

Comprehensive Plan

CITY OF ST. CLOUD > COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, SUBAREA PLANS & CATALYST SITES



Adopted March 2016

Acknowledgments

The St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan is the result of dedicated and ongoing collaboration among residents and stakeholders. The Plan was shaped by those who served on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee as well as members of the Economic Development Authority and Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation. It was furthered shaped by focus group participants that represented 27 stakeholder organizations and interest groups and more than 500 members of the community that provided input either online or at one of the many public workshops.

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Introduction

In October 2014, the City of St. Cloud kicked-off an 18-month process of updating its Comprehensive Plan to establish a long-term vision for St. Cloud. The planning process included fieldwork, data collection, market analysis, extensive public outreach, and consensus building. This document represents the culmination of those efforts and serves as the City's official vision for the future and primary policy guide for growth and development.

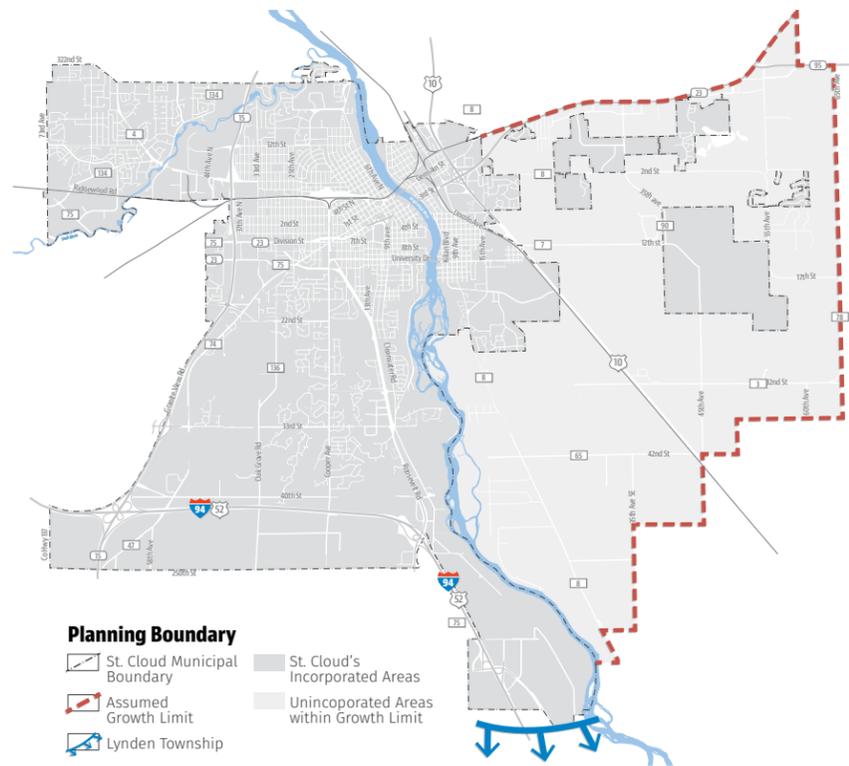
Purpose of the Plan

The St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan is a detailed policy document that guides land use, development, capital improvements, community investment, growth, and overall quality of life for 15 to 20 years. The Plan is comprehensive both in breadth and scope, with recommendations for areas that encompass land use, housing, parks and recreation, transportation, and community facilities, and more. The Plan provides the framework for regulatory tools like zoning, subdivision regulations, annexations, and other policies. A comprehensive plan promotes the community's vision, goals, objectives, and policies; establishes a process for orderly growth and development; addresses both current and long-term needs; and provides for a balance between the natural and built environment. It is designed to serve as a foundation for decision-making for the City, developers, residents, and other stakeholders.

Using the Plan

The St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan should be used for the following:

- **A basis for regulatory actions:** The plan serves as a foundation and guide for the provisions of the zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, the official map, flood hazard regulations, annexation decisions and other decisions made under these regulations.
- **A basis for community programs and decision-making:** The plan is a guide and resource for the recommendations contained in a capital budget and program, for a community development program, and for direction and content of other local initiatives, such as for water protection, recreation or open space land acquisition and housing.
- **A source for planning studies:** Few plans can address every issue in sufficient detail. Therefore, building upon the comprehensive plan, further studies and plans may be needed to develop courses of action on a specific need.
- **A standard for review at the local, County, and State level:** The comprehensive plan is the standard for review for development proposals and applications for state and federal funding and support. Comprehensive plans should be used to develop regional plans or inter-municipal programs, i.e., a regional trail networks, transit programs, and economic development initiatives.
- **A source of information and marketing:** The plan is a valuable source of information for local boards, commissions, organizations, citizens and business. The plan is also a powerful marketing tool that can be used to promote a community and highlight opportunities for investment.
- **A long-term guide:** The plan is a long-term guide by which to measure and evaluate public and private proposals that affect the physical, social and economic environment of the community.



Vision for St. Cloud in 2035

In 2035, the City of St. Cloud will have strengthened its positions as the economic, social, and cultural hub of Central Minnesota. Anchored by a unique and vibrant Downtown and a healthy collection of Core Neighborhoods, St. Cloud will be recognized for its unparalleled access to the Mississippi River, business-friendly climate, high quality housing, diversity, opportunities for health, and growing arts community. New neighborhoods will have developed to the south and east of the City's established core in a sustainable manner that has preserved sensitive natural areas and made efficient use of infrastructure and resources. New households will be served by revitalized and attractive commercial corridors that foster a positive image throughout the greater region as well as a growing inventory of office and industrial businesses that provide local employment opportunities. The high quality of life afforded by St. Cloud, in addition to the community's "can do" attitude, will continue to make St. Cloud one of the most desirable places to live in the country.

Planning Boundary

Minnesota statute gives municipalities the authority to prepare, adopt, amend, and implement comprehensive municipal planning actions (§462.353). A community-based comprehensive plan must address areas within its municipal boundaries as well as within urban growth areas as identified in a county plan (§462.3535). St. Cloud's urban growth area is defined in the 2000 St. Cloud Joint Planning District Plan.

While the City of St. Cloud may plan for all three unincorporated growth areas established by the St. Cloud Joint Planning Board, it is anticipated that the Ultimate Urban Growth Area will not be developed within the time frame of the Comprehensive Plan. The planning boundary shown in this figure represents the areas that may more realistically be developed within the next 15 to 20 years. Areas to the west of the Mississippi River and north of Highway 23 have also been excluded due to boundary agreements in place with neighboring communities. It is this planning boundary that is used to frame all community-wide maps in the Comprehensive Plan.

Additional industrial growth may be accommodated within nearby portions of Lynden Township, but no annexation agreements are in place.

Planning Process

The development of the St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan involved a multi-step planning process which is outlined below:

- Step #1: Project Initiation.** The first step of the planning process involved meeting with City staff and officials to review and discuss the overall direction of the Comprehensive Plan and any policy issues facing the City. It laid the initial foundation for further research and analysis.
- Step #2: Community Outreach.** Arguably one of the most important steps of the plan, the community outreach component involved gathering input from members of the St. Cloud community via in-person meetings, workshops, charrettes, and a variety of online tools.
- Step #3: Existing Conditions Analysis.** This step reviewed and analyzed the conditions of St. Cloud as they existed at the time of the planning process. Data was gathered from the City, community service providers, local agencies, organizations, and on-the-ground reconnaissance. This step also included a detailed demographics and market analysis. The results were presented in an Existing Conditions Report, published in February 2015.
- Step #4: Community Vision, Goals, and Objectives.** This step established an overall "vision" for the future of St. Cloud. It provided focus and direction for subsequent planning activities.
- Step #5: Subarea Plans.** This step entailed the preparation of detailed subarea plans for Downtown St. Cloud and the Division Street Corridor, as well as several catalyst sites, to provide more specific recommendations for these critical areas of the City.
- Step #6: Community-Wide Plans and Policies.** This step included the preparation of future plans and policies that address growth and annexation, land use, transportation, open space and environmental features, community facilities, urban design, and community sustainability. This step was the core of the Comprehensive Plan, reflecting the collective community vision for the City.
- Step #7: Draft Comprehensive Plan & Adoption.** Based on steps 1-6, a draft Comprehensive Plan was prepared for local review and consideration. After a period of public review and commenting, the draft was revised and presented to City's various departments for approval and then finalized for City Council adoption.



Organization of Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into 11 chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Introduction**, introducing the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, the City’s planning jurisdiction, and the organization of the document;
- **Chapter 2 – Community Profile**, detailing a variety of important background information, such as the City’s history, development controls, existing land uses, demographics, as well as a summary of all community outreach conducted;
- **Chapter 3 – A Vision for St. Cloud**, establishing the community vision that guides the Comprehensive Plan document and paints a picture of what St. Cloud should look like in 2035;
- **Chapter 4 – Land Use & Development Plan**, illustrating and describing in general terms the type and location of future land uses within St. Cloud. This section also addresses growth management and land use.
- **Chapter 5 – Housing & Neighborhoods Plan**, detailing policies and recommendations for the City’s neighborhoods, including land use, infill development, code enforcement, historic preservation, aging in place, and more.
- **Chapter 6 – Economic Development Plan** establishes an economic development strategy for St. Cloud, with recommendations regarding land use for commercial and industrial areas; attracting, retaining, and growing businesses; leveraging the City as a coordinator and connector; attracting new residents; supporting workforce development, education, and entrepreneurship; and listing incentives and tools available to undertake economic development actions.
- **Chapter 7 – Transportation & Mobility Plan**, providing recommendations for the City’s roads, trails, sidewalks, and more, and identifying opportunities to increase community connectivity;
- **Chapter 8 – Community Facilities & Services Plan**, identifying the future need for community facilities and offering long-range recommendations for future facility locations and improvements to ensure that residents are adequately served by service providers.
- **Chapter 9 – Parks, Open Space, & Environmental Features Plan**, providing recommendations intended to enhance the park and trail system, and protect and enhance St. Cloud’s natural areas and environmental features.
- **Chapter 10 – Subarea Plans**, establishing a vision and site-specific recommendations for the Downtown St. Cloud, the Division Street corridor, and several catalyst sites.
- **Chapter 11 – Implementation Plan**, presenting specific actions, as well as potential funding sources, that the City should pursue as it seeks to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Profile

Long-range visioning and planning for the future is founded upon an understanding of the community in the present. This chapter provides important background information about the community, including the regional position and history of St. Cloud, an overview of St. Cloud's existing land use and current development regulations, an overview of demographics, and a summary of community outreach. Collectively, this information paints a profile of the St. Cloud community and the influences that shaped the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

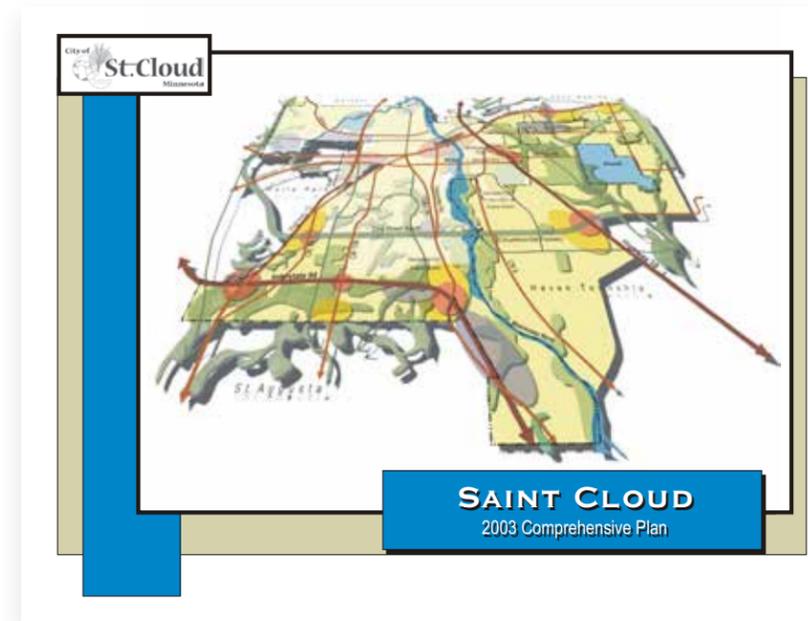


Regional Setting

The City of St. Cloud is situated along the banks of the Mississippi River and located approximately 60 miles northwest of Minneapolis. More than 41 square miles in size, the City straddles Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne Counties. St. Cloud is bordered by the City of Sartell and the City of Sauk Rapids to the north, the Cities of Rockville and St. Augusta to the south, and the City of St. Joseph and the City of Waite Park to the west.

St. Cloud is easily accessible by I-94, US 10, Highway 15, and Highway 23. Amtrak has a station on the City's east side that provides cross-national rail service via the Empire Builder line. The City also connects to the Twin Cities via a bus link that carries commuters from St. Cloud to Big Lake and the Northstar commuter rail line. The St. Cloud Regional Airport provides businesses and residents from throughout the greater St. Cloud region with air access.





Community History

Named after the city of Saint-Cloud, France, the City of St. Cloud, Minnesota was first inhabited by members of the Ojibwa tribe. Early explorers who worked in the fur trade then settled the area, followed by an influx of European immigrants. As more immigrants moved to the area, they formed three distinct settlements: Upper Town, Middle Town, and Lower Town. Upper Town included the areas north of current-day Downtown and was originally called Acadia. Middle Town included much of present-day Downtown, and Lower Town now makes up what is known as the South Side University Neighborhood. The three settlements consolidated via authority from territorial legislature and the City was officially incorporated as St. Cloud in 1856.

St. Cloud's 18 historic sites and 4 historic districts are a testament to the City's rich history. The many granite quarries that began production in the late 1800s gave St. Cloud the nickname of "The Granite City." The infamous Pan Motor Company was established in the City in 1917 to take advantage of the City's access to two major rail lines, power dams, and proximity to iron ore mines. While the company failed following the indictment of its founder for mail fraud, just two years after the first Pan Car rolled off the assembly line, the historic Pantown neighborhood still stands as an example of an early company town.

Since the early 1900's, St. Cloud has grown in prominence as a regional retail and employment hub with nearly 67,000 residents. Crossroads Center and the Division Street corridor draw from a trade area of 400,000. Meanwhile, Downtown St. Cloud appears to be witnessing a renaissance of sorts with more than 6,000 employees, an expanding River's Edge Convention Center, and numerous projects underway. St. Cloud also retains several companies from its industrial roots including Electrolux, but has become home to a growing number of office and medical users such as Capital One and CentraCare.

Past Plans & Studies

A thorough review of all of the community's past plans and studies was conducted as a part of the existing conditions process. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of these prior planning efforts and builds upon them where applicable as a part of the community's new vision.

- Phase I Southside Neighborhood Historic District Study (1999)
- Phase II Southside Neighborhood Historic District Study (2000)
- Lake George Master Plan (2000)
- Natural Areas Inventory and Planning Framework (1995) & Addendum (2001)
- Barden Park Historic District Study (2003)
- St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan (2003)
- Riverside Regional Park Plan (2003)
- St. John Cantius Neighborhood Historic District Study (2004)
- Downtown Preservation Design Manual (2004)
- Strategic Action Plan for Downtown St. Cloud (2004)
- Plum Creek Regional Park Master Plan (2005)
- Phase I Joint Cities Neighborhood Best Practices Manual (2005)
- Residential Historic District Preservation Design Manual (2005)
- 2030 St. Cloud Bikeway and Pedestrian Plan (2005)
- Phase II Joint Cities Neighborhood Best Practices Manual (2006)
- Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force Action Plan (2006)
- Core Neighborhood Progress Report (2007)
- Heritage Preservation Community Education and Marketing Plan (2007)
- St. Cloud Source Water Protection Plan (Part I: 2005, Part II: 2007)
- Neenah Creek Regional Park Master Plan (2007)
- A Cultural Plan for the City of St. Cloud (2007)
- Stearns County Road 74 Plan (2007)
- Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force Report (2008)
- City of St. Cloud Fire Protection Master Plan Update (2008)
- South Side University Neighborhood Master Plan (2009)
- South Side University Neighborhood Master Plan (2009)
- Upper Mississippi River Source Water Protection Project (2009)
- Metro Bus Moving Forward Plan (2010)
- Stearns County Bikeway Plan (2010)
- Resolution No. 2011-11-164. Resolution Establishing a Complete Streets Policy for St. Cloud, Minnesota (2011)
- Stormwater Management Plan (2011)
- Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan (2011)
- Stormwater Management Plan (2011)
- Mississippi River Regional Park Plan (2011)
- ArtWORKS Initiative (2011)
- Central Minnesota Freight Plan (2012)
- Economic Impact of the St. Cloud Regional Airport (2012)
- St. Cloud Regional Airport Master Plan (2012)
- Police Department Annual Report (2012)
- Mississippi Watershed Monitoring Report (2012)
- St. Cloud Housing Redevelopment Authority Annual Report (2013)
- 2013 Community Housing Study (2013)
- Placemaking Design Manual (2013)
- St. Cloud Community Housing Study (2014)
- Economic Development Strategic Plan (2012-2014)
- St. Cloud Area Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan (2014)
- St. Cloud Area Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan (2014)
- Police Department Operational Analysis (2014)
- St. Cloud Area School District 2014-2019 Strategic Plan (2014)
- Lake Wobegon Trail Report (2014)
- GREATER City Brand Guidelines (2014)
- 2014 Regional Visitors Guide (2014)
- 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan
- St. Cloud State University Campus Master Plan (in progress)

Demographic Overview

An analysis of St. Cloud’s demographic conditions was conducted to guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information for developing market-viable policy recommendations.

This section presents and assesses current trends, notes important market implications, and to the extent possible, makes projections for future growth and development opportunities. When possible and where necessary, data for the City of St. Cloud is compared with data for the St. Cloud Region (comprising Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne Counties). Collectively, this information provides a snapshot of St. Cloud’s current and projected competitive position within the Central Minnesota region.

In all cases, the figures presented in this chapter are the most recent and reliable available at the time the Plan was drafted. The majority of data cited in this study relate to the following sources:

- Figures from **2000 and 2010** reflect data provided by the U.S. Census.
- **2009-2013 American Community Survey** data reflects a five year estimated average based on surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau during that time period.
- Data for the years **2014 and 2019** are estimates and projections developed by ESRI, a national leader in demographic data services.

Additional demographic and market information can be found in **Chapter 6: Economic Development**.

Population

St. Cloud’s population is increasing. The city’s current population is estimated at 66,658 people. Between 2010 and 2019, the city is projected to gain roughly 2,000 additional residents, a 3.2% increase. The City of St. Cloud makes up, and is projected to remain, approximately 59% of the St. Cloud urbanized area’s total population.

Age

St. Cloud’s population is very young. The city’s current median age is estimated at 29.7 years, which is roughly 5 years younger than the regional median and roughly 8 years younger than the national median. At present, almost 70% of the city’s population falls under the age of 44 and the age cohort with the largest share of the population is 20-24 years. This is not necessarily surprising given St. Cloud’s status as a “college town.” The local age profile is very similar to those seen in other college towns such as Ann Arbor, Michigan or Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

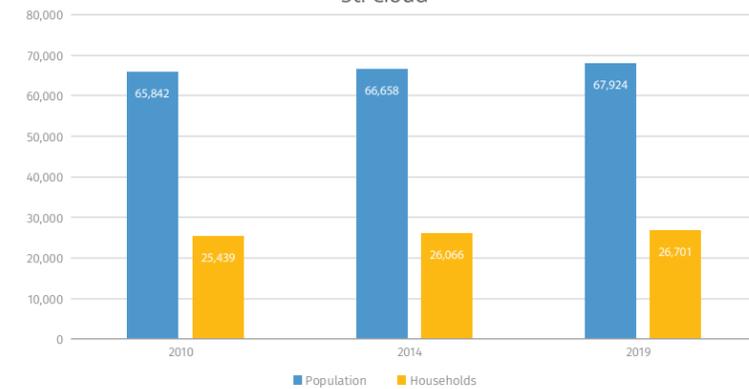
Over the next 5 years, the City’s median age is projected to age slightly to 30.7 years. Comparing St. Cloud’s population distribution by age in 2010 with 2019 displays the slight aging of the community over this time period. Age cohorts gaining in share of the population are mostly on the older end of the spectrum (55-64 years, 65-74 years, 75-84 years, and 85+). Age cohorts losing in share of the population are mostly younger and middle-aged cohorts.

Income

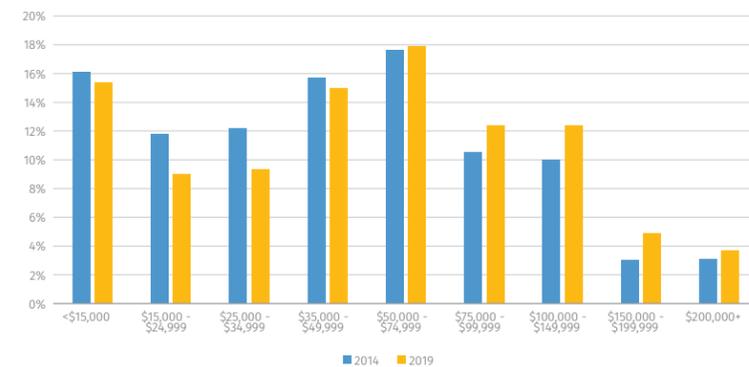
Incomes are rising. St. Cloud’s current (2014) median household income is estimated at \$43,238. By 2019, it is projected to rise by nearly \$8,000 to \$51,222. However, the city is currently, and is projected to remain, less wealthy than the region. For example, in 2014, the city’s median household income was roughly \$15,000 less than the region’s. This is likely due to the presence of thousands of local college students, who generally report little income and can skew income calculations.

Comparing St. Cloud’s estimated population distribution by income in 2014 with 2019 reflects the projected rise in incomes. Between 2014 and 2019, the percentage of St. Cloud households earning greater than \$100,000 is expected to rise from 16.1% to 21.0%. Similarly, the percentage of households earning less than \$25,000 is expected to decline from 27.9% to 24.4%.

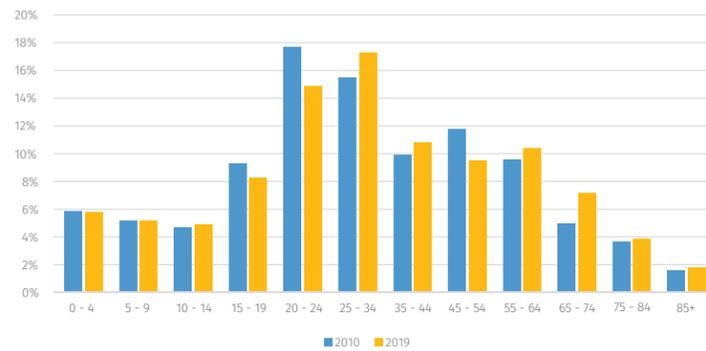
Population & Households (2010, 2014, 2019)
St. Cloud



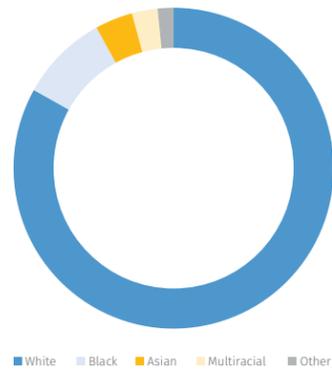
Household Income Distribution (2014, 2019)
St. Cloud



Age Distribution (2010, 2019)
St. Cloud



Racial Composition (2014)
St. Cloud



Immigration Profile (2000, 2009-2013 Avg.)
St. Cloud

	2000	2013*	Projected Change (2000-2013)*
Foreign Born Residents	2,269	4,597	+2,328
As % of Population	3.8%	7.0%	+3.1%
Foreign Born Residents - Birthplace			
Europe	310	294	-16
Asia	1,453	1,628	+175
Africa	113	1,734	+1,621
Oceania	15	13	-2
Latin America	267	453	+186
Northern America	111	121	+10
Language Spoken at Home (All Residents)			
English	92.7%	90.8%	-1.9%
Other	7.3%	9.2%	+1.9%

*Denotes that it is actually a 2009-2013 Average
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Race & Ethnicity

The city is becoming more diverse. White residents currently (2014) make up the overwhelming majority of the city's population (83.1%). The remainder of the population includes those identifying as Black (8.9%), Asian (3.8%), and Multiracial (2.6%), among others.

However, while the city's population currently is, and is projected to remain, mostly White, a noticeable demographic change is underway that mirrors national trends. Between 2000 and 2019, the city's population has been trending more diverse. Expected shifts in the population during this period include a roughly 11% decrease in the White share with a tantamount increase in the minority share of the population. The Black population is projected to experience the most significant growth during this time period.

The city's Hispanic population is currently estimated at 2.7%. Between 2000 and 2019, the city's Hispanic population is projected to increase from 1.3% to 3.2%. For purposes of clarification, the U.S. Census considers Hispanic an ethnicity and not mutually exclusive with racial categories. For example, a resident may identify as both Black AND Hispanic.

NOTE: Racial and ethnic categories reported in this chapter are defined by the Census.

Immigration

St. Cloud is an increasingly attractive destination for immigrants. This includes those who pursue immigration through regular naturalization channels as well as those granted refugee or asylum status. Minnesota is a popular resettlement destination for refugees. Between 2003 and 2012, 30,000+ refugees were resettled in Minnesota. Common origins for those immigrants included Somalia (75%), Burma (18%), Laos (17.5%), and Ethiopia (8.0%).

At present, roughly 1 out of every 13 St. Cloud residents (7.0%) was born outside of the United States. Between 2000 and 2013 (technically an average of 2009-2013), both the total number of immigrants and their share of the population have increased noticeably, growing from 2,269 (3.8% of the population in 2000) to 4,597 people (7.0% in 2013). Roughly one-third of all of St. Cloud's immigrants were born in Africa, with Asian, Latin America, and Europe birthplaces also common.

Impacts of Immigration

An April 2014 report published by the St. Cloud State University School of Public Affairs Research Institute indicates that the immigrant population is not harmful to the local or regional economy. The report, *St. Cloud Immigration: A Fact Sheet* summarized various demographic facts and trends related specifically to the St. Cloud region's foreign born population. The report highlighted several key items including:

- Nearly half of St. Cloud's immigrant population are U.S. citizens.
- Approximately two-thirds of immigrants are in the labor force.
- Immigrants arriving prior to 2010 experience unemployment and poverty rates similar to the native population.

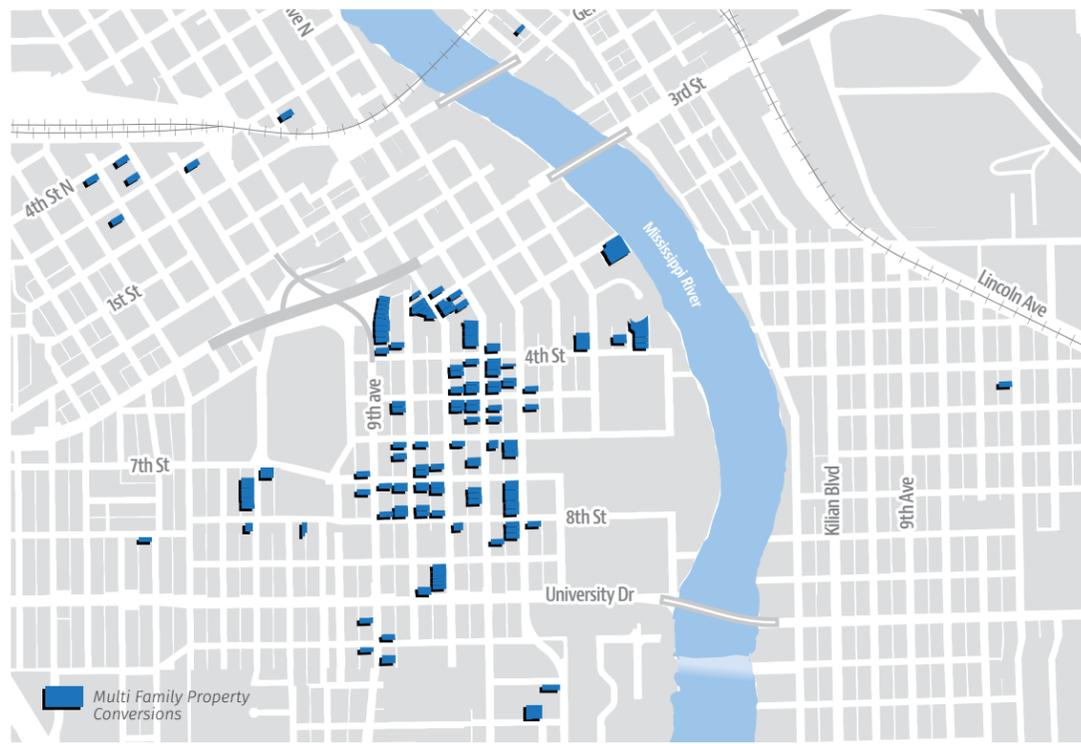
Market Implications

- Projected population increases between 2010 and 2019 will increase demand for housing and retail, as well as require additional community services and infrastructure.
- A relatively youthful population - compared to regional, state, and national levels - may require disproportional demand for educational and recreational programming, as well as commercial needs associated with younger populations. At the same time, the population is aging, and the slight growth of the senior citizen population may require a more senior-friendly housing stock of multi-family, town home, and senior living options.
- Rising incomes may lead to higher demand for retail goods and services, facilitating small business growth. Additionally, higher income levels increase the ability to market St. Cloud to national retailers and developers, who often base the siting of new stores, restaurants, and housing units on income levels.
- The immigrant population has increased significantly since 1990. Data indicate that once immigrants are able to gain solid footing in the workforce they exhibit economic indicators similar to the native-born population.

Existing Land Use

The City of St. Cloud comprises a variety of existing land uses and has a unique development pattern shaped by several key factors:

- The Mississippi River and Sauk River serve as natural dividing lines that create both physical and perceptual divides between the City's neighborhoods. The urban development pattern has generally followed the corridors that cross the Mississippi River, such as Division Street.
- As the Granite City, St. Cloud's decommissioned and active quarries have not only impacted the local economy, but the use of land surrounding these large sites.
- Railroad lines throughout the City have influenced the development of industrial land uses that take advantage of spurs along the rail corridors. While rail is a key transportation component for local industry, the corridors also act as physical barriers between neighborhoods.



Land Use Categories

Every parcel in the City has been inventoried and classified under one of 15 existing land use categories based on field reconnaissance taken in November 2014 and January 2015.

Rural Residential

Rural residential land uses include large-lot single-family homes, usually adjacent or in close proximity to agricultural uses. These homes are generally not part of planned subdivisions.

Single Family

The single family category is the predominant land use designation within St. Cloud. Single family homes are generally owner-occupied; however, shifts in the economy have increased the number of renter-occupied homes.

Single Family Attached

Single family attached residences encompass single family dwelling units that share at least one common wall with an adjacent dwelling. This category includes two-unit or multi-units structures, such as rowhomes, but each dwelling maintains its own entrance.

Multi-Family

Multi-family housing makes up a significant portion of the overall housing stock in St. Cloud. Multi-family units are stacked horizontally and vertically, with a common entrance and shared amenities. The multi-family category includes not only traditional multi-family housing structures such as apartments and condominiums, but also single family homes that have been converted into multi-family units (typically rental properties).

Mobile Home

Mobile homes, also referred to as manufactured homes, are single family detached homes that can be connected to utilities to serve as permanent housing. Although intended for year-round living, mobile homes are designed without a permanent foundation, which allows for the transportability of the structure.

Downtown/Mixed Use

The Downtown/Mixed Use category consists of a mix of multi-story mixed use structures and commercial buildings within Downtown. This category also includes large office and institutional users that serve as anchors to Downtown St. Cloud as well as single story commercial uses that contribute to the district's traditional streetwall.

Commercial

The commercial land use designation encompasses a range of commercial uses. These include, but are not limited to retail, entertainment, and service commercial businesses that are sited within large, regional commercial developments, corridor commercial settings, and smaller neighborhood-serving commercial structures.

Industrial/Business Park

The industrial/business park category includes both standalone industrial uses as well as businesses arranged in park or campus settings. Examples of this range from larger users like Electrolux and Pan-O-Gold Baking Company to the I-94 Business Park and smaller light industrial users along the Roosevelt Road corridor.

Quarry

Quarries include areas that are dedicated to the extraction of stone and other minerals. Quarries can have an impact on surrounding development due to excess noise and vibrations from cutting and blasting and/or excess debris and truck traffic.

Parks & Open Space

The parks and open space category is defined by areas that are used for active and passive recreation as well as natural areas. They may be fully programmed spaces or areas that are undevelopable due to environmental features such as large tree stands, steep slopes, and wetlands.

Agriculture

The agriculture land use category includes land that is dedicated to the production of crops, livestock, and other uses associated with agricultural activities.

Public/Semi-Public

The public/Semi-public category encompasses a wide variety of uses that provide a public service. Specific uses include, but are not limited to, government-owned facilities, local schools, universities, and places of religious worship.

Medical

The medical land use comprises St. Cloud's major medical facilities including St. Cloud Hospital, Centra-Care Medical Plaza, and the VA Medical Center. Other smaller or independent medical uses are grouped under the commercial land use category.

Utility

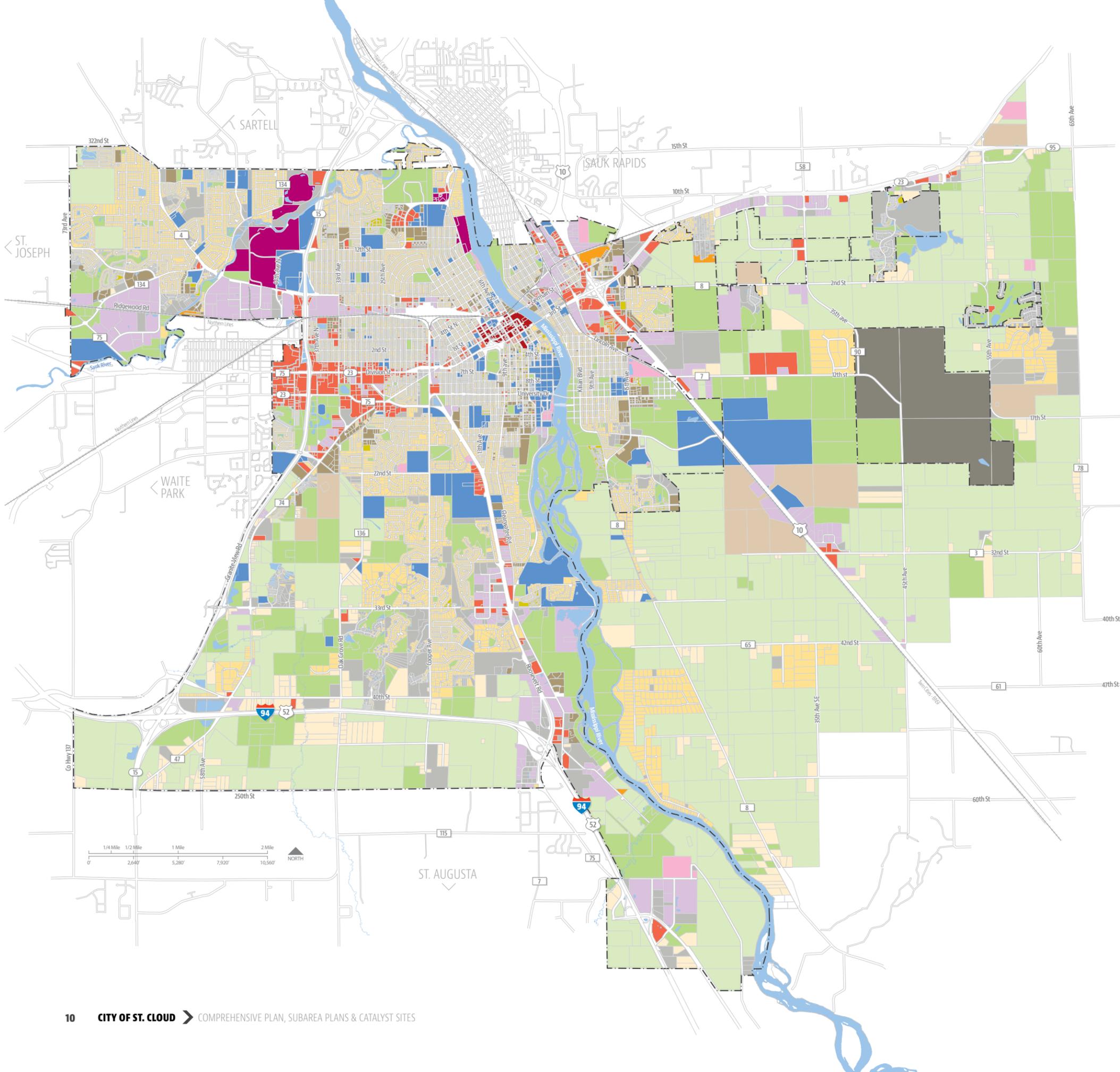
Utilities include land that is dedicated to the production, storage, and maintenance of utilities such as gas, electric, water, and wastewater.

Airport

The airport land use category includes the St. Cloud Regional Airport as well as adjacent land that may be impacted by airport operations.

Vacant/Undeveloped

This category incorporates land that contains no active uses and is available for future development.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD Existing Land Use

KEY

- Agriculture
- Rural Residential
- Single Family Detached
- Single Family Attached
- Multi-Family
- Mobile Homes
- Commercial
- Downtown / Mixed-Use
- Public / Semi-Public
- Medical
- Parks / Open Space
- Light Industrial / Business Park
- Industrial
- Utilities
- Quarry
- Airport
- Vacant / Undeveloped



Current Land Development Code

The St. Cloud Land Development Code is a legally-enforceable document that dictates land use and development within the City. This section summarizes the Code as it stood in November 2014.

Zoning Districts

The St. Cloud Land Development Code outlines 21 zoning districts and 5 overlay districts. These districts include:

Residential Districts

Low Density Residential Districts (R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-R)

These zoning districts allow for low density, single family and two-family residential uses, most commonly on larger parcels and in more rural settings. The Rural Residential (R-R) district includes rural areas of the City, largely agricultural uses and scattered residences. These areas are expected to become more urbanized in the future, thus requiring the extension of facilities and services. The R-1A District is intended to allow for slightly higher density, preserving single-family residences located on traditionally smaller lots. All low density residential districts allow for limited non-residential uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

University Residential Districts (R-3, R-3A)

These zoning districts allow for a mix of residential uses within the St. Cloud State University campus area, largely focused on multi-tenant residences. These include lodging, fraternity, and sorority houses which most commonly serve student populations. The zone also provides for other residential uses, including single family, two family, and multi-family residential types. These districts allow limited non-residential uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

High Density Residential Districts (R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7)

These zoning districts allow for higher density residential uses, including townhomes, multi-family, and high rise residences. While also permitting single family and two-family dwellings, these zones are focused on creating higher density neighborhoods and urban areas, largely focused in the Downtown and along major commercial corridors. Similar to other residential districts, these areas allow limited non-residential uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Commercial Districts

The City's commercial zoning districts cover a variety of commercial types, designed to permit commercial uses that are compatible with the areas surrounding them. These districts can be broken into four types:

Business Office District (C-1)

This district is intended to create business office environments, primarily including non-retail development. Permitted uses are geared toward office structures and related uses.

Neighborhood Commercial District (C-2)

This district includes retail uses within residential neighborhoods which serve convenience goods and basic services. Comprised largely of small, single parcels scattered throughout St. Cloud's residential areas, uses are intended to serve and be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Central Business District (C-3, C-4)

These two districts include Downtown St. Cloud and surrounding fringe areas, which allow a variety of commercial uses. These zones are designed to preserve the city's central commercial district and maintain the area's pedestrian-oriented nature. In addition to commercial uses, these districts permit various residential facilities, such as nursing homes, as well as residential dwellings, as long as they are above ground flood. The Fringe Central Business District (C-4) acts as a transitional zone, allowing for uses geared toward both pedestrian and automobile accessibility.

Highway Commercial District (C-5)

This district is intended to provide commercial services along major arterial traffic routes throughout the city. Given the zones relation to traffic corridors, uses are largely auto-oriented, providing commercial services to both nearby residential areas and greater local and regional consumers.



Industrial Districts (I-1, I-2, I-3)

These districts provide for industrial uses of various intensities, ensuring the nature of industrial uses is best mitigated as to not detract from commercial and residential uses within the City. The I-1 zone includes light industrial uses intended to be compatible with surrounding commercial and residential zones. The I-2 district includes more intense industrial uses that are not compatible with less intense land uses, and should thus be removed from commercial and residential areas. The final district, I-3, includes more intense industrial uses that must be located, due to the nature of the use, near low-intensity land uses. Developments within the I-3 district, as well as I-1, must provide high performance standards to reduce effects on adjacent zones.

Agricultural District (AG)

This district includes land designated for agricultural uses and open space, often used to maintain rural character and natural resources while preserving and encouraging necessary agricultural uses. The zone does allow for very low density residential development, as is necessary for various permitted uses.

Special Purpose Districts

Medical District (MD)

This district is dedicated to addressing the specific needs and impacts of a large-scale, multi-functional hospital and medical campus. Encompassing the St. Cloud Hospital, the district is guided by a General Development Plan that takes into account the needs of the hospital, adjacent districts, and greater community.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

This district is designed to offer an alternative to residential, commercial, and industrial zoning types, allowing deviation from certain code regulations. Allowing greater variety and the combination of different uses, the PUD district encourages a creative approach to land use that enables high quality development and design that may not be accomplished in stricter zoning districts.

Overlay Districts

Floodplain Overlay District

This overlay district includes floodplain regulations for flood hazard areas, as per Minnesota Statutes Chapters 103 and 462. The overlay district is focused on minimizing economic loss and public safety hazards through regulation of properties within local floodplains.

Shoreland Overlay District

This overlay district includes regulations for the subdivision, use, and development of public water shorelands, as per Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103F, Minnesota Regulations, Parts 6120.2500-6120.3900 and Chapter 462. The overlay district limits uncontrolled use of shorelands within St. Cloud that may lead to pollution of public waters through regulations for the preservation of natural shoreland resources.

Scenic River Overlay District

This overlay district establishes standards and criteria for uses within designated scenic areas along the Mississippi River, consistent with Minnesota Statutes regarding management of the Mississippi River. The overlay district preserves and protects “scenic, recreational, natural, historic, and scientific” areas along the River through regulation policy.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) provide protection to areas of the city deemed susceptible to damage by growth and development. ESA are regulated to ensure prioritization of resource protection and aid developers and city staff in management of development plans that may affect the areas.

Historic District Overlay District

The City of St. Cloud has 4 historic districts, largely consisting of properties located in the city’s Downtown core. These districts are designed to protect and enhance historical areas, buildings, and structures. This is accomplished through the use of design guidelines and review for new development and exterior building alterations.

Split Zoning

While not specifically designated in the St. Cloud Land Development Code, a number of properties throughout the City are classified as split zoning. Parcels included in the split zoning district have multiple, unique zoning classifications placed on a single property. While noted on the zoning map, specific information concerning parcels in the split zoning district is only accessible through the Planning and Zoning Department.

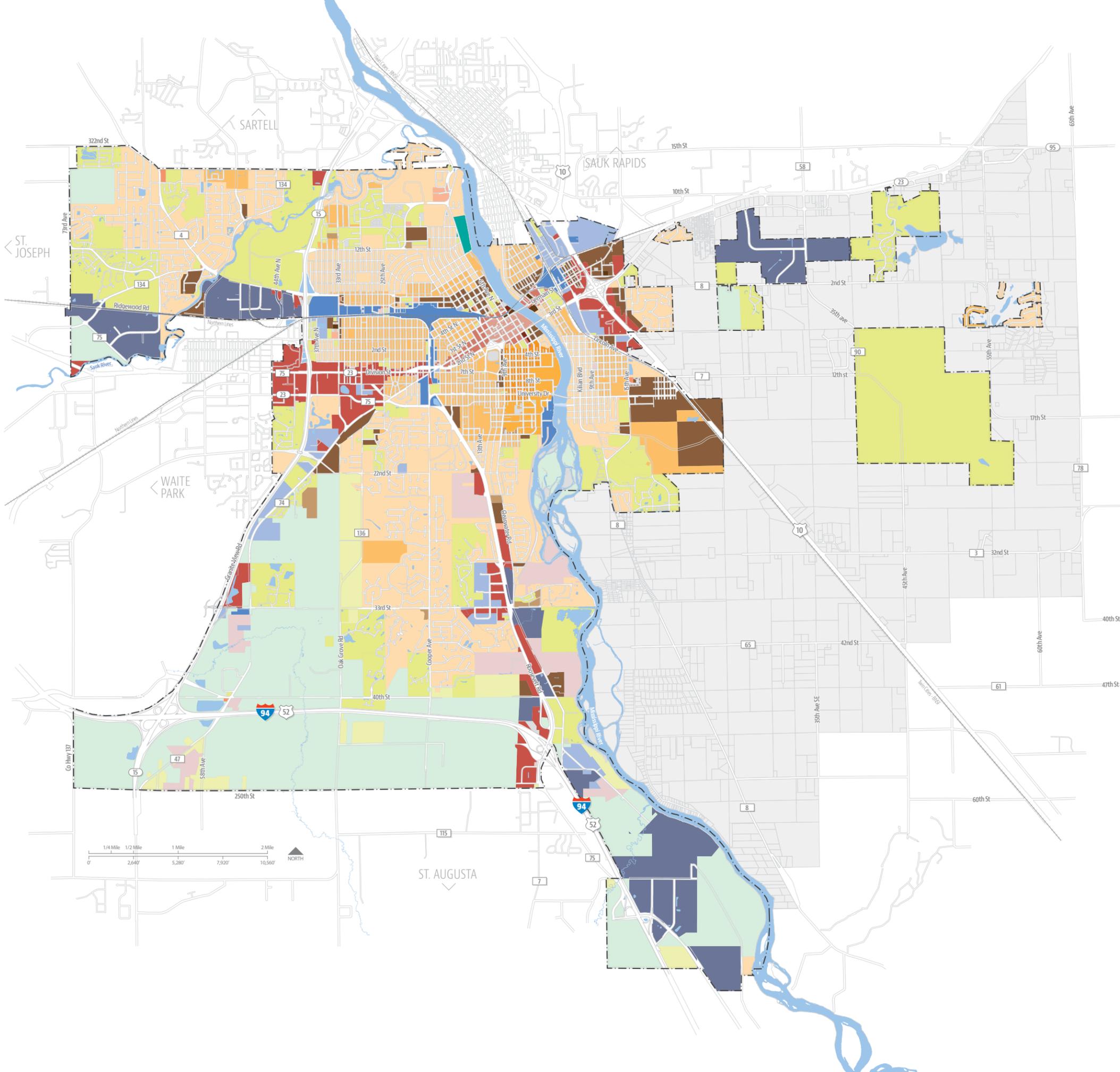
St. Cloud Municipal Airport Zoning Ordinance

The St. Cloud Municipal Airport Zoning Ordinance provides specific regulations for the St. Cloud Regional Airport and surrounding areas, intended to mitigate the effects and potential hazards associated with airport operations. The code identifies safety zones within the airport area based on flight paths, with specific regulations as to the use, nature, and height of properties included. These zones have helped establish the current St. Cloud Regional Airport Safety Zone Overlay District. It should be noted that the original zoning ordinance was first enacted in 1976, serving what was at the time called the St. Cloud Municipal Airport.

CITY OF ST. CLOUD Current Zoning

The City's current zoning ordinance includes 21 zoning districts and 5 overlay districts. Following an update in 2009, the code is well-organized with easy-to-use tables regarding permitted and conditional uses and bulk standards.

While not specifically designated in the St. Cloud Land Development Code, a number of properties throughout the City are classified as split zoning. These parcels have multiple zoning classifications placed on a single property. Specific information concerning parcels in the split zoning district is only accessible through the Planning and Zoning Department.



KEY

- AG - Agricultural District
- C1 - Business Office District
- C2 - Neighborhood Commercial District
- C3 - Central Business District
- C4 - Fringe Central Business District
- C5 - Highway Commercial District
- I1 - Light Industrial District
- I2 - General Industrial District
- I3 - Planned Industrial District
- MD - Medical District
- PUD - Planned Unit Development
- R1 - Single Family Residential District
- R2 - Single Family and Two Family Residential District
- R3 - Lodging House and Fraternity/Sorority House Residential District
- R3A - General Residential and Lodging House District
- R4 - Townhouse Residential District
- R5 - General Multi-Family Residential District
- R6 - Multi-Family Residential District
- R7 - High Rise Multi-Family Residential District
- RR - Rural Residential District
- Split Zoning - Contact St. Cloud Planning and Zoning at (320) 255-7218 for specific zoning information.



Community Outreach

Community input is the driving force in developing a successful Comprehensive Plan, and the planning process was designed to proactively engage residents, civic and business leaders, and other key stakeholders. Over the course of the one year planning process, a variety of public outreach opportunities were held in support of the St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan that allowed residents to share their thoughts, aspirations, and ideas about the community.

The following outreach efforts and initiatives were conducted:

- A **Project Initiation Workshop** was conducted with 21 members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee on October 9, 2014 at City Hall.
- Nearly 60 residents attended a **Community Workshop** at the Regency Plaza on October 23, 2014.

- A **Business Workshop** was held with 15 business owners and operators on the morning of October 24, 2014 at City Hall.
- Various City staff attended a **Department Heads Workshop** on October 24, 2014 at City Hall.
- A **Downtown Workshop** was held with 20 area businesses and property owners on November 13, 2014 at the Pioneer Place on Fifth Avenue.
- An **Economic Development Workshop** was held with the members of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) Board in conjunction with their regularly scheduled board meeting on November 13, 2014 at City Hall.
- A luncheon and workshop was conducted with 17 members of the **Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation** on November 13, 2014 at the River's Edge Convention Center.
- Eleven **Focus Group Sessions** were conducted in October and November 2014 with 56 individuals representing approximately 27 stakeholder organizations and interest groups. This included a workshop with school children at Oak Hill Elementary.

- 10 **Do-it-Yourself Workshops** were completed and submitted, providing comments from 117 residents.
- A **Visioning Workshop** was held on February 19, 2015 at the Rivers Edge Convention Center. Residents worked in teams and drew their visions for the community on large maps.
- A **Downtown Design Charrette** was hosted on April 29, 2015 and participants created a detailed vision for Downtown St. Cloud, including recommendations for a few specific catalyst sites.
- **Online Questionnaires** were completed by 307 residents and 29 business owners.
- Participants that used **sMap, an interactive, online mapping system**, generated 22 distinct maps with 274 points of interest.

Summary of Workshops

The following summary presents a synthesis of all input received through the various comprehensive plan workshops focus groups, and do-it-yourself workshops. While a wide variety of topics were discussed by members of the St. Cloud community, this summary highlights several of the key themes that emerged from discussion and written comments. A summary of comments related to each theme is provided below.

It is important to note that the items and potential strategies identified in this summary are not recommendations or City policy, but rather represent feedback and comments received from those who participated in the workshops.

Priority Issues & Concerns

Downtown & East Side

Downtown St. Cloud was a primary concern discussed in all workshops. While several participants acknowledged that Downtown has made a positive transformation over the past several years, they also noted that the Downtown should be a more attractive and vibrant district. A holistic approach is needed to improve the Downtown including bringing in more businesses, providing a range of entertain options, increasing housing in and around the Downtown, beautifying the district, and creating more public gathering places.

Participants at the Downtown Workshop noted several potential barriers to investment, redevelopment, and renovations in the Downtown. Comments highlighted issues associated with historic preservation regulations, code enforcement, and renovations to outmoded buildings. Local business owners also pointed to parking turnover enforcement and the use of parking meters and on-street spaces by Downtown employees as barriers to conducting business in the area. Crime was also often discussed as an issue for the Downtown with comments focusing on the "college bar scene".



Comments from downtown stakeholders cited a concern for a lack of strong leadership or commitment to the Downtown and riverfront area. Downtown stakeholders noted a lack of identity and proper marketing for the area, which was cited as a contributing factor to other issues such as business closures, vacancies, and blight. Community members demonstrated a desire for new restaurants, stores, and vendors within the Downtown. Similarly, Downtown was suggested as the site for new events or activities within the community. Noted as a major asset for St. Cloud, respondents hoped to see better utilization of the Mississippi River, especially new riverfront development that would better integrate the riverfront and the Downtown.

The East Side area of St. Cloud was also frequently mentioned when discussing the Downtown. Comments indicated that the area east of the Mississippi River is in need of attention regarding aesthetic improvements and encouraging new technology-related industries and employers to locate there. Properties surrounding the Highway 10 corridor were often mentioned as priorities for both new development and beautification efforts.

Economic Development

Though the level of detail and extent of comments varied by workshop, participants raised economic development as an important issue facing St. Cloud. Among the broader public, economic development-related comments were typically discussed in concert with the need to attract new families or retailers to the area. Participants in the Business Workshop, Department Heads Workshop, and EDA Board Workshop cited a need to continue to expand the local employment base with higher paying manufacturing, technical, and finance-related jobs. St. Cloud's reputation as a difficult place to do business was also discussed. Building on the need for economic development, members of City staff stressed the need to create a stronger tax base through business growth that would better fund city services and projects.

In addition, concern was raised in every workshop over "Brain Drain" and the emigration of individuals with college or higher level education out of the area. While the City's higher education facilities, including St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical and Community College, were cited as assets in attracting people to the community, participants indicated a desire to better link those institutions to business development and retaining students in the region post-graduation.

Housing & Core Neighborhoods

A variety of housing issues were noted throughout the outreach process by City stakeholders. Residents highlighted concerns with the conversion of single family homes into multi-family rental units, the overall volume of rental units, the need for increased affordable housing options, and the annexation of residential areas surrounding St. Cloud.

Many of these issues were stressed when discussing the City's Core Neighborhoods, particularly the high volume of rental property and concern over owner-absenteeism and poor property maintenance. As the area with the highest density and greatest visibility, respondents emphasized the need for revitalization, maintenance, and rebranding of the City's core residential areas that surround the Downtown. With changes in the City's demographics, including an aging population, increases in immigrant populations, and a desire to attract new, younger families, the need for a variety of housing options, particularly affordable housing, was stressed. A need for high-end housing was also identified in relation to providing attractive housing options for higher income households.

Diversity & Demographic Changes

Diversity as it relates to age, income, race, and ethnicity, was a topic of significant discussion throughout all outreach workshops. Participants noted that St. Cloud has diversified rapidly with an increase in the number of foreign born individuals. The influx of immigrants, many of whom come from areas such as Somalia where the religion and culture is very different from that of the majority of individuals in St. Cloud, has created some social tension in the community.

Recognizing that some level of tension may be unavoidable when people of different backgrounds interact, many workshop participants identified St. Cloud's increasing diversity as a source of community pride and an asset to be leveraged moving forward. Workshop participants noted that the St. Cloud community has been welcoming to new immigrants and, in turn, members of the foreign-born population present at Comprehensive plan workshops indicated that they felt welcomed by the community.

It was also noted that St. Cloud has a large aging population that presents issues surrounding housing, infrastructure, and services in the future. Comments underscored the need to provide additional housing options to the growing senior population and continue to attract new families and young professionals to the City.

Transportation

Traffic and congestion was a general topic of discussion among workshop participants. Respondents mentioned congestion along Highway 15, Division Street, and South Second Street as problematic and emphasized the need for better east-west connections across the City.

While many participants had general comments about concerns with congestion, the majority of specific observations and recommended strategies highlighted a need to expand alternative transportation options with an emphasis on Complete Streets. The majority of transportation-related issues revolved around the gaps in safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, in particular the lack of bicycle infrastructure, including safe trails, bike lanes, and sufficient safe crossing opportunities at major roadways. Discussion also pointed to support for regional transit connections, namely the extension of the Northstar Commuter Rail to St. Cloud.

Education

While noting the strength of various higher education facilities, workshop participants demonstrated concern for the state of local public education. While St. Cloud Area School District performs well when compared to others throughout the state, comments indicated a broad community concern for the perceived underperformance of the St. Cloud Area School District relative to other school districts within the region. Many participants also voiced concerns regarding the potential existence of an achievement gap among different student groups within the school district.

In addition to the well-being of students, several comments underscored the connection between school performance and the long term growth of the community. Another concern noted by participants was the closing of the current Technical Senior High School facility and potential impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and the Downtown. Despite a general desire to retain the school, many workshop attendees also emphasized the need for renovations and improvements to existing school facilities to replace out-of-date technologies and reconfigure outmoded facilities.

Parking

Similar to transportation, participants felt that parking was a difficult issue within the City, with particular emphasis placed on parking in the Downtown. Workshop attendees raised concern over the ease of finding parking spaces, as well as the difficulty of parking during winter, when many spaces are unplowed. In addition to the difficulty of finding parking, the parking signage, meters, and rules were a topic of discussion, with many feeling that figuring out where, when, and for how long one can park is unnecessarily difficult.

Public Safety

While the specificity of comments varied, many participants expressed a general concern for public safety. Although crime rates have decreased over the last decade, the potential perception of a lack of safety was mentioned as damaging to the City's image and disruptive to the community. Of particular note was the sense that the Downtown is not safe in the evenings and that crime is especially problematic in areas surrounding St. Cloud's colleges and universities. With regard to public safety at the various higher education institutions, some participants noted that a certain level of misconduct should be expected with thousands of young adults living in the community, that "kids will be kids", and that campus security and City police should focus on preventing serious criminal activity.

Infrastructure Maintenance

The general condition of St. Cloud's existing infrastructure was an issue among workshop participants, especially in relation to quality of services in the Downtown and Core Neighborhoods. While the topic did not generate extensive discussion among the broader public, many CPAC members, department heads, and business owners and operators noted a concern that infrastructure within St. Cloud, especially roadways, is reaching the end of its useful life and upgrades are needed.

Issues surrounding the age and condition of infrastructure in St. Cloud were often discussed in concert with discussion regarding the City's limited financial resources. It was noted that many of the city's important infrastructure components, including roadways, sidewalks, and water and sewer in the Core Neighborhoods and Downtown, are in need of repairs and improved maintenance. Infrastructure was also often mentioned in discussion of housing expansion and economic development.

Community Image & Appearance

Nearly every workshop and focus group identified community image and the physical appearance of the City, particularly its major corridors, as important issues. This concern was said to primarily relate to the City's ability to "put its best foot forward" and provide a positive first impression to potential employers, investors, and the development community. While other areas were mentioned, the Highway 10 corridor and the journey between the St. Cloud Regional Airport and Downtown were discussed at length, particularly among business workshop participants. Participants highlighted a need for improved, more attractive wayfinding signage, gateway features, and beautification efforts on behalf of the City as well as private property owners.

Community Center

Throughout the outreach process, widespread discussion was given to the need for a recreation or community center. Many participants supported the construction of the new St. Cloud Area Y Community and Aquatics Center, but cited a desire for additional facilities to provide community services. Students in particular emphasized the need for a center dedicated to recreational and aquatic uses, linking the development of a recreation center with providing new activities for youths and teens. Other stakeholders, especially the Homeless Group for Men, envisioned a community center that would provide not just recreational activities, but community services and amenities.

Primary Strengths & Assets

Each comprehensive plan workshop concluded with a discussion of the assets that St. Cloud has to build upon and should be preserved moving forward. While covering a diverse range of strengths and assets, responses generally highlighted St. Cloud's community culture; location and identity; parks and natural areas; and facilities and services. Workshop discussion focused on the city's physical location and proximity to natural features such as the Mississippi River and Lake George. Stakeholders also highlighted a number of existing facilities, including St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, St. Cloud Hospital, and St. Cloud Regional Airport, as being major assets that give character to the city and positively contribute to its regional image. While the city's growing diversity was mentioned as an issue needing further attention, respondents also felt this cultural change was a major asset.

Perhaps most noteworthy as a community asset is St. Cloud's "Can Do Attitude." This phrase was stated in discussion or written in participant comments numerous times at each workshop. Comments underscored the drive and desire of St. Cloud residents and business owners to support and implement various initiatives and improve the community.

The most commonly identified assets and strengths included:

Community Culture

- "Can Do" attitude
- Community
- Diversity
- Youth and student population

City Services

- The Mayor
- Support of the Core Neighborhoods
- Accessibility of City Officials and Staff
- Police & Fire Department

Facilities & Services

- Medical Facilities, particularly St. Cloud Hospital
- St. Cloud State University
- St. Cloud Technical & Community College
- Technical Senior High School
- Public Library
- St. Cloud Regional Airport
- Stearns History Museum
- River's Edge Civic Center

Location & Identity

- Historic buildings throughout the City
- Historic Downtown
- Strong arts community
- Regional location
- Core Neighborhoods

Parks & Natural Areas

- Mississippi River
- Lake George
- Munsinger Gardens
- Quarry Park
- Heritage Park
- Whitney Park & Recreational Center
- Parks & trails
- Summerland Family Fun Park

Other

- St. Cloud Downtown Council
- Retail & business hub
- Potential of the Downtown
- Employers, companies, and entrepreneurs

Summary of Online Outreach

To supplement face-to-face outreach opportunities, online tools were utilized to give those unable to attend in-person events the chance to voice their opinion and provide additional outlets for unique comments and feedback. Hosted on the Comprehensive Plan's project website, outreach tools included a questionnaire for St. Cloud Residents, a questionnaire for business owners and operators within St. Cloud, and a St. Cloud sMap page.

Resident Questionnaires

A total of 322 St. Cloud residents participated in the online resident questionnaire, representing a full range of community residents. Just over 50% of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 44 and the majority of participants have lived in St. Cloud for over 10 years, with 63% having lived in the city for 11 or more years, and 28% having been a resident for over 30 years. Given this data, the survey was well founded by a dedicated and knowledgeable sample of St. Cloud residents. Representative of the City as a whole, individual responses were reviewed to develop a holistic analysis of local issues that will guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Questionnaire responses were generally on par with data from other outreach opportunities. Participants stressed the strength of St. Cloud's regional location, higher education opportunities, and public services. Local healthcare facilities and the Great River Regional Library were noted as important local assets, and residents felt positively about city amenities such as sewer, water, fire protection, parks & recreation, trash, and police services.

Residents demonstrated concern for traffic and circulation, diversity of the population, community image, and safety. When asked to identify the top three priorities the Comprehensive Plan should focus on, participants chose neighborhoods (52%), schools (49%), and the Downtown (36%). Residents emphasized the importance of the Core Neighborhoods and the need to maintain and preserve these areas and local housing stock. Schools were a central concern, given the age of school facilities and programs. Participants supported the need for greater resource development and partnership with local schools. Similarly, the Downtown district was noted as an area favorable for new commercial development, especially restaurants, retailers, and entertainment options. Crime and violence was also widely discussed in survey comments, with the lack of safety and high perception of crime noted as a hindrance to a positive local image.

Business Questionnaires

A total of 30 business owners and operators completed the online business questionnaire, representing a variety of businesses and industries in St. Cloud. The majority of responses are from well established businesses in operation for over ten years, with 54% of respondents owning a business located within the Downtown district west of the Mississippi River. Representative of the City's business community as a whole, individual responses were reviewed to develop a holistic analysis of local issues that will guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

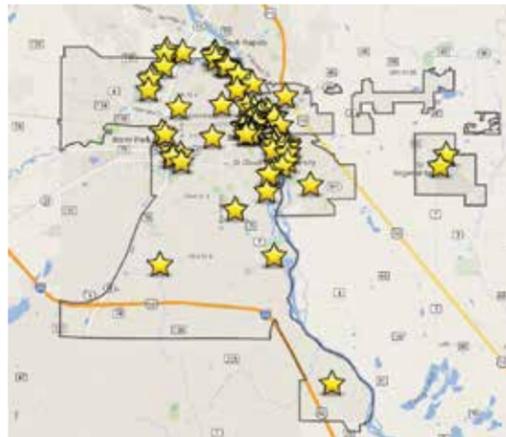
Participants emphasized a number of local features that are important advantages to operating a business in St. Cloud, specifically visibility and accessibility to customers, the building and property stock, and the character of the community and local business district. In addition, respondents noted the strength of local fire protection, parks and open spaces, and city services. While business owners did list a number of issues and concerns, 65% felt that St. Cloud has improved in the past 10 years. The surveys also showed a clear support for new developments of all kinds within St. Cloud.

In opposition, respondents felt that parking availability, taxes, nearby competition, and security were disadvantages to business operation in St. Cloud. While parking availability has been discussed throughout outreach opportunities, business owners were split on the issue, with only 42% of participants citing a need for additional parking spaces for their business. A perception of high taxes was of particular concern, with a few respondents stating they would move their business out of St. Cloud if given the chance due to high taxes. In agreement with other outreach opportunities, safety and crime were discussed as detriments to business operation, particularly within the Downtown area. Participants strongly supported greater communication, support, and cooperation between the City and business community.

sMap

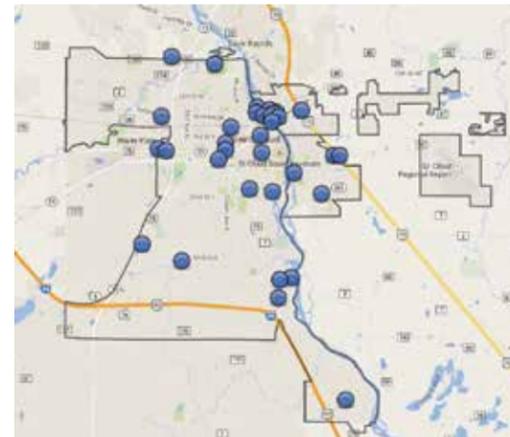
sMap is a map based outreach tool which allowed individuals from the community to create and mark a map of their community. This enabled comments and feedback on the City that are tied to a specific space or area of St. Cloud. The sMap tool creates a fun way for participants to identify issues and opportunities within their City from a spatial perspective.

A total of 266 points were created on the St. Cloud sMap, representing comments, ideas, and feedback from community stakeholders in 10 unique categories. Points were largely concentrated within Downtown St. Cloud and the Core Neighborhoods, demonstrating areas of key concern. To allow for a close analysis of spatial issues and opportunities, each category has been summarized.



Community Asset (85 points)

With twice as many points as any other category, respondents highlighted a variety of assets throughout the community. Identified assets focused on local rivers, transportation amenities, education opportunities, parks and recreation facilities, and the variety of developments and services within the Downtown. Lake George and the Mississippi River were consistently noted as community assets of high importance.



Desired Use/Development (32 points)

For desired use and development, participants marked a variety of sites that could be developed as commercial office and retail uses throughout St. Cloud. Many points focused on the development potential of the Mississippi Riverfront and a desire for increased parks, trails, and pedestrian connectivity.



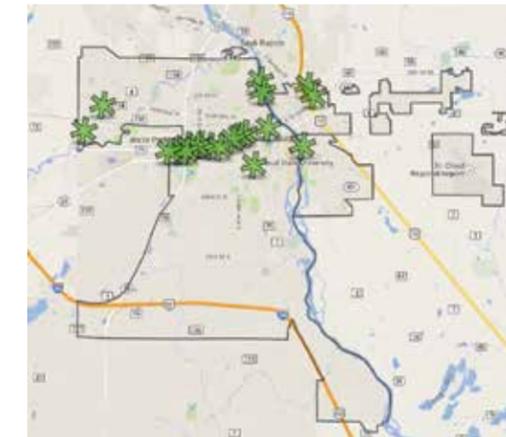
Development Priority Site (21 points)

The majority of sites identified for their development opportunity were clustered in Downtown St. Cloud, with a handful of sites located on the east side of the Mississippi River. Points highlight specific sites and buildings that respondents felt could be better utilized to spur growth, provide unique housing options, and improve connectivity.



Key Transit Destination (12 points)

Emphasizing a few important locations for greater transportation mobility, such as Crossroad Center, points largely focused on potential locations for an extension of the Northstar Commuter Rail.



Physical Access Opportunity (19 points)

Similar to points made for the desired use/development category, areas marked for access opportunity included a number of potential trail connections, specifically the Wobegon Trail connection and a beltway in the southwest portion of the City. Points also noted various pedestrian and connectivity issues, such as difficult accessing Lake George from Downtown St. Cloud.



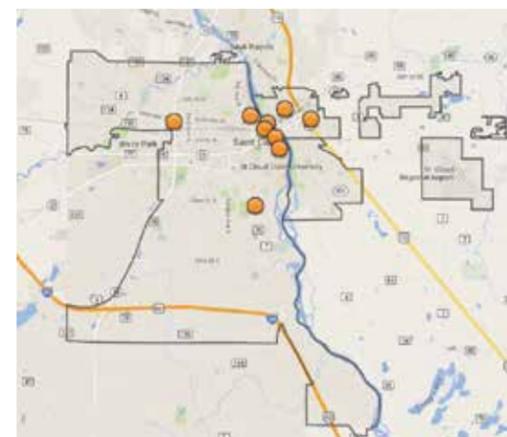
Poor Appearance (34 points)

Points marking poor appearance were largely concentrated in two areas; the highway 10 corridor in east St. Cloud and the Division Street corridor extending west of the Downtown. Respondents noted poorly maintained parcels and buildings as well as the unsightly nature of extensive parking lots or what one resident called a “sea of asphalt.”



Problematic Intersection (33 points)

Intersections identified as problematic largely concentrated on the 9th/10th Avenue and Route 15 corridors, noting poor signal management and pedestrian safety concerns. Participants also noted a number of unnecessary stop lights within the Downtown area.



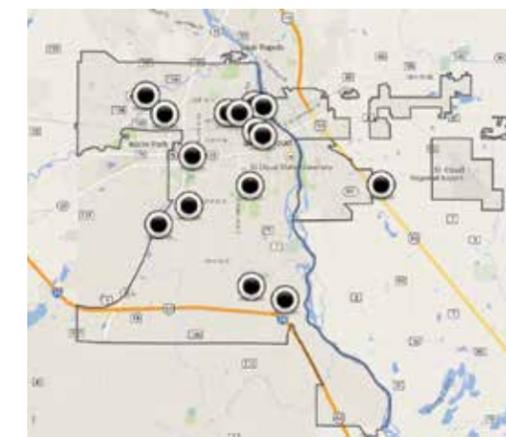
Public Safety Concern (9 points)

Noted public safety concerns concentrated on the lack of pedestrian and automobile safety within St. Cloud. In addition, the St. Cloud State University Campus and Downtown areas were listed as unsafe districts.



Undesirable Use (6 points)

Containing only a few points, respondents made note of specific commercial and institutional uses that were unfavorable to the community, such as the Minnesota State Prison along route 10. In addition, points highlighted uses that were incompatible with the surrounding area.



Other (15 points)

Intended for feedback not defined in other categories, the “other” points largely contained transportation-based suggestions to improve connectivity and mobility within St. Cloud. Participants also noted a few zoning code issues and pedestrian and bicycle accessibility suggestions.

A Vision for St. Cloud

The Vision Statement is an inspirational narrative describing what St. Cloud could achieve following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. It is high-reaching, ambitious, and enthusiastic. It is a snapshot of the collective desires of the community, which serves as the foundation for the goals, objectives, and technical recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement is written as a retrospective, depicting the St. Cloud community 20 years in the future.

In 2035...

The City of St. Cloud is the economic, social, and cultural hub of Central Minnesota. Twenty years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, St. Cloud has firmly cemented itself as a state leader in economic development, intellectual capital, and art and cultural diversity. The City has effectively harnessed its historic character and leveraged new growth to create a thriving local economy. The high quality of life afforded by St. Cloud, in addition to the community's "can do" attitude, continues to make St. Cloud one of the most desirable places to live in the country.

Continued growth of St. Cloud has increased both the population and size of the community. Nevertheless, the City has grown in a fiscally sound and managed manner, developing vacant properties within the City Core and expanding into the Primary Growth Area. St. Cloud has grown in a balanced fashion, increasing housing opportunities and supporting existing businesses, while encouraging new commercial and employment areas. This approach has allowed the City to incrementally expand infrastructure, while preserving high levels of maintenance and services.

Downtown St. Cloud has strengthened its role as the heart of the Granite City. The Paramount Theatre attracts nationally-renowned performances while the River's Edge Convention Center continually hosts large conferences and events. Companies seeking Class A office space have occupied and restored historic buildings and continue to drive new development and investment, such as the successful development of the Lady Slipper and Swan Lots. Downtown has transformed into a place where people not only work, but now live. New mixed-use development at the Northwest Corner Lot and North Riverfront Lot has spurred renewed interest in urban living, which gives residents access to shopping, entertainment, and transit all within walking distance.

Residential growth has not only occurred in Downtown, but also throughout the City Core. Residential subdivisions that stalled during the Great Recession are now complete, while new residential areas to the south are designed to preserve the natural environment and extend the City's trail system. Perhaps the most striking transformation has occurred within the City's Core Neighborhoods. The City and residents have invested capital and sweat equity to stabilize and beautify St. Cloud's founding residential areas. Block by block, the Core Neighborhoods have become some of the most desirable real estate in the City for their historic charm, well-maintained streets, and proximity to Downtown and St. Cloud State University.

Division Street continues to serve as a significant economic engine for the City; however, it now stands as a welcoming gateway into the community. No longer just a roadway, but now with increased landscaping, street-scaping, and pedestrian amenities, Division Street has transformed into an attractive and welcoming distinct place. The roadway supports a variety of businesses, including the Crossroads Mall, which draws consumers from the six-county region. The transformation of Division Street is further highlighted by the Cooper Avenue development, which has set a new standard for landscaping and building design along the busy corridor.



Local commercial and industrial districts throughout the City have taken cue from the success of Division Street, utilizing high quality design and landscaping to maximize employee and business recruitment and retention. St. Cloud has managed to improve the aesthetics of its commercial areas while maintaining its “business-friendly” reputation. Public art and high quality design have been key components to the success of business districts. In addition, the City has effectively worked with the private-sector partners to develop strong industrial business parks that provide quality job opportunities. Additional partnerships have supported the creation of several workforce development programs that provide “cradle-to-career” opportunities.

The local job market is supported by the City’s quality schools and local services. The St. Cloud Police Department and Fire Department have adjusted staffing and service to respond to increased growth while increasing safety. The St. Cloud Area School District stands as a diverse and high-achieving public school provider, and higher educational institutions of St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical and Community College and produce civic, social, and professional leaders. Growth of the healthcare sector, including CentraCare and the VA Hospital continue to provide jobs, provide high quality care, and have served as key community health partners.

Interspersed throughout the City’s residential and employment districts are several hundred acres of city parkland and natural areas. St. Cloud parks continue to serve as prized community assets that are easily accessible from all residential neighborhoods. The Whitney Park Aquatic Center and Neenah Creek Park, as well as the City’s many neighborhood and community parks, provide an assortment of programming and recreational amenities promotes healthy and active lifestyles for residents of all ages. The City’s natural areas are highlighted by the Mississippi River, which is easily accessible through the extension of the Beaver Island Trail. The extended Beaver Island Trail; however, is just one component of a now extensive trail network. St. Cloud is connected to the Lake Wobegon Trail, and the system is supplemented by pedestrian infrastructure and on-street bicycle facilities.

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City of St. Cloud has worked to link its parks, community facilities, and neighborhoods through a highly-connected roadway network. The growth of St. Cloud prompted a need to improve and expand the capacity of the City’s roadway network. New roadway extensions and wider roads have improved local and regional mobility, providing increased access to both older and emerging neighborhoods and destinations. The roadways are designed with safety and efficiency in mind, accommodating alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and transit.

Improvements in local and regional mobility have been complemented by enhanced travel options to areas outside of St. Cloud. The establishment of Northstar Commuter Rail service has provided a direct transit route to the Twin Cities region and improved employment opportunities throughout the City. And with commercial passenger flight service restored, residents and businesses from throughout the regional can also use the St. Cloud Regional Airport to access destinations well beyond central Minnesota.

In the twenty years since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, St. Cloud continues to rank as an exciting and desirable place to live and work. It is a destination for businesses, families, professionals, and students. The wealth of parks, educational providers, employment opportunities, high quality housing, and entertainment and retail opportunities afford St. Cloud residents a high quality of life. Understanding the link between health quality of life, St. Cloud has prioritized positive health outcomes and supported good health by ensuring residents are able to access health care, are physically active, and have access to safe, affordable and healthy food. The character of St. Cloud has much improved and the City has undergone significant change, but the strength of the Granite City community has managed to a remained a consistent and thriving asset.

4 Land Use & Development

St. Cloud is a desirable place to live and work, and has remained one of the fastest growing cities in Minnesota. Building on the foundation of the City's existing pattern of development, the Land Use Plan identifies what types of development are desired in the future for the City of St. Cloud and its planning area.

The Land Use Plan provides a framework for future planning decisions that builds upon the desirable characteristics of St. Cloud's established residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and employment areas. Retaining an appropriate mix of land uses in the community is key to ensuring that the City continues to grow and maintain itself in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner. As such, the Land Use Plan seeks to promote balanced growth while preserving natural areas and open space.

Goals

Promote growth that strengthens existing neighborhoods and minimizes impacts to City resources, infrastructure, and the natural environment.

Objectives

- Support incremental growth by prioritizing infill development within the City Core.
- Discourage noncontiguous development to limit impacts to community facilities and services.

- Ensure the City can accommodate future growth while maintaining existing infrastructure and services.
- Continue to maintain and invest in existing neighborhood infrastructure and services as the City grows.
- Coordinate future land uses with Stearns County, Benton County, Sherburne County and adjacent municipalities and townships.
- Ensure annexation agreements reflect current growth, development, and land use goals and practices.

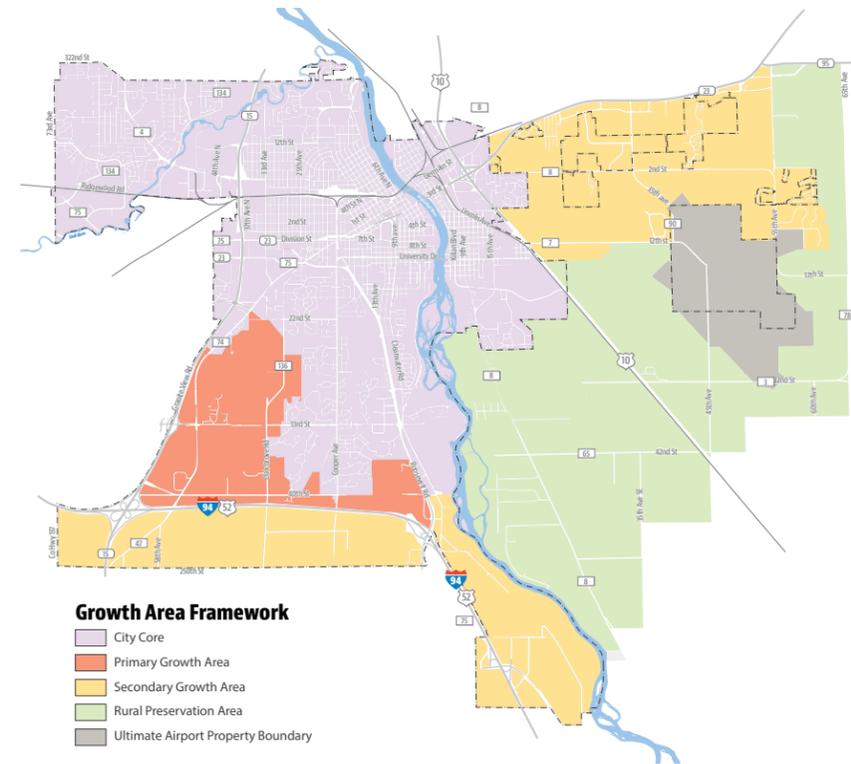
Population Projections (2010-2030) St. Cloud & St. Cloud Region

	2010		2030		Projected Change (2010-2030)	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Population	Percentage	
St. Cloud	65,842	50.6%	83,224	17,357	26.4%	
St. Cloud Region	130,225	100.0%	164,554	34,329	26.4%	

Source: St. Cloud APO Long Range Transportation Plan 2040

Land Area Needs (2030) St. Cloud

Population of City Core	59,631	Area Needed in 2030 5.8 sq. mi.
Area of City Core	19.9 sq. mi.	
Population Density of City	3,001 /sq. mi.	
2010-2030 Population Growth	17,357	



Growth Areas Framework

St. Cloud's population is increasing, and according to the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization, the region's population (as shown above) is projected to grow by more than 34,000 (26%) between 2010 and 2030. The City of St. Cloud makes up approximately 51% of the region's total population and if this share of the regional population is maintained, St. Cloud could grow by more than 17,000 between 2010 and 2030.

As St. Cloud's population grows, additional pressure will be placed on undeveloped areas within and surrounding the City, including extensive agricultural areas and natural areas. The Growth Areas Framework provides a general guide as to what areas are best suited to accommodate future growth through the year 2030. While the Land Use Plan presented in the following section identifies how various areas should be developed in response to projected population growth, the Growth Areas Framework identifies when such development should occur.

Accommodating Future Growth

The established core of St. Cloud has an average population density of approximately 3,000 people per square mile. If future development were to occur with a mix of land uses similar to that of existing development then approximately six square miles of land would be required to accommodate projected population growth through the year 2030. Building on this understanding, the Growth Areas Framework identifies what areas should be prioritized for development in accordance with the Land Use Plan and what areas should be preserved and retained to accommodate additional growth beyond the horizon of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Growth Areas Framework consists of four components: City Core, Primary Area, Secondary Area, and Rural Preservation Area. These components establish priorities for future growth within the planning area with an emphasis on leveraging existing infrastructure. The Growth Areas Framework does not preclude development from occurring outside priority growth areas; however, it serves to encourage infill development and avoid leap-frog development. Adhering to the Growth Areas Framework, in concert the Land Use Plan, will reinforce existing neighborhoods and ensure future growth occurs in a well-managed and resource-efficient manner.

City Core

The City Core is centered on Downtown St. Cloud and comprises portions of the City that have experienced extensive development, including the City's Core Neighborhoods, established commercial districts, industrial corridors, and new, complete residential subdivisions. Future growth in St. Cloud should be prioritized within the City Core to stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods. Within the City Core, the City should encourage the development of vacant or underutilized parcels, continue to strengthen code enforcement, and seek to enhance quality of life for existing residents through improved services, infrastructure, and neighborhood and commercial area beautification projects.

Primary Growth Area

The Primary Growth Area includes land that is adjacent to the City Core in incorporated areas to the south of 33rd Street South and north of I-94. This area is already served by infrastructure and City services. In accordance with the Land Use Plan, future development within the Primary Growth Area should primarily consist of single-family detached and attached housing complemented by a mix of multi-family strategically located adjacent to significant natural areas and major transportation corridors. The 33rd Street interchange at Trunk Highway 15 and a future potential interchange at County Road 136 and I-94 should anchor new commercial development within the Primary Growth area with smaller-scale, neighborhood-serving development occurring at other key intersections.

Opportunities exist for infill housing and redevelopment within the Primary Growth Area, including incomplete subdivisions where final build-out slowed during the recession. Moving forward, new housing construction should be compatible to the scale and intensity of existing development and connectivity should be encouraged with adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, complementary development should be encouraged within and adjacent to existing industrial and business park areas along the I-94 corridor.

As development occurs, new streets should be aligned to connect to the existing roadway network and existing neighborhoods. Trails and non-motorized transportation networks should be integrated to expand pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and access.

Secondary Growth Area

The Secondary Growth Area includes areas located south of I-94 and areas located in the western portion of Minden Township, south of Highway 23, in the north-eastern portion of the City's planning area. Development within the secondary growth area will require strategic annexation by the City to ensure newly incorporated areas are adequately served by municipal infrastructure without undermining the existing system. Portions of the Secondary Growth Area have already been incorporated into the City of St. Cloud. These areas are generally served by City infrastructure, but additional capacity may be required to properly supply future development with needed water and sewer.

Consistent with the Future Land Use plan, development within the Secondary Growth Area should primarily consist of single-family detached land uses, but should also include areas of denser, single-family attached and multi-family housing units. Additional employment-related development should also be encouraged near existing and future potential interchange areas along I-94 interchange as well as areas to the north of the St. Cloud Regional Airport.



Rural Preservation Area

The Rural Preservation Area consists of areas that are predominantly rural in nature with agricultural and rural residential uses that are not serviced by City infrastructure, primarily the southeast quadrant of the City's planning area. Development within the Rural Preservation Area will require significant investments in infrastructure including the extension of water and sewer across the Mississippi River in concert with the extension of 33rd Street east to Trunk Highway 10. Projected population growth through the year 2030 should be accommodated within the City Core and Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, minimizing the need for new development within the Rural Preservation Area.

In general, the City of St. Cloud should discourage development within the Rural Preservation Area until land within both the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas has been built out. Although it is projected that the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas have adequate capacity to absorb future growth and development over the life of this Comprehensive Plan, if development occurs more quickly and begins to impact the Rural Preservation Area, the City should consider revisiting the Comprehensive Plan. Development within the extended area will require further analysis to plan for impacts to infrastructure and community facilities and could be vulnerable to "leapfrog" development that overburdens existing systems.

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan identifies desired uses throughout the City of St. Cloud and its planning area. All parcels have been designated under one of 16 land use categories which include:

- Single-family Detached
- Mixed Residential
- Multi-Family
- South Side Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Downtown/Mixed Use
- Office & Research
- Light Industrial
- Quarry
- Parks and Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Rural
- Utility
- Airport

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached homes should remain the predominant land use within St. Cloud. This land use varies in intensity from half-acre lots in some newer subdivisions near the south of 22nd Street S, to more traditional, smaller lot single-family in the Core Neighborhoods and adjacent areas. While a mix of renter-occupied housing should be accommodated, single-family neighborhoods should primarily comprise owner-occupied housing and the conversion of owner-occupied housing to renter-occupied or multi-unit housing should be strongly discouraged. The build out of incomplete subdivisions should also be prioritized prior to new subdivision approval and construction.

Mixed Residential

This land use encompasses a range of residential uses. Mixed residential land uses include single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes, and low-density multi-family development. Single-family attached homes include both two-unit and multi-unit single-family attached structures, such as rowhomes and townhomes, but each dwelling maintains its own entrance. Within the mixed residential land use category, single-family attached homes provide an important housing option within St. Cloud, serving as a stepping stone to home ownership in single-family neighborhoods and providing opportunities for empty-nesters to downsize. Single-family attached development of limited scale and intensity may be integrated within a predominantly single-family detached area; however, it must maintain the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Single-family attached development can be used to buffer single-family detached residential areas from more intense development such as commercial or industrial. Similarly, low-density multi-family structures and high density single-detached homes can be seamlessly integrated utilizing similar design characteristics. This land use can be used at infill locations to increase the number of residents living in areas well-served by infrastructure and community assets such as Downtown St Cloud.

Multi-Family

Multi-family housing should continue to compose a significant portion of the overall housing stock in St. Cloud. Multi-family includes structures where residences are stacked horizontally and vertically, with individual units sharing a common entrance and on-site amenities. The multi-family category includes traditional multi-family housing such as apartments and condominiums, as well as senior housing and affordable housing developments. The Multi-Family land use serves a vital role in providing a diverse range of housing St. Cloud to a range of incomes and stages of life including from higher education students and young professionals, to recent immigrants and seniors.

As with mixed residential development, multi-family development should be encouraged along major corridors where it can serve as a buffer between commercial areas and single-family neighborhoods. Properties in and around Downtown St. Cloud should also be targeted for multi-family development where residents are in proximity to numerous community amenities. Multi-family infill of appropriate scale and character should be encouraged while the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family structures should be discouraged.

Downtown Vision

As highlighted in this illustration from the 2013 Placemaking Design Manual, the St. Cloud community has long supported a vision for the downtown as a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use district with strong ties to the Mississippi River.

The Comprehensive Plan encourages continued reinvestment and redevelopment in the downtown to realize this vision. New development should include residential uses in mixed use structures as well as multi-family buildings to support downtown retailers and restaurants. Surface parking lots should also be redeveloped to accommodate desired development

As properties are redeveloped, a strong emphasis should be placed on improving public access to the riverfront. Private investment should also be complemented by public investments in high quality streetscape and green space improvements throughout the downtown.

More detailed discussion of the vision for Downtown St. Cloud and recommendations to achieve that vision are provided in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.



Southside Residential

Home to St. Cloud State University and a large student population, the Southside University Neighborhood represents a unique residential land use category within the City. The historic Southside consists of a distinct mix of single-family homes, townhomes, multi-family structures, and single family homes that have been converted to multi-family units. Multiple housing types often intermingle within the same block and while significant multi-family and rental housing development has occurred within the Southside, there is a strong desire to retain and enhance the single-family character of the area as reinvestment and redevelopment occurs.

A mix of housing should continue to be supported to ensure long-time residents and students have high quality housing options. Regardless of whether a given property is owner-occupied for rental, however design guidelines and updated development regulations are needed to ensure that future development is of appropriate scale and character and well maintained. The conversion of additional single-family homes to multi-family units should be discouraged moving forward. These steps will provide current property owners with the fair certainty that redevelopment of adjacent properties will serve to enhance their property and encourage further reinvestment. Addition discussion of these strategies is provided in **Chapter 5: Housing & Neighborhoods**.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use category consists of a multi-story, mixed use structures featuring retail, restaurant, and service uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on the upper floors. Mixed use development is concentrated within Downtown St. Cloud and should continue to be encouraged throughout the Downtown to increase foot traffic and create a more vibrant atmosphere. Buildings should be located at or near the sidewalk with parking provided through a combination of on-street spaces and off-street parking structures. Given the availability and proximity of public transit and other amenities, reduced parking requirements for residential units should also be considered to help encourage more dense development that complements the existing historic character of Downtown. Additional discussion of mixed use development in Downtown St. Cloud is located in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land use consists of small-scale commercial business that cater to the everyday shopping and service needs of St. Cloud's residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood Commercial uses are geared toward the service, retail, and convenience needs of the surrounding community. Structures within a Neighborhood Commercial area should be of a similar size and scale to the adjacent residential community and exhibit complementary architecture and materials. Pedestrian connectivity and vehicular parking and circulation management should be promoted to encourage walkability and reduce potential conflict points.

Corridor Commercial

The Corridor Commercial land use designation encompasses a range of commercial uses that are sited along primary roadways. These include, but are not limited to retail, entertainment, and service commercial businesses that are sited within large commercial developments, inline retail centers, or as individual sites along roadways such as Division Street and University Avenue. Because corridor commercial areas are sited along busy roadways, curb cuts should be reduced and cross-access encouraged between businesses to minimize conflict points and increase access. Corridor Commercial areas are auto-oriented by nature, but should be enhanced to be pedestrian-friendly including the introduction of parking lot and perimeter landscaping that fosters an inviting environment for all users.



Regional Commercial

Areas designated as Regional Commercial are intended to accommodate larger commercial shopping centers and developments that serve a more regional function, drawing on a customer base that extends beyond the City limits. These areas often have a mix of big box stores and national retailers set among large shared parking areas. Commercial service uses are also appropriate within Regional Commercial areas, but must be compatible with adjacent and nearby retail and commercial shopping areas and should be located so as to not occupy prime retail locations.

As key destinations for tens of thousands visitors on a daily basis, the appearance of Regional Commercial areas has a significant impact on the City of St. Cloud's image within the region. As such, enhancements to on-site landscaping, vehicular circulation, and pedestrian access should be prioritized to create a unique sense of place that is welcoming to visitors and local residents alike.

Office & Research

The Office & Research land use category accommodates professional offices, medical offices, and research facilities that are clustered or arranged in a business park or campus setting. This land use broadens the potential to attract employment-related development to St. Cloud by providing opportunities to accommodate corporate users in areas outside of the Downtown. Similar to light industrial uses, future Office and Research areas are concentrated along the I-94 and Truck Highway 15 corridors where land is available to accommodate larger scale users. As prominent features along major roadways, Office and Research developments should be of high quality and reflect positively on the image of the City using high quality architecture, signage, and landscaping.

Light Industrial

Areas designated for Light Industrial are intended to accommodate a variety of uses ranging from light assembly, storage and distribution, low intensity fabrication operations, intense commercial service uses, and others. Examples of Light Industrial uses range from larger users like Electrolux and Pan-O-Gold Baking Company, to the I-94 Business Park and smaller users along the Roosevelt Road corridor. The scale and intensity of Light Industrial uses should vary based on context and respect the scale and character of nearby non-industrial development. Industrial uses should be well buffered and screened to minimize noise, light, and other environmental nuisances to adjacent commercial and residential areas.

Public/Semi-Public

The Public/Semi-Public category encompasses a wide variety of uses that provide public services and facilities to St. Cloud residents and businesses. Specific uses include, but are not limited to, government-owned facilities, hospitals, local schools, universities, and places of worship. A significant portion of the Public/Semi-Public land use category is dedicated to medical uses. These areas include the St. Cloud Hospital, CentraCare Medical Plaza, and the VA Medical Center. Higher education institutions such as St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical Community College, and the Minnesota Correctional Facility also make up much of the Public/Semi-Public land use category. Because Public/Semi-Public land uses generally serve the public, multi-modal access including vehicular, public transit, walking, and biking should be integrated within all Public/Semi-Public sites and nearby neighborhoods. Additional discussion of Public/Semi-Public uses is located in **Chapter 8: Community Facilities & Service Plan**.

Rural Preservation

The Rural Preservation land use encompasses the southeast quadrant of the St. Cloud planning area. Currently, agriculture and rural homesteads are the predominant land uses within this area and should remain as such during the life of this Comprehensive Plan. Development should be discouraged within the Rural Preservation areas until other portions of the planning area are built out in accordance with the Growth Areas Framework. Should significant development pressure exist to accommodate a growing population and job base, the City should reevaluate and update the Comprehensive Plan.

Quarry

Known as the Granite City, St. Cloud and its planning area are home to numerous quarries dedicated to the extraction of stone. It is anticipated that existing quarries will remain active during the life of the Comprehensive Plan. As discussed in the Industrial Areas Framework, over the near term, it is important that the City and surrounding townships continue to enforce mining operation regulations to minimize negative impacts on nearby residents related to noise, dust, and potential nuisances. Over the near term, it is important that long term site reclamation plans are in place to ensure compatibility with future development and leverage quarry areas as natural assets to the greater St. Cloud community.

Parks & Open Space

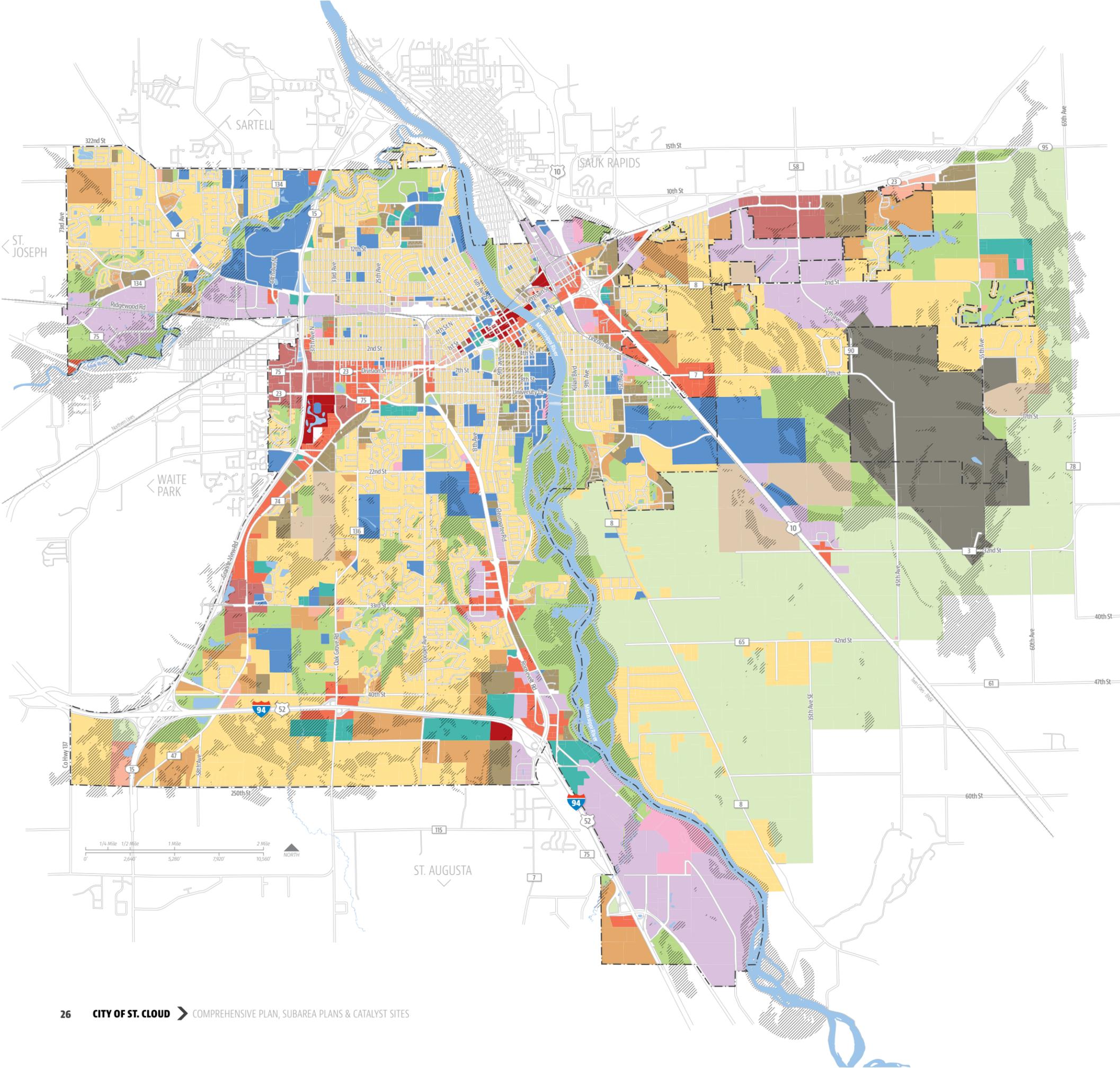
The parks and open space category is defined by areas that are used for active and passive recreation as well as natural areas. These include fully programmed park spaces that are owned and operated by the City of St. Cloud, common open space areas within subdivisions, and significant environmental features such as large tree stands, floodplains, wetlands, and lands with steep slopes. Additional discussion of Parks and Open Space uses is located in **Chapter 9: Parks, Open Space & Environmental Features**.

Utilities

The Utilities land use includes land that is dedicated to utility infrastructure such as gas, electric, water, and wastewater. This land use also includes various utility and railroad rights-of-way.

Airport

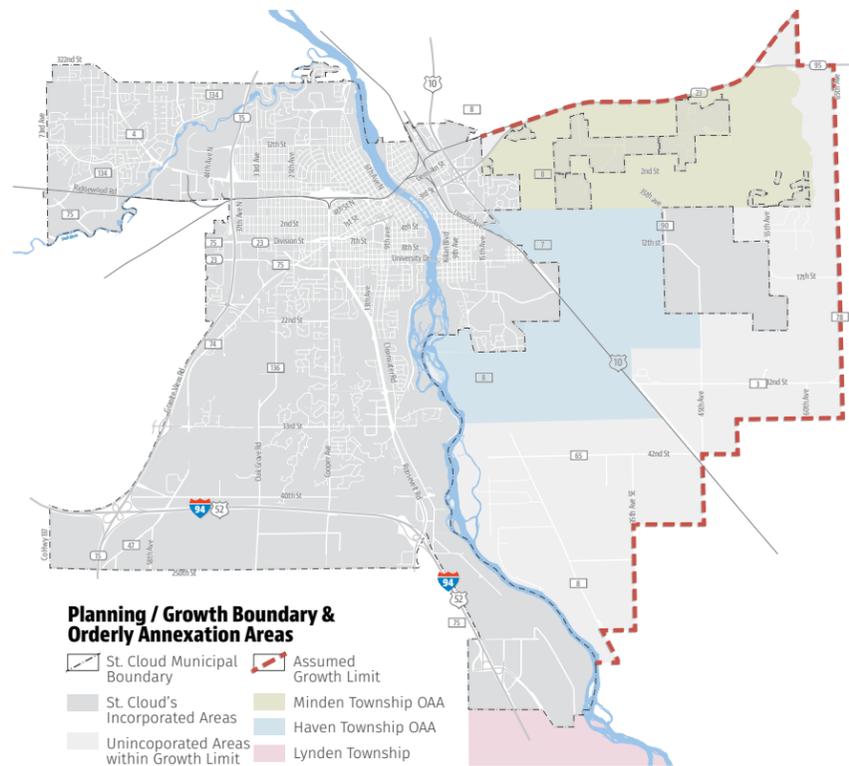
The airport land use category includes the St. Cloud Regional Airport as well as adjacent land that may be impacted by airport operations as identified in the St. Cloud Regional Airport Master Plan Update (2014).



CITY OF ST. CLOUD Land Use Plan

KEY

- Single Family Detached
- Mixed Residential
- Multi-Family
- South Side Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Office & Research
- Light Industrial
- Parks and Open Space
- Public/Semi-Public
- Rural
- Utilities
- Quarry
- Airport
- Environmental Constraints



Orderly Annexation

An Orderly Annexation Agreements (OAA) encourages the managed growth and development of rural lands located in proximity to urbanized areas. This strategy prevents “leap frog development” and the need to extend municipal services to areas that are not contiguous to existing municipal boundaries and infrastructure. The City of St. Cloud has two OAAs in place that will both expire in 2025.

Minden Township OAA

The Minden Township orderly annexation area is roughly bounded Highway 23 to the north, Trunk Highway 10 to the west, the Benton County line to the south, and the Elk River to the east. The 2001 annexation agreement indicates that 3,370 acres of land in Minden Township will be annexed by resolution after December 31, 2025. At that time, the City will need to ensure that adequate public services (police, fire, snow plow, sanitation, etc.) and infrastructure will be provided to existing and future development in the area.

The 2001 agreement outlines annexation procedures while Minden Township Orderly Annexation Area Master Plan dictates land use for the area, which was updated to be consistent with the 2003 St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan. While the development principles remain relevant and should be applied to new projects within the OAA area, the agreement should be amended to reflect the minor land use plan changes within this Comprehensive Plan. These changes include:

- A focus on rural preservation for undeveloped areas to the west of 55th Avenue SE.
- The location of light industrial uses along the Highway 23 corridor (in keeping with established development patterns) with a corresponding reduction in the amount of commercial uses along the corridor.

Haven Township OAA

The City of St. Cloud and Haven Township entered into an OAA in 2010 to encourage development contiguous to existing City boundaries and to “limit non-farm rural development.” Under the agreement, the areas identified are to follow land uses according to the Sherburne County Land Use Plan with the intent of protecting the areas from scattered and piecemeal residential and non-residential development. Haven will protect current agricultural uses by limiting housing to one home per 40 acres without a plat, and to five acre lots in areas substantially wooded. Haven will maintain existing commercial and industrial districts, and protect and promote existing commercial activities. Tracts within the OAA area may only be annexed through a petition of a majority of property owners or the City may initiate annexation proceedings after the OAA expires in 2025.

Much of the Haven Township OAA is located within the Rural Preservation Area identified in the Growth Areas Framework. As such, it is not anticipated that significant development pressure will occur within this area over the life of the Comprehensive Plan. Portions of the Haven Township OAA area located to the east of the St. Cloud Regional Airport are identified for future single-family residential and commercial development and should the City annex any areas within the Haven Township OAA boundaries, development should occur in accordance to the Land Use Plan.

Lynden Township - Future Annexation

While St. Cloud's future residential and commercial development should be accommodated within the City's existing boundaries or nearby portions of Minden and Haven Townships, opportunities exist in neighboring Lynden Township to expand St. Cloud's industrial base. The City has sold much of the land within the existing I-94 Business Park with limited options for expansion within the City's existing boundaries. Demand exists for additional business park development in areas to the south in Lynden Township along the Opportunity Drive corridor. Given development pressure in this area and existing market opportunities, it is appropriate for the City to begin to engage Lynden Township officials in conversation regarding future potential annexation and the development of a formal orderly annexation agreement.

Housing & Neighborhoods

St. Cloud is a mix of old and new neighborhoods, with some currently under construction and others that were established in the 19th Century. The Core Neighborhoods include a variety of single-family homes, from large Victorians to small Tudor cottages, duplexes, and multi-family structures. Housing options within the rest of the City consist of clusters of single-family subdivisions, rural residential homes, and single-family attached and multi-family complexes. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides strategies and policy recommendations to improve and enhance the City's varied residential neighborhoods and districts.

Goal

Enhance and maintain the City's residential neighborhoods while providing a diverse range of housing opportunities for the community.

Objectives

- Utilize targeted incentives to catalyze improvements within the Core Neighborhoods.
- Stabilize and enhance existing neighborhoods through code enforcement and beautification.

- Prioritize the completion of existing residential subdivisions and vacant residential parcels.
- Develop new residential subdivisions using traditional neighborhood development and/or low impact design.
- Support affordable housing development to support elderly and low-income members of the community.
- Ensure neighborhoods are well connected to local commercial areas, educational and civic facilities, and recreational amenities.
- Monitor the status and efficacy of housing and neighborhood improvement initiatives.
- Prevent premature residential development of rural and agricultural areas.



Housing Conditions Overview

Single-family homes are the predominant housing type in the City, with nearly 5,000 acres devoted to this specific land use; however, multi-family housing comprises nearly 700 acres in the City, including approximately 100 single-family home structures that have been converted to multi-family use over the years. Much of the demand for multi-family housing is generated by students attending St. Cloud State University and St. Cloud Technical and Community College, as well as the City's growing immigrant population. Nevertheless, given the range of housing options, there is a sustained need for affordable housing units.

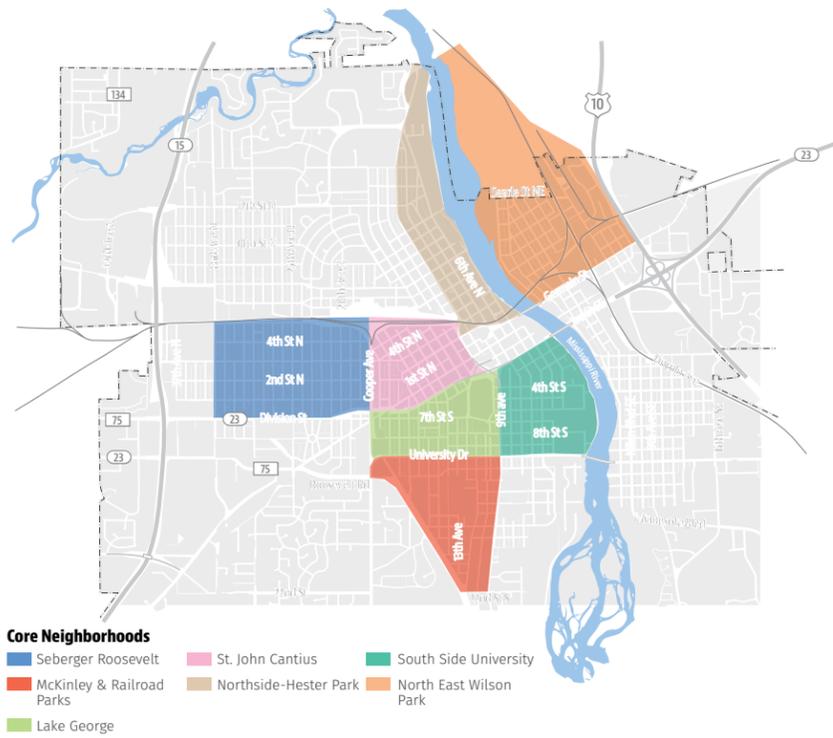
With a high concentration of older housing stock and large student and rental populations, housing conditions in St. Cloud's Core Neighborhoods have declined as a result of several factors including the 2008 recession, conversion of single-family homes to multi-family units, and deferred maintenance. The City of St. Cloud has had a rental property licensing program in place since the 1960s and an increased calls for action from residents to address deferred maintenance of area homes spurred the creation new landlord educational programs and increased enforcement.

While property maintenance issues create challenges for Core Neighborhoods, vacant residential properties pose a threat to newer St. Cloud neighborhoods. Although serviced by City infrastructure, numerous areas have experienced an increase in foreclosure activity in the wake of the Great Recession (2007-2009 general economic decline). Nevertheless, the St. Cloud community is resilient and continues to implement new initiatives to improve the City's diverse residential neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force

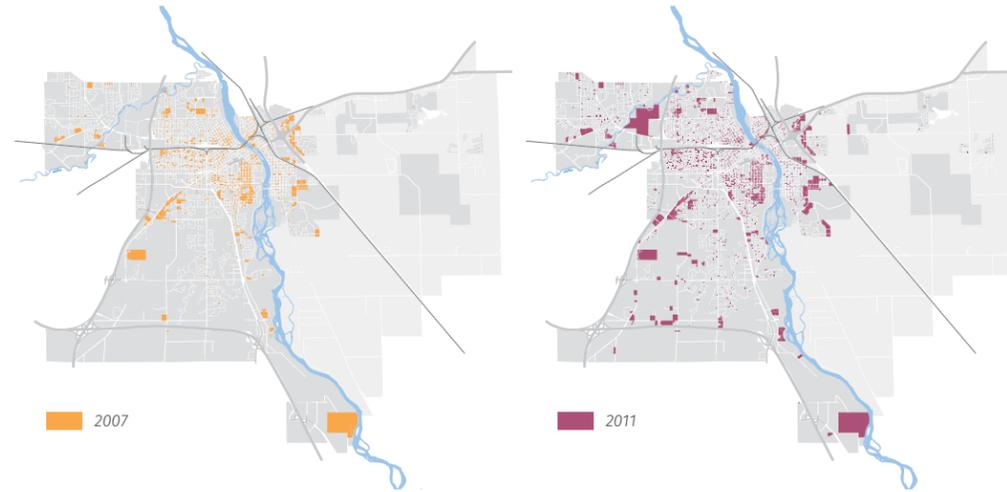
In 2006, the City undertook a joint study with Mankato and Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota, to understand the various tools and strategies being used by communities to address growth in rental housing and maintenance of existing neighborhood character. The result of the study was a *Neighborhood Action Plan* developed by the Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force that outlined new initiatives to positively impact St. Cloud's neighborhoods. The 2008 round of the Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force confirmed 2006 goals, reviewed relevant local and regional practices, identified actions, and developed recommendations.

The City will reconvene the Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force in late 2015 to review accomplishments from the 2008 round, and focus new initiatives addressing the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. Quality of life issues include rental conversions, neighborhood safety, access to parks and open space, multi-modal mobility, and many other factors. In addition to discussing a wide array of topics impacting quality of life in St. Cloud's neighborhoods, the 2015 Task Force should be used to more fully vet the Residential Areas Framework recommendations, revise the recommendations as appropriate, and identify resources for implementation. The City should also reconvene the Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force on a regular basis to verify the status and efficacy of initiatives and make modifications accordingly.



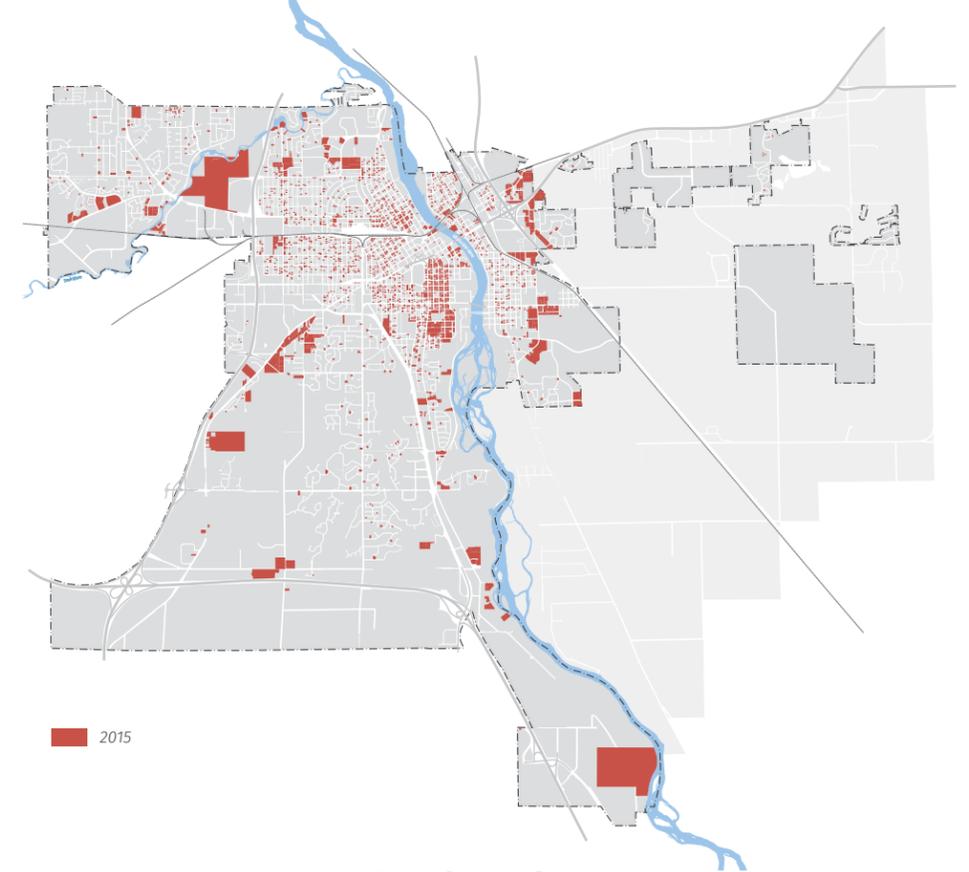
Core Neighborhoods

- Seberger Roosevelt
- St. John Cantius
- South Side University
- McKinley & Railroad Parks
- Northside-Hester Park
- North East Wilson Park
- Lake George



Changes in Rental Housing

The following maps demonstrate the progression in the amount of rental housing units throughout the City.



Residential Areas Framework

Core Neighborhoods

Much of the City’s residential identity is defined by its 11 Core Neighborhoods. The Core Neighborhoods include St. Cloud’s oldest and most varied housing stock, but are also areas that are in the most need of reinvestment. These neighborhoods should primarily consist of single-family detached homes, as was the case when they were first built. As a complement to single-family homes, a mix of single-family attached and multi-family development is appropriate within the Core Neighborhoods, however development should be limited in scale and concentrated in areas with proximity to amenities such as transit, shopping, and community assets like the Mississippi River. In addition to encouraging reinvestment in the existing housing stock, the City and its partners should focus on improving quality of life within the Core Neighborhoods including enhanced code enforcement, pedestrian connectivity and safety, and neighborhood beautification. More targeted strategies are provided in the following section entitled **Core Neighborhood Strategies**.

Single-Family Neighborhoods

With the exception of some isolated neighborhoods located adjacent to the Core Neighborhoods, much of St. Cloud’s newer residential areas were developed in the form of master planned subdivisions, characterized by larger lots along curvilinear blocks and limited points of access to adjacent neighborhoods and commercial districts. As with the Core Neighborhoods, the quality of these single-family neighborhoods should be maintained through active code enforcement, property maintenance, and context-sensitive infill development and reinvestment. The build out of incomplete subdivisions should also be a priority. Where possible and appropriate, new pedestrian infrastructure and roadway extensions should be installed to improve connections to nearby community facilities and commercial areas and decrease resident reliance on automobiles for making short trips.

Mixed Residential

Several clusters of multi-family and single-family attached housing are located throughout the community, and are especially concentrated near St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, at the eastern terminus of University Drive, and near Diocese Park. Non-single-family residential development should also be encouraged in proximity to future neighborhood commercial and corridor commercial areas, Downtown St. Cloud, and major institutions including hospitals, universities, and others. While multi-family developments provide valuable housing options for the community, poor design can leave residents isolated from the surrounding neighborhood. Single-family attached and multi-family development clusters should be well connected to the local pedestrian and roadway network and adjacent residential areas and commercial districts. Similar to single-family neighborhoods, code enforcement and increased landscaping will serve to strengthen neighborhoods with existing mixed residential land uses.

Downtown

As the heart of the City, Downtown St. Cloud should include dense housing types that include mixed-use and multi-family units. Increased residential opportunities in Downtown not only increases housing options, but also support local retailers and restaurants. Priority development sites include surface parking lots and single-story building parcels that can be consolidated for larger-scale mixed-use and multi-family developments. The design and density of the structures should follow the Character Areas defined in the Downtown Subarea. Detailed discussion and strategies for Downtown St. Cloud is located in **Section 10: Subarea Plans**.

Residential Transition

St. Cloud includes several residential areas that are isolated by adjacent commercial and industrial uses. Given the impacts to residential areas from higher intensity uses, these areas should transition to commercial or industrial uses over time as properties become available for purchase or redevelopment. The City should utilize land use planning and zoning to support the transition of isolated residential areas into more appropriate commercial and industrial uses.



Growth Area Residential

While infill development and the completion of existing subdivisions should be a priority, there will be ample opportunity for residential development within St. Cloud's growth areas over the life of the Comprehensive Plan. Residential development within the growth areas should predominantly consist of single-family neighborhoods with a complement of strategically located multi-family housing. These neighborhoods should be anchored by commercial districts located at key intersections with an emphasis on access to retail, services, and employment opportunities.

The use of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) principles should be encouraged throughout St. Cloud's growth areas. In areas where significant natural areas and sensitive environmental features such as wetlands are present, Low Impact Design (LID) principles should be used to maintain traditional neighborhood densities while preserving areas of open space. The use of both TND and LID strategies reinforce recommendations within the City's 2010 Sustainability Framework Plan and 2011 Stormwater Management Plan.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), also sometimes referred to as neo-traditional development, emulates many of the attributes typical to urban neighborhoods built prior to World War II. This type of design incorporates a mix of land uses within a compact street grid. Local commercial areas can be supported by a greater density of residential units, which can consist of mixed use, multi-family, single-family attached, and small lot single-family development. Pedestrian travel is prioritized through the use of narrow street widths and the inclusion of sidewalks, high-visibility crosswalks, and trails. Finally, TND integrates parks and community facilities to make a complete neighborhood, much like the City's existing Core Neighborhoods. In essence, a TND-designed community shares many of the features of St. Cloud's Core Neighborhoods.

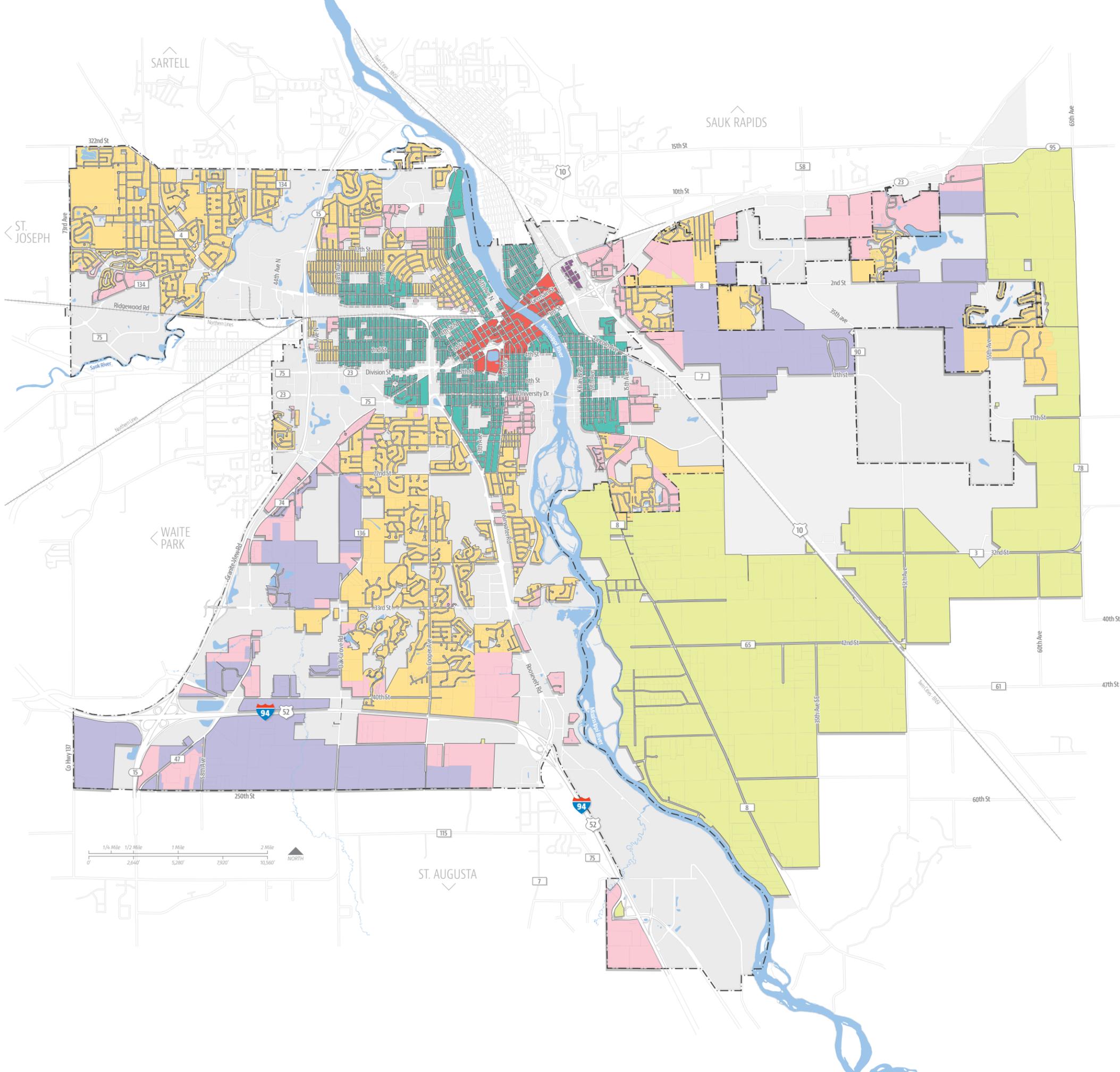
Low Impact Design

Low impact design is an approach to residential development that preserves contiguous areas of open space and natural areas by clustering smaller residential parcels on select areas of a site. The overall housing density remains the same, but the site design allows for larger areas of common open space that can be used for conservation or neighborhood parkland. This approach to development also provides for naturalized stormwater management while minimizing the amount of roadway and utility infrastructure needed to service a given development.

Low impact design should be strongly encouraged within portions of St. Cloud's growth areas where Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) such as floodplains, wetlands, areas of high slope, prairies, rock outcroppings, and wooded areas could be impacted by typical subdivision development. ESAs should be preserved and integrated within the development and the existing topography should be used to dictate the design of new development, preserving an area's natural drainage.

Rural

Rural land includes areas within the southeast portion of the planning boundary. As these areas are not currently serviced by city infrastructure and remain within the secondary growth area, their uses will remain predominantly agricultural and low-density residential. To protect the agricultural uses and limit leapfrog development, the City should follow guidelines per the Haven Township Orderly Annexation Agreement, by which housing is limited to one home per 40 acres without a plat, and to five acre lots in areas substantially wooded.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD
**Residential Areas
 Framework Plan**

RESIDENTIAL FRAMEWORKS

- Downtown
- Core Neighborhoods
- Residential Transition
- Single Family Neighborhoods
- Mixed Residential
- Growth Area Residential
- Rural

Core Neighborhood Strategies

While issues regarding housing quality, a growing rental housing stock, and neighborhood appearance are perhaps most significant within the Southside Neighborhood, they remain present in several of St. Cloud's older residential areas. The following strategies are intended to complement the recommendations of previously adopted neighborhood plans, such as the *South Side University Neighborhood Master Plan*, and should be considered for throughout the Core Neighborhoods.

Ultimately, the City, the St. Cloud Neighborhood Coalition (SCNC), and other partners must work together to maintain and enhance the diverse character of the Core Neighborhoods, including long- and short-term residents as well as anchor institutions.

Multi-Family Design Guidelines

Multi-family housing development and single-family rental conversions have changed neighborhood character significantly in some areas including the Southside Neighborhood. While single-family development and homeownership remain key components of neighborhood stability that should continue to be encouraged, additional guidelines are also needed to ensure that non-single-family and rental properties are of high quality.

The City and its partners in the Core Neighborhoods should work to establish and adopt design standards to guide the development of the variety of single-family attached and multi-family housing types. Design standards should be created to apply to new multi-family development as well as renovated properties. These standards should ensure that new investment in multi-family development improves the quality and livability of the neighborhood as a whole while providing housing opportunities for a wider array of lifestyles. This task would also likely require modifications to regulations in the R3 and R3A zoning districts to provide for stricter landscaping and parking placement requirements.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

In addition to ensuring a good fit within the single-family character of established neighborhoods, design standards could also address safety in areas surrounding anchor institutions such as the SCSU campus. The incorporation of standards related to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) can be used to create a physical environment that defines public and private space, creates opportunities for natural surveillance, and guide pedestrian and vehicular traffic in manner that discourages crime. These CPTED measures would foster an environment in which both students and year-round residents can feel safe.

Historic Conservation Districts

The City created the Southside Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (SSNCO) District in 2010. The SSNCO promotes development that is in character with the existing scale and architectural style of the neighborhood, protects the district from the loss of architecturally or historically important buildings, prohibits new construction that is not in character with the neighborhood, and protects against additions to buildings that would lessen their architectural importance. The SSNCO ensures that the height, scale, and setbacks of new construction respect the built form of existing contiguous structures on the block. The ordinance also guides design features such as building entrance, materials, window arrangement and sizing, and parking.

Assistance Programs

The City has established partnerships with the SCNC and St. Cloud Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to facilitate reinvestment in the Core Neighborhoods. The HRA provides several deferred loan programs targeted at home repair and homeownership assistance within the Core Neighborhoods. Applications for these funds have remained steady through the past several years, but the HRA has historically had the capacity to only administer between 8-15 loan applications per year based on staffing and available funding levels. As demand exceeds funding and staff resources, eligible loan recipients are put on a waitlist. As one of the few funding sources available to incentivize targeted reinvestment, the City and should consider identifying staff or other resources to assist the HRA in administering its Core Neighborhood programs.

Encourage Home Ownership

The Core Neighborhoods contain a significant number of rental housing units. While rental units can provide an affordable housing option for students and lower income residents, the proliferation of rental units can destabilize neighborhoods due to the transient nature of the occupants.

The South Side University Neighborhood Homebuyer Program was created by the HRA to facilitate the conversion of rental properties back to single-family, owner-occupied homes. While only one grant was issued between February 2009 and November 2014, when the program was discontinued, the program was identified as a critical tool by stakeholders.

The City should work with the HRA and SCNC to evaluate the Homebuyer Program and identify potential modifications to make it more attractive to potential property owners. This may require increasing the incentive, increasing awareness of the program through targeted marketing, or providing educational programs about converting former single-family home rental units to owner-occupied homes. The City and HRA should also evaluate the potential to expand the program to other Core Neighborhoods to allow the program to gain better traction in the community.

Block-by-Block Incentives

While the various HRA Core Neighborhood programs have resulted in the renovation or rehabilitation of numerous individual properties, areas facing significant rental property conversions have not seen a significant change in overall housing quality. The incremental, lot-by-lot approach in the application of these programs may be limiting the transformative impact of grant funds that is desired by residents.

The City, HRA, and other partners should evaluate the implementation of a block-by-block approach to administering grant funds for the redevelopment and revitalization of more distressed neighborhoods. Such a program could complement community-wide programs while targeting specific blocks for reinvestment, rather than isolated properties for individual improvement. Doing so allows for the stabilization of an entire area and also increases the tangible impact of improvement projects and incentive programs.

The block-by-block approach will require a concentrated and well-coordinated effort by the City, property owners, investors, lending institutions and others. Policies and procedures that facilitate reinvestment including zero or no interest loans, tax breaks, permit fee waivers, infrastructure improvements, and other mechanisms will be necessary. While block-by-block reinvestment is still speculative from a financial perspective, the comfort level of buyers and investors lies in the fact that there are others sharing in the risk and potential benefit.

Residential Areas Strategies

Infill Development

In the early 2000s, St. Cloud built approximately 300 homes per year and the City platted and ran infrastructure services to meet developer demand. As the economy slowed, roadway and utility projects were completed to serve to-be-developed subdivisions. Infrastructure is now in place to service hundreds of vacant residential lots.

While most of these vacant lots are now in the tax forfeiture and are being made available through public auction at a fraction of the cost, many residential subdivisions remain vacant. The reinvestment in and improvement of existing neighborhoods should be prioritized over the construction of new subdivisions and greenfield development. In addition to providing a more complete urban fabric and higher quality of life, infill development promotes the efficient use of City resources and infrastructure that have already been invested in established neighborhoods.

Prior to approval of new plats and subdivisions, the City should encourage the completion of existing subdivisions. The City should also evaluate revising existing development agreements or relaxing guidelines or requirements to foster development within incomplete subdivisions. For example, if portions of a traditional single-family subdivision have yet to development, the City might consider allowing for the development of other complementary housing product types such as small lot single-family residential or townhomes that respond to a different portion of the market and may be more in demand. Regardless of end use, measures should be taken to facilitate new development that is consistent with the existing neighborhood character and of the same high quality as nearby homes that have already been built.

As infill development occurs within both residential subdivisions and the Core Neighborhoods, new homes should incorporate the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs include, but are not limited to the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, swales, green roofs, and permeable paving to manage stormwater on-site. The City should also consider making development approval contingent upon the requirement to fully install sidewalks, improved open space areas, storm-water systems, and other community amenities.

Code Enforcement

Consistent, fair, efficient code enforcement is an effective strategy to maintain existing neighborhoods and help revitalize those that have fallen into disrepair. Results from the *2014 Rental Housing and Code Enforcement Status Report* indicate that approximately 80% of property owners will bring their property into compliance upon issuance of a notice of violation. In 2014, the City resumed neighborhood sweeps, which is a strategy to proactively review neighborhoods for property maintenance and nuisance violations. The City should continue to be proactive, utilizing neighborhood sweeps throughout the City to cite property owners of code violations. Adequate staffing should continue to be budgeted to maintain these operations on a regular basis to maintain stabilized and strong neighborhoods. The City should also consider more frequent sweeps for problematic areas, such as the Southside Neighborhood.

Neighborhood Beautification

In addition to housing quality, public realm improvements and on-site improvements to beautify a neighborhood can have significant positive impacts on property values and quality of life. In addition to improved code enforcement, the City should work with property owners and local neighborhood groups to identify local neighborhood beautification initiatives.

Streetscape & Gateways

The City should consider implementing streetscape improvements at key intersections and gateways within the Core Neighborhoods. While additional parkway trees and sidewalk enhancements are desirable throughout residential areas, targeted investments can serve to improve neighborhood appearance with minimal investment. Gateway features including unique landscaping treatments, gateway signs, wayfinding, and distinctive hardscape can be used to delineate neighborhood edges and enhance sense of place. Recent gateway signs installed along the SCSU campus edge represent neighborhood scale improvements that could be replicated in other areas.

On-site Landscaping

The City should consider revising landscaping requirements for single-family attached and multi-family development to increase the amount of green space and landscaping within residential neighborhoods. Revisions to regulations could also be accompanied by complementary educational seminars about home gardening and landscaping, as well as incentive to increase on-site landscaping on previously completed developments.

Pedestrian Lighting

The City can improve the aesthetics and safety of neighborhoods through enhanced pedestrian street lighting. The City should work to improve key pedestrian and bike routes through residential areas with pedestrian-scale lighting that is placed on fixtures between 8-15 feet in height to provide more specialized illumination of pedestrian facilities. While long term maintenance must be accounted for, by focusing on key routes such as 3rd Street N, the City can tap into state and federal transportation grant funding to aid in the initial installation costs of pedestrian lighting. This lighting can also utilize decorative fixtures and poles with banner signs to strengthen neighborhood identity on various pedestrian links.

The Arts: Neighborhood Identity

The *ArtSparks Matching Fund Program* was created to pair neighborhoods with artists and/or arts organizations to develop projects that enhance and strengthen neighborhoods through the arts. The City should continue to work with neighborhood groups to further define neighborhood identity by strengthening distinct boundaries and defining features.

For example, the Lake George neighborhood utilizes street signage to identify the neighborhood. Other neighborhoods could utilize neighborhood gateway signs that integrate public art and work with the City to install decorative crosswalks to both increase pedestrian safety and give a unique identity to the neighborhood. The Northeast Wilson Park neighborhood association worked with local artists to design and install this gateway sign and sculpture.



Tech High School

The future of the 11-acre Tech High School site has been a significant point of discussion in recent years as ISD 742's population continues to grow and move across multiple jurisdictions. The school district must plan for facility renovation and/or relocation to best serve its student population. Construction of a new high school remains an attractive alternative that likely will be the subject of a future public referendum.

The Tech High School site's significant size, prominent location on the west bank of Lake George, and frontage along Division Street make it a highly desirable redevelopment opportunity in the heart of the City. However, the site has a long history as a community and neighborhood asset. It is important that any development process include extensive community engagement to identify a market-viable and community-supported redevelopment concept for the property.

Appropriate Development

At approximately 11 acres in size, the Tech High School site could be developed to accommodate multiple uses. Given its location within the Lake George neighborhood and its legacy as a community amenity, the following uses would be appropriate for the site:

- Neighborhood scale commercial development that fronts Division Street and utilizes access management and enhanced landscaping and screening to ensure minimal impacts on adjacent residential properties.
- Multi-family residential including senior housing that can leverage the site's extensive views of Lake George and ready access to nearby parks and recreation amenities.
- Community center that retains public access to the site and could potentially renovate and reuse existing recreation facilities at the site.
- Artist live-work units including a gallery or outdoor café area to strengthen the arts community.

Historic Preservation

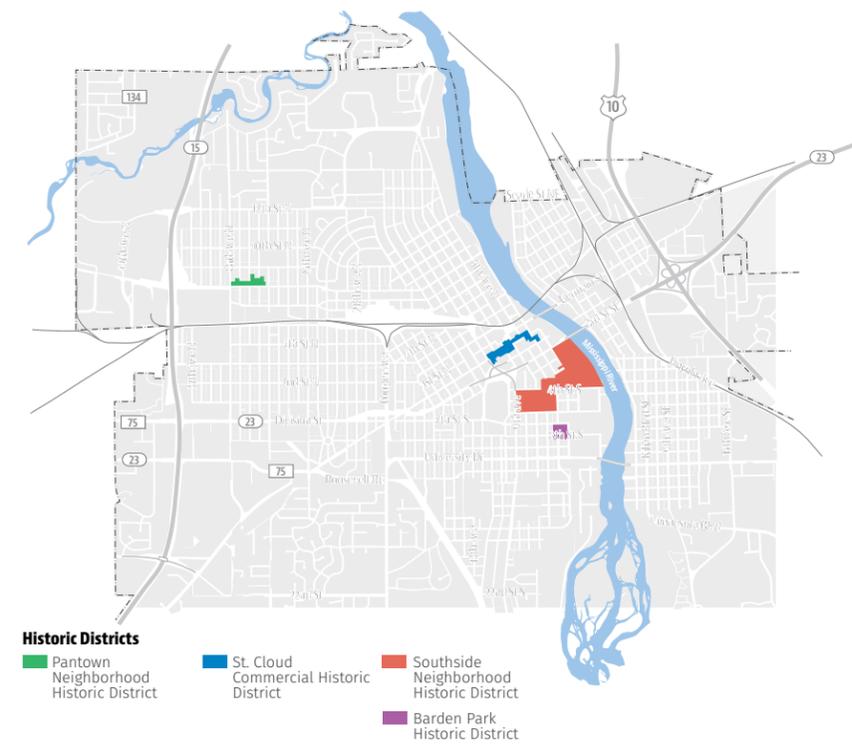
Where possible, future development should adapt and reuse the older portions of the Tech High School building. Such efforts should focus on structures in the southeast corner of the site where the traditional school façade remains intact.

Public Use

If made available, there is a strong desire among the community to maintain a portion of the historic high school as a public asset. The school site's pedestrian-friendly neighborhood location with highway access could be leveraged by a range of service providers such as a museum, community center, recreation facility, and more.

ArtSpace

In response to community discussions regarding relation of Tech High School, the City and school district have engaged ArtSpace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating affordable space for the arts, to document the potential to create a successful, affordable, self-sustaining arts development project in St. Cloud. ArtSpace specializes in the development of affordable residential and commercial artist spaces, including live-work units, galleries, arts education, and others. Several stakeholders cited the adaptive reuse of the former Franklin Junior High School in Brainerd as an example of a desirable reuse for the Tech High School site. The Franklin Arts Center mixed use project by ArtSpace features 25 live-work apartments for artists and their families, nearly 38,000 square feet of artist studio and meeting space, and two gymnasiums and an auditorium operated as community space by the school district.



Historic Preservation

St. Cloud has four historic districts as well as 18 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These districts showcase a variety of 19th century Victorian, 1920s Moderne, Gothic Revival, American Four Square, Neo Classic, and Queen Anne architectural styles, with historic homes and contributing structures providing much of the identity of St. Cloud's older neighborhoods.

The City utilizes overlay districts to protect and enhance historic assets by requiring contributing properties to comply with design regulations set forth in the Residential Historic District Preservation Manual and Downtown Preservation Design Manual and requiring new development and exterior alterations to undergo review by the Heritage Preservation Commission. Members of the St. Cloud Neighborhood Coalition, including the Southside University Neighborhood Association, highlight local historic district designation and related regulations as key tools in preserving the character of the Core Neighborhoods as pressure to expand the rental housing stock increase.

Moving forward, the City should continue to work with the SCNC and other partners such as SCSU to identify opportunities to assist property owners with design and construction of projects that contribute to historic district housing quality. This could include providing technical assistance and informational materials the help implement design guidelines and to navigate the review process. The City and its partners could also identify resources to assist property owners in pursuing state and federal grant and tax credit programs to facilitate reinvestment in historic properties.



Housing Affordability

The low housing costs provided by the City's multi-family housing units play an integral role in the diversity of the City's population and economy. In addition, the St. Cloud Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) administers affordable housing programs as well as several programs aimed at promoting homeownership and maintenance for low- to middle-income families. Nevertheless, with waitlists for HRA housing and more than 56% of renters and 22% of homeowners paying more than 30% of their household incomes on housing, there is a continued need for affordable housing options. This data is supported by findings within the 2013 Community Housing Study and 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan.

In response to this need, the cities of St. Cloud, St. Joseph, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park entered into a joint powers agreement to encourage the development of affordable housing units. The St. Cloud Code of Ordinances (§ 380.00) allows for the use of incentives including density bonuses, streamlined procedures, fee waivers, and others for projects where at least 15% of new housing units are affordable Life Cycle Housing (LCH) units. While the LCH program proved beneficial during periods of growth, the program fell out of use as platting for new housing developments slowed. As the housing market strengthens, the City should work with its partners in the development and financial communities to increase awareness of the LCH program.

Aging in Place

St. Cloud's 55+ population is expected to increase by 10% between 2014 and 2019 and demand for senior housing is growing. An increasing number of older residents are looking for housing options that will enable them to remain in the community as they age. Housing that accommodates the physical needs of seniors and proximity to basic goods, services, and transit is needed as an alternative to traditional housing. The City should assess opportunities to develop quality senior housing in areas such as Downtown, and near commercial nodes and healthcare facilities. These areas provide seniors with close access to transit, shopping, health care, and other day to day needs. As senior housing is developed, special attention should be given to pedestrian infrastructure that includes ADA accessibility, high visibility crosswalks, and crosswalk signal timing that accommodates seniors.

In addition to housing needs, seniors benefit from focused services that cater to their direct needs. The St. Cloud Department of Aging Services operates the Senior Center, which helps maintain the social fabric. The City should continue to provide programming that such as the current grant-funded program that assists with fall prevention, and other programs specific to the needs of the City's aging population.

Neighborhood Connectivity

St. Cloud's Core Neighborhoods have a high level of connectivity with a compact, regular roadway network; however, the City's newer subdivisions often include more organic layouts with cul-de-sacs and fewer access points to the major street network. This not only limits vehicular connectivity, but also safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods. As new subdivisions come online, the City should discourage residential developments with cul-de-sacs and limited connectivity. Similar to the Stoney Springs and Cape East neighborhoods, the City should work with developers and builders to integrate trails within and among neighborhoods.

Heritage Park

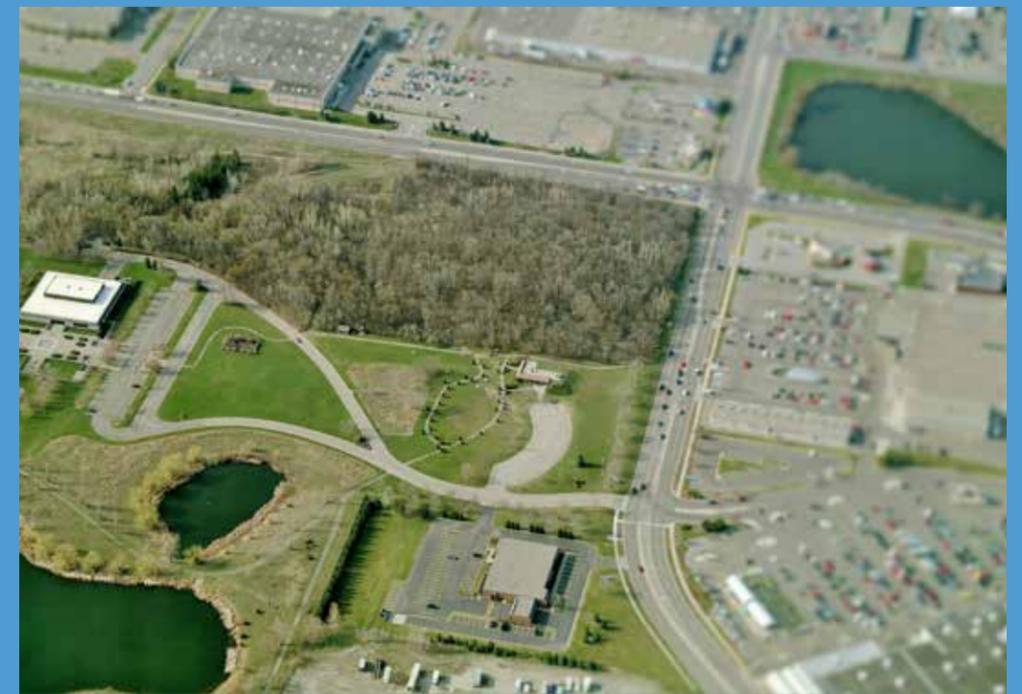
Heritage Park is a 92-acre park located at the corner of 2nd Street S and Trunk Highway 15. The park's location adjacent to a regional commercial district and major transportation corridors limits its accessibility and use by the community. The City has been approached on several occasions by private parties interested in developing the site.

Potential development could include a mix of retail, residential, and cultural uses that complement one another and leverage the natural features of the park, utilizing the park's water feature as a defining setting. This strategy could serve as a potential "win-win," allowing the development of valuable commercial frontage on 2nd Street S that enhances the site's existing uses.

MnDNR grant funding tied to the park would require the City to replace the park with new parkland of equivalent natural value. As a condition of the park's sale, the City could also require dedication of land elsewhere that satisfies MnDNR requirements for natural value.

The City should assess the long-term viability of Heritage Park and undertake a cost-benefit analysis to understand the financial implications of selling the park, purchasing additional parkland, and the overall effect changing the land use would have on the community's quality of life and access to open space areas.

If the City desires to retain Heritage Park, then improvements to parking, access, and recreation amenities are needed to better leverage the park as a community asset.



Economic Development

The availability of well-paying jobs, cultivation of entrepreneurship, provision of quality workforce training and education, and reputation as a “place to do business” are all key components to St. Cloud’s prosperity. Taken collectively, these economic development efforts will have a significant influence in shaping St. Cloud’s future. This chapter provides key goals, priorities, and recommendations that can help St. Cloud’s economy grow while improving the overall business climate and encouraging reinvestment in the community’s established commercial and industrial districts. It marries recommendations related to land use and urban design with broader policy topics such as workforce development and economic incentives.

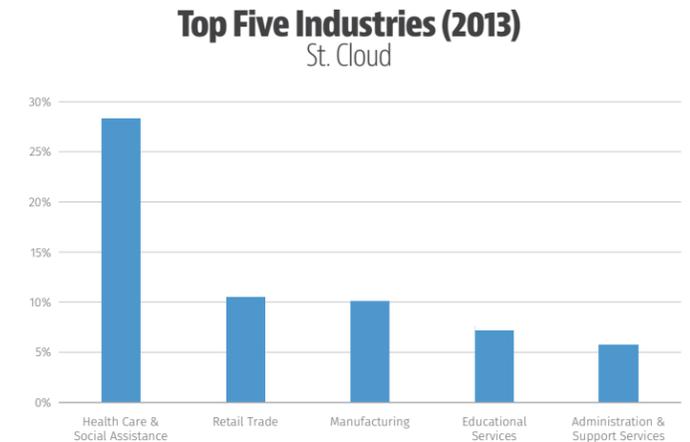
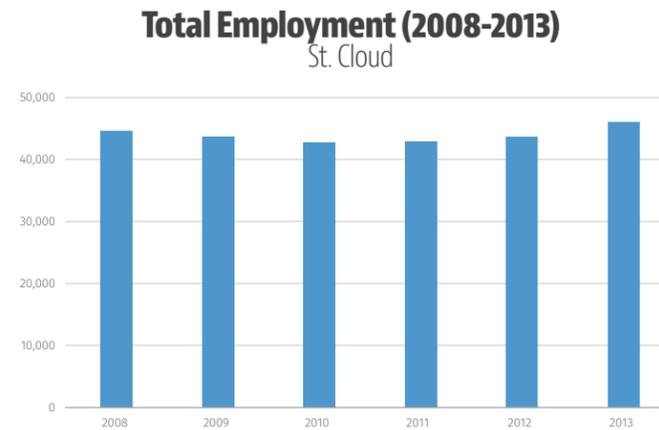
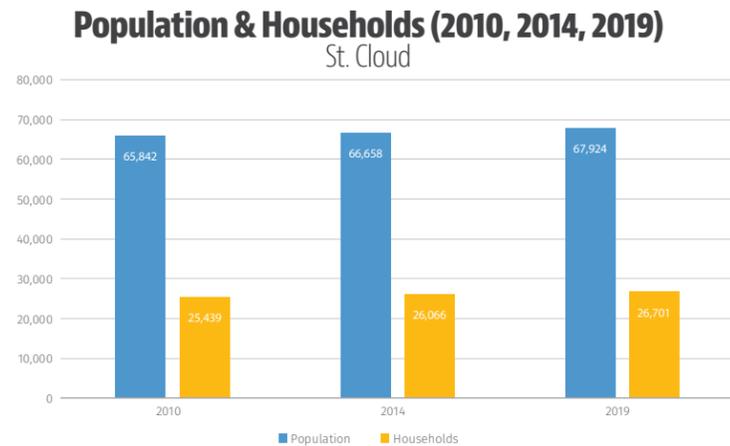
Goal

Promote strong and diverse economic activity to recruit and retain a range of businesses that generate local employment opportunities, provide necessary goods and services, strengthen the City’s tax base, and improve quality of life.

Objectives

- Update the Economic Development Authority Strategic Plan to provide strategies and direction for future economic development projects.
- Support beautification efforts and improved development standards within commercial districts to create more attractive and desirable locations for business recruitment and retention.
- Utilize placemaking strategies to create a distinct sense of place within the City’s various commercial districts.

- Ensure emerging commercial nodes and districts provide multi-modal access and reflect the scale, character, and identity of surrounding neighborhoods.
- Build awareness of the City of St. Cloud through the St. Cloud Greater brand campaign to build positive connections with residents, visitors and businesses of] the St. Cloud community.
- Serve as a coordinator, facilitator, and connector between the City and economic development organizations and local businesses.
- Attract and embrace new residents through marketing, incentives, and immigrant support.
- Leverage the City’s professional staff, higher educational institutions, and local organizations as resources to develop effective workforce development programs.
- Support business development, retention, and attraction using a variety of economic tools and incentives.
- Utilize the arts as a strategic and effective economic development tool.



The Economic Development chapter is organized into the following sections:

- **Market Overview**, providing a snapshot of St. Cloud's market position and the context for plan recommendations.
- **Commercial Areas Framework**, detailing land use and urban design recommendations for the City's commercial areas.
- **Industrial Areas Framework**, detailing land use and urban design recommendations for the City's industrial areas.
- **Attracting, Retaining, & Growing Businesses**, discussing business issues such as branding and marketing, brownfield redevelopment, hotel demand, the regional airport, establishing a culture of business friendliness, and more.
- **The City as a Coordinator & Connector**, establishing the City as St. Cloud's economic quarterback and identifying key partners that will assist, support, or lead different initiatives.
- **Attracting New Residents**, highlighting the economic importance of converting existing commuters into residents, and reducing brain drain of educated young professionals.
- **Workforce Development, Education & Entrepreneurship**, stressing the importance of having a well-trained and entrepreneurial workforce with access to education and capital, particularly low income individuals.
- **Incentives & Tools**, providing an overview of grants, loans, financing, and other tools that can be used for economic development purposes within St. Cloud.

Market Overview

This section provides a brief "snapshot" of St. Cloud's local economy and market position, detailing trends and key information on the city's population, workforce, retail market, and Economic Development Authority.

A Growing Population that is Becoming More Diverse

St. Cloud's population is increasing. The city's current population (2014) is estimated at 66,658 people. Between 2010 and 2019, the city is projected to gain roughly 2,000 additional residents, a 3.2% increase. This will increase demand for housing and retail, as well as require additional community services and infrastructure. Additionally, the City is also becoming more diverse. White residents currently (2014) make up the overwhelming majority of the city's population (83.1%). The remainder of the population includes those identifying as Black (8.9%), Asian (3.8%), and Multiracial (2.6%), among others. Between 2000 and 2019, the City will have witnessed an 11% increase in the minority share of the population.

An Expanding Employment Base

St. Cloud's total employment has remained stable in the wake of a national recession. In 2013, the city contained 45,973 jobs, an increase of roughly 1,300 jobs over 2008 levels. On the whole, the city weathered the 2008 economic downturn very well compared to most other American cities.

The highest concentrations of employment within the city are in Downtown, the St. Cloud State University campus area, the Division Street corridor, and the St. Cloud Hospital area. These "job hubs" are home to more than 10,000 jobs per square mile and contain some of the region's largest employers.

St. Cloud sits within the Central Minnesota region. Between 2010 and 2020, the State estimates that Central Minnesota region will gain 51,622 jobs (+18.3%). Applying St. Cloud's local share of the region's jobs (15.2% in 2010) to the anticipated economic expansion, it can be estimated that St. Cloud could stand to gain roughly 7,800 new jobs between 2010 and 2020.

A Healthcare Hub with Diversified Industries

The city's economic base is well-diversified, but Healthcare and Social Assistance is St. Cloud's biggest industry. In 2013, roughly 1 in 4 of the city's jobs (28.4%) fell within this industry. Other prominent industries include Retail Trade (10.6%), Manufacturing (10.0%), Educational Services (7.3%), and Administration and Support Services (5.8%).

The City's major employers reflect the current industrial composition. The top 10 major employers in St. Cloud are mainly in the healthcare, education, government, and manufacturing sectors, and include CentraCare, the State of Minnesota, and the St. Cloud VA Healthcare System.

This economic diversification has allowed the St. Cloud job base to remain stable in the years following the economic recession. The local market is relatively insulated from significant fluctuations within particular industries by not being overly reliant on any one industry.

A Variety of Retail Areas Catering to Different Needs

In 2014, St. Cloud contained more than 650 retail, accommodation, and food services businesses. The majority of these businesses -- which include shops, restaurants, services (e.g. barber, auto mechanic), hospitality uses, and more -- are found along its major corridors, within Downtown, and near major highway interchanges. The three largest retail areas are:

- **Downtown St. Cloud**, which contains a mixture of unique shops, restaurants, and bars in a walkable environment;
- **Minnesota 23/Division Street Corridor**, home to auto-oriented retail, in-line and big box retailers, and Crossroads Center Mall.
- **US 10 Corridor**, which contains mostly auto-oriented retail in a highway setting.

A Saturated Retail Market with Opportunities

A retail gap analysis was performed during the Existing Conditions phase of the planning process. A gap analysis compares supply and demand within a defined market area to help establish what types of new retail could or could not be supported based on existing spending potential and sales.

At the local level, it is not surprising that many retail categories are saturated given St. Cloud's status as a regional shopping hub. St. Cloud attracts consumers from within and around St. Cloud, as well as those from more rural areas in Central Minnesota and highway travelers passing through. The high volume of outside visitors is skewing the data and making the market appear more saturated than it truly is.

At the regional level (within a 30-minute drive time) there is an oversupply of \$55.5 million in annual retail sales. This market area contains almost 200,000 people in 75,000 households with a median disposable income of \$44,857. It covers the area between Royalton in the north, Princeton in the east, South Haven in the south, and Albany in the west.

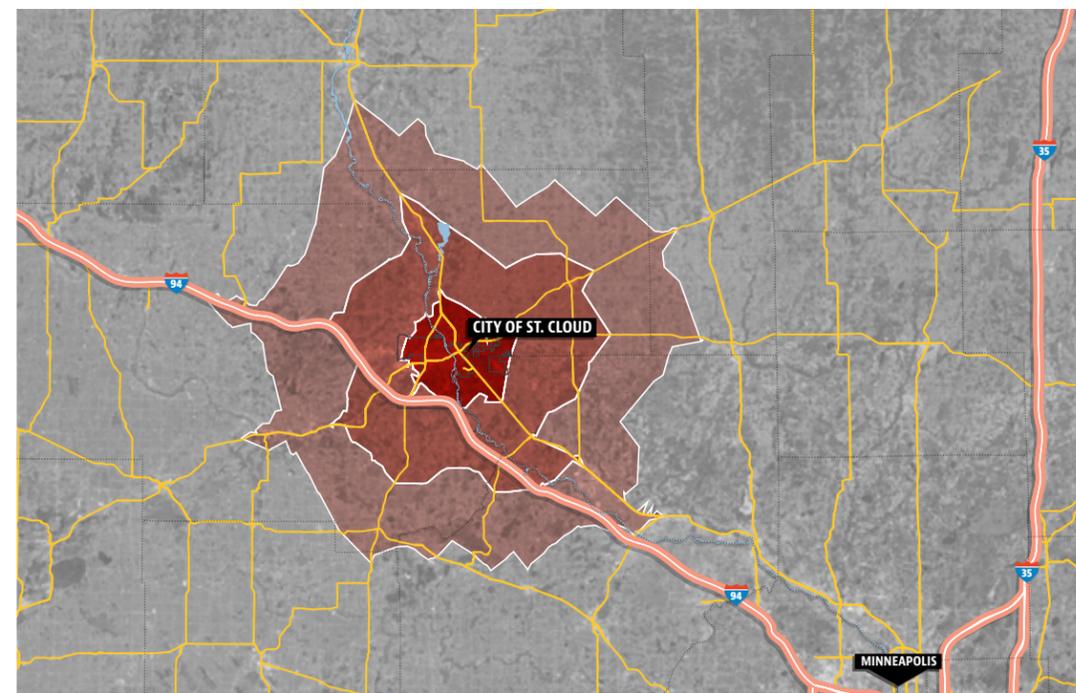
This saturation at the local and regional levels does not, however, preclude potential to attract new uses and development. Opportunities will continue to exist if sites can be positioned with better access, exposure and infrastructure to competing locations in the market. Potential, therefore, is more aligned with attracting uses from other areas of the market as opposed to filling voids or underrepresented businesses. Indeed, several retail categories are experiencing leakage including Healthcare & Personal Stores; Gasoline Stations; Clothing & Clothing Accessory Stores; Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores; General Merchandise Stores; and Miscellaneous Store Retailers.

Economic Development Authority

The City of St. Cloud Economic Development Authority (EDA) is the first-stop for business development assistance within St. Cloud. The seven-member board is appointed by the Mayor with approval by the City Council for six-year terms in accordance with State statutes and EDA bylaws. The EDA is located within the City's Community Development Section. The EDA assists with site selection for large or small business, business expansion and relocation financing resources, referral service for business start-up assistance, and the permit process.

In 2012, the EDA authored an Economic Development Strategic Plan 2012-2014 with the vision of strengthening St. Cloud as the economic heart of the Central Minnesota region and increasing job opportunities and the tax base through proactive collaboration, business-friendly customer service, and leveraged investments.

This Economic Development section should serve as a foundation for the updating of the EDA's Strategic Plan. This section provides information on the wide array of tools available to the EDA and should assist the EDA in clearly defining its role and identifying key priorities for the City and its partners moving forward as they seek to strengthen the economic vitality of St. Cloud.



Retail Drive Time Map

- Local Market: 10 Minute Drivetime
- Local/Regional Market: 20 Minute Drivetime
- Regional Market: 30 Minute Drivetime

Retail Gap Analysis Summary (2014)

St. Cloud

Summary Demographics	10 Minute Drivetime		20 Minute Drivetime		30 Minute Drivetime	
Population	89,530		143,846		198,685	
Households	35,623		55,240		74,819	
Median Disposable Income	\$37,239		\$41,717		\$44,857	
Per Capita Income	\$24,230		\$26,003		\$26,737	
Overview	10 Minute Drivetime		20 Minute Drivetime		30 Minute Drivetime	
Total Retail Gap	-\$621.5		-\$321.9		-\$55.5	
Total Retail Trade	-\$550.0		-\$294.8		-\$67.8	
Total Food & Drink	-\$71.5		-\$27.0		\$12.3	
Retail Gap by Industry Group	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*	Retail Gap (\$M)	Potential (Sq. Ft.)*
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	-\$47.6	--	\$34.8	--	\$81.6	--
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	-\$21.5	-53,825	-\$16.7	-41,648	-\$10.7	-26,665
Electronics & Appliance Stores	-\$27.9	-69,691	-\$14.7	-36,723	-\$3.3	-8,306
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	-\$0.7	-1,760	-\$1.8	-4,388	-\$10.0	-25,010
Food & Beverage Stores	-\$127.2	-317,887	-\$111.9	-279,677	-\$68.7	-171,729
Health & Personal Care Stores	-\$35.6	-88,921	-\$8.1	-20,179	\$26.3	65,632
Gasoline Stations	-\$57.7	--	-\$114.4	--	-\$115.5	--
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	-\$66.1	-165,179	-\$38.8	-97,064	-\$12.6	-31,421
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	-\$57.6	-144,086	-\$47.3	-118,248	-\$37.9	-94,705
General Merchandise Stores	-\$151.8	-379,509	-\$73.7	-184,188	\$25.8	64,409
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	-\$11.9	-29,736	-\$2.6	-6,580	\$7.4	18,524
Nonstore Retailers	\$55.6	138,925	\$100.2	250,582	\$49.9	124,647
Food Services & Drinking Places	-\$71.5	-178,661	-\$27.0	-67,598	\$12.3	30,828

*Potential is based on an average sales of \$400/sq. ft. Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers and Gas Stations are not included in this calculation. Source: ESRI Business Analyst; Houseal Lavigne Associates

Success Stories: Park Industries

Park Industries, the nation's largest producer of stone processing equipment reached out to the City and economic development partners to aid an \$11-million expansion in the City of St. Cloud. The expansion included the construction of a 33,760 square foot addition to the manufacturing facility and additional machinery and equipment. To assist the expansion, the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development provided funding through the Minnesota Job Creation Fund, and the City of St. Cloud provided tax increment financing. As part of the financing agreement, the company anticipates creating a minimum of 20 new jobs.

Park Industries was founded in 1953 by Leon Schlough and has remained in the Schlough family for three generations. The company provides stone-working solutions to more than 3,000 businesses in North America and has produced more than 10,000 machines that are operating worldwide. The company employees about 225 people.





Commercial Areas Framework

The Commercial Areas Framework provides guidance and policy recommendations for commercial land areas within St. Cloud and its planning area. The framework describes key characteristics of the City's various commercial areas and identifies key design principles that should be applied.

Downtown St. Cloud

Downtown St. Cloud is the heart of the City, serving as a civic, employment, and cultural hub. The commercial and public/semi-public uses will remain the predominant use; however, multi-family and single-family attached residential uses should be promoted within the district and adjacent areas. Additional residential development should also be encouraged to strengthen demand for existing and future retailers and service-providers while contributing to Downtown's unique identity as a place to shop, dine, work, and live. New development should complement the historic character of Downtown, utilizing similar materials and architectural elements. More detailed recommendations for Downtown can be found in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

Crossroads District

The Crossroads District, which can be considered the City's West Gateway, is home to regional commercial businesses and developments including the Crossroads Center Mall. Commercial businesses include national retail chains within multi-tenant shopping centers as well as standalone big box retailers and restaurants. Due to its regional draw, access management and parking lot circulation are crucial to the high volume of visitors. Parking lots should be well landscaped and include cross-access to adjacent businesses. While the district has a regional draw, it should safely accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic by integrating sidewalks and paths that provide direct access from the public right-of-way to building entrances. Additional discussion of the Crossroads District can be found in the **Division Street Corridor section of Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

Commercial Corridors

St. Cloud includes several prominent commercial corridors that contain a range of regional retailers, professional service providers, and local commercial uses catering to everyday retail and service needs of the St. Cloud community. Corridor commercial development is not as intense as within a regional commercial area and includes multi-tenant retail centers as well as standalone users on smaller lots. The City's primary commercial corridors include Roosevelt Road, Highway 15, Highway 10, and Division Street/Highway 23.

The centrally-located portions of St. Cloud's commercial corridors have largely been built out and are aging. The poor appearance of commercial development in some areas has emerged as a significant issue impacting community image and the health of established commercial corridors. Updated regulations are needed to promote high quality development with landscaping, signage, and other site improvements that enhance the visual appeal of these corridors. This will also ensure that new commercial development in St. Cloud's growth areas establish high quality districts moving forward. Additionally, wherever possible, in an effort to improve the safety and efficiency of traffic operations, the number of curb cuts should be reduced and excess driveways eliminated. Shared access and cross connectivity between adjacent properties should be encouraged.

Additional discussion of commercial corridor appearance can be found in the commercial areas appearance section of this chapter and in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

Medical Districts

The healthcare sector is the largest employment sector in the City with more than 6,000 employees. The St. Cloud VA Health Care System is the City's third largest employer, sitting on a 218-acre campus in northern St. Cloud. CentraCare serves as the area's largest health-care provider, and owns and operates the St. Cloud Hospital in the Northside-Hester Park neighborhood as well as eight other facilities in St. Cloud including the CentraCare Health Plaza. In addition to these large districts, medical service providers are clustered within small business parks, including several near St. Cloud Technical and Community College.

As providers of desirable employment opportunities, the City should encourage the expansion of medical districts. Future, healthcare related development should include the completion of established medical campuses such as the CentraCare Health Plaza facility and the expansion of existing facilities such as St. Cloud Hospital. Where expansion requires the redevelopment of established residential areas, it is critical that the City work with healthcare employers to coordinate with local neighborhood groups and willing property owners to ensure that new development respects the scale and character of adjacent areas and provides buffers and screening where appropriate.

Growth Area Commercial

As St. Cloud expands south to I-94 and east along Highway 23, additional commercial areas will be required to meet the needs of new residential neighborhoods. While the scale and location of future commercial development will be dependent upon a number of factors, the City should anticipate the general need for such development in areas that are currently located in undeveloped or agricultural areas.

- **33rd Street Interchange.** As development occurs within the Primary Growth Area, the Highway 15 interchange at 33rd Street S should anchor a new commercial district that provides goods and services to surrounding neighborhoods while capturing vehicular traffic from the highway. High quality business park development should also be encouraged in this area that leverage frontage along Highway 15 and enhances the City's image.

- **Roosevelt Road at 40th Street S.** MnDOT plans to relocate the signalized intersection at 43rd Street S and Roosevelt Road to 40th Street S. To complement this shift in access, the City should encourage the redevelopment of light industrial properties in this area to corridor commercial uses such as retail, restaurants, and lodging. The development of a frontage road should also be evaluated to improve access to existing development on the east side of Roosevelt Road that will be located to the south of the future signal. Additional office and business park development that is of similar quality to the Marco headquarters should also be encouraged along the nearby Heatherwood Road corridor.

The City, County, and MnDOT should update the CSAH 75 corridor study (2007) working in concert with local businesses. The study should identify viable access and intersection design alternatives south of the future 40th Street South and Roosevelt Road intersection considering access needs of private property owners and traffic operations and safety.

- **Future Potential CR 136 Interchange.** As additional residential and employment-related development occurs within the primary growth area, an additional access point to I-94 may also be warranted. As discussed in **Chapter 7: Transportation & Mobility**, an interchange at CR 136 would help minimize traffic congestion on east-west routes leading to existing interchanges. Should MnDOT identify plans for such an interchange, the City should encourage the development of commercial corridor and business park uses in the area near the future potential interchange.
- **Neighborhood Nodes.** Small neighborhood commercial centers should be developed at the intersections of existing and proposed major roadways (including CR 4, CR 120, CR 136, 40th Street S, Highway 10, and Highway 23) to provide for the daily needs of nearby residents. These neighborhood centers could be integrated as a component of traditional neighborhood development where appropriate.

Regardless of intensity, future commercial development within the Growth Areas should provide for safe and convenient pedestrian and access to minimize the need for local residents to drive for day-to-day retail and service needs. Growth area commercial districts should also adhere to design standards that reflect the scale, character, and identity of the surrounding community.

The Arts: Commercial Districts Placemaking

The *Placemaking Design Manual* provides strategies for "placemaking," which focuses on the interaction of people with public spaces to form meaningful physical, social, environmental, and economic connections. The St. Cloud Arts Commission has been working to prioritize recommendations within the plan, which includes city-wide placemaking strategies, the same principles can and should be applied to the City's commercial districts. Branding and the integration of public art can help form a unique identity for commercial areas. Future commercial areas should include streetscaping and public art while prioritizing walkability and bikability to improve community connectivity. Existing commercial areas can be seen in a new light with streetscape improvements and the addition of landscaping. In addition, large surface parking lots such as those within the Crossroads District can serve as venues to host community events and generate greater activity.



Case Study: Quarry Reclamation

The Blue Heron Pointe development is a water-oriented community of 144 attached single family homes featuring direct water access for each resident with public beaches and walking trails providing seasonal opportunities for recreation.

This development occupies the shores of an 18-acre lake that was once a gravel quarry in Northville Township, Michigan. A system of cisterns and catch basins prevent direct run-off and allow for the gradual release of stormwater into the lake and nearby wetlands. An elevated boardwalk also provides limited access to a wetland areas for observing blue herons and other waterfowl.



Industrial Areas Framework

St. Cloud's industrial areas provide local employment opportunities and economic diversity. While industrial land uses serve as an integral component of the local and regional economy, they can pose significant visual, noise, and environmental impacts. The Industrial Areas Framework presents recommendations that support and strengthen the growth and development of industrial businesses while minimizing negative impacts on the community.

I-94 Corridor

The I-94 corridor is home to St. Cloud's largest and newest business park, the I-94 Business Park, and represents an emerging cluster for office park, light industrial, and manufacturing uses. With convenient access to I-94 and readily available infrastructure, the City should continue to target the "shovel ready" business park and surrounding areas for industrial development. With limited opportunities for expansion within the existing I-94 Business Park and increasing market demand for industrial development in the area, the City should evaluate the potential to expand the business park to the south into neighboring Lynden Township. Expansion of the business park would require the creation of an Orderly Annexation Agreement with Lynden Township.

As the community grows and areas to the south of I-94 undergo development, additional employment-related development should also be encouraged in areas to the south of I-94 and west of CR 75 along the 255th Street corridor. The City should also consider establishing wayfinding and directory signage at key intersection to provide guidance for visitors, vendors, and delivery vehicles.

Rail Corridors

Rail continues to serve as an integral resource for many of the City's industrial businesses. The BNSF rail corridor forms the eastern boundary of Downtown and is traversed by the Northern Lines Railway, which travels through the City's Core Neighborhoods. The industrial businesses along these corridors include a mix of light manufacturing and production facilities, recycling and salvage facilities, and service commercial uses. Industrial businesses are valued contributors to the local economy and industrial areas identified within the Land Use Plan are appropriately located.

With the exception of the St. Cloud Industrial Center and Industrial Center West Business Parks, these industrial businesses are often within close proximity to both residential and commercial land uses. Rail access is a valuable asset that is difficult to reestablish once lost due to non-industrial development. As such, residential and incompatible commercial uses should not be allowed within rail corridor industrial areas.

Industrial businesses, especially those with outdoor assembly and storage, should be encouraged to install screening elements such as board-on-board fencing and landscaped buffers to better insulate activity and protect adjacent neighborhoods. Front and side yard landscaping should also be encouraged to improve the character of industrial uses, and should be required for businesses that share street frontage with residential uses. As discussed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, the screening of industrial uses is of strategic importance to the future potential location of a Northstar Commuter Rail station on the East Side.

Roosevelt Road Corridor

The Roosevelt Road Corridor includes light industrial and service commercial uses. The corridors includes two concentrated nodes of activity at 33rd Street South and 40th Street South. In addition to industrial uses, these areas include recreational and auto-oriented commercial service businesses. As such, local circulation and traffic management should be encouraged through curb cut elimination and cross access. Sidewalks should be installed to allow for safe, non-motorized access along the public right-of-way and sites should include on-site pedestrian access to building entrances.

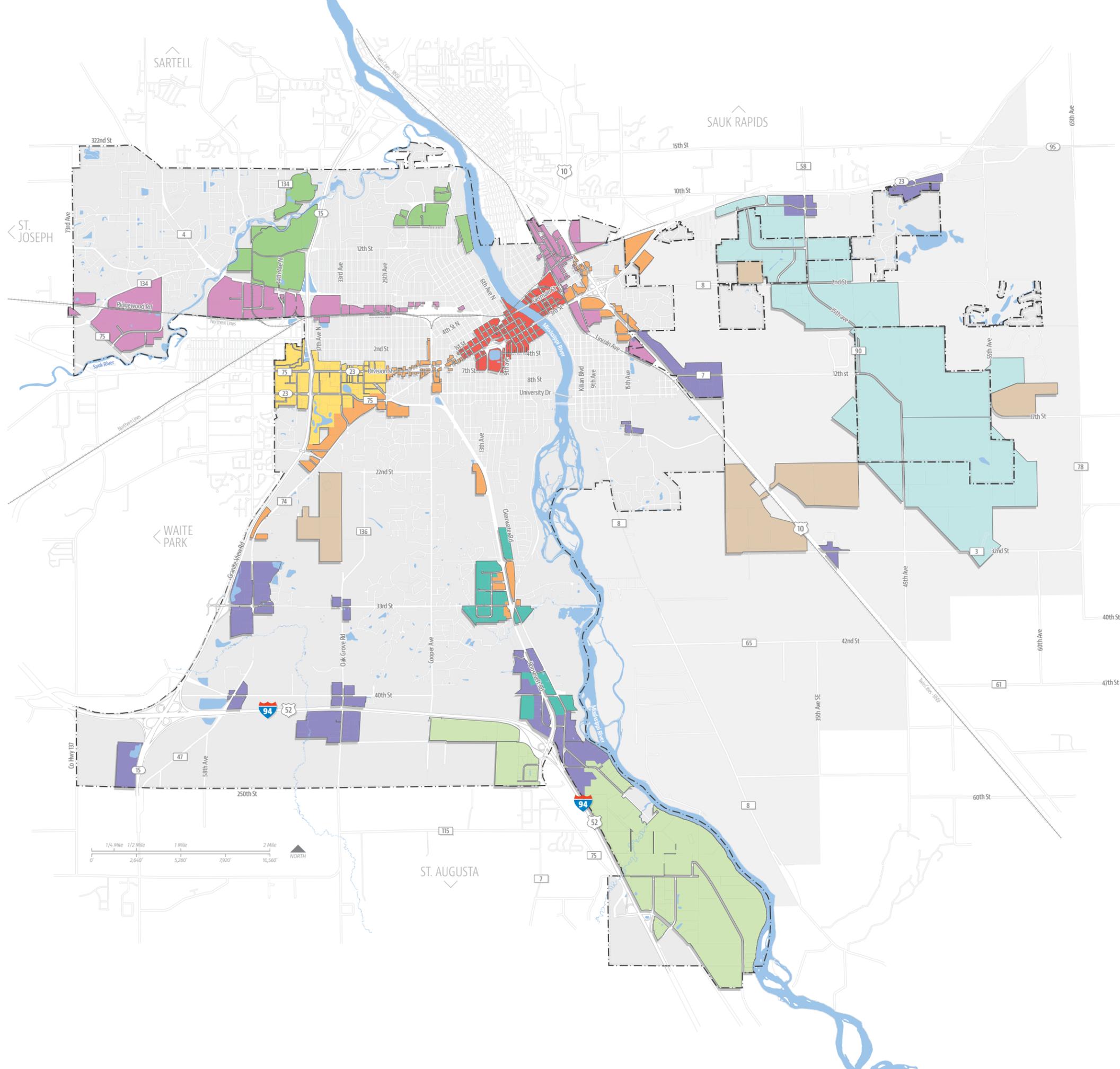
St. Cloud Regional Airport District

As a key economic asset it is important that the City should continue to support the operation of the St. Cloud Regional Airport by protecting adjacent property from incompatible land use and development. The Airport land use category in the Land Use Plan reflects the ultimate planned property boundary for the St. Cloud Regional Airport as identified in the 2015 Master Plan Update. Industrial development should be encouraged in areas to the north of the airport including the completion and potential expansion of the St. Cloud Airport Business Park. As the Airport Business Park develops, the City should work with the Airport Advisory Board and future tenants to address traffic circulation, open space preservation, stormwater management, tenant amenities, and wayfinding and signage. Low intensity residential development that complies with airport zoning density and height requirements should also be encouraged in areas to the northeast and northwest.

Quarries

St. Cloud is home to several active quarries that continue to reinforce its moniker as the Granite City. These sites include two facilities on TH10 and the Coldspring Granite Quarry south of the SH 15 and 22nd Street S intersection. These uses will likely remain in place past the course of this Comprehensive Plan; nevertheless, the City should have both near-term and long-term strategies and plans in place for its quarry sites. Over the near term, the City should continue to enforce mining operation regulations to minimize negative impacts on nearby residents related to noise, dust, and potential nuisances.

In addition, the City should work with quarry owners to develop reclamation plans to be enacted upon vacation of the sites. An effective reclamation plan should address future land use, revegetation strategies, erosion control, and environmental remediation, if necessary. Future land uses should be consistent with the intensity and character of adjacent areas and should include a public use component such as a public park and/or recreation area that directly benefits the surrounding neighborhood and community at-large. Desirable uses for the Coldspring site (which is located in the Primary Growth Area) include a combination of single-family and multi-family residential and parkland.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD
Commercial & Industrial Areas Framework Plan

COMMERCIAL AREAS FRAMEWORK

- Downtown
- Commercial Corridors
- Growth Areas Commercial
- Crossroads District
- Medical District

INDUSTRIAL AREAS FRAMEWORK

- Rail Corridors
- St. Cloud Regional Airport District
- Roosevelt Rd. Corridor
- I-94 Corridor
- Quarries

Case Study: Business to Business, Buying Local in Detroit

The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation's D2D business-to-business program helps large Detroit businesses buy products from smaller Detroit businesses. By redirecting purchasing away from external suppliers towards local businesses, the purchaser (e.g. a hospital, public school system, bank etc.) can invest in the local economy while also reducing other costs, such as transportation. For example, D2D recently matched a small business owner selling sweet potato products with several local restaurants and Detroit's new Whole Foods grocery, both whom now sell her products.



Connecting Detroit,
business by business.



Attracting, Retaining & Growing Businesses

Attracting new business and retaining and growing existing businesses should form a key components of the City's economic development strategy. This section identifies key priorities, assets, and initiatives that can help the City retain, invest in, and grow existing businesses as well as remain competitive for the recruitment of new businesses.

Branding & Marketing

The "St. Cloud Greater" brand was launched in 2014 and has produced a distinguishable brand for the City and its partners. With just one word – "greater" – the campaign for St. Cloud illustrates that St. Cloud is already a vital and thriving city and has its sights set on becoming a greater place to live and a destination to visit.

The development of the St. Cloud Greater brand suggests to new and existing businesses that the City is serious about presenting a "unified front" on economic development issues, has a clear agenda and approach to marketing the city, and is willing to invest in initiatives that can promote the City's reputation and its brand. The City should continue to build on this brand by encouraging its integration into other marketing materials both within the public and private sectors.

Opportunities exist to leverage the existing brand and market the City on a variety of fronts for economic development purposes. With an ample inventory of land, the City should aggressively market priority sites for greenfield development, redevelopment, and adaptive re-use, as well as the financing tools and incentives available to make the project feasible for developers, businesses, and institutions. This may include brochure collateral for mailings and distribution, usage of billboards, website postings, updated listings on relevant real estate sites, and attendance of City staff and other public partners at local, regional, and national conferences and trade organization meetings. It is important that such marketing uses a format, theme, and scheme that aligns with the existing St. Cloud Greater campaign.

Marketing should also be used for the attraction of new residents (see the "Attracting New Residents" section of this chapter).

"Eds & Meds"

Higher education, including colleges and universities ("eds"), and medical institutions ("meds") remain a promising avenue for economic growth in St. Cloud based on both regional and national trends. Across the country, cities ranging in size from Iowa City, IA to Pittsburgh, PA to New York City have embraced these types of employers as a core element of their economic development strategy. Both industries are projected for sizable growth in the coming decade as higher education is becoming increasingly important both domestically but also abroad in developing economies and the Baby Boomer population continues to age and increase its demand for medical services.



The St. Cloud region has an impressive array of institutions within both industries, including St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, Rasmussen College, College of St. Benedict, and St. John's University, St. Cloud Hospital, and St. Cloud Veterans Administration Hospital. The City should develop a formal collaborative partnership or initiative with these different entities to identify mutually beneficial strategies for growth, including:

- **Creation, financing, and support for spin-off private businesses** capitalizing on the presence of major institutions. Opportunities could range from attracting businesses that could: support the operations of or be aligned with activities occurring at these institutions; provide needed research, development, or services for these institutions; or transition research and development conducted at these local institutions into viable private enterprises.
- **Formulation of civic partnerships** that can be supported or initiated by major institutions, such as workforce training programs, curriculum alignment, transportation infrastructure, or workforce housing.
- **Establishment of “Business to Business (B2B)” relationships** that can connect local institutions with large purchasing power to local small businesses, harnessing institutional buying power to grow small business (e.g. a university cafeteria ordering all of their bread from a local baker).

A Culture of Business Friendliness

Private sector investment is directly influenced by a city's friendliness towards the business community, both interpersonal as well as regulatory. It is important for City Hall staff to have a “customer service” mentality when interacting with the business community, seeing them as partners and not adversaries. This includes ensuring that a “can do” attitude permeates through City Hall, identifying accountable “point persons” for various business issues, attending or hosting breakfasts, banquets, or meetings that can assist in relationship building.

City ordinances and policies should be clear, consistent, and easy to follow. Regulations are integral to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the St. Cloud community, however, unnecessary regulations and unpredictable processes can stifle investment and inhibit job growth. Following the approval of the Comprehensive Plan, the City should review all existing development regulations and processes to ensure they are efficient and necessary.

Lastly, the City must be proactive in business retention and attraction. In the 21st century, the global marketplace is too competitive to simply wait for opportunities to arise. The City must consistently market itself and pitch St. Cloud to regional, national, and international businesses; conduct trade missions and establish partner city relationships that can procure international attention and investment; ensure that existing businesses are aware of government programs and incentives that can help grow their businesses; and attend relevant conferences and meetings of trade organizations to generate new leads and opportunities.

Brownfields Redevelopment

Brownfields are former industrial properties in which expansion, redevelopment, or re-use may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. While St. Cloud does not have the industrial legacy of other Midwestern cities such as Youngstown (OH) or Flint (MI), the City does contain several brownfield sites -- such as the Cooper Avenue site, Landy Beef site, and the Hardive's property -- which require special attention and remediation before new investment can occur. Cleaning up and revitalizing brownfields can bring vacant and underutilized properties back onto the tax roll while creating jobs and increasing public health.

Any brownfield site must go through a multi-stage process, including a site visit and historical review, contamination testing and review of cleanup options, development of a plan for site cleanup, and actual site cleanup. Different federal and state standards exist depending on the intensity of contamination and the types of public financing used.

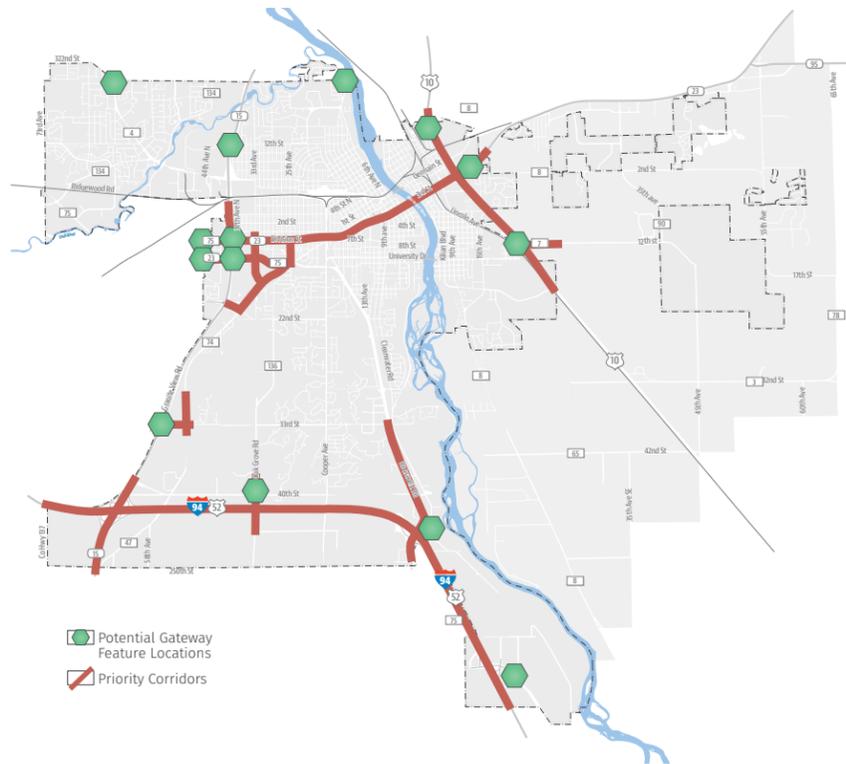
The City is in the process of completing a comprehensive brownfields strategy. Over the course of the next several years, the City should identify all brownfield sites within city limits, explore the need for acquisition of sites, prioritize and phase the remediation based on community benefits, identify redevelopment scenarios, and apply for (or support the application of) funding that can help bring properties back online for productive community uses.

A variety of both state and federal programs exist to help secure, remediate, and reposition/redevelop brownfield sites. For a comprehensive list of such programs, please visit the last section of this chapter entitled “Incentives.”

The Arts: Industrial Beautification

Industrial areas are generally not what first come to mind when thinking about the arts; however, St. Cloud's many industrial districts have the potential to provide significant contributions to the City's identity and arts culture. In addition to landscaping improvements, industrial businesses should be encouraged to incorporate public art within on-site improvements. The City could also work with industrial businesses and local artists to donate materials and obsolete machinery for the use of sculpture and public art installations within common areas of business parks and public rights-of-way. Industrial-inspired pieces can be used to brand specific districts, further contributing to the City's identity as a leader in local arts and culture. Such improvements could be negotiated prior to development as part of a planned development agreement or funded through the use of a special service district.





Landscaping Standards St. Cloud & Other Communities

Neighboring Community	Require Perimeter Landscaping	Require Parking Lot Islands	Require ROW Screening
Sartell	-	X	-
Sauk Rapids	X	X	X
Waite Park	-	-	-
Peer Community			
Duluth	X	X	X
Fargo	X	-	X
Mankato	X	X	-
Rochester	X	X	X
Sioux Falls	-	X	X
St. Cloud	-	-	-

Source: Houseal Lavigne Associates

Commercial Area Appearance

As a regional hub St. Cloud should be represented as an inviting destination with commercial developments that reflect the natural identity of the city, but current commercial area aesthetics do not support this notion. While examples of high quality development with attractive landscaping and signage exist throughout St. Cloud, overall, the City's commercial areas are lacking in quality landscaping and screening. Commercial area appearance was highlighted as a significant issue by the public throughout the planning process.

While St. Cloud has emerged as a regional destination for shopping and dining, the poor appearance of the commercial corridors threatens the City's ability to maintain this status in the future. An assessment of zoning ordinances from among neighboring communities (Sartell, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park) and regional peer communities (Fargo, Sioux Falls, Duluth, Mankato) reveals that St. Cloud lags behind the competition regarding development standards. As neighboring communities and other regional competitors enhance their commercial districts through high quality and attractive development, St. Cloud's competitive position could be challenged.

Development Standards

Corridors like Division Street have minimal right-of-way available to dedicate to streetscape improvements, which means much of the City's image and character is reliant on the actions of private property owners. Perimeter landscaping and interior parking lot landscaping requirements and stricter sign regulations are needed to elevate the image of the community.

The adjacent map figure identifies corridors where improving commercial area appearance should a high priority.

Major Gateways

In addition to overall all appearance, gateway features can have a significant visual impact on a corridor and enable a community to put its best face forward to visitors.

Whether approaching from the south along Highway 15, from the west along Division Street, or the east along Highway 10 or 23, few features exist along the City's commercial corridors that clearly identify that a visitor is passing through the City of St. Cloud. The City should identify and install gateway treatments at all major gateways to St. Cloud. Gateway features should include signage welcoming individuals to St. Cloud that leverages messaging and design elements of the City's "St. Cloud Greater" brand. In addition, gateways should be landscaped and provide visual interest that clearly marks point of entry into the community. Though many factors may vary based on location, all gateway features should use a similar design to create a unified image or brand across all gateways to the City. Potential future gateway feature locations are identified on the adjacent figure.

The intersection of Highway 15 with 33rd Street S offers a unique opportunity for a gateway feature as a component of new commercial development adjacent the new interchange. The City should work with the development community and property owners to coordinate development of a gateway feature that greets commercial district visitors traveling east from Highway 15.

Hotel Demand

St. Cloud contains several high quality lodging options, but opportunities may exist for additional hotel development. Throughout the outreach process, business leaders identified the perceived need or demand for additional lodging opportunities within the community. Additional market research is needed to verify feasibility and quantify the demand for additional hotel and travel accommodations in St. Cloud.

The City may wish to commission a hotel feasibility study to quantify demand and ascertain what type of hotel property may be suitable. There may also be collaborative opportunities with groups such as the St. Cloud Area Convention and Visitors Bureau or St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce, feasibility study could quantify demand for lodgings for several commercial areas throughout the region. Such a study could directly benefit the City of St. Cloud as well as the greater region.

Should sufficient demand be identified to support a new hotel or other lodging in the near future, the City should continue to work with the public and private partners to market the opportunity and attract potential developers to St. Cloud. The location of new lodging will largely be determined by available sites, but should ideally be located near existing activity generators such as the Downtown. As discussed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, both the Lady Slipper Lot and the North Riverfront catalyst sites are identified as having the potential to accommodate a new hotel within the Downtown.



St. Cloud Regional Airport: Gateway to the Community

The St. Cloud Regional Airport serves as a national gateway for the greater St. Cloud region, supporting business travel, tourism, and distribution/logistics, as well as increasing quality of life for residents. In addition to simply moving people, the airport generates demand for dining, entertainment, transportation, and hotels.

The St. Cloud Regional Airport first opened as the New Whitney Memorial Airport in 1935. In 1970, the airport moved from its original location at present-day Whitney Park, to a new facility three miles east of the city. Today, the publicly operated St. Cloud Regional Airport serves private and commercial air markets.

The Airport completed a Master Plan Update in 2015, and the Plan's forecasts suggest positive growth in passenger enplanements, the number of based aircraft, and total aircraft operations at the Airport over the next 20 years. To help increase commercial, business, and cargo ridership through the St. Cloud Regional Airport, the City should:

- **Complete infrastructure improvements as directed in the Master Plan Update.** This includes both ongoing maintenance of existing assets as well as capital investments that can position the airport for future growth.
- **Develop a strategy to reestablish commercial air service to O'Hare.** The City should work with the State, relevant counties, and businesses located within the airport's catchment area to identify a game plan that can make service to St. Cloud profitable. This may include policies that can increase demand for flights or subsidies that can bring down the operating costs of maintaining a fleet at the airport.
- **Evaluate the creation of a Regional Airport Authority.** While the airport's catchment area (or geographic area where the airport can reasonably expect to draw passenger traffic) covers 76 zip codes and contains a population of nearly 400,000 people, the airport is owned and operated by the City of St. Cloud alone. The creation of a Regional Airport Authority with stakeholders throughout the catchment area could increase the base of support for the airport and its visibility within neighboring communities.
- **Manage development around the airport to achieve maximum economic benefit.** The City should work with property owners to position land uses proximate to the airport for land uses that can capitalize off of proximity to the airport, such as business parks, hospitality, light industrial, and industrial uses. The City should also ensure that the land necessary for the addition of a general aviation runway is protected from private development, even though it is not expected to occur within the next twenty years.

Arts Economy

The arts are more than just artistic expression and creativity – they are an untapped generator of economic growth. In addition to revenue generated from ticket prices or purchases of goods, the arts stimulate spending on dining, hospitality, transportation, child care, and more. In turn, this spending creates jobs and tax revenue. According to the not-for-profit Americans for the Arts, the arts industry generated \$135.2 billion of economic activity in 2010. In 2013, it is estimated that Stearns County residents spent an average of \$373 annually on the arts, translating into a roughly \$57 million industry.

The St. Cloud region is already a leader in local arts and cultural initiatives. According to the 2013 Arts Index, Stearns County had 62 artists and art-related business per 100,000 residents, compared to a national average of 43.6. Within the community, numerous displays of public art can be seen throughout the community, including the "Poetry in Sidewalks Program" which stamps poems from local writers into newly poured sidewalks. The Paramount Theater draws 80,000 patrons a year and generates approximately \$1.5 million per year in economic activity. Other key arts programming includes the St. Cloud Art Crawl and events held at the Paramount Theatre and Visual Arts Center.

However, there is always room for growth. The Center for Best Practices at the National Governor's Association (NGA) recommends several strategies for using arts and culture to stimulate economic development. While they are targeted at state governments, they can also be applied locally in St. Cloud.

- **Inventory and fully understand St. Cloud's existing cultural industries and assets.** It is important to know what existing programming exists. Calculating of local economic impact may also be helpful, however, it is important to ensure accurate management. Studies show due to a lack of North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes for many arts programming, the impact of the arts is often understated.
- **Incorporate arts and culture into all planning efforts.** The City developed a "Cultural Plan for St. Cloud" in 2007, however, an update may be needed. Arts and culture should be incorporated into all planning efforts and flexibility and accommodations should be made within the City's regulations to support local artists and cultural activities. This could include the creation of a "Percent for Art" program/ordinance to include a percent of all municipal capital improvement projects where funds can be used to provide public art throughout the City.
- **Develop clear and implementable strategies to provide support for the arts and culture sector.** The City should target specific sectors within the arts, strengthen the City's arts and culture infrastructure – both physically and socially, and utilize higher education assets for arts and culture growth.
- **Incorporate the arts into tourism efforts.** Embracing the City's arts and cultural assets can be a boon for tourism and assist in attracting visitors to St. Cloud. This may include marketing cultural events, promoting unique destinations, and/or promoting distinctive cultural products.



The City as a Coordinator & Connector

The City of St. Cloud cannot - nor should it try to - develop, manage, and execute every economic development initiative or program. But it can establish a clear vision, facilitate partnerships between public, private, institutional, and not-for-profit sectors, and align different organizations to produce economies of scale. The City is - in essence - a connector, coordinator, and clearinghouse.

The City and Economic Development Authority connects and coordinates business concerns with the appropriate agency or organization. The EDA plays a unique role in assessing each business' unique situation and connecting them and facilitating discussions with the appropriate resources (e.g. building permit or business plan counseling). The City's Economic Development Department office receives inquiries from a wide range of businesses, from new immigrant-owned businesses to international businesses seeking to expand or relocate.

The economic development frequently refers businesses to other City departments such as the Planning and Zoning Department for preliminary site planning discussions, facilitates leveraged financing from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), or refers for business plan assistance through the Central Minnesota Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

This section highlights some of the partners that the City/EDA should continue to work in receiving and forwarding business inquiries and developing various policies, initiatives, and partnerships.

Profiles of Key Partners

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is the state's principal economic development agency. DEED programs promote business recruitment, expansion, and retention; international trade; workforce development; and community development. They act as the official economic development advocate for the state, adopt rules to formulate policies necessary to administer legislatively created programs, and oversee grants and incentives.

Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation

The Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC) is a private collaboration of approximately 100 regional business and community leaders within Benton, Sherburne and Stearns counties in central Minnesota with the expressed goal of making the St. Cloud region one of the best places to live and work in America. Their efforts to improve the regional business climate and economic base are 100 percent self-funded through investor fees and all actions are self-governed by investors, boards and various committees.

The GSDC has identified six key initiatives for further improving the region:

- Facilitate efforts and advocate for expansion of a regional transportation infrastructure system including road, rail, air, bus and trail.
- Create a vibrant downtown.
- Expand corporate wellness programs.
- Foster innovation.
- Develop talent.
- Foster Regional Economic Development.

St. Cloud Downtown Council

The St. Cloud Downtown Council was founded in 1992 and is a member-driven not-for-profit advocate for St. Cloud's Downtown. The Downtown Council is dedicated to promoting the downtown area, building a neighborhood downtown, serving as a one-stop shop for information on downtown, and advocating the interests of local businesses and property owners.

St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce

The St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce is the premier representative of the St. Cloud business community. Supported and led by members and professional staff, the Chamber creates, enhances, and supports a healthy business environment for their members. Key initiatives include: membership growth and involvement, legislative advocacy, effective communication, business education partnerships, and leadership development.

Stearns County, Sherburne County & Benton County

St. Cloud sits in three counties: Stearns County, Sherburne County, and Benton County. Each has their own economic development programming and are vital partners in making the St. Cloud region a prosperous place to live and work.

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center is located within the Herberger Business School at St. Cloud State University and is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and regional support partners. It provides services for every stage of business development, including pre-venture, start-up, and established phases. Training and counseling are available, and the Center's consultants can assist with identifying funding and loan opportunities. Financial support from committed funding partners allows the Center to provide our professional services at no cost to participants.

St. Cloud Opportunities

St. Cloud Opportunities is a non-profit corporation that develops business and industrial parks. The mission of the company is to "create, enhance, extend and increase opportunities for employment in the St. Cloud area." St. Cloud Opportunities currently works in partnership with the City of St. Cloud and is an active member of the St. Cloud Area Economic Development Partnership.



Attracting New Residents

Attracting new residents can generate new tax revenue, inject new life and investment into declining areas, and increase the consumer base for local goods and services. Several opportunities exist for St. Cloud to attract new residents: convert commuters and retain students attending the area's colleges and universities.

Converting Commuters

Each day, roughly 31,000 non-residents commute into St. Cloud for work. Roughly 25% of these workers drive greater than 25 miles, and 1 in 10 drive greater than 50 miles daily.

Exploring Incentives

The City should partner with major employers to determine whether incentives should be utilized to promote conversion and whether such incentives should be targeted to specific areas. For example, major employers in Detroit, MI, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Compuware, DTE Energy, Quicken Loans, and more created a "Live Downtown" initiative to recruit employees to move to the Downtown area. The program incentivizes employees to live where they work and provides participants with financial assistance to purchase or rent a home in neighborhoods in and around Downtown Detroit.

Marketing Campaign

This presents an opportunity for the City of St. Cloud to transform existing commuters into City residents. Working with the business community, the City should develop a marketing campaign targeted towards these commuters that advertises available housing, demonstrates the reasons to live in St. Cloud, and highlights the benefits of a reduced commute time. For example, reducing a daily commute of 30 minutes each way to 10 minutes each way would save an employee nearly 900 hours (or roughly 36 days) of travel over a 5 year period.

Even if the program was able to recruit only 10% of existing commuters, that could translate into more than 300 new households.

Supporting Immigration

Attracting immigrants and integrating them into the community is an additional avenue for both increasing the City's population as well as creating new jobs.

Key Trends in St. Cloud

St. Cloud is an increasingly attractive destination for immigrants. This includes those who pursue immigration through regular naturalization channels as well as those granted refugee or asylum status. Minnesota is a popular resettlement destination for refugees. Between 2003 and 2012, 30,000+ refugees were resettled in Minnesota. Common origins for those immigrants included Somalia (75%), Burma (18%), Laos (17.5%), and Ethiopia (8.0%).

At present, roughly one out of every 13 St. Cloud residents (7.0%) was born outside of the United States. Between 2000 and 2013 (technically an average of 2009-2013), both the total number of immigrants and their share of the population have increased noticeably, growing from 2,269 (3.8% of the population in 2000) to 4,597 people (7.0% in 2013). Roughly one-third of all of St. Cloud's immigrants were born in Africa, with Asian, Latin American, and European birthplaces also common.

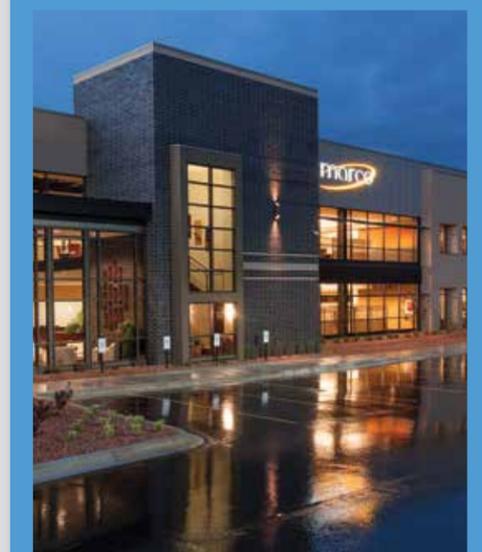
A report issued by the St. Cloud State University School of Public Affairs Research Institute, *St. Cloud Immigration: A Fact Sheet*, summarized various demographic facts and trends related specifically to the St. Cloud region's foreign born population. The report highlighted several key items including:

- Nearly half of St. Cloud's immigrant population are U.S. citizens.
- Approximately two-thirds of immigrants are in the labor force.
- Immigrants arriving prior to 2010 experience unemployment and poverty rates similar to the native population.

Success Story: Marco

The City helped Marco, Inc. identify options to accommodate their growing expansion needs in their 25-year old St. Cloud based location. The company, which provides solutions for voice, data, video and print needs, employs 465 people across 21 locations in a 5-state region.

With the assistance of the St. Cloud EDA, the company constructed a \$7-million, 80,000-square-foot corporate headquarters building at 4510 Heatherwood Rd., near Stearns County Road 75 and I-94. Tax abatement assistance was provided by the City and ISD742 to support the project with a commitment to maintain a minimum 150 full time jobs for the next 20 years. The new location provides a flagship entrance to the City, which is anticipated to spur additional commercial development in the area.



Case Study: Nashville's MyCity Academy

In 2012, Nashville's mayor launched an initiative aimed at empowering new Americans to understand and participate in Nashville's government. Over the course of seven months, MyCity Academy participants meet with leaders from departments and tour facilities. In doing so, they gain a better understanding of how their government works and learn how to resolve issues and obtain information. Upon graduation, MyCity participants are able to help their communities understand and access government services.

In total, 110 participants from 33 counties have graduated. The August 2015 graduating class included citizens from India, Iran, Mexico, Somalia, Russia, and more.



Embracing Immigrants

The City can play an important role in welcoming immigrants into the St. Cloud community. Some initiatives that could be undertaken to achieve this end include:

- **Join the "Welcoming America" coalition.** Welcoming America is a national network of local governments and non-profits that collectively advocate for social integration of new immigrants as well as empowering them to become entrepreneurs. The network shares best practices among members, conducts training, provides public policy support, and hosts conferences. The coalition includes dozens of members across the country, ranging from Lincoln, NE to Iowa City, IA to Chicago, IL, and New York City. Welcoming America was recently recognized by the White House for helping immigrants to integrate civically, linguistically, and socially into the fabric of their neighborhoods.
- **Celebrate diversity and heritage through cultural or arts programming.** The City should make it clear that it is a welcoming city for immigrants and that it cherishes diversity. Parades, festivals, art exhibits, and other cultural events that can display St. Cloud's heritage should be encouraged and supported by the St. Cloud Arts Commission, Parks and Recreation Department. Partnerships with the library district, school district, and neighborhood groups could also be leveraged.
- **Establish a "Welcoming Center" or "Welcoming Program."** The City could work establish a "Welcoming Center" or "Welcoming Program" that could help immigrants adjust to life in St. Cloud socially, economically, and culturally. The program could match immigrants with a sponsor family, provide technical assistance with school registration or residential permitting, and educate new residents about available services and programming. Because many first generation immigrants are often distrusting of government (depending on the country of origin), such programming would likely require a "trusted broker" or partner such as a religious institution, respected community leader, or not-for-profit.

For recommendations regarding immigrant entrepreneurship, please see the Workforce Development, Education & Entrepreneurship section.

Reversing Brain Drain

St. Cloud is home to 30,000 students. Residents and business owners are concerned that not enough of this highly educated cohort remains in St. Cloud post-graduation. Repercussions for the departure of highly educated professionals ("brain drain") include an impact on the local economy, as these individuals tend to secure high-income jobs and have significant spending power.

Attracting & Retaining Young Professionals

Reversing brain drain in St. Cloud will be a challenging undertaking requiring improvement of employment opportunities as well as raising the standard of living on items that are important to younger generations. St. Cloud's struggle is not uncommon, however. Research shows that very few college graduates, outside of those educated in major metropolises such as Chicago or New York City, remain in the city in which they studied after graduation. What is more important for St. Cloud is the ability to attract and retain a healthy base of young professionals, regardless of whether they studied in St. Cloud, grew up in St. Cloud but attended college elsewhere, or have no previous ties to the community.

In order to attract and retain young professionals, the City should focus on four main areas: (1) providing a clear platform for young professionals to be aware of and access employment opportunities in St. Cloud, (2) revitalizing Downtown and continuing to making it a hip and fun mixed-use neighborhood, (3) improving the trail and sidewalk network to improve connectivity and reduce the need for an automobile, and (4) emphasizing the low cost of living relative to many other markets. Specific strategies on items #2 and #3 can be found in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Workforce Development, Education & Entrepreneurship

A well-rounded, educated workforce -- with skills that are aligned to meet the demands of the twenty-first century economy -- is critical to St. Cloud's economic growth and prosperity. In 2014, 28.2% of the population aged 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 23.7% of the region. However, this is noticeably lower than the overall state level of 32.6%.

Cradle to Career Workforce Development

The City can play a vital role in assisting St. Cloud Area School District #742, higher education institutions, workforce development organizations, private companies, and not-for-profits in creating a healthy ecosystem for the community's workforce, starting from the cradle through retirement. While the City has limited influence in this sphere, it is an important advocacy voice and can align City resources with those of other agencies, institutions, and providers. This includes not only preparation and completion of college education, but also skills development, vocational training, internships, mentoring, extra-curricular activities, and more.

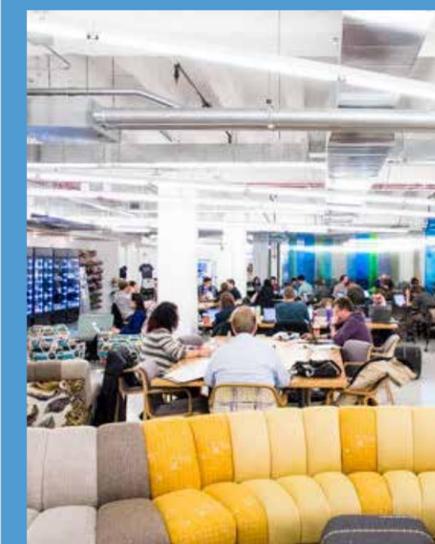
The City should:

- **Develop a web-based talent portal for St. Cloud.** A web-based talent portal would be a "one stop shop" for employment opportunities and workforce development programming within the St. Cloud region. It would connect both seekers and providers of training, services, and employment. It could also promote existing workforce training programs, and collate programming from local universities and colleges.
- **Facilitate partnerships between colleges, universities, workforce training programs, and local businesses.** Partnerships between the Region and its colleges and universities offer a range of potential opportunities. Universities, in conjunction with local businesses, can (1) adapt curricula to respond to the needs of the region's employers, (2) function as crucial research institutions, and (3) function as anchors in innovation clusters that serve a dual role as economic engines. Jobs in the health care industry are particularly conducive to partnerships between universities and local governments.
- **Encourage internships and summer employment opportunities for youth.** Internships allow young students to become familiar with the challenges of emerging employment opportunities, and allow employers the chance to train the next generation of employees in the best practices of emerging industries. The City should assist public schools, major employers, institutions, and other key stakeholders in enhancing internship and summer employment opportunities for the City's youth, particularly those who are at-risk. Other possible initiatives could increase connections between youth and major employers include job shadowing days, career fairs, career days, field trips to companies, and more.



Case Study: 1871

1871 is Chicago's largest tech incubator, a not-for-profit located in Downtown Chicago within the Merchandise Mart. It provides a creative yet affordable work environment for start-ups. The space includes 85,000 square feet of office and co-working space, and is filled with designers, coders, and entrepreneurs who learn from each other, encourage each other, and share a journey up the steep startup learning curve. Its operations are funded partly by rents but also through grants from public and private sponsors. Within its first year, the 225 startups housed within 1871 created 800 jobs and added nearly \$13 million in revenue to the local economy.



- Leverage parks and recreational programming to provide opportunities for at-risk youth.** Sports and exercise can teach youth team-building skills, keep them physically fit and healthy, and encourage responsible lifestyle choices and attitudes. The City Parks and Recreation Department should evaluate opportunities to use programming to reduce risky behaviors. This may include expanding existing parks and recreation programming, conducting outreach to at-risk communities to enlist participation in existing programming, and/or reducing registration fees for low-income families. The City could also consider hiring youth for temporary summer employment (e.g. mowing, maintenance, administration, etc.).
- Increase access to early childhood education, particularly within at-risk and low income communities.** Early childhood education accounts for children younger than kindergarten. For children born into poverty and at-risk environments, early childhood education is critical to ensuring they have the educational foundation necessary for future success. While early childhood education can be expensive, research by the National Dropout Prevention Center shows that for each dollar invested in quality early childhood education, \$7 is generated in return through higher wages, less reliance on government programming, and reduced incarceration. The City should work with the St. Cloud Area School District #742 and other partners to identify opportunities to increase access to early childhood education.

Business Incubators

Business incubators afford new startups and growing firms a way to build their businesses with minimal cost, support services, and infrastructure. Business incubation programs are often sponsored by private companies or municipal entities and public institutions, such as colleges and universities. Their goal is to help create and grow young businesses by providing them with necessary best practices support and financial and technical services.

The City should work with local universities, economic development partners, and major employers to determine whether an incubator space would be appropriate and desirable for St. Cloud, likely located within the Downtown area.

Immigrant Entrepreneurship

Immigrants have a disproportionately positive impact on the local economy relative to natural born residents. Research documented by the Welcoming Economies Global Network, a not-for-profit network of immigrant economic development organizations working in the Midwest, shows that:

- While immigrants make up only 13% of the American population, they own 28% of America's Main Street businesses, including 58% of dry cleaners, 53% of grocery stores, 38% of restaurants, and 32% of clothing stores.
- More than 40% of Fortune 500 Companies were founded by immigrants or their children.
- Immigrants are almost two times as likely to start a business as U.S. born residents.
- 25% of American high-tech startups created between 1995 and 2005 were started by immigrants.
- Immigrant-owned businesses pay out \$126 billion in payroll each year.

The City should consider:

- Launching a "St. Cloud Immigrant Entrepreneurship Initiative."** The City could work with higher educational institutions, the banking sector, not-for-profits and other private and public partners to establish an initiative that provides immigrant entrepreneurs (many perhaps who owned or operated a business in their home country prior to emigrating) with the training and tools they need to start a business in America. Business training, language courses, assistance with permitting, and networking with local business leaders could be provided or facilitated.
- Working with higher education institutions and companies to target and retain talented international students.** Many companies across the United States report a skills gap between the training of the existing domestic workforce and the skills required to successfully execute many positions. In 2012, for example, Microsoft had more than 6,000 positions it could not fill. Working with private sector companies and higher education institutions in St. Cloud, the City could establish a partnership that could link promising international students at area colleges and universities with local employers seeking talent. St. Cloud State University, for example, has more than 1,100 international students. A similar successful initiative was launched in Lansing, MI ("Global Lansing"), where regional partners collaborated to place international students at Michigan State University in companies for internships, including assisting employers and students with the required work authorization process.

Key Workforce Development Partners

St. Cloud Area School District #742

St. Cloud Area School District 742 is the largest school district in Central Minnesota. The St. Cloud Area School District maintains and operates 18 facilities that include 8 elementary schools, 3 middle level schools, two high schools (Tech High and Apollo), three alternative learning schools, an early childhood center, and a community education center. The District has a current enrollment of 10,300, which is expected to increase, as it has for the past 5 years.

The school district has also undertaken several other initiatives to set itself apart. Examples include Chinese and Spanish Immersion programs, 19 Advanced Placement classes, 60 athletic teams, 45 activities and groups, career-readiness classes and programs such as STEM and Health Careers. The special education program is held as a model for the state, earning praise for its depth and ability to serve a broad spectrum of special needs.

Two-thirds of the district's licensed staff have advanced degrees and in a recent national (NSPRA) communication audit, focus groups agreed that District 742 boasts passionate, hard-working teachers and approachable administrators. The focus groups also revealed a sense of pride in both the programs and people of the school system.

St. Cloud State University

Occupying a 100-acre campus along the Mississippi River, St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is a regionally and nationally recognized institution offering students more than 200 academic programs. Founded in 1869, SCSU had a Fall 2014 enrollment of just over 15,000 students. The school offers students not just a world class education, but also opportunities to participate in study abroad programs, internships, and research opportunities.

St. Cloud Technical & Community College

St. Cloud Technical & Community College enrolls roughly 6,000 students from St. Cloud and the larger regional area, offering degrees in business, construction technology, health, liberal arts and science, manufacturing technology, nursing, and transportation technology. Largely a commuter college, 70% of the student body comes from the surrounding six counties, with an average student age of 26 years. The college has seen a high level of collaboration with St. Cloud State University through various programs and initiatives, providing students with accessibility to the services and amenities of both campuses.

Other Colleges

In addition to local St. Cloud facilities, higher education opportunities are provided by Rasmussen College and the nearby College of St. Benedictine and St. John's University.

Rasmussen College is a national institution for higher education, including 24 campuses spread across six states and online. The St. Cloud campus offers degrees and programs in businesses, design, education, health sciences, justice studies, nursing, and technology.

Located west of St. Cloud, the College of St. Benedictine and St. John's University offer higher educations within close proximity of the city. Both institutions are nationally recognized as top Catholic liberal arts universities. Closely affiliated, the facilities are separated between the all-women's St. Benedictine campus in St. Joseph and the all-men's St. John's campus in Collegetown.

St. Cloud WorkForce Center

The State of Minnesota WorkForce Center works in collaboration with key partners to make sure that area job seekers find employment and training and area businesses find the skilled workers they need. They assist businesses by identifying the right workers, publicizing jobs and accessing workforce data; help job seekers by providing computer access, coaching, and identifying the right employment opportunities; and by hosting or coordinating workshops and job fairs.

SCORE of Central Minnesota

SCORE provides free and confidential business counseling to assist people in starting a new business and existing small and mid-sized business owners. SCORE volunteers are real-world professionals with expertise to help small businesses succeed. Counselors are experts in such areas as accounting, finance, operations, marketing management and business plan preparation.

RESOURCE

RESOURCE (formerly known as Employment Action Center or EAC) is a not-for-profit that provides employment services, career education training, and chemical and mental health services to more than 20,000 individuals and families each year. They offer more than 70 programs and services for career advancement, including employment, career development, and job placement services for laid-off workers through the Dislocated Workers Program; career development and employment counseling specifically for women — making career decisions, finding employment or advancing in their careers; and education support, employment services, parenting and life skills training for youth and young parents.

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

The Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC), a partner in the WorkForce Center in St. Cloud, provides services to employers and job seekers in Stearns and Benton Counties. SBETC provides job seekers with labor market information access to job seeking tools and resources, career counseling, assessments, career counseling and planning and, in some instances, financial assistance for training.

The Anderson Center

The Anderson Center exists to promote growth: individual growth, organizational growth, and economic growth. The group provides engaging management and leadership development forums for executives across Greater Minnesota. In Anderson Center forums, experienced participants—including owners, directors, executives, managers, advisors and financiers—debate and apply the lessons of real-world case studies guided by highly-skilled Discussion Leaders to improve their organizations.

Minnesota Business Finance Corporation

Minnesota Business Finance Corporation is a private not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization licensed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a certified development company (CDC). MBFC handles SBA approval, closing, and loan servicing within St. Cloud and provides long-term, low down payment, and reasonably priced fixed-rate loans to businesses with a high probability of success.

Initiative Foundation

Formed in 1986 by a partnership of regional leaders and The McKnight Foundation, the Initiative Foundation is one of six Minnesota Initiative Foundations serving Greater Minnesota. In the 1980s, Minnesota faced widespread financial hardships, high unemployment, and shifting rural economies that severely impacted the farming and mining industries.

Independent and responsive to local needs and opportunities, each Foundation was created to strengthen its regional economy and communities. The MIF partners share ideas while investing in business loans, nonprofit grants, programs, and donor services. The MIF model is unique to Minnesota. No other U.S. state has a similar foundation network that unites community and economic development.

Incentives & Tools

This section provides an overview of grants, loans, financing, and other tools that can be used for economic development purposes within St. Cloud, particularly many of the key topics that have been discussed in this chapter. This is not an exhaustive list but a summary of the most prominent and available incentives currently available. The City should continue to publicize these incentives, assist in their application, or utilize these tools (where applicable) to promote economic growth within St. Cloud. A full list of economic development and business resources is maintained by the City's Economic Development Department. It should be noted that programs identified below should be closely scrutinized to understand application deadlines and eligibility requirements as well as potential legislative changes that may affect existing programs.

State of Minnesota Incentives

The State of Minnesota provides a variety of incentives to municipalities and economic development entities. Several of the incentives available in St. Cloud are identified here.

Angel Tax Credit

Businesses headquartered in Minnesota with fewer than 25 employees and engaged in the research or development of qualifying high-technology can qualify for up to \$1 million in angel tax credits.

Job Creation Fund

The Job Creation Fund provides financial incentives to new and expanding businesses that meet certain job creation and capital investment targets. To be designated as a Job Creation Fund business, a business must, at minimum:

- Be engaged in an eligible business activity.
- Obtain local government support for their project via council resolution.
- Invest at least \$500,000 in real property improvements within one year of becoming a designated Job Creation Fund business.
- Create at least 10 new full-time permanent jobs within two years of becoming a Job Creation Fund business while maintaining existing employment numbers.
- Pay at least \$12.61 in wages and benefits in 2015, adjusted annually based on 110 percent of federal poverty guidelines. The level will change again on Jan. 1, 2016.
- Have other location options outside of Minnesota.
- Cause no undue harm to Minnesota business competitors.
- Certify that the project would not occur without Job Creation Fund assistance.

Companies deemed eligible to participate may receive up to \$1 million for creating or retaining high-paying jobs and for constructing or renovating facilities or making other property improvements. In some cases, companies may receive awards of up to \$2 million. This award-winning program has been recognized for its innovation by the Economic Development Association of Minnesota.

Greater Minnesota Job Expansion Tax Credits

The program approves sales tax exemptions of up to 12 years to eligible existing businesses located in Greater Minnesota (outside the Twin Cities 7-county metro area) that meet specified job creation and wage level eligibility requirements.

Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The MN Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credits Program offers a 20% state tax credit for qualified historic rehabilitations, and parallels the existing federal rehabilitation tax credit. It also offers project investors an option of a grant in lieu of a credit. Only income-producing properties are eligible for this incentive. This tax credit/grant is funded by the State of Minnesota; funds are awarded to eligible applicants who meet the program requirements. The building must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places or be certified as contributing to the significance of a "registered historic district".

MN Investment Fund

The Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) provides financing to help add new workers and retain high-quality jobs on a statewide basis. The focus is on industrial, manufacturing, and technology-related industries to increase the local and state tax base and improve economic vitality statewide. Funds are awarded to local units of government who provide loans to assist expanding businesses. At least 50 percent of total project costs must be privately financed through owner equity and other lending sources (most applications selected for funding have at least 70 percent private financing).

Research & Development Tax Credits

Businesses with qualifying research & development (R&D) expenses in Minnesota may qualify for the credit for increasing research activities. The R&D credit is equal to 10 percent of qualifying expenses up to \$2 million, and 2.5 percent for expenses above that level. C-corporations, partnerships and S corporations are eligible to claim the credit through the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

Capital Equipment Exemption

Businesses that buy or lease qualifying capital equipment (machinery and equipment used in manufacturing) for use in Minnesota are eligible for an up-front exemption from Minnesota state and local sales or use.

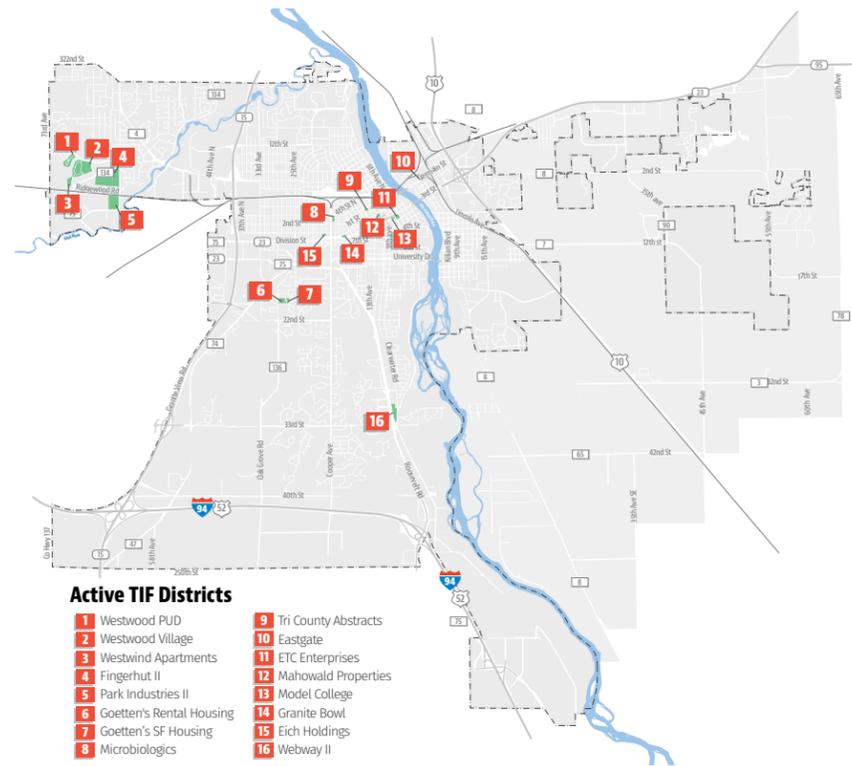
Minnesota's Shovel Ready Program

Site certification is an effective site marketing tool for economic development organizations looking to establish a competitive advantage in successfully attracting new employers.

The DEED Shovel Ready Certification Program confirms that a site ready to accommodate desired development including appropriate zoning, environmental suitability, utility service, known ownership status, and transportation access. The certification ensures that the site-selection process is easier, faster and more predictable for companies that are looking to grow in Minnesota.

Certified shovel-ready status is fast becoming a standard for sites that are marketed around the country. Minnesota's Certified Shovel Ready sites are marketed at national conferences, trade shows and on the MnPRO.com Web site, the state's site-selection database.





Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) utilizes future property tax revenues generated within a designated area or district to pay for infrastructure improvements and further incentivize continued reinvestment. As the Annual Assessed Value (AAV) of properties within a TIF District increases, the incremental growth in property tax over the base year that the TIF was established is reinvested in that area.

TIF dollars can typically be used to redevelop areas with substandard buildings, build housing for low-income and moderate income families, mitigate pollution, provide general economic incentives, and finance public infrastructure (e.g. streets, water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.). Dependent upon the project type, the duration of a TIF district in the State of Minnesota may span between 8-25 years.

TIF in St. Cloud

In St. Cloud, TIF districts are administered by the Economic Development Authority which has an important role to play in deciding whether use of TIF is appropriate for a given project and how TIF will be used and adopting TIF plans. The EDA sets TIF policy, evaluates applications, and negotiates contracts with recommendation to the City Council for adopting TIF plans and contracts.

The City has made it a practice of decertifying TIF districts once bonds/obligations have been paid in full, or when the District term expires, whichever occurs first. St. Cloud has established a total of 37 TIF districts and had 16 active TIF districts in 2015. TIF districts in St. Cloud have been primarily utilized to facilitate redevelopment and employment-generating projects, particularly in industrial areas.

In keeping with this focus, the City should consider establishing TIF districts to facilitate redevelopment and implement improvements on key sites in accordance with the Land Use Plan. Projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan that may be eligible for TIF fund expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Relocation/removal of an electrical substation to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment of the Cooper Avenue Catalyst Site (**Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**).
- Redevelopment of the former Coborn's, Inc. corporate office property located on the east side.
- Redeveloping underutilized commercial properties throughout the Division Street and Highway 10 corridors.
- Facilitating parcel assembly and redevelopment of sites in Downtown St. Cloud in accordance with the Downtown Subarea Plan (**Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**).

Tax Abatements

In 2013 the City adopted a Tax Increment Financing and Tax Abatement Policy describing eligible uses and application process that is administered and recommended by the EDA, with approval by City Council.

The City is authorized to grant abatement (a reduction or elimination) of all or a portion of the City property tax on specified parcels. The City may abate taxes only after holding a public hearing and adopting a resolution stipulating the terms of the agreement. The City Council must find that the abatement is in the public interest by meeting one or more of the following objectives:

- Help or preserve tax base;
- Provide employment opportunities in the City;
- Provide, help acquire, or construct public facilities;
- Help develop or renew blighted areas;
- Help provide access for services for residents of the City; and/or
- Finance or improve public infrastructure.

The City must find that the expected benefits to the City of St. Cloud at least equal the cost to the City of the proposed agreement. The maximum duration of abatement is 15 years (with a maximum of 20 years in limited situations).

District Type	Use of Increment	Maximum Duration
Redevelopment	Redevelop blighted areas	25 years
Renewal and renovation	Redevelop areas with obsolete uses, not meeting blight test	15 years
Economic development	Encourage manufacturing and other footloose industries	8 years
Housing	Assist low- and moderate-income housing	25 years
Soils	Clean up contaminated sites	20 years
Compact Development	Redevelop commercial areas with more dense development	25 years

Source: State of Minnesota – House of Representatives Research Department

Special Service District (SSD)

A Special Service District (SSD), often referred to as a business improvement districts in other states, is a defined area where special services are rendered and the costs of the special services are paid from revenues collected from service charges imposed within that area. Such services may include snow and ice removal, lighting, signage, parking, parking enforcement, marketing, landscaping, security, and promotion.

Special service districts, may be established at any location within a municipality, but only commercial, industrial, or utility properties will be subject to the service charge. A SSD may be established only if a petition by a certain percentage of potentially affected property owners is filed and the city adopts an ordinance to establish it. Funding available within an SSD varies widely depending on the number of contributing properties and the agreed upon service charge which is, in turn, determined by the costs of services to be funded by the SSD.

Several cities in Central Minnesota utilize SSDs for economic development purposes including Duluth and St. Louis Park. The Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District is the most well known SSD in Minnesota and had an approximate budget of \$6.5 million in 2014.

As discussed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, the City should partner with the Downtown Council and Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation to evaluate and facilitate the formation of a Downtown St. Cloud SSD. A Downtown SSD would provide a steady and predictable funding source to facilitate a variety of district-wide initiatives, such as:

- Downtown marketing and branding campaigns.
- Economic development activities that assist new and existing local businesses in a manner that is beneficial to the larger downtown district.
- Joint maintenance services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, ice and snow removal, trash collection, and other services.
- Parking management and wayfinding program implementation.
- On-site security services where necessary.
- Installation and maintenance of planters and flower baskets
- Seasonal decorations
- Capital improvements for streetscaping and installation of special district amenities such as decorative street lighting, street furniture, and banners.

While the City already currently provides these services and amenities to some degree, and SSD would allow for enhanced services and amenities that are over and beyond what could ordinarily provided.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is a similar tool to tax abatement. Municipalities can use PILT to reduce the property tax burden of a desired business for a predetermined period. In this instance, a local taxing body and a property owner will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of the property taxes. Payments are typically made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property. In addition, PILT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity locating on a key potential-tax generating site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the municipality to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

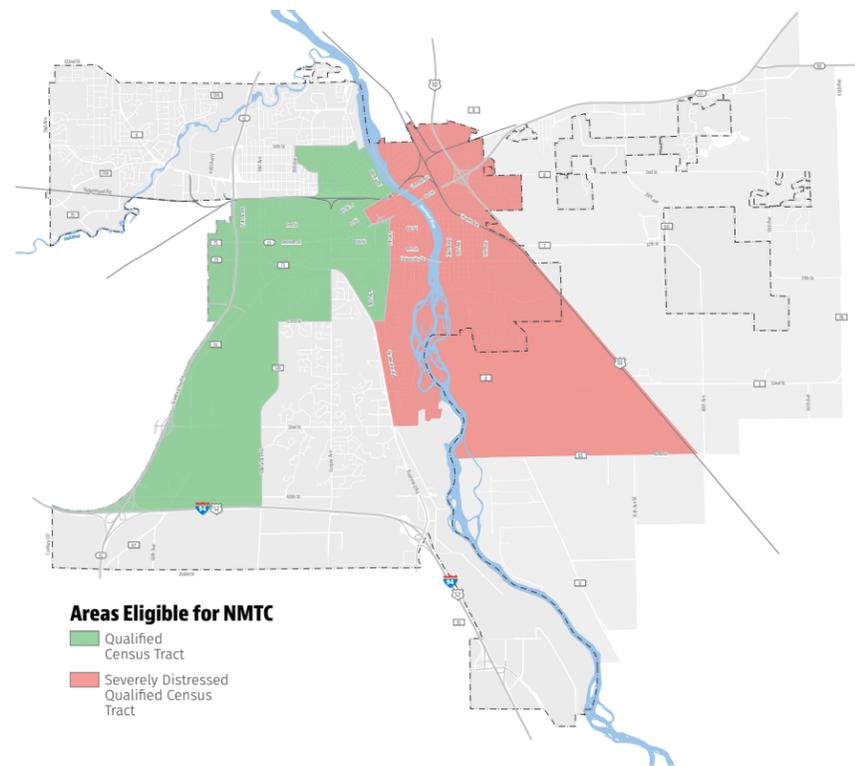
St. Cloud State University Micro Loan Program

The Micro Loan Program offered by St. Cloud State University helps to build the local economy by providing technical/entrepreneurial expertise, educational assets, and small loans for individuals that ordinarily would not qualify for traditional financing. This includes those with low incomes, with low education levels, displaced workers, and New Americans. Loans of \$1,000 up to \$25,000 are available for financing equipment, capital improvements, property, and start-up expenses.

Redevelopment Success Story: Quinlivan & Hughes

The St. Cloud EDA worked with developers Redevelopment Holdings One, LLC and Boser Construction to redevelop the former site of the Granite Bowl – a downtown bowling alley that had been vacant for 2 years. The 74-year old deteriorating building was redeveloped into a 17,000 square foot, Class A office building that is located on the gateway entrance to downtown St. Cloud. The building addition provided much needed space for the growing law firm, Quinlivan and Hughes, who wanted to remain located in the vibrant downtown district.

The project is expected to create nine jobs, retain 52 jobs and increase the city's annual tax base by \$48,180. Extraordinary redevelopment costs were supported through the City's award of a Redevelopment Grant Program application from MN Department of Employment and Economic Development, as well as matching funds, provided by tax increment financing.



Federal New Market Tax Credits

New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs) provide investors such as banks and insurers with tax credits against their federal income tax in exchange for new investments made in low-income areas (a census tract with at least 20% below the poverty line or where the median family income for the tract is below 80% of the area median family income). NMTCs are administered by Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), which tap into a federal fund through a competitive process. The Initiative Foundation is a CDFI with active involvement in the St. Cloud community.

The New Market Tax Credit is a valuable economic development tool as it is one of few funding sources that provides funding up front. NMTCs can play a crucial role in facilitating desired development by providing gap financing within a development budget or reducing the debt service within a project's operating pro forma.

As depicted in the accompanying map, many areas within St. Cloud are eligible for this program, including Downtown St. Cloud and the St. Cloud State University campus area. The NMTC program was used recently in St. Cloud to fund the development of the Capital One 360 building. As the City and its partners seek to encourage redevelopment of key sites in and around the downtown, serious consideration should be given to expanding the use of New Market Tax Credits.

Brownfields

A variety of both state and federal programs exist to help secure, remediate, and reposition/redevelop brownfield sites. Assistance includes tax credits, reimbursements, loans, and grants, and are administered typically by either the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, or Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. A not-for-profit, Minnesota Brownfields, also assists with brownfield reuse and redevelopment. Each brownfields program has its own qualifying criteria.

Existing programs that the City of St. Cloud and its partners could tap into for assistance are listed below. It is important to note that other federal and state programming exists that could be utilized for brownfields remediation, but are not specifically brownfields programs.

- Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Grants (federal)
- Brownfields Site Assessment Pilots/Grants (federal)
- Brownfields Cleanup Grants (federal)
- Brownfields Job Training Grants (federal)
- Minnesota Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (state)
- Small Business Environmental Improvement Loan (state)
- Contamination Cleanup Grant (state)
- Contamination Investigation and RAP Development Grant (state)

- Agricultural Chemical Response and Reimbursement Account (state)
- Drycleaner Fund Environmental Response and Reimbursement Account (state)
- Petroleum Tank Release Cleanup Fund (state)
- Contamination Tax Assistance (state)
- Site Assessment and Consultation Unit (state)
- Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (institutional – Kansas State University)

Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Program

The Greater Minnesota Business Development Infrastructure Grant Program helps stimulate new economic development by providing grants to cities of up to 50 percent of the capital costs of the public infrastructure necessary to expand or retain jobs in the area, increase the tax base, or expand or create new economic development. Eligible cities must have home rule and be outside of the seven-county metropolitan area. Cities must provide a match of at least 50 percent of the project capital costs, and the city may receive no more than \$1,000,000 in two years for one or more projects. Eligible projects include publicly owned infrastructure that supports economic development projects, including wastewater collection and treatment, drinking water, storm sewers, utility extensions, and streets.

Transportation Economic Development (TED) Fund

The TED fund is a competitive grant program of which governmental entities may apply to receive funds for highway improvement and public infrastructure projects that create jobs and support economic development. The projects must support one or more of the following industries: manufacturing, technology, warehousing and distribution, research and development, agricultural processing, bioscience, or tourism/recreation. Although competitive, awards can be up to \$10 million per project, and awards may be used to fund a maximum of 70 percent of project costs for trunk highway interchanges and other improvements. For example, the City of St. Cloud used TED funds to construct the new interchange at 33rd Street South and Trunk Highway 15.

Transportation & Mobility

St. Cloud boasts a robust transportation system of roadways, public transit, trails, and sidewalks. Safe and efficient access and mobility are critical in supporting land use and development, economic development, and quality of life. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan presents recommendations intended to guide investment in a well-balanced, multi-modal transportation system. Many of the recommendations are informed by the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO) Long Range Transportation Plan 2040.

Goal

Support a highly-connected transportation network that facilitates safe access and mobility for all forms of transportation.

Objectives

- Extend and increase the capacity of roadways that enhance circulation, mobility, and anticipated growth and development.
- Increase bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity across jurisdictions through local coordination of improvement projects.

- Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements throughout the community, including at local schools, parks, civic institutions, and community gathering and recreation destinations.
- Work with local transit agencies to develop a coordinated and integrated plan for public transportation that includes Amtrak, the Northstar Commuter Rail Line, and Metro Bus.
- Utilize the Downtown Parking Study to develop a comprehensive parking strategy for both downtown and other commercial areas that addresses capacity, pricing, and landscaping/design.
- Support the development and implementation the APO On-Street Bicycle Plan as well as an updated St. Cloud Bikeways and Pedestrian Plan.
- Develop a community gateway and wayfinding program and install gateway and wayfinding signs throughout the St. Cloud community to create a unique sense of place.



Vision Zero

Between 2009 and 2013, MnDOT recorded more than 130 pedestrian and bicycle crashes within St. Cloud, some of which were fatal. Areas with a concentration of crashes include Downtown, the Division Street corridor, 33rd Avenue, and 12th Street N. As the City implements roadway improvement projects and constructs new developments, it should consider how roadways, crosswalks, and other transportation infrastructure impacts the safety of the community. Designing safe roadways to eliminate traffic injuries and fatalities is part of an emerging movement called Vision Zero. Vision Zero utilizes several strategies to reduce roadway crashes:

Infrastructure – Designing roadways to be safe for all users: vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Vehicle Technology – Utilizing existing and emerging safety controls such as seatbelts, child seats, and rear-view cameras.

Services & Education – Increasing driver education as well as increasing the knowledge of roadway design best practices.

Control & Surveillance – Enforcing traffic safety codes and monitoring traffic incidents.

Roadway Network

The roadway network in St. Cloud consists of principal arterials, minor arterials, major and minor collectors, and local roads, and is aligned with the Federal Highway Administration’s Functional Classification Guidelines. These classifications provide guidance as to the function of each roadway and serve to balance the competing needs of mobility and access. The jurisdiction of local streets fall under the City of St. Cloud; Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne Counties oversee their respective county roadways; and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) maintains jurisdiction of interstate freeways, U.S. trunk highways, and state trunk highways.

Key Roadway Improvements: St. Cloud APO

St. Cloud APO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2040 identifies and classifies key projects as fiscally constrained, illustrative, and unmet needs.

Fiscally Constrained Projects

Fiscally Constrained projects are funded improvements projects that have received capital programming and will be undergoing construction or more detailed design in the near future. These include:

- **CR 134:** Widening to 4-lanes from W Oakes Drive to Pine Cone Road.
- **9th Avenue N:** Widening to 4-lanes from 15th Street N to 9th Street N.
- **Mayhew Lake Road:** Widening to 4-lanes from Highway 3 to CR 45.
- **33rd Street S (Phase 1):** Widening to 4-lanes from CR 136 to Cooper Road.

Illustrative Projects

Illustrative projects are those that, while still desired and necessary for the community, currently lack funding for implementation. As funding becomes available, these projects should be amended to the fiscally constrained project list. These include:

- **River Avenue N (CSAH 1):** Widening to 4-lanes from 9th Avenue N to CR 120 in Sartell.
- **33rd Street S (Phase 2):** Widening to 4-lanes from CSAH 74 to CR 136.
- **40th Street S:** Extension as a 2-lane roadway from Cooper Road to Roosevelt Road.
- **45th Avenue SE:** Realign roadway to follow western ultimate property boundary of St. Cloud Regional Airport as identified in the 2015 Master Plan Update.
- **Heatherwood Road:** Extension as a 2-lane roadway across Johnson Creek to the I-94 Business Park.

Unmet Congestion Need Projects

Unmet Congestion Need projects are roadways segments that are projected to operate at LOS E or F (high levels of traffic congestion) if no improvements are made by 2040. These routes should be considered long-term improvements that may influence development in currently undeveloped areas of the community. These include:

- **25th Avenue:** Centennial Drive to Highway 23 (Division Street).
- **3rd Street N:** 31st Avenue N to 16th Avenue N.
- **CR 136/Oak Grove Road:** 25th Avenue to the area south of Oak Hill Elementary.
- **Cooper Avenue:** 33rd Street S to CSAH 75.
- **15th Avenue SE:** Minnesota Boulevard to US Highway 10.
- **Clearwater Road:** From Roosevelt Road to 16th Street S.
- **33rd Street S River Crossing:** Roosevelt Road to US Highway 10.

In addition to widenings and other improvements to enhance existing capacity, several the recommended roadway extensions highlighted in the Transportation and Mobility map figure are intended to provided alternate routes that will reduce traffic demand on Unmet Congestion Need routes.



Key Roadway Improvements: City of St. Cloud

In addition to roadway improvements included in the St. Cloud APO L RTP, there are several projects that are recommended to improve connectivity and reduce congestion at the neighborhood and commercial district scale. Several of these projects are included within the Illustrative Capital Improvement section of the City's Capital Improvements Program (2016-2021) while other improvements are recommended based on observations made during the comprehensive plan process.

33rd Street Improvements

Much of the City's projected population growth will be accommodated in the area located between 22nd Street S and I-94. 33rd Street S is viewed as a critical component in the Southwest Beltway that will link growing residential areas in St. Cloud, Haven Township, and Waite Park to the Highway 15 and Roosevelt Road corridors, and then on to regional commercial areas to the north and I-94 to the south. The recent completion of the interchange at 33rd Street S and Highway 15 was a critical step in implementing the Southwest Beltway concept and the planned development of the Tech High School campus has also increased the importance of 33rd Street S. With no improvements, level of service along 33rd Street S will degrade as development occurs and the roadway experiences increased traffic congestion.

Much of the 33rd Street S corridor will undergo development over the life of the Comprehensive Plan and opportunities exist for the City to work with Stearns County and property owners to ensure appropriate roadway widenings and enhancements can be accommodated moving forward. In addition to ensuring efficient vehicular movements and access, as a key route in a growing residential area, it is important that 33rd Street S roadway design adhere to "complete streets" principles and safely accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movements as well as auto and transit.

33rd Street S Bridge

The extension of 33rd Street S to the east, across the Mississippi River, is also of strategic importance to improving traffic conditions on St. Cloud's east side. Currently, to access I-94 and surrounding retail and employment areas, residents must rely on the University Avenue to travel over the river and then travel south along the Roosevelt Road corridor. This places additional stress on Roosevelt Road and other parallel collectors while also funneling traffic through the SCSU campus area and the surrounding Southside University neighborhood. The extension of 33rd Street S across the river would allow east side residents to utilize CR 8 or Highway 10 to access 33rd Street S and connect to Roosevelt Road near I-94.

In addition to providing a much needed roadway connection, the extension of 33rd Street would also help facilitate the extension of infrastructure to areas surrounding the St. Cloud Regional Airport and Minden Township. While development should be discouraged within Haven Township, the extension of 33rd Street S would also facilitate future development opportunities once the primary and secondary growth areas were substantially built out.

Division Street

Throughout the community outreach process for the Comprehensive Plan, residents noted congestion along Division Street to be a significant issue. While Division Street has historically been known as a congested roadway, the 2040 L RTP does not indicate level of service to be a current issue and projected increases in traffic counts are not expected to impact LOS. Though not scientific, members of the Project Team recorded their travel times along the corridor at various times of day and did not encounter significant backups. Travel times increased most significantly when attempting to turn left from Division Street at signalized intersections where left turns are prohibited without a signal.

The only future potential projects related to the Division Street corridor identified within the L RTP include improvements to the Highway 15 intersection and improvements to roadways leading to Division. Improvements to signalization and access management for properties fronting Division appear to have been effective in reducing congestion in recent years and establishing regular traffic flow along the corridor.

As discussed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility are needed within the Division Street corridor. With limited right-of-way available for non-auto infrastructure, the City should partner with MnDOT and private property owners to identify pedestrian infrastructure improvements that will improve safety and foster a more inviting environment.



Heatherwood Drive Extension

As discussed in the Commercial Areas Framework section of **Chapter 5: Economic Development**, Heatherwood Drive (also referred to as Clearwater Road by the St. Cloud APO) should be extended south, across Johnson Creek to the I-94 Business Park. This will be a key improvement to encouraging industrial and office/business park development between the two I-94 interchange areas (Roosevelt Road and CR 75).

40th Street South and Roosevelt Road

MnDOT plans to relocate the signalized intersection at 43rd Street S and Roosevelt Road to 40th Street S. The St. Cloud APO plans to connect the eastern and western segments of 40th Street S, establishing an uninterrupted corridor from Highway 23 across Highway 15 and continuing east to Roosevelt Road. As traffic increases on 40th Street S as a result of this improvement, the proposed intersection improvement and realignment will be necessary to improve traffic flow to and from Roosevelt Road and the nearby I-94 interchange. The City, County, and MnDOT should update the CSAH 75 corridor study (2007) working in concert with local businesses. The study should identify viable access and intersection design alternatives south of the future 40th Street South and Roosevelt Road intersection considering access needs of private property owners and traffic operations and safety.

As discussed in the Commercial Areas Framework section of **Chapter 5: Economic Development**, to enhance use of existing commercial development and facilitate future development, the City should partner with MnDOT to evaluate the use of a frontage road on the east side of Roosevelt Road. An offset frontage road should also be considered for the west side of Roosevelt Road to allow for desired commercial development to locate on both sides of the frontage road and increase overall development potential while maintaining frontage along Roosevelt Road.

I-94/CR 136 Interchange

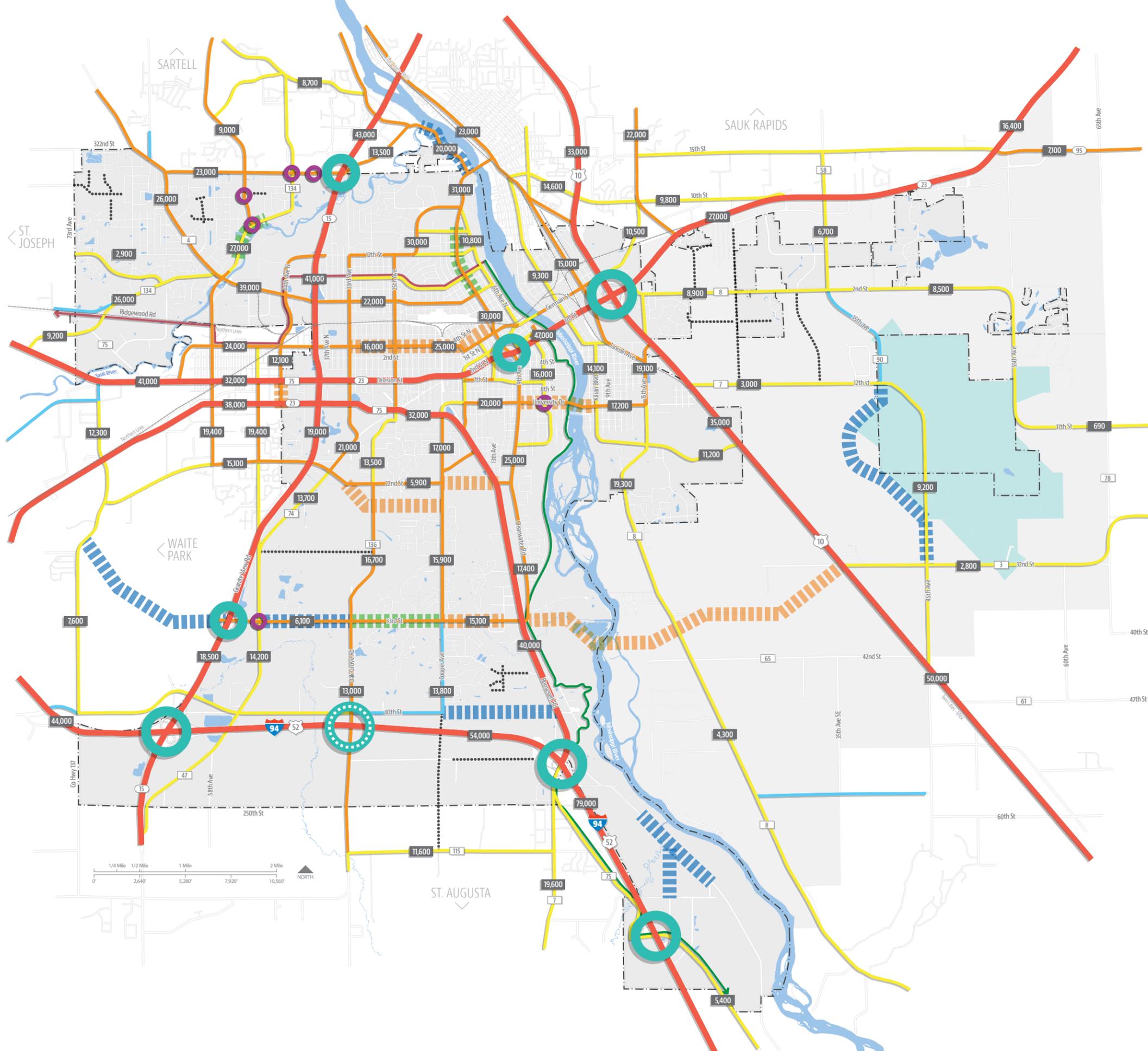
Although not listed as an unmet need, future growth and development in the Primary Growth Area may necessitate the need for an additional interchange at I-94 and CR 136/Oak Grove Road. An interchange at this location would increase access to emerging growth areas and would also alleviate congestion Oak Grove Road, 40th Street S, and other east-west routes currently providing access to I-94 via Highway 15 and Roosevelt Road. As areas surrounding I-94 and CR 136 continue to develop and intensify, the City should work with MnDOT to monitor traffic counts at the two nearest interchanges. Further, the City should consider limiting development near the intersection of I-94 and CR 136 to decrease future conflict should a new interchange be warranted.

Local Roadway Connections

Connectivity within several St. Cloud neighborhoods is poor due to a lack of access points to individual subdivisions and the presence of numerous unconnected stub streets. While stub streets are created with the intent to align and connect to adjacent developments, in areas where development has slowed, residents often come to treat the stub streets as private cul-de-sacs and oppose future connections to avoid “cut through” traffic.

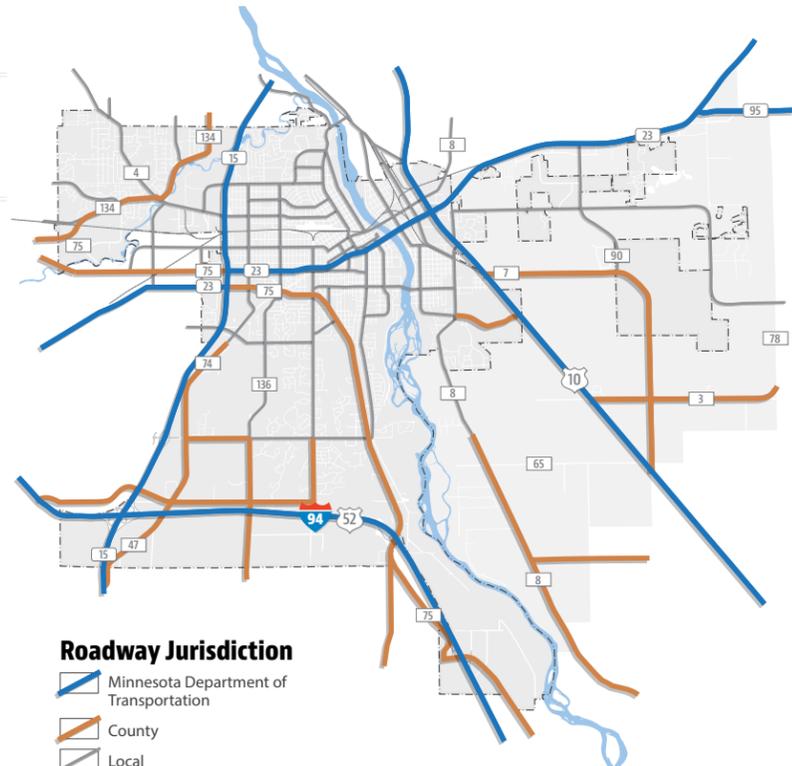
The residential areas in Minden Township along the Highway 23 corridor provide numerous examples where additional through connections to existing stub streets would greatly improve mobility to local residents. While connections to Highway 23 should be limited, additional neighborhood-to-neighborhood connections would provide more than one point of entry to each development. Connections to the south at 2nd Street SE would also be beneficial and could be established as a complement to future development to the south.

Moving forward, the City should maintain a policy of increasing connectivity between existing and future residential neighborhoods. This includes limiting the use of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets, planning for future local roadway connections, and promoting the establishment of stub streets. Efforts should also be made to encourage connections to adjacent commercial districts to limit the need to drive for day-to-day shopping needs. As new development occurs, the City should require connections to existing stub streets as a condition of approval. In addition, the City should also work with the development to ensure that residents are properly informed and educated about future through connections and when completion of the road segment is anticipated.

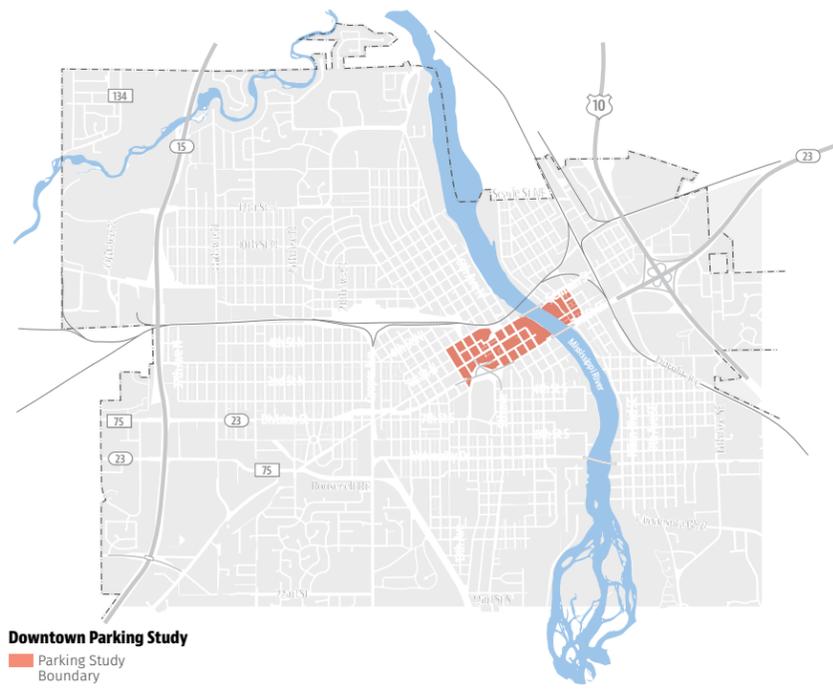


CITY OF ST. CLOUD Transportation & Mobility

- KEY**
- Principal Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
 - Fiscally Constrained Projects
 - Illustrative Projects
 - City Improvements
 - Local Connectivity
 - Beaver Island Trail
 - Lake Wobegon Trail Preferred Alignment
 - Existing Interchange
 - Future Interchange
 - Existing Roundabouts
 - Projected 2040 Annual ADT (No Build ADT Volumes, St. Cloud APO)
 - St. Cloud Regional Airport



- Roadway Jurisdiction**
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
 - County
 - Local



Downtown Parking Study
 ■ Parking Study Boundary



Parking

Parking plays a significant role in the St. Cloud transportation system. The availability and ease of locating parking can have an effect on local businesses and quality of life, while the appearance and design of surface parking can affect stormwater management and the identity of the City. In particular, parking management issues manifest in Downtown and within the City's commercial corridors.

Downtown Parking Study

To address Downtown parking, an independent parking study was conducted in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan. The study includes an analysis of on- and off-street parking demand and supply, including both public and private lots. Observation of the study area's parking supply provided key insights into the demand and use of parking in Downtown:

- Downtown St. Cloud has a parking supply of 4,385 spaces, or an effective supply of 3,914 spaces (which provides a more accurate approach to measuring supply that integrates spaces necessary for vehicles moving in and out, restricted parking spaces, improperly parked vehicles, minor construction, and snow removal).
- Downtown has a current surplus of 1,241± parking spaces.
- 68% of parking is utilized during peak hours.
- New development such as the expansion of key employers like Capital One or the redevelopment of the Lady Slipper Lot may create a parking deficit.

As new development occurs, the study recommends increasing the parking supply by requiring off-street parking to be integrated within the project. To better manage and expand existing parking as well as maximize future parking, the study offers the following recommendations:

- Utilize minimum parking structure dimensions to maximize the number of parking spaces per square foot
- Locate parking no more than a block away for business patrons and three blocks away for employees.
- Establish an Ambassador Program to provide customer service, emergency response, and City services.
- Consider raising the cost of expired meter violations.
- Consider raising the Convention Center parking ramp rate, and also consider installing Parking Access and Revenue Control equipment capable of both collecting fees on entrance (for events) or charging based on a programmable rate structure (non-events).
- Establish a parking branding and signage program that provide organized information about parking, wayfinding, and other information to guide accessibility.

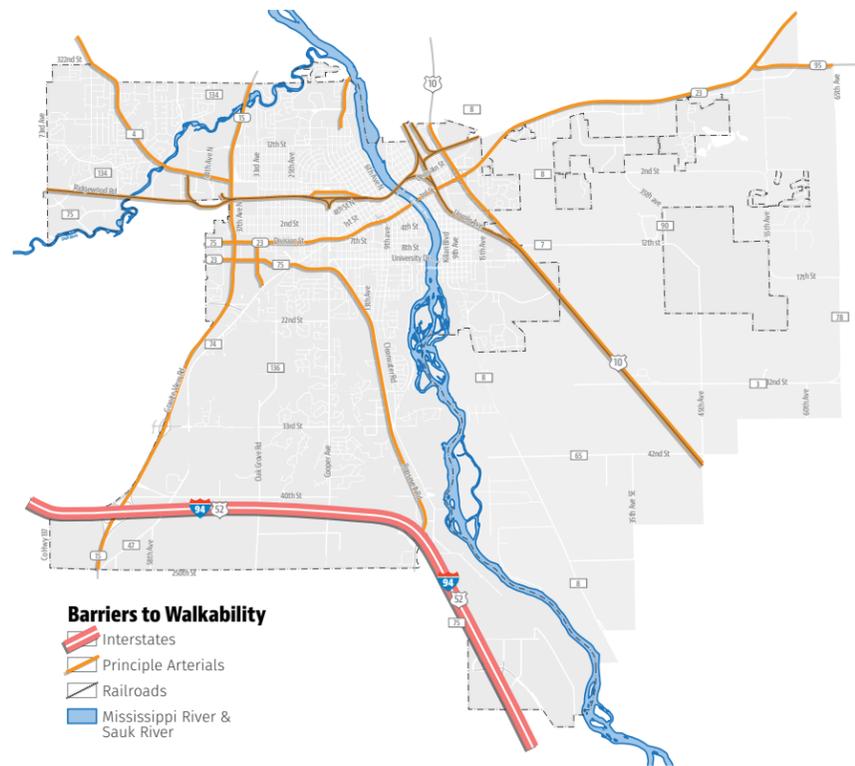
Off-Street Parking

Article 16 of the Land Development Code addresses off-street parking requirements for the City's zoning districts. Residential parking requirements are in-line with current development practices, however, the code requires a significant number of off-street parking with no maximum limit, which results in excess and underutilized off-street parking scattered throughout the City's commercial corridors. The City should consider amending Article 16.3 to include both off-street parking minimums and maximums, which prevent a surplus of parking as well as unnecessary amounts of impervious surface areas.

The design and landscaping of off-street parking areas can have a significant effect on the overall identity of the City's various neighborhoods. Residential parking areas with more than eight parking stalls are required to be screened (Section 17.4.C); however, the Land Development Code makes no off-street landscaping requirements for any other zoning district. The City should amend the Land Development Code to include requirements for parking lot landscaping, landscaped buffers, and screening. It should also consider reducing the required number of off-street parking requirements in exchange for the integration of stormwater best management practices. For more specific examples of parking lot improvements, see **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

Active Transportation Complete Streets

Following the passage of a statewide complete streets policy, the Area MPO and City of St. Cloud both passed local complete streets resolutions in 2011. Complete streets policies require that all modes of transportation are considered during roadway projects including automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. The goal is to create a transportation network that accommodates all roadway users, regardless of age or ability. While the policy may appear to increase capital improvement costs, this approach to transportation planning has been shown to stimulate the local economy by making it easier and safer for residents and visitors to walk, bike, or take transit as an alternative to driving. As such, the City should continue to implement its complete streets policy to ensure the safety and mobility of its non-motorized transportation groups. The City should work with developers and property owners to ensure complete streets projects include well-designed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that does not simply comply with the policy, but promotes and encourages walking and bicycling.



Pedestrian Infrastructure

The City's pedestrian infrastructure system consists of sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks. As part of the City's ongoing Neighborhood Revitalization Project, infrastructure in select neighborhoods in St. Cloud is being reconstructed and rehabilitated to improve or install curb, gutter, and sidewalks, in addition to sanitary sewer, water main, and storm drain facilities as warranted. The City should continue to install sidewalks throughout the community as part of additional infrastructure improvement projects, prioritizing major corridors and areas around schools, public facilities, and other destinations often used by youth and senior citizens.

In addition to neighborhood sidewalk gaps, St. Cloud includes several barriers to walkability and pedestrian mobility. These barriers include arterial roadways, railroad tracks, and natural features such as TH 15, the BNSF tracks, and the Mississippi River.

Key Trail Assets

St. Cloud offers a network of off-street, multi-use trails that represents a considerable asset local residents seeking to experience the community's extensive inventory of parks and natural areas. Potential greenway trail corridors and significant trail projects such as the recently expanded Beaver Island Trail and proposed Lake Wobegon Trail are discussed in **Chapter 9: Parks, Recreation & Environmental Features**.

Safe Routes to School

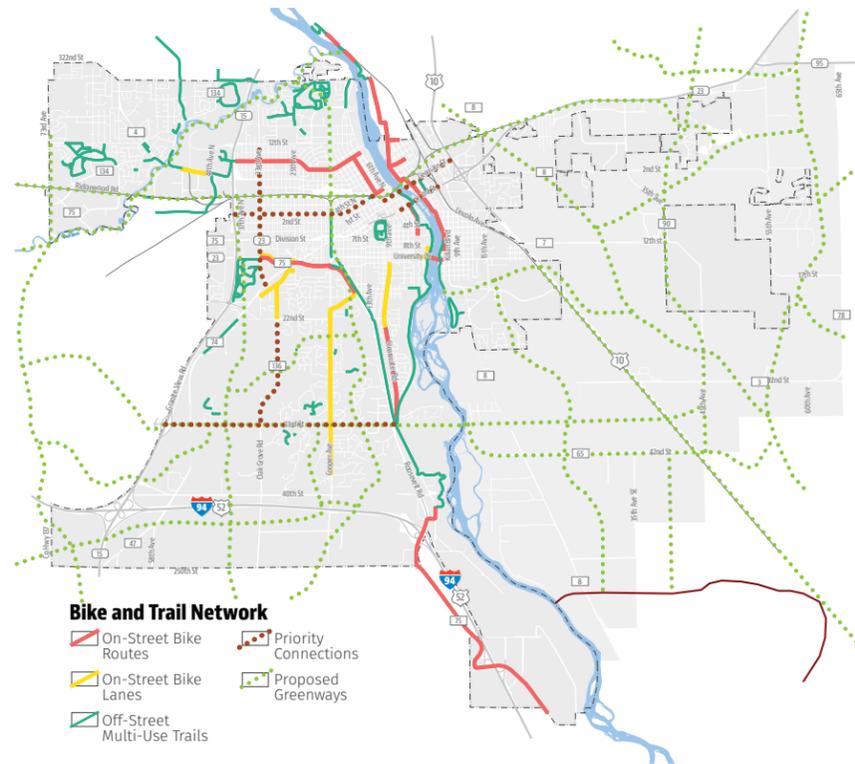
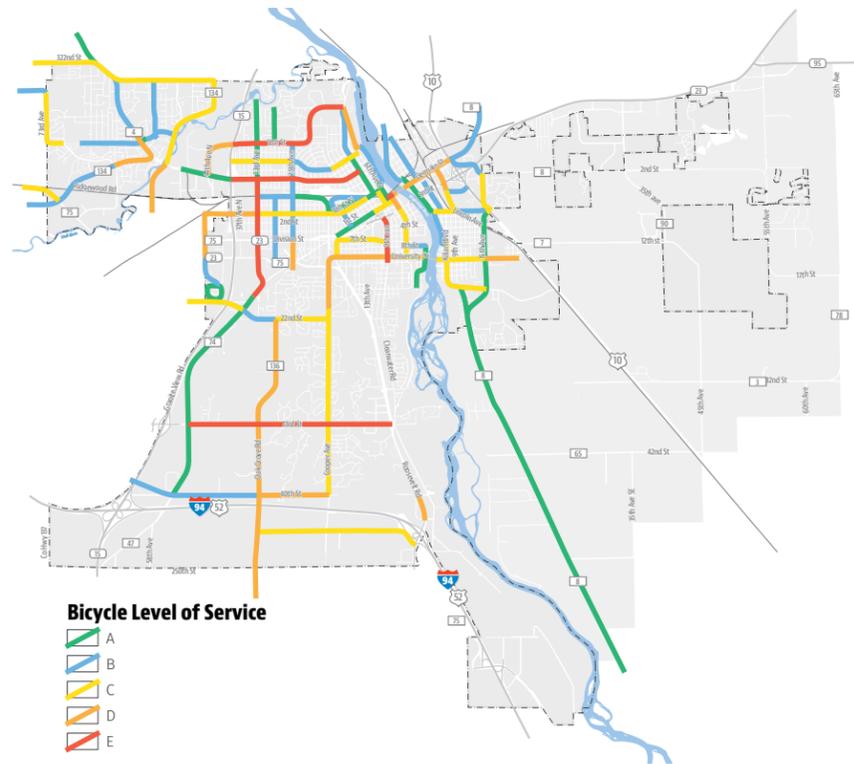
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program that seeks to improve the quality of life for children, families, and communities through infrastructure improvements that promote safe, healthy, and active lifestyles. In cooperation with the Cities and School Districts of St. Cloud, Sartell and Sauk Rapids and Central Minnesota's Better Living through Exercise and Nutrition Daily (BLEND), the APO successfully competed in the SRTS grant solicitation. Projects thus far have involved creating a safe community near Westwood Elementary, and three additional schools in the St. Cloud APO area have received funding for planning and construction. The City should continue to work collaboratively with the St. Cloud APO to identify SRTS project and apply for funding for infrastructure improvements near local schools that improve walking and bicycling conditions.

Additional SRTS programs include education, enforcement, and encouragement efforts. One such effort to increase public health through safe, non-motorized transportation to local schools includes the walking school bus. At its most basic form, a walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. The walking school bus can be comprised of only a couple of families, or extend into larger groups that arrive at coordinated meeting spots to walk to school as a group. This SRTS program is an effect strategy to increase safety and public health, while increasing community pride and neighborliness. The City should work with the St. Cloud Area School District, private educational providers, and neighborhood organizations to identify neighborhoods and schools to implement walking school buses.

Bicycle Infrastructure

In addition to off-street trails, St. Cloud includes several on-street bicycle facilities consisting of marked bike lanes and bike route signage. Though the City has made progress in growing its bicycle infrastructure, the combined bicycle network of trails and on-street infrastructure leaves critical connectivity gaps. To address on-street network gaps, the St. Cloud APO is developing an on-road bicycle plan, which is discussed further below.

With regard to facilities such as bike parking, storage, and maintenance, the City is home to a mix of available facilities. A bicycle maintenance station serves the Beaver Island Trail south of 33rd Street, and yellow bike racks provide Downtown bicycle parking. While downtown bike racks offer an option for cyclists to secure their bikes, the design does not fit the existing streetscape nor does it reflect current bike locking practices. The City should amend the off-street parking requirement of the Land Development Code (Section 16.13) to require a minimum number of bicycle parking facilities. The new standards should address different types of bicycle parking for different needs, including long-term versus short term storage, as well as protection from the elements. The City should reference the *Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals' Bicycle Parking Guidelines* as a standard for bicycle parking design best practices.



On-Road Bicycle Plan

During the summer of 2015, the St. Cloud APO conducted the first stages of an On-Road Bicycle Plan. The process includes a review of the streets within the St. Cloud APO planning area and collecting data related to the comfort level for a cyclist to utilize a particular roadway. Primarily, the St. Cloud APO utilized the bicycle comfort system known as Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS). The BLOS model calculates on-road facilities only. It uses the same measurable traffic and roadway factors that transportation planners and engineers use for other travel modes. With statistical precision, the model clearly reflects the effect on bicycling suitability or “compatibility” due to factors such as roadway width, shoulder widths, traffic volume, pavement surface conditions, motor vehicles speed, vehicle type, and on-street parking.

As of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the St. Cloud APO was in the process of completing its review of BLOS and the entire BLOS is not expected to be complete until the summer of 2016. It is at this point that the St. Cloud APO will release the On-Road Bicycle Plan. The City should work with the St. Cloud APO and other partners to use the results of the On-Road Bicycle Plan to identify potential roadway enhancement projects to address bicycle level of service. The City should also update the St. Cloud Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan to reflect newly identified or prioritized projects, including those identified within the 2003 Greenway Concept Plan.

BLOS Grade	Compatibility Level
A	Extremely high
B	Very high
C	Moderately high
D	Moderately low
E	Very low
F	Extremely low

Priority Routes

While there are numerous roadway segments within St. Cloud that have a BLOS grade of C or lower, there are several roadway segments that traverse major bicycle and pedestrian barriers and represent key routes that should be considered priorities for enhancements moving forward. These routes include:

- **3rd Street N & Veterans Drive:** These routes provide east-west access from Waite Park to Downtown St. Cloud and represent an alternative to the busy Division Street corridor.
- **33rd Avenue N:** This route provides a connection across the railroad tracks that divide the northern Core Neighborhoods and connect residents to commercial areas along Division Street.
- **E St. Germain Street & University Drive:** These routes provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access across the Mississippi River and connect neighborhoods on the East Side to the SCSU and Downtown districts.
- **33rd Street S, CR 136 & Cooper Avenue:** These will play critical roles in connecting new residential areas in the Primary Growth Area to the City Core and emerging commercial corridors.



Public Transportation

Metro Bus

St. Cloud has a robust and award-winning public transportation system operated by the St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission. The Commission's Metro Bus system runs fixed-route bus lines that serve the greater St. Cloud area and operates routes that specifically serve student and faculty transit riders at St. Cloud State University. On average, Metro Bus serves 2,398,000 riders annually, and projections from the Metro Bus Moving Forward Plan indicate ridership will increase by 85% between 2010 and 2025.

As transit use expands, Metro Bus has identified the following concepts to meet demand:

Transit Hubs – Improvements at major transfer points where multiple routes intersect outside of the Downtown. These transfer points include Crossroads Center Mall, The Miller Learning Resources Center at SCSU, Downtown Sauk Rapids, and Epic Center in Sartell.

Town circulators – New town circulators, either fixed route or demand response, to provide service to various neighborhoods in the service area that currently are not served. Town circulators would interface with regular routes to provide service to Downtown St. Cloud.

Additional services to serve new areas – Metro Bus will continue to evaluate service to new activity generators and areas within the region for possible extensions or new services. Potential new service areas include the St. Cloud Regional Airport, East St. Cloud Industrial Park areas, St. Augusta, St. Joseph and St. John's University, as well as new routes and connections within the current service area.

To accommodate increased transit demand, the City should work closely with Metro Bus to coordinate capital improvement programs with planned major transfer points and extended service areas. The City should also maintain close communication with the transit agency to keep it informed of future large development and activity generators that may impact future service demand.

Passenger Rail

Amtrak

St. Cloud is serviced by the Amtrak Empire Builder Line. The route, which runs from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago, includes a stop at the St. Cloud Amtrak station located on the City's east side. The Amtrak station, though an historic depot, is currently located within an industrial area where visitors are greeted by views of scrap piles, razor wire, and loading bays. Amtrak has slated the station facility for major renovations, but additional improvements are needed to the property surrounding the station to present visitors with a more positive impression of the St. Cloud community. The access drives to the station should also be formalized with curb, gutter, sidewalks, and lighting to better guide visitors to the station and lead them to active portions of the E St. Germain Street corridor. More significant wayfinding should also be provided.

Northstar Commuter Rail Line

Future rail service from St. Cloud to Minneapolis may occur through the extension of the Northstar Commuter Rail line. Initial plans propose expanding service to St. Cloud from its current terminus at Big Lake.

To fully understand the commuter utilization of the corridor and feasibility of the extension, the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) established the Northstar Link, a commuter bus line operated by Metro Transit that provides express bus service from St. Cloud to Big Lake where commuters can transfer to the Northstar Commuter Rail. The NCDA is closely monitoring ridership on the Northstar Link. Link ridership for 2014 through August was up 10.4% over the previous year.

The City of St. Cloud and neighboring communities should continue to support the NCDA and its actions to bring commuter rail to the City. Future implementation steps for NCDA include securing funding for preliminary engineering and environmental reviews, negotiations with BNSF Railway, property acquisition, and construction. As funding is secured and the project enters preliminary engineering and design, the City should work with NCDA, Amtrak, and Metro Bus to develop a centralized transit center.

Station Area Improvements

The extension of Northstar Commuter Rail has the potential to increase regional access to St. Cloud. As detailed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, it is recommended that the City partner with Amtrak to evaluate the potential to collocate the future potential Northstar Commuter Rail service at the Amtrak station. This would draw commuters to a station that is located on the edge of Downtown St. Cloud near the E St. Germain corridor and Amtrak has budgeted funds to improve the facility.

The City should work with local neighborhood groups and property owners to ensure that adequate commuter parking is available and that routes to and from the station area are attractive. This could include volunteer-supported neighborhood beautification projects as well as the installation of quality fencing and landscaping to screen nearby industrial uses from the station and nearby public rights-of-way.



St. Cloud Regional Airport

The St. Cloud Regional Airport first opened as the New Whitney Memorial Airport in 1935. In 1970, the airport moved from its original location at present-day Whitney Park, to a new facility three miles east of the city. Today, the publicly operated St. Cloud Regional Airport serves private and commercial air markets. The Airport is a significant asset for the city; however, the loss of United Airlines service in March 2015 may impact future economic growth in the short-term. In the long-term, the Land Use Plan designates areas near the airport for light industrial development to foster potential expansion of airport-related businesses and services that would not impact airport operations.

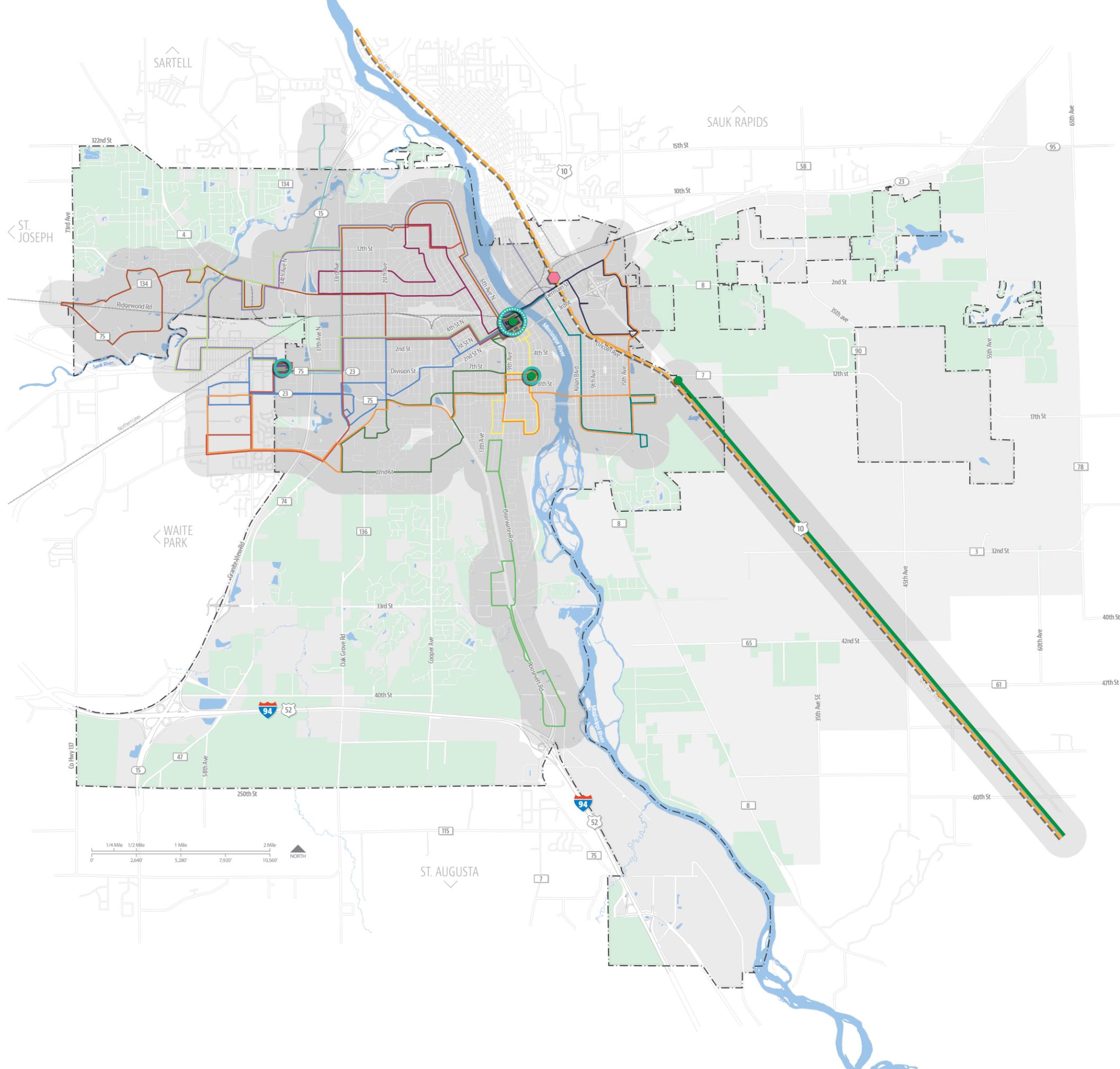
The Airport Master Plan Update rapid growth forecast projects that commercial operations could increase to more than 4,300 commercial passenger departures in 2031. The Master Plan Update identifies future improvements needed to accommodate critical aircraft, making the airport more competitive and increasing its capacity for additional air traffic. The City should continue to work with the Airport Advisory Board to implement recommendations within the Airport Master Plan update and securing funding to include projects within the CIP. As activity at the Airport increases, the City should also work with the Airport Advisory Board and Benton and Sherburne Counties to enhance roadway capacity leading to the airport.

Freight Rail

Historic growth of St. Cloud can be attributed to the rail lines used to transport granite from the city's many quarries. Today, BNSF Railway and Northern Lines Railway operate active rail lines in St. Cloud, many that carry local ore as well as Bakken crude oil from North Dakota. According to the LRTP, the BNSF rail lines through the city carry approximately 5 trains per day. Rail traffic along the line is increasing and BNSF recently announced plans to add a second track along two segments to the northwest and southeast of St. Cloud to accommodate additional freight traffic and enhance future potential commuter rail options.

An increase in rail traffic is of concern to some residents living in neighborhoods that flank these lines, particularly in the Pan Town and east side neighborhoods, where at-grade crossings are numerous and homes are in proximity to the tracks. Per legislature passed in 2014, to address safety concerns, the State now requires railroad companies to submit disaster prevention plans, increase safety inspections, and provide emergency response training and plans. The St. Cloud Fire Department, Police Department, and other first responders should coordinate with BNSF to ensure that these plans are effective and all personnel are trained to respond to potential train accidents.

The increase in rail traffic affects the number of trains that cross at at-grade crossings within the planning area. While the State of Minnesota provides project assistance for at-grade crossings, it prioritizes areas that have a high probability of hazard based on existing conditions, local concerns, and the age of existing signals. As such, the City should identify critical rail crossings and work with MnDOT to include these signals as part of its annual ranking and selection process for the Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD Transit Routes

KEY

-  Campus Routes (4 routes)
-  East Side 45
-  North Side
-  Pantown
-  Route 75
-  Sartell
-  Sauk Rapids
-  South Side
-  South East
-  South West
-  University
-  Waite Park
-  West Side
-  West Wood
-  Northstar Link Commuter Bus Route
-  Northstar Commuter Train Route
-  St. Cloud Amtrak Station
-  Northstar Link Stations
-  Transit Hub
-  Transit Centers
-  1/4-mile from Existing Route
-  Residential area beyond walking distance from existing route

8 Community Facilities

Community facilities include the structures and services administered by public and semi-public organizations that provide for the everyday needs of the community. Collectively, community facilities have a significant influence on the quality of life in St. Cloud and include city government, public safety, education, sewer and water infrastructure, medical services, and public health. The Community Facilities Chapter offers a description of and policy recommendations for existing facilities and service providers; however, the majority of community facilities fall outside the purview of the City of St. Cloud. As such, the plan presents a cooperative approach that stresses coordination and communication.

Goal

Ensure public infrastructure and facilities provide high-quality and effective public health, safety, education, and civic services.

Objectives

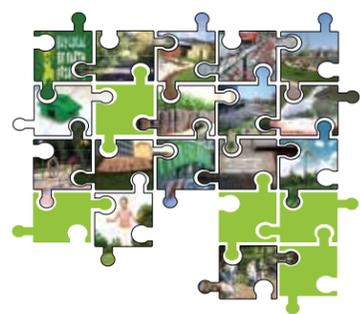
- Ensure municipal facilities accommodate government functions while serving as examples of community identity and sustainability.
- Support the Police Department and Fire Department through close coordination and planned allocation of resources to improve public safety.
- Work with the St. Cloud Fire Department and Great River Regional Library to monitor the need for additional locations to improve service and accessibility.
- Coordinate with local municipalities and agencies to provide an equitable share of public, health, and social services.
- Ensure the Former Tech High School site continues to serve as a community amenity that anchors and enhances the Lake George neighborhood.
- Prioritize infrastructure investment within existing neighborhoods and the Primary Growth Area.
- Encourage the use of stormwater best management practices to improve local and regional water quality.
- Ensure healthcare expansion and other large community service providers are adequately screened and buffered from adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Coordinate with the St. Cloud Area School District and other educational providers with regard to facility expansion projects and emerging residential development that may impact student enrollment.



Municipal Sustainability

The *Sustainability Framework Plan for the St. Cloud Area* outlines several goals for the region to reduce energy consumption and improve the environment. In the fall of 2015, the City Council selected SunEdison as to partner with the City to develop ground and building mounted solar arrays on city properties with the intention of meeting all of its electrical consumption via renewable energy sources. This action will not only create a return on investment, but also aligns with the best practice areas of the Sustainability Framework Plan for greenhouse gas reductions and use of renewable energy. Furthermore, the City is actively engaging to Xcel Energy to be part of its Partners in Energy program. Cities that are selected receive \$30,000 - \$50,000 in professional services to assist in preparing an energy action plan and its subsequent tracking and promotion to community property owners.

Sustainability Framework Plan



Adopted: September 2010
St. Cloud, Minnesota Joint Planning District Board

City Government

The City of St. Cloud is comprised of 14 departments that provide municipal services to city residents and businesses. The City's physical needs are addressed in the Infrastructure section of this report.

City Hall Redevelopment

While the existing City Hall meets the requirements of the offices and community functions it houses, the facility's surface parking lot also occupies one of the most prominent corners in Downtown at 5th Avenue and Division Street. As discussed in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, this corner is underutilized and redevelopment should be encouraged provided that City Hall operations are not negatively impacted.

As of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City was engaged in the preliminary development process to facilitate redevelopment of the City Hall site. The proposed redevelopment would consist of a 60,000-square-foot, four-story mixed use development including ground floor retail and office uses on the upper floors. To make up for lost parking on the site, the City would engage in a land swap to gain control of the former First Methodist Church property located across 3rd Street S to the south and establish a surface lot on the site. As the plans for the redevelopment are refined and put into action, the City should ensure that its design and function allows for efficient administration of government services and that the project reflects positively on the St. Cloud community. In addition, to quality architecture, the City should seek to enhance the City Hall site and future potential surface parking lot with perimeter landscaping that includes street trees and a low masonry wall to improve the pedestrian environment and complement the high quality Coborn Plaza mixed building across 5th Avenue S.

Immigration: Public Engagement & Participation

Like Minneapolis and other Minnesota communities, St. Cloud is experiencing significant growth in immigrant populations. The largest concentration of immigrants are from Somalia with smaller numbers from other east African nations. Immigrants increase the diversity of the community and a survey of Minnesotans found the majority welcome immigrants. Nevertheless there are negative stereotypes and misinformation with regard to the effect of immigrants on the community. For example, 48% of Minnesotans feel immigrants are a burden on government welfare and impact services such as housing; however, it should be noted that the majority of public housing residents in St. Cloud and Minnesota are not immigrants (Annual Minnesota Statewide Survey Fall 2014 and HUD Resident Characteristics Report August 2014-August 2015).

To further dispel misinformation and create a more cohesive community that responds to the needs of all community members, the City should continue to engage its immigrant population. City officials and staff should actively recruit members of the immigrant population to take leadership roles within the St. Cloud community such as positions on City Council and various advisory boards and commissions.

City Center Effect

As the largest municipality within the six-county region, St. Cloud offers many services and facilities unavailable in smaller cities. While this can be considered a major asset, the City is experiencing the effects of increased pressure to provide social services to an increasing number of those in need. The City should work with municipalities within the six-county region to develop a regional plan that addresses the social service issues facing the region. The plan should address strategies for each municipality to make an equitable contribution to address the health and social issues facing the region.



Public Safety

St. Cloud Police Department

The St. Cloud Police Department is headquartered in Downtown at 101 11th Ave. N. The state-of-the-art, 201,000 SF facility broke ground in 2008 and was designed to earn an Energy Star award from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Department employs more than 100 sworn officers and a support staff of 54. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, municipalities with populations similar to St. Cloud and located in the Midwest have an average of 1.9 sworn officers for every 1,000 inhabitants. Based on current staffing and an estimated 2014 population of 66,658, the City has a deficit of approximately 27 police officers when compared to peer communities.

Despite limited staff, the Police Department is performing well with recent trends indicating overall crime in the City has steadily been decreasing in the previous decade. Moving forward, population growth will only increase the need for sworn officers. The City should create a long-term staffing plan that anticipates future staffing and budget needs based on projected population growth.

Campus Safety

Some of the recent reduction can be attributed to the Campus Area Police Service (CAPS) program. Under the program, three St. Cloud police officers are assigned to a CAPS team that works specifically within the South-side campus area. This community policing model allows for personnel to gain a greater understanding of safety issues impacting the community and establish relationships with campus area residents. This also helps foster an environment in which residents (including both long-time residents and students) are more prone to monitor for and report crime. The CAPS program is made possible through an agreement between the City of St. Cloud and St. Cloud State University, which contributes funds annually to cover additional policing costs to the city.

City leaders and the Police Department should coordinate with other neighborhood groups, especially within the Core Neighborhoods, to determine if other areas of the City may be better served through community policing efforts similar to the CAPS program. Grant funding sources such as the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at the U.S. Department of Justice can also be evaluated to fund any additional staff that are required through the expansion of community policing in St. Cloud.

St. Cloud Fire Department

The St. Cloud Fire Department operates from five fire stations, all of which are in excellent condition. The Department is a member of the Central Minnesota Mutual Aid Association and has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 3, which is among the highest ISO ratings within the State of Minnesota. An ISO rating is an indicator of how well a community is protected in the event of a fire on a scale of 1-10.

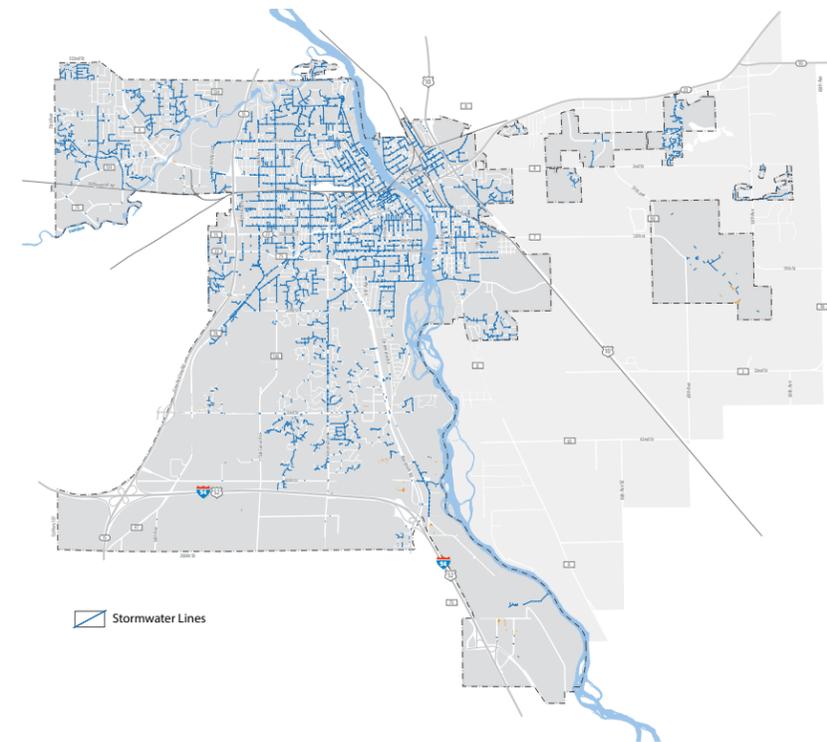
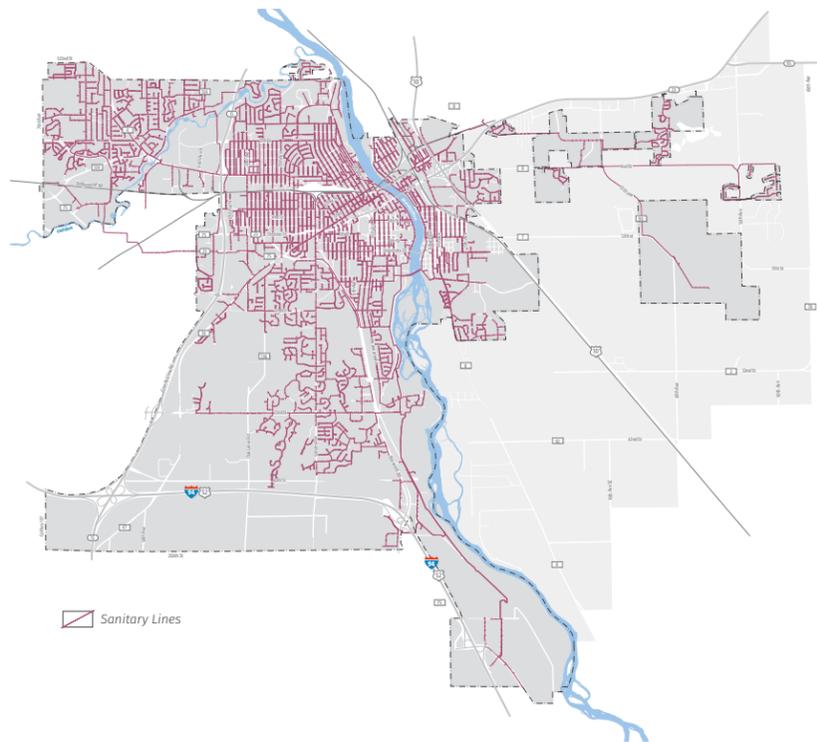
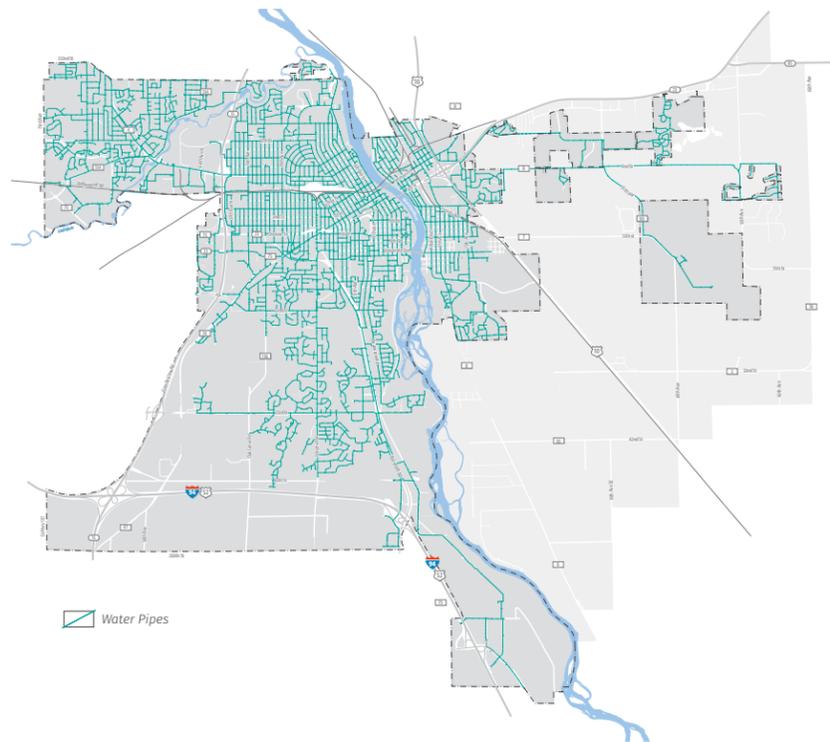
South Side Station

Continued growth to the south has created pressure for an additional fire station. This facility, Fire Station 6, is included as part of the Neenah Park Master Plan and is expected to begin construction in 2020.

East Side Station

Future growth on the East Side, including the Minden Township area, as well as issues with response delays due to increased train traffic at at-grade crossings is increasing the need for expanded facilities in the area. This may require the construction of an additional station or the upgrade and expansion of the St. Cloud Airport station. As the City continues to grow, City leaders should continue work closely with the Fire Department to keep them informed with regard to new developments that may affect fire service and response.

The City should continue to include Fire Department representatives early in planning process as significant new developments are considered to ensure high quality service and response times can continue to be provided to all St. Cloud residents.



Infrastructure

The St. Cloud Public Services Sections comprises four departments: Airport, Engineering, Public Utilities, and Public Works. These departments maintain the City's physical infrastructure and facilities, which include St. Cloud's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. Xcel Energy supplies gas and electricity, and Stearns Electric Association and East Central Energy provide electricity. Given the numerous departments and private organizations that provide crucial infrastructure, the City should maintain regular communication between all entities. This serves keep all parties informed of planned projects and developments and offers opportunities to for project coordination and increased efficiencies.

Roadways

The City of St. Cloud maintains nearly 760 lane miles of streets and 42 miles of alley miles. The City currently conducts an annual condition evaluation that includes street and alley pavement, drainage, curb, and sidewalk on all local roadways in the City. The condition ratings are utilized to determine what roadways will be resurfaced, crack sealed, or receive spot patching repairs based on annual budgets.

The Department of Public Services estimates that approximately 55% of City-maintained streets are in good condition, while 34% are in fair condition, and 11% are in poor or problematic condition. Improved roadway maintenance has been identified as a priority among both City staff and stakeholders who participated in the planning process. While appropriate information exists to identify and prioritize roadway maintenance projects, funding is limited to adequately maintain the City's existing volume of roadways. As with parks, schools, utilities, and other vital community infrastructure, appropriate funding must be identified to ensure that the gap between available resources and needs does not grow as the St. Cloud population grows.

Additional discussion regarding roadway capacity and transportation improvements can be found in **Chapter 7: Transportation and Mobility**.

Street Improvement Districts

While it did not become law, in 2014 the Minnesota Legislature considered a bill that would authorize cities to establish street improvement districts. Supported by the League of Minnesota Cities, the street improvement district concept is modeled after existing legislation which allows cities to establish sidewalk improvement districts. As proposed, the street improvement districts would have allowed municipalities to collect fees from property owners within a district to fund municipal street maintenance, construction, reconstruction, and facility upgrades. The authority would have provided a funding mechanism that establishes a clear relationship between who pays fees and where projects occur.

While the initial bill to establish municipal street improvement district authority failed, the concept may be revisited by the Minnesota Legislature in future sessions. The City should continue to support the Legislature in efforts to identify alternative funding sources for the maintenance of local streets to make up for shortfalls in funding provided by property and sales tax.

Water and Wastewater

St. Cloud's drinking water is sourced from the Mississippi River and processed at the St. Cloud Water Treatment Facility in Hester Park, which has the capacity to treat 16 million gallons of water per day. Wastewater is treated at the award-winning St. Cloud Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) located in the city's far south side.

The WWTF services the communities of St. Cloud, Augusta, St. Joseph, Sartell, Sauk Rapids, and Waite Park and is designed to treat 13 million gallons of residential and industrial waste-water per day, and has the capacity to manage anticipated population growth.

While ample treatment capacity exists, as the St. Cloud region continues to grow, the City will be required to invest in additional lines to service new development anticipated within the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas. In addition, existing lines that traverse the Mississippi River near Downtown lack the capacity to accommodate additional growth on the City's eastern side and areas within Minden Township. Given the eastside capacity constraints and available land within the Primary Growth Area that can accommodate the projected growth of the City, the City should focus water and wastewater infrastructure investments within the Primary Growth Area.

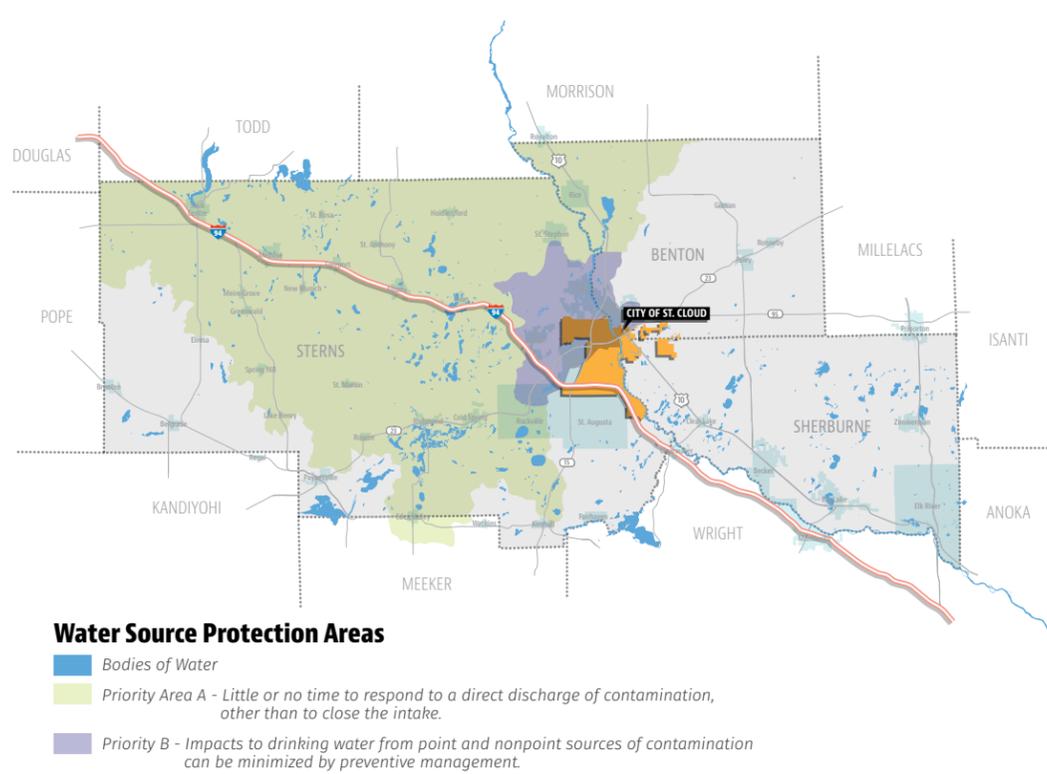
West Airport Sewer Interceptor

As identified in the Illustrative Capital Improvement section of the City's 2016-2021 CIP, a new wastewater interceptor is needed to service the St. Cloud Regional Airport and surrounding areas. This interceptor would extend services along the 33rd Avenue S corridor in concert with the expansion of that roadway across the Mississippi River. The interceptor then turn north and then east again along the 12th Street SE corridor where it would connect to the airport and nearby business park. In addition to servicing St. Cloud's growth areas, this project is also of critical importance to maintaining quality service in the City of Sauk Rapids and its growth areas to the north of Highway 23.

Stormwater

The City continues to improve the tools used to achieve water quality objectives. Needs vary within the existing system of 210 miles of pipe, 8,000 catch basins, 215 outfalls, 140 ponds, and over 300 infiltration treatment practices. The 114 subwatersheds are prioritized to target concern. Proper maintenance and new practice(s) installations help the City meet its goals. Minimal impact design strategies and partnerships with agencies and local property owners are also key to achieving foundational goals.

Stormwater is managed to protect public safety and property while enhancing the quality of natural habitat and waterbodies including the Mississippi, Sauk, and Elk Rivers, Neenah Creek, Lake George, and many wetlands. The Mississippi River is of special significance to St. Cloud as it is the sole source of drinking water. The City prioritizes needs based on a Stormwater Management Plan whose foundational goals include: 1) conservation, protection and restoration of St. Cloud's and the region's surface water resources; 2) compliance with the regulatory; and 3) management of expenditures to achieve the most benefit for the least cost.



Water Quality

The Mississippi River is the sole source of water for the City of St. Cloud as well as neighboring municipalities. To protect this vital resource, the City worked with the City of Minneapolis and City of St. Paul to prepare the Upper Mississippi River Source Water Protection Project (UMRSWPP), which includes Source Water Protection Plans. The St. Cloud Source Water Protection Plan maps priority protection areas (A and B) that may be sources of potential contamination and identifies strategies to prevent and mitigate areas of contamination. On a local level, the increased use stormwater management practices and public education are key strategies that can significantly improve the health of the Mississippi River.

Opportunities for Health

Research demonstrates that the health of populations is most closely determined by the socioeconomic conditions in which people live; including the distribution of income, goods, services, and opportunities within communities. Health is not determined by behavior choices and access to health care alone. Determinants are created and enhanced by policies and systems that impact the physical and social environment.

The City should consider promoting a “Health in All Policies” framework with the goal of health equity. The City of St. Cloud should take a community-based approach and work with local public health and healthcare providers, educational institutes, and wellness-based initiatives to strengthen the community’s capacity to improve the quality of life for its residents. This includes promoting active living, access to healthy food, access to health care and social services, and access to other community health resources.

Providers

The St. Cloud healthcare sector is the largest employer in the City with more than 6,000 employees. The St. Cloud Veterans Administration Health Care System is the City’s third largest employer, sitting on a 218-acre campus in northern St. Cloud. The facility serves more than 37,000 veterans. CentraCare Health serves as the area’s largest healthcare provider, and owns and operates the St. Cloud Hospital in the Northside-Hester Park neighborhood as well as eight other facilities in St. Cloud. CentraCare Health and the VA handled a combined 900,000 outpatient admissions in 2014.

Health Campus Expansion

While the VA and CentraCare Health facilities and currently in good condition, all facilities are anticipated to experience issues with space as continued growth in the region adds to demand for additional services. While the VA and CentraCare Medical Plaza both have room for expansion on their respective campuses, the St. Cloud Hospital is in need of additional parking facilities and expansion. The St. Cloud Hospital site is adjacent to single family development on all sides and property acquisition and redevelopment will be required to expand the facility.

As discussed in the Land Use Plan, properties located adjacent to the hospital on the north side that also front 6th Avenue N have extensive lot depth. This makes them attractive targets for acquisition and

assembly as they would allow for significant expansion in addition to accommodating necessary screening and buffering of the hospital from nearby residential properties. The City should work with CentraCare Health, adjacent property owners, and the Northside-Hester Park Coalition to ensure that any future expansions of the St. Cloud Hospital facility do not negatively impact neighborhood character of quality of life for local residents.

Healthcare Facility Access

The high volume of employees, patients, and visitors generated by the City’s medical districts requires multi-modal access and parking capacity. The City should work with Metro Bus to ensure its bus routes provide access to the City’s medical districts. In addition, all districts should include on-site pedestrian access from the right-of-way to building entrances as well as bicycle parking.

Access to Food

Access to safe, affordable, healthy food is a critical component of community well-being. The City should support local food production and the emerging local food economy, and consider local access options to food when determining new development. Doing so will recognize the impact that a healthy food system has in creating a vibrant community that attracts and maintains its residents.

Public Health

The community of St. Cloud is served by Stearns, Sherburne, and Benton county health and human services agencies. The City should take a cooperative approach to ensure services are available, coordinated, and accessible to the community. Data from CentraCare Health, local public health Community Health Assessments and other sources should be communicated regularly with the City in an effort to implement a community-based approach to health and wellness.

Preventable factors that contribute to chronic disease, such as obesity, physical activity, access to food and tobacco use and smoke exposure should be top public health priorities. Low income and disadvantaged residents are more likely to be disproportionately impacted by adverse health issues. Diabetes, vascular disease, obesity rates and tobacco use and exposure vary by zip code. Communication and collaboration to address these factors should occur with the City (including the Environmental Health Department), health and human service departments, and other community partners.



Education

St. Cloud Area School District

St. Cloud Area School District 742 is the largest school district in Central Minnesota. The St. Cloud Area School District maintains and operates 18 facilities and had a 2014-2015 student enrollment of 10,300, which is expected to continue to increase as it has in recent years.

Student Achievement

While St. Cloud Area School District performs well when compared to others throughout the state, the school district does not perform as well as adjacent area school districts. This is thought to put St. Cloud at a disadvantage with regarding to home sales when residents pursuing job opportunities within the City are considering where to live. To address this perception as well increase student achievement the District is actively engaging parents and updating learning strategies for staff. The City should work with the District to advertise school achievements and the initiatives that set it apart from other areas including Chinese and Spanish Immersion programs, 19 Advanced Placement classes, 60 athletic teams, 45 activities and groups, career-readiness classes and programs such as STEM and Health Careers.

Tech High School

The District is currently in the midst of a large community outreach and visioning program to refine a conceptual design for a new Tech High School and improve Apollo High. The existing Tech High School facility does not adequately meet the needs of its students, which prompted the school board to budget approximately \$111M for the construction of a new Tech High School campus near the planned Neenah Creek Regional Park on 33rd Street S. The school district will be selling the existing Tech High School facility, which has historically served as an anchor of the Lake George neighborhood, and building new administrative offices and a community center on a portion of the nearby Clark Field site. Information regarding the future of the former Tech High School site can be found within **Chapter 5: Housing & Neighborhoods** as well as **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**.

The new Tech High School campus location to the south of 33rd Street S will enable the district to better serve the district's growth areas to the west and south while improving the education facilities and technology. As the school moves forward with the design and construction process, the City should work with the district to ensure 33rd Street S and CR 74 receive complete street roadway treatments to allow for safe, motorized and non-motorized access to the school.

Student Diversity

School District 742 also has the area's most diverse student population and receives more resources dedicated to assisting teachers and providing early education and English language learning programs not offered in neighboring districts. While diversity is embraced by the school district, challenges such as new immigrant language barriers have led to achievement gaps at some school facilities with a higher proportion of minority populations.

For example, **Talahi Elementary School** was ranked among the bottom five percent of schools for performance in Minnesota among those schools eligible for federal Title I funding for reading and math. An improvement plan in place with the Minnesota Department of Education to address its achievement by providing updated learning strategies for staff and regularly engaging parents.

Components of the plans include a district-wide literacy program that integrates technology into the curriculum, pre-kindergarten readiness partnerships, use of culturally responsive teaching strategies, an English academy for new immigrant students, increased professional development resources, and an initiative that provides a computer for every middle school student.

Private Schools

St. Cloud is served by a number of private schools and academies that are most commonly linked to religious institutions. The majority of these schools provide early childhood education to students Kindergarten through 8th grade, with a few facilities also offering high school-level education. As with the St. Cloud School District, the City should maintain active dialogue with private school officials to allow all parties to be regularly informed or new expansion project and residential developments that may impact school enrollment and city services.

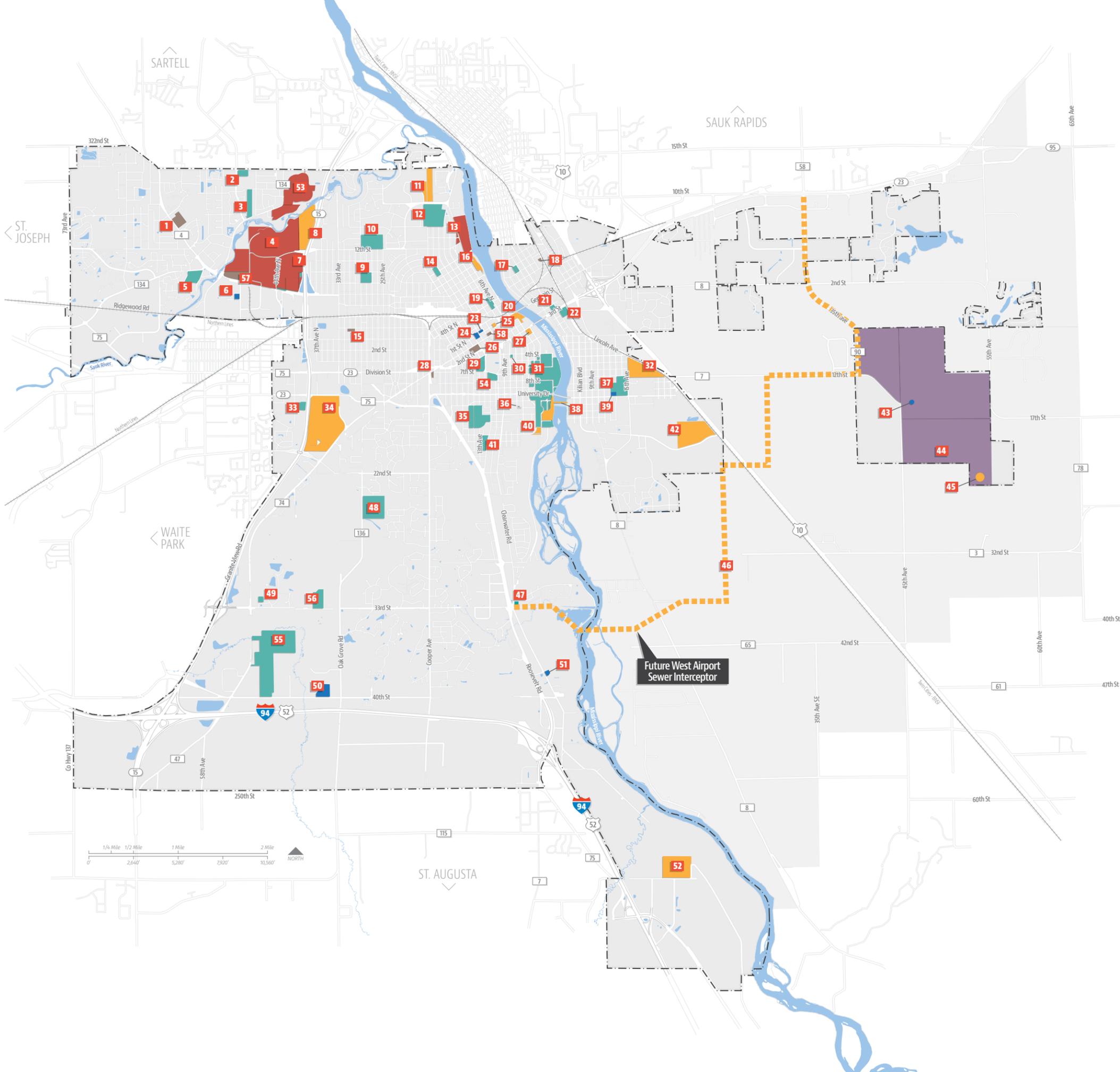
Higher Education

St. Cloud is a regional hub for higher education opportunities. St. Cloud State University occupies a 100-acre campus along the Mississippi River, and reported a Fall 2014 enrollment of just over 15,000 students. St. Cloud Technical & Community College enrolls roughly 6,000 students from St. Cloud and the larger regional area. In addition, higher education learning is provided by Rasmussen College and the nearby College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. These institutions not only serve to educate the community, but are significant economic development generators and community partners. More information about the role of higher education in the community can be found in **Chapter 6: Economic Development**.

Great River Regional Library

The City is served by the St. Cloud Public Library branch of the Great River Regional Library (GRRL), a multi-county library system formed in 1969 that serves six counties in central Minnesota, including Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Morrison, Todd, and Wright counties. The GRRL operates 32 library branches, containing close to a million books, CDs, and DVDs available to county residents. Directed by a board of trustees including representatives from each county, the GRRL is funded by a joint effort of local and county governments, as well as other state and federal initiatives. The six counties provide funding for staff, services, and programs, while individual municipalities provide and maintain the facilities for local branches.

As the City's population grows to the south within the Primary Growth Area, there will be increased demand for library services in emerging neighborhoods. The City should work with library officials to determine future library service demand, and identify sites for a potential library branch should future needs necessitate expanded services and facilities.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD Community Facilities

KEY

- City of St. Cloud, Stearns County & State of Minnesota
- 8 Minnesota Department of Transportation
- 11 Whitney Recreation & Senior Center
- 16 St. Cloud Water Treatment Facility (Hester Park)
- 20 River's Edge Convention Center
- 25 Stearns County Administration Center
- 27 St. Cloud City Hall
- 32 St. Cloud Public Works
- Public Safety
- 6 Fire Station 2
- 23 Fire Station 1
- 24 Police Department
- 39 Fire Station 3
- Public Health
- 4 CentraCare Health Plaza
- 53 St. Cloud Veterans Administration Hospital
- Education
- 2 Prince of Peace Lutheran School (private)
- 3 Granite City Baptist Academy (private)
- 5 Westwood Elementary School
- 7 Apollo High School
- 9 Madison Elementary School
- 10 North Junior High School
- 12 St. Cloud Community and Technical College
- 14 All Saints Academy-St. Cloud & St. Peter, Paul, Michael Primary School (private)
- 17 St. Cloud Christian School (private)
- 19 Cathedral High School (private)
- 21 St. Katherine Drexel School (private)
- 22 Lincoln Elementary School
- Other Facilities
- 1 Area Planning Organization
- 15 Boys & Girls Club – East Side
- 18 Boys & Girls Club – Roosevelt School site
- 26 Greater River Regional Library
- Airport
- 44 St. Cloud Regional Airport
- 34 Stearns County History Museum
- 38 Hydroelectric Generation Facility
- 40 St. Cloud Parks Department Maintenance
- 42 State Reformatory
- 45 MN National Guard Armory – Air Wing
- 46 West Airport Sewer Interceptor (future)
- 52 St. Cloud Wastewater Treatment Facility
- 43 Fire Station 4 (Airport)
- 50 Fire Station (future)
- 41 Fire Station 5
- 13 St. Cloud Hospital
- 29 Tech High School (closed)
- 54 District 742 Offices/Adult Learning/Early Childhood Education (future)
- 30 St. Robert Bellarmine Academy (private)
- 31 St. Cloud State University
- 33 Rasmussen College
- 35 South Junior High School
- 37 Talahi Community Elementary School
- 41 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (private)
- 47 Stride Academy– 2nd location (private)
- 48 Oak Hill Community School
- 49 Stride Academy (private)
- 55 Tech High School Campus (future)
- 56 Athlos Academy (future - public charter)
- 28 District 742 Bus Garage
- 36 Boys & Girls Club – South Side
- 57 St. Cloud MAC
- 58 Paramount Theatre & Visual Arts Center

Parks, Recreation & Environmental Features

St. Cloud's parks, open space areas, and environmental features represent the recreational and natural resources of the City's historic landscape, including athletic facilities, wooded areas, wetlands, and shorelands. The City's more than 1,500 acres of parkland and natural areas provide passive and active recreation as well as opportunities to connect with nature. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes the various facilities throughout the City and offers strategies to ensure they remain well-utilized and prized community assets.

Goal

Support a network of recreational facilities and natural areas that meet the needs of area residents and protect local ecosystems.

Objectives

- Ensure new and existing parks provide active and passive recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the St. Cloud community.
- Prioritize the maintenance and improvement of existing parks and recreational facilities.

- Ensure the City has the financial capacity to acquire and maintain new park sites.
- Provide safe, non-motorized access to local and regional park facilities.
- Increase use of and access to the Mississippi River.
- Develop policies to protect the Mississippi Riverfront and regional watersheds in areas not designated under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Program.
- Continue to apply a higher level of scrutiny and mitigation requirements for development within Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

The Economic Value of Parks

The City's park system provides a valuable service to the greater St. Cloud community, which can be measured in terms of its effect on the local economy. As the City continues to improve undeveloped parkland and make upgrades and improvements to existing assets, according to the Trust for Public Land, there are numerous benchmarks with which to measure the total economic value of the St. Cloud park system.

Property Value

Homes that are in close proximity to parks have been shown to have higher property values. This, in turn, can generate additional tax revenue for the City.

Tourism Value

St. Cloud includes several parks and facilities that attract residents throughout the greater region. Visitors that come to St. Cloud for a park facility may also visit local shops and restaurants, increasing sales tax revenue.

Direct Use

Direct use value involves the willingness of a park visitor to pay to participate in activities and enjoy facilities such as team sports, bicycling, walking, and picnicking. Because these facilities are offered for free or at discounted rates, the direct use is a measure of how much the public has saved if it were to use a private facility of similar caliber.

User Fees

User fees are the most easily quantifiable revenue stream. The 2014 Annual Report indicated the department received \$425,100 in user fees and charges.

Health Value

Park access has been shown to increase levels of physical activity. Active lifestyles are associated with lower levels of heart disease, diabetes, and other medical conditions, which can result in lower medical costs. In addition, the natural vegetation within parks improves local air quality, creating a healthier urban environment.

Community Connections

In addition to places that provide recreational opportunities, local parks provide community connections. Parks can define a community, allowing for community cohesion and a place to hold events and connect with fellow community members.

Stormwater & Floodplain Management

Parks generally include large areas of pervious, natural surface. As such, they serve dual role as an effective stormwater and floodplain management tool and areas for public open space and trail alignments.



St. Cloud Parks & Recreation Department

The St. Cloud Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 95 parks, open space areas, and trail corridors. Neighborhood and mini parks serve nearby residents while regional and community parks provide recreational amenities that cater to the entire St. Cloud community and region at-large. In addition, the department is responsible for the operation and upkeep of Clemens and Munsinger Gardens.

The Park and Recreation Department provides both maintenance to existing parks, gardens, and facilities, as well as programming and activities at those locations. The department's Forestry Division is responsible for pruning, inventorying, and the general maintenance of public trees on all parkland and City rights-of-way, including identification and removal of diseased trees.

Parkland Needs

The City measures its parkland needs in terms of acres per person, with a goal of 10 acres of accessible parkland per 1,000 persons. As of 2014, the city contains 1,522.3 acres of designated parkland with just over 1,006 acres of undeveloped and natural areas and 516 acres of fully developed parkland (not including parks and recreational facilities associated with local schools and educational institutions). This provides for approximately 7.7 acres of accessible parkland per 1,000 persons, which falls below the target level of service (given an estimated 2014 population of 66,658). When including undeveloped and natural areas under City ownership, St. Cloud has more than 22.8 acres per person. While some unique opportunities may present themselves (such as the Friedrich Park project), the availability of existing parkland under the control of St. Cloud indicates that the City should prioritize the improvement of existing facilities over future park expansion.

In addition, the City should conduct a park facility needs assessment to determine the amount of existing useful park space and park use frequency to prioritize park funding allocation and guide reinvestment decisions. This assessment should also include a review and analysis of recreational programming and facilities. Once complete, the park facility needs assessment will guide decision making and can support the City Strategic Plan to focus future programming and park improvements directed at youth and older adults within the St. Cloud community.

Tiered Approach

The City generally classifies parks into three different service categories: mini parks, neighborhood parks, and regional parks. This hierarchy of parks provides an idea as to the size of different parks, but there is no clear distinction in policy for the specific categories.

Given the size and complexity of the Park and Recreation Department inventory and service area, it is recommended that the three-tiered parks classification also be used to better identify parkland needs at the local level. For example, a given household should be served by a neighborhood park for general recreation and access to open space. The same household should also have access to regional parks that provide unique amenities such as access to natural areas as well as recreation facilities such as a swimming facility. Different park service levels should be established for each park type, that when taken together equal the overall target of 10 acres per 1,000 residents. For example, regional parks could be provided at 5 acres per 1,000 residents, while neighborhood parks and mini parks are provided at 3.5 acres and 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents respectively.



Parkland Service Areas

The Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features map figure utilizes typical service areas standards of ¼-mile for mini-parks and ½-mile for neighborhood parks to identify areas of the community that are well-served by the existing park system. Undeveloped parks and regional parks, which are primarily accessed via car or are currently undeveloped, are excluded from the service area assessment.

Existing and future residential areas as identified in the Land Use Plan that are underserved by existing parks are also highlighted in the map figure. As Park and Recreation Department resources permit, the City should identify and prioritize opportunities to acquire and develop parkland in underserved areas. Neighborhood parks should be centrally located within residential neighborhoods and ideally within a half-mile walk of all homes.

Barriers

The service areas shown on the Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features map figure does not reflect potential barriers to access such as the I-94 corridor, major highways and arterials, railroads, or changes in topography. When identifying future park sites such barriers should be taken into consideration so as to provide parkland in areas with optimum access. To minimize impacts of pedestrian barriers on park use, the City should also consider installing directional signage to local and regional parks as a part of a broader City-wide wayfinding program.

Trails

St. Cloud includes several miles of uninterrupted trails. These trails function as both transportation and recreational resources. Trails also serves as “greenways,” or trail corridors that feature natural areas and open spaces. The City should continue to identify opportunities to support future greenways as defined in the 2003 Greenway Concept. The City should work with the St. Cloud APO as it develops the On-Road Bicycle Plan to ensure on-road facilities are well-connected to both existing and planned trails and greenways.

Parkland Dedication

Per the City’s Land Development Code 19.9 A, St. Cloud requires parkland dedications from all residential subdivisions for public use. Parkland dedications are assessed by the Parks and Recreation Department, and required for all residential subdivisions; however, developments can be made exempt from parkland dedications at the department’s discretion, and alternatively, provide cash payment in lieu of dedication.

Staffing & Maintenance Issues

Budgetary constraints within the Parks and Recreation Department have placed limitations on staffing and reduced the department’s ability to improve parkland properties that it has acquired to dedication.

Given the unimproved acreage of parkland within the existing inventory, the City should carefully consider the need for parkland, new facilities, and the maintenance of existing facilities in the given location. Until additional resources can be identified to properly staff the Park and Recreation Department, new park development should be limited to areas where there is a demonstrable need for neighborhood park service as identified in the Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Features map.

Planned Projects

The City’s 2016-2021 Capital Improvements Program lists four funded park projects that will begin construction between 2016 and 2019. In addition to the four projects listed below, the CIP includes several projects that are desired by the community, but lack sufficient funding to be included in the 2016-2021 budget cycle.

- Regional Aquatic Community Center.** Initiated in 2007, this project is for the construction of an aquatic center at Whitney Park. The project is slated to begin construction in 2016, and will feature lap lanes and a water slide. It may also include a gym, whirlpool and spray pool facility, dance room, weight room, arts/crafts area, community area, indoor walking track, climbing wall, meeting space, classrooms and community areas. To accommodate increased visitation to the facility, the City should consider modifying Northway Drive and Stockinger Drive to improve pedestrian safety, which may include traffic calming measures, curb extensions, raised crosswalks, and/or HAWK signals.
- Whitney Park Continued Improvements.** This project will be performed in concert with the Regional Aquatic Community Center. The City plans to restore and replace aging infrastructure and facilities, as well as improve lighting, trails, and signage.
- Neenah Creek Regional Park.** Developed in 2007, the Park Master Plan for Neenah Creek provided the analysis and implementation to turn the area into an important regional park. Construction is slated to commence in 2017 and will include access roads, parking areas, utilities, shelters, trails, athletic fields, and other miscellaneous improvements according to the Neenah Creek Master Plan. As the park develops, the City should improve 40th Street S and Oak Grove Road to provide safe access for non-motorized visitors.
- Beaver Island Trail Extension: 60th Street S to City boundary.** The ongoing Beaver Island Trail project is a riverfront trail along the west side of the Mississippi River. The Phase VIII portion of the project includes constructing a new segment of the Beaver Island Trail along railroad corridor, road right-of-way, and other alignments at the southern end of the City. As a regional trail, the City should coordinate with St. Augusta and MnDOT to provide safe access to the trail from residential areas west of I-94.
- St. Cloud/Lake Wobegon Trail Planning Study.** A planning study was completed in January 2014 identifying several alternative routes to connect the existing Lake Wobegon Trail in Waite Park to the Mississippi River and Beaver Island Trail. This project is currently in the process of selecting one of the route alternatives and development of site designs. This trail was included in the Stearns County Rails with Trails Feasibility Study, as the alternative routes include potential rails to trails segments.



Key Sites

Heritage Park

Heritage Park is a 92-acre park located at the corner of 2nd Street S and Trunk Highway 15. The park's location adjacent to a regional commercial district and major transportation corridors limits its accessibility and use by the community. The City has been approached on several occasions by private parties interested in developing the site. Potential development could include a mix of retail, residential, and cultural uses that complement one another and leverage the natural features of the park, utilizing the park's water feature as a defining setting. This strategy could serve as a potential "win-win," allowing the development of valuable commercial frontage on 2nd Street S that enhances the site's existing uses. The City should assess the long-term viability of Heritage Park and undertake a cost-benefit analysis to understand the financial implications of selling the park, purchasing additional parkland, and the overall effect changing the land use would have on the community's quality of life and access to open space areas.

Selke Field

Selke Field is a 17-acre open space area that is framed by a prominent granite wall. Named after former SCSU president George Selke, the field is home to the SCSU softball team and local athletic teams. The granite wall was built in 1934 as WPA project and is the former home of the SCSU football team. Despite its storied history, the facility does not adequately meet the needs of SCSU. Should the University convey the land to the City or a private entity, future land use should preserve the existing park, or alternatively, consist of low-density residential uses that are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

Hardrive Property

The Hardrive Property is a former industrial parcel located adjacent to River Bluffs Regional Park. Should the City acquire the property, it has the potential to expand the footprint of the Mississippi Bluffs Regional Park; however, the site is a brownfield with an industrial legacy. Given the remediation required to make the Hardrive site a serviceable park, the City should only acquire the site if awarded grant funding for brownfield remediation. Further, if the site is fully remediated, it should remain a natural open space to reduce added costs of more highly programmed parkland.

Friedrich Park

Located at the eastern terminus of University Drive, George Friedrich Park is a 50-acre former park site that which was closed to the public in the 1970s. Conveyed from SCSU to the City in late 2015, the City is requesting \$6 million in bonding dollars to expand the park through land acquisition, improve the site with additional amenities, and reopen the park. Given the significant size and unique set of natural features at the site, the City should engage residents and partner agencies in developing a master plan for the site to ensure it meets the needs of the community and includes appropriate activities to fill existing recreational service gaps. Future park improvements should leverage the site's unique features including several quarry ponds, granite outcroppings, and extensive tree canopy.

Donovan Lake Regional Park

Regional parkland is limited in areas east of Highway 10 and is most noticeably absent within the Minden Township area where residential development has been expanding in recent years. As residential development occurs within the eastern portion of the Secondary Growth Area, the City should seek to establish a regional park in areas adjacent Donovan Lake. The lake is a unique amenity within Minden Township that could leveraged as a community destination for residents living east of Highway 10.

Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area

The Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area is a 700-acre parcel of land owned by the State of Minnesota. It is located just outside of the City of St. Cloud between Highway 10 and the St. Cloud Regional Airport. Sand Prairie is situated in the glacial flood plain of the Mississippi River. It is characterized by well-drained sandy soils with a high water table define the type of native vegetation that grows here. Moist to wet remnant prairie, dry prairie, and aspen are occurring here.

Sand Prairie is designated as an Environmental Education Area. Numerous local schools, college students, and educators routinely visit and study the Sand Prairie ecosystem. Wildlife Management Area (WMA) offers excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing, nature study, and hiking. In addition, the large expanse of the Sand Prairie WMA provides more remote areas that offer solitude and discovery for those willing to explore.



Mississippi Riverfront

The Mississippi Riverfront is a unique and desirable amenity and there is community demand for increased parkland, programming, and access along the Riverfront. The riverfront has the potential to be leveraged for economic development, as the river's natural beauty and location can draw new residents and regional visitors to new development.

As illustrated by the North Riverfront catalyst site in **Chapter 10: Subarea Plans**, the riverfront provides a unique opportunity for reinvestment in the City Core. In accordance with the **2011 St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan**, which outlines a regional vision for the riverfront, future riverfront development in St. Cloud should be concentrated on the west bank from approximately St. Cloud Hospital to the SCSU campus. Opportunities exist on the east bank, but the presence of single family neighborhoods in this area will limit the ability for assembly and comprehensive redevelopment.

Currently, the riverfront lacks effective access, with disrupted trail segments and diverse ownership among riverfront properties in or near the downtown, which makes cohesive programming and connectivity difficult. Where possible, new riverfront development should include a public easement that allows for the extension of the Beaver Island Trail as well as the implementation of placemaking strategies that improve public use of the river. In the interim, the City should install wayfinding signage to existing riverfront access points to enhance use of the trail. Partnerships with key property owners such as the St. Cloud HRA should also be used to identify potential opportunities for the installation of scenic viewpoints along the existing Beaver Island Trail.

Wild & Scenic River Program

Following the Mississippi River corridor from the City's southern boundary to University Drive, the Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designation is a riverfront area specified by the Scenic Rivers Overlay District that is included in the City's Land Development Code. Developed in accordance with Minnesota State policy, this area protects and preserves the "natural, scenic, historic, scientific, and recreational values" of the Mississippi River. Construction within the Wild and Scenic River Boundary must obtain a permit, ensuring that new development is consistent with state-wide standards and compatible with preservation of natural resources.

In the future, development of the Mississippi Riverfront could potentially lead to conflicts between the Scenic River Boundary and desired uses along the riverfront. As defined in the Land Use Plan, while some isolated occurrences of residential development exist, the majority of the area located within the WSR area is identified as future parks and open space or rural uses. The potential future expansion of the I-94 Business Park area is the most significant conflict with the WSR area, but the use of Low Impact Design and Best Management Practices can be used to ensure that future development does not negatively impact the river corridor.

Similarly, while uses are regulated within the WSR area, more intense and urban uses north of the WSR area could have a significant effect on the river environment downstream. To protect the riverfront while accommodating future development within and near Downtown, the City should work with Minnesota DNR to develop policies for non-WSR areas that enable greater riverfront development while limiting environmental impacts. This may include establishing appropriate development buffers and heightened stormwater management requirements including required or encouraged use of green infrastructure improvements.

St. Cloud River Walk

The City of St. Cloud understands the unique asset presented by the Mississippi River. Opportunities for increased interaction through a river walk on the City's west bank are discussed within the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan, as well as the St. Cloud Placemaking Design Manual. Extending the Beaver Island Trail north from the St. Cloud Convention Center to Hester Park as a river walk provides increased opportunities to create non-motorized travel along the River, develop scenic viewpoints, improve shoreline stability and wildlife habitats, and integrate public art. Mississippi Partners, an organization established to champion implementation of the urban river plan, received funding support from the St. Cloud Rotary Club in late 2015 for grant-writing and marketing efforts to support the project. The City should continue to support the efforts of the Mississippi Partners to plan and implement a future river walk.



Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

The majority of St. Cloud's natural amenities are classified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) in the City's Land Development Code. These areas include floodplains, wetlands, wooded areas, shorelands, and unprogrammed open spaces. ESAs require more rigorous site plan review to protect the City's natural areas.

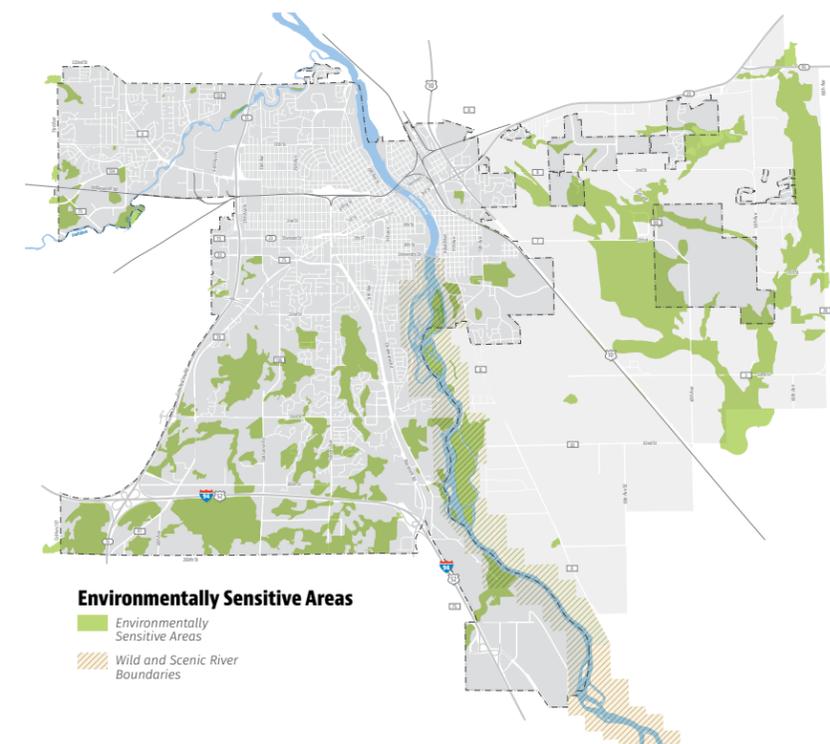
As discussed in **Chapter 6: Housing and Neighborhoods**, the use of low impact design and other conservation design approaches should be strongly encouraged on properties located partially or entirely within an ESA. While the Land Use Plan identifies a desired future land use for all parcels in the City and its planning area, the ESA designation should remain in use to guide future development in a sustainable manner. ESAs should also be used to guide the development of an integrated network of parks and open space areas throughout St. Cloud's growth areas through the use of conservation easements and parkland dedication.

Wetlands & Shorelands

Wetlands include swamps, marshes, and bogs scattered throughout the City, largely clustered in South and East St. Cloud. Shorelands are concentrated along the Mississippi and Sauk Rivers and include sensitive areas that may have a direct impact on local watersheds. Both wetlands and shorelands are vital to the health of larger watersheds and floodways, trapping floodwaters, reducing pollution, and recharging local groundwater.

Floodplains

St. Cloud includes limited floodplain areas as a result of local watersheds, the most prominent being the Mississippi and Sauk Rivers. Floodplains include any areas of land susceptible to flooding in the event of a 100- or 500-year flood, meaning the chance the area will be flooded in any given year is 1% or 0.2%, respectively. The steep banks along much of the Mississippi River limit the extent of local floodplains.



CITY OF ST. CLOUD Parks & Open Space

KEY

- Natural Areas
- Future Parks
- Park Service Areas
- Future Park Service Areas
- Future Underserved Residential Areas
- Wetlands & Floodplains
- Existing Bike & Trail Network
- Proposed Greenways

Regional Parks

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 4 Pineview Park | 47 Heritage Park | 66 Riverside Regional Park |
| 16 Knights of Columbus Park | 51 Eastman Park | 87 Neenah Creek Park |
| 30 Whitney Memorial Park | 54 Munsinger and Clemens Gardens | 95 St. Cloud River Bluffs Regional Park |
| 31 Future Aquatics Center | 57 George Friedrich Park | |
| 35 Wilson Park | 64 Beaver Island Park | |

Neighborhood Parks & Greenways

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Prairie Park | 29 Greenway Trail | 59 Diocese Park |
| 2 Rolling Ridge Park | 34 Hester Park | 61 Calvary Hill Park |
| 3 Westwood Parkway | 37 Raymond Park | 63 Schmidt Park |
| 5 Westwood School Park | 39 Cherry Park | 68 Kiwanis Park |
| 6 Ridgewood Park | 40 Woodland Hills Park | 70 Sterling Heights Park |
| 7 Westwind Park | 41 Centennial Park | 74 Pioneer Park |
| 8 Sunset Park | 43 Seberger Park | 79 Cooper Hills/Oaks Park |
| 9 Southview 90 Park | 45 Park II (Dublin Park) | 80 Cooper Hills Park |
| 10 Ambleswood Park | 46 Dwyer Park | 81 Crestview Park |
| 12 West River Meadows Park | 49 Hwy/Carlin Park | 82 Cimarron Park |
| 13 Glenview Park | 50 McKinley Park | 85 Concord Park |
| 19 Chantry Park | 52 Barden Park | 91 Rose Richter Park |
| 22 Jaycee Park | 53 Reach-Up/10-10 Park | 92 Southwood Park |
| 27 Pantown Park | 55 South Side Park | 93 Plum Creek Park |
| 28 Northway Park | 58 Rotary Park | 96 Croat/Lenzmeier park |

Mini-Parks

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 15 Black Walnut Park | 32 Vocational Park | 62 Railroad Park |
| 20 Aurora Park | 33 Triangle Park | 69 Tower Park |
| 21 Madison Park | 36 St. Cloud Park | 72 Oak Park |
| 23 Fountain Park | 38 Goldthorpe Park | 78 Hidden Oaks Park |
| 24 Lions Park | 42 Hope Park | 84 Signal Hills Park |
| 25 Central Park | 44 Angushire Park | 94 DJ Voth Park |
| 26 BBC Park | 48 Colonial Gardens Park | |

Natural Areas

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 11 Prairie Rose Park | 75 Serenity Park & Natures Trail Park & Jarvic Park | 86 Orchid Park |
| 14 Quail Pond Park | 76 Tiffany Park | 88 Quarry Woods Park |
| The Beaver Islands | 77 Barthelemy Oak Forest | 89 Heritage Woods Reserve |
| 71 Oak Savannah Park | 83 Beaver Island Trail | 97 Edgewater Park |
| 73 Lansing Park | | 98 Sand Prairie WMA |

Special Use

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 17 St. Cloud MAC | 60 Quarry Park and Nature Preserve |
| 56 Selke Field | |
| 67 Talahi Natural Area (SCSU) | |

Stearns County Park

- | |
|---|
| 60 Quarry Park and Nature Preserve |
|---|

Subareas & Catalyst Sites

Building on the core components of the Comprehensive Plan, detailed Subarea Plans have been developed for the Downtown and the Division Street corridor.

The subarea plans highlight key concepts and strategies for land use and development, transportation and circulation, and other improvements to these important areas of St. Cloud. The subarea plans provide more specific recommendations for these key areas of the City, building upon the general framework of the Comprehensive Plan to guide improvements, reinvestment, and redevelopment in each area including site-specific application of various planning principles presented in the Plan.

Division Street Corridor

Division Street functions as the city's primary east-west transportation and commercial corridor. As a prominent western gateway to the community, more can be done within the public right-of-way and along commercial frontage to project a positive image of St. Cloud. The majority of properties along this regionally prominent corridor lack basic site improvements such as perimeter landscaping, parking lot landscaping, and pedestrian improvements. Strategies are provided that will enable the City and private properties within this regional retail destination to leverage commercial development as both an economic engine and source of community pride and identity.

Downtown Subarea

Downtown is the symbolic heart of the St. Cloud community. Rooted in history, the area is home to a unique mix of businesses, dining options, and entertainment venues, such as the Paramount Theatre and the River's Edge Convention Center. Streetscaping initiatives and expansions to the Convention Center demonstrate the continued investment into the district. Downtown has an active restaurant and bar scene in the evening hours and is a growing employment hub, but activity within the Downtown could be greatly enhanced with additional residential development and destination commercial businesses. Downtown Subarea recommendations for enhancing use of public areas and repositioning private properties that will enable the downtown to function better as a collective district.

Catalyst Sites

Catalyst sites are vacant and/or underutilized parcels where development, adaptive re-use, or redevelopment would have a significant positive effect on Downtown St. Cloud and the Division Street Corridor.

This proposed catalyst site concepts illustrate the redevelopment and repositioning of 5 sites:

- Cooper Avenue;
- Lady Slipper Lot;
- Swan Lot;
- Northwest Corner; and,
- North Riverfront.

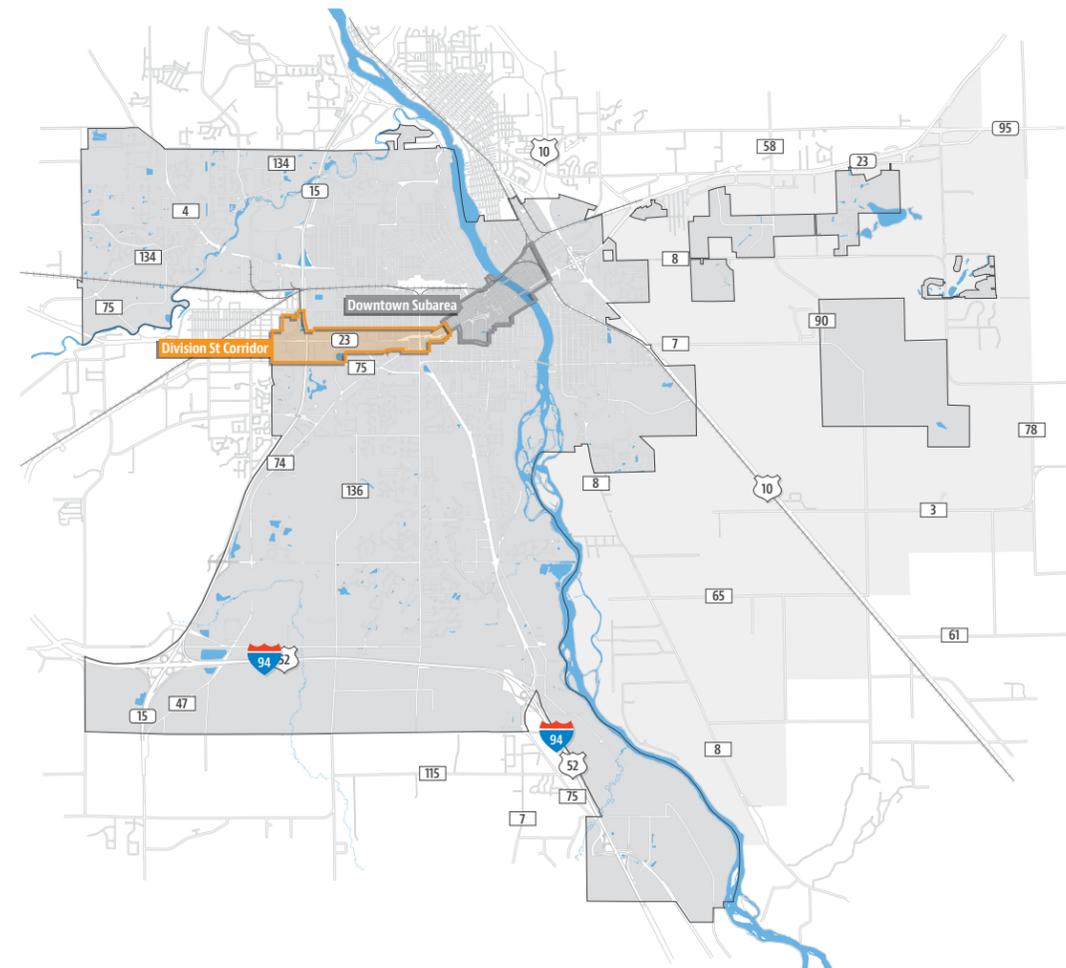
Two of the catalyst sites are public parking lots, which are incompatible with the character of a walkable, intimate, and attractive Downtown environment and represent missed opportunities to generate tax revenue and pedestrian activity. As these parking lots and other similar opportunity sites are developed over time, the location of new parking spaces in other areas of the Downtown will be a key development consideration.



Division Street Corridor

Subarea Plan

Division Street functions as the city's primary east-west transportation and commercial corridor. The corridor is a significant economic engine for the City, providing a wide variety of commercial, retail, and services uses. The corridor is anchored to the west by the Crossroads Center, which serves as a regional retail and employment hub, and on the east end the corridor transitions into Downtown St. Cloud. As successful as the corridor is, however, it lacks the image, identity, and overall character and appearance reflective of the community and desired by most residents. As a prominent western gateway to the community and the downtown, a variety of improvements can and should be implemented within the corridor to project a positive image of St. Cloud. This subarea plan identifies improvement strategies and development opportunities to enhance the corridor and ensure its role as a regional retail and service center is leveraged as both an economic asset and source of community pride and identity.





ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR Functional Character Area Framework

The Division Street corridor is divided into three distinct character areas. Each character area within the Framework contains a unique suite of attributes that defines its function within the broader corridor. For each character area, the Framework provides recommendations regarding future land use, development scale and intensity, and overall character. The Framework is also used to guide recommendations related to corridor beautification within both the public and private public realms, which are presented in later sections of the Division Street Subarea Plan.

Legend

West Gateway

The West Gateway Character Area contains the most intense development within the Division Street corridor. The area serves as a regional retail hub and is home to a significant number of national retailers, restaurants, and hotels, including the nearly 900,000-square-foot Crossroads Center retail center. Land uses within the West Gateway predominantly consist of regional commercial uses supported by somewhat smaller, ancillary commercial corridor uses.

As the western entry point into St. Cloud, as well as a regional destination itself, development in the Character Area should exemplify and showcase the identity of the City. Development of commercial uses should be oriented toward Division Street, with access provided via shared curb cuts, side streets, and rear drives. Large surface parking lots fronting Division Street right-of-way should be considered for outlot development wherever possible.

Central Corridor

The Central Corridor Character Area consists primarily of retail and service commercial businesses that cater to both regional and local populations. The Central Corridor is generally less intensely developed than the West Gateway, with lot depths and parcel sizes that vary widely, accommodating big box retailers as well as neighborhood scale inline retail centers.

Future development in the Central Corridor area should continue to be primarily comprised of commercial corridor land uses.

This will include transitioning underutilized single-family residential parcels to commercial uses along the existing predominantly commercial areas. Multi-family development may also be appropriate to serve as a transition between more intense commercial uses fronting the roadway and adjacent single family neighborhoods. Buffering and screening strategies should also be implemented where possible to mitigate impacts to adjacent residential areas including the Seberger Roosevelt and Colonial Gardens neighborhoods.

East End

The East End Character Area serves as the eastern gateway to the Division Street Corridor as it travels west from Downtown St. Cloud. The area also straddles three core neighborhoods including Colonial Gardens, St. John Cantius, and Lake George. Development along the corridor includes a mix of neighborhood and service commercial, as well as residential uses. The businesses that line this portion of Division Street generally serve nearby neighborhoods, generating less traffic and other land use

impacts. Employment related uses such as research and development and office users occur along the Cooper Avenue section of this area where a catalyst site is also located.

As redevelopment and reinvestment occurs within the East End, commercial properties should be repositioned to minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties. Where possible, parcels with Division Street frontage should be consolidated to accommodate larger scale development and implement appropriate screening and buffering improvements.



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR
Land Use Framework

All parcels within the Division Street Subarea have been assigned one of eight (8) land use designations. These land use designations cover a range of land use types and help to define the character areas.

The land use designations should serve as the basis for development review and future zoning amendments, which will be required to fully implement the Subarea recommendations. The corridor land use designations include:

Legend

- *Regional Commercial*
- *Commercial Corridor*
- *Neighborhood Commercial*
- *Single Family Residential*
- *Multi-Family Residential*
- *Office & Research*
- *Parks & Open Space*
- *Public/Semi-Public*



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR Redevelopment Opportunities

Several sites on the Division Street corridor are well-positioned for redevelopment and new development. These sites include outdated buildings, poor site design, and lack of on-site improvements. Inconsistent setbacks of corridor buildings result in a hodge-podge of building designs and orientations and can affect the visibility of some businesses. Combined, these attributes negatively affect the image of the corridor and have led to developments that do not effectively leverage valuable corridor frontage.

Redevelopment, which may include utilizing parcel consolidation and site repositioning, can create local employment opportunities, spur investment, and generate tax revenue. Redevelopment, whether that includes demolition and reconstruction or repositioning of individual businesses, will not only serve to maximize returns on investment for property owners, but will also improve the image of the City and positively benefit the St. Cloud business community beyond the boundaries of the subarea.

Legend

- Significant Opportunities
- Parcel Assembly
- Repositioning
- Catalyst Sites
- Dead End

Repositioning

- 1 Crossroads Center
- 2 Plaza West Shopping Center
- 3 Westgate Shopping Center

Significant Opportunity

- 4 Former Office Building

Small Lot Consolidation

- 5 Area north of Walmart Supercenter
- 6 Northeast Corner of Division & 33rd Avenue
- 7 Single Family Home Consolidation
- 8 Neighborhood Commercial Consolidation
- 9 Northeast corner of Division & Cooper Avenue

Catalyst Sites

- 10 Cooper Avenue Site

Redevelopment Opportunities

Repositioning

Existing commercial developments within the subarea have an opportunity to reposition themselves through façade improvements, parking lot landscaping, and other site improvements. These changes and upgrades can have immediate effects on the perception of the businesses themselves, as well as the corridor as a whole. However, the most significant repositioning strategy includes the development of outlots on large surface parking lots. Outlots are defined as developable property within a parcel that are generally sited near the property line along the road frontage. Outlot development generally includes restaurants and some commercial service and retail uses.

For example, the northern edge of the Byerly site, which provides significantly more parking than is required by city code, should be developed with outlot uses. Development should integrate landscaping and buffering, and implement well-sited internal circulation to facilitate traffic flow and pedestrian access. Outlot development closer to the roadway will enhance the pedestrian environment, increasing the sense of enclosure along adjacent sidewalks, break up the visual impact of large surface parking lots, and provide additional opportunities for economic development.

1. The corner outlots of the Crossroads Center retail center are currently underutilized and could be redeveloped to accommodate more intense retail development oriented toward the corners of the adjacent intersections.
2. The large Plaza West Shopping Center parking lot could accommodate an additional outlot along its 33rd Avenue frontage. Primary points of access should also be framed with landscaping.
3. The northern edge of the Byerly site, which provides significantly more parking than is required by city code, should be developed with outlot uses.

Significant Opportunity

The Corridor includes several sites that may be suitable candidates for complete redevelopment. These include sites that have outdated and functionally obsolete buildings, as well as buildings that are sited in a manner that does not leverage the full economic benefits of the parcel. As redevelopment occurs, attention should be given to architectural detail, landscaping, site amenities, and orientation. Buildings should be sited to front Division Street and allow safe access by all forms of transportation – accommodating the automobile while providing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. Furthermore, redevelopment provides an opportunity to better integrate public open space to serve as gathering points, places of rest and repose, and visual interest.

4. This site is the location of a vacant single-story office building that is currently for sale and a used car dealer. These two sites could combine to create a unique development opportunity for larger scale commercial development. There may also be potential to redevelop this site in concert with the assembly and redevelopment of single family homes to the west of 31st Ave.

Small Lot Consolidation

The Division Street Corridor Subarea presents several redevelopment opportunities through small lot consolidation. Consolidation of small lots or parcels creates larger, more viable development sites. Small lot consolidation should be considered as a key strategy to redevelopment, which can create a much larger impact on the corridor than the redevelopment of individual smaller lots. The benefits include the ability to accommodate landscaping and buffering, implement well-designed parking and access management, and better accommodate desirable contemporary development. Because the site is larger, a property owner or developer could master plan the site and/or utilize the PUD process to create a unique, well-planned development.

5. Development in this area consists of several small, single-story commercial uses and an aging motel. An isolated and infrequently used portion of the Walmart Supercenter parking lot abuts these uses. If assembled, the properties would create a large development site adjacent with cross-access to the Walmart Supercenter and the Plaza West Shopping Center. As a partial owner of the site, Walmart could also play a role in facilitating development.

6. This area comprises a small in-line shopping center, an auto service center, and a somewhat isolated auto parts dealer located adjacent single family homes to the north. Parcel depth is limited due to adjacent single family home development and strategic parcel assembly would allow for more efficient use of the site for commercial corridor development. The northernmost portion of the area should be targeted for multi-family development to better complement adjacent single family homes. It is also recommended that 32nd Avenue form a dead-end into the newly created site to expand opportunities for development.
7. Five single family homes are located in this area which is surrounded on all sides by commercial development. Some of the homes have been converted to small commercial uses while others are rented out as residences. Single family residential is not supported in this area and assembly should be pursued to facilitate more intense commercial development.
8. This area comprises three small, vacant commercial properties that should be combined to accommodate new neighborhood-scale commercial. Screening should also be improved at the rear of the site to lessen impacts on adjacent residential development.
9. This area is located at the corner of a heavily trafficked intersection and is largely owned by two users: VFW and a flooring retailer. Assembly of these properties could establish a significant commercial site at the intersection with access from an extended 1st Street N. Osseo Avenue would also be terminated at 1st Avenue to allow development to make full use of the site.

Catalyst Site: Cooper Avenue

Located at the corner of Division Street and Cooper Avenue, the development of the 30-acre Cooper Avenue site will have an immense impact on the corridor. The site benefits from access to the Cooper Avenue Trail and it provides a key link between Division Street and Roosevelt Road. It presents a mix of commercial and residential development opportunities that may serve to strengthen two of the city's Core Neighborhoods while complementing established retail development (e.g. Coborn's). An existing electrical substation on the north end of the site will constrain development, and should be relocated off the property. Much of the site, however, is undeveloped with limited residential and light industrial development on adjacent and nearby properties.

Cooper Avenue Catalyst Site

Site Characteristics:

- **Size:** 1,828,600 SF/43.0 acres
- **Parcels:** 48
- **Zoning:** R-1 Single Family Residential District; C5 Highway Commercial District; I-1 Light Industrial District; I-2 General Industrial District
- **Existing Development:** Vacant former industrial site (quarry processing) and vacant commercial properties located west of Cooper Avenue. Public schools bus maintenance facility and active commercial service buildings (event rentals) east of Cooper Avenue.

Design Considerations:

- An electrical substation is prominently located at the corner of Cooper Avenue and Division Street. As a physical barrier to development of a highly desirable commercial property, removal of the substation is key to the redevelopment of this important catalyst site. The power being handled at the substation could be redirected to other facilities in the area, but the substation can only be moved at significant cost. While the property owner and City would benefit from the removal of the substation, the utility company also stands to benefit as the aging substation will require improvements and maintenance over the long term. The City should work with property owners and the utility to establish a shared-cost agreement for removal of the substation.
- The western portion of the block bound by 7th Street S, Osseo Avenue S, 18th Avenue is located adjacent the Cooper Avenue site in an isolated area fronting light industrial development. New commercial development in this area could be positioned to provide a better environment with landscaping and surface parking. However, assembly and redevelopment of these properties (5 parcels) should be considered to lessen the impact of future development on the residential areas to the east.

Proposed Redevelopment Concept:

Commercial – 1 stories, 142,000- square feet

- A community scale, in-line shopping center with a 30,000 square foot anchor tenant and two lots, similar in intensity to the Coborn's Superstore development to the south. Access provided from Cooper Avenue and an improved 19 ½ Avenue.
- Several standalone retail and commercial service buildings with shared parking and access from Cooper Avenue and 8th Street S.
- A commercial use is appropriate near the Cooper Avenue and Roosevelt Road intersection in place of one or more residential buildings shown on the catalyst site drawing. Access control, trip generation, design, and buffering will be important to ensure a compatible high-quality mixed-used development.

Multi-family – 4-5 stories, 290-360 units

Multi-family development organized in clusters fronting new local streets including 8th Street S, 9th Street S, and 19th Avenue. Surface parking areas and landscaped buffers insulate new residents from Cooper Avenue traffic and adjacent commercial.

Single-family Attached – 50 units

Owner-occupied rowhomes buffering established single family areas from more intense multi-family and commercial development along Cooper Avenue.

Single-family Detached – 5 units

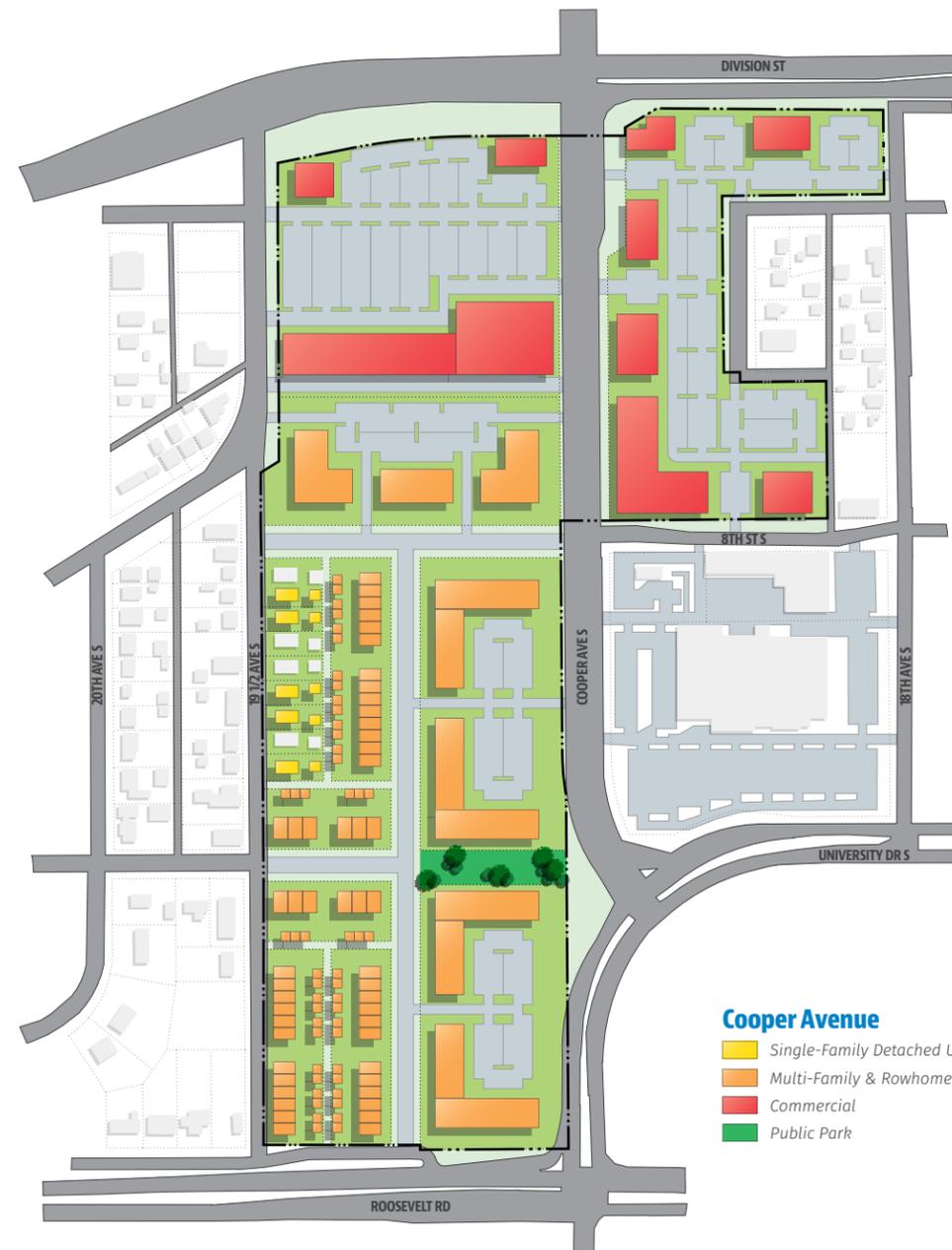
New single family home development occupying vacant lots along the 19 ½ Avenue S frontage.

Parking – Surface lot and detached garage parking

- Commercial development would utilize surface lots accessed from Cooper Avenue, 19 ½ Avenue, and 8th Street.
- Clusters of multi-family structures would have access to centrally located surface lots accessed from newly established 19th Avenue and 8th Street S as well as right-in, right-out access points along Cooper Avenue.
- Proposed single-family attached development would utilize detached garages accessed via a rear alley.

Public Park

New park established at the end of an extended 2nd Street S where it terminates at 19th Avenue.





Cooper Avenue

Conceptual Visualization



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR Beautification Framework

Division Street is the busiest east-west route through St. Cloud, providing an important link between Highway 10, the Downtown, Highway 15, and the Crossroads Center area. As a corridor of regional importance, the perception of Division Street has a significant impact on the perception of St. Cloud as a whole. As a regional hub, St. Cloud should be represented as an attractive and inviting destination, but commercial development within the Division Street corridor and several other highway-oriented commercial districts does not reflect this.

While commercial properties along the corridor exhibit a variety of architectural styles and vary widely in age and condition, the nearly universal design commonality among Division Street properties is the lack of landscaping, pedestrian infrastructure, and service area screening. Public rights-of-way including highly visible intersections and parkways are equally lacking in improvements.

Investments in both the public and private realm are needed to better establish Division Street as a destination and not just a pass through. Where possible, the City should work

with MnDOT to green and beautify public areas and strengthen commercial district identity along the corridor. As Division Street has minimal right-of-way available for dedication to streetscape improvements, much of the City's image and character is reliant on the actions of private property owners. The City should update its zoning and development requirements to improve corridor aesthetics and enable Division Street to better compete with regional peer communities that have already imposed more prescriptive landscaping and development standards.

Legend

- Public Parkway and Median Improvements
- Private Landscaping - Parking Improvements
- ◆ Gateway Features
- Billboard Sign
- ◆ Corner Landscaping
- Gateway Improvements
- ◎ Key Intersection Improvements
- ▬ Landscaped Buffers / Curbs
- ▬ Enhanced Perimeter Landscaping

Public Realm Improvements

Street trees and landscaping are generally absent along the corridor right-of-way. The unadorned right-of-way combines with adjacent unlandscaped parking lots adjacent to form an uninterrupted swath of pavement that is unwelcoming to pedestrians. The realignment of Division Street created parcel fragments and medians that remain within the jurisdiction of MnDOT. These areas present opportunities to improve the overall aesthetics of the corridor. Where possible, street trees and landscaping should be placed in the public realm to improve the appearance of Division Street and provide landscaped buffers between the right-of-way and adjacent uses.

Gateways

Gateway features should be installed to announce entry into St. Cloud and define the Division Street commercial corridor. Waite Avenue serves as the primary entry point into the community from the west, while Cooper Avenue forms the eastern gateway to the corridor as the first major intersection west of Downtown St. Cloud.

Gateway signs should share a common design theme and establish a unified character that is shared by other improvements throughout the corridor. Special landscaping, lighting, decorative paving, and pedestrian amenities should be incorporated into gateway installations to enhance their visibility and contribute to their prominence. In addition, gateways offer an opportunity for the City to engage the art community to assist with design.

- At **Waite Avenue**, right-of-way is limited and a partnership with the Crossroads Center property owners will likely be necessary to implement gateway improvements. The outlot property located at the corner of Division Street and Waite Avenue is vacant and redevelopment this areas is recommended to help enhance the image of the City as well as the Crossroads Center shopping center.
- At **Cooper Avenue**, there is adequate right-of-way along the north edge of Division Street to the west of the intersection to accommodate a sizeable gateway feature. This improvement should be complemented by landscaping improvements along the perimeter of the Cooper Avenue catalyst site.



Public Realm Improvements

Landscaped Medians & Parkways

The Division Street corridor contains medians between 6' and 36' in width that provide available right-of-way for landscaping. Landscaped medians should include street trees placed at equal intervals of 30'-40' on center to allow for visibility of businesses and traffic along the Corridor. Trees can also be planted in a cluster pattern in areas where additional visual interest is desired and installations will not significantly screen nearby businesses. Considerations should include allowing for breaks in landscaping to accommodate mountable medians for use by emergency vehicles. Where right-of-way is sufficient to accommodate a sidewalk in addition to a parkway, parkways should receive a treatment similar to the nearby median. Both medians and parkways should incorporate native vegetation where possible and vegetation should be well-maintained year-round. Public art should also be considered where right-of-way widths allow for proper installation and lighting.



Key Intersections Improvements

As the meeting point of two heavily trafficked thoroughfares, the Division Street and Highway 15 intersection should be enhanced with additional landscaping and pedestrian improvements. The intersection utilizes channelized right-turn, or slip lanes, which are delineated by raised islands. These islands should be enhanced with landscaping that beautifies the space while also accommodating pedestrian movement and vehicle site lines. Additional landscaping should also be installed in the nearby parkways including raised masonry planters at intersection corners. The Cooper Avenue intersection should also be enhanced with a similar landscaping treatment.



Recommended Enhancements

- 1** Prominent corners enhanced with low masonry planters with seasonal plantings
- 2** Recommended tree planting and sidewalk enhancements
- 4** Brick paver crosswalks
- 3** Decorative traffic signal
- 5** Continental crosswalks



On-site Improvements

Portions of Division Street have minimal right-of-way available to dedicate to streetscape improvements, which means much of the City's image and character is reliant on the actions of private property owners. On-site improvements are recommended for privately owned properties throughout the corridor. Current zoning and development standards in St. Cloud are less stringent than regional peer communities, which has resulted in the majority of properties along the Division Street corridor having little to no landscaping or site improvements. This has fostered an image of Division Street as a corridor that functions to move people and cars through the region, and not a regional shopping and dining destination with an established and attractive sense of place.

In addition to drafting regulations that respond to the lack of landscaping and parking lot screening, the City should seek to identify partnership opportunities with existing property owners to enhance their site for not only their benefit but also the benefit of the greater corridor business community. For example, the City could encourage implementation of private property improvements by providing access to an on-site improvement grant program to offset design/construction.

Parking Lot Improvements

A large portion of parking lots along the corridor have little, if any, on-site landscaping. This creates large areas of unobstructed fields of pavement that contribute to the unattractive nature of the corridor. Property owners should install landscaped parking islands and foundation landscaping. Lots should be landscaped with shade trees, evergreens, shrubs, grasses, and flowers to beautify sites and connect them to larger green networks. Local or native species should be used to strengthen the local ecology and the sense of heritage.

These efforts would not only enhance the physical character of the corridor, but could also contribute to greater stormwater management and flood control by increasing the amount of pervious area on a site (landscaping), reducing oversized parking lots, and incorporating sustainable best management practices (BMPs) into the zoning regulations. Examples of BMPs include:

- Bioswales/Bioretenion;
- Filter strips;
- Rain water harvesting;
- Level spreaders;
- Native planting;
- Naturalized buffers, parking lot islands, and retention/detention basins; and,
- Porous surfaces/permeable pavers.



On-site Improvements

Perimeter Landscaping & Screening

Parking areas and parcel edges should be screened from public rights-of-way with a combination of vegetation and low-profile fencing. Plant material should be durable and salt-tolerant, and include a mixture of shade trees, deciduous shrubs, and native grasses. Perimeter landscaping should be designed to maximize stormwater management and improve water quality through the implementation of BMPs such as bioretention areas.

Screening should be used to enclose or hide secondary site activities from public view. Service areas, utilities and mechanical systems, dumpster areas, and other necessary but unsightly elements deter from the overall character of the corridor or community. To the extent possible, building mechanical and communications systems should be located on rooftops and screened with extended parapets that are integrated into the design of the overall building.



On-site Corner Landscaping

Shallow lot depths and the need to accommodate required parking may restrict some property owners from installing parking lot landscaping such as landscaped islands and buffers. In most instances, voids within the parking field exist where landscaping should be accommodated. The corners of parking lots adjacent to nearby intersections and property edge corners frequently comprise unusable space due to parking geometry. These corners should be landscaped in similar fashion to parking lot perimeters with low lying ground cover, hedges, and low-profile fencing. Pedestrian access to adjacent sidewalks should also be provided if possible, but not at the expense of the health and viability of the landscaping installation.



On-site Improvements

Sign Enhancements

The lack of consistency among business sign types, sizes, and locations creates a cluttered appearance that detracts from the aesthetics of the Division Street corridor. In addition to being visually unappealing to visitors, the effectiveness of individual business signs is reduced due to excessive clutter. The issue of sign clutter is particularly of concern within the central and eastern portions of the Division Street corridor where the concentration of small lots creates the potential for numerous signs to be located within close proximity of one another in succession along the corridor. The presence of overhead utilities in these areas can also exacerbate the issue of visual clutter.

In evaluating the City's sign regulations, there are several changes that should be considered to ensure that regulations allow for adequate business identification, legibility, and visibility while respecting the scale and character of surrounding development and minimizing visual clutter. Some of these include:

- Consider the elimination of pole signs and box signs that contribute significantly to visual clutter along the corridor and detract from the quality of adjacent development.
- Consider the elimination of off-premise signs, including billboards, along Division Street frontage to reduce visual clutter and improve the appearance of the corridor.
- Consider added restrictions to digital signs that would establish timing requirements for change of copy and brightness/animation restrictions that limit distractions for passing motorists





ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR **Transportation & Access Management**

As a key east-west major arterial roadway, Division Street should prioritize the movement of people over access to adjacent land uses to maintain steady traffic flow. Access management and intersection improvements along Division Street appear to have been effective in improving traffic flow; however, there are additional opportunities to increase traffic flow and reduce conflict points. The goal is to balance the efficient movement of vehicles, access to corridor businesses, and safety of all roadway users including pedestrians.

Legend

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector

- Signalized Intersection
- Cul-de-sac
- Curb Cut Elimination
- Cross Access Opportunities
- Rear Access Drive Opportunities

Transportation & Access Management

Curb Cut Reduction & Elimination

Parking lots have traditionally been designed in isolation of surrounding properties, requiring each business to have separate curb cuts for access. This can create an excessive amount of curb cuts, which can have negative impacts on pedestrian mobility, safety, and on-site circulation. More recent improvement to Division Street eliminated a considerable number of curb cuts and several more can be removed without compromising access to a site.

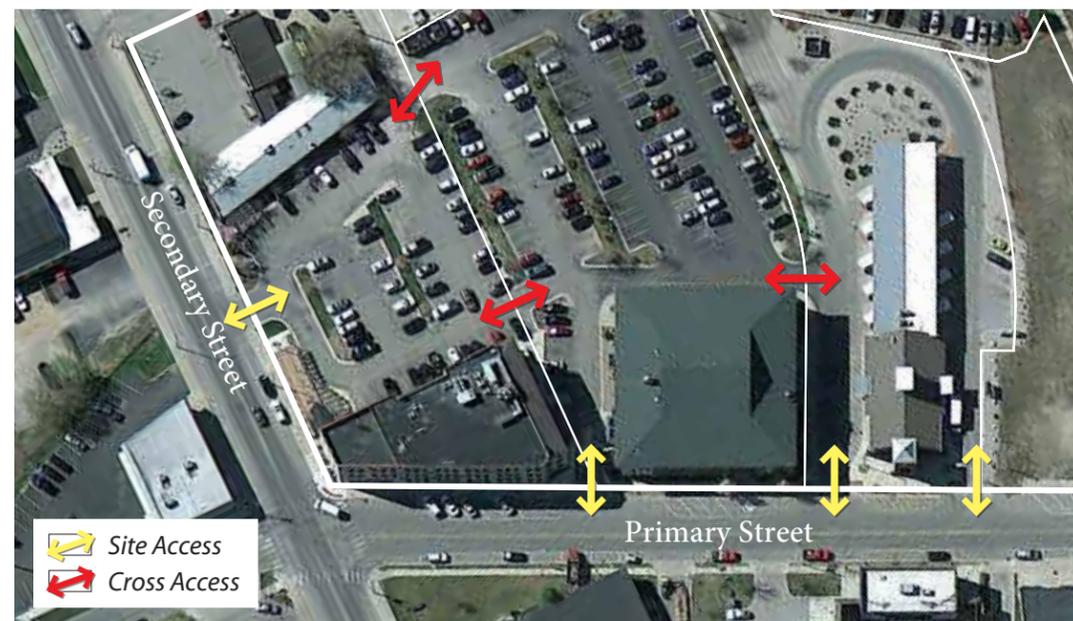


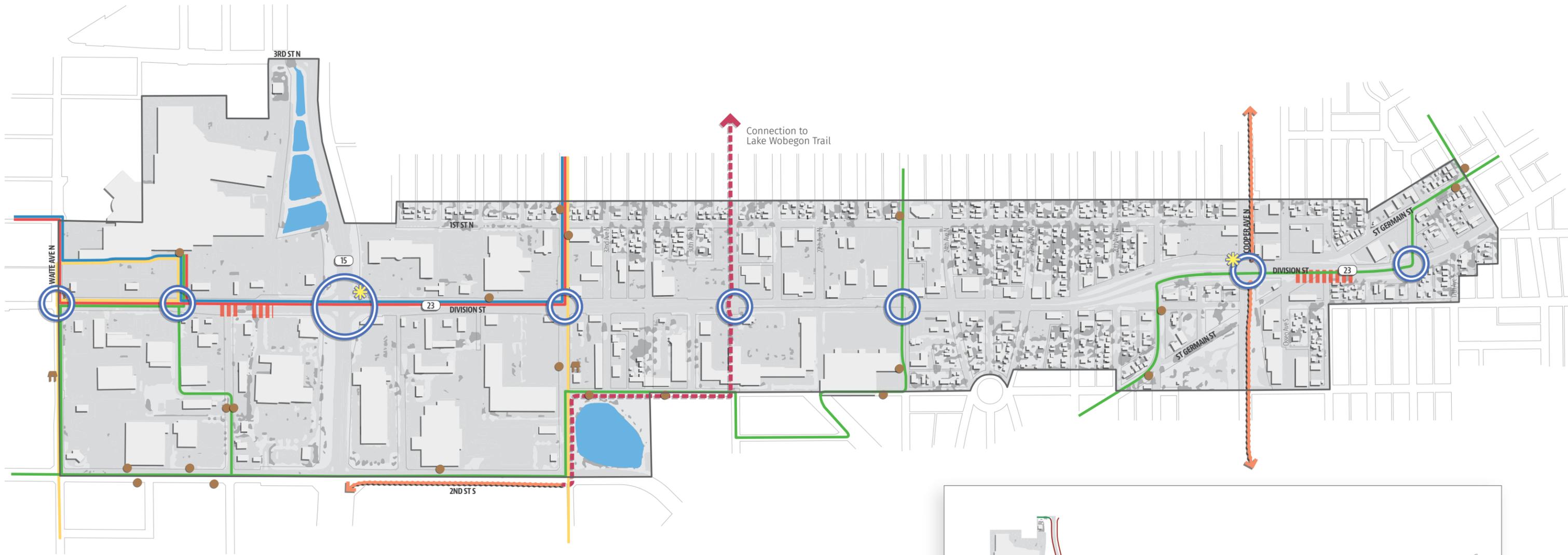
Cross Access

Curb cut elimination often requires cross access between neighboring property owners. Along the corridor, developments are separated from one another by fencing, landscaping, and in many cases, only by parking lot striping. The City should work with property owners to facilitate cross-access agreements and incentivize or require them as part of new developments.

Rear Access Drives

Rear access drives provide an additional means of access to property along the corridor and facilitate curb cut reduction. Several properties along Division Street include existing rear drives accessible via side streets, which provide access to parking and storefront entrances. Use of rear access drives should be encouraged to reduce curb cuts along both Division Street and side streets.





ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DIVISION ST CORRIDOR Transit & Non-Motorized Mobility

As an auto-oriented corridor, the high speeds and heavy traffic of Division Street can make it hazardous and unattractive to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. While the corridor will likely prioritize automobile movement through the duration of this Comprehensive Plan, it should do so in a manner that safely accommodates other roadway users.

Designating bicycle routes, completing the sidewalk network, improving the transit experience, and enhancing crosswalks will increase the vitality and safety of the corridor.



Transit & Non-Motorized Mobility

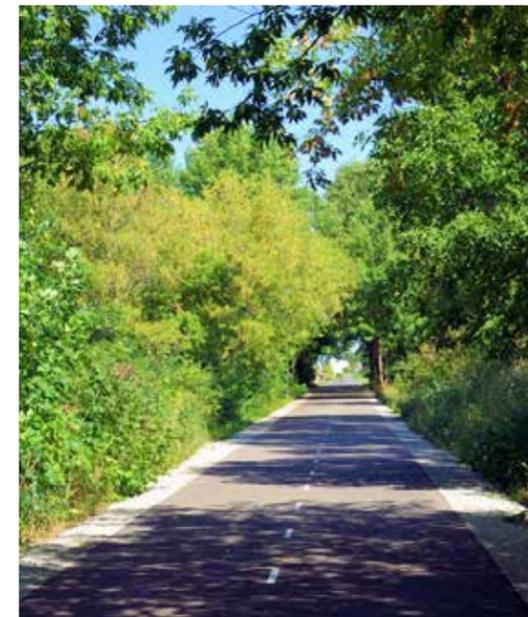
Bus Stops & Shelters

The Division Street corridor is served by four Metrobus routes with multiple stops within the subarea. Only two stops within the subareas are improved with all other stops being solely identified by a bus stop sign. The City should work with Metrobus to install bus shelters and benches at high-frequency bus stop locations to protect users from the elements. Shelters also provide an opportunity for the City to showcase public art and utilize the shelters themselves to demonstrate a local design theme or character. Stops served by multiple routes or located near significant destinations including large employers and retailers should be prioritized to shelter installation.



Bike Routes

Access to businesses and property by all forms of transportation is crucial to the development and prosperity of the corridor. While Division Street is not appropriate for bicycle or trail facilities based on the available right-of-way and heavy traffic counts, access can still be provided to key destinations on parallel routes. This includes utilizing 3rd Street North, as identified in the Lake Wobegon Trail Planning Study (2014), as an alternative east-west bicycle route. This route can be connected to Heritage Park via 1st Street North, and 29th Avenue.



Transit & Non-Motorized Mobility

Sidewalk Treatments

Several miles of roadway within the Division Street corridor lack sidewalks, which present challenges for non-vehicular roadway users. Where sidewalks exist, the network consists of two types of sidewalk treatments: 1) carriage walks in which the sidewalk is directly adjacent to the roadway and 2) parkway sidewalks in which turf, grass, flowers, or trees divide the sidewalk from the roadway. Where the right-of-way allows, parkway sidewalks should be the preferred sidewalk gap treatment to provide a landscaped buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Should carriage walks be implemented, they should be a minimum of 6' in width with a preferred width of 8' to provide a wider buffer to the travel lanes. Both sidewalk treatments present an opportunity to expand the Poetry in Sidewalks program.



Carriage Walk

Carriage walks should be widened wherever possible, or when redevelopment occurs, to 8' (a minimum of 6'). Inset textured pavers should be incorporated at key locations to enhance long expanses of pavement. In keeping with the established character of the corridor, carriage sidewalks should be installed to fill any gaps west of 29th Avenue. Street trees should be incorporated where appropriate.



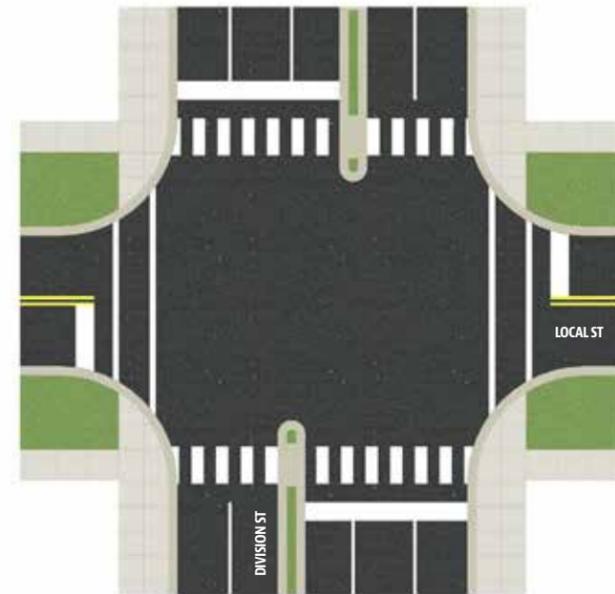
Parkway Sidewalk

Parkway sidewalks are the preferred sidewalk configuration for the eastern portion of the Division Street corridor. In addition to enhancing pedestrian safety, parkways have the potential to accommodate sustainable landscaping techniques including bioswales, rain water inlets, and rain gardens, as well as provide opportunities to establish tree canopy.

Transit & Non-Motorized Mobility

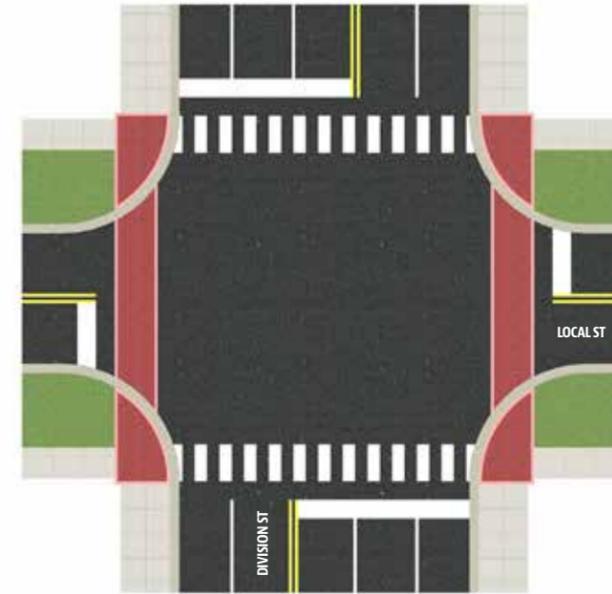
Crosswalk Enhancements

Division Street includes up to seven lanes of traffic and 100-foot crossing distances, which can constrain safe and efficient pedestrian movement. Every intersection on Division Street should be enhanced with a combination of continental crosswalk striping, reduced curb radii, and advance stop bars. Reducing the curb radii decreases the crossing distance for pedestrians while advance stop bars reduce encroachment on pedestrian travel zones, ensuring unobstructed travel on designated crosswalks.



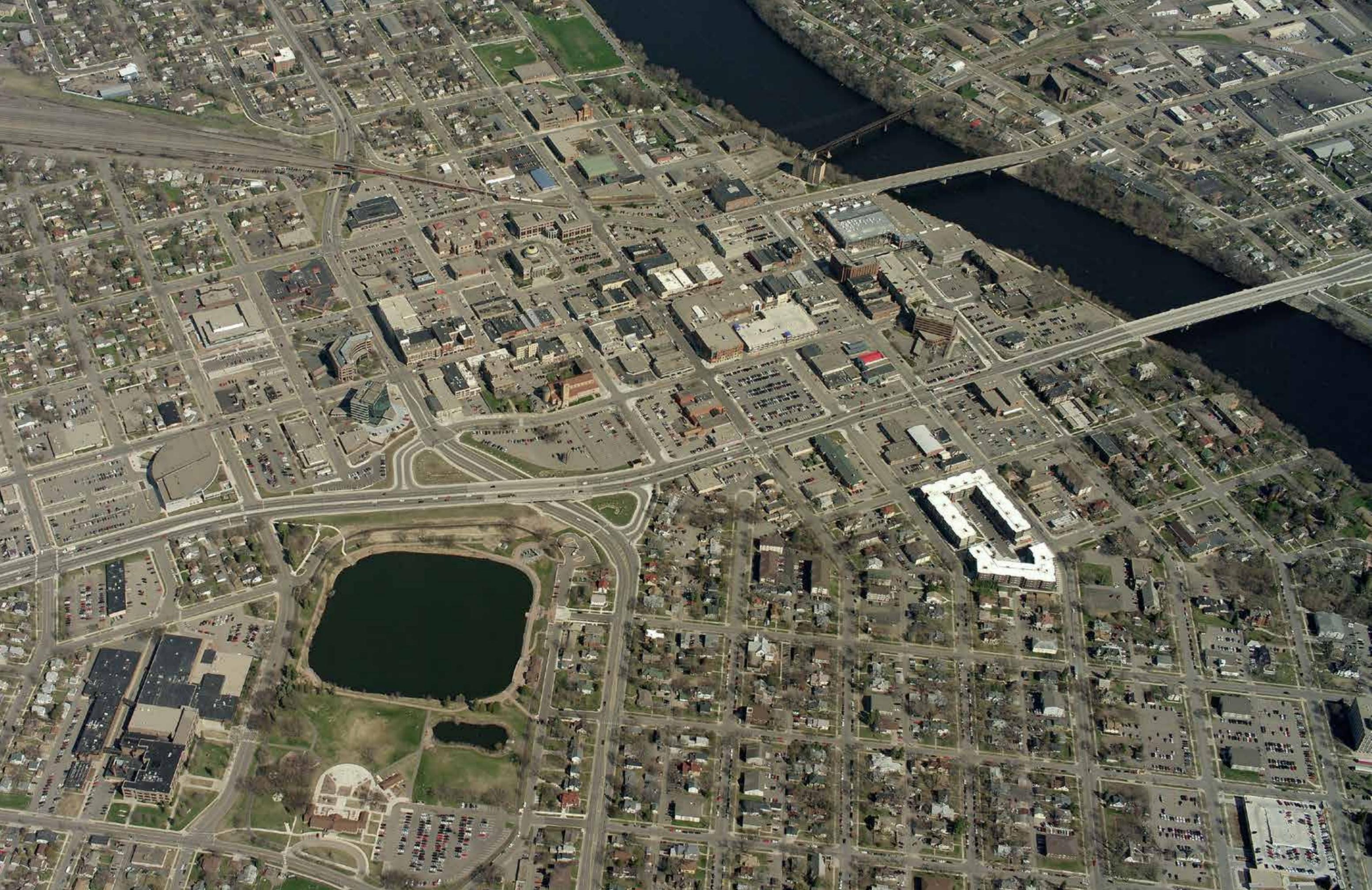
Continental Crosswalk

Where cross-sections of five lanes or greater exist, medians should be extended to provide pedestrian refuge areas, which allow more vulnerable and slower users an opportunity to cross Division Street in two light cycles.



Brick Paver Crosswalk

While crosswalks over heavily trafficked Division Street should be maintained with continental pavement markings, brick paver treatments should be considered for crosswalks that run parallel to the corridor. Necking down the curbs or providing “bumpouts” at these locations should also be considered to help shorten the crossing distances for pedestrians and to reduce vehicle speeds.



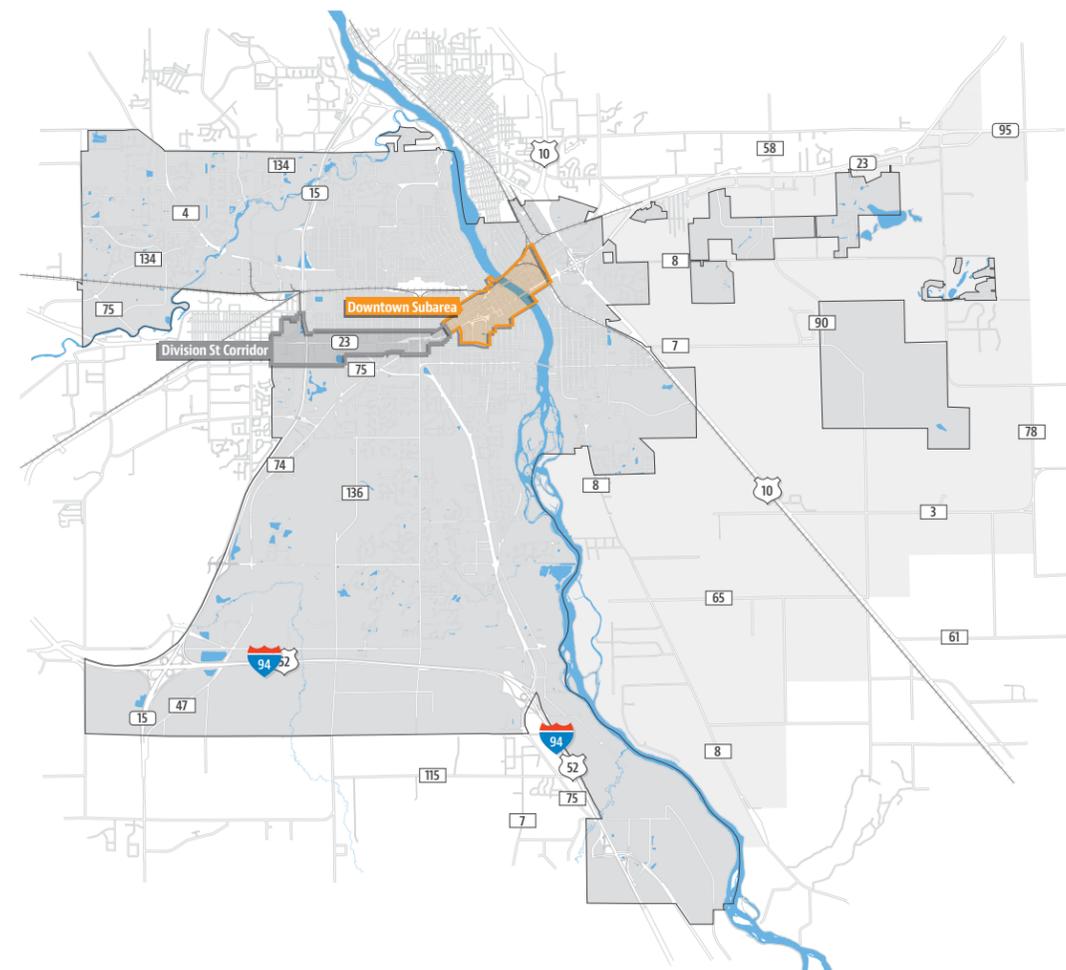
Downtown Subarea Plan

Downtown is the symbolic heart of the St. Cloud community. Rooted in history, the area is home to a unique mix of businesses, dining options, and entertainment venues, such as the Paramount Theatre and the River's Edge Convention Center. Downtown is an employment hub within the region and the district has an active restaurant and entertainment scene. Since 2008, more than \$115 million has been invested in the Downtown and streetscaping initiatives, recent expansion of the Convention Center, demonstrates the potential for continued investment in the district.

However, despite its many assets, there are several issues currently limiting the ability of the district to reach its full potential, including, but not limited to:

- Lack of significant residential development limits activity to support retailers and restaurants.
- Heavily used surface parking lots could be redeveloped to accommodate future development.
- Riverfront development that turns its back on the river and blocks public access to the riverfront.
- The need to improve connectivity between key activity generators like the court complex, convention center, and retail areas.
- Lack of green space, visual interest, and sense of enclosure that weakens the pedestrian environment.

The Downtown Subarea Plan identifies opportunities and strategies for addressing these issues and identifies strategies for repositioning and enhancing areas of the Downtown to better leverage existing assets and facilitate greater investment.



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Functional Character Area Framework

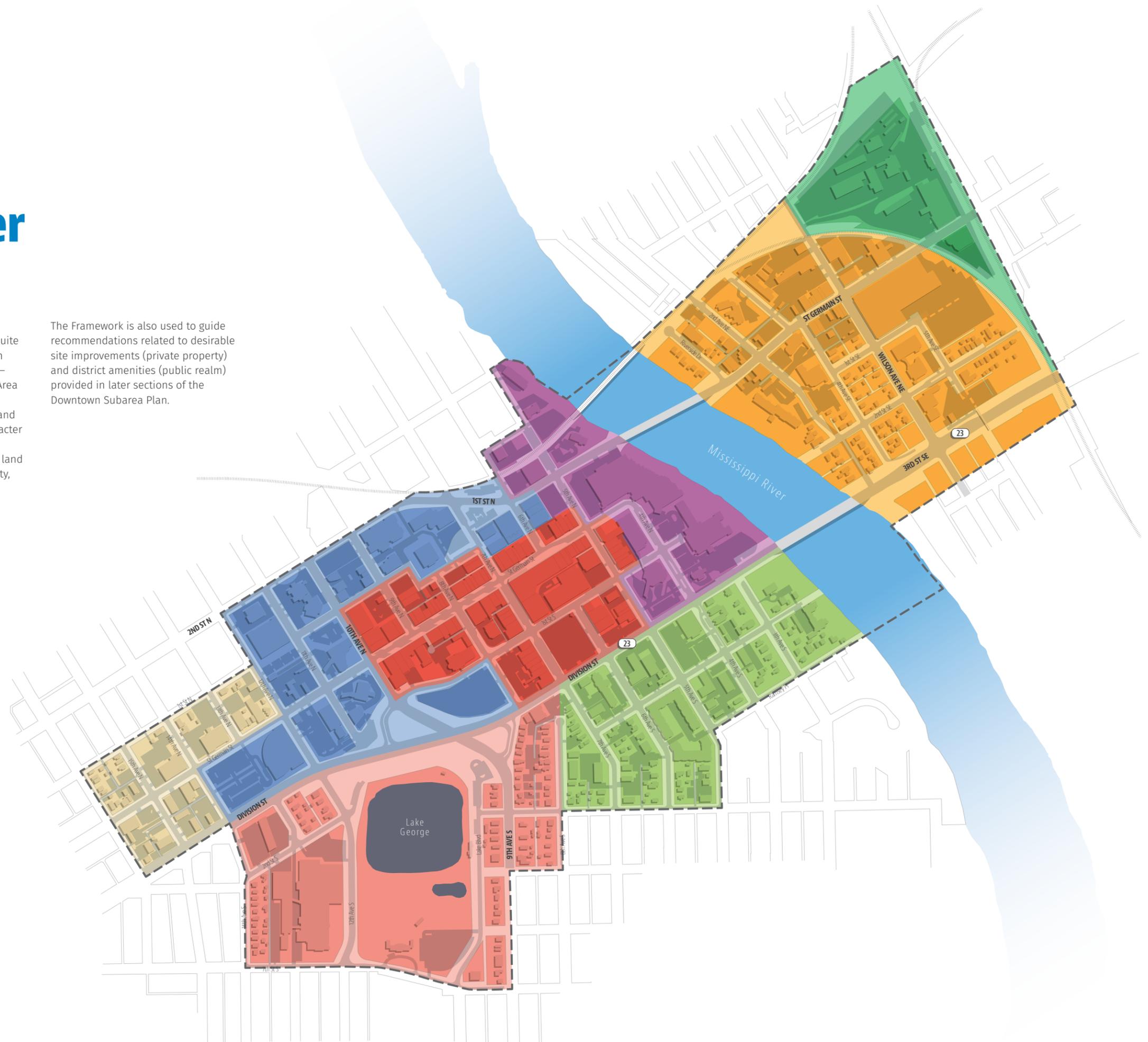
Downtown St. Cloud is comprised of several unique areas, from the traditional core along St. Germain Street to the more transitional area east of the Mississippi River. Collectively, these unique “Functional Character Areas” make up the greater Downtown St. Cloud Area, and each contributes to the Downtowns overall character. This section presents the Functional Character Areas Framework for the Downtown Subarea Plan, providing guidance on future development and reinvestment throughout the Downtown.

Each character area within the Framework is defined by a unique suite of attributes that define its function within the broader Downtown area – making each Functional Character Area different from the others, while connected functionally, physically, and visually in some way. For each character area, the Framework provides recommendations regarding future land use, development scale and intensity, and overall character.

The Framework is also used to guide recommendations related to desirable site improvements (private property) and district amenities (public realm) provided in later sections of the Downtown Subarea Plan.

Legend

- University Gateway
- Lake George District
- Traditional Core
- Civic / Office
- West Bank District
- East Side Artisan
- Industrial Transition
- West Side Transition



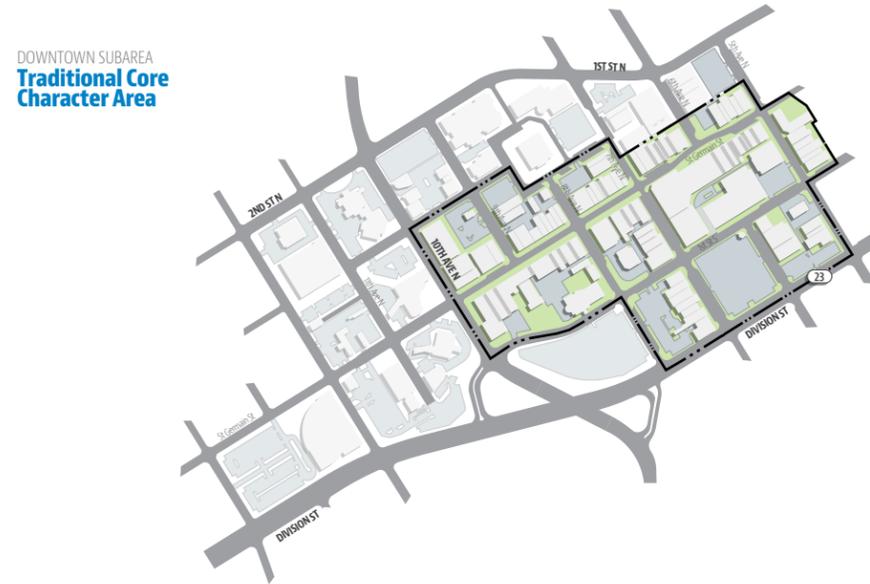
Character Areas Traditional Core

The Traditional Core is the historic commercial/mixed use core of Downtown St. Cloud. The area is centered on the St. Germain Street corridor, anchored on the west by the Paramount Arts District and on the east by the River's Edge Convention Center. The St. Cloud Commercial Historic District, a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places with 60 contributing structures, provides the area with a character and sense of place that is unique within the region.

Future development that enhances sense of place and pedestrian activity within the Downtown and bolsters support for area retailers and entertainment venues should be a priority within the Traditional Core. Development within the Traditional Core should predominantly consist of multi-story, mixed use structures which are oriented toward the street and located at or near the sidewalk. A diverse range of uses should continue to be encouraged in the Traditional Core with a focus on locating pedestrian activity-generating uses, such as retail, restaurant, entertainment, and civic uses, in ground floor locations and residential and office uses on the upper floors.

The development of multi-family housing (owner- and renter-occupied) should be encouraged within the Traditional Core. Mixed-use structures with a multi-family component should be encouraged along St. Germain Street, 5th Avenue, and 7th Avenue, although standalone multi-family buildings may also be appropriate in the area if located on an intersecting side street. Office development should also continue to be encouraged within the Traditional Core.

Less intensely developed properties including one-story, single-use buildings and surface parking lots should be prioritized for redevelopment. Development of three- to four-story buildings should be encouraged. Construction of buildings six stories or greater may be appropriate in certain locations, provided the architectural design and detail is sufficient to ensure compatibility with adjacent and nearby structures.



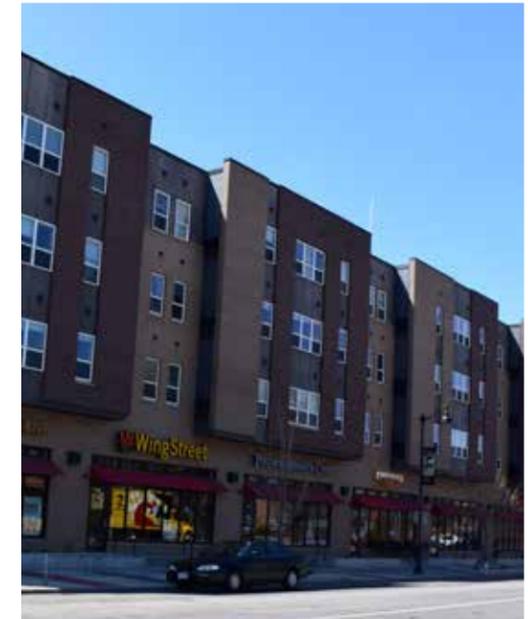
Character Areas University Gateway

The University Gateway area forms the southern edge of Downtown St. Cloud and serves as a gateway to the St. Cloud State University area. Commercial Development along the Division Street corridor anchors the west side of the area while City Hall and the Coborn Plaza development occupy the centrally located 5th Avenue corridor. The area also includes the eastern portion of the Southside Neighborhood Historic District.

As a gateway, the prominent 5th Avenue and Division Street frontages are of strategic importance in defining the character of the broader downtown. The appearance and quality of development in the University Gateway area also directly impacts the image of St. Cloud State University which is located one block to the south. The area's dual role in the community requires development to be of high quality design.

Opportunities for redevelopment are limited in this University Gateway area, but where possible, development should be intensified along the Division Street frontage and 5th Avenue frontage. Underutilized sites including the vacant former First United Methodist Church property, and clusters of smaller parcels and surface parking lots, should be targeted for multi-story mixed use and office development that establishes a more traditional streetwall. Coborn Plaza, which is a mixed used development featuring residential units above ground floor commercial with internalized parking, should serve as an example of desirable, high quality design that should be emulated elsewhere in the area.

Existing corridor commercial development should be enhanced with improved landscaping and screening to provide a better sense of enclosure to pedestrians using adjacent sidewalks. The gas station located at 5th Avenue and Ramsey Place exemplifies use of fencing and low lying landscaping to appropriately frame the pedestrian right-of-way. The historic preservation of single family development and appropriately-scaled multi-family development should also be encouraged in areas located away from Division Street and 5th Avenue.



Character Areas Civic & Office Employment

The Civic and Office Employment area is the location of Downtown St. Cloud's most significant employers and activity generators. The areas west of 10th Avenue are anchored by the Falcon National Bank and US Bank Plaza buildings and St. Cloud Public Library, while areas along the 1st Street N corridor are anchored by the Stearns County Complex.

Employees and visitors to this area should be leveraged as prime drivers of demand for commercial goods and services in the Downtown. The Civic and Office Employment area should be targeted for additional multi-story office development as well as multi-family development that increases the residential base of the Downtown. Mixed use development that includes service providers to complement anchor users such as the Stearns County Courthouse is desirable for areas adjacent to the Traditional Core.

Blocks not occupied by major office or civic uses primarily consist of small parcels, low-intensity development, and surface parking lots. These properties should be consolidated and repositioned where possible to accommodate larger-scale development. Development of five to six stories is appropriate for newly consolidate development sites, where such sites are not immediately adjacent to nearby single-family residential uses. Sites adjacent to the Traditional Core should mirror the building scale of that character area.

Where possible, streetscaping should be enhanced on routes that link businesses to commercial areas within the Traditional Core. Surface parking lots should also be enhanced with appropriate perimeter landscaping and fencing to help maintain continuity of the pedestrian realm, with public and civic uses leading by example with regard to site improvement, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities. The city and its downtown partners should also coordinate with employers to promote downtown living and evaluate initiatives such as a "Live Downtown" program that would provide home finance incentives or rental rebates to employees of area businesses who choose to live in the Downtown.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
Civic / Office
Character Area



Character Areas Lake George District

Lake George, a unique park and iconic gathering place within the community, forms the core of this character area. The area to the east of Lake George comprises a mix of single family and multi-family development while the area to the west is anchored by the former Tech High School site.

At the time of the development of this plan, the school district has announced plans to build a new community education and administrative center on the site of the high school's athletic fields, and sell the remainder of the high school facility. The successful reuse or redevelopment of the Tech H.S. site is of significant importance to not just the Lake George neighborhood, but to the Downtown as a whole.

The following observations should provide guidance as concepts are considered for the site:

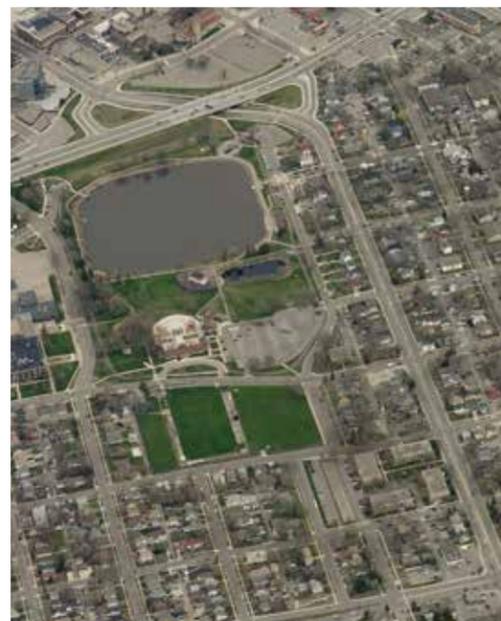
- Tech H.S. should be considered for adaptive reuse, or at least partial adaptive reuse, where historic portions of the facility are retained and incorporated into new development. While uses may change, the facility's original structures contribute to the character of the surrounding Lake George neighborhood.
- The site's location adjacent Lake George and proximity to the central Downtown and amenities like the Public Library make it a desirable location for multi-family residential development including renter or owner-occupied housing, as well as senior housing.

- Commercial development should not be encouraged in the Lake George District as this activity should be concentrated in the nearby Traditional Core and University Gateway areas.
- With the school district maintaining a presence in the area, educational uses at the Tech H. S. site should be ancillary in nature.
- Community outreach has indicated a strong desire for community services and an arts presence at the site. The Tech H.S. facility should be considered as a potential site for arts-related uses such as artisan workshops and residences (including live-work studios) that provide opportunities for artists to live and create in the Lake George District.

The 10th Avenue corridor is identified as the Northwest Corner Catalyst Site within this Subarea Plan. As recommended in the catalyst site concept, parcel assembly should be encouraged in the areas north of 4th Street to facilitate multi-family development with views of Lake George, along with the establishment of an expanded greenspace and park entrance area immediately adjacent to the lake. Additional discussion regarding the redevelopment of this area is located in the Northwest Corner Catalyst Site section at the end of this Chapter.

Lake George District connections to central portions of the Downtown should also be strengthened. The pedestrian activated cross-walk beacon at 9th Avenue provides improved access to the Public Library and nearby areas, but additional enhancements are needed at 10th Avenue. The City should continue to pursue implementation of a public art project to improve the appearance of the Division Street underpass and utilize the space. A small park or plaza treatment should also be installed at 10th Avenue and 1st Street to help make the walk between the Traditional Core and Lake George District more inviting.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
Lake George District
Character Area



Character Areas West Bank District

The West Bank District is located along the central Downtown riverfront from 1st Avenue S to 3rd Street N. With the exception of a few smaller properties, the West Bank District largely consists of five major users: Wells Fargo Bank building, Kelly Inn, Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Empire Apartments building, and River's Edge Convention Center. While these uses provide for a steady stream of visitors to the Downtown, their existing location along the riverfront limits the potential for improved public access and use of the riverfront.

As indicated by its name, the West Bank District should be defined by its relationship to the Mississippi River. While existing development is predominantly sited and oriented to function independent of its riverfront location, where possible, redevelopment should be encouraged to better leverage the nation's largest river as an asset to the Downtown and larger St. Cloud community.

The River's Edge Convention Center should continue to grow in prominence as a regional event destination within Downtown St. Cloud. While improved access to the river is desirable, the convention center's location along the riverfront has been bolstered by recent renovations and expansion projects, including an approved parking ramp adjacent to the Convention Center. As such, additional opportunities for riverfront access lie in the redevelopment of privately owned properties to the north and south.

The portion of the West Bank District located north of 1st Street N is identified as the North Riverfront Catalyst Site within this Subarea Plan. As recommended in the catalyst site concept, parcel assembly should be encouraged for parcels to the north of 2nd Street N along the riverfront to facilitate multi-story, multi-family development while the Empire Apartments site could potentially accommodate a hotel (or other uses) to complement the nearby convention center. All such development should emphasize visual and physical connections to the riverfront and the new Beaver Island Trail where possible. Additional discussion regarding the redevelopment of this area is located in the North Riverfront Catalyst Site section at the end of this Chapter.

The Kelly Inn site is located to the south of the convention center and, with approximately 650 feet of river view property, is the largest property on the riverfront. As highlighted in the previous Comprehensive Plan (2003) and the 2013 Placemaking Design Manual (2013), the Kelly Inn site represents the most significant opportunity to reconnect Downtown St. Cloud with the riverfront. The City and its downtown partners should work with the owners of the Kelly Inn site to redevelop the property. The following observations should provide guidance as concepts are considered for the site:

- 1st Street S should be extended to the east where it can form a pedestrian arcade or plaza that provides community space along the riverfront and establishes a terminating vista of the river from the Traditional Core of the Downtown.
- Deck parking should be established in areas removed from public view to accommodate increased development, including a hotel tower with more rooms in a vertical configuration that replaces the existing horizontally expansive footprint.
- The southern portion of the site should be redeveloped with four to six-story, mixed use structures including residential or office uses located above retail shops and restaurants that can properly leverage views and access to the riverfront.
- Buildings should be oriented to establish lines of sight to the riverfront and public walkways and park space connecting to an expanded Beaver Island Trail.
- New development should have a strong presence along Division Street to frame the eastern approach to the Downtown and establish the new bridge as a gateway to the Downtown.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
West Bank District
Character Area



Character Areas West Side Transition

The West Side Transition area includes local-serving commercial development and single-family development along the St. Germain Street corridor. This area marks a transition between more intense development within and surrounding the Traditional Core and the residential areas of the St. John Cantius neighborhood. The southern portion of the area also includes small scale commercial development fronting Division Street.

Neighborhood-serving retail and services are desired for this area, but it is important that development does not threaten the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. Several single-family homes along this portion of St. Germain Street and on intersecting side streets have been converted to secondary commercial uses. In other areas, single-family homes remain, but are now surrounded by businesses and parking lots. The transitory nature of development creates a sense of visual discord between adjacent properties and detracts from an overall sense of place.

Moving forward, façade improvements and redevelopment should be encouraged to firmly establish this portion of the St. Germain Street corridor as a unique commercial district with residential appeal. Single-family homes that have been adapted for commercial use and are of quality design and well-maintained should remain in place. Parcel assembly and redevelopment of adjoining small lots should be encouraged within the West Side Transition area to facilitate development that complements adjacent residential areas. Development should be one to two stories in height and architecture should be residential in character with a focus on the pedestrian scale.

Redevelopment of aging commercial properties fronting Division Street within the West Side Transition area should be encouraged. The divided highway cross section along this portion of Division Street reduces the potential to capture eastbound traffic, therefore limiting the potential for commercial development. Signage indicating U-turns are permitted at the 14th Avenue intersection for access to businesses should be considered. Multi-family development could also be appropriate for this area if appropriate greenspace can be provided to buffer residents from the Division Street traffic.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
West Side Transition
Character Area



Character Areas East Side Artisan/Creative District

The East Side Artisan/Creative District is the commercial and mixed use core of the Downtown St. Cloud's East Side. Though similar in character to other areas of the downtown, the separation created by the Mississippi River establishes the East Side Artisan/Creative District as a unique place that functions somewhat independently. St. Germain Street forms the center of the East Side Artisan/Creative District and marks the boundary between the Northeast-Wilson Park and Southeast neighborhoods. The easternmost portion of this area is dominated by the St. Katherine Drexel School and the Pan-O-Gold Baking Company, an active industrial-scale bakery that has been located at its East Side location since 1900.

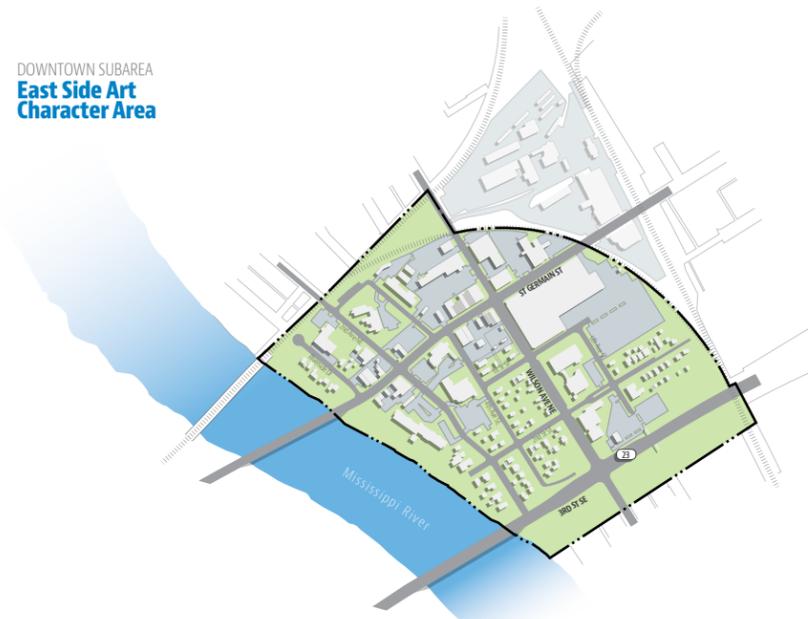
The intersection of St. Germain and Wilson Avenue is the focal point of a cluster of mixed use development. As demonstrated by the presence of several vacant sites and empty storefronts, commercial development is struggling along the East St. Germain Street, particularly near the Riverside Drive intersection. Several light industrial buildings also intermingle among the area's commercial properties.

While some businesses are thriving, community input has highlighted the fact that a new vision is needed for the East Side's St. Germain Street corridor if it is to function as a healthy commercial district. In concert with this call to action, community input throughout the Comprehensive Plan process has also underscored a desire for additional investment in the arts. The concept of an East Side Artisan/Creative District melds these two community desires into a place-based strategy for improving the East Side.

It is recommended that the City and its partners encourage the location of artisan workshops and artists residences to a newly branded East Side Artisan/Creative District. This can be accomplished by:

- Establishing incentives for incubators and accelerators that provide creative organizations with shared space, shared equipment, and other technical assistance in growing sustainably.
- Providing incentives for redeveloping "make/live space" for use by creative individuals and organizations.
- Examining the potential for zoning districts in industrial and commercial areas that would allow for live/work units where residential uses are located above ground-floor creative production uses.
- Creating a seed fund to provide micro-grants to creative initiatives.

As with the West Side District, there is a desire for improved access to the riverfront in the East Side Artisan District. It is recommended that a new riverfront trail be installed along the east bank of the Mississippi River within the East Side Artisan/Creative District. Further discussion is provided in the Greenspace section.



Character Areas Industrial Transition

The Industrial Transition area is located adjacent to two active rail corridors and has historically been the location of industrial uses such as lumber and construction supply companies. Similar industrial development can be found across the railroad to the east. Industrial properties within this area that front St. Germain Street are two stories and are located at the sidewalk. This appropriately mimics the character and intensity of commercial properties to the west within the East Side Artisan/Creative District.

The Industrial Transition area is the location of the St. Cloud Amtrak Station which provides service along its Empire Builder Line from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago. A lack of screening and site enhancements within the industrial station area creates a situation in which Amtrak riders are greeted by views of scrap piles, lumber stacks, construction equipment, razor wire, and loading bays.

Roadways leading to the station also lack basic improvements such as curb-and-gutter and striping to properly identify them as formal access points to the station. The City should work with Amtrak and local property owners to improve the appearance of the station area and provide a positive image of St. Cloud to visitors using the station. The rail corridor is an appropriate location for industrial uses and these economic contributors should be encouraged to remain. However, given their prominent location adjacent the St. Germain corridor and a regional transportation asset, investments in loading and service area screening and landscaping are needed. Complementary improvements are also needed along the perimeter of the Amtrak station property as well as properties located to the east of the railroad tracks.

With strong community support for bringing the Northstar Commuter Rail service to the Amtrak station, there is an increased need for significant investment in industrial use screening, station site improvements, and enhancements to the roadways leading to the station. The addition of commuter rail service at the station will also likely require the development of additional parking on sites currently occupied by outdoor industrial storage.

TOD Opportunity

The St. Cloud Amtrak Station and adjacent parcels present a significant opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD). According to Reconnecting America, a TOD is defined as, "more compact development within easy walking distance of transit stations (typically a half mile) that contains a mix of uses such as housing, jobs, shops, restaurants and entertainment." TODs contribute to a vibrant and walkable local economy by using transit as an anchor. The City should work with Amtrak and surrounding property owners to understand potential development opportunities that can contribute to and benefit from the St. Cloud Amtrak Station. Examples of successful TOD projects from around the country are shown on this page.

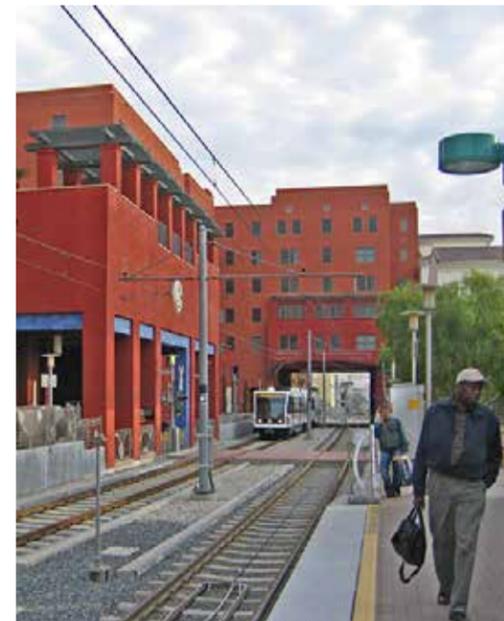


Clarendon (VA) Metro Station, Arlington, VA

Ron Cogswell, Flickr



Bloomington-Normal Station, Normal, IL



Del Mar Station, Pasadena, CA

Brett VA, Flickr



Target Field Station, Minneapolis, MN

ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS : DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Land Use Framework

All parcels within the Downtown Subarea have been assigned one of the eight (8) land use designations. The land use designations cover a variety of land uses and help to define the functional character areas.

These designations should be used as a basis for development review and future zoning amendments. The latter being required to fully implement the subareas' recommendations. The following land use designations are listed below:

Legend

- Single Family Detached
- Multi-Family
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Office & Research
- Light Industrial
- Public / Semi-Public
- Parks / Open Space



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS : DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Redevelopment Opportunities

A number of specific sites within the Downtown subarea demonstrate redevelopment opportunity which could help support reinvestment and a renewed character for Downtown St. Cloud. These sites are well suited for parcel assembly and consolidation, on-site improvements, and significant reinvestment to provide new interest and direction for the area. Redevelopment can help generate local employment opportunities, spur further investment, and deliver additional tax revenue.

This section identifies sites within Downtown St. Cloud which provide opportunities to strengthen local business, better define the Downtown's character, and position the Downtown as a local and regional destination. In addition, specific catalyst sites have been recognized that demonstrate the greatest potential to improve the Downtown subarea.

Legend

- Parcel Assembly
- Significant Opportunity Sites

- Catalyst Sites

Small Lot Consolidation

- 1 Site 1: Small Commercial Properties
- 2 Site 2: Parking & Small Commercial Properties
- 3 Site 3: Parking & Fast Food Restaurant

- 4 Site 4: Small Commercial Property on Division
- 5 Site 5: Parking & Restaurant
- 6 Site 6: EDA-owned Site (Former Salvation Army)

Significant Opportunity Sites

- 6 Tech High School
- 7 City Hall Parking Lot

- 8 Kelly Inn Property
- 9 Riverside Apartments

Catalyst Sites

- 10 Lady Slipper
- 11 Swan Lot

- 12 NW Corner
- 13 North Downtown Riverfront



Redevelopment Opportunities

Small Lot Consolidation

There are several sites where small scale development is located adjacent to high intensity, better performing areas of the Downtown. Parcel consolidation and redevelopment of these sites will allow for new development that increases intensity in the Downtown, while accommodating desirable site amenities and streetscaping that improves the overall character and vibrancy of the area.

- **Site 1** contains three small single-story commercial properties with a significant area dedicated to parking and access. These properties could be consolidated and made available for more intense office development that would better complement the significant US Bank and Falcon National Bank office developments immediately to the east.
- **Site 2** is a one city block area comprising a private parking lot fronting 2nd Street N and several single story commercial uses fronting 9th and 10th Avenues. Parcel consolidation should be considered for this site to facilitate more intense development near the core of the Downtown. The site's location adjacent the Stearns County Courts complex and proximity to the St. Germain Street corridor make it attractive to office and employment uses as well as multi-family.
- **Site 3** is the location of the parking lot for the 60-unit Germain Towers public housing property and a small fast food restaurant featuring a drive-through. These auto-oriented uses detract from the pedestrian environment that is established by adjacent development. Parcel assembly should be encouraged to accommodate mixed use development that better contributes to the character of the district. St. Cloud HRA could establish a parking agreement with the City to accommodate Germain Towers resident parking in the adjacent Paramount Parking Ramp where excess capacity currently exists.

- **Site 4** includes a single-story commercial property and an access drive for a public parking lot and bank drive-through. Given the site's prominent location at 7th Avenue and Division Street, it should be targeted for more intense commercial or mixed use redevelopment. Such development should be of high quality to complement the redevelopment of the Lady Slipper Lot to the east. These three parcels include a single-story restaurant and two surface parking lots.
- **Site 5** consists of three parcels that include a single-story restaurant, Perkins, and two surface parking lots. These lots could be consolidated to take advantage of underutilized surface parking. Nevertheless, the main building is on one lot with the primary access point facing the supporting parking lot to the south. This creates challenges in redeveloping the underutilized Perkins parking lot without also redeveloping the Perkins building since there is not access point provided from 6th Avenue. Given the site's prominent location along 2nd Street, redevelopment should take advantage of recommendations to improve the Lady Slipper Lot to the west by encouraging multi-story mixed-use. The new building should be brought up to the property line on both 6th Avenue and 2nd Street with access to parking being provided from the public alley.
- **Site 6** is the former location of a Salvation Army facility. The vacant site is currently used for temporary parking and is owned by the Economic Development Authority. The site is approximately 12,000 square feet and is ready to develop under the C-4 (Fringe Central Business District) zoning district standards. There is also potential to assemble the property with two adjacent properties to the west, providing for a large site with frontage on three sides and rear alley access. Mixed use development should be encouraged, but a range of uses may be appropriate as the site is located in the heart of the proposed East Side Artisan/Creative District.

Significant Opportunity Sites

The Downtown includes three significant sites that are each under single ownership and may be suitable candidates for complete redevelopment. Each site is highly visible from Division Street and other cross-streets and though the exact development program for each site will vary, attention should be given to architectural detail, landscaping, site amenities, and building orientation that improve the image of the Downtown. Furthermore, redevelopment provides an opportunity to better integrate public open space and pedestrian amenities.

Tech High School

This large development opportunity is being considered for sale by the school district. The site is approximately 11 acres in size with frontage along Division Street and extensive views of Lake George. The site is well-suited for multi-family, but could accommodate a variety of development types. As future property owners pursue redevelopment, the City should encourage the use of a planned development process with extensive community engagement to identify a market-viable and community-supported redevelopment concept for the property.

City Hall Parking Lot

This is a sizeable development opportunity with frontage along both Division Street and 5th Avenue. The site is desirable for office or mixed use development, but parking requirements could limit its potential. The vacant church property to the south would be an appropriate location for parking serving both the City Hall and new development on the City Hall site.

Kelly Inn Property

The hotel and restaurant property is a desirable use for the Downtown, but its current configuration blocks public access to the riverfront and limits the site's ability to reach its full potential. Property owners should be encouraged to work with the City and its partners to pursue redevelopment that retains hotel and restaurant uses on the site, but also allows for more intense mixed use and commercial uses as well as public open space.

Riverside Apartments

This large parcel is home to the Riverside Apartments, an HRA facility for seniors 55 and older. The City should work with the HRA to develop potential redevelopment options that take advantage of riverfront. Redevelopment should incorporate the vision from the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan, which includes transforming the apartments into a mixed use project. Development should be of a similar size and scale to the North Downtown Riverfront catalyst site (page 129).

Catalyst Sites

Downtown St. Cloud contains four sites that, if redeveloped, could help spur reinvestment and redevelopment on surrounding properties. These properties are also located in prominent locations that demand high quality development that will strengthen the image of the Downtown and the City as a whole. Catalyst sites within the Downtown include:

- **Lady Slipper Lot:** Undeveloped city block currently used for surface parking in the heart of the Downtown with frontage along Division Street.
- **Swan Lot:** A public parking lot located at the foot of the Division Street bridge over 10th Avenue that has the potential to serve as a gateway to the Downtown.
- **Northwest Corner:** Single family residential area suffering from disinvestment and poor maintenance. Proximity to Lake George and the Downtown makes this area very attractive for new multi-family development.
- **North Downtown Riverfront:** Current development includes a public housing property, rental and owner-occupied multi-family structures, and a historic mixed use building. None of this development currently leverages the river as an asset which undermines the well-located site's ability to contribute to function of the Downtown district.

Lady Slipper Lot Catalyst Site

Site Characteristics:

- **Size:** 87,120 SF/2 acres
- **Parcels:** 1
- **Zoning:** C-3 Central Business District
- **Existing Development:** Public parking surface lot containing 268 parking spaces.

Design Considerations:

As the most heavily used surface parking lot in Downtown St. Cloud, redevelopment of the Lady Slipper Lot will have a significant impact on downtown parking. Some excess capacity exists in nearby lots and structures, but it is not sufficient to adequately absorb all parking currently provided at the Lady Slipper Lot. While a one-for-one replacement of public parking may not be feasible, future development at the site should provide some component of public parking in addition to the parking required by new development.

Proposed Redevelopment Concept:

Retail – 1 story, 10,755 square feet

Ground floor retail along the 7th Avenue frontage to strengthen the link between Division Street and Downtown St. Cloud.

Hotel – 6-8 stories, 86-128 rooms, 53,000 square feet lobby and event space

A hotel with a lobby, restaurant, and meeting areas occupying floors 1-2 and rooms located on upper floors. The hotel's main entrance would open onto the corner of 7th Avenue and 1st Street while a secondary entrance connected to a parking structure access point would allow for convenient guest pick-up and drop-off.

Office – 5-6 stories, 55,000-66,000 square feet

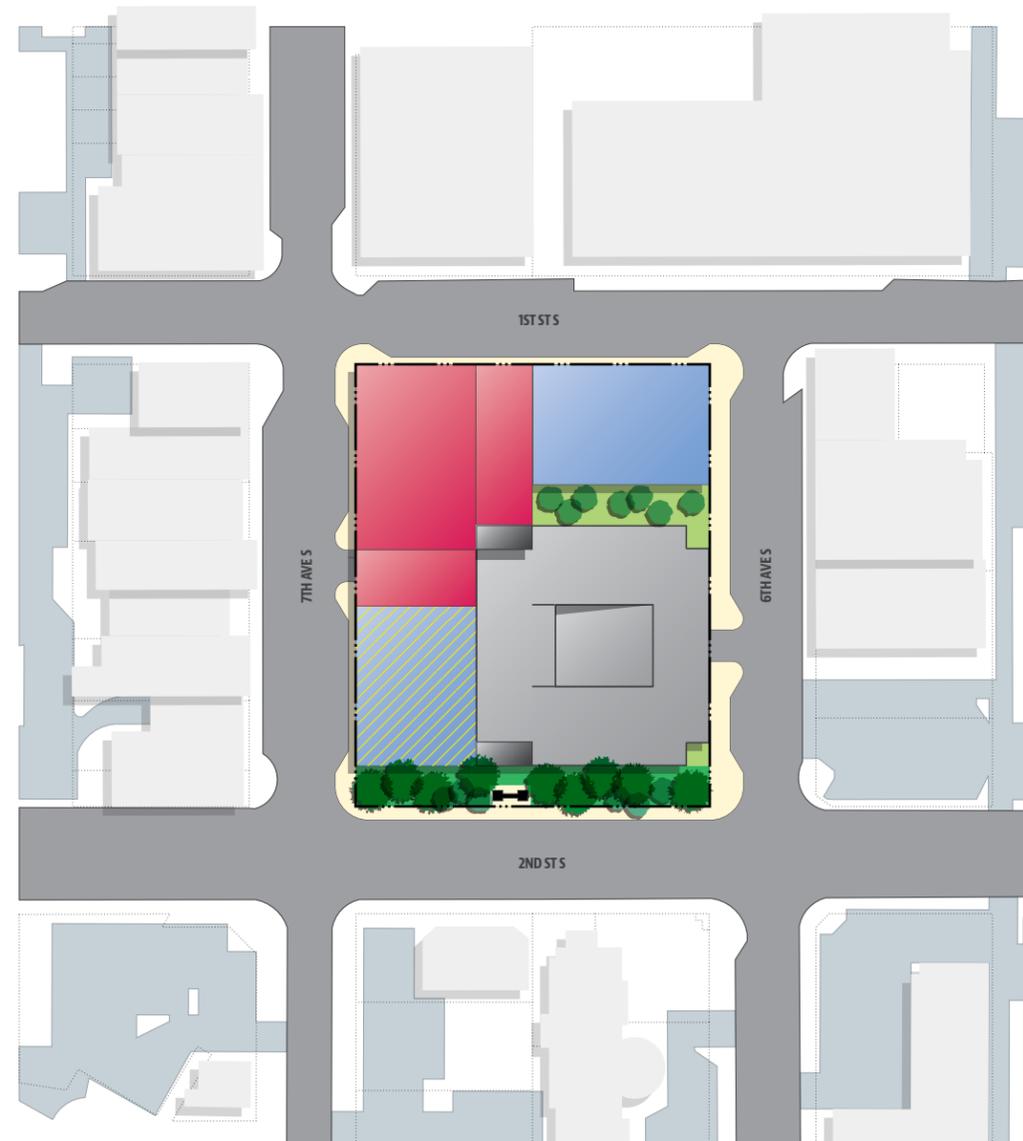
Office development fronting 1st Street of similar to intensity to the nearby Capital One office location. A greenspace between the office building and adjacent parking structure would help provide employees with access to air and light. Additional office development of located on the upper floors of the 7th Avenue frontage adjacent the hotel.

Parking – 5-6 stories

Parking structure wrapped on two sides by the adjoining hotel and office development with ingress/egress from 6th and 7th Avenue. Facades along Division Street and 6th Avenue would be improved with landscape elements such planter boxes and vertical planters to screen vehicles from view and enhance aesthetics. The parking structure would provide adequate parking for uses on the site in addition to public parking which would be located on the two lower floors.

Greenspace – 30 wide, 325 long

A linear park located within the 30 foot setback area along the Division Street frontage. The park would soften the edge of the development along the corridor and provide for needed greenspace in the downtown. The existing Liberty Square Arch would be integrated within the new park.



Lady Slipper Lot

- Hotel
- Office

- Parking Ramp
- Buildings with Ground-Floor Retail





Lady Slipper Lot

Conceptual Visualization

Swan Lot Catalyst Site

Site Characteristics:

- **Size:** 87,600 SF/2.0 acres
- **Parcels:** 3
- **Zoning:** C-3 Central Business District
- **Existing Development:** A surface parking lot containing 147 public parking spaces and an unstriped surface parking lot owned by St. Mary's Cathedral with area for nearly 200 parking spaces.

Design Considerations:

- The Swan Lot is located in a prominent location along Division Street near the 10th Avenue interchange. The site should be considered for larger scale development that reflects the areas function as a gateway to the downtown from the west. As a surface parking lot operating near capacity, redevelopment of the Swan Lot will require the development of additional parking on-site or nearby to at least partially replace public parking in addition to the parking required by new development.
- The western portion of the site owned by St. Mary's Cathedral is former lake bottom for nearby Lake George. No development should be encouraged in this area.
- The original conveyance of the city property limited its use to surface parking to ensure open sight lines to and parking supply for St. Mary's Cathedral. The location, mass, and design of any future development must be addressed in coordination with St. Mary's officials. The location of convenient parking for large church events must also be considered.

Proposed Redevelopment Concept:

Office – 5-6 stories, 135,000-160,000 square feet

Office development fronting 8th Avenue, similar in intensity to the nearby Falcon National Bank and US Bank buildings.

Parking – Underground parking

Underground structured parking with ingress and egress from 1st Avenue. A shared use agreement should also be developed with the St. Mary's Cathedral to enhance and better leverage their property for surface parking by on-site users during weekdays when church attendance is less significant. If additional parking is needed for the new development or St. Mary's Cathedral, the single-story office development located on the northeast corner of the intersection should be considered for redevelopment as a public surface lot.

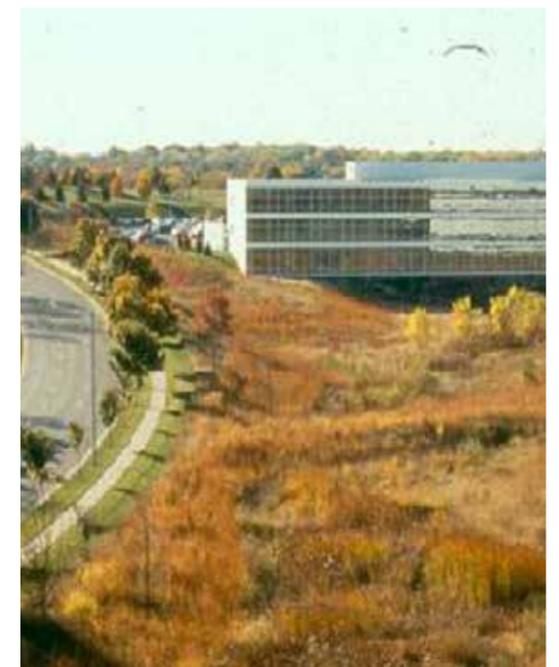
Public Park – 10th Avenue Plaza

A small plaza located on the unutilized portion of the St. Mary's Cathedral parking lot. The park would improve the appearance of the 10th Avenue interchange area and create visual interest that encourages pedestrian travel between St. Germain Street and Lake George.



Swan Lot

- Office
- Public Park





Swan Lot

Conceptual Visualization

Northwest Corner Catalyst Site

Site Characteristics:

- **Size:** 439,800 SF/10.1 acres
- **Parcels:** 45
- **Zoning:** R-3 Lodging House, Fraternity and Sorority House Residential District; R-3A General Residential and Lodging House District; C-3 Central Business District; C-4 Fringe Business District.
- **Existing Development:** The site consists of numerous properties within the four block area bound by 8th Avenue, Division Street, E Lake Boulevard, and 5th Street. The northern portion of the site is anchored by Model College of Hair Design while the remainder of the site comprises a mix of owner- and renter-occupied single family homes. While some properties are well-maintained, property conditions within the Northwest Corner are poor overall.

Design Considerations:

Access to the Northwest Corner site is constrained by the location of the 10th Avenue interchange to the west. 8th Avenue and parallel alley ways can currently only be accessed from 4th Street. New opportunities for access to the Northwest Corner site will be required to ensure viability of new development. Enhanced crosswalks should be considered to provide safe access across 9 Ave S and designs may relate to a potential public art project for the 10 Ave S underpass.

Proposed Redevelopment Concept:

Multi-family – 4-5 stories, 27-34 units

Multi-family development fronting 9th Avenue with views of the St. Germain Street corridor and Lake George.

Single-family Attached – 14 units

Owner-occupied rowhomes with uninterrupted views to Lake George. Structures that contribute to the Southside Neighborhood Historic District, including the Michael Majerus House, which is on the National Register, are to remain with new rowhomes on properties to the north and south.

Parking – Surface Lot and detached garage parking

Proposed single-family attached development would utilize detached garages accessed via the existing rear alley. The multi-family structure would have access to a new surface lot located on the north end of the alley and served by a newly extended 3rd Street S. The creation of this lot would also enable a larger multi-family footprint on the site and facilitate more significant development. Lack of covered parking will likely require new multi-family residential to be renter-occupied.

Public Park – Lake George Expansion

Properties fronting Lake George along the west side of 9th Avenue would be cleared to provide opportunities for the expansion of public parking and the development of a new greenspace framing the east entrance to the park. This new greenspace would provide excellent views to the lake for new rowhomes to be located across the street.

Roadway Modification – 3rd Street S Extension

To provide for sufficient parking for proposed multi-family development and improve access to the Northwest Corner site, 3rd Street S would be extended from its current terminus at 7th Avenue to 8th Avenue. This new route would then provide direct access to multi-family parking rather than relying on the alley way to the west.

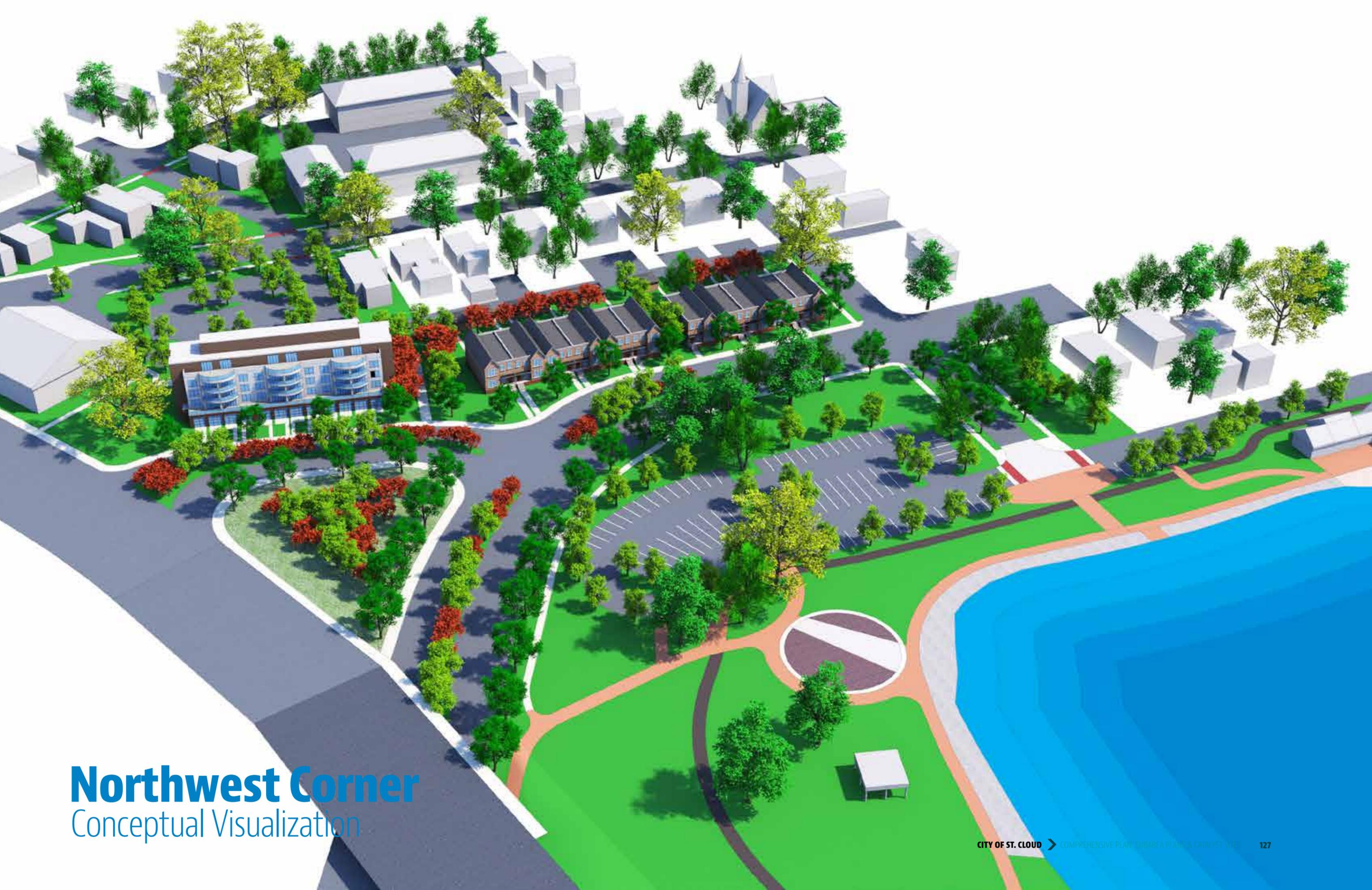


NW Corner Site

- Multi-Family & Rowhomes
- New Parkland

- New 3rd St S Extension
- Contributing Historic Structures





Northwest Corner

Conceptual Visualization

North Downtown Riverfront Catalyst Site

Site Characteristics:

- **Size:** 277,100 SF/6.4 acres
- **Parcels:** 7
- **Zoning:** R-6 Multi-Family Residential Development; R-7 High Rise Multi-Family Residential District
- **Existing Development:** 90-unit apartment building (public housing); historic mixed use building; two multi-family buildings; light industrial business; undeveloped right-of-way.

Design Considerations:

As a result of these various design considerations, redevelopment of the North Riverfront site requires a piecemeal approach where development of one component is not dependent on another.

- Located adjacent to the Mississippi, this site presents an opportunity to create a development that takes advantage of its riverfront access and location within the Downtown and proximity to the River's Edge Convention Center.
- The site is bisected by actively used railroad and utility rights-of-way that limit development parcel assembly opportunities. A substation that is located at 5th Avenue and 2nd Street N must remain, but will be reduced in size.
- The northern extension of the Beaver Island Trail must also be accommodated either in its current alignment or in a new alignment that maintains connections to the north of the site.
- The St. Cloud Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) owns the 90-unit Empire Apartments property that occupies the southeast portion of the site. Redevelopment of this property will require new development of substantial size to offset the cost of demolition and the relocation of families living in the public housing units. Federal regulations require affordable housing units to be relocated and replaced prior to the vacation of existing residents, with the potential for the Cooper Avenue site to fulfill this need.
- The site is the location of the Carter Building (on National Register of Historic Buildings), built in 1902 and the current location of 59 senior apartments.

Proposed Redevelopment Concept:

Hotel – 6-8 stories, 67-93 rooms

A hotel with a lobby, restaurant, and event space on floors. The hotel would have a strong orientation to the river with meeting and event space with riverfront views.

Mixed Use – 3-4 stories, 20-30 units 17,500 square feet commercial,

A new mixed use building of similar intensity to the adjacent Carter Building. Office or retail located on the ground floor with residential units on the upper floors.

Multi-family – 5-6 stories, 70-86 units

Assembly and redevelopment of two existing two-story multi-family properties with more intense multi-family development. Leverage grade change to accommodate multi-level, underground parking with residential units on upper floors gaining views of the riverfront. Redevelopment of these properties would allow for the relocation of the Beaver Island Trail to its originally preferred alignment as an at-grade path along the riverfront north of 2nd Street N.

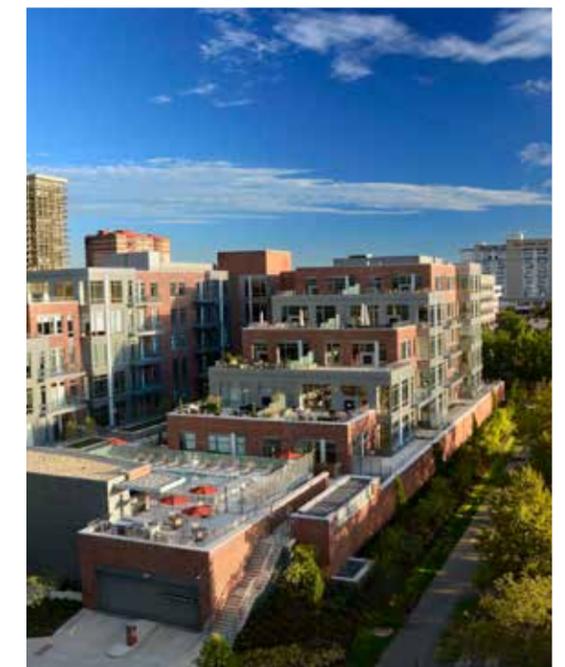
Parking – Surface lots, on-street, and structured

Overall, each development component would provide sufficient on-site or related off-street parking. Existing on-street parking on 5th Avenue would likely be converted to angle or parallel parking to facilitate through traffic on the site.

Hotel parking would be provided via a surface lot immediately adjacent the hotel as well as a new lot located in the area between the utility and railroad rights-of-way. A pedestrian bridge would also provide access to the second parking lot over the railroad tracks to an upper floor of the hotel.

Greenspace – Riverfront park and overlook

A park located between the railroad and utility right-of-way with open views to the riverfront and public art features. Some adjacent parking reserved for park and trail users. A direct connection to the Beaver Island Trail would be desirable, but may not be feasible due to the boardwalk treatment of the path in this location.





North Downtown Riverfront

Conceptual Visualization

Illustrative Downtown Visualization

The Illustrative Downtown Visualization illustrates how the central business district might look after significant improvements and development have been undertaken. The Visualization includes the entire Downtown and riverfront area and incorporates new development opportunities on key sites, reconfiguration of some existing uses and properties, enhanced mobility for both pedestrians and vehicles, and aesthetic improvements throughout.

Development and improvement concepts shown include the redevelopment of vacant lots and underutilized sites with new multi-story mixed use buildings, the redevelopment of properties adjacent to the Mississippi River to take advantage of the natural beauty of the riverfront, and the reconfiguration of the Kelly Inn property, allowing the hotel to capitalize on the stunning views of the river corridor, while creating a river-oriented terminal vista and Downtown outdoor gathering space.

Pedestrians and vehicular access and mobility are enhanced through four main improvements, illustrated in the Visualization. These improvements include: the addition of a new parking lot for City Hall, converting the existing lot into a new mixed-use development; the installation of parking decks throughout the Downtown to eliminate surface parking lots and increase in the development potential in key areas; the elimination of excess curb cuts along 2nd Street, focusing instead on providing access via cross streets; and installing additional access points to the Riverfront Trail, thus allowing the community to take full advantage of this amazing asset.

Finally, aesthetic improvements are included that help to foster a liveliness in the Downtown. Decorative intersections at 2nd Street/4th Avenue and 2nd Street/7th Avenue, and a new landscaped medium help to improve the overall look of the corridor and serve to create a gateway and branding opportunities of the Downtown. Land owners and developers are encouraged to add landscaping and screening throughout the Downtown, to minimize unsightly views of parking areas and undesirable uses. And uses along the river could provide gateway features and public plazas that include public art, open spaces, and outdoor dining and gathering opportunities that take advantage of the unique river views.

Catalyst Sites

The Downtown Redevelopment Visualization contains four catalyst sites that are in prominent locations in the Downtown. These locations demand high quality redevelopment that will strengthen the image of the Downtown and the City as a whole.

- Lady Slipper Lot (page 122)
- Swan Lot (page 124)
- Northwest Corner (page 126)
- North Downtown Riverfront (page 128)

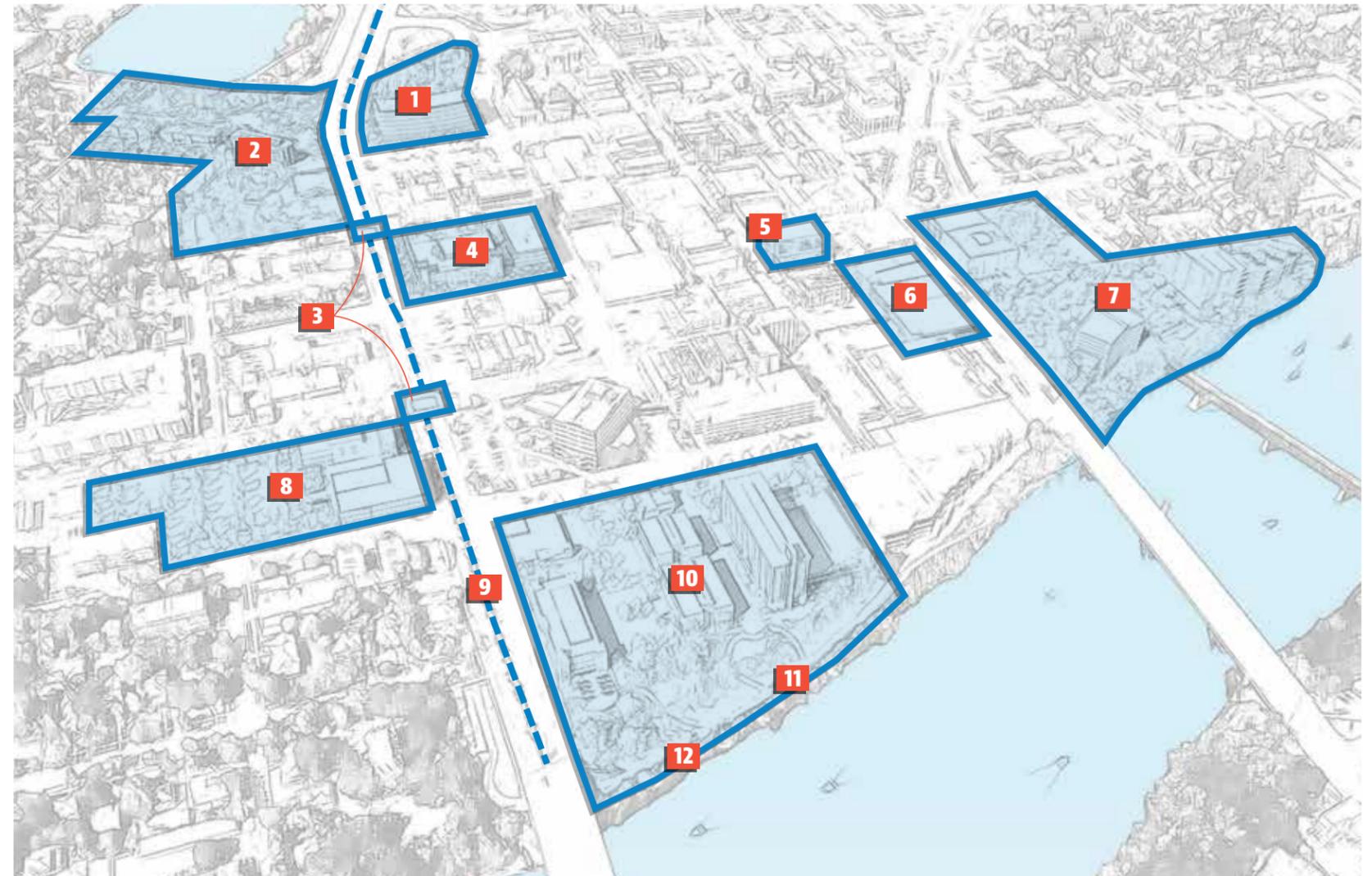
Redevelopment Opportunity Sites

The Downtown Redevelopment Visualization includes four redevelopment opportunity sites that are highly visible from key streets throughout the Downtown. Redevelopment in these areas should focus on architectural detail, landscaping, public open space, pedestrian and site amenities, and building orientation that improve the image of the Downtown.

- City Hall Parking Lot
- Kelly Inn Property
- Mixed Use Infill
- Potential Parking Deck

Public Right-of-Way Improvements

The Downtown Redevelopment Visualization includes improvements to the public realm as well which includes a landscape median that can replace the paved median along Division Street, Intersection Improvements at 2nd Street/4th Avenue and 2nd Street/7th Avenue, and providing pedestrian connections to the riverfront trail from proposed Kelly Inn Property adjacent to the Mississippi River.



Key Map

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Swan Lot | 5 Mixed Use Infill | 9 Median Improvements |
| 2 Northwest Corner | 6 Potential Parking Deck | 10 Kelly Inn Property |
| 3 Intersection Improvements | 7 North Downtown Riverfront | 11 Potential Connections to the Riverwalk |
| 4 Lady Slipper Lot | 8 City Hall Parking Lot | 12 Potential Connections to the Riverwalk |



Lake George

Division St

8th Ave

3rd St

6th Ave

1st St

5th Ave

St Germain St

4th Ave

1st St

Division St

Mississippi River

ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA Transportation Framework

The roadway network plays a critical role in bringing visitors to the downtown and fostering a viable business climate. Primary vehicular access to Downtown St. Cloud is provided by Division Street, 2nd/1st Street N, Wilson Avenue, 10th Avenue. Each of these roadways is projected to carry at least 20,000 vehicles per day by 2040 with Division Street handling nearly twice that traffic. Other important roadways include 5th and 7th Avenue, which facilitate vehicle travel between Division Street and the St. Germain Street corridor.

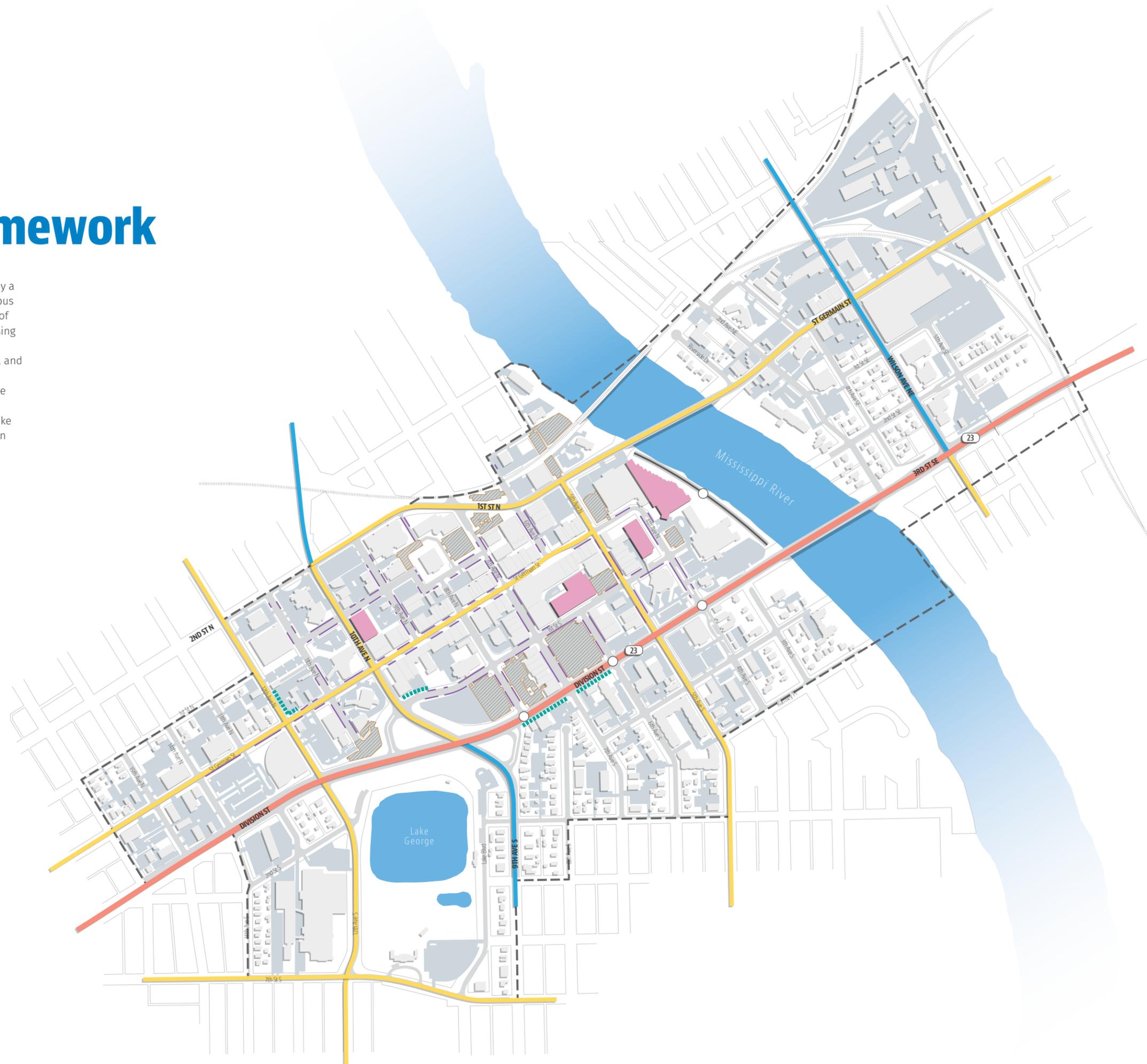
The Downtown is also well served by a walkable street grid pattern, Metrobus transit options, and an abundance of available parking. However, addressing pedestrian barriers, investing in connections beyond the Downtown, and providing adequate spaces for underserved areas may help provide greater connectivity, strengthen transportation alternatives, and make the Downtown friendly to pedestrian and cyclists.

Legend

Roadway Classifications

-  Principal Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Major Collector

-  Public On-Street Parking
-  Public Off-Street Parking Lots
-  Public Off-Street Parking Ramps
-  Pedestrian Barriers
-  Access Management



Transportation Framework

Roadway Network

The City and MnDOT have invested significantly in the Downtown roadway network and it functions well overall. Division Street is the only roadway within the downtown that is under MnDOT jurisdiction and is classified as a principal arterial. All other roadways are either minor collectors or local roads under the City's jurisdiction.

Division Street

Community input indicated a perception of congestion along Division Street, but field observations and regional transportation data do not support this perception. While Division Street has historically been known as a congested roadway, MnDOT improvements to signalization and access management for properties fronting Division Street have been effective in reducing congestion in recent years. The 2040 LRTP does not indicate level of service to be a current issue and projected increases in traffic counts are not expected to impact LOS.

Travel times to the downtown from Division Street are most impacted when a left turn is required to access a desired destination. Signalized intersections along Division Street prohibit left turns without a signal and wait times between signals can be lengthy with a brief signal time limiting the number of vehicles who can turn. The City should work with MnDOT to evaluate the potential for changes in left turn signal timing and duration to alleviate this issue. Changes to the current configuration would impact Division Street traffic flow, but may be warranted if additional development near key intersections increases demand for turning movements off of Division Street.

No other major improvements are recommended for Division Street or other roadways in the Downtown with the exception of enhancements to pedestrian access and mobility.

Metrobus

Downtown is the hub of the Metro Bus system. The MTC's attractive Transit Center is where passengers make connections to other areas of the four-city area served by the MTC (St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids and Sartell). An estimated 6% of Downtown employees take public transit to and from work. Related to the Transit Center's location, the majority of MTC's bus routes utilize a combination of 5th Avenue, 7th Avenue, and 1st St as they pass through Downtown St. Cloud.

The recently constructed Transit Center is a high quality facility and provides the Downtown with the region's largest transit hub. Additional wayfinding could be used to enhance bike and pedestrian navigation to the site. Consideration should also be given to installing a colored or texture paving treatment when sidewalks cross the bus entrance curb cuts to delineate pedestrian paths. Otherwise, the station area is pedestrian friendly and easily accessible to other areas of the Downtown.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Transit

-  Transit Center
-  North Side
-  East Side-45
-  Pantown
-  Sauk Rapids
-  South Side
-  South East
-  University
-  Waite Park
-  West Side
-  Westwood



Street Connectivity & Walkability

With few exceptions, Downtown St. Cloud has a well-connected street grid with regular block spacing of 300'-400'. The small size and regular shape of blocks make the downtown a walkable and accessible district. This compact street grid should be maintained throughout the district. As redevelopment and reinvestment occurs, additional connections should be provided where possible and creating larger blocks should be prohibited.

Access Management

Though isolated in extent, there are several areas where long continuous curb cuts and a lack of streetscape enhancements create an unwelcoming pedestrian environment. In these areas, vehicles can freely access sites unimpeded by hardscape or landscape, crossing over public sidewalks and pedestrian access ways. A lack of curb stops in parking lots also exacerbates this situation, when no cars are parked in the spots adjacent to the designated entrance. Parking lots for these sites should be improved with a low perimeter fence or landscaped buffer to formally define the property edge and access drives.

Pedestrian Barriers

While the downtown is generally very walkable, development along the riverfront (namely the River's Edge Convention Center and Kelly Inn) and the highly traveled Division Street corridor represent significant barriers to pedestrian traffic.

- **Riverfront development** currently blocks any potential for public access to the riverfront and the Beaver Island Trail with the exception of a ramp on the south side of Division Street. If redevelopment of the Kelly Inn site occurs, providing pedestrian ways to the riverfront should be a priority that shapes any development program.
- **Division Street** has traffic counts in excess of 30,000 vehicles per day and is a divided highway as it passes through the downtown. Pedestrian crossings at Division Street are limited to 10th Avenue, 7th Avenue, and 5th Avenue. While the addition of new crossings is not likely along this MnDOT-controlled roadway, enhancements to existing crossings should be considered to improve pedestrian access. For example, the medians at Division Street crossings could be enhanced with raised planters and modified to include a pedestrian refuge. A pedestrian refuge is a defined area where pedestrians may safely wait until vehicular traffic clears, allowing them to cross the street. Other means of emphasizing pedestrian crossing of Division Street include intersection materials, signal timing, emerging crossing technology, and others.

Bike Routes & Trails

Downtown St. Cloud should be a bike-friendly and bike accessible district. This means getting to and from Downtown on two-wheels should be a pleasant and safe experience. Furthermore, amenities such as bike racks and bike parking areas, public art, pedestrian-scale wayfinding, and secure routes should make getting around the downtown by bike convenient. Currently, Downtown St. Cloud has limited bike infrastructure with no marked or signed lanes and limited bike parking opportunities. Where possible, permanent bike racks should be installed throughout downtown in high traffic pedestrian areas such as the St. Germain Street corridor, key employment and shopping areas, and other areas that provide several businesses in close proximity.

Division Street and 2nd/1st Street have limited potential for on-street bike routes or off-street trails. With limited potential for east-west routes through the downtown, north-south routes should be prioritized to connect with existing east-west routes in nearby areas. 5th Avenue should be targeted for bike route improvements including route identification and directional signage, and lane markings including colored pavement where possible. This route should connect with the existing on-road bike routes along 11th Street and Centennial Drive, as well as the proposed Lake Wobegon Trail extension. An on-street bike route should also be established along 5th Street S to connect 5th Avenue to Lake George and its network of trails.



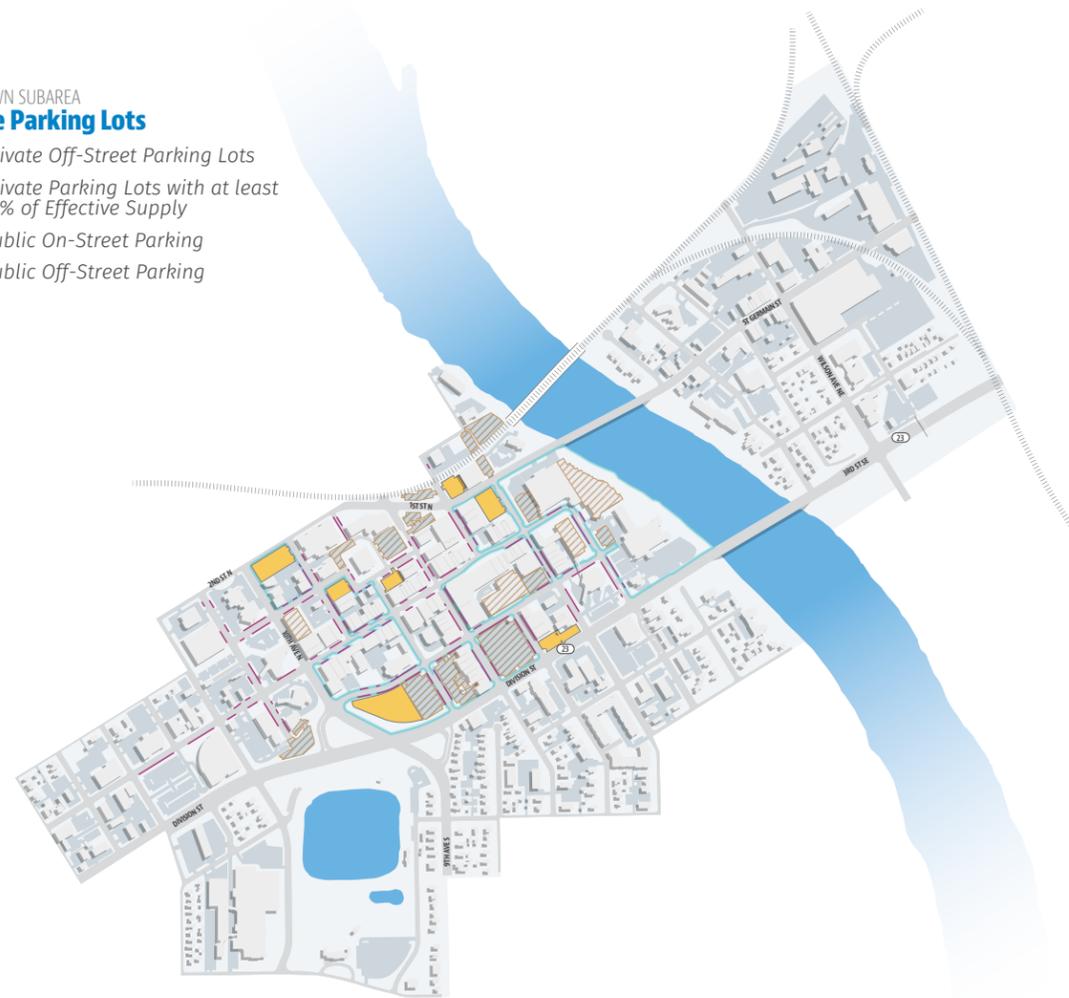
Parking

A total of about 4,238 parking spaces are provided in a combination of on-street spaces (525 spaces), off-street public lots and parking structures (2,505 spaces), and off-street private lots (1,205 spaces). In general, this parking supply is adequate with approximately two thirds of the parking spaces occupied during peak hour demand.

While overall supply is sufficient, parking shortages exist in key areas within the downtown including the area surrounding the heavily used Lady Slipper Lot and the block immediately west of the River's Edge Convention Center at 5th Avenue and 1st Street. As redevelopment and renovation projects are considered for the Downtown, parking supply should be a prime consideration. Surface lots should be viewed as development opportunities; however, redevelopment proposals should identify exactly how existing parking can either be replaced within the project or accommodated in nearby areas. Development of public parking in peripheral areas of the Downtown should also be considered.

A detailed Parking Alternatives Analysis is needed to identify long-term solutions to improve the City parking system. Such analysis should also offer recommendations for consideration on effective industry standard policies and procedures that if implemented, may enhance the overall operation of the City system in the future.

- DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
Private Parking Lots
- Private Off-Street Parking Lots
 - Private Parking Lots with at least 75% of Effective Supply
 - Public On-Street Parking
 - Public Off-Street Parking



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Gateway & Streetscape Framework

The Gateways and Streetscape section touches on the relationship between people, buildings, and public space, and addresses factors that influence the pedestrian experience within the Downtown and surrounding areas. The Gateways and Streetscape section provides recommendations for shared spaces and the public realm that foster a comfortable and attractive Downtown.

In addition to providing a downtown-wide framework for gateway and streetscape improvements, this section also highlights issues related to gaps in the pedestrian environment and voids in pedestrian activity, as well as needed improvements for the Amtrak Station Area.

Legend

-  Corridor
-  Downtown Core
-  Downtown Secondary
-  Downtown Periphery

-  Key Intersection
-  Gateway
-  Key Gathering Places
-  Amtrak Station Area



Gateways & Streetscape

Gateway Features

Gateway features should be installed at prominent intersections along Division Street, 10th Avenue, 1st Street, and E St. Germain Street to announce entry into central portions of the Downtown and the East Side Artisan/Creative District. The character and appearance of these areas are important factors in determining the overall image and perception of the Downtown as a whole.

Downtown St. Cloud currently lacks any major features that indicate one is entering or passing through a unique district within the region. The Liberty Square Arch is an attractive feature that identifies the Downtown, but its location on the side of the Division Street right-of-way and orientation parallel with Division Street limits its visual impact.

Major gateway locations should be considered for the installation of a visually distinct and significant feature such as a monument sign or archway over the roadway that grabs the attention of passersby and identifies Downtown St. Cloud as a special place in the community. Special landscaping, lighting, decorative paving, and pedestrian amenities should also be incorporated into gateway installations to enhance their visibility and contribute to their prominence along major routes. Design elements could also be drawn from the Liberty Square Arch to establish a unified gateway appearance that better ties together the identity of the Downtown.

Key Intersections

Key intersections marking entrance and arrival to unique districts within the Downtown should also be visually distinct. These include entry points into the Traditional Core and the intersection of Wilson Avenue and St. Germain Street, which is the focal point of the East Side Artisan/Creative District. Though less prominent in comparison to gateway features, these intersections should be considered for the installation of identifying markers such as district identification signs, brick paver crosswalks, landscape and hardscape installations, and public art installations.

Wayfinding

A coordinated wayfinding system should be installed throughout the Downtown to extend the unified design theme throughout the district and to direct vehicles and pedestrians to community assets, including the various performing arts venues, concentrations of restaurants or retailers, the convention center, Amtrak Station, public library, and the Beaver Island Trail.

Amtrak Station Wayfinding

It is important that improved wayfinding be provided for both access and identification of the Amtrak station. Although a small sign is provided at the rail crossing, the importance of this community asset should be elevated within wayfinding systems to better direct visitors beyond the immediate vicinity of the station.



Gateways & Streetscape

Streetscape

Within Downtown St. Cloud, all streets should provide a pedestrian-oriented environment that is safe, attractive, inviting, and easily assessable. The streetscape along a given roadway encompasses the public right-of-way and its various amenities and improvements such as the sidewalk, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture. The pedestrian-friendly nature of Downtown St. Cloud is a defining characteristic that distinguishes the district from other commercial areas and enhances the vitality of the downtown business community. The character and visual interest provided by adjacent building facades also contributes to the overall streetscape experience and character.

As indicated in the Gateways & Streetscape Framework, a coordinated streetscape improvement program should be installed throughout Downtown, with the type and intensity of improvements dictated by the function of the related roadway. Although the intensity of each streetscape type may differ, collectively the recommended improvements to the Downtown streetscape provide coordinated and enhanced landscaping and signage, pedestrian-scaled lighting within the core, and the addition of street furniture. These improvements are intended to improve the image of the Downtown and enhance the pedestrian experience for visitors.

Four types of streetscape treatments are recommended for Downtown St. Cloud:

- Downtown Core;
- Downtown Secondary;
- Downtown Corridor; and,
- Downtown Periphery.



Downtown Core



Downtown Secondary



Downtown Corridor



Periphery

Gateways & Streetscape

Downtown Core Streetscape

The Core Streetscape treatment should be applied to the St. Germain Street corridor as well as 5th Avenue and 7th Avenue routes that serve as gateways to the Traditional Core character area. This treatment should also be applied to the central portion of the East Side Artisan/Creative District.

- Parking should be on-street, in parking lots at the rear of buildings, or in structures via intersecting cross-streets.
- Crosswalks at all intersections along a Downtown Core route should include pedestrian crossing signals and should incorporate alternative materials such as brick pavers or colored concrete to emphasize pedestrian orientation.
- Sidewalks should be at least 10'-14' in width to provide pedestrian comfort and opportunities for outdoor seating and planters.
- Where possible, wide sidewalks of 16'-18' should be provided to accommodate outdoor dining and other amenities that provide for active street life.
- Streetlights along Downtown Core routes should be pedestrian-scaled and adorned with banners promoting the City, Downtown, and special events.
- Street trees should be incorporated at regular intervals along Downtown Core routes, either planted in raised planters or tree-grates. Where possible, street trees should be spaced at 20'-30' intervals to establish a continuous canopy.
- Planters and potted plants should be located throughout to help with beautification and add visual interest.
- Benches, trash receptacles, and other pedestrian furnishings should be placed throughout.

St. Germain Street Greening

Significant investment in streetscape has already occurred along the central portion of the St. Germain Street corridor. While maintenance is needed in some areas, the streetscape configuration generally aligns with the recommendations of this plan. The key recommendation for this portion of St. Germain is a renewed focus on greening the corridor with a unified system of planters and potential installation or expansion of planting beds. Planters and related plantings currently vary from block-to-block and create a sense of lack of ownership.

Downtown Secondary Streetscape

The Downtown Secondary Streetscape should be applied to all routes circulating within the Traditional Core as well as major approaches to the Downtown including the 9th Avenue corridor near Lake George and the St. Germain Street corridor.

- Parking should be on-street, in parking lots at the rear of buildings, or in structures. Surface parking lots should be strongly discouraged along these routes. Any surface lots should have extensive perimeter screening, landscaping, and/or decorative fencing.
- Crosswalks along Downtown Secondary routes should include pedestrian crossing signals and be painted in a continental style that is highly-visible to drivers.
- Where possible, sidewalks should be 8'-10' in width; however, a standard 5' sidewalk is acceptable in limited application.
- Streetlights along Downtown Secondary routes should be pedestrian-scaled and adorned with banners promoting the City, Downtown, and special events.
- Street trees should be incorporated at regular intervals along Downtown Secondary routes, either planted in raised planters or tree-grates. Where possible, street trees should be spaced at 20'-30' intervals to establish a continuous canopy.
- Benches and other pedestrian furnishings are appropriate and should be placed in this treatment only where space permits.

Downtown Corridor Streetscape

The Downtown Corridor Streetscape should be applied to high traffic corridors that intersect with primary routes into the Traditional Core and East Side Artisan District. The treatment should also be applied to the routes leading to the Amtrak Station.

- Parking should be in parking lots at the rear of buildings or in structures where possible. Front-loaded parking lots are acceptable if appropriately enhanced with perimeter landscaping and screening to improve sense of enclosure along the sidewalk.
- Where driveways are needed to provide access to a site, sidewalks should be visually differentiated using brick pavers or colored cement.
- Crosswalks along Downtown Corridor routes should include pedestrian crossing signals and be painted in a continental style that is highly-visible to drivers.
- Where possible, sidewalks should be at least 8' in width, a standard 5' sidewalk is acceptable in limited application. If appropriate foundation landscaping and perimeter landscaping can be provided adjacent to the sidewalk.
- Streetlights should provide ample lighting for pedestrians and vehicles, and where possible be pedestrian in scale. Where possible, dual standard street lights featuring both a roadway lighting fixture and a pedestrian lighting fixture should be installed to reduce clutter.
- Street trees should be incorporated at regular intervals along Downtown Corridor routes, planted in tree-grates. Where possible, street trees should be spaced at 30'-40' intervals.
- Benches and other pedestrian furnishings are appropriate and should be placed in areas of high pedestrian traffic such as key intersections and gateways.
- Utility lines should be buried if feasible, but above grade utilities are acceptable.

Downtown Periphery Streetscape

The Downtown Periphery Streetscape treatment should be applied on quieter, less busy streets surrounding the Traditional Core character area.

- Parking can occur on street, but does not necessarily have to be demarcated. Private driveways, garages, and parking lots are also appropriate.
- Standard, 5' sidewalks are appropriate, and given the low volumes of traffic, crosswalks do not necessarily have to be striped or formalized.
- Streetlights should be scaled for vehicles, and street trees should be planted in the parkway. Ideally overhead utility lines should be buried; however, this is costly and not necessarily a priority.

Gateways & Streetscape

Public Gathering Areas

Gathering places and public spaces provide opportunities to host special events and serve as regular destinations for pedestrians. Currently public gathering places are limited within the Downtown and additional improvements are needed to enhance the district's ability to leverage special event attendees as business patrons. Public gathering places should be supported and maintained by the City and its partners and incorporated as desirable components of the Downtown.

1st Street Extension

If 1st Street is extended as part of a redevelopment of the Kelly Inn site, a plaza should be established at its terminus at the riverfront. This area would provide a gathering space that is truly unique within the region where small-scale outdoor events, outdoor entertainment, and dining should be encouraged.

Lake George

Lake George is a major attraction on the edge of the Downtown, but poor pedestrian connectivity between this community asset and the Downtown's Traditional Core limits the ability of downtown businesses to capitalize on the traffic it generates.

The City should continue to pursue implementation of the 2013 Placemaking Design Manual recommendation to enhance the 10th Avenue underpass at Division Street. A public art project to and wayfinding improvements to address pedestrian movement through the underpass should be installed to strengthen the pedestrian connection between Lake George and St. Germain Street. This improvement will make the underpass more inviting and provide an enhanced sense of safety. Wayfinding should also be improved to direct pedestrians to the appropriate intersection.

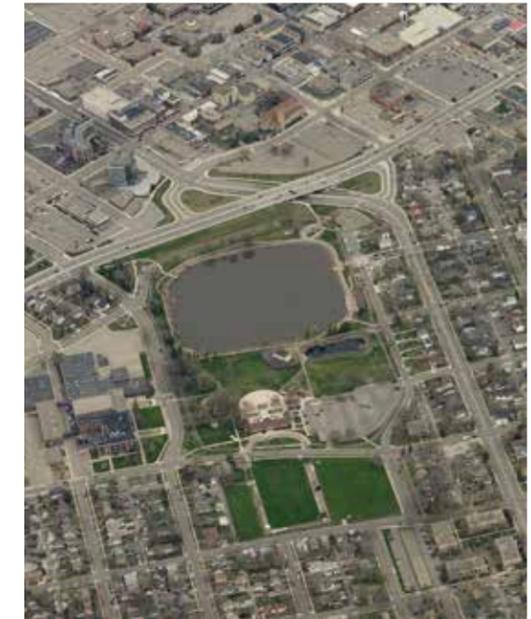
St. Germain "Open Street"

St. Germain Street was closed to traffic and transformed into a pedestrian mall from 1972 to 1997. While it is not recommended that this vital transportation route be returned to a pedestrian mall, consideration should be given to identifying a segment of the roadway that could be used as an "open street."

Open streets involve restricting vehicle use on a street and opening the entire right-of-way for public use by people walking, sitting, and enjoying the space. Depending on community interest, St. Germain Open Street could either be event-based (e.g. farmers markets) or temporary (e.g. daily or weekly for certain hours).

Currently the Downtown Council organizes an annual "Downtown Walk About" event that closes several streets in the downtown for a one-day, eight-hour event. This type of event could be encouraged on a more frequent basis, on a more limited scale. If successful, a designated open street area could be identified using unique design features such as pavement treatments that encompass the entire roadway and sidewalk, lighted and/or retractable bollards, movable benches, or public art.

If the Lady Slipper Lot is redeveloped, there will be an increased need for a centrally located community gathering space within the Downtown. The open street approach to using St. Germain Street would provide a versatile community space that does not require dedicating additional real estate within the Downtown to open space or parking.



Gateways & Streetscape

Voids in Pedestrian Activity

Downtown includes several areas where pedestrian activity is limited by a variety of factors including poor sense of enclosure and lack of adequate streetscaping and visual interest that foster an unwelcoming pedestrian environment.

Sense of Enclosure

The combination of building separation (distance between facing building facades) and building height determines the sense of enclosure experienced by pedestrians passing through an area. Establishing a desirable sense of enclosure helps foster a comfortable, inviting, and pedestrian friendly atmosphere in the downtown area as well as creating a more intimate character throughout the Downtown.

A minimum building separation to building height ratio of 2:1 is recommended to establish a desirable sense of enclosure throughout the Downtown. It is also recommended that buildings be located at or near the sidewalk to improve sense of enclosure where possible. As buildings become increasingly separated due to wider roadway configurations or the provision of front loaded parking areas, the potential to provide adequate sense of enclosure decreases and the pedestrian environment suffers.

Sense of enclosure is strongest along the St. Germain Street corridor where building separation is typically 80 feet and buildings are typically three to four stories in height (approximately 36'-48' feet). Conversely, portions of Division Street and 5th Avenue demonstrate the weakest sense of enclosure due to increased building separation (200 feet or greater) that is required to accommodate front-loaded parking areas. Surface parking lots that breakup the streetwall also detract from sense of enclosure in areas throughout the Downtown.

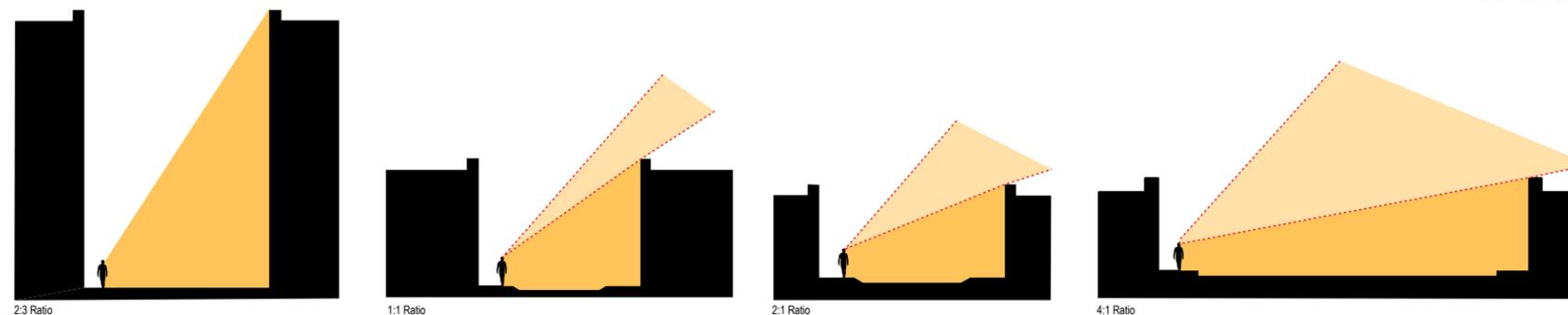
Areas with a diminished sense of enclosure impact

pedestrian activity within the Downtown. Where redevelopment is not likely in the near term, these areas should be enhanced with a combination of fencing and low lying landscaping such as a hedge row that firmly delineates the edge of the property line and artificially brings the building front closer to the sidewalk. It is important to note that such improvements should not negatively impact sight lines at intersections or overly screen views to the development at the rear of the subject property.

Visual Interest

Commercial buildings with long, blank facades can also act as gaps in the streetwall and detract from pedestrian activity. Even if these buildings have setbacks consistent with adjacent structures and no physical gaps exist between adjacent structures, their blank facades are uninviting to pedestrians. Where possible, the installation of ground level windows should be encouraged to provide visual interest and make the Downtown more inviting and pedestrian friendly. Where windows exist, it is important that they contain visually interesting displays that engage passersby. Windows that have been frosted, given a mirrored finish, or filled with monochromatic backgrounds should be discouraged. Where the installation of windows is not feasible, the City should work with property owners and local artists to install murals and other forms of public art.

Sense of Enclosure

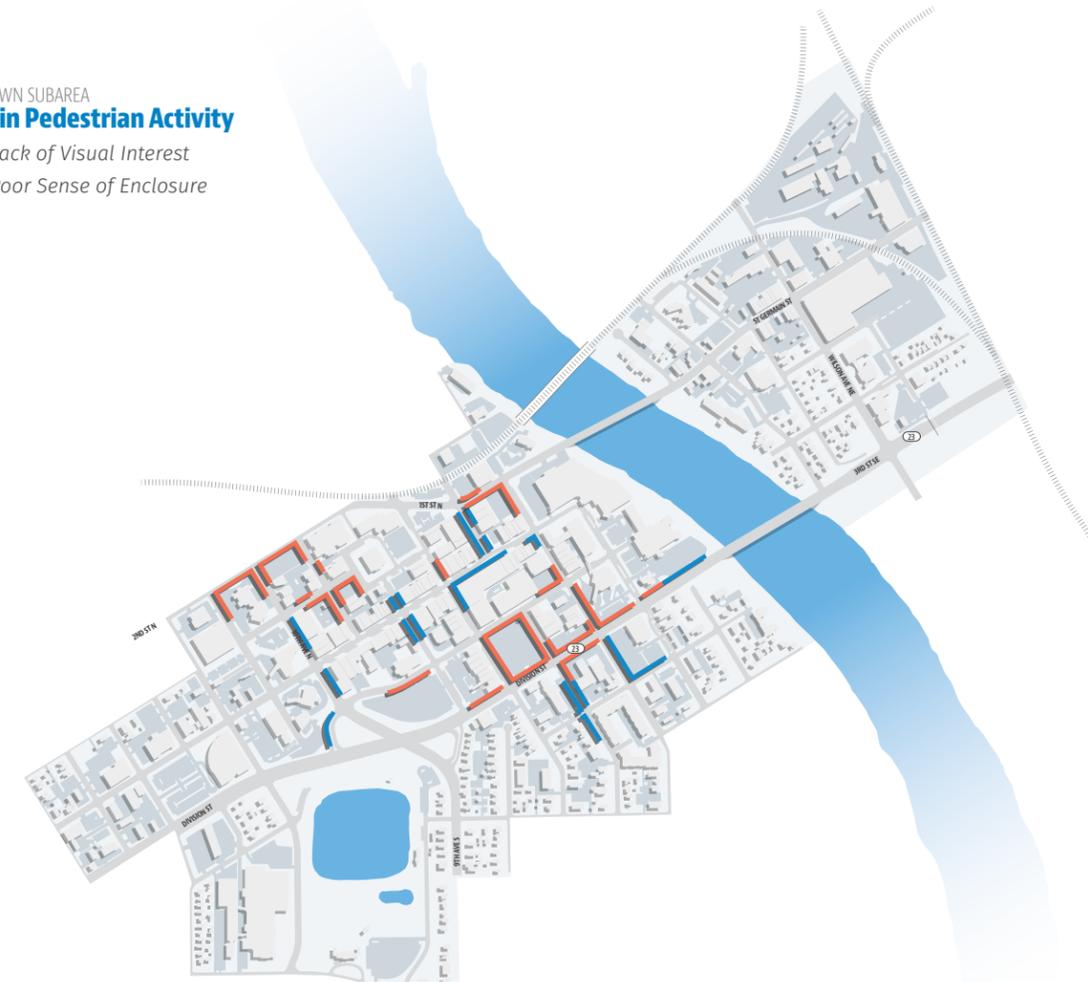


Train Station Area Improvements

The Amtrak Station's location within an industrial area creates a need for additional streetscape, screening, and on-site improvements. It is important that a welcoming environment be established in the area surrounding this key transit asset. The following improvements are recommended:

- Upgrades to access routes with curb and gutter, planters including street trees, and sidewalks to establish attractive ingress and egress to the station areas for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Differentiated pavement treatments (including distinct colors and tactile materials) and an elevated platform to identify designated passenger waiting areas.
- Replacement of razor wire fencing with a low fence and hedge row to formally delineate the parking lot edge and entry points.
- Dense evergreen landscaping as well as a high, opaque fence along the property line of industrial properties facing the Amtrak station from the opposite side of the tracks.
- Opaque fencing and landscaping including tree and ground cover plantings blocking sight lines to outdoor storage areas and service areas.

DOWNTOWN SUBAREA
Voids in Pedestrian Activity

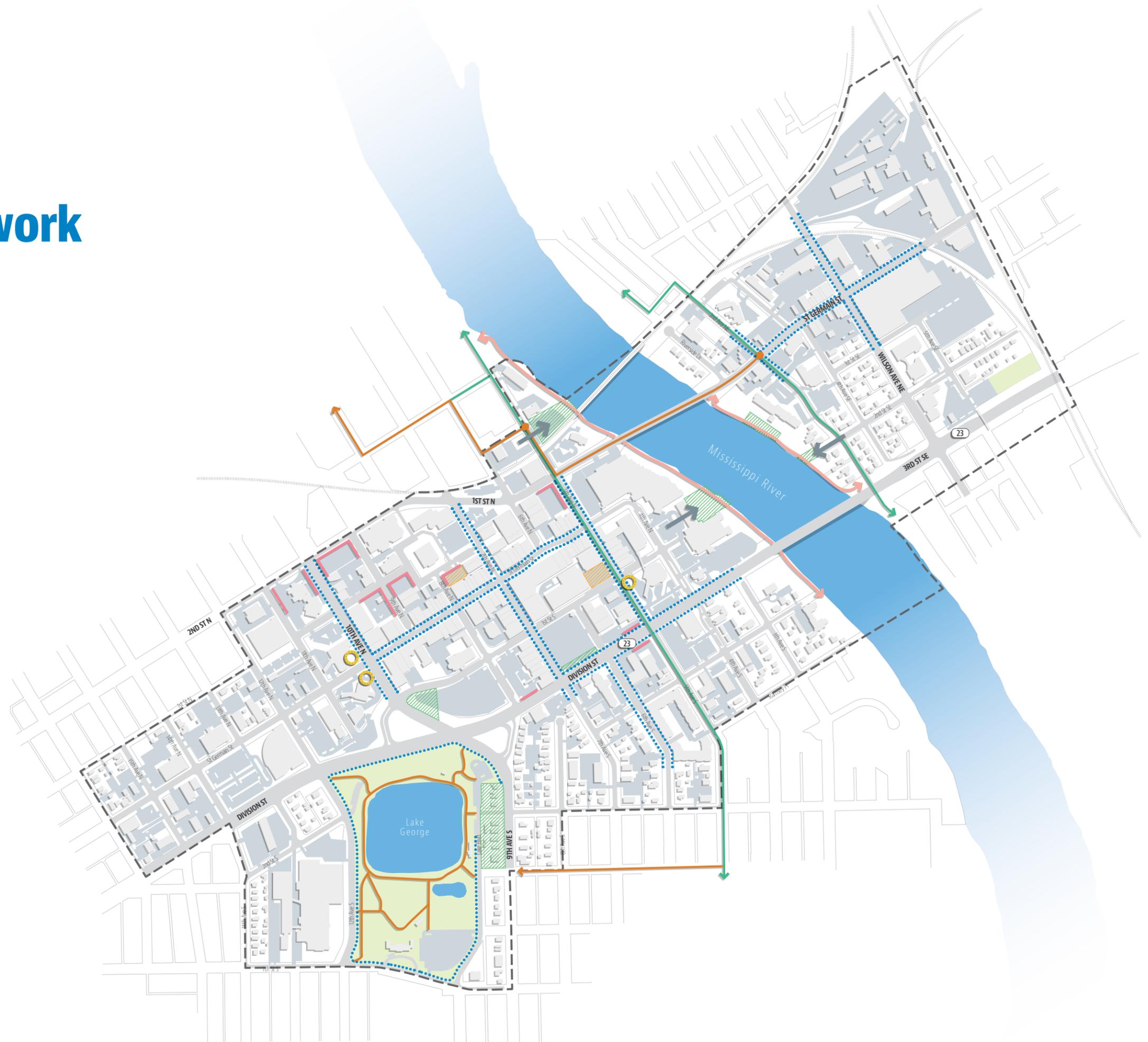


ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA Greenspace Framework

Greenspace can significantly improve the character of an area and provide for greater business success within a downtown. However, greenspace is limited within Downtown St. Cloud with the exception of the large Lake George area. Considerable input from the community underscored a desire for more investments be made in greening the Downtown and providing open space areas and public spaces. Moving forward, new development and reinvestment within the Downtown should be complemented by enhancements to existing public open space and right-of-way landscaping.

Legend

-  Existing Park
-  Potential Parklets
-  New Public Park
-  Existing Bikeways
-  Mississippi Riverfront Trail
-  Plaza Improvements
-  River Access / View
-  Riverfront Trail
-  Primary Streetscape Link
-  Perimeter Improvements



Greenspace Framework

Parks & Plazas

Establishing small public parks, pocket parks, or plazas in these areas would help provide a more balanced distribution of open space in the Downtown.

New Public Parks

Several new park locations are identified. Each area provides a strategic benefit that collectively enhances access to parks and recreation throughout the Downtown.

- **Swan Lot Plaza** – Through the redevelopment of the Swan Lot property, a small park or plaza should be installed at the southeast corner of the 10th Avenue and 1st Street intersection. By providing visual interest, public art, and a small seating areas, this park should enhance the pedestrian experience along 10th Avenue en route to Lake George.
- **Lake George Expansion** – As part of the Northwest Corner catalyst site redevelopment, properties on the west side of 9th Avenue adjacent to Lake George should be redeveloped to accommodate a new park entrance. This area can include expanded parking for Lake George as well as greenspace fronting 9th Avenue that will provide desirable views to the lake for new residential development to the east.
- **Division Street Greenway** – As part of the redevelopment of the Lady Slipper Lot, a linear park should be installed along the Division Street frontage. Landscaping, a meandering sidewalk, and water features should be used to soften the edge of the new development while providing a pleasant park setting.
- **Riverfront Park** – Should the redevelopment of the Kelly Inn occur, a new riverfront park with a connection to the Beaver Island Trail should be established at the terminus of an extended 1st Street.

Pocket Parks

Potential pocket parks locations have been identified for small surface parking lots in two locations. Establishing small public parks or plazas in these areas would help provide a more balanced distribution of open space in the Downtown. Pocket parks should include outdoor seating, raised planters/seat walls, landscaping, water features, etc. and should be provided at these pocket parks, but a significant portion of green space should be dedicated to outdoor seating for local workers to use. Pocket parks should also be considered for public art installations.

Private Plazas

Plaza areas located on private property, such as the US Bank or Wells Fargo Bank sites, could also be established in the open space areas adjacent the buildings. While landscaping existing on these sites, additional hardscaping and street furniture including benches, trash cans, and lighting could be used to transform these areas into useful greenspace for Downtown visitors and workers.

Street trees

As recommended in the Gateways and Streetscape section, street trees should be installed and maintained at regular intervals throughout the Downtown. St. Germain Street, 5th Avenue, 7th Avenue, and Wilson Avenue should be prioritized for streetscape enhancements with a goal of establishing a continuous street tree canopy along these key routes. This will foster a safer walking environment and a more enjoyable pedestrian experience that benefits downtown businesses.

St. Germain Planters

In years past, the Downtown Council has raised money to buy planters and plants to be stationed in clusters along the St. Germain Street corridor. While the downtown business community has indicated support for such an initiative, there is a desire for additional planters and for some form of shared maintenance that would alleviate the need to individually water the large planters.

The City and its downtown partners should identify funding to purchase more substantial planters and provide for annual professional planting installation and maintenance (including watering). This will improve the appearance of the St. Germain Street corridor and create and reinforce a sense of ownership of the public right-of-way.

The formation of a Downtown St. Cloud Business Improvement District (BID) could provide one means of funding this initiative and others. A BID allows merchants within a defined geographic boundary to collectively adopt a special tax assessment to fund improvements within the district.

Mississippi Riverfront

Wherever possible, the City should work with Downtown property owners to identify opportunities to improve access to the Mississippi Riverfront.

Riverfront Vistas

As redevelopment and reinvestment occurs within the Downtown, the City should work with property owners to establish a strong orientation to the river while also reestablishing views from nearby properties and public right-of-ways. Rather than a continuous “wall” of buildings along the riverfront, development should have “gaps” or breaks where perpendicular streets intersect with 4th Avenue and Riverside Drive.

Riverfront Trails

The Beaver Island Trail stretches for nearly 5 miles along the western bank of the Mississippi River. The trail begins at the River Bluffs Regional Park at 38th Street S and travels north through SCSU to the 1st Street N bridge. Phase 3 of the Beaver Island Trail Project includes a riverfront pedestrian connection from 5th Avenue to the River’s Edge Convention Center, going under the 1st Street Bridge. Additional access points to this trail should be provided where possible.

In addition to enhancing access to the Beaver Island Trail, the City should seek opportunities to establish a similar trail on the eastern bank of the river. A new trail should be established between the 3rd Street and St. Germain Street bridges, with additional access from 2nd Street SE. While significant coordination would be required with single family home owners, the St. Cloud HRA, which owns the 85-unit Riverside Apartment, could be a key partner in establishing the northern link of the trail.

ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA Historic Preservation

St. Cloud is home to 18 historic sites and 4 historic districts that serve as a legacy of the City's rich history. The Downtown Historic District includes 39 contributing structures, which not only exemplify the history of St. Cloud, but also contribute the unique character of Downtown.

Legend

- St. Cloud Commercial Historic District
- Southside Neighborhood Historic District
- Contributing Buildings
- National Register of Historic Buildings



Historic Preservation

Downtown Preservation Manual

The City of St. Cloud Downtown Preservation Design Manual provides guidance on building preservation and rehabilitation, which has been applied to several structures in the Downtown. For example, the 501 Building and Bensen Bros. Building (a historic structure located near the district) are excellent recent examples of restoration and reuse.

Given the impact historic rehabilitation can have on a district, the City should encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment of older properties before considering redevelopment. New construction and renovation projects within the historic district should complement the historic architecture of surrounding properties with the use of traditional building materials and design components.

As an example highlighted in the Downtown Preservation Manual, the Press Bar and Parlor is prominently located at the corner of 5th Avenue S and St. Germain Street which serves as a gateway to the St. Germain corridor. The building's gray stucco facade and lack of first floor windows detracts from the character provided by the historic buildings adjacent on either side and across St. Germain Street at the aforementioned 501 Building. The addition of large pedestrian-level windows, a repaired stucco facade in a warm color tone, appropriate canvas awnings, and a decorative cornice would greatly enhance this building. If implemented on other properties in the Downtown, these simple facade improvements would better integrate the building within the historic character of the district while providing enhanced streetscape and fostering a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Preservation Initiatives

The City of St. Cloud actively recognizes its many historic districts and structures through a variety of historic preservation initiatives.

- **Century Homes Recognition Program.** With its housing stock dating back to the 1800s, the City is home to thousands of historic homes with unique designs and stories. Established in 1998 through partnership of the City of St. Cloud HPC and the St. Cloud Historic & Neighborhood Preservation Association (SCN&PA), the Century Homes Recognition Program honors homeowners' efforts and dedication to preserving quality neighborhoods. Eligible homes must be 100 years old or older, built originally as residential buildings, and reflect the original design character.
- **Heritage Preservation Awards.** The HPC recognizes projects, individuals, and organizations that enhance and celebrate St. Cloud's historic resources through its annual Heritage Preservation Awards. Since its beginning in 2008, the HPC has honored 24 award recipients.
- **Historic Properties Seminar.** In partnership with the St. Cloud Association of Realtors, the City host regular seminars on architectural history, local historic districts and community livability. This program has been in place since 2002 and continues to educate real estate professionals throughout the community.
- **Historic Downtown History Hunt.** This program promotes local history while educating all ages on the importance of preserving historic landmark. HPC, in partnership with the St. Cloud Downtown Council, hosts a self-guided tour to discover hidden architecture and hear stories of people who lived, worked, and played in St. Cloud many years ago.

St. Cloud's historic preservation initiatives recognize and honor the City's past, and should continue to be supported by the City.

Residential Character

The Southside Neighborhood Historic District exemplifies early St. Cloud residential architecture and history. The neighborhood was formed in the 1880s as one of the first residential areas of St. Cloud as part of Middle Town. It includes nearly 250 contributing structures including one building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City should ensure that these historic structures are maintained by targeting and prioritizing endangered buildings and working with property owners to repair and rehabilitate these structures.



ST. CLOUD SUBAREAS DOWNTOWN SUBAREA

Arts and Culture

Downtown St. Cloud is at the heart of arts and culture in Stearns County, which according to the Americans for the Arts Local Arts Index, equates to an approximate \$56.7 million dollar per year expenditure in arts and cultural activities. St. Cloud is home to the City-owned Paramount Theatre, displays twenty works of public art throughout the City as well as spearheads the Poetry in Sidewalks program. Nevertheless, there are several unique and transformative opportunities the City should explore to further support art in St. Cloud.

Legend

-  Bridge / Underpass Lighting
-  Gateway Arch
-  Mural Opportunity
-  Art Galleries
-  Performing Arts Venue
-  River Edge Convention Center
-  East Side Artisan District



Arts & Culture

Public art plays a key role in the recommendations within the Downtown Subarea. Public art can be included in solutions for enhanced crosswalks, murals, bus shelters and benches, parkways, parks, and other green spaces. The City's Arts Commission in the recent past has consulted with Forecast Public Art, Public Art St. Paul, and the Tacoma Arts Commission to establish a best-practices public process for the selection, creation, and maintenance of public art. The Commission has used this public process to create numerous public art works at the Great River Regional Library, murals adjacent to the Metro Bus station, Colonial Gardens sculpture, St. John's Cantius gateway, and any many more public works.

In order to realize the inclusion of public artworks in this plan, the City should adopt a percent for art policy in order to fund public art. The St. Cloud Arts Commission and City staff should research and propose best-practice percent for public art ordinances. In this way, funding can be leveraged for a variety of projects and assist to implement projects identified within the 2013 Placemaking Design Manual. In addition, the City should explore an artist-in-residence program, which can provide assistance in planning public art.

Public Art & Gateway Areas

In addition to the existing, traditional public art displays, the City should implement installation of unique and eye-catching artwork. This includes utilizing decorative, colorful, and unique lighting displays on river bridges and the Division Street underpass. For example, a gateway arch could be installed over Division Street at 4th Avenue to announce entry into Downtown.

Mural Installations

Blank walls along the sides of buildings provide unique opportunities for public art in the form of murals and large paintings. The building side murals that face the Transit Center provide an excellent example of this. The City should consider establishing a downtown murals

program that seeks to take advantage of blank walls throughout the district. The murals can be used to highlight unique community assets and local history while showcasing the talents of local artists.

The City should also consider developing a program to commission short-term art installations to occupy and activate vacant storefronts. This strategy not only takes advantage of an underutilized space, but also serves as a marketing tool to help lease the storefront. Furthermore, such a program could also be leveraged to sell the work of local artists.

East Side Artisan/Creative District

As noted previously, the east side of Downtown provides a unique opportunity to serve as the creative hub of St. Cloud. In addition to establishing incentives for incubators, accelerators, and make/live spaces, the City should seek to work with outside organizations that specialize in promoting art districts through live/work development.

Arts-related Development

Artspace is an organization based in St. Paul that has a growing portfolio of successful art-related development. The organization works with municipalities to utilize available financing, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits, to create affordable, mixed use live-work projects. Many of the projects include the rehabilitation of historic buildings and warehouse spaces into artist lofts, galleries, and community art centers. With its many historical structures and legacy industrial buildings, St. Cloud is well-positioned to work with an organization such as Artspace and utilize its existing building stock for affordable art spaces and projects.

As an example, the City of St. Paul assisted in financing Artspace's first affordable live/work project dedicated to artists. Completed in 1990, Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative project included the rehabilitation

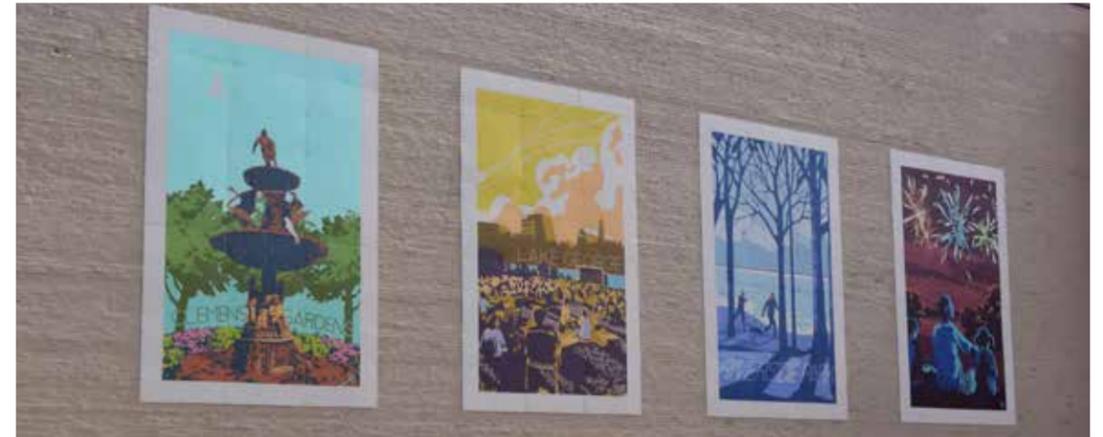
of a 1908 warehouse into 52 live/work units on the four upper floors, and 2 floors below for office and studio space, a gallery, and a coffee shop. The project was the first in the nation to use Low Income Housing Tax Credits for artist housing and was refinanced in 2011 to ensure that the building remains affordable to artists for the next 30 years.

Performance & Visual Art Venues

Downtown includes four performing arts venues and four gallery spaces, not including Lake George, which is used for outdoor performances and events. The City should work cooperatively with all performing and visual art venues to create a coordinated marketing plan that highlights performance arts in St. Cloud. The marketing strategy should be targeted to reach a variety of audiences, and could be tied into other marketing efforts related to downtown tourism, events and festivals, and other aspects of the community.

Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre is a unique, City-owned performance venue in Downtown. The historic building is attached to another structure, which is currently for sale. Combining the buildings as a singular structure with singular ownership has several benefits including the expansion of the Theater with studios, training space, offices, and other function. Furthermore, the combined buildings will further give the structure a strong corner presence that showcases art in the City. Nevertheless, the purchase of the structure should undergo more detailed scrutiny to understand the feasibility of planned improvements and potential return on investment.



11 Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a “road map” for growth and development within the City of St. Cloud over the next 15 to 20 years. The Plan is the culmination of the collective efforts of City staff and officials, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, City of Council, and the St. Cloud community. While adoption of the Comprehensive Plan represents the end of the planning process, it also represents the first step in the much longer journey of guiding change within the community and implementing the recommendations of the Plan.

This section briefly highlights the next steps that should be undertaken to begin the process of implementation. These include the:

- Use of the Comprehensive Plan on a day-to-day basis to guide City policies and decision-making;
- Review and update of the Zoning Ordinance and other development controls to reflect policies presented in the Comprehensive Plan;
- Expansion of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to plan for recommended improvements;
- Updating of the Comprehensive Plan at regular intervals;
- Enhancement of public communication regarding plans and decision-making;
- Preparation of an Implementation Action Agenda; and
- Exploration of possible funding sources and implementation techniques.

Use Plan on a Day-to-Day Basis

The Comprehensive Plan should become the City's official policy guide for land use, development, and community improvement. It is essential that the Plan be adopted and then used on a regular basis by City staff, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate all proposals for improvement and development in the years ahead. City management should meet with department heads to explain the purpose and benefits of the Comprehensive Plan.

To further educate the community about the Plan, the City staff should:

- Make copies of the Plan available online for free, provide hard copies at the City Hall for purchase, and have a copy on file at the St. Cloud Public Library for reference;
- Provide assistance to the public in explaining the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other proposals, as appropriate;
- Assist the City Council and Planning Commission in the day-to-day administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan;
- Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the Comprehensive Plan.

Review Development Controls

Zoning is an important regulatory tool for implementing planning policy. It establishes the types of uses to be allowed on specific properties and prescribes the overall character and intensity of permitted development. It is important that the City's various development controls including zoning, subdivision regulations, property maintenance, and other related codes and ordinances, are reviewed to ensure that all are consistent with and complementary to the Comprehensive Plan .

The Comprehensive Plan sets forth policies regarding the use of land within the City and establishes guidelines for the quality, character and intensity of new development to be promoted in the years ahead. The Plan's policies and guidelines should greatly assist the City in formulating new zoning and development code regulations that can better reflect the unique needs and aspirations of the St. Cloud community.

Specific recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan that development regulations can address include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting sustainable development and growth within the Primary and Secondary Growth Areas;
- Ensuring the appropriate scale, design character, and configuration of development in Downtown St. Cloud and along the Division Street corridor;
- Updating and modernizing landscaping, parking, and screening requirements to promote high quality, attract development as reinvestment and redevelopment occurs within commercial areas;
- Encouraging high quality non-single family residential development in the Southside University neighborhood;
- Encouraging the development of Life Cycle Housing throughout the community;
- Promoting the use of Traditional Neighborhood Design and Low Impact Design in new residential development;
- Ensuring future corridor and neighborhood commercial areas are accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists from surrounding neighborhoods; and
- Facilitating the development of parks and open space to best meet the recreation needs of St. Cloud residents.

Expansion of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

While the City has a current six year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for 2016-2021, the City should review and update it as needed to reflect Plan recommendations. These projects might include the restoration and upgrading of existing utilities and infrastructure, and the renovation, expansion, or relocation of City facilities.

In reviewing the Capital Improvement Program, the City should first prepare a list of all public improvements within the next six years that are recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. All projects should then be reviewed and prioritized and cost estimates prepared along with potential funding sources. Financial resources within the City of St. Cloud, as in all municipalities, will always be limited and public dollars must be spent wisely.

Residents and businesses in the City of St. Cloud and surrounding areas receive their services from a variety of providers including the City, public utilities, and private companies. Service providers, whether public- or private sector, frequently use a Capital Improvement Program to map out growth and investment in facilities and infrastructure. As the City updates and monitors its own CIP, City staff should coordinate with other service providers including the State of Minnesota and respective county governments, to ensure that investment is occurring in a logical manner and synergies can be created between public, quasi-public, and private improvements.

Update the Plan on a Regular Basis

It is important to emphasize that the Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. If community attitudes change or new issues arise which are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the Plan should be revised and updated accordingly.

Although a proposal to amend the Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. The City should initiate review of the Plan at least every two to three years and an annual review is desirable. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan update. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. In turn, development regulations may need to be amended to most accurately reflect the intent of any modifications to the Comprehensive Plan. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

As discussed in **Chapter 4: Land Use Plan**, the City should undertake a full review and update of the Comprehensive Plan as the Primary and Secondary Growth areas become substantially built out and pressures increase to develop Haven Township and other areas of Sherburne County.

Enhance Public Communication

The process undertaken to create the Comprehensive Plan was, in and of itself, an important step in educating the community about the relevance of planning and the City's role in defining its future. Through the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, a community vision workshop, resident questionnaire, and interactive web-based engagement, much positive momentum has been forged. In order to build on this foundation, the City should ensure that the Plan's major recommendations and "vision" for the future are conveyed to the entire community.

The City should also consider additional techniques for responding quickly to public questions and concerns regarding planning and development. For example, the City might prepare a new informational brochure and online information on how to apply for zoning, building, subdivision, and other development related permits and approvals. It might also consider special newsletter and/or webpage features that focus on frequently raised questions and concerns regarding planning and development.

Explore Funding Sources & Implementation Techniques

Many of the projects and improvements called for in the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented through administrative and policy decisions or traditionally funded municipal programs. However, other projects may require special technical and/or financial assistance. The City should continue to explore and consider the wide range of local, state, and federal resources and programs that may be available to assist in the implementation of planning recommendations. For example, initiatives related to economic development, housing, sustainability and environment can receive assistance from grant programs established for specific categories of actions or projects.

There are several grant funding sources available to municipalities seeking to enhance local transportation infrastructure and parks and open space offerings. Many of the grants require that the requested funding be used to support Comprehensive Plan recommendations. As such, the Comprehensive Plan can be used to support grant applications, and plan graphics can serve as a starting point for mapping proposed improvements. City staff should possess the expertise necessary to apply for these grants, but outside assistance may be used if staff does not have adequate time to dedicate to the application process.

The grants identified in the following section do not represent an exhaustive list. In addition to these sources, the City of St. Cloud should continue to work with other agencies to request additional cost participation in the redevelopment of some areas, namely those areas impacting regional infrastructure.

Economic Development Funding Sources

A summary of tools and resources that can be utilized in promoting and assisting with economic development initiatives is located in **Chapter 6: Economic Development**.

Transportation & Infrastructure Funding Sources

There are various State and Federal funding sources available to help offset some or all of the cost of road and infrastructure improvements. While sources and funds may be available for isolated and unique projects the following highlights some of the larger programs applicable to City of St. Cloud plans and projects.

MAP-21 Programs

In 2012 the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) program, a two-year transportation reauthorization bill, was established. MAP-21 replaces the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which expired in September 2009 and was extended nine times. The goal of MAP-21 is to modernize and reform the current transportation system to help create jobs and accelerate economic recovery. MAP-21 continues funding for numerous programs previously funded through SAFETEA-LU. Given the relative recent passage of MAP-21, it is still uncertain how changes in Federal policy will ultimately impact existing funding programs. The City should continue to keep informed as to the status of these programs and any new funding sources that may be introduced in the near future as a result of MAP-21.

The following discussion summarizes grant programs covered under MAP-21 that could be utilized by the City to make enhancements to local transportation infrastructure.

NOTE: At the time of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, Congress was in the process of adopting a new transportation bill that would replace MAP-21. While it is likely that several of the funding sources identified would continue to exist in some manner, the City should revisit this section to ensure that potential funding sources are updated to reflect the latest federal and state policy.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

As part of the MAP-21 program, Congress created the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), which provides funding for non-motorized transportation projects. Projects range from on-street bike facilities to multi-use paths and sidewalk infill programs to Safe Routes to School projects. TAP funds are administered by the St. Cloud APO through a formal application process.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The SRTS program has provided funding for the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bike to school, including:

- Sidewalk improvements;
- Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements;
- Pedestrian and bicycle-crossing improvements;
- On-street bicycle facilities;
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Secure bicycle parking facilities; and
- Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

In the past, these funds have been allocated to coordinating regional councils to be used for roadway and roadway related items. Projects in this funding category have required a local sponsor and have been selected based on a ranking scale that takes into account the regional benefits provided by the project among other factors. STP funds have been used for a variety of project types including roadway rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration; widening and adding lanes; intersection improvements; traffic signal improvements; and green infrastructure funding.

Sidewalk Improvement District (SID)

Under Minnesota state law, a city may establish, by ordinance, a sidewalk improvement district to pay all or part of the cost of sidewalk construction and repair by apportioning the cost throughout the property in the district on a "direct or indirect benefit basis. The council may establish districts in order to provide all areas with safe pedestrian walkways to and from schools, school bus stops, public transportation facilities, and other neighborhood and community services.

The total cost may be apportioned and assessed to all property in the district on a uniform basis as to each classification of property. An indirect benefit assessment may involve all property in the district without regard to location of sidewalks. A direct benefit may be assessed to abutting property for the additional cost of an extra sidewalk width. Assessments may be spread over a five-year period, but there is no provision in the statute for issuing obligations initially, to finance the cost, nor is any procedure prescribed for making the assessments.

Transportation Revolving Loan Fund (TRLF)

When traditional funding sources for transportation projects are not available, the Transportation Revolving Loan Fund serves as an alternative financing tool. Established through the State Infrastructure Bank Program's directives in 1997, the TRLF is used to support transportation projects through a low-interest loan. As the loan is repaid, the funds are returned to the TRLF. Eligible projects include predesign studies; acquisition of right-of-way; road and bridge maintenance, repair, improvement or construction; enhancement items; rail and airport safety projects; drainage and safety structures and transit capital purchases.



Parks and Open Space Funding Sources

Recreational Trails Program

The federal “Recreational Trails Program” (RTP), was created through the National Recreational Trail Fund Act (NRTFA) as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and reauthorized by the MAP-21. This program provides funding assistance for acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreation trails. By law, 30% of each States’ RTP funding must be earmarked for motorized trail projects, 30% for non-motorized trail projects and the remaining 40% for multi-use (diversified) motorized and non-motorized trails or a combination of either. The RTP program can provide up to 80% federal funding on approved projects and requires a minimum 20% non-federal funding match.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants are available to cities, counties and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% match. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes. Development and renovation projects must be maintained for a period of 25 years or the life of the manufactured goods.

Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program

The CPL grant program funds projects which restore, enhance or protect forests, wetlands, prairies and wildlife habitat. Funding for the program is from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, which is derived from a portion of Minnesota State sales tax. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources administers this matching, competitive grant program to projects ranging from \$5,000-400,000 to local government entities and other non-profit organizations. The City of St. Cloud was recently awarded \$66,000 for the River Bluff Restoration project and \$272,000 for the Sauk River Dam Removal and Streambank Restoration project.

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Critical Habitat Match Program

Private individual and groups may apply for the RIM match program to help fund the acquisition and development of critical habitats by having land donations matched from a special state fund administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The City of St. Cloud should advertise this program to property owners of critical habitats.

Cross Country Ski Trail GIA Program

The GIA program supports the maintenance and grooming of cross-country ski trails. Local units of government are eligible grantees. The City of St. Cloud received \$13,354 to help fund their hourly trail grooming rates of the Graystone Trails. Funding for this program comes from the Great Minnesota Ski Pass revenue.

Local Trail Connections Program

The Local Trail Connections program provides reimbursement grants to local units of government to fill in small gaps between destinations and residential areas, and the program is supported by the “In Lieu Of” lottery proceeds. Eligible projects include acquisition of and development of trails, but must result in a trail linkage that is immediately available for use by the general public. Eligible applicants include counties, cities and townships, and grant requests can range from \$5,000-\$150,000 consisting of up to 75% of the total eligible project costs with a minimum 25% non-state cash match. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources administers this program.

Outdoor Recreation Grant Program

The Outdoor Recreation Grant Program increases and enhances outdoor recreation facilities in local and community parks throughout the state using Land and Water Conservation Funds and a portion of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Project must have a total cost of at least \$10,000 and go towards supporting a primary recreation facility. Grants are reimbursed based up to 50% of the total eligible costs, where a maximum award is \$100,000. Cities, counties, townships and tribes are eligible to apply.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance

This program provides technical and financial assistance to local governmental units for conducting floods damage reduction studies and for planning and implementing flood damage reduction measures; for example, eligible projects can include flood plain restoration, development of flood-warning systems and relocations, among others. 50% of total eligible project costs up to \$150,000 are awarded assistance on a competitive grant basis. Eligible applicants include cities, counties, watershed districts and watershed management organizations, and the program is administered by the Department of Natural Resources.



Implementation Action Agenda

The Comprehensive Plan provides more than a hundred policy and program recommendations. The following Implementation Action Agenda provides City staff and community stakeholders with an organized table summarizing the numerous recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. In conjunction with the annual updates to the Capital Improvement Program, the City should utilize, and update regularly, the Implementation Action Agenda. The Implementation Action Agenda should reflect the most up-to-date implementation actions and priorities and be amended to provide more detailed department-level activities required to carry out specific strategies.

The Implementation Action Agenda consists of:

- A description of the projects, activities, and strategies to be undertaken;
- The priority of each project or activity;
- An indication of the potential public and private sector partners that should be engaged in each activity; and
- Potential funding sources and assistance programs that might be available for implementing each project or activity.

While the action agenda identifies numerous potential partners for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the City of St. Cloud remains primarily responsible for all action items. The listed potential partners demonstrate opportunities for cooperation, but the action agenda does not represent a commitment or responsibility on their behalf.

Action Priorities

Each action item has been designated a priority level to aid with implementation of Plan recommendations. Action item priorities are broken into three levels including:

- **1** - Actions that have the highest priority. Though not necessarily more important, items listed as priority 1 may have an immediate impact on the community, may be more easily completed, or may be necessary actions for long term projects to begin.
- **2** - Actions that have secondary priority include longer term projects, actions that indirect impacts on quality of life, and actions that require other projects be completed before they can be started.
- **On-Going** - Actions that have begun, including projects that are currently under construction. This also includes actions that represent changes in policy that are in place or actions that require continuous implementation.

Implementation Action Committee

Without actual physical and regulatory changes as recommended, a Comprehensive Plan becomes a paper document, rather than the living, policy guide it is intended to be. To ensure the implementation of recommendations the City should form an Implementation Action Committee.

The Action Committee would consist largely of volunteers who meet at specific times throughout the year to identify opportunities for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations. Working in an advisory role, the committee would be able to provide City staff with prioritized actions that adhere to the Plan's goals and objectives. Committee members should meet annually throughout the life of the plan, allowing recommended actions to be tailored to City finances, economic development, and implementation progress.

The Implementation Action Agenda provided in the following pages should be used as a starting point for City staff and the Implementation Action Committee to prioritize Comprehensive Plan recommendations and track implementation progress.

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT				
Support incremental growth by prioritizing infill development within the City Core	Encourage the development of vacant or underutilized parcels through the use of financial and development incentives that may include density bonuses, parking reductions, and expedited permitting	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIF • Tax Abatement • New Market Tax Credits • Impact fee waivers
Discourage noncontiguous development to limit impacts to community facilities and services.	Limit financial and development incentives to the City Core and Primary Growth Area	Ongoing		
Ensure the City can accommodate future growth while maintaining existing infrastructure and services.	Ensure newly incorporated areas are adequately served by municipal infrastructure without undermining the existing system through the CIP process.	Ongoing		
Continue to maintain and invest in existing neighborhood infrastructure and services as the City grows.	Include regular maintenance as part of the City's CIP	Ongoing		
Coordinate future land uses with Stearns County, Benton County, Sherburne County and adjacent municipalities and townships.		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stearns County • Benton County • Sherburne County • Minden Township • Haven Township • Lynden Township 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Sartell • City of St. Joseph • City of Sauk Rapids • City of Rockville • City of Augusta • City of Waite Park
Ensure annexation agreements reflect current growth, development, and land use goals and practices.		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minden Township • Haven Township • Lynden Township 	
HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS				
Utilize targeted incentives to catalyze improvements within the Core Neighborhoods.	Identify staff or other resources to assist the HRA in administering its Core Neighborhoods programs.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA • SCNC 	
	Evaluate the Homebuyer Program and identify potential modifications to make it more attractive to potential property owners	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA • SCNC 	
	Evaluate the implementation of a block-by-block approach to administering grant funds	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRA • other partners 	
	Identify opportunities to assist property owners with design and construction of projects that contribute to historic district housing quality, which may include technical assistance and distribution of informational materials the help implement design guidelines	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCNC • SCSU 	

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Stabilize and enhance existing neighborhoods through code enforcement and beautification.	Amend the Land Development Code to incorporate standards related to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSD • Sidewalk Improvement District
	Continue to apply the requirements within the Southside Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (SSNCO)	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Alternatives Program • Transportation Enhancement Grants • ArtSparks Matching Fund Program
	Prioritize and implement streetscape improvements at key intersections and gateways within the Core Neighborhoods	1	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	
	Amend the Land Development Code to increase the amount of required green space and landscaping within residential neighborhoods.	1		
	Provide complementary educational seminars about home gardening and landscaping	1		
	Improve key pedestrian and bike routes through residential areas with pedestrian-scale lighting	1		
	Continue to work with neighborhood groups to further define neighborhood identity through the use of public art	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	
Prioritize the completion of existing residential subdivisions and vacant residential parcels.	Evaluate revising existing development agreements or relaxing guidelines or requirements to foster development within incomplete subdivisions.	1		
Develop new residential subdivisions using traditional neighborhood development and/or low impact design.	Amend the Land Development Code to address the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs)	1		
	Consider making development approval contingent upon the requirement to fully install sidewalks, improved open space areas, stormwater systems, and other community amenities	1		
Support affordable housing development to support elderly and low-income members of the community.	Increase awareness of the Life Cycle Housing program.	1	• Economic Development Authority	• TIF
	Assess opportunities to develop quality senior housing in areas such as Downtown, and near commercial nodes and healthcare facilities.	1	• HRA	
Ensure neighborhoods are well connected to local commercial areas, educational and civic facilities, and recreational amenities.	Amend the Land Development Code to discourage or prohibit residential developments with cul-de-sacs and limited connectivity.	1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Abatement • Impact Fee Waivers • Density Bonuses • Outdoor Recreation Grant Program • Regional Park Grant Program • Local Trail Grant Program • Regional Trail Grant Program
	Work with developers and builders to integrate trails within and among neighborhoods	Ongoing		
Monitor the status and efficacy of housing and neighborhood improvement initiatives.	Reconvene the Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force on a regular basis to verify the status and efficacy of initiatives and make modifications accordingly.	Ongoing	• Neighborhood Best Practices Task Force	
Prevent premature residential development of rural and agricultural areas.	Follow guidelines per the Haven Township Orderly Annexation Agreement, by which housing is limited to one home per 40 acres without a plat, and to five acre lots in areas substantially wooded.	Ongoing		

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Update the Economic Development Authority Strategic Plan to provide strategies and direction for future economic development projects.		1	Economic Development Authority	
Support beautification efforts and improved development standards within commercial districts to create more attractive and desirable locations for business recruitment and retention.	Amend the Land Development Code to require perimeter landscaping and interior parking lot landscaping requirements and stricter sign regulations in commercial districts	1		
	Amend the Land Development Code to encourage front and side yard landscaping and require front and side yard landscaping for businesses that share street frontage with residential uses.	1		
Utilize placemaking strategies to create a distinct sense of place within the City's various commercial districts.	Continue to prioritize and implement recommendations within the Placemaking Design Manual	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	• SSD • Transportation Enhancement Grants
	Identify and prioritize key intersections for wayfinding and directory signage		• Property owners • St. Cloud Arts Commission	
Ensure emerging commercial nodes and districts provide multi-modal access and reflect the scale, character, and identity of surrounding neighborhoods.	Coordinate with local neighborhood groups and willing property owners to ensure that new development respects the scale and character of adjacent areas and provides buffers and screening where appropriate	Ongoing	• CentraCare • St. Cloud Veterans Administration Health Care	• TIF • Tax Abatement • Impact Fee Waivers • Density Bonuses
	Develop reclamation plans to be enacted upon vacation of quarry sites.	Ongoing	• Quarry Owners	
	Address traffic circulation, open space preservation, stormwater management, tenant amenities, and wayfinding and signage around the St. Cloud Regional Airport	Ongoing	• Airport Advisory Board • Future tenants	
Build awareness of the City of St. Cloud through the St. Cloud Greater brand campaign to build positive connections with residents, visitors and businesses of the St. Cloud community.	Integrate the St. Cloud brand within brochure collateral for mailings and distribution, usage of billboards, website postings, updated listings on relevant real estate sites, and attendance of City staff and other public partners at local, regional, and national conferences and trade organization meetings.	Ongoing		
	Review all existing development regulations and processes to ensure they are efficient and necessary.	Ongoing		
Serve as a coordinator, facilitator, and connector between the City and economic development organizations and local businesses.	Provide assistance to property owners to navigate the DEED Shovel Ready Certification Program	Ongoing		
	Ensure that existing businesses are aware of government programs and incentives that can help grow their businesses	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce	
	Attend relevant conferences and meetings of trade organizations to generate new leads and opportunities.	Ongoing		

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Attract and embrace new residents through marketing, incentives, and immigrant support.	Develop a marketing campaign targeted towards commuters to encourage them to locate to St. Cloud	1	• St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce	
	Join the "Welcoming America" coalition	1		
Identify future cultural or arts programming to celebrate diversity and heritage through	Establish a "Welcoming Center" or "Welcoming Program."	1		
	Launch a "St. Cloud Immigrant Entrepreneurship Initiative."	2	Higher educational institutions: • SCSU • St. Cloud Technical and Community College • Rasmussen College • College of St. Benedict • St. John's University • the banking sector • not-for-profit organizations • private and public partners	
	Work with higher education institutions and companies to target and retain talented international students	2	• SCSU • St. Cloud Technical and Community College • Rasmussen College • College of St. Benedict • St. John's University	
	Develop a web-based talent portal for St. Cloud.	1	• St. Cloud Workforce Center • RESOURCE • The Anderson Center • Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council	
Leverage the City's professional staff, higher educational institutions, and local organizations as resources to develop effective workforce development programs.	Facilitate partnerships between colleges, universities, workforce training programs, and local businesses through regular meetings and events.	Ongoing	• St. Cloud State University • St. Cloud Technical and Community College • St. Cloud Area School District #742	
	Encourage internships and summer employment opportunities for youth through the creation and marketing of a youth job program.	1	• St. Cloud Area School District #742	• Job Creation Fund • Greater Minnesota Job Expansion Tax Credits
	Leverage parks and recreational programming to provide opportunities for at-risk youth.	Ongoing	• Parks & Recreation Department • St. Cloud Area School District #742	
Increase access to early childhood education, particularly within at-risk and low income communities by increasing awareness of available programs and working to connect families to local transportation options.		Ongoing	• St. Cloud Area School District #742 • MetroBus	
	Implement the business and recruitment strategy as outlined within the Economic Development Authority Strategic Plan	Ongoing	• Economic Development Authority • Small Business Development Center • St. Cloud Opportunities • SCORE of Central Minnesota • Minnesota Business Finance Corporation • Initiative Foundation	• Angel Tax Credit • Greater Minnesota Job Expansion Tax Credits • Minnesota Investment Fund • Capital Equipment Exemption • Research & Development Tax Credits • TIF • Tax Abatement • New Market Tax Credits • Greater Minnesota Public Infrastructure Program • Transportation Economic Development (TED) Fund
Complete the City's comprehensive Brownfields Strategy, including the identification of all brownfield sites within city limits		2		• See page 58 for a comprehensive list
Commission a hotel feasibility study to quantify demand and ascertain what type of hotel property may be suitable		1	• St. Cloud Area Convention and Visitors Bureau • St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce	
Complete airport infrastructure improvements as directed in the Master Plan Update.		Ongoing	• Airport Advisory Board	• Transportation Revolving Loan Fund

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	Develop a strategy to reestablish commercial air service to O'Hare.	1	• Airport Advisory Board	
	Evaluate the creation of a Regional Airport Authority.	2	• Airport Advisory Board	
	Position land uses that can capitalize off of proximity to the airport	Ongoing	• Property owners • Airport Advisory Board • Small Business Development Center, • St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce	
Utilize the arts as a strategic and effective economic development tool.	Continue to prioritize and implement recommendations within the Placemaking Design Manual	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	• Percent for Arts Program • Central Minnesota Arts Board Grants
	Work with industrial businesses and local artists to donate materials and obsolete machinery for the use of sculpture and public art installations within common areas of business parks and public rights-of-way.	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	• Minnesota State Arts Board Grants • National Endowment for the Arts Grants
	Inventory and fully understand St. Cloud's existing cultural industries and assets.	1	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	
	Incorporate arts and culture into all planning efforts.	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	
	Market cultural events, promoting unique destinations, and/or promoting distinctive cultural products to incorporate the arts into tourism efforts.	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Extend and increase the capacity of roadways that enhance circulation, mobility, and anticipated growth and development.	Implement the Fiscally Constrained Projects outline within the St. Cloud APO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2040	1	• St. Cloud APO • Stearns County • Benton County • Sherburne County • MnDOT	• Surface Transportation Program
	Prioritize key roadway improvements to be amended to the fiscally constrained project list	1		
	Monitor the need for enhanced roadway capacity at the St. Cloud Regional Airport	Ongoing		
	Identify critical rail crossings to be included in the selection process for the Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program	1	• MnDOT	
Increase bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity across jurisdictions through local coordination of improvement projects.	Continue to implement the complete streets policy to ensure the safety and mobility of its non-motorized transportation groups.	Ongoing		• Local Trail Grant Program • Regional Trail Grant Program • Transportation Alternative Program • Safe Routes to School
	Review future roadways and roadway extensions to ensure complete streets projects include well-designed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure	Ongoing	• Developers • Property owners	
	Identify SRTS project and apply for funding for infrastructure improvements near local schools	1	• St. Cloud APO	
	Amend the off-street parking requirement of the Land Development Code (Section 16.13) to require a minimum number of bicycle parking facilities	1		

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements throughout the community, including at local schools, parks, civic institutions, and community gathering and recreation destinations.	Consider drafting and adopting a Vision Zero policy	1	• St. Cloud APO • Stearns County • Benton County • Sherburne County • MnDOT	• Sidewalk Improvement District • Safe Routes to School
	Continue to install sidewalks throughout the community as part of additional infrastructure improvement projects	Ongoing		
	Identify neighborhoods and schools to implement walking school buses	1	• St. Cloud Area School District #742	
Work with local transit agencies to develop a coordinated and integrated plan for public transportation that includes Amtrak, the Northstar Commuter Rail Line, and Metro Bus.	Coordinate capital improvement programs with planned major transfer points and extended service areas.	1	• Amtrak • Northstar Commuter Rail • Line • Metro Bus	
Utilize the Downtown Parking Study to develop a comprehensive parking strategy for both downtown and other commercial areas that addresses capacity, pricing, and landscaping/design.	Utilize minimum parking structure dimensions to maximize the number of parking spaces per square foot	1		• SSD
	Locate parking no more than a block away for business patrons and three blocks away for employees	2		
	Establish an Ambassador Program to provide customer service, emergency response, and City services.	2		
	Consider raising the cost of expired meter violations.	1		
	Consider raising the Convention Center parking ramp rate, and also consider installing Parking Access and Revenue Control equipment capable of both collecting fees on entrance (for events) or charging based on a programmable rate structure (non-events).	1		
	Establish a parking branding and signage program that provide organized information about parking, wayfinding, and other information to guide accessibility.	1		
	Amend the Land Development Code to include requirements for parking lot landscaping, landscaped buffers, and screening. It should also	1		
Support the development and implementation the APO On-Street Bicycle Plan as well as an updated St. Cloud Bikeways and Pedestrian Plan.	Consider reducing the required number of off-street parking requirements in exchange for the integration of stormwater best management practices.	1		
	Identify potential roadway enhancement projects to address bicycle level of service	1		• Transportation Alternatives Program
	Develop plans to address critical bike route connections including 3rd Street N & Veterans Drive, 33rd Avenue N, E St. Germain Street & University Drive, 33rd Street S, CR 136 & Cooper Avenue	2		
Develop a community gateway and wayfinding program and install gateway and wayfinding signs throughout the St. Cloud community to create a unique sense of place.		1	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
COMMUNITY FACILITIES				
Ensure municipal facilities accommodate government functions while serving as examples of community identity and sustainability.	Enhance the City Hall site and future potential surface parking lot with perimeter landscaping that includes street trees and a low masonry wall to improve the pedestrian environment and complement the high quality Coborn Plaza mixed building across 5th Avenue S	2		
Support the Police Department and Fire Department through close coordination and planned allocation of resources to improve public safety.	Create a long-term staffing plan that anticipates future staffing and budget needs based on projected population growth	1		• Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at the U.S. Department of Justice
	Coordinate with other neighborhood groups, especially within the Core Neighborhoods, to determine if other areas of the City may be better served through community policing efforts similar to the CAPS program	1	• SCNC	
Work with the St. Cloud Fire Department and Great River Regional Library to monitor the need for additional locations to improve service and accessibility.	Include Fire Department representatives early in planning process as significant new developments are considered to ensure high quality service and response times can continue to be provided to all St. Cloud residents	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Fire Department	
	Work with library officials to determine future library service demand, and identify sites for a potential library branch should future needs necessitate expanded services and facilities	Ongoing	• Great River Regional Library	
Coordinate with local municipalities and agencies to provide an equitable share of public, health and social services.	Work with municipalities within the six-county region to develop a regional plan that addresses the social service issues facing the region	Ongoing	• Stearns County • Benton County • Sherburne County • Minden Township • Haven Township • Lynden Township	• City of Sartell • City of St. Joseph • City of Sauk Rapids • City of Rockville • City of Augusta • City of Waite Park
Ensure the Former Tech High School site continues to serve as a community amenity that anchors and enhances the Lake George neighborhood.	Engage the community to identify a market-viable and community-supported redevelopment concept	1	• SCNC • Lake George neighborhood residents • St. Cloud Area School District #742	
Prioritize infrastructure investment within existing neighborhoods and the Primary Growth Area.	Continue to support the Legislature in efforts to identify alternative funding sources for the maintenance of local streets to make up for shortfalls in funding provided by property and sales tax	Ongoing		
Encourage the use of stormwater best management practices to improve local and regional water quality.	Focus water and wastewater infrastructure investments within the Primary Growth Area	1		
	Encourage on-site stormwater management using Low Impact Design strategies	1		
	Provide educational information about stormwater best management practices	Ongoing		
Ensure healthcare expansion and other large community service providers are adequately screened and buffered from adjacent residential neighborhoods.	Ensure that any future expansions of the St. Cloud Hospital facility do not negatively impact neighborhood character of quality of life for local residents	2	• CentraCare • Northside-Hester Park Coalition • Property owners	• Transportation Alternatives Program
Coordinate with the St. Cloud Area School District and other educational providers with regard to facility expansion projects and emerging residential development that may impact student enrollment.	Advertise school achievements and the initiatives that set it apart from other areas including Chinese and Spanish Immersion programs	2	• St. Cloud Area School District #742	• Recreational Trails Program • Local Trail Grant Program • Regional Trail Grant Program • Safe Routes to School • Sidewalk Improvement District
	Ensure 33rd Street S and CR 74 receive complete street roadway treatments to allow for safe, motorized and non-motorized access to the school	1		
	Maintain active dialogue with private school officials to allow all parties to be regularly informed or new expansion project and residential developments that may impact school enrollment and city services	Ongoing	• St. Cloud Area School District #742	

Objective	Recommendation/Strategy	Priority	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
PARKS, RECREATION & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES				
Ensure new and existing parks provide active and passive recreational opportunities that meet the needs of the St. Cloud community.	Engage residents and partner agencies in developing a master plan for the Friedrich Park site to ensure it meets the needs of the community and includes appropriate activities to fill existing recreational service gaps	1	• Property Owners • Southeast neighborhood residents	• Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
	Conduct a park facility needs assessment to determine the amount of existing useful park space and park use frequency to prioritize park funding allocation and guide reinvestment decisions, and include a review and analysis of recreational programming and facilities	1		• Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
Prioritize the maintenance and improvement of existing parks and recreational facilities.	Continue to forego parkland dedications in favor of a fee in lieu that can be used to enhance existing parks and undeveloped parkland to better serve the population	Ongoing		
Ensure the City has the financial capacity to acquire and maintain new park sites.	Identify and prioritize opportunities to acquire and develop parkland in under-served areas	1		• Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
	Undertake a cost-benefit analysis to understand the financial implications of selling Heritage Park, purchasing additional parkland, and the overall effect changing the land use would have on the community's quality of life and access to open space areas	1		
Provide safe, non-motorized access to local and regional park facilities.	Install directional signage to local and regional parks as a part of a broader City-wide wayfinding program	1		• Transportation Alternatives Program • Recreational Trails Program • Local Trail Grant Program • Regional Trail Grant Program
	Improve 40th Street S and Oak Grove Road to provide safe access for non-motorized visitors	2		
	Coordinate with St. Augusta and MnDOT to provide safe access to the trail from residential areas west of I-94	1	• City of St. Augusta • MnDOT	
	Consider modifying Northway Drive and Stockinger Drive to improve pedestrian safety, which may include traffic calming measures, curb extensions, raised crosswalks, and/or HAWK signals	2		
Increase use of and access to the Mississippi River.	Install wayfinding signage to existing riverfront access points to enhance use of the trail	2	• St. Cloud Arts Commission	
Develop policies to protect the Mississippi Riverfront and regional watersheds in areas not designated under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Program.	Develop policies for non-WSR areas that enable greater riverfront development while limiting environmental impacts	1	• Minnesota DNR	
	Identify potential opportunities for the installation of scenic viewpoints along the existing Beaver Island Trail	1	• HRA • Riverfront property owners	
Continue to apply a higher level of scrutiny and mitigation requirements for development within Environmentally Sensitive Areas.	Continue to use the ESA designation to guide future development in a sustainable manner	Ongoing		• Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance • Conservation easements • Parkland dedication • Outdoor Recreation Grant Program
	Use ESAs to guide the development of an integrated network of parks and open space areas throughout St. Cloud's growth areas through the use of conservation easements and parkland dedication	Ongoing		