

**October 2, 2025
6:30 PM**

The Planning Commission Meeting will be conducted on **October 2, 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

Ken Roberts, Community Development Director

Chris Cherne, Planning Commission Secretary

III. Adopt Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of September 4, 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. 2025-2026 Workplan Topics - Discussion

B. Downtown Design Manual Review

C. 2025-2026 Planning Commission Work Plan Update

VIII. Reports

IX. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting is November 6, 2025.



To	Date
Planning Commissioners	October 2, 2025

Agenda Placement # IV.A
Approval of Minutes

Subject
Approval of September 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Background/Facts
N/A

Recommended Action
Staff recommend approval of the September 4, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Attachments
1. PC Minutes 09-04-2025

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Cherne, Community Development Administrative Assistant



**Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 4, 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

Arthur Alvarez, Jr., Commissioner

Absent

Stephanie Kane-Burback, Commissioner

Elizabeth Gadbois, Commissioner

Cameron Muhic, Commissioner

Jim Rathe, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Jason Nordby, City Council Liaison

Ken Roberts, Community Development Director

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Blee asked for a motion to adopt the September 4, 2025, meeting agenda.

M/Rathe, S/Wise.

Motion carried 6-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of August 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Blee asked for a motion to approve the August 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes.

M/Rathe, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 6-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Cowern Elementary School – CUP Amendment and Site Plan

Roberts presented the Cowern Elementary School – CUP Amendment and Site Plan item to the Planning Commission. Roberts presented aerial maps and site and design plans for the Cowern School addition. The school district plans, if approved to do so by the City, plans to have the project out for bid by later this year, construction beginning spring of 2026 and going through phases through 2028. The site is currently

zoned for R-1: Single-Family Residential. The Comprehensive Plan does not have a designation for institutions or public uses, so it is included in the R-1: District. In the R1: Zoning District, schools are allowed as a conditional use. The application meets the criteria for conditional use permit. The school is currently on four separate properties. It is staff recommendation that these properties be combined as a condition of approval. Roberts discussed the parking plan and landscaping plan. The final design of the stormwater retention pond is subject to the Watershed's approval. Roberts also reviewed the architectural details of the proposed expansion project. Staff recommends approval of the CUP amendment subject to the conditions detailed in the official documents.

Ms. Chambers, the architect with the Applicant Team, spoke to the traffic flow off South Ave. The south lot is currently existing as visitor/ADA parking, but the main entry is on Margaret Street. The bus lot will be signed for buses only during school hours. Muhic asked if the applicant had looked at introducing a right turn lane from South Avenue East due to a MnDOT rule requiring it if their expected traffic flow is 100 or more movements per day. Greg Buchal, a Civil Engineer with the project did have conversations with the County about that, but they indicated they would rather not have a right turn lane in that location.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:05 PM.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:06 PM.

Chair Blees asked for motion to recommend to City Council approval of the Conditional Use Permit Amendment and site plan approval for the expansion at Cowern Elementary School.

M/Rathe, S/Wise.
Motion carried 6-0.

B. Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments

Roberts presented the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments item to the Planning Commission. The text amendments clarify certain non-encroachments from setback requirements and language in the code regarding expansions on existing structures that have nonconforming setbacks. Roberts noted the changes from the previous Planning Commission meeting.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:15 PM.

Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:16 PM.

Nordby asked if this is something that should first be reviewed by the Code Compliance Department. The Planning Commission directed staff to submit the ordinance to Code Compliance for review.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of the zoning text amendment that amends the standards for permitted encroachments and additions to nonconforming structures.

M/Muhic, S/Gadbois.
Motion carried 6-0.

C. Subdivision Ordinance Amendment

Roberts presented the Subdivision Ordinance Amendment item to the Planning Commission. The amendment includes clarification on the park dedication fees and how they are calculated, details in the provisions requiring development contracts and adding language to accept security from developers in the form of an Irrevocable Letter of Credit from a bank. Roberts noted the comments from the City Engineer and City Attorney.

Chair Blees opened the public hearing at 7:25 PM.



Chair Blees closed the public hearing at 7:26 PM.

Chair Blees asked for a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of the subdivision ordinance amendment that alters the standards for permitted encroachments and additions to nonconforming structures.

M/Rathe, S/Wise.

Motion carried 6-0.

VII. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no Commission Business, Action Items or Recommendations.

VIII. REPORTS

Roberts reminded the Planning Commission of the Open Meeting Law rules.

Roberts noted that the City Council approved the Home Occupation Ordinance on August 19, 2025, with no changes.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Blees asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 PM.

M/Rathe, S/Gadbois.

Motion carried 6-0.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting is Thursday, October 2, 2025, at 6:30 PM.

Members, please notify any planned absences to:

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

City of North St. Paul

Planning Commission Report



From: Ken Roberts, Community Development Director
Meeting Date: October 2, 2025
Agenda Item: **2025-2026 Workplan Topics - Discussion**

INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2026 Planning Commission Work plan has several topics and activities for the Planning Commission to consider. This memo has information about two of those topics for the Planning Commission to review and discuss.

DISCUSSION

First Work Plan Topic

Check definitions of townhouses, duplex, and twin homes to ensure they align with state law, the building code and the intent of the R-2 and R-3 Zoning districts.

Listed below are several definitions from the North Saint Paul Zoning Ordinance with potential amendments. I based the proposed zoning code amendments on language in the Minnesota Building Code and on language in State Statute as highlighted on page two of this memo.

Existing North Saint Paul Zoning Code Definitions: (with proposed amendments shown in bold):

DWELLING, ATTACHED. A dwelling unit which is joined to another dwelling or building at one or more sides by a party wall or walls.

DWELLING, SINGLE-FAMILY. A residence structure that is free-standing (detached) and designed for or occupied by one family for living purposes. ~~only.~~ (see [FIGURE 12](#))

DWELLING, TOWNHOUSE. A one-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of two or more similar one-family dwelling units, each with a private entrance that has direct access to the outside, which is part of a structure whose dwelling units are attached and arranged either horizontally or vertically. When arranged horizontally, they may span more than one parcel. **Each dwelling unit must have separate building service utilities as required by other chapters of the State Building Code. Note: A two-unit townhouse is sometimes referred to as a “twin-home”.**

DWELLING, TWO FAMILY. A residence structure located on a single parcel containing two dwelling units for living purposes that each have separate housekeeping and cooking facilities, each of which has direct access to the outside. (see [FIGURE 13](#)) **Note: These structures are sometimes referred to as “duplexes.”**

DWELLING, MULTIPLE FAMILY. A building, or portion thereof, on one lot, containing three or more separate dwelling units **each intended for residential occupancy by different families.** (see [FIGURE 11](#)).

State of Minnesota Building Code Definitions: (Highlighted phrases from the definitions below are added to the City Zoning Code definitions above to help ensure clarity):

A two-family dwelling (IRC-2 occupancy) is:

- A building containing two separate dwelling units.
- The separation between units is either horizontal or vertical.
- Both units are on one lot.
- Sometimes referred to as “duplexes.”

A townhouse (IRC-3 occupancy) is:

- A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of two or more attached dwelling units.
- Each unit is a separate building and extends from the foundation to the roof with open space on at least two sides of each unit.
- Each unit is provided with separate building service utilities required by other chapters of the State Building Code.
- A two-unit townhouse is sometimes referred to as a “twin-home.”

From Minnesota State Statute: (1309.0202)

DWELLING. SINGLE-FAMILY. Any building that contains one dwelling unit used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or occupied for living purposes.

TWO-FAMILY. Any building that contains two separate dwelling units with separation either horizontal or vertical on one lot that is used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or occupied for living purposes.

TOWNHOUSE. A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of two or more attached units in which each unit extends from the foundation to the roof and having open space on at least two sides of each unit. Each single-family dwelling unit shall be considered to be a separate building. Separate building service utilities shall be provided to each single-family dwelling unit when required by other chapters of the State Building Code.

Staff are asking the Planning Commission to review the potential amendments to the zoning code definitions shown on Page 1 and provide direction as to whether the city should pursue making these changes to the zoning code with the preparation of a zoning code text amendment ordinance.

Second Work Plan Topic:

Check Sections 154.007 and 154.008 of the Zoning Code to ensure they are consistent with the goals and policies in the Downtown Design Manual and Comprehensive Plan.

I reviewed Section 154.007 of the Zoning Code (Mixed Use Districts) and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to see if the purposes and uses in each of the city’s mixed use zoning districts are consistent with the goals and policies in the 20240 Comprehensive Plan. I found that goals, purposes and uses in each of the three mixed use zoning districts in North Saint Paul are generally very consistent with the overall goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

I have included for reference on Page 9 of this memo the parts of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan that are most relevant to the mixed-use zoning districts. The potential zoning code revisions shown below include language from the Comprehensive Plan to help ensure the relevant sections of the Zoning Code are consistent with the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan. I have highlighted in yellow the most relevant phrases from those parts of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission also should review the listed permitted and conditional uses for each zoning district to ensure these zoning districts provide opportunities for the desired type, design and diversity of development opportunities reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and the current and future needs of the city.

154.007 MIXED-USE DISTRICTS. (Last update in 2016). (with potential revisions shown in bold and underline)

(A) *Purpose.* Mixed-use districts are established to create a vibrant urban environment that brings compatible land uses, public amenities and utilities together at various scales. These districts provide a range of district types, from the Downtown Core District to the Corridor Highway District, while fostering high-quality building and site design, enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobile circulation and a sense of community. These districts are also intended to:

1. Encourage a diversification of uses, including residential, commercial, and civic uses, in order to enhance the vitality and appeal of these areas.
2. Facilitate preservation, development or redevelopment consistent with the adopted goals, objectives, policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans.
3. Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings including vertical and horizontal configurations while maintaining and improving the quality of the natural landscape.
4. Encourage appropriate transitions between lower and higher density uses within the district.
5. Encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment, bicycle and transit use as a means of accessing and moving through the district and surrounding areas.

(B) *Submittal of plans.* In order to review proposals for compliance to this chapter, the following plans must be submitted to the city: site plan, landscape plan, building plan and, for certain uses, a site analysis plan.

(C) *Use, lot and design requirements*

1. *Permitted, conditional and interim uses.* See [Table 3](#) for a complete list of allowed uses within the mixed-use districts. Other uses may be allowed by the Community Development Department if they are determined to be of similar scale and impact.

2. *Accessory uses and structures.* See [Table 3](#) for a complete list of allowed accessory uses and structures within the mixed-use districts.

3. *Lot requirements.* See [Table 7](#) for a complete list of lot requirements within the mixed-use districts. Before any building permit is approved, the Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the proposed use will conform to the requirements. The applicant or owner shall supply data necessary to demonstrate such conformance.

(D) *Downtown Mixed-Use District (MU-1).*

1. *Purpose.* This district is established to sustain and enhance the viability of the Downtown in terms of preserving its small-town and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere while encouraging development and redevelopment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan to create a destination. The district is also intended to:

(a) Preserve and enhance the historical character of the Downtown where appropriate with historic renovations and adaptive reuse of structures.

(b) Encourage creating a sense of place within the Downtown through **superior** aesthetics including architectural diversity, façade designs, parking configurations, pedestrian-scale amenities, streetscape enhancements, landscaping and the public realm.

(c) Encourage vertical mixed-use development in which the lower floors generally have more public uses, with private **and residential** uses on the upper levels.

(d) Allow (or encourage) development and redevelopment that will maintain a sense of the City's heritage.

Uses from Use Table 3 of the Zoning Code

Permitted Uses

Residential Unit over Nonresidential Use
Townhouse Dwelling
Municipal Administrative Building, Fire Station or other Public Safety Facilities
Clinic
Essential Service Structure
Brewery or Micro-Brewery or Tap Room
Club or Lodge
Coffee Shop or Tea House
Cultural Center
Indoor Recreation
Restaurant
Animal Grooming
Artisan Studio
Bank or Financial Institution
Body Art Establishment
Business Sales and Services
Personal Services
Education Services
Lab, Research
Office
Farmer's Market
Grocery
Liquor Store
Retail Sales
Limited Production and Processing
Wholesale Establishment

Conditional Uses

State Licensed Residential Facility (for six or fewer persons)
State Licensed Residential Facility (serving 7-16 persons)
Senior Housing
Day Care Facility
Day Nursery
Catering

Drive-In or Self-Service Business
Institutions
Schools
Garden Material Sales
Funeral Home
Automobile Service Station/Convenience Store

(E) *Transitional Mixed-Use District (MU-2).*

1. *Purpose.* This district is established to sustain and enhance the viability of commercial nodes that serve the needs of residents in adjacent neighborhoods while encouraging development and redevelopment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The district is also intended to:

(a) Encourage appropriate transitions to surrounding land uses through aesthetics including architectural pedestrian-scale design, parking configuration, streetscape enhancements, landscaping and screening.

Uses from Use Table 3 of the Zoning Code.

Permitted Uses

Residential Unit over Nonresidential Use
Townhouse Dwelling

?? Should the City allow multiple-family residential? (possibly only by PUD)?? If so, with a maximum density?

Clinic
Essential Service Structure
Bed and Breakfast Establishment
Brewery or Micro-Brewery or Tap Room
Catering
Coffee shop or Tea House
Cultural Center
Indoor Recreation
Restaurant
Animal Grooming
Artisan Studio
Bank or Financial Institution
Body Art Establishment
Business Sales and Services
Personal Services
Education Services
Drive-In or Self-Service Business
Lab, Research

Office
Farmer's Market
Grocery
Liquor Store
Retail Sales
Limited Production and Processing
Wholesale Establishment

Conditional Uses

State Licensed Residential Facility (for six or fewer persons)
State Licensed Residential Facility (serving 7-16 persons)
Day Care Facility
Day Nursery
Institutions
Schools
Hotel or Motel
Garden Material Sales
Club or Lodge
Funeral Home
Automobile Service Station/Convenience Store
Retail Cannabis Business
Industrial Cannabis Business

(F) *Corridor Mixed-use District (MU-3).*

1. *Purpose.* This district is established to encourage the development or redevelopment of mixed-use centers that combine new or existing retail development with a variety of housing, offices, studios, live-work space, civic buildings, employment activities, research, limited industrial and other complementary uses which combine to create a lively environment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The district is also intended to:

- (a) Encourage the integration of complementary and related uses in an aesthetically attractive and functional environment.
- (b) Encourage building and site design that advances the city's sustainability goals.
- (c) Promote desirable economic development activities.

(d) Provide more flexibility in the redevelopment or intensification of existing commercial centers and the development of vacant sites.

Uses from Use Table 3 of the Zoning Code

Permitted Uses

Residential Unit over Nonresidential Use

Multiple Family Dwelling

Townhouse Dwelling

Municipal Administrative Building, Fire Station or other Public Facilities

Clinic

Hospital

Animal or Vet Clinic

Essential Service Structure

Bed and Breakfast Establishment

Hotel or Motel

Brewery or Micro-Brewery or Tap Room

Catering

Coffee shop or Tea House

Cultural Center

Indoor Recreation

Restaurant

Animal Grooming

Artisan Studio

Bank or Financial Institution

Body Art Establishment

Business Sales and Services

Personal Services

Education Services

Contractor's Business with Showroom or Workshop

Drive-In or Self-Service Business

Lab, Research

Office

Farmer's Market

Garden Material Sales

Grocery

Liquor Store

Retail Sales

Limited Production and Processing

Warehousing

Wholesale Establishment

Conditional Uses

- Assisted Living and/or Memory Care Facility
- Senior Housing
- State Licensed Residential Facility (for six or fewer persons)
- State Licensed Residential Facility (serving 7-16 persons)
- Day Care Facility
- Day Nursery
- Institutions
- Schools
- Medical Cannabis Facility
- Adult Uses
- Club or Lodge
- Animal Boarding Facility
- Funeral Home
- Automobile Service or Repair
- Car Wash
- Automobile Sales and Rental
- Automobile Service Station/Convenience Store
- Self-Service Storage Facility
- Retail Cannabis Business
- Industrial Cannabis Business

Staff are asking the Planning Commission to review the potential amendments to the zoning districts and provide direction as to whether the city should pursue making these changes to the zoning code.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff are recommending the Planning Commission:

1. Review the existing City Code sections related residential definitions and their potential amendments; and
2. Review the potential code amendments to Sections 154.007 of the Zoning Code to ensure they are consistent with the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan; and

Be prepared to discuss these at the Planning Commission meeting.

After review and discussion by the Planning Commission, staff will be looking for direction from the Commission as to any changes they want staff to include in the final version of a zoning ordinance text amendment.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Reference Materials (from 2040 Comprehensive Plan)

Reference Materials

Sections From 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Page 5.

Downtown Design Manual

The Downtown Design Manual (2005, update forthcoming in 2017-2018) was created to illustrate portions of the North St. Paul Code of Ordinances 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. The Manual also provides business owners and potential developers tangible design ideas that can be applied in North St. Paul's downtown to improve the potential for economic viability and make the commercial district a welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians. The Manual is used by the City's Design Review Commission to review projects within the Downtown Mixed Use district. It is also used by staff to work with business owners and developers to provide predictability as to the look and feel of the Downtown.

Pages 10 and 11.

Land Use Categories

The development of North St. Paul's 2040 land use plan involves updating the land use descriptions and density ranges of each land use category. There are significant changes in land use categories from the 2030 land use plan, due to a complete zoning rewrite that occurred in 2015. The 2040 future land use plan districts were rewritten to reflect the new zoning districts, as well as new density ranges to conform to the City's designation in *ThriveMSP 2040* as an Urban Community. A summary of those changes include:

- Medium-Density Residential. The 2040 Land Use plan includes an increase in the maximum density for this land use category from 7.3 units per acre to 12 units per acre. This is consistent with the current zoning ordinance and the intent to allow townhouse development.
- Multi-Family Residential. An increase in minimum density for multi-family development is made in the 2040 Land Use Plan, from 7.4 to 12 units per acre. This density is consistent with the intent of the multi-family district to allow for apartment buildings, condominiums and other multi-story structures.
- Downtown Mixed Use. (M U - 1) Clarifications on the intent of this district are made in the 2040 plan, including tying the district to the historic character of the area. The district also sets density expectations for residential development.
- Transitional Mixed Use. (M U - 2) This is a new land use district, and replaces the General Retail district. This district allows (but does not require) a mixture of uses including high density residential, consistent with the zoning districts adopted in 2015.
- Corridor Mixed Use. (MU-3) This district is also new for the 2040 Future Land Use Plan, replacing the larger Diversified District from the 2030 Plan. The Corridor Mixed Use District is more focused outside of the downtown area and provides for more flexibility in the redevelopment (or intensification) of existing commercial centers and the development of vacant sites. This district includes a minimum 30 percent residential requirement.

Pages 22 and 23.

Land Use Plan Implementation Strategies

The main implementation strategy for future land use planning is to update the City's official controls to reflect the uses and density ranges in the Plan. In addition to these updates, the City commits to the following strategies to implement the goals of this chapter as well as facilitate development and redevelopment that corresponds to the Future Land Use Plan. More detail on priorities and timelines are discussed in the Implementation chapter of this Plan:

Commercial and Mixed Use Development

- Review the allowed uses and standards within the city's Mixed Use zoning districts to ensure that these zoning districts provide opportunities for the desired type, design, and diversity of development opportunities reflected in this Plan.
- Create design standards for both vertical and horizontal mixed-use developments, so that not only are uses compatible, but the scale, mass, and feel of new development enhance both the existing and desired character of the City.
- Continue to use economic development incentives to achieve redevelopment goals (refer to the Economic Development Chapter for more information).

Redevelopment Districts (Pages 16-20).

4 & 6 = Core Employment Reinvestment District

- Redevelop the McPhillips site to more intensive office/medical employment.
- Continue reinvestment and adaptive uses on properties throughout the district as they become available.
- Consider trees and other environmental amenities (including Living Streets) in any redevelopment.

5 = Downtown District

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

The City of North St. Paul will be using significant city resources to help encourage and assist in the redevelopment of the districts. The level of possible assistance will be based on the type and the quality of the project that has been proposed. In addition, the level to which the proposed project fits the goals of the community will also be a factor in the level of possible assistance. It is anticipated

that the City may be required to be actively involved with a developer in the project including the assembly of properties to encourage the project to occur.

Pages 22-24 Economic Development Goals and Tasks

Goal 3 - Utilize land use planning to enhance job growth and continued economic health throughout all areas of the City.

Task 1 - Inventory, research and analyze land areas of the City that appear to be underutilized, underperforming or antiquated. Create effective land use strategies for economic sustainability of the City.

Task 2 - Identify the types of land uses and related building types that promote job generation and job retention to encourage economic growth in the City. Establish a process by which the preservation or creation of job producing land uses is reviewed periodically by City staff.

Goal 4 – Develop a plan to allow for the growth of the tax base of the community through growth and redevelopment of the identified districts.

Task 1 – Identify additional districts in the community to focus on for redevelopment opportunities.

Task 2 – Create and/or implement programs to facilitate the acquisition and redevelopment of the identified sites.

Task 3 – Find funding sources and work with the partners to allow for the successful acquisition of additional resources projects.

Chapter 7: Downtown

DOWNTOWN GOALS AND POLICIES

From the public engagement of the downtown revitalization process, as well as the output of all of the previous planning process, several guiding values for the downtown emerged.

Aesthetics and Image: Create a positive visual image for the downtown through high-quality design, materials and graphics. The downtown design should be user-friendly encourage redevelopment, and communicate a distinct identity for the district.

Policies:

- Make downtown visually interesting at a small-town scale.
- Ensure quality design and superior aesthetics of development.
- Possess a progressive image for redevelopment while maintaining a sense of the community heritage.
- Design transportation improvements to enhance the functional and

aesthetic character of the road or facility.

- Enhance the appearance of streets through boulevard landscaping, careful placement of necessary signs, underground utilities when improvements are made and by providing decorative street lights.
- Create user friendly edges and provide more form to downtown.
- Include graphics to provide useful and appealing information, add street interest, and to celebrate downtown.
- Create new landmarks and gateways to better signal the arrival into downtown.

Downtown Master Plan (Page 10, Chapter 7)

Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 15 – Implementation

Short Term Actions:

Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to reflect uses and density ranges in the Comprehensive Plan.

Review the allowed uses and standards within the city's Mixed Use zoning districts to ensure that these zoning districts provide opportunities for the desired type, design and diversity of development opportunities reflected in this Plan.

Medium-term actions:

Review and update the City's zoning code to reflect consistency with this Land Use Plan. Evaluate the zoning code language to ensure that the dimensional standards and zoning district regulations provide the opportunity for development to occur as guide.

City of North St. Paul

Planning Commission Report



From: Ken Roberts, Community Development Director
Meeting Date: October 2, 2025
Agenda Item: **Downtown Design Manual Review**

INTRODUCTION

City staff and Planning Commission have started reviewing the North Saint Paul Downtown Design Manual (“Manual”). The purpose of this review is to determine if the Manual is still relevant for use and if so, how the City should revise the Manual for use going forward in North Saint Paul.

BACKGROUND

On June 5, 2025, the Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Downtown Design Manual. The Commission discussed various design guidelines in the Downtown Design Manual such as setbacks and building height requirements. At this meeting, Director Roberts asked the Planning Commission what their priority is for the Downtown Design Manual. Commissioner Blees indicated that the other work plan items mentioned throughout the meeting are more of a priority, but it is important to have the Manual be right. Blees indicated it would be a good idea to have a consultant work on these updates next year. Commissioner Muhic stated the east and west ends of the Downtown Design District should have a form-based code and that the only truly historic parts of the town are the two blocks on either side of Margaret St N along 7th Ave East.

GENERAL INFORMATION – DISCUSSION

Since the June 5 Planning Commission meeting, staff have been reviewing the Zoning Code and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to ensure the zoning standards and requirements for the mixed-use zoning districts are consistent with the goals and purposes listed in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Staff are proposing a few changes to Section 154.007 of Zoning Code to help ensure the language in the zoning code is consistent with the goals and purposes in the Comprehensive Plan. I have outlined the proposed zoning code changes in a separate memo.

I also have continued my review the Manual to gain a better understanding of the document and how it may or may not need revising. As part of my research, I found information from 2015 and 2016 in the city files about the Manual. The first item I found were notes from a meeting of the Design Review Commission held on October 22, 2015, where they discussed the Manual and provided suggestions and comments for the city to consider when updating the Manual. I reviewed these notes and have added my comments to the 2015 notes to form one set of suggestions for consideration. I have attached these combined review comments to this report.

The second document I found is titled “Downtown Design Manual Update 2016 Process/Timeline.” This seven-page memo provides an extensive analysis of why an update to the Manual was and is necessary and the process the City could take to complete the project. As one will see when reviewing this document, the update to the Manual they envisioned in 2016 would be a significant undertaking that would take several months to complete. I have attached an updated version of this document to this report for the Commissions review.

I cannot determine at this time if current City staff would have the time to complete such an extensive update to the Manual. It might be possible for City staff and the Planning Commission to work through and propose changes and updates to parts of the Manual without making a complete overhaul of it. The 2015-2025 set of

notes includes several areas of the existing Manual that have been identified so far that the City should revise. Staff may be able to prepare many of these proposed text changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council.

To complete the update to the Manual, there are at least two options for the City to consider:

First, does the City need to completely rewrite and reorganize the entire manual with a public participation component as outlined in the 2016 update process memo; or

Secondly, is the layout and organization of the existing manual generally sufficient for the City to use with staff and Planning Commission preparing updates to the text and photos to better reflect the current needs and interests of North Saint Paul?

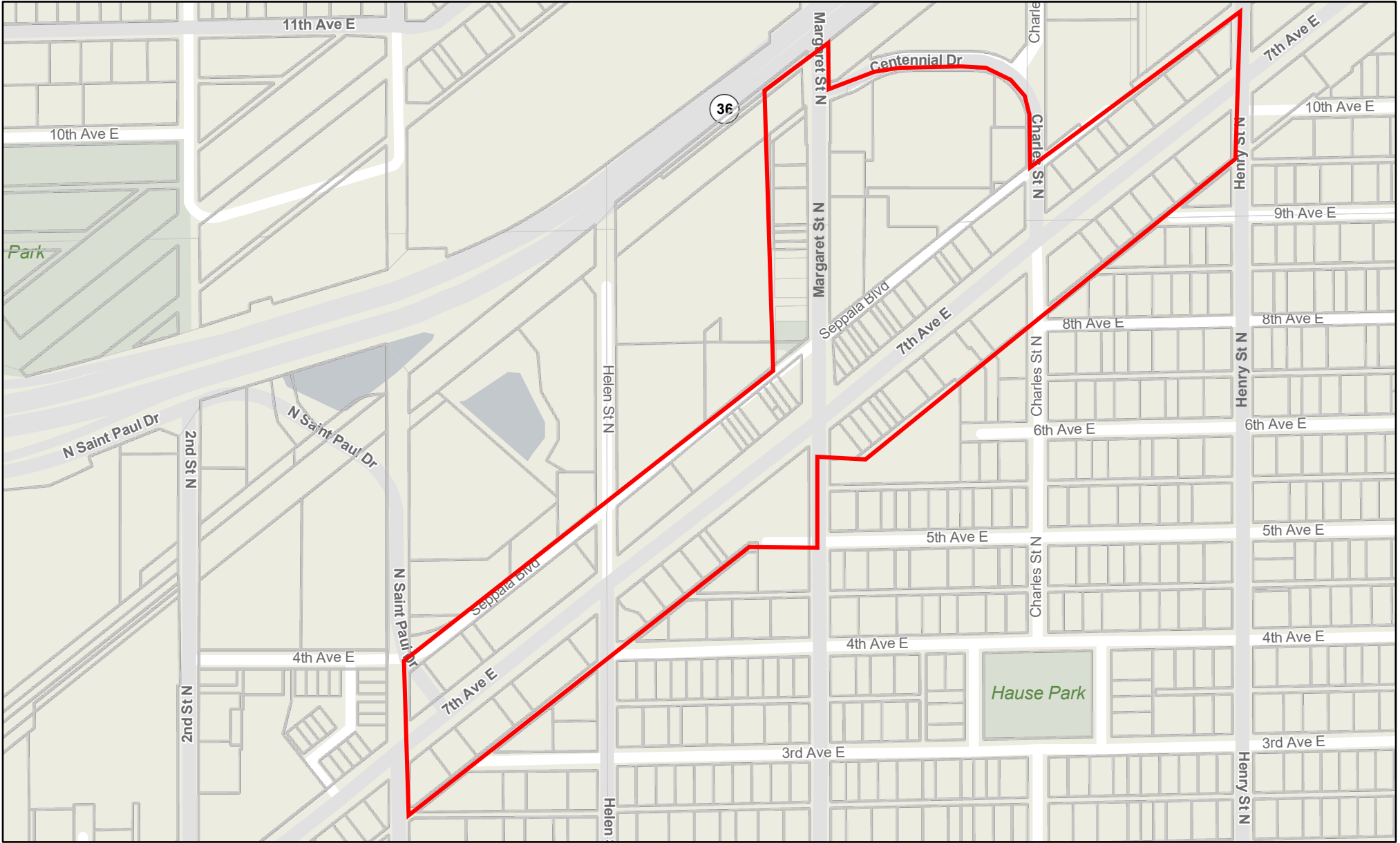
Preparing a final design and layout of the Downtown Design Manual with the new text and updated pictures for publishing will require the city to hire a graphic artist or a firm with publishing expertise. I have not yet explored who might be able to perform this service or get a cost estimate for the work.

RECOMMENDATION




Staff are recommending the Planning Commission review the attached materials about the Downtown Design Manual and be prepared to discuss the need and options for updating the Manual during the meeting on October 2, 2025.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Existing Downtown Design Manual
2. Base Map
3. Aerial Photo
4. 2015 and 2025 Downtown Design Manual Review notes and comments
5. October 2025 update to 2016 Proposed Process to Update Downtown Design Manual

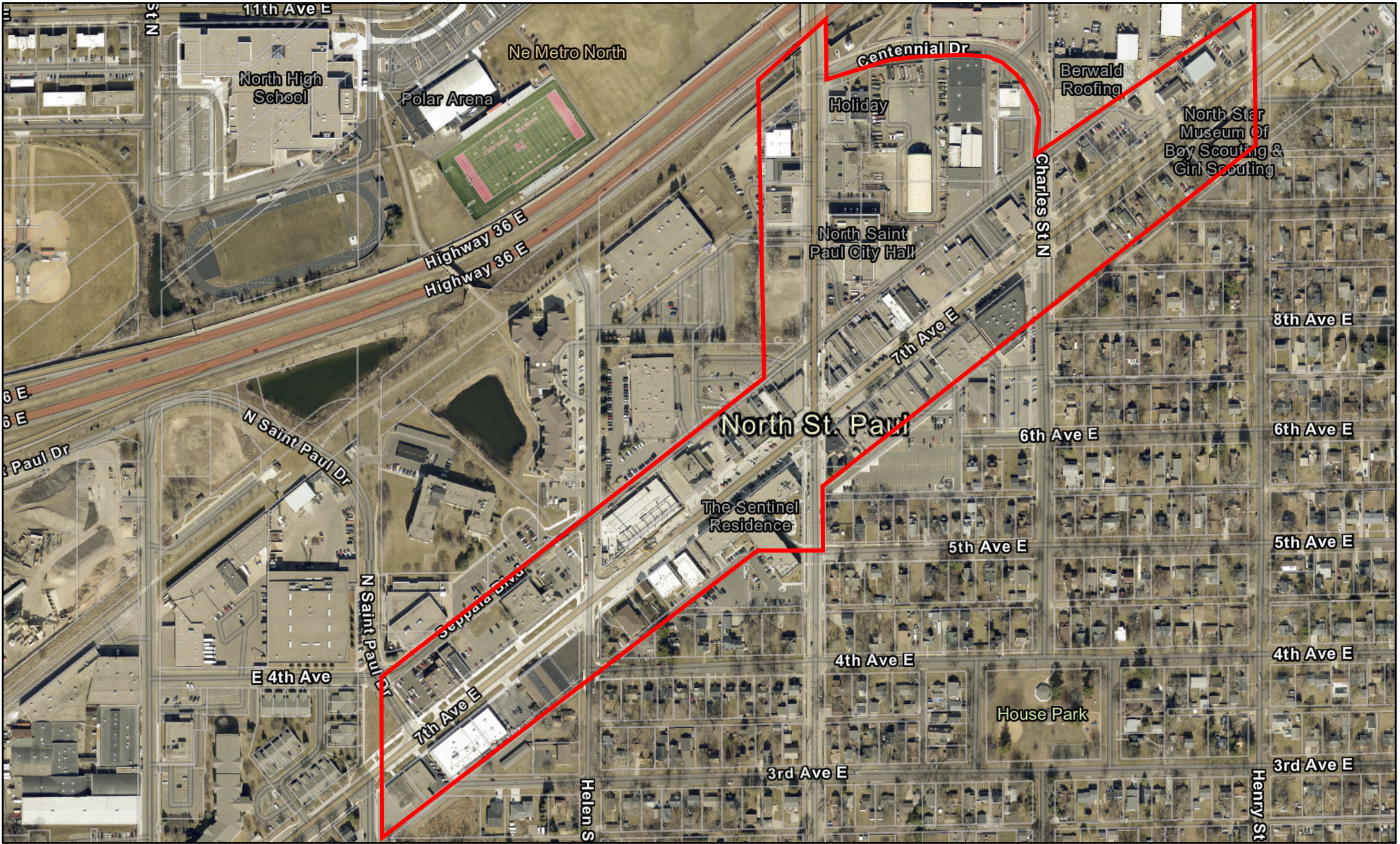





1 in = 587 Ft

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Address Label
-  Tax Parcels
-  Downtown Design District Boundaries



The information on this map is from a digital database using the Datafi Geographic Information System. The map and associated data do not represent a survey. The City of North St. Paul makes no claims or guarantees about the accuracy or currency of the data depicted and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in its contents. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for their intended use or purpose.



-  Municipal Boundary
-  Tax Parcels
-  Downtown Design District Boundaries

1 in = 558 Ft



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Notes from Design Review Commission on Thursday, October 22, 2015

With City Staff updates dated May 26, 2025, in blue

Additional City staff updates dated September 23, 2025

Downtown Design Manual

Overall Comments

- Remove and/or update references to the Design and Historical Review Commission.
- Look for ways to streamline and condense the document.
- Pg. 5 Boundaries – the west end of the District with VFW, existing commercial buildings (M and M Rogness, Farmers Insurance, Reflex Medical and River of God Church building) are not historical. Remove the area between North Saint Paul Drive (former 1st Street) to Helen Street from the district.
- Pg. 8 Expectations for Developers and for Existing Business owners.
- Pg. 15 Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC) information – needs updating
- Pg. 19 Application Procedure and Review Process – DHRC disbanded in 2019 so no longer reviewing. Review when or what type of building changes will require PC and City Council approval versus minor projects that city staff could approve.
- PP 20-23 Guiding Principles – still relevant?
- Pg. 25 Review standards versus guidelines.
- PP 79 Appendixes B and C - Review and probably remove forms and applications.

Site Design and Layout – Page 28

- Wording change needed? - make it more concise?
- Pg. 29 Review required setbacks – possibly allow different building setbacks along 7th Avenue to allow patios in the front of buildings
- Pg. 31 business owners go through rear and never see store fronts
- ~~Pg. 32 Target is a terrible example of parking~~
- Proof of parking – what is meant with this comment – allow this?
- Parking area behind south is bad shape??
- Pg. 37 rooftop equipment screening – continue to require?
- Pg. 40 Mixed Use. Still require retail and service uses on first floors and prohibit housing on the ground level? This failed in the Article No. Seven building.

Massing – Page 42

- Good overall
- Pg. 43 No one story - is that an issue? It's what is there. Related – should the City now allow 4-story buildings since the City approved Sentinel and Article No. Seven buildings in the downtown?
- PP 43 and 45 Bay width maximum of 25 feet – still necessary to include?

- Review limits on building heights – 4 story buildings have been built and are more common now – pp. 43 and 44. (check versus zoning code standards)

Existing Zoning Code language:

(D) *Downtown Mixed-Use District (MU-1).*

1. *Purpose.* This district is established to sustain and enhance the viability of the Downtown in terms of preserving its small-town and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere while encouraging development and redevelopment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan to create a destination. The district is also intended to:
 - (a) Preserve and enhance the historical character of the Downtown where appropriate with historic renovations and adaptive reuse of structures.
 - (b) Encourage creating a sense of place within the Downtown through aesthetics including architectural diversity, façade designs, parking configurations, pedestrian-scale amenities, streetscape enhancements, landscaping and the public realm.
 - (c) Encourage vertical mixed-use development in which the lower floors generally have more public uses, with private uses on the upper levels.
2. *Downtown Design Manual.* Buildings within the MU-1 District shall give due regard to the standards within the Downtown Design Manual.

Table 7. Mixed Use Districts Lot Requirements. (Existing)

District	Minimum Lot Size	Lot Width	Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit	Front Yard Setback	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback	Maximum Height
MU-1 Downtown Mixed-Use District	10 sq. ft. or None	20 ft.	1,980 sq. ft.	0 ft.	0 ft. When abutting a Residential District 20 ft.	0 ft.	Three (3) stories or 35 ft. New mixed use buildings with residential units above nonresidential, office or service uses may be up to four (4) stories or 50 ft.

- Pg. 47 exterior finish material 70% windows, 40% brick? Maybe not have percentages. Percentages are difficult to design to.
- PP. 47 and 60. Efface should be EFIS, Spelling Correction.
- Pg. 50 Windows 70%/40%/seems high. (See note about percentages).
- Pg. 51 ADA – take out (Yes - Not necessary to have in the manual - now required for all buildings).
- Pg. 52 Fiberglass awnings and other materials are not allowed. Still relevant?
- Pg. 57 If Earthy tones, then do not use beige.
- Pg. 58 incandescent lighting- should now say LED or energy efficient instead.
- Pg. 60-61 redundant- use more graphics -??
- Pg. 47 and 60 - Should the City continue to require facades to be at least 50 percent brick?

Signs - Page 62

- Update with new and better pictures.
- PP. 64 and 65 Too many sandwich board signs.
- Pg. 66 Liquor store sign in the design manual- not there anymore. [Also shows the old Mac's Dinner.](#)
[Remove outdated pictures, See note above.](#)
- [Review requirements and standards for awnings, signs, colors.](#)
- Too many words.

Downtown Design Manual Update 2016
Process/Timeline
October 2025 update

Introduction to the Design Manual Update

The Planning Commission and City Staff have determined that an update to the Downtown Design Manual is necessary in order to continue to provide better flexibility and design solutions to the Downtown Mixed-Use District built environment. This process will take approximately six to ~~eight~~ twelve months to complete while including the participation of City staff, City Council, Commissions, various City departments, business owners and residents.

Process and Involvement

The update process will take a strong commitment from the City to inform, involve, and engage North St. Paul residents, business owners, ~~the Design Review Commission, the Planning Commission,~~ other Commissions, the Business Association, City Council and various City departments to create an effective and useful update of the Downtown Design Manual. The City should extend its outreach efforts to provide an inclusive process for preparing the update. North St. Paul has many passionate residents, Council members and Commissioners who care deeply about the Downtown, and who through their participation, can help to shape the elements of the manual. The Downtown Design Manual Update will ultimately be a better document because of the comments, suggestions, and critique provided by all of those who engage in the project. The City will be thankful for their contributions and dedication to this process.

Why is a Downtown Design Manual Update necessary?

The former 2005 Downtown Design Manual is a document that, over the past ~~10~~ 20 years, has led to North Saint Paul implementing its design standards within the City, but has numerous times resulted in conflicts and inconsistencies with the City's Zoning Code that often made the document difficult to interpret and use. Since the City updated the Zoning Code in 2015, updating the manual now will give the City an opportunity to create standards and requirements that better relate to the current zoning ordinance and to ensure it is consistent with updated and emerging design practices. ~~and the upcoming advancements and reconstruction of the downtown.~~

The design standards in the manual will provide direction to decision makers, design professionals, and the public about site planning, building, landscaping, and infrastructure design. The intent of the new manual is not only to update and modernize the design standards, but also to create encouraging guidelines that reinforce the community's desires for quality design and place making and to promote sustainable development practices. The City will write and prepare the manual to support local businesses and new development and redevelopment interests in North St. Paul. The goals of the update will be to streamline City review procedures and processes, remove any unnecessary or contradictory standards, and provide more opportunities for creative development consistent with the City's goals and policies.

Relationship to the Zoning Code

In addition to a full Downtown Design Manual Update, there is a potential for the Zoning Code to be affected by the suggested changes and modifications of the manual. It is the goal of the staff to have the updated manual be consistent with and complement the Zoning Code. If standards in the manual affect or are in conflict with those in the Zoning Ordinance, City staff and the Planning Commission will request the City make ordinance text amendments of the Zoning Code.

Downtown Design Manual Layout and Graphics

Through this process, the manual will benefit from a new layout, table formations, and graphics that will better address the overall goals of the language changes and better aid in interpretation of the guidelines. The updated manual will certainly benefit from visual guides, sketches, and diagrams providing a graphical interpretation of the design guidelines.

Existing Downtown Design Manual Sections

- Part I: Introduction
 - Table of Contents
 - Map of the Downtown Design District
 - Overview of the Design Manual
 - Purpose of the Design Manual
 - Who Should Use this Manual
 - The Role of Developers and Business Owners
 - The Desired Character of Downtown
 - Building Height and its Effect on Place-making
 - Design Review Defined
 - The Purpose of Design Review
 - The Design and Historical Review Commission (DHRC)
 - History of North St. Paul
 - Types of Projects that Require Review
 - Application Procedure and The Design Review Process
 - Guiding Principles
- Part II: Design Standards and Guidelines
 - What are Design Guidelines?
 - What are Design Standards?
 - Streetscape Elements and Materials Palette
 - Site Design and Layout
 - Building Orientation – Setbacks
 - Building Orientation – Entrances
 - Rear Entrances
 - Landscaping and Impervious Surfaces
 - Parking Lots
 - Parking Screening
 - Utility Areas and Mechanical Equipment
 - Rooftop Mechanical Equipment Screening
 - Fences

- Outdoor Seating
 - Mixed Use
 - Franchise Architecture
 - Massing
 - Proportion and Rhythm
 - Height
 - Width
 - Façade
 - Blank Walls
 - Windows
 - Doors
 - Awnings
 - Architecture Detail
 - Color
 - Lighting
 - Rooflines and Parapets
 - Materials
 - Signage
 - Sandwich Boards
 - Projecting or Hanging Signs
 - Monument Signs or Billboards
 - Rooftop Signs
 - Decorative Flags, Pennants, and Balloons
 - Temporary Signs
 - Street Banners
- Part III: Appendices
 - Appendix Summary
 - Appendix A
 - Glossary
 - Bibliography
 - Appendix B – Building Permit Application and Supplemental Forms for Design Review
 - Section B:1 – Building Permit Application
 - Section B:2 – Sign Installation Supplement
 - Section B:3 – Façade Renovation Supplement
 - Section B:4 – New Construction/Development Supplements (Phases I – IV)
 - Appendix C – Checklist
 - Section C:1 – Design Review Application Checklist

Potential New Downtown Design Manual Sections

- History of North St. Paul’s Downtown District
- Design Standards Manual

- Purpose
- Design Goals
- Applicability
- Site Design
 - Building Setbacks
 - Parking
 - Landscaping
 - Placement and Screening of Services, Loading and Storage Areas
 - Fencing and Walls
 - Lighting
 - Streetscape Furniture and Elements
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Access
 - Public Spaces
- Building Design
 - Building Proportion and Scale
 - Building Placement and Orientation
 - Building Height
 - Building Details and Façade Articulation
 - Fenestration
 - Building Entries, Overhangs, Awnings, and Canopies
 - Building Materials
 - Colors
 - Building Roof Design and Materials
 - Corporate and Franchise Designs
- Application and Review Process
- Community Design Outcomes and Expectations
 - Current Opportunities
 - Goals and Objectives for Downtown Business Development
- Acknowledgements
- Glossary
- References and Maps
- Appendix A: Design Manual Gallery
- Appendix B: Sample Site Plan
- Appendix C: Table

Downtown Design Manual Update Education

After the update is completed, the City will provide an update and overview to residents and business owners via presentations, the City website, or send out notices in the newsletter. These updates would provide an overview of the manual and how it may be applied to the Downtown.

Draft Schedule for Downtown Design Manual Updates

Discussion Sessions:

- Where can we insert items from the Redevelopment Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan?
- What changes are necessary in each section of the Manual?
- What additional information/missing information needs to be added to each section of the Manual?
- How do these changes affect other areas of the zoning code, if any?
- Are there changes/comments/suggestions from the Planning Commission, EDA and City Council? Meet and discuss.
- Are there changes/comments/suggestions from each department? Meet and discuss.
- How does the Downtown Overlay district affect the updates and vice versa?
- What does the new Downtown Design Manual Layout look like?
- What is the Role of a Planning Consultant? Timeframe/Duties.
- What role will the City Engineer and City Attorney have in this process?

Prior to Start

Hire Planning Consultant – Potentially only months 6-8 for critical proofreading

~~Hire Planning Intern – Months 0-8~~

Months 1-2 (November/December)

Discussion Sessions

Meetings with Council and Commissions

Planning Commission – (on going)

City Council – Work Session (on going)

Meetings with Departments/Leadership Team/Business Association

Leadership Team – (on going)

City Manager – (TBD)

Community Development – (TBD)

Code Enforcement – (TBD)

Public Works/Engineering – (TBD)

Business Association – (TBD)

Gap Analysis – Review analysis from Design Manual vs. Zoning Code

Research New Manual language

Additional Sections

Additional design guideline language

Other City design guidelines – good examples

Planning and Urban Design Standards – review

Urban Street Design Guide – review

Principles and Practice of Urban Planning – review

The Practice of Local Government Planning – review

Planning and Zoning webpage

Set up a Downtown Design Manual update page

Months 3-4 (January/February)

Send out information in Newsletter – March newsletter

Discussion Sessions

Meetings with Council and Commissions

Planning Commission – TBD

Economic Development Authority – TBD

City Council – Work Session (on going)

Meetings with Departments/Leadership Team

Leadership Team – (on going)

City Manager – (TBD)

Community Development – March 2, 2016

Code Enforcement – (TBD)

Public Works/Engineering – (TBD)

Modification of Downtown Design Manual Sections

- History of North St. Paul's Downtown District
- Design Standards Manual
 - Purpose
 - Design Goals
 - Applicability
- Site Design
 - Building Setbacks
 - Parking
 - Landscaping
 - Placement and Screening of Services, Loading and Storage Areas
 - Fencing and Walls
 - Lighting
 - Streetscape Furniture and Elements
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Access
 - Public Spaces

Modification of affected Zoning Code Sections

Incorporating Graphics/Layout

Months 5-6 (March/April)

Discussion Sessions

Meetings with Council and Commissions

Planning Commission (on going)

Economic Development Authority – March meeting

City Council – Work Session (on going)

Business Association Lunch – March meeting

Modification of Downtown Design Manual Sections

- Building Design
 - Building Proportion and Scale
 - Building Placement and Orientation
 - Building Height

- Building Details and Façade Articulation
- Fenestration
- Building Entries, Overhangs, Awnings, and Canopies
- Building Materials
- Colors
- Building Roof Design and Materials
- Corporate and Franchise Designs
- Application and Review Process
- Community Design Outcomes and Expectations
 - Current Opportunities
 - Goals and Objectives for Downtown Business Development
- Acknowledgements
- Glossary
- References and Maps
- Appendix A: Design Manual Gallery
- Appendix B: Sample Site Plan
- Appendix C: Table

Modification of affected Zoning Code Sections

Incorporating Graphics/Layout

Bring working drafts by Section to the Planning Commission

Month 7 (May)

WORKING DRAFT: Bring working Draft to Planning Commission for review –May meeting

Open House of Final Draft and Comment period at Planning Commission mtg – May meeting

Month 8 (June)

WORKING DRAFT: Bring working Draft to PC for review – June meeting

FINAL DRAFT: Bring Final Draft to Planning Commission for approval –June meeting

Month 9 (July)

Modification of Zoning Code Sections – possible text amendments

Take Text Amendments to Planning Commission and City Council (July mtgs)

FINAL DRAFT: Bring Final Draft for approval

Planning Commission – July meeting

EDA – July meeting

City Council – July meeting

Print new Downtown Design Manual for Planning Commission and City Council

Put new Downtown Design Manual on Planning webpage – GO LIVE!

Newsletter Update – send out Downtown Design Manual adoption news



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

Members at Large:

Paul Anderson
Clare Erickson
Ellsworth Erickson
Tom Germschied
Lucianne Hudak
Kristen Rieser

City Council Member:

Jan Walczak

City Manager:

Wally Wysopal

Prepared by:

Kari Haug Planning and Design, Inc.

Reviewed by:

Claybaugh Preservation Architecture, Inc.

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*.

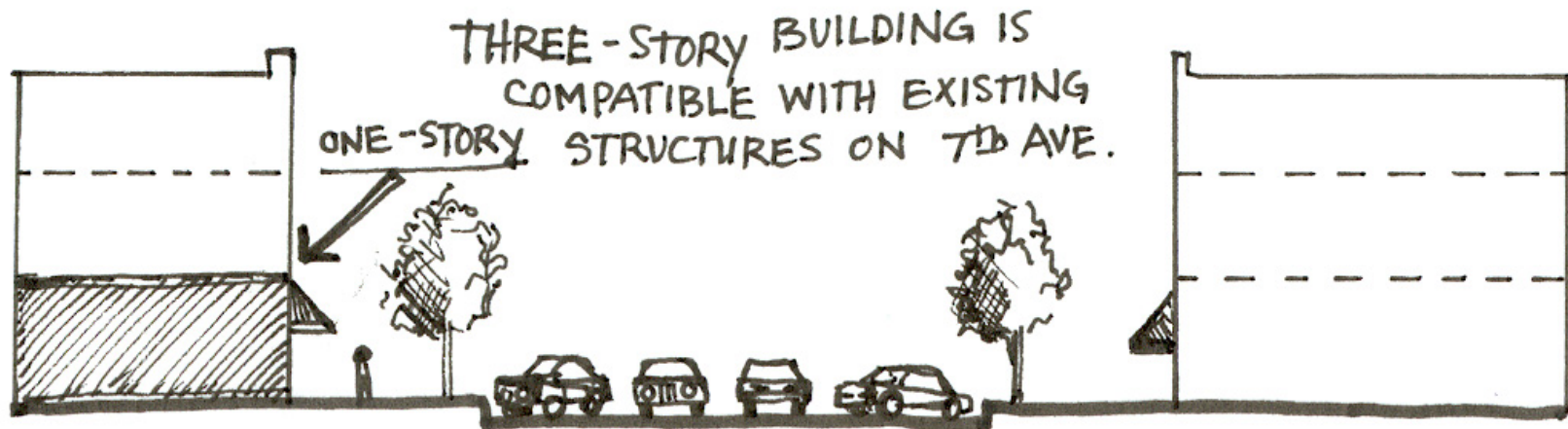


The ideal building to street-width proportion (according to some literature) is 1:2. In the case of North St. Paul, this would be a 50 foot high building or approximately four stories. (Seventh Avenue is 100' wide.) ***BUT, this is NOT the ideal proportion when all factors are considered.***

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.

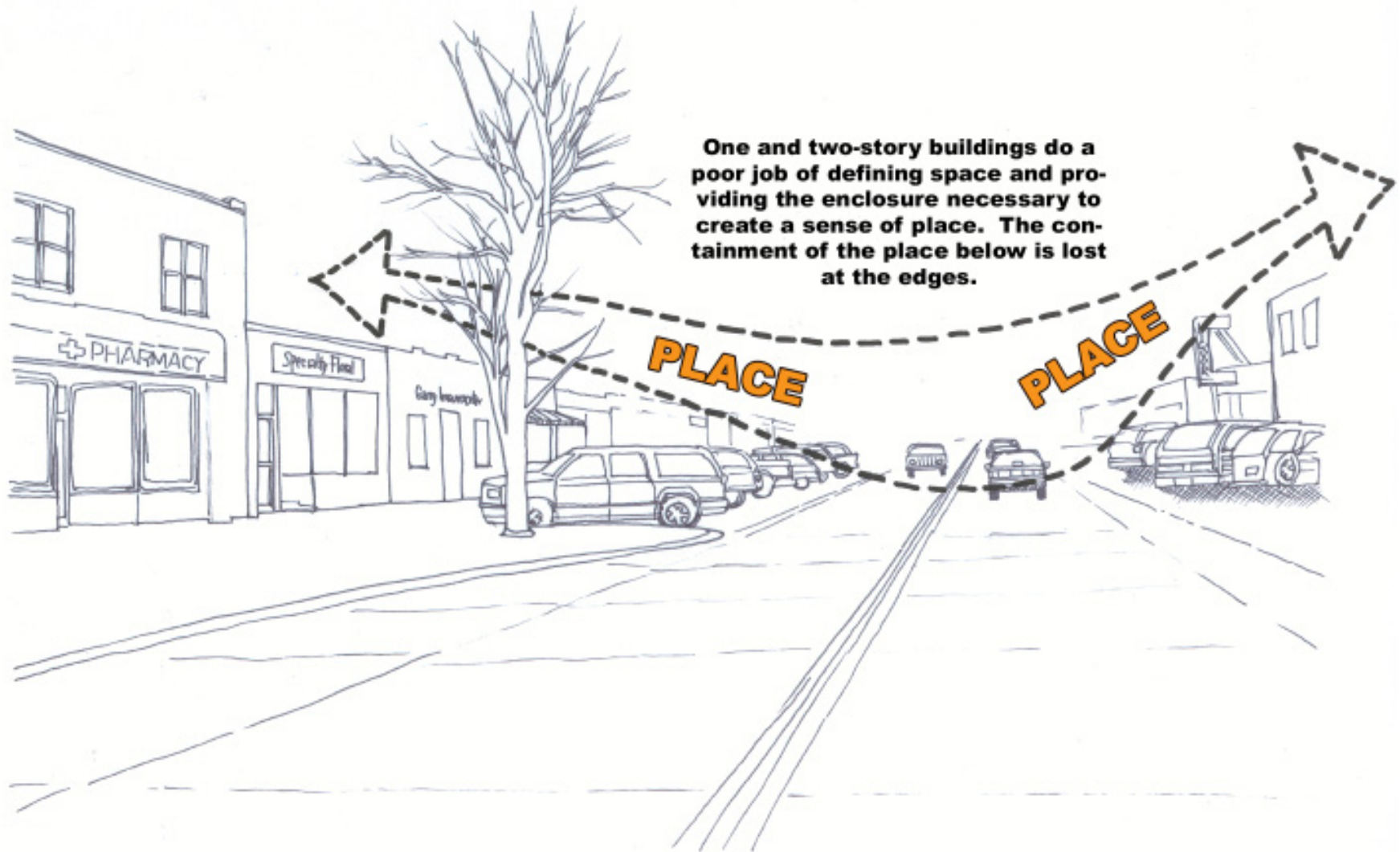




The appropriate building height when *all factors* are considered is approximately 1:3, or two to three-stories. This height is in proportion with existing structures, the width of the street, the desire of the citizens to maintain a small-town atmosphere, and the scale of the pedestrian. The approximate 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:

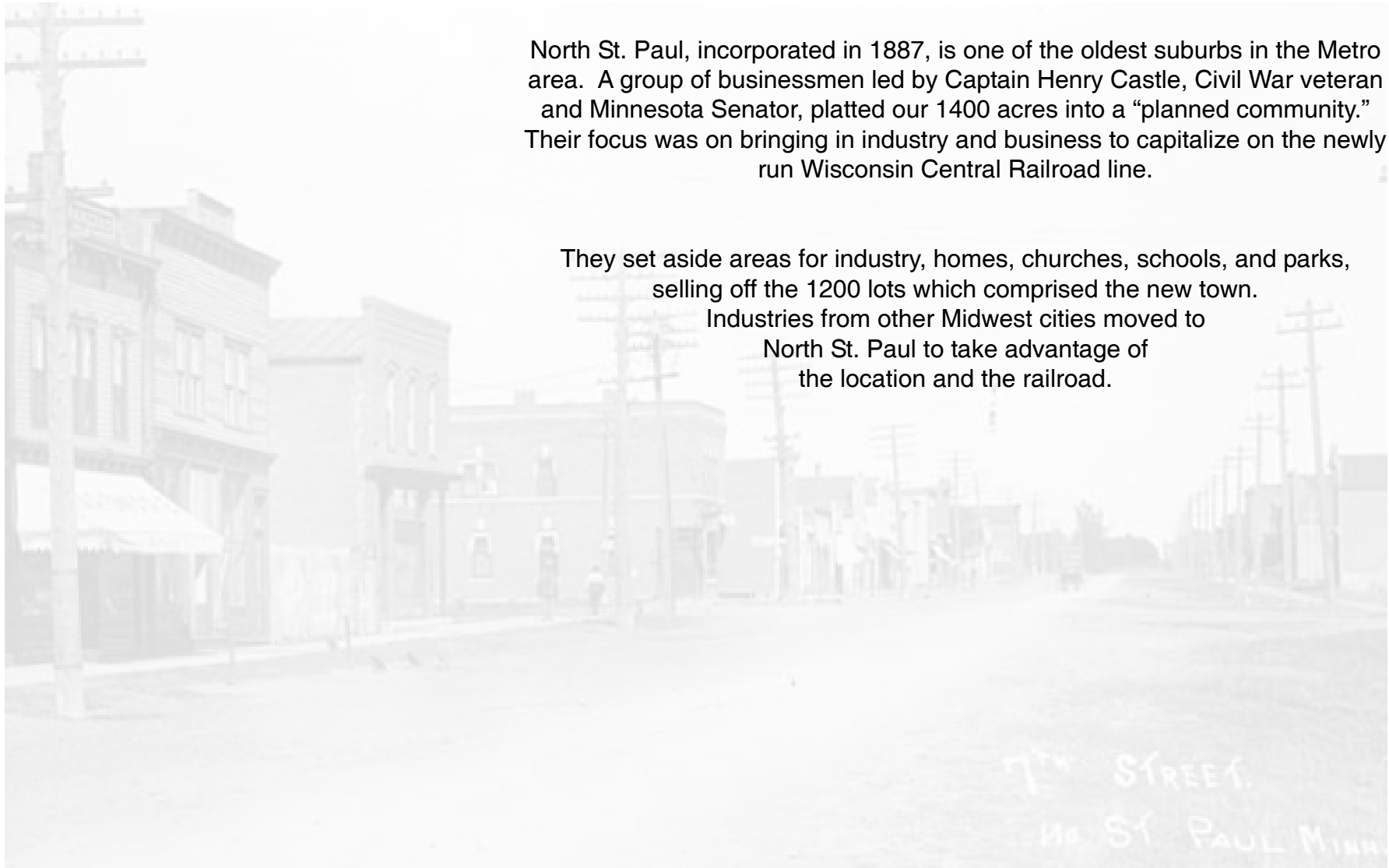
- (A) Encourage the harmonious growth and appearance of structures and property within the city;
- (B) Preserve the historical heritage of the city;
- (C) Maintain and improve property values throughout the city by insuring property owner compliance with the design regulations of the Zoning Code; and
- (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

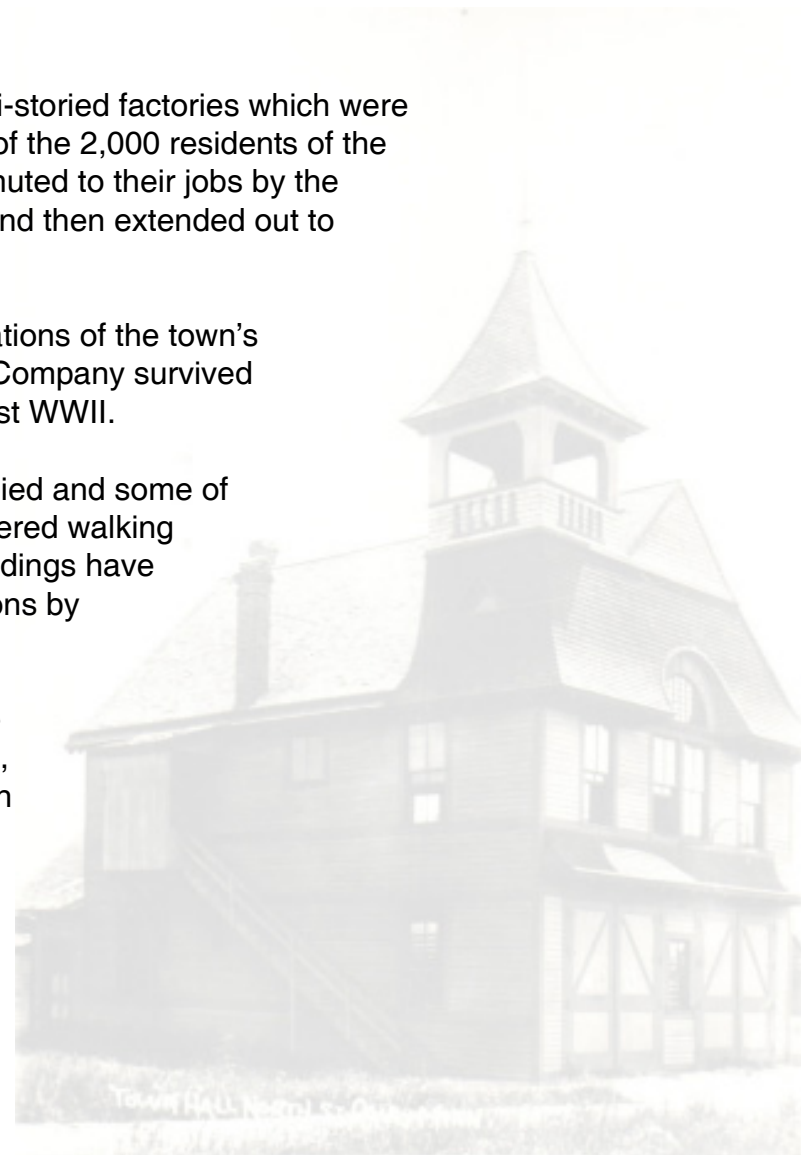
A brickyard was established to manufacture bricks for the multi-storied factories which were built to produce furniture, caskets, pianos, and organs. Many of the 2,000 residents of the town worked at the various companies in town. Others commuted to their jobs by the streetcar line which ran between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



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.



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.

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.

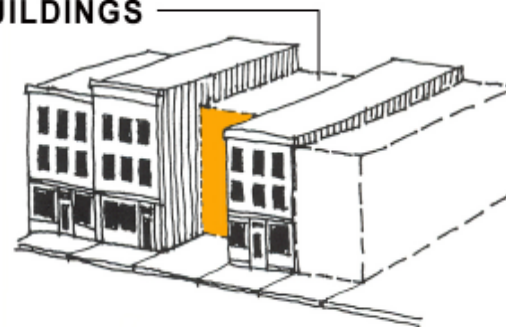
Guidelines: Buildings should be built flush to the sidewalk and flush with adjacent buildings.

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



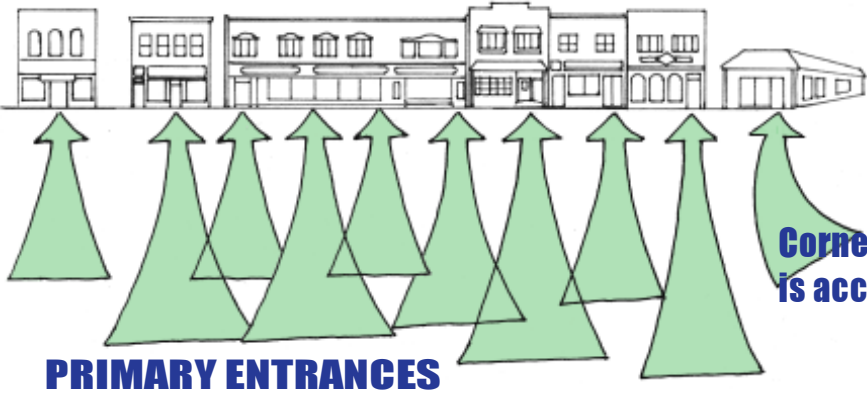
Building Orientation - Entrances

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

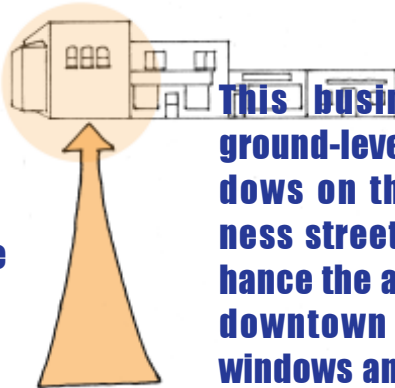
People traveling along the main streets in the central business district should be able to easily see storefronts, windows, doors, and other aspects of business activity. Primary entrances that are not easy to find or that are located “around back” or “to the side” may confuse patrons or make the shopping 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.



Corner Entrance is acceptable



This business has no ground-level door or windows on the main business street. It could enhance the activity level in downtown by restoring windows and an entrance on the main street.

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.

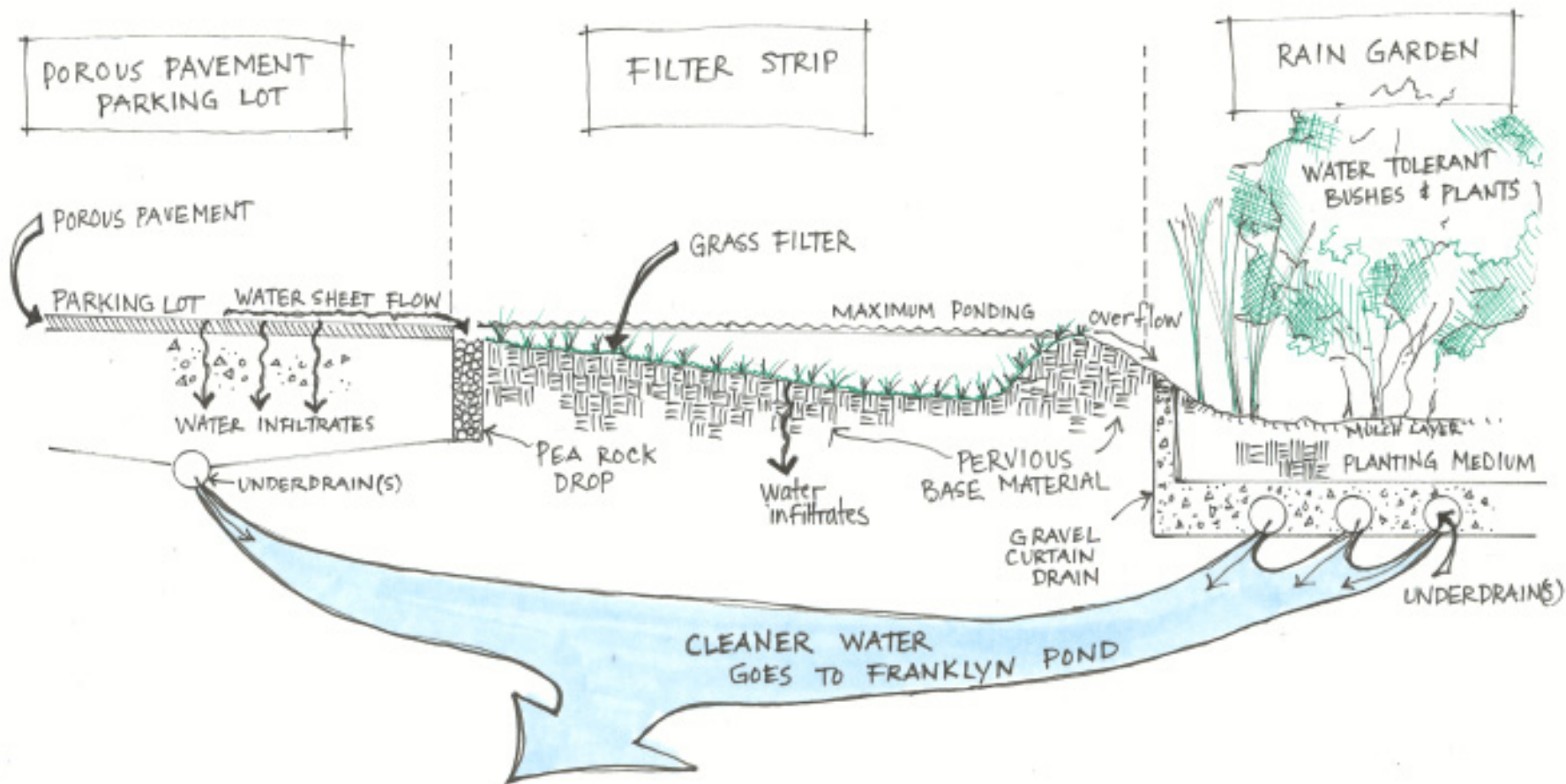
The benefit of plants and the color green has been the topic of many researchers. In the 19th Century, Central Park was built to “solve the ills of the tenements in New York City” and the new Minneapolis Public Library is using green roof technology to mitigate storm water runoff and manage rooftop temperature. 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.

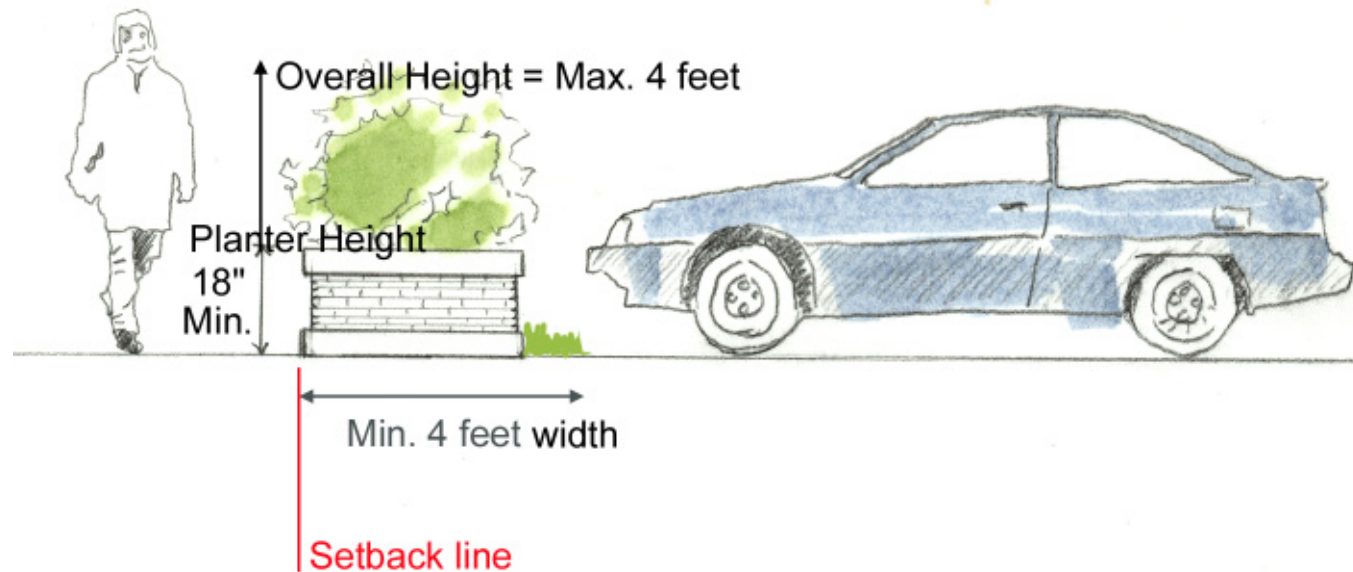
Standard: If parking structures are built, they must be designed to avoid blank concrete facades where visible to the public. The same materials standard that applies to building facades applies to parking structures (ie., 50% brick facade adjacent to public right-of-ways.) Entrance to parking lots between 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.

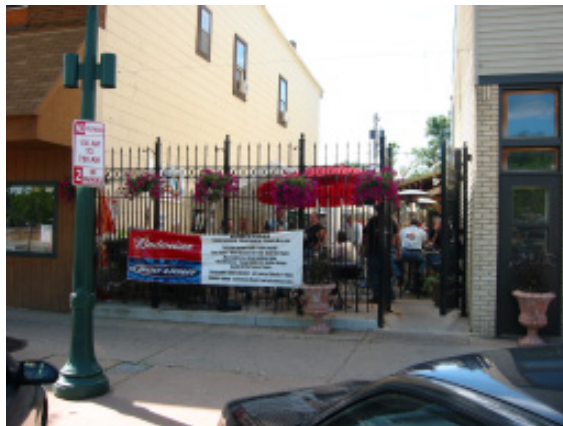


Outdoor Seating

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 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

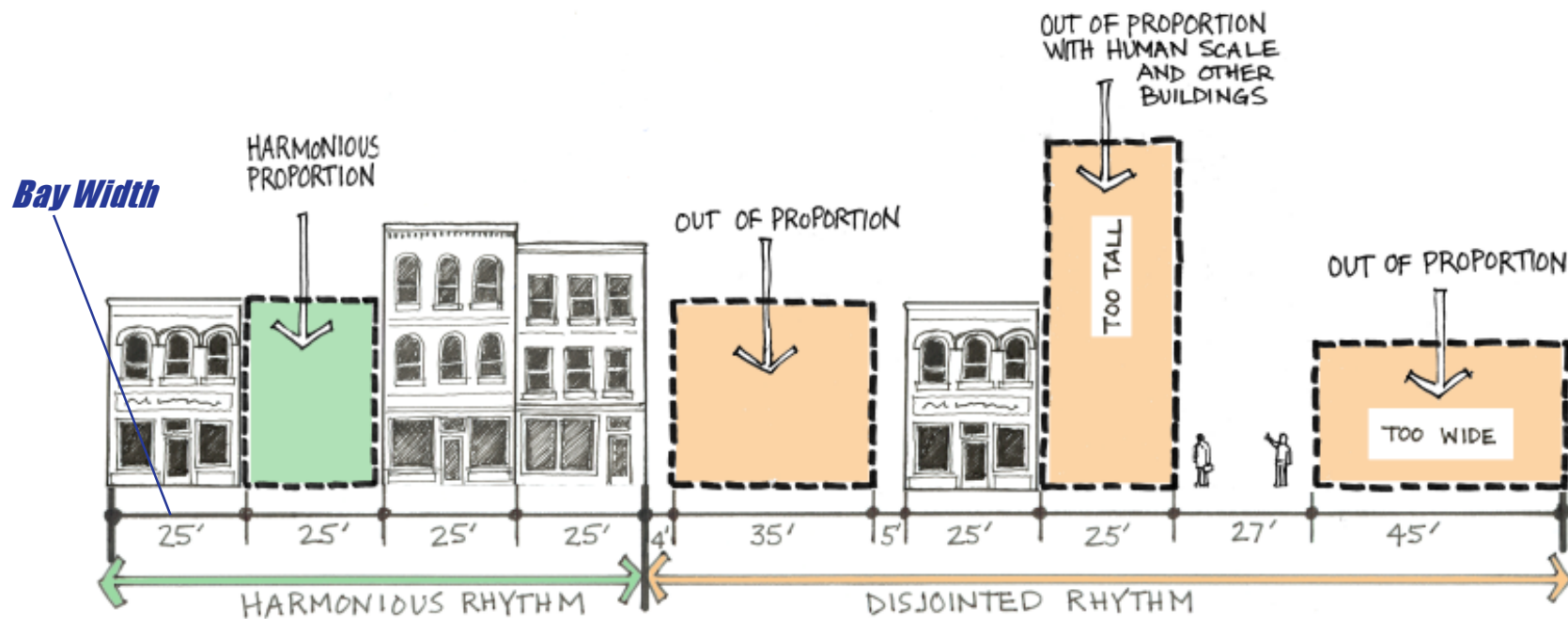
Proportion and Rhythm

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.

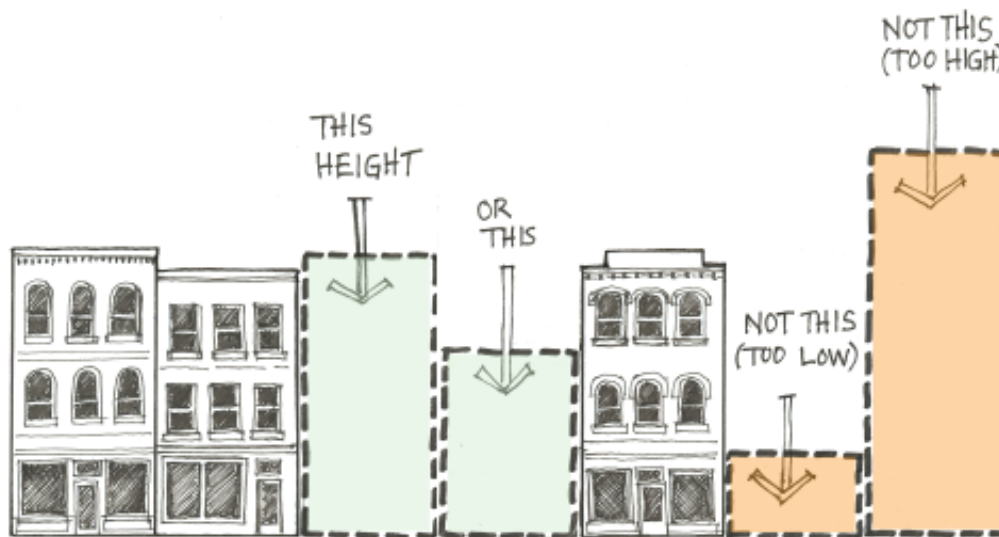


Height

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.)

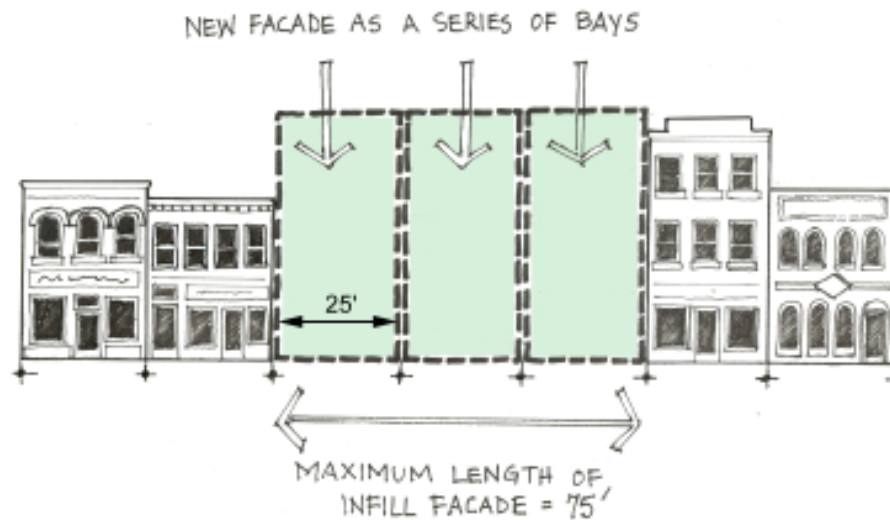
Width (Length of the Façade on 7th Avenue & Margaret Street)

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.

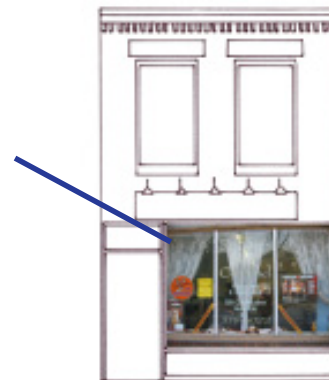
Standard: Buildings must be comprised of 70% transparent window material on ground-level facades facing streets and there must be a minimum of 40% on second or third-story levels. The window must be made of glass and the glass must be clearly transparent. Colored, tinted, opaque, or smoked glass is not 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.

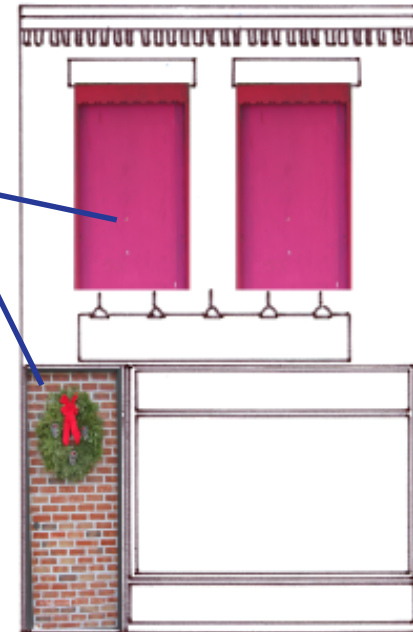
Guideline: Doors comprised of 70% or greater glass with visibility through the door six feet into the interior of the business space are encouraged. Lighting at night is encouraged. Choosing a door that is compatible in overall size and material of the facade is recommended. Closing one half of a double 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.

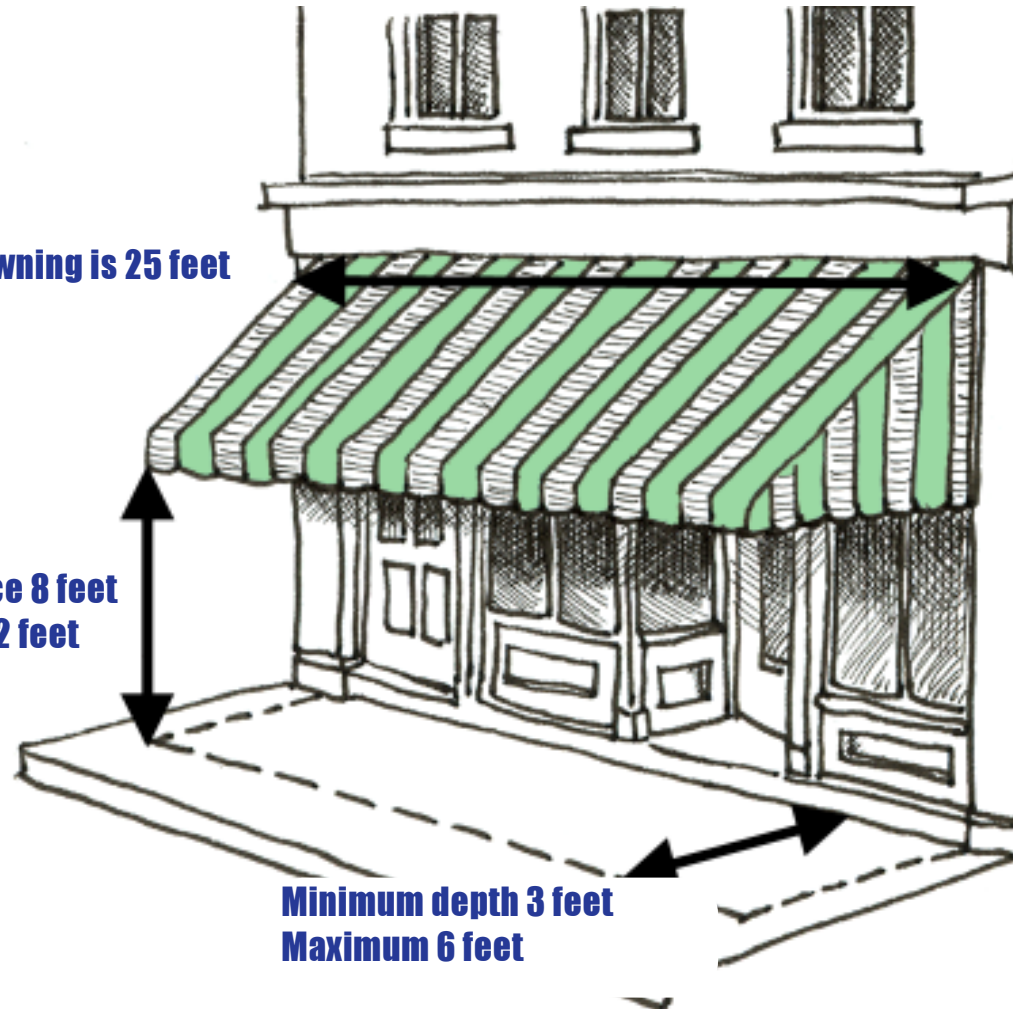
Guidelines: Although retractable awnings are allowed, canvas stretched on a fixed frame is less maintenance intensive than retractable and would be preferable. Awnings should be broken into segments that reflect the door or window openings beneath them. Awnings should compliment the building, shape,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

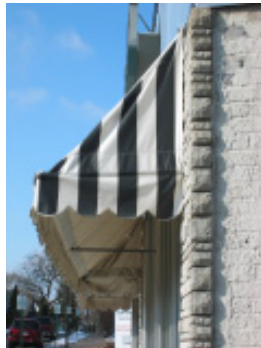


**Minimum depth 3 feet
Maximum 6 feet**

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.

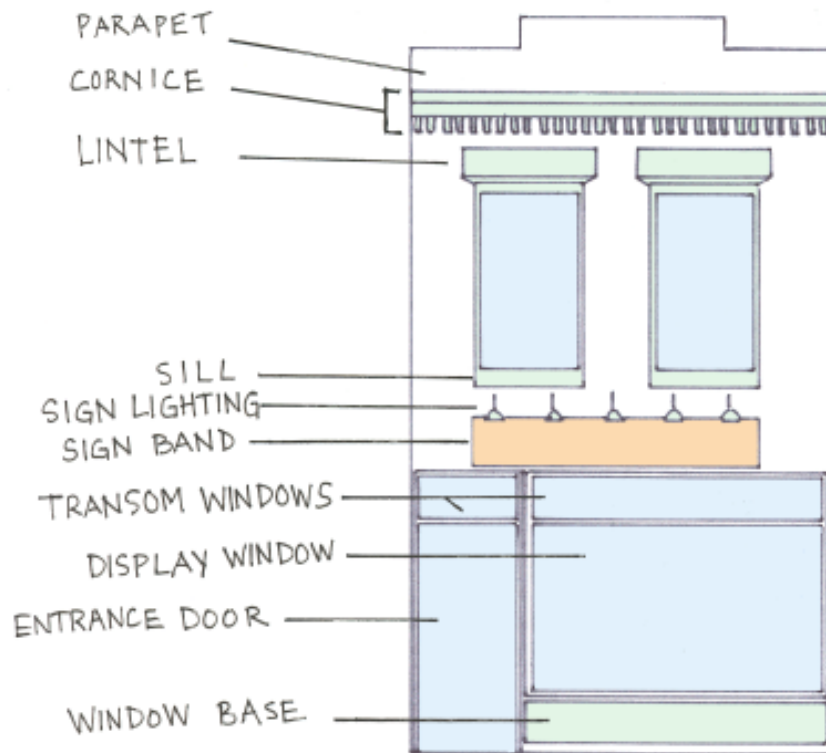


This awning is too long and doesn't reflect fenestration.

Architectural Details

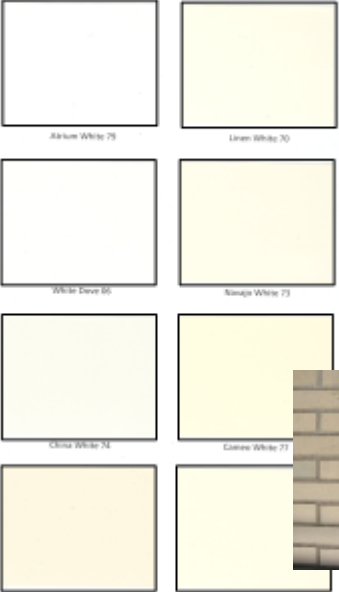
Intent: To restore architectural details that contribute to place identity and pedestrian-oriented environments.

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.)

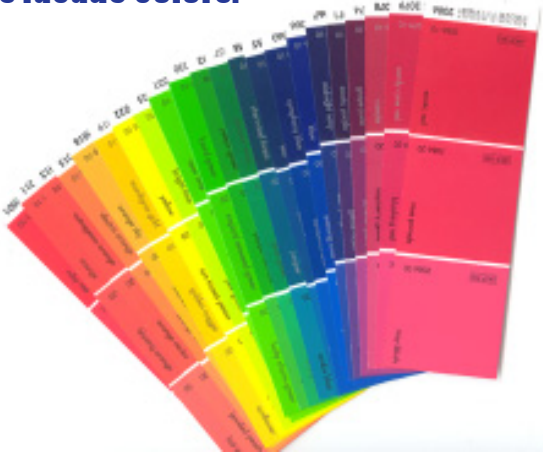


Color


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."

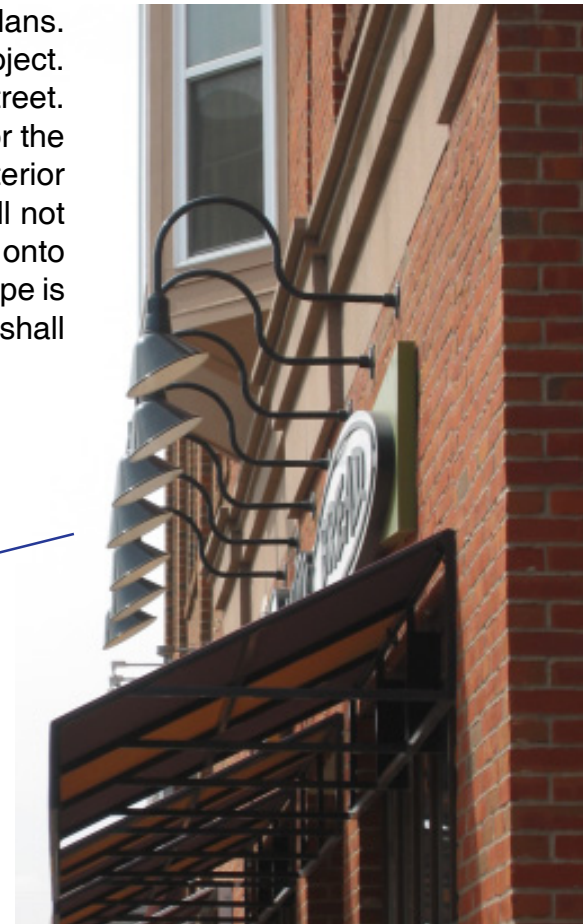
Lighting

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

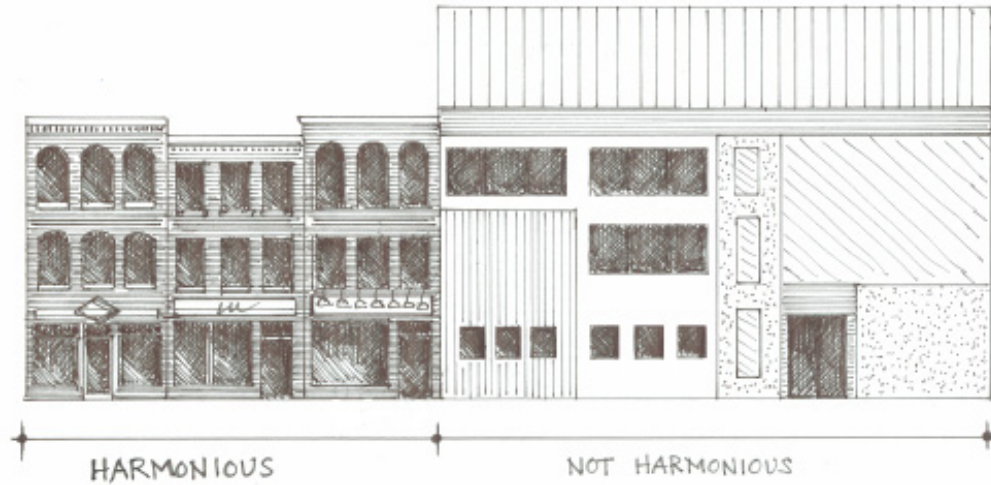
Intent: To ensure design authenticity and integrity and prevent hodge-podge appearance that can disrupt the unity of a place; to ensure that hodge-podge design will not cause visual blight, maintenance difficulties, or negatively impact property values.

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.

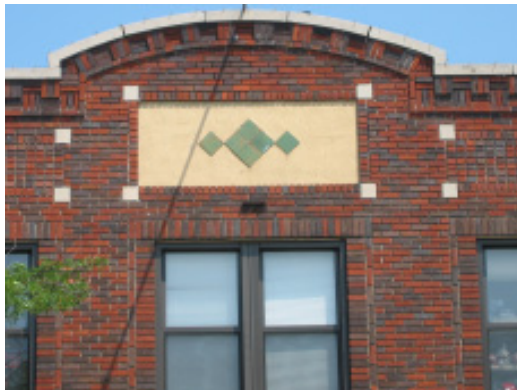
Changing brick colors, textures, and materials as part of a carefully developed architectural design is acceptable; however, using numerous materials in an attempt to diminish bulk or mass of a building, or make a building look like more than one building is not recommended. If a building is so big that 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.)

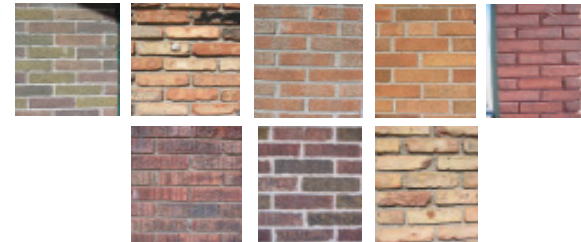


The developer above chose harmonious materials, and divided the facade into bays to reduce the perceived mass of the building.

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

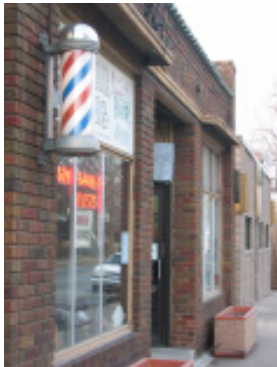


Intent: To improve the ability of a merchant to advertise the location of his/her business to a person walking on the sidewalk; to make sure the sign provides sufficient clearance for pedestrians passing on the sidewalk; to prevent signs from blocking second story windows and keep them in proportion 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:			
LEGAL DESCRIPTION:	Lot:	Block:	
Addition:		PIN:	
Property Owner	Name	Phone	
	Mailing Address	Cell Phone	
Contractor	Company	License No.	
	Contact Person	Phone	
	Address	Cell Phone	
	City	State	ZIP
JOB VALUATION: \$	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:	Is there an unimproved driveway on this property? YES NO	
WORK DESCRIPTION:			
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		REMARKS:	
Curb Deposit			
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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Page 1 of 2

9/14/2006



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.)



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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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!

City of North St. Paul

Planning Commission Report



From: Ken Roberts, Community Development Director
Meeting Date: October 2, 2025
Agenda Item: **2025 – 2026 Planning Commission Work Plan Update**

INTRODUCTION

Staff are requesting the Planning Commission review and update their work plan for the remainder of 2025 and for 2026.

GENERAL INFORMATION – DISCUSSION

City staff have identified several items and topics the Planning Commission should review and make recommendations to the City Council over the next 18 months. We are asking the Planning Commission to review the list below and provide input as to their importance and let us know if there are items missing from the work plan that staff should add to the work plan.

Update: I have revised the work plan to reflect the recommendations the Planning Commission discussed during their meeting on June 5, 2025, and to show the completed projects with ~~strike~~through.

Proposed Work Plan Topics – Items

- ~~1. Review Home Occupation Ordinance update – June-July 2025~~
- ~~2. Review City-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zoning Map revision – properties along 7th Avenue and South Avenue, east of McKnight Road – June-July 2025~~
- ~~3. Review Subdivision Ordinance update – July-August 2025; CC on 9-16-25~~
4. Review Zoning Code updates:
 - a. Definitions – updates, removing unused terms, adding new terms with corresponding land uses.
 - ~~b. Defining what are considered as non-encroachments into required setbacks such as egress window wells and ADA ramps (Section 154.010 (A) 5) July-August 2025; CC on 9-16-2025~~
 - c. Off-street parking standards in residential districts:
 - i. Number of required spaces
 - ii. Permitted locations for parking spaces
 - iii. Required surface materials for parking spaces
 - d. Check definitions of townhouses, duplex, and twin homes to ensure they align with state law, the building code and the intent of the R-2 and R-3 Zoning districts. **October 2, 2025, PC**
 - e. Check Sections 154.007 and 154.008 to ensure they are consistent with the goals and policies in the Downtown Design Manual and Comprehensive Plan. **October 2, 2025, PC**
- ~~5. Subdivision Ordinance Update July-August 2025; CC on 9-16-2025~~
6. Review CIP update – November 2025
7. Start preliminary tasks for the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update
 - a. Review and respond to Metropolitan Council Local Systems Plan for 2050 Comprehensive Plan - November 2025
 - b. Identify possible redevelopment sites
 - c. Review overall goals from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for relevance going forward
8. Review and make recommendations about land use and development applications
9. Review Downtown Design Manual – October-November 2025
10. Cannabis and Hemp (low potency) Businesses
 - a. Monitor State of Minnesota for updates on licensing and approvals
 - b. Determine whether the adopted City ordinance is working or if changes are necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the above list of topics, any future topics or projects and provide direction to City staff as to their order of relevance and importance for consideration by the Planning Commission in 2025 and 2026.