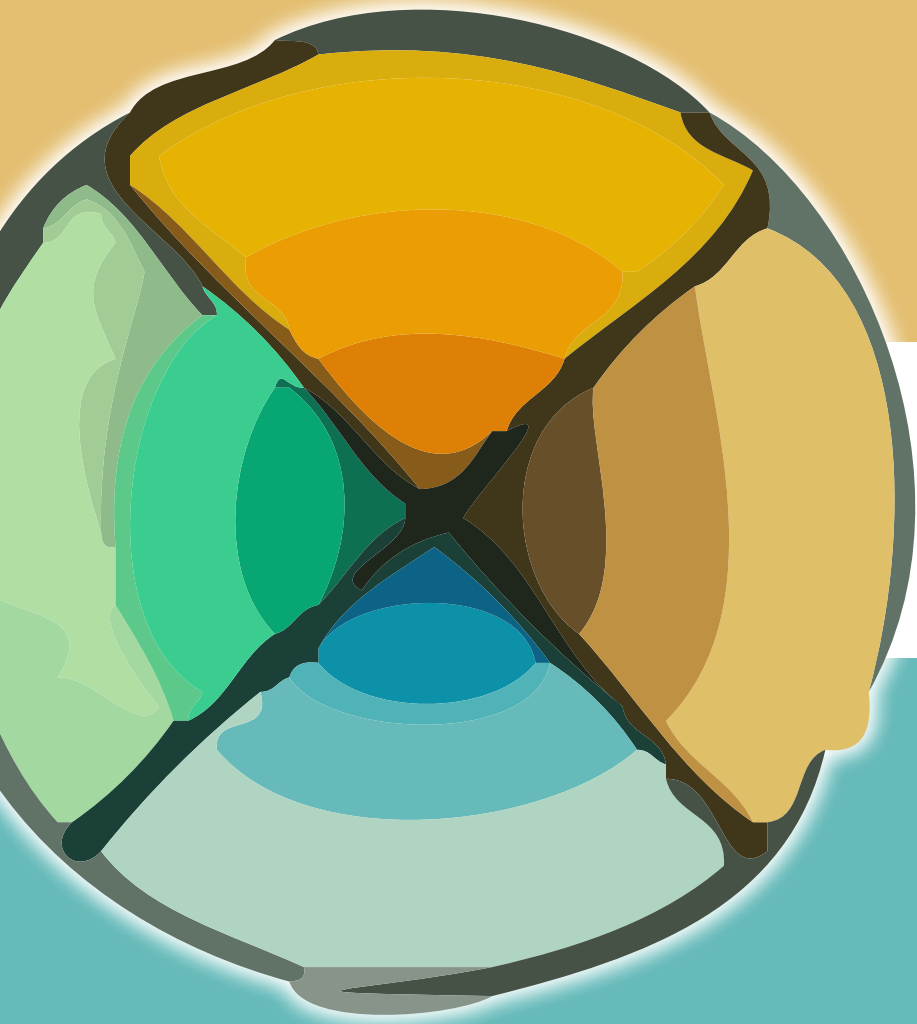


# Four Seasons Mall Site

## *Redevelopment Study*



FINAL REPORT  
*November 17, 2011*



City of Plymouth

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# Acknowledgments

## City Council:

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Kelli Slavik, Mayor

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Katheen Murdock (Ward 2 until Sept. 30, 2011)

Jeffry Wosje (Ward 2 after Oct. 25, 2011)

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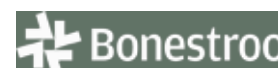
**SRF Consulting**

*Traffic Analysis*



**Bonestroo**

*Market Study*



# Project Overview

## Introduction

In April 2010, the City of Plymouth took the initiative to begin studying the Four Seasons Mall site in order to better understand the site and therefore, to better respond to redevelopment proposals. To assist with the study, the city secured funding from the Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Demonstration Account with supplemental funding from Hennepin County's Daylighting Hennepin Creeks program and in-kind assistance from the Bassett Creek Watershed Commission.

## Project Goals & Objectives

The Four Seasons Mall Redevelopment Study provides guiding principles for redevelopment of the property. The guiding principles are focused on land use and urban design, architectural character, transportation and pedestrian connectivity and storm water treatment techniques.

## Project Elements

The work plan for the study included the following elements:

- A market study to analyze the current demographics and market components and suggest potential future uses.
- Illustrative redevelopment scenarios, based on the market study results and initial traffic analysis.
- A traffic study to identify current constraints and analyze the traffic impacts of each of the illustrative scenarios.
- Storm water / environmental review and designs, addressing how to incorporate the existing storm water stream located to the north and east of the existing building and the wetland complex to the south as focal point amenities for the site and the neighborhood.

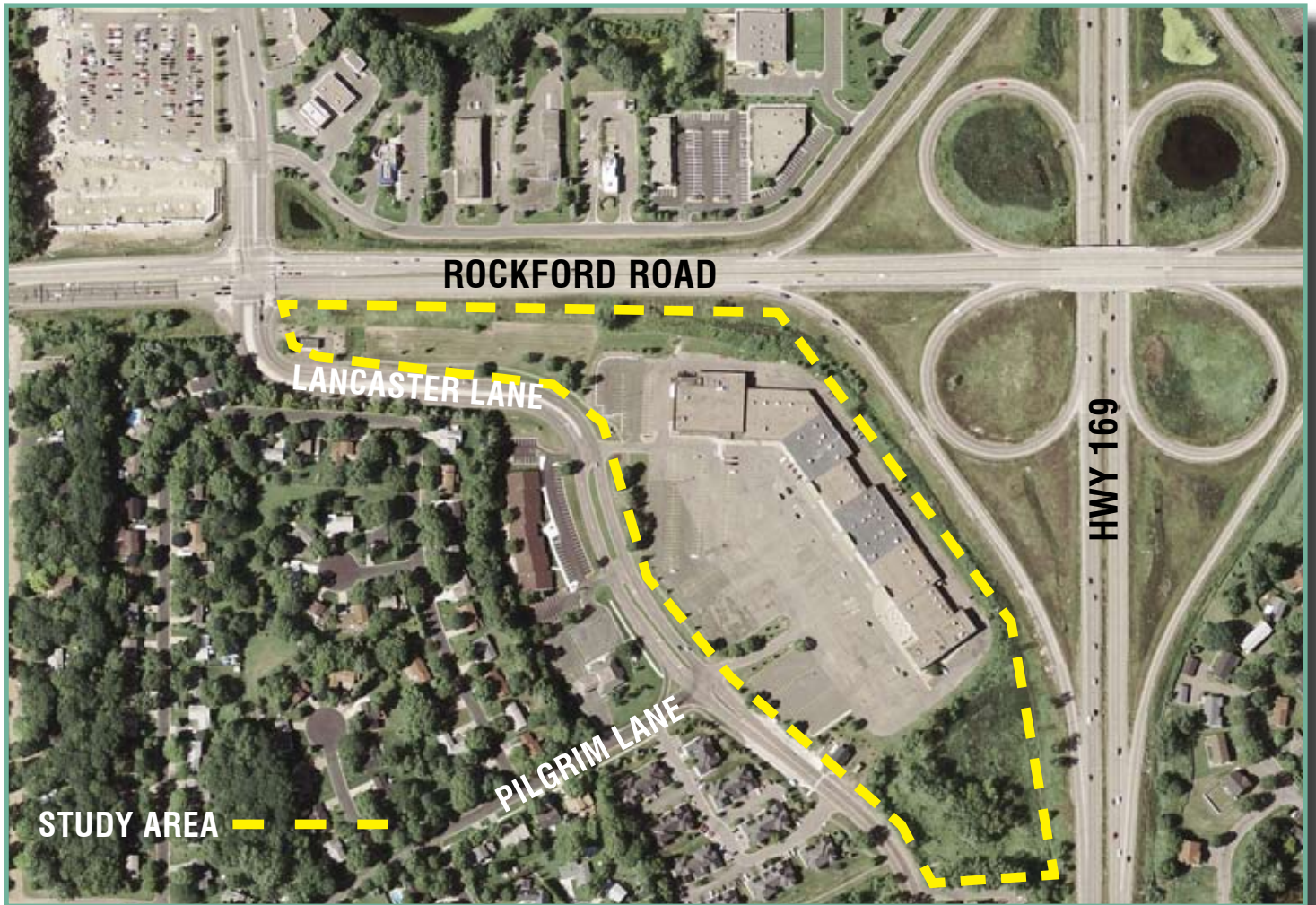


*The Four Season Mall sits on a 21-acre site along Highway 169 and Rockford Road (County Road 9) in Plymouth.*



*The Four Seasons Mall currently has a number of vacancies within the building.*





*Project Site Aerial - Four Seasons Mall Site.*



*Four Seasons Mall from the northern entrance off of Lancaster Lane.*



The centerpiece outcome of each of these elements was the set of guiding principles. The same elements and particularly the development of guiding principles can be replicated for other redevelopment sites within the community.

## Project History

The Four Seasons Mall is a 117,000 square foot vintage 1978 neighborhood strip shopping center on a 21-acre site. The center has not been updated for many years, and much of it is currently vacant. Its highly visible location at the southwest corner of Highway 169 and County Road 9 (Rockford Road) and deteriorating condition led the city to begin studying the center as early as 1998, during the 2000 update to the comprehensive plan. At that time, the city concluded that the site was properly guided and zoned, and chose not to further study the site's redevelopment potential. By the time the city began the next plan update in the mid-2000's, the Four Seasons Mall had declined to the point where the city identified it as a property that may undergo change during the 20-year planning horizon. Specifically, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan stated that the mall site is a good candidate for mixed use in the future. The city intended mixed use in this context to include commercial, retail, office and potentially specialized housing (e.g. senior, live/work). The plan further indicated that any redevelopment: 1) include a transit element as the area is currently served by transit and until 2008, the site included a park-and-ride and 2) be sensitive to the neighborhood immediately to the west.

## Existing Conditions

The site is roughly 21 acres, however due to the irregularity of the parcel shape and a wetland located at the southern portion of the site approximately 16 to 17 acres of the site are buildable. Given the site location, it has a "front" on all four sides of the property. Appropriate orientation to Highway 169, Rockford Road, and Lancaster Lane will be critical to the success of any future redevelopment.

Uses adjacent to the site include a US Bank, small offices and townhomes near the intersection of Pilgrim Lane. A large single family neighborhood lies beyond to the west. Access to and from the neighborhood is via Pilgrim and Lancaster Lanes. To the south, a wetland creates the border between the site and several apartment complexes along Lancaster Lane. This wetland collects drainage from areas both north and west of the site and ultimately outlets to the east through a culvert under Highway 169. The wetland is classified as a medium quality wetland and provides a feeling of open space.



*Four Seasons Mall interior circulation was a trend in retail development in the 1970s.*



*Medium density housing exists across Lancaster Lane to the west from Four Seasons Mall.*



*A significant single family neighborhood exists to the west of the study area and traffic is a significant issue for the area.*



## Existing Land Use Guiding

The site is guided commercial and is identified as a potential mixed use / transit site in the city's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Surrounding land use guiding includes commercial office uses (CO - Commercial Office) immediately west and higher density housing (LA-4 - Living Area 4) to the southwest and south. Low density residential (LA-1 - Living Area 1) is the predominant guiding to the west of the site.

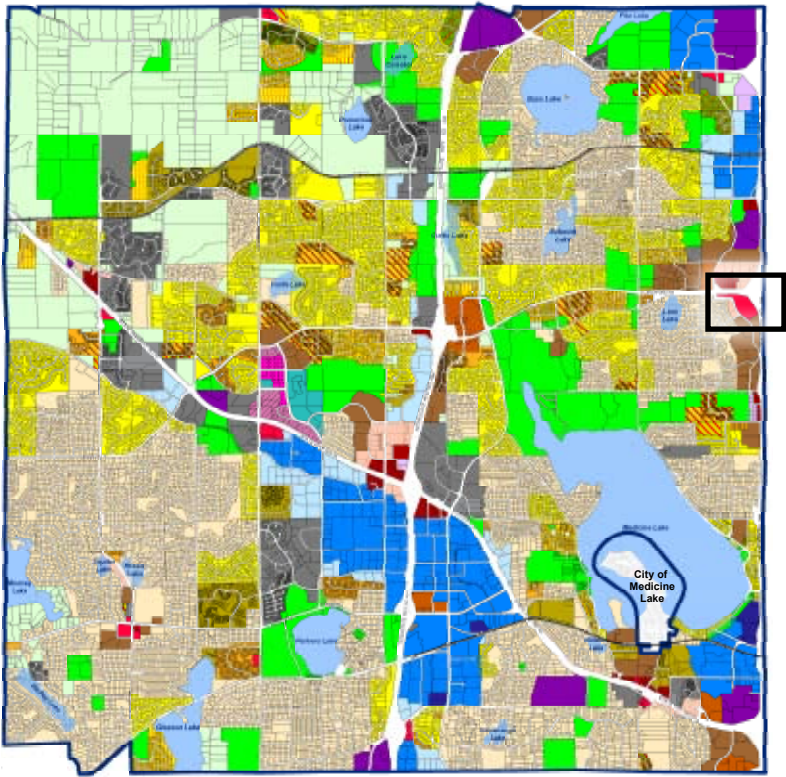
### EXISTING LAND USE MAP



# Existing Zoning

Zoning for the property is C-2, neighborhood commercial. Neighborhood commercial zoning is intended to provide for low to moderately intense retail or service outlets which deal directly with the customer for whom the goods or services are furnished. The uses allowed in this district are to provide goods and services on a limited community market scale.

## EXISTING ZONING MAP



The City’s 2011 Zoning Map shows the site as C-2, Neighborhood Commercial.

### Legend

- FRD, Future Restricted Development
- RSF-R, Single Family Detached Rural to Urban Transition
- RSF-1, Single Family Detached 1
- RSF-2, Single Family Detached 2
- RSF-3, Single Family Detached 3
- RSF-4, Single and Two Family
- RMF-1, Multiple Family 1
- RMF-2, Multiple Family 2
- RMF-3, Multiple Family 3
- RMF-4, Multiple Family 4
- O, Office
- C-1, Convenience Commercial
- C-2, Neighborhood Commercial
- C-3, Highway Commercial
- C-4, Community Commercial
- CC-P, City Center, Public
- CC-OT & R, City Center, Office/Tech & Retail
- CC-R & E, City Center, Retail & Entertainment
- C-5, Commercial/Industrial
- B-C, Business Campus
- I-1, Light Industrial
- I-2, General Industrial
- I-3, Heavy Industrial
- P-I, Public/Institutional
- PUD, Planned Unit Development
- City Limits
- Lakes



City of  
Plymouth, Minnesota





## Site Issues & Opportunities

Two challenging aspects to redevelopment of the Four Seasons Mall site will be the shallow depth of the parcel between Lancaster Lane and Highway 169 and the need to create a development plan that addresses the multiple fronts of the property. The long, narrow parcel shape will create issues with the placement of buildings and the corresponding placement of parking. Finding a balance between providing highway visibility and respecting the existing uses to the west will be a primary objective for the site design.

Another challenge of the site is the poor soil conditions. Generally, the soils worsen from north to south, closer to the existing wetland. The existing building was constructed on pilings to prevent the building from slumping. However, pavement continues to settle away from the building and multiple attempts have been made to bring the parking and loading areas back up to grade.

The intersection at Lancaster Lane and Rockford Road is another significant limitation to redevelopment of the site. This intersection operates within acceptable thresholds today. However, any redevelopment proposal will need to include an analysis of the proposed traffic generation in order to determine if roadway improvements are necessary. Any modifications, improvements or upgrades to this intersection will be difficult, given the proximity to the Highway 169 ramps to the east.

The wetland located in the southern portion of the site creates an opportunity to focus development on an open space amenity. Additionally, the site has potential to treat storm water from upstream, off-site development at a few specific locations.

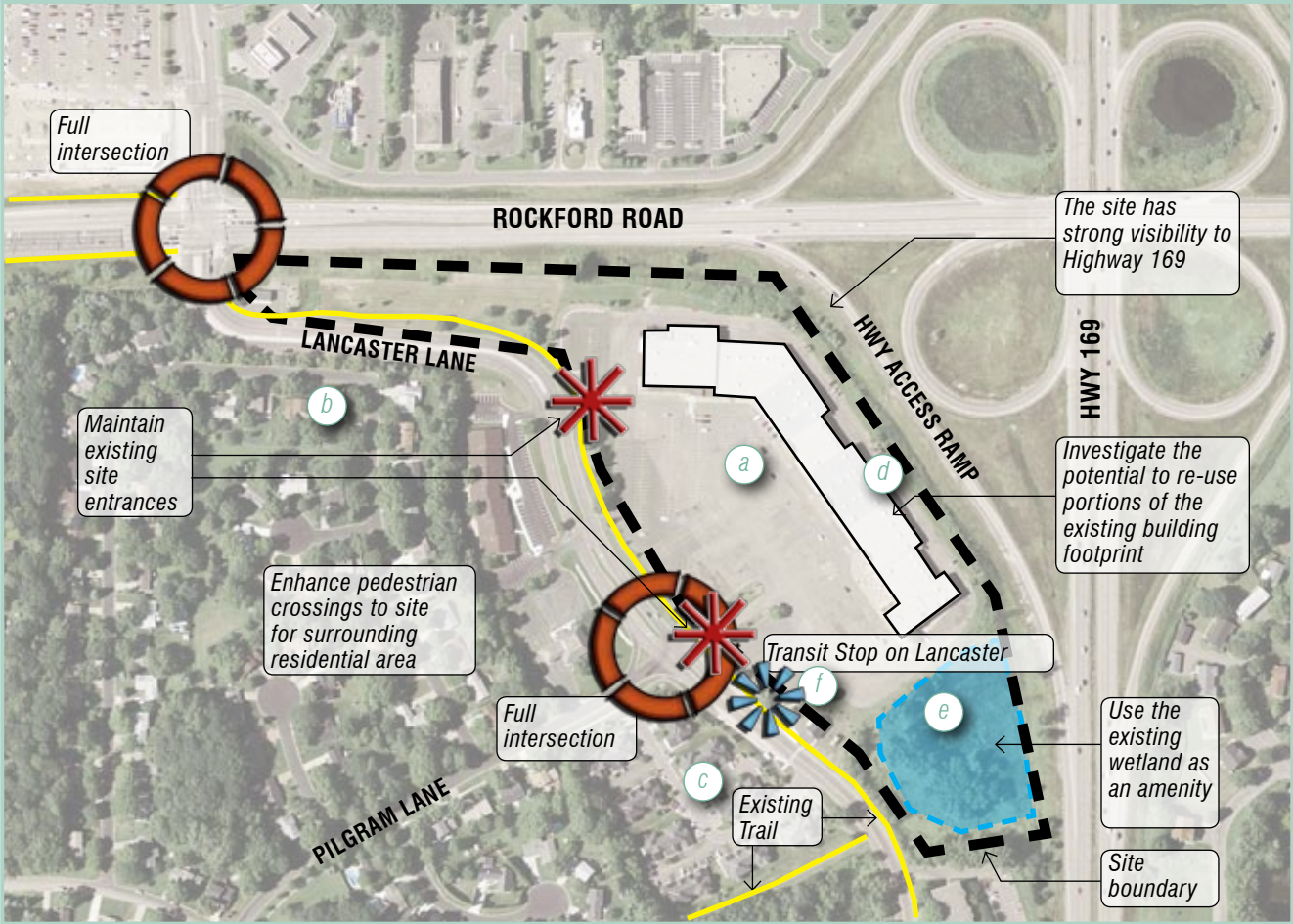
Site Issues and Opportunities



The site is predominately covered in impervious surface.



Residential land uses to the west need to be addressed.



The service and loading areas along the Highway 169 side of the current building create an unappealing view from the highway.



Existing wetland provides an opportunity as a natural feature amenity.



Existing transit stop on Lancaster Lane could be integrated with a park and ride on the site.

# Redevelopment Guiding Principles

## Introduction

The primary focus of the planning effort for the Four Seasons Mall Redevelopment Study was to establish a set of “guiding principles” for redevelopment that the city can use to review and evaluate future development proposals. The guiding principles are rooted in the comprehensive plan, but have more direct correlation to specific site conditions and relationships to existing uses.

The guiding principles are focused on four areas: 1) land use and urban design; 2) architecture; 3) transportation and connectivity; and 4) storm water treatment techniques. All of the principles represent the desired outcomes for redevelopment at the site from the community’s perspective. The guiding principles were presented to the public at an open house on September 22, 2011. They were also presented to and reviewed by the Planning Commission on October 5, 2011 and presented to, reviewed by and approved by the City Council on October 11, 2011.





## Land Use / Urban Design Principles

The principles for land use and urban design for the Four Seasons Mall site are rooted in the best management practices for livable and sustainable communities. Ensuring that the scale and intensity of the proposed development respects the existing surrounding uses and fulfills needs in the marketplace are key principles. Integrating the design of inviting outdoor spaces such as patio areas, outdoor seating / dining areas and plaza spaces for public gatherings into the development are additional critical elements to be factored into the design. The principles also address green site design techniques and outline appropriate landscaping and lighting such as native landscaping and dark sky friendly lighting. The guiding principles for land use and urban design are:

1. The use or mix of uses shall fill market needs.
2. The scale and intensity of use shall respect and complement the scale of adjacent residential and office commercial development, as reflected in e.g. building and parking setbacks, building height, building bulk.
3. Useable, inviting outdoor spaces shall be integrated into the development.
4. Parking shall be screened from Lancaster Lane with landscaping and where appropriate, with fencing and/or berming. Service areas shall be screened from all views.
5. Light fixtures at walkways, gathering spaces, building fronts and entries shall be pedestrian-scaled (no higher than 15 feet).
6. Individual signage for a mixed use development shall be consistent with a comprehensive sign plan that provides overall continuity of signage throughout the development.
7. Outside storage and display of goods and/or merchandise shall not be allowed.





## Architectural Principles

The principles for architecture of buildings on the site begin with the desire for a consistent and complementary theme throughout the development. Desirable and undesirable materials are identified. Principles also focused on reducing the building mass of the structures due to adjacent uses, outline a need for four sided architecture due to the high visibility of the site and to explore green building design techniques by including an abundance of glass for natural lighting and the use of arcades and covered entries. The guiding principles for architectural character are:

1. Building materials and colors shall be consistent and complementary throughout the site.
2. Building materials shall be timeless, rather than based on current fashion to limit design that becomes outdated with age.
3. All facades, including back and side elevations of a building generally visible from public view or adjacent to residential uses, shall be architecturally treated and relate to but not overwhelm the neighborhood. All elevations generally visible from public view shall reflect the overall design, colors and textures used on the front façade.
4. For all buildings, at least two of the following elements shall repeat horizontally. Buildings with facades greater than 100 feet in length shall include at least three of the following elements, repeated at appropriate intervals, either horizontally or vertically:
  - i. Color change. Recognizable, but not strongly contrasting.
  - ii. Texture change.
  - iii. Material change.
  - iv. Architectural variety and interest through a change in plane such as offsets, reveals, archways or projecting ribs.
  - v. Wall plane projections or recesses.
5. Building elevations shall incorporate architectural features and patterns that include a pedestrian scale.
6. Reduction of building mass may be achieved by using a combination of the following techniques:
  - i. Variations in roofline and form.
  - ii. Use of ground level arcades and covered areas.
  - iii. Use of protected and recessed entries.
  - iv. Use of pronounced wall plane offsets and projections.
  - v. Use of focal points and vertical accents.
  - vi. Inclusion of windows on elevations facing streets and pedestrian areas.
  - vii. Retaining a clear distinction between roof, body and base of building.





## 7. Desired materials include:

- i. Materials that are easily maintained, durable and attractive at close distances (e.g. from the view of a pedestrian on a sidewalk).
- ii. Materials that have an attractive pattern, texture, and quality detailing.
- iii. Brick, stone or high quality pre-cast concrete (colored and textured).
- iv. Metals that are matt finish and neutral or earth tone in color; metals that are used for exterior walls should have visible corner moldings and trim.
- v. Transparent glass.
- vi. Canvas awnings.

## 8. Undesired materials include:

- i. Non-durable siding materials such as plywood, corrugated metal or fiberglass or other materials that decay rapidly when exposed to the elements.
- ii. Materials that have no pattern or relief, especially when those materials are applied to large wall surfaces
- iii. Simulated brick or stone.
- iv. Wood, except as accent materials or in elements that are integrated with other desired materials.
- v. Mirrored glass, especially mirrored glass that faces an active pedestrian street.
- vi. Materials (excluding signs) that represent corporate colors, patterns or trademarks.
- vii. Brightly colored metal roofing or canopies.
- viii. Concrete that is not enhanced as indicated under "Desired Materials," especially pre-cast, tilt-up walls.
- ix. Synthetic awnings, especially awnings meant to be illuminated from within.





9. Variations in rooflines or parapets shall be used to reduce the scale of commercial buildings. Roof size, shape, material, color and slope shall be coordinated with the scale and theme of the building.
- i. Parapets for concealing flat roofs shall include three dimensional cornice treatments at the ends or corners of buildings. Where not used in conjunction with other roof elements, parapets shall vary in height and have a finished depth at building corners.
  - ii. Buildings with sloping roofs shall include multiple planes.
10. Commercial buildings adjacent to existing residential uses shall incorporate lower scale elements and/or greater setbacks to the neighborhood.
11. Service and exit doors shall be integrated into the architecture of publicly visible elevations.
12. Trash and recycling storage shall be internal to buildings.





## Transportation / Connectivity Principles

For these principles, multiple modes of transportation are considered, including auto, bicycle, pedestrian and transit. For auto transportation, ensuring that the level of service on the roadway system will not exceed the current capacity of the roadway network is paramount. Connections on-site and off-site through multi-use trails for pedestrians and bicyclists and strengthened internal pedestrian walkways are cited to both reduce the number auto trips to the site and connect more directly to the adjacent neighborhood.

The principles also identify the consideration for transit, specifically a park and ride, to be re-introduced to the site. The former park and ride on the site was relocated behind the Cub Foods store on the north side of Rockford Road, but with the amount of adjacent residential use, the park and ride use should be explored. The ability to develop strong public private partnerships between the developer, city and other agencies could be a key aspect to re-introducing transit back to the site.

The guiding principles for transportation and pedestrian connectivity are:

1. Pedestrian/bicycle routes/connections/facilities (e.g. benches, plazas, bicycle racks) will be a key on and off-site element. Trails and sidewalks will facilitate pedestrian movement within the site ("Park Once and Walk") and will connect the site to the adjoining neighborhood.
2. Site access points shall be limited to current locations.
3. Transit facilities shall be considered in conjunction with planning for site parking.
4. Development shall not exceed the capacity of the existing roadway network, unless improvements can be made to maintain the existing level of service.





## Stormwater Treatment Principles

Outdoor features such as plazas and outdoor seating / dining areas near storm water facilities that are designed as amenities are key principles for both storm water and urban design. Principles for storm water seek to make the storm water improvements the aesthetic and functional focal point for the development. Storm water is intended to be at the forefront of the redevelopment. Not only should storm water features serve a functional purpose, they should be designed as high value, high aesthetic elements, and not relegated to the rear yard. Integration of the existing wetland into the overall redevelopment proposal either through viewsheds or providing adjacent amenities such as overlooks should be considered.

The guiding principles for storm water treatment techniques are:

1. Site development shall result in less impervious surface coverage.
2. Solutions for the handling of storm water shall: 1) be amenity-driven; 2) recognize both natural drainage patterns and soil limitations on the site; and 3) result in an improvement in on-site water quality treatment.
3. Portions of the site may have the ability to treat additional storm water from up-stream, off-site areas.



### Areas for additional treatment of off-site storm water:

1. Run-off from Lancaster Lane
2. Overflow from Lancaster Lane & Pilgrim Lane Intersection
3. Overflow from the MNDOT ditch along the Highway 169 ramp

