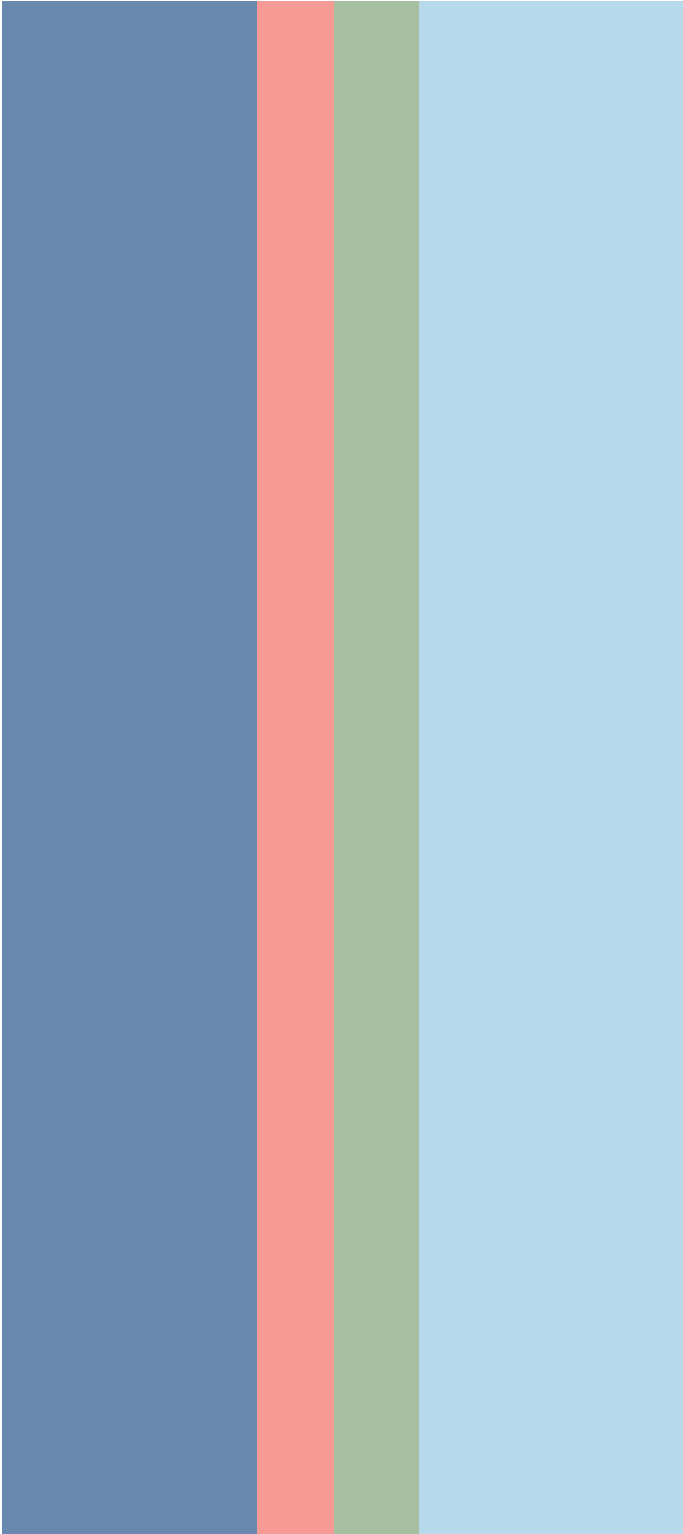




Approved on March 21, 2022, by Roll Call Number 22-0463

# SOUTH OF GRAY'S LAKE

## MASTER PLAN



# acknowledgments

## **south of gray's lake master plan advisory committee**

Carl Voss - *City Council At-Large*  
Connie Boesen - *City Council At-Large*  
Josh Mandelbaum - *City Council Ward III*  
Stefanie Running - *Gray's Lake Neighborhood Association*  
Sarah Lohmeier - *Friends of Des Moines Parks*  
George Davis - *Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association*  
Cheri Cipperley - *Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee*  
Mell Meredith - *Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee*  
Rick Neumann - *Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee*  
Susan Huppert - *Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee*  
Johnny Alcivar - *Plan and Zoning Commission*  
Stephanie Weisenbach - *Urban Design Review Board*  
Carl Saxon - *DART*  
Luis Montoya - *DART*  
Corey Bogenreif - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
David Kamp - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Jeff Wiggins - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
John Davis - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Steven Naber - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Thomas Vlach - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Benjamin Page - *City of Des Moines Parks*  
Jenny Richmond - *City of Des Moines Parks*  
Erin Olson-Douglas - *City of Des Moines Development Services*  
Ryan Moffatt - *City of Des Moines Development Services*

## **key city staff**

Erin Olson-Douglas - *City of Des Moines Development Services*  
Ryan Moffatt - *City of Des Moines Development Services*  
Corey Bogenreif - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Jenny Richmond - *City of Des Moines Parks*  
David Kamp - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
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John Davis - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Steven Naber - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Thomas Vlach - *City of Des Moines Engineering*  
Benjamin Page - *City of Des Moines Parks*

## **elected officials**

T.M. Franklin Cownie - *Mayor*  
Carl Voss - *City Council At-Large*  
Connie Boesen - *City Council At-Large*  
Bill Gray - *City Council Ward I*  
Linda Westergaard - *City Council Ward II*  
Josh Mandelbaum - *City Council Ward III*  
Joe Gatto - *City Council Ward IV*

## **des moines residents**

The South of Gray's Lake Master Plan was created based on input received from hundreds of Des Moines residents and businessowners. The City of Des Moines thanks them for their input and willingness to participate in this planning process.

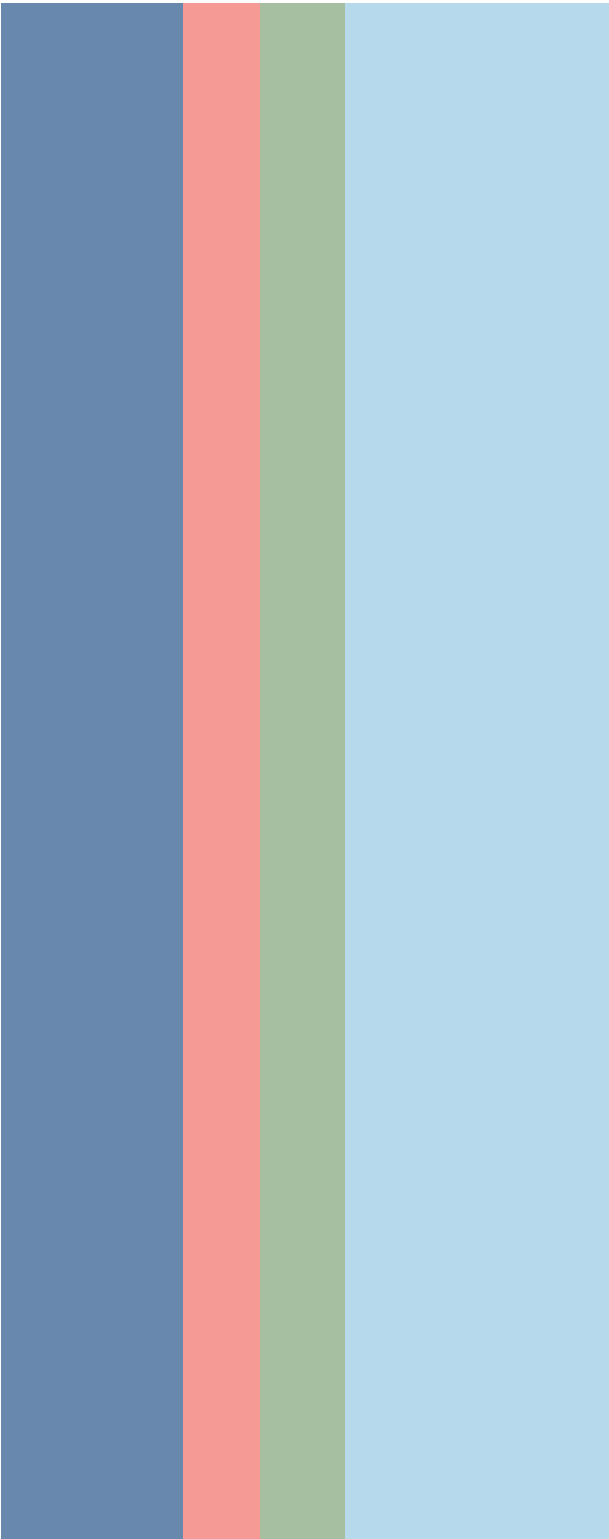
table of contents

**existing conditions analysis ..... 4**

**public input summary..... 23**

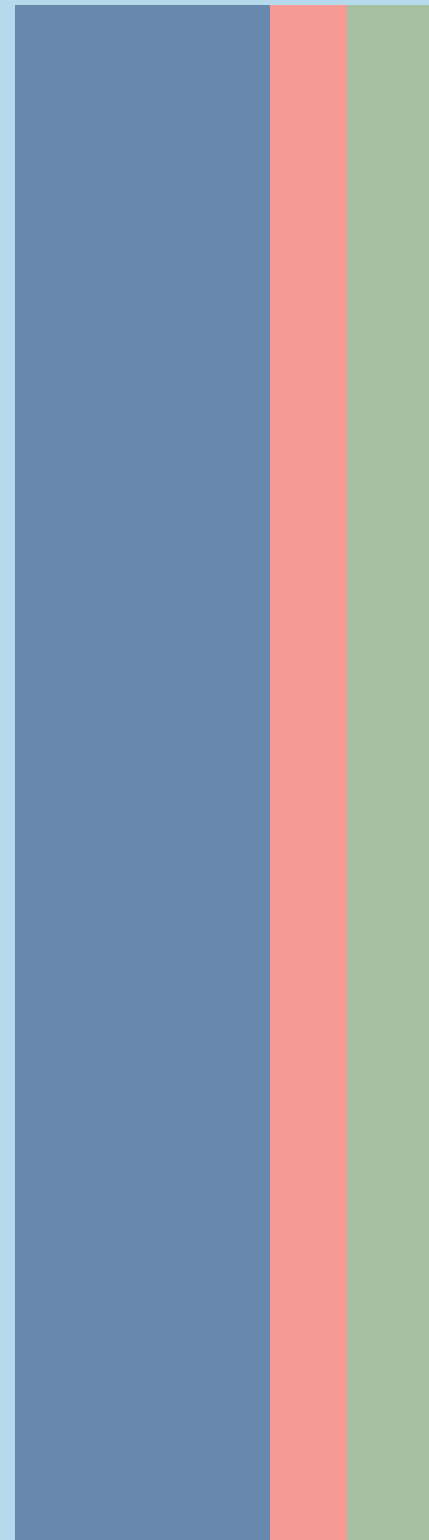
**master plan scenarios..... 54**

**final master plan..... 69**





# existing conditions analysis





# study area

## Study Area



The study area is roughly bound by Gray's Lake Park to the north, Fleur Drive to the west, Bell Avenue/Thomas Beck Road to the south and the intersection with SW 7th Street to the east. Figure 1.1 shows an aerial view.

The area's development origins were largely influenced by extensive mining operations. The existing alignment of Thomas Beck Road closely aligns with the old mining road serving the area now known as MacRae Park.

The study area includes a mixture of built environment and natural areas with plentiful tree cover and viewsheds into downtown Des Moines. Gray's Lake Park to the north and MacRae Park to the southeast offer access to a range of open space and programmed recreational activities.



**Figure 1.1** South of Gray's Lake Study Area Aerial

-  Study Area
-  N/S Drainage Corridor

# study area context

## Study Area Context

The South of Gray's Lake study area is in a high profile location for the Des Moines community. It is close to both Downtown Des Moines and south of the widespread redevelopment of the Western Gateway and Gray's Station and Gray's Landing redevelopments.

Its location adjacent to Fleur Drive ensures it is associated with the first views into downtown Des Moines for visitors arriving from the Des Moines International Airport.

Collectively, these factors make the future of the South of Gray's Lake study area

important for the City of Des Moines.



Figure 1.2 South of Gray's Lake Study Area Regional Context



# existing land use

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use for the study area is shown in Figure 1.3 below. The predominant use is light industrial / flex space, shown in purple. There is also a significant amount of open space, especially south of Thomas Beck Rd,

shown in green. There are a few office and commercial users as well as some residential uses located in the northeast corner of the study area.

Given the area's proximity to downtown and other important amenities, initial

analysis indicated many of the uses currently in the area today were not the highest and best use. The locational characteristics of the site lend themselves better to mixed-use, commercial, entertainment and multi-family residential.

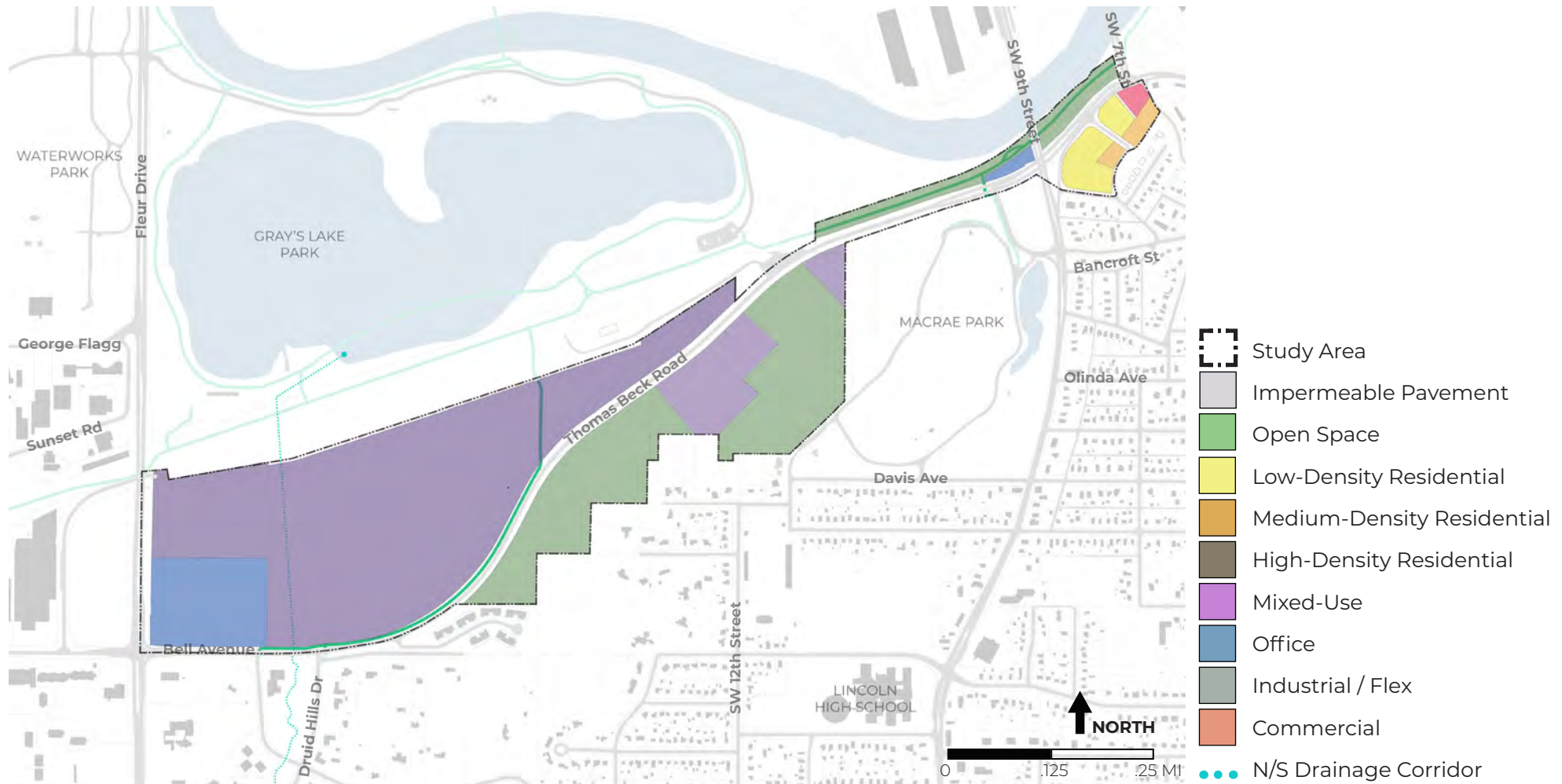


Figure 1.3 Existing Land Use

# existing zoning

## Existing Zoning

Figure 1.4 shows the existing zoning for the South of Gray's Lake study area. The city's entire zoning code was updated in 2019 for the first time since 1965. A large portion of the study area is zoned Mid-Intensity Downtown (DX2). The second

most dominant zoning is Neighborhood Mix Residential (NX1).

The remaining portions of the study area are either Neighborhood Residential (N3b), General Industrial (I1), Transitional Zone (RX1), or Open Space (P1). A summary of

the allowable uses by zoning district is on the following page.

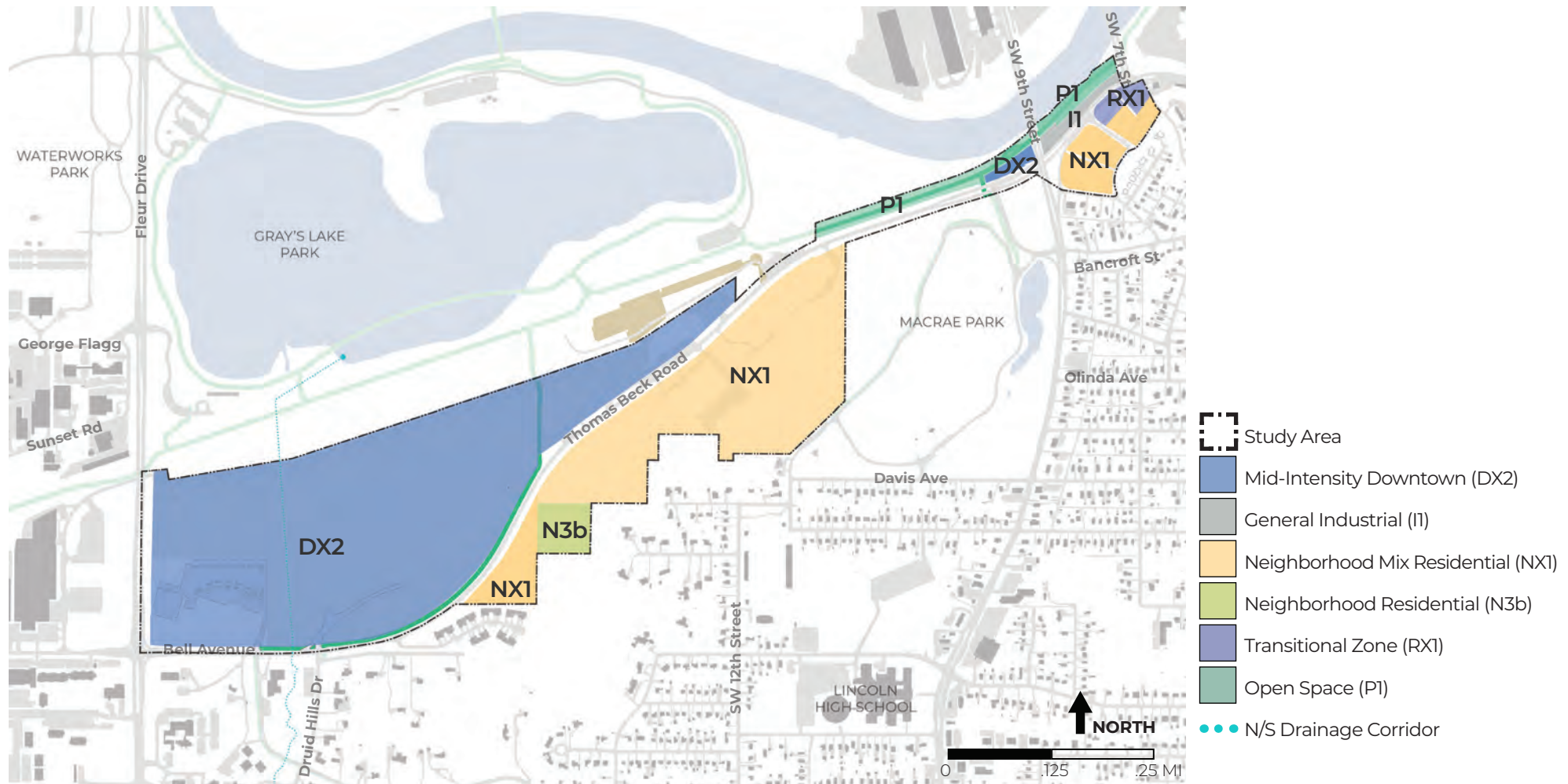


Figure 1.4 Existing Zoning Map

# existing zoning

## Allowable Uses by Zoning

The study area contains a variety of zoning districts. Many of the allowable uses are different than the development that currently exists in the study area.

### Mid-Intensity Downtown (DX2)

The allowable uses in DX2 include:

- Multi-family residential
- Mixed-use buildings
- Schools and churches
- Medical facilities and hospitals
- Offices and banks
- Retail store and restaurants
- Hotels and motels
- Sports complexes

### Neighborhood Mix Residential (NX1)

The allowable uses in NX1 include:

- Single family
- Multi-family residential

### Neighborhood Residential (N3b)

The allowable uses in N3b include:

- Single family
- Multi-family residential

### Transitional Zone (RX1)

The allowable uses in RX1 include:

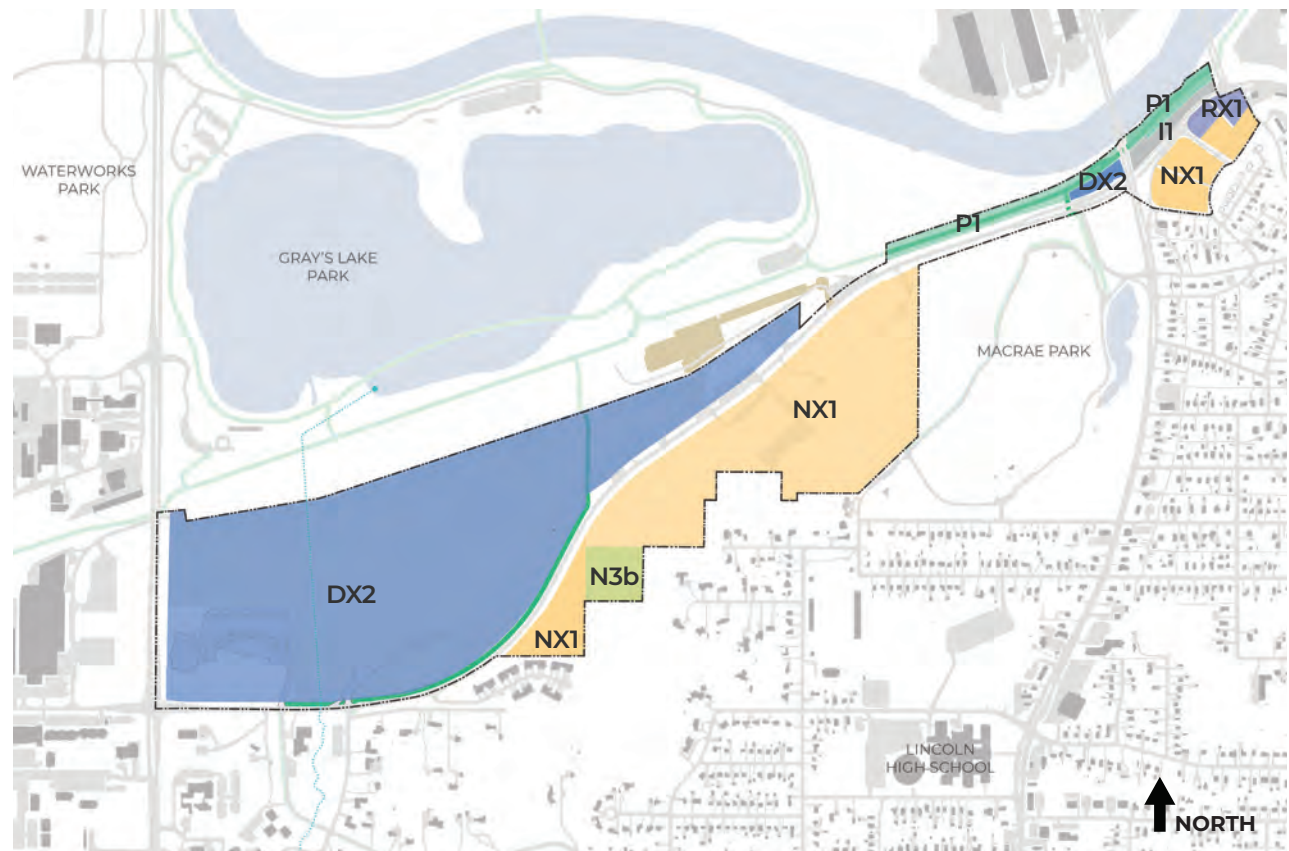
- Single family
- Multi-family residential
- Schools
- Medical facilities and hospitals
- Offices and banks
- Retail store and restaurants
- Hotels and motels
- Sports complexes

### General Industrial (I1)

The allowable uses in I1 includes manufacturing, warehousing and other industrial uses.

### Open Space (P1)

The P1 zoning district is designated for open space.





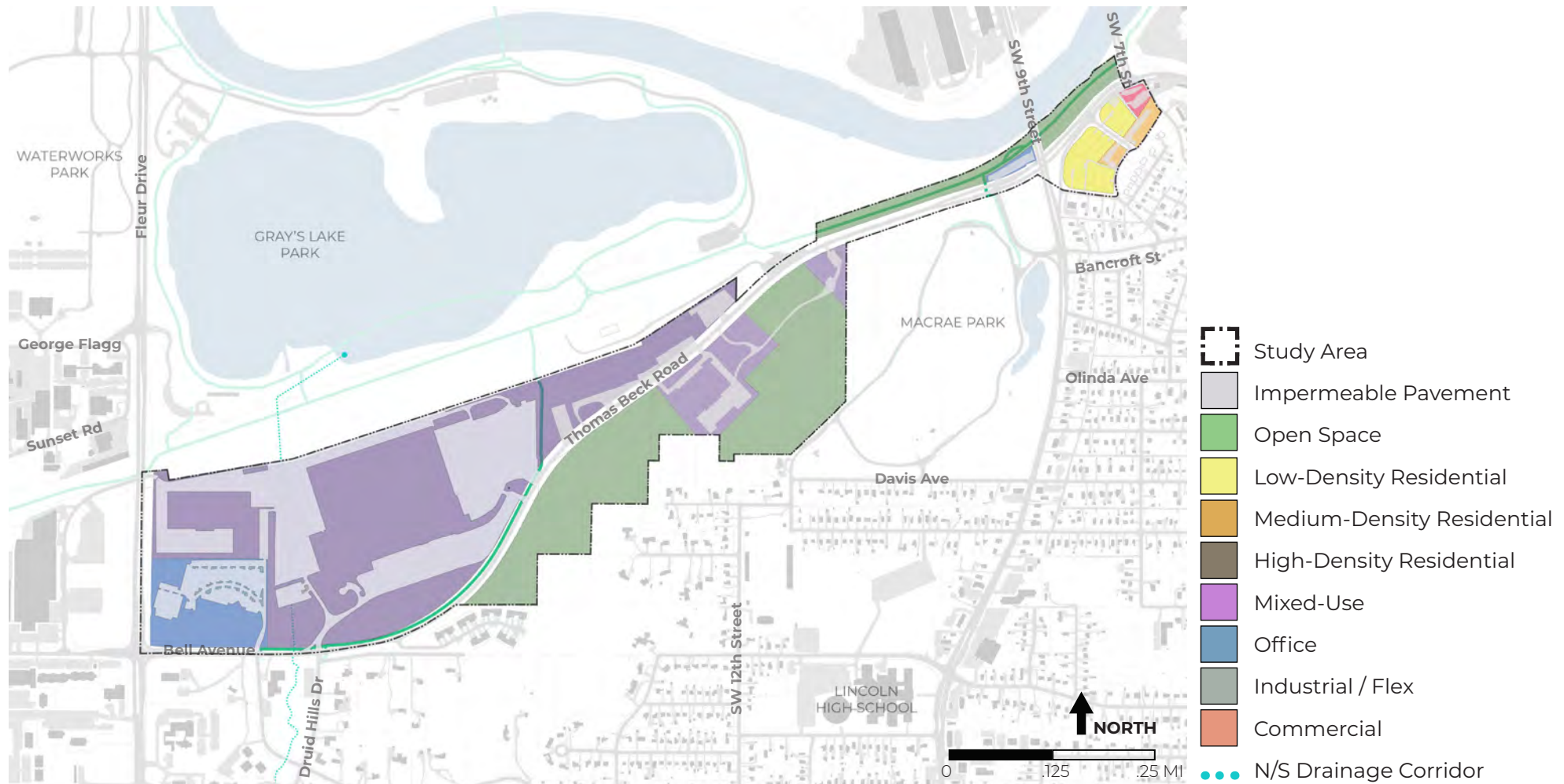
# existing impermeable pavement

## Impermeable Pavement

Figure 1.5 shows the impermeable pavement within the study area. Impermeable pavement is associated with development and influences stormwater runoff. The largest parcel within the study area is composed of roughly half impermeable surfaces.

The Iowa Finance Authority site and the Wesco Distribution site also have a large amount of pavement and parking lots. This is significant because of the study area's proximity to Gray's Lake. Impermeable pavement contributes to flooding and influences water quality. Some flooding

situations occur because there is not adequate permeable land to absorb water back into the ground. Stormwater runoff collects pollutants from impermeable pavement and carries it into nearby lakes and rivers. Limited space is available to infiltrate water in the industrial/flex uses.



**Figure 1.5** Existing Land Use + Impermeable Pavement

# existing building footprint

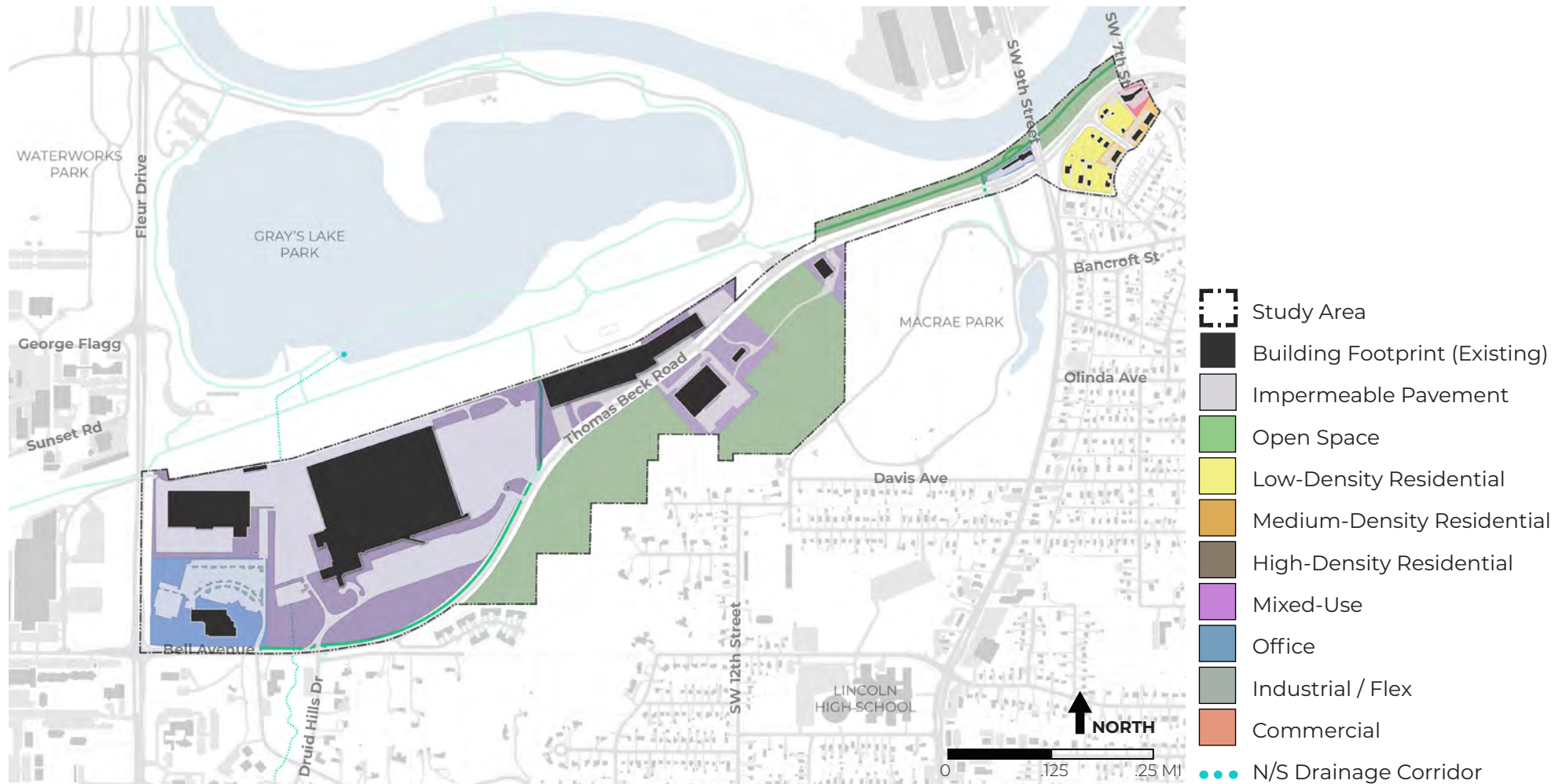
## Building Footprint

Figure 1.6 shows the building footprint outline for the study area. the largest building within the study area is the 1902 Bell Avenue Business Park. The roughly 658,855 SF building covers a large amount of the site.

Other large buildings in the study area include the Wesco Distribution building (140,814 SF) and the 1235 Thomas Beck Rd site (121,200 SF), often referred to as the Confluence building because of the popular brewery tenant located within the building. Also, on the main part of the

study area is the Iowa Finance Authority building, which is 116,292 SF.

The area between SW 9th St and SW 7th St contains 5,900 SF of commercial space and a mix of single-family detached residential and garden style apartments.



**Figure 1.6** Existing Land Use + Impermeable Pavement + Building Footprint

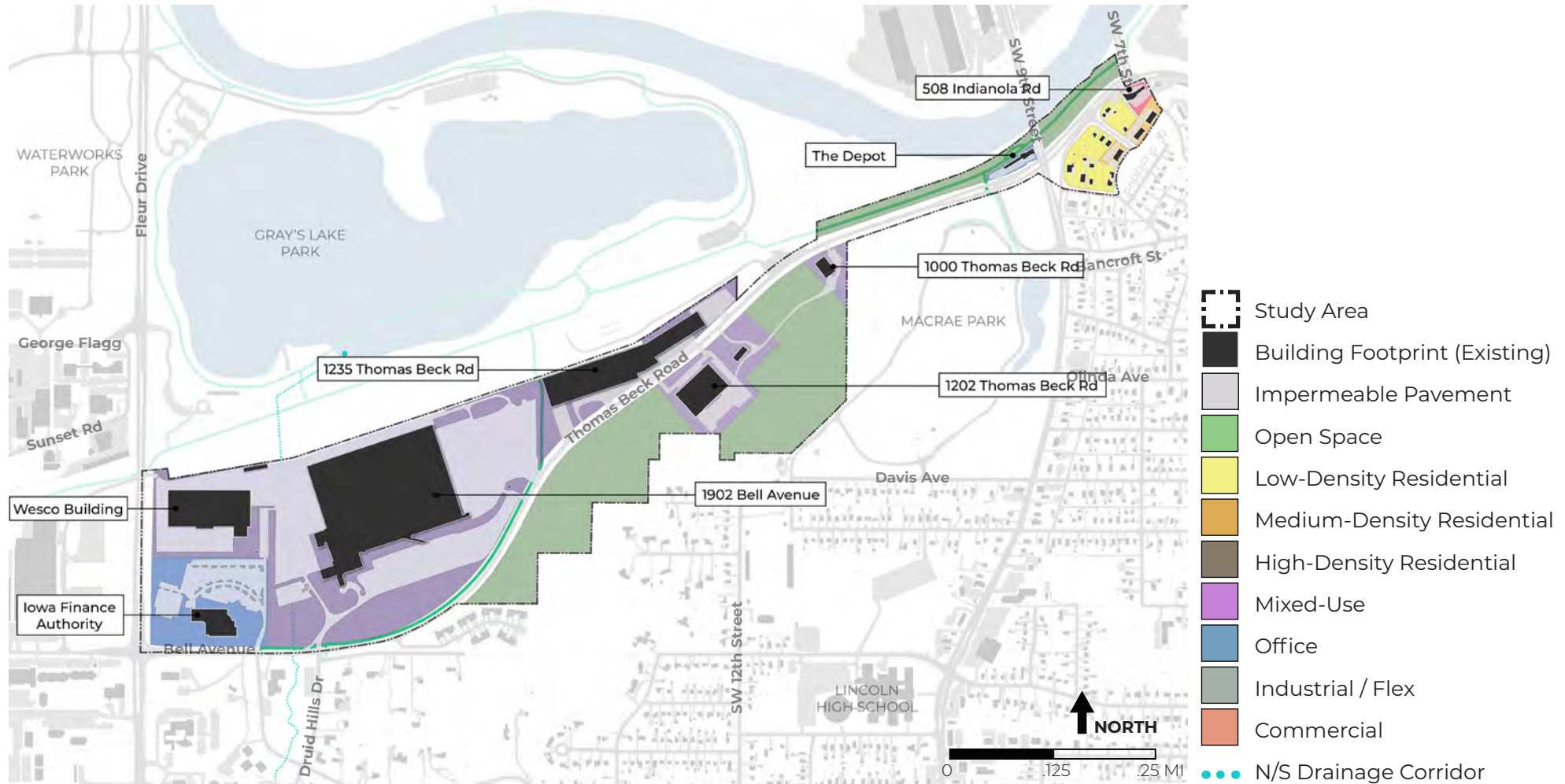
# existing tenants

## Existing Major Tenants + Landowners

Figure 1.7 shows the existing land use, impermeable pavement and building footprint with the major tenants or landowners and addresses labeled.

The 1902 Bell Avenue site is the largest

built structure in the study area and is also on the largest parcel. Other important buildings include the Wesco Distribution Building, the Iowa Finance Authority Building, 1235 Thomas Beck Road, and 1202 and 1000 Thomas Beck Road, The Depot, and 508 Indianola Road.



**Figure 1.7** Existing Land Use + Impermeable Pavement + Building Footprint + Labels



# existing tree + grass cover

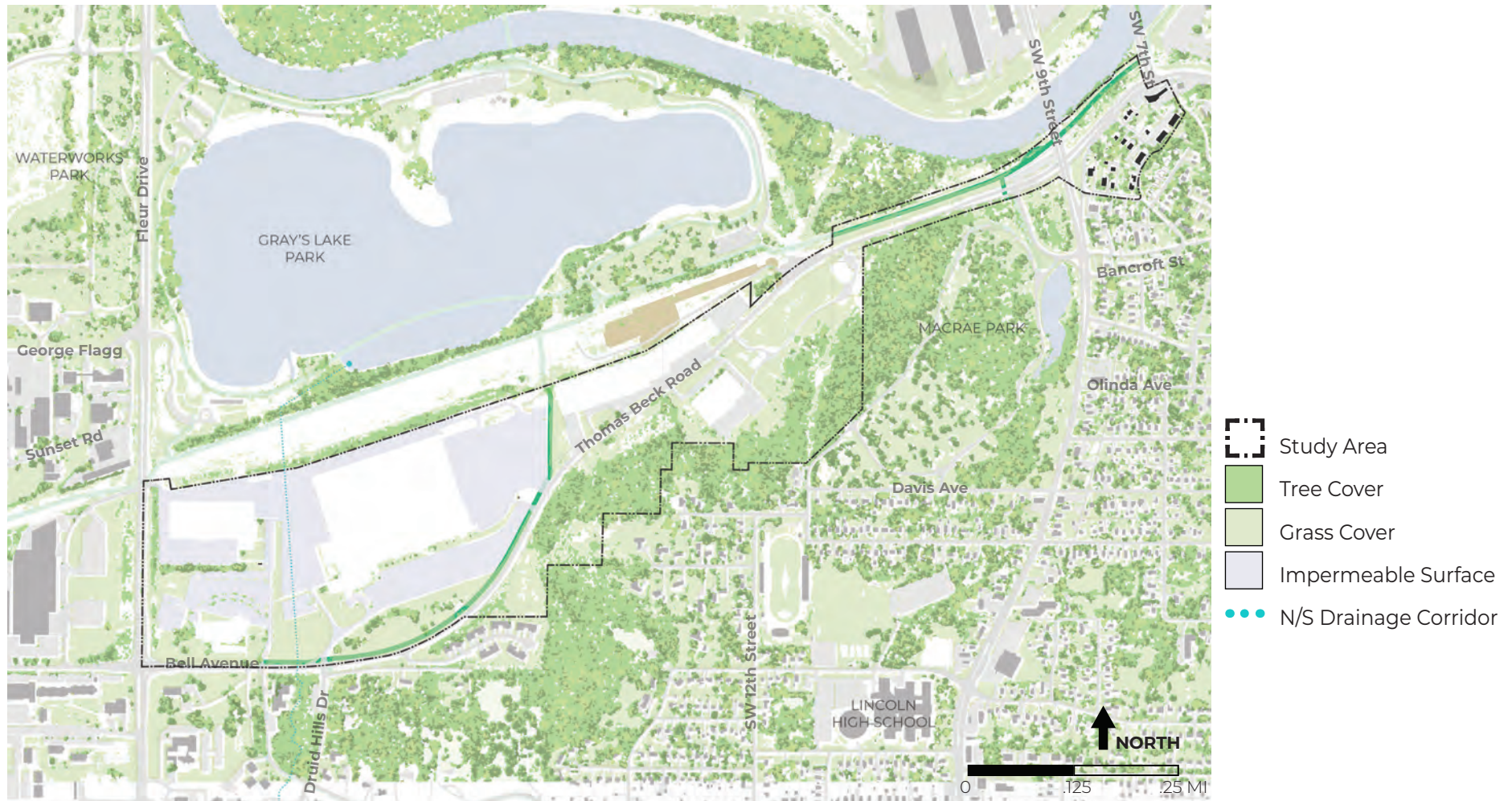
## Tree + Grass Cover

Figure 1.8 shows the estimated tree and grass cover for the South of Gray's Lake study area. Generally, much of the parcels are dominated by building footprints or parking / other impervious pavement.

Much of the tree cover can be found in the steep hillside south of Thomas Beck Road, which extends into the neighborhoods to the south as well as MacRae Park.

Tree cover also creates a natural boundary between the existing developed

properties and Gray's Lake Park. The trees screen any street level views north across the abandoned railyard property owned by the City and the Bill Riley / Meredith Trails adjacent to the park.



**Figure 1.8** Tree + Grass Cover + Impermeable Pavement Map

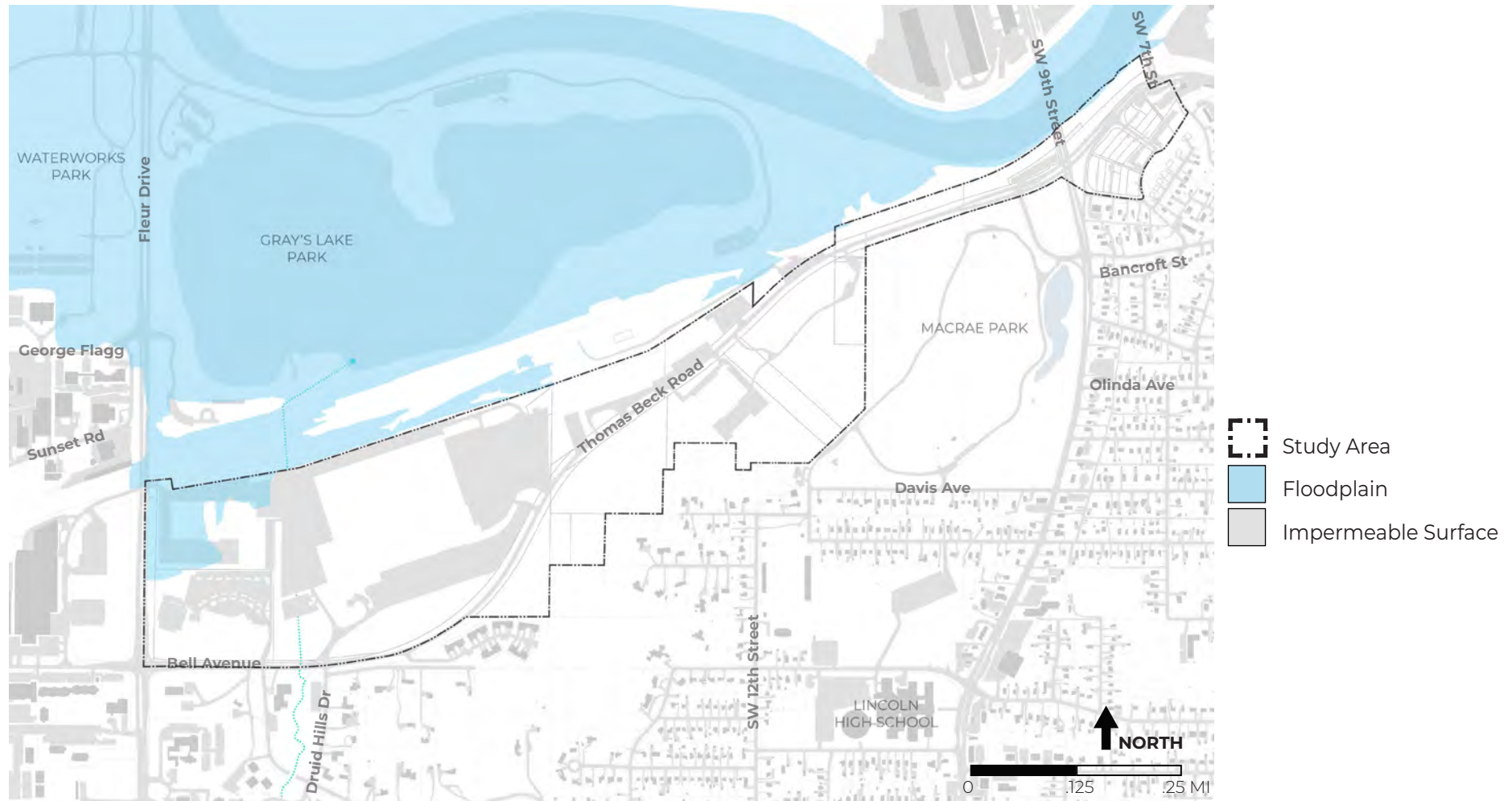
# floodplain

## Floodplain

Figure 1.9 shows the floodplain for the study area. While there is a significant amount of floodplain north of the study area in Gray's Lake Park, only a strand of floodplain exists in the study area itself in the Wesco Distribution site.

The floodplain area is highly influenced by the management and size of the Raccoon River upstream of the study area. A June 2015 flood recorded flood elevations of approximately 12 feet above bank storage where it crosses under Fleur Drive. Rainfall depths up to 10" in a 24-hour period led to

flooding into Gray's Lake and the study area. Devastating floods in 1993 also impacted land within the study area. Records indicate up to 8" of water entered the previously biggest Holiday Inn in Iowa. The estimated \$5 million in damages ultimately led to the property being torn down.



**Figure 1.9** Floodplain Map

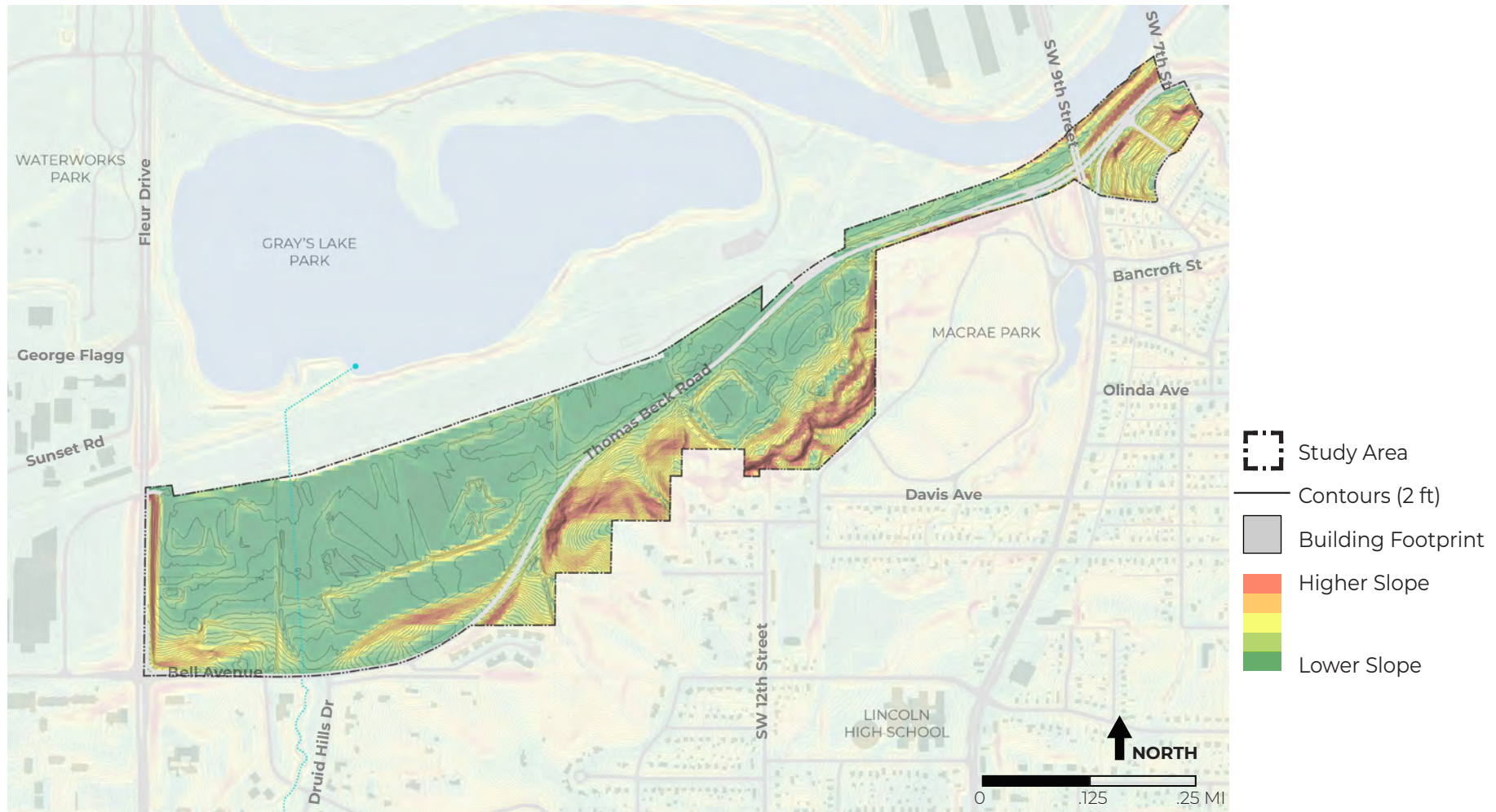


### Topography

The 2 ft contour lines for the South of Gray's Lake study area are shown below. The main portion of the study area is relatively flat with some steeper topography along Bell Avenue/Thomas Beck Road.

There is a significant amount of steeper terrain south of Thomas Beck Rd. This topography will impact the ability to develop parts of the area south of the street. This steeper terrain corresponds to the location of significant tree cover as well. Steeper terrain also is present in the

area near Indianola Rd, but many of the existing structures are built into the slope.



**Figure 1.10** Tree + Grass Cover + Impermeable Pavement Map

# view corridors

## View Corridors

Four key view corridors in the South of Gray's Lake study area are shown in Figure 1.11. A view corridor represents a unique opportunity area that can be preserved for the benefit of development.

The first view corridor is along Thomas Beck Rd near Druid Hills Dr., which offers a direct view through the property all the way to the trees surrounding Gray's Lake. The second view corridor is further east along Thomas Beck Rd. This offers great views of Gray's Lake Park and Downtown Des Moines.

The third major view corridor is along Thomas Beck Rd northwest of MacRae Park, which offers good views of Gray's Lake Park

Lastly, the area near Indianola Rd in the northwest offers excellent views of Downtown Des Moines and the river.

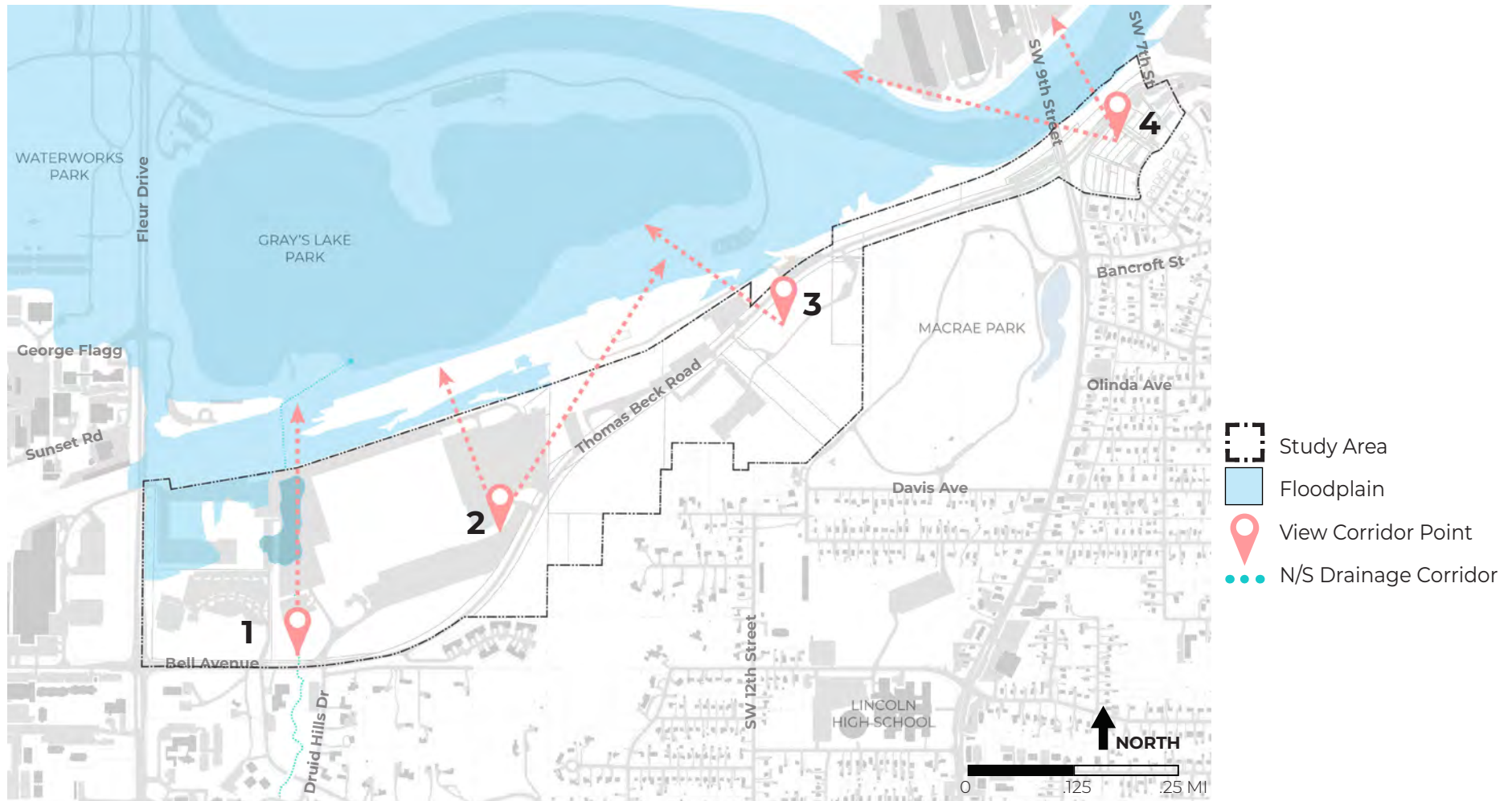


Figure 1.11 View Corridor Map



# active transportation + transit

## Active Transportation + Transit

The trail network around the study area is shown in Figure 1.12. Nearby transit stops, benches, and shelters are also detailed. This study area is supported by DART Route 8. Route 8 is important for the neighborhood and has high ridership. DART Route 7

divides Gray's Lake and Indianola Hills neighborhoods with transit stops near the intersection of SW 9th St and Bancroft St.

The area is laced with multiple trail segments. Trails connect Gray's Lake Park with Des Moines Water Works Park. The

Great Western Trail feeds into the Bill Riley Trail and connects riders to Martensdale, south of Des Moines. Progress within the trails network includes improved sidewalks and pedestrian crossings including a median refuge island for pedestrians crossing Thomas Beck Rd at Bancroft St.

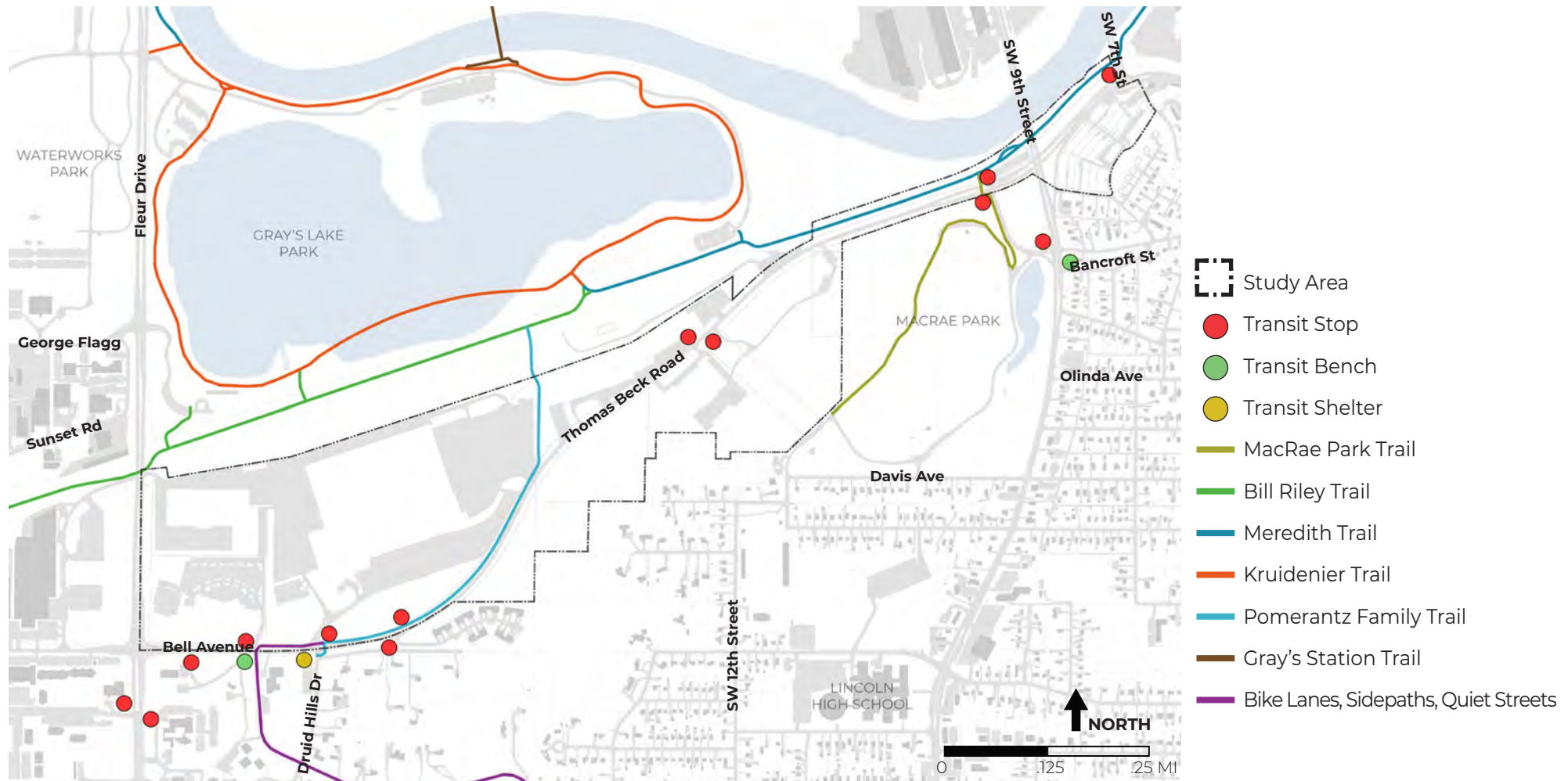


Figure 1.12 Active Transportation + Transit Map

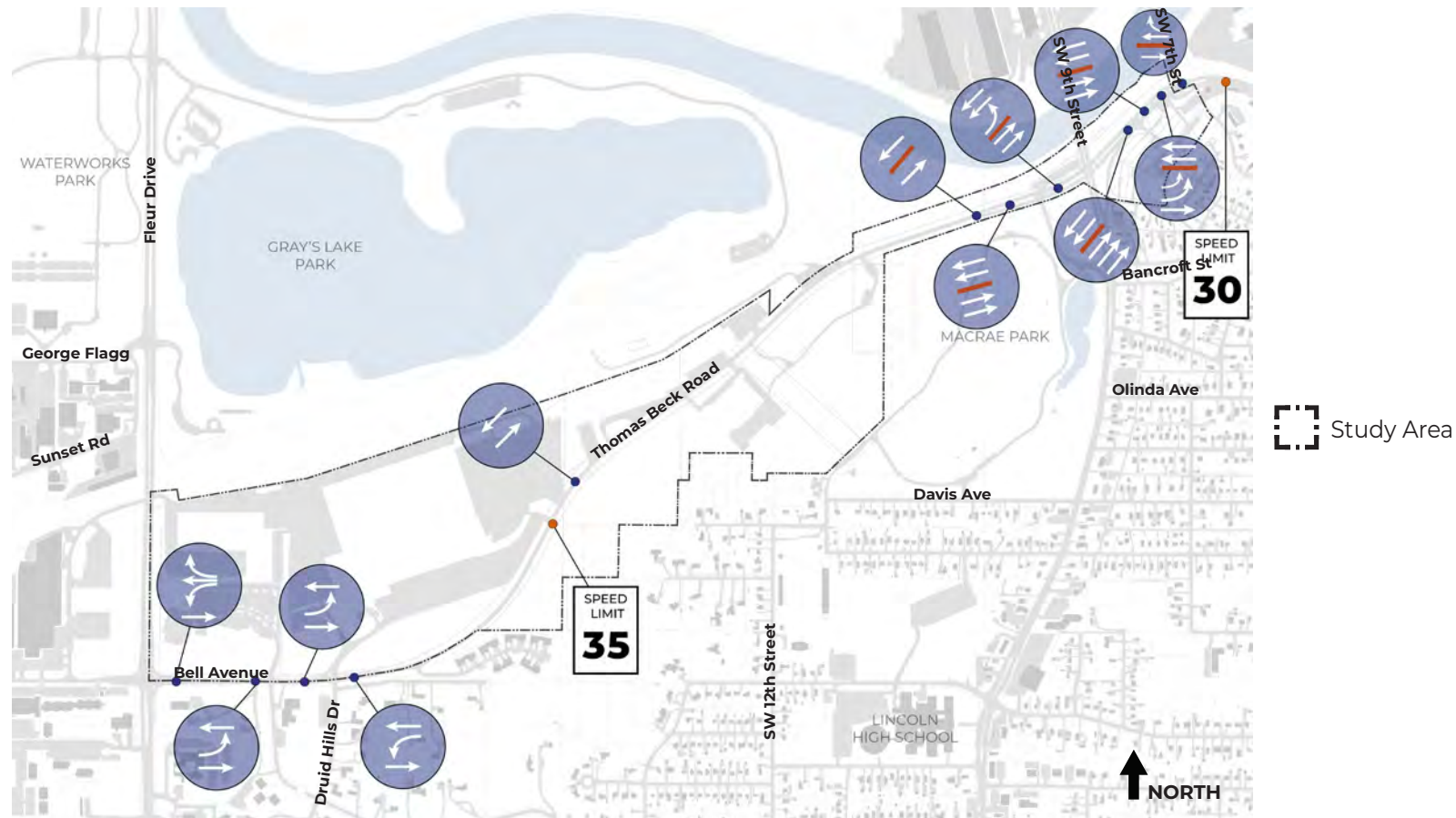
# transportation analysis

## Speed Limits + Lanes

Figure 1.13 shows the lane configuration, turning movements, and posted speed limits along Bell Avenue, Thomas Beck Road, and Indianola Road between Fleur Drive and SW 7th Street. The segment conveys traffic for 1.5 miles between signalized intersections. No other intersection controls currently calm traffic through this corridor. Center turn

lanes along Bell Avenue support access north and south to Druid Hill. Existing commercial uses on the north side of the road have full turn movement access and traffic operations may be reduced during the afternoon peak hours under existing traffic volumes. The center segment provides two lane traffic head to head, but with the steep hillside on the south and limited access to the Bell Avenue Business

Park, it supports the existing needs. The eastbound slope of the roadway and posted speed of 35 miles per hour may result in faster travel speeds than desired for the anticipated land use. The existing raised medians separate traffic between Bancroft Street and SW 7th Street.



**Figure 1.13** Active Transportation + Transit Map

# transportation analysis

## Primary + Non-Primary Streets

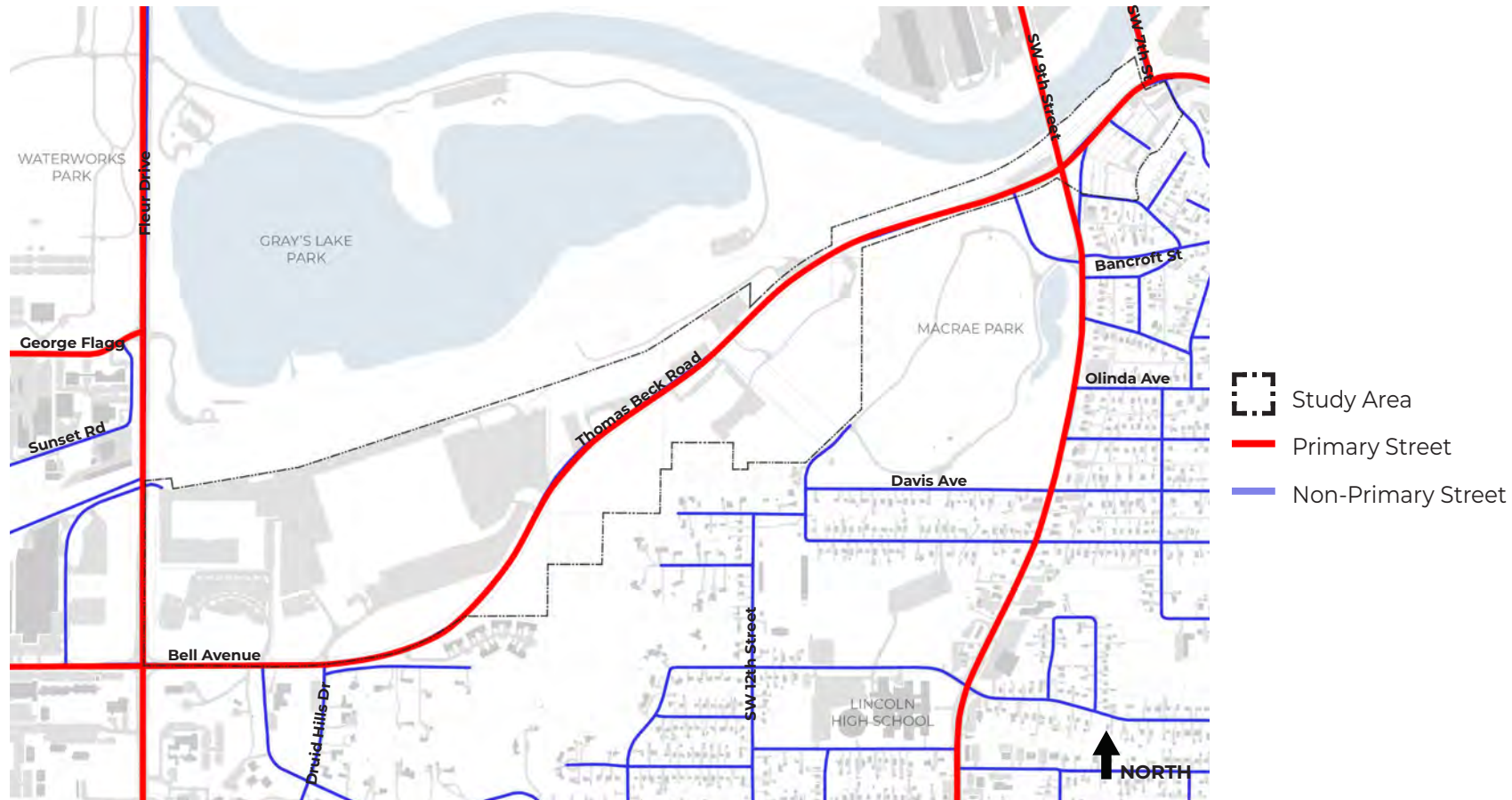
Figure 1.14 identifies the primary and non-primary streets within the study area and its immediate surroundings. Primary streets represent main corridors for through traffic as well as the primary/secondary emergency routes or truck routes.

Typologies in the City of Des Moines Transportation Master Plan are assigned

to these roadways to provide context for their existing and ultimate purpose. Fleur Drive is designated as Regional Mixed Use typology as a gateway, connecting people using all modes of travel from around Des Moines and the wider region to the City's major destinations. Bell Avenue/Thomas Beck Road and SW 9th Street are designated as Community Mixed Use segments that enable economic activity by creating welcoming

pedestrian environments, ensuring efficient deliveries and transit access, and supplying the right amount of parking.

The roadways within and adjacent serve to create a transportation network that supports the movement of people into and through the study area. Intersections and crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians from these roads are also important conditions.



**Figure 1.14** Primary + Non-Primary Streets Map



# transportation analysis

## Truck Route

Figure 1.15 shows Des Moines truck routes in the study area. The major streets surrounding the study area are highlighted. This helps inform the type of street design and layout necessary for efficient truck traffic in the city through the study area.

Commercial vehicles exceeding 12,000

pounds, loaded or unloaded, are restricted to using truck routes designated in orange. Thomas Beck Road is the first east/west route south of downtown and more than three miles north of Army Post Road.

Westbound trucks traveling along Bell Ave/Thomas Beck Rd intersect with SW 30th Street. Trucks are directed north

to the skewed intersection with George Flagg Parkway to reach Park Avenue. Park Avenue (not shown) between Fleur Drive and SW 42nd Street is not a designated truck route, but has been used at times by drivers when George Flagg Parkway is closed for flooding.



**Figure 1.15** Truck Routes - City of Des Moines



# transportation analysis

## Traffic Patterns + Volumes

Figure 1.16 shows the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) estimated average annual daily traffic (AADT) from 2018 for the roadways around the study area. Daily traffic estimates were combined with traffic counts in 2020 for the Southwest Infrastructure and

Planning Study.

The roadways with the highest AADT include the area's primary roads of Fleur Drive and Thomas Beck Road. Those roads with the highest AADT have daily traffic at or excess of 5,000 automobiles per day. Streets with

AADT of between 2,000 and 4,999 per day are shown in orange and include several intersecting streets in or near the study area. Streets shown in green have AADT between 1,000 and 1,999 and the least trafficked streets are shown in blue and carry daily traffic below 1,000 cars daily.

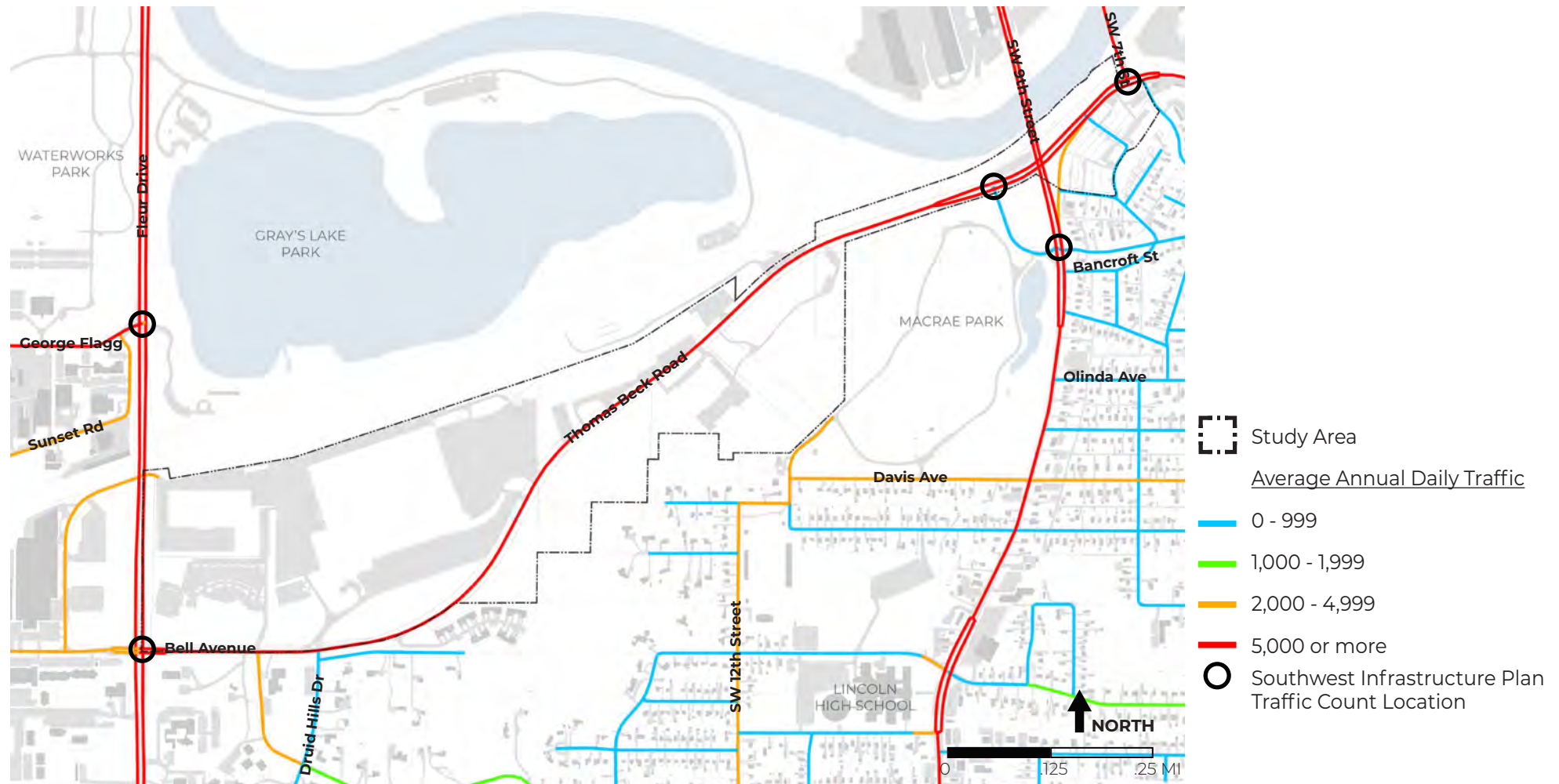


Figure 1.16 Traffic Volumes

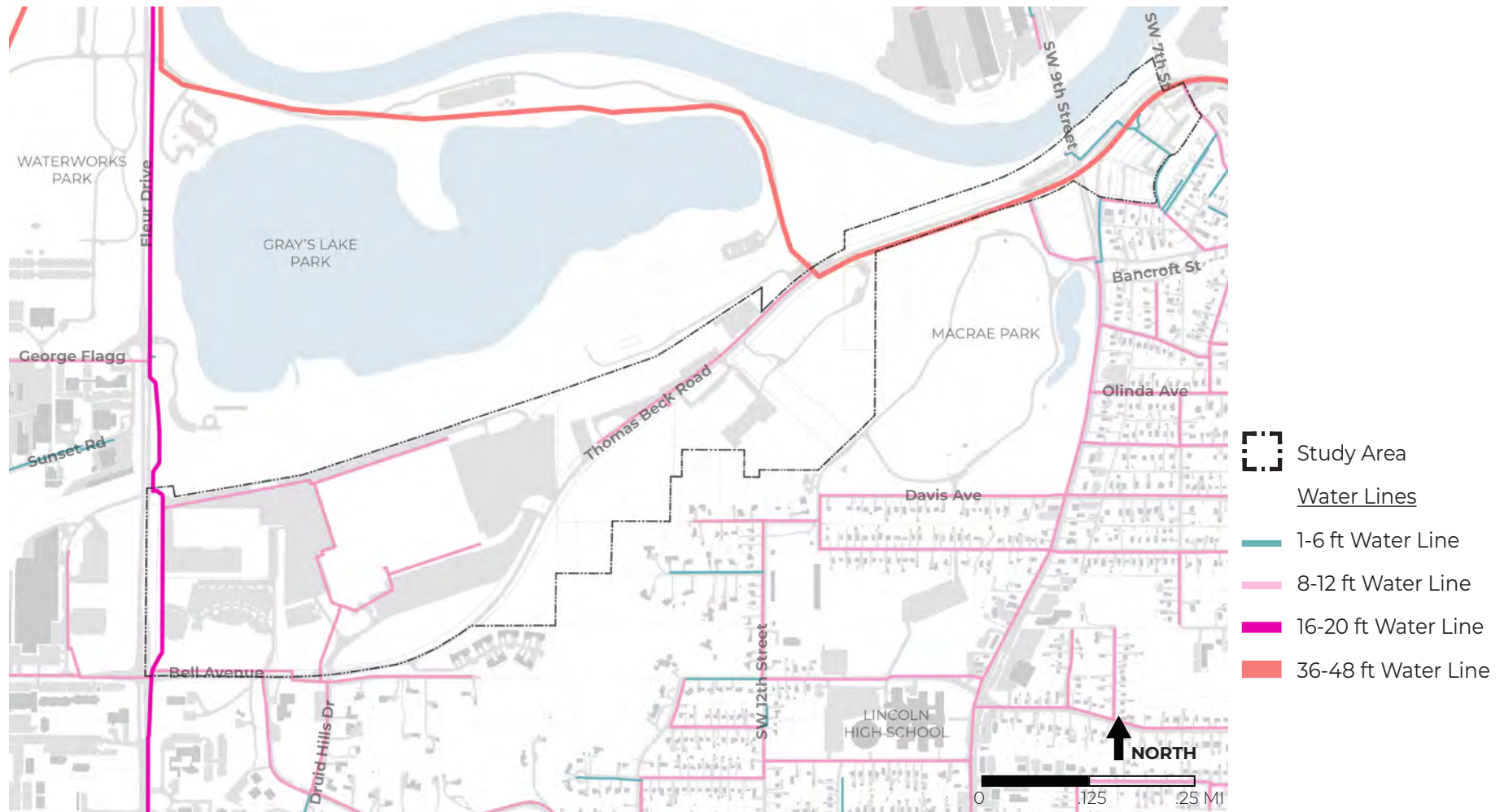
# infrastructure analysis

## Water Infrastructure

Figure 1.17 shows the water infrastructure data for the South of Gray's Lake master plan study area. The area is in close proximity to the water distribution main lines that run between Racoon River and Gray's Lake. The main is critical to

providing water services to southeast Des Moines and must not be impacted. The size of the water line ensures adequate pressure can be expected for existing and future development in the area. Orientation of internal water line circulation is not likely to be supportive of

future redevelopment and development submittals should anticipate replacing existing taps to provide water services in phases. A new 8-12" tap may be needed to support residential development on the south side of Thomas Beck Road.



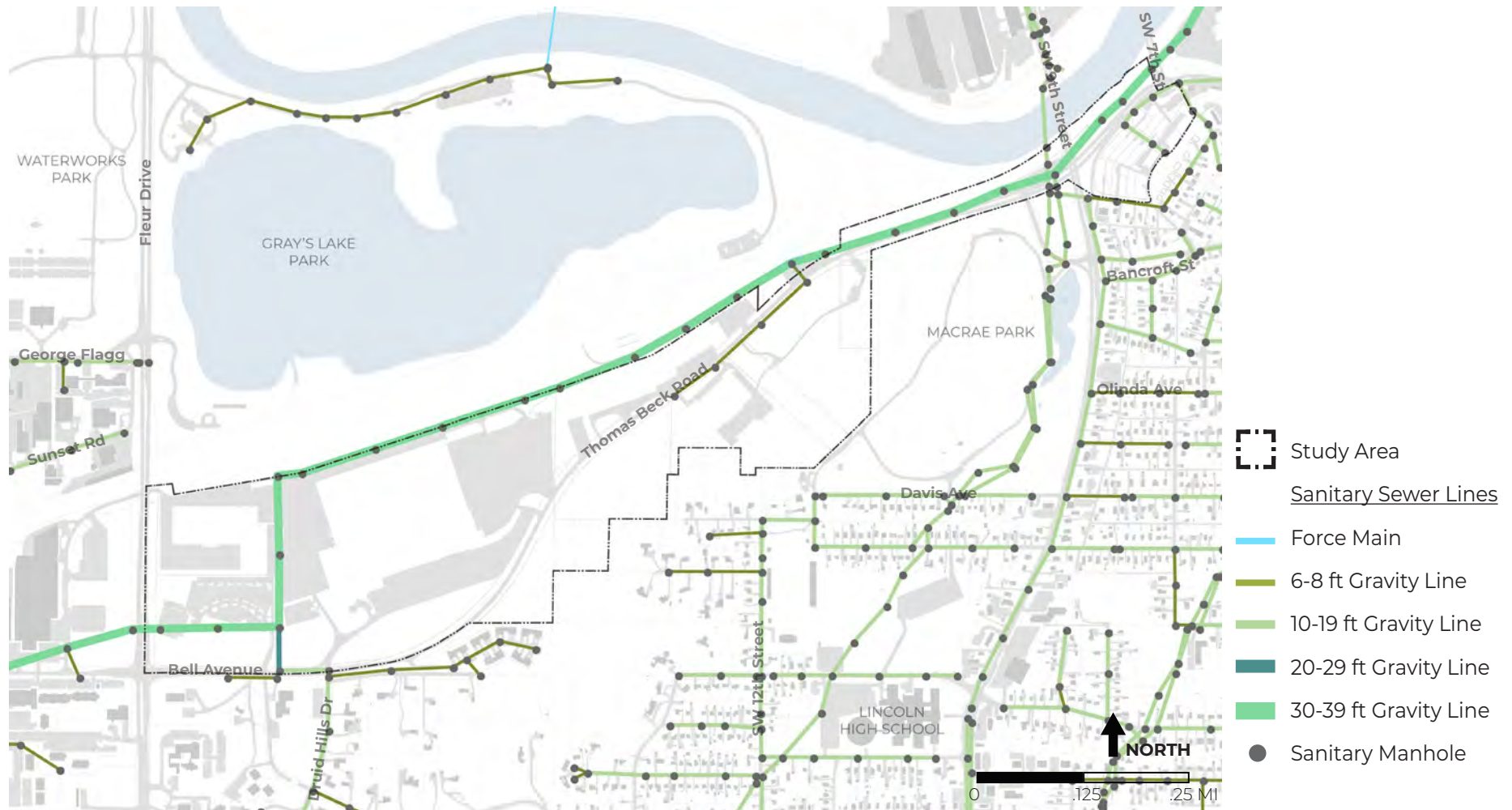
# infrastructure analysis

## Sanitary Infrastructure

Figure 1.18 shows the wastewater infrastructure data for the South of Gray's Lake master plan study area. A mainline of the sanitary gravity flow system runs along the north boundary of the South of Gray's Lake area. Redevelopment must

work around this line to avoid impacting the regional conveyance system. Available GIS data did not provide depth below surface elevation for the mainline and the depth must be confirmed before locating future stormwater treatment facilities. The anticipated demand of residential

apartments and townhomes south of Thomas Beck Road is likely to exceed the capacity of the existing 6-8 inch line which flows under the roadway to require upgrading the size.



**Figure 1.18** Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure



# infrastructure analysis

## Stormwater Infrastructure

Figure 1.19 shows the stormwater infrastructure contained within the study area. Existing stormwater drainage pipes provide the capacity required for existing residents and redevelopment. However, public input revealed some localized areas of short-duration ponding along the south side of Thomas Beck Rd. Also, sediment is deposited on the driving and walking

surfaces frequently due to runoff from the hill slope to the south.

Open drainage along Druid Hill Dr connects under Thomas Beck Rd to flow through stormwater pipe. The drainage areas to this location extends south past Watrous Ave. Significant rain events can cause stormwater to back up and overtop Druid Hill Dr.

All future development and redevelopment must submit plans to the City for attaining stormwater treatment requirements prior to discharge into the storm drain system. Construction of the Gray's Lake Wetland is intended to provide stormwater treatment for the large drainage area to the south. Local redevelopment plans are required to demonstrate how their site will provide stormwater treatment prior to entering this regional treatment facility. Design plans could include separate or integrated treatment methods with the wetland site as long as the function of the wetland is not diminished and maintenance can be provided.

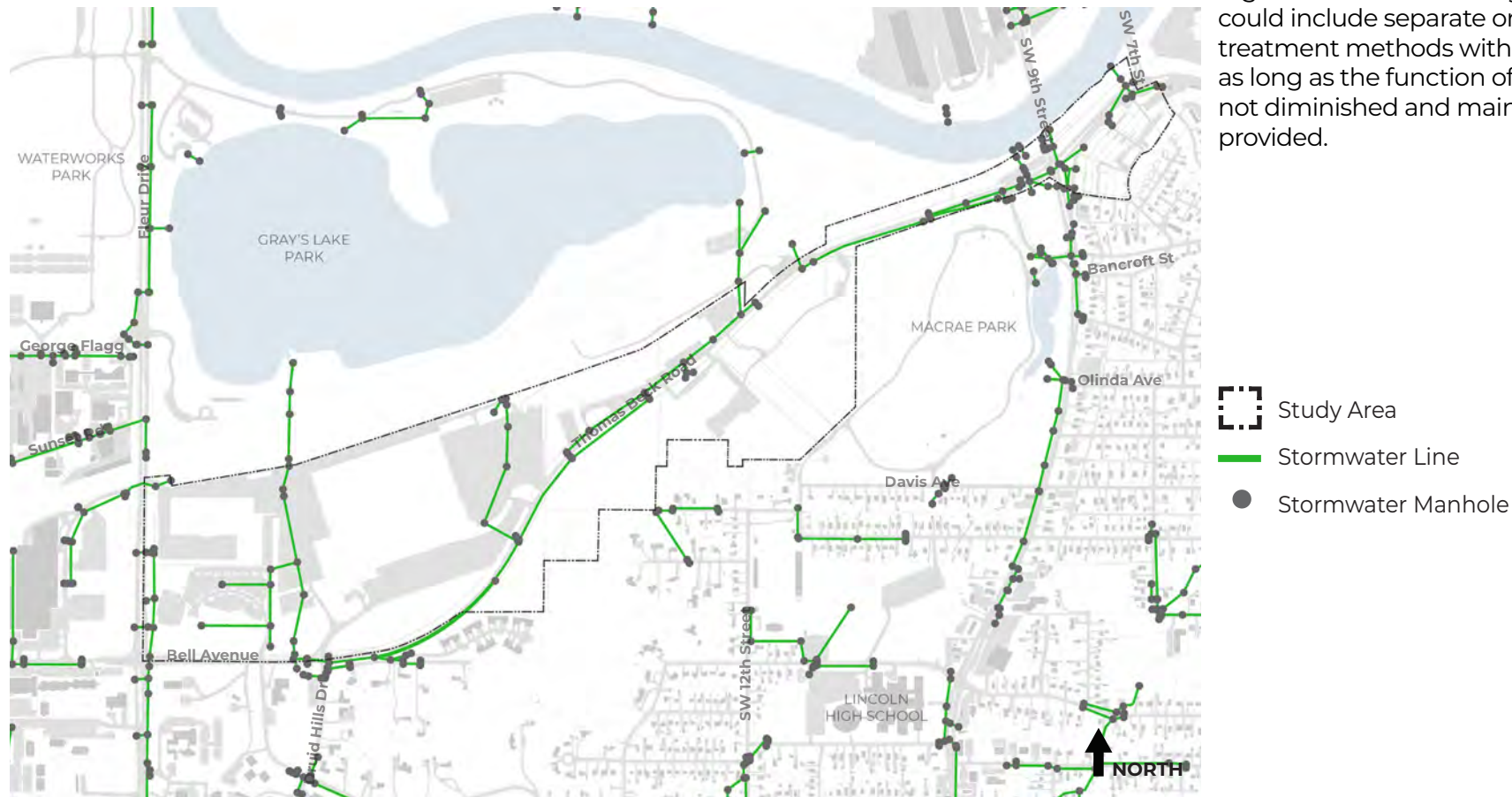


Figure 1.19 Stormwater Infrastructure

# existing conditions conclusions

## **Existing Conditions Conclusions**

The existing conditions analysis revealed several important considerations.

### *Highest and Best Use*

Given the underlying zoning, location and proximity to Downtown Des Moines, the current land uses in the study area are not the highest and best use of the site. Future redevelopment of the site should be more in line with the base zoning, which allows for more urban densities with retail, entertainment and residential uses.

### *Road Network*

The Bell Avenue /Thomas Beck Road / Indianola Road corridor will experience increasing traffic volumes that will conflict at times with future redevelopment that is anticipated within the area. The existing alignment will need improvements to introduce traffic calming and support traffic operations at studied intersections. North-south movement of pedestrians and bicyclists needs to be enhanced to provide neighborhood access to the walkable redevelopment and regional trails.

### *Infrastructure*

The area is currently served by stormwater, water, and sanitary services. The orientation and capacity of some lines is not ideally supportive of redevelopment. A combination of public and private infrastructure improvements are likely needed to support the anticipated improvements in this area.

### *View Corridors*

View corridors should be strategically preserved in the study area. This includes views of the wetland and proposed water feature from Thomas Beck Road as well as views of Downtown Des Moines from within the study area and for residents to the south. Building heights should be limited throughout the development except for the Wesco Distribution site in the northwest corner along Fleur Drive.

### *Green Infrastructure*

The study area is in close proximity to several important waterbodies including the Raccoon River and Gray's Lake. While the area has a lot of existing impermeable pavement, new development should widely incorporate green infrastructure solutions to deal with stormwater on-site as much as possible. There is some existing floodplain within the study area as well that needs to be addressed as part of any redevelopment plan.

### *Density*

The current zoning allows for very high densities within the study area. Based on site analysis and context of the study area, a medium-intensity mixed-use density is more appropriate for the study area. The area is physically separate from the rest of Downtown and near to existing residential areas to the south, all of which support a more mid-level intense development.

### *Natural Features*

There are several natural features within or near the site to consider as part of

any redevelopment or master plan. This includes some areas of steeper terrain as well as patches of significant tree cover. Many of the areas with steeper terrain also have tree cover, which likely helps protect and stabilize the hill from erosion.

### *Existing Buildings*

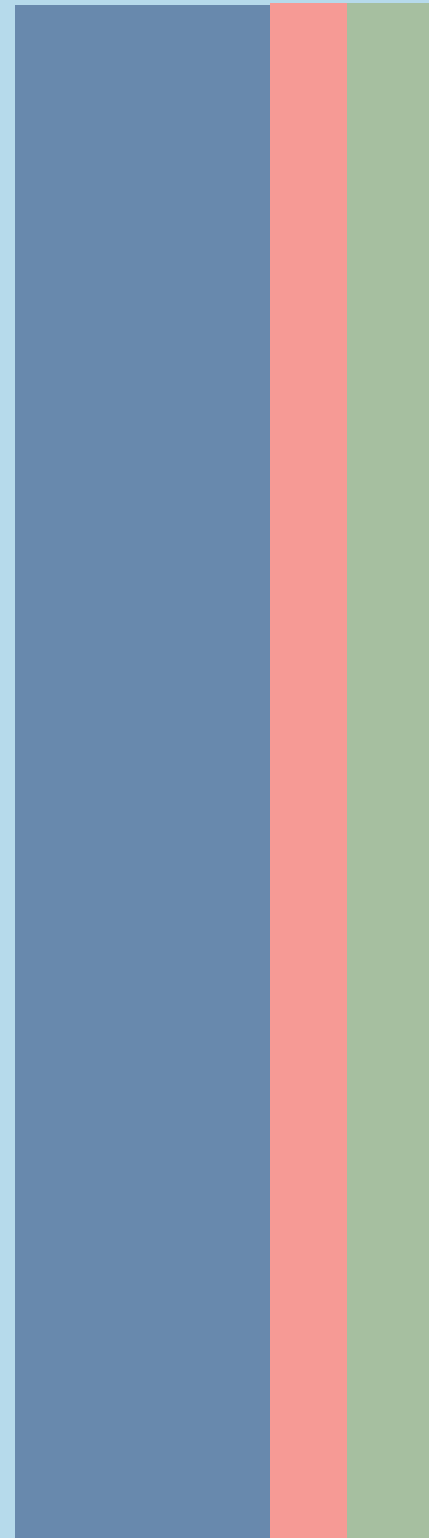
A review of the existing building stock within the study area was completed based on form, function and location. Newer buildings such as the current Iowa Finance Authority building still appear to function well and fit within the highest and best use of the area. Others are unique and historic, such as The Depot building along the trail along Thomas Beck Road in the northeast corner. Other industrial / flex buildings perform fine for the existing land use and character of the development. However, many of these buildings would no longer fit the character of the area given any substantial redevelopment at the densities described within the underlying zoning.

### *Planned Developments*

There are several planned or proposed developments underway within the study area. This includes redevelopment of the northeast corner of the site near Indianola Road as well as a proposed medium-density residential development south of Thomas Beck Road. Both proposed and planned developments fit within the land use types preferred for the future of the site. Both add additional and appropriate residential density to the area.



# public input summary



# public input schedule

## Public Input Schedule Overview

Due to social distancing measures put in place because of COVID-19, many of the meetings for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan were held virtually. Table 2.1 shows the overall project schedule including the public input opportunities.

Project Schedule	November 2020	December 2021	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021
<b>Phase 1 - Project Kick-Off, Research + Analysis</b>											
Kick-off Meeting with Advisory Committee	●										
Analysis Review Meeting with Advisory Committee			●								
<b>Phase 2 - Community and Stakeholder Input</b>											
Social Pinpoint Website					●						
Stakeholder and Property Owner Interviews (2-days)				●							
Neighborhood Workshop					●						
Input Review Meeting with Advisory Committee					●						
<b>Phase 3 - Draft Plan + Evaluation</b>											
Draft Review Meeting with Advisory Committee								●	●	●	
Neighborhood and Stakeholder Open House								●	●		
Social Pinpoint Website Update								●	●		
<b>Phase 4 - Final Draft Plan and Presentation of Findings</b>											
Planning Commission / Urban Design Board Presentation								●	●		
City Council Workshop										●	●

**Table 2.1** Project Schedule with the events broken down throughout the four phases.

# advisory committee

## Advisory Committee

To help aid the public input process, an advisory committee comprised of City staff members, members of the Gray's Lake advisory committee, neighborhood representatives, property owners, an elected official, Urban Design Review Board member, and a Plan and Zoning Commission member. A list of the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan Advisory Committee members can be found below.

Name	Organization	Title
Carl Voss	City Council	At-Large Councilmember
Connie Boesen	City Council	At-Large Councilmember
Josh Mandelbaum	City Council	Ward III Councilmember
Stefanie Running	Gray's Lake Neighborhood Association	Neighborhood President
Sarah Lohmeier	Friends of Des Moines Parks	Executive Director
George Davis	Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association	Neighborhood President
Cheri Cipperley	Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee	Committee Member
Mell Meredith	Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee	Committee Member
Rick Neumann	Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee	Committee Member
Susan Huppert	Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee	Committee Member
Johnny Alcivar	Plan and Zoning Commission	Commission Member
Stephanie Weisenbach	Urban Design Review Board	Commission Member
Carl Saxon	DART	Transit Planner
Luis Montoya	DART	Chief Planning Officer
Corey Bogenreif	City of Des Moines- Engineering	Principal Traffic Engineer
David Kamp	City of Des Moines- Engineering	Chief Design Engineer
Jeff Wiggins	City of Des Moines- Engineering	Transportation Planner
John Davis	City of Des Moines- Engineering	City Traffic Engineer
Steven Naber	City of Des Moines- Engineering	City Engineer
Thomas Vlach	City of Des Moines- Engineering	Deputy City Engineer
Benjamin Page	City of Des Moines- Parks	Parks Director
Jenny Richmond	City of Des Moines- Parks	Deputy Parks Director
Erin Olson-Douglas	City of Des Moines- Development Services	Development Services Director
Ryan Moffatt	City of Des Moines- Development Services	Economic Development Director

**Table 2.2** Advisory Committee Members



# stakeholder interviews

## Stakeholder Interviews

Conducting stakeholder interviews is an extremely valuable method of engaging the public. Held virtually, members of the consultant team met with stakeholders for one-on-one interviews. This small group setting provides a safe environment to speak freely. Interviewees provide feedback on the strengths on the strengths, weaknesses, setbacks and opportunities within the community today, and in the future. The feedback gathered provided guidance to the overall development of the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan.

## Stakeholders

To the right, in Figure 2.1, stakeholders contacted for the Master Plan and those that agreed to meet are listed. Below, groups that the team was unable to contact is also provided. These individuals and groups represent property and business owners, developers, and community organizations.

### The list of stakeholders that were contacted or offered to meet include:

- Des Moines Public Schools
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- DART
- Central Iowa Trails Association
- Polk County Conservation
- Natural Heritage Foundation
- Friends of SW 9th
- Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail Advisory Committee
- DSM Street Collective
- Urban Design Review Board
- Plan and Zoning Commission
- Gray's Lake Neighborhood Association
- Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Indianola Hills Neighborhood Association
- Confluence Brewery
- Krause Development (1901 Bell Ave LLC)
- Hubbell Development
- Other Area Property Owners:
- 1963 Bell Ave
- 2301 Fleur Drive
- 1401 Thomas Beck Rd
- 1200 Thomas Beck Rd

### Ultimately, the consultant team on the project was able to meet with the following individuals or groups that agreed to meet:

- Andrea Boulton / Trails & Greenways Director, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Tim Wirta & Rob Pomerantz / 1401 Thomas Beck Rd, Pomerantz Realty Co
- George Davis / Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association
- Luis Montoya / DART
- Maggie McClelland & Hannah Inman / Central Iowa Trails Association, Great Outdoors Foundation
- Ted Corrigan / General Manager, Des Moines Water Works
- John Martin & Mark David / Confluence Brewery
- Kris Saddoris / Hubbell Realty
- Katie Rock / Polk County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Danny Heggen & Aubrie Gould / Krause Development, 1901 Bell Ave LLC
- Stephanie Weisenbach / Urban Design Review Board
- Johnny Alcivar / Plan & Zoning Commission

**Figure 2.1** Stakeholder Interview List

# stakeholder interview takeaways

## Stakeholder Interviews Key Takeaways

Following the stakeholder interviews, the feedback gathered was categorized into general, positive, and development comment types.

### General

- Industrial/outdoor storage not a good use south of Thomas Beck Rd
- This area serves as a gateway to Des Moines from the airport
- Don't make this area too crowded or dense
- Be careful on the amount of retail planned-there is already an oversupply
- Leave some existing buildings alone such as the site at 1235-1405 Thomas Beck Rd

### Amenities

- Need to accommodate multi-modal (pedestrian, bike, car, and bus)
- Need linear parks and open space to create walking and gathering spaces
- Need to maintain direct access to the Meredith Trail and Gray's Lake Park
- Need more recreation facilities including ball fields and courts in the area for the nearby residential areas
- The area needs sidewalks and measures to slow down traffic
- Need natural buffers to support wildlife, pollinators, protection from flooding
- Need a public gathering space just off the lake, which may help alleviate pressures on Gray's Lake Park

### Development

- Entertainment retail would be a good use in this area - retail, restaurants and breweries
- Retail / housing densities will help support and increased level of transit services
- This area is good for a mix of retail and residential but should include affordable housing
- Design with a park once mindset (limit on-site parking)
- Would like to expand outdoor patio space into the park
- Water trails support retail would be a good use for this area

# public workshop

## Public Workshop

A public workshop was held virtually on Tuesday, March 30, 2021. The meeting was held over zoom and started at 6:00 P.M.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to the public and receive input on visioning for the area south of Gray's Lake. At this workshop, the following items were included on the agenda:

- Project Scope and Schedule
- Existing Conditions
- Your Input
- Next Steps

The marketing correspondence used to invite the public to the meeting is depicted in Figure 2.2.



## JOIN US FOR A *Virtual* Public Workshop

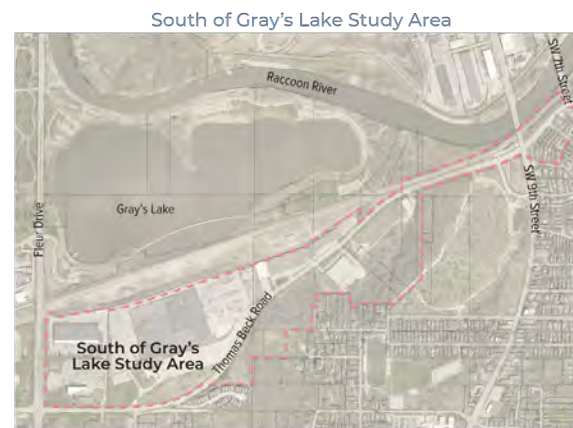
TUESDAY, MARCH 30  
6:00 PM | ZOOM

Learn more about and provide input on the  
South of Gray's Lake Master Plan

The City of Des Moines requests **public input** on a new vision for the area located south of Gray's Lake Park and east of Fleur Drive.

The South of Gray's Lake Master Plan will create a detailed plan for the potential future redevelopment of the area south of Gray's Lake Park.

[Click here to learn more and provide your input now at the project website](#)



**Figure 2.2** Marketing Correspondence sent out to attendees via email

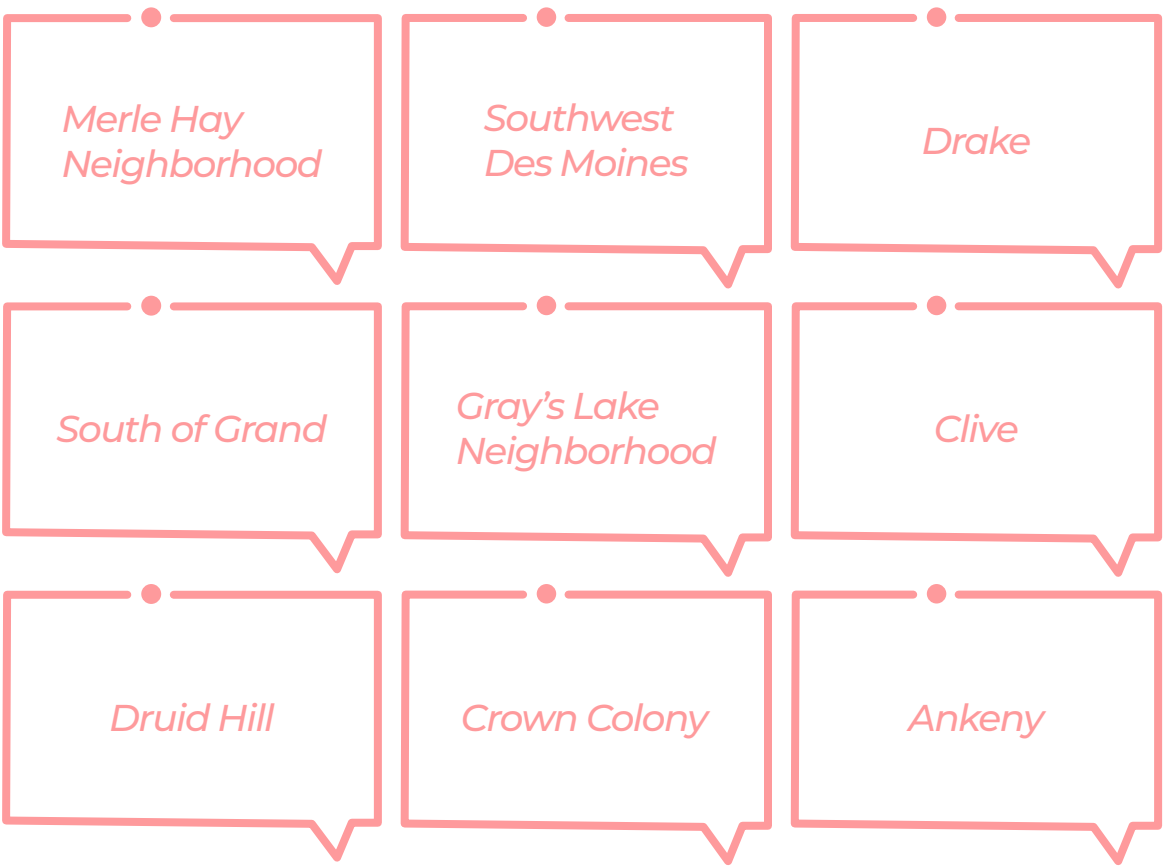
# visioning questions

## Visioning Questions

Mentimeter, a digital polling application, was used to gather input from the public on a series of multiple choice and write-in questions. The results are summarized below.

*What part of Des Moines do you live?*  
To start off, the participants were asked to use the Mentimeter site to type in what part of Des Moines they live. Most participants specified a neighborhood close to the study area including Druid Hills, South of Grand, the Gray's Lake neighborhood, Drake, Crown Colony, or Southwest Des Moines. A few participants listed Des Moines suburbs as their home.

*What part of Des Moines do you live?*



# visioning questions

## Visioning Questions

*What dream do you have for this area?*

The second question given to the participants asked them to describe their dreams for this area. Major themes that came about included walkable neighborhoods, a mix of residential, retail, and restaurants, environmentally sensitive developments, and the retention of natural habitats and features.

*What DREAM  
do you have for  
this area?*

*Environmentally  
sensitive  
developments*

*Retaining  
natural features  
and habitats*

*Access to Gray's  
Lake from  
Thomas Beck Rd.*

*Walkable  
residential*

*Neighborhood  
experience*

*Family-friendly  
entertainment  
and retail*

*Neighborhood  
experience*

*Walkable shops  
+ eateries*

*A Minneapolis-  
style lake  
neighborhood*

# visioning questions

## Visioning Questions

*What is one fear you have for this area?*

The next visioning question asked the participants to share their fears for developing this site. Concerns included too much high density housing and commercial land uses, cheap and unfavorable finishings, not realizing the site's full potential, congested vehicular traffic, the timeliness of the development, noise from restaurants and retail, and the environmental impact of development.

*What is one  
FEAR you have  
for this area?*

*Timeliness of  
development*

*Too much  
commercial*

*Access to Gray's  
Lake from  
Thomas Beck Rd.*

*Too much high  
density housing*

*Cheap and  
Unfavorable  
finishings*

*Congested  
vehicular traffic*

*Environmental  
impact of  
development*

*Not realizing  
the site's full  
potential*

*Noise from  
restaurant  
and retail*

# visioning questions

## Visioning Questions

*Describe your vision for the future of this area*

The participants shared their visions for the future of the site. Highlights of these visions include walkability, connecting the south to the north, mixed-use, and maintaining the natural environment.

*Describe your vision for the future of this area*

*A major lake area with big city ambitions*

*An urban mixed-use neighborhood that is a draw for the south side that can attract new residents and businesses*

*Pedestrian-friendly retail entertainment that supports residential while maintaining the woods and lake environment*

*A connection between the south side and downtown and the lake*

*Retail, restaurants, and condos in a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere with river access embracing the nature*

*Walkable, family-friendly, age-in-place community*

# visioning questions

## Visioning Questions

*What dream do you have for this area?*

The final visioning question asked the participants to share goals we should establish for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan. Ensuring that the site is accessible to all, safe for pedestrians, features multimodal transit, and preserves the natural beauty are some of the goals set for the consultant team.

*What goals should we establish for this plan?*

*Balance the opportunities of expanding the tax base with environmental stewardship*

*Create an enduring development that will not age too quickly or deteriorate and also serves a diverse population, not just the young*

*Appropriate land uses and densities, increasing recreational offerings and tying in with Gray's Lake and MacRae Park*

*Preserve the natural beauty*

*Planned for multimodal opportunities*

*Safe access for pedestrians*



# redevelopment scenarios

## Redevelopment Scenarios

*What type of development do you prefer?*

Three options for development were proposed to workshop attendees.

Option 1: Status Quo with No Redevelopment is highlighted by maintaining the 1902 Bell Avenue building and 1235 Thomas Beck Road building, receiving 6 of the 34 total votes.

Option 2: Long-Term Redevelopment includes redevelopment of the entire study area with proposed mixed use and retail development to take place. Option 2 received 13 of the 34 total votes.

Option 3: Hybrid Redevelopment, combines the two previous options by retaining the 1235 Thomas Beck Road building and redeveloping some portions of the study area.

Option 3 received the highest number of votes with 15 of the 34 total votes.



**Figure 2.3** Virtual Public Workshop Preferred Redevelopment Scenario Question Results

# interactive website

## Interactive Website

A Social Pinpoint project website was created to encourage virtual, interactive engagement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing prohibited many in-person meeting opportunities. This website allowed the public to safely engage with the project and provide input and guidance on the study area.

The website provides general information about the project and upcoming events. Three key interactive tools- mapping, image voting, and a short survey- were utilized to engage the community and gather input. Each of these methods are detailed in the following pages.

During this first phase of the Social Pinpoint site, there were 1,419 site visits with 352 unique users.



**Figure 2.4** Main Page from Interactive Website

## WELCOME

This is the interactive engagement website created for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan. Below you'll find a series of steps to complete the engagement exercises created for this planning effort.

## PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Master Plan is to identify a vision for the area south of Gray's Lake Park in Des Moines, Iowa. The study area is outlined in the image below. Gray's Lake Park is a highly coveted gem within the Des Moines metro area. The South of Gray's Lake Study Area is a key potential redevelopment site. The site is well suited for a mixture of uses given its proximity to Gray's Lake Park, regional trails, key transportation routes as well as Downtown Des Moines.

## ENGAGE

Please take ten minutes to provide input on the future of the area South of Gray's Lake! FAQs about the project can be found at the bottom on this page.

# interactive website

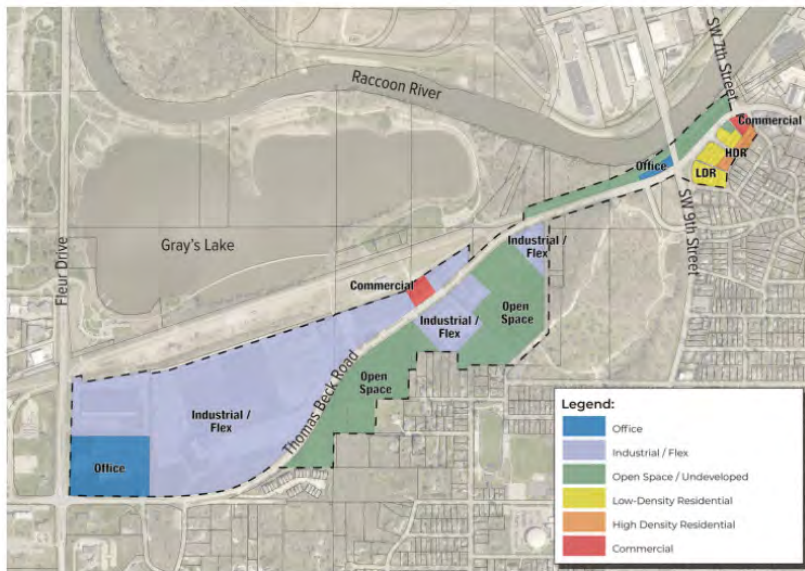
## Interactive Website

Website visitors were provided the following images as they scrolled through the website. The images gave introductions to the study area's existing land uses and zoning.

## Things to know before you participate:

### What is in the South of Gray's Lake Study Area Today?

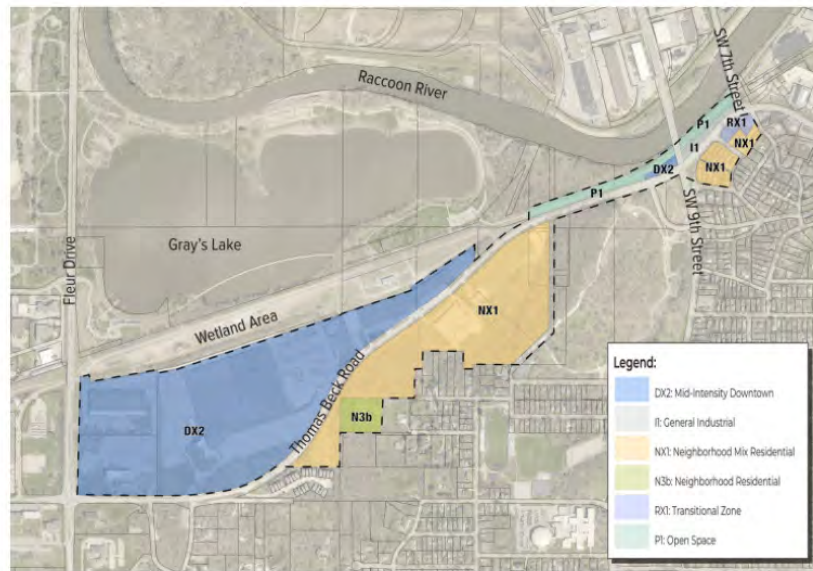
Today, the South of Gray's Lake study area is mainly composed of a mixture of light industrial uses. There are several commercial and office users as well as some undeveloped land. The easternmost section of the study area has a few residential uses.



Existing Land Uses - South of Gray's Lake Study Area

### What uses are allowed in the Study Area in the future?

A large portion of the South of Gray's Lake Study Area is zoned Mid-Intensity Downtown (DX2), which allows for multi-family residential, mixed-use buildings, schools and churches, offices and banks, retail stores & restaurants, hotels & motels, and sport complexes.



Zoning Map - South of Gray's Lake Study Area

**Figure 2.5** Interactive Website Things to Know Before you Participate



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### *Map Your Ideas!*

The first prompt visitors received was to “Map your ideas!” A map of the study area with its boundary outlined is available to them to place their comments and ideas on.

*Note: Any redevelopment of the South of Gray's Lake Study Area would require the support and agreement of each property owner. This Master Plan is meant to represent a possible vision based on analysis and public input.*

Please keep these considerations in mind when you are completing the engagement exercises below.

## Step 1 - Map your Ideas!



## Comment directly on a map of the South of Gray's Lake Study Area

View a map of the study area and tell us your ideas for the area South of Gray's Lake in the future

[Study Area Map](#)

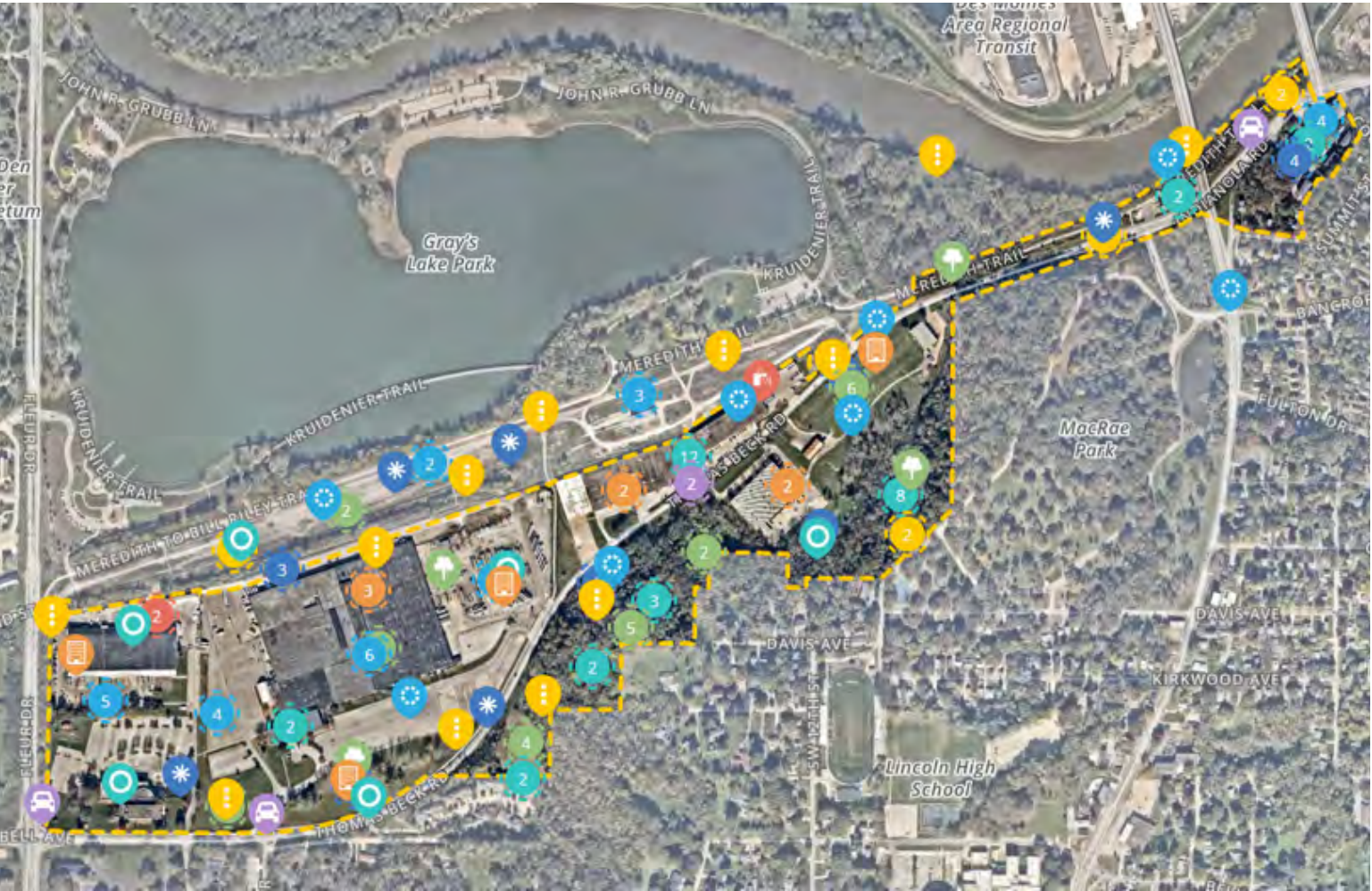
**Figure 2.6** Interactive Website Step 1

# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

There were a total of 170 comments left on the study area map, utilizing the 9 different comment types available. A breakdown for each of the comment types and examples follow.



170 comments

A varied distribution of the 9 comment types throughout the study area

Comment Types	
	I want to live here!
	I want to work here!
	I want to shop here!
	Manage Traffic

Figure 2.7 A snapshot of the preliminary comments provided through the Map your Ideas! step



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

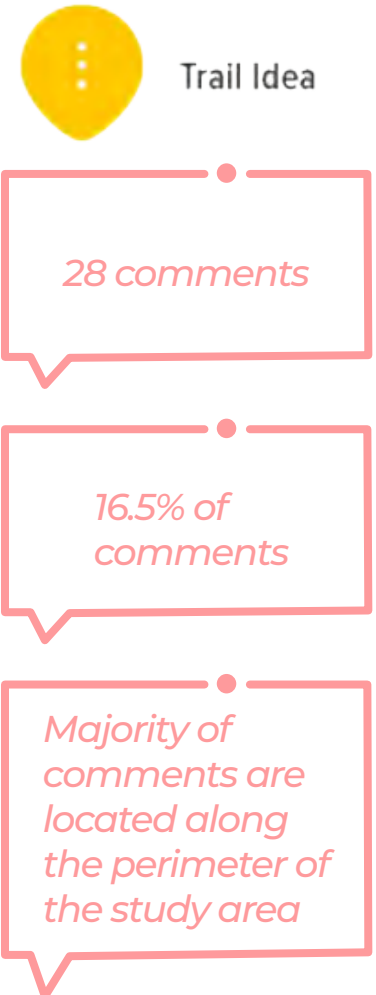
The Trail Idea prompt on the Social Pinpoint website was a frequently used comment type encouraging an array of trail connections and enhancements. Many people commented recommending the expansion of trail connections to

Lincoln High School and MacRae Park. Some comments encouraged linking existing trails together with the study area's proposed trails to provide a more expanded network. To build off this idea, there are opportunities to extend trails as north/south connectors into the rest of the Metro. Southern connector trails would

bring bordering neighborhoods into the South of Gray's Lake development and the Downtown. Northern connections would directly link bicyclists and pedestrians to Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. The trails located in the study area have the opportunity to further link Des Moines together with an extensive trails network.



**Figure 2.8** The “Trail Idea” comment prompt was primarily located around the perimeter of the study area





# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

The land in and around the study area produces some challenges regarding topography and strategically placing amenities. The wooded area on the south side of Thomas Beck Road has steep slopes that inhibit much from

being developed. Comments from the Land Use Idea! prompt provide insight into exactly how we can accomplish this through desired amenities suitable for the area. By utilizing the woods' challenging topography as an asset, amenities such as outdoor classrooms for the surrounding schools, cross-country skiing and

mountain bike courses are opportunities for amenities. Additional comments that fall under this category shared a desire to preserve and maintain the natural beauty of Gray's Lake. Wetlands, daylighting streams, and natural plantings were suggested initiatives in achieving this goal.

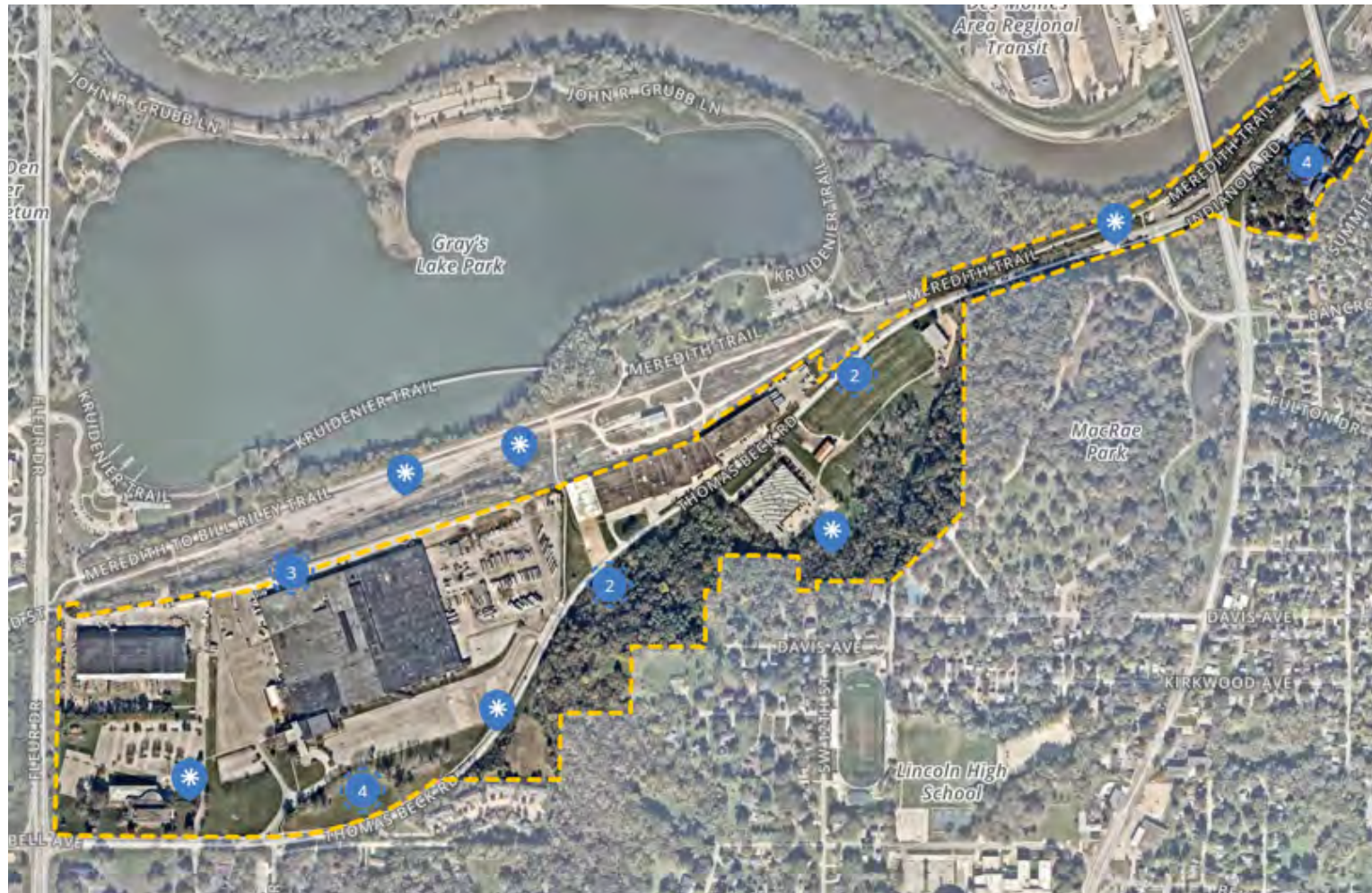


Figure 2.9 “Land Use Idea!” comment prompt utilized throughout the study area



20 comments

11.8% of comments

Many comments discuss maintaining and expanding on natural assets



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

The Preserve This! prompt identified a desire for a few structures to be retained during the redevelopment of the study area. The most frequently mentioned building was the 1235 Thomas Beck Road, home to Confluence Brewery. Comments characterize the

company as a local icon and hub for bicyclists along the trail system. The Confluence Brewery was suggested as an anchor for the proposed retail and commercial in the study area. The depot building, near the northeast corner of the study area, was identified as an opportunity for a food or drink rest-stop along the trail network. Lastly, in regard to the

1902 Bell Avenue building, many vocalized a desire to retain the frontage as it is a stand out feature to Mid-Century Modern design and is visible from the roadways.



**Figure 2.10** The "Preserve This!" prompt identified a desire to retain wooded areas and Confluence Brewery



38 comments

22.4% of comments

Many of the comments pertained to preserving the woods and Confluence brewery



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

The overwhelming majority of comments from the Redevelop This! prompt agreed that the site should be redeveloped.

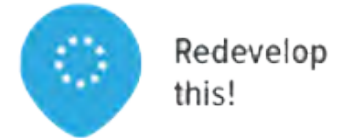
There were a variety of ways proposed to accomplish and considerations that need to be given. Many see the area as a prime

location to build on the biking culture already present in Des Moines and make this area a biking hub with amenities to support it. As mentioned in the two previous comment sections, recreational activities, biking, and cross-country skiing courses are frequently proposed features of the site. In addition to this,

commercial and residential uses were the most frequently suggested land uses. Concern for the heights and affordability of the residences to be developed were often mentioned, expressing a desire to retain sightlines for neighbors to the south and ensure this is an income-inclusive neighborhood.



**Figure 2.11** The “Redevelop This!” prompt comments focused primarily on industrial buildings



36 comments

21.2% of comments

The comments focused on industrial buildings within the site



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

The Keep as Open Space prompt strongly indicated the need to preserve the wooded area on the south side of Thomas Beck Road and to cultivate areas that will reduce impact. The wooded area is prized for its natural buffer between road and residence and

the presence of wildlife and greenscaping. Cultivating areas that reduce human impact include the proposed wetland feature and potential to daylight the stream that runs north/south through the study area. These two features also assist in expanding the natural capital in the area and alleviate pressure of runoff and stormwater on Gray's

Lake. While it is important to maintain the existing natural capital present in and around the study area, there were many comments that encouraged the expansion of these amenities via planting additional trees and installing native plantings.



**Figure 2.12** The “Keep as Open Space” prompt provided locational suggestions of wetlands, woods, and parks



28 comments

16.5% of comments

Comments provided ideas for locations of wetlands, woods, and parks



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### *Map Your Ideas!*

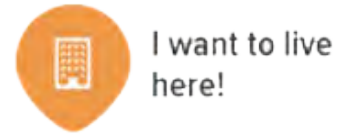
The I want to Live Here! prompt was abundant with wishes for a dense, walkable, affordable, and amenity-filled community. Preferred housing typologies for the area included townhomes and rowhouses, condos, and medium-density apartments. Brick,

Form Based Code, and large balconies or rooftop spaces, were mentioned as desirable design features to establish strong character and identity within the residential district of South of Gray's Lake. Many people vocalized their excitement over the idea of being able to live a car-free lifestyle due to the proximity of Downtown, Gray's Lake and the airport.

The desire for this area to be pedestrian and bicycle-centric was mentioned time and time again throughout each of the comment types and is a crucial contributor to the vision of South of Gray's Lake.



**Figure 2.13** The “I Want to Live Here” prompt gave insight into desirable densities within the study area



12 comments

7.1% of comments

Many comments provided ideas on densities and their locations



# interactive website

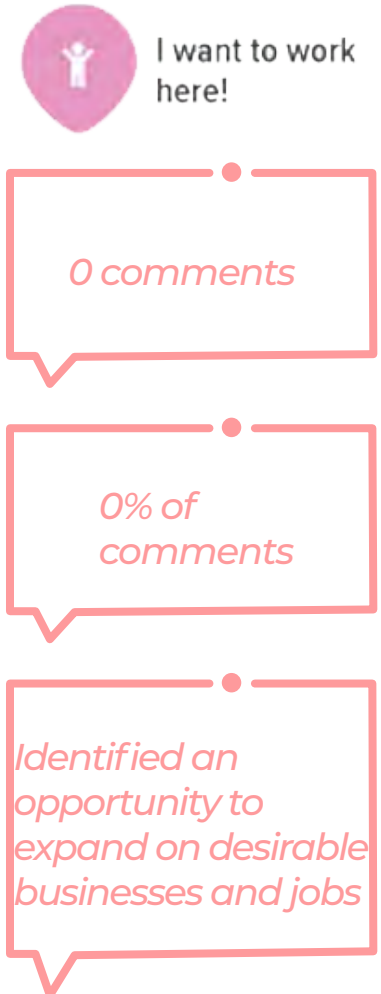
## Interactive Website

### *Map Your Ideas!*

There were no comments produced using the I want to work here! comment type. This identifies an opportunity to expand on desirable businesses and jobs.



**Figure 2.14** The “I Want to Work Here!” prompt received zero comments





# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### *Map Your Ideas!*

The I want to shop here! comment type identifies locations for potential retail, which included the Wesco Distribution site and the 1235 Thomas Beck Road building.



I want to shop here!

3 comments

1.8% of comments

The comments recommended locations for potential retail

**Figure 2.15** The “I Want to Shop Here!” prompt comments provided ideas for potential retail locations



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Map Your Ideas!

Thomas Beck Road was the primary road of concern from the Manage Traffic comment prompt. The lack of lighting along Thomas Beck Road leaves drivers and parked cars unseen and unprotected.

Comments also encouraged the priority for complete street features throughout all of Thomas Beck Road with defined spaces for cars, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Today, the transit routes along Thomas Beck Road are limited, both in time and stops, and comments expressed the need

to expand this should any development occur here. The intersection of Thomas Beck Road and Druid Hill Drive was identified for needing reconfigured to account for increased traffic in the area. Comments vocalized the need for a stop light or other traffic calming measures.



**Figure 2.16** The “Manage Traffic” prompt comments were primarily located along Thomas Beck Rd.



**Manage  
Traffic**

*5 comments*

*2.9% of  
comments*

*Comment  
locations were  
primarily along  
Thomas Beck Rd*



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### *Image Voting*

The second prompt on the website asked visitors to partake in image voting exercises for development densities and types including housing, parks and open space, retail, and mixed-use.

## Step 2 - Vote on Images



### Development Type

What type of land uses do you want to see in the study area in the future?  
**Pick your three (3) preferred types of development for the area.**



### Development Density

What type of development density or intensity makes sense for the area given its zoning and location? **Pick your six (6) preferred types of density for the area.**

**Figure 2.17** Introduction of Step 2's Image Voting

# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### *Image Voting*

The image voting component of the website proposed two categories to participants to direct development type and density. Figure 2.18 shows the most preferred and least preferred images from the development type category.

### *Development Type*

The question posed and directions given to participants included:

- What type of land uses do you want to see in the study area in the future?

*Pick your three (3) preferred types of development for the area.*

## MOST PREFERRED



Mixed-Use Development (80 votes)



Parks + Open Space (77 votes)



Retail + Commercial (33 votes)

## LEAST PREFERRED



Industrial/ Business Park (9 votes)



Low Density Residential (8 votes)

**Figure 2.18** Most + Least Preferred Development Types



# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Image Voting

The image voting component of the website proposed two categories to participants to direct development type and density. Figure 2.19 shows the most preferred and least preferred images from the development density category.

### Development Density

The question posed and directions given to participants included:

- What type of development density or intensity makes sense for the area given it's zoning and location?

*Pick your three (3) preferred types of development for the area.*

## MOST PREFERRED



Mixed-Use Ex. 6 (44 votes)



Mixed-Use Ex. 11  
(36 votes)



Mixed-Use Ex. 4  
(30 votes)



Retail Ex. 4  
(36 votes)



Apartment/ Condos Ex. 2  
(26 votes)

## LEAST PREFERRED



Retail Ex. 3 (0 votes)



Rowhouse Ex.1  
(0 votes)



Apartment/ Condos Ex.4  
(1 vote)



Mixed-Use Ex. 7  
(2 votes)



Rowhouse Ex. 5  
(2 votes)

**Figure 2.19** Most + Least Preferred Development Density

# interactive website

## Interactive Website

### Short Survey

The final prompt on the website asked visitors to complete a short survey. The questions primarily included asking where they lived, what they would like to see for densities, and short descriptions of the study area. Figure 2.20 is a snapshot of what the survey included.

**Step 3 - Complete a short survey**

**SOUTH OF GRAY'S LAKE MASTER PLAN**

**Complete a short survey**  
Answer a few questions to help us better understand your views and priorities

[Take the Survey](#)

Thank you for completing the engagement exercises for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan!

**Complete a short survey**

Where do you live?

- ☐ City of Des Moines
- ☐ Des Moines Suburb
- ☐ Unincorporated Area
- ☐ Outside of Des Moines Area

Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include the following land use types?

	Yes	No
Parks & Open Space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low-Density Residential (single-family homes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medium-Density Residential (townhomes / condominiums)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[Close](#)

A Public Workshop on the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan was held on March 30, 2021. Below is a PDF of the results.

**Figure 2.20** Example of the short survey in Step 3 of interactive engagement for the website.



# interactive website

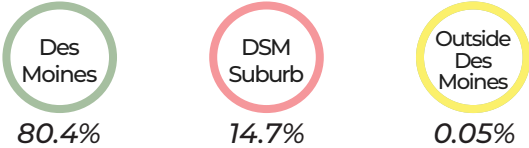
## Interactive Website

### Short Survey

Detailed below are the results from the short survey given to website visitors.

### Short Survey Questions

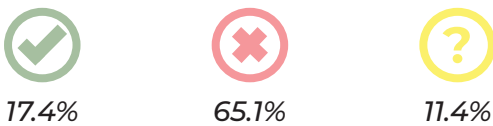
#### 1. Where do you live?



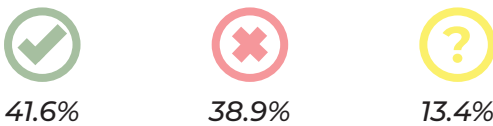
#### 2. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Park & Open Space?



#### 3. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Low-Density Residential?



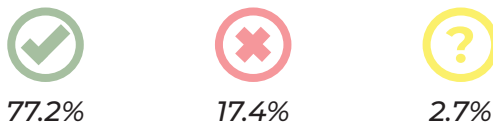
#### 4. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Medium-Density Residential?



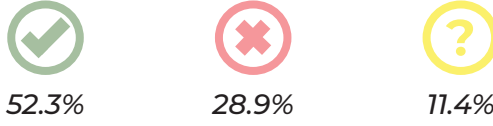
#### 5. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include High Density Residential?



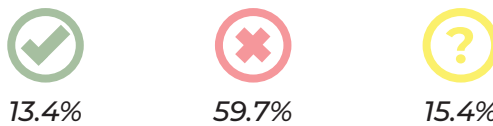
#### 6. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Mixed-Use?



#### 7. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Retail & Commercial?



#### 8. Should the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan include Industrial & Business Park?



#### 9. What word would you use to describe the area South of Gray's Lake today?



#### 10. What word would you like to describe the area South of Gray's Lake in the future?



# master plan objectives

## **Master Plan - Key Objectives**

The existing conditions analysis and public input review made several key objectives clear. The unique master plan area should be a unique, walkable, mid-intensity mixed-use development with plenty of integrated open space with enough residential to support any additional commercial uses.

### *Unique within the metro*

It is important that the environment created in the master plan scenarios offer something that is unique within the Des Moines metro. The intent of the master plan is not to recreate Downtown Des Moines or the East Village, but rather to create a new experience based on the location and opportunities of the study area.

### *Mid-Intensity Mixed-Use*

The desire to see mixed-use was the most dominant preferred land use and development style. Within the mixed-use development style, a mid-intensity level of mixed-use was also preferred and makes sense for the site based on its location and nearby uses. Two to four-story mixed-use development that is walkable and of a human-scale is shown throughout the scenarios developed for the master plan.

### *Integrate Open Space / Parks*

Many in the public requested that the master plan include strong connections to the nearby natural environment and to integrate parks / green space into the scenarios.

### *Need Residential to Support Other Uses*

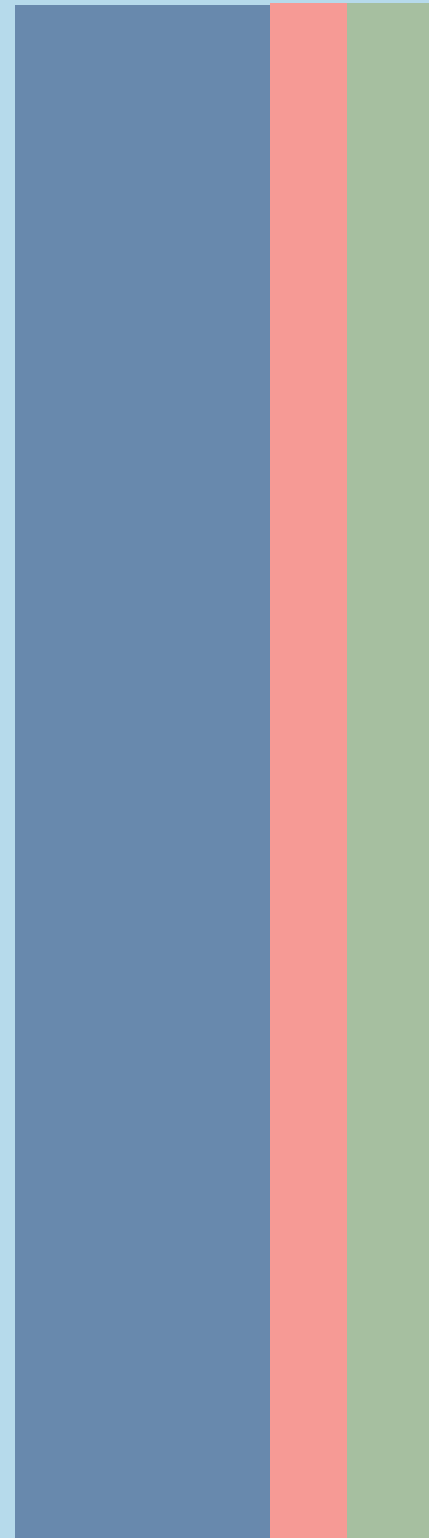
To support the mixed-use environment that many envisioned on the site, new residential in the area will be needed to attract reinvestment and redevelopment. Given the location and zoning, multi-family residential is the most suitable residential type. Based on feedback from the public, the most preferred multi-family type is medium density (townhomes / rowhouses) or lower-intensity high-density residential (2 to 4 story apartment / condo buildings). These new dwellings could be standalone or part of a mixed-use environment.

### *Walkable Development*

It was essentially unanimous that the master plan promotes a walkable environment that is friendly to both pedestrians and bicycles. Cars would not be the main motivator for the connectivity of the site or design.



master plan  
scenarios



# master plan scenarios

## Master Plan Scenarios Overview

The existing conditions analysis and public input were used to help guide the creation of different master plan scenarios for the South of Gray's Lake site. Initially, seven (7) different scenarios were presented to the Advisory Committee for review and comment. The different scenarios shown to the committee are included on this page. Elements the committee liked and disliked from each were discussed. From this meeting, three scenarios were created to present to the public for additional feedback.

BUSINESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD OPTION B



CENTRAL GREEN NEIGHBORHOOD



MAIN STREET NEIGHBORHOOD



ACTIVE RETAIL NEIGHBORHOOD OPTION A



BUSINESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD OPTION A



URBAN CORE NEIGHBORHOOD



ACTIVE RETAIL NEIGHBORHOOD OPTION A





# master plan scenarios

Precedent imagery was identified for each major element of the scenarios. The images were influential to the design of the plans. Most were positively voted for during the visioning process. The following pages show important imagery to help bring the three final scenarios to life.

## Precedent imagery

### *Pedestrian-Focused Streets*





# master plan scenarios

## Precedent imagery

*Trail-Frontage Retail / Mixed-Use*





# master plan scenarios

## Precedent imagery

*Medium-Density Residential*

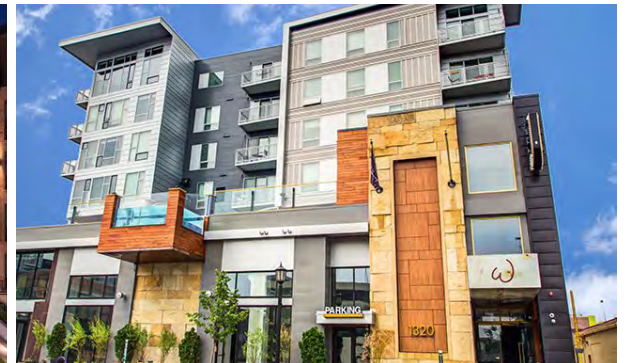




# master plan scenarios

## Precedent imagery

*High-Density Residential*





# master plan scenarios

## Precedent imagery

*Mixed-Use*





# master plan scenarios

## Scenario 1

### *Business Park Neighborhood*

The Business Park Neighborhood scenario keeps a portion of the 1902 Bell Avenue remaining as office or industrial flex, possibly as live-work units with office / workspace on the first floor and second

or third story living. The remaining parts of the 1902 Bell Avenue site is proposed as a walkable, mixed-use environment with pedestrian-focused streets. The Wesco site is proposed as higher-density residential, and the Iowa Finance Authority remains as is as does the 1235 Thomas Beck Road

building. New medium and higher-density residential is proposed along the south side of Thomas Beck Road. The Depot building is envisioned as a future retail/restaurant space to serve the adjacent trail users. The area near Indianola Road shows a mix of medium and higher-density residential.



**Figure 3.1** Scenario 1 - Business Park Neighborhood



# master plan scenarios

## Scenario 2

### Main Street Neighborhood

The Main Street Neighborhood scenario removes the 1902 Bell Avenue building and replaces it with connected mixed-use and residential with a grand boulevard entrance with views through to the wetland area

from Thomas Beck Road. The Wesco site is shown as high-density residential, and the Iowa Finance Authority building remains as is. The 1235 Thomas Beck Road building is removed and shown as part of the greater mixed-use, walkable environment with a brewery component shown as remaining.

Medium-density residential flanks either side of Thomas Beck Road. The south side of Thomas Beck Road also shows a recreation-based mixed-use environment. The Depot site is also shown as restaurant / retail and the Indianola Road area as a mix of medium/high density residential.



Figure 3.2 Scenario 2 - Main Street Neighborhood

# master plan scenarios

## Scenario 3

### *Urban Green Neighborhood*

The Urban Green Neighborhood scenario replaces the 1902 Bell Ave building with a walkable, mixed-use and open space district. An urban linear park connects Thomas Beck Road to a park overlooking the wetland

area. A boardwalk is shown with views of the wetland area and connections to the mixed-use developments to the south. A large, double woonerf (a living street designed primarily for pedestrians) is shown that could be closed off for special events. The Wesco site is shown as high-density residential. The

Iowa Finance Authority and 1235 Thomas Beck Rd buildings remain as is. Medium and higher-density residential is shown on the south side of Thomas Beck Road. The Depot site is also shown as restaurant / retail and the Indianola Road area as a mix of medium/high density residential.



**Figure 3.3** Scenario 3 - Urban Green Neighborhood



# in-person open house

## in-Person Open House

After creating the three preferred master plan scenarios, an open house was scheduled to coincide with the presentation of the progress made on the Southwest Infrastructure Study.

The in-person public open house was held on Wednesday, July 28, 2021, at the Fred Maytag II Scout Center in Des Moines. This event was open to the public to provide feedback on both the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan, as well as the Southwest Infrastructure Study.

The consultant team created multiple boards for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan and Southwest Infrastructure Study. Figure 3.4 shows one board provided by Confluence for the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan. As attendants walked around the room, they were also provided with a short survey to provide feedback on the three different scenarios presented to them. This data was then collected and summarized in the following pages.

## PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Several opportunities for public input were made available throughout the planning process including stakeholder interviews, a virtual public workshop, and an interactive engagement website. The common themes and takeaways from each engagement activity are summarized below.

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Over 24 different stakeholder groups were offered a chance to speak one-on-one with the consultant team to provide input on the future of the area south of Gray's Lake. Fifteen stakeholders agreed to provide input on the vision for the area. Below are some key themes and takeaways:

- Industrial / outdoor storage not a good use south of Thomas Beck Rd.
- Entertainment retail would be a good use in this area - retail, restaurants and breweries
- Dental / housing densities will help support and increase level of transit services
- The area needs sidewalks and measures to slow down traffic
- Need more recreation facilities including ball fields and courts in the area for the residents
- This area is good for a mix of retail and residential but should include affordable housing
- This area is suitable for medium density downtown style development
- Need to accommodate multi-modal (pedestrian, bike, car, bus)
- Design with a park once mindset (limit on-site parking)
- Need linear parks and open space to create walking and gathering spaces
- This area serves as a gateway to Des Moines from the airport
- Need natural buffers to support wildlife, pollinators, protection from flooding
- Don't make this area too crowded or dense
- Need a public gathering space just off the lake, which may help alleviate pressures on Gray's Lake Park
- Be careful on the amount of retail planned - there is already an oversupply
- Would like to expand outdoor patio space into the park
- Need to maintain direct access to the Meredith Trail and Gray's Lake Park
- Water trails support retail would be a good use for this area
- Leave some existing buildings alone such as the site at 1235-1405 Thomas Beck Road

### PUBLIC WORKSHOP

A virtual public workshop was held on March 30, 2021. Attendees were presented with an overview of the project and then asked a series of visioning questions. Below are some common themes and ideas received. While there are some differing opinions, most agree the area should be walkable, mixed-use, celebrate nature and be appropriately dense.

#### What is one DREAM you have for this area?

- Eco-friendly / preserve natural areas
- Walkable shops and eateries - Confluence Brewery
- Low-rise buildings
- Minneapolis-style lake neighborhood
- Walkable shops and eateries - Confluence Brewery
- Utilizing the river for activities, expanded development
- Family-friendly retail and entertainment
- Increased density with excellent access across to Gray's Lake / trail system

#### What is one FEAR you have for this area?

- Status quo - not realizing potential of area as an asset, nothing will happen, it remains warehouse
- Lack of infrastructure improvement on the road (Thomas Beck, Indiana)
- Loss of privacy in our quiet neighborhood
- Loudness/noise from shops, restaurants, bars, traffic
- Overdoing commercial / over development / too much density and traffic
- Loss of views
- Low-quality development / cheaply done
- Vehicular traffic
- Water quality

#### Describe your VISION for the future of this area

- Major lake area with big city ambience
- Great first impression when coming from the airport
- Retail / restaurants / condos in a pedestrian friendly atmosphere with river access
- South of Gray's Entertainment District
- A happy medium of recreational area and things to do
- Walkable neighborhood with a nearby business node - locally owned shops
- Welcoming area to explore with friends and family
- Welcoming green space / totally park like / natural area with a few places to meet friends
- Urban mixed-use neighborhood that is a draw for the south side to attract new residents and visitors
- Expanded trail access but keep area predominantly wooded and green space

### INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WEBSITE

#### Step One: Mapping Activity

Mapping Activity Statistics - approx: 170 comments



- Trail Ideal**  
28 comments  
Most were about connecting site to Bill Riley Trail, nearby neighborhood / parks, and pedestrian site access
- Land Use Ideal**  
20 comments  
Preserve wetland area, don't block views, tear-out industrial buildings, question need for housing, recreation ideas
- Preserve this!**  
36 comments  
The Depot, wooded areas, Iowa Finance Authority, wetland, Confluence Brewery, Mid-century facade of 1902 Bell Ave
- Redevelop this!**  
36 comments  
1902 Bell Avenue, Wesco Building, Indiana Road area, area south of Thomas Beck Road, reimagine Confluence building
- Keep as open space!**  
28 comments  
Wooded areas south of Thomas Beck, Daylight former creek, dog park or recreation ideas
- I want to live here!**  
12 comments  
Wesco site (high-rise), brick rowhomes along Thomas Beck, 1902 Bell Ave site, great location for urban living
- I want to work here!**  
0 comments
- I want to shop here!**  
3 comments  
Wesco (mixed-use), remember to help existing local businesses (Confluence etc.)
- Manage traffic!**  
5 comments  
Thomas Beck needs to be multi-modal (car, bike/ped, transit), bus stop near Fleur needs improvement, parking at Confluence

#### Step Two: Image Voting

MOST PREFERRED development types / density:



LEAST PREFERRED development types / density:



#### Step Three: Survey

The site included a short survey - below are some highlights of the results.

- Most respondents live in Des Moines**  
115 / 143 live in Des Moines, a few live in a Des Moines suburb
- Parks & Open Space and Mixed-Use were the two most preferred land uses**  
- 90.6% said Open Space should be included in the plan  
- 77.2% said mixed-use should be included in the plan
- Industrial + Business Park and Low-Density Residential were the least preferred land uses**  
- 59.6% said Industrial + Business Park is not appropriate  
- 65.1% said Low-Density Residential is not preferred

What word describes the study area today?



What word would you like to describe the study area in the future?



Figure 3.4 One of the five boards provided by Confluence for the Open House



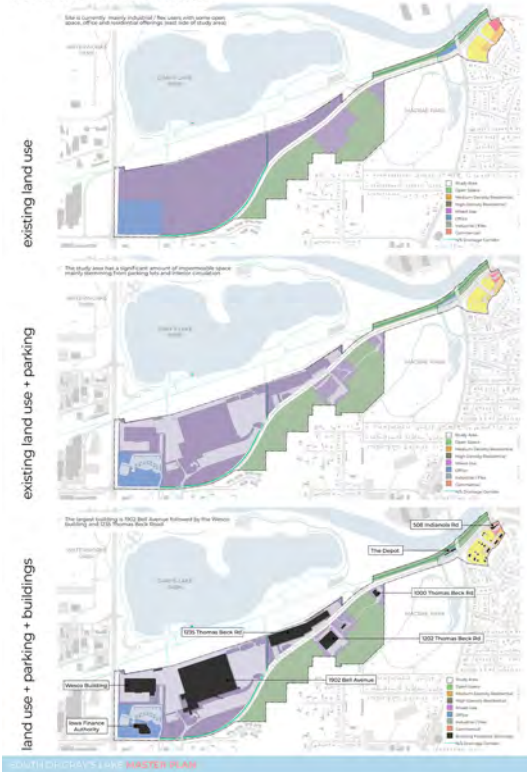
# in-person open house

## In-Person Open House

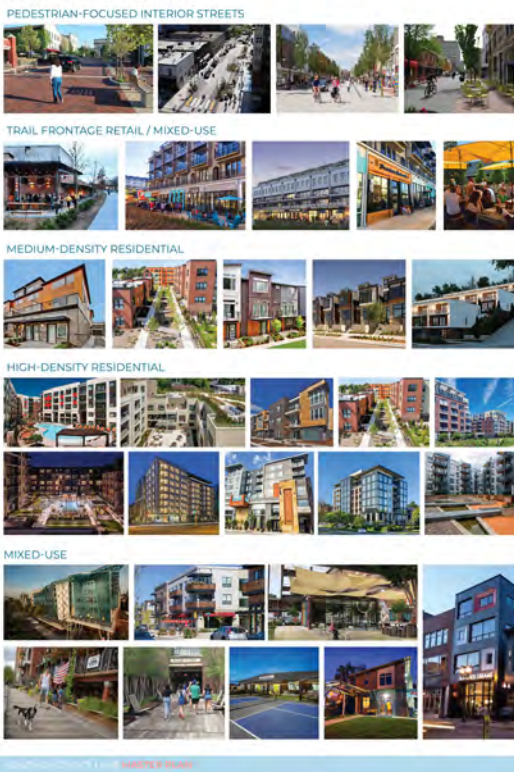
Attendees were shown a summary of the existing conditions and public input received to date to help gain a better general understanding of the site before turning to the proposed scenarios. Each scenario was labeled with numbers relating to precedent element or building type images. Sticky notes were provided on each of the boards to provide specific feedback in addition to the short survey.



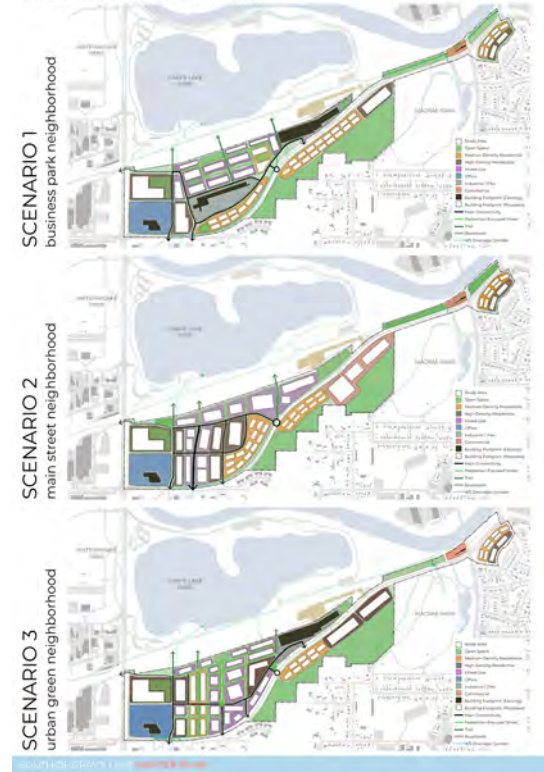
### EXISTING CONDITIONS



### PRECEDENT IMAGES



### MASTER PLAN SCENARIOS



**Figure 3.5** The remaining three boards provided detailed existing conditions and scenarios



# in-person open house

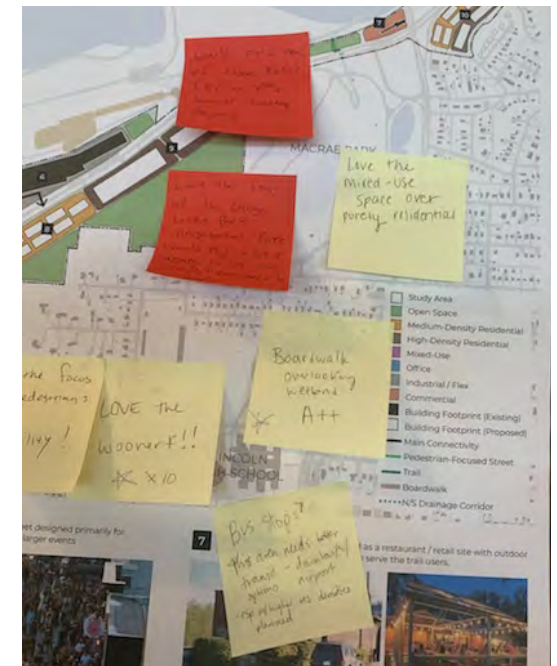
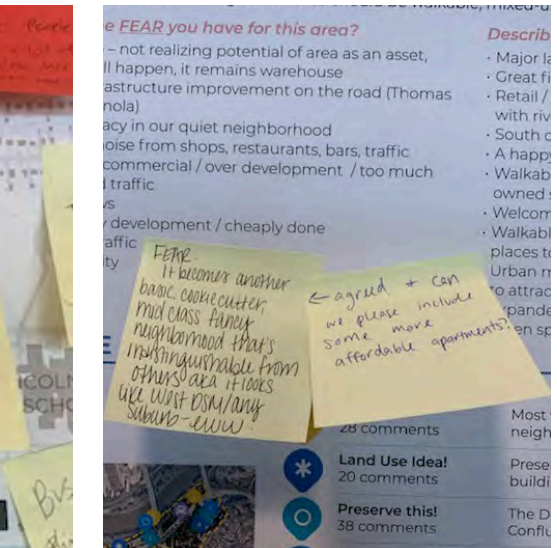
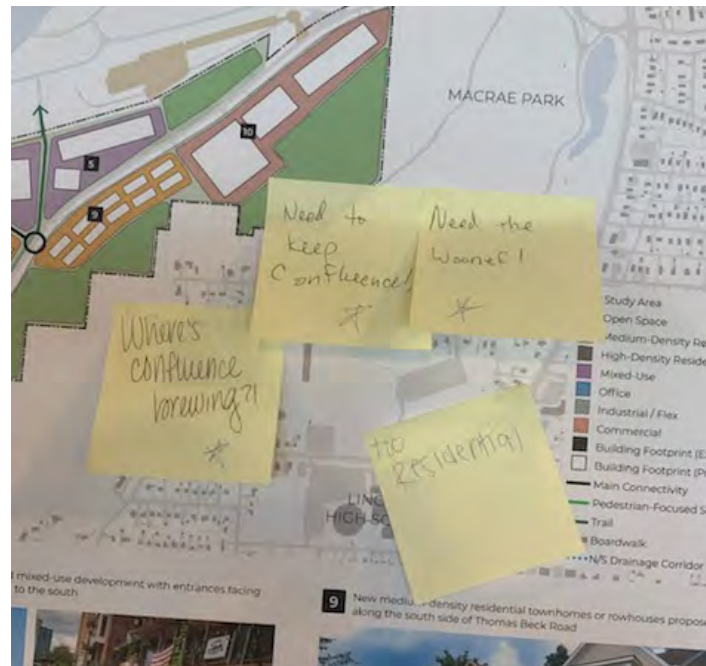
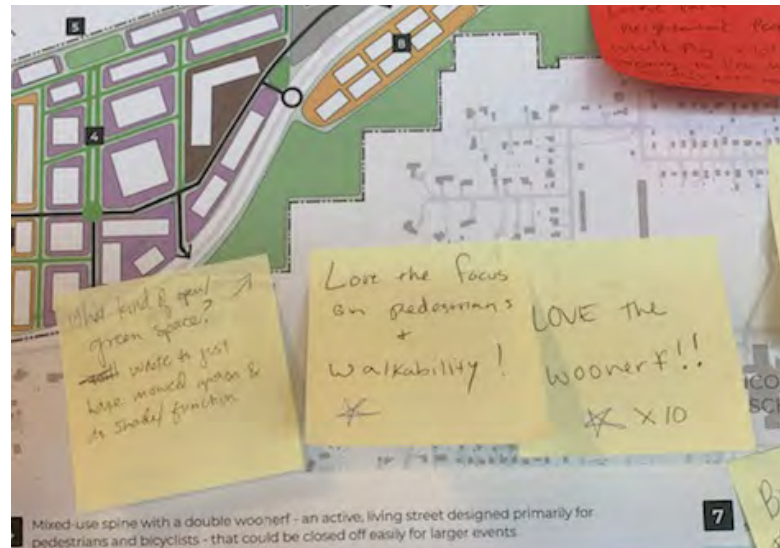
## In-Person Open House Feedback

Images on the right show feedback written directly onto the master plan scenario boards with the provided sticky notes.

General ideas received on the sticky notes included:

- Love for the focus on pedestrians and walkability (scenario 3)
- Love the woonerf! (scenario 3)
- Questions about the type of green space shown on the scenarios (scenario 3)
- The need to keep Confluence and questions of why Confluence wasn't shown on some (scenario 2)
- Need the woonerf (on scenario 2)
- Too residential (on scenario 2)
- Like the boardwalk overlooking the wetland A++ (scenario 3)
- Love the mixed-use over purely residential land (scenario 3)
- Need for bus stop / transit (scenario 3)
- Fear it will become another cookie-cutter mid-class fancy neighborhood that is indistinguishable from others aka West Des Moines looking suburb

By far, the third scenario, Urban Green Neighborhood, was the preferred master plan scenario. This was similarly reflected in the one-on-one feedback directly with attendees. Many liked elements from scenarios 1 and 2, but prefer the baseline conditions of scenario 3.

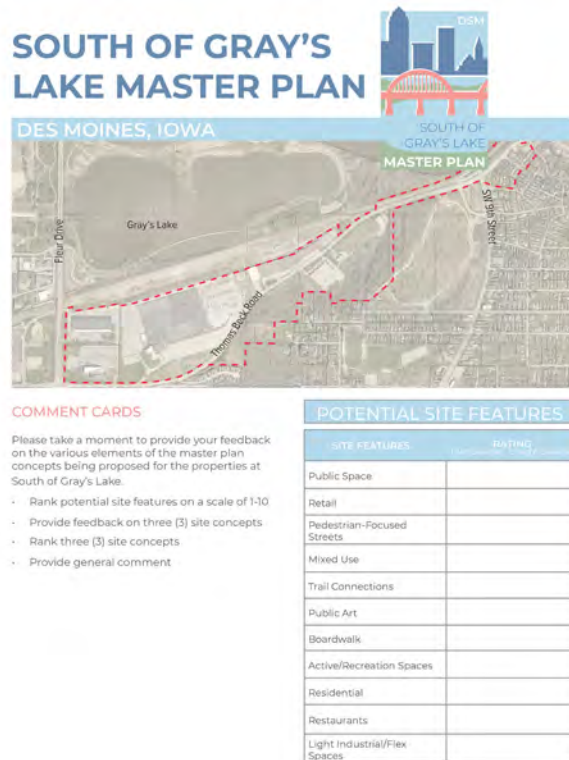




# in-person open house

## In-Person Open House

A short survey was handed out to attendees. Figure 3.6 shows the survey format and questions. The survey asked attendees to rank potential site features, provide general comments to the scenarios, and to rank the scenarios in order of preference.



Please Rank the Three (3) Site Concepts in order of preference. [1(favorite) - 3 (least favorite)]:

- ☐ Business Park Neighborhood
- ☐ Main Street Neighborhood
- ☐ Urban Green Neighborhood



**Figure 3.6** A short survey given to attendants asking for their preferences for site features and scenarios

# in-person open house

## In-Person Open House

The following results are summarized from the short survey given to attendants as they surveyed the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan scenarios.

### Scenario Rankings

- 1 Scenario #3  
*Urban Green Neighborhood*
- 2 Scenario #2  
*Main Street Neighborhood*
- 3 Scenario #1  
*Business Park Neighborhood*

### Potential Site Feature Average Rankings

- 1 Trail Connections
- 2 Ped-Focused Streets
- 3 Boardwalk
- 4 Public Space
- 5 Active/Recreation Spaces
- 6 Public Art
- 7 Restaurants
- 8 Mixed Use
- 9 Retail
- 10 Residential
- 11 Light Industrial/Flex

*We have the potential to make Gray's Lake Neighborhoods an anchor neighborhood*

*I like the wetlands development!*

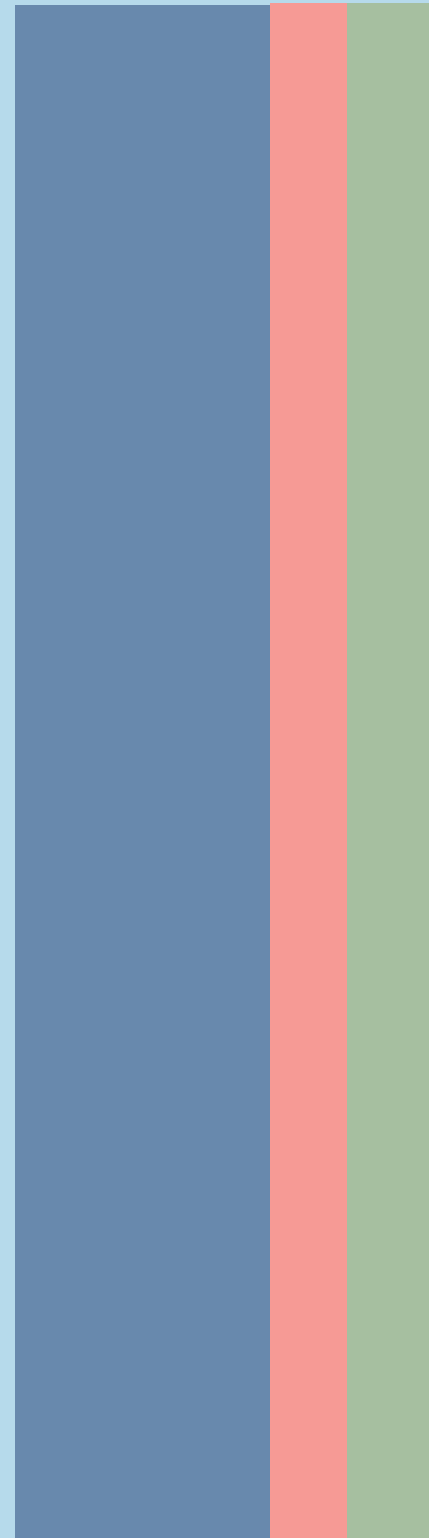
*There should be affordable housing here*

*The plan should include green infrastructure, stormwater BMPs, and sustainable building choices*





final  
master plan



# final master plan

## South of Gray's Lake Master Plan

The more detailed master plan created for the South of Gray's Lake area shown in Figure 4.1 is focused on the main portion of the study area. It is anticipated most of the proposed streets and drives will be private. Any new public streets must be designed to City standards.

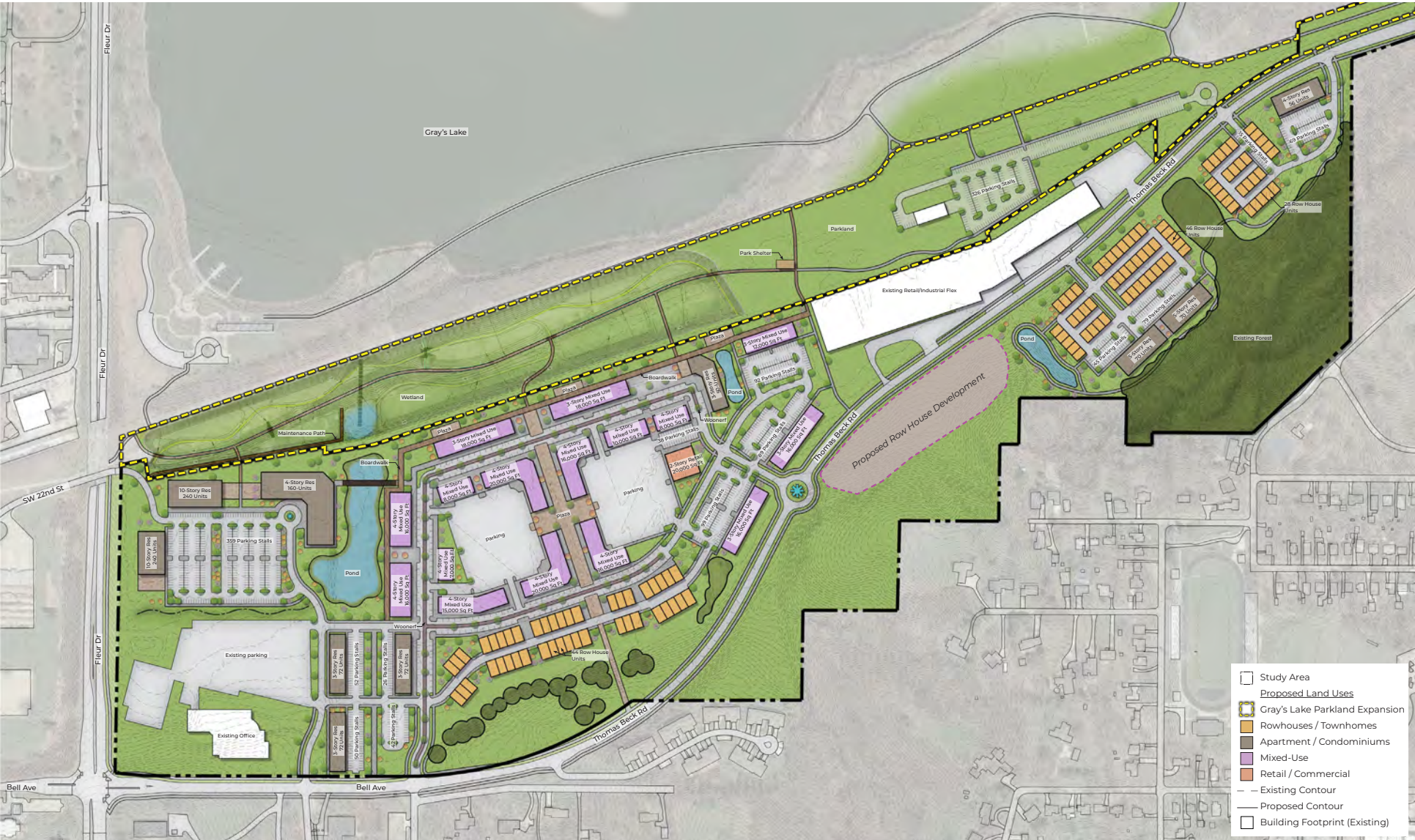


Figure 4.1 Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan



# final master plan

## Northwestern Corner

The master plan shows three high-density residential buildings between 4 and 10 stories. This area has the tallest buildings allowed within the master plan. The two taller 10-story buildings are close to Fleur Drive to avoid impacting the viewsheds of the other master plan developments and to keep the taller buildings closer to the street.

The proposed buildings include:

### 10-Story Residential Buildings (two)

240 units each / 480 total units

### 4-story Residential Building (1)

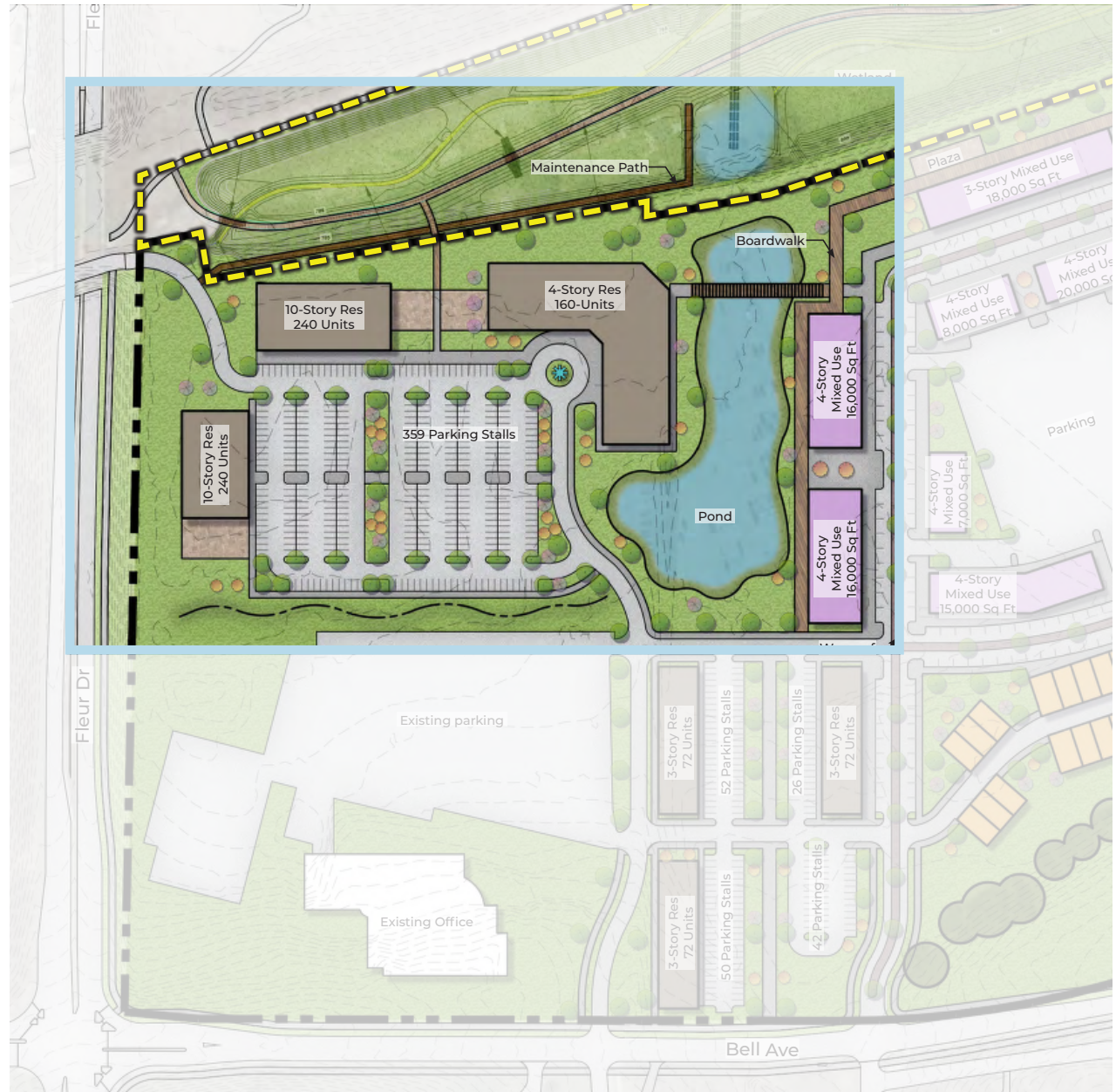
160 total units

### 359 interior parking stalls

Immediately east of the higher density residential complex is an expanded wetland pond. This will serve as an amenity as well as on-site stormwater management feature.

Crossing the pond and connecting the residential building to the core mixed-use development east of the site is a pedestrian bridge. The pedestrian bridge overlooks the pond to the south and wetlands to the north while also connecting directly to the proposed boardwalk feature that borders the mixed-use development south of the planned wetland north of the study area. An access easement may need to be established to connect the proposed wetland forebay maintenance path to SW 22nd Street.

Maintenance access for the wetland is also shown in this area. The parking lot and space between buildings allows for adequate spacing to access the wetland.



**Figure 4.2** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Northwestern Corner



# final master plan

## Southwestern Section

The master plan shows the existing Iowa Finance Authority remaining as is on the master plan including their associated existing parking lot. Immediately east of the area are two rows of multi-family residential housing with exterior parking in the back.

The proposed development include:  
**3-Story Residential Buildings (three)**  
72 units each / 216 total units

**Interior Parking Lots (four)**  
170 total stalls

The proposed multi-family residential has a linear greenway pathway running through the interior of the area that connects the sidewalk/trail on Thomas Beck Road to the pond directly north of the multi-family residential site. This greenway path allows for pedestrian connectivity as well as a view from Thomas Beck of the water feature and wetland.

The multi-family residential development is flanked on either side by entrances into the development. The western entrance is a minor entrance that would generally serve the high-density residential in the northwest corner, the Iowa Finance Authority building, as well as the multi-family. The eastern entrance is a major entrance to the core mixed-use development.



**Figure 4.3** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Southwestern Section



# final master plan

## Core Mixed-Use Area

The core mixed-use area of the master plan is shown on the right. The defining characteristic of the mixed-use core is the importance placed on the public realm and gathering space.

A key feature is the **double woonerf** loop that connects the bulk of the mixed-use buildings. The double woonerf is designed to provide a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment. The double woonerf allows for automobile circulation with some parallel parking options but is not designed for cars and can be easily shut down for events, markets, or festivals.

Another important feature is the **boardwalk** that extends parallel of the northern mixed-use buildings in front of the wetland to the north. The boardwalk also fronts the pond area to overview this water feature. The boardwalk would be designed to provide access to the mixed-use buildings from both sides and take advantage of views of the wetland, nearby trails and Gray's Lake Park.

The **plaza** space in the center of the mixed-use core is another feature that promotes walkability and outdoor gathering space. The area could have outdoor seating and tables and host smaller events without having to shut down the entire double woonerf.



**Figure 4.4** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Core Mixed-Use Area



# final master plan

## Core Mixed-Use Area

There are several mixed-use buildings shown in this area of the master plan. The building heights range from 3 to 4 stories and total size from 7,000 SF to 20,000 SF. All of these mixed-use buildings front either the double woonerf, plaza space, or both.

The proposed development include:

### 3-Story Mixed-Use Buildings (three)

18,000 SF each / 54,000 SF total

### 4-Story Mixed-Use Buildings (three)

18,000 SF each / 54,000 SF total

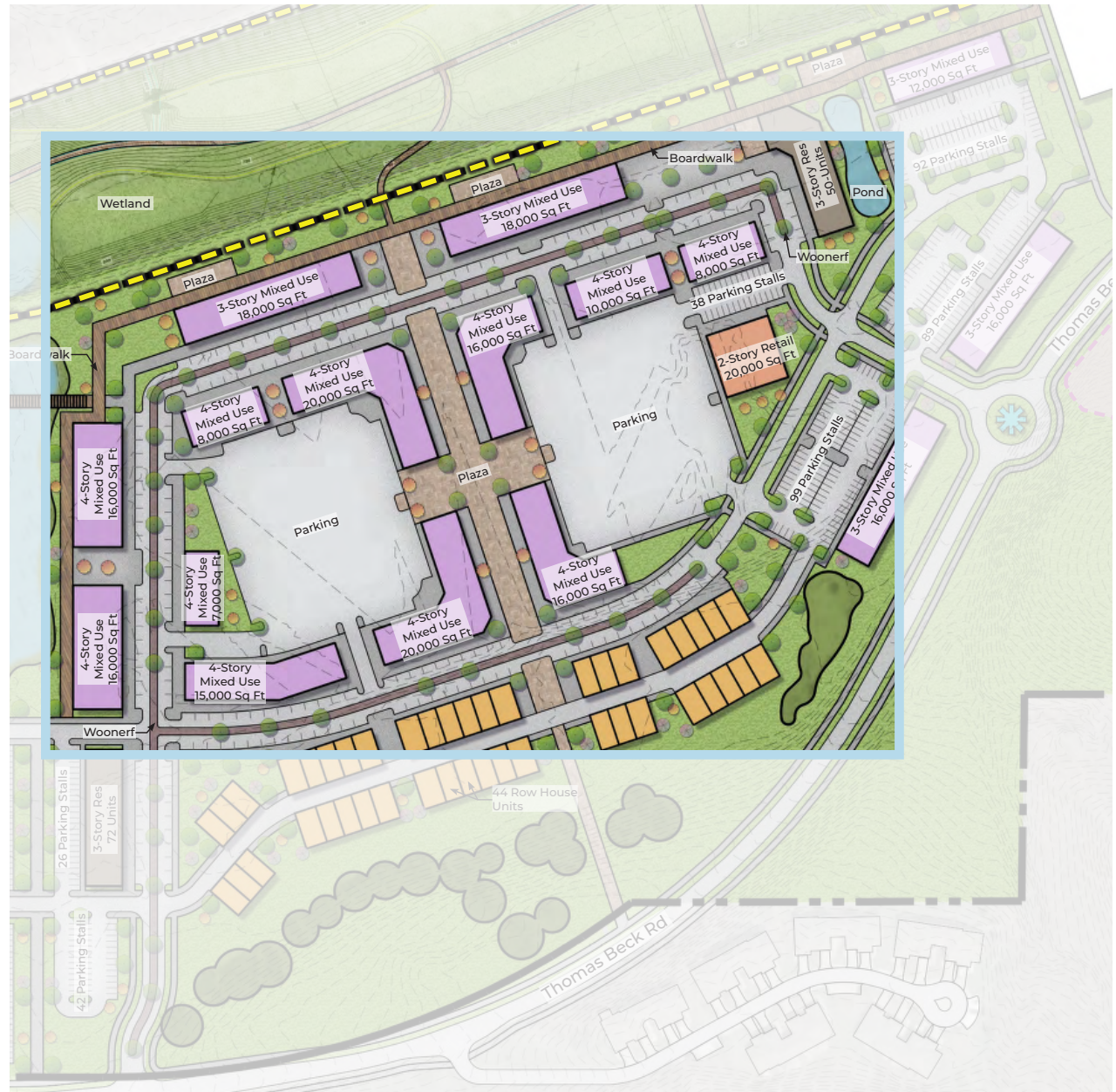
### 2-Story Retail Building

20,000 SF

## Interior Structured Parking

There are two areas dedicated for structured parking, interior to the mixed-use core. The parking was placed interior to the site and behind the mixed-use buildings to de-emphasize its importance and keep parking out of view for users and residents.

The master plan shows a variety of mixed-use building sizes. Ideally, these mixed-use buildings would provide a wide range of rentable square footages to allow for a diverse range of users.



**Figure 4.5** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Core Mixed-Use Area



# final master plan

## Southern Rowhouses

There are two rows of rowhouses shown south of the mixed-use core between the development and Thomas Beck Road. These mid-level density units provide a transitional land use between the more intense mixed-use core and neighbors to the south. Open space south of the rowhouses provide an additional level of buffering.

## Rowhouses

44 total units

The rowhouses would have garages built into the bottom of the units to reduce the need for area parking lots. An alley would provide posterior access for residents. Residents in the northern units would also have access via a double woonerf segment.

The area directly fronting Thomas Beck Rd has steeper topography and some existing tree cover. The master plan shows this area being left as is to serve as a buffer for the core mixed-use area and neighbors to the south. A pedestrian entrance to the rowhouses and greater mixed-use development / plaza space is shown.



**Figure 4.6** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Southern Rowhouses



# final master plan

## Northeast Mixed-Use Area

Connected to the main core mixed-use area is some additional standalone mixed-use, multi-family residential and retail buildings.

### 3-Story Mixed-Use Buildings (3)

28,000 total SF

### 2-Story Retail Building (1)

20,000 total SF

### 3-Story Multi-Family Building (1)

50 total units

### Parking Lots (3)

280 total stalls

### New Roundabout

The mixed-use buildings are shown as three story and would be more standalone with separate parking than the mixed-use shown around the double woonerf. One faces the wetland / park area to the north and is shown connected to the boardwalk pathway. The other two are near the planned roundabout to be added along Thomas Beck Rd as part of the Southwest Infrastructure Study as a traffic calming mechanism.

A 50-unit multi-family building is shown on the edge of the mixed-use core along the double woonerf. Part of the site as shown is an additional pond to serve as a joint amenity and green infrastructure component.



**Figure 4.7** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Northeast Mixed-Use Area



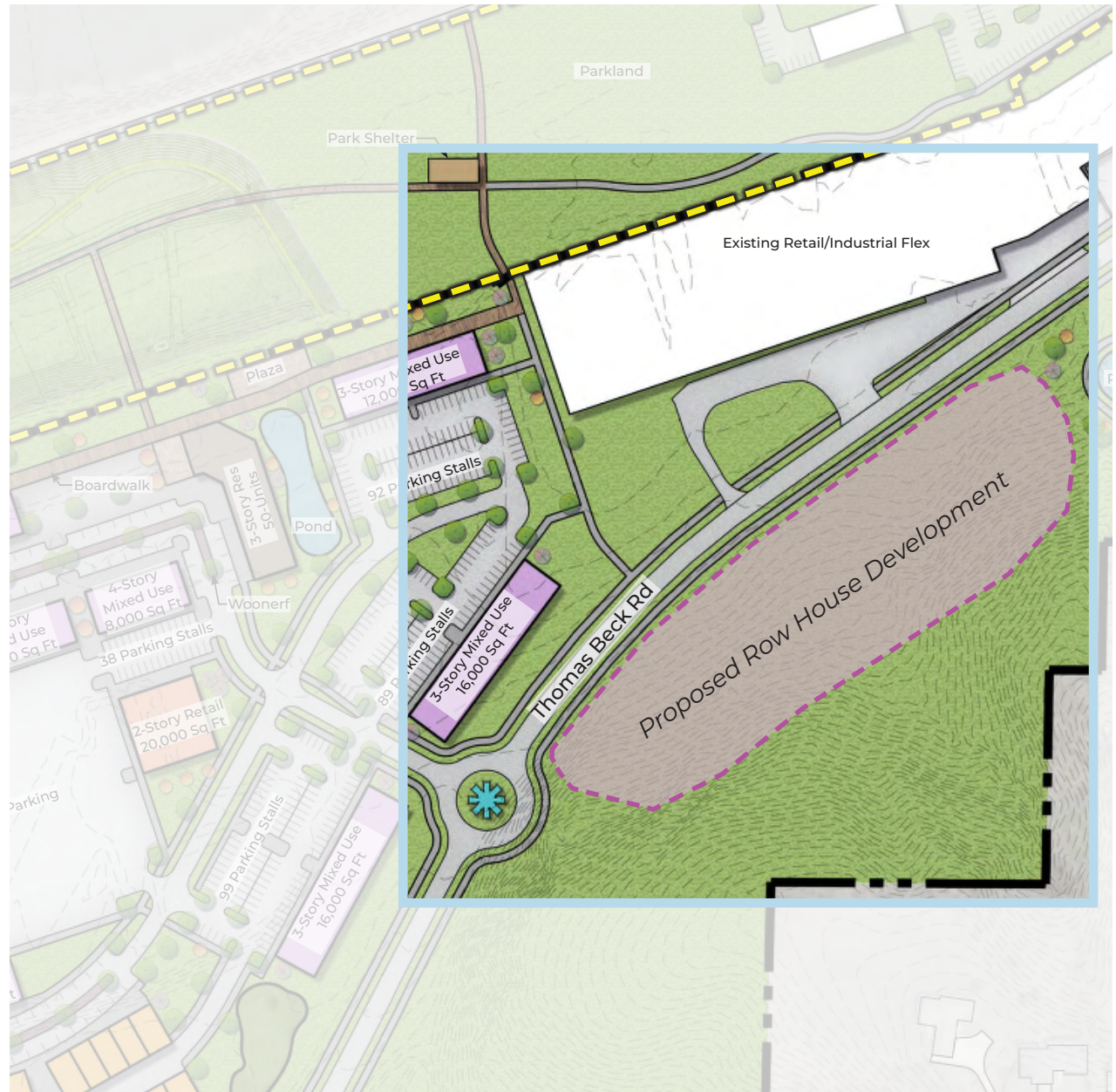
# final master plan

## Proposed Row House Development

An already proposed row house development site has been drawn into the master plan. While the look and feel of the area will be determined by the developer of the site, the approximate location of the development is shown on the plan graphic.

## Existing Retail / Industrial Flex Building

The master plan shows the 1234 Thomas Beck Rd building, commonly referred to as the Confluence building because of the popularity of one of its major tenants. This property is preserved as is with a goal that facade and site improvements for the area could be completed to help complement any future redevelopment of the core mixed-use development site.



**Figure 4.8** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Proposed + Existing Development



# final master plan

## Thomas Beck Road Row Houses

The master plan shows a cluster of row houses along the southside of Thomas Beck Rd. The development would be connected to the core mixed-use area via a sidewalk path. Behind the row houses are two multi-family residential buildings with either apartments or condominium units.

### Rowhouses

46 total units

### 5-Story Multi-Family Residential Buildings (2)

70 units each / 140 total units

### Parking Lot

124 total stalls

These townhomes would have parking underneath and be connected via an alley driveway system. An on-site pond is shown that would ideally serve as both a site amenity as well as green infrastructure feature.

The 5-story multi-family residential buildings are shown at the back of the site near the preserved treeline and sloped area. The 140 unit multi-family residential buildings would be served with 124 parking stalls.

The entire area is shown with a path around the pond and into the wooded area behind the structures.



**Figure 4.9** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Thomas Beck Road Rowhouses



# final master plan

## Thomas Beck Rd Multi-Family Building

A 4-story residential apartment or condominium building is shown as part of the residential development on the south side of Thomas Beck Road.

## Apartment or Condominium Building

56 total units

## Exterior Parking Lot

69 parking stalls

The apartment building is shown connected via driveway to the rowhouse development southwest of the site. The development is shown surrounded by natural tree cover and hills to the southeast.



**Figure 4.10** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Thomas Beck Road Multi-Family

# final master plan

## Wetland

A wetland is shown in the area directly north of the master plan study area south of Gray's Lake Park. The wetland would be designed to capture, treat and store water during rain events. Low-impact trails are shown meandering through the wetland and connecting the regional trail system directly to the master plan area in several locations.

Overseeing the wetland area to the south on the edge of the master plan is the proposed boardwalk feature. The boardwalk would provide views of the wetland and Gray's Lake Park as well as direct access to the mixed-use buildings in the master plan.

There is a maintenance access pathway shown north of the higher density residential in the northwest corner of the master plan.



**Figure 4.11** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - Wetland Area



# final master plan

## New Park + Parking

The master plan shows new parkland and a parking lot north of the site east of the wetland area. The park includes some trail paths as well as a park shelter. The parking lot can be accessed through Thomas Beck Rd and is shown with approximately 326 parking stalls.

Trail access points from the private development should be provided to Gray's Lake Park and will need to be coordinated with the Parks and Recreation Department.



**Figure 4.12** Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan - New Park + Parking Lot

# sustainability measures

## **Sustainability Measures in the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan**

The South of Gray's Lake Master Plan should aim to create a sustainable redevelopment of this key area of the community. Sustainability as a concept has three major components: environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Sustainability measures have been identified to address different facets of the sustainability of the redevelopment / master plan.

### *Environmental Sustainability*

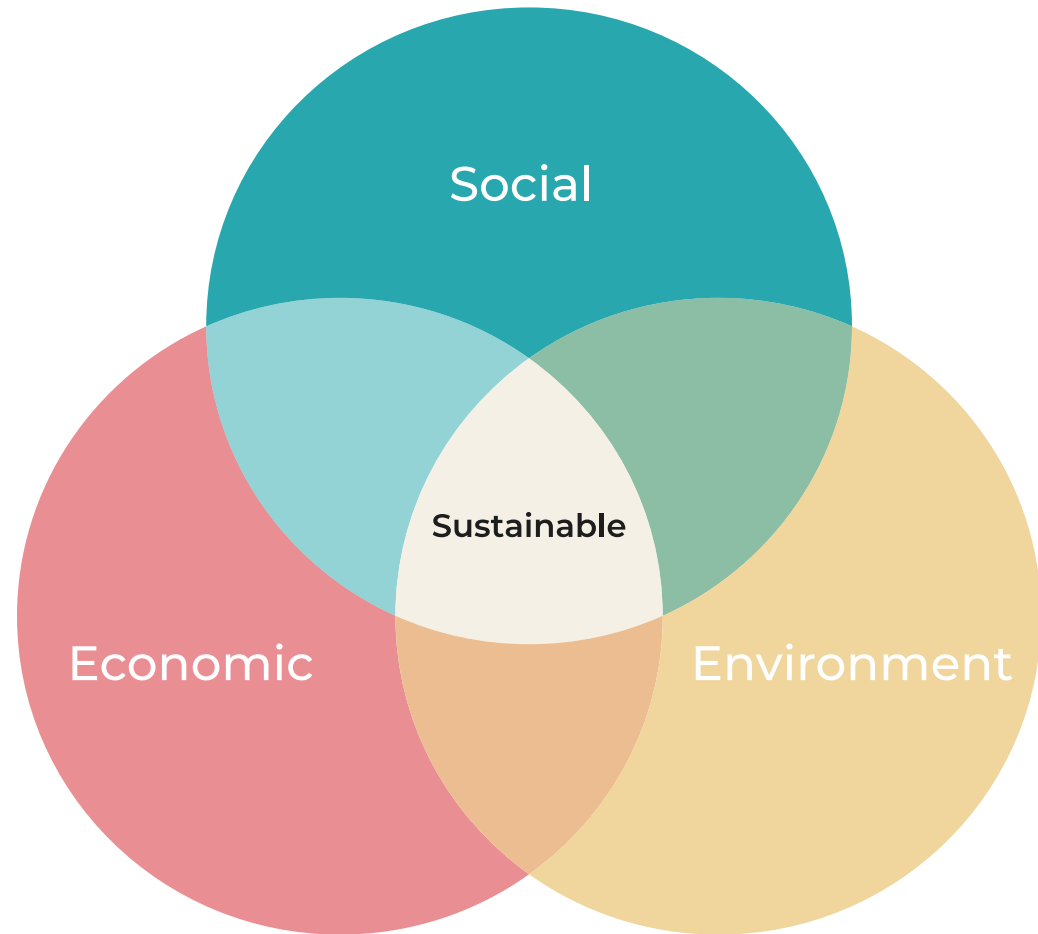
Environmental sustainability typically refers to the direct impact on the natural environment such as water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, or natural area conservation.

### *Economic Sustainability*

Economic sustainability refers to the need for the economics of a project to be reasonable. This can include the need for a development to be financially sound and resilient.

### *Social Sustainability*

Social sustainability refers to the need of a project to be equitable. This can include measures to increase accessibility for all users to a site or project.





# sustainability measures

## Require the use of green infrastructure in the study area

### *Green Infrastructure*

Given the study area's proximity to important waterbodies, the redevelopment of the study area should require the use of green infrastructure to help manage stormwater on site. This can reduce runoff into Gray's Lake or the Des Moines River which can positively impact water quality. Additionally, it may help reduce the frequency and severity of flooding during rain events in the area.

- Permeable pavers could be used in all or portions of the double woonerf to help slow and absorb stormwater
- Bio-retention facilities should be incorporated into all of the streetscape and site designs
- Rain gardens should be added or incorporated into grassy areas on site or along the boardwalk area

Green infrastructure can also help enhance the outdoor experience and placemaking of the neighborhood for users and residents.





# sustainability measures

## Support development of the wetland north of the study area

### *Wetland Area*

The wetland planned for the area directly north of the site is key to the long-term redevelopment of the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan. The planned wetland provides stormwater management and water quality control for the area around the site. The installation of this wetland will help increase the viability of the master plan as well as manage stormwater locally. Stormwater from adjacent development is required to account for onsite pre-treatment and storage of stormwater to ensure that the created wetlands are not adversely impacted by increased nutrient loads and increase stormwater loads.



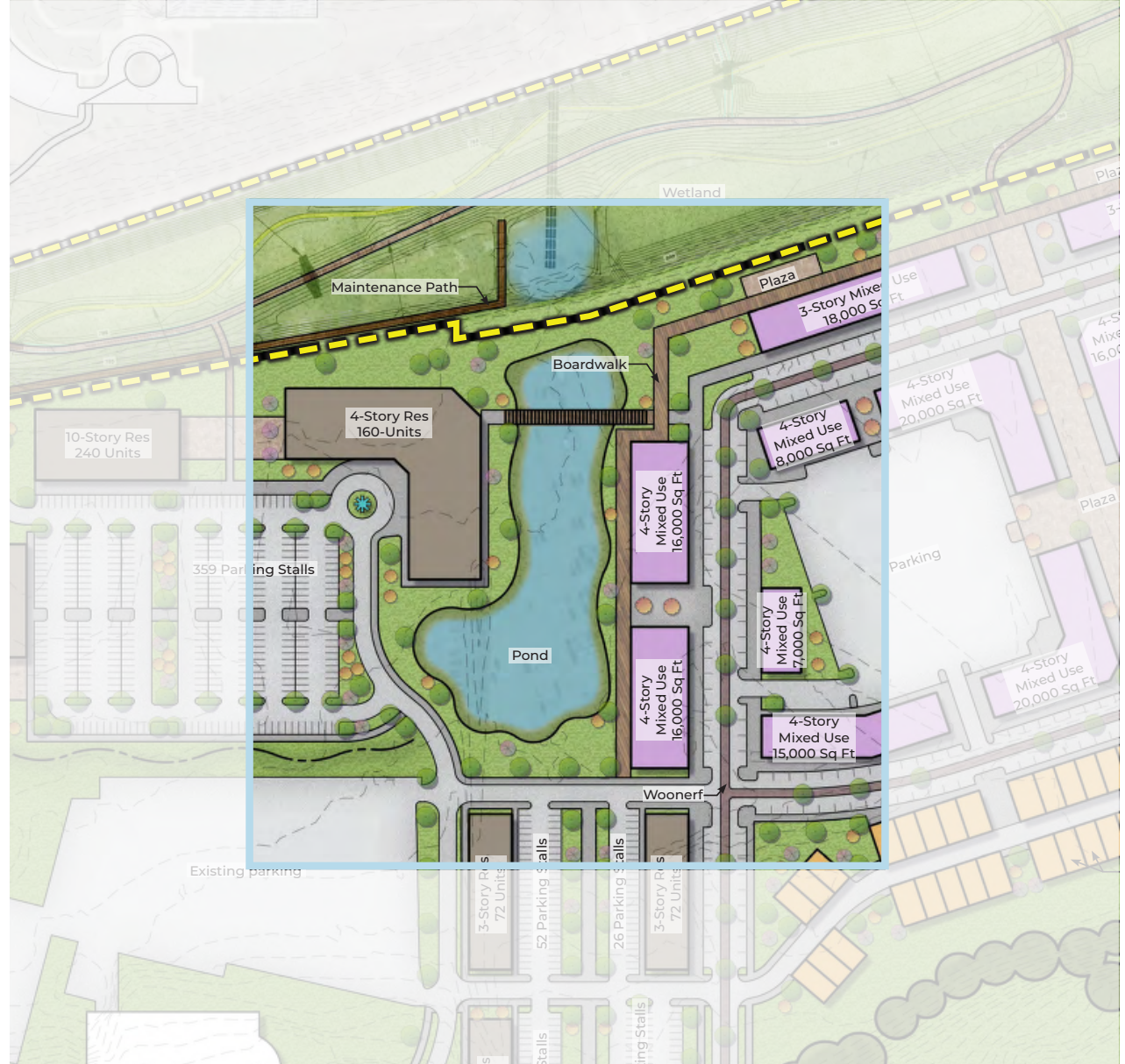


# sustainability measures

## Creation of the on-site water feature

### *On-Site Water Feature*

The on-site water feature proposed between the higher-density residential in the northwest corner and the core mixed-use area is an important sustainability measure included in the plan. The pond will serve as an additional, large green infrastructure feature by providing stormwater detention and water quality treatment through sediment removal. Additionally, the pond is an aesthetic treatment that will help attract users and contribute to the sense of place and character of the neighborhood. The pond will help extend the experience users of Gray's Lake Park feel into the neighborhood directly south.



# sustainability measures

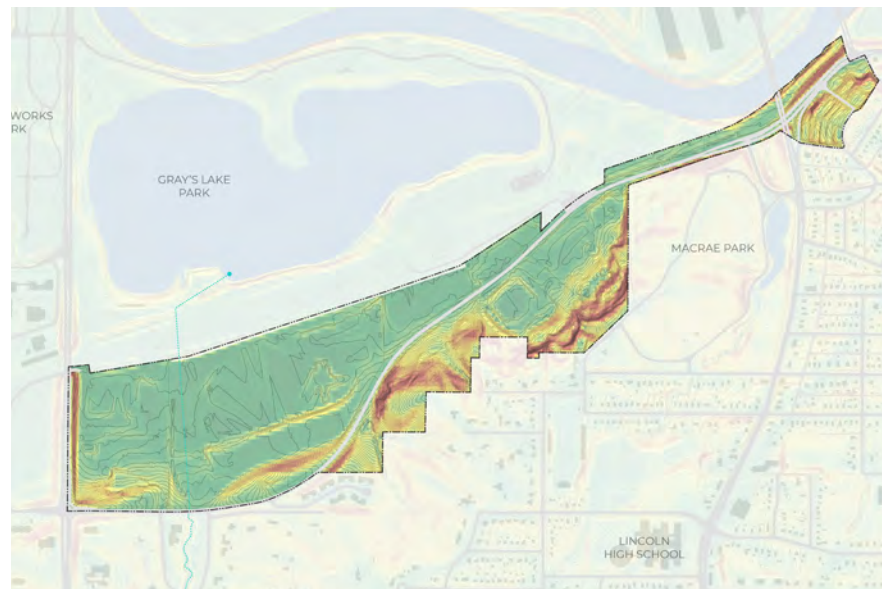
## Preserve tree cover and protect areas of steep slope

### *Tree Cover + Slope Protection*

The South of Gray's Lake study area has several areas with significant tree cover and with steeper slopes, often at the same time. These sensitive ecological features should remain to help naturally filter and slow stormwater, stabilize the slope, provide habitat for local wildlife and serve as a natural buffer between the study area and neighbors to the south. The final master plan preserves most of these natural features to help with conservation, site design and amenities, as well as proper buffering.



**Figure 4.13** Tree + Grass Cover Map



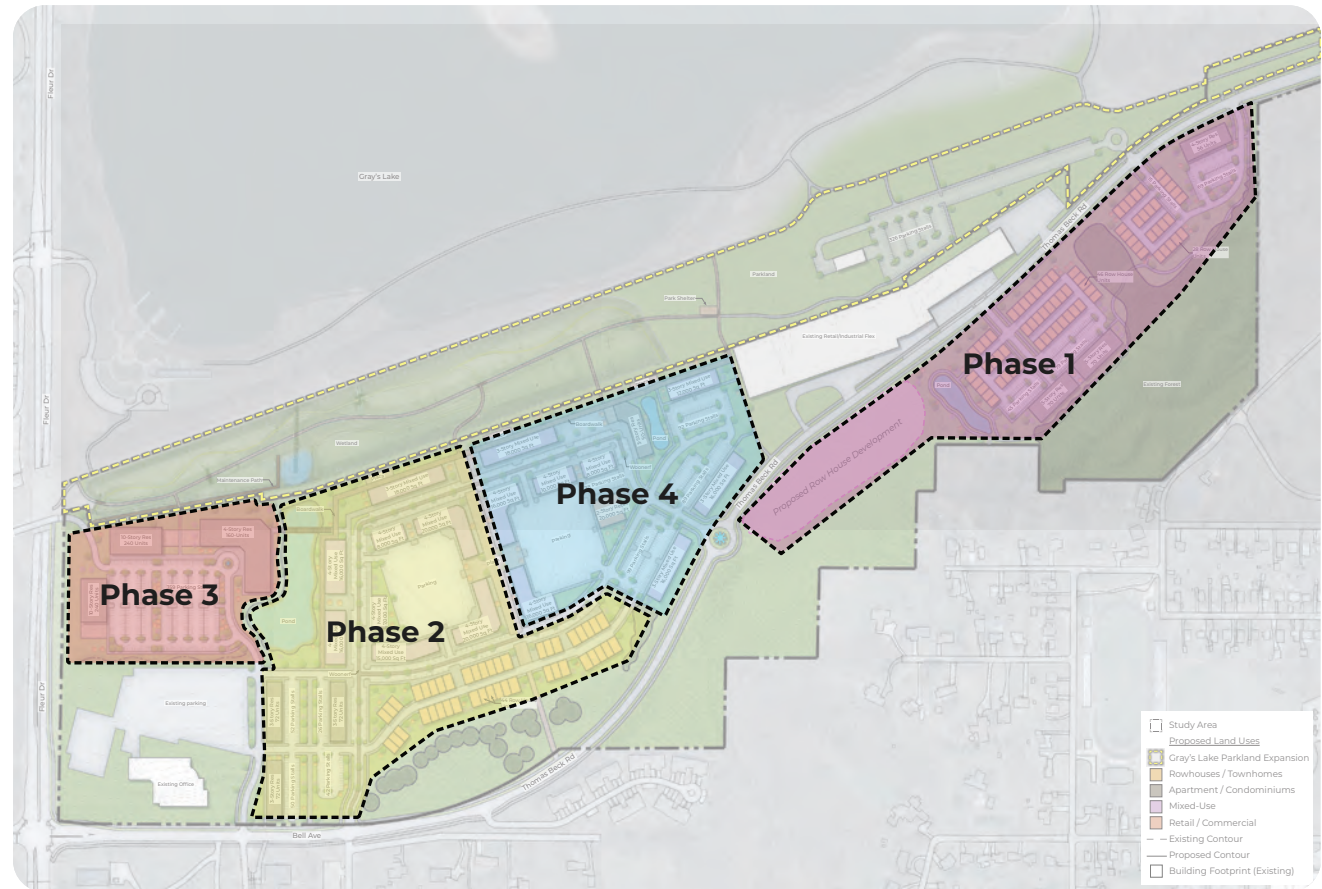
**Figure 4.14** Slope + Contour Map







# sustainability measures

## Aim for a phased redevelopment of the South of Gray's Lake study area with a long-term partner

Redevelopment of the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan study area will require a long-term partnership with a master developer and the City of Des Moines. The scale of redevelopment shown in the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan is massive and will likely require a phased approach to implementation. By phasing the redevelopment appropriately, it will help to make the project and redevelopment more economically feasible. The exact details of the phasing will need to be worked out with a future master developer and will depend heavily on the ability to acquire land, cost of construction and market conditions. However, a possible phased development plan is shown in Figure 4.15.



**Figure 4.15** Phasing Plan - South of Gray's Lake Master Plan

-  Phase 1
-  Phase 2
-  Phase 3
-  Phase 4

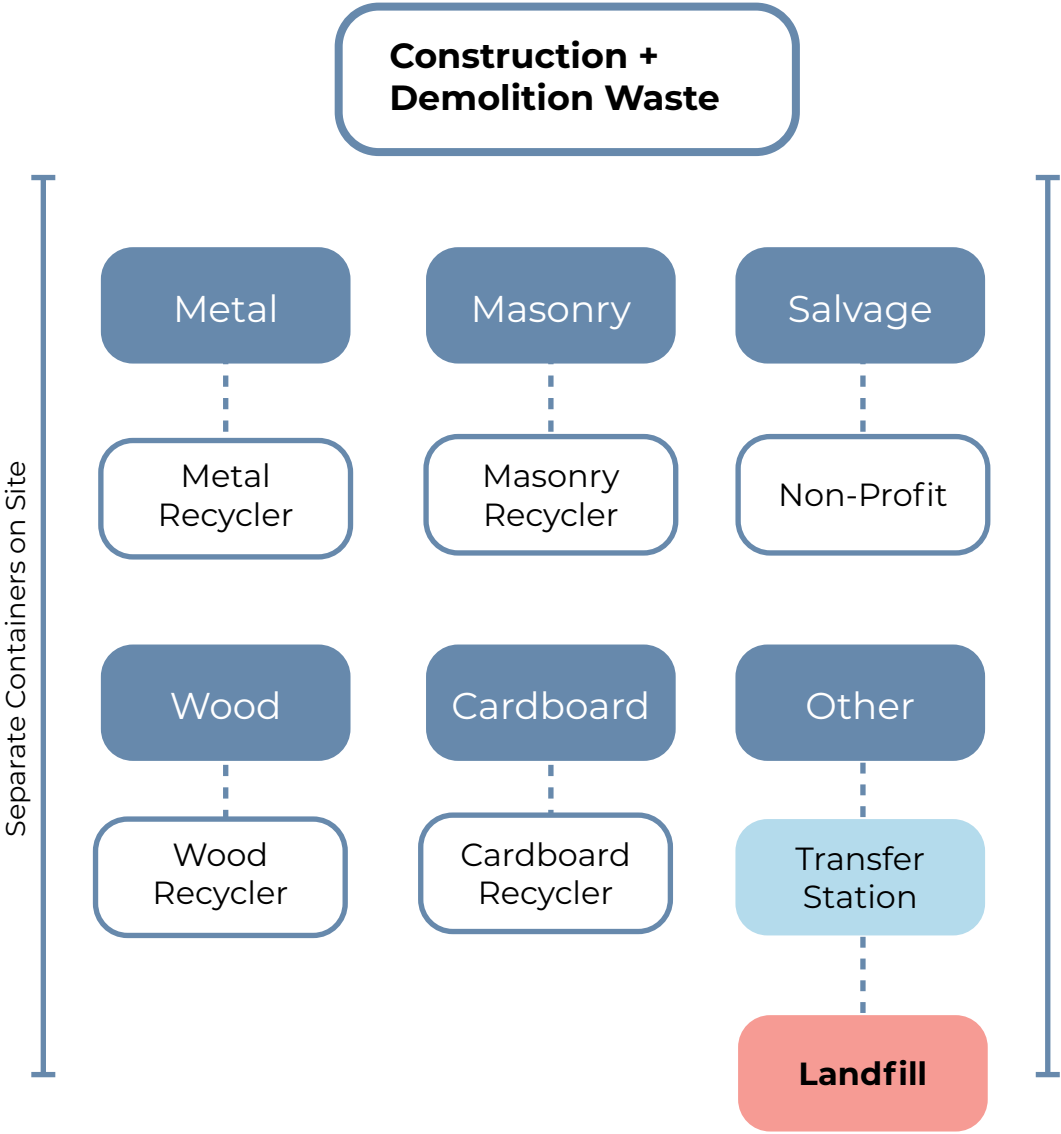
# sustainability measures

**Encourage the sustainable demolition of any buildings as they are torn down**

*Sustainable Demolition*  
Sustainable demolition is an approach to demolition that aims to reuse or recycle material and products from the demolished building. This approach can reduce the need to extract and process new materials for the redevelopment or another project. It also reduces the amount of waste entering landfills.

- Common material and products reused or recycled include:
- Concrete
  - Wood
  - Metals
  - Bricks
  - Glass
  - Plastics
  - Trees, stumps, earth, and rock from clearing sites

The City should work with the developer to encourage demolition be performed with sustainability in mind, reusing and recycling material as possible. Figure 4.16 shows a sustainable demolition waste plan that limits the amount of material directly entering a landfill.



**Figure 4.16** Sustainable Construction + Demolition Waste Plan



# sustainability measures

## Promote adaptive reuse of some remaining buildings over time

### *Strategic Adaptive Reuse*

Adaptive reuse is the repurposing of a building for a new use or function. Reuse reduces the cost and environmental cost of tear-down, demolition, and new construction. While many of the study area's structures were determined to be unsuitable for adaptive reuse, others such as the old Depot were.

The Depot Building is a unique opportunity for adaptive reuse within the study area. While it currently serves as an office space, it's great location along the trail as well as its unique look and feel make it a prime opportunity for adaptive reuse into a restaurant or retail establishment. The future use could be trail-centric or take advantage of the many trail users that travel near the property. There are opportunities for outdoor seating to enhance the site further.

Other opportunities for adaptive reuse should be pursued within the study area, as appropriate.

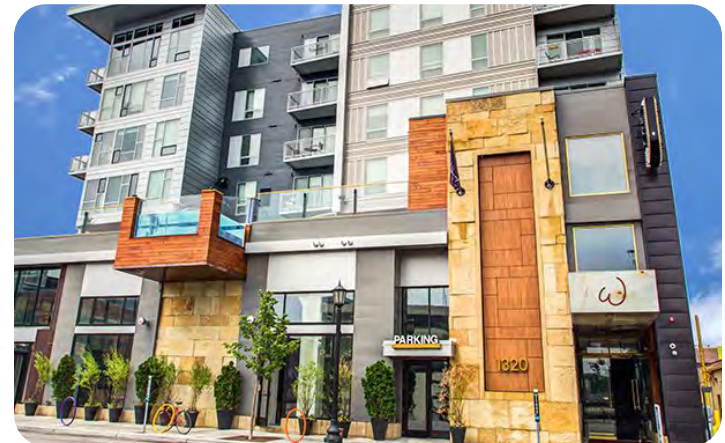




# sustainability measures

## Push for the addition of a mix of housing typologies throughout the master plan development

The South of Gray's Lake Master Plan shows a mix of housing typologies. By doing so, the development can attract interest from a wider range of individuals, all of which may want a different density, style, and features. In particular, the master plan shows some middle housing options that can cater to households desiring a more urban feel but not wanting a traditional apartment or condominium. This serves a dual purpose of providing enough density to make the project viable, but also providing some missing middle housing opportunities for residents.



***“ I would want to live here in either a medium or high density location, preferably one that has an open park space that looks out over Gray's Lake toward downtown. ”***



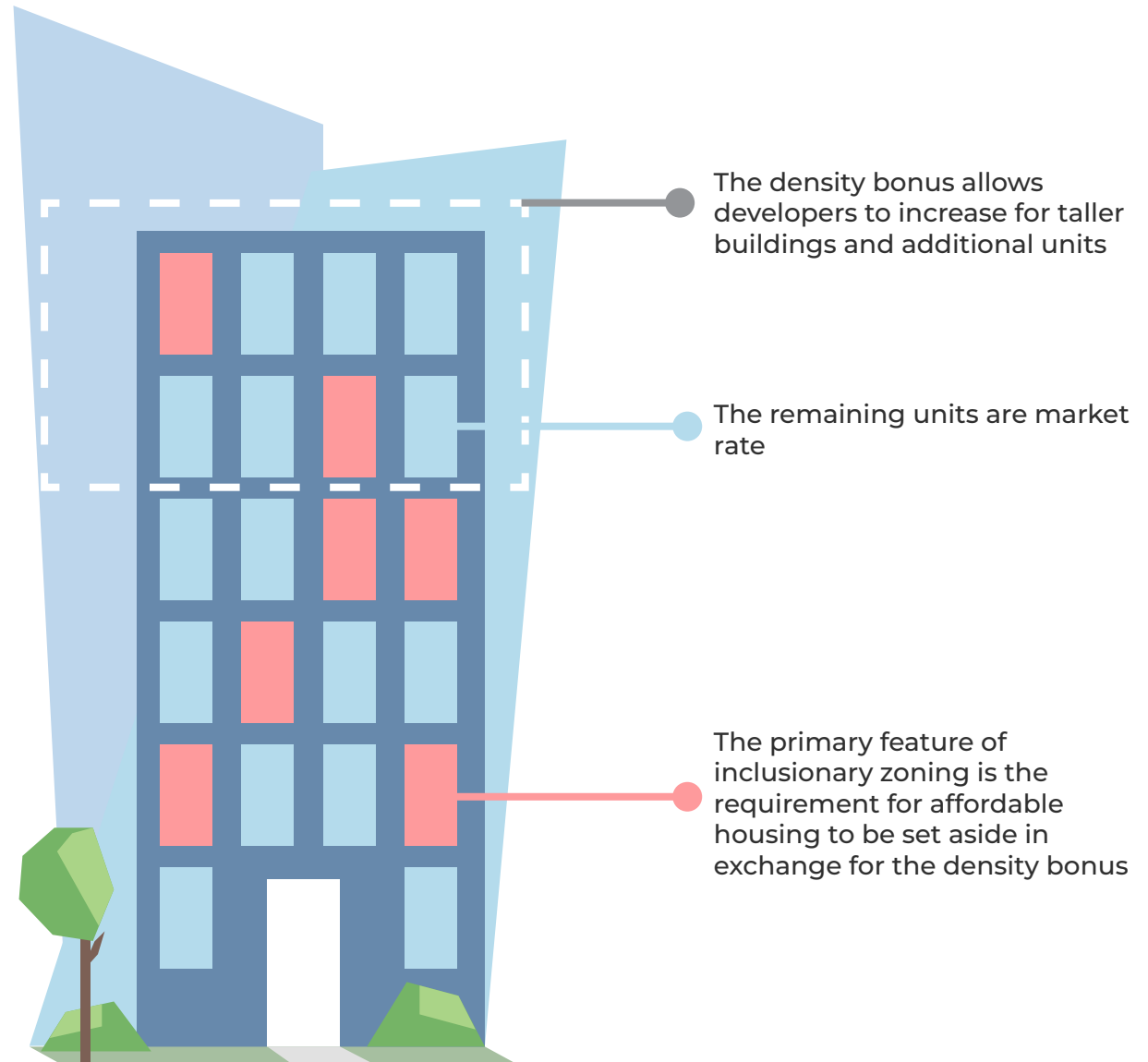
# sustainability measures

## Consider adopting inclusionary zoning practices

### *Inclusionary Zoning*

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) practices are widely accepted measures for increasing affordable housing. Programs vary in structure but often require a specified percentage or number of units be set aside for affordable housing in new residential units. Most programs also offer incentives, such as density bonuses, expedited approval, or waived fees in exchange. Affordable units are typically determined utilizing area median income (AMI) to identify low- and moderate-income residents.

To ensure affordable housing will be created within the South of Gray's Lake neighborhood, it is essential to consider inclusionary zoning for the study area.



**Figure 4.17** Inclusionary Zoning Best Practices

# sustainability measures

Provide affordable housing at a variety of AMIs

*Affordable Housing*  
Area Median Income (AMI) is used to understand income distribution and affordability within communities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identifies AMI for a variety of household sizes, setting benchmarks for low-income (80% AMI), very low-income (50% AMI), and extremely low-income households (30% AMI). Households in these categories are then eligible for affordable housing assistance. The 2021 Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA states the low-income household AMI to earn \$73,050 in annual gross pay.

The City should consider requiring the master plan developer to set aside a specified number of units as low-income units, using AMI standards. This will allow the market to better serve all Des Moines households and create a diverse, welcoming neighborhood.

2021 Adjusted Home Income Limits Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA				
	1 Person	2 Person	4 Person	6 Person
Low Income 80% AMI	\$51,150	\$58,450	\$73,050	\$84,750
Very Low Income 60% AMI	\$38,400	\$43,860	\$54,780	\$63,600
Very Low Income 40% AMI	\$32,000	\$36,550	\$45,650	\$53,000
Extremely Low Income 30% AMI	\$19,200	\$21,950	\$27,400	\$31,800
Median Income by Household Size	\$-	\$61,375	\$70,273	\$66,378

Figure 4.18 Des Moines-West Des Moines MSA Area Median Income Chart



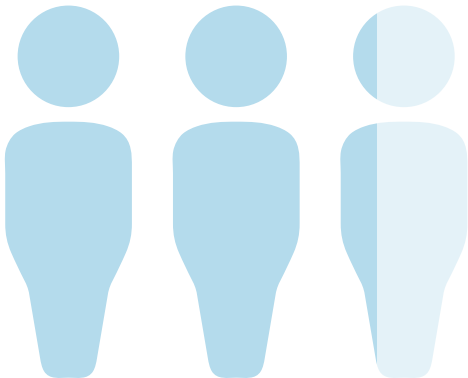
# sustainability measures

**Provide a variety of unit sizes to support larger household sizes**

*Multiple Bedroom Units*  
Most multi-family developments, especially affordable units, are comprised primarily of studio, one-, and two-bedroom units. This limits the ability of some households to live in multi-family units. Additionally, low-income renter households may have a disproportionately larger household size, due to multi-generational living or generally larger household sizes. This requires unit sizes that are two-, three-, and four-bedrooms to accommodate such household sizes.

For the South of Gray's Lake Master Plan to be affordable and suitable for a wider group of community residents, the City should work with the developer to ensure a diverse range of bedroom number unit types.

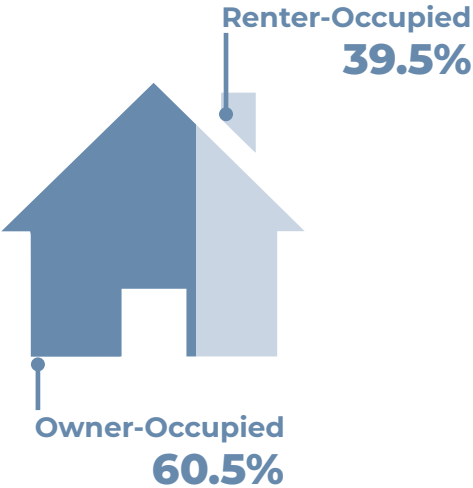
Average Household Size  
**2.3** persons



Total Households  
**91,045**

City of Des Moines  
Household Statistics (2019)

Housing Tenure



Average Family Size  
**3.02** persons

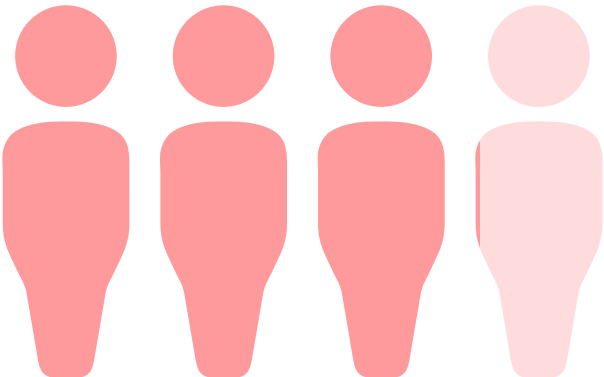


Figure 4.19 Des Moines Household Statistics (2019)

# sustainability measures

## Consider reduced parking minimums for the study area's redevelopment

### *Reduced Parking Minimums*

The South of Gray's Lake master plan places a higher priority on the pedestrian, bicyclist and transit user; broadening their access and looking to increase accessibility. Parking is included in the space to meet normal demands. However, to keep costs down and increase viability of affordable units, parking minimum should be reduced within the development. This can also help with equitable development because lower costs can make the addition of affordable rents more realistic.

The reduction in parking minimums relieves the pressure on developments to include specified amounts of parking and increase the potential for square footage and the potential for affordable units.





# sustainability measures

## Provide a range of tenant sizes to allow for small and established firms

### *Varying Tenant Space Size*

Small businesses come in all shapes and sizes ranging from a calligrapher to a wood worker and they require a range of spaces to work. Providing a variety of tenant sizes in the proposed mixed-use buildings can help a wider range of tenants. Units of varying sizes enable the business owner or entrepreneur to better afford the rents and be efficient in their use of the space. Additionally, it attracts a wide range of businesses to the community.

This is another approach to keeping the mixed-use area vibrant, sustainable and unique. By providing a wide range of tenant sizes, a mix of tenants are able to occupy the spaces and provide of broad range of amenities to the community.





# sustainability measures

## Establish a permanent pop-up space with very low rents

### *Affordable Pop-Up Space(s)*

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the retail market was experiencing a shift due to the rise of online retailers and changing consumer preferences. This shift was exacerbated by the pandemic and has left many retail spaces vacant. A persistent fear in the master planning effort was a question over the viability of retail in the mixed-use area.

Finding alternate approaches to retail while also supporting local small businesses and entrepreneurs is imperative for the future of the area. The installation of permanent pop-up space(s) with very low or no rents would enable new or small businesses to occupy premium retail space while they learn how to run their business and establish a client base. The goal would be for these businesses to move into permanent, paid units after the experience. These pop-up businesses could be a unique draw to the development and provide a fresh retail environment for residents and visitors.





# infrastructure improvements needed

## Proposed Development by Phase

The proposed building area, unit totals and parking stalls proposed by phase are summarized below.

### Phase One

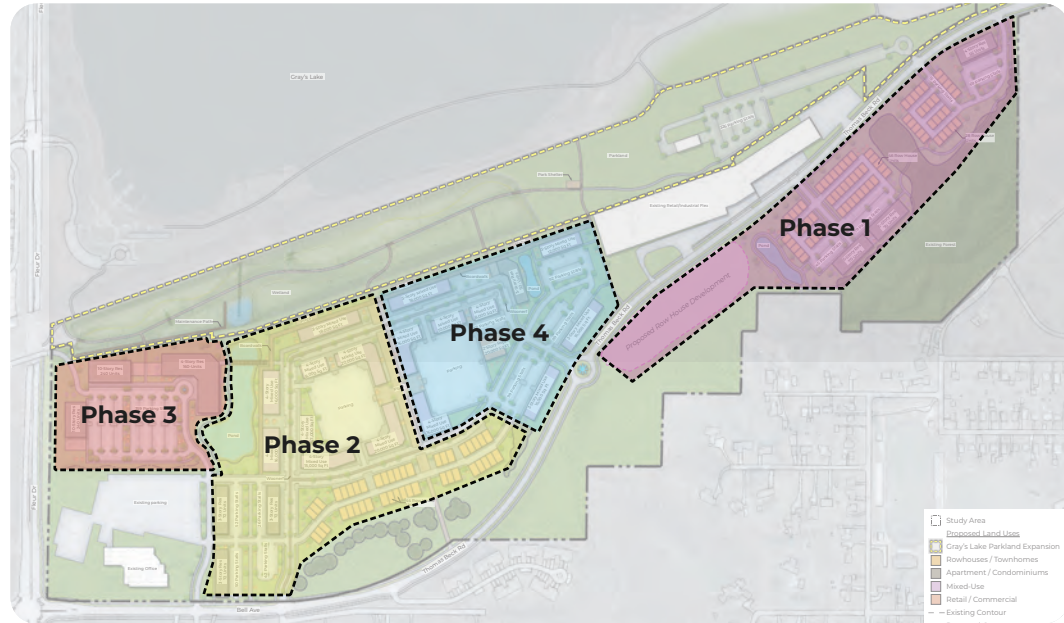
46 row house units  
28 row house units  
5-story residential - 70 units  
5-story residential - 70 units  
4-story residential - 56 units  
45 parking stalls  
79 parking stalls  
69 parking stalls

**TOTALS**  
74 row houses  
196 multi-family residential units  
193 parking stalls

### Phase Two

44 row house units  
3-story residential - 72 units  
3-story residential - 72 units  
3-story residential - 72 units  
4-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
3-story mixed use - 18,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 8,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 20,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 7,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 15,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 20,000 SF  
52 parking stalls  
50 parking stalls  
42 parking stalls  
26 parking stalls  
structured parking garage

**TOTALS**  
44 row houses  
216 multi-family residential units  
120,000 SF of mixed-use  
170 parking stalls



### Phase Three

10-story residential - 240 units  
10-story residential - 240 units  
4-story residential - 160 units  
359 parking stalls

**TOTALS**  
640 multi-family residential units  
359 parking stalls

### Phase Four

3-story mixed use - 18,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 10,000 SF  
4-story mixed use - 8,000 SF  
3-story mixed use - 12,000 SF  
3-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
3-story mixed use - 16,000 SF  
2-story retail - 20,000 SF  
3-story residential - 50 units  
38 parking stalls  
99 parking stalls  
89 parking stalls  
92 parking stalls

**TOTALS**  
50 multi-family residential units  
112,000 SF of mixed-use  
20,000 SF of retail  
50 multi-family residential units  
318 parking stalls

# infrastructure improvements needed

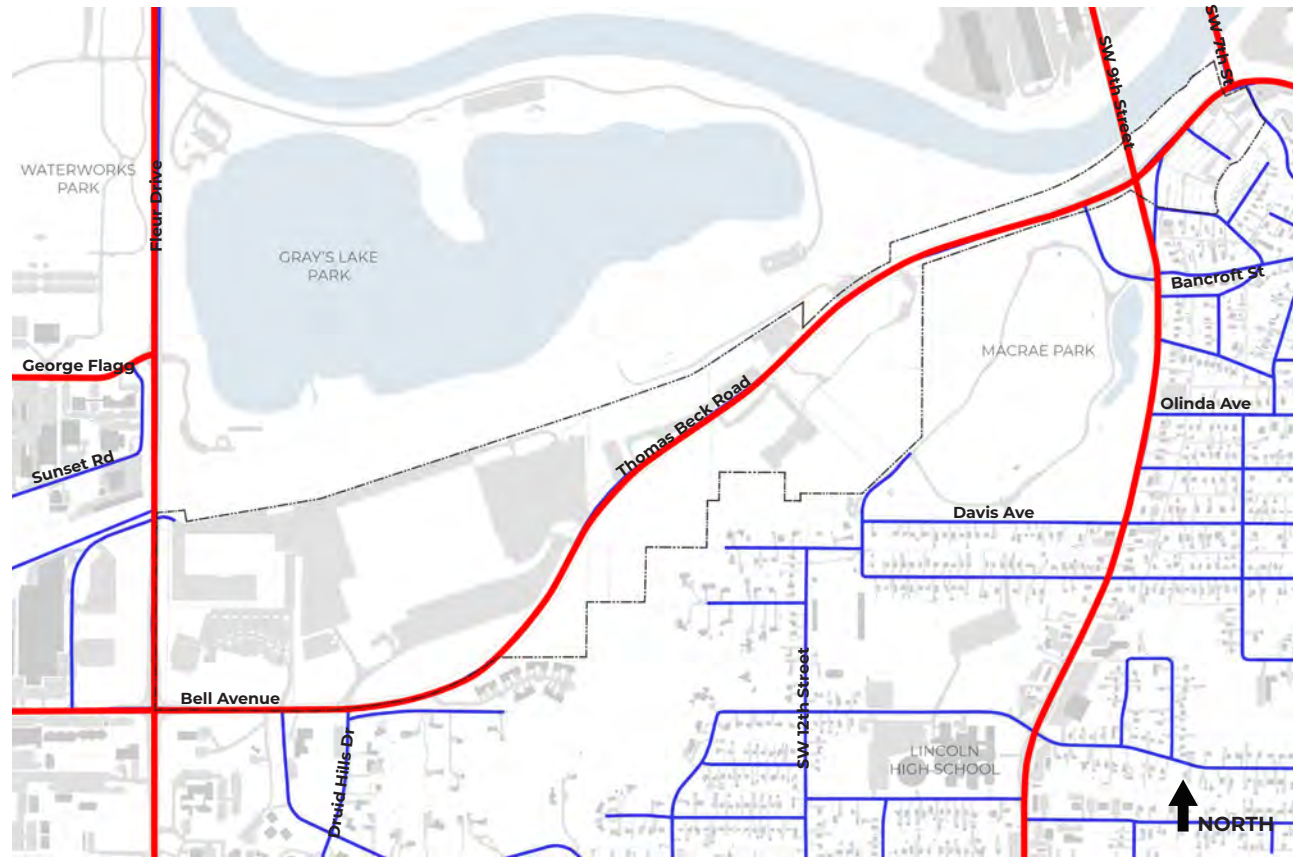
## Roadway Improvements

### *Roadway Improvements*

The Bell Avenue and Thomas Beck Roadway improvements proposed will have the capacity to adequately handle the vehicle traffic that could be generated by the proposed redevelopment of the master plan area. Project phasing and operational modifications made to the roadway will be programmed by the City to support regional and local traffic demands. To properly distribute traffic flows and accommodate internal circulation, all new developments must be interconnected and establish cross access agreements/ easements.

### *Action Steps*

- Continue to plan and implement the roadway improvements identified in the Southwest Infrastructure Plan.



**Figure 4.20** Primary + Non-Primary Streets Map

- Study Area
- Primary Street
- Non-Primary Street



# infrastructure improvements needed

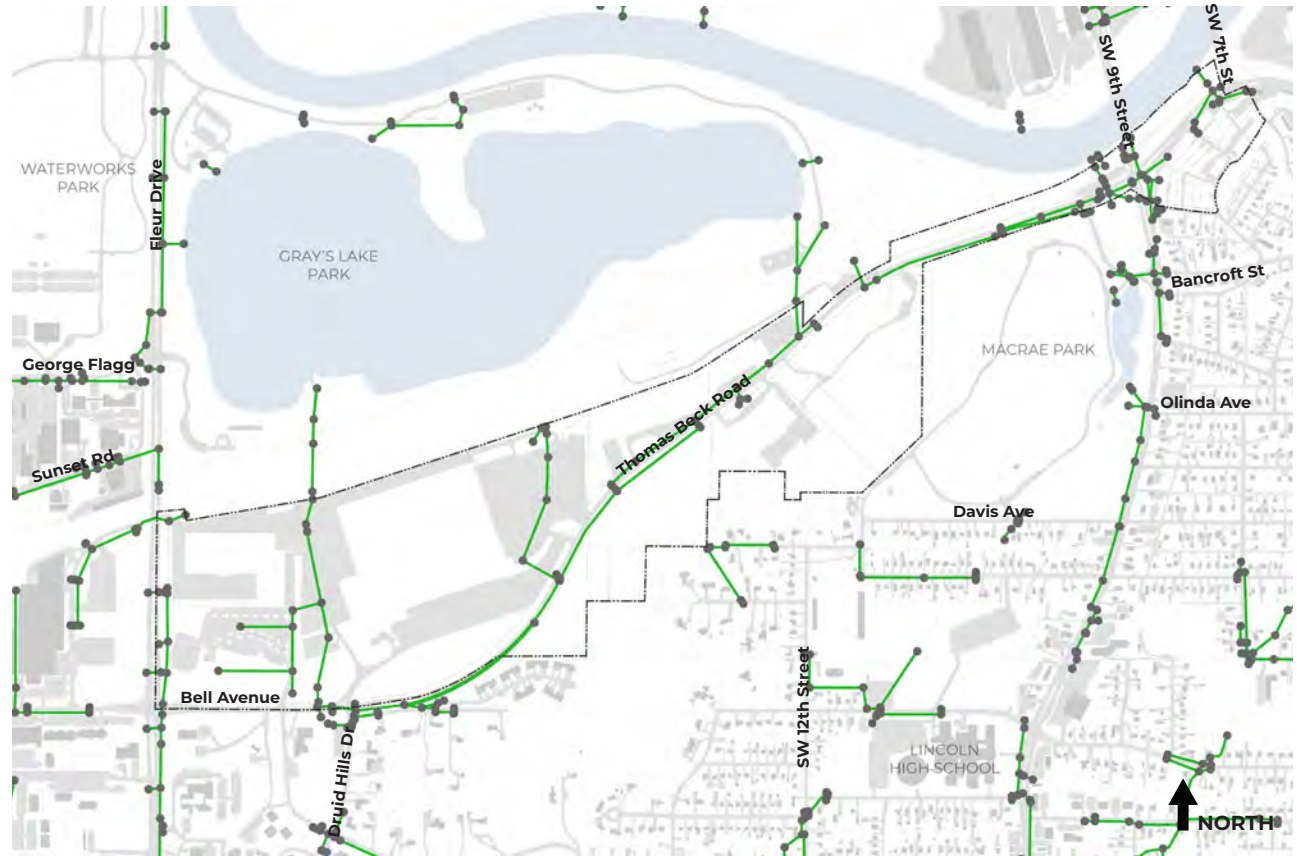
## Stormwater Improvements

### *Stormwater Improvements*

The South of Grays Lake Master Plan proposes to maintain the existing stormwater pipes that connect through to Gray's Lake Park to convey the passthrough stormwater flows. However, the condition of these pipes is unknown and could become an issue for redevelopment. The City should consider completing a survey and inspection of these pipes to determine any maintenance or repair issues and develop a plan to complete any necessary repairs now or at the time of redevelopment.

### *Action Steps*

- Complete a survey and inspection of the existing public storm sewers within the study area.
- Develop a short and long-range plan for repairs and/or replacement as may be needed.



**Figure 4.21** Existing Stormwater Infrastructure

- Study Area
- Stormwater Line
- Stormwater Manhole

# infrastructure improvements needed

## Watermain Improvements

### Watermain Improvements

There appears adequate water capacity to serve the South of Grays Lake Master Plan. However, the existing watermain located within the master plan area are older, not in ideal locations, and may be too small to provide the necessary service. As part of the first major redevelopment north of Thomas Beck Road, a construction plan for a new internal watermain system should be created. This new watermain can be constructed in phases with each development being responsible for installation of their portion of the system.

### Action Steps

- Develop a watermain master plan as part of the first major redevelopment project North of Thomas Beck Road.

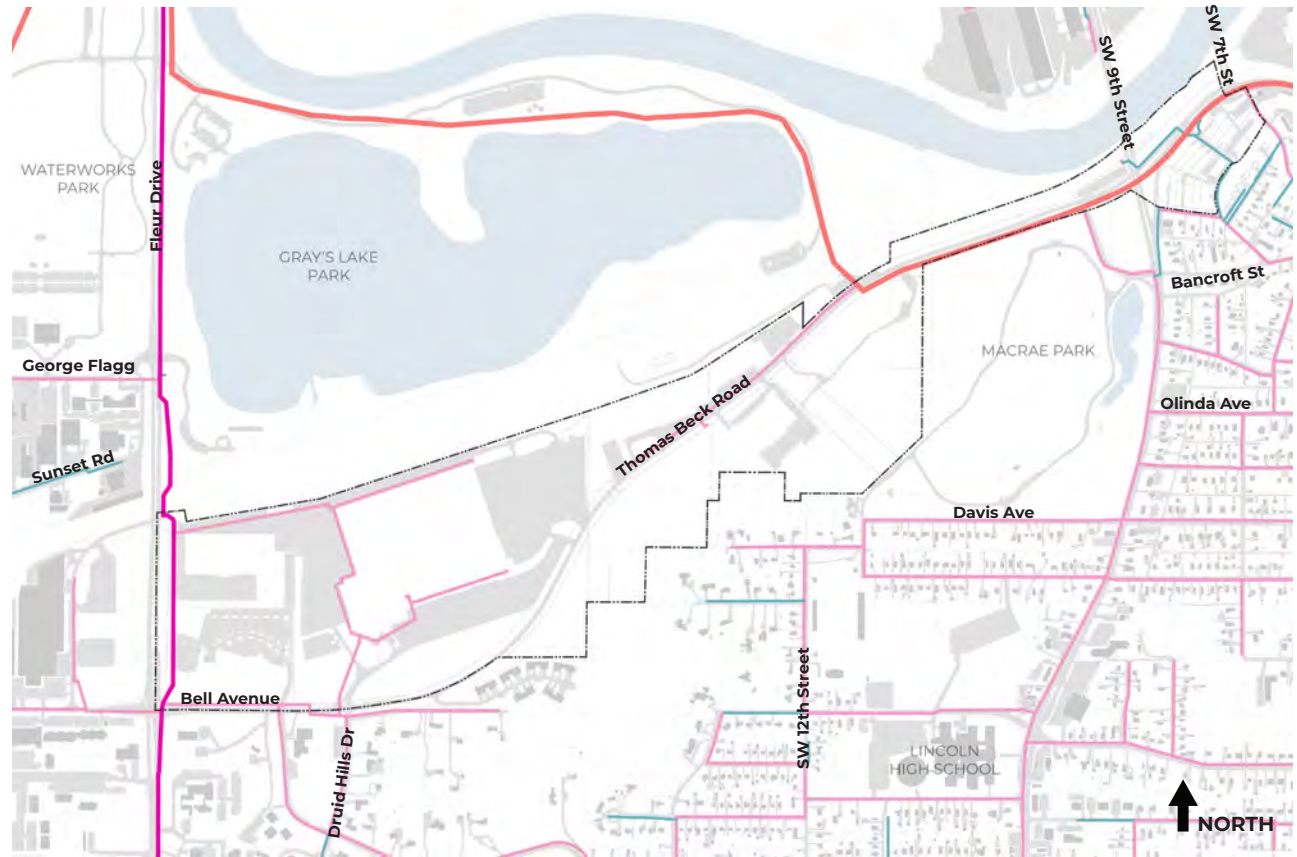


Figure 4.22 Existing Water Infrastructure



Study Area

Water Lines

1-6 ft Water Line

16-20 ft Water Line

8-12 ft Water Line

36-48 ft Water Line



# infrastructure improvements needed

## Sanitary Sewer Improvements

### Sanitary Sewer Improvements

There appears to be plenty of sanitary sewer capacity to serve redevelopment, except for the planning area located south of Thomas Beck Road. The existing sanitary sewer along the south side of Thomas Beck Road is likely too small to adequately serve redevelopment with apartments and townhomes in this area so this line will need to be replaced with a larger main. The City should consider replacing this sewer to coincide with the first proposed development along the south side of Thomas Beck Road.

### Action Steps

- Replace the existing sanitary sewer along the south side of Thomas Beck with a larger main sized to accommodate the redevelopment of this area.



Figure 4.23 Existing Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure



