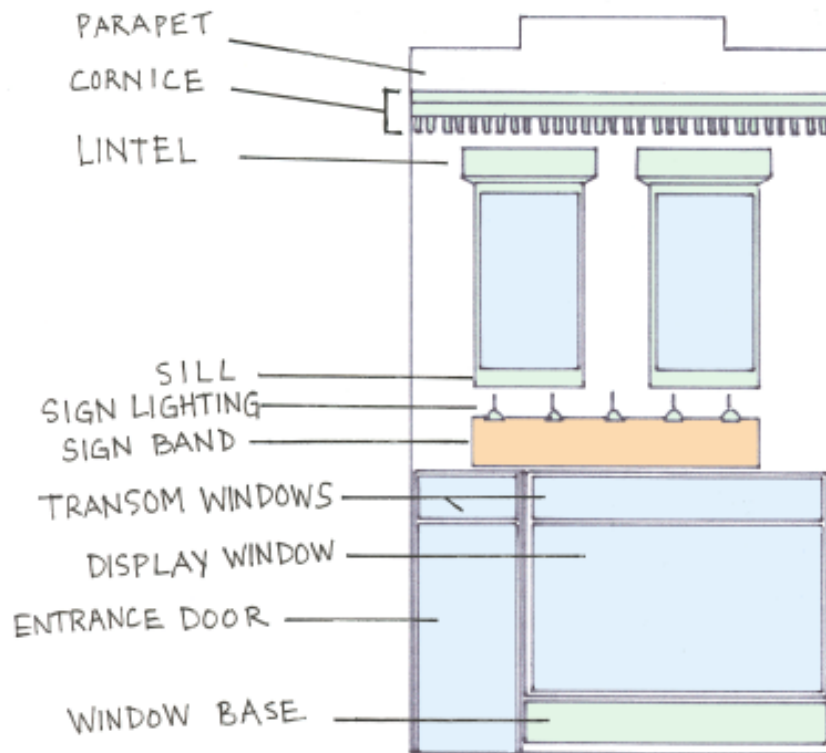


This awning is too long and doesn't reflect fenestration.

Architectural Details

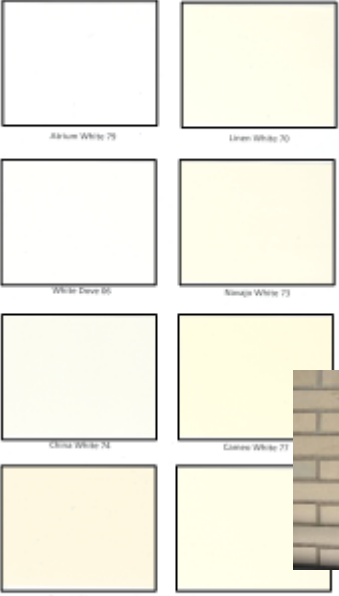
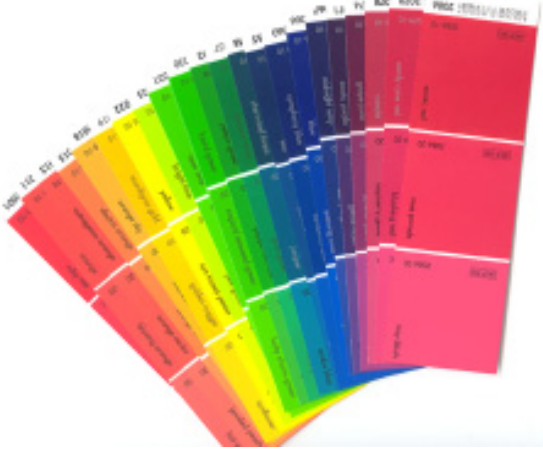
Intent: To restore architectural details that contribute to place identity and pedestrian-oriented environments.

Guideline: Building renovations of historic structures should restore architectural details of cornices, lintels, parapets, area arches, chimneys, windows, doors, and iron work of the original building as appropriate and feasible. If false facade materials have been applied, renovation should seek to uncover original building materials as feasible. If the building is not a historical structure, renovations should seek to utilize architectural detail that will contribute to visual interest for the pedestrian (see *Facade - General* for standards related to historic buildings and infill construction.)




Color

These two color palettes are extremes that should be *avoided* as facade colors.

This palette of greys and cremes can be too bland for a business district.



This palette can be too loud.

Consider using rich earthy tones for brick facades.



Consider brighter, more saturated colors for awnings and trim.



Not Recommended: Colors in the neon palette and white palette are discouraged. Painting a building the same color as the adjacent building is discouraged. Crème, beige, and taupe are discouraged, but can be interesting if the building has two of the following compensatory characteristics:

1. Architectural detail that is of exceptional character. (Examples of this are: roof parapets that provide distinct identity, brick or iron work that demonstrates distinctive craftsmanship, and/or a distinctive cornice)
2. An accent color or trim that is painted with one or two complimentary colors
3. A colored awning
4. Potted plants or landscaping immediately next to the façade that fills in a minimum of 20% of the façade
5. Stained glass window work

Not Recommended

Color

Intent: To encourage varied but harmonious use of color.

Paint color, architectural detail, and signage create the first impression of a business and therefore should be chosen carefully. Colors that are muted do not activate the streetscape. Pastels, beiges and whites create a sleepy serenity that is not desirable in a commercial district. Colors that are overly bright are difficult to look at, compete for attention, and detract from the harmony of the streetscape. When choosing paint colors for your building, it is advisable to peruse brochures at the paint store that provide pictures of professionally matched paint color combinations.

Guideline: Use complimentary colors. If you do choose a muted color like beige or a pastel, consider pairing it with one and preferably two accent colors for the trim. To create interest for the pedestrian and establish a distinct identity for a business, color should be used to set one business apart from its adjacent neighbor. Therefore, it is recommended that no two buildings directly next to one another be painted the same color. Generally, building facades will look better with an earthy or rich tone (see examples on following pages,) trim and awnings will stand out more with more colorful applications (see below.) Beige or bland pastels do little to activate retail streets; therefore more saturated colors are recommended.



Adding color to this building would help to activate Downtown.



These three storefronts have used complimentary colors to activate the streetscape.



This storefront may be a bit much, but "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

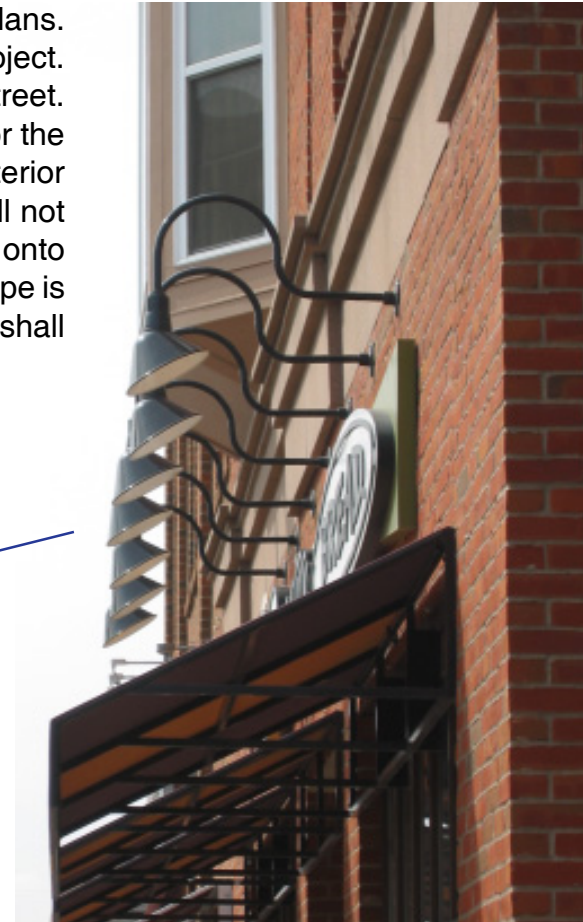
Lighting

Intent: To provide a safe and “alive” Downtown atmosphere in the evening; to encourage lighting that does not disrupt adjacent business functions.

Guideline: Lighting adds special character to Downtown’s nighttime appearance. It can illuminate building entrances, pedestrian walkways, signage, or floodlight special buildings. Incandescent lighting is encouraged to provide maximum warmth of light. Neon lighting for sign purposes is encouraged. Fluorescent lighting is discouraged.

Standard: A coordinated lighting plan shall be submitted for review with building plans. Lighting fixtures shall be concealed or integrated into the overall design of the project. All outdoor lighting shall be directed away from adjoining property and from the street. Bare incandescent light bulbs shall not be permitted in view of adjacent property or the public right-of-way except decorative holiday lights having 7.5 watts or less. No exterior lighting shall exceed 0.4 foot candles at the lot line. Non-city light standards shall not exceed 20’ in height and shall include full cutoff luminaires so as not to shine onto adjacent properties or produce glare. Additional lighting on the main city streetscape is not allowed except to illuminate signs, doorways, or inside storefronts. The City shall ensure that streetscape lighting is well maintained.

Light is projected downward onto the sign band.



Rooflines and Parapets

Intent: To enhance pedestrian experience of streetscape by promoting pedestrian scale and visual interest; to promote individuality and distinct identity that differentiates the individual stores from one another.

The roofline creates visual interest, can help strengthen the identity of your storefront, and sometimes acts as a civic landmark.

Guideline: Differentiating the roofline of one building from another is encouraged. It is recommended that buildings adjacent to one another not utilize the same roofline treatment. Roof edges should be related in size and proportion to adjacent buildings.

Standard: Infill buildings shall be flat or gently pitched and hidden behind flat parapet walls. Roof edges must be related in size and proportion to adjacent buildings. Infill buildings shall include extended parapets and architecturally detailed cornices to create a distinct edge when viewed against the sky.

These buildings have distinctive rooflines.



Architectural Materials

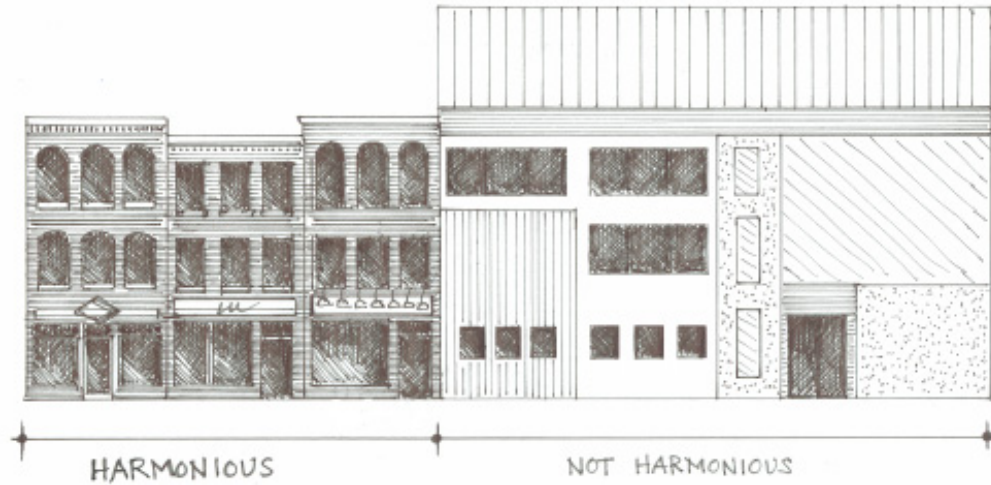
Intent: To ensure design authenticity and integrity and prevent hodge-podge appearance that can disrupt the unity of a place; to ensure that hodge-podge design will not cause visual blight, maintenance difficulties, or negatively impact property values.

Like architectural details, architectural materials contribute to creating visual interest for the pedestrian and harmony along the streetscape. Certain architectural materials can also contribute to the effort to restore place identity within North St. Paul's Central Business District. A harmonious materials palette can help establish unity, visual harmony, rhythm, and cohesion of physical form, desirable qualities in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Guideline: An infill building and façade should be composed of earthy materials that have a pleasant and comfortable feeling. All infill facades that are visible to the pedestrian should be 100% brick with the exception of architectural detail and fenestration, which should use a complimentary but contrasting material to allow the detail to be visually interesting. The chosen primary building material and color should be consistent throughout the façade and not change from section to section of the building. Numerous building materials can disrupt the integrity of the building design and create a hodge-podge appearance that undermines the integrity of the building design and visual legibility of the structure. Numerous materials also may become a maintenance problem. The materials palette should include a singular base material for the façade and complimentary materials for fenestration, trim work, and architectural detail.

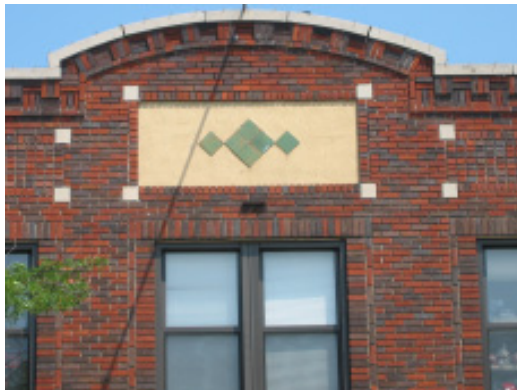
Changing brick colors, textures, and materials as part of a carefully developed architectural design is acceptable; however, using numerous materials in an attempt to diminish bulk or mass of a building, or make a building look like more than one building is not recommended. If a building is so big that several materials are used to attempt to "hide" the mass, consider this as a cue that the mass is too great and does not fit with the desired character of Downtown. This technique is somewhat like an elephant trying to hide behind a daisy. False veneers, and non-sustainable materials are not allowed on infill buildings or renovations. Unacceptable facades are also those using shiny materials (for example: shiny metals, polished stone, or plastics.) For an infill building, window and door trim should be appropriately colored painted wood or anodized metal.

Standard: With the exception of fenestration, architectural detail, and trim work, all facades that are visible to the pedestrian shall be comprised of at least 50% brick material. A complimentary brick, block (but not concrete,) painted wood, anodized metal or natural stone must be used as trim work, accent material, and/or architectural detail. If wood is used, it must be weatherproofed and not subject to damage caused by heavy use or exposure. Wood must be limited to trim and cornice work and must be maintained. Examples of unmaintained wooden structure includes flaking or peeling paint, faded stain, rotted areas, or cracked or broken areas. Unacceptable facade materials are those using unsustainable or imprinted veneers; synthetic, or shiny materials (example: unpainted metal, polished stone, shiny plastics, efface, etc.)

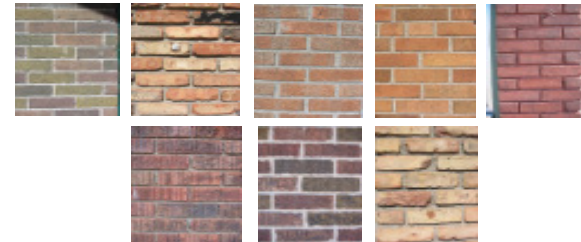


The developer above chose harmonious materials, and divided the facade into bays to reduce the perceived mass of the building.

The developer of the building to the right above used numerous materials apparently in an attempt to reduce the massiveness of this condo development (this is not recommended.)



This building is constructed of a consistent brick for the facade and compatible materials for fenestration and architectural detail.



The warm colors of the brick materials above are compatible with the desired character of Downtown North St. Paul. The gray and beige colors and patterns below are not compatible with the desired character of Downtown.



Signs - General

Intent: To permit safe, effective, efficient and aesthetic means of communication using signs, while recognizing the need to maintain an attractive and appealing appearance of property in the city; to insure adequate identification of each business while minimizing the tendency for signs to compete for attention with excessive wording or flashy visual stimulation; to insure expression of a business' individuality while at the same time ensuring architectural harmony, compatibility and unity of the streetscape.

Guidelines:

- Three dimensional and appropriately sized projecting signs are encouraged.
- Permanently painted window signage is encouraged if compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Wall signs constructed of metal, engraved stone, inlaid tile, or painted wood are preferred.
- Signs should not cover architectural detail on the building, windows, or cornices.
- Use type fonts and colors that are legible.
- Use signage that is consistent with other signage on the commercial corridor, and that compliments a building's architecture.
- Signs should be professionally fabricated.
- Neon lights are allowed, but avoid flashing lights and bare bulb lights.
- Avoid signs on a white or neon colored background.

Standards: (This is a general list. For more information on specific types of signs, refer to the individual sections on each sign type and the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance.)

- If flags (with the exception of national, state, county or city flags) or banners are hung from a building, they must be included and reviewed as part of the building sign plan. Banners may not hang for a period greater than 30 days. Banners that rip, tear, or become dirty prior to 30-day limit must be removed. Decorative flags may be part of a permanent sign plan provided there is a maintenance schedule and it is observed.
- Painted window signs must not consume more than 20% of the window area.
- Neon signs are permitted on the building exterior and in display windows as long as they do not cover more than 20% of the window area or building exterior.
- If the sign is illuminated at night, the source of the light must be directed at the sign and must not be visible to pedestrians, motorists, or neighboring residents or businesses.
- Projecting signs must not be greater than 12 square feet and have a maximum width of three feet.
- Fiberglass and plastic signs are not allowed.
- Rooftop signs are not allowed unless used in a parapet fashion (see rooftop signage.)
- Maximum space between signage and building face is 1 foot.
- Temporary signage cannot consume more than 20% of the window area and must be maintained.
- Internally illuminated signs (not including neon or theater signs) are not allowed.

Guideline: Three dimensional and appropriately-sized projecting signs are encouraged. Permanently painted window signage is encouraged if painted on the inside and if it is compatible with the architecture of the building. Wall signs constructed of metal, engraved stone, inlaid tile, or painted wood are preferred. Use of the sign band on traditional store-fronts is encouraged.

Use the sign band on a building



Recommended

Avoid signs that are too busy or wordy

Not recommended:

- Temporary signage.
- Signage that blocks the window.
- Sale signs lasting more than 1 week.
- Signs that are excessively wordy.
- Too many signs.



Not Recommended

Sandwich Boards

Intent: To encourage expression of the unique identity and character of individual businesses; to prevent an overabundance of these signs; to maintain clear pedestrian walkways.

Guidelines: Merchants are encouraged to create tent signs that uniquely express the nature of their business. The average size of a tent sign is 24 in. wide x 48 in. tall.

Standards: Sandwich boards or tent signs are encouraged, but must:

- Not be white or neon-colored
- Not be larger than 30” wide and 48” high or smaller than five square feet
- Not be more than **one** per business
- Leave a minimum of six feet of clear walkway on the sidewalk
- Not be left on the sidewalk overnight



Some examples of unique sandwich boards





This business has too many signs, and they are all white and lack visual interest.

This sign is too big (as tall as a person and can block views.)



This sign is too small and could be a tripping hazard.



Avoid white

Not Recommended

Projecting or Hanging Signs



Intent: To improve the ability of a merchant to advertise the location of his/her business to a person walking on the sidewalk; to make sure the sign provides sufficient clearance for pedestrians passing on the sidewalk; to prevent signs from blocking second story windows and keep them in proportion with store fronts; to ensure maintenance for a safe pedestrian environment.

Pedestrians walking on the sidewalk are not able to see signs that are flush with the front of a building without stepping out toward the street or waiting until they are directly in front of the store; therefore, to improve visibility of a business, signage perpendicular to the sidewalk is encouraged.

Guideline: The sign should be in proportion to the storefront and should have lettering that is easily read. Signs may be hung from awnings, but make sure there is at least eight feet of clearance from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk. Signs should not block or obliterate architectural or design details, windows, or cornices of the building upon which they are placed.

Standard: Projecting signs must be no greater than 12 square feet, have a maximum width of three feet, and cannot extend more than five feet above the first story. The sign must have at least eight feet of clearance between the sidewalk elevation and the lowest portion of the sign. Maximum distance between sign and building face is one foot. The sign must be in proportion with the building and the architecture of the building.



Monument signs and Billboards

Monument signs and mobile monument signs are not allowed in the Central Business District except for civic uses.



Billboards and rooftop billboards are not allowed.

Rooftop Signs

Intent: To provide an alternative means for signage for one story buildings; to use rooftop signs in a parapet-like fashion to increase the visual height of a building (to enhance the sense of place in Downtown;) to prevent visual blight caused by competing advertising, signage that is out of scale and proportion with the character of Downtown, and from poor maintenance of rooftop signs.

Guideline: If your building is one story and you would like your signage to be more visible, consider use of a rooftop sign that is no taller than three feet from the top of the roofline of your building.

Standard: Rooftop signs are allowed within the following limitations: Rooftop signs may only be placed upon one-story buildings. The purpose of the rooftop sign must be to identify the business atop whose roof the sign is located. The sign may only include the name of the business, a tagline, and/or a logo if any. Signs placed upon the roof for the purpose of advertising are not allowed. The sign must be integrated and compatible with the overall design and color scheme of the building or facade renovation plan and must be owned by the building owner or business owner occupying the storefront space. The sign may not be taller than three feet from the roofline and the separation of the sign from the roofline to the bottom of the sign may not be greater than one foot.



The rooftop sign in the photo to the left is acceptable.



The one in the photo to the right is not.

Decorative Flags, Pennants, and Balloons

Intent: To encourage individual expression and advertising that adds motion to the street.

Guidelines: Flags and pennants are encouraged; however, use of balloons is discouraged.

Standards: Decorative flags are allowed, but limited to a maximum of two per business. They must not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular sight-lines or mobility. In the case of grand openings (the initial commencement of business) and special events, balloons shall be allowed for the week (maximum ten days of the grand opening.) For special events, a permit shall be issued for ten day periods, but limited to three times per year per business. A separate occasion begins no sooner than 30 days after the expiration of the previous approval and removal of the previous sign, whichever is longer.

Temporary Signs

Intent: To ensure signage is constructed of quality materials and that temporary signs don't become permanent fixtures.

Standards: Temporary signs announcing any public, charitable, educational or religious event or function must be located entirely within the premises of that institution and set back no less than ten feet from the property line. The sign may be up to an area of 30 square feet. Such signs shall be allowed no more than 21 days prior to the event or function and must be removed within three days after the event or function. Event signage is limited to three times per year. A separate occasion begins no sooner than 30 days after the expiration of the previous approval and removal of the previous sign, whichever is longer. Signs may be illuminated in accordance with the restrictions set forth in the North St. Paul Code of Ordinance book. If building mounted, these signs shall be flat wall signs and shall not project above the roof line. If ground mounted, the top shall be no more than six feet above ground level.

Street Banners

Intent: To prevent temporary banners from becoming permanent fixtures.

Standards: Street banners advertising a public or civic event may be displayed 21 days prior to the event and three days after the event. The number of annual civic events are not limited.

Note: None of the guidelines or standards apply to national, religious, or local governmental flags. All freedoms provided by federal and/or state law shall take precedence over this document.

PART III - APPENDICES

Appendix A

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Appendix B - Permit Applications and Supplemental Forms

- Section B:1 - Building Permit Application
- Section B:2 - Signs
- Section B:3 - Facade Renovations
- Section B:4 - New Construction Phases I - IV

Appendix C - Checklist

- Section C:1 - Design Review Application Checklist

APPENDIX A

Glossary

Architectural detail

Architectural elements that are integral to the design of the building. Details are often integrated into the architectural design for a decorative, symbolic, or functional purpose and add visual interest to the building façade.

Architectural materials or palette

The materials that are used in the construction of a building.

Blank Wall

A wall that lacks doors or windows.

Civic esteem/pride

The collective self-respect, dignity or honor of the citizens of a location such as a town, city or community.

Community ecosystem

The complex network of all the elements that must interact to comprise a society.

Cornice

(See page 55)

Façade

The facade of a building is the exterior wall usually at the front of the building. The word comes from the French language meaning face or frontage and is used by architects to refer to the principle frontage of a building that is often given the greatest design consideration. Well-designed facades have a carefully considered pattern and placement of door and window openings (fenestration) and architectural details such as cornices, sills, lintels, parapets, and trim work.

Fenestration

Door and window openings in a façade.

Frontage

The portion of a building facing a street.

Heat island

A geographical area that is heated by the sun and stays warmer than surrounding areas because of the presence of black tar, rooftops, or other materials that retain heat.

Historically designated building

A building that has been placed on the historical register.

Historically significant building

A building identified as being historically important, but not designated as such by historical registration.

Impervious surface

A surface that does not allow anything to filter through it. This term is generally used in reference to parking lots, rooftops, and other landscaping materials that do not allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground.

Infill development

The creative recycling of vacant or underutilized lands in cities and suburbs

Lintel

(See page 55)

Mixed-use development/building

A development/building that mixes uses such as housing, retail, entertainment, and office spaces all within one building or within a small geographical area.

Monoculture

A culture made up of only one demographic of people or crop of plants.

Parapet

(See page 55)

Pedestrian-friendly atmosphere/environment

An environment that provides safe surfaces and areas for people to walk; physically non-taxing topography and reasonable distances to walk; visually interesting elements to look at; and surroundings that don't adversely affect the human senses, but rather provide them with elements that please the human senses.

Pedestrian character

An area with pedestrian character is designed such that it has areas of visual interest, safe street crossings and low speed traffic, well lit signs and walkways, appropriate scale and mass of buildings, planted areas, and comfortable, clean seating areas.

Pedestrian-oriented environment

An environment designed with the pedestrian in mind. (See pedestrian character.)

Pedestrian scale

Environmental scale that does not overwhelm the human being spatially or in regard to human endurance or pace. The five-minute walk or 1/3 of a mile is often referred to as the acceptable maximum distance most people will walk. In regard to spatial proportion, building size and façade detail should be designed in proportion to the human body and walking pace rather than to be viewed from a speeding auto.

Place identity

The consistent character of a place that creates the singularity of that place at all times or in all circumstances; the elements and conditions that make a place someplace not found anywhere else; the distinguishing characteristics that set it apart from other places, make it unique or distinct from another place.

Public domain/Public realm

Public land that belongs to everyone, but that no one person owns. This would include our sidewalks, streets, public schools, civic buildings, parks, town squares, etc.

Public right-of-way

Areas that are publicly owned where the public is allowed to pass.

Rehabilitate/rehabilitation

To return a building to functional use.

Re-develop / re-development

To make improvements, enhancements, or enlargements on existing properties.

Remodel

To refashion, modernize, amend, alter, or otherwise modify an existing structure.

Restore/restoration

To refurbish or return a building to its original state.

Revitalize/revitalization

To refresh, invigorate, rejuvenate or regenerate.

Runoff

(See *storm water runoff*)

Seatwall

A wall constructed such that a person could easily sit on a portion of it.

Small-town atmosphere

An atmosphere that has the characteristics of a small town. These characteristics have to do with smaller scale buildings, a variety of stores on a main street, convenient services often provided by local merchants, safe and walkable streets, and well-maintained public areas. (See page nine in this manual.)

Sprawl

Haphazard real estate expansion around the outskirts of a city or along major highway corridors. It is generally a default result of a lack of form-based comprehensive planning or from zoning ordinances that necessitate a region's inhabitants to drive to fulfill daily needs for housing, work, food, education, etc.

Storm water runoff

Water that runs overland and into storm sewer systems after a rainfall.

Streetscape

The environment or surrounding components that make up a setting, scene, or location centered around a street. These components include, but are not limited to: the sidewalk, benches, lighting fixtures, street trees, plantings, parking configurations, building frontages, etc.

Streetwall

Just like a room has walls, so does a street. The walls of the street are formed by the structures that line the street, most often buildings.

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of today while ensuring that the needs of future generations will be met as well.

Transom window

(See page 55)

Transparent storefront window

A display window at the front of a store that can easily be seen through to the interior of the store.

Trim

(See page 55)

Visual interest (items of)

Architectural details, art, window displays or other visible items that catch the eye of passersby without causing visual alarm by being excessively flashy or competing for attention via loud color, light, or rapid movement.

Welcoming appearance

Visible details that make one feel welcome such as: open doors, open gates, windows that can be easily seen through, a clear path, lighted walkways, welcome signs, etc.

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APPENDIX B



**COMMUNITY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

BUILDING PERMIT

2400 Margaret Street N., North St. Paul, MN 55109
 Ph: 651-747-2407 Fax: 651-747-2435
 www.ci.north-saint-paul.mn.us

PERMIT NUMBER _____

JOB ADDRESS:		Block:		
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:	Lot:	PIN:		
Addition:				
Property Owner	Name	Phone		
	Mailing Address	Cell Phone		
Contractor	Company	License No.		
	Contact Person	Phone		
	Address	Cell Phone		
	City	State	ZIP	
JOB VALUATION:	\$	ESTIMATED	Is there an unimproved driveway on this property? YES NO	
WORK DESCRIPTION:		COMPLETION DATE:		
INDICATE SQUARE FOOTAGE:	Basement:	Attached Garage:	Height of SFD	
	1 st floor:	Detached Garage:	Height of Det. Gar.	
	2 nd floor:	Deck:	Other:	
Acknowledgement and Signature: Issuance of a permit or approval of plans and specifications shall not be construed to be a permit for, or an approval of any violation of any of the provisions of the MN State Building Code or any other ordinance or jurisdiction.				
Print Name:	Signature:			
SEPARATE PERMITS REQUIRED FOR Electrical Mechanical Plumbing Sprinklers Water Sewer Signs				
		APPROVALS		
Building Inspection Fee		DATE	SIGNATURE	
Plan Review Fee				
Fixed Fee Permit Cost		Building Official		
State Surcharge		Engineer		
State License Check Fee				
Drain Tile System Fee		Fire Chief		
Electric Service Fee				
Curb Deposit		REMARKS:		
Metro SAC Charge				
Metro SAC Credit				
Deferred Assessments				
Other		* For inspection call: 651-747-2407		
TOTAL FEE		* BEFORE DIGGING – Call Gopher State One at 651-454-0002		
		* Property Owners are responsible for locating property lines.		
RECEIPT DATE		* DO NOT Disturb Natural Drainage		



Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Business _____

Street Address Where Sign Will Be Located: _____
Street City State Zip Code

New Sign Installation Sign Type:

- Façade/Wall Painted Window Projecting Rooftop (Variance Required)*
- Sandwich Board* Directional Awning Appliqué Hanging from Awning
- Temporary Banner Other _____

***Rooftop signs** that are not for the specific purpose of identifying the business are not allowed.
***Sandwich Boards** do not need a permit if they are within the guidelines.

Plans and Specifications

Written Description: On a separate piece of paper, please explain the method of construction or attachment to the building.

Photos: Include two (2) photos, one of the proposed sign location including the adjacent properties, and one close-up of the proposed location of the sign.

Drawings: Include two (2) scaled drawings, one showing the sign with dimensions and the second showing the location of the sign in reference to your building and the adjacent properties. Include building façade dimensions. Please indicate the wattage, type and color of lights if any, and details of any light shields or shades. (Please note that flashing lights are not permitted and light must not shine onto adjacent properties or the street.)

Please answer the following:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Sign 1 | Sign 2 |
| 1.) SIGN DIMENSIONS: | _____ Ft. | _____ Ft. |
| | x _____ Ft. | x _____ Ft. |
| | = _____ Sq. Ft. | = _____ Sq. Ft. |

2.) TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGN SURFACES: _____

Section B: 2

- 3.) SETBACK FROM PROPERTY LINES (measure from the closest point to property line):
FRONT = _____ FT. SIDE = _____ FT. REAR = _____ FT.
- 4.) HEIGHT OF SIGN: _____ Ft. above grade _____ Ft. above first story
- 5.) IS AN ELECTRICAL PERMIT REQUIRED? (Will the sign need new electrical work for lighting?)
 Yes No

For Changes to Existing Signs (the photo requirement applies)

Please reply to the following:

- I am ONLY changing the lettering on the sign. Yes No
- I will be using the same color(s) as previously used. Yes No
- I will be using the same sign surface. Yes No
- Is the existing sign surface in compliance with the code? Yes No
- Will the renovated sign be in compliance with the code? Yes No
- The lettering size on the sign will stay the same. Yes No
- The lighting of the sign will remain the same. Yes No
- If you answered "No" to any of the above, please explain here:

Recommendation to the City Council:
(AREA BELOW FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY)

Commissioners' Initials: _____



Supplement to Building Permit Façade Renovation

Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Business or Development _____

Street Address Where
Façade will be Renovated: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Photo Requirements

A minimum of **TWO (2)** clear photographs is required. One should show the area of the building to be renovated and the other should be a *zoomed-out* photo of your *entire* building and the one to the right and the one to the left. If there is an empty lot next to your building, try to zoom-out to capture neighboring buildings.

Materials Requirements

Applicants are required to bring samples of façade materials and color swatches to the review.

Brief Letter Describing the Project

Please write a concise letter describing the project. The letter should include statements that explain the following:

1. Why the renovation is being undertaken and what part of the building façade is being renovated (ie., lower portion of façade facing 7th Avenue, etc.)
2. Describe how the renovation will contribute to the pedestrian atmosphere and connect the business entrance to the sidewalk.
3. Describe how the *scale* of the proposed renovation relates to surrounding development, particularly buildings directly adjacent to it. Is it harmonious with its neighbors in height, width, and architectural detail?
4. Describe how the position and size of windows, doors, awnings, seating areas, and *architectural detail relate to the pedestrian*.
5. Describe how the project integrates *sustainable building* practices if any.
6. Describe how the renovation will *enhance the unique local assets*, or preserve the character, place identity, or “small-town” atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul.

(The **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** section of the North St. Paul Downtown Design Manual is a good reference when writing this letter.)

Supplement to Building Permit Façade Renovation

Drawing Requirements:

On separate pieces of paper, please include two (2) *scaled* drawings. The first one must show the plan for the building façade to be renovated with dimensions clearly labeled. The second drawing must show the plans for façade renovation relative to the adjacent properties. You may trace over a photograph of all the buildings to do the second drawing. Please include the photo with your submittals.

Please answer the following:

- 1.) What material will you be using to renovate the façade? (please clearly describe the material, its color, texture, manufacturer, and method of application)
-

2.) Is this the same material that is on the rest of the façade? Yes No

3.) What color will the façade be? (attach swatch – write FAÇADE on the back)

4.) What color will the trim be? (attach swatch – write TRIM on the back)

5.) What color will the door be? (attach swatch – write DOOR on the back)

6.) Will there be any special architectural detail such as tile work, special brick design, cornice work, or parapet work? Yes No

7.) Will transparent windows and doors make up a minimum of 70% of the façade? Yes No

8.) Will the renovation be compatible with the rest of the façade? Yes No

9.) Will the renovation be compatible with neighboring buildings? Yes No
If so, how? _____

10.) Will you be using a commercial grade door? Yes No

11.) Will the door be 70% transparent glass? Yes No

12.) Will you be adding a sign band? Yes No

13.) Will the door be flush with the façade when you are done? Yes No

14.) Will you be using any opaque, smoked, or tinted glass? Yes No

15.) Will you be filling in or covering up any existing doors or windows? Yes No



Supplement to Building Permit Façade Renovation

- 16.) Will you be reducing the window size or door opening to a size smaller than currently existing? Yes No
- 17.) Will you be removing any existing architectural details? Yes No
- 18.) Will you be moving a door or a window? Yes No
- 19.) Does this building have a veneer layer on the facade? Yes No
If yes, will you be removing it? Yes No
- 20.) Will you be removing any lighting elements? Yes No
If yes, will you be replacing them and with what? Include wattage, light type and color, direction of lighting, and details of any light shields or shades.
- 21.) Will lighting fixtures be compatible with the architectural style of the building? Yes No
- 22.) IS AN ELECTRICAL PERMIT REQUIRED? (Will the sign need new electrical work for lighting?) Yes No

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions in the gray area above, please explain here:

Recommendation to the City Council: (AREA BELOW FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY)

Commissioners' Initials: _____
Date: _____



Supplement to Building Permit Façade Renovation



New Construction
Design and Historical Review Application
Part I: Concept Plan Review
(Part 1 of 4 Required Reviews)

Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Proposed Development _____

Street Address Where
Development will be located: _____
Street City

Brief Letter Describing the Project
(Please provide eight (8) copies of your narrative.)

Please write a concise letter describing the project concept in regard to site design and building design. The letter should include statements that explain the following:

1. Describe the project concept.
2. Describe how the project will connect to and relate to the public domain, ie., trails, sidewalks, parks, civic buildings, schools, etc.
3. Describe how the development will contribute to the pedestrian atmosphere.
4. Describe how the *scale* of the proposed development will relate to surrounding development, particularly buildings directly adjacent to it. Is it harmonious with its neighbors in height, width, and architectural detail?
5. Will the project be mixed-use and what business functions and/or housing demographic will be served by the development?
6. Describe the conceptual orientation of building entrances and exits, parking and auto circulation, proposed service areas, pedestrian circulation and the overall project *as it relates to the pedestrian*.
7. How will the project integrate *sustainable building* practices?
8. How will the project *enhance the unique local assets*, or preserve the character, place identity, or "small-town" atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul?

(The **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** section of the North St. Paul Downtown Design Manual is a good reference when writing this narrative.)

- Concept Drawing:** The concept drawing must show the entire site with the proposed location of structure(s.) site circulation, parking, landscaping, service areas, etc. *(Please provide eight 11 X 17 copies of the concept drawing. Base map must be to scale!)*
- Photo Requirement:** Photos of the development site are required. Make sure photos show the adjacent buildings and those across the street or behind the development. Photos from all cardinal directions are required.

Design and Historical Review Commission recommendations are on the reverse side of this page.



New Construction
Application For Design and Historical Review
Part II: Schematic Design Review
(Part 2 of 4 Required Reviews)

Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Proposed Development _____

Street Address Where
Development will be located: _____
Street City

Brief Letter Describing the Project

(Please provide eight (8) copies of your letter. If this letter was written for the concept design and has not changed, there is no need to write a new letter.)

If this project is beyond the concept phase and was not reviewed, a letter must be provided that describes the project concept in regard to site design and building design. The letter should include statements that explain the following:

1. Describe the project concept.
2. Describe how the project will connect to and relate to the public domain, ie., trails, sidewalks, parks, civic buildings, schools, etc.
3. Describe how the development will contribute to the pedestrian atmosphere.
4. Describe how the scale of the proposed development will relate to surrounding development, particularly buildings directly adjacent to it. Is it harmonious with its neighbors in height, width, and architectural detail?
5. Will the project be mixed-use and what business functions and/or housing demographic will be served by the development?
6. Describe the conceptual orientation of building entrances and exits, parking and auto circulation, pedestrian circulation and the overall project as it relates to the pedestrian.
7. How will the project integrate sustainable building practices?
8. How will the project enhance the unique local assets, or preserve the character, place identity, or "small-town" atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul?

(The GUIDING PRINCIPLES section of the North St. Paul Downtown Design Manual is a good reference when writing this narrative.)

A Project Update: Please write a short letter describing the progression of this project since the conceptual design phase. If the project was approved with certain conditions, please address how each of the conditions of approval has been met.

Photo Requirement: Photos of the development site that show the adjacent buildings and those across the street or behind the development are required. Photos from all cardinal directions are required.
(Please disregard if photos have already been submitted.)

Section B:4(b)

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New Construction
Application For Design and Historical Review
Part III: Design Development Review
(Part 3 of 4 Required Reviews)

Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Proposed Development _____

Street Address Where
Development will be located: _____
Street City

Brief Letter Describing the Project

(Please provide eight (8) copies of your letter. If this letter was written for an earlier design phase and has not changed, there is no need to write a new letter.)

If this project is beyond the concept phase and was not reviewed, a letter must be provided that describes the project concept in regard to site design and building design. The letter should include statements that explain the following:

1. Describe the project concept.
2. Describe how the project will connect to and relate to the public domain, ie., trails, sidewalks, parks, civic buildings, schools, etc.
3. Describe how the development will contribute to the pedestrian atmosphere.
4. Describe how the scale of the proposed development will relate to surrounding development, particularly buildings directly adjacent to it. Is it harmonious with its neighbors in height, width, and architectural detail?
5. Will the project be mixed-use and what business functions and/or housing demographic will be served by the development?
6. Describe the conceptual orientation of building entrances and exits, parking and auto circulation, pedestrian circulation and the overall project as it relates to the pedestrian.
7. How will the project integrate sustainable building practices?
8. How will the project enhance the unique local assets, or preserve the character, place identity, or "small-town" atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul?

(The GUIDING PRINCIPLES section of the North St. Paul Downtown Design Manual is a good reference when writing this narrative.)

A Project Update: Please write a concise letter describing the progression of this project since the conceptual design and/or schematic phase. If the project was approved with certain conditions, please address how each of the conditions of approval has been met.

Photo Requirement: Photos of the development site that show the adjacent buildings and those across the street or behind the development are required. Photos from all cardinal directions are required.
(Please disregard if photos have already been submitted.)

Section B:4(c)

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New Construction
Application For Design and Historical Review
Part IV: Final Plan Review
(Part 4 of 4 Required Reviews)

Date _____

Name of Applicant _____
Last First

Name of Applicant's Proposed Development _____

Street Address Where
Development will be located: _____
Street City

Brief Letter Describing the Project

(Please provide eight (8) copies of your letter. If this letter was written for the concept design and has not changed, there is no need to write a new letter.)

If this project is beyond the concept phase and was not reviewed, a letter must be provided that describes the project concept in regard to site design and building design. The letter should include statements that explain the following:

1. Describe the project concept.
2. Describe how the project will connect to and relate to the public domain, ie., trails, sidewalks, parks, civic buildings, schools, etc.
3. Describe how the development will contribute to the pedestrian atmosphere.
4. Describe how the scale of the proposed development will relate to surrounding development, particularly buildings directly adjacent to it. Is it harmonious with its neighbors in height, width, and architectural detail?
5. Will the project be mixed-use and what business functions and/or housing demographic will be served by the development?
6. Describe the conceptual orientation of building entrances and exits, parking and auto circulation, pedestrian circulation and the overall project as it relates to the pedestrian.
7. How will the project integrate sustainable building practices?
8. How will the project enhance the unique local assets, or preserve the character, place identity, or "small-town" atmosphere of Downtown North St. Paul?

(The GUIDING PRINCIPLES section of the North St. Paul Downtown Design Manual is a good reference when writing this narrative.)

A Project Update: Please write a concise letter describing the progression of this project since the conceptual design phase. If the project was approved with certain conditions, please address how each of the conditions of approval has been met.

Photo Requirement: Photos of the development site that show the adjacent buildings and those across the street or behind the development are required. Photos from all cardinal directions are required.
(Please disregard if photos have already been submitted.)

Section B:4(d)

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FINAL PLAN REVIEW.doc

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New Construction
Application For Design and Historical Review
Part IV: Final Plan Review
(Part 4 of 4 Required Reviews)

Drawing Requirements:

(Please provide eight 11 X 17 copies of the final scaled drawings and materials listed below.)

- Final site plan
- Final landscape plan
- Final building plan
- Section Drawings
- Section / Elevation Drawing(s)
- Perspective(s) that show the new development or infill building in context of other buildings existing on the site
- Architectural detail drawings
- Final plans for any artwork
- Final circulation plan
- Final grading plan
- Final lighting plan
- Final sign plan
- Final parking plan
- Final façade materials (bring samples to your review)
- Final color palette (bring swatches)
- Final outdoor ground plane materials list (bring samples to your review)
- Final window and door material (bring samples)

Recommendation to the City Council:

(AREA BELOW FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY)

- Approve Project**
- Denial of Project**
- Approve With Certain Conditions:**

Commissioners' Initials: _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C

- The “Building Permit Application” form is completed and signed by the property owner and the applicant or representative. (This is in Appendix Section B:1.)
- The *appropriate* “Design Review Supplement to the Building Permit Application” is attached. There are supplemental application materials required for:
 - Signs (Appendix Section B:2)
 - Building façade renovation (Appendix Section B:3)
 - New Construction/Development (Four Reviews are Required: Phase I – IV found in Appendix Section B:4)
- The appropriate forms are submitted to the Community Services Department at City Hall **ten (10)** days prior to the next scheduled Design and Historical Review meeting. (DHRC meets the second Tuesday of each month at 4:00.)
- All materials listed on the building permit application ***Design and Historical Review supplemental application*** have been submitted with the building permit application form (this includes the “Design Review Letter,” **SCALED** drawings, photos, and any other required materials.)
- The Review Application Letter:** In supplements where requested, this letter is required before approval of a new construction will be given by the Design and Historical Review Commission. Each of the eight (8) questions (Q.) listed in the supplemental application(s) should have corresponding answers (A.) numbered in the letter. For example:
 - Q. #1.) Describe the project concept.
 - A. #1.) The project concept is to build a three-story building with offices on the second floor and retail bays on the first floor. *This narrative should continue as appropriate....*

If a particular question does not apply, please write N/A next to the number in your letter. The “Design Manual” may be a helpful resource for you in answering these questions.

***For new development, drawings must be submitted at the following phases:**

- Concept phase (Concept diagram base map must be to scale.)
- Schematic plan phase (Schematic plan must be to scale.)
- Design development (Plan, section, and elevation drawings must be to scale)
- Final phase (Construction documents should be presented.) If all prior phases have been successfully reviewed, there *should* be no surprises or hold-ups when final phase drawings are reviewed.

Design development and final phase drawings:

- The **site plan** shows exterior boundary lines of the property indicating easements, dimensions and lot size (a survey may be required.)
- The plans show the location, elevation, size, height, dimensions, materials, and proposed use of all buildings and structures (including walls, fences, signs, lighting, and screening devices) existing and intended to be on the site.
- Scaled **plan, section, elevation, and/or section/elevation drawings** of the building are included as required.
- The **landscape plan** has a list all existing trees on the site, giving type and location and any other significant plant material. It also delineates any existing significant natural features such as rock outcroppings or water courses; proposed landscaping includes quantity, location, varieties and container sizes for plants, and it is to scale.
- The **parking plan** is to scale and shows location, number of spaces and dimensions of off-street parking spaces, loading docks and maneuvering areas; pedestrian, vehicular and service points of ingress and egress; driveway widths; and distances between driveways.
- Proposed **grading plan** (for sites having over 5-foot grade differential) shows direction and path of drainage on, through and off the site and indicates any proposed drainage channels or facilities.
- Plans show the required and existing street dedications and improvements such as sidewalks, curbing and pavement.
- This application includes all items requested in the supplemental application forms. Other items or data as requested by the DHRC have been provided. This application has been prepared as complete as possible to allow the reviewing commissions to make the required findings for approval of the specific type of application.

IMPORTANT!

ALL DRAWINGS **MUST** BE LABELED APPROPRIATELY AND TO SCALE!