

CONCORD BOULEVARD NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, MN

12.31.2012



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» This is Volume I of two volumes. Volume I includes the plan and a summary of the planning process. Volume II represents the comprehensive inventory of the background data and concept exploration in more of its raw form.

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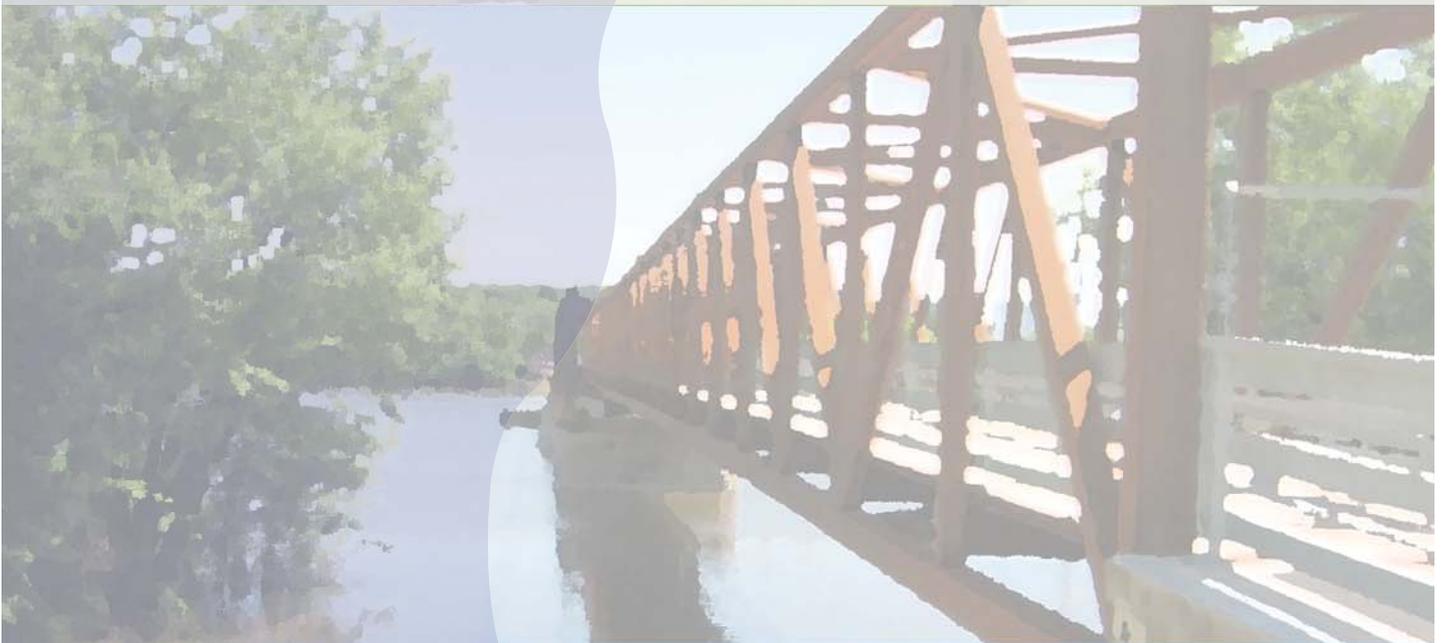
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*STUDY OVERVIEW &
PLANNING PROCESS*

1



STUDY OVERVIEW & PLANNING PROCESS

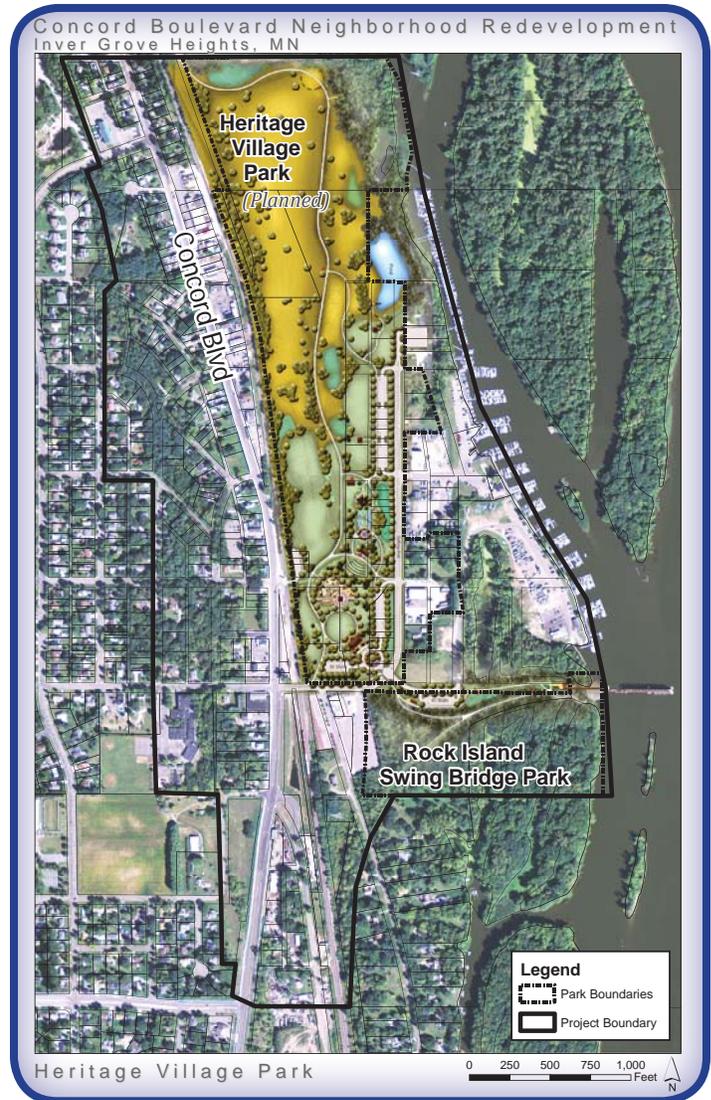
INTRODUCTION

Following the 1997 update to the Comprehensive Plan, a new study initiative emerged to take a closer look at the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood. At that time, Concord Boulevard was experiencing significant change, largely due to the rerouting and building of the new US Highway 52 and the pending reconstruction of old Concord Boulevard. The City of Inver Grove Heights underwent a planning study and in 1998 adopted the first Concord Boulevard Neighborhood Plan. A lot has happened since then:

- » Concord Boulevard improvements have been completed.
- » A new park (Heritage Village Park) has been planned and implementation is in process.
- » A regional trail has been constructed connecting the project area to St. Paul and to Hastings.
- » The Rock Island Swing Bridge has been closed, preserved and restored as a public pier.
- » Deteriorated housing has been acquired by the Dakota County CDA and cleared to make way for new development opportunities.
- » The 1997 Comprehensive Plan has been updated.
- » Portions of the flood plain have been restored through the acquisition and clearance of properties with financial assistance from the Minnesotal Department of Natural Resources.

All of these events warrant a new look at the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood.

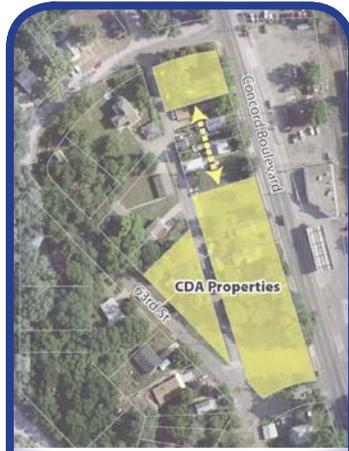
This plan is the first phase of a two phase process to update the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood Plan and to begin positioning the City to play a more proactive role in shaping future redevelopment within the neighborhood.



STUDY OVERVIEW & PLANNING PROCESS

2. ESTABLISH A STARTING POINT FOR WHERE REDEVELOPMENT CAN BEGIN (IDENTIFY CATALYST SITES) AND TARGETED LAND USES/ PROGRAM:

The Concord Boulevard Neighborhood will not change overnight. Neither the private sector nor the public sector has the ability to redevelop all of the parcels in the neighborhood. With that in mind, it is important to identify the projects that will have the most immediate impact and build the most momentum for subsequent redevelopment. Those sites that are best positioned for near term redevelopment will be identified for further study and redevelopment actions.



The Dakota Co. CDA has assembled and made ready for development land along Concord Boulevard. This site will serve as a catalyst for other redevelopment initiatives

3. FACILITATE A PLANNING PROCESS THAT IS TRANSPARENT AND RESULTS IN COMMUNITY/ NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT:

Many of the people who own businesses in the neighborhood live here as well. They have invested time, money, and energy into the neighborhood and it is important that the plan listens and responds to the input and suggestions of local residents, business owners and stakeholders. If the plan is going to succeed, it will need the support of the people who live and/or work in the neighborhood, and that support needs to be earned starting with the planning process.

4. IDENTIFY PUBLIC ACTIONS NECESSARY TO FACILITATE OR COMPLIMENT REDEVELOPMENT:

The City of Inver Grove Heights has shown a commitment to encouraging and facilitating the redevelopment of Concord Boulevard. Public investment in parklands, the Rock Island Swing Bridge, and the Mississippi River Regional Trail reflect the desire to improve the amenities in the area. The restoration of the floodplain and improvements to Concord Boulevard create an area that is more suited to redevelopment. This plan will identify which public actions are needed to support private re-investment and that will help create value for redevelopment in the area.



Redevelopment near the railroad may require implementing a whistle-free zone or other "quiet" strategies and crossing improvements



STUDY OVERVIEW & PLANNING PROCESS

PROJECT APPROACH:

The planning process for Concord Boulevard began in the summer of 2011 and ran through spring of 2012. The process included eight primary tasks:

1. Organize background and site context information
2. Conduct project kick off
3. Conduct Stakeholder Engagement
4. Generate and Explore Alternative Land Uses
5. Conduct Stakeholder Engagement
6. Prepare Preferred Plan
7. Conduct Review of Preferred Plan
8. Prepare Final Plan

These steps helped create a stronger plan that reflects the diverse viewpoints about the direction of Concord Boulevard. The planning process was designed to create a clear view of the starting point for the neighborhood. With the base material in place, residents and business owners had the opportunity to consider and share their vision for the neighborhood. The input gathered through meetings and conversations informed plan options that were again reviewed by stakeholders. A preferred plan was developed based on reaction to the alternatives. Stakeholders were engaged again to offer refinements to the preferred plan and the final plan was prepared. Moving forward, a targeted market study and design guidelines will help inform the shape the neighborhood takes over the next 20 years.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The involvement and vision of various stakeholders is the foundation that will bring the plan to reality. A number of people and groups were consulted in developing this plan. Face to face correspondence took place through a series of focused meetings held twice during the process. The first set of meetings was an opportunity to hear from stakeholders their perspectives on the corridor and their view of the future of the corridor. At the second meeting, concepts were presented and input was taken to help converge on a preferred plan. Stakeholder groups that were consulted with in these sessions included:

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS:

They have been a part of the planning process from the beginning. Representatives were consulted in individual meetings as well as during regular meetings and work sessions. In order for the Concord Neighborhood Plan to affect city actions, support from elected and appointed officials is a necessity.

BUSINESS OWNERS & MANAGERS:

Meetings with general business owners and managers were facilitated through Progress Plus and the Chamber of Commerce. 10 to 15 business representatives attended each set of meetings.

STUDY OVERVIEW & PLANNING PROCESS

BARS/RESTAURANTS, MARINAS, REFUSE HAULING COMPANIES –

The Concord Boulevard Neighborhood is home to a few clusters of business types, specifically bars & restaurants, marinas and refuse hauling companies. A special effort was made to reach out to members of these industries to understand what they want to see in the plan, and what role they anticipate playing in the future of the neighborhood. Most bars and restaurants participated fully while all of the marinas and refuse hauling companies were engaged in the planning process and provided valuable insights and feedback.

COMMUNITY AT LARGE:

An open house format was used to engage the broader neighborhood as well as offer the community at large the opportunity to learn about the planning process and weigh in. While not heavily attended, these meetings did attract participants with valuable insights and a great deal of historical perspective on the corridor.

CITY STAFF:

City staff will ultimately be responsible for managing the process of implementation for the plan. From handling potential acquisitions to working with business owners, the importance of city staff cannot be overlooked. City staff has been intimately involved in the planning process, guiding and working with consultants and stakeholders to create a strong plan and vision for the neighborhood. Principal staff involved in the process included Community Development and Planning, Parks and Recreation and Administration.

DAKOTA COUNTY CDA:

The Dakota County Community Development Agency is a local government agency working to facilitate community development and provide affordable housing options for residents of Dakota County. The CDA is also a major property holder along Concord Boulevard, and an important partner for development in the neighborhood. The CDA participated in meetings held in conjunction with South St. Paul and Progress Plus and were also consulted in individual meetings facilitated by City staff.

PROGRESS PLUS:

As a group that publicizes and promotes the business climate in the cities of Inver Grove Heights and South St. Paul, Progress Plus served as the conduit between the planning team and the business community along the Concord Boulevard. They will continue to be an important player as the city begins implementing the plan initiatives.

SOUTH ST. PAUL:

The northern boundary of the project area abuts the southern border of South St. Paul. With an established plan for the South St. Paul section of Concord Boulevard, this plan works to raise the level of investment in the Inver Grove Heights portion. It recognizes that investment and improvements along Concord Boulevard help build momentum in the area, whether it is north or south of the border between the two communities. South St. Paul staff have been informed of the planning progress through group meetings and individual correspondence between various agencies.



***BACKGROUND INFORMATION
& PROJECT INFLUENCES***

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION & PROJECT INFLUENCES

In order to gain a full appreciation of the character of the corridor and the forces and influences that shape both how the corridor exists today and how it will re-develop over time, the plan establishes a detailed picture of the corridor's context through site photos, mapping, analysis of property records and windshield surveys. Also critical to this review is a review of key background plans and documents that provide an historical perspective into prior decisions that have influenced the project area. The following section provides a general snapshot of this analysis. Volume II of this report provides a more comprehensive inventory of the site context and corridor analysis conducted.

CORRIDOR BACKGROUND & SITE CONTEXT MAPPING:

To begin the process, a number of context maps were created to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the area. These maps included:

STUDY AREA & CONTEXT -

The study area is bounded in the north by the Inver Grove Heights city limits at Linden Ave, the Mississippi River to the east, the top of the bluff to the west and the southernmost point of the McPhillips Trucking facility. In all, the study area represents approximately 285 acres

CURRENT LAND USE -

Existing land uses within the project area include a wide mix of uses. Traditional single family detached homes are found as one moves west of Concord Boulevard and up the bluff in addition to the homes that front directly onto Concord Boulevard. Intermingled throughout the project area are multi-family homes that are often the result of single family homes being converted to multi-family rental dwellings. Commercial uses in the corridor are largely service oriented commercial establishments, manufacturing or marinas. Many commercial establishments are in structures that over time have changed in use and have had limited or partial improvements to make the facilities accommodate the new uses. Some heavier industrial uses are located

along Dickman Trail and are land intensive uses. Contractor yards and outside storage dominates many of the more land intensive uses. A demolition debris landfill is located just north of the project area. This use is governed by a Conditional Use Permit that stipulates closure of the land fill by the end of 2017 unless the CUP is amended by the owner and approved by the City. Many of the current land uses in the corridor present challenges to new development/redevelopment. These challenges are associated with the noise, odors and dusts that are frequently associated with uses such as contractor yards, landfilling, refuse hauling and heavy industry. Redevelopment will need to be coordinated with relocation of incompatible uses or specific design strategies that minimize or mitigate impacts.



Varying levels of investment exist throughout the corridor, providing opportunities for redevelopment

NATURAL SYSTEMS & TOPOGRAPHY -

Moving east to west across the neighborhood, the site transitions from river to floodplain/flats to bluffs. A patch of floodplain forest exists in the southeast portion of the site in the Old City Hall/Rock Island Swing Bridge Park. A number of mature trees also add character to the western bluffs. Storm water management was noted as an issue throughout the neighborhood with seasonal flooding and shallow depth to bedrock.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, & TRAILS -

In 2011 the City refurbished a portion of the Rock Island Swing Bridge, creating a pedestrian pier that affords visitors a unique view of the Mississippi

BACKGROUND INFORMATION & PROJECT INFLUENCES

River. The City of Inver Grove Heights also dedicated significant resources to the creation of Heritage Village Park. A master plan completed in 2010 anticipates the development of more highly programmed space in the south portion of the park to compliment the open space and trails that have been installed in the north. Currently portions of the proposed park still need to be acquired. Running through the park is the Mississippi River Regional Trail, connecting Hastings, Rosemount, Inver Grove Heights and South St. Paul for bikers, walkers and inline skaters. In 2010 Concord Park was redeveloped to Cameron's Liquors a local business that relocated from elsewhere in the corridor after the reconstruction of Concord Boulevard. This leaves the west side of the corridor void of neighborhood park lands.

Way provides a connection to the top of the bluff on the north end of the project area and 64th Street provides a rather steep local street connection. 65th Street and 66th Street are key east west streets that serve as focal points in the neighborhood. The site has limited public transportation, with the Metro Transit 71 and 68 busses providing sporadic service at the north and south ends of the neighborhood but do not provide service on Concord Boulevard.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Key background documents that were reviewed and provide policy direction for this planning effort include the following:

- » Concord Boulevard Neighborhood Plan - 1998
- » Heritage Village Park Master Plan - 2010
- » Inver Grove Heights Comprehensive Plan - 2007
- » Dakota County CDA sketch plan & council minutes - 2005
- » Heritage Village Park Cultural Resources Overview - 2005
- » Feasibility Report CSAH 56 - 2009
- » Concord Blvd Area Railroad Crossing Study - 2008
- » South Saint Paul Development Plan - 2011
- » MPCA: Monitoring & Phase II ESA - 2006, '07



The Mississippi River Regional Trail connects the much of the south metro to the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT -

Concord Boulevard/CSAH 56 is the main transportation route running through the neighborhood. Development within the project area is served by local streets; however, access in and out of the neighborhood is mostly limited to Concord Boulevard as a result of being situated between the Mississippi River and a significant bluff. Further complicating traffic circulation is the railroad corridor, which affords limited opportunities for crossing. With the swing bridge no longer serving traffic, the nearest river crossing is at Interstate 494 to the north. 70th Street connects the neighborhood to the rest of Inver Grove Heights to the west. Dawn

BACKGROUND INFORMATION & PROJECT INFLUENCES

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*OPPORTUNITIES
& ISSUES*

3



OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

The following represents an assembly of observations and directions (or commonly referred to as Issues and Opportunities) based on what was heard through the Stakeholder Engagement process and what resulted from the project planning team's analysis of the project area. The assembly of thoughts and observations also builds off of past planning work completed over the last decade or more (see the list of background documents). These thoughts and observations served as a starting point for further discussion and framing of themes for the concept exploration stage of the planning process.

strong local knowledge where members of the neighborhood understand local conditions and activities. People are invested in the neighborhood for both work and home life. This is a strength that instills longevity in the businesses.



STRENGTHS:

PROXIMITY TO TWO MAJOR REGIONAL HIGHWAYS –

Interstate 494 and Highway 52 provide great access to the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro Areas. This means easy connections to jobs and amenities for residents and markets for commercial and industrial users.

PROXIMITY TO RIVER –

The Mississippi River is a great asset for the neighborhood. Fishing and boating opportunities are available. Marinas and boat repair businesses operate along the river and possibilities exist for more businesses based on the river. Water based activities help establish an identity for the neighborhood as they have for over 100 years. The marina industry is changing in part as a result of our changing demographic mix. The marina operators recognize this trend and must continue to adapt and explore new opportunities.

LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESSES –

A number of the businesses along Concord Boulevard are owned and operated by people who live in the neighborhood and live in Inver Grove Heights. They are family owned and in some cases, younger generations are positioned to possibly take the business over. This continuity between businesses and residents creates a

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO CONCORD –

Local businesses recognized the need for improvements. Business is starting to return to pre-reconstruction levels – but it is felt that that it will not ever be the same as it used to be. The bigger impact was the building of a new US 52 which changed the travel patterns of the region and had the most significant impact on Concord Neighborhood businesses. The road today is at a much higher quality and public investment is recognized.



EXISTING HOUSING IS GENERALLY WELL BUILT AND AFFORDABLE –

Although old, the housing stock in the corridor is generally well built. Many of the units have become rental units, as property owners have opted to sell and homes are acquired by investors. It is generally felt by stakeholders that a greater effort at code enforcement and property maintenance education would benefit the corridor. Much of the housing stock in the neighborhood is affordable to low and moderate income households, largely due to its age and surrounding land uses.

OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

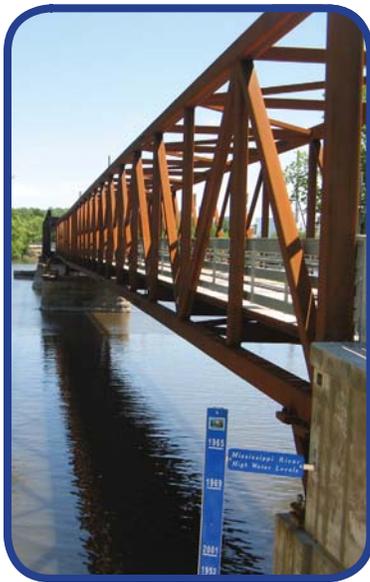
REGIONAL TRAIL CONSTRUCTED –

The Mississippi River Regional Trail connects bikers, walkers and inline skaters to the greater metropolitan area along the beautiful Mississippi River. Currently serving Inver Grove Heights, South St. Paul, and West St. Paul, by 2013 the trail will run to Hastings.

VISION FOR HERITAGE PARK IMPROVEMENTS AND MOVEMENT TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION –

The City crafted a vision and approved a master plan for Heritage Village Park. Implementation of the master plan is currently being pursued through acquisition of land on a willing seller, willing buyer basis. Money for park improvements has not been dedicated; however, as land continues to be acquired, the reality of achieving the master plan grows. This major investment has the opportunity to serve as a great catalyst to future development and a great draw for the City.

PIER IMPROVEMENTS –



The Rock Island Swing Bridge pier is a tremendous asset that creates a new public connection to the Mississippi River. With this connection, Inver Grove Heights has fulfilled an often voiced desire to connect the citizens with the river in a more public setting. The Pier has the potential to grow as a recreational and historical draw to the neighborhood.

TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES –

The topography of the neighborhood can be a great development asset, providing opportunities for walkout basements or other structures that utilize grade change

or even long term potential for structure parking. People also value mature trees and the ability to build with the landscape. Protection of existing mature trees should be a priority as should the re-establishment of native vegetation in areas that are graded for new development.

QUIET TUCKED AWAY NEIGHBORHOOD –

The housing to the west of Concord Boulevard is tucked into the hill in a way that creates a nice quiet neighborhood feel. Living in an area with privacy and calm is an asset, especially when someone can also easily access major transportation routes within a few minutes. This is an asset that stakeholders cherish as a hidden gem; one that is not known by those who have not lived there for years.

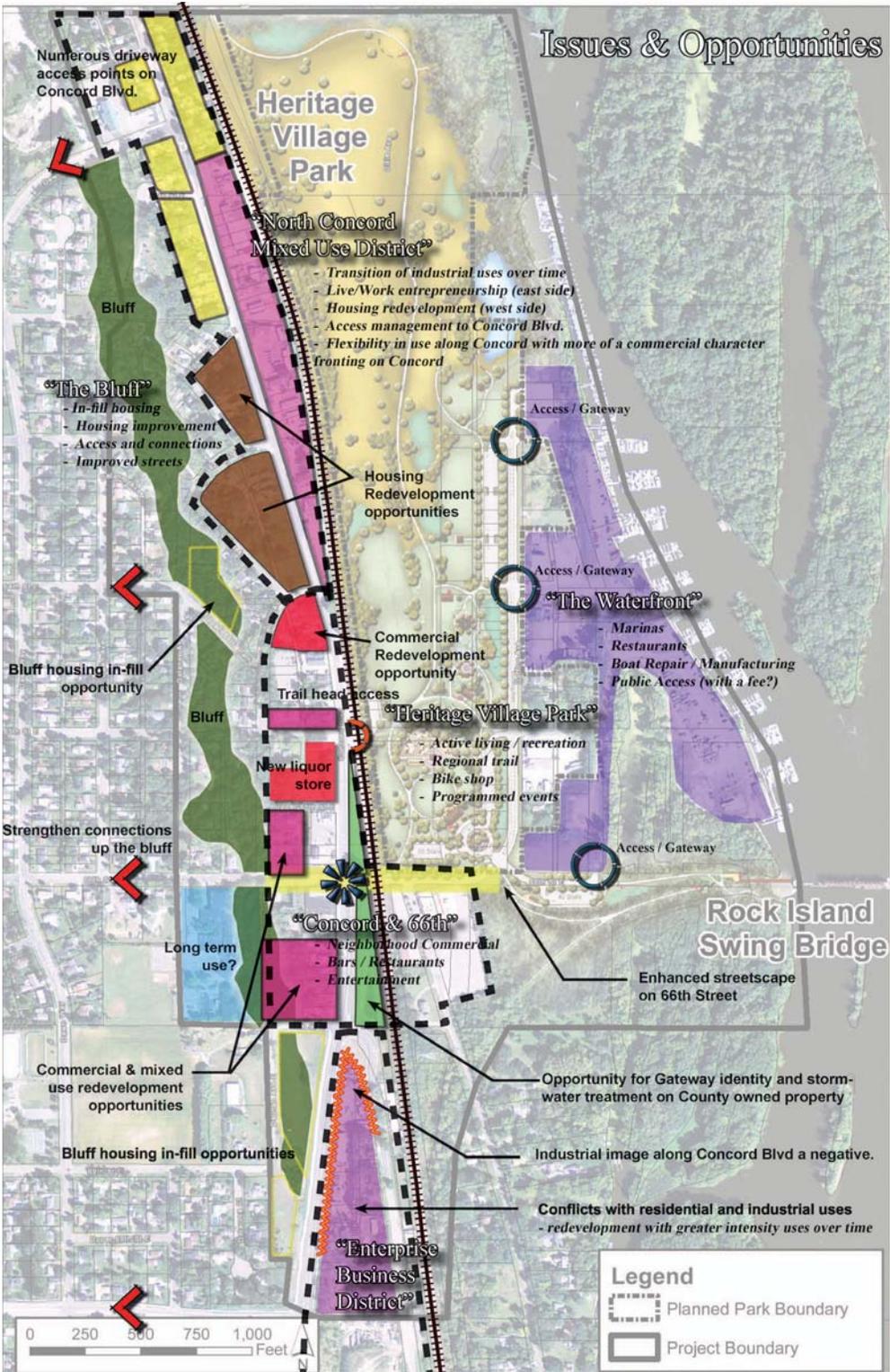


HISTORY OF AREA –

The Concord Boulevard area has a long, rich history that provides some of the identity for the neighborhood. Known for a long time as Inver Grove Village, the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood was one of the earliest settlements in Inver Grove Heights. The area has served as a military transportation route, a meat packing area, and a rail hub. It is home to the Rock Island Swing Bridge which until 1959 was the only Mississippi River crossing between Saint Paul and Hastings and served as an escape route for John Dillinger. The old city hall building still sits in the neighborhood. The history of the area is an important

Opportunities & Issues

This diagram examines the opportunities and issues facing the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood. Five districts are identified, with unique attributes that will shape redevelopment.



OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

piece of Heritage Village Park and the Rock Island Swing Bridge. It could also be an important theme for redevelopment in the area.

MARINAS CREATE A UNIQUE AREA DRAW –

Although privately owned, the marinas create a unique draw and user group in the neighborhood. Connecting to the river, the marinas present an opportunity to create a brand or identity for the area.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS -

The presence of several bars and restaurants creates a destination draw. Bars and restaurants are gathering places. They provide a place to recreate and to enjoy the company of others. They create an identity to an area and offer a sense of vibrancy. In the Concord Neighborhood, there is a small cluster of these uses that is seen as a strength.

PROPERTIES THAT ARE PUBLICLY OWNED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT CAN HELP FACILITATE REDEVELOPMENT –

The City, the County, and the Dakota County CDA all own parcels in the study area which helps set up redevelopment projects because much of the acquisition has already been completed. The blocks with publicly owned property may be the sites that will help build early momentum for redevelopment in the corridor.

LAND IS AFFORDABLE –

Low land prices reflecting the current conditions of some properties in the neighborhood provide an opportunity for redevelopment at a good value. This means lower barriers to entry for developers and the ability to make public sources of funds go further in redevelopment.

WEAKNESSES:

RUN DOWN HOUSING AND BUSINESSES –

The current residential, commercial and industrial building stock is aging significantly and in some instances has become dilapidated. Some properties have also been abandoned. This creates the perception of disinvestment that can lead to even less maintenance and continued deterioration of the neighborhood.

INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES –

Heavier industrial uses, heavy truck traffic, foul smells and dust, outside storage of refuse containers, industrial demolition landfill materials all create nuisances to uses such as residential, park and recreation, or retail goods. These uses, if not designed appropriately or not managed well and left unregulated, present significant barriers to future redevelopment.



RAILROAD TRACKS –

The railroad tracks create a narrow strip of land between Concord Boulevard and the tracks. This strip of land creates challenges to designing development projects with adequate separation from the tracks, parking, stormwater management and traffic circulation. The rail line also creates impediment for residential development (because of noise issues) and reduces access to the park and marinas on the east of the tracks.



FLOODING QUESTION AND LEVY CONDITION/ STRENGTH –

Any time development is adjacent a major river, the risk of flooding is present. Rather than invest considerable public funds in the reconstruction of the temporary/emergency levy, the City has used funds to acquire and clear properties in the flood plain. This program has been in place since 1999 and has resulted in acquisition and clearance of roughly 2/3 of affected properties.

NOT KNOWN FOR RETAIL OR AS A DESTINATION –

The identity of the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood is not always clear or positive. It is not known today as a retail area, nor is it recognized as a place to gain access to the river. However, with recent improvements and investments, that weakness is changing.

HIGH BEDROCK IN SOME LOCATIONS –

The presence of high bedrock creates challenges for the construction of public improvements, including stormwater improvements and underground utilities. High ground water issues also lead to basement flooding in some properties in the neighborhood.

NO GOOD PLACE FOR KIDS TO GO –

With a county highway as well as industrial and adult land uses, Concord Boulevard is not perceived as a kid friendly area.

NOT VERY PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY –

Crossing Concord Boulevard can be difficult due to the speed of traffic and long crossing distance. The City has already taken significant steps to improve the pedestrian experience along the boulevard. New sidewalks and lighting have been installed in places, but there are still significant gaps along portions of the industrial land uses and off of Concord Boulevard in the neighborhood to the west and the park/marina area to the east.

LACK OF PARKING –

Balancing parking is an issue in the neighborhood. On street parking has been reduced with the Concord Boulevard redesign, while many of the private parking lots associated with bars and restaurants need to handle the highly fluctuating parking counts associated with events and peak hours. Parking for access to the Rock Island Swing Bridge and Heritage Village Park is at times unclear and separated from the destination.

LACK OF TRANSIT THAT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE –

The only public transit service available near the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood is the morning/afternoon 71 bus which runs south to Dawn Way before veering to the west and the sporadic 68 bus which turns around on Concord Boulevard to the south at 75th Street. Neither one of these serves the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood particularly efficiently.



OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES & THEMES:

MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTY (PRIVATE AND PUBLIC) -

A key opportunity that should be explored within the corridor is efforts to improve on property maintenance. This can be done through a regulatory (code enforcement) approach such as development of a property maintenance code or stronger enforcement of existing codes. Alternatively it can be done through more of a “carrot” approach. Working through the Economic Development Authority, revolving loan funds could be used to structure a low interest or interest free loan program that can go toward maintenance programs or site improvements that contribute to more sustainable maintenance efforts. Stormwater programs could also be used to achieve greater storm water management and site improvements on a limited case basis.



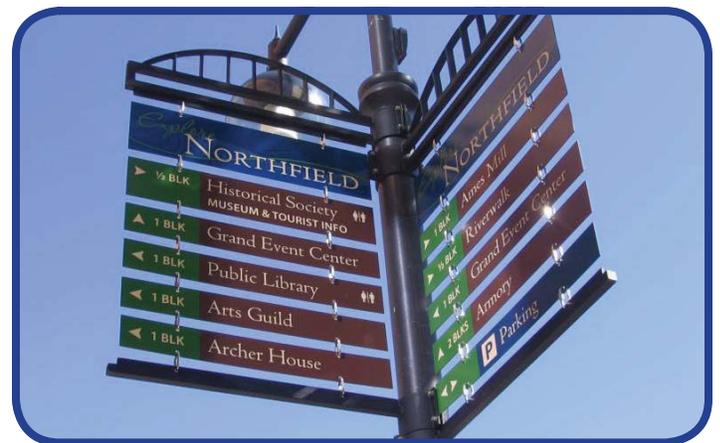
TRAFFIC CALMING AND MANAGEMENT (ACCESS MANAGEMENT) -

Opportunities exist through redevelopment to continue improving access management on Concord Boulevard. Stakeholders expressed challenges with getting onto Concord during peak traffic periods from individual driveways. Numerous commercial curb cuts exist on the east side of Concord. Through redevelopment, parcels can be combined and reconfigured to facilitate internal circulation and focus access points onto Concord.

The roadway improvements, while well received, also have created a real or perceived problem with traffic speeds. Police were observed on several occasions monitor speeds in the area. This creates challenges with pedestrian crossing of the corridor. Future improvements could consider intersection improvements that improve pedestrian crossing safety.

WAYFINDING AND IDENTITY BUILDING -

One of the challenges noted through the stakeholder engagement process was knowing where certain businesses were located. And with the Pier and development components of Heritage Park planned for the area, a wayfinding system would be a great asset. Its design could also provide a sense of identity for the district. Funding strategies could be explored with business advertising or sponsoring and maintenance.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT-

The City has an Economic Development Authority that is charged with maintaining and growing economic opportunity for Inver Grove Heights. The EDA could begin establishing programs that help family owned and operated business or small businesses with improvement funds or with business start-up resources. These programs could be coupled with redevelopment efforts in the Concord Neighborhood, which is a great place for smaller footprint start up business.

OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

BAR/RESTAURANT ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT “THEME” –

There is already a presence in the Concord district of a number of bars. Many of them draw from beyond Inver Grove Heights, yet also rely on local patronage. As the area continues to develop from a public amenity perspective (Pier, Heritage Village Park, Mississippi River Regional Trail) and as existing land uses turn over, new jobs created, and new housing developed an opportunity exists to create a theme for the area that focuses on eating and entertainment venues building off the businesses that already exist. Such a theme can create a destination for Inver Grove Heights residents but also the Twin Cities and beyond. River users could dock their boats and walk through the district enjoying cultural opportunities presented by a cluster of bar/restaurants.

MARINA AND RIVER ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT –

The marinas are somewhat of a “best kept secret” in Inver Grove Heights. Everyone knows the Mississippi River runs the length of the City, but there are limited opportunities to interact with the River. An opportunity exists to collaborate with the marina owners to reconfigure the district in order to enhance the connectivity to the river, maximize the asset the River provides and promote the marina uses as vital Inver Grove Heights business and destination. Opportunities exist for recreation and entrainment venues that tailor to boaters such as: bike rentals, walking, hiking, fishing, music, and of course dining.

ACTIVE LIVING / RECREATION –

Proximity to the River and the Mississippi River Regional Trail sets this area up to pursue a theme oriented around active living, healthy living and active recreation: road biking, mountain biking, running, hiking, walking, blading, boating/rowing, skiing (snow or water). Retail opportunities could focus on bike shops, sporting goods or services, eateries with focus on healthy foods or other. This theme would suggest a more regional connection but could be located

adjacent or fronting on Heritage Village Park, the pier or other areas where a trail head could be established. Commercial development could be set up to target industries with a niche in active recreation products or services.



LIVE / WORK ENTREPRENEURSHIP –

Land area within the corridor is often challenged spatially by existing features: Concord Blvd, railroad, bluff, major utilities, recent private development (newly constructed buildings). Opportunities for development will be on smaller infill parcels often requiring unique footprints and site configurations. Opportunities to create live/work spaces that can double as housing over a workshop or studio space could be a fit in the corridor. This is particularly likely in locations where a commercial frontage would be desired fronting on Concord or where redevelopment/development opportunities exist for adjacent heavier commercial uses. This theme builds on existing commercial and industrial momentum to develop more employment opportunities in the corridor.

HOUSING / MIX OF HOUSING TYPES –

Housing in the corridor should be a mix of housing types, mostly of a more moderate density nature as it approaches Concord Boulevard and a lower density single family typology as it moves westerly from Concord. The more moderate density product type should be more vertically oriented and more compact. Single family housing might be allowed at a more narrow lot pattern with a different house style, maybe a Pullman style home (deep and narrow).



OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

COMMERCIAL (RETAIL AND SERVICES) –

Commercial (retail and services): limited opportunities exist for this in the near term. Over the longer term, a vision would support concentrated nodes of service commercial at key intersections where traffic and destinations could support it. Retail uses will generally follow renewed interest from residential development.

SMALL BUSINESS (MANUFACTURING, ARTISAN FOCUS) –

Opportunities to reposition existing commercial sites for more efficient land uses of a small business nature will exist on sites that are vacant or underutilized. Configuration of sites might take into consideration alternative (mixed use/live work) building orientation and sizes that allow for smaller business enterprises or an artisan focus...one that might not mind operating near a welder or mechanic operation. New uses would be designed to coexist with housing opportunities with development guidelines shaping such features as access points, lighting, windows, signage, and setbacks.

OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES –

Preservation of trees is important, as is recognition of storm water challenges and topography. Using these features as assets will be a key principle in the land use vision.

TRANSIT, WALK, BIKE, DRIVE, TRUCKING –

Uses should be focused on connections to bike, walk and transit infrastructure as well as the street. Such connections also need to keep in mind the nature of traffic in the area.

PARKS –

While Heritage Village Park is a major investment, park and open space should still be a consideration as redevelopment occurs west of Concord. A park, whether public or private, should provide some open space relief

and active/passive recreation appropriate to the scale of the neighborhood. Community gardens could also be a consideration for the project area.

HERITAGE VILLAGE PARK –

Heritage Village Park is a master planned open space between the railroad tracks and the marinas that will allow visitors the opportunity to stroll through gardens, explore historic buildings, attend events, and play with their children. The development of the park is currently in process and is already connected to the larger regional trail system via the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

ROCK ISLAND SWING BRIDGE –

The Rock Island Swing Bridge allows visitors the opportunity to understand a part of the history of Inver Grove Heights and get an uncommon perspective of the Mississippi River. It is a rare double decker, steel truss bridge that is over 100 years old. The City saved and restored portions of the bridge to create a pier over the Mississippi River and a reminder of the rich history of the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood.



DISTRICTS APPROACH:

Portions of the neighborhood were considered as different districts in order to more closely examine the opportunities and issues facing each area. Each district contains unique features and presents an opportunity to establish unique identities and themes based on the character of each district.

CONCORD NORTH –

The Concord North District is characterized by the narrow parcels, sandwiched between Concord Boulevard and the railroad tracks. These are being used as general industrial which creates noise and access conflicts with the residential uses across Concord Boulevard.

66TH & CONCORD –

66th and Concord has the potential to expand in its role as a neighborhood commercial hub. Existing and new commercial uses could capitalize on location and increased density in the neighborhood.

THE DICKMAN TRAIL –

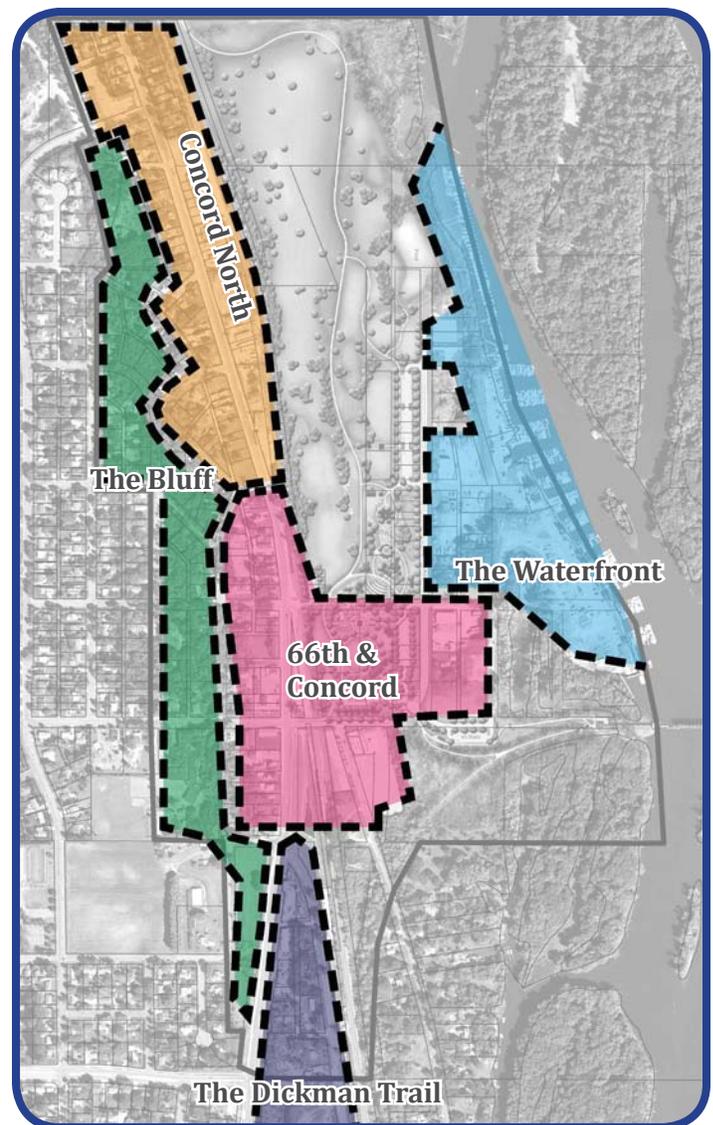
The Dickman Trail district is an industrial focused area that should be able to take advantage of wider lots (compared with Concord North) to attract new and relocated industrial uses. It will require the removal of a few single family residences.

THE BLUFF –

The Bluff area of Concord Boulevard Neighborhood presents topographic challenges that make development difficult, although those who have found buildable parts are rewarded with a quiet neighborhood. Opportunities may exist to create connections from the bluff to the river as well as neighborhoods on top of the hill.

THE WATERFRONT –

The marinas along the Mississippi River are a unique asset to the neighborhood, although there is significant room for improvement in the way they are accessed. Currently the circulation pattern is haphazard and unclear. There are also concerns about flooding that restrict what development is feasible in this location.



*PREFERRED
MASTER PLAN*

4



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Through the planning process, a series of alternative land use concepts were explored with the Concord Neighborhood stakeholders. These land use concepts were presented in terms of future land use patterns and illustrative diagrams that tested development and site design based on the land use potentials. Through a review of the planning concepts with the stakeholder groups and through a technical evaluation of the alternatives, a preferred master plan emerged. This plan is presented in this section. Furthermore it is shaped by a vision and set of guiding principles. The vision and guiding principles are the broad, overarching statements that should be referred to when new concepts and ideas challenge the master plan. The plan is not intended to be a static document but instead must be dynamic in order to respond to the intricate details and nuances of redevelopment and the redevelopment process.

VISION STATEMENT:

Concord Boulevard is a place where a diverse history, population, and building pattern can co-exist to create a unique environment. It is a place that offers opportunities to live through a variety of lifestyle stages, to start and grow a small business and to experience the history and culture of an historic village along the Mississippi River.

There is a saying “the whole is more than the sum of its parts.” The project area is a series of parts today. Some parts have been renewed; some parts are tired and in need of renewal and some parts are simply waiting for the renewal to take place. Redevelopment and revitalization of the Concord Neighborhood will be an ongoing task, occurring incrementally as opportunities fall into place and ultimately, through good planning and collaboration amongst the stakeholders, will be more than the sum of its parts.



Three concepts for the neighborhood were developed and evaluated to reach the final preferred master plan. See Volume II for more detail on alternatives explored.

PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles serve to define the individual character elements of future redevelopment. They should be used to guide design of redevelopment projects and the establishment of programs. They form the measurements by which we evaluate future change.

1. PEDESTRIAN REALM IMPROVEMENTS / CONNECTIVITY:

Create pedestrian realm improvements that safely connect Concord to greater Inver Grove Heights trail/sidewalk system, to future park resources (Heritage Village Park), to the regional trail corridor (MRRT) and to riverfront amenities (Marianas/Pier). Intersection enhancements should create safer crossings of Concord Boulevard and the railroad tracks.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AMENITIES:

Develop a neighborhood park on the west side of Concord Boulevard that provides open space and play areas on the west side of Concord Boulevard. This improvement could be integrated into a private development as part of a larger residential redevelopment project.

3. GATEWAY TREATMENTS:

Utilize gateway elements (monument signs, unified material palette, etc...) to distinguish the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood, especially at entry points on the north city limits and the intersection of Concord Boulevard and Dickman Trail. Gateway treatments might also be used to emphasize entrance into a sub-district such as the waterfront commercial area (i.e. a gateway treatment at 66th and Concord Boulevard.)

4. WAYFINDING:

Wayfinding is the ability to orient oneself in a location and understand how to navigate to another place. Explicit cues (such as signs) and implicit cues (such as roadway character) can both give users direction and clues about how to get from place to place.

In the context of the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood, signage is important along the regional trail and at other pedestrian nodes. It should also play a role in alerting drivers and pedestrians about local stores and restaurants and truck drivers about where to go for pick-ups and deliveries. Wayfinding has the opportunity to be expanded in its design and serve as an identity feature for the neighborhood or as a bulletin board for neighborhood events.

5. CONCORD BOULEVARD FRONTAGE:

Buildings and landscaping along Concord Boulevard should be held to a high standard, with aesthetic upgrades such as landscaping, architectural detail, and durable materials. As “the face” of the neighborhood, Concord Boulevard frontage should portray a positive image.

6. BUILDING ORIENTATION / SITE DESIGN:

Buildings should be oriented to the street, with the “front face” and main entrance of the building looking toward Concord Boulevard where possible and entrances providing access to public sidewalks, rather than only the parking lot. Sites should include landscaping and should be kept in good condition to provide positive cues about the character of the neighborhood.

7. DEVELOPMENT TRANSITIONS / BUFFER:

Ensure that potentially conflicting land uses are buffered by vegetation, topography or space, or are separated by intermediate development that is not conflicting.

8. PARKING AND CIRCULATION:

Parking lots should be oriented alongside yards or behind buildings. Commercial and industrial land uses that rely on truck circulation should provide loading docks facing away from Concord Boulevard when possible. Parking and circulation should not be the face of Concord Boulevard.

9. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT:

Stormwater management should be treated as a site amenity. It should serve multiple functions: aesthetic, flood protection, water quality enhancement and source for irrigation (stormwater reuse).

10. TRANSIT SERVICE:

Improvements and potential re-routing of transit service should be investigated. Redevelopment should be considered in light of its potential impact on or contribution to an improved transit market. In the meantime, actions taken now should not prevent or introduce additional challenges to transit expansion.

11. PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES:

Care should be taken to preserve natural resources in the area. This includes retaining mature trees, minimizing erosion, and protecting the Mississippi River with stormwater best management practices.

12. RECOGNITION / CELEBRATION OF HISTORIC PLACE:

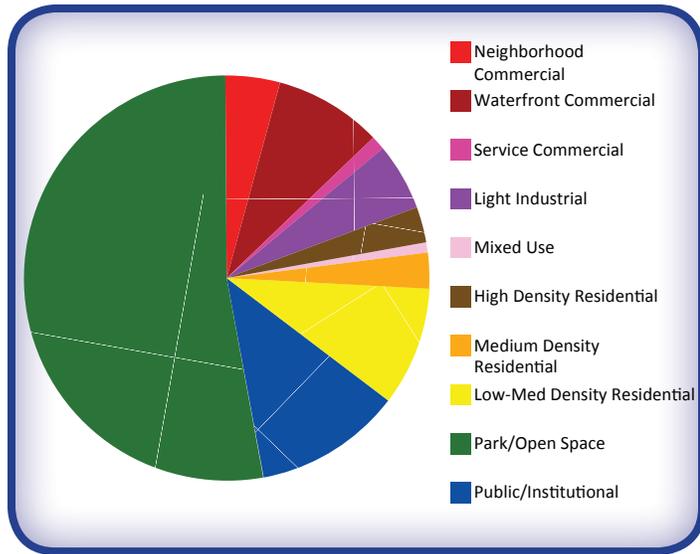
The Concord Boulevard Neighborhood has one of the richest histories in Inver Grove Heights. This should be recognized and celebrated as an asset for the neighborhood, and a feature to draw visitors from the rest of the city and region.



PREFERRED MASTER PLAN

LAND USE PLAN:

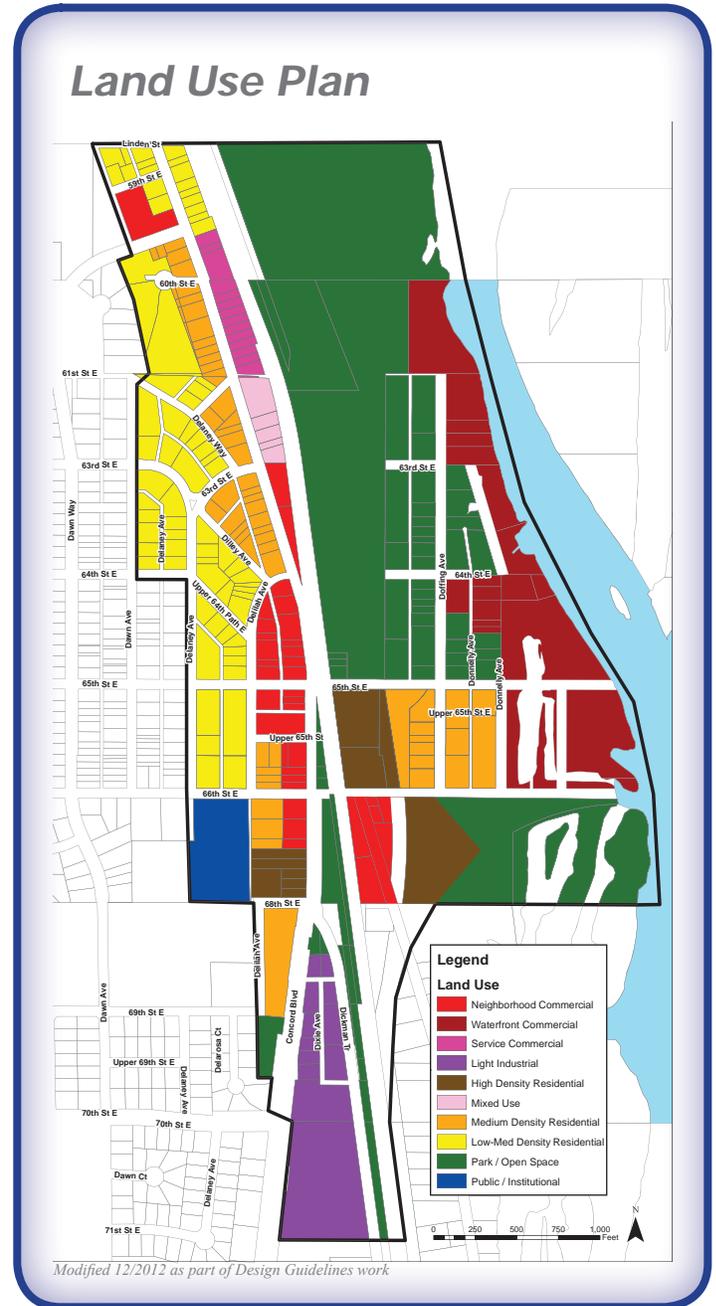
The land use plan for the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood attempts to better define and locate appropriate land uses. The Comprehensive Plan from 2008 called out most of the neighborhood as “mixed use.” This plan anticipated the development of a small area plan for the neighborhood and left the prescribed land use intentionally open to change. The new land use plan for the neighborhood has a number of components, including the introduction of two land use categories; “Waterfront Commercial” and “Service Commercial” to better describe conditions in the neighborhood.



LAND USE CATEGORIES:

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL:

Neighborhood commercial areas include parcels containing retail sales and services located along collector roadways that serve the adjacent neighborhood area. The neighborhood commercial designation is the least intensive of the commercial classifications used in the comprehensive plan. Neighborhood commercial areas are intended to house businesses that provide convenience goods and services. Convenience goods and services include



items that are regularly needed by nearby residents or businesses such as small grocery items, dry cleaning, video rentals, hardware, drug store, finance, tax or real estate services.

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WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL:

(NEW LAND USE CATEGORY) Waterfront commercial is specific to the commercial needs of marine based activity. This could include marinas, boat storage and repair, fishing/tackle shops and other aquatic based commercial uses. These uses serve a unique market and have specific needs that may not be covered by other commercial categories. Waterfront Commercial could also cover retail and service land uses that may not be waterfront specific, but due to their location serve waterfront purposes (such as a nearby restaurant that serves boaters).

SERVICE COMMERCIAL:

(NEW LAND USE CATEGORY) Service commercial focuses on commercial land uses that are service oriented such as bike repair, auto body shops, and refuse haulers. Areas designated as Service Commercial are non-exclusive of other, retail focused commercial land uses; however, the primary uses are more service oriented than retail goods.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL:

Light industrial areas in Inver Grove Heights include parcels containing light manufacturing, goods movement and wholesale trade.

MIXED USE (COMMERCIAL / OFFICE / RESIDENTIAL):

Mixed use areas consist of parcels that contain a mix of retail and service commercial, office, institutional, higher density residential, public uses and/or park and recreation uses, organized in a pedestrian friendly environment

In the context of Concord Boulevard, this could mean traditional mixed use buildings with retail on the ground floor and residential or office uses on the upper stories. It could also include “live/work” mixed use spaces on the 6200 block of Concord Boulevard with residential units over offices, workshops, or studios allowing residents to “work where they live.” Ground floor spaces in a mixed use area should be designed to accommodate a more intense commercial use, although its initial use may be residential or office. As the market for commercial matures, it can be converted to commercial use.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Areas designated as high density residential are intended to accommodate multi-family housing at densities exceeding 12 units per net acre. Uses in this category will be principally limited to higher density apartment or condominium buildings for either general occupancy or for specific segments of the population such as senior housing.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

Medium density residential accommodates somewhat higher residential densities ranging from 6 to 12 dwelling units per net acre. Uses in this classification include higher density townhome developments and apartments, all with full public utility service.

LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL:

The low-medium density residential category includes a combination of single family attached and single family detached housing that is generally at a greater density than traditional single family housing in Inver Grove Heights. Density of the Low-Medium Density Residential category ranges from 3 to 6 units per net acre. In the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood, topographical limitations should not preclude development if density cannot reach the 3 dwelling units per acre threshold.

PARK / OPEN SPACE:

Public park and open space includes the City’s Park system as well as areas of public ownership that are intended for open space use. Typically, these areas include lands used for stormwater storage or other public infrastructure need and are not considered developable.

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL:

Public/Institutional uses in Inver Grove Heights include churches, buildings and land adjacent to schools, cemeteries, government facilities and other parcels that are owned by a public agency or institution. The public/ institutional category does not include parks and recreation areas. They are classified separately. The public/institutional use within Concord Boulevard is the school building last used for the Tarek Ibn Ziyad Academy on 66th Street.

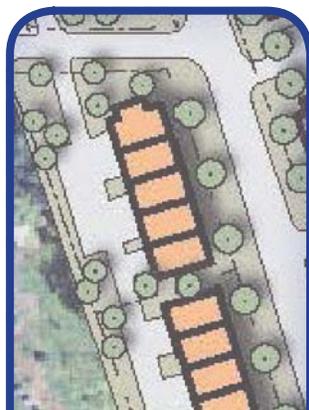
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ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN:

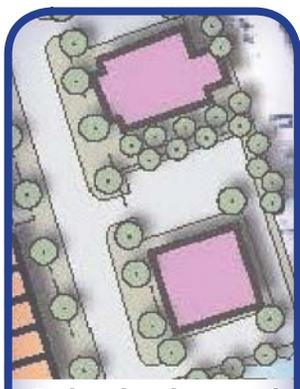
The illustrative plan shows both the nature of the density in redevelopment areas and an example of the way buildings should lay out and respond to the street network. The illustrative plan is not intended to limit how sites should develop, but instead intended to show how a site could redevelop given the guiding land use pattern. The illustrative diagram is intended to illustrate guiding principles.



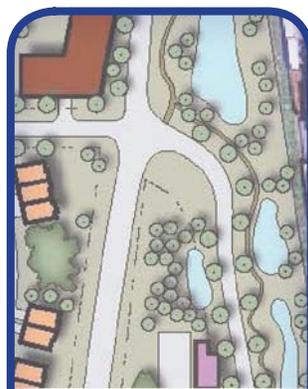
Vegetation and space buffers potentially incompatible land uses



Access is managed by keeping driveways off of Concord Boulevard where possible



Parking lots do not push the buildings to the back of lots, allowing facades to define the look of Concord Boulevard



Stormwater is managed and becomes a visual amenity

Illustrative Plan



Please note: portions of the plan have been slightly modified 12/2012 as part of Design Guidelines work
-Consult Design Guidelines-

CONCORD NORTH:

TOWNHOUSE/ROWHOUSE DEVELOPMENT WEST OF CONCORD:

The Plan for Concord North District includes medium density housing redevelopment on the west side of Concord Boulevard. This housing should front the street with quality facades and building materials. Automobile access should be from the rear of the buildings to manage access points on and off of Concord Boulevard. These redevelopments include the current Dakota County CDA properties and could serve as a catalyst site for redevelopment. As these parcels are redeveloped, space should be identified for green space/pocket parks to provide easily accessible open space for residents. A park facility may be part of a private facility or public parklands.



SERVICE COMMERCIAL EAST OF CONCORD:

This area should serve as a transition area, capitalizing on turnover in the area to redevelop

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and introduce new business. The narrow parcels make large scale developments difficult in this location, but aesthetic upgrades and a move to uses with less outside storage and less truck traffic over time is envisioned.

LIVE / WORK:

Also along the east side of Concord Boulevard between 63rd Street and Upper 61st Street, the depth of the lots between Concord Boulevard and the railroad right-of-way widens. This presents an opportunity for a new type of use that could offer the opportunity for people to work where they live. This is an expansion and refinement of a home office, workshop, or studio idea. It would suggest a street level office, show room or retail front with a living or housing unit above or in the back. Envisioned uses include a bike shop, artist studio, arts/craft maker, or professional office/studio. The live/work concept is one that will take time to mature and will require an innovative approach to redevelopment. Examples of this arrangement are becoming more prevalent as developers look to reuse older buildings and redevelop underutilized sites.



Live/Work units often separate use by floors or front/back layouts.

66TH & CONCORD:

COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL SERVICES:

The area along Concord Boulevard generally between Delilah Avenue and 68th Street presents the greatest opportunity for commercial land uses that are more goods oriented along with restaurants, bars and professional services. The plan calls for clustering these types of uses closely together, creating a longer term opportunity for uses to share parking in more of a district parking approach. By clustering uses closer together, a stronger retail environment is created. The retail uses are envisioned as free standing commercial uses or potentially multi-tenant structures. The area between 65th Street and 66th Street also is important as a gateway into the water front district and Heritage Village Park. A strong retail presence at this node will be important as a signature icon to the district.

MIXED USE AND HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AT 68TH STREET:

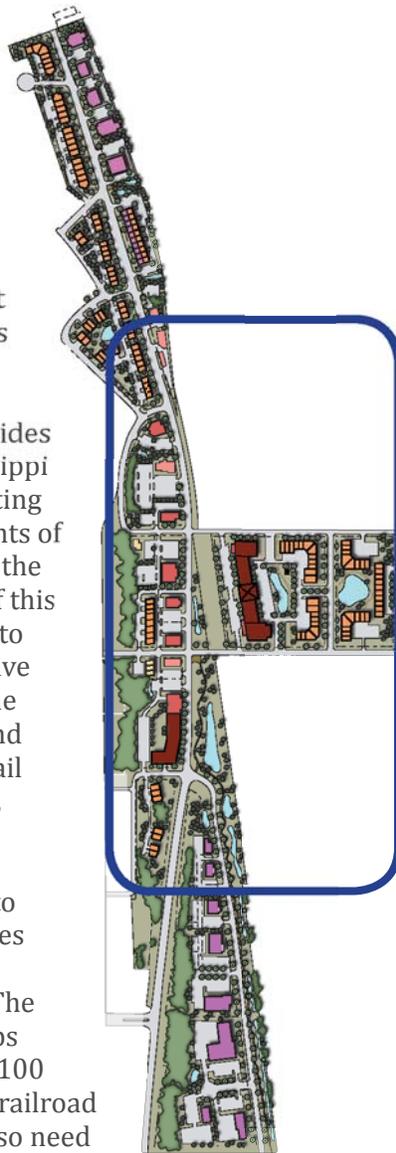
At the 68th Street node, an opportunity exists to redevelop vacant lots and to work with the site to create a high density development use. Such a use could benefit by close proximity to future commercial retail and services in the district and could contribute to increasing the market place for transit service. However, by itself it most likely would not be enough to warrant a bus route along Concord. The building could include ground level retail or professional offices fronting on Concord with residential components on upper levels or on the back side towards the bluff. The site could work with the topography of the area and potentially add structured parking.



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THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER GATEWAY

Probably the most notable area of change presented in the master plan is the area east of the Railroad tracks between 65th Street and 66th Street. This site is currently envisioned as part of the future Heritage Village Park. The site is currently used by a waste hauler and implementation of the Park Master Plan would require acquisition of this parcel. The Park master plan envisions a highly programmed entrance and park focal point on this site. This plan suggests a different direction. One that seeks to introduce housing, retail and services with an orientation that provides a gateway to the Mississippi River along 66th. By shifting the programmed elements of Heritage Village Park to the north, redevelopment of this site could also orient onto the park creating an active multi-use frontage on the park. The envisioned land uses include limited retail and service commercial, higher density housing in a 3 or 4 story structure transitioning to lower density townhomes or rowhouses as you move toward the river. The illustrative concept keeps development out of the 100 year flood plain. Future railroad improvements would also need to be investigated to explore quite zone improvements to further make the site attractive for residential uses.



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DICKMAN TRAIL:

BUSINESS PARK

The area south of 68th Street along Dickman Trail is an area with a wide mix of uses. Many of the uses are heavy industry that generates significant truck traffic, noise and dust issues.

The longevity of some of these uses was questioned through the stakeholder engagement process. A limited number of single family homes are scattered throughout the site. The plan for this area suggests redevelopment over time that would intensify the employment density and building coverage of business uses and moving away from more site intensive uses to more building intensive uses. Increasing job density in the area will further support retail and professional services and could be an attractive opportunity given the vision for Heritage Village Park and other improvements. Opportunities to better utilize the land area within this district can be explored through replatting of the site and reconfiguring development parcels. Uses envisioned in this area might include light manufacturing, research and design, technology companies, assembly, cabinet makers or other light industry.



Please note: portions of the plan have been slightly modified 12/2012 as part of Design Guidelines work
-Consult Design Guidelines-

TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

STREETS:

With the exception of Concord Boulevard, the street network in the Concord Neighborhood is made up of local residential streets. The Land Use Plan does not envision significant new street development or the need for major street reconstruction that would be a result of implementing the redevelopment plan. Key improvements to the street system might be initiated in locations where redevelopment adjacent to the street creates an opportunity to upgrade infrastructure (sewer, water or stormsewer) or improve upon the aesthetic character of the neighborhood by adding landscaping or burying overhead utility lines.

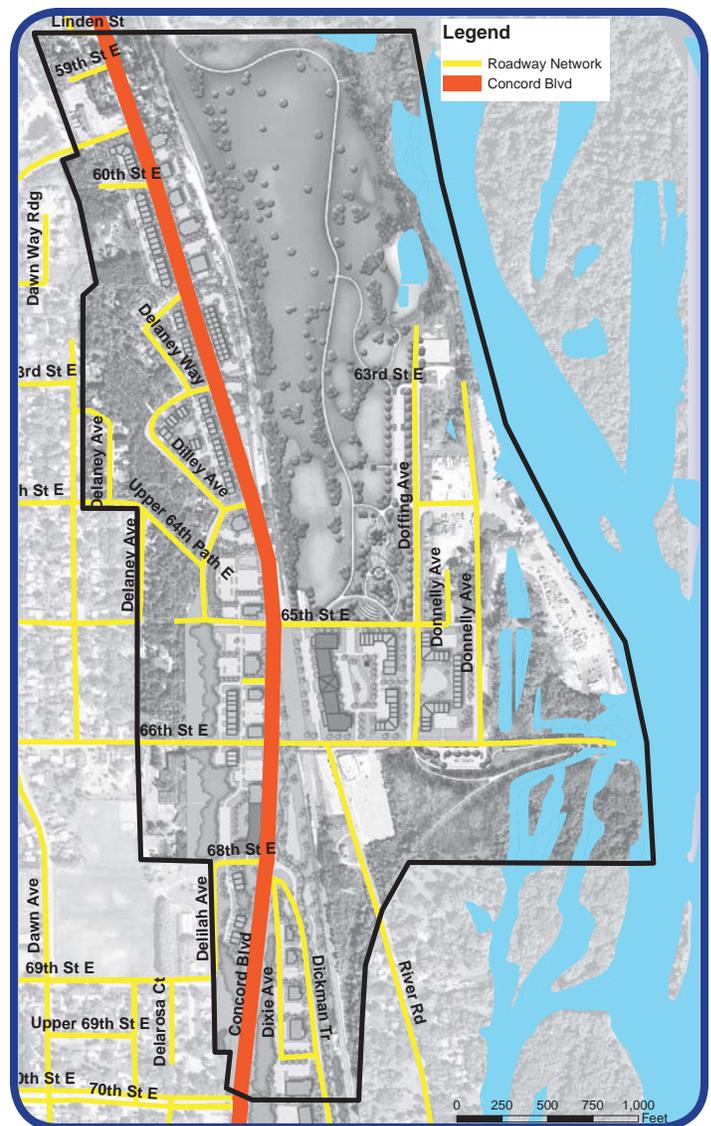
Access management should be considered in all redevelopment projects making sure careful attention is given to internal site circulation and access to the local street network to minimize traffic conflicts. Traffic calming strategies could also benefit in key areas particularly on the west side of Concord to prevent and slow traffic through the neighborhood and create a safer pedestrian environment.

The only significant street improvement project is Dickman Trail. This street could be reconstructed as part of redevelopment in the Dickman District that replats lands to make better use of current parcels between the railroad and Dickman that are undevelopable. Integration of a linear stormwater system and a trail to connect future businesses in the area to the recreational and retail uses within the neighborhood could be accomplished with this street reconstruction project.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MOVEMENT:

Pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the project area will continue to grow with the improvements to the MRRT, the Rock Island Swing Bridge and the implementation of the future Heritage Village Master Plan. Intersection enhancements, especially across Concord Boulevard will

help create a safer way to cross the street. This creates a vital link between the neighborhood and the park and river amenities on the east side of Concord Boulevard. Intersection improvements could be as simple as signage and street markings identifying crosswalks or could be more advanced such as changing the street dimensions at key intersections. Future redevelopment should carefully consider internal pedestrian circulation, facilities for bicycle parking and connections to the public sidewalk/trail system.

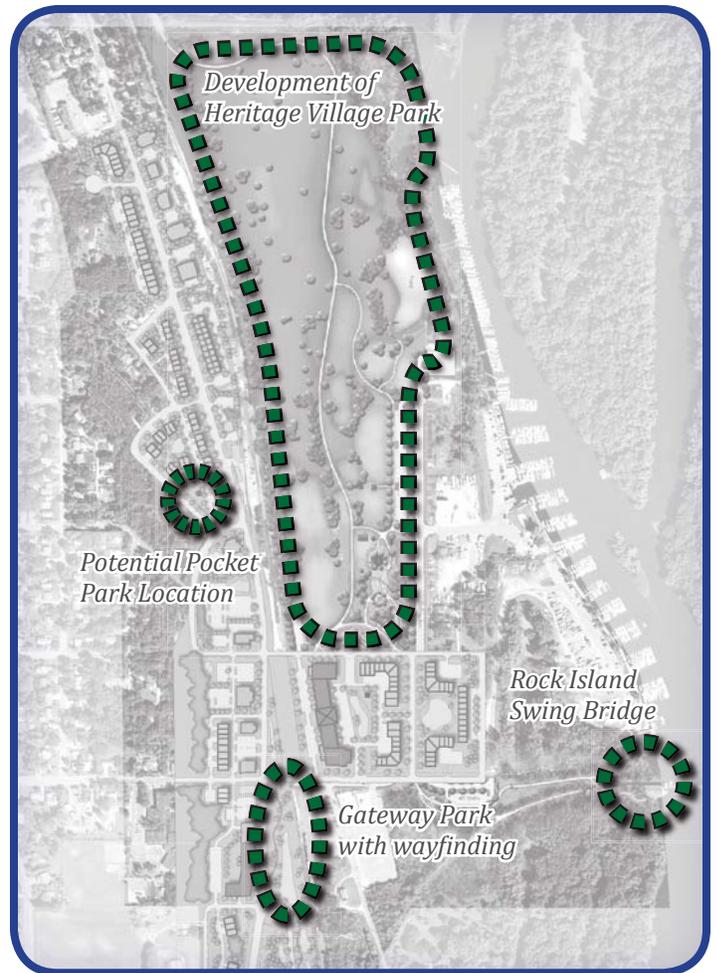


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PARKS, OPEN SPACE & THE PUBLIC REALM:

The park system needs within the Concord Neighborhood is envisioned to be largely met by the future Heritage Village Park improvements, the Rock Island Swing Bridge Park and existing parks on top of the bluff. However, with the recent loss of Cameron Park, no neighborhood park exists on the west side of Concord Boulevard. Stakeholders expressed a desire for a small neighborhood park or tot lot in a location that does not require crossing of Concord Boulevard, or that crossings of Concord Boulevard be enhanced. The land use plan does not identify a specific park as part of future development west of Concord Boulevard. However, the illustrative plan does show the potential for a park component to be incorporated into future redevelopment. A park or open space feature should be a component of future redevelopment on the west side of Concord. Such a component could be privately developed and owned or a component of the City Park system and would be determined as part of an actual redevelopment plan.



REDEVELOPMENT STARTING POINTS

A goal of the planning process was to establish a starting point for where redevelopment can begin (identify Catalyst sites) and targeted land uses/program. This section of the plan highlights seven different catalyst project ideas. Each of these projects has unique components that impact the “readiness” of the redevelopment project. A description of each project is provided below. Prioritization of these projects will occur with more detailed study including market analysis, fiscal analysis and conversations with landowners. Furthermore, it is anticipated that these projects will be the subject of further review and discussion with the Economic Development Authority.

CITY ROLE IN REDEVELOPMENT

The City can play a variety of roles in the redevelopment process. It can be the developer which would include acquiring of the land and making land available for development, platting the land and installing public improvements and ultimately selling the land to an intended building or user. It can serve as the broker or facilitator of redevelopment, working with land owners/business owners to market the property and attract a developer/builder to the table. Or it can simply serve as a resource to assist with the regulatory and entitlement or approval processes.

The City of Inver Grove Heights may be involved with the financial side of the redevelopment; facilitating tax increment financing, tax abatement, and/or bonding. It may also be involved in a programmatic role; supporting code enforcement, rental housing certification, and/or creating maintenance programs. Some efforts could include both financial and programmatic elements, such as housing rehabilitation and business improvement programs.

Defining the City’s role in redevelopment will be a subject of future strategic planning using this plan as a resource for future project identification.

PROJECT #1 CDA PROPERTY:

The CDA property is most ready for redevelopment. Individual parcels have been acquired and the site is available for redevelopment. The plan envisions a townhouse/rowhouse type of housing product. The parcel will require re-platting and site plan approval. Past efforts to redevelop the site have been met with opposition from the neighborhood. This opposition is mostly isolated to a concern about affordable housing. The City should work with the CDA to accommodate a mix of affordable housing options within the project. City actions needed for this redevelopment to occur include replatting and site plan approval.

PROJECT #2 MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY SITE:

This site includes approximately xx acres of land that includes land currently occupied by a waste/garbage hauler, a trucking company and vacant land owned by a neighborhood business. The site is currently planned as part of Heritage Village Park and is envisioned as a the key gateway area of the park to include parking lots, picnic patios, playground area, splash pad, picnic shelter and multi-purpose building. This plan recommends the park plan be amended, shifting these active uses to the north of 65th Street, making way for a mixed use redevelopment south of 65th Street. The envisioned redevelopment includes a mix of stacked housing (apartment/condos), street level commercial uses (retail or services) and townhomes or rowhouse type units. Key City and/or developer actions associated with this project include:

- » Acquisition and assembly of land including relocation as necessary (approximately 4 separate landowners and two businesses)
- » Environmental review to determine any soil remediation needed for proposed development
- » Site plan and re-platting
- » Investigation and implementation of railroad crossing improvements and quiet zone implementation
- » Amendment to Heritage Village Park Plan



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PROJECT #3 68TH STREET AND CONCORD MIXED USE AREA

The node on the northwest quadrant of 68th and Concord Boulevard includes a mix of single family homes and vacant lots. Some of these parcels are already owned by the City of Inver Grove Heights, acquired over the years to remove problem properties. Some of the homes sit on deep lots, which when combined create a feasible re-development project. This project will require the assembly of remaining parcels, re-platting and detailed site design. The project could then be marketed for a higher density housing project (owner or renter occupied) or a mixed use project with commercial on the ground floor and residential or office on upper floors.

PROJECT #4 NORTH CONCORD RESIDENTIAL

This project includes redevelopment of the single family homes on the west side of Concord Boulevard between Upper 61st Street to Dawn Way. A number of these properties have been rumored to be available for sale and could be acquired over time to provide a reasonable sized development parcel. This project presents an opportunity to eliminate individual driveway access points, to enhance the street front of Concord and to intensify the density of the area further supporting commercial and recreational uses in the district. The project would require acquisition of single family homes. Due to the number of homes to acquire, this project may be a longer term project.

PROJECT #5 DICKMAN TRAIL BUSINESS PARK

The triangle of industrial and single family homes south of the intersection of Dickman Trail and Concord Boulevard presents an economic development opportunity. Redevelopment of the site would eliminate conflicting land uses and would better utilize available land and infrastructure resources. Extension of this concept further to the south to include areas currently used for outside storage and salvage should be explored as part of master planning this

project area. Redevelopment of this area will include master planning, site acquisition, utility extensions, environmental investigation and clean-up and re-platting.

PROJECT #6 LIVE/WORK ON CONCORD

The site between Upper 61st Path and Delilah Ave on the east side of Concord Boulevard is identified as a site for a concept defined as Live/Work. The site currently is occupied by a refuse hauler, a sandblasting operation and an auto repair business. Redevelopment of the site will make for better use of the land and infrastructure. City and /or developer actions that would be required for this project would include acquisition and relocation of existing businesses, environmental investigation and remediation, re-platting and site design.

PROJECT #7 NORTH CONCORD COMMERCIAL

This project refers to the commercial users north of Upper 61st Path on the east side of Concord. The project area is represented by three separate property owners. Redevelopment of these areas could occur as a whole or separately on an individual basis. It would not require assembly of all the properties in order to proceed. The City's role in this project may best be suited to acting as a facilitator while working in close collaboration with the property owners so that when properties come up for sale, the City can help in securing the right user for redeveloping the site.

CATALYST PROJECT SITES

1. *CDA PROPERTY*
2. *MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY SITE*
3. *68TH STREET AND CONCORD MIXED USE AREA*
4. *NORTH CONCORD RESIDENTIAL*
5. *DICKMAN TRAIL BUSINESS PARK*
6. *LIVE/WORK ON CONCORD*
7. *NORTH CONCORD COMMERCIAL*



*IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES*

5



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Several factors are important to successfully realize the vision established by Inver Grove Heights for the Concord Neighborhood. These factors are important regardless of the actual form and timing of future redevelopment.

PATIENCE & COMMITMENT TO VISION:

Redevelopment is not an easy task. Staying committed to the vision in this plan will take patience. The plan will not result in sweeping change overnight. Rather, the plan identifies a number of potential projects that will create incremental change, bringing Concord Boulevard closer to the vision established in the plan. This step-by-step approach is realistic and breaks the effort down into manageable projects, but it demands patience from stakeholders. It also means that the City of Inver Grove Heights and local stakeholders must be willing to actively promote investments and development that work toward the vision while deterring or redirecting development that does not meet the plan's objectives. Not all of these decisions will be easy, but they are necessary.

THE CITY'S ROLE IN REDEVELOPMENT

To date, the City of Inver Grove Heights has not had a lot of experience with redevelopment projects to the scale of the Concord Neighborhood. A key step in implementing redevelopment is to define what role the City wants to take in redevelopment. As noted in chapter 4 of this plan the City can play many different roles in the redevelopment process. Different roles might include the providing of financial considerations through such mechanism as tax increment financing, tax abatement, or bonding or establishing targeted programs for housing improvement, business development or improvement, rental housing inspections or code enforcement. Providing clarity to what role the City will play will provide for a more efficient and understandable redevelopment process.

FINANCIAL REALITY:

Implementing the Concord Boulevard Neighborhood Plan requires careful investment of public funds. It also requires a commitment and partnership from the private sector, both those who own land, businesses or homes in the project area and those who seek to invest in redevelopment. Change will not occur in the project area if it is not supported by a financially sound investment plan. Acquisition of lands, relocation of buildings, environmental cleanup and public improvements must be afforded by the value created through new development. Subsidies will be required, but should be carefully considered relative to the short term improvement and the long term return on investment. The plan seeks to provide a balance of public investment in the neighborhood and the creation of a more robust economic environment along the corridor.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS:

The reality facing Concord Boulevard, like most neighborhoods across the country, is one of limited budgets and investment. Because there are limited funds, expenditures must be weighed and prioritized based on the change they can create or stimulate in the neighborhood. Neither public nor private sources of funding will be able to take on all of the projects immediately. Each expenditure should build the momentum of change in the neighborhood and make the next investment an easier and more obvious choice.

WILLING SELLERS AND BUYERS:

Redevelopment requires multiple parties to be willing to enter into a transaction. A property owner who is not interested in development, must be willing to sell property for a fair and reasonable price. In order for a development project to be proposed, a property owner or prospective buyer must be willing to buy a property and assist with relocating of existing uses if needed. The transaction requires both parties to make a deal. Absent either, redevelopment does not occur.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION:

Redevelopment is a tricky and often challenging process. It requires specialized skills, patience, the right market and financial resources. It often requires many different players who have many different roles. The City should begin to explore what its role should be through its Economic Development Authority. This city board has the statutory tools to help facilitate redevelopment if the City chooses to implement them. The role the City can plan may vary greatly from being an active development partner to being more of a broker and facilitator.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STRATEGIC TOOLS:

The City has available a number of statutory redevelopment tools that can be used to leverage private investment and to facilitate redevelopment. These tools include tax increment financing, tax abatement, special assessments, park dedication, environmental clean-up funds and special service districts to name the most typical tolls. The City also has the ability to establish targeted business development loans or grants or housing improvement programs through its EDA. All of these programs in various capacities can be used to further the vision established in this plan. The right tools in the financial “toolbox” need to be adapted to fit based on each projects individual needs.

NEXT STEPS

The Concord Boulevard Neighborhood Plan update is the first of two phases of studies. Phase two of the study is to prepare a market strategy that will identify the market demand for various uses within the corridor. This market strategy will help identify which projects are best positioned to redevelop in the near term, intermediate term and more long term. Furthermore the market study will validate the vision plan, establish market strategies for implementing the plan and recommend modifications in cases where the market simply may not perform as intended or desired in the master plan. Phase two of the study will also include a more detailed site planning exercise that will establish desired building and site circulation patterns,

pedestrian and public realm improvements and desired design character for selected redevelopment projects.

The responsibility for guiding the implementation of this master plan lies primarily with the City Council and the EDA. The Council and EDA will provide direction to City Staff and consultants in carrying out the day to day actions. The Council and EDA will also authorize expenditures of public financial resources. Key next steps for the Council and EDA include:

1. Embrace the vision plan as a guiding document.
2. Initiate Phase II of this study – market study and detailed site planning/design guidelines for priority sites.
3. Revise the vision plan if needed based on Phase II study.
4. Collaborate with the Planning Commission to amend the Comprehensive Plan with the Phase II Study.
5. Implement any necessary zoning modifications based on plan.
6. Collaborate with the Park and Recreation Commission in amending the Heritage Village Park Master Plan (provided Phase II substantiates redevelopment.)
7. Establish detailed plans for public improvements (gateway improvements, stormwater, rail crossing and quiet zone improvements or wayfinding system) – seek collaborative partnerships with benefiting businesses or other stakeholders in carrying out improvements.
8. Prioritize redevelopment projects and develop detailed implementation steps.

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