



City of North St. Paul
Joint EDA & Planning Commission
Special Meeting Agenda

July 15, 2021
6:30 PM

The joint Economic Development Authority and Planning Commission meeting will be held at North St. Paul City Hall, 2400 Margaret Street in the 2nd floor training room.

The Zoom meeting can be accessed

via: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87556902183?pwd=d2VMK0dBUG5YV2J5SkILd0dSi9XZz09>

Passcode: 617033

Or

Dial: US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 875 5690 2183

Passcode: 617033

The joint Economic Development Authority and Planning Commission Zoom meeting will be 'open to the public' to listen in, but will be muted from contributing at all times with the exception of a Public Hearing and open to the public forum.

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

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

PLANNING COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Patrick Blees, Commissioner

Erik Brenna, Commissioner

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

John Monge, Commission Vice-Chair

Lisa Wong, Commission City Council Liaison

Andrew Wise, Commissioner Allan Worm, Commissioner

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Robert Dew, Chair

Kevin Fuller, Vice Chair

Don Jensen, Treasurer

Tom Schifsky

Archie Vickerman

Terry Furlong, Mayor/Council Representative

Tim Cole, Council Representative

Brian Frandle, Executive Director

Brett Garry, Business Association Representative

STAFF

Eric Zweber, Planning Consultant

Lisa Ritchie, Planning Secretary

III. Adopt Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

- A. Joint Economic Development and Planning Commission March 18, 2021 meeting minutes

V. Meeting Open to Public

Note: This is a courtesy extended to persons wishing to address the council who are not on the agenda. A completed public comment form should be presented to the Deputy Clerk prior to the meeting; presentations will be limited to 3 minutes. This session will be limited to 15 minutes.

VI. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

- A. Redevelopment Master Plan Update/Review

1. Discuss the current value of the RMP and what, if anything, should be done to update this document.
2. If a review and update is desired, develop a plan to execute the process and establish a timeline.

- B. Downtown Parking Needs

1. Discuss the current and future needs for parking and pedestrian/bike transit within the downtown.
2. Discuss any current efforts that have been undertaken providing EDA and Planning an opportunity to comment. (This is not a plan presentation it is intended to be a high level discussion about need and opportunity within the downtown).

VII. Reports from Council Liaison

VIII. Reports from Commissioners

IX. Adjournment

The next scheduled joint Economic Development Authority and Planning Commission meeting is October 21, 2021

**CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021**

I. CALL TO ORDER

(Audio started at 3:30 into the video)

ROLL CALL (there was no roll call)

EDA

Robert Dew, Chair

Terry Furlong, Mayor/Council Representative

Scott Thorsen, Council Representative - Excused

Rich McNamara, Commissioner ??

Tom Schifsky, Commissioner

Scott Duddeck, Executive Director

Don Jensen, Treasurer

Archie Vickerman, Commissioner

Brett Garry, Business Association Representative ??

PLANNING COMMISSION

Elaine Barton, Commission Chair

Patrick Blees, Commissioner

Erik Brenna, Commissioner

Rick Gelbmann, Commissioner

John Monge, Commission Vice-Chair

Lisa Wong, Commission City Council Liaison

Andrew Wise, Commissioner

Allan Worm, Commissioner

STAFF

Eric Zweber, Planning Consultant

Lisa Ritchie, Planning & EDA Secretary

INTRODUCTIONS

City Manager Scott Duddeck asked the meeting attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

Andrew Wise – no audio 3:36

Archie Vickerman – no audio 4:31

Kevin Fuller stated he is the owner of Reflex Medical and serves as the EDA Vice Chair. He added he hopes he can add positive contributions to the downtown area.

Lisa Ritchie stated she is the new Administrative Assistant with Community Services. She added she is happy to be on board and looks forward to working with everybody.

Rick Gelbmann stated he has served on the Planning Commission for over 7 years. He added he enjoys seeing what is going on in the City. He noted he is excited about the City's current development projects.

John Monge stated he is the Planning Commission Vice-Chair, and he has served on the Commission since 2020. He added he has lived in North St. Paul since 1996.

Robert Dew stated he is the EDA Chair and has served on the EDA since its inception over a decade ago. He added he owns the Keindels building on 7th Street and Charles Avenue and has been involved in many City initiatives over the past 15-18 years.

Planning Commissioner Al Worm stated he has lived in North St. Paul since 1972. He added he retired from 3M 20 years ago.

Planning Commissioner Patrick Blees stated he is an architect and has lived in North St. Paul for a total of 46 years. He added he loves to see the transformations going on in the City recently. He noted he has been on the Planning Commission since 2020 and served on the Design and Historic Review Commission.

Eric Zweber, Planning Consultant from WSB, stated he has been a City planner for about 21 years, and has worked for WSB for the last 6 years.

Planning Commissioner Eric Brenna stated he is a Civil Engineer for MnDOT's Bridge office. He added he has been on the Planning Commission since 2020. He noted he wanted to take part in the community and see what he can do to help.

City Council Member Lisa Wong stated she began her first term in January 2021. She added she has lived in North St. Paul for 5 years. She noted she is the City Council Liaison to the Planning Commission.

Tom Schifsky stated he has lived in North St. Paul his whole life and has had a local business for over 60 years. He added he has served on the EDA for the past 4 years.

Elaine Barton stated she has served on the Planning Commission for 12-14 years. She added she worked for AT&T before her retirement.

Mayor Furlong stated EDA member Don Jensen is unable to attend the meeting as he is in California. He added City Council Member Scott Thorsen was also unable to attend the meeting.

City Manager Duddeck stated there are many development activities going on in North St. Paul that are very exciting to see. He added many projects and activities are happening at one time, and during a pandemic, and it is phenomenal that we have been able to hold it all together and move forward.

II. ADOPT AGENDA

-None.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

-None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

-None.

V. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

-None.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

-None.

VII. BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Update on EDA activities - ongoing and planned
- B. Discussion on how current development activity may change the look, feel and needs of the community. Will this possibly drive modification or higher flexibility in code/approval process?
- C. Discuss desire of aligning vision between Council/Planning/EDA. How do we get there? Revisit living documents, primarily Redevelopment Master Plan.
- D. How can each group support one another and communicate ongoing activities/concerns to maintain alignment?

EDA Chair Robert Dew stated ongoing and completed EDA projects in North St. Paul include the old Anchor Block site and the senior facility at Commerce Park. He added the EDA continues to drive projects to stabilization to ensure that they become good developments for the City of North St. Paul. He noted the EDA is actively working to identify the correct uses for several City-owned infill sites.

Mr. Dew stated the City of North St. Paul is in an enviable position, with new and existing residential development that will be full or at capacity by the end of 2022, putting a lot of people in the downtown area. He added the EDA is considering how to keep people engaged and utilizing services and keep them in North St. Paul, to take advantage of all that the City has to offer. He stressed the importance of determining what the demographics will look like, to anticipate demands and opportunities.

Mr. Dew stated the EDA recently issued their Annual Report to the City Council. He added the City's Redevelopment Master Plan, approved a few years ago, came up as part of the Annual Report review. He noted this important document has not been reviewed recently and would be a good place to start in terms of aligning the visions of the City Council, Planning Commission and EDA. He noted he feels this should be City Council-driven at some level.

Mr. Dew stated the community center site has been in flux for many years. He added the site is currently used as a private facility, as well as housing the library on a long-term lease. He added it will be important to move forward with a plan that may include community use of the building again.

Mr. Dew stated the EDA held a joint meeting with the Planning Commission a few years ago. He added it would be helpful to have regular communication between the two groups to share high level summaries, spread news, and raise awareness. He stressed the importance of rendering the best judgments to the City Council for decision-making.

E. Update on Planning Commission Activities

Planning Commission Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission's role is to guide City planning, including the Comprehensive Plan, Redevelopment Master Plan, Living Streets document and downtown revitalization. She added the Planning Commission has been reviewing the Zoning Code for several months to ensure that it aligns with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. She noted the Planning Commission is relatively limited in terms of what can be done with applications after they have been reviewed by City Staff. She expressed her agreement that coordination and communication matter.

Chair Barton stated the Redevelopment Master Plan should be reviewed, although any changes would potentially involve a Comprehensive Plan amendment, which is a lengthy process.

Mr. Dew stated EDA recommendations are made completely from an economic development standpoint, in terms of what is best for the City, and without regard for the Zoning Code, the Planning Commission or the City Council. He added the EDA attempts to provide the best recommendation possible.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission uses a table in the Zoning Code that designates Zoning districts and business categories. She added it is not possible to predict what type of business might arise for a specific parcel. She noted this makes the process easier and more cost-effective for applicants.

Mr. Dew stated the Planning Commission may recommend a type of use for a privately owned parcel that is acceptable under the Zoning Code but could potentially go against what the EDA is trying to accomplish. He stressed the importance of ensuring that both groups are aware of and understand each other's goals. He noted it may not be obvious what those needs are until projects stabilize, but they can be anticipated.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated there is a balance between allowing the marketplace to operate freely while restricting the kind of development that occurs. He added the role of the EDA is important in helping communicate information about potential development and how it fits with the needs of the community.

Commissioner Blees stated he agrees that the EDA should not be focused on the restrictions of the Planning Commission, but rather have a broad reach and be open to opportunities that could be good for the City. He added many residents have expressed a desire for a nice restaurant in the

downtown area. He noted the EDA may be working on another type of development, while residents are saying they want a restaurant. He noted it is a challenge bring these two things together.

Chair Barton stated the Planning Commission is not always aware of how long an applicant has been working with City Staff on a particular idea or concept. She asked whether City Staff consults with the EDA when development is proposed for an area marked for redevelopment. She asked whether this is a process issue that can be addressed.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff brings development proposals to the Planning Commission for recommendation to the City Council. He added sometimes the City only finds out with the intent to purchase, and the developer is already aware of zoning.

Mayor Furlong stated the Lillie Newspaper building is an example of a parcel that has a purchase agreement but over which the City has no control.

Chair Barton stated the EDA has made efforts to provide information about properties that are available across the City. She added the EDA can be proactive than the Planning Commission in this regard. She noted it is worth considering and discussing how to coordinate these efforts given the limitations. She noted the Planning Commission has made a recommendation that concept plans be provided to City Staff and the Planning Commission before an official application is submitted.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated outreach to property owners and buyers is valuable, so the City is aware of potential development plans.

Mr. Dew stated there have been City Staff over the years who provided support and assistance to the EDA, almost exclusively at times. He added the EDA might want to consider hiring someone who is fully dedicated to EDA activities.

Chair Barton asked whether the new CiviClerk online platform can be used to distribute agendas and documents. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this. Ms. Ritchie stated the platform will be collaborative, and easy for people to access.

Mr. Dew stated it would be helpful to have a short synopsis of EDA meetings provided to the Planning Commission for their review. Chair Barton agreed, adding it is important to make it as easy as possible to do business with the City.

Ms. Ritchie stated ongoing action items could be added to the end of the Planning Commission agenda. Chair Barton agreed that is a good idea.

Mr. Dew stated it would be helpful for the EDA to have action items recorded and communicated to the Planning Commission.

Chair Barton asked whether Planning Commission draft minutes could be posted on the City website. Mr. Duddeck agreed that can be done.

Ms. Ritchie asked Mr. Duddeck whether the contractor who does the City's minutes could help out with other meetings. She added it is difficult to get them completed in a timely manner. Mr. Duddeck agreed to look into that.

Commissioner Wise asked whether the EDA has any guiding documents that are analogous to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Dew stated the Redevelopment Master Plan is the most significant document that the EDA uses to determine good vision alignment within the City. He added it has been used for many years and should be updated. He noted he presented the EDA Annual Report at a recent City Council meeting.

Chair Barton asked whether these documents are available on the EDA's webpage on the City website. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this.

Chair Barton asked whether the EDA has thought of creating plans for large undeveloped sites or areas. Mr. Dew stated some of that work has been done but it is difficult to draft a concept plan for property that the City does not own. He added the EDA recently agreed to commission concept plans for the 7th Avenue parcel.

Chair Barton stated there are more numerous types of uses farther away from the downtown area. She asked whether the EDA has given any thought to what uses would not be desirable.

Mr. Dew stated there were discussions at the EDA level over the past few years, but no concept plans have been developed.

Commissioner Gelbmann stated the City of Oakdale has a large development of 400-600 homes about .5 mile from North St. Paul's border. He added that may have an effect on the types of development the City will want to see near that intersection.

Mr. Dew stated he would support the formation of a collaborative group between the City Council, EDA and Planning Commission, to review the Redevelopment Master Plan. He added a study group could be formed for the community center building to consider options and provide recommendations to the City Council.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff are working on gathering information on options for the community center building, including use by civic groups, food shelf, library expansion, and a potential teen study center managed by the School District. He added all groups would be required to support the building financially. He noted there are many courses of action being considered.

Chair Barton stated the community center is public property, and purchase of the facility would require action by the City Council to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She added the Redevelopment Master Plan encompasses the community center facility. She noted there has been no community input from residents.

Chair Barton stated there was also a vision for Seppala Boulevard, to create a pedestrian and bike-friendly boulevard. She added that concept should be reviewed since the roadway is now a 2-way street.

Mr. Duddeck stated he is open to hearing from all groups about the future of the community center building. He added the building was built as a long-term asset for the City and could be needed again with ongoing redevelopment and potential new residents. He noted the site provides a significant amount of downtown parking, which would cause problems if the building were to be sold.

Council Member Wong asked whether the City's new software can track applications and integrate notifications into communication to the Planning Commission or EDA when there is pertinent information to convey. Mr. Duddeck confirmed this.

Eric Zweber, WSB Planning Consultant, stated the Planning Commission is working to ensure that the City has the ability to develop different kinds of businesses and residential units than are currently allowed by City Code. He added there may be an opportunity to continue discussions with the EDA about how they can become involved in development. He noted, to Ms. Ritchie's point, locating grant funding or financial assistance would be very helpful for both groups so that other agencies or sources can provide development funding instead of depending upon North St. Paul residents.

Mayor Furlong expressed his appreciation to everyone for coming together to discuss these issues. He added there are positive changes ahead.

Kevin Fuller stated he believes it will be important to be patient and not move too quickly on development at 7th Avenue and Margaret Street. He added, at some point in the near future, there will be a really cool downtown area.

Mr. Duddeck there is potential for development at former Ground Round site as well as the out lots by Target. He added City Staff have received information from the DNR that there will be a potential flood map update, which could have an impact on redevelopment opportunities. He noted this issue will probably be reviewed by the EDA and Planning Commission in the near future.

Mr. Duddeck expressed his appreciation for the hard work of all the EDA and Planning Commissioners.

Chair Barton thanked the Planning Commissioners and EDA for attending multiple meetings every month for the past few months.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON

-None.

IX. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

-None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Duddeck adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

North Saint Paul

Redevelopment Master Plan

December 7, 2012 **Final Report**

Hoisington Koepler Group, Inc.

W-ZHA

WSB

Springsted

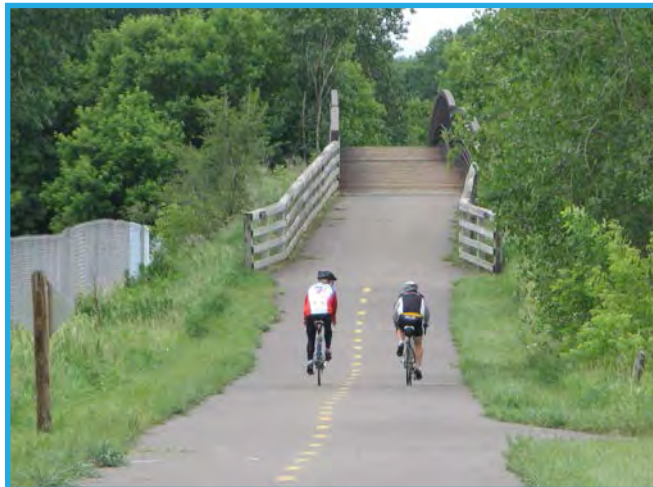


Table of Contents

North Saint Paul

1	Project Background.....	1
	Purpose.....	1
	Approach.....	1
	Context Report Summary.....	2
2	Existing Conditions.....	5
	History.....	5
	Land Use.....	6
	Transportation.....	7
	Market Summary.....	7
3	Vision & Guiding Principles.....	9
	Vision.....	9
	Guiding Principles.....	10
4	Redevelopment Master Plan.....	11
	Approach to Redevelopment.....	11
	Redevelopment Master Plan / Districts.....	13
	Land Use - Commercial.....	15
	Land Use - Housing.....	17
	Land Use - Employment.....	19
	Parks & Recreation System.....	21
	Stormwater System.....	23
	Transportation & Transit Systems.....	25
	Streets & The Public Realm.....	27
	Infrastructure.....	29
	Energy.....	30
5	Implementation & Phasing.....	31
	Keys to Implementation.....	31
	Roles and Responsibilities.....	31
	Land Use Controls.....	32
	Redevelopment Initiatives.....	33
	Phasing.....	35
	Financing.....	43
	Summary.....	46

Acknowledgements

City Council

Mike Kuehn, Mayor
Bob Bruton
Terry Furlong
Candy Peterson
Jan Walczak

EDA

Jerry Bell, Chair
Robert Dew, Vice-Chair
Kristen Rieser, Treasurer
Bill Fairbanks
Dave Szczepanski
Mike Kuehn, Mayor
Terry Furlong, City Council Representative

Planning Commission

Elaine Barton, Chair
John Wahl, Vice-Chair
Michael Stahlmann
Christine Wiegert
Allan Worm
Wally Wysopal, City Manager
Bob Bruton, Council Representative
Jim Henneck, City Staff Representative

Staff

Wally Wysopal, City Manager
Paul Ammerman, Economic Development Director
Nate Ehalt, Community Development Director

Consultants



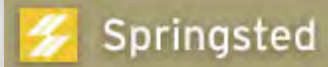
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1. Project Background

Purpose

Livable Community

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

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

Revitalization

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

Changing Conditions & Context

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

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

Approach

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

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

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

Multi-disciplinary approach

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



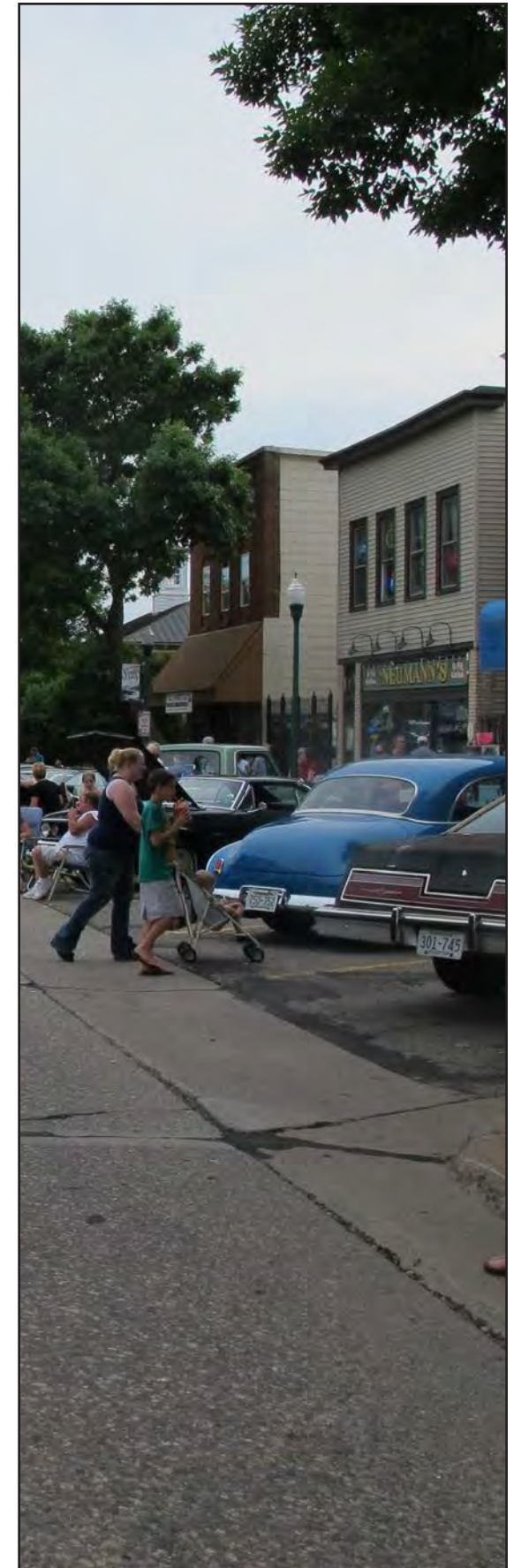
Downtown North St. Paul



Housing



North St. Paul Historical Society



Downtown North Saint Paul

Issues and Opportunities Context Report

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

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

Prior Plans

North Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan

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

Diversified District Plan

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

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

Other plans

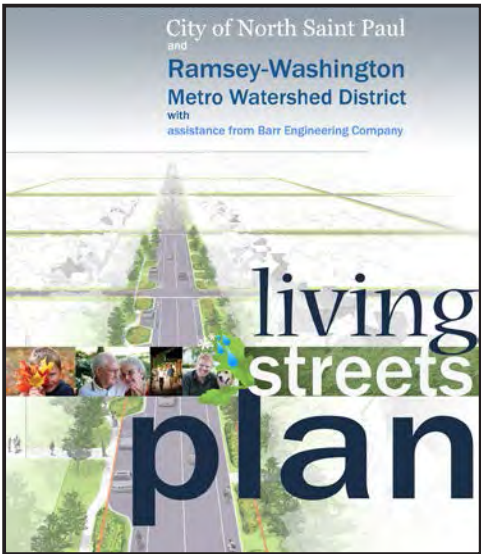
Numerous other plans, studies, and design guidelines adressing the project area, either in part or as a whole, include:

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

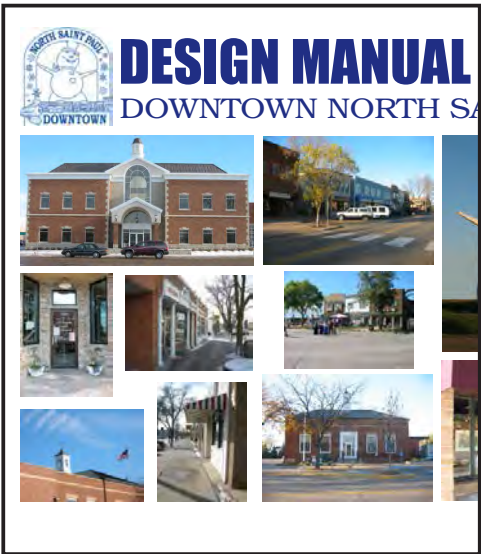
These documents have been studied and incorporated into the North Saint Paul Redevelopment Master Plan. (More detailed summary of the plans can be found in the Context Report in the Appendix). Currently, MNDOT’s Highway 36/Division Interchange Study is looking at the interchange between Highway 36 and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



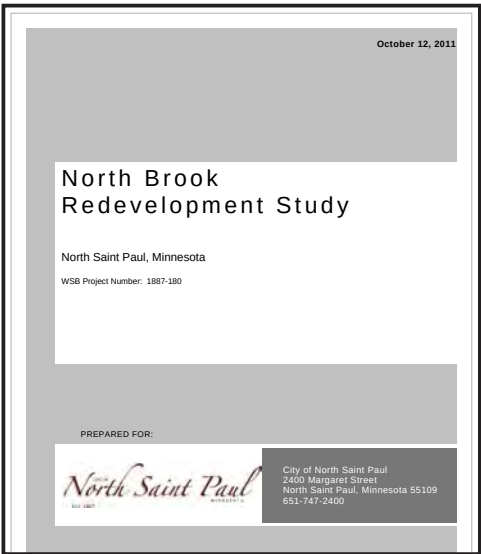
Metropolitan Council
2030 Transportation Plan



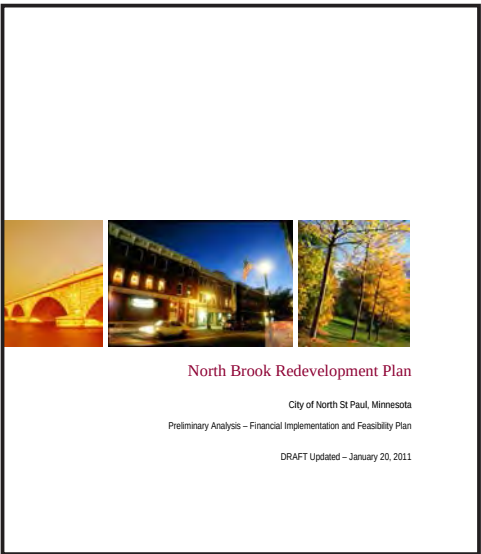
North Saint Paul Living Streets Plan



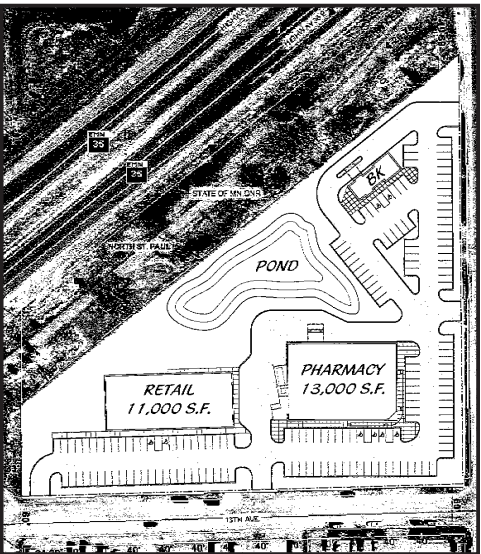
Design Manual -
Downtown North Saint Paul



North Brook Redevelopment Study



North Brook Redevelopment Plan



Commerce Park Development Concepts

Identifying Redevelopment Opportunities

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

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

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

Adjacencies

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

Identifying Immediate Projects - Catalysts

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



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

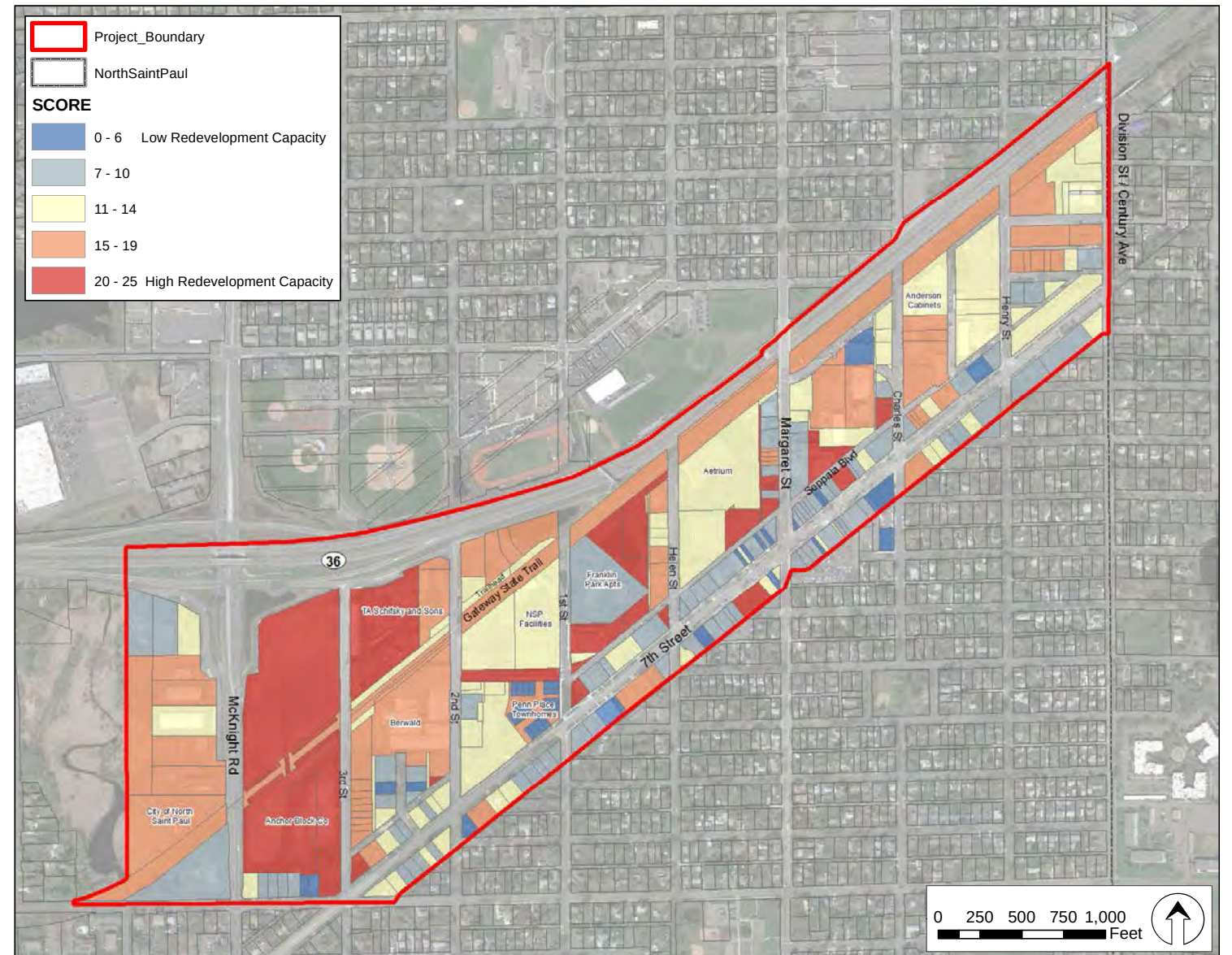
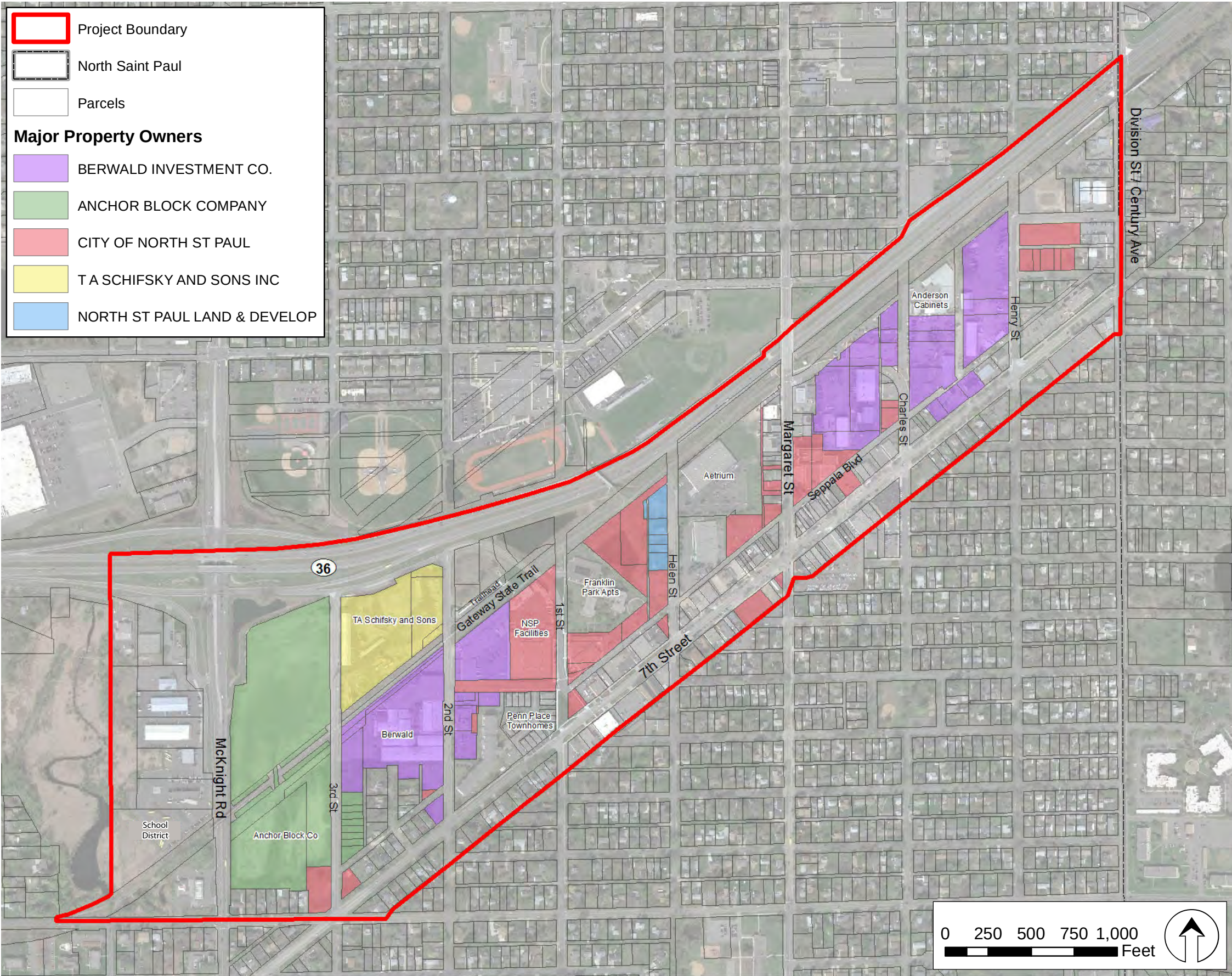


Figure 1.1 - An evaluation of redevelopment potential. The Anchor Block site scored well due to a number of factors including vacancy, visibility, proximity to McKnight and Highway 36, size, and an owner that is actively trying to sell the property. At the same time, Franklin Park Apartments do not make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



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

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

2. Existing Conditions

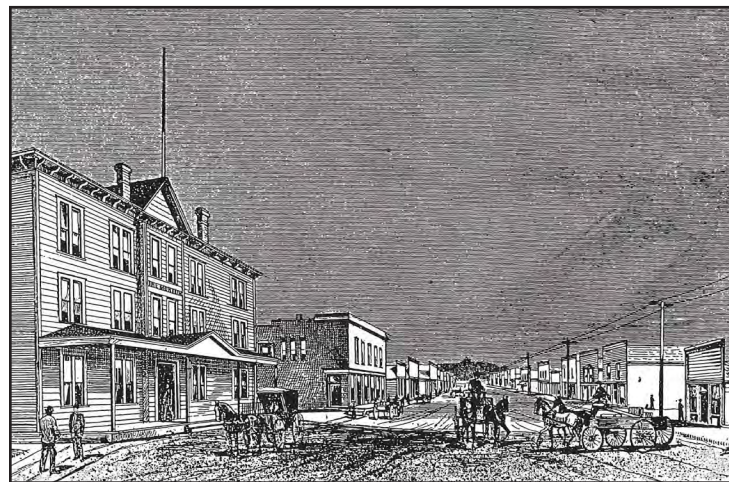
History

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

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

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

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



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



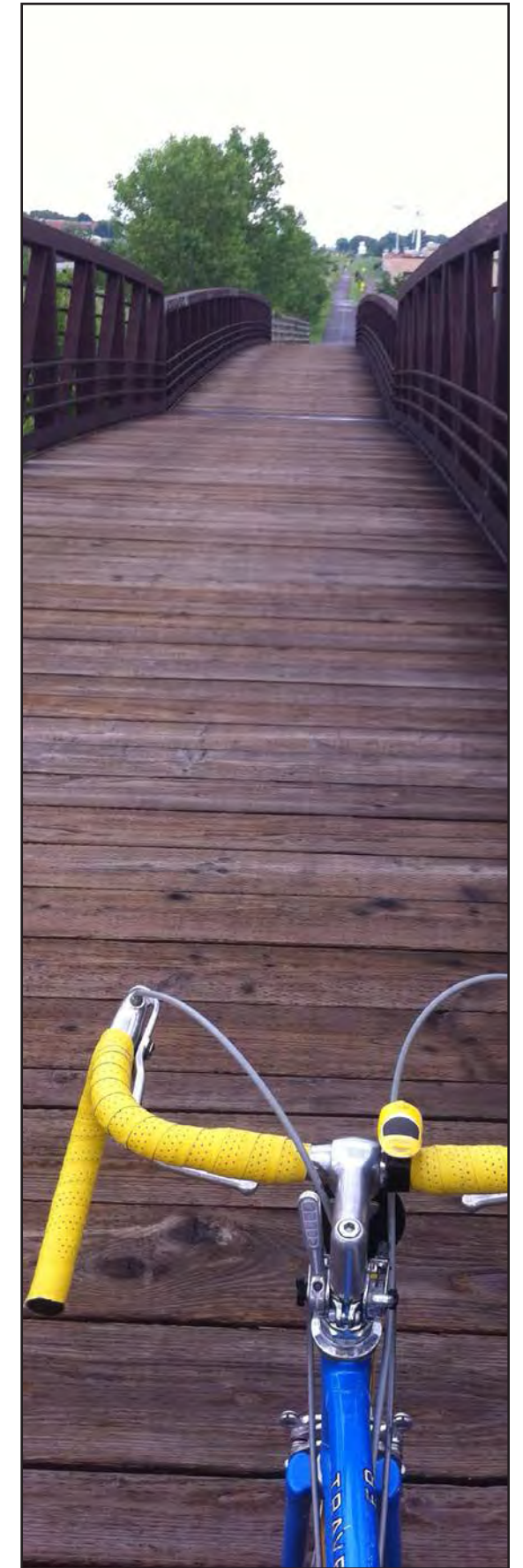
Repairing the tracks at the historic North St. Paul Depot
(Image: A Century of Good Living-North St. Paul)



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



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



The Gateway Trail Bridge over McKnight Road.

Land Use

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

Civic

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

Commercial

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

Industrial

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

Residential

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

Vacant

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



Civic - City Hall



Commercial - Downtown Retail



Office / Light Industry - Aetrium



Heavy Industry - T.A. Schifsky & Sons



Residential - Penn Place Townhomes



Vacant - Anchor Block Site

Transportation

Highway 36 and The Study Area Roadway Network

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

Public Transit

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

Gateway Trail

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



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

Market Summary

Retail

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

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

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

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

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

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

Industrial

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

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

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

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

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

Office

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

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

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

Residential

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

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

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

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

3. Vision and Guiding Principles

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

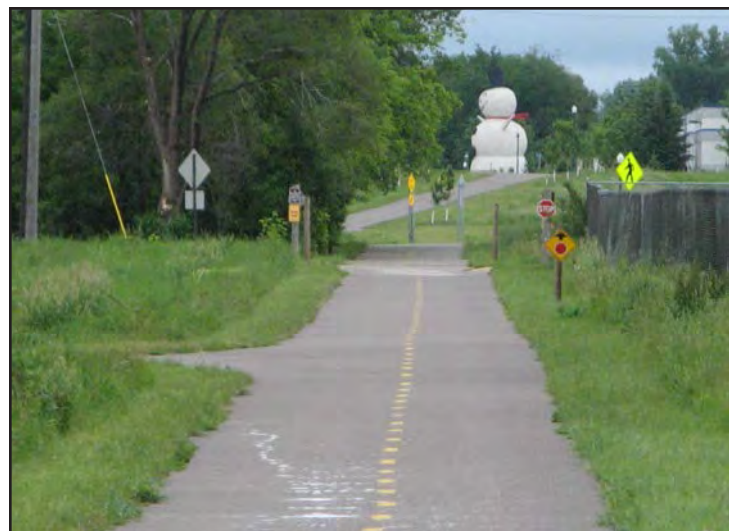
The vision for this project is drawn from past comprehensive planning and master planning efforts. It defines what the community is to become. It provides a basis and a framework from which the plan and supporting strategic actions can be identified. The vision suggests a way of thinking about possible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

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

Vision & Guiding Principles for North Saint Paul

What do they mean?

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



Gateway Trail



Post Office

Vision

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

Identity

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

Image

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

Enduring

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

Quality of Life

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



The North Saint Paul Snowman

Guiding Principles

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



From a new City Hall...



To a celebration of historic cars...



With locally focused retail...



And investment in jobs...



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



With plenty of opportunity.

4. Redevelopment Master Plan

The Approach to Redevelopment

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

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

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



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



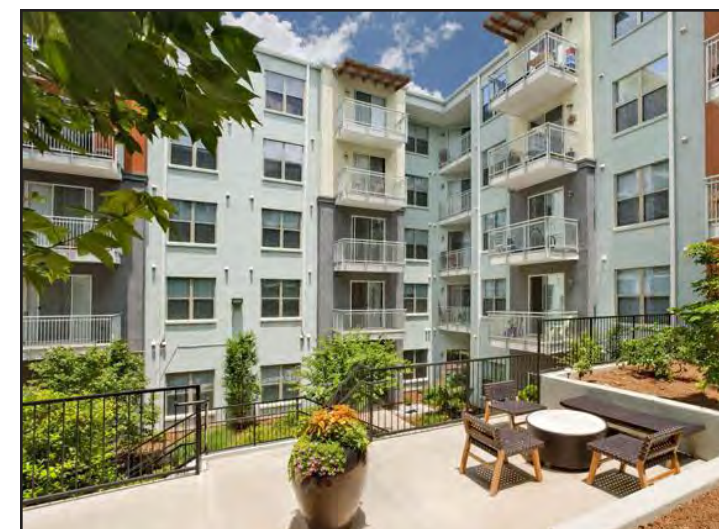
Mixed Use is envisioned in the downtown.



Convenience retail in Commerce Park.



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



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



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

Redevelopment Approach Diagram:

Key Elements:

- Create retail compression at the downtown core;
- Develop vertical mixed use intensity in the downtown core;
- Support and grow a diversity of jobs surrounding the downtown core;
- Develop a contemporary convenience retail/service at the intersection of Highway 36 and Century Avenue / Division Street;
- Redevelop the Commerce Park area with a collection of office showroom, office flex and light industrial uses;
- Transform the McKnight Road area into an employment center
- Create a housing redevelopment and intensification area south of the Gateway Trail on portions of the Anchor Block site;
- Utilize parks and open spaces as amenities for future development;
- Provide enhanced wayfinding and signage for visitors arriving via Highway 36 and the Gateway Trail into the heart of downtown;
- Create a strong connection to downtown with the creation of a new "parkway" from McKnight Road to North Saint Paul Drive;
- Utilize stormwater treatment as an amenity throughout the district.

McKnight Employment Center:

- Short-term light industrial / office showroom on Anchor Block Site.
- Mid-term redevelopment or reinvestment of select areas west of McKnight.
- Long-term redevelopment of Schifsky Site, but could remain over the short to mid-term.
- Potential education component (trade school / vocational school).
- Strengthen connections to new live/work district to the south and to the regional trail.

Employment Reinvestment District:

- Long-term redevelopment of McPhillips Site to more intensive office / medical employment.
- Continued reinvestment and adaptive re-use on Berwald Roofing Site.
- Continued reinvestment and adaptive re-use on Atrium site.

Commerce Park Redevelopment District:

- Short to mid-term convenience retail at Highway 36 intersection.
- Office showroom / light industrial (internalized).
- High quality building materials along the perimeter roadways with enhanced streetscape and district identity.

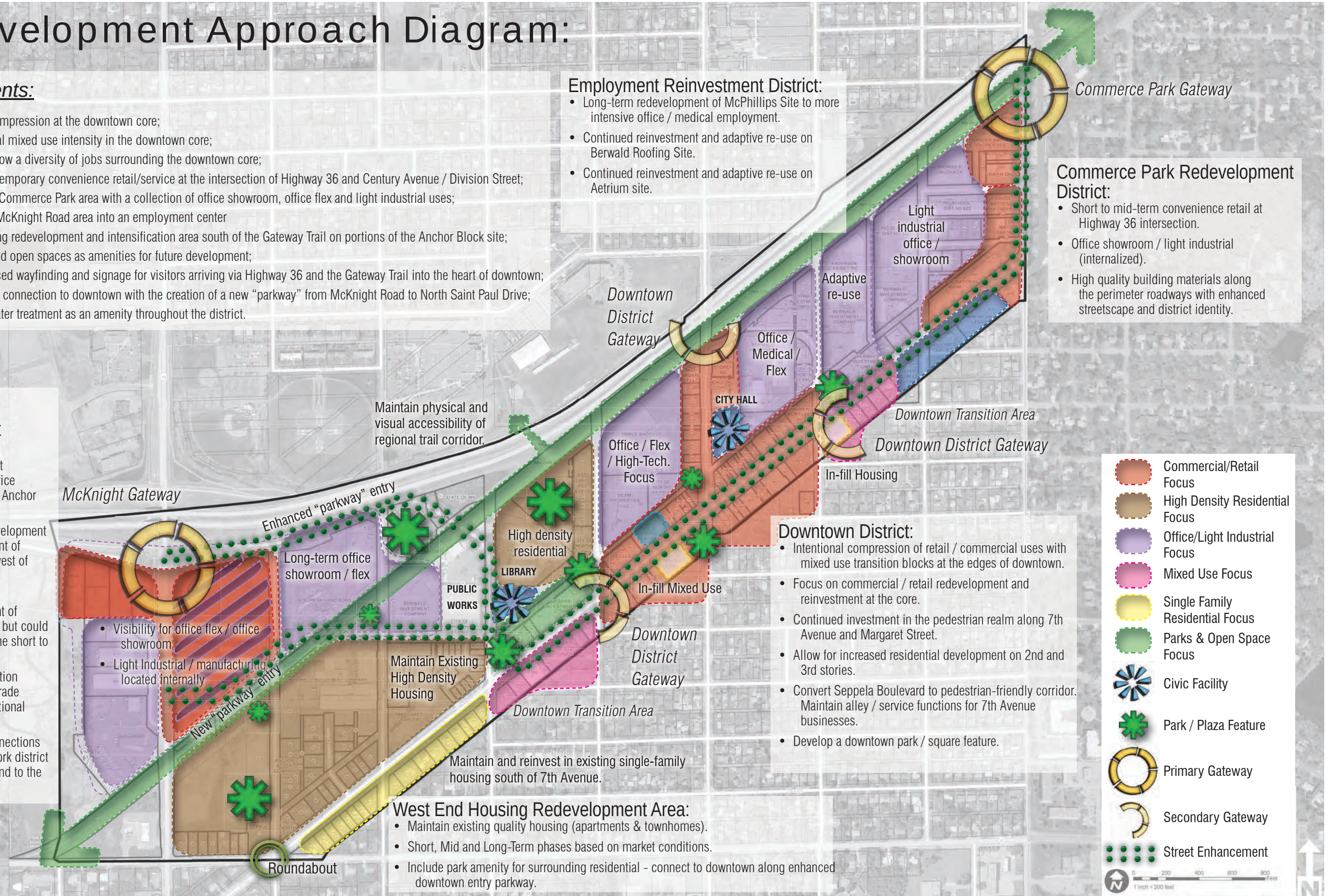


Figure 4.1 - Redevelopment Approach Diagram

A Collection of Districts

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

Downtown District

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

Commerce Park Redevelopment District

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

McKnight Employment Center

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

West End Housing & Redevelopment Area

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

Core Employment Reinvestment District

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

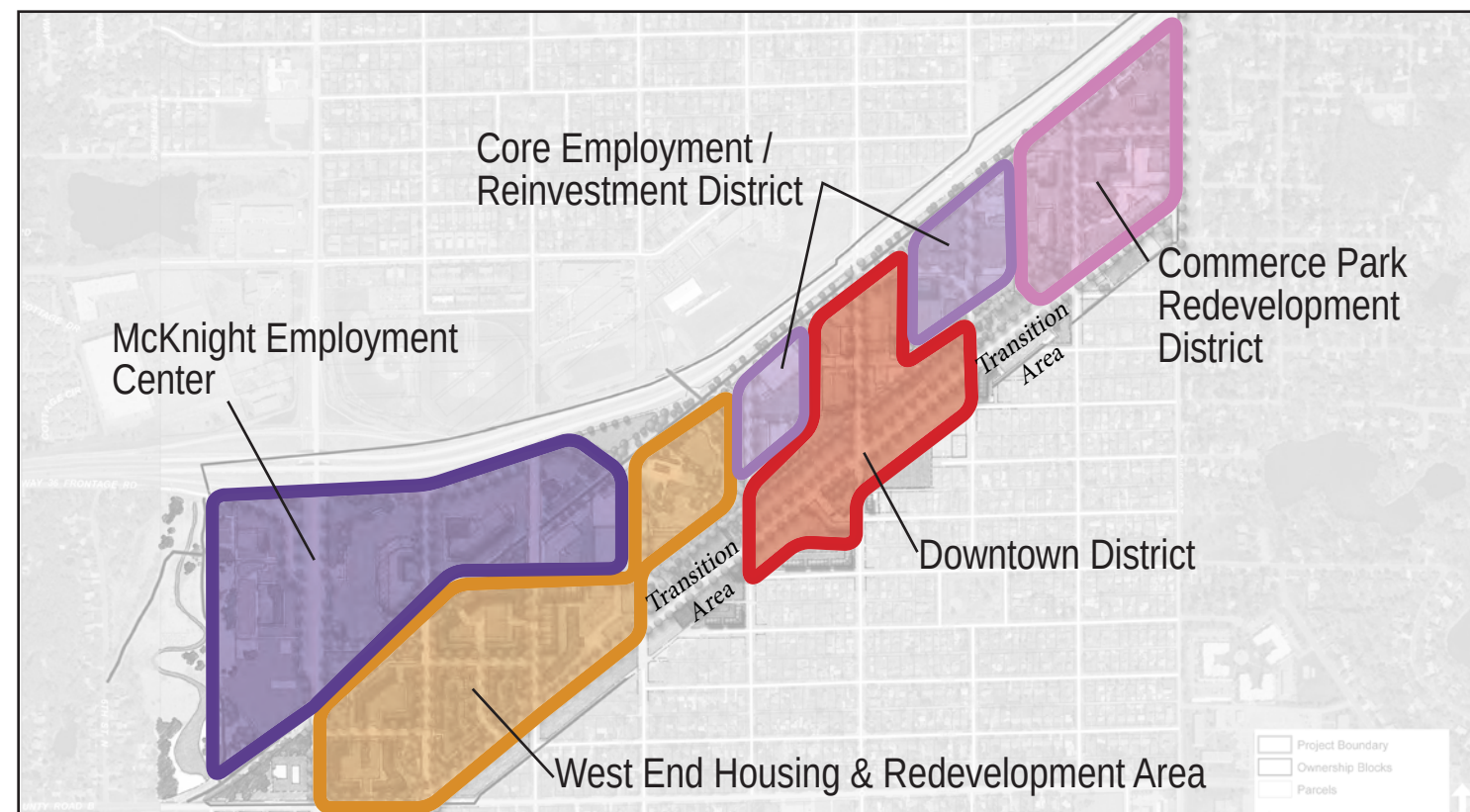


Figure 4.2 - Land Use and Urban Design Districts Map

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

Redevelopment Master Plan

Legend:

Employment (Industrial, Office, Professional)

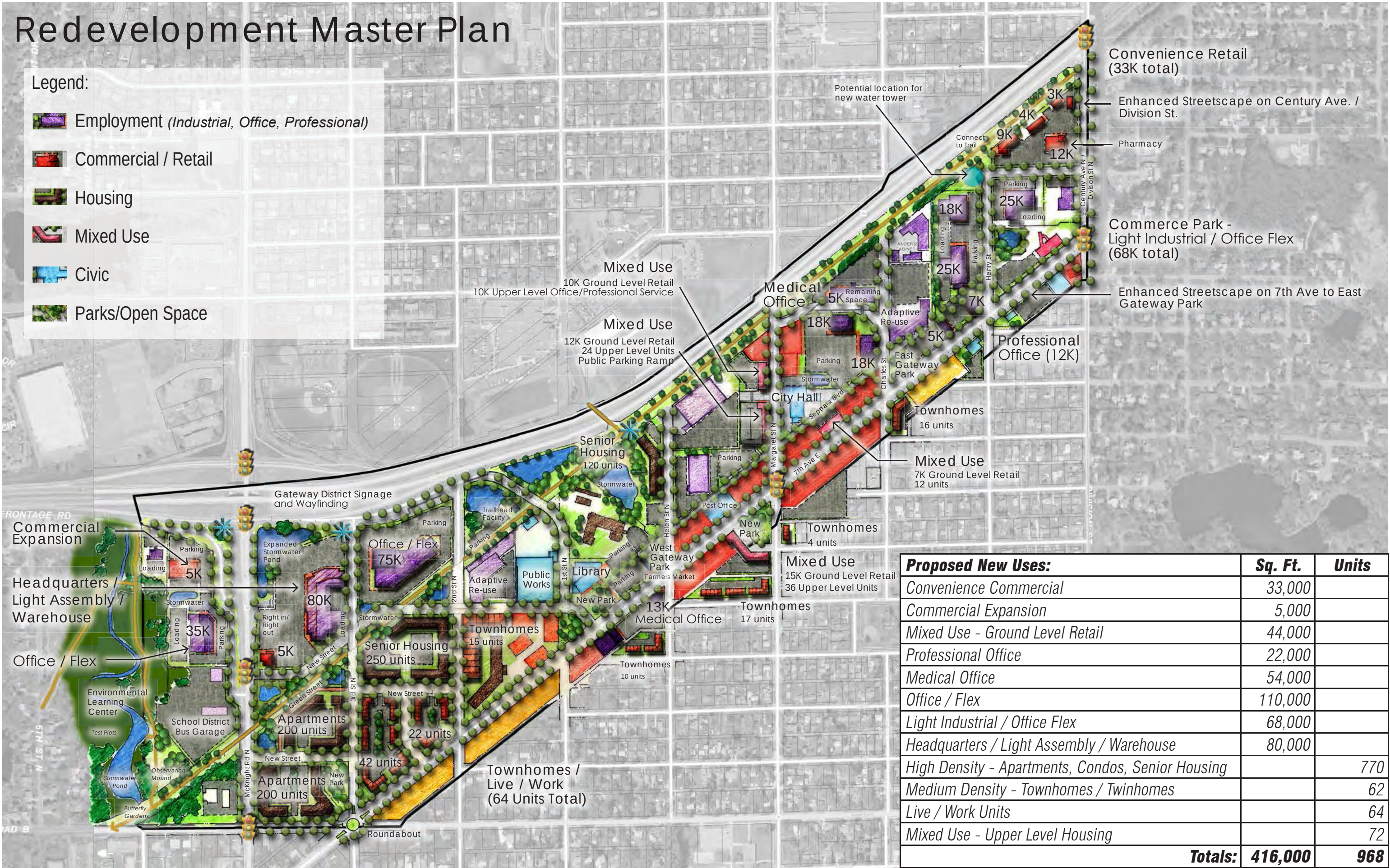
Commercial / Retail

Housing

Mixed Use

Civic

Parks/Open Space



Proposed New Uses:	Sq. Ft.	Units
Convenience Commercial	33,000	
Commercial Expansion	5,000	
Mixed Use - Ground Level Retail	44,000	
Professional Office	22,000	
Medical Office	54,000	
Office / Flex	110,000	
Light Industrial / Office Flex	68,000	
Headquarters / Light Assembly / Warehouse	80,000	
High Density - Apartments, Condos, Senior Housing		770
Medium Density - Townhomes / Twinhomes		62
Live / Work Units		64
Mixed Use - Upper Level Housing		72
Totals:	416,000	968

Figure 4.3 - Redevelopment Master Plan

Retail Compression at Core

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

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

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

Convenience Retail at Century Avenue and Highway 36

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

Retail near McKnight Road

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

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



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



Mixed use in the Downtown District.



Develop appropriate scale of buildings and public realm amenities downtown.



Convenience Retail

[illegible]

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



New commercial development should utilize high-end materials.



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



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



A pleasing downtown environment with outdoor dining and gathering areas.

Figure 4.4 - Land Use - Commercial Areas

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

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

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

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

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

Live / Work

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

Case Study: Live / Work Housing

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

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

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



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



Live/Work Townhomes (see case study)



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



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

Land Use - Residential Areas

New Residential Units	Units
Medium Density - Townhomes / Twin Homes	62
Live / Work Units	64
High Density - Apartments, Condos, Senior Housing	770
Mixed Use - Upper Level Housing	72
Total:	968

*Potentially housing roughly 1,450-2,400 residents (based on average HH of 1.5-2.5)

5

Market rate rental apartments

6

Urban infill townhomes

7

Urban infill townhomes.

8

Senior Housing.

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



Market rate rental apartments



Urban infill townhomes



Urban infill townhomes.



Senior Housing.

Figure 4.5 - Land Use - Residential Areas

Office

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

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

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

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

Medical Office

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



Headquarters / Light Assembly / Warehouse



Light Industrial / Office Flex

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

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

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

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

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

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

Land Use - Employment Areas

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



Office Showroom / Office Flex



Office / Flex



Medical Office



Live / Work

Figure 4.6 - Land Use - Employment Areas

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

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

7th Avenue Square – A New Downtown Park

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

Library / Farmers Market Plaza

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

Gateway Parks

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



Community Gathering Space



Interactive Water Feature

A New Urban Neighborhood Park

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

Strengthen Connections to the Gateway Trail

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

Gateway Trail Trailhead Facility

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

Environmental Learning Center

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

Stormwater Treatment as an Amenity

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

Parks & Recreation System Map

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



Movies in the park



Adventure Play



Creative Water Play



Additional Bicycle Facilities



Farmer's Market Pavilion



Environmental Learning Center

Figure 4.7 - Land Use - Parks & Recreation System Map

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

Flooding Issues

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

Water Quality

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

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

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



Tree Trenches



Rainwater Gardens

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

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

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

Other Issues and Opportunities

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

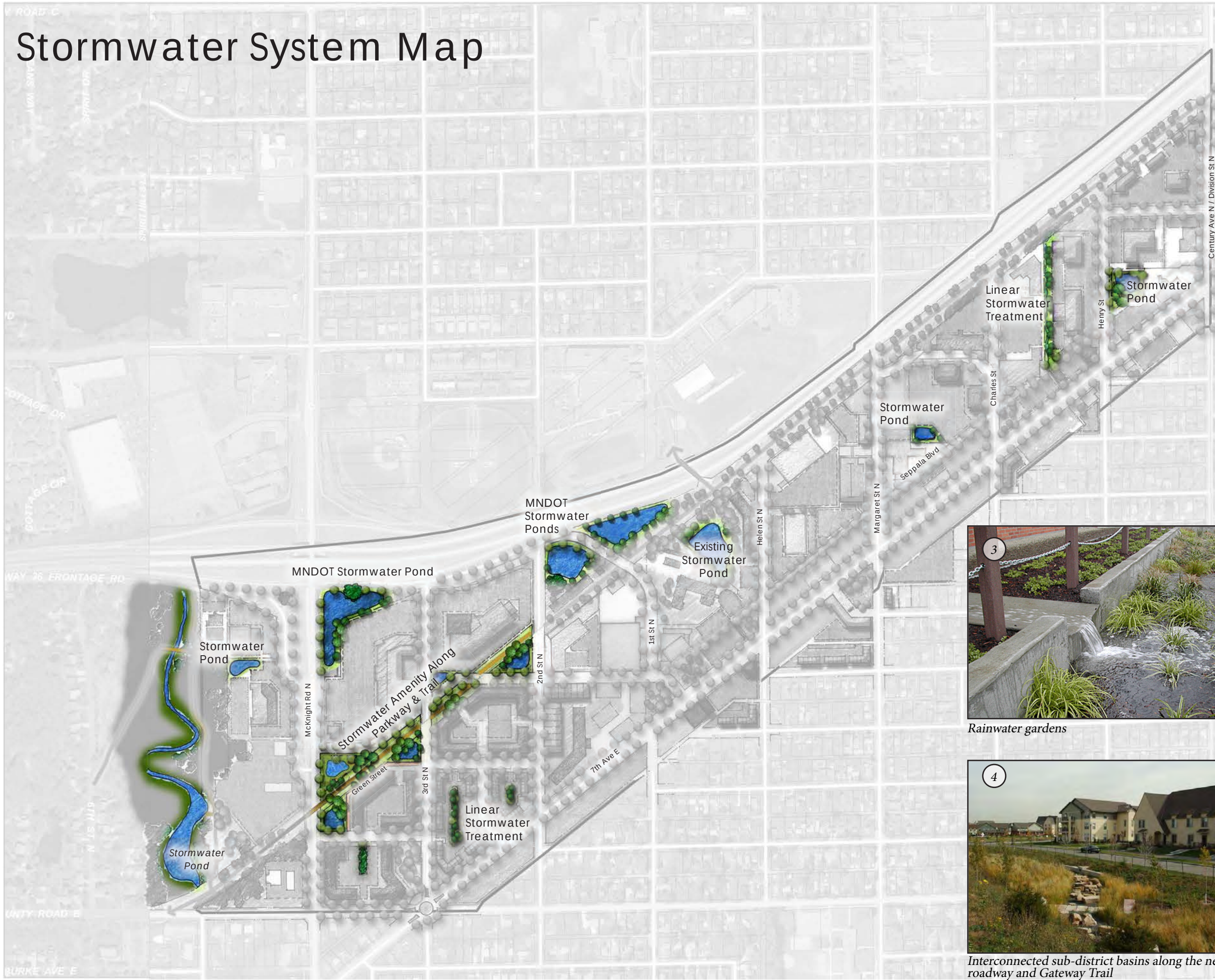
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Requirements: In addition to the Watershed District requirements, several lakes downstream of the study area are listed as impaired since their water quality is worse than the State's standards. The study area has been identified as an area where the quality of stormwater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

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

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

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

Stormwater System Map



Demonstration Projects



Porous Paving



Rainwater gardens



Bio-swales in boulevards



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



Creative on-site stormwater solutions

Figure 4.8 - Stormwater System Map

Long-term MNDOT interchange

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

Gateway Improvements - Century Avenue & McKnight Road Corridor

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

Transit Opportunities

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

District Parking Downtown

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

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

Street Types:

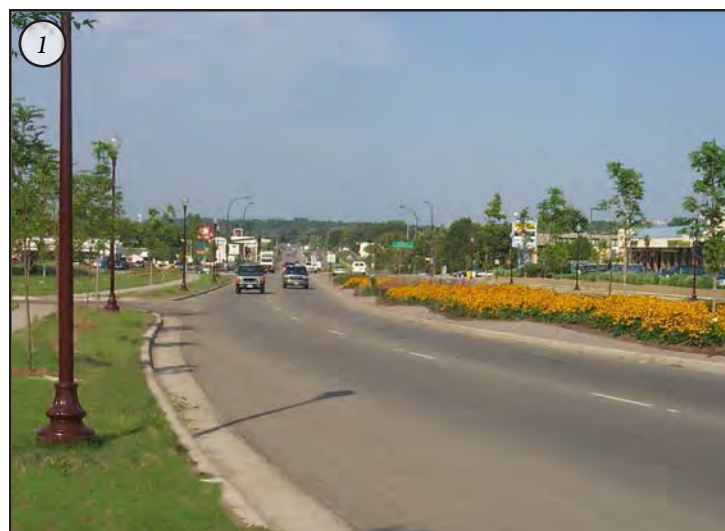
The map to the right (Figure 4.9) indicates a hierarchy of street types for the study area. The design character of these streets are detailed on the next page. Street types provide a guide for future improvements for all streets in the district.



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



Round-a-bout



Large Corridor Streetscape



Transit Buildings / Bus Shelters



Park and Ride Facility



Structured Parking

Transportation & Transit System Map

Legend:

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

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

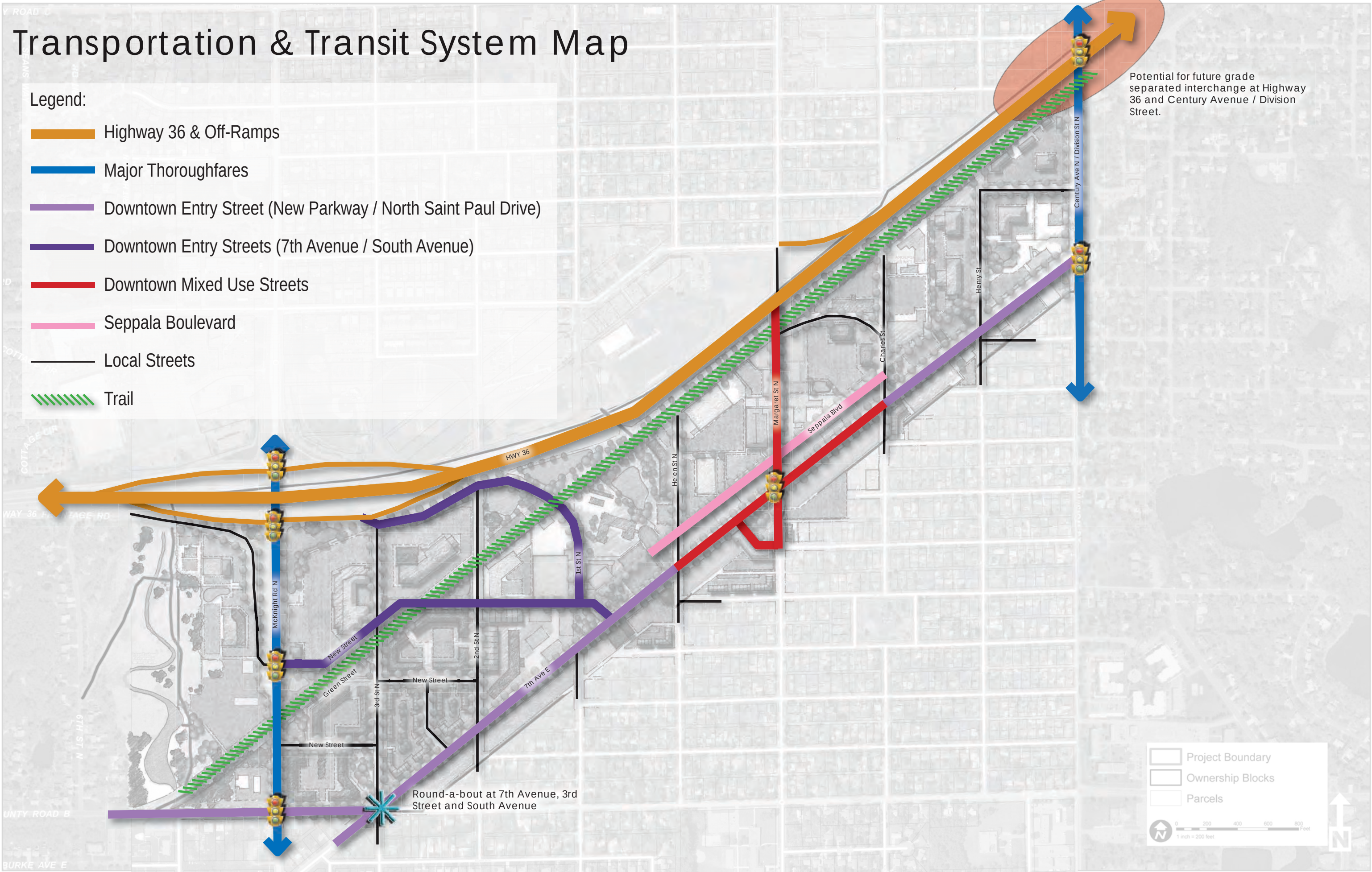


Figure 4.9 - Transportation & Transit System Map

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

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

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

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

Downtown Entry Streets - 7th Avenue & South Avenue

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

Downtown Mixed Use Streets

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



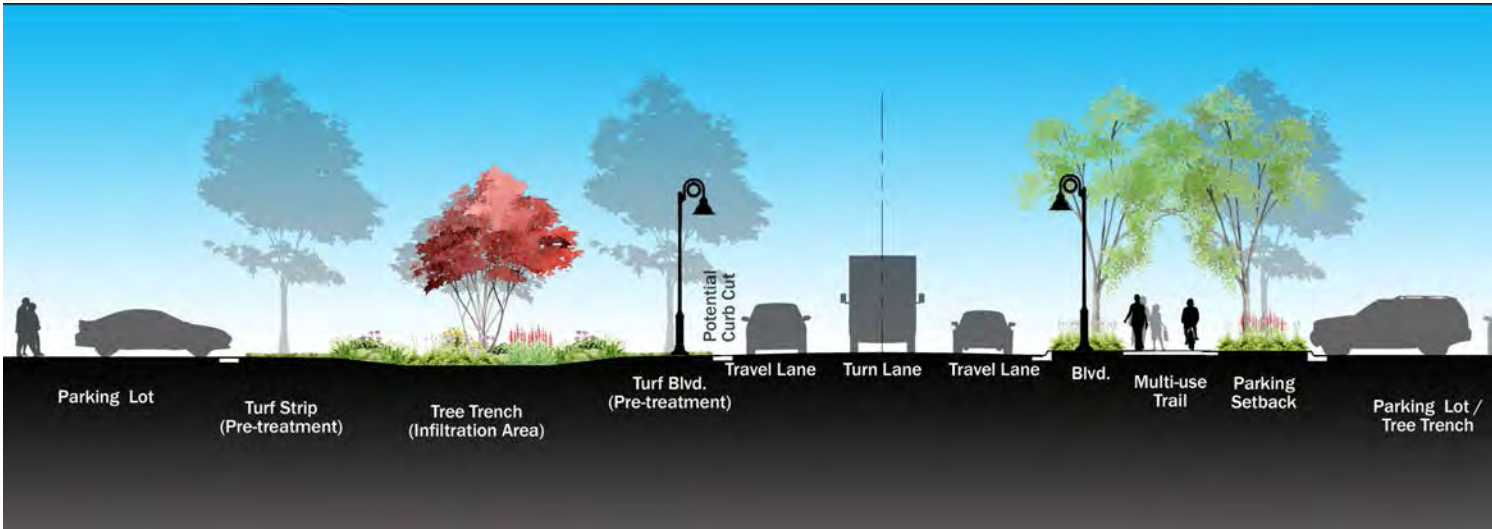
7th Avenue should be a comfortable public realm, inviting to all in the community.



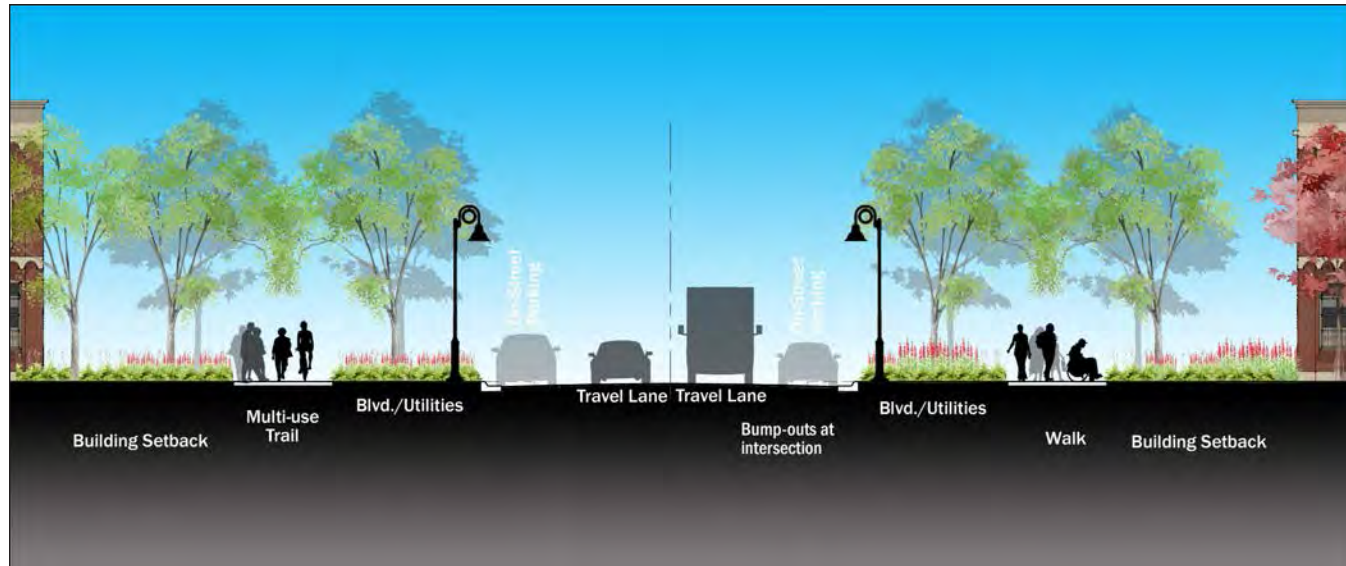
Pedestrian features along 7th Avenue should include benches, awnings, boulevard trees at specified intervals and pedestrian scaled street lighting providing a well-lit, safe evening environment.

Local Streets

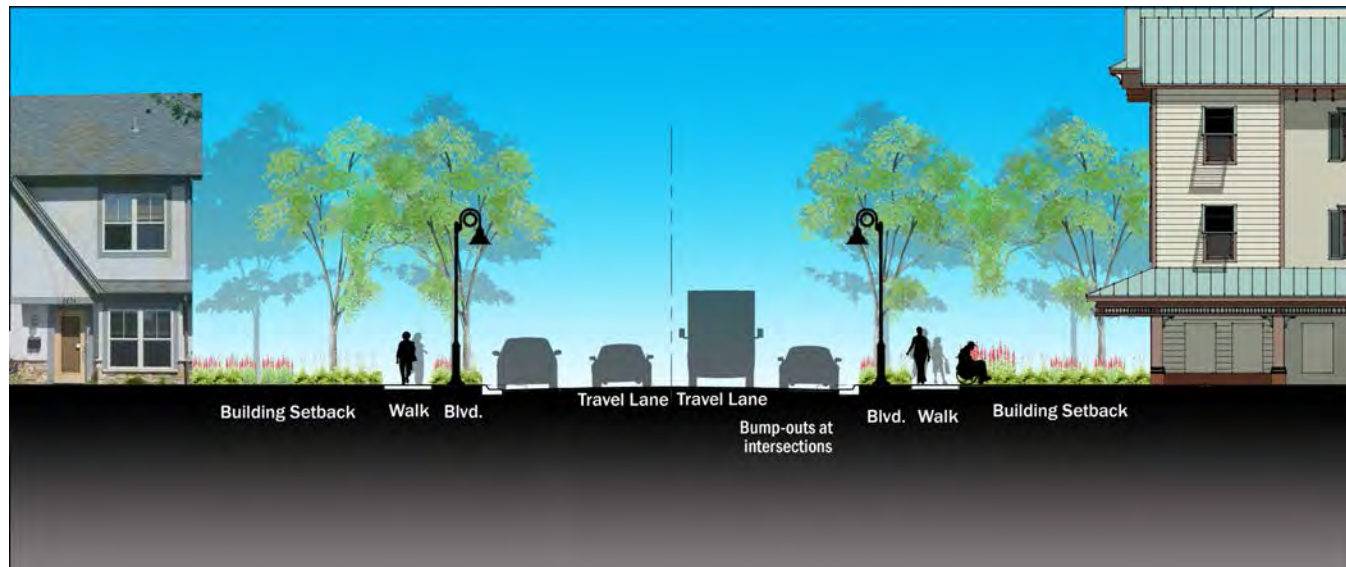
Local streets in the study area should be designed with adjacent uses in mind. For industrial uses the streets should be wider to accommodate truck turning movements and provide designated areas for on-street parking. In residential areas, streets should be narrower at intersection crossings and must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



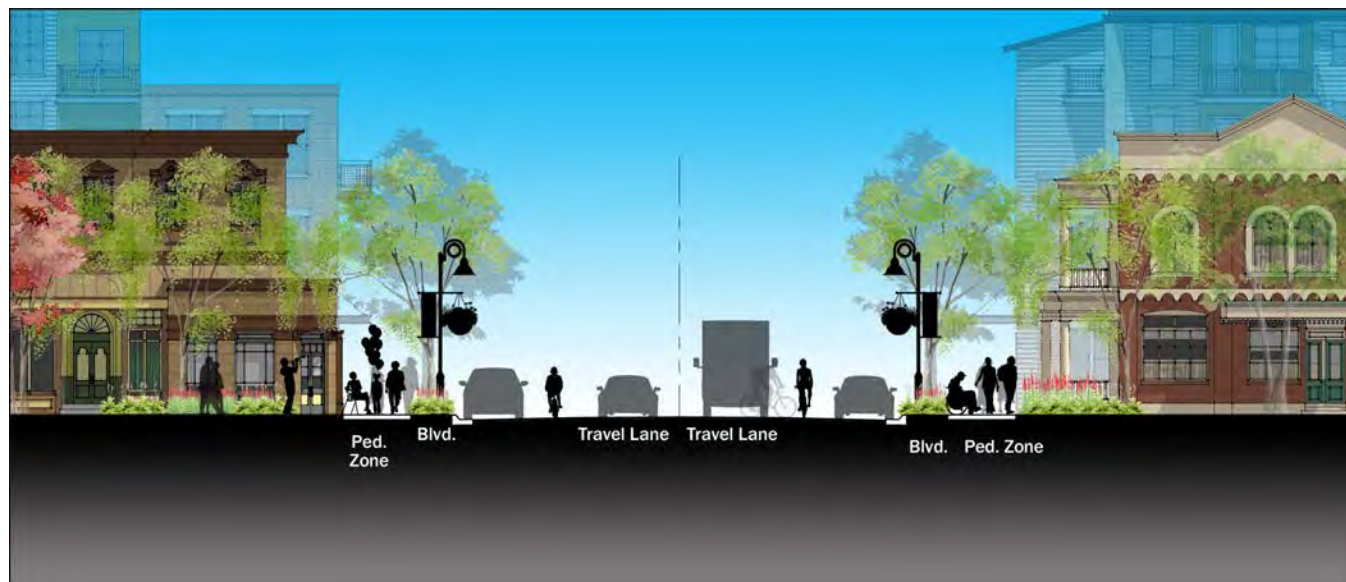
Section - Downtown Entry Street (McKnight Road to & 7th Avenue)



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



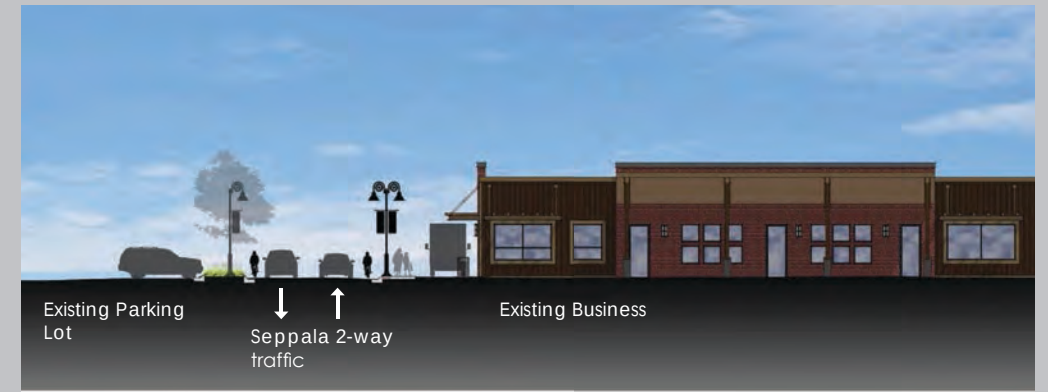
Section - Local Streets (Urban Residential uses shown)



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

Seppala Boulevard:

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



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



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

Water Demand and Wastewater Flow Assumptions

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

- Office/Flex – 274 gal/day/2400 SF – Office SAC criteria
- Lt. Industrial/Flex - 274 gal/day/7000 SF – Manufacturing SAC criteria
- Lt. Industrial/Office Showroom – 274 gal/day (30% Office, 70% Manufacturing per SAC criteria estimates)
- Commercial/Retail/Showroom – 274 gal/day/3000 SF – Retail SAC criteria
- Restaurant – 274 gal/day/300 SF – restaurant SAC criteria, assume ½ restaurant seating area
- Medium/High Density Development - 250 gal/day/unit
- Senior Housing – 200 gal/day/unit
- Existing development to remain in master development area – 1,000 gal/day/acre
- A substantial portion of the City’s existing wastewater generated in the southeast residential area is upstream of sanitary sewers in the Master Plan area. Therefore, wastewater generated by existing development outside of the Master Plan area was estimated based on total wastewater City flow and sewer shed area upstream of Master Plan area.
- City wide water demands influence water system available capacity to the Master Plan area. Water demands were estimated based on historical water usage, but demands vary annually and seasonally depending on climate conditions and customer water usage patterns.

Sanitary Sewer

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

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

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

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

As noted in the immediate phase and short term phase there is only one property where sewer location is impacted, in the McKnight area.

Water

Evaluation results indicated the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

As noted in the spreadsheet, immediate phase and short term phase projects include the following:

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

District Energy opportunities

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

Alternative Energy Solutions

Solar power

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

Wind power

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

Geothermal

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



Sun Screens for Building Efficiency



Geo-Thermal



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



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

5. Implementation & Phasing

Keys to Implementation

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

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

Roles & Responsibilities

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

City of North Saint Paul

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

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

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

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

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

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

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

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

Community-at-Large

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

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

Land Use Controls

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

Approve the Master Plan

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

Amend Land Use Controls

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

Comprehensive Plan

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

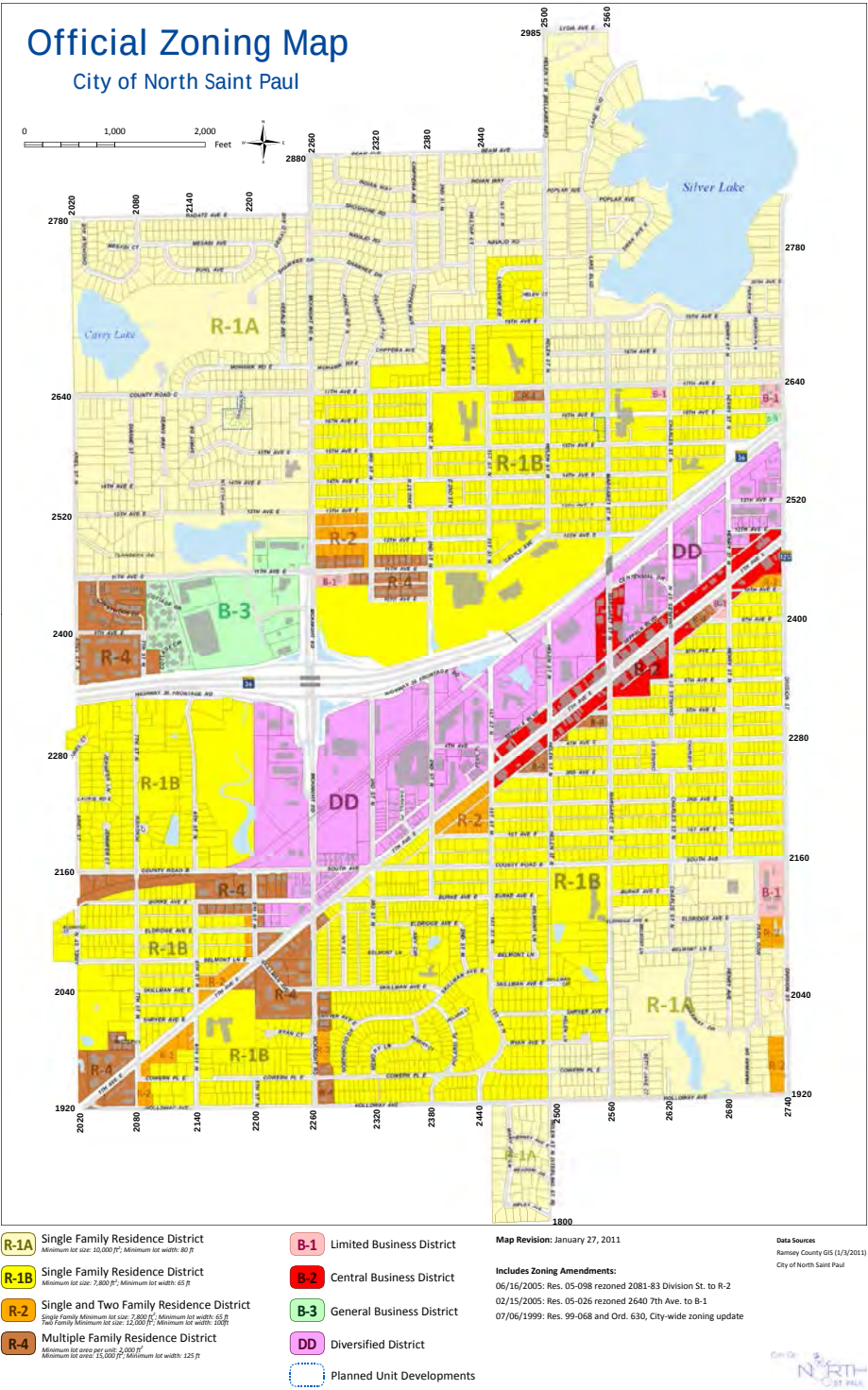
Zoning Regulations

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

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

Design Guidelines

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



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

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

Suggested activities to enhance project success include:

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

Case Study: Thematic Connections

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

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



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



Case Study: Business Incubator

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

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



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

Case Study: Temporary Uses - Storefronts

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

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



Case Study: Temporary Uses - Property

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

Immediate Phase (0-5 Years)

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

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

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

Immediate Phase

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



Sources & Uses of Funds Summary

Key Elements	Sources of Funds	Uses of Funds
TIF Generation (Existing Districts)	\$600,000	
TIF Generation (Future Districts)	\$5,800,000	
Existing Street Improvements		\$ 269,500
New Streets		\$ 1,198,500
Parks		\$ 275,000
Stormwater		\$ 320,000
Utilities		\$ 475,000
Totals:	\$6,400,000	\$2,538,000

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

Figure 5.2 - Immediate Phase

Short-Term Phase (5-10 Years)

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

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

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

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

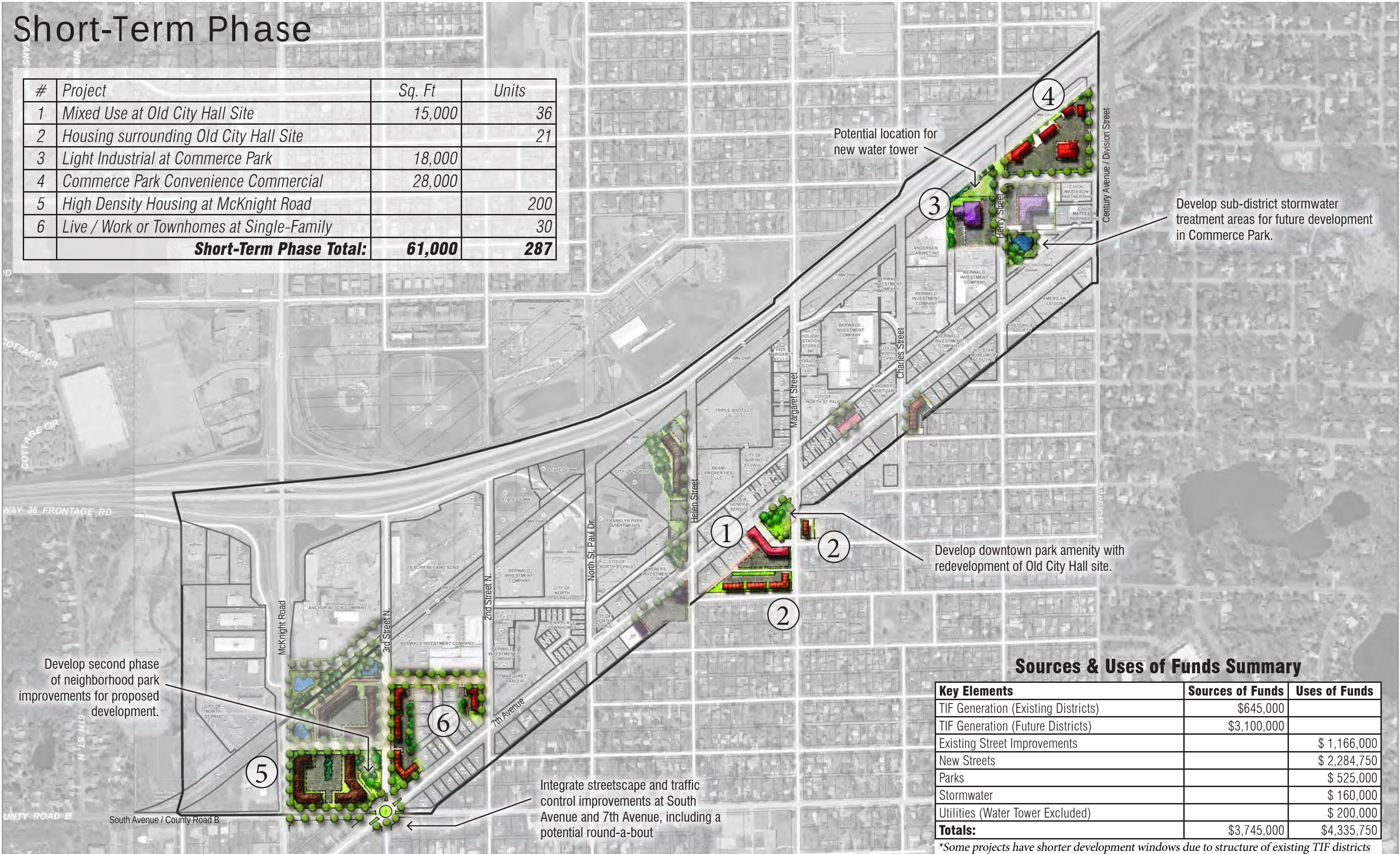
- Extend a new street connection between 3rd Street N. and 2nd Street N. south of the existing Berwald property for additional connectivity;
- Develop urban infill townhomes on City owned or Anchor Block owned vacant parcels within the existing single-family neighborhood;
- Investigate the need for a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



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

Short-Term Phase

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



Sources & Uses of Funds Summary

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

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

Figure 5.3 - Short-Term Phase

Mid-Term Phase (10-15 Years)

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

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

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

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



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



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

Mid-Term Phase

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



Figure 5.4 - Mid-Term Phase

Long-Term Phase (15+ Years)

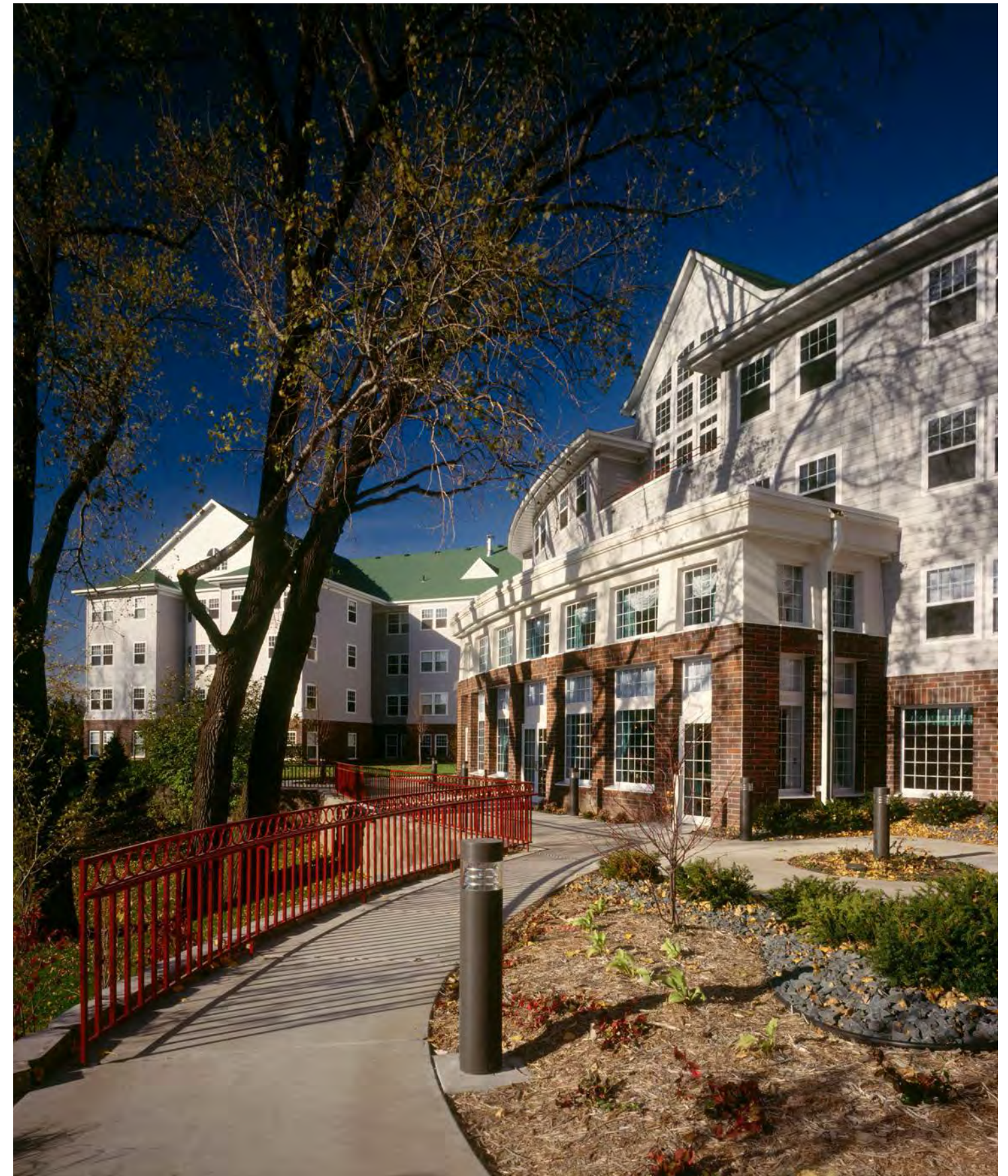
The Long-Term phase includes the redevelopment of the Schifsky asphalt & recycling facility, the Berwald industrial area immediately to the south, and the McPhillips Roofing property located behind City Hall. The Schifsky site is envisioned as an office / flex use capturing the strong visibility from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

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

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



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



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

Long-Term Phase

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



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

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

Tax Increment Financing

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

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

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

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

Project Area:

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

District Criteria:

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

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

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

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

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

Pooling:

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

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

Time Constraints:

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

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

Use Limits:

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

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

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

Other Public Finance Tools

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

Tax Abatement:

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

Special Service Districts:

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

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

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

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

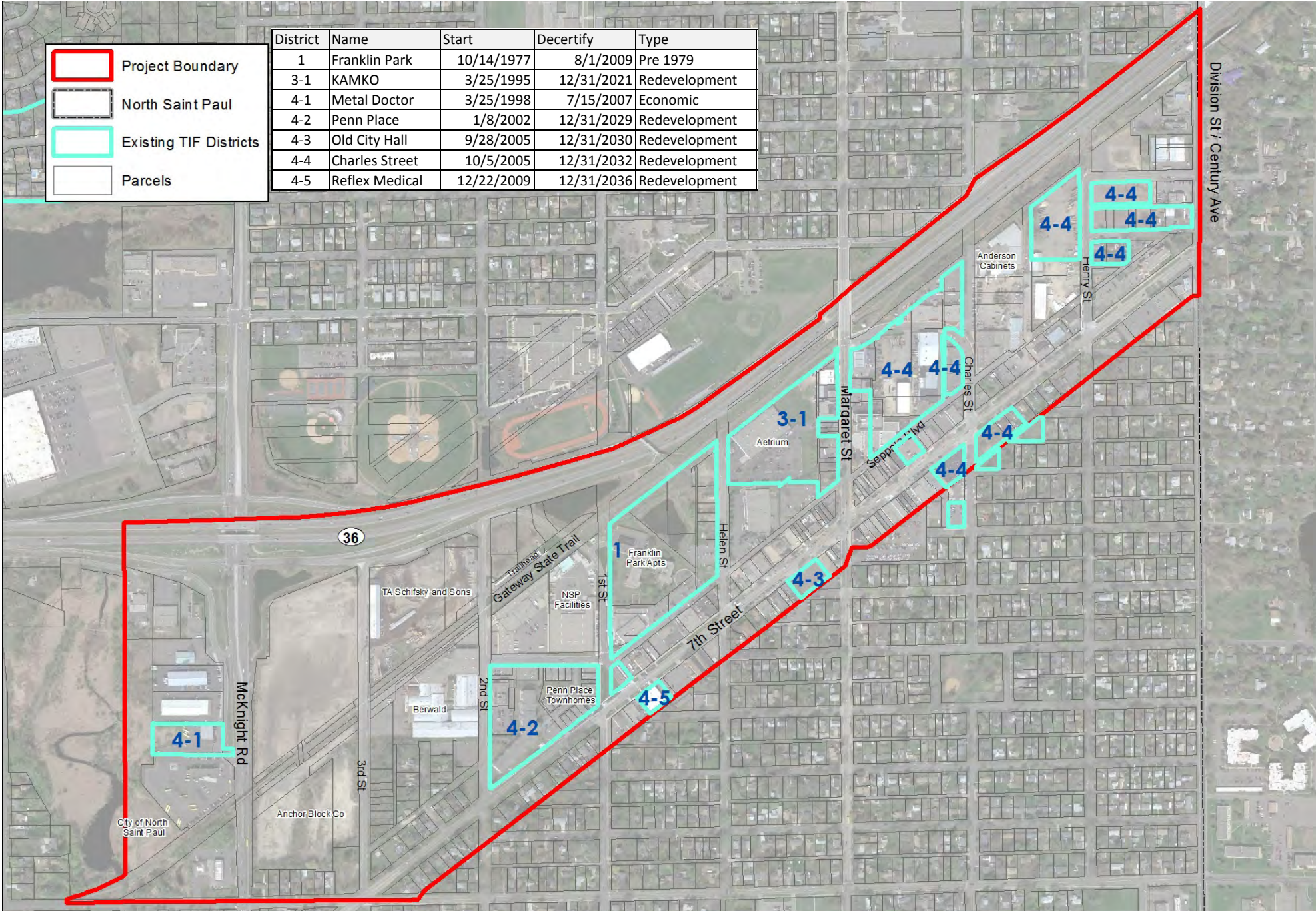


Figure 5.6 - Existing TIF Districts in North Saint Paul

Grants

Metropolitan Council - LCDA

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

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

DEED

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

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

MPCA

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

Environmental Assistance (EA) Grant

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



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

Grants Focused on Clean Water / Stormwater

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

Park Dedication

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

Stormwater Utility Fee

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



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

SUMMARY

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

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