



Hillcrest Master Plan



INITIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

PUBLIC REVIEW

AUGUST, 2020



WHERE IS HILLCREST?

Hillcrest is a 112-acre site in the northeast corner of Saint Paul - at the intersection of Larpenteur Ave and McKnight Road. The site was developed in the early 20th Century as a golf course. The golf course closed in 2017. In July of 2019, the Saint Paul City Council approved bonds for the Saint Paul Port Authority to purchase the site with the intent to redevelop the site to benefit the surrounding communities.

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The City of Saint Paul - in collaboration with the Saint Paul Port Authority, community members, and consultants - is developing a master plan. The purpose of the master plan is to develop a future vision for the site including future land uses and street network for the site. Key goals of the plan include how to build opportunity and community wealth on the redeveloped Hillcrest site – *bringing more housing, jobs, and public amenities*.

WHO IS LEADING THIS EFFORT?

The City of Saint Paul is leading the master plan process, in collaboration with community members, consultants, and the Port Authority.

WHAT IS THE CAC?

The Hillcrest Community Advisory Committee (CAC) provides feedback to City staff and consultants throughout the master planning process. Topics include land use priorities, street and trail networks, open space and neighborhood connections. The CAC’s mission includes that its members represent the broader community in addition to (their) own unique perspectives.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was appointed by Mayor Melvin Carter from among over 70 applications via an open application process. The members of your CAC are:

- Anne DeJoy (Planning Commissioner)
- Osman Egal (Saint Paul/Maplewood resident)
- Jon Fure (Saint Paul resident)
- Kathryn Murray (Saint Paul resident)
- James Westin (Saint Paul resident)
- Rachel Finazzo Doll (District 2 Community Council representative)
- Linda Martinez-Higgins (Maplewood resident)
- Tiffany Scott Knox (Maplewood resident)
- Tong Thao (Business representative)
- Que Vang (Housing representative)
- Ethan Osten (Multimodal transportation representative)

TIMELINE

WINTER 2020	PHASE 1	Research, Data Collection, and Initial Public Engagement The City of Saint Paul, in collaboration with the community and consultant team, collected and reviewed information on the site's the history, current conditions, opportunities, and constraints. This included technical and sustainability analyses as well community wants and needs. This information will be used to develop Hillcrest Master Plan's Goals and Priorities.
SPRING 2020	PHASE 2	Initial Site Approaches Development Using the goals and priorities developed in Phase 1, the Hillcrest team developed initial development concepts for the site.
SUMMER 2020	PHASE 3	Initial Site Approaches Public Review The initial development concepts are being presented to the public for their review. Multiple tools, from on-line surveys to in-person events, will be used to capture community feedback on this initial development concepts.
FALL 2020	PHASE 4	Finalist Scenarios and Draft Master Plan Text Development Feedback from the community, associated governmental agencies, and other stakeholders will be reviewed and analyzed. The development concept will be adjusted to incorporate this feedback. The Master Plan document will be developed.
NOVEMBER 2020	PHASE 5	Finalist Scenarios Public Review Finalist development scenarios will be created that incorporate this feedback
2021	PHASE 6	Formal City Process City staff put forward final scenario and Master Plan document for CAC comment and public hearings at Planning Commission and City Council.



CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS

The Site's current landscape reflects its previous use as a community golf course. It is distinctive for the rolling topography, mature tree canopy, and water features. Less visible is soil contamination associated with previous pesticide use on the course.

The development scenarios will incorporate aspects of the existing site that the community and/or technical advisory committee identify as valuable to the ecology, culture, or function of the site and/or surrounding systems. Remediation of the mercury pollution will be part of any future development.

WETLANDS

The Site has several wetlands and ponds that are in the process of being delineated. If designated as "jurisdictional" they are subject to federal requirements. If not, they are subject to watershed district requirements.

TOPOGRAPHY

Though the site has been artificially graded as a golf course, it has always been the high point of Ramsey County - thus the name, "hillcrest". The ridge connecting the three peaks defines waterflow on the site, with 2/3rds of the site draining to the south and 1/3 draining to the north.

TREES

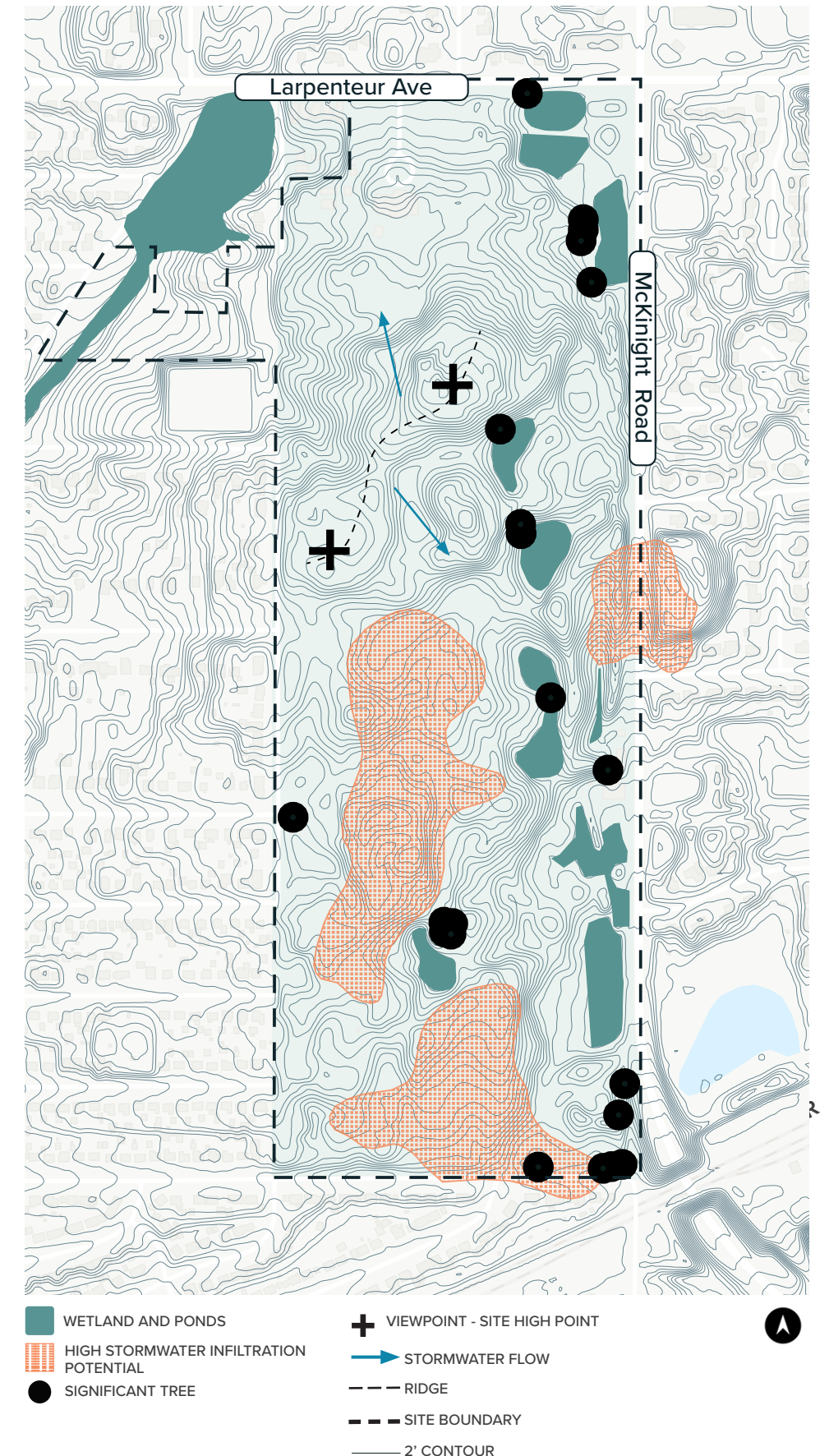
Trees on site consist of red and bur oaks, maple, elms and river birch trees along the edges of the site and arranged along the fairways. Many of the trees were planted for the golf course, several are over 100 years old. These trees create urban habitat and

SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

The neighborhoods to the east and west are quiet neighborhoods with primarily, though not exclusively single family homes.

SOILS AND CONTAMINATION

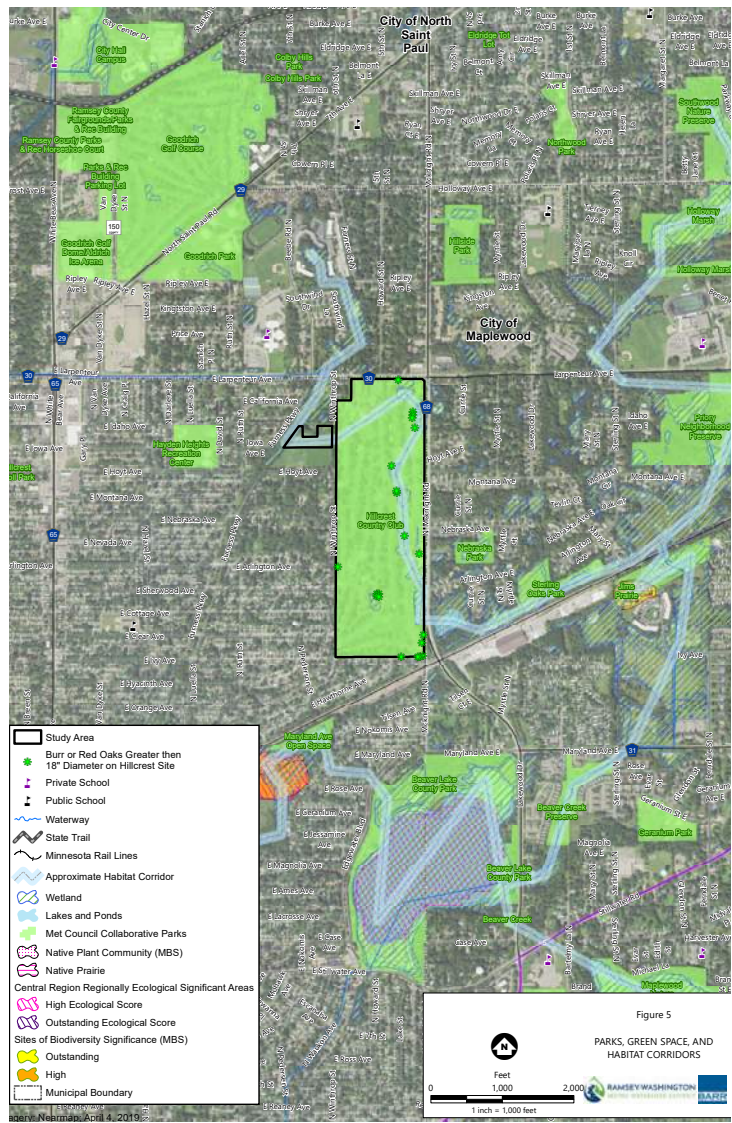
Much of the soil will have to be removed due to mercury contamination. The contamination is highest in the tee boxes and greens of the golf course. Removal of the contaminated soil will result in the loss of many trees. Soils on the southern portion of the site have a high potential for infiltration.



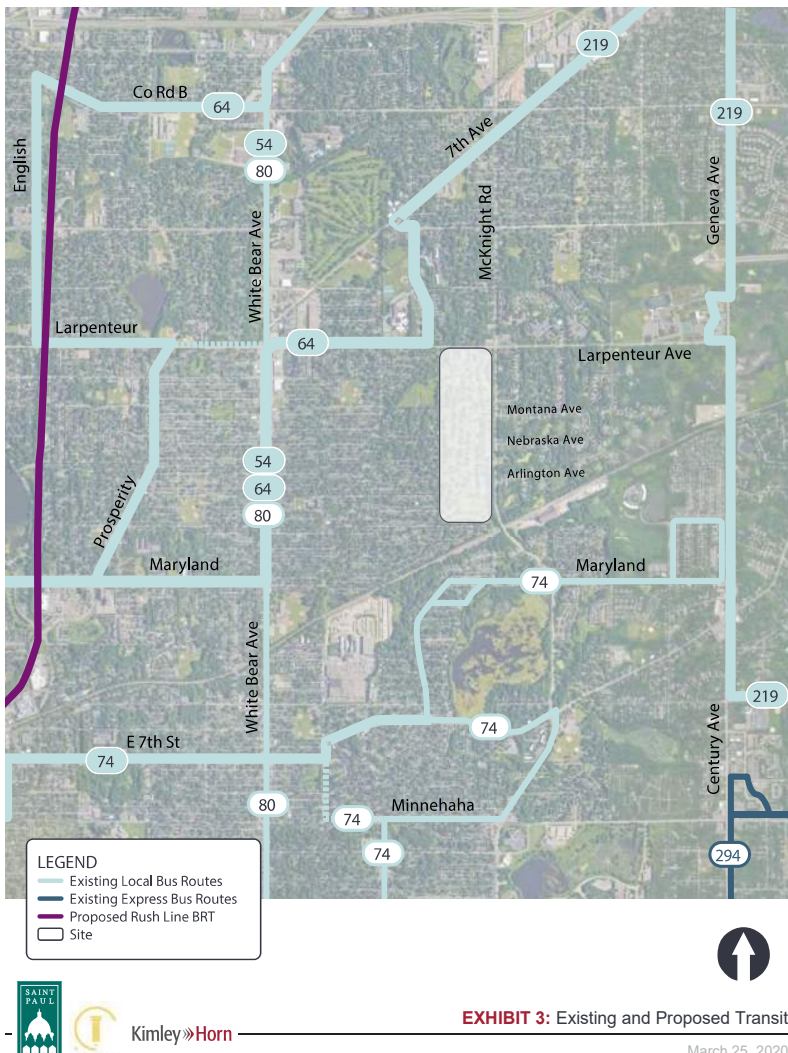
SYSTEM CONNECTIONS

The site is connected to a variety of urban and ecological systems that extend beyond the project boundary. The approaches identify ways to connect to the existing systems to benefit the new development and potentially improve the systems they are effecting.

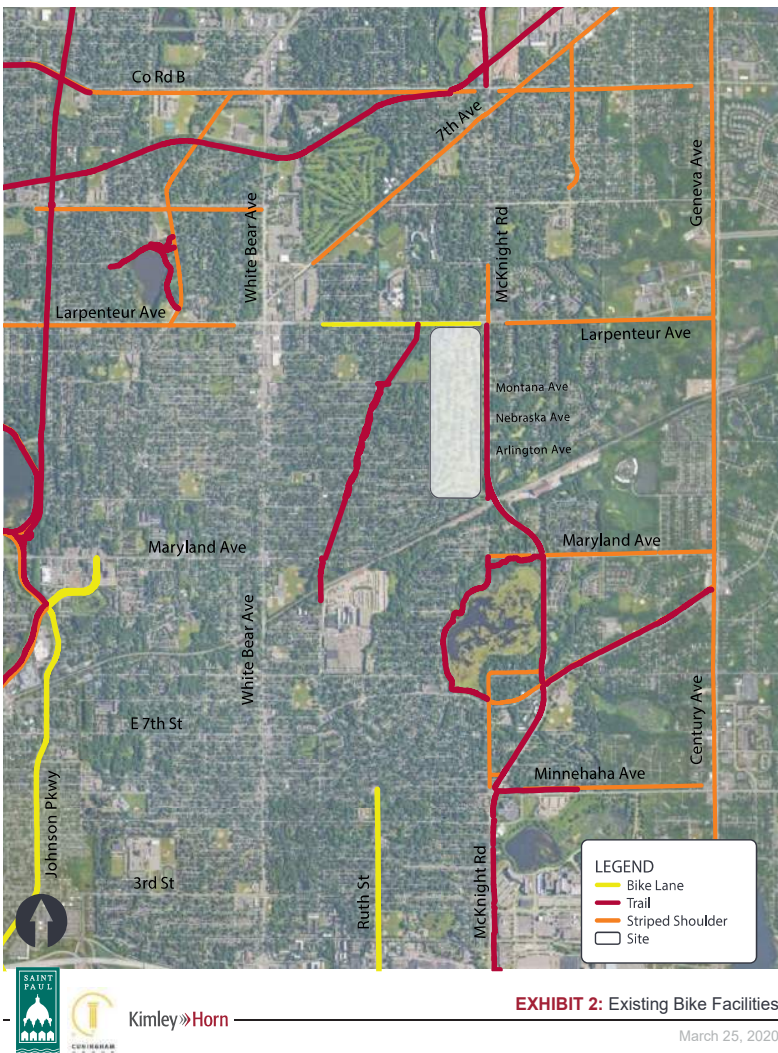
OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT



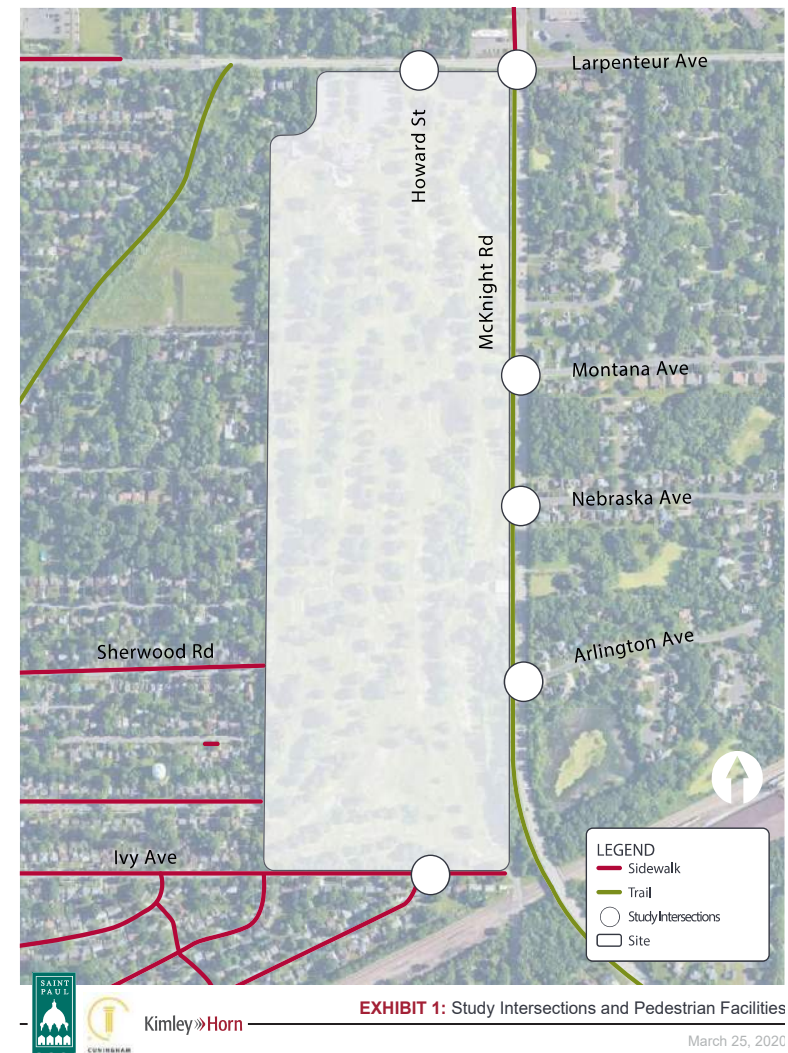
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



BICYCLE TRAILS



PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE



POLICY & TECHNICAL PRIORITIES HIGHLIGHTS



+/- 1000 JOBS

Saint Paul’s East Side has seen a significant loss of living wage jobs over the past 30 years. Often taken for granted, living wage jobs and light industrial jobs have been middle class engines for over 100 years - offering job opportunities that support many workers and their families. The Port Authority (owners of the Hillcrest Property) endeavors to bring approximately 1000 jobs to the site in the form of light industrial, production, modern manufacturing and potentially office.

+/- 1000 HOUSEHOLDS

Housing at Hillcrest will likely occur in a range of styles, sizes and types - including single family homes, townhouses, apartments, cooperative living arrangements, as well as housing for seniors and larger families. Senior housing is particular value in this area of the city with a growing population over the age of 65.

+/- 20 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE

As a part of City ordinance and the Port Authoty’s agreement withthe City, there will be approximately 20 acres of open space on the site. Open space will be owned by the city and the Port and will be a combination of active park space, passive park space, ecological resoration and repair, and privately owned publicly accessible plazas.

ACTIVITY THROUGH SHARED USE

A portion of the site has been desingated as a NEIGHBORHOOD NODE in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. NEIGHBORHOOD NODES are compact, mixed use areas that provide shops, services, neighborhood-scale civic and institutional uses, recreational facilities and employment close to residences. The community node development on Hillcrest will serve not only the new residents but the existing surrounding communities.



Lower Density Housing



Active Park Space



Higher Density Housing



Passive Open Space



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PHASE 1

The purpose of Phase 1 Engagement was to introduce the public to the project, to give background information, and to listen to participants visions and concerns for redevelopment of the Site. Discussions were generally structured around community character, living/housing, working/jobs, and overall community priorities.

Following the phase 1 community engagement, the Community Advisory Committee developed 20 community priorities for the Hillcrest Master Plan Project based on the community responses that will be carried through the development of site approaches.



Community Forum

160 attendees



Pop Up Meeting (x3)

60 attendees



On line Surveys

22 responses

Total  +/- 220 engagements



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

1. New development should respect the quiet nature of the existing neighborhood. Whereas we recognize that new development may “open up” our neighborhood, we value our trees, quiet streets, access to nature, and sense of neighborhood. New development should not eliminate these qualities.
2. Neighborhoods should be walkable with connections to nearby parks, schools, public transportation and other amenities.
3. New development should address the serious housing shortage in Saint Paul.
4. New jobs on the site should be for a diverse working class, providing sustainable living wage jobs and have local hiring goals; stable jobs for skilled labor for all education levels, and not with high turnover rates.
5. Development on the site should strengthen existing businesses and also support the growth of small, local, and entrepreneurial businesses. This can include (but is not limited to) provisions and allowances for home (and garage) based businesses, affordable commercial workspaces, co-working and collaboration spaces, incubators/accelerators and startup retail including small shops and kiosks.
6. Any retail should be pedestrian-accessible, not automobile-based strip commercial. Attract distinctive small businesses like a coop grocery market, ice cream shop, small cafes, and entertainment venues.
7. Industrial/manufacturing building types should integrate with the neighborhood’s character and be located on the edges of the site near higher volume streets like Larpenteur and McKnight.
8. The site (and the area) needs better public transportation connections. Therefore, the site should be developed in a manner that enables improved transit and encourages the use of public transportation.
9. Extend trails into the site, creating a pedestrian and recreational connection that allows people from the neighborhood to access the site, public spaces, and businesses.
10. Analyze the public services that will be necessary to provide for public safety such as additional fire and police, or a new elementary school.
11. Preserve and respect the unique topography and features of the site and maintain healthy mature trees. The rolling hills, wetlands and trees are valuable resources that define the site, perform important ecological functions, and for many are part of childhood memories. Incorporate them into park space, gardens, wetlands and other amenities usable year-round to distinguish the site.
12. The development should have ample green space, open space, and park space to support the needs of the people who will be living and working there and meet the City’s green space and park requirements. These spaces should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods and Beaver Lake with multi-use trails and side-walks.
13. The site should have ample community spaces for people to gather and get to know each other and break down barriers – community center, swimming pool, picnic space, splash pad and playground for young families, natural reserve for kids to explore, dog park and other public or semipublic elements that help create community. Also places for activities like community/educational gardens and a farmers market, and programming such as art in the park and community murals.
14. Design of housing should encourage pride in one’s home and the community. [As revised by the CAC.]
15. Housing should emphasize an interaction with other residents and with nature.
16. Ideally, new jobs would be “green jobs.”
17. Provide a mix of housing options on the Hillcrest site that blends into the existing community and allows people to both stay on the East Side and choose to live on the East Side. This may include smaller single family homes including two-three bedrooms for young families, cottages, twin and town homes, duplexes, live/work homes, homes that are affordable to many incomes and family types, senior options (assisted and independent living cottages), and starter homes, all with yards and green space a priority.
18. New housing should consider emerging and existing family types – such as multi generational, extended, and single person households, cooperative housing arrangements, and intergenerational mixes.
19. New development should help complete the Greater East Side by providing jobs, health services, pedestrian-accessible commercial and retail uses, and new housing that the East Side currently does not have. Retail should primarily serve the immediate area and not compete with White Bear Avenue.
20. Limit connections to the west and south that carry fast and high volumes of vehicular traffic. Connections into the site from the west and south should be carefully designed so as to avoid excess traffic flow through the neighborhood. Many neighborhood streets do not have sidewalks, so pedestrian safety is a priority. If traffic is increased, provide sidewalks.

THEMES



CONNECT

build strong connections to existing infrastructure and community systems



ACTIVATE

spark community and economic activity through innovative development



CONSERVE

conserve existing site features that celebrate the character and ecological value of the site



BLEND

thoughtfully integrate the new development into the existing neighborhoods



BUILD

provide new community resources through site development

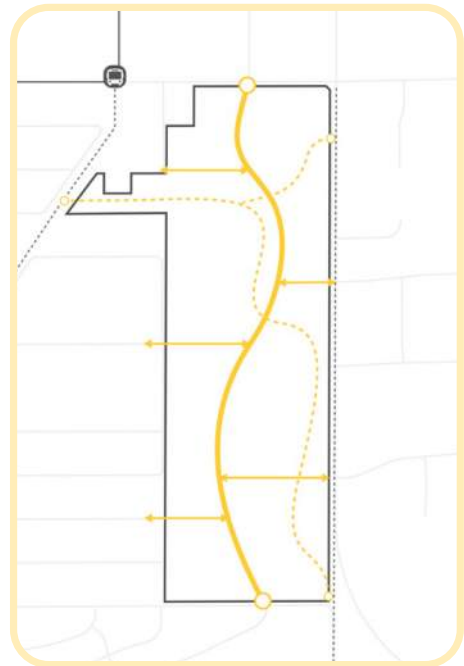
INITIAL APPROACHES

Four initial approaches were developed from the community, city policy priorities, and technical priorities. Each approach presents a different distribution and alignment of land uses - residential, open space, employment, trails, and public right-of-way - and their relationship to the existing site conditions and system connections.

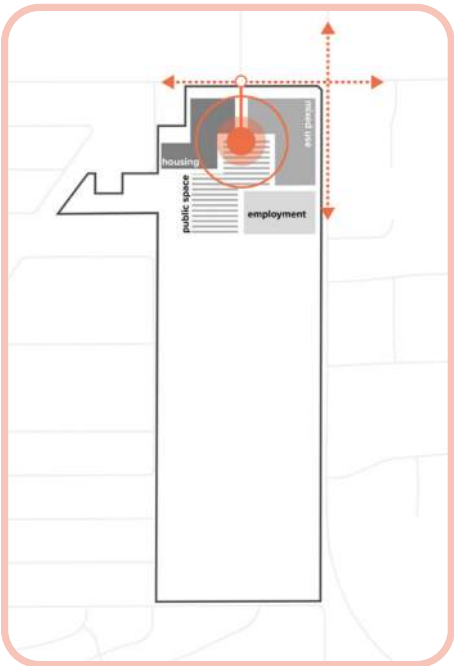
PROCESS



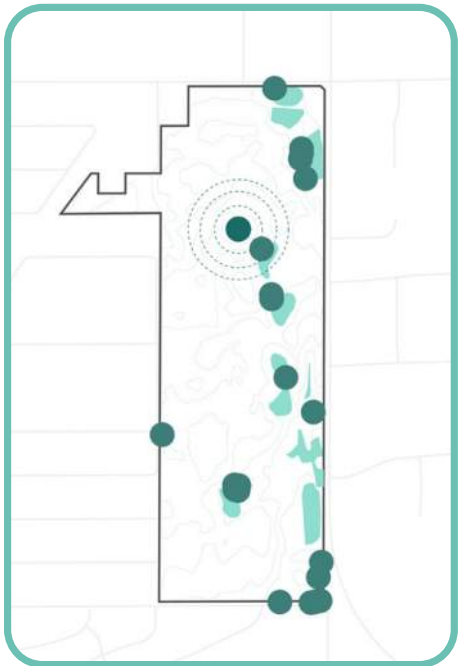
DESIGN TOOLS



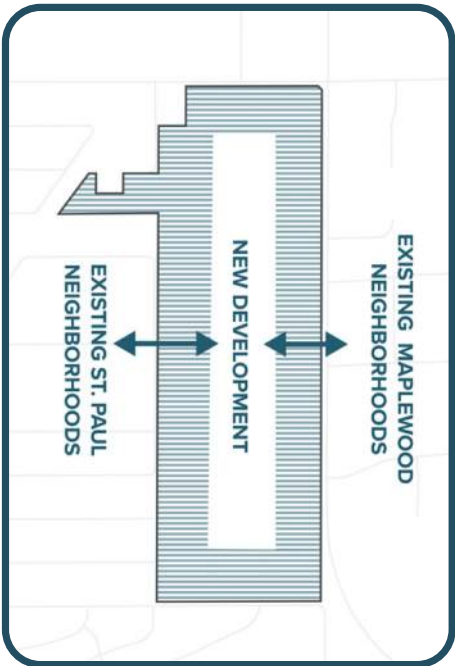
CONNECT
the new development in the hillcrest site will create connections to the surrounding infrastructure network and will balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.



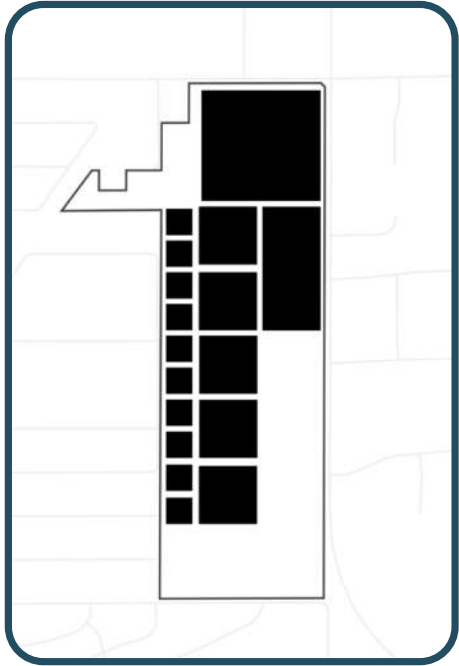
ACTIVATE
the new development looks to spark economic and community activity on the site. This is often created through placement of complementary land uses - housing, public open space, retail, and employment. Each approach proposes a different way to balance the land uses and activate the site.



CONSERVE
the community has identified natural features on the site - including the topography, mature trees, and wetland - as valuable features to maintain in the new development. Each approach proposes a different way to approach this conservation.



BLEND
the new development should complement the surrounding neighborhoods and act as a bridge between the communities of st. paul and maplewood.



BUILD
the site will use varying scales in blocks and buildings to meet the needs of each of the land uses. Each approach looks to balance the scales to support new activity as well as blend into the surrounding development.

APPROACH 1 : LIGHT TOUCH



BUILD

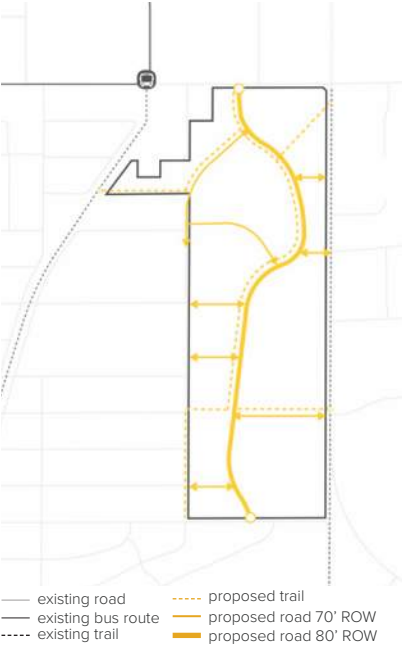
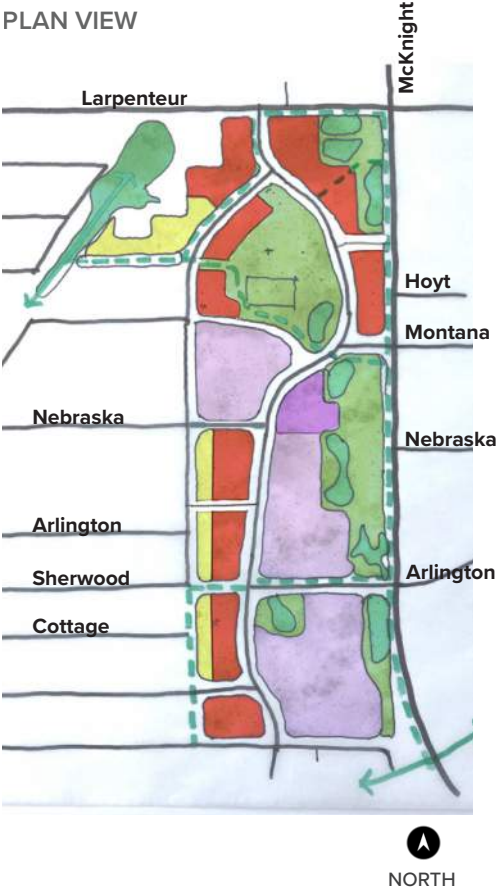
This approach conserves the current location and extents of the hill crest and wetlands as central site features. Proposed land uses are placed around these features and existing site topography.

LAND-USES

- residential 1 : higher density
- residential 2 : lower density
- open space
- park land
- wetland
- employment: industrial
- employment: office
- trail
- right-of-way

LAND USE	Acres
ROW	15
Trail	3
Total Open Space	33
Open Space (including wetlands, not active park)	25
Active Park	8
Employment (Industrial + Office)	29
Office	2
Industrial	27
Total Residential	32
Residential 1	24
Residential 2	8
Total Area	112

PLAN VIEW



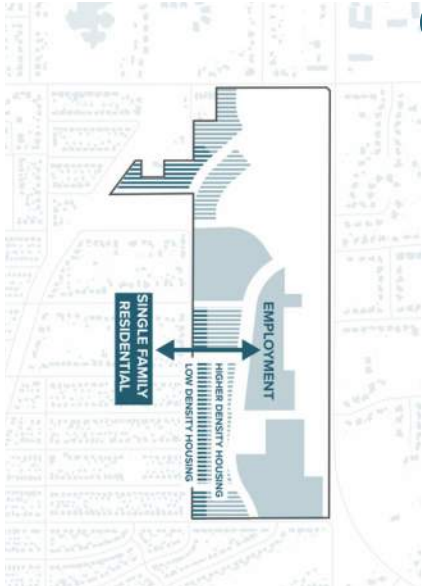
CONNECT

A single north south connection meanders through the site with east west roads connecting to existing local network at select roads. This placement conserves the wetland and existing hillcrest in their current locations. Trails connect the site to the existing trail network and allow for easy pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the new development.



CONSERVE

All wetlands, majority of significant trees, and the existing hillcrest are conserved in this approach.



BLEND

Employment land uses are located in the center of the site. Lower to higher density residential development are used to blend the site into the existing neighborhoods' grid.



ACTIVATE

This approach activates the site near the intersection of McKnight and Larpeur by locating housing, employment, and retail around flexible public space - including a 5+ acre active park and hill crest.

APPROACH 2 : CONSERVATION



BUILD

This approach balances the conservation of the existing natural site features with acreage identified for new development. This approach focuses development around the intersection of McKnight Road and Larpenteur Ave.

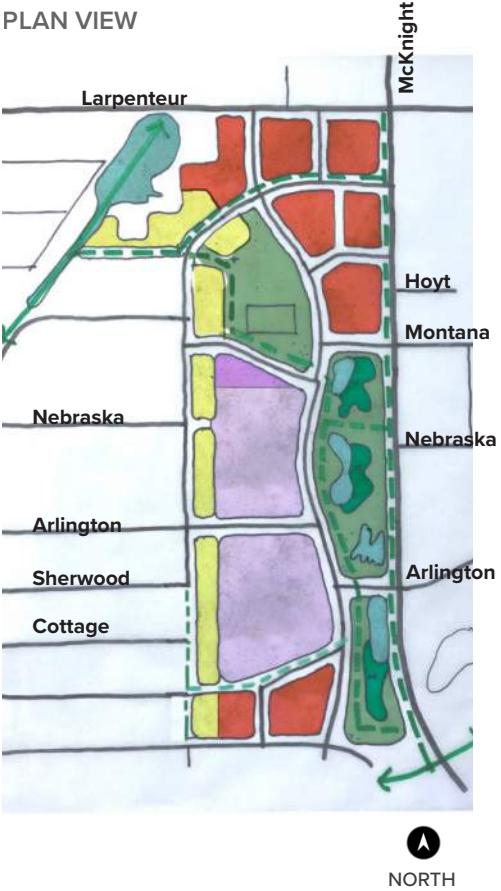
LAND-USES

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- trail
- right-of-way

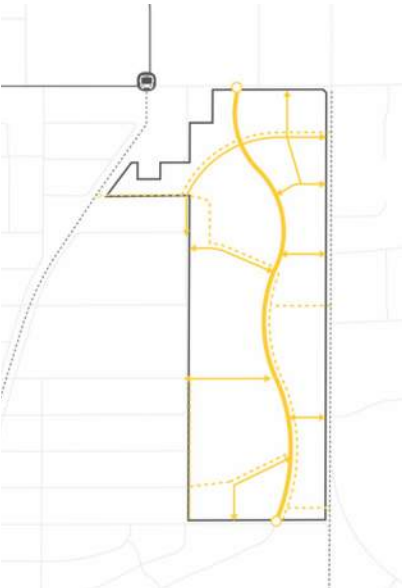
LAND USE	Acres
ROW	17
Trail	4
Total Open Space	29
Open Space (including wetlands, not active park)	24
Active Park	5
Employment (Industrial + Office)	23
Office	1
Industrial	22
Total Residential	40
Residential 1	23
Residential 2	17
Total Area	113*

*Includes 1 acres ROW outside of existing site

PLAN VIEW



NORTH

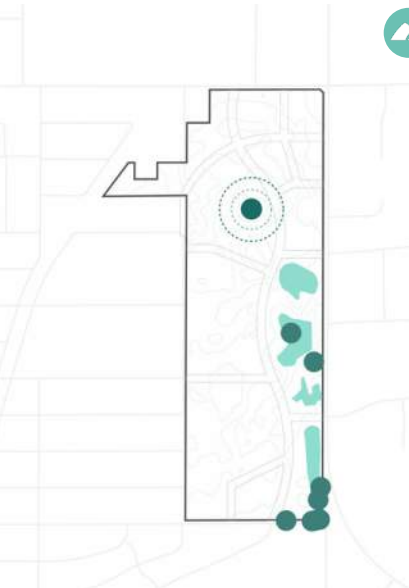


- existing road
- existing bus route
- existing trail
- proposed trail
- proposed road 70' ROW
- proposed road 80' ROW



CONNECT

A single north south connection meanders through the site with east west roads connecting to existing local network at select roads. This road placement creates a range of block scales needed for the different land uses - smaller blocks for residential use and larger areas for industrial. Trails connect the site to the existing trail network and allow for easy pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the new development.

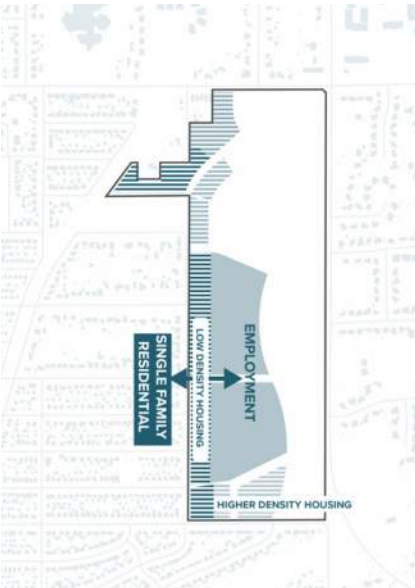


- existing significant tree
- existing wetland
- proposed hillcrest



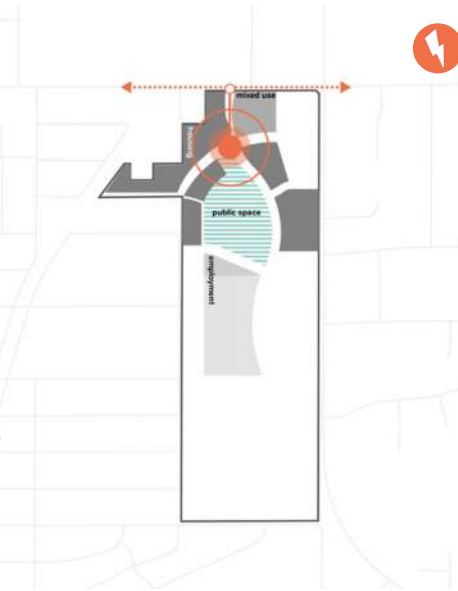
CONSERVE

High value existing wetlands on the eastern edge of the site and adjacent significant trees were maintained in this approach. A hillcrest is identified near to the location of the existing site's highest peak



BLEND

Employment land uses are located in the center of the site. Lower and higher density residential development are used to blend the site into the existing neighborhoods' grid to the west and south. Maintaining the existing wetlands in the east of the site creates a green buffer between the site development and adjacent residential neighborhoods.



ACTIVATE

This approach activates the site near the intersection of McKnight and Larpenteur by locating housing and retail around flexible public space - including a 5+ acre active park and hillcrest.

APPROACH 3 : RESHAPE



BUILD

This approach maximizes acreage identified for employment. High value wetland areas are maintained. Two active community open space nodes are created around the hillcrest in the north and the active park land in the south of the site.

LAND-USES

- residential 1 : higher density
- residential 2 : lower density
- open space
- park land
- wetland
- employment: industrial
- employment: office
- trail
- right-of-way

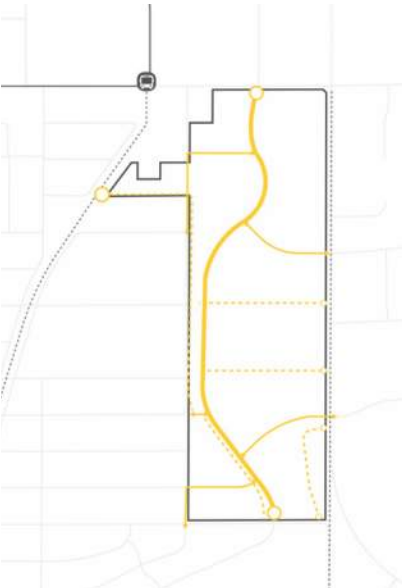
LAND USE	Acres
ROW	14
Trail	3
Total Open Space	33
Open Space (including wetlands, not active park)	21
Active Park	6
Employment (Industrial + Office)	38
Office	2
Industrial	36
Total Residential	26
Residential 1	21
Residential 2	5
Total Area	113*

*Includes 1 acres ROW outside of existing site

PLAN VIEW



NORTH



- existing road
- existing bus route
- existing trail
- proposed trail
- proposed road 70' ROW
- proposed road 80' ROW



CONNECT

a single north south connection meanders through the site with east west roads connecting to existing local network at select roads. This road placement creates larger blocks in the center of the site needed for industrial use. A open space buffer runs along the western edge of the site between the industrial land uses and the neighboring residential community. Trails connect the site to the existing trail network and allow for easy pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the new development.

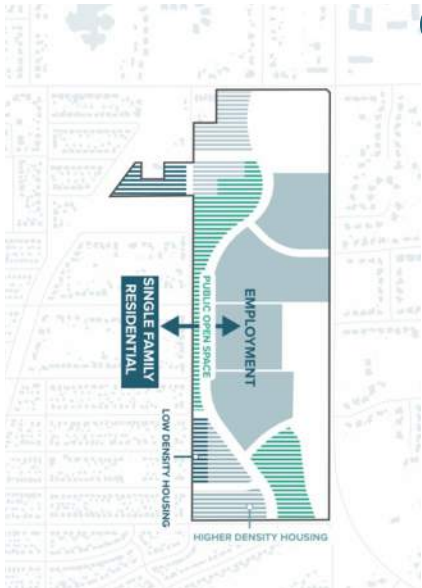


- existing significant tree
- existing wetland
- proposed hillcrest



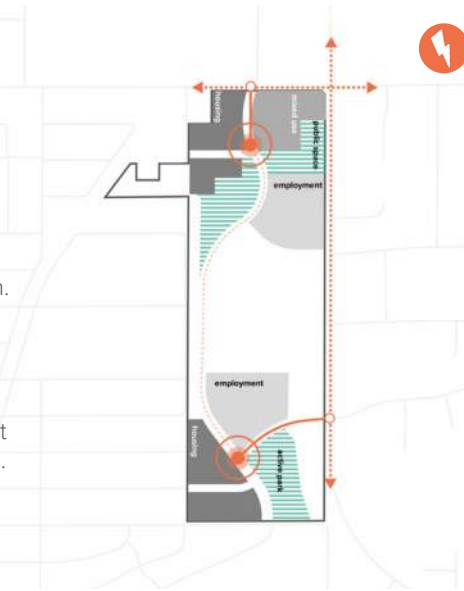
CONSERVE

high value existing wetlands and adjacent significant trees were maintained in this approach. A hillcrest is identified near to the location of the existing site's highest peak.



BLEND

employment land uses are located in the center of the site. Residential development and public open spaces are used to blend the site into the existing neighborhoods' grid to the north and south. Maintaining the existing wetlands in the east of the site creates a green buffer between the site development and adjacent residential neighborhoods.



ACTIVATE

this approach activates the site near the intersection of McKnight and Larpeleur by locating housing and retail around flexible public space - including a 5+ acre active park and hillcrest.

APPROACH 4 : SCULPT



BUILD

This approach maximizes development of the land for employment and housing. Wetland areas are relocated to the southern end of the site following existing grade.

LAND-USES

- residential 1 : higher density
- residential 2 : lower density
- open space
- park land
- wetland
- employment: industrial
- employment: office
- trail
- right-of-way

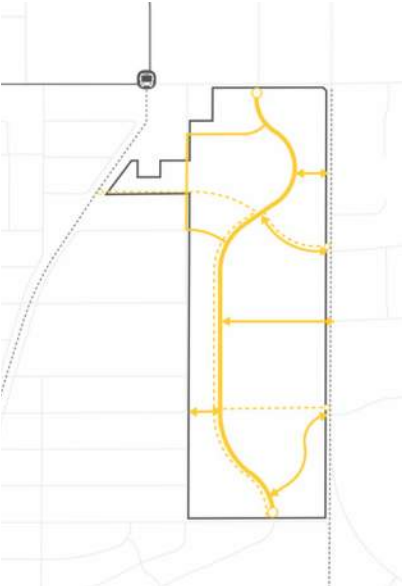
LAND USE	Acres
ROW	16
Trail	3
Total Open Space	26
Open Space (including wetlands, not active park)	21
Active Park	5
Employment (Industrial + Office)	37
Office	1
Industrial	36
Total Residential	32
Residential 1	16
Residential 2	16
Total Area	113*

*Includes 1 acres ROW outside of existing site

PLAN VIEW



NORTH



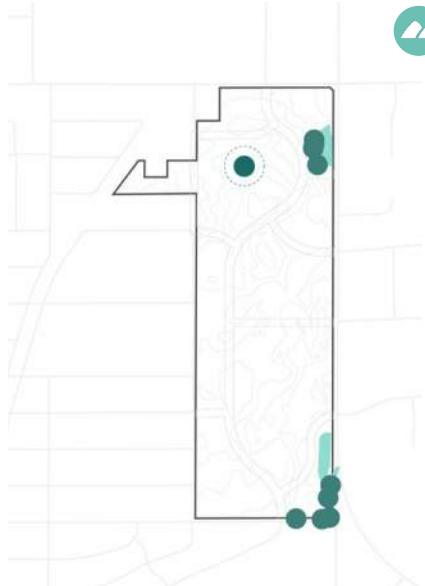
CONNECT

A single north south connection meanders through the site with east west roads connecting to existing local network at select roads. This road placement creates a range of block scales needed for the different land uses - smaller blocks for residential use and larger areas for industrial. Trails connect the site to the existing trail network and allow for easy pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the new development.



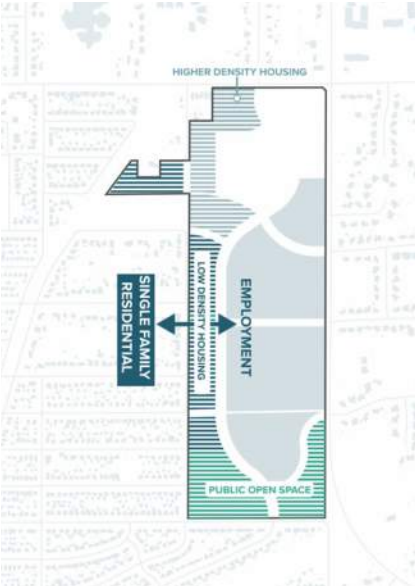
CONSERVE

High value existing wetlands and adjacent significant trees were maintained in this approach. A hillcrest is identified near to the location of the existing site's highest peak



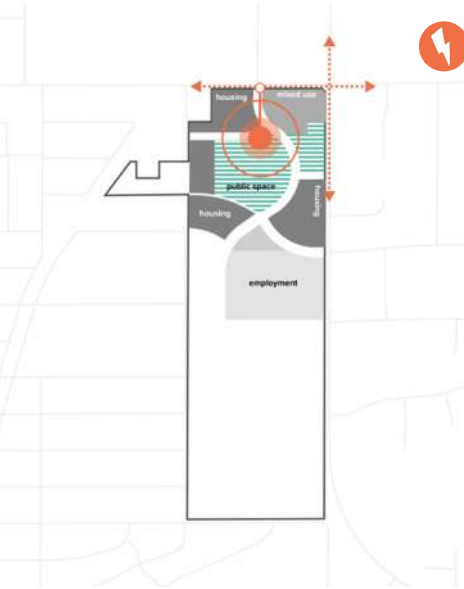
BLEND

The large area identified for employment use is located in the center and eastern edges of the site. Lower density residential development and public open spaces are used to blend the site into the existing neighborhoods' grid.



ACTIVATE

This approach activates the site near the intersection of McKnight and Larpeur by locating housing and retail around flexible public space - including a 5+ acre active park and hillcrest.



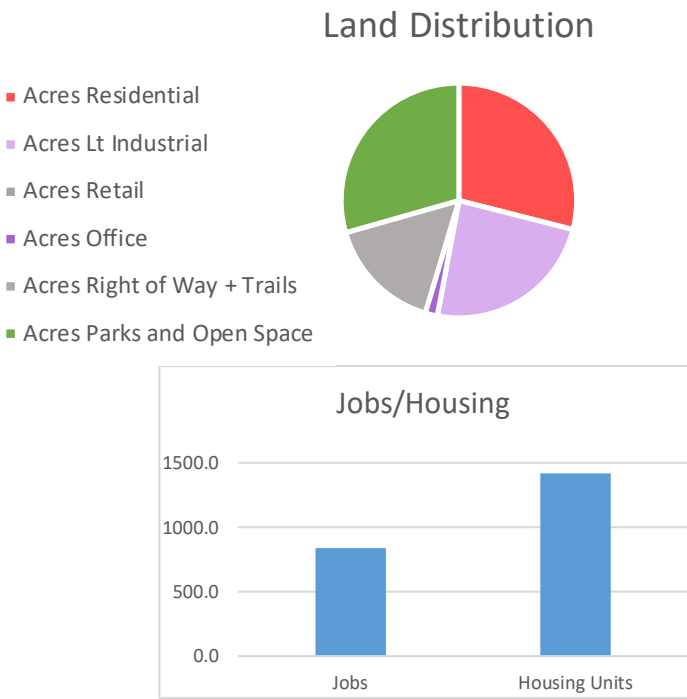
COMPARISON OF THE APPROACHES

APPROACH 1 : LIGHT TOUCH



responds most directly to the features of the land, preserving them in place

keeps wetlands and ponds
minimal grading around the hillcrest

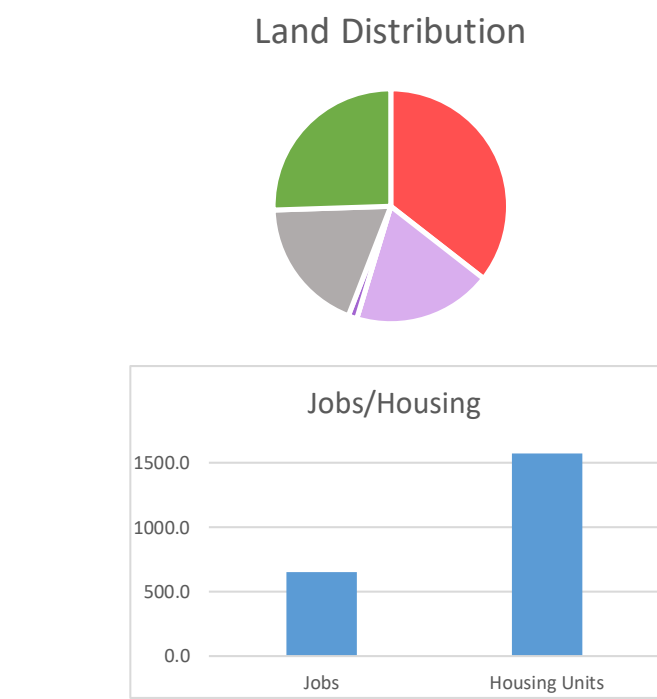


APPROACH 2 : CONSERVATION



gathers valuable natural and cultural resources in one location and builds intensely elsewhere

gathers and expands wetlands in single location,
creates a broad corridor through site
adjusts the hillcrest slightly
active park to the north

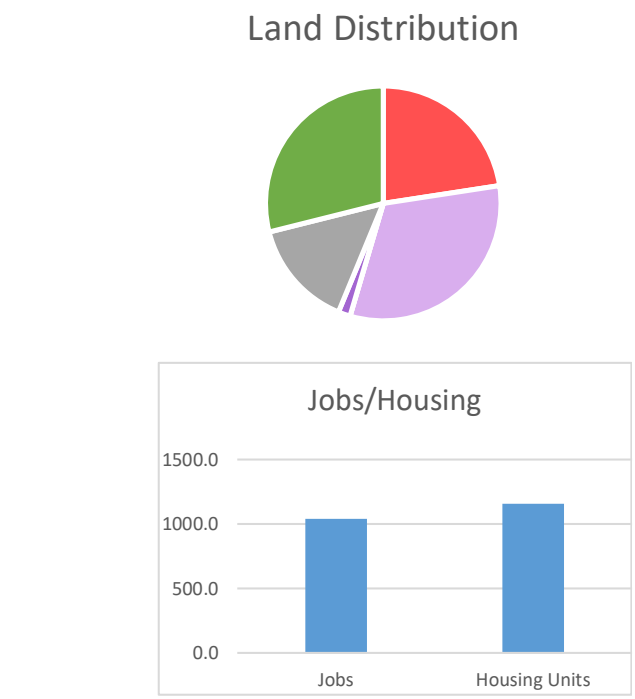


APPROACH 3 : RESHAPE



pushes the hill and moves the ponds to expand design possibilities

Keeps all wetlands,
eliminate ponds,
significant grading to push and sculpt the hill, two areas
of open space connected by trail,
active park on the south



APPROACH 4 : SCULPT



sculpts a hill and moves the wetlands to create more design possibilities

Keeps select wetlands,
eliminate ponds,
significant grading to sculpt the hill, two areas of open
space connected by trail,
active park on the north

