



Douglas Drive Corridor Study Report

Credits



Douglas Drive Advisory Committee

Mike Freiberg, City Council representative
DeDe Scanlon, City Council representative
Bob Shaffer, City Council representative
John Kluchka, Planning Commission representative
Cathy Waldhauser, Planning Commission representative
Don Keysser, Planning Commission representative



LHB, Inc.

250 Third Avenue North, Suite 450
Minneapolis, MN 55401
612.338.2029
612.338.2088 (fax)
www.LHBcorp.com



WSB, Inc

701 Xenia Avenue South, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55416
763.541.4800
763.541.1700 (fax)
888.541.4800 (toll free)
info@wsbeng.com

Contents

- The Concept Plan ii
- Introduction 1
- 1. Process 2
- 2. Goals 6
- 3. Corridor Context 8
 - Figure 3-1: Community Context & Area of Influence.. 9
 - Table 3-1: Uses in the Corridor..... 10
 - Figure 3-2: Current Land Use Plan..... 11
 - Figure 3-3: Current Zoning Plan..... 11
 - Figure 3-4: Existing Pedestrian and Transit Routes..... 12
 - Figure 3-5: Character Zones..... 16
 - Table 3-2: Character Zones..... 17
 - Figure 3-6: Susceptibility to Change..... 18
 - Table 3-3: Considerations for Stability..... 19
- 4. Corridor Concept Plan 20
 - Figure 4-1: TH55 Campus..... 21
 - Figure 4-2: Douglas Drive Residential, South..... 22
 - Figure 4-3: Douglas Drive Residential, North..... 23
 - Figure 4-4: Mixed Use Node..... 24
 - Figure 4-5: Mixed Use Village..... 25
 - Figure 4-6: Potential Land Use Patterns..... 27
 - Table 4-1: Land Use Type and Character..... 29
 - Figure 4-7: Daily Traffic..... 31
 - Figure 4-8: Street Sections..... 32
- 5. Implementation 36
- Appendices..... 42



The Plan for the Douglas Drive corridor imagines evolving land use as redevelopment occurs and changes to the roadway to accomodate those new uses and multiple modes of transportation safely and in keeping with the community's character.

The Concept Plan

LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTY roadway corridors in Hennepin County, Douglas Drive exists in a narrow right-of-way lined with aging development and with some homes dating to 1900. Like other corridors, Douglas Drive has not changed much, though it carries increased traffic, accommodates contemporary uses, and serves pedestrians and bicyclists. Looking forward, the Golden Valley community sees an evolving Douglas Drive as a model for accommodating change in this kind of corridor—for traffic, use, and movement.

The recent deaths of two pedestrians on Douglas Drive suggest the immediate need to safely accommodate pedestrian movement on the corridor. Sidewalks are intermittent, and where they exist, they are in poor or aging condition. With redevelopment, opportunities to create safe passage for pedestrians can be readily achieved; until then, this plan recommends the implementation of continuous and safe pedestrian facilities as a critical first step.

With time, the opportunities for change in the corridor grow. As buildings age or become obsolete and as pressures for redevelopment mount, this plan suggests vital new uses, quality jobs, and expanded housing choices—and enhancements to all modes of movement. It suggests an orientation to Douglas Drive as a community street—not diminishing its role as a transportation corridor, but reinforcing its place in Golden Valley through wise public realm investments and eventual new development.

TH 55 Campus

Even without the presence of a plan, the Douglas Drive corridor will change. Areas near TH 55 consist largely of aging commercial/industrial uses. Looking ahead, it doesn't take much imagination to see that significant change might occur here. This area is prominently located near the intersection of two major arterial roadways, is visually prominent to thousands of commuters, is close to downtown Minneapolis, and is reasonably close to a large segment of the metropolitan area's working

population. In fact, it's harder to imagine the corridor staying the same than to think that change will occur here.

This plan envisions a business campus organized around a new boulevard, with a campus commons providing services to campus buildings and workers. Parking is aggregated and shared among all buildings, avoiding expansive surface parking lots, managing stormwater more effectively and efficiently, and reinforcing the sense of a connected campus.



Ultimately, the TH 55 Business Campus might include 870,000 square feet of development and provide many jobs.

Mixed Use Village

Another area of potential significant change occurs along Duluth Street near TH 100. Looking forward, it's easy to imagine the current buildings not serving their occupants well. Here, the future uses might be more mixed, with buildings that offer space for working, shopping, and living, and connections following an engaging and walkable public realm with an orientation to Bassett Creek. The kinds of uses that people have grown accustomed to here should remain—a grocery store, for example, is important to the community and offers a great anchor for this area. While this plan does not suggest eliminating uses, some sites, like the MnDOT site, may offer significant opportunities for new development should it ever become available. Again, having a plan is critical in guiding the evolution of this area over a long period of time.

The goal is to shape the kind of change that might occur due to market forces in order to create a place of value for the community. This plan envisions development of moderate scale, with great public gathering spaces, inviting streetscapes, and quality buildings. In many ways, this area might be viewed as a village within the community—its own place, but still a place connected to the broader Golden Valley community.

Mixed Use Node

On a smaller scale, but no less important in terms of its potential for change, is the area surrounding the intersection of Douglas Drive and Duluth Street. In this case, it might be more difficult to see how change might come, particularly because the evolution would involve displacing residents (as opposed to businesses).



The Mixed Use Village might eventually include 73,000 square feet of commercial space for retail, restaurants, and similar shopping uses, 350,000 square feet of office space, and about 370 housing units.

Still, with an eye to the future, most people recognize that multi-family housing—particularly rental units, loses some appeal with age, and that even currently busy convenience stores might eventually provide opportunities for businesses that better serve the community with functional and aesthetic improvements.

A place founded in a pattern of mixed uses offers a framework for change here. A variety of housing choices, some retail, and some employment uses still find their way into the new patterns, but now they are framed around common spaces and a walkable public realm. Importantly, the transitions formed through reductions in scale and intensity create a stronger physical and visual connection to the surrounding neighborhood.

Douglas Drive Residential

While the patterns of existing use along Douglas Drive are a mix of residential, commercial/industrial, and institutional uses, by far the most parcels are residential. In the past, homes along this corridor would not have seemed out of place, but today the function of the roadway makes living along it more challenging. Traffic is more intense, and probably moves faster, making a front yard less desirable and driveways less accessible; and homes immediately along Douglas Drive probably haven't retained their value compared to those further from the road.

The challenges of acquiring property will make change here difficult and

incremental, but the difficulties must be weighed with other considerations:

- the nearby neighborhood might be better protected from the effects of the roadway;
- more housing choices might be available, with configurations that bring activity to the street;
- access to the roadway from driveways and intersecting streets might become more safe;
- redevelopment might allow the right-of-way to broaden to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists; and
- one of its primary streets might be enhanced to better reflect the community's character.



At full development, the Mixed Use Node might accommodate 37,000 s.f. of commercial use, 44,000 s.f. use of office space, and more than 265 housing units.



Near the intersection of Douglas Drive and the railroad, the residential model might take on a smaller-scale feel. Townhomes could replace single family homes, buffering neighborhoods to the west, and new multi-family housing might replace the existing aging apartment buildings east of the road. The potential for concentrating access to and from Douglas Drive will continue to be studied.

Several areas along Douglas Drive have the potential for this kind of change. This plan proposes patterns that offer unity in the new development, but not uniformity—the new homes are intended to bring life to the corridor, and they should be designed to be enduring improvements for the community. They will change to reflect their immediate context—in some places as rowhomes and in others as more intensive condominiums, apartments, or senior living communities. But most important, the change will be incremental, resulting in patterns that fit seamlessly with the public realm, and that feel like a natural part of the Golden Valley community.

A market study was not performed as a part of this planning process, but given the evolutionary nature of the plan, a market study might be quickly irrelevant. This plan, as a companion to the Comprehensive Plan, is intended as a guide looking forward over years—even decades—to demonstrate the kinds of change desired for the Douglas Drive corridor.

As important as framing the kinds of use that might line the corridor, the road itself must change with time to be integrated with land use directions. The need to accommodate safety improvements has already been noted as a critical immediate step. Projections of traffic based on normal growth in traffic and the new uses described in this plan suggest that, in the early stages of Douglas Drive's evolution, certain portions need four lanes to

handle traffic (such as the segment of Douglas Drive south of Golden Valley Road and north of TH55). The remainder could accommodate traffic in a two-lane roadway (that is, one lane in each direction, and a common and continuous left turn lane). Eventually, however, the two-lane section might need to be expanded; in this case, redevelopment drives the need to expand the roadway, and the same redevelopment offers the opportunity for expanding the right-of-way to not only handle the roadway but the other functions that need to occur in the roadway—parallel parking bays, boulevards and sidewalk, bike lanes—all of which are difficult to fit into the corridor today. Still, even with an expanded roadway, Douglas Drive can become a street oriented to the community even as it accommodates the traffic of a county highway. 🌿



At the north end of the corridor, Sandburg School might serve as a school and community center and a wide variety of residential redevelopment could occur around this community amenity. East of the road, multi-family housing could buffer neighborhoods to the east.

Introduction

DOUGLAS DRIVE, from Medicine Lake Road to Highway 55, forms the geographic center of Golden Valley. The corridor is an important community route and links residential neighborhoods, major employers, and a scattering of retail areas. The corridor also intersects railroads, the Luce Line Trail, and Bassett Creek, creating a varied and unique transportation corridor.

Despite its assets, Douglas Drive is an aging street, both in terms of infrastructure and development, and it has significant safety issues, especially for pedestrians. As the corridor evolves, it is important to address immediate safety concerns while maintaining a vision of what the corridor could become over the next decades. Designing a corridor for today's context but expecting it to serve the needs of the community in ten or twenty years is not likely to be successful. Instead, planners must balance immediate needs with a vision for the streetscape and redevelopment that anticipates and provides flexibility to serve future needs.

This report describes the community's immediate and long-term goals for the corridor and takes the form of a guide, rather than a mandate, for change. It summarizes the current condition of the street and the context for its planning. It suggests forms development might take, ways to accommodate that development with supportive transportation, and design considerations for the streetscape and surrounding developments. Finally, it outlines strategies for implementing the vision, refining this report as developments and redevelopments are proposed. 

Chapter 1: The Process

THE CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY, recognizing the need for a short-term resolution of key safety issues and the desire for a long-term evolution of the corridor, established an Advisory Committee to guide the creation of a plan for Douglas Drive and orchestrated a number of other engagement activities intended to bring stakeholders and other interested parties directly to the planning process. While the plan evolved, each of these groups played a significant role in defining issues and shaping directions for change.

The Douglas Drive Advisory Committee was composed of representatives of the Golden Valley City Council and Planning Commission. The Advisory Committee laid the foundations for planning the corridor as they discussed its potential for change. While the committee recognized the commitment of current businesses and residents to the Golden Valley community, they allowed themselves to pose directions for change that looked forward years into the future, solidifying the prospect of both residential and commercial uses along Douglas Drive.

For the Advisory Committee, guidance necessitated an understanding of how dramatically different the world might be when implementation of the long term solution begins. The committee did not want to see solutions implemented that are appropriate for 2009 or 2010, knowing that when implementation occurs—in 2020 or later—those ideas might be ten or more years out-of-date. Rather, they chose to look forward, framing a series of possible futures that might guide

the evolution of Douglas Drive. In framing possible scenarios, several broad issues were considered:

- Demographic shifts

Will Golden Valley be an older community? ... a more diverse community?... a more dependent-focused community?... a healthier community?

- Environmental shifts

Will people rely on other transportation modes? Will there be a more significant focus on redevelopment?

- New economic and market realities

Will the community experience slower growth because of current economic conditions? Will consumers behave differently compared to when Golden Valley first developed?

- Changes in development patterns

Will there be greater concentrations of development in existing developed areas? Will there be more—and different—mixed use development? Will development be focused around more walkable environments?

While there are no answers to these questions, the exercise raised awareness of the possibilities that different assumptions presented and allowed the Advisory Committee to guide the plan recognizing the influence of several possible futures:

- A **grayer** future...

Golden Valley is a community with a population that is aging, with growing numbers of senior citizens as Baby Boomers and Gen-X'ers reach retirement age. Trends suggest that younger demographics will be more

interested in more walkable, urban environments—the same kind of mixed environments that support active senior residents. Therefore,

Changes should be made to accommodate the community's senior residents, and as a result, those changes will be seen as attractive to and a benefit for all residents of Golden Valley.

- A **younger** future...

Demographic trends suggest that Golden Valley is a younger community, with a household size projected to be 2.5 persons per household in 2030 (higher than any surrounding community). Even with a younger demographic, single family homes and senior housing will not meet all the needs of Golden Valley residents and not all areas of the community can accommodate a wide mix of housing types. Therefore,

A mix of housing opportunities will continue to be needed in Golden Valley and Douglas Drive should include a full range of those opportunities.

- A **regenerative** future...

Douglas Drive is one of the older transportation corridors in Golden Valley, with development along its edges and infrastructure below it that likely matches its age. This is one of many aging corridors in Hennepin County, all of which may see some degree of evolution in the coming years. Therefore,

Douglas Drive should strive to be the model for the smart evolution of this kind of corridor.

- A **greener** future...

A greater orientation to sustainable practices and a growing awareness of the environment will direct attention to natural features and systems found in the corridor; regulatory



Stakeholders in the future of the Corridor gathered to share ideas.

requirements or development incentives result in changes in development practices. Codes are gradually changing to encourage or require more sustainable (“green”) development and management practices. Therefore,

Douglas Drive should be the city’s first “Green Corridor.”

Community Engagement

Approximately 70 residents attended a public workshop conducted in October 2008 where they were asked to work in small groups to provide input to the planning process. The predominant themes in their responses included:

- Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and the experience of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Direct attention to streetscape improvements
- Improve the safety of certain intersections



Honeywell was one of the major landholders interviewed for this study.

- Reduce impacts in surrounding neighborhoods
- Guide redevelopment/reuse of the Denny’s site, the apartments near Olympia Street, and the northeast corner of Douglas Drive and Golden Valley Road.

While not nearly so common, other responses were also offered:

- Add a trail along Bassett Creek
- Use the Canadian Pacific railway as a pedestrian/bicycle route
- Consider guiding use along the entire corridor either toward light industrial, retail, or residential
- Add green space when planning the entire corridor

As a part of the corridor planning process, city staff identified various stakeholders along the Douglas Drive corridor with whom interviews would be conducted. While other methods of gaining input from the community occurred throughout the planning process, the interviews allowed for deeper insights to be gained before plans were defined. A range of stakeholders were identified for possible interviews, including:

- Major landholders and businesses
 - Tennant Company
 - Honeywell
 - CenterPoint Energy
 - OptumHealth (United Health Group) represented by Jones Lang LaSalle
- Small businesses and institutions
 - Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses
 - Gregg and Jim’s Service
 - AEI Electronics

- Winkley Orthopedics Laboratory, Inc.
- Public sector agencies and institutions
 - Robbinsdale Area Schools
 - Hennepin County Department of Public Works
 - Hennepin County Department of Housing, Community Works, and Transit
 - Metro Transit
 - Three Rivers Park District
 - City of Crystal
 - Transit for Livable Communities
 - Bassett Creek Watershed District

Beyond gathering the insights from people who live on or near the corridor, city staff shared the reasons for conducting a corridor study, highlighted some of the conditions of the corridor that might be resolved through the plan, and noted the general schedule of events in the planning process. During the interviews, there were no standard questions asked; rather, stakeholders were encouraged to share thoughts and concerns related to their particular interest, to ask questions of city staff and the city’s consultants, and to share their ideas about improvements that would be attractive for their use.

While notes were kept for each interview, the comments offered during the interviews are summarized here without attributing the comment to its author. While most stakeholders would likely share their comments publicly, it’s more important to understand the breadth of concerns noted. In general, comments from private stakeholders could be summarized as follows:

- Safety was noted as the most pressing concerns of stakeholders.
- Resident stakeholders voiced more interest in a current development proposal than a long term view of the corridor, and indicated that safety for pedestrians is a concern.
- Most stakeholders recognized the need to improve the corridor for the benefit of non-vehicle movement, and many indicated support for enhanced transit facilities—especially transit shelters. Of greatest concern was the lack of reasonable pedestrian facilities.
- Many stakeholders suggested that they would cooperate in dedicating property for improvements to pedestrian facilities (although it was noted for each stakeholder that there are no plans at this point).
- Corporate uses are located on or near the corridor because of long-term investments in their facilities; it was not suggested that any of the users had expansive growth plans.
- The corridor is a significant employment center for the community, with two world headquarters and a number of solid smaller businesses. There was almost no mention of vacant buildings or unoccupied spaces in multi-tenant buildings.
- A need for more retail on the corridor was noted.
- Several stakeholders noted the positive improvements to Golden Valley Road.
- Many stakeholders, as groups or larger bodies, indicated a long connection to Douglas Drive and the Golden Valley community.

Public agency stakeholders were more matter-of-fact in their interviews, often relating their agency's policy as



A workshop participant provides feedback about her vision for the corridor.

the corridor was discussed. Common themes from the public stakeholders include the following:

- Sandburg will remain a school (although perhaps not in the traditional sense), as there has been significant investment in the building. There is potential for district-wide facilities to be added.
- A two-lane road with a shared central turn-lane configuration for Douglas Drive is being considered for the City of Crystal, and there is potential for this configuration in Golden Valley. A three-lane roadway works in locations where traffic volumes (measured on the basis of Average Daily Trips) are less than 14,000. In Golden Valley, the significant peaks in traffic volume may be problematic at some locations.
- The narrow width of the corridor limits the ability to easily add facilities for pedestrians and bicycles or to accommodate other regulatory functions of the road. Still, most entities agree that innovation is needed as the project is planned (recognizing potential mode shifts for transportation functions or reductions in water volume for stormwater management).
- The culvert at Bassett Creek needs to be studied for its condition, its ability to be extended (if the roadway or sidewalk were to be widened), and its hydraulic function (so that flows of the creek are not limited).
- Hennepin County's Bicycle Plan notes off-street facilities for bicycles on Douglas Drive and Duluth Street. Three Rivers Park District recognizes the need for expanded trail facilities (for commuting and recreation) beyond those currently being constructed for the Luce Line Trail, and advocates for stronger linking of their trails to each other and to a local sidewalk/trail network.
- The city has applied for a grant from Transit for Livable Communities and has received a preliminary notification of an award. While that award is not final, it provides limited funds for targeted bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Other sources of funding are limited but the city is committed to defining pools of local and outside funding that can, over time, satisfy many of the identified needs for Douglas Drive. While no agency indicated that improvements on Douglas Drive are a part of their planned capital improvements, Hennepin County has noted the city's interest in improvements and has encouraged the city to begin engaging them more directly in planning efforts. The City of Crystal noted their positive relationship with Hennepin County and possible methods of accessing funds for some roadway improvements and corridor enhancements. 🌈

Chapter 2: The Goals

ALREADY, IT'S CLEAR THAT resolution of pedestrian safety issues is a clear and immediate goal. But in pursuing this plan, the community has more expansive goals—articulated as principles for the corridor—that will frame patterns of use and development and guide an evolution of Douglas Drive over a period of ten or twenty years or more:

- 1. Improve connectivity and functionality for all transportation modes.** As a county state-aid highway and minor arterial street, Douglas Drive has historically focused on motorized vehicles. Traffic volume has increased significantly over the years as has the desire for non-motorized transportation and transit options. Improvements in pedestrian and non-motorized traffic facilities must be developed so safe and attractive options are available for all modes of travel in all seasons and improved transit service can be provided. Enhancements to the functioning of the TH 55/Douglas Drive and other key intersections within the corridor are critical to safer and improved movement for pedestrians, non-motorized, and vehicular traffic in the corridor.
- 2. Enable the corridor to maintain a diverse mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial activities.** A mix of activities, uses and densities will sustain the corridor through changing economic cycles, consumer preferences, and housing trends. Clustered and mixed uses create synergies, increase transit use, and enhance pedestrian activity.

- 3. 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. Residential neighborhoods should be buffered from adjacent non-residential corridor uses.
- 4. Maintain the corridor as an employment center.** Jobs within the corridor help maintain Golden Valley's jobs-to-housing balance while sustaining commercial enterprises. Retaining 'living wage' jobs should be a priority.
- 5. 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 corridor and the broader public realm, while public improvements should set the standard for private investment.

- 6. Foster neighborhood-serving retail and services.** Multimodal links to commercial development should be enhanced.
- 7. Encourage and facilitate 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 stormwater runoff, and fosters resource conservation and the use of renewable systems in new construction.

None of this will happen overnight. An evolution of the Douglas Drive corridor that follows these principles will take years, so the notion of looking forward—and really imagining a future that might be twenty years out—to understand the potential for change is a fundamental goal of the planning effort. This perspective allows for a more expansive view of the future, one where the original seven goals are seen as real possibilities.

Even as significant change is contemplated for the Douglas Drive corridor, the community expects change to reflect a Golden Valley character. This applies to development along the corridor, but it applies equally to the roadway that supports development. To be successful, the goal is a street that “feels” like a Golden Valley street—accommodating vehicle traffic, as well as other modes of movement, and providing a pleasant street as a front yard for development. 🌿



Douglas Drive can be upgraded from its current state to a model road through this study's goals and objectives.

Chapter 3: Corridor Context

THE STUDY AREA FOCUSES on Douglas Drive from Highway 55 at the south to Medicine Lake Road at the north and on Duluth Street from Douglas Drive at the west to Highway 100 at the east. In addition to the streets themselves and the parcels immediately fronting on the rights-of-way, it is also important to consider the surrounding neighborhoods which are significantly influenced by the corridor. In planning the corridor, an early diagram (Figure 3-1) demonstrated the study area with a “fuzzy” boundary, largely because the influence of the corridor cannot be easily defined by the lines of existing parcels.

The portions of the corridor within the right-of-way exhibit a number of deficiencies, including conditions that limit solutions and those with priority for resolution—all of which are in the public realm, and all of which, assuming cooperation from Hennepin County and other government entities, the city could assist in resolving:

- unsafe and discontinuous pedestrian facilities;
- little accommodation of modes other than vehicles;
- increasing traffic congestion;
- unlinked transit facilities; and
- narrow right-of-way and utility conflicts

These points become important when dealing with the rights-of-way of Douglas Drive and Duluth Street. However, the

context of the corridor and the potential for change are a product of both the public realm and the private parcels that line the roadway. Achieving a progressive solution will require an understanding of the limits and opportunities of both.

Community context

Douglas Drive lies at about the geographic center of the Golden Valley community and in the northwest quadrant of TH 55 and TH 100 (Figure 3-1). Important intersections include Duluth Street—a part of the study area—which forms a link to TH 100, and Golden Valley Road, which connects Douglas Drive to the retail area at Winnetka Avenue and forms

a non-highway link to that portion of Golden Valley lying east of TH 100 (in fact, Golden Valley Road is even more important to Golden Valley because it forms the most extensive east-west local street on the north side of TH 55). As a corridor, Douglas Drive extends northward into Crystal, eventually terminating at County Road 8 (West Broadway Avenue); on the south, it essentially terminates at TH 55, but the street network continues to the south (although not so clearly on the same alignment). Today, the corridor seems to be defined by its proximity and interconnectedness with other roadways and not by a clear identity of its own. In short, people recognize Douglas Drive as a street, but not a place.

It's difficult to define Douglas Drive as a district because of its length (8,300 feet, or 1.6 miles, for Douglas Drive, and 2,500 feet, or 0.5 mile, for Duluth Street) and the varied uses along that distance, especially when compared to other large planned districts in Golden Valley like the Highway 394 Commercial Area and the Winnetka Retail Area and Civic Core. However, as a corridor, Douglas Drive and Duluth Street form an important transportation link and a focus for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Development in the Douglas Drive corridor is fairly typical of the community. Golden Valley is a first-ring community, with much of its development dating to an era of

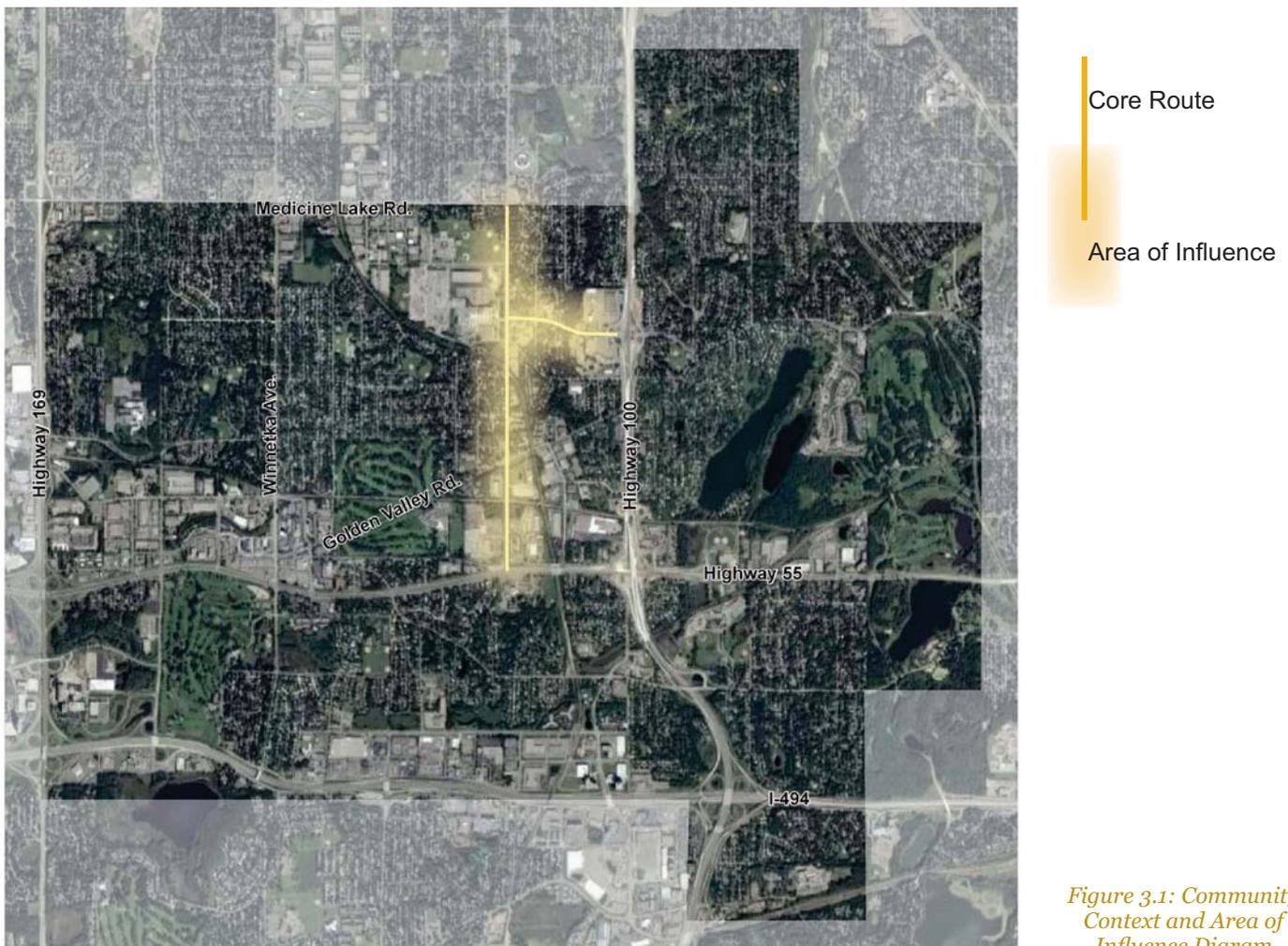


Figure 3.1: Community Context and Area of Influence Diagram

suburban development in the decades surrounding the 1960s. While most development is residential and dates to that same time frame, some homes date to the early 1900s. The commercial and industrial development is generally about the same age, in some cases in buildings that have evolved to suit more contemporary use through renovation and updating. It's important to note, however, that this kind of building does not improve with age. Other communities with similarly situated buildings have found that buildings of this age often reach a stage of functional obsolescence because of the cost of updating communications and data infrastructure, and when those improvements cannot be made, lease rates diminish and their financial performance suffers.

Land use

The city's land use plan (Figure 3-2) demonstrates the varied nature of development along Douglas Drive and Duluth Street. Table 3-1 describes land uses in the corridor, based on the frontage of the street along Douglas Drive and Duluth Street.

Zoning (Figure 3-3) in the Douglas Drive and Duluth Street corridors generally reflects the patterns of land use. The exceptions are parcels guided to High Density Residential that are currently occupied by office or single family residential uses.

Transportation

Douglas Drive is under the jurisdictional authority of Hennepin County, and is classified as an "A" Minor Arterial roadway in the county's Transportation Plan; in county terms Douglas Drive is County State Aid Highway 102. Duluth Street is also a Hennepin County State Aid Highway (County Road 66), and is also classified as an "A" Minor Arterial roadway. With this classification, the roads are intended to provide mobility, serve short to medium length trips (two to six miles) and have controlled land access. In planning for the future of the Douglas Drive corridor, it is important that the function of the road as a part of the county highway system remains clear.

Traffic volumes are heaviest at those points where the roadways intersect with the regional transportation

facilities—at TH 55 and TH 100. Traffic volumes on Douglas Drive (measured as average daily traffic in 2008) are 9,100 south of Golden Valley Road, 11,400 between Golden Valley Road and Duluth Street, and 10,900 north of Duluth Street. Between Douglas Drive and TH 100, the ADT for Duluth Street was 14,700. For comparison, TH 55 carries about 33,000 cars per day near Douglas Drive and TH 100 carries about 90,000 cars per day near Duluth Street. The ADT of Winnetka Avenue was measured at 12,300, and Medicine Lake Road carries about 10,000 cars per day near its intersection with Winnetka Avenue.

Transit routes (Figure 3-4) along Douglas Drive include routes 705 and 755 at the south end, and routes 14 and 758 at the north end. The middle portion of Douglas Drive is not currently served by buses. For these routes, Metro Transit counted 60 total boardings on Douglas Drive and Duluth Street in a survey conducted in the summer of 2008.

Three Rivers Park District recently completed a section of the Luce Line Trail in Golden Valley. While largely

Use	Street frontage	% of corridor frontage
Residential		
Low density residential	6,100 linear feet	28%
Medium density residential	600 linear feet	3%
High density residential	2,400 linear feet	11%
Commercial¹		
Office	2,600 linear feet	12%
Commercial	2,000 linear feet	9%
Industrial		
Industrial	4,900 linear feet	23%
Public and institutional		
Open space	600 linear feet	3%
Schools and religious facilities	1,700 linear feet	8%
Public facilities	600 linear feet	3%

Table 3-1: Uses in the corridor.

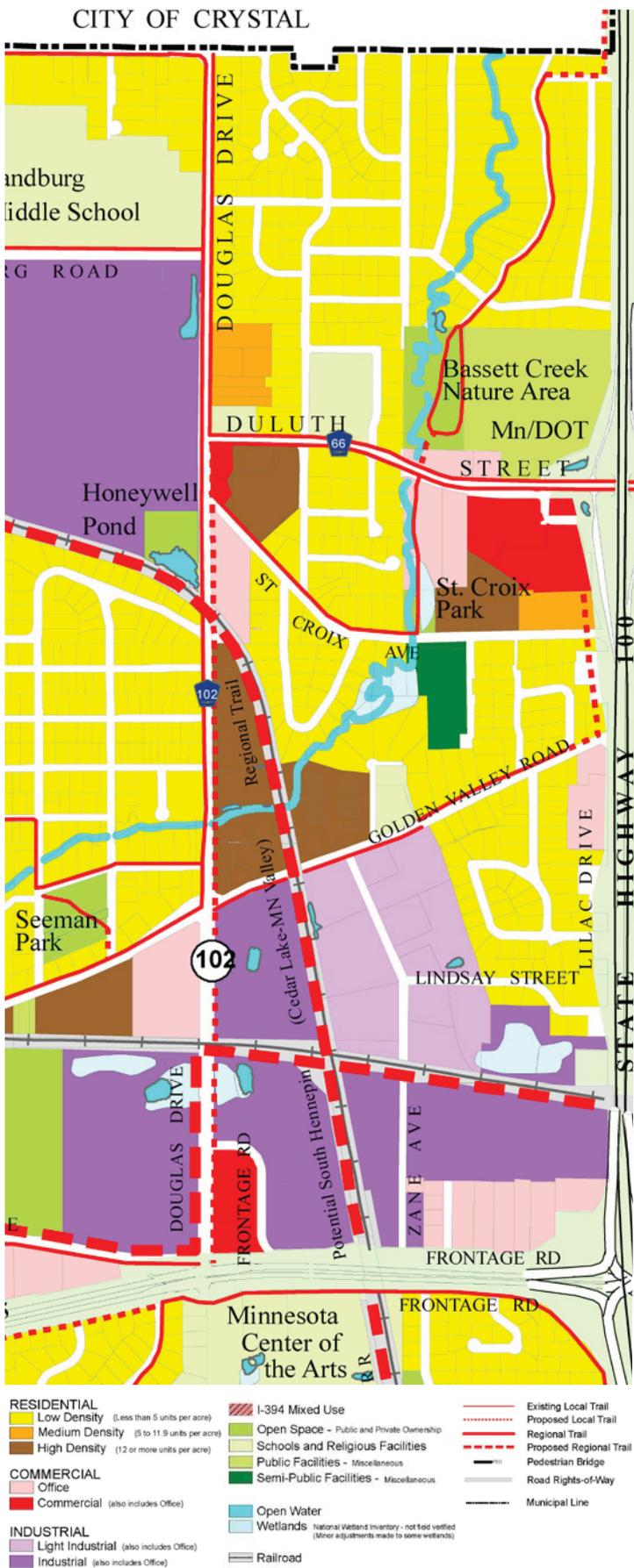


Figure 3-2: Current Land Use Plan

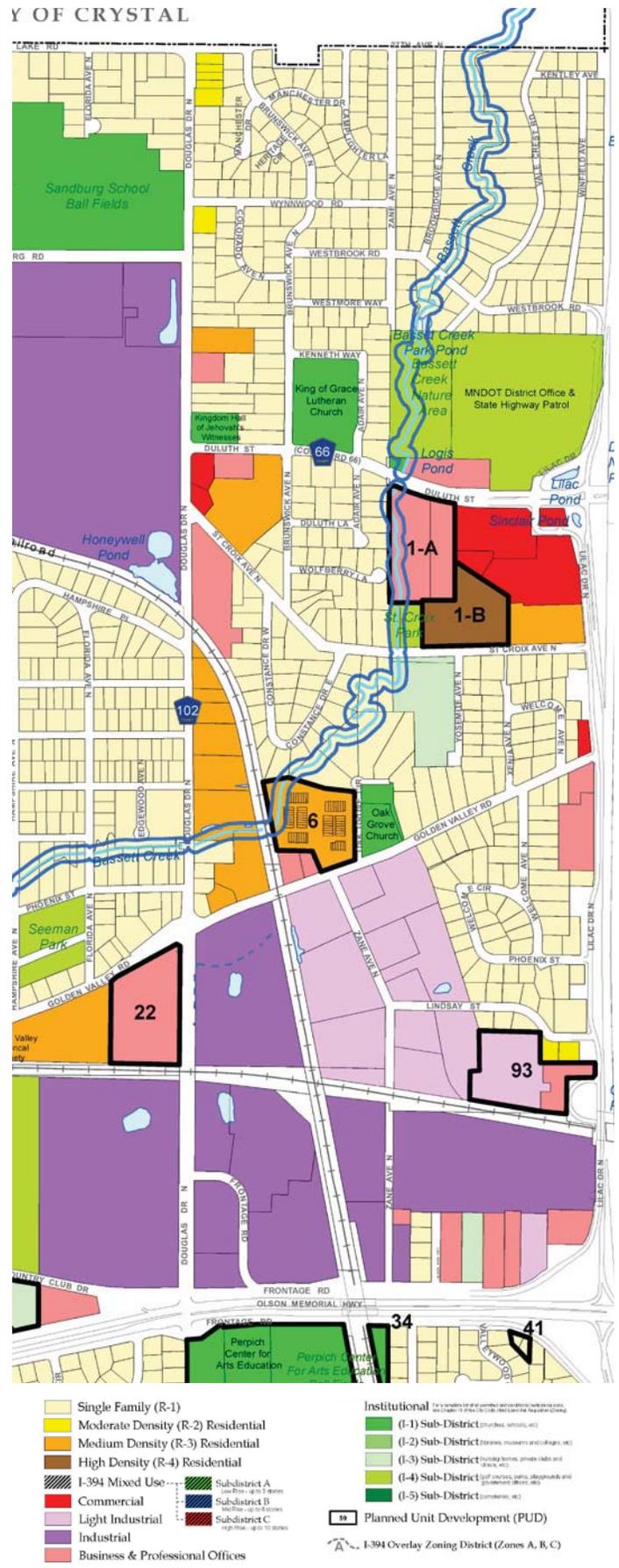


Figure 3-3: Current Zoning Plan

- Sidewalk without Boulevard
- Sidewalk with Boulevard
- Bituminous Trail
- Bus Route 14
- Bus Route 758
- Bus Route 755
- Bus Route 705
- Bus Stop with Bench
- Bus Stop with Shelter



Figure 3-4: Existing Pedestrian and Transit Routes

viewed as a recreation amenity, from a transportation perspective the trail offers an alternative to commuting by car or bus into Minneapolis. In terms of connectivity, the Luce Line Trail reaches from Theodore Wirth Parkway to Vicksburg Lane in Plymouth, and from there it reaches another 63 miles to the west as a gravel trail to Hutchinson. Portions of the trail run alongside Douglas Drive between TH 55 and the old railroad corridor (Figure 3-4). Still, portions of the pedestrian network are somewhat discontinuous, with some areas being particularly unsafe (like the rail crossing area, where pedestrians are essentially forced into traffic lanes to cross the tracks).

Sidewalks are also a part of the transportation component of Douglas

Drive. Today, the sidewalks exist as both bituminous and concrete walks with an asphalt shoulder, in some locations immediately behind the curb and in others with a boulevard separating the walkway from the road (Figure 3-4). For most of its length, Douglas Drive has pedestrian facilities on one side of the road.

Infrastructure

The unseen elements of Douglas Drive are a critical part of its function in the community. The corridor serves as a route or crossing point for water and sanitary sewer systems in Golden Valley, and a source of stormwater that enters Bassett Creek and downstream water bodies. Given the potential for

long-term evolution of the corridor, and the desire for a “greener” future, the infrastructure supporting the corridor becomes integral the plan for its future.

While an in-depth analysis was not a part of this study, considerations of age and likely condition factor into the long-term improvements that may be needed to support new development—and possibly, depending on future investigations, development that already exists along Douglas Drive. Because runoff from development enters Bassett Creek, a key natural resource for the community, and because contemporary methods of managing runoff from development and the road itself are dramatically different than the methods when most



Where sidewalks are not available on both sides of the road, paths frequently have been created by pedestrians.

development along Douglas Drive occurred, management of stormwater becomes an essential part of the plan. In fact, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission will exercise some control over development activities contemplated as a part of this study.

Without any changes, these systems serve existing development within the limits of current regulations. With new development or roadway construction, higher standards for infrastructure may become a requirement. It's also possible that, with time, existing systems will fail simply due to age.

Water systems

The area of Douglas Drive is served by three trunk water mains running in an east-west orientation through this part of Golden Valley: a 16-inch main located along TH 55; a 24-inch

main along St. Croix Avenue; and a 12-inch main on Medicine Lake Road. In addition, there are mains running north of Olympia Street (16- and 18-inch) and south of Olympia Street (6-inch) under Douglas Drive. A distribution network extends from the mains under nearly every public street, as well as within some of the larger developed parcels.

The age of water systems in this part of Golden Valley varies. Water mains in areas south of Golden Valley Road were installed in 1973; in other areas, the mains were installed in the early- to mid-1960s. Based on discussions with city staff, reports do not indicate a significantly high occurrence of water main breaks in the corridor.

Sanitary Sewer

Sanitary sewerage in the corridor is generally divided in flow direction by the Union Pacific Railroad (Luce Line

trail), with areas to the south collected in 8- to 10-inch pipes and then directed into a 12-inch concrete trunk line that flows east along the railroad corridor and eventually to the east side of TH 100. Pipes in this area are typically vitrified clay, and were installed in 1959.

The remainder of the corridor is served by a 27-inch trunk line that flows onto Douglas Drive from the west at Plymouth, flows north one block and leaves Douglas Drive, flowing to the east, at Knoll Street. Collector pipes range from 8 inches to 12 inches in diameter, are generally vitrified clay pipe, and were installed in 1957 or 1958. There are sporadic instances of ductile iron or cast iron pipe in this area as well.

There are no recent televising records of the sanitary sewer system in this



Stormwater treatment ponds serve both aesthetic and environmental functions.

area, so the extent of pipe cracking or settling, or damage from roots is not known at this time. However, pipes of this material and age often have significant damage that affects capacity, and introduces infiltration of clean water into sanitary sewers or leakage of sewage into ground water.

Stormwater management

The Douglas Drive Advisory Committee and members of the community noted the desire for a “greener” Douglas Drive corridor as it evolves. While some might have considered “greener” to mean more trees, others were definitely noting the need to be more sustainable and more environmentally responsible. Management of stormwater is a key element of a “green” philosophy.

In the Douglas Drive corridor, runoff from the roadway typically finds its way to Bassett Creek without any treatment

or storage. North of Golden Valley Road, runoff from private parcels is treated by private stormwater management ponds in some instances. South of Golden Valley Road (with the exception of the CenterPoint Energy facility), runoff from Douglas Drive and development along its edges collects in a series of catch basins, pipes, and private ponds into 60- and 72- inch trunk storm sewers that drain east along the railroad corridor to a point where water is discharged to a wetland area in Schaper Park.

The remainder of the study area is directed to Bassett Creek through a variety of catch basins, pipes, ponds, and ditches, with the ponds and ditches located on private property and likely sized for only the runoff generated on that site. All roadway drainage enters Bassett Creek without treatment.

The age of the stormwater system is difficult to determine due to the number of private facilities involved, but available data indicates the roadway system was installed between 1957 and 1970. Without any major changes having occurred within the immediately past decades, it is likely that stormwater management for both public and private areas of the corridor will not satisfy contemporary standards for stormwater management. Reconstruction of the roadway or new development in the study area will be subject to higher standards to protect important community features like Bassett Creek and Sweeney Lake.



Bassett Creek is an important community feature.



Figure 3-5: Character Zones

Character and features

While not nearly so quantitative as some other aspects of context, the character of Douglas Drive can be a factor in its evolution, particularly because a plan that reflects the community and the unique features of this corridor is desired. The characterization of the corridor as five character zones (Figure 3-5 and Table 3-2) results from the experience one has as a traveler on the roadway, but it may aid in shaping an identity for uses or clusters of uses that line the roadway.

Several features suggest a quality unique from other county road corridors—features that might be celebrated in its evolution to maintain a stronger sense of identity and a corridor more reflective

of the Golden Valley community.

Bassett Creek flows under Douglas Drive north of Golden Valley Road and under Duluth Street between Douglas Drive and TH100. However, it's nearly unrecognizable as a natural feature other than a concentration of trees because the creek flows in a culvert, which makes the water nearly invisible. The Luce Line Trail, already noted for its connections between Minneapolis and Hutchinson, crosses Douglas Drive near its south end; while it is essentially a replacement for a railroad that once occupied the corridor, it is notable for its regional connections and its value as a recreation amenity for the Golden Valley Community. A large open space at the southeast quadrant of Douglas Drive and Golden Valley Road will likely

remain so for the foreseeable future, as CenterPoint Energy has intentions for only limited development of a site that is a critical service point for their gas distribution system.

Development features also contribute to the character of the street. While Douglas Drive and Duluth Street are populated largely with single family residential development, two properties stand out: Honeywell's Automation and Control Solutions, with an expansive front yard and modern design reflect a contemporary manufacturer of international scale; and the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, a building of a much smaller scale, reflects a post-modern aesthetic despite the fact that the building was built by members of its congregation.

Zone	Character	Opportunities	Challenges
North Gateway			
	A wooded, residential area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established tree canopy Sidewalks on both sides Proximity to stable neighborhoods Proximity to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow, crumbling sidewalks Several abandoned, foreclosed, and neglected homes
Central Mixed			
	An open industrial and retail area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Busy retail and offices Investment in sites by anchor businesses School grounds Stormwater ponds and significant open space near road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalk only on east side, south of Duluth Street Exposed and unsafe pedestrian experience Inaccessible bus stops Outdated and auto-oriented office buildings
Residential			
	A higher-density residential area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing tree canopy Creek crossing Investment in sites by the newer apartment/condominium complexes Proximity to park and stable neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalk only on the lower-density side Crumbling and interrupted sidewalks Outdated and neglected multifamily housing Houses with back fences towards Douglas Drive
Luce Line			
	An office and open space area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing tree canopy Luce Line crossing Investment by landowners in landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sidewalks Large CenterPoint site with gas tanks
TH 55			
	A highway frontage office area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment by Optum Health and BNC bank in landscaping High visibility from TH 55 Broad boulevards on both sides of street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sidewalk on either side at north east corner of Hwy 55 & Douglas Drive Neglected site at most visible corner Exposed and very busy boulevards

Table 3-2: Character Zones

Change potential

Douglas Drive Advisory Committee members were asked to share their thoughts about the future of the corridor through an analysis of parcels and their resistance or susceptibility to change. While not intended as a definitive prediction of a parcel's future, the analysis generally lend insights about where change is possible, and where the existing condition reflects stability.

The analysis is organized to first determine a parcel's resistance or susceptibility to change. An absolute determination is not the goal; that is, a parcel receiving a susceptible label does not indicate that it will change, and similarly, a stable designation is not a guarantee that the use will remain. Ultimately, it is the areas of the corridor where a number of parcels

receive similar designations that merits attention.

A second level of analysis goes beyond a parcel's resistance or susceptibility to change, attempting to frame the reasons underlying a designation. Advisory Committee members assigned at least one criterion supporting each parcel's designation. Analysis of these criteria gives insights to a parcel's future, and when compared to those parcels surrounding it, suggests strategies supporting intervention to stem negative influences or measures that would support longevity for the existing use.

Parcels noted for stability are not surprising, and include those occupied by major corporations (OptumHealth, Tennant's Corporate Woods building, and Honeywell), industrial uses along Zane Avenue, and institutions (Perpich Center for Arts Education, Sandburg

Middle School, and Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses). Along Duluth Street, parcels occupied by Minnesota Department of Transportation, King of Grace Lutheran Church, the Spring Gate Shopping Center, and office uses were all categorized as stable. A few multi-family housing sites also fall into this category. Support for the characterization of these parcels as stable include:

- The current use conforms to zoning ordinances;
- The current use supports the vision for the corridor;
- There are no negative influences caused by the use; and
- Adjacent or nearby uses are not negatively influenced by the use.

Three types of parcels fall into the category of susceptible: single family



The multi-family housing just south of the railroad may be susceptible to change because the buildings are becoming obsolete and may have a negative impact on their neighbors.

homes abutting Douglas Drive, some multi-family housing, and industrial-use parcels east of Douglas Drive nearer to Highway 55. Members of the Advisory Committee offered the following as support for these designations:

- Structure and/or infrastructure is obsolete;
- The current use negatively impacts its neighbors; and
- Pedestrian access is unsafe or insufficient.

It's worth noting that some sites identified as susceptible to change were described as being the right use, but a lack of investment in the building or grounds detracts from the parcel's otherwise positive contribution.

The analysis included several parcels where the designations were not

conclusive. A parcel occupied by CenterPoint Energy was considered stable because the parcel is not for sale or does not appear to be in transition, that the use is not likely to move, and that it offers a positive visual impact for the corridor. It was also noted as being susceptible because the use is not necessarily consistent with the vision for the corridor. An office use, convenience store, and apartments on the southeast corner of Douglas Drive and Duluth Street are a cluster of parcels where the opinions of the Advisory Committee differed and a conclusion is not evident.

The analysis revealed strong patterns of stability and susceptibility, but probably most important is the expanse of areas noted as stable by the Advisory Committee. From that perspective, those uses are likely viewed as valued parts of the corridor and the community, and their longevity might

be encouraged. Still, with time, even these uses could face conditions that would suggest a change. The planning effort should direct efforts toward understanding how their presence can be maintained over time.

At the same time, most of the parcels noted as susceptible to change were single family residential uses that line the corridor. Two paths might be considered for these parcels: changes in the public realm that might result in a more comfortable relationship with a roadway that will continue to carry significant traffic; or changes to the parcels themselves that might result in uses that are more compatible with the corridor's activities. Perhaps most important is a recognition that some of these parcels abut other single family homes; protection of the neighborhoods near those homes considered susceptible should be a goal of this planning effort. 📍



Well-maintained and active commercial uses may be more resistant to change.

Chapter 4: Corridor Concept Plan

A PLAN FOR DOUGLAS DRIVE and Duluth Street involves shaping both the public and private realm, defining evolution in stages, and balancing development and transportation needs with a character that resonates with the community. Considering the potential for change along the corridor, it becomes obvious that much of the corridor could change. This plan considers a series of precincts along the length of the study area, each with its own potential and timeline for change, and each with its own direction. What results is a multi-use corridor, where the range of uses present today remain, but may be refined to address the changing needs and goals of the community. These changes are manifested in a series of development precincts:

- **TH 55 Campus**
 - reinforce employment uses at the south end of the corridor;
 - reorganizes roadway access to create parcels that are more developable and to create a better link to Zane Avenue;
 - provides common functions to serve all of the development; and
 - enhances the corridor's south "gateway" with a more campus-like setting.

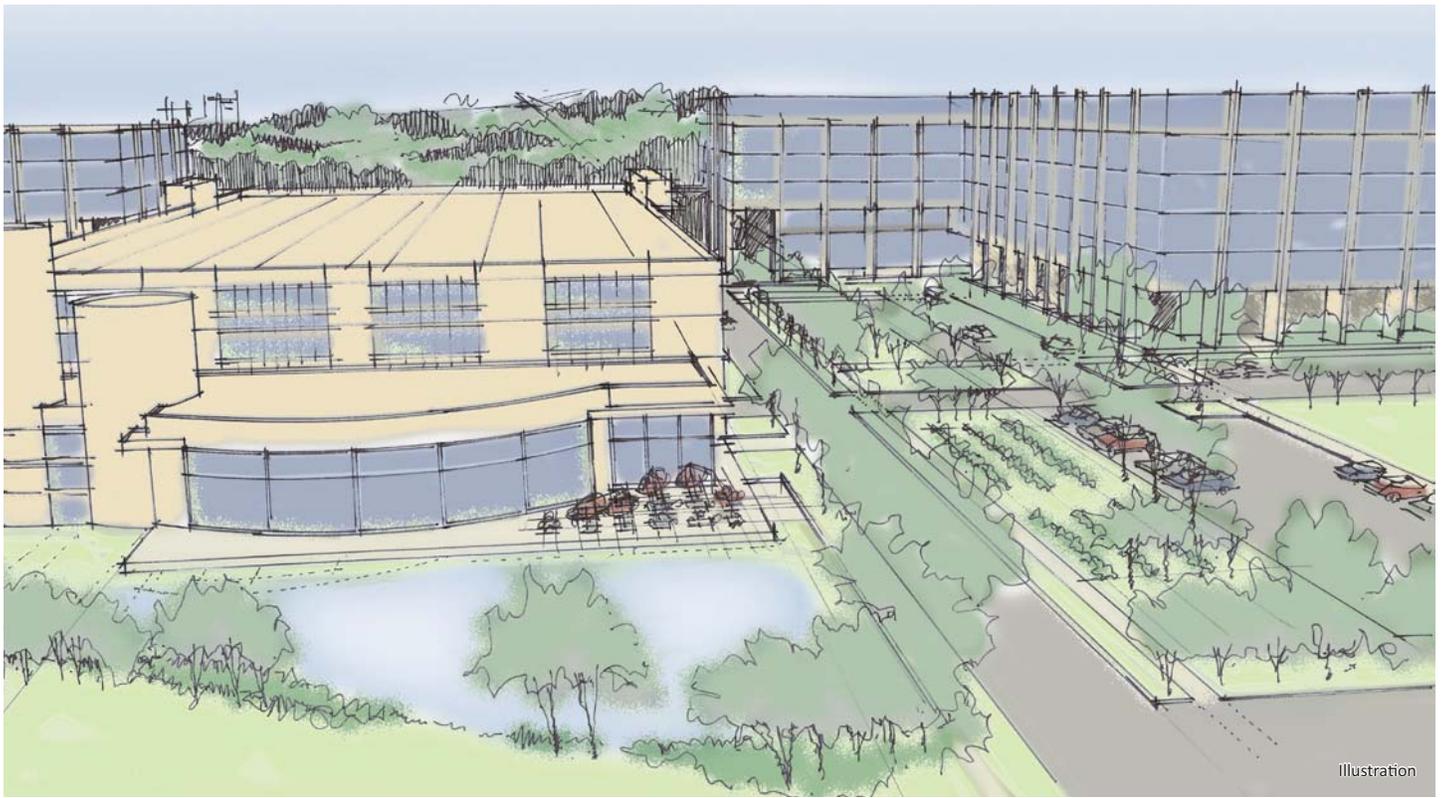
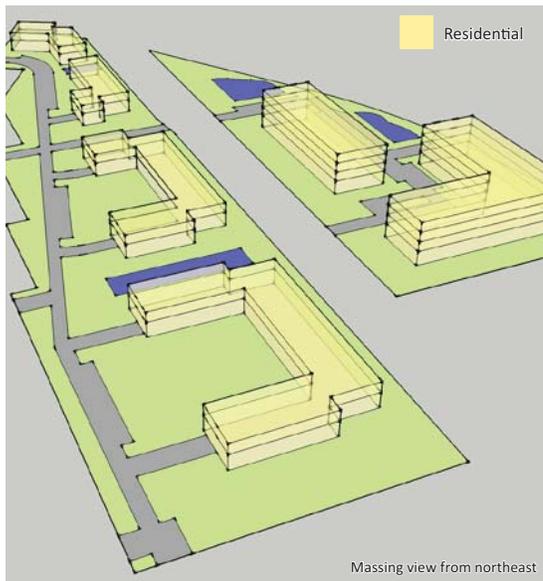


Figure 4-1: TH 55 Campus Concept for Development

- **Douglas Drive Residential**, which is actually a series of residential precincts with the same underlying goals
 - offers a neighborhood edge of new housing that engages Douglas Drive (no back doors to the corridor), “protects” remaining homes, and orients housing to Douglas Drive without turning back doors onto neighbors;
 - directs access to Douglas Drive to fewer points;
 - enhances Douglas Drive’s capacity to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit use as housing adjacent to the corridor evolves;
 - accommodates stormwater management as a key element of common space;
 - provides a phased evolution of residential areas to accommodate a greater range of housing choices for the community; and
 - establishes densities that offer a comfortable relationship to remaining homes.



Illustration



Massing view from northeast



Figure 4-2: Douglas Drive Residential, South Concept for Development



Figure 4-3: Douglas Drive Residential, North Concept for Development

• **Mixed use node**

- organize commercial uses in way that integrates with surrounding uses to create a mixed use node at Douglas Drive and Duluth Street;
- intensifies use of large scale, low intensity sites without overwhelming the neighborhood to the east;
- provides smaller scale, neighborhood serving retail on Douglas Drive; and
- maintains the Honeywell presence as a major feature of the corridor.



Illustration



Massing view from northeast



Massing view from southwest



Figure 4-4: Mixed Use Node Concept for Development

- **Mixed use village**

- creates a mixed-use village-scaled redevelopment pattern in areas north and south of Duluth Street near TH 100;
- establishes patterns of mixed use focused on community spaces and walkable street environments
- preserves and expands choices of multi-family residential use to help support the commercial components of the mixed use pattern;
- accommodates stormwater as a component of common spaces; and
- preserves street connections through the “village” with an orientation to pedestrians and identity.



Figure 4-5: Mixed Use Village Concept for Development

Land Use

The overall pattern for land use (Figure 4-6) in the corridor is based, in part, on the potential for change analysis. As a result, some existing patterns remain and are, in fact, strengthened, while others could see change—which may not involve a change in use so much as a change in the pattern on a site. Market forces, the age or utility of buildings, and community needs all played a role in shaping potential directions. Ultimately, most of the corridor could see some degree of change—in a long term view.

The directions suggest a potential for change, not a mandate. The ability to support development with roads and infrastructure is an important consideration—that is, too much development could reduce the function of the road to the point where development is detrimental to the corridor and the community. The long term view is important when roads and infrastructure are discussed: the changes in use along the corridor can support the ability to build better facilities within the right-of-way for all modes of movement—a major goal of this effort.

Defining land use offers some guidance for change in the corridor, but the goals of this planning effort require a better understanding of the three-dimensional character of the future corridor. With this, the experience people might expect in each of the precincts can be evaluated alongside more quantifiable criteria such as densities and floor area ratios. As each site is different, creative approaches to land use and design should be expected. Common functions such as parking, open space, and stormwater management might be accommodated

in a different way in each precinct, but the orientation of development to streets and accommodation of pedestrian circulation follow a more consistent theme.

To more clearly demonstrate the differences in land use and character inherent in each precinct, they can be compared according to a variety of factors. While this might ultimately be considered in a more prescriptive way, it is intended here more as guidance. So we look at how single use zones become areas of more mixed activity, and how primary and secondary uses can complement one another; the ways in which pedestrians move, which ultimately tells a lot about the kinds

of experiences that are expected; how parking is accommodated without diminishing those experiences for pedestrians; and, importantly, the ways in which common spaces are integrated into the patterns of development—as truly public spaces, or as publicly accessible, privately developed spaces. In some cases, these patterns come together to form nearly complete communities on their own, as in the Mixed Use Village, while in others they form a critical seam between public corridors and quiet neighborhoods. For the Douglas Drive corridor, the general characterization of use and character described in Table 4-1 would apply to each of the precincts in the corridor.



Existing land uses can transition to fit the future needs of the corridor.

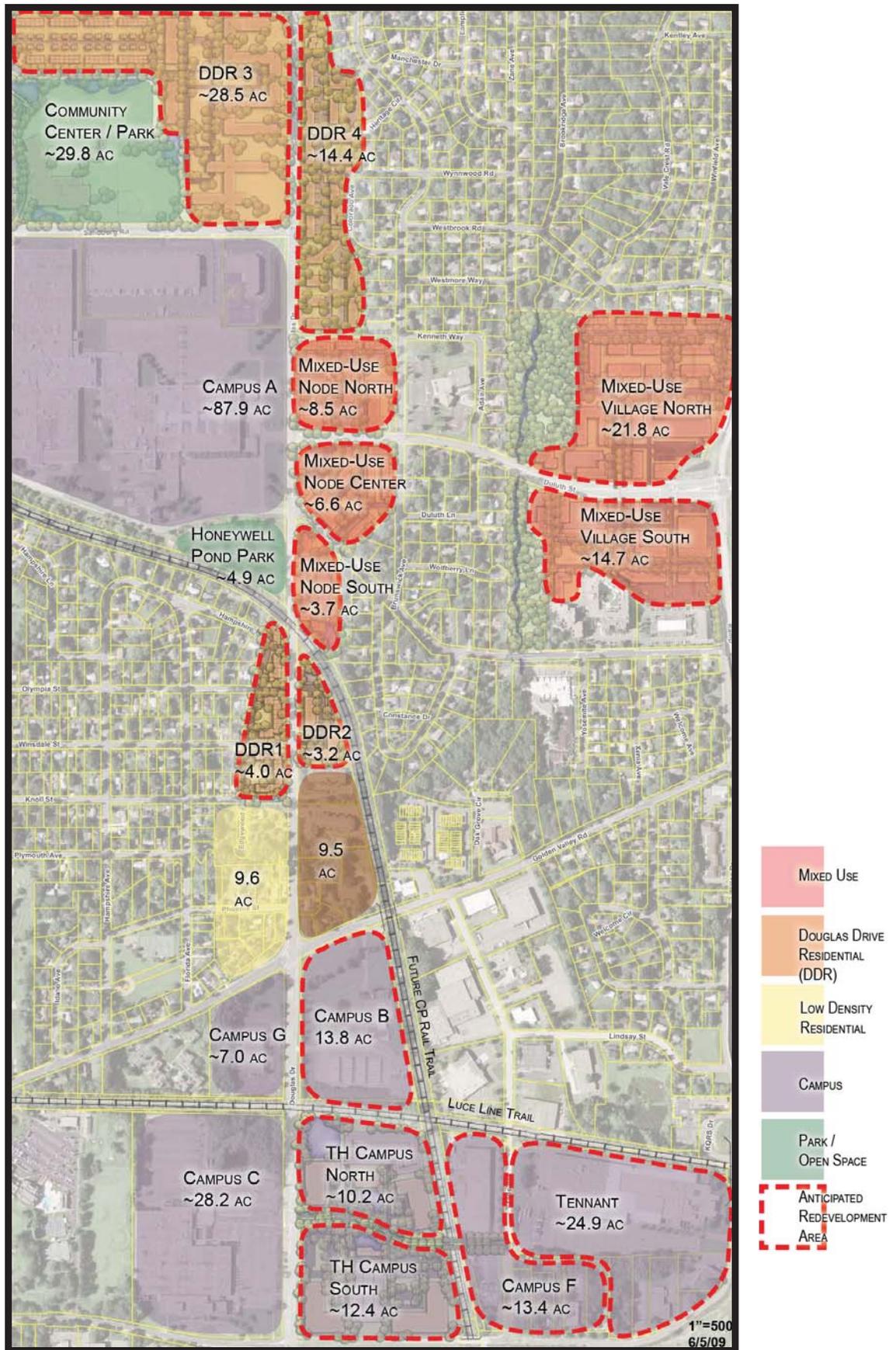


Figure 4-6: Potential Land Use Pattern

Use type	TH55 Campus	Douglas Drive Residential 1	Douglas Drive Residential 2	Douglas Drive Residential 3
General location	South of Golden Valley Road to TH 55	West side of Douglas Drive, south of CP Rail corridor	East side of Douglas Drive, south of CP Rail corridor	West side of Douglas Drive south of Medicine Lake Road
Scale and character	Four to six story buildings of [90] feet maximum height; strong pedestrian connections to public streets, including when the building is not oriented primarily to the public street	Small scale (two and three story) attached dwellings, orientation to Douglas Drive	Three and four story multi-family, internal parking court, "front door" to street with street accessible units	Mixed residential uses organized around public park and common spaces
Density	[2.0 to 5.0] FAR	[10 to 12] units per acre	[20 to 24] units per acre	[10 to 12] units per acre for rowhomes or townhomes; 30 to 40 units per acre for apartments or condominiums
Primary use	Office, research, medical	Attached residential (townhomes, rowhomes)	Apartments condos	Attached residential (townhomes, rowhomes); multi-family (apartments, condos)
Secondary use	Uses supporting primary uses established as common to the district	None	None	School, community center
Orientation	Development orientated to public streets with pedestrian oriented entry drives where buildings do not touch the right-of-way	Toward major street; no rear yard toward public streets	"Townhome" units oriented to Douglas Drive, Douglas Drive building entry balanced with entry at interior parking court; no rear yard toward public streets	Toward major street; no rear yard toward public streets
Parking	Parking structures and small highly landscaped surface parking areas	Surface parking in drives, small parking areas off of alley, or protected parking bays on Douglas Drive in expanded right-of-way	In garages below buildings, with limited surface parking at interior of site, parallel parking along Douglas Drive in expanded right-of-way	In garages below buildings, surface parking along interior streets, protected parking bays on Douglas Drive
Pedestrian circulation	Sidewalks on both sides of public streets; pedestrian connections from every public street to a building entry	Sidewalks along Douglas Drive, front walk to units, sidewalks along previous rights-of-way	Sidewalk along Douglas Drive, sidewalks to interior court and building entries at interior of the site	Sidewalks along Douglas Drive and Medicine Lake Road, and along both sides of interior streets
Common space	Privately developed publicly accessible common space forming seamless pedestrian-oriented spaces through the district outside of public sidewalks	Public alley along west side of redevelopment area next to existing single family homes		Public park and neighborhood "green;" courtyards between buildings
Other features	The development pattern might be thought of as clusters of buildings surrounded by continuous green space	Access to garages from alley; this district forms transitions between single family uses and more intensive uses along Douglas Drive or Duluth Street, and can be seen as an active buffer to those streets		

Table 4-1: Land Use Type and Character

Use type	Douglas Drive Residential 4	Mixed use node	Mixed use village south	Mixed use village north
General location	East side of Douglas Drive south of Medicine Lake Road	East side of Douglas Drive at Duluth Street	South side of Duluth Street near TH 100	North side of Duluth Street near TH 100
Scale and character	Small scale (two and three story) attached dwellings, orientation to Douglas Drive and existing residential streets	Mixed development district, including retail, office townhomes/rowhomes as a transition to existing single family uses, apartments/condominiums at interior	Two to five story buildings generally set at the edge of the right-of-way	Two to five story buildings generally set at the edge of the right-of-way; transition to single family residential uses to the north occurs with two or three story townhomes/rowhomes along the north edge of the district
Density	[10 to 12] units per acre	[0.3 to 0.5] FAR; [10 to 12] units per acre for townhomes/rowhomes, [20 to 40] units per acre for apartments/condominiums	[0.3 to 0.5] FAR; residential densities of [10 to 12] units per acre for rowhomes/townhomes; [20-24] units per acre at mixed use buildings; [30 to 48] units per acre for other multi-family	[0.3 to 0.5] FAR; residential densities of [10 to 12] units per acre for rowhomes/townhomes; [20-24] units per acre at mixed use buildings; [30 to 48] units per acre for other multi-family
Primary use	Attached residential (townhomes, rowhomes)	Retail near Duluth Street; office at south end; multi-family residential for interior parcels	Mixed use with retail at street level, office or residential above	Office, mixed use, residential
Secondary use	none	Single use buildings adjacent to Douglas Drive and Duluth Street provided the building directly addresses the right-of-way and facades are active	Single use buildings (office or residential buildings) in second tier of development (away from Duluth Street)	Some existing uses redirected to new buildings
Orientation	Toward Douglas Drive or other existing public streets; no rear yard toward public streets	Orientation to Douglas Drive and Duluth Street for exterior parcels; orientation to internal streets at interior parcels	Orientation to streets internal to village, with priority to "Main Street" and "Commons"	Orientation to streets internal to village, with priority to "Main Street" and "greens"
Parking		Parking in small landscaped parking areas located behind or beside buildings	Parking in structures and along streets; limited surface parking lots	Parking in structures and along streets; limited surface parking lots
Pedestrian circulation		Sidewalks at both sides of Douglas Drive and Duluth Street, and sidewalks on at least one side of internal streets	"Main Street" streetscape and sidewalks on both sides of streets, landscape connections between surface parking areas and building entries	"Main Street" streetscape and sidewalks on both sides of streets, landscape connections between surface parking areas and building entries
Common space		Interior "greens" creating links through redevelopment area	Commons as primary focal space with a direct connection to Bassett Creek	Greens as primary focal space with direct connection to Bassett Creek Natural Area
Other features	Access to garages from alley; this district forms transitions between single family uses and more intensive uses along Douglas Drive or Duluth Street, and can be seen as an active buffer to those streets			

Table 4-1 continued: Land Use Type and Character

Transportation

A critical balance should be struck between transportation and development in the Douglas Drive corridor—if a corridor that feels like Golden Valley is expected to result. While the road must accommodate traffic as a county highway, the intention is to create a street that works for traffic while accommodating transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. In accommodating the roadway functions, it is the intention to create a compatible relationship between the roadway, new and existing development along the corridor, and the community.

With current development and traffic levels, traffic can be accommodated on Douglas Drive in a combination of configurations dependent on location within the corridor. Between TH 55 and Golden Valley Road, the city has studied a configuration that includes two lanes of travel in each direction, with protected left turn lanes created by a median. In fact, this configuration not only accommodates the levels of traffic experienced today but also is sufficient for all of the redevelopment contemplated in the corridor, including expected growth in background traffic.

In this stretch of Douglas Drive, pedestrian accommodation should occur on both sides of the road. The Luce Line Trail improvements facilitate pedestrian movements on the west side; in the longer term, with redevelopment in the TH 55 Campus, a sidewalk should be added on the east side of Douglas Drive. When coupled with the goals for transit improvements, a bus stop on Douglas Drive just north of TH 55 dictates expansion of pedestrian ways that link those transit users to their employment destinations.

The intersection of Douglas Drive

and Country Club Road remains an issue. Leaving the intersection in its current configuration fails to resolve significant traffic and safety concerns, but changing the intersection may result in impacts to access for nearby businesses. Resolution will most likely require involvement of Hennepin County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation—in addition to the City of Golden Valley. As a result, this intersection remains an area for further study.

North of Golden Valley Road, a cross-section with three lanes is proposed (more specifically, one travel lane in each direction with a common left turn lane). While this configuration does not meet the cross-sectional requirements of Hennepin County, it can be accommodated within the existing curbs, and it offers safety enhancements for drivers since left turning movements are directed to their own lanes, without sacrificing traffic capacity. In this configuration, the potential for accommodating bicycles on the street is limited to a relatively narrow zone on each edge of the roadway. However, a more definitive and continuous pedestrian facility—in the form of a sidewalk—is directed to the east side of the road, where permanent facilities for pedestrians can be constructed in the short term.

This configuration is not without limitations. Existing overhead utilities must be buried within the roadway, adding costs to the initial construction and offering significant aesthetic advantages, but more critically providing the needed space for pedestrian movements within the existing right-of-way. As this proposal assumes that the improvements in the east boulevard will be permanent, a significant amount of engineering work remains to fully

understand the feasibility of these improvements relative to the future cross section of the roadway (ensuring that the roadway can meet the curb lines of the immediate improvements without compromising the cross section of the road or creating the need for more aggressive construction on the west edge of the roadway as the future road is implemented). And of more immediate concern, the railroad crossing and Bassett Creek culvert both need to be modified to reasonably address pedestrian movements.

It is important to recognize that improvements in the roadway are interim improvements in that they fail to meet the dimensional requirements of Hennepin County's standard for a three-lane roadway. When the entire roadway is reconstructed (with the exception of the east side improvements), the right-of-way will need to be expanded to accommodate wider bicycle lanes and a wider center turn lane to meet county standards. Impacts to properties on the west side will likely occur, and will vary depending on the final cross section and the city's desires for improvements outside of the curb on the west side of the roadway. The impacts may be limited to the need for a few feet to as much as 20 feet, depending on the final cross section.

Accommodating traffic with the long term improvements in the roadway suggests that other changes occur, most notably the reduction of intersecting streets and driveways along Douglas Drive. Foremost among these might be the concentration of street intersections between Golden Valley Road and the railroad tracks.

While the changes to the roadway may be important as long term improvements, the roadway could remain essentially



2005 Daily Traffic
 2006 Daily Traffic
 2007 Daily Traffic
 2030 Forecast Daily Traffic

Figure 4-7: Current and Forecast Average Daily Traffic

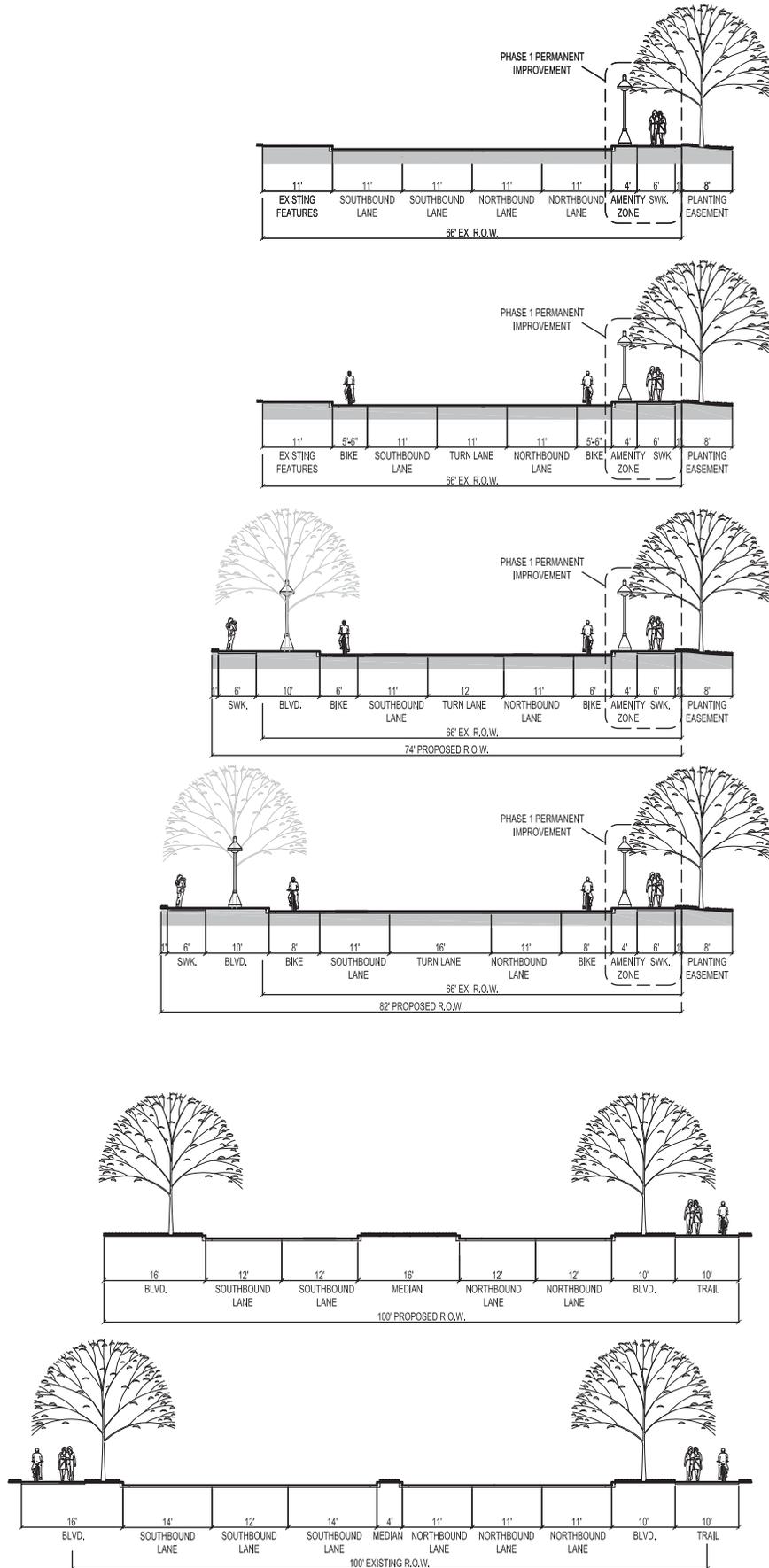


Figure 4-8: Street sections allow for immediate improvements and long-term development.



Figure 4-9: Several intersections may be reconfigured to improve safety and function.

in its current four-lane configuration. Improvements on the east side should remain a part of the immediate plan in order to facilitate the needed pedestrian safety improvements.

Intersections along Douglas Drive have not been defined as a part of this study. However, several intersections are identified as needing further study as a result of projected traffic volumes (Figure 4-9). For each of these intersections, possibilities ranging from enhanced signalized intersections to roundabouts may be considered. As Douglas Drive is a Hennepin County roadway, the determination of intersection types will need to be coordinated with the county as roadway improvements are studied.

Streetscape

Today, the Douglas Drive corridor exhibits a rather pleasant landscape aspect for most its length, not atypical of suburban roadway corridors, but certainly one that reflects a diversity of character ranging from front lawns of businesses dominated by parking, to seemingly wild landscapes around low lying areas and Bassett Creek, front and side yards of single family homes (some of which have been closed off by fences), to corporate front lawns and expansive green park areas, and to parking lots in front of shopping centers, churches, and office buildings. But what is interesting here is these landscapes form zones along the corridor, so that three broad patterns of streetscape related to land use might result:

- the TH 55 Campus, the Mixed Use Node, and the Mixed Use Village, Douglas Drive and Duluth Street might be more “urban,” or more designed;

- in areas that are predominantly residential, the character of the streetscape might be more like a parkway, with streetscape elements (particularly trees) in a less regular pattern or a more informal layout; and
- in front of Honeywell and CenterPoint Energy, where the existing landscape broadly open and unencumbered by buildings, a streetscape of a more “forested” nature might be encouraged, with patterns of trees dominating.

Focus might be provided at entry points, gateways, or key intersections, much like the streetscape that was implemented along Winnetka Avenue where more intensive landscape features and identity elements occur. The creek crossings might be more celebrated, using a bridge or improvements to the culvert that inspire a more bridge-like feeling.



Bridge-like enhancements at creek crossings would help highlight important corridor features.

The streetscape is more than trees and boulevards. The experience of a street by pedestrians suggests a higher degree of visual quality is desired, but an approach that balances pedestrian activity with the expectations of people in vehicles suggests that improvements that are bold and those that rise above the pavement (lights, trees, and plantings) might be more important than those that are primarily horizontal (pavement enhancements). Transit shelters that afford protection from the elements might be viewed differently by transit patrons if the shelter were more attractive, if they reflected a character that is unique to the corridor or to Golden Valley, or if they were surrounded by a more attractive landscape (a bus stop garden). Continuous facilities for pedestrians on each side of the street are also a desirable component of the streetscape, along with provisions for their comfort and use (like benches and trash receptacles) and more clearly marked street crossings that lend a

sense of permanence for pedestrian facilities in the roadway (a sense that, in those locations, pedestrians belong and should be expected).

With this level of streetscape, it should be obvious that it cannot be completely implemented today. The public realm of the corridor simply is not wide enough. But with redevelopment and the potential for increasing the width of the right-of-way, sufficient space exists to allow all of these improvements to occur. However, two important considerations remain:

- These improvements, which are in part focused on pedestrian movements, need to be complemented by a strategy of extending pedestrian facilities along other streets and corridors that form important and desired connections across the community—which are directed toward movement on foot, and not in cars; and

- Maintaining those improvements is a necessary component of a functional and pedestrian-oriented streetscape, and without a clear strategy for maintain the sidewalks in a safe and accommodating way, the value of the improvement is greatly diminished.

Infrastructure

The evolution of Douglas Drive needs support from contemporary infrastructure. Current infrastructure's capacity is generally sufficient for the development posed by this plan, with the notable exception of stormwater. Still, the age and condition of the existing infrastructure is the question.

Water

From a capacity standpoint, the water system appears to be generally capable of supporting the proposed land use changes. Portions of the watermain in Douglas Drive are currently six inches in diameter. An 8- or 12-inch main is recommended to improve capacity.

A full water model investigation should be performed in the corridor to take into account existing system pressures and the proposed land uses. The model will confirm the existing capacity and identify potentially insufficiencies. It is also recommended that, as each development is proposed, the break histories be re-examined to determine the need for replacement of existing mains, many of which are already 40 to 50 years old. Given the likely timeframe for redevelopment, these systems could be as much as 70 years old when the final roadway improvements and lands uses are realized. It is common practice and a prudent use of public resources to replace below-grade facilities of that age in concert with surface improvements and roadway reconstruction.



Winnetka Avenue is an example of a streetscape that uses pedestrian amenities to help express the community's character.

Sanitary Sewer

Similar to the water system, the sanitary sewer system seems generally adequate for future land use demand. And like the water system, a more thorough system modeling analysis is recommended to more fully determine the impacts of the proposed development.

Age of the sanitary sewer system is an issue, along with a heightened attention to the issues of inflow and infiltration limits dictated by the Metropolitan Council. The combination of age and pipe materials (predominantly vitrified clay) suggests a high potential for cracks, separated joints, and root infiltration—all of which allow groundwater to enter the pipes, or for untreated waste to leak into the ground. Regardless of capacity issues, future development impacts or roadway improvements should include televising of the sanitary sewer, which will inform the methods of improving the sanitary sewer systems (which could include pipe lining, pipe replacement, or manhole repair). Finally, and similar to the water system, it will be prudent to make these improvements coincident with roadway reconstruction.

Storm sewer

Today, runoff from Douglas Drive and adjacent sites drains untreated into Bassett Creek, where it flows into Sweeney Lake on its way to the Mississippi River. The community has indicated a preference for a “greener” corridor. The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission requires a “best effort” for stormwater management for roadways, but clearly, the stormwater system is the one element of infrastructure that is in most need of attention.

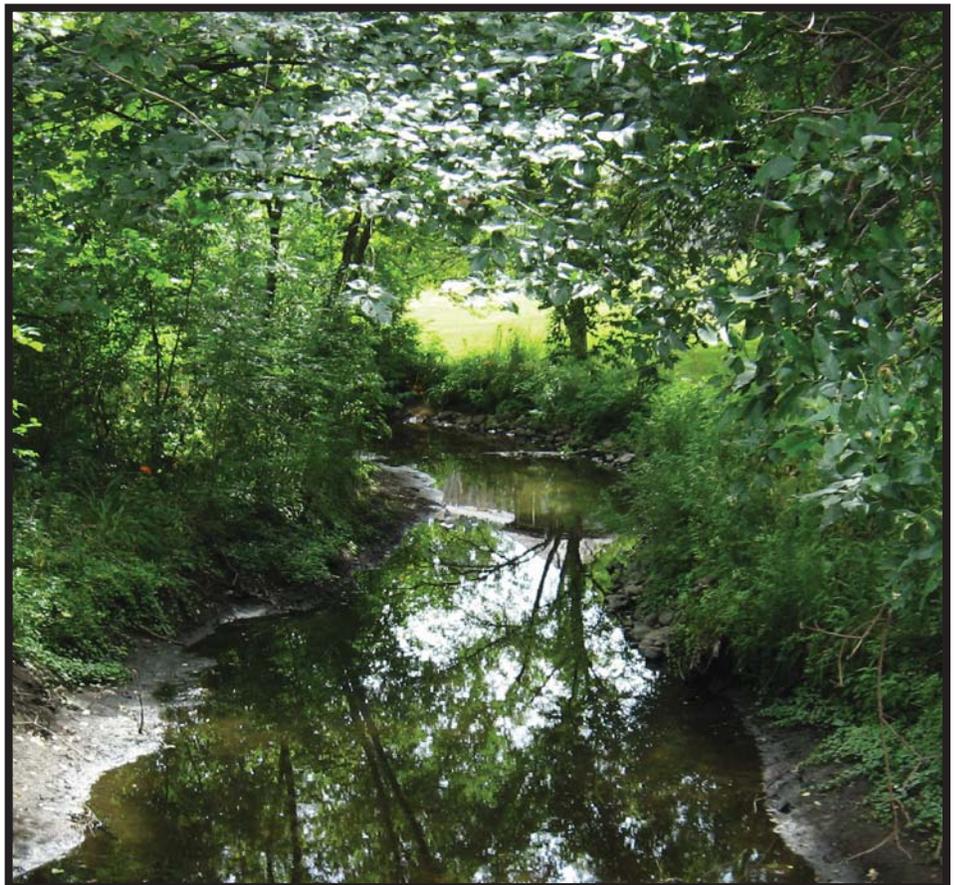
With limited available land area in some areas, improvements for stormwater

management will be difficult to accomplish. It is likely that partnerships between the city and private developers, or among the city, private developers, and other entities, will lead to the most beneficial solutions. Given the ever-changing regulatory requirements, the rapidly-expanding options for storage and treatment, the desire for a “green” corridor, and the intention of a land use pattern that reinforces activity on the corridor, it is likely that a unique partnership and a solution tailored to individual sites and the corridor as a whole will be needed. This kind of solution results in enhanced protections for natural resources and perhaps a unique identity for the corridor.

Preparation of a master drainage analysis is recommended to incorporate future land uses and increased impervious surfaces. As each

development occurs, an understanding of the runoff quantities and treatments will be the first step toward a combined solution. Still, the solution will be one that might:

- utilize stormwater treatment as an amenity for the corridor, particularly in areas where the method can be integrated with a pedestrian experience;
- pursue the most innovative methods of managing stormwater, given the natural limitations (such as soil conditions and high water tables), to maximize development opportunities; and
- integrate stormwater management methods with elements that create identity for the corridor and the community, where space exists and regulations allow. 🌿



Future stormwater management should better protect Bassett Creek.

Chapter 5: Implementation

A PLAN IS NOT AN OUTCOME, but rather a guide for moving toward a vision. This plan suggests a pattern of land use and changes to the public realm, but suggestions do not result in the kinds of change desired by the community. An implementation strategy, even one that is directed to change that might take twenty years or more to accomplish, is a necessary complement to the recommendations for the Douglas Drive corridor. It serves the purpose of encouraging cooperation and coordination among public entities that must partner for some improvements, and between public and private entities that must work together to achieve mutually beneficial change on parcels along the corridor. The implementation strategy also offers a way of gaining support from the public, and then maintaining support through a long evolution. And it suggests a sequence of activities that emphasizes community priorities as way of beginning a long term process of implementation.

While much has been made of the potential for change along the corridor, the goals of this project—from the beginning—direct attention to needed pedestrian safety improvements. While many of the suggestions and recommendations are long term and evolutionary in nature, the need to provide safe passage for pedestrians along Douglas Drive is paramount. As a result, a critical first step is defining a way of improving pedestrian safety. Still, those improvements are balanced with activities that help set the stage for an evolution of the corridor.

This study suggests patterns of land use that will eventually lead to actual changes in land use designation for many parcels along Douglas Drive and Duluth Street. But the study anticipates dramatic change only over a longer period of time, so it's more reasonable to move forward with the study being used as a guide as redevelopment activity occurs. In this way, current uses remain legal and conforming, and new development can find consistency with the plan through incremental changes to the city's land use plan.

Policy development

In pursuing a plan that suggests change over a period of perhaps twenty years or more, development of policies that guide development might be as important as regulatory direction or design guidelines—especially because the specific patterns of development will be framed as developers demonstrate their interest in projects. Two policy

directions are suggested:

- Develop and adopt economic development strategies for the TH 55 business campus. This area has the potential for adding significant tax base and jobs in Golden Valley given its prominence in the corridor and the region, and the potential for creating more intensive patterns of development in place of aging structures.
- Develop and adopt sustainable development and design strategies for the corridor. The community identified a desire for the corridor to be more “green,” not only in appearance but in function. Several methods of moving toward sustainability are possible, including requirements for new development or redevelopment projects to achieve or match certain standards identified by the U.S. Green Building Council's

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. While other methods are possible, LEED offers a recognized benchmark for the design, construction, and performance of buildings and sites.

Regulatory change

Development patterns demonstrated in this plan won't necessarily match those pursued by developers, but they demonstrate an idea about how development might be configured to activate the corridor and create destinations and neighborhoods that are more connected and walkable. The city's current development guidance might already achieve most of the goals, but a comparison of the existing code to the demonstrated patterns will help ensure desired development results. Consideration of the following regulatory directions is encouraged:



- Compare existing zoning requirements to those demonstrated in this plan. Density allowances likely vary in some instances and many of the development goals of the plan result from increases in densities. It should also be recognized that increases in density may be required to establish thresholds where redevelopment activity might be viewed as financially attractive. Specific requirements of the code for setbacks, lot coverage, and building heights may require attention.
- Establish parking requirements that reasonably serve development while allowing for desirable development patterns to result. Parking inventories are typically dictated by a code that establishes a minimum parking ratio for a given use, and fail to recognize the opportunity for areas dedicated to parking to be directed to other, more attractive or productive uses. Establishing parking maximums in redevelopment zones encourages an orientation to pedestrians and transit without overbuilding parking facilities, it promotes a more efficient use of available parking through joint-use or shared parking configurations, it allows for more intensity of buildings or the creation of more expansive landscape or open spaces, and potentially reduces the volume of stormwater that must be managed. From a sustainability perspective, developers might be persuaded to be more innovative in their parking strategies, and employers might be more aggressive in encouraging transit, carpooling, or other alternatives to the typical commute.
- Establish the ability to create a parking district to serve redevelopment zones in part or in whole. A more aggressive parking management strategy might look across an entire redevelopment area, or might suggest a comprehensive parking strategy that flows across several sites. Facilitation of shared parking opportunities might result by recognizing parking peak use that accommodates a wider range of uses on several sites within a district. A by-product of a more comprehensive parking strategy, that spans a district or at least several sites, is an increase in the volume of street-level pedestrian activity.
- Establish minimum and maximum thresholds for redevelopment areas. The planning process yields an understanding of the potential end use for parcels in the study



area, and considers an evolution along a fairly lengthy time horizon. However, if a parcel redevelops in an early stage of the redevelopment process at intensities significantly less than the ultimate plan, there may be lesser reason for succeeding projects to pursue a path that aligns with the intentions of this plan. In a similar way, establishing an upper limit for development offers a greater ability to manage impacts across an entire district, and suggests a way of creating improvements that fit the intended character of the plan.

- Consider methods of defining development based on form, and not solely on use. Many communities have implemented a form-based code format in redevelopment districts that offers direction to development beyond basic use, lot coverage,

and dimensional requirements. This code format, while different than the city's existing zoning code, directs attention to the form of development, and perhaps more directly, to the ways in which pedestrians experience the development. The creation of overlay districts might offer another way of guiding development toward the goals of this plan, but allow an underlying zoning to remain as a district evolves.

Identification of financial support

In considering a long term evolution, it is often difficult to define a source of funds that would encourage conformance with the plan. While the best methods of creating an alignment between a community's plan and a developer's intention is to have control over sites or other critical components

of the development, having the ability to shape development through incentives is most often the path chosen. Several methods might be considered, or even be necessary:

- Tax Increment Financing has been the most commonly used local finance tool to encourage redevelopment, but its use has been limited by legislative action. Still, the ability to establish a TIF district in areas that are redeveloping may be an important method of capturing funds needed to create supportive public realm improvements and encourage development that conforms with the plan. Tax abatement is another financing tool that is available at the municipal level.
- The creation of a property acquisition fund might be especially important in gaining control over sites that have the ability



to shape development potential around them—particularly in a redevelopment process that might unfold over ten to twenty years. Properties acquired through the use of these funds might be used to provide land for public improvements, to support efforts to create mixed-income housing, to remove blighted properties, to spur conforming development, or to simply control land until an appropriate time for development. In some cases, municipalities have benefitted from acquisition of certain properties well in advance of roadway construction, dramatically reducing the costs of right-of-way acquisition at the time of the actual improvements. As Douglas Drive is a county roadway, coordinating early acquisition of key properties might be pursued.

- The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County offer municipalities funding assistance through grants that support connected development patterns

that link housing, jobs, and transit, and that make use of existing infrastructure. The City of Golden Valley has made use of these Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) funds successfully in the past to create the Valley Square redevelopment. Hennepin County offers funding for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and affordable housing initiatives.

- A utility franchise fee allows a municipality to levy a fee on a utility provider (typically gas and electric utilities) provided the fee is passed directly to the consumer and the fee is clearly identified on the utility bill as a city fee. Cities can choose to direct the fees received to their general fund, although some choose to dedicate the collected fees toward specific purposes (for burying overhead utility lines, for example).
- Funding for roadway construction and reconstruction projects is available through the Minnesota

Department of Transportation through the Highway Safety Improvement Program for improvements designed to decrease the frequency of crashes involving vehicles, as well as crashes involving pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-motorized vehicles. Improvements must be permanent, and cannot include right-of-way acquisition.

Sequence of improvements

The need for improving pedestrian facilities in the corridor has already been identified. Still the process of creating those improvements is made difficult by the desire to be prudent with the limited resources available to the community, and to plan improvements that can remain a part of the Douglas Drive landscape even as more intensive changes occur in the public realm. The strategy of building so-called immediate permanent improvements requires significant engineering analysis to ensure the improvements can actually be permanent, but if determined to be possible, these improvements would, in part, satisfy the need for creating a public improvement that significantly enhances conditions for non-motorized movement in the corridor.

The immediate permanent improvements posed by this plan include the creation of the “final” streetscape improvements along the east side of Douglas Drive, within the available right-of-way. While space is limited, reasonable improvements can be made if overhead utilities are placed underground in the same zone as the pedestrian improvements. Within the 11 foot “boulevard,” a ten foot wide sidewalk would be constructed immediately behind the curb, with the



first five feet reserved for “amenities” such as street lighting and functional needs such as roadway signage. The second five feet would be the pedestrian circulation zone, but the functional width would only be limited in locations where street lights and signs occur—and even in those locations, more than five feet would typically exist.

While the available width is limiting for more substantial streetscape improvements, this concept establishes a zone dedicated to pedestrian movement that is seriously lacking on the corridor today. Other streetscape improvements, such as street trees, might occur in a zone beyond the sidewalk through the creation of a planting easement.

While the relocation of overhead utilities is an obstacle, others exist as well. The railroad crossing must be improved to allow safe passage for pedestrians, and the culvert at Bassett Creek must be extended to support the sidewalk. The creek crossing offers a chance to emphasize one of the features of the corridor by creating a culvert extension that supports pedestrian facilities in a form that is more bridge-like, and that highlights the creek crossing.

The prospects for this first step in implementation requires engineering design of the future roadway sufficient to fully understand the cross section and profile of the future roadway—if these immediate improvements are really intended to be permanent. Still, some improvements (such as those near intersections or at transitions in the roadway lane configurations), may not be nearly so permanent. While it might be demonstrated through the engineering investigation that very little of the improvements could actually be permanent, the investigation itself might identify alternative methods of

accomplishing the critical pedestrian safety improvements, including the creation of temporary improvements in the same location.

While the creation of safe pedestrian passage on Douglas Drive is the highest priority, other early actions might also be considered:

- The city should begin the process of gaining concurrence on the transition of the roadway by working with Hennepin County to verify the potential for reconstructing the road. This process has already begun, as the county is aware of the project and has encouraged the city to begin working informally to review several assumptions and projection made by this plan as it relates to the capacity of a future roadway. As Douglas Drive is a county facility, the county will be responsible for determining the feasibility of changes; the city may have to respond by adjusting some of the recommendations of this plan to conform to county requirements

that permit the road to function as a part of their transportation system.

- The city would be well-served to begin identification of parcels where a short term change would influence or limit future development potential. While this plan does not identify those parcels or the timing of potential change in private parcels, having those key parcels identified and having a method for establishing control over their future offers assurance that they will evolve in ways that are supportive of the plan’s goals. The future of these sites might be reasonably guided by existing regulatory controls, but in those instances where a change might be “unrecoverable” from the perspective of this plan, the city should take action to ensure current or anticipated development will not diminish the integrity of the remainder of the surrounding parcels. 



Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Interviews with Corridor Stakeholders

Appendix B: Resistance/Susceptibility to Change Analysis

Appendix C: Douglas Drive (CSAH 102) and Duluth Street
(CSAH 66) Traffic Forecasts