

Guiding Plan for the B2 District



**Approved by the City Council
October, 27 2008**



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Introduction and Summary

In November 2007, the City of Arden Hills approved a moratorium on development and redevelopment in the B2 Zoning District, which only exists in the vicinity of County Road E between Lexington Avenue and Minnesota Highway 51. The purpose of the moratorium was to provide time to create a long-term redevelopment plan for that area.

With great assistance from the community and the steering committee, a guiding plan that addresses the complex issues of transportation, land use intensity, appearance, access and long-term viability has been prepared. This plan will be instrumental in advancing a community vision on how to redevelop and enhance the commercial properties north and south of County Road E.

To guide the planning process and facilitate the meetings, the City retained McCombs Frank Roos Associates (MFRA) to assist staff in preparing this plan. The MFRA planning team included three sub-consultants: Maxfield Research for the residential and commercial market study, Spack Consulting for the traffic analysis, and Hay Dobbs Architects for illustrations. The steering committee included 15 members of the community, including residents, businesses and property owners. Other landowners from the study area also attended and participated in the committee meetings.

The planning process examined existing conditions, created a long-range redevelopment vision and guiding principles, addressed transportation questions, evaluated market potential, reviewed land uses and prepared design guidelines. The plan includes specific recommendations, an implementation strategy and estimates of public costs.

Overall, the plan guides the way for the next major step in the evolution of the County Road E corridor to a place with a stronger sense of community center.

Notable Findings and Recommendations

Guiding Principles

These principles will be used by the City of Arden Hills to help guide the evolution of the B2 District including plans for land use, urban design, public facilities and circulation. Elaboration and details will be added as the plan progresses.

- **Place:** Create a visual impression that the B2 District is a distinct, identifiable and special place in Arden Hills.
- **Land Uses:** Allow and encourage a variety of land uses in the district potentially including retail and service businesses, offices, high-density housing, places to eat

and drink, industry that has high employment density and attractive buildings, education and indoor recreation.

- **Intensity and Scale:** As redevelopment occurs, generally increase the height of the buildings and amount of each site they cover.
- **Local:** Create a district that serves the needs and desires of residents of Arden Hills.
- **Quality:** Ensure that all private and public improvements are of a high quality in terms of appearance, function and longevity.
- **Civic:** Communicate that the district is “everybody’s neighborhood” and a center of public life in Arden Hills (a distinction perhaps to be shared with the redeveloped TCAAP site) through the use of public plazas or open space, small private spaces usable by the public, improved sidewalks and streetscape.
- **Movement:** Provide for safe and efficient auto movement as land use intensifies but also greatly improve the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Green:** Provide year-round greenery and color throughout the district through generous landscaping of private sites and the public street edges. Add one or more green gathering spaces in the corridor. Improve the public’s use of the Country Insurance woods, its intended purpose.
- **Role of the City:** Establish the primary role of the City in the district as planning, leadership, zoning and public improvements. Do not rule out the application of municipal financial assistance in land redevelopment.
- **Continuity:** Maintain long-term support for the principles and policies of the *Guiding Plan for the B2 District* throughout the entire Arden Hills family including elected and appointed officials and staff.
- **Environmental Conservation and Sustainability:** Promote the use of green building practices, sustainability, and energy conservation to reduce the environmental impact of new development and redevelopment.

Land Use Plan

The land use plan calls for moving beyond several outmoded developments and using land in ways that are more consistent with the important role that this corridor may play in Arden Hills. The plan recommends expanding the number of potential land uses in the district to include multiple-family housing. Refer to Figure 9 on page 4-5.

Illustrative Guiding Plan

Several of the principles conveyed in this land use plan and the district design guidelines have been expressed in the Illustrative Guiding Plan, Figure 11, on page 4-11. That sketch is meant to illustrate one possible way in which this plan might be realized but is certainly not the only development pattern. The market may propose a wide variety of additional building patterns that are just as desirable (if not more so) and which are also consistent with this plan and the City's zoning regulations.

Urban Design Guidelines

A comprehensive set of design guidelines for both private and public improvements will help ensure a high quality of physical improvements. Refer to chapter 5.

These and other statements will guide the future design of the study area:

- The B2 District will be a place where people can live, work and play.
- The district will be a compact, architecturally diverse, pedestrian-friendly community with a distinct identity.
- It will provide sidewalks and places for people to gather and socialize.
- Design guidelines will be followed to promote an attractive environment with lasting value. The district is dedicated to the belief that we desire to integrate nature, home, work and leisure.

Redesign of County Road E

County Road E is proposed to be redesigned as a landscaped boulevard with a central, landscaped median that will focus the left-turn movements, improve traffic safety, greatly enhance appearances and set the tone for private redevelopment. The redesign of the County Road will also introduce a pair of bicycling lanes, a greatly needed addition.

The improvements preliminarily planned for transforming County Road E into Lake Johanna Boulevard are listed below and illustrated by the sketch on page 4-7 and Figure 11, Illustrative Guiding Plan, on page 4-11.

- A traffic signal system at the future intersection located between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue.
- Replacement signals, arms and poles for the existing signal systems at (all optional):
 - The eastern ramp terminals of Highway 51.
 - Pine Tree Drive.
 - Lexington Avenue.
- Boulevard trees spaced at an average of 40 feet.
- Relocating the electrical boxes to a less visible location or screening where feasible.
- A planted median that may include trees along with shrubs, tall grasses and/or annual flowers.
- Decorative lighting at the automobile scale (on the existing bases, located 200 feet apart); optional extra: decorative lighting at the pedestrian scale located approximately 50 to 70 feet apart).

- Benches and trash receptacles.
- A pair of new continuous concrete sidewalks (6 feet wide) and connections to businesses.
- Bollards.
- Annual flowers (in beds or raised planters), perhaps in partnership with the adjacent businesses.
- Seasonal banners on the light poles.
- Striped or colored pedestrian crossings.
- Bus waiting shelters.
- A pedestrian and bicyclist connection over Highway 51, which may be a separate bridge, a new bridge, or an addition to the existing bridge.

A detailed engineering and design study is recommended for the public improvements to County Road E to refine the plan and determine feasibility.

Traffic Study

A detailed traffic study report was prepared. (Refer to Chapter 6 for a summary and Appendix A for the full report.) To provide a safe multi-modal corridor, the following long range improvements are recommended:

- Construct a landscaped median on County Road E from Highway 51 to Lexington Avenue to convert the private driveways along County Road E into right-in/right-out accesses.
- Consolidate driveways whenever feasible to limit the conflict points along the corridor.
- Provide left turn lanes at public street intersections.
- Provide on street bicycle lanes.
- Provide sidewalks.
- Improve the landscaping to provide a human scale to the corridor.
- Provide eleven foot wide travel lanes which will reinforce the 35 mph speed limit.
- Minimize traffic signs within the corridor whenever feasible.
- Extend the bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the County Road E/Hamline Avenue interchange when it is reconstructed.
- Reconstruct the corridor using the existing curb and gutter system to minimize the cost. This will also shorten the construction period, lessening the impact on local businesses.

County Road E is under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. Therefore, the City must collaborate with the County to gain approval of these improvements.

Left-Turns Only at Signalized Intersections

It is important to note that the improvements to County Road E call for building a raised, landscaped median that would eliminate left-turn movements except at the signalized intersections at the Highway 51 ramps, Pine Tree Drive, a planned new intersection between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue, and Lexington Avenue. Additional engineering and review will be needed prior to implementation.

Intersection of County Road E, the Holiday Inn Site and the Arden Plaza Driveway

After the first round of redevelopment, the driveways on County Road E for the Holiday Inn site and the Arden Plaza site will experience significant delay and queuing in the p.m. peak hour even though the overall intersections will operate within traffic engineering standards. From a traffic engineer's perspective, this is acceptable as an interim situation because it is not expected to pose a safety problem and little queuing is anticipated on County Road E. Long term, the queuing will impact the vitality of the redevelopments and could lead to safety problems.

Therefore, those driveways should be realigned midway between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue to provide a four-legged intersection that could be controlled with a traffic signal. Left turn lanes and shared right/through lanes should be built on the new north and south legs of the intersection to provide adequate egress. The signal should be installed when agreement is reached with the most directly affected land owners and when the traffic volumes at the intersection meet the criteria for installing a traffic signal per the *Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. When the traffic signal is installed at the new intersection it will operate at LOS B in the 2030 Build p.m. peak hour. This leaves capacity to accommodate significantly more redevelopment as long as the traffic from the redevelopment is focused at the signalized intersection.

A process is proposed for coordinating the construction of the median in County Road E (and its restrictions on left turns) with the redevelopment of adjacent properties and new driveway locations.

Implementation Program

A preliminary cost estimate for a complete package of traffic, streetscape, pedestrian and bicyclist improvements along the new Lake Johanna Boulevard was prepared and totals an estimated \$2.0 million, though additional detail and review will be needed. That total includes \$0.5 million for a pedestrian and bicyclist connection over Minnesota Highway 51. This cost estimate does not include any required replacement of roads or underlying infrastructure prior to any improvements. Potential funding sources include:

- City general funds
- Special assessments on benefiting properties
- Private sources
- Municipal State-Aid funds
- Tax increment financing
- Tax abatement
- Ramsey County funds
- Grants.

Supplementary Road Name

As a supplement to “County Road E,” the local name used on County Road 149 west of Minnesota Highway 51, “Lake Johanna Boulevard” is proposed. This additional name will help identify the road as a local facility with a connection to a nearby natural feature and thereby personalize it. The County Road E name could still be used by residents and businesses where needed.

Committee Consensus and Support

The citizens advisory committee has been closely involved every step of the way and supports the draft plan.

Current Physical Conditions

Location

The B2 District is located in east-central Arden Hills approximately one-half mile south of I-694 and between State Highway 51 on the west and Lexington Avenue (County Highway 51) on the east. Arden Hills is located in the north-central portion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, roughly equidistant from the two metro centers and within the regional freeway ring.

The study area has good access from both regional, subregional and local roads. I-694 provides very good regional access, while Highway 51 and Lexington Avenues provide sub-regional connections; both roads link south to Minnesota Highway 36 in Roseville and I-94 in St. Paul. Lexington Avenue has a full interchange with I-694 but Highway 51 to Hamline Avenue have only partial access, which is scheduled to be removed as part of the preliminary I-694 reconstruction plans.

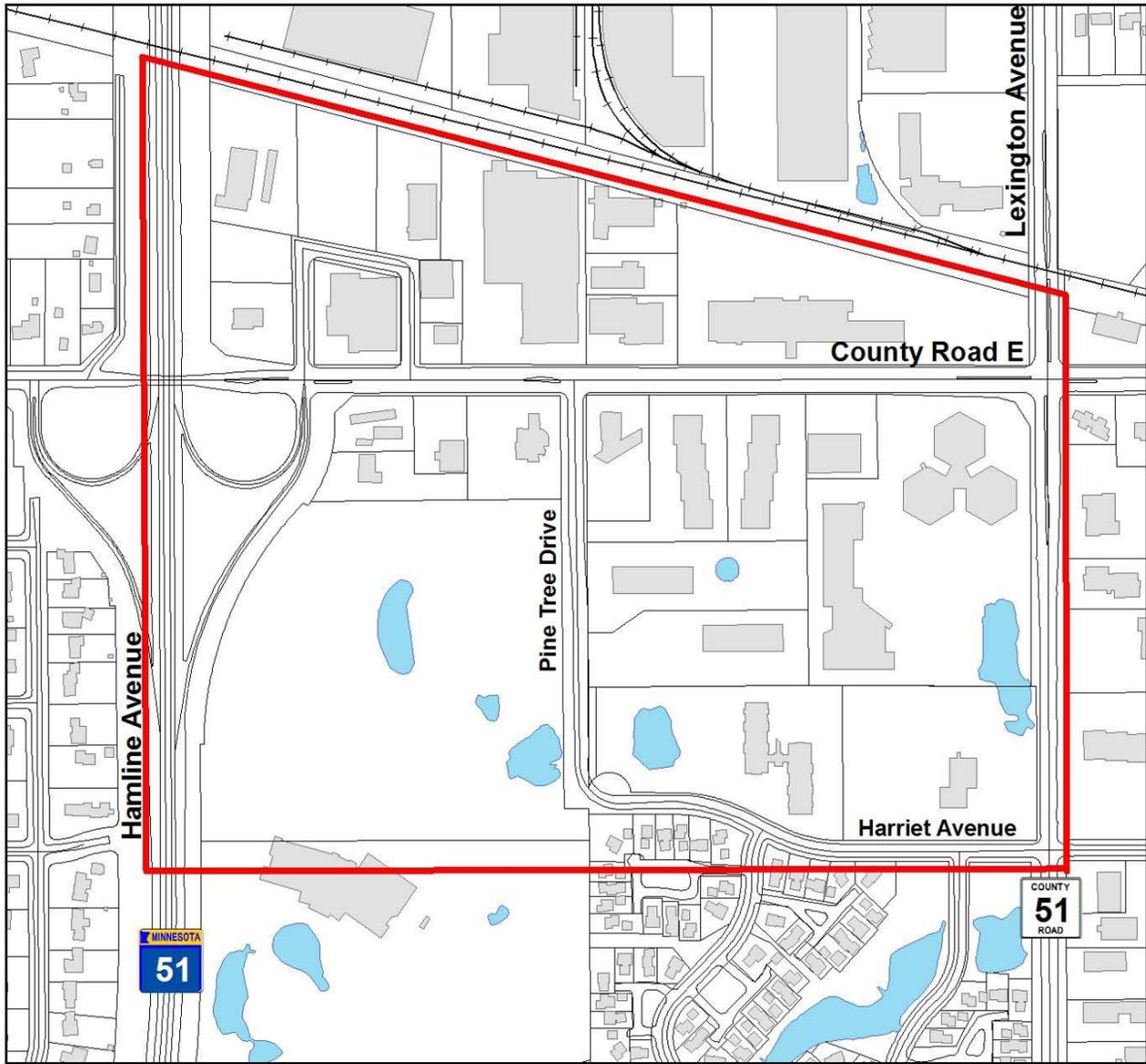
County Road E is not a major east-west roadway for Ramsey County. To the west, it merges into Lake Johanna Boulevard and terminates at Cleveland Avenue on the western side of Arden Hills; to the east, it travels only another two miles and ends near the City of Vadnais Heights. County Road E is also designated as Ramsey County State-Aid Highway 15 between Snelling Avenue to the west and Victoria Street to the east.

Connections to the study area from within Arden Hills are provided by Highway 51 and Lexington Avenues, Lake Johanna Boulevard, Snelling Avenue, Lake Valentine Road, County Road E2 and other routes.

The study area is just as well linked to the adjacent community of Shoreview as to Arden Hills by virtue of road access and proximity. Lexington Avenue is the common border of the two Cities.

Nearby major features include:

- A large commercial and industrial area to the north;
- Low-density residential neighborhoods to the west, south and east;
- Tony Schmidt Regional Park on Lake Johanna to the west and Island Lake County Park to the east;
- Bethel University to the immediate northwest and Northwestern College on the south side of Lake Johanna;
- Rosedale Shopping Center and related commercial properties approximately 2.5 miles to the southwest via Highway 51;



County Road E Corridor Plan

Legend

-  Study Area
-  Parcels
-  Buildings
-  Water
-  Streets
-  Railroad

0 500 1,000 Feet

Figure 1
Study Area



County Road E Corridor Plan

Legend

 Study Area

0 500 1,000 Feet


Figure 2
Aerial Photography

The site of the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant approximately two miles to the northwest via Highway 51 and US Highway 10; the development master plan for that 585 acre site includes various types of housing, office buildings, hotel, retail and service commercial buildings, neighborhood parks, a major community park, and a wildlife corridor.

The study area is bounded by the Soo Line - Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks on the north, Highway 51 on the west and east, respectively, and Harriet Avenue on the south.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the boundaries of the study area.

Current Land Use, 2008

The Vicinity

Immediately north of the study area is a corridor owned by the Soo Line - Canadian Pacific Railroad. Between the railroad tracks and I-694 along the east side of Highway 51 is a district of industry and offices; along both sides of the Lexington Avenue frontage are retail commercial areas including a Super Target store on the Shoreview side.

Immediately south of the study area is a neighborhood of townhouses and single-family homes.

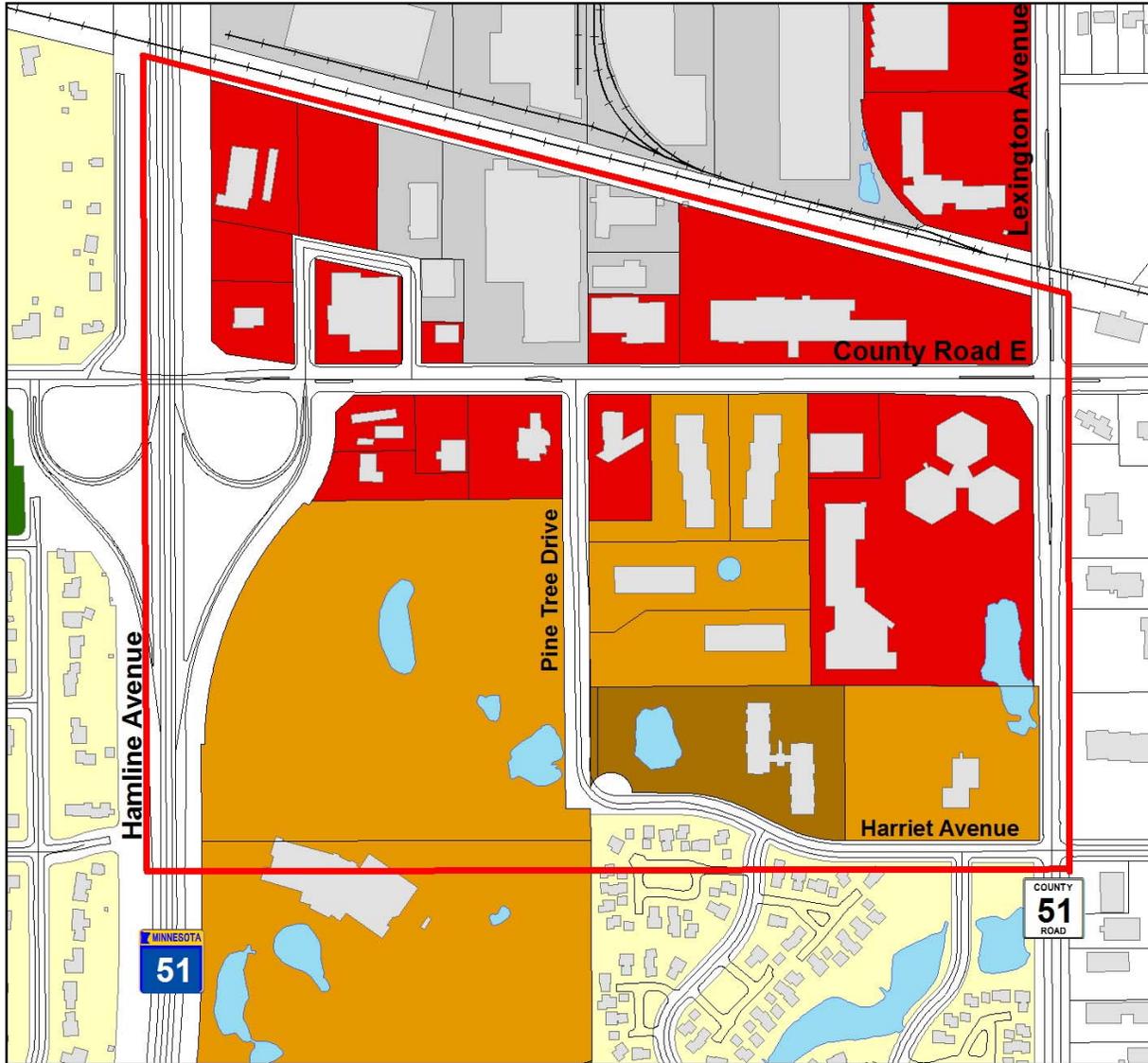
The east side of Lexington Avenue is lined with retail and office buildings. West of Highway 51 is a residential neighborhood.

The Study Area

The 2008 pattern of land use in the study area is illustrated by Figure 3 and the photos on the subsequent pages. Most of the study area and the majority of the County Road E frontage are occupied by retail and service businesses. There are also districts of offices and industry. The industrial area is somewhat of an extension of the industry north of the railroad tracks. A district of multiple-family housing exists in the southern portion of the study area, providing somewhat of a transition to the residential neighborhood further south.

Notable elements of current land use include:

- **Arden Plaza Shopping Center:** a retail, service and office development with access from Lexington Avenue and County Road E. An application was submitted by the owner in 2007 to amend the Planned-Unit Development agreement in order to remove the three office buildings and build a 15,000 square foot pharmacy, a (small) 16,000 square foot retail store and a two-story 14,000 square foot retail and office building (directly east of the Frattalone's Hardware store). The application was withdrawn before being considered by the City Council.



Existing Land Use

- Community Commercial
- Office
- Light Industrial
- Multiple Family Residential
- Single Family Detached Residential
- Buildings
- Study Area

County Road E Corridor Plan

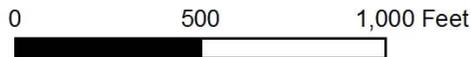


Figure 3
Existing Land Use, 2008

- The Former Holiday Inn property: eight acres of land and an unused 150-room hotel at the corner of County Road E and Lexington Avenue. The building is scheduled to be used as a residence hall for Northwestern College students through the fall of 2011. Also included are a restaurant and two large banquet rooms.
- Northpark Corporate Center: four major office buildings with access from both County Road E and Pine Tree Drive.
- Carroll's Furniture: a relatively small but locally owned retail furniture business on the north side of County Road E.
- Corporate Express: a major business-to-business office supplies and equipment company.
- Three banks along the south side of County Road E: Anchor, Wells Fargo and TCF.
- Flaherty's Arden Bowl: includes 36 bowling lanes and a restaurant; parking is located north of Connelly Avenue.
- Pot o' Gold Bingo: a private operation in an aging, former lumber yard building north of the McDonald's restaurant along Highway 51 with access from Connelly Avenue.
- Hunter's Park: two large condominium buildings with access from Pine Tree Drive.
- Country Financial: a large corporate office building with private open space to the north (including pedestrian paths) and the south (including a wetland).
- Catholic Aid Association: an attractive office building located at the intersection of Harriet and Lexington Avenues. Some undeveloped land is included on the northern end of this site.

Arden Plaza is a retail, service and office development along Lexington Avenue with a secondary access point on County Road E.



There are several wetlands in the study area. The one shown here separates the retail portion of Arden Plaza from Lexington Avenue.



The former Holiday Inn property occupies 8 acres at the corner of County Road E and Lexington Avenue.



The one-story office buildings in the southwest quadrant of County Road E and Lexington Avenue were proposed for redevelopment in 2007.



The intersection of County Road E and Lexington operates at a low Level of Service in the PM peak hour.



There is typically a landscaped setback between the County Road E curb or sidewalk and the buildings or parking lot of approximately 15 to 30 feet.



There are three banks located along County Road E.



Corporate Express is a large office supplies company on the northern end of the study area that generates traffic by heavy trucks.



County Road E has four travel lanes and a shared center turn lane.



Bicycling along County Road E is difficult and dangerous because there are no striped cycling lanes nor a wide curb lane.



Sidewalks exist along only about three-quarters of the County Road E frontage. Crossing intersections and driveways is hazardous because of the many fast-moving autos making turns.



Minnesota Highway 51, sometimes known in this vicinity as Hamline Avenue or Snelling Avenue, forms the western boundary of the study area.



There is no space on the bridge over Minnesota Highway 51 for pedestrians or bicyclists.



The easterly exit from the Arden Plaza shopping center operates at Level of Service F during the PM peak hour.



The Northpark Corporate Center includes four prominent office buildings.



A convenience store with fuel pumps and auto service bays is located along the south side of County Road E at Minnesota Highway 51.



A bingo gaming business is located north of the McDonald's restaurant along Connelly Avenue in a former industrial building.



Four small industrial buildings are located to the east or west of the major Corporate Express building although none is easily visible from County Road E.



The Country Financial headquarters office occupies the southwest corner of the study area.



A large open space and paths surround the Country Financial office building.

The Hunter's Park condominiums are the housing element in the study area.



An office building anchors the southeastern corner of the study area.



There may be some first-time development potential remaining in the study area.



The east side of Lexington Avenue in the City of Shoreview includes a retail-office mixed use building, a convenience gas and good store, and several office



buildings.



The asphalt path along the western side of Lexington Avenue ends abruptly at the eastern entrance to Arden Plaza.



Current Zoning and Land Use Plan

Current Zoning Regulations

The pattern of zoning districts in the study area as of 2008 is illustrated by Figure 5. The districts are summarized as follows:

B-2, General Business District: Allows as Permitted Uses service businesses, clinics, non-profit clubs, fitness clubs, commercial recreation, child day care facilities, financial institutions, hotels, funeral homes, offices, personal service businesses, and retail sales.

R-4, Multiple Dwelling District: Allows as Permitted Uses single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings and day care facilities. Allows under the Planned-Unit procedure attached housing up to a density of twelve dwelling units per net acre.

Thus, the several industrial businesses north of County Road E are not consistent with the pattern of zoning or with the 1998 Land Use Plan (see below).

Land Use Plan, 1998

The City of Arden Hills Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1998) guides most of the study Area for commercial development. High-Density Residential land use is designated for the Hunter's Park condominium area.

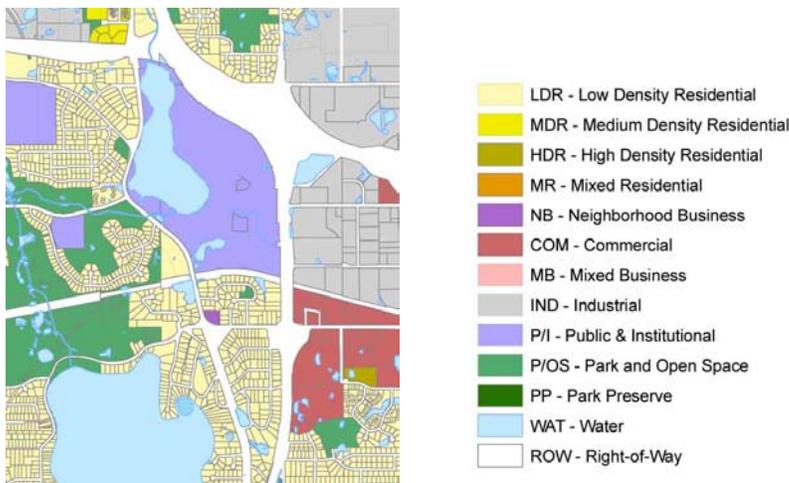
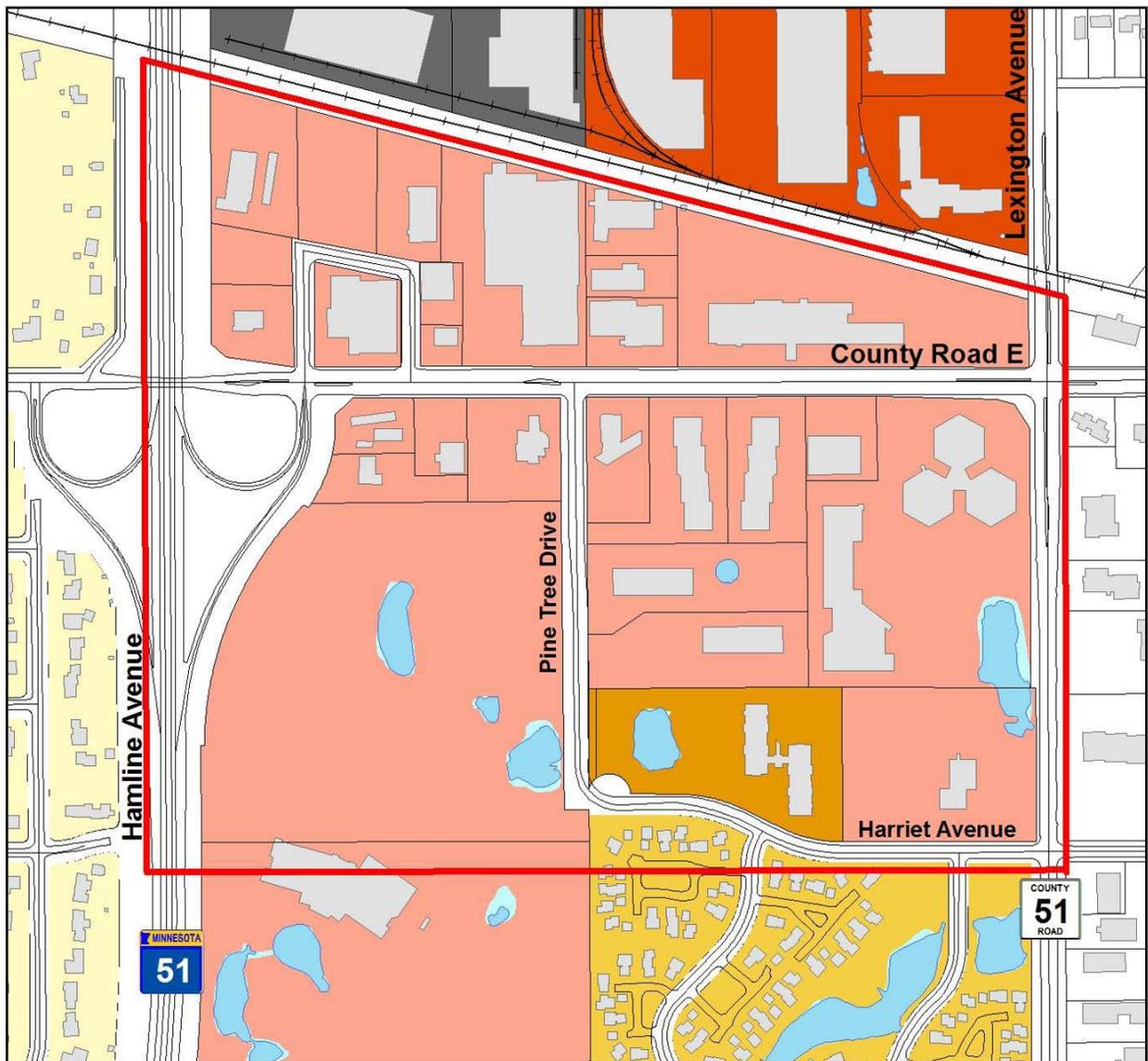


Figure 4
1998 Land Use Plan

Land Use Plan, 2008

The City is in the process of updating the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which can be amended as needed to reflect the results of this Guiding Plan.



Zoning Districts

- R-1 - Single Family Residential
- R-3 - Townhouse & Low Density Multiple Dwelling District
- R-4 - Multiple Dwelling District
- B-2 - General Business District
- B-3 - Service Business District
- I-FLEX District
- Buildings
- Study Area

County Road E Corridor Plan

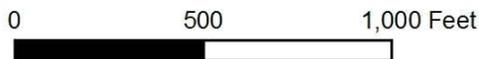


Figure 5
Zoning Districts, 2008

Major Natural Features

As illustrated by Figure 2, Study Area, there are at least four major wetlands, all located south of County Road E, some of which sustain open water.

There is also a large, privately owned wooded area that wraps around the Country Financial site in the southwest portion of the study area.

Building Design and Conditions

Most of the buildings in the study area have been constructed within the past forty years and are generally in very good condition. The oldest buildings include the industrial buildings north of County Road E and the Pot o' Gold bingo hall (a deteriorated and aged former industrial structure). The newer buildings tend to be south of County Road E. Exterior building architecture varies although most structures have facades of masonry and glass.

The overall impression along County road E is a low-rise, low-density suburban environment. Many of the commercial buildings have a landscaped front setback with the parking located to the side or rear, which provides a pleasant appearance for the corridor. Others have parking between the sidewalk and the building with little or no landscaping.

The most impressive structure is probably the four-story former Holiday Inn hotel that has been vacant since the fall of 2007. In comparison, the three office buildings immediately south of County Road E from the hotel are one story in height and six-sided.

Arden Plaza is a community-scale shopping center located in the southwest corner of Lexington and E that includes the three office buildings mentioned above. The appearance of the center is well maintained but undistinguished. The center is nicely buffered from the adjacent housing and offices by a row of mature conifers. Between Arden Plaza and Lexington Avenue is a landscaped pond, which is attractive but probably hurts the business visibility of the center and restricts auto access.

The Northpark Corporate Center consists of a pair of one-story brick office buildings with frontage along County Road E plus two three-story brick office buildings to the south with primary access from Pine Tree Drive.

The largest building in the study area is probably the warehouse and offices for Corporate Express, a major vendor of business office supplies, equipment and furniture. Fortunately, only the office element abuts the County Road E frontage; the warehouse and truck court are relatively concealed in the rear.

The largest surface parking lot, that of Country Financial, is arranged in an unusual and interesting semi-circular shape focused on a landscaped arrival and turn-around. The approach is via a curving, tree-lined two-lane road, and views are softened by mature woods. Thus, the expanse of parking is not a visual nuisance to the vicinity.

There is little or no land available for new construction without undergoing redevelopment. Minor opportunities may include the northern end of the Catholic Aid Association office property along Lexington Avenue south of the Arden Plaza shopping center.

Redevelopment opportunities may include the former Holiday Inn property, the office component of Arden Plaza, and the Pot o' Gold bingo property.

In 2007, a planned unit development application was presented to the City to remove the office building from Arden Plaza and build a freestanding pharmacy, a freestanding retail building and a mixed-use retail and office building (on the southernmost end of the parking area between the pond and the existing retail center).

South of Harriet Avenue is a residential neighborhood of narrow-lot, single-family homes with a distinctive 1970s design. This neighborhood includes two wetlands and backs up to the wooded area owned by Country Financial.

Along the east side of Lexington Avenue in Shoreview, there is a mixed-use retail and office building north of County Road E. South of E, there is a convenience store and a series of four attractive office buildings.

West of Highway 51, development consists of an attractive, low-density, wooded neighborhood of single-family homes.

North of the railroad tracks are large industrial and retail buildings including a Cub Foods grocery. East of Lexington Avenue is a Super Target (goods plus groceries) store.

Study Area Identification and Identity

The study area lacks a sense of identity, which would be helpful both for business marketing and to build a sense of central place for the Arden Hills community. There are no entrances signs, monuments, landscaping or special lighting at the eastern or western ends to the district announcing arrival or place.

Some people have called the study area “downtown,” but that term has not caught on, perhaps because it lacks many of the physical characteristics usually associated with a downtown: a grid of streets, sidewalks lined with buildings, and civic buildings, plaza or parks.

Another identity shortcoming is the name of the major road. The county road designation does not evoke warm and local identity. It has been suggested that the Lake Johanna Boulevard moniker be extended from Old Snelling to Lexington Avenue and possibly into Shoreview.

Road Pattern

The Traffic Analysis and Plan chapter of this document includes a complete and detailed analysis of current and forecast traffic conditions. However, a few global observations are offered below.

The basic circulation challenge for the study area is the fact that there are only three ways in or out of the district: the east and west “ends” of Country Road E at the bridge over Highway 51 and at Lexington Avenue and Harriet Avenue at Lexington Avenue. No roads other than Lexington and Highway 51 cross the railroad line to the north, and there is no link to the south through the adjacent neighborhood.

The capacity of the Highway 51 connection is adequate for the study area because of its folded diamond interchange design. However, the signalized intersection of E at Lexington Avenue suffers from peak-hour congestion; the overall level of service is D, and east-to-northbound PM peak hour left-turns movement operates at level of service F (the worst rating).

Internally, circulation is hampered by the size of the block bounded by Lexington, E, Pine Tree and Harriet. The lack of internal public streets to divide that large block reduces the access options for all land uses. The result is that peak-hour egress at certain driveways (e.g., the northern exit from Arden Plaza) is difficult and hazardous. Also, County Road E is forced to serve the dual and conflicting roles of traffic movement and land access.

Ideally, traffic related to Corporate Express would be routed through the industrial area to the north but that is not possible. The warehouse land use and its truck traffic are inconsistent with the nature of the rest of the study area.

Street and Right-of-Way Dimensions

County Road E consists of four traffic lanes and a shared center turn lane. Public right-of-way and street dimensions were measured (rounded to the whole number) at three points:

1. At the Corporate Express entrance:
ROW: 89'
Street: 72'
2. At Carroll Furniture (just east of Pine Tree Drive):
ROW: 83'
Street: 70'
3. At the eastern median:
ROW: 88'
Street: 72'

Thus, County Road E is typically 72 feet from curb to curb in an 83 to 89 foot right-of-way and is divided approximately as:

Number	Element	Dimensions
4	12-foot driving lanes	48
2	2-foot gutters	4
1	18-foot shared left-turn lane	18
2	Boulevards	13 to 17 (6.5 to 8.5 each)

Current Traffic Conditions

The three major roadways within the study area, all designated as minor arterials, are County Road E (Ramsey County State Aid Highway 15), Lexington Avenue (Ramsey County State Aid Highway 51), and Minnesota Trunk Highway 51. The rest of the roadways within the study area are city streets. Existing traffic control, speed limits, and travel lanes are shown on Figure 6 for each study intersection. No roadway improvements are scheduled near the site.

Metro Transit route 225, which is a local circular route, travels along County Road E, Lexington Avenue north of the study area, and to Rosedale shopping center. Route 261, a local/express bus, travels along Lexington Avenue through the study area. There are no major bus stops within the study area, but bus service is available during the day time hours.

There are intermittent trails and sidewalks for pedestrians through the study area. The sidewalks along County Road E are interrupted by many driveways that serve the local businesses. There are bicyclists who use the corridor both on street and along the trails/sidewalks. The County Road E / Highway 51 interchange provides a significant barrier for pedestrians and bicycles who want to move along the County Road E corridor. The bridge over Highway 51 does not have sidewalks or on street bicycle lanes.

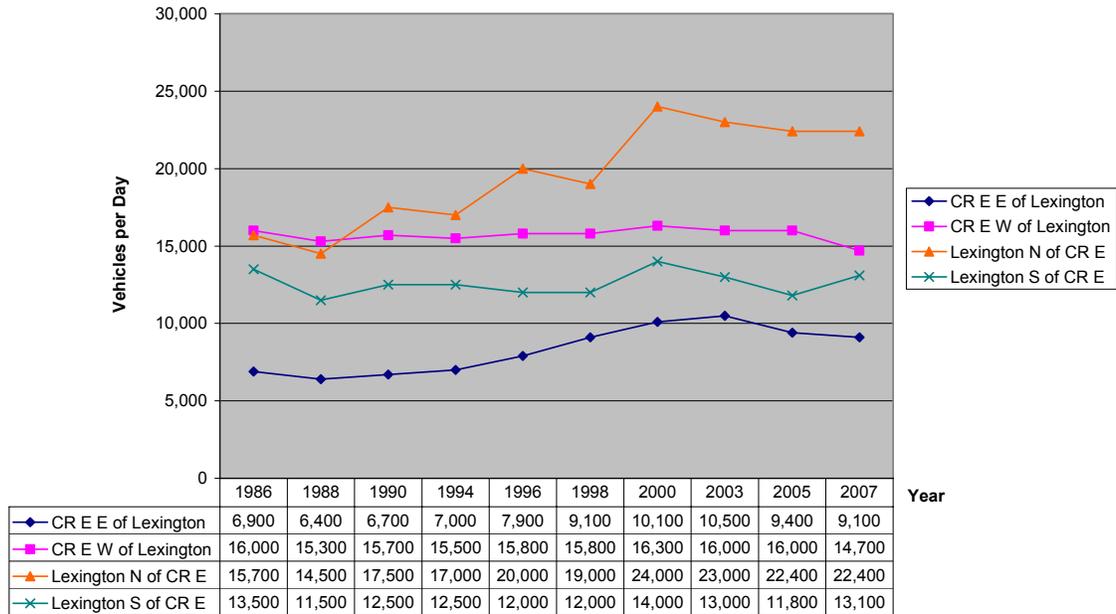
Traffic Volumes

In commercial / retail areas, such as the County Road E corridor, the p.m. peak hour is typically more congested than the a.m. peak period. For this reason, the analysis in this study focuses on the p.m. peak hour. Figure 7 shows the existing p.m. peak hour turning movement counts for the study area. The data for the street intersections was collected in 2008 and the turning movement count data is contained in fifteen minute intervals in the Appendix. The turning movement volume data for the County Road E / Arden Plaza driveway intersection is from the 2007 *Traffic and Parking Study for Proposed Redevelopment of Arden Plaza*. No turning movement volumes are shown for the Holiday Inn site because it is currently vacant and will be completely redeveloped.

Please note the traffic volumes do not balance between the study intersections because there are driveways and ancillary intersections between them.

The historic daily traffic volumes for the area roadways are shown in Table 1. This data was furnished by Mn/DOT.

**Table 1
Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes**



Level of Service



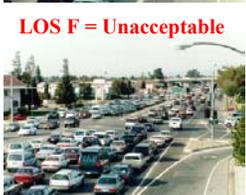
LOS A



LOS C



LOS D = Acceptable



LOS F = Unacceptable

Source: City of San Jose, CA

An intersection capacity analysis was conducted for the existing intersections per the *Highway Capacity Manual*. Intersections are assigned a “Level of Service” letter grade for the peak hour of traffic based on the number of lanes at the intersection, traffic volumes and traffic control.

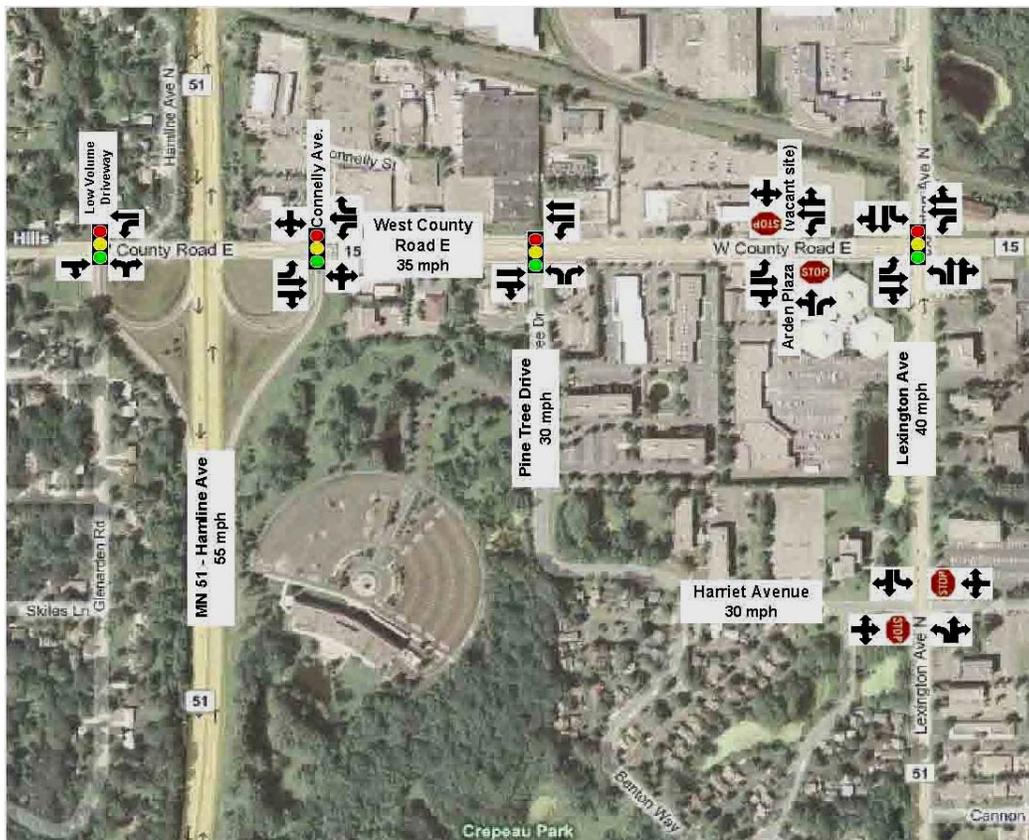
Level of Service A (LOS A) represents light traffic flow (free flow conditions) while Level of Service F (LOS F) represents heavy traffic flow (over capacity conditions). LOS D is considered acceptable in urban conditions. The photos on the left represent some of the LOS grades (from a signal controlled intersection in San Jose, CA).

The LOS results for the existing study hours are shown in Table 2. These are based on the existing traffic control and lane configurations as shown in Figure 6. The existing turning movement volumes from Figure 7 were used in the LOS calculations. The LOS calculations were done using SYNCHRO™ software. Ramsey County’s existing timing plans were used in the analyses. The complete LOS calculations are included in Appendix A.

**Table 2
Existing Level of Service (LOS)**

Intersection	Existing P.M. Peak Hour Level of Service
Co Rd E & Highway 51 Ave West Ramp	B
Co Rd E & Connelly Ave	C
Co Rd E & Pine Tree Dr	B
Co Rd E & Holiday Inn Site Dvwy	A
Co Rd E & Arden Plaza Dvwy	A
Co Rd E & Lexington Ave	D
Lexington Ave & Harriet Ave	A

All of the study intersections operate acceptably at LOS D or better in the existing p.m. weekday peak hour.



**Figure 6
Existing Lanes and Traffic Control**

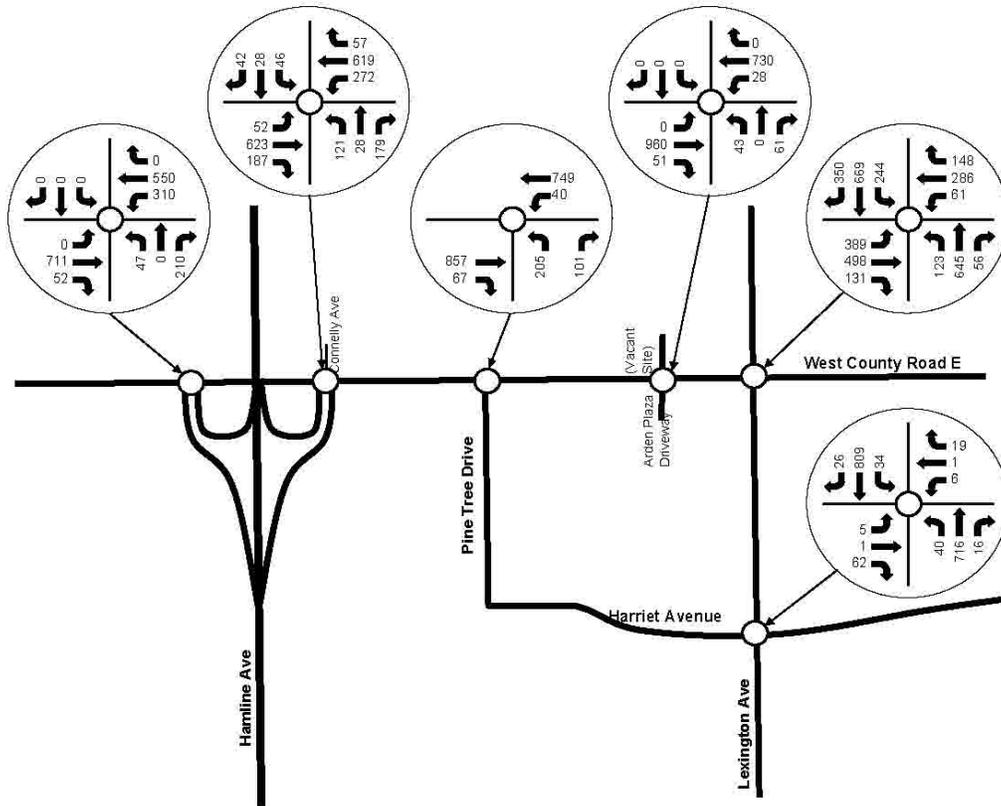
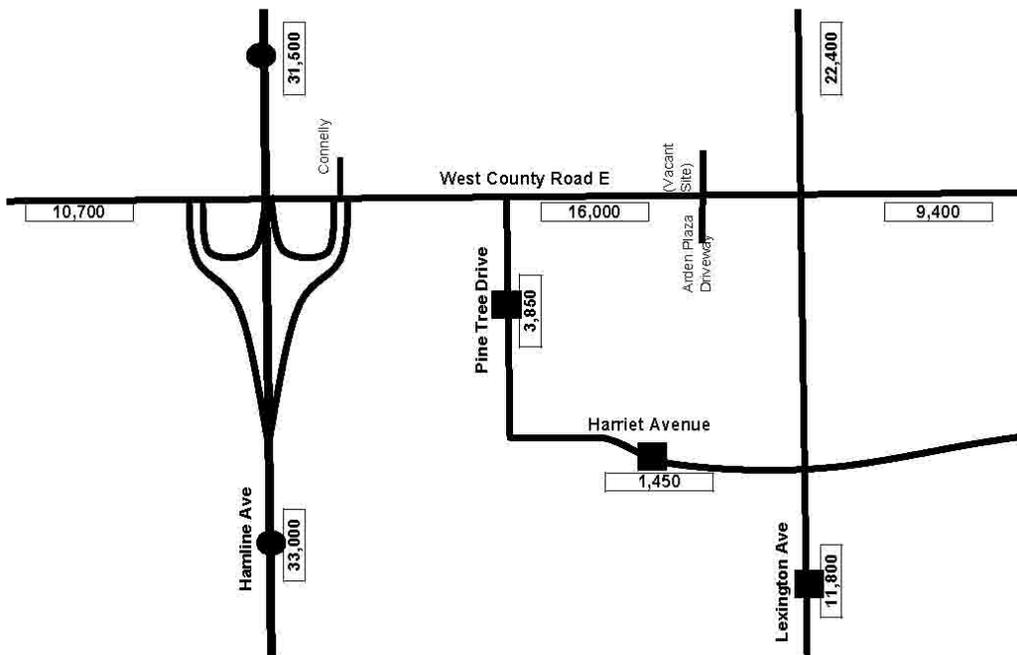


Figure 7
Existing PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes



● 2006 Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes
source: Mn/DOT Traffic Flow Maps
■ 2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes
source: Mn/DOT Traffic Flow Maps

Figure 8
Existing Daily Traffic Volumes

Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking is provided for every building in the study area; there is no parking allowed on County Road E. Parking is allowed on Pine Tree Drive and Harriet Avenue but rarely used. All parking areas appear to provide adequate capacity for the land uses that they serve including the more intensive uses such as Arden Plaza, Flaherty's Arden Bowl and the Northpark Corporate Center.

Structured parking in the study area is located under the two major Northpark Corporate Center office buildings.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Circulation

Pedestrian and bicyclist circulation in the study area is difficult and hazardous.

A concrete sidewalk exists along the south side of County Road E from the Highway 51 off-ramp to Lexington Avenue. On the north side, there is a sidewalk only from the west leg of Connelly to Pine Tree Drive. Walking along County Road E is an intimidating experience because of the high speed traffic. Crossing driveways or Pine Tree Drive is dangerous because of the many turning vehicles.

There are no sidewalks along Pine Tree Drive, Harriet, Lexington or Highway 51. There is a walking path in the open space owned by Country Financial. There are no designated pedestrian crossings on County Road E. The only signalized intersections are at the Highway 51 ramps and at the Lexington Avenue intersection.

There are no on-street striped bicycling lanes or off-street bicycling paths in the study area.

Crossing the Highway 51 bridge is especially hazardous for pedestrians or bicyclists. The bridge deck consists of two auto lanes, no sidewalks and no bicycling lanes. County Road E is five lanes east of the bridge and two lanes west of the bridge.

Crossing Lexington Avenue on foot or bicycle is equally intimidating. There are striped pedestrian crossings and walk indicators at the signalized Lexington intersection but no such help at the Arden Plaza driveway nor the Harriet Avenue intersection.

Streetscape Improvements

Along County Road E there are decorative street lights elevated and spaced to illuminate the road for auto traffic and, secondarily, pedestrian movement. The metal poles and "shoebox" light fixtures are a step up from the most basic equipment and provide a high level of illumination and enhance the sense that this is a special district.

There are no trees in any of the public street rights-of-way. Trees along County Road E would help soften and effect of the wide road and add identity and unity to the corridor. There is probably insufficient space between the curb and the right-of-way boundary

along County Road E for trees; that distance is approximately 7 feet or less in most locations, as noted above.

Sidewalks are presently located outside the public right-of-way in easements across private property. Any trees near the street are on private land.

Lexington Avenue presents an unappealing image as an entrance to Arden Hills and the County Road E study area. It has neither decorative street lights, street trees, continuous sidewalks nor continuous curbing.

Highway 51 is located below the surrounding grade near the study area and is lined with mature vegetation that appears to have come up on its own.

Summary of Major Physical Planning Issues

The following questions should be discussed, debated and resolved during the planning process from the *County Road E Plan*.

- 1. Arden Plaza:** What should be the extent and nature of redevelopment, if any, on the Arden Plaza shopping center site? Should additional development on that site be limited for the sake of traffic operations at its two driveways?
- 2. Former Holiday Inn Site:** How should the former Holiday Inn property be used in the future?
- 3. Industry:** Is industry considered an appropriate land use along the County Road E corridor?
- 4. Street Trees:** Should the City plant trees along the County Road E right-of-way? Should pedestrian-scale lighting be installed?
- 5. Lexington Avenue Streetscape:** Should the City invest in trees, decorative lighting and better sidewalks along Lexington Avenue?
- 6. Entrance Monuments:** Should district identity signage, lighting and/or landscaping be installed at the Lexington and Highway 51 entrances to the study area?
- 7. Building Setbacks:** Where should future buildings be located relative to the street and sidewalk – set immediately adjacent to the sidewalk, set back a short distance or separated with a parking area?
- 8. Design Guidelines:** Should the City adopt and apply a set of site planning and architectural design guidelines in the corridor?
- 9. Role of the City:** To what extent should the City of Arden Hills be involved in helping to implement changes in the study area? Should the City’s role be limited to planning, zoning and public infrastructure or should it become financially involved in site redevelopment?

District Market Analysis

Maxfield Research, Inc., was retained by the City of Arden Hills to conduct market research and analysis of the market potential for an area in Arden Hills considered to be the prime central business district of the city.

The scope of this study includes an evaluation of the site; definition of an appropriate draw area (“Market Area”) for general occupancy and seniors housing, retail business and office land uses; an examination of demographic growth trends and characteristics of the Market Area; and an analysis of competitive housing, retail and office developments in the Market Area. Based on the research, demand is projected for general occupancy and senior housing units, retail, and office space in the study area.

Based on this analysis, it was found that the study area could support selected housing products and additional commercial retail space. At this time, sufficient demand was not found to support additional office space.

The report contained primary and secondary research. Primary research included interviews with realtors, commercial brokers, City Staff and others. All of the market data on existing and pending developments was collected by Maxfield Research, Inc., and is accurate to the best of their knowledge. Secondary data, such as U.S. Census data, is credited to the source and is used as a basis for analysis.

Housing Conclusions and Recommendations

Over time, a maximum of 778 housing units that could be supported in the General Occupancy and Senior Market Areas from 2008 to 2020. The number of supportable units should be revisited prior to any redevelopment in the study area to determine whether sites that become available for redevelopment would justify accommodating additional housing stock. Total demand by type of housing is summarized in the table below.

The table below represents optimal demand for housing in the study area. However, based upon the timing and costs of redeveloping specific sites, the full potential may not be realized. Additionally, these demand figures are based on the assumption that the TCAAP site would move forward with development as planned. If the TCAAP site does not add as many units as planned, the study area could potentially capture a greater proportion of demand for each of the specified product types if appropriate sites were made available to accommodate housing in the study area.

A summary of demand calculations for general occupancy rental housing and senior housing in the study are described further in the following sections.

General Occupancy Demand

Sufficient demand was found to support a total of 228 market rate and 183 affordable units of general occupancy rental housing in the study area. It was felt that the study area could support a stand-alone market rate building if an appropriate site becomes available for development. However, a 100 percent affordable building is not recommended as rents would not make project development costs financially feasible. Rather, it is suggested that any general occupancy rental project include a mix of market rate and affordable units in a medium- to high-density building (for example, 80 percent market rate units and 20 percent affordable units) as the market rate rents would help support high land acquisition and development costs.

Senior Housing Demand

There is sufficient demand to support 389 adult units, 620 ownership units, 340 congregate units, 202 assisted living units, and 185 memory care units. It is recommended that any new construction of senior housing in the study area be done as a combination of senior housing types in the form of a senior campus as the only senior housing types that could support a stand-alone buildings would be independent senior housing.

Furthermore, senior housing in the study area could be affected by additional product added at TCAAP or other location in the Market Area. Any future development of senior housing in the study area should revisit Market Area conditions in order to find sufficient demand to support additional product in the Market Area.

Condominium and Townhouse Demand

Based on findings in the TCAAP study, the study found a total potential demand for about 100 units of condominium housing, all of which would be captured on the TCAAP site. If the estimated potential demand for the 100 condominium units is unmet at the TCAAP site, there would be an opportunity for a redevelopment site in the study area to capture a portion of the unmet demand.

Additionally, it is recommended that townhouses be developed in the study area. Any future redevelopment site in the study area would likely be unable to support the higher density required to support an affordable townhouse product in this marketplace.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF HOUSING DEMAND IN THE STUDY AREA* 2008 to 2020			
	Total Excess Demand for Units in Mkt Area	Percent Capturable in study area	Estimated Potential Demand for Units in study area**
General Occupancy Rental Housing			
Market Rate Apartments	1,140	20%	228
Affordable Apartments	917	20%	183
Total	2,057		411
Senior Housing			
Adult Rental	389	20%	78
Adult Ownership	620	20%	124
Congregate	340	20%	68
Assisted Living	202	25%	51
Memory Care	185	25%	46
Total	1,736		367
Total Units			778
* Figures shown are the total number of units that could be supported in the study area. Figures assume that the TCAAP site will be developed as planned.			
**If TCAAP does not develop as many units as planned, then the study area could potentially capture a greater percentage of the excess demand.			
Source: Maxfield Research, Inc.			

Projected Demand for Neighborhood and Specialty Retail Space

Table 4 calculates the amount of neighborhood retail space and Table 5 calculates the amount of specialty retail space (gross leasable area in square feet) supportable within the draw area from household growth alone.

The figures used for the calculations reflect the amount of money spent on consumer goods and services (from consumer expenditure reports from Claritas, Inc.) and the estimated median sales per square foot for neighborhood retail centers (from *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers*, Urban Land Institute).

Also shown in the table is a calculation for “net leakage.” Net leakage is the amount of consumer spending for convenience goods and services that is likely to be spent outside of the Retail Market Area. This calculation is based on the proportion of consumer expenditures that can be captured by retail space in the area. We estimate that retail space in the Retail Market Area is currently capturing about 80 percent of the total neighborhood retail expenditures and 60 percent of specialty retail expenditures by residents. The net leakage figures in the demand tables are based on the estimated leakage after new space would be added in the Retail Market Area. Based on the goods currently offered in the Retail Market Area, it is estimated that leakage would gradually decrease if new space were added.

Table 4 calculates demand for neighborhood retail space in the Retail Market Area. The following bullet points summarize the demand calculations presented in Table 4.

- There were approximately 31,600 households in the total Retail Market Area in 2007. Added are the number of employees estimated to work in the Retail Market Area. There are approximately 21,100 non-resident households, or employees, working in the Retail Market Area.
- Based on the analysis of consumer expenditure data, it is estimated that consumer expenditures for the types of neighborhood goods and services that could be purchased in the Retail Market Area are \$26,452 per household.

TABLE 4 DEMAND FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL SPACE ARDEN HILLS MARKET AREA 2005 to 2015			
		2007	2012
Market Area Purchasing Power			
Market Area Households		31,358	32,191
Market Area Employees ²	+	21,093	22,477
(times) Annual Neighborhood Household Expenditures	x	\$26,452	\$31,660
(equals) Total Market Area Expenditures	=	\$1,387,424,382	\$1,730,800,151
(plus) Approx. % Leakage Outside the Market Area ¹		20%	20%
(equals) Leakage Outside of Market Area		\$277,484,876	\$346,160,030
(equals) Total Purchasing Power		\$1,109,939,506	\$1,384,640,121
(divided by) Average sales per Sq. Ft. ³	/	\$234	\$258
(equals) Total Retail Space Demand (Sq. Ft.)	=	4,741,508	5,357,389
Retail Demand Potential			
		2007 to 2012	
Retail Space Demand Growth		615,882	
(times) Amount Capturable by the study area	x	5% - 10%	
Demand for Additional Neighborhood Retail Space in Arden Hills (in sq. ft.)		30,794 - 61,588	
¹ This Positive Leakage Factor is the estimated percentage of consumer expenditures spent by Market Area households goods and services outside of the Market Area. ² We estimate that approximately of 1/3 of Market Area employees make purchases in Market Area. ³ From <u>Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers</u> , Urban Land Institute.			
Sources: Claritas; <u>Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers</u> , Urban Land Institute; Maxfield Research Inc.			

- Multiplying the consumer expenditure figure by the number of households and employees results in total retail sales of \$1.4 billion. However, factoring in leakage of retail dollars spent by Retail Market Area residents to centers outside of the Retail Market Area at 80 percent, the total demand in the Retail Market Area is reduced to \$1.1 billion. (Leakage could potentially decline if particular types of retail were added in Arden Hills.)

- Utilizing average sales per square foot from *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers* and adjusted to account for location factors by Maxfield Research, it was determined that the Retail Market Area demand was about 4.7 million square feet in 2006, increasing to about 5.4 million square feet in 2012.
- No one site can capture 100 percent of the demand as the subject site will compete with other areas in the Retail Market Area for new retail stores over this period. We estimate that the study area would be able capture 5 percent to 10 percent of the neighborhood retail demand, or about **30,800 to 61,600 square feet between 2007 and 2012.**
- Using the same methodology as above to calculate demand for specialty retail space in Table 5, it was estimated **that the study area would be able capture 5 percent to 10 percent of the specialty retail demand, or about 9,300 to 18,500 square feet between 2007 and 2012.**
- If Arden Plaza remains in its current state, we feel that the study area would capture demand for neighborhood and specialty retail space at the 5 percent levels shown in Tables 2 and 3. However, if Arden Plaza is repositioned or renovated in the future, demand could reach the 10 percent levels as shown in the illustrated demand tables.

TABLE 5 DEMAND FOR SPECIALTY RETAIL SPACE ARDEN HILLS MARKET AREA 2007 to 2012			
		2007	2012
Market Area Purchasing Power			
Market Area Households		31,358	32,191
Market Area Employees ¹	+	21,093	22,477
(times) Annual Specialty Household Expenditures	x	\$12,658	\$14,869
(equals) Total Market Area Expenditures	=	\$663,920,226	\$812,863,785
(plus) Approx. % Leakage Outside the Market Area ²		40%	40%
(equals) Leakage Outside of Market Area		\$265,568,091	\$325,145,514
(equals) Total Purchasing Power		\$398,352,136	\$487,718,271
(divided by) Average sales per Sq. Ft. ³	/	\$234	\$258
(equals) Total Retail Space Demand (Sq. Ft.)	=	1,701,705	1,887,058
Retail Demand Potential			
		2007 to 2012	
Retail Space Demand Growth		185,353	
(times) Amount Capturable in study area	x	5% - 10%	
Demand for Additional Specialty Retail Space in study area (in sq. ft.)		9,268 - 18,535	
¹ This Positive Leakage Factor is the estimated percentage of consumer ² We estimate that approximately of 1/3 of Market Area employees make purchases in Market Area. ³ From <i>Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers</i> Urban Land Institute.			
Sources: Claritas; <i>Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers</i> Urban Land Institute; Maxfield Research Inc.			

Appropriate Types of Retail

- As seen in our projected demand tables, those retailers attracted to the study area will most likely be neighborhood retailers. Types of retail that would be appropriate for the study area are listed in Table 6 along with the median size (square feet) for each type of store. The store types represent stores with the greatest potential to locate in the study area. It should be noted, however, that the study area is not likely to attract all of these potential retailers. Some retailers may choose not to locate in the study area because of competing stores that may be developed in nearby Retail Market Area shopping centers or storefronts or because similar retailers that already exist in the study area.

Retail Lease Rates

- Based on the lease rates at new competitive shopping centers in the Market Area and surrounding communities, we find that retail space in the study area should be priced lower than higher-profile sites closer to the commercial district north of the study area and near Rosedale Center. With the right mix of retailers and a reconfiguration of the property, we believe Arden Plaza could increase lease rates to about \$17.00 per square foot.
- Redevelopment of existing commercial properties such as Arden Plaza may require a public/private partnership. The rents necessary to make redevelopment feasible would be higher than what potential retail and office tenants could or would be willing to pay initially. Public assistance to help reduce the cost of redevelopment to the private sector could be necessary for the commercial portion of the redevelopment to be successful in the next five years.

TABLE 6
 RETAIL USES BY MEDIAN SIZE OF STORE
 EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL RETAILERS FOR THE STUDY AREA*
 June 2008

Retail Uses:	Median Sq. Ft.	Retail Uses:	Median Sq. Ft.
Neighborhood-Oriented		Specialty Retail	
Cards & Gifts	2,400	Arts & Crafts	2,200
Coffee/Tea	1,250	Book Store	4,400
Convenience Market	3,000	Computer/Software	1,250
Deli/Specialty food	1,950	Decorative accessories	1,650
Drugstore/Pharmacy	12,150	Discount Dept Store	12,000-15,000
Dry Cleaner/Laundry	1,450	Eyeglasses-Optician	1,400
Fast Food Restaurant	3,000	Flowers/Plant	1,200
Ice Cream Shop	1,200	Furniture Store	5,000
Liquor/Wine	2,400	Health Club	10,000
Nail Salon	1,050	Hobby	2,500
Photocopy/Fast Print	1,400	Home accessories	2,800
Pizza	1,500	Mailing/Packaging	1,200
Restaurant with liquor	4,000	Pet Shop	2,000
Sandwich Shop	1,250	Photographer	1,200
Sporting Goods	3,090	Picture Framing	1,250
Tailor	900	Radio, Video, Stereo	2,100
Tanning Salon	1,250		
Telephone/Telecom	1,020		
Unisex hair	1,300		
Weight Loss Center	1,300		

*Examples may overlap with existing uses; this table is intended to represent potential retailers (type and size) that could locate in the study area.

Sources: Urban Land Institute: Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers, 2006
 Maxfield Research Inc.

Projected Demand for Office Space

The amount (in square feet) of additional office space supportable in the study area is based on projected office employment growth in the Office Market Area. The demand calculations are shown in Table 7 and are summarized in the following points.

- The Office Market Area is projected to add nearly 6,000 total jobs between 2007 and 2015. Of that growth, it is estimated estimate that 30 percent will be office jobs, or 1,776 new office jobs.
- Using an industry standard of 200 square feet of office space per employee on average, demand is forecast for 355,131 square feet of office space in the Office Market Area between 2007 and 2015 to accommodate office employment growth. This figure assumes that a variety of office spaces in a variety of locations will be available to meet the needs of prospective tenants.
- Of this demand, we estimate that Arden Hills will capture 30 percent or 106,539 square feet of office space.
- From that amount, existing competitive space marketing was subtracted along with pending space identified – about 120,076 square feet. From that calculation, demand was estimated for about -13,537 square feet of office in the City of Arden Hills between 2007 and 2015. The negative demand for office space is the result of large amounts of vacant office space located in the Arden Hills Office Market Area.
- At this time, our findings suggest that **no new office space could be supported in the study area. We estimate negative demand (-2,031 to -2,707 square feet of office space) from 2007 to 2015 in the study area** due to existing vacant office space as well as the Office Market Area’s limited capacity to absorb existing product. If the Office Market Area’s vacancy rates decline and the marketplace absorbs existing office space in the future, there is potential for a redevelopment site to potentially capture an office user considering locating in the study area. However, we believe that a minimum of five to seven years will be required to allow for the market to rebound and absorb existing product.
- Small technology firms, consulting companies, legal firms, medical offices, small sales firms, and advertising firms are some of the companies that might be interested in locating in the study area. Other companies specializing in medical products or technology may also consider office space in the study area to synergize with similarly focused companies located nearby.

TABLE 7 PROJECTED DEMAND FOR OFFICE SPACE ARDEN HILLS MARKET AREA 2007 to 2015			
Demand from Projected Employment Growth			
Projected increase in employment in the Arden Hills Market Area, 2007 to 2015		5,919	new jobs
(times) Percentage of projected employment growth that will be office jobs	x	<u>30%</u>	
(equals) Projected increase of office jobs in the Market Area, 2007 to 2015	=	1,776	new office
(times) 200 square feet of office space per employee	x	200	sq. ft./emp.
(equals) Total Market Area office space demand from growth, 2007 to 2015	=	355,131	
(times) Percent capturable in the study area	x	<u>30%</u>	
(equals) Projected office demand in 2007 to 2015	=	106,539	
(minus) Available and planned competitive leasable office space in 2007*	-	<u>120,076</u>	sq. ft.
(equals) Projected demand for small business office space in Market Area	=	-13,537	sq. ft.
(times) Estimated capture rate in the study area	x	15% - 20%	
(equals) Estimated total new office space supportable in the study area.	=	-2,031 - -2,707	sq. ft.
*Estimated % of Market Area office space that would be competitive with the study area: New Brighton -10%; Roseville-25%; Shoreview-50%; Arden Hills-100%			
Source: Maxfield Research Inc.			

Land Use and Public Improvements Plan

Guiding Principles

These principles will be used by the City of Arden Hills to help guide the evolution of the B2 District including plans for land use, urban design, public facilities and circulation. Elaboration and details will be added as the plan progresses.

1. Place

Create a visual impression that the B2 district is a distinct, identifiable and special place in Arden Hills.

2. Land Uses

Allow and encourage a variety of land uses in the district potentially including retail and service businesses, offices, high-density housing, places to eat and drink, industry that has high employment density and attractive buildings, education and indoor recreation.

3. Intensity and Scale

As redevelopment occurs, generally increase the height of the buildings and amount of each site they cover.

4. Local

Create a district that serves the needs and desires of residents of Arden Hills.

5. Quality

Ensure that all private and public improvements are of a high quality in terms of appearance, function and longevity.

6. Civic

Communicate that the district is “everybody’s neighborhood” and a center of public life in Arden Hills (a distinction perhaps to be shared with the redeveloped TCAAP site) through the use of public plazas or open space, small private spaces usable by the public, improved sidewalks and streetscape.

7. Movement

Provide for safe and efficient auto movement as land use intensifies but also greatly improve the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

8. Green

Provide year-round greenery and color throughout the district through generous landscaping of private sites and the public street edges. Add one or more green gathering spaces in the corridor. Improve the public’s use of the Country Insurance woods, its intended purpose.

9. Role of the City

Establish the primary role of the City in the district as planning, leadership, zoning and public improvements. Do not rule out the application of municipal financial assistance in land redevelopment.

10. Continuity

Maintain long-term support for the principles and policies of the *Guiding Plan for the B2 District* throughout the entire Arden Hills family including elected and appointed officials and staff.

11. Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Promote the use of green building practices, sustainability, and energy conservation to reduce the environmental impact of new development and redevelopment.

Land Use and Public Improvements

Guidelines for the future use of property in the B2 District are presented by the following text and Figure 9.

Arden Plaza Site

- **Northern Access:** Plan to create a new access driveway aligned north-south along the western edge of the Arden Plaza and “TCF Bank” sites to serve both those properties plus the Northpark Corporate Center site. A connection back to Lexington Avenue at the southern edge of the Arden Plaza site is optional and should be studied further.

During the course of this planning process, study and recommend future traffic controls for that intersection, including whether the northern access drive should be restricted to right-in, right-out movement. Any new development that occurs before the new road is built should be designed to fit within a long-term guiding plan that makes use of the new access drive.

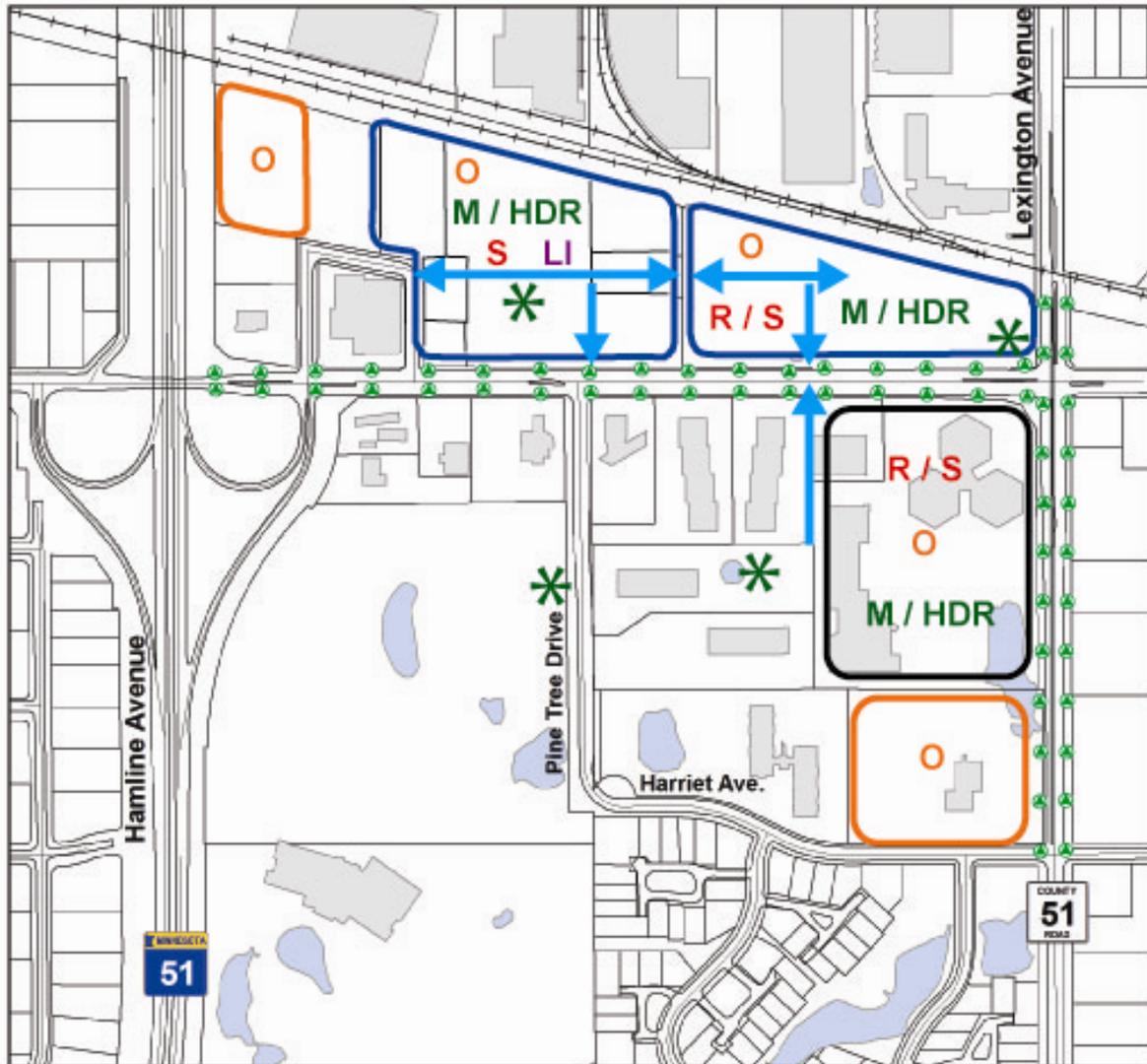
- **Eastern Access:** Preliminarily determine during this planning process whether the **eastern access** drive to this site should be restricted to right-in, right-out movement. An east-west driveway between the proposed new access road and Lexington Avenue should divide the site between the commercial area and the residential area.
- **Land Use:** Redevelop the current Arden Plaza property long-term with **retail and service businesses** on the northern half and either retail businesses, an office building or an apartment building on the southern half.
- **Access:** Work with Ramsey County to install a traffic signal on County Road E approximately 550 feet west of Lexington Avenue along with protected left-turn lanes in a landscaped median. That signal would serve Arden Plaza and the former Holiday Inn site. This would necessitate realigning the northern access driveway for Arden Plaza to the northwestern corner of the “TCF Bank” property, which would require redevelopment of that property.
- **Gathering Space:** Create an attractive civic (but privately owned) **gathering space** in the northeast corner of the site, potentially including a small pond or other water feature.
- **Building Orientation:** Orient the northern commercial buildings to frame the civic gathering space feature create an attractive and inviting space. These layout options are preliminarily suggested to accomplish this space-making:
 - An east-west layout of two parallel sets of buildings around a “Main Street” or landscaped median feature leading to the green gathering space in the northeastern corner of the site.
 - An L-shape with the open side facing northeast; sidewalks and a single row of parking would front the buildings on the sides facing the gathering space; the major parking would be on the opposite sides of the buildings; the buildings

would be broken at the point of the L to provide pedestrian movement and visibility.

- An L-shape with the open side facing southwest; the buildings would be broken at the point of the L to provide pedestrian movement and visibility.
 - An east-west orientation of one building (possibly two or more tenant spaces) along County Road E and a north-south orientation of a retail building along Lexington Avenue.
- **Anchor Business:** Redevelop an **anchor retail** or service building of approximately 15,000 to 25,000 square feet, preferably on the northern edge of the site. Consider adding one or more strong national retailers to increase customers to the site.
 - **Hospitality Businesses:** Include in the new commercial area one or more **eating and drinking businesses** that could take advantage of and animate the outdoor gathering space. Restaurants that do well at lunch are expected to be most successful.
 - **Pedestrian Movement:** Provide a **pedestrian connection** from Arden Plaza to a location near the County Road E and Lexington Avenue intersection. Require the replacement of the pathway along Lexington Avenue and extend the pathway to the south for future connections. Also investigate with the owners of the Northpark Corporate Park the feasibility of creating a **pedestrian link** from the Arden Plaza site to the central water feature in the Northpark site and the Country Insurance open space.

Former Holiday Inn Site

- **Interim Use:** Assume that the current building is demolished after its use as a college residence hall.
- **Access:** Align a new **access** drive at the new intersection shown on Figure 9, opposite the future access point to the south.
- **Land Use:** Redevelop the site with an intensive combination of **office, residential** and, possibly, **retail or service business** land uses. Consider structured parking located along the railroad tracks. Allow housing and housing or offices above retail or service businesses. Seniors' housing would also be a possibility, depending on market conditions.
- **Focal Feature:** Orient the development around a major landscaped median or other green space.
- **Building Relationship to the Street:** Locate the **buildings close to County Road E**; parking should be to the north of the buildings.
- **Corner Gateway Feature:** Create a green **entry feature** near Lexington Avenue.



County Road E Corridor Plan

- O - Office
- R/S - Retail or Service Businesses
- S - Service Businesses
- M/HDR - Medium / High Density Residential
- LI - Industry: High Employment Density
- - Auto Movement/Access
- ⋯→ - Pedestrian Movement
- 🌳 - Streetscape Improvements
- * - Civic Gathering/Green Feature



Figure 9
Land Use Plan

Industrial Area

- **Site Assembly:** Seek to **redevelop** this entire area as a whole when the market allows. The area is defined as including Corporate Express plus the small industrial buildings to the east and west plus the veterinary and furniture business buildings. The site may be redeveloped for a **single large user or divided** into two, three or four smaller sites. The site could even be assembled, planned and redeveloped in combination with the Pot o' Gold and Arden Bowl parking properties.
- **Access:** Create an **access** point at the Pine Tree Drive signalized intersection.
- **Land Use:** Develop the site intensively with any combination of office, high-density residential, service business, employment-based (e.g., research and development), educational or institutional uses. Buildings should be taller than a single story and may be as tall as allowed by the City's fire department and can be accommodated by the roads.
- **Circulation:** Build **east-west movement** across the site between the Holiday Inn parcel and Connelly Drive to provide multiple points of access for all properties on the north side of County Road E and to promote movement among the sites (e.g., going to lunch). This circulation may be private lanes among the parking areas.
- **Building Relationship to the Street:** Locate **buildings relatively close to County Road E** with a short landscaped setback. Parking should not be located along County Road E.
- **Focal Feature:** Orient the development around a major landscaped median or other green space.
- **Streetscape:** Extend the planned **streetscape improvements** along County Road E.

Pot o' Gold Bingo Site

- **Land Use:** This site should be redeveloped for a single, **employment-oriented user** that desires some visibility from MN Highway 51 but does not need much visibility from County Road E.

Country Financial Open Space

- **Access to Open Space:** Work with Country Financial to make the **entrance** to these walking paths more visible and welcoming to the public.

Traffic and Streetscape Improvements

Various street segments in and near the district should receive differing treatments in plantings, lighting, furniture and banners, as follows:

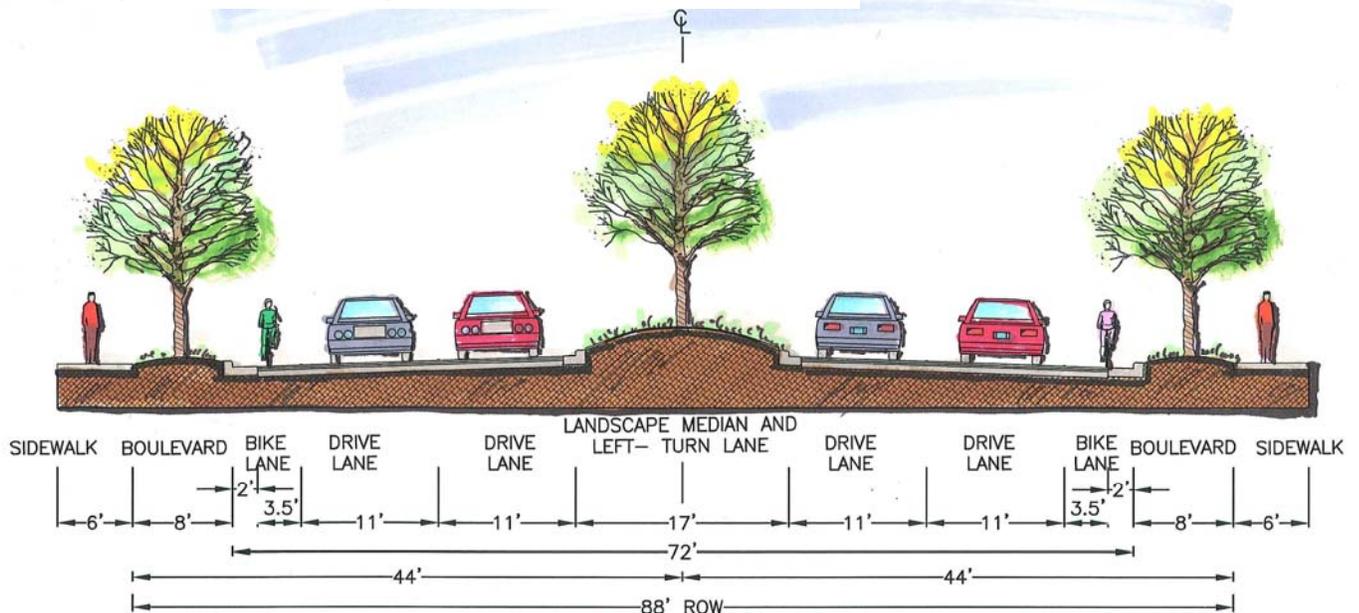
County Road E

From the west side of the Minnesota Highway 51 bridge to at least Lexington Avenue, this road should receive the highest level of streetscape improvements. Elements should include:

- Boulevard trees spaced at an average of 40 feet.
- A planted median that may include trees, shrubs, tall grasses and annual flowers.
- Decorative lighting at the automobile scale (on the existing bases, located 200 feet apart, contemporary styling); optional extra: decorative lighting at the pedestrian scale located approximately 50 to 70 feet apart)
- Benches and trash receptacles.
- A pair of new continuous concrete sidewalks (6 feet wide) with connections to adjacent businesses.
- Bollards.
- Annual flowers (in beds or raised planters).
- Seasonal banners on the light poles.
- Striped or colored pedestrian crossings.
- Bus waiting shelters.
- A traffic signal system at the future intersection located between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue.
- Replacement signals, arms and poles for the existing signal systems at (all optional): the eastern ramp terminals of Highway 51, Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue.
- Relocating the electrical boxes to a less visible location or screening where feasible.
- A pedestrian and bicyclist connection over Highway 51, which may be a separate bridge, a new bridge, or an addition to the existing bridge.



Figure 10 Streetscape Cross Section



The two “end caps” and the Pine Tree Drive intersection “centerpiece” should be accentuated by color, intensity, lighting and signage.

Improvements should include irrigation for the boulevards and the median plus electrical outlets for winter lighting. Light fixtures should have “cut-offs” to concentrate the beam and reduce glare.



Ideally, this streetscape improvement should be carried a short distance into Shoreview so as to make a smooth transition with the changing nature of the road and land use as well as to emphasize the intersection as an important landmark or node.

Left-Turns only at Signalized Intersections: Importantly, this improvement program calls for building a raised, landscaped median that would eliminate left-turn movements except at the signalized intersections at the Highway 51 ramps, Pine Tree Drive, a planned new intersection between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue, and Lexington Avenue. Additional engineering, traffic study, and review may be needed prior to implementation.



Street trees with new buildings brought close to a new Lake Johanna Boulevard should be used to create attractive spaces for pedestrians and a stronger community connection to the corridor.

Add a supplementary name to County Road E in Arden Hills: **Lake Johanna Boulevard**, which is the local name used on County Road 149 west of Minnesota Highway 51. This additional name will help identify the road as a local facility with a connection to a nearby natural feature and thereby personalize it. The County Road E name could still be used by residents and businesses where needed.

Pine Tree Drive and Harriet Avenue

The streetscape elements of County Road E should be carried south on Pine Tree Drive to the Hunters Park entrance but at a reduced level. This approach would help unify the district but indicate the secondary nature of Pine Tree Drive. The residential nature of Harriet Avenue should be protected with the addition of street trees and a sidewalk on one side of the street.

Lexington Avenue

A comprehensive streetscape improvement program should be undertaken for Lexington Avenue from north of I-694 to some point south of the district. Request that Ramsey County install sidewalks, curbing, trees and more attractive lighting along Lexington Avenue from I-694 to some point south of the study area.

Cooperation from the City of Shoreview and Ramsey County will be essential. The design objective in this corridor should be tuned to the higher speed and volume of auto traffic, the large parking areas along the road and the large-scale retail business environment.

Minnesota Highway 51 and Bridge

This state highway already has a degree of landscaping on its valley slopes. Emphasis here should be on announcing access to the County Road E district and the Lake Johanna parks.

Ramsey County should be encouraged to rebuild the bridge over Minnesota Highway 51 with accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists as soon as possible. Alternatively, a separate bridge or an addition to the existing bridge should be built for non-motorized traffic.

Illustrative Guiding Plan

Several of the principles conveyed in this land use plan and the district design guidelines have been expressed in the Illustrative Guiding Plan, Figure 11, on the next page. That sketch is meant to illustrate one possible way in which this plan might be realized but is certainly not the only development pattern. The market may propose a wide variety of additional building patterns that are just as desirable (if not more so) and which are also consistent with this plan and the City’s zoning regulations. The major ideas illustrated by the Illustrative Guiding Plan are:

- **Mixture of Land Uses:** There should be a mixture of land uses along County Road E including retail and service businesses that serve the local market, high-density housing (general market or seniors, rental or owned), and corporate or professional offices. Some of these activities may be combined on the same site or in the same building. Overall, land would be intensively used.
- **Redevelopment Opportunities:** There are several major redevelopment opportunities available over the next 25 years: the former Holiday Inn site, Arden Plaza and the adjacent “TCF Bank” site, the Pot o’ Gold Bingo property, and the several industrial and commercial properties in the middle of the corridor.
- **Building Relationship to the Street:** Buildings should be located along County Road E with parking to the rear. There should be no parking between future buildings and any public street.
- **Parking:** Parking may be accommodated in well-landscaped surface lots and/or in attractive structures.
- **Improvements to County Road E:** County Road E should be reconstructed to include a landscaped median, boulevard trees, protected left-turn lanes, bicycling lanes and continuous concrete sidewalks.
- **Traffic Signal:** A new traffic signal should be installed between Lexington Avenue and Pine Tree Drive to serve the former Holiday Inn property and the enlarged and redeveloped Arden Plaza site. Shared access between the Arden Plaza site and the adjacent office park to the new traffic signal should be reviewed.
- **Private Site Landscaping:** Each new development should be attractively landscaped.
- **Entry Feature:** There should be entry feature landscaping, lighting and public art at the eastern and western ends of the corridor.
- **Bicyclist and Pedestrian Connection:** A bicyclist and pedestrian bridge should be built over Minnesota Highway 51 or accommodations should be made for non-motorized traffic when the auto bridge is rebuilt.

- **Civic Focal Point:** A public or private green should be created north of County Road E.



- | | |
|--|---|
|  Commercial |  Mixed Use |
|  Office |  Parking Structure |
|  High-Density Residential | |

Figure 11
Illustrative Guiding Plan

Refer to Figures 1 or 2 on pages 2-2 and 2-3 to see the pattern of buildings existing in 2008.

District Design Guidelines

The design guidelines for the B2 District are organized according to the Guiding Principles of this plan. These statements are intended to be a guide for the City, developer, architect and builder that allow flexibility, individuality and creativity.

They focus on fundamental site planning and design ideas that address compatibility, visual appeal, lasting value and place-making. They emphasize the relationship to the street, density, heights, façade treatment, circulation, parking and plantings.

While some of these design guidelines are discretionary and advisory, some of them may be used to amend the B-2 zoning district to achieve the long term redevelopment vision within this plan. Ideas for streetscape enhancements should be considered when the City prepares a more detailed public improvements plan, though certain improvements could be implemented by the private sector as properties redevelopment.

Vision Statement

The County Road E / Lake Johanna Boulevard District will be a place where people can live, work and play.

The district will be a compact, architecturally diverse, pedestrian-friendly community with a distinct identity.

It will provide sidewalks and places for people to gather and socialize.

Design guidelines will be followed to promote an attractive environment with lasting value.

The district is dedicated to the belief that we desire to integrate nature, home, work and leisure.

Planning and Design Principles

The following principles are the basis for the design guidelines, reflect the community vision and will be followed through the evolution of the district.

- 1.** Be more urban than suburban in terms of density, building height, parking and façade treatments.
- 2.** Include several types of land uses such as office, housing, retail or service businesses and, possibly, job-intensive light industry.
- 3.** Face residential, office and retail buildings toward the public street to the extent possible.
- 4.** Insist on a high quality of design in buildings and public improvements.
- 5.** For office or residential buildings, strive to locate as much of the parking as possible in structures, under buildings or to the rear of buildings. For commercial sites, strive to locate at least some of the building(s) between the street and the surface parking area.
- 6.** Provide a generous amount of landscaping; pay attention to the details of lighting, signage, materials and fixtures.
- 7.** Encourage walking and bicycling through physical improvements, streetscape and building placement.

Place

Entrances



The eastern and western entrances to the district should be announced by special landscaping, signs, lighting and/or art. Those entrance locations are defined as (west) the immediate vicinity of the eastern Minnesota Highway 51 ramps and (east) the Lexington Avenue intersection with County Road E.



Arrival



The vicinity of the intersection of County Road E and Pine Tree Drive should be demarcated as the visual center of the district through use of landscaping and lighting.

Street Name

West of Lexington Avenue, County Road E should receive the supplementary name of Lake Johanna Boulevard, which could be used in addition to the County Road E name. The City of Shoreview should be encouraged to also apply this local moniker to County Road E from Lexington Avenue to Victoria Street.

Space Defined

To the extent possible, locate future buildings so as to define some spaces in which people feel comfortable walking or sitting. Orient doors and windows toward those spaces. Avoid locating buildings in a field of parking. Whenever feasible, require that windows on the first floor of a building be made of transparent glass.

Street Improvements

County Road E / Lake Johanna Boulevard should be improved as follows to create a sense that this is a special place in Arden Hills:

- Convert the shared left-turn lane to a landscaped median with protected left-turn lanes.
- Add a row of trees along both sides of the road between the curb and the sidewalk.
- Replace the street light poles and light with new equipment.

Refer also to the description in Chapter 4, Land Use and Public Improvements, in this guiding plan.



Business Signs

Business signs should be restrained and in proportion with the wall of the building. Back-lit signs with individual letters are preferred over plastic panels. Freestanding signs along the public street should be monument style rather than pole style.



Land Uses

Types of Land Use



Allow a wide range of land use types throughout the district on each site and, potentially, within each building.

On sites bordering County Road E, allowable land use may include corporate or professional office buildings, build-to-suit offices, medical offices, multiple-family housing, lodging, eating and drinking businesses, and retail or service businesses.

Multiple-family housing would be medium- to high-density buildings with interior hallways as opposed to townhouses; either rental or owned; general market or seniors.



Retail or service businesses should be scaled to serve the local trade area that includes Arden Hills, Shoreview and northern Roseville.

On sites presently occupied by industry along the north side of County Road E, redevelopment may include certain industrial operations that have a high density of jobs, no outdoor storage and little or no heavy-truck traffic.

Every land use should be of the type that generates property tax revenue.





Development characteristics that will be used to create a sense of place and interest along the new Lake Johanna Boulevard include mixed use, intensive development, enhanced public spaces framed by buildings, and architectural fenestration.

(Please also refer to the Illustrative Guiding Plan sketch on page 4-11, which more clearly indicates the shape, coverage and relationships of the buildings and open space suggested above.)

Building Height and Size

The B2 District should be visually distinct from the rest of Arden Hills and clearly express that distinction. It should grow to be a visual, social and psychological center of Arden Hills.

It should be an intensely developed part of the community, and that density should foster increased walking.

The way in which buildings relate to the public street is one of the key aspects of creating a sense of place and identity. Building placement and height should serve to enclose and define the edges of County Road E, making it somewhat of an outdoor room.

Building Setbacks



To support walking and enhance a sense of place, buildings should be set close to the public street rather than being separated from the street by parking. A landscaped space between the sidewalk and the building approximately 20 feet wide would be appropriate.

Encourage that at least 50 percent of the largest building on each site occupy the street frontage at the “build-to” line.

Coordinate building architecture to try to create active spaces in side yards rather than just parking or service functions.

Building Height



Most new office, residential or mixed-use buildings are anticipated to be in the height range of two to four stories. Buildings exclusively devoted to retail and service businesses are expected to be one story.

Commercial building(s) taller than one story would be desirable on the northern end of Arden Plaza to compensate for the difference in elevation between the road and the site. At a minimum, a raised parapet wall is needed there to shield rooftop equipment from views from the road. A “second story expression” technique (exterior façade only) could also be used.



Buildings taller than four stories may be considered northwest of County Road E, where the tallest buildings and greatest intensity of land coverage should be guided. Building height may be limited by the effect of the project on traffic circulation, which will be assessed during the review process.



Future residential buildings could be three or four stories in height, include parking under the building or in a structure, and be located along the street with space for trees and other landscaping behind the public sidewalk. Building mass should be broken with materials, setbacks, window patterns and balconies.

Parking

- Parking areas or structures for office or residential buildings that are in close vicinity to County Road E or Lexington Avenue should be located behind (preferably) or beside the building.
- Allow parking between buildings to the extent that parking in the side yard accounts for no more than 50 percent of parking on the site.
- Sufficient parking should be provided to accommodate the reasonable hourly peak on a given site. Parking should be shared among buildings on a site to reduce the land devoted to parking. Hourly variations among different types of land use should be considered when estimating parking demands.
- Provide on-street parking along Pine Tree Drive and Harriet Avenue. Demarcate on-street parking bays with pedestrian “bump-outs” at driveway or street intersections.
- Green islands and trees should be incorporated into parking lots to increase their visual appeal. Where feasible, pervious surfaces should be used to reduce stormwater runoff.



Retail Building Size

The floor area of any individual retail business should not exceed 50,000 square feet. “Big box” retail businesses will not be allowed in this district. Certain service businesses such as a fitness center may exceed that figure.

Quality

Exterior Building Materials



- Buildings should be constructed of materials that are enduring, timeless and well-detailed.
- Exterior building materials should be primarily face brick, stone, decorative concrete plank, transparent glass and/or metal (as an accent and trim material). Other high-quality materials that increase the variety and appeal of buildings may be considered as accents.
- Metals should have a matte finish and neutral or earth tone colors. Metals that are used for exterior walls should have visible corner moldings and trim.
- Undesirable materials include wood except as an accent material, mirrored or tinted glass especially on the first floor, simulated brick or stone, vinyl or aluminum siding, concrete blocks, materials that have no pattern or relief especially when applied to large walls, materials that represent corporate colors or trademarks, brightly colored metal roofing or canopies, pre-cast tilt-up walls, and synthetic awnings particularly when illuminated from the rear.

Exterior Building Design

- Buildings should be articulated, especially with windows and doors, to reduce their apparent size and create visual interest from the street. Long blank exterior walls should not be allowed.
- Building volume should be broken with recesses and projections such as porches, dormers and bays that create shadows and add visual interest. Volume may also be broken with multiple roof and ridge lines perpendicular to one another or offset to avoid single roof lines.
- Facades of commercial buildings should be designed to convey the impression of a series of individually-constructed small storefronts. Façade treatment should be carried around all sides.

- Approximately 70 percent of the first level façade that includes the major store entrance and/or faces a public street should be transparent (have windows and doors). Windows should be made of transparent glass and recessed at least one inch rather than being flush with the façade.
- Awnings or overhangs should be provided at entryways to provide shelter from the sun and rain.
- Exterior lighting for parking lots and buildings should not be excessive and should be directed at their intended purposes.
- Any multi-level building should distinguish the ground floor level from the upper floors by use of these techniques: an intermediate cornice line, difference in building materials or details, awnings trellis or arcade, special window details, or brick corbels or quoins. A strong base and top for multi-story buildings should be established; middle layers should be simpler. Detail should be an integral part of the architecture rather than a series of applied elements.
- Mechanical systems and service areas should be integrated into in the architecture of the buildings. Garbage and recycling containers should be fully enclosed and integrated into the architecture of the buildings.
- Business signs should be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building and should be an integral part of the building. Signs should be incorporated into the facades of the buildings rather than extending past the roof line and should not project more than 12 inches beyond the plane of the façade. Retail business wall signs should be located in a position above the front window that is located consistently among stores. Backlit signs should not be allowed on the street side of new buildings with 100 feet of a public street. Pylon, rooftop and portable changeable message signs should not be used.
- Franchise architecture identified with a particular chain will be discouraged unless it is architecturally integrated into the district and approved building materials are used. Drive-up windows may be allowed if conflicts with pedestrian traffic are minimized.
- Truck docks and delivery areas should face away from the public street and integrated into the architecture of the building where feasible.
- Lighting under a gasoline station canopy should not be directly visible from the street but should be recessed into the canopy or otherwise shielded.



Civic

Gathering Space



- All commercial elements of the B2 District should be considered a public gathering space for the community. Every commercial building should offer opportunities for some degree of gathering. Spaces should be created to encourage interaction and gathering.
- In Arden Plaza, there should be an attractive and functional outdoor seating area or two near businesses that offer eating and drinking.
- Public art should be used near the district focal point, the Pine Tree Drive intersection, and possibly other locations. Public art may range from vertical, sculptural elements to creative touches integrated with walls or pavements.
- Attractive bus waiting shelters should be installed.



A public or private “town green” should be created as part of the potential redevelopment north of the new Lake Johanna Boulevard.



Movement

Bicycling

- Work through Ramsey County to rebuild and restripe County Road E to include a pair of striped bicycling lanes plus a landscaped median.
- Construct a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian connection over Minnesota Highway 51, which could be part of a rebuilt bridge over Highway 51, an addition to the existing bridge, or a separate bridge.



Walking

- There should be a six-foot-wide concrete sidewalk along both sides of County Road E; along the east side of Pine Tree Drive and the north side of Harriet Avenue; and along the west side of Pine Tree Drive from County Road E to the entrance to the Country Financial site.
- When reasonably feasible, raised concrete walkways should be used to connect perimeter public sidewalks to the front door of each building in the district.
- Bump-outs should be installed to help pedestrians cross Pine Tree Drive and Harriet Avenue.
- Construct a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian connection over Minnesota Highway 51, which could be part of a rebuilt bridge over Highway 51, an addition to the existing bridge, or a separate bridge.
- Drive-up windows should be discouraged because of their impact on pedestrians. However, if they are allowed, they should be located so as to minimize such effects.



Green

Private Spaces

A generous amount of plant material should be used on every new development site. Office parking areas should include generous perimeter and internal landscaping. Parking structures should have upgraded façade finishes and be visually softened with plantings.

Parking Areas

Plantings should be used to soften and shade parking lots and parking structures. Parking and service areas should be visually screened from street views with plantings and architectural treatments.

Parking lot islands should be used to distribute large parking fields into separate “outdoor rooms” that have visual relationships to the buildings they serve. Parking lot islands should be planted with trees or include infiltration basins and naturalized plantings. Entry drives should be defined by trees and shrubs.

Parking adjacent to street should be screened from views with low hedges or masonry walls. Berms should not be used.



Country Financial Woodland

The City should work with Country Financial to determine whether a more clear and formal announcement of the availability of its walking paths can be made at Pine Tree Drive.

Crepeau Nature Center

Connections from the district to the Crepeau Nature Center should be more clearly announced.

Traffic Study Conclusions and Recommendations

A traffic impact study was prepared for the *Guiding Plan*, a full version of which is presented in Appendix A. The following summary conclusions and recommendations are an outcome of that study.

County Road E Corridor

The roadways and study intersections within the study area currently operate acceptably at Level of Service (LOS) D or better and will continue to operate at LOS D or better through the 2030 Build scenario when the redevelopment is anticipated to be fully occupied.

The County Road E corridor has a wide center two way left turn lane down the middle as well as many driveway intersections. This leads to a vehicle dominated corridor that is unfriendly to pedestrians and bicycles. It is envisioned County Road E will operate as a vibrant, multi-modal corridor that will attract pedestrians and bicycles. To provide a safe multi-modal corridor, the following long range improvements are recommended:

- Construct a landscaped median on County Road E from Highway 51 to Lexington Avenue to convert the private driveways along County Road E into right-in/right-out accesses.
- Driveways should be consolidated whenever feasible to limit the conflict points along the corridor.
- Provide left turn lanes at public street intersections.
- Provide on street bicycle lanes.
- Provide sidewalks along the length of County road E and to the businesses, including a connection to Arden Plaza near to the County Road E and Lexington intersection.
- Improve the landscaping to provide a human scale to the corridor.
- Provide eleven foot wide travel lanes which will reinforce the 35 mph speed limit.
- Minimize traffic signs within the corridor whenever feasible.
- Extend the bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the County Road E/Hamline Avenue interchange when it is reconstructed.
- Reconstruct the corridor using the existing curb and gutter system to minimize the cost. This will also shorten the construction period, lessening the impact on local businesses.

County Road E is under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County. The City will need to work collaboratively with the County to gain approval for these recommended improvements.

Intersection of County Road E, the Holiday Inn Site and the Arden Plaza Driveway

The driveways on County Road E for the Holiday Inn site and the Arden Plaza site will experience significant delay and queuing in the p.m. peak hour even though the overall intersections will operate within traffic engineering standards. This is acceptable as an interim situation because it is not expected to pose a safety problem, little queuing is anticipated on County Road E. Long term, the queuing will impact the vitality of the redevelopments and could lead to safety problems.

These driveways should be realigned midway between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue to provide a four legged intersection that could be controlled with a traffic signal. Left turn lanes and shared right/through lanes should be built on the new north and south legs of the intersection to provide adequate egress. The signal should be installed when the traffic volumes at the intersection meet the criteria for installing a traffic signal per the *Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. When the traffic signal is installed at the new intersection it will operate at LOS B in the 2030 Build p.m. peak hour. This leaves capacity to accommodate significantly more redevelopment as long as the traffic from the redevelopment is focused at the signalized intersection.

Short-Term Development Assumptions Used in the Traffic Study

Three short-term redevelopment possibilities were identified through the planning process. Although redevelopment may occur outside these areas, the traffic study analyzed the effect of redeveloping the Pot o' Gold, Holiday Inn and northern Arden Plaza properties. These properties may redevelop differently but the below numbers were used to show the impact if they were redeveloped. Specifically:

- The Pot o' Gold bingo hall was assumed to be replaced with 15,000 square feet of office.
- The former Holiday Inn hotel was assumed to be replaced with 95 apartment units and 120,000 square feet of office.
- The 46,000 square feet of offices on the northern part of the Arden Plaza site was assumed to be replaced with a 14,000 square foot pharmacy and 5,000 square foot retail space.

Plan Implementation Program

The *Guiding Plan for the B2 District* will be carried forward through these and other actions.

Comprehensive Plan

The City Council should approve and accept this plan and then:

1. Adjust the comprehensive plan to reflect Figure 9, Land Use Plan, in the citywide land use plan map.
2. Adopt this plan “by reference” into the comprehensive plan.

Zoning Ordinance

The City will amend the B-2 zoning district to allow the full range of land uses recommended in the Guiding Plan: retail and services businesses, office buildings and high-density housing as principal land uses. Allow light industry as a conditional use; specify a minimum number of jobs per acre and exterior appearance standards. Require that all applications be submitted and reviewed as planned-unit developments. Expand the map coverage of the B-2 district to include the Hunters Park residential area.

Site Plan or Planned-Unit Reviews

The City of Arden Hills will review each development application by conferring with each applicant before the application is submitted, by applying the terms of an amended B-2 zoning district and, when appropriate, interpreting this plan when judgment is needed.

Traffic and Streetscape Improvements

Prepare a specific plan and engineering feasibility study for traffic, landscaping, lighting and pedestrian improvements along both County Road E from the eastern ramp terminals of Highway 51 to and including the Lexington Avenue intersection as described on page 4-7 of chapter 4.

Streetscape Improvements

Determine during this planning process the most feasible location for additional landscaping and sidewalks, taking into account the limited space in the public right-of-way outside the curbs.

Implement the street landscaping plan by obtaining easements from property owners since

the space for such landscaping will be entirely on private property (the public right-of-way is almost entirely taken by the road). The City could potentially design, fund and install the improvements on easements, though working with private enterprises and non-profit partnerships is encouraged for implementation and long-term maintenance.

Estimated Costs and Potential Funding Sources

The preliminary cost estimate for the traffic and streetscape improvements is \$2.0 million (2008 dollars).

Funding sources will be determined by the City Council but could include:

- City general funds
- Special assessments on benefiting properties
- Private sources
- Municipal State-Aid funds
- Tax increment financing
- Tax abatement
- Ramsey County funds
- Grants

The preliminary estimated costs do not include utility or other underground work, which would need to be evaluated during the feasibility study and potentially included with the streetscape improvements.

Timing the Median Construction and Access Changes

It is important to note that the County Road E improvement plan calls for building a raised, landscaped median that would eliminate left-turn traffic movements except at the signalized intersections at the Highway 51 ramps, Pine Tree Drive, a planned new intersection between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue, and Lexington Avenue.

That median would, thus, affect all businesses in the corridor particularly the high-volume retail enterprises and especially Arden Plaza, the largest retail operation in the study area.

Creating a new signalized intersection between Pine Tree Drive and Lexington Avenue is judged to be essential for the long-term viability of Arden Plaza and the former Holiday Inn site. The City wishes to achieve this improvement while minimizing or totally avoiding adverse effects on those two properties. Coordination of the public improvement with the redevelopment of both of the private properties is essential.

Therefore, the City will continuously consult with all affected property owners in the corridor before ordering these improvements with the aim of targeting the ideal year. However, if one property redevelops before the other and the new intersection is judged to be critical to its success, the City Council will take that into consideration.

It goes without saying that Ramsey County will be involved in this process since the County has jurisdiction over the road. The City of Shoreview will also be closely

involved because it is proposed that the streetscape improvements be carried a short distance into that community and the signal system at Lexington may be updated.

Supplementary Road Name

Add a supplementary name to County Road E in Arden Hills: **Lake Johanna Boulevard**, which is the local name used on County Road 149 west of Minnesota Highway 51. This name change will help identify the road as a local facility with a connection to a nearby natural feature and thereby personalize it; however, the existing County Road E name could also still be used by residents and businesses as needed.

Continuity

This plan should be used on a long-term basis for the purpose of amending the zoning ordinance, making public improvements and reviewing development applications. The plan may be reviewed periodically and updated by the Planning Commission and City Council to ensure that it continues to be useful in those tasks.

Summary of Actions

Short-Term

- **Name:** Add the supplementary name of Lake Johanna Boulevard to County Road E.
- **Zoning:** Adjust the text of the B-2 zoning district to match the guidance of the plan, specifically the design guidelines in Chapter 5.
- **Site Plan Reviews:** Use the plan for guidance in site plan or Planned-Unit Development reviews. Consider proposals that would result in the redevelopment of the Arden Plaza office buildings and a more vibrant retail center as long as the resulting traffic is consistent with the assumptions and forecasts for the existing northern driveway as used in the traffic study (Appendix A).
- **Funding:** Begin to seek funding for improvements to County Road E and the construction of the pedestrian and bicyclist connection over Highway 51 from Ramsey County and other sources.
- **Communications:** Continuously consult with property owners along County Road E regarding the timing of their redevelopment plans for the purpose of coordinating the construction of a median and traffic signal on County Road E with their changes.

Mid-Term

- **Road Improvement Plan:** Prepare a more detailed streetscape improvement plan and engineering feasibility study for improvements to County Road E. Prepare a financial plan. Involve the City of Shoreview. This step could be moved forward if redevelopment moves faster than anticipated.
- **Road Reconstruction:** Construct the improvements to County Road E, Pine Tree Drive and potentially part of Lexington Avenue.
- **Maintenance:** Regularly replace seasonal flowers at the entrance monuments and decorative banners to the light poles along Lake Johanna Boulevard and Pine Tree Drive. Maintain the driving surfaces (with Ramsey County).
- **Site Redevelopment:** Use the plan as guidance when reviewing applications for land redevelopment. Shift the northern access to Arden Plaza west to a new signalized intersection when a second phase of redevelopment occurs.

Longer-Term

- **Lexington Avenue:** Collaborate with the City of Shoreview on a streetscape improvement plan for Lexington Avenue.
- **Site Redevelopment:** Use the plan as guidance when reviewing applications for land redevelopment.

Appendix A
Traffic Impact Study

Due to the length of the Traffic Impact Study, a copy may not be included with this printing. A copy is available at City Hall and online at www.ci.arden-hills.mn.us.

Appendix B

Comments from the Community Visioning Meeting

20 May 2008

Strengths

- University students use the district
- Existing businesses already in place and known, centralized (3)
- Variety / Mix of businesses, good shopping (10)
- Serves some consumer needs, serves local needs (2)
- Nice business district
- Lower density of businesses
- Small family businesses, local, neighborhood retail, useful, small town feel, no big box stores, unique (22)
- Variety of office space and employment opportunities (2)
- Historically this was the main business area for Arden Hills
- Arden Plaza, hardware store, pharmacy, post office (7)
- Convenient banking (2)
- Source of good tax income for Arden Hills

- Accessibility via arterial streets and from neighborhoods (3)
- Retail shops within walking distance of neighborhoods
- Easy access to neighborhoods, centrally located (4)
- Ease of access for pedestrians, bikers, and autos, manageable traffic (4)
- Some pedestrian sidewalks
- Decent parking
- Possible light-rail future opportunities
- Central to other commercial development, large chains on Lexington (2)
- Good access from Snelling Avenue and I-694 and Lexington Avenue (9)
- Traffic flows well except at rush hour, good amount of traffic (2)
- County Road E can support development, four lanes, turn lanes (3)

- The area is well defined, has a beginning and end
- Large area and can accommodate a variety of uses
- Small town layout, residential feel, quiet side streets (3)
- Area has a pattern of development that can be built upon
- Most existing development does not directly conflict with obvious future plans
- Strong community feel and quaintness, friendly, meet neighbors (3)
- Relatively calm visually
- Buildings are setback from street, not right on the street
- Stability
- Railroad tracks create natural division of land uses
- Has redevelopment opportunities and open areas

- Aged in such a way that it is close to turning over
- Two large parcels on prime corner
- Little in the area that needs to be preserved
- Narrow street and bridge
- Banners on light poles
- Open green space, landscaping, and mature trees (9)
- Quality parks nearby, undeveloped areas, and trails (3)
- Close to beach
- Need to include environmental concerns and impact in planning future development
- Wide street has potential for landscaping or boulevard

Weaknesses

- Scum on pond, brings mosquitoes
- Doesn't draw strangers to existing businesses
- Low Patronage by majority(?) of residents
- Retail trending to downscale/vacancies/transient (6)
- Ugly Bingo Parlor, bingo traffic (3)
- Poor mix of businesses, needs grocery store, needs variety, small businesses (8)
- Existing business are struggling (2)
- Large existing businesses are unlikely to want to change, or difficult to redevelop compatibly (2)
- Lack of good restaurants/dining/neighborhood café/ethnic/healthy (9)
- Lack of night time activity
- Weak potential for residential/mixed use
- Lack of residential housing to make it feel more like a downtown
- Rail makes residential uses unattractive
- Architecture is blah and uninteresting, no public square, lack of diversity (3)
- Not attractive buildings, blank walls, too much asphalt (3)
- Setbacks are inconsistent – no real “flow” visually on E2
- Somewhat chaotic visually, lacks obvious plan, especially on north side of E (3)
- Needs more continuity architecturally, non-uniform architecture, needs harmony (4)
- Arden Plaza needs a new look, better signage, outdated office pods (4)
- Lack of community gathering spot, central park (2)
- No gateway entrance identification, bad signage (2)
- No cultural or art attractions
- More Green, trees, etc (2)
- Needs decorative lighting (3)
- Too many parking lots right on County Road E
- No Access to Public Transit (3)
- Area is not bicycle and pedestrian friendly, needs more connectivity through City, especially from west, few sidewalks and bike paths (15)
- Lack of sidewalk on north side of E (2)
- No designated bike trail, better bike access through city (5)
- Poor pedestrian/bike access across 51, bad bridge, too narrow, unsafe (14)
- Lousy/unsafe access for vehicles, turning onto Lexington is difficult, poor circulation (3)

- Traffic in and out of Arden Plaza and internal circulation is bad (3)
- Heavy traffic, too much, especially during rush hour (8)
- Too many access points, curb-cuts (3)
- 51 and E is a dangerous intersection (2)
- Train that goes every hour on the ½ hour backs up traffic (3)

Opportunities

- Keep all the property on the tax rolls
- Make retail areas more accessible by pedestrian and bike traffic, from all directions, safe crossings (8)
- Promote ease of access for pedestrians, bikes, and autos (2)
- Prominent bike paths, sidewalks or walking paths on both sides of street (5)
- Circulator bus for area
- No more than 2-3 curb cuts into business sections, put a frontage road to limit access points, particularly Mr. Movies and TCF (3)
- Alter Curb cuts to more “street-like” elevation (not up over sidewalks)
- Better street circulation
- Four-lane Bridge, with pedestrian walkway and bike lane (8)
- Better turn lanes or roundabout (3)
- Add right hand turn lane from northbound Snelling/Hamline to east bound Co Rd. E
- Two lanes each way on Lex. South of E
- Right turn lane from eastbound Co Rd. E to southbound Lex.
- Two left turn lanes from eastbound Co Rd. E to northbound Lex
- Right turn lane from southbound Lex to westbound Co. Rd. E
- Circulation road behind Flaherty’s and Corp Express so buildings can be closer to E.
- Lower speed limits
- Traffic hub with mass transit to major metro access; hub to include retail and service shops to support those utilizing mass transit
- Plan with Shoreview for a transit hub/depot with structured parking on NE corner of Co Road E and Lexington.
- Keep traffic down
- No trucks
- Limit traffic congestion
- Extend Connelly Ave across railroad track to connect with Grey Fox Road
- Parking behind stores (3)
- Parking structure up against the railroad to preserve the Co. Rd. E frontage
- On-Street parking (3)

- Some residential mixed in with retail
- Encourage and support businesses that citizens want as part of their “neighborhood” (2)
- Neighborhood businesses on north side of the street
- Viability of Grand Avenue
- Retail Office Supply
- Variety of service stores and retail (3)
- Nice upper end shops
- Home improvement retail
- Anchor store such as Costco (no Walmart) (2)
- Post Office

- Small Businesses/restaurants, Unique restaurants, inexpensive, ethnic, Small specialty shops: bakery, coffee, book store, Asian take-out, clothing, gifts, drugstore, toy store, green products store, ice cream, shoe repair, cleaners (7)
- Small scale neighborhood commercial with a common architectural theme
- Food: Co-op, farmers market, interesting restaurants, real restaurants, sit-down, neighborhood bar/café – but not a chain, more wine selection (6)
- A Sweet Tomatoes Restaurant
- Trader Joe's (2)
- Somewhere to have real ice cream cones – not soft serve
- Keep pharmacy and Ace Hardware
- No big box retail (3)
- Replace Bingo Hall with dining or motel or housing
- Close down bingo hall
- Farmers market in Arden Plaza parking lot
- Remove octagon buildings and replace with not “cutsie” small businesses visible from all sides (no Walgreens, CVS, or Bigbox)
- Holiday Inn as conference center/community center (3)
- Holiday Inn converted to senior housing project within current building
- Mixed use on Holiday Inn site (residential above community/retail/office/services) (2)
- Mixed-use, including residential (3)
- Should have a multi-use zone so that residential could be mixed with the retail
- Consider needs of local corporations; Boston Scientific, Land-o-Lakes, Deluxe, etc.

- Put library where bingo hall is and have food and gathering place
- Move City hall to Arden Plaza/general area (2)
- Ramsey County library portal
- Consider public purpose for Arden Plaza – library?
- Some kind of community plaza where people can gather – town square
- Community Park
- A focus place where people can eat and gather, public meeting areas or room in old holiday inn hotel
- Community bulletin board

- Divided roadway with landscaping
- Wide boulevards for pedestrian walkways, landscaping (8)
- Multi-use sidewalk north of Co Road E and west of Lexington Avenue and safe crossing areas to cross Lexington
- Walks and trails should compliment the existing trail system
- Uniform trees and street lights (2)
- Pedestrian friendly square, fountain, occasional street vendors (2)
- Good landscaping, pleasant surroundings, outdoor patios, water
- Signs along Snelling for Northwestern College
- Improve park and hockey rink size/access
- Change name of County Road E to...community choice
- Continued small town feel, Arden Hills community identity (3)
- People friendly amenities
- Low Building profile, no building taller than 3 stories (2)
- Outdoor art
- Large setbacks
- Buildings that architecturally flow together, that do not “age”, blend with environment (7)
- Quality architecture, not franchise architecture

- Gateway signage
- Work together with Shoreview to improve the corner aesthetically; trees, sidewalk, landscaping, use of retail space
- Mix of business and landscaping
- Maintain trees and green spaces (5)
- Utilize wind mill structures around community
- Plan for green or LEED design in all housing types