

GrandView District

Small Area Guide Plan Process Report to Planning Commission and City Council

December 2010



OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The GrandView District includes the area between Eden and Vernon Avenues, crossing Highway 100 on each street. This crescent-shaped district comprises 19 parcels, and a variety of land uses, including retail, commercial, office, housing, public uses, and historic buildings. Historically, the area was defined commercially by its proximity to Highway 100, built in the 1930's. At one time, Vernon Avenue was Highway 169, which made this area an important commercial hub for shopping, recreation, and services. Over time, the district has evolved to serve more neighborhood-oriented needs such as grocery, hardware, restaurants, clinics, and significant public uses such as the Senior Center, Library and City Hall. As such, the district is seen by residents as an important node for services, and by land owners and tenants as an ideal location adjacent to a busy highway. A map showing the parcels included in the District is attached as Appendix A.

Since the district was planned and developed during the height of the emphasis on cars in city planning, non-vehicular traffic has a significant challenge in the area. Highway 100, while bringing important vehicular traffic into the area, has also served as an impediment to pedestrian and bicycle movements. It is seen by many as an insurmountable barrier to pedestrians and other non-vehicular traffic that may access the district.

For many years, the district was also home to the City's Public Works facility. Located at 5146 Eden Avenue, the facility housed all of the City's public works equipment and personnel. In the early 2000's, with the facility reaching the end of its useful life, City staff began exploring replacement options. In 2007, the City issued a Request for Proposals to local developers for a potential redevelopment of the site. One of the proposals received in response to the RFP called for the public works facility to move to a new site on Metro Boulevard south of Highway 62 and west of Highway 100 and for the site at 5146 Eden Avenue to be redeveloped as a medical office building. After considerable public discussion, the developer withdrew the proposal to construct a medical office building at the public works site and the City purchased the Metro Boulevard site from the developer. The new Public Works Facility was subsequently constructed and, in late July 2010, the City vacated the Public Works facility at 5146 Eden Avenue and moved to their new headquarters.



In 2008, the Edina Comprehensive Plan was amended to identify several Potential Areas of Change in the City. As shown in the chart below, the GrandView District is one of these Potential Areas of Change.



The amended Comprehensive Plan provides that small area studies of these areas should be conducted in consultation with residents, property owners, business owners and commercial property owners, to produce a guide for redevelopment. A request to initiate a specific small area plan or study can be made by community groups, business groups, the Planning Commission, or City staff. A development proposal that involves a Comprehensive Plan Amendment or a rezoning will require a small area plan study prior to planning application. However, the authority to initiate a small area plan rests with the City Council.

In late 2009, the Council approved a process designed to engage the community in planning for the future of the old Public Works site and the area surrounding it. The process was to be led by a Community Advisory Team (CAT) made up of interested residents, representatives from City Boards and Commissions, area business and property owners, and a school district representative. The CAT was to be supported by a Design Team made up of Edina residents in the design field, and a staff-led Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The roles to be played by members of the CAT, Design Team, and TAC were outlined in writing before the process commenced. Copies of the descriptions are attached at Appendix B.



Beginning with a kick-off meeting on April 8, 2010, the CAT met 10 times in a 20-day period during the months of April and May 2010 to study the site and the surrounding area. They determined that the study area should encompass the commercial node at Highway 100 and Vernon, as well as the City Hall campus across Highway 100. During the process (which is described in greater detail later in this report), the CAT, TAC and Design Team members walked the study area, and looked at potential areas of change, transportation challenges, pedestrian access, and other development issues. By the end of the process, the CAT had developed a set of seven guiding principles to define the future of the Grandview District. These guiding principles were shared with the City Council in May 2010.

PROCESS

As mentioned above, the process leading to the adoption of the seven guiding principles was a compressed one. It began with a kick-off meeting on April 8, 2010 and finished with a Refinement Meeting when the CAT voted on the seven Guiding Principles on April 28, 2010. Presentations summarizing the work were subsequently made to the Planning Commission on April 29, 2010 and to the City Council on May 19, 2010. Follow up meetings were held on June 29, 2010 and September 22, 2010. This Report was formally approved by the CAT in November of 2010. What follows is an overview of what transpired at the meetings held in April and May of 2010.

Meeting #1 – Kick-off Meeting

On April 8, 2010 the Kick-off meeting was held. The meeting included an introduction of the process, a collection of initial ideas, and the selection of the CAT members. The process was introduced by Michael Fischer, Kevin Staunton and Michael Schroeder. Mr. Fischer, the Chair of the Planning Commission, had appointed Mr. Staunton to convene the kick-off meeting and Mr. Schroeder to lead the Design Team. Initial ideas were collected from attendees by asking them to write their ideas down and post them on a large sticky-board.

The selection of the CAT members was perhaps the most unusual part of the process. Approximately half of the CAT members were appointed by virtue of their positions on various city boards or commissions or status as business or property owners in the area. The remaining members of the CAT were selected by the members of the public who attended the kick-off meeting after members of the public caucused in 4 groups representing the four geographic quadrants of the City. Ultimately, members of the public attending the meeting appointed four “quadrant” representatives and 5 “at-large” representatives to the CAT.





Members selected to the CAT were as follows:

Representative of:

Northwest Quadrant
Northeast Quadrant
Southwest Quadrant
Southeast Quadrant
At large
At large
At large
At large
At large

Kim Montgomery
Steve Buss
Sue Davison
Gene Persha
Andy Brown
Lisa Diehl
Larry Chestler
Joann Olsen
Greg Domke

Business Owner
Business Owner
Property Owner

Bob Shadduck
Linda Odell Cowles
Nancy Grazzini-Olson

Heritage Preservation Board
Planning Commission/CAT Facilitator
Energy & Environment Commission
Transportation Commission
Parks Commission
Edina School Board

Chris Rofidal
Kevin Staunton
Michael Platteter
Josh Sprague
Ellen Jones
Brian Hedberg



Members of the Design Team were selected as follows:

Landscape Architect	Michael Schroeder
Architect	Peter Sussman
Architect	Mia Blanchett
Architect	Tim McILwain
Architect	Jim Miller
Architect	Scott Davidson
Architect	Meriwether Felt
Landscape Architect	Peter MacDonagh
Architect, Landscape Architect	Stefan Helgeson
Architect	Michael Fischer

Initial ideas identified for the Public Works site by those attending the meeting were:

- Sculpture Garden
- Community Garden (2 responses)
- Green Space
- Open Space
- Wetland
- Urban Forest
- Park
- Water Tower
- Community Center (5 responses)
- City Auditorium
- Public Theater/Performing Arts
- Farmers Market (3 responses)
- City Market (2 responses)
- Town Square (5 responses)
- Community School with clinic
- Multi-Use (gym, park & ride, community center)
- Sports facility (retractable dome)
- Kid friendly area
- Park with bike facilities/walking path and playground equipment
- Truck Maintenance Facility
- Bus Garage
- Snow Plow storage
- Office (2 responses)
- Service (2 responses)
- Medical Clinic
- Manufacturing for medical use
- Surgery Center
- Retail
- Biltmore style hotel

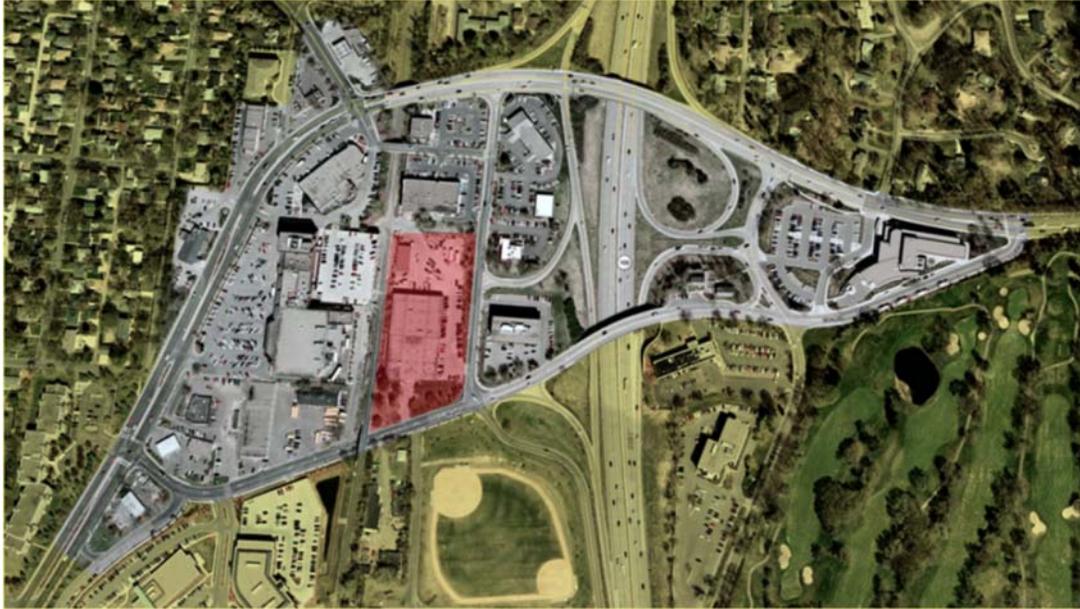


- Downtown destination
- Mixed Use – office/retail/residential (3 responses)
- Sell
- Housing for Edina teachers and City employees
- Higher Density
- Park & Ride (2 responses)
- Transit Hub/Station (8 responses)
- Light Rail Station (3 responses)
- Public Transportation
- Plan to accommodate Light Rail
- Biking Hub
- Bikeway
- Sustainable site (2 responses)
- Improve local environment
- Greenway from city Hall to Library
- Pedestrian friendly (3 responses)
- Sense/feeling community
- Bike system tie-in/connection (2 responses)
- Tie to the “greatest city need”
- Gateway image
- Ability to grow, adapt over time
- Relocation bus garage
- Strengthen community identity
- Something exciting to look at and use
- Public/private partnership
- Extend the settler one room school house to an old Edina Settlement
- Plan for future of adjacent sites not just public works site.



Meeting #2 – Organization and Site Tour

On April 10, 2010, a meeting was held to select the CAT chair and to tour the GrandView District. The meeting concluded with developing boundaries of the District, a debriefing of what the CAT viewed on their tour, discussed potential issues and planning for upcoming meetings with developers and business/property owners.





Meeting #3 – Developer Roundtable

On April 12, 2010, a meeting was held with four developers that live and have done work in Edina. The purpose was to gain insight and perspective of developers as to how to develop the public works site and the potential of future development in the area.



Meeting #4 – Business and Property Owner Roundtable

On April 14, 2010, a meeting was held with business and property owners within the GrandView District. The purpose was to gain insight and perspective of those who work and own property within the District.



Meeting #5 – Community Meeting

On April 21, 2010, a community meeting was held to identify issues; assess the susceptibility to change in the District; consider ideas for redevelopment of the area; and develop a list of ideas for a name for the District.





The following were submitted as ideas for the name of the district:

- JEDA (Jerry's Edina Development Area)
- Grandview Heights (8)
- Edina Gateway
- Eden Center
- Bridges over Edina
- Arcadia
- The Bridges (1)
- Edina Town Square
- Edina West (1)
- Future Zone (1)
- Brookside Hollow
- The Eye (picture of eye for eye) of Edina
- Edina Hub
- ETC (Edina Transit Center)
- Eden Heights
- Arcadia Hills
- Edina City Center
- Edina Greenway (1)
- Grandview Commons (5)
- The Danen District
- The Crossroads
- Edina Crossroads
- The Bridges
- Prospect Park
- Grandview (1)
- The Edina Crossing (2)
- Grandview Crescent (1)





Meeting #6 – CAT Summary Meeting

On April 22, 2010, the CAT held a meeting to formulate the information gathered so far, with an emphasis on information gathered at the Community meeting. Important issues and concepts were identified from information gathered at previous meetings and organized into seven principle categories.



The result was the CAT members agreeing on the following set of principles:

1. Leverage Public Ownership
 - City Government Center – Library, City Hall, Senior Center
 - Public Gathering

2. Neighborhood Center with Regional Connections
 - Retail business opportunity and support



- Meet business needs
 - Movement
 - Diverse goods and services
 - Economic vitality
 - Business/Resident Synergy
3. Turn barriers into Opportunity – Work through barriers not around them
- School Bus Site
 - Rail Line
 - Highway 100
 - Transportation Corridors
 - Topography
4. Design for Present and Future
- Functionality
 - Density



5. Parking
- Could fit multiple categories
6. Movement
- Pedestrian Friendliness
 - Better Connectivity
 - Promote Multimodal Transportation
7. Design/Identity
- Innovative Design
 - Aesthetics
 - Natural Space
 - Attractive Space



- Identity
- Image
- Gateway
- Promote Sustainability

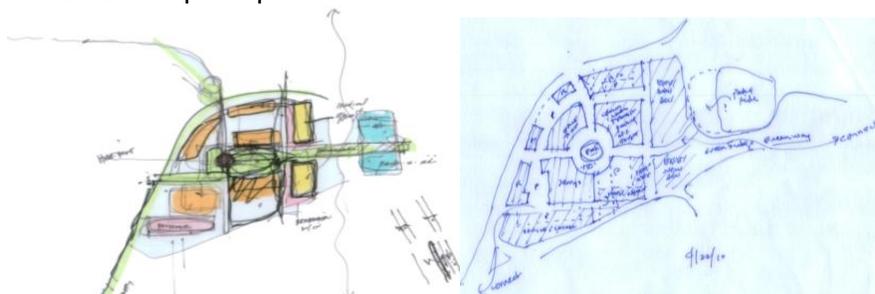


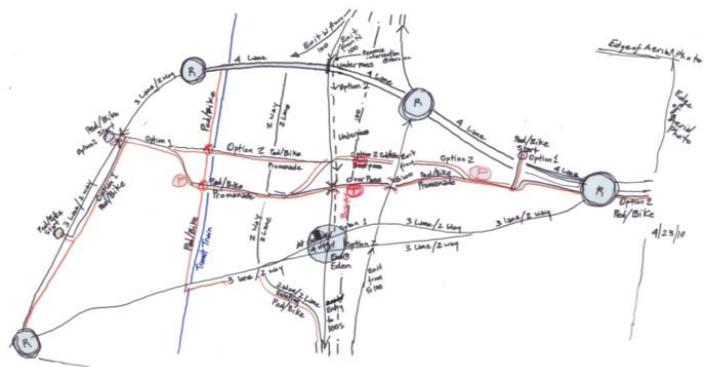
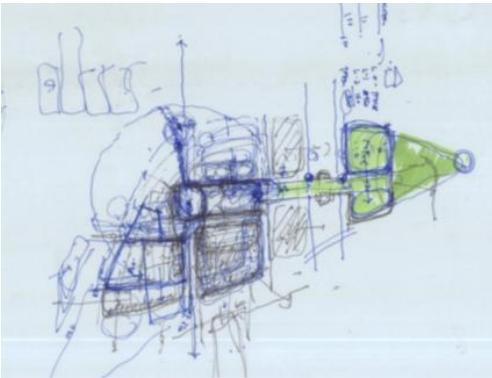
Meeting #7 – CAT Communication to the Design Team

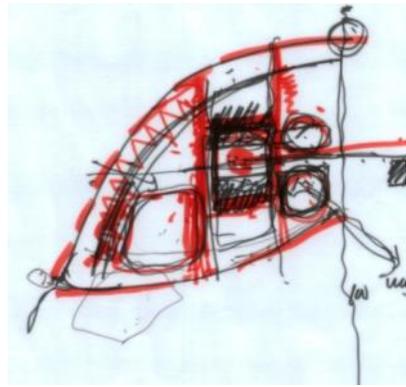
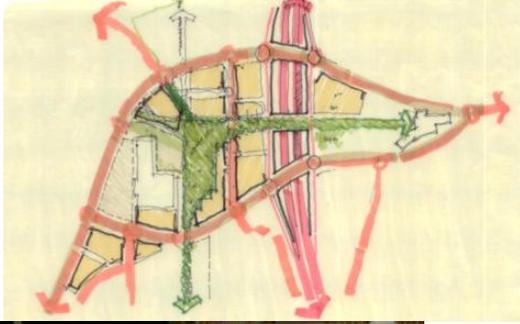
On April 23, 2010, the CAT communicated the seven principles to the design team. Additionally, Jack Broz, Transportation Consultant to the TAC, presented an overview of ideas to the group on how to deal with the transportation issues in the District.

Meeting #8 – Design Charrette

On April 23 and April 24, 2010, the Design Team held a Design Charrette at the Edina Senior Center. After the close of the CAT Communication Meeting, the Design Team began sketching ideas based on the seven principles presented by the CAT. The design work continued again the next morning, and resulted in a draft articulation of the principles and an illustration of potential application of the principles.







Meeting #9 – Open House

On April 26, 2010, an Open House was held at City Hall to display all of the work that had gone on up to this point. The visual display included a summary of each meeting. CAT Chair Kevin Staunton and Design Team Leader Michael Schroeder presented a summary of the process and a description of the results coming out of the design charrette. Mr. Staunton described the process followed by the CAT and walked those in attendance through the draft list of the Guiding Principles. Mr. Schroeder then explained the illustration the Design Team had created during the design charrette, noting that it was intended as one example of how the Guiding Principles might be implemented.



Meeting #10 – CAT Refinement Meeting

On April 27, 2010, the CAT met to review and finalize the Guiding Principles and the illustration created by the Design Team. The CAT discussed each draft Guiding Principle, making edits to some to ensure that they accurately reflected the intent of the CAT. The CAT then voted unanimously to approve the revised list of seven Guiding Principles. After approving the Guiding Principles, the CAT considered the graphic created by the Design Team. It emphasized that the graphic should be viewed as one possible way in which the Guiding Principles could be implemented. The CAT then approved the graphic illustration to be used as an example — not a blueprint — of how the District might develop in a manner consistent with the Guiding Principles.”

- 1 **Leverage publicly-owned parcels and civic presence** to create a vibrant and connected public realm that serves as a catalyst for high quality, integrated private development.
- 2 **Enhance the District's economic viability as a neighborhood center with regional connections**, recognizing that meeting the needs of both businesses and residents will make the district a good place to do business.
- 3 **Turn perceived barriers into opportunities** by layering development over supporting infrastructure and taking advantage of the natural topography of the area.
- 4 **Design for the present and the future** by pursuing logical increments of change using key parcels as stepping stones to a more vibrant, walkable, functional, attractive, and life-filled place.
- 5 **Organize parking as an effective resource** for the district by linking community parking to public and private destinations while also providing parking that is convenient for businesses and customers.
- 6 **Improve movement within and access to the district** for people of all ages



REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

After updating the Planning Commission on its work at the Commission’s April 28, 2010 meeting, CAT and Design Team representatives met with the City Council at a Council work session on May 19, 2010.

Kevin Staunton and Michael Schroeder made a presentation to the Council that included an overview of the process and an explanation of the Guiding Principles that were developed. The presentation of the Guiding Principles included bullet point explanations created by Mr. Staunton and graphics created by Mr. Schroeder. The bullet points and graphic illustrations are not part of what the CAT adopted at its April 27 meeting but were, instead, intended to help explain and illustrate the intent behind the Guiding Principles. They appeared in the presentation as follows:



Illustrative Vision



Principle 1 - Leverage publicly-owned parcels and civic presence to create a vibrant and connected district that serves as a catalyst for high quality, integrated public and private development.

- A substantial portion of the property in the District is publicly-owned (e.g. – City Hall, Public Works, Library/Senior Center, School Bus Garage, Highway Interchange)
- The public ownership includes a significant civic presence – City Hall and Library/Senior Center.
- Use the existing civic presence to contribute to the future identity of the District and the public ownership to leverage change consistent with the Guiding Principles.

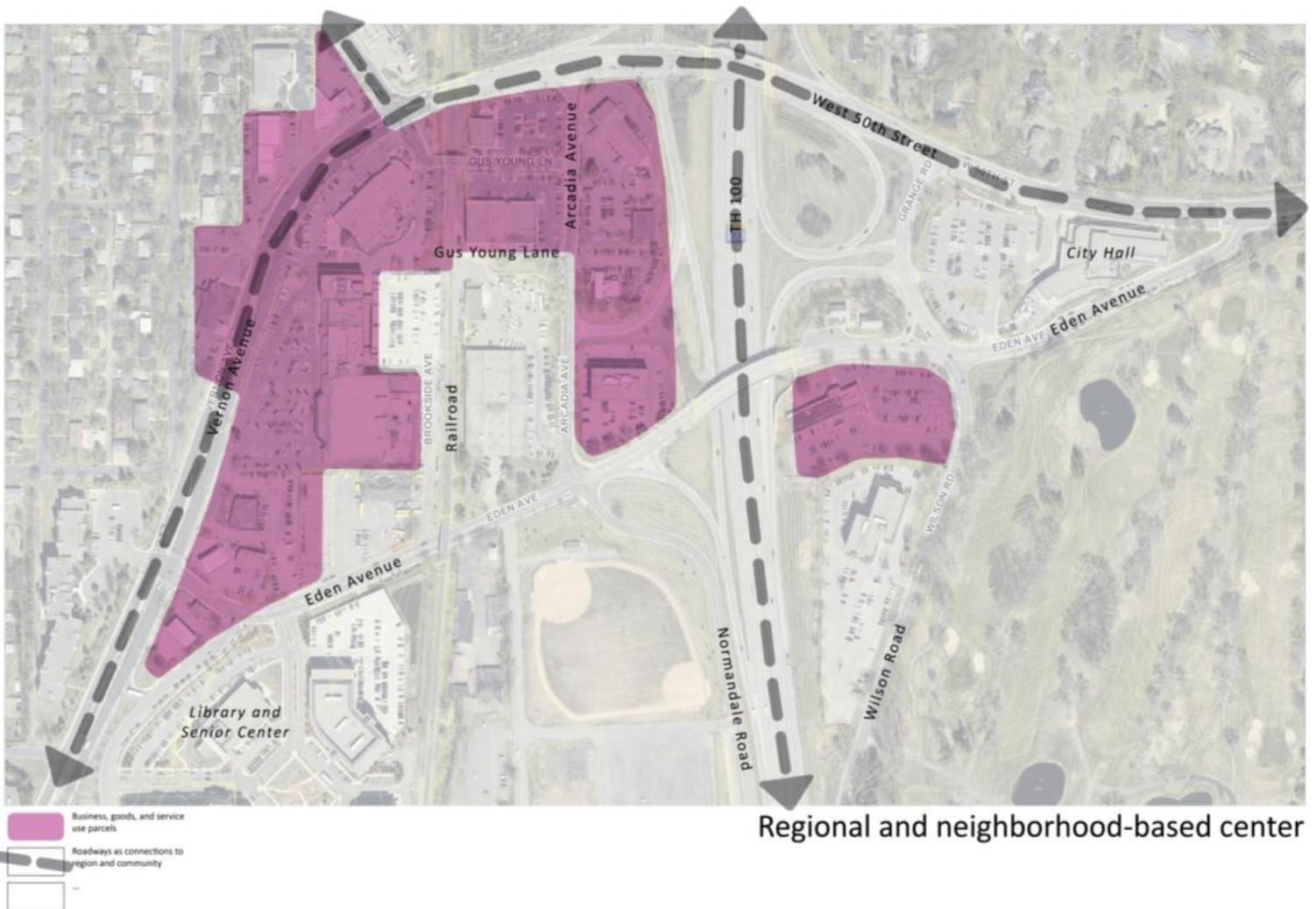


Publicly-owned parcels



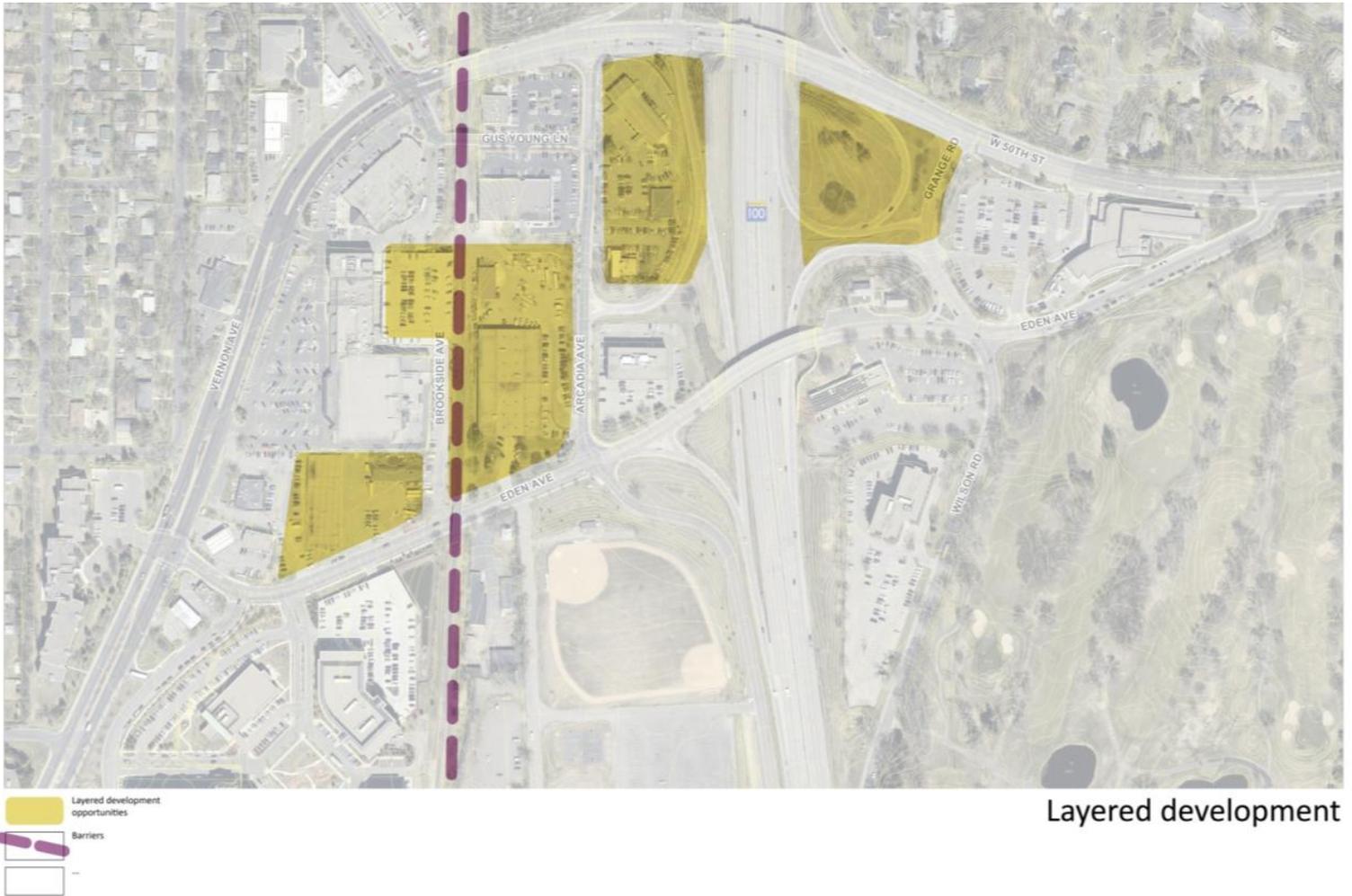
Principle 2 - Enhance the District’s economic viability as a neighborhood center with regional connections, recognizing that meeting the needs of both businesses and residents will make the district a good place to do business.

- Neighborhood residents rely on the District for a wide variety of their day-to-day commercial service needs.
- Property and business owners in the District rely on neighborhood residents for customers.
- Proximity to major transportation corridors provides opportunities for connections to and from the surrounding region.
- The District serves primarily as a neighborhood (rather than regional) center; successful future development of the District must meet the needs of both businesses and residents.



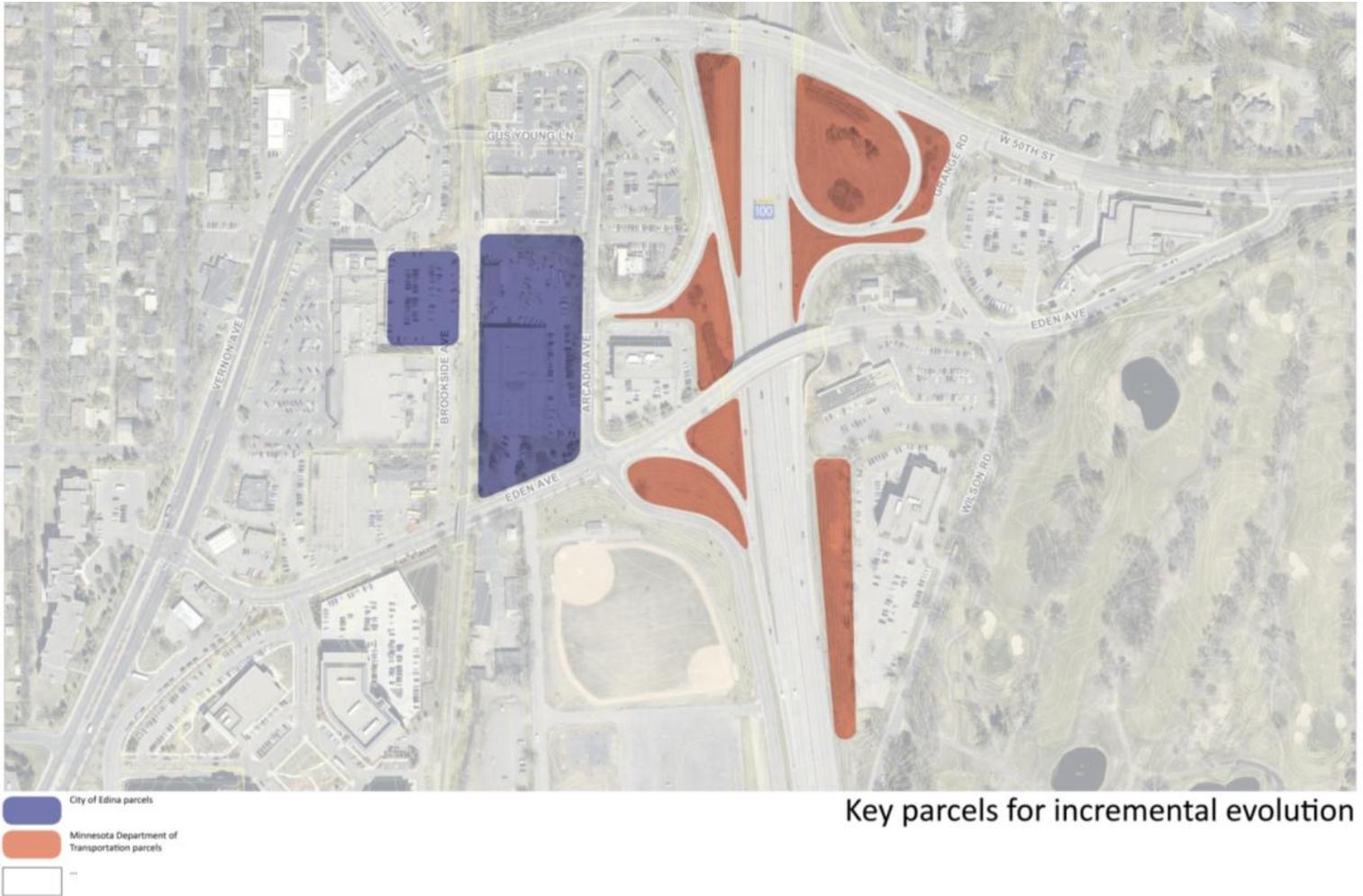
Principle 3 - Turn perceived barriers into opportunities. Consider layering development over supporting infrastructure and taking advantage of the natural topography of the area.

- The basic configuration of its transportation infrastructure – Highway 100, the rail corridor, Vernon and Eden Avenues – has remained unchanged for 70 years.
- The transportation infrastructure has been a barrier to integration of the land uses within the district as well as pedestrian and bicycle access to the District.
- Those barriers can be overcome. Layering development over the supporting infrastructure and taking advantage of the area’s natural topography is one possible technique.



Principle 4 - Design for the present and the future by pursuing logical increments of change using key parcels as stepping-stones to a more vibrant, walkable, functional, attractive, and life-filled place.

- Redevelopment will have to occur in stages over time.
- Each stage needs to preserve benefits for businesses and customers while incrementally improving the District.
- Look for the right sequence of redevelopment that can meet present needs while ultimately creating a more vibrant, walkable, functional, attractive, and life-filled place.



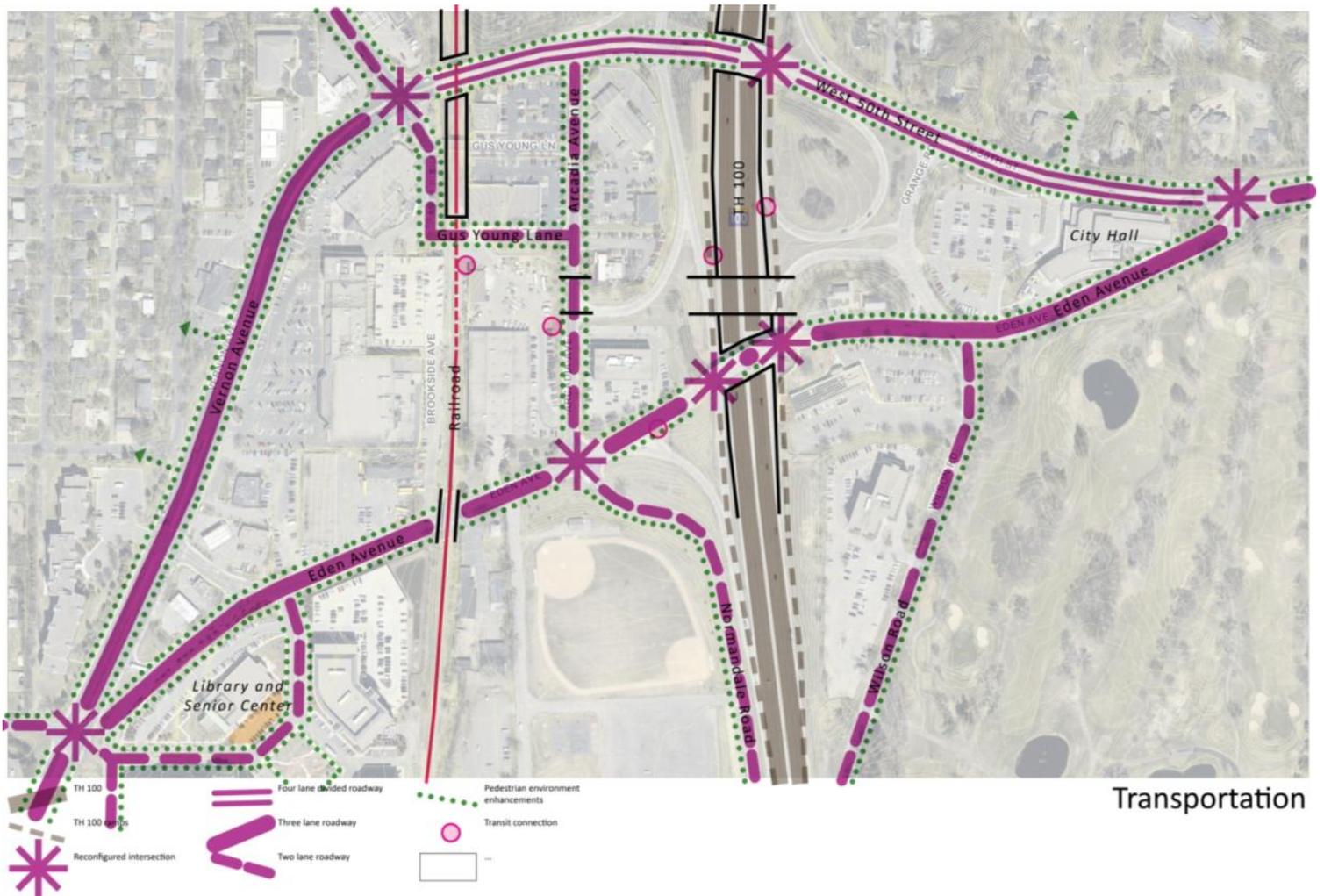
Principle 5 - Organize parking as an effective resource for the district by linking community parking to public and private destinations while also providing parking that is convenient for businesses and customers.

- The District is currently served by both “convenience” parking that allows customers to quickly access businesses for short visits and by “community” parking.
- The existing “community” parking is under-utilized primarily because it has limited connections to District destinations.
- Preserve “convenience” parking while improving the utility of “community” parking by linking it to public and private destinations.



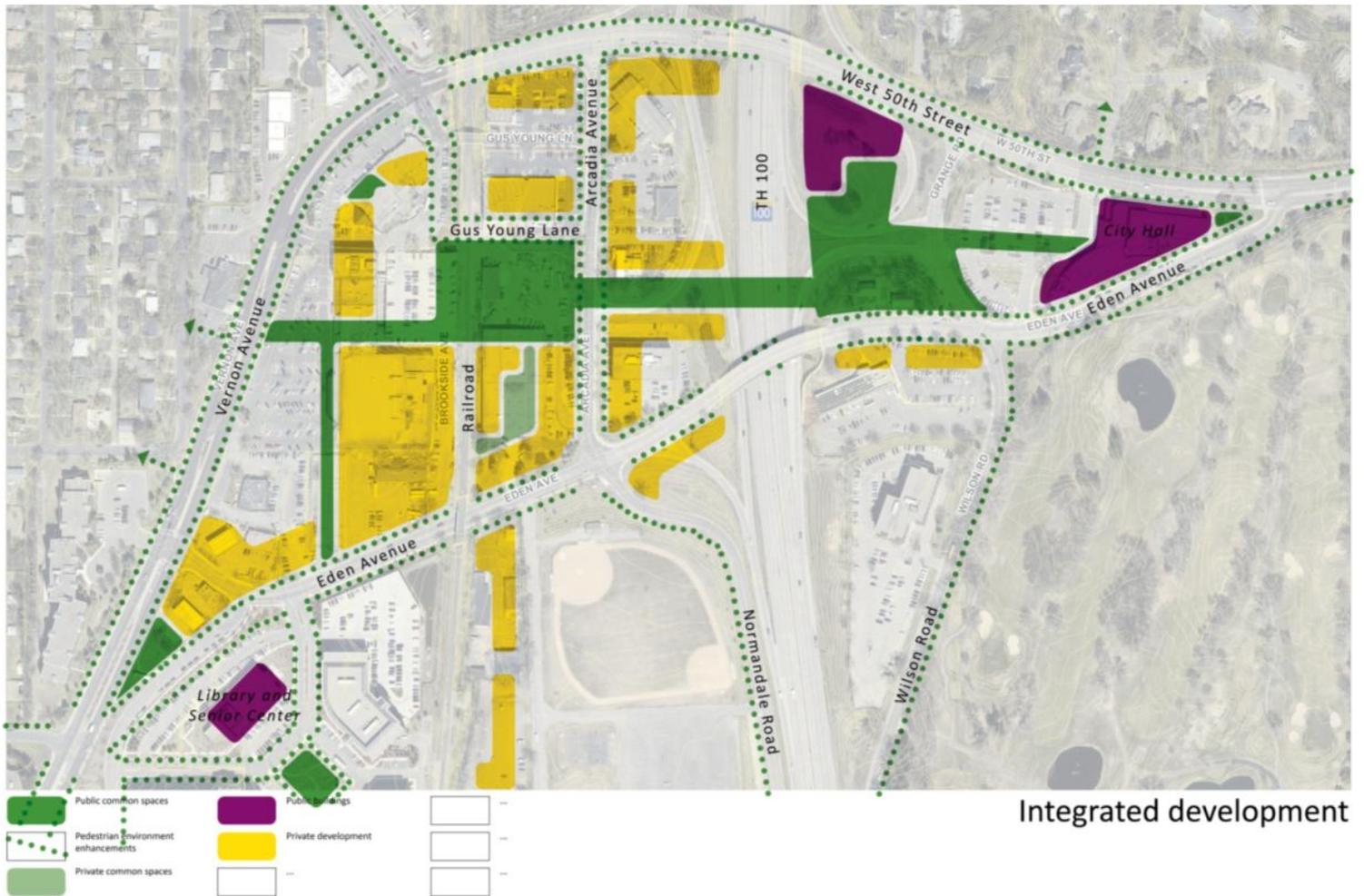
Principle 6 - Improve movement within and access to the district for people of all ages by facilitating multiple modes of transportation, and preserve future transit opportunities provided by the rail corridor.

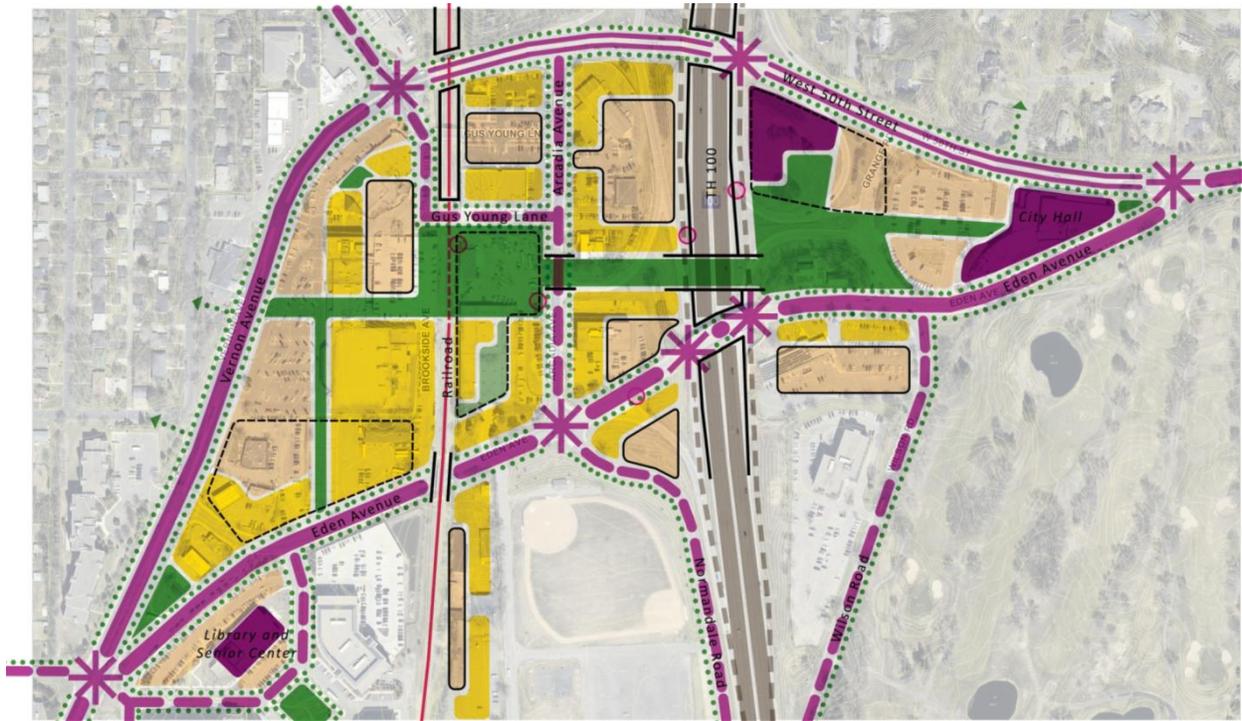
- Currently, access to and movement within the District is almost exclusively accomplished via motor vehicles and discourages pedestrian and bicycle use.
- For a variety of reasons, the existing transportation infrastructure creates traffic issues and acts as a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle access to the District.
- The District has great potential as a regional transportation hub, including the future transit opportunities provided by the rail corridor.
- Future development should create better access to and movement within the District and facilitate multiple modes of transportation.



Principle 7 - Create an identity and unique sense of place that incorporates natural spaces into a high quality and sustainable development reflecting Edina’s innovative development heritage.

- Edina has a great heritage of innovative development.
- The location of the District makes it one of the most visible gateways to the community.
- The GrandView District can be Edina’s next innovative development, combining natural spaces and sustainable technology to create a place we can all be proud of.





Demonstration of principles as a concept for evolution of the GrandView district

IMPLEMENTATION

After the CAT made presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council, the City Council expressed interest in receiving a formal report. Before this Report could be completed and approved, the CAT learned about the potential for funding for a future implementation phase of the process. Since the deadline for the grant funding was to expire before this formal Report could be completed and approved by the Council, the City Council authorized staff to apply for a Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) grant in July. The grant would defray costs associated with the development of a Small Area Plan which would include the following items:

- Market Analysis
- Community Needs Analysis
- Transportation Analysis and Plan
- Redevelopment Phasing Plan
- Public Participation Plan
- Financial Analysis of Redevelopment Plan

If awarded, the grant would likely cover all costs associated with the development of the Small Area Plan, outside of in-kind staff time needed for the process.

The grant application envisioned that a team of staff and hired consultants would be responsible for fulfilling each of the provisions. This team would then draft a report, which



would be reviewed by the Planning Commission, and then forwarded to the City Council for consideration. The Community Advisory Team would continue to advise the Planning Commission on implementation strategies.

The Small Area Plan would help to inform and drive change in the district over a period of several years. It would serve as a guide to developers and landowners who may want to make changes to their property.

The Small Area Plan would also be officially incorporated into the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Finally, the City would use the Plan to help communicate with the community about the future of the district.

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION

As it submits this Report, the CAT recommends that:

1. The City Council accept and approve the Report.
2. The City Council adopt the Guiding Principles in this Report as the foundation for development of a small area plan for the GrandView District.
3. The process of developing a small area plan for the GrandView District be led by a community-based advisory team that includes members of the current CAT and Design Team, chosen through an open process similar to that used to form the initial Community Advisory Team.
4. The City retain ownership of all city-owned public property in the GrandView District at least while the planning process continues and potentially beyond depending upon the results of the small area planning process.

