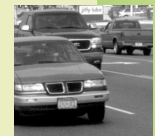
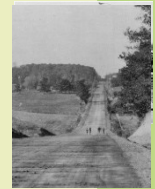
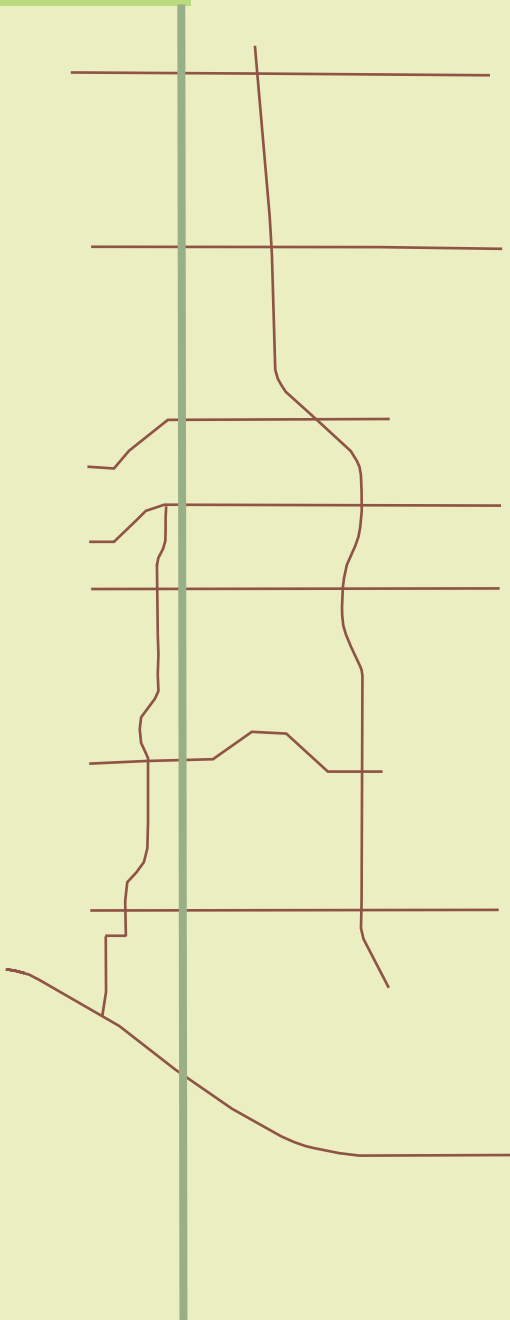


Redevelopment Design Framework

A Strategy for
South Robert Street's
Renaissance

City of
West St. Paul
Minnesota



Prepared by:
Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.
Maxfield Research Group
Meyer, Mohaddes Associates, Inc.

November, 2000

Purpose of Strategy

This redevelopment strategy, funded by the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities program, represents a unique opportunity to shape South Robert Street's future in a sustainable, livable and economically viable manner that is responsive to the community's vision for the corridor.

Goals.

- Reinforce South Robert Street's historic role as the Main Street of West St. Paul, the focus of community activities and the primary link with surrounding cities.
- Create a sustainable environment for all who live, work and recreate in West St. Paul by fostering a compact mix of uses, introducing adaptable building types, and improving the corridor's image and connectivity.
- Improve the sense of continuity throughout the corridor, while at the same time recognizing the distinct character districts.
- Improve the livability of the corridor by providing for a mix of uses, supporting transit and cyclists, and balancing the functional needs of traffic with a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Market Summary. Usage patterns have changed, due to shifts in traffic patterns, limited growth in the retail draw, and an increase in competitive shopping districts located in second-tier suburbs.

Framework Plan Recommendations

The following recommendations apply to all districts within the 2.5-mile corridor.

1. Amenity Zones. Easements are recommended to provide additional width for streetscape improvements.



2. Rezone to Mixed-Use. Three types of mixed-use districts are recommended to foster the desired character for the North, South and Signal Hills District and Town Center.

3. Concentrate Mixed-Use Development at Primary Crossroads. The limited commercial growth should be concentrated at nodes to create compact neighborhood centers and stimulate market synergy in each district.

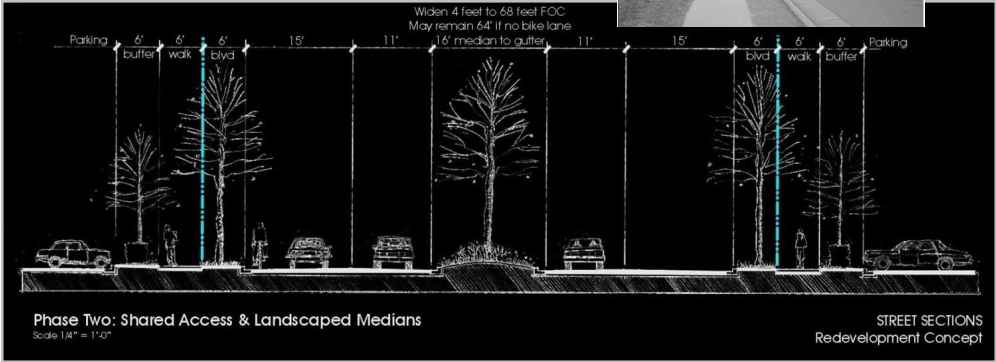
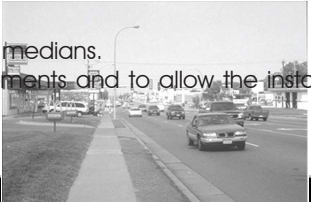
South District



4. Town Center Between Wentworth and Thompson Avenues is intended as the primary community focus and will integrate the City Hall, Library and YWCA with a compact mix of commercial, residential and open space uses.

5. Street Improvement Concepts.

- Modified roadway cross-section to provide space for medians.
- Consolidate driveways to create safer turning movements and to allow the installation of center medians.



6. Streetscape Improvements can create a distinct district identity while maintaining continuity along the corridor. Refer to the South Robert Street Design Initiative for streetscape design.

7. Infill with Residential Uses. West St. Paul should capture its share of the projected regional household growth. Residential uses benefit the commercial market, create a more diverse and vital environment, and provide more life-cycle housing choices.

8. Hierarchy of Open Space.

The framework plan provides central gathering places for each district. The Town Square, Community Green, Waterfront Park, and the proposed trail along Wentworth Avenue form a green connection linking Dakota County's North Urban Regional Trail, Marthaler Park and the Dodge Nature Center.

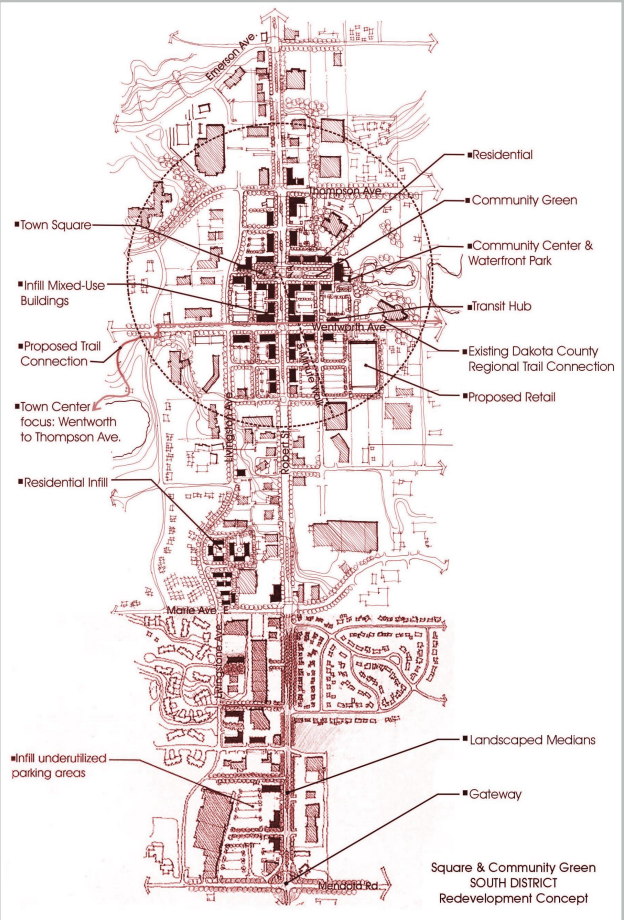
9. Shared Parking. Reducing the amount of land devoted to parking allows for a more efficient, compact form of development, increases the tax base and provides land for public amenities.

South District

The segment between Emerson Avenue and Mendota Road has evolved into a post-World War II suburban commercial strip.

Market Findings

- The auto-oriented goods and services market is very strong. Incorporate these uses at key intersections at the periphery of pedestrian-scale development. The design should complement rather than detract from new development.



A Strategy for the South Robert Street Renaissance

Summary of Redevelopment Framework

South District (continued)

- Housing should develop in close proximity to the Town Center, targeted to different market segments. A mix of owner-occupied multi-family will provide a variety of choices to satisfy market demand.

10- to 15-Year Projected Market Demands:

- 60,000 sf of net new retail space (new uses);
- 50,000 sf of net new office space (professional services);
- 250 to 300 units of housing (varying product types); infill areas along the Corridor.

Recommendations

1. Rezone to Two Mixed-Use Districts that will foster the desired character of the Town Center, the gateway corridors on Thompson and Wentworth Avenues, and the auto-oriented development south of Lothenbach Avenue.

2. Introduce a Tighter Block Pattern and Street Grid. The proposed block system is particularly important in the Town Center to establish an interconnected, compact framework for redevelopment. An ultimate block grid of 1,200-foot spacing (existing) for signalized intersections, 600-foot nominal spacing for unsignalized intersections serving businesses, and 300-foot spacing of right-in/right-out shared driveways.

3. South Gateway at Mendota Road.

Improvements include: infill development in the underutilized fringe areas of parking lots, improved landscaping, architectural and site planning standards, landscaped medians, streetscape elements, and entry monuments.



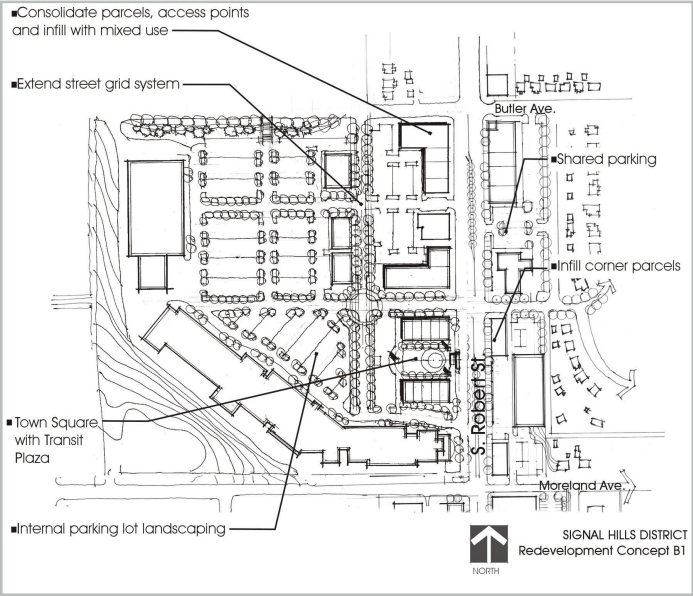
Signal Hills District

North District

Signal Hills District

The segment between Butler and Emerson Avenues transitions from the Main Street character of the North District to a more suburban, auto-oriented development pattern.

Signal Hills Market Findings. Infill residential opportunities exist east of South Robert for owner-occupied multi-family development. Relocated businesses could be incorporated on the west side of the Corridor, focusing greater development intensity at Signal Hills.



Recommendations

1. Town Square and Transit Plaza.

Underutilized eastern portions of the shopping center parking lot present opportunities to infill with additional commercial and residential uses. The concentration of mixed uses surrounding the Town Square and transit plaza should create a vibrant center of activity.

North District

The segment between Annapolis and Butler evolved along the end of a streetcar line, evident in this district's compact development pattern.

Objectives:

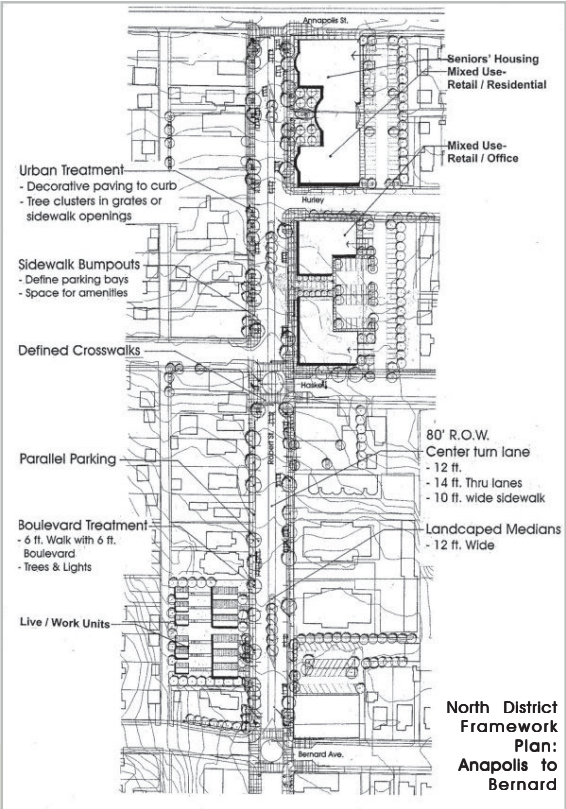
- Maintain "Main Street" character.
- Improve the streetscape.
- Need short-term solutions.
- Emphasize mixed-use development to stimulate business.
- Define as a Gateway to West St. Paul.

North District Market Findings

- Strengthen the mix of neighborhood-oriented goods and services to enhance consumer convenience, particularly for seniors, and create more vitality on the street.
- 10- to 15-Year Demand:
 - 15,000 to 20,000 square feet of retail;
 - 10,000 square feet of office;
 - 180 to 200 units of housing.

Recommendations

1. Infill with Multi-Family Housing Types. Increasing the number of residential units will strengthen the population base and commercial market, creating a more diverse and vital environment, and providing more life-cycle housing choices.



2. Include Medians in the Street Cross Section. Lane widths should be modified to provide a center median with dedicated left turn lanes.

3. Incorporate Sidewalk Bump-outs at intersections to define parallel parking areas, provide more sidewalk for streetscape improvements and create shorter, safer crosswalks.

4. Reduce Speed Limits. The segment north of Butler Avenue may more appropriately be zoned for 30 mph (down from 35 mph).



Primary Design Guidelines

Mixed-Use Districts A, B & C: District A (MU-A) is intended for the North and Signal Hills Districts. District B (MU-B) is intended for the Town Center Area. District C (MU-C) is intended for the Gateway Corridors on Wentworth and Thompson Avenues, as well as the segment south of Lothenbach Avenue. Following are the primary site planning guidelines.

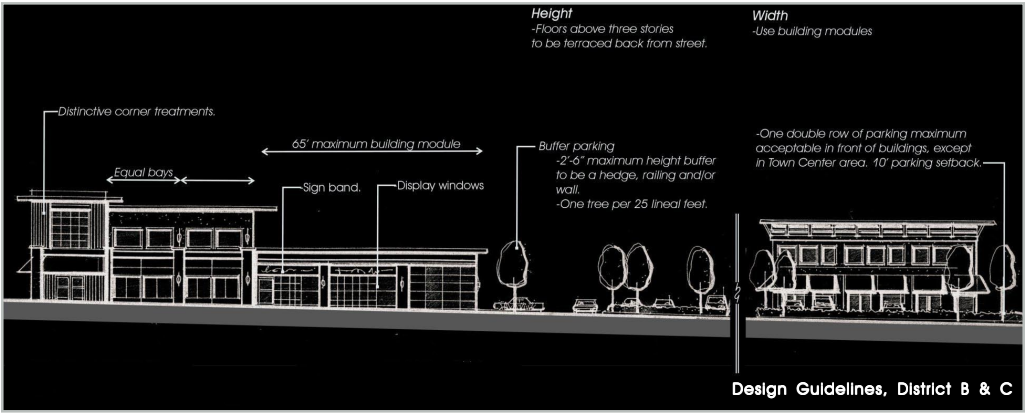
1. Building Placement, MU-A

- **Commercial.** Place new buildings at a maximum 5-foot setback from the right-of-way.
 - **Residential.** Front yard setbacks should not exceed 20 feet.
- MU-B & MU-C.** New infill development shall be "built-to" within 18 to 24 feet of the right-of-way and placed at corners of Gateway corridors.

2. Width and Height, MU-A. New development should maintain the alignment of building windows, cornices and roof lines associated with traditional urban development patterns.

A clear visual division between the street and upper floors should be maintained. Canopies and awnings are encouraged to accentuate the relationship between building and streetscape and to provide protection for pedestrians.

3. Facade composition. Building entrances should face and be clearly visible from the street. Exterior building wall length may not exceed 60 feet without significant visual relief, such as significantly different materials or textures, horizontal or vertical offsets, and/or first floor fenestration.



4. Buildings Should Complement the Pedestrian Realm. Ground-level businesses should stimulate interest with well-lit displays or a view of internal activity.

5. Display Windows. Forty percent of first floor facades should consist of windows and entries.

6. Color, Texture & Materials. Colors should promote visual harmony and contextually integrate buildings. A common palette of brick colors and other high-quality materials will establish a degree of conformity, but not uniformity, along the street.

7. Signs Should Complement Building Appearance. Signs influence the overall character and appearance of the streetscape.

8. Landscaping Parking Lot Interiors is essential to improve the appearance of large commercial parking lots. Landscaped islands provide visual relief from large expanses of asphalt and automobiles.

9. Parking Lots

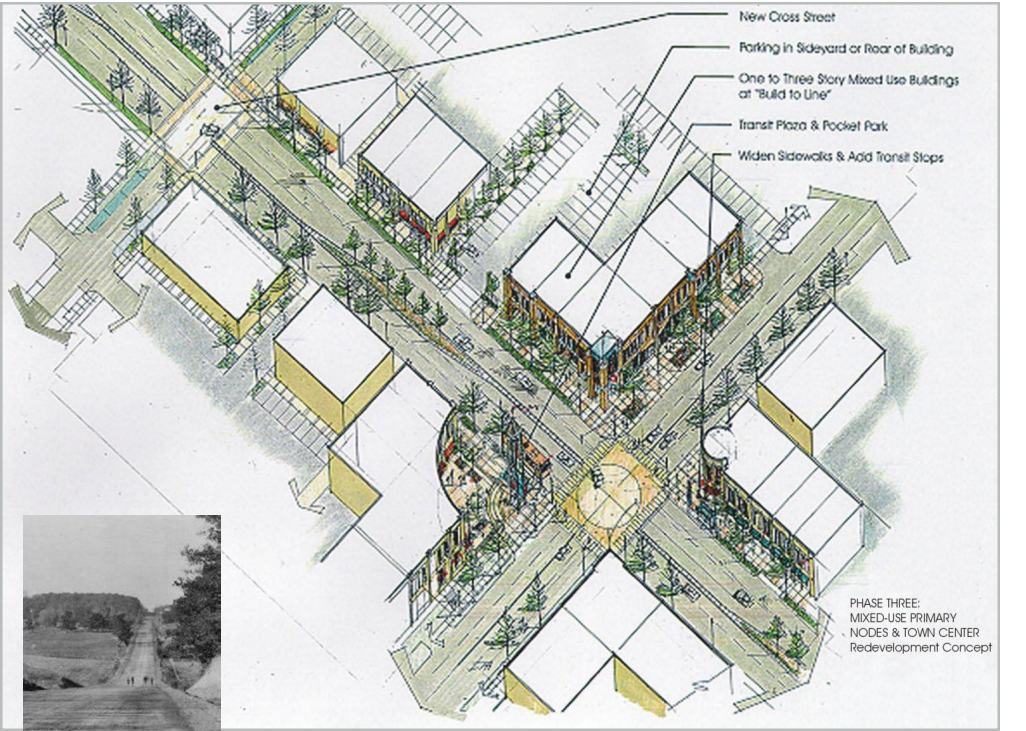
The street wall should continue across the street frontage of parking lots through the use of overstory trees, hedges, and/or structural screens.

- **MU-B.** In the Town Center, cross streets should accommodate parallel parking to maximize the parking area and to create a buffer between pedestrians and traffic. Parking lots should be placed in side and rear yards where possible.
- **MU-C.** South of Wentworth, one double row of parking is the maximum acceptable in front of buildings.

Implementation

South Robert Street has been evolving into its current pattern of development for nearly 120 years. Even with a strong commitment, it will take several years before many of these recommendations take full shape. Although the City's role in this process is an important one, the success of this effort will not be possible without the full support and participation of landowners, citizens and the development community. Following are key points to consider as the community begins the redevelopment process:

- **Comprehensive.** A single project cannot revitalize the corridor. Only an ongoing series of initiatives can build community support and create lasting progress.



- **Incremental.** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that "things are happening." Large projects can really set the tone and establish precedence.

- **Self-Help.** Local leadership can breed long-term success by fostering community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

- **Public/Private Partnership.** The redevelopment program needs the support and expertise of both public and private sectors.

- **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful redevelopment initiative.

- **Quality.** From streetscape to storefront design to promotional campaigns and special events, quality must be the primary goal.



South Robert Street Design Framework

City of West St. Paul

November, 2000

Acknowledgments

The staff of Dahlgren Shardlow and Uban, Inc. wish to thank the City Council, City Staff, Task Force and residents of West St. Paul, all of whom volunteered countless hours to realize their vision for South Robert Street.

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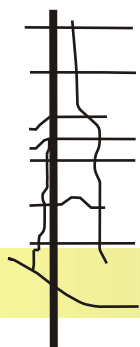
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I. Introduction

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1856, land in West St. Paul went up for sale, and farmers looking for a location close to St. Paul were eager to claim farmland. While South Robert Street was not the first street in West St. Paul, upon its establishment in the 1880s, it quickly became the “Main Street” of the city, linking local farmers directly to St. Paul markets. Twenty years later, South Robert Street was decidedly the retail and community hub of West St. Paul. Now 120 years later, South Robert Street is comprised of a profusion of big box retail, chain restaurants and local shops possessing 800,000 square feet of retail which rivals a regional mall. While the corridor is still considered the retail “Main Street” of the city, conventional auto-oriented development patterns with large parking lots, excessive signage and franchise architecture have created a nondescript identity typical of many suburban commercial strips.



Historic South Robert St.

A. Purpose

This redevelopment strategy, funded by the Metropolitan Council’s Livable Communities program, represents a truly unique opportunity to shape the future of the South Robert Street corridor. Numerous redevelopment opportunities, as well as a strategy to guide redevelopment in a manner that is sustainable, livable, economically viable and responsive to the community’s vision for the corridor are illustrated in this document. Community character is often defined by small projects in which the whole is truly richer than the sum of its parts. Thus, the design principles recommended in this document will foster incremental improvements that will shape South Robert Street into a more cohesive marketplace and a focus of community activity.



Today’s South Robert St.

B. Study Area

The study area for the South Robert Street Redevelopment Strategy includes the entire 2-1/2 mile length of South Robert Street within the City of West St. Paul, bounded to the north by Annapolis Street and to the south by Mendota Road. South Robert Street has been divided into three separate districts which reflect the changing character along the corridor: the North District, Signal Hills District and the South District. See Figure I-1.

C. Goals

The following goals were defined by the South Robert Street Task Force to clarify a vision for the corridor’s future and to guide the creation of the redevelopment framework.

- Reinforce South Robert Street’s historic role as the Main Street of West St. Paul, the focus of community activities and the primary link with surrounding cities.
- Create a sustainable environment for all who live, work and recreate in West St. Paul by fostering a compact mixture of uses, introducing adaptable building types, and improving the image of the corridor and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and cities.
- Improve the sense of continuity throughout the corridor, while at the same time recognizing the distinct character districts.
- Improve the livability of the corridor by providing for a mixture of uses, supporting transit and cyclists, and balancing the functional needs of traffic with safety and aesthetic needs for a comfortable pedestrian environment.

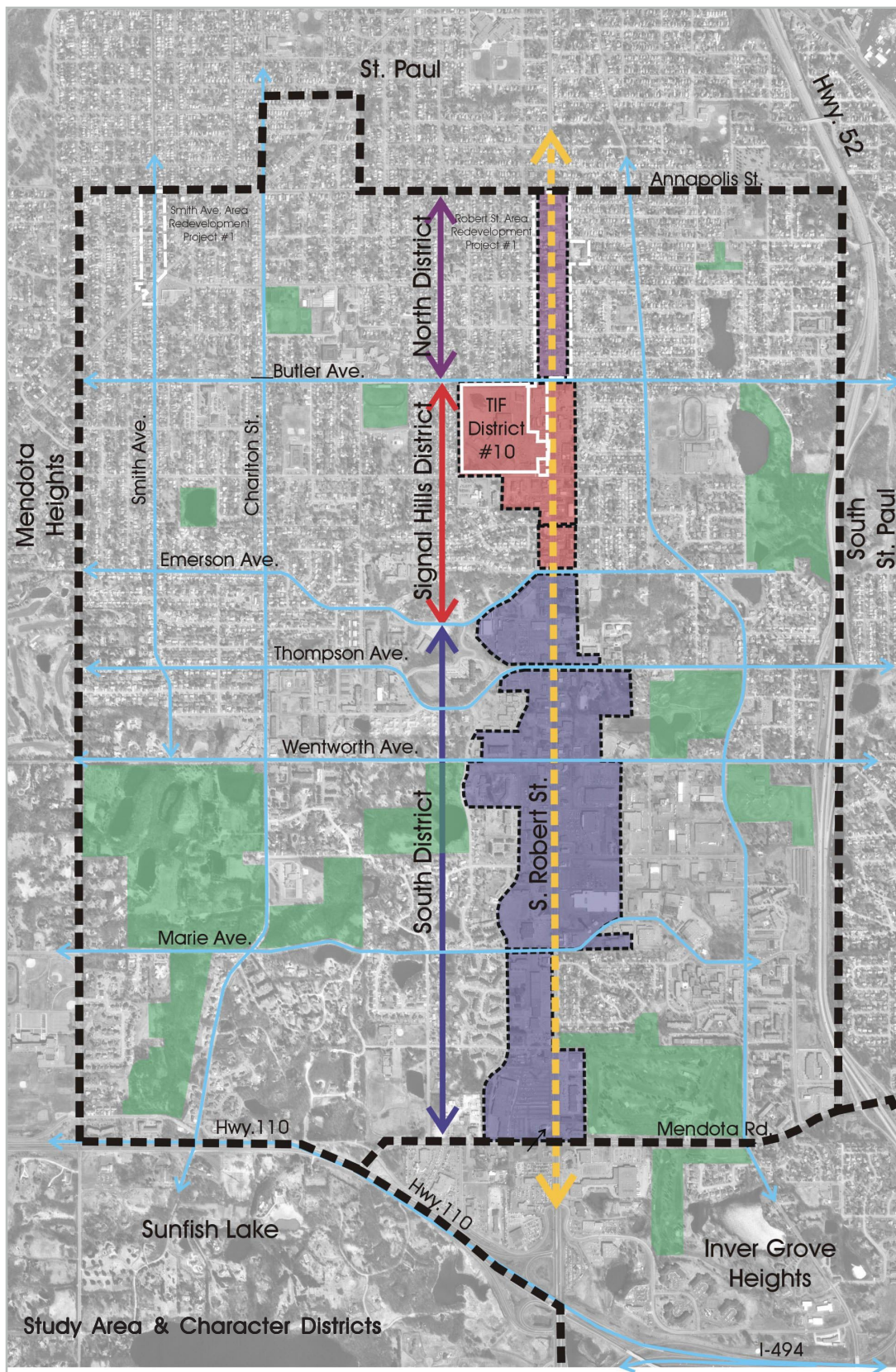


Figure I-1.

D. Character Districts

Three distinct districts have evolved along the South Robert Street corridor, each representing a progression in eras and development types from north to south. Each district is characterized by the components that shape the environment, including: block patterns, land uses, lot sizes, building and parking lot placement, architectural typologies, traffic volumes, open space, vegetation and land form. These districts are: the North District, located between Annapolis Street and Butler Avenue; the Signal Hills District, located between Butler and Emerson Avenues; and the South District, located between Emerson Avenue and Mendota Road (Figure I-1).

1. North District

In the early 1900s, the North District evolved along the end of a streetcar line, which created its traditional Main Street character. Such a development pattern is characterized by a 300-400 foot block size and small, shallow lots with on-street parking. Although land uses are balanced between single- and multi-family residential and independently-owned commercial uses, with an alley acting as a buffer between the two uses, the City's land use plan and zoning map designate the corridor as purely commercial. The North District is the most pedestrian-accessible along the corridor due to the minimal setbacks and compact, pedestrian-scaled buildings.



North District

2. Signal Hills District

The area south of Butler Avenue, which constitutes the Signal Hills District, developed in the 1950s. Signal Hills Shopping Center is the dominant land use and landmark. It is in this district that the development pattern transitions from the traditional urban development of the North District to one that is more suburban and auto-oriented. The combination of inconsistent setbacks, lot sizes, architectural treatments and signage create a visually cluttered environment. Parking lots are large and often placed in front of businesses, creating a shapeless corridor and barrier to pedestrian access. Land uses and buildings are compartmentalized, requiring multiple access points along the street that contribute to a more hazardous environment for both pedestrians and drivers.



Signal Hills District

3. South District

Most of the district south of Emerson Avenue, the South District, developed from the 1960s onward and is characterized by commercial franchises and big box retail uses. High traffic volumes, the width of South Robert Street, and numerous access and turning points create an active but hazardous environment for both pedestrians and drivers. Deep setbacks, which afford more commercial opportunities, allow parking lots to dominate the street, and a mixture of building types, setbacks and signs creates visual clutter. Signs are larger and higher to compete with other signs and to be seen at higher traffic speeds.



South District

E. Project Approach

The approach to the South Robert Street Redevelopment Strategy involved the following key components:

1. Define a Shared Vision for South Robert Street

The success of the plan is dependent on how well it responds to the objectives and shared vision established by the stakeholders. Community Involvement was secured through the Task Force, an Issues Workshop, Interviews, a Visual Preference Survey and Design Workshop, and an Open House.

2. Build Upon Previous Planning Initiatives

The Principles, Goals and Objectives defined in the South Robert Street Initiative, as well as other planning documents, were reaffirmed and established as a foundation upon which this strategy builds. The principles, goals and objectives were refined to reinforce the community's vision and guide the formation of redevelopment alternatives.

3. Integrate the Following Key Components:

- **Define Real Market Conditions** to drive an economically viable plan. The strategy responds to commercial, office, and residential market conditions.
- **Urban Design and Architectural Guidelines** are defined to respond to the different character districts, and improve the livability and appearance of the corridor over time.
- **The Transportation Strategy** addresses the relationship of South Robert Street to surrounding land uses as well as its evolving role within the city and regional roadway network. The strategy balances the functional needs to move traffic and provide parking, with pedestrian, bicycle, transit and streetscape objectives.
- **Implementation Strategies** were defined that address public and private initiatives; community organization; design standard administration; promotion; short-, mid- and long-term projects and action steps.

F. Development Standards and Illustrative Prototypes

Design standards and guidelines serve to enhance the unique character of each district along the corridor. A careful balance is necessary to allow for flexible, creative solutions for redevelopment, infill and remodeling. Two types of regulations should be applied to the three character districts along South Robert Street:

1. Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are strongly recommended yet discretionary policies that guide subjective considerations, such as district character, design details or architectural style. They serve as design criteria for review by City Staff, the Planning Commission and City Council.

2. Development Standards

Changes to the current zoning ordinance which address those aspects of site development and building design essential to reinforcing the desired character of each district are recommended throughout this document. Recommended changes address permitted uses; building height; facade treatment; setbacks; and parking, sign and landscaping specifications. These standards should be legally defensible and implemented through the City's development regulations. Design guidelines and development standards are defined with illustrative prototypes throughout this document in order to provide prospective developers with a graphic illustration of the intent of the guidelines and standards.

G. How to Use this Redevelopment Framework Strategy

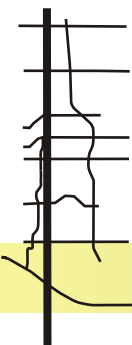
These design guidelines serve as a tool for evaluating redevelopment proposals and for making decisions about public and private improvements along South Robert Street. They will ensure that incremental site design and architectural and streetscape projects contribute to a desirable image for West St. Paul. Illustrations and photographs are included within this document to communicate the intent and character of the principles and guidelines.

1. Public Sector

- This document should be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, which will require submittal to the Metropolitan Council for approval.
- Any recommended changes to the Zoning Code should be codified and incorporated into the zoning district standards.
- City departments should refer to the concept designs for the individual districts as a basis from which to develop more detailed special area studies and implementation strategies.
- City departments should refer to the objectives and recommendations in this manual to coordinate, design, and budget for capitol improvements.
- The Planning, Engineering and Inspections Departments should refer to the guidelines when reviewing individual development proposals. Each proposed development or renovation should reinforce the principles and comply with the guidelines.
- The formulation of a Redevelopment Committee is recommended to ensure that all development proposals within the South Robert Street corridor comply with design guidelines established in this document.
- A stand-alone document that summarizes the primary objectives and guidelines for the corridor and each district should be prepared and made available to prospective developers.
- The public should be able to access this document from the City's web site.

2. Private Sector

- As the first step to any project, developers should refer to this manual in order to understand West St. Paul's overall goals and determine how their potential development fits into the context of the district in which the project is proposed.
- Pertinent chapters in this document may be copied in order to provide interested parties a summary of the objectives and guidelines for each district.
- Developers should refer to the site planning and architectural guidelines to understand the design intent and the minimum standards for quality expected by the City.
- The guidelines for parking lot edge treatments and landscaping should serve as a reference during the site design phase of a project. Through discussions with City Staff, developers should determine whether parking lot edge treatments will be constructed as part of site redevelopment or a larger public street improvement project.



II. Background

II. BACKGROUND

The South Robert Street Redevelopment Strategy builds upon the City of West St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan; Zoning Ordinance; Existing and Proposed Land Use Plans; past planning initiatives, including the Livable Communities Planning Event held in 1999; and the *South Robert Street Design Initiative*, a study carried out by BWBR in November 1998. The South Robert Street Redevelopment strategy expands and integrates the objectives derived from these past studies.

A. Previous Studies

1. The South Robert Street Design Initiative

The South Robert Street Design Initiative, prepared by BWBR Architects in 1998, provided preliminary design concepts and guidelines for redevelopment, focusing primarily on the north end of the corridor. The report, which distills general urban planning concepts applicable to the entire corridor, was adopted by the City of West St. Paul and forms the foundation for this study.

- **Gateways.** Special treatments at key gateways to West St. Paul at Annapolis Street and Mendota Road and along Butler, Thompson, and Wentworth Avenues, and Southview Boulevard from Highway 52 should provide a sense of arrival and departure.
- **Town Center.** A compact and more urban Town Center was proposed at Wentworth Avenue and South Robert Street. This area will provide a sense of place and identity as well as a focus of activity.
- **Neighborhoods.** Key neighborhood nodes should be reinforced along South Robert Street. Primary neighborhood nodes are identified at Annapolis Street, Butler and Marie Avenues. Local neighborhoods are identified at Haskell Street, Emerson Avenue and Lothenbach Avenue. These nodes should be expressed through intensified redevelopment and streetscape treatments.
- **Greenway Connections.** A major greenway connection crossing South Robert Street at Wentworth Avenue provides an open space linkage between Dodge Nature Preserve, Marthaler Park, the library, Thompson Oaks Golf Course and parks to the east.
- **Parking.** Parking lots should maintain a strong urban architectural edge by keeping parking behind or between buildings. Parking ideally would be accessible from side streets, and/or mid-block from a single access point.
- **Main Street.** A main street expression should maintain a strong architectural edge along the street, consisting of a landscaped median and intersections articulated with decorative paving.
- **Streetscape.** Several concepts are presented for streetscape elements and treatments. The design of these elements are still pertinent and based on components of the corridor's history and local icons. Future streetscape projects should utilize the elements defined in this document.

2. Livable Communities Planning Event

In 1999, a Livable Communities Planning Event was conducted in West St. Paul to assist the community in identifying issues pertinent to the redevelopment of South Robert Street. Community concerns included:

- Too many auto-oriented businesses
- Need for a short-term fix
- Need for senior, teen, children and community gathering places
- Improve safety on South Robert Street
- Desire for Main Street
- Need to relate to neighboring communities
- State owned right-of-way, where will the traffic go?
- Need to encourage new businesses to locate on South Robert Street
- Pedestrian safety demands safe street crossings
- Get property owners to cooperate
- Need better communication with the community to alter apathy towards planning efforts
- Change aging businesses
- There is the perception of economic problems, although commerce is healthy
- Limited lot sizes
- Need to improve zoning requirements
- Need family restaurants
- Need bakery
- Need turn lane or passing lane at Thompson and South Robert and Butler and South Robert
- Need to address livability rather than dealing with cosmetics
- Kmart and Signal Hills opportunities
- Robert Street should be welcoming to all citizens
- Less curb cuts
- Need for turn lane markings and a curb
- Include property owners of vacant properties in the study
- Are commercial taxes too high?
- Need more lighting for night safety

B. Historical Summary

"The city's most traveled highway, South Robert Street, takes its name from Captain Louis Robert, a French fur trader who moved to St. Paul in 1844 and purchased a portion of the original townsite at what is now Kellogg Boulevard and Robert Street. The West St. Paul portion of Robert was known as Eaton Avenue until the late 1880s, while the St. Paul territory was identified as Ducas Street."¹

In 1856, land in West St. Paul went up for sale, and farmers looking for a location close to St. Paul were eager to claim farmland. While South Robert Street was not the first street in West St. Paul, upon its establishment in the 1880s, it quickly became the "Main Street" of the City, linking local farmers directly to St. Paul markets.

"The city fathers chose to locate the first City Hall on the corner of Orme and South Robert, then known as Eaton Avenue, in 1889. In the years between 1890, when Robert was first graded through at a width of eighty feet from Annapolis to Orme, and the end of the First World War, the thoroughfare ended at Mendota Road. A winding trail took over at that point which crossed the hills and valleys toward Rosemount. In 1920, the street was extended past Mendota Road to the south, and in 1922, the entire road was paved with concrete to a width of 46 feet from Annapolis to Arion and then, in a slightly narrower width, all the way to the city limits."¹

Other key elements in South Robert Street's history are outlined in Figure II-1.

¹Source: Dakota County Historical Society. *The Evolution of South Robert Street: From Farmland to Fast Food*. St. Paul, MN: Dakota County Historical Society, May 1994.

Historical Context

-S. Robert St. first known as Eaton St.

-Annapolis and S. Robert St. first center of commerce and nightlife in early 1900's. Had the first saloon (Krey's). Langula Hardware est. 1912 still in existence. Langula was a blacksmith. Every Christmas he put a large decorated Christmas tree in a manhole on S. Robert St. to attract business.

-Old Twins Theatre location 1939 at corner of Hurley.

-Baseball Field prior to Twins Theatre

-Baseball Field at corner of S. Robert St. and Arion.

-Site of Premo Farm.

-Hurley's Hill- skiing, sledding.

-Signal Hills named for Dakota mounds used as signal stations to communicate with the village of Kaposia and the settlement in Mendota.

-First City Hall (1889-1971) at corner of Orme and S. Robert St. at Firestone.

-S. Robert St. Site of community activities such as the Booya, Turkey Throw and Dog Derby.

-Stassen Farm at Granny's Donuts.

-Lothenbach Farmhouse at Taco Bell.

-Cabbage farm at Target.

-Old Post Café location 1930's-1950's at Cub Foods.



South Robert Street



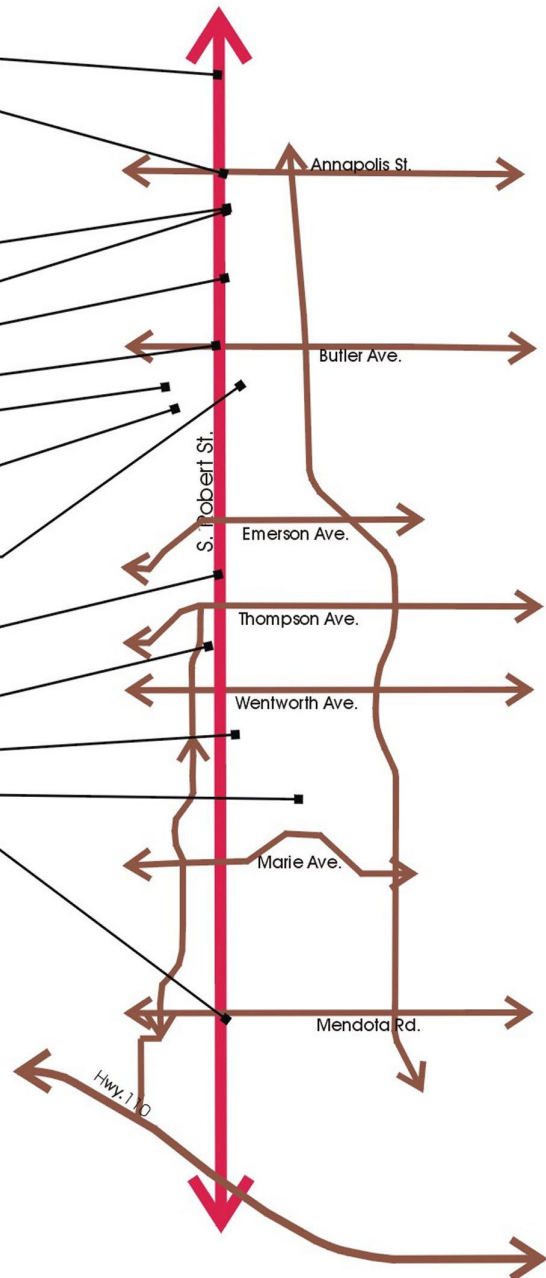
Old Twins Theatre



"The Strip"



Old City Hall



SOUTH ROBERT ST. CORRIDOR
Historical Context

Source: *The Evolution of South Robert Street: From Farmland to Fast Food.*

Figure II-1

C. Community Design Workshop

On April 10, 2000, a Community Design Workshop was held at the West St. Paul City Hall. The focus of the workshop was to involve the community in the formulation of the redevelopment strategy by presenting preliminary concept plans for each district and gathering comments and criticisms as design input. Feedback was elicited both formally and informally via open discussion, a Visual Preference Survey, an issues workshop and a Redevelopment Strategy Survey.

1. Issues Workshop

After preliminary redevelopment concepts for all three districts had been reviewed, participants divided into groups based on their particular area of interest: North District, Signal Hills District or the South District. Each group was requested to list its comments and recommendations for its selected district. A summary of the recommendations can be found i at the beginning of Chapters VI through VIII.

2. Redevelopment Strategy Survey

A questionnaire was distributed to workshop participants to quantitatively gather responses to preliminary concepts. More specific data on shopping and living patterns along the corridor were also elicited. By tabulating the responses to the Redevelopment Strategy Survey, specific goals and priorities could be deduced. Design parameters were listed in order of priority based on the survey results for each set of questions. Refer to the appendices for survey results.

3. Visual Preference Survey

The workshop was initiated with a Visual Preference Survey, a tool that enables the community to select those components of the urban environment that contribute to the overall image of the city. These components include site planning, architectural style and materials, signs, setbacks, landscaping, parking treatments, and other design components. Participants rated 80 slides depicting a broad range of urban landscapes in West St. Paul and other cities. The slides were grouped into six categories: General Image and Character, Building and Parking Lot Placement, Parking Lot Treatments, Building Types, Signs, and Streetscape.

Workshop participants rated each slide on a scale of +3 for "most preferred" to -3 for "least preferred." The results were tabulated and the slides projected again in order of preference to further reach a consensus for the preferred development patterns and character of components needed to shape South Robert Street's visual landscape. The components deemed appropriate for South Robert Street are incorporated into the urban design strategy and design guidelines, as well as future zoning amendments for South Robert Street. The three most preferred images and the three least preferred images for each category are depicted on the following pages.

General Image and Character

Most Preferred Images



(Score +74)

- + parking lot screening
- + shade trees
- + mix of materials
- + bump-outs
- + planter



(Score +71)

- + composition of elements
- + water feature
- + clock landmark
- + brickwork



(Score +67)

- + high-quality architecture
- + multi-family housing
- + green space between units
- + perpendicular to street

Least Preferred Images



(Score -59)

- narrow sidewalk
- not pedestrian-friendly
- no landscaping
- barrage of signage



(Score -56)

- no separation between walk and street
- no landscaping
- car-oriented environment



(Score -44)

- wide street
- deep building setbacks
- minimal streetscape

Building and Parking Lot Placement

Most Preferred Images



(Score +71)

- + parking lot screening
- + bump-outs extend pedestrian realm
- + only two rows of parking
- + varying building massing



(Score +43)

- + pedestrian gateway entrance
- + two rows of parking
- + varying building massing

Least Preferred Images



(Score -41)

- immense parking lot
- distance too great between walkway and building
- no landscaping



(Score -18)

- parking in front of building
- no buffering between street and parking
- minimal landscaping

Parking Lot Treatments

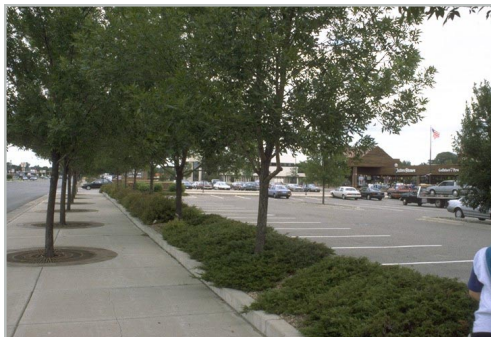
Most Preferred Images



(Score +75)

+ railing buffers parking
+ use of brick

+ street trees buffer parking
from street



(Score +72)

+ trees and shrubs
buffer parking

+ curb buffers parking
+ street trees buffer parking
from street



(Score +52)

+ trees and mulch
buffer parking
+ broken low brick wall

buffer
+ rhythmic use of trees and
wall

Least Preferred Images



(Score -79)

-minimal differentiation between pedestrian and
vehicular realm
-numerous curb cuts



(Score -35)

-sparse landscape materials
-narrow boulevard
-sea of parking

Building Types

Most Preferred Images



(Score +67)

- + variety of quality materials
- + windows on the street
- + canopies for shade and signage
- + well-marked corner entrance
- + mixed-use expression



(Score +57)

- + pedestrian-scaled building
- + "dignified" architecture for fast food business
- + strong entrances from both street and parking
- + windows on street
- + parking on side
- + generous landscaping



(Score +55)

- + strong building form
- + use of brick
- + clearly marked entrances

Least Preferred Images



(Score -85)

- big box architecture
- building has no relationship to street
- scaled for autos, not people



(Score -34)

- anonymous strip mall architecture
- minimum windows on street
- entry unclear



(Score -25)

- big box architecture
- no windows on street
- monotonous facade

Signs

Most Preferred Images



(Score +74)

- + monument signage
- + use of stone and brick
- + detailing relates to architecture
- + landscaping incorporated with sign



(Score +55)

- + hanging sign
- + appealing colors and subject matter
- + extends architecture into the street



(Score +51)

- + monument signage
- + unified materials and massing

Least Preferred Images



(Score -81)

- scaled for maximum sight distances
- highway scale
- "loud" colors and graphics
- isolated context



(Score -57)

- entire building is a sign
- "loud" colors and graphics



(Score -53)

- consolidated signage
- confusing
- not pedestrian-scaled
- isolated context

Streetscape

Most Preferred Images



(Score +83)

- + variety of flowers and trees
- + unique bus shelter
- + medians
- + use of benches, banners, decorative lighting



(Score +75)

- + compact, pedestrian scale
- + outdoor eating area and parallel parking buffer pedestrians from traffic
- + windows on the street
- + use of canopies, decorative lighting, umbrellas and trees



(Score +37)

- + landscaped median and boulevard
- + overstory trees enclose street corridor
- + pedestrian-scaled street

Least Preferred Images



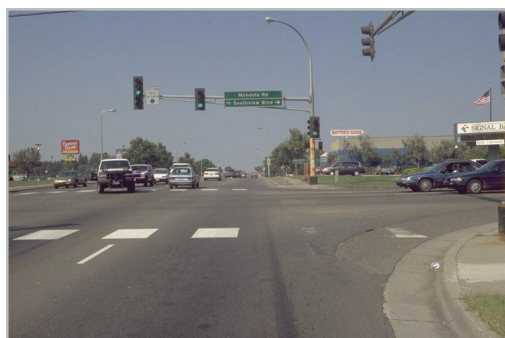
(Score -72)

- no landscaping
- narrow boulevard
- no separation between parking and pedestrian realm
- neighborhood selected lights



(Score -70)

- no landscaping
- narrow boulevard
- auto-dominated environment
- no distinct and positive identity



(Score -49)

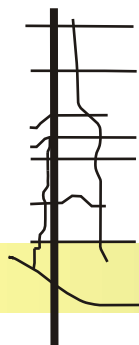
- anonymous architecture
- narrow median
- auto-dominated environment
- large lot, sprawling development

D. Summary of Findings From Market Analysis

The following are key market findings identified through our research for the South Robert Street Corridor. For additional information, please refer to the Market Research Study in the Appendices.

- The primary South Robert Street Draw Area consists of West St. Paul and the communities of South St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights, Sunfish Lake, Mendota, Lilydale, and the southern portions of St. Paul (including the Cherokee Neighborhood).
- The existing retail base along the South Robert Street Corridor is substantial in terms of total square footage (approximately 886,000 sq. ft.). This amount of square footage is nearly equal to that of a large sub-regional shopping mall, such as Eden Prairie Center (861,426) or Northtown Mall in Blaine (808,000 square feet). The current retail focus of the Corridor is both “value-” and “auto-” oriented. The use of the term “auto-oriented” not only refers to retail uses serving vehicles, but those that are also heavily-based on the convenience of using the automobile to access the good or service (such as fast-food restaurants).
- At one time, the Corridor was used heavily as a commuter route to and from Downtown St. Paul. The Lafayette Freeway has displaced much of the commuter traffic off South Robert Street. Current estimates are that “through” trips account for only about 10 to 15 percent of the trips that are occurring along the Corridor. This implies that nearly all of the traffic on South Robert Street is either accessing the commercial base and/or traveling to residential neighborhoods east and west of South Robert Street.
- The draw area identified for the South Robert Street Corridor primarily reflects its current function as a neighborhood shopping area, although some businesses draw customers from a much broader area than has been identified initially. Growth in second- and third-tier suburban communities has precipitated the development of new neighborhood and community shopping districts that have eroded the dominance of retail in the South Robert Street Corridor.
- The historical development pattern reflected a Corridor that was originally utilized as a regional shopping district by a relatively large suburban market due to very little competition. As new retail developments have opened in the heart of the growing household base, fewer regional shoppers travel to Robert Street regularly to conduct their shopping. Many remain closer to home. This pattern is consistent with the travelshed analysis conducted, which shows the most convenient travel area for South Robert Street to be within a 5- to 10-minute distance from South Robert Street.
- The Corridor is fully-developed. However, access to many of the businesses along the Corridor is confusing and difficult. The analysis of the retail market situation revealed that retail usage patterns in the Corridor have changed somewhat due to shifts in traffic patterns, limited growth in the retail draw, and an increase in competitive shopping districts in second-tier suburbs. A substantial amount of retail exists in the Corridor now. Consumer difficulty with access and visibility has resulted in a preponderance of some uses in the Corridor.
- Market potential figures for retail and office in the Corridor have been calculated, and reflect an overall reduction in the total amount of commercial square footage over time. The character and pattern of traffic has already shifted; businesses interviewed for this analysis have noted the market shifts as well. As the City encourages a more pedestrian-friendly development pattern, the mix and type of commercial uses will change to respond to this market.
- The Corridor will continue to primarily serve the neighborhoods in closest proximity to it for neighborhood (convenience-oriented) goods and services. In addition, the Corridor will support its share of specialty goods and services that will draw from a larger trade area.
- Additional commercial development can be supported on the Corridor, but new development will be focused on providing goods and services in new formats that are not currently available on the Corridor and/or through relocation of existing businesses which identify market opportunities for upgrading and expansion.

- Trends that are currently having an impact on retail development in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area include 1) redevelopment of successful neighborhood retail districts to improve and enhance visual appeal, pedestrian orientation and enhance the retail mix; 2) convenience and proximity instead of only price as consumers begin to resist long commutes and additional time spent shopping far away from home.



III. Transportation

III. TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

A. Regional Context

South Robert Street in West St. Paul has played major, but differing roles in the regional transportation system over time. Prior to construction of the Lafayette Freeway (TH 52), South Robert Street was the primary market arterial moving north-south traffic to and from downtown St. Paul. This regional highway function shaped the roadway and much of the land use in the corridor. As the TH 52 freeway was completed, South Robert Street became a parallel minor arterial route in the regional system, although still retaining trunk highway designation as TH 952 through West St. Paul. Within the current Metropolitan Council system of functional class, South Robert Street is an A-Minor Reliever Arterial. Reliever routes are defined as "*minor arterials that provide direct relief for traffic on major metropolitan highways.*"¹ Within Mn/DOT's *Transportation System Plan*, South Robert Street is slated as a preservation route, meaning that it is not scheduled for capacity expansion, and is designated as a candidate for jurisdictional reassignment to Dakota County (although no formal memorandum of understanding has been developed).² In the context of reassignment, the portion of South Robert Street in Ramsey County (north of Annapolis Street) does have existing memoranda of understanding for transfer in 2001 to 2003.

Within the Dakota County system, five of the major cross streets along the portion of South Robert Street in West St. Paul are designated as county roads. Starting at the north end, Butler Avenue; Thompson Avenue, east of South Robert; Wentworth Avenue; and Mendota Road are County roads. Wentworth Avenue is a B-Minor Arterial and the others are Collectors. Access to TH 52 is provided via a diamond interchange at Butler Avenue, a split diamond at Thompson/Wentworth, and a diamond interchange at Mendota Road. These four streets also provide the only east/west crossing of the freeway between West St. Paul and South St. Paul.

As a regional roadway, South Robert Street continues to play a major, although less important, role than it did prior to the completion of the TH 52 freeway. It's context has shifted to the subregional stage of the northern end of Dakota County and it continues to be a key route linking St. Paul with other cities in that part of the county.

B. Travel Markets and Volume Patterns

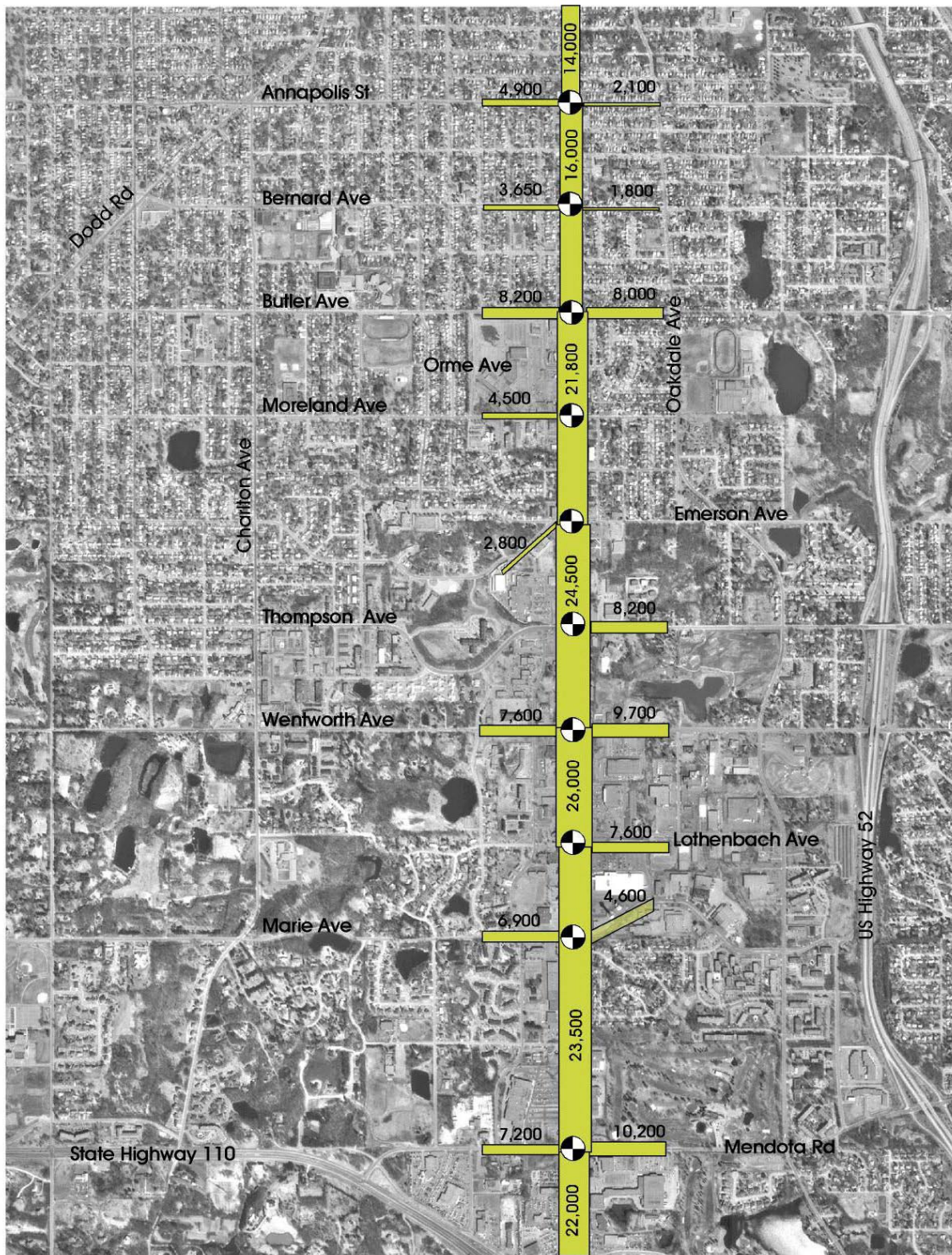
Traffic using South Robert Street has been analyzed to determine what volume patterns are present and to ascertain what travel markets are served by the street. Travel markets can be viewed as the underlying origin-destination patterns of traffic within the regional area. As individual travel markets layer onto the street system, they result in the volume patterns that are visible in traffic counts along South Robert Street. While the volume patterns are the basic level of traffic data needed to evaluate the adequacy of the roadway from a design standpoint, the travel market movement patterns that make up the volumes provide additional information that is used to focus improvement concepts. For example, the more end-to-end through traffic on the street, the greater the emphasis on arranging design elements and traffic signal operation to minimize overall delay on the street. Conversely, if much of the traffic is shown to be using only short portions of the street, then the benefit of minimizing end-to-end delay is of minimal benefit and efforts should focus on facilitating access to and from the street.

Current two-way average daily traffic (ADT) volumes range from 14,000 vehicles per day (vpd) north of Annapolis Street to 26,000 vpd south of Wentworth Avenue. As shown in Figure III-1, traffic volumes are relatively constant in the 14,000 to 16,000 vpd range north of Butler Avenue, but increase south of Butler Avenue to 22,000 vpd and climb to 26,000 vpd before dropping back to 22,000 vpd at the south end of the corridor. Evaluation of the major cross streets shows volumes of between 1,800 and 10,200 vpd. Butler, Thompson, and Wentworth Avenues and Mendota Road show the highest volumes (8,000 to 10,000 vpd).

Review of historic volume patterns shows that South Robert Street served similar volume levels prior to the construction of the TH 52 freeway. Over a ten-year period following freeway construction, the volumes on South Robert Street declined initially and then rebounded to current levels, which have remained stable. Looking to the future,

¹ Metropolitan Council, *Transportation Policy Plan*, December 1996.

² Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Division, *Transportation System Plan*, January 1997



 Signalized Intersection



EXISTING AVERAGE DAILY
TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Figure III-1

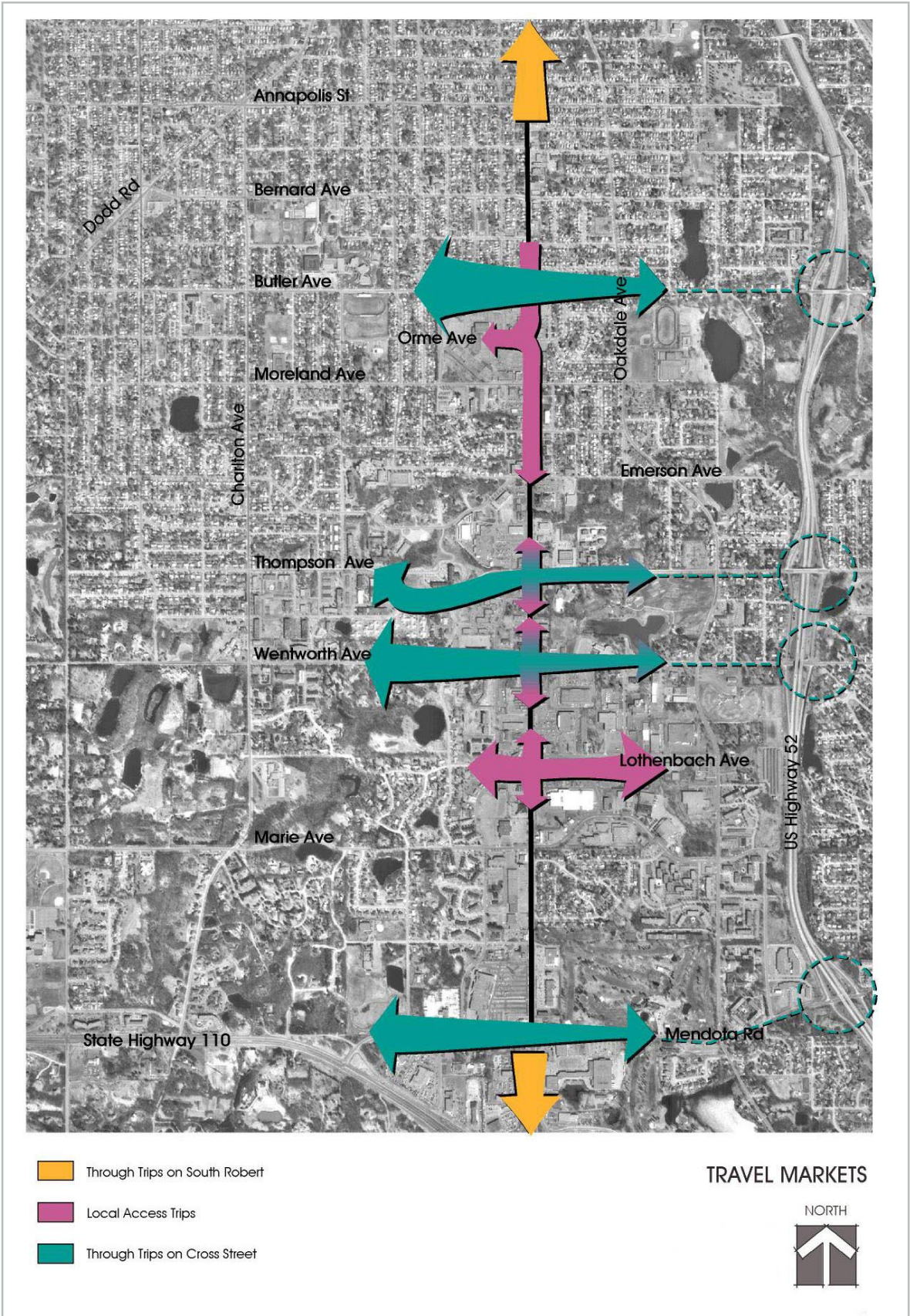


Figure III-2

the Dakota County Transportation Plan forecasts only nominal growth in traffic volume on South Robert Street between 2000 and 2015, which is reflective of the mature nature of the community. The market potential for the corridor (see Findings of Market Analysis in the Appendices) shows a slight net reduction in the amount of retail and commercial in the corridor and a potential increase in the number of residential units over the next ten years. The changes in traffic from these two shifts essentially cancel each other and provide for only nominal traffic growth from changes in land use, more so to the northern end of the corridor.

Evaluation of the underlying travel markets was conducted using the Dakota County transportation model. From this analysis, end-to-end through traffic on South Robert Street is shown to be in the range of 10 to 20 percent of the total traffic volume on South Robert Street. Such a volume level would equate to about one-half lane of roadway in each direction. By comparison, between 60 and 90 percent on TH 52 is through traffic between Mendota Road and Annapolis Street, while only about 5 percent of the traffic on Charlton Avenue (a parallel local street west of South Robert Street) is through in the same segment.

Historically, the through traffic percentage on South Robert Street was much higher, but has declined over time as longer distance through trips moved over to the TH 52 freeway. Since traffic volumes are holding at historic levels and through trips have declined as a percentage of overall trips, the street is serving other travel markets.

The travel market analysis shows two underlying patterns of travel on South Robert Street in addition to through trips. One market is for freeway access to/from TH 52 that focuses on Butler Street, Butler, Thompson, and Wentworth Avenues and Mendota Road as illustrated in Figure III-2. These streets are connections to portion of West St. Paul that lies west of South Robert Street. The other market is for local service to retail/commercial land uses in the corridor. This latter market is focused on two nodes of activity, one in the Signal Hills area and the other between Wentworth and Marie Avenues.

These three travel markets combine to produce the current traffic volume patterns visible on South Robert Street (see Figure III-2). The following findings are of importance:

- The low through volumes in relation to the volume of trips to/from local land uses and to the strong crossing volumes along freeway access corridors. These elements collectively de-emphasize the value of end-to-end mobility in the corridor and focus attention on moving vehicles between points in the corridor and on adequate crossing capacity.
- The relationship between the travel markets and the volume projections for the corridor is of similar importance. The low through percentage means that growth in traffic from outside the corridor has a limited and minimal effect on traffic growth in the corridor.
- The crossing patterns will remain stable over the next ten years, since the population base in the area west of South Robert Street is representative of the mature nature of West St. Paul. The travel market associated with local land uses will grow or decline proportional to changes in those land uses, which means that the traffic effects of the corridor plan will be largely localized and can be addressed within the context of the overall planning framework.

C. Traffic Operations and Geometric Design Considerations

South of Butler Avenue, South Robert Street is a five-lane cross-section that has two travel lanes in each direction separated by a center two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL). Curb parking is not allowed in this section of the street. The cross-section changes north of Butler Avenue to a three-lane configuration with curb parking allowed. The center TWLTL continues, but only one through lane is provided in each direction. The speed limit along South Robert Street is 40 mph in the section between Mendota Road to Marie Avenue and drops to 30 mph north of Marie Avenue. Cross street intersections are signalized at Annapolis Street, Bernard, Butler, Moreland, Emerson, Thompson, Wentworth, Lothenbach, and Marie Avenues, and Mendota Road. Unsignalized intersections along the road are controlled by stop signs on only the minor street approaches.

Traffic volumes were evaluated along South Robert Street and at signalized intersections to determine if the

roadway is adequately sized and if traffic operations are at appropriate levels. From a main line volume standpoint, the existing street cross-sections are appropriate for the projected traffic volume patterns on the street. There is a reduction in volume north of Butler Avenue that corresponds to the change in cross-section and allows the segment to the north to function adequately as a three-lane roadway. The five-lane section to the south of Butler Avenue is appropriate for the volume of traffic using the route. There are a large number of driveways along South Robert Street that are served by the center TWLTL configuration. Future configurations (see Improvement Scenarios below) consider how the center lane space could be utilized as a combination of medians and dedicated left-turn lanes. However, until a consolidation of access is achieved along the corridor, the TWLTL will be needed to provide for safe operations. The speed limits in place on the street are appropriate to the character of the cross section and to the number of access points along the street segments. Under the future configurations, the segment north of Butler Avenue may more appropriately be zoned for 30 mph (down from 35 mph). The 35 mph segment from Butler Avenue to Marie Avenue is appropriate for the future configuration, as is the 40 mph segment south of Marie Avenue, provided that the recommended gateway treatments occur south of Marie Avenue.

Analysis of peak-hour traffic operations at the signalized intersections using the *Highway Capacity Manual*³ show that peak conditions are at acceptable levels of service and that queue conditions are moderate at most locations. Level of Service (LOS) is a scale that uses ratings of A (free flow/minimal delay) to F (jammed conditions) to describe traffic operations at intersections and along streets and freeways. Urban conditions generally consider LOS D to be the limit of acceptable operations for peak hour conditions. As shown in Figure III-4, the intersections along South Robert Street operate in LOS B and C conditions for the most part with the intersection of Moreland Avenue at LOS A in the peak. Volume levels vary widely along the corridor, which affects the amount of green time available at signals. The sizes of the circles in Figure III-4 address those intersections with relatively high volumes (Thompson, Wentworth, and Mendota) versus those with moderate to low volumes during peak periods.

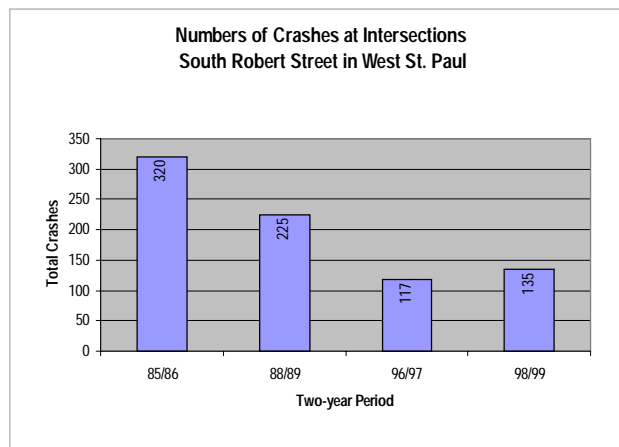


Figure III-3

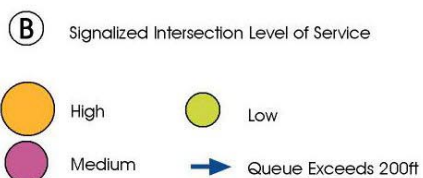
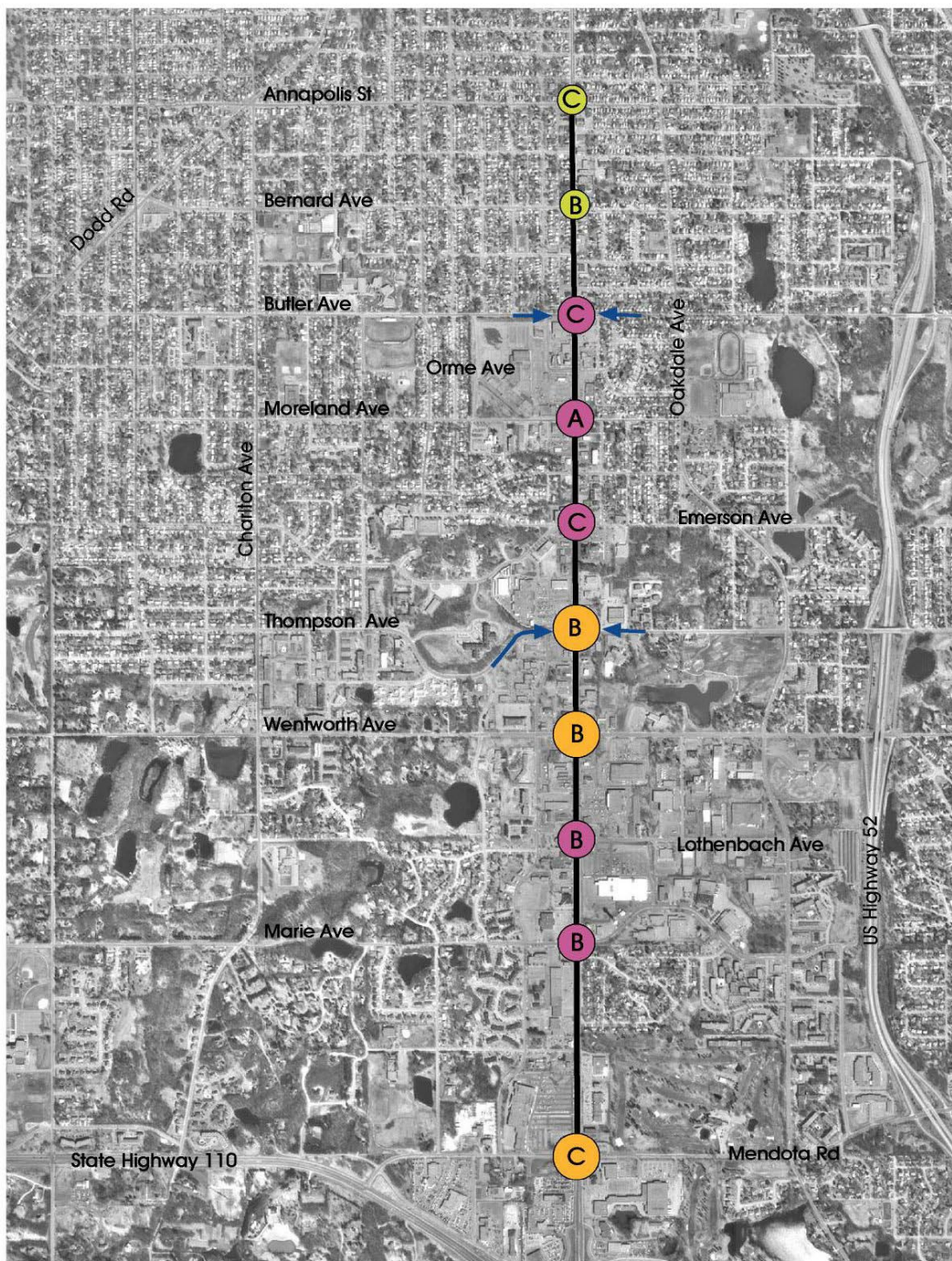
While the overall intersection LOS is at acceptable levels, the one-lane approaches on some of the cross streets are experiencing excessive queuing that is caused by through vehicles being trapped behind left-turning vehicles. At Butler and Thompson Avenues, the analyses indicate that maximum queues exceed 200 feet (about 10 vehicles) during the afternoon peak period on weekdays. While these conditions existing for only about five percent of the time, average queues do exceed five vehicles for about half of the time. Installation of left turn lanes on the cross street approaches would alleviate queuing in the through lanes, but would not appreciably improve the already good levels of service. Geometric constraints may limit the installation of turn lanes since the cross streets that do not have left turn lanes are narrow. Removal of curb parking to allow through traffic to bypass left-turning traffic is not recommended since doing so allows the left turning traffic to

block the sight lines of the through traffic as it approaches the intersection. Inadequate sight distance is a factor that contributes to increased crashes.

D. Crash Patterns

The pattern of crashes along South Robert Street was tracked extensively in the late 1980s when Mn/DOT was determining modifications to the roadway to reduce the rate of vehicle crashes. The initial work in 1985/1986 was used as the basis for installation of the center TWLTL and other intersection-related improvements.

³ Transportation Research Board, Special Report 209, *Highway Capacity Manual*, 1997



EXISTING INTERSECTION ACTIVITY
PM PEAK HOUR



Figure III-4

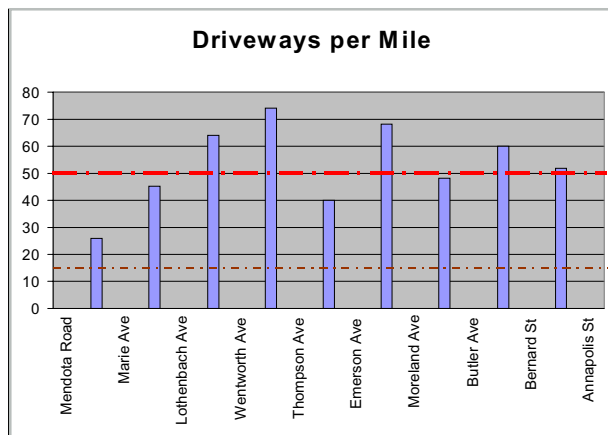


Figure III-5

The number of crashes dropped substantially following the TWLTL installation as noted by the 1988/1989 data in the chart. Analysis of more recent crash activity shows that there continue to be around 125 crashes per two-year period at intersections in the corridor, which is roughly half of the number in the earlier period. Since traffic volumes are currently similar to those in the late 1980s, this means that the crash rate has decreased from the earlier period.

In terms of current patterns, between 40 and 50 percent of the crashes in the corridor occur between intersections and appear to be highly related to the amount of direct driveway access to the street.

Mn/DOT has recently completed research that evaluates the density of driveways as a causal factor in crashes on state highways.⁴ As they looked at crash data for a sampling of roadways in the state, they found that for four-lane urban conventional roadways with left turn lanes there were patterns in the data that suggested that roads with driveway densities of 0 to 15 per mile had lower than average crash rates and that roads with more than 50 per mile had rates higher than the average.

Although the corridor for South Robert Street is only about 2.6 miles long, there are 60 to 70 driveways on each side of the road, which is equivalent to 50 driveways per mile. The density of driveways varies by location in the corridor and ranges from about 25 per mile up to an equivalent 75 per mile as shown in the following chart. This suggests that most of the corridor can expect to have average crash rates at best and that some segments will have above average crash rates.

E. Transit/Pedestrian/Bicycle Considerations

The corridor is served by Metro Transit regular service for routes 5, 7, and 8. There is a park and ride and timed transfer point at Signal Hills mall near Butler Avenue that is served by the three routes, and park and rides along Oakdale south of Thompson that are served by the 8. Route 29 provides parallel service along Oakdale and Butler.

Between Thompson and Butler, the density of service becomes greater as the three routes overlap. North of Butler, only the 8 provides service on South Robert Street, as the 5 and the 7 move to other streets. South of Thompson, the 5 provides limited service and only the 8 provides regular service to Mendota Road, where the route turns to the east.

1. Transit

Transit accommodations in the corridor consist of marked stops and a limited number of shelters. The right of way for South Robert Street is relatively narrow in relation to the pavement cross-section south of Butler Avenue, which leaves only minimal room for pedestrian accommodation. Transit patrons at stops along South Robert are waiting adjacent to the roadway with little separation or buffer from the traffic lanes. Room for standard shelters is not available along large segments of the corridor. The

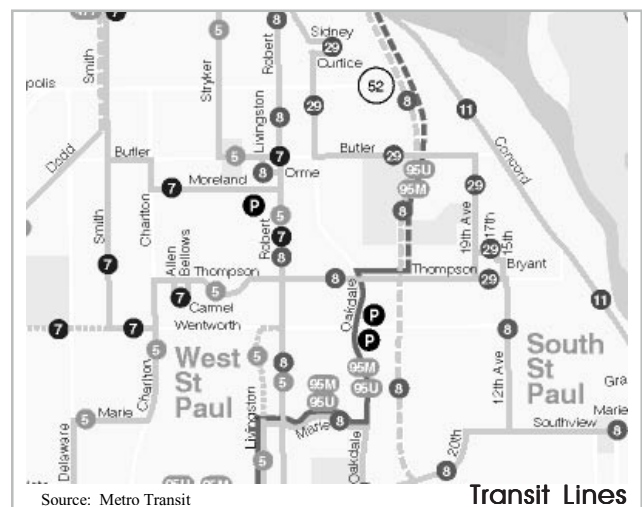


Figure III-6

⁴ Minnesota Department of Transportation and BRW, Inc., *Statistical Relationship between Vehicular Crashes and Highway Access*, August 1998.

route pattern requires buses to turn on and off South Robert Street along the corridor, which places geometric constraints on the placement of turn lanes and parking on the narrower cross streets along the corridor, if the buses are not to encroach on opposing traffic.

2. Pedestrian Facilities

While sidewalks are present throughout the corridor, the pedestrian environment is relatively hostile. Sidewalks range from three to five feet in width and are separated only minimally (four to five feet) from the travel lanes because of the narrow right of way for South Robert Street. Insufficient width is available in the 4- to 5-foot boulevard strip for plantings, so the relative buffer effect afforded by the strip is minimal.

3. Bicycle Routes

Bicycle routes in the corridor are present only on Wentworth Avenue east of South Robert Street where an off-road trail is provided that connects to the Dakota County Library site. The pavement width on South Robert Street is insufficient for bicycle accommodation, which makes the cycling environment along the street relatively hostile. Parallel routes (Oakdale and Livingston) are available that are more suitable for cyclist use along the length of the corridor. South of Emerson, Oakdale carries an off-road trail to Wentworth and an on-road lane to the south.

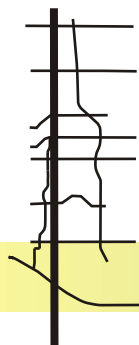
Considerations for development of the concepts will require close coordination with Mn/DOT Metropolitan Division and with Dakota County since both of these agencies have or will have jurisdiction over the roadway. In that context, the potential for jurisdictional reassignment ("turnback") also provides the opportunity to achieve the longer term vision for the roadway through that process. To do so, it is incumbent upon the City to clearly articulate the vision for the corridor and to put in place the plans and development controls that will bring the development pattern along the corridor into alignment with the modified roadway design.

F. Key Findings

- **Volume Patterns.** Average Daily Traffic ranges from 14,000 vehicles per day (vpd) at the north end to 26,000 vpd south end. The Dakota County Plan shows only nominal traffic growth between 2000 and 2015, which is reflective of the mature nature of the West St. Paul community and the decreased low through traffic percentage on South Robert Street.
- **Travel Markets.** Through traffic accounts for 10 to 20 percent of traffic on South Robert Street and is equivalent to one lane of roadway. The majority of traffic is for local service to corridor retail/services. The local service traffic combines with traffic that accesses TH 52 at Butler Avenue, Thompson/Wentworth Avenues, and Mendota Road.
- Existing street cross section is appropriate for projected traffic volume patterns. Volumes decrease north of Butler Avenue, which coincides with the change from a five-lane cross section to a three-lane cross section.
- **Traffic Operations.** Intersections along the corridor are at acceptable levels of service (generally at LOS B or C), but the one-lane approaches on the cross streets cause queuing if left-turning traffic is present in any appreciable volume. Multiple driveways along South Robert Street are a major issue that has been mitigated to a certain extent by the two-way left turn lane that was added to the street. The speed limits along South Robert Street are 40 mph in the section between Mendota Road and Marie Avenue and 35 mph north of Marie Avenue and are appropriate to the character of the cross section and to the number of access points along the street segments. Under the proposed future configurations, the segment north of Butler Avenue may more appropriately be zoned for 30 mph (down from 35 mph).
- **Crash Patterns.** Crash rates dropped when the center turn lane was added in the late 1980s. Analysis of more recent crash activity shows that there continue to be around 125 crashes per two-year period at intersections in the corridor, which is roughly half of the number in the earlier period. Since traffic volumes are

currently similar to those in the late 1980s, this means that the crash rate has decreased from the earlier period. In terms of current patterns, between 40 and 50 percent of the crashes in the corridor occur between intersections and appear to be highly related to the amount of direct driveway access to the street.

- **Transit.** The corridor is served by Metro Transit routes 5, 7, and 8 via local stops and a park and ride and timed transfer point at Signal Hills Mall near Butler Avenue. Route 29 provides parallel service along Oakdale and Butler. Transit accommodations in the corridor consist of marked stops and a limited number of shelters.
- **Pedestrian.** The pedestrian environment is relatively hostile with sidewalks ranging from three to five feet in width and separated only minimally (four to five feet) from the travel lanes because of the narrow right of way for South Robert Street. Insufficient width is available in the 4- to 5-foot boulevard strip for plantings, so the relative buffer effect afforded by the strip is minimal.
- **Bicycle.** Designated routes in the corridor are present only on Wentworth Avenue east of South Robert Street where an off-road trail is provided that connects to the Dakota County Library site. The pavement width on South Robert Street is insufficient for bicycle accommodation, which makes the cycling environment along the street relatively hostile. Parallel routes (Oakdale and Livingston) are available that are more suitable for cyclist use along the length of the corridor. South of Emerson, Oakdale carries an off-road trail to Wentworth and an on-road bicycle lane to the south.
- **Improvement Concepts.** Focuses on development of a modified 64-foot cross-section for the roadway to provide space for medians, where they could be introduced. Curb parking is retained north of Butler Avenue and there is the potential for a widened curb lane for bicycle accommodation south of Butler Avenue. Consolidation of driveways along South Robert Street has been suggested to allow for installation of a center median. Recommendation for an ultimate block grid of 1,200 feet (existing) spacing of signalized intersections with 600 feet nominal spacing of unsignalized intersections serving businesses and 300 feet spacing of right-in/right-out shared driveways has been made. Restriping of cross streets to add left turn lanes where feasible without affecting transit operations has also been suggested.
- **Implementation Considerations.** Development of the concepts will have to include close coordination with Mn/DOT Metropolitan Division and with Dakota County since both of these agencies have or will have jurisdiction over the roadway. Funding is potentially possible through either the turnback process via Dakota County or the use of non-Trunk Highway STP funding that Mn/DOT could support without being the lead agency. State Aid Standards would control under the turnback process, while the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) process and Trunk Highway Standards would control the STP funds. A third scenario is possibly available in which the project could qualify for CMAQ or Enhancement funds that are set aside by the TAB for Livable Communities projects, which would require a joint application to the Metropolitan Council by the City, Mn/DOT, and Dakota County.



IV. Design Principles

IV. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

A. Development Patterns

1. Conventional Suburban Development Patterns

As with most suburban commercial areas, the existing South Robert Street area is characterized by widely spaced buildings set back and isolated from the street in order to accommodate parking lots. Since land uses are compartmentalized, residents are forced to make most trips by car. As a result, streets and signs have been designed to accommodate the automobile, creating a cluttered environment lacking a distinct sense of place.

The ultimate challenge for a suburban environment is to balance the functional needs of vehicles with those of pedestrians, to create a sense of personal safety and comfort while also nurturing a memorable image, to define a focus to the area, to reduce clutter and to foster a sense of community pride.



Conventional suburban development pattern

2. Traditional Community Development Patterns

Traditional urban environments are characterized by a compact building pattern that strongly delineates the street corridor and creates a comfortable pedestrian environment. Rich in local history, South Robert Street is the symbol and identifiable center of West St. Paul, and the setting for civic and cultural activities.



Traditional community development pattern

Unfortunately, the need to accommodate greater volumes of traffic and parking have diluted the potency of South Robert Street as an urban setting. The sensitive treatment of the pedestrian realm and placement and design of new buildings will be necessary to reinforce the traditional urban development pattern.

3. The Public Realm and Responsible Architecture

Many of the design principles presented in this redevelopment strategy strive to form a positive image of the city through improvement of the public realm and streetscape. The public realm's design is shaped by parks and open space, street corridors, parking lots, sidewalks, signs, landscaping, streetscapes, and the interrelationship between differing land uses. If public realm elements are well-designed, they create a positive image, foster a safe and pleasant environment, support the community, and make the city more livable.

Each new structure, whether a gas station, fast food restaurant or museum, influences the character of the public realm and contributes to or detracts from the overall image of the city. New construction and redevelopment sites along South Robert Street possess a number of identical design concerns, the solutions to which are basic elements in any design effort. However, they require the careful attention of a project designer and site plan review authority.

A building's physical characteristics, such as height, shape, width, and bulk, influence its ability to successfully integrate into its surroundings. Significant differences among any of these primary characteristics may disrupt the established scale and character of an area. Each new building and major addition should be reviewed in terms of its placement, shape, scale, materials, details, its relationship to its surroundings, and contribution toward a positive image.

B. Livable Communities Design Principles

The South Robert Street Redevelopment Project is partially funded by a Livable Communities Grant, which was awarded by the LCDA (Livable Communities Demonstration Account) of the Livable Communities Fund, administered by the Metropolitan Council. The LCDA funds are an incentive for communities to adopt "smart growth" principles that integrate mixed-use redevelopment with transit, bicycles, pedestrians and cars. The LCDA's program guidelines were reinterpreted for this project to create four basic principles upon which the study builds:



Principle 1: Shape the redevelopment framework with a hierarchy of interconnected streets and open spaces.

- Design streets to balance the needs of cars, buses, trucks, pedestrians, people who use wheelchairs and walkers, cyclists and community events.
- Connect uses to transit to provide people with alternative means to get to shopping, recreation, home and places of work.



Principle 2: Make Development Compact

- Connect rather than separate uses, to allow for functional relationships and accessibility between them.
- Build more compact developments appropriate to the location, with attention to the design and relationships of structures to each other.
- Infill underutilized areas or retrofit land uses that result in more compact development.



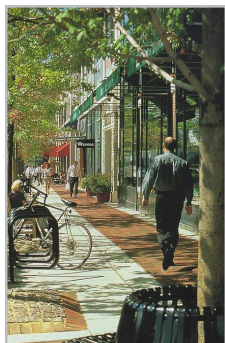
Principle 3: Mix Uses

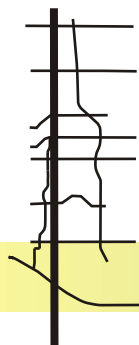
- Include a variety of uses and destinations--shopping, workplaces, restaurants, entertainment venues, civic uses, cultural activities, parks and other spaces, and a variety of housing types and costs.
- Foster market synergy



Principle 4: Design for People

- Locate shops and other uses within walking distance of each other, and within walking distance of transit, where available.
- Orient businesses and other structures to the street for pedestrian accessibility, and provide convenient parking buffered from view. This creates safe, pleasant walking environments.
- Provide places for people to gather, including parks and other public open spaces, and a central place or neighborhood center that also provides a focus for community activities.





V. Corridor Framework Plan

V. CORRIDOR FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Corridor Framework Plan responds to the principles, objectives and preferences defined by the participants in this planning process, and illustrates a long-term plan for the revitalization of the South Robert Street corridor. In addition, the plan illustrates how the corridor fits within the context of the remainder of the city and surrounding communities. The following section presents recommendations for revitalizing the entire corridor. Specific plans and recommendations for the North, Signal Hills and South Districts are provided later in this document.

A. Primary Issues

Following are the primary issues which influence the Framework Plan phase:

- Excessive access points on South Robert Street create an environment that is hazardous to motorized traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.
- The right-of-way provides inadequate space for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and streetscape improvements.
- Small parcels possessing a variety of setbacks contribute to visual clutter, and limit the potential for redevelopment, shared access and parking.
- According to the City's Comprehensive Plan¹ and the Market Study, the corridor is zoned for an excessive amount of commercial land in a stabilized or possibly declining market.
- A more sustainable, long-term development model and condensed commercial area is needed.
- A long-term vision must be defined that will be supported with a strategy, framework plan, guidelines and ordinances.
- Short-term streetscape projects and developments, architectural guidelines and zoning amendments should reinforce the preferred long-term development pattern.

B. Corridor Framework Plan

1. Rezone from Commercial to Mixed-Use Land Use Districts

The current zoning code and land use plan designate the entire South Robert Street corridor for commercial uses. However, portions of the North district possess single-family and multi-family uses which are an integral part of the district's appeal. Although zoned commercial, some properties in the Signal Hills district possess heavily-wooded, steep slopes with significant grade changes that would be very difficult to develop as commercial uses.

The market study reveals a substantial amount of existing commercial development exists along the Corridor. As second- and third-tier suburban areas have grown, retail has been developed to follow the household base. Although South Robert Street retains its market position as a commercial shopping district, it competes more heavily with these newer shopping areas. Over time, increased competition and limited new growth will result in a repositioning of the Corridor to goods and services that will tap into currently underserved market niches. New commercial development will benefit from combining uses in close proximity to one another (residential/commercial) and there will be fewer single-use pads.

Three types of mixed-use designations should be adopted with standards that will foster the desired character of the North and Signal Hills Districts; the Town Center area; the gateway corridors on Butler, Thompson, and Wentworth Avenues; and the more automobile-oriented development south of Lothenbach Avenue in the South District. Recommended site planning, architectural and landscaping standards are listed in the Design Guidelines chapter in this document.

¹City of West St. Paul. *Comprehensive Plan*, September 25, 2000.

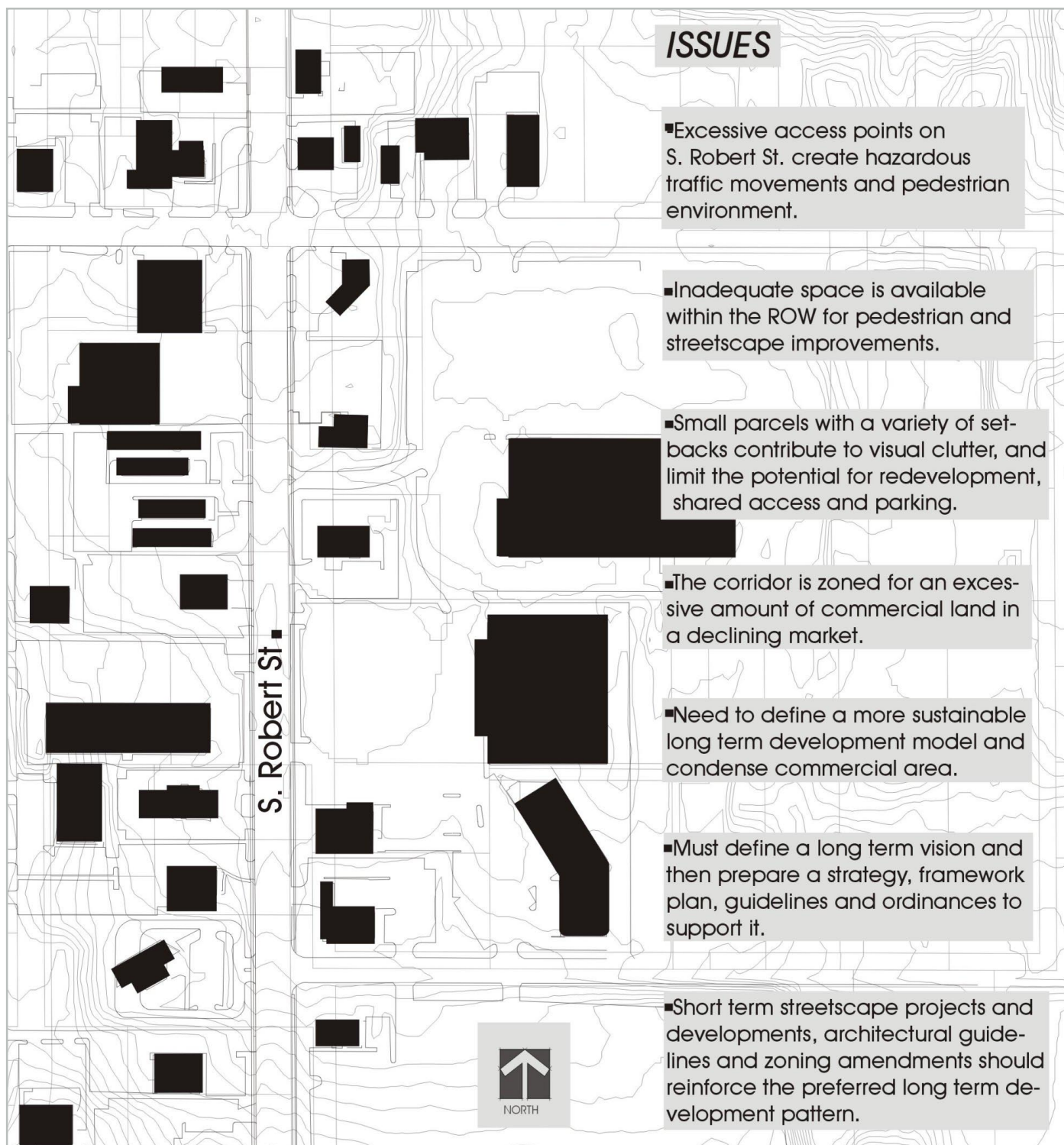


Figure V-1

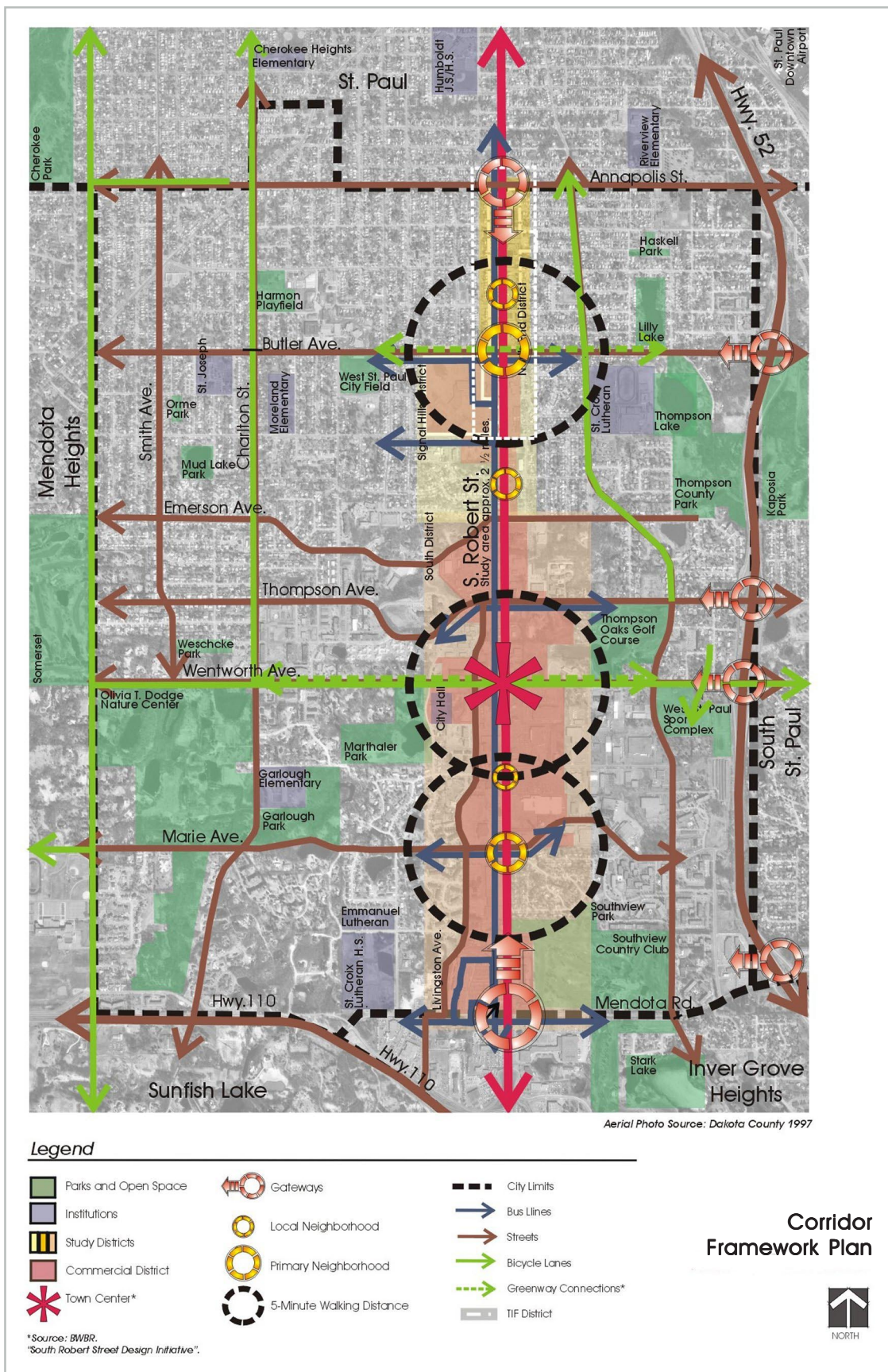


Figure V-2

2. Concentrate Mixed-Use Development in Nodes Around Primary Neighborhood Crossroads

Primary Neighborhood crossroads have been identified at Annapolis and Butler Avenues for the North District, around the shopping center area within the Signal Hills District, and at Thompson and Wentworth Avenues in the South District. The limited potential growth areas for commercial uses should be concentrated, along with residential and office uses, at these nodes to create identifiable neighborhood centers, promote market synergy, and compact centers of activity. A compact mixture of uses in combination with streetscape and open space improvements will foster safer, more livable neighborhoods and provide an environment more conducive to additional residential development.

3. Town Center Between Wentworth and Thompson Avenues

In keeping with the South Robert Street Design Initiative (adopted by the City in 1998), a Town Center is proposed between Wentworth and Thompson Avenues. This area is intended to be the primary focus of the community and takes advantage of current opportunities to integrate the existing City Hall, Library, and YWCA with a compact mixture of commercial, residential and office uses. A series of open spaces and trails will provide spaces for community gatherings, amenities to support residential development and connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Refer to the South District chapter for a more detailed description.

4. Promote Infill with Residential Uses

West St. Paul has a strong opportunity to capture its share of the projected regional population and household growth. Other first-ring suburbs of the Twin Cities have redeveloped parcels for housing and new commercial development that have been very successful. The same can be true for West St. Paul. Redevelopment offers the creation of new land available for residential development. Providing more land for residential uses benefits the corridor by increasing the population base and commercial market, creating a more diverse and vital environment, and providing more life-cycle housing choices. New building typologies, such as mixed-use senior's housing and retail complexes, live/work units and multi-family townhomes should be encouraged in order to tap the market demands which are reflecting changing demographic trends and diverse incomes. In 1995, households comprised of married couples with children accounted for only 25 percent of total households in the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s, household types have diversified, due to an increase in childless couples; more divorces, resulting in a higher proportion of single-parent households; and cohabitating individuals. By 2010, as the baby boom generation ages, it is estimated that one-third of total households will be empty-nesters. In addition, Generation X is postponing childbearing into their 30s. These trends have increased the need for housing alternatives to the traditional single-family home.

5. Street Improvement Concepts

- **Improvement Concepts.** The transportation aspects of the corridor plans focused on the following phased improvements:

Phase One

- Use of easements and site regulations to add space for pedestrians and streetscape improvements adjacent to the roadway.

Phase Two

- Development of a modified cross-section for the roadway to provide space for medians, where their introduction is possible.
- Consolidation of driveways along South Robert Street to allow center median installation.
- Recommendation of an ultimate block grid of 1,200-foot spacing (existing) for signalized intersections, with 600-foot nominal spacing for unsignalized intersections serving businesses, and 300 foot spacing of right-in/right-out shared driveways.
- Restriping of cross streets to add left turn lanes where, feasible, without affecting transit operations.

- **Modified Street Cross Sections: Add Medians and Landscaping.** For the modified cross section, the existing face-of-curb to face-of-curb width was held constant, but the lane widths were

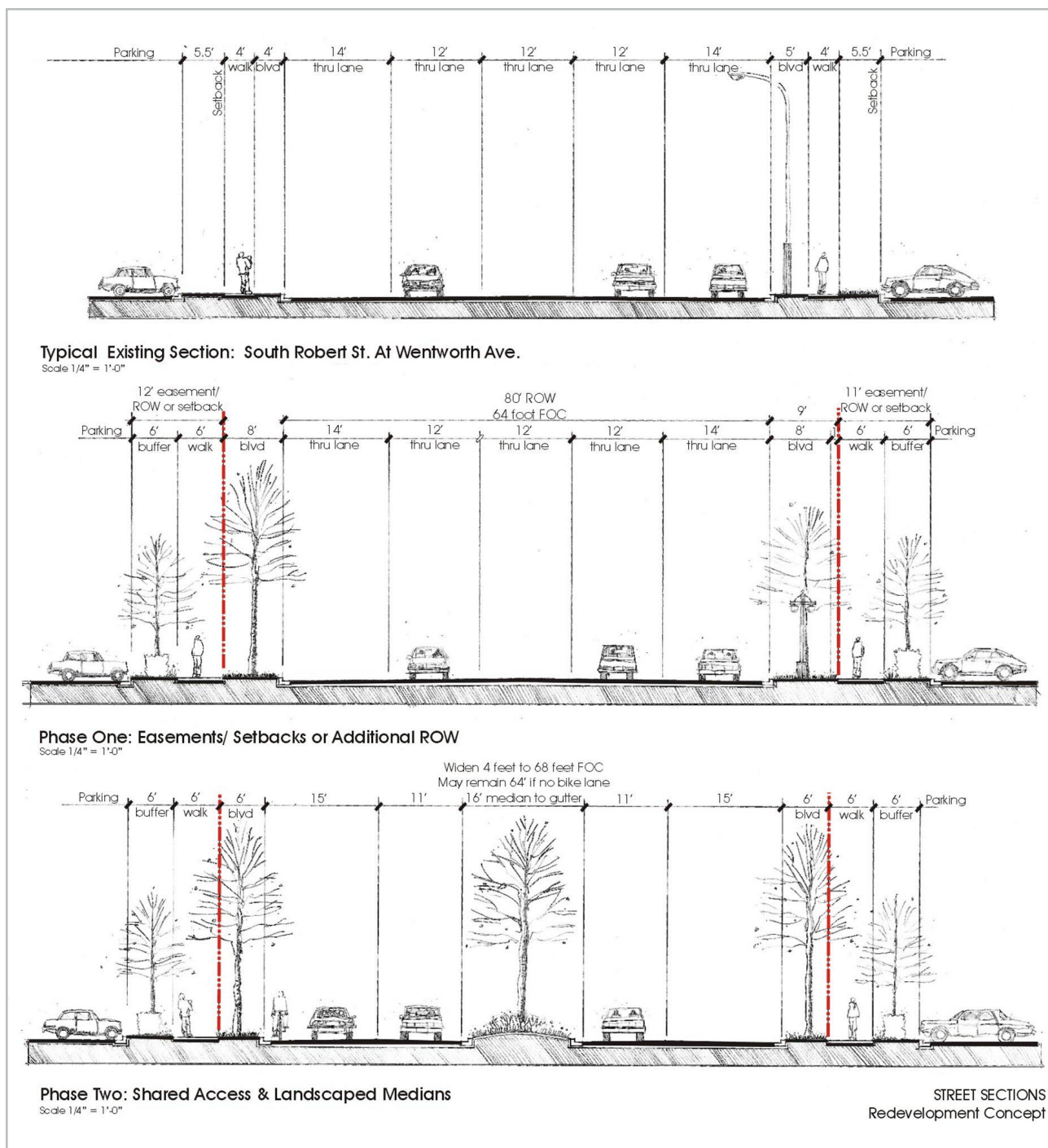


Figure V-3

modified to provide room for a center median with dedicated left turn lanes. Lane widths in the modified concept would be acceptable under State Aid Standards (see Figures V-3 and V-7).

- Consolidate Driveways to Allow for Center Median Installation.** Incorporation of medians into the roadway would be contingent upon consolidation of access. The medians are at Gateway areas, mixed-use nodes and the Town Center area. The medians should measure 400 to 600 feet in length. For both the north and south sides of the intersections, two median widths were suggested, a wider version for the five-lane cross-section south of Butler Avenue and a narrower version for the segment north of Butler where curb parking is allowed. In the narrower version, the

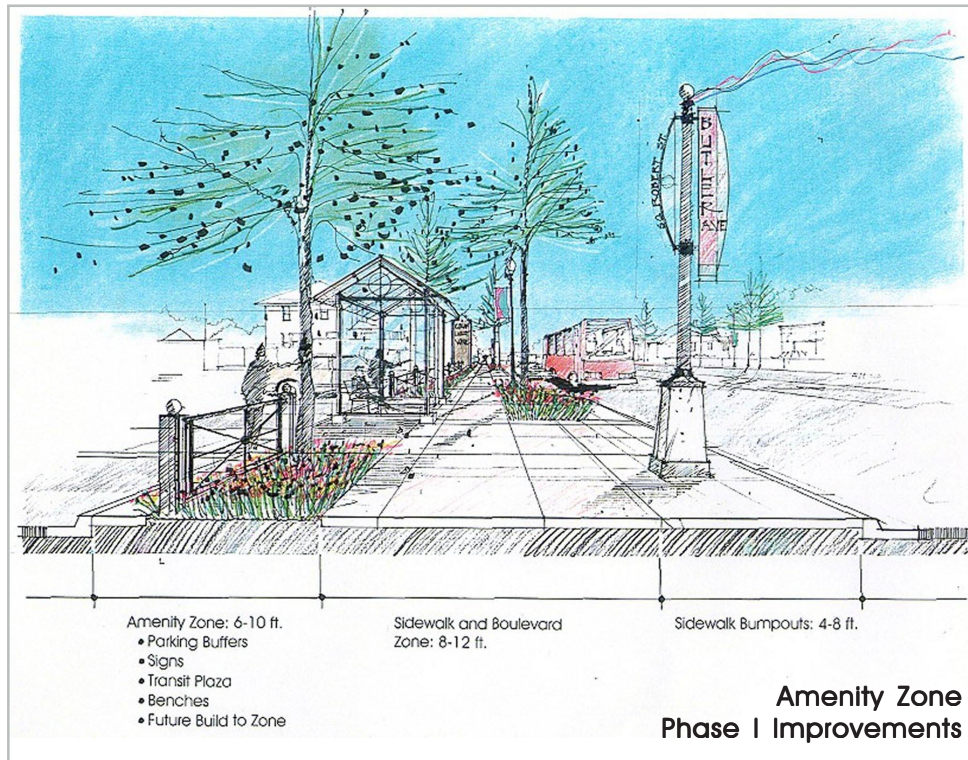


Figure V-4

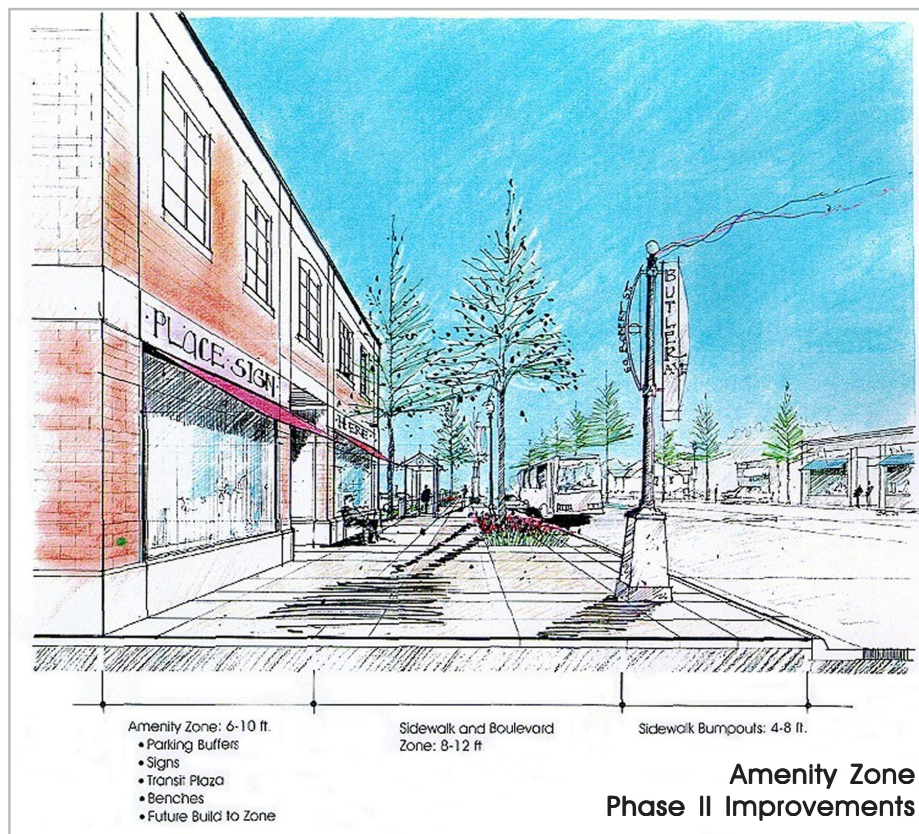


Figure V-5

median would be discontinued at the start of the taper for a turn lane and only striping would delineate the turn lane. In the wider version, the median would continue in a narrowed configuration adjacent to the taper and turn lane.

- **Introduce a Tighter Block Pattern and Street Grid.** On average, blocks in the South District measure between 1,400 and 1,770 feet. Such a pattern limits accessibility from surrounding neighborhoods and promotes large-scaled and big box development. Recommendation of an ultimate block grid in the south segment is important to development of the Town Center concept by establishing an interconnected, compact framework for redevelopment. The recommended pattern will retain the existing signalized intersections at approximately one-quarter-mile spacing, and would place an unsignalized intersection at approximately one-eighth-mile spacing with 300-foot spacing for driveways in between. This concept, which includes development of a median and would require substantial consolidation of the numerous driveways along the corridor, is expected to evolve over time as sites for redevelopment become available and as the City is able to develop new infrastructure to support the Town Center concept.

6. Incorporate Amenity Zones and Easements

South of Butler, easements are recommended to provide additional width for pedestrian and streetscape improvements. The easements will widen the boulevard strip to permit plantings and allow the sidewalk to be relocated adjacent to the right-of-way. Parking will need to be set back from the right-of-way. A 6- to 10-foot amenity zone, illustrated in Figures V-4 and V-5, should be accommodated between the sidewalk and parking lot or building. Amenity zones create space for signage, benches, parking buffers, snow storage and transit plazas and act as a “build-to” zone for future buildings. At a minimum, a continuous median measuring 600 feet in length is needed from the primary intersections at the Town Center area and primary neighborhood nodes in order to have the space for the proposed medians, turn lanes, access points and streetscape improvements.

7. Hierarchy of Open Space

Public open space, such as squares, parks and plazas are currently nonexistent along South Robert Street. The framework plan provides central gathering places for each district. In the North District, the traditional Main Street treatment and streetscape provide pedestrian-oriented public gathering spaces. In the Signal Hills District, several concepts are proposed, all of which include a park and transit plaza fronting south Robert Street at the shopping center site. Open space fingers are also proposed as amenities for future housing in the southeast portion of the district. A Community Green and Town Square are proposed in the heart of the South District’s proposed Town Center. Refer to the individual district chapters for a more detailed explanation.

8. Create Open Space and Trail Connections

The Town Square, Community Green, Waterfront Park, and the proposed trail along Wentworth Avenue form a green connection across South Robert Street that links into Dakota County’s North Urban Regional Trail, which connects Marthaler Park to the Dodge Nature Center. Wentworth Avenue should be treated as a parkway with a multipurpose trail to reinforce connectivity between parks and open space within West St. Paul.

9. Shared Parking

Shared parking allowances are recommended for adjacent uses. Shared parking facilities work most effectively in mixed-use areas that have staggered peak use periods. The total number of parking spaces can be reduced by comparing peak demand of each use by time of day, day of the week, and season. Complementary relationships between land uses in a mixed-use area encourages multipurpose trips and allows a single parking facility to serve several land uses. Reducing the amount of land devoted to parking allows for a more efficient, compact form of development, increases the tax base and provides land for public amenities.

10. Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape elements can create a distinct district identity while maintaining a continuity along the South Robert Street corridor. The South Robert Street Design Initiative proposed several alternatives for streetscape elements and should serve as a reference for further streetscape design.

- **Quality Landscaping.** In order to provide year-round color and interest, a variety of appropriately placed, hardy over-story and ornamental trees, shrubbery and ground covers must be included in the landscaping plan.
- **Pedestrian-Scale Lights.** Currently, the North District is partially identified by its continuous row of historic lights. Banners, railings, benches and public art can be incorporated which are inspired by the unique history of South Robert Street between Annapolis and Butler. Pedestrian lighting will also improve the aesthetics and safety of the area.
- **Special Materials.** Materials unique to West St. Paul's development should be incorporated into the streetscape as bollards, benches, special paving highlights, sign and monument bases, and sculpture and edge treatments.
- **Paving Treatments.** Specially paved areas should be simple and incorporate decorative pavers to define bump-outs, cross walks and seating areas.
- **Public Art.** An infrastructure of public art could unify the South Robert Street while celebrating its unique history. Public art can be more than just sculpture on the street, it can be a celebration of the city's infrastructure by appearing in paving patterns, tree grates, utilities, bridges, kiosks, bus shelters, benches and gardens. It can be ephemeral and performative and involve children, teen, adult and senior programming.
- **Directional Signage.** A comprehensive civic wayfinding system could be created for the South Robert Street and West St. Paul. Overhanging signage is encouraged. Signage can be consolidated in monument signs made of materials similar to the buildings they advertise.



Planters



Benches



Bollards



Public art landmarks

11. Incremental Development and Corridor Evolution

South Robert Street has been evolving site by site, street improvement after street improvement, into its current pattern of development for nearly 120 years. Even with a strong commitment, it will take several years before many of these recommendations take full shape. The magnitude of redevelopment may seem daunting; however change is constant and the vision for the corridor will be the product of individual site redevelopments and street improvements where, ultimately, the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. Every project is important and should help build toward the long-term vision. The City has an important role to play in this process, but the success of this effort will not be possible without the full support and participation of landowners and the development community.

Short-term treatments of the street and other public realm improvements, coupled with private realm improvements, such as consolidation of access points and parking areas, will set the stage and framework for longer-term realization of the community's goals.

The following diagrams (Figures V-6 and V-7) illustrate how the long-term mixed-use redevelopment model and street improvements may be realized through a sequence of more manageable steps.

- **Phase One: Easements, Setbacks, and Streetscape Improvements.** In Phase One, the City obtains control of the space from property owners (easements through dedications and/or purchase) necessary for streetscape improvements along South Robert Street, primarily in the Signal Hills and South Districts. Currently, typical sidewalk and boulevard widths measure 5 feet and 2-1/2 feet respectively. Where possible, easements and setbacks will be acquired to accommodate an 8-foot boulevard, 6-foot sidewalk, and a 6-foot parking lot buffer, after which street trees, pedestrian-level lights, transit stops and other streetscape elements may be incorporated within the boulevard and amenity zone. A combination of trees, shrubs and/or architectural screens are accommodated within the parking lot buffer zone.
- **Phase Two: Shared Access and Landscaped Medians.** Phase Two focuses on combining access points where possible and incorporating medians in select areas along the corridor. Access points should be consolidated to eliminate hazardous turning movements. Parking lots should be reevaluated to determine if more efficient layouts are possible and to consider shared parking arrangements between adjacent property owners.

Incorporating medians into the roadway will be contingent upon consolidating access points. The medians need to measure approximately 600 feet in length to accommodate left turn lanes for unsignalized intersections, right-in/right-out shared access points, and to establish a pattern of 1,200 feet between signalized intersections.

- **Phase Three: Compact Mixed-Use Redevelopment.** Phase Three focuses on consolidating key parcels in the Mixed-Use Neighborhood Centers and Town Center. Consolidating smaller parcels, access points and parking lots will help to minimize isolated, individualized parcels that necessitate numerous curb cuts to access individual parking lots. Over time, some businesses will stay and expand, while others will sell to new owners and possibly replace buildings. Expansions of existing buildings and newly constructed buildings should be placed closer to the street. Parking lots should be located behind or between buildings, and key corner parcels should be infilled with buildings that are built up to the right-of-way, or build-to lines, on both street frontages.

Phasing of development will no doubt occur over time on a site-by-site basis.

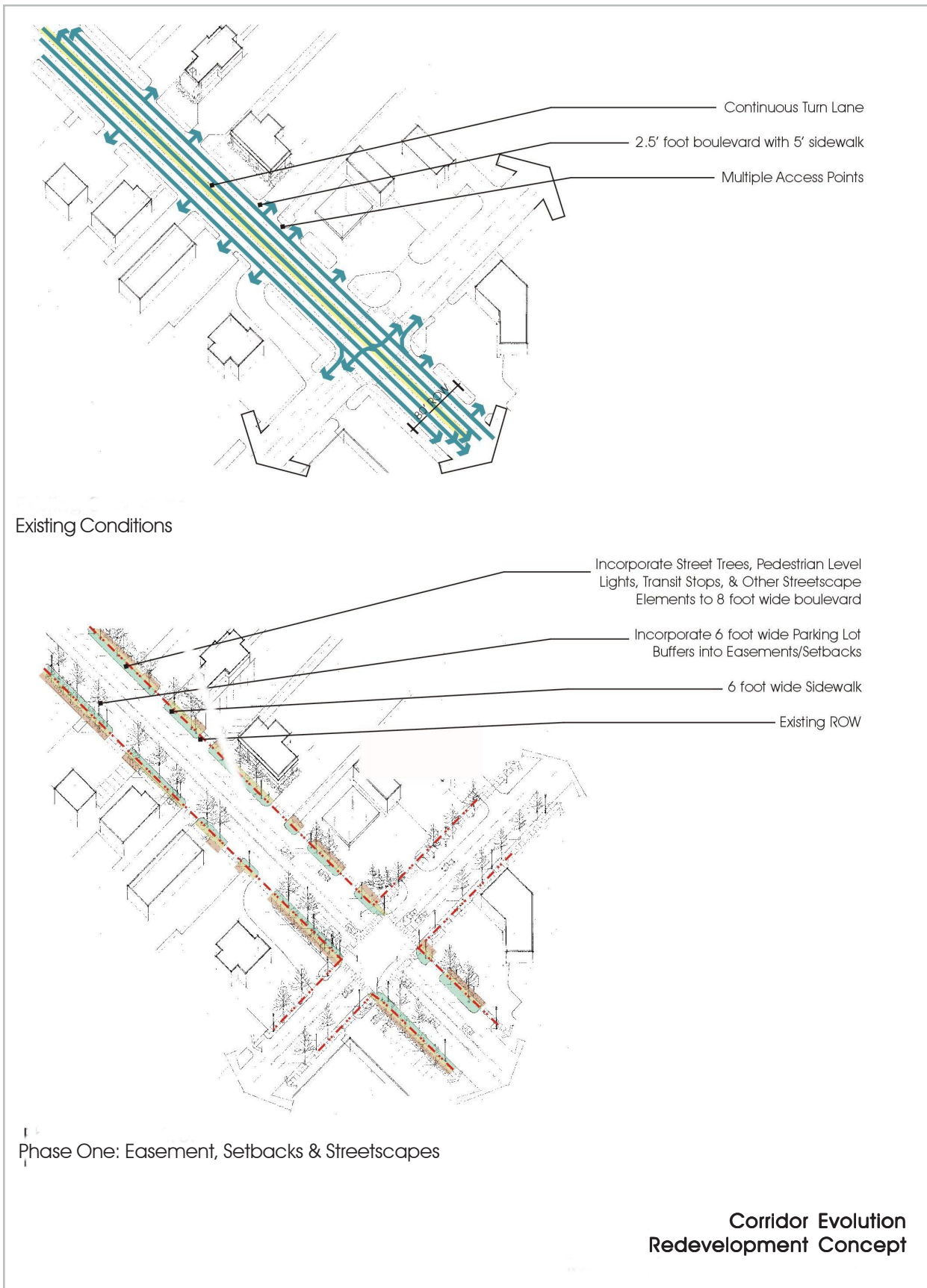
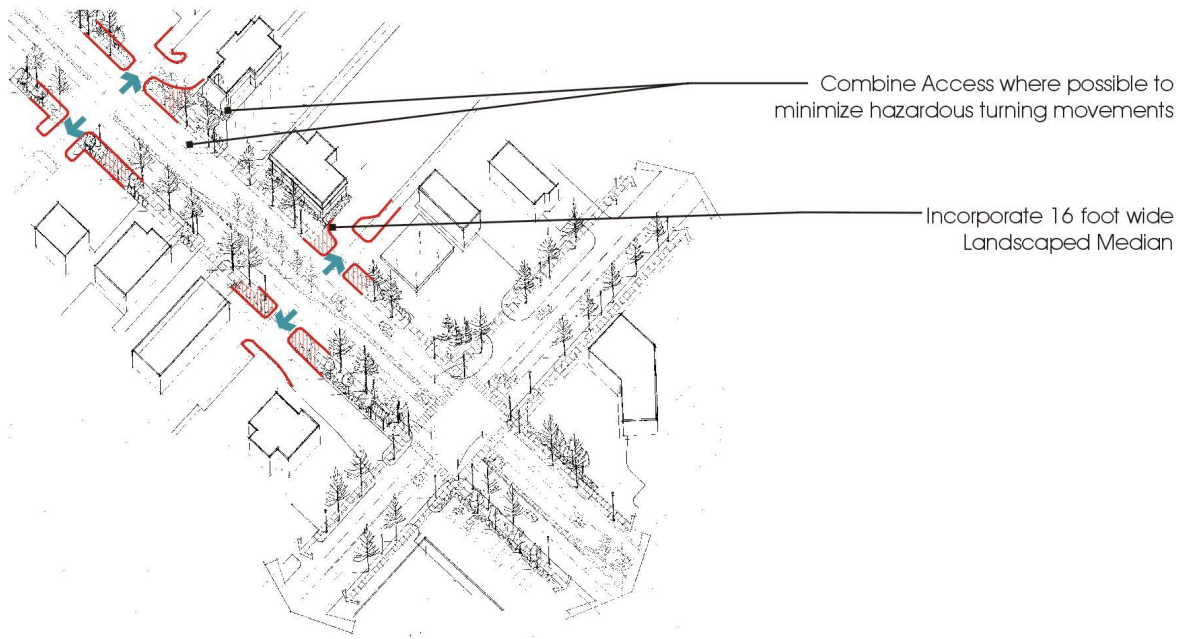
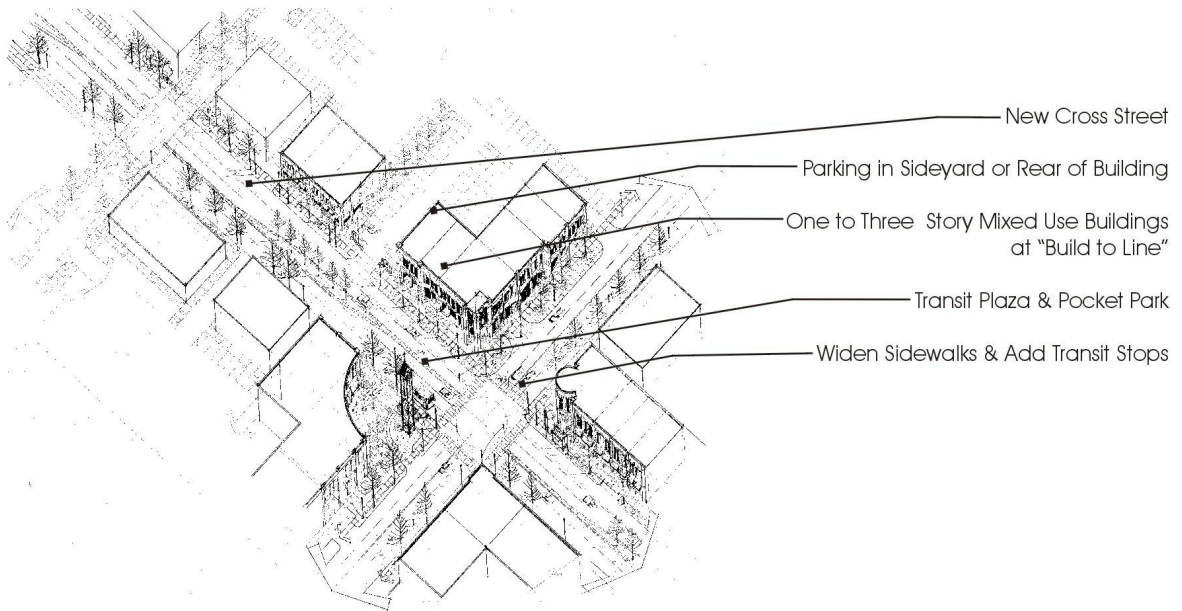


Figure V-6



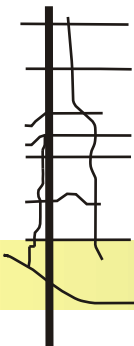
Phases Two: Shared Access & Landscaped Medians



Phase Three: Mixed Use Primary Nodes & Town Center

**Corridor Evolution
Redevelopment Concept**

Figure V-7





VI. NORTH DISTRICT

The segment of South Robert Street between Annapolis and Butler, known as the North District, evolved along the end of a streetcar line, which is evident in the district's compact "Main Street" development pattern. This segment is situated on a high point that provides significant views north to St. Paul and at the same time defines a gateway to the City of West St. Paul from the north. Single-family homes and apartment complexes are interspersed with other uses and give this segment of the corridor a unique residential character which is lacking in other districts along South Robert Street.

The North District was the focus of the South Robert Street Design Initiative Study, which defined numerous development models as well as streetscape treatments. This study should serve as a reference during the detail stages of the streetscape design.

A. Issues, Observations and Objectives

Issues, Observations and Objectives established for the North District are summarized in Figures VI-1 and VI-2.

Participants in the Issues Workshop and Visual Preference Survey identified the most pressing issues facing the North District and suggested methods to address those challenges. Their list of primary issues and recommendations are as follows:

- Maintain the unique "Main Street" character of the North District.
- Improve the streetscape and business environment to stimulate investment.
- Short-term solutions are needed to stimulate community interest.
- Emphasize mixed-use development to stimulate business.
- Define this area as a Gateway to West St. Paul.

B. Market Findings and Recommendations

Following is a summary of the primary market findings for the North District. Please refer to the Appendices for additional information.

- The North District offers a strong, urban character.
- Existing businesses in the area are a mix of neighborhood-oriented and specialty retailers.
- Neighborhood business owners want to encourage additional commercial development in the District that will complement the existing viable businesses.
- Because of the tighter development pattern in this area, there is a strong potential to incorporate mixed-use (residential/commercial, office, institutional) to enhance market support for commercial uses.
- This segment of the Corridor can benefit significantly from residential infill and redevelopment to provide a variety of new housing products to meet life-cycle housing needs.
- Strengthening the mix of neighborhood-oriented goods and services will enhance consumer convenience (particularly for seniors) and create more vitality on the street.
- Recommend incorporating and retaining the following types of goods and services:
 - mid-price restaurants/deli (outdoor cafe)
 - coffee shop
 - eyewear
 - bike shop/sporting goods
 - dry cleaners
 - business services (insurance, financial services, printing)
 - health care services (dental, chiropractic, massage)
 - consumer services (cleaners, photography, tailoring)
 - cards and gifts; decorative accessories
 - craft/hobby shop
 - specialty foods
 - flowers/plants
- Recommend identifying specific businesses that already exist in the area that may be interested in relocating to a new development site in the North District.
- Identified demand for the following in the North District over the next ten years:
 - 15,000 to 20,000 square feet of retail;
 - 10,000 square feet of office;
 - 180 to 200 units of housing.
- Relocation of existing businesses to the North District could add to these numbers.

Issues & Observations



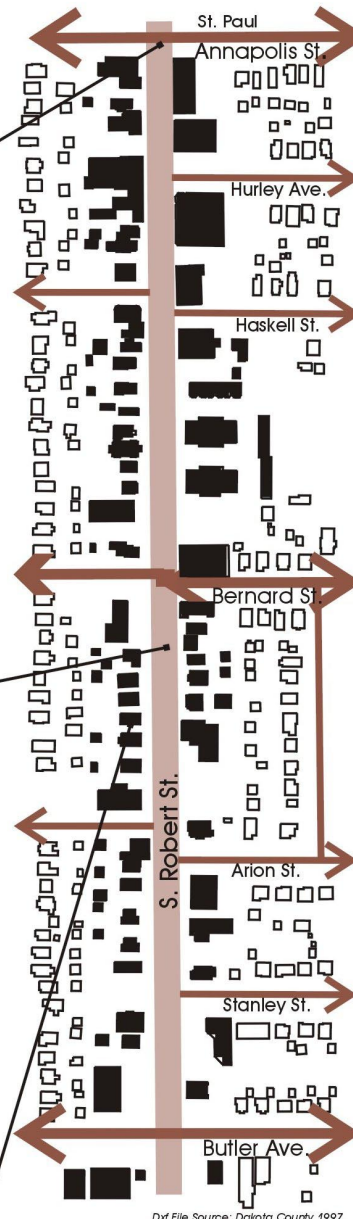
- Opportunity to create a distinct gateway corridor and connection with St. Paul.
- Shallow commercial parcel depths limit development potential to neighborhood scale.



- Traditional compact urban development pattern creates a distinct identity and "Main Street" character on S. Robert St.
- Offset street alignments at Haskell, Bernard and Arion St. create unsafe crossings.
- Recent development with parking in front of buildings erodes the traditional "Main Street" character.
- Lack of immediate community gathering places and open spaces along S. Robert St. and within neighborhood.



- Current zoning and land use designation is for commercial development lining the whole corridor. This should be reevaluated to maintain residential and more mixed use opportunities.



Dxf File Source: Dakota County 1997

NORTH DISTRICT



Figure VI-1

Redevelopment

-Define design standards to maintain "Main Street" character and neighborhood scale.

-Define architectural and streetscape treatments to emphasize gateway areas and major intersections at Annapolis, Bernard and Butler, and to establish continuity throughout the corridor.

-Maintain off-street parking to the sides and rear of buildings.

-Define alley treatments, parking lot edge treatments and transitions to surrounding neighborhoods.

-Explore potential as a "Mixed-Use" Zoning District to promote more residential development along S. Robert St.

-Future guidelines should address:

- Commercial expansion
- Parking ratios
- Building and parking lot placement
- Landscape buffering and parking lots
- Building massing and types
- Sight lines
- Facades
- Gateway architecture

■ Bernard St.

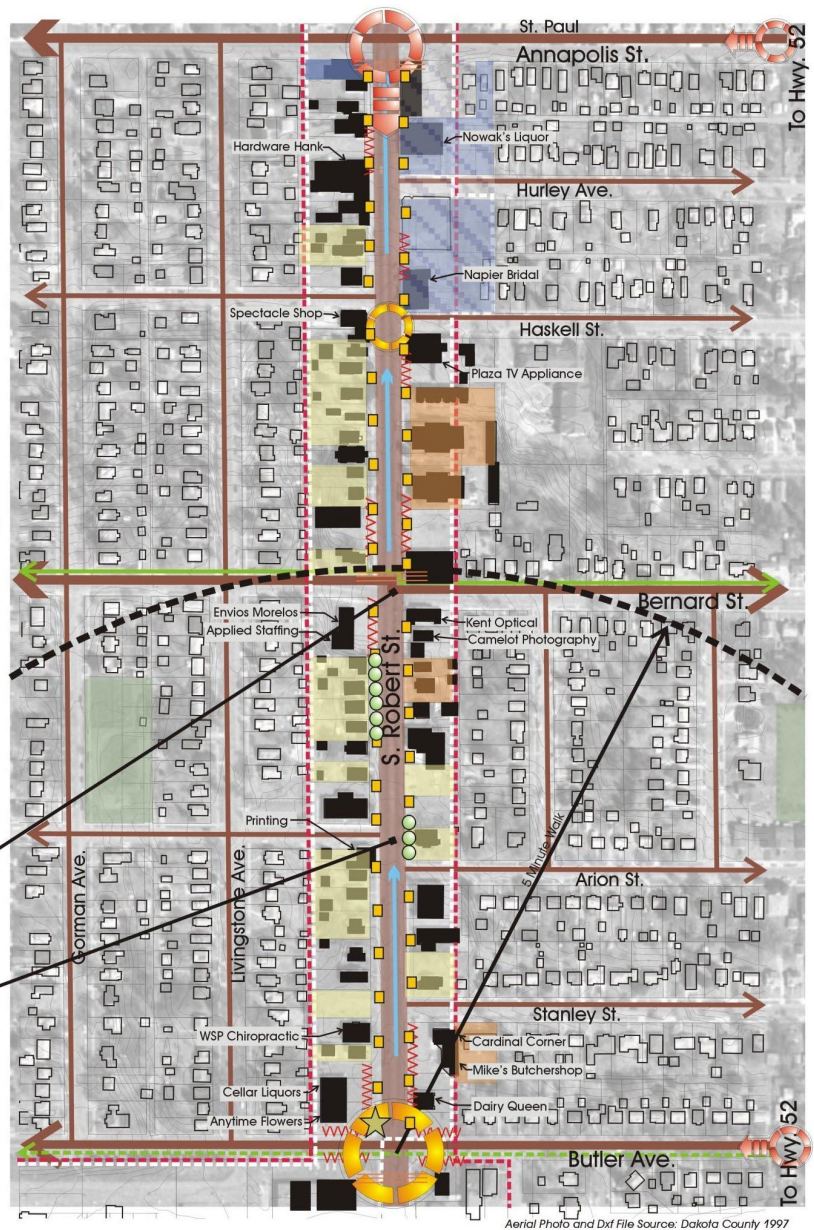
-Define as a pedestrian greenway crossing and connection to Emerson Park residents.

■ S. Robert St.

-Define streetscape treatments that build on the existing elements and emphasize a "Main Street" scale.

-Maintain on-street parking.

-Explore potential for seniors/teens/children's gathering area.



Aerial Photo and Dxf File Source: Dakota County 1997

Legend

Buildings	Parks and Open Space	Bus Stops	Commercial District
Parking	Gateways	Overhead Utilities	Bicycle Lanes
Multi-Family Housing	Primary Neighborhood*	Water Drainage	TIF District
Single-Family Housing	Local Neighborhood*	Streets	Views to Parking
City-Owned Property	Street Trees	Greenway Connection*	Decorative Lighting
Proposed Mixed-Use Development		15-Minute Walk	

*Source: BWR, "South Robert Street Design Initiative."

NORTH DISTRICT Design Objectives



Figure VI-2

C. North District Recommendations

1. Rezone to Mixed-Use District

The historical integrity and character still evident in the North District is complemented by its mixture of commercial and single-family homes, duplexes and apartments. The current zoning code and land use plan designate the North District as strictly commercial. In order to maintain the character of this district and promote more residential infill, the zoning ordinance should be amended to include a mixed-use designation. Please refer to section V.B.1 (page V-1) for more detail on the mixed-use zoning district (Figures VI-1 and VI-2).

2. Infill with Townhomes, Live/Work Units and Other Multi-Family Housing Types

Increasing the number of residential units will benefit the North District by strengthening the population base and commercial market, creating a more diverse and vital environment, and providing more life-cycle housing choices. New building typologies, such as mixed-use seniors' housing and retail complexes, live/work units and multi-family townhomes, should be encouraged in order to tap into the changing market demands, which are reflecting demographic changes.

3. Concentrate Mixed-Use Development at Primary Neighborhood Crossroads

Primary neighborhood crossroads have been identified at Annapolis, Bernard and Butler Avenues for the North District. Commercial uses (retail and small office) should be concentrated at these crossroads to create an identifiable neighborhood center and promote market synergy. A compact mixture of uses in combination with streetscape improvements will foster a center of activity and safer more livable neighborhoods, define the area as a gateway and create an environment more conducive to additional residential development (Figures VI-4-VI-5).



4. Street Improvements Concepts

■ *Modify the Street Cross Section to Include Medians.*

The street right-of-way measures 80 feet wide in this segment. For the modified cross section, the existing face-of-curb to face-of-curb width was held constant, but the lane widths were modified to provide room for a center median with dedicated left turn lanes. The proposed street cross section will meet state-aid standards and recommends two 10-foot walks, two 14-foot through lanes,



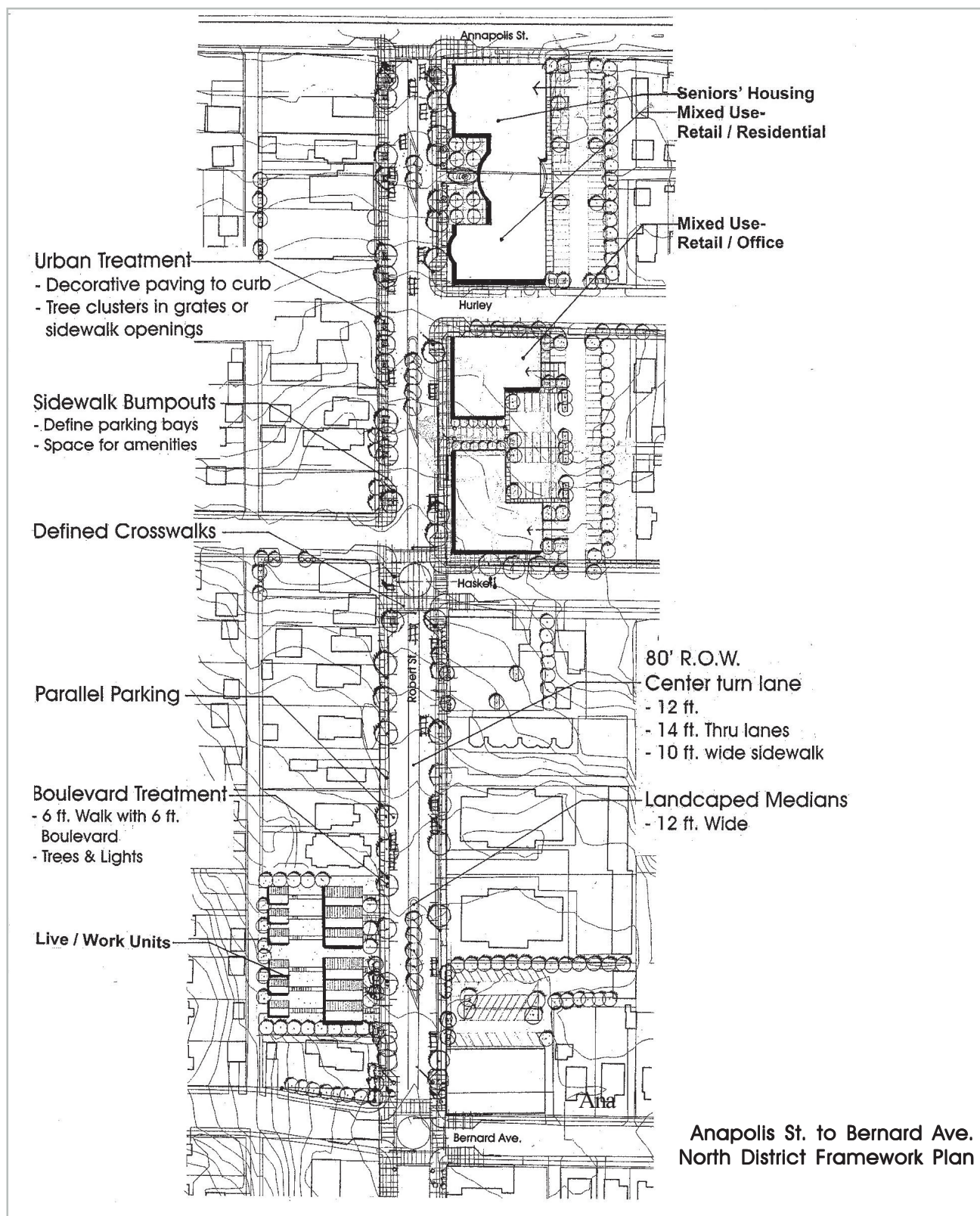


Figure VI-4

two 10-foot parking lanes and a 12-foot center median/ turn lane. The median would be discontinued at the start of the taper for a turn lane and only striping would delineate the turn lane. Driveways must be consolidated where possible to allow for center median installations.

- **Incorporate Sidewalk Bump-outs.** The sidewalk bump-outs at intersections will define parallel parking areas, provide more sidewalk space and areas for streetscape improvements and create shorter and safer crosswalks. In addition, this treatment will present a distinct North District streetscape.

5. Incorporate Amenity Zones and Easements

Where parking lots front South Robert Street, easements are recommended to provide additional width for parking buffers and streetscape improvements. This amenity zone allows space for signage, benches, parking buffers, snow storage and transit shelters, and acts as a “build-to” zone for future buildings.

6. Shared parking

Shared parking allowances are recommended for adjacent uses, particularly for those parcels owned by the Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and the Commercial Club. Shared parking facilities work most effectively in mixed-use areas that have staggered peak use periods, as is the case with the HRA and Commercial Club. The total number of parking spaces can be reduced by comparing peak demand of each use by time of day, day of the week, and season.

7. Open Space

An improved streetscape with sidewalk bump-outs and street furniture will provide a linear public space conducive to neighborhood events, sidewalk sales and festivals. New development north of Haskell Avenue provides opportunities to incorporate pocket parks and entry courts for semi-public space.

8. Greenway Connections

The South Robert Street Design Initiative defines Bernard and Butler Avenues as east and west greenway connections to neighboring parks and neighborhoods.

9. Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape should provide a sense of safety and pedestrian comfort. Streetscape elements can create a distinct North District identity while maintaining a continuity along the South Robert Street corridor. The South Robert Street Design Initiative proposed several alternatives for streetscape elements and should serve as a reference for more detail. Residential and commercial areas exist within the North District that should receive different streetscape treatments. The phase one streetscape plan and associated costs are included in the Appendices.

- **Commercial Treatment.** Decorative paving should extend from the building face to the street. Trees should be placed in clustered grates or sidewalk openings.
- **Residential Treatment.** Boulevard treatments in residential areas should include a 6-foot sidewalk and a 6-foot landscaped median with street trees and lights.

10. Speed Limits

The speed limits along South Robert Street are 40 mph in the section between Mendota Road and Marie Avenue and 35 mph north of Marie Avenue, and are appropriate to the character of the cross section and to the number of access points along the street segments. Under the proposed future configurations, the segment north of Butler Avenue may more appropriately be zoned for 30 mph (down from 35 mph).

11. Stormwater

Please refer to Section C of the Appendices.

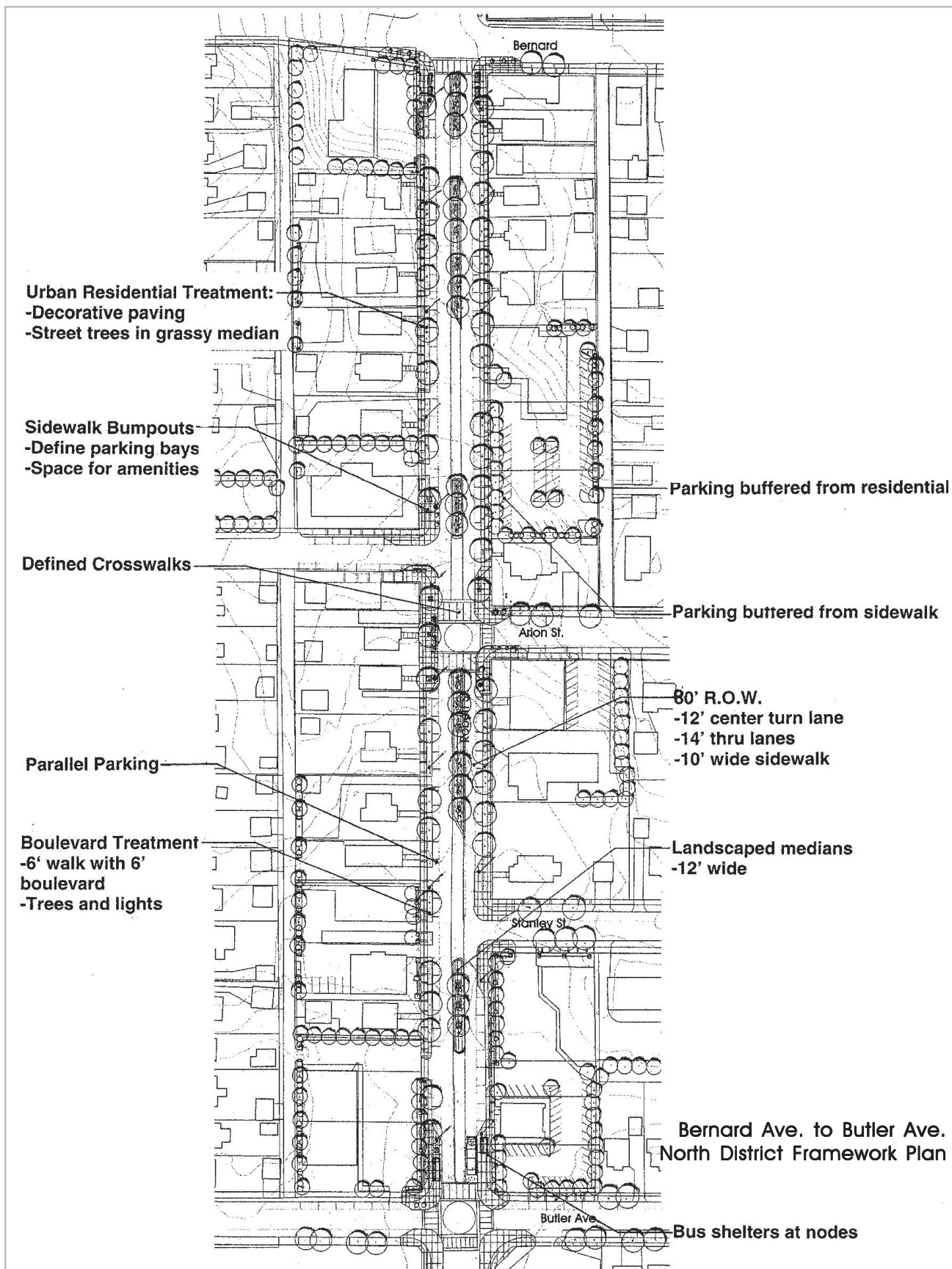
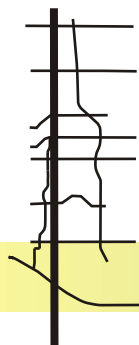


Figure VI-5



VII. Signal Hills District



VII. SIGNAL HILLS DISTRICT

The Signal Hills District is defined by Butler Avenue to the North and Emerson Avenue to the south. Signal Hills Shopping Center is the dominant land use and landmark within this district. The development pattern transitions from the Main Street character of the North District to a more suburban, auto-oriented development pattern. Inconsistent setbacks, lot sizes, architectural treatments and signage compound the visual clutter. Parking lots are large and often placed in front of businesses, creating a shapeless corridor. Land uses and buildings are compartmentalized, requiring multiple access points along the street, which contributes to a more hazardous pedestrian and driving environment.

A. Issues, Observations and Objectives

Issues, Observations and Objectives established for the Signal Hills District are summarized in Figures VII-1, VII-2 and VII-3.

Participants in the Issues Workshop and Visual Preference Survey identified the most pressing issues facing the Signal Hills District and suggested methods to address those challenges. Their list of issues and recommendations is as follows:

- Long-term redevelopment of the shopping center.
- Need for open space and public gathering areas.
- Place residential development north of Emerson.
- Transit plaza should be located in the district.
- Place a farmers market in Signal Hills area.
- Utilize medians in street.
- Need improved landscape and architectural standards.
- Multiple access points create hazardous turning movements.

B. Market Findings and Recommendations

The following are key market findings identified through market research for the Signal Hills District. Please refer to the Appendices for more detailed information.

- Signal Hills shopping center was recently reconfigured and reintroduced to the market in an open air format. Kmart relocated and now anchors the center. Total square footage is 225,000 square feet with 30 stores.
- The tenant mix at the new Signal Hills shopping center consists primarily of neighborhood-oriented goods and services that are targeted to a broader draw area than is typical for a traditional neighborhood shopping center, which is usually between one and three miles.
- Infill residential opportunities exist east of South Robert in this area for owner-occupied multi-family development (i.e. townhomes, live/work units). While redevelopment on the east side of the Corridor may remove some existing commercial space, businesses desiring to relocate could be incorporated into small building pads on the west side of the Corridor, focusing greater development intensity at Signal Hills.
- A modest amount of additional commercial square footage can be accommodated in this area through relocation of existing businesses to smaller pad sites on the Signal Hills parcel or through the addition of businesses serving new market segments.
- As the residential and commercial environment evolves over time, a high potential exists to convert this parcel entirely to residential uses or mixed-use incorporating commercial and residential uses in close proximity on the same parcel.
- Recommend that the maximum square footage of commercial development on the Signal Hills parcel not exceed 250,000 square feet in its current configuration.

Issues & Observations



- Transition zone from traditional compact urban development to conventional suburban development.
- Large block street system and development limits neighborhood connections to S. Robert St. businesses and Signal Hills Shopping Center.
- Lack of distinct identity, unifying streetscape and focus.



- Lack of interior parking lot landscaping and edge treatments contribute to negative image.



Figure VII-1

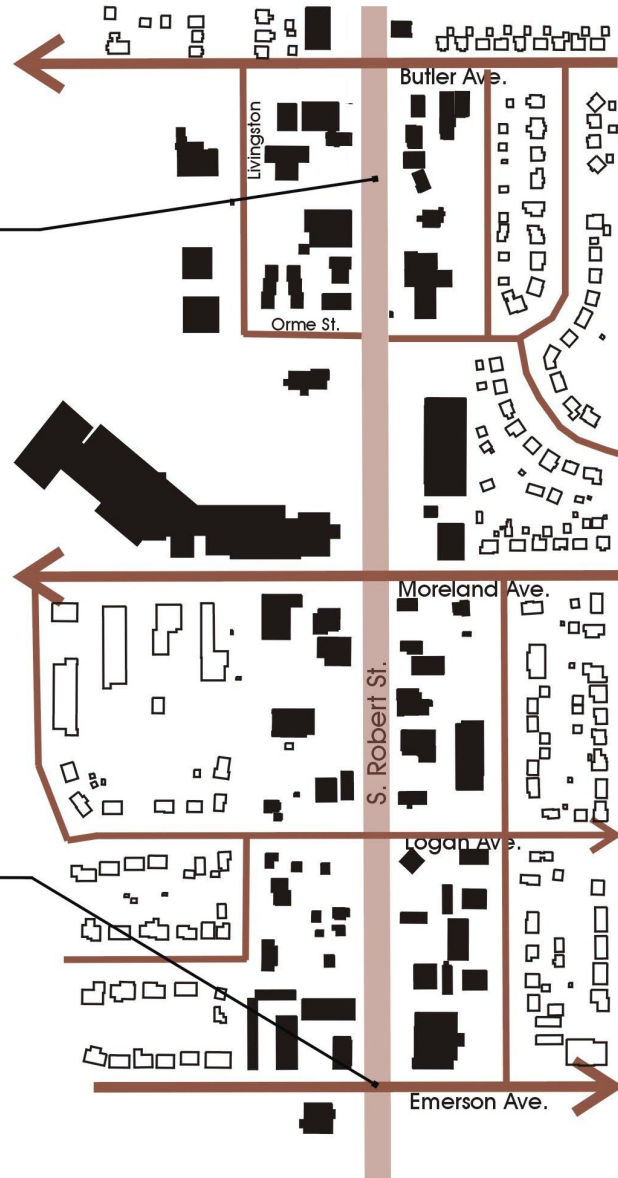
Issues & Observations



- Shallow commercial parcel depth limits commercial redevelopment potential south of Moreland.
- Multiple property access points create hazardous turning movements.
- Variety of setbacks/ architectural treatments and signs compound visual clutter.



- Lack of boulevard treatments and narrow sidewalks result in negative image and unsafe pedestrian experience.
- Current commercial land use designation along entire corridor does not respond to topographic site characteristics.
- Topography defines district boundaries.



SIGNAL HILLS DISTRICT



Figure VII-2



Figure VII-3

C. Signal Hills Recommendations

Four concepts have been prepared for the Signal Hills District which focus primarily on integrating the shopping center site with the community and the South Robert Street Corridor. Concept A illustrates the following recommendations that are common to all concepts throughout this segment of the corridor. All four concepts include the following recommendations (Figures VII-4-VII-7):

1. Rezone from Commercial to Mixed-Use Land Use Districts

The current zoning code and land use plan designate the entire South Robert Street corridor as commercial. Portions of the Signal Hills district that are zoned commercial have heavily wooded steep slopes with significant grade changes that would be very difficult to develop as commercial uses. Recommended site planning, architecture and landscaping standards are listed in the Design Guidelines chapter of this document.

2. Concentrate Mixed-Use Development Between Butler and Moreland Avenues

Primary neighborhood crossroads have been identified at Butler Avenue for the Signal Hills District, around the shopping center area within the Signal Hills District. The limited growth potential for commercial uses should be concentrated, along with residential and office uses, at these nodes to create identifiable neighborhood centers, promote market synergy, and create compact centers of activity.

3. Introduce Residential Uses

Townhomes are proposed east of South Robert Street between Moreland and Emerson Avenues to bolster an existing residential district and to mirror the residential area on this side of the corridor. Open space fingers extend from the street and provide an amenity for the townhomes.

4. Street Improvements Concepts

The street right-of-way width measures 80 feet in this segment. For the modified cross section, the existing face-of-curb to face-of-curb width was held constant, but the lane widths were modified to provide room for a center median with dedicated left turn lanes. The proposed street cross section recommendations will meet State Aid standards. Driveways must be consolidated where possible to allow for center median installations. Landscaped medians reduce the perceived width of the street, improve the image of the area, and create a safer traffic pattern and pedestrian crossing.

5. Incorporate Amenity Zones and Easements

South of Butler, easements are recommended to provide additional width for pedestrian and streetscape improvements. The easements will allow the boulevard strip to be widened to permit plantings and allow the sidewalk to be located adjacent to the right-of-way. Parking must be set back from the right-of-way. Currently, typical sidewalk and boulevard widths measure 5 feet and 2-1/2 feet respectively. A 10'-6" amenity zone is needed to accommodate a 6-foot boulevard, 6-foot sidewalk and a 6-foot parking lot buffer where possible. This zone allows space for signage, benches, parking buffers, snow storage and transit plazas, and acts as a "build-to" zone for future buildings.

6. Shared Parking

Shared parking allowances are recommended for adjacent uses. Shared parking facilities work most effectively in mixed-use areas where peak use periods are staggered. The total number of parking spaces can be reduced by comparing peak demand of each use by time of day, day of the week, and season. Complementary relationships between land uses in a mixed use-area encourage multi-purpose trips and allow a single parking facility to serve several land uses. Reducing the amount of land devoted to parking uses land more efficiently and fosters more compact development.

7. Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape should provide a sense of safety and pedestrian comfort as well as continuity of the components used within the Signal Hills District. Elements unique to this district should be included to distinguish this area as a neighborhood place.

8. Stormwater

Please refer to Section C of the Appendices.

9. Shopping Center Concepts

the following concepts illustrate the recommendations for redevelopment of the shopping center site at progressive stages of evolution.

- **Concept A: Landscape and Extension of Street Grid.** Concept A illustrates the application of landscaping standards to the Signal Hills Shopping Center parking lot as well as the extension of the street grid system into the northeast portion of the center parking lot in order to better integrate the circulation system and development pattern into the neighborhood. The intensity of the interior parking lot landscaping and buffer treatments is typical of the landscaping requirements in most suburban communities in the region. At the time of this writing, the City of West St. Paul was negotiating with the owners of the center to include this level of landscaping within the parking lots and edge treatments (Figure VII-4).

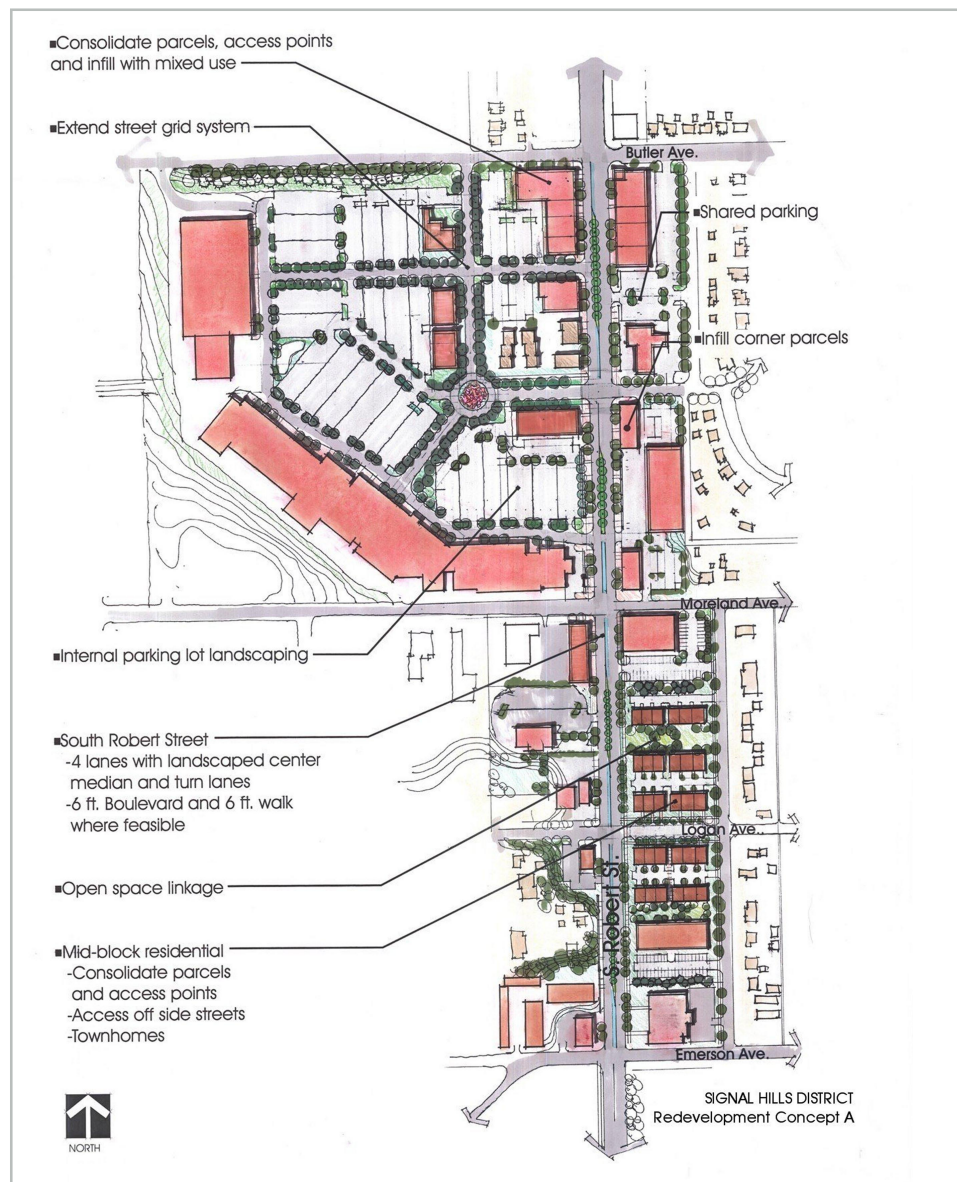


Figure VII-4

- **Concept B1: Town Square and Transit Plaza.** Concept B-1 illustrates the introduction of infill development and a central open space to create a focus to this segment of the corridor in an otherwise underutilized fringe parking lot. A Town Square is proposed along South Robert Street which will be defined by buildings on the north and south sides. The Town Square is also proposed as the site for a transit plaza. Placing buildings up to and perpendicular to the street will create a much more structured and pedestrian-scaled environment while still providing openings for visibility to the shopping center. Marginal land uses and underutilized portions of the center parking lot present opportunities to infill the eastern edge of the site with additional commercial and residential uses. The concentration of mixed uses surrounding the Town Square and transit plaza should create a vibrant center activity for this segment of the corridor (Figure VII-5).

Concept B1 also illustrates the application of landscaping standards to the Signal Hills Shopping Center parking lot as well as the extension of the street grid system into the northeast portion of the center parking lot.

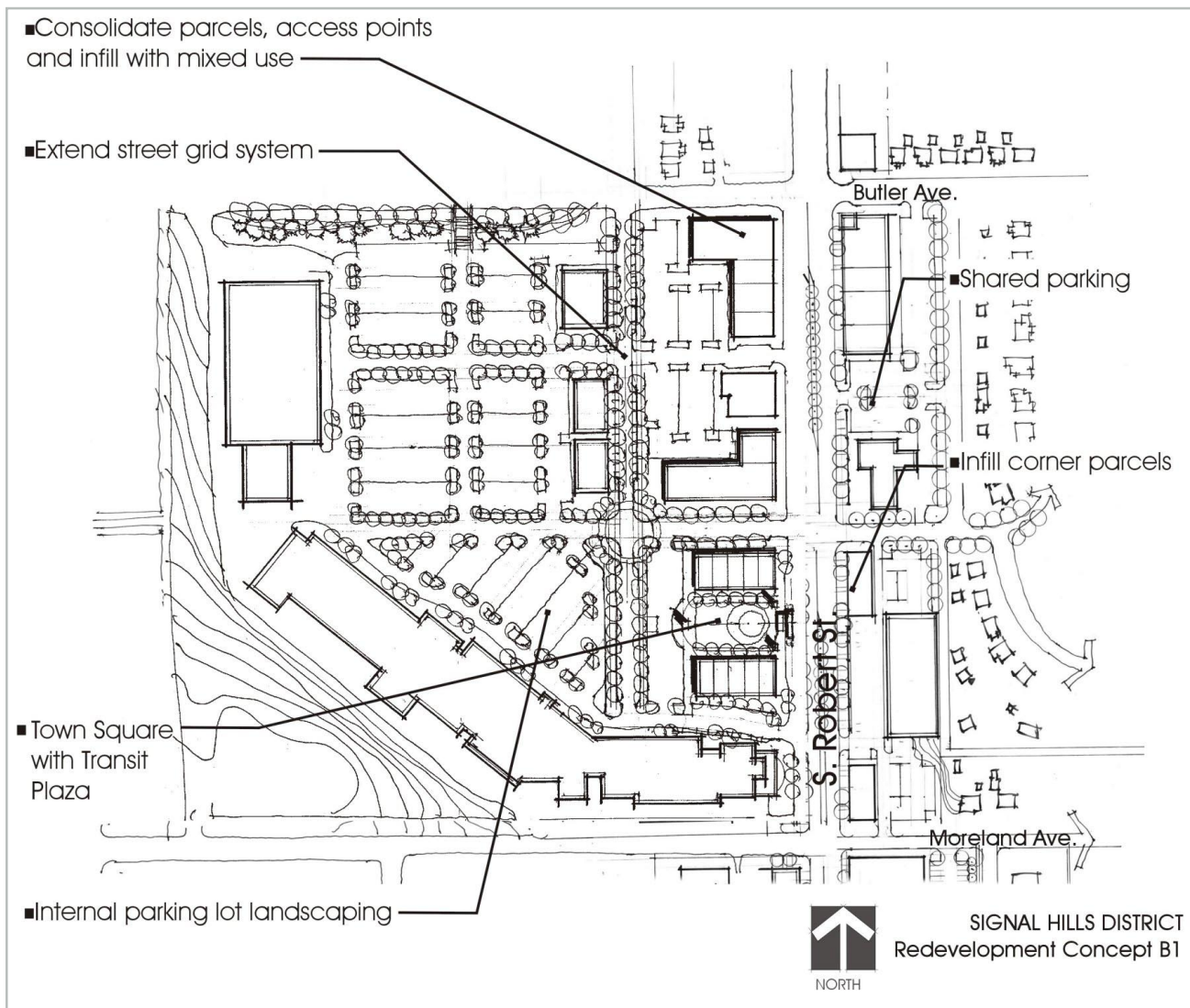


Figure VII-5

- **Concept B2: Central Park.** Concept B2 illustrates infill development and a central open space as in Concept B1; however, the concepts differ in the location and size of the park and the way in which buses would circulate. The open space in Concept B2 is designed as a larger central park surrounded by access and egress routes for buses and shopping center traffic (Figure VII-6).

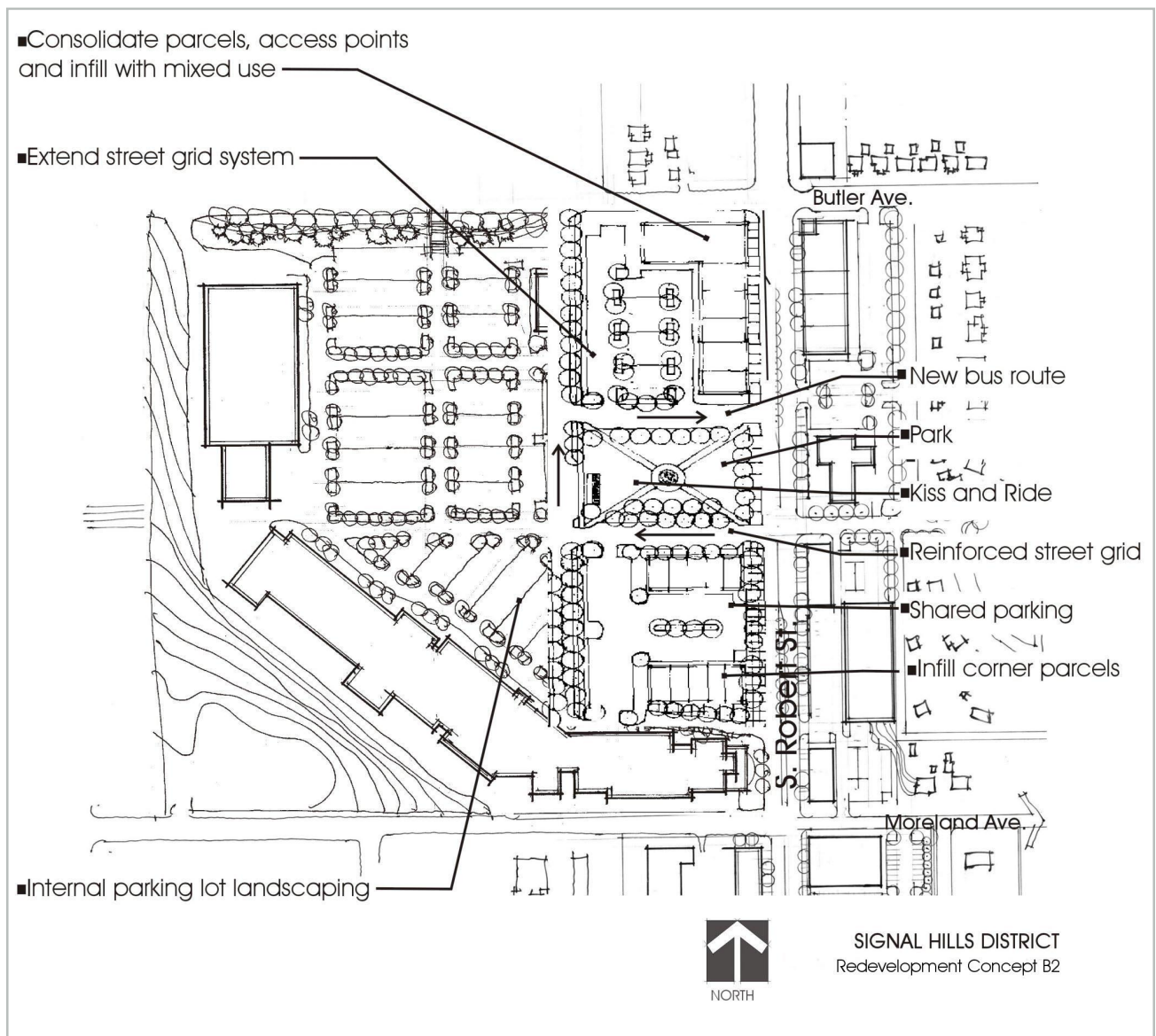


Figure VII-6

- **Concept C: Mixed-Use Neighborhood.** Concept C illustrates the way in which the shopping center site can evolve over the long term into a mixed-use neighborhood center, assuming that the current use could fall victim to a stagnant market. The concept illustrates the extension of the neighborhood street grid throughout the site, providing greater connectivity to and from the residential areas to South Robert Street businesses. Single-family home sites are proposed to act as an extension of the existing neighborhood to the west. Townhomes and other multi-family dwellings are proposed to be located in the central portion of the site. Mixed-use buildings front South Robert Street. The park provides an open space amenity and a central gathering area for the neighborhood (Figure VII-7).



Figure VII-7

10. Incremental Development

Short-term treatments of the street and other public realm improvements, coupled with private realm improvements, such as consolidation of access points and parking areas, will set the stage and framework for longer-term realization of the community's goals. The following diagrams illustrate how the long-term mixed-use redevelopment model, along with street improvements, may be realized through a sequence of manageable steps.

- **Phase One: Amenity Zones, Shared Access and Parking and Streetscape Improvements.** Phase One acquires the amenity zone necessary for streetscape improvements from property owners along South Robert Street in the Signal Hills District. Street trees, pedestrian level lights, transit stops and other streetscape elements may then be incorporated within the boulevard and amenity zone. A combination of trees, shrubs and/or architectural screens are accommodated within the parking lot buffer zone.

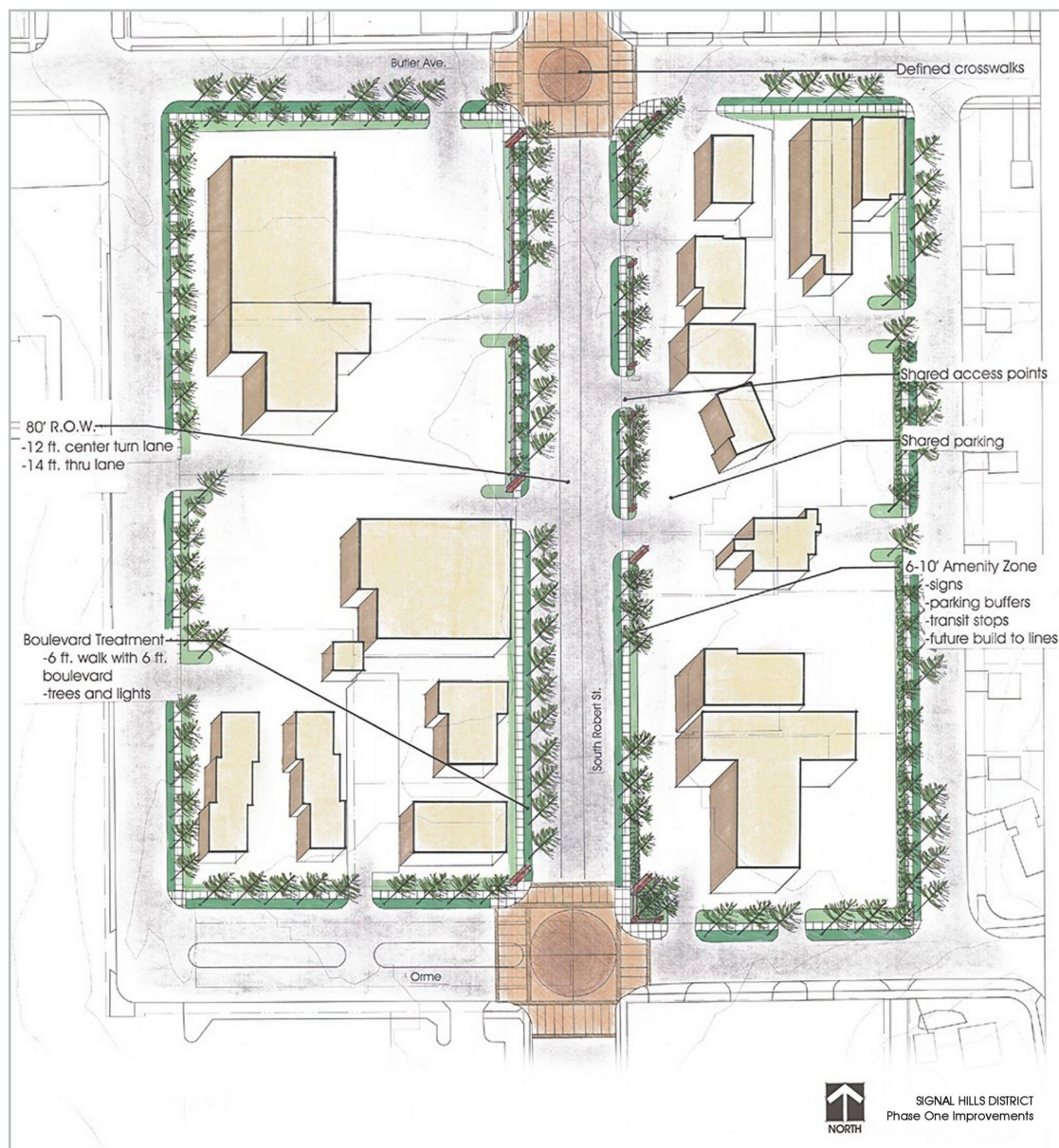


Figure VII-8

-Shared Access and Parking. Access points should be consolidated where possible to eliminate hazardous turning movements. Parking lots should be reevaluated to determine if more efficient layouts are possible and to consider shared parking arrangements between adjacent property owners. Consolidating smaller parcels and parking lots will help to minimize isolated, individualized parcels that necessitate numerous curb cuts to access individual parking lots.

- **Phase Two: Compact Redevelopment and Landscaped Medians.** Redevelopment will most likely evolve site by site as some owners move, some expand, and others rebuild. With each scenario, building expansions and new development should evolve toward the street. Parking lots should be located behind or between buildings. Key corner parcels should be infilled with structures that are built to the right-of-way on both street frontages.

-Incorporating medians into the roadway will be contingent upon consolidating access points in Phase One. The medians need to measure approximately 600 feet in length to accommodate left turn lanes for unsignalized intersections, and right-in/right-out shared access points.

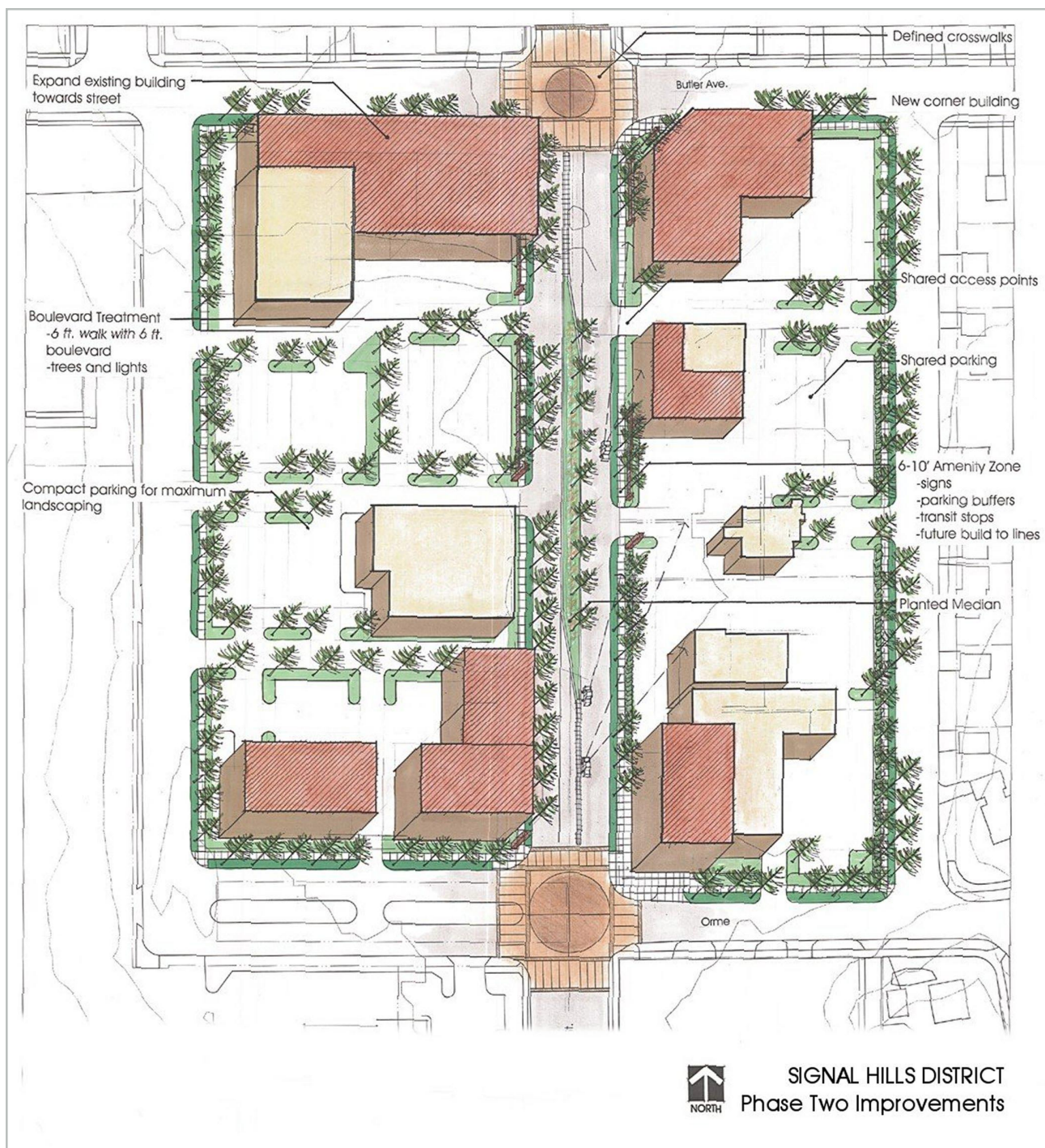
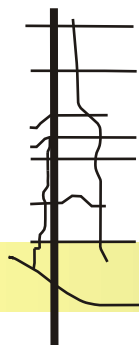


Figure VII-9





VIII. SOUTH DISTRICT

The segment of South Robert Street between Emerson Avenue and Mendota Road, known as the South District, has evolved into a typical post-World War II suburban commercial strip, its design strongly influenced by accommodating the automobile. City Hall, the Library, Dakota County Northern Facilities building and YWCA are located in this district.

The South District is characterized by commercial franchises, big box retail uses, and high traffic volumes. A mixture of building types, setbacks and signs creates visual clutter. Although an active area, South Robert Street's width, numerous access points and turning movements create a hazardous environment for drivers and pedestrians.

A. Issues, Observations and Objectives

Participants in the Issues Workshop and Visual Preference Survey identified the most pressing issues facing the South District and suggested methods to address those challenges. Their list of issues and recommendations is as follows (Figures VIII-1, VIII-2 and VIII-3):

- Need more trees.
- Smaller blocks are needed for the Town Center.
- Green Space/Community Green is desirable.
- Do not dismiss the pond as an amenity.
- Build townhomes between nodes to create vitality.
- Townscape or green space across South Robert Street is an asset.
- In the long-term vision, develop more residential infill around the Menards area.
- Introduce the street grid and green space at the Kmart site too.
- Kmart and other new developments should respect the library architecture which acknowledges the dignity of the people of West St. Paul.
- Use shared, creative and flexible parking.
- Site housing perpendicular to South Robert Street to respond to the Town Center concept. Rather than linear development, these centers should promote quality radial development. Sidewalks will be needed in these areas.
- Integrate a bike path from South St. Paul.
- Use the potential pedestrian and bicycle overpass as a gateway piece.
- Explore the possibilities of extending the parkway system across South Robert Street.
- Jump on opportunities to add trees and park-like elements.
- Include more pedestrian facilities.
- Focus on incremental construction with each development.

B. Market Findings and Recommendations

The following key market findings were identified through market research for the South District. Please refer to the Appendices for more detailed information.

- The South District is predominantly commercial in character with a development pattern that is largely suburban: substantial setbacks and surface parking, many curb-cuts, freestanding buildings, separate signage, and buildings sandwiched in along the Corridor.
- The South District presents a vision of strip highway development. Although there is a substantial base of commercial square footage in this area, the impact of the amount is lost in the isolation of uses from one another.
- Buildings that do not face the street or are hidden behind or alongside others reduce the impact of the square footage, but hamper visibility of several businesses to prospective patrons on the Corridor.
- No strong pedestrian connections exist within this District. Customers must travel by automobile to access individual businesses. Although there is some strip center development, it is not comfortable or convenient for customers to travel between uses other than by vehicle.
- A substantial amount of private parking is reserved for individual businesses and is underutilized. There is no synergy of uses or spaces that could enhance customer flow to each business as well as throughout the entire district.
- Almost no multi-modal opportunities are currently being provided to the Corridor. Bus transit is the only other form of transportation other than vehicular, that has the ability to conveniently access goods and services along South Robert Street.
- Kmart has relocated out of the South District to Signal Hills shopping center. Home Depot has proposed to locate on the former Kmart site. The Kmart site is located on a sizeable parcel in the Corridor. Although fast food restaurants flank the east side near Wentworth, this site is a key focal point for West St. Paul. Incorporating Home Depot's traditional exterior designs on this site to complement potential future projects that would be focused more to an urban quality and character could present some challenges.

1. Town Center

- The area between Wentworth and Emerson Avenues along both sides of the Corridor has been identified for the creation of a Town Center. This area will be the focus of the community of West St. Paul. As such, the intensity of development is likely to be much greater than in other parts of the Corridor.
- Some of the most recent developments in the area designated for the Town Center have building designs that are more human in scale (i.e. Firststar Bank, Red Lobster). As this area will be the focus of the community, it will be important to maintain consistency in visual design, incorporating uses that address pedestrian needs as well as vehicular needs.
- The Town Center district should incorporate a variety of commercial retail, office and residential uses in close proximity to one another. Connections to existing community facilities, such as the Library and the YMCA, are important components to create a synergy of individual uses.

We envision the following mix for the development of a Town Center district:

- professional offices
- municipal and/or other government offices
- convenience/specialty retail (service and entertainment-oriented):
 - books/music/live entertainment

- coffee/baked goods
 - restaurants
 - business services
 - consumer services
 - institutional uses
 - art/paper supplies
 - other specialty uses
- The market for auto-oriented goods and services is very strong in the Corridor. It is recommended that, as the Corridor evolves and redevelops over time, these uses be incorporated at key intersections at the periphery of more intensive, pedestrian-scale development and that their design complement rather than detracts from new development. There are many new examples of auto service uses that operate and have been designed to blend in with a more urban format.
 - Housing should be developed in close proximity to the Town Center, and targeted to different market segments; a mix of owner-occupied multifamily products, senior housing, etc. will provide a variety of choices to satisfy market demand.

2. South District, South of Wentworth

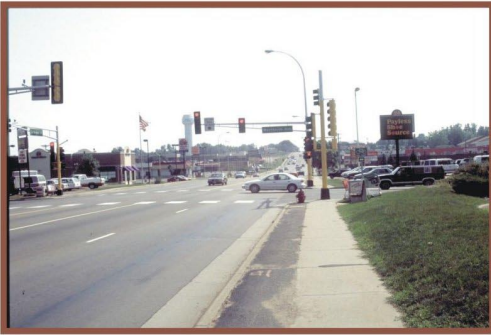
- Most of the commercial space is located in the South District. The South District holds more than three-quarters of the total commercial space in the Corridor, which equates to nearly 700,000 square feet.
- Several strip centers are located on either side of the Corridor beginning south of Wentworth Avenue and extending to Mendota Road. These strip centers house a variety of midsize and smaller retailers with a few large anchor tenants. Although these smaller retailers have the benefit of being located in a center, often the tenant mix has been diluted over time and spaces are leased more now on the need to fill vacant spaces versus maintaining a critical mix of users within the center.
- The freestanding pads consist predominantly of auto-oriented uses such as auto service repair and fast food, along with some sit-down restaurants. These uses are located close together, but are difficult to separate and, because of the proliferation of signs along the Corridor, lose their distinctiveness.
- There is no sense of synergy or cohesion among these uses.
- The existing development pattern is entirely focused toward the vehicle.

Demand was calculated for the South District for the following components over the next 10 to 15 years:

- 60,000 square feet of net new retail space (will be new uses);
- 50,000 square feet of net new office space (professional services);
- 250 to 300 units of housing (varying product types); infill areas along the Corridor;

Net new retail and office space reflects space that is developed net of existing space.

Issues and Observations



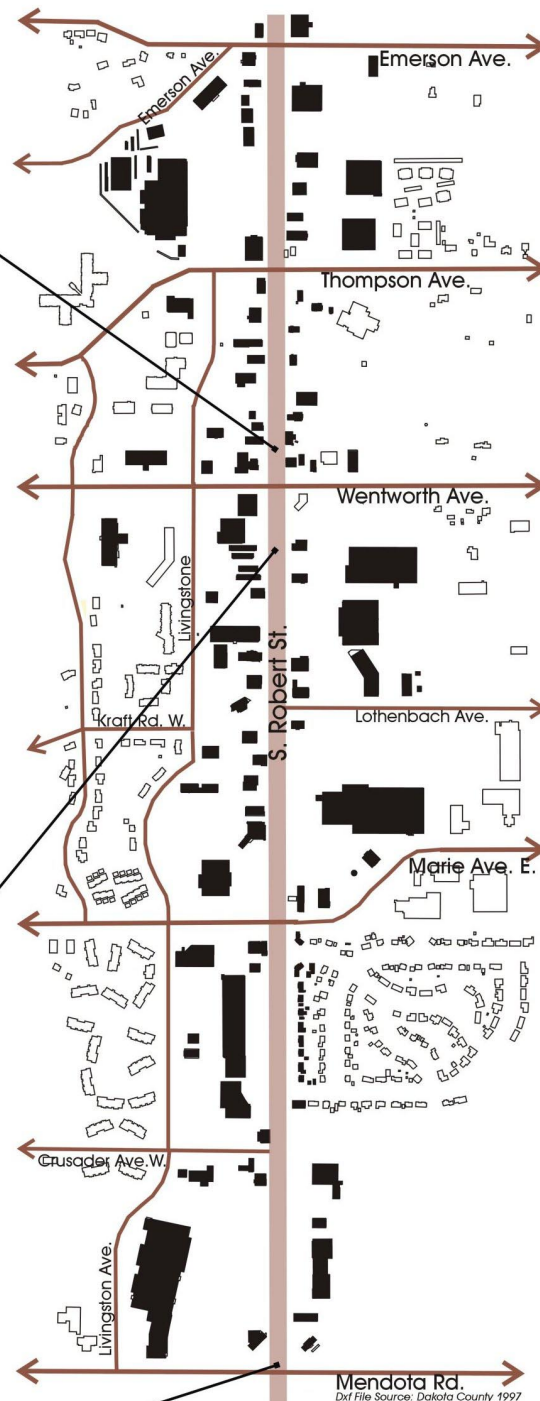
- Transition zone from community commercial uses in the north to a regional commercial scale in the south.
- Small lots with multiple access points create hazardous turning movements.
- Extensive franchise commercial architecture contribute to the lack of a distinct identity and focus.
- Vast views of parking lots contribute to negative image.
- Mixture of building types, setbacks and signs create visual clutter and negative image.
- Lack of central focus and identity to district.



- Deeper lots afford more commercial development opportunities.
- Lack of parking lot buffers and boulevards and high traffic volumes create a hazardous pedestrian environment and unappealing image.



- Topography and wide setbacks provide opportunity to define a gateway corridor between Inver Grove Heights to the south and West St. Paul to the north.



SOUTH DISTRICT



Figure VIII-1

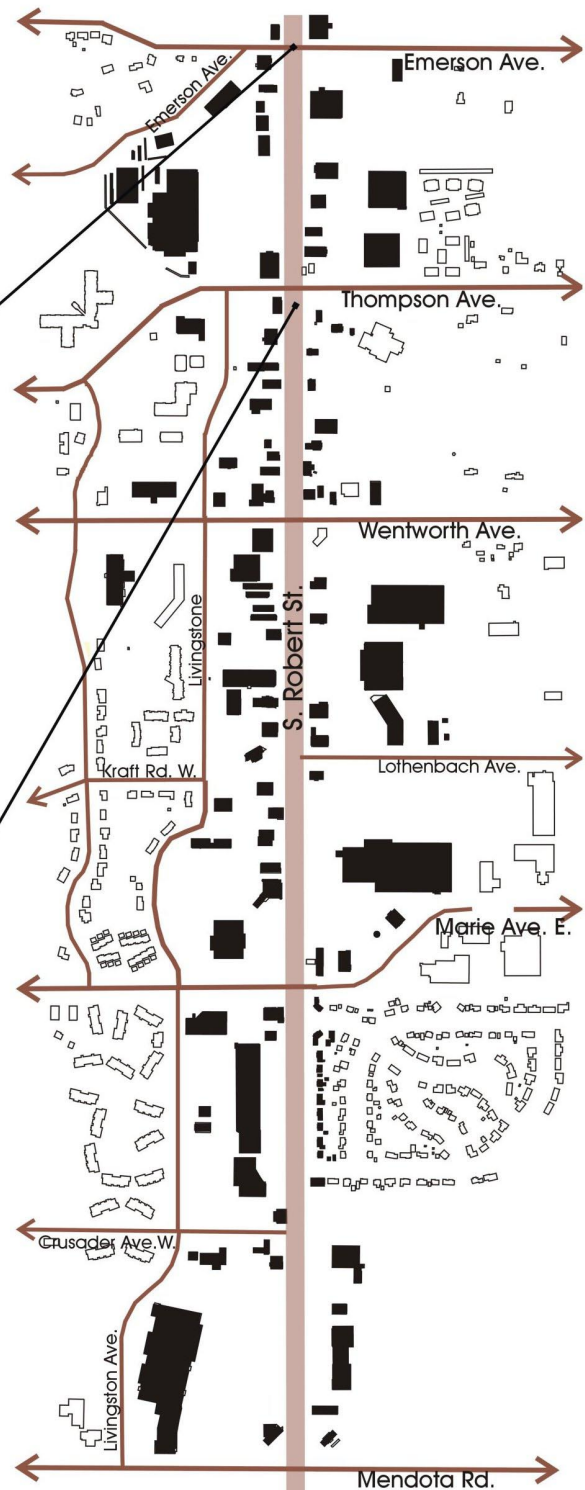
Issues and Observations



- Topography and green space define district boundary.



- Wide landscaped setbacks and higher quality building materials create a distinct district between Emerson and Thompson.
- Livingstone Ave. parallels and relieves traffic on S. Roberts St. And provides service access to businesses.
- Tight pedestrian scaled urban street grid now completely replaced by large blocks sized for big box retail and the movement of cars.
- High traffic volumes and wide street form barrier to pedestrians.
- Gridded urban residential grain to the north replaced by larger scale multiple family residential and commercial developments.
- Parking lots rather than architecture dominate S. Robert St.



Aerial Photo and Dxf File Source: Dakota County 1997

SOUTH DISTRICT



NORTH

Figure VIII-2

Redevelopment

-Minimize visual clutter

A.Enforce and implement new sign standards and promote incentives.

B.Create design standards that:

- Define consistent "build-to" zone.
- Minimize parking in front of buildings.
- Define landscape standards for edge treatments and interiors of parking lots.

-Define "Gateway" architectural and site planning standards for the Thompson, Wentworth and Mendota Road corridors.

-Promote shared access and parking.

■Thompson Ave.

-Treat as gateway from Hwy. 52 to the east.

■Wentworth Ave.

-Treat as gateway and parkway linkage with Dakota Co. N. Urban Regional Trail.

■Wentworth Ave. and S. Robert St.

-Define as a mixed use "Town Center" area.

■Wentworth Ave. to Marie Ave.

-Maintain opportunities for large-scale development.

■S. Robert St.

-Define a unifying identity and streetscape.

-Express the regional commercial scale of this district through the streetscape and gateway treatments.

-Define parking lot edge and land use transition treatments.

-Improve pedestrian comfort, safety and accessibility.

-Define linkages to surrounding neighborhoods at cross streets and mid-block.

■Marie Ave. and S. Robert St.

-Define a "Primary Neighborhood" mixed-use area.

-Reinforce and maintain the integrity of residential areas.

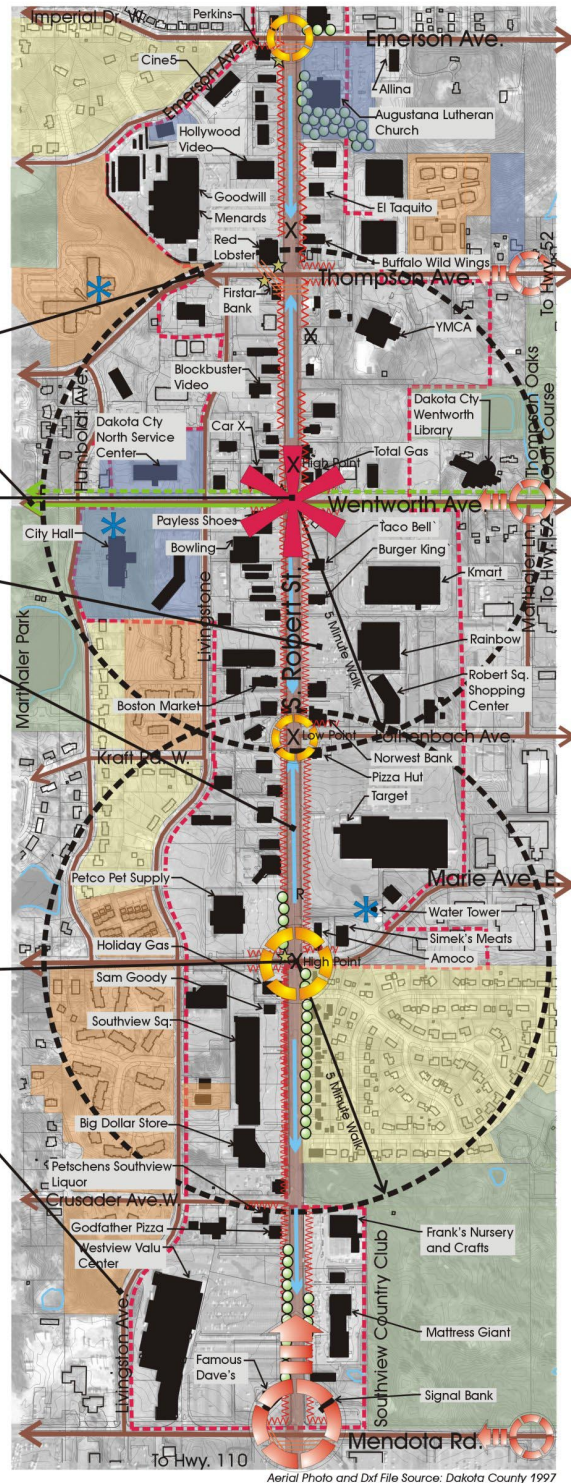
■Livingstone Ave.

-Define streetscape treatments, redevelopment + design guidelines and standards.

Legend

	Buildings		Bus Stops
	Parking		Overhead Utilities
	Multi-Family Housing		Water Drainage
	Single-Family Housing		Streets
	Public/Semipublic		Greenway Connection*
	Parks		Bicycle Lanes
	Gateways		Commercial District
	Primary Neighborhood*		TIF District
	Local Neighborhood*		Views to Parking
	Town Center- Major Pedestrian Intersection		Landmarks
	Street Trees		15-Minute Walk

"South Robert Street Design Initiative." *Source: BWR.



Aerial Photo and Dxf File Source: Dakota County 1997

SOUTH DISTRICT
Design Objectives



Figure VIII-3



Figure VIII-4

C. South District Recommendations

1. Town Center Between Wentworth and Thompson Avenues

In keeping with the South Robert Street Design Initiative, a Town Center is proposed between Wentworth and Thompson Avenues. This area is intended to serve as the primary focus of the community and will take advantage of current opportunities to integrate the existing City Hall, Library, and YWCA with a compact mixture of commercial, residential and office uses. A series of open spaces and trails will provide areas for community gatherings, amenities to support residential development and connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

2. Community Green, Town Square and Transit Plaza

A Community Green and Town Square are proposed in the heart of the South District's proposed Town Center. The Community Green provides a large open space amenity for future residents, and a green connection between the pond and trails to the east of South Robert Street. The Town Square mirrors the Community Green across South Robert Street and provides an urbanized gathering space and transit

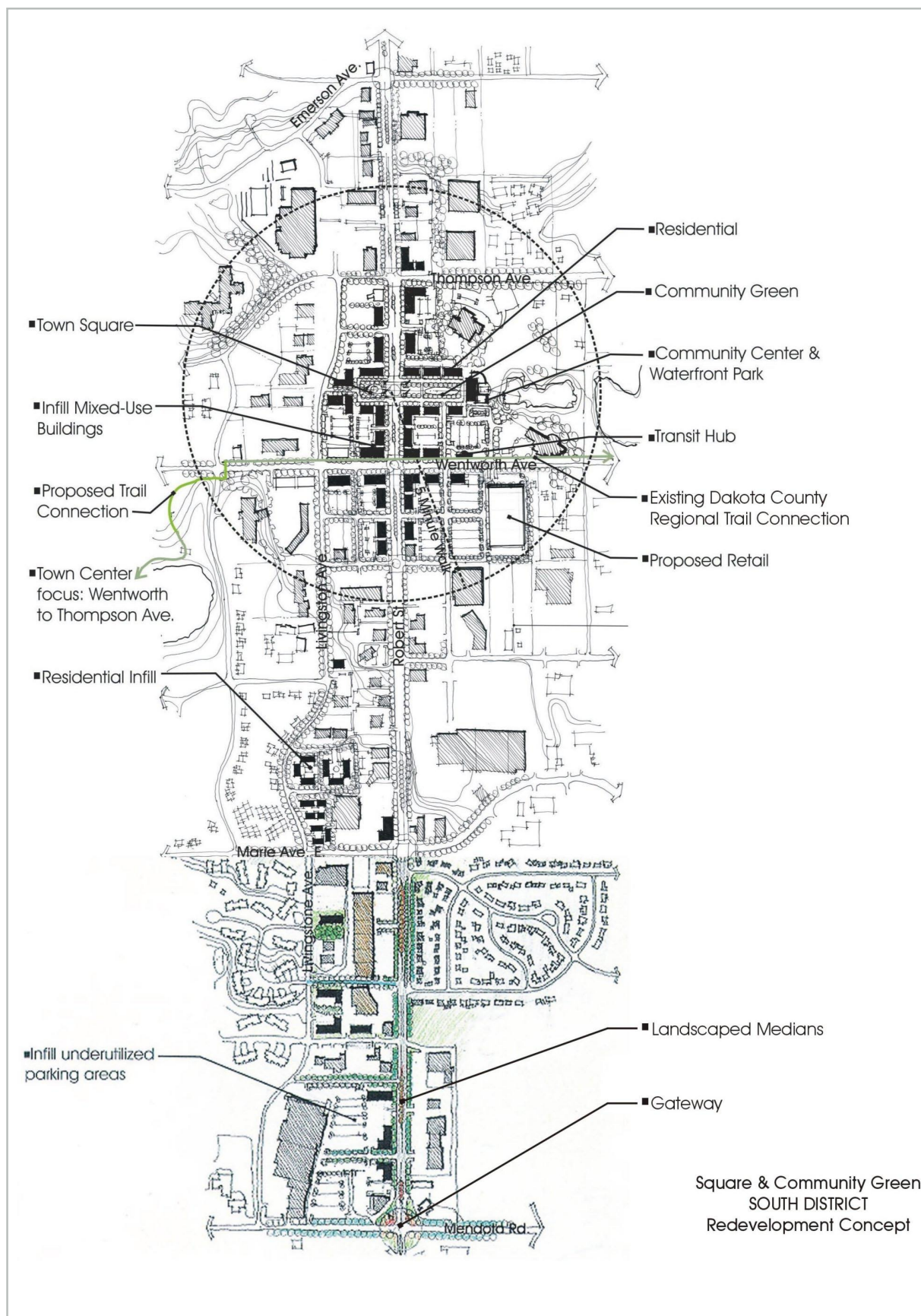


Figure VIII-5

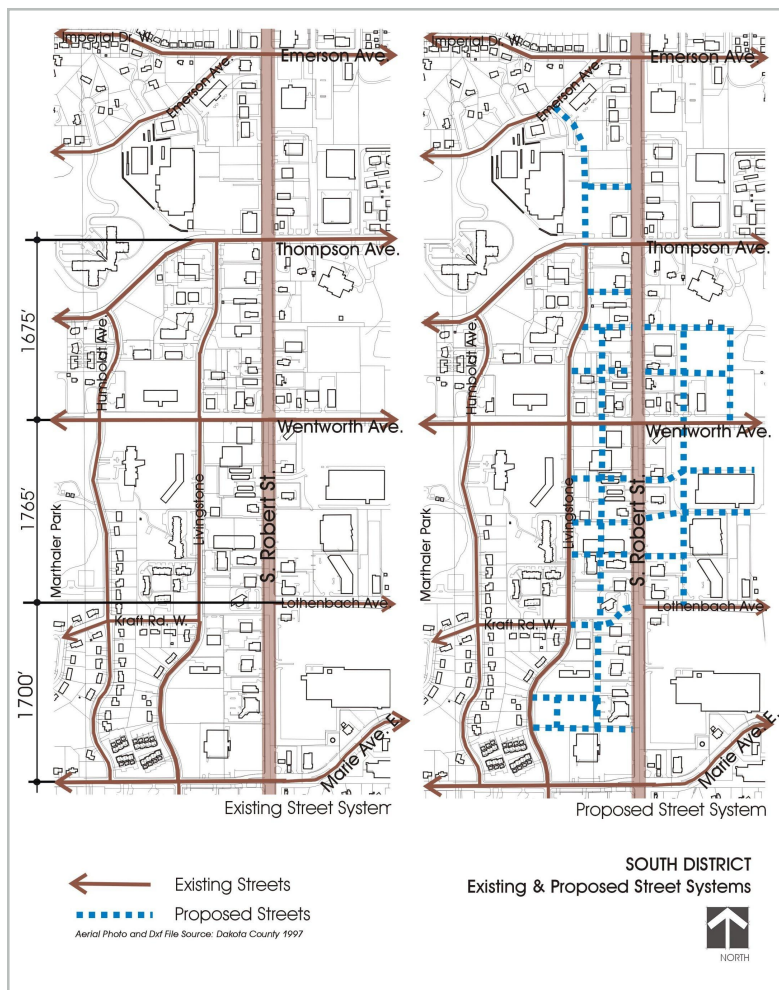


Figure VIII-6

nodes to create identifiable neighborhood centers, promote market synergy, and provide compact centers of activity. A higher density mixture of uses in combination with streetscape and open space improvements will foster safer, more livable neighborhoods and an environment more conducive to additional residential development.

5. Promote Infill with Residential Uses

Increasing the amount of residential uses benefits the corridor by increasing the population base and commercial market. It also creates a more diverse and vital environment and provides more life-cycle housing choices. New building typologies, such as mixed-use senior's housing and retail complexes, live/work units and multi-family townhomes, should be encouraged in order to tap into the market demands which reflect changing demographic trends and diverse incomes.

6. Introduce a Tighter Block Pattern and Street Grid

This plan recommends that ultimately the block grid pattern should be spaced 1,200 apart for signalized intersections and 600 feet apart for unsignalized intersections. The proposed block system is particularly important in the Town Center Area to establish an interconnected, compact framework for redevelopment. On average, the South District's current blocks measure between 1,400-1,770 feet. This pattern forces more traffic to the main crossroads, limits accessibility from surrounding neighborhoods and promotes large-scaled or big box development. Livingston Avenue, originally constructed to relieve traffic flow from South Robert Street, is currently underutilized.

plaza around which mixed uses can cluster.

3. Rezone from Commercial to Two Mixed-Use Districts

The current zoning code and land use plan designate the entire South District for commercial uses. Based on the findings of the market study, which identified an already excessive amount of retail square footage along the Corridor relative to future growth, there is an oversupply of commercially zoned land. Two types of mixed-use designations should be adopted for the South District. They should include standards that will foster the desired character of the Town Center area, the gateway corridors on Thompson and Wentworth Avenues, and the more auto-oriented development south of Lowell Avenue. Recommended site planning, architecture and landscaping standards are listed in the Design Guidelines chapter in this document.

4. Concentrate Mixed-Use Development at Primary Neighborhood Crossroads

For the South District, Primary Neighborhood Crossroads have been identified at Thompson and Wentworth Avenues. Areas to capture the limited commercial growth potential should be concentrated, along with residential and office uses, at these

7. Street Improvements Concepts

As in the North District, the South District's street right-of-way width measures 80 feet in this segment. For the modified cross section, the existing face-of-curb to face-of-curb width for the five-lane section is held constant, but the right-of-way widths were modified to provide room for a center median in much of the district with dedicated left turn lanes. The proposed street cross section will meet State Aid Standards. Driveways must be consolidated where possible to allow for center median installations. At a minimum, a continuous 600-foot median is needed at the primary intersections for the Town Center and Gateway areas.

8. Incorporate Amenity Zones and Easements

Within the South District, Amenity Zones measuring 6 to 10 feet are recommended to provide additional width for pedestrian and streetscape improvements. These easements will allow the boulevard strip to be widened, providing room for plantings and allowing the sidewalk to be relocated adjacent to the right-of-way. In addition, amenity zones provide space for signage, benches, parking buffers, snow storage and transit plazas, and act as "build-to" zones for future buildings. Existing parking will need to be set back from the right-of-way.

9. Improve Transit Facilities

The improved streetscape with amenity zones will provide the space necessary to include more transit shelters throughout the corridor.

10. Waterfront Park, Open Space and Trail Connections

A waterfront park is proposed along the pond east of the Community Green with trail connections to the library, YWCA, and Wentworth Avenue. This trail and open space system forms a green connection across South Robert Street that is linked to Dakota County's North Urban Regional Trail, which connects Marthaler Park to the Dodge Nature Center. Wentworth Avenue should be treated as a parkway with a multipurpose trail to reinforce connectivity between parks and open space within West St. Paul.

11. Shared Parking

As with the other districts, shared parking allowances are recommended for adjacent uses in the South District. Shared parking facilities work most effectively in mixed-use areas that have staggered peak use periods. The total number of parking spaces can be reduced by comparing peak demand of each use by time of day, day of the week, and season.

12. Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape should provide a sense of safety and pedestrian comfort as well as continuity with the North and Signal Hills Districts' existing streetscape components. This may be accomplished by providing landscaped medians and by maintaining a buffer between the sidewalk and through lanes that consist of a combination of pedestrian-scaled street lights, signage, street trees, and plantings between the curb and walking zone. In addition, elements unique to this district should be incorporated to distinguish this area as the Town Center and Gateway while maintaining continuity along the entire South Robert Street corridor.

13. Stormwater

Please refer Section C of the Appendices.



Figure VIII-7

14. South Gateway

The segment of South Robert Street just north of Mendota Road is the south gateway area to the corridor. Recommended improvements to this area include: infill development in the underutilized fringe areas of parking lots; improved landscaping, architectural and site planning standards; landscaped medians within South Robert Street; streetscape elements; and entry monuments. Due to the large lot shopping center development in this area, fewer access points exist and, as a result, short-term streetscape and median improvements will be easier to implement in the South District than in the other districts.

D. Incremental Development and Corridor Evolution

The following diagrams illustrate how the long-term mixed-use redevelopment model and street improvements may be realized through a sequence of more manageable steps within the South District.

1. Phase One: Easements, Setbacks, and Streetscape Improvements

Phase One will acquire the space necessary for streetscape improvements from property owners along South Robert Street. Currently, typical sidewalk and boulevard widths measure 5 feet and 2-1/2 feet respectively. Easements and setbacks should be acquired to accommodate a 6-foot boulevard, 6-foot sidewalk and a 6-foot parking lot buffer where possible. Street trees, pedestrian-level lights, transit stops, and other streetscape elements may then be incorporated within the boulevard and amenity zones. A combination of trees, shrubs and/or architectural screens should be accommodated within the parking lot buffer zones. An 8-foot boulevard is necessary if a bike lane is included.

2. Phase Two: Shared Access and Landscaped Medians

Phase Two will focus on combining access points where possible and incorporating medians in select areas along the corridor. Access points should be consolidated where possible to eliminate hazardous turning movements. Parking lots should be reevaluated to determine if more efficient layouts are possible and to consider shared parking arrangements between adjacent property owners.

Incorporating medians into the roadway will be contingent upon consolidating access points. The medians should measure approximately 600 feet to accommodate left turn lanes for unsignalized intersections, right-in/right-out shared access points, and to establish a pattern of 1,200 feet between signalized intersections. In the South District, buildings and parking areas are, generally speaking, set back farther. This pattern increases the feasibility of combining access points and parking.

3. Phase Three: Compact Mixed-Use Redevelopment

Phase Three will focus on consolidating key parcels, particularly in the Town Center area. Consolidating smaller parcels, access points and parking lots will help to minimize isolated, individualized parcels that necessitate numerous curb cuts to access individual parking lots. Over time, some businesses will stay and

expand, while others will sell to new owners and possibly replace buildings. Expansions of existing buildings and new buildings should move closer to the street. Parking lots should be located behind or between buildings. Key corner parcels should be infilled with buildings that are built up to the right-of-way on both street frontages.

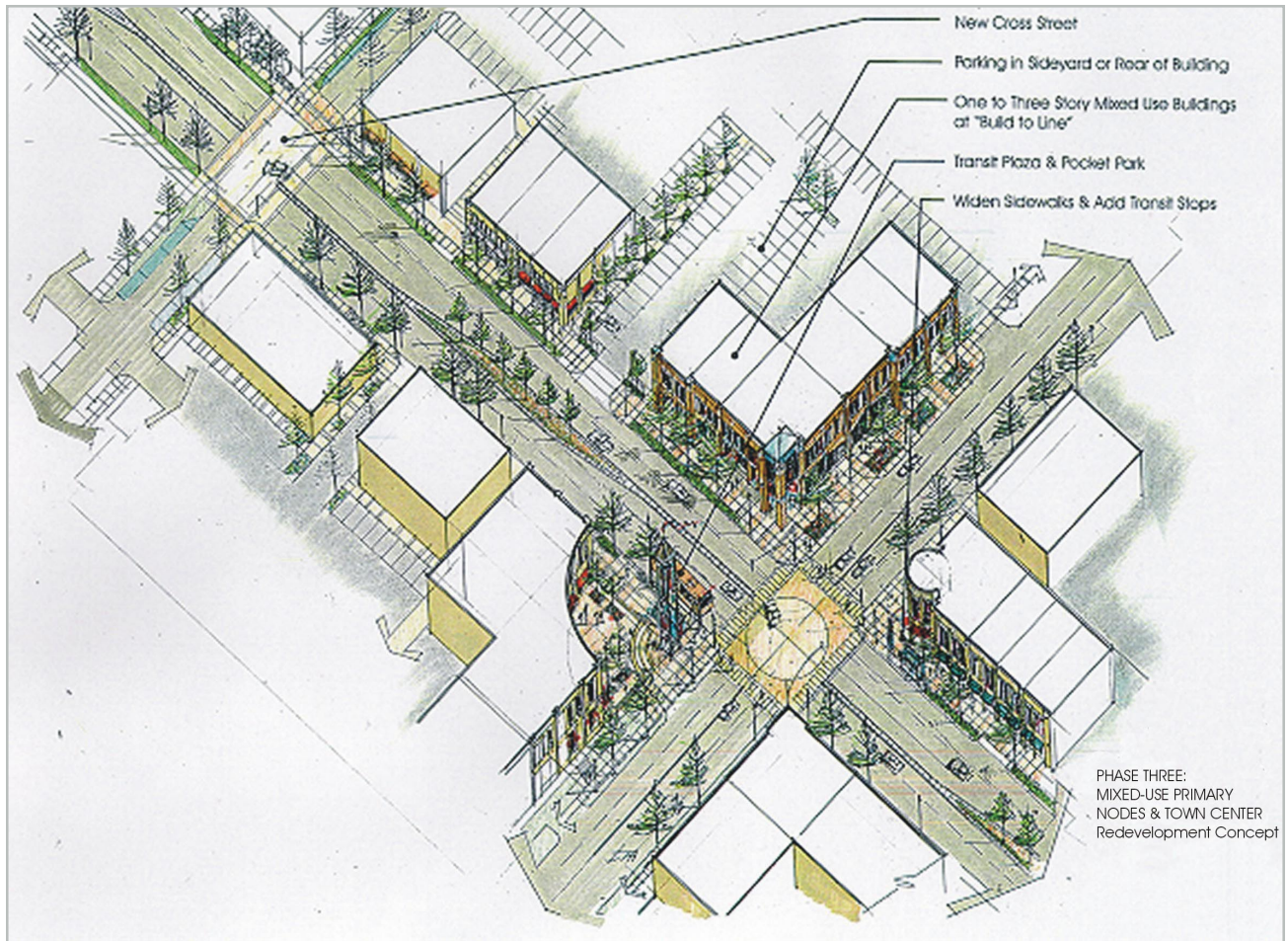
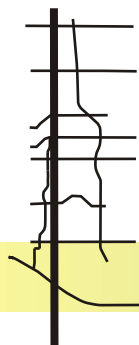


Figure VIII-8



IX. DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. North & Signal Hills Districts: Proposed Mixed-Use District A

As new infill development in the North and Signal Hills Districts progresses, the site planning guidelines outlined in this document should be complied with to reinforce a traditional redevelopment pattern. Figures IX-1 and IX-2 illustrate the application of these principles within a residential and commercial context.

1. Building Placement

- **Commercial.** Place new buildings at a maximum 5-foot setback from the right-of-way line. Corner buildings should also have a maximum 5-foot setback from South Robert Street as well as the side street. Main building entries should face or be clearly visible from South Robert Street.
- **Residential.** Front yard setbacks for residential infill redevelopment should not exceed 20 feet. Multi-family housing may be sited perpendicular to the street and provided with side street access to allow for privacy, and parking and courtyards between buildings.

2. Alleys

Alley access should be defined with curbs and trees on commercial and residential properties. Residential areas should be buffered and the alley edges defined with one tree planted per 25 lineal feet or a fence. Site lines should be maintained to ensure safety.

3. New or Renovated Buildings Should Complement the Pedestrian Realm

Street-level building facades shape the pedestrian's streetscape experience. Ground-level businesses should stimulate passerby interest with well-lit displays of merchandise or by providing a view of internal activity. As a building's use changes, it is important to maintain its existing character, particularly at the street level.

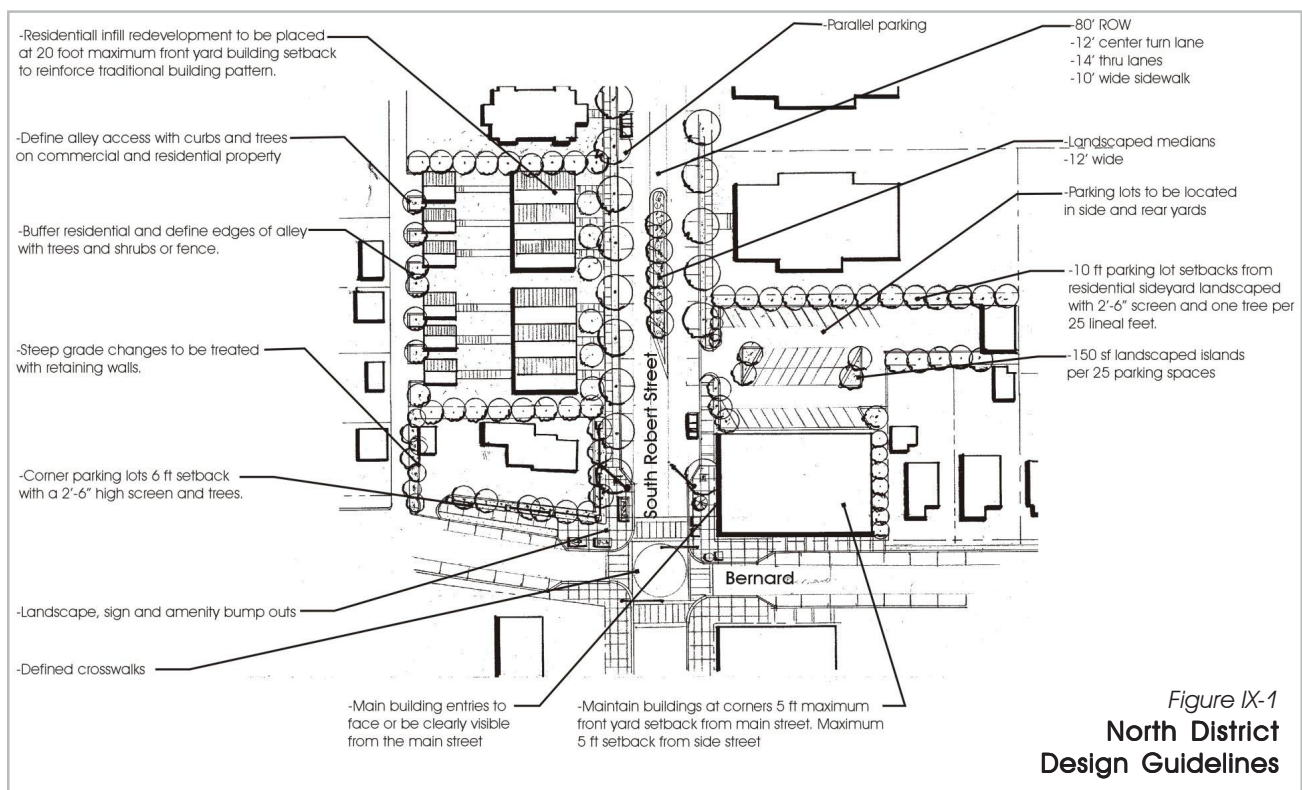


Figure IX-1
North District
Design Guidelines

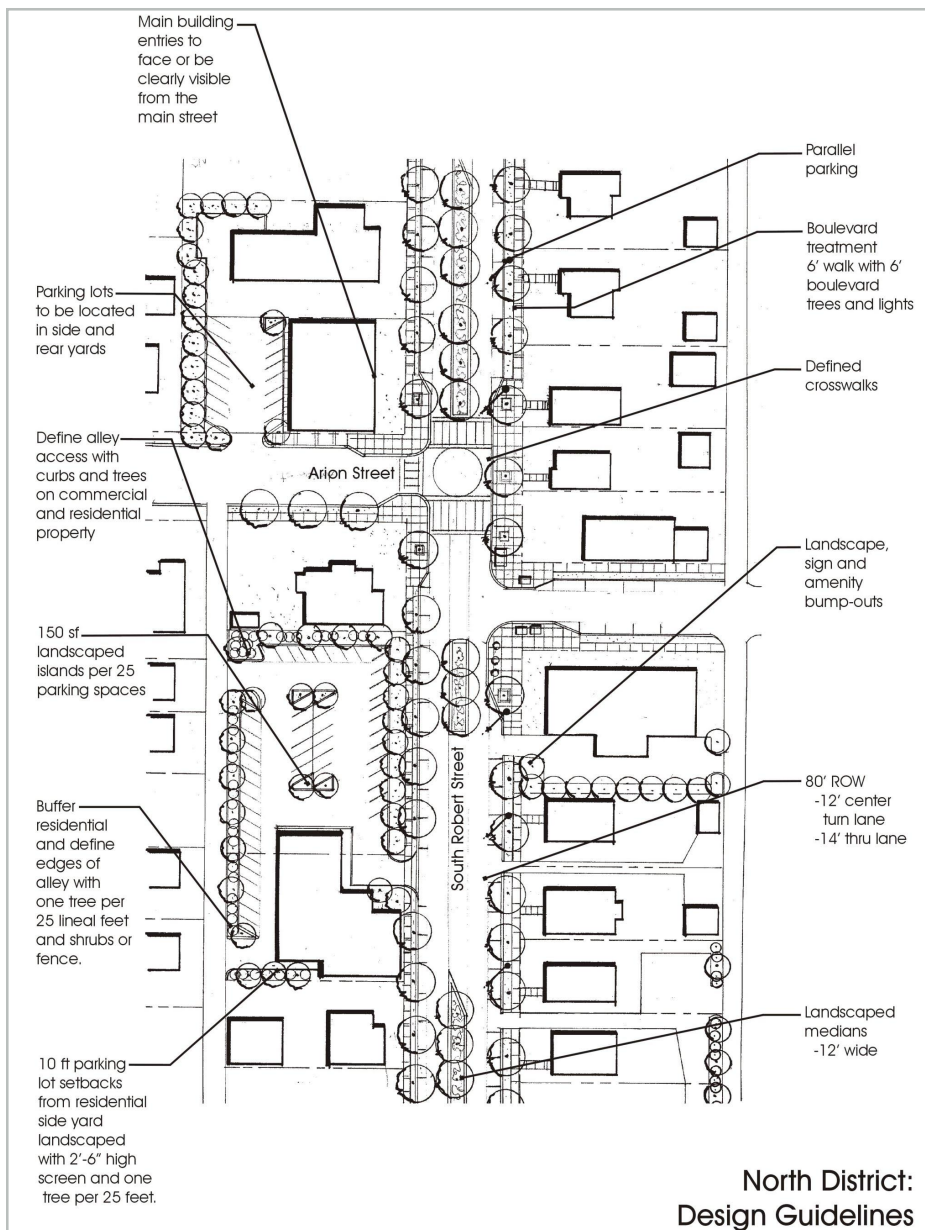


Figure IX-2

■ **Width and Height.**

The rhythm established by a consistent building width and a similar building height is a component that defines the architectural character of the North District.

New development should maintain the alignment of building windows, cornices and roof lines that are associated with a traditional urban development pattern. Character and scale should be compatible with traditionally-designed structures through the use of materials, detailing and window placement. A clear visual division between the street level and upper floors should also be maintained.

■ **Facade composition.**

The entrances to buildings should face and be clearly visible from the main street, and should be recessed to maintain a coherent pattern along the sidewalk, to define the entry point and to add interest and create more retail window space.

The building facade should contain a combination of vertical and horizontal pattern designs in the facade.

Any exterior building wall adjacent to or visible from a public street, public open space or abutting property may not exceed 60 feet in length without significant visual relief consisting of one or more of the following:

The facade shall be divided architecturally by means of significantly different materials or textures, horizontal offsets, vertical offsets, and/or fenestration at the first floor level.

- **Display Windows.** Retail stores typically possess large windows on the first floor for merchandise display, adding life and interest to the streetscape. The following guideline encourages the preservation and creation of display windows for both newly renovated or newly constructed buildings (Figure IX-3) :

A minimum of 40 percent of first floor facades fronting South Robert Street, side streets and public open space should consist of windows and entries.

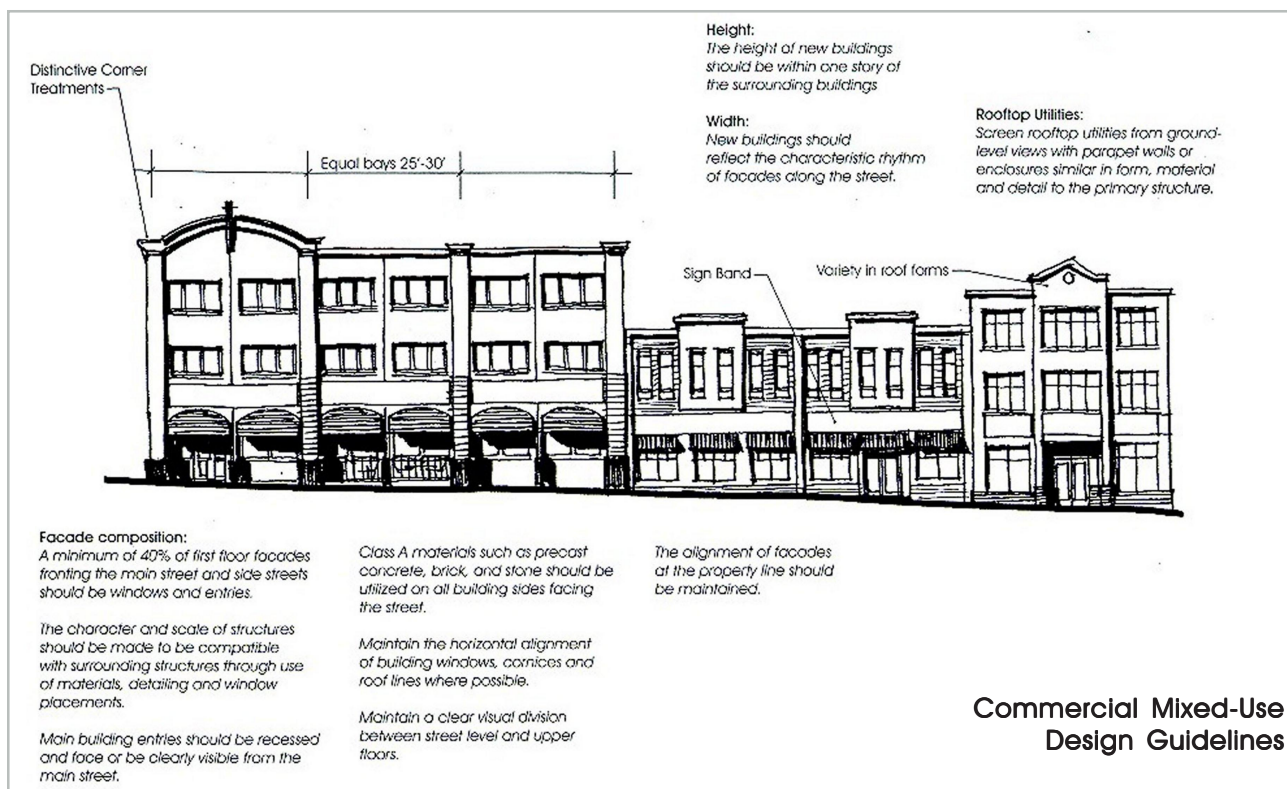


Figure IX-3



Decorative detailing



Brick: precast and tile

Canopies and awnings are encouraged to accentuate the street level relationship between the building and streetscape and to provide protection for pedestrians.

■ **Color, Texture & Materials.** Color is often the most recognizable element of a building and it can greatly enhance or detract from the visual harmony of street facades. In general, the number of colors should be limited in order to maintain simple color schemes. Colors should be selected that will promote visual harmony and integrate buildings within their respective blocks. A common palette of brick colors and other high-quality materials will establish a degree of conformity, but not uniformity, along South Robert Street. Exterior building materials are classified as either primary, secondary, or accent materials.

Primary Materials

Primary materials cover at least 60 percent of the facade of a building. They must be integrally colored and may consist of brick, stone, precast concrete or glass. Bronze-tinted or mirror glass are prohibited as exterior materials except in the South District.

Secondary Materials

Secondary materials may cover no more than 30 percent of the facade. They must be integrally colored and may consist of decorative block or stucco. Synthetic stucco may be permitted as a secondary material on upper floors only.

Accent materials

Accent materials may include door and window frames, lintels, cornices, and other minor elements, and may cover no more than 10 percent of the facade. Accent materials may consist of wood or metal if appropriately integrated into the overall building design and not situated in areas which will be subject to physical or environmental damage.

All buildings must incorporate accent materials that are visible from a public street or open space, complementary major material colors, and a combination of vertical and horizontal pattern designs in the building facade.

- **Outdoor Space.** When appropriate, the extension of interior space into the public realm is not only lucrative for the business owner but interesting and visually stimulating for the pedestrian. If special consideration is given to their size, location, design, and appearance, sidewalk cafes enhance an area's ambiance. A well-designed outdoor seating area will not block storefront entrances or inhibit access for the pedestrian or physically handicapped. Outdoor cafe furniture should be urban in character and scaled to fit the space.
- **Landscaping.** At least one overstory tree must be provided for every 500 square feet of landscaped area. In order to provide year-round color and interest, a variety of appropriately placed and hardy overstory and ornamental trees, shrubbery and ground covers must be included in the landscaping plan.

At least 10 percent of the total land area of a site including the perimeter of private parking and driveway areas should be landscaped. Landscaped areas provided within the build-to line may be credited toward this 10 percent landscaping requirement on a square-foot-for-square-foot basis, for up to half of the requirement, or 5 percent.

- **Amenity Zones.** An amenity zone should be accommodated between the sidewalk and parking lot or building, allowing space for signage, benches, parking buffers and transit plazas, and a future build-to zone. This amenity zone should measure a minimum of 6 feet in width.

4. Signs Should Complement Building Appearance

Signs are an important architectural element for any business. Since signs influence the overall character and appearance of the streetscape, they should complement a building's design. Franchise logos and identification signs should be allowed only if they are scaled down in size and are integrated into the building facade and street character. Buildings and gas station canopies designed as signs must be prohibited. Signage guidelines outlined for each district should be respected to enhance the character of the overall streetscape.

- **Overhanging Signs.** Overhanging signs received one of the highest preference ratings in the Visual Preference Survey. Overhanging signs, if appropriately designed, can add significant charm and character to a building facade and streetscape. Their use should be encouraged.
- **Multiple Tenant Buildings.** Multi-tenant building signage is an important consideration. Each tenant is allowed one identification sign to be located within the designated sign area, as defined by the Ordinance. New multiple tenant buildings can successfully grant individuality to each tenant through the use of varied building materials and facade detailing. Signage may be varied in terms of lettering styles and lighting, while maintaining regularity in their size and location.
- **Awning Signs.** Awnings increase a business's visibility, particularly those located on the second floor of a building. Awning signage complements the building facade and can be easily removed as tastes evolve or new businesses move in. Awnings should be made of high-quality opaque material, and backlighting of awnings should be prohibited.



Overhanging signs



Monument sign



Building signs



Awning signs

5. Improve Alleys, Parking Lots and Rear Building Entries to Create a Safe, Attractive, and Viable Commercial and Residential Environment.

- **Alley Treatments.** Alleys serve as the transitional area between commercial and residential uses and as the primary access for commercial parking lots, rear building entries, and service areas. Using the North District as an example, alleys could be improved by:

-Providing an island at the end of each parking aisle that will define the parking areas, provide space to plant trees and buffer residential areas, and accommodate additional lighting that will provide a greater feeling of safety.

-Defining the limits of the residential areas with well-delineated landscaped areas.

-Incorporating bollards, benches, signs, and other elements that will blend with proposed streetscape elements and building treatments.

- **Rear Building Entrances.** The rear entrance to a building may become the primary entrance when parking is located in the interior of a block, as is typical for a traditional urban development pattern. Improvement to the rear building entrances, coupled with those made to alleys and parking lots, will create a welcoming and safe environment and should be encouraged.



Rear building entries should complement the architecture

- **Parking Lots.** In an urban context, the street wall formed by structures built to the sidewalk should continue across the street frontage of parking lots through the use of overstory trees, hedges, and/or structural screens. The treatment of the setback area between parking lots and sidewalks is more important than the depth of the setback. A narrow setback that includes overstory trees and a low screen made of concrete, brick and/or ornamental iron railings can be very effective at screening views and maintaining the street edge. The buffer area should measure a minimum of 6 feet in width to provide adequate space for trees and a railing or wall, as well as a minimal area for snow storage.



Parking lots fronting the street should be buffered with a combination of trees, shrubs and/or architectural screens

- **Landscaping Parking Lot Interiors.**

Interior landscaping is essential to improve the appearance of large commercial parking lots. Landscaped islands provide visual relief from large expanses of asphalt and automobiles. In addition, shade trees add a vertical dimension to parking lots that is often needed to maintain a pedestrian scale.

If properly designed, parking lot islands can be landscaped cheaply and effectively. They should incorporate drought- and salt-tolerant trees that are indigenous to the area. The ground layer should

consist of materials that will not be destroyed by the weight of snow piles, such as decorative mulch, or shrubs and perennials that may be sheared to the ground in late fall. Islands should be large enough and the soil uncompacted and treated to provide adequate habitat for trees and other plant materials.

- **Recommendation.** The City should modify the Zoning Ordinance to clearly define what is acceptable as materials for buffering parking lots and landscaping the interior of parking lots. Following is an example of the proposed text:

Parking lots abutting a street shall possess a 6-foot setback with landscaping and/or an architectural screen that measures a maximum 3'-0" in height. Sight lines should be maintained into parking areas to accommodate surveillance. Acceptable materials in the buffer area include:

Parking Lot Perimeters

-One tree per 25 feet of parking lot frontage shall be incorporated into the perimeter landscaping area,

-A hedge that is no higher than 3'-6" and maintains 75 percent opacity in the winter months,

-An ornamental steel picket railing with stone, concrete or brick piers,

-Stone, steel, or concrete bollards spaced a maximum of 6 feet apart, and a ground cover of flowers, or low-growing evergreen or deciduous shrubs,

-Any combination of the above that accomplishes the intent of the Ordinance,

Interior Parking Lot Landscaping

Parking lot interiors shall possess 150 square feet of landscape islands per 25 parking spaces. The islands shall include a minimum of one 2 1/2" caliper overstory, ornamental or 6-foot evergreen tree at time of planting.

For parking lots adjacent to residential areas, a 10-foot setback shall be provided with the equivalent of one tree per 25 lineal feet of frontage with a fence and shrubs. Sight lines shall be maintained to ensure safety.

At least 10 percent of the total land area within the perimeter of private parking and driveway areas shall be landscaped with approved ground cover, flowers, shrubbery and trees.

Where parking abuts the site perimeter, at least one overstory tree per 25 feet of site perimeter shall be provided.

6. Design Buildings to Provide People with a Clear Sense of Weather and the Seasons

- **Trees.** Trees placed around a building's perimeter provide shade and act as air conditioners; reduce the urban heat island effect, precipitation and wind speeds at the pedestrian level; and increase property values.
- **Balconies.** Balconies not only create visual interest within the streetscape, but also provide for a safer public environment by encouraging more eyes on the street.
- **Winter Warmth.** West St. Paul is a winter city where the warmth of sunlight in the middle of January can be absorbed on the sunny north side of many of the city streets. Streetscape treatments and building designs should take advantage of a sunny winter location by incorporating darker, warmth-absorbing materials and protected areas for pedestrian comfort.

In addition to sheltering pedestrians from the elements, awnings protect window displays from sun damage, and keep store interiors cooler on sunny summer days. Retractable awnings possess the ability to capture sun warmth and natural lighting. As a general rule, awnings should conform to a standard of 7'-6" of clearance between awning frames and the sidewalk.



Awnings and trees provide shade

B. South District: Proposed Mixed-Use Districts B & C

Two types of mixed-use districts are proposed for the South District:

- Mixed Use District B. This district is intended for the Town Center Area
- Mixed Use District C. This district is intended for the Gateway Corridors on Wentworth and Thompson Avenues, as well as the segment south of Lothenbach Avenue on South Robert Street.

1. Buildings

- **Alignment.** In order to create a "street wall" that will define the edges of South Robert Street and provide an engaging, human-scaled environment, the following guideline should be considered (Figure IX-4).

-New infill development shall be "built to" within 18 feet minimum and 24 feet maximum of the right-of-way.

- Buildings should be placed at corners of Gateway corridors.

- **Width and Height.** To maintain a consistent rhythm along the street, similar building widths and heights should be maintained.

-A clear visual division between the street level and upper floors should also be maintained. Canopies and awnings are encouraged to accentuate the street-level relationship between the building and streetscape and to provide protection for pedestrians.

-A 65-foot maximum building module should be used. This module should be broken into equal bays.

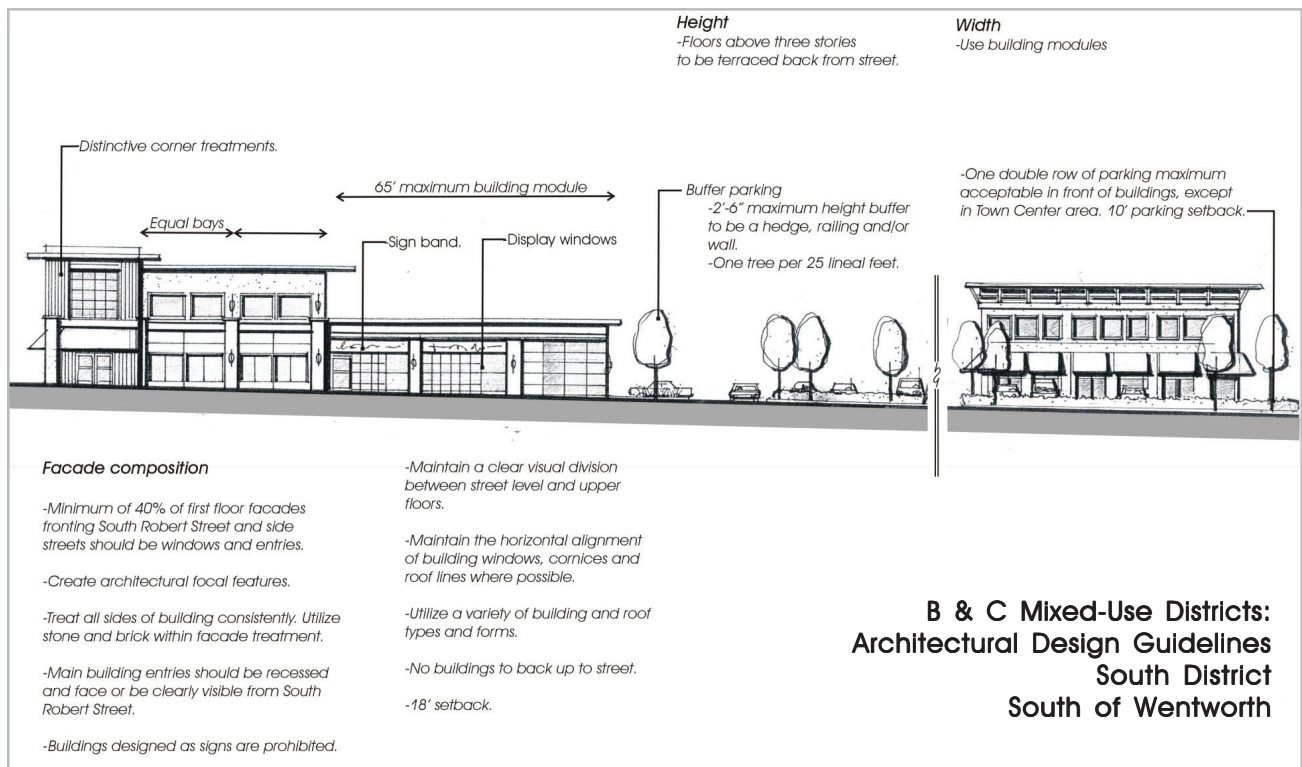


Figure IX-4

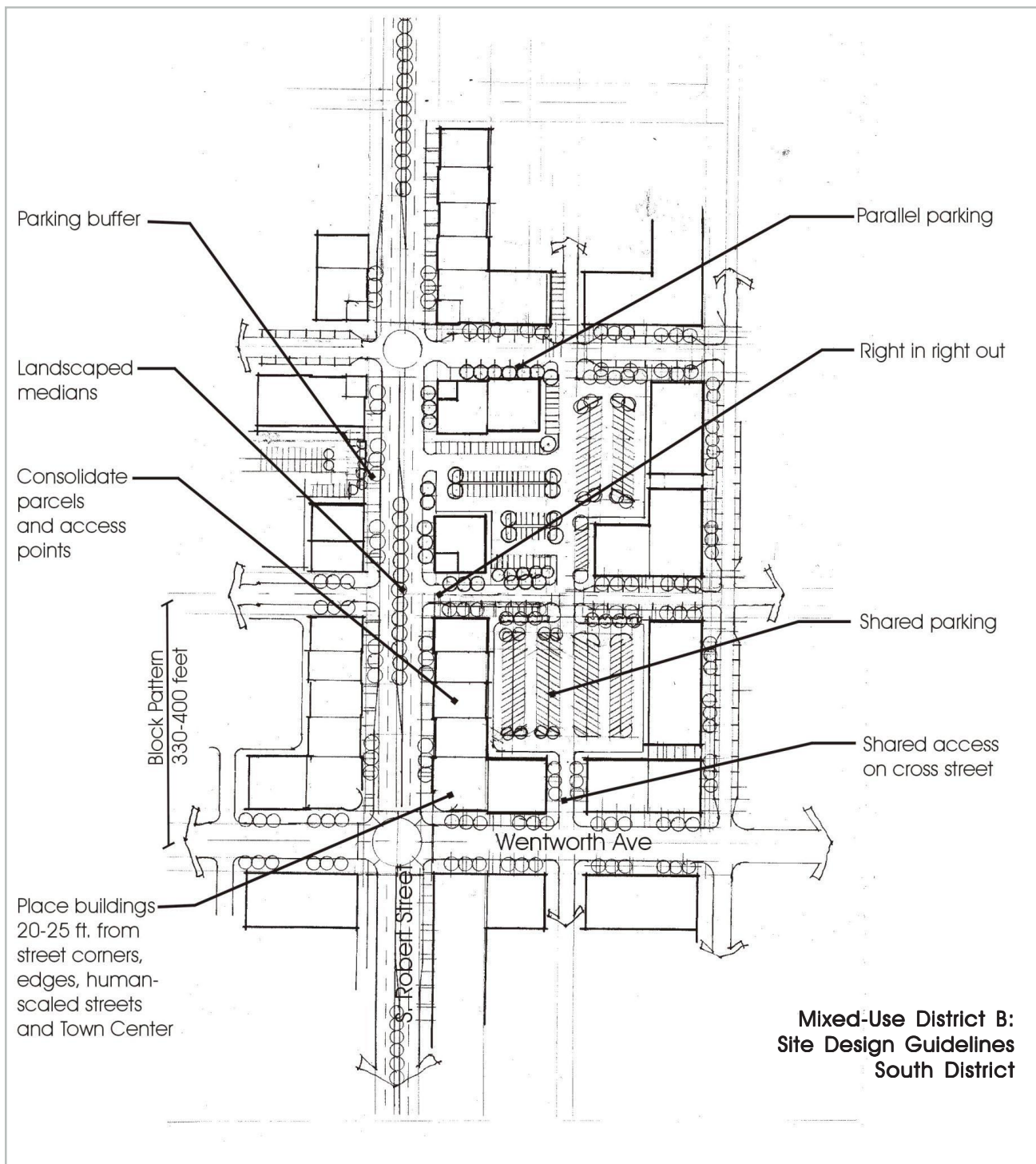


Figure IX-5

-Floors above three stories should be terraced back from the street.

- **Facade composition.** The entrances to buildings should face and be clearly visible from South Robert Street, and should be recessed to maintain a coherent pattern along the sidewalk, to define the entry point and to add street-level interest by creating more retail window space.

-No buildings should back up to the street.

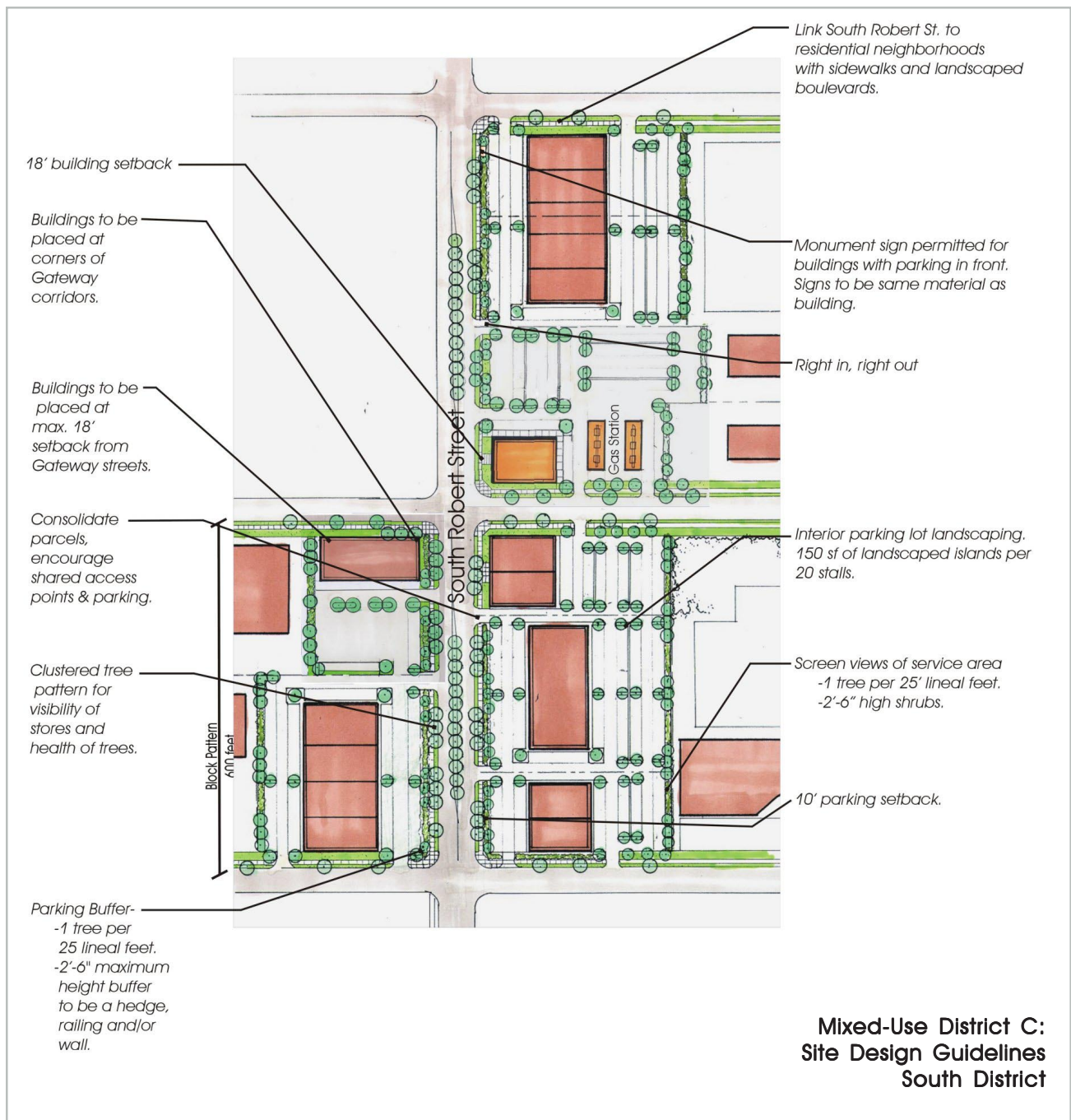


Figure IX-6

-A minimum of 40 percent of first floor facades fronting South Robert Street and side streets should consist of windows and entries.

-Treat all sides of the building consistently. Utilize stone and brick within facade treatment.

-Create architectural focal features. Utilize a variety of building and roof types and forms.

-Rooftop utilities should be screened from ground level views with parapet walls or enclosures similar in form, material and detail to the primary structure.

2. Parking Lots

- **Mixed-Use District B.** In the Town Center, cross streets should accommodate parallel parking to maximize the available parking area and to create a buffer between pedestrians and traffic. No parking should be accommodated in front of buildings in the Town Center Area. In order to maintain a continuous architectural wall adjacent to the pedestrian realm, parking lots should be placed in side and rear yards where possible, with shared access on cross streets.
- **Mixed-Use District C.** South of Wentworth, one double row of parking is the maximum acceptable in front of buildings. Many of the existing establishments along South Robert Street in this district have large parking lots in front of buildings. More efficient parking layouts would accommodate a 10-foot buffering amenity zone, walkways in front of businesses, and parking lot landscaping. Parking lots should be consolidated where possible, and angled parking patterns should be used.

3. Parking Lot Landscaping and Buffers

- A 10-foot setback with trees 25 feet on center and a row of shrubs or evergreens should be provided in parking lots adjacent to residential areas. Sight lines should be maintained to ensure safety.
- **Landscaping.** Parking lots should have 150 square feet of landscaped island per 25 parking spaces.
- **Buffers (Mixed Use District B).** In an urban context, the street wall formed by buildings built up to the sidewalk should continue across the street frontage of parking lots through the use of trees, 2'-6" hedges, and/or structural screens. Trees should be grouped at one per 25 lineal feet in order to avoid blocking visibility of the building or signage.

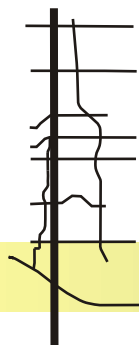
(Mixed-Use District C). If locating parking lots to the side and rear of buildings is not possible, a 10-foot parking lot setback buffer should be placed at the right-of-way. The treatment of the setback area between parking lots and sidewalks is more important than the depth of the setback. A narrow setback that includes overstory trees and a low screen constructed of concrete, brick and/or ornamental iron railings can be very effective at screening views and maintaining the street wall. This amenity zone should measure 10 feet in width to provide adequate space for trees and a railing or wall, as well as a minimal area for snow storage. Sight line should be maintained to ensure safety.

4. Alleys

- **Mixed-Use District B.** Alley access should be defined with curbs and trees on commercial and residential property. Residential areas should be buffered and the alley edges defined with one tree planted per 25 lineal feet, and a hedge to 75 percent opacity or a fence. Sight lines should be maintained to ensure safety.

5. Amenity Zone: Existing Parking Lots in Mixed-Use Districts B & C

A 10-foot amenity zone, similar to that recommended for the Signal Hills District, should be accommodated between the sidewalk and parking lot or building. This zone allows space for signage, benches, parking buffers and transit plazas, and a future "build-to" zone.



X. IMPLEMENTATION

This study has analyzed virtually all of South Robert Street's commercial areas and is recommending distinct strategies for guiding the future form and appearance of each district. Because these areas vary significantly from each other, both in their existing conditions and future potential, different strategies are needed to accomplish the study's objectives.

Before describing specific recommendations to implement the future vision contained in this report, some reasonable expectations for this process should be understood. First, South Robert Street has been evolving into its current pattern of development for nearly 120 years. Even with a strong commitment, it will take several years before many of these recommendations take full shape. Second, although the City's role in this process is an important one, the success of this effort will not be possible without the full support and participation of landowners, citizens and the development community.

A concerted effort has been made throughout this project to involve a broad cross-section of the community. Business owners, residents, elected and appointed officials, and community leaders have been invited to provide input and guidance. Their participation has improved the study and their continued participation and support will be critical in sustaining the community's commitment over time. Important steps that the City can and should take to put this plan into action are described in the following paragraphs. However, there are limitations to what the community can expect to accomplish through zoning enforcement and public improvements. The optimum results for this effort will only come if this study is also embraced by the private sector and if it guides both public and private investment over time.

A. Redevelopment Approach

Following are some key points to consider as the community begins the redevelopment process for South Robert Street:

- **Comprehensive.** A single project cannot revitalize the corridor. Only an ongoing series of initiatives can build community support and create lasting progress.
- **Incremental.** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that "things are happening." Large projects can really set the tone and establish precedence.
- **Self-Help.** Local leadership can breed long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
- **Public/Private Partnership.** The redevelopment program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.
- **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** One of the Redevelopment Strategy's key goals is to recognize and make the best use of the corridor's unique offerings. Local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful redevelopment initiative.
- **Quality.** From streetscape to storefront design to promotional campaigns and special events, quality must be the primary goal.
- **Change.** Changing community attitudes and habits is essential to bring about a corridor renaissance. A carefully planned program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.
- **Action-Oriented.** Frequent, visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small but dramatic improvements accomplished early in the process will remind the community that the revitalization effort is underway.

B. First Step: Advisory Group

The establishment of an advisory group that is committed to South Robert Street and whose mission is to administer the proposed work program is recommended. This group would serve as an umbrella organization which orchestrates other organizations with limited involvement in a collaborative effort to implement the plan objectives.

Two approaches could be considered to formulate the advisory group. The first approach would be to appoint an existing core group, such as the South Robert Street Task Force, as the advisory group. The Task Force represents those with the greatest familiarity with the plan and provides a logical core around which to build an advisory group that will maintain continuity within the planning process. However, shepherding the community through the implementation process is a formidable task. The Task Force may need to be broadened and financially strengthened to accomplish the objectives.

A second approach would be to form a new committee, similar to the current Task Force, consisting of 10 to 15 representatives of all the pertinent business organizations, City departments, community organizations and residents. The Advisory Committee may wish to incorporate as a nonprofit corporation representing the official improvement body for South Robert Street.

Ideally, a full-time salaried manager would be hired to coordinate implementation efforts which cannot be efficiently sustained by volunteers.

C. Short-Term Design Steps

Within the next year, it is important to establish the organizational and planning tools to implement the redevelopment guidelines, which include the following:

1. Build Design Standards into the Zoning Ordinance

Building design standards into the zoning ordinance is the most effective and legally sound strategy. If design objectives can be visualized and defined in quantifiable terms, they can be expressed in the form of standards that can be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. Definitive standards developed in response to reasonable goals and objectives are better for developers, are less likely to be legally challenged and are more defensible in the event of legal challenges. This approach would be easiest to administer by the planning staff in the long term. However, in the short term, the formation and authorization of a separate design review committee that will work with City staff to review redevelopment proposals is recommended.

There are limitations to the results that can be achieved through zoning. Design standards help achieve a degree of continuity through an area and certainly prevent development that is truly incongruous and incompatible. However, it is also true that good taste cannot be legislated. Although, zoning can help a community establish a level of quality and prevent discordant development, it cannot guarantee that development will be beautiful.

2. Other Options for Implementing Design Standards

- **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning.** If planned unit development (PUD) zoning is set up as a separate floating zoning district that can be applied anywhere the City chooses, or in prescribed locations, it can provide the opportunity to customize a set of design standards that maximize the potential for development. The key to the successful use of this tool is that the underlying zoning should govern in all matters, except where it has been demonstrated that the flexibility requested will provide a definite improvement over what would result from following the underlying zoning. Therefore, the use of PUD should be thought of as an enhancement of underlying zoning and not a replacement. The two tools need to be used in concert with each other.
- **Standards Related to Special Districts.** This approach is really a refinement of the first method described. It would involve the establishment of separate and distinct standards that would distin-

guish a particular district from others in the city. This approach could be implemented either with the creation of new districts, or through the use of overlay districts. Either way, the district or districts need to be officially added to the official zoning map. The underlying rationale for the creation of these districts should be established in the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Site Plan Review (SPR)

In order for the City to effectively implement the design guidelines recommended by the Task Force and consultants, the City should empower itself to guide development by bolstering the newly adopted Site Plan Permit process for all development along South Robert Street. The SPR “ensures developments conform to City goals, plans and regulations; preserves and enhances the natural environment; protects existing uses; enhances the economic, residential and institutional communities; grows the City tax base and beautifies the city.” Some of the factors considered in the SPR process are: consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, consistency with Design Guidelines adopted by the City, building setback and build-to requirements, consistent facades, minimum glass requirements, sign controls, minimized curb cuts, parking lot location and buffering, landscape and lighting plans, stormwater management plans, parking requirements and drive-throughs.

4. Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The City of West St. Paul’s Comprehensive Plan should be amended to bring the Land Use Plan into conformance with the proposed Mixed-Use Zoning recommended in this study. Such an amendment will require review and approval by the Metropolitan Council.

5. City Zoning Map Amendment

The zoning map should be amended to conform with the changes to the Land Use Plan.

D. Transportation Improvements

Considerations for development of the concepts will require close coordination with Mn/DOT Metropolitan Division and with Dakota County, since both of these agencies have or will have jurisdiction over the roadway. The potential for jurisdictional reassignment (“turnback”) also provides the opportunity to achieve the longer-term vision for the roadway through that process. To do so, it is incumbent upon the City to clearly articulate the vision for the corridor and to put in place the plans and development controls that will bring the development pattern along the corridor into alignment with the modified roadway design.

Two scenarios are currently available for funding the roadway components. One involves cooperative agreement within the turnback process in which the turnback fund could be used to accomplish the roadway changes as part of the requirements for Dakota County to assume jurisdiction of the roadway. State Aid Standards would control and the roadway concepts would need to be consistent with them. In the other scenario, the City could approach Mn/DOT with the roadway concept sufficiently defined to apply for non-Trunk Highway STP funding that Mn/DOT could support without being the lead agency. In this latter case, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) process would control and the project would be required to compete with other similar projects in the region for funding on an annual basis. Trunk Highway Standards would control the allowable design of the corridor. A third scenario is possibly available in which the project could qualify for CMAQ or Enhancement funds that are set aside by the TAB for Livable Communities projects, which would require a joint application to the Metropolitan Council by the City, Mn/DOT, and Dakota County.

E. Amenity Zones

Amenity zones are recommended throughout the corridor to provide space for the proposed pedestrian and streetscape improvements. The 6- to 10-foot amenity zone should be accommodated between the sidewalk and parking lot or building. This zone provides space for signs, benches, parking buffers, snow storage and transit plazas, and serves as a “Build-To” zone for future buildings.

The priority areas for the amenity zones are within 600 feet of either side of the intersections of South Robert Street and Butler, Emerson, Thompson, and Wentworth Avenues, as well as between Mendota Road and Marie Avenues. The Amenity Zones could be incorporated by:

- Providing incentives to existing property owners to dedicate the amenity zones.
- Requiring the dedication of the amenity zone easement as part of the site plan approval process.
- Purchasing the easements as part of a County or City roadway improvement project.

F. Public vs. Private Streetscape Elements

Streetscape implementation will require a cooperative effort between the public and private sectors. It is recognized, however, that substantial redevelopment of a corridor that is the length and scope of South Robert St., with its more than 2-1/2 miles of roadway and 800,000 square feet of commercial space, is an enormous undertaking that will be accomplished gradually and incrementally, as opportunities allow. The evolution can be hastened with aggressive public and private investment in key areas.

Very little improvement to the livability of the street corridor will be possible without cooperation between property owners to consider sharing access points and parking areas, dedicating easements for buffering parking, and expanding sidewalks and boulevard space. The majority of the streetscape elements will most likely be constructed as part of a public street reconstruction project.

Elements that could be installed in either a public improvement project, or as part of a large private redevelopment project include: transit shelters, medians, parking lot railings and other buffer treatments, street trees, lighting, sidewalk paving, benches, public art and other street furniture.

G. Support Shared Parking Through Parking Agreements and Cross-Parking Easements

Shared parking agreements and cross-parking easements most often are private agreements between private parties. Therefore, it is difficult for the City to compel a property owner to pursue these options. The City can, however, strongly support their use and clearly provide in its codes and ordinances for their approval. It is recommended that the City encourage property owners to secure shared parking agreements and allow them to construct less than the required amount of parking through the issuance of a conditional use permit (CUP). CUP approval should be contingent upon a demonstration by the applicant that such a private agreement exists, as well as an acceptable plan to provide sufficient parking to meet the underlying code requirements, in the event that the agreement is nullified in the future.

H. Implement Modifications to the New Sign Ordinance

In many key areas along South Robert Street, the visual landscape is dominated by signage and visual clutter. Just as it took a long time for this condition to evolve, it will take time to change it to a more appealing form. Modifications to the sign ordinance have been applied which, in general, strive to move away from pylon signs in favor of building signs and landscaped monument signs. However, the Sign Ordinance may need to be amended further to preserve the intent of this Redevelopment Strategy.

I. Implementation Action Steps

This section is organized into short-, mid-, and long-term action steps pertaining to corridor redevelopment, community organization, and promotion.

1. Corridor Redevelopment

This section focuses on strengthening the economic viability of the Corridor, coordinating redevelopment objectives, defining the redevelopment potential of site specific areas, identifying the City's role in redevelopment, recruitment of business, and phasing of the redevelopment projects outlined in the framework plan.

2. Organization and Promotion

Currently, no civic organization and/or public bodies are involved in the management, promotion and development of the corridor area as a whole. Organizing a diverse group of people to achieve the work tasks, build public/private partnerships, foster ongoing leadership, and provide a unified voice for the area

will be the key to whether this plan succeeds or fails.

This section outlines a strategy for organizing interested residents and business owners into an effective advisory group whose mission is to see that redevelopment is implemented according to the goals and objectives of the plan, to act as an advocacy group for the corridor, and to coordinate promotional campaigns and small projects.

SOUTH ROBERT STREET PRELIMINARY REDEVELOPMENT WORK PROGRAM

PHASE		REDEVELOPMENT
SHORT TERM 0 to 1-1/2 years	1.	Prepare Streetscape and Architectural Design Standards
	2.	Amend Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan
	3.	Establish Design Review Process
	4.	Develop City Redevelopment Financing Strategies Expand use of TIF Districts Tax Abatement Special Assessment Districts, Maintenance Districts
	5.	Establish Building and Site Improvement Incentives. Low interest loan program for building, site, and sign improvements Shared Access and Parking Agreements
	6.	Target Key Seed Projects North District: Acquire Amenity Zone Property Big A Site Acquisition Dakota Co. CDA Site Commercial Club Redevelopment Design Streetscape Improvements Sign Improvements Shared Access and Parking Agreements Signal Hills District: Shopping Center Landscape Design Streetscape Improvements Acquire Amenity Zones Sign Improvements Shared Access and Parking Agreements South District Mendota Road Gateway Improvements Design South Gateway Medians and Streetscape Sign Improvements Shared Access and Parking Agreements
	7.	Define Strategy to Implement Town Center Plan.
	8.	Develop Parking Management Policies and Strategy.
	9.	Establish timeline of planned public works Coordinate design efforts with City Planning, Public Works, and Parks, County, and MnDOT
	10.	Place Improvements in Capital Improvements Plan Capital Improvements Plan.

SOUTH ROBERT STREET PRELIMINARY REDEVELOPMENT WORK PROGRAM

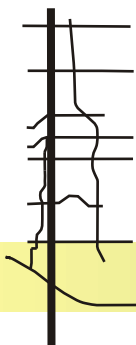
MID TERM 1 1/2 - 5 years	1	Target Key Seed Projects North District: Big A Site Development Implement Streetscape Signal Hills District: Implement Streetscape Improvements Sign Improvements South District: Implement South Gateway Medians and Streetscape Sign Improvements 2 Selected Redevelopment Parcel Proformas 3 Prepare Development Proposals for Selected Sites Define Public/Private Partnerships 4 Define Developer Selection Process 5 Select Preferred Developers 6 Define Development Agreements
LONG TERM 5-10 years	1	Continue Selected Redevelopment Process

SOUTH ROBERT ST. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION & PROMOTION PRELIMINARY WORK PROGRAM

ACTION		TASKS
SHORT TERM 0 to 1-1/2 years		
A. Establish a Private/Public Organization to Manage Corridor Marketing, Improvements, and Redevelopment.	1	Identify Resource Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship with City - People - Projects - Budget - Define mission.
	2	Develop Financial Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Funding and Budget
	3	Create subcommittees to address specific projects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redevelopment Projects, Site Plan Review - Seed Projects - Streetscape - Promotional Campaign - Public/Private Enhancements - Shared Access and Parking Management - Business Recruitment - Maintenance Program - Funding - Public Art - Special Events - Flower Plantings - Open Space and Trail Improvements
	4	Identify Public Relations Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market strategies - Develop message - Evaluate Methods, ie, Newsletters, Displays, Newspaper Columns - Web Sites, Presentations, Brochures.
	5	Coordinate plan objectives with all pertinent City departments, City Council, and committees.
	6	Implement, short term projects such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking lot improvements, community art work, landscaping, banners South End Gateway North End Streetscape

SOUTH ROBERT ST. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION & PROMOTION PRELIMINARY WORK PROGRAM

ACTION		TASKS
MID TERM 1 1/2 - 5 years	1.	Create newsletter or column in local paper.
	2.	Advisory group recruitment.
	3.	Leadership training.
	4.	Continue implementing short term community projects.
LONG TERM 5-10 years	1.	Monitor progress and format.
	2.	Continue recruitment and training.



XI. APPENDICES

A. Redevelopment Strategy Survey Results

1. Overall Strategy

- Define Gateway Corridors along Thompson, Wentworth and Butler with special streetscape, signage and land use treatments.
- Define neighborhood centers at Butler and Thompson.
- Create a Town Center in the South District.

2. Corridor Evolution

- **Phase One: Short-Term Action**
-Participants were unanimously in favor of using landscaping to buffer views to parking lots; incorporating sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian level lights and transit stops; and having property owners grant sidewalk and parking buffer easements.
- **Phase Two: Medium-Term Action**
-Participants unanimously felt that access points should be combined to create safer turning movements and space for landscaping.

-Incorporate landscaped medians on South Robert Street with its existing width.
- **Phase Three: Long-Term Action**
-Participants unanimously supported convenient parking behind and between buildings. This is already being done successfully by businesses like Langula Hardware.

-Define a Town Center and Primary Nodes with a compact, mixed-use building pattern.

-Create an interconnected system of streets with a 300-400 ft. block pattern in the Town Center.

3. Concepts: North End District

- Incorporate sidewalk bump-outs to provide space for streetscaping, shorten crosswalks and slow traffic.
- Include landscaped medians where possible.
- Only 50 percent of the participants support removing the center turn lane and widening walks and boulevards to a total of 18 feet in the long term.

4. Concepts: Signal Hills District

- Infill corner parcels with higher density mixed uses at Butler and Moreland Avenues to create Neighborhood Nodes.
- Incorporate more housing south of Moreland Ave.
- Locate a Town Square with a transit plaza at the Signal Hills Shopping Center along South Robert Street.

- Include a traditional street pattern, main street commercial uses, housing and a community park in the long-term plan.

5. Concepts: South District

- Incorporate a Town Square between Thompson and Wentworth as a focus for community and cultural activities. Incorporate a community green and waterfront park linking South Robert St. to the YMCA and Library.
- Introduce community open space as an amenity at primary nodes and the Town Center.
- Introduce housing into the Town Center and between nodes along the corridor.
- Locate a community center in the Town Center area.
- The majority prefer parks on South Robert Street rather than courtyard parks. People prefer a nodal rather than linear concentration of uses along South Robert Street.

6. General

- **Goods and services needed in the community are:** community center, teen hangout, senior center, bookstore, bakery, bagel shop, coffee shop, boutique retail, organic grocery store, sporting goods store, men's clothing, small ethnic restaurants, movies, clothing and gift stores, antique store, jazz club, theatre, co-op market, family department stores, and no more big buildings or parking lots.
- **Where participants currently shop for everyday items:** Target, Cub, Walgreens, Menards, KMart, Office Max, Rainbow, Suburban Hardware, Home Video, Burlington, DQ, Whole Foods at Fairview and Grand, Minneapolis Market at Dale and Selby, Signal Hills, Eagan, Woodbury and Arbor Lakes.
- **Destinations for major shopping (clothing, appliances, furniture):** Best Buy, Slumberland, Daytons/Kohls in Minneapolis and Eagan, Herbergers, Sears, Mike Thomas, Mall of America, Dales, Promenade Center in Eagan, Maplewood Mall, Galleria in Edina, Eagan, Bloomington, Midway, Regional, South St. Paul, Rosedale, Roseville, Maplewood, Woodbury.
- **Major assets along South Robert Street:** the library; Suburban Hardware; DQ; Mikes Butcher Block; supermarkets; Target; anchor businesses such as Menards, Cub and Rainbow; linkage to St. Paul; older businesses on Robert St.; small family-owned businesses; solid independently-owned business; close to neighborhoods and useful services; adequate traffic lanes and service; potential; diversity; well known; convenient; opportunity for using green space; close proximity; easy parking; local ownership mixed with larger owned business.
- **What makes South Robert Street a unique place:** history; variety; urban-suburban interface; continuous commercial and public uses; solid, independently-owned businesses; location; heavy retail very close to beautiful neighborhoods; linkages to freeways, St. Paul and North Robert St.; convenience; and main street flair.
- **What participants would like to see implemented along the corridor:** Strong connections to Northern Dakota County; more plants, flowers and trees, especially in parking areas; monument signs; better walking environment; less big box businesses; landscaping; bus shelters; sidewalk treatments; multi-color tile; decreased but shared access to businesses; turn lanes; long term, comprehensive redevelopment (without huge tax increases); highway ownership; no housing; housing; less asphalt; fewer curb cuts; similar facades; people-friendly green space; limited left turns from parking lots onto South Robert St; mixed use; upgraded lighting; better traffic patterns; slightly

more upscale; better designed buildings; removal of telephone poles and all tall signs; left turn lanes on cross streets; safety; nodal development; and rubber wheeled trolleys from shopping node to shopping node.

- **Additional comments or concerns:** Improve road connections to Hwy 52; merely doing an improved streetscape is a band aid, not a proactive plan; attracting business that will improve the economic level of the area is a key part of revitalizing the area rather than a cosmetic plan; the economic costs of the most ambitious plans need to be kept in mind or the plan will go on the shelf; biking on South Robert Street is not a good/safe/feasible idea; need to get short term actions set so as not to miss opportunities; keep public advised; mixed reaction on housing in North District; small and big parks, more greenery and trees; native flowers to make a more livable, cleaner and cooler city; less asphalt; quality of life in the city should not be determined solely by business development; "Signal Hills" refers to an American Indian site- and a community center could include an interpretive center; a high quality recital/lecture hall (not auditorium) is needed; we need to be forward thinking without limits, but also understand...that our plan will only work with financial buy-in from property owners along the street; make clear difference between short term and long term expectations; think about the streets connecting South Robert St. too; space for local artists to show their work- such as at the Town Center; connections to neighborhoods, parkways and parks; timing is crucial- streetscape should be instigated immediately; contact residences to clean up/fix up properties; and Senior Center at Thompson Park; need parking lot landscaping.

B. Streetscape Cost Estimates

Following is a summary of the costs for the streetscape improvements proposed for the North and Signal Hills Districts, as illustrated in Figures XI-1 and XI-2. This cost summary was submitted with a Livable Communities grant application in May 2000.

SOUTH ROBERT STREET REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY NORTH DISTRICT- ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE 5/3/2000 Prepared by DSU, Inc.						
NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT	TOTAL EST. QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST	TOTAL
1	MOBILIZATION (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 41,000.00	\$ 41,000.00	
2	TRAFFIC CONTROL (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	
3	R.O.W. ACQUISITION- LANDSCAPE EASEMENTS (NOT INCLUDING CDA, COMMERCIAL CLUB OR SIGNAL HILLS)	SF	5010	\$ 14.00	\$ 70,140.00	
4	IRRIGATION- SPECIAL PROVISION (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	
5	REMOVE EXISTING CATCHBASINS AND CAST GRATINGS (AT BUMP OUTS)	EA	20	\$ 126.00	\$ 2,520.00	
6	INSTALL CATCH BASINS AND CONNECT INTO EXISTING STRUCTURE	EA	20	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	
7	RELOCATE STORMSEWER (AT BUMP OUTS) (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	
8	REMOVE CONCRETE PAVEMENT (AT BUMP OUTS)	SF	15900	\$ 1.00	\$ 15,900.00	
9	REMOVE CONCRETE BOULEVARD (FOR SOD AND WALKWAY)	SF	13550	\$ 1.00	\$ 13,550.00	
10	REMOVE BITUMINOUS STREET PAVEMENT (BUMP OUTS)	SF	19800	\$ 0.35	\$ 6,930.00	
11	REMOVE CONCRETE CURB & GUTTER (BUMP OUTS)	LF	1820	\$ 4.00	\$ 7,280.00	
12	CONC. CURB & GUTTER, DES. B612	LF	2200	\$ 15.00	\$ 33,000.00	
14	DECORATIVE CONCRETE PAVERS (BUMP OUTS)	SF	35700	\$ 6.00	\$ 214,200.00	
15	CONCRETE WALK EXTENSION	SF	3800	\$ 4.00	\$ 15,200.00	
16	BUS SHELTERS	EA.	4	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	
17	WASTE RECEPTACLE	EA.	12	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	
18	METAL BENCH (5 FOOT)	EA.	23	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 23,000.00	
19	LIGHT RELOCATION	LS.	20	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	
20	ORNAMENTAL PARKING LOT RAILING	LF	795	\$ 165.00	\$ 131,175.00	
21	RAISED PLANTER	LF	578	\$ 70.00	\$ 40,460.00	
22	TREE GRATE PAVER FRAME (5' X 5') CENTER PIECE	EA.	17	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 18,700.00	
23	TREE GRATE PAVER FRAME (3.5' X 5') SIDE PIECE	EA.	20	\$ 550.00	\$ 11,000.00	
24	SELECT TOPSOIL BORROW (LV) MOD (BOULEVARD TREE TRENCHES)-1' DEPTH	CY	360	\$ 17.00	\$ 6,120.00	
25	DECIDUOUS TREE 2.5" CAL B&B	TREE	86	\$ 375.00	\$ 32,250.00	
26	ORNAMENTAL TREE 1.5" CAL B&B	TREE	66	\$ 275.00	\$ 18,150.00	
27	SHRUB - CONT.	SHRUB	138	\$ 40.00	\$ 5,520.00	
28	PERENNIAL- 1' O.C.	PLANT	1360	\$ 7.00	\$ 9,520.00	
29	SOD	SY	1080	\$ 3.00	\$ 3,240.00	
	SUBTOTAL					\$ 1,067,855.00
	DESIGN AND ENGINEERING FEES, ADMINISTRATION AND CONTINGENCY- 28%					\$ 298,999.40
	TOTAL - BASE					\$ 1,366,854.40
	ALTERNATES					
1	CROSSWALKS					\$ 394,380.00
	- REMOVE BITUMINOUS	SF	18780	\$ 1.00	\$ 18,780.00	
	-SPECIAL PAVING	SF	18780	\$ 20.00	\$ 375,600.00	
2	MEDIANS					\$ 112,133.00
	-REMOVE BITUMINOUS	SF	8620	\$ 0.35	\$ 3,017.00	
	-CURB AND GUTTER	LF	1985	\$ 15.00	\$ 29,775.00	
	-TOPSOIL- 1' DEPTH	CY	523	\$ 17.00	\$ 8,891.00	
	-DECIDUOUS TREE- 2.5" CAL. B&B	EA	32	\$ 375.00	\$ 12,000.00	
	-PERENNIAL- 1' O.C.	EA	8350	\$ 7.00	\$ 58,450.00	
3	PUBLIC ART- SCULPTURE	EA	4	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
4	KIOSK	EA.	6	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
5	BICYCLE RACKS	EA	9	\$ 800.00	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$ 633,713.00	\$ 633,713.00
	DESIGN AND ENGINEERING FEES, ADMINISTRATION AND CONTINGENCY- 28%					\$ 177,439.64
	TOTAL - ALTERNATES					\$ 811,152.64
BASE PLUS ALTERNATES						\$ 2,178,007.04

**SOUTH ROBERT STREET REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
SIGNAL HILLS DISTRICT- BUTLER TO MORELAND
PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE**

5/26/2000 Prepared by DSU, Inc.

NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT	TOTAL EST. QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST	TOTAL
1	MOBILIZATION (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	
2	TRAFFIC CONTROL (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00	
3	R.O.W. ACQUISITION- LANDSCAPE EASEMENTS (NOT INCLUDING SIGNAL HILLS SHOPPING CENTER- EXCEPT FOR HARDEE'S)	SF	6210	\$ 14.00	\$ 86,940.00	
4	IRRIGATION- SPECIAL PROVISION (ANNAPOLIS TO BUTLER)	LS	1	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00	
5	REMOVE CONCRETE BOULEVARD (FOR SOD AND WALKWAY)	SF	6280	\$ 1.00	\$ 6,280.00	
6	REMOVE CONCRETE PAVEMENT (AT CORNERS)	SF	4800	\$ 1.00	\$ 4,800.00	
7	DECORATIVE CONCRETE PAVERS (CORNERS)	SF	4800	\$ 6.00	\$ 28,800.00	
8	CONCRETE WALK EXTENSION	SF	5640	\$ 4.00	\$ 22,560.00	
9	BUS SHELTERS	EA	2	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	
10	WASTE RECEPTACLE	EA	6	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	
11	METAL BENCH (5 FOOT)	EA	6	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	
12	DECORATIVE LIGHTS	LS	14	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 21,000.00	
13	ORNAMENTAL PARKING LOT RAILING	LF	1500	\$ 165.00	\$ 247,500.00	
14	TREE GRATE PAVER FRAME (5' X 5') CENTER PIECE	EA	8	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 8,800.00	
15	TREE GRATE PAVER FRAME (3.5' X 5') SIDE PIECE	EA	16	\$ 550.00	\$ 8,800.00	
16	SELECT TOPSOIL BORROW (LV) MOD (BOULEVARD TREE TRENCHES)-1' DEPTH	CY	215	\$ 17.00	\$ 3,655.00	
17	DECIDUOUS TREE 2.5" CAL B&B	TREE	49	\$ 375.00	\$ 18,375.00	
18	ORNAMENTAL TREE 1.5" CAL B&B	TREE	79	\$ 275.00	\$ 21,725.00	
19	SHRUB - CONT.	SHRUB	305	\$ 40.00	\$ 12,200.00	
20	PERENNIAL- 1' O.C.	PLANT	600	\$ 7.00	\$ 4,200.00	
21	SOD	SY	640	\$ 3.00	\$ 1,920.00	
	SUBTOTAL					\$ 650,555.00
	DESIGN AND ENGINEERING FEES, ADMINISTRATION AND CONTINGENCY- 28%					\$ 182,155.40
	TOTAL- BASE					\$ 832,710.40
	ALTERNATES					
1	CROSSWALKS					\$ 328,600.00
	- REMOVE BITUMINOUS	SF	24600	\$ 1.00	\$ 24,600.00	
	-SPECIAL PAVING	SF	15200	\$ 20.00	\$ 304,000.00	
2	MONUMENT SIGNS	EA	11	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 220,000.00
3	PUBLIC ART- SCULPTURE	EA	4	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
4	KIOSK	EA	6	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
5	BICYCLE RACKS	EA	9	\$ 800.00	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$ 675,800.00	\$ 675,800.00
	DESIGN AND ENGINEERING FEES, ADMINISTRATION AND CONTINGENCY- 28%					\$ 189,224.00
	TOTAL- ALTERNATES					\$ 865,024.00

BASE PLUS ALTERNATES

\$ 1,697,734.40

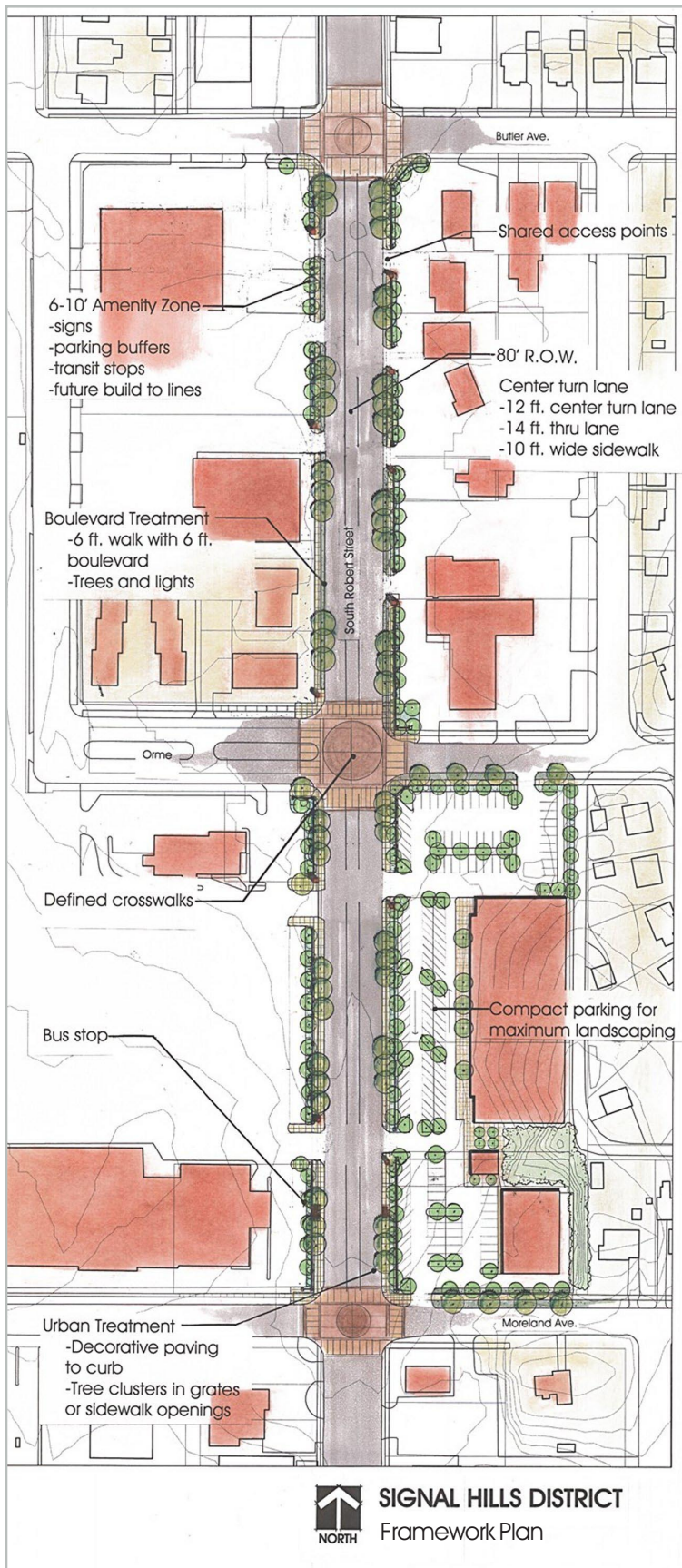


Figure XI-1

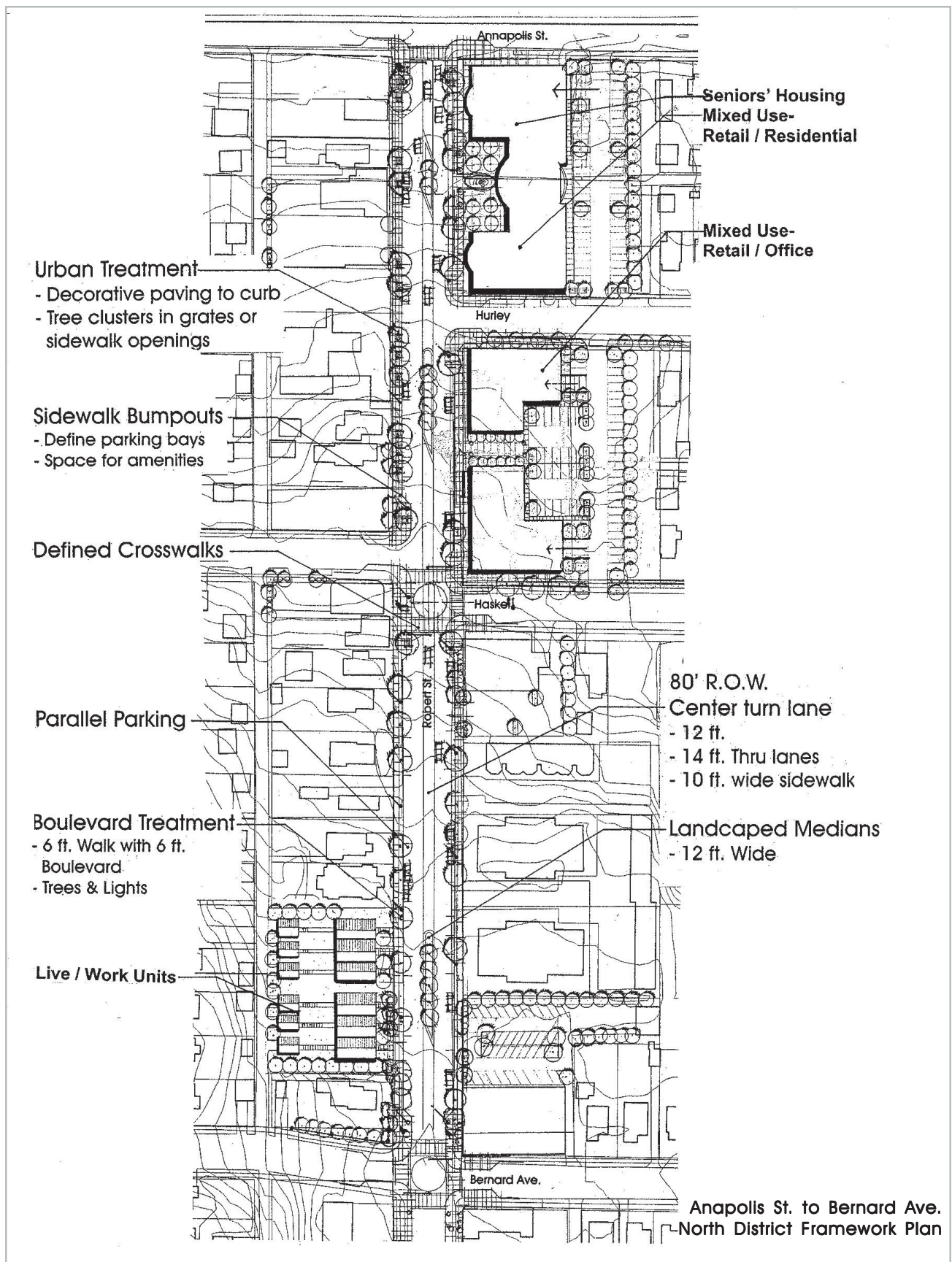


Figure XI-2

C. Stormwater Treatments

According to a 1992 inventory by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more than one-third of American rivers and nearly one-half of its lakes are unfit for drinking, swimming or fishing. Non-point source pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, heavy metals, urban sediments, dumpster leachate, oils and detergents pose the greatest threat to water quality. West St. Paul's proximity to the Mississippi River necessitates a responsibility to protect water quality. The South Robert Street Redevelopment Strategy affords a unique opportunity to address this issue in an integrated and innovative way.

Nineteenth century perceptions of water as a carrier of filth and disease are still prevalent in current stormwater design. Stormwater traditionally has been regarded as a waste to be disposed of as efficiently and invisibly as possible. This requires large amounts of impervious surface replete with curb and gutters and elaborate subterranean pipe matrices, which, ironically, contribute to lower water quality in rivers and groundwater due to:

- Increased siltation
- Thermal pollution
- Heavier pollutant, nitrogen and phosphorous loading
- Increased erosion

In vegetated areas possessing little impervious surface, a minimal amount of water drains into waterways in the first few hours during and after a storm event. Most of it is either absorbed by vegetation or the ground and takes days to months to reach the river. In contrast, a large amount of impervious surfaces speeds up the process: stormwater can reach the river in a matter of minutes.

Stormwater systems can be designed as an amenity, a multiple use civic infrastructure that makes water processes legible, sustainable, and expressive. If stormwater is perceived as a replenishing amenity and resource, rather than a waste that should be hidden away, stormwater systems can incorporate earth and vegetation to serve as cleansing filters.

Several innovative technologies have been developed to ameliorate poor stormwater quality. Using these strategies to daylight stormwater processes benefits overall water quality by:

- Lowering peak flow velocity and volume.
- Lessening possibilities of erosion.
- Settling heavy metals and silt out of stormwater flow.
- Filtering pollutants, silt, phosphorous and nitrogen.
- Regenerating groundwater.
- Cooling water before it reaches a water body.
- Reusing water for irrigating parks and gardens rather than installing expensive systems.
- Ameliorating the heat island effect of urban areas.

Other benefits include:

- Enhancing the amenity value of the community.
- Supporting biodiversity at the street level by building ecological structure.
- Lowering capital costs for municipal infrastructure.
- Educating the community about drainage and cleansing processes of degraded water.
- Opportunities to incorporate art and education with the use of follies celebrating the hydrologic event.
- Opportunities to reveal the natural topography and to reconnect people experientially to the land.
- Opportunities for practicing responsible regional watershed planning at the site scale.
- Opportunities to create public gathering spaces at larger water collection areas which celebrate the ephemeral qualities of a rainstorm or spring thaw.
- Opportunities to create a common vocabulary of streetscape elements rooted in place through the use of native plants and the revelation of ephemeral climatic events.

1. Detention Ponds and Marshes

Detention ponds and marshes detain and store stormwater runoff to allow for settling of particulate pollutants, vegetative uptake, and control of peak flood rates. They may be constructed above or below grade, be wet or dry. Although these systems control peak rates, they do not mitigate increased runoff volumes.

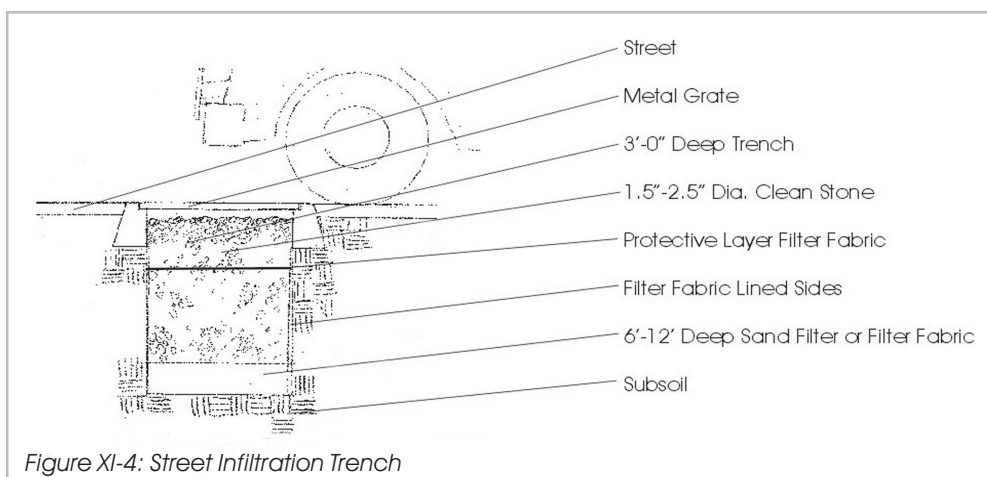
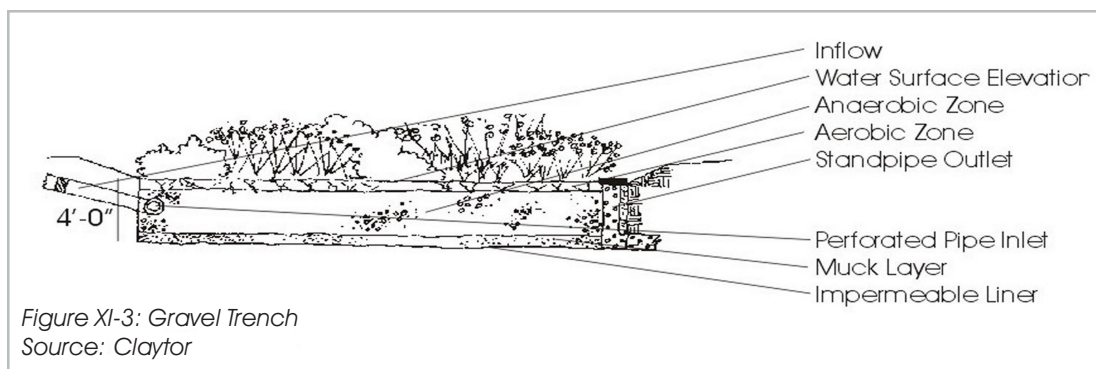
2. Infiltration

Infiltration Systems- Infiltration systems intercept and reduce direct site surface runoff, allowing water to percolate back into the ground through coarse gravel, sand or other filtering media. These types of systems control peak rates, help preserve existing on-site hydrology, maintain stream base flow, and recharge groundwater.

Trenches- Trenches are shallow (two to 10 feet deep) and are placed in relatively permeable soils that are backfilled with coarse stone, a sand filter, and lined with filter fabric. The trench surface can be covered and/or consist of gabion, stone, sand, or a grassed covered area with a surface inlet. Trenches allow for partial or total infiltration of stormwater runoff into the underlying soil.

Basins- Basins are depressions created by excavation, berms, or small dams for the short term ponding of surface runoff until it percolates into the soil.

Pervious Paving Systems- Pervious paving systems consist of strong structural materials, such as concrete or asphalt, regularly interspersed with voids which are filled with pervious materials such as sandy loam or grassed turf. These surfaces are underlain by soils capable of allowing infiltration. Pervious



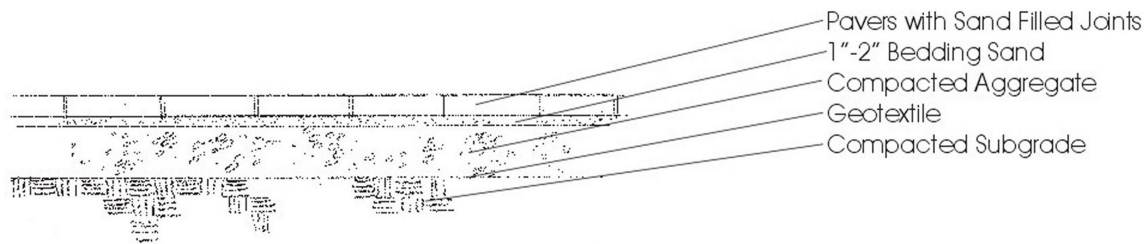


Figure XI-5: Pervious Paving

asphalt is not recommended for clay-rich soils since it easily clogs and thus necessitates frequent replacement.

Roof Downspout Systems- Roof downspout systems consist of small-scale chambers or variations of infiltration trenches that are specifically designed to accept and infiltrate roof drainage only. They should be covered with rip rap to dissipate the water's erosive energy.

3. Biofiltration

Biofiltration systems use vegetation and/or sand and other natural filtration media to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. Filtration, infiltration, adsorption, sedimentation, and biological uptake of stormwater pollutants are all methods utilized by biofiltration systems.

Vegetated Swales- Vegetative swales possess less than six percent side slopes and are wide and shallow to maximize flow residence time and promote pollutant removal. They are often used downstream from detention facilities, around parking lots, in parking lot medians, and along roadsides.

Vegetated Filter Strips- Filter strips consist of vegetated sloped strips in which flow is distributed broadly along the length of the vegetated area as overland sheet flow. Requiring ample space to spread the flow over a wide area at a small depth, suitable areas for filter strips include shoulders along uncurbed roads, areas between parking lots and stormwater inlets, adjacent to vegetated swales and upstream of infiltration facilities.

Media Filters- Media filters strain runoff through a medium, such as sand, peat, compost, pelletized leaf compost, into an underdrain system that conveys treated runoff to a detention facility or the point

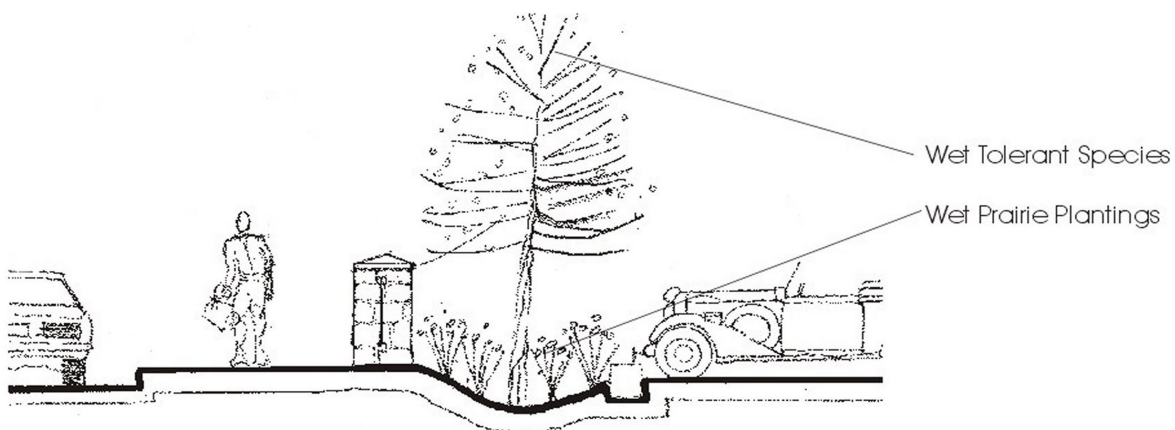
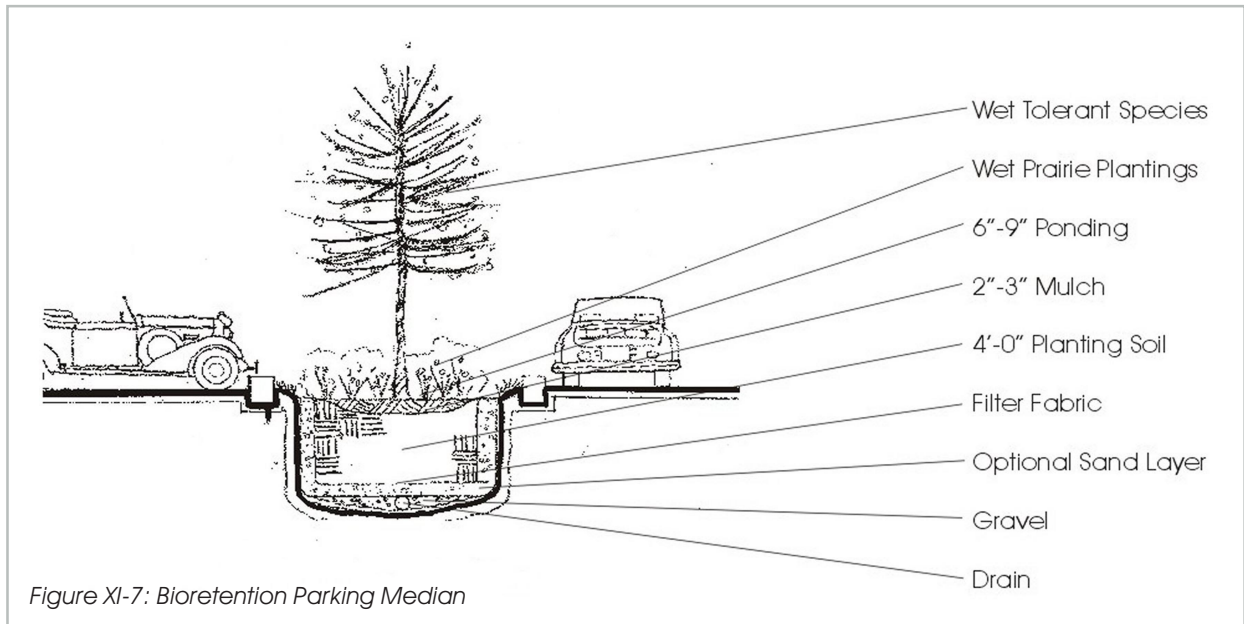


Figure XI-6: Vegetated Swale

of ultimate discharge. They can be used in highly developed sites or be retrofit to existing sites.

Catch Basin Filter Inserts- Catch basin filter inserts are suspended within catch basins and designed to strain sediment. Since they require high maintenance to avoid hydraulic failure, they are applicable only to a small drainage area.

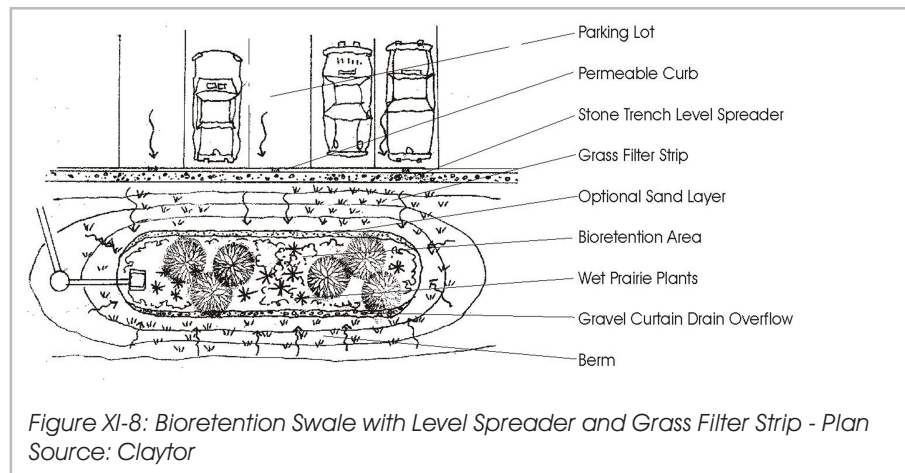


4. Multifunctional Systems

Multifunctional systems incorporate multiple stormwater treatments:

Enhanced Swales & Ponds- Enhanced swales contain infiltration/filtration systems which consist of an infiltration pond with a layer of filter media (sand/crushed limestone) in their beds. They work best where soils are very coarse.

Bioretention- Bioretention systems consist of shallow landscaped areas that allow for ponding and filtration of water runoff. Treatment involves settling, vegetative uptake, and filtering as water passes through layers of sand, loam and compost before infiltration or collection in underlying perforated pipes. Traditionally designed convex grassed medians/parkways and piping/catch basins may be replaced with concave bioretention gardens and vegetated stormwater channels.



5. Site Planning Principles

Minimize Total Impervious Area

Impervious areas prevent infiltration of rainfall and act as pollutant collectors between storms, while vegetated surfaces tend to treat or uptake pollutants. Total impervious surface may be reduced by locating parking areas beneath buildings, minimizing building footprints by adding stories, and by using porous paving materials rather than traditional asphalt and concrete for parking lots, roads, sidewalks, and driveways.

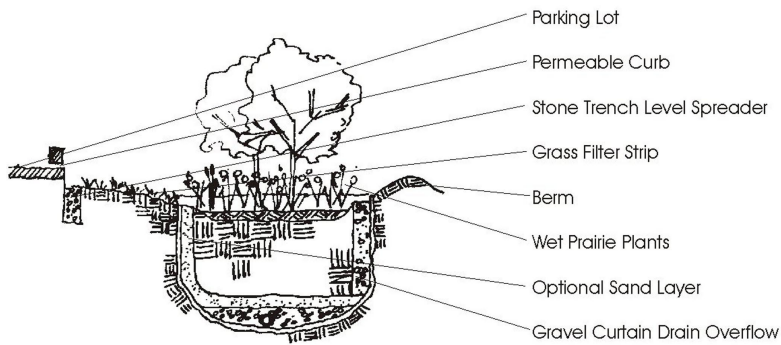


Figure XI-9: Bioretention Swale with Level Spreader and Grass Filter Strip- Section
Source: Claytor

Minimize Direct Connection Between Impervious Surfaces- Connected impervious surfaces result in rapid stormwater flows. Driveways, sidewalks and streets may be sloped so that runoff drains first to lawns or vegetated swales.

Conduct Watershed-Based Zoning-

Conduct land use master planning across scales to ensure that future growth is compatible with high water quality. Create regulation that is preventative rather than reactive, such as Best Management Practices, buffer regulations, limits on impervious surfaces, limits on curb and gutter, and require low irrigation and low fertilizer/pesticide plantings. Adopt sensitive area ordinances to provide for buffers and to ensure development does not occur in key areas such as steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands. Review municipal codes and modify them to protect water quality.

Plant More Trees- Trees and shrubs can capture as much as 35 percent of the annual rainfall through absorption or evaporation. Roots provide a path for increased water infiltration as well.

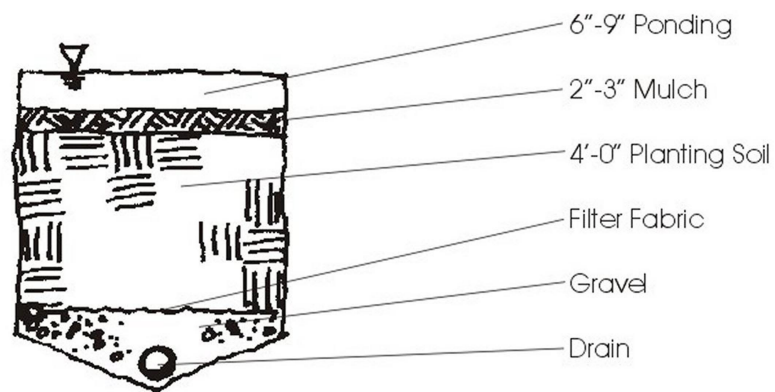
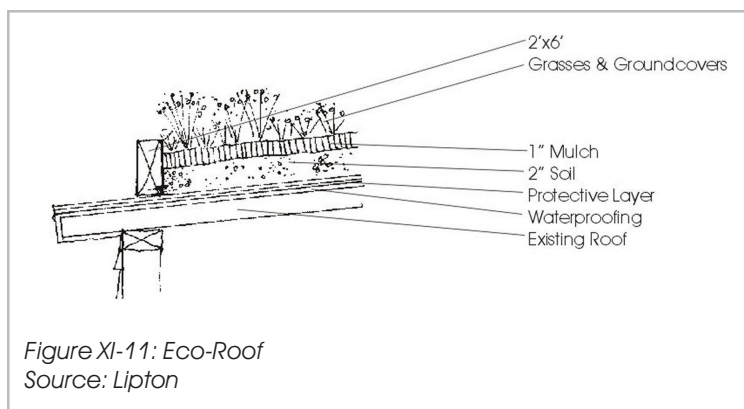


Figure XI-10: Bioretention Swale - Section
Source: Claytor

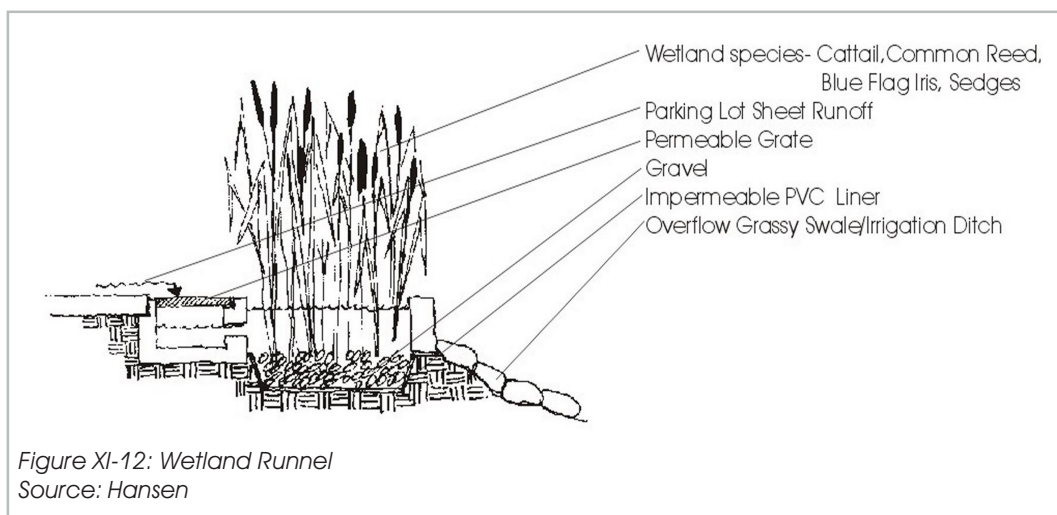


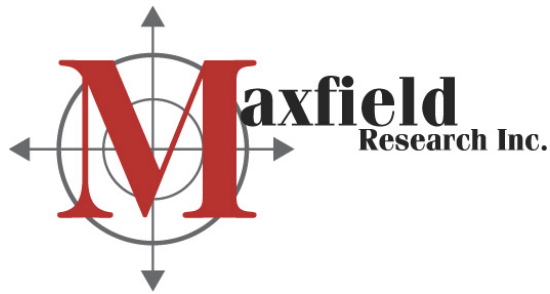
Use Rooftops for Stormwater Collection and Filtration- Eco-roofs cover all or a portion of a roof with grasses and ground covers and can be retrofitted to existing buildings with little or no structural reinforcement. This soft roof filters and reduces stormwater runoff volume while enhancing the thermal and acoustic insulation of the building.

Use Native Plant Materials Appropriate to Soil Type and Wetness- Plants such as Cattails, Blue flag Iris, Sedgegrass and Common Reed are site specific and respond to wet conditions,

6. Sources

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October 20, 2000

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Geoff Martin
Dahlgren Shardlow & Uban, Inc.

FROM: Ms. Mary C. Bujold
Maxfield Research Inc.

RE: Findings of Market Analysis for the South Robert Street Corridor in
West St. Paul, Minnesota

Introduction

Maxfield Research Inc. has conducted its analysis of the South Robert Street Corridor. This analysis includes a visual inspection of the Corridor from a market perspective, identification of businesses within the Corridor (types of goods and services, total amount of square footage, image and character of the Corridor and who it serves from the North to the South end, a travelshed analysis of the Robert Street Corridor between and competitive shopping areas, (completed with Parsons Transportation Group), a link analysis (also completed with Parsons Transportation Group) to assess the regional competitive environment and consumer travel behavior under which the Corridor currently operates, interviews with businessowners located on South Robert Street and a demand analysis based on current market conditions and the proposed redevelopment concept for both the North and South Districts of South Robert Street.

Summary of Findings from Market Analysis

The following are key market issues identified through our research for South Robert Street.

- The existing retail base along the South Robert Street Corridor is substantial in terms of total square footage (approximately 886,000 sq. ft.). The current retail focus of the Corridor is

both “value-“ and “auto-“ oriented. Our use of the term auto-oriented does not only refer to retail uses that serve vehicles, but those that are also heavily-based on the convenience of using the automobile to access the good or service (such as fast-food restaurants).

- At one time, the Corridor was used heavily as a commuter route to and from Downtown St. Paul. The Lafayette Freeway has displaced much of the commuter traffic off South Robert Street. Current estimates are that “through” trips account for only about 10% to 15% of the trips that are occurring along the Corridor. The implication of this is that nearly all of the traffic on South Robert Street is either accessing the commercial base and/or traveling to residential neighborhoods east and west of South Robert Street.
- The draw area identified for the South Robert Street Corridor primarily reflects its current function as a neighborhood shopping area, although some businesses draw customers from a much broader area than has been identified initially. Growth in second- and third-tier suburban communities has precipitated the development of new neighborhood and community shopping districts that have eroded the dominance of retail in the South Robert Street Corridor.
- The historical development pattern reflected a Corridor that was originally being utilized as a regional shopping district by a relatively large suburban market because there was very little competition. As new retail developments have opened in the heart of the growing household base, fewer regional shoppers travel to Robert Street consistently to conduct their shopping. Many remain closer to home. This pattern is consistent with the travelshed analysis conducted that shows the most convenient travel area for South Robert Street to be within a 5- to 10-minute distance from South Robert Street.
- The Corridor is fully-developed. However, access to many of the businesses along the Corridor is confusing and difficult. As we develop a market potential for the Corridor, we must be cognizant that, over time, the total amount of retail square footage in the Corridor will be reduced and development intensified in certain areas so that uses will be more easily accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles. There is a substantial amount of retail in the Corridor now. Consumer difficulty with access and visibility has resulted in a preponderance of some uses in the Corridor.
- The Corridor will continue to primarily serve the neighborhoods in closest proximity to it for neighborhood (convenience-oriented) goods and services. In addition, the Corridor will support its share of specialty goods and services that will draw from a larger trade area.
- Trends that are currently having an impact on retail development in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area include 1) redevelopment of successful neighborhood retail districts to

improve and enhance visual appeal, pedestrian orientation and enhance the retail mix; 2) convenience and proximity instead of only price as consumers begin to resist long commutes and additional time spent shopping far away from home.

Trade Areas (Travelsheds)

The South Robert Street Corridor includes several different trade areas. These trade areas operate as a function of the types of goods and services available along the Corridor and the target groups from which they draw. For the purposes of our analysis, we have identified a general retail draw area that, in our view, represents that area from which the majority of the customer base will come. This draw area is shown on a map included later in this report and represents the area from which the majority of customers to South Robert Street will come.

Prior to the development of several competitive shopping areas in growing second- and third-tier suburban locations, South Robert Street functioned more as a regional shopping area. Over time, new shopping districts (Mall of America, Eagan's Town Center, Woodbury's Valley Creek Mall and Tamarack Village) have eroded the drawing power of the South Robert Street Corridor.

However, the travelshed analysis continues to identify a very large draw area within a 20-minute drive of the South Robert Street Corridor. This area is considerable. However, within that 20-minute draw/travel area are other centers that also compete for a portion of the South Robert Street Corridor's trade area.

The travelshed maps included in this memorandum were developed by Parsons Transportation Group identify travel time areas (5-, 10-, 15 - and 20-minutes) from the target area. The areas shown are South Robert Street Corridor, 80th and Cahill Avenue, Valley Creek-Tamarack Village, and Eagan's Town Center. The maps show the travelsheds for these various shopping districts. It should be noted that the travelsheds are based on existing highway patterns and also show relative accessibility to each of the shopping districts, not the consistent use of these centers by the people who live near them.

We can however, make some general assumptions about the ability of the South Robert Street Corridor to draw customers to the area for different types of goods and services based on these travelsheds. Whether the South Robert Street Corridor can and does draw a proportionate number of people to the Corridor is not accounted for within this particular analysis. A separate analysis (also contained herein) discusses the actual trips being made to the area through the "selected link analysis."

Types of Goods and Services

There are exceptions to each of these categories and retailing today crosses categories more often than not. However, these groups of goods and services still remain largely the same.

Neighborhood (Convenience) Goods and Services

Neighborhood goods and services are those types of goods for which consumers have the least propensity to shop around and/or travel great distances to obtain. These are items that are consumed or used frequently, are easily replaced and for which there are a number of similar substitutions. Examples of these types of goods and services include groceries, fast food restaurants, photo finishing, dry cleaning, alcoholic beverages, gas, automobile services, cards, hardware, video rental, etc.

Destination/Specialty Goods and Services

Destination/Specialty goods and services are those types of goods for which consumers are willing to travel much longer distances to obtain and for which there are relatively few substitutes or the good is unique. Within this category, we must also include retailers who have caused a shift in consumer shopping behavior because of their large amount of selection of a very specific line of products. Known as “category killers,” these discount or “big box” retailers have created a destination following based on offering the consumer a very large selection of merchandise at a “value” price. These stores, both individually and collectively, operate as “destination” retailers, although their products are not necessarily viewed as such.

Comparison Goods and Services

Comparison Goods and Services are those where the consumer wants to be able to choose among a diverse selection of goods of a similar type. The most common example of this type of good is apparel, where the consumer wants to be able to have the maximum amount of selection possible. The comparison goods shopping experience is what originally spawned the birth of the “shopping mall.” The typical shopping mall usually houses a multitude of apparel retailers in addition to household furnishings. Some traditional “mall” retailers, those for which comparison shopping is not essential (music, books, cards/gifts) have found their customers responding just as well or better to freestanding store formats or other types of shopping environments.

Store formats come and go. However, the birth of the “category killer” dealt a serious blow to both the department store and the small specialty retailer. In addition, these large store formats have enticed the consumer to travel farther and spend more time and money at one location.

Thus, traditional retail shopping areas based on the historical Corridor format and largely “auto-oriented” have suffered from lack of cohesive image, proliferation of convenience and auto-oriented uses, reduction in the number of comparison and specialty goods and a shift in their traditional customer base and these customers are forced elsewhere for goods that were previously available to them in their immediate neighborhood.

The whole of America has become “value conscious.” Americans have been bombarded with messages that read “get more for your money,” “buy now for less,” “sounds of you saving money,” etc., “buy one, get one free,” and the inevitable “sale, sale, sale.” Marketing and merchandising on a discounted format does not encourage or require that the item or service be enhanced visually or be sold in an upscale setting. The selling feature is its discounted price. In order to attract attention, signs calling attention to discounts or coupons or other forms of advertising that focus on the price as the only selling feature do not require fancy, attractive settings.

Typically the small retailer (specialty) has only a couple of things to offer, 1) a unique product or service, and/or 2) a product or service presented in a unique way. This means that the small retailer cannot offer a myriad variety, but can, offer a small variety in a unique format. In order to be successful, a small retailer must focus carefully on its market and be able to cater specifically to that market. The most successful retailers I know do just that. They focus and do not over extend themselves or diversify out of their niche.

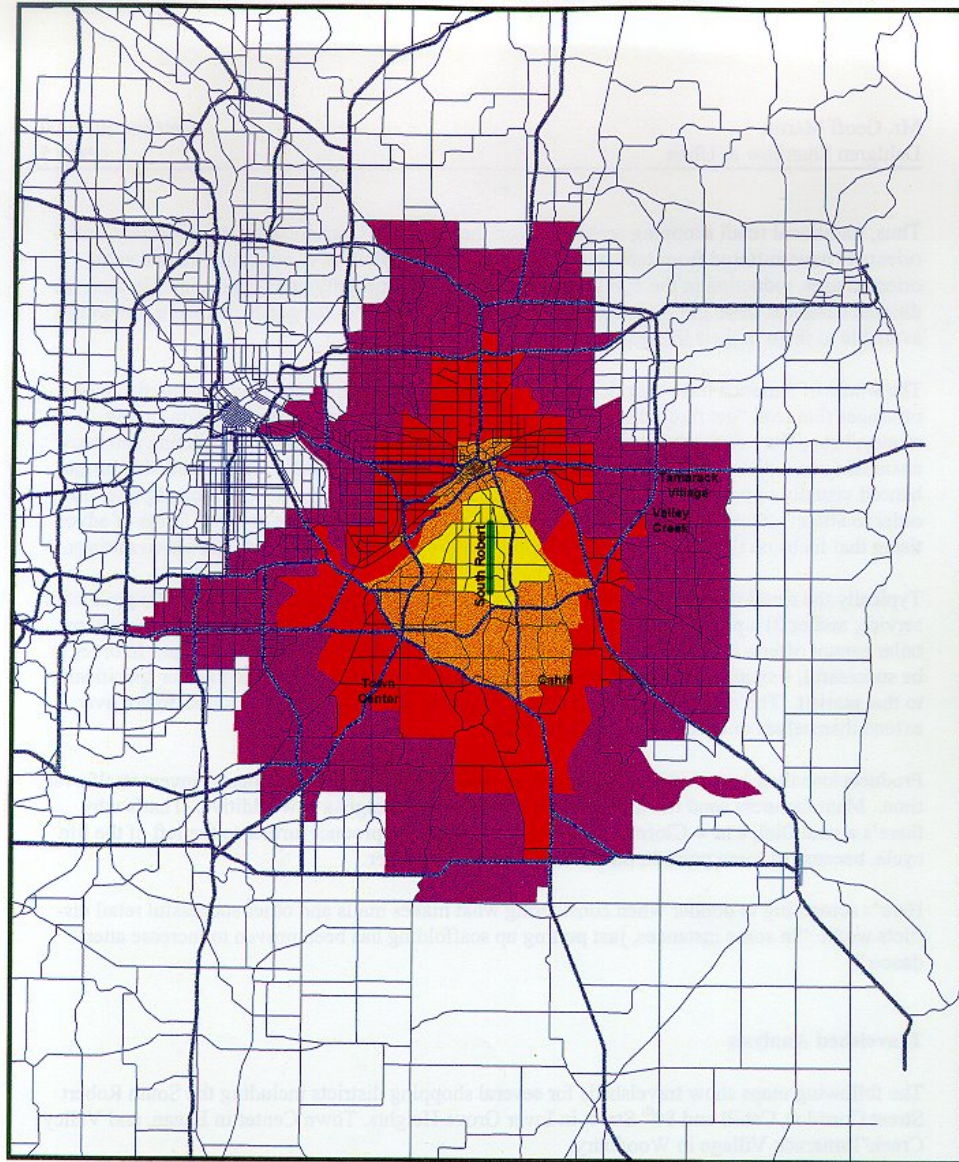
Products lose their luster over time. Retail, in order to remain dynamic, must reinvent itself over time. Manufacturers send the message; we have a new package, a new additive. That’s why there’s a new Dial, a new Clorox. They do that to push the product further to the left of the life cycle, because at some point in the decline, you can’t recover.

Here’s something to ponder when considering what makes malls and other successful retail districts work: “In some instances, just putting up scaffolding has been proven to increase attendance.”

Travelshed Analysis

The following maps show travelsheds for several shopping districts including the South Robert Street Corridor, Cahill and 80th Street in Inver Grove Heights, Town Center in Eagan, and Valley Creek/Tamarack Village in Woodbury.

The color codes are as follows: yellow – 5 minutes; peach – 10 minutes; 15 minutes – red; and purple – 20 minutes. As was mentioned previously, the travel time districts shown are based on the existing roadway system and linkages to each of the shopping districts.

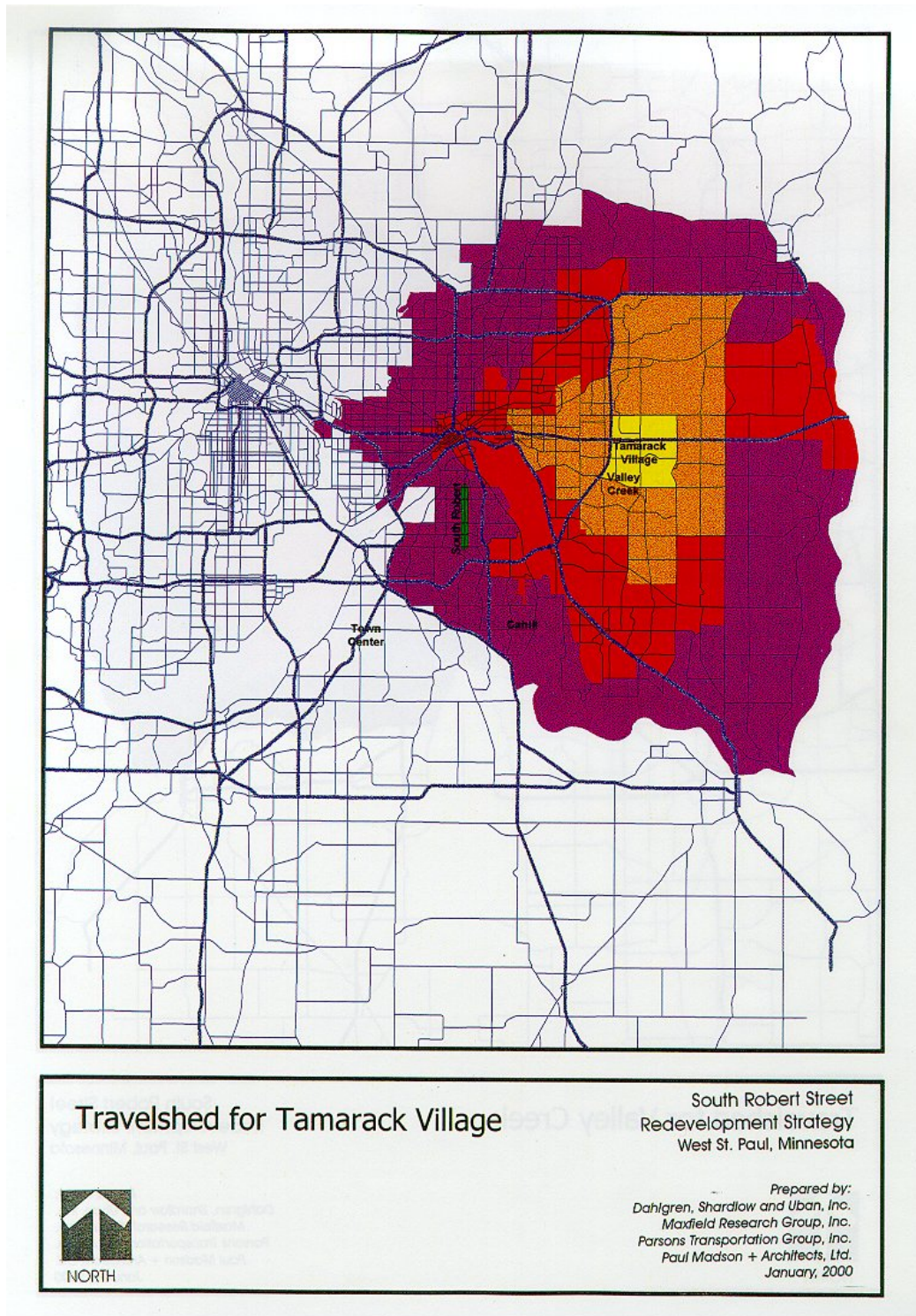


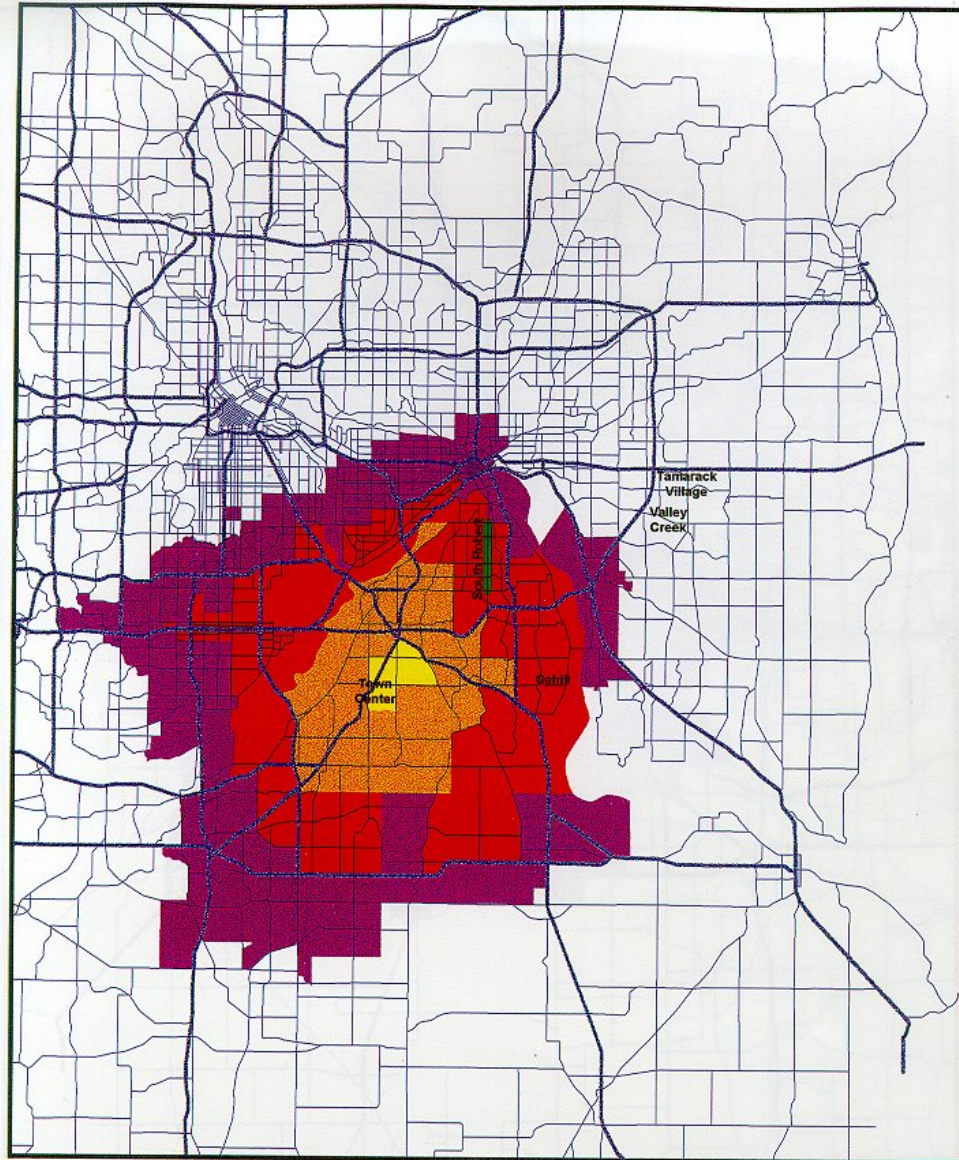
Travelshed for South Robert Street

South Robert Street
Redevelopment Strategy
West St. Paul, Minnesota



Prepared by:
Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.
Maxfield Research Group, Inc.
Parsons Transportation Group, Inc.
Paul Madson + Architects, Ltd.
January, 2000





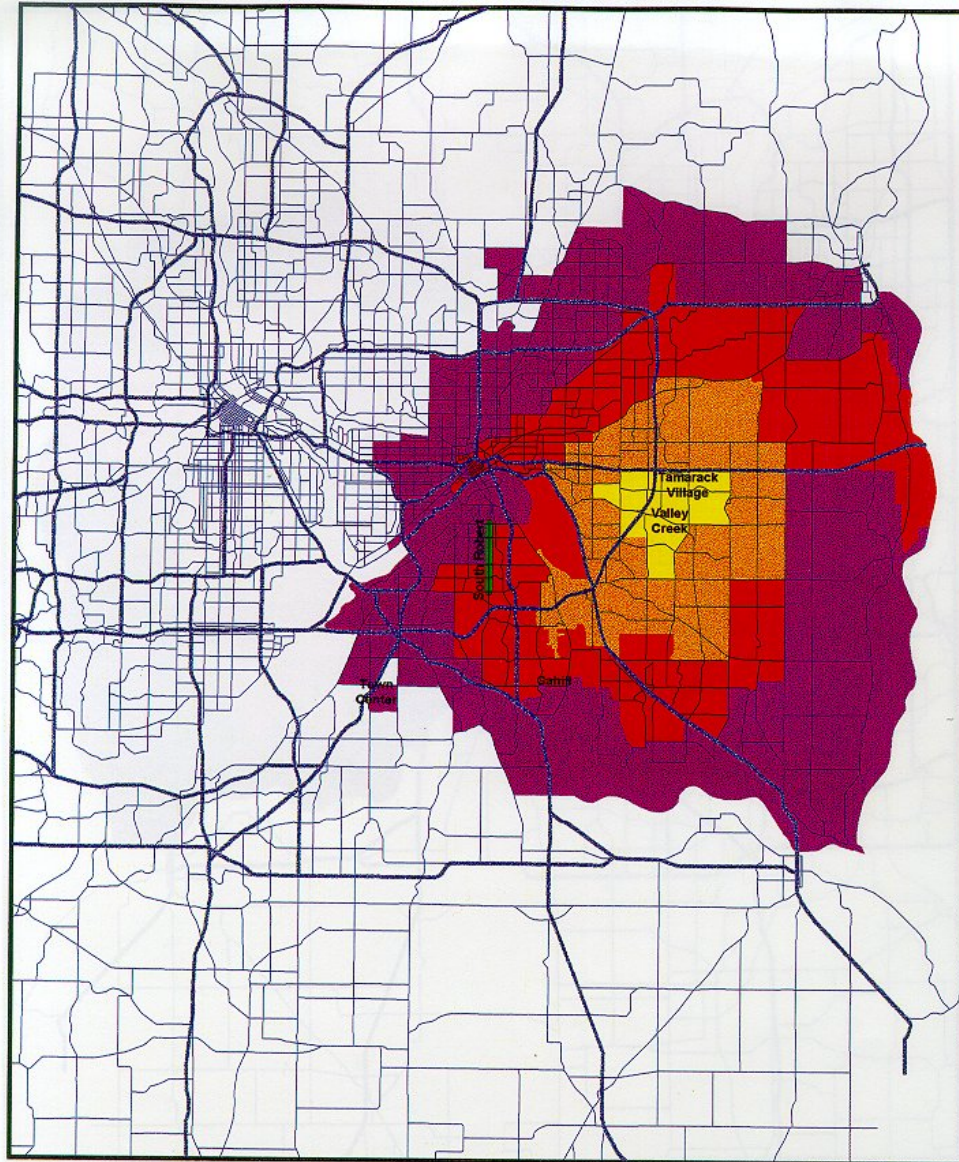
Travelshed for Town Center



NORTH

South Robert Street
Redevelopment Strategy
West St. Paul, Minnesota

Prepared by:
Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.
Maxfield Research Group, Inc.
Parsons Transportation Group, Inc.
Paul Madson + Architects, Ltd.
January, 2000



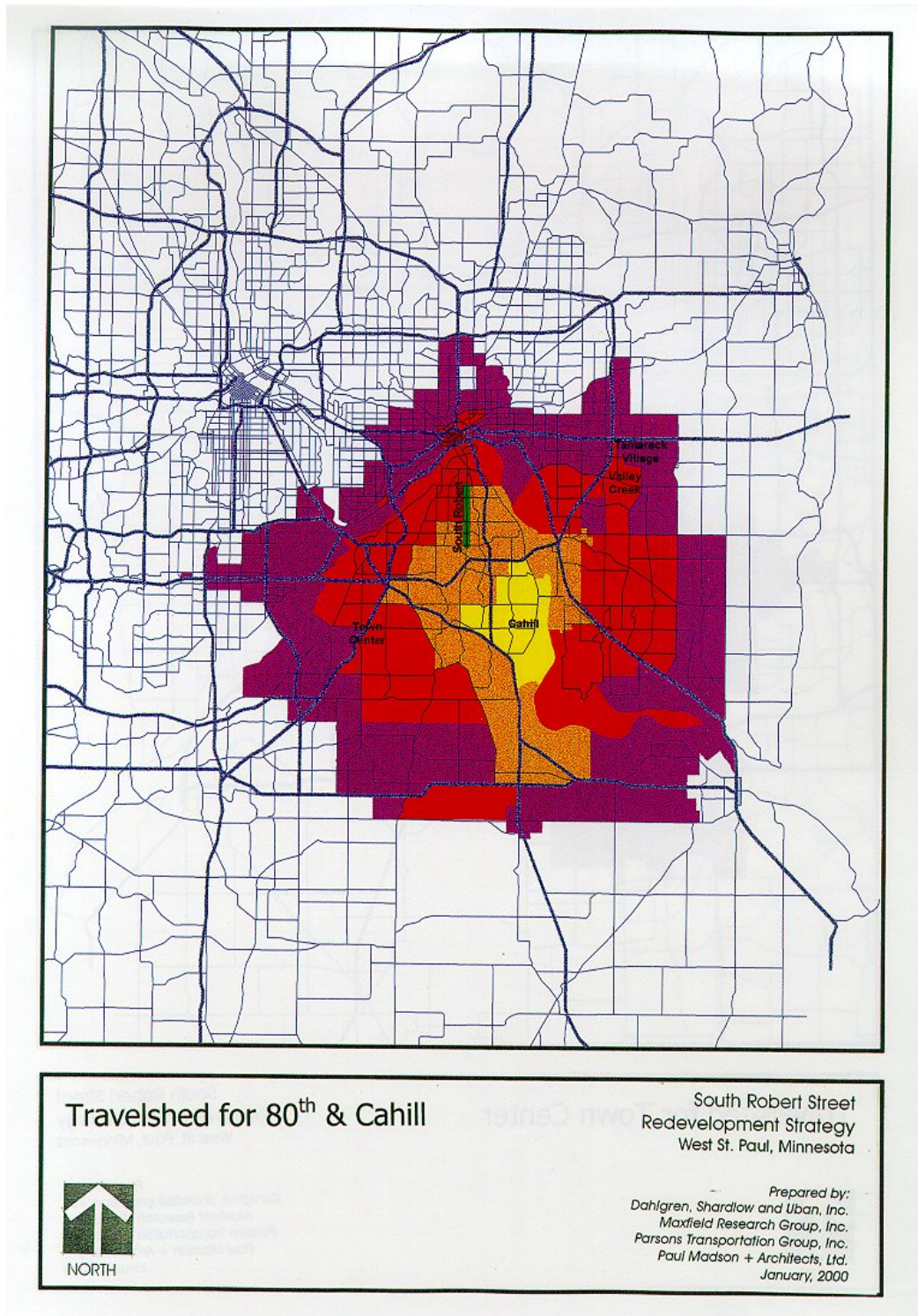
Travelshed for Valley Creek

South Robert Street
Redevelopment Strategy
West St. Paul, Minnesota



NORTH

Prepared by:
Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.
Maxfield Research Group, Inc.
Parsons Transportation Group, Inc.
Paul Madison + Architects, Ltd.
January, 2000



The following paragraphs present the important market issues from this analysis:

South Robert Street Corridor – The South Robert Street Corridor shows that the five-minute travelshed includes most of West St. Paul and South St. Paul. The ten-minute travelshed incorporates a larger area to the south and on either side (east/west) of South Robert Street into Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights and South St. Paul and also includes most of Downtown St. Paul.

The 15-minute travelshed reaches up into St. Paul north of Interstate 94 and further into Eagan, Inver Grove Heights. The 20-minute travelshed includes most of Maplewood, Woodbury, Inver Grove Heights, and Eagan and also extends over into Bloomington.

The key issue here is that the core draw area for South Robert Street does not extend beyond the 15-minute travelshed. The areas located within the 20-minute travelshed are those that are already covered by newer and larger shopping districts. The exception is Inver Grove Heights.

It is visually apparent from the travelshed analysis that the households that were once drawn to the South Robert Street Corridor as a regional shopping district now have other alternatives that are much closer and offer a wider variety of items. Uses are concentrated in a large shopping center rather than along a traditional highway Corridor.

Valley Creek and Tamarack Village – These two shopping areas are located in close proximity to one another, and although they have some similar uses, they function differently within the marketplace. Tamarack Village serves a more regional clientele, drawing customers from into Wisconsin, while Valley Creek now tends to serve more of a local customer base.

Valley Creek and Tamarack Village's travelsheds overlap significantly. However, the mix of uses and the scale of the development are different for each center. Both of these centers compete with the South Robert Street Corridor. Despite the fact that Rainbow Foods and Cub Foods are located on South Robert Street, the mix of other uses located at Tamarack Village and at Valley Creek would make it appealing for South Robert Street customers to travel the extra distance to complete their shopping.

Town Center in Eagan - Town Center in Eagan offers a similar situation, although it draws from a more local area than do the Woodbury centers. South Robert Street is within the 15-minute travelshed for the Town Center and using the freeway system would make this area easily accessible by vehicle. However, for those who rely on public transit, it would be very difficult to reach these other competitive shopping areas.

Town Center's travelsheds include all of Eagan, Apple Valley, Rosemount, Inver Grove Heights, West and South St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, and Lilydale and large portions of Bloomington, Richfield, southern St. Paul, and Minneapolis. However, despite strong highway connections, the River creates a significant geographic barrier.

The Town Center easily draws customers from Mendota Heights, Lilydale, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, and the Highland Park area of St. Paul in addition to Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, and East Bloomington.

Summary of Travelsheds

What the travelshed analysis indicates is that the South Robert Street Corridor is currently best positioned to serve customers located within a maximum distance of 10 to 15 minutes from the area. While the Corridor can and does serve customers from far beyond this area, trying to attract customers from a greater distance would require a significant destination use, something not found in the competitive areas nearby.

Signal Hills in its previous configuration was attracting customers regionally because of the greater draw area of Herbergers and JC Penney. Under the center's new configuration, the center's trade area will function more as a community center with a majority of its customer base traveling from within 15 minutes of the center. This trade area may shift slightly depending on a final tenant mix. Access to businesses at Signal Hills is enhanced with individual store entrances and higher visibility signage.

Figures generated by Parsons Transportation Group show only 10% of the trips along the South Robert Street Corridor from Annapolis to Mendota Boulevard are "through" trips. This indicates that the traffic that is using the Corridor is also visiting the businesses along South Robert and/or traveling to neighborhoods within the immediate area. From a market standpoint, two issues arise. First, there is very little additional traffic on the Corridor that because of through trips might be funneled off to a higher use roadway (such as the Interstate). Second, the heavy traffic use within the area is due primarily to local trips which suggests that while businesses are being patronized, intensifying uses within the Corridor will intensify traffic. How to address traffic issues moving forward is a key issue as redevelopment occurs.

Primary Retail Uses in the Corridor

The following is a summary of the primary retail uses in the Corridor along with the approximate square footage of each general type of use. This information identifies what currently exists in the Corridor and the level of supply. In a Corridor situation, many of the uses become lost or hidden because of poor visibility, lack of direct access, oversupply, among other issues. There is less consistency in design and marketing and therefore, the larger uses typically stand out while many uses are not even noticed.

Grocery (120,000 sq. ft.)

Cub Foods

Rainbow Foods

Auto Service/Repair (not gas stations) (70,000 sq. ft.)

Pep Boys

Checker's Auto Parts

Big Wheel Rossi

Champion Auto Stores

Meineke Mufflers

CarX Mufflers

Harmon Auto Glass

Napa Auto Parts

AAMCO Transmission

Tires Plus

Kennedy Transmission

Midas Mufflers

Valvoline Oil Change

Firestone

Auto Parts & Paint

Goodyear Tires

Jiffy Lube

Auto Service Stations (5,000 sq. ft.)

SuperAmerica

Total Gas

Holiday Station

Amoco Station

Phillips 66

Discount General Merchandisers (128,000 sq. ft.)

Kmart

Target

Sam's Club

Big Dollar Store

Building Supplies/Hardware (55,000 sq. ft.)

Menards

Suburban True Value Hardware

Langulas Hardware Hank

Tools & More

Drugs/Pharmacy (18,000 sq. ft.)

Walgreen's

Snyders

Medicine Shoppe

Financial Institutions (16,500 sq. ft.)

Norwest Bank

TCF Bank

Postal Credit Union

U.S. Bank

Signal Bank

CitiFinancial

Firststar Bank

Entertainment/Recreation (65,000 sq. ft.)

YMCA

Bingo Palace

Bowling

Nancy Raddatz Dance Studio

United Karate

Restaurants (chain – fast food) (22,200 sq. ft.)

Arby's/Sbarro

McDonalds

Burger King

Taco Bell

White Castle

Godfather's Pizza

Pizza Hut

Papa John's Pizza

Subway

KFC

Hardees

JT Hamburgers

Dairy Queen

Donut Shop

Restaurants (specialty) (52,800 sq. ft.)

Old Country Buffet
Famous Dave's
Bridgeman's
Beirut Restaurant
Red Lobster
TimberLodge Steakhouse
Ground Round
Perkins
El Tacquito Tacos
Boston Market
Ali Babas
Lucky China
Grand Buffet (Oriental)
Shangri-La
Bunker's Sports Bar
Asia Inn

Health Care (25,000 sq. ft.)

Allina Medical Clinic
Southview Animal Hospital
Dentistry
Chiropractic
Ptosi Physical Therapy
Dental Care
ASPEN Medical Group
East Metro Family Practice

Home Furnishings/Appliances (108,000 sq. ft.)

Hirschfield's Paint & Wallpaper
Mattress Giant
Slumberland
Carpet King
Affordable Furniture
Sherwin Williams Paint
Best Buy
Thomas Appliance
Vacuums

Business Services (36,000 sq. ft.)

Kinko's Copy Centers
Mailboxes Etc.
A to Z Rental Centers
Allied Staffing
Printing Shop

Coldwell Banker/Burnet Realty
ReMax Realty
Real Estate
Law Offices
Quality Staffing
Larry Seymour Insurance
North Star Title
American Family Insurance
Button Works (Ad Specialties)
St. Paul Voice

Specialty Retail (jewelry, crafts, pets, etc.)(70,000+ sq. ft.)

Music – Sam Goody
Paper Warehouse
Jewelers
Bike Sales and Repair
Spectacle Shop Too
Pearle Vision Center
A-1 Tattoo
Bridal Boutique
Regina's Candies
Shinders
Frank's Nursery & Crafts
Hancock's Fabrics
Kent Optical
Camelot Photography
Vision Center
Photo Processing
Amish Woods & Goods
Cardinal Bird Shoppe
Ultimate Golf
Ultimate Pawn
Pawn America
Pat Ryan Golf
Funcoland
For Pet's Sake
Petco Pet Supply
Karen's Hallmark
Mill End Textiles
Play It Again Sports
Hostess Bakery Outlet
Blockbuster Video
Hollywood Video

Hair Care (7,000 sq. ft.)

John Frederick's Salon/Tanning
Expose Nails
Tangles Hair
Cost Cutters
Great Clips
MinneNails
Aerial Professional Beauty Supplies

Apparel (60,000 sq. ft.)

Famous Footwear
Big & Tall Men
Payless Shoes
Baby Depot
Napier Bridal & Formalwear
Red Wing Shoes
Foreman & Clark
Burlington Coat Factory

Liquors (15,000 sq. ft.)

Peschen's Southview Liquors
MGM Liquors
Wine & Spirits
Cellar Liquors
Nowak's Liquors

Floral (3,200 sq. ft.)

Evergreen Flowers & Gifts
Florist
Any-Time Flowers

Specialty Meats (4,000 sq. ft.)

Mike's Butcher Shop
Simek's Meats

Other (5,000 sq. ft.)

Gus Gun Repair
Crown Trophy
Quality Exteriors
MN Locks
Shoe Repair
Armed Forces Recruiting
Armory
Pate Bonding
Self-Service Car Wash
Car Wash
Coin Laundry

Dry Cleaners (2)

Approximate Retail Square Footage along South Robert Street (primarily fronting on South Robert), excluding Signals Hills: **886,000 sq. ft.** This amount of retail square footage is nearly the amount of a large sub-regional mall (such as Eden Prairie Center or Northtown).

Growth Trends

Based on a draw area that includes West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Lilydale, Sunfish Lake, the very southern portion of St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights, Maxfield Research Inc. has reviewed growth trends for population, households and employment through 2020 from information compiled by the Census and the Metropolitan Council. Growth trends for West St. Paul were analyzed more closely through Transportation Analysis Zone data. Tables 1 through 4 present this information. The map on the following page visually depicts this draw area.

Population

Table 1 shows population growth trends for the draw area from 1990 to 2020. The table shows relatively consistent growth for the draw area led by Inver Grove Heights and growth that is expected to occur in the St. Paul portion of the draw area as a result of redevelopment. West St. Paul is projected to increase its population somewhat, but not significantly over the next 20 years. There is renewed interest in Riverfront development and substantial new residential development along the River over the next 20 years could result in even greater increases in population.

The modest growth in population is expected because of the aging of the population that includes smaller household sizes and fewer new household formations. This situation may be mitigated somewhat by alternate cultural and ethnic trends which may have a greater impact on this situation in the future.

South Robert Street Draw Area

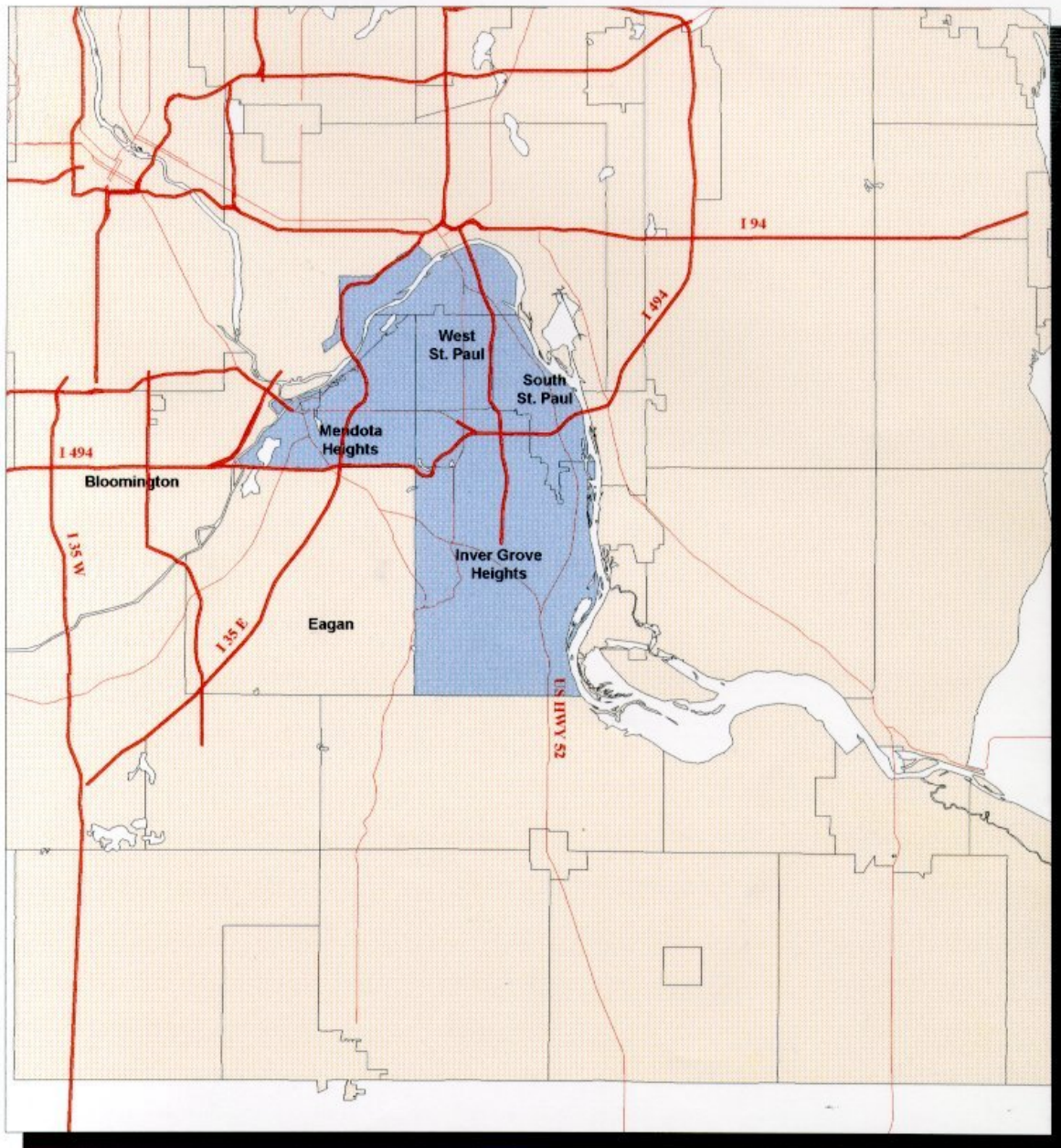


TABLE 1
POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1990 - 2020

	U. S. Census	Metropolitan Council				----- Change -----					
		Estimate	-----	Projections	-----	1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2020	
		1999	2000	2010	2020	No.		No.		No.	
						Pct.		Pct.		Pct.	
West St. Paul	19,248	19,648	19,800	20,100	20,700	552	2.9	300	1.5	600	3.0
South St. Paul	20,197	20,194	20,500	21,100	21,900	303	1.5	600	2.9	800	3.8
Mendota Heights	9,381	10,300	11,000	11,200	11,300	1,619	17.3	200	1.8	100	0.9
Mendota	164	162	160	180	200	-4	-2.4	20	12.5	20	11.1
Lilydale	553	600	730	740	750	177	32.0	10	1.4	10	1.4
Sunfish Lake	413	490	510	520	530	97	23.5	10	2.0	10	1.9
St. Paul (pt.)	30,458	30,302	29,951	33,379	38,218	-507	-1.7	3,428	11.4	4,839	14.5
Inver Grove Heights	22,477	30,322	30,500	36,500	44,500	8,023	35.7	6,000	19.7	8,000	21.9
Total	102,891	112,018	113,151	123,719	138,098	10,260	10.0	10,568	9.3	14,379	11.6
Dakota County Total	275,186	347,255	351,240	402,100	456,160	76,054	27.6	50,860	14.5	54,060	13.4
Metro Area Total	2,288,729	2,576,306	2,608,990	2,838,730	3,091,390	320,261	14.0	229,740	8.8	252,660	8.9

Sources: Bureau of the Census: U.S. Census of Population and Housing (1990)
Metropolitan Council, Forecasts of Population, Households, and Employment, April 1998
Maxfield Research Inc.

The table shows that the draw area is projected to have approximately 113,150 people as of 2000. This figure is projected to increase to 123,720 by 2010 and to 138,100 people by 2020. This growth reflects percentage increases ranging from 9.3% to 11.6%.

Compared to Dakota County as a whole, the draw area is expected to grow at a slower pace. However, by 2010, significant redevelopment in the central cities and more fully-developed first tier suburbs will cause this current disparity to stabilize.

Households

Table 2 shows household growth trends for the draw area from 1990 to 2020. A similar situation is projected for household growth as for population, although household growth rates are expected to be higher than population growth rates. This is consistent with historical growth trends and those that are projected to occur in the future.

By 2000, the draw area is projected to have nearly 44,975 households. This figure is projected to increase to 50,320 households by 2010 and to 56,880 households by 2020. These figures reflect growth rates of 5.2% and 6.1% over each of the next two decades. Household growth, in many communities, has outpaced population growth over the past two decades as the baby boom generation formed a significant number of households of smaller size. The draw area is forecast to show greater population growth than household growth over the next 20 years, indicating that the draw area communities will be adding larger size households than during the previous two decades and that household types will be in transition.

Employment

Table 3 shows employment growth trends for the draw area from 1990 to 2020. The table shows that employment in the draw area is projected to continue to grow substantially to 2010, continue to increase between 2010 and 2020, but at a much smaller amount than previously.

During the 2000s, the draw area is projected to add 8,622 jobs, a growth rate of 15.1%. This is near the projected employment growth rate for Dakota County during this same period, 16.6%. However, from 2010 to 2020, the draw area is forecast to add only 3,685 jobs, a growth rate of 5.6% compared to 14,400 jobs or 8.5% for Dakota County.

West St. Paul is expected to add 2,550 new jobs during the 2000s. However, its current employment estimates from TAZ data suggest that a drop in employment occurred during the 1990s. West St. Paul was estimated to have only about 8,900 jobs as of 1999. While it is still possible for the community to reach its projected increase for the 2000s, the total number of jobs in the community is likely to be less than is shown on the table.

TABLE 2
HOUSEHOLD GROWTH TRENDS
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1990 - 2020

	U.S.	Metropolitan Council				----- Change -----					
	Census	Estimate	----- Projections -----			1990-2000		2000 - 2010		2010 - 2020	
	1990	1999	2000	2010	2020	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
West St. Paul	8,441	8,752	8,750	8,900	9,100	309	3.7	150	1.7	200	2.2
South St. Paul	7,914	8,096	8,100	8,400	8,800	186	2.4	300	3.7	400	4.8
Mendota Heights	3,302	3,865	4,200	4,600	5,000	898	27.2	400	9.5	400	8.7
Mendota	69	71	70	80	90	1	1.4	10	14.3	10	12.5
Lilydale	297	420	500	520	520	203	68.4	20	4.0	0	0.0
Sunfish Lake	138	406	180	200	210	42	30.4	20	11.1	10	5.0
St. Paul (pt.)	12,185	13,100	12,175	13,623	15,663	-10	-0.1	1,448	11.9	2,040	15.0
Inver Grove Heights	7,803	10,849	11,000	14,000	17,500	3,197	41.0	3,000	27.3	3,500	25.0
Total	40,149	45,559	44,975	50,323	56,883	1,629	4.1	2,348	5.2	3,060	6.1
 Dakota County Total	 98,293	 126,697	 129,110	 155,590	 183,900	 30,817	 31.4	 26,480	 20.5	 28,310	 18.2
 Metro Area Total	 875,504	 999,076	 1,011,050	 1,138,120	 1,269,320	 135,546	 15.5	 127,070	 12.6	 131,200	 11.5

Sources: Bureau of the Census: U.S. Census of Population and Housing (1990)
Metropolitan Council, Forecasts of Population, Households, and Employment, April 1998
Maxfield Research Inc.

TABLE 3
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH TRENDS
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1990 - 2020

	----- Estimate -----		----- Projections -----			----- Change -----					
	1990	1999	2000	2010	2020	1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2020	
						No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
West St. Paul	9,264	8,900	9,750	12,300	13,000	486	5.2	2,550	26.2	700	5.7
South St. Paul	5,564	6,970	7,100	7,500	7,700	1,536	27.6	400	5.6	200	2.7
Mendota	250	350	420	600	730	170	68.0	180	42.9	130	21.7
Mendota Heights	5,805	7,300	7,650	8,400	9,000	1,845	31.8	750	9.8	600	7.1
Lilydale	50	50	50	100	100	0	0.0	50	100.0	0	0.0
Sunfish Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
St. Paul (pt.)	22,520	24,528	24,751	27,693	28,298	2,231	9.9	2,942	11.9	605	2.2
Inver Grove Heights	5,724	7,000	7,400	9,150	10,600	1,676	29.3	1,750	23.6	1,450	15.8
Total	49,177	55,098	57,121	65,743	69,428	7,944	16.2	8,622	15.1	3,685	5.6
Dakota County Total	106,029	140,000	145,560	169,700	184,100	39,531	37.3	24,140	16.6	14,400	8.5
Metro Area Total	1,273,000	1,500,000	1,527,070	1,709,920	1,808,670	254,070	20.0	182,850	12.0	98,750	5.8

Sources: Bureau of the Census: U.S. Census of Population and Housing (1990)
Metropolitan Council, Forecasts of Population, Households, and Employment, April 1998
Maxfield Research Inc.

West St. Paul Growth Trends by TAZ

Table 4 shows population, household and employment growth trends in West St. Paul by TAZ. While this data reflects estimates and projections, it can provide us with an assessment of those areas along the Corridor that are projected to experience the most dramatic changes. Of course, the projections can also be affected by additional infrastructure and future redevelopment along the Corridor.

The greatest population and household growth is projected to occur in those TAZ's that are located west of South Robert Street. The same is true of employment growth, except that the southeast corner of the community that is included in TAZ 293, is also projected to experience relatively strong employment growth to 2020.

As was previously mentioned, the ability of West St. Paul to meet these employment projections will depend, in part, on the community's ability to grow through redevelopment and transition.

Age Distribution of the Population

Table 5 shows the age distribution of the population in West St. Paul from 1990 to 2004. The 1990 figures are from the U.S. Census while the estimates for 1999 and the projections for 2004 are were compiled by Claritas, Inc., a national demographics forecasting company. These figures were reviewed by Maxfield Research Inc. to ensure they are consistent with local trends.

The table reveals that similar to other first-tier suburban communities in the Twin Cities, persons age 35 to 54 are estimated to have increased by the greatest number during the 1990s, 6,614 persons. This draw area also has a relatively high proportion of persons age 65 and over, 18.2 percent, compared to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area proportion of just above 12.0 percent. Persons age 18 to 34 are estimated to have declined during the 1990s, reflecting fewer mid-age families with older children.

However, we expect that the relative affordability of housing in the draw area may mitigate this decline over the next ten years as the housing stock transitions and more families with children move into the area. Also, the ability of West St. Paul and the surrounding communities to provide a variety of housing products to meet life-cycle housing needs will assist in retaining households that may have moved elsewhere to find housing that meets their needs. Retention of the household base will assist in supporting retail development along South Robert Street and will also support markets for new products and services not currently available.

TABLE 4
TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS ZONE (TAZ) GROWTH TRENDS
WEST ST. PAUL
1995 and 2020

	1995				2020			
TAZ Zone	Population	Households	Non-Retail Employment	Retail Employment	Population	Households	Non-Retail Employment	Retail Employment
291	2,571	1,042	308	44	2,724	1,090	463	42
292	1,744	728	535	314	1,834	759	788	445
293	2,852	1,399	1,844	1,437	3,074	1,491	2,472	2,140
294	2,312	1,014	2,071	646	2,428	1,054	3,052	950
295	5,953	2,760	599	793	6,310	2,905	773	1,135
296	4,041	1,691	303	219	4,385	1,819	428	312
Totals	19,473	8,634	5,660	3,453	20,755	9,118	7,976	5,024
				9,113				13,000

TABLE 5
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1990, 1999 & 2004

	Number of Persons						Change			
	1990		1999		2004		1990-1999		1999-2004	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total										
17 & under	26,652	25.9	28,439	25.4	29,064	24.8	1,787	6.7	625	2.2
18-24	9,604	9.3	8,461	7.6	9,418	8.0	-1,143	-11.9	958	11.3
25-34	18,802	18.3	16,961	15.1	15,929	13.6	-1,842	-9.8	-1,031	-6.1
35-44	15,090	14.7	17,769	15.9	17,490	14.9	2,679	17.8	-279	-1.6
45-54	9,785	9.5	13,720	12.2	15,827	13.5	3,935	40.2	2,107	15.4
55-64	8,812	8.6	9,947	8.9	11,758	10.0	1,136	12.9	1,811	18.2
65 & over	14,146	13.7	16,722	14.9	17,890	15.2	2,576	18.2	1,168	7.0
Total	102,891	100.0	112,018	100.0	117,378	100.0	9,128	8.9	5,358	4.8

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau
Claritas Inc.
Metropolitan Council
Maxfield Research Inc.

Household Income by Age of Householder

Table 6 shows household income by age of householder for 1999 and 2004, as compiled by Claritas, Inc. and adjusted by Maxfield Research Inc. to accommodate local growth trends. The figures shown reveal that the estimated median household income in the South Robert Street Draw Area was \$43,918 as of 1999. This compares to a 1999 median household income in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area of \$54,000. The median household income in the Draw Area is projected to increase to \$48,257 by 2004. What is important to note is that incomes peak among those between the ages of 35 and 54. This is the age cohort that will be increasing at the fastest rate in the Draw Area over the next five years.

These households are those that will have the highest discretionary income and will be willing to spend dollars on entertainment, dining out, and other goods and services. Attracting new entertainment venues and restaurants to the area will increase the attractiveness of South Robert Street

TABLE 6
HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1999

Number of Households			Age of Householder											
Retail Market Area														
	Total		<25		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
1999														
Less than \$25,000	11,914	26.8	1,125	2.5	1,824	4.1	1,308	2.9	830	1.9	1,040	2.3	5,786	13.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,534	12.5	305	0.7	1,504	3.4	1,081	2.4	585	1.3	717	1.6	1,342	3.0
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7,998	18.0	282	0.6	2,267	5.1	2,129	4.8	1,190	2.7	974	2.2	1,156	2.6
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9,958	22.4	143	0.3	1,988	4.5	2,888	6.5	2,589	5.8	1,283	2.9	1,067	2.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4,486	10.1	46	0.1	566	1.3	1,325	3.0	1,245	2.8	761	1.7	542	1.2
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,621	5.9	34	0.1	187	0.4	721	1.6	829	1.9	476	1.1	374	0.8
\$150,000 or More	1,895	4.3	14	0.0	102	0.2	388	0.9	482	1.1	524	1.2	386	0.9
Total	44,407	100.0	1,948	4.4	8,437	19.0	9,841	22.2	7,752	17.5	5,775	13.0	10,654	24.0
Median Income	\$43,918		\$21,644		\$40,892		\$53,484		\$62,273		\$53,049		\$23,016	
2004														
Less than \$25,000	11,647	24.7	1,194	2.5	1,513	3.2	1,207	2.6	927	2.0	1,149	2.4	5,657	12.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,067	10.8	311	0.7	994	2.1	755	1.6	552	1.2	781	1.7	1,675	3.6
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7,743	16.4	353	0.7	1,867	4.0	1,733	3.7	1,169	2.5	1,198	2.5	1,423	3.0
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10,134	21.5	264	0.6	2,156	4.6	2,708	5.7	2,435	5.2	1,399	3.0	1,172	2.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	5,536	11.8	65	0.1	893	1.9	1,540	3.3	1,689	3.6	792	1.7	558	1.2
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,859	8.2	27	0.1	364	0.8	1,072	2.3	1,271	2.7	691	1.5	435	0.9
\$150,000 or More	3,128	6.6	9	0.0	160	0.3	705	1.5	948	2.0	836	1.8	471	1.0
Total	47,115	100.0	2,221	5.0	7,947	17.9	9,720	21.9	8,991	20.2	6,845	15.4	11,391	25.7
Median Income	\$48,257		\$23,251		\$46,781		\$60,755		\$68,967		\$55,262		\$25,345	

Sources: Claritas, Inc.
Maxfield Research Inc.

as a destination for entertainment activities, but will also retain dollars within the current Draw Area.

Consumer Expenditures

Table 7 shows consumer expenditures for the South Robert Street Draw Area as of 1999. The table shows that households in the Draw Area spend an average of nearly \$22,000 annually on consumer goods and services (excluding shelter, lodging away from home, insurance, education and health care). Per Capita expenditures total nearly \$8,700 annually.

Also shown on the table, is an index that compares each category to expenditures for the average U.S. household. A figure of 100 is equal to par. Figures above 100 indicate that households in the Draw Area spend more than the average U.S. household for that particular good or service.

Households in the South Robert Street Draw Area spend more than the average U.S. household for most items shown on the table. Those categories where households exceed the average U.S. household expenditures include:

- Food Away From Home – 105%
- Alcoholic Beverages Away From Home – 123%
- Personal Care Products and Services – 102%
- Women's Apparel – 109%
- Men's Apparel – 106%
- Furniture – 109%
- Floor Coverings – 119%
- Housekeeping and Lawn and Garden Supplies – 106%
- Small Appliances – 105%
- TV Radio and Sound Equipment – 104%

Many of these categories reflect a predominantly mid-age population with higher discretionary incomes.

TABLE 7
CONSUMER EXPENDITURES BY SELECTED PRODUCT TYPE
SOUTH ROBERT STREET DRAW AREA
1999

<u>Category</u>	Annual Expenditures			
	<u>Total</u> <u>(\$000's)</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Per HH</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Per Capita</u>	<u>Percent of</u> <u>U.S. Average</u>
Food at Home	167,250	3,948	1,577	97
Food Away from Home	119,681	2,825	1,129	105
Alcoholic Beverages at Home	10,676	252	101	99
Alcoholic Beverages Away from Home	9,227	218	87	123
Personal Care Products	16,839	398	159	102
Personal Care Services	13,329	315	126	101
Nonprescription Drugs	6,098	144	58	97
Women's Apparel	39,460	932	372	109
Men's Apparel	21,810	515	206	106
Girls' Apparel	3,760	89	35	100
Boys' Apparel	4,827	114	46	101
Infants' Apparel	3,625	86	34	95
Footwear (Excl. Infants)	15,437	364	146	99
Housekeeping Supplies	23,179	547	219	106
Lawn/Garden Supplies	3,823	90	36	106
Domestic Services	22,282	526	210	99
Household Textiles	6,794	160	64	104
Furniture	25,554	603	241	109
Floor Coverings	7,666	181	72	119
Major Appliances	9,551	225	90	102
Small Appliances	6,237	147	59	105
TV, Radio, Sound Equipment	32,585	769	307	104
Other Entertainment Equip/Services	35,505	838	335	102
Transportation	313,145	7,393	2,953	100
Total	918,340	21,680	8,659	

Sources: Claritas, Inc.
Maxfield Research Inc.

Retail Space and Lease Rates

Maxfield Research Inc. has conducted a preliminary examination of lease rates for retail centers along South Robert Street. Our findings have revealed that the majority of centers are asking lease rates of between \$10.00 and \$13.00 per square foot for space that is older. We have not included Signal Hills in this range as it has recently been renovated and is being remarketed. According to information gathered from our database, lease rates for Signal Hills begin at \$12.00 per square foot but the range is much broader, up to \$20.00 square foot.

Some centers are leasing space for rates much lower than the figures shown above. Lease rates significantly below \$10.00 per square foot for retail space indicate that the center is experiencing difficulty.

There is not a significant amount of vacant space along South Robert Street. What is available, except for Signal Hills, is often a very specific design and/or is in a center that is already experiencing deferred maintenance or has had difficulty leasing the existing spaces. As can be seen from the square footages calculated, there is a preponderance of auto-related uses and fast food restaurants, among other convenience/neighborhood items. The specialty stores that exist along South Robert Street tend to have either 1) a neighborhood orientation or 2) require space that is less expensive and thus, have located in the South Robert Street area in space that offers more flexibility at a somewhat lower price.

The median net rent range is approximately \$9.00 to \$12.00 per square foot for neighborhood centers and between \$11.25 and \$15.00 per square foot for community centers (includes power centers). Net rents have changed very little over the past couple of years, reflecting substantial retail competition and new centers capturing additional market share.

There is a wide variety of retail along the South Robert Street Corridor. The problem however, is that it is often difficult to get to and visually unappealing. In addition, there is a substantial amount of "value-oriented" retail that overshadows those uses that are more upscale and/or target a different market/clientele. The perceived market position of South Robert Street is one of a large discount shopping area.

Office Space and Lease Rates

Maxfield Research Inc. also conducted a preliminary analysis of office space in the South Robert Street Corridor. There are several office buildings that do not front on South Robert Street, but that were included in our analysis as they are located in the immediate area with access to South Robert Street from major cross streets along the Corridor.

Our review of office space in the area revealed primarily older, smaller multitenant office buildings, those that were built 1985 or earlier. Even among only a few buildings in the South Robert Street area, there was more than 30,000 square feet of space available.

Lease rates for this older office space ranged from a low of \$8.00 net to a high of \$13.00 net. Gross lease rates were slightly higher, beginning at \$9.00 per square foot. Tenants occupying office space tend to be professional business services (legal, accounting, real estate, etc.) or health care (doctors, dentists, chiropractors, physical/massage therapists, home care, etc.)

As you move further north along the Corridor, office space is located in non-traditional buildings (converted single-family homes). Although we have seen more office type users locate in traditional retail centers in other areas, we did not find preponderance of this situation occurring. Most of the traditional retail spaces continue to be occupied by retailers rather than office users or quasi-retail users (insurance, financial services).

Interviews

Maxfield Research Inc. conducted interviews with business owners on South Robert Street to assess the draw areas for different types of businesses, their concerns as business owners, and general operating conditions along South Robert Street. The following paragraphs summarize our findings from these interviews.

Market Draw Area

Dependent on the type of products or services offered, the South Robert Street business community serves varying market areas. For more traditional retail stores (small appliances, hardware, neighborhood restaurant, etc.), the clientele served generally come from the immediate neighborhoods (ten-minute drive radius), with a more sporadic reach to Inver Grove Heights, Mendota Heights, the west side of St. Paul, and northern Eagan. Service related businesses (auto parts, service centers, etc.) and larger department retail stores serve an area that includes the aforementioned surrounding Southeast Metro suburbs, and a slightly broader reach into Cottage Grove and Woodbury. Specialty retail stores serve a niche market that reaches across the entire Metro Area, but is focused more specifically in the East Metro.

Economic Concerns

Several businessowners identified economic concerns regarding future demographic trends and the ability of South Robert Street to compete with other second- and third-tier suburban retail shopping areas.

Several of those interviewed indicated a demographic shift in the West St. Paul Draw Area which has resulted from two demographic factors inherent to other first-ring suburbs: the out-migration of younger, more affluent households to developing areas in second- and third-ring suburbs, and the aging of the residing population into retirement years. The households with incomes which allow for increased spending on retail “luxury” goods has decreased in the area and a portion of households are now spending their money in developing communities such as Inver Grove Heights, Eagan, and Woodbury. Many felt that the resident population is primarily focused on purchasing “necessity” items. There are also perceptions of increased crime, less automobile traffic (due to the heavier use of Highway 52, which runs parallel to Robert Street), and unconstructive involvement by City and HRA officials in promoting growth and forward progress.

Potential Relocations

Of the numerous business owners and managers interviewed, only two are seriously considering relocating away from the Corridor. However, many people indicated that, unless they see a marked improvement in the South Robert Street area, they would consider looking elsewhere at the termination of their current lease agreements. One large retailer, Northern Tool Power and Equipment, recently relocated out of the area due to concerns about its decline. They moved to Woodbury, as their business (heavy power equipment) is geared toward serving a developing area with higher discretionary incomes. It was also commonly mentioned that efforts to improve a store’s “sellability” (building re-positioning, parking problems) have been prevented by city intervention, prompting disgruntled owners to consider relocation.

Desired Products and Services

Interviewees mentioned a variety of retail products and services that could be fused-in to the area, but the most commonly mentioned component currently lacking is a bagel and/or coffee shop.

Other suggestions included:

- Some sort of destination (big box, entertainment venue, etc.) at both the northern and southern ends of the Corridor to increase general traffic to the area.
- Also suggested was changing the focus of the northern end (900-1100 blocks) to bring in more specialty, unique shops that would attract a specific market to the area.
- The departure of Herberger’s from Signal Hills has created a void in the apparel market yet to be filled.

- One business manager suggested that some form of family entertainment/recreation facility (skating rink, swimming pool, workout center, etc.) is noticeably lacking from the area.
- Many interviewees indicated that basic improvements to the appearance of the area (storefronts, signage, etc.) would be a sensible and profitable first step.

General Comments and Concerns

Interviewees were asked to make general comments about their personal perceptions of the current state of the South Robert Street Corridor, and to suggest methods of future development that would assist in the area's turnaround. Managers of shopping centers in the area (Southview Square, Salem Square, and Signal Hills) were also questioned regarding their current tenant mix, and proposed types of new tenants interested in locating within a revitalized and refocused Corridor.

The following are comments shared by those interviewed:

- The West St. Paul HRA removed a number of buildings on the northern end of the Corridor and has not taken steps to fill those spaces. The lots are now vacant, creating an unsightly appearance in the area.
- Housing in the area is looking dilapidated and the City has not taken steps to force residents to clean up their yards or remove unregistered vehicles from their driveways.
- The intersection at Annapolis and Robert is considered to be unsafe (traffic perspective) by some owners and managers, and a number of accidents have occurred as a result.
- Years ago, the focus of development in the northern end situated much of the parking behind buildings, away from view. As a result, the lack of visible parking in the front of stores prevents passers-by from patronizing businesses.
- The existing population base is considerably older than it used to be, and development efforts have not been focused to serve that population.
- Seniors in the area also have difficulty crossing the street, due to crosswalks that are timed to better serve the automobile traffic that passes through the area.
- Businesses that have recently entered the area chose their location due to its central location in the Southeast Metro, as well as its strong visibility and accessibility.

- Several business owners expressed displeasure with the increase in the number of pawn shops and second-hand stores in the corridor. They associate this trend with what occurred in St. Paul's Midway area, and do not wish for similar trends (higher crime, dilapidated storefronts, etc.) to occur, as well.
- Multiple business owners mentioned that city officials have historically just been "difficult" to work with.
- Some owners are also concerned that older, traditional buildings in the area are being "painted over", destroying the traditional look of the area, and further preventing passers-by from taking an interest in the area.
- An interviewee expressed his displeasure with the restricted TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district, as he thinks the entire city is in a state of disrepair. Incentives need to be made available to spur both home- and business-owners alike to improve the appearance and structural integrity of their homes and businesses.
- Multiple interviewees indicated that additional "sit-down" restaurants would be very welcome, but they also mentioned that the city keeps a tight leash on liquor licenses, which may hurt a developer's ability to attract more of these types of businesses.
- The recent reconfiguration and repositioning of Signal Hills Shopping Center has concerned businesses at both ends of the Corridor, since its centralized location helped bring consumer traffic from all directions to the area. They believe that the loss of Herberger's hurt the area, and the center's inability to fill Herberger's strong apparel focus has been unsettling to owners.
- However, Signal Hills' current transformation from indoor shopping to extensive strip mall is seen as a positive step by many of those questioned.
- Conversations with Signal Hills' management indicate that they are still negotiating with a number of businesses to fill vacant space. The primary focus of these negotiations has been to replace the void in apparel.
- Management at Salem Square is attempting to fill vacancies with smaller, specialty retail stores that would work well off the anchor there, HomeValue. Types of business expressing interest include pool/spa and truck accessory stores.

- Southview Square (1800 South Robert) currently lists approximately 25% of its 100,000 square feet as vacant. A 12,000 square foot space was leased to Checker Auto.

Demand Assessment

Continuing on with our market analysis and examination of retail and office potential in the South Robert Street Corridor, Maxfield Research Inc. has conducted an analysis of the potential demand for a variety of retail goods and services along the South Robert Street Corridor. As you remember, our previous memorandum documented retail square footage of almost 880,000 square feet, excluding the Signal Hills Shopping Center. We have taken this amount and segmented the total by product/service type and applied consumer expenditure data to these amounts for the draw area. Our objective for this exercise is to determine where there is market saturation for various types of goods and services and where there may be unmet market demand.

The traffic patterns and market draw of South Robert Street have changed over time. Undertaking a nodal approach to redevelopment and focusing on new consumer traffic patterns will shift the potential demand for various goods and services to a different level and will affect the amount and type of market demand that may be captured through this new retail pattern. This analysis is conducted to better understand the potential for a variety of goods and services appropriate to a new pattern of development over time.

Existing Retail Base

Our previous memorandum identified approximately 880,000 square feet. We have separated this square footage among the following retail categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Square Footage</u>
Groceries/Food Stores	131,300 sq. ft.
Restaurants	95,000 sq. ft.
Auto Service (Gas Stations)	10,000 sq.ft.
Auto Service (Repair/Service Only)	36,800 sq. ft.
Auto Parts	35,800 sq. ft.
Apparel	50,500 sq. ft.
Accessories	10,800 sq. ft.
Sporting Goods	6,500 sq. ft.
Hardware	41,500 sq. ft.
Lawn/Garden Supplies	7,000 sq. ft.

General Merchandise	145,000 sq. ft.
Entertainment	26,500 sq. ft.
Furniture/Floor Coverings	82,000 sq. ft.
Electronics Equipment	25,000 sq. ft.
Personal Care Products/Services	25,500 sq. ft.
Business Services	21,100 sq. ft.
Alcoholic Beverages	11,900 sq. ft.
Financial Services	20,800 sq. ft.
Health Care	18,000 sq. ft.
Pharmacy	12,800 sq. ft.
Household Appliances	4,500 sq. ft.
Florist	2,000 sq. ft.
Fitness	10,000 sq. ft.
Household Textiles	15,000 sq. ft.
Other Miscellaneous	35,500 sq. ft.
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Total	880,700 sq. ft.

We then used these general retail categories to assess the level of market saturation that exists for the trade area within each of these groups. The objective is to determine where there are unmet market niches and/or areas where there is a sufficient level of retail development within the category to be currently supported by the draw area.

We found near market saturation within the following categories:

- Grocery Stores
- Household Textiles
- Automotive Repair and Parts
- Financial Services

We found greater unmet market demand within the following categories:

- Restaurants
- Personal Care Products/Services
- Hardware/Home Improvements
- General Merchandise

The other categories shown above on the chart are at or just below market demand.

Market Findings and Recommendations for South Robert Street Corridor

North District

- The North District offers a strong, urban character.
- Existing businesses in the area are a mix of neighborhood-oriented and specialty retailers;
- Neighborhood business owners want to encourage additional commercial development in the District that will complement the existing viable businesses.
- Because of the tighter development pattern in this area, there is a strong potential to incorporate mixed-use (residential/commercial) to enhance market support for commercial uses.
- This segment of the Corridor can benefit significantly from residential infill and redevelopment to provide a variety of new housing products to meet life-cycle housing needs.
- Strengthening the mix of neighborhood-oriented goods and services will enhance consumer convenience (particularly for seniors) and create more vitality on the street.
- Recommend incorporating/retaining the following types of goods and services:
 - mid-price restaurants/deli (outdoor cafe)
 - coffee shop
 - eyewear
 - bike shop/sporting goods
 - dry cleaners
 - business services (insurance, financial services, printing)
 - health care services (dental, chiropractic, massage)
 - consumer services (cleaners, photography, tailoring)
 - cards and gifts; decorative accessories
 - craft/hobby shop
 - specialty foods
 - flowers/plants
- Recommend identifying specific businesses that already exist in the area that may be interested in relocating to a new development site in the North District.
- Identified demand for the following in the North District over the next ten years:
 - 15,000 to 20,000 square feet of retail;
 - 10,000 square feet of office;
 - 180 to 200 units of housing;

Relocation of existing businesses to the North District could increase the amount of square footage in the North District, but would shift the space from another location on South Robert Street.

Signal Hills District

- Signal Hills shopping center was recently reconfigured and reintroduced to the market in an open-air format. Kmart relocated and now anchors the center. Total square footage is 225,000 square feet with 30 stores.
- The tenant mix at the new Signal Hills shopping center consists primarily of neighborhood-oriented goods and services that are targeted to a broader draw area than is typical for a traditional neighborhood shopping center which is usually between one and three miles.
- Infill residential opportunities exist east of South Robert in this area for owner-occupied multifamily development (i.e. townhomes, live/work units). While redevelopment on the east side of the Corridor may remove some existing commercial space, businesses desiring to relocate could be incorporated into small building pads on the west side of the Corridor, focusing greater development intensity at Signal Hills.
- A modest amount of additional commercial square footage can be accommodated in this area through relocation of existing businesses to smaller pad sites on the Signal Hills parcel or through the addition of businesses serving new market segments.
- As the residential and commercial environment evolves over time, there is a high potential to convert this parcel entirely to residential uses or mixed-use incorporating commercial and residential uses in close proximity on the same parcel.
- Recommend that maximum square footage of commercial development on the Signal Hills parcel not exceed 250,000 square feet in its current configuration.

South District

- The South District is predominantly commercial in character with a development pattern that is largely suburban with substantial set-backs and surface parking, many curb-cuts freestanding buildings, separate signage, and buildings sandwiched in along the Corridor.
- The South District presents a vision of strip highway development. Although there is a substantial base of commercial square footage in this area, the impact of the amount is lost in the isolation of uses from one another.
- Buildings that do not face the street or are hidden behind others or alongside others reduce the impact of the square footage, but hamper visibility of several businesses to prospective patrons on the Corridor.

- There are no strong pedestrian connections within this District. Customers must travel by automobile to access individual businesses. Although there is some strip center development, it is not comfortable or convenient for customers to travel between uses either than by vehicle.
- There is a substantial amount of private parking that is reserved for individual businesses and is underutilized. There is no synergy of uses or spaces that could enhance customer flow to each business as well as the entire core.
- Almost no multi-modal opportunities are currently being provided to the Corridor. Bus transit is the only other form of transportation other than vehicular, that has the ability to conveniently access goods and services along South Robert Street.
- Kmart has relocated out of the South District to Signal Hills shopping center. Home Depot has proposed to locate on the former Kmart site. The Kmart site is located on a highly visible parcel on the Corridor. Although fast food restaurants flank the east side near Wentworth, this site is a key focal point for West St. Paul. Incorporating Home Depot's traditional exterior designs on this site to complement potential future projects that would be focused more to an urban quality and character could present some challenges.

Town Center

- The area between Wentworth and Emerson Avenues along both sides of the Corridor has been identified for the creation of a town centre. This area will be the focus of the community of West St. Paul. As such, the intensity of development is likely to be much greater than in other parts of the Corridor.
- Some of the most recent developments in the area designated for the Town Centre have building designs that are more human in scale (i.e. Firststar Bank, Red Lobster). As this area will be the focus of the community, it will be important to maintain consistency in visual design, incorporating uses that address pedestrian needs as well as vehicular needs.
- The Town Center district should incorporate a variety of commercial retail, office and residential uses in close proximity to one another. Connections to existing community facilities such as the Library and the YMCA are important components to create a synergy of individual uses.

We envision the following mix for the development of a Town Centre district:

- professional offices
- municipal and/or other government offices
- convenience/specialty retail (service and entertainment-oriented);
 - books/music/live entertainment;
 - coffee/baked goods;
 - restaurants
 - business services;
 - consumer services;
 - institutional uses;
 - art/paper supplies;
 - other specialty uses;
- The market for auto-oriented goods and services is very strong in the Corridor. We recommend that as the Corridor evolves and redevelops over time that these uses are incorporated at key intersections at the periphery of more intensive-pedestrian scale development and that their design complements rather than detracts from new development. There are many new examples of auto service uses that operate and have been designed to blend in with a more urban format.
- Housing should be developed in close proximity to the Town Centre – targeted to different market segments; recommend a mix of owner-occupied multifamily products, senior housing, etc.

South District-South of Wentworth

- Most of the commercial space is located in the South District. The South District holds more than three-quarters of the total commercial space in the Corridor that equates to nearly 700,000 square feet.
- A Home Depot is slated to open on the site of the former Kmart, east of South Robert Street and south of Wentworth Avenue. Although our analysis identified additional market support for home improvement/building materials, Home Depot's size of more than 100,000 square feet may saturate the Draw Area market in this category.
- Several strip centers located either side of the Corridor beginning south of Wentworth Avenue and extending to Mendota Road. These strip centers house a variety of mid-size and smaller retailers with a few large anchor tenants. Although these smaller retailers have the

benefit of being located in a center, often the tenant mix has been diluted over time and spaces are leased more now on the need to fill vacant spaces versus maintaining a critical mix of users within the center.

- The freestanding pads consist predominantly of auto-oriented uses such as auto service repair and fast food, along with some sit-down restaurants. These uses are located close together, but are difficult to separate and because of the proliferation of signs along the Corridor, lose their distinctiveness.
- There is no sense of synergy or cohesion among these uses.
- The existing development pattern is entirely focused toward the vehicle.

Demand was calculated for the South District for the following components over the next 10 to 15 years and excludes demand for building materials and supplies that we have projected to be absorbed by the new Home Depot:

- 60,000 square feet of net new retail space (will be new uses);
- 50,000 square feet of net new office space (professional services);
- 250 to 300 units of housing (varying product types); infill areas along the Corridor;

Net new retail and office space reflects space that is developed net of existing space.