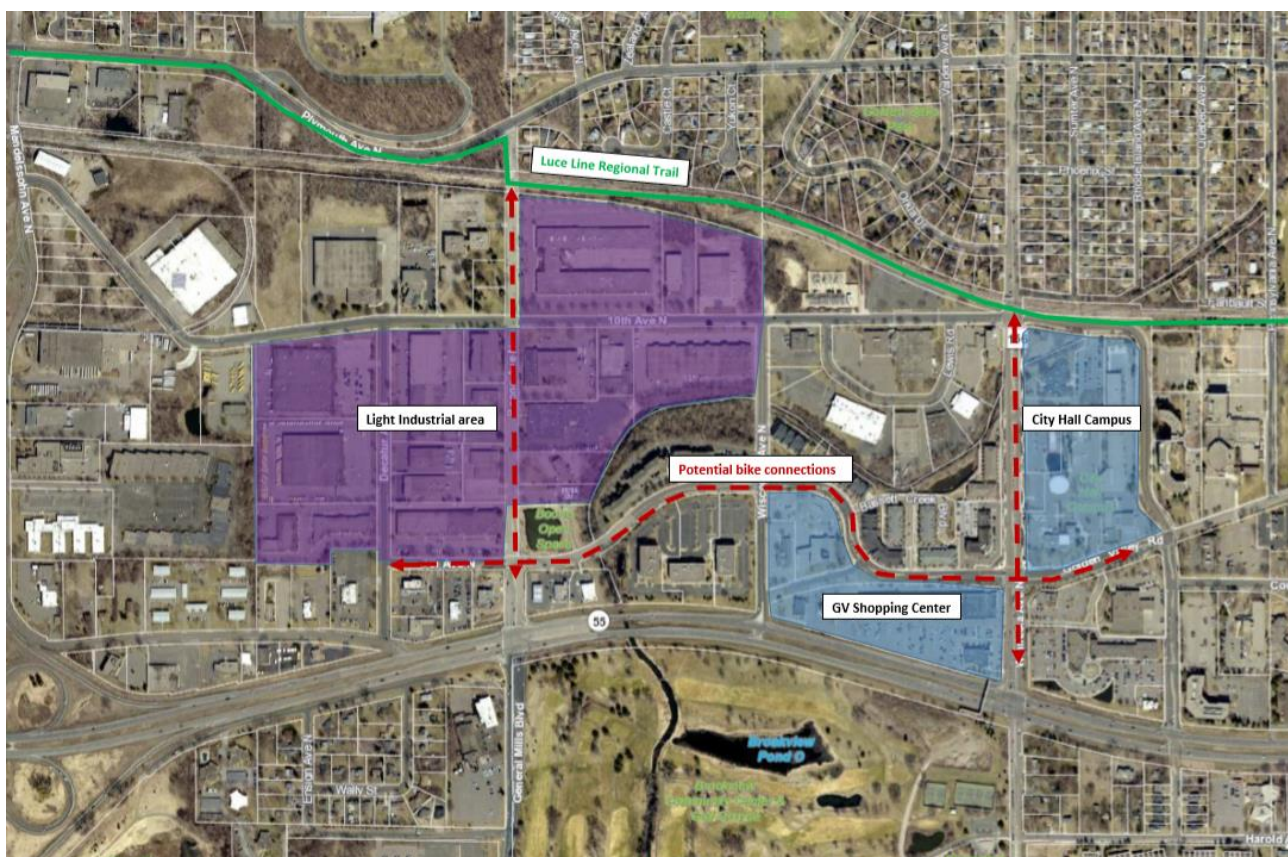


Golden Valley Downtown West

A ULI Minnesota Technical Assistance Panel
for Golden Valley

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Urban Land
Institute

Minnesota

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) are convened by ULI MN at the request of cities, counties or other public agencies. TAPs address specific development challenges such as site redevelopment options, downtown revitalization and environmental considerations.

TAPs convene development experts across disciplines who can offer recommendations based on the sponsor's questions. The goal is to generate ideas for realizing local, regional and state-wide aspirations. Panelists evaluate data, site conditions and future redevelopment readiness and provide specific recommendations to guide future land uses for each site, as well as future partnerships in the real estate industry.

In this instance, the City of Golden Valley (referred to as 'the City') invited a ULI MN Technical Assistance Panel to evaluate the market potential of Downtown West and how to best position the area for future redevelopment. Specifically, the City sought the panel's market analysis regarding specific sites as well as urban design ideas to strengthen the vitality of Downtown West and increase the viability of non-motorized movement.

THE PANEL

Panelists are ULI MN members and development experts volunteering time because of their commitment to the principles of redevelopment, planned growth, economic expansion and local and regional capacity-building.

PANEL

Tammy Omdal, *Northland Securities (Chair)*
Frank Clark, *Stahl*
Tony Kuechle, *Doran Companies*
Beth Pfeifer, *Assembly*
Josh Stowers, *HGA*
Mike Sturdivant, *Paster Properties*

ULI MN STAFF

Cathy Bennett
Gordon Hughes
Rachel Lieberman

THE PANEL'S CHARGE

The first evening, panelists connected with City elected and appointed officials and staff over dinner to hear about their goals for Downtown West. The City would like to see the area become more of a defined town center and believe a more cohesive redevelopment plan that includes the City Hall Campus, Golden Valley Shopping Center, Golden Valley Commons and the commercial and industrial areas to the west as defined in the study area is necessary to help provide both a short term and long-term plan and vision for the area. At the meeting City officials indicated that they have an interest in being a partner but are unclear what financial role they could play. They encouraged the panel to think big but be pragmatic in providing a path forward with the current market and ownership conditions. The panel member participated in a walking tour around the study area to observe firsthand the geography, land uses and current gaps that exist in connecting the areas together. The following day, the panel convened at the Brookview Community Center in Golden Valley to interview community stakeholders, to engage in deep discussion about the study area, to formulate answers to the panel's questions and to sketch out a development concept for the area (see Figure 1 on page 7). The day-long session ended with a preliminary report of the panel's findings and recommendations to key city staff members. A public presentation of the findings will also be provided.

ABOUT THE STUDY AREA: GOLDEN VALLEY DOWNTOWN WEST



Downtown West, as defined by the City of Golden Valley in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Golden Valley's draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan identified Downtown West as a planning district that needs further study. The City outlined Downtown West as the properties between Hwy 169 to the west, the Golden Valley Country Club to the east, the Luce Line Regional Trail to the north and Hwy 55 to the south.

Redevelopment efforts by the City's Housing and Redevelopment Authority in the 1980s resulted in a series of significant projects. These projects reorganized the street system, removed outdated and blighted buildings and spurred construction of new retail and housing developments. This work was generally focused along Winnetka Avenue North between Hwy 55 and the Luce Line Regional Trail, though in successive years new multi-family housing and office projects extended to the west along Golden Valley Road.

More recently, the City has approved new multi-family housing along Golden Valley Road in the western part of Downtown West. The construction of new public improvements (sidewalks and the undergrounding of overhead utility lines) will soon help connect the western parts of Downtown West with the commercial node at Winnetka Ave N and Golden Valley Road. A variety of new businesses have begun to revitalize some of the light industrial spaces along 7th Avenue. This includes both experiential uses like the escape room and more retail-oriented uses like the thrift store and brewery/taproom.

The Golden Valley Shopping Center, located at in the northwest quadrant of Hwy 55 and Winnetka Ave, has experienced varying levels of reinvestment over the years. The redevelopment of a free-standing building into three restaurants in 2006 and the addition of the New Bohemia restaurant on the west side of the mall in 2015 contrast with the overall state of the property. The City is interested in exploring ways to revitalize this property

and provide a better space for community social interaction.

In addition, residents and elected officials have prioritized better pedestrian and bicycle facilities in many parts of the City, especially in Downtown West. Connections to the Luce Line, which sits on the north edge of Downtown West, are relatively removed from the commercial activity along Winnetka Ave and Golden Valley Road. Connections of this kind are important in supporting a vibrant and active commercial and civic node.

Finally, the City Hall campus consists not only of administrative spaces for City operations, but also the Fire and Police Departments as well as buildings for storing and maintaining Public Works vehicles. A McDonald's and a local branch of the Hennepin County Library fill out the block. The City is interested in considering the future of the campus and how it might be reoriented or redeveloped to maximize the potential value of the land on which it sits.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The panel interviewed three property owners/representatives that were selected by the city as influential in providing background on key site development patterns, current conditions and perspective on future renovation and redevelopment of the study area. These interviews assisted the panel in developing their TAP key findings and recommendations.

JOE SMITH, SUMMERHILL COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

The building managed by Joe Smith at 8000 7th Avenue is a traditional office/warehouse building that has been transformed with a mix of retail and entertainment uses in the last five years. The building is successfully occupied due to the great location near the amenities of Winnetka Avenue and the easy access to highways. Smith is able to attract many tenants by marketing the building's proximity to downtown Golden Valley. There is a mix of tenant types including entertainment uses like gameshow battle rooms, glass blowing, a school for basketball and a brewery. Smith feels there is a strong market for the type of transformative light industrial users compatible with the nearby housing and retail services.



8000 7th Avenue

However, he believes there would also be a demand for traditional office/warehouse uses if properties were redeveloped with modern ceiling heights. Most tenants drive to work, and then drive to the services on Winnetka Avenue. Smith's main concern is ensuring sufficient parking. He supports the idea of infrastructure improvements like sidewalks and trails to provide his tenants with easier access to the downtown area and making better connections to the Luce Line through signage.

BEN STEINBERG, GOLDEN VALLEY COMMONS



Fountain and clock tower maintained privately by Golden Valley Commons serve as public gathering space

Golden Valley Commons is a higher end strip mall consisting of two buildings. The restaurant tenants and a wine and liquor store draw the most customers to the center. According to Steinberg, the mix of tenants has been important to the mall's success, as well as the semi-public gathering area in the center of the mall around the fountain and clock tower.

According to Steinberg, traffic is not an issue, but parking is precious, especially with the large number of restaurants. He believes a district parking model would not be ideal because convenience is very important, and people want to park right

next to where they are going. When asked if the promenade extending north from the fountain area of Golden Valley Commons could connect to something in the future, Steinberg said he had never considered this. For all intents and purposes, the mall is the center of Golden Valley. Steinberg said this is a nice asset, and in some ways pushes him to maintain it as an urban public park. If the post office site were redeveloped, Steinberg feels a restaurant would be a compatible use. Steinberg does not believe there is a need to build infrastructure

for people to walk between Golden Valley Commons and the Golden Valley Shopping Center as many businesses are similar in type but attract different customers. If the Golden Valley Shopping Center was redeveloped or repurposed into office or other uses, a walkway between the two areas may become more attractive.

RON TRACH, GOLDEN VALLEY SHOPPING CENTER

Ron Trach's father built the Golden Valley Shopping Center, and Trach is proud to run it and service Golden Valley with 'ma and pa' type stores. However, most of the tenants are very sensitive to an increase in occupancy costs. Some national tenants have located in the Golden Valley Shopping Center more recently including Chipotle, Smash Burger, Jimmy Johns and UPS, though many stores in the mall are still locally-owned and operated and provide a necessary service to the resident of the City. The former MN Federal building is an architectural icon and is currently used as a lighting studio. In 2016, the taxes on the center jumped about 32% in a year, according to Trach, about a \$135,000 increase, resulting in higher occupancy costs to his tenants. This was surprising to Trach since the uses and improvements of the center had not been changed. If the City were to improve the downtown area, Trach's main concern is the



Golden Valley Shopping Center



Former MN Federal Building, currently used as a Lighting Studio

likelihood of higher taxes. He does not support this, but would be open to accepting a grant from an outside source to cover improvement costs. Trach and his architect are particularly opposed to the idea of a new sidewalk on the south side of Golden Valley Road. Currently, the Golden Valley Shopping Center could accommodate a 15-20,000 sq. ft grocery but would have to remove or relocate some of the current tenants. Trach considers the shopping center to be the downtown and center of Golden Valley, and an important part of the City's history. He intends to continue to own the property and respond to the market needs of the community. At this time, he would not consider selling any of the property.

PANEL QUESTIONS

The panel was asked by the City to address the following questions:

1. Placemaking

What placemaking strategies can the City do to get people to the area, entice them to stay and to enhance the experience as a community gathering place without creating vehicle congestion and inconvenience?

2. City Hall Campus

Is the City Hall Campus an attractive redevelopment site? Are there opportunities for public/private partnerships involving the public uses here?

3. Golden Valley Shopping Center

What can the City do prospectively to position this area for improvement? From a market standpoint, what are the principal land use and design elements for the repurposing and/or redevelopment of the older shopping centers?



Photo taken along Winnetka Ave N during the panel's evening walking tour through Golden Valley Downtown West

4. Light Industrial Area

What should the City expect from the market in terms of repurposing of light industrial properties in this area? Should other non-traditional uses be allowed/encouraged in this area?

KEY FINDINGS

What's Possible for Golden Valley Downtown West

The sketch below of Golden Valley Downtown West was drawn by panelists to highlight development opportunities in the area. Note the general paths of connectivity flowing north, south, east and west through the shopping centers and the current City Hall campus. This includes a breezeway which would open up the Golden Valley Shopping Center and a pedestrian bridge (which could alternatively be a tunnel) crossing Highway 55 as an extension of Winnetka Ave N. Panelists drew a parking ramp on the current City Hall campus and a town center around the water tower. They also suggested potential development opportunities like a hotel, multifamily housing, grocery and townhomes. This drawing will be referred to throughout the report as Figure 1.



Figure 1. Sketch of potential concept plan in Downtown West

Strong Market with Development Potential in Golden Valley

Overall, there is great potential within Golden Valley as evidenced by the level of development activity, reinvestment within the industrial buildings, high quality tenants and the usage and low vacancy rate of the retail establishments. The panel believes the City can support even more retail. A grocery store and a limited service hotel are missing from the market in this area and could fuel even more retail or entertainment uses. There is a strong market for all types of land uses in Downtown West including multi-family market rate and affordable housing.

Narrow the Geographic Focus of Development

The panel believes the Downtown West area as defined by the City is too large and that the City should sharpen their focus to have a greater initial impact.

The panel recommends the City focus their efforts on the two shopping centers, the City Hall campus and the connection to Bassett Creek. The industrial area and newly added residential uses are transforming organically into an authentic neighborhood. The City should continue to support this change through flexibility with land use codes.

The panel also observed that the new Brookview Center/Golf Clubhouse is far from the delineated downtown area. This distance makes safe connections to these uses of critical importance. Making a more deliberate connection between these two points will be important.

Improve Connectivity Into and Within Golden Valley Downtown West

The winding streets and lack of a grid layout in Golden Valley present a navigation challenge for both pedestrians and vehicles. It is important to reinforce pathways for various types of transportation uses. As outlined in Figure 1, the panel recommends a path of connectivity linking the creek to the current City Hall campus, down to the Golden Valley Commons, across to the Golden Valley Shopping Center and up again to the north.

The panel also encourages the City to embrace Bassett Creek and the bike trails outlined in the comprehensive plan. Trails, bike paths and sidewalks improve connectivity, increase property values and are a key attraction for residents and development.

More specific recommendations to improve connectivity within downtown, to the Luce Line, between downtown and the Community Center and around Highway 55 are outlined under 'Placemaking' in the 'Panel's Response to Questions.'

Public Partnership is Key

The City's involvement in (re)development can take many forms but partnership is key. The City should identify a clear vision and develop a public finance policy that can help achieve that vision. Although financial assistance could be an important component of successful projects, the City could also consider approaches such as marketing initiatives or property assemblage. Whatever the approach, it is important for the City to align available resources and communicate them effectively to the (re)development community. The policies and practices outlined in the [ULI MN \(Re\)Development-Ready Guide](#) will assist the City in establishing (re)development and finance policies and practices that use scarce public dollars to attract private investment, grow jobs, and build tax base for the well-being of the City.

PANEL RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

These findings are based on the panel's opinions and analyses as real estate, planning, design, finance and development professionals. While the panel considers these ideas and suggestions sound, they are not directives. There is no substitute for developers with motivation and vision. Should partners come to the table with proposals that do not align with these findings but otherwise meet the City's goals, there should be no hesitation in moving forward.

PLACEMAKING

Improving Connectivity and Navigation

Connectivity to Luce Line

The Luce Line trail connects Theodore Wirth Park to the east with the City of Plymouth (and beyond) to the west. For most of its path through Golden Valley, it parallels the Union Pacific Railway. A road crossing at Winnetka Ave provides an opportunity for access to the downtown, but the volume of traffic on Winnetka coupled with the limited right-of-way width may discourage casual bikers from using this roadway. A secondary access point at Boone Avenue to the west could provide a more comfortable route to the western portion of the downtown.



Photo of the Luce Line Trail from Three Rivers Park District

The panel recommends the City pursue greater connectivity between the Luce Line trail and Downtown West. Connections would be improved by extending the bike trail as outlined in the City's comprehensive plan, as well as installing some bike stations for safe stops with maps, pumps, water, and storage accessible by GoCard around the City Hall campus or the library.

The bike and pedestrian section of the comprehensive plan is a great first step in identifying important gaps in the system and providing implementation steps to make these critical connections. The panel also stresses the asset of Bassett Creek and encourages the City to explore the possibility of a pedestrian or bike bridge over the creek as part of a trail. They believe the City should pursue trail easements from the large industrial area parking lots to allow the trail to be parallel to the Creek and its eventual connection to the Luce Line.

The panel recommends that the City pursue funding to move forward aggressively with the bike and pedestrian plan. They suggest securing resources from [Three Rivers Park District](#), [Move Minnesota](#), and transportation funding from places like the [Metropolitan Council](#), [Minnesota Department of Transportation](#), and [Hennepin County](#).

Connectivity between Downtown and the Community Center

It will be important to provide improved connections between the Brookview Community Center and Downtown West to enhance this current community asset with future Downtown investments. One very important step will be to improve the bridge over Highway 55.

Connectivity Within Downtown West

There is a connection challenge presented by the major roads in Downtown West. The City streets in this area are not in a grid pattern, making the area more difficult to navigate. The panel believes it's critically important to reinforce pedestrian, bike, and vehicular connections to draw users to and through the downtown area in a safe and appealing way.

To improve navigation and create a sense of place, the panel recommends cultivating visual corridors through wayfinding, public art and signage. In some places, like along Golden Valley Road, it would be appropriate to allow on-street parking as a way of encouraging people to leave their vehicles and use the sidewalks. Adding a defining green area or boulevard between the sidewalks and roadway enhances safety and creates a more attractive pedestrian experience, encouraging people to traverse the area. Despite the opinions of the Golden Valley Shopping Center owner, the panel believes that a new sidewalk along the south side of Golden Valley Road would be a very worthwhile addition to the area and be an enhancement to future private investment.

Connectivity Around Highway 55

According to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Hwy 55 runs east-west through the south center of Golden Valley and is a four-lane divided expressway with a median ditch through most of the community. There is a full access intersection at Winnetka Ave controlled by traffic signals. Traffic volumes in the area are high as this is a principal traffic arterial with an estimated 23,000 vehicles per day. The roadway design in this area, where delays and congestion are evident, contribute to the frequency of crashes and can be considered a safety hazard for pedestrians.

Even with these conditions, the panel did not view Highway 55 as a major barrier related to development. However, they did believe that improvements to the pedestrian experience should be considered to ensure safe pedestrian crossing and a more appealing and interesting experience for walking and biking. The panel understands that land bridges can an important aspirational goal across Hwy 55. Land



Winnetka Ave/Hwy 55 Sub-Area. Photo from the City of Golden Valley's 2040 Comprehensive Plan

bridges can help connect neighborhoods that were decimated by freeway construction, create development opportunities where none exist, and provide space for parks and open spaces in areas lacking such amenities. However, the panel discourages the construction of a land bridge in this area. In the panel's opinion, this part of Golden Valley is not characterized by the above shortcomings. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to pursue a land bridge here given the high costs to construct and maintain. Instead, the panel recommends the City improve/replace the pedestrian bridge and consider connecting it to Winnetka Ave N.



The panel recommends replacing this pedestrian bridge with a more attractive one, and connecting it to Winnetka Ave N

The replacement of the current bridge with something that's more attractive and user-friendly would go a long way in linking the north and south sides of Hwy 55. Also, a unique design, such as the Hiawatha bike bridge in Minneapolis, can create a symbol that something cool is happening in Golden Valley as people drive by, encourage them to stop in town. It could also be a gateway to the town center that includes a bike crossing or stopping area with navigational signage.

One of the concepts that was noted by the City is the notion of closing a portion of Winnetka Avenue north of Highway 55 and its conversion into a pedestrian-only mall. Such a conversion would have the desirable effect of enhancing connections between Golden Valley Commons and the Golden Valley Shopping Center as well as connecting the municipal campus with uses to the west. Although it did not study this concept in detail, the panel's reaction was that such a street closure would be very difficult to accomplish given the existing traffic volumes on Winnetka and the arrangement of other streets in the area. While the goal is laudable, the panel felt it would be more reasonable to create pedestrian-friendly areas and amenities along Winnetka to enhance the pedestrian experience along this street and others in Downtown West. Main Street in downtown Hopkins and 50th Street in the 50th and France area of Edina are good examples of shopping areas where pedestrians and vehicles safely share a street.

Create a Defined Golden Valley Town Center

After interviews with stakeholders, conversations with City officials and experiencing the area through a walking tour, the panel concluded that there currently is no commonly agreed upon "downtown" or town center.



*Golden Valley Water Tower as seen from City Hall.
Photo from Golden Valley Patch*

The panel sees the water tower area as a key Downtown West feature and recognizable as a community gathering spot. The City should embrace the water tower as a fun and interesting landmark by highlighting it with lights, public art, or unique painted features, and creating a designated town center around it. An artist in residence program surrounding the water tower could also generate activity in the area and give people a new reason to visit and gather in Downtown West.

When the tower needs to be replaced in 12-15 years, the City should ensure the design helps the water tower continue to be a unique feature for the City; a place authentic to Golden Valley. The City

should consider utilizing the tower and the space around it to become a public activity space with recreational uses such as a climbing wall or an amphitheater to support concerts and public events.

Additionally, the City could partner with Golden Valley Commons to bolster the organically utilized town center at the fountain and clock tower and create a designated pathway between this location and a new "town center" gathering space near the water tower.

CITY HALL CAMPUS

City Hall and Public Works

The City indicated that City Hall has been remodeled to try and meet the needs of modern governmental operations but that the layout is far from ideal. Many of the Public Works buildings do not have adequate capacity or dimensions to house new equipment. These factors, combined with their premier location at the heart of Golden Valley's downtown, have led City staff to wonder if the next adaptation of the property could involve a more substantial reworking of the site to provide better facilities and, perhaps, to share the campus with private development in the form of housing or commercial uses. The Golden Valley Library is also facing renovation/reconstruction in the coming years, adding another potential opportunity for partnership.

The panel believes the current City Hall location is in the center of what should be the focus of Downtown West redevelopment. They recommend consolidating and relocating public works operations to a more commercial/industrial part of the City. A new public works facility located close to the existing school bus facility in the industrial area could take advantage of things such as joint fueling, vehicle maintenance services and other functions that would be possible with adjacent facilities.

The current City Hall campus is a great place for City Hall itself, but it would be better situated on the north end of the campus rather than the Golden Valley Road frontage which has great development potential for a variety of privately owned and developed uses. One option that should be explored is to combine City Hall with as many city facilities as possible. This could include public service facilities, the fire hall, and the library. This would mean greater efficiency for the City, and potentially a City building that could be the northern anchor of the town center surrounding the water tower, as depicted in Figure 1. This would also free up more land for development and create a more desirable development parcel closer to Golden Valley Road.

As noted earlier, the panel recommends an enhanced pedestrian connection between the City Hall campus and Golden Valley Commons to draw pedestrians from one area to the other. Based on the current layout of Golden Valley Commons, it appears that such a connection was envisioned when Golden Valley Commons was initially constructed but was never implemented. This connection could be implemented in the short term to provide an improved connection in anticipation of a redeveloped City Hall campus. This will help set the stage for a new walkable environment integrating the future town center with the community gathering spaces of Golden Valley Commons.



Golden Valley Public Library

The panel believes the southeast corner of the current City Hall campus is the most viable redevelopment site. Suggested land uses include residential, hotel and/or service retail uses. Residential uses would begin to create a sense of place and could serve as a visual cue to visitors that they are nearing or entering the new town center and public gathering space. The metro area lacks hotel accommodations along the Hwy 55 corridor and the panel agreed that the City

Hall campus would be a good location. The campus could also include a centralized district parking ramp to allow for a more densely developed area. It may be possible to fund ramp construction with proceeds from the sale of public land to private developers and/or tax increment financing proceeds collected from the increase in taxes generated by privately developed portions of the site. Due to the impact that autonomous vehicles may have in the future, any new parking ramp built in Downtown West should be designed in a way that would allow it to be repurposed in the future. Whether you believe that driverless cars will be here in 5 years or in 25 years, today's parking ramps and other infrastructure will likely outlive their useful life as the impact of autonomous vehicles become a reality, dramatically shifting how people get around, how many cars they own if any, and street and parking design for cities.

In the long-term, the panel suggests planning for the redevelopment of the current McDonalds and Post Office parcels. The Post Office site is key for downtown redevelopment, and the process should be started now. One option is to include a post office service function within a redeveloped City Hall/Library. There is value in having the McDonalds in the area, but it may be better suited to another location near other fast food restaurants like the Culvers located to the west near the industrial area. Based upon panel members knowledge of fast food restaurant chains, there are specific timelines for improvements that may be required to comply with corporate standards. The panel suggests that the City begin an initial conversation with the owners of McDonalds now, so that they have an opportunity to evaluate the cost and benefits of a new location prior to making any upgrades at the current location.

GOLDEN VALLEY SHOPPING CENTER

Originally built in the 1950s, the Golden Valley Shopping Center has been a fixture at Winnetka Ave and Hwy 55 for decades. The mall consists of four buildings— a main building, a newer structure containing three restaurants in the southeast corner, a lighting store in a unique building that previously housed a Midwest Federal Savings and Loan, and a stringed instrument rental business to the West.



In many ways, the shopping center acts as a small-town

Golden Valley Shopping Center, Photo from RE/MAX Results and Homes MSP

Main Street for Golden Valley. Current tenants include a hardware store, a dry cleaner, an auto parts store and an insurance agent. In recent years, vacancies have become more common and, according to the City, the perception from some residents is that the maintenance and upkeep of the property have been lacking.

The current condition of the GVSC property and the occupancy of the principal building on the site fall short of what could be accomplished by a comprehensive redevelopment of or significant improvements to the property. Based upon the panel's interview, the owner of the GVSC has strong family ties to the property and is uninterested in pursuing a redevelopment or selling any part of the property. In addition, any improvements to the property that increase occupancy costs for tenants or debt load for the owner are of no interest. Although the panel indicated there is market interest in a comprehensive redevelopment of the site, this would not be feasible in the foreseeable future without significant City investment and regulatory authority. Therefore, in the short term, the panel recommends partnering with the GVSC owner to pursue more modest improvements that offer benefits without high costs until such time as the ownership interest shifts.

In the short-term, the panel recommends partnering with the shopping center owner to make improvements that will offer benefits without high costs.

The City should also look to activate the parking lot with more public events. The existing seasonal garden store within the currently underutilized parking field is a good example of creating activities in an otherwise unattractive sea of asphalt.

Another short-term improvement would be to reconfigure the traffic flow in front of the center by shifting the driving lane away from the front of the building and providing a curving roadway to the south (See Figure 1). This would reduce cut through traffic that creates a safety issue for shopping center patrons. This could also allow parking against the building near the center's sidewalk which is recommended by the panelists. The shopping center is a great location for a grocery store and the City should assist the owner in attracting such a use. Small scale grocers like Aldi, Fresh Thyme, a co-op, or Trader Joes would be a good fit here.



The Panel suggests opening the existing breezeway and connecting it to the neighborhood to the north

As evidenced by the usage of the fountain at Golden Valley Commons, the neighborhood is looking for gathering places. The panel suggests working with the owner to open the existing breezeway in the middle of the shopping center to create a public pathway connecting the neighborhood to the north through the center and to the front doors of the shops. Opening the breezeway would create more attractive and visible storefronts and would not significantly hinder the creation of future developable parcels. These short term improvements will need to be made a little or no cost to the existing owner. The City should review ways to accomplish these improvements by seeking grants or funding through other public financing methods.

There is significant market interest in this location and the City should be prepared for more comprehensive redevelopment that includes adding density with a mix of uses. The panel believes this could be accomplished in phases as the property owner becomes willing to entertain such investments himself or in partnership with other developers or when the ownership changes.

If the GVSC owner is unwilling to pursue significant improvements to the property, the City may be better served by prioritizing opportunities on the periphery of the GVSC site. In particular, the panel believes that Wells Fargo and the Park Nicollet site are very attractive redevelopment sites, especially when combined with property coming from the possible vacation of the street to the south. This could be an ideal location for a grocery store that could include a small satellite bank or clinic. Successful redevelopments on these sites could also enhance market interest in GVSC thus sparking further incremental redevelopment of the shopping center on its west side.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AREA

Increasingly over the past few years, older industrial buildings have been attracting entertainment and experiential type businesses. As the downtown continues to expand to the west, the City should consider modifying its zoning regulations to allow more flexibility and to encourage additional entertainment and experiential type activity in this area. Like NE Minneapolis or the North Loop, the buildings in the light industrial area are functionally obsolete as light industrial/office warehouse spaces. The fact that these areas are transitioning to experiential retail, restaurants and family entertainment uses is a testament to the market demand and the willingness of the City and property owners to accommodate non-traditional tenants. The

development occurring in this light industrial area is positive and the panel recommends letting the area organically reconfigure and respond to the market. Nontraditional uses should continue to be allowed where appropriate. Creative office space and uses such as maker spaces are particularly good fits when it comes to reutilizing older industrial buildings. Maker spaces are physical spaces that encourage open collaboration where people have access to resources, knowledge, professional connections and tools that they share in order to develop projects with the aim of creating products or services.

The City should evaluate modifying their zoning codes to allow these non-traditional uses as principal uses rather than requiring a conditional use permit process. Even though the existing property representative did not see the process as a barrier, other owners may in the future. Although non-traditional uses may fit well, the City should be mindful that the market is also strong for traditional office and warehouse uses in this area, especially if buildings can be redeveloped to increase ceiling heights. Areas within the 494/694 loop are very attractive locations for distribution centers.

In addition, the panel recommends that the City evaluate the option of converting an older industrial building into a new public works garage. Talking to the owners about the City's interest in this regard could open up that opportunity as the owners look to repurpose and/or sell the buildings in the future.

This area could also benefit from improved pedestrian and bike connections as there will likely be more people walking to and from the residential areas to the west and commercial uses to the east. The City should include a bike trail coming from the Luce Line and connecting this area to the town center/ Golden Valley Commons. One of the best things for the City to do is establish safe and inviting pedestrian experience via lighting, landscaping, and wider sidewalks. This could be financed by establishing a special service district or setting up a lighting assessment. Research and conversations with existing property owners on the costs and benefits of these financing methods to make the improvements should be explored and initiated by the City.

Finally, the panel noted that housing surrounding this light industrial area is already happening and it is anticipated that more proposals for housing to the north will come particularly if the City pursues infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, signage and lighting.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Downtown West is in a great place with the advantage of being a cool, walkable neighborhood that businesses are wanting to move to. Moving forward, the City should work to ensure placemaking and future development is proactive not retroactive by investing in small projects that align with a long-term land use plan and community vision

1. Pursue completing a small area plan for the town center.

One of the most important next steps in the process is to come together as a City (political leadership, staff and community) with an agreed upon small area plan for the town center taking into consideration the key findings summarized in the TAP report and input from community members. Small area plans are a useful tool to help guide future growth with particular emphasis on the special character of the area, its vision, and an implementation strategy. Figure 1 can be a launching point to start that conversation. Leadership and “consistency of vision” are keys to successful communities, especially the alignment of policy direction between elected officials and staff.

2. Create long term financial strategy and related short-term goals.

The vision for Downtown West is not likely to be fully achieved without investment by the City. The panel suggests that the City develop a more comprehensive and detailed public finance assistance policy including guidelines for tax increment financing, tax abatement, special service district, and other tools that may be needed to jump start redevelopment of Downtown West and perhaps other key properties in the City. Is the City willing to consider use of public finance tools to pay certain project costs? If so, under what conditions and for what purposes? Developers are interested in pursuing projects in cities that have a well-crafted and predictable model for the types of developments that will merit public participation. Setting the stage now through more specific policies will pay dividends later as properties transition to new ownership or when current owners become interested in pursuing redevelopment.

3. Begin discussions with property owners and be willing to partner in the redevelopment, relocation and renovation within a smaller defined downtown redevelopment area.

The panel believes the City should start conversations sooner rather than later with property owners regarding a long-term vision for the area. This includes Hennepin County for the Library, the Post Office, McDonalds, Wells Fargo and the Health Clinic. Continued conversations with the Golden Valley Shopping Center should also be pursued in the best interest of the City, the owner and the tenant.

4. Implement public improvements to enhance and connect to natural features.

The City should proceed with the bike and pedestrian plan outlined in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and begin actively seeking finding. The panel also suggests that the City embrace opportunities to enhance and connect to natural features like Bassett Creek. The creek is currently an underutilized asset that, when improved, will generate more value to the adjoining property owners. A land bridge is unnecessary here but a more connected pedestrian/bike tunnel under or bridge over Highway 55 is recommended as a longer-term strategy to fully connect Downtown West with the Brookview community center. The City should continue to use wayfinding and public art to foster placemaking and to connect



Bassett Creek

important places in Golden Valley along safe and interesting routes.

5. Utilize City Hall Campus to jumpstart creation of a densely developed town center.

The City should narrow the scope of Golden Valley Downtown West and focus on development around a centralized focal point. This includes:

- Evaluate other possible locations in more industrial settings for the Public Works Operations garage, maintenance and storage.
- Consider consolidating City Hall with the library and pursue other complementary private development uses on the campus.
- Embrace the water tower and area surrounding as a town gathering spot and make deliberate connections to the area from the surrounding properties as illustrated in Figure 1.
- Create other recognizable gathering space meeting spots and identifiable Golden Valley features to begin to create a sense of place.
- By focusing in on the properties that the City controls first, the private market interest will naturally follow.

PANELIST BIOS

TAMMY OMDAL

TAP CHAIR

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

NORTHLAND SECURITIES



Tammy has worked in public and private financial management for more than 25 years. Tammy's areas of expertise include: debt issuance and management, financial planning, economic development, redevelopment, housing, annexations/mergers, and strategic planning. She is effective at helping clients solve critical and challenging financial issues in a thoughtful and creative manner. She has participated in many projects involving the use of TIF and tax abatement. This experience spans a wide variety of projects and settings. Prior to joining Northland Securities in 2011, Tammy served as the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer for the City of Burnsville, MN. She also served as Financial Management and Budget Director for the City of Minneapolis, MN.

FRANK T. CLARK, CCIM, LEED, AP

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

STAHL



Frank is currently the Director of Strategy and Development for Stahl. He provides leadership and overall strategy for efforts across the Stahl platform. Frank has over 20 years of real estate experience, covering office, land, multifamily and retail sectors. Prior to Stahl, Mr. Clark was the Senior Development Manager for The Ackerberg Group where he oversaw the Development Department, leading project teams through all aspects of the development process. In addition, Frank has worked on behalf of Hines and Pulte Homes, holding positions in management, acquisitions, and leasing. Frank holds a Bachelor of Arts in economics from Denison University, and is a Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) and LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP). Frank is an active member in numerous commercial real estate and professional groups; he serves on the Advisory Board

for the Urban Land Institute and serves on the Board of Directors of CCIM Minnesota. He is also a member of Minnesota Sustainable Growth Coalition and Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (MNCAR).

TONY KUECHLE

PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

DORAN COMPANIES



Tony Kuechle is President of Development for Doran Companies and has more than 20 years of industry experience in development, acquisitions and asset management. In the past three years, Tony has developed more than 1400 luxury multi-family units in some of the most exclusive areas of the Twin Cities. Most recently, he led the development of The Moline in Hopkins, 610 West in Brooklyn Park and The Reserve in Maple Grove. Current developments include Aria in Edina, The Expo in downtown Minneapolis and The Triple Crown at Canterbury Park, all luxury apartment communities with a combined value of more than \$400 million. A graduate of St. Cloud State University, Tony holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Real Estate and Finance.

BETH PFEIFER

ADVISOR

ASSEMBLY

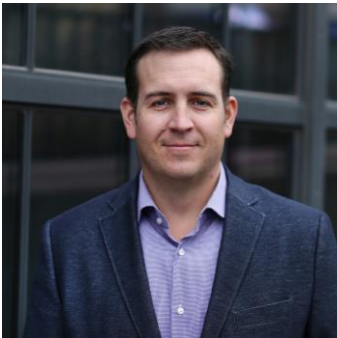


Educated as an architect and having spent 20 years in architecture, private development, and the public sector, Beth has successfully completed numerous development projects in the Twin Cities metro area. At Assembly Beth specializes in the management and development of multi-family housing, mixed-use, and commercial properties. Her ability to think strategically through all aspects of the development process—from acquisition through design, entitlements, financing, construction, and occupancy—make her an asset to the team. Beth is the former board chair of Move MN, and a former board member of the American Institute of Architects Minnesota. She participates in WIRED UP, the Urban Land Institute, Lambda Alpha International, and is LEED AP. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and two daughters, where she enjoys being an active user of Minneapolis's award-winning park system.

JOSH STOWERS

PRINCIPAL, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT

HGA



Josh is a Principal in the Minneapolis office where he collaboratively leads business development opportunities, client relations and new projects for HGA's Public | Corporate Practice Group. Josh has more than 15 years of project leadership and design experience focused on corporate and commercial architecture including Fortune 500 companies. His expertise includes project management, design, workplace strategy, sustainability, and adaptive re-use. Josh has a Master of Architecture and Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Minnesota. He is a regular speaker at CoreNet Global's Summit and a Past-President of CoreNet Global's Midwest Chapter. Josh is a recipient of Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Award and Minnesota Business Magazine (Real) Power 50 Award.

MIKE STURDIVANT

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

PASTER PROPERTIES



Mike is the Director of Development for Paster Properties executing real estate development and acquisition opportunities for Paster. Mike's development responsibilities include: Guiding project direction and coordination from pre-development to completion of construction; negotiating with land owners and brokers through LOI and purchase agreements; managing pre-development activities including acquisition, environmental review, project concept development, budgeting, cost analysis and financing. Prior to joining Paster Properties, Mike worked with developers CSM Corporation and H.J. Development, both local developers who own large real estate portfolios throughout the Twin Cities.

ULI MINNESOTA

ABOUT US

ULI Minnesota is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members and sponsors. Founded in 1936, ULI now has more than 40,000 members worldwide representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, including developers, builders, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics and students.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

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Supported by ULI Minnesota, the nationally recognized Regional Council of Mayors (RCM) was formed in 2004 and represents Minneapolis, Saint Paul and 52 municipalities in the developed and developing suburbs and Greater Minnesota. This collaborative partnership provides a nonpartisan platform that engages mayors in candid dialogue and peer-to-peer support with a commitment towards building awareness and action focused on housing, sustainability, transportation and job growth.

ADVISORY SERVICES

ULI has a long history of providing unbiased, market-based solutions and best-practice advice on land use and building resilient and competitive communities through Advisory Services. At ULI MN, three advisory service options are offered to policy leaders. Each option, including the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), engages ULI MN real estate professionals who volunteer their time and talent to contribute their wisdom and expertise.

For more information, visit minnesota.uli.org.

“Successful development and redevelopment is rarely by chance; it is the result of vision and continuous effort by dedicated leaders. The ULI MN Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) is effective in providing unbiased and informed ideas for helping a community take a step forward toward realizing its aspirations.”

Tammy Omdal, Northland Securities



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