

Northeast Corridor Development Plan Summary

Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

Recommended by the Planning Commission on March 25, 2005

Adopted by the City Council on December 14, 2005

Location

The area addressed in the *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* includes land at key nodes along running diagonally between Lafayette Park, on East Seventh Street, through the Phalen Boulevard Corridor, to Hillcrest, at the city's northeast boundary.

Framework

The foundation of the *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* is contained in the Saint Paul *Comprehensive Plan* and *Zoning Code*. Relevant policies and principles include:

- strategic location of redevelopment in the city (Land Use Element, small area plans);
- excellence in urban design (*Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*); and
- traditional neighborhood development (*Zoning Code*)

The *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* used the *corridor focus* of the Land Use Element in combination with *development concepts*, some of which are contained in previously adopted small area plans (Trout Brook Greenway Plan, 2001; Railroad Island Small Area Plan, 1994; Phalen Corridor Development Strategy, 2001; Phalen Village Small Area Plan, 1995; Ames Lake Neighborhood Master Plan, 2001; White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan, 2001) and others are new development concepts. The *streetscape* and *pedestrian path principles* come initially from the *Development Framework* (adjusted for the particulars of the Northeast Corridor) and from planning work done for the individual traditional neighborhood nodes. Moreover, all of the policies have been developed through the lens of the principles of traditional neighborhood development in the *Zoning Code*, including:

- compact (within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of major intersections)
- pedestrian-oriented (including safe and direct pedestrian access to the center of the node)
- mix of commercial and residential uses (vertical and/or horizontal)
- on major transit streets and corridors
- expanded housing choices within the region

Strategically, the approach to land use planning in this corridor is:

- To continue working with community and business organizations
- To work with each neighborhood to take best advantage of the views and amenities of the river valley
- To pursue redevelopment of major opportunity sites
- To strengthen the urban village characteristics along East Seventh Street, Maryland Avenue and White Bear Avenue, as well as adjacent streets within the Northeast Corridor

Recommendations

The *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* includes recommendations for six nodes along East Seventh Street, Phalen Boulevard, Maryland Avenue and White Bear Avenue. The nodes are: Lafayette Park, Metropolitan State University, Arcade, Phalen Village/Hazelwood, White Bear/Maryland and Hillcrest. “City Actions” (below) describes the strategies and approaches the City of Saint Paul will use to implement the recommendations.

The recommendations are proposed for areas depicted on the attached Concept Plans. “Concept Plans” show broad classes of recommended land uses and connections among them. The concept plans use the following vocabulary to discuss improvements or changes:

- *Existing Land Uses* (solid line) include major projects recently completed or under construction.
- *Planned Land Uses* (long dashed line) indicate projects already proposed in prior Small Area Plans or studies.
- *Proposed Land Uses* (short dashed line) indicates changes proposed as part of this Corridor Plan. Since neighborhood planning often involves successive iterations of an idea, there is sometimes an overlap between “Planned” and “Proposed” categories. Some projects or concepts first suggested in previous plans are refined or slightly altered in the current plan.

More detailed suggestions for specific sub-areas within each node area are presented in the attached illustrative plans. The illustrative plans are intended to depict potential “redevelopment scenarios” – that is, they indicate one manner in which a given site could be developed in accord with the broad principles in the concept plan. Rarely does development occur in exactly the manner suggested in an illustrative plan. These plans are intended to provide examples to help guide development, but are not meant to foreclose other possible scenarios involving similar land uses and development intensities.

Additional recommendations include design guidelines for buildings and sites, guidelines for building typologies at various densities and the prototypical plan for a path system connecting the node with the surrounding neighborhood.

Principles of Transit Oriented Development

The relationship between land use and transportation was altered by the proliferation of automobile and truck traffic, accompanied by a development pattern characterized by large-lot, single-use districts.

As undeveloped land has become scarce and as congestion has increased, however, the post-war pattern of decentralized land uses linked by a maze of roadways has come under greater scrutiny. There is now an opportunity to use a sophisticated transit system to connect ever more complex urban centers. This will encourage the development of vibrant, economically healthy communities that support, and are supported by, transit.

The characteristics of transit oriented development are:

- A distance that can be walked between bus stop and destination in 5-15 minutes. This 5-15 minute walk corresponds to approximately one-quarter to one-half mile from major bus stops. This distance encourages pedestrian movement, provided that the environment is pleasant and safe for pedestrians. These radii are shown on all TOD node graphics, along with physical barriers such as freeways, bluffs or railroad lines that may also limit the effective size of the TOD node.
- A core that includes a mixture of land uses with physical and visual amenities that encourage transit usage. The mixture of land uses includes employment centers, apartments and retail with upper-story offices or housing.
- Signs that provide information and indicate direction
- Public art

Design Guidelines

Building and site design is a key factor in creating compatible infill development, especially at higher levels of density. The design guidelines address some of the key elements of infill design: sensitivity to context and the relationship of building facades, windows and entrances to street and sidewalk. These guidelines should be considered as part of the site plan review process for proposed nonresidential or multifamily developments in all nodes. The new Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts, proposed as rezonings in specific nodes in the corridor, include additional design guidelines that address the placement of parking and screening of service areas.

The following guidelines are recommended for consideration as part of the site plan review process for new nonresidential or multifamily buildings in station areas. They address the relationship of new buildings to the street and to neighboring traditional buildings. Additional guidelines may be applied in connection with existing zoning districts (i.e., the White Bear Avenue overlay zone) or proposed zoning changes to the TN Traditional Neighborhood Districts.

- New development should relate to the design of adjacent traditional buildings, where these are present, in scale and character. This can be achieved by maintaining similar setbacks, façade divisions, roof lines, rhythm and proportions of openings, building materials and colors. Historic architectural styles need not be replicated.
- Primary building entrances on all buildings should face the primary abutting public street or walkway, or linked to that street by a clearly defined and visible walkway or courtyard. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area. Entries should be clearly visible and identifiable from the street.
- In pedestrian-oriented commercial districts (generally characterized by storefront commercial buildings built up to the sidewalk) the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Buildings should be as close to the sidewalk as practical.

2. At intersections, buildings should "hold the corner," that is, have street facades at or near the sidewalks of both streets.
 3. Buildings should have direct pedestrian connections to the street.
 4. No blank walls should be permitted to face the public street, sidewalks, or other public spaces such as plazas.
 5. Signage should be appropriate for pedestrians.
 6. The width of sidewalks should be maintained.
- Buildings should have window and door openings facing the street; windows facing parking lots are also encouraged.
 - All rooftop equipment shall be screened from view from adjacent streets, public rights-of-way and adjacent properties. Preferably, rooftop equipment should be screened by the building parapet, or should be located out of view from the ground. If this is infeasible, the equipment should be grouped within a single enclosure. Exterior mechanical equipment such as ductwork shall not be located on primary building facades.
 - The number of curb cuts should be minimized where possible, and shared curb cuts for adjacent parking areas are encouraged.

Building Typologies

This section and the accompanying graphic indicate the variety of building types and mixtures of uses that are possible in a node. Categories are as follows:

- Residential: In almost all cases, new residential development is at medium to high densities, and can encompass townhouse or other attached dwellings, carriage house secondary units, and low-rise or mid-rise multifamily buildings— loft-type apartments, or flats, both condominiums or rental units. In a few instances, one- or two-family dwellings on small lots are proposed as infill projects or components of larger projects. The "residential" category may also include hybrids such as live-work units, and the occasional small "corner store" or café. Thus, some new urban village sites such as the Upper Landing are characterized as primarily residential, although they include small commercial components.
- Mixed Use: Indicates both vertically-integrated mixed use, such as housing above ground-floor commercial or office use, as well as a range of uses along a block frontage
- Commercial: Includes retail and service uses, sometimes in combination with offices.
- Office: Includes buildings used solely or primarily for office purposes, including medical offices and government offices such as state agencies.
- Industrial: Includes manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing/shipping activities, as well as other large-scale office tenants of business parks.
- Institutional: Includes private institutions such as places of worship, semi-public institutions (i.e., a hospital or YMCA) and public institutions such as schools and police stations.

Within the node, there are a number of ways to achieve residential densities of approximately 20 units per acre and a floor-to-area ratio of 1.0 without detracting from neighborhood character. Building design is the key factor in creating compatible infill development. The graphic, Building Typology, is provided as a broad overview of the general building types that are proposed in the

nodes of the Northeast Corridor. These types have been identified as appropriate for various redevelopment sites, with consideration of neighborhood scale, market conditions, circulation patterns, the “background density” of the surrounding neighborhood and the density level needed to create a vibrant node.

Access Path System

Access paths should be designed to provide connectivity to important destinations and with sensitivity to other existing or planned public realm improvements. At a minimum, access paths should include the following:

- Street lighting maintaining a continuous level of safe illumination within the bus stop and along the access paths
- Continuous paving along the access paths, accessible to everyone.
- Lane crossing markings and/or traffic signals at all intersections along the access paths.

Additional access path improvements might include:

- Enhanced lighting, including pedestrian lights
- Street trees, shrubs and groundcover
- Benches
- Decorative pavement
- Directional and informational signs
- Bollards
- Public art

As shown in the attached graphic, there may be several “levels” of paths in each node..

- Type 1: Node
- Type 2: Primary Street Corridor - Improvements could be specific to segment or to the node.
- Type 3: Major Cross Street/Pedestrian Corridor - Includes primary collectors and major pedestrian paths to the node, such as Randolph Street.
- Type 4: Major Destination or Link - Primary pedestrian connectors between a node and a major employment center, a major activity node, or a higher-density residential area.
- Type 5: Other Major Corridors - Designated primary pedestrian thoroughfares that do not intersect the corridor, such as the Samuel H. Morgan Regional Trail along the Mississippi River.

The level of amenities will vary by type of path. A path system of this type, shown in a schematic format here, offers opportunities to link nodes to an integrated system of streetscape improvements along important corridors.

The Development Nodes of the Northeast Corridor

Lafayette Park

Lafayette Park functions in two ways: as an extension of downtown Saint Paul and as a transitional zone between downtown and the residential neighborhoods of the East Side. It is a major employment center, with at least a dozen large industrial or business sites and four large state office buildings, supporting approximately 2,500 jobs.

The area is dominated by the interchange of Lafayette Road and I-94 and its traffic, as well as the high traffic volumes on East Seventh Street. Large, somewhat nondescript office and manufacturing buildings and associated surface parking are spread throughout the district. A number of the area's local streets, such as Eighth Street and Grove Street, carry large volumes of pedestrian traffic.

Commercial uses consist of a cluster of small, free-standing commercial buildings fronting East Seventh, including both traditional storefronts and more generic franchise buildings, with surface parking in a variety of configurations.

Recommendations include the following:

The recommendations focus on how the Lafayette Park area could, over time, covert to more intensive uses, dependent on market conditions, as well as providing more a hospitable environment for pedestrians.

The following improvements are recommended, as shown in the Concept Plan.

1. Design modifications to improve pedestrian safety at East Seventh Street and Lafayette Road include improved crosswalk markings, signal timing, pedestrian warning signs and street lighting.
2. Infill development along Lafayette Road and elsewhere in the area, on land currently used for surface parking, will create consistent street frontage and an urban environment.
3. Restoration of the street grid by extending Eighth and Grove Streets (which currently terminate in large surface parking lots) to the east, extending Kittson Street north to connect with Eighth and Grove, and restoring Willius Street (the vacated north-south street between Lafayette and Kittson) to continue north to University Avenue. Creation of new blocks would create sites for new buildings and enhance pedestrian circulation.
4. Development of structured parking will allow for infill development; two areas identified for structured parking are east of Lafayette Road where surface lots now exist.
5. Construction of an urban park plaza at the southeast corner of the intersection of Lafayette Road and Grove Street; this plaza will provide an outdoor space for informal gatherings and a visual center for the employment district.

6. Retail development focused at the intersection of Lafayette and East Seventh, primarily to satisfy the limited market created by the concentration of office workers in the district. A day care center serving these workers may also be an appropriate use, but should be located away from the Lafayette Road intersection to reduce noise. New development may come in the form of reuse of existing structures, infill on underutilized land, or redevelopment to more substantial structures.
7. Streetscape improvements along Lafayette Road and Eighth Street, with the objective of creating a high-quality pedestrian environment.
8. Landscaping and screening on the edge of the ravine on the east side of the area. Limited physical access to this area via walking trails or overlooks should be considered in conjunction with any new development. As the Trout Brook trail is developed along the BNSF corridor, trail connections to this area should be planned.

Metropolitan State University

The Metropolitan State University campus is the dominant use in this area and its buildings dominate the view from their prominent position on the hillside at East Seventh Street and Mound Boulevard. The university's expansion plan, if realized, could further increase its presence and influence in this area.

The remainder of the East Seventh Street frontage is occupied by storefront and freestanding commercial and office uses, surrounded by largely single- and two-family housing. Railroad Island is a small neighborhood north of the East Seventh/Payne intersection and Swede Hollow Park, while Dayton's Bluff, a City-designated historic district, is mostly south of East Seventh Street.

The Bruce Vento (formerly Burlington Northern) Regional Trail follows the park north; a small parking area and trailhead is located on the south side of East Seventh at Payne. The Swede Hollow Café and adjacent garden form an attractive oasis in this area and also mark the outer limits of the campus district.

Recommendations include the following:

The recommendations complement and support the expansion plans of Metropolitan State University as proposed in its draft master plan.

1. Redevelopment of the north side of East Seventh Street between Maria and Bates Avenues, creating a campus shopping district with its own identity, with mixed commercial and residential uses that incorporate the existing police station; the site would include 24,000 square feet of ground floor retail or office space and approximately 80 residential units on the second and third floors. Parking would be to the rear and underground.

2. Redevelopment of the southeast corner of East Seventh and Bates, potentially to one or more uses that complement university activities or possibly as a law enforcement training facility; retail, offices and/or housing would also be suitable.
3. Redevelopment of the Hospital Linen site, along the south side of East Seventh at Maple; approximately 120 housing units could be developed on the site and could potentially be integrated with the adjacent East Seventh/Bates redevelopment discussed above.
4. Streetscape improvements along East Seventh with elements that highlight and promote the identity of the University as a distinct district.
5. TN2 zoning for the redevelopment sites around the Metropolitan State campus: the Maria-Bates block on the north side of East Seventh and the Maple-Bates block on the south side of East Seventh. The TN2 district is designed specifically for transit-oriented development at commercial nodes; particular provisions include a cap on surface parking, a reduction in the required minimum amount of off-street parking and design standards for building and parking placement.

Arcade

The Arcade area encompasses the intersection of East Seventh and Arcade Streets, as well as the area lying north of the intersection on Arcade Street. East Seventh Street lies on a diagonal orientation, creating small triangular blocks, while Arcade Street is an arterial street connecting to residential neighborhood streets in a grid pattern. These two patterns give the Arcade area a discontinuous appearance that makes it less functional as a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial center.

The area was dominated for many years of the 20th century by industrial employment centers. That is no longer the case, given fundamental changes in manufacturing in recent decades. Whirlpool was closed and demolished, replaced by a shopping center and Hamm was closed and many of the buildings are used for non-industrial purposes. The 3M company no longer manufactures abrasives and adhesives at the East Side complex but retains its engineering facilities there, and company officials have said 3M is planning to transform the site into a "tech center" that includes engineering, research and some manufacturing.

There are retail businesses scattered along both East Seventh and Arcade Streets, although many are clustered near the intersection of those streets. Residential neighborhoods lie on all sides of the Arcade station area. Single-family houses, duplexes and smaller multiple-family buildings comprise the housing in these neighborhoods.

There are two major parcels of vacant land on the west side of Arcade, north of the Arcade bridge. The Building 17 site, once part of the Whirlpool complex, is immediately adjacent to the street. To the west is the former brewery grain elevator site.

Recommendations include the following:

Proposed land uses in the Arcade area, both at the East Seventh/Arcade node and on both sides of Arcade north of the Arcade bridge.

1. East Seventh/Arcade Crossroads

Retail complemented by housing will strengthen the market for existing businesses and provide needed goods and services for residents and employees. The following principles for this neighborhood commercial center are recommended:

- A walkable neighborhood center created by clustering retail businesses within the blocks immediately emanating from the East Seventh/Arcade intersection;
- A public realm that includes both usable open space with amenities and an indoor community gathering space;
- Connections between blocks within the neighborhood center;
- New off-street parking for existing businesses;
- Design guidelines when properties are rehabilitated or redeveloped;
- Rehabilitation of existing buildings that reflect the historic character of East Seventh Street;
- Redevelopment of underutilized sites.

Recommendations for specific sites within the node are:

- An urban village on the south side of East Seventh Street between Minnehaha Avenue and Beech Street. This urban village is a collection of individual small, independent start-up businesses gathered together in one building and, at times, sharing elements of the operation. These businesses will occupy "stalls" of 200-400 square feet each. It will be developed and managed by a private, non-profit organization that could provide logistical support to the merchants located there. Its design will provide for interior selling spaces during inclement weather. When weather permits, the stalls will open onto a plaza fronting on East Seventh Street. The plaza will be a public realm providing usable open space and streetscape amenities, connected by a mid-block pedestrian crossing to the north side of East Seventh. A community meeting space that complements the public plaza will be located at the ground level in one of two buildings anchoring the triangular site. Townhouses will line the back of the Mercado, on the north side of Beech Street and the west side of Mendota Street.
- The other block faces in the East Seventh/Arcade neighborhood center should include a combination of building rehabilitation and infill redevelopment. Rehabilitation, rather than redevelopment, is preferred when buildings reflect the historic character of the

street. Examples are the building at 801 East Seventh Street, originally an auto dealership, and the building on the northwest corner of East Seventh and Arcade, owned by Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc.

- Townhouses could be developed on the south side of East Seventh (a triangular site bounded by Margaret Street on the north, Arcade on the east and Sinnen Street on the west), as well as the west side of Sinnen Street. Closure of Margaret between East Seventh and Arcade and creation of a linear park will enhance both the new housing and the pedestrian nature of the neighborhood center.
- The parking lot on the north side of East Seventh, west of Arcade, would be the entrance to a public parking ramp designed to serve existing businesses. There is little off-street parking for existing businesses and, as redevelopment and rehabilitation proceeds, on-street parking will be insufficient to accommodate patrons. The ramp would be constructed over the existing parking lot for the office building at 800 Minnehaha Avenue.

2. East Seventh Street Corridor

Destination commercial and institutional uses in the corridor should be retained and, possibly, upgraded. However, many existing commercial uses in the corridor are too far from the neighborhood center to contribute to its viability or benefit from its concentration of commercial activity; the sites should be redeveloped with housing, close to employment centers on the East Side and in downtown Saint Paul.

The following principles should guide any plan for the corridor:

- Provide for the redevelopment of underutilized sites with a range of moderate- to high-density housing types, including townhouses, apartments, senior apartments and live-work units;
- Provide for convenience retail uses on the ground floor of new housing developments. Street-level retail will serve residents in the immediate vicinity and is not intended to serve a wider market. It should be located closest to a street intersection and in a corner of a building, facing the street, and should be modest in size.
- Provide for the rehabilitation of existing buildings that reflect the historic character of East Seventh Street;
- Provide a streetscape that enhances housing and encourages pedestrian activity.

Housing redevelopment in the East Seventh Street corridor should be located between Maple and Margaret Streets:

- On the north side of East Seventh Street, between the HealthEast Care Center and Margaret, two existing duplexes are identified for rehabilitation. Existing commercial

buildings, including one on a small triangular parcel, are identified as multifamily housing sites. Closure of Hope between Margaret and East Seventh would allow the creation of a small linear park that will enhance the housing development.

- On the south side of East Seventh, multifamily housing sites are located between Maple Street and Eichenwald Street and on the southwest corner of East Seventh and Hope Streets.

3. Phalen Corridor Middle Section

The availability of open land on the west side of Arcade and the proximity to community institutions make the middle section ideally suited to recreational facilities that will attract both residents from surrounding neighborhoods.

The following principles guide the plan for the middle section:

- Development of housing;
- Recreational facilities to serve residents in nearby neighborhoods;
- Revitalization of the Seeger Square shopping mall.

Potential recreational facilities in this area include the following:

- A Tier 2 skateboard park. The East YMCA is a potential operator of the skateboard park.
- Open space; amphitheater seating will enable the site to be used for community events. The open space could also be used for sports activities, including pee-wee sized soccer fields and, if space allows, volleyball and bocce ball. The recreational field and event space would be lit.
- A pond along the trail, one-half acre in size, to be used for storm water detention and a nature classroom.
- A small pavilion with restrooms.
- A path and stairs connecting the recreational area with the community institutions at the top of the bluff (the elementary school and the YMCA), beginning at Phalen Boulevard and crossing over the Bruce Vento Regional Trail.
- Tennis courts on property east of Arcade, north of Phalen, on a site in Seeger Square currently occupied by Quonset huts. These tennis courts would replace existing courts near Lake Phalen.

Housing. The development of housing in two areas of the Phalen Corridor middle section, including the bluffs below the school and west of the East YMCA. In addition, the lower-level space in Seeger Square could be used for live/work residential uses, such as artist housing.

Revitalization of Seeger Square will bring goods and services that are not being provided and will upgrade a shopping mall that increasingly risks becoming deteriorated and of marginal value. A key element in revitalization is connecting the buildings to the sidewalk and the street with a landscaped walkway; the walkway will not only be a pedestrian amenity but will also add visual interest to a large, asphalt surface parking lot.

4. Study Areas

There are two areas for future study:

- The 3M complex. The 3M Company has announced plans to retain its engineering division and to transform the Saint Paul facility into a tech center. Specific plans have not been announced; It is anticipated 3M will continue operations at its Saint Paul complex and the site will continue to be an industrial use. Two sites are outside the bulk of the 3M campus – a surface parking lot south of East Seventh between Mendota and Forest, and a surface parking lot and vacant site west of Arcade and immediately south of the Arcade bridge.
- Middle Section South. This is south of Phalen Boulevard and west of Arcade Street and includes the brewery site and a residential neighborhood currently zoned for industrial use. The brewery site, currently used for warehousing, is underutilized, and some houses in the residential neighborhood suffer from deferred maintenance.

5. Design Guidelines

In addition to the design guidelines for the entire corridor, the following additional guideline should guide development in the Arcade node:

- New construction fronting East Seventh and Arcade Streets should be a minimum of two and a maximum of four stories, where permitted by zoning.

6. Rezonings

- Rezone the properties in the East Seventh/Arcade crossroads and the East Seventh Street corridor to TN2. The new TN district is designed to encourage transit-oriented development.
- Rezone the property at 800 Minnehaha Avenue, currently occupied by an office building, to B-2. The current office use is consistent with the B-2 district.

7. Redevelopment

Provide for the establishment of an East Seventh/Arcade redevelopment program that will be operated and managed by a private, non-profit organization collaborating with the City.

Phalen Village and Hazelwood

The area is bounded by Lake Phalen and surrounding parkland to the west, and an active rail corridor south of Ames Avenue. The Phalen Village node will serve office workers and shoppers as well as residents, while the Hazelwood node serves a dense multifamily area. Largely single-family residential blocks extend to White Bear Avenue on the east and toward the city boundary on the north.

Phalen Village has been undergoing major changes in the past five years, many of these involving substantial construction projects. This includes both road construction, housing and the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) headquarters, a major employment center with 200 to 300 jobs. There is green space surrounding Ames Lake, providing an amenity for the new housing in the area. As one moves east along Maryland, high-density residential blocks are interspersed with small commercial sites and institutions such as the Armory. Housing types range from 1960s-era three-story apartment blocks to newer townhouses, senior housing, and small-lot single-family homes on the surrounding streets. Densities range from approximately 25 units per acre on some of the apartment blocks to about six units per acre on the largely single-family blocks.

Recommendations include the following:

These recommendations will support, and benefit from, improved transit in Phalen Village and along Maryland Avenue:

1. On the south side of Maryland Avenue, close the old alignment of Prosperity Avenue and extend Rose Avenue to meet Clarence Street on the west. An advantage to this approach is restoration of the original street grid to create blocks of roughly equal size and regular shape.

The original shopping center site should be redeveloped for up to 200 housing units, taking advantage of the amenity of the lake. This housing would also support existing retail uses and potential new retail in this area.

2. Upgrading of the commercial area on the east side of Clarence between Phalen Boulevard and Maryland with new retail or small office development will “fill in” the west side of the new Wells Fargo bank block, with shared access points and internal circulation. A small outdoor plaza or seating area, possibly adjacent to a restaurant, would be desirable on this block.
3. The commercial area on the west side of Clarence between Phalen and Maryland is recommended for either office development and retail development targeting specialty uses. Residential development would also be appropriate, including senior housing. Rose Avenue should be extended to the west side of Clarence to serve this area, its exact alignment to be determined after further study.
4. The auto-oriented strip mall at the northeast corner of Maryland and Clarence is recommended for exterior improvements or redevelopment.
5. Redevelopment of the block bounded by Maryland, Rose, Barclay and Hazelwood to a more intensive use; possibilities include office space and/or a child care facility. A creative partnership with the National Guard Armory should consider adaptive reuse of the Armory site if the opportunity arises. Community-oriented human services such as child care or family support services should be considered at that time. Medium-density residences would also

be appropriate on this block, but it is recommended that residences be sited on secondary streets with a more residential character.

6. ...Rezoning

Rezone Phalen Village and selected housing sites in the *Ames Lake Neighborhood Master Plan* to TN2, a zoning district that supports compact, pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential development and encourages a variety of uses and housing types.

Maryland and White Bear

The area is characterized by small commercial nodes along White Bear Avenue, surrounded by well-maintained single-family housing. There are two commercial nodes in this study area: the Maryland Avenue node is dominated by auto-service uses on three of the four corners, while the Ivy Avenue node has a small cluster of unique specialty shops. The Maryland/White Bear intersection is scheduled for reconstruction and widening in 2006.

Despite the high visibility of this intersection of two major thoroughfares, commercial development has historically occurred at stronger retail nodes to the north and south. Parcel sizes tend to be small, and single-family homes abut the existing commercial uses. Redevelopment sufficient in size to be economically feasible would require removal of single-family homes.

Recommendations include the following:

- A three-story mixed-use building with approximately 24 apartment units and 12,000 square feet of ground floor retail or office use on the northwest corner of the intersection. Surface parking will be at the rear of the site, with a landscaped buffer for adjacent houses.
- A small multi-family building with approximately 12 units on the northeast corner. A second option for this corner is a small-scale office or service use which could include reuse of the existing small freestanding building. Single-family parcels east of the site could be redeveloped as a second multifamily building facing Maryland, with about 12 units.
- A three-story multi-family building with approximately 35 housing units on the southwest corner, the site of a former grocery store and several adjacent parcels. This is a project planned by the North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation (NENDC)
- Townhouses oriented toward a landscaped courtyard adjacent to the southeast corner, which is a narrow strip of residential parcels adjacent to the middle school property. The townhouses would have tuck-under parking and vehicular access to the rear. In addition, a small multi-family building, with approximately 20 units and surface parking to the rear, on the southeast corner
- Rezoning. No rezonings are proposed at this time. When redevelopment of each of the quadrants appears feasible, TN2 zoning would permit all the uses recommended in this summary; this zone allows design standards included in the recommendations, as well as complements those in the White Bear Avenue Overlay District. Alternatively, the RT-2 district would allow townhouse development where proposed in the southeast quadrant, and the RM-1 district would allow multifamily buildings of the size and scale proposed at other corners, but would not permit mixed use.

Hillcrest

The Hillcrest area is a commercial area that was fully built by the 1950's, surrounded by largely single-family residential neighborhoods. The commercial area is anchored by the Hillcrest Shopping Center, a large single-story strip mall covering three blocks consisting of multiple storefronts and a large parking lot in front of the buildings,. The remainder of the commercial area is characterized by single-story, single-use buildings, each with its own parking lot and driveway curb cut onto White Bear Avenue.

In recent decades development of the Maplewood Mall and “big box” retail at Highway 36 and White Bear Avenue shifted the focus of retail activity away from Hillcrest; the Hillcrest commercial district has had difficulty competing with the newer retail developments to the north and has over time acquired the image of a discount retail center. A neighborhood of mostly single-family homes surrounds the commercial district on both sides. Housing densities are approximately 6 units per acre.

Recommendations include the following:

The recommendations seek to restore the Hillcrest district to a thriving commercial center that is sustainable in size and content. Accomplishing this will require a significant shift in how the area functions. The amount of commercial space will be reduced, replaced with new housing units of various types and new office space that is integrated into the district. Commercial activity would be clustered in a smaller but more intense commercial core in the two or three blocks closest to Larpenteur. This concentration of commercial activity also helps create a vital, walkable area. Commercial activity would then taper down to less intense, more neighborhood-oriented uses in the blocks further south. Likewise, the tallest buildings should be clustered along White Bear Avenue, with heights tapering down to the surrounding neighborhood.

Pedestrian improvements are recommended, both to the streetscape of White Bear Avenue and by creating through-block pedestrian connections, where possible. Public art and neighborhood design considerations are recommended on all new projects.

Although the following recommendations envision redevelopment of blocks where existing businesses are now operating, they do not imply that those businesses should cease operating in the Hillcrest commercial district. The recommendations focus primarily on how the built environment should look and function. It is hoped that existing businesses that support and complement a mixed-use urban village can be retained and relocated in the same service area.

The recommendations are organized by blocks, moving south from Larpenteur.

- Blocks 1, 2 and 3 (between Larpenteur and Iowa, east side only):

Consolidate the most intense activity in these blocks, including, but not limited to, commercial, office, housing and library uses. Conduct a “best use” study to determine the market feasibility of potential uses and the amount of space to be allocated to each potential use. One potential use is the relocated Hayden Heights Library. It is recommended that the “best use” study consider the following: This three block area is most appropriate for large-scale redevelopment, with mixed use buildings in the first two blocks south of Larpenteur incorporating ground floor retail, with office and/or housing on the upper floors. Development on these blocks will likely require 4-story buildings, at a minimum, to be feasible. Design issues include construction of an interior parking area, or a parking structure to meet parking requirements; a traffic entrance across from the intersection of White Bear and California, creating a quasi-street connection. The traffic entrance may need to be right-in/right-out only, to avoid traffic stacking on White Bear. Entrances to this block could also be from Larpenteur and from Idaho.

The third block south of Larpenteur could include either a relocated library, housing or mixed use development with neighborhood oriented service uses on the ground floor.

- Blocks 1 and 2 (between Larpenteur and Idaho):

West: A Walgreen’s store has been built on the block between Larpenteur and California. Between California and Idaho a mixed-use development is recommended, taking advantage of the deep site.

- Block 3 (between Idaho and Iowa):

West: One parcel covers the entire block frontage on White Bear; it is one of only two parcels comprising the entire block. The other parcel is that of the Iowa Senior Hi-Rise. A mixed-use building is recommended, possibly sharing parking with the senior apartments. A new building on this site could be built to a significant height to provide a visual link and transition between the Hi-Rise and the rest of the commercial district.

- Block 4 (between Iowa and Hoyt):

Housing, or mixed use development with housing and ground floor commercial that is compatible with, and oriented to, residential uses, is recommended on both sides of White Bear Avenue.

- Block 5 (between Hoyt and Montana):

East: The small strip mall on this block is of a design and configuration compatible with the commercial district, although it will likely need significant rehabilitation and updating over the next 20 years. New housing units would be appropriate for the area to the rear, of a scale compatible with adjacent housing.

West: New housing units are envisioned on the two sites fronting on White Bear Avenue. An apartment/condo building could be oriented to White Bear Avenue. It is recommended that the alley access onto White Bear Avenue be closed.

A range of numbers of housing units would be determined in the “best use” study.

Street Design and Streetscape Recommendations:

The White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan (2001) adopted policies to guide street design and streetscape improvements on White Bear Avenue. This plan reaffirms those policies and makes the following additional recommendations:

- When White Bear Avenue is reconstructed, opportunities to beautify or improve existing medians should be pursued, e.g. using bollards or planters.
- Establish a mechanism that allows for upkeep and maintenance of common areas, boulevards, sidewalks and parking lots through one management agreement or assessment district.

Policies adopted in the *White Bear Avenue Small Area Plan* include the following, with minor updates:

1.When new development occurs along White Bear Avenue, negotiations for up to 10 feet of additional right-of-way to accommodate pedestrian amenities (not traffic lane widening) should be part of the City's request to developers.
2.City and County Public Works should work with businesses to close off unneeded driveways and alley exits along White Bear Avenue before or during street reconstruction. This would improve traffic and pedestrian safety at these locations and solve the problem of some drivers cutting through business parking lots to avoid an intersection.
3.Street lighting that conforms to current city standards should be installed when the street is reconstructed. Tall double lantern lights should be installed from Larpenteur to the south side of Sherwood.
4.To promote pedestrian safety, crosswalks should be clearly marked with continental striping – broad white bands that identify the crosswalk location. Decorative crosswalk treatments at key intersections should still include clear crosswalk markings.
5.White Bear Avenue's traffic volume and narrow right-of-way make it a poor location for a bicycle route. This plan supports locating the route along Ruth and Hazel streets and Furness Parkway and extending a bicycle route and walkway along the former streetcar right-of-way between Ivy and Maryland, linking with the pedestrian bridge behind Hazel Park Middle School. North of Furness Parkway, the trail becomes an on-street bike lane along Ruth Street. An extension of the off-road trail is proposed along right-of-way running in a northeasterly direction. Improvements to the existing parkway and paths are encouraged to benefit bicyclists and pedestrians and improve the area's appearance for the surrounding neighborhoods.
6.Fencing on White Bear Avenue should:

-act as a unifying element on the street, with commercial and residential designs relating to each other;
-be adaptable, e.g. fencing might top a wall or be freestanding;
-be constructed of high quality and low maintenance materials, e.g. wood for residential uses and ornamental iron for institutional and business uses (not including chain link fencing);
-relate to the street by limiting maximum heights along White Bear Avenue.

7.Street trees and landscaping must be designed with the long term health of the plants in mind. Street trees should be planted along the entire length of White Bear Avenue, making sure that there is sufficient room for root growth and including an irrigation system when necessary. Generous planting beds are preferable to tree grates. Other landscaping should be hardy and primarily native.

8.Street furnishings (banners, trash receptacles, benches) can help to make White Bear Avenue more inviting and livable. Furnishings should:

-be durable and well designed;
- unify and add character to the street;
-be well located to provide real benefit for those using the area.

Banners that provide neighborhood and/or business district identification should be designed with a common shape, while patterns may vary by area.

9. The District 1 and District 2 community councils, WBABA, NENDC, and City and County Public Works departments, should work with Xcel Energy to relocate or bury the utility lines along White Bear Avenue when the street is reconstructed.

Phasing

Proposed redevelopment is likely to require up to 20 years to complete, with a commitment by public/private partnerships at the outset.

Short-term (within 10 years)

-Development of up to 280 housing units of new housing, to enhance the area's retail potential and generate momentum for continued redevelopment:
 -60 to 80 independent senior units
 -80 to 100 for-sale townhouses/condominiums
 -80 to 100 rental housing units
-Streetscape improvements, at a minimum adjacent to those parcels that are targeted for redevelopment, and ideally throughout the entire Hillcrest area.
-Redevelopment of 40-50,000 square feet of commercial space. No net increase in commercial space.

Long-term (10 to 20 years)

- An additional 260 units of new housing:
 - ... 60 to 80 senior housing units
 - 80 to 100 for-sale townhomes/condominiums
 - 60 to 80 rental housing units
- Redevelopment of 50-60,000 square feet of commercial space. No net increase in commercial space.

City Action

To encourage development according to the concepts and recommendations, the priorities of the City should be:

- Adopt this summary as an amendment to the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*.
 - Adopt zone changes that will encourage development reflecting the concepts in the plan summary.
 - Collaborate with other agencies and community organizations to implement the recommendations in this summary.
 - Encourage redevelopment of land in the nodes.
 - Provide for the development of streetscape amenities along East Seventh Street, Maryland Avenue, White Bear Avenue and within the nodes.
 - Implement design recommendations as redevelopment occurs.
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Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds that the *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* summary is consistent with the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan* and other adopted City policies.

Planning Process

The *Northeast Corridor Development Plan* was prepared by a task force and two working groups, one focused on the Metropolitan State University and Arcade nodes and the other focused on Hillcrest. The task force was established by the Planning Commission. Membership included representatives of the community planning councils for Districts 2, 4, and 5, as well as representatives of businesses and community organizations, the Planning Commission and residents. The task force was assisted throughout the planning process by staff from the City of Saint Paul and a consultant team from URS Inc., which was retained by the Metropolitan Council. The task force began its work in February 2002 and concluded in November 2002.