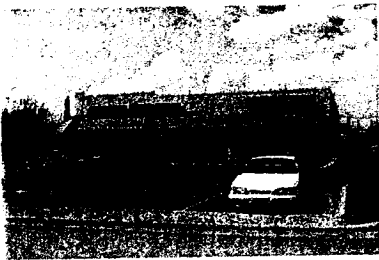


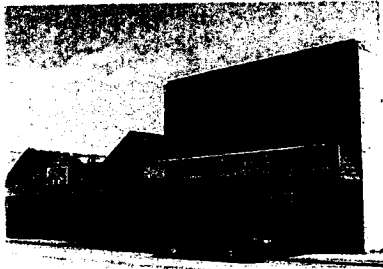
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DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



CITY OF PRIOR LAKE



Hoisington Koegler Group
Ehlers & Associates



Draft I
JUNE 2000

Credits

The planning process for the Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide relied on the participation of the Prior Lake community to review, evaluate and provide direction for the formulation of the plan. Through community meetings, workshops, interviews and other methods, the people of Prior Lake were asked to contribute their thoughts and insights related to the revitalization of their downtown area. Without their input, this plan would not have been possible.

Special thanks go to the Prior Lake Economic Development Authority and City Council. Both of these groups spent numerous hours to ensure that the intentions of this plan match the needs and desires of the Prior Lake Community.

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Introduction

Prior Lake has a number of features that differentiate it from other suburban Twin City communities. Obviously, its namesake, Prior Lake is one of those characteristics. An intact, downtown area is another of its major attributes. Throughout the Twin Cities and across the country today, suburban communities are striving to establish downtowns. Creating a new downtown is a major challenge. Restoring the vitality of an existing downtown is also a difficult task but one that can be based on an existing framework with historical and cultural significance to the community rather than based on an identified marketing theme.

Prior Lake's downtown area has evolved over the past 100 years. As commercial ventures were constructed along Highway 13, the focus of commercial activity shifted to businesses along the highway corridor. More recently, commercial developments in Burnsville and Savage have further eroded business conditions in Downtown Prior Lake. The deterioration of downtown has been a concern of the City for a number of years. In 1984, the City hosted a Governors Design Team Visit which was a charatte-based planning session focused on downtown improvements. The Design Team generated a number of ideas but the effort was not an implementation-oriented process. The Design Team visit was followed up by the preparation of plans for downtown improvements in 1991. The plans were prepared under the auspices of the City and a group of business owners known as the Towncenter Association. The 1991 plans advocated a number of physical streetscape improvements paid partially by property assessments. Because of the financing mechanism and other factors, the improvements were never constructed.

In 1998, a task force submitted a report entitled "A Conceptual Design Plan for the City of Prior Lake" to the Prior Lake Economic Development Authority (EDA) recommending ways of revitalizing the downtown area. The report addressed land use, building types, streetscape improvements and costs. As the name implies, however, the purpose of the report was to present a conceptual overview rather than a detailed implementation plan. One of the report's recommendations was the preparation of a more detailed redevelopment plan.

This effort, the Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide represents that suggested redevelopment plan. Its purpose is to build on the work that has occurred since 1984 and to formulate specific recommendations for the downtown area as well as an action plan for implementation. This development guide is expected to be used in a number of ways. It is:

A Resource – The Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide contains a compilation of the research and analysis that occurred during the planning process. The Guide can be used as a resource to promote a greater understanding of the downtown area and the forces that have shaped its development. It serves as a resource to explain the basis for findings and recommendations and it provides background and suggestions for use in future planning and decision making.

A Tool for Decision Making – The Development Guide serves as a tool for evaluating potential development and redevelopment efforts. Consistent with an



suggested "updated buildings." Six percent wanted to "keep the old town look." Six percent suggested "landscaping." Four percent urged "upgraded roads."

- Residents evaluated a number of proposals for the redevelopment of the old downtown area:
 - By an 85% to 11% judgment, residents supported "adding more retail and office businesses, such as shops and restaurants."
 - By an 80% to 13% verdict, residents supported "adding pedestrian and bicycle links to Lakefront Park."
 - By a 71% to 22% margin, respondents supported "installing new landscaping, benches, and lighting."
 - By a 68% to 24% judgment, respondents supported "creating a community gathering space, such as a 'town square.'"
 - By a 63% to 27% verdict, residents favored "improving the entries to downtown, off of Highway 13."
 - By a 61% to 27% margin, residents supported "creating additional parking."
 - By a 58% to 30% decision, residents favored "providing higher density housing, possibly for senior citizens."
 - By a 54% to 33% judgment, respondents favored "attracting public services, such as a post office."
 - By a 52% to 36% verdict, respondents supported 'reducing the number of bars and auto repair shops.'
 - By a 48% to 22% margin, residents supported "improving the existing park-and-ride lot."
 - By a 47% to 39% judgment, residents favored "installing a traffic signal at the intersection of County Road 21 and Main Avenue."

- Seventy-one percent "favored" the City of Prior Lake granting incentives and tax breaks to attract desired commercial and light industrial development to the community. Twenty percent "opposed" it and nine percent were 'unsure.'

The results of the survey show a strong interest in Prior Lake's downtown area and significant public support for improving the area.

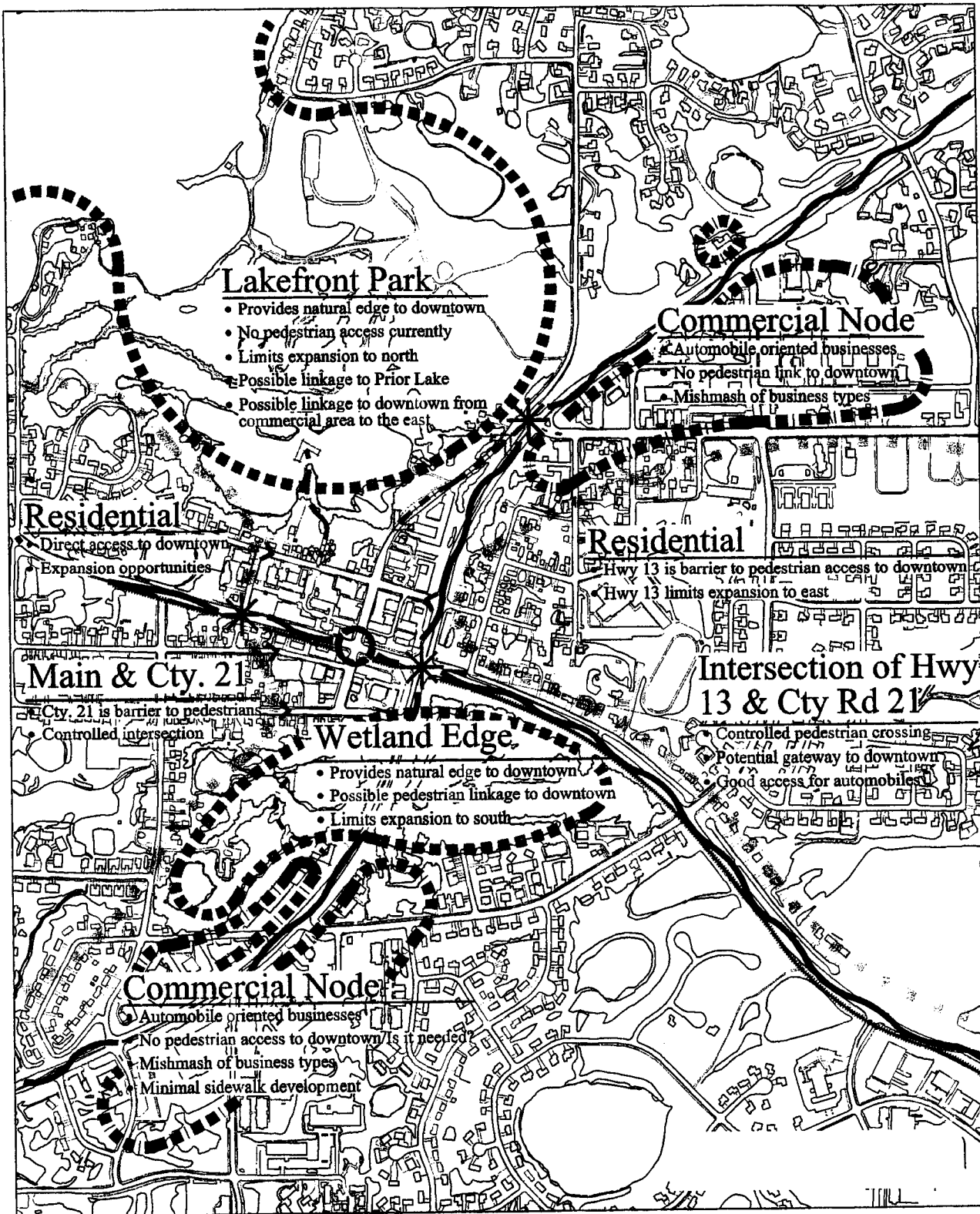
Land Use

The analysis of existing land use for downtown Prior Lake started as a large-scale effort that was then refined in scale. Figure X entitled Context and Linkages depicts the initial broad based analysis. In order to gauge the boundaries of downtown as well as to assess the impacts of nearby commercial areas and community features, an expanded view was examined. The area generally covered encompassed Lakefront Park, the community commercial area north of 160th Street SE, the community commercial area adjacent to the intersection of Franklin Trail and TH 13, which includes Priordale Mall, and the residential neighborhoods generally lying east and west of downtown.

The community commercial node abutting 160th Street SE is an automobile oriented business area. It does not have convenient pedestrian linkage to

Existing Conditions





LEGEND

	Commercial Area		Primary Entry to Downtown		Major Roadway
	Residential District		Secondary Entry to Downtown		Regional Bike Trail
	Existing Natural Area		Major Pedestrian Crossing		Possible Linkage



**City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide**

Context &
Linkages



Holtzgraves Rougier Group Inc.

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downtown and it contains a variety of commercial enterprises including fast food, retail, office and service uses. The Priordale Mall area, which lies north of 170th Street SE, contains similar businesses. The area surrounding Priordale Mall also is home to a number of automobile sales and service businesses that rely on a highway orientation for traffic and visibility. There are no pedestrian or trail links that connect the Priordale Mall to the downtown area.

Residential neighborhoods flank the downtown area on both the east and west sides. Highway 13 is a boundary on the east side between commercial uses and residential neighborhoods. The roadway is an effective element separating the two differing types of land uses. On the west side, the boundary between the downtown area and adjacent residential neighborhoods is not as well defined. Arcadia Street and the church area on the west side of the street generally mark the delineation between commercial and residential land uses.

The land immediately north and south of the existing downtown area contains park property and natural resource areas. A large wetland complex serves as the southern boundary of the area lying south of Pleasant Avenue on both sides of TH 13. Lakefront Park, which is Prior Lake's premier community park, lies immediately north of downtown. Lakefront Park contains a large pond that can be viewed from the rear portions of lots along the north side of Dakota Street. The main entrance to the park is approximately 700 feet north of Dakota Street off of Main Avenue. This entrance, which was constructed in 1999, results in almost all of the park traffic either passing through downtown entering the park from the south or through the northern downtown gateway intersection at Highway 13 and Main Avenue.

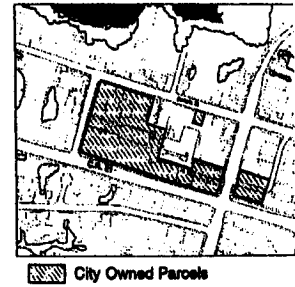
The land use pattern and the location of natural features described above delineates the "edges" of the current downtown area. The wetlands and park areas limit significant future expansion to the north or south. Highway 13 precludes the eastward expansion of downtown commercial uses. The residential neighborhoods make westward expansion difficult. As a result, on a large scale, the limits of downtown Prior Lake were generally defined as being consistent with the present commercial boundaries with possible limited expansion potential to the north, west and southwest. Downtown Prior Lake is viewed as a separate commercial area from either the Priordale Mall area or the concentration of community commercial uses abutting 169th Street SE.

Existing land uses within the downtown area are shown on Figure X entitled Existing Conditions Analysis. Generally speaking, downtown Prior Lake contains four clusters of similar land uses. The land areas north and south of Dakota Street abutting Highway 13 contain auto-oriented businesses. Body shops and automotive repair shops are located between Main Avenue and Highway 13. An auto sales lot and an Amoco station with automotive repair abut Highway 13 further to the south.

The area east of Main Avenue, south of County Road 21 and north of Pleasant Street contains a number of destination commercial uses. Within this area, a hardware store, video rentals and a liquor store are located. All of these businesses are retail uses that are largely "drive to" destinations.



The western portion of downtown contains a public use campus area. In recent years, Prior Lake has made a commitment to retaining public uses as part of its downtown area. The area lying east of Arcadia Avenue, north of County Road 21 and south of Dakota Street is a public use campus. The area contains the Prior Lake City Hall, police department, and a new library, community resource center. The City of Prior Lake is a significant owner of downtown property.



The fourth major component of the downtown land use pattern is the core commercial area that generally abuts Main Avenue between County Road 21 and Dakota Street. This area exhibits the land use pattern of a traditional downtown. It is the location of a number of retail and office uses located in a mixture of older and more recently constructed buildings.

Although the four land use clusters represent an overall pattern of uses in the downtown area, a number of other downtown businesses do not fit within these boundaries. Of note are the VFW club on Main Avenue; the lumberyard between Main Avenue and Erie Avenue; the Scott Rice Telephone Company facility on Colorado Street; automotive repair at the corner of Colorado Street and Main Avenue; an auto repair facility on Main Avenue, north of Pleasant Avenue; and a gas station at the corner of Main Avenue and Dakota Street.

A number of the businesses identified above are either generally incompatible with a traditional pattern of downtown land uses or presently pose aesthetic or operational conflicts. The lumberyard, which is largely a wholesale business, is located in the heart of downtown. It is a facility with very little retail attraction, open storage space areas and low employment generation compared to the amount of land that the business occupies. It is not the type of business that requires a downtown location.

The auto repair businesses north of Dakota Street are well maintained buildings with attractive landscaping. Because of the detached location of these uses and the nature of their business operations, they are likely compatible with future downtown improvements. The auto sales lot on the north side of Dakota Street sits at one of the downtown entrances off of Highway 13. Because of the prominence of this location, a future use not requiring large outdoor storage and sales areas would improve the appearance of the area.

Other auto-oriented businesses conflict with establishing a stronger traditional downtown land use pattern. The gas station at the corner of Dakota Street and Main Avenue is generally well maintained but not the type of land use that would typically be found at the intersection of the two primary downtown streets. The auto repair facility on the corner of Colorado Street and Main Avenue raises the same concern, however, in the case of this business, the condition of the existing building also detracts from the appearance of the downtown area. The auto repair facility on the south end of Main Avenue, north of Pleasant Avenue, which also encompasses an existing house is again, classified in a similar manner. In the case of this business, however, outside storage of damaged vehicles and outside repair of vehicles on the residential lot detracts from the appearance of the area.





LEGEND

Residential Use	Historic/Cultural Use	Regional Bike Trail	Downtown Entry
Commercial Use	Religious Use	Public Parking Lot	Traffic Pattern
Governmental Use	Existing Woodland	Views	Pedestrian Crossing



**City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide**

Existing Conditions
Analysis

Mapmaker Group Inc.
12000 Hennepin Avenue, Suite 200
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55426
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WWW.MAPMAKERGROUP.COM

State Trunk Highway 13

- Three different entries provide good vehicle access to downtown.
- Limited pedestrian crossings.
- Steep slopes limit potential for trail or bikeway development to the south.
- Provides vehicular access to commercial areas on the north and south sides of downtown.

County Road 21

- Divides downtown to the north and south
- Limited pedestrian crossings.
- The backs of many businesses face road.
- No driveway access.
- Entry Plaza at Hwy 13 seems to float.
- Minimal landscape development.

South of County Road 21

- Municipal parking seems remote.
- Must drive through neighborhood to exit to the west.
- Residence on Pleasant Avenue and Main Ave. is isolated.
- Core of established businesses and potential for Scott Rice expansion.
- Varied architectural styles and materials / brick, stucco, wood, stone
- Older buildings at sidewalk, while newer construction tends to be setback from property line.
- Minimal landscape development.
- Wetland to south provides natural amenity and limits expansion possibilities.

North of County Road 21

- Municipal parking at corner of Main Ave provides immediate parking for visitors.
- Governmental node to the west.
- Residences on north end of downtown are isolated.
- Core of established businesses and vacant land provides potential for future expansion.
- Varied architectural styles and materials / brick, wood and stone.
- Most buildings are at edge of sidewalk.
- Historic building adds link to the past.
- Lakefront park provides developed amenity and limits expansion to the north.
- Business and residence on Erie Ave. are isolated.
- Police garage could be upgraded.
- Neighborhood to the West has good access.
- Potential site for Post Office relocation.



City of Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide

Existing Conditions
Analysis Notes

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Building Character

The strength of downtown Prior Lake's built environment comes from its existing pattern of development rather than its historic or unique architectural heritage. Downtown Prior Lake has a traditional downtown building pattern with structures placed at the right-of-way line. This pattern emphasizes pedestrian accessibility, placing businesses convenient to curbside parking and in close proximity to one another. The character and continuity of the buildings, however, has been significantly altered over time. Unlike neighboring Shakopee, downtown Prior Lake does not contain a recognized historic district. Although a few existing downtown buildings may retain some local historic significance, none of the structures in the area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Most of the buildings in the downtown area feature an assortment of false fronts that include mansard roof areas and a variety of wooden façade treatments. None of the older buildings retain any significant amount of their original architectural detail. Newer, infill buildings, stand as examples of typical suburban architecture. The building containing the video rental store and restaurant is indicative of contemporary highway commercial architecture with awnings serving as adornment and as a defining element for wall signage.



Typical Mansard Roof Attachment

While virtually all of the downtown buildings have "lost" their original style, many still contain original materials and partially hidden details that reveal hints of their past. The stone building in the northeast corner of Dakota Street and Main Avenue retains its original building façade with more recent window replacements. The rear wall of the old bank building in the southwest corner of the same intersection reveals some of the brick work detail that was part of the original structure.



If anything currently establishes a building pattern for Prior Lake's downtown area, it is the public buildings. City Hall, which incorporates portions of a grade school that was constructed in 1941, is a brick building. The recently opened library and community resource building, south of City Hall, is a noteworthy addition to the architecture of downtown. The new building retains the use of brick and contains strong architectural elements that are reminiscent of the community's railroad heritage. The new structure maintains an attractive presence on County Road 21, which is the former location of railroad right-of-way.



Prior Lake City Hall



Public Library and Community Resource Building



Comprehensive Plan

Prior Lake updated its Comprehensive Plan in April of 1999. A number of the plan's sections contain information pertinent to downtown. Lakefront, one of the planning districts identified in the plan, includes portions of downtown or "Town Center" as it is referenced in the plan. The Lakefront Neighborhood Planning District is clustered around Lakefront Park and Town Center. It includes a major portion of the Town Center and is bordered on the southwest by County Road 21, on the southeast by Highway 13 and on the north by Prior Lake. The plan identifies objectives for the district that include:

- Continue improving access to Lakefront Park to better integrate the park with adjacent neighborhoods, Town Center and other commercial areas. A trail system should link all of these areas.
- Ensure that redevelopment projects in this district include better pedestrian access and improved traffic circulation.

The plan also contains text that provides direction for the eventual improvement of the Town Center area. It states that, "the Town Center classification is a special designation for the historical and recognized Town Center, which has retained attributes of a "downtown," despite relocation by some original commercial uses. The classification strives to balance the civic center and contemporary commercial features with new cultural-focused institutions and enterprises, and redevelopment potential of retail and service uses.

*Excerpt from the 1999
Prior Lake Comprehensive
Plan*

The Town Center may be characterized as a service hub with limited retail shopping. Suburban vehicular access can be supported by effectively integrating peripheral and on-street parking.

Limited residential uses, excluding single-family detached dwellings, can be integrated with the commercial and service environment. Convalescent care facilities and congregate senior citizen housing are appropriate uses at selected locations away from thoroughfares.

Redevelopment stimulated by available City programs can effectively displace uses that are no longer compatible with the purposes of the Center.

The proximity to State Highway 13 and County Road 21 presents a dilemma for prospective development and redevelopment. The location presents prime access to the area and it offers an opportunity for enhanced viability for some businesses. The traffic generation and public safety needs are not conducive to private access drives onto either thoroughfare or to pedestrian crossings without electric lights.

The focus of the uses within the Town Center should be internal rather than external, recognizing those enterprises on the perimeters will have extra value of visibility. The Town Center should be the recognized civic, commercial and cultural entity.

The Town Center character should be defined by an approved Planned Unit Development plan; retail uses are expected to be relatively specialized and even



unique and should easily mix with service uses and cultural places, rather than serve as the foundation of another shopping node.”

Zoning

Prior Lake’s downtown area is presently zoned C-3, Specialty Business Use District. The purpose of this district is to allow for a variety of commercial uses within the framework of a traditional downtown area. The ordinance allows a variety of uses either as outright permitted uses, permitted uses subject to specific conditions, or uses allowed only through the issuance of a conditional use permit. Uses allowed under each of these classifications include the following:

Permitted Uses

- Medical/Dental Offices
- Retail
- Showrooms
- Offices
- Services
- Libraries
- Police and Fire Stations
- Business/Trade Schools
- Business Services
- Hotel/Motel
- Printing Process/Supplies
- Studios
- Museums/Art Galleries

Permitted Uses with Conditions

- Adult Day Care
- Dry Cleaning/Laundry
- Group Day Care
- Park/Open Space
- Private Entertainment
- Restaurants
- Multi-family Dwellings
- Community Centers
- Banks
- Appliance, small engine and bicycle repair
- Animal Handling
- Clubs and Lodges
- Convention/Exhibition Halls
- Food Service
- Public Service Structures
- Cluster Housing
- Elderly Housing
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Wholesale

Uses Permitted by Conditional Use Permit

- Motor Fuel Station

Transportation

Downtown Prior Lake sits at the junction of two major roadways, County Road 21 and State Trunk Highway 13. Both of these roadways have a significant influence on the downtown area and will continue to do so in the future. In 1999, traffic volumes on County Road 21, east and west of downtown respectively were 9,600 and 9,900 vehicles (ADT). Volumes on TH 13, north and south of the downtown area respectively were 16,900 and 15,200. By 2020, projections contained in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan identify significant increases. Traffic projections for the portions of County Road 21, east and west of downtown



respectively call for 17,000 and 25,000 vehicles. Projection for TH 13 both north and south of downtown call for vehicle counts of 25,000.

Traffic counts in and around the downtown area have long been a concern of the City and a topic of conversation with Scott County. In March of 2000, the County commissioned a traffic study focused on the intersection of Main Avenue and County Road 21. That study reached the following conclusions:

- The all-way stop at CSAH 21/Main Avenue currently operates at a good level of service.
- As traffic volumes increase, the CSAH 21/Main Avenue all-way stop is not an effective means of control. In the future, a signal could be used for traffic control. Scott County currently considers the intersection as meeting warrants for signal installation but stresses that the all-way stop should remain in place until traffic volumes render it insufficient.
- Signalizing CSAH 21/Main Avenue may immediately interfere with Main Avenue driveway accesses.
- Traffic forecasts indicate a future need for an additional through lane on TH 13 and a left turn lane on CSAH 21 at TH 13.
- Future CSAH 21 traffic may backup from TH 13 through the Main Avenue intersection. This backup is minimized if the signal timing at the two intersections is coordinated.

The recommendations of the CSAH 21/Main Avenue Intersection Traffic Study and conversations between the City and the County are being used as a basis for future downtown planning. Based on the report, it is assumed that the all-way stop will remain in place until sometime in the near future when the capacity of the intersection in its present form is overwhelmed by growing traffic volumes. At that time, a signal will be installed along with turn lane improvements along CSAH 21 and possible through lane improvements on TH 13. The signal will have an impact on the existing driveways that access Main Avenue both north and south of CSAH 21. Vehicles waiting on Main will periodically block the driveway entrances.

In the long term, it is possible but not currently recommended that a median might be extended along CSAH 21, across the Main Avenue intersection. Should this occur, Main Avenue would be limited to right-in, right-out access only. At that time, it is presumed that the traffic signal would be relocated to the CSAH 13/Arcadia Avenue intersection to provide full movement access to the downtown area.



Planning Process and Community Input

In order for any planning effort to be effective, it must represent the goals and collective vision of the stakeholders that it is intended to benefit. In the case of the Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide, the stakeholders are not simply downtown business interests but the community-at-large. Therefore, it was essential to the success of the Guide to involve all interested parties in its creation.

The planning process used to create the Guide blended the expertise of the community with the consulting team experienced in land use, commercial markets, and public finance. Two key elements, participation and evaluation, were at the core of the process. Participation is critical in reaching a consensus regarding community desires. While professional consultants can apply their respective expertise, citizens bring a different perspective – they are the real experts regarding downtown Prior Lake. They provided their expertise in a planning process that used a series of town meeting and workshops. The initial town meeting sought participation by the entire community. Evaluation occurred during a series of public workshops with representatives of both the private and public sectors. All of the meetings were held under the auspices of the Prior Lake Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Initial Community Meeting

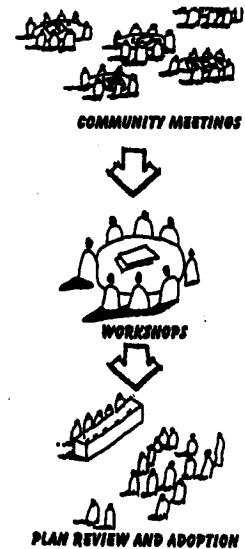
At the beginning of the process, an initial town meeting was held on May 13, 1999. The session, which was attended by approximately 50 community representatives, consisted of a series of exercises focused on gaining insights into downtown Prior Lake. A complete summary of the session is found in the appendix. The following are highlights:

When asked, what characteristics define downtown Prior Lake, community-meeting attendees offered the following:

- Proximity to the park
- Office/service orientation
- Civic structures
- Hodge-podge of quality and building styles
- County Road 21 is a plus and a minus
- Lack of Identity
- Location of a major library
- Heart of the Prior Lake community
- Thoroughfare, not a destination

When asked to look into the future and imagine what downtown might be like, community-meeting attendees stated:

- Expand and connect downtown – link both sides of Highway 12 and County Road 21
- Provide adequate parking
- Enhance park amenities – access to Lakefront Park
- Create attractions – possibly a farmers market or arts and crafts fair – encourage more pedestrian traffic
- Expand housing opportunities



- Improve appearance -- make the area aesthetically pleasing -- add streetscaping improvements
- Expand retail and entertainment uses -- consider mixed use retail/housing, add a variety of retail and restaurants
- Expand office uses
- Accommodate pedestrians
- Improve public facilities

When asked to identify downtown Prior Lake's opportunities and challenges, attendees offered:

Opportunities

- Incorporate natural amenities such as the wetlands
- Reflect Prior Lake's history
- Smaller may be better -- small scale might actually be advantageous
- Downtown is a center for public services
- Expand business opportunities -- increase downtown's customer base, add new businesses, increase the tax base
- Area has good transportation access
- Land is affordable
- Prior Lake has the chance to "do it right" -- opportunity can be created by need
- Identifiable redevelopment sites exist -- Main Avenue to City Hall -- Dakota Street to Lakefront Park
- Provide youth activities

Challenges

- Paradigm shift -- getting the community to "buy in" -- changing the perceptions of downtown
- Manage the impacts of change -- keep current businesses while making needed changes
- Gain consensus/cooperation -- reach a consensus of property owners and community cooperation
- How do we pay for it?
- Attract local and outside interest
- Overcome regulatory barriers

The material that was gathered at the initial meeting was important in setting the stage for subsequent planning activities. The thoughts that were expressed at the meeting were the basis for the establishment of a vision statement and a set of guiding principles for downtown, both of which are presented in the next section. The ideas that were generated also played a key role in the formulation of alternative future land use concepts for the downtown area. The concept alternatives are also documented within this report.



Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision can be defined in a number of ways. One definition states that vision is an “imaginative contemplation”, the ability “to actually perceive something not actually visible.” The Downtown Prior Lake Development Guide is all about contemplation – with a little help and effort on the part of a lot of people, what might the area become? How might it change? What should that change include?

A Vision for Downtown Prior Lake

A common vision that addresses these questions is an important foundation for the Downtown Development Guide. During the preparation of the Guide, the vision statement was used as a constant reminder of what residents and businesspeople indicated was important. After adoption of the Guide, the community may need to periodically review the vision statement in order to maintain its focus. The vision language makes a strong statement that is indicative of the community’s desired future.

Based on input received at the initial public meeting, the following vision statement was assembled for the Development Guide.

Vision Statement

Downtown Prior Lake will continue to be the community focus of government, culture and social interaction. Businesses within the area will provide a wide range of goods, services and entertainment.

Downtown Prior Lake will be a vibrant destination. Its development pattern will echo the lake environment that serves as an icon for the Prior Lake community.

Downtown Prior Lake will invoke a strong expression of community pride.

Guiding the Vision

Guiding principles are intended to serve as statements of more specific criteria by which ideas, concepts and components of the Downtown Development Guide can be judged. Downtown Prior Lake will continue to evolve over time, generally in accordance with the adopted guide. Decisions on issues that are not specifically addressed in the guide, however, will be necessary to react to unique circumstances or conditions that were unknown at the time the plan was assembled. Because of this, it is important that the tone of the guiding principles be upheld.

In doing so, the principles will help ensure that decisions that are made are consistent with the overall direction for the community that is articulated in the development guide.

Together, the vision statement and guiding principles serve the following purposes:

- They *orient the community to the future*, even to a future that is twenty years distant.



- They require *imagination*, recognizing that the direction they set today will be the reality of the future.
- They look to *current conditions and community traditions* for clues to the appropriate future.
- They are based on a *shared understanding* of what the community desires for itself.
- They will be used as *tools for evaluation* of proposals, projects, ideas and future directions.
- They will be an *anchor during conflict*, a way of finding common ground and shared values.
- They become a *basis for coordination and cooperation*.
- They are a *source of energy and enthusiasm* for maintaining a commitment to the future of downtown Prior Lake.

Based on input received during the public meeting, the following set of guiding principles has been assembled for the Development Guide. They are listed randomly without any attempt to imply priorities or an overall ranking.

Guiding Principles

- **A strategic approach...**

The development process for Downtown Prior Lake must be strategic in that it encourages further action with every step taken. As resources are applied, they must be seen as an investment, with a return that can be used to foster additional improvements. This series of sustained actions will be the fuel that keeps Prior Lake moving toward a more vibrant future.

- ***A good place to do business...***

Downtown Prior Lake needs to be a viable place for businesses to succeed. The downtown area should be organized to serve the needs of the community and businesses should be recruited to supplement the current mix of goods and services.

- ***The center of Prior Lake...***

Downtown Prior Lake has always been and will continue to be an important commercial district in the community. By creating a dynamic mix of goods, services and activities, downtown can continue to be the center of the community. Offering attractions that appeal to a mix of customers creates an active and lively place. It creates a compelling reason for people to come downtown, to gather and to interact with one another.

- ***Downtown, a place for people...***

The downtown environment should be pedestrian friendly. Streets and parking areas should be designed in a manner that creates an attractive and safe pedestrian environment.



- ***An opportunity to establish a unique sense of place...***

Downtown Prior Lake lacks a common theme or historical reference. As buildings are remodeled and new structures are built, they should help unify the downtown area through common setbacks, compatible materials, and facades that are inviting from the street.

- ***Compliment the adjacent neighborhoods...***

Healthy neighborhoods will support the revitalization of downtown Prior Lake. Clear boundaries for the business area and integrated higher density housing will create stability for the surrounding single-family neighborhoods and help to maintain consistent property values.

- ***Meet and greet on the street...***

Streets are great meeting places. Streets are accessible to residents and visitors and they are a key part of the outdoor environment of the downtown area. Well-designed streets can do more than accommodate the movement of vehicles. They can become a stage for human activity. Streetscape design elements can tell a story about the community and serve as a reminder of Prior Lake's unique lake environment.

- ***Parks, not just parking...***

The downtown Prior Lake environment offers unique natural and man-made recreational opportunities. Parks and recreation areas should become integral components of the downtown area.

- ***Work together to attain common goals...***

Revitalization of downtown Prior Lake will require investment by both the City and private property owners. Public resources should be used to provide an environment that attracts private investment.



Alternative Concepts

The input received from the general public and the EDA coupled with the vision and guiding principle statements was used as a basis to assemble three alternative concepts. All of the concepts focused on providing a uniform set of improvements. They included the following:

- Civic Center – allow for growth and expansion of existing facilities
- Traffic – improve access to downtown, improve pedestrian movement
- Parking – improve access to commercial properties, provide safe and aesthetically pleasing parking
- Higher Density Housing – integrate housing into the existing framework of downtown, promote daytime activities, add to the customer base of downtown
- Community Gathering – create a civic focal point, accommodate space for community celebrations and events
- Commercial Growth – provide new opportunities for commercial businesses to compliment existing growth
- Expand Existing Commercial – foster new growth of existing businesses
- Pedestrian Linkages – provide connections to the community, create attractive and inviting pedestrian areas, establish a character of the street that fits the Prior Lake community
- Entries – create inviting ways to access downtown
- Open Space Linkages – improve access to regional trails, local trails, and Lakefront Park

Based on these points, three alternatives were assembled. Prior to the presentation of each of the options, the following is a list of design elements that were common to all of the concepts:

- The volume of traffic on County Road 21 will continue to grow.
- Each of the concepts depicts alternate locations for a new Post Office. At the time of the plan preparation, a number of sites throughout Prior Lake were being considered for a new Post Office. Ultimately, the decision was made to locate the post office outside of the downtown area. Limited land availability for parking and difficulty in assembling land parcels to match the Post Office's needs were major considerations in the decision to locate the facility outside of the downtown area.
- All of the concepts emphasize the strengthening of the existing public campus adjacent to City Hall. Prior Lake has made a number of past



CIVIC CENTER

- Future expansion opportunities
- Allow for growth and redevelopment of existing facilities.

TRAFFIC

- Improve access to downtown
- Improve pedestrian vehicular relationships

PARKING

- Improve parking lot identification
- Improve access to commercial properties
- Parking areas should be safe and aesthetically pleasing.

HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

- Creates new downtown users
- Integrate into existing downtown framework.
- Promotes all day activity downtown

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Creates a civic focal point
- Create a space for community celebrations & events.

LEGEND

- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Governmental Use
- - - Downtown Boundary



COMMERCIAL GROWTH

- New growth compliments existing business.
- Provides new opportunities for commercial business

EXPAND EXISTING COMMERCIAL

- Create new opportunity
- Foster new growth of existing business.

PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

- Provide linkages to community
- Character of street should reflect unique qualities of Prior Lake.
- Pedestrian spaces should be pleasant and inviting.

ENTRIES

- Invite you into downtown.
- Reflect unique qualities of Prior Lake & downtown.
- Enhance pedestrian and vehicular movement.

OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Improve access to neighborhoods
- Improve access to Prior Lake and create a diverse downtown experience.



**City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide**

Development
Options - Components



decisions that emphasize public services in its downtown area. All of the concepts continue to support this position.

- Future development and redevelopment efforts in the downtown area were limited to land lying west of Trunk Highway 13. Traditionally, Highway 13 has been a dividing line between commercial and residential developments.
- All of the concepts depicted locations for multi-family residential development in the downtown area. There is a market need in Prior Lake and most communities for multi-family housing. A downtown site provides locations for such housing adjacent to available goods and services as well as Lakefront Park, which offers a wide-range of recreational facilities.
- Each of the concepts shows a strong connection to Lakefront Park. Lakefront Park is a tremendous asset for downtown Prior Lake. Each of the alternatives seeks to establish stronger physical and visual connections to Lakefront Park.
- Arcadia Avenue is extended south across County Road 21 enhancing the connection of the north and south sides of the business district.
- The Kop farm on the north end of Main Avenue is incorporated into Lakefront Park.

One of the purposes of the alternatives was to test a full range of possibilities in the downtown area. Accordingly, they explored differing approaches to expanding or retaining the current supply of commercial land as well as differing locations and quantities of multi-family housing. The following is an overview of each of the concepts.

Concept A – Crossroads at Main Avenue and Dakota Street

Land Use Alternatives

Concept A is shown on Figure X. This alternative explores retaining a compact downtown area with an overall boundary that reflects existing conditions. One of the major features of this concept is a shift of the “100% corner” from the intersection of Main Avenue and County Road 21 to the intersection of Main Avenue and Dakota Street. Historically, the corner of Main and Dakota was the prominent intersection corner in Prior Lake. The purpose behind investigating the shift is to minimize the impacts of the future growth of traffic on County Road 21 on downtown businesses. The shift allows a pedestrian orientation for the intersection that is not possible on a roadway carrying 25,000 vehicles per day.

The heightened emphasis of the intersection of Main Avenue and Dakota Street is paired with streetscape improvements on both of the roadways. Intensive streetscape improvements are envisioned along Main Avenue from County Road 21 to just north of Dakota Street. A similar level of improvements is contemplated along Dakota Street. Main Avenue south of 21 will also see



CIVIC CENTER

- Civic improvements focus on Erie Avenue.
- Erie Avenue becomes pedestrian mall linking downtown to Lakefront Park.

TRAFFIC

- Main Ave. and County Rd. 21 has improved pedestrian crossing.

- Downtown redevelopment is focused on Main Ave. and Dakota St.

PARKING

- Diagonal parking is implemented on Main Ave. and Dakota St.
- Parking lots are located behind buildings and in close proximity to commercial uses.

HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

- Becomes a transition use between existing neighborhoods and downtown.

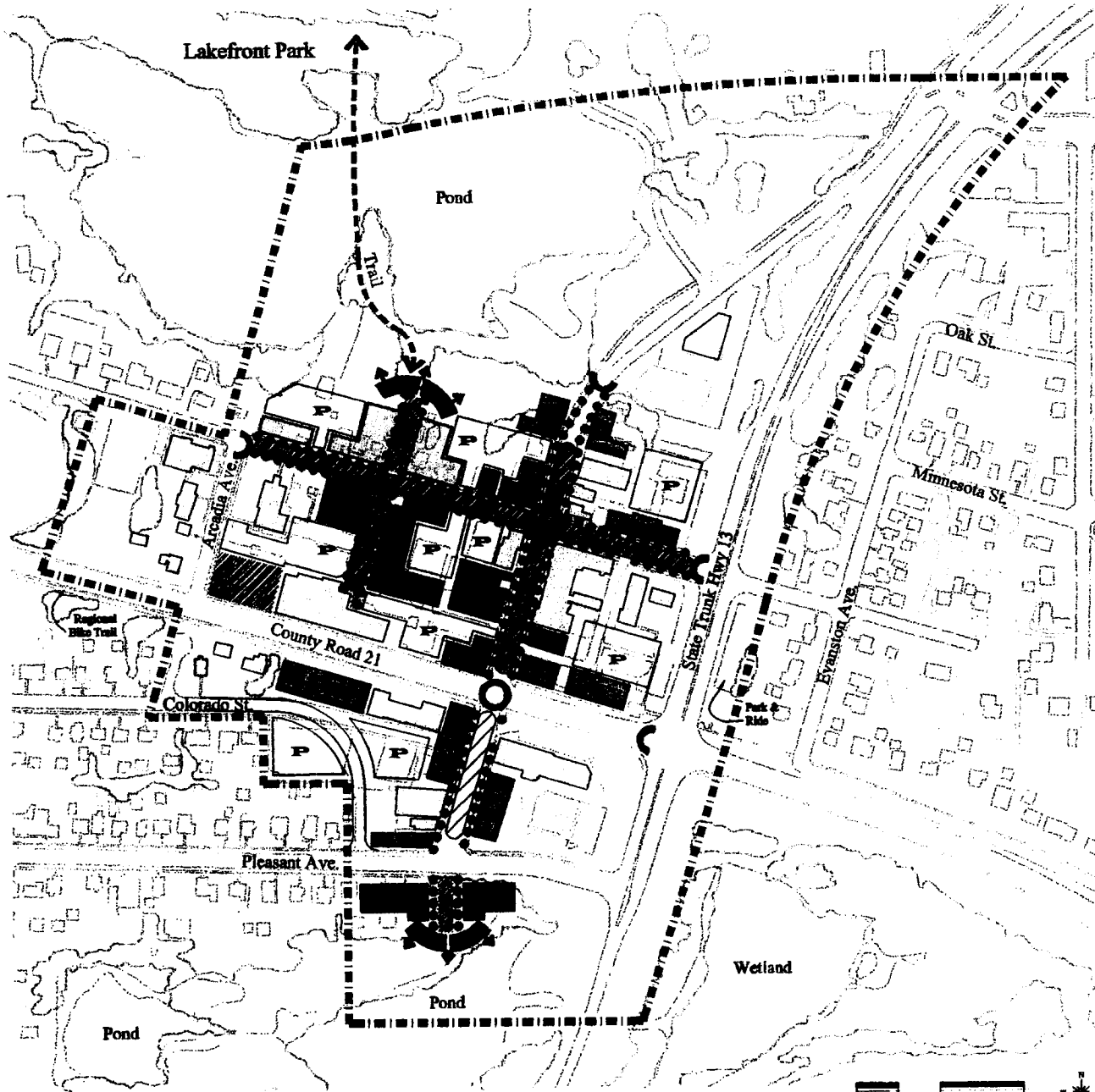
COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Erie Ave. mall becomes a civic focal point and space for celebrations and events.



LEGEND

- Community Gathering Space
- Node
- Gateway
- Parking
- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Governmental Use
- Mixed Use
- Traditional Downtown District
- Pedestrian-oriented Open Space
- Downtown Boundary



COMMERCIAL GROWTH

- New growth infills vacant areas along Main Ave. and Dakota St.
- New growth complements and enhances existing business by creating an increased density of commercial use.

PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

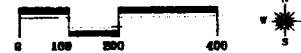
- Sidewalks along Main Ave. and Dakota St. are enhanced to encourage people to walk, shop and linger downtown.
- The street amenities reflect the history and unique qualities of Prior Lake.

ENTRIES

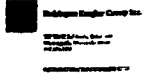
- Focus on Dakota St. and Main Ave. as the primary streets in downtown.

OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Erie Ave. mall links downtown to Lakefront Park.
- Pedestrian mall at Pleasant Ave. and Main Ave. links downtown to natural areas to the south.



**City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide- Alternative A - Crossroads at Main Avenue and Dakota Street**



streetscape improvements. Because of County Road 21, which separates the area, streetscaping in this area will be of a compatible nature of improvements but as a less intensive level. For example, pedestrian seating areas will be more frequent and prominent on the northern sections of Main Avenue than they will be in the southern section of the street.

Concept A calls for significant land use changes over time. The area north of Dakota Street, generally west of Main Avenue is a site identified for multi-family housing. Multi-family housing in this area replaces existing single-family homes. The plan identifies numerous infill-building opportunities in the downtown area. The lumberyard site on the west side of Main Avenue is redeveloped for commercial and possibly public uses.

Off-street parking is generally located in the interior portions of the blocks flanking Main Avenue. Additionally, the plan contemplates diagonal parking on both sides of Main Avenue and along one side of Dakota Street. Erie Avenue is emphasized as both a vehicular access roadway and a pedestrian corridor connecting to the north to Lakefront Park.

In order to encourage a concentration of buildings along Main Avenue south of 21, Concept A shows Colorado Street being rerouted to the south making a connection to Pleasant Avenue. This alignment eliminates the connection of Colorado Street to Main Avenue, which exists as an intersection in close proximity to the intersection of CSAH 21 and Main Avenue.

A future mixed-use redevelopment is shown at the terminus of Main Avenue at Pleasant Avenue. The plan contemplates opening a vista at the terminus of the street to the wetland area to the south. A pedestrian plaza affording views to the wetland could separate mixed-use buildings containing ground floor office and/or retail development and attached housing on the upper floors. This feature would strengthen the tie between downtown Prior Lake and the adjacent natural amenities.

The existing green space in the foreground of City Hall is retained as an open space area.

A summary of the characteristics of the Crossroads at Main Avenue and Dakota Street includes:

- Shift of emphasis of downtown pedestrian oriented retail activity north of County Road 21
- Higher level of streetscape improvements along Main Avenue, north of 21 and along Dakota Street
- Compatible streetscape improvements along Main Avenue, south of 21
- Expansion of a public campus adjacent to Erie Avenue with a pedestrian link along Erie Avenue to the north. The campus could include and expanded City Hall, a new police building, etc.
- Mixed use buildings are located at the terminus of Main Avenue



- Colorado Street is re-routed to Pleasant Avenue
- New growth and infill of commercial uses occurs
- Higher density housing is located north of Dakota Street
- Diagonal parking is installed on Main Avenue and Dakota Street
- Interior surface parking lots are located in close proximity to businesses

Concept B – Main Street Revitalization

Concept B, like Concept A retains the current boundaries of the downtown area. Concept B, however, examines the retention of Main Avenue and Dakota Street as the prime downtown intersection. Accordingly, major streetscape improvements are located along Main Avenue both north and south of County Road 21 and along CSAH 21 from Arcadia Avenue to Trunk Highway 13.

Since Main Avenue has such prominence in this concept, visual access to Lakefront Park on the north and to the wetland to the south is part of this concept. At both locations, small plazas could serve as gathering spaces allowing views of the adjacent amenities. The trail connection to Lakefront Park connects to the northern plaza area.

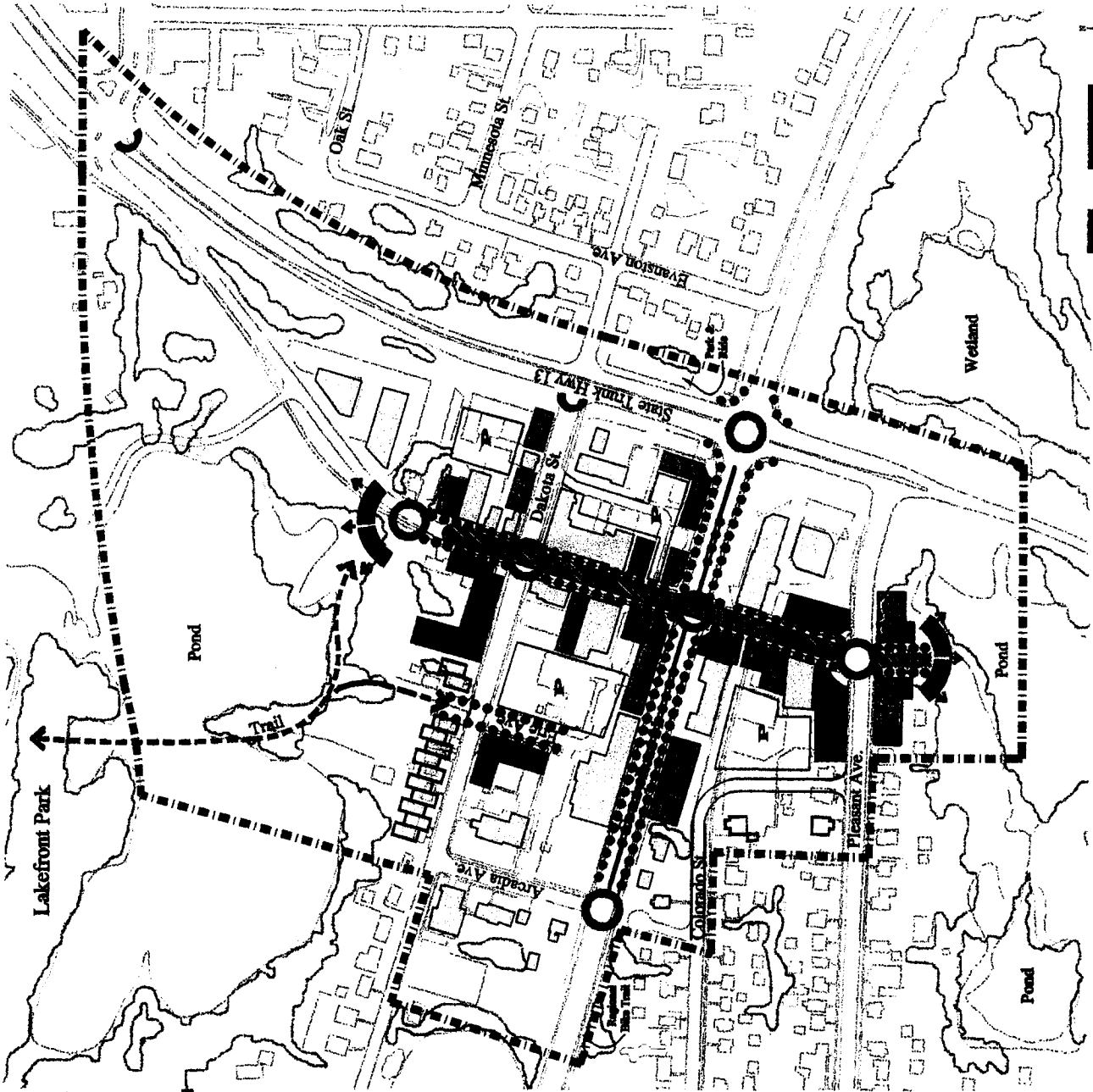
Concept B places multi-family housing north of Dakota Street. The public use at the corner of Dakota Street and Main Avenue was envisioned as a possible Post Office facility at the time of the preparation of the plan. Since the Post Office chose a site outside of the downtown area, either a mixed-use residential/commercial development or an exclusively commercial development could be located on the corner.

Concept B calls for continuity along Main Avenue from Dakota Street to Pleasant Street. The ability to tie the north and south segments of Main Avenue together as one continuous street and business area is threatened by the presence of CSAH 21 and ever increasing traffic volumes. Heavy traffic passing through Prior Lake on 21 may make it difficult in not impossible to create a true connection between the northern and southern segments of Main Avenue.

A summary of the Main Street Revitalization concept includes:

- Emphasis on existing Main Avenue, both north and south of 21
- Civic use as a possible anchor at Main Avenue and Dakota Avenue
- Infill commercial along Main Avenue
- Housing on the north side of Dakota Street overlooking Lakefront Park
- Diagonal parking on Main Avenue and Dakota Street
- County Road 21 has more intensive streetscape improvements



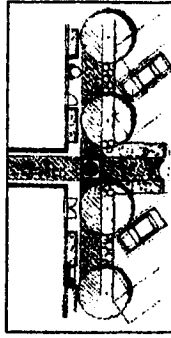


COMMERCIAL GROWTH

- Growth is focused on Main Ave.

PARKING

- Diagonal parking is implemented along Main Ave., thus doubling current parking counts.
- Parking lots are located in close proximity to commercial users.
- Colorado St. is re-oriented to Pleasant St. creating more opportunity for commercial expansion on Main Ave.



PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

- Main Ave. is enhanced to encourage walking from Pleasant Ave. to Lakefront Park.
- Main Ave. reflects a traditional Main St. with a Lakefront theme expressing the unique relationship between the city and Prior Lake.

ENTRIES

- The lakefront theme is carried from Main Ave. to entries at Hwy 13 and County Rd. 21.

OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Connections are made with pedestrian plazas and trail linkages to Lakefront Park and the natural areas to the south.

CIVIC CENTER

- Expands along Dakota St. to Main Ave.
- Civic use anchors Main & Dakota intersection

TRAFFIC

- Co. Rd. 21 becomes landscaped boulevard, which slows traffic down within the downtown district.
- Intersection of Co. Rd. 21 & Main is improved to enhance pedestrian crossing.

HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

- Acts as transition between existing neighborhoods and downtown.
- Housing takes advantage of natural amenities to the north and south.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Main Ave. is revitalized to become civic focal point. Events and celebrations focus on Main Ave.

LEGEND

- Community Gathering Space
- Node
- Gateway
- Parking
- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Governmental Use
- Mixed Use
- Traditional Downtown District
- Downtown Boundary



City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide- Alternative B- Main Street Revitalization



- Colorado Street is re-routed to Pleasant Avenue
- The integrity of the concept depends on the ability to have reasonable access across CSAH 21 on Main Avenue

Concept C – A Downtown District

At the initial community meeting in 1999, a number of participants recognized the value of a smaller, more compact downtown area. Others who participated in the meeting saw value in an expanded downtown area. In order to investigate this latter opinion, Concept C was created.

Concept C establishes a larger downtown district with significant opportunities for growth and change. One of the most significant features of this plan is the change in the roadway system.

As a part of the Downtown District, Trunk Highway 13 remains the eastern boundary of the area. County Road 21 continues to be a major regional roadway carrying traffic through the downtown area. Local streets, however, are expanded as part of this concept. From the north intersection of Main Avenue and TH 13, the entry to downtown is reconstructed to serve as a parkway overlooking Lakefront Park. The road meanders to the southwest along the bluff line, north of Dakota Street intersecting with Arcadia Avenue. Arcadia Avenue is extended south to Pleasant Avenue. The area east of the extension of Arcadia is redeveloped into multi-family housing and commercial uses. This area constitutes one of the plan's new areas for larger scale commercial redevelopment.

On the north end, another substantial redevelopment area is created in this plan. The re-routing of the north entry road creates opportunities for both residential and mixed-use development in the northern portion of the downtown area. These uses would support expanded commercial infill opportunities in this plan.

As with the previous concepts, Concept C forges stronger connections to Lakefront Park and to the wetlands lying south of Pleasant Avenue. On the north end, trail connections access downtown streets at Main Avenue, Erie Avenue and Arcadia Avenue. The public campus remains around the existing City Hall area. In this alternative, however, the City Hall is expanded to the south replacing the public green space shown on the other alternatives.

Since Concept C emphasizes a district, streetscape improvements are shown on all of the area roadways. More intensive improvements occur along CSAH 21 and Main Avenue.

A summary of the characteristics of the Downtown District includes:

- Expanded concept creates a larger downtown area
- A parkway is created at the northern end connecting to Main Avenue and Arcadia Avenue
- Main Avenue contains median landscaping and parallel parking



CIVIC CENTER

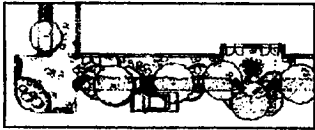
- Expands to create gateway at Arcadia & Co. Rd. 21.

TRAFFIC

- Existing street grid is extended to create a downtown district.
- Parkway is created on north to bring Lakefront Park & downtown together.

PARKING

- Main Ave. would remain parallel parking with center median landscaped.
- Parking lots are located in close proximity to commercial uses and in the interior of city blocks.



HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

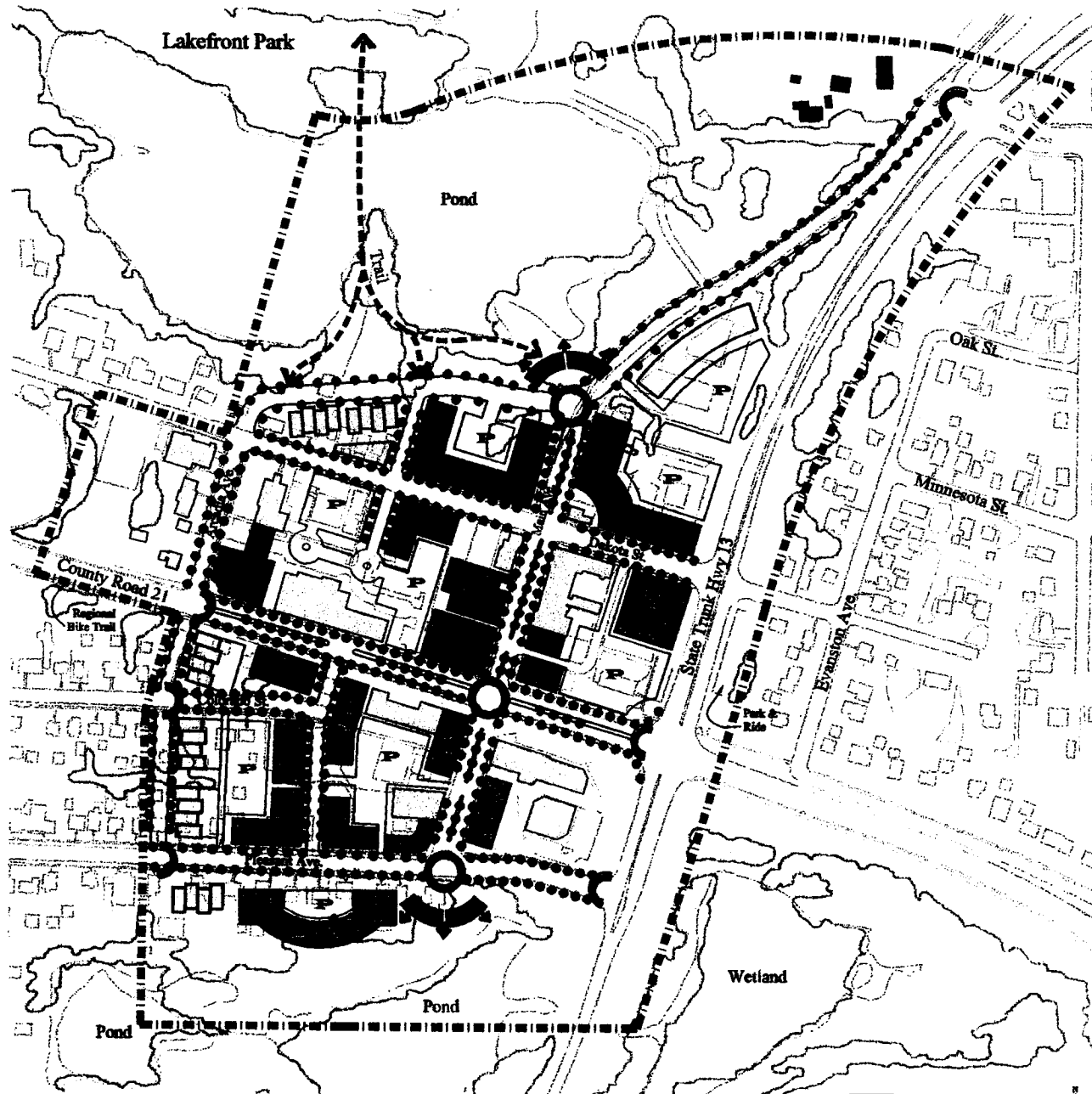
- Overlooks Lakefront Park and creates a new downtown neighborhood.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Plaza at intersection of Main and Parkway becomes community focal point.

LEGEND

- Community Gathering Space
- Node
- Gateway
- Parking
- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Governmental Use
- Mixed Use
- Downtown Boundary



COMMERCIAL GROWTH

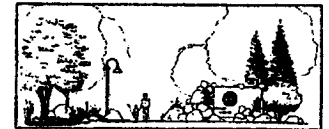
- Retail is focused on Main Ave. with mixed use introduced in new neighborhood.
- Office District created south of Co. Rd. 21.

PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES

- Main Ave. remains center of commerce.
- Pedestrian spaces begin to reflect some of the materials used in Lakefront Park.

ENTRIES

- North entry extends all the way to State Hwy 13 and Lakefront Parkway.
- Entries reflect materials and character expressed on Main Ave.



OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Links are created to the south wetland and Lakefront Park.



City of Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide- Alternative C- A Downtown District

Planning Board for the City of Prior Lake
 1000 Main Ave. S.
 Prior Lake, MN 55372
 952-469-1111

- The trail from Lakefront park has a number of connections to the downtown area
- Community gathering spaces occur at the north and south ends of Main Avenue
- Colorado Street is re-routed making a connection to both Main Avenue and CSAH 21
- The existing public campus area is expanded
- Substantial infill commercial along Main Avenue, Colorado Street and Pleasant Avenue
- Off-street parking is placed on the interior of all major blocks
- Multi-family housing is added in the northern and western portions of the downtown area

In addition to the land use concepts, the exploration phase of the creation of the Downtown Development Guide also examined appropriate architectural themes. Because of the tremendous range of building styles in the downtown area, no theme is currently readily perceptible. In order to examine possible themes to help unify the appearance of downtown, historical resources and input from the Prior Lake community were considered. As a result, three possible theme topics emerged. They include the following:

- A "lake" theme based on the obvious fact that Prior Lake is a lake community. Prior Lake itself is not visible from the downtown area. The only body of water adjacent to downtown is the pond in Lakefront Park. Future physical improvements can reflect the community's lake theme and heritage.
- A "historical, railroad" theme based on the fact that the railroad played a key role in the original establishment of the community. Materials such as brick and building styles echoing early railroad architecture could be included as part of this theme. The new community library and resource center has elements of railroad architecture.
- A "park" theme based on the location of downtown adjacent to Lakefront Park. The park theme could emphasize natural materials and native plantings as part of streetscape improvements.

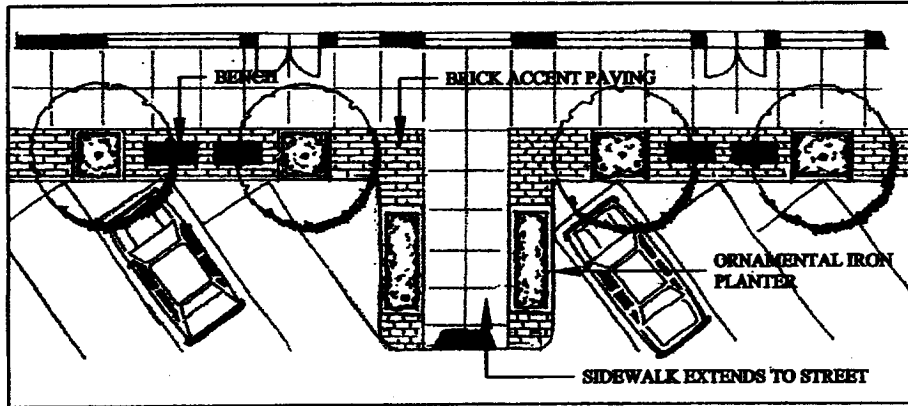
Lake Theme

The lake theme is intended to remind downtown visitors that Prior Lake is a lake community. Accordingly, design elements reflect a nautical influence in subtle ways with materials and colors. Figure X graphically depicts some of the qualities that could be incorporated into design elements to reflect this theme. Major components include:

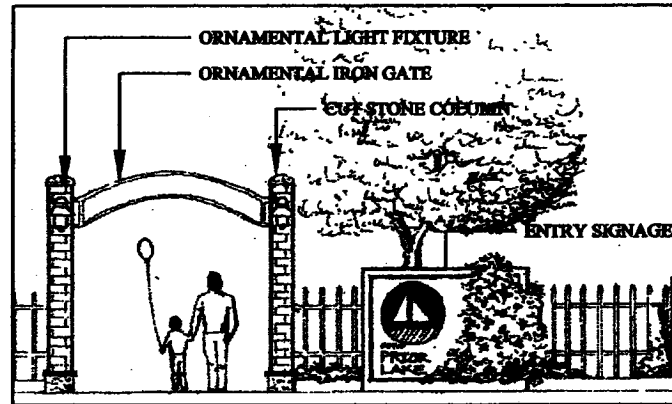
Architectural Theme Alternatives



Paving Pattern



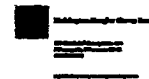
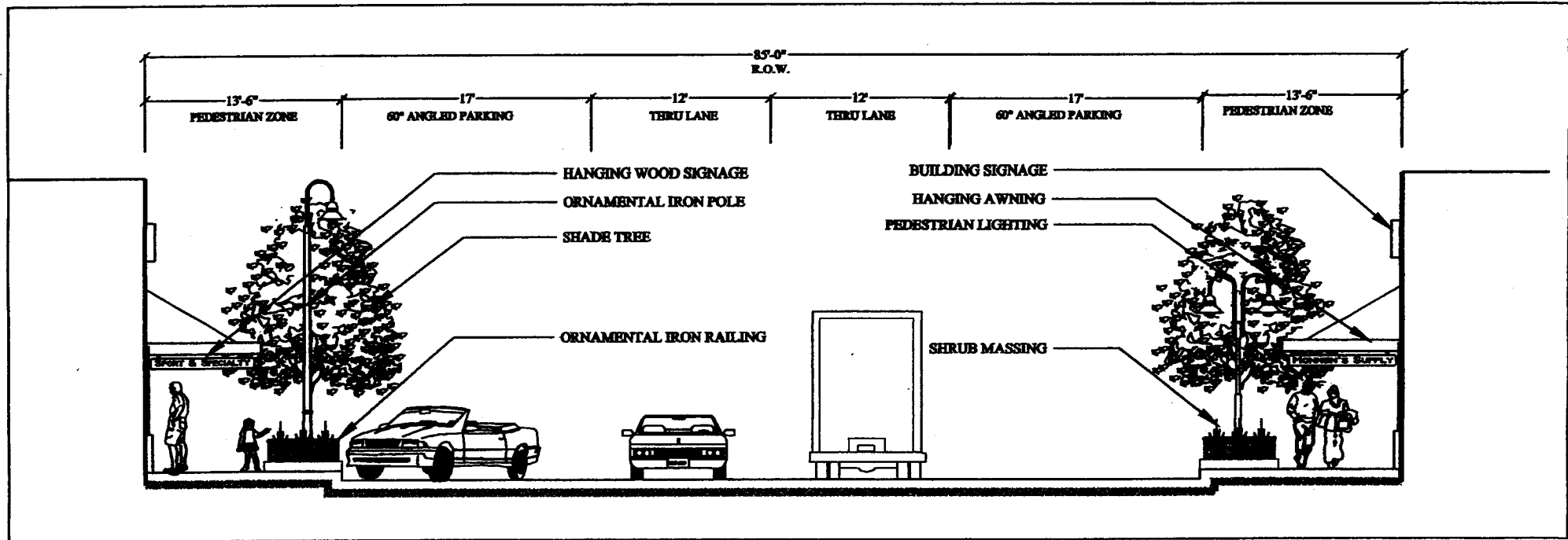
Pedestrian Gateway



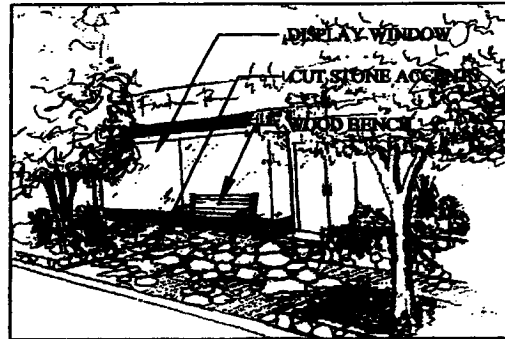
Streetscape Character



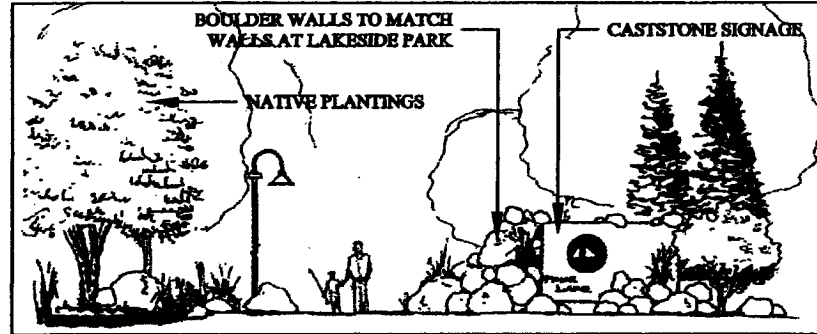
Section through Main Ave.



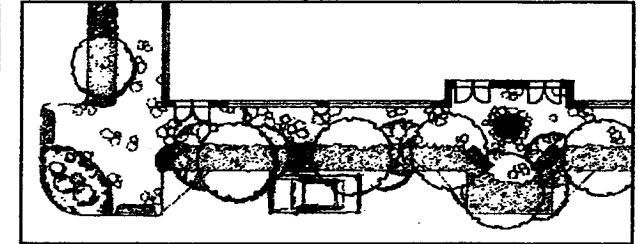
Streetscape Character



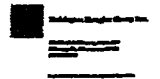
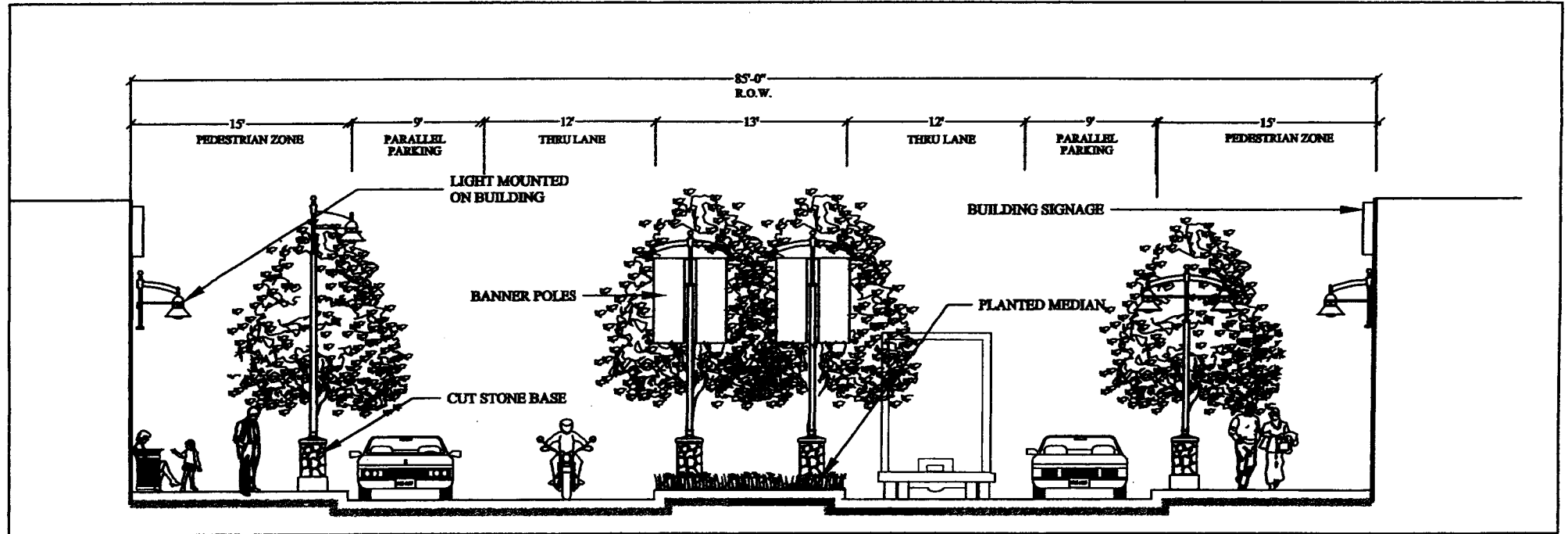
Pedestrian Gateway



Paving Pattern



Section through Main Ave.



- Ornamental lighting and banner poles
- Wall signage on buildings
- Use of native plant materials

In October of 1999, a public workshop was held to solicit community input on the alternative land use concepts and the identified theme alternatives. Participants collaborated in groups in a "hands on" work session marking up the plans and making suggested additions and modifications. The result of the effort is depicted in Figure X, the Public Comments Composite Plan. A written summary of each of the group's comments is located in the appendix.

Community Input – Composite Plan

The composite plan contains some of the features of each of the options. The most notable characteristic of the plan is the emphasis of a compact downtown rather than the expansive development pattern represented on Concept C. Interestingly, when the public was asked which plan they would select if they could not make any changes, Concept C, the Downtown District garnered the second highest vote total.

A summary of the elements shown on the Public Comments Composite Plan includes:

- Main Avenue and CSAH 21 are retained as the focus intersection of downtown
- Infill commercial occurs along Main Avenue
- Multi-family housing is located north of Dakota Street
- A mixed-use development is located at the southern terminus of Main Avenue
- Arcadia Avenue is extended south to Colorado Street, Colorado Street is extended south to Pleasant Avenue
- Main Avenue north of the downtown area takes on the appearance of a parkway
- Erie Avenue is improved as a vehicle access and pedestrian way connecting to the park
- Future expansion of public uses occurs east of the existing City Hall
- Diagonal parking is installed on both sides of Main Avenue and on one side of Dakota Street
- Interior off-street parking lots are located in all blocks



CIVIC CENTER

- New Civic Structures are located along Erie Ave. to the south of Dakota St. These structures reinforce the existing civic core and set the framework for a connection between Lakefront Park and Downtown.

TRAFFIC

- The intersection of Main Ave. & Hwy 13 is improved to become a main entry into the Downtown. Main is a parkway from Hwy 13 to downtown. The new alignment will enhance the entry to downtown through the use of streetscape elements similar to those used on the Main Ave. restructuring.

- Arcadia Ave. is extended from Colorado St. to County Rd 21, to increase access to the businesses south of County Rd 21 and reduce the amount of traffic going through the neighborhood to the west.

- Colorado St. is rerouted to the south to connect with Pleasant Ave. This will open the southwest corner of Main Ave. and County Rd 21 to development. It will also reduce awkward traffic movements at Main Ave. and Colorado St.

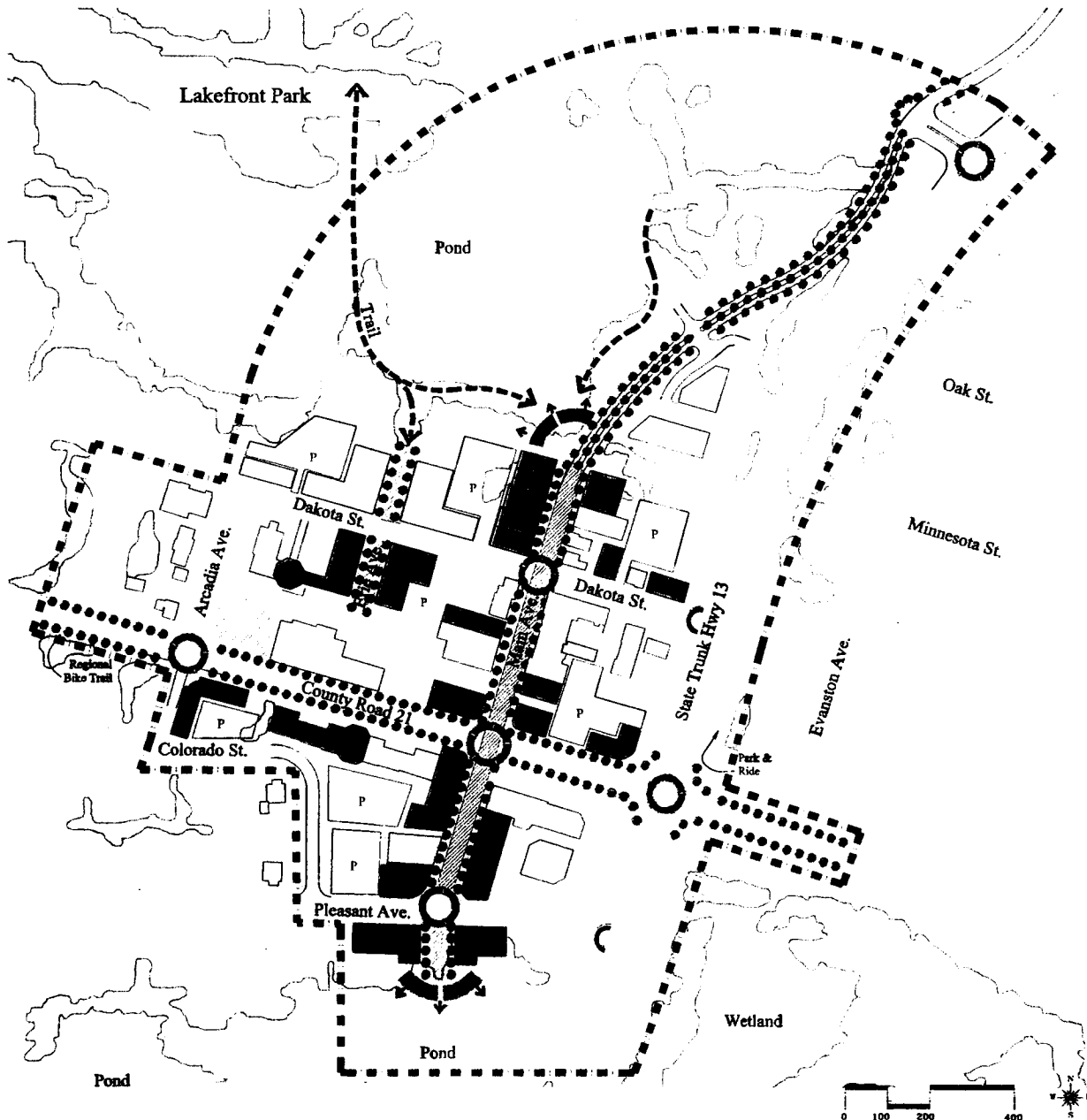
- County Rd 21 is improved within the downtown limits. The combination of turn lanes and the Arcadia Ave. extension will help to slow traffic down within the downtown limits and increase opportunity for people to access downtown businesses.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Commercial growth is focused on Main Ave. Commercial areas also begin to extend out and have a presence on Hwy 13.

LEGEND

	Community Gathering Space
	Improved Intersection
	Gateway
	Parking
	Residential Use
	Commercial Use
	Civic Use
	Mixed Use
	Traditional Downtown District
	Green Space
	Downtown Boundary



HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

- New housing is located along Erie Ave. to the north of Dakota St. These structures reinforce the framework established by the new civic structures to the south and support the connection between downtown and Lakefront Park.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Community gathering spaces anchor the north and south ends of Main Ave. They reinforce the importance of Main Ave. as a community focal point and connect downtown to Lakefront Park and the natural areas to the south.

PARKING

- Main Ave is restructured to accommodate diagonal parking on both sides of the street.
- Dakota St is restructured to accommodate diagonal parking on one side with parallel on the other side.
- Surface parking lots are located on the interior of city blocks to maximize the amount of businesses fronting Main Ave. They are in close proximity to Main Ave to minimize the walking distance from car to shopping.

PEDESTRIAN SPACES

- Main Ave becomes a pedestrian friendly street that encourages walking, shopping and lingering downtown. It is enhanced through the use of shade trees, ornamental street lighting, benches, paving and other site amenities to reflect the unique relationship between the city; its history and Prior Lake.
- County Rd 21 becomes a landscaped boulevard that indicates to drivers that they have entered into downtown and traffic speeds are reduced within the downtown limits.

ENTRIES

- Downtown entries are marked through the use of architectural elements, landscaping and lighting. They reflect the image and character established on Main Ave.

OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Trails link Lakefront park and the northern neighborhoods to downtown and the civic core. A trail also links the southern neighborhoods and commercial district to the downtown central business district.



- An enhanced pedestrian environment through landscaping, sidewalk improvements, lighting and seating areas.

The workshop that was held in October of 1999 also focused on a community review of the identified theme elements. When participants were asked to select a preferred theme, the lake theme won by a slim margin with the other two options getting equal votes. Because there was no clear choice on a favored theme, elements of each of the theme ideas may be appropriate for the downtown area.

Community Input – Design Theme

A complete summary of the public review of the theme elements is located in the appendix.



Redevelopment Plan

The planning process for the Prior Lake Downtown Development Guide involved the assembly of a wide range of ideas, public review and input, EDA workshop reviews, and ultimately, a series of decisions resulting in a preferred redevelopment plan. Three options were originally considered. Based on those options, the field was narrowed to the Composite Plan illustrated on Figure X. The Composite Plan then became the subject of a more intensive review by the EDA at a series of workshop meetings. The result of that process is the Redevelopment Plan that is shown on Figure X.

The major difference between the Redevelopment Plan and the Composite Plan involves the shift of the primary downtown pedestrian activity intersection from Main Avenue/CSAH 21 to Main Avenue/Dakota Street. Traffic volumes on CSAH 21 are the reason for this shift. After the Composite Plan was assembled, the traffic study for the intersection of CSAH 21 and Main Avenue was completed. The study emphasized that County Road 21 will be an even greater barrier impacting downtown in the years ahead.

In order to respond to the impacts of CSAH 21, the downtown area is expected to provide two slightly different types of commercial markets. Properties on the south side of CSAH 21 are expected to contain community commercial uses that are more automobile oriented, destination type businesses. The hardware store is a good existing example of a business appropriate for the south side. The north side of CSAH 21 is expected to be the home of smaller, retail, service and office businesses that benefit from proximity to one another and the ability of pedestrians to easily walk from business to business. Additional information on anticipated types of businesses for each area is found later in this section.

The Prior Lake Downtown Redevelopment Plan is shown on Figure X. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for future land use changes, development and redevelopment activities, roadway improvements, and building improvements. In order to describe the contents of the plan, an overview of transportation issues will first be addressed followed by a block-by-block review of specific recommended land use changes.

Redevelopment Plan Overview

Transportation

The redevelopment plan advocates three primary street changes. On the north end of downtown, the intersection of Main Avenue and Trunk Highway 13 needs to be reconstructed. When the City gains full control of the Kop farm, which lies adjacent to the intersection, land area will be available to improve the intersection consistent with the plan. The north and south legs of Main Avenue need to be moved to the west allowing more stacking between Main Avenue and Highway 13. The plan suggests that Main Avenue be improved either as a parkway section with a landscaped median or as a resurfaced roadway with additional boulevard landscaping. The Main Avenue/Highway 13 entrance to downtown has the ability to serve as a major entrance to downtown and also as an attractive entrance to Lakefront Park. Enhanced landscaping along the roadway would help unify the entrance area, Lakefront Park and downtown Prior Lake. An identification sign should be placed at the Main Avenue and



CIVIC CENTER

- New Civic Structures are located along Erie Ave, south of Dakota St. These structures reinforces the existing civic core and set the framework for a connection between Lakefront Park and Downtown.

TRAFFIC

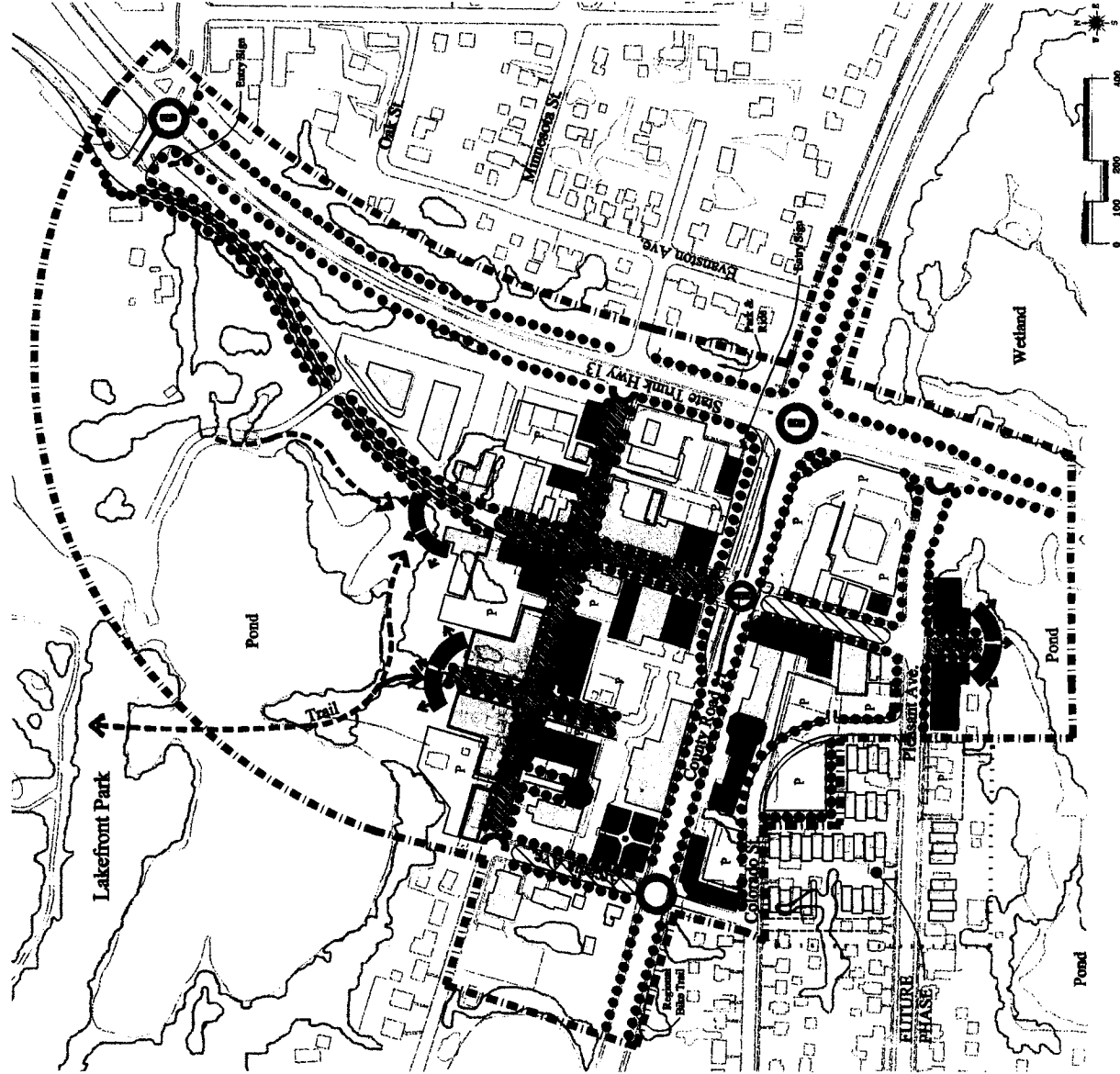
- The intersection of County Road 21 & Hwy 13 is improved to become a main entry into the Downtown. The intersection will enhance the entry to downtown through the use of streetscape elements similar to those used on the Main Ave.
- Arcadia Ave. is extended from Colorado St. to County Rd 21, to increase access to the businesses south of County Rd 21 and reduce the amount of traffic going through the neighborhood to the west. Long term, Arcadia may be extended south to Pleasant Avenue.
- Colorado St. is restructured to the south to connect with Pleasant Ave. This will open the southwest corner of Main Ave. and County Rd 21 to development. It will also reduce outward traffic movements at Main Ave. and Colorado St.
- County Rd 21 is improved within the downtown limits. Turn lanes and a traffic signal at Main Ave. will help to control traffic within the downtown limits and increase opportunities for people to access downtown businesses.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Commercial growth is focused on Main Ave., north of 21. Commercial areas also begin to extend east and have a presence on Hwy 13.

LEGEND

- Community Gathering Space
- Improved Intersection
- Gateway
- Parking
- Residential Use
- Commercial Use
- Civic Use
- Mixed Use
- Traditional Downtown District
- Green Space
- Downtown Boundary



HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING

- New housing is located along Erie Ave. to the north of Dakota St. These structures reinforces the framework established by the new civic structures to the south and support the connection between downtown and Lakefront Park.

COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Community gathering spaces anchor the north and south ends of Main Ave. They reinforce the importance of Main Ave. as a community focal point and connect downtown to Lakefront Park and the natural areas to the south.

PARKING

- Main Ave is restructured to accommodate diagonal parking on both sides of the street.
- Dakota St is restructured to accommodate diagonal parking on one side with parallel on the other side.
- Surface parking lots are located on the interior of city blocks to maximize the amount of businesses fronting Main Ave. They are in close proximity to Main Ave to minimize the walking distance from car to shopping.

PEDESTRIAN SPACES

- Main Ave. and Dakota Street become pedestrian friendly streets that encourage walking, shopping and lingering downtown. They are enhanced through the use of shade trees, ornamental street lighting, benches, paving and other site amenities to reflect the unique relationship between the city, its history and Prior Lake.

- County Rd 21 becomes a landscaped boulevard that indicates to drivers that they have entered into downtown and traffic speeds are reduced within the downtown limits.

ENTRIES

- Downtown entries are marked through the use of architectural elements, landscaping and lighting. They reflect the image and character established on Main Ave. and Dakota Street.

OPEN SPACE LINKAGES

- Trails link Lakefront Park and the northern neighborhoods to downtown and the civic core. A trail also links the southern neighborhoods and commercial district to the downtown central business district.



Highway 13 intersection. Graphics and lettering should identify the location as an entrance to both the park and downtown Prior Lake.

On the south end of downtown, Arcadia Avenue is extended south of CSAH 21 to Colorado Street. Colorado Street is subsequently extended southward to Pleasant Avenue. The purpose of this improvement is to provide a more direct "loop" around the southern section of the CBD. It will provide a more direct connection to businesses on the south side of 21, west Main Avenue.

The major transportation change envisioned in the plan is the upgrading of CSAH 21 to accommodate turn lanes and possible through lane improvements on Trunk Highway 13. The construction of through lanes in the future will involve the City but will be a Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) project. Adding lanes to TH 13 will impact the community but is not expected to have a major impact on downtown properties. Improvement of CSAH 21 to add turn lanes, however, will have an impact on downtown properties. Creating a turn lane for eastbound CSAH 21 traffic onto northbound Main Avenue and TH 13 will require property on the north side of 21. Property acquisition on the south side of 21 is less likely because of business impacts. On the north side, the taper for the northern curb alignment will begin just east of the new library and extend eastward to TH 13. The old library building that is owned by the City of Prior Lake lies in the path of the turn lane and will need to be removed to accommodate construction. The city also owns a parking lot on the east side of Main Avenue, a portion of which will also need to be used for right-of-way and roadway construction.

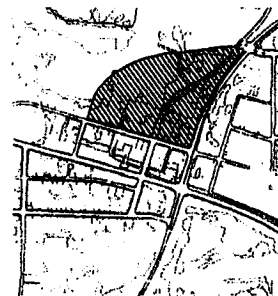
One other transportation related change involves parking. Sufficient right-of-way exists on portions of Main Avenue to install diagonal parking on both sides of the street. Space exists along Dakota Street for diagonal parking on one side of the roadway. Diagonal parking could increase the number of parking spaces convenient for local businesses. Diagonal parking should be implemented immediately by re-striping the spaces and then as street improvements occur, by constructing permanent end islands and pedestrian connections.

Land Use

The redevelopment plan advocates a series of land use changes. In order to provide a complete assessment of all of the recommendations, specific geographic areas will be individually reviewed. Recommended timing for land use changes is also included as part of the discussion for each area. Improvements are generally expected to occur in the following increments: one to five years, five to ten years, and ten years plus.

The northern portion of Prior Lake's downtown area lies north of Dakota Street extending to Lakefront Park and to the Main Avenue and Highway 13 intersection. The roadway improvements in this area were discussed previously. Land use changes involve two primary elements, infill of added commercial uses and redevelopment of existing commercial and single-family residential uses.

East of Main Avenue and north of Dakota Street, the plan calls for an infill of additional commercial uses and the redevelopment of the existing used car lot. The purpose of the eventual redevelopment of the car lot site is to establish



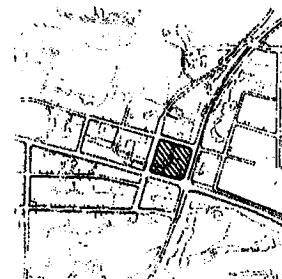
downtown buildings that reach out to Highway 13. Adding additional commercial buildings that abut TH 13 helps to emphasize Dakota Street as an entrance to downtown businesses. The timing of the improvements in this area is expected to be 10+ years.

The land area west of Main Avenue, north of Dakota Street and east of the extension of Arcadia Avenue is slated for redevelopment within the next one to five years. The plan recommends substantial change in this area. It is recommended that the existing gas station at the corner of the intersection and the existing daycare center be replaced with a mixture of attached housing and new commercial structures. Either constructed as an integrated mixed-use project or as two adjacent uses, the plan envisions a commercial building that fronts on Dakota Street and a residential building that is located to the north to take advantage of the views of Lakefront Park. Mixed-use integration of the two uses is possible by creating a building that has ground floor retail and/or office space and residential units on the upper floors. It is important that the ground floor of any new building at this location contain retail or office uses in order to maintain the intersection as a pedestrian oriented shopping and activity center. It is equally important that the building be constructed at the right-of-way line on both Dakota Street and Main Avenue. Parking to accommodate the uses could consist of both surface parking and interior garage parking for the residential structures.

Further west along Dakota Street, the plan calls for the construction of additional multi-family housing. Multi-family housing in this location would be more compatible with downtown public and commercial land uses and could take advantage of views to the north and readily available access to Lakefront Park. The types of multi-family housing likely to be constructed in the area will need to be determined by a specific market study. From general conditions in Prior Lake and surrounding communities today, there appears to be a need for senior housing as well as market rate housing. The construction of market rate housing in today's economic climate presents some challenges because rent levels have not risen to a point that encourages private construction. A successful project at the corner of Main Avenue and Dakota Street could help serve as a catalyst for development of additional multi-family housing.

The Erie Avenue right-of-way within this area provides access to Lakefront Park. Today, pedestrians, bicycles and a limited number of automobiles share the access. In the future, the access should be reconstructed to exclude motorized vehicles. A gateway feature should be added in the area to serve as a portal to both the park and downtown.

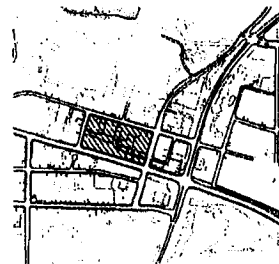
The "heart" of downtown is an area bounded by Dakota Street, Highway 13, CSAH 21 and Arcadia Avenue. This area, like the area to the north is expected to see significant change. The block within this area east of Main Avenue is slated for infill commercial building construction and façade improvements for existing buildings. The new turn lane for CSAH 21 will remove the parking lot that now exists on the corner of Main and 21. Space remains for new construction in the area. This site should contain a building in the future rather than an open parking lot to concentrate commercial activity at the corner and to serve as a walking destination. Longer term, the small office building located immediately south of the Amoco station could be replaced with a more



substantial commercial structure in an architectural style compatible with the remainder of the downtown area.

The buildings in this eastern block should also be upgraded with façade improvements. Mansard roofs and false fronts should be replaced with other building treatments to create more harmonious blend of building styles. Façade improvements are expected to occur in the next 1 to 5 years and infill building should occur within 5 to 10 years.

The block west of Main Avenue currently contains a mix of public and private uses. Although some of the uses will change in the future, the mix will remain. When CSAH 21 is improved, the turn lane construction will eliminate the old library building. Land exists to construct a new building north of the old library. Until it is necessary to remove the old library structure, it should continue to be used for commercial purposes. The City should attempt to find a tenant interested in a short-term lease. As redevelopment efforts get underway downtown, the old library building can serve as a temporary location for disrupted businesses. The library should not be removed until necessary due to road construction.



One of the largest current land uses in this block is the lumberyard. The business serves principally wholesale customers and is not a use compatible with the long-term vision of downtown Prior Lake. Accordingly, the plan calls for redevelopment of the lumberyard site with new commercial buildings. Since the lumberyard has frontage on both Main and Dakota, new buildings could be constructed with frontage on both streets. Surface parking is added at the rear of the buildings on land that is now used for outdoor storage of building materials. The parking could be shared with the public uses to the west.

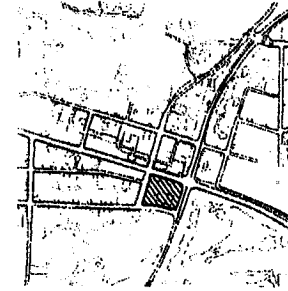
The western portion of this block will remain as a public campus. The plan allocates space for a new addition to City Hall, possibly providing new quarters for the police department. The green space west of the new library and community resource center is shown as a developed park area. The peripheral placement of public and private buildings in this oversized block provides interior parking that can serve a number of uses. Primarily, the area will provide customer and employee parking for area businesses, City Hall and the new library. The area, however, has the potential to be more than simply parking. It could serve as the home for a regular Prior Lake farmers market as well as a location for periodic art and craft shows. It could also host community festivals or gatherings specifically promoting downtown businesses.

Vehicular entry to the interior parking lot is from the north and west. No access will be available from CSAH 21. Pedestrians can enter the area from the vehicular access points and from Erie Avenue, which will be improved as a pedestrian walkway, connecting north to the park. Redevelopment of the lumberyard site will also permit the installation of a narrow pedestrian walkway access on the east side between the parking lot and Main Avenue.

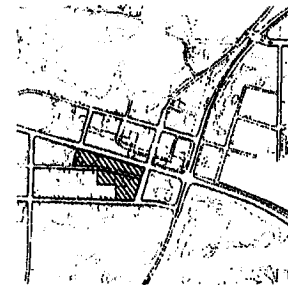
Development within this block is generally slated for the next 5 to 10 years. Façade improvements should begin within the next 1 to 5 years. Removal of the old library will depend on the timing of roadway improvements but is likely within the next 5 -10 years because of growing traffic volumes on CSAH 21.



The block bounded by Main Avenue, Highway 13, Pleasant Avenue and CSAH 21 is not expected to change substantially in the near future. This block is currently the home of Main Avenue businesses and other businesses such as the hardware store and video rental store that have a more suburban development pattern with parking directly in front of the buildings. Within the short term of one to five years, however, efforts should be made to curtail unscreened outdoor storage and repair of vehicles that currently occurs on the south end of Main Avenue. Within a time frame extending beyond 10 years, the existing single-family home at the terminus of Main Avenue should be replaced with a new commercial building.

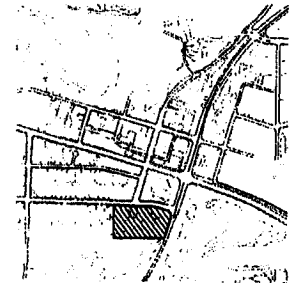


A number of improvements are shown on the block bounded by Main Avenue, Pleasant Avenue, reconstructed Colorado Street and newly extended Arcadia Street. Both the street improvements and land use changes in this area are not expected to occur for at least ten years. Re-routing Colorado Street provides a direct connection to parking lots serving Main Avenue businesses. By relocating existing Colorado Street, a new commercial building can be built on Main Avenue replacing the right-of-way area and the existing automotive repair facility. Construction of a building in this location would continue the building pattern that exists north of CSAH 21.



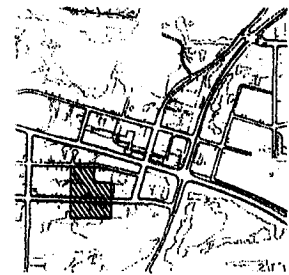
Redevelopment in this area can accommodate larger scale users or construction of a multi-tenant building. It is assumed that the Scott-Rice Telephone Company will maintain its office and switching facility at its current location. If warranted by business conditions, this area could accommodate expanded telephone offices or other business offices.

Property located along Pleasant Avenue sits at the terminus of Main Avenue. The Redevelopment Plan calls for the eventual construction of a mixed-use development containing ground floor commercial uses and housing on upper floors. In order to afford views to the adjacent wetland, new buildings should not be located directly along the sight line of Main Avenue. Construction of a plaza at this location could provide a downtown gathering space and preserve public views into the wetland area. Improvements in this area are not expected to occur for at least 10 years.

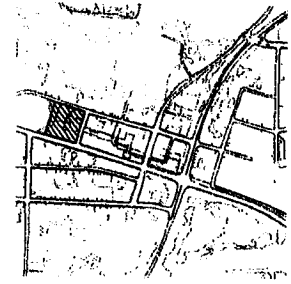


Future Land Uses

When the original three concepts were reviewed at public workshops, participants asked if implementation of either the Main Street Revitalization or the Crossroads at Main and Dakota Street alternatives (Figures X and X respectively) precluded long-range implementation of Alternative C, the Downtown District. Implementation of the proposed Redevelopment Plan does not preclude longer-term implementation of a larger downtown district. The Redevelopment Plan does include one future phase that provides housing along Pleasant Avenue, west of re-routed Colorado Street. If planned multi-family housing along Dakota Street and as part of the mixed-use development along Pleasant Avenue is successful, there may be additional demand for attached housing convenient to the downtown area. Accordingly, future housing is shown on the Redevelopment Plan.



One other area was discussed during the planning process but was not included as part of the formal plan recommendations. The west side of Arcadia Avenue, north of CSAH 21 is the location of a church campus and three separate single-family residences. During the planning process, it was assumed that church operations would continue on this site. The church makes a good buffer between downtown land uses and residential neighborhoods further west. If in the future, if the church decides to relocate, the site could be used for additional commercial or multi-family housing. If the church remains, there is still an opportunity for a small multi-family housing project replacing the existing single-family homes on Arcadia Avenue and utilizing vacant church property that has frontage on CSAH 21.



Redevelopment Summary

The following is a summary of the major redevelopment actions contained within the Redevelopment Plan:

Timeframe: One to Five Years

Actions:

- Upgrade Main Avenue from CSAH 21 to Lakefront Park
- Upgrade Dakota Avenue from TH 13 to Arcadia Avenue
- Redevelop land north of Dakota Street, west of Main Avenue
- Construct an entry sign at the Main Avenue/TH 13 intersection (locate outside of future construction limits)
- Construct an entry sign at the CSAH 21/TH 13 intersection (located outside of future construction limits)
- Install landscaping along TH 13 from the Main Avenue/TH 13 intersection to south of the Pleasant Avenue/TH 13 intersection
- Infill commercial and public uses
- Improve Erie Avenue as a pedestrian and/or vehicle corridor
- Improve the open space area south of City Hall
- Existing building façade improvements

Timeframe: Five to Ten Years

Actions:

- Realign the Main Avenue/TH 13 intersection
- Upgrade Main Avenue from CSAH 21 to Pleasant Avenue
- Add turn lanes along CSAH 21 at Main Avenue and TH 13 and a traffic signal
- Infill commercial
- Existing building façade improvements

Timeframe: Ten Years or More

Actions:

- Extend Arcadia Avenue south of CSAH 21 to Colorado Street
- Re-route Colorado Street to Pleasant Avenue
- Infill commercial
- Construct mixed-use project along Pleasant Avenue at the Main Avenue terminus
- Existing building façade improvements



Downtown Business Uses

The Land Use section of the Development Guide outlined two slightly different commercial areas for downtown Prior Lake with differing compositions of business uses. Business uses on the north side of CSAH 21 are anticipated to be those that are more specialized, ones that can benefit from compatible businesses with a reliance on pedestrian circulation. Businesses on the north side would also offer services to downtown workers and area residents.

Land on the south side of CSAH 21 is intended to accommodate larger scale uses, many of which might be classified as "drive to" destinations. The following is a list of potential uses for each of the two business areas. These lists are intended to provide a sampling of the types of uses that may ultimately be attracted to each area.

Community Commercial Area (South of CR 21)

Hardware	Beer, Wine and Liquor
Pharmacies	Communications Offices
Furniture Stores	Banking
Floor Covering Stores	Professional Offices
Paint and Wallpaper Sales	Telemarketing Bureaus
Window Treatment Stores	

Core Commercial Area (North of CR 21)

Specialty Home Furnishings	Newspaper Office
Camera/Photo Supplies	Public Uses
Convenience Stores	Securities Brokerage
Specialty Food Services	Real Estate
Health and Personal Care	Professional Offices
Cosmetics and Beauty Supply	Portrait/Photography Studios
Clothing Stores	Travel Agencies
Shoe Stores	Barber/Beauty Salons
Jewelry Stores	Medial Offices
Hobby Stores	Restaurants
Specialty Music	Drinking Establishments
Sewing and Needlework	Diet Centers
Musical Instrument Stores	Day Spa
Florists	Bakery
Gift and Novelty	Art Gallery/Supplies

Streetscape Improvements

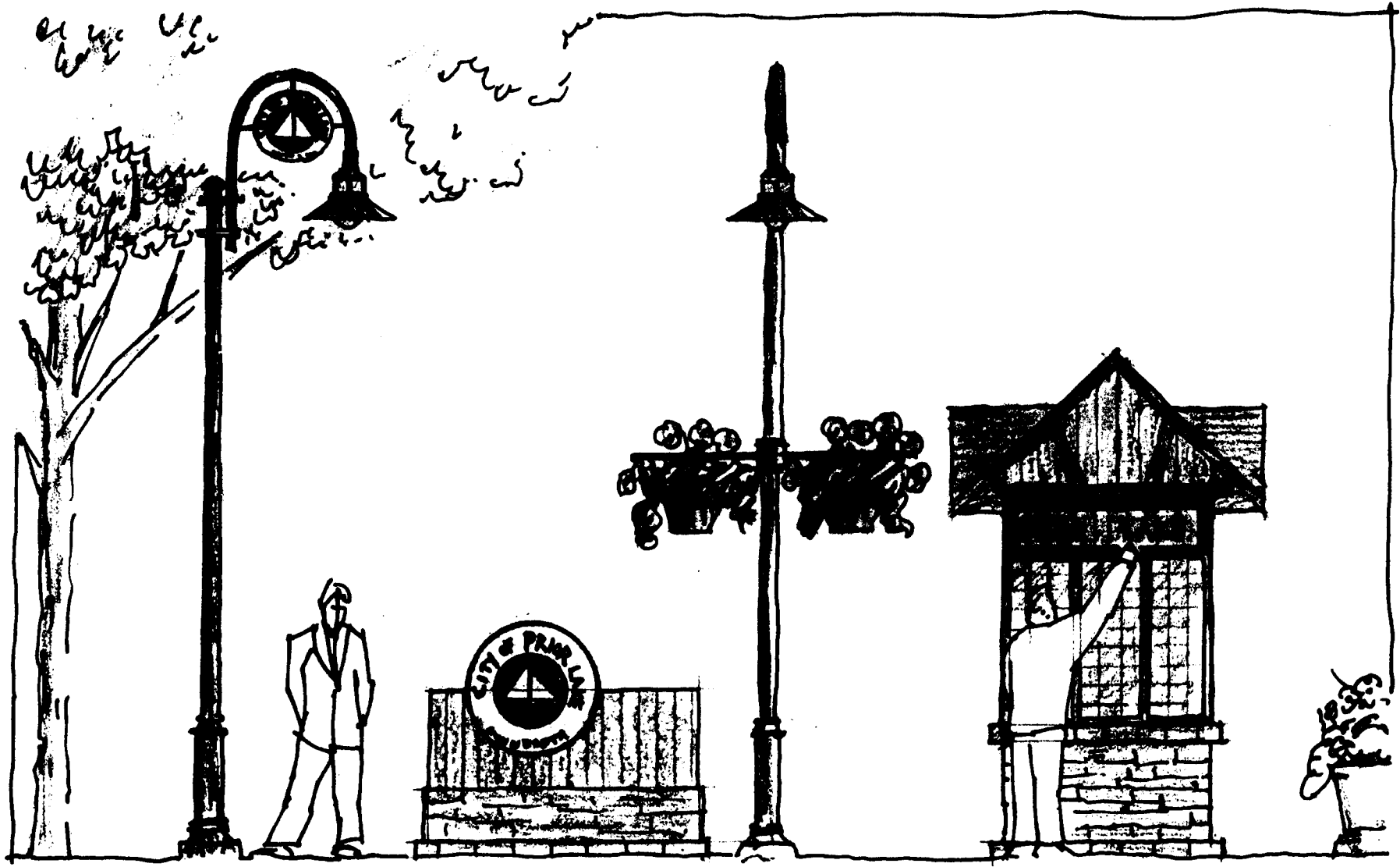
Streetscape improvements are an integral part of the Redevelopment Plan. Streetscape improvements in and of themselves are not enough to effectuate a major redevelopment effort. Making an area more attractive and aesthetically pleasing certainly supports other efforts to attract new businesses, to attract and retain a stronger customer base and to enhance employment.

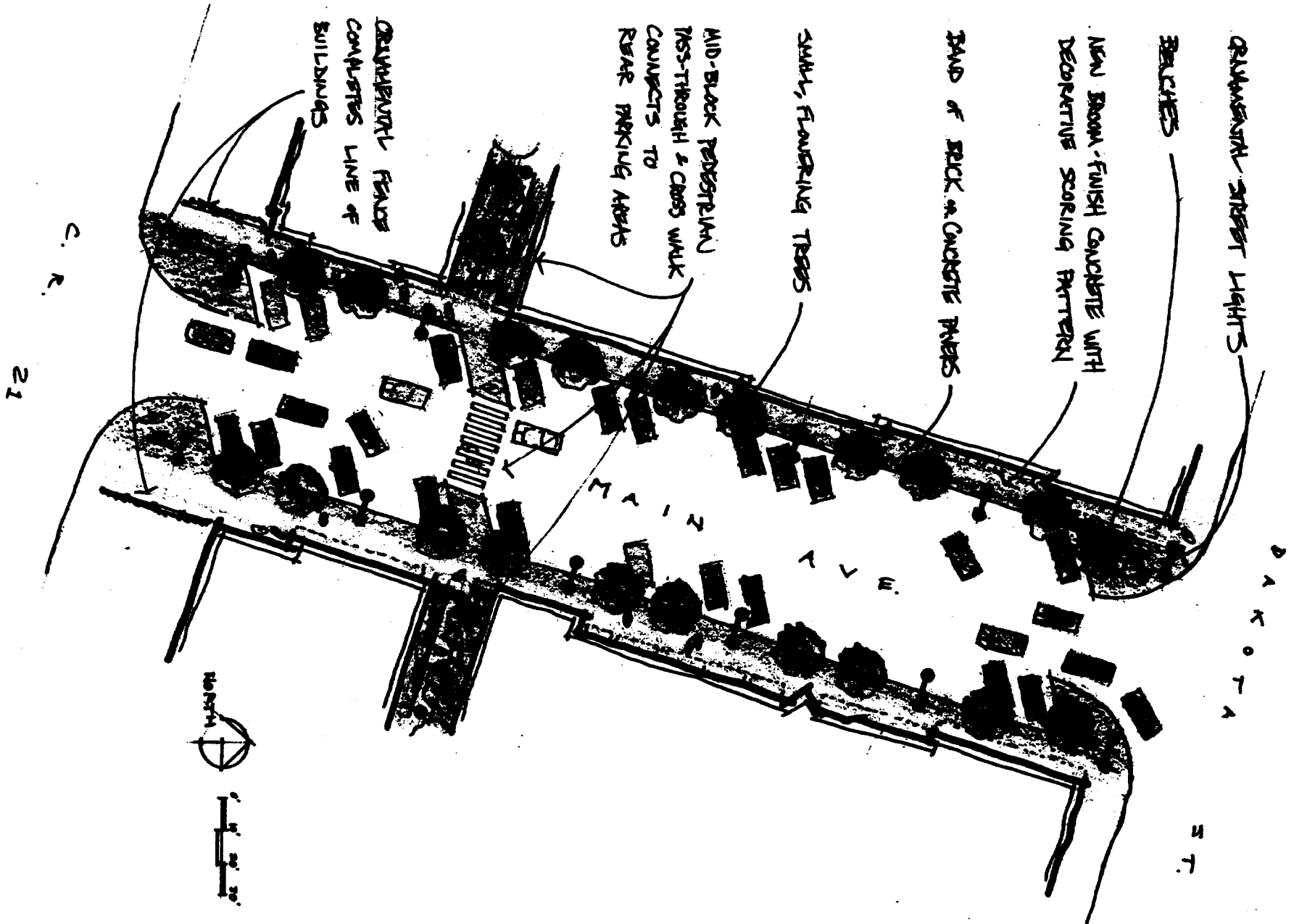






City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide - Elevation of East Main Avenue





The Redevelopment Plan advocates extensive streetscape improvements on all of the downtown roadways. More intense improvements are planned along Main Avenue and Dakota Avenue to support the creation of a pleasing environment that is attractive to pedestrians. Less intense, but compatible improvements are identified on other streets.

Streetscape improvements include landscaping, new light standards, new sidewalks, seating areas and trash receptacles, bollards, banner poles and specialty elements. The design theme for these physical improvements focuses on Prior Lake's "lake" heritage as well as subtle reminders of its history as a railroad community. Figures X through X depict some of the major streetscape elements.

Through the process of creation of a Downtown Development Guide, the Prior Lake community has recognized a common vision for its downtown. This district will continue to be the community focus of government, culture and social interaction, and its businesses will offer a variety of goods and services. Downtown will be a vibrant destination with development patterns that reflect the lake environment that makes Prior Lake unique. In short, it will be the center of Prior Lake and a source of community pride.

While the picture created for Downtown Prior Lake might seem like a pretty good sketch, it can never be considered to be exactly what will happen. Communities evolve slowly, over many years; the changes anticipated for Prior Lake will occur on a similar timeline. This is the Development Guide's intention: to allow Prior Lake's downtown to grow and change in ways that are dynamic and responsive rather than ways that are prescriptive. Every project must be considered as a part of the whole to ensure it fits the patterns of the district, but some latitude should be afforded the individual or group that is undertaking the project.

New buildings will be built that fit the overall patterns but still express their own individuality; old buildings will be restored to contribute to the mix that defines the desired character for the downtown district; and the community will have a life that springs from the way people do business.

While not every aspect of development is controlled, one aim of this Guide is to restore authenticity to the community's downtown business district. The need for rules must be recognized, however; this plan establishes "rules" that must be interpreted by the community. In reviewing proposals for change, the first criteria are whether the proposal meets the community's intentions as gauged by this Guide. Ultimately, design guidelines are used to direct a proposal to the best possible "fit." These "rules" might be codified, but to begin, the guide expects the downtown district to evolve based on the sensibilities of a small town rather than by legislation.

Not every building in Prior Lake is old, or is worthy of rehabilitation. Those that are worthy should be viewed as community assets and required to conform to the design guidelines. But new buildings must also respect the design guidelines in order to maintain the sense of connection to the district and the community. In

Development Guidelines



the design guidelines that follow, patterns for creating new buildings and restoring the character of older buildings can be found.

Design Strategies

A community's heritage is tied to its buildings, and buildings contribute significantly to a community's image and identity. In Prior Lake's case, it is not so much the character of any individual building as it is the intactness of the downtown district as a whole. The scale of the buildings and their relationship to each other and the street is much the same as it has always been, and that begins to differentiate downtown Prior Lake from the rest of the community as well as from surrounding cities. Marketing experts say that product differentiation is a critical element for success; in this case Prior Lake may have something of value in its current mix of buildings. There is, however, far to go before the community's vision for its downtown district is realized. The design of buildings will be an aspect of the work that must be accomplished.

Existing Building Renovation Guidelines

In general, not a great deal of architectural character exists in the structures on Main Avenue and the old downtown area. Even so, significant improvements can be made by simply removing inappropriate later façade additions such as:

- Wood shake mansard roofs.
- Wood siding cover-ups.
- Large signs, sized to be read at high speeds
- Plastic or oddly shaped awnings.
- Window opening infills or surrounds designed to reduce window openings.
- Lighting fixtures inconsistent to the era and style of architecture.

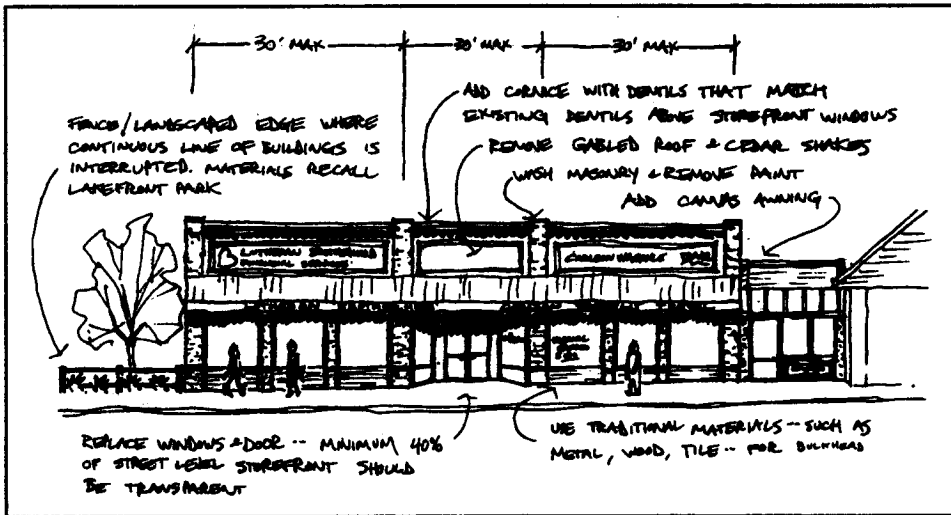
Most structures worthy of renovation are of brick or brick and stone masonry. Quite often a window replacement has happened in the life of the building that has detracted from the original character. Attention to detail and color of window framing can add dramatically to a rather plain masonry building.

Windows at the street level should be large and transparent to depict activity to the street with glass transoms above and paneled lower transoms below typically.

Boarded up windows should be uncovered and opened up. Large expanses of blank lower level walls are to be avoided. Windows are important to the vitality of the street. Businesses that are not as naturally related to transparent viewing, such as, law offices, etc., still need a visible connection to the street and should respect the lines of the masonry structure with window and masonry infill. A main street relies on the sense of transparency with people able to walk or drive by, look in and see humans inside, see product for sale and see business being transacted. Ground floor retail, service and restaurants should use large pane



windows framed by wall. The base of the building below the windows should be treated with stone, paneled wood, tile or brick typically.



The addition of large window and the removal of mansard roofs and false fronts can dramatically change the appearance of a building

Building color consistent to the building era is very important. In keeping with the desire that downtown reflect an image befitting a lake community, natural colors and materials should be used. Large expanses of white are inappropriate for building colors of historic downtowns. Window colors can have an enormous effect on how one views a masonry façade. Window trim colors should avoid white and tend to be more muted such as warm gray, gray/green, etc.

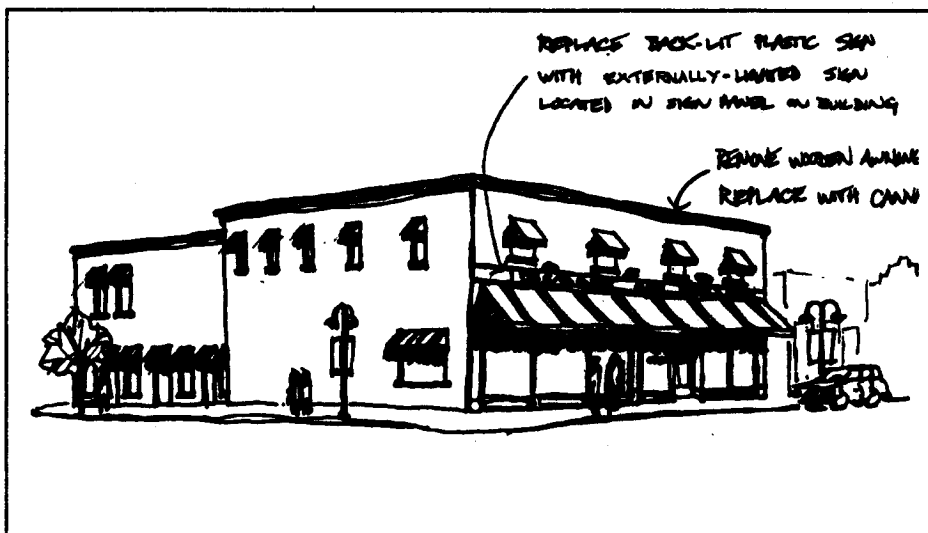
Replacement windows should be of the same style as the original; typically this would include double-hung or transom lights-type windows.



Buildings

Masonry buildings should be cleaned to lighten the overall color. A stunning result can often be obtained by combining masonry cleaning with window replacement utilizing a sensitive trim color.

New masonry work should match the color and materials of the original. If the buildings upper floor is brick, the lower floor should utilize brick (not painted concrete block.)

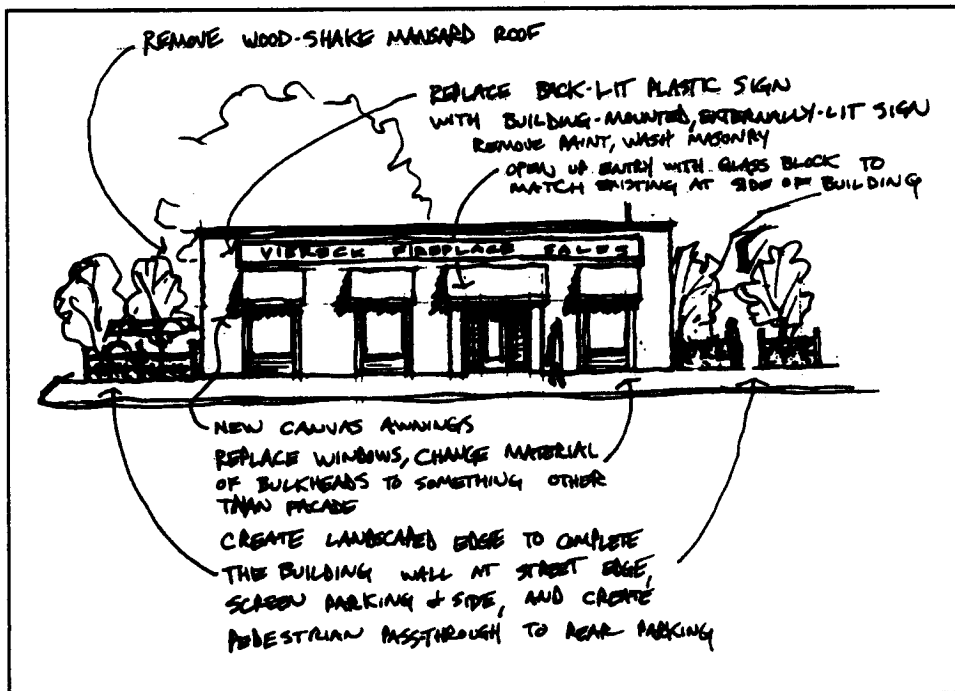


Renovations of existing storefronts may have more to do with removal of inappropriate elements rather than complete reconstruction of storefronts.



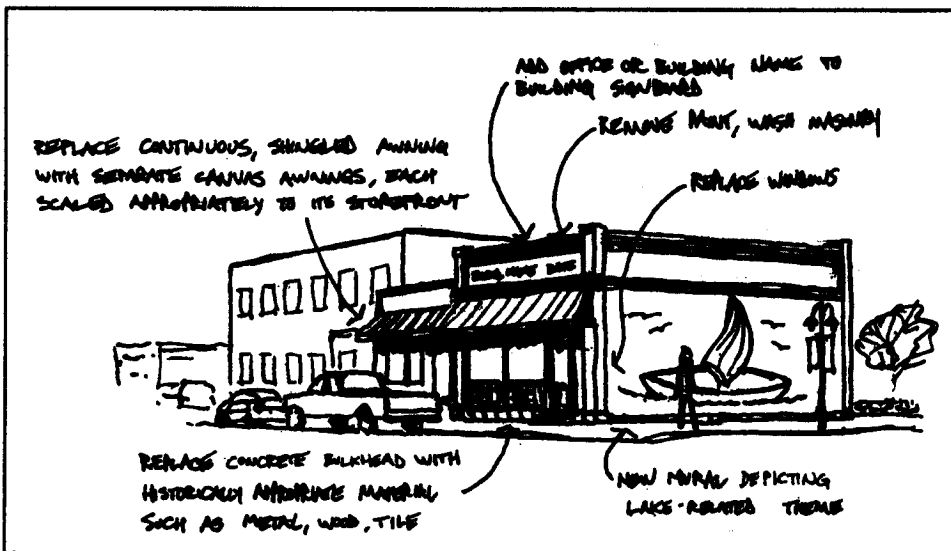
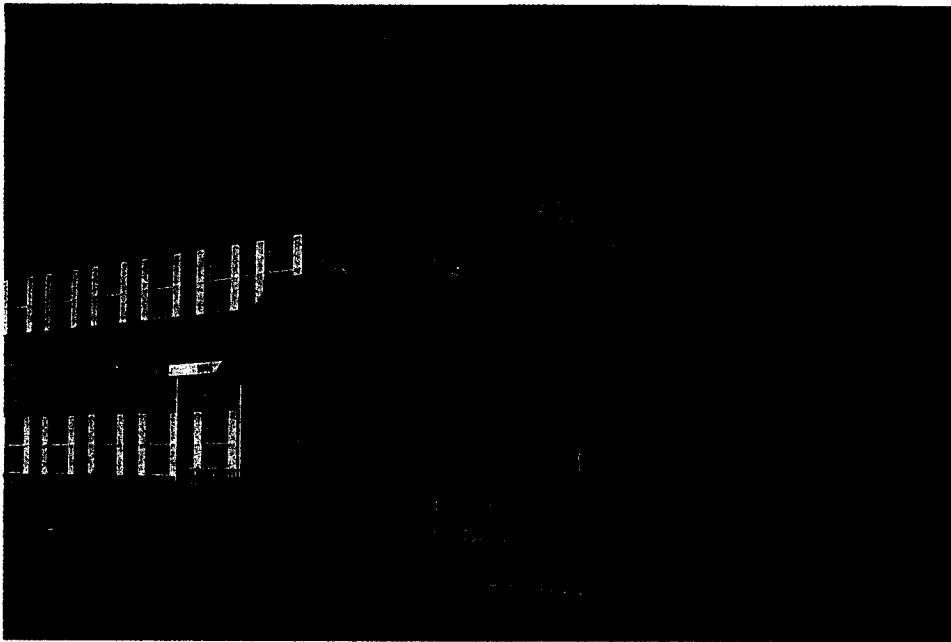
Awnings

Awnings should be permitted where appropriate and complimentary to the building style. Canvas awnings are most desirable especially on sides of the street where sunlight control is a significant problem. Retractable canvas awnings create a variable facade, which creates more interest in even the simplest buildings. Graphics and signage on awnings should be modest in size, with proportions appropriate to the size of the awning. The form of the awning should be a simple shed form; metal and wood shake awnings should be avoided.



Color stabilized canvas awnings help unite buildings and depict Prior Lake's "lake" theme. They should be used to individualize buildings and district storefronts





Wall murals can add color and vitality to downtown Prior Lake if done professionally and appropriately

Upper Floors

The upper and lower floor must look like they are part of the same building. Materials, color, texture and form should show continuity.

Entrances

The entry points should be articulated with trim and detail to make them obvious and the highlight of a building's facade.



WHEN PARKING IS LOCATED IN REAR,
 CREATE INVITING REARWARD PASS-THROUGHS
 AND INTERESTING REAR STREETFRONTS THAT
 RELATE TO THE REST OF THE BUILDING



Add pedestrian connections between the street and rear parking lot areas

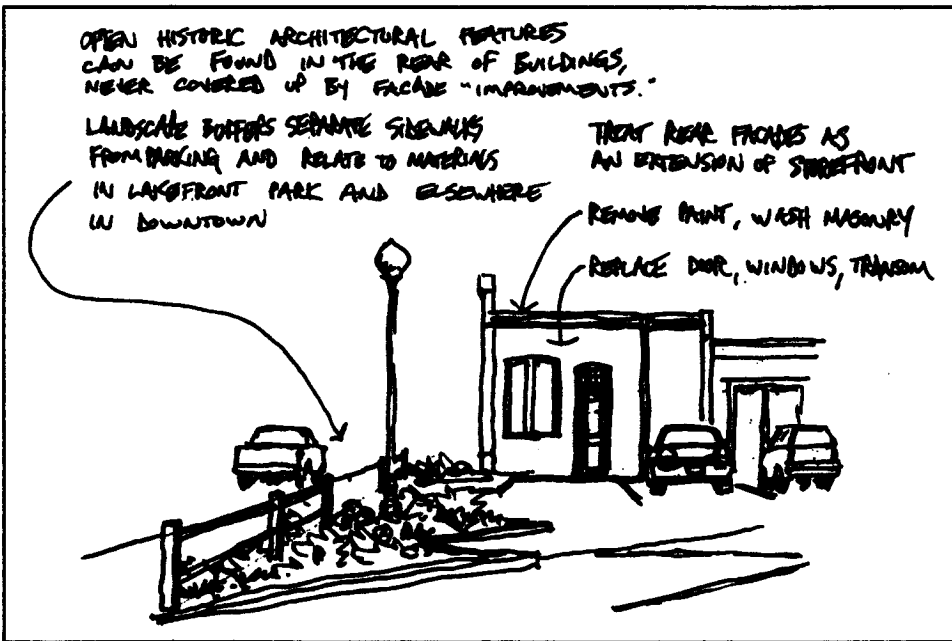


OPEN HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES
 CAN BE FOUND IN THE REAR OF BUILDINGS,
 NEVER COVERED UP BY FACADE "IMPROVEMENTS."

LANDSCAPE BUFFERS SEPARATE SIDEWAYS
 FROM DRIVING AND RELATE TO MATERIALS
 IN LAKEFRONT PARK AND ELSEWHERE
 IN DOWNTOWN

TREAT REAR FACADES AS
 AN EXTENSION OF STREETFRONT

REMOVE PAINT, WASH MASONRY
 REPLACE DOOR, WINDOWS, TRUSS



Provide attractive rear entrances to buildings off of rear parking lot areas

New Building Construction

The siting and massing of new structures should seek to fill in gaps left in the continuum of facades where they exist, in effect, filling in the "empty teeth" between existing buildings with new construction. If buildings are not used to



fill the space, fences with appropriate style should be used to complete the line of the street wall.

The infill building should reflect the design of adjacent structures in height, materials and style whenever possible.

Blank walls where visible to the public should be articulated with panels, pilasters or similar architectural elements to establish some rhythm and relief.

Signage Guidelines

Projecting signage should be allowed and even encouraged as long as it relates to the pedestrian scale of the streetscape and is well designed. Mounting brackets must be as artfully designed as the sign itself, as it becomes an element of both the sign and the building. Backlit and flashing projecting signs should be prohibited.

One medium sized sign depicting the activity of the premises should be allowed on the main façade and one on the sidewall if the building is on a corner. Letter height should be restricted to generally no more than 12 inches.

The signage is best illuminated with incandescent lamps directed onto the sign from above or below. Backlit building façade signs should be discouraged.

Signage on canopies or awnings should be fairly small, scaled to the pedestrian on the sidewalk. Ground or sidewalk signs should be encouraged to help define for the pedestrian user where the place of business is located.

Guidelines

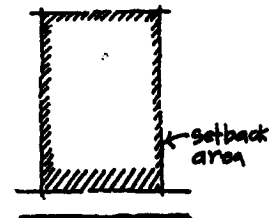
Patterns described for the downtown district provide strong direction for the growth and evolution of the district as a whole. To make each project more meaningful to the community, design guidelines are illustrated. For projects that receive any level of community support, the design guidelines described in the following section should be followed. For all projects, they provide direction that builds value and authenticity for the community.

Site Design Guidelines

1.0 Establish common setback and lot coverage standards to ensure compatible and maximum development in the downtown district

1.1 Setbacks (minimum distance from a right-of-way in which no structure may encroach) and build-to lines (a line measured from the right-of-way which at least 70 percent of the primary structure must touch) for the downtown district are established as follows:

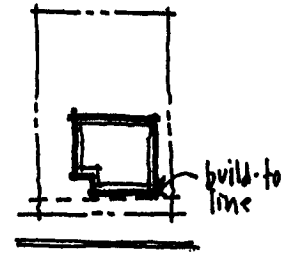
- Main Avenue from CR 21 to the curve north of Dakota Street
Build to line: 0 feet
- Main Avenue from Pleasant Avenue to CR 21
Build to line: 0 feet
- Dakota Street from Hwy 13 to Arcadia Avenue
Setback at front yard: 0 feet



Establish setback area requirements (Guideline 1.1)



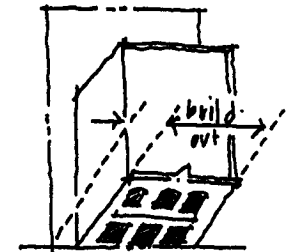
- Pleasant Avenue from Hwy 13 to Main Avenue
Setback at front yard: 10 feet
- Highway 21 from Hwy 13 to Arcadia Avenue
Setback at front yard: 20 feet



Establish build to lines.
(Guideline 1.1)

1.2 Minimum street frontage “build-out” (that portion of the primary street frontage which must be occupied by the primary structure at the build-to line or which must have a majority of the primary structure touching the setback line) is established for the downtown district as follows:

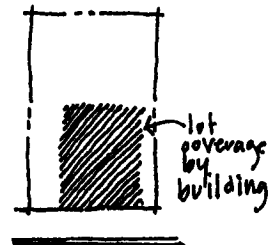
- Main Avenue from Pleasant Avenue to the curve north of Dakota Street: 100 percent, except that pedestrian passages and plaza spaces developed in concert with buildings are exempt; 30 percent for cross streets
- Main Avenue from Pleasant Avenue to the curve north of Dakota Street 100 percent, except that pedestrian passages and plaza spaces developed in concert with buildings are exempt; 30 percent for cross streets



Establish requirements for street frontage buildout (Guideline 1.2)

1.3 Standards for minimum lot coverage by structures, in order to ensure the best use of limited available land, are established for the downtown district as follows:

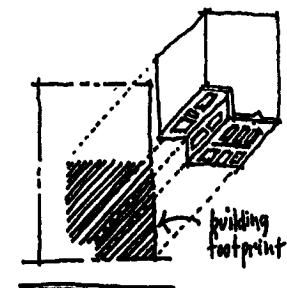
- Main Avenue from CR 21 to the curve north of Dakota Street 50 percent, except that pedestrian passages and plaza spaces developed in concert with buildings are exempt; xx percent for cross streets



Establish requirements for minimum lot coverage (Guideline 1.3)

1.4 Building footprint size and “bay width” (the width of a storefront or segment of a continuous facade at which building must be divided) for the primary structure on each site is as follows (larger footprint may be allowed as a conditional use):

- Main Avenue from CR 21 to the curve north of Dakota Street: 2,000 square foot minimum, 15,000 square foot maximum, except that buildings fronting Highway 21 may be up to 30,000 square feet maximum; 20 to 40 foot bays, except that buildings fronting Highway 21 may have bays up to 60 feet

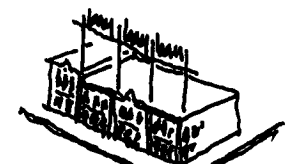


2.0 Make buildings the focus of downtown Prior Lake, not parking areas

2.1 Locate parking behind or beside buildings, with no more than 25 percent of required parking in a side yard.

2.2 Prohibit parking areas adjacent to intersections of streets.

2.3 Require 12 feet of horizontal separation between parking areas (and drive lanes in parking areas) and buildings for walks and landscaping; require 10 feet of horizontal separation between parking areas and public sidewalks.



Establish requirements for building footprint and bay width (Guideline 1.4)



2.4 Visual separation between parking areas and public rights-of-way should use landscape materials or ornamental fences (no berms) such that a screen that is at least 50 percent opaque is present in all seasons to a height of 28-36 inches.

3.0 Create parking to accommodate anticipated and realistic demands, without overbuilding parking facilities

3.1 Encourage development of joint-use parking facilities, balancing use on a day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis to achieve the highest possible use of each parking space created.

3.2 Create on-site parking for office uses at a rate of 4 spaces per 1000 square feet gross floor area; create parking for retail uses at a rate of 5 spaces per 1000 square feet gross floor area.

3.3 Discourage development with excessive normal peak parking demand or development with a high peak parking demand that is not offset by joint-use parking in order to keep development density intense (for example, require that a church's parking be available to serve a nearby office during the church's non-peak hours).

3.4 Change Main Avenue to diagonal parking.

3.5 Provide employee parking in remote areas to allow customer parking close to businesses; prohibit employees from parking on downtown streets.

3.6 Create preferential parking zones in neighborhoods, if necessary

4.0 Develop each site to facilitate traffic movement and reduce conflict points.

4.1 Where possible, provide full vehicular access to sites using cross streets rather than Main Avenue

5.0 Establish continuity in the patterns of site development to maintain coherency and cohesiveness in downtown.

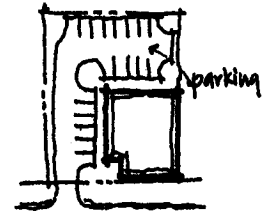
5.1 Establish a common palette of materials for sites in each district

Lighting: Parking lot lighting of same height, pole type and color, same fixture type and wattage, same mounting height and light levels

Paving: Similar pavement materials and patterns for pedestrian ways, with variations allowed at areas immediately at storefront or in pedestrian plaza areas

Landscape: Similar requirements for plant type, installed size, planting patterns and planting intensity; reflect the "natural" forest/lake margin plant community qualities in planting layout

Signs: Limit number, size and placement of signs for a given parcel or building



*Locate parking behind or beside buildings
(Guideline 3.1)*



5.2 Require that parking lots be 25 percent shaded by trees within 10 years of development

5.3 Use indigenous and/or proven native plant materials, focusing on species related to forest/lake margin environments. ✓

5.4 Encourage signs to be a part of the building rather than the site; allow pylon signs on Highway 21 only for developments larger than 50,000 gross square feet (aggregate of all buildings on a site). ✓

6.0 **Develop a unified character for all built elements of Prior Lake's downtown district to yield a greater sense of the community's character**

6.1 Formula and "corporate" architecture, and franchise patterns and buildings that are designed as signs should be prohibited on Main and discouraged on Highway 21 between Highway 13 and Arcadia Avenue. ✓

6.2 New development should be compatible with existing development in the district, achieving compatibility through similar scale, massing, bulk and detail. ✓

6.3 Buildings should be organized with primary axis perpendicular to streets. ✓

6.4 Each building should be encouraged to explore some level of individual expression in order to reflect the sense of a district rather than a strip center.

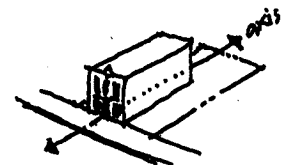
6.5 No commercial or office building should exceed a height greater than three stories plus the roof, except that civic or institutional buildings may have elements that exceed three stories.

6.6 Awnings should be allowed to be continuous only across "storefronts" occupied by a single tenant; awnings should not be allowed to extend across the face of more than one building, even if the buildings are occupied by the same tenant. ✓

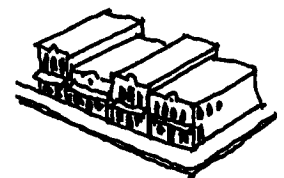
6.7 Detail should be integral to the building, not elements that are applied to a standard building shell (such as a clock tower or dormers with no usable space behind).

7.0 **Require the use of quality building materials and methods to create an enduring stock of buildings.**

7.1 Materials should be durable, easily maintained, attractive at close distances (for people walking on sidewalks or driving slowly on the street, for example); materials should be scaled to pedestrians when structures are within 10 feet of a public right-of-way or a walkway that is intended for public use (avoiding the use of "jumbo" brick in these circumstances).



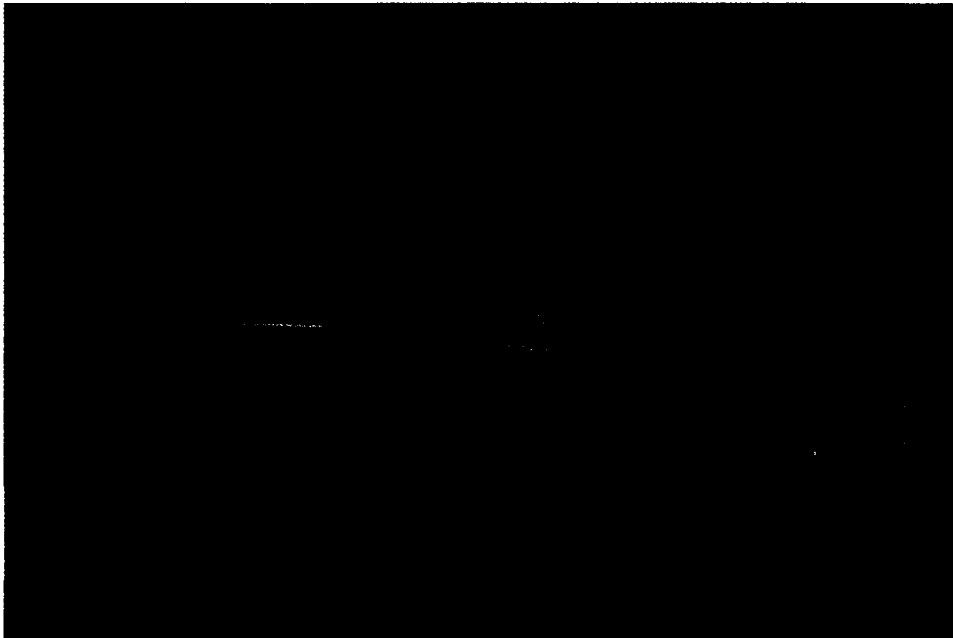
Align primary building axis to be perpendicular to the street (Guideline 6.3)



Awnings should cover the storefront of a single tenant; awnings should not be continuous across more than one building (Guideline 6.6)

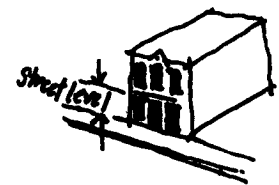


- 7.2 Brick, stone, wood, EIFS (exterior insulating finish system) or high quality precast concrete are acceptable finish materials; high quality metal (matte finish preferred) or synthetic siding may be acceptable if used in combination with other acceptable materials; wood frame or masonry construction is acceptable. ✓
- 7.3 Transparent glass should be used at the majority of street level windows; mirrored glass at street level is not acceptable.
- 7.4 Canvas awnings or extension of the roof material for awnings is encouraged; nylon awnings or other synthetic materials, as well as those awning structures meant to be illuminated from within, are not acceptable on Main Avenue. } →
- 8.0 **Develop buildings that relate to people at all publicly visible sides; eliminate a “back door” appearance for service areas and rear entrances from parking lots.**



Rear entrances need to be renovated to create attractive access to business from parking lot areas

- 8.1 Facades facing streets or public walkways should be articulated with windows and doors resulting in a minimum of 40 percent window or door area at street level (sidewalk to 12 feet high); windows should have a generally vertical orientation. ✓
- 8.2 Entries should be designed to be the highlight of the building. ✓
- 8.3 Mechanical systems should be integrated into the design of the building.
- 8.4 Trash storage areas should be completely enclosed and incorporated as a part of the building.



Provide a minimum of 40 percent transparent window and door area at the street level (Guideline 8.1)

- 8.5 Only those entrances that are unlocked during regular business hours should be considered public entrances.
- 8.6 Signs should be incorporated into the building facade, windows or awnings up to a maximum of 1 square foot of sign area per linear foot of street facade (at the front yard); signs that extend more than 12" beyond the plane of the building facade or signs that extend beyond the roof line are not allowed, except that signs that project over the sidewalk are allowed up to a maximum size of six square feet (marquis excepted); signs that are within or a part of a window should maintain 70 percent clear area in the surface of the window; one sign will be allowed for each usable public entry (signs that are a part of an awning or within or part of a window are encouraged and should not be counted in determining the number of signs allowed).
- 8.7 Tenant signage for multi-tenant buildings should occupy an area no larger than 3 square feet per tenant at each public entrance.
- 8.8 Temporary signage may be attached to the inside face of any window at street level, provided that such signage does not obscure more than 50 percent of the total window area and does not remain in place longer than 21 days (leasing or for sale signs exempt from time limitations).
- 8.9 All buildings must be identified at each public entrance with its full street address, in numbers and letters no smaller than 2 inches in height and no larger than 4 inches in height; this signage should not be included in the total signage allowed.

Oversight of Design Guidelines

- 9.0 **In order for these Design Guidelines to be effective in maintaining consistency with the community's visions for it's downtown district, a body must be charged with their oversight.**
- 9.1 The Planning Commission should be charged with further shaping and refinement of the Design Guidelines, and the codification of appropriate sections of the Design Guidelines.
- 9.2 The Design Guidelines should apply to all parcels and projects within the boundaries of the downtown district defined by this Guide.
- 9.3 As the City considers assistance to developers of projects within downtown, the Planning Commission could act as an advisory body to the City Council. Assistance should be tied to compliance with the Design Guidelines.
- 9.4 Prior to review of any proposal, which will be evaluated by use of the Design Guidelines, the city planner should meet with the proposer to review the project and determine how the Design Guidelines might apply to the proposed project.



- 9.5 Review of development proposals for conformance with the Design Guidelines should be triggered by a building permit application or a site plan/zoning review, or for any project that requests any form of city assistance. The city may require additional material from a proposer to fully understand the intentions and result of a proposal.
- 9.6 The city planner and/or planning commission may request additional technical assistance for review of complex or controversial proposals. Such technical assistance should be advisory only; the final determination for conformance with the Design Guidelines in all cases should be by the City Council.



The recommendations found in this Development Guide call for significant change. Aesthetic improvements and street overlays may make downtown Prior Lake more attractive but they do not go far enough in and of themselves, to improve the business climate and strengthen the role of the area as the commercial focus of the community.

Prior Lake does not find a "do nothing" alternative valid for the downtown area. A continuum of related past planning efforts stands as a testimonial to this fact. In community meetings that were held as part of the planning process and based on prior efforts and recent community surveys, Prior Lake supports its downtown area and has a strong desire to see it improved. Improvement is possible if the talents and resources of both the public and private sectors are focused on the same goals and the common methods of achieving those goals. This implementation section provides a future course to help coordinate those actions.

The Development Guide identifies significant improvements for downtown Prior Lake. Implementation of the recommendations will involve major expenditures by both private investors and by the public. The full plan will not be quickly implemented. The community realizes that there are a number of barriers and constraints that must be overcome. Downtown Prior Lake has evolved for more than 100 years. This Development Guide outlines a program for substantive change over the next ten years and beyond.

Keys to Implementation

This Development Guide articulates a vision for downtown Prior Lake. A number of factors will be key in its implementation. Key elements include:

- **Public/Private Partnerships** – Achieving the vision for downtown Prior Lake benefits businesses and property owners in the downtown area and the entire community. Public and private parties must work together to realize these benefits. While the City must play a lead role in the implementation of the Development Guide, it cannot revitalize downtown by itself. Businesses and property owners must play an active role in shaping the future of downtown.
- **Patience and Commitment** – Achieving the vision will not be easy nor will it happen overnight. No single action can change the current state of downtown. Economic reality will not support large-scale actions. The vision can only be achieved through a long-term building process. A series of well conceived, viable first steps will begin the process of improving downtown. As initial improvements are made, other actions become possible.
- **The Importance of Public Institutions** – Downtown is the center of government. City government and the County library bring people into the downtown area. Prior Lake has made past commitments to retain downtown public uses. New facilities such as a new police department building should be located downtown.



- **Build off of Existing Strengths** – The greater downtown area currently serves as a destination for commerce and recreation. Downtown must capitalize on its proximity to Lakefront Park providing both physical and visual connections to the open space area. Prior Lake’s central business district contains an existing mix of traditional downtown buildings. Renovations of these structures and new buildings that are added should conform to consistent patterns.
- **Find Retail Niches** – Downtown can be a great environment for retail uses that don’t fit within a mall or big box complex. Because downtown features a mix of rents, smaller retail and office uses have a chance to establish themselves and grow with minimal up-front capital investments.

Financial feasibility is a key to redevelopment in downtown Prior Lake. Financial feasibility relates to both public and private development. Successful redevelopment requires the City to undertake and finance key action steps. The end result must be an environment that is financially feasible to private parties to conduct business.

Financial Tools

The redevelopment of the Downtown requires a framework for financial decision-making. This section provides guidance on financing actions needed to implement the Redevelopment Plan and the flexibility to tailor these actions to meet the needs of projects as they occur.

The investment of public monies in the Downtown should be guided by several broad principles:

- **Financial resources are limited.** The City has limited funding to apply to the Downtown. The use of resources must be targeted to achieve the greatest effect on the implementation.
- **Financial decisions require a long-term perspective.** The current use of financial resources may reduce monies available in the future. In evaluating short-term opportunities, it is important to question the long-term impact on redevelopment. Does this action lay the foundation for future steps? Does the investment in a current opportunity lead to additional revenues in the future?
- **Public funds should lead to private investment.** While this section focuses on public finance, the Redevelopment Plan cannot become reality without private investment. The use of public funds should be targeted to actions that encourage private investment in downtown Prior Lake.

The City of Prior Lake and its Economic Development Authority have the development powers and financial resources needed to perform several critical redevelopment actions:

- Acquire property and assemble suitable development sites. ✓



- Remove barriers to redevelopment, including structurally substandard buildings.
- Make development sites in the downtown area economically competitive with more traditional development locations in Prior Lake and the surrounding communities.
- Make the public improvements outlined in the Redevelopment Plan more affordable.
- Provide an economic incentive for existing businesses to reinvest in buildings and facades.

The remainder of this section discusses how Prior Lake can use available financial resources to implement the Redevelopment Plan. This discussion is intended to highlight the tools available to the City and their potential applications. The specific statutory requirements for using these tools are not fully described. In addition, the laws governing these programs change over time. Finance plans for actual projects should be made using appropriate technical and legal advice.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is the primary development finance tool available to Minnesota cities (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.174 through 469.179). TIF is simple in concept, but complex in its application. Through tax increment financing, the property taxes created by new development (or redevelopment) are captured and used to finance activities needed to encourage the development. The challenge in using TIF lies with the complex and ever-changing statutory limitations. These complexities make it impractical to provide a thorough explanation of tax increment financing as part of this Plan. Instead, this section highlights the use of TIF as it relates to the implementation of the Plan.

Uses

Tax increment financing can be used to finance all of the important implementation actions facing the City: land acquisition, site preparation, parking, and public improvements. In addition, TIF creates a means to borrow money needed to pay for redevelopment costs.

Existing TIF Districts

The City has three tax increment financing districts located within the planning area.

- TIF District #1-1 consists of five parcels west of TH 13 and north of Dakota Street. This district was established in 1985. It is scheduled to end in 2012
- TIF District #1-2 includes the Amoco station at the corner of Dakota and STH 13. This district was established in 1988. It is scheduled to be



decertified in 2005.

- TIF District #2-4 contains three sets of noncontiguous parcels. Five of the parcels are located in the Downtown at the southwest corner of the CR 21 and TH 13 intersection.

The fund balances and annual revenues from these districts may provide financial resources to assist with implementing the Downtown Plan. The evaluation of this use must occur in conjunction with a specific development activity. The use of these funds requires answering to two basic questions. Is this use authorized by the TIF Plan? How does the use fit with the statutory constraints that apply to the district? Each of these districts is subject to different statutory constraints tied to the date they were created. Within the statutory limits, the TIF plans can be amended to address the current needs of the Downtown.

New TIF Districts

The implementation of the Downtown Plan will probably require the creation of one or more new TIF districts. The following overview highlights some of the considerations in creating a TIF district. This information is intended solely as a basic framework for finding applications within the Downtown. All specific uses will require a thorough analysis of all statutory factors.

Qualifications

The ability to meet the statutory criteria for establishing a district is a key to the use of TIF. Three types of TIF district have application to the Downtown Plan.

- **Redevelopment:** A redevelopment TIF district has two basic criteria. (1) parcels consisting of 70% of the area of the district are occupied by buildings, streets, utilities, or other improvements. To be occupied not less than 15% of the parcel's area must be covered by the improvements. (2) more than 50 percent of the buildings, not including outbuildings, are structurally substandard to a degree requiring substantial renovation or clearance (as defined by statute). A redevelopment district may consist of noncontiguous areas, but each area and the entire area must meet these criteria.
- **Renewal and renovation:** A renewal and renovation district requires similar, but reduced criteria. The following three factors must exist. (1) the same 70% occupied test applies. (2) the minimum amount of structurally substandard buildings drops to 20%. (3) 30% of the other buildings require substantial renovation or clearance to remove existing conditions such as: inadequate street layout, incompatible uses or land use relationships, overcrowding of buildings on the land, excessive dwelling unit density, obsolete buildings not suitable for improvement or conversion, or other identified hazards to the health, safety, and general well-being of the community.
- **Housing:** A housing TIF district is intended to contain a project, or a portion of a project, intended for occupancy, in part, by persons or families of low and moderate income. A district does not qualify as a



housing district if the fair market value of the improvements which are constructed in the district for commercial uses or for uses other than low and moderate income housing consists of more than 20% of the total fair market value of the planned improvements in the development plan or agreement. There are several variations of housing districts that apply different rent and income restrictions and apply to owner-occupied and rental housing.

Uses

The use of tax increment revenues is controlled by both State Law and by local plan. State Law sets forth specific limitations based on the type of TIF district. These limitations generally tie back to the original criteria use for establishing the district. For example, at least 90% of the revenues derived from tax increments from a redevelopment district or renewal and renovation district must be used to finance the cost of correcting conditions that allowed for the designation of the district. The use of tax increments must also be authorized by the tax increment financing plan adopted by the City.

Pooling

The term pooling refers to the ability to spend money outside of the boundaries of the TIF district. For redevelopment districts, not more than 25% of revenues can be spent on activities outside of the TIF district. The limit is 20% for all other districts. Monies spent on administrative expense count against this limit. This limit reduces the ability of TIF to pay area-wide improvements and to use excess revenues to support other development sites.

Local Contribution

In creating a new TIF District, the City should elect to make a qualifying local contribution to avoid the loss of state aid (LGA/HACA). For a redevelopment and a regular housing district, the local contribution is equal to 5% of the tax increment revenue. A renovation and renewal district requires a 10% contribution. A qualified housing district has no local contribution requirement. In implementing the Downtown Plan, expenditures should be earmarked for the local contribution. The amount of the local contribution must be made out of unrestricted money of the City or EDA, such as the general fund, a property tax levy, or a federal or state grand-in-aid which may be spent for general government purposes. The local contribution may not be made, directly or indirectly, with tax increments or developer payments. The local contribution must be used to pay project costs and cannot be used for general government purposes.

Timing Constraints

Timing factors must be considered in creating a TIF district. Establishing a district too far in advance of actual development may limit future use. The key timing constraints are:

- Within 3 years from the date of certification, the City must undertake activity within the district. The statutory criteria of activity includes



issuance of bonds in aid of a project, acquisition of property, or the construction of public improvements. Without qualifying activity, no tax increment can be collected from the district.

- Within 4 years from the date of certification, the City or property owners must take qualifying actions to improve parcels within the district. All parcels not meeting these statutory criteria must be removed (knocked down) from the district. Upon future improvement, any parcel so removed may be returned to the district.
- After 5 years from the date of certification, the use of tax increment is subject to new restrictions. Generally, tax increment can be used only to satisfy existing debt and contractual obligations.
- The geographic area of the District can be reduced, but not enlarged, after 5 years from the date of certification.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement acts like a simpler and less powerful version of tax increment financing. With TIF, the City controls the entire property tax revenue from new development. Under the abatement statute (Minnesota Statutes, Sections 469.1812 through 469.1815), the city, county and school district have independent authority to grant an abatement.

Uses

Abatement in Minnesota works more like a rebate than an abatement. The city (and other units abating taxes) adds a tax levy equal to the amount of taxes to be abated. The revenue from the abatement levy can be returned to the property owner or retained and used to finance development activities. Tax abatement can be used to finance the key redevelopment actions in the Downtown: land acquisition, site preparation and public improvements.

Tax abatement is perhaps best suited as an incentive for reinvestment in existing property. While TIF deals with only the value from new development, abatement can apply to both new and existing value. This power provides the means to encourage building rehabilitation and storefront improvements. The City could agree to abate all or part of the municipal share of taxes to encourage reinvestment tied to the Downtown Plan.

The statute grants the authority to issue general obligation bonds supported by the collection of abated taxes. The proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay for (1) public improvements that benefit the property, (2) land acquisition, (3) reimbursement to the property owner for improvements to the property, and (4) the costs of issuing the bonds.

Limitations

State Law places several important limitations on the use of tax abatement:

- In any year, the total taxes abated by a political subdivision may not



exceed the greater of 5% of the current levy or \$100,000.

- If one political subdivision declines to abate, then the abatement levy can be made for a maximum of 15 years. If the city, county and school district all abate, then the maximum period drops to 10 years.
- Taxes cannot be abated for property located within a tax increment financing district.

Special Assessments

Public improvements are often financed using the power to levy special assessments (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429). A special assessment is a means of benefiting properties to pay for all or part of the costs associated with improvements and to spread the impact over a period of years. From a city perspective, this authority provides an important means of raising capital.

Uses

Special assessments can be used to finance all of the public improvements needed to implement the Plan. Eligible improvements include streets, sidewalks, street lighting, streetscape, and parking.

Special assessments provide a means to borrow money to finance public improvements. Chapter 429 conveys the power to issue general obligation improvement bonds to finance the design and construction of public improvements. Important factors in the use of improvement bonds include:

- A minimum of 20% of the cost of the improvement must be assessed against benefited properties.
- Beyond the 20% threshold, any other legally available source of municipal revenue may be used to pay debt service on improvement bonds.
- Improvements bonds are not subject to any statutory debt limit.
- Improvement bonds may be issued without voter approval.

Limitations

Careful consideration must be given to setting the amount of the assessment. From a legal perspective, the amount of an assessment cannot exceed benefit to property as measured by increased market value. There are also practical considerations. Benefiting property owners should pay for a fair share of improvement costs without creating an economic disincentive to operating a business in the Downtown area. Within this limitation, several factors will shape the amount of the assessment.

- The amount of the assessment must be 20% or more of the improvement cost to allow the issuance of bonds.



- Local improvement policies and/or decisions made on previous projects often create parameters for assessments. Likewise, assessment decisions should be made with consideration of the potential implications for future similar projects.
- The assessment must strike a balance between equity and feasibility. Properties that benefit from improvements should pay a fair share of the costs. The assessment must be affordable for both the property owner and the City. Reducing the assessment to the property requires the City to allocate other revenues to the project.

Special Service District

A special service district is a tool for financing the construction and maintenance of public improvements within a defined area. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 428A.01 through 428A.10 govern the creation and use of special service districts. This legislation is currently scheduled to sunset in 2005. A special service district provides a means to levy taxes (service charge) and provide improvements and service to a commercial area.

Uses

A special service district has several applications for the Plan. The district provides an alternative means of financing the construction of any of the public improvements discussed previously with special assessments. The service district approach avoids the benefits test imposed by special assessments. The test for the district is that the amount of service charges imposed must be reasonably related to the special services provided. The costs of parking or streetscape improvements, for example, may be better spread across a district than through assessments to individual properties.

An important use of the special service district is the maintenance of public improvements. Some of the improvements described in the Plan require a level of maintenance above the typical public improvement. Items such as banners and planted materials must be maintained and replaced. Higher levels of cleaning and snow removal may be needed. Without a special service district, these costs are borne through the General Fund of the City.

Limitations

The use of a special service district is subject to some important constraints:

- The process to create district and to levy taxes to use must be initiated by petition of property owners and is subject to owner veto. The use of a special service district requires a collaboration of property owners and the City. There are two separate steps in the process: (1) adoption of an ordinance establishing the service district and (2) adoption of a resolution imposing the service charges. Neither step can be initiated by the City. The City must be petitioned to undertake the processes to create a special service district and to impose service charges. At a minimum, the petitions must be signed by owners representing 25% of the area that would be included in the district and 25% of the tax capacity subject to



the service charge.

- The actions of the City Council to adopt the ordinance and the resolution are subject to veto of the property owners. To veto the ordinance or the resolution, objections must be filed with the City Clerk within 45 days of initial Council action to approve. The objections must exceed 35% of area, tax capacity or individual/business organizations in the proposed district.
- The service charge applies solely to non-residential property. State Law limits the application of a service charge to only property that is classified for property taxation and used for commercial, industrial, or public utility purposes, or is vacant land zoned or designated on a land use plan for commercial or industrial use. Other types of property may be part of the service district, but may not be subject to the service charge.

General Property Taxes

General property taxes can be used to finance many of the services, improvements, facilities and development activities needed to implement the Plan. Taxes may be levied through the General Fund, to pay debt service on G.O. Improvement or G.O. Tax Increment Bonds, and as a levy for the Economic Development Authority. The ability to use property taxes provides another resource for the plan. For taxes payable in 2001, the levy is not subject to levy limits. This situation may change in the future.

Commercial Rehabilitation Loans and Grants

Through HRA's and EDA's, cities have broad powers to facilitate the revitalization of existing buildings. State Law also creates specific statutory authority for loans by cities. The City may establish a program to make loans to finance the rehabilitation of small and medium sized commercial buildings (M.S. Section 469.184). The program can be funded through the issuance of bonds. Other revenues of the City (i.e. - tax increment or tax abatement) could be used to assist the program.

Other City Funds

Other funds of the City may play a role in financing the implementation of the Downtown Plan. Other funds may help support the costs of streets, utilities and other improvements. The use of other city funds should be factored into capital improvements planning and earmarked for the Downtown.

Other Programs

Funding may be available for other units of government to assist with implementing the Downtown Plan. Typically, this funding is tied to policy objectives other than the general redevelopment of Prior Lake. If these objectives match project needs in the Downtown, then these other programs may provide assistance. Other program possibilities include:



- Improvements to County Road 21 and TH 13 funded by County and State
- Housing programs funded by the Scott County HRA.
- Assistance through the Metropolitan Council's Livable Communities Program.
- Redevelopment, business assistance and environmental cleanup programs through the State Department of Trade and Economic Development.

Recommended Projects

It will take years to fully implement the Redevelopment Plan outlined in this Design Guide. Complete implementation will result from a series of projects, some of which can be accomplished in the short term and some of which can only be implemented over a longer period of time. Where possible, this Guide provides details necessary to begin implementation efforts. Complete details of longer-term projects are not available at this time and will need to be filled in later.

The Redevelopment Plan outlines a series of improvements that are meant to be implemented in three time frames: short term (1-5 years), mid term (5-10 years) and long term (10+ years). The following projects are recommended in the plan:

Projects to be Completed in 2000 to 2005

Project: Upgrade Main Avenue from CSAH 21 to Lakefront Park

Actions: Complete reconstruction of existing streets and replacement of storm sewer and water lines as required. Sidewalk paving, lighting and other site amenities consistent with patterns identified in the design guidelines and streetscape standards.

Purpose of Project: Improve the appearance of the downtown streetscape and alleviate existing utility deficiencies.

Anticipated Cost: \$635,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: Business and property owners along the length of Main Avenue

Potential Funding: Tax Increment from Existing Districts
Tax Increment from New District
Bonds
Special Assessments



Special Service District
Utility Reserves/Revenues
General Tax Levy
Other Reserves

Project: Upgrade Dakota Avenue from TH 13 to Arcadia Avenue

Actions: Improve Dakota Avenue from curb line to right-of-way line. Project includes curb and gutter, sidewalk, lighting and landscaping. Project will need to be coordinated with redevelopment efforts on the north side of Dakota Avenue.

Purpose of Project: Improve the appearance of the downtown streetscape and emphasize Dakota Street as a minor entrance to downtown off of Trunk Highway 13.

Anticipated Cost: \$240,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: Business and property owners along the length of Dakota Avenue. City of Prior Lake.

Potential Funding: Tax Increment from Existing Districts
Tax Increment from New District
Bonds
Special Assessments
Special Service District
Utility Reserves/Revenues
General Tax Levy
Other Reserves

Project: Redevelop Land North of Dakota Street, West of Main Avenue

Actions: Redevelop land lying north of Dakota Street in multiple phases incorporating both commercial and residential land uses. The parcels near the corner of Dakota Street and Main Avenue are identified as commercial and residential (possibly mixed-use) and land lying further west is identified as a site for multi-family residential. Potential public actions include land acquisition and site preparation.

Purpose of Project: Provide opportunities for new commercial uses and new multi-family housing that is convenient to downtown goods and services and to recreational opportunities at Lakefront Park.

Anticipated Public Cost: To Be Determined (Based on specific development proposal)



Responsible Parties: Private landowners and developers with assistance as needed by the City of Prior Lake.

Affected Parties: Property owners along the north side of Dakota Street.

Potential Funding: Private Investment
Tax Increment Financing from New District
Bonds
EDA Property Tax Levy
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grant Funds
Scott County HRA

Project: Construct Entry Signs at Main Avenue/TH 13 Intersection and at the CSAH 21/TH 13 Intersection

Actions: Design and construct entry signs at primary downtown gateway locations. The sign on the northern end should identify both downtown Prior Lake and Lakefront Park.

Purpose of Project: Enhance major downtown entry points with attractive entry signs. Signs serve as identifiers for downtown and Lakefront Park.

Anticipated Cost: \$60,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake. Possible participation by downtown businesses and/or community groups.

Affected Parties: Sign on north end, none. Sign at TH 13/CSAH 21 may have minor impacts on adjacent properties.

Potential Funding: Donations from Downtown Businesses
Tax Increment from Existing Districts
Park Dedication Funds
General Fund Revenues

Project: Install Landscaping Along TH 13

Actions: Install street trees along TH 13 from the Main Avenue/TH 13 intersection to the intersection of Pleasant Avenue/TH 13.

Purpose of Project: Improve the appearance of the frontage of Highway 13 passing through Prior Lake. Installation of street trees along TH 13 will help tie the roadway into the downtown area and create a different look that reminds people that they are on the edge of the downtown area.

Anticipated Cost: \$75,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake with cooperation of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT)



Affected Parties: Adjacent property owners

Potential Funding: Donations from Downtown Businesses
Special Service District
Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
Park Dedication Funds
General Fund Revenues

Project: Improve Erie Avenue as a Pedestrian and/or Vehicle Corridor

Actions: Improve Erie Avenue as a connection between the downtown public campus area and Lakefront Park to the north. The section north of Dakota Street is to be designed to accommodate pedestrians only and the section south of Dakota Street will accommodate pedestrians and vehicles.

Purpose of Project: Provide a convenient, attractive connection between downtown and Lakefront Park.

Anticipated Cost: \$100,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake in cooperation with parties involved in the redevelopment of property north of Dakota Street.

Affected Parties: Existing property owners abutting Erie Avenue.

Potential Funding: Donations from Downtown Businesses
Donations from Community Groups
Tax Increment from New District
Special Service District
Park Dedication Funds
General Fund Revenues

Project: Improve the Open Space Area South of City Hall

Actions: Design and construct a city commons park in the open space area immediately west of the library.

Purpose of Project: Provide a passive park area as a site for community events and possibly a farmers market.

Anticipated Cost: \$150,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: None

Potential Funding: Donations from Downtown Businesses



Special Service District
Park Dedication Funds
General Fund Revenues

Project: Existing Building Façade Improvements

Actions: Create a revolving loan and grant fund for building façade improvements. The fund(s) could be used to help offset design and/or construction costs.

Purpose of Project: Encourage the upgrading of building facades consistent with the Design Guidelines. Projects should be required to adhere to the principles outlined in the Guide as a condition of receiving assistance.

Anticipated Cost: Building façade improvements are expected to range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 depending on the scale and size of the project. Costs might be split in some manner between the property owner and the Prior Lake EDA.

Responsible Parties: Private building owners and the Prior Lake EDA.

Affected Parties: Applicable private building owners.

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
EDA Revolving Loan Fund Program
Interest Reduction of Bank Loans
Private Investment

Projects to be Completed in 2005 to 2010

Project: Realign the Main Avenue/TH 13 Intersection

Actions: Reconstruct the Main Avenue/TH 13 intersection

Purpose of Project: Create a more efficient and attractive entrance into downtown and Lakefront Park. Provide adequate separation and stacking for turning vehicles in the intersection.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake and Mn/DOT

Affected Parties: None

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
State of Minnesota
Bonds
Other City Funds



Project: Update Main Avenue from CSAH 21 to Pleasant Avenue

Actions: Complete reconstruction of existing street and replacement of storm sewer and water lines as required. Sidewalk paving, lighting and other site amenities consistent with patterns identified in the design guidelines and streetscape standards.

Purpose of Project: Improve the appearance of the downtown streetscape and alleviate existing utility deficiencies. Construct streetscape improvements that are compatible with the remainder of Main Avenue, north of CSAH 21.

Anticipated Cost: \$250,000

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: Business and property owners along the length of Main Avenue

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
Bonds
Special Service District
Utility Reserves/Revenues
Special Assessments
General Tax Levy
Other Reserves

Project: Construction of Turn Lanes along CSAH 21 and a Traffic Signal at CSAH 21/Main Avenue and CSAH 21/TH 13 Intersections

Actions: Acquire right-of-way and reconstruct portions of CSAH 21 to add left turn lanes and a traffic signal at the intersection of Main Avenue CSAH 21.

Purpose of Project: Manage growing traffic volumes on CSAH 21 and preserve vehicle access into downtown Prior Lake.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake and Scott County

Affected Parties: City of Prior Lake and landowners along CSAH 21

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
General Fund Revenues
Scott County



Project: Infill Commercial

Actions: Construction of new commercial buildings in the downtown area either on land that is currently undeveloped or on land that becomes available due to property acquisitions. Potential City actions include acquisition of property, assembly of viable development sites, removal of existing structures, and other site preparation.

Purpose of Project: To create new office and retail opportunities to enhance the range of goods and services available downtown.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: Private land and building owners and the City of Prior Lake.

Affected Parties: Private land and building owners.

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
Tax Abatement
Private Investment
EDA Levy

Project: Existing Building Façade Improvements

Actions: Utilize a revolving loan and grant fund for building façade improvements. The fund(s) could be used to help offset design and/or construction costs.

Purpose of Project: Encourage the upgrading of building facades consistent with the Design Guidelines. Project should be required to adhere to the principles outlined in the Guide as a condition of receiving assistance.

Anticipated Cost: Building façade improvements are expected to range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 depending on the scale and size of the project. Costs might be split in some manner between the property owner and the Prior Lake EDA.

Responsible Parties: Private building owners and the Prior Lake EDA.

Affected Parties: Applicable private building owners.

Potential Funding: Tax Abatement
EDA Revolving Loan Fund
Interest Reduction of Bank Loans
Private Investment



Projects to be Completed Beyond 2010

Project: Extend Arcadia Avenue South of CSAH 21 to Colorado Street

Actions: Extend Arcadia Avenue south of CSAH 21 to Colorado Street as a new public street.

Purpose of Project: To enhance access to business properties located south of CSAH 21 and to establish a circulation pattern around the downtown area via Dakota Street, Arcadia Avenue, Colorado Street and Pleasant Avenue.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: Private land owners adjacent to the roadway extension

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
General Fund Revenues

Project: Re-route Colorado Street to Pleasant Avenue

Actions: Re-route Colorado Street to Pleasant Avenue as a new public street.

Purpose of Project: To enhance access to business properties located south of CSAH 21 and to establish a circulation pattern around the downtown area via Dakota Street, Arcadia Avenue, Colorado Street and Pleasant Avenue.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: City of Prior Lake

Affected Parties: Private land owners adjacent to the roadway extension

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
General Fund Revenues

Project: Infill Commercial

Actions: Construction of new commercial buildings in the downtown area either on land that is currently undeveloped or on land that becomes available due to property acquisitions.

Purpose of Project: To create new office and retail opportunities to enhance the range of goods and services available downtown. The area south of CSAH 21 contains sites designated for larger scale commercial uses.



Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: Private land and building owners and the City of Prior Lake.

Affected Parties: Private land and building owners.

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
EDA Levy
General Fund Revenues

Project: Construct Mixed-use Project on Pleasant Avenue at the Foot of Main Avenue

Actions: Redevelop land on the south side of Pleasant Avenue incorporating both commercial and residential land uses. Construct a public plaza affording views of the adjacent wetland.

Purpose of Project: Provide opportunities for new commercial uses and new multi-family housing that is convenient to downtown goods and services and to recreational opportunities at Lakefront Park.

Anticipated Cost: To Be Determined

Responsible Parties: Private land owners and developers with assistance as needed by the City of Prior Lake.

Affected Parties: Property owners along the south side of Pleasant Avenue.

Potential Funding: Private Investment
Tax Increment Financing
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Grant Funds
EDA Levy
Scott County HRA

Project: Existing Building Façade Improvements

Actions: Utilize a revolving loan and grant fund for building façade improvements. The fund(s) could be used to help offset design and/or construction costs.

Purpose of Project: Encourage the upgrading of building facades consistent with the Design Guidelines. Project should be required to adhere to the principles outlined in the Guide as a condition of receiving assistance.

Anticipated Cost: Building façade improvements are expected to range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 depending on the scale and size of the project. Costs might be split in some manner between the property owner and the Prior Lake EDA.



Responsible Parties: Private building owners and the Prior Lake EDA.

Affected Parties: Applicable private building owners.

Potential Funding: Tax Increment Financing
Tax Abatement
Private Investment
EDA Levy

First Step Project

The most important component of any redevelopment effort is a starting point. The Guiding Principles that shaped the Redevelopment Plan advocate a strategic approach – one that builds momentum and then capitalizes on success to move onto the next challenge.

Upon adoption of this Development Guide, Prior Lake needs an immediate course of action for implementation. Therefore, this Plan identifies a “first step.” In assessing alternatives for a first step project, all of the recommended projects were examined. Criteria that were used to help define the most appropriate project include:

- The project must make economic sense. With limited financial resources, the initial implementation actions must allocate available resources in the best possible manner. The first step project needs to create opportunities for private investment.
- Location is important. Since implementation of the Development Guide will consist of a series of actions, the location of the first step project should lay the foundation for subsequent actions.
- The project needs to represent a bold move. Prior Lake has been examining its downtown area and formulating plans since 1984. It is now time for something to happen. It is also time for something to happen that grabs the attention of the community. The first step project must make a statement that Prior Lake is serious about redeveloping the downtown area and is willing to make a commitment to see that the Redevelopment Plan is implemented.

Project Details

The recommended “first step” project involves the redevelopment of the northwest corner of the intersection of Dakota Street and Main Avenue. The project area is shown on Figure X. The first step project consists of the following elements.

1. Site Acquisition, Demolition and Building Construction

The first step project is intended to be a cooperative effort between the City of Prior Lake and private landowners. It is based, in part, on a



preliminary proposal that the City received for portions of the identified area.

The project consists of acquiring various land parcels within the identified boundary area. Four existing buildings including two residential structures, the gas station, and the daycare facility will be cleared. New construction on the site will include a mixed-use commercial/residential building and a separate multi-family residential structure. Parking for the site will be provided through an interior surface lot, underground parking and on street parking for commercial patrons. Both buildings are expected to be two or three stories in height and should be designed in a manner consistent with the design guidelines found in this study.

2. Streetscape Improvements

It is important that the first step project begin the process of enhancing the physical environment of the downtown area. Construction of new buildings is only part of the need. The project also needs to include construction of initial streetscape improvements. The following improvements are included:

- Main Avenue from CSAH 21 to a point approximately 200 feet north of Dakota Street. Main Avenue improvements will involve complete street reconstruction including utilities.
- Dakota Street from Main Avenue extending approximately 200 feet west of the intersection. This section corresponds to the street frontage of the proposed project. Dakota Street improvements will be limited to features behind the existing curb line. Resurfacing of the street is not envisioned as part of the first step project.

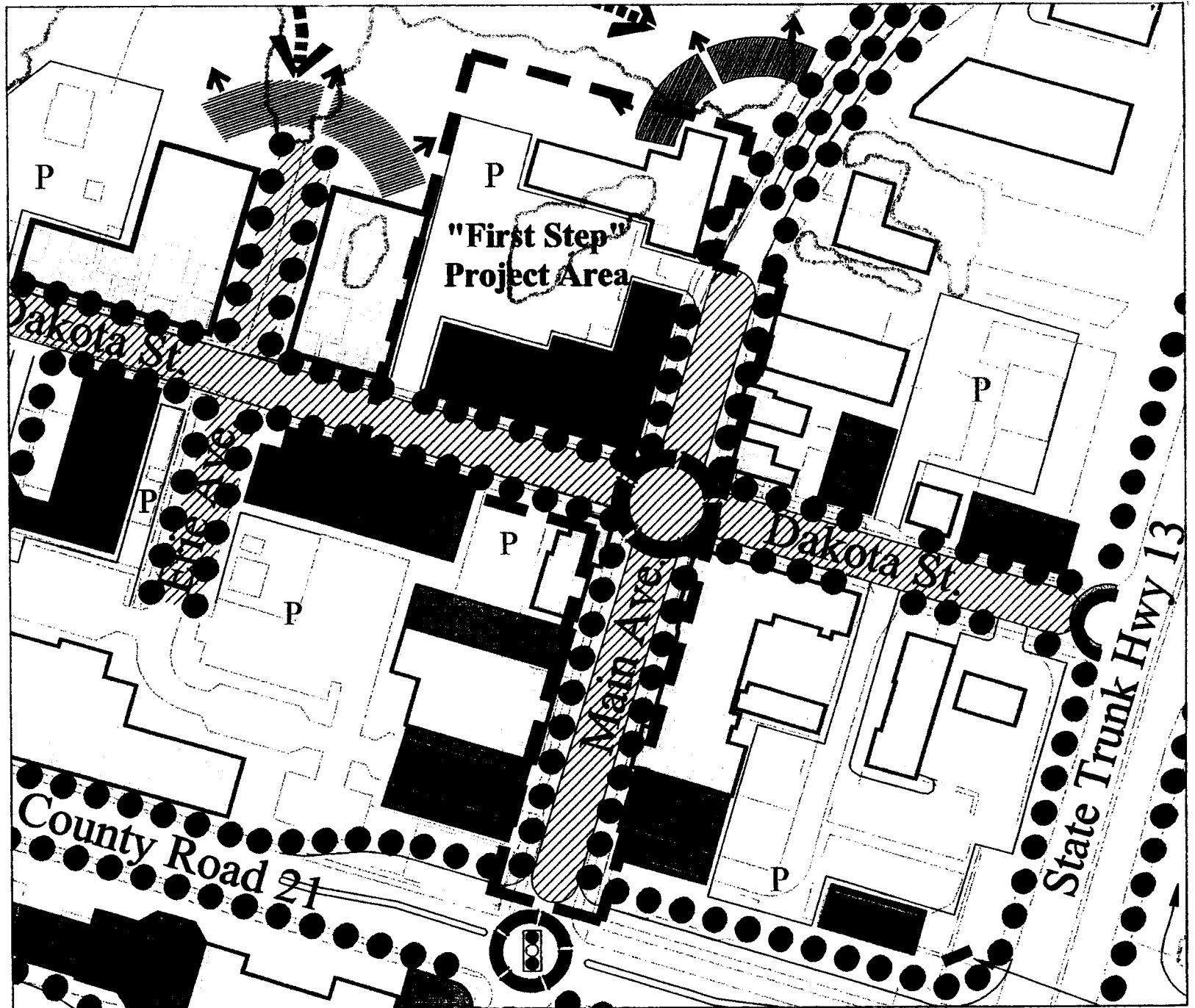
3. Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings

Implementation of the Development Guide also involves the improvement and renovation of existing buildings. A portion of the first step project establishes a grant and loan program for façade improvements. Small grants could be offered to cover the costs of initial professional design work. Low interest loans and other incentives such as tax abatement could be offered for qualifying projects. The City could work with one or more local banks to create the loan program. Criteria would need to be established regarding incentives and priorities.

4. Administration

The first step project will involve participation by both the private and public sectors. The City is expected to play a key up-front role in the project. In order to be most efficient, the City of Prior Lake will need to identify a project administrator who can oversee the details of the project assembly and the activities of a variety of specialized consultants with expertise in public finance, appraisals, and acquisition and relocation.





LEGEND

	Community Gathering Space
	Improved Intersection Gateway
	Parking
	Residential Use
	Commercial Use
	Civic Use
	Mixed Use
	Traditional Downtown District
	Green Space
	Downtown Boundary



**City of Prior Lake
Downtown Development Guide- "First Step" Project**



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Once the property has been acquired and cleared for development, the role of the City's project administrator will shift to the streetscape improvements portion of the project.

Financial and Procedural Overview

The Redevelopment Plan targets the area west of Main Avenue, north of Dakota Street and east of the extension of Arcadia Avenue (Block 9 of the Original Town subdivision) for redevelopment in the near term. A closer examination of this block provides valuable guidance on the strategies and actions needed to implement the Plan.

The City has received a proposal for the redevelopment of a portion of Block 9. The proposal would create 63 housing units and 22,000 square feet of retail space in a mixed used development. While this type of development is a good fit with the Redevelopment Plan, it illustrates the challenges of redevelopment.

1. Will the City take what comes or be proactive in seeking redevelopment?

The proposal wraps around the existing day care and gas station occupying the southeast corner of Block 9. This development proposal reflects the practical realities of creating redevelopment sites. The proposal fits development onto land that can be acquired by the developer.

Redevelopment of the entire block would have far greater benefit to the Downtown. New development would be immediately adjacent to the core area at the Main/Dakota intersection. The hope of extending the development is to promote activity on adjacent properties. The development would also reinforce the public improvements to Main and Dakota.

2. Will the City play an active role in acquiring property?

Assembling sites is perhaps the greatest challenge of redevelopment. Unless redevelopment means a series of small projects, then existing parcels must be combined into larger sites. If parcels cannot be purchased, then the City faces the potential use of condemnation. The implementation of the Plan requires the City consider if it is willing to condemn property for redevelopment and if so under what conditions.

3. Can a TIF district be created?

The development proposal for Block 9 does not request financial assistance in the form of tax increment financing. However, expanding the project to include all of the Block and adjacent public improvement will require additional public funding. TIF is the most likely source of this funding.



The ability to use tax increment financing on Block 9 depends on the answer to the following questions. Is enough of the area improved? Do any of the buildings meet with statutory definition of structurally substandard?

The statutory criteria for both redevelopment and renovation/renewal TIF districts require the presence of improved parcels. The test for improvements has two elements:

- Parcels consisting of 70% of the area of the district are occupied by buildings, streets, utilities, or other improvements.
- A parcel is deemed to be occupied if 15% or more of the parcel area contains buildings, streets, utilities, or other improvements.

In its current lot configuration, the entirety of Block 9 cannot meet the improved area criteria. The vacant parcels on the northern portion of the Block exceed 30% of the area. A TIF district could include parcels on the south one-half of the block. Several combinations of parcels could meet the improved area criteria.

It is important to recognize that the redevelopment of this property would result in replatting and a change in parcel layout. The current parcels would be combined into larger development sites. Through the combination of vacant and improved parcels, the replat might meet the statutory criteria for a TIF district.

The second test involves the presence of structurally substandard buildings. There are five buildings (not including outbuildings) on Block 9. To create a redevelopment TIF district, three of the buildings (more than 50%) must meet the statutory test. Two buildings (more than 30%) must meet the test for a renovation and renewal TIF district.

State Law uses two factors to determine if a building is structurally substandard:

- The building must contain defects in structural elements or a combination of deficiencies in essential utilities and facilities, light and ventilation, fire protection including adequate egress, layout and condition of interior partitions, or similar factors, which defects or deficiencies are of sufficient total significance to justify substantial renovation or clearance.
- The building is determined not to be in compliance with the building code applicable to new buildings or could not be modified to satisfy the building code at a cost of less than 15% of the cost of constructing a new structure of the same square footage and type on the site.

The evaluation needed to make this determination has not been made as part of the Downtown planning process. Experience with similar



properties suggests that some of the buildings in Block 9 may meet these criteria.

4. Is redevelopment financially feasible?

The ability to create a TIF district does not guarantee that redevelopment will be financially feasible. The expanded redevelopment of Block 9 faces the following public costs:

- Land acquisition.
- Relocation of existing property owners.
- Building demolition and site clearance.
- Adjacent public improvements.

The cost of these activities less monies from the sale of land to the developer and use of other city improvement funds represents the potential need for TIF. The amount of tax increment is determined by the property value added by new development. The table below shows the estimated annual tax increment and long-term financing capacity from different levels of estimated market value captured by a TIF district.

Captured From New Development			Supportable Debt		
Estimated Market Value	Tax Capacity	Tax Increment	10 Years 7.75%	15 Years 8.00%	20 Years 8.25%
\$100,000	\$2,400	\$2,955	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$28,000
200,000	5,300	6,526	44,000	56,000	63,000
300,000	8,700	10,712	73,000	92,000	103,000
400,000	12,100	14,899	101,000	128,000	144,000
500,000	15,500	19,085	130,000	163,000	184,000
600,000	18,900	23,272	158,000	199,000	224,000
700,000	22,300	27,458	186,000	235,000	265,000
800,000	25,700	31,644	215,000	271,000	305,000
900,000	29,100	35,831	243,000	307,000	345,000
1,000,000	32,500	40,017	272,000	343,000	386,000
1,100,000	35,900	44,204	300,000	378,000	426,000
1,200,000	39,300	48,390	328,000	414,000	466,000
1,300,000	42,700	52,577	357,000	450,000	507,000

Depending on the type of project, new commercial development of 25,000 square feet or more should create a financially feasible project.



Downtown Development Guide - City of Prior Lake

Discussion Summary

May 13, 1999

Exercise One Existing Characteristics

Downtown Prior Lake has evolved over the past century. Today, it is a collection of public and private land uses that provides an array of goods, services and entertainment. But what is Downtown Prior Lake? What characteristics define the downtown area? What makes the downtown Prior Lake unique? Please identify some of the existing characteristics of the area:

- Proximity to park
- Intersection of two roads
- Night life
- Office/service orientation
- Diversity of business
- Civic structure
- Hodge-podge of quality and style of building
- Historical center
- Compact
- No access to lake
- Shortage of retail attractions
- Natural barriers to expansion
- No malt shop
- County Road 21 +/-
- Adjacent and in downtown resources
- Lack of family restaurant
- No sidewalk sales
- Severed by major road
- Scattered retail
- Pedestrian/bicycle access not connected
- Lack of identity
- Major library
- Good place for events
- No youth or attractions for youth
- Inadequate parking
- Hub/Heart of community
- Poor pedestrian circulation
- Impact of 44
- House adjacent to Conoco, B&B?
- Segregation of downtown by 21
- No hotel downtown
- Thoroughfare, not destination

Exercise Two Future Characteristics

Prior Lake's downtown area today is the result of a variety of economic and physical forces. As we look to the future, image what the downtown area might be like. What do you want downtown Prior Lake to be like in ten or twenty years?

EXPAND/CONNECT DOWNTOWN

- Bigger businesses
- Trolley and/or bus system
- Bridge over south wetlands (floral shop to CH. Carpenter)
- Tie uptown with downtown
- A "link to bring both sides of Highway 13 and County Road 21 together" Join the N&S business
- Downtown expansion (larger -- more area)
- Expand to allow more growth

PROVIDE ADEQUATE PARKING

- Parking
- Adequate parking

ENHANCE PARK AMENITIES

- Community designed central park
- Access to lake and lakefront park

CREATE ATTRACTIONS

- Create special draw
- Glockenspiel
- Youth center
- Farmers market and arts and crafts fairs
- More pedestrian traffic day and night

EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

- (Dense) housing overlooking the pond
- Senior housing

IMPROVE APPEARANCE

- Remove dilapidated structures
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Streetscape/parking
- Bed and breakfast (historical preservation)
- Compatible facia
- Retention of historical

EXPAND RETAIL/ENTERTAINMENT USES

- Micro-brewery
- Another Grainwood Hotel (near pond)
- Lifecycle services
- Mixed-use retail/housing
- Lunch
- Variety of retail and restaurant
- (More) family restaurants
- Retail
- Coffee shop
- Specialized retail shops
- Quality retail
- Family dining/bakery

EXPAND OFFICE USES

- Office campus

ACCOMMODATE PEDESTRIANS

- Pedestrian friendly/controlled traffic

IMPROVE PUBLIC FACILITIES

- Public restroom

Exercise Three Opportunities and Challenges

Downtown Prior Lake is not a blank slate. To improve the area, there are assets that may need to be built upon and challenges that must be recognized and overcome where feasible. List as many opportunities and challenges as you feel appropriate and then as a group, define those that you consider to be the five most important in each category.

OPPORTUNITIES

INCORPORATE NATURAL AMENITIES

- Natural wetlands

REFLECT PRIOR LAKE'S HISTORY

- To preserve Prior Lake history

SMALLER MAY BE BETTER

- Small size (scale's) is advantageous

EXISTING ENTERTAINMENT BASE

- Night life

CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

- City Hall
- Telephone company
- Library
- Dance center
- Strong existing businesses
- Growing company - Scott -Rice
- Move post office downtown

EXPAND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase the customer base
- New businesses
- Increased tax base
- Job opportunities construction & new businesses
- Increase tax base

GOOD TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

- Good road access - in and out of downtown
- Traffic count

AFFORDABLE LAND

- Land banking
- Low land costs (presently)

CHANCE TO DO IT RIGHT

- To focus community (once chance to do it)
- Opportunity is created by the need

IDENTIFIABLE REDEVELOPMENT SITES

- Expansion of downtown
- Redevelop main to city hall
- Redevelop Dakota to park

PROVIDE YOUTH ACTIVITIES

- More youth activities

CHALLENGES

PARADIGM SHIFT

- Attitudes (paradigms)
- Getting the community to "buy in"
- Changing the downtown perception

MANAGE IMPACTS OF CHANGE

- To keep current business while making changes
- Business interruption

GAIN CONSENSUS/COOPERATION

- Consensus of property owners
- Uniting business owners
- Community cooperation
- Cooperation (business, government, residents)

HOW DO WE PAY FOR IT?

- Financing
- City take the lead in financing
- Financial considerations
- Financing

ATTRACT LOCAL AND OUTSIDE INTEREST

- To attract new business and developer investment

OVERCOME REGULATORY BARRIERS

- Barriers with city zoning

Exercise Four Other Ideas

Throughout the course of tonight's meeting, we have gathered a great deal of information for the Downtown Development Guide. This is your opportunity to tell us if we've missed anything. Are there any other issues that you think will be important to the downtown area in the next ten to twenty years that have not been raised this evening?

- Increased need for medical services
- Convenience for residential or business center
- Move utilities underground
- Make downtown unique/niche
- Separate downtown from other commercial
- Enhance existing business
- Downtown competing with urban expansion
- Containment of downtown
- Plan for future growth
- Access, topography, lake/unique boundaries
- Can downtown survive adjacent competition
- Build in 'sense of community'
- City - Advertise downtown
- Connections from 169 & I35
- Future roll of CH 21

Workshop #3 Design Concepts Summary

Group #	Option A Score	Option A - Crossroads at Main Ave. and Dakota St.	Option B Score	Option B - Main Street Revitalization	Option C Score	Option C - A Downtown District
1	1	Great Idea for Post Office - Is it enough room? County Rd 21 should be addressed. Include area south of 21 as integral part of downtown. Reroute of Colorado St. a good idea. Provide trail connection under Hwy 13, across wetland to public gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave.	3	Bad location for Post Office. Post Office would fit better in Gov't Campus Include all of Main Ave up to Hwy 13 Intersection. Good location for new City Hall Improvements to County Rd. 21 good No Blvd on Main Ave. Angle Parking Good Provide trail connection under Hwy 13, across wetland to public gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Reroute of Colorado St. an improvement High Density Housing North of Dakota a good idea	2	Too Much - Unrealistic! No Center Median on Main Ave. Improvements to County Rd. 21 good Provide trail connection under Hwy 13, across wetland to public gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave.
2	2	No Post Office - Takes up too much parking space No Parking along Lakefront Park No Parking Lots along Hwy 13 - not a good image to portray	3	Improve County Rd. 21 to slow traffic through beautification Good location for Post office Good location for parking lots adjacent to retail uses Good phase one leading to option C	1	South edge of Pleasant could be Phase 2 for Option B No median on Main Ave. - Too much maintenance No parking along 13 - does not convey positive image
3	1	Extend Main Ave to the south to connect to Priordale Mall Do not remove existing business on Northeast side of Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Stop Light at County Rd. 21 & Main Ave. Likes parking behind Scott Rice Likes addition of all parking lots adjacent to retail No diagonal parking on Main - will slow traffic Likes Housing on North side of Dakota Replace Automall with Housing	3	No Center Median on County Rd. 21 Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Connect Resource Center to Lakefront Park on Erie Ave.	2	Do not expand downtown limits to the southwest Likes addition of Residential along existing residential and facing park. Likes removing Automall for Housing Likes Gathering space on North edge of Main Ave.
4	2	Extend downtown limits to Evanston Ave. Then jog one block east on Minnesota St. and continue to North to meet with existing boundary. Emphasize Main Ave. Do not remove business around Lumber Yard. Improve access to downtown at Dakota St. & Hwy 13 Likes Gathering Space on North side of Erie Ave.	1	Extend downtown limits to Evanston Ave. Then jog one block east on Minnesota St. and continue to North to meet with existing boundary. Extend Arcadia Ave. to the South across County Rd. 21. Likes gateway at Hwy 13 and Main Ave. Enough parking? Good concept to slow down traffic No retail behind existing offices on Main & Dakota	3	Extend downtown limits to Evanston Ave. Then jog one block east on Minnesota St. and continue to North to meet with existing boundary. No Median on Main Ave. Likes Gathering space on North edge of Main Ave. Likes removing Automall for Housing Likes residential uses around park
5	1	Do not remove existing business on Northeast side of Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave.	3	Do not remove existing business on Northeast side of Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave.	2	Do not remove existing business on Northeast side of Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave.
6	1	Do not reroute Colorado St. Stop Light at County Rd. 21 & Main Ave. Provide turn lanes at Hwy 13 and County Rd. 21 No commercial on northside of County Rd. 21 between Hwy 13 and Main Ave. Likes Housing on Northside of Dakota Likes Gov't uses at Erie and Dakota	2	Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Improvements to County Rd. 21 good - turn lanes Reroute of Colorado St. an improvement Likes Community Gathering space on north end of Main Ave. Widen Main Ave. with Turn Lanes from Dakota to Hwy 13 Likes Housing on Northside of Dakota Bad Location for Post Office - Commercial would bring in \$\$	3	Likes Gathering Space at Pleasant and Main Ave. Likes Housing North of Dakota & buffering neighborhood to the Southwest. Intersections on County Rd. 21 would be dangerous. Must have signal at Main. Ave. & County Rd. 21. Implement cooperative agreement for signal Need to acquire R.O.W. for median on County Rd. 21 Likes overall size and business opportunity

Workshop #3 Design Concepts Summary

Group #	Option A Score	Option A - Crossroads at Main Ave. and Dakota St.	Option B Score	Option B - Main Street Revitalization	Option C Score	Option C - A Downtown District
7	2	Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. - No mixed Use Extend Arcadia Ave. to the South across County Rd. 21. NO Post Office Provide mixed use on North side of Dakota where Housing is shown. Add Median on County Rd. 21 Emphasize Main Ave. between Dakota & County Rd. 21	3	Extend medians & planting across Hwy 13 to the East. Add left turn arrows at Hwy 13 and County Rd. 21 Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. - prefers commercial vs. mixed use. Teen Center might be good candidate for Pleasant & Main Likes single family residential at Colorado & Pleasant Extend Arcadia Ave. to the South across County Rd. 21. High Density Housing North of Dakota a good idea Post Office an OK location Extend entry to Lakefront park out to Hwy 13 Remove entry at Main Ave. & Hwy 13 Add Parkway from Option C to this option	1	No median on Main Ave. Likes parkway to Arcadia Extend Arcadia Ave. to the South across County Rd. 21. Extend entry to Lakefront park out to Hwy 13 Remove entry at Main Ave. & Hwy 13 Be sensitive to removing nice homes south of Pleasant Ave. Extend medians & planting across Hwy 13 to the East.
8	2	Likes mixed use/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Likes Housing on Northside of Dakota Likes Gov't uses at Erie and Dakota	3	Improvements to County Rd. 21 good - turn lanes Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Erie Avenue becomes wasted space south of Dakota Likes emphasis on Main Ave.	1	Likes Parkway on Main Ave. from Hwy 13 to Dakota Does not like Parkway extending over to Arcadia
9	1	Likes mixed use/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Reroute of Colorado St. - a good idea. Parking along Hwy 13 - a not so good idea Bad location for Post Office Housing North of Dakota St. a good idea Not a long term solution	2	Improvements to County Rd. 21 good Extend medians & planting across Hwy 13 to the East. Show southern gateway to downtown between wetlands on Hwy 13. Likes retail/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. OK with single family residential on Colorado extension Likes anchor building on Hwy 13 & County Rd. 21 Likes parking behind buildings Likes Community Gathering space on north end of Main Ave. Post Office too big for this location High Density Housing North of Dakota a good idea Likes new City Hall Likes green Space on Arcadia & County Rd. 21 Likes Gateway at Main Ave. and Hwy 13	3	Likes extending Arcadia to Pleasant Ave. Intersection at Erie and County Rd. 21 a so-so idea Likes commercial and Public Gathering space south of Pleasant Ave. No median on Main Ave. No Parking on Hwy 13 and County Rd. 21 Likes Gathering space on North edge of Main Ave. Likes removing Automall for Housing Likes residential uses around park Likes gateway at Main Ave. & Hwy 13 Great long range approach Likes Housing on Arcadia between County Rd. 21 & Pleasant Ave. How do you access park?
Totals	13	Liked Gov't use at Erie Ave. & Dakota St. Mixed feelings about location of Post Office Housing North of Dakota is a good idea Liked mixed use/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. County Rd. 21 needs to be addressed Mixed feelings on Colorado St. Reroute	23	Bad Location for Post Office Liked mixed use/community gathering space at Pleasant Ave. & Main Ave. Colorado St. Reroute an improvement Liked Improvements to County Rd. 21 - extend across Hwy 13 Housing North of Dakota is a good idea Extend Arcadia across County Rd. 21 Liked gathering space on the North end of Main	18	Long Range Plan Liked Housing around park edge Extend Arcadia across County Rd. 21 Controlling traffic on County Rd. 21 important No Center Median on Main Ave. Liked gathering space on the North end of Main
Summary of issues	The Community felt strongly about these issues: Traffic on County Rd. 21 needs to be addressed Housing north of Dakota seems to make sense Public Gathering Spaces on the North & South ends of Main Ave. would be an improvement Focus development on Main Ave. Extend Arcadia across County Rd. 21 Diagonal Parking would improve Main Ave. No median on Main Ave. should be implemented		The Community had mixed feelings about these issues: Rerouting of Colorado St. Location for Post Office			

Workshop #3 Theme Development Summary

Group #	History Score	Historical Theme	Lake Score	Lake Theme	Park Score	Park Theme
1	3	Like midblock access to sidewalks Likes hanging wood signs - No Trucks on Main Wants Coffee House on Main Ave. Low Maintenance Likes Historical Light Fixture	1	No Canvas Awnings - Would Fade & be High Maintenance No Trucks Ugly lighting Yuck - does not like Posts & Ropes	2	No Center Median on Main Ave. - No Banners - Yuck Want Angle Parking Too High Maintenance
2	1	Too Cold Feeling	2	No Post & Ropes theme Too high Maintenance	3	Likes natural looking entry Likes Streetscape Character Sketch No Center Median - Not practical - Cuts views to business Likes tying Park to Main Ave. Low Maintenance
3	1	No Comment	3	No Comment	2	No Comment
4	2	No Comment	1	No Comment	3	No Comment
6	3	No Comment	2	No Comment	1	No Comment
6	1	Likes diagonal parking Likes hanging wood signs -	3	Likes diagonal parking Likes decorative planters on Main	2	Likes fieldstone bases for lighting Add flower planters No median
7	3	Likes hanging wood signs Likes Historical light fixture Likes ornamental Iron railing Likes Gateway Would work well with existing business Extending sidewalk out to street would make it difficult to remove snow.	2	Lights are OK but not great Extending sidewalk out to street would make it difficult to remove snow.	1	Likes lighting on buildings No median No natural look on street Gateway OK
8	2	Do not like hanging signs	3	Like Canvas Awnings Canvas Awnings a Maintenance Concern Gateway OK if Maintained	1	No Median No natural look
9	1	Do not like hanging signs Does not like gateway	3	Like Canvas Awnings Likes Post & Ropes - Nautical theme Likes diagonal parking	2	No Median
Totals	17	Mixed feelings on the Hanging Wood Signs Liked diagonal parking	20	Canvas Awnings Nice but a maintenance concern Liked diagonal parking Mixed feelings on the Post & Ropes theme	17	No Center Median Mixed on Entry Signage Natural look not appropriate for downtown