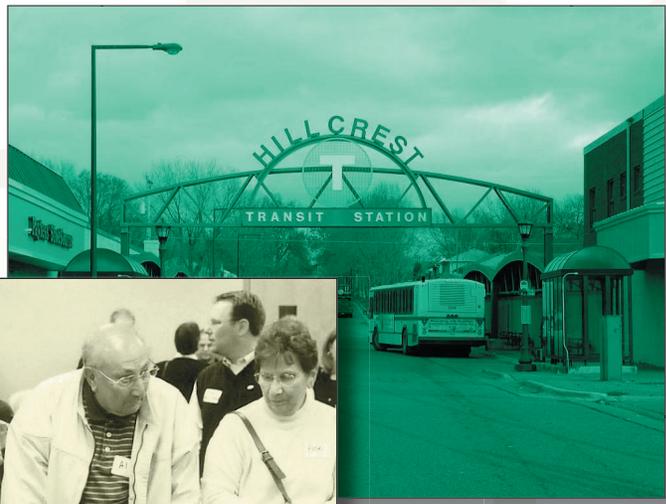


SMART GROWTH TWIN CITIES

HILLCREST VILLAGE

OPPORTUNITY SITE

NOVEMBER 2002



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: PROJECT SETTING AND BACKGROUND	5
The Study Area	6
Market Assessment (Summary)	7
Transportation Inventory (Summary)	10
Infrastructure and Public Facilities Assessment (Summary)	16
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPT PLAN DEVELOPMENT	19
Stakeholder Workshop	20
Sketch Plan Alternatives	22
Public Input	25
Final Concept Plan	28
Street Designs	33
CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION	37
Urban Design Framework	38
Transportation	40
Implementation Issues	42
Infrastructure Cost Assessment (Summary)	44



CHAPTER 1: PROJECT SETTING AND BACKGROUND



- THE STUDY AREA
- MARKET ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)
- TRANSPORTATION INVENTORY (SUMMARY)
- INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)

Smart
growth
twin cities

THE STUDY AREA

The Hillcrest Village Smart Growth Opportunity Site is located in the northeast quadrant of the Twin Cities metro area, approximately four miles northeast of downtown St. Paul, on the border of St. Paul and Maplewood. The 85-acre site is a fully developed suburban area, containing commercial, residential, and high-density senior housing land uses, including a 1950s-era strip shopping center and other strip commercial uses in a fully developed suburban/core city setting. Larpenteur Avenue, White Bear Avenue, North St. Paul Road, and Frost Avenue are the main streets running through the project area. Bus transit service connects the site to the larger metro area, including a minor bus transfer center.

The Hillcrest Village opportunity site has the potential to become a mixed-use, transit friendly environment and a model for transforming older strip retail centers into mixed use centers that are better connected and integrated into surrounding residential areas.

The cities' and community's initial goals were to revitalize the area's retail, and make the streets more walkable, especially for Hillcrest's significant older population. At the same time, the community wishes to protect aspects of the neighborhood's character that the community values.



Figure 1.1: Aerial view of Hillcrest Village opportunity site

MARKET ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)

The consultant team performed a market assessment on the study area. This assessment considered local and national economic, demographic and development trends in an effort to determine what types and amounts of development would be feasible and desirable in the Hillcrest neighborhood.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Creating a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use environment will maximize Hillcrest’s long-term development potential. This can be accomplished by enhancing the mix of uses, increasing development density, and encouraging through-block pedestrian connections.

To realize the full potential for new development in Hillcrest, significant redevelopment of existing retail properties must occur. This redevelopment should consist of primarily residential uses with a limited amount of professional office inserted into the retail environment. Retail users will continue to require White Bear Avenue visibility. Additionally, there will continue to be significant new competition imposed by the nearby Mapleridge Shopping Center and its environs.

The Hillcrest Commercial District has the potential to accommodate up to 300 new residential units. Existing parcels can be redeveloped to contain mixed-use buildings with retail or service uses on the ground floor and either office or residential above. The amount of occupied commercial space will probably remain around current space levels (208,500 square feet); however, the mix of commercial space will become less dominated by retail uses.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Because of its orientation to the car and “convenience” shopping, Hillcrest’s current development density is low and there is essentially no pedestrian environment.
- There is significant vacancy in the portion of Hillcrest Shopping Center that is bounded by White Bear Avenue to the west, Idaho Avenue to the north, an alley to the east, and Iowa Avenue to the south.
- Hillcrest is not solely strip retail. Local and regional religious (a church), fraternal (Junior Achievement), and recreational uses (an entertainment center, a movie theater, a Ramsey

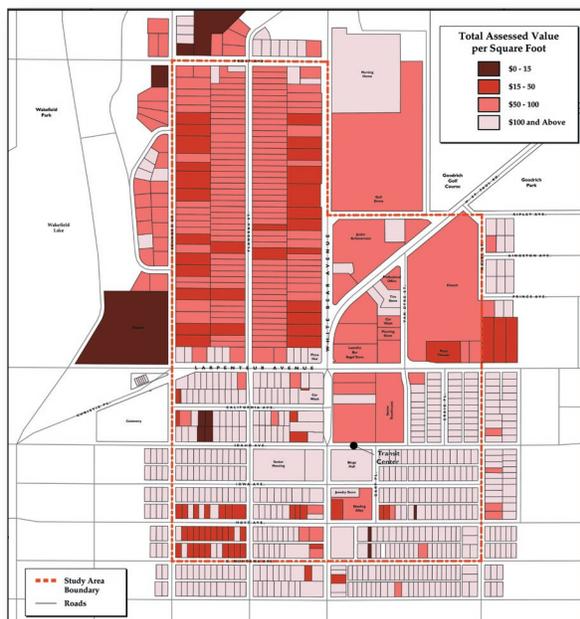


Figure 1.2: Market value per square foot for parcels within and near the Project Area

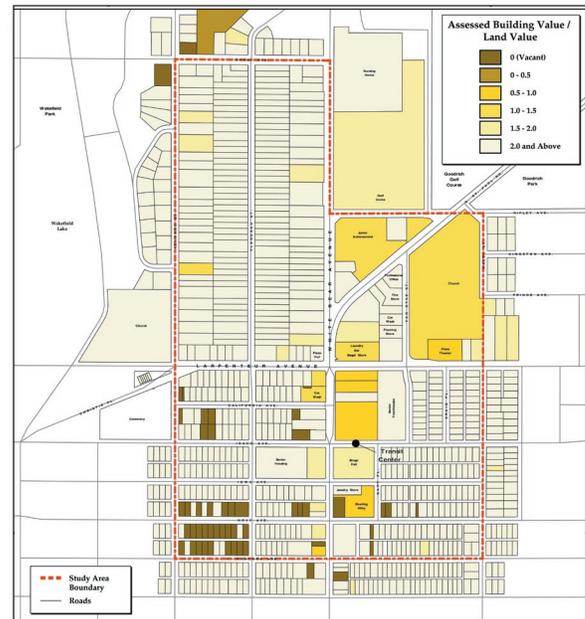


Figure 1.3: Ratio of building value to land value for parcels within and near the Project Area

<i>Housing Type</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Multi-family for-rent	32%
Multi-family for-sale	14%
Single-family attached for-sale	10%
Low-price single-family detached	26%
Mid-price single-family detached	13%
High-price single-family detached	3%

Table 1.1: Optimum mix of housing types

County/Maplewood Community Center) are present in the commercial district. A pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment could better link these anchors to enhance neighborhood potential.

- White Bear Avenue will continue to be an arterial and, as such, will continue to be attractive to auto-oriented, convenience retail. This will make it a challenge to the pedestrian, unless positive steps are taken to make it pedestrian-friendly.
- White Bear Avenue’s retail potential is constrained by the new Mapleridge Shopping Center and the power center located across the street.
- Pedestrian access can be enhanced through and behind the blocks that front on White Bear Avenue.
- Hillcrest Shopping Center possesses unusually deep retail bays. This makes these spaces difficult to lease.
- The retailers on Van Dyke Street likely located there because of the Builder’s Square anchor, which is now a church. Thus, they are inappropriately located.
- There is significant senior housing demand in the immediate vicinity of the Study Area.
- Creating a mixed-use environment in an area whose economy is linked to through traffic is very difficult.
- Landowners can make more money with a higher density of land use.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET ASSESSMENT

From the perspective of draw area target market propensities and compatibility, and within the context of the new housing marketplace in the Saint Paul/Maplewood market area, the potential market for new housing units within a redevelopment of the Hillcrest area could include a full range of housing types, from high-density

multi-family to large-lot single-family detached. However, development costs and limited parcel size preclude development of single-family detached units in the redevelopment area, and there is a need to focus housing near commercial nodes and transit infrastructure. Therefore, the recommendations focus solely on the potential market for high-density housing types.

Draw area household analysis establishes that, in the year 2001, nearly 1,200 households have the potential to purchase or rent a range of new housing units within the Hillcrest area. The annual market potential for new multi-family and single-family housing units in the Hillcrest area, as delineated by housing preferences, is shown in Table 1.1.

The annual market potential limited to multi-family units, both for sale and for rent, in the Study Area is shown in Table 1.2.

Absorption of 300 housing units within the Hillcrest Village Center could be achieved within approximately three years from commencement of marketing, depending on phasing and construction, and stable economic conditions.

At the forecast absorption of 134 units, including rental apartments, in one year, new residential development within the Hillcrest Village Center would require a capture rate of up to 27 percent of the 550 households, identified through target market analysis, that have the potential to rent or purchase new housing

units in the Hillcrest Village Center in the year 2001—a rate that is within the target market methodology’s parameters of feasibility. In the context of the target market methodology, and for a development of this size and scale, a capture rate of 30 percent of the potential market—or approximately 165 households in the year 2001—would be achievable.

See Appendix A: Market Assessment for the full consultant reports on market conditions.

	<i>Number of Units at Build-Out</i>	<i>Net Density/ Lot Size</i>	<i>Housing Type</i>	<i>Annual Absorption (Units)</i>
<i>Multi-Family For-Rent—69.1%</i>				
	124	45 dwelling units/acre	Courtyard Apts.	60
		17,280 square feet	{18 units/building}	
		{144 x 120}		
	84	50 du/a	Senior Apts.	42
		10,880 square feet	{12 units/building}	
		{84 x 120}		
<i>Multi-Family For-Sale—30.9%</i>				
	92	25 du/a	Townhouses Over Flats	32
		3,360 square feet	{2 units/lot}	
		{28 x 120}		
<i>Total Number of Units</i>	<i>300</i>			<i>134</i>

Table 1.2: Market for new multi-family market-rate housing units within the Study Area

TRANSPORTATION INVENTORY (SUMMARY)

New development in the area would both affect and be affected by the transportation network. It is important to understand the capacities and limitations of the existing network so that development can take advantage of multi-modal access, and so that deficiencies can be corrected. To this end, the consultant team assessed current levels of automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian access to the site.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Several regional streets and a dense grid of local streets serve the Hillcrest site. White Bear Avenue, Larpenteur Avenue (east of White Bear Avenue), and Frost Avenue (west of White Bear Avenue) are A Minor arterials that provide access to regional highways and business concentrations. These roadways are classified as Augmenters by the Transportation Policy Plan¹; they are intended to absorb some longer distance trips from parallel principal arterials. North Saint Paul Road and Larpenteur Avenue (west of White Bear Avenue) are classified as B Minor/Collector roadways, intended as connectors between local streets and the higher order arterial system. As arterial roadways, these streets emphasize mobility rather than access, although current development patterns have allowed driveway access to these roadways.

White Bear, Frost, and Larpenteur Avenues and North St. Paul Road are County State Aid Roadways. This status limits local design flexibility for these roads. Ripley Avenue between White Bear Avenue and North St. Paul Road is a county road.

Frost and Larpenteur Avenues combine to provide a continuous east-west movement function much as White Bear Avenue provides in the north-south direction. Discontinuities on adjacent parallel roadways place added emphasis on the regional connectivity afforded by these streets. Consequently, these roadways attract a higher percentage of longer distance trips. With no plans to construct parallel

through routes, it is likely that the longer distance traffic movements can be expected to continue into the future and to grow as congestion grows on parallel principal arterials.

ACCESS PATTERNS

On White Bear Avenue, south of Larpenteur Avenue, the local street grid in St. Paul provides an east-west cross street approximately every 330 feet. To the west of White Bear Avenue, the street grid supports a block pattern of roughly 300 by 600 feet. On the east side, the blocks are longer (roughly 300 by 1200 feet). North of Idaho Street on the west side of White Bear Avenue, the block orientation rotates 90 degrees and provides for an end grain on Larpenteur Avenue rather than onto White Bear Avenue. In Maplewood, across Larpenteur Avenue, the block pattern is much larger with ¼ and ½-mile spacing of east-west streets along White Bear Avenue. The parcel pattern in Maplewood makes for more frequent spacing of driveways along White Bear Avenue, as individual parcels have no other means of access to the street system.

Block spacing and parcel orientation combine to create a relatively dense access pattern, either as public ways or private drives. The close spacing of public streets in St. Paul allows for traffic to disperse onto multiple parallel routes, although the short block spacing contributes to more frequent concentrations of turning vehicles. The wider spacing of streets in Maplewood concentrates turning activity at fewer locations, but makes for higher overall turning volumes at these locations. The lack of alternate access to residential parcels that front the west side of White Bear Avenue in Maplewood creates numerous direct access points, although volumes on these driveways are typically low since they primarily serve individual residences.

Recent Mn/DOT research evaluated driveway density as a causal factor in state highway crashes.² The Mn/

¹ Metropolitan Council, Transportation Policy Plan, Appendix F, December 1996

² Minnesota Department of Transportation and BRW, Inc., Statistical Relationship between Vehicular Crashes and Highway Access, August 1998.



Figure 1.4: Conditions along White Bear Avenue

DOT study found that four-lane urban conventional roadways with left turn lanes and driveway densities of 0 to 15 per mile had lower-than-average crash rates, and roads with more than 50 driveways per mile had higher-than-average rates.

As a result of the block/parcel pattern described above, driveway spacing along White Bear Avenue is in the range of 30 to 50 driveways per mile, although it is lower on the east side of the street north of Larpenteur Avenue, where parcel size increases. The raised median north of Larpenteur Avenue somewhat mitigates the effect of the numerous driveways by limiting movements to right-in and right-out only. The research findings suggest that consolidation of access along White Bear Avenue may have beneficial effects on traffic safety.

VOLUME PATTERNS

Current two-way average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on White Bear Avenue are in the range of 19,000 vehicles per day (vpd). These are expected to grow to 22,000 vpd by 2020. This level of projected growth is approximately 1% per year, which is consistent for mature urban areas in core cities in this region. On a daily basis, trips are evenly split between northbound and southbound traffic.

Volumes on Larpenteur Avenue range from about 6,000 vpd west of White Bear Avenue to 13,000 vpd to the east. Frost Avenue carries about 9,000 vpd east

of White Bear Avenue. Trips tend to be split evenly by direction on a daily basis. The other east-west streets south of Larpenteur carry volumes that range from 1,000 vpd to 3,500 vpd. The range is a result of the overall connectivity of the grid (some streets are shorter than others because of discontinuities and serve fewer trip generators) and where signals concentrate traffic.

Review of historic volume patterns shows that traffic growth on the east-west streets will be relatively low since the area served by these streets is mature. Trip making on these streets would be expected to continue at about the rate it currently occurs. On Larpenteur and Frost Avenues, growth in regional traffic can be expected to cause volumes to grow at up to the 1% per year that is projected for White Bear Avenue.

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS AND GEOMETRIC DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

North of Idaho Avenue, White Bear Avenue is a five-lane cross-section (two through lanes in each direction with left-turn lanes at intersections and a narrow raised median). The cross-section changes south of Idaho Avenue to a four-lane cross-section with two travel lanes in each direction. Curb parking is not allowed on either section.

The four-lane roadway is nominally 44 feet on 66 feet of right of way, which is not up to current State Aid

standards³. Unless Ramsey County obtained a variance, an additional four feet of roadway would be needed to receive State Aid funding for reconstruction. The five-lane section nominally meets state aid standards for width.

Cross street intersections are signalized at Frost Avenue, Ripley Avenue, Larpenteur Avenue, and Iowa Street. The intersection of Van Dyke Street and Larpenteur Avenue is also signalized. Unsignalized intersections along the road are controlled by stop signs on only the minor street approaches. Signals along White Bear Avenue are nominally spaced at ¼-mile north of Larpenteur Avenue, but are slightly closer to the south.

Traffic volumes were evaluated along White Bear Avenue and at signalized intersections to determine if the roadway is adequately sized and if traffic operations are at appropriate levels. From a volume standpoint, the existing and projected volumes will require two through lanes in each direction. Therefore, existing street cross-sections are appropriate. Analysis of peak-hour traffic operations at signalized intersections shows that peak conditions are at acceptable levels of service. Level of Service (LOS) is a scale that uses ratings of A (free flow/minimal delay) to F (jammed conditions) to describe traffic operations. Urban conditions generally consider LOS D to be the limit of acceptable operations for peak hour conditions. The intersections operate in LOS D at Frost Avenue and LOS A at the other locations during the evening peak period.

TRANSIT FACILITIES

Two Metro Transit bus routes currently serve the Hillcrest area. Aldrich Arena north of Hillcrest Shopping Center houses a park-and-ride. A timed-transfer transit hub recently opened on Idaho Street south of the Hillcrest shopping center.

Metro Transit implemented a service redesign by sector around the metropolitan area. The Hillcrest site is in Sector 2, where service changes in June 2001 enhanced the function of the new Hillcrest Hub as the 14 and 20 routes were reconfigured to provide additional service focusing on the hub. Service patterns now connects Hillcrest with hubs at Maplewood Mall and Sunray Center. Service frequency with the redesign is in the enhanced 30-minute category with some routes providing 7 to 10 minute peak headways and others at 15-minute headways.

Transit accommodations in the corridor (away from the hub) consist of marked stops and a limited number of shelters. Transit patrons at stops along White Bear Avenue must wait adjacent to the roadway with little separation or buffer from the traffic lanes.

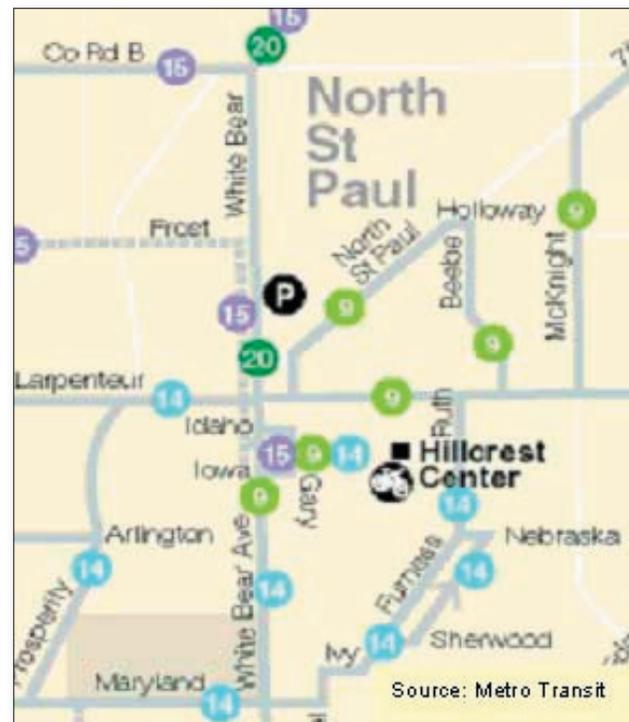


Figure 1.5: Map of local TRANSIT SERVICE

³ Minnesota Rules, Chapter 8820.9936, Geometric Design Standards, Urban; New or Reconstruction Projects

PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CONSIDERATIONS

Sidewalks are present along White Bear Avenue except on its west side north of Larpenteur Avenue. However, the pedestrian environment is relatively hostile. Sidewalks are nominally five feet in width and are minimally separated from travel lanes with a narrow (2') boulevard planting strip in some blocks and only the curb in other blocks.

The 4-5' boulevard median strip contains insufficient width for plantings, so the strip affords a relatively minor buffer effect. Sidewalks back on to parking areas that are only minimally separated from the pedestrian area. Multiple driveways cross the sidewalk in most blocks, which makes for a fragmented pedestrian environment. Some segments of White Bear Avenue contain many business signs that overwhelm the pedestrian scale of the sidewalk and contribute to visual clutter in the corridor. Sidewalks are present on the St. Paul streets that intersect White Bear Avenue and on some intersecting streets in Maplewood.

Marked bicycle routes are present on Larpenteur Avenue except on the two blocks adjacent to White Bear Avenue, where a connection is planned in the future. A marked route is present on North St. Paul Road east of Ripley Avenue that is planned to connect to the route on Larpenteur via Van Dyke Street. The marked route segments of Larpenteur Avenue and North St. Paul Road provide good roadway suitability ratings for bicycles, while unmarked (proposed) portions are rated only fair. The pavement width on White Bear Avenue is insufficient for bicycle accommodation, which creates a hostile cycling environment, as evidenced by the poor suitability rating⁴. The Gateway Trail is an off-road facility located north of Frost Avenue at the northern edge of the study area.



Sidewalk conditions on White Bear Avenue



Figure 1.6: **SIDEWALK CONDITIONS** in the Project Area

⁴ Minnesota Extension Service, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Bicycle Map Commuter Guide, 1997

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

The following issues result from the preceding assessment:

- Roadway travel lanes are nominally sufficient for the projected volume and travel patterns.
- Intersection layouts are sufficient to absorb the projected future demand, particularly north of Idaho Avenue where turn lanes are provided.
- Larger blocks and parcels in Maplewood will require modification of the access system to effectively redevelop, particularly on the west side of White Bear Avenue.
- There are an excessive number of driveways along White Bear Avenue that fragment the pedestrian environment and negatively affect traffic operations, although the median north of Idaho Avenue mitigates the traffic effect.
- While pedestrian connectivity is good at the block edge, the relatively hostile pedestrian environment limits the utility of the connections. Additional width is needed for wider sidewalks and wider separation from the travel lanes on White Bear Avenue for the pedestrian realm to function properly.
- Parking areas subsume considerable space along the White Bear Avenue frontage and contribute to a unified pedestrian connection internal to the blocks, which limits accessibility to uses on the back half of the wider parcels adjacent to White Bear Avenue.
- The area is well connected to the larger metro area bicycle network in the east-west direction by marked routes and nearby off-road trails, but is not well served in the north-south direction.
- It is hoped that transit service will expand into the study area, focusing on a new hub.

Generally, the study area functions from a transportation standpoint, although the pedestrian component is very weak. Options for addressing

smart growth options will be constrained somewhat by the need to maintain the arterial function of the roadways that bisect the study area. However, changes in development patterns can be dovetailed with changes in the transportation system to address pedestrian deficiencies.

Additional space is necessary adjacent to the roadways to improve the pedestrian environment at the block edges. Accessibility and connectivity would be improved if parking and access along White Bear Avenue is consolidated into fewer points, and more substantial and visible connections are made internal to the larger parcels south of Larpenteur and within the larger blocks north of Larpenteur. Consolidation of access and parking areas combined with the use of setbacks, landscaping requirements, and parking buffers may provide additional width to move the sidewalk further from the back of curb along White Bear Avenue.

Business signs along White Bear Avenue should be spaced out to correspond to the general overall viewshed of the roadway so as to reduce visual clutter. Control of signs, combined with the introduction of unifying streetscaping elements, would reinforce the pedestrian environment along the block edges.

Additional internal circulation, either as private streets, lanes or public ways, should be incorporated into redevelopment of the blocks north of Larpenteur Avenue. Redevelopment of the west side of the large block of White Bear Avenue (currently residential) will need to incorporate alternate access for the parcels that front on White Bear Avenue, either as joint easements between parcels, or through the introduction of a north-south alley and an extension of Ripley Avenue.

Use of shared parking requirements may allow the overall amount of parking to be reduced and would be consistent with the theme of consolidation to

achieve an economy of scale. Identification of joint off-street parking areas, particularly north of Larpenteur Avenue, would allow for reinforcement of the pedestrian realm by allowing buildings to move close to the street.

Crossings of Larpenteur and White Bear Avenues and North St. Paul Road will continue to be difficult because of the traffic volumes and the roadway width. Additional space is needed at these intersection corners to accommodate pedestrians and waiting transit patrons.

See Appendix B: Transportation Inventory and Traffic Modeling Results for the full consultant transportation report.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)

Like transportation infrastructure, the availability and condition of other infrastructure and public facilities will affect the feasibility of new high-quality development in the Hillcrest study area. A thorough assessment of existing infrastructure and public facilities was conducted for the Hillcrest site, within the Maplewood and St. Paul jurisdictions. This assessment analyzed topography, sanitary sewer capacity, water supply, storm water capacity, 'dry' utilities, street and sidewalk conditions, and other public facilities. Notable findings are summarized here. Please see Appendix C for the complete report.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

St. Paul and Maplewood are both within the Metropolitan Council Municipal Urban Service Area (MUSA), and therefore, are responsible for collecting wastewater and conveying it to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) treatment facilities. Wastewater from these communities is conveyed to and treated at the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant, a 225 million gallon per day (MGD) facility that discharges to the Mississippi River.

Originally, the City of St. Paul had a combined sanitary sewer and storm water system. However, a storm water collection system has been installed and the original combined piping is only used for sanitary sewer collection. As a result, most of the sanitary sewer piping is oversized and the system capacity has the ability to handle increased flow and new development.

No sanitary sewer improvements or expansion are planned at this time in either Maplewood or St. Paul. However, some sanitary sewer relocation was recently done to accommodate the storm water management area and associated storm water piping that was constructed in the area bounded by Flandrau Street to the east, Montana Avenue to the south, Kennard Street to the west, and the alley north of Hoyt Avenue to the north.

WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

St. Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) treats and supplies water to several communities in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area, including the cities of St. Paul and Maplewood. St. Paul and Maplewood are responsible for the water distribution system within their respective city limits.

In St. Paul, SPRWS indicates that the 24-inch watermain along Flandrau Street has additional capacity available to support increased water demand in the Hillcrest area. The McCarrons Water Treatment Plant in Roseville also has available capacity to support growth.

SPRWS has no planned improvements within the project area at this time. Some water main relocation will be required for the storm water management area and associated storm water piping that will be constructed in the area bounded by Flandrau Street to the east, Montana Avenue to the south, Kennard Street to the west, and the alley north of Hoyt Avenue to the north.

STORM WATER SYSTEM

There are no immediate plans to improve or expand the storm sewer system in Maplewood, with the exception of storm water collection improvements made during the reconstruction of Kennard and Flandrau Streets. Future development will likely require significant storm sewer system improvements. All drainage plans must conform to the City of Maplewood master drainage plan, which in turn must be in conformance with Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District requirements.

The St. Paul Public Works Department also indicated that the storm water collection system does not have additional capacity to support growth. Therefore, any development will require a storm water management plan.

A storm water management area was constructed during the 2001 construction season in the area bounded by Flandrau Street to the east, Montana Avenue to the south, Kennard Street to the west, and the alley north of Hoyt Avenue to the north. Existing storm water piping was rerouted to direct runoff into this 7.5-acre area that will be called “Hillcrest Knoll Park.” The area now serves as a park with trails and benches and also provides emergency storm water retention for the project area located within the St. Paul city limits. This storm water collection system is designed for a 5-year storm event, using a 15-minute time of concentration, and a rainfall of 4.0 to 4.15-in/hr.

SUMMARY

In general, residents and businesses located within the boundaries of the Hillcrest site have access to utilities and infrastructure typical for other similar areas of the same vintage located elsewhere in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area.

See Appendix C: Infrastructure and Public Facilities Assessment for the full consultant infrastructure report.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPT PLAN DEVELOPMENT



- STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP
- SKETCH PLAN ALTERNATIVES
- PUBLIC INPUT
- FINAL CONCEPT PLAN
- STREET DESIGNS

growth
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STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP PROCESS

Hillcrest stakeholders from Maplewood and St. Paul considered design options for their neighborhood at a planning workshop April 26th, 2001, at the Woodland Hills Church in Maplewood. Approximately 70 citizens, business people and public officials attended. Metropolitan Council Member Frank Hornstein introduced local officials including Maplewood Mayor Bob Cardinal, St. Paul City Council President Dan Bostrom, and Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt.

At the workshop, citizens were presented with an overview of smart growth concepts, which included slide show illustrations from Hillcrest and other communities. Citizens broke into small groups around a half-dozen tables, each of which contained an aerial photo map of 20 acres surrounding the intersection of White Bear Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue.

Each group was given a hypothetical development program to fit onto the site, based upon the marketing assessments of how much growth, and what type of development, can be expected in the Hillcrest area (see Chapter 2). Using the information they had been given, group members placed wooden blocks representing buildings and paper representing roads and green space on the maps, creating land use and urban design plans in line with their visions for the community.

“A tremendous number of good ideas for redesigning the Hillcrest community were spilling forth at every table. Citizen groups have insights that pure analytical approaches can’t have. Citizens have an intuitive sense of their community and its interactions. They know who lives there and what they need. And they were great at ‘thinking out of the box.’

- Bob Mazanec, Project Coordinator



Participants at the April 26 workshop. See Appendix F: Stakeholder Workshop Results for a detailed description of each group’s comments and map.

At the conclusion of the evening, each group presented their design to the entire group.

CONCLUSIONS

Community members at the workshop generated many ideas for the future of Hillcrest Village. Among them were:

- Gathering buildings and locating them in ways that create community identity and focus, including physical ‘gateways’ to the community and better focus and identity for area businesses.
- Slowing traffic on White Bear Avenue, and softening its influence.
- Using green spaces and walkways to pull the community together and increase access, including reconnecting opposite sides of White Bear Avenue, possibly with pedestrian bridges.
- Showing sensitivity to the needs of the community’s senior citizens.
- Creating “rain gardens” that respond to the landscape and help to manage stormwater runoff.



Table 1



Table 2



Table 3



Table 4



Table 5



Table 6

Figure 2.1: Participants at the stakeholder workshop created these woodblock models, that were used as inputs into the Concept Alternatives (following pages).

SKETCH PLAN ALTERNATIVES

The ideas generated from the April 26th workshop were combined into two development alternatives, which illustrated concepts for new development, street patterns and open space.

Generally, both options featured:

- Easier ways for pedestrians to cross White Bear Avenue;
- A gateway element at the intersections of White Bear and Larpenteur to mark the entrance to Saint Paul and Maplewood;
- A central park with trees and green space;
- More senior housing;
- A rain garden to manage on-site stormwater;
- More business activity, including a neighborhood-scale grocery store; and
- Moving commerce closer to senior housing.



Figure 2.2: ALTERNATIVE A site plan

ALTERNATIVE A

In Alternative A, small greens and open spaces are distributed throughout Hillcrest Village. The existing transit stop shifts north one block to California, which extends east across White Bear Avenue to Gary Place. Mixed-use buildings with commercial, office, and retail space line White Bear Avenue. Parking is located to the rear and sides of the buildings, not between buildings and the street; therefore, vehicular access is moved to the side streets, reducing curb cuts along White Bear Avenue.

**DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:
ALTERNATIVE A**

	<i>Units</i>	<i>Square Feet</i>	<i>Parking Spaces</i>
<i>Residential</i>	97		
<i>Mixed-Use</i>	82	255,525	568
<i>Retail</i>		4,200	21
TOTAL	179	259,725	589

Table 2.1: Development Program for Alternative A



Figure 2.3: Woodblock mock-up of Alternative A site plan

Alternative A also contains a strong residential component. Residential uses are located in the streets just off of White Bear Avenue, as well as in apartments above ground floor retail in mixed-use buildings located along White Bear Avenue. In this scheme, residential units are primarily apartments and townhomes. Townhomes are placed off of White Bear Avenue on the surrounding streets.

ALTERNATIVE B

Alternative B represents a higher intensity development scheme than Alternative A. As in Alternative A, California extends east across White Bear to Gary Place. Additionally, Alternative B realigns North St. Paul Road. At Van Dyke Street, North St. Paul Road angles perpendicular to White Bear Avenue. A large neighborhood square located at the southeast corner of Larpenteur Avenue and White Bear Avenue provides a prominent public realm element at this busy intersection. The transit stop is located on the southern edge of the green, in the same location as in Alternative A.

In addition to smaller scale commercial/retail space, Alternative B includes a 36,000 square foot grocery store in a new block created by the realignment of North St. Paul Road and White Bear Avenue. The remainder of the commercial/office/retail space is concentrated along White Bear Avenue with parking to the rear (reducing curb cuts along White Bear Avenue). Most of the apartments are contained in single use buildings east of White Bear Avenue.



Figure 2.4: ALTERNATIVE B site plan

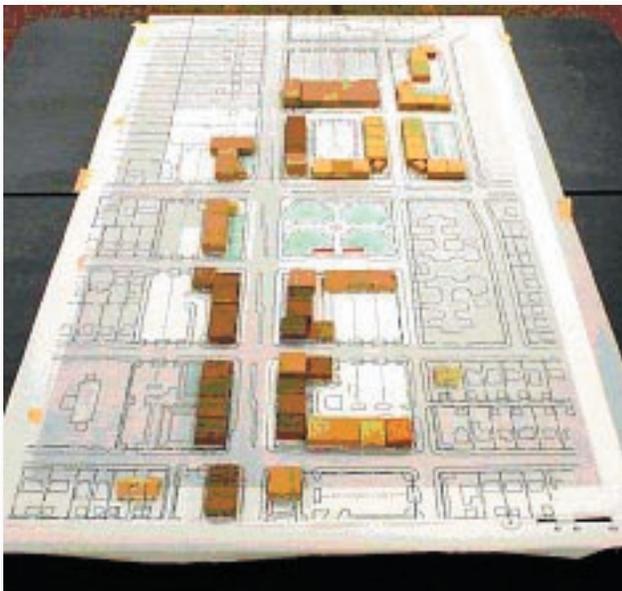


Figure 2.5: Woodblock mock-up of Alternative B site plan

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: ALTERNATIVE B

	Units	Square Feet	Parking Spaces
Total Residential	240		
Total Mixed-Use	14	207,025	741
Grocery		36,000	240
Parking Ramp			182
TOTAL	254	243,025	1,163

Table 2.2: Development Program for Alternative B

PUBLIC INPUT

OPEN HOUSES

Alternatives A and B were presented to the Hillcrest community in a public open house on May 24, 2002. After a brief introduction, community members were given the opportunity to examine the plans, ask questions and provide verbal and written comments. The development alternatives were displayed as plan drawings and three-dimensional woodchip models. Overall, the 60 workshop participants preferred Alternative A over Alternative B by a margin of roughly four to one.

In addition, relevant agencies and staff also made comments on the plans. The comments included here reflect the views of the comment cards received, the City of Saint Paul's Parks and Recreation Division, the City's Department of Public Works, staff from the Department of Planning and Economic Development, the Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee of the Saint Paul Planning Commission, and Public Works staff from Ramsey County.

The following is a summary of comments received regarding the two alternative development scenarios for Hillcrest Village.

HOUSING

Many comments received from area residents on comment cards expressed a preference for townhomes, twin homes, and mews townhouses more than apartment-style units. One person commented that the new housing units should have a variety of designs and materials - not a uniform look. There was some support for the mixed use development, with apartment units above retail.

Community-members expressed interest in emphasizing ownership opportunities over rental; there was some support for additional housing targeted to seniors, including cooperative housing. Additionally, the community supported affordable units, but not subsidized units, such as public housing or Section 8. The City's housing policy requires that

10% of new units be affordable to households at 50% of the regional median income and 10 % affordable to households at 30% of the area median.

Staff members felt that the distribution of new housing units between Maplewood and Saint Paul was an issue, and supported more housing in St. Paul than the 78 units shown in Alternative B. They recommended that the preferred alternative should show the full 300 units recommended by the market study. There was interest in exploring the idea of senior housing, possibly with the church.

They asked that the idea of live/work units be explored further. While it may not be a part of this planning effort, staff felt it would be a good idea to pull together some local examples of multi-unit housing so that neighbors would get a better idea of what the buildings could look like. Examples that were suggested include the Marian Center, Metro Plains, and Lake Phalen Townhomes.

COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

Most of those who commented were cautious about how much commercial space can be viable at this location. Group members thought that retail should serve the needs of the immediate neighborhood as much as possible. There was support for retaining existing businesses serving the Hillcrest area. However, there was particular skepticism about whether a moderate sized grocery store could stay in business. There was not much support for the pawn shop or the bingo hall.

Staff members wanted to see commercial uses consolidated and the total square footage devoted to commercial use reduced from the existing amount. They preferred clustering commercial uses into a node rather than having the uses strung out along White Bear. Staff was opposed to showing a free-standing grocery store in the preferred alternative, thinking that

it might raise expectations that would be difficult to meet.

GREEN SPACE/STREETSCAPE

There was strong support for making White Bear Avenue more pedestrian-friendly and generally attractive. Many liked the medians but wanted more to be done so pedestrians can cross White Bear in safety. They felt more should be done to improve the amenities along White Bear and to add green space within new developments. There was strong support from residents for removing the utility lines along the street and support as well for linking to trails in the area and to Phalen-Keller Regional Park.

A number of residents were skeptical about the “central green” in Alternative B; the Parks and Recreation staff were firmly opposed to the size and location of the park. They, as well as some on the Planning Commission, felt that Hillcrest Knoll Park at Hoyt and Montana provided sufficient large green space in the area. Parks staff noted that Hazel Park playground and the trails along Furness Parkway were also nearby.

Staff members thought that Alternative A was more visually appealing than Alternative B due to the large amount of space in Alternative B set aside for parking lots. The park in “B” also seemed misplaced, many felt. They also expressed concern about the width of the islands that are shown on White Bear, which some staff felt would need to be 20 ft. across to permit landscaping. However, many of St. Paul’s best-known parkways have median widths of as little as six feet, a width that the forestry division of the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board says offers enough growing space for medium to large trees.

TRANSIT

Most residents and staff thought the transit facility should stay in its current location. However, there was resistance to having buses close to the existing senior housing across Gary Place, and many group

members felt that the Riverview Busway stations at Hillcrest should be located along White Bear Avenue. Staff members thought that the northbound station should be across Larpenteur near Big Apple Bagels and Garrity’s, while the southbound station would be on the first block south of Larpenteur by the existing pawnshop and Jerry’s. Locating the stations at those sites might also help to spur walkable, mixed-use redevelopment.

STREET DESIGN

Both St. Paul and Ramsey County Public Works liked the alternatives’ limiting of access along White Bear to the cross streets. There wasn’t agreement on adding medians and left turn lanes, however. St. Paul staff preferred painted center left turn lanes or a 5th lane in the center of the street, which they said would allow pedestrians to take two lanes at a time at non-signalized intersections by waiting in the center lane. County staff liked the concrete medians, but wasn’t asked about the paint alternative. City staff noted that the widening in Alternative “B” should be centered at Iowa to provide more transition room.

County staff was especially interested in the treatment of Larpenteur and North St. Paul Road. They wanted to reconstruct the road and add a turn signal at Van Dyke. They also wanted to see only one opening in the median between White Bear Avenue and Van Dyke at the continuation of Gary Place. They liked Alternative B in that it eliminates a bad intersection between North St. Paul Road and White Bear. They suggested that Van Dyke be redirected to meet North St. Paul Road at a right angle, then curve onto its existing right-of-way. North St. Paul Road could then be closed off with a cul-de-sac or a parking lot.

CITY OF MAPLEWOOD COMMENTS

Maplewood city staff also commented on the two alternatives. Their comments were as follows:

1. Regarding the realignment of North St. Paul Road to connect with White Bear Avenue at a right

angle. they felt that the ermination of North St. Paul Road at Ripley Avenue and letting Ripley be the connection makes better sense.

2. The alternative with more residential units was prefered.
3. The large village green was preferred.
4. Maplewood staff also liked the grocery store in Alternative B.

FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

The input from the community, public staff and advisory panels helped to create a preferred alternative site plan for the Hillcrest Village. The plan’s goal is to create a village center with an active street life that mixes shops, workplaces, housing, recreation and civic uses. The village center’s orientation supports the community and the pedestrian, with a special emphasis on enhancing civic spaces and transit infrastructure and connecting them to the fabric of the town. The various buildings are intended to line the streets to create a pedestrian-friendly environment linking the cities of St. Paul and Maplewood, with their primary entryways and windows activating the streets.

Based on input from the community workshops, the plan envisions a Hillcrest Village enhanced with street-facing mixed-use buildings and shops oriented to a pair of village greens. The residential elements feature a variety of housing types, including small lot single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. Commercial and mixed-use buildings are located close to White Bear Avenue, with their parking in the interior of the blocks, away from public view. The eastern corners of White Bear Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue host a pair of new plazas, creating a civic focus for the neighborhood and linking the St. Paul and Maplewood sides of the neighborhood. A coordinated system of enhanced street crossings,

sidewalks and paths provides pedestrian access throughout the Village area, connecting the various uses with each other and to adjacent neighborhoods.

North of Larpenteur between White Bear and Van Dyke, the plan envisions larger commercial and mixed-use buildings, with some stand-alone apartments. North Saint Paul Avenue will be realigned, creating a more regular block in this quadrant. On the other side of White Bear north of Larpenteur, 16 townhouse units face onto a small green perpendicular to White Bear.

Between Larpenteur and Idaho on either side of White Bear, the plan calls for commercial and mixed-use buildings along White Bear. Between Idaho and Iowa, courtyard apartment buildings will face onto White Bear, with townhomes located behind. South of Iowa, townhomes will face White Bear, with other townhomes facing the east-west grain of local streets located in interior blocks. In this way, building types become lower density and proportionately more residential as they begin to blend with existing neighborhoods to the south.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM							
	<i>Commercial</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Townhome</i>	<i>Single-Family</i>	<i>Apartment</i>	<i>Off-Street Surface Parking Spaces</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Square Feet</i>	151,300	36,400					187,700
<i>Units</i>			98	10	291		399
<i>Parking Spaces</i>						739	739

Table 2.3: Development Program for Hillcrest Village Final Concept Plan

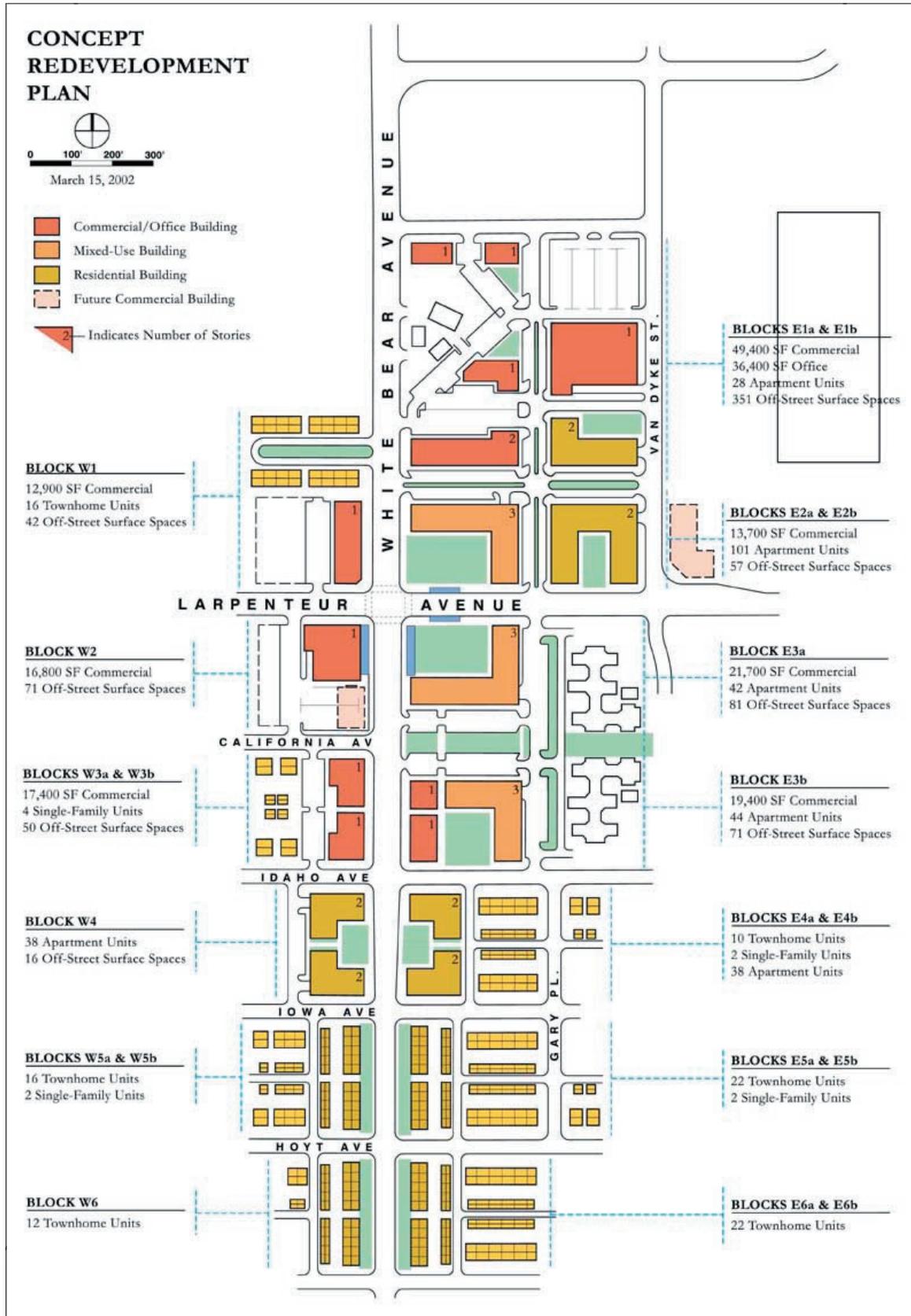


Figure 2.6: Hillcrest Village FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

PROPOSAL FOR A STREET-FRONTING DRUGSTORE

As part of the Hillcrest Village design, Calthorpe Associates assisted the city of Maplewood in evaluating a development proposal for a Walgreens drugstore on a site near the northeast corner of White Bear Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue. The original proposal is shown in Figure 2.6 below, and a revised design by Calthorpe Associates that complies with recommended urban design standards is shown in Figure 2.7. The revised design satisfies the same program requirements of the originally proposed Walgreens store, including a two-lane drive-through window and handicapped parking spaces directly adjacent to the entrance. But the new design shifts the orientation so that the building, not the parking lot, fronts on the street. At the store’s entrance, small landscaped plaza with seating and bicycle parking provides a generous addition to the pedestrian environment.

The redesign shows how the build-to line requirements in the design standards should be applied along key streets and key intersections, where street-facing buildings are an important component of the area’s pedestrian character. Parking lots located between buildings and public streets, particularly at key corners such as White Bear and Larpenteur Avenues, are not compatible with a pedestrian- and transit-oriented environment.

A Word About Parking Requirements

According to the existing zoning code in Maplewood, a Walgreens of this size would be required to provide 75 parking spaces, or 5 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of floor space. As the applicant noted, this amount of parking is clearly excessive, since a comparable Walgreens in St. Paul was shown to have attracted a maximum of 44 cars per hour during the hours of highest demand. Since few if any of those customers were on site for the full hour, even fewer than 44 cars were actually present at any one time. The actual demand for parking spaces, then, was something less than 3 spaces per 1,000 square feet, which is 40% less than the number required by the zoning.

Parking standards are notoriously difficult to validate empirically, and historically many jurisdictions have tended to use high parking requirements to be “on the safe side.” But there is no free lunch – those extra spaces cost money, consume valuable land, degrade the

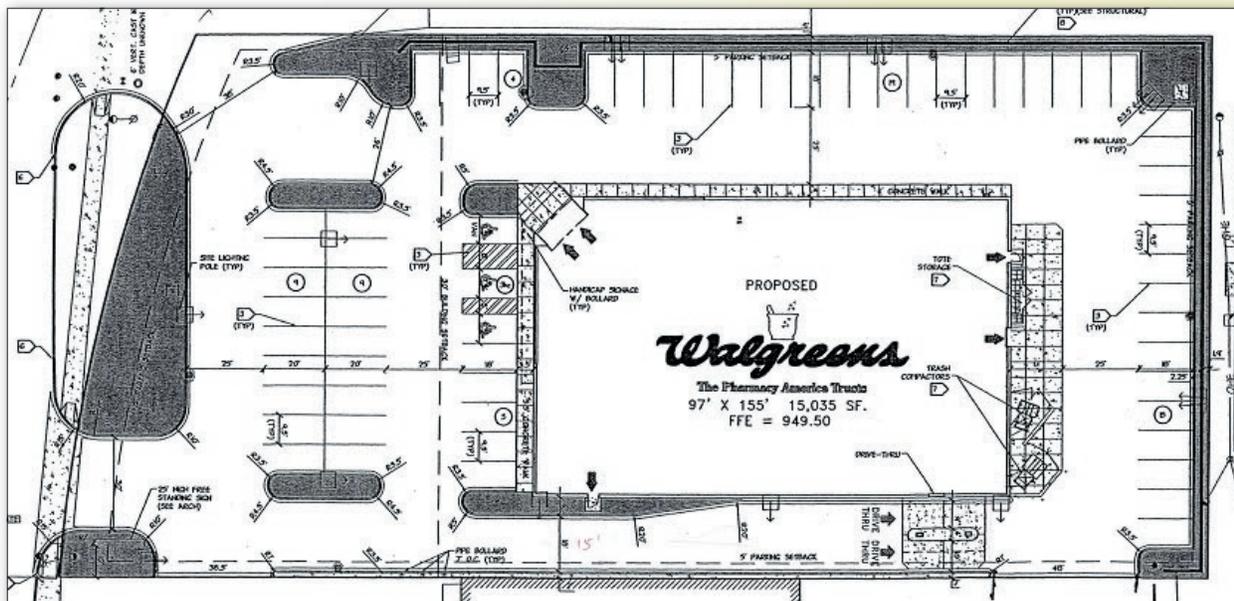


Figure 2.7: Traditional drugstore layout

environment through increased surface water runoff, and decrease the likelihood that people will walk or bike to reach neighborhood destinations, because the distances are greater and the walking environment is less pleasant. For instance, using an average of 350 square feet per space (including associated drive aisles), the difference between the 75 parking spaces required and the 44 parking spaces which Walgreens might need is one quarter of an acre, which would take up over 17% or one sixth of the entire property. In the instance of a neighborhood retail center totaling 100,000 square feet (a small grocery store and several small shops), the difference between 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet and 3 spaces per 1,000 square feet would be 200 spaces, or over one and a half acres, enough space for a soccer or baseball field, with space left over for three tennis courts.

Because of the growing awareness of the various monetary, economic, environmental and aesthetic costs associated with large parking areas, many communities are reevaluating their parking requirements, with an eye to reducing them as much as possible. In some situations, it may even be appropriate to eliminate parking requirements altogether. This is possible because the market often self-regulates parking provision. Lending institutions usually require developers to provide a certain amount of parking, with the idea that adequate parking will affect the financial viability of the development. Thus, a city's greater concern should be that too much parking is created, not too little. A too-large parking area imposes the increased non-monetary costs like environmental degradation on the community, but may not directly affect the developer's bottom line the way providing too little parking could.

As stated, the city's parking requirements would force the developer to build 75 parking spaces. The developer's design shows fewer, only 64 spaces. For the reasons discussed above, the project team's redesign shows even less parking, 53 spaces, but still nine parking spaces more than the Walgreens should need. This allows the redesign to maintain many existing trees, and keep 21% of the site area as planted surfaces, which will help to absorb rainwater and provide visual relief as well.

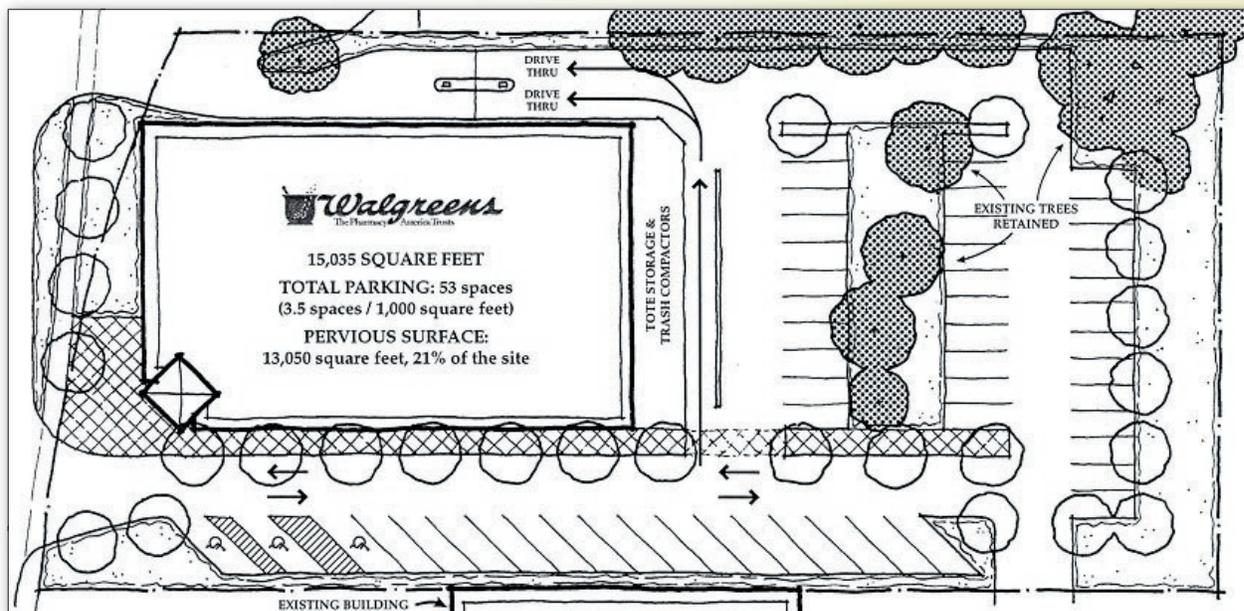


Figure 2.8: Street fronting pedestrian-friendly drugstore layout



Figure 2.9: Existing conditions at the corner of White Bear Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue



Figure 2.10: Public streetscape improvements enhance pedestrian conditions and encourage reinvestment



Figure 2.11: What Hillcrest Village could look like if it were to develop as suggested by the Final Concept Plan and Hillcrest Urban Design Guidelines (Appendix E).

STREET DESIGNS

As part of the final concept plan, specific street sections were prepared for Larpenteur Avenue at one point and White Bear Avenue at four different points.

White Bear Avenue will contain a central landscaped median from the northern end of the study area as far south as Idaho, where the right-of-way narrows. The road will remain two travel lanes in either direction, with no on-street parking. Sidewalks and planter strips will be widened for pedestrian comfort and safety.

Perhaps most important, new development will approach the sidewalk edge along the length of White Bear Avenue. This will better define the pedestrian space and eliminate the uncomfortable atmosphere of walking on a narrow strip of concrete between a busy street and a busy parking lot. Larpenteur Avenue will receive similar treatment, with a smaller median, widened pedestrian spaces, and buildings that approach the sidewalk.

These sections are illustrated in the following pages.

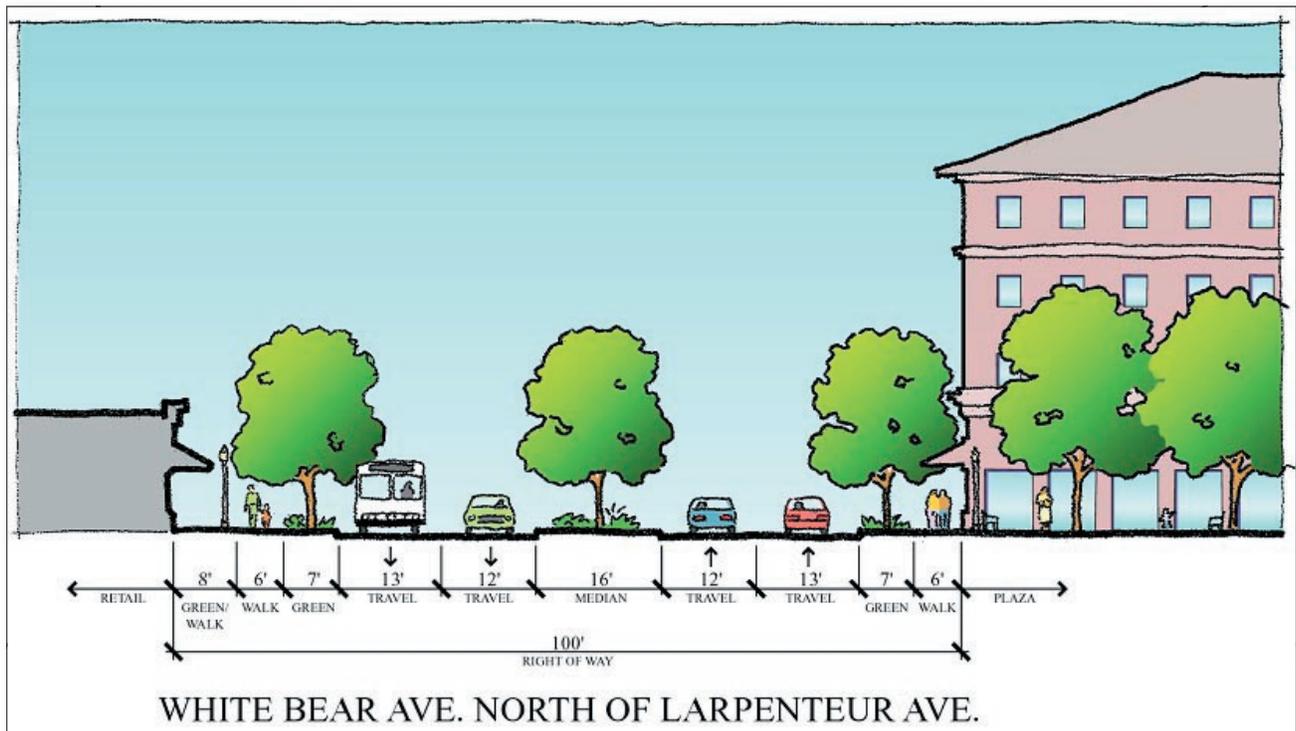


Figure 2.12: The median on White Bear, will be cut in to create a left-turn lane at intersections. The dimensions at intersections will consist of an 11-foot left-turn lane, 1 foot of reaction distance, and a four foot median.

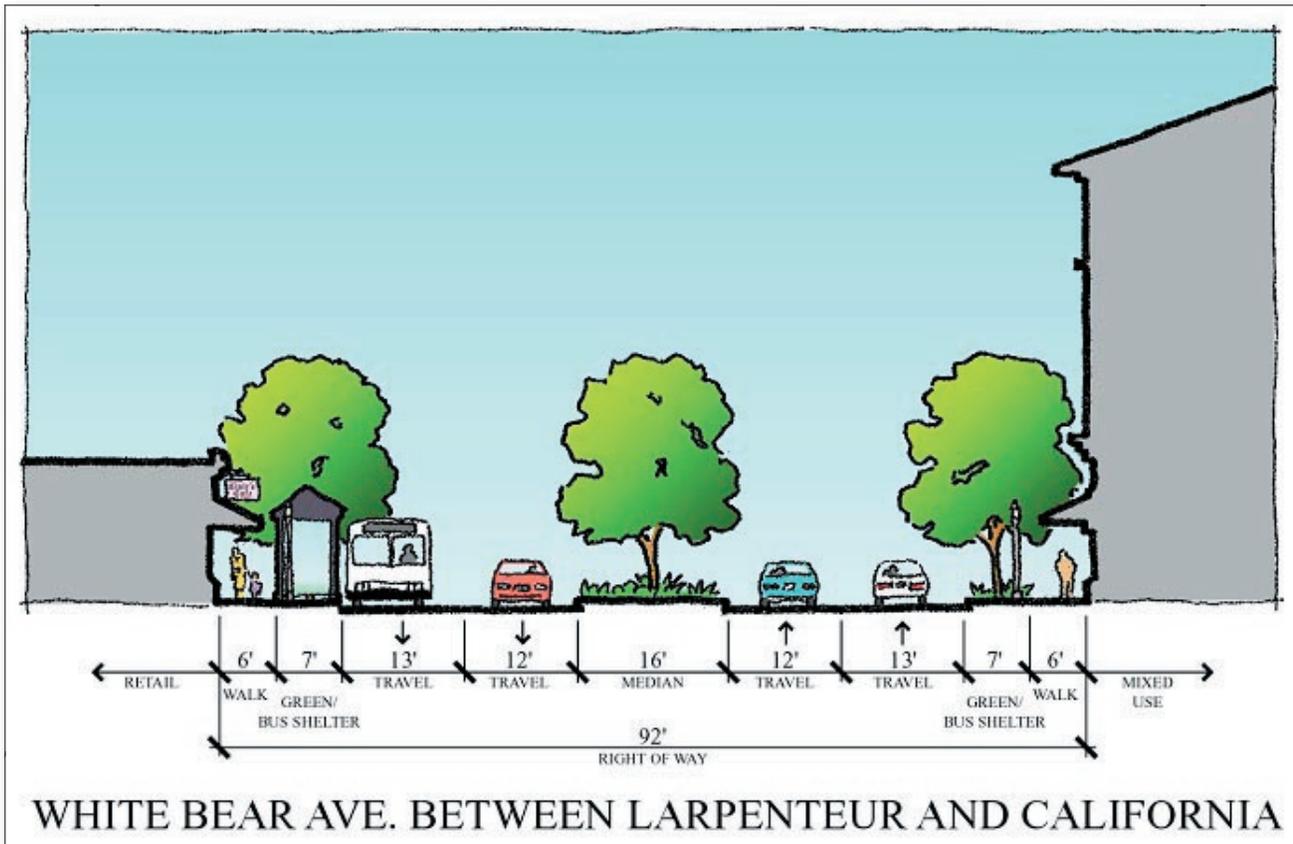


Figure 2.13

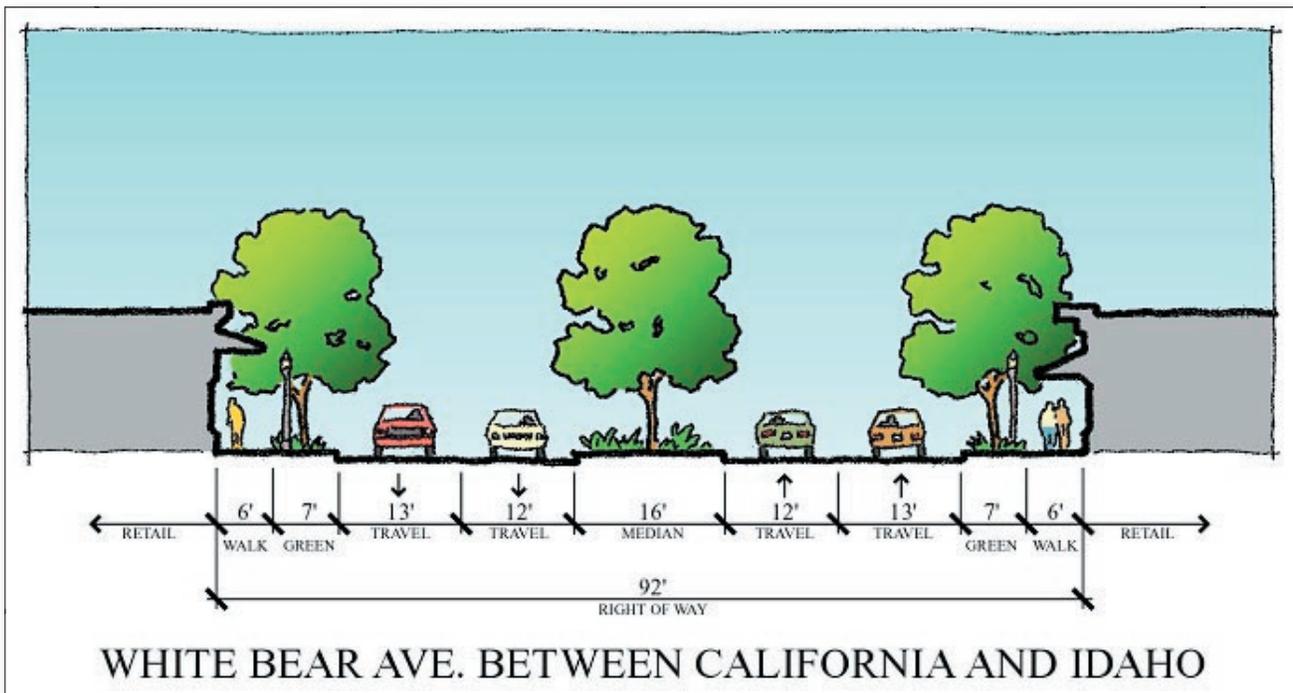


Figure 2.14

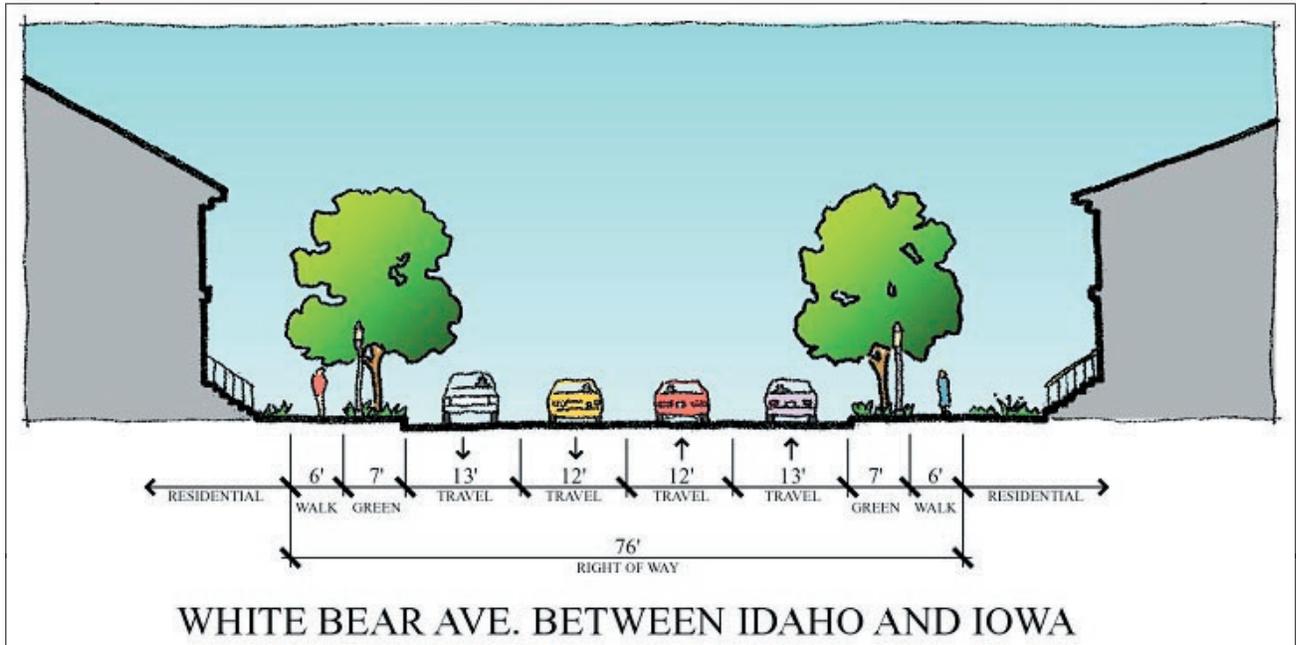


Figure 2.15

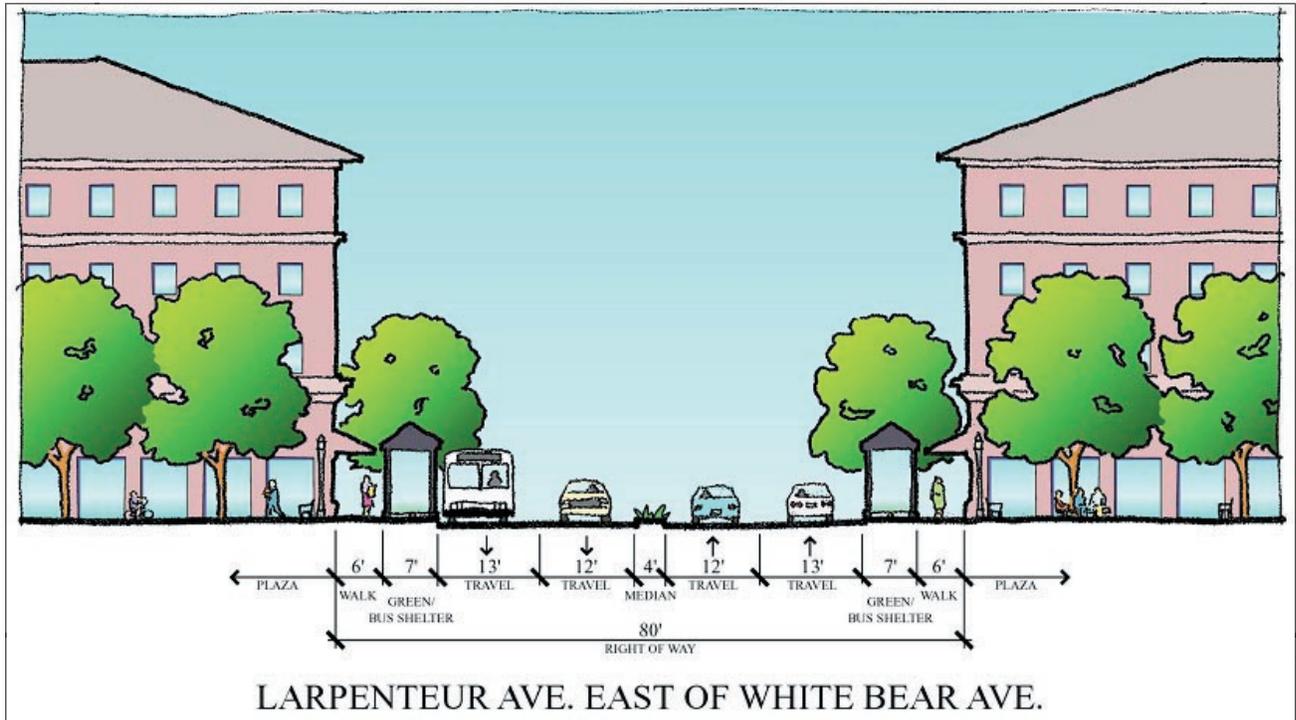


Figure 2.16

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION



- URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK
- TRANSPORTATION
- IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES
- INFRASTRUCTURE COST ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)

art
rowth
twin cities

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The urban design framework sets directions for Hillcrest Village to redevelop in a pedestrian-friendly manner. The goal is to plan for a series of evolutionary changes over time that will create a village center with an active street life that mixes shops, workplaces, housing, recreation and civic uses. The neighborhood's orientation will support the community and the pedestrian, with a special emphasis on enhancing civic spaces and transit infrastructure and connecting them to the fabric of the cities and the region. The various buildings are intended to line the streets to create a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment linking the cities of St. Paul and Maplewood.

At present, conditions along White Bear, Larpeur and other streets are unwelcoming and unsafe for pedestrians. Low-rise buildings set behind parking lots, frequent driveways, and a dearth of public spaces all contribute to the pedestrian-unfriendly atmosphere. As the area redevelops, new buildings should address these problems by approaching the street, and activating the street with visible, transparent entries and windows. Additionally, ground floors on commercial streets should contain uses that activate the street. Over time, buildings built to this framework will combine to create a streetscape that has a unique village identity and is safe and inviting for pedestrians.

The regulating map (Figure 3.1) illustrates the plan's urban design framework. While allowing flexibility for developers, the regulating map will cause each new project to fit into the neighborhood in a way that will lead to a pedestrian-friendly village character. The map shows areas of generalized land use categories, critical "build-to" lines, and the location of new streets, alleys, pathways and public spaces. For the land use in commercial areas, a mix of uses is allowed along with the dominant use. Build-to lines show where buildings are required to be built close to the street, at a minimum height that varies by type of use.

The regulating map also differentiates between "primary" build-to lines and "secondary" build-to lines. Primary build-to lines are intended for commercial and mixed-use buildings and require building facades to comprise 70% of the street edge. Secondary build-to lines apply primarily to residential uses and allow more flexibility. They allow courtyard style residential forms so that residences can be buffered from busy streets.

For more detail on the Hillcrest Village urban design framework, see the accompanying Proposed Urban Design Standards. (Appendix E)

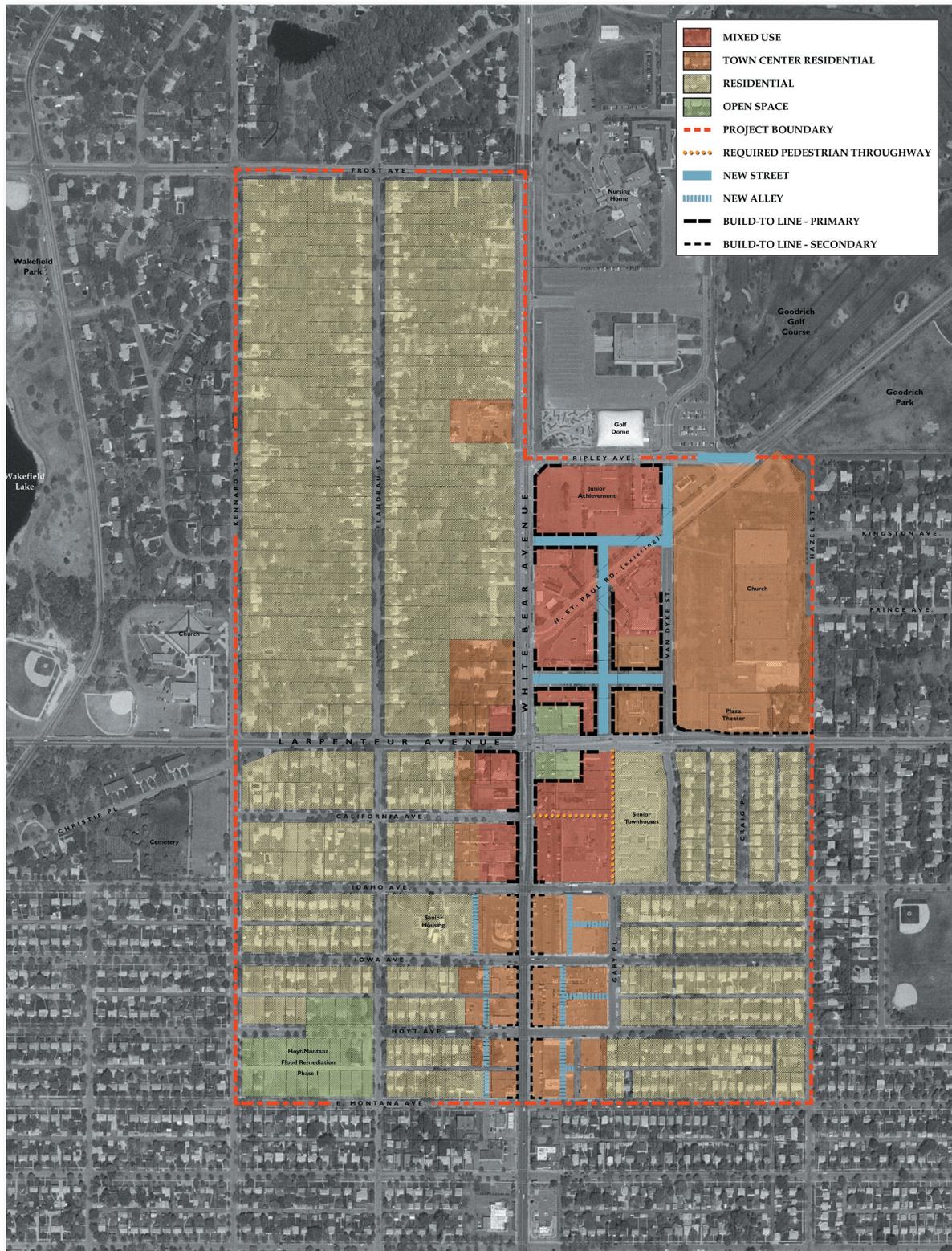


Figure 3.1: **REGULATING MAP:** This map shows guidelines for land use, open space, new streets and required building frontages along White Bear Avenue and at the core of the study area. These details are described further in the urban design guidelines.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation effects of the proposed development program for the Hillcrest Smart Growth opportunity site have been analyzed in relation to conditions expected on the existing street network that supports the site. In Saint Paul, the proposed plan utilizes the existing block pattern. However, in Maplewood, the plan proposes to terminate North Saint Paul Road at Ripley Avenue to form a pattern of smaller blocks between Larpenteur and Ripley Avenues. Additionally, the Hillcrest site is located along the proposed Riverview Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor that has the potential to affect future conditions in the vicinity of the opportunity site by making transit a more attractive option for trips to and from the site.

In general, the analysis has considered existing traffic from the opportunity site that would remain, existing traffic that would be removed (by the proposed development), regional growth in traffic, and traffic from the proposed development. These different types of traffic were assigned over the proposed street system and, through comparison to future volumes without the proposed development, were used to identify transportation requirements for the site. The individual components of the analysis for the Hillcrest site are discussed below, followed by the findings of the analysis.

Since the Hillcrest site is largely developed with retail and the proposed development would reduce the amount of retail and infill with residential and office, there is more existing peak period traffic being generated by the site than would be the case with the mixed-use development plan. Additionally, with the

mixed-use plan, traffic would be more balanced during the day than under the current land use patterns.

The project trip generation in Table 3.1 has been adjusted to account for trips that would remain internal to the site and that would be made by non-auto modes. The 4D data from the regional analysis was used to make these adjustments as follows:

- Density – indicates that between zero and one percent of trips would remain internal to the site as a result of the intensity of land uses on the site
- Diversity – indicates that approximately 12 percent of morning trips and 14 percent of evening trips would remain internal to the site as a result of the magnitude and mix of land uses on the site
- Design – indicates that between zero and one percent of trips would remain internal to the site as a result of the design of the site
- Destination – indicates an approximate two percent decrease in trips from regional destinations

The existing traffic that would be removed, existing traffic that would remain, regional growth in traffic from outside sources, and the traffic from the proposed development were assigned over the proposed street system and compared to future volumes without the proposed development. Distribution of traffic was derived from forecasts from the Metropolitan Council regional travel demand model. Table 3.2 shows the projected Level of Service in and around the opportunity site. Existing lane configurations have been assumed at the intersections

<i>Condition</i>	<i>AM Peak Period Vehicle Trips</i>			<i>PM Peak Period Vehicle Trips</i>		
	<i>In</i>	<i>Out</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In</i>	<i>Out</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Existing</i>	515	280	795	1,215	1,500	2,715
<i>Proposed</i>	350	360	710	820	850	1,670
<i>Net New</i>	-165	80	-85	-395	-650	-1,045

Table 3.1: TRIP GENERATION

The analysis, which was conducted using planning methods, indicates that the proposed street system would operate in acceptable conditions for the evening peak period. As the Riverview Corridor BRT system comes into operation, an increasing percentage of trips from the opportunity site could be expected to use the BRT system, which would reduce the trip generation from that shown in Table 3.1.

<i>Intersection</i>	<i>Future LOS w/o Project</i>	<i>Future LOS w/ Project</i>
White Bear Avenue and Frost Avenue	E	D
White Bear Avenue and Ripley Avenue	A	A
White Bear Avenue and Larpenteur Avenue	B	A
White Bear Avenue and Iowa Avenue	B	A
Larpenteur Avenue and Van Dyke Street	A	A

Table 3.2: **INTERSECTION OPERATIONS** (Levels A through D are acceptable)

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

MARKET AND PHASING ISSUES

The following paragraphs detail some market and phasing issues future development of the Hillcrest Village area will likely face:

- *Multiple Property Owners:* There are approximately 31 property owners impacted by the Hillcrest Concept Plan, with an average parcel size of 35,000 square feet. Redevelopment will likely require public, private or joint parcel assembly. Because of the existence of multiple landowners and the need for parcel assembly, redevelopment of Hillcrest Village will likely see an increase in private investor time, risk and, often, land acquisition cost. In this manner, land assembly complications can impede redevelopment.

The Hillcrest Shopping Center provides the opposite condition. According to the tax records, Hillcrest Shopping Center consists of over 6.5 acres of land in single ownership on the east side of White Bear Avenue, with the exception of one parcel of 29,300 square feet. The shopping center property runs from a parcel immediately south of Idaho Avenue north to Larpenteur Avenue. This parcel represents an instance in which land assembly is probably not necessary for feasible redevelopment.

- *Redevelopment Versus Development Costs:* Redevelopment adds cost to the development process, impacting what type of development will be feasible at Hillcrest Village. With redevelopment, investors must pay property owners on an income-valuation basis, which often results in higher land values than the typical future value-valuation, which is used on undeveloped land. In addition, most of the development envisioned for Hillcrest will require demolition and the costs associated thereto.
- *Current Land Values and the Economics of Future Uses:* Current land values may also make redevelopment

economically difficult or infeasible. According to property tax records, the average estimated value of property impacted by the Hillcrest Concept Plan is \$9.23 per square foot. Typically, property tax assessment values are well below sale prices. In 2000, the Hafner Center property (75,449 square feet of land and a 32,000 square foot improvement) sold for \$888,988 or \$11.78 per square foot.

This high land value is important because a one-story retail center with a grocery store anchor will likely not be able to support a land cost in excess of \$8.50 per square foot. Mixed-use commercial and residential with underground parking will require even lower land costs to be economically feasible.

- *Retail Leases on Existing Properties:* There are a number of properties in Hillcrest that appear to be owned by an interest distinct from the user. In other words, there are a number of properties with tenants leasing space. While the property owners may want to sell, existing leases may impede disposition. Typically, a property owner must pay heavily to break a lease – further increasing development costs. However, in most leases, a taking by eminent domain typically relieves the property owner of lease obligations.
- *Existing Convenience Retail in New, More Expensive, Space:* Existing convenience retail may have a hard time supporting rents in newer centers. Convenience retail is currently located in older buildings in Hillcrest. Rents are relatively low (approximately \$10.00 - \$13.00 per square foot). The Concept Plan seeks to concentrate these uses in a more attractive and functional setting. For those retailers who are presently in Hillcrest moving to the new buildings may increase their sales slightly due to better functionality. The question is whether relocation would be worth the significant rent increase (a probable minimum of \$18.00 per square foot) and additional common

area maintenance costs associated with new construction. However, by limiting retail space and re-positioning Hillcrest as a mixed-use center there may be an opportunity to draw neighborhood-serving retailers who are not currently present in Hillcrest.

- *Mixed-Use Development Adds Value As Well As Cost:* While mixed-use development represents a desired product, it also adds cost to development. For this reason, most successful mixed-use projects are either in high rent locations or have been subsidized. It is likely that mixed-use development in Hillcrest will require public sector capital support. It is also likely that upon implementation the mixed-use projects will be four stories tall, not two or three.
- *Economies Are Gained With Project Size:* Investors are often more willing to engage in redevelopment and joint development when the mere size of the project warrants the time and effort. Larger projects also often create the critical mass necessary to “tip” a neighborhood into its next phase in the evolution of land use.
- *Land Price Write-Down:* Land price write-downs help to make re-development economics work. Often the public/quasi-public sector purchases land for redevelopment purposes, clears the land, and offers it at a discount price to achieve re-development objectives. One method often employed is for the public sector to take land for a public purpose like a park. The portion of the land not needed for the park is transferred to a re-development authority to market for economic development purposes.
- *Capital Subsidies:* Capital subsidies typically take the form of investments in infrastructure or low interest loans. The public/quasi-public sector can support desired investment by paying for street improvements, infrastructure, and/or parking. The project must be designed to allow such investments to benefit the community as a whole, not just the project itself. Typical sources of capital subsidy include tax increment financing bonds, special assessment district bonds, grants (such as those from the Livable Communities Program), transportation funds, and low interest loans. Special assessments may not be viable in Hillcrest because of the small size of the redevelopment area and existing investment economics.
- *Regulations and Parking Management:* For better or worse, parking often drives development feasibility. Regulations allowing for innovative parking solutions, such as sheared parking, the provision of public parking, and establishing parking maximums can go a long way to encourage development intensification.

REDEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The following list discusses tools that are available to public and quasi-public agencies to implement redevelopment priorities:

- *Land Assembly and Demolition:* There are essentially three ways for the public/quasi-public sector to assemble land. The first method is to use eminent domain for a public purpose or use such as a park, road, storm drain, or library. The second method is to use eminent domain to cure an existing “blight”. The third method is to simply negotiate a purchase price and buy land for economic development purposes. By using its powers and resources strategically, the public/quasi-public sector can enhance development potential by assisting in land assembly.

INFRASTRUCTURE COST ASSESSMENT (SUMMARY)

SUMMARY OF METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS FOR COSTS

The information used to assemble the preliminary opinion of probable cost for Hillcrest is summarized below. Costs were gathered for street construction and removal, storm water collection improvements, sanitary sewer collection improvements, water distribution improvements, and park construction. The costs were divided according to type of work, and for each city. Quantities for improvements north of Larpenteur Avenue were assigned to the City of Maplewood. Quantities for improvements south of Larpenteur Avenue were assigned to the City of St. Paul. Assumptions were made when detailed information was not available. These assumptions are also described. A 25 percent contingency factor was added to the opinion of probable cost at this preliminary stage due to the large number of unknown issues in this phase of the project.

STREET CONSTRUCTION AND REMOVALS

Street reconstruction was proposed along Larpenteur Avenue and White Bear Avenue. Typical sections through these streets were provided by Calthorpe Associates to determine quantities and costs. Tall double lantern style streetlights were used at 70-foot intervals for the proposed reconstruction.

STORM WATER COLLECTION

Proposed storm water collection piping was determined using typical design criteria. The intakes were placed at typical intervals and locations.

Modifications will most likely be required due to the need for storm water treatment prior to collection. It is likely that the local Watershed will require a series of detention ponds. The general layout of the area suggests that the storm water naturally flows to the southwest. The costs to construct the treatment

ponds in this area have been included. The costs do not include land acquisition or demolition of the proposed area.

SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION AND WATER DISTRIBUTION

Information on the number of single family, townhouse, apartment, office, and commercial space added and removed from the project area was used to determine a change in water demand and sanitary sewer flows. Proposed water distribution pipe sizes were also determined using typical design criteria.

PARKS

Two parks are proposed as part of the plan for the area. The parks are adjacent to each other with one located in the City of Maplewood and one in the City of St. Paul. The parks will consist of several landscaping items, including pavers, sidewalk, a sitting wall, and shrubs.

SUMMARY

The preliminary opinion of probable cost for the infrastructure improvements is \$5,215,000. This figure is preliminary, based on information known at this time. No monies are included for land or right-of-way acquisition, building demolition, temporary or permanent easements, engineering design or field services, bonding or financial costs, legal expenses, appraisals or any other soft costs necessary.

<i>Infrastructure Cost Summary</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
Removals	\$284,964
Street Construction	\$3,052,719
Watermain	\$190,500
Sanitary Sewer	\$126,000
Parks	\$515,810
Contingency - 25%	\$1,042,498
<i>Construction Total</i>	<i>\$5,212,491</i>

Table 3.3: Summary of probable infrastructure costs

City Of Maplewood - Subtotal Including 25% Contingency	\$2,786,956
City Of St. Paul - Subtotal Including 25% Contingency	\$2,425,535

Table 3.4: Probable infrastructure costs by city