

# Douglas Avenue Corridor Study

Draft March 2009



## The Corridor

Douglas Avenue is an important north-south link between Dunedin and Clearwater. The 1.26-mile long study limit stretches from Skinner Boulevard (north end) to Union Street (south end) and includes all properties located along its east and west right-of-way lines.

While a diversity of local businesses and residential uses exist along the corridor, it is noticeably different than most of the City as it contains a significant clustering of major public uses that attracts people from greater distances to events and activities.

The main attraction in the corridor is the Dunedin Stadium Toronto Blue Jay's Spring Training Baseball Facility. Located at the southeast corner of the Beltrees Street intersection, the baseball complex is an iconic community element and economic engine that has active use during the February-September time period with major league training that is augmented by the team's minor league team

affiliate's spring and summer game schedule. In this same area there is a Public Library and the Dr. William E. Hale Activity Center that supports a major collection of community uses and activities.

Another major attraction in the corridor is at the downtown Main Street intersection where Pioneer Park is located. This is a prominent location in the downtown with adjacent on-street parking that allows for public gathering events. The park includes a performance stage and open green where gatherings and events occur, including the City's Green Market.

The street infrastructure between these two major attraction areas has been improved by the City and includes on-street parking, sidewalks, palm trees and other public realm enhancements. However, the area still lacks

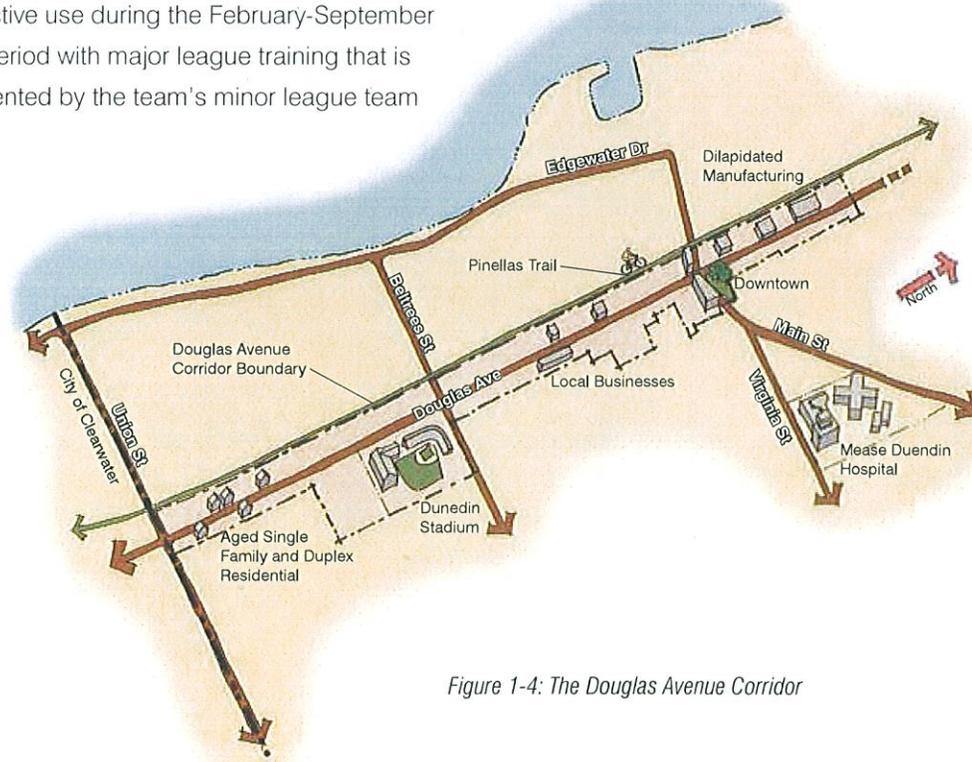


Figure 1-4: The Douglas Avenue Corridor

a unified development pattern and design character. This is in part due to the overall walking distance between these two locations. At nearly 1/2-mile, this is a negative factor in Florida's tropical environment for supporting active pedestrian use areas. Additionally, the current lack of concentrated and quality land use types in this area also limits the need for a more active pedestrian street. Both supportive land use changes and pedestrian public realm improvements are needed to strengthen the connections between these two areas.

The opportunity exists to attract businesses to the adjacent Pinellas Trail. The existing parcel sizes and pattern of development has limited the effect of this community asset. The Corridor has a reactive zoning/ land use pattern and uses suburban development standards that set back buildings from the street right-of-way lines and helps create a parking dominated streetscape. *Proactive zoning/ land use standards are needed that supports property assemblage and supports attraction of new uses.*

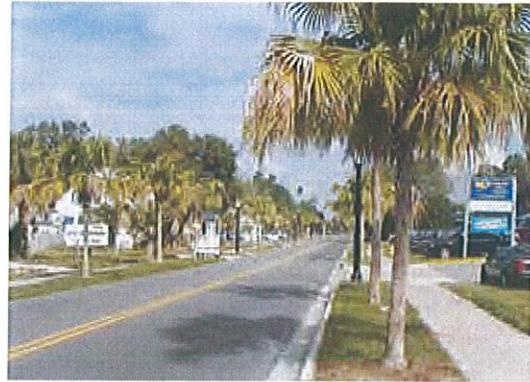


Figure 1-5: Douglas Avenue streetscape improvements

In addition, during this study it has become apparent that *Beltrees Street* is a critically important east-west link for the City between Edgewater Drive and Patricia Avenue. The local, 2-lane street provides connections to the Gulf of Mexico, Pinellas Trail, Douglas Avenue and Dunedin Stadium/Public Library/ Hale Activity Center, Dunedin Elementary School, and Patricia Avenue and former Neilson Media property. This east-west corridor needs pedestrian mobility enhancements to strengthen its linkages to Douglas Avenue.

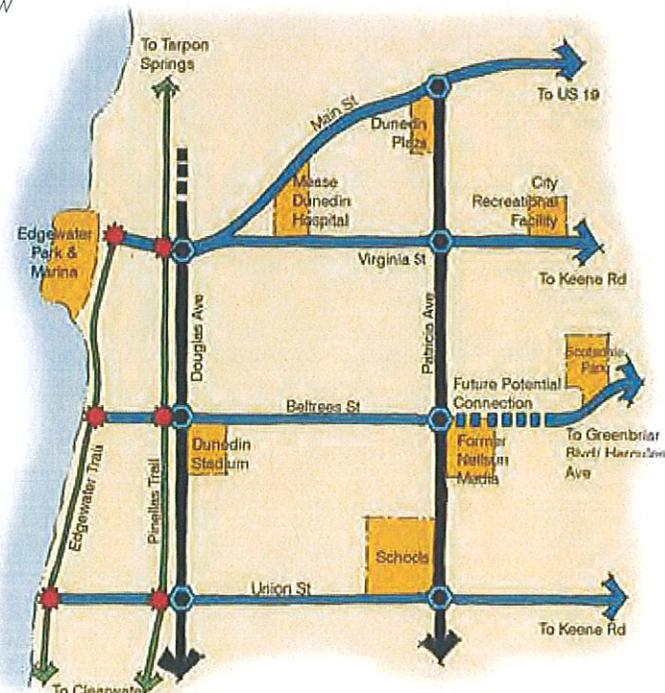
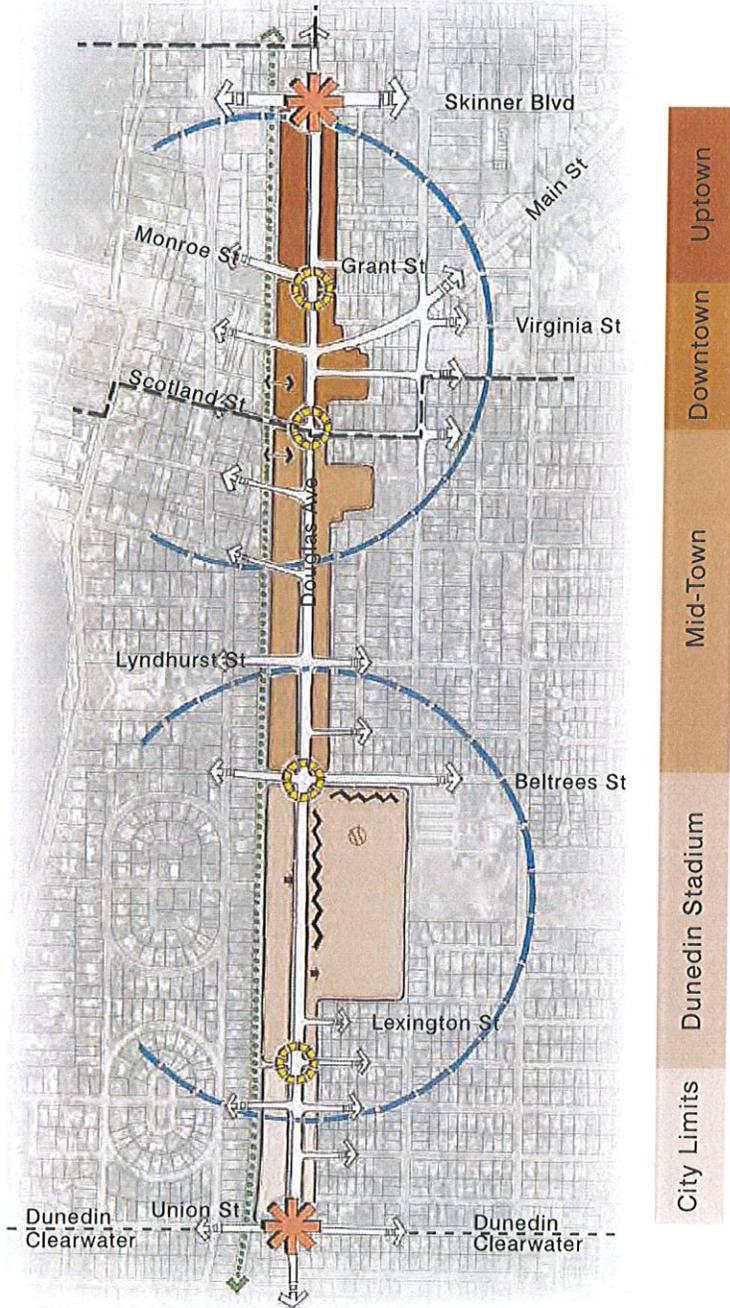


Figure 1-6: Street network and major community assets

## Sub-Area District Structure

The Douglas Avenue Corridor can be logically broken into five (5) distinct Sub-Areas which are *Uptown*, *Downtown*, *Mid-Town*, *Dunedin Stadium*, and *City Limits*. Sub-Area boundaries were consensually determined through observation of the existing scale, land use, character, and development pattern of the Corridor.

The following subsections give descriptions for each of the Sub-Areas, documenting existing conditions, issues and needs for each portion of the Corridor.



### Legend



Figure 3-3: Corridor Sub-Area Districts

**Dunedin Stadium Sub-Area District**

**District Limits.** From the signalized Beltrees Street intersection, southward to the Roanoke Street intersection (1,700 +/- linear feet).

**Character.** This is an important civic-focused community activity center with Beltrees Street providing the primary east-west connecting linkage to the sub-area. It includes the Dunedin Stadium stadium facility, the Dunedin Public Library, the City's Hale Activity Center for seniors, Military Museum and Veteran's Memorial Park, and the VFW Hall. There are also a number of small businesses, all located south of the stadium, including the Liberty Square business complex. Dunedin Stadium is a unique iconic neighborhood landmark that anchors the sub-area. Properties on the west side of Douglas Avenue also share frontage along the Pinellas Trail. Adjacent areas consist primarily of established residential neighborhoods and subdivisions.

**Observations, Issues and Challenges:**

- ① Prominent, busy intersection with Beltrees Street
- ② Poor connection between the Dunedin Stadium stadium and the intersection at Douglas Avenue and Beltrees Street
- ③ Poor relationship between certain businesses and the overall function and identity of the area
- ④ Existing small business site design and building orientation doesn't contribute to a walkable neighborhood environment
- ⑤ Weak connections to the Pinellas Trail

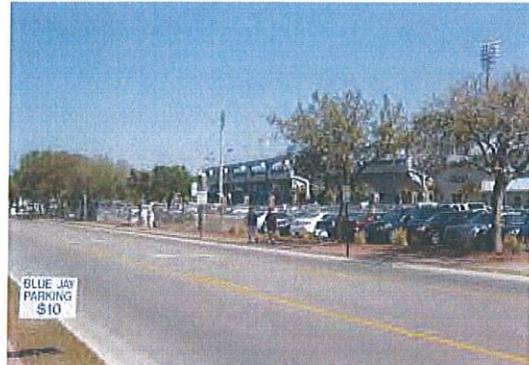


Figure 3-16: Dunedin Stadium

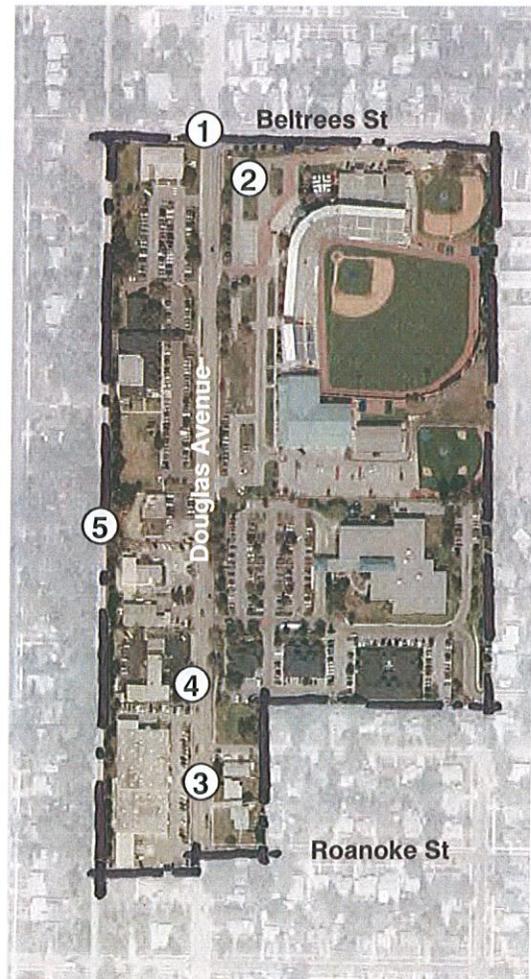


Figure 3-17: Dunedin Stadium Sub-Area Inventory

**Needs Analysis.** This collection of civic-focused uses anchored by the busy Douglas Avenue and Beltrees Street intersection form a natural community activity center. Many of the properties are publicly owned and contribute significantly to the vitality and livability of the area. In fact, they are arguably Douglas Avenue's greatest assets. The Dunedin Stadium stadium is a unique undeniable focal point to the area; however, it connects and relates poorly to the Corridor itself. Many business uses nearby also relate poorly to Douglas Avenue; many of which do not serve or compliment the established area identity and theme.

The design of existing properties, buildings and the Douglas Avenue roadway as well could be



Figure 3-18: Poor building/use-to-street relationship

improved to enhance the pedestrian experience and safety for nearby neighborhood residents that arrive by foot or bicycle, and for people walking from one establishment to another. Information gathered at public meetings from local merchants indicated that the area could also use “way-finding” signage to orient people that may be unfamiliar with many of the area amenities.

**Desirable Improvements:**

- ① Better relationship between Dunedin Stadium stadium and the Douglas Avenue and Beltrees Street intersection
- ② Unified design and development theme for this community activity center, including a mix of uses supportive of the sub-area and each other
- ③ Improved pedestrian environment and street crossings
- ④ Secondary uses in and around the stadium for activity on non-game days and in the off-season
- ⑤ “Way finding” signage to local uses and downtown
- ⑥ Stronger connections between the Corridor and the Pinellas Trail

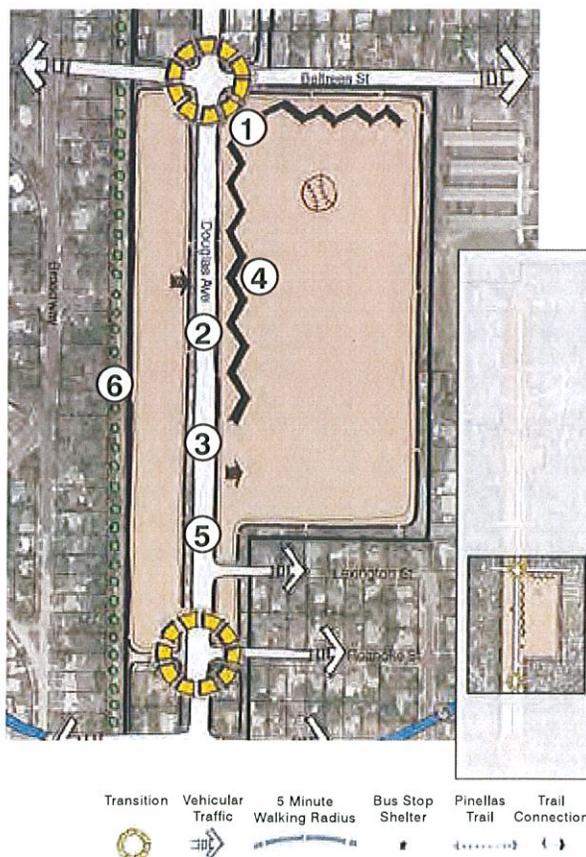


Figure 3-19: Dunedin Stadium Sub-Area diagram

**City Limits Sub-Area District**

**District Limits.** From the Roanoke Street intersection, southward to the north side of the signalized Union Street intersection (740 +/- linear feet).

**Character.** The City Limits Sub-Area is the gateway into Dunedin from Clearwater on the way to downtown. The Corridor becomes somewhat desolate and quiet in this area, south of the Dunedin Stadium Sub-Area. The east side of the Corridor is occupied by single family residential and duplex residential conversions on small, shallow depth parcels. The west side of the Corridor contains slightly larger parcel depths with single family residential and duplex residential conversions that are adjacent to the Pinellas Trail. Areas beyond the Corridor consist primarily of establish residential neighborhoods and subdivisions.

**Observations, Issues and Challenges:**

- ① Gateway into the City of Dunedin and downtown, from Clearwater
- ② Wider roadway section of Douglas Avenue with higher vehicle speeds
- ③ Somewhat desolate with almost no pedestrian movement and activity
- ④ Aged single family and duplex residential fabric that may not fit the current function of the corridor
- ⑤ Weak connections to the Pinellas Trail
- ⑥ Unfinished look to street / lack of streetscape
- ⑦ Missing/interrupted sidewalk



Figure 3-20: Small scale residential along wide roadway

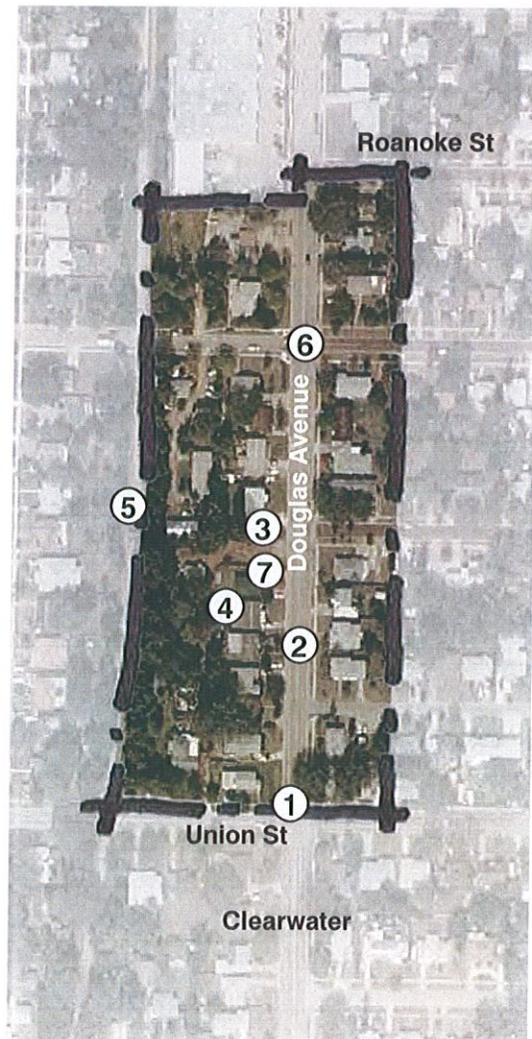


Figure 3-21: City Limits Sub-Area Inventory

**Needs Analysis.** The intersection at Union Street leading into the City is essentially the traveler's "first impression;" however, its look and feel doesn't do justice to the positive qualities that Dunedin uniquely enjoys. While this area is both directly adjacent to the Pinellas Trail and within walking distance to the Gulf of Mexico, it has experienced little reinvestment in quite some time. The area could benefit from incentives for property owners to make improvements to existing buildings as well as complete reinvestments in more modern, appropriate facilities.

A continued prevalence of residential structures would be appropriate, however, at higher densities that would be more suitable for this area of the Corridor; and that would provide incentives for property owners to reinvest. Case-by-case consideration of use changes



Figure 3-22: City Limits Sub-Area: Gateway into Dunedin

from residential to office and professional services should also be considered. A public investment in streetscape, to give the area a softer neighborhood look and feel, and provide a distinctive entry feature at Union Street, would prove beneficial both visually and in terms of changing the perception of this area to residents and investors.

**Desirable Improvements:**

- ① Improved, finished streetscape and entry feature at Union Street into Dunedin
- ② Incentives for physical and aesthetic improvement, and redevelopment to encourage property owners and new investors to reinvest in the area
- ③ Increased residential densities more appropriate for the area including potential allowance of limited office and professional service uses
- ④ Stronger connections between the Corridor and the Pinellas Trail
- ⑤ Fill in missing sidewalk segments along west side of Douglas Avenue
- ⑥ Improve street lighting and overall pedestrian safety along Douglas Avenue

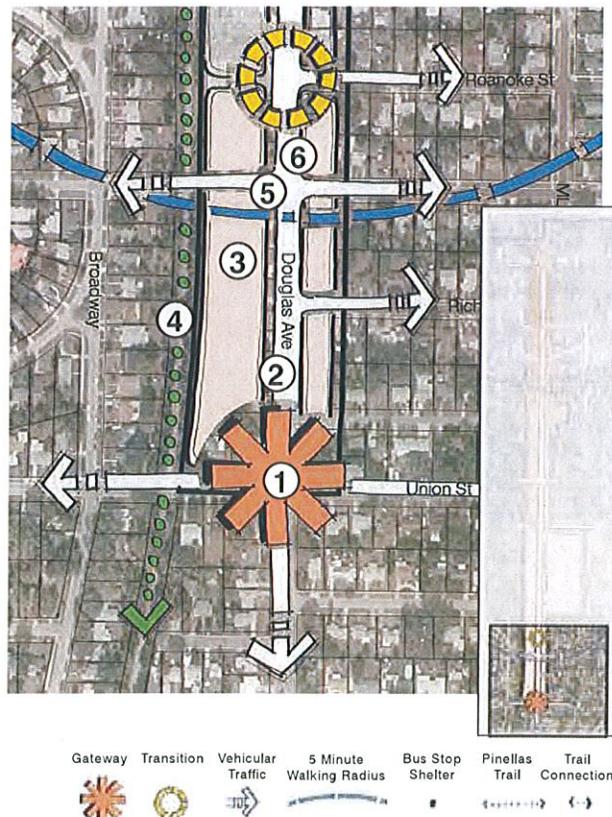


Figure 3-23: City Limits Sub-Area diagram

## East-West Connections

Consider potential enhancements to east-west connecting streets that improve pedestrian mobility and access to important community assets.

There are four primary east-west connecting corridors that intersect Douglas Avenue, linking it to nearby community assets as well as other important thoroughfares. They include Union Street, Beltrees Street, Virginia Street and Main Street. These corridors have a range of both existing and potential multi-modal functions to serve a small range of transportation options.

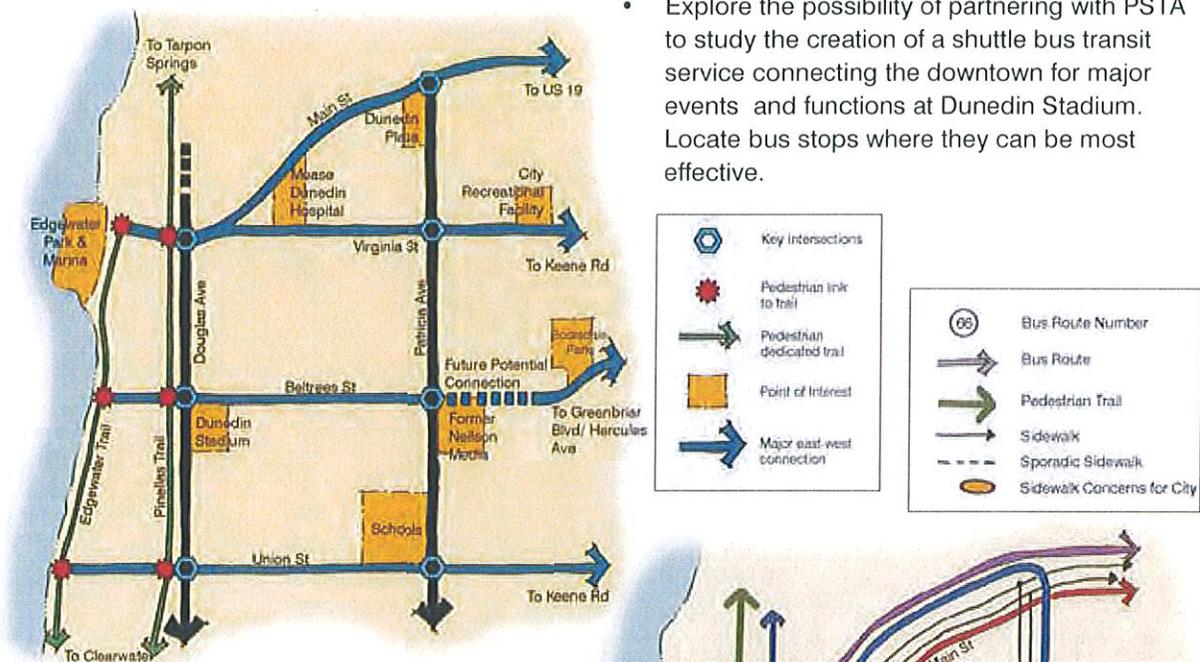


Figure 4-16: Street network and major assets

### Recommendations:

- Union Street, Beltrees Street, and Virginia Street should be reviewed more closely to assess the need for pedestrian mobility enhancements to strengthen linkages to Douglas Avenue, increasing pedestrian safety and overall mobility. This is especially critical for Beltrees Street, as it connects numerous important community assets and intersects near the center of Douglas Avenue.

- Install decorative pedestrian-scaled “way finding” signage at key pedestrian intersections to direct people to community assets such as the Pinellas Trail and Dunedin Stadium.
- Complete the missing sidewalk link along the south side of Beltrees Street between the Pinellas Trail and the shoreline.
- Study the potential for a future multi-modal connection from the current terminus of Beltrees Street at Patricia Avenue, eastward to connect with Brown Avenue and eventually reconnect with Beltrees Street.
- Explore the possibility of partnering with PSTA to study the creation of a shuttle bus transit service connecting the downtown for major events and functions at Dunedin Stadium. Locate bus stops where they can be most effective.

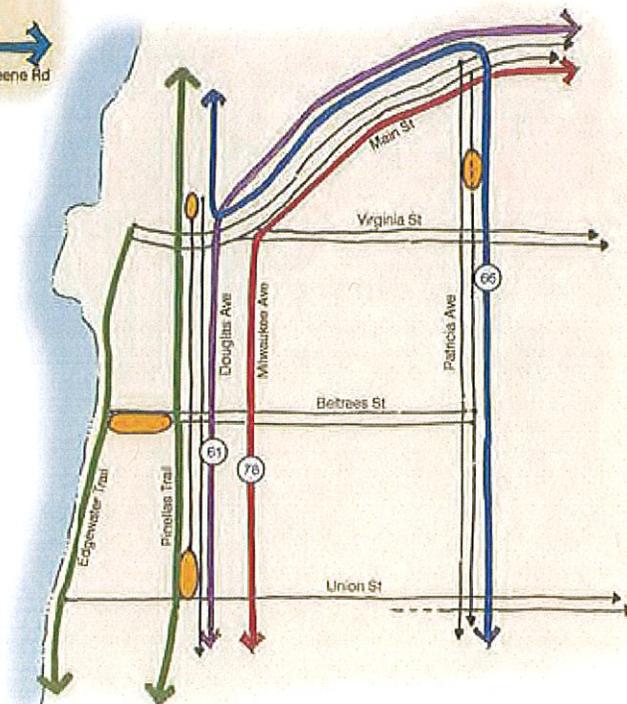


Figure 4-17: Mobility options

### City Limits Sub-Area

- Evaluate the costs and benefits of adjusting the roadway cross section to include two through lanes and two parking lanes. Extension of the enhanced streetscape cross section would give Douglas Avenue the quality of a local neighborhood thoroughfare. The on-street parking could allow residential densities to increase without increasing the number of driveways to private parking areas along Douglas Avenue.
- Add landscape planting strips between the sidewalk and the roadway, including improved street and pedestrian lighting.
- Create a gateway feature at the Union Street intersection. Consider a design competition.

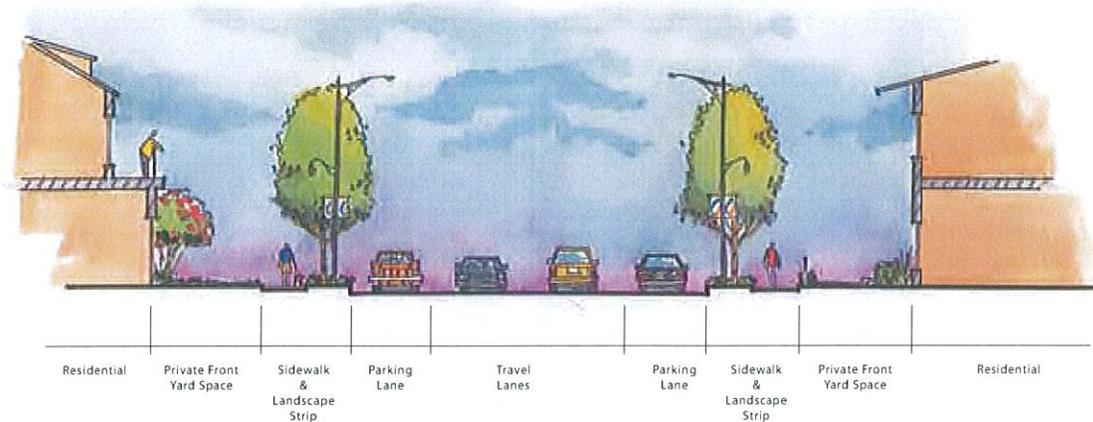


Figure 4-24: City Limits Sub-Area/Roadway Cross Section

### Pinellas Trail

- Encourage additional direct physical connection between the Pinellas Trail and Douglas Avenue and trail-serving uses, where appropriate. (See Uptown Cross Section, Figure 4-21)
- Create a garden-like scenic view shed along the east side of the Pinellas Trail adjoining properties that includes outdoor cafes, resting spots, and landscape buffers. (See Uptown Cross Section, Figure 4-21)

### Corridor-wide

Additional recommendations requiring Capital Improvement Plan programming include:

- Improve pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections through the use of colorized, textured and narrowed crosswalks; and use pedestrian activated mid-block crossings with countdown timers at key locations to increase pedestrian safety.
- Improve linkages to community assets through improvements to east-west street corridors (Virginia, Beltrees, Union) to increase pedestrian safety and overall mobility within the City.
- Strategically place decorative “way finding” signage throughout the corridor to reinforce the identity of business districts.

- Destination stores and restaurants
- Kinder Gentler bus zone
- No drug store, fast food, or gas station.
- Improve landscape maintenance
- Include as a pocket park (NW corner of Beltrees and Douglas)

#### **Dunedin Stadium - Douglas**

- Enhance Existing Pond (on west side of) Dunedin Stadium.
- What if they (Blue Jays) leave?
- (rename to) Dunedin Stadium
- Year round use for Knology
- Public Park
- Organic Garden
- Parking
- Neighborhood Grocery, etc.
- Pelican Bay Industrial -too heavy commercial
- Parking / open space
- Smaller Street lights on Beltrees
- Passion vines on chain link fence
- Public restrooms (at Knology property)
- Green market (on Knology property)
- Signs on trail (pointing towards ball park)
- Campus
- ATM

#### **City Limits - Douglas**

- Complete Streetscape to Union
- Lighting, Decorative Features, LED
- Entryway Signage to City
- Sidewalks needed for safety
- Expand Beautification (streetscape, etc.)
- Flooding at Roanoke and Douglas
- Keep with historic look and feel (neighborhood to the east of Douglas near city limit)
- Bring Beautification to union!
- Keep brick streets (neighborhood to east of Douglas near city limit)
- Make low commercial (between Lexington and Roanoke) to lessen the impact of industrial across street
- (Pelican Bay Industrial)
- residential retrofit
- streetscape
- 3 lane (Douglas) to Union

#### **Corridor-Wide - Douglas**

- Electronic Trolley - Connect Main Street to Parking at Knology
- Bike Lanes
- Encourage Green Redevelopment
- Missing Corner Grocery
- Reduce Setbacks
- Formalize and Connect to Edgewater Linear Park
- Artist Colony Along Trail
- Retain Historic Character - Cottages - and extend through redevelopment guidelines

## Implementation

The following table includes recommendations for the Douglas Avenue Corridor organized first by the five framework principles, followed by location (i.e. corridor-wide and sub-area districts). Its organization will allow the City of Dunedin to implement the Corridor recommendations with accountability at the department level.

Implementing this plan will require a focused effort over the next 0-5 years and close cooperation between the City of Dunedin, the

county, property owners, stakeholders, and private sector developers. The table is based upon a prioritization scale of 1-3 that will create momentum and visible results, encouraging further investment. The City has the flexibility to re-prioritize recommendations and the anticipated schedule as necessary. Cost information is not included at this time and will require a closer, subsequent evaluation of the individual recommendations at various levels; however, it is recommended that the anticipated cost of each of these items is estimated and added to the table.

### Land Use and Zoning

Land use and development guidance should identify uses appropriate for the corridor, and direct the future design and placement of buildings and structures. Additional guidance should be given to other site planning features such as pedestrian mobility, shared access and parking.

Framework Principle: Land Use & Zoning					
Area	Recommendation	Priority	Schedule	Responsibility	Cost
Corridor-wide	Designate the study limits of the Douglas Avenue corridor as a Planned Redevelopment Mixed Use category on the countywide Future Land Use map.	1	6-9 months	Planning	
	Create five distinct Sub-Area zoning overlay districts that allow for redevelopment change over time. Permitted uses for each district are identified in the sub-area guideline sheets found in the Appendix.	1	6-9 months	Planning	
City Limits	Create specific development regulations and standards for this sub-area that supports its character as a transition between residential and professional service uses.	1	6-9 months	Planning	
Dunedin Stadium	Create specific development regulations and standards for this sub-area that supports its character as a citywide attractor with supportive retail, restaurant, professional services and limited residential uses.	1	6-9 months	Planning	
Mid-Town	Create specific development regulations and standards for this sub-area that supports its character as a transition between residential, retail and professional service uses.	1	6-9 months	Planning	

## Form-Based Regulations

Provide "place making" traditional village design recommendations that can support future form-based land development regulations.

Place making traditional design standards and development guidelines will provide the product-driven regulatory mechanism to assure that future redevelopment along Douglas Avenue takes a traditional village form that compliments downtown Dunedin and is respectful of the adjacent neighborhoods. The ability to provide multiple uses on a single parcel, placement of buildings near the street right-of-way lines or build-to lines rather than setbacks, vehicle parking at rear of the lots

and on-street, and dedicated pedestrian public realm areas are part of the guidelines displayed here in textual and graphic form that should shape future form-based land development regulations.

- Direct future redevelopment changes through a set of form-based design standards that permit current uses to transition naturally over time to the new pattern of development as market forces demand. Current uses should be allowed to remain until major renovation (e.g. more than 50% appraised value) occurs; at which time the new development standards would be required.



Figure 4-3: Existing conditions



Figure 4-4: Redevelopment changes

