

Maryland Avenue at Arcade Street Study



925 Payne Avenue, Suite 201
Saint Paul, MN 55130

Phone: 651-288-8744
Email: adejoy@esndc.org

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION	1
URBAN DESIGN CONSULTANTS	1
BACKGROUND	2
◇ Small Area Plan	2
◇ Traffic Calming Study	2
PROJECT OVERVIEW	3
STUDY AREA	3
PROPERTY INVENTORY	4
PARKING	12
BUSINESS IN THE STUDY AREA	14
TRAFFIC	18
COMMUNITY OUTREACH	19
POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS	21
COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS	22
COVID 19 IMPACT	23
NEXT STEPS	23
WALGREENS, CVS & BURGER KING REBOUND	24
Conclusions	24 & 25
Endnotes	26

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Preparing this report was not a unilateral effort. ESNDNC wishes to acknowledge the contributions that individuals made to help develop Maryland Avenue at Arcade Street Study.

We thank Thomas Dobbs for utilizing his professional expertise in design concepts that resonate with the community's visions parlayed in the Small Area Plan.

Thank you to Claire Thomas who developed the RFP that brought Hay Dobbs P. A. to the project, and for her and Michael Alada's tenacious efforts to survey small BIPOC businesses.

Thank you to Luis Pereira, Planning Director for the City of St. Paul who pulled together *esri reports* specifically for this project.

Thanks to Fay Simer from the Minnesota Department of Transportation for providing up-to-date information on the road reconstruction planned for Arcade Street.

And a special thanks to Rick Howden from Ramsey County Community and Economic Development for overseeing this project.

Resources for this Study were provided by the Ramsey County Corridor Revitalization Program.

Anne DeJoy
Executive Director
East Side Neighborhood Development Company

Maryland Avenue at Arcade Street Feasibility Study

Introduction

The goal of Ramsey County's Corridor Revitalization Program is to revive important County-owned transportation thoroughfares by providing grants to research, evaluate and plan for corridor improvements. The revitalization pilot program launched in 2019 awarded East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC) \$25,000 to study the feasibility for redevelopment on Maryland Avenue at Arcade Street.

Organizational Information

Established in 1979, ESNDC is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 community development corporation based on the East Side of St. Paul. Its mission is *to foster a safe, diverse, and thriving neighborhood by engaging the community to create affordable housing and support commercial development.*

ESNDC has been working for more than forty years as a catalyst for housing and commercial development on the East Side and plays a key role in building relationships and collaborating with partners on shared visions for neighborhood revitalization. ESNDC's goal is not simply to attract investment, but to engage community members, especially those who are not often heard, in sharing their aspirations and ideas for neighborhood prosperity.

Urban Design Consultants

ESNDC commissioned Hay Dobbs, P.A. architecture and urban design firm as the consultant for the Study. Hay Dobbs has collaborated with many communities, businesses, and institutions in the region, and across the country, to support economic development, education, safe neighborhoods, and vibrant communities. Hay Dobbs has more than twenty-seven years of experience leading multi-disciplinary building and urban design teams.

Thomas Dobbs is the principal consultant for this Study and is an experienced architect, planner, and designer. Dobbs brings broad professional experience to the projects he is involved with, identifying new strategies outside traditional limits of architecture and planning. His work includes leadership roles in the development of master sites and facilities plans, feasibility studies, facility evaluations, building design and renovation projects.

ESNDC and Dobbs developed our team's base scope of work for the Study, to fit within a total budget of \$25,000. However, there are additional tasks, such as the economic, technical, environmental, and financial analysis that must be conducted before undertaking real estate development to determine if a particular concept is feasible.

These additional tasks will help Ramsey County build a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the market context for the redevelopment concepts and can help

to build a constituency of residents, community leaders and business owners who will own and support the proposed development options.

Background - Small Area Plan

The Arcade Street Small Area Plan (SAP) and 40-Acre Study, adopted by the St. Paul City Council and Mayor, concluded that Arcade Street would be rezoned TN (Traditional Neighborhood) which encourages mixed use development. TN zoning allows for housing and a variety of commercial uses.

A key strategy in the Arcade Street Small Area Plan (SAP) is “Focusing community-oriented commercial areas at two major intersections: Arcade/Maryland and Arcade/Phalen, where traffic volumes are sufficiently high to support retail businesses that provide goods and services for the surrounding neighborhoods.”ⁱ

The SAP recommended B2 (general business) zoning for properties on Arcade at the Maryland intersection. The section of Maryland Avenue within the feasibility “study area” runs through an established neighborhood. Land use is mostly zoned TN2 (traditional neighborhood) and includes single-family houses and duplexes; there are also two smaller scale RM2 (multi-family) apartment buildings at Maryland and Mendota Street. Maryland functions as a thoroughfare through the Payne-Phalen neighborhood and is served by public transit. It is a mixed-use corridor with sections of B2 zoning for commercial properties.

Traffic Calming Study

Maryland Avenue is an arterial roadway that stretches from Como Boulevard on the west end of St. Paul, stops at the railroad tracks at Ruth Street on the east, and continues beyond the Maryland open space area to Century Avenue in Oakdale. Heavy traffic and speeding cars on Maryland have made sections of this street unsafe for pedestrians to cross.

In 2017 the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners adopted a “transportation for all policy” for county-owned roads, intended to put pedestrians first, then facilitate biking, transit, and automobiles, in that order. This was a meaningful change from roads that were focused on moving cars through communities as efficiently as possible.

A planned road repaving project for Maryland Avenue in 2017 was impacted by the tragic death of a woman crossing this street at Greenbrier. The tragedy brought the community together with County Commissioners and City and County Public Works officials to consider converting Maryland from a 4- to a 3-lane road.

A traffic study was conducted, focused on a section of Maryland from Highway 61 (Arcade Street) on the west to Forest Street to the east. A temporary narrowing of the road was engineered during the study. Through traffic data collection, monitoring interactions, discussions with business owners and community meetings, where folks provided input and

feedback, the test proved successful – this section of Maryland Avenue is now a permanent 3-lane road. Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) data shows fewer crashes in the one year after the conversion was implemented. Ramsey County reports that the average car velocity dropped approximately 6 mph, depending on the location in the Maryland corridor.ⁱⁱ

Project Overview

The rationale for this Study is to gain an understanding of evolving market trends, so that the community is better informed while planning for the future. Without much notice, Cub Foods on Arcade Street abruptly closed its doors in 2018. In 2019, at the onset of this project, retailers like CVS and Walgreens, two prominent stores in the Study Area, were in trouble on a national level. According to Coresight Research, a national research and advisory firm, these two major retailers were on course to close more stores than they did during the previous year.ⁱⁱⁱ Burger King was not faring much better, as the parent company reported declining sales in 2018.^{iv}

If Walgreens, CVS and Burger King closed, East Siders would be negatively affected by the loss of retail, a reasonably priced eatery, pharmacy services and jobs in single commercial node, in addition to tax revenue losses for the State and County. Then, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and everything changed. *More on this later.*

Study Area

The *Maryland Avenue at Arcade Study* targeted the section of Maryland from Arcade Street to Forest Street. The study was conducted to inventory properties in the target area and consider current conditions, then determine prospects for rehabilitation and explore opportunities for community-conscience real estate development.

Our objectives were as follows:

- Hire an urban design firm that would review the adopted *Arcade Street Small Area Plan* (SAP) and interpret the community's vision and goals into feasible development scenarios
- Analyze existing conditions and use of buildings on Maryland Avenue and those intersecting at Arcade Street
- Assess business types, particularly BIPOC businesses and make recommendations on how owners may broaden their customer base in today's market
- Identify the types of commercial uses that the market can support in the future
- Investigate business trends and anticipated changes, and what those changes might mean for existing commercial uses on Maryland Avenue
- Recommend future development options for this section of Maryland Avenue as a commercial corridor; both as a part of Ramsey County and as a neighborhood main street
- Identify resources to develop a *Comprehensive Redevelopment Strategy* for the Maryland/Arcade Commercial Node

Current Conditions

ESNDC conducted a property inventory within the study area which reveals the following uses:

Maryland Avenue

- 3 national retailers
- 2 local grocery store retailers (1 large, 1 small)
- 1 auto service (vacant)
- 4 restaurants or eateries
- 1 strip mall with 4 street-level units
- 2 mixed-use residential/commercial (upper/lower)
- 9 single family residential
- 3 duplex residential
- 1 four-plex residential
- 2 multi-family apartment buildings (4-6 units)
- 2 detached retail spaces
- 2 office buildings (1 large, 1 small)

Arcade Street (NW corner of Maryland)

- 1 multi-tenant mixed use building; 6 apartments (upper), 4 retail and 1 office (lower)

Inventory of Properties in the Study Area

Property Inventory – Maryland Avenue	South side of Maryland
Address: 810 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106-2511 Tax Payer: JOHN J & MAGARET M HUEGEL TRUSTEES Tax Payer Address: 5151 MOONSTONE AVE, ALTA LOMA CA 91701 Deed Acres: 1.15 EMV Total: \$2,314,800 Land Use: MEDIUM DETACHED RETAIL Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 2004	
Address: 1180 ARCADE ST, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: 1180 ARCADE LLC Tax Payer Address: 1180 ARCADE ST., ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 1.08 EMV Total: \$2,265,500 Land Use: MEDIUM DETACHED RETAIL Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 2007	

Address: 842 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106-2617 Tax Payer: SHAWN A SULLIVAN T P Address: 842 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106-2617 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$151,500 Land Use & Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING, PLATTED LOT Built: 1925	
Address: 850 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2617 Tax Payer: THINH XUAN PHAM LLC Tax Payer Address: 2565 FRANKLIN AVE 308, ST PAUL MN 55114 Deed Acres: 0.34 EMV Total: \$334,800 Land Use: SMALL DETACHED RETAIL (UNDER 10,000 SF) Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 1969	
Address: 860 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2617 Tax Payer: YANG MAI HWAI SHIAW & JACK YANG Tax Payer Address: 860 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106-2617 Deed Acres: 0.23 EMV Total: \$470,600 Land Use: SMALL DETACHED RETAIL (UNDER 10,000 SF) Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 1986	
Address: 864 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2617 Tax Payer: HTOO SWEIN Tax Payer Address: 1434 MAYRE ST., ST PAUL MN 55117-4551 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$185,600 Land Use: TWO FAMILY DWELLING - UP/DWN Dwelling: DUPLEX Built: 1884	

Address: 874 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2617 Tax Payer: ASIAN AUTO TECH INC Tax Payer Address: 874 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106-2617 Deed Acres: 0.34 EMV Total: \$312,200 Land Use: AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE STATION Structure: AUTO SERVICE GARAGE Built: 1953	
Address: 888 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2619 Tax Payer: QUINCY INC Tax Payer Address: 488 OAK CREEK DR S., VADNAIS HEIGHTS MN 55127 Deed Acres: 0.31 EMV Total: \$274,000 Land Use: DRIVE-IN REST/FOOD SRV FACILITY Structure: FRANCHISE FOOD Built: 1970	 <i>Figure 1 THIS BUILDING HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED</i>
Address: 900 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2619 Tax Payer: JD GROUP LLP Tax Payer Address: 5290 VILLA WAY EDINA MN 55436-2153 Deed Acres: 0.92 EMV Total: \$1,943,000 Land Use: SUPERMARKET Structure: SUPERMARKET Built: 1952	
Address: 924 MARYLAND AVE E SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2651 Tax Payer: GAVETT BRANDON J Tax Payer Address: PO BOX 435, CHISAGO CITY MN 55013-0435 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV: \$296,600 Land Use: APARTMENTS 4 OR MORE UNITS Tax Classification: 4A- RENTAL/RESIDENTIAL NON-HOMESTEAD Built: 1960	

Address: 928 MARYLAND AVE E SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2619 Tax Payer: JANA E N BATES Tax Payer Address: 928 MARYLAND AVE E Parcel Area 0.11 Acres Parcel Width 40 Feet Parcel Depth 122 Feet Tax Classification: 1A-Residential Homestead EMV Total: \$180,400 Built: 1919	
Address: 1199 FOREST ST SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2635 Tax Payer: LEFT BANK PROPERTY 1199 LLC Tax Payer Address: 1199 FOREST ST, SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2634 Parcel Area 0.08 Acres Parcel Width 41 Feet Parcel Depth 79 Feet EMV Total: \$165,200 Land Use: TWO FAMILY DWELLING - UP/DWN Structure: RESIDENTIAL NON-HOMESTEAD 3 UNITS OR LESS Built: 1907	
Address: 1200 FOREST ST SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2635 Tax Payer: ZEWDIE WOSSENSEGED Tax Payer Address: 15134 FANNING AVE N, HUGO MN 55038 Deed Acres: 0.08 EMV Total: \$212,400 Land Use: MIXED RESID/COMMERCIAL Structure: MIXED USE Built: 1921	

Property Inventory – Maryland Avenue	North side of Maryland
Address: 1205 ARCADE ST 1, ST PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: KS FORTUNE INVESTMENTS LLC Tax Payer Address: 3053 DULUTH ST, MAPLEWOOD MN 55109 Deed Acres: 0.23 EMV Total: \$760,000 Land Use: MIXED RESID/COMMERCIAL Structure: MIXED USE Built: 1922	

Address: 821 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: ARCADE & MARYLAND DEV LLC Tax Payer Address: 681 CEDAR VIEW COURT, SHOREVIEW MN 55126 Deed Acres: 0.33 EMV Total: \$715,000 Land Use: SMALL STRIP CENTER Structure: RETAIL MULTI OCCUPANCY Built: 2014	 A photograph of a modern, single-story commercial building with large glass windows and doors. The building has a dark facade with a prominent sign for "MR Pet's" in red and yellow. A small, covered walkway leads to the entrance. The building is situated on a street corner with a sidewalk and a parking area.
Address: 841 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: BURGER KING CORP 281 Tax Payer Address: PO BOX 460189, HOUSTON TX 77056 Deed Acres: 0.44 EMV Total: \$710,400 Land Use: DRIVE-IN REST/FOOD SRV FACILITY Structure: FRANCHISE FOOD Built: 1988	 A photograph of a two-story commercial building with a red roof and a large sign for "BURGER KING" in yellow and red. The building has a drive-in window and a covered entrance. The building is situated on a street corner with a sidewalk and a parking area.
Address: 853 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: JAMES W MEEHAN Tax Payer Address: 853 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$184,900 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING Built: 1904	 A photograph of a single-story house with a gabled roof and a chimney. The house has a light-colored exterior and a small front porch. The house is situated on a street with a sidewalk and a lawn.
Address: 857 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: ANNE ELIZABETH FARRELL Tax Payer Address: 857 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL, MN Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$179,100 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY Built: 1914	 A photograph of a single-story house with a gabled roof and a chimney. The house has a light-colored exterior and a small front porch. The house is situated on a street with a sidewalk and a lawn.

Address: 861 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: CHU YUAN ZHOU Tax Payer Address: 861 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$174,400 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY Built: 1946	
Address: 865 MARYLAND AVE E SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2616 Tax Payer: MARY E SPEIDEL Tax Pater Address: 865 MARYLAND AVE E., ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$197,300 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY Built: 1925	
Address: 869 MARYLAND AVE E., SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: LOWNY EMILY DIANE RITA HERNANDEZ Tax Payer Address: 869 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$183,900 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY Built: 1916	
Address: 871 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: SCHMIDT GROUP MARKETING LLC Tax Payer Address: 5038 QUAIL AVE N, CRYSTAL MN 55429-3649 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$139,100 Land Use: TWO FAMILY DWELLING - UP/DWN Dwelling: DUPLEX Built: 1907	

Address: 875 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: ERIC FORT Tax Payer Address: 875 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.11 EMV Total: \$157,400 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY Built: 1908	
Address: 881 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: KLARRIS REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS LLC Tax Payer Address: 4668 BLOOMBERG LANE, INVER GROVE HGTS MN 55076-1164 Deed Acres: 0.14 EMV Total: \$524,700 Land Use: APARTMENTS 4-6 RENTAL UNITS Structure: APARTMENTS - 4-6 UNITS Dwelling: APARTMENTS 4-6 RENTAL UNITS Built: 1960	
Address: 889 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: KLARRIS REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS LLC Tax Payer Address: 4668 BLOOMBERG LANE, IGH, MN 55076-1164 Deed Acres: 0.21 EMV Total: \$823,100 Land Use: APARTMENTS 7-19 RENTAL UNITS Structure: APARTMENTS - GARDEN Dwelling: APARTMENTS 7-19 RENTAL UNITS Built: 1958	
Address: 905 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106-2618 Tax Payer: CAL XIONG Tax Payer Address: 1736 E SHORE DR., ST PAUL MN 55109 EMV Total: \$167,300 Land Use: SMALL DETACHED RETAIL (UNDER 10,000 SF) Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 1965 Plat: RECENTLY SOLD	

Address: 911 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106-2618 Tax Payer: MARYLAND OFFICES LLC Tax Payer Address: 22820 STREHLER RD., HAMEL MN 55340-0936 EMV Total: \$635,000 Land Use: MEDICAL CLINIC Structure: MEDICAL OFFICE/CLINIC Built: 1955 Plat: EAST MARYLAND CLINIC	
Address: 919 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: CHARLES A & MARGARET E KELLER Tax Payer Address: 919 MARYLAND AVE E, ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.14 EMV Total: \$125,600 Land Use: MEDICAL CLINIC Structure: MEDICAL OFFICE/CLINIC Built: 1956	
Address: 927 MARYLAND AVE E SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2618 Tax Payer: XIONG MITTERAN Tax Payer Address: 927 MARYLAND AVE E SAINT PAUL MN 55106-2618 Deed Acres: 0.19 EMV Total: \$229,000 Land Use: SINGLE FAMILY, PLATTED LOT Dwelling: SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING Built: 1954	
Address: 933 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: SANDRA L ERSKINE Tax Payer Address: 908 MOUND ST, ST PAUL MN 55106 Deed Acres: 0.05 EMV Total: \$78,100 Land Use: SMALL DETACHED RETAIL Structure: RETAIL SINGLE OCCUPANCY Built: 1953	
Address: 935 MARYLAND AVE E, SAINT PAUL MN 55106 Tax Payer: KIM SHIN-HAE YOUNG-JIN KIM Tax Payer Address: 3132 IRVING AVE S., MINNEAPOLIS MN 55408 Deed Acres: 0.10 EMV Total: \$322,400 Land Use: MIXED RESID/COMMERCIAL Structure: MIXED USE Built: 1925	

Parking

On-street parking on Maryland Avenue is prohibited in the study area; therefore customers must utilize off-street parking or park on residential side streets adjacent to Maryland. The study area includes 9 surface parking lots that provide 296 off-street parking stalls. The largest parking lots are owned by Walgreens, CVS, Burger King, Golden Harvest Foods, and the Office Building at 911 Maryland Avenue. During this study, it appeared that some customers were utilizing the larger parking lots while patronizing other businesses, however, it was not apparent that these lots were built to provide shared parking. Additionally, the vacant lot at 888 Maryland Avenue (the former Taco Johns site) is being used for parking, primarily during daytime hours. For the duration of this study there were between 6 to 14 cars parked on the 888 Maryland lot between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm. The parking lot with consistently more ingress and egress traffic was the Golden Harvest Foods lot.

Parking Lot Inventory

Address	810 Maryland	821 Maryland	841 Maryland	850/860 Maryland	911 Maryland
Number of parking stalls	54	20	44	26	45

Address	900 Maryland	935 Maryland	1180 Arcade	1205 Arcade	
Number of parking stalls	47	6	40	14	



Area outlined in yellow is a drive-thru



Businesses in the Study Area

In the study area there are three national chain retail establishments: Walgreens, CVS and Burger King. Additionally, there are 15 commercial properties occupied by 18 businesses and 6 office tenants. Fifteen of the retail tenants are BIPOC-owned (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) businesses including clothing stores, barber shops, restaurants, food markets, and franchises.



1205 Arcade Street is a mixed-use apartment/commercial building built in 1922. It sits at the northwest corner of Maryland Avenue and leases to four businesses.

- Liberty Income Tax (franchise)
- G & T Apparel (BIPOC-owned - men and woman's clothing)
- All Goods (BIPOC-owned - men's t-shirts)
- A 1 Cuts (BIPOC-owned - barber shop)



1219 Arcade Street, just north of Maryland, leases to two BIPOC-owned businesses.

- Circle of Apparel (custom printing and embroidered street wear)
- Silver Clip (barber shop)



820 Maryland Avenue, at the northeast corner of Maryland and Arcade, leases to four businesses.

- Taqueria El Buen Gusto (BIPOC-owned - fast food restaurant- Mexican food)
- Metro by T-Mobile (franchise cell phone company)
- BoBa Tea (BIPOC-owned - beverages and snack shop)
- Personnel Resources (franchise – BIPOC-owned – temporary employment agency)



850 and 860 Maryland Avenue have a combined parking lot between them.

- I ♥ Pho (BIPOC-owned - sit-down and take-out Asian noodle restaurant)
- Hoa Mei Market (BIPOC-owned - Asian products and groceries and hot-food deli)



874 Maryland Avenue. This business was closed and listed as “for sale” for both the auto repair business and real property. The building has a significant amount of surface asphalt surrounding it.



888 Maryland Avenue is the site of the former Taco Johns fast food restaurant. The building has been demolished and the lot surface is asphalt.



900 Maryland Avenue. Golden Harvest is a BIPOC-owned grocery store with a gross building area of 12,384 sq. ft.



905 Maryland Avenue - the Garden House. While ESNDNC was conducting business visits and surveys, as part of the feasibility study, the Garden House was not open for business. The building was sold on 10/01/2021.



911 Maryland Avenue – Maryland Offices LLC is a multi-tenant office building 9,800 sq. ft. After losing its primary tenant (a medical clinic) it is now about 50% occupied.



919 Maryland Avenue – former Dental Office. This 786 sq. ft. building is listed “for sale” for \$179,000 as of 1/5/2022.



933 Maryland Avenue is leased to a BIPOC-owned barber shop.

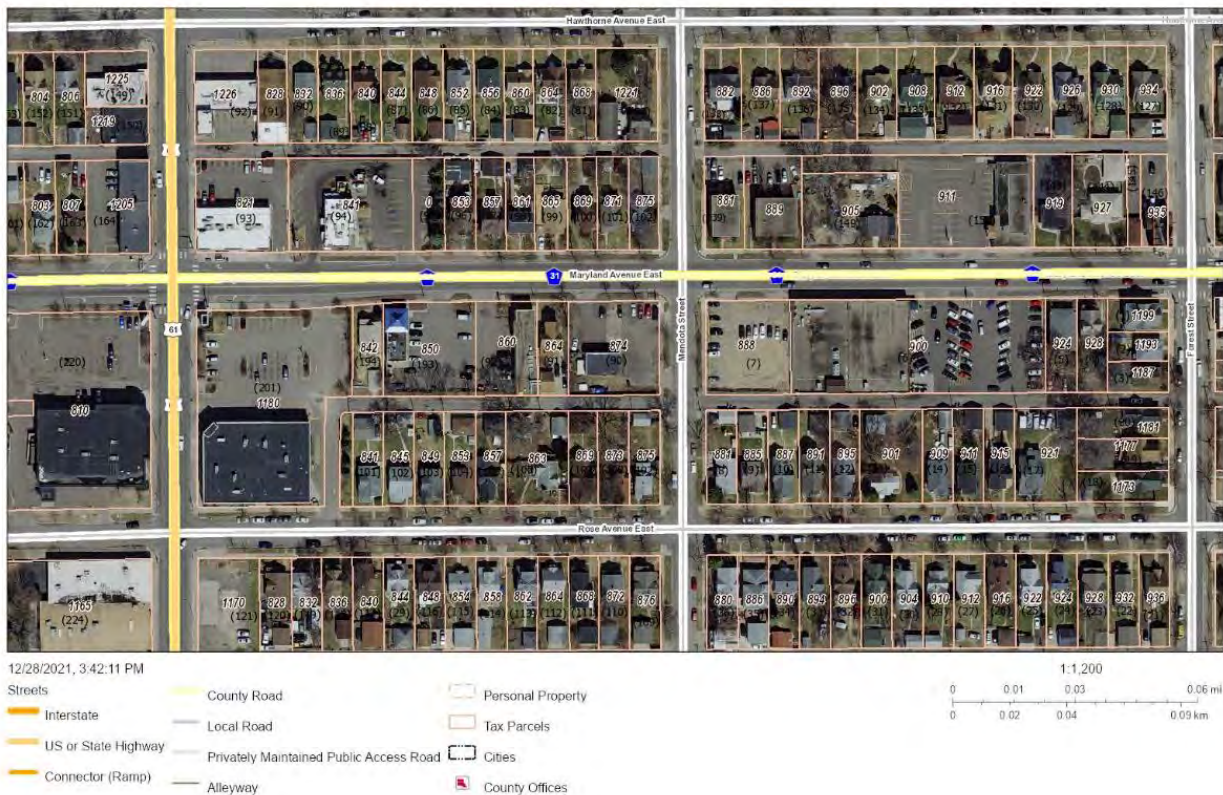


935 Maryland Avenue is a 3,436 sq. ft. mixed use building with a three-bedroom apartment on the second floor. The commercial space is vacant as of 1/5/2022.



1200 Forest Street is a 2,583 sq. ft mixed use building at the southeast corner of Maryland and Forest. It is leased to a Metro by T Mobile store and has an asphalt lot just east of the building on Maryland Avenue. The lot is not striped so it is not clear if it is a legal parking lot.

Map Ramsey



Traffic

According to the most recent traffic count profile, an average of 19,400 vehicles travel through the study area daily in both directions. Maryland Avenue is used for various purposes, including pedestrian access and vehicle movement. Because it connects to I-35E, traffic volume is greater near that intersection. Both county and city officials are exploring ways to enhance safety, understanding that the number of vehicles will continue to be high.

State law requires motorists to stop for pedestrians, even at unmarked crosswalks, but on busy four-lane roads like Maryland Avenue, the reality is that crossing the street is difficult and treacherous. As mentioned earlier in this report, sections of Maryland Avenue have now been reduced to three lanes.



Community Outreach

ESNDC conducted community outreach to business owners as a part of the Study from October to November of 2020. We contacted 19 businesses in the designated service area and received survey responses from 11 of those businesses:

- Circle Of Apparel
- Silver Clips
- Boost Mobile
- G & T Apparel
- A1 Cuts
- Taqueria El Buen Gusto
- Metro by T-Mobile
- Personnel Resources
- Hoa Mei Market & Deli
- Asian Auto
- Owner of office building, 911 Maryland

Information collected through direct outreach was recorded, compiled, and used to guide the development of the design concepts. Survey responses gave insight into the experiences and aspirations of the business owners in the Maryland-Arcade area.

Business owners were asked about the length of their tenure conducting business in the targeted commercial node, current attitudes towards operating in that node, and, how they felt about the East Side. We also inquired about their satisfaction with their current square footage, interest in expansion or location change, traffic concerns, impact of the pandemic, and general business needs.

Those who participated in the survey ranged significantly in how long they have been in operation, with some who opened less than a year prior to the survey, and others having been in business at their current location for nearly 20 years.

All business owners we spoke with had positive sentiments about conducting business in the Maryland-Arcade commercial node, many noting personal and communal connections to the neighborhood and steady, return clientele. Both mobile phone stores in the node cited having comparatively higher sales to their counterparts in the Twin Cities area. Numerous Asian-owned businesses remarked on the stiff business competition in the area. Multiple businesses said that they aspire to expand their square footage while remaining in the area.

Business and building owners commented extensively on the pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the intersection of Maryland and Arcade, noting that the high traffic counts and transit access have led to an increase in walk-in customers. Some noted they had intentionally moved to the node because of the pedestrian traffic in the area.

Several business owners voiced concerns about the safety of the intersection of pedestrians and cars alike, and recounted their building being crashed into by vehicles. ESND C contacted Minnesota Department of Transportation about their current plans for the repaving of Arcade Street (Hiway 61), particularly at the Maryland intersection, those include:

- Repave the roads
- Remove or trim the trees causing sidewalks to heave
- Replace aging traffic signals and add push buttons to assist people with disabilities
- Replace curb ramps so they are accessible to people with disabilities
- Improve safety for pedestrians crossing the street
- Replace aging sewers

It is important to note that all businesses reported significant operational impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several businesses were required to remain closed to the public for extended periods. Following the completion of this survey, one participant business has ceased operations, a previously vacant commercial property has been sold, and two formerly unoccupied commercial buildings have secured new tenants.

ESND C's community outreach in the service area reveals a commitment of the businesses to remain in the Maryland and Arcade commercial node, as well as a desire to have additional commercial space to enable expansion of their businesses.

ESND C staff attempted to survey all businesses in the study area, however some business owners were either by appointment only, unavailable, or not interested in participating in the survey. Businesses in the study area that did not participate in the survey include Walgreens, CVS and Burger King. While each has a General Manager these national chains did not identify a representative who is authorized to speak on behalf of their respective corporations.

BUSINESS OWNER SURVEY	
1.	How long have you been in business at your current location?
2.	What are your current attitudes towards operating a business on the East Side?
3.	Are you satisfied with the size and square footage of your current space?
4.	Are you interested in increasing or decreasing your square footage? Why?
5.	How satisfied are you with your present location otherwise?
6.	Are you interested in moving locations? If so, staying on the East Side or elsewhere in the metro area?
7.	Does the car traffic at the intersection of Maryland & Arcade impact your business? If so, how?
8.	How has the pandemic impacted your operations?
9.	Is there anything you need to advance your business?

Possible Redevelopment Scenarios

Considering national market trends, understanding community values identified in the Small Area Plan, and survey results from business owners, all contributed to the design concepts developed by Hay Dobbs.

New ways of working and connecting and cultural preferences have begun to drive the shape of real estate development in fundamentally different ways. Aside from social and physical distancing triggered by coronavirus, commercial and residential projects where people can meet either intentionally or by chance and build community through common spaces are highly desired.

There are no large undeveloped parcels seeking development solutions in the Study Area. Dobbs proposed concept scenarios as 250' X 120' generic parcels that could be assembled by current owners and/or developers. Each scenario could be flexed up or down in size. Some schemes fit better with smaller plots. Some of these are the same concepts executed on a different scale, while other ideas could work together and are not mutually exclusive. Due to the built-up nature of the Study Area and restricted parking on Maryland Avenue, parking for the redevelopment concepts would be a main concern. The assumption with each concept is that there would be some kind of creative parking solution.

The concepts scenarios are as follows:

- *Urban Cooperative* - two story building with greenhouse, hydroponic and aquaculture farming on the upper level. The lower level could support retail sales, packaging, distribution, and other activities. Potential for a community kitchen or incubator space.
- *Athletics and Training* - two-story mixed-use facility that can provide year-round programming including youth and adult leagues, strength and conditioning, sport specific training, clinics and camps, and overall wellness programming and support
- *Coworking/Co-Making Space* - envisioned as a public woodworking shop, so-working space, and artisan hub that offers hobbyists and professional makers community, equipment, and space. Including programming and classes for youth and adults.
- *Micro Apartments* - Tiny apartments under 350 square feet that save space, money and increase efficiency. This housing option has lower monthly rents and is financially advantageous to developer
- *Live-Work Housing* - "Living above your store." Highly flexible space where residential units are above or adjacent to office workshop and retail spaces
- *Multi-use Community Center* - mixed-use concept that can be "mixed-and-matched" based on market research of community needs
- *Urban Event Pavilion* - Facility is envisioned to be flexible to provide the ideal space for graduations, year-end parties, seasonal markets, festivals, wedding dances, team

building, conferences, or other group activities. Could be open air or indoor or a building with removable or operable side walls/windows

Due to the amount budgeted for this initiative, this document is not a full-scale real estate development feasibility study. Our final report is an objective review of schematic options for redevelopment. As mentioned earlier in this report, other tasks and financial analysis must be conducted before comprehensive feasibility is determined for each concept.

This report does not indicate whether a chosen site is suitable for the intended function, nor does it consider the financial, social, and environmental aspects of each scenario. Many comprehensive plans start with a feasibility study to understand the site's geographic, environmental, and historic context and build on the information collected and analysis developed during the scoping phase. Any background reports that are deemed necessary (that is, hydrology, environment, cultural heritage, transport, and so on) should also be commissioned to fully determine the feasibility for redevelopment for each concept.

Community Presentations

Presentations were made to the ESNDC Board of Directors on August 3, 2021, and at the Payne-Phalen Community Council meeting on August 24th, 2021.

An online survey (Survey Monkey) was developed for community input which included the following questions:

1. What do you value about your community?
2. What do you feel is missing from your community?
3. If you could add a space or a business to your community, what would that be?
4. What features would be most important to you in a new space located near the Maryland and Arcade intersection?
 - a. Offering unique services not available elsewhere
 - b. Offering services or functionalities that are available elsewhere, but are not easily accessible due to distance or inconvenience.
 - c. Providing services/uses that create jobs for the local community
 - d. Appearance and Quality of construction
 - e. Safe and Inviting
 - f. Providing services/uses that are affordable to most
 - g. Sustainability
 - h. Appealing to most all age groups
 - i. Other (please specify)
5. Rank each proposed project:
 - a. Urban Cooperative
 - b. Athletics and Training

- c. Coworking/Co-Making
- d. Micro Apartments
- e. Live-Work Housing
- f. Multi-use community facility
- g. Urban event pavilion
- h. Please leave any additional comments

The survey link was distributed during a virtual meeting of the Payne-Phalen Community Council and received responses from council members. The respondents answered that they valued the “diversity”, working class environment, affordability, access to outdoor spaces, accessibility, and close ties to their neighbors in their community. Respondents also noted the desire to see an increase in housing options, sustainable jobs, and a decrease in highspeed traffic at the intersection of Maryland and Arcade, as well as an increase in consumer-facing businesses like artist collectives, bookstores, or coffeeshops.

Others voiced the desire for large-scale manufacturing in the area that could provide jobs, mixed-use sport and event spaces, an art center, with an emphasis on the businesses being locally owned and not national chain stores.

Survey results showed that community members value spaces that provide services/uses that create jobs for the local community, provide services/uses that they can find elsewhere, but are too far away or too inconvenient to get to, and are safe and inviting. The ranking of the six proposed development concepts was relatively evenly skewed because of the low number of responses, with “Live-Work Space”, “Urban Event Pavilion”, and “Athletics and Training” narrowly edging out the other concepts.

Covid 19 Impacted Community Engagement

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the community engagement that was planned for this Study. In addition to the challenges directly associated with the virus itself, ESNDK’s practices of community outreach had to pivot quickly to a reality where physical distance between people was required, and a forced change of social interaction was employed.

As many functions as possible shifted into digital form during the time that this Study was being conducted. Increased participation and engagement activities via on-line platforms was not as successful as we had hoped and much remains to be learned about how best to implement user-friendly online platforms for equitable access. The pandemic accelerated the virtual process, providing valuable lessons by means of a forced experiment.

Next steps

We hope to continue broader engagement by scheduling a community meeting to unveil the design concepts or organize zoom calls with larger groups of people. An effective next step in the community engagement process will be bringing the same survey that was given to the

Payne Phalen Community Council to a larger group of residents and analyzing the results with a wider data pool.

Walgreens, CVS and Burger King Rebound during Covid 19

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that Walgreens or CVS are at risk of imminent closure. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, these retailers have served as primary sources for personal protective equipment (PPE) and related supplies. Additionally, they have functioned as alternative medical clinics, providing Covid-19 testing and vaccine distribution services.

Both companies experienced growth by March 2021, according to data from Placer.ai, with CVS seeing visit growth of 39.9% in August and Walgreens posting a 45.2% improvement in the same period. Foot traffic in September was up 22.1% for CVS and 26.2% for Walgreens, and both companies experienced significantly higher sales than in September 2019.^v

According to Restaurant Brands International, the parent company of Burger King saw its sales climb 25% in the first quarter of 2021. For the three months ending March 31st, revenue rose to \$1.26 billion from \$1.23 billion the previous year.^{vi}

Conclusions

The study area sits within a built-up neighborhood that has a relatively high housing occupancy rate. Taking this into consideration, this study took a concept approach toward redevelopment, as opposed to a more mainstream method where the land and buildings have been vacant for some time.

Concept planning is making assumptions on what the future could be and how the neighborhood may shift overtime considering market forces, changing trends and population growth. More precisely, concept planning is identifying a specific set of uncertainties, different “realities” of what could develop in the future. The concepts developed by Hay Dobbs for this study are intended to help the community visualize possible scenarios and serve as a useful prelude in defining desired mix and intensities of land uses.

What are the advantages of redevelopment concept planning? There are several:

- Keeping land use economically viable is critical to stabilizing property values.
- Re-use of land adjacent to other developed land is important for preventing economic, environmental, and social decline.
- Mixed-use buildings and facilities offer the potential for character, quirkiness, and interest while serving multiple uses.
- The community may be better able to connect with its history if some aspects of it are preserved. Preservation often requires a change of land or building use.

The property inventory included in this report identifies land uses in the study area, and the maps show the proximity between them. The land uses and parcels are fragmented, and all the properties are privately owned. To attain any of the design concepts proposed in this study, several properties will be required to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of land assembly.

The concept of illustrations and maps in this report will serve as the basis of comparison for land use alternatives that residents, community leaders, property and business owners may consider. With a goal of non-displacement, the hope is that existing property owners would be able to purchase adjacent properties that are for sale and assemble the parcels needed for redevelopment. Both Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul can fuel this effort by making real estate development dollars and tools available to local property owners.

Also, by evaluating the conditions of current commercial buildings, redevelopment efforts can include programs that target grants and loans for rehabilitation and façade improvements to benefit existing business tenants, most of who are BIPOC.

Key Spending Facts, Retail Market Potential and other reports obtained from Esri provide useful information for businesses operating in the node, and for new entrepreneurs speculating business opportunities. The Esri data in this report can be utilized to attract businesses, investors and customers with analytics, reports, and maps. It identifies gaps in goods and services that illustrate the potential for additional businesses or services.

Sections of Maryland Avenue serve as fundamental public spaces on the East Side. It's not just a transportation route, but it is the connective fiber that directly impacts the social and economic vitality of our neighborhoods. The hope for the redevelopment of Maryland Avenue at Arcade will balance the needs of mobility and other street activities to achieve safe quality communal places and develop innovative strategies for streetscape and transportation improvements.

What is the longer-term outlook for Big Box Retail Space?

According to Paul Loubet, a real estate specialist with more than 20 years' experience in retail development, Big box closures are happening at an unprecedented rate. With the shrinking list of active and expanding retailers, some areas are overbuilt, and there are few retailers not represented in any given area. ^{vii}

Urban real estate is generally much more adaptable to a change in use than suburban or rural empty boxes. If Walgreens and CVS ever decide to close, mixed-use opportunities, like adding vertical components to the properties, will not only capitalize on land values but add density.

There are opportunities for creative use. Almost every property type has ended up in a closed box – retail, office, municipal offices, hospitality, mixed-use, multi-family, industrial, storage, and in some areas even legal cannabis growth and sales, has filled a box.

Urban areas have more appeal as there are more retailers interested in urban areas due to demographics and densities. Other uses like health clubs and bounce houses are also becoming more prevalent as they take up space that others won't, and they bring foot traffic. And of course, the growing appreciation and desire for experiences that the internet simply cannot provide set the stage for creative reuse.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ <http://paynephalen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Arcade-Street-Small-Area-Plan.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/safety/road-diet-stpaul.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/08/06/walgreens-store-closings-drugstore-chain-plans-close-200-stores/1937722001/>

^{iv} <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/fast-food/burger-king-parent-close-several-hundred-restaurants>

^v <https://www.globest.com/2021/10/18/pharmacy-foot-traffic-hits-pre-pandemic-levels/?slreturn=20220024135547>

^{vi} <https://www.rbi.com/English/news/news-details/2021/Restaurant-Brands-International-Inc.-Reports-Third-Quarter-2021-Results/default.aspx>

^{vii} <https://www.us.jll.com/en/views/what-is-the-future-of-big-box-retail>