

CHAPTER 9: TARGET AREA PLANS

This chapter presents four Target Area Plans: West St. Germain Street, Community Gateways, the Northstar Commuter Rail Transit Oriented Development area, and the Northstar Collision area (Lenzmeier Property). These are specific sites for which more specific land use plans, goals, policies, and/or development standards were developed.

WEST ST. GERMAIN STREET

INTRODUCTION

The West St. Germain Street Target Area consists of the West St. Germain Street corridor located between Trunk Highway 23 and 1st Street North, and 9th Avenue North and 19th Avenue North. In addition to the analysis of the area and land use recommendations, the West St. Germain Street Target Area Plan incorporates the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines (see Appendix F) to shape future development and redevelopment along West St. Germain Street and all of the downtown area.

Through on-site inspection and analysis of the area and background data, a number of key observations were made and issues were identified, and are summarized below:

ANALYSIS

VISUAL APPEAL

- Most boulevards within the study area lack landscaping. Specifically, along Trunk Highway 23 between 10th Avenue North and 9th Avenue North, landscaped boulevards are nonexistent and this very prominent corridor has little visual appeal. Along West St. Germain Street, some improvements have been made to several existing buildings and businesses. However, the lack of separation, landscaping, buffering or screening, between the streets, land uses, parking, service and walking areas offer little visual appeal and has created a harsh and uninviting place. Some efforts have been made to incorporate landscaping, but there has not been a common vision or standards for landscaping in the area.
- There are numerous parking areas within the study area. Although parking is necessary to accommodate large service businesses, improved landscaping, screening, or buffering must be incorporated around the parking lots and service areas to enhance the appearance of the corridor.

- The West St. Germain Street corridor is an assemblage of land uses, including small and large service businesses, commercial, retail and residential. There is little or no buffering or screening to soften the resulting transitions between land uses. Many single-family residential units are adjacent to businesses, typically separated by only a wood fence or minimal landscaping. Along Trunk Highway 23 and West St. Germain Street many businesses present views of parking, service functions, rubbish receptacles and the rear of buildings that are not buffered. In addition, the lack of streetscape plantings and buffering elements combined with minimal setbacks has resulted in a harsh, uninviting environment.
- Numerous overhead wires, utility poles and limited lighting detract from the area's overall appearance. Many of the light fixtures are attached to existing utility poles and provide insufficient lighting for pedestrian security or safety.
- The Trunk Highway 23 frontage has a number of pylon signs and billboards that compromise the appearance of this community gateway corridor. According to MnDOT, the stretch of Trunk Highway 23 between 12th Avenue North and 19th Avenue North has the highest rate of traffic accidents. The clutter and visual distraction in combination with high traffic volume, number of at grade intersections, and the number and locations of the adjacent driveways contribute to these safety concerns.

PEDESTRIAN APPEAL

- The walking distances between businesses, the downtown and adjacent residential areas are reasonable. However, with few street trees; little separation between the walks, parking and streets; poor lighting; and few, if any, pedestrian amenities; the pedestrian system in the area has become uninviting. In addition, the vacant expanses of the Miller Property, as well as other large parking and vacant areas within the corridor, reinforce the perception of long walking distances and a lack of security in the evening hours. Buffering, lighting, and aesthetic elements are needed to promote the area as a pedestrian friendly and safe environment.

EXISTING LAND USE

- The area has many substantial businesses and offers a variety of services. The uses include a bakery, dry cleaner, barber, shoe shop/repair, auto repair, law offices, bank and financial offices, medical offices/clinic, real estate, fast food, gift shop, bowling, VFW, liquor store, small retail strip centers, shops, industrial uses and single family homes. Although there are numerous large parking lots that support these businesses, many of the small service businesses in the area rely on "on-street" parking or small parking areas located at the front or sides of the business.
- There are some architecturally attractive structures within the corridor, some of which are residences converted to business use. A few of these residential and commercial structures may be architecturally significant or have historical value, and this should be addressed prior to renovation or conversion to another use.

- There is an established neighborhood just north of the study area. Many homes in this area were constructed or renovated in the early to mid 1990s and include single-family, multi-family and rental units. There have been some recent street and sidewalk improvements to the area and owner improvements to homes. It appears the area has a strong “neighborhood feel” and residents support the area businesses.
- The West St. Germain Street study area needs a “common vision” regarding development, landscaping, and land uses. At the west end of the corridor, there is an established industrial area abutting an older residential area. As the corridor heads east, there is a transition to service and retail, with a mixture of residential units. On the east end, the corridor consists of high volume and intense service related businesses and the entrance to the Downtown. There are a few structures scattered throughout the entire corridor, both new and old, that would be more appropriately located in an industrial or light industrial area.

REDEVELOPMENT

- There are many areas within the corridor that should be considered for redevelopment. Facilities that are underutilized, vacant, deteriorated or structurally unsound should be identified and studied for redevelopment potential. The large Miller property (former car dealer) is located within the heart of the study area and is a prime opportunity for redevelopment.
- Other opportunities for redevelopment include existing residential units that are well suited for conversion to non-residential use. The aesthetic and/or historical value of these residential structures should be considered, and where appropriate these structures should be renovated and reused.

TRANSPORTATION

- The city identified the need to improve the intersection at Washington Memorial Drive and West St. Germain Street. This three-way intersection is confusing and hazardous. As the study area redevelops and traffic/pedestrian volumes increase, improvements to this intersection are a priority.
- As noted earlier, many of the existing businesses rely on on street parking, while some others rely on off-street parking areas placed very close to the right-of-way. This presents numerous access and circulation issues, including blind intersections, driveway spacing conflicts, parking within front setbacks, and vehicles backing onto the street.
- A number of improvements are planned by MnDOT for Trunk Highway 23. The city, businesses and residents will need to consider the impacts of the improvements, which will limit access off Trunk Highway 23. The reconstruction of Trunk Highway 23 may close existing intersections or reduce them to “right-in, right-out” at 15th and 16th Avenues North. In addition, there is the potential to relocate the traffic signal from 12th Avenue North to 14th Avenue North. According to MnDOT, the intersection at 12th Avenue North would then be closed to accommodate the new interchange at 9th Avenue North. Lastly, MnDOT is considering turn lanes on the north and south sides of Washington Memorial Drive at Trunk Highway 23.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

OVERALL STREETScape APPEARANCE/CONDITION

Figure 9.1-1, *Overall Streetscape Appearance/Condition*, illustrates the general appearance of the streetscape and indicates in three different colors whether there is no landscaping and non streetscape improvements (poor appearance – red on the graphic), some existing landscaping on the boulevard (moderate appearance - yellow), or existing streetscape treatment with landscaping (good appearance – green). This simplified analysis indicates that the majority of the streetscape edge in the West St. Germain Street area are poor in appearance, most of the rest have only moderate landscaping, and very little of the area (two blocks at the far east end) have significant coherent streetscape treatment. The graphics also indicate the location of four major intersections with Trunk Highway 23 and the several blocks where this edge is crowded with little room for sidewalk, plantings, or setbacks to buildings.

OVERALL BUILDING APPEARANCE/CONDITION

Figure 9.1-2, *Overall Building Appearance/Condition*, illustrates the analysis of the buildings in the West St. Germain Street area. The building appearance analysis is also a simplified, subjective judgment, dividing the buildings into “above average”, “average”, and “below average” appearance based on their general condition, maintenance, and design as seen from the street. The analysis makes no judgment on the buildings’ structural soundness or compliance with building codes. Poorly maintained buildings, ones with visible damage or decay, scored lower in the analysis. Buildings that were clean and well maintained, with higher quality materials and architectural detailing, scored higher in the analysis. In addition buildings of particular architectural interest, both residential and non-residential are noted on the graphic. The three existing billboards on Trunk Highway 23 in the West St. Germain Street area are located as well.

The analysis reveals that most of the buildings at the east end of the study area closest to downtown are better looking than those in the middle or west end of the study area. Many of the residences in the west side residential area appear to be in good condition.

PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

The pattern of development is illustrated on Figure 9.1-3, *Development Pattern*, indicates the darker building footprints contrasted with the lighter gray open areas on site (sometimes called a “figure-ground” analysis). The lighter areas might be vacant land, parking areas, storage yards, or loading areas – any area not covered with a building above ground. For an urban area like the West St. Germain Street study area more intense concentration of buildings close to the street is typical and indicative of a healthier urban environment. Wide gaps between buildings and large open areas indicate places that are not conducive to pedestrians and are not as efficiently developed as they might be.

The development pattern in the West St. Germain Street area shows the few large buildings at the east end nearest downtown are fairly tightly developed at the street edges. The middle of the area and the southwest corner show a number of large, open sites, while the residential area reveals a tight, pattern of development. This would indicate that the middle and southwest areas of the study area are the least attractive to pedestrians and may have the greatest potential for redevelopment.



| LEGEND | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| | Existing Boulevard Plantings |
| | Poor Streetscape Appearance |
| | Existing Streetscape |
| | Major Intersections |
| | Highway edge crowded - no buffer |

Overall Streetscape Appearance/Condition
West St. Germain Street
 Figure 9-1.1



| LEGEND | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ■ | Above Average Appearance |
| ■ | Average Appearance |
| ■ | Below Average Appearance |
| ● | Architectural Interest Residential |
| ● | Architectural Interest Non-Residential |
| ■ | Existing Billboard |

Overall Building Appearance/Condition

West St. Germain Street
Figure 9.1-3



| LEGEND | |
|---|--------------|
|  | Buildings |
|  | Parking Lots |

- Unorganized commercial development pattern
- Poorly defined building setbacks
 - No standards for screening/ buffering of parking lots and/or storage areas
 - Multiple driveways create unfriendly pedestrian environment

Development Pattern

West St. Germain Street
Figure 9.1-3

GENERALIZED LAND USE DISTRICTS/ PAC ISSUES AND CONCERNS

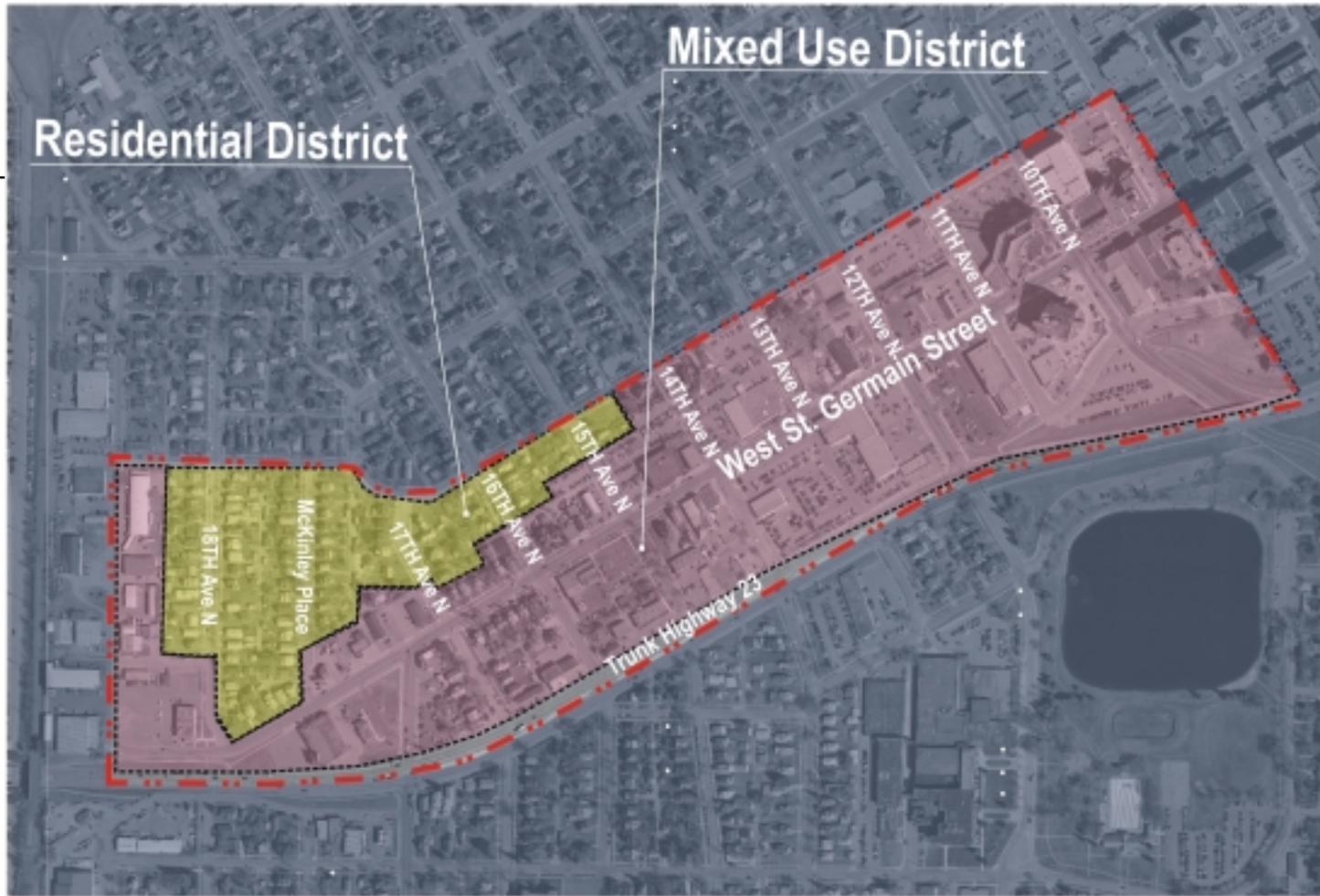
The character of the study area is generalized on Figure 9.1-4, *Generalized Land Use Districts/ PAC Issues and Concerns*, dividing the area into four sub-districts based on their existing land use characteristics. The eastern half of the area (red on the graphic) is primarily commercial and office uses in the “downtown fringe”; the middle quarter of the area (brown on the graphic) is a transitional district, with some commercial and some residential uses, but which should be encouraged to remove the existing residential for redevelopment in mixed uses; the southwestern corner (blue) is a combination of neighborhood commercial and industrial uses, which should transition to more commercial uses; while roughly the northwestern quarter (yellow) is the heart of the intact single family residential neighborhood, which should be protected and maintained. These districts are for the purpose of analyzing existing land use trends and are not the designated future land uses for the area.

LAND USE PLAN

The future land use designation for the West St. Germain Street area is illustrated on Figure 9.1-5, *Generalized Future Land Use Districts*, indicating two land use categories – Downtown Mixed Use and Low Density Residential. The Downtown Mixed Use area corresponds to the areas identified on Figure 9.1-4 as the downtown fringe, the transitional area, and the neighborhood commercial and industrial areas. These areas should redevelop with similar commercial, office and service uses, and more dense urban residential development. The Low Density Residential area corresponds to the intact residential neighborhood identified on Figure 9.1-4. This area should be encouraged to maintain its existing housing stock or redevelop with residential uses of similar scale and character.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

To encourage the successful development and redevelopment of the West St. Germain Street area a set of design guidelines was developed to set forth basic urban design principles that would shape future projects in the entire downtown area. These are attached in Appendix F and are entitled *Downtown Design Guidelines*.



| LEGEND | |
|---|---|
|  | Existing Residential District |
|  | Existing Downtown Fringe Commercial/Office District |

Generalized Future Land Use Districts

West St. Germain Street
Figure 9.1-5

ST. CLOUD GATEWAY CORRIDORS

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing the gateways into St. Cloud along major roadways is an element of the Comprehensive Plan embraced by the city in an effort to shape the overall future appearance of the city. The plan for gateways reinforces a positive community identity, guides the preservation of natural areas, and promotes future development along and near gateway corridors into the city of St. Cloud.

GATEWAYS

A visitor's initial perceptions of the character and livability of a community occur along the major access corridors and entrances into a city. These corridors and entrances are gateways to the community and should be designed to create a cohesive identity and reflect the desired image of the community. Gateways can also include architecturally significant buildings, bridge or other infrastructure improvements, monuments, signs, and landscaping.

Gateways can be enhanced through either public realm improvements or private development, or a combination of the two. The public realm improvements can be in the form of landscape improvements or enhancements, directional/ informational signs or markers, public artwork, monuments, and public infrastructure/bridge improvements. Private development can be guided to improve gateways through city land use controls, site planning standards, architectural guidelines and view shed protection.

ST. CLOUD GATEWAYS

Within the city of St. Cloud there exist six unique gateway corridors that provide the initial perceptions of the city for visitors and provide access to the city from adjacent communities. These gateway corridors help define and celebrate the entrance into the city and reinforce the identity and character throughout the community.

The primary gateway corridors in St. Cloud are typically the primary arterial roadways and include:

- Interstate 94 corridor;
- Trunk Highway 10 corridor;
- Trunk Highway 15 corridor; and
- Trunk Highway 23 (two separate segments on the eastern and western edges of the downtown).

The local gateway corridors include:

- CSAH 75;
- CSAH 4; and
- Trunk Highway 23 (the segment through the core of the city).

The objectives for improving the St. Cloud community gateway corridors are:

- Inform visitors that they have arrived in St. Cloud. This may be accomplished through a system of regionally unique landscaping, civic monuments, sign treatments and public infrastructure improvements.
- Improve the image and character of the city through landscaping, site planning, signs, bridge and roadway enhancements, redevelopment opportunities and architectural guidelines and standards.

Located along the defined gateway corridors are primary and local gateway nodes. The primary gateway nodes are located at major crossroads, typically at the edge of the city, and define the main entry points into the community. The primary gateway nodes are:

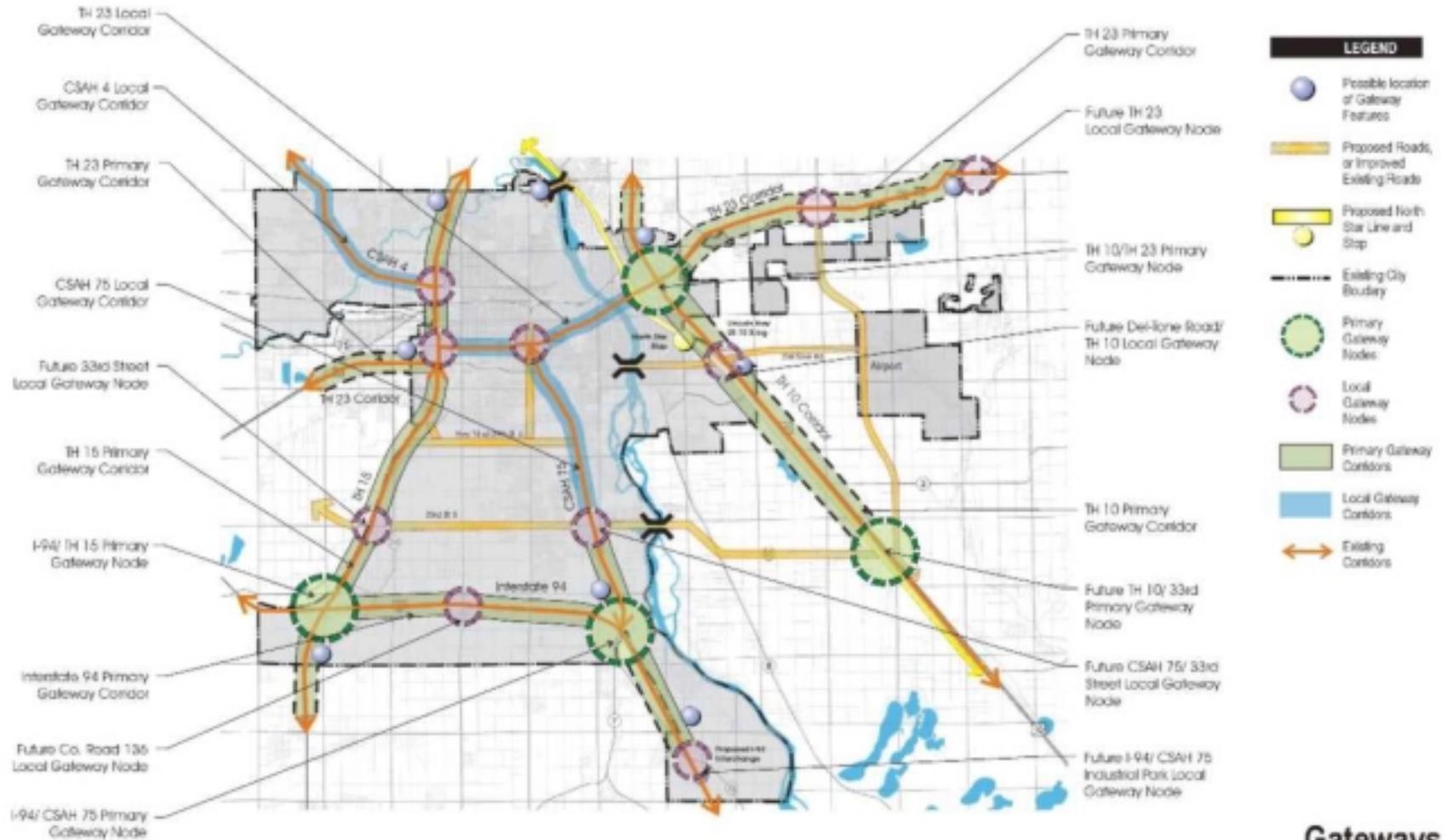
- Interstate 94 and CSAH 75;
- Interstate 94 and Trunk Highway 15;
- Trunk Highway 10 and 33rd Street (future intersection); and
- Trunk Highway 10 and Trunk Highway 23 (intersection east of the core downtown).

The main objectives for improving the primary gateway nodes include:

- Create a strong sense of arrival to the community;
- Enhance the node with appropriate landscaping, lighting, and informational/directional signs;
- Pursue the potential to enhance roadway bridges as gateway elements into the community and downtown;
- Provide landscaping to screen views into adjacent commercial/industrial parking, loading, and storage areas;
- Reinforce good views into existing open spaces.

The local gateway nodes are located at the important crossroads throughout the city and define transition areas within the community. The local gateway nodes are:

- Interstate 94/Industrial Park interchange (proposed);
- County Road 136/Interstate 94 interchange (future); and
- CSAH 75/33rd Street South intersection.



Gateways

Figure 9.2-1

The main objectives for improving the local gateway nodes include:

- Promote a strong image;
- Encourage master planned mixed use opportunities at the local gateway nodes;
- Use building massing and landscaping to define the intersection;
- Encourage the use of significant architecture to reinforce the desired community character;
- Frame existing positive views into adjacent open spaces; and
- Enhance pedestrian crossings and facilities.

The locations of gateway corridors and gateway nodes are illustrated in Figure 9.2-1, *Gateways*.

TRUNK HIGHWAY 10 GATEWAY CORRIDOR

The Trunk Highway 10 Gateway Corridor in St. Cloud runs through an area in transition from a rural development pattern to a conventional suburban style of commercial development near the core downtown area.

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

There are two main character districts that define the Trunk Highway 10 gateway corridor, the Natural Open Space District and the Highway Commercial District.

The Natural Open Space district is characterized by flat open farmland, stands of native trees, the Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area, pockets of wetlands, man-made wind breaks adjacent to Trunk Highway 10, and the symbolic granite wall of the Correctional Facility. The objectives for this district are:

- Maintain, enhance and frame positive views into wetland and wooded areas;
- Define and strengthen the edge of the corridor with additional landscaping;
- Enhance the ecology and image of wetland/open water areas with appropriate landscaping;
- Provide additional landscaping to screen adjacent industrial, parking, and storage areas;
- Reinforce the ecology and character of the Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area;



TH 10 Gateway Corridor

- Reinforce the character of the St. Cloud Visitor Center;
- Reinforce the character of the correctional facility. Provide landscaping to enhance the significant architectural element (granite wall).
- Reinforce the character of the existing windbreaks with appropriate landscape material. Locate and establish new wind breaks along the corridor to create a positive and memorable entry experience;
- Use native plant materials wherever possible to create a positive image for the city and region;

The Highway Commercial District is characterized by a mixture of businesses and industrial uses with large parking areas adjacent to the roadway and little or no landscaping or screening. Within this district are also numerous billboards and un-buffered storage/ loading areas. The objectives for this district are:

- Continue existing setbacks and provide landscaped boulevard treatments;
- Consolidate driveways and roadway signs;
- Use landscaping to screen parking lot and storage areas;
- Determine and promote future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image.

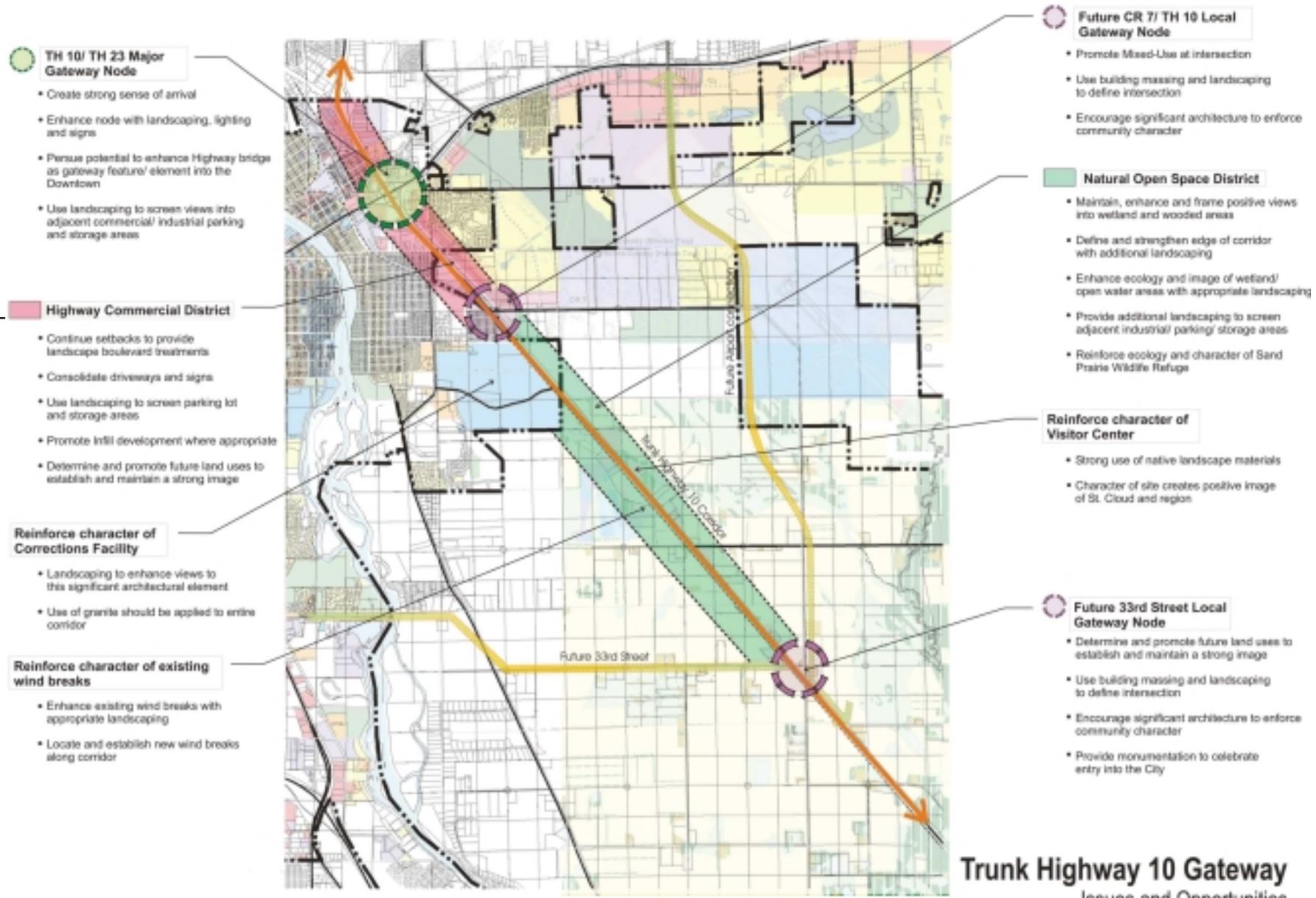
The objectives for the Trunk Highway 10 gateway corridor are illustrated in Figure 9.2-2, *Trunk Highway 10 Gateway Corridor Objectives*.

GATEWAY NODES

There is one major gateway node at the intersection of Trunk Highway 10 and Trunk Highway 23 east of the downtown core area, and two designated local gateway nodes at the future 33rd Street South and County Road 7 interchanges on Trunk Highway 10.



TH 10 Gateway character image



Trunk Highway 10 Gateway
Issues and Opportunities

Figure 9.2-2

COUNTY STATE AID HIGHWAY (CSAH) 75 GATEWAY CORRIDOR

CSAH 75 is an important gateway corridor that intersects Interstate 94 along the southern edge of the city of St. Cloud. The gateway corridor provides a transition from the conventional suburb commercial development pattern that exists adjacent to Interstate 94 and the more urban residential pattern that exists closer to the downtown.

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

There are two main character districts that define the CSAH 75 gateway corridor: the Highway Commercial District nearest to Interstate 94 and the Urban Residential District near downtown.

The Highway Commercial District is characterized by a mix of service businesses, gas stations, franchise restaurants and industrial uses adjacent to CSAH 75. Un-buffered parking lots and storage areas are visible throughout the district, as well as numerous signs and billboards. The objectives for this district are:

- Define the edges of the corridor by controlling setbacks and providing landscaped boulevard treatments;
- Consolidate driveways and roadway signs;
- Use landscaping to screen parking lot and storage areas;
- Promote infill development where appropriate;
- Determine and promote future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image.

The Urban Residential District is characterized by numerous public open spaces and a mix of residential land uses adjacent to the roadway. There also exists a very generous right-of-way through portions of this district, allowing for future landscape improvements. The objectives for this district include:

- Define the edges of corridor by controlling and providing landscaped boulevard treatments;
- Enhance existing multi-use trail adjacent to roadway;
- Frame and maintain views into community parks and open spaces;
- Reinforce and strengthen the existing character of residential neighborhoods.

The objectives for the CSAH 75 gateway corridor are illustrated in Figure 9.2-3, *CSAH 75 Gateway Corridor Objectives*.

GATEWAY NODES

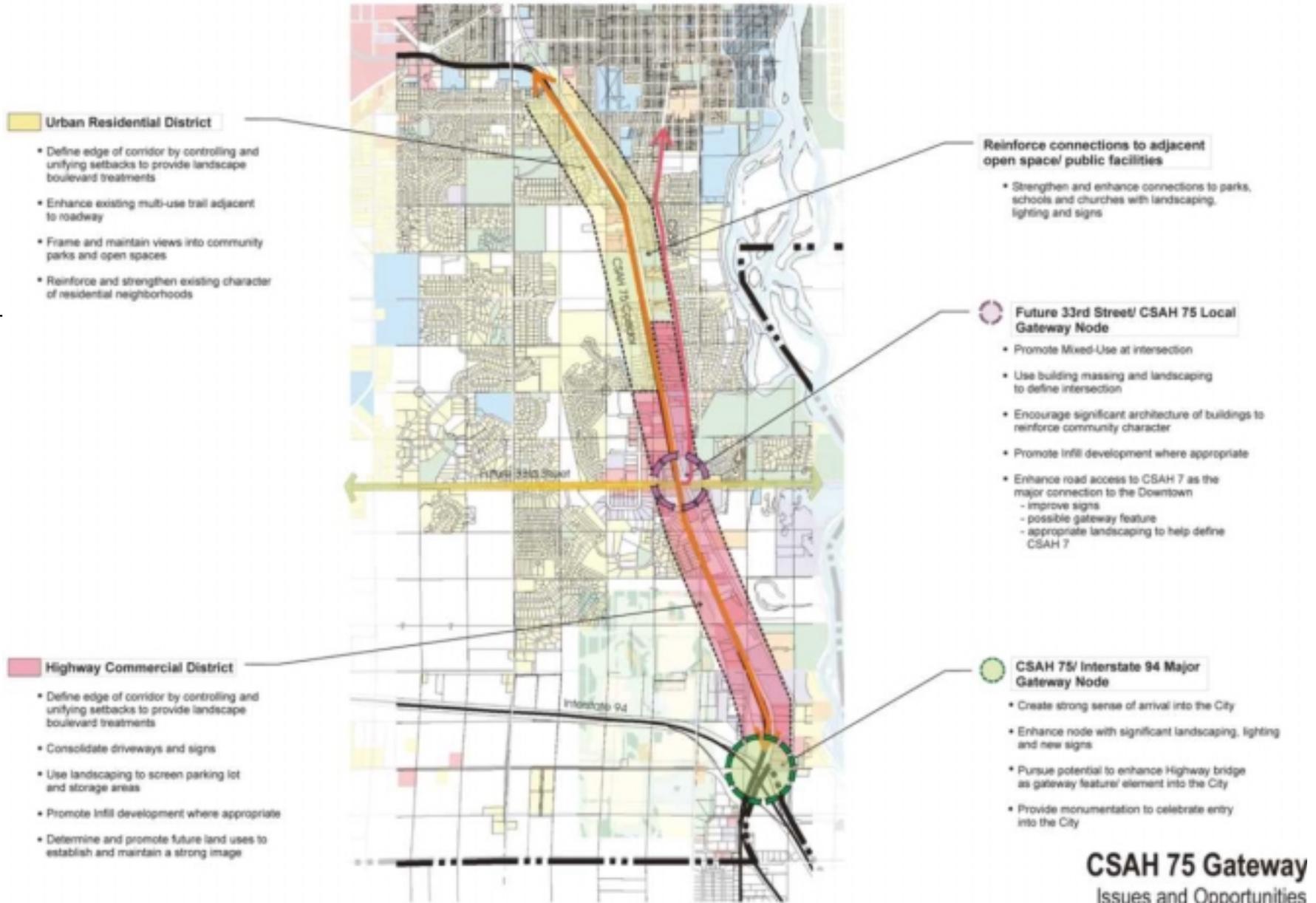
There is one major gateway node at the intersection of Interstate 94 and CSAH 75, and also one local gateway node along the corridor at the intersection of 33rd Street South and CSAH 75.



CSAH 75 Gateway Corridor



Typical image of CSAH 75 Gateway Corridor



CSAH 75 Gateway
Issues and Opportunities
Figure 9.2-3

TRUNK HIGHWAY 15 GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Trunk Highway 15 is a major north-south gateway corridor located along the western edge of the city of St. Cloud. This gateway corridor is characterized by an abundance of natural features and current lack of development.

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

There are four main character districts that define the Trunk Highway 15 gateway corridor. The four districts are:

- Natural Open Space District along the southwestern edge of the city;
- Highway Commercial District located within the western fringe of the downtown;
- Public/Residential district along the northern section of Trunk Highway 15; and
- Open Space/Residential district stretching west along CSAH 4.

The Natural Open Space district is characterized by flat open farmland, stands of native trees, pockets of wetlands, numerous rock outcroppings and long, positive views.

The objectives for the Natural Open Space district are:

- Frame positive views into wetland and wooded areas;
- Define the edge of the corridor with additional landscaping;
- Reinforce the natural character of the district and highlight rock outcroppings.

The Highway Commercial District is characterized by a mixture of businesses with large parking areas that front the highway and little or no landscaping or screening. Within this district are also numerous billboards and un-buffered storage and loading areas. The objectives for this district are:

- Define the edge of the corridor by controlling setbacks and providing landscaped boulevard treatments;
- Consolidate driveways and roadway signs;
- Use landscaping to screen parking lot and storage areas;
- Promote infill development where appropriate;
- Determine and promote future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image.



Typical image along TH 15
Gateway Corridor

The Public/Residential District is characterized by a mix of residential developments on the east side of the roadway and public land occupied by Mn/DOT on the west side of the roadway. The public land contains natural plantings and ponding areas along the roadway. The objectives for this district include:

- Maintain boulevard and enhance with additional plantings;
- Protect and enhance the existing residential character;
- Enhance the river crossing and connections to adjacent open spaces/ trails;
- Provide monuments features to celebrate the entry into the city.

The Open Space/Residential District located along CSAH 4 is characterized by a mix of residential developments on both sides of the roadway with numerous opportunities to access public open spaces and parks. The southeast portion of the corridor abuts both the public land occupied by Mn/DOT and a large industrial area. The objectives for this district are:

- Reinforce the residential character and connections to adjacent neighborhoods;
- Maintain and enhance the boulevard with additional plantings;
- Enhance the pedestrian overpass as a gateway feature;
- Enhance the Sauk River bridge crossing and connections to open spaces/trails.

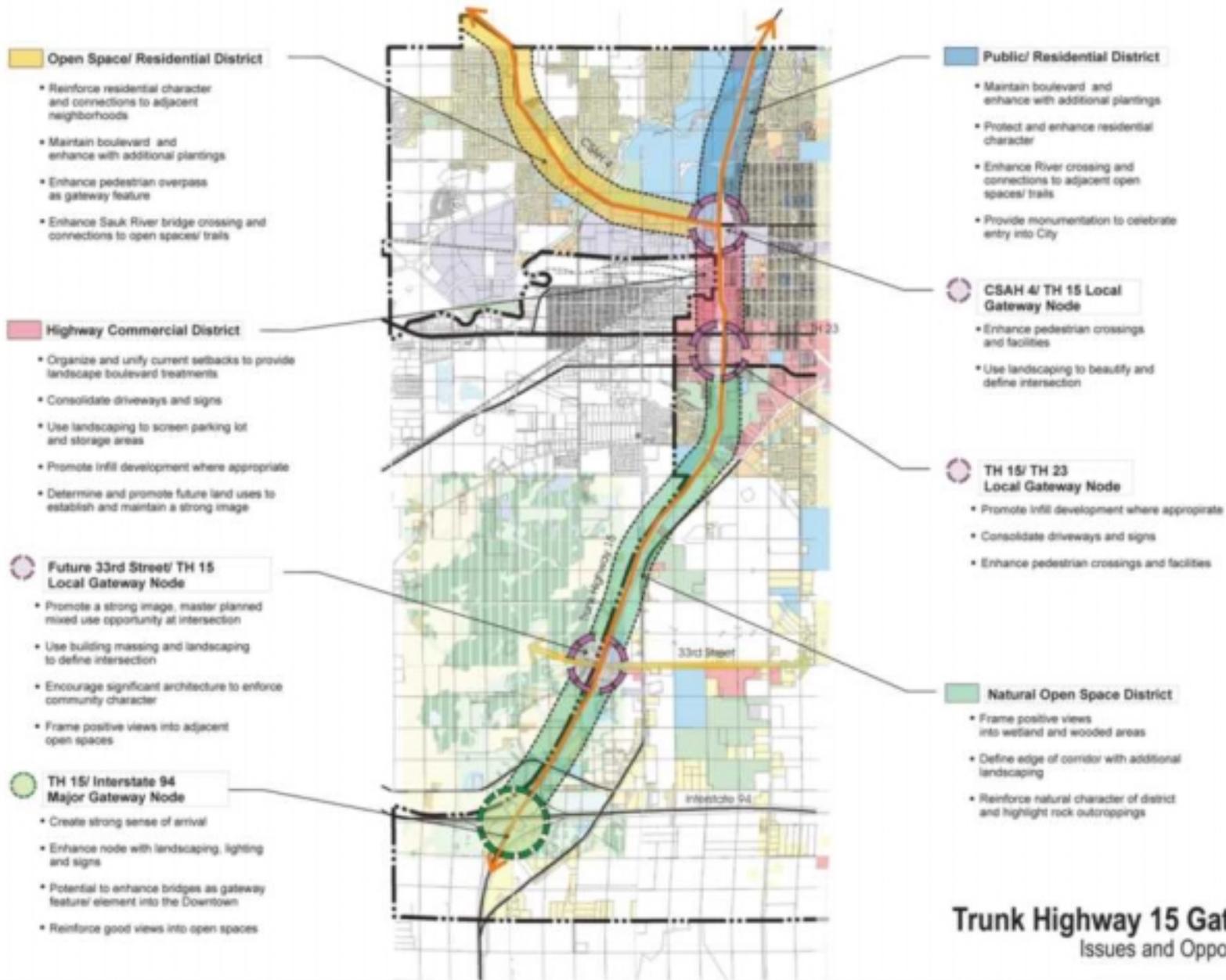
The objectives for the Trunk Highway 15 gateway corridor are illustrated in Figure 9.2-4, *Trunk Highway 15 Gateway Corridor Objectives*.

GATEWAY NODES

There is one major gateway node at the intersection of Trunk Highway 15 and Interstate 94 on the southwestern edge of the city. There are three designated local gateway nodes at the intersections of CSAH 4 and Trunk Highway 15, Trunk Highway 23 and Trunk Highway 15, and the future interchange of 33rd Street South and Trunk Highway 15.



Typical image along TH 15
Gateway Corridor



Trunk Highway 15 Gateway
Issues and Opportunities

Figure 9.24

TRUNK HIGHWAY 23 GATEWAY CORRIDOR



Trunk Highway 23 is a major east-west gateway corridor that acts as the primary vehicular thoroughfare through the downtown. This gateway corridor is characterized by the intense suburban development pattern that occurs along most of the central portion of the corridor. The east and west sections of the TH 23 gateway corridor are characterized by the open space/ natural areas that are typically found on the fringe of the community.

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

There are three main character districts that define the Trunk Highway 23 gateway corridor:

- Open Space/Residential district;
- Downtown District; and
- Highway Commercial District.

The Open Space/Residential district is characterized by the flat open farmland and a rural residential development pattern that makes a transition to a more suburban development pattern near the fringe of the downtown. The objectives for this district are:

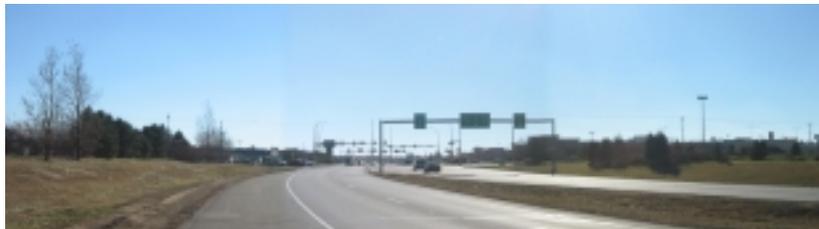
- Define edge of corridor by controlling setbacks and providing landscape boulevard treatments;
- Maintain good views into adjacent open spaces;
- Enhance connections to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities;
- Promote infill development where appropriate;
- Determine future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image throughout the district;
- Promote mixed uses at major intersections/nodes.

The Downtown District is characterized by a more compact urban development pattern in the core downtown area with some suburban style strip mall developments located on the fringe of the downtown. The objectives for this district are:

- Strengthen boulevard treatments throughout the district;
- Consolidate driveways and signs;
- Use landscaping to buffer parking lot and storage areas;
- Promote infill development where appropriate;
- Promote mixed uses at major intersections;
- Enhance pedestrian crossings and facilities;
- Improve connections to adjacent neighborhoods and community facilities, open spaces and parks.

TH 23 and TH 10 major Gateway node

Typical image of TH 23 through the residential/ open space district.



The Highway Commercial District is characterized by a mixture of businesses with large parking areas that front the highway and have little or no landscaping or screening. Within this district there are also numerous billboards and un-buffered storage and loading areas. The objectives for this district are:

- Define the edge of the corridor by controlling setbacks and providing landscape boulevard treatments;
- Consolidate driveways and roadway signs;
- Use landscaping to screen parking lot and storage areas;
- Promote infill development where appropriate;
- Determine and promote future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image.

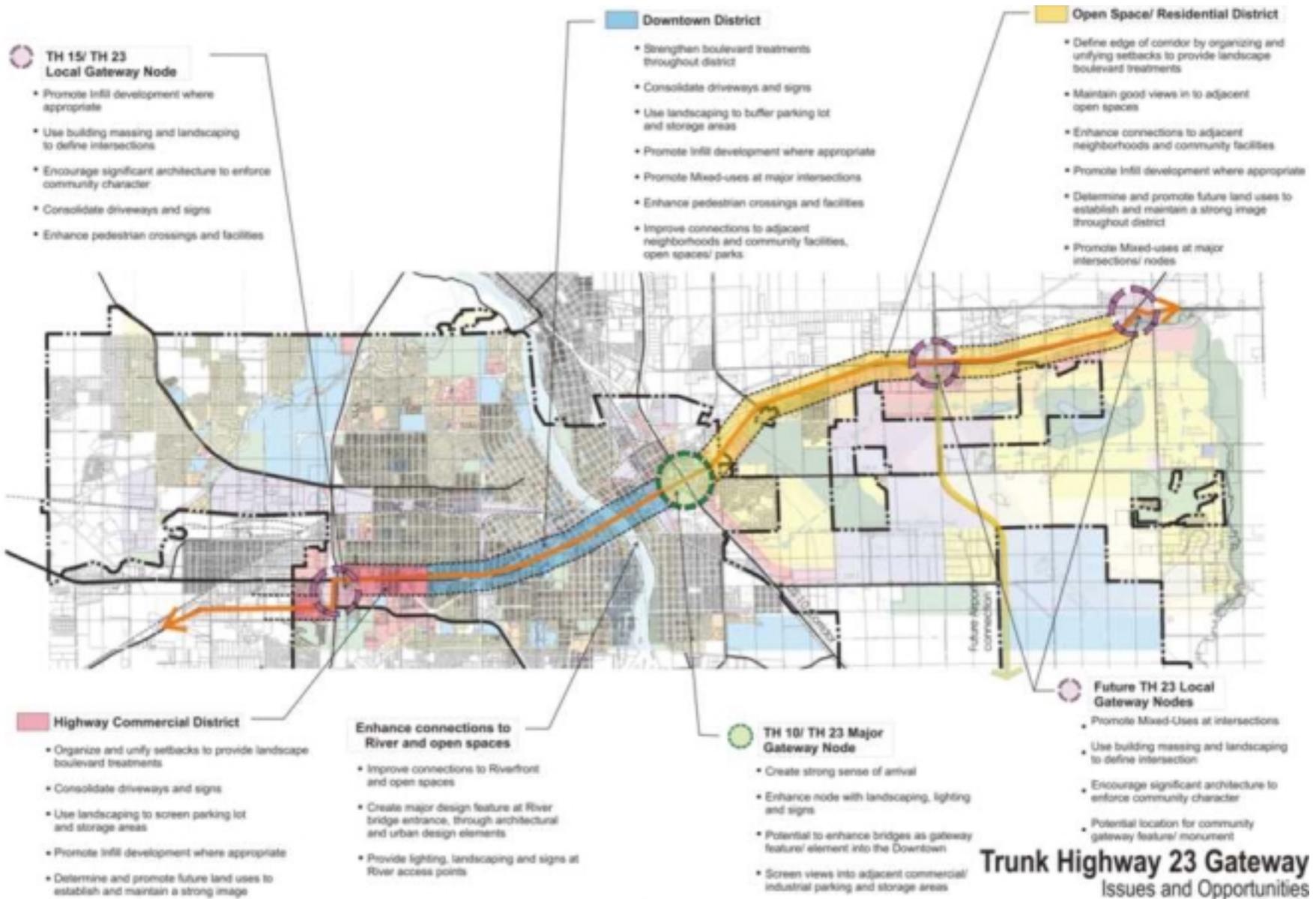
The objectives for the Trunk Highway 23 gateway corridor are illustrated in Figure 9.2-5, *Trunk Highway 23 Gateway Corridor Objectives*.



Typical image of TH 23 through the Downtown.

GATEWAY NODES

There is one major gateway node at the intersection of Trunk Highway 10 and Trunk Highway 23 just east of the downtown core area. There are three designated local gateway nodes: the first at the intersection of Trunk Highway 23 and 35th Avenue SE, the second at the intersection of Trunk Highway 23 and Trunk Highway 95 at the far northeastern edge of the city in what is now Minden Township, and the third located at the intersection of Trunk Highway 15 and Trunk Highway 23 west of downtown in the Crossroads shopping center area.



Trunk Highway 23 Gateway
 Issues and Opportunities
 Figure 9.2-5



INTERSTATE 94 GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Interstate 94 is arguably the most important gateway corridor within the city, as it is the major roadway connection through the region. This gateway corridor can be most characterized by the rural farmlands and natural areas, as well as the long positive views throughout the corridor.

CHARACTER DISTRICTS

The one district that defines the gateway corridor is the Highway Commercial District. The Highway Commercial District is characterized by a mixture of businesses with large parking areas that front the highway and little or no landscaping or screening. Within this district are also numerous billboards, and un-buffered storage and loading areas. The objectives for this district include:

- Define edge of corridor by controlling setbacks and providing landscape boulevard treatments;
- Use landscape treatments within setbacks to maintain natural character of the corridor;
- Determine and promote future land uses to establish and maintain a strong image; and
- Frame positive views into open space/natural areas.

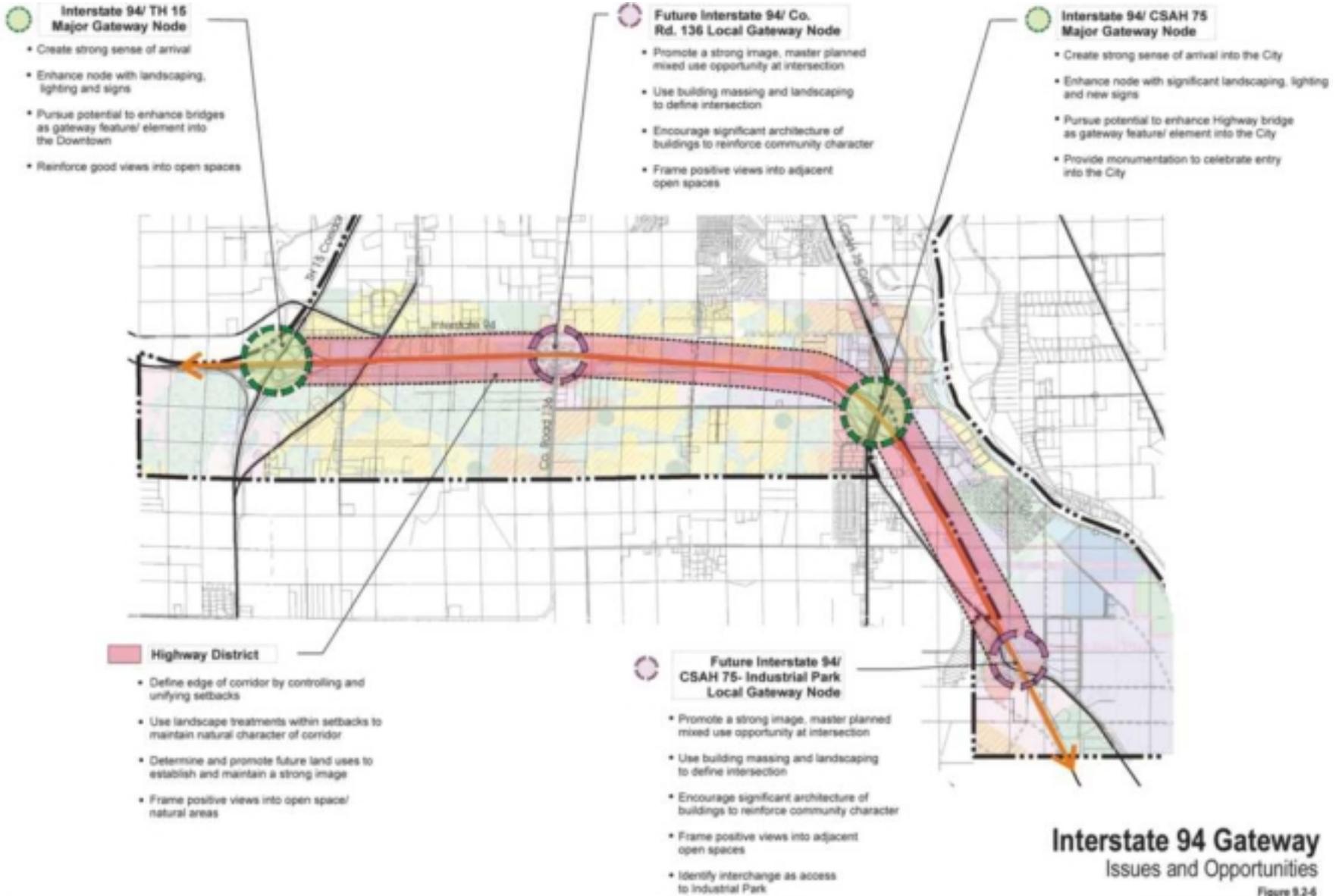
The objectives for the Interstate 94 gateway corridor are illustrated in Figure 9.2-6, *Interstate 94 Gateway Corridor Objectives*.

GATEWAY NODES

There are two major gateway nodes at the interchanges of I-94 and CSAH 75 on the east edge of the corridor and Trunk Highway 15 on the west edge. There are also two designated local gateway nodes identified within the district, the first located at the future Industrial Park interchange along Interstate 94 and the second at the future County Road 136 and Interstate 94 interchange.



Interstate 94/ CSAH 75
future gateway node.



Interstate 94 Gateway
Issues and Opportunities

Figure 9.2-4

GATEWAY MONUMENTS

One of the most effect methods to help define a gateway and access into a community is through the design and placement of gateway monuments. The community gateway monuments for the City of St. Cloud should be designed in a manner that recalls the natural history of the community, defines the City boundaries, celebrates the entrances into the community and creates a unified image and character for the Community and region.

The very first St. Cloud Gateway monument was located at the intersection of E. St. Germain Street and what was then the Jefferson paved highway (Lincoln Avenue). The Gateway monument stood 20 feet tall and 30 feet wide, and was constructed using granite and ornamental iron. This gateway monument was used to greet visitors to the community from the north and to direct these visitor's over the St. Germain Bridge. This very first gateway monument goes a long way to help define the desired character, materials and location of future gateway monuments throughout the community.

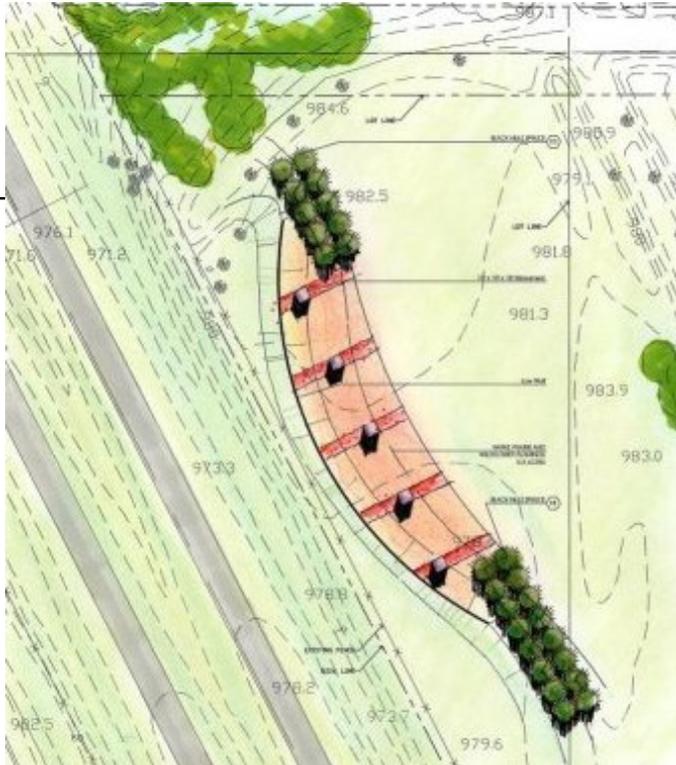
The City of St. Cloud is referred to as the "Granite City" because the natural material is widely available throughout the community, the City is recognized throughout the region as a source of the native material, and the stone is a metaphor for the strong base and strength of the community. The granite stone should be incorporated into the design of the community gateway monuments, as well as, native plant materials, and existing natural land forms. Because of the varied character of the gateway corridors where the monuments will be located, a more localized approach to the design of the monuments should include neighborhood icons and imagery, places of interest, views/ vistas and landmarks.

The location of the gateway monuments along the community corridors is critical, as they should be located to maximize visibility, define City borders and major community nodes, incorporate the existing natural environment to reinforce the positive identity of the community, and utilize high traffic areas to help identify the community and act as a point of reference to visitors.

As a part of the planning process, concept level designs were created for an entry monument to be located at the future Interstate 94/ CSAH 75 Industrial Park local gateway node. See Figure 9.2-6 for location of local gateway node and monument. The location of the proposed monument is adjacent to Interstate 94 just beyond the proposed Interstate 94/ CSAH 75 interchange. The proposed monument will be located in a large open field that is gently sloping away from the edge of the Interstate, with a large existing stand of evergreen and deciduous forest as a back drop. The land is also currently owned by the City as part of the Industrial Park. Both monument concepts integrate granite, native plant materials, and manipulation of the existing land form.

MONUMENT CONCEPT A -

This concept integrates a long sweeping granite wall to create a monumental edge along Interstate 94. Five vertical granite obelisks are evenly spaced between the ends of the wall with accent plantings to highlight the modified landform and obelisks. Two rows of evergreen trees extend the sight line of the monument into the surrounding natural landscape.



Left: Concept A - Site Plan

Below: Concept A - Sketch of Monument



MONUMENT CONCEPT B -

This concept creates a new landform in which a large granite wall protrudes perpendicular from the landform towards Interstate 94. Behind the wall, one vertical granite monument extends 35 feet skyward. One double row of overstory deciduous trees marches north from the monument as a one double row of evergreen trees extend the sight line to the proposed interchange. Native grasses and perennials define to top of the new landform and melt into the natural environment.



Left: Concept B - Site Plan

Below: Concept B - Sketch of Monument



NORTH STAR COMMUTER RAIL TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

The North Star commuter rail line, a new public rail transit system linking the St. Cloud region to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, has been in the planning stages for many years. In previous studies by consultants working with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, a commuter rail station site serving St. Cloud was identified on Trunk Highway 10 at Lincoln Avenue SE at the east edge of St. Cloud just north of Michigan Avenue, called the St. Cloud East Station. The city of St. Cloud wants to take advantage of this commuter rail line by promoting appropriate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) at the St. Cloud East Station and other station locations in St. Cloud that may be identified in the future.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, is a term implying land uses surrounding the transit station that take advantage of people wanting to live or work near the commuter stop that provide services for these people such as coffee shops, restaurants, personal services, etc. TOD typically relies on easy pedestrian connections to a dense neighborhood surrounding the station, thus reinforcing the transit function rather than automobiles. The rule of thumb is that pedestrians will readily make a 1/4-mile walk (5-minutes) to the transit site and may make a 1/2-mile walk (10 minutes) from the surrounding area.

Interest in rail transit in Minnesota has increased in recent years, with the advent of the first Light Rail Transit (LRT) line now under construction, linking downtown Minneapolis with the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington. At the same time, planning has been underway for the North Star commuter rail line connecting Minneapolis, St. Cloud and cities in between, generally along and near the Trunk Highway 10 corridor.

TOD is a strategy that works in large and small communities, and for bus and rail transit alike. It focuses development around a transit stop, thus bringing more riders, customers and employees to a development. But TOD should not just be typical development near transit, but it should be designed specifically to take advantage of the transit hub in terms of parking, residential and commercial density, and building orientation. The rationale for creating special nodes of TOD is clear and has been implemented in numerous cities around the country. Borrowing from a California Department of Transportation study of TOD there are a number of benefits to TOD:

- TOD provides mobility choices for young people, the elderly, and those who don't own cars.
- TOD can increase public safety by providing more people watching out for others in the area.
- TOD can increase transit ridership by increasing the efficiency of the transit service.
- TOD can reduce total vehicle miles traveled for those who live, work or shop near transit stations.
- TOD can increase a household's disposable income by freeing up driving-related expenses.
- TOD reduces air pollution and energy consumption.
- TOD can conserve land and open space by concentrating growth instead of spreading it out.
- TOD can play a role in economic development to revitalize aging or declining areas.

- TOD can decrease infrastructure costs – water, sewer and roads – through compact development.
- TOD can create more affordable housing, by lowering transportation costs and land consumption.

TOD STRATEGIES

There are a number of challenges and barriers to TOD, some of which are under local government control. These include providing good public information and discussion about the benefits of TOD in order to stem community concerns about density, design, and other unknowns in TOD; creating zoning standards that are transit-friendly and that encourage higher-density development where appropriate around transit stations; and helping find or provide financing for TOD projects.

Based on experiences in Minnesota and elsewhere, the City of St. Cloud should adopt the following TOD strategies:

- Provide frequent communication and opportunities for public discussion about the benefits of transit and TOD – in the media, on the City web site, and at public forums;
- Plan for good vehicular access to TOD sites in cooperation with MnDOT and County roadway plans;
- Plan for adequate parking, and encourage structured parking, near TOD sites;
- Plan for excellent pedestrian access and a pedestrian-friendly environment into and within TOD sites;
- Enhance the pedestrian environment with landscaping, lighting, streetscape treatment and other aesthetic considerations;
- Formulate development standards for TOD sites, either in the Zoning Ordinance or as part of PUD conditions of approval, that will allow:
 - residential densities of 20 units per acres or higher;
 - building heights of at least three stories;
 - mixed uses, both vertically and horizontally;
 - buildings placed close to the street for easier pedestrian access;
 - reduced parking ratios where site-specific studies warrant such reduction
- Identify developers interested in TOD projects and encourage them to participate in planning for TOD sites;
- Provide funding or assist in identifying sources of funding for TOD projects
- Work with MnDOT to identify and develop additional station sites where TOD might be implemented.

NORTHSTAR LINE – ST. CLOUD EAST STATION

PREVIOUS LAND USE PLAN

The land use plan for the St. Cloud East Station site (Figure 9.3-1, *Previous St. Cloud East Station Land Use Plan*), developed several years ago while the Northstar line was being planned, suggested a mix of retail, office/business, and low and high density residential uses in close proximity to the station on both sides of Trunk Highway 10. To the south of the station site is a large City public works facility. That land use plan assumed easy access across Trunk Highway 10 to the station site for future residents on the east side of the highway, as well as relatively easy access for existing residents on the west side of the highway in neighborhoods west and south of the public works yard.



Figure 9.3-1
Previous St. Cloud East Station Land Use Plan
(Courtesy of IBI, HKO, ZHA, July 2000)

CURRENT HIGHWAY 10 PLAN

Recently Mn/DOT has undertaken a study of Trunk Highway 10 in the St. Cloud area and the recommendations include significant changes to the access conditions in the vicinity of the Northstar/St. Cloud East station site. Along most of the Trunk Highway 10 corridor in this area direct access to the highway will be eliminated in favor of a series of freeway style interchanges (see Figure 9.3-2, *Trunk Highway 10 and Michigan Avenue Interchange*).



Figure 9.3-2
Trunk Highway 10 and Michigan Avenue Interchange

A new interchange is recommended at Michigan Avenue, about 4/10 mile south of the Northstar Station site. With this interchange all direct access to Trunk Highway 10 will be eliminated in favor of frontage roads and other local roads. At the Northstar Station site, Lincoln Avenue will join this frontage road, not Trunk Highway 10. The frontage road in turn will connect to Michigan Avenue at the new interchange, which will cross to the east side of Trunk Highway 10, becoming Del Tone Road (County Road 7). The 1/4-mile and 1/2-mile walking distance for pedestrians going to the east side of Trunk Highway 10 will now only get them along the frontage road and halfway across the Michigan Avenue interchange bridge. The east side of Trunk Highway 10 will no longer be within easy reach for pedestrian-oriented land uses, unless a pedestrian overpass is provided near the station site, as recommended in the MnDOT plan.

LAND USE IMPLICATIONS

The redesign of Trunk Highway 10 and the location of the City public works facility have implications for land use surrounding the Northstar Station site and for the “transit-oriented” nature of these land uses.

- The station site will still enjoy excellent access to Trunk Highway 10 and to properties on both sides of the highway, for vehicles and not pedestrians. Pedestrians will have easy access only the west side of the highway, since the west side access distance has effectively been increased to almost a mile. A direct connection will be needed across the City Public Works property to facilitate pedestrian movements from the south.
- The previous land use plan (Figure 9.3-1) for the east side of the highway would serve as a source of pedestrians to the station, provided a convenient pedestrian overpass is built connecting to the station site. Patrons and riders may still drive to the station from the east side of Trunk Highway 10, but few will walk. Commercial and higher density residential uses still make sense in those locations on the east side of the highway, but not because they serve TOD.
- For successful TOD this puts more pressure on the west side properties to fill the gap.
- The public works facility is in the prime TOD area for pedestrians within a 1/4-mile walk and would be an ideal location for future medium and high density residential development (see Figure 9.3-3, *East St. Cloud Station and Vicinity*).

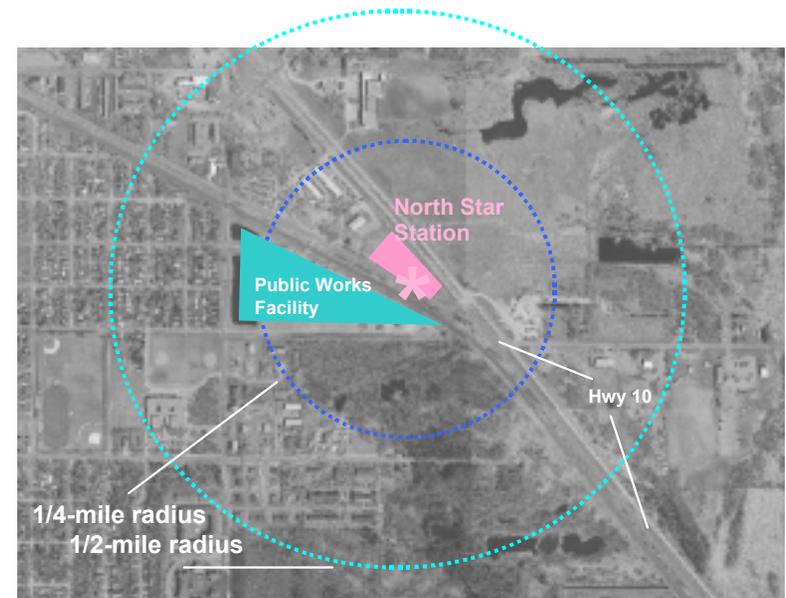
NORTHSTAR WEST SPUR SITE

A potential Downtown station for the Northstar Commuter Rail line is planned for the triangular site bounded by 2nd Street North, 9th Avenue North, and the Burlington Northern railroad. This location is known as the West Spur site because the rail line serving it is a spur off the main line on the east side of the river. This site is very close to the heart of downtown, a block north of the Stearns County courthouse and government buildings. It is within easy walking distance (or a very short bus ride) from the Civic Center, City Hall, hotels, major office buildings and the downtown retail core along West St. Germain Street.

The West Spur site could make good use of TOD strategies because it is surrounded by existing intense government and office development on the south side, and across the street to the north the expansion of the law enforcement center is planned with additional structured parking. In the several blocks immediately north of the West Spur site there are existing residential and other uses which could be considered for more intense redevelopment to higher density residential and mixed uses, to take advantage of the rail station site.

A 1/4-mile radius from the West Spur site extends to Trunk Highway 23 on the south, the Mississippi River and 4th Avenue on the east, 7th Street North to the north, and 13th Avenue to the west. Within a 1/2-mile radius from the site are Lake George, the edge of the SCSU campus, and portions of the east side of downtown across the river. A significant amount of

Figure 9.3-3
East St. Cloud Station and
Vicinity



St. Cloud's most intense development is within this close walking radius of the West Spur station site. If this station site is included as part of the Northstar Commuter Rail line it would be an excellent opportunity for TOD around the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider moving the public works facility to a new location or vacating a portion of it for future TOD land uses, particularly High Mixed Residential.
- If the public works facility remains essentially as is, consider vacating a small portion on the east end for a pedestrian connection to the station site for existing and future residents.
- For land south of 13th Street SE, maintain the current recommendation for High Mixed Residential land use. Whether or not there will be significant TOD opportunities, this property will be close to Michigan Avenue and the new interchange. Higher density development makes sense. The property may have significant wetlands.
- For the land north and west of station site, continue the Commercial designation and look for redevelopment opportunities that could provide services complementary to the station site.

EAST ST. CLOUD STATION SITE

- For the land north and west of station site, continue the Commercial designation and look for redevelopment opportunities that could provide services complementary to the station site.
- For land east of Trunk Highway 10 the city should encourage TOD and high density development in anticipation of the Northstar line, and also due to its proximity to Michigan Avenue and the new interchange.
- For land south of 13th Street SE, maintain the current recommendation for High Mixed residential land use. Whether or not there will be significant TOD opportunities, this property will be close to Michigan Avenue and the new interchange. Higher density development makes sense, although the development potential of the property may be limited due to former quarry sites.
- Future expansion of the Public Works facility should consider the impacts on TOD in the area.
- If the public works facility remains essentially as is, consider vacating a small portion on the east end for a pedestrian connection to the station site for existing and future residents.

NORTHSTAR LINE/ FUTURE EXPANSION OF SATELLITE STATIONS

- Encourage the development of other Northstar station sites in St. Cloud, including a possible west downtown site (see Downtown Master Plan) and a possible east side downtown site.
- TOD around other commuter rail station sites should be encouraged to spur revitalization of the surrounding areas. The benefits of TOD noted earlier would apply to any future sites and would have positive repercussions for those areas of the city.
- Station sites in addition to the East St. Cloud site will help traffic congestion by reducing west-to-east trips from the more fully developed part of the city across the river to the East St. Cloud station.

NORTHSTAR COLLISION TARGET AREA PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Northstar Collision property is located in south central St. Cloud on the west side of CSAH 75 between 33rd Street South and 40th Street South. The property consists of about 95 acres and is largely vacant except for a former auto body business, Northstar Collision. The property was selected as a Target Area Plan because it represents a large and relatively undeveloped parcel of land with highway frontage, and the owners are interested in development options for it. The property is a transition area between two existing single-family neighborhoods and intense highway commercial uses along CSAH 75.

SITE ANALYSIS

An analysis of general site characteristics is illustrated on Figure 9.4-1, *Northstar Collision Site Analysis*. The major elements of the site analysis are as follows:

PARCEL CONFIGURATION/ADJACENT LAND USES

The parcel is generally rectangular, about 1,350 feet (1/4 mile) wide north-south and about 3,050 feet (6/10 mile) deep east-west. The east edge fronts CSAH 75; the north and west edges abut existing single-family residential development; the south edge abuts generally undeveloped land. The southeast corner of property is adjacent to existing intense highway commercial uses.

ACCESS

The property has access to a full movement intersection with CSAH 75, and a frontage road to CSAH 75 cuts across the front edge of the property, providing access to other properties and local roadways to the north and south of the property. Off the northwest corner of the property 36th Street South, a collector street, is anticipated to continue to the east-southeast through the Northstar Collision property, providing through access to the CSAH 75 intersection. A signal is planned for this intersection in the near future. On the north side of the property Kristin Lane is stubbed to the property line and will provide local access connecting to Plum Creek Drive and the neighborhood to the north. On the west side of the property 38th Street South is stubbed to the property line and could provide local access for a limited amount of developable property on the west edge of the Northstar site to Deerwood Court and the neighborhood to the west. To the south there are no streets currently built, but it would be appropriate to provide access for future development to the south of the Northstar property extending south to 40th Street South.

SITE FEATURES

The property is relatively flat. Much of the western third of the site is occupied by a large wetland that extends off the property to the southwest. This wetland and areas on three sides of it are identified in the city's natural areas inventory. This area is a willow swamp that has a "high" priority ranking by the city. The city's environmentally sensitive areas ordinance states that for areas deemed "high" priority areas "the goal is to protect these areas and avoid any deterioration".

There are three areas of existing woodlands on the property, two at the north edge and a larger one roughly in the middle of the property where the existing buildings are located.

LAND USE CONCEPTS

Two alternative land use concepts were developed for discussion with the committee reviewing the plans. These are general concept sketches for discussion purposes and actual development may be different, but they illustrate some of the ideas that should be followed in any reasonable development. Discussion among the committee favored Concept A, with less commercial area than Concept B.

For both concepts we assume a stepping down of land use intensity from CSAH 75 on the east to the residential neighborhoods on the west in four steps: Commercial, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Low Density Residential. Both concepts place residential uses on most of the western portion of the property, single family abutting most of the existing single-family areas, medium density townhouses in the middle of the property, and high-density apartments on the east abutting the commercial areas. Commercial uses are developed around the intersection of 36th Street South (extended) and the frontage road.

The large wooded area around the homestead is assumed to be preserved as a park. The wetlands are not touched, except where necessary for public street crossings at the narrow points. The natural areas shown are mostly preserved as park and open space.

ROADWAYS

Both concepts make the following assumption about roadways serving the property:

- 36th Street South connects as a collector street through the middle of the property to CSAH 75 at its current intersection.
- The CSAH 75 frontage road connects as a backage road behind future Commercial parcels when extended into the Northstar Collision property.
- Kristin Lane at the north edge connects as a minor local access street.
- 38th Street South at the west edge extends as a minor cul-de-sac or may be connected to 36th Street South if possible.
- Two new streets connect to the south in the middle of the property, at least one of them extending to 40th Street 1/4 mile south.
- Depending on the exact boundaries of the wetland on the west side of the site, the half-width right-of-way on the west edge of the property may be vacated and turned back for single family development.

LAND USE CONCEPT A (FIGURE 9.4-2)

Land Use Concept A follows the generalized land uses above with a small intersection of commercial uses at the east edge of the site. It would consist of the following:

- 29 Single Family
- 125 Townhouses (6-10 u/a)
- 180 Apartments (20 u/a)
- 15 ac. Commercial

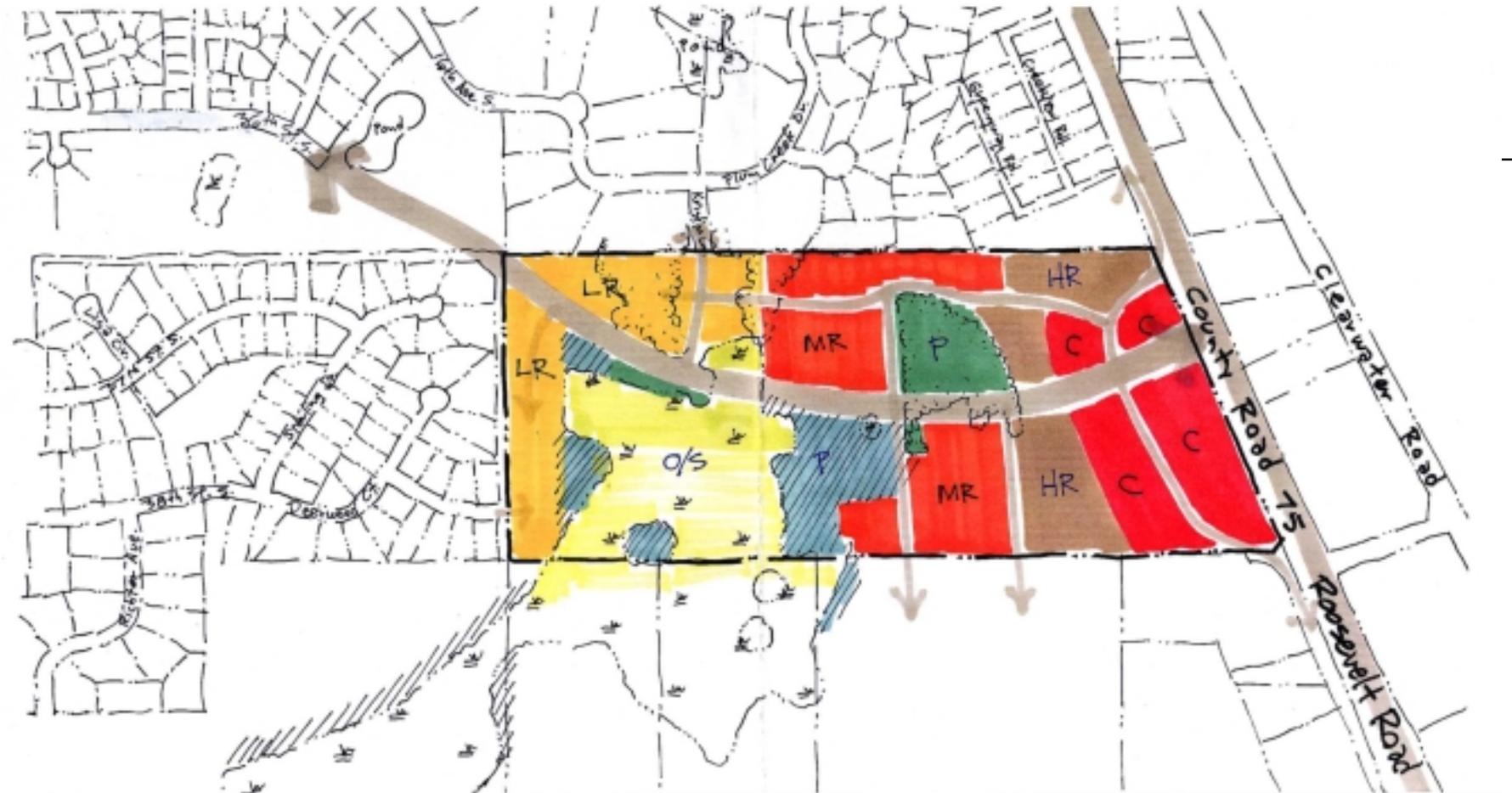
LAND USE CONCEPT B (FIGURE 9.4-3)

Land Use Concept B follows the generalized land uses above with Commercial uses around a larger intersection at the east edge of the site. It would consist of the following:

- 29 Single Family
- 100 Townhouses (6-10 u/a)
- 120 Apartments (20 u/a)
- 21 ac. Commercial

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT (FIGURE 9.4-4)

During reiew of the concepts by the Planning Commission and City Council, the preferred concept, Land Use Concept A, was modified to place medium density townhouse residential in the northeast corner of the property adjacent to the existing single family neighborhood, instead of high density apartments. The Development Concept is an illustration of what modified Land Use Concept A might look like when developed under this revised lower density.



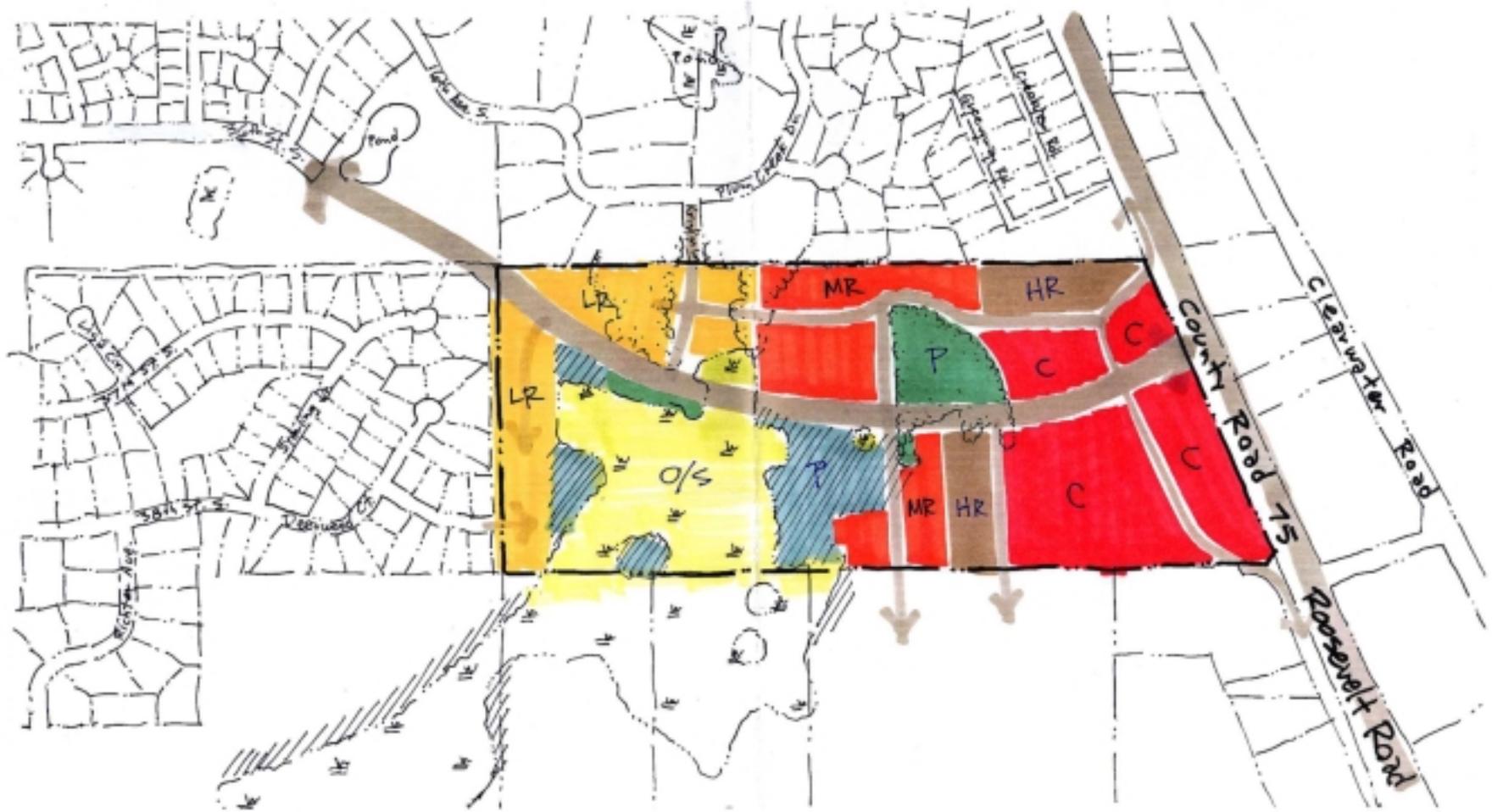
DSU 9-25-01

- LR Single Family Residential
- MR Medium Density Residential
- HR High Density Residential
- C Commercial
- P O/S Park/Open Space

Northstar Collision Land Use Concept A

Figure 9.4-2

SAINT CLOUD
2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



06/19/25-01

- LR Single Family Residential
- MR Medium Density Residential
- HR High Density Residential
- C Commercial
- P/O/S Park/Open Space
- Roadways

Northstar Collision Site Land Use Concept B

Figure 9.4-3

SAINT CLOUD
2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



Single Family Residential
 Medium Density Residential
 High Density Residential
 Commercial
 Park/Open Space

Northstar Collision Development Concept

Figure 9.4-4

SAINT CLOUD
2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Concepts discussed indicate land use categories that are somewhat different from the land use categories eventually decided on for the citywide Comprehensive Plan. The three Residential designations (low, medium, high) used in the Land Use Concepts have been simplified to two categories for future Residential: Low Density Mixed Residential and High Density Mixed Residential. The Low Density designation would remain in the Low Density Mixed category; the Medium Density category used here for the Northstar parcel (townhouse development) would also be appropriately designated by the Low Density Mixed Residential category; while the High Density designation would be appropriate as High Density Mixed Residential on the Land Use Plan. Figure 9.4-5 below, *Proposed Land Use Plan, Northstar Collision Target Area*, illustrates the recommended land use for the property based on modified Land Use Concept A.

Figure 9.4-5
Proposed Land Use Plan
Northstar Collision Target Area

