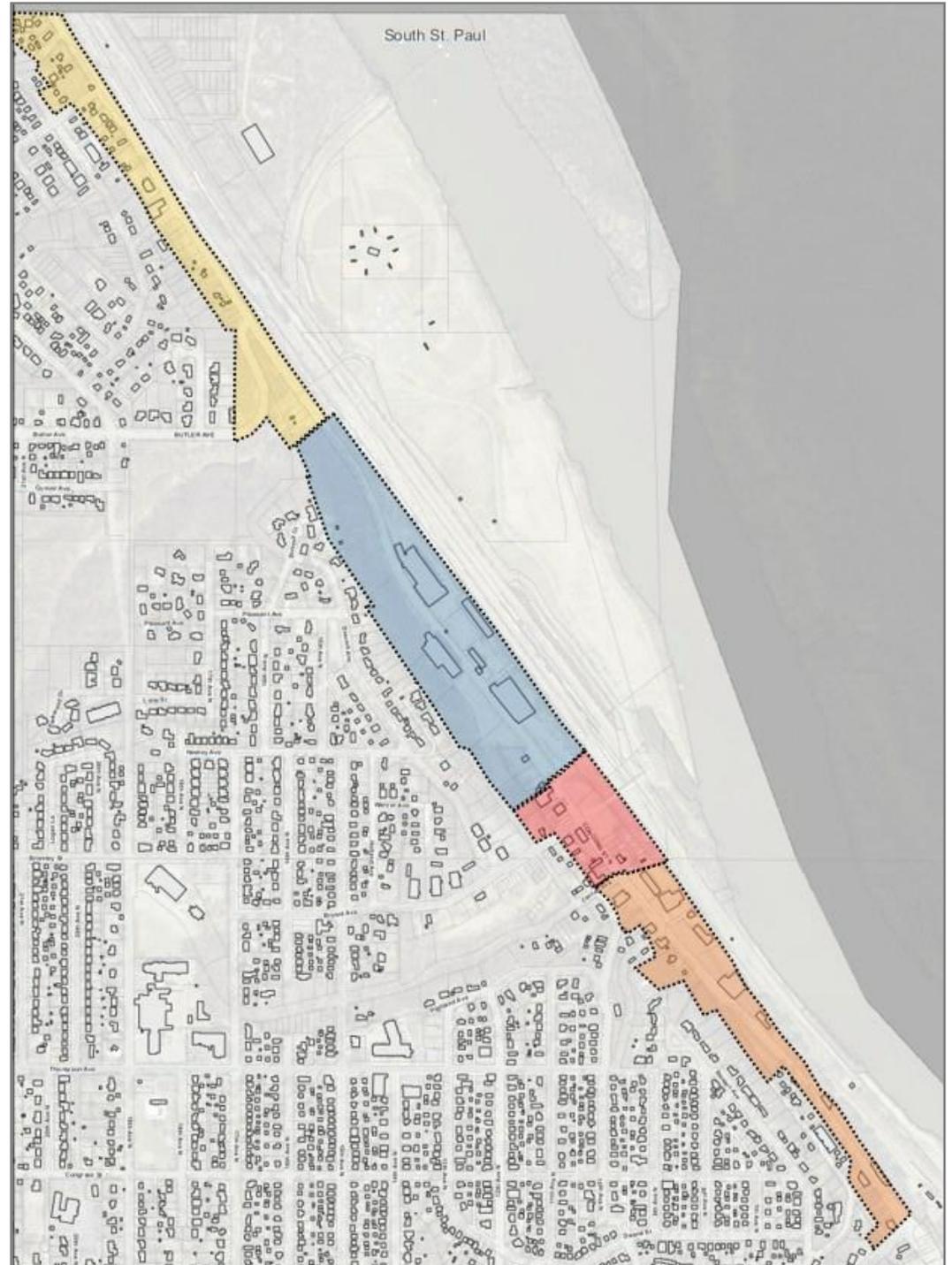


North Concord Mixed Use District Corridor Vision

*City of South St. Paul
June 21, 2021*



Introduction

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I. Introduction

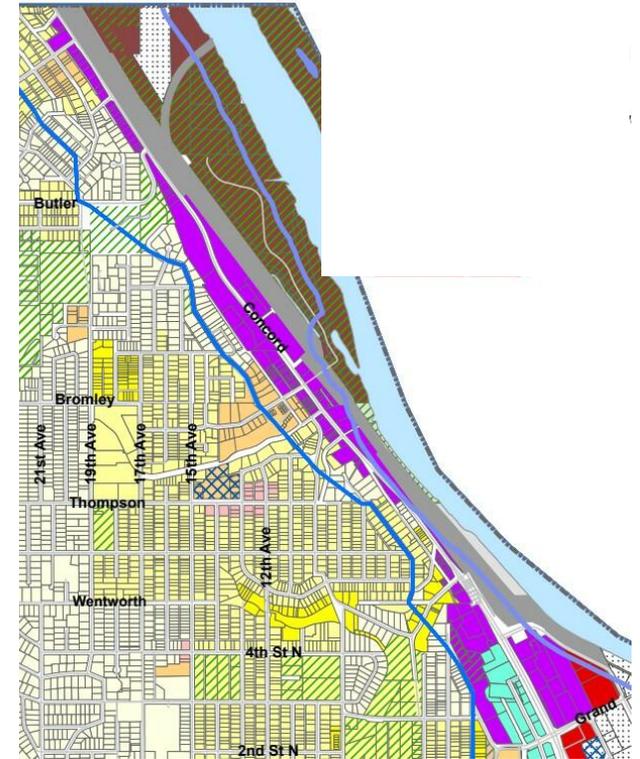
The 2040 Comprehensive Plan calls for a comprehensive study and zoning update on Concord Street North between Wentworth Avenue and the city’s northern border with Saint Paul. The entire corridor has been zoned mixed-use since 2004 which matches the City’s official future land use map. Unfortunately, the existing North Concord Mixed use (NCMU) standards have proven to be unworkable on Concord Street North due to issues with parcel configuration, topography, and the sheer costliness and complexity of the NCMU Code’s building design and site design requirements. The City successfully obtained a “Statewide Health Improvement Partnership” grant from Dakota County to complete the zoning study .

North Concord 2.2 mile section of Concord Street in South St. Paul that lies between Annapolis Street E. and Grand Avenue. Existing development along the corridor consists primarily of small commercial and industrial buildings, some of which date back to the early 1900’s,

as well as a number of scattered single-family homes. Most of the corridor is already zoned “North Concord Mixed-Use (NCMU),” which is a form-based commercial/residential mixed-use district. There has not been any new development on the corridor since the current development standards were implemented in 2004. North Concord has challenging topography and narrow parcels which are difficult to build on. The corridor is constrained by river bluffs and the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The existing NCMU zoning standards have created a situation where every existing building on the corridor is lawful nonconforming with limited expansion options and almost every development project is unbuildable without variances or PUD flexibility. (source: from the RFP)

North Concord Mixed Use Zoning District

The current zoning district contains some very useful standards that we think can be used going forward. Requirements like the 0-10’ front setback provides a very flexible tool for new buildings but side, rear and parking setbacks could use some tweaking. Height is another requirement that should be revisited especially relative to the new MRCCA ordinance; requiring a minimum height of 24’ seems to be a non-starter. Likewise some of the standards for architecture and landscape need to be revised to better respond to the market place. And we understand the past focus on creating compact, mixed-use development but by right uses could be more refined and more flexibility given to investors without minimizing the standards for well designed street, building and parking relationships.



^ The existing North Concord Mixed Use District shown in purple.

Introduction

Process

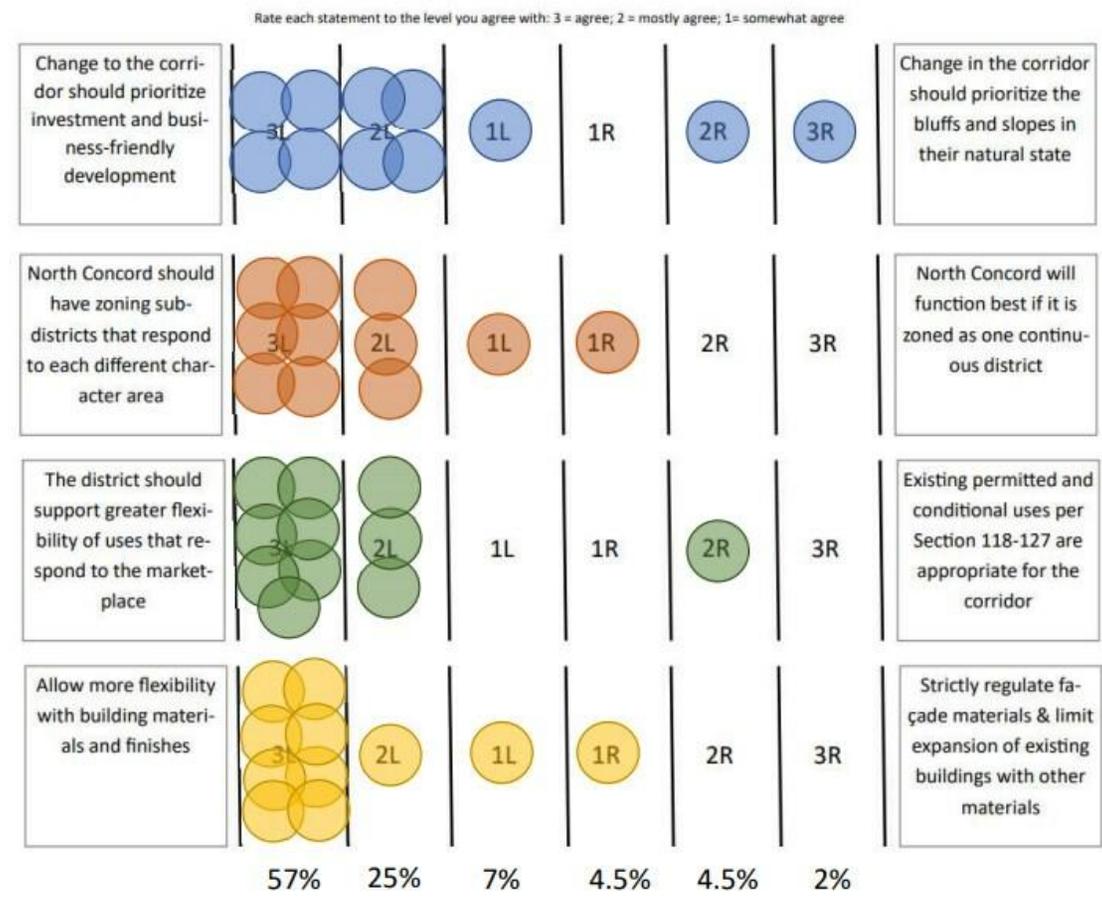
The process to date has included the following tasks, activities and meetings.

- March 18—Kickoff meeting
- March 29—Driving tour of corridor
- March 31—Zoom call with MN DNR
- April 15—Site visit, walking tour & interviews
- April 26—Joint worksession with Council & Commission
- May 24—Joint worksession with Council & Commission

Stakeholder Interviews & Responses

- Former Cenex Co-op
- Minnehahda Storage
- Buggs
- Car & Credit Connection
- 722 Concord

Continuum Statements



^ City Council and Planning Commission members were surveyed using a set of 'continuum statements' that asked them to compare issues about being business friendly, protecting natural conditions, character areas, flexibility with uses, and regulating building materials and finishes. A majority of responses were in favor of greater zoning flexibility to support existing businesses and encourage market-related investment in the corridor.

Corridor Analysis

II. Corridor Analysis

A review of existing conditions reveals a range of commercial and employment-based buildings/uses, plenty of surface parking and some residential uses. And, according to the rfp, new development and investment in the corridor has been very slow to materialize. A major benefit to the corridor is the recent turnback of Hwy 156 to the City; the city has a new project to rebuild the street that is expected to be completed in 2022.

Issues

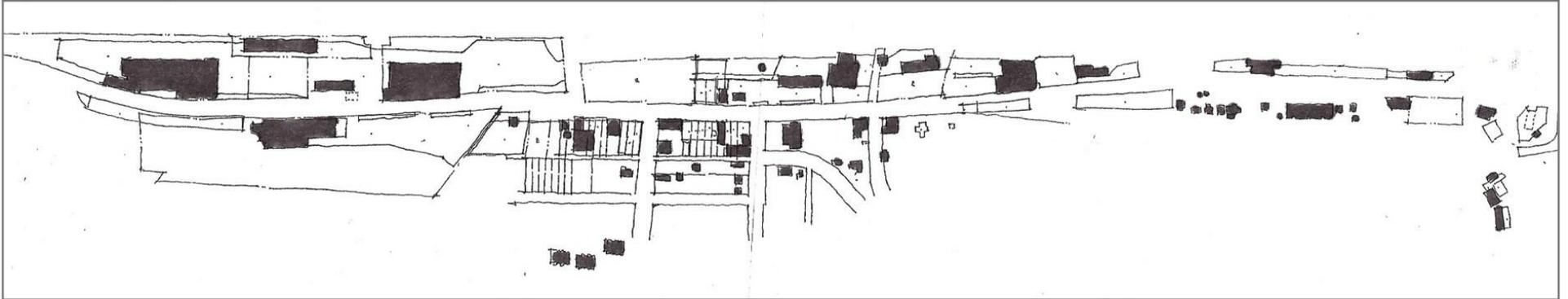
There are a number of issues that we believe are major obstacles to future growth and reinvestment.

- The parcel configuration is very random in size, access and circulation; some parcels display more historic platting increments while others are simply large odd shapes.
- Obviously the bluffs and topographic conditions are issues that have always been present but never really addressed from a implementation and results approach
- Aside from City owned HRA parcels, ownership is contained by a large range of owners and operators; getting all stakeholders on board with a united vision may be a challenge.
- Another issue is the large amount of surface parking that potentially indicates low land values but also the opportunity to support needed change.

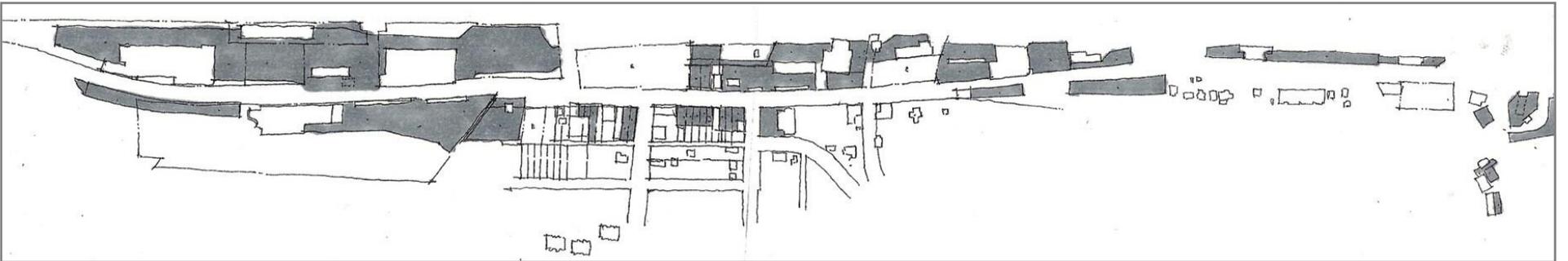


^ A majority of the district lies between two major destinations: Bridge Point Office Park and Kaposia Landing.

Corridor Analysis



Building footprint diagram



Surface and parking lots diagram

Summary analysis diagrams (showing the most developed areas of the corridor) illustrate the wide range of building sizes/types and paved surfaces. Larger buildings are located north of Bryant and are associated with larger parcels. At Bryant and Concord the parcel pattern is much smaller resulting in more and smaller buildings; new construction and redevelopment is limited by this pattern. South of Central the parcels narrow down, the bluff comes into play more and buildings are more linear in form and footprint. Impervious surfaces make up a large part of the character of the corridor; some are used for parking and some for outdoor storage. Obviously the larger surface areas are associated with the larger buildings and parcels north of Bryant.

Corridor Analysis



Commercial building types include simple one-story masonry (cmu block) buildings that are used for auto repair, sales and bars. This building type is generally more economical to maintain, rehab or reuse. Multi-story buildings in the corridor are in various stages of maintainance; some are under-utilized and are very good candidates for new investment and use.

Corridor Analysis



Residential building types include typical detached single family and related garage structures fronting on to Concord. Historic fabric include a stone faced house on Central Avenue and the Cass Gilbert designed Ten O Nine building that is currently a multi-family rental building.



Mixed-use building types include two-story buildings that are used for various uses including shop space, storage or are currently vacant. Rehab and reuse of these buildings could provide additional residential and commercial opportunities near the Bryan & Concord intersection. The former Cenex Co-op building could be converted into residential or live/work studios on floors 2, 3 and 4.

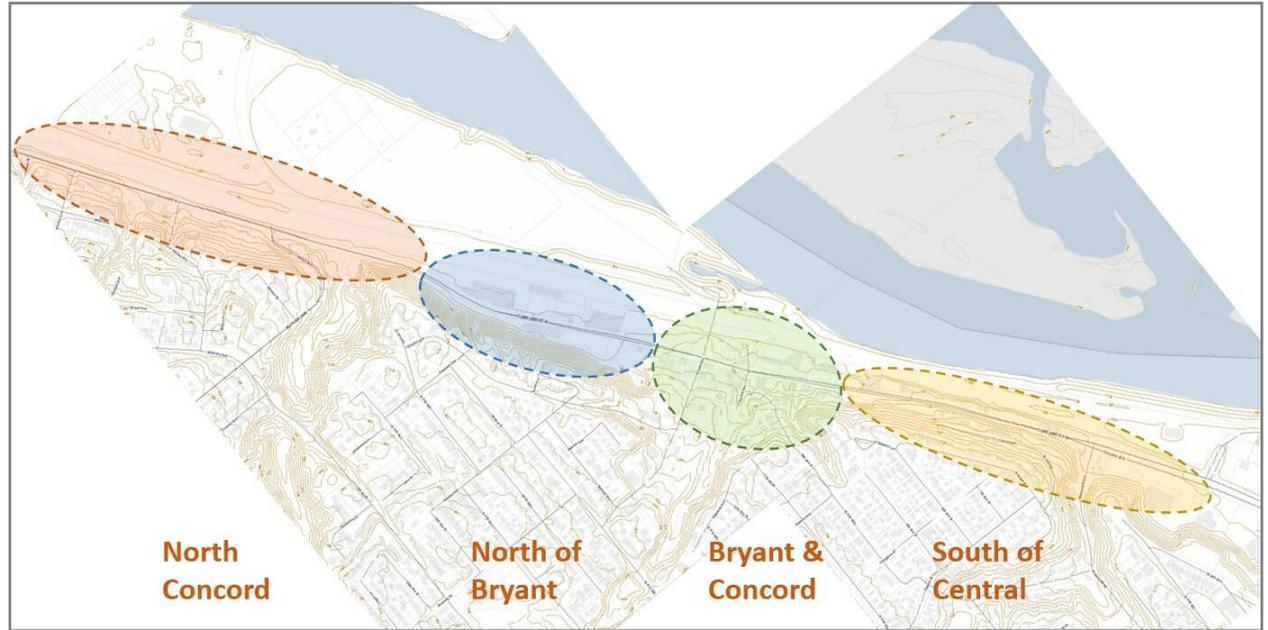
Character Areas

III. Character Areas

The corridor can be thought about as a series of connected character areas, each with unique conditions and settings. These areas include North Concord, North of Bryant, Bryant & Central and South of Central. It may be beneficial to think about how revised zoning requirements and standards reflect and respond to the different conditions in each character area. The following pages discuss each in more detail.



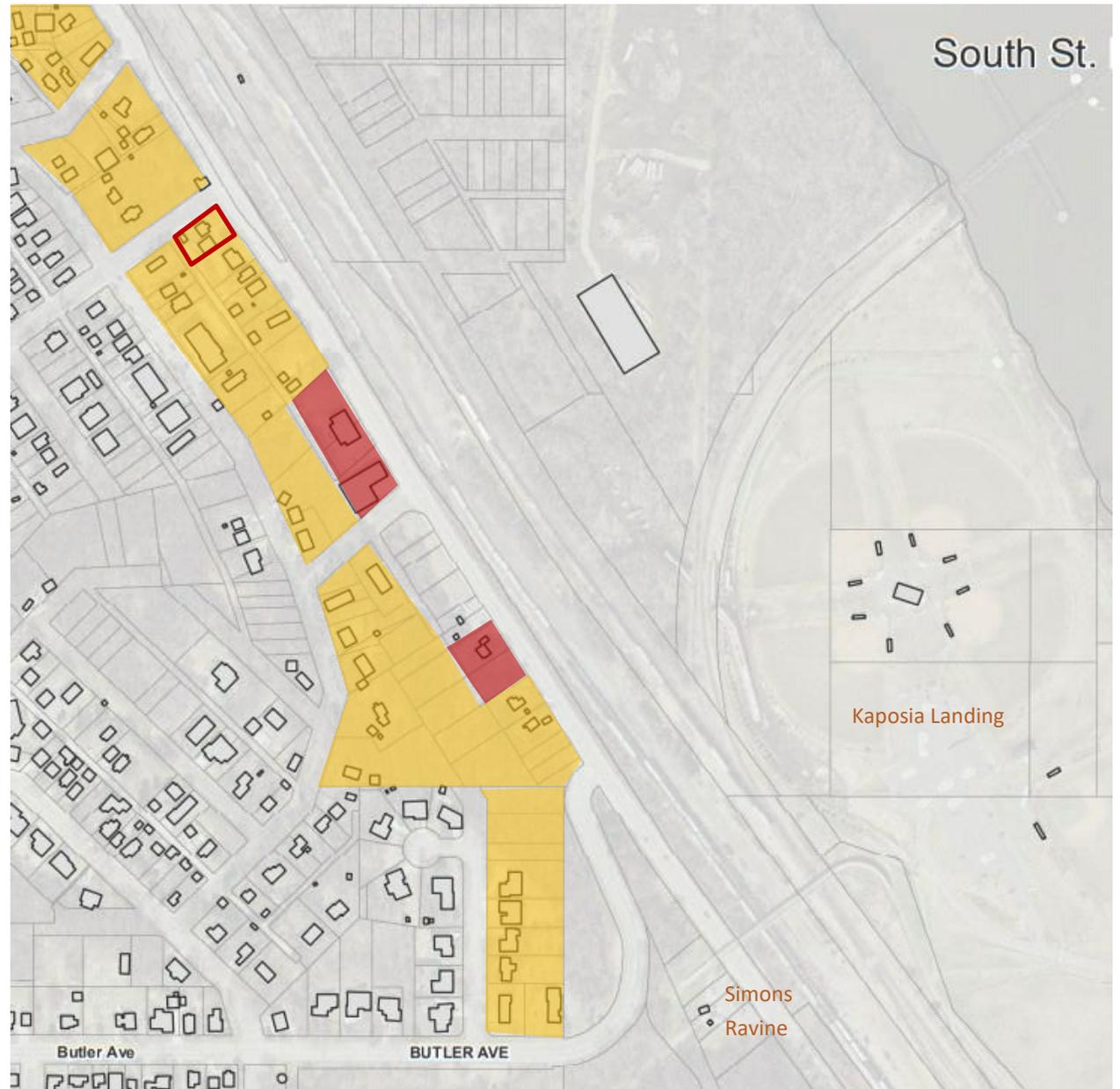
A wide variety of signs and building materials help define the distinct character areas.



Character Area 1

North Concord

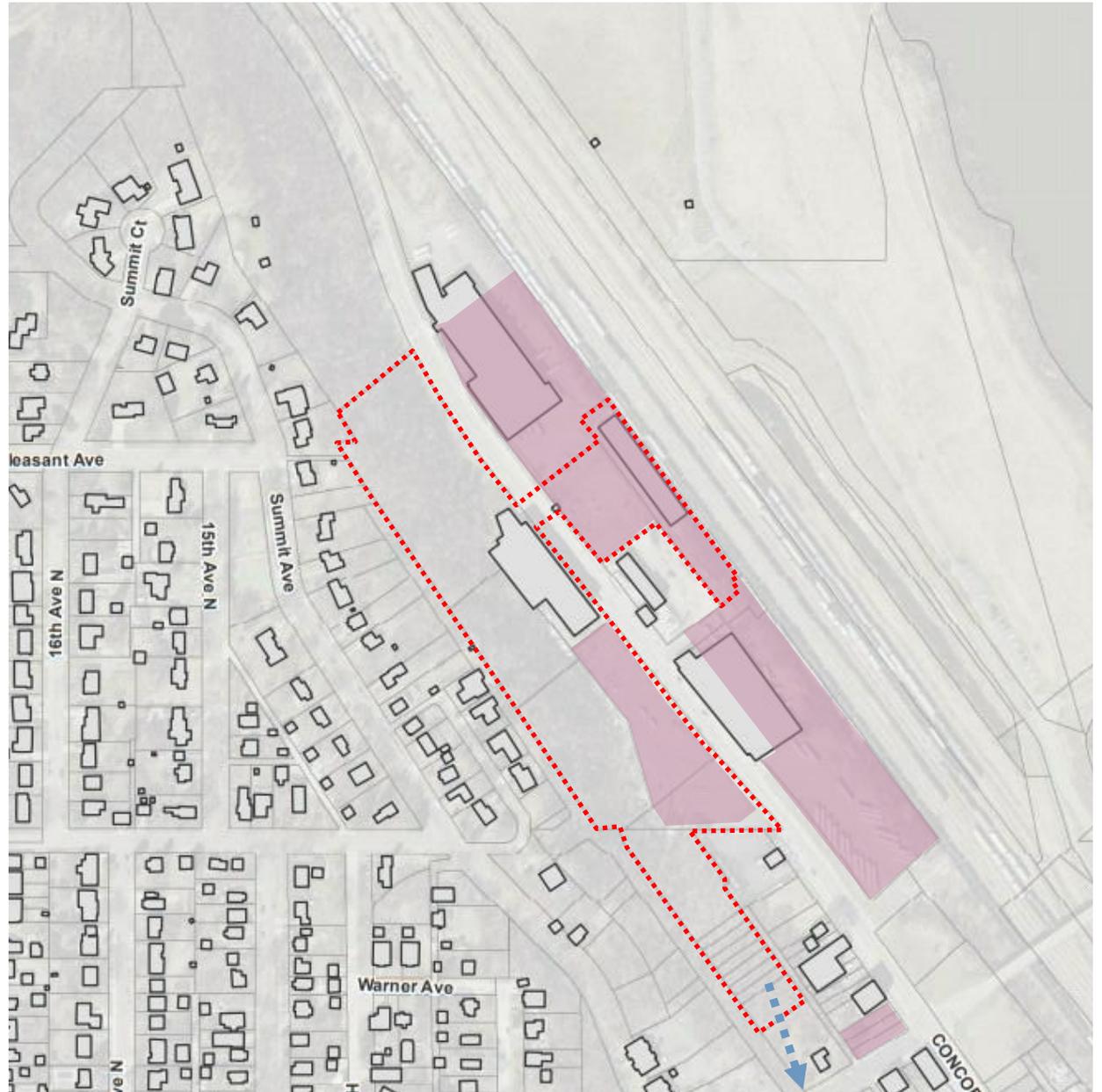
The transition from Saint Paul in this character area is primarily residential (highlighted in yellow) with buildings sitting up on the bluff or slightly elevated and fronting Concord, typically behind a retaining wall. Commercial uses are limited in this area to auto and commercial services (shown in red).



Character Area 2

North of Bryant

This area is distinguished by larger buildings including the two former Co-op/Cenex headquarters and parcels that are deeper and contain larger areas. A majority of this area is used for covered or outdoor storage and parking (purple area). The former Cenex building includes CKC Foods and a small number of office space tenants and contains the largest parcel area (approx. 9.26 acres—shown in red dashed line); site also has easement access to Bryant (blue dashed arrow). This is also the tallest building in the corridor at 4 stories.



Character Area 3

Bryant & Central

This area exhibits development patterns and buildings that date back to the streetcar era and before. The Ten O Nine building was designed by Cass Gilbert (architect who designed the MN State Capitol building) and is one of several older buildings that line the west side of Concord. The east side of Concord is mostly undeveloped at and around the intersection; the EDA owns land on both sides of the connection over to Kaposia Landing; Dakota County and EDA own land (shown in orange highlighted parcels) west of Buggs Bar. This area also has the most consistent building frontage (shown with red line) along the corridor.



Character Area 4

South of Central

This area narrows down significantly south of Fury Motors and essentially allows only very shallow depth buildings. On the west side of Concord the bluff is more pronounced allowing only room for on-street parking which is mainly used by residential located up on the bluff along Concord Place. Development opportunities are constrained by the bluff on one side and the narrow parcel depth on the east side.



Corridor Vision

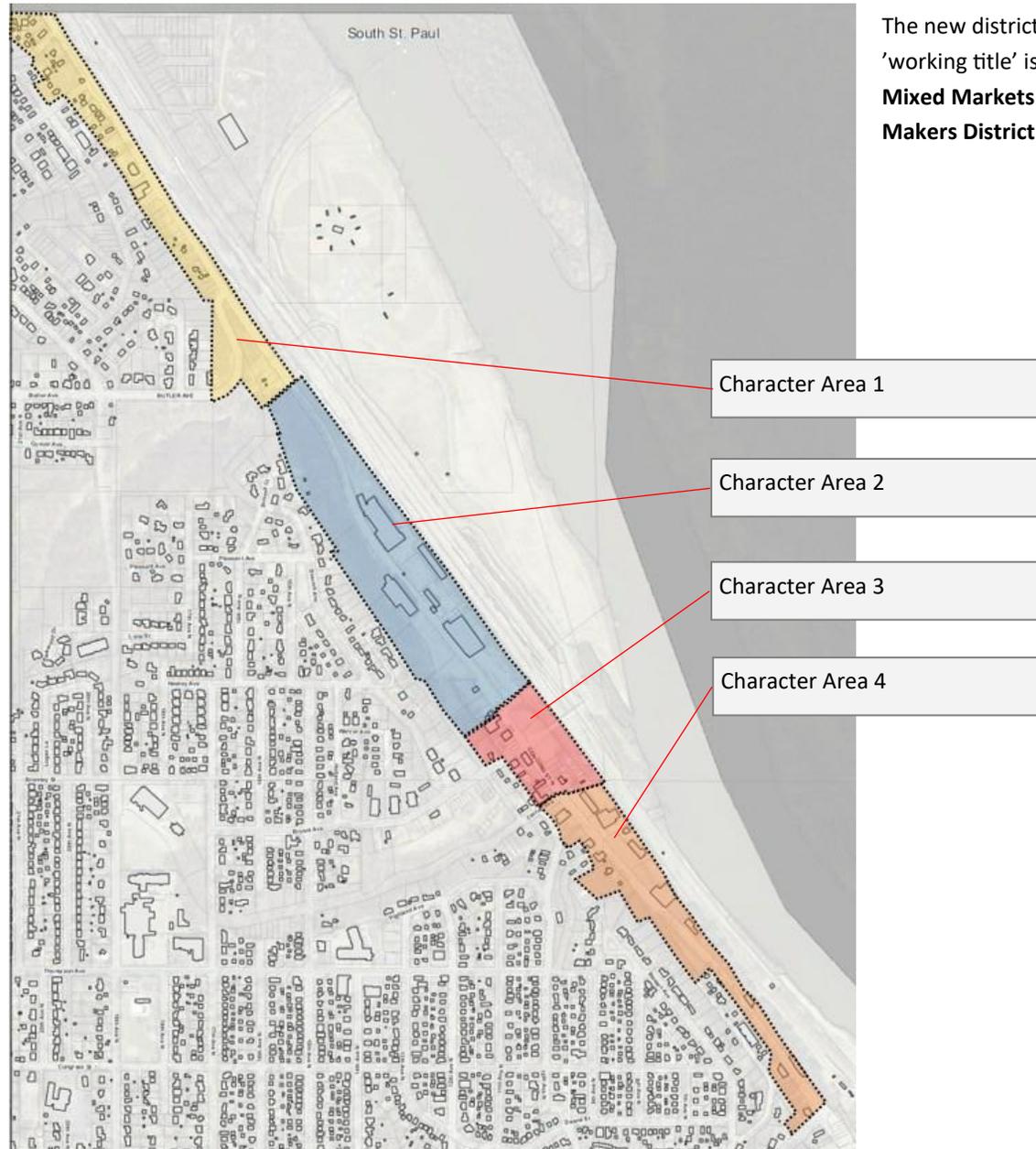
IV. Corridor Vision

The vision recognizes the distinct character areas that make up the corridor from North Concord at the Saint Paul border to Wentworth. The intent is to write new district zoning standards that relate and respond to each of the character areas. The vision is organized around two key ideas:

- Exploring the idea of a business-friendly/free market approach to parking with reduced or no minimum parking requirements for some areas/properties
- Working with the DNR to establish bluff-impact regulations that preserve the buildability potential of parcels along the corridor.

Corridor Vision Statement

The North Concord corridor is an area that has a broad history including native settlements and activities, unique river bluffs, geographical ravines, streetcar-era development, patterns, legacy business owners, historic buildings and commercial uses, and residential sited up on the bluffs. The corridor contains a wide variety of uses located along the western edge of the railroad corridor and the Mississippi River and river bluffs. The corridor is made up of smaller sub-areas, or districts, that consist of uses, natural conditions and development characteristics unique to each sub-area. The vision recognizes these distinct character areas and how refined regulatory standards can better support the uses and different setting of each area. The vision is focused less on strict site and material requirements and more on how existing buildings can be reused and how the corridor can better support a healthy range of commercial and residential uses that can flexibly respond to the broader market place.



The new district 'working title' is:
Mixed Markets & Makers District.

Corridor Vision

North Concord

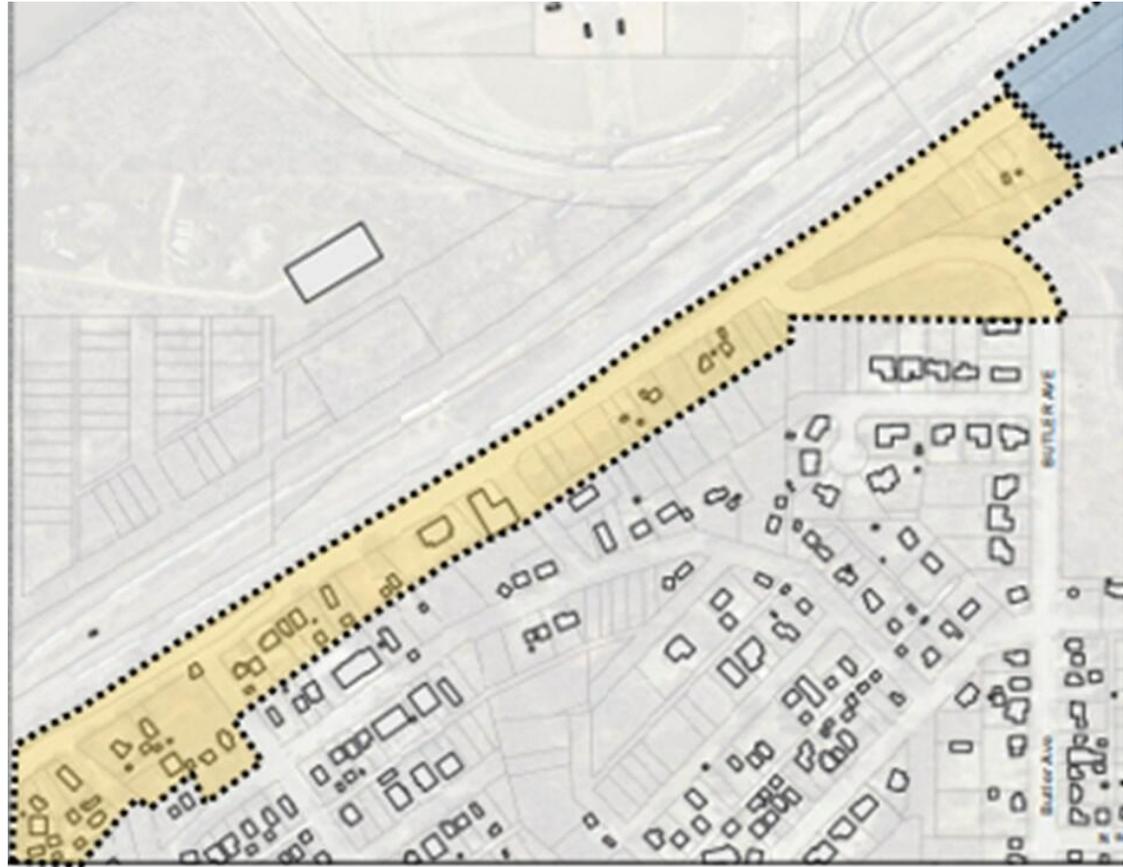
This sub-area is primarily residential in character; its context is smaller, detached buildings some of which are commercial services.

The visual quality in this area is wooded bluffs, green yards typically behind retaining walls that are located near the east property line.

Uses:

- Residential: detached & attached
- Small scale commercial regulated by FAR (FAR= floor area ratio)

Possible development types:



Corridor Vision

North of Bryant

This area includes larger buildings and deeper lots that allow for a greater range of building type and development density. The vision supports an emphasis on employment & residential use while also accommodating storage (surface and in structures)

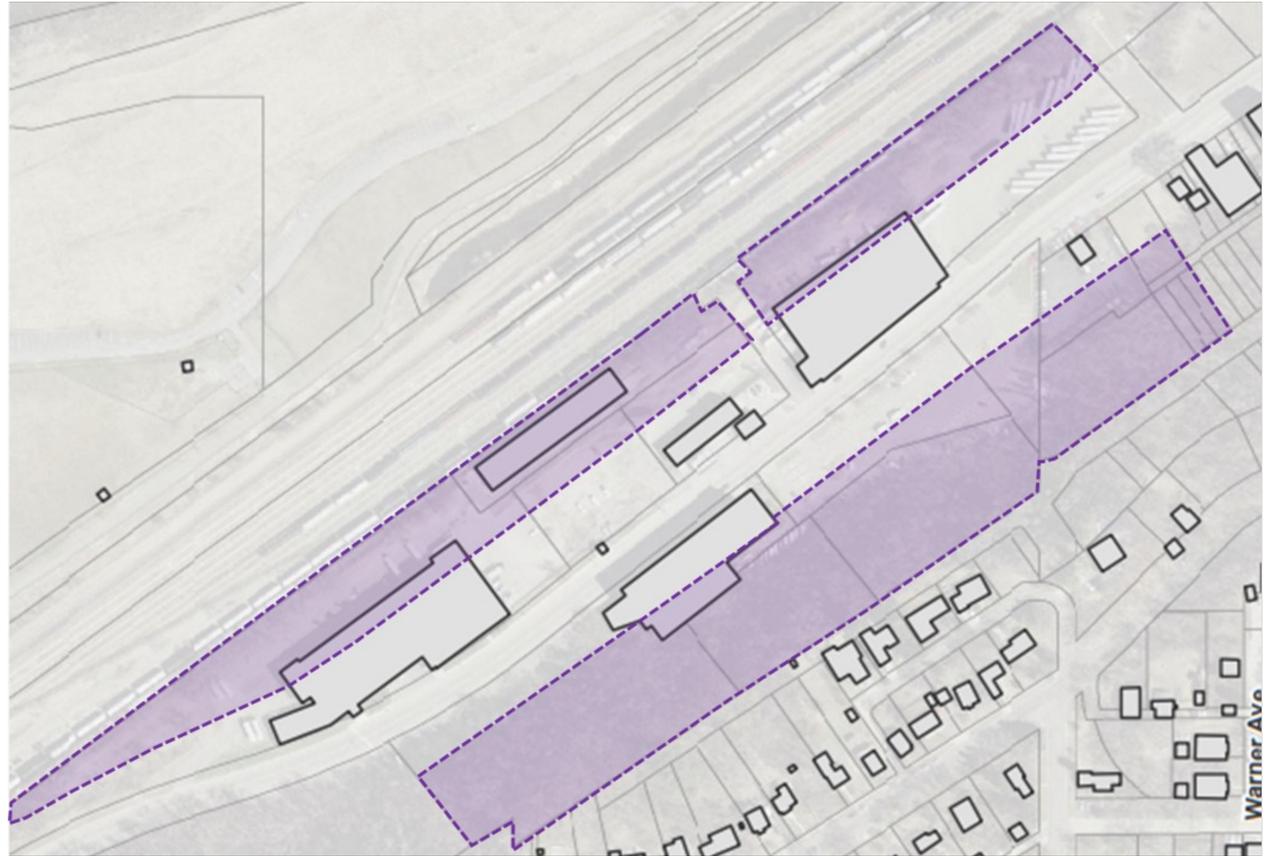
Uses:

- Multi-family residential
- Commercial/retail/storage with conditions
- No single family allowed

Storage and parking:

- min. 70' setback from Concord (shown in purple highlight)

Possible development types:



Corridor Vision

Bryant and Central

Bryant acts as the gateway to Kaposia Landing and is a very visible mixed use center along Concord. The vision supports this key location as a mixed-use center that utilizes some of the existing zoning standards and requirements such as 'build-to' line and parking arrangements. Attached residential is also appropriate in this area.

Uses:

- Commercial, retail
- Attached and multifamily residential
- Single family not allowed
- Storage and parking setback a minimum 70' from Concord
- Common/coordinated parking strategy: shared parking & parking improvement partnerships
- Commercial uses regulated by FAR (FAR = floor area ratio)

Possible Development Types:



Corridor Vision



Bryant and Central

New investment and development should support existing businesses with needed parking supply and highlight the “gateway” to Kaposia Landing at the east side of the Bryant/Concord intersection. Other uses could include commercial/retail, sandwich shop/restaurants, brewpub, coffee shop and attached residential housing.



Armor Plant Gates

The former Armor gate structures could be relocated to Bryant to announce the “gateway” into Kaposia Landing.

Corridor Vision

South of Central

This area includes legacy businesses such as Fury Motors, Ries Electric, Car & Credit Connection and McPhillips, Inc. This area has a wider range of service and contractor uses that includes parking, equipment storage, fuel storage and related activities.

Uses:

- Existing and variety of uses
- Auto sales with conditions
- No single family allowed
- More flexible standards



Possible Development Types:



Corridor Vision

South of Wentworth

Incorporate into the Concord Gateway Mixed Use District



Project Schedule

Task	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1 Proj Mgt	-----								
Kick off meeting	● (contract approved March 15th)								
2 Issue ID									
2.1 Tour corridor		● (tour the week of April 12 or 19th)							
2.1.1 Background Review	■								
2.2 CC/PC Workshop									
3 Public Participation									
3.1 Engagement plan	■								
3.2 CC/PC workshop		● 26th	● 24th				●	○	○
3.3 Open house					● 28th				
Stakeholder interviews		-----							
4 Corridor Vision									
Draft Vision			■						
4.1 Document				■					
5 Ordinance Amendment									
5.1 Draft ord.				■	■		● 1st		
5.2 Staff support							○ 20th	○ 4th	
6 Graphic Design Stds									
6.1 Site design stds					■	■			
6.2 Building design stds					■	■			

Key Dates:

- June 3: Planning Commission comments
- June 21: City Council meeting resolution