

**Appendix B: Concord /Grand Gateway
Streetscape and Redevelopment Plan**

CONCORD / GRAND AVENUE GATEWAY STREETSCAPE AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Framework Manual



Introduction

Existing Conditions

Principles, Goals and Objectives

Redevelopment Framework Plan

Streetscape Master Plan

Design Guidelines

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City of South St. Paul, Minnesota Concord / Grand Avenue Gateway Streetscape and Redevelopment Plan

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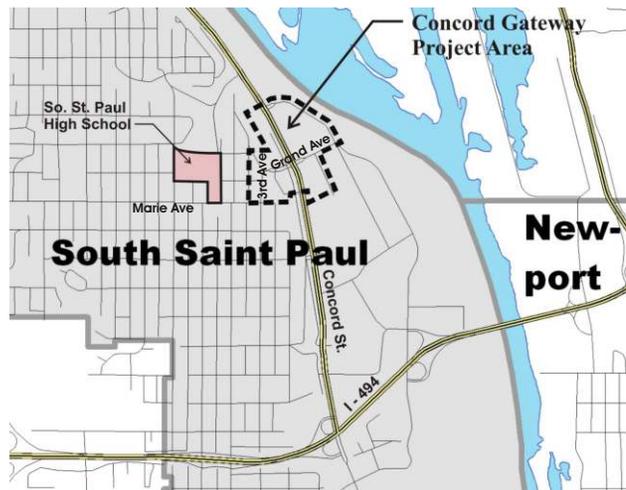


INTRODUCTION

South St. Paul, once the thriving capitol of the meat packing industry, has experienced dramatic changes since it was settled over a century ago. The City evolved as an economic center in the 1880's due to its proximity to regional roadways, the Mississippi River, and rail transportation systems. By the turn of the century Concord Street and Grand Avenue became the center of commercial, retail and banking activity. This hub of activity also formed an impressive gateway along Grand Avenue as it ascended the river bluff to the residential neighborhoods to the west.

The combination of a decline in the meat packing industry over the last decades and recent suburban style redevelopment has diluted the vitality of Concord Exchange as a center of commerce as well as it's main street character.

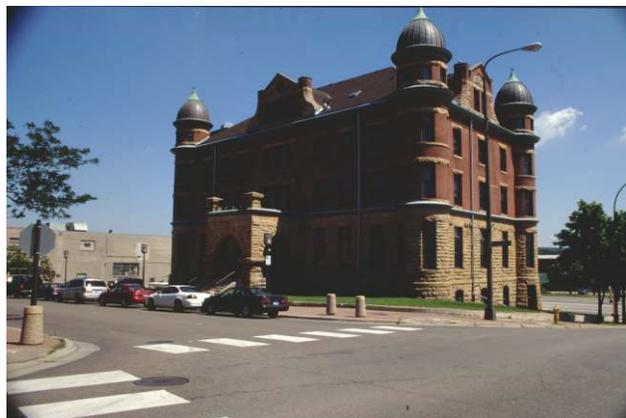
Study Purpose



South St. Paul is a community with strong traditions and a deep sense of community pride. The City is committed to rebuild the Concord area as the traditional center of commerce, culture and the primary gateway to the community. The City of South St. Paul also recognizes the need to improve the image of the Concord and Grand Avenue area to make it competitive in the market place and to draw business and residents to the community. The purpose of this project is to establish a design framework to improve the quality of redevelopment and foster a climate for reinvestment

The South St. Paul City Council authorized the preparation of a framework plan for the Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway Streetscape to include Grand Ave South, 3rd Avenue, Concord Exchange and Concord Streets. The design process for the Gateway Project began with the establishment of a Concord Gateway Improvement Committee by the South St. Paul City Council in July, 2001. This group was responsible for overseeing the preparation of the Redevelopment and Streetscape Master Plan and Framework Manual. Through this process several overall tasks were pursued:

This document represents the completion of a 12 month process to formulate a framework plan for the Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway and includes a brief description of the process, goals and objectives, redevelopment framework, design guidelines, and selected streetscape elements. This plan should be used as a guide for future decisions regarding both public and private improvements within the Gateway and will assist the community in reaching informed decisions regarding the extent, character, costs, benefits and maintenance concerns associated with the proposed streetscape and about future investments in redevelopment.



Context

The Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway is centrally located in South St. Paul just north of Interstate 494 and provides an east-west connection ascending the Mississippi River bluff to the heart of the community. The area is bounded by the Mississippi river to the east, then moves passed the old Livestock Exchange Building (now the Grand Hotel) and 3rd Avenue North to the West. The Gateway is also an important connection to the Mississippi River Regional Trail System and the City's own park system.

Project Approach

Through the Concord Gateway plan, South St. Paul will redevelop in a manner that responds to regional smart growth and livable community design principles. An abridged summary of the planning approach conducted by the City follows:

Community Involvement

The residents and business owners in the community have a lot to say about what the corridor should look and feel like and how future plans affect their lives and property. South St. Paul citizens have been involved in the process through participation on the task force, open houses and community presentations. The process involved key representatives of the city council, staff, property owners, Dakota County Department of Transportation, MNDOT, and the community at large.

The approach to this project integrates redevelopment planning, the functional needs for moving vehicles and pedestrians with design considerations to create a sense of continuity, safety, human scale, and a fresh identity throughout the Concord Gateway District.

Process

The process evaluated existing conditions, identified goals and objectives, defined a vision for the project area, illustrated redevelopment and streetscape alternatives, and encouraged public participation and ownership of the plan.

Principles, Goals and Objectives.

Design Principles Goals and objectives were identified by the task force to define a vision for the Concord Gateway area and to guide the creation of the redevelopment plan, design guidelines and standards, as well as the streetscape design.

Identify Market Conditions

The ultimate success of this redevelopment plan will be achieved by capturing the opportunities available in the market. The Maxfield Research Group prepared a market study in 1999 for the project area. This plan integrates the findings from the market study in a manner which will maximize the potential for market synergy and to reinforce the urban design and economic development objectives.



Design Framework for the Concord Gateway

This Framework Plan has been created to insure the potential growth of both public and private development, as well as improvements to the public realm will reinforce each other and be integrated into a mutually supportive plan. The Framework Plan illustrates the intent of the design principles and ensures that future development is consistent with the vision of the community.

What is a Streetscape?



The term “streetscape” in the context of the Concord gateway refers to the street’s physical setting, shaped by the relationships and design of land uses, buildings, parking lots, streets, signs, landscaping, pedestrian paths, transit routes, and other elements.

Streetscape elements typically include street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, transit shelters, street furniture such as benches, planters, kiosks, and bollards and public art. The relationships between these elements and buildings are key determinants in shaping a pedestrian scaled environment and a positive image for the City of South St. Paul.

How to Use This framework Manual

This manual is a guide for both public and private redevelopment and streetscape improvements throughout the Concord Gateway. The purpose of the manual is to provide a framework to ensure that a cohesive design results as individual improvement projects are realized over the next 20 years. Both the public and private sectors play vital roles in this process, and should use this Framework Manual as outlined below.

Public Sector

- a) This document should be adopted as an addendum to South St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan.
- B) City departments should refer to the components in this manual to coordinate, design, and budget for capitol improvements.
- c) City departments should refer to the schematic designs for the individual areas as a basis from which to develop more detailed plans for construction.

- d) The planning, engineering, and inspections departments, as well as a potential advisory group, should refer to the guidelines and associated zoning standards when reviewing individual development proposals within the study area. Each proposed development should comply with the guidelines, reinforce the desired character of development, and contribute to creating a cohesive, pedestrian friendly, memorable, and economically viable place.
- e) The prototypical designs contained within this manual should be referenced when selecting specific streetscape elements such as lights, benches, paving, plant materials, and other elements.

Private Sector

- a) Developers should work with city staff and refer to the manual and previous planning studies prior to generating design concepts, in order to better understand the overall goals of the community and how their proposed project fits into the context of the Streetscape and Redevelopment Master Plan.
- B) The guidelines for site design, architecture, signs, streetscape, parking lot edge treatments and landscaping should be referenced during the site design phase of the project. Developers should discuss the options for their particular site with city staff to determine if parking lot edge treatments and other streetscape treatments will be constructed as part of the site redevelopment or a larger public street improvement project.

Existing Conditions

History

South St. Paul has a rich history in the meat packing and gravel mining industries. Fueled both by the dramatic location and natural resources of the Mississippi River Valley and also its location as hub of regional transportation systems including the river barges, railroad, and roadways. The Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway is located in the heart of what was once a thriving business district along Concord Exchange and stockyard facilities to the east. See figure 2-1 for images of South St. Pauls earlier days.

(Figure 2-1)-
Historical Photos
Source:
South St. Paul
Centennial History,
1887 - 1987



View of old Concord Street



View of So. St. Paul with a bustling stock yards industry in the early 1900's



Historic buildings displaying the store front architecture of the time



View of the main entry into the stockyards with architectural entry monuments



A view of old downtown and the street cars used at the time



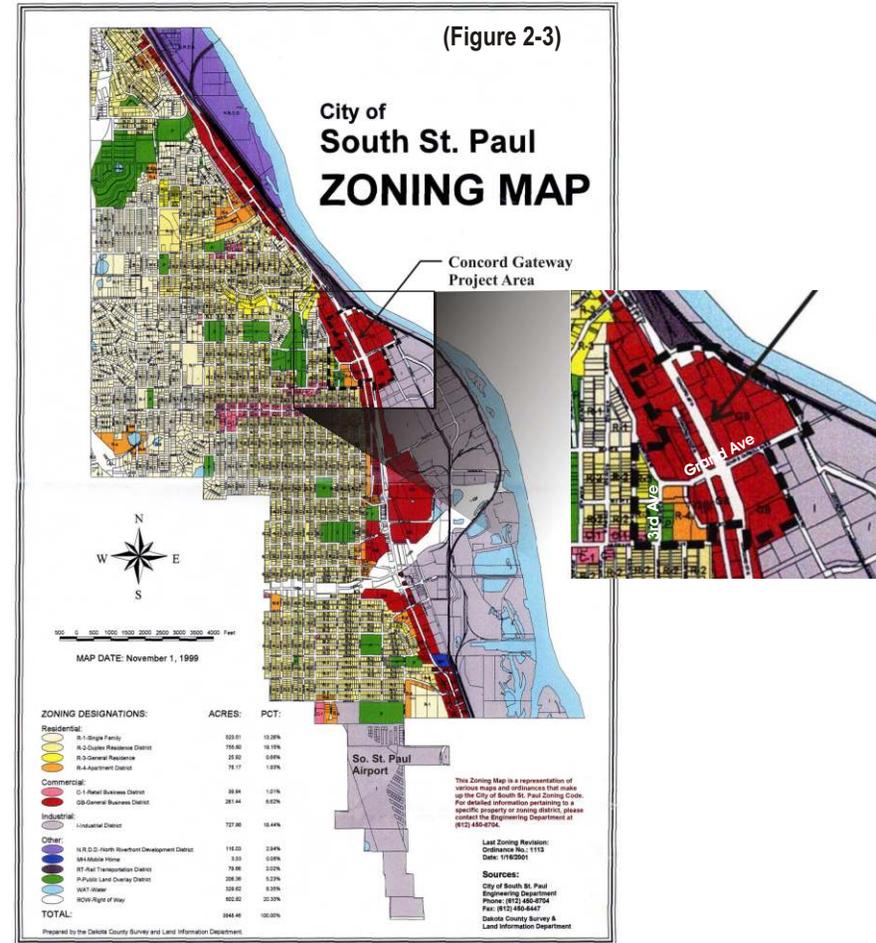
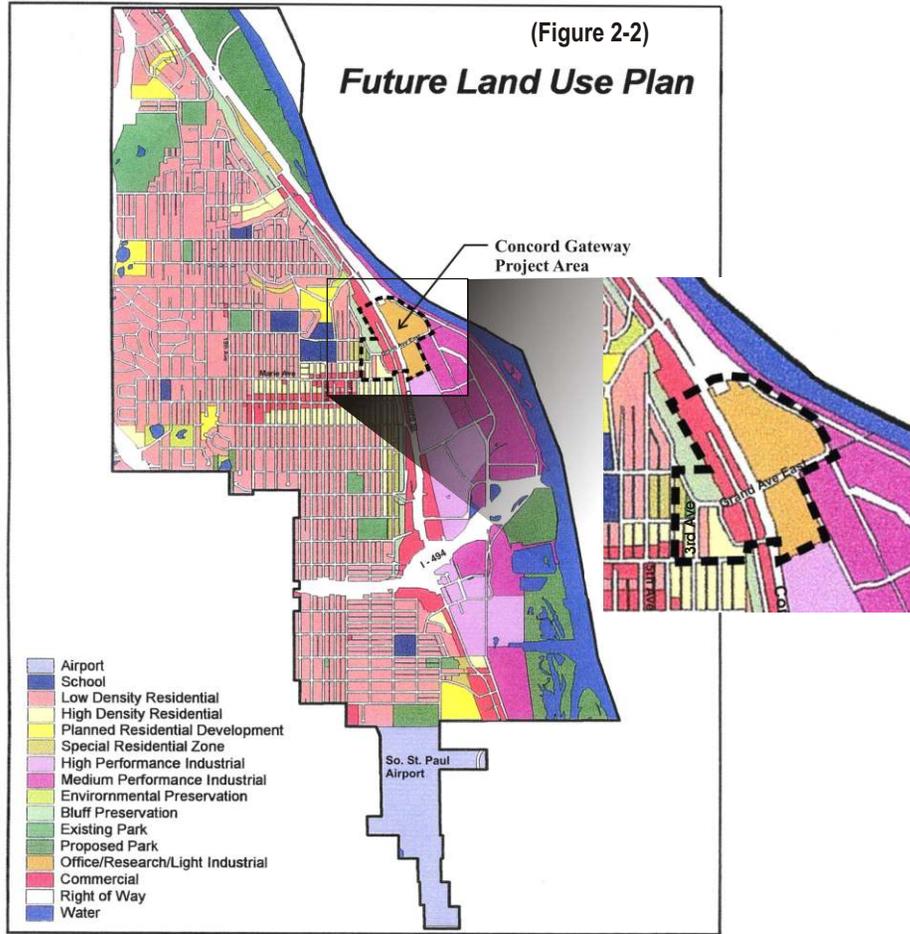
The old Livestock Exchange building shortly after completion in the early 1900's. The building at one time housed 21 firms.

Land Use and Zoning

The South St. Paul Future Land Use Plan designates the land uses within the Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway as primarily commercial and planned residential west of Concord Street and office/ research/ light industrial east of Concord Street. The bluff north of Grand Avenue is in a preservation zone. Moving west above the bluff preserve area there are also several high density residential areas and institutional designations around the City Hall, Library and Museum. (See Figure 2-2) and (Figure 2-3)

Zoning

The project area is currently zoned for General Business, R-4 Residential and Public Land Uses.



Character Districts



View South on Concord Exchange



View East to Concord Exchange



Livestock Exchange Building on Concord Exchange

Concord Exchange

The Livestock Exchange Building, Globe Office Supply and the Post Office are strong architectural reminders of the time when Concord Exchange was a thriving main street. These buildings are close to the street and help shape a pedestrian scaled environment along Concord Exchange.

3rd Avenue North Institutional District

The combination of the City Hall, County Museum and Library define this area as an institutional district and a center of community activity.

Concord Triangle Office & Industrial District

Previous planning and marketing efforts have laid the foundation for an emerging commercial and office/light industrial park to the east of Concord Street and north of Grand Avenue known as the Concord Triangle. This pattern has been established by relatively new industrial uses emerging south of Grand Avenue as well.



View North on 3rd Avenue



Triangle District on Hardman Ave



3rd Avenue at City Hall



View East in Triangle District on Grand Ave

Development Patterns

Urban Development Pattern

Urban environments are in part characterized by a compact mixture of land uses in densely spaced buildings. This compact pattern shapes street corridors and an environment that is, human scaled and comfortable for pedestrians. These environments are typically rich in local history and architecture. The Livestock Exchange Building, Globe Office Supply, and the Post Office are remnants of the once bustling main street that existed along Concord Exchange. The individual buildings that once collectively shaped the street corridors were designed at a time when people walked to and from the streetcars that connected South St. Paul to downtown St. Paul. The decline of the meat packing industry, the inclusion of conventional suburban buildings, and the need to accommodate greater volumes of parking have diluted this urban pattern.



Urban Development

Suburban Development Patterns

Conventional suburban development centers around the automobile. Land uses are compartmentalized, requiring most trips to be made by car. Buildings are set back and isolated from the street in order to provide space for parking lots. Streets are designed primarily from the drivers perspective and to get a vehicle from point A to point B as quickly and safely as possible. This results in a shapeless environment that is more comfortable for driving than walking.

Suburban Development



Transportation

Both Concord Street North and Grand Avenue were designed to carry much more traffic than is projected to use the streets. This presents an opportunity to explore reducing the widths of the streets to provide more space for streetscape improvements while still maintaining adequate traffic capacity. Currently, the average daily traffic on 3rd Avenue North and Grand Avenue from Marie Avenue to Concord Street is 6650 vehicles per day. This is projected to increase to 8550 vehicles per day by year 2023.

Bus routes

Two regional bus routes serve the project area, however, neither route ascends Grand Avenue. Bus shelters are located at Concord Exchange at Grand Avenue. Bus stops are located in front of the city hall, as well as at east Grand Avenue and the north and south ends of Concord Exchange Street.

Natural Features

River Bluff

The project area sits on the bluff line of the Mississippi River Valley which creates a dramatic setting and topographic challenge. The elevation change from Grand Avenue East to the top of the bluff on Marie Avenue is approximately 120 feet. The majority of the bluff line is too steep to develop and is covered with mixed woodlands. The grades for Grand Avenue range from approximately 6% to almost 10%.

Mississippi River Flood Plain

The area north of Grand Avenue between Concord Street and the Mississippi River levee is known as the Concord Triangle. This area is within the old flood plain and has very poor soils and a high water table. These two factors require new buildings to have 60 to 80 foot pilings which drive up the development costs. The noise from the railroad along the levee is significant and will be a negative influence for residential redevelopment in the area. The Concord Triangle site is depressed below the highway to the west and the levee to the east. This relationship makes the highway seem more prevalent and minimizes physical and visual connections to the river from within the Concord Triangle. Concord Street also isolates the Concord Triangle from the historical heart of South St. Paul along Concord Exchange.

Pedestrian Circulation

Generally the Concord Gateway area is adequately served with sidewalks west of Concord Avenue. The east side of Concord Avenue however is lacking a connection to the South St. Paul Regional Trail along the Mississippi River levee.

The streetscape that was completed in the 1970s along Concord Exchange is still in good shape. The neighborhoods on top of the bluff are connected to the Concord Exchange area by stairways located at Grandview Park to the north and at the end of Marie Avenue to the south.

The greatest impediments to pedestrian circulation are the 9.9% grades along Grand and 3rd Avenue as well as pedestrian crossings along Grand Avenue and Concord Street. The steep grades prohibit the walkways along Grand and 3rd Avenue North from meeting accessibility guidelines. The following pedestrian crossing areas are unsafe and should be improved: the crossing between city hall and the parking lot to the east, all intersections along 3rd Avenue North and Grand Avenue, Concord St. North at Grand Avenue, and between the regional trail parking lot and the trail head.

Principles, Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The design principles illustrated in figure (3-1) serve as a foundation on which the Concord Gateway Redevelopment Framework Plan is based. These traditional town planning principles emphasize urban design components that are essential to maintain a viable and livable community. The principles also adhere to the smart growth policies and guidelines established by the Metropolitan Council through the Livable Communities Grant Program.

Traditional downtowns are characterized by a compact building pattern that strongly delineates street corridors and creates a comfortable pedestrian environment. Rich in local history and architecture, downtowns are the symbol and identifiable center of the city, and the setting for civic and cultural activities.

Many of the design principles presented in this chapter strive to form a positive image of the South St. Paul through improvement of the public realm and streetscape. The public realm is shaped by the interrelationships of design and location of buildings, parks and open space, street corridors, parking lots, sidewalks, signs, landscaping, streetscapes, and differing land uses. The Goals and Objectives are illustrated in figure (3-2).

Design Principles

Design Principles

Principle 1: Shape the redevelopment framework with a hierarchy of interconnected streets and open spaces.

- Design streets to balance the needs of cars, buses, trucks, pedestrians, people who use wheelchairs and walkers, cyclists and community events.
- Connect uses to transit to provide people with alternative means to get to shopping, recreation, home and places of work.

Principle 2: Make Development Compact

- Connect rather than separate uses, to allow for functional relationships and accessibility between them.
- Build more compact developments appropriate to the location, with attention to the design and relationships of structures to each other.
- Infill underutilized areas or retrofit land uses that result in more compact development.

Principle 3: Mix Uses

- Include a variety of uses and destinations--shopping, workplaces, restaurants, entertainment venues, civic uses, cultural activities, parks and other spaces, and a variety of housing types and costs.
- Foster market synergy

Principle 4: Design for People

- Locate shops and other uses within walking distance of each other, and within walking distance of transit, where available.
- Orient businesses and other structures to the street for pedestrian accessibility, and provide convenient parking buffered from view. This creates safe, pleasant walking environments.
- Provide places for people to gather, including parks and other public open spaces, and a central place or neighborhood center that also provides a focus for community activities.

(Figure 3-1) Design Principles

Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Improve the appearance of landuse along Concord St.

Objectives:

- Embrace Concord St. As the City's "heritage street", that welcomes most visitors and residents into the City.
- Identify streetscape and landscape improvements for Concord St., Including minimum landscape standards for new and existing business.
- Create an off-street trail or sidewalk along Concord St.'s entire length.
- Implement the "signature street" improvements through cost-sharing programs like low-interest loans, grants, donations and volunteerism.

Goal: Create a "main street" character and feel along Grand Ave (John Carrol BLVD) and 3rd Ave N.

Objectives:

- Identify streetscape treatments and landscaping to improve pedestrian crossing and vehicular circulation
- Establish pedestrian links to existing parks and trail systems.
- Integrate streetscape treatments into surrounding adjacent streets to establish a South St. Paul identity.



Goals and Objectives

Goal: Create a regional destination and recreation area in the vicinity of Concord St. and Grand Ave (John Carrol BLVD.) Which capitalizes on the historic and natural resources of the City.

Goal: Create a unique identity for South St. Paul from the Mississippi River view.

Objectives:

- Provide unique signage and lighting along the river identifying South St. Paul to river traffic.
- Encourage water related businesses i.e. Cruise boats, fuel sales, restaurants, bait shops, etc.
- Provide a "gateway" to the Mississippi Riverwalk's pedestrian overpass at Grand Ave (John Carrol BLVD.) Through the use of streetscape elements and landscaping.
- Redevelop Concord Exchange with retail shops and restaurants that will support the Castle Hotel.
- Provide additional retail and service opportunities on the east side of Concord St. And Grand Ave (John Carrol BLVD.)

Legend

- Major Intersections
- Minor Intersections
- Vegetation
- Circulation
- Buildings
- Study Area
- Historic Sites

(Figure 3-2) Goals and Objectives



Redevelopment Framework Plan

Introduction

Build on Strengths to Create a Memorable Place

The primary objective that has driven the formation of this framework plan is to build on the history, prominent architecture, and the compact development pattern of the Concord Exchange and 3rd Avenue North districts to create a genuine and memorable place. This framework plan illustrates how redevelopment in the Concord Gateway and streetscape improvements may be integrated into a mutually supportive plan and ultimately foster a vital redevelopment area within South St. Paul. This Framework Plan outlines design objectives, illustrates the intent of the design principles and redevelopment that is consistent with the vision of the community.

Currently, the scale of Concord Avenue coupled with the slope of Grand Avenue physically and psychologically separates the east and west side of Concord Street. A challenge for the framework plan is to reinforce a connection and provide continuity between the institutional district along 3rd Avenue North, Concord Exchange, the Concord Triangle, and the South St. Paul Regional Trail along the Mississippi River Levee.

Potential office, residential and retail uses defined in the 1999 Maxfield Market Research study have been integrated into the Concord Gateway Framework Plan in a manner which will maximize the potential to capitalize on the market and to reinforce the urban design and economic development objectives. Although redevelopment may take time, developing this framework plan will enable the City to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Framework Plan

The primary components of the framework plan are as follows:

Hierarchy of Streetscape Treatments

The framework plan illustrates a hierarchy of streetscape treatments. The treatments are based on the role each street plays within the Concord Gateway Area.

Primary Streetscape Treatments

Grand Avenue, 3rd Avenue North and Concord Exchange are the primary streets serving the gateway area and provide an armature for the redevelopment district. Grand Avenue is the main connection from Concord Street to the top of the bluff. Concord Exchange will be the focus of redevelopment and provide a main street setting. Third Avenue North serves the institutional district shaped by the City Hall, the Library and the Dakota County Museum. These streets should be the top priority streets for improvements.



Gateway Treatments

- Medians
 - lights, textured
 - colored pavements
 - bollards
- Intersections
 - Directional
 - Identification
 - Monuments
 - Landscaping

Close truck staging lanes

- Expand open space
- Entry monuments
- Streetscape elements

Grand Avenue West

- Primary streetscape treatment
- Narrow if possible
- Incorporate boulevard trees, Lights and sidewalks
- Median treatments
- Enhance crosswalks

3rd and Grand Intersection

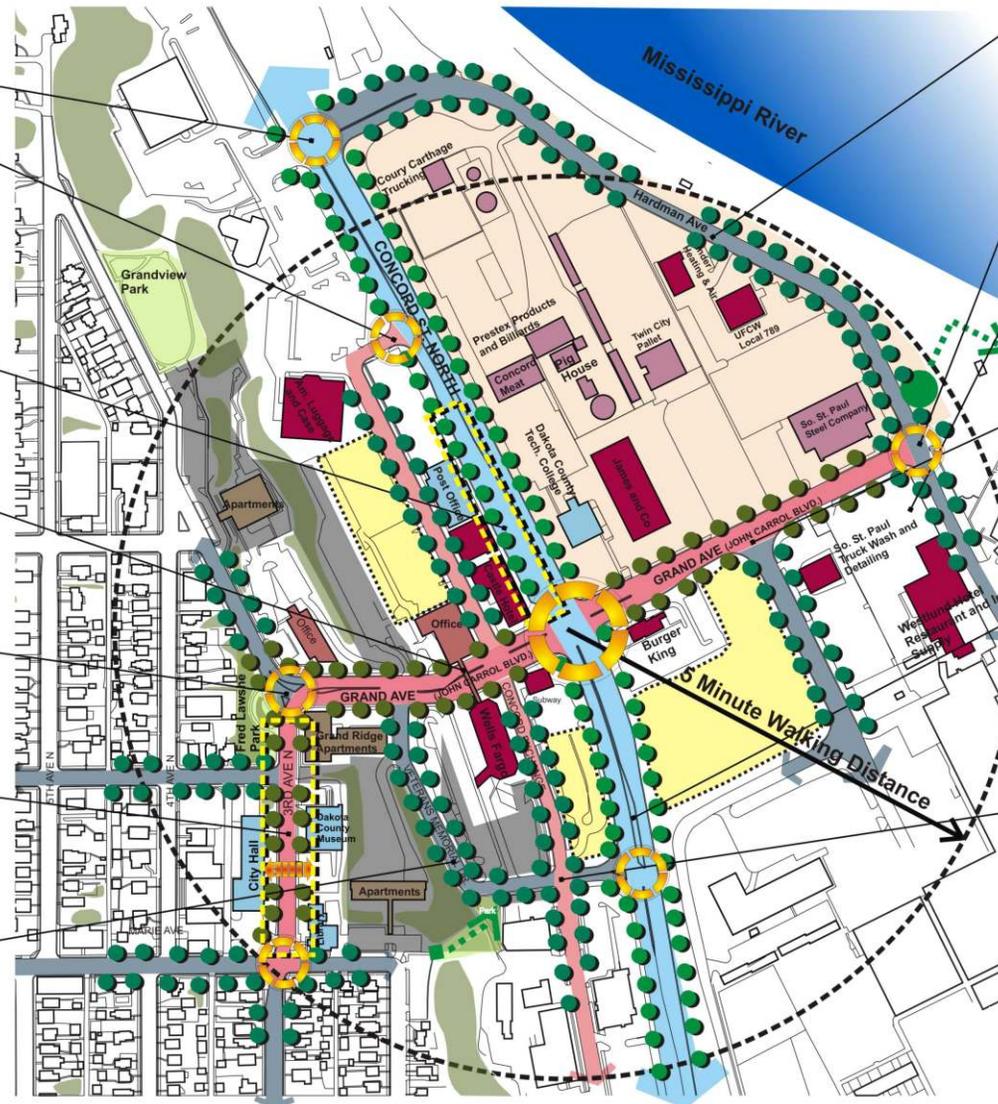
- Enhance as a focal point
- Simplify traffic monuments
- Directional signs

3rd Ave.

- Create civic mall
- Improve crosswalk
- Narrow street
- Define parking bays
- Incorporate existing street trees
- Directional signs
- Create gathering space

Veterans Memorial Drive

- Integrate streetscape with proposed treatment
- Improve and move transit shelters to Grand Avenue



Hardman Ave.

- Create parkway character
- Include street trees, lights, walkways, bike way
- Minimize chain link
- Buffer parking and storage areas

Focal Point

- Create visual draw to trail access
- Create terminal view to Grand Avenue

Trail parking area

- Improve crossing to trail head
- Include directional/informational signage

Grand Avenue East

- Create parkway character
- Pedestrian linkage to river trail
- Narrow if possible
- Include walks on both sides, parking buffers, lights, trees and other street furnishings

Concord St.

- Work with MnDOT and county DOT to modify medians, lanes and boulevards
- Incorporate landscape to improve gateway
- Emphasize as "Heritage Street"

Concord Exchange

- Improve as "Main Street"
- Incorporate existing streetscape paving and trees
- Redesign lighting and bollards, benches
- Improve transit shelters

Legend

- Gateway Intersections
- Primary Streetscape Treatments
- Secondary Streetscape Treatments
- △ Gateway Triangle
- HRA Undeveloped Parcels
- HRA Developed Parcels
- Vegetation
- Buildings
- Trails
- Parks

(Figure 4-1)
Concord Gateway Redevelopment Framework Plan



Secondary Streetscape Treatments

Veterans Memorial Drive, Grand Avenue East, and Hardman Boulevard are the secondary streetscapes and serve primarily local traffic by providing access to area businesses and residents. Improvements to these streets may include creating a parkway quality with boulevards and walks on both sides, parking and storage buffers, lights, trees and other street furnishings, directional signs and trail connections to the South St. Paul Regional Trail.

Concord Street: Future Parkway

Concord Street was designed to carry much more traffic than is currently or projected to use the street. The lane widths are wider than necessary and the turn lanes are longer than needed. A preliminary plan has been prepared that illustrates how the lanes could be narrowed and medians, boulevards and bike trails could be incorporated to create a parkway character and appealing approach to the Concord Gateway Area. See Figure 4-2

Concord Exchange "Main Street:"

The primary objective of the framework plan is to focus redevelopment efforts along Concord Exchange to build upon the existing compact development pattern and to redefine its role as the historic Main Street for South St. Paul. The 1999 market research study by Maxfield Research recommends focusing the limited commercial and office potential first in the Concord Exchange area to build on the positive character of the area, the existing compact development pattern, and the proximity to the core of So. St. Paul. Other objectives for Concord Exchange include:

Preserve and Build Upon the Historic qualities of the Livestock Exchange and Post office building. The Livestock Exchange, Globe Office Supply and the post office are strong architectural reminders of the time when Concord Exchange was a thriving main street. These buildings also contribute to a positive identity and form a model for future development.

Update Concord Exchange Streetscape

The existing streetscape elements along Concord Exchange should be updated as redevelopment occurs to incorporate the new palette of elements selected for Grand Avenue and 3rd Street. It may be possible to retain the existing concrete pavers depending on the condition and how much will need to be removed for construction of individual buildings. Improved transit shelters and directional signs should also be considered.

Reinforce the Existing Compact Urban Form Along Concord Exchange

New infill redevelopment should reinforce the compact building pattern established by the Livestock Exchange and post office to shape a "Main Street" character. These buildings are close to the street and shape a pedestrian scaled environment



Mix Retail, Office and Residential Uses

Potential office, residential and retail uses are proposed along Concord Exchange in a conceptual manner which builds upon the existing compact pattern, shapes the main street and illustrates the intent of the design guideline outlined in a following section of this document. See figure 4-2.

Town Square: Create Amenities and Public gathering Areas

A park or town square is suggested across from the post office on Concord Exchange to provide a public gathering area and community focus for public events such as art fairs, farmers markets and sidewalk sales. The town square will also provide an amenity for area residents and businesses.



(Figure 4-2)
Concord Exchange Redevelopment Plan



Existing Concord Exchange

Clock Tower Plaza

The Concord Gateway Redevelopment Committee recommends placing a clock tower at the intersection of Concord Exchange and Grand Avenue. A clock tower in this location will provide a focal point for the entry experience on Grand Avenue, as well as on Concord Exchange. The proposed plaza at the base of the clock tower will provide a small outdoor sitting space for general public use and programmed events.

(Figure 4-3)
Proposed Concord Exchange



Proposed Redevelopment
Concord Exchange

Provide Convenient Parking

Structured parking will have to be utilized in order to provide adequate parking for new uses and to maintain a compact building pattern. New residential complexes and mixed use buildings should incorporate underground parking and small surface lots to accommodate the short term users. The lots should be located to the side or rear of the buildings. Public parking structures are also proposed south of Grand Avenue and on the current public lot north of the Cenex building. On-Street parking should be maximized along Concord Exchange to accommodate short term users for new businesses.

Grand Avenue West: Primary Gateway

The combination of the Livestock Exchange Building and the ascent from Concord Street up the bluff along Grand Avenue forms a dramatic entrance to the City. The trip is equally dramatic as one descends from the top of the bluff and is presented with views across the river valley. The gateway experience can be improved by enhancing the streetscape and buildings that line Grand Avenue. Suggested streetscape improvements include: removing a lane in either direction, widening the sidewalks and boulevards, incorporating a central landscaped median, and including new streetlights, trees, paving, benches and other streetscape amenities

3rd and Grand Intersection: Enhance as a Focal Point and Improve Safety

The interchange of Grand Avenue and 3rd Avenue North is a focal point for motorist ascending the bluff. The intersection design is also confusing to motorists and unsafe for pedestrians. A new interchange was intended to simplify the turning movements, as well as include more space for landscaping, sculptures, directional signs or other entry elements.

3rd Avenue North Institutional District

The combination of the City Hall, County Museum and Library define this area as an institutional district. The streetscape design should reinforce the character of this district and its role as a center of community activity.

Connection to the South St. Paul Regional Trail

As mentioned previously a challenge for the framework plan is to provide a connection between the institutional district along 3rd Avenue North, the Concord Exchange Area, east Grand Avenue and the South St. Paul Regional Trail along the Mississippi River levee. The framework plan recommends reinforcing this connection by: including a safe appealing pedestrian link through streetscape improvements on Grand Avenue east and west; work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to create a safer pedestrian crossing of Concord Street; shape the east Grand Avenue street corridor by placing future buildings closer to the street, and by creating a visual draw and terminus to the view at the east end of Grand Avenue.

Concord Triangle Office & Industrial Uses

Previous planning and marketing efforts have laid the foundation for a commercial and office/light industrial park to the east of Concord Street. This pattern has been established by relatively new industrial uses that are difficult to reposition for a mixed-use commercial and /or residential development. Other considerations:

The area east of Concord Street is within the old flood plain and has very poor soils and a high water table. These two factors require new buildings to have 60 to 80 foot pilings which drive up the development costs.

The noise from the railroad is significant and will be a negative influence for residential development in the Concord Triangle Area.

The Concord Triangle site is depressed below the highway to the west and the levee to the east. This relationship makes the highway seem more prevalent and minimizes physical and visual connections to the river.

Concord Street isolates the Concord Triangle from the historical heart of So. St. Paul along Concord Exchange.



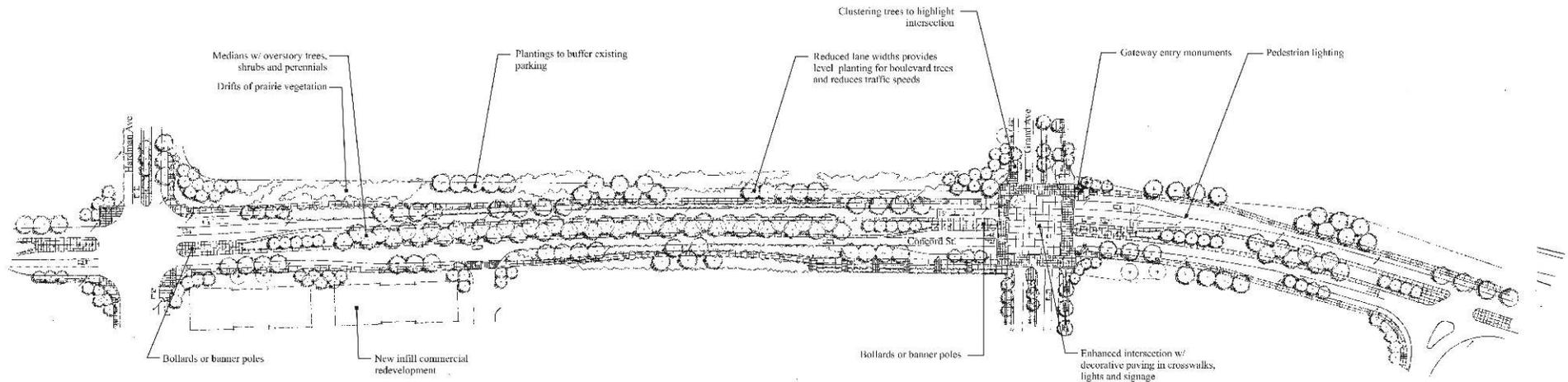
Streetscape Master Plan

Introduction

The intent of the master plan is to illustrate how the design principles, goals and objectives are applied to the existing setting. The master plan also establishes a framework to assist the City with decisions regarding design, phasing and costs for implementation. The primary objective of the master plan is to insure that the improvements recommended for Concord Street, Concord Exchange, Grand Avenue West and 3rd Avenue will be integrated into future redevelopment and streetscape phases.

Concord Street - Future Parkway

Concord Street was originally designed to carry a large amount of traffic. Today that need has diminished. The lane widths are wider than necessary and the turn lanes are longer than needed. The concept plan focuses on improving Concord Street by narrowing lanes, providing planted boulevards and medians, new sidewalks, and pedestrian friendly bike paths. Scored colored concrete intersections, pedestrian lighting and monuments will help highlight the gateway area at Grand Avenue and Concord Street. See Figure 5-1



(Figure 5-1)
Proposed Concord Streetscape Plan

Preliminary Concept: Parkway
 130' R.O.W.
 8' walks
 6'-20' boulevards
 15' thru-lanes





Existing Grand Avenue and Concord Street



(Figure 5-2)
Proposed Grand Ave and
Concord Street Intersection

Proposed Grand Avenue and Concord Street

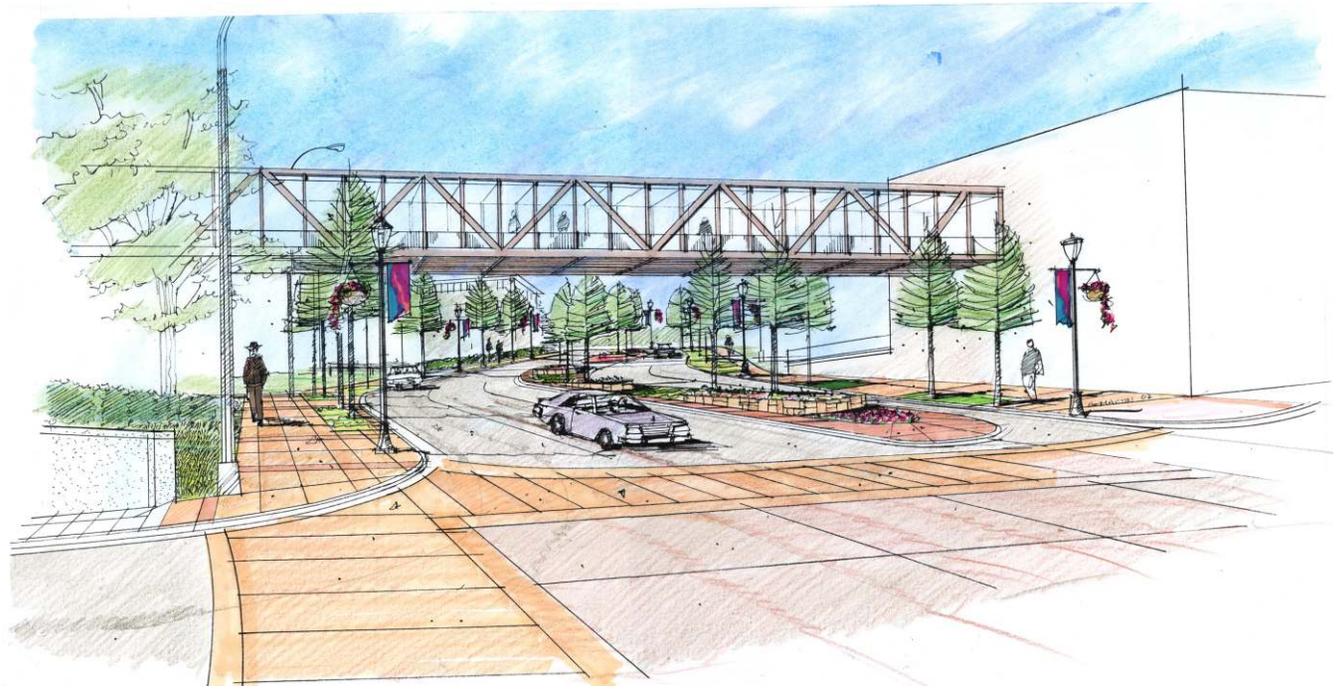
Grand Avenue West Streetscape

Grand Avenue West is also a road that was originally designed to accommodate larger amounts of traffic. As the primary gateway into the city a more pedestrian friendly street is desired. Narrowed lane widths and removal of turn lanes will provide space for large boulevards and medians to accommodate trees and perennial plantings, pedestrian level lights and sidewalks. Limestone walls are proposed inside the medians to recall the bed rock of the community and to accent the elevation change. See Figure 5-2 and 5-3.



Existing Grand Avenue and Concord Exchange

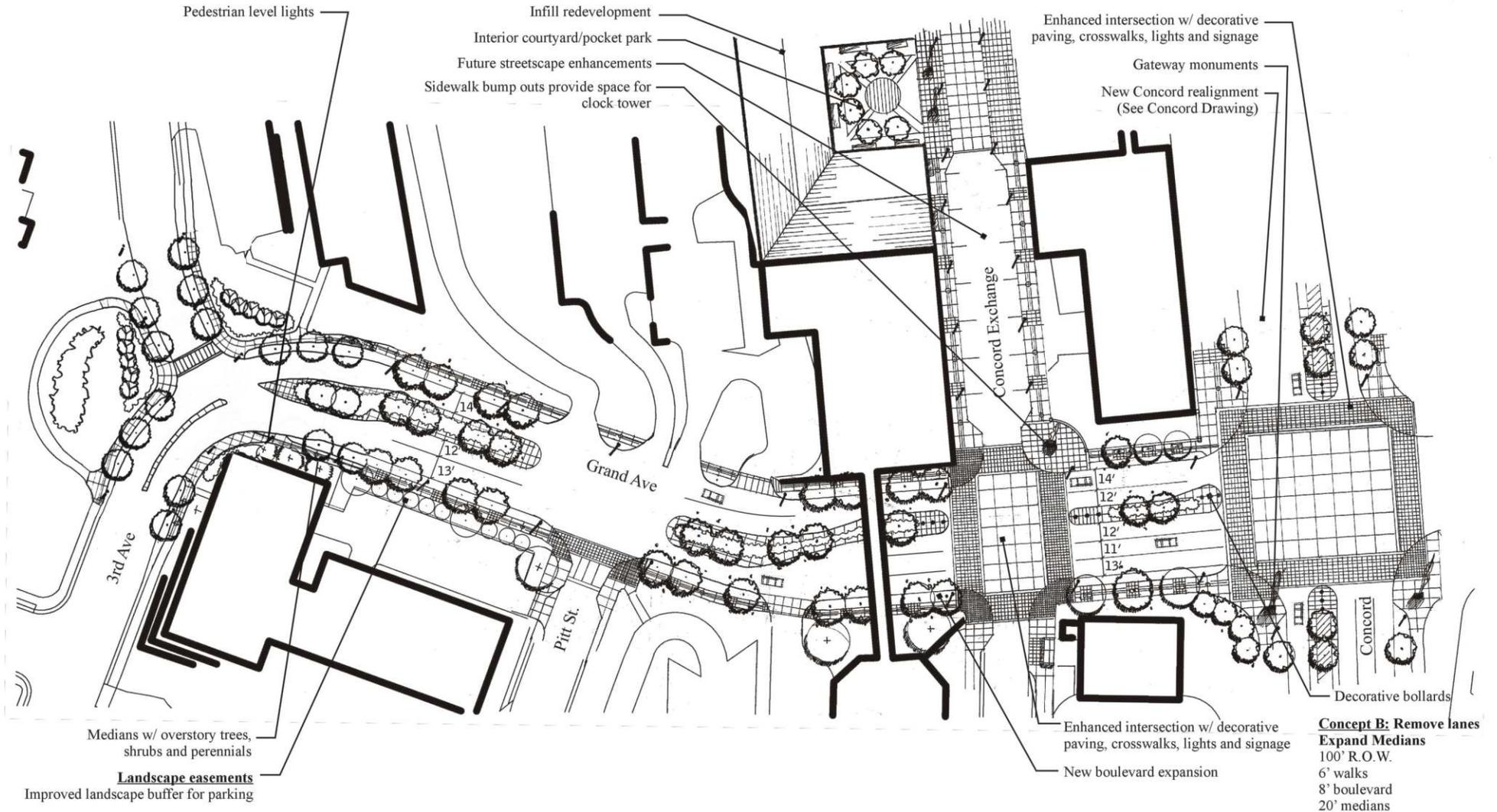
(Figure 5-3)
Proposed Grand Ave and
Concord Exchange Intersection



Proposed Grand Avenue and Concord Exchange

Grand Avenue and 3rd Avenue Intersection

Several different configurations for this intersection have been explored to improve the safety and pedestrian friendly character desired by the city. Several concepts were explored, including a round-about which was ultimately discarded because of slope issues associated with the bluff. The new design incorporates a "T" intersection, which will have a stop condition for traffic moving south on 3rd and free movement for traffic moving up and down the bluff.



(Figure 5-4) Grand Avenue Streetscape Plan



Clock Tower Plaza

The Concord Gateway Improvement Committee has requested a clock tower at the intersection of Concord Exchange and Grand Avenue. Clock Tower Plaza will provide an open space for pedestrians and special events while accommodating the clock tower and serving as a focal point to the gateway entry. The plaza will also include bench seating, ornamental plantings and decorative paving. See figure 5-5.



Existing Clock Tower Plaza

(Figure 5-5)
Clock Tower Plaza at Grand Avenue
and Concord Exchange Intersection



Proposed Clock Tower Plaza

3rd Avenue Streetscape

The overall design of 3rd Avenue focuses primarily on narrowing the roadway to provide room for parallel parking, boulevards and tree plantings, See Figure 5-7 and 5-6. Intersections are highlighted with scored colored concrete to slow vehicles and provide a pedestrian crossing. A mid-block crosswalk in front of city hall is also proposed to slow traffic. Monuments, benches and kiosks will reinforce the area as an institutional district.

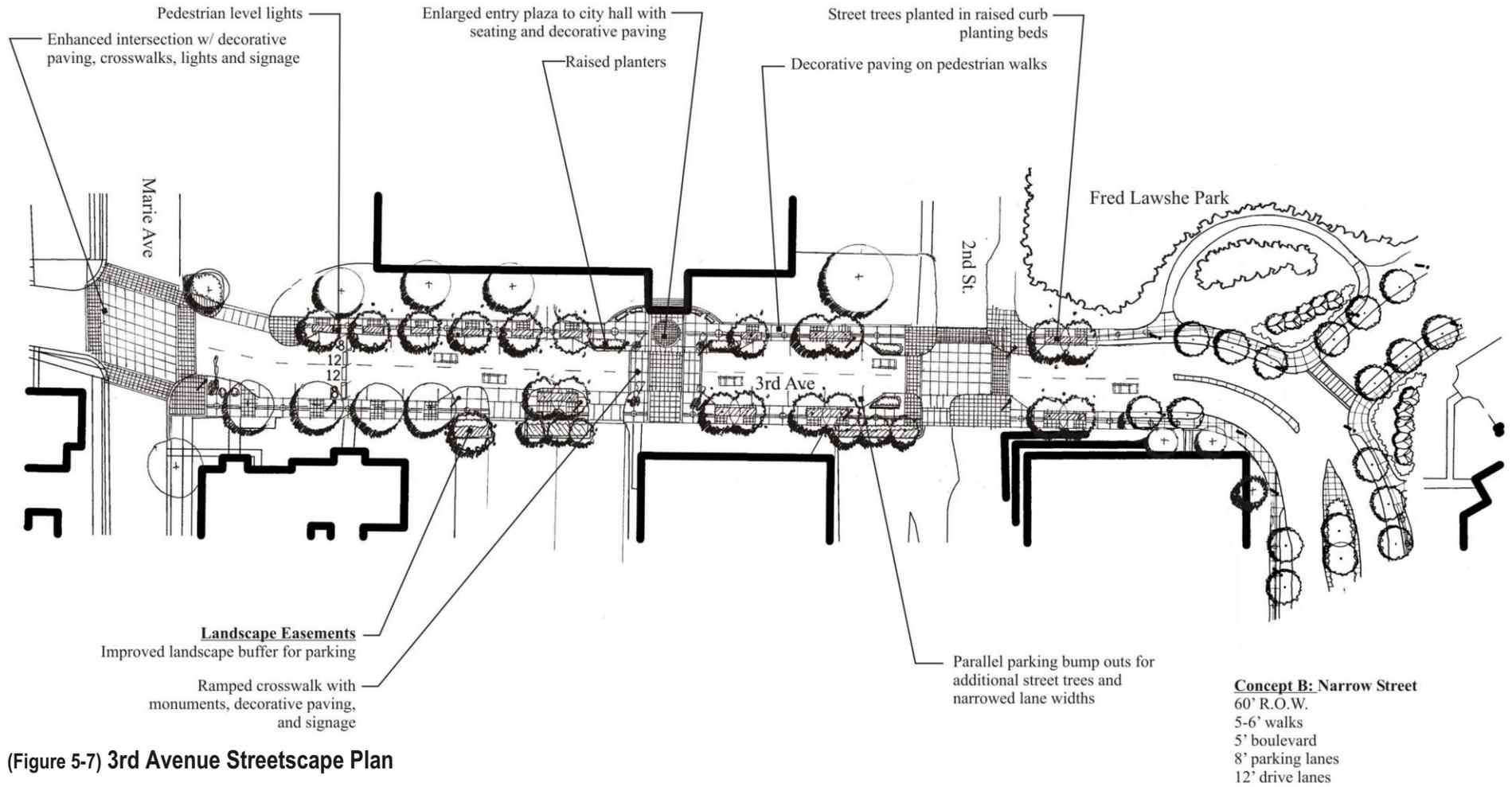


Existing 3rd Avenue Before

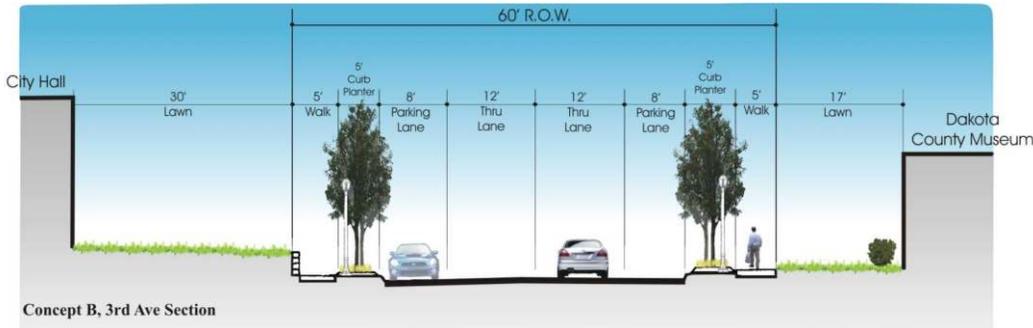


Proposed 3rd Avenue

(Figure 5-6)
Proposed 3rd Avenue



(Figure 5-7) 3rd Avenue Streetscape Plan



(Figure 5-8) 3rd Avenue Section

Streetscape Elements

This section of the Framework Manual describes a detailed system of streetscape elements that will establish a consistent, genuine, vibrant and positive identity for the Gateway Area. The elements are intended to reinforce one another and work together to form that identity, while remaining flexible enough to be applicable to a variety of site conditions.

The specific streetscape elements included in the Streetscape Master Plan are:

- Monuments
- A Clock Tower
- Pedestrian Lighting
- Kiosks
- Plant Materials
- Medians and Boulevards
- Paving
- Parking Lot Buffering
- Street Furniture

Design Principles

The following principles guided the design of the streetscape elements.

The streetscape design should reinforce Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway as a cohesive, significant gateway, but should be flexible and express the variety of residential, mixed use, and commercial districts, as well as adapt to site specific conditions.

Vertical streetscape elements should be emphasized such as lighting, trees, identification signs, and artwork in order to define edges, and create a sense of enclosure and human scale.

Elements should be functional and simple in design, and should be able to withstand snow, salt, sandblasting from snow plows, vandalism, and other urban conditions. They should not interfere with sight lines to oncoming traffic at intersections.

The streetscape elements should contribute to a sense of safety and comfort and promote walking and biking throughout the corridor.



The elements should reinforce existing positive qualities currently found within South St. Paul. The elements also should utilize traditional materials in a manner that expresses a new and progressive identity.

Streetscape elements should be cost effective and designed to minimize maintenance costs.

The Concord Gateway Improvement Committee reviewed three distinct palettes of streetscape elements. The following is a description of the design elements selected and recommended by the Committee for use within the Concord/ Grand Avenue Gateway.

Elements

Overall Design Concept

The streetscape elements selected for the Gateway build on the character established by existing elements within South St. Paul, including the historic Swift Company meat packing facility, the Armour Meat packing facility, and the Livestock Exchange building (Grand Hotel). The elements also express a timeless quality through the use of traditional materials.

Monuments

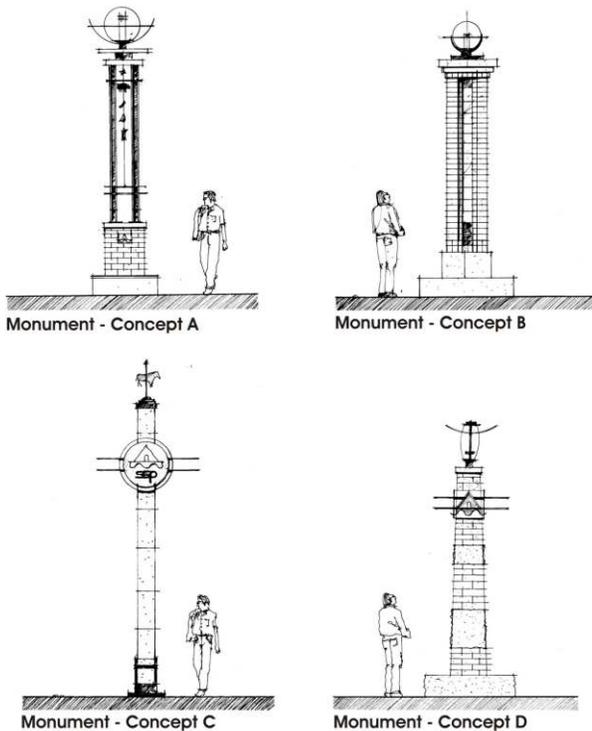
A variety of designs for entry monuments were explored, see figure 5-9. The monuments are proposed at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Concord Street, as well as at other entry points off Concord Street. The proposed designs recall entry monuments to the old Armour plant.

Plant Materials

Plant materials will be selected based on their ability to survive severe urban conditions, snow, salt, drought, and, in some areas, compacted and alkaline soils as well as for seasonal interest, form, and texture. Indigenous plants should be used wherever possible to reinforce the native landscape of the area.

Overstory trees will be clustered in the boulevard between the back of curb and sidewalk to define the pedestrian and vehicular zones. Clustering the trees allows for better visibility into retail areas, prevents a regimented appearance along the road, and allows for the creation of large planting beds of un-compacted soil, which promotes good plant health.

Flowers will be incorporated in highly visible areas such as parking lot entries, street intersections, and gateway areas. Maintenance of the flower beds will be accomplished through local volunteers, neighborhood groups, and/or gardening clubs.



(Figure 5-9) Monument Concepts

Paving

Variety in paving types will be used throughout the Gateway area to define sidewalks, intersection crosswalks, driveways, and other pedestrian areas. Concrete pavers, colored concrete, and standard concrete have been selected for the Gateway area. Paving will be used to effectively communicate changes in the overall character of the Gateway (from industrial to residential, for instance) and emphasize points of interest or gathering places. Gateways and major pedestrian connections will be punctuated by contrasting paving treatments.

Parking Buffering

Throughout the Gateway area, most of the private parking areas have minimal buffering treatments. This condition has a negative impact on the overall aesthetic quality of the Gateway. One of the objectives of the streetscape design is to provide parking lot edge solutions that are flexible and may adapt to a variety of site conditions and budget constraints. Buffering may be accomplished through plantings, grade changes, railings, or any combination of these. Railings are particularly appropriate in more urban settings where space is limited.

Pedestrian Lighting

Two of the main objectives for the streetscape design are to improve both the image and safety of the Concord/ Grand Ave Gateway area. Lighting plays a major role in defining the character, scale, and sense of safety associated with the streetscape. The proposed plan calls for incorporating the minimum amount of roadway lights necessary to meet required illumination standards; and augmenting the pedestrian environment with a secondary system of decorative 14 foot high pedestrian level lights. See Figure 5-10.

The following criteria were considered while selecting the final design for the light poles and fixtures:

The poles and fixtures must be able to withstand the sandblasting and corrosive road salts associated with snow removal operations.

The design should reinforce the overall design concept for the corridor.

Manufacturer's stock components should be utilized wherever possible, in order to minimize long term replacement costs.

The design should incorporate options for banner arms, flower pots and auxiliary power for tree and holiday lighting



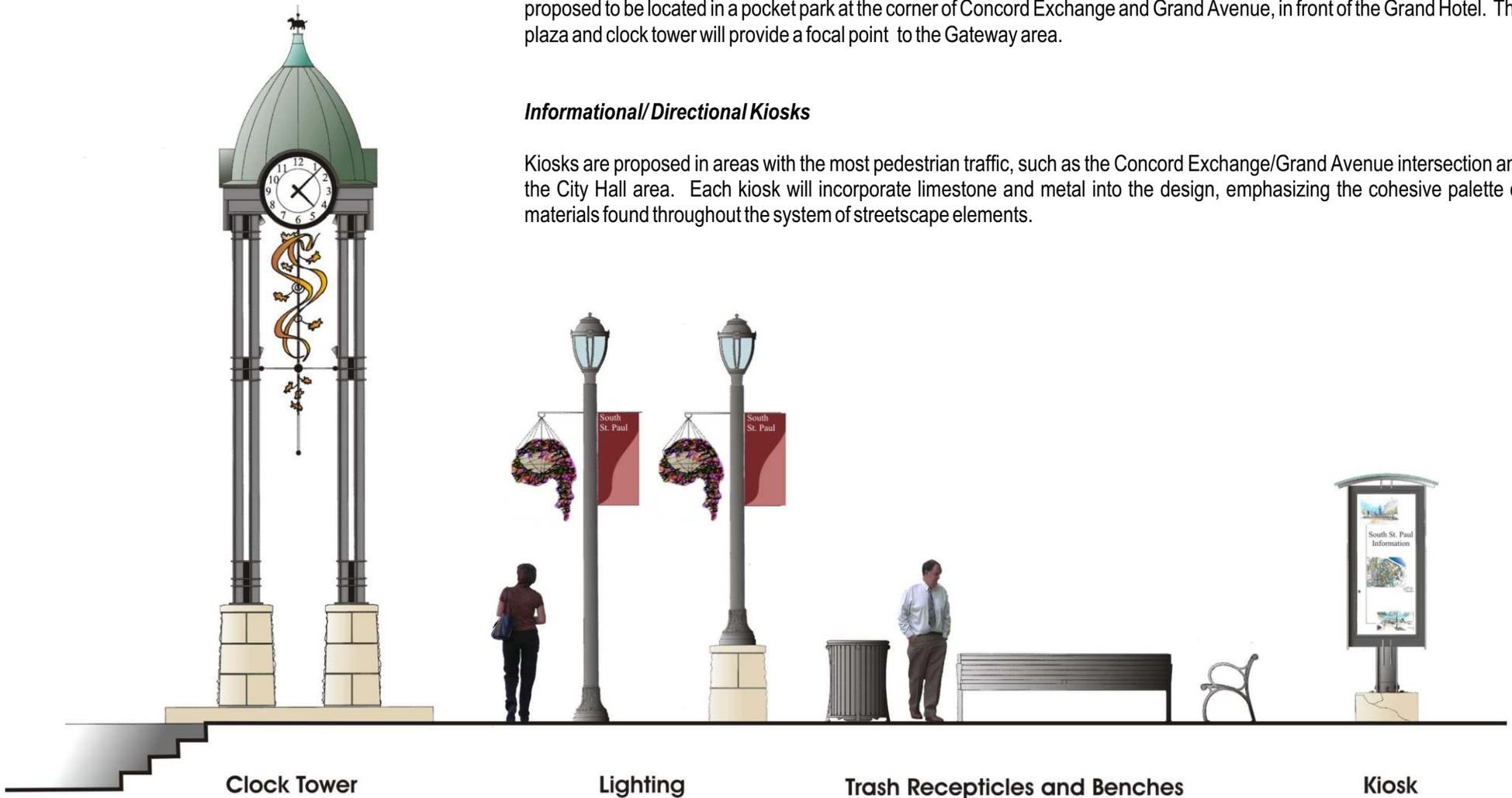
Parking Lot Buffer

Clock Tower

Several clock tower designs were presented to the Concord Gateway Improvement Committee at their request. Each clock tower concept expressed the forms and materials found on the neighboring Livestock Exchange building. The tower is proposed to be located in a pocket park at the corner of Concord Exchange and Grand Avenue, in front of the Grand Hotel. The plaza and clock tower will provide a focal point to the Gateway area.

Informational/Directional Kiosks

Kiosks are proposed in areas with the most pedestrian traffic, such as the Concord Exchange/Grand Avenue intersection and the City Hall area. Each kiosk will incorporate limestone and metal into the design, emphasizing the cohesive palette of materials found throughout the system of streetscape elements.



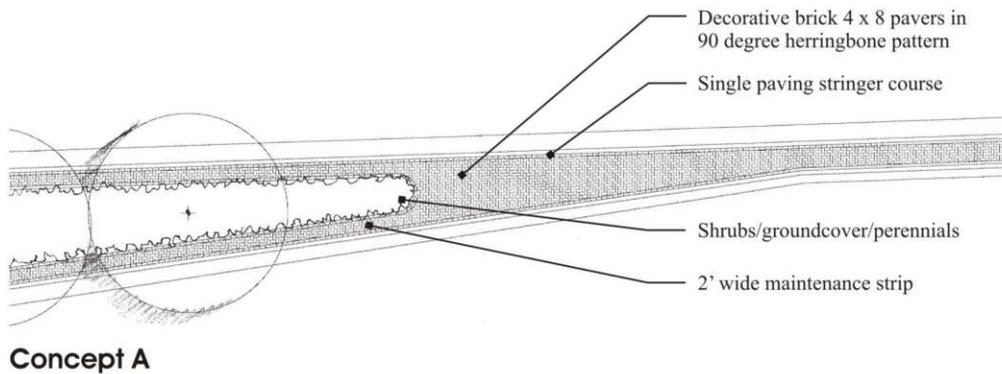
(Figure 5-10) Selected Streetscape Elements

Street Furniture

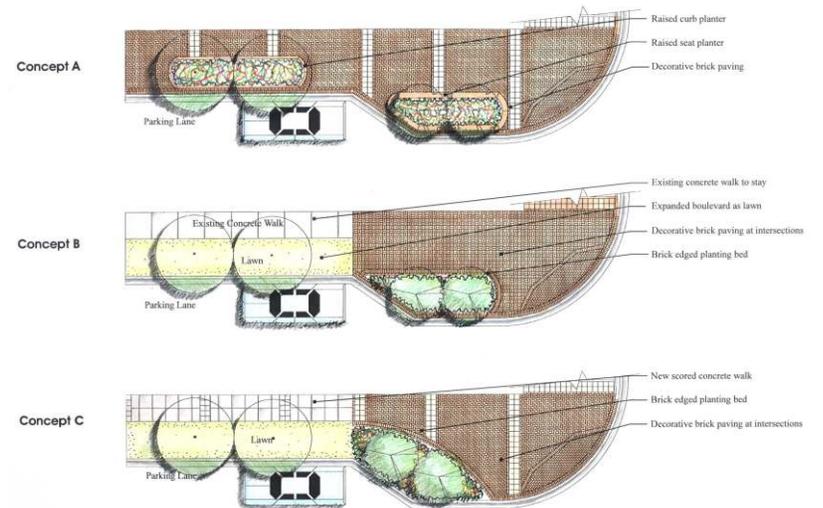
Benches, trash receptacles, and other street furniture elements have been chosen based upon their compatibility with the design, as well as for their durability and availability for future reuse.

Medians and Boulevards

Several options for the ground layer treatment of the medians and boulevards were presented to the Concord Gateway Improvement Committee, ranging from low maintenance materials such as stone, mulches, and decorative paving to higher maintenance treatments such as shrub massings and lawn. Because of the significant grade change on Grand Avenue, a series of limestone terrace walls have been selected to help offset the slope and enhance the visual character of the roadway. The landscape design of the medians and boulevards will strike a balance between the aesthetic quality desired by the City and the ability of public agencies to maintain them. The medians and boulevards will be equipped with irrigation, drain tile, electrical outlets for seasonal lighting, and a modified planting soil mix which resists compaction. The recommended treatment is to utilize overstory trees as the main component of the median plantings, in order to provide a sense of enclosure to the street and allow for better visibility underneath the canopies. See Figures 5-11 and 5-12.



(Figure 5-11)
Median Treatment Alternatives



(Figure 5-12)
Boulevard Treatment Alternatives

Design Guidelines

The quality and character of streets and streetscape elements have a great deal to do with the buildings that frame those streets. Overall improvement of the Concord Gateway Area must go beyond the improvement of the street rights-of-way. The following design guidelines, therefore, have been established to reinforce the desired character of this key Gateway Area in South St. Paul. The guidelines refer to improvements to, renovations of, and redevelopment of buildings within the Gateway area; and they apply to both public and private improvements.

What are Design Guidelines?

Guidelines, by definition, are a set of recommended design goals for new and existing buildings. Guidelines set forth the generalized desired character of the gateway area. They suggest overall character without dictating specific design requirements. They are qualitative, not quantitative. In general, buildings within the Concord Gateway Area should provide interest at the street level, create interesting street corners, demonstrate the use of high quality materials, and enhance the overall pedestrian experience on the street.

This Framework Manual sets forth guidelines for:

- Commercial Building Types
- Residential Building Types
- Franchise Architecture
- Façade Treatments
- Ground Level Expression
- Signs
- Roof Design
- Parking Lot Edge Treatments



Commercial Building Types

Commercial buildings should address the street, providing windows and access points to create interest and draw shoppers. Adaptive re-use is encouraged, as it preserves and enhances the historic character of South St. Paul. Multi-level and mixed use buildings also add significant benefit to the gateway area, as their mass helps to define and frame the street. Unique treatments at street corners and a unified, high quality, design scheme are also encouraged.



Adaptive re-use of historic building. High energy building on high traffic corner.

One story building with awnings, high quality materials, and no setbacks



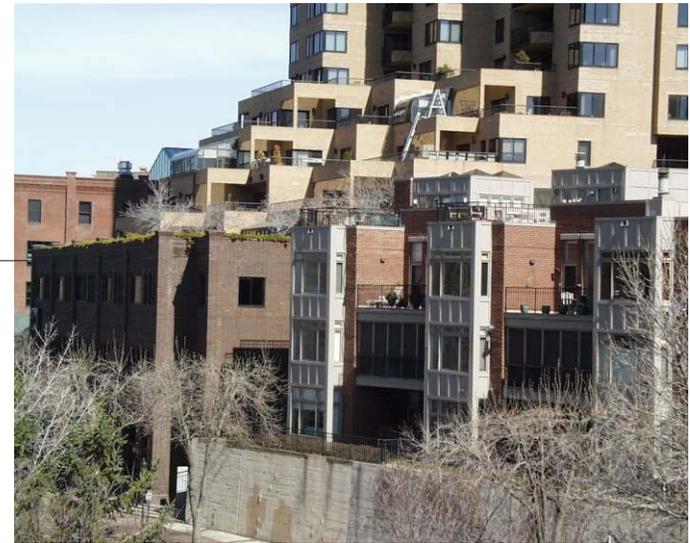
Mixed-use multi-story with unified facade and unique corner treatments

Residential Building Types

Residential buildings should also address the street, as well as taking advantage of possible views across the river valley. Residential buildings may take different forms, such as townhomes and condominium or apartment buildings, but should always be constructed of high quality materials, demonstrate a unified design scheme, and possess varies roof lines and a clear but approachable differentiation between public and private space. They should also include interior parking and plaza spaces, in order to provide residents opportunities to access the buildings and relax outdoors sheltered from the street.



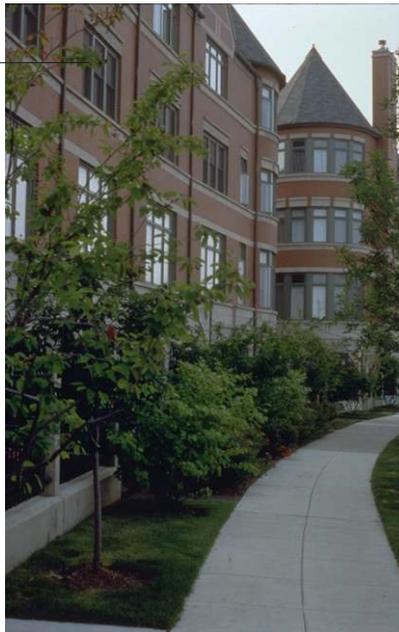
Multi family with interior parking and plaza spaces



Housing adjacent to river road with terraces and views to river

Terracing to river

High quality materials and variety of roof forms



Townhomes



Franchise Architecture

Chain establishments typically desire a specific architectural motif, in order to emphasize consistency in their network and attract regular customers. In many cases, this standardized architecture conflicts with an historic urban core. There are ways, however, of incorporating the franchise's desired signage and even some building treatments, while still encouraging the basic principles of commercial building design listed above. Franchise establishments should still address the street with windows, prominent entrances, and unique corner treatments.

Building placed at street edge. Trademarked logo, signs, and canopy are downsized to fit character and scale of main street environment



Unique design which is sensitive to context: landscape and pedestrian walkways, pedestrian scale signs, high quality materials

Building addresses corner, awnings and high quality building materials used



Ground Level Expression

Useful and vital pocket plaza

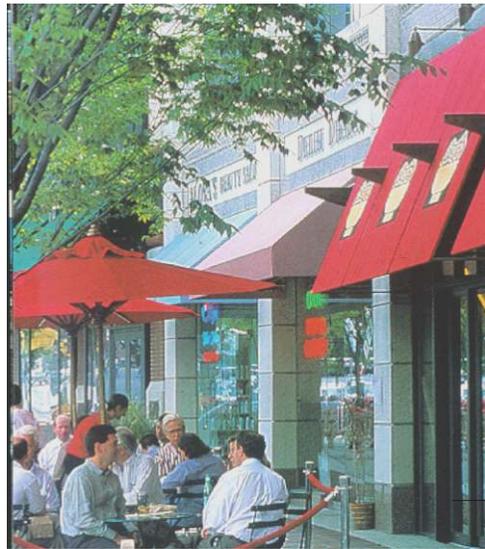


Ground Level Expression refers to the way in which a building meets the street. This building/pedestrian interface is a crucial part of urban design and should provide visual interest, opportunities for sociability, and overall pedestrian safety and comfort. As stated above, windows and clear entrances enhance a building's appearance on the street, and may be further augmented by awnings, pocket plazas, outdoor cafe seating, and plantings.

Windows create interest at street level



Outdoor café, awnings, and entry face street



Awnings and umbrellas



Visual interest at street level: awnings, outdoor dining

Signs

Commercial districts, with their many businesses vying for attention, can become cluttered with signs. This is particularly true in auto-oriented commercial areas, but can also be the case in pedestrian-centered urban cores. Signs in pedestrian areas should address the scale of the pedestrian, should be simple in materials and message, and enhance the overall street environment. This is not to say that signs cannot be colorful, unusual, or noticeable in fact, interesting signs can add a memorable dimension to a commercial area. In essence, signs should effectively communicate the character of the business they advertise without overwhelming the pedestrian streetscape.

Playful facade signs that do not detract from building massing



Overhead signs with high quality materials



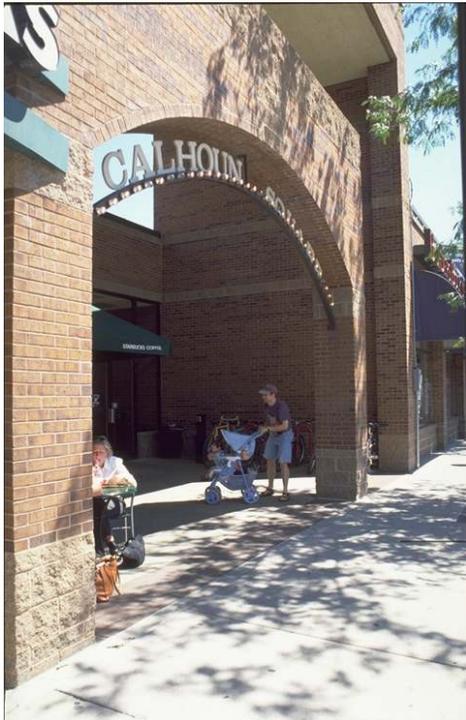
Pedestrian scale monument signs and sandwich boards for multiple tenants



Canopy signs of high quality materials with text on vertical surfaces only



Facade signs creatively integrated into architecture



Roof Design

Variety in heights and cornice treatments within unified development



A building's roof line can establish its individuality and interest within the context of a commercial area, and variety in roof lines from building to building can add visual interest to a mixed use area. Some techniques that add interest include varying heights and cornices within an otherwise unified design scheme, using roof line changes to note entrances or commercial bays, and establishing contrasting roof lines at street corners.

Roofline variation denotes entrances and internal spaces



High quality materials, roofline variation



For multi-level buildings and river bluff buildings, upper floors step back from street and/or bluff

Building height variation, vertical elements at entrances



Parking Lot Screening

Parking lots are a necessity in most mixed use areas in the United States. They can, however, break up the continuity of an otherwise unified gateway area. Parking lot frontage on pedestrian streets should be reduced, and their edges and interiors should be extensively greened. Hedges, ornamental railings, bollards, trees, and other methods should be used to screen parking lots from pedestrian spaces.



Decorative railing with columns



Plantings and high quality materials utilized in small spaces

Monument sign and railing



Railing, columns, seating, various levels of planting utilized where space is available



Site Design

The placement of buildings along South St. Paul's gateway mixed use streets has a profound effect on the character of the pedestrian environment. Buildings should be placed close to the street, with primary entrances on the street. Buildings should be placed on corners at street intersections, to emphasize and define those intersections. Any auto-oriented uses should be placed behind or to the side of buildings. By maintaining a mostly continuous line of buildings along the sidewalk edge, pedestrians will use, and therefore enliven, the streets in the gateway area.

Ordinance



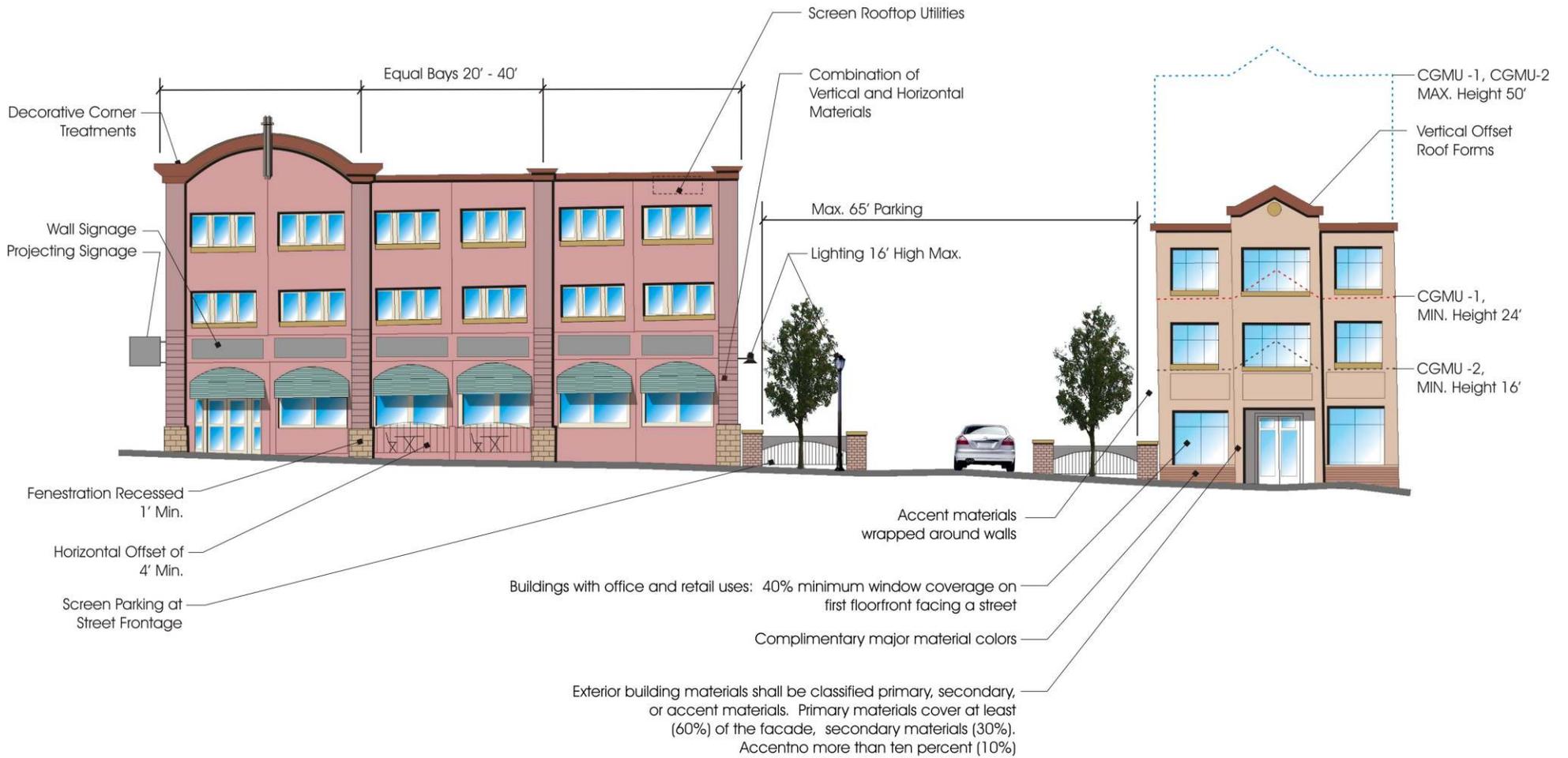
These guidelines have been largely incorporated into the City's Zoning Ordinance Number 1500.15. "CGMU" - CONCORD GATEWAY MIXED USE DISTRICT. The purpose of the "CGMU" Concord Gateway Mixed Use District is to provide an area for compact development of commercial, residential, and office uses. These mixed uses will be made compatible through a combination of careful planning and urban design and coordinated public and private investment. The mixture of land uses within the district is essential to establishing the level of vitality and intensity needed to support retail and service uses.

The placement of building edges and treatment of building, parking, landscaping, and pedestrian spaces is essential to creating the pedestrian-friendly environment envisioned for the Concord Gateway District. The standards in the ordinance are intended to implement the principles and relationships established in the South St. Paul Concord Gateway Framework Plan. The Zoning Ordinance outlines requirements specifically related to:

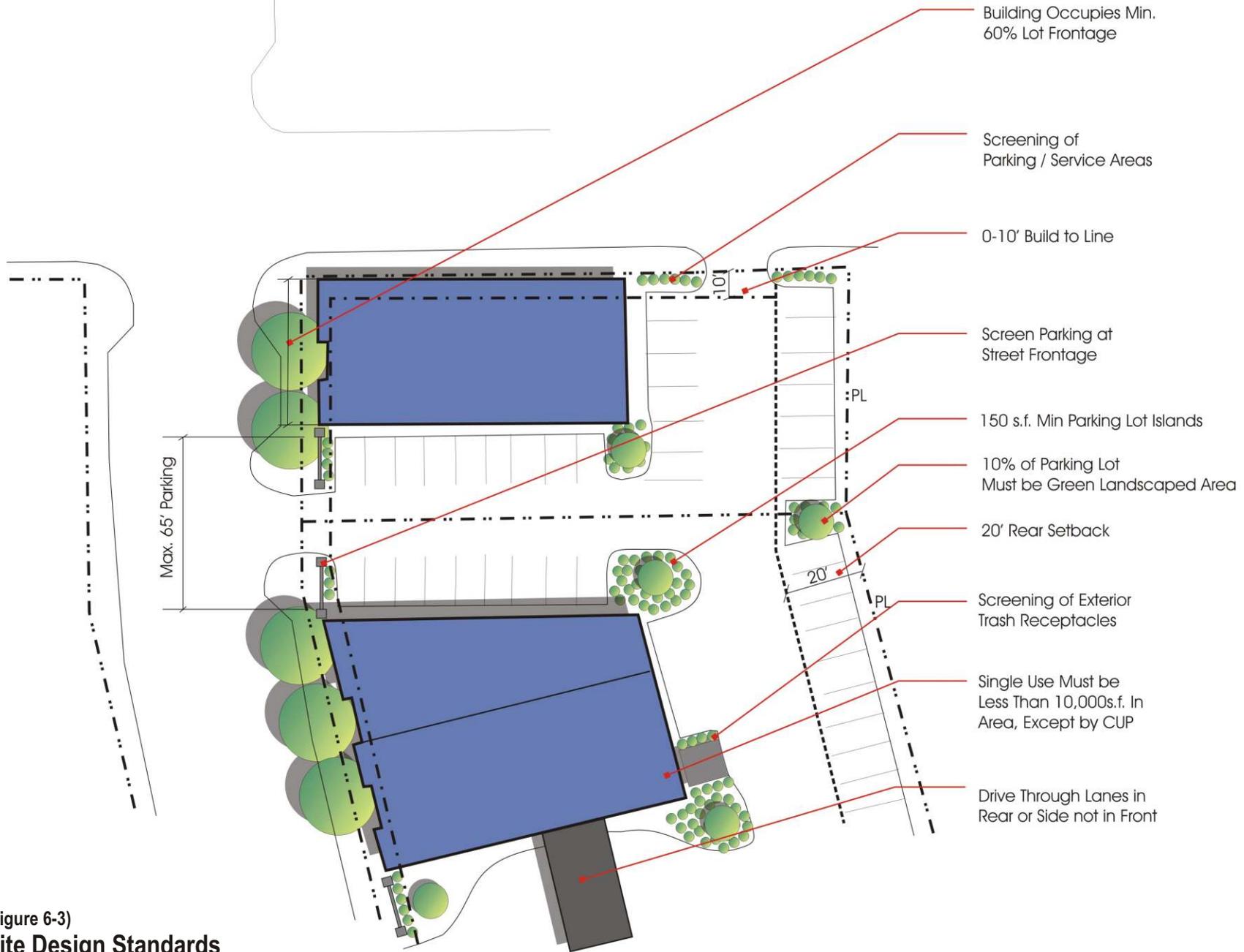
- Architectural massing
- Exterior building materials
- Architectural character
- Building height minimums and maximums
- Placement of parking and other auto-oriented uses
- Placement of buildings on a site
- Landscaping and screening of parking areas

The CGMU district is divided into two sub-districts CGMU-1 and CGMU-2, which are depicted in Figure 6-1, and on the Official Zoning Map.





(Figure 6-2)
Architectural Design Standards



(Figure 6-3)
Site Design Standards