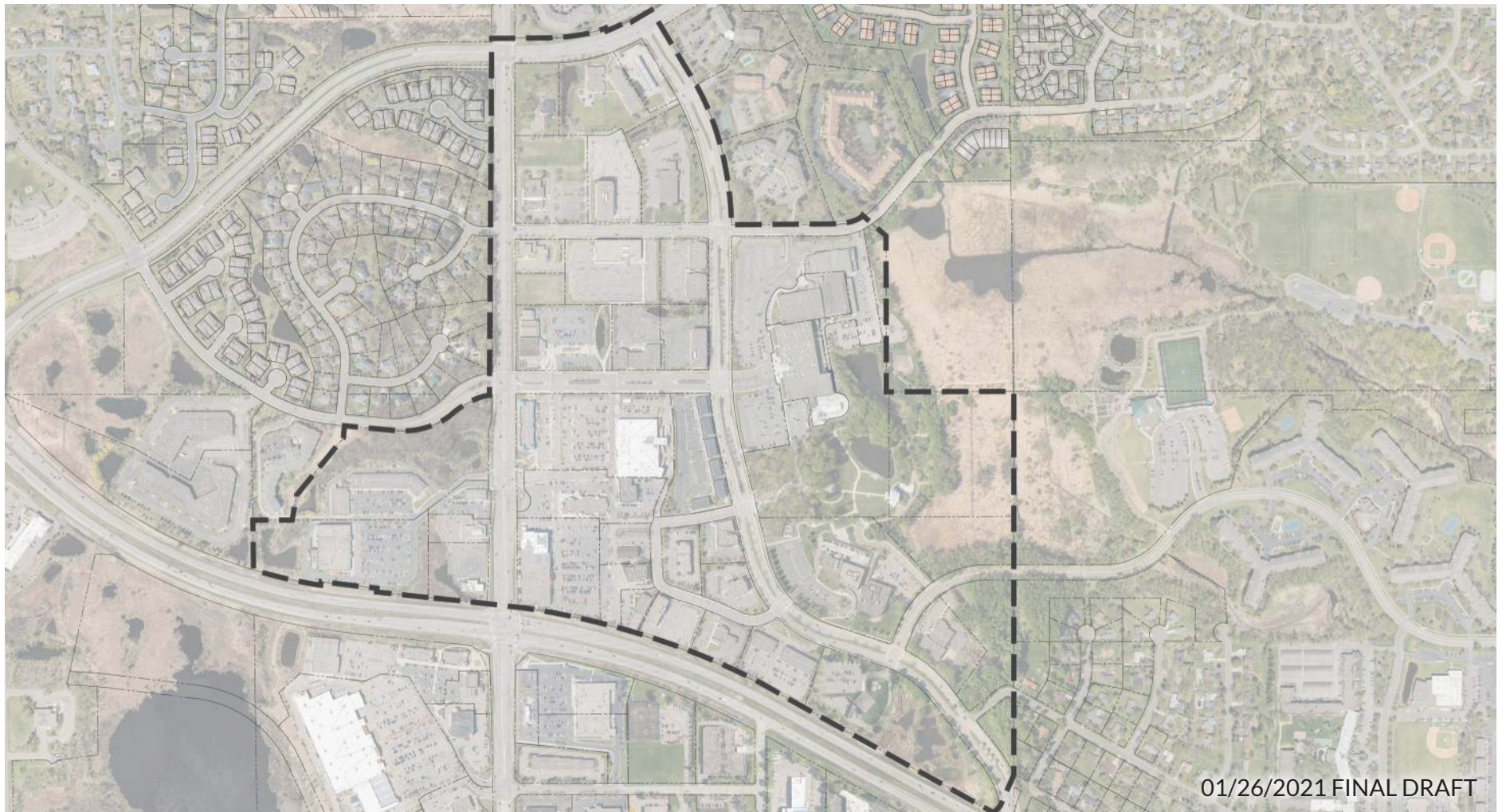


# Plymouth City Center **2.0** *a new community vision*



01/26/2021 FINAL DRAFT

# Acknowledgments

---

## City of Plymouth



## Hennepin County



Hennepin County provided assistance to the project through a grant from the Community Works program

## Consultant Team



GRAEF: Prime consultant and planning team  
Zan Associates: Public engagement  
BDI, Inc.: Market analysis  
CDG: Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity assistance

# Contents

---

1. Introduction .....	4
2. What We Heard .....	8
3. Market Direction .....	16
4. Analysis of Primary Neighborhood Elements .....	24
<i>Making a Neighborhood</i> .....	25
<i>Making a Place</i> .....	26
<i>Making Connections</i> .....	28
5. The Vision .....	32
6. Opportunity Areas .....	34
7. Action Plan Framework .....	48

## Appendix

A: Interim Market Report

B: Community Engagement Reports

# 1. Introduction

## Background of City Center.

In 2019, the Plymouth City Council initiated a visioning process to explore options for continued development and redevelopment of Plymouth's City Center. City Center is located one mile west of Interstate 494 on Minnesota state highway 55 (MN 55). The existing boundaries are shown on the map to the right. First introduced in 1996, City Center includes a mix of uses: office, medical, retail, restaurant, park, and governmental.

As with most development in the late 1990s, City Center is predominantly auto-oriented, lacking key pedestrian infrastructure that would help cultivate the "place-making" typically desired for city centers. Today, while most of City Center is developed, the uses lack a cohesive feel. While the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly altered the market landscape, any difficulties retailers were already experiencing have grown exponentially, making the need to reimagine City Center even more urgent.

## Why City Center 2.0 Was Needed.

City Center is halfway through its third decade in existence and is in need of a renewed vision for how it can best meet the needs of the Plymouth community. This study, Plymouth City Center 2.0, is intended to provide a roadmap for how to attract new investment to City Center, create an enhanced sense of place, and cultivate a financially successful, visually



Figure 1. Existing City Center boundary at start of City Center 2.0 project



*Figure 2. A landmark destination, the Hilde Performance Center lies just east of Plymouth Boulevard within the City Center boundary. Physically located at a lower elevation, the amphitheater itself is not visible from the commercial areas of City Center. One of its entrances is visible along Plymouth Boulevard at 35th Avenue North.*

appealing mixed-use suburban development. From market and zoning analyses to wayfinding and landscaping, the recommendations in this study will help nurture an attractive residential and business environment in the heart of Plymouth that will serve the needs of the community, create a regional destination, and foster civic pride.

Major opportunities exist for City Center 2.0, including creating a central plaza space, encouraging a restaurant cluster with outdoor seating areas, and developing a mixed-use corridor for residential and business uses. Importantly, the vision for a new City Center involves the design of multi-modal streets that accommodate all modes of transportation (not just automobiles). Cultivating a pedestrian-

oriented environment will help support the “downtown feel” that is so desired by community residents, as well as contribute to the success of restaurants and retailers in City Center. Ultimately, a successful City Center 2.0 requires ensuring that the needs and desires of the community harmonize with the realities of the market, and that the vision for development possibilities aligns with the local ordinances, policies, and larger vision for the community. This study presents a roadmap for achieving a successful City Center 2.0.

### **How To Use This Document.**

The first part of this study includes the ingredients of analysis (Chapters 2-4), and the end of the study describes the product of that analysis (Chapters 5-7).

Chapter 2 describes the processes for community engagement and covers particular desires that stakeholders expressed for a renewed City Center. While Covid-19 altered the methods for community engagement (as gatherings and physical interaction was not a possibility), the value of that engagement was not lessened.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of existing market trends and opportunities that helped determined the feasibility of the vision. This section includes both an interim market report (conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic) and a final market report (conducted in the midst of the pandemic). Together, these reports help

provide an understanding of present and future trends that should guide the development vision for City Center 2.0.

Chapter 4 describes best practices for creating neighborhoods and cultivating a sense of place. These best practices served to guide the urban design for opportunity areas within the renewed City Center to cultivate a “downtown” feel – a common desire expressed by the community and stakeholders.

Chapters 5 and 6 begin to showcase the vision for City Center 2.0, which was informed by the ingredients of the previous sections. This vision, contained in Chapter 5, is focused on three main elements: creating a framework for the redevelopment of parcels in the City Center; improving the connectivity within the City Center; and, cultivating a central place for community gathering and events. Chapter 6 describes three opportunity areas for the redevelopment of the Civic Center: the central gathering place (“downtown”); a restaurant cluster; and, a mixed-use corridor for residential and business development.

The last chapter includes an action plan framework for implementing the vision for City Center 2.0. Actions steps are focused on ensuring consistent policy for the City, updating zoning and subdivision ordinances, developing multi-modal streets within the City Center, and advancing redevelopment for opportunity sites.

## The Process for the Project.

A broad range of critical elements were reviewed and analyzed in the development of the vision for City Center 2.0. A summary of these elements is below.

From the market and development side:

- » Current position in the market.
- » Near term opportunities.
- » Barriers or obstacles to development and new investment (internal within government and external within the market).

From the community side:

- » Engage businesses, property owners, residents and users of City Center.
- » Identify quality of life issues to serve as recommendations within the City Center 2.0 study.

From the planning and policy side:

- » Updates to policies, regulations and/or processes to attract and retain the types of development that fit the City Center 2.0 vision.
- » Outline action steps to implementation.

## The Boundary Analysis.

Defining City Center's boundaries has been important to Plymouth officials throughout this study process. Traditionally, any commercial district is defined as that part, or area, of

any community where the land uses include multiple commercial activities, such as retail or office. The study area's location off MN 55 is proximate to other commercial uses, as well as light industrial. Two key areas were evaluated for possible incorporation, labeled and shaded

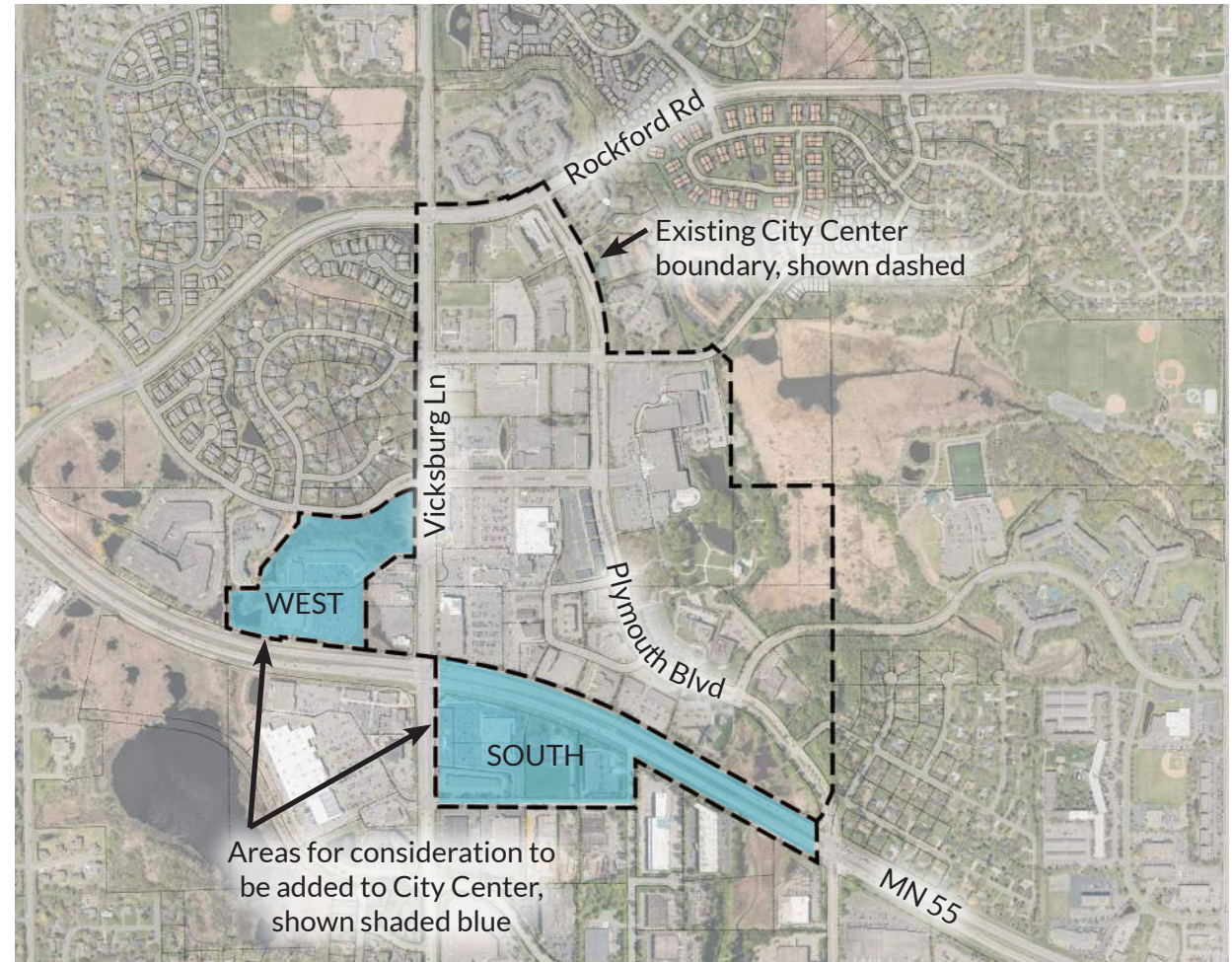


Figure 3. Areas of consideration (shown in blue) to be incorporated into the City Center boundary during City Center 2.0 project

in blue on the previous figure as “West” (Lunds and Byerlys and its surrounding area) and “South” (Fresh Thyme and Goodwill south of MN 55).

What comprises City Center’s boundaries has two aspects—what is perceived locally, and what is logical. Outreach conducted during this study indicates that few participants understand where City Center is located, while Lunds & Byerlys is often identified in tandem with City Center’s businesses. Logically, the proposed City Center interventions, or redevelopment scenarios, will have a more direct impact on and near the Lunds & Byerlys area. Also, those commercial uses located south of MN 55 generally differ from the community-oriented uses north of MN 55. Finally, City Center’s future growth per this study requires focused management, whether by City staff or in the future, by some district management organization. For management, the inclusion of the Lunds & Byerlys area within City Center enables redevelopment and future transit-related decisions that affect the Plymouth’s central place.

The diagram to the right illustrates the recommended City Center boundary, and comprises the study area used through this document.



Figure 4. Recommended City Center boundary, and the City Center 2.0 study area.

# 2. What We Heard

## Overview

The planning process for Plymouth City Center 2.0 began early 2020 and included a wide variety of in-person and online engagement techniques. As community engagement for Civic Center 2.0 began, so did the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our daily living patterns, requiring that we

minimize social congregation and limit physical interaction. While the Covid-19 pandemic fundamentally altered the nature of community engagement by increasing the reliance on digital engagement techniques, the value of that engagement was not compromised. In fact, many of the online tools that were deployed to collect community feedback

### INTERACTIVE PROJECT WEBSITE

Timeframe: May-October 2020



### FLASH VOTE

Timeframe: June 16-18, 2020



### ONLINE SURVEY #1

Timeframe: June 15-August 3, 2020



### ONLINE SURVEY #2

Timeframe: October 1-October 31, 2020



### ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Timeframe: February-March 2020



### Visioning Workshop

Timeframe: August 24, 2020





generated significantly more discussion than what is typically achieved via in-person methods. For many, especially those with demanding schedules or family constraints, online engagement is easier to access and requires significantly less time to become informed and voice one's opinion. As a result, over 2,400 people made their voices heard through the community engagement outreach.

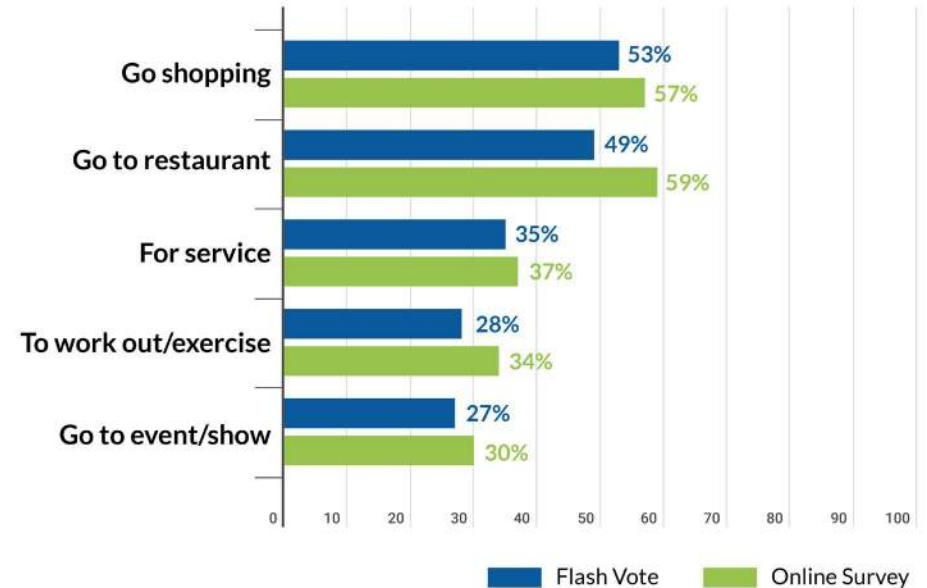
Public engagement activities included an interactive website, two online surveys, a FlashVote, a virtual workshop with Council Members and key stakeholders, and in-person and telephone interviews with Council Members, property owners, business owners and developers. Details for each activity are summarized below and on the pages that follow.

### Phase 1 Engagement

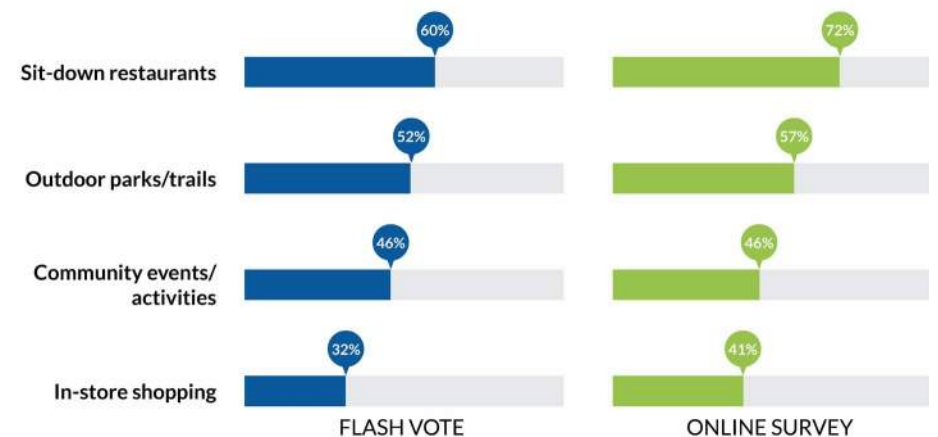
Community engagement during Phase 1 of the planning effort, which occurred March-August 2020, focused on seeking input from people about how they currently use Plymouth City Center, what their concerns are about existing conditions, what their vision is for a future City Center, and what things should be considered when designing or implementing housing in City Center.

In general, people expressed concern about the quality and safety of walking and bicycling in City Center, had a number of questions about housing, and expressed a vision of City Center as a walkable gathering place for families with green public spaces and opportunities for eating and entertainment. The results of the Phase 1 engagement informed the market study, the analysis of existing conditions, and the development of planning options. Details about Phase 1 engagement can be found in Appendix B.

### Why people use City Center now:



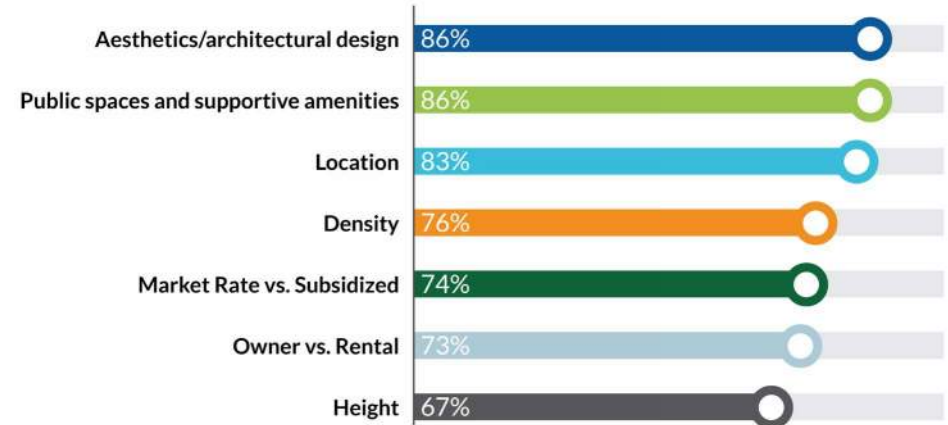
### What people say will be important in two years:



## How people describe their vision for city center:



## Housing Considerations:



Community Quotes:



Can we have an actual city center where everyone gathers like a Main Street?



I would love to see a true downtown in Plymouth



The theater is great - we're so lucky they remodeled



I want to see more restaurants, more coffee shops, more local businesses providing that kind of social atmosphere



Make it charming... family friendly... less a strip mall...

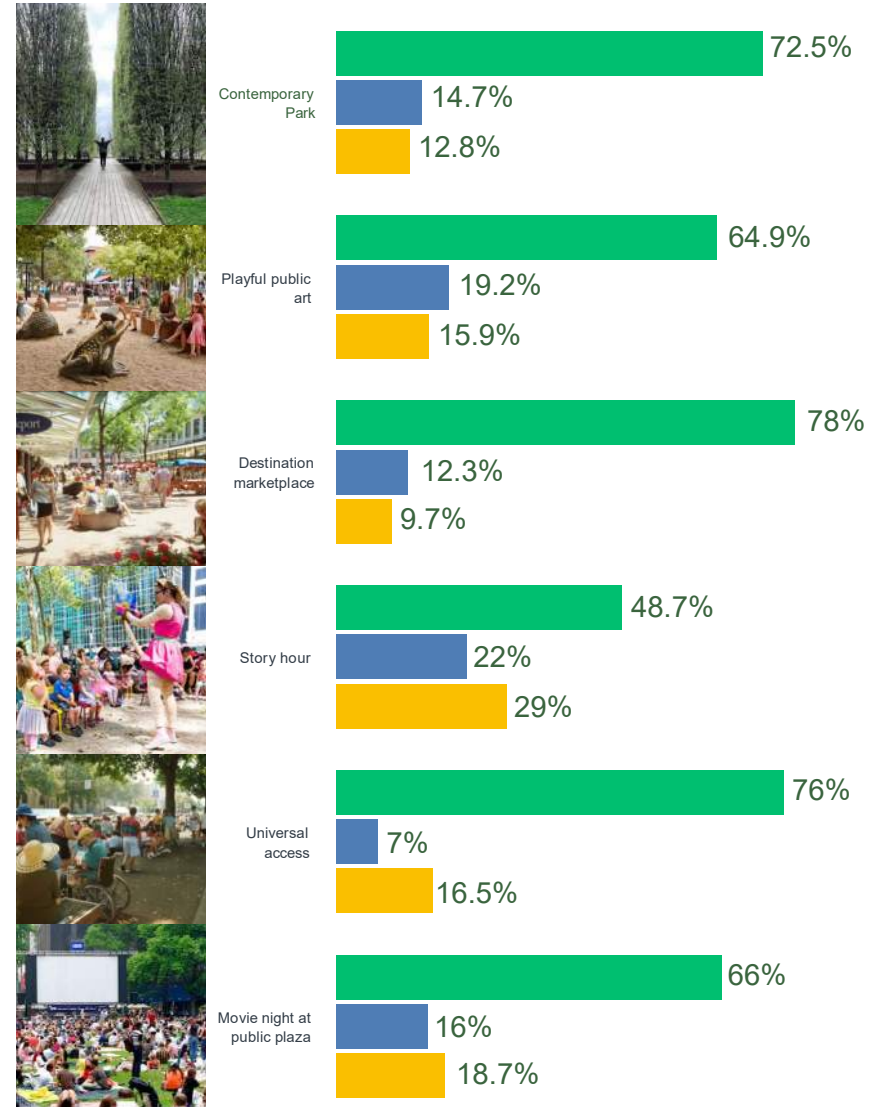
## Phase 2 Engagement

Community engagement during Phase II of the planning effort, which occurred August-October 2020, focused on seeking input from people on various options for a future Plymouth City Center. Phase II engagement had two primary components: a virtual Visioning Workshop with City Council members, key stakeholders, and city management; and a second round of online engagement including an online visual preference survey. Over 640 people responded to the visual preference survey, providing over 1500 comments in addition to answering the survey questions. In general:

- » The majority of people liked all examples of gathering places and outdoor dining examples.
- » Most people liked mixed used multifamily housing and townhomes (2-5 stories in height) and did not like the idea of high-rise apartments or condos (6 stories or more).
- » Most people liked the idea of mixed-use trails, cycle tracks and intersection improvements for bicyclists and did not like the idea of **unprotected** bike lanes on streets. They were split on liking/disliking **protected** on-street bike lanes.
- » Most people liked the idea of mixed-use trails, walking paths, sidewalks with planted boulevards and intersection improvements for pedestrians. They were split on liking/disliking sidewalks **without** planted boulevards.

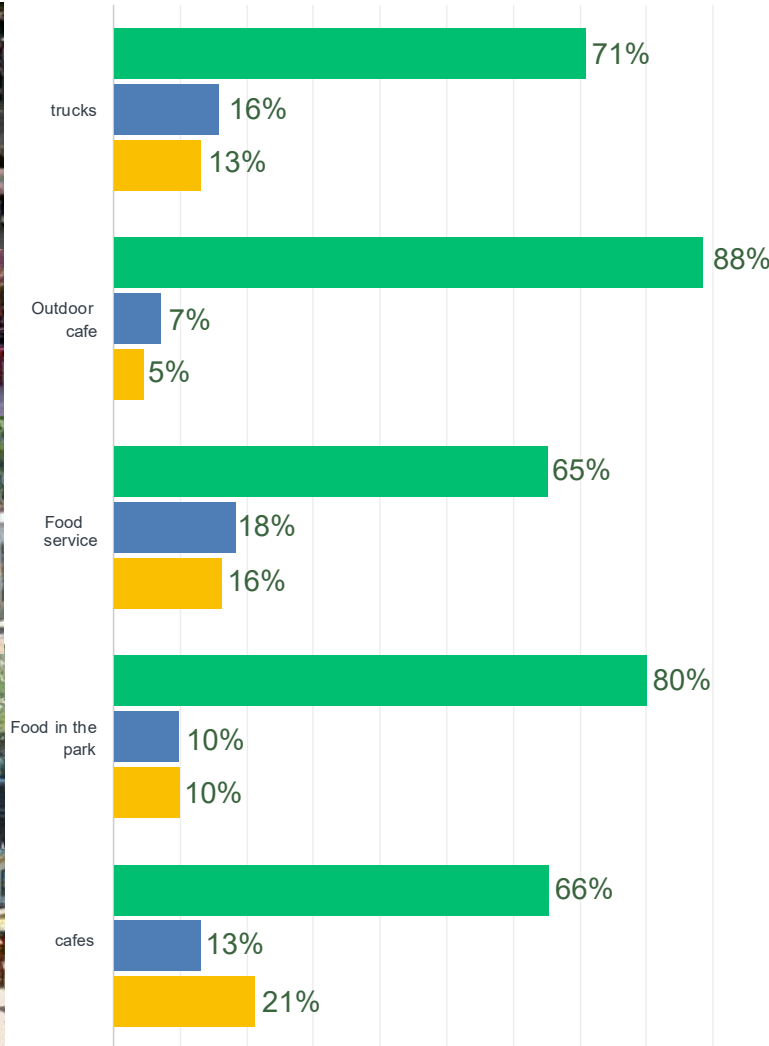
The results of the visual preference survey are shown to the right on the following page. There results are very consistent with discussion at the Visioning Workshop. Details about Phase II engagement can be found in Appendix B.

## Gathering Spaces:



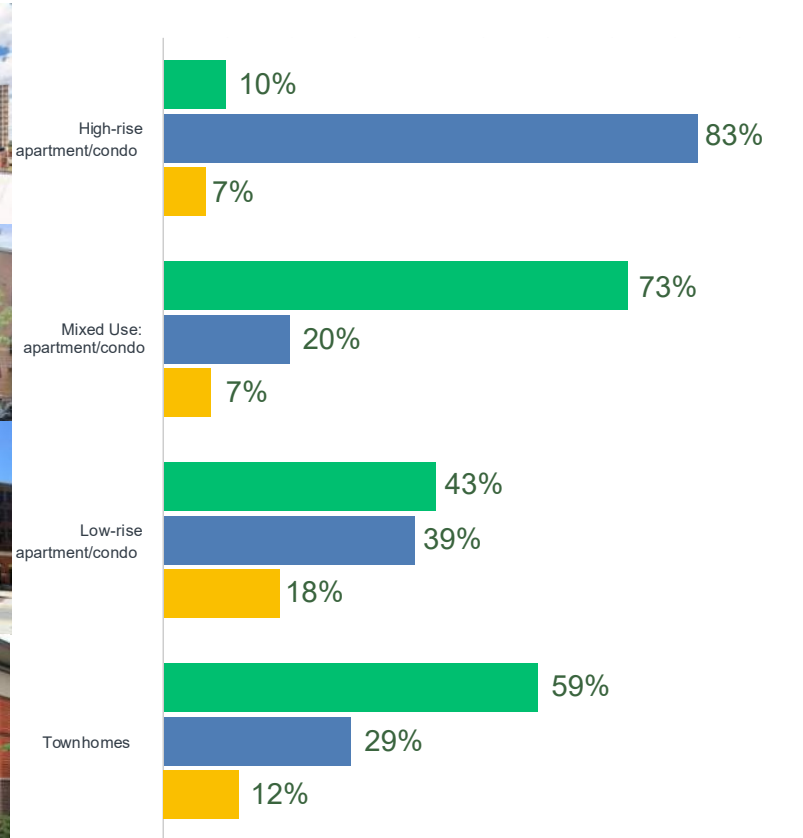
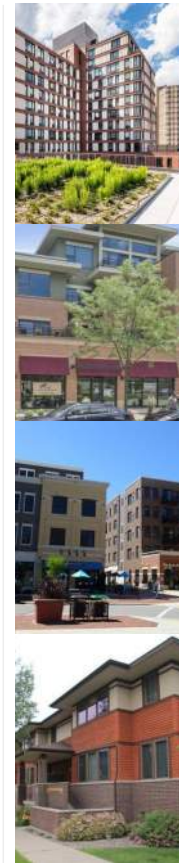
Like Dislike Don't know

## Outdoor Dining:



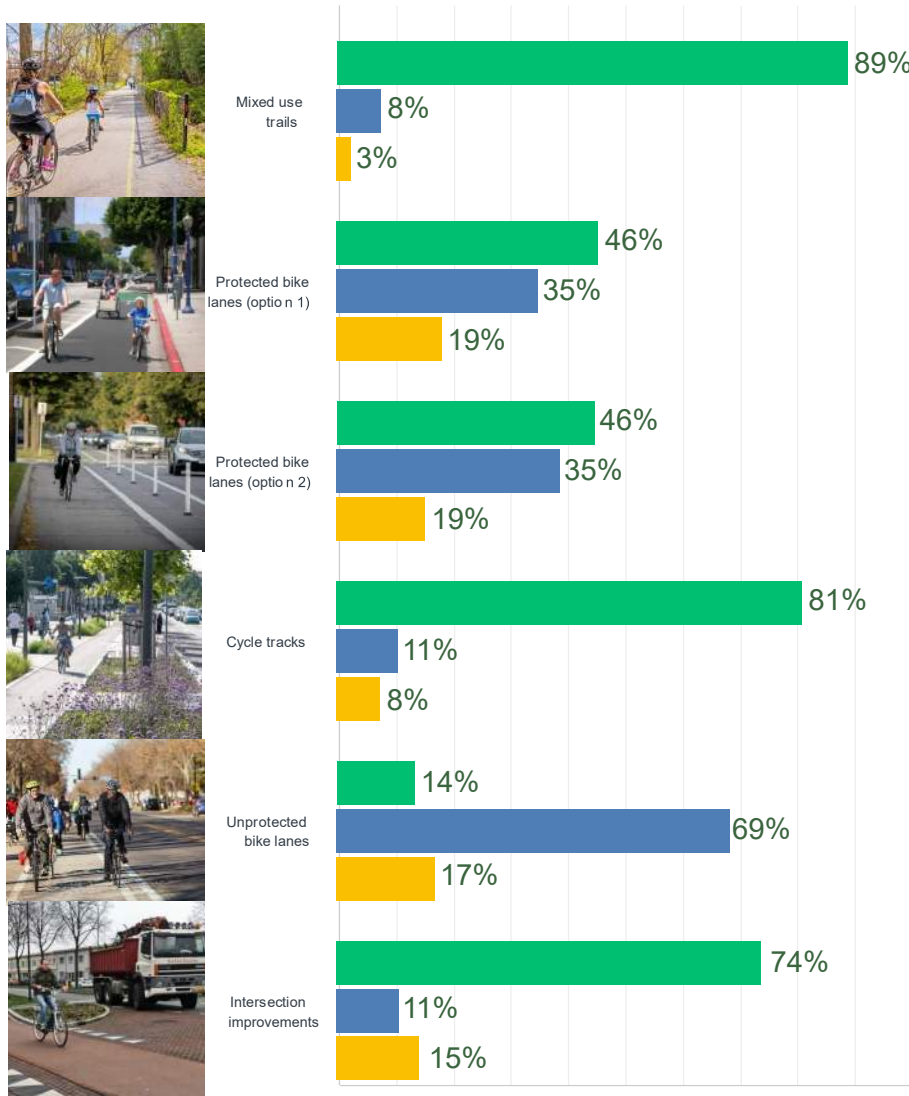
■ Like
 ■ Dislike
 ■ Don't know

## Multifamily Housing:



■ Like
 ■ Dislike
 ■ Don't know

## Bicycle Improvements:



Like Dislike Don't know

## Pedestrian Improvements:



Like Dislike Don't know

### Community Gathering Places/Vision for City Center

Overall, survey respondents were very supportive of adding community gathering places to Plymouth City Center and see gathering places as a focal point for a future vision for City Center. Respondents described their preferences as:

- » Attractive areas that are charming, family-friendly, dog-friendly, timeless, and have character, attractive architecture, and a small-town feel
- » Spaces that are activated with recreation and entertainment activities
- » Green spaces and pedestrian amenities
- » Public areas that are walkable with easy access
- » Enough parking but in structures rather than surface lots

### Bicycling Connections

There is broad support for improved bicycling facilities in City Center, in the city overall, and for better biking connections between City Center and nearby trails and neighborhoods. Many people supported bicycle trails, cycle tracks and protected bike lanes. However, most people did not support unprotected bike lanes, and many expressed concern about using street space for any bike lanes. While there was some support for multi-use trails, people felt pedestrians and bicyclists should be separated. Many people expressed a need for a safe bicycle crossing of MN 55.

### Pedestrian Connections

There is a general recognition that there are pedestrian safety needs in the City Center area and that the area should become a more pleasant and safer place to walk. In particular, people indicated a need for improved crossings at intersections, a safe pedestrian crossing at MN 55, better connections to/from City Center, and a more pedestrian-friendly design overall.

### Restaurants and Outdoor Dining Spaces

A desire for more affordable, local, family-friendly restaurants that are not chains or fast-food restaurants was by far the most frequent comment received. Many people mentioned that they have to leave Plymouth for the type of dining and entertainment they want. Many people expressed a desire to be able to stay in Plymouth for these activities and see City Center as an opportunity for that to happen.

### Multifamily Housing

There is a general recognition that additional housing would be acceptable in the City Center area. However, there were some people who stated that no additional housing should be provided in Plymouth, including in City Center. These concerns were often associated with concerns about school crowding, increased traffic, loss of green space, and tax burden. The most frequent comments about specific types of housing in City Center included:

- » High-rise housing (6 stories or more) is not seen as appropriate for Plymouth or City Center.
- » A greater variety of housing opportunities is needed that are affordable for seniors and young families.
- » There is a preference for walkable mixed use with green space and underground parking.



# 3. Market Direction

## Overview

This Final Market Report links City Center’s market fundamentals, as described in the Interim Market Report (see Appendix A), with local outreach, accelerating market trends, and this study’s site redevelopment scenarios. The resulting market framework establishes the market context for capitalizing on City Center’s best opportunities and achieving the City Center 2.0 study vision over time.

Plymouth’s City Center has strong market characteristics, and for the future, the City of Plymouth and City Center are part of a growing region known for its great quality of life and considered one of the top national locations for Millennials to live and work.<sup>1</sup> These many market strengths mean that a great City Center, functioning as Plymouth’s community core, can evolve as a place where interesting and exciting activities attract both residents and visitors and that Plymouth residents identify as their own. Ultimately, growing City Center’s markets will require a local willingness to embrace creative solutions to realize City Center’s true potential in implementing this study’s recommendations.

The Interim Market Report identified five (5) market-based opportunities for City Center, including:

1. Housing;
2. Physical improvements that provide great experiences for City Center users and support local business success;
3. Collaborating with existing City Center property owners to improve their properties to enable business growth;
4. Additional food and beverage, or restaurant, options;
5. Retaining the City Center’s character as a critical component of future redevelopment.

Capitalizing on these market-based opportunities also means recognizing that the ongoing worldwide pandemic has altered consumer behaviors, investor thinking, and market trends affecting all uses and all communities. For City Center and Plymouth, these key market shifts will affect how this study’s recommendations are implemented, particularly over the next five (5) years. New and flexible approaches to implementation, as described throughout this study, will ensure that this City Center vision becomes reality.

## Market Updates: City Center’s Uses and Opportunities

The Interim Market Report (see Appendix A) defined broader market trends, such as purchasing technologies, with implications for City Center’s future. These same pre-pandemic market trends have either accelerated or shifted, with long-term implications for commercial uses and tenancies in all commercial locales, including City Center. Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2021, recently published by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), notes that the impact of the pandemic may potentially affect real estate and all commercial uses for decades. Suburban communities, like Plymouth, may benefit from a decreased appeal of urban centers for the next five (5) years, as these urban areas re-emphasize their livability and amenities. The attraction power of suburbs with character and strong amenities, including unique small businesses, can also strengthen City Center’s overall experience within a growing, family friendly community.<sup>2</sup>

The following updates are described by sector. Local and national data is provided for the retail, restaurant, and housing sectors, given City Center’s identified opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/10/12/minneapolis-among-top-cities-for-millennials.html>

<sup>2</sup> Both suburban trends are detailed in ULI and PWC’s Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2021.



## Retail

Overall, the retail sector (excluding restaurants described below) was struggling pre-pandemic. The national problem of too much retail square footage per capita has been well publicized for at least a decade. The advent of online purchasing has resulted in a decreasing need for selling space by retailers of all types. At the same time, consumer preferences have changed, with consumers allocating more of their disposable income to entertainment, recreation, travel, and housing. This weaker demand for traditional retail goods has also contributed to overall sector declines. These specific changes are also evident in the repositioning of shopping malls from exclusively retail centers to residential neighborhoods, healthcare facilities, and e-commerce fulfillment centers.

While certain retailers, such as grocers and home services, have performed well in 2020, other retailer categories are stressed. Apparel is one example. Retail sales continue to migrate to online channels. According to a recent survey, shown in the figure on this page, over 60% of consumers anticipate spending more online post-pandemic.

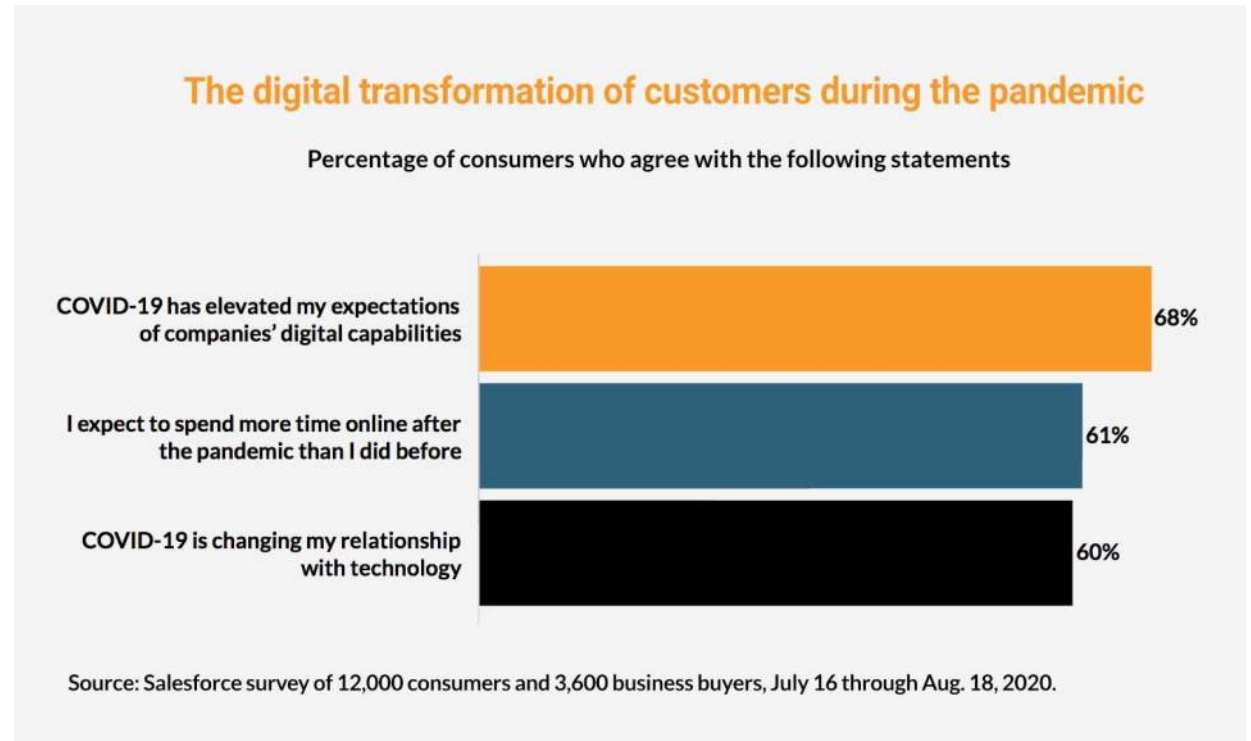


Figure 5. Consumers and Digital Transformation. Source: Digital Commerce 360.

State-mandated closings have placed many small retailers in jeopardy. Small retailers, some hesitant to adapt to online sales, had to quickly develop online and social media sales platforms to survive. These same smaller, independent retail businesses rarely have the same levels of cash reserves and access to financing as larger retailers. Many were also unable to access federal pandemic aid programs. Though retail

sales increased in mid-summer, the question of when most customers will feel safe enough to return to physical stores remains. According to the ULI report cited above, an estimated 20% failure rate for small retailers would result in 1 billion square feet of vacant retail space nationally.

In the short-term, those small retailers that Plymouth residents desire for City Center and that could consider a City Center location are focused on survival. The broader sector shifts indicate that greater numbers of future ground level tenants will not be retailers in the traditional sense of selling goods. There are three (3) positive aspects of these market shifts:

1. Retailers and retail property owners continue to readily adapt to market challenges. Whether it is a new use for former retail space, shared lease space with multiple retail tenants, or seasonal tenancies, emerging occupancy formats are the positive result. City Center, as Plymouth's central place, can accommodate unique retail, assuming that local regulations are sufficiently flexible to enable emerging business formats.
2. The interest in shopping locally and supporting local small businesses has strengthened. City Center's mix includes multiple retailers with important connections to Plymouth and to the Twin Cities area. Examples of these locally owned businesses include Foursome Fine Men's Wear, Letterman Sports, Von Hanson's Meats, and India Bazaar. Fostering affinity with existing City Center businesses (and City Center's future small businesses) among area customers will remain important as implementation of this study's place making occurs.

3. A recent national small business survey by Main Street America<sup>3</sup> indicates the pandemic's challenges have prompted greater collaborations among small business owners in established commercial districts nationally. Providing continued City support for these collaborations geared to generating revenues and visibility for City Center is another way of creating excitement about City Center to its core customers.

### Restaurant

The restaurant industry faces some of the most visible and highly publicized challenges in the current market environment. Nationally, about 70% of restaurants in all formats are independently owned. Based upon the responses in study outreach, Plymouth residents want an expanded food and beverage offering in City Center, encompassing varied formats from fine dining to brew pubs to world cuisine.

According to the National Restaurant Association (NRA), one (1) in six (6) U. S. restaurants have closed permanently. Based upon October 2020 data from the U. S. Census Bureau, the shortfall in restaurant and food service revenues since February 2020 is estimated at \$200 billion.<sup>4</sup> The NRA estimates

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/resourcecenter/mainstreetforward/research>

<sup>4</sup> The U. S. Census Bureau category, Eating and Drinking Places, is the accepted sales measurement for the restaurant and food service industry. Similar data is noted in this Wall Street Journal article: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mcdonalds->

\$240 billion for 2020. Total industry revenues (see figure, following page) remain well below YE 2019 revenues. Minnesota, according to NRA data, ranks fifth in restaurant job losses, having lost 30,000 restaurant jobs since February (see figure, following page). Industry leaders also continue to advocate strongly for increased federal pandemic assistance to specifically aid independent restaurant operators.

Restaurant unit operating costs have dramatically increased, given state-mandated closures, indoor dining capacity limits, the costs associated with developing new sales channels (such as carry-out or delivery), and increased cleaning and employee safety equipment and procedures. Pre-pandemic, the average restaurant profit margin was about 5%.<sup>5</sup> Revenues from limited contact sales and reduced indoor seating are often insufficient to cover operating expenses. For many restaurants, outdoor dining has helped generate some sales, but not all restaurants have been able to either accommodate outdoor dining or have access to outdoor space that adequately serves enough customers. Modifications of local liquor laws, permitting sales of wine, beer, and cocktails via delivery or curbside pick-up, have also helped to generate some restaurant revenues.

Despite the real challenges, there are multiple [chipotle-and-dominos-are-feasting-during-coronavirus-while-your-neighborhood-restaurant-fasts-11602302431](https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/07/16/the-hunger-games.html)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/07/16/the-hunger-games.html>

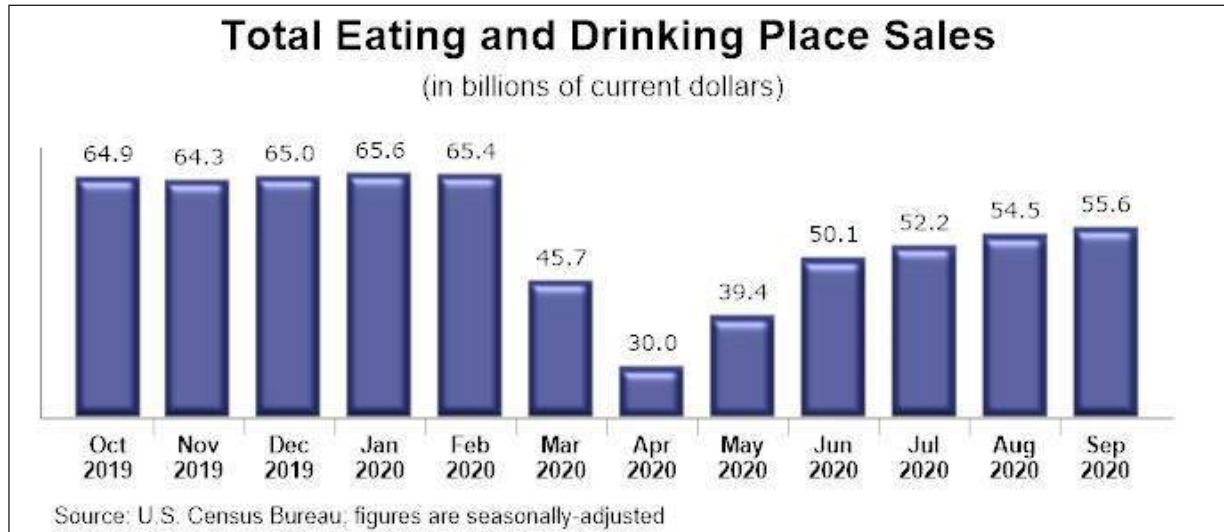


Figure 6. Restaurant Industry Revenues

Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Feb-Sep Job # Change	Feb-Sep Job % Change
192,400	186,500	90,500	110,500	145,600	157,800	165,800	162,500	-29,900	-15.50%

Sources: <https://www.restaurant.org/downloads/pdfs/research/state-employment-trends-september-2020.pdf>; BDI.

Figure 7. Minnesota Restaurant Jobs.

creative adaptations occurring in major restaurant markets, including the Twin Cities. Technology has been crucial to cost control in food and beverage operations. Improved customer facing technology has also been an important industry trend for the last five (5) years, but the need for no-touch interactions with patrons has accelerated this trend. Food and beverage businesses in all formats have pivoted in how they serve customers. Many restaurants, throughout the pandemic period, have become community kitchens, producing meals for distribution by non-

profits and charities. Other examples include: offering multi-course carryout; changed menu offerings; meal and drink kits; food sales supporting the restaurant (and often aiding their purveyors); rooftop igloo dining; and carhop curbside service. New restaurants, including fine dining, are also opening, despite current uncertainties.<sup>6</sup> Interesting approaches locally include:

<sup>6</sup> Chicago's Ever restaurant is a prominent example. In Minneapolis, Petite Leon recently opened with limited staff to serve customers through multiple channels.

1. Kenwood Food & Beverage. This partnership between the Double Black Diamond restaurant group and national supplier, U. S. Foods, is starting a 'virtual food hall' out of a Minneapolis ghost kitchen. Offerings from Black Diamond's Red Cow restaurants and three (3) new concepts will be available for delivery only. A closed Red Cow unit serves as the ghost kitchen. (A ghost kitchen is a professional kitchen facility used to prepare and cook meals for delivery only.) Ultimately, this ghost kitchen will function as an incubator for the restaurant group to develop future new restaurant concepts.<sup>7</sup>
2. Bellecour Bakery. After closing his downtown Wayzata restaurant (Bellecour) for pandemic-related reasons, chef Gavin Kaysen partnered with Cooks of Crocus Hill, area cooking school and cookware retailer, to sell pastries through their retail stores.
3. Lake City Sandwiches. The owners of Nightingale Restaurant in Minneapolis had developed the concept for Lake City—a sandwich shop using ingredients provided by their local suppliers—but had not identified a location. To bolster Nightingale's potential revenues given permitted dining room capacity and colder weather, Lake City has opened as a separate restaurant within Nightingale offering pick-up and delivery only.

<sup>7</sup> Dylan Thomas, "Red Cow Founder Teams with U. S. Foods," MSP Business Journal, September 24, 2020.

Some of these altered ways of doing business, including certain safety protocols, will remain part of restaurant operations, post-pandemic. For City Center, considering what actions and regulations will foster independently owned restaurant tenancies, whether as part of this study's outdoor food hall scenario or at stand-alone locations. Accommodating new restaurants will require an openness to varied options for consumer purchasing, including walk-up windows, outdoor dining, and the related adjustments to parking requirements for delivery services and curbside customer pick-up.

### Office

Stay-at-home orders served as the most recent sector disrupter for the office market, forcing work from home (WFH) for office workers. The unknown is how WFH will affect the office sector over the long-term. For now, building owners are increasing health precautions, and employers continue to evaluate how, when, and where to ask workers to return. Data and employer experiences vary on the success of WFH and its impact on overall productivity. Also, co-working space is expected to rebound, despite health concerns, with its emphasis on short-term leases and start-up firms.

As described in the Interim Market Analysis, office uses represent about 1/3 of City Center's overall business mix. Healthcare uses, including medical and dental practices, dominate this component of the mix. Many of these practices have re-opened, with additional health/safety

protocols for patients and employees and options for virtual visits. These healthcare-related office uses remain positioned for solid growth post-pandemic.<sup>8</sup> For City Center, office uses are not the priority redevelopment opportunity, but office (and nearby) employees and their visitors will remain important customers for study area businesses.

### Entrepreneurship

Collaborating with existing City Center property owners to both improve their properties and to support business growth is one of City Center's market opportunities. The underlying objective in this collaboration is to ensure location options for entrepreneurial small businesses of all types. Within the next 5 years, a surge of entrepreneurship is projected to occur in downtowns and areas similar to City Center.<sup>9</sup> These entrepreneurs are expected to include those new and emerging uses that Plymouth residents hope to support.

These newer small businesses are less likely to occupy newly constructed ground level lease space, given the rent cost per square foot (PSF). As noted in the Interim Market Report, new lease space typically rents for \$30 PSF with vintage space at about \$15 PSF. For City Center's tenancies, developing

a support system for these small businesses is described in the following framework. This study's outdoor food hall concept is one aspect of entrepreneurial growth in City Center. The long-term tangible benefit of this collaboration is its contribution to place making by attracting businesses that also attract more City Center users and stronger local affinity for City Center.

### Residential

Housing was identified as best opportunity for City Center's future redevelopment, most likely as multi-family housing. Nationally, multi-family housing development continues to be financed, and despite initial concerns, rent collections have averaged 95% or greater. Twin Cities' developers remain interested in City Center sites. Multi-family development has served as the region's real estate development driver over the last five (5) years, as it has in many major markets nationally. Regionally, the pandemic has not slowed multi-family project starts, with 2020 starts exceeded only by 2019.<sup>10</sup> Though multi-family has been constructed in both cities and the suburbs in the Twin Cities, the majority of the projects proposed over the next two (2) years are expected to be suburban multi-family developments.<sup>11</sup>

For potential City Center projects, unit sizes,

<sup>8</sup> ULI and PWC's Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2021, p.70

<sup>9</sup> 'Global Trends Affecting North American Downtowns' presented by the Chicago Loop Alliance on September 17, 2020. This session examined the trends and economic opportunities specific to downtowns of all sizes and their likely post-COVID impacts.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/11/05/twin-cities-apartment-construction-keeps-booming.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2020/08/19/real-estate-experts-predict-apartment-slowdown.html>

depending upon tenant WFH needs, and amenities may vary, given perceived health-related concerns. Purchasers for any future condominium projects will likely have similar concerns. An advantage for any City Center redevelopment is that major amenities exist within walking distance. The addition of new residents can only enliven City Center. In approving any future City Center projects, recognizing the changing needs of potential residents and how proposals are funded will remain key factors in how and what housing formats are built in City Center.



Figure 8. City Center 2.0 Planning Boundary

## City Center's Market Framework for the Future

In implementing the vision described in this City Center study, the above update emphasizes the ongoing market changes that will affect Plymouth's City Center and commercial districts of all types nationally. Often, local communities assume that their commercial areas are exempt from any impact, but all districts and their individual opportunities will be affected by change. Flexibility in approaching redevelopment and implementation will be necessary, particularly as the pandemic's impact recedes. This flexibility in approach also assumes predictable review and approval processes.

The following recommendations are intended to provide a market framework for considering City Center decisions over time.

- » Emphasize residential redevelopment at City Center's priority sites. Throughout the study process, housing has been identified as City Center's primary opportunity. Developer and market interest exists. Quality housing infill, also self-parked, will diversify City Center uses and enliven the area.
- » Re-examine City Center's design guidelines. Updates should re-emphasize quality housing materials and product, as noted in the current guidelines, and emphasize City Center's overall character, relating future structures to the public realm as recommended. These same updates should

provide sufficient guidance to developers to submit planned developments that can be approved. Issues specific to City Center's design guidelines can be addressed as part of the City's ongoing conversations with the development community to ensure predictable review.

- » Identify the local threshold for fiscal involvement in City Center redevelopment. This study's development scenario for residential on City-owned property presents an opportunity for that policy conversation and its impact on future planned developments. Again, the goal is facilitating good development for the City and catalytic impact for City Center.
- » Consider City Center's overall mix of uses versus mixed use. The business mix in any commercial district is never static. The mix changes routinely—businesses move or close for individual reasons, new businesses assume those locations, and over time, totally new business types or formats emerge. The current mix data, described in the Interim Market Study, notes City Center functions successfully as an area for small office users and employers, with destination retail and restaurants and government institutions. These discrete and successful uses will remain important to City Center's future. The opportunity for new housing is another component of considering and expanding City Center's overall mix of uses. Most of identified priority sites and their site concepts lack the density and traffic needed for traditional mixed-use development

(meaning residential units located above ground level commercial lease space) to succeed at those locations. Too often what is identified as 'retail' or 'commercial' space at street level is neither a good location nor affordable for the types of independent businesses (in all categories) envisioned by Plymouth residents in the study's outreach.

- » Related to the mix of uses, accommodate emerging business operating needs and uses. Strengthening the overall mix with supplemental uses, such as more restaurants, and emerging uses, such as the outdoor food hall and temporary retail or varied pop-ups, will create that unique experience desired by Plymouth residents. Working with City Center's commercial brokers and property owners to attract strong and unique ground level tenants to City Center will remain important. Incentives for improvements to existing buildings (noted in the next bullet point) or to attract new business types to City Center may be developed for short- or long-term use to improve the area. Many communities use various incentives to attract restaurants. Examples of incentives include providing assistance for build outs or reduced permit fees. These incentives could also be structured to support post-pandemic restaurant growth, incorporating ideas from area restaurateurs. Being prepared to address the operating needs of such businesses will be important to incremental improvements (and creating excitement) in the overall mix. The City's regulatory framework needs to respond to how actual

business operations change over time. Uses, such as ghost kitchens (defined above), are one example. Others include:

- Outdoor dining, assuming available sidewalk width, parklet options, or reduced parking space numbers in adjacent lots;
  - Roof-top dining, if possible, on City Center's required flat roofs;
  - Walk-ups and/or drive-thrus. Recognizing the current City Center design guidelines prohibit drive-thrus, walk-up windows are an emerging option for restaurant carryout. Permitting drive-thrus are often challenging issues for local communities. They are inappropriate for many locations, but their impact on unit revenues is undeniable—typically 30% or greater sales. The Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) has recently developed a walk-up and drive-thru format<sup>12</sup> for restaurants in downtowns or traditional commercial districts (illustrated in Chapter 7, Action 2). A drive-up in these denser districts is only permitted with walk-up windows.) For City Center, considering how to evaluate any future drive-thru proposals should be re-examined during implementation.
  - Parking for curbside pick-up and delivery services as part of existing parking;
  - Multiple users, such as restaurants within restaurants, and retailers within retailers.
- » Foster City Center as the location for area entrepreneurs. As noted, collaborating with existing property owners to improve

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2020/09/03/drive-throughs-walk-ups-and-covid>

their buildings is an important opportunity. Vintage properties in most commercial areas serve as the home for new, growing and often unique businesses. Supporting entrepreneurial growth over the short-term can include the following efforts:

- Consider new incentives to assist City Center property owners in improving their buildings. Multiple models for small scale incentives, such as matches for tenant build-outs or exterior improvements, exist in Minnesota and elsewhere that reinforce the local vision for the targeted commercial district;
  - Focus on restaurants initially. The first step is identifying those existing City Center buildings suitable for build-out as food and beverage locations, including such uses as breweries or distilleries;
  - Develop relationships with regional small business resources, such as area Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and small business lenders, such as Twin Cities Metro.
  - Expand current relationships with area commercial real estate brokers to identify and monitor tenant interest in City Center;
  - Work with City Center's small and destination businesses to facilitate any expansions within the study area.
- » Consider shared parking options within City Center as interim solutions. Larger parking solutions are described elsewhere in this study, but simpler and lower cost programs can address specific concerns. For example, with the prevalence of office uses in City Center, are there ways to collaborate with City Center (and nearby) property owners

to share parking when these businesses are closed? For example, parking for the Islamic Center during observances remains challenging. Working to identify available nearby parking within walking distance or via a quick shuttle ride could mitigate the parking concerns for the Islamic Center and for the City. Identifying existing, available parking in the evening, for hockey games, or for special events represents additional solutions.

As was noted in this study's outreach, residents and visitors want a better City Center, and all the elements for a successful future exist. Quality new development can expand how City Center is used and appears. Area businesses, including City Center's destination businesses, can expand their sales, markets, and locations over time. New businesses and emerging business formats can create interest and help existing businesses grow. City Center's property owners can affect tenancies with visible improvements to their properties. The area's institutions can continue to contribute to the City Center's image, as the Plymouth's civic core. New residents can invigorate City Center. All of this hard work by the City and its local partners will ensure that City Center's vision becomes reality.

# 4. Analysis of Primary Neighborhood Elements

An analysis of the existing City Center identified the following key issues:

1. The existing land uses are destination-driven uses and residential development is missing from City Center.
2. It is difficult to walk or bike from one parcel to the next, thus people who use City Center will generally only visit one business and leave.
3. There isn't a "downtown" or an identity to City Center.

The City Center 2.0 recommendations included in this study focus on three guiding principles or elements to address the above issues: Making a Neighborhood, Making a Place, and Making Connections.

## Making a Neighborhood

Downtown neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use. Traffic and visits drive success of commercial and retail centers, and providing housing offers additional market, visibility and dynamics to a neighborhood.

## Making a Place

Public spaces must be flexible in their design. Placemaking is a collaborative process where community members, business partners, property owners, and municipal governments work together to reimagine public spaces, including commercial corridors, through urban design, events, and programs. The goal of placemaking projects is to help people feel more connected to places: more excited to walk to lunch, shop locally, and play with their kids in community parks.

## Making Connections

Great neighborhoods are walkable, drivable, and bike-able and include a variety of civic spaces, such as plazas, greens, and parks.



# Making a Neighborhood

## Analysis: Land Use

The existing land uses are destination-driven uses and residential development is missing from within City Center. Buildings are spread out on large lots with large areas of surface parking between them. The figure ground diagram below showcases the vast amount of space between buildings. This space between buildings makes it undesirable to walk or bike from one parcel to the next, thus people who use City Center will generally only visit one business and leave. This is not beneficial for the private sector or the community. Capturing multiple visits per trip can serve to increase business exposure and revenue. The introduction

of residential uses and the strategic placement of new buildings will work towards creating an authentic neighborhood feel that is currently lacking from City Center. A neighborhood that includes a mixture of uses and attractive placement of buildings and outdoor destinations. See Chapters 6 & 7 for actions that support the “Making a Neighborhood” guiding principle.



Figure 9. Existing figure ground diagram shows the large gaps between existing buildings



Figure 10. Existing land use diagram shows the lack of residential uses within City Center

# Making a Place

## Analysis: Open Space and the Public Realm

The existing public realm primarily exists in the form of public streets (right-of-ways). These streets are auto-oriented and provide little to no pedestrian experience. While the Hilde Performance Center serves as a public gathering space, it is visually disconnected from the rest of City Center and does not provide added value to commercial uses. The creation of new “places” in the form of public, private, or semi public gathering spaces—connected to the area commercial uses—is key to making a memorable experience for City Center. This should occur within redesigned right-of-way and also new plaza/park spaces within private property as part of public/private joint ventures. See Chapters 6 and 7 for opportunities and actions that support the “Making a Place” guiding principle.

The current public open space is located or associated with:

- » Public Right-of-Ways (boulevards and terrace area next to sidewalks)
- » Plymouth Library
- » Hilde Performance Center
- » Plymouth Creek Park
- » Government Center
- » Recreational trails
- » Stormwater management



Figure 11. Example of terrace area next to a sidewalk within the City Center 2.0 study area



Figure 12. Existing open spaces within the City Center 2.0 study area

# Public Realm Inspiration for City Center

## Gathering space within ROW



## Gathering space on private property



## Large, destination gathering space



Figure 13. The images on this page include a variety of outdoor spaces both large and small that contribute to an active and welcoming public realm

# Making Connections

## Analysis: Street and Block Pattern

The main roadways for City Center provide excessive space for cars. Streets in City Center are under 11,000 AADT (annual average daily traffic) and include bi-directional two-lane drives with turn lane configurations. MnDOT recommends this configuration at 16,000 AADT or greater. Lane widths within City Center are also wider than local standards, with widths ranging from 14 feet to 18.5 feet wide. Hennepin County recommends travel lanes no wider than 12 feet, with 11 feet preferred. As such, this lane configuration results in the area dedicated for vehicular traffic to be excess of what is needed.

Additionally, City Center's road layout creates "superblocks." Superblocks are over-scaled blocks larger than typical city blocks. This type of block layout makes vehicular and non-vehicular connections difficult. For example, the distance between Vicksburg Lane and



Figure 14. Existing street right-of-way (ROW) widths are wide and oversized for automobiles

Plymouth Boulevard along 36th Avenue N is approximately 1,100 feet. That is nearly three times the size of a block that would typically support walkability and promote multiple-stop trips by visitors. Development best practice includes sizing of blocks between 200 feet to 400 feet per block in order to support walkability.

The diagram below illustrates red dashed circles; this represents about a 10-minute walking radius. While feasible to walk across City Center from one business to another, the lack of internal circulation facilities that connect the public right-of-way to building entries makes this less likely to occur. This is further discouraged with existing parking lot layout.

In Chapters 6 & 7, more detail regarding the opportunities and recommendations will be discussed.

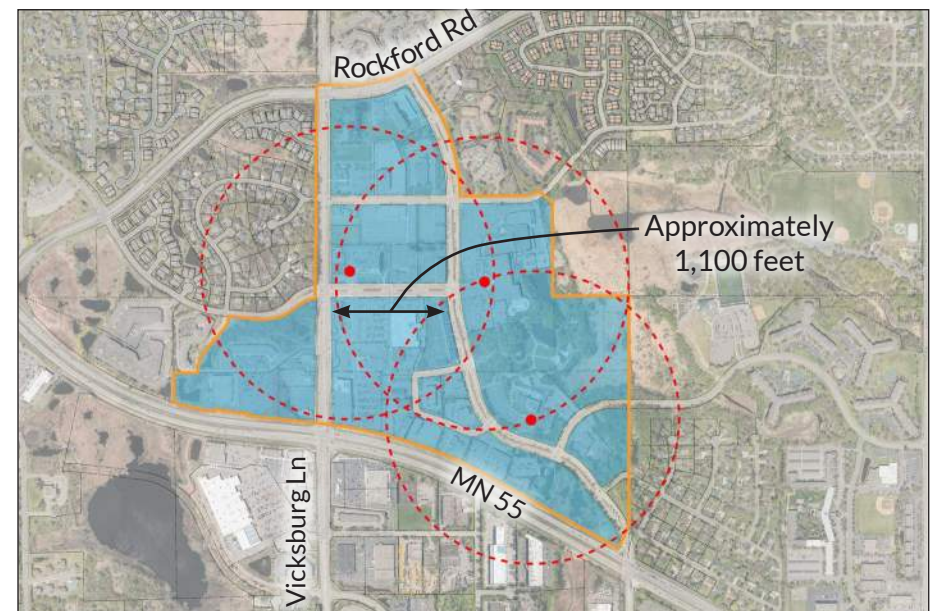


Figure 15. Existing street and block pattern result in "superblocks" that make vehicular and non-vehicular connections difficult.

## Analysis: Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity





Many bike trails surround and connect to City Center, but traveling through City Center has its challenges. Bicyclists would choose to either ride on the street in the vehicular travel lane or on sidewalks. While avid cyclists may find riding on the street next to cars to be feasible, it is not typically comfortable for the majority of riders. Currently, there are no bike-friendly facilities within the project area.

The existing sidewalks provide space for pedestrian movement, but while sidewalks are located along public streets, they are placed immediately adjacent to moving cars with no terrace space. This type of arrangement yields the sidewalks uncomfortable for pedestrians. The scale of surrounding features—buildings, streetscape features such as benches or wayfinding signage, and trees—help to make a place feel comfortable, human-scale, and provide a sense of enclosure. While City Center enjoys some of these features, they are often spread out and it loses the visual connection needed.

Additionally, major building entrances lack direct and intuitive pedestrian and bicycle connections from the public right-of-way. This causes a disconnect for those on foot or bike from the public street to the businesses. The yellow dots in Figure 17 clearly show a disconnect between many of the building entries and their lack of connection to existing sidewalks and trails.

See Chapters 6 & 7 for actions that support the “Making Connections” guiding principle within City Center.

### Key for Figures, right

	Planning Boundary
	Existing Sidewalk
	Existing Trail
	Building Entrance (approximate locations)

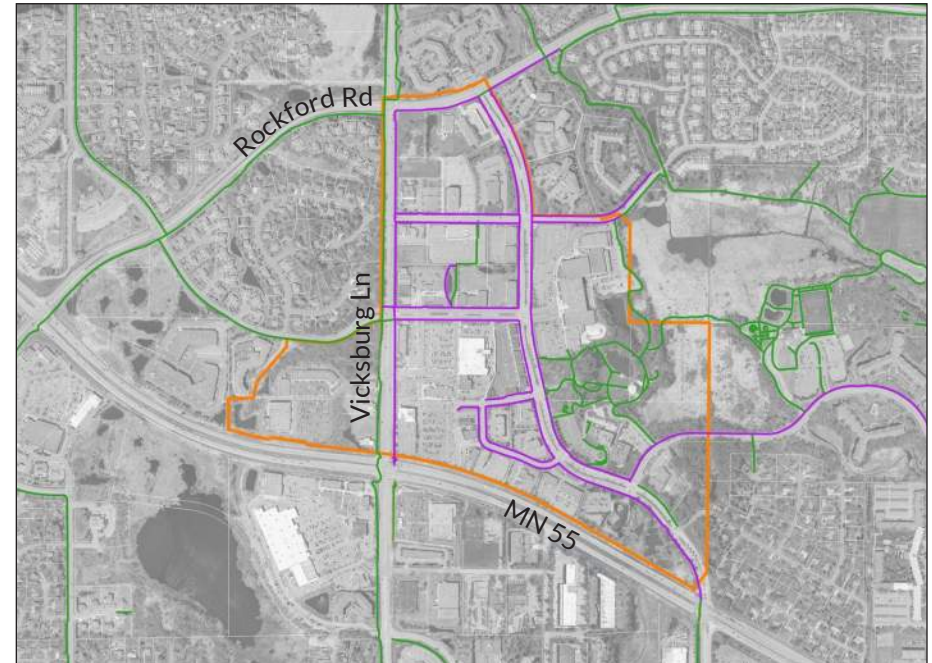


Figure 16. Existing bike and pedestrian facilities are disjointed; existing neighborhood trails (shown in green, above) lead to the City Center boundary but are limited within the City Center.

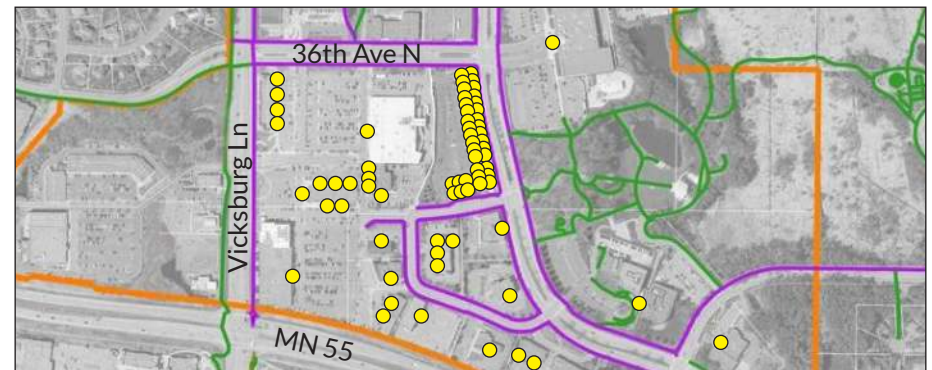


Figure 17. Enlarged view of study area illustrates that most building entrances (with the exception of the office condominium buildings on Plymouth Boulevard between 36th Ave N and 35th Ave N) are oriented to the parking lots rather than the street, and that existing trails and sidewalks in the public realm lack clear connections to building entrances.

# Making Connections

Connectivity Inspiration for City Center

## Traffic Calming



Figure 19. (1) Curb bump outs or pavement design of intersections can serve as traffic calming methods as well as add beauty to the public realm; (2) Pavement markings, landscaping, materials, and amenities all contribute to a pedestrian friendly public realm

## Bicycle / Pedestrian Facility Design



### Walkability: Four Key Elements

What is needed	In City Center Today?
<b>Useful:</b> connect to elements of daily life	Yes
<b>Safe:</b> actual safety and perception of safety	No
<b>Comfortable:</b> responsive to human scale, needs for enclosure and place	No
<b>Interesting:</b> visually stimulating, activity, other people	No

Figure 20. Examples (above and above right) of ways to integrate widened sidewalks and multi-use trails into City Center.

# 5. The Vision

As part of this study, City Center is divided into four subareas of focus, each with their own characteristics and opportunities for growth and change:

**Area A** focuses on creating a public gathering space, while increasing connectivity and residential development opportunities.

**Area B** emphasizes what is being called the “restaurant cluster.” An area for food, entertainment and hospitality, creating a social hub within City Center.

**Area C** looks at increasing economic value through future job creation as well as residential development.

**Area D** is the civic heart and anchor of the City, with the iconic Hilde Performance Center, Government Center and the post office.

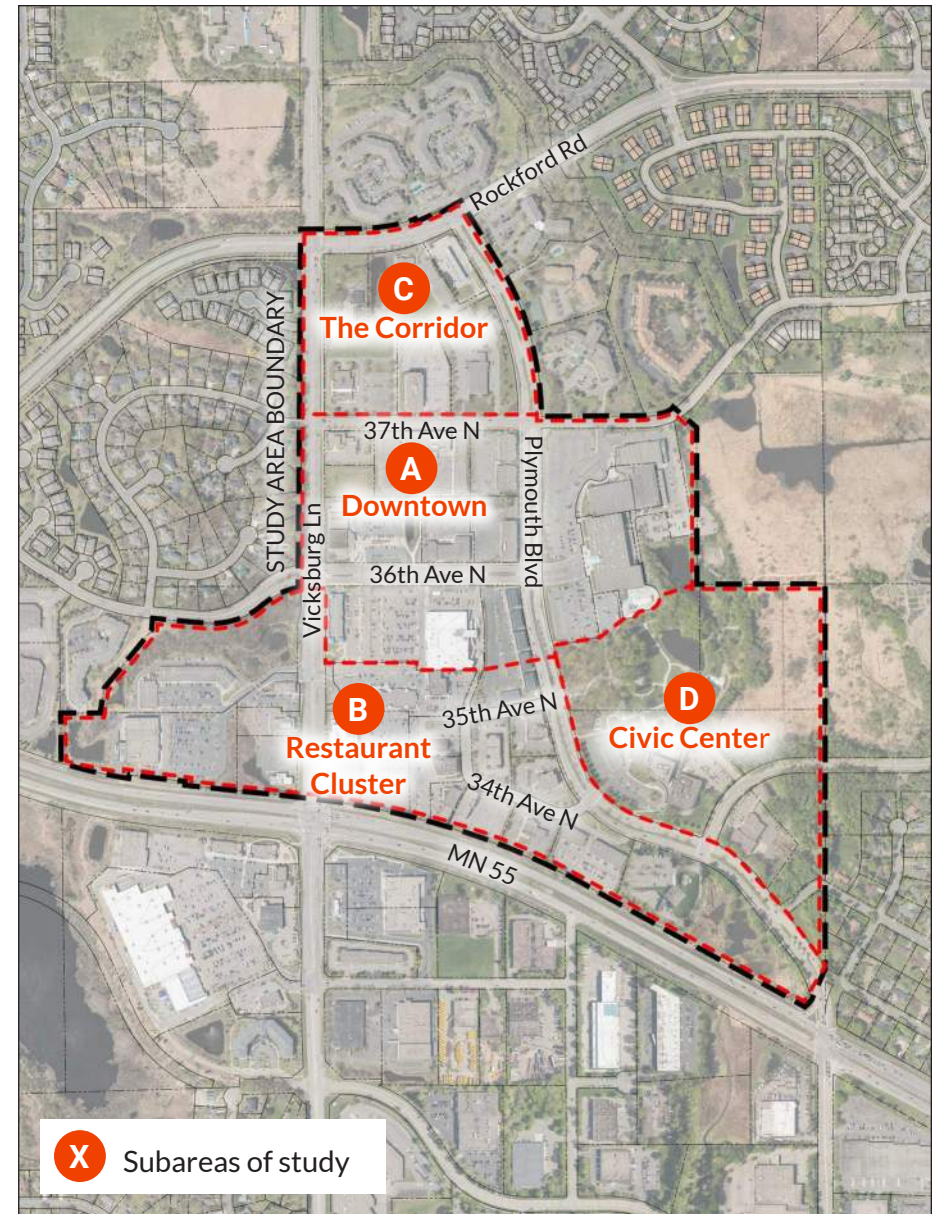


Figure 21. City Center 2.0 planning subareas



1. Provide a framework that allows guidance and predictability for landowners and developers that wish to redevelop parcels.
2. Improve connectivity (walkability) between parcels.
3. Add a “downtown” or “central place” that can be programmed for active uses that will become the hub, complementing the Hilde Performance Center and the rest of City Center uses.



Figure 22. Conceptual Master Development Vision

# 6. Opportunity Areas

Within the four subareas of study, thirteen sites have been identified as possible redevelopment opportunities. All of the redevelopment scenarios included on the following pages are for discussion purposes only. The possible transformation of private properties from their current use to the depicted use in the scenarios is expected to occur over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.



Figure 23. Images (above and left) represent ideas for residential development and public spaces within City Center.

Opportunity Area Site Identification			
Site	Address	Parcel ID	Current Land Use
1	18590 37th Ave N	16-118-22-32-0021	Utility
2	15800 37th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0006	Vacant Land / Commercial
3	15600 37th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0011	Offices
4	3650 Plymouth Blvd	16-118-22-34-0015	Ice Center
5	3600 Plymouth Blvd	16-118-22-34-0017	Fitness
6	15600 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0012	Offices
7	15650 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0013	Offices/Bank
8	15700 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0004	Library
9	3350 Vicksburg Lane	21-118-22-22-0015	Grocery Store
10	15705 35th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0004	Liquor / Retail
11	15600 34th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0012	Auto Service
12	15525 34th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0019	Bank
13	3305 Plymouth Blvd	21-118-22-24-0005	Bank



Figure 24. Possible redevelopment sites

## Vehicular Circulation and Parking

City Center is located along the high-visibility corridor of Minnesota state highway 55 (MN 55). MN 55 runs along the southern boundary of City Center, with annual average daily traffic (AADT) volume the highest in the study area vicinity, between 36,000-41,000 AADT. Just north of MN 55, Vicksburg Lane has a volume of 20,500 AADT, and Plymouth Boulevard has a volume of 10,700 AADT.

One of the areas of highest perceived traffic congestion is 36th Avenue North at Plymouth Boulevard. It is presumed that most traffic entering Life Time Fitness—a high traffic generator within the study area—is through this intersection, as shown in the diagram at right. Given this, in order to improve connectivity while also providing for opportunities for redevelopment, it is recommended to promote alternate and new access points into the Life Time and the P.I.C., as illustrated in the diagram on the following page. Although 37th Avenue North at Vicksburg Lane is not signalized currently, as traffic patterns change with new development, the City may look to add a signal if warranted in the future. These alternate circulation routes combined with strategies to incorporate and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities, will provide good multi-modal access.

The Hilde Performance Center is a major attraction in the City of Plymouth. At performances, or with special events hosted in the park, parking is utilized throughout the surface lots within City Center—both public lots at Government Center and the private commercial parking lots. Retaining available parking for special event use is important to the success of the Hilde.

City Center has ample surface parking for existing and new development with commercial uses. Going forward, shared parking strategies can be employed for complementary uses. Shared parking may be used for uses that require peak parking usage at different times of the day or different days of the week. Examples of this might be an office building in use during regular business hours and a restaurant with peak dining after 5:00 PM.

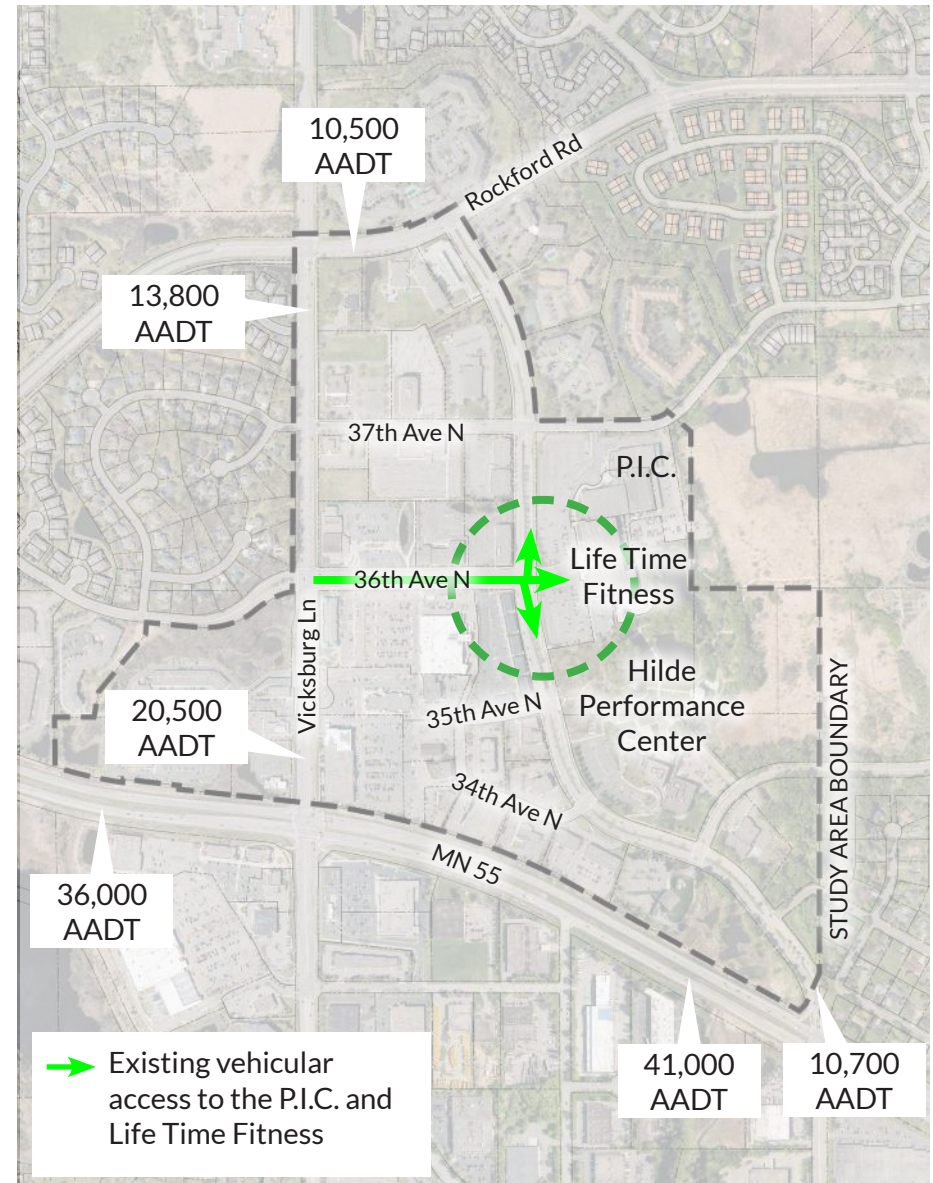


Figure 25. Existing vehicular circulation to Life Time Fitness and the P.I.C. AADT Source: MnDOT.

For new development such as mixed use and residential multi-family buildings, incorporating parking into the site development plan will be necessary, to adequately respond to the market demand for the amount of parking needed for these types of uses. At such time development is planned, it may be an opportunity for the City to provide additional structured spaces to provide parking in areas of City Center with high demand.

A next step may be to study the parking location, quantity and availability specifically in a parking study. While the quantity of parking may be plentiful for day-to-day use in City Center, the demand in certain key areas or during special events may lead to a better understanding of the need for additional structured parking. Based on the opportunity sites identified in the following sections, the diagram on this page illustrates areas of consideration for parking structures in conjunction with new redevelopment.



Figure 26. Example of a new construction redevelopment that retained existing surface parking for public use, and built new additional underground spaces for the residential development above.

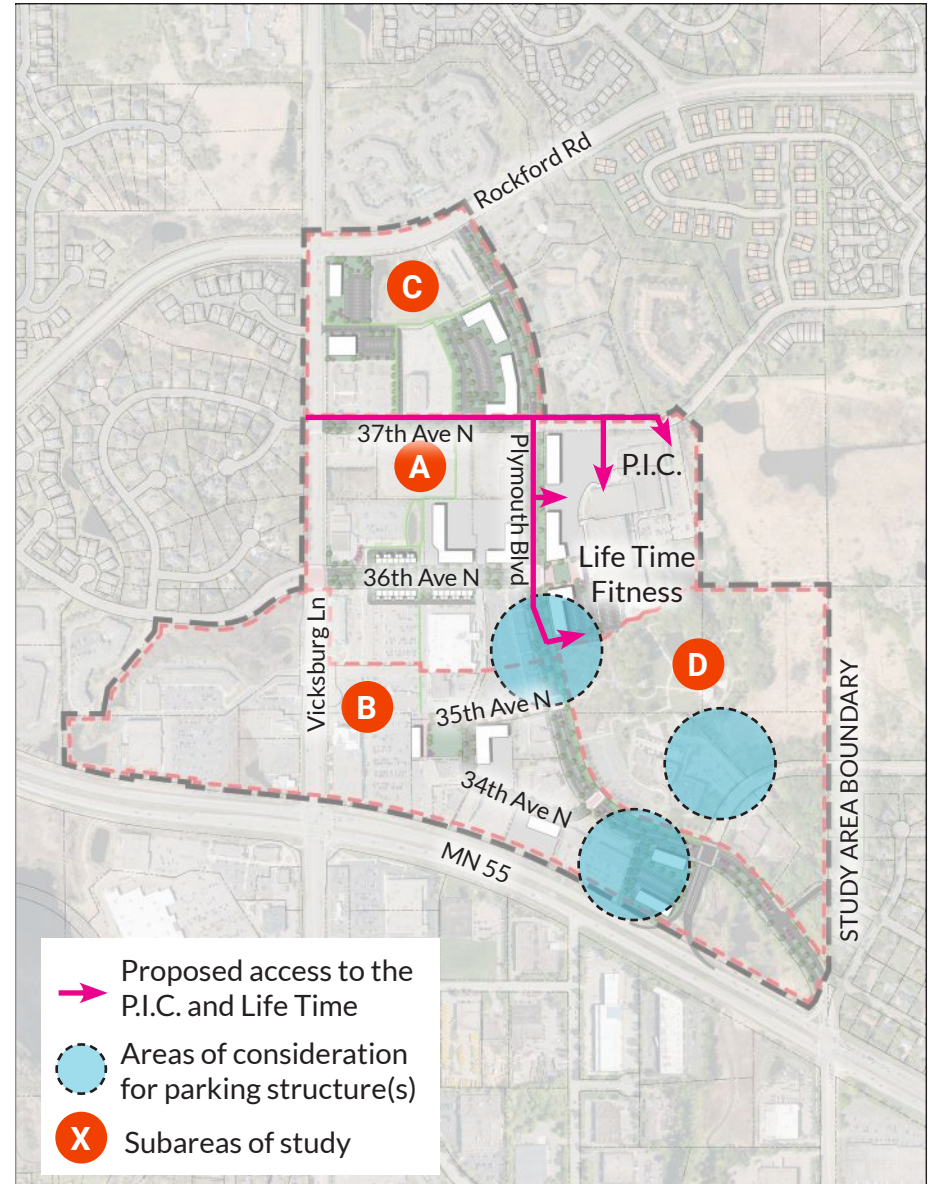


Figure 27. Conceptual master plan rendering, with vehicular circulation and areas noted for future parking structure; see "Area A: Downtown" for a more in-depth look at proposed circulation

# Area A: Downtown



Figure 28. Conceptual site design scenario for Area A: Downtown

# Area A: Downtown

## Lot 5 Development Scenario

### Site Overview

- » 2.4 acres City-owned land (part of larger 17 acre parcel)
- » Life Time front door site
- » Dynamic location: high visibility site, access to retail and recreation amenities, and proximity to grocery
- » 237 existing parking stalls (south of entrance drive)

### Development Overview

- » 4-story, 80 unit residential building with public plaza (City Center Central Plaza). Typical density for this type of development can be approximately 30-45 dwelling units per acre.
- » Parking: No loss of parking, and parking to be added to serve the addition of residential units.
  - » **Retains** existing 237 parking stalls (surface lot tucked below proposed building)
  - » **Addition** of up to 100 below-grade parking for proposed residential units (1.25 parking spaces per dwelling unit)
  - » Added development value estimated at \$20.8 MM



Figure 30. Building cross section of proposed 4-story residential building



Figure 29. Existing aerial of Lot 5

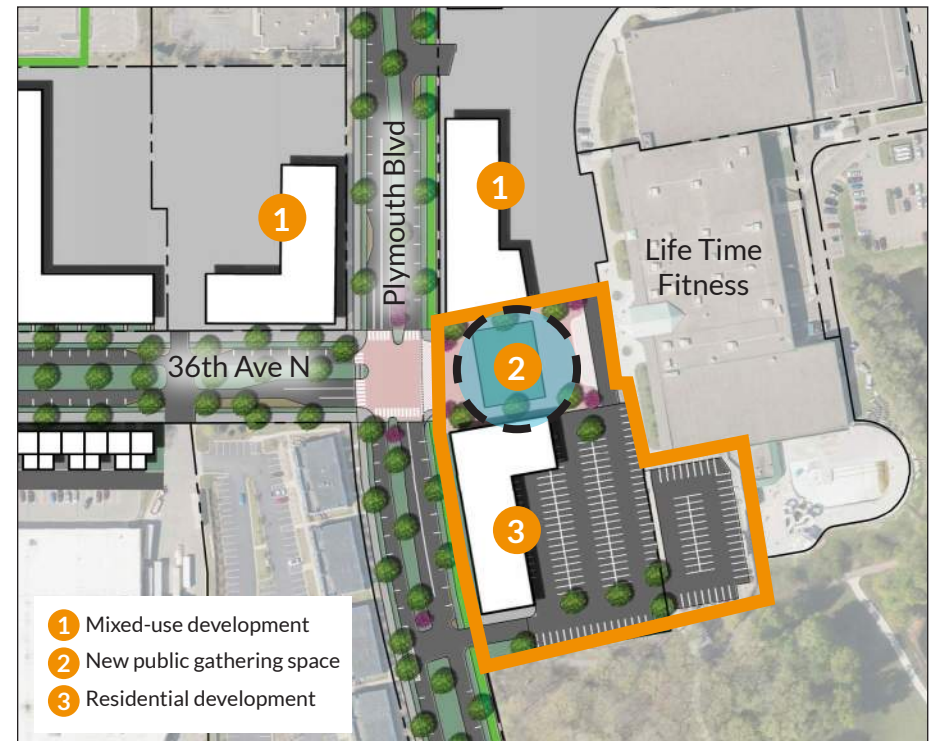


Figure 31. Conceptual development scenario

# Area A: Downtown

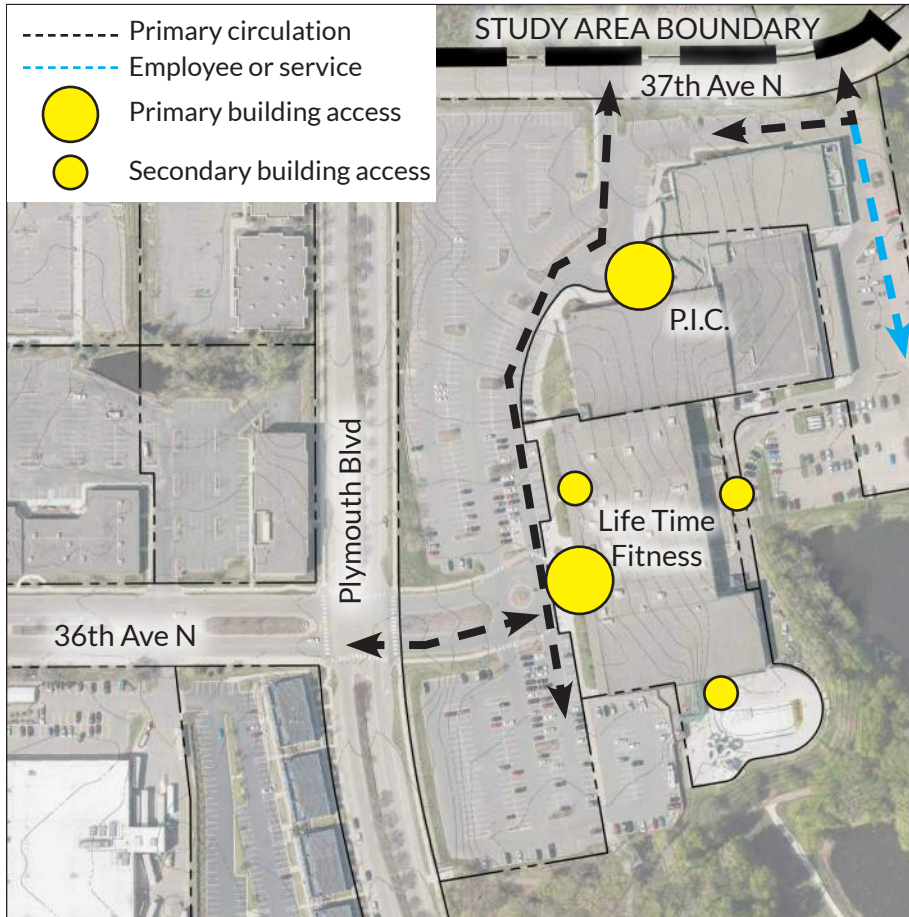


Figure 32. Existing site circulation

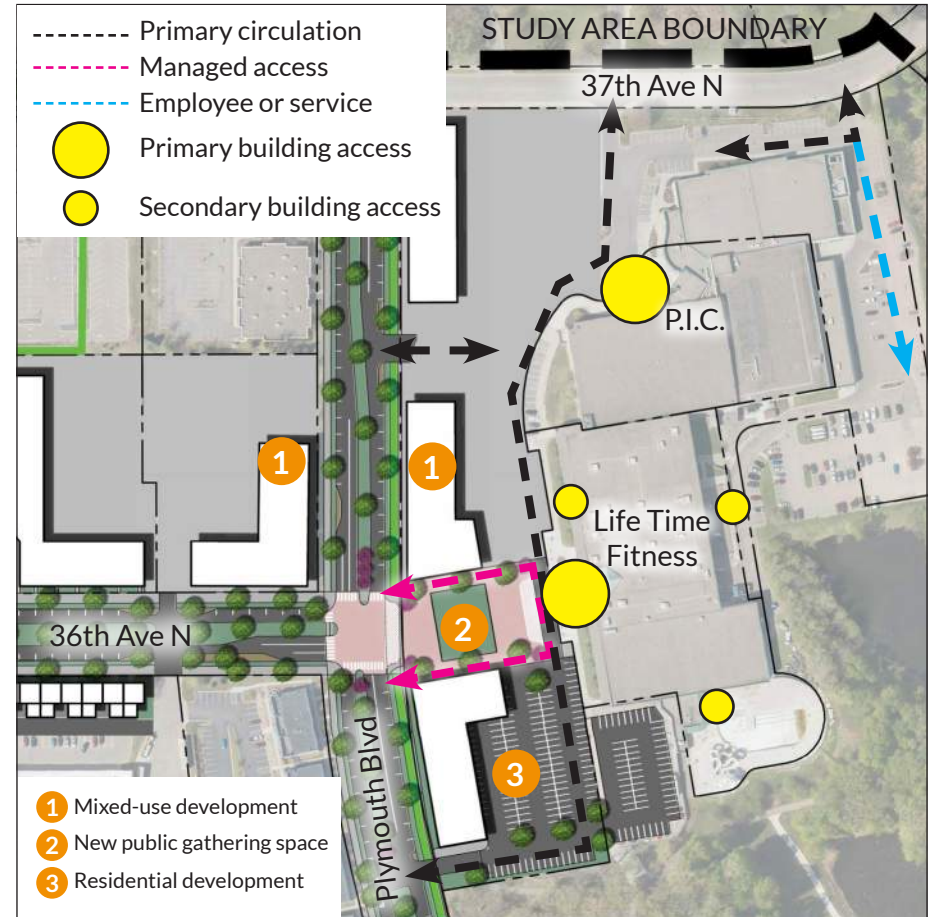


Figure 33. Proposed site circulation provides flexibility

To accommodate new infill-development opportunities, Figure 33 highlights two new entries suggested off of Plymouth Boulevard north and south of 36th Avenue. Access opposite 36th Avenue would be maintained, however this would be redesigned to feature a large Public Square and pedestrian circulation serving new building entries as well as the Lifetime Complex. Vehicular access would be resolved through a traffic management strategy continuing to accommodate normal daily

and mid-week ingress and egress patterns at this entrance. For special events and seasonal programming, portions or directional flows would be temporarily modified to accommodate special traffic needs and minimize pedestrian conflict. Existing circulation routes from the north and two new access points from Plymouth Boulevard maintain service access to the east. This continued access to all entrances provides maximum flexibility in response to year-round programmed use of the site.



## Design inspiration for Lot 5 and surrounding area

Examples of housing types that could work on Lot 5 and future complimentary retail and commercial development



Figure 34. 4-story residential structures similar in scale to those preferred during the community engagement

The City Center Central Plaza is envisioned as a public space, facilitated through a partnership with development in the area. In the area of the City Center Central Plaza, the surrounding development should accomplish two things:

- » Define the space through the building walls by creating a sense of enclosure that is beneficial for plaza spaces to feel human scale.
- » Activate the space by providing foot traffic in the area.

It is meant to complement the existing Hilde Performance Center and provide an alternate space that could be programmed to support the City Center restaurants, retail and entertainment venues.



Figure 35. Example of ground level retail spilling out onto a public space

## City Center Central Plaza



Figure 36. Flexible design allows for wide variety of event programming

# Area B: Restaurant Cluster

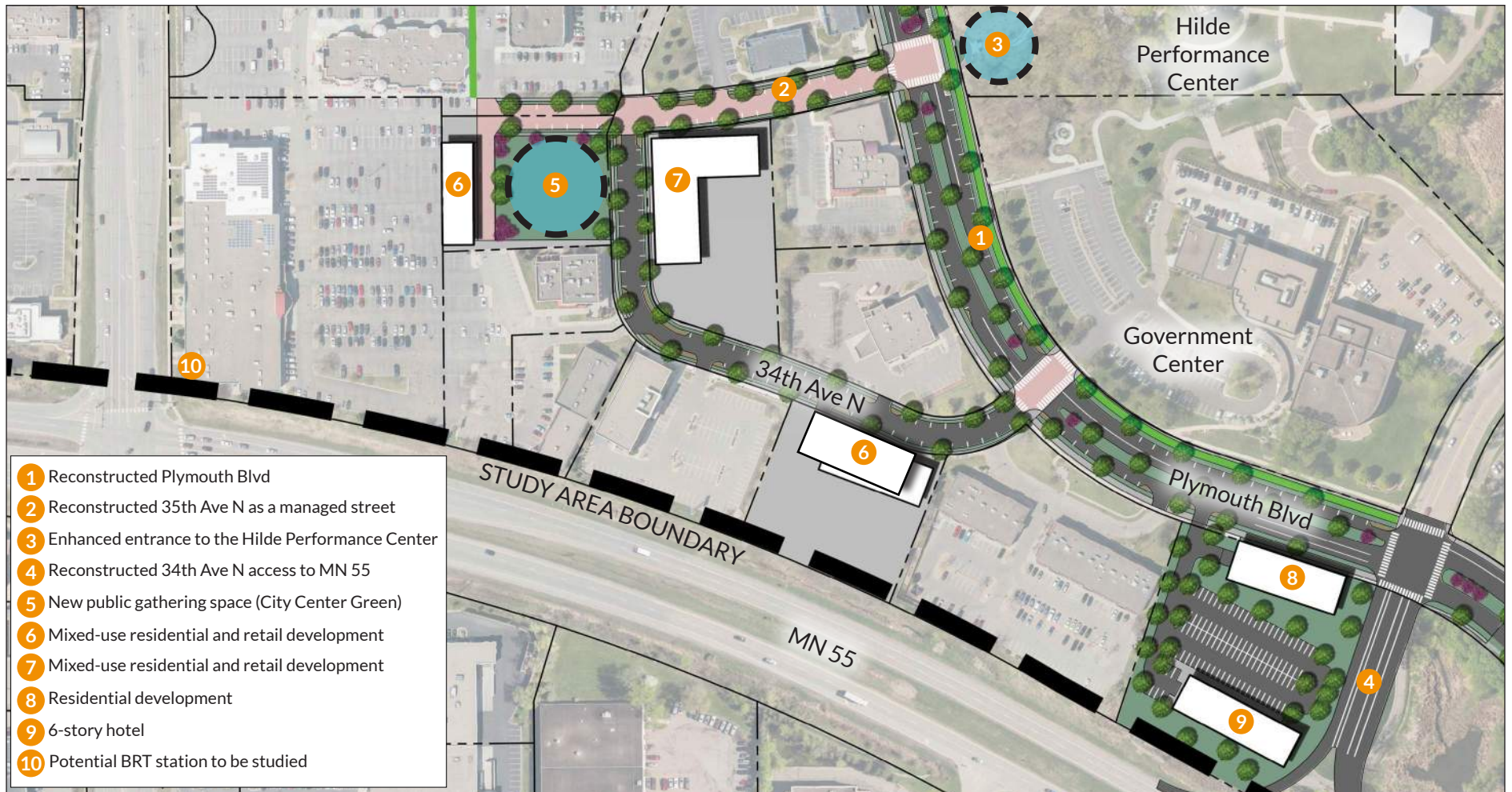


Figure 37. Conceptual site design scenario for Area B

## Lot 13 Development Scenario

### Site Overview

- » 2.6 acre site (approximate size with newly proposed 34th Avenue / MN 55 access)
- » US Bank existing use
- » High visibility from highway and susceptible to change due to proposed roadway project
- » 73 existing parking stalls

### Development Overview

- » 6-story, 120 room hotel (along MN 55)
- » 4-story, 43 unit residential building (along Plymouth Blvd)
- » Residential densities typically in the 20-40 dwelling unit per acre range for this type of development
- » 120 surface lot parking with 86 below-grade parking for residential
- » Added development value estimated at \$33.68 MM



Figure 38. New development will have high visibility from MN 55 and should include prominent architectural features

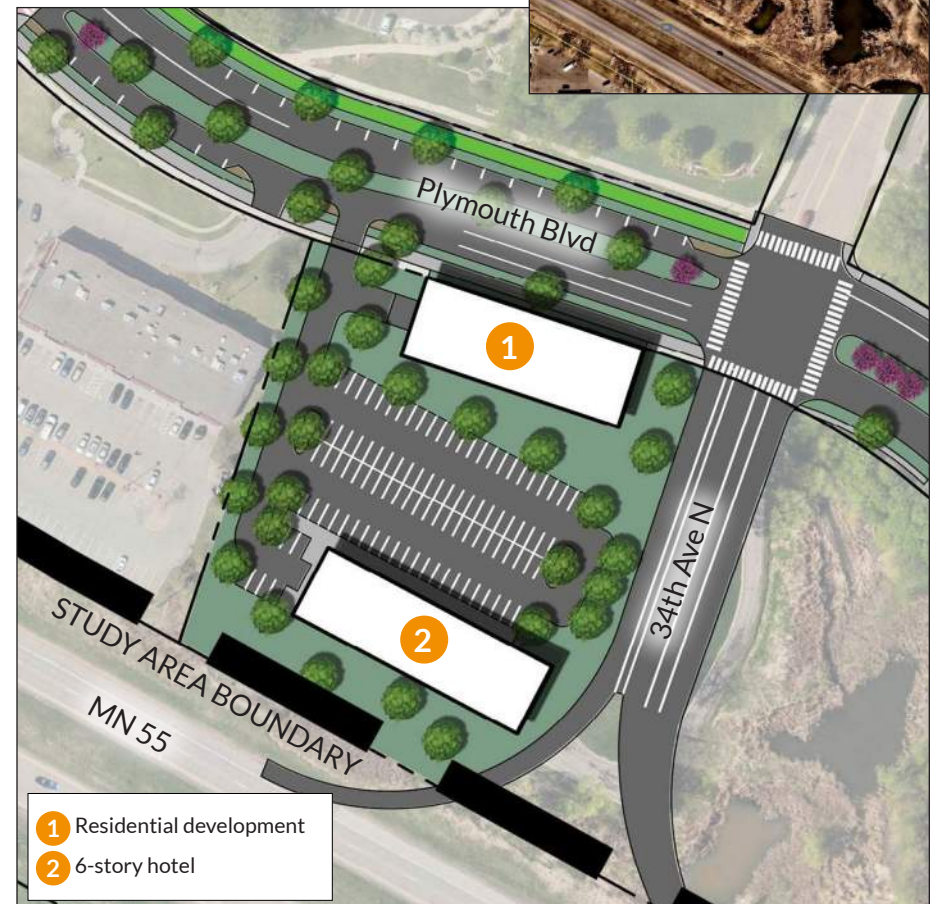


Figure 39. (top) Existing aerial of Lot 13; (bottom) Conceptual development scenario

# Area B: Restaurant Cluster

City Center Green and surrounding development sites (Lot 10 & 11)

## Site Overview

- » 1.3 acre site (Lot 10); 1.5 acres site (Lot 11)
- » Existing restaurants in adjacent parcels
- » 76 existing parking stalls between the two properties

## Development Overview

- » Redevelopment scenario looks to create a new green space that acts as an outdoor gathering destination and spillover seating for existing and new restaurants. Short-term redevelopment could occur within existing parking lots surrounding the green. Long-term redevelopment at Lot 10 to the east of 34th Avenue N.
- » 82 surface lot, shared-on street parking surrounding green space, 80 below-grade parking for residential
- » Added development value estimated at \$18.74 MM



Figure 41. (left) Buildings should be designed to connect interior and exterior spaces; (middle) Pop-up restaurants or food trucks within the park are encouraged; (right) Green vs. paved space is desirable.

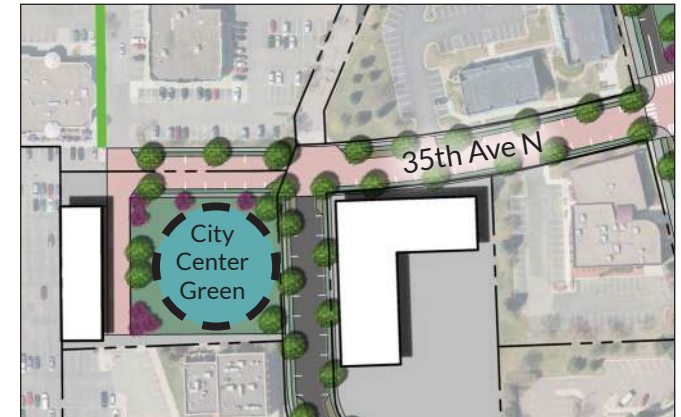


Figure 40. (top) Existing aerial of Lot 10/11; (bottom) Conceptual development scenario with mixed use residential and commercial development and integrated public space.



Figure 42. Options for integrating additional seating into the public realm and quasi-public spaces that can be incorporated into private developments.

# Area C: The Corridor

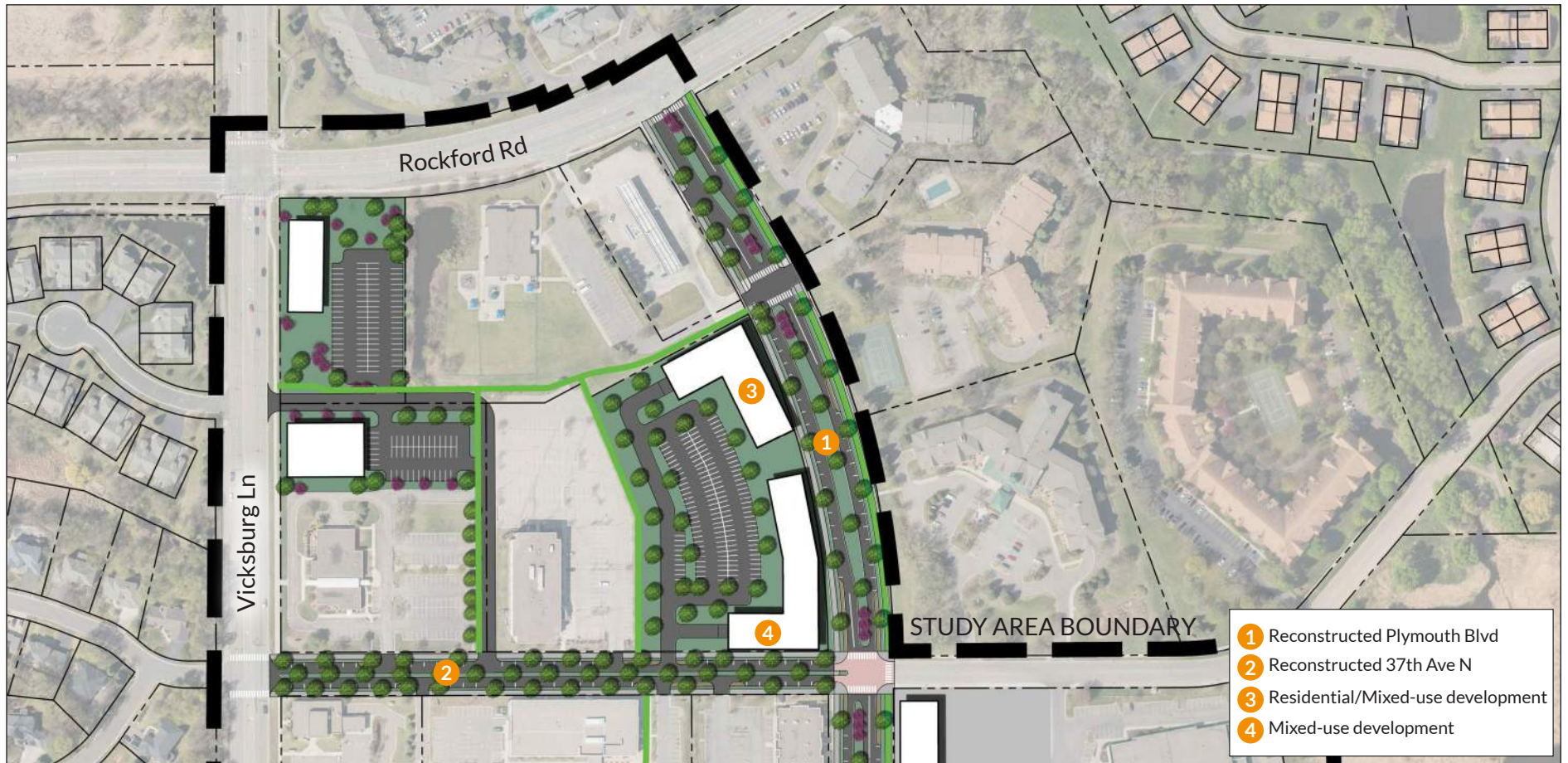


Figure 43. Conceptual site design scenario for Area C

## Lot 3 Development Scenario

### Site Overview

- » 4.3 acre site
- » Letterman Site
- » Opportunity site due to its proximity to the P.I.C. and Life Time Fitness
- » 138 existing parking stalls

### Development Overview

- » 4-story mixed-use buildings
- » Typical density would be between 20-40 dwelling unit per acre for this type of development
- » Up to 50,000 SF of commercial space with residential units above
- » 144 surface lot parking with up to 250 below-grade parking for residential units
- » Added development value estimated at \$45.15 MM



Figure 45. Mixed-use housing examples

# 7. Action Plan Framework

Recommended Actions	
1	Assure the study recommendations are not in conflict with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
2	Amend current zoning & subdivision ordinances
3	Utilize multi-modal street design that accommodates all modes of transportation, improves pedestrian safety, and promotes traffic calming in key areas
	3.1: Plymouth Boulevard
	3.2: 35th Avenue North
	3.3: 36th Avenue North
	3.4: 37th Avenue North
4	Create memorable gathering spaces
	4.1: City Center Central Plaza
	4.2: City Center Green & 35th Avenue North Shared Street
5	Pursue redevelopment for opportunity sites
	5.1: Area A: Downtown
	5.2: Area B: Restaurant Cluster
	5.3: Area C: The Corridor
6	Focus on public-private partnerships

## Overview

The actions included in this section are both process-based and land-focused actions. The actions involve changing the regulatory policies, the physical environment, the relationship and communication network, and the incentive structures that exists today in the City of Plymouth.

The final pages of this section includes an Action Plan Summary Table that identifies Roles/Responsibilities, and Timing.

## Action 1

### Assure the study recommendations are not in conflict with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan

In order to give the City Center 2.0 a clear role in future development decisions, it should be reviewed to assure that no recommendations are in conflict with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and amended as necessary. Requests for changes in current zoning (including conditional uses, planned developments, text/map changes) as well as subdivisions must be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Consistency does not imply precise conformity to the maps and development scenarios shown in this report. Rather, the Planning Commission and City Council would determine whether the proposed changes were materially and substantively consistent with the principles and intent of this study. In some cases this might include specific dimensional and geometric features while in other cases “consistency” may be related more to the types of uses, the character of the public places, the location of infrastructure and, most importantly the overall community costs and benefits in relationship to surrounding parcels and districts.



# Action 2

## Amend current zoning & subdivision ordinances

The development scenarios and market direction included in this study identified a number of proposed uses and site/building design alternatives that may be in conflict with existing regulations. The City should identify conflicts within existing regulatory documents and draft amendments for Council action.

1. Re-examine City Center’s design guidelines. An update should re-emphasize quality housing materials and product, as noted in the current guidelines, and emphasize City Center’s overall character, relating future structures to the public realm as outlined in Chapter 4, such as bringing building edges closer to the right-of-way and encouraging building entrances to be oriented to the street. The update could include the addition of the area west of Vicksburg Lane (see the Boundary Analysis section of Chapter 1).
2. Ensure the City Center design guidelines have standards to promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity from the public right-of-way to the building entrances.
3. Allow for flexibility in minimum parking requirements and maximize shared parking options within City Center. Create procedures to allow for the Planning Commission to override parking requirement when the applicant provides evidence that the parking demand can be satisfied with a reduced parking supply.
4. The City’s regulatory framework should respond to the ways business operations could change over time. New uses include:
  - Outdoor dining, assuming available sidewalk width, parklet options, or reduced parking space numbers in adjacent lots;
  - Roof-top dining, if possible, on City Center’s required flat roofs;
  - Walk-up and/or drive-thru windows. Recognizing the current design guidelines prohibit drive-thrus, walk-up windows are an emerging option for restaurant carryout. The Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) has recently developed a walk-up and drive-thru format<sup>1</sup> for restaurants in downtowns or traditional commercial districts, as shown at right. A drive-up in these denser districts is only permitted with walk-up windows.

- Parking for curbside pick-up and delivery services as part of existing parking—either in their parking lot, or in a public space that is designated by permit as a temporary pick up zone;
  - Multiple users, or restaurants within restaurants;
  - Shared and ghost kitchens (delivery-only restaurant concept) to streamline operations, particularly for delivery and curbside service.
5. Evaluate the uses and development standards for the City Center zoning districts (CC-R & E, CC-OT & R, and CC-P) to allow for the mix of uses envisioned. A strategy would be to use development standards rather than strict density numbers to allow for the types of mixed use buildings as seen in the master plan. Using height, setbacks and meeting on-site parking requirements will set the



Figure 46. Design Guideline trends for walk-ups and drive-thrus appropriate for downtowns and traditional commercial developments that allow for drive-thru windows but still promote walkability (Congress for New Urbanism)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2020/09/03/drive-thrus-walk-ups-and-covid>

zoning envelope in which developers will be able to build. Work with build-to rather than setbacks from the ROW to encourage infill projects, and create a sense of enclosure which defines the public realm. The key to advancing the envisioned plan is to allow the intended uses and building sizes in each of the districts. This will give the development world assurances that pursuing a development in this area would be received by the community, with a seamless approval process.

**Uses:**

- » Allow multi-family residential in the three City Center zoning districts: CC-R & E, CC-OT & R, and CC-P.

**Setbacks / Build-to Lines:**

- » Suggested setbacks would be to use a maximum setback for new development, for example up to 15 feet, which will create building edges along the right-of-way and help cultivate a downtown feel.

**Heights:**

- » For residential development, 2-story minimum, with 1-story a conditional use. Maximum heights to be 5 stories.
- » For commercial uses, 2-story minimum for office uses (restaurant and retail are allowed to be 1 story).

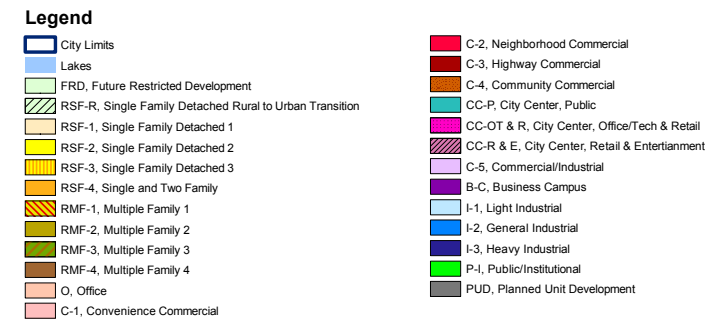
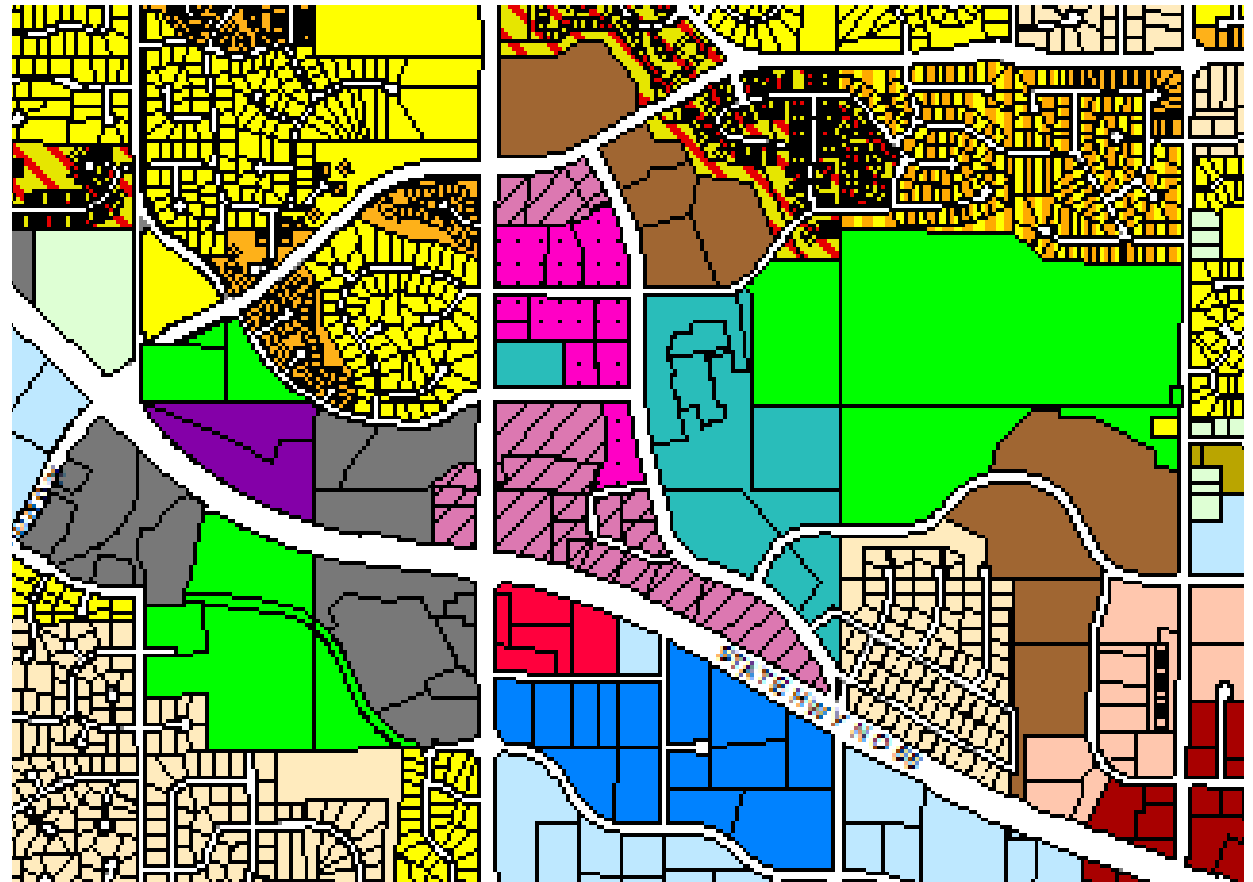


Figure 47. Existing Zoning Map

# Action 3

**Utilize a multi-modal design approach that accommodates all modes of transportation, improves pedestrian safety, and promotes traffic calming in key areas**

The design of a multi-modal street considers the interaction of several different roadway users, elements of street design, and surrounding land uses. To ensure that each of these elements are considered during current and future street reconstruction projects within City Center, this study identifies six street “components” that make up the public right-of-way. The table to the right lists the components along with their applicability to City Center.

### Legend

- Required
- High Priority – include if geometry permits
- Priority
- Desirable (if feasible)

<sup>1</sup> Information kiosks, trellis, artwork, gateway elements  
<sup>2</sup> 8’ width maximum  
<sup>3</sup> Biofiltration  
<sup>4</sup> 8’ minimum for adequate plant growth  
<sup>5</sup> Recommended at key intersections

Multi-Modal Street Design Matrix				
		Street Component	Design Treatment	City Center
PEDESTRIAN ZONE	1.0 Sidewalk Zone	1.1 Pedestrian Zone Width		10’ minimum
		1.2 Walking Zone Width		5’ minimum
	2.0 Buildings & Furnishings	2.1 Facade Zone (building setback)		0’-15’ preferred
		2.2 Furnishing Zone Width		3’ minimum
		2.3 Bicycle Parking		■
		2.4 Lighting		●
		2.5 Benches		■
		2.6 Sidewalk Cafés		○
		2.7 Street Trees		■
		2.8 Planters (including stormwater)		■
2.9 Street Furniture		■		
2.10 Architectural Features <sup>1</sup>		○		
ROADWAY ZONE	3.0 Bicycle	3.1 Multi-Purpose Trails		■
		3.3 Bike Route Signs		●
	4.0 Curbside Management	4.1 On-Street Parking <sup>2</sup>		■
		4.2 Loading Zones		■
		4.3 Transit Stops		■
		4.4 Alternative Uses of Parking Lanes		○
		4.5 Stormwater Management <sup>3</sup>		■
	5.0 Cartway/Vehicle	5.1 Lane Width		12’ maximum
		5.2 Medians <sup>4</sup>		○
	6.0 Intersection Design	6.1 Marked Crosswalks		●
6.2 Curb Bump Outs			■	
6.3 Decorative Intersections <sup>5</sup>			■	

Figure 48. Multi-Modal Street Design Matrix

### Action 3 Recommendations:

1. Design multi-modal streets that accommodate all modes of transportation: cars, buses, service shuttles, bicycles, and foot travel.
2. Use Hennepin County roadway design best practice as starting point for redesign of roadway lane widths. Travel lanes no wider than 12 feet wide (11 feet preferred), transformation of dedicated left turn lanes to shared through/turn lanes, on-street parallel parking no wider than 8 feet.
3. Enhance bicycle facilities within City Center, connecting existing bicycle network outside of project area to City Center destinations, by adding new off-street multi-use paths.
  - Provide separated bicycle facilities along key roadways within City Center including Plymouth Boulevard and 36th Avenue North.
  - Provide bicycle accommodations for secondary roadways within City Center including 34th Avenue North, 35th Avenue North, and 37th Avenue North.
  - Incorporate bicycle safety design elements within all roadway redesigns, where practical (such as bike boxes and route signage).
4. Ensure the “Pedestrian Zone” throughout City Center includes a minimum of 5 foot wide terrace space that buffers pedestrian walking from the roadway curb. Terrace space should aim to include trees, lighting, seating, and other streetscape amenities.
5. Provide streetscape amenities along the entire corridor—trees, planters, benches, bike racks, litter receptacles, information kiosks, banners, signage—that improve the overall aesthetics and function of the “Pedestrian Zone.”
6. Enhance intersection design using different paving materials, clear crosswalk markings, curb bump-outs, landscaping, and streetscape amenities (seating, bollards, litter receptacles, etc.).
7. Develop a study for City Center light pole and banner branding and guidelines.

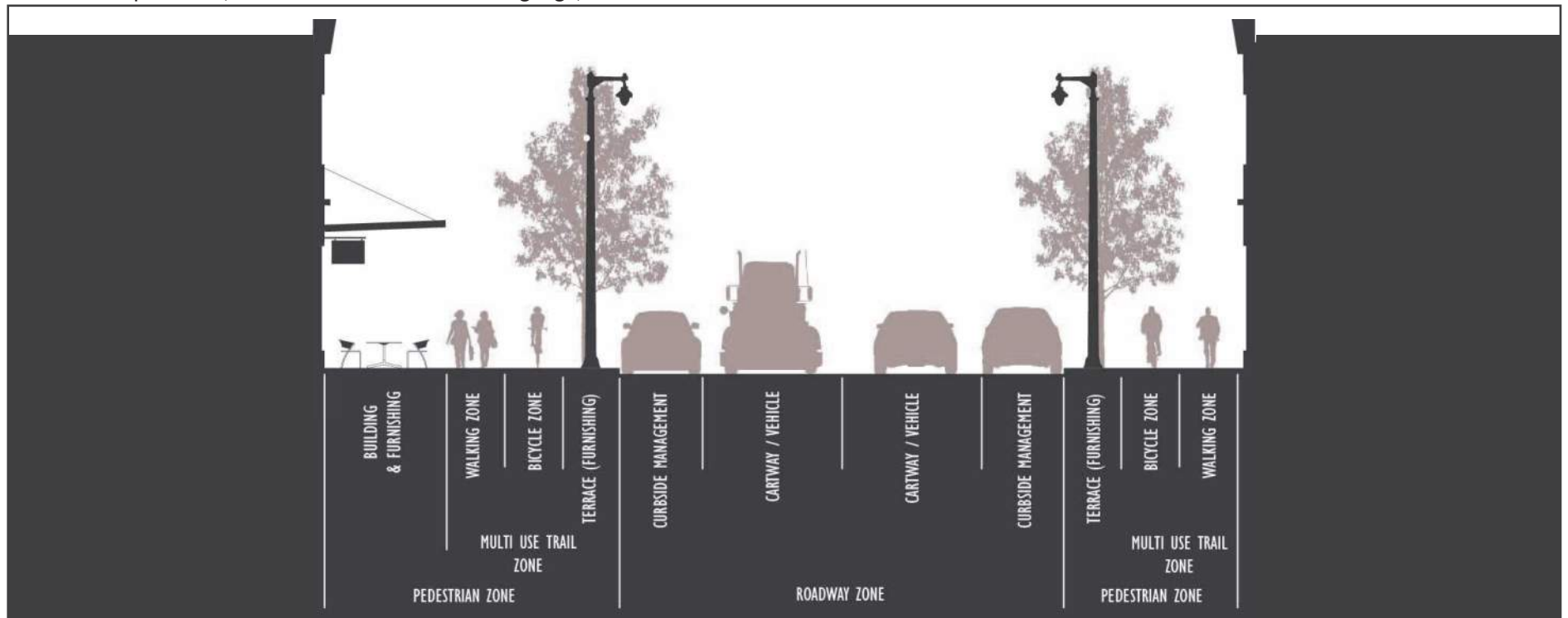
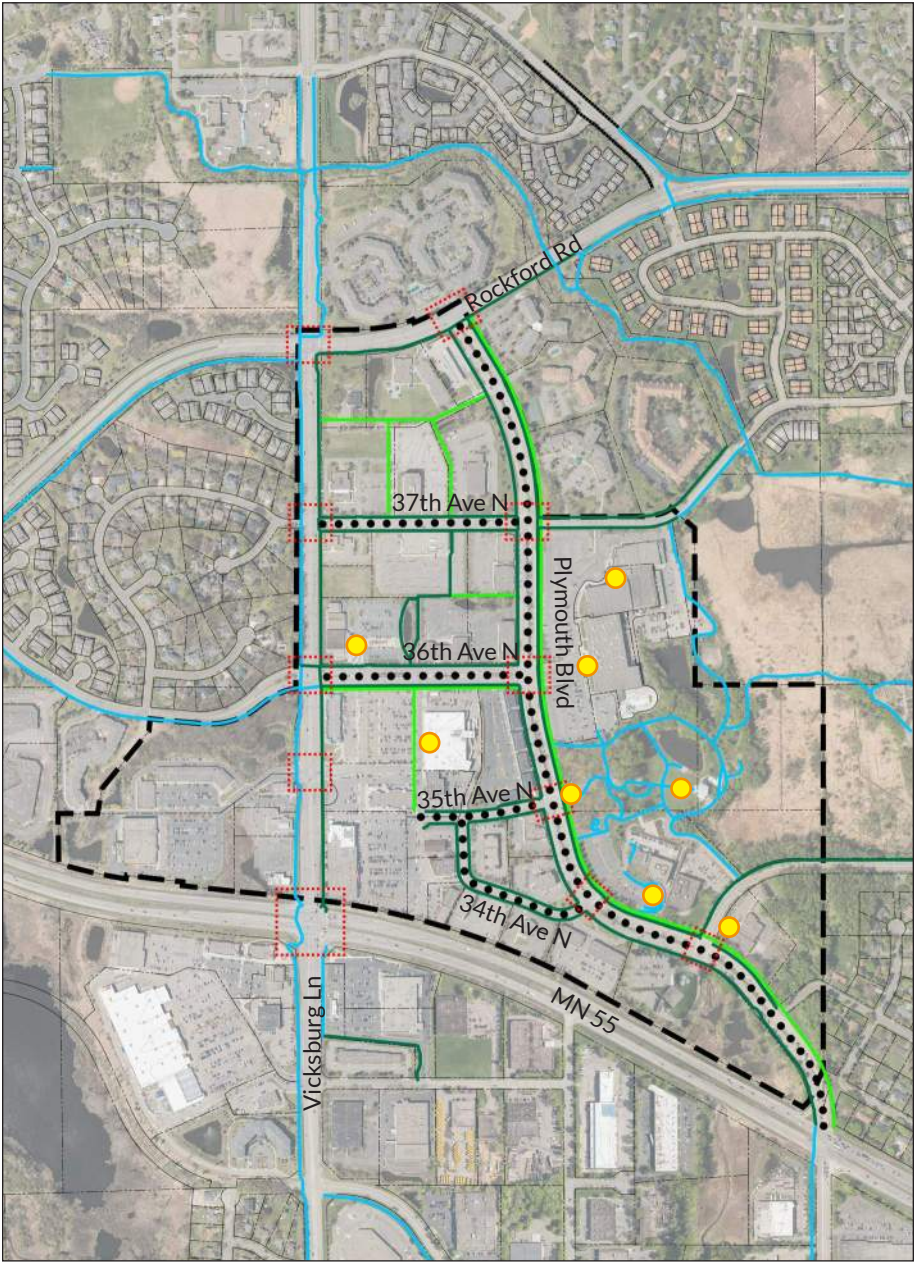


Figure 49. Street design components to include in right-of-way design that accommodates multiple modes of transportation such as vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.

# Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Amenities & Proposed Right-of-Way Improvements



The diagram at left illustrates the summary of public right-of-way conditions and proposed improvements to achieve connectivity to City Center, and within City Center.

A more detailed look at each of the primary roads—Plymouth Boulevard, 37th Avenue North, 36th Avenue North, and 35th Avenue North—and proposed improvements may be found on the following pages.

- — Planning Boundary
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Trail
- Major Destination Entrance
- New multi-use trail
- - - New crossing improvements
- • • New streetscape and/or bumpouts

Figure 50. Existing bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and proposed right-of-way improvements.

## Plymouth Boulevard

### Existing

- » 120-foot wide ROW
- » No sense of arrival along any portion of the roadway
- » Includes excessive space for automobiles (18.5-foot wide travel lanes, 9.5-foot wide parking lanes)
- » Sidewalks are wide, but place pedestrians adjacent to automobiles
- » No bicycle facilities provided

### Proposed

- » Reduced lane widths according to best practice (traffic calming)
- » Addition of multi-use path along east side of street. Future coordination needed with new MN 55 & 34th Avenue N intersection
- » Planted terrace space to buffer pedestrians from automobiles
- » Curb bump outs and decorative intersection design (traffic calming)
- » At 35th Avenue N, improve visibility from Plymouth Boulevard to Hilde Performance Center.

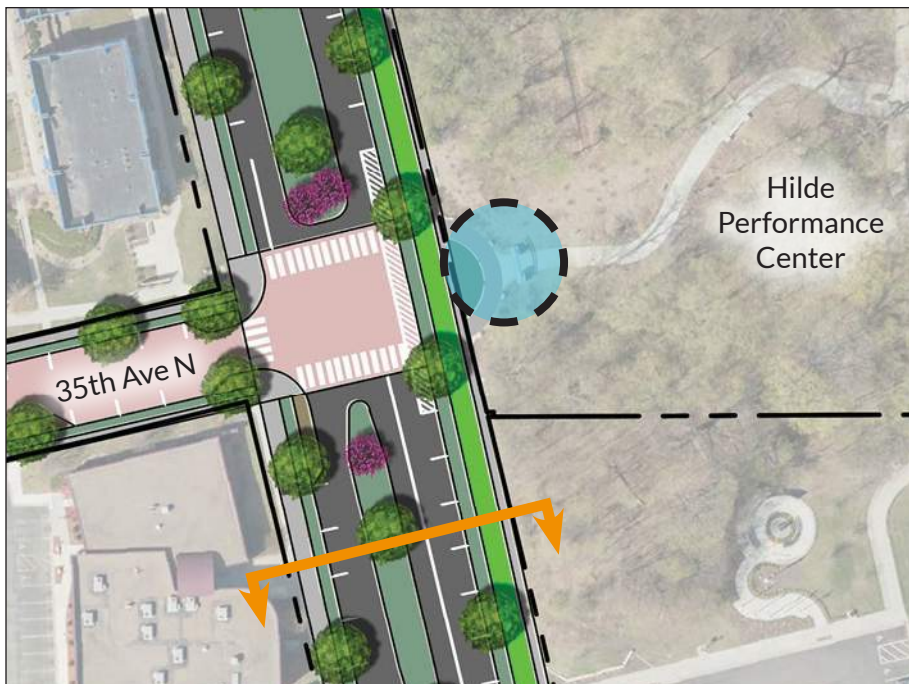


Figure 54. Conceptual design of Plymouth Boulevard. Orange line with arrowheads indicate the approximate location of street cross section, figure right.



Figure 51. Existing Plymouth Boulevard street view



Figure 52. (top) Existing Plymouth Blvd street cross section; (bottom) Proposed cross section



Figure 53. Example of off-street multi-use paths adjacent to roadways

## 36th Avenue North

### Existing

- » 120-foot wide ROW
- » Existing development is disconnected from the street
- » Includes excessive space for automobiles (two 14-foot wide travel lanes) and no on-street parking options
- » Sidewalks are wide, but lack attractive terrace design
- » No bicycle facilities provided

### Proposed

- » Reduced lane widths according to best practice (traffic calming)
- » Addition of separated (buffered) multi-use trails
- » Addition of on-street parking (traffic calming)
- » Planted or decorative paving terrace design
- » Curb bump outs and decorative intersection design (traffic calming)
- » New redevelopment should include building frontage within 0-15 feet of ROW and include public entries in an effort to increase walkability and an active pedestrian zone between the library and Plymouth Blvd.



Figure 57. Example of off-street multi-use paths adjacent to roadways



Figure 55. Existing 36th Avenue North street view

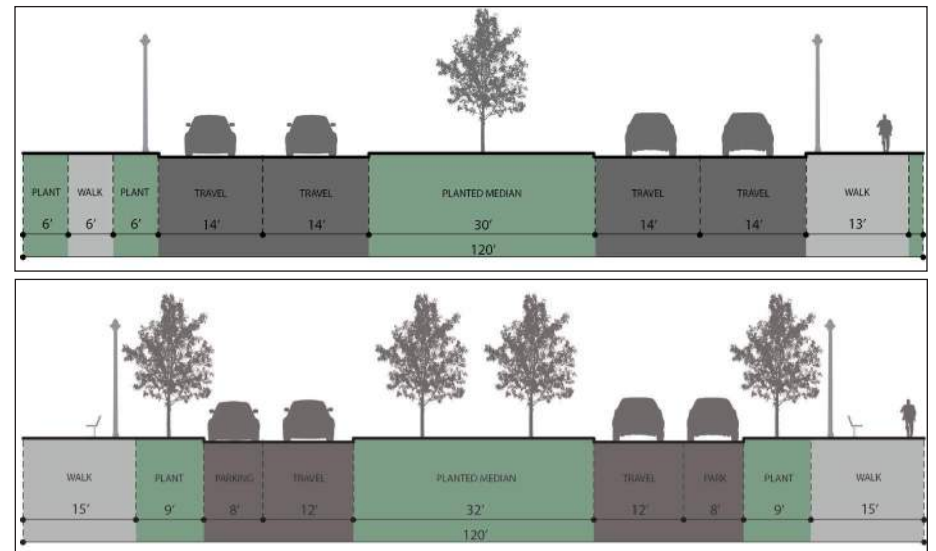


Figure 56. (top) Existing 36th Avenue North street cross section; (bottom) Proposed cross section

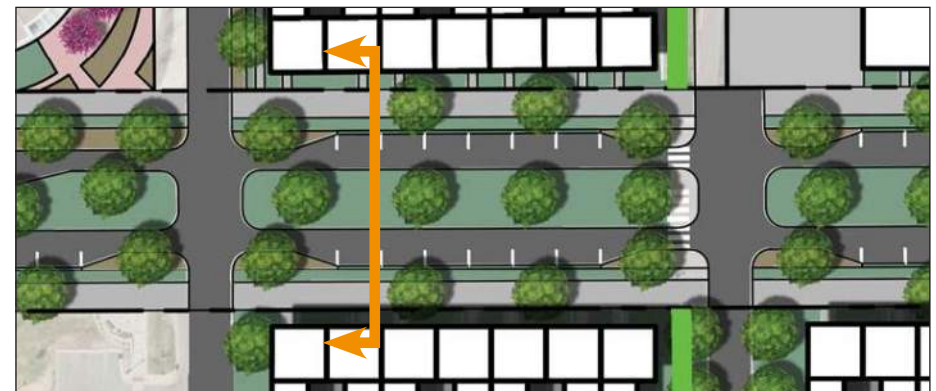


Figure 58. Conceptual design of 36th Avenue North. Orange line with arrowheads indicate the approximate location of street cross section, figure above.

# 37th Avenue North

## Existing

- » 80-foot wide ROW
- » Includes excessive space for automobiles (17-foot wide travel lanes)
- » No bicycle facilities provided

## Proposed

- » Reduced lane widths according to best practice (traffic calming)
- » Incorporate planted median
- » Widened sidewalk or multi-use trail



Figure 59. Existing 37th Avenue North street view

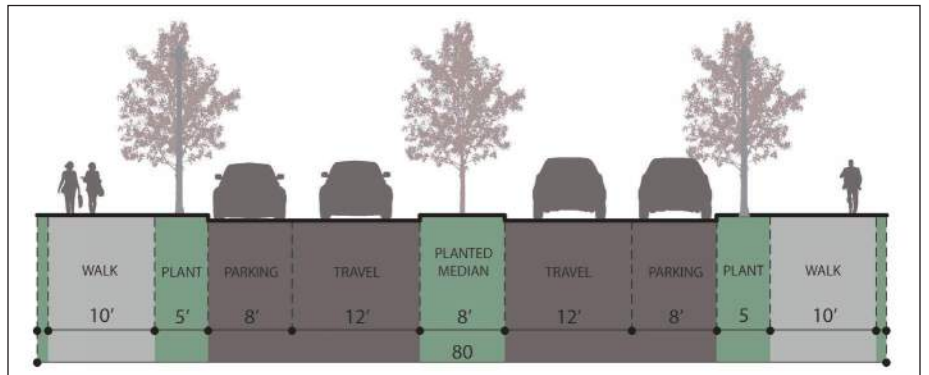
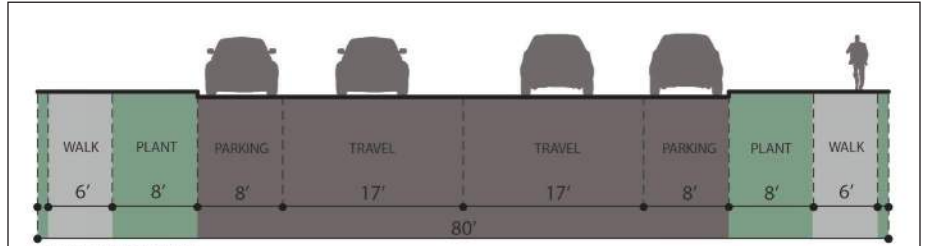


Figure 60. (top) Existing 37th Avenue North street cross section; (bottom) Proposed cross section



Figure 62. Conceptual design of 37th Avenue North. Orange line with arrowheads indicate the approximate location of street cross section, figure above.



Figure 61. Example of proposed planting area and multi-use trail



## 35th Avenue North

### Existing

- » 60-foot wide ROW
- » Existing development is disconnected from the street
- » Includes excessive space for automobiles (15-foot wide travel lanes)
- » Sidewalks are wide, but place pedestrians adjacent to automobiles
- » No bicycle facilities provided

### Proposed

- » Improved visual connection between the Hilde Performance Center and existing restaurants west of 35th Avenue N as well as future redevelopment around City Center Green public space
- » Easily managed street entrances that allow the street to be closed or open depending upon public use patterns
- » Narrow lanes with limited parking and curb bump-out
- » Use of visually appealing paving materials that harmonize, but still differentiate, drive lanes, parking, and walking, and bicycling
- » Trees, seating, bollards and other items which create strong signals to drivers that this is an area only for slow traffic.



Figure 63. Existing 35th Avenue North street view

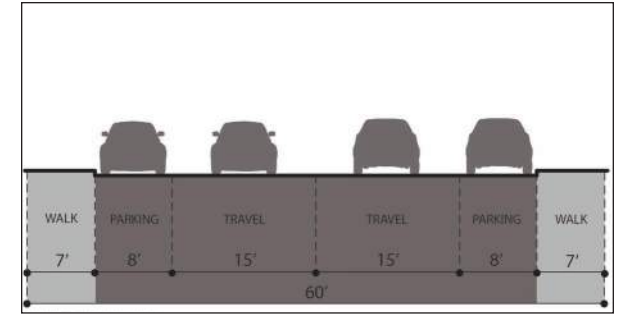


Figure 64. Existing 35th Avenue North street cross section



Figure 65. Representation of proposed street articulation and use of paving materials to differentiate zones

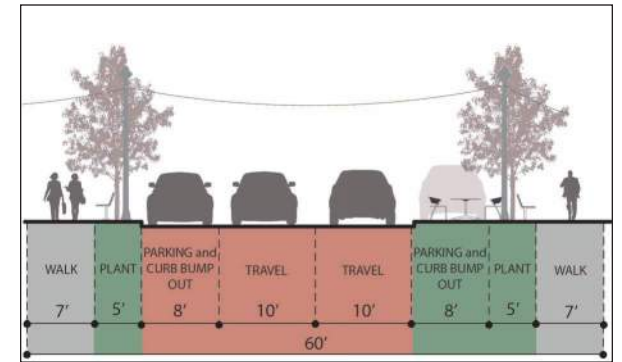


Figure 66. Proposed 35th Avenue North street cross section



Figure 67. Conceptual design of 35th Avenue N as a managed street connecting the Hilde Performance Center (labeled "1") to existing restaurants and future redevelopment around City Center Green public space (labeled "2"). Orange line with arrowheads indicate the approximate location of street cross section, figure above.

# Action 4

## Create memorable gathering spaces

### Overview

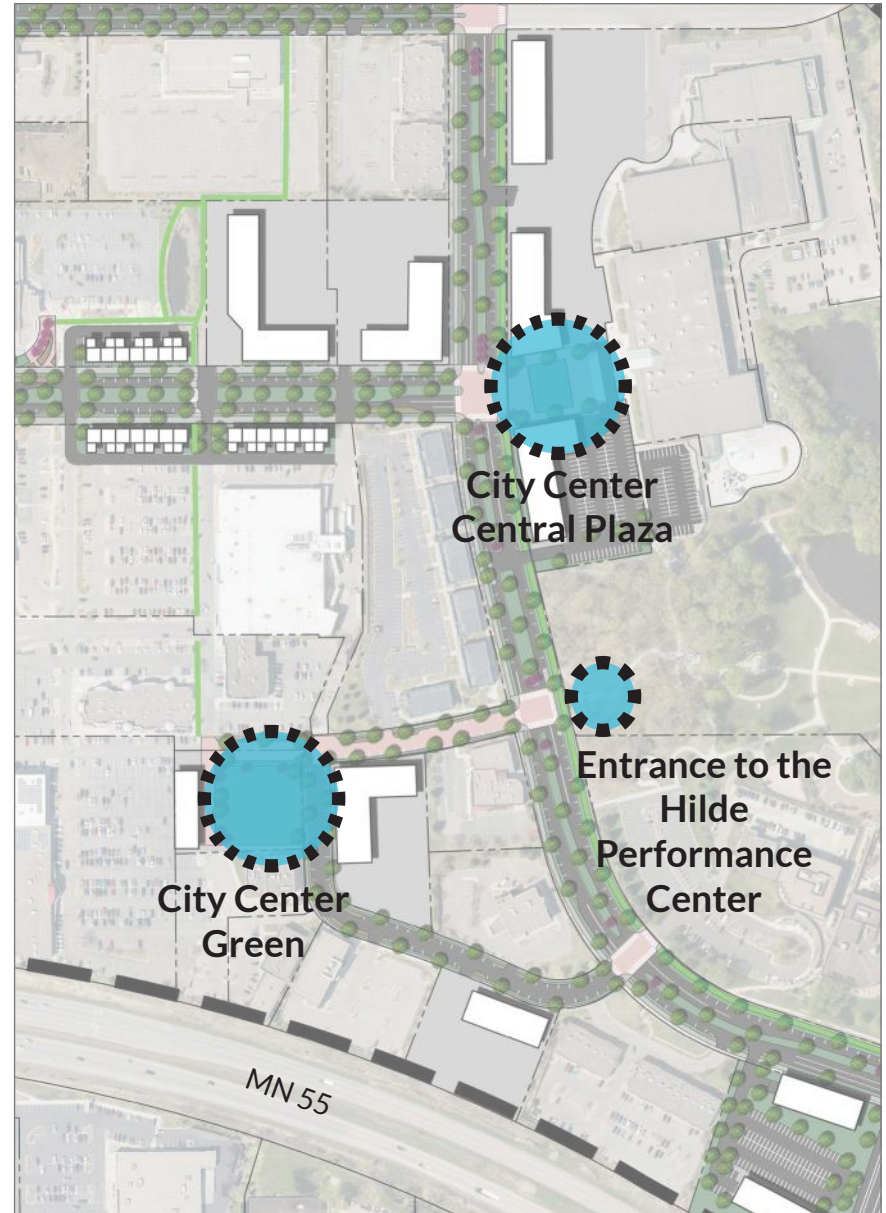
Compact community development is rooted in centuries old traditions of urban design, updated to accommodate modern issues and technologies. Such developments typically feature pedestrian friendly streets, a mix of land uses, connected street networks, and high-quality public spaces. The name of the development—City Center—emphasizes the importance of a destination or sense of arrival. This should be advanced through the creation of large and small gathering spaces.

Traditionally, town squares or large gathering spaces must meet two sets of criteria to be successful: they must work for major public events and they must work for everyday activity. Typically, this is accomplished through the design of the space as a highly flexible public place that requires constant management, both for programmed activities and everyday use. The illustrations included in this study show just one type of simple, traditional pattern often used as a starting point for the evolution of public spaces. Further design development should be pursued for City Center Central Plaza and City Center Green.

Further design development, policies and management strategies should be pursued for the following areas defining the public realm:

- » **City Center Central Plaza**
- » **City Center Green**
- » **Secondary court yards / small gathering spaces**
- » **Forecourts / building entrance zones**
- » **Streetscapes**
- » **Enhanced entrance to the Hilde Performance Center**

The diagram at right illustrates two examples of how such spaces could be integrated into City Center. One approach would be for the City to work in concert with developers to incorporate such spaces into design plan when redevelopment occurs, in a public-private partnership.



## Upgrade and Redefine Publicly Controlled Lands

The public sector needs to lead by example. An overall design theme needs to be developed that is supported by quality materials and amenities demonstrating a commitment to existing property owners, future investors, and create a sense of pride for the community residents at large. The City needs to set the standard and commitment to good design and implementation. This is where first impressions count.

The community's brand and uniqueness expressed in the urban design of the City Center needs to be resilient to changing trends and become the foundation to place making. The design framework created needs to accommodate change but carries the day when it comes to creating a strong brand, a strong theme and design continuity within the commercial core.

To clearly define a community's commercial / social heart most places we admire or look to as successful, mire the physical signs or lines defining property lines, easements and setbacks. The less obvious these lines are between public and private ownership the more cohesive the public becomes and the creation of a singular experience of Place.

- » City Center Central Plaza: In concert with a private development, define the programming needs—both uses and types of facilities—that are envisioned for the space. Examples might be ice skating, space for outdoor movies, food trucks or vendors, and outdoor wellness and exercise activities. This programming can be used in the design of the public space. A plaza of this scale would typically be about 1-2 acres. A size such as this can be designed to accommodate 1,000-2,000 people comfortably. Popular for smaller gatherings of 500, movie night, seasonal events, music, specialty open air fairs. The final design and detail are important so the space is civic is quality and scale, and can be programmed in large and small spatial modules.
- » City Center Green: Work in collaboration with the existing food and beverage industry present in City Center and user groups, and envision the type of space that would enhance their market and operations. Use this exercise to help drive the next steps in designing and implementing this type of space.

## Programming

One of the least expensive and low risk investments is the programming of the public domain. This can build on current activities and existing seasonal traditions. This can continue to be supported by community groups and be led by a stronger and financially self-supported business district. These activities can continue to support the center and are critical in creating momentum that eventually elevates the brand, participants and support creating economic benefits. These activities develop a status where the public expects them as part of the local structure and sometimes become the draw to host events by special interests or become the reason why people invest or even locate in the center.

## Incentivizing Development of Public/Private Spaces

As stated earlier the city needs to lead by example. Equally important at the beginning of any town center transformation is to develop strategies which will incentivize participation of programs and investment in the physical improvements by both private businesses as well as the City. These incentives can take many forms and can be more fully evaluated by the City going forward.

## Management Strategy

This area can be addressed from both the private and public side. This aspect of creating successful public places needs to be a priority for both the public and private interests. Maintenance and operations are as important as budgeting capital improvement costs. The hallmark of loved and highly successful places is the commitment to maintain the investment of the public realm. This becomes an excellent area to interface and partner. A well-maintained space attracts the broadest group of consumers, attracts investments, defines the community's reputation, and creates confidence in the tax payer.

## Public Private Partnerships

Public / Private Partnerships make things happen. The public sector has access to and can leverage a variety of public funding sources that private owners cannot access. On the other hand, the private sector can act much more expeditiously than the public sector. A commercial district can establish a self-assessed tax district that can dedicate its efforts and resources to complementing city resources. Quite often there are great economies in working with the public works and parks staff in consolidation of required efforts. Collectively the shared financial contributions and efforts broaden community engagements and ultimately community ownership in the broadest sense.

# Action 5

## Pursue redevelopment for opportunity sites

1. Emphasize residential redevelopment at City Center's priority sites. Throughout the study process, housing has been identified as City Center's primary opportunity. Developer and market interest exists. Quality housing infill, also self-parked, will diversify City Center uses and enliven the area.
2. Consider City Center's overall mix of uses versus mixed use. New housing is one component of considering the overall mix of uses. Most of identified priority sites and their site concepts lack the density and traffic needed for traditional mixed-use development to succeed. Too often what is identified as 'retail' or 'commercial' space at street level is neither a good location nor affordable for the types of independent businesses (in all categories) envisioned by Plymouth residents in the study's outreach. The mix data, described in the Interim Market Study (See the appendix), notes City Center's functions successfully as an area for small office users and employers, in addition to destination retail and restaurants. Employees, based in City Center and nearby, will remain important customers for City Center's businesses, and their spending power also contributes to City Center business success.
3. Related to the mix of uses, accommodate emerging business operating needs and uses. Strengthening the overall mix with supplemental uses, such as more restaurants, and emerging uses, such as the outdoor food hall and temporary retail or varied pop-ups, will create that unique experience desired by Plymouth residents. Being prepared to address the operating needs of such businesses will be important to incremental improvements (and excitement) in the overall mix.



## OPPORTUNITY AREA DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

	EXISTING				PROPOSED	
	Site	Address	Parcel ID	Current Land Use	Proposed Use	Design Framework
AREA C	1	18590 37th Ave N	16-118-22-32-0021	Utility	Residential	Building placement shall be along Vicksburg Lane with parking behind.
	2	15800 37th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0006	Vacant Land	Commercial	Building placement shall be along Vicksburg Lane with parking behind.
	3	15600 37th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0011	Offices	Mixed-Use Retail/ Residential	Building placement shall be along Plymouth Blvd with parking behind. Building design should embrace the corner of 37th Avenue N and Plymouth.
AREA A	4	3650 Plymouth Blvd	16-118-22-34-0015	Ice Center	Mixed-Use Office/ Retail/Residential	Building placement to include frontage along Plymouth Boulevard. Buildings adjacent to City Center Central Plaza shall include active ground level uses (restaurants, retail).
	5	3600 Plymouth Blvd	16-118-22-34-0017	Fitness	Mixed-Use Commercial/ Residential	Building placement to include frontage along Plymouth Boulevard and along the new proposed public space. Development should incorporate a destination public place.
	6	15600 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0012	Offices	Mixed-Use Retail/ Residential	Building placement to include frontage along 36th Avenue N, with parking behind. Building design should embrace the corner of 36th Avenue N and Plymouth.
	7	15650 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0013	Offices/Bank	Mixed-Use Retail/ Residential	Building placement to include frontage along 36th Avenue N, with parking behind. Embrace existing N-S Trail connectivity on the west side of the property.
	8	15700 36th Ave N	16-118-22-33-0004	Library	Residential Townhomes (retain library)	Building placement shall be along 36th Avenue N with parking behind.
	9	3350 Vicksburg Lane	21-118-22-22-0015	Grocery Store	Mixed-Use Commercial/ Residential Townhomes	Building placement to include frontage along 36th Avenue N, with parking behind.
AREA B	10	15705 35th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0004	Liquor / Retail	Commercial	New development should incorporate a public space or public-private space that supports the area restaurants, including space for outdoor dining. The public space should connect to the Hilde via a managed street and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
	11	15600 34th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0012	Auto Service	Mixed-Use Commercial/ Residential	Building placement to include frontage along the street edges, with parking behind.
	12	15525 34th Ave N	21-118-22-22-0019	Bank	Mixed-Use Commercial/ Residential	Building placement and entrance to address 34th Avenue N.
	13	3305 Plymouth Blvd	21-118-22-24-0005	Bank	Hotel / Residential	Building placement and entrance to address Plymouth Boulevard.

# Action 6

## Focus on public-private partnerships

Share “value-added” development scenarios with property owners

» Identify the local threshold for fiscal involvement in City Center redevelopment. This Study’s development scenario for residential on City-owned property presents an opportunity for that policy conversation and its impact on future planned developments. Again, the goal is facilitating good development for the City and catalytic impact for City Center.

### Opportunity Sites New Development Potential

- » Area A = \$105.6 MM
- » Area B = \$62.7 MM
- » Area C = \$57.8 MM
- » **Total = \$225.1 M**



## Develop possible cost models for proposed improvements

» Ultimate implementation of private sector projects requires a positive “return on investment” (ROI). Typically this analysis, in real estate and related businesses, is described as a “pro forma” that analyzes the costs and benefits from the specific viewpoint of the investor. While this form of analysis is not the responsibility of the City, it is, in fact, an issue that the City must recognize when considering the risks and rewards borne by the private sector. When local governments are not familiar with this mode of analysis, they may misinterpret the proposals and outcomes put forward by developers. Ongoing concern for investment scenarios can provide a basis for demonstrating a “business friendly” attitude and a willingness to engage in subsidies, trade-offs and other aspects of “making deals” that will garner more positive consideration from the property development community.

## Support entrepreneurial growth

» Foster City Center as the location for area entrepreneurs. As noted, collaborating with existing property owners to improve their buildings is an important opportunity. Vintage properties in most commercial areas serve as the home for new, growing and often unique businesses. Supporting entrepreneurial growth over the short-term can include the following efforts:

- Consider new incentives to assist City Center property owners in improving their buildings. Multiple models for small scale incentives, such as matches for tenant build-outs or exterior improvements, exist in Minnesota and elsewhere that reinforce the local vision for the targeted commercial district;
- Focus on restaurants initially. The first step is identifying those existing City Center buildings suitable for build-out as food and beverage locations, including such uses as breweries or distilleries;
- Develop relationships with regional small business resources, such as area Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and small business lenders, such as Twin Cities Metro.
- Expand current relationships with area commercial real estate brokers to identify and monitor tenant interest in City Center.
- Work with City Center’s small and destination businesses to facilitate any expansions within the study area.

# Action Plan Summary Table

## Role & Responsibility Key

L = Lead agency / department
S = Shared lead responsibilities
C = Coordination role, but not the lead

Recommended Actions		Description	Role & Responsibility						Timing	
			City					Partners		
			Community Development	Economic Development	Parks & Rec	Public Works	City Council	Hennepin County	Property Owners	Short-term, Long-term, Ongoing?
1	<b>Assure the study recommendations are not in conflict with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan</b>	Review the 2040 Comprehensive Plan to assure that no recommendations are in conflict with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and amended as necessary.	S				S			Short-term
2	<b>Amend current zoning &amp; subdivision ordinances</b>	Modify the CC-OT & R, CC-R & E, and CC-P zoning districts to allow multi-family residential uses and allow for flexibility for parking provided on and off site.	L							Short-term
3	<b>Utilize “complete street” design that accommodates all modes of transportation</b>	When considering reconstruction for City Center streets, refer to Study for incorporating or improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and bring vehicular and parking lanes within proposed design standards.	C		C	L				Short-term
	3.1 : Plymouth Boulevard	Reduce vehicular lane width, incorporate a multi-use trail, provide planted terrace between sidewalk and curb, and incorporate bump outs at intersections for traffic calming.	S		S	S				Short-term
	3.2 : 35th Avenue North	Reduce vehicular lane width, add landscape buffer between sidewalk and curb, and incorporate bump outs at intersections for traffic calming.	S		S	S				Long-term
	3.3 : 36th Avenue North	Reduce lane widths, add on-street parking, incorporate multi-use trail, add landscape buffer along terrace area.	S		S	S				Short-term
	3.4 : 37th Avenue North	Reduce lane widths and incorporate planted median.	C	L					S	Long-term
4	<b>Create memorable gathering spaces</b>	Solidify City Center as Plymouth’s “downtown” by implementing a few key high-quality public spaces that support the existing uses.	L					C	S	Short-term
	4.1 : City Center Central Plaza	Create a destination-level public plaza near the intersection of Plymouth Boulevard and 36th Avenue N.	S	S					S	Short-term



## Action Plan Summary Table, cont'd

Recommended Actions		Description		Role & Responsibility					Timing		
				City					Partners		Short-term, Long-term, Ongoing?
				Community Development	Economic Development	Parks & Rec	Public Works	City Council	Hennepin County	Property Owners	
4.2 : City Center Green & 35th Avenue N Shared Street	Develop a managed street approach to the street redesign, that connects the Hilde Performance Center to the proposed City Center Green area. Incorporate narrowed lanes and bumpouts for traffic calming on 35th Avenue N, add paving that differentiates between vehicular zone, and bicycle and pedestrian zone. Add planting, trees and other streetscape elements that serve as visual cues to drivers to slow traffic.	S			S			S	Long-term		
5 Pursue redevelopment for opportunity sites	Focus on opportunity sites and attracting residential developers in the near term, particularly for Sites 3, 5 and 13. Maintain the overall mix of commercial uses in City Center, as the employment and visitor base helps sustain the other retail and commercial uses. Accommodate incremental improvements and supplemental uses to support the changes needed for current businesses to be successful and keep City Center exciting.	S	S						Ongoing		
5.1 : Area A: Downtown	Focus on developing residential units in cooperation with development of a primary public outdoor space, focused on activities such as markets, movies, skating, or wellness activities.	S	L		S				Short-term		
5.2 : Area B: Restaurant Cluster	Create a new green space that acts as an outdoor gathering destination and spillover seating for existing and new restaurants. Short-term redevelopment could occur within existing parking lots surrounding the green. Long-term redevelopment at Lot 10 to the east of 34th Avenue N.	L	C		S			C	Short-term		
5.3 : Area C: The Corridor	Engage with property owner to explore development scenarios that increase the density of use in the area of the intersection of Plymouth Boulevard and 37th Avenue N.	S	L					C	Long-term		
6 Focus on public-private partnerships	Develop high level development proformas for the key opportunity sites to better understand the private sector costs and associated public incentives should a gap exist, and what may be needed or available to bridge the gap. Identify key ways to expand the restaurant offerings in City Center, such as expanded outdoor seating, a food hall concept, and buildings suitable for additional restaurant use. Explore developing local grant or loan programs that could assist entrepreneurial growth in the area's vintage properties that incentives owners to continue to invest in these properties. Focus business attraction and retention efforts on the City Center businesses to respond to expansion opportunities.		L					S	Short-term		

