

Chapter 4



# Special Planning Districts

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Background
- ◆ Guiding Principles
- ◆ Alternative Scenarios
- ◆ Framework Plan
- ◆ Implementation

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photo by City staff

## Section 1: Introduction

The City of Golden Valley has been a leader among first-ring communities of the Twin Cities in reinventing itself to meet changes in transportation patterns, housing preferences, and market trends in office, industrial, and commercial uses. The City responded to the opening of Interstate 394 in the 1990s with a regional I-394 zoning overlay district that links new development to traffic demand management and intersection improvements. The City proactively recreated a new downtown at Hwy 55 and Winnetka Ave, incorporating mixed use and mixed-income housing (Wesley Commons) on the site of an aging strip mall. The *Envision Golden Valley* effort set a new standard in citizen involvement, bringing more than 600 residents together to develop comprehensive vision statements and supporting themes/ideas that will guide the City in updating its Comprehensive Plan.

### Need for Special Planning Districts

While these vision statements provide a strong foundation for subsequent planning, they were not linked to specific locations, planning efforts, or zoning districts within the city. Recognizing the value of linking community vision to location-specific planning, the City launched the I-394 Corridor Study as its first special planning district.

## Need For I-394 Corridor Study

### Commercial/Industrial Issues

Forty percent of the City's tax base consists of older commercial/industrial uses, which are gradually being eclipsed by newer development elsewhere. There appears to be a low market demand for vacant industrial space. How can these uses and their settings be improved to remain viable enterprises? How can the City encourage smaller commercial businesses, rather than the typical "big box" retail?

The City's commercial and industrial uses are concentrated in several highway corridors, including Hwys 55 and 169 in addition to I-394. A number of these corridors are beginning to show signs of obsolescence and will be studied in the future for potential introduction of new uses or revitalization strategies. However, the I-394 corridor is the location that appears most susceptible to change. Essentially, access and visibility from I-394, a principal arterial, have tended to raise land values, increasing pressure for conversion to more intensive uses. At the same time, the proximity to residential neighborhoods and concerns about traffic could impact growth potential.

### I-394 Traffic Management Issues

The I-394 Zoning Overlay District was developed in 1989 to address traffic management issues associated with the upgrade of former State Highway 12 to the current I-394. The ordinance requires traffic studies and management plans for new dense development in the interchange areas. The ordinance has been effective in identifying needed improvements, but traffic increases may soon begin to limit the ability to develop or redevelop

land to the intensity that the area's assets might otherwise support.

### Linkages and Connections

There are few direct north-south roads or paths between I-394 and Hwy 55, especially through the residential neighborhoods in the northern part of the corridor. Better pedestrian and bike connections across I-394 and Hwy 55 are needed, as well as trail connections to the regional multi-use Cedar Lake and LRT trails in St Louis Park. I-394 is already a high-service transit corridor with two park-and-ride facilities in this area: the Louisiana Transit Center, on the south (St Louis Park) side of the Louisiana interchange, and a smaller facility on the south side of the Xenia/Park Place interchange. However, demand for parking exceeds supply, and improved local connections to the park-and-rides are needed. Future transit improvements could reduce the level of congestion new development may bring.

### Housing Issues

*Envision Golden Valley* indicates that there is increasing demand for different housing types that don't yet exist in the City. Resident surveys completed in 1999 and 2001 also call for an increase in the diversity of housing in Golden Valley. Higher-density housing is becoming more acceptable, but protection of existing neighborhoods is also a key issue. The I-394 corridor may be a suitable location for higher-density housing that could serve as a buffer between single-family housing north of Laurel Ave and highway-oriented uses to the south.

### Environmental Issues

Much of the I-394 corridor is built on wetland, primarily peat soils, resulting in problems with settling of buildings, roads, and parking lots. Continued

improvements to area storm water management are needed, and there is also strong interest in restoring natural systems like streams and wetlands throughout the area.

### Regulatory Issues

The City has encouraged the use of Planned Unit Development (PUD) standards for most office development in the I-394 corridor. Each PUD is a unique project, with its own development standards that relate to an approved development plan. While PUDs can provide needed flexibility on a case-by-case basis, PUD regulations often fail to articulate the planning principles and design standards that should apply across a corridor or entire community. The study process will result in updated development codes that establish design standards, improve the transitions/buffers between different land uses, and bring some consistency to streetscape treatments along the corridor.

An initial assessment of these and other issues in the corridor is shown on Figure 4.1.

## How this Study Will be Used

The Corridor Study will be implemented using three primary tools:

- ♦ **Ongoing planning**—the study will be considered in reviewing development proposals and site plans.
- ♦ **Zoning updates**—as discussed in the Implementation section of this report, zoning changes will encourage mixed use and a high quality of site planning and building design within the corridor.
- ♦ **Public improvements**—as the City makes improvements to streets, public open space, storm water fa-

Figure 4.1: Preliminary Issues



- Major intersection
- Minor intersection
- P High pedestrian use area

cilities, and other infrastructure in the study area, the principles and recommendations of the study will be considered.

## Study Process and Public Involvement

The City initiated the I-394 Corridor Study in Winter 2005 by selecting a consultant team and developing a communications plan to guide the effort. This plan, developed by City staff, was designed to build public awareness about the study and its mission, and to communicate directly with affected businesses and people who live and work in the area.

A Joint Task Force consisting of two City Council members and two Planning Commission members met regularly with staff and the consultant throughout the process to provide oversight and direction to the study. The City Council and Planning Commission were briefed regularly.

Outreach methods used throughout the study process included a resident survey, business survey, resident roundtable, visual preference survey, an open house, and various public information pieces.

### Resident Survey

City staff developed a brief resident survey, which was sent in Spring 2005 to all households in the area east of Brookview Parkway, west of Hwy 100, south of Hwy 55 and north of I-394. The survey asked residents what activities draw them to the area, whether they would support more transportation alternatives in the area, and the key issues that the study should address. A total of 1,200 surveys were sent, of which 119 were returned. Residents were asked what they liked and disliked about the area, the ways in

which they use the area, and suggestions for change. Some highlights of the responses are:

- ♦ Positive comments focused on the diversity of retail/commercial businesses in the area, the newer office buildings, the Laurel Avenue Ponds, the paths and open space, attractive landscaping on many properties, and the overall ease of access to the highway system.
- ♦ Negative comments tended to focus on the overall appearance of the area—unattractive or rundown buildings, “hodgepodge” of building types and appearances, and lack of consistency in terms of street and building design. Other comments focused on traffic congestion, traffic noise, the amount of surface parking, and the interface between industrial and residential uses.
- ♦ Residents use the area primarily for shopping, dining, walking, and driving through. The majority would support more bike trails, and many would support improved pedestrian access and transit choices.
- ♦ Residents feel that key issues the corridor study should address include landscaping, building height, building design, density, aesthetics, and storm water management.

Survey results are summarized in Appendix 4-A.

### Business Survey

A detailed business study was prepared by City staff and sent to the 190 businesses in the study area. Staff then followed up with phone calls. A total of 47 surveys were completed, for a 26% response rate. The survey focused on reasons for locating in the area, future plans, where their employees live and their modes of travel to work, and relationship with the City. Some high-

lights of responses are:

- ♦ About three-quarters of businesses view Golden Valley as an above average or excellent place for business.
- ♦ The majority of their employees live outside Golden Valley and do not use public transportation.
- ♦ Businesses were asked a series of questions about future plans. Ten companies (21 percent of respondents) considered expansion or remodeling and five companies (10 percent of respondents) considered relocation.
- ♦ The primary reasons that deter companies from remaining/expanding in Golden Valley are cost to lease, accessibility to their site, and availability of land space.

Survey results are summarized in Appendix 4-B and in a more extensive background report.

### Resident Roundtable

For a more in-depth discussion of issues raised in the resident survey, about a dozen residents were selected from those who included addresses in their surveys, with the goal of geographic balance and diversity. These residents met in an informal workshop setting in which they identified strengths/assets and problems or challenges facing the study area, and made suggestions for specific improvements.

Strengths of the area include:

- ♦ The Laurel Avenue Greenbelt, other green space and landscaping within the corridor, the convenience of many retail destinations, and specific buildings considered aesthetically pleasing, including Allianz and the Golden Hills Business Park.

Suggestions for improvements include:

- ♦ redesign the service road from Louisiana to Xenia to improve access and wayfinding
- ♦ add sidewalks and pedestrian walkways on or between the north–south streets that directly access the commercial area
- ♦ improve environmental standards and their enforcement (ie, pollution control, landscaping, property maintenance)
- ♦ develop design guidelines for buildings and public spaces

A summary of the roundtable is included in Appendix 4-C.

### Visual Preference Survey

A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a method for assessing community preferences regarding the form and appearance of buildings, landscape, and streetscape elements. The VPS has become a widely used tool for helping community representatives and the general public become familiar with the role of design in creating the urban and suburban environment. The VPS was conducted through images on display boards and on the City Web site. Participants were asked to review images in six categories, and to rate them from lowest to highest in terms of their attractiveness:

- ♦ Medium-High Density Housing
- ♦ Mixed-Use Development
- ♦ Commercial Buildings
- ♦ Office/Business Park/Industrial Development
- ♦ Parking and Streetscape Design
- ♦ Signs

A total of 150 people took the survey. Of these, 82 participated at events (Golden Valley Arts Festival and Public Safety Open House), 24 at City Hall, and 44 via the City Web site.

There was a high degree of consistency between all categories of respondents. Some highlights of the survey are:

- ♦ For residential development, materials and detailing seemed to be the most important attributes that produced favorable scores. Brick buildings received higher scores, and narrow wood siding was also rated highly, while buildings with stucco as a dominant material received lower scores. Most of the photos in this category were “controversial,” (shown by a broad range of responses), indicating varying attitudes toward higher-density housing.
- ♦ For mixed-use development, scores were higher and images were less controversial compared to residential development. Traditional building forms, contrasting colors and materials, and streetscape activity all contributed to high scores. Buildings with ‘flat’ facades, whether stucco or brick, received lower scores.
- ♦ For commercial development, buildings with a multi-story appearance received the highest scores, while buildings with a residential appearance were somewhat more controversial. Masonry-and-stucco combinations were preferred, while metal buildings received the lowest scores.
- ♦ Among office and industrial buildings, newer multi-story office buildings were preferred, followed by single-story office parks.

Survey results are summarized in Appendix 4-D and in a more extensive background report.

### Open House

An open house was held in December 2005 to review interim study products and general alternatives for the corridor plan. Comments from the open

house included the following:

- ♦ Laurel Avenue Spine Alternative preferred—seems to balance business/residential uses
- ♦ new housing and structured parking are desirable; prioritize single-family attached housing; improve green space and trails
- ♦ traffic impacts—the area is already “everyone’s shortcut”
- ♦ City needs to work to maintain its identity as a first ring suburb
- ♦ plan is an improvement over existing buildings and facilities; support mixed use and live-work concepts
- ♦ desire for a small supermarket, central square
- ♦ favor design guidelines for new construction if not too stringent
- ♦ carefully consider cost of any new projects to City and taxpayers

### Other Outreach Efforts

City staff prepared a PowerPoint presentation tracing the evolution of the corridor and key issues being studied; this was presented to the Chamber of Commerce and made available to other organizations and neighborhood associations. A series of articles in *Golden Valley CityNews* reported on the study’s progress and status. Topics included the history of zoning in the corridor and the City, the Visual Preference Survey, and the Comprehensive Plan update. The City also used the new *GV DirectConnect*, an interactive web service, to provide citizens with updates and information. 

Plank Road

Superior Boulevard

Wayzata Bo

1854

Territorial legislature authorizes construction of Plank Road from Minneapolis to Lake Minnetonka

1886

The Village of Golden Valley is incorporated, population 467

1920

Hwy 12 (formerly Plank Road) widened to 18 feet

1930s

Because of difficulties with the high water table, little development occurs along Hwy 12

1945-47

Community soundly rejects development proposals: one for an airport along Hwy 12 west of Hwy 100, one for drive-in theatre along Wayzata Blvd, and one for a sports stadium at Wayzata Blvd and Turners Crossroad

1955

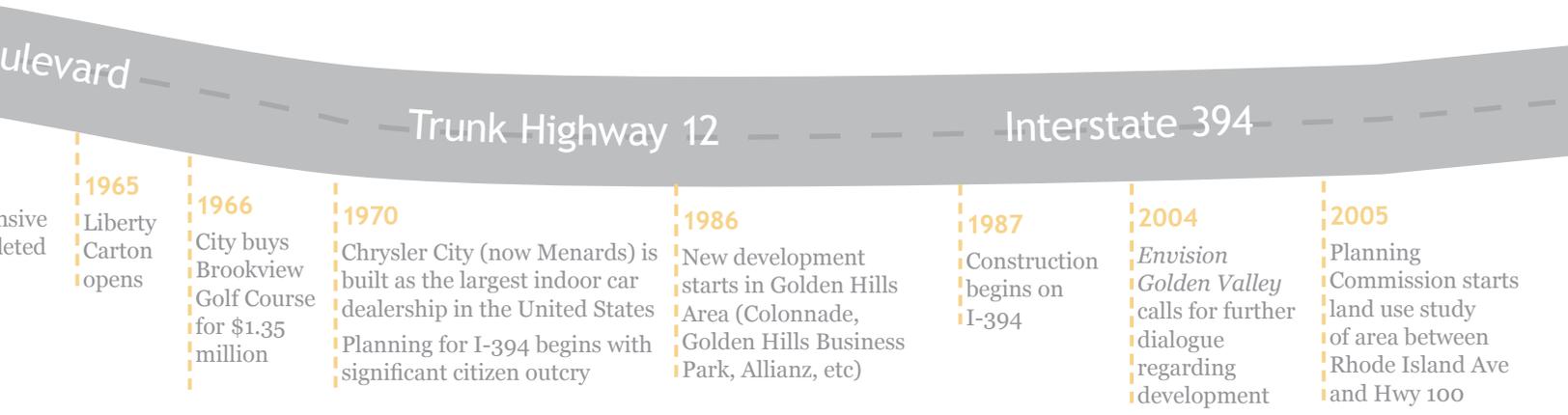
Laurel Ave construction begins (last two blocks completed in 1980s)

1958

Golden Valley's population reaches 14,000, indoor ice arena opens along Wayzata Blvd, and General Mills opens its world headquarters at Wayzata Blvd and Hwy 169

1959

First Comprehensive Plan completed



nsive  
leted

1965  
Liberty  
Carton  
opens

1966  
City buys  
Brookview  
Golf Course  
for \$1.35  
million

1970  
Chrysler City (now Menards) is  
built as the largest indoor car  
dealership in the United States  
Planning for I-394 begins with  
significant citizen outcry

1986  
New development  
starts in Golden Hills  
Area (Colonnade,  
Golden Hills Business  
Park, Allianz, etc)

1987  
Construction  
begins on  
I-394

2004  
*Envision  
Golden Valley*  
calls for further  
dialogue  
regarding  
development

2005  
Planning  
Commission starts  
land use study  
of area between  
Rhode Island Ave  
and Hwy 100



photo from City archives

## Section 2: Background

I-394 has always been a visible gateway to the City, from its beginning as a cart track that Golden Valley farmers used to take goods to city markets to its current role as an interstate highway carrying thousands of vehicles daily. Over the years, the area’s gradual growth resulted in a collection of uncoordinated land uses that don’t necessarily match current zoning or the community’s vision for the corridor.

### The Corridor’s Evolution

Planning Commission and City staff prepared an I-394 Corridor Study in 1989. Many of the issues and background information identified in that study remain relevant and are referenced or updated in the current study. The study area extended from Highway 100 to General Mills Boulevard. The major findings of the study were that:

- ♦ “The I-394 corridor in Golden Valley is highly diversified in land uses but highly uniform in failing to meet current code requirements. The corridor, in other words, does not appear to fit well within the parameters of existing land use regulation mechanisms.” Nonconformities included structure and parking setbacks, unscreened outdoor storage, and multiple structures on single lots.
- ♦ These nonconformities could be lessened if more than one structure was permitted on a lot, and if shared parking and shared driveways across property lines were permitted.

The study recommended establishing a special mixed-use district with flexible zoning standards for the central part of the study area, allowing the broad range of nonresidential uses already found there. Recommendations included more flexible standards for setbacks, open space and height limits. Recommendations for the southeast portions of the study area (Turner's Crossroad, Circle Down, etc) were deferred until construction of I-394 was complete.

Golden Valley's last Comprehensive Plan update, in 1999 (*Golden Valley: A Balanced Approach to the 21st Century*), includes a detailed description of how the I-394 corridor evolved in tandem with changes in transportation, and the corridor's redevelopment needs. Relevant sections of that report are excerpted below.

*Even before its reconstruction as part of the federal interstate transportation system, land uses along old Highway 12 had become an issue for the City. The area on the north side of the highway, lying between Turner's Crossroad and Pennsylvania Avenue and extending up to Laurel Avenue was of particular concern. Zoned primarily for Industrial uses since 1947, the area has also been designated as industrial on all of the City's comprehensive plans since 1959. It is a major entry to Golden Valley for many travelers, and is visible to many others passing through on I-394.*

*Most development in the area occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, there were no on-site parking requirements specified in the zoning code. There were setback requirements, but an interesting clause in the code said that, if an Industrially zoned property was surrounded by other Industrially zoned properties, and the owners of those adjacent properties did not object, then the owner of the subject property could disregard the setback requirements as long as minimal emergency access to the rear of the lot was available somewhere nearby. Substandard parking and setbacks characterize the area to this day.*

*As long ago as the 1960s, changing land use demands along the highway corridor began exerting pressure on Golden Valley to allow more commercial uses—particularly those with a strong automobile orientation—in the area. It would have been appropriate to reclassify part or all of the area in either the 1973 or 1982 land use plan and then rezone for commercial use or establish a new zoning district specifically to accommodate auto-oriented uses. Instead, the City began to add certain individual commercial uses to the Industrial district provisions as requests came up. Not only has this caused a conflict with the comprehensive plan designation of the area for industrial use, it has also been in open conflict with the specific purpose and intent stated for the zoning district.*

*In more recent years, nonconforming uses have proliferated in addition to the area's other problems. Unlike the hand-*

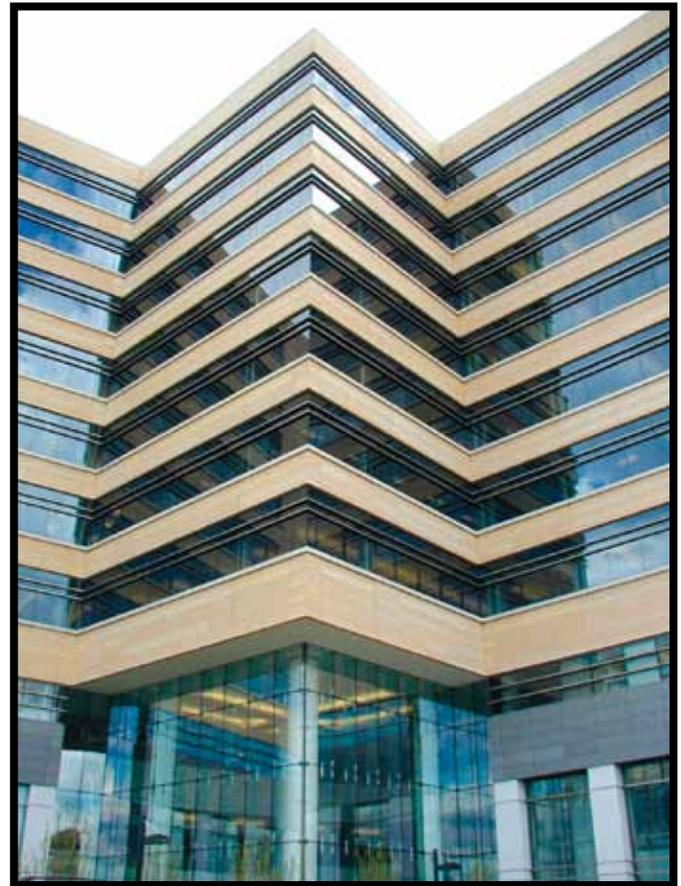


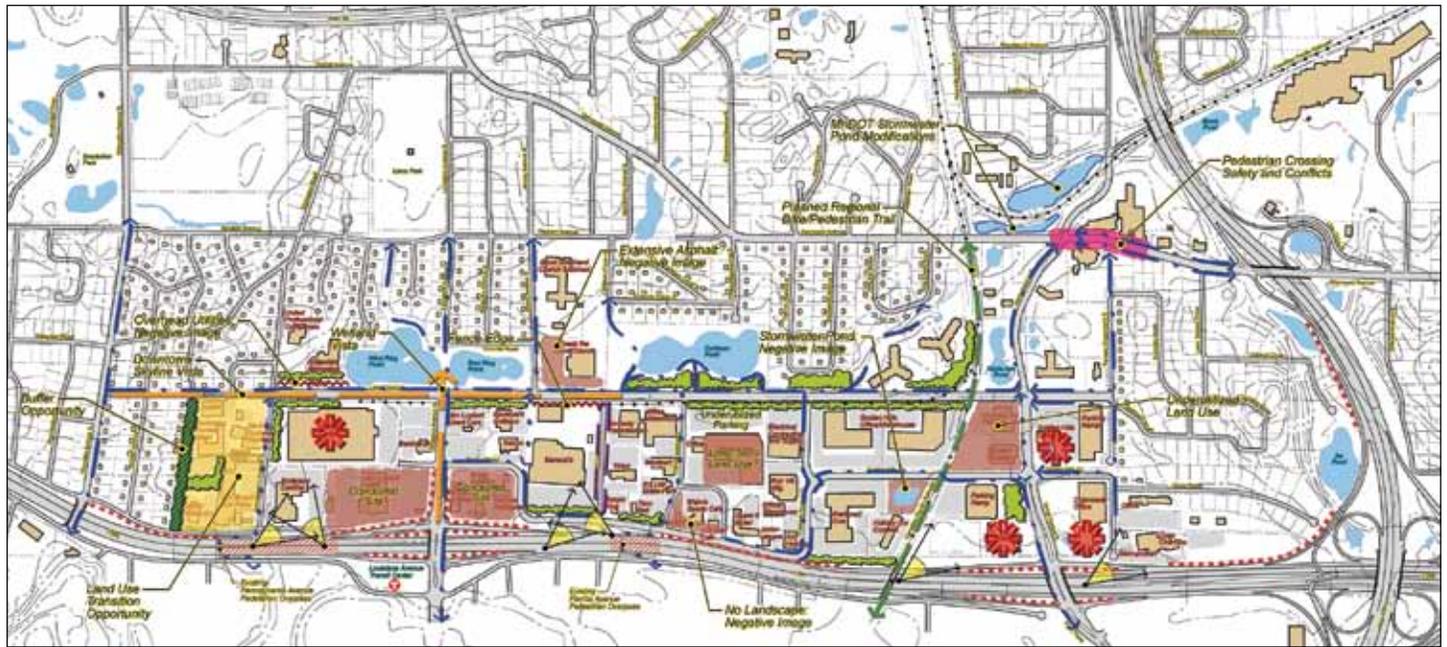
Photo by City Staff

*The Allianz building was a result of the redevelopment plan associated with the Golden Hills Redevelopment Area in 1984.*

*ful of commercial uses that have actually been added to the permitted use list for the Industrial zoning district, these are retail outlets that are not allowed per the code. For the most part, it appears they came in as legal industrial uses and then evolved to something more commercial in nature... In several other cases, businesses came in as wholesalers or distributors and were allowed to set aside a small portion of the building for display or servicing; over time, that floor space expanded until it achieved the scope of a retail outlet, complete with advertising to the public.*

The corridor's problems prompted the City to include part of it in the Golden Hills Redevelopment Area in 1984. The redevelopment plan has been implemented since then by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). Results of that redevelopment include several signature office buildings—the Colonnade and Allianz—as well as the Holiday Inn Express and the Golden Hills Business Park, with multiple office tenants in separate buildings. City involvement in redevelopment was facilitated through creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. This district will expire in 2015.

Figure 4.2: Urban Design/Visual Analysis



-  Primary Vistas
-  Bike/Pedestrian Routes
-  Bike/Pedestrian Opportunities
-  Landmark
-  Roadway Vistas
-  Hampshire Road Improvements
-  Landscaped Edges
-  Retaining Walls
-  Freeway/Adjacent Land Grades Similar

Extensive involvement by the HRA in future redevelopment in the I-394 Corridor is not anticipated. Rather, re-development will come about through a series of private initiatives, with City guidance and, where appropriate, public-private partnerships on specific improvements.

### Urban Design and Visual Analysis

Figure 4.2 depicts some of the more noticeable visual features of the corridor as well as some of the identifiable opportunities for improvements. Features highlighted on the graphic include:

- ♦ views of the downtown Minneapolis skyline, looking east along Laurel Ave
- ♦ views over the corridor from the pedestrian overpasses at Pennsylvania and Florida Aves
- ♦ the number of “concealed” sites—that is, sites below freeway level and largely invisible—at the Louisiana Ave interchange

- ♦ areas that suffer from a lack of landscaping, excessive paving, or underutilized buildings and parking
- ♦ existing and potential bike and pedestrian routes, many extending from the residential neighborhoods north of Laurel Ave into the corridor

### Current Land Uses

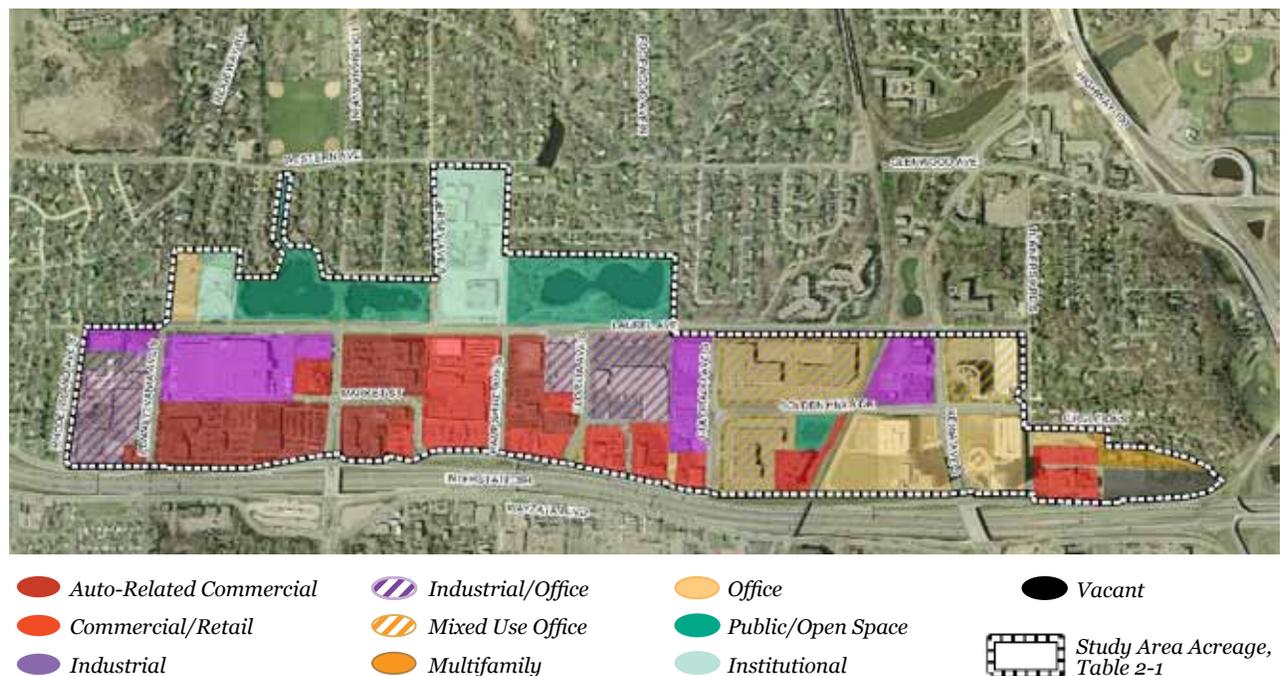
As described above and shown in Figure 4.3, the primary study corridor (extending from I-394 to Laurel Ave) has evolved into a highly diverse mix of commercial, office and industrial uses. East of Colorado Ave, office uses dominate around the Xenia Ave interchange, indicating the influence of the Golden Hills Redevelopment Plan. The Allianz corporate headquarters and the Colonnade office tower are the largest uses in the area. A seven-acre site at the northwest corner of Xenia Ave and Golden Hills Dr (the former Olympic Printing site) is currently proposed for a mixed use development. West of Colorado, industrial and commercial uses are closely combined, with a large cluster of auto-related

commercial uses—auto dealerships and service facilities—close to Louisiana Ave. Visibility from I-394, or the lack thereof, is significant; many land uses at Louisiana are largely concealed from the highway itself, although partially visible from the overpass.

Public open space is concentrated along Laurel Ave, where the City created the Laurel Avenue Greenbelt ponds (using existing natural wetland areas) in the mid-1970s to help solve drainage problems in the area while providing a public amenity. The three ponds of the Greenbelt are generally considered one of the study area’s most attractive features, and trails are enjoyed by area residents and workers.

Outside the primary study corridor (bounded by Laurel Ave, Turners Crossroad and Rhode Island Ave) single-family housing is the dominant land use, interspersed with several multi-family complexes near Xenia Ave. Two large religious institutions occupy the block between Hampshire and Jersey Aves. A sheltered workshop and an office warehouse building

Figure 4.3: Land Use 2005





*Typical franchise with landscaping*



*Industrial use, Laurel Avenue*



*Auto sales and service uses*

photos by City staff

are located north of Laurel at Pennsylvania Ave.

Figure 4.3 identifies land uses in several categories:

- ♦ auto-related commercial, including auto dealerships and service establishments
- ♦ commercial/retail uses, including many of the small fast-food restaurants and other highway-oriented businesses
- ♦ industrial
- ♦ industrial/office combined (primarily industrial with a smaller office component)

- ♦ mixed-use office—applies to the Golden Hills Business Park, and includes some limited industrial uses
- ♦ multi-family residential
- ♦ institutional, primarily churches
- ♦ open space, including parks and storm water basins

Approximate acreage of each land use type is shown in Table 4.1.

### Natural Resources

Soils in the corridor are known to be problematic. Much of the area was once wetland, and subsequent drainage for development and road construction has left large areas of muck

and peat soils that are highly susceptible to subsidence. The 1989 Corridor Study noted:

*At many locations, the underlying soils have been disrupted by fill or cut-and-fill practices. The difference between “fill” and “cut-and-fill” is that the latter has a higher organic content, being composed largely of soil that was cut from surrounding high ground and dumped into the low spots, while the former is characterized by pockets of household trash, demolition debris, and other frequently unsavory artifacts.*

Many buildings in the corridor, including Menards, the Florida West office/warehouse, and Burger King, were built on wetlands and required pilings and extensive soil remediation.

Golden Valley is located almost entirely within the Bassett Creek Watershed, which is managed by the Bassett Creek Water Management Commission. The study area is within this watershed.

The City’s *Surface Water Management Plan* was completed in 1999. It addresses the issues of water quality, wetland protection, storm water management (storm sewers and ponds), and sedimentation and erosion control. Within the study area (identified as the Sweeney Lake sub-basin of the Bassett Creek Watershed), the plan identifies multiple ponds and wetlands, as well as a trunk storm sewer

**Table 4.1: I-394 Corridor Land Use By Acreage**

Land Use	Parcels	Acres
Auto Related Commercial	15	33.0
Commercial/Retail	17	38.8
Industrial	9	28.6
Industrial/Office	6	24.3
Mixed-Use Office	5	29.8
Multifamily	1	2.8
Office	9	23.6
Public/Open Space	3	32.4
Institutional	3	19.6
Vacant	1	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>232.4</b>

Source: City of Golden Valley, 2006 (does not include rights-of-way)

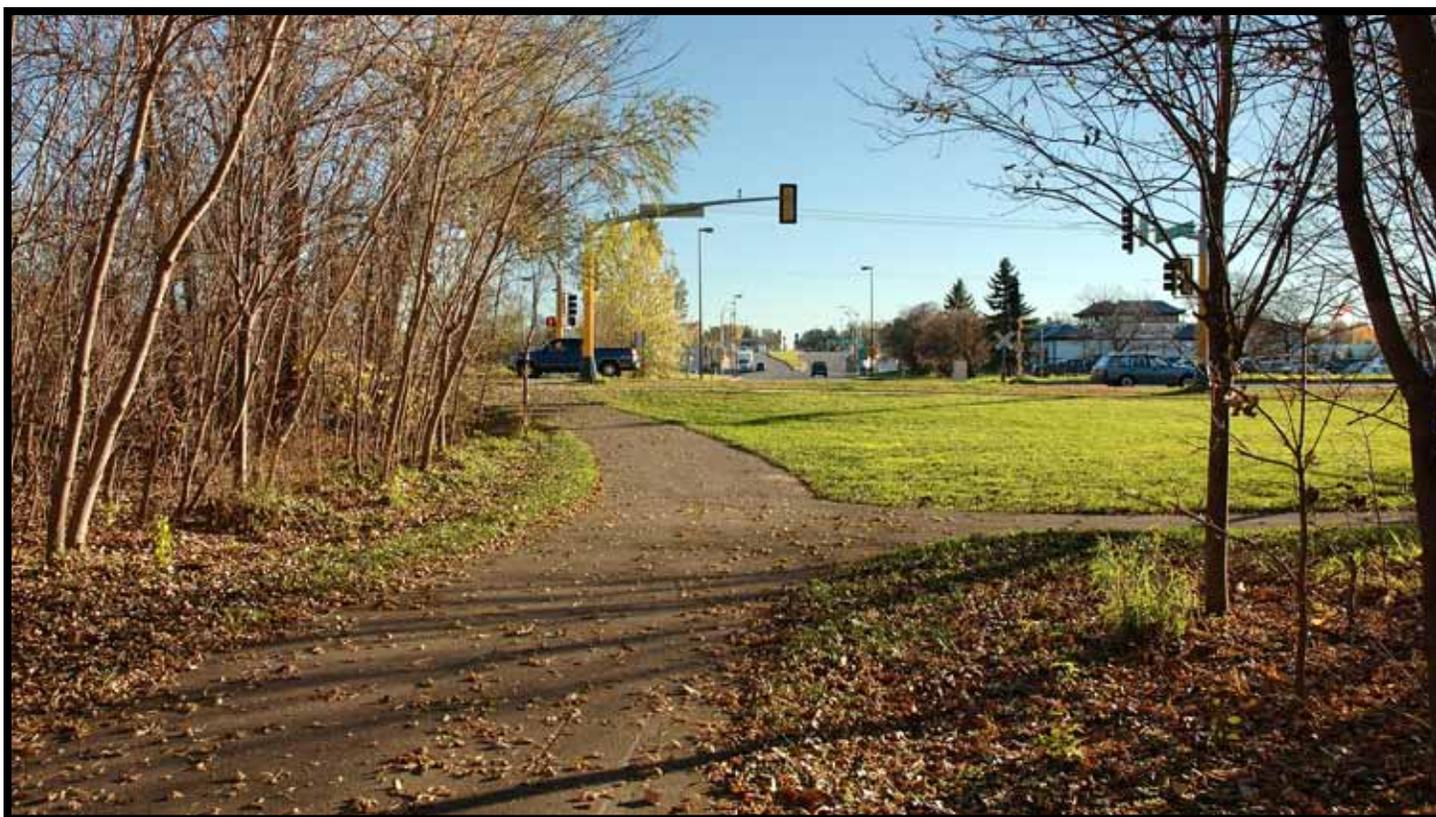


photo by City staff

#### Trail around Laurel Avenue ponds

that runs along Laurel Ave from approximately Hampshire Ave, then discharges into a storm water pond along the Canadian Pacific Railroad north of Laurel, then through a series of ponds to Sweeney Lake.

Improved water quality (nutrient and sediment removal) is the goal of the City and the Bassett Creek Water Management Commission, with particular emphasis on water quality ponding, and best management practices for all redevelopment proposals.

The Golden Valley *Natural Resources Inventory* was completed in 2003. The study identifies natural resources in the city according to the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS). The MLCCS standards identify and assess vegetative communities in detail, including data on significant native plant communities; rare and endangered species; wetlands; wildlife corridors; invasive, exotic, and

nuisance vegetation; and potential for habitat restoration and public access.

The Natural Resource Inventory grouped the city into a series of Resource Management Units (RMUs) and identified woodland, forest, and wetland communities in each one. The I-394 study area falls within two RMUs: Laurel Avenue Greenbelt and a portion of North Tyrol Park (east of Xenia Ave).

The 885-acre Laurel Avenue Greenbelt RMU is home to a great diversity of land uses, as discussed above. Its central natural feature is the Laurel Avenue Greenbelt and the associated greenway connecting it to neighboring Lions Park, Western Avenue Marsh Nature Area, and residential areas. The Laurel Avenue Greenbelt RMU includes:

- ♦ five distinct wetland communities scattered through the northern part

of the RMU and in the Western Avenue Marsh

- ♦ aquatic communities
- ♦ floodplain forest in the Western Avenue Marsh Nature Area
- ♦ disturbed deciduous woodland and box elder-green ash forest communities around the Laurel Avenue ponds.

Nuisance vegetation includes European buckthorn around the Laurel Avenue ponds and reed canary grass in the Western Avenue Marsh.

The North Tyrol Park RMU covers the southeast corner of the city, from Xenia Ave east to the city boundary and north to Hwy 55 and the Canadian Pacific railroad line. Natural communities include areas of disturbed deciduous woodland and other forest types in the residential area on the west side of Hwy 100.

The Natural Resource Inventory included general recommendations for removal of nuisance vegetation, particularly buckthorn and purple loosestrife, but recommended that the City develop further natural resource management objectives. These objectives and related policies will be considered as part of the comprehensive planning process for natural resources.

## Building and Land Values

Various indicators of building and land value were used to identify sites that may be “soft” or susceptible to change. (Note that data was compiled in 2005 and does not reflect more recent sales or valuations.) These indicators include:

- ♦ **Building Value to Land Value**—This ratio may indicate parcels where land may be considered more valuable for redevelopment than for its current use.
- ♦ **Market Value per Square Foot of Land**—All parcels outside the Golden Hills Redevelopment Area have an estimated market value of \$10-30 per square foot of land, including buildings and improvements.
- ♦ **Year Built**—Most parcels around the Louisiana Ave interchange were built before 1980, and most parcels around the Xenia Ave interchange were developed more recently, including the Golden Hills Business Park.
- ♦ **Last Date of Sale**—A majority of parcels west of Hampshire have remained in the same ownership since 1970 or earlier. Most parcels between Hampshire and Colorado changed owners between 1991 and 2004.
- ♦ **Last Sale Price per Square Foot of Land**—A majority of parcels between Colorado and Hampshire sold for between \$7 and \$16 a square foot. Outside of this area, most parcels sold for less than \$7 a square foot (sale price includes buildings and improvements).
- ♦ **Building Value per Square Foot Building Area**—The parcels west of Menards and east of Louisiana Ave have building values from \$27-\$120 per square foot of building area. Most other parcels west of Colorado have values of less than \$27.

These maps were combined to create a single “Susceptibility to Change” graphic (Figure 4.4). It identifies sites with lower land and building values, low ratios of building to land value, and older structures.

## Recent Development Proposals

During the period of this study, several proposals were introduced in the Xenia Ave/Park Place interchange area in both Golden Valley and St Louis Park. These have been considered in the traffic analyses discussed below and in development of the corridor plan. Their status in late 2006 is as follows:

- ♦ **Former Olympic Printing Site**—This site, at the northwest corner of Xenia and Golden Hills Dr, is currently proposed for development as a mixed-use PUD, to include an eight-story office tower, about 10,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, and a 1,058-stall parking structure. A second phase would include a 10-story condominium tower with 75 units and two parking spaces per unit.
- ♦ **Allianz Expansion**—A 200,000-square-foot expansion of the existing office complex was completed in 2006.
- ♦ **Colonnade Expansion**—The existing PUD provides for a 250-suite hotel on the remaining vacant parcel. A PUD Amendment substituting a 240,000 square foot office with related structured parking was proposed in 2006 and denied in early 2007.
- ♦ **West End Development**—This proposal by Duke Realty covers a 49-acre site in the southwest quadrant of the I-394/Hwy 100 interchange. The majority of the site is in St Louis Park but includes a small area in Golden Valley. A draft environmental review document (an Alternative Urban Areawide Review, or AUAR) has been prepared for the site, considering four build scenarios with a mix of office, commercial and residential uses, and a fifth scenario reflecting St Louis Park’s current comprehensive plan. The five scenarios include the following range of uses and square footage:
  - ♦ **office space**—from 900,000 to 2 million square feet in 9- to 20-story buildings
  - ♦ **retail space**—from 350,000 to 500,000 square feet in 1- to 5-story buildings
  - ♦ **residential units**—from 125 to 900 condo units in 2- to 4-story buildings
  - ♦ **hotel development**—from 125 to 175 rooms
  - ♦ **parking**—structured and surface parking to serve all uses, ranging from 5,650 to 11,850 spaces

Development is anticipated to occur from 2007–2011.

Figure 4.4: Susceptibility to Change



-  < 1.0 Building/Land Value
-  < \$10/SF EMV Parcel
-  < \$15 Building Value/SF
-  1951-1960 Year Primary Structure was Built
-  1961-1970 Year Primary Structure was Built

## Transportation and Circulation Issues

The I-394 Overlay District was developed in 1989 to address traffic management issues associated with the upgrade of former State Highway 12 to the current I-394. The ordinance, adopted by the Cities of Golden Valley and St Louis Park, establishes minimum levels of service for each interchange and requires traffic management plans, traffic studies, and potential assessments for new dense development in the interchange areas. Development potential is allocated to cities that share interchanges, and a joint task force of these cities monitors this process. This process has worked well to date, but increasing background traffic has already resulted in poor levels of service at the Louisiana Ave interchange and diminishing capacity at the Xenia interchange that will require mitigation as land uses intensify. When combined with development pressures in both Golden Valley and St Louis Park, traffic increases may begin to limit the ability to develop or redevelop land to the intensity that the area's assets might otherwise support.

Figure 4.5, Circulation and Connectivity Analysis, draws from a technical memo, "Overlay Zoning District Ordinance Development Update and Analysis," prepared in July 2005 by SRF Consulting Group. It indicates the levels of service projected at the key intersections on Louisiana and Xenia intersections as a result of anticipated levels of development. Traffic projections are based on increased background traffic levels and the development proposals listed above, as well as a small commercial redevelopment of the Golden Hills Shopping Center/Metropolitan Ballroom. They do not include any of the land use changes recommended in this study.

The graphic shows the greatest delays are at the intersections on Louisiana at the south ramps and south frontage road, but the SRF study shows that these could be improved with revised signal timing and coordination.

The 2005 report included the following recommendations to improve intersection operations in the study area:

- ♦ optimize signal timing and coordination of Louisiana Ave/I-394 south ramps and Frontage Rd intersections
- ♦ install northbound left-turn lane at Xenia/Glenwood Aves
- ♦ at Xenia Ave/Golden Hills Dr, re-stripe westbound approach of Golden Hills Dr, install westbound right-turn

lane, and modify traffic signal to allow concurrent eastbound and westbound turns

- ♦ install traffic signal, interconnect system, and coordinate signals at Xenia Ave

## Current Zoning and Other Regulations

As described in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan (see above under Background), the majority of the study area west of the Canadian Pacific rail line is zoned Industrial. This district is designed "to provide for industrial and manufacturing uses which "require isolation from residential and commercial areas." Permitted uses include offices, warehouses, lumber and building materials sales and general manufacturing, as well as lodging, kennels, and miscellaneous other uses. Most retail, auto-oriented, and outdoor sales uses are conditional. However, as the 1999 plan indicated, these uses have been allowed to proliferate, so the area now appears as more of a commercial district.

While this district does not require a minimum lot area or width, it does require deep landscaped front yard setbacks (35 feet, or 75 feet opposite residential uses), and these have enhanced the attractiveness of many properties while providing a buffer for adjacent residential uses. However, many properties are nonconforming with regard to these and other setbacks.

East of the Canadian Pacific rail line and north of Laurel Ave, nonresidential areas are zoned Business and Professional, a district designed "to provide an exclusive office district with incidental retail." The large Allianz and Colonnade office complexes were developed as Planned Unit Developments, allowing greater building height and flexibility as a way to achieve higher-quality design.

Other districts that apply in small parts of the study area include:

- ♦ Light Industrial (parcel at Laurel and Xenia)
- ♦ Commercial (east of Turners Crossroad adjacent to I-394)
- ♦ I-1 Institutional (church and school properties north of Laurel)
- ♦ I-4 Institutional (open space and fire station properties north of Laurel)
- ♦ M-1 Multiple Dwelling (multi-family developments near Xenia north of Laurel) 





photo by City staff

## Section 3: Guiding Principles

**A**s a first step in formulating the Corridor Plan, eight guiding principles were developed. The principles are concise statements that establish the direction and intention of the plan. They were adopted by the City Council in December 2005.

**1. Enable the corridor to evolve toward a diverse mix of land uses, including residential as well as commercial and industrial.** A mix of activities, uses, and densities will help sustain the corridor through changing economic cycles, consumer preferences, and housing trends. Mixed uses can create synergies and increase the level of pedestrian activity. Active uses (such as retail) at ground floor level can help to create activity after working hours. At the same time, the corridor should complement, not compete with, the Hwy 55/Winnetka district, now the City's true 'downtown.'

**2. Maximize integration rather than separation of land uses, where appropriate.** Many land uses can benefit from increased integration with one another, including neighborhood-serving retail, multi-family and senior housing, offices, and low-impact services. Other land uses, such as auto-oriented commercial or industrial uses, can benefit from integration with similar uses but need to be buffered from residential neighborhoods.

**3. Maintain the corridor as an employment center.** Jobs within the corridor help maintain Golden Valley's jobs-housing balance while sustaining commercial enterprises. Retaining 'living wage' jobs should be a priority.

#### 4. Improve the visual coherence and attractiveness of the corridor.

Improvements in streetscapes, landscaped areas, open spaces, building aesthetics, and parking/service areas all contribute to a more unified and visually appealing environment, with an increased sense of identity. Buildings and other private improvements should make positive contributions to the district and the broader public realm, while public improvements should set the standard for private investment.

#### 5. Improve connectivity for all modes.

The development of I-394 and subsequent road realignments have resulted in a discontinuous and confusing circulation system. Im-

provements in east-west vehicular circulation and north-south pedestrian circulation are most needed; however, roadways should be designed to be attractive and safe for all modes of travel.

#### 6. Foster neighborhood-serving retail and services.

Commercial development should include a variety of small independent businesses and larger enterprises that serve City residents, supplementing and broadening the current mix of commercial uses.

#### 7. Maintain or improve the functioning of intersections and highway interchanges.

The functioning of the I-394 interchanges at Xenia and Louisiana Aves, and other key intersections within the corridor,

is critical to maintaining commercial viability and neighborhood quality of life. New development must be carefully planned, evaluated, and designed so that interchanges and intersections continue to function at an adequate level.

#### 8. Foster sustainable development and work to establish a balance between urban and natural systems.

Encourage the application of green building and infrastructure techniques. Examples include low-impact development that maintains the natural functions of the land, reduces storm water runoff, and fosters resource conservation and the use of renewable systems in new construction. 🌱



photo by consultant

*This photo of a mixed-use area scored the highest of all pictures used in the Visual Preference Survey. This development incorporates a number of the guiding principles developed for this study.*



## Section 4: Alternative Scenarios

Two general scenarios for the corridor’s evolution were developed as a way of clarifying the choices and options available to landowners and the City.

The “Laurel Avenue Spine Alternative” (Figure 4.6) views the corridor as a series of parallel sub-corridors centered on Laurel Ave, with its ponds and open space forming the transition between residential uses to the north and mixed use development to the south. The Speak the Word Church parcel is recommended for multifamily housing, should the current use relocate. The industrial uses west of Pennsylvania and east of Rhode Island Ave are proposed to transition towards medium-density housing. The parcels and land uses closest to I-394 are served by a continuous “backage” road instead of the current discontinuous frontage road. These “freeway edge” land uses are anticipated to remain a combination of freestanding retail and large, highly visible office uses.

The “Laurel Avenue/Freeway Employment Focus Alternative” (Figure 4.7) envisions a continuation and expansion of the large-scale employment uses, including manufacturing, in the corridor, while potentially replacing the auto dealerships south of Laurel Ave. A new street parallel to Rhode Island Ave is shown dividing new medium-density housing from the industrial uses. North-south connections between the current frontage road and Laurel Ave are strengthened, with several new local street segments.

Table 4.2 compares these alternatives. In general, the Task Force and Planning Commission, as well as area residents,

preferred the Laurel Avenue Spine Alternative as offering a more logical series of transitions between residential and commercial/office uses and providing more opportunities for higher-density housing. However, each alternative should be viewed more as a broad-brush concept than a specific plan. City decision-makers realize that the evolution of the corridor will be driven largely by private initiatives rather than large-scale public redevelopment. Therefore, *incremental change*, rather than radical alteration, should be anticipated and will be guided by the City’s development standards.

Figure 4.8, Site-Based Alternatives, builds on this idea of incremental change, envisioning alternative scenarios for specific blocks or parcels that were identified as being sus-

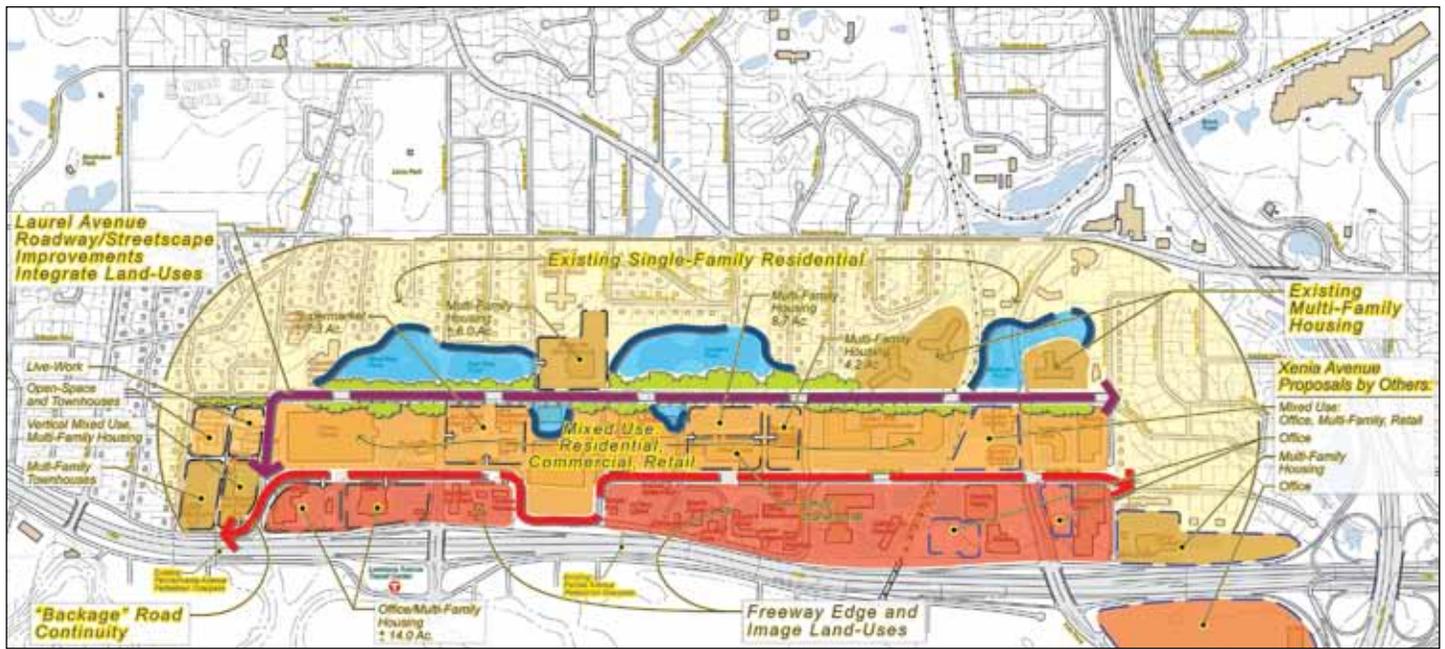
ceptible to change. Figure 4.8A (Preliminary Site Development Data) presents a sample redevelopment scenario for each identified site, involving new residential, office, retail, or manufacturing uses. These scenarios are not intended to prescribe those particular uses for those sites, but rather to show how each site could be used more efficiently and intensively. In each case, sufficient parking spaces for each use, as well as storm water management facilities, are provided on site.

These development scenarios were then used as a basis for traffic analysis and incorporated into the Illustrative Development Plan, discussed below. 

**Table 4.2: Overview of Alternatives**

Laurel Avenue Spine Alternative	Employment Focus Alternative
<b>General Concept</b>	
Introduction of medium- to high-density housing and mixed use along the Laurel Ave ‘spine’ and several north-south connecting streets. Auto service uses and car dealerships would gradually be replaced with uses that would bring new residents and neighborhood-oriented services to the area. Light manufacturing may continue in some locations or phase out gradually.	Retention and creation of high-quality employment opportunities. The Louisiana Ave area is the primary focus of this alternative, while the Xenia Ave area will continue to develop as currently planned. Light manufacturing and office uses predominate. Most car dealerships are expected to phase out gradually. Small freeway-oriented retail uses remain, with improved site design and internal circulation.
<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	
Vertical mixed use, multi-family housing, offices, continuing light manufacturing and commercial use. Supermarket is a preferred use. Central square or plaza offers opportunities for interaction. Structured parking will be necessary for more intense uses.	Light manufacturing, office, office-showroom and commercial uses. Medium-density residential and mixed uses in a few ‘edge’ locations. Most uses can be accommodated with surface parking.
<b>Building Types (priority order)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vertical mixed use (structured parking)</li> <li>• single-family attached housing</li> <li>• multi-family housing structured parking)</li> <li>• multi-story office (structured parking)</li> <li>• low-rise office/light industrial</li> <li>• free-standing commercial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low-rise office/light industrial</li> <li>• multi-story office (structured parking)</li> <li>• free-standing commercial</li> <li>• vertical mixed use</li> <li>• single-family attached housing</li> <li>• multi-family housing (structured parking)</li> </ul>
<b>Related Street Improvements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phased improvements to ‘straighten out’ frontage road</li> <li>• Laurel Ave traffic calming</li> <li>• Interchange and intersection improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phased improvements to ‘straighten out’ frontage road</li> <li>• Interchange and intersection improvements</li> </ul>
<b>Related Design Standards</b>	
Landscape enhancements—screening of service and parking areas. Materials and design standards for buildings. Higher degree of design review for new mixed use and residential buildings.	Landscape enhancements—screening of service and parking areas. Materials and design standards for buildings.

Figure 4.6: Laurel Avenue Spine Alternative



← Access Points

Figure 4.7: Laurel Avenue/Freeway Employment Focus Alternative

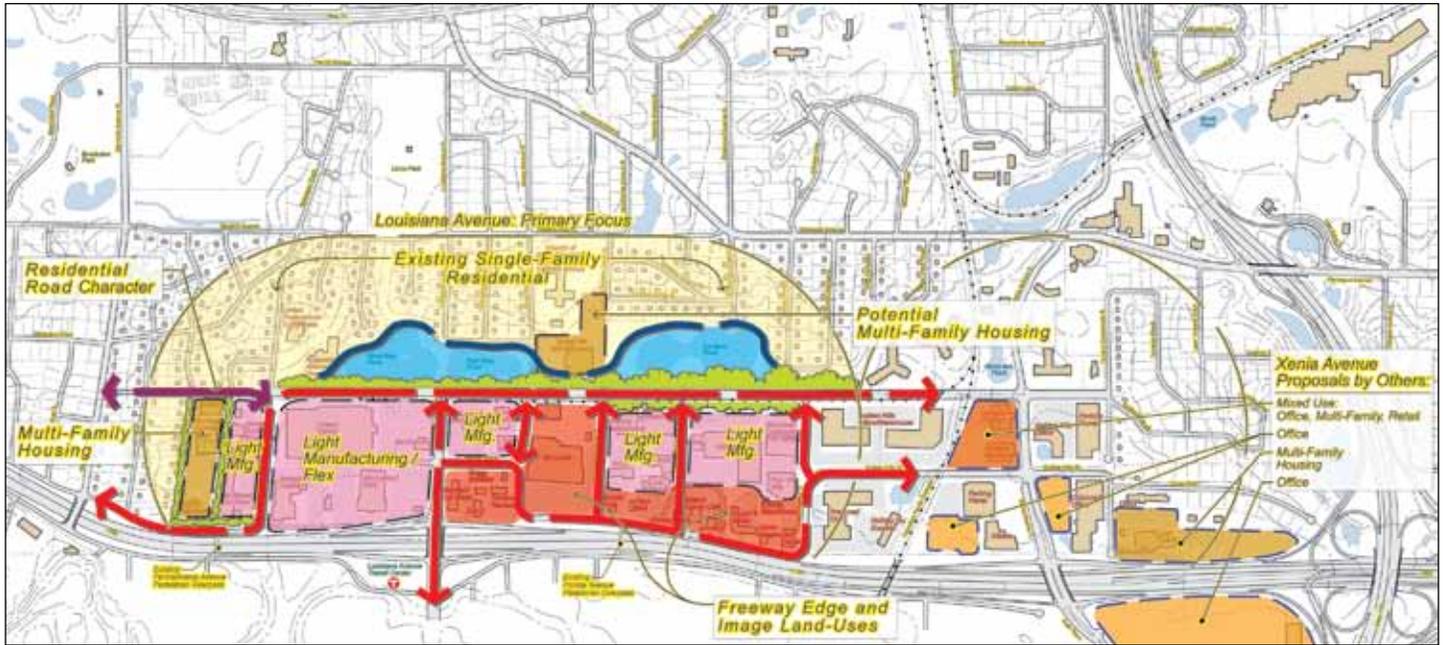
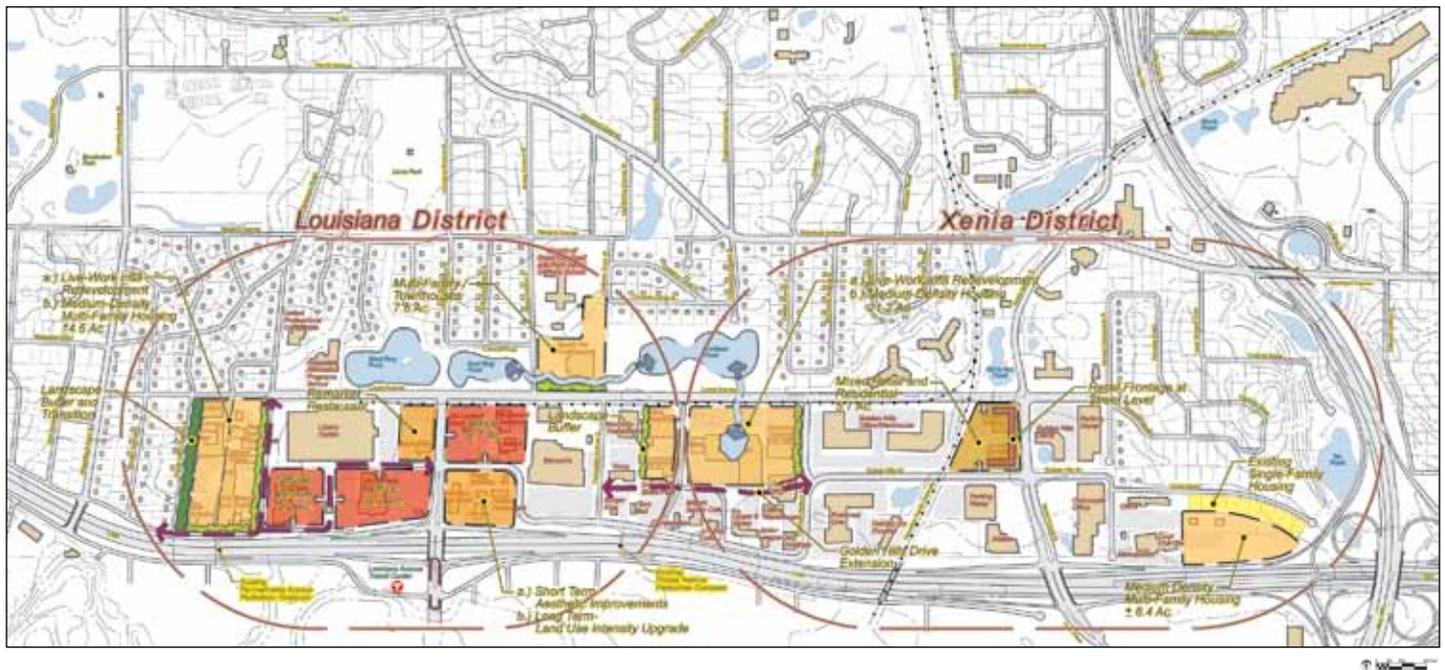
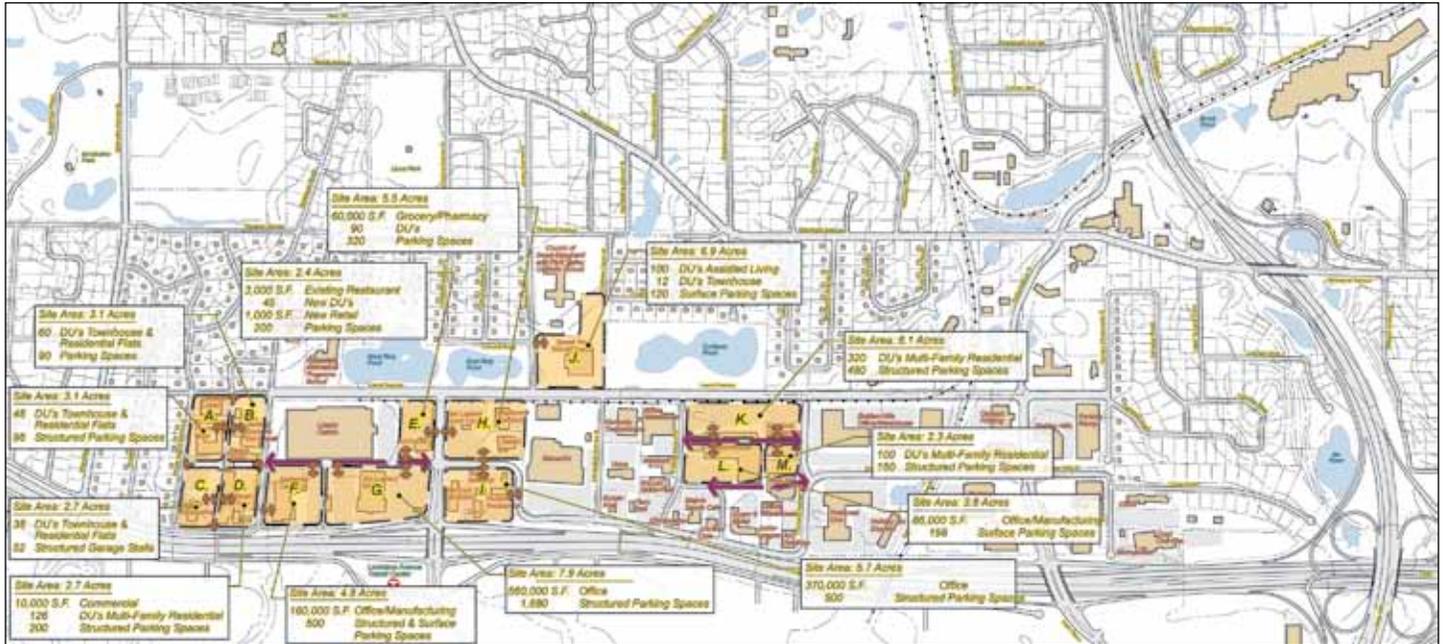


Figure 4.8: Site Based Alternatives



-  Roadway Improvements
-  Access Points

Figure 4.8a: Preliminary Site Development Data



W&A

-  Potential Roadway
-  Site Access/Egress Point



graphic by consultant

## Section 5: Framework Plan

The primary land uses that are recommended in the I-394 Corridor are a variety of residential, office, and commercial uses that can be combined compatibly with one another and will contribute to a more cohesive, diverse, and walkable environment.

### Land Uses—Primary and Secondary

Primary land uses include:

- ♦ **medium- to high-density housing** in a variety of configurations (multi-story multifamily buildings, the upper floors of mixed-use buildings, attached single-family units such as townhouses) and ranging from rental to owner-occupied (condominium or cooperative) housing. Many would be appropriate for senior housing.
- ♦ **commercial retail and service uses** that are integrated into mixed or multi-use developments, gradually moving away from the current pattern of small free-standing convenience retail. A grocery store is also encouraged as a medium-sized freestanding retail facility that would meet neighborhood needs.
- ♦ **business and professional office uses.** It is understood that office use can have significant traffic impacts, as regulated by the I-394 Overlay district, and that large office uses will typically require traffic analyses and actions that will minimize congestion.
- ♦ **open space.** The development plan does not identify any sites for new public parks or plazas, but large developments would be required to provide improved open space

as part of their site plans. Enhanced streetscape treatments along major streets will also improve the area's appearance.

Secondary land uses include the following (these are mainly existing uses that could remain in the area, but could also be replaced by primary land uses):

- ♦ **existing industrial and commercial uses.** These uses could remain in the area indefinitely, but the City will consider redevelopment or reuse proposals for sites that may be ready for more intense and market-responsive uses. These include the auto dealerships in the Louisiana Ave area.
- ♦ **institutional uses.** Currently the study area includes two large churches and a sheltered workshop north of Laurel Ave. While these uses could certainly remain in the area, if they choose to relocate, their sites should be considered for single-family attached or other types of medium-density housing, as well as restoration and expansion of the Laurel Avenue Greenbelt wetlands and ponds. Assisted living facilities would also be appropriate within the corridor.

### Illustrative Development Plan—Louisiana Avenue Area

Figure 4.9 (Illustrative Development Plan) depicts the potential development scenarios shown in Figure 4.8A (Site-Based Alternatives), focusing on the Louisiana Ave interchange area, where most redevelopment opportunities are located. Proposed land uses include medium to high-density residential uses, office and manufacturing uses, limited new commercial use,

and structured parking to serve all these uses. Some uses are combined in mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail. Test development sites are shown in detail in Appendix E, Conceptual Plan Drawings.

In reviewing Figure 4.9, it is important to remember that the ultimate development plans for each site will depend on market factors, individual development decisions, and on the zoning. The proposed land uses are just one example of desirable development patterns for these sites. As discussed below under Implementation, the proposed zoning district for the corridor would allow all of the land uses shown in the plan, as well as allowing for the continuation of existing land uses.

### Building Height Limits

Building height needs to be regulated to achieve a development pattern that maximizes visibility from I-394 while achieving suitable transitions to surrounding lower-density office and residential development. Three proposed building height 'zones' are shown in Figure 4.10:

- ♦ high-rise buildings—up to 10 stories—in the area south of Golden Hills Dr and Market St, and on both sides of Xenia Ave
- ♦ mid-rise buildings—up to six stories—primarily south of Laurel Ave and north of Golden Hills Dr/Market St. These heights represent a moderate change from existing building heights in those areas.
- ♦ low-rise buildings—up to three stories—in locations around the edges of the corridor where transitions to adjacent single-family neighborhoods are needed

Figure 4.11, Illustrative Development Visualization, shows the same de-

velopment scenarios as Figure 4.10, but from a birds-eye perspective that shows the range of building heights.

### Traffic Impact Analysis

The development scenarios shown in the Illustrative Development Plan were evaluated by the City's consulting traffic engineer to determine the change in travel demand that should be expected as a result of these potential changes in land use in the corridor. The parcels, identified as Sites A through M in Figure 4.8 (Site-Based Alternatives), were analyzed to compare the traffic generated by existing land uses with traffic generated by planned land uses.

The majority of existing land uses are commercial and retail establishments, along with office space. The planned changes would result in a shift to a mix of residential, office and commercial/retail uses. Table 4.3 summarizes the cumulative change between the existing and proposed land uses for Sites A–M and describes the general effect of the change on traffic patterns.

The resultant mix of land uses would increase the overall number of daily trips generated. However, the peaking characteristics and an associated change in the direction and distribution of trips would focus more trips to the Louisiana Ave/I-394 interchange, with moderate increases on local collectors and arterials like Winnetka, Jersey, or Xenia Aves.

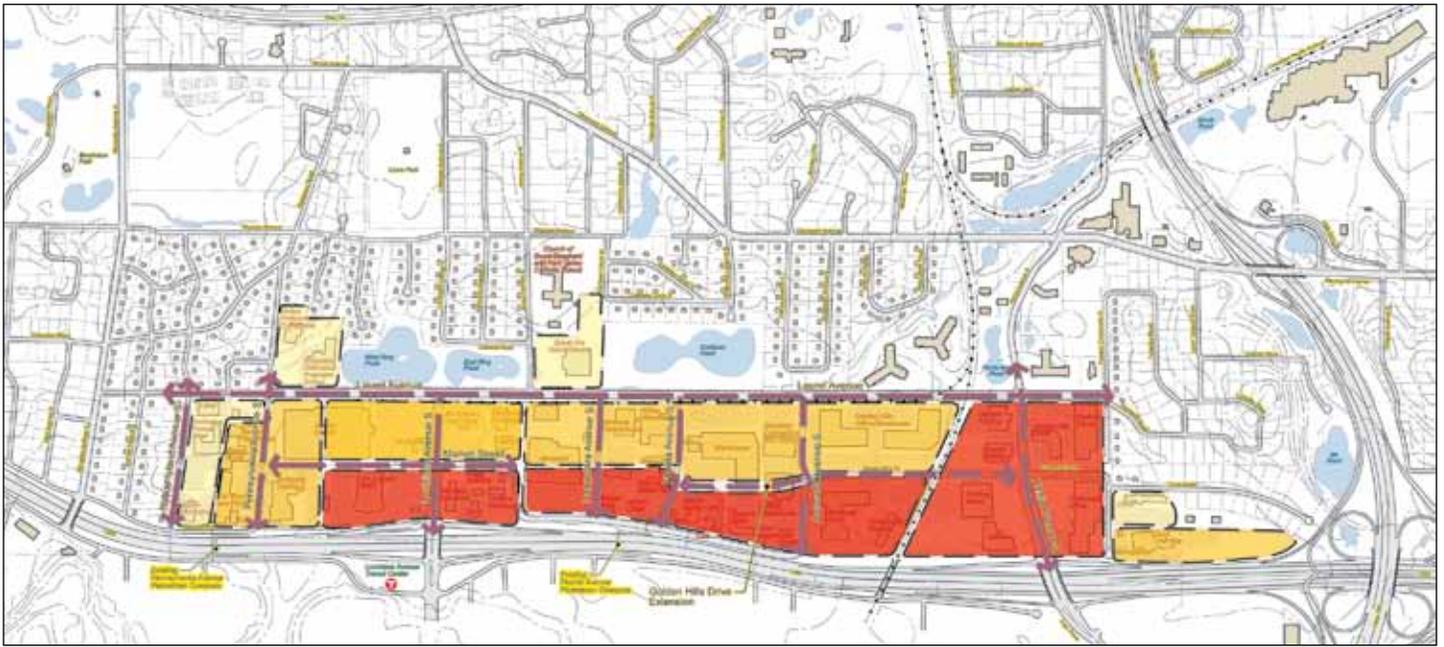
The commercial establishments currently in the study area generate both inbound and outbound traffic during all times of the day, since they are open during normal business hours and provide services to customers that can occur at any time (ie, auto maintenance, convenience retail, etc) As

Figure 4.9: Illustrative Development Plan—Louisiana Avenue Sub-Area



- MF Residential – High-Rise
- MF Residential – Mid-Rise
- MF Residential – Low-Rise
- Commercial
- Office
- Office/Manufacturing
- Structured Parking

Figure 4.10: Building Height Limits



-  Up To 10 Stories – High
-  Up To 6 Stories – Mid-Rise
-  Up To 3 Stories – Low-Rise
-  Primary Streets

Figure 4.11: Illustrative Development Visualization

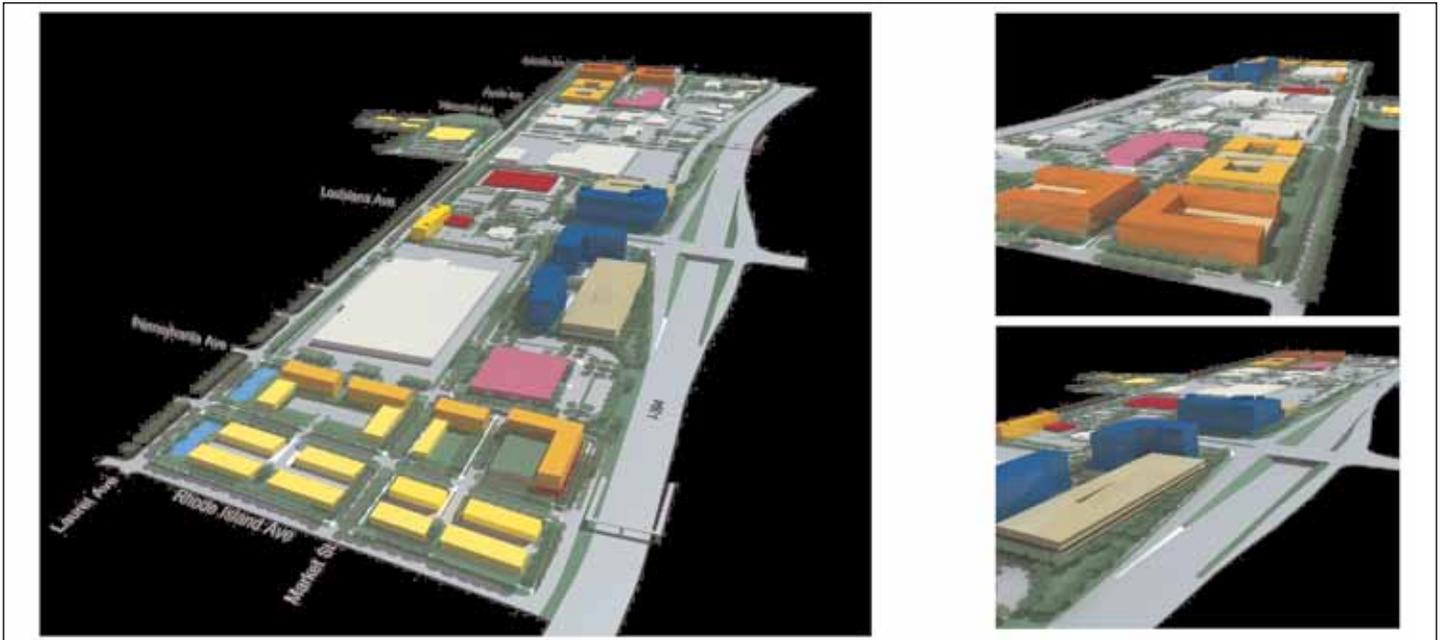


Table 4.3: I-394 Land Use Study: Sites A–M Daily Trip Generation

Land Use	Existing		Future		Change	
	Area	Daily Trips	Area	Daily Trips	Area	Daily Trips
Residential	0 <i>(dwelling units)</i>	0	939 <i>(dwelling units)</i>	6,080	939 <i>(dwelling units)</i>	6,080
Commercial/Retail	547,418 <i>(square feet)</i>	14,370	146,990	4,440	-400,428	-9,930
Office	210,687 <i>(square feet)</i>	2,660	1,156,000 <i>(square feet)</i>	9,520	945,313	6,860
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>17,030</b>	-	<b>20,040</b>	-	<b>3,010</b>

Source: Memorandum, SEH Inc, September 8, 2006, No. AGOLDV9801.00

these uses are gradually replaced, the volume of traffic entering the study area for those services would decrease.

The offices in the study area tend to attract inbound traffic in the morning and generate outbound trips in the afternoon. They may also generate traffic over the lunch hour but not on weekends or weekday evenings.

The planned land use changes in the area will result in an increase in residential units and office space with a reduction in commercial uses. Residential land uses generate trips throughout the day, evenings, and weekends.

In summary, the land use changes will reduce traffic flow to and from local destinations and result in an increase in commuting trips to job centers elsewhere in the metro region and to office space within the study area. This change tends to reduce traffic demands on the local arterials and increase demands on the regional roadways (ie, I-394 and Hwy 100).

### Streetscape Treatments

Figure 4.12, Roadway and Intersection Treatments, presents a conceptual plan for public improvements in the study area, with the goal of improving wayfinding, visual cohesiveness, pedestrian comfort and safety, and aesthetic appeal.

Streets are grouped into four general streetscape categories, A through D, based on their function within the area, their current and future volume of vehicular and pedestrian use, and proposed land use changes along these streets.

- ♦ Treatment A—Applies to the primary north-south interchange streets of Louisiana and Xenia, as well as Winnetka Ave (recently landscaped). Improvements include

gateway treatments at major intersections and a heavily landscaped median.

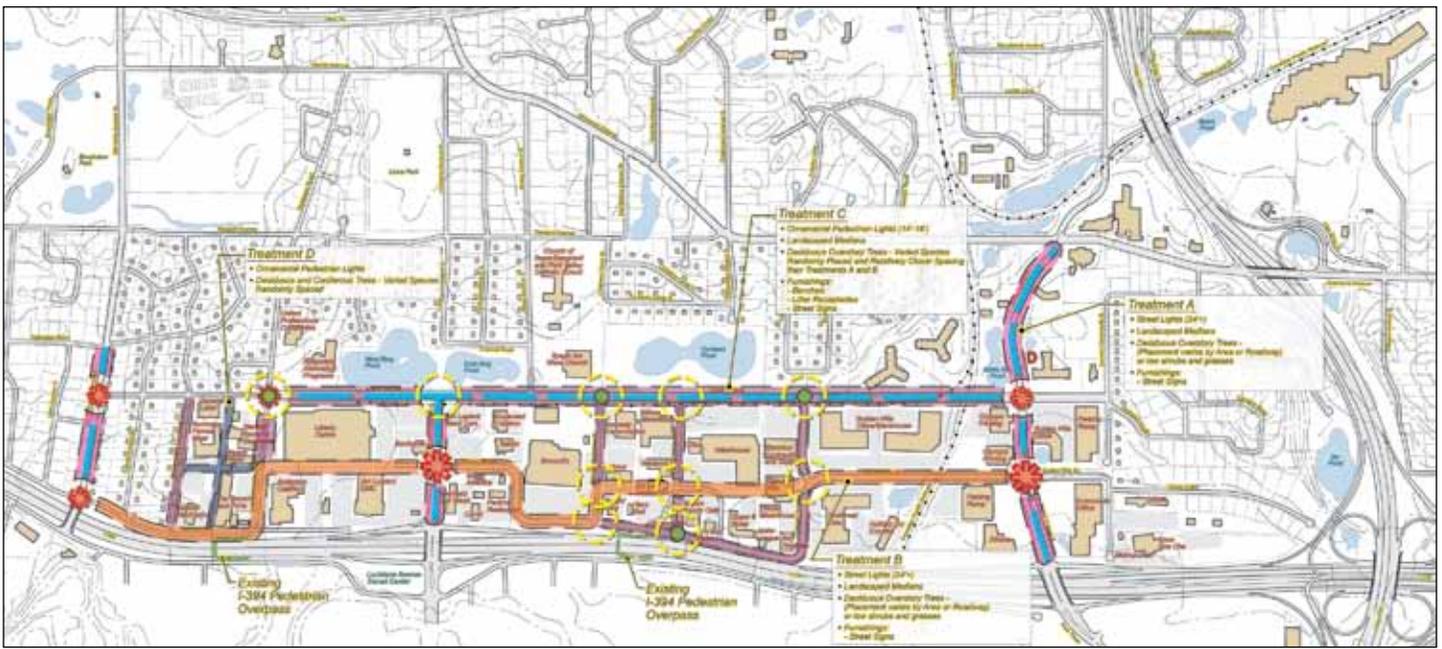
- ♦ Treatment B—Applies to Market St, Golden Hills Dr, and the remainder of the I-394 frontage road. Improvements are designed to create visual continuity and encourage pedestrian movement.
- ♦ Treatment C—A parkway type of design that would apply to Laurel Ave and to the north-south streets that carry lower volumes of traffic than the “A” streets.
- ♦ Treatment D—A narrower internal street, shown bisecting the block between Rhode Island and Pennsylvania Aves, to provide local access to smaller blocks proposed for medium-density townhouse and multifamily development. This street type could be used to divide other large ‘super-blocks’ if these are redeveloped.

All streets are intended to be designed with sidewalks on both sides as a general rule. Potential sites for gateway treatments are identified at major entry points to the corridor. Gateways are essentially designed entry points, intended to foster civic and neighborhood identity, orient visitors, link people to the natural or built environment, and establish themes that are carried out in other city districts. Gateway treatments can combine public art, monuments, markers, or decorative sign, landscape treatments, decorative lighting, and other street furniture. The graphic indicates major and minor gateways—major gateways would likely include several of the above-listed elements, while minor gateways would mainly consist of signs or markers and related landscaping.

### Design Standards

Future development within the I-394 Corridor will largely be initiated and implemented by private landowners and developers. The City’s role is to help shape this development by applying design guidelines as part of the develop-

Figure 4.12: Roadway and Intersection Treatments



-  Treatment A
-  Treatment B
-  Treatment C
-  Treatment D
-  Major Gateway
-  Gateway/Area Entry Point
-  Narrowed Intersection
-  Wayfinding System/Pedestrian Orientation
-  MSAS Roadway
-  Pedestrian Links

ment review process. Design guidelines are used by many communities in development review to improve the quality, character, and coherence of new development in a particular area.

Guidelines can help:

- ♦ guide property owners wishing to expand, renovate, or construct new buildings or parking
- ♦ assist City officials, staff, and the general public in reviewing development proposals

- ♦ establish a framework for public improvements to streets, parks, and other public facilities

The following guidelines (Table 4.4) are intended to be integrated into the proposed I-394 Mixed Use zoning district (see discussion under Implementation), and are also intended as a general guide to inform residents, landowners, and others who live, work, or own property in the corridor.



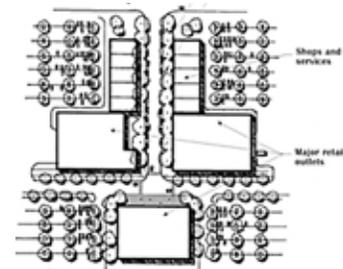
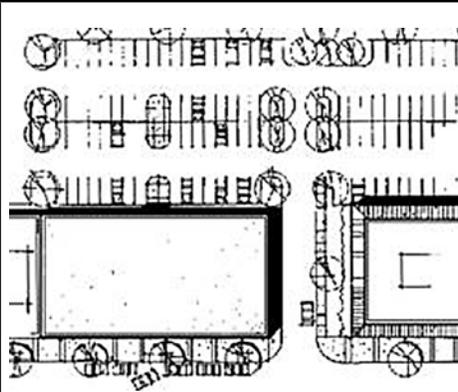
photos by consultant

Table 4.4: Design Guidelines

**Site Design, Circulation, and Parking**

**Driveways and Surface Parking**

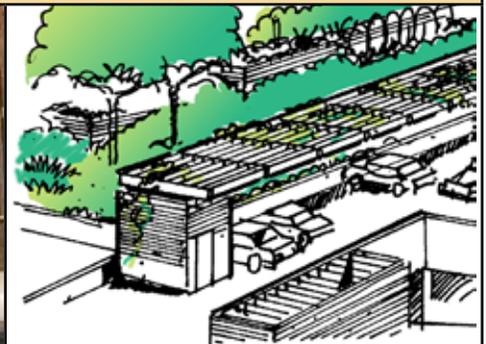
- ♦ Locate surface parking to side and rear of buildings where feasible.
- ♦ Encourage or require shared parking between complementary land uses.
- ♦ Divide large parking areas into smaller increments and introduce an internal pedestrian-orientated circulation system.



*Even "big box" buildings can be grouped in a manner that minimizes the amount of parking adjacent to the street and encourages walking within the complex*

**Structured Parking**

- ♦ Encourage a specified percentage of 'liner' storefronts along street frontages.
- ♦ Encourage trellis or other green features on roofs/sides of structures.
- ♦ Place entrances to parking structures on side streets, not primary street, where possible.



**Screening**

- ♦ Surface parking and service/loading areas should be screened where visible from street.
- ♦ Screening may consist of hedges, low walls or decorative fencing high enough to screen parked cars but low enough to allow visibility (3 – 3½ feet). A berm with low plantings and canopy trees may also be effective.



Table 4.4: Design Guidelines (continued)

**Internal Circulation**

- ◆ Encourage interconnected circulation within the block. (In this example, rear entrances and shared parking in a traditional downtown setting provide a high degree of interconnection.)



**Storm water Management**

- ◆ Use natural storm water management by directing water to natural systems, such as landscaped planters, swales, and gardens, to reduce and filter storm water runoff.



**Building Types**

**Residential: Attached and Multi-family**

- ◆ Building heights 2–8 stories, with careful placement of taller buildings closer to I-394
- ◆ Buildings ‘step down’ to neighborhood scale
- ◆ Front setbacks of 10–20 feet
- ◆ Variety of roof types



**Mixed Use: Live-Work, Commercial/Residential, Etc**

- ◆ Building heights 2–10 stories, with placement of taller buildings closer to I-394
- ◆ Percentage of active retail at ground floor
- ◆ No front setback for storefront-type buildings
- ◆ Flat roofs typical



Table 4.4: Design Guidelines (continued)

**Nonresidential: Free-standing Commercial, Office, Industrial**

- ♦ No front setback for storefront-type buildings
- ♦ Height: minimum 1.5 stories



**General Building Guidelines**

**Facade Articulation**

- ♦ Long facades should be divided into smaller increments by architectural elements, variation in materials, etc.
- ♦ Buildings should have a defined base, middle, and top. The base or ground floor should include elements that relate to the human scale and appeal to the pedestrian, such as awnings, windows, and arcades.
- ♦ Building tops should be articulated with cornices or parapets.



**Transparency**

- ♦ Building facades should include windows and doors allowing views in and out of building interiors.
- ♦ Commercial and office uses: at least 30% of the front facade, ground floor, should consist of window and door openings.
- ♦ Residential: 15-20% of front facade should consist of window and door openings.



**Building Materials**

- ♦ Masonry and other durable materials are encouraged. Pre-fab metal and concrete block are discouraged.

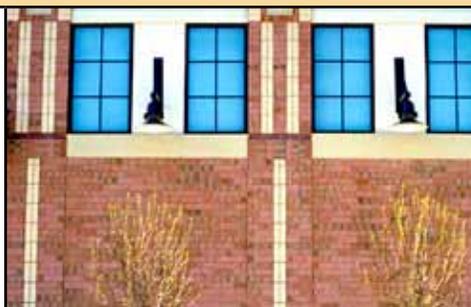


Table 4.4: Design Guidelines (continued)

Building Colors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Limit bright, primary, accent, or highly contrasting colors to a small percentage of facade and roof (ie, 15%).</li> </ul>	
Building Entries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Entrances should be clearly visible and accessible from the street.</li> <li>♦ Street-facing entrances should be architecturally prominent.</li> </ul>	
Backs of Buildings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Rear facades should be well-maintained and welcoming in appearance. A well-defined rear entrance is encouraged where there is rear yard parking. Pedestrian connections between rear yard parking and front entrances are encouraged.</li> <li>♦ Service areas should be screened from view, preferably by walls or fences of materials that are compatible with the principal building.</li> </ul>	
Signage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Encourage wall signs and monument signs that are well-integrated with building's design. Pylon signs are discouraged. Projecting signs designed for pedestrian viewing are encouraged.</li> <li>♦ Signs inside windows should not block more than 40% of the total window area. Sign colors and materials should echo or complement those of the building.</li> </ul>	





photo by City staff

## Section 6: Implementation

The I-394 Corridor Study will be implemented through several mechanisms, the most immediate and significant of which is a change in the area's zoning. The other primary mechanisms will include public investment in streetscape and other public realm improvements, review of development proposals, and cooperation with property owners who wish to develop or redevelop their properties consistent with this plan.

### Zoning: I-394 Mixed Use District

As part of the corridor study, an I-394 Mixed Use District was developed to replace the current combination of industrial, commercial, office, and institutional districts. The district is intended to apply to the entire corridor between Rhode Island Ave and Turners Crossroad, as well as several parcels north of Laurel Ave and east of Turners Crossroad, as shown in Figure 4.10, Building Height Limits. The proposed ordinance includes:

- ♦ references to the Guiding Principles of this study as part of the statement of purpose
- ♦ permitted and conditional uses, including the primary and secondary land uses discussed earlier in this section. Permitted uses include attached and multifamily dwellings, commercial uses in mixed-use buildings, offices of limited size, and related uses. Conditional uses include larger free-standing commercial and office uses and light industrial uses.

- ♦ requirements for a mix of uses in specific areas, minimum densities for residential development, required open space for larger projects, and a maximum floor area ratio that is consistent with the I-394 Overlay District (Section 11.56 of the Zoning Code)
- ♦ development standards that apply within the district. These are based on the Design Guidelines in this report, but are written in more specific and measurable terms. Development standards are to be applied as part of a site plan review process, with some flexibility to accommodate alternative approaches or site-specific physical conditions.
- ♦ site plan review—this process is established to allow for review by the Planning Commission of development proposals in the I-394 Mixed Use District, but may potentially be applied elsewhere in the city, if desired.
- ♦ signs—revisions will be made to the Sign Ordinance to allow projecting signs within the corridor and to encourage signs that are pedestrian- rather than highway-oriented.

## Public Improvements

As streets are rebuilt and other public works improvements undertaken within the corridor, street design will follow the general principles laid out above under Streetscape Treatments, with refinements and adjustments based on actual site conditions and neighborhood input.

## Storm water Management and Low Impact Development (LID)

As discussed earlier in this report, most soils within the corridor are former wetland soils that present difficulties for development and for storm water management. Low Impact Development (LID), as mentioned in Guiding Principle 8, offers one way to improve storm water management by mimicking natural systems.

LID is based on the philosophy that storm water should be treated as a resource, not a waste product. Rather than using one or two large, costly treatment facilities at the base of a drainage area, LID uses small cost-effective features at the lot level. These are designed to store and treat rainwater where it falls. If done correctly, LID features are viewed as an amenity by landowners. LID can be incorporated into new development as well as redevelopment projects.

Hard surfaces like roads, rooftops, and parking lots, are the biggest cause of storm water problems, and reducing them is a key element of LID. More important, however, is to break up the connections between the hard surfaces and nearby water resources. This can be done by using LID features like pervious pavements and green roofs, or simply by redirecting runoff to vegetated areas and exposing polluted water to plants and soil.

The site-based development alternatives shown in this study rely on storm water management on site, rather than on regional solutions. In evaluating on-site management practices, the City will encourage LID techniques such as green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, and pervious pavement in parking areas. The City may also choose to pursue more regional treatment methods, such as the Laurel Avenue storm water ponds, if opportunities become available.

## Development Review

Review of development proposals within the I-394 Corridor will occur through the site plan review process that proposed zoning changes would establish. The City may assist with development projects that advance the goals of this corridor study, through the use of any available financial tools or incentives. 