

Chapter 4: Special Planning Districts—
I-394 Corridor Study

 **Appendix**



Appendix 4-A: Resident Survey Summary

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.

The Focus Area for the I-394 Corridor Study is south of Laurel Avenue, west of Highway 100, and east of Rhode Island Avenue South.

Total Survey Responses= 119

Thinking about the FOCUS AREA, what do you like best about what's currently there?

- Retail/Commercial Businesses—Many respondents appreciated the retail/commercial businesses and all the fast food and restaurant options (mentioned 22 times). Some of the places that received favorable comments were SuperAmerica, Perkins, the hotels, the car wash, and Menard's, mentioned more than 15 times.
- Office Buildings—People generally liked the office buildings but differed on their size. Some preferred one-story office buildings, but the majority preferred the taller office buildings at Xenia, I-394, and Golden Hills Drive. That area was mentioned favorably around 20 times. The newer redeveloped office buildings also received positive comments.
- Natural Area—The largest number of positive comments in this section (28) went to the natural area north of Laurel Ave.
- Landscaping—A topic mentioned several times was the landscaping in the area. People felt there was some nice landscaping and property owners, for the most part, were maintaining their grounds. Some of the places mentioned were the area around Menards and the Saturn dealership and the office complexes at Xenia.
- Roads—Roads and other infrastructure were mentioned several times. People like the accessibility of the area on and off the freeways and the way the roads run.

- What's Currently There—More than 15 people commented that they like current uses and the combination of different uses in one area.

Thinking about the FOCUS AREA, what do you like least about what's currently there?

- Look of the Area—One of the top complaints about the focus area was its appearance. There were around 10 comments on the overall look, such as “unattractive” or “cheap looking,” dull appearance, decaying roads, and the need for better maintenance, such as landscaping. There were more than 20 comments on the look of the buildings, especially vacant and rundown buildings.
- Office Buildings—Several people commented negatively on the number of office buildings in the area. Eight comments pertained to the tall office buildings, specifically the ones at Xenia.
- Lack of Flow—A few people mentioned that the area seem to be a hodgepodge of several different things, with no “flow” or coherence in terms of road or building design.
- Noise—The issue of noise from the freeway and businesses was mentioned several times.
- Industrial—There were about 10 negative comments about industry in general and specific industrial uses in the focus area.
- Traffic—The largest number of comments on this question pertained to traffic, with 10 comments just on the amount of traffic. There were several comments that congestion in the area results from too many stoplights, rush hour traffic, and franchise businesses that attract traffic. There were also comments about the road network—the lack of a continuous frontage road and how difficult it is to move around the area. There also were many complaints about the condition of the railroad tracks over Louisiana and the 30 mph speed limit on Laurel.
- Parking—Parking and parking lots were mentioned several times. People commented on the amount and size of the parking lots in the area and how much parking is used by the car dealerships. Two respondents mentioned the amount of parking on the street, especially around JJ's Club House and Majors.
- Housing—There were comments on negative effects of

commercial/industrial uses on the nearby housing.

- Commercial—Some of the respondents were unhappy with the mix of commercial uses in the area and the current dining choices.

Is there anything in particular you would like to see in the FOCUS AREA in the future?

- Commercial—One of the most commonly suggested ideas was more commercial/retail choices. Preferences included a grocery store (19), better/more restaurants (8), more shopping variety (5), and a coffee shop (3) or bookstore (2).
- Special Place—A place designed as a gathering place for residents and workers was one of the top suggestions. Several would like to see a common space similar to the ones at 55 and Winnetka or in a newer or revitalized downtown area, such as Maple Grove, St Louis Park, or Hopkins. They would like to see more entertainment options and better transitions into the neighborhoods.
- Design—Many comments pertained to design and the look of the area. Around ten people suggested better landscaping and items such as decorative streetlights, ponds, benches, and fountains. There were also mentions of building design and redevelopment of rundown areas.
- Traffic—Several people commented on the fact they would like to see less traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods. There were also some suggestions for parking ramps vs. parking lots, light rail and fixing the railroad tracks over Louisiana.

- Sidewalks and Bike Paths—Five people mentioned they would like more and safer bike and pedestrian paths.
- Residential—Another common suggestion was for additional residential development, both single and multi-family.
- Natural Areas—Over ten comments called for more parks, natural areas, and green space.
- Office Development—Comments were generally favorable toward more office development, including taller office buildings. Most often mentioned were the areas around Xenia.
- Noise—Five respondents suggested protecting the neighborhood from noise, including noise from the focus area and adjacent freeways.

Can you identify another highway corridor that would be a good model for future development along I-394 in Golden Valley?

- Hwy 55 area between Winnetka and Douglas Dr—8
- Excelsior & Grand area—6
- 94 in Maple Grove—3
- Highway 55 near Vicksburg in Plymouth—3
- Carlson Parkway—2
- I-66 coming out of DC into Virginia
- County Road 73 & I-394 (north side)
- I-394 in Minnetonka between 169 and I-494
- 169 & I-394, General Mills corner

Table 4-A-1 What Activities Draw You To The Focus Area?

(Check all options that apply.)		Frequency			
		Daily	2X Week	Weekly	Monthly
Work	9	8	1	0	0
	8%	89%	11%	0%	0%
Shopping	83	10	16	26	31
	70%	12%	19%	31%	37%
Dining	67	5	8	17	37
	56%	8%	12%	25%	55%
Walking	73	25	22	19	7
	61%	34%	30%	26%	10%
Driving through	97	74	13	7	3
	82%	76%	13%	8%	3%

Table 4-A-2 Would You Support More Transportation Alternatives In The Area? (Check all options you support.)

Bike Trails	71
	60%
More Buses	21
	18%
More Express Buses	15
	13%
Light Rail	59
	50%
Improved Pedestrian Access	58
	49%
Road Improvements	43
	36%

**Table 4-A-3 Issues That Could Be Addressed in the Study.
(Check all you would like to see addressed, and rank the three that are of greatest concern to you.)**

The Rank column includes two numbers: the first is the number of respondents who selected the option; the second is the average rank given, with 1 being the top concern.

	Total	Rank
Landscaping	84	33
	71%	2.36
Height of Buildings	55	17
	46%	1.88
Traffic	89	46
	75%	1.50
Pedestrian Safety	73	29
	61%	1.86
Noise	63	30
	53%	2.2
Lighting	44	8
	37%	3.13
Storm Water Ponding	31	8
	26%	2.63
Density of Buildings	57	20
	48%	2.20
Building Aesthetics	74	27
	62%	2.26
Other	18	6
	15%	1.50

Appendix 4-B: Business Survey Summary

The Business Survey, conducted in 2005, was one component of the outreach effort of the I-394 Corridor Study. The goals of the survey were to learn more about the 190 businesses that operate in the study area, their plans, and their concerns. The survey asked open- and close-ended questions in the following categories: Business Information, Future Plans, Employees, and Relations with the City of Golden Valley. Forty-seven of the 190 businesses returned surveys, a 26 percent response rate.

Business Information

Overall, the businesses in this corridor have remained in the corridor for an extended time. Sixty-nine percent of businesses have been located in Golden Valley for over five years and 39 percent of businesses for more than 10 years. The major market for more than half of the businesses in the corridor (53 percent) is the Twin Cities metro area.

Businesses reported that sale forecasts are more optimistic next year compared to last year, or the past five years. Seventy-eight percent of businesses expect sales to increase compared to 62 percent that reported an increase in sales last year or 65 percent that reported an increase over the past five years.

Businesses were asked why they decided to locate in Golden Valley and to rank these reasons by importance. The top three primary reasons companies decided to locate in Golden Valley are the location in the metro area, the price of the property/building or lease rates, and the location in western Hennepin County.

Future Plans

Businesses were asked a series of questions about future plans. Only one company stated they were considering con-

solidating their operations in Golden Valley. Ten companies (21 percent of respondents) considered expansion or remodeling and five companies (10 percent of respondents) considered relocation. The primary reasons to deter companies from remaining/expanding in Golden Valley are cost to lease, accessibility to their site, and availability of land space.

Employees

A majority of Golden Valley employees live outside of Golden Valley and do not use public transportation. Seventy-six percent of the companies reported that zero to 10 percent of employees live in Golden Valley, and 86 percent of companies reported zero to 10 percent of employees use public transportation.

Thirty-eight percent of companies stated they would like to see an increase in public transportation for their employees.

City of Golden Valley

Seventy-four percent of companies reported the City of Golden Valley is either an above average or excellent place for business. Seventy-eight percent of businesses reported access to freeways and major highways was above average or excellent. Only 32 percent rated the availability of nearby affordable housing the same way. Sixty-six percent of businesses considered the mix of businesses in the I-394 corridor to be above average or excellent.

Appendix 4-C: Resident Roundtable Summary

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 a two-hour informal workshop setting in which they identified strengths/assets and problems or challenges facing the study area, and made suggestions for specific improvements.

Summary of Issues

Participants were first asked to identify strengths and problems or challenges within the corridor, and then to suggest possible improvements. Strengths included the Laurel Avenue greenbelt, other green space and landscaping within the corridor, the convenience of many retail destinations, and specific buildings that were considered aesthetically pleasing, including the Allianz building and the Golden Hills business park. Challenges included:

- the ‘hodgepodge’ quality of the area and its general lack of aesthetic appeal
- traffic congestion and confusing traffic patterns
- the size and scale of development (some residents dislike taller buildings while others do not)
- limited retail options
- poor pedestrian environment
- lack of continuity of the service road
- transitions between industrial and residential uses, especially at Rhode Island Avenue
- pollution (air, noise, odors, visual)

Detailed Strengths/Assets

Laurel Avenue Greenbelt (8 comments)

- Everything north of Laurel is beautiful—‘perfect’ (do not change)
- Walkway/bikepath
- Laurel ponds/landscape

Recreation

- Walking paths, skate park

Green Space (4 comments)

- Places where people can sit
- Parks/open space
- Trees, flowers, landscaping
- Landscaping; berming, setbacks, building height

Neighborhood-Serving Businesses (7 comments)

- Office buildings, consumer retail, and restaurants
- Convenience of retail (2 comments)—SA, Menard’s
- Restaurants (2 comments)—Perkins, Benihana
- Availability of hardware/home improvement store (Menard’s, 2 comments)

Aesthetics (3 comments)

- Allianz is a great example of a business in this corridor
- Improved properties—new buildings and businesses
- Golden Hills business park development—low-rise brick buildings, lots of green, well-maintained

Easy Access/Access to I-394

Detailed Problems/Challenges

Traffic (5 comments)

- Traffic and crime potential
 - Keep traffic out of residential areas
- Additional traffic due to large office buildings
- Traffic patterns
 - Specific suggestion: right turn lane needed into shopping area on Louisiana at Market Street
- Traffic speeds on Laurel

Size and Scale of Development (3 comments)

- Tall buildings
- Industrial buildings and parking
 - Industrial buildings are run-down
 - Parking lots used as storage for trucking
- Size of Liberty Paper—proximity to residential uses

Quality of Life (3 comments)

- Retail options limited
- Amount of commercial—would like to see more green space, recreational areas, bike paths, etc
- Walkability—pedestrian access to retail needs improvement (especially Hwy 55/Winnetka)

Aesthetics, Visual Coherence (6 comments)

- Inconsistency—different degrees of design; materials quality
- Large office buildings don't fit surrounding area
- “Look” is ugly, not uniform
- Hodgepodge of buildings and uses (2 comments)

Service Road Continuity (3 comments)

- Service road doesn't run through from Pennsylvania to Louisiana—would spend more in Golden Valley if driving was easier
- Layout of frontage road

Property Upkeep and Aesthetics (2 comments)

- Weeds
- Railroad area is littered—corridor behind Menard's, Benihana's, etc

Industrial—Residential Transition (2 comments)

- Block between Rhode Island and Pennsylvania is impacted by commercial and industrial uses

Pollution (2 comments)

- Air quality—pollution due to increase in traffic
- Noise—traffic
- Visual—height of buildings
- Odors

General Goals for the Area

- Jobs-housing balance—live close to work
- Pedestrian environment
- Better transit

Suggestions for Improvements

Access and Circulation

- A planted median or similar redesign of Laurel Avenue to calm traffic (recent traffic calming improvements to Winnetka are a good example of what can be done)
- Redesign of the service road from Louisiana to Xenia; would improve way-finding and benefit businesses
- Park and ride—add capacity to the site on the south side, or consider an additional site on the Golden Valley side
- Add sidewalks and pedestrian walkways on or between the north-south streets that directly access the commercial area. [note 2005 sidewalk improvements on several north-south streets, done after Roundtable]

Aesthetics

- Improve environmental standards and their enforcement—ie, pollution control, landscaping, property maintenance
- Develop design guidelines for buildings and public spaces.
- Encourage common open space such as plazas
- Building height should provide appropriate transitions to surrounding residential neighborhood

Land Uses and Business Types

- Encourage mixed use—a good mix of housing types, including new apartments and townhomes, would benefit the area
- Consider senior housing options
- Mid-rise building height (typically up to four or five stories) is preferable
- Encourage local independent businesses, including arts-oriented businesses
- Other desired businesses: mid-scale or upscale grocery; businesses targeted to workers in corridor

Appendix 4-D: Summary of Visual Preference Survey Results

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.

Participants were asked to look at a series of images, on five display boards (or as individual images on the web site), and rate them from lowest to highest in terms of their own preferences, using a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Images were divided into the following categories:

- 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, Public Safety Open House), 24 at City Hall, and 44 via the web site. There was a high degree of consistency between all categories of respondents.

Residential Development



photo by consultant

Highest: The highest-rated photo (3.40) shows two-story brick row houses with simple roof forms but sufficient detailing of fence, balconies and landscaping to provide some visual richness. The private courtyard may also appeal to some viewers.

All the photos in this category were of medium- to high-density development, ranging from townhomes to 4-story apartments. 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,” with an average standard deviation of 1.22 for the category. This probably indicates that participants’ attitudes towards higher-density housing differ widely.

Mixed-Use Development



photo by consultant

Highest: The high-quality materials, level of detail, contrasting colors, and streetscape improvements in this image, from Excelsior & Grand, contribute to its high score of 4.08, the highest in the VPS as a whole.

In general, scores were higher and images were less controversial in this category than those for 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.

There was a high degree of consistency among the responses in this category, with an average standard deviation of 1.05.

Commercial Buildings



photos by consultant



Highest: The highest-scoring images (3.81 and 3.75) both show buildings with a 1½-story appearance and a combination of masonry and stucco, with ornamental details and lighting, and wall signs that are well-integrated with the buildings’ design and materials.

This category included single-use or multi-tenant commercial buildings, generally one story in height. Overall scores were somewhat lower than those for mixed-use buildings. 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.

Office, Business Park and Industrial Buildings



photos by consultant



Highest: The two highest-rated images (3.80 and 3.53) show multi-story offices. The brick building received the highest score, while the glass building was somewhat controversial.

There was a broad range of images in this category, from very recent office buildings to industrial buildings that clearly date from earlier eras of development. Therefore it is difficult to compare across categories. Newer multi-story office buildings were preferred, followed by single-story business parks, while older office and industrial buildings received the lowest scores.

Parking and Streetscape Design



photos by consultant

Highest: Wide landscaped berm largely hides parked cars; sidewalk leads to buildings in background. Score of 3.88.



Parking Structure: This parking structure received a moderately high score of 3.16. Note the masonry construction, clock tower, decorative pavement and other details; parked cars are not visible.

Images in this category included surface parking, structured parking and sidewalks with landscape features. In general, viewers preferred wide landscaped buffers between sidewalks and surface parking. Parking structures received medium scores, with unlandscaped surface parking receiving the lowest scores. Scores were fairly consistent in this category, with no high standard deviations.

Signs



photos by consultant



Highest: Scores of 3.97 and 3.54 for these pedestrian-scaled signs, both of which match their principal buildings.

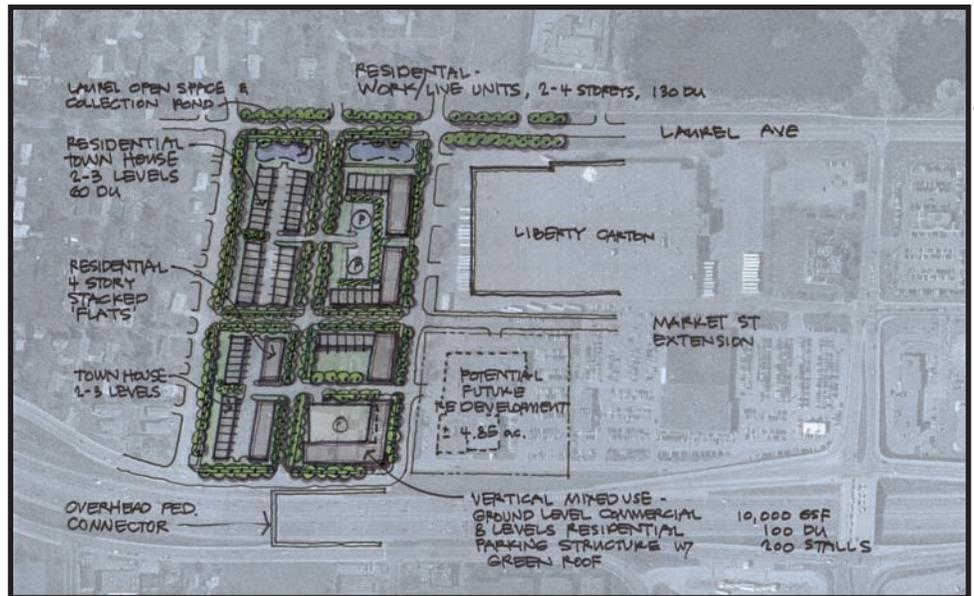
This category included projecting signs, wall signs and free-standing signs of various sizes, in settings ranging from a traditional Main Street to big box commercial development. The highest ratings went to signs designed for the pedestrian Main Street environment, including some that matched the preferred commercial buildings on Saint Paul's Grand Avenue. The least preferred signs were large, brightly-colored wall and gas station canopy signs.

Appendix 4-E: Conceptual Plan Drawings

These conceptual plan drawings were developed for sites determined susceptible to change (see Figure 4), and were incorporated in Figure 9: Illustrative Development Plan—Louisiana Avenue Sub-Area.

Mixed Use

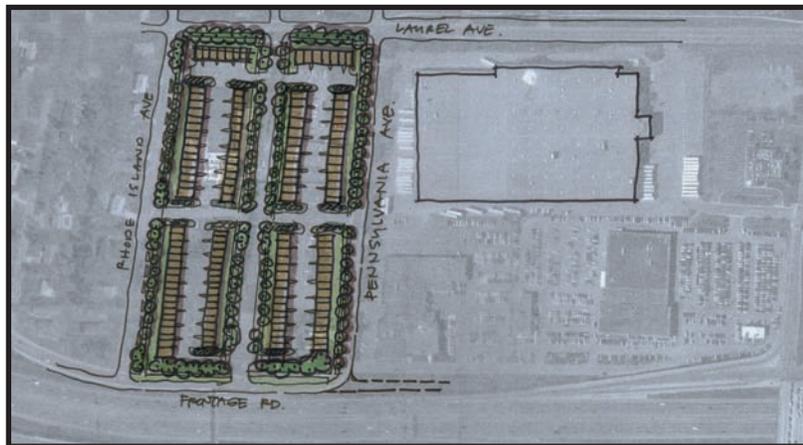
Site Area: 11.5 acres
 Dwelling Units: 236
 Site Density: 20.5 dwelling units/acre
 Commercial: 10,000 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 280
 Structured: 100
 Surface: 180



Illustrations by consultant

Sketch Site Plan 1: Townhouses

Site Area: 11.5 acres
 Dwelling Units: 122
 Site Density: 10.6 dwelling units/acre



Single-story office/manufacturing building

Site Area: 4.8 acres
 Building Area: 60,000 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 240 @ 4/1000 ft²



6-story office buildings

Site Area: 7.9 acres
 Building Area: 348,000 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 1,390 @ 4/1000 ft²

Phase 1: 6-story office building

Building area: 192,000 ft²
 2-level parking garage: 730 spaces

Phase 2: 6-story office building

Building area: 156,000 ft²
 2-level parking garage (addition): 660 spaces



Grocery and Pharmacy

Site Area: 7.1 acres
 Building Area: 60,000 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 300 @ 5/1000 ft²



Assisted Living Facility (adaptive re-use of existing buildings)

Site Area: 6.9 acres
 Building Area: 90,000 ft² (2 stories)
 Parking Spaces: 150 @ 1.5/dwelling unit
 Multi-Family Townhouses: 12 units
 Parking Spaces: 30 @ 2.5/dwelling unit



Phase 1 Multi-Family Residential: 3-story apartment buildings (4)

Site Area: 8.7 Acres

Building Area: 386,400 ft²

Dwelling Units: 256 @ 1,500 ft²/unit

Parking Spaces: 640 @ 2.5/dwelling unit
400 from 2-level parking structures (2)



Phase 2 Multi-Family Residential: 3-story apartment buildings (4)

Site Area: 4.2 Acres

Building Area: 193,200 ft²

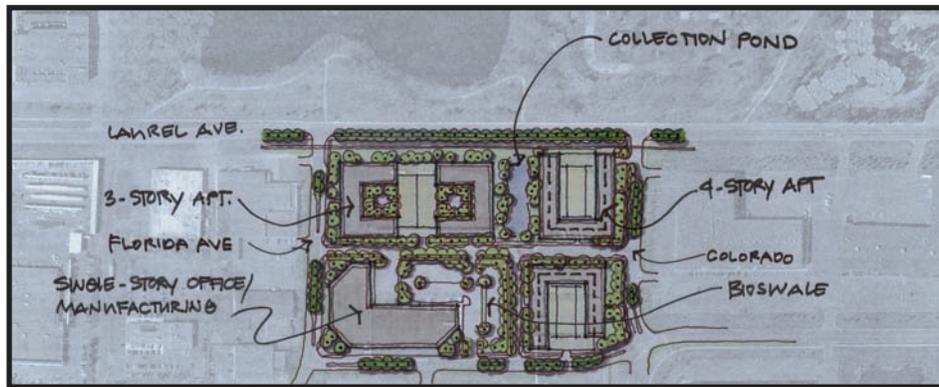
Dwelling Units: 128 @ 1,500 ft²/unit

Parking Spaces: 320 @ 2.5/dwelling unit
200 from 2-level parking structure (1)



Single-story office/manufacturing buildings (2)

Building Area: 137,000 ft²
 Site Area: 12.9 Acres
 Parking Spaces: 548 @ 4/1000 ft²



Single-story office/manufacturing building

Site Area: 3.8 Acres
 Building Area: 66,000 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 198 @ 3/1000 ft²

Multi-Family Residential: 3 story apartment buildings (2)

Site Area: 3.8 Acres
 Building Area: 193,200 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 1.5/dwelling unit
 Multi-level parking structure

Multi-Family Residential: 4-story apartment buildings (2)

Site Area: 4.6 acres
 Building Area: 243,600 ft²
 2 stories @ 21,500 ft²
 2 stories @ 39,400 ft²
 Parking Spaces: 1.5/dwelling unit
 Multi-level parking structure