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## **INTRODUCTION**

The land use section of the city's comprehensive plan is the city's official guide for all future land use decisions. Decisions regarding development, redevelopment, infill and conservation should be considered in respect to this section of the plan. The major land use classifications within the city include residential, commerce, industrial, public facilities and natural elements.

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

Existing land use as of January 1, 2008 is reflected in Figure 2-1. The acreage and percent of each type of land use is catalogued in Table 2-1, below. The city has experienced moderate development since 1998, especially along the I-35E and I-694 corridors. The amount of vacant developable land has been reduced from 137 acres (2.4%) to approximately 65 acres (1.2%). However, some of this vacant land is un-developable as it is covered by wetlands.

**TABLE 2-1  
EXISTING LAND USE  
DECEMBER, 2007**

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Single Family	2,179.2	40.3%
Single-Family Attached <sup>1</sup>	246.5	4.2%
Multi-Family <sup>2</sup>	132.8	2.8%
Commercial	249.9	4.9%
Industrial	208.4	4.4%
Public <sup>4</sup>	822.6	11.7%
Semi-Public	419.3	7.1%
Rail ROW	65.5	2.0%
Vacant <sup>3</sup>	66.4	1.2%
Other*	1,067.4	19.6%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>5,458.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Other includes road right-of-way. The total amount of road right-of-way within the City (1,067.4 acres) was deduced from the acreage left over after calculating the acreage of all the parcels within the City.

Source: Ramsey County GIS data.

<sup>1</sup>Single-family attached includes townhomes, duplexes and triplexes.

<sup>2</sup>Multi-family includes common entrance housing such as condos and apartment buildings.

<sup>3</sup>Much of the vacant land is covered by wetlands.

<sup>4</sup>Public land use includes Birch Lake and Goose Lake.

**[INSERT EXISTING LAND USE MAP]**

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **STAGING**

In some instances, future growth is projected to occur in a fashion which is different from the current zoning classification for the area. Differences may involve proposed versus allowed residential densities or major land use reclassifications.

Differences between zoning and land use planning will need to be addressed over time. Minnesota Statute (473.858 Subd.1) states that:

“The Comprehensive Plan shall provide guidelines for the timing and sequence of the adoption of official controls to ensure planned, orderly, and staged development and redevelopment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.”

The timing and sequencing of each projected development area is incorporated within the planning district analysis. Changes in zoning to accomplish compatibility with proposed land use is not considered necessary until the sequencing year projected for each planning district area. Sequencing can be found at the end of the narrative for each area in each of the eight planning districts.

### **CATAGORIES**

The 2008 Future Land Use Map contains 8 designations grouped into 5 categories: Residential, Commerce, Industry, Public Facilities and Natural Elements. In all residential, commerce, business and public facility categories, uses may be mixed among these categories when part of an approved planned unit development.

*RESIDENTIAL – This category allows parks and various types of residential units. The residential category is divided into 4 designations based on density.*

#### **Very Low**

Includes single-family detached residential and allows a maximum density of 1 unit per acre.

#### **Low**

Includes single-family and two-family residential and allows 1.1 to 7 units per acre. The maximum density allowed in this category was increased from 4.2 to 7 in order to bring the R-4 zoned neighborhoods into compliance with the comp plan. There are many existing lots of record in these older neighborhoods which do not meet a 4.2 density when analyzed on an individual basis. This change is not intended to facilitate the development of new lots which would not otherwise be permitted by existing zoning regulations. Where the 70% rule applies, densities up to 8.64 units per acre are allowed.

#### **Medium**

Includes single-family, two-family, townhomes, and multi-family and allows 4.2 to 12 units per acre.

### High

Includes all types of residential development except single-family and allows 9 to 17 units per acre.

### Senior Housing

The City allows higher density senior housing (up to 30 units per acre) in all residential districts and in some commercial districts through special zoning approval. As such, most properties within the City are also deemed to be properly guided for multi-family senior housing.

### Affordable and Transit-Oriented Housing

The City's intent is to allow for a density bonus for multi-family development projects (R-6, R-7, DCB, LVMU and PZ) which include units which are either in close proximity to mass transit or affordable at 60% of AMI. The application of the density bonus will be modeled similar to the senior housing density bonus currently in place. When an affordable component is proposed, an increase in density in less-intense residential zoning districts may be permitted by variance on a case-by-case basis.

*COMMERCE - The commerce category is divided into 3 designations based on types of uses and locations within the City.*

### Commercial

Includes a wide range of general commercial uses, such as retail, office, auto-oriented businesses, and personal service establishments. May also include public facilities as deemed appropriate.

### Downtown Mixed Use

The zoning within the *Downtown* designation currently permits up to 32 units per acre for multi-family housing and 50 units per acre for senior housing. While it is difficult for staff to predict the ratio of commercial to residential development that the market will bear, our best guess is 10-20% residential and 80-90% commercial.

The *Downtown* designation has been expanded to the extent of the currently delineated downtown fringe area and specifically designates a mix of uses within this area. The intent is to facilitate the redevelopment of the west side of the downtown area, as well as emphasize the allowance of second floor residential in the historic downtown (east side). Expanding the coverage area of the new mixed use *Downtown* designation will require an amendment to the DCB zoning district to allow for a mix of uses and to adopt standards similar to the B-5 district for performance, including setback, residential densities, architecture and landscaping.

### Lake Village Mixed Use

The Marina Triangle district was previously guided *General Commercial* and *Proposed Park, Recreation and Open Space* until it was re-guided in 2006 to a new "*Mixed Use*" designation. The new "*Lake Village Mixed Use*" designation is intended to complement the

existing zoning and to facilitate implementation of the district's master plan. Allowed uses within this designation are enumerated in the LVMU zoning district. Those uses are confirmed and currently include multi-family housing at 24 units per acre as well as senior housing at 40 units per acre. These densities may be increased by up to 50% at Council discretion. Staff's best estimate of the ratio between commercial and residential in this designation is also 10-20% residential and 80-90% commercial.

*INDUSTRY - The Industry category is divided into 2 designations, Industrial and Business Park.*

#### Business Park

Due to the metamorphosis of uses over time within some of our industrial and business park areas, the Business Park designation has been amended to allow a mix of industrial, warehouse, office and limited retail uses. This will not require any zoning code amendments because a mix of uses is already provided for.

#### Industrial

Includes those uses provided for in the City's I-1 and I-2 zoning districts, such as manufacturing, warehousing, office/warehouse, cartage and research and development.

*PUBLIC FACILITIES - The public facilities category includes all publicly and most semipublicly owned land.*

#### Park, Recreation and Open Space

This designation is intended for properties owned by a public entity (ie: the City or the County) or a non-profit entity and are used for public or quasi-public recreation and/or open space. The "Proposed Park" designation has been eliminated. For the properties which had this guiding and are not currently owned by the City, the guiding is being amended to match the current use and/or zoning. In lieu of the "Proposed Park" designation, the City's intent is to register a "right of first refusal" at the County, to insure the City has the opportunity to negotiate a purchase if/when the property owner becomes interested in selling.

#### Public/Semi-Public

This designation is for properties which are owned by a public or non-profit entity and used for public services and uses other than parks and open space, such as City Hall. It is also intended for semi-public uses such as recreation centers, public schools, churches and cemeteries.

*NATURAL ELEMENTS - The natural elements which have been included on the Future Land Use map include open water and wetlands.*

The 1998-2020 Future Land Use Map has been included in this Comprehensive Plan for comparison purposes. The changes between it and the new 2008-2030 Future Land Use Map are outlined in Table 2-2.

**[INSERT 1998-2020 FUTURE LAND USE MAP]**

**[INSERT PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP CHANGES]**

**TABLE 2-2:  
FUTURE LAND USE MAP CHANGES TABLE**

**[INSERT 2008-2030 FUTURE LAND USE MAP]**

The acreage and percent of each designation summarized in Table 2-3, below.

**TABLE 2-3  
FUTURE LAND USE  
DECEMBER, 2007**

Guiding Designation	Acres	Percent
Very Low Residential	75.1	1.4%
Low Residential	2,023.6	37.1%
Medium Residential	317.8	5.8%
High Residential	169.3	3.1%
Commercial	179.8	3.3%
Downtown	70.6	1.3%
Lake Village	13.0	0.2%
Business Park	238.0	4.4%
Industrial	67.2	1.2%
Park, Recreation & Open Space	797.5	14.6%
Public/Semi-Public	419.6	7.7%
Rail/ROW	66.1	1.2%
Other*	1,020.4	18.7%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>5,458.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Other includes road right-of-way. The total amount of road right-of-way within the City (1,020.4 acres) was deduced from the acreage left over after calculating the acreage of all the parcels within the City.

Source: Ramsey County GIS data.

## **PLANNING DISTRICTS**

Eight discrete planning districts have been established within the city. Within each district are sub-areas based on a commonality of characteristics and/or issues which unify an area. This section includes a brief analysis of some of each district's future development, redevelopment, and infill potential.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICTS MAP]**

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 1 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## PLANNING DISTRICT 1

Planning District 1 is bounded by Centerville Road on the west, Otter Lake Road on the east, the Soo Line Rail on the north, and the municipal boundary on the south. The district includes all of Birch Lake and its adjacent land uses. The oldest development in the district includes single family uses on the north, south, and east sides of Birch Lake. During the late 1980's and early to mid 1990's, the district experienced a boom in apartment and townhouse development with the addition of 663 rental units and 182 for sale townhomes. In addition, vigorous business development on White Bear Parkway has nearly exhausted available land in that portion of the district. Several undeveloped business and multi-family parcels, which are discussed below, remain throughout the district including land adjacent to the City's Sports Center.

### **Birch Lake Business Park**

#### Characteristics/History

The Birch Lake Business Park was created in the late 1980's, when the City father's vision for a business-oriented district was implemented along with the construction of White Bear Parkway. The parkway has spurred a wave of vigorous economic development which has brought both employment opportunities and a more diversified tax base.

The Birch Lake Business Park lies along either side of Interstate 35E and along both sides of White Bear Parkway and along the north side of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street extension of White Bear Parkway. In addition to Birch Lake, the district includes numerous wetland areas which, while enhancing the areas' ecological and aesthetic qualities, have presented challenges to development. The City's goal for diversified land use in the area has not superseded its responsibility for sustainable growth, which respects the unique environmental assets of the area. To this end, the City has achieved a carefully planned balance of economic development and ecological preservation. Minimal amounts of the districts wetland have been lost or disturbed, and storm water management has played a key role in site planning to maintain water quality and minimize wetland degradation.

By design, Birch Lake area development has been multi-faceted in nature. Zoning for the district is included in the City's Diversified Business District, which allows for a range of uses made naturally compatible through careful land use controls and high standards for site and architectural development. The stated purpose of the districts is "to facilitate moderately intense development in environmentally sensitive areas and to encourage economic development, which will enhance employment opportunities in the City." The district has fulfilled its purpose to allow opportunities to integrate high quality office structures, hotels, restaurants, office warehouse and showrooms, light manufacturing uses and medium density housing in an area with convenient access to the interstate system and the metropolitan marketplace.

Several major employers call the Birch Lake Business Park home, including:

Trane Heating and Air Conditioning – 350 employees

Taymark Corporation – 200 employees

Sensata Technologies – 89 employees

Smarte Carte – 75 employees

To enhance walk ability and connectivity within one of the City's major employment hubs, the City implemented the Birch Lake Regional Trail corridor. The trail, implemented in 1992, is a key contributor to active living in the City and provides a unifying design element which links jobs, services, and the natural environment.

### Issues

#### *Traffic Demands*

With area growth has come traffic and associated commuter delays. Highway 96 experiences significant delays during rush hour traffic periods, especially during the peak p.m. period. Traffic on Highway 96 is forecasted to increase from approximately 23,000 trips to 27,000 between 2000 and 2020. Although the expected increase is only 4,000 trips per day, the existing level of traffic is already constricting movement through the district. Highway 96 westbound, between White Bear Parkway and the western ramps of the I-35E interchange is very congested, attaining a level of Service F at times during the p.m. peak hour. The narrowness of the County Highway 96 bridge severely limits traffic movement through the four intersections between White Bear Parkway and Centerville Road. Double left turn lanes from westbound Highway 96 to southbound I-35E and Centerville Road are needed to facilitate existing and expected traffic levels. A new bridge over I-35E is necessary (and overdue) in order to handle regional and local traffic demands.

#### *Compatibility*

The diversity of use in the Birch Lake district provides for a dynamic mix of office, retail, office/warehouse, light industrial and medium density residential uses. Uses currently coexist in a compatible manner. Development of the remaining parcels along with continued use and reuse of existing businesses will need to be done in a fashion which recognizes the need to be a good neighbor to less intense uses, including residential.

#### *Aesthetics*

More can be done by the public sector to provide unifying design elements for the area. The City encourages high quality site development, including architectural, material standards, ample landscaping, and tightly proscribed signage regulations. Additional attention should be placed on developing unifying design elements, especially along White Bear Parkway. The addition of decorative street lights, district monument signage, boulevard plantings, decorative paving, and "screening" could help to build a stronger sense of place while coalescing the various uses into a more unified urban setting.

#### *Centerville Road Infill/Redevelopment*

Several parcels south of Highway 96 between Centerville Road and I-35E are blighted and underutilized. The City will need to identify parcels which can be assembled for redevelopment purposes. Proposals for new uses which are consistent with the current business mix in the district should be encouraged and brought to the public forum for debate and consideration. Adjacent residential uses should be recognized and respected early in the planning process.

Infill development north of Highway 96 is also likely. Development will be carefully interfaced, transitioning from auto oriented retail to high density residential. Transit oriented development should be strongly considered.

Ninth Street industrial uses are some of the oldest in the City. Anchored by Weyerhauser, this area is surrounded by residential and park uses. Some obsolete, residentially developed parcels exist among the industrial concerns and should be brought into architectural conformity with the rest of the built environment. The City will need to carefully monitor existing and proposed uses to be assured that impacts for less intense uses are minimized and mitigated. Noise levels, odors, truck traffic and outside storage should be addressed and managed through the Planning process.

#### South Birch Lake City Owned Property

The land adjacent to the Sports Center, is located south of Highway 96 between White Bear Parkway and Birch Lake Boulevard South. The area consists of the White Bear Sports Center and adjacent passive park, three single family homes, and undeveloped land acquired by the City in 2000. The city acquired the sports center in 1989 and later acquired a five acre piece of land immediately to the west in 1992. The extra land is being banked for possible future use with an expanded sports/community center. An expanded community center with a wide variety of facilities could require additional land depending on the desired facilities. Three single family homes could be acquired in the future. These additional lands, along with the sports center and land bank, would bring the total area to just over 12 acres. The expanded site should be more than adequate to accommodate a full-service community center by adding approximately 60,000 s.f. to the existing 41,000 s.f. facility. **Sequencing - Estimated year of development 2020.**

#### Birch Lake Improvement District

In 2006, the City Council approved a Birch Lake homeowner's initiative to create a Birch Lake improvement district. The district allows for the uniform assessment of all lakeside property owners. District funds are designated for the study and enhancement of the lake, including ecology, water quality and access.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 2 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## PLANNING DISTRICT 2

Planning District 2 is bounded by Otter Lake Road on the west, Bald Eagle Avenue on the east, Highway 96 on the south, and the Soo Line Rail on the north. The district is a mix of pre- and post- World War II single family homes, along with an older developed industrial area north of 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The area is nearly fully developed with only about 6 buildable single family lots available within the Timberwood plat on the northeast corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Otter Lake Road. The area provides limited possibilities for infill development which will be discussed on an individual basis.

### Ramaley Park and North-Central Neighborhoods

#### Characteristics/History

The Ramaley Park and North-Central Neighborhood includes some of the City's oldest and most affordable single-family homes. The Ramaley Park neighborhood, which straddles both sides of Highway 96, was platted in 1883 and includes just over 103 acres of contiguous property. Subsequent plats north of Birch Lake Avenue continued the development pattern of starter-type homes on smaller lots. The North Central Neighborhood contains 374 single family parcels, the vast majority of which are still configured in the original shape of 50 x 135 feet.

While the Ramaley Park neighborhood was originally chosen for analysis, it was concluded that the rest of the neighborhood stretching to Ninth Street was similar enough in lot size, housing style and price range, that it should all be aggregated into one somewhat cohesive district. The boundaries, although somewhat amorphic, are Whitaker Avenue on the south, Ninth Street on the north, Bald Eagle on the east and Dillon Street/Woodcrest on the west.

The quality of this residential district is generally consistent with a preponderance of smaller homes with a single or two car, detached garage, on 50 to 60 foot wide lots. Only a handful of infill opportunities exist throughout the district, primarily on double lots.

#### Issues

The general condition of the neighborhood is fair to good, with some homes suffering from the effects of aging and deferred maintenance. The City's main concerns in dealing with this district in the future is to foster revitalization and upkeep of existing homes and accessory structures, while enhancing and maintaining the area's unique scale and character and promoting reinvestment in the district's public infrastructure and park properties. While the focus of this overview is generally the City's older neighborhoods, it is recognized that many of the same issues are inherent in the City's newer neighborhoods.

The portion of the Ramaley neighborhood north of Highway 96 and south of Birch Lake Avenue is of particular concern to the City. Many of the older homes in the area are showing signs of distress. Lack of structural and aesthetic maintenance is creating a downward spiral for the neighborhood. Property values in the neighborhood are declining due to these conditions, while the number of rental properties is increasing. An apparent decline in pride of ownership has occurred over the past few years, which is leading to disinvestment and lack of upkeep. This has resulted in a generally poor and unsightly appearance of many properties.

To counter this trend, the city should take aggressive action. Increased code enforcement, along with education as to desirable remodeling investments should lead the effort. The City should also seek to expand financial incentives available for both owner-occupied and rental properties. Restructuring of the Ramsey County deferred loan programs to cover a wider range on incomes and allowable improvements will help in encouraging significant reinvestment. The City should also consider acquiring distressed properties for rehab or redevelopment. Lastly, public improvements to streets and boulevards should be undertaken along with neighborhood beautification.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 3 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## PLANNING DISTRICT 3

Planning District 3 lies east of Bald Eagle Avenue and north of White Bear Lake. The district is further bounded on the north by the city's corporate boundary. The district is bisected by Highway 61 and is unique for several reasons. The area contains some of the city's earliest development, especially in the downtown area, as well as the City Hall complex and adjacent redevelopment areas.

The district has undergone a number of redevelopments in the past and is ripe for additional redevelopment in the future. The city has undertaken redevelopment projects for a number of public purposes including removal of blighted properties, expansion of the downtown's critical mass of retail/office and residential, and to provide senior housing in close proximity to the downtown. The continued presence of underutilized and blighted properties in the downtown area along with the city's desire to continue to expand the downtown, offers several additional opportunities for redevelopment.

The area north of Highway 96 extending out to the City's northern and eastern corporate boundaries is primarily zoned single-family residential, with a small section zoned general business just north of Highway 96. There is a 20-acre, 3 parcel site zoned single-family residential which has great natural amenities including woods, ponding, and a hillside view over White Bear Lake. Given the attractiveness of this site, a proposal to increase density is possible. The City may look favorably upon this especially if a clustered, attached form of development would allow for preservation of the site's unique natural features. Given the need to preserve the site's natural amenities, density should be kept at or below 5 units per acre.

The area which lies north of the Downtown West area, west of Highway 61, includes public, semi-public and single-family residential parcels, pockets of which are blighted to some degree and may present future redevelopment opportunities for medium density development. It should be noted that portions of the North Central Neighborhood and the Highway 61 Corridor Overlay also lie within District 3.

### **'Old White Bear' Residential Area**

#### Characteristic/History

This area lies between Highway 61 and Lake Avenue and meanders in and out of the downtown. It is significant due to its proximity to both the lake and the downtown, and has historical relevance. Cabins, summer homes and hotels created a resort-like destination in the mid-1800s and were eventually replaced or renovated to accommodate year round residency. The area evolved into a neighborhood with a broad range of housing types, which add to its charm and character.

#### Issues

Due to its proximity to the lake and downtown, demand for housing in this area has grown exponentially over the years. New owners are renovating, and at times, demolishing existing homes to create new living spaces. This trend greatly reduces any risk of blight in the area, yet poses a different set of challenges. Home owners often apply for variances to existing land use

guidelines and restrictions. Some believe the current guidelines should be more strictly applied to avoid over-building so as not to alter the neighborhood's existing character. Others contend that the guidelines are too restrictive and should be modified to allow for rebuilding and expansion.

Opposing expectations of what is deemed to be appropriate use of existing lots in 'Old White Bear' calls for a closer examination of our vision for this area. Once defined, the vision needs to be accurately reflected through the City's zoning code to minimize requests for variances.

Concerns for the environment and lake water quality are vital considerations that also impact land use policy. The preservation and restoration of green space is a very high priority. Zoning requirements regulating lot dimensions and impervious surface requirements must be closely examined and uniformly applied.

Existing bikeways and walkways should be well-maintained. Opportunities for additional bikeways/walkways in the area should continue to be identified.

## **Historic Downtown**

### Characteristics/History

The historic downtown lies east of Highway 61 between the south end of Lake Avenue and Highway 96 to the north. The downtown area is intended to encompass major retail, service, cultural, entertainment, and governmental uses as well as higher density residential at the periphery. The area contains some of the city's earliest development, along with many of the properties found within the adjacent Old White Bear neighborhood. Platted by the railroad barons in 1871, the original plat of White Bear established downtown as the centerpiece of the community, and the area as a resort destination for many.

As the community grew into its own, the downtown continued to flourish. Throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the downtown served as a primary shopping destination for the community. Food, clothing, hardware and even furniture stores were included in the mix. With the rise of big box retailers locating in and around White Bear Lake during the 1980s, the downtown began to lose its customer base. During this period of decline, considerable efforts were put forth by the City and business community to revitalize the downtown. Beautification and intensive marketing efforts reversed the trend by the mid 1990s and positioned the downtown to what is now a unique metro-wide shopping destination.

The City of White Bear Lake's rich history is a significant asset which merits consideration. The City's early beginning as a resort town in the mid-1800's spawned the downtown area which today remains a unique and eclectic mixture of shops, restaurants and services in a traditional village style layout. Although few of the buildings in the downtown area are on the historic register, many are architecturally significant and reflect the architectural practices from their respective eras. As a group, these buildings form a downtown district, which is historically and culturally significant for its traditional and pedestrian oriented massing. The compact and contiguous nature of the downtown's streetscape is often cited as an example of the type of downtown other suburbs would like to emulate. The downtown continues to be a source of local pride and enjoyment.

### Issues

The downtown is a traditional town center with a pedestrian orientation and mix of uses. It offers the community a strong sense of place. Limited parking has become an unexpected consequence of the downtown's success, which may serve as a disincentive for investors interested in renovating an existing site. Expanded parking, however, runs the risk of conflicting with traditional, historic design patterns. Parking expansion efforts must take into consideration the historic character of the downtown.

Other considerations for this area:

- Preservation of the U.S. Post Office is important.
- Expansion of the public library is desirable.
- Public utilities servicing the downtown area need to adequately serve the mixed uses of downtown businesses.
- Connection to White Bear Lake; the lake is one of the community's greatest attractions. Its proximity to the downtown is a unique amenity worth enhancing. Recent renovation of Clark and Lake Avenues have strengthened this connection.
- Zoning ordinances should be compatible with and promote the protection of historic character.

## **Downtown West**

### Characteristics/History

This area lies west of Highway 61, east of Bald Eagle Avenue, north of Highway 96 and south of the City's corporate boundary. It contains both single and multi-family residential, includes the City Hall complex and commercial and retail development. The area has undergone a number of City-initiated redevelopment projects in the past 10 years, with potential for additional redevelopment in the future.

### Issues

Additional redevelopment opportunities exist in several locations. The area south of Fourth Street includes many parcels occupied by single-family structures suffering from moderate to extensive blight. The City has begun the process of acquiring parcels in this area and will consider other opportunities which may arise. The long-range plan is to redevelop the area as a mix of multi-family uses with consideration given to life-cycle and affordability options.

The City owns the property on the other side of 4<sup>th</sup> Street which is currently occupied by two businesses and guided for future redevelopment. The City will consider opportunities to acquire additional property in the district on a case by case basis to support further redevelopment.

Design guidelines for future redevelopment in Downtown West area should emphasize pedestrian oriented scale, setback and connectivity. The City should work with its Planning Commission to study the applicability of utilizing the City's traditional downtown design standards for the future redevelopment efforts of Downtown West. Consideration should also be

given to creating municipal parking opportunities west of Highway 61 and to modification of parking requirements to credit allowances for multi-modal transportation. These efforts to extend the character of the historic downtown will unify the greater downtown area despite the division created by Highway 61.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 4 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **PLANNING DISTRICT 4**

Planning District 4 extends from Highway 96 on the north to County Road F on the south. The district's eastern boundary is just west of Bellaire Avenue and its western boundary abuts the City of Gem Lake and White Bear Township. It should also be noted that portions of the Highway 61 Corridor Overlay also lie within District 4.

### **Marina Triangle Master Plan**

#### Characteristics/History

In 1998 the City was approached by the owners of the Johnson Boat works property with an offer to sell their property to the City. The City and the Johnson's agreed on the terms of the sale, which occurred in September of 1999. The purchase of the Boat works along with the marina has provided the City with some unique challenges as it has attempted to ascertain the most appropriate redevelopment scenario for the property. The site is 1.6 acres in size and is currently developed with aging warehouse and single family structures. Lake Avenue separates the developed portion of the site from the properties riparian accretions. The marina includes 160 seasonal boat slips which the City leases along with the remainder of the Boat Works improvements.

The City acquired the property in order to ensure that the property was redeveloped in a fashion that would be acceptable to the City and to ensure a strong public realm component. Subsequent to acquiring the property, the City undertook a year long planning process of the entire Marina/Triangle area. The resulting master plan, adopted by the City Council in the summer of 2002, envisions a dynamic mixture of uses intended to revitalize the district by creating a lively, year round environment with new shops, offices, restaurants and appropriate housing. This plan is incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan document as Attachment B.

#### Goals

The overall master plan goals for the redevelopment are as follows:

- Improve public access to the lake
- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle use
- Improve environmental quality
- Broaden the mix of land uses
- Promote the Boat Works as a catalyst for new development
- Enhance the district as a major community focal point
- Minimize the impact on adjacent neighborhoods
- Preserve and interpret the districts heritage
- Test ideas through an interactive process
- Enhance linkages to downtown and neighborhoods

The development objectives include:

- Celebrate and interpret the area's history and enhance its unique sense of place
- Strengthen connections to adjacent neighborhoods and downtown White Bear Lake
- Improve access into and through the site
- Create a well defined and connected public realm
- Integrate storm water management into the design; improve water quality in the lakes
- Develop a land use mix that encourages extended daily and year round activity
- Enhance market viability by creating high-quality, adaptable architecture
- Identify and prioritize catalyst projects which stimulate redevelopment and bring about plan objectives
- Address implementation, including funding, phasing and policy requirements

### **Reuse of the Public Works Site**

#### Characteristics/History

Currently, the City is actively engaged in planning for a new public works facility. The alternatives are to reconstruct on the same site or to acquire a new site with a convenient location and additional acreage.

#### Issues

The current public works facility contains 5.58 acres of buildable property. The redevelopment of the property has many constraints including a high water table, poor organic soils and the fact that it is surrounded by wetlands. Redevelopment of the site with a new public works facility is further complicated by the need to maintain ongoing operations during reconstruction.

A replacement public works site has been identified south of County Road F and east of Highway 61. If the acquisition and utilization of this site for a new public works building proves to be feasible, it would free up the existing site for a transit oriented design (TOD) alternative.

The existing public works site may be very desirable for new housing options due to the proximity to the Triangle area and the city's historic downtown area. The potential for light rail or some other form of mass transit has been studied extensively for the adjacent Burlington Northern right of way. Eventually the site could be connected to the central cities by mass transit making it that much more attractive as a multi-family project.

The existing public works site has great potential as a redevelopment site despite its current constraints. Redevelopment of the property offers the ability to enhance the Marina/Triangle site by adding to the critical mass of housing in the area and thereby strengthening the sense of place by extending the daily and year round activity of the current marina uses.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 5 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **PLANNING DISTRICT 5**

District 5 located between County Roads E and F to the north and south and between White Bear Avenue and the Burlington Northern Railroad right of way to the east and west. The District is nearly fully developed with a wide variety of uses including commercial and industrial development along both sides of Highway 61, a significant cluster of multi-family residential in the southwest quadrant of the district and post WWII single-family residential which predominates the easterly and central portions of the district.

A significant portion of the north central portion of the district is occupied by two religious institutions which include large amounts of open space which may be developed at some time in the future. The First Evangelical Lutheran and the United Methodist churches sit side by side, both with large open areas which front on Highland Avenue. Combined, this open space totals roughly 10.3 acres. Although the City has envisioned possible housing development in the future, the churches have no specific development plans for the areas at this time. The properties are currently zoned R-7, High Density Residential. Consequently, the future land use designation is being revised (on the Highland side only) from Other Public/Semi Public to High Density Residential, so that it is consistent with current zoning and future housing objectives.

Another infill opportunity lies on the west side of Auger Avenue between Richard Court and Spruce Court. It involves 4 single-family lots which could be redeveloped with a cul-de-sac design to yield an additional 6 to 8 units. Together the properties are almost 5 acres in size.

### **Strawberry Acres Infill Area**

#### Characteristics/History

The Strawberry Acres area lies east of Hoffman Road, south of Cedar Avenue and north of the Stadium Bar off of County Road E. It includes 21 parcels of land with an average depth of over 600 feet, totaling approximately 31 gross acres. At present, there are 19 single family homes located in the area (all of which set close to Hoffman Road). The entire area is zoned R-6 and guided as medium density residential. The area is bordered by three townhome developments on the east, all of which have been developed between 1992 and 1998.

In association with the Half Moon Bay planned unit development (PUD) project, a 2005 comprehensive plan amendment was approved to allow up to 12 units per acre for all medium-density guided properties. Assuming that the existing homes would remain, each with a lot size of 15,000 square feet, and the remaining 24.5 acres were developed at the maximum medium density allowed, a total of 260 to 290 units could potentially be realized in this area.

#### Issues

Although development of this area may be challenging due to the numerous property owners involved, the City anticipates a coordinated, high-quality, PUD in this area. The design of the will require careful attention to circulation, green space, architectural character, compatibility with adjacent properties, and distribution of density. The City will explore opportunities to insure that an affordable housing component will be incorporated into this project.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 6 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **PLANNING DISTRICT 6**

District 6 is located between County Roads E and F and extends east of White Bear Avenue beyond the county line. This area of the city stretches into Washington County including an existing 97-unit single-family subdivision as well as the Wildwood Shopping Center, Walgreens, and The Lodge at White Bear senior housing development. The entire area is nearly fully developed, predominantly with post WWII single-family homes.

Attempts to extend the livability of these homes often times results in requests for variances from the code. The City should exercise care while working with homeowners to insure that these efforts do not diminish the quality of the neighborhoods.

District 6 contains most of the City's post WWII housing, developed with a suburban tract method, with typical 80-foot wide lots, attached 2-car garages and 32-foot wide streets. Most interior streets do not have sidewalks and several major roads bisect the district into isolated 40-acre, vehicular-dependent neighborhoods. The lack of pedestrian improvements makes movement without a vehicle difficult, especially in the winter months. There are two elementary schools, a middle school, two parks and three churches which present walking opportunities. However, speeding along many of the district's collectors and minor arterials has been a problem in the past. Traffic calming methods should be utilized to address this issue. The City should also look for ways to enhance multi-modal transportation and beautify these corridors. The City's intent is to provide the neighborhood with safer, more convenient and aesthetically pleasing ways to get to area schools, churches and shopping centers.

It should be noted that a portion of the County Road E Corridor Overlay is also located within District 6.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 7 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **PLANNING DISTRICT 7**

District 7 lies in the southwest corner of the city, south of County Road E, north of Interstate 694 and west of White Bear Avenue. This district is nearly fully developed with limited infill development possibilities. Most of the eastern half of the district is developed with Post WWII single-family housing. The western portion of the district contains a variety of townhomes, industrial, commercial, natural open space and business park.

Elmwood Garden Farms is one of the larger infill opportunities which involves numerous large single-family parcels that may further be subdivided. The City has approved several subdivisions in the area in the past, resulting in approximately two-thirds of the roadway and infrastructure necessary to complete the master plan. Staff estimates an additional 20 single-family lots in this area are possible.

It should also be noted a portion of the County Road E Corridor Overlay falls within District 7.

### **Buerkle Business Park**

#### Characteristics/History

The Industrial area along Buerkle Road between Hoffman Road and Sam's Club has unofficially been referred to as the Buerkle Business Park for many years. It is referenced as such in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The area is now fully built-out, with the development of the last vacant parcel in 2007 with the McGough Construction headquarters. The area is mostly zoned I-2 and is predominantly developed with industrial type uses, including Fed Ex, Cummins Diesel, and Public Storage. However, many of the buildings are multi-tenant warehouses which over the years have converted to offices and retail/showrooms. The increase of retail/showroom uses within this industrial area has led the City to re-guide the area from Industrial to Business Park.

#### Issues

It is envisioned that the Buerkle Business Park would benefit from an enhanced identity, including "branding" as well as physical improvements. Monument signs at both ends of the corridor identifying the area as "Buerkle Business Park" could be a first step toward greater name recognition. Coordinated roadway improvements such as sidewalks, street trees and street lighting could also enhance the area by providing both practical and aesthetic amenities.

**[INSERT PLANNING DISTRICT 8 GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **PLANNING DISTRICT 8**

Planning District 8 is located in the southeast corner of the city, south of County Road E, north of Interstate 694 and east of White Bear Avenue. Again, the district is nearly fully developed.

There are four parcels on Karth Road just north of I-694. The properties are zoned for medium density residential and guided as high density residential. Although the parcels total 5.1 acres in size, much of the land is wetland with just under two acres buildable.

There is some medium density housing located in the southeast corner of the district. The City should continue to monitor the condition and viability of this housing to insure the City's licensing standards are being met.

There are several major pedestrian attractions throughout the district, including the Manitou Ridge Golf Course, Lakewood Hills Park, YMCA, Golfview Elementary, the South Campus of White Bear Lake High School and Century Collage, however, there are few sidewalks – they are mostly on the major roads. A study of the residential areas within this district as well as district 6 should be conducted to develop a plan for pedestrian improvements. The study should identify opportunities on key internal streets to make connections to these significant destinations.

Century College is a valuable amenity to the City's quality of life and provides opportunities for cultural and educational partnerships. The college property holds some significant open space, with pristine wetland and woodland areas which connect to an adjacent series of wetland and waterbodies that could be enhanced with trails. The City should insure that any future improvements on the site provides best management practices for stormwater and conserves the existing open space.

It should also be noted a portion of the County Road E Corridor Overlay District falls within District 8.

### **Century Avenue Neighborhood - Life Cycle Housing Maintenance**

#### Characteristics/History

This high-density housing area is located on the west side of Century Avenue, just north of Century College. It contains 3 housing developments which encompass almost 18 acres, including Century Townhomes, Watertown Student Apartments and East Metro Transitional Housing. This area is located within walking distance of Century Community College and the commercial services on County Road E, including the Festival Foods grocery store. The area includes housing vital to the community, which serves individuals and families with varying incomes and in varying stages of their lives. This neighborhood poses some unique challenges to the City due to the high density and somewhat transient nature of its residents. The City will continue to work closely with owners and property managers to insure that city codes and standards are adhered to and that residents are provided decent, safe, sanitary and attractive housing in a supportive community environment.

Issues

The pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in this area should be enhanced to capitalize on the proximity of this area to the aforementioned amenities. The City should be sure to maintain the crosswalks across County Road E and sidewalks along County Road E. The City could consider partnering with the College to run a trail from this neighborhood to the ball fields on the south side of the Century Campus. This could provide access to a play area for children when not in use by the college. It could also provide a connection to nature, as the trail would need to pass through the wetlands between the classrooms and the ballfields.

**[INSERT HIGHWAY 61 OVERLAY GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## **HIGHWAY 61 OVERLAY AREA**

Highway 61 could probably be considered the City's most major internal thoroughfare. The corridor is critical to the city because it includes a high percentage of the city's commercial and industrial development and because it bisects the City's downtown district. In essence, it functions as the City's "Main Street" providing entrances and exits to the city. The adjacent right-of-way owned by the Burlington Northern railroad is also considered to be part of this corridor.

There are at least two distinct segments of this corridor, the higher-speed segment to the south of Goose Lake and the lower-speed segment to the north of Goose Lake. The general development pattern of the corridor is commerce and higher density residential type uses in a relatively narrow band along the highway's edge with low-density housing beyond that. The faster/southern segment has more auto-oriented and some industrial uses fronting on it. It also has a multi-family residential development and churches. The uses along the slower/northern segment are more pedestrian oriented and mostly front the cross-streets.

Highway 61 is a 4-lane divided highway which runs generally north-south. The pedestrian amenities along this corridor are virtually non-existent, except along the east side of the downtown stretch. The City has long wanted to establish this route as a civic highway deserving functional and aesthetic improvements. The City commissioned a study of the Highway 61 Corridor in 1988. The study identified major image needs in the corridor including: unifying the segments, providing a common theme, announcing entry into WBL and visually connecting the highway to the City's namesake lake.

The study also identified positive and negative aspects of the corridor. Positive aspects include: a dramatic view of Goose Lake as the roadway slices across it, the long vistas down the highway, the nautical atmosphere created by Johnson Boatworks and boats bobbing at the docks, the old Northern Pacific Railroad Depot near 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and the attractive downtown retail district. Negative aspects include a general lack of landscaping along the highway, the volume and speed of traffic, the unscreened outdoor storage of goods and material including automobiles and trucks, parking lots fronting the roadway with little or no screening, and the inconsistency in roadway design.

Finally, the study identified numerous issues related to land use, transportation, and image, many of which have been addressed, but many of which are still germane today.

### Land Use

The existing car dealerships are considered to be incompatible with both the lake and adjacent residential uses. Such incompatible relationships should be eventually eliminated and uses with similar and supportive functional and aesthetic demands as those around it should replace them.

The reuse of rail road corridor needs to be considered. Possible uses including bicycle and pedestrian paths, light-rail transit, commuter rail transit, private development, landscaping buffer/beautification.

Significant amounts of redevelopment have been accomplished along the west side of Highway 61, in the downtown area, over the past 20 years adding to the critical mass of commercial offerings along with new high density senior housing. Parcels north of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street are good candidates for continued future redevelopment.

The possibility for transit along this corridor could play a beneficial role in future redevelopment. The development industry is finding that development projects near transit stations tend to be profitable, and hence desirable, investments. In addition, transit station surroundings are like “window shopping” for riders—places where the riders see what the community has to offer. A stop near downtown could be economically valuable as well.

### Transportation

The corridor’s largest intersection is at County Highway 96. For quite some time there have been plans to widen Highway 96 and add a west-bound left turn lane on 61, increasing the capacity of the intersection. Crosswalk repairs and enhancements would also help maintain and improve traffic safety

Access openings onto the highway should be closed whenever possible and created only when absolutely necessary.

### Image

Highlight major intersections, including White Bear Avenue, Highway 96/Lake Avenue South, Fourth Street, Fifth Street, Seventh Street and the entry points (Cedar Avenue at the south and Highway 96 at the north). All other intersections are considered minor. Entry statements consisting of signage or other structures could be constructed to further strengthen the corridor’s identity.

Unify the corridor with landscaping and lighting without becoming monotonous. Landscaping should screen adjacent land uses (parking) while maintaining views to businesses. Landscaping may decrease towards the downtown area, opening up views to this central business district. Lighting has been installed downtown already and the same style fixtures could be used along the corridor as a unifying element between the two.

In Conclusion, a corridor overlay district could serve to provide many benefits, including: additional protection measures for both Goose Lake and White Bear Lake, require traffic impact analysis for major developments, limit direct accesses (openings) onto the highway, and provide a coordinated design elements. Coordinated design elements puts the City’s best foot forward for visitors and businesses, by increasing functionality and creating a sense of place. A corridor overlay district with which to regulate private improvements, combined with public investment for improvements within the rights-of-way would provide an adequate start towards rehabilitating the roadway’s image.

The roadway is slated for turn-back from the State to the County, but the County is not interested in accepting the jurisdiction without accompanying funds to improve it with. Since the state does not have any funds slated for the project, the turn-back is not expected to happen in the near future. The City has already developed plans to beautify the corridor at such time as the County accepts jurisdiction. A good model for this effort is the County Highway 96 corridor which was turned over to the County in 1995 and was beautified with the City’s assistance.

**[INSERT COUNTY ROAD E OVERLAY GRAPHIC PAGE]**

## COUNTY ROAD E OVERLAY AREA

### Character/History

County Road E is a 3-lane state highway composed of one east-bound and one west-bound lane with a shared middle turn lane. There are currently sidewalks on both sides. The portion within the City limits is approximately 2.3 miles long. The right-of-way is typically 86 feet in width. The approximate number of trips per day is 17,000.

The general land development pattern of the corridor is predominantly single family residential with a few townhome developments along the north side of the western end and small to medium multi-nodal commercial developments at most major intersections, including Hoffman Road, Linden Avenue, White Bear Avenue, Bellaire Avenue and Century Avenue. Also of significance is the proximity of the South Campus of White Bear Lake High School, which draws a large number of vehicular trips per day, second only to Century College.

The commercial nodes are typically unanchored with the exception of the White Bear Hills Shopping Center, which has a large chain grocery store. Contrary to popular belief, none of the 4 corners of the intersection of Highway 61 and County Road E lie within the municipal boundaries of the City of White Bear Lake.

### Issues

The intersection of White Bear Avenue contains three 1960's era strip malls. The intersection's primary businesses are limited to a liquor store and a convenience store/gas station. These buildings have had very little investment over the past 20 years and are in need of refurbishing. The City should encourage the upgrade and/or redevelopment of these commercial structures complimentary to and supportive of the surrounding neighborhoods including the high school. While the existing uses may be appropriate to the area, the architectural and site design will require significant reinvestment by the private and possibly the public sector.

The intersection at Bellaire Avenue presents somewhat different challenges. Each of the four corners has been developed with gas/convenience stores, only two of which remain in operation, a third has been converted to a dry-cleaners and the fourth presently sits vacant. Reuse of these brownfield sites will require significant interagency coordination, public input and considerable financial reinvestment. With the exception of the northwest corner, new land uses will be limited to the existing parcels which are small and surrounded by mostly single-family and a couple other more viable commercial uses. The northwest corner provides the opportunity for additional assemblage of adjacent commercial parcels. New land uses will need to be carefully planned to insure that they serve the residential area in which they are located and to avoid auto-oriented re-use. Redevelopment should emphasize a residential character which may include office, professional and personal service establishments with possible mixed commercial/residential components. The need for environmental assessment for each of the four corners should be undertaken in cooperation with the land owners.

All of the corridor's intersections lack pedestrian amenities such as landscaping, decorative lighting, delineated crosswalks and preferential signalization to minimize pedestrian/automobile conflicts. Along with high traffic volumes, these deficiencies encourage vehicular trips from one corner to the other.

There are many obsolescences associated with the County Road E corridor, including:

- Overabundance of non-conforming signage lacking design unity
- Large expanses of unscreened parking areas
- Little or no landscaping of public or private property
- Few or no pedestrian enhancements
- Above ground utilities and overhead lights
- Numerous, closely spaced and poorly delineated driveway openings
- Uncoordinated approach to design of public improvements
- National chains with sameness in appearance making corridor undistinguishable from those of other communities

The corridor needs to be addressed as more than just a transportation conduit but as an integral part of the city's life and landscape. Towards this end, the City should strive to enhance both the visual and functional qualities of the corridor.

1. Continue to enforce the City's Sign Code, to insure the eventual removal of all commercial pylon signs and to promote coordinated and more uniform wall signs.
2. Minimize the negative impact of unscreened parking areas through enhanced corridor landscaping.
3. Adopt new landscape standards for commercial zoning districts.
4. Set an example for the private sector by working with the County and State to raise the standards for the beautification of the corridor right-of-way.
5. Give greater priority to pedestrian safety, comfort, visual appeal and orientation.
6. Analyze the feasibility of placing overhead utilities underground and creating higher standards for both public and private sector lighting.
7. Height, glare and uniformity standards for lighting throughout a development.
8. Work to minimize access openings and discourage new and unnecessary curb cuts.
9. Develop uniform urban design standards for all public streetscape improvements, including pavement and crosswalk appearance, landscaping, lighting, signage, and other pedestrian amenities.
10. Discourage trademark buildings and franchise signage.
11. Create an overlay district which provides disincentives for the use of trademark buildings and provides for a coordinated architectural appearance among the commercial buildings at a particular intersection.

## **LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Land use and land use patterns act to create and shape the quality, character, and intensity of activity and generate related service and transportation demands in a community. Land use therefore is the key element of the Comprehensive Plan. The emphasis and attention to this aspect of community development cannot be overstated.

In some instances, the lack of coherent land use policies has resulted in problems relative to incompatibility of activities and uses. With the overall city development goals in mind, land use policies are established to prevent conflicting development patterns from reoccurring and to correct existing problems. Changes will not be rapid or dramatic. However, it is important that each change benefit the community. The following objectives and policies serve as a reference for planning and decision-making.

It should be noted that these goals are numbered for convenience purposes only and are in no way prioritized.

### **Goal 1: Reduced dependence upon fossil fuels, underground metals, and minerals**

Objectives:

1. Promote and encourage compact development that minimizes the need to drive. (ongoing)
2. Provide a mix of integrated community uses – housing, shops workplaces, schools parks, civic facilities – within walking or bicycling distance. (ongoing)
3. Design human-scaled development that is pedestrian friendly. (ongoing)
4. Develop around public transit. (ongoing)
5. Facilitate home-based occupations and work that reduce the need to commute. (ongoing)
6. Support local food production and agriculture that reduces need for long-range transport of food. (ongoing)

### **Goal 2: Reduction of activities that encroach upon nature**

Objectives:

1. Guide development to existing developed areas and away from natural resources. (ongoing)
2. Remediate and redevelop brownfield sites and other developed lands that suffer from environmental or other constraints. (as opportunities arise)

3. Promote design that respects the local and regional ecosystems and their natural functions. (ongoing)
4. Create financial and regulatory incentives for infill development; eliminate disincentives. (short-term)

**Goal 3: Protect and promote options for the employment of solar energy.**

Explanation: The City of White Bear Lake has long been aware of the need to encourage and protect the right to utilize solar energy. The City's 1980 Comprehensive plan has several references to this effect. The City continues its interest in preserving and promoting the use of solar technology.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the protection of existing solar collectors from shading by development and vegetation on adjoining parcels. (ongoing)
2. Discourage new development from prohibiting use of solar technologies through protective covenants. (ongoing)
3. Consider solar access in the formulation of plans for public and private landscaping. (ongoing)
4. Consider variances to zoning and subdivision standards to promote the use of solar energy. (ongoing)
5. Encourage and support public awareness of technological advancements in the use of solar technology. (ongoing)

**Goal 4: Ensure compatibility and functional relationships among land uses.**

Explanation: Community development should not occur on a piecemeal and fragmented basis through investments by private individuals. The function of government in this process is to coordinate, relate, and control private development for the health, safety, and protection of the individual and community. The means by which government executes this function is its comprehensive plan, notably the land use elements and development controls such as zoning and subdivision ordinances.

In order to correct existing deficiencies and prevent future problems, a land use plan and supportive ordinances are formulated to guide development and ensure proper placement and relationships of uses. The plan and supportive ordinances include the establishment of planning districts within the community which are based upon and create logical units such as natural and manmade physical barriers and homogenous land use characteristics.

Objectives:

1. Where possible, reduce the impact of physical barriers by providing intermodal transportation connections between presently segregated areas. (ongoing)
2. Locate related and compatible land uses in compact, functional districts. (ongoing)
3. Provide transitional zones between distinctly differing and incompatible land use activities. (as opportunities arise/ongoing)
4. Reduce the impact of incompatible land uses, wherever possible, through redevelopment and/or relocation. (ongoing)
5. Wherever possible, transitions in land use should occur at borders of areas created by major urban and natural barriers to ensure that similar uses front on the same street. (ongoing)

**Goal 5: Prevent overcrowding and over-intensification of land uses.**

Explanation: Overcrowding and over-intensification of land use is created where development controls are not properly enforced. To ensure reasonable development which does not cause disruption or create excessive demands on the community, a land use plan is formulated to relate uses and activities with required services and facilities.

Objective: Research the options for parking area design and standards for commercial and mixed-use development to minimize its visual and physical impact on the built and pedestrian environments.

**Goal 6: Preserve and upgrade land uses.**

Explanation: In order to maintain the quality of residential, commercial and industrial areas, the city should take steps to encourage and promote rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of all substandard properties. Infill development of underutilized properties should also be studied.

Objectives:

1. Analyze undeveloped and underutilized and/or blighted parcels on an individual basis to determine how they can best be utilized within the context of the area it is located and the community as a whole. (ongoing)
2. Upgrade or redevelop substandard and deteriorated commercial, industrial, and residential structures through private means and/or public assistance. (as opportunities arise)
3. Promote high quality development which makes efficient use of remaining lands. (ongoing)

4. Vigorously enforce maintenance standards. (ongoing)
5. Ensure that all new development is properly and adequately related to transportation and service needs and priorities. (ongoing)
6. Continue to promote the orderly infill of underutilized properties. (ongoing)
7. Continue to support the City's strategic acquisition of blighted and/or underutilized parcels for future redevelopment through the City's Housing Redevelopment Authority. (ongoing)
8. Continue to use the planned unit development (PUD) process to foster innovative development in the City's best interest. (ongoing)

**Goal 7: Preserve downtown as is the community's primary retail and service focal point.**

Objectives:

1. The city should continue to strengthen the critical mass of retail, office, residential, and entertainment offerings in the downtown while strongly discouraging rezoning for additional retail and service businesses throughout the rest of the city. (ongoing)
2. Study the applicability of extending downtown zoning and design standards to the west side of Highway 61. (short-term)
3. Consider opportunities for the creation of municipal parking facilities in the Downtown West redevelopment areas. (short-term)

**Goal 8: Encourage the preservation and enhancement of historically significant areas, structures, and archaeological sites.**

Objectives:

1. Include consideration of historic, cultural and archaeological concerns and values in the development process. (ongoing)
2. Consider giving additional incentives to developers and owners of downtown properties in order to encourage preservation of the downtown character. (ongoing)
3. Consider the development of an overlay zone to protect historic properties and to include the establishment of design standards for historic or culturally significant buildings. (short-term)
4. Work with owners of historically significant structures downtown to identify potential technical and financial resources for rehabilitating the buildings. (ongoing)

5. Continue to fund the City's low-interest, rehabilitation loan program for downtown building restorations. Consider additional funds for genuine historic renovation. (ongoing)
6. Promote public improvements which enhance the historic nature of the downtown. (ongoing)
7. Ensure that redevelopment and infill development activities in and around the downtown are compatible with the architectural character of the downtown. (ongoing)
8. Ensure that development activities undertaken in close proximity to archaeologically significant sites are done in the most unobtrusive manner possible. (ongoing)

**Goal 9: Reinforce and maintain the character of individual neighborhoods.**

Explanation: Each neighborhood within the community should be protected from encroachment by undesirable uses and buffered from other types of uses. Physical barriers which serve to separate and segregate neighborhoods from other sections of the community should be dealt with in such a way so as to reduce their impact on the neighborhood.

Objectives:

1. Protect residential neighborhoods from penetration by through traffic. (ongoing)
2. Adopt massing and height averaging regulations for residential structures in the Old White Bear Neighborhood and other appropriate neighborhoods. (immediate)
3. Analyze existing zoning regulations and their potential impact on historic development patterns. (short-term)
4. Develop a program of incentives to aide homeowners in their efforts to maintain their properties. These might include educational opportunities as well as include design guidance / technical assistance and financial tools aimed at reinvestment, such as offering low interest loans and grants. The goal of the program should be to preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood. Home remodeling seminars could focus on maintaining the design integrity of the existing housing stock while promoting energy efficiency and environmentally sensitive remodeling practices. (mid-term)
5. Continue to take a lead role in street reconstruction and utility replacement. The City's investment in the public realm will pay dividends by catalyzing private investment in housing rehabilitation and property enhancements. (ongoing)

**Goal 10: Preserve and protect the environmental integrity of the community.**

Explanation: Lakes, wetlands, and woodlands contribute enormously to the quality of life in the city. The city should continue to enforce preservation of these resources through its ordinances and policies.

## Objectives:

1. Consider extending tree preservation regulations to single family developments. (short-term)
2. Strengthen our wetland standards by requiring a setback from the wetlands. (short-term)
3. Create additional impervious area regulations beyond the Shoreland District boundaries in the City's historic neighborhoods. (short-term)
4. Explore the possibility of establishing standards whereby certain best management practices can be implemented to achieve an "effective" level of porosity within the shoreland overlay district, rather than a strict adherence to a physical measurement of impervious surface. (short-term)
5. Balance development and redevelopment with environmental and historic preservation. (ongoing)
6. Research the feasibility of basing building permit fees on energy calculations, not construction value. (short-term)
7. Provide incentives for developers to participate in the green star program. (short-term)
8. Encourage developers to utilize low impact development (LID) techniques for stormwater management. (ongoing)
9. Continue to support the efforts of the Birch Lake Homeowner's Association and their improvement district's study and enhancement of the lake. (ongoing)
10. Register "right of first refusal" at the County to insure City has the opportunity to make an offer on parcels it is interested in obtaining.
11. Coordinate with MPCA on development review of former gas stations and other possibly contaminated sites ([www.pca.state.mn.us/backyard/neighborhood.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/backyard/neighborhood.html)) on a case-by-case basis. (ongoing)
12. Continue to review and evaluate development standards and regulations as they relate to the potential for negative environmental impacts.

**Goal 11: Enhance connectivity**

## Objectives:

1. Amend the code to require bicycle parking spaces with each new development, similar to car parking spaces. (short-term)
2. Require new and major redevelopment projects to provide sidewalks, when appropriate. (ongoing)