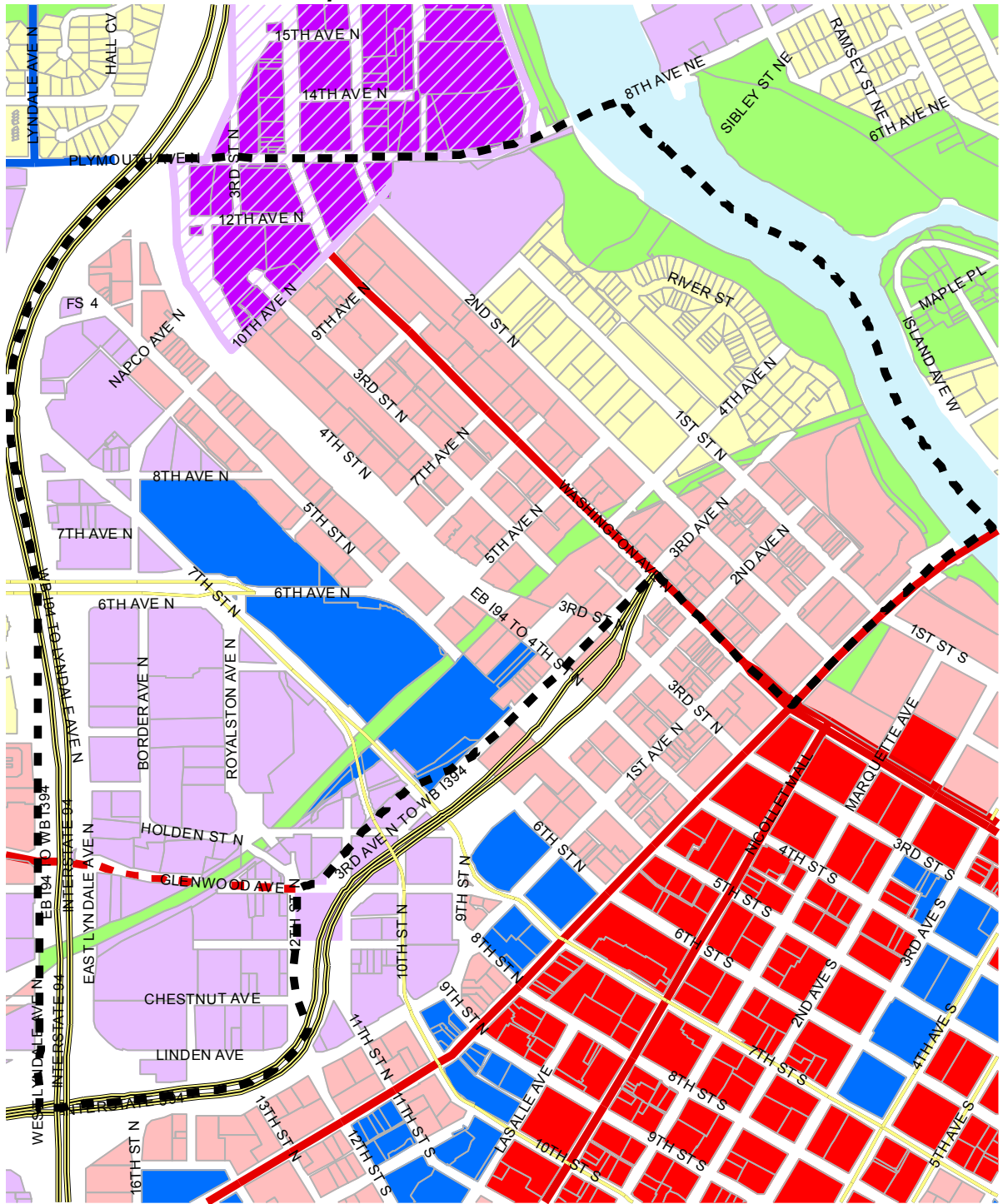













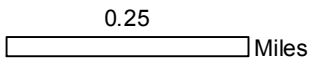


North Loop Small Area Plan Map A.1 Future Land Use



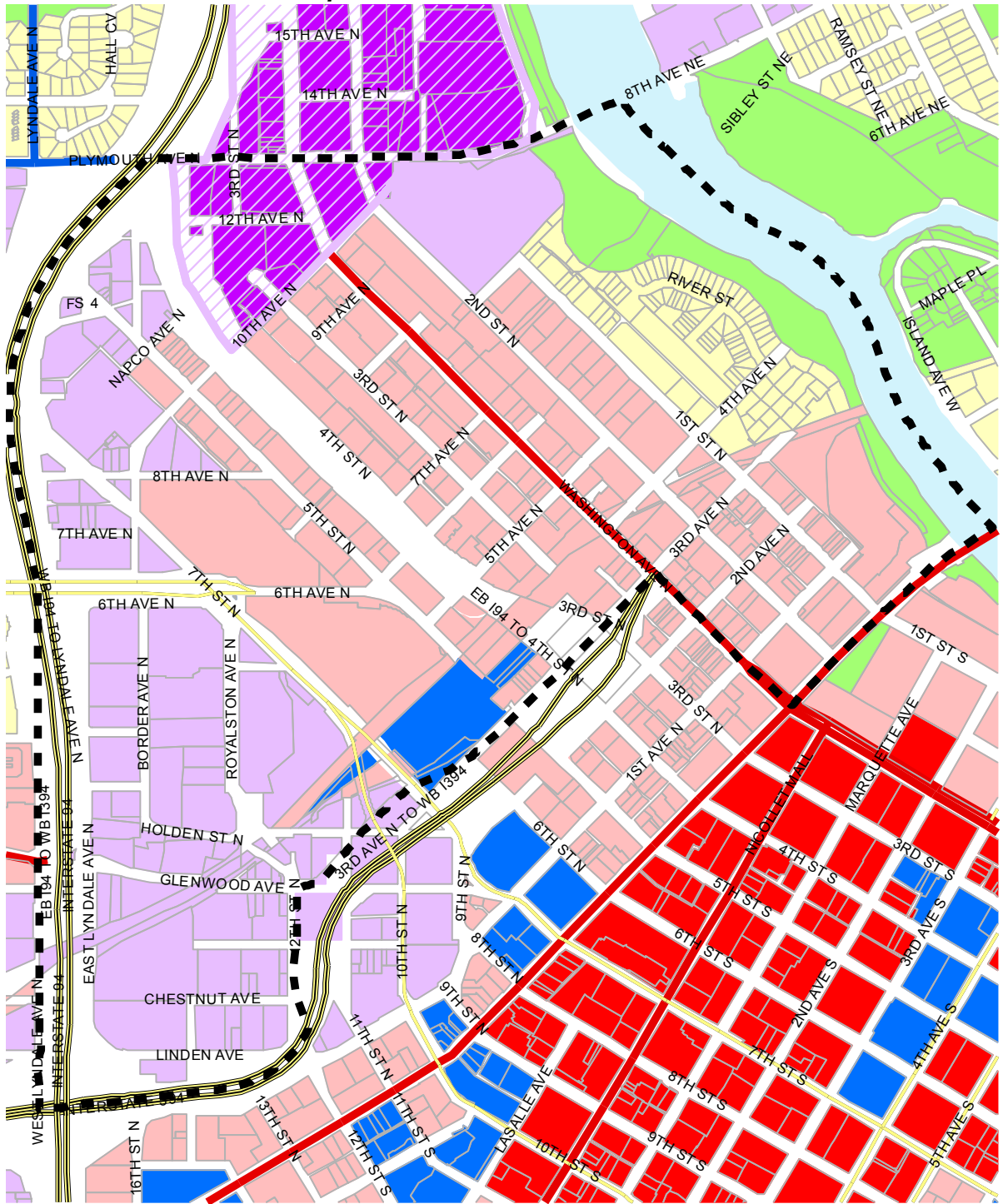
-  Study Area
-  New Commercial Corridor
-  Mixed Use
-  Transitional Industrial
-  Parcels
-  Industrial Employment District
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Urban Neighborhood
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Community Corridor

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The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

Map A.2 Future Land Use



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Study Area | Community Corridor | Mixed Use | Transitional Industrial |
| Parcels | Industrial Employment District | Commercial | Industrial |
| Commercial Corridor | Urban Neighborhood | Public and Institutional | Parks and Open Space |

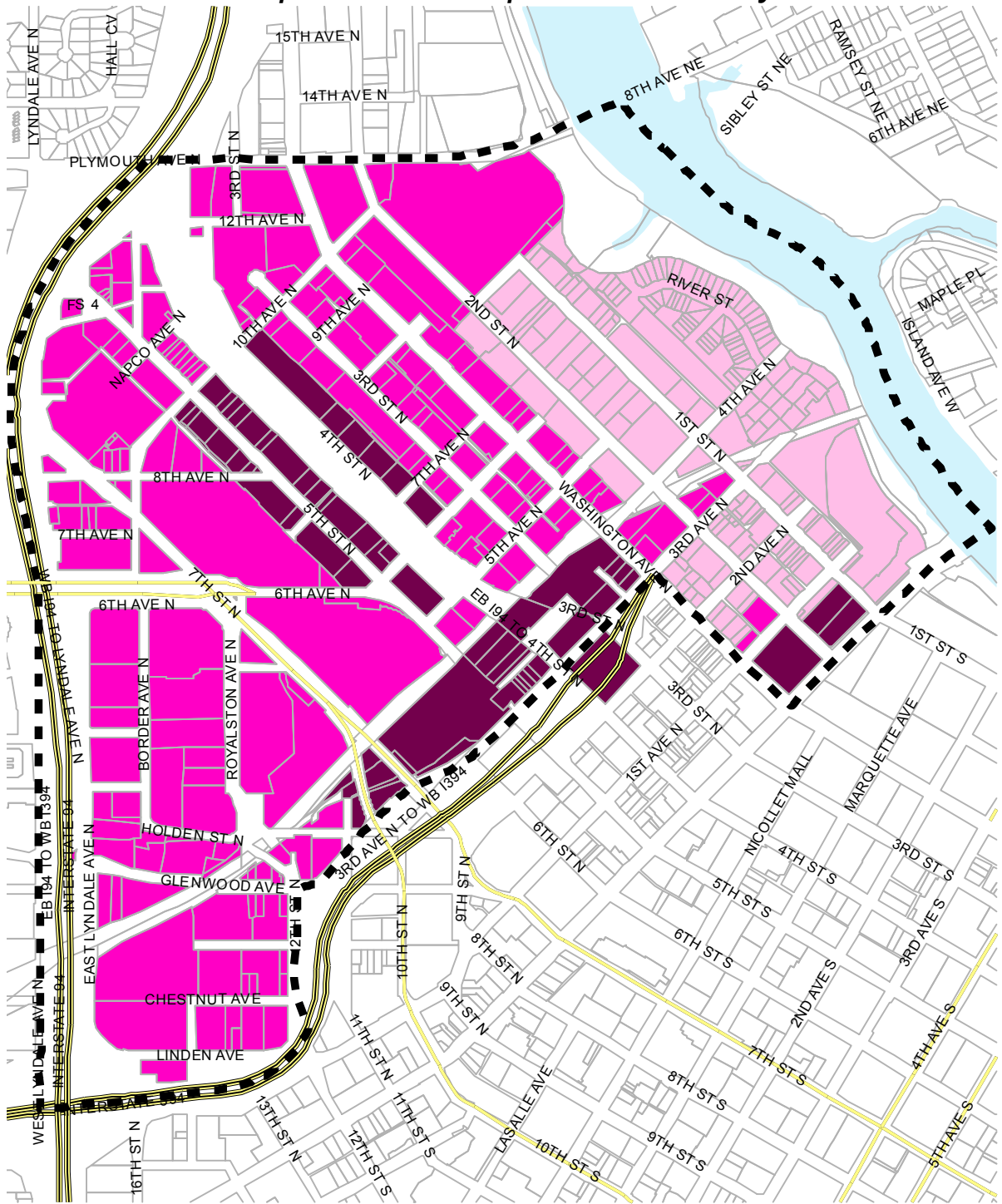
City of Minneapolis
CPED Planning Division

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North Loop Small Area Plan

Map A.3 Development Intensity



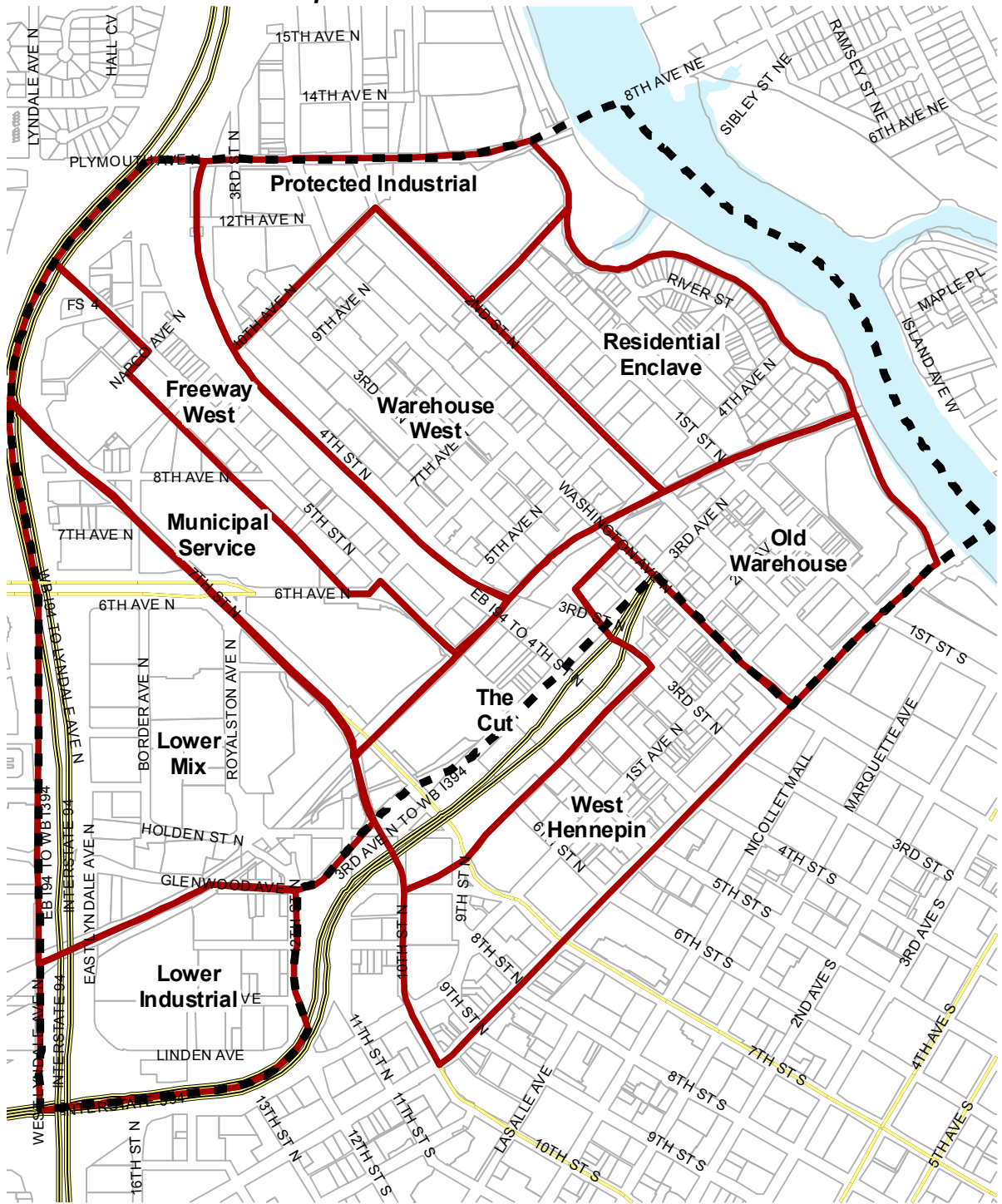
-  Study Area
-  District A
-  Parcels
-  District B
-  District C

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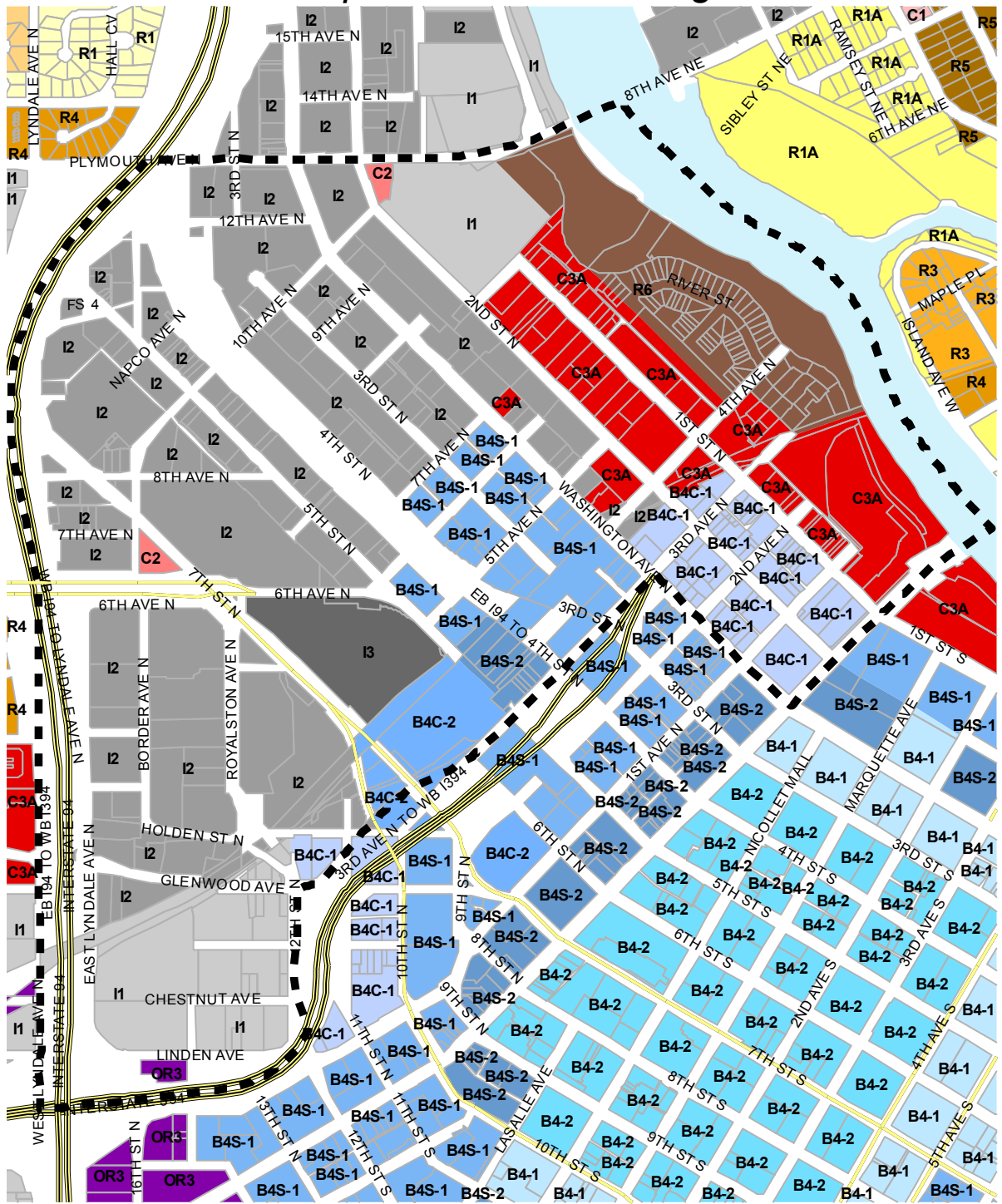
North Loop Small Area Plan Map A.4 Land Use Districts



-  Study Area
-  Parcels
-  Land Use Districts

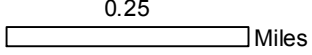


North Loop Small Area Plan Map A.5 Current Zoning



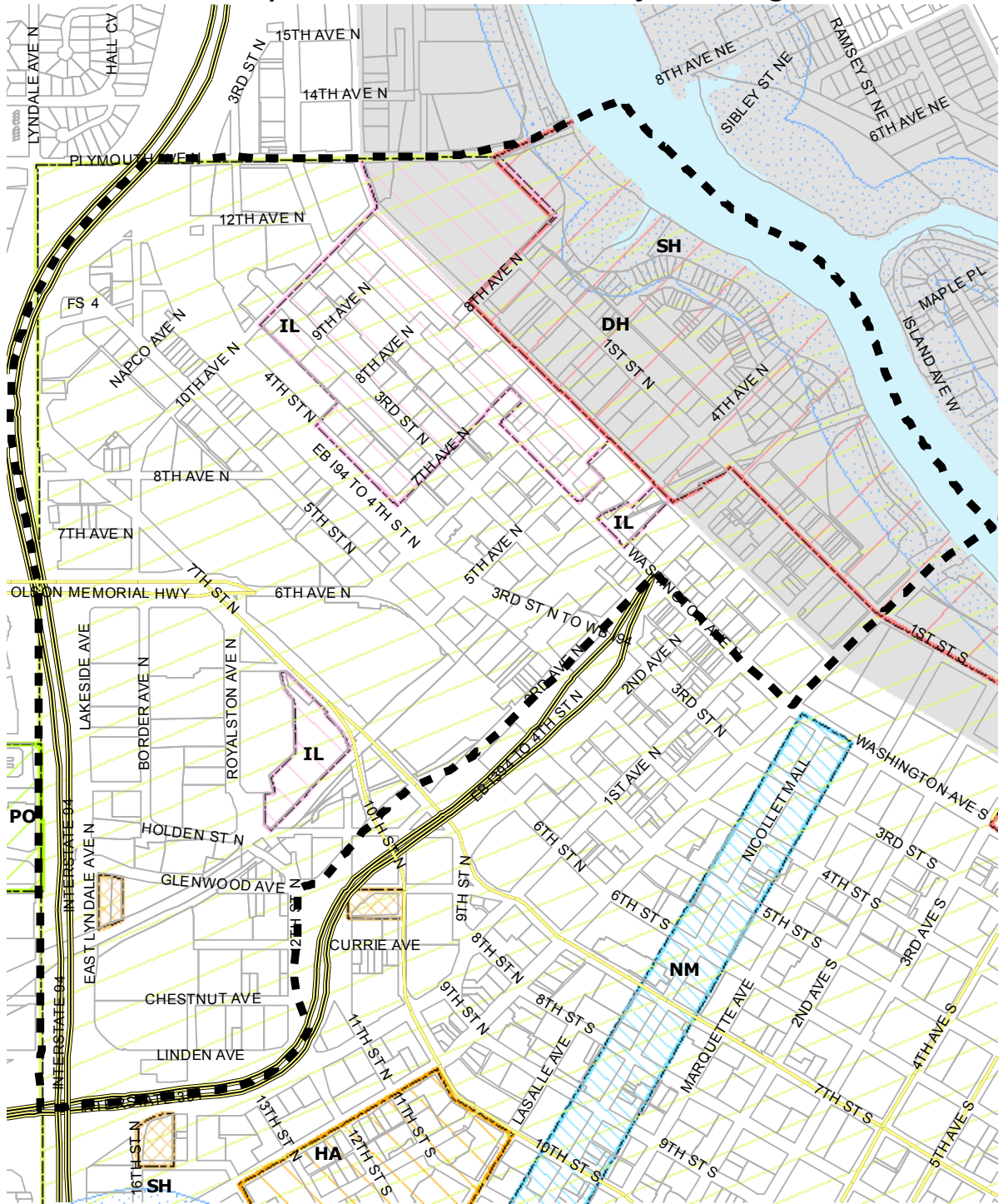
	Study Area		B4-2		B4S-1		C2		C4		I3		OR3		R2		R4		
	Parcels		B4C-1		B4S-2		C3A		I1		OR1		R1		R1A		R2B		R5
	B4-1		B4C-2		C1		C3S		I2		OR2		R1A		R3		R6		

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North Loop Small Area Plan

Map A.6 Current Overlay Zoning



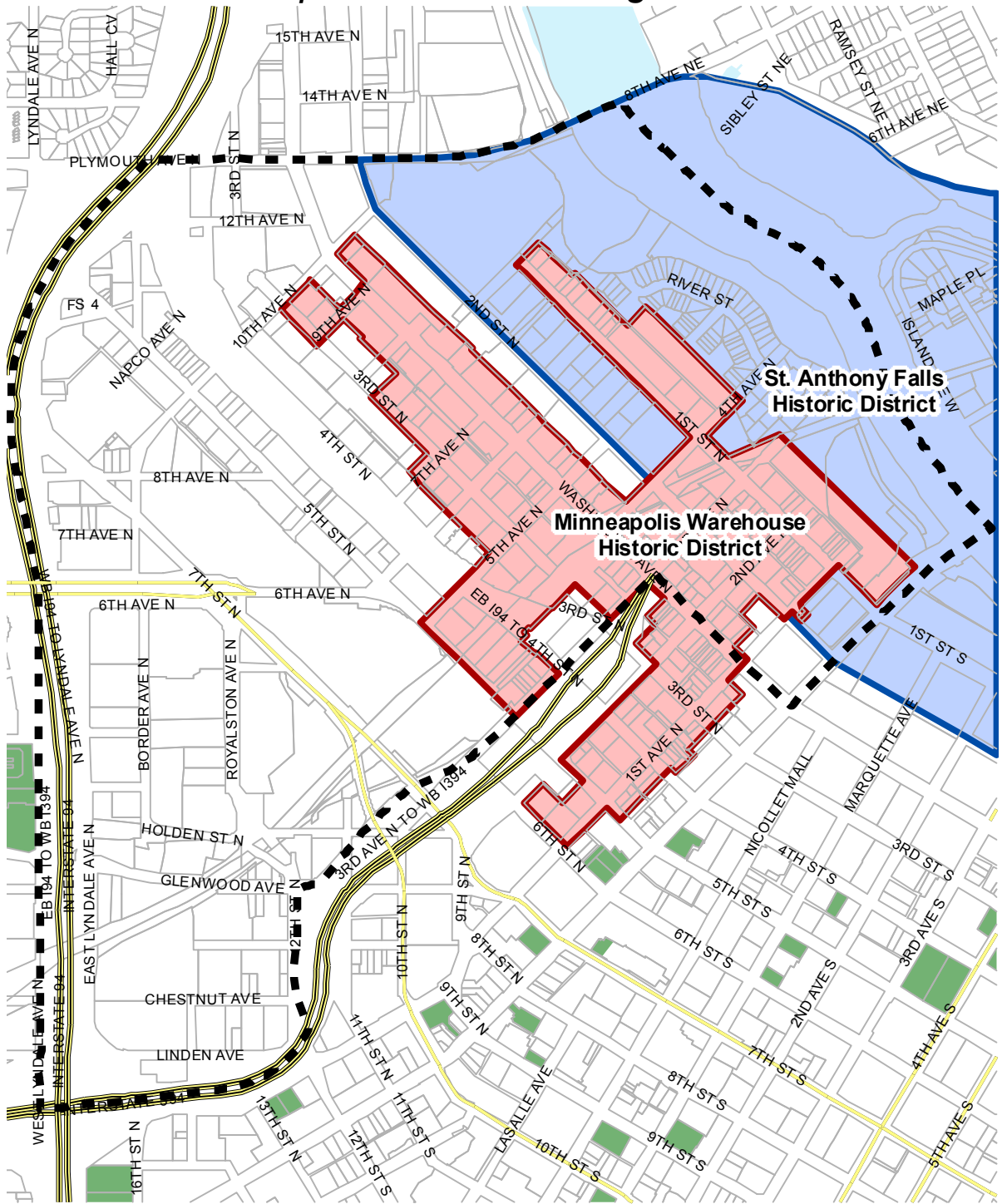
- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Study Area | Mississippi River | Downtown Parking | Pedestrian Oriented |
| Parcels | Industrial Living | Downtown Housing | Shoreland |
| Nicollet Mall | Harmon Area | Downtown Height | |

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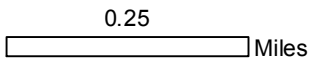


North Loop Small Area Plan Map A.7 Historic Designation

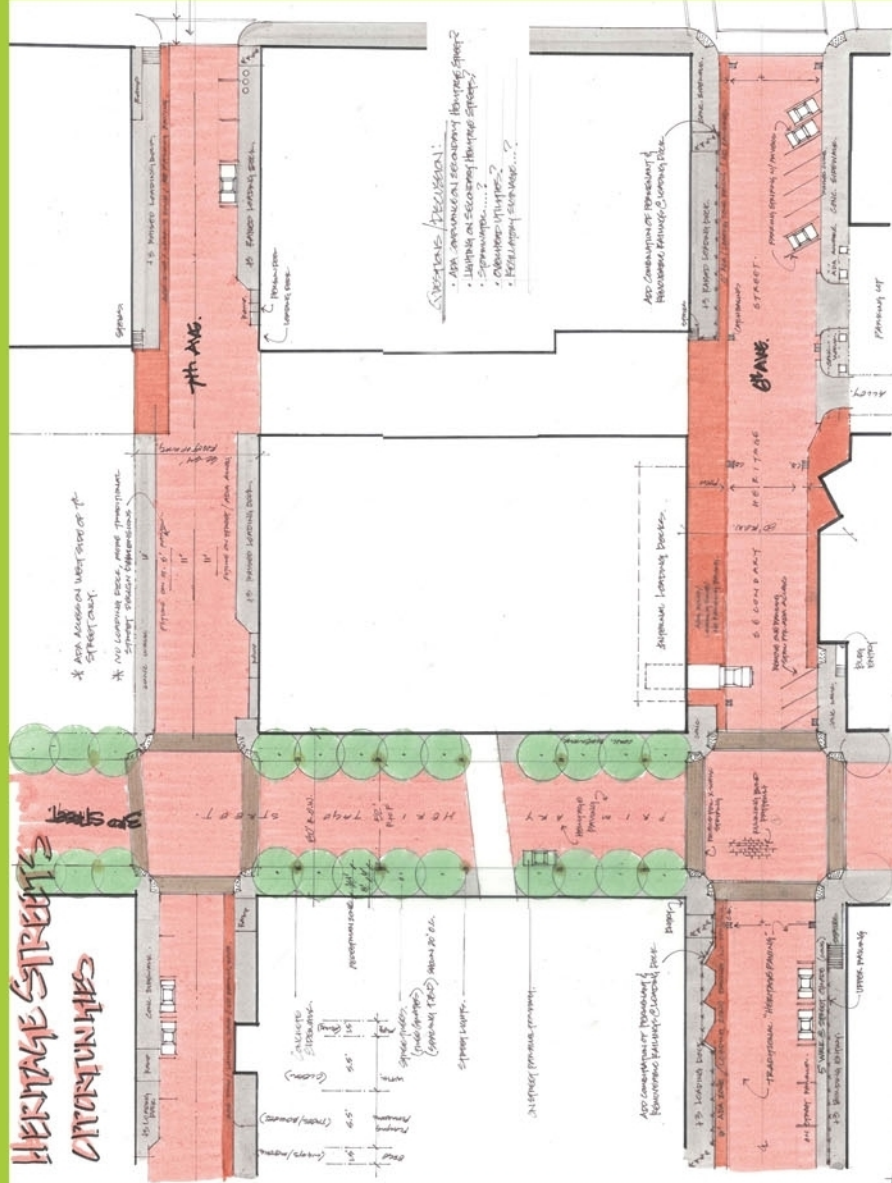


-  Study Area
-  Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District
-  Parcels
-  St. Anthony Falls Historic District
-  Locally Designated Landmarks

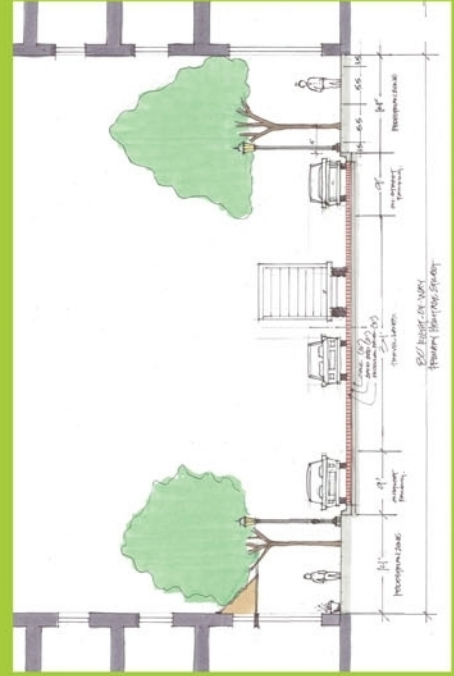
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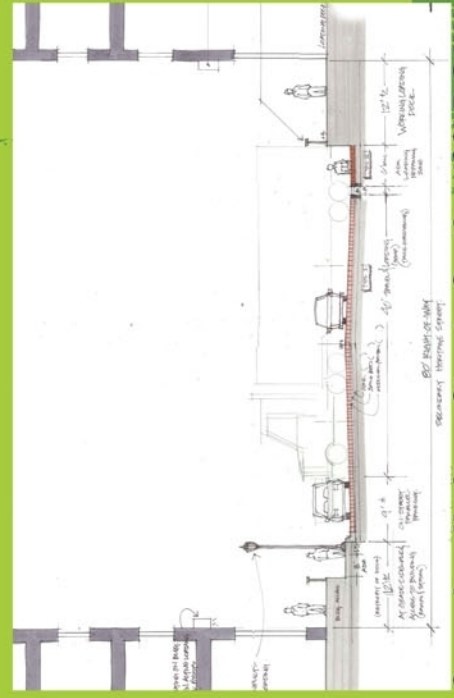
HERITAGE STREETS CITY PLAN



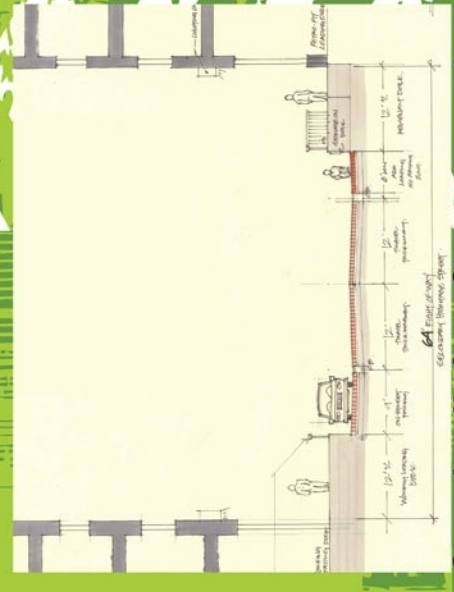
Heritage Streets Concept - Plan Diagram



Primary Heritage Street - Section (80' R.O.W.)



Secondary Heritage Street - Section (80' R.O.W.)



Secondary Heritage Street - Section (64' R.O.W.)

Heritage Streets CONCEPTS

City of Minneapolis
North Loop Neighborhood
Master plan

Neighborhood features

North Loop Neighborhood Master plan

City of Minneapolis

- Legend:**
- Bottineau Transitway (Route Alternatives)
 - Southwest Transitway
 - Cedar Lake Trail Expansion
 - North Loop Neighborhood
 - North Loop Warehouse Local Historic District
 - Growth Center (Proposed)
 - Activity Center
 - River Front Park
 - Commercial Corridor
 - Destination
 - Primary Connectivity Barrier
 - Secondary Connectivity Barrier
 - Primary Gateway
 - Secondary Gateway
 - Proposed Development



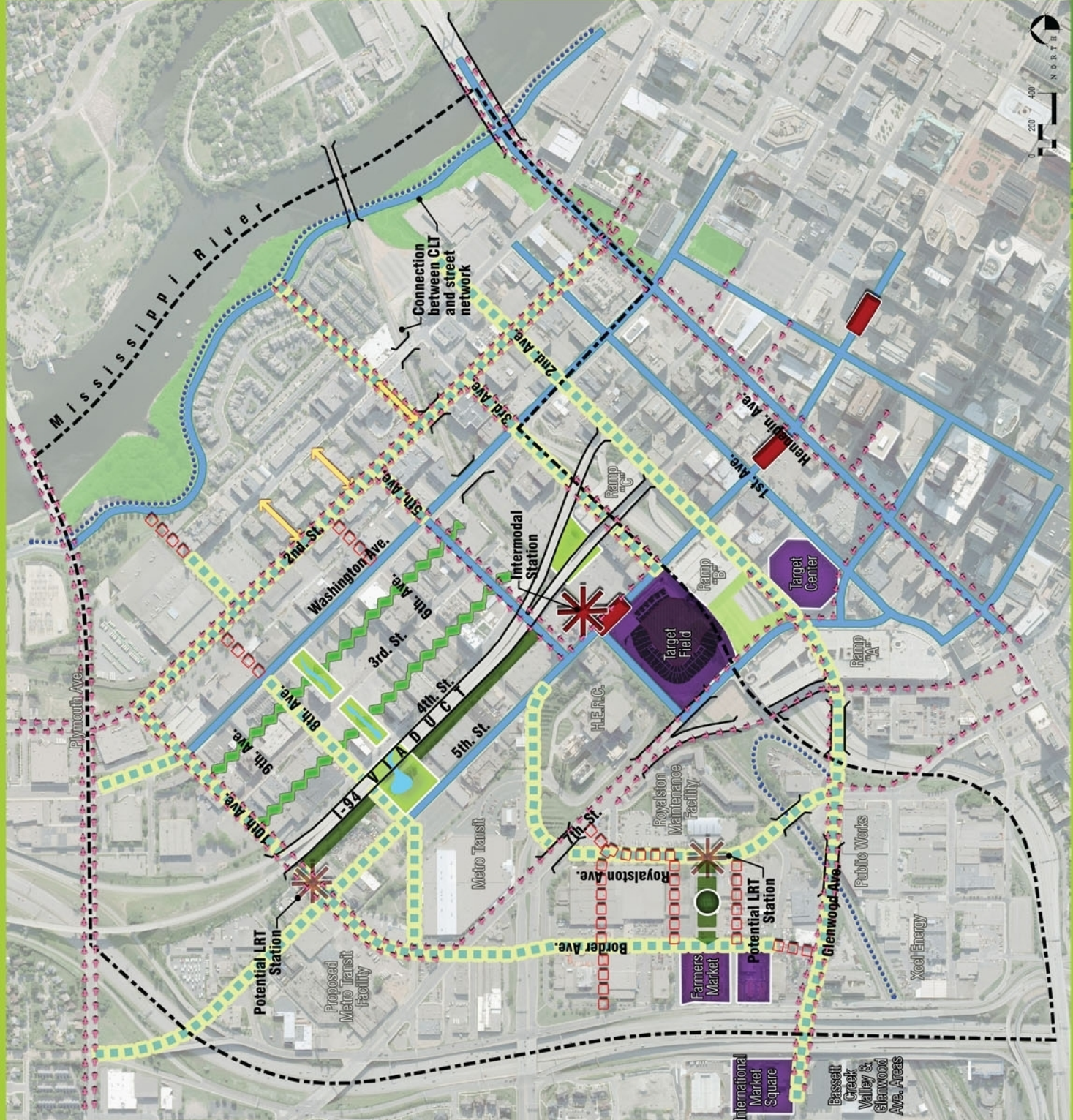
Parks and Open Space

North Loop Neighborhood Master Plan

City of Minneapolis

Legend:

- North Loop Neighborhood Boundary
- Existing Parks and Open Space
- Proposed Open Space
- Potential Open Space Opportunity
- "Wide Alley" Open Space Zone
- Bike Trail
- Light Rail Station
- Identified Primary Pedestrian Movement Corridors
- Proposed Additional Primary Pedestrian Movement Corridors
- New Roadway Connection Needed
- Destination
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Pedestrian Shortcut

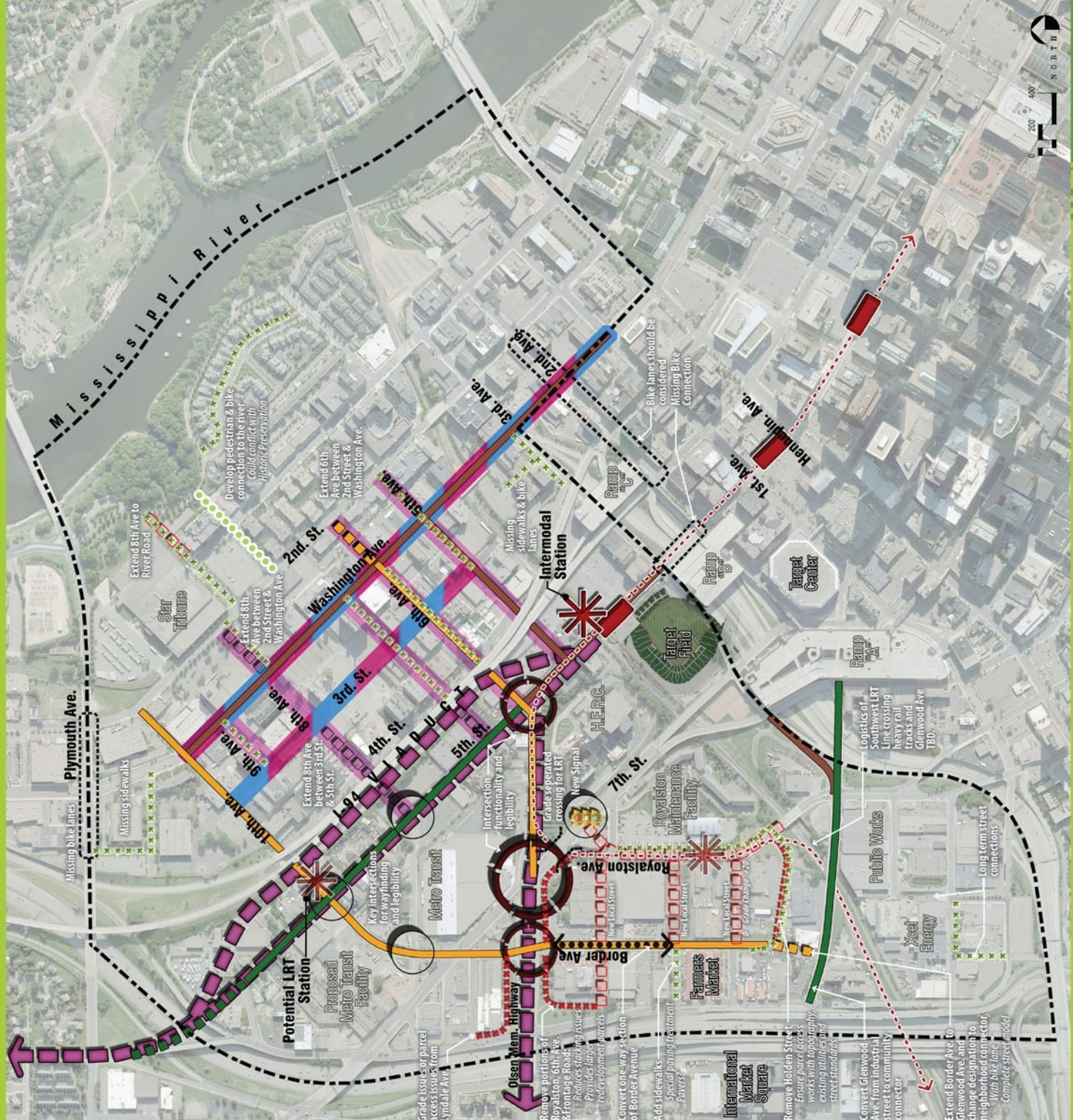


Transportation & connectivity recommendations

City of Minneapolis
North Loop Neighborhood Master Plan

Legend:

- North Loop Neighborhood Boundary
- Activity Area Street
- Community Connector
- Neighborhood Connector
- Primary Heritage Street Overlay
- Secondary Heritage Street Overlay
- Proposed New Streets
- Proposed Street Closures
- Key Intersections for Pedestrian-Connectivity Improvements
- Potential Light Rail Line
- Existing LRT Station
- Missing Sidewalk connection
- Bottleneck Transitway (Route Alternatives)
- Connection conflict
- Key Intersection for Wayfinding and Legibility
- Missing Bike Connection



Transportation: Existing & Planned Systems

Legend:

- Bottineau Transitway (Route Alternatives)
- Southwest Transitway
- North Loop Neighborhood Boundary
- Activity Area Street
- Community Connector
- Commuter Street
- Industrial Street
- Neighborhood Connector
- Parkway Street
- Signed Bike Route
- Bike Trail
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Funded Bike Lane
- Funded Bike Trail
- Planned Bikeway Not Funded
- Existing Pedestrian Shortcut
- Identified Sidewalk Gap
- New Pedestrian Connection Needs







Outline of Participation Process

- Winter 2009:
 - City staff presented planning material and received input within the setting of other organizations (e.g. Downtown 2010 Partners, North Loop Neighborhood Association).
 - A market consultant for the planning process reached out to developers, property owners, business owners, and other public agencies for perspective and feedback on market issues.
 - A group of capstone students at the Humphrey Institute conducting stakeholder interviews about issues relating to the Lower North Loop.

- Spring 2009:
 - City staff participated in a two-day workshop hosted by 2010 Partners on infrastructure placemaking issues in the neighborhood – it will act as input into the planning process.
 - City staff presented material on the planning process in two meetings for Heritage Park residents, developers, and property owners.
 - A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) created guiding principles for the plan as well as responded to an interim market analysis.
 - City staff received feedback on the Guiding Principles from NLNA
 - CAC and TAC members participated in a neighborhood walk-through to identify key infrastructure issues.

- Summer 2009:
 - City staff met with key property owners in the Lower North Loop to test the market results.
 - Over the course of monthly meetings, the CAC and TAC worked with City staff to analyze existing conditions, create a framework for the recommendations, and draft plan recommendations.
 - City staff attended both NLNA and 2010 Partners meetings to update on plan progress and receive input on interim work.
 - A large community meeting was held to receive broader feedback on the plan recommendations. Special emphasis was placed on mail advertising to all North Loop property owners.

- Fall/Winter 2009:
 - The CAC met after the community meeting to analyze the community response to plan recommendations.
 - City staff attended both NLNA and 2010 Partners meetings to update on plan progress opportunities to provide feedback on the document.
 - CAC and TAC members provided comments on a draft plan and City staff made the needed revisions.
 - The draft plan began a 45-day public review period in early December where additional feedback was received and incorporated into the draft plan in preparation for the approval process.

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE
Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday, April 22, 2009
City of Minneapolis Public Service Center
3:00 – 5:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members present: Paul Adelman, Karen Rosar, Erin Fitzgerald, Joanne Kaufman, Mary de Laittre, Bob Schmitz, Bruce Rubin, Adrienne Hannert, Ryan Kronzer

Committee members absent: Cara Letofsky, Tracy Berglund

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: Dick Paik

Introductions

Beth Elliott introduced city staff that will be involved in the process and invited members present at the meeting to introduce themselves and share their interest and experience with the North Loop area. The role of the committee was then discussed in the context of the planning process.

Overview of the Planning Process and Purpose

Staff explained the anatomy of a small area plan by briefly describing the elements that are common in a final planning document and how they interact with city operations. Also discussed were the specifics of how this planning process will be managed. The description of items and issues included:

- Future land use map and description.
- Transportation issues and opportunities – especially as they relate to connectivity of all modes of travel.
- How the study area and policy document will interact with overarching city policy and adjacent small area plans.
- How the community engagement process will be represented in the plan.
- The plan will be adopted by the city to implement the vision described therein.
- How plans often guide public infrastructure investments.
- A technical team has been assembled and includes representatives from a number of government agencies including Metro Transit, Hennepin County, and other city departments.
- City staff will be leading the process, and consultants have/will be hired to tackle certain technical aspects of the process, including but not limited to design issues, market conditions, and transportation issues.

Mr. Rubin requested information on the location of the Downtown East North Loop Plan (DTENLP). Bob noted the importance that sightlines played in the DTENLP, and also noted that uniquely identifying different areas of the neighborhood will be important to the planning process.

A question was raised regarding the themes under which the planning process would operate. Staff indicated that Guiding Principles usually set the framework for future policy discussions that come up during a planning process. It was decided that Guiding Principles would be drafted and discussed at the next CAC meeting.

Preliminary Market Analysis Findings

Market consultant Dick Paik presented preliminary findings of his market analysis that focused on an area of the North Loop that is southwest of 7th Street North. The slideshow from the presentation can be found [here](#). The study acknowledged a few key items including but not limited to market reliance on downtown office. Dick noted that this portion of the North Loop is actually closer to the downtown office core than the Metrodome. However, due to connectivity issues both real and perceived, this benefit goes untapped. Trends on population growth and housing were also shared in relationship to the North Loop market. The impact of the multi-modal station, possible LRT stops, and Target Field was considered in the analysis and discussion. The resulting conclusion of the interim study results show that residential rental or mid-price ownership units may have a shot in this location, a potential entertainment niche is something to consider, and office/industrial users will likely come incrementally. Specific improvements to the infrastructure that would improve the local market were also discussed. In the subsequent group discussion, connectivity and a market theme were proposed as the main areas of interest for the plan. Mr. Paik will create recommendations for how to guide decisions on land use and infrastructure in the planning process based on market realities.

Next Steps

Future meeting dates were then discussed; the next meeting with an optional tour of key locations in the neighborhood. The next steering committee meeting was tentatively scheduled for late June.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00pm

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE
Community Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Wednesday, June 24, 2009
City of Minneapolis Public Service Center
3:00 – 5:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members present: Karen Rosar, Erin Fitzgerald, Mary de Laittre, Bob Schmitz, Bruce Rubin, Adrienne Hannert, Ryan Kronzer

Committee members absent: Cara Letofsky, Tracy Berglund, Paul Adelman

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: None

Guiding Principles

Joe Bernard went through the new list of guiding principles. Input was incorporated from the North Loop Neighborhood Association's Planning & Zoning Committee, and then CAC members provided input and additional revisions were made. Joe emphasized that the principles should be written more broadly than policies, but that the plan will eventually get down to that level of detail. He also explained that there is likely a need for an additional principle that speaks to the distinctiveness of certain parts of the neighborhood. The Guiding Principles presented were:

- **Transportation and Infrastructure**
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle accessibility and connections are important aspects of livability for the residents, employees, and visitors of the North Loop.
 - Integration of transportation and land use planning that encourages and supports movement by public transit, bicycle, and walking as viable alternatives to the private automobile make the North Loop a desirable place to be.
 - Enhanced pedestrian safety, function, and aesthetic character in public rights-of-way encourage walking, particularly on roads connecting to major destinations.
 - The North Loop Neighborhood is and will be host to transit lines coming from all parts of the region which provides tremendous opportunity to place new emphasis on the movement of all modes of travel to and through the neighborhood.
- **Urban Design**
 - Neighborhoods of choice such as the North Loop enjoy a high level of neighborliness through mixed-use development and design standards that acknowledge the interconnectedness of land uses.
 - The North Loop benefits from a wide range of public and private sector stakeholders that work toward the common goal of creating a unique urban identity for the neighborhood.

- Historic character of the private and public realm is highly valued by residents, employees, and visitors of the North Loop Neighborhood.
- Improving safety conditions makes the North Loop a place that people want to live in and visitors want to revisit to experience all that the neighborhood has to offer.
- **Land Use**
 - The North Loop Neighborhood is a community of choice that provides a harmonious mix of housing options for a variety of incomes.
 - The unique uses and built form of Downtown neighborhoods require a specialized regulatory environment that supports the historic character of the area while acknowledging the need for adaptive reuse and context sensitive design in redevelopment.
 - Environmental sustainability is a key feature in the future of the North Loop Neighborhood.
 - Preservation and enhancement of parks and open space is a priority throughout the North Loop Neighborhood.
 - Community gathering spaces within the North Loop Neighborhood connect residents, employees, and visitors in a convenient and publicly-accessible manner.
 - Seamlessly integrated living wage employment and work force housing opportunities are a priority for the North Loop Neighborhood.

Public Participation Plan

Beth Elliott explained the purpose of public participation thus far – coordination with City partners and community members to make sure all the concurrent North Loop plans and studies respond well to each other, and also to engage residents, property owners, and business owners who may not yet be represented in any official way. The committee discussed that the best way to reach property owners, particularly those in the Lower North Loop, may be to have individual meetings versus one larger meeting, so staff will begin that work in July. The group also agreed that a September community meeting should have extensive outreach to adjacent neighborhoods in addition to the North Loop stakeholders.

CAC members also expressed interest in staff visiting the Harrison Neighborhood because of the direct connections and major Bassett Creek Valley redevelopment plans being proposed.

Past/Concurrent Planning Efforts

Beth Elliott went through some key components of past and concurrent planning efforts. The comp plan land use designations may be important to build from and they are:

- Commercial Corridors: Washington, Hennepin, 1st Ave N
- Activity Center: Warehouse District
- Growth Center: Downtown (as a whole)
- Industrial Employment District: North Washington
- Transit Station Area: Multimodal Station

A brief description of the *Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan*, which this planning process is amending, included its four main priorities:

- Articulate the market potential inherent in underdeveloped districts of Downtown.
- Promote vertical mixed-use “complete communities.”
- Capitalize on rail transit and encourage a less auto-dependent downtown.
- Encourage the design and delivery of high quality public spaces and streetscapes.

The *Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan* emphasized Glenwood Avenue as a future commercial spine just west of the plan’s western boundary at I-94, so that could be something the plan considers continuing on into Downtown. Plans done recently by the 2010 Partners discuss using urban design to make connections, improving the pedestrian experience near the ballpark and transit station, and creating a transit plaza on 5th Street. Staff has mentioned some highlights of multimodal station plans done by Hennepin County that include:

- Joint development at station
- Eliminate viaducts
- Daylight Bassett Creek for green network
- Connection through long blocks to river
- Year-round Farmers Market
- More pedestrian-oriented Glenwood

Market Analysis

Dick Paik completed the market analysis for the Lower North Loop and the CAC had an opportunity to review it prior to the meeting. The group discussed some of the interesting points, including the fact that the Lower North Loop is the closest Downtown ring neighborhood to the central point of the office core – the issue is that it is physically and psychologically challenging to get there. Dick also emphasized that the catalytic opportunities for a private developer would be a Southwest Corridor transit station on Royalston Avenue and a Lunds in the proposed Alatus development just south of the study area, instead of the formerly-assumed ballpark and multimodal station because they are so inaccessible from the Lower North Loop. He believes that there will be a market for low-cost (but market-rate) housing, ongoing industrial tenancies, and small-scale renovations. The Lower North Loop is not likely to see new office or industrial development due to the cost of the land, demolition, and potential site clean-up.

CAC members agreed that the Farmers Market is currently the life of the Lower North Loop. In order to create an identify for this area, it may be important to capitalize on this asset (which was an idea from the capstone report).

Recommendation Continuum

Joe Bernard proposed a way of thinking for the plan recommendations that fit along a continuum of: **Functionality**, **Managed Growth**, and **Visionary**. By creating options under each component of the recommendation continuum, it offers the plan more flexibility to prepare for various contingencies of implementation. The **Functionality** category is important for implementing physical changes to help the neighborhood function better for people who currently live, work, and visit there, and also does not assume private sector interest in land use changes. Under a **Managed Growth** scenario, the recommendations will assume market demand for moderate land use changes as well as an introduction of new transit lines. For the **Visionary** recommendations, they will occur if there are catalytic land use changes or

improvements, drastic improvements in infrastructure connectivity, and a complete altering of neighborhood perception.

Committee members agreed that this strategy seemed to fit this process and the neighborhood very well.

Consultant Work – infrastructure design challenges

Beth Elliott informed the committee that the City is in the process of hiring the Hoisington Koegler Group to do some strategic thinking of some infrastructure design dilemmas. Some elements of the scope will include:

- An evaluation of the neighborhood within the context of Access Minneapolis
 - Are the street types accurate?
 - Possible inclusion of an historic street type
- Reviewing the broader infrastructure context of the Lower North Loop
- Creating illustrations of a possible non-viaduct corridor

Transportation and Infrastructure Recommendations

Joe Bernard went through the beginnings of possible recommendations related to improving the transportation infrastructure. Some specific places in the neighborhood to think of ways to improve **Functionality** are the two major intersections of Olson at 10th Ave N and 7th St N. Those two intersections are challenging for all modes of transportation but particularly for pedestrians – it is difficult to know where to cross and make it across the street in a timely way. Converting the full length of Border Ave to a two-way street could improve circulation but it makes for a traffic problem at the intersection with Olson because northbound cars on Border would run into cars coming around the corner from Royalston Ave. Another problem area is the southerly part of the Lower North Loop south of Glenwood. This area lacks a sufficient grid and has major circulation challenges due to one-ways and dead-ends. One more possible functional improvement could be adding street infrastructure for a small section of missing 6th Ave N between 2nd St and the alley in the direction of Washington. This addition would allow 6th Ave N to extend all the way from 2nd St south through the North Loop and connect to Olson. Overall the CAC agreed that it is important to make both strategic functional connections within the neighborhood as well as to adjacent areas. Beth Elliott explained that **Functionality** recommendations should have lower price tags with maximum benefit. CAC members agreed with the problem areas but added some suggestions:

- Fill in the sidewalk gaps on 11th and 12th Streets, tying better to the office core.
- Better utilize 5th St through the core for improved pedestrian connections from the Metrodome to Target Field. Beth Elliott asked members to take a look at the *Downtown East/North Loop Plan* to see if this issue is adequately addressed.
- Improve connections to Heritage Park.

In a **Managing Growth** scenario, there may be possibilities to add more streets through the large block between Border Ave and Royalston Ave, but this will likely only be accomplished if those sites are redeveloped by the private sector. If new infrastructure is identified in a small area plan, it is easier for the City to work with a developer on improvements as part of a larger project – a Minneapolis Official Map could be one way to make these new streets more formal. Adding to these suggestions and **Functionality** recommendations to improve Border Ave and the

intersections on Olson, Royalston Ave could be eliminated from 5th Ave N as it curves over to 10th Ave N parallel to Olson. If this was done, it would make a two-way Border Ave more feasible because northbound traffic would not run into cars coming from Royalston. It would also be necessary to direct traffic from Royalston Ave onto 5th Ave N and create a new 90 degree intersection with 7th St. This would hopefully alleviate congestion and circulation confusion on Olson. In order to make the changes on Border most effective, staff recommends completing its connection to Glenwood Ave – this small connection once existed and may be even more necessary if the Southwest LRT comes up from the rail corridor in that location and necessitates a dead-end at Holden/Border before Royalston. Another idea that had come up previously by some community members was to take a look at the feasibility of converting Lyndale Ave N to a two-way street in the North Loop, but Joe Bernard explained that technical experts do not view it as feasible because of the on- and off-ramps and the southerly section of Lyndale on the west side of I-94. CAC members understood and agreed it should be taken off the table for conversion but that there are still possibilities to make traffic-calming improvements. And finally, staff recommended new access points north-south through the Upper North Loop and to the river. Connections could be made to make 8th Ave N more direct from 5th St through to the river. This would be more likely as a pedestrian or bike connection. CAC members think 8th Ave N could be a good connection into Heritage Park as a major pedestrian route, but this would also require a bridge over I-94. Mary de Laitre also suggested that the random triangles of land in the neighborhood could be used for gateway opportunities or street roundabouts.

Joe Bernard explained some of the ideas for **Visionary** improvements. Again adding to a major circulation system change, a possible option could be to complete the north-south connection of 10th Ave N through a two-way Border Ave all the way to Linden Ave. This would require connecting through the Xcel Energy property which seems less feasible to implement. An alternative route south of Glenwood Ave could add onto a small section of 15th St N to complete the connection to Glenwood. Improvements to the viaduct are also some visionary options. Former plans have recommended its elimination at the end of the useful life, but current technical engineers think it would not be feasible. The benefit of the viaduct is that it takes commuter traffic off the local system and dumps it directly into parking ramps. If the viaduct was eliminated, there would still need to be a bridge structure over the rail corridor along 5th Ave N as well as a ramping system to the freeway at 10th Ave N. Instead the committee offered ideas for working with the viaduct rather than seeing it as a complete negative. Bob Schmitz mentioned there are possibilities to build below and connect above, and that we could have modular buildings below that still offer MnDOT the opportunity to do maintenance on the viaduct structure when needed. Karen Rosar suggested that the Farmers Market may be a good addition in the area underneath.

Beth Elliott reiterated that HKGi will be looking at the viaduct as well as other **Visionary** opportunities – they will present at the August meeting. Staff will have more detailed recommendations for discussion during the next meeting. In July, the main focus will be land use and design recommendations that build on the transportation infrastructure opportunities.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 22nd from 3-5pm

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00pm

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE
Community Advisory Committee Meeting #3

Wednesday, July 22, 2009
City of Minneapolis Public Service Center
3:00 – 5:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members present: Karen Rosar, Mary de Laittre, Bruce Rubin, Bob Schmitz, Adrienne Hannert, Ryan Kronzer

Committee members absent: Paul Adelman, Erin Fitzgerald, Cara Letofsky, Tracy Berglund

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: None

Before the meeting started, there was a brief discussion about the merger of the [local and national warehouse historic districts](#) in the neighborhood. Several attendees requested information on where the work can be found online, and how they can comment on the plan. An update will be sent to CAC members along with the meeting summary.

Update on Transportation Recommendations

Staff shared that most of the input received from various stakeholders show that everyone is on the same page. A draft chapter that focuses on reconnecting the neighborhood is forthcoming late this week or early next week.

Comment: Encourage staff to think about design as a comprehensive issue across all chapters of the plan.

Update on HKGi Work

HKGi has started working on identifying street cross sections that can be applied to the neighborhood that match street types in the [Access Minneapolis](#) document. They are looking for streets that are not appropriately labeled in the plan, or streets that may need a change based on the work being done in the North Loop Plan. The consultant is also working to identify what a “Heritage Street” might be, what it will look like, and how it will operate. Thus far 6th Street is the example that might be used. Staff has directed the consultants to create a bird’s eye view of the lower north loop from a visionary perspective. We also have asked them to visualize general greening of the neighborhood. Another area of focus for the consultants will be the viaducts – looking at what the potential will be to enhance the space under, through, and on the viaducts.

Question: Will someone be presenting this information?

Staff: They will be presenting rough ideas at the next CAC meeting before solidifying their ideas for a late September community meeting.

Comment: 2010 Partners has a meeting scheduled September 15.

Staff: This may be an opportunity to preview the work. We can also go to the North Loop P & Z meeting at request.

Land Use Recommendations

Staff took general land use guidance from the existing plan and applied what was appropriate to districts in the rest of the neighborhood. For instance, concentration of Class A office space should continue in the downtown business core. Staff and CAC members then discussed the draft land use guidance statements as they applied to the whole neighborhood and the [draft development districts](#).

Comment: Staff should clarify what is meant by “continuum of housing choices.”

Comment: Consider the design of transit projects so that they are not done to the detriment of other modes of transportation – it should be a system.

Question: Is the city becoming less strict on number of parking spaces for uses?

Staff: Although parking requirements in the downtown zoning districts (part of which cover the North Loop neighborhood) have been lower than other parts of the city for some time, the entire parking chapter was rewritten recently to further lower those parking requirements.

West Hennepin:

This area is not in the neighborhood – it is simply in the plan for reference.

Warehouse West:

It is an existing development district in the [Downtown East North Loop Master Plan](#). It has been extended to 10th Ave N for this plan.

Freeway West:

This is also an original district in the existing plan. Based on feedback received to date, staff proposes to keep language about reestablishing the street grid, but to remove language about dismantling viaducts.

Question: Is the [Bottineau Transitway](#) still recommended to be routed along 5th St?

Staff: It is still one of the possible routing options, there are a lot of complications, but it is still being considered.

Comment: 5th Street does have a pedestrian scale that feels neighborhood friendly.

Municipal Service:

Staff is proposing to remove language in the original plan about retail around the HERC facility. Major redevelopment is not likely in this area short of additional public facilities and co-location of services.

Comment: We should think about making public utilities, for instance batteries that serve solar arrays, more of a showcase for the public.

Comment: Consider alternative/modular housing for some of the transient population in the neighborhood to further the sustainability goal.

Staff: Through our zoning and housing regulations the City tends to encourage more permanent structures.

Question: Why was the border placed where it was on the north end?

Staff: Ownership of property related to the planned Metro Transit expansion.

The Cut:

There are currently no new recommendations in this section.

Comment: It might be nice to emphasize pedestrian enhancements in this area.

Staff: This issue will be covered in another section of the plan.

Old Warehouse:

There is still potential for large scale redevelopment along Hennepin. Development should enhance and maintain the historic character. Street-level retail is encouraged along Washington and Hennepin.

Comment: A spectacular place for retail – if kept at a human scale.

Comment: Some development is at a suburban scale – there is a disparate group of buildings in this area. Minneapolis doesn't have a window shopping street.

Comment: The blocks bound by Washington, 1st Ave, 3rd Ave, and 1st St. could be an incredible window shopping retail district. Much like what has been done at Hennepin and Central across the river.

Residential Enclave:

It is primarily a residential area that has limited opportunities for new development – retail should be limited to service uses.

Protected Industrial:

The industrial land use plan designates protected industrial areas throughout the City. One of these areas is in the northern portion of the neighborhood – staff proposes to add the Star Tribune site to this district.

Comment: Residential seems more appropriate for this site.

Comment: Design should be of most importance – we don't want to end up with box warehouse buildings.

Comment: The connection to the river should be emphasized regardless of the future land use.

Comment: The warehouse west section might be more appropriate for the Star Tribune site.

Staff: The discussion on the Star Tribune will continue beyond this group.

Lower Mix:

We want to see medium intensity development, more intense than the current uses. Improvements should be made to the Farmer's Market to accommodate year round operations. The siting of an LRT station on the Southwest Transitway route is important for this area. Glenwood and 12th should have a commercial concentration. There should be an emphasis on green jobs and industry in this area.

Comment: Social responsibility and interconnectivity as it relates to housing, jobs, the economy, and the environment should be emphasized, and the plan should help to sell this idea.

Lower Industrial:

Primary land use will remain industrial, minimal change is expected in this area.

Design Direction

This part of the agenda was postponed to the August meeting.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 19, from 3:00pm – 5:00pm, Public Service Center Room 110

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00pm

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE
Community Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Wednesday, August 19, 2009
City of Minneapolis Public Service Center
3:00 – 5:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members present: Karen Rosar, Adrienne Hannert, Ryan Kronzer, Erin Fitzgerald

Committee members absent: Paul Adelman, Mary de Laittre, Bob Schmitz, Bruce Rubin

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: Jeff Miller and Bryan Harjes from HKGi

Development Guidelines

Guidelines for private/public development are an important tool to complement any future land use guidance. Staff is working on the direction for general and private development (site-based) while HKGi has been tasked with analyzing the public realm and connectivity issues in the neighborhood.

The main impetus for the Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan was the introduction of light-rail transit in Downtown along the 5th Street corridor. That plan is essentially a large transit station area plan with particular focus at the Downtown East and Multimodal station locations.

This update to the plan further emphasizes the need to:

- Articulate the market potential inherent in underdeveloped districts of Downtown.
- Promote vertical mixed-use “complete communities.”
- Capitalize on rail transit and encourage a less auto-dependent Downtown.
- Encourage the design and delivery of high quality public spaces and streetscapes.

Broad policy and public support for increasing development intensity exists to perpetuate the existing character of this Downtown neighborhood and to capitalize on opportunities to further the goals of transit-oriented development to support the multimodal station and other transit stations in the North Loop neighborhood.

In order to provide guidance for the scale of new buildings and infill development within the neighborhood, the Development Intensity map categorize sites into three Intensity Districts – Downtown Transit-Oriented, Downtown Urban-Oriented, and Downtown Neighborhood Oriented. Each district corresponds to a level of development intensity and density related to current and anticipated uses in the North Loop in all categories – residential, commercial, industrial, and public. The Transit-Oriented District is located around current and anticipated station areas and is the most intensive, from a development standpoint, of the three districts. The

Urban-Oriented District supports land areas that are developing in a pattern consistent with medium density building types of up to ten stories. The Neighborhood-Oriented District is intended to support new development that is compatible with the existing density and pattern of an area. Because the North Loop is a Downtown neighborhood, intensity will be reflected differently than it would in neighborhoods outside of the Central Business District. The Development Intensity map covers areas included in the Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan and is consistent with that existing policy.

Density and intensity is frequently measured using parameters like floor area ratio, or dwelling units per square foot of property area. These density measures are not very intuitive, in part because they do not lend themselves to being depicted visually. This plan attempts to make the proposed density levels more intuitive by correlating each district with a mix of compatible development types that are common in Minneapolis and will be easily recognized by most Minneapolis citizens. New development should offer a mix of development styles, and larger sites should consider site designs that provide a mix of development types within the development.

Committee members thought properties like the Jaguar site on Hennepin Avenue should be in the most intense category, consistent with the previous proposal on the site. They also requested a more nuanced, site-by-site approach in and around the historic district. Staff explained they do not want the Development Intensity map to conflict with the historic guidelines but there was definitely space to be more nuanced to allow more intensity right outside of the historic district. The group also wants to see more intensity allowed in the 5th Street corridor near the viaduct. Otherwise, they generally agreed with the location of the three Development Intensity districts.

The committee also reviewed development guidance for general and private development. This guidance will build on the laying of site policy with direction related to land use and development intensity. In many cases this guidance for sites reiterates existing site plan regulation that emphasizes how a specific site and its use can integrate more seamlessly with the public realm.

The plan will have basic guidance for:

- Frontage
- Off-street parking
- Fencing and landscaping
- Building facades

On properties located within the historic Warehouse District, direction should be taken from its design guidelines.

HKGi Connectivity Analysis

Hoisington Kogler Group has been hired to accomplish three main items:

- Review Access Minneapolis street types and recommend changes in the North Loop consistent with the planning process – this may include new street types.

- Create a graphic illustration of the visionary scenario for the Lower North Loop that exhibits the new street connections, transit station, improved Farmers Market, and possible development.
- Create a graphic illustration looking underneath the viaduct that may exemplify new development opportunities along 5th Street as well as positive use of space underneath the viaduct.

Jeff Miller began to explain the process of analyzing the street types. They started by examining the existing neighborhood features such as designated land use features, gateways, physical barriers to connectivity, and the open space system. These features help to provide a clear picture as to the opportunities and limitations for improving the public realm and connectivity. They then explained the existing and planned transportation system, including the current street types found in the neighborhood.

Their recommendations include revising the street types on Glenwood and 5th Street to Community Connectors which will better represent possibilities for improved emphasis on connecting into North Minneapolis. It also recognizes the plan's draft recommendation for future commercial uses on Glenwood as well as more bicycle and pedestrian accessibility. They also propose following the direction of the plan so far to use 10th Ave N as the new main connection through the neighborhood from 2nd St south to Glenwood by re-identifying the street type as a Neighborhood Connector. 5th St near the multimodal station would be an Activity Area Street, mainly continuing that designation into the North Loop from the office core. While Olson Hwy will always likely carry a heavy amount of traffic, there are opportunities to make the street more of a Neighborhood Connector – this would continue a 6th Ave N Neighborhood Connector to the intersection of 7th St with Olson.

Jeff and Bryan are proposing a new street type – a Heritage Street. This street type would actually act as an overlay and complement the primary street types. It would be applicable to 3rd St and 5th/6th/7th/8th/9th Aves N. They explained a possible cross-section for 3rd St that would basically keep character of the historic street wall with the wide street but add street trees, more pedestrian lighting, and an improved paver system.

The avenues, or secondary streets, are trickier because of all the ways they are used. Many still have functioning loading docks, and even for the non-functioning loading docks, it is important to preserve them. The loading docks, however, make pedestrian travel through these corridors difficult, particularly for pedestrians with disabilities. The City is also required to bring its streets up to ADA standards over time. One idea HKGi explained is to allow a street-level walking area adjacent to the loading docks. This walking area would not be an elevated sidewalk but would still need to be separated from the traffic lanes by some vertical mechanism – a short curb/bump, bollards, etc. This solution would keep the loading docks as they are and allow enough space for the driving lanes and parallel parking.

Staff reiterated some concerns expressed by Public Works in earlier discussions. Public Works staff are concerned about making sure snow plows can differentiate the driving lanes from the lower pedestrian walkway, as well as snow being plowed into that space and making it unusable. They are also concerned about stormwater ponding in the walking area – one solution is to angle

the street up from the middle so water drains into the center of the street. Overall, though, both Public Works and Preservation staff believe the concept is sound and its just the details that need to be worked out.

CAC members liked the propose solution. One member wants the plan to acknowledge the pressure now and in the near future on 5th Ave N and that it is in poor shape. Staff explained that HKGi's work on the Heritage Street concept is more of a case study and therefore transferable to any street in the neighborhood with similar challenges.

HKGi then explained their concepts for the Lower North Loop and 5th Street/viaduct corridor. The Lower North Loop illustration will be a birds-eye perspective looking toward the center of the neighborhood from International Market Square, generally. It will emphasize the visionary street connections being proposed. It will show an expanded Farmers Market connecting with the proposed Southwest Transitway station on Royalston, articulating one possibility for improving access for people using the train to get to the market. Finally, it will show development opportunities if the private sector starts to see interest in the Lower North Loop. CAC members expressed enthusiasm for the creative solution of designing the Farmers Market to connect with the new transit station.

The 5th Street/viaduct illustration would be the view from street level. It would include a proposed street connection underneath the viaduct at 8th Ave N with some opportunities for green space. As articulated in previous land use discussions, they will show development opportunities on the north side of 5th Street in this illustration along with a possible Bottineau Blvd alignment. As requested by both the plan's TAC and CAC, this illustration is meant to show how the viaduct can enhance the neighborhood rather than be seen as a liability.

Next Meeting

Staff has set up a community meeting for the end of September. Since this will be the only large community meeting in the planning process, staff will make a big advertising push with mailings to all North Loop property owners and tax payers as well as email blurbs to adjacent neighborhood groups and other stakeholders. The meeting will be used to present the plan's draft recommendations.

Community-wide meeting: Thursday, September 24th from 4:30-6:30pm
Currie Maintenance Facility, 1200 Currie Avenue North

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00pm

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE

Community Meeting

Thursday, September 24, 2009
City of Minneapolis Currie Maintenance Facility
4:30-6:30 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Background

Beth Elliott introduced herself as the project manager and Community Planner for Downtown. In the presentation, she began by explaining that a small area plan derives from the citywide comprehensive plan but is geared to be more detailed for a specific geographic area. Small Area plans are then implemented with a rezoning study (which will likely happen for the North Loop in 2010), through the sale of public land, in the development review process, and by adding infrastructure projects to the Capital Improvement Plan. In the case of the North Loop neighborhood, there is an existing plan called the *Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan* that was adopted in 2003 and created policy guidance for parts of the neighborhood around the ballpark and intermodal transit station. This current planning process is meant update that plan with the remainder of the neighborhood and analyze unique issues that the existing plan did not address.

This planning process began at the beginning of the year and the first task was to get input from various stakeholders on what they saw as the priority issues to tackle. Planning staff took that input and identified a few questions that the North Loop Plan process should address and finally resolve. They are:

Land use and Design:

- What should be the character of new development?
- How should publicly-owned properties be managed or developed?
- How can existing uses be sustained while creating a community of choice and increasing developer demand?

Transportation:

- How can neighborhood connectivity be improved?
- Will the market be constrained by the existing infrastructure?

Commercial development:

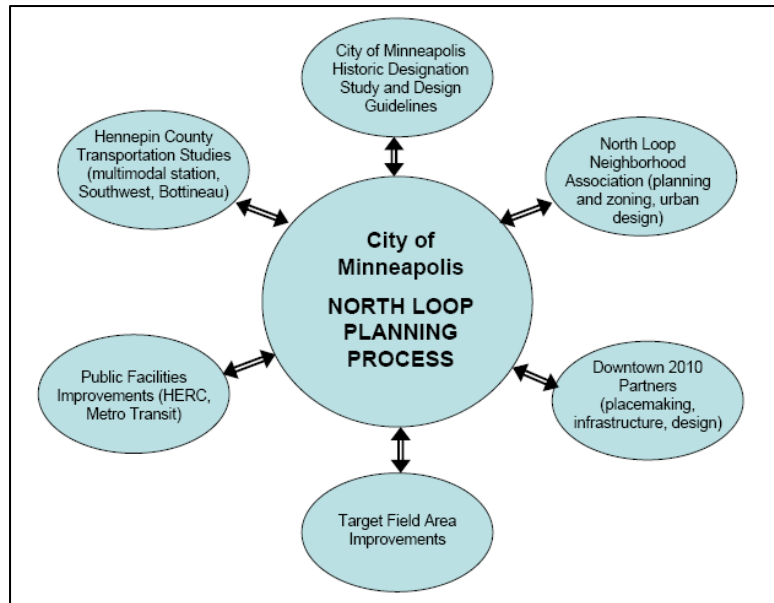
- What affect will a ballpark and multi-modal station have on the market?

Public Participation Plan

Since the North Loop Plan is officially updating an existing adopted plan, this public participation process has built on the input received and codified in the *Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan*. One method used by staff has been to coordinate with the various other studies going on in the neighborhood (identified in graphic below). It was also very important to engage residents, property owners, and business owners who may not yet be represented in any official way. Staff also worked with a Technical Advisory Committee made up of public agency

experts and a Community Advisory Committee with neighborhood, business, and property owner representation.

This community meeting is the culmination of those efforts and an opportunity to get broader input. The meeting was advertised with mailings to every North Loop property owner and taxpayer and then with an email blitz to community organizations within and adjacent to the North Loop.



Additional Assistance

It was apparent early in the planning process that the Lower North Loop (south of 7th St N) required additional analysis because its future seemed less certain than the Upper North Loop. The City hired a market to evaluate the market realities of the area and determine how the private sector will react to it in the future. A summary of the market analysis results includes:



- Good proximity to office core
- Development constraints:
 - Prevailing uses (industrial, public, housing providers)
 - Access barriers to core
 - Difficult internal circulation
 - Lack of buildings with character
- Weak market prospects for new office and retail projects
- Opportunities:
 - Low-priced multifamily residential
 - Ongoing industrial tenancies
 - Small-scale renovations
- Drivers: Southwest LRT station, Alatus development with Lunds (not ballpark and multimodal station)

A capstone group from the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning at the Humphrey Institute also studied the Lower North Loop. They identified opportunities and constraints in the area and recommended improvements to connectivity, public realm, and land uses. Both the market analysis and the capstone report can be found on the project website at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/north_loop.asp.

Finally, the City hired planning consultant Hoisington Kogler Group to identify issues with the design of existing infrastructure and propose conceptual solutions to barriers it may cause. They also evaluated the neighborhood within the context of Access Minneapolis, the City's 10-Year Transportation Action Plan.

During the planning process it became apparent that there should be three levels of recommendations that can prepare the North Loop for various scenarios and levels of change. Plan recommendations fall under three categories:

Functional Improvements –

- Recommendations that can and should happen regardless of whether or not major private reinvestment occurs in the neighborhood.
- Current neighborhood users will benefit immediately from these strategic improvements.

Managing Growth –

- Recommendations that should happen in conjunction with possible change in the neighborhood.
- Examples include new transit facilities, infrastructure maintenance, and private sector redevelopment.

Visionary Change –

- Recommendations meant to serve as an anchor point for the long term vision of the community.
- Functional and Managing Growth changes should not impede the possibility of visionary recommendations taking place.

In this community meeting, the participants were asked to respond to the original planning questions and assist staff in fine-tuning the recommendations found in the plan. Staff and area stakeholders made recommendations in draft form that attempt to address those key issues and participants had the opportunity to consider whether or not the draft recommendations indeed address the issues.

Next Steps

Input received at the community meeting will be distilled by City staff and the plan's Community Advisory Committee and the recommendations will be revised as necessary. Staff will write the draft planning document in October and then it will become available for public comment during the 45-day public review period in mid to late November.

Once the 45-day review is complete, all comments will again be distilled and lead to possible changes in the draft plan. The final step is the approval process – a public hearing at a Planning Commission meeting and final approval by the City Council in the first part of 2010.

There will be a new opportunity to provide input during the 45-day review period. The North Loop Neighborhood Association is hosting a Wiki Pilot Project that will give participants "editing" ability of the draft plan. The Wiki Pilot Project will be hosted on an independent website but have a link through the official plan's webpage on the City of Minneapolis website. The Wiki concept will hopefully enhance the other public participation tools used in the planning

process and provide an opportunity for people to provide input that may not have been able to through the other venues. Look for information in early November.

Recommendations

Display: How should infrastructure be improved?

Key Concepts:

- Create a complete connection through the neighborhood that allows a user to travel from one side to the other, creating a “Loop” through the neighborhood along 10th Avenue North and Border Avenue.
- Accommodate growth in the Lower North Loop through siting of a Southwest Transitway light rail station on Royalston Avenue North.
- Create more meaningful connections between the neighborhood, the Mississippi River, the Downtown office core, and neighboring communities.
- Improve pedestrian safety in key locations within the neighborhood.
- Increase the presence of transit facilities throughout the neighborhood and place enhanced stations in the North Loop neighborhood.

Potential Improvements:

- Extend Border Ave from Holden to Glenwood.
- Restore two-way traffic to Border Ave.
- Better connect 16th Street to the neighborhood from the south.
- Create strong pedestrian connections from the Southwest LRT station to the Farmers Market area.
- Extend Cesar Chavez Ave from Border to Glenwood.
- Improve connections to the Downtown core.
- Enhance Glenwood Ave with bike lanes, on street parking, and street plantings where possible.
- Emphasize 7th Street as a major pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile route that safely connects the Downtown office core, the North Loop neighborhood, and neighborhoods in North Minneapolis.
- Reconnect 8th Ave under the viaducts and to the River.
- Place a pedestrian crossing on 7th Street near Target Field.
- Reconfigure two key intersections on Olson Memorial Highway to improve safety and access for all users.



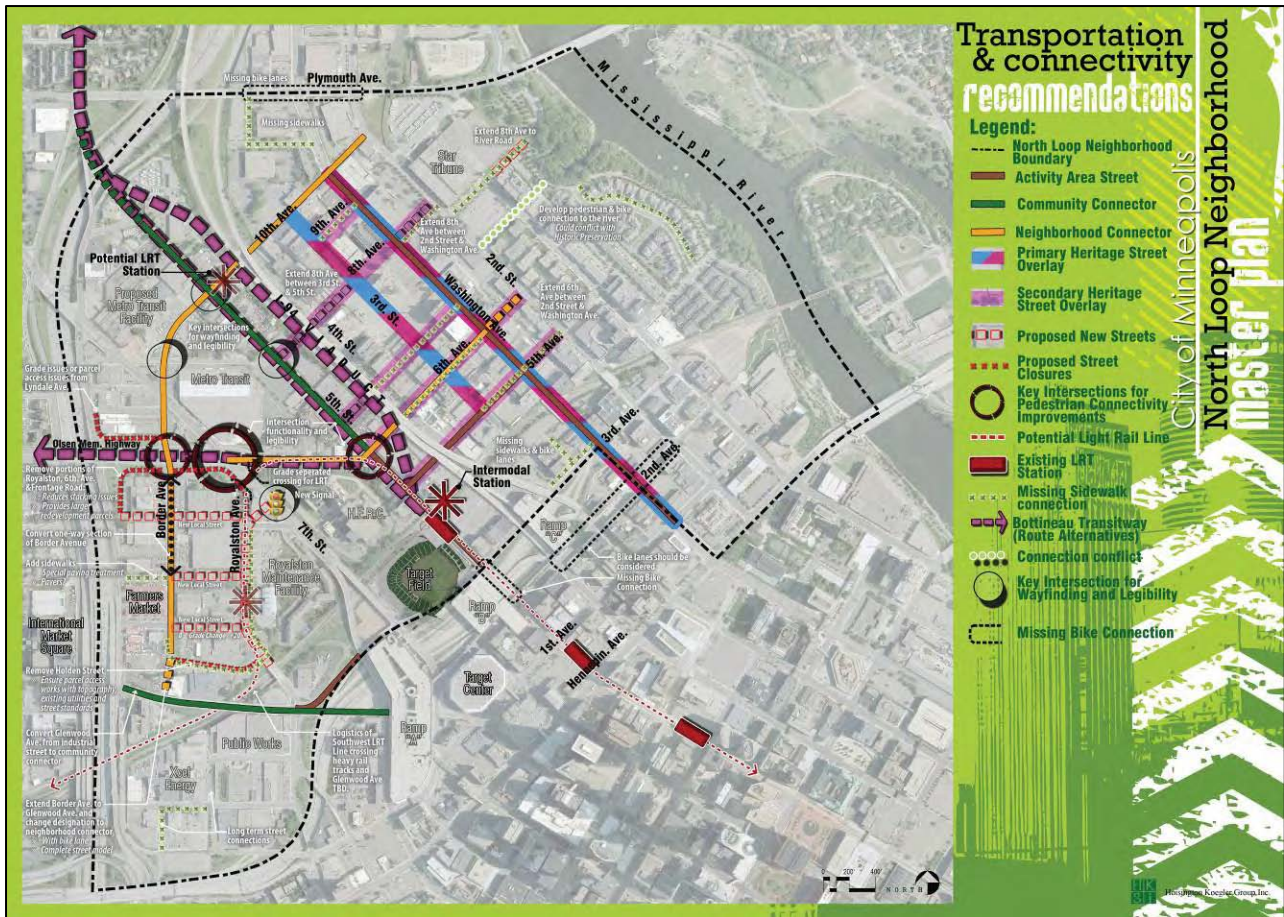
Functional Improvements – These recommendations can and should happen regardless of whether or not major private reinvestment occurs in the neighborhood. Current industrial, residential, and commercial users in the neighborhood will benefit immediately from these strategic



Visionary Change – These recommendations are meant to serve as an anchor point for the long term vision of the community. Functional and Managing Growth changes should not impede the possibility of visionary recommendations taking place.



Managing Growth – Recommendations in this category should happen in conjunction with possible change in the neighborhood. Examples of such change include new transit facilities, infrastructure maintenance, and private sector redevelopment.



Display: What should land uses look like in the future?

Recommendations:

- Concentration of future Class-A Office development contained within the existing Downtown Core;
- Preference for mid- to high-density mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, and retail (where appropriate) uses;
- Promotion of an overall increase in neighborhood housing density that includes a continuum of housing choices;
- Land uses organized to encourage and support public transit, cycling, and walking as viable alternatives to the private automobile;
- Preference for structured parking built below, or embedded within, development projects. New accessory and commercial surface parking lots are prohibited;
- Promotion of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, street-facing retail in identified locations, transit nodes, and neighborhood services.

Neighborhood features

City of Minneapolis

North Loop Neighborhood Master plan

Legend:

-  Bottineau Transitway (Route Alternatives)
-  Southwest Transitway
-  Cedar Lake Trail Expansion
-  North Loop Neighborhood
-  North Loop Warehouse Local Historic District
-  Growth Center (Proposed)
-  Activity Center
-  River Front Park
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Destination
-  Primary Connectivity Barrier
-  Secondary Connectivity Barrier
-  Primary Gateway
-  Secondary Gateway
-  Proposed Development





Lower North Loop concept looking north



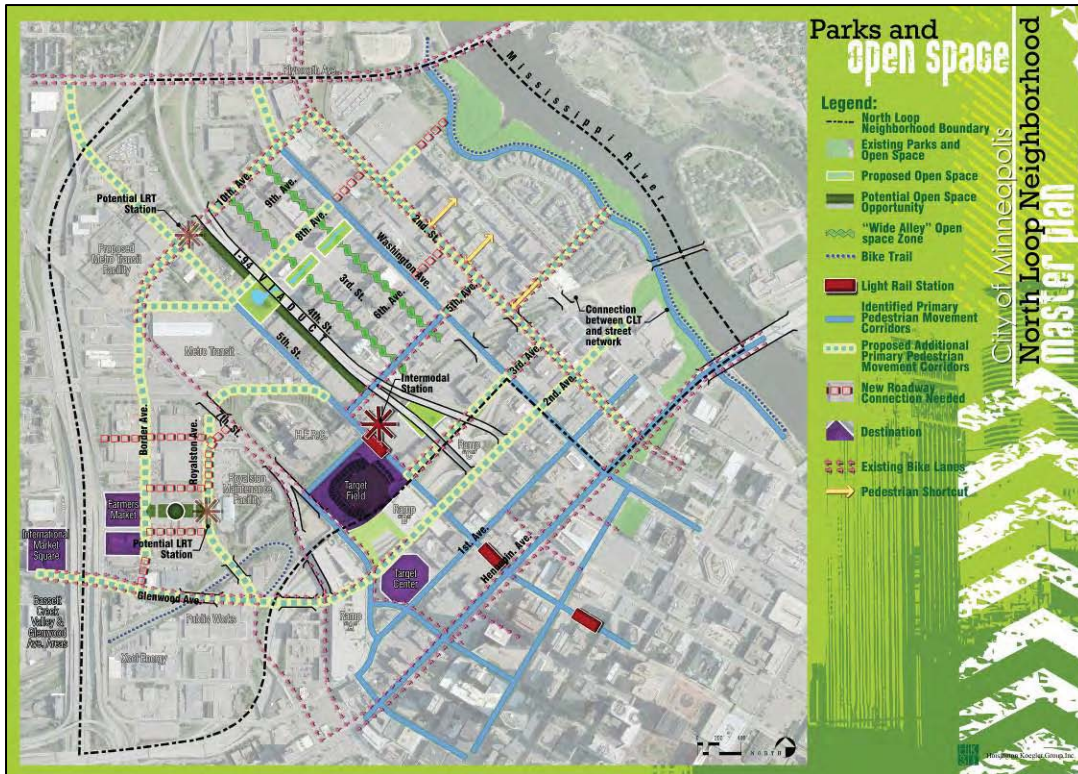
Freeway West concept at 8th Ave N

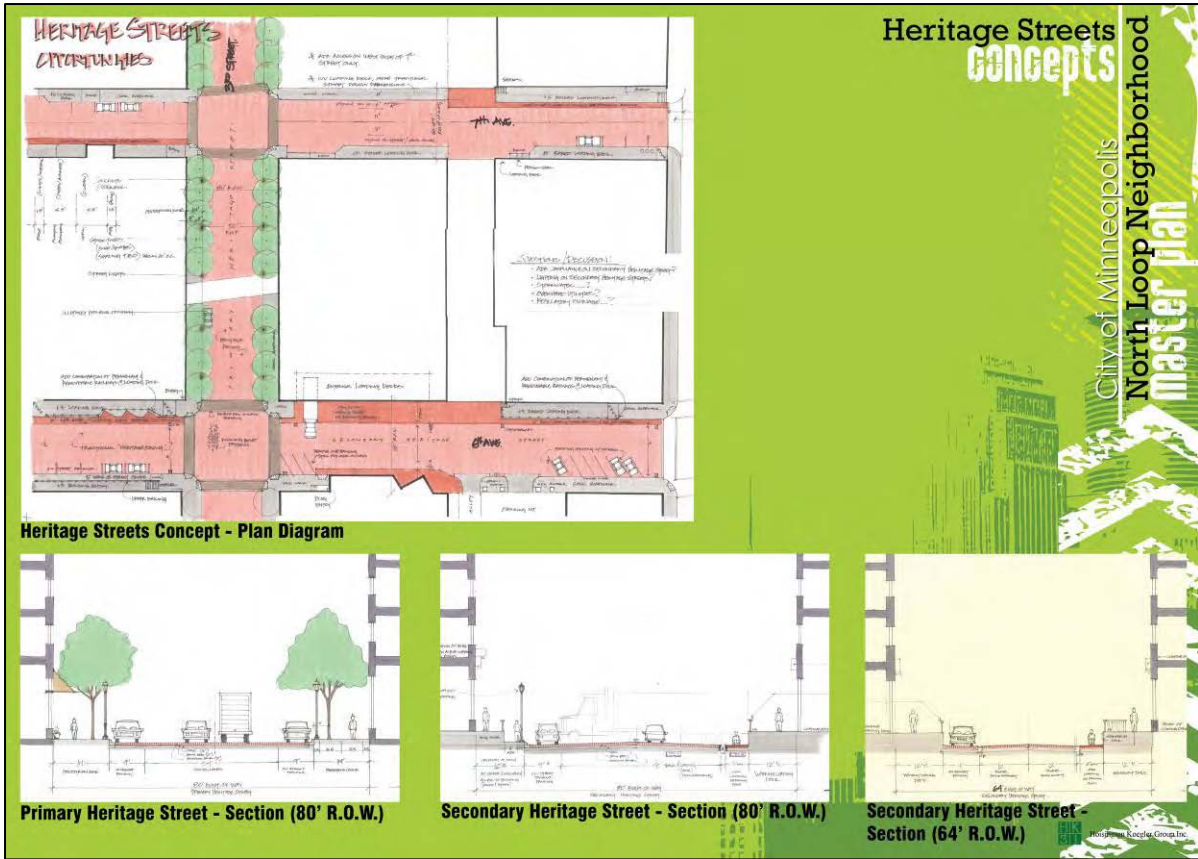
<p>Warehouse West:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and enhance historic character ▪ Infill development appropriate on underutilized sites, particularly underutilized parking lots ▪ Mix of industrial, residential, and commercial uses appropriate ▪ Concentrate retail and restaurants on Washington 	<p>Freeway West:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of industrial, residential, and commercial uses appropriate • Higher utilization of sites along 5th St appropriate in future • Enhance viaduct as asset with usage underneath • Highlight 10th Ave N with buildings that face the street with pedestrian design features
<p>Municipal Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development not likely due to mostly public ownership of sites • Public sites should transition to co-location of services for improved space usage • Highlight 10th Ave N with buildings that face the street with pedestrian design features 	<p>Old Warehouse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large development opportunities along Hennepin • Maintain and enhance historic character • Concentrate street-level retail along Hennepin and Washington
<p>Residential Enclave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities for large-scale redevelopment • Development should maintain residential character • Limited opportunities for service-oriented retail accessory to residential building • Maintain and enhance historic character 	<p>Protected Industrial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue City policy to preserve and protect for industrial users • If Star Tribute vacates site, it should continue to be industrial with existing building preserved • All businesses should be high-wage and job-intense
<p>Lower Industrial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue industrial as primary use • Intermittent opportunities for residential and commercial • Glenwood should be new designated Commercial Corridor 	<p>Lower Mix:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue eclectic character of industrial, public facilities, and housing providers • Expand Farmers Market to year-round service (land acquisition and political will are required) • Commercial opportunities along Glenwood

Display: How can the public realm function better for pedestrians?

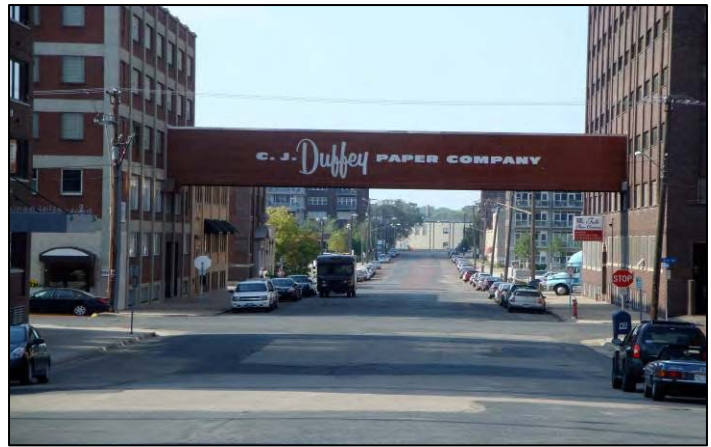
Recommendations:

- Highlight key through-streets with improved wayfinding to prominent destinations and additional streetscape elements.
- Realize a children’s play area on park property near the river.
- Minimize the industrial feel of many neighborhood streets with wider sidewalks, landscaping, and pedestrian crosswalks at key intersections.
- In the historic Warehouse District, create a Heritage Street designation that gives guidance on how to improve pedestrian safety without compromising historic integrity.





6th Ave N – need to balance historic integrity with pedestrian safety

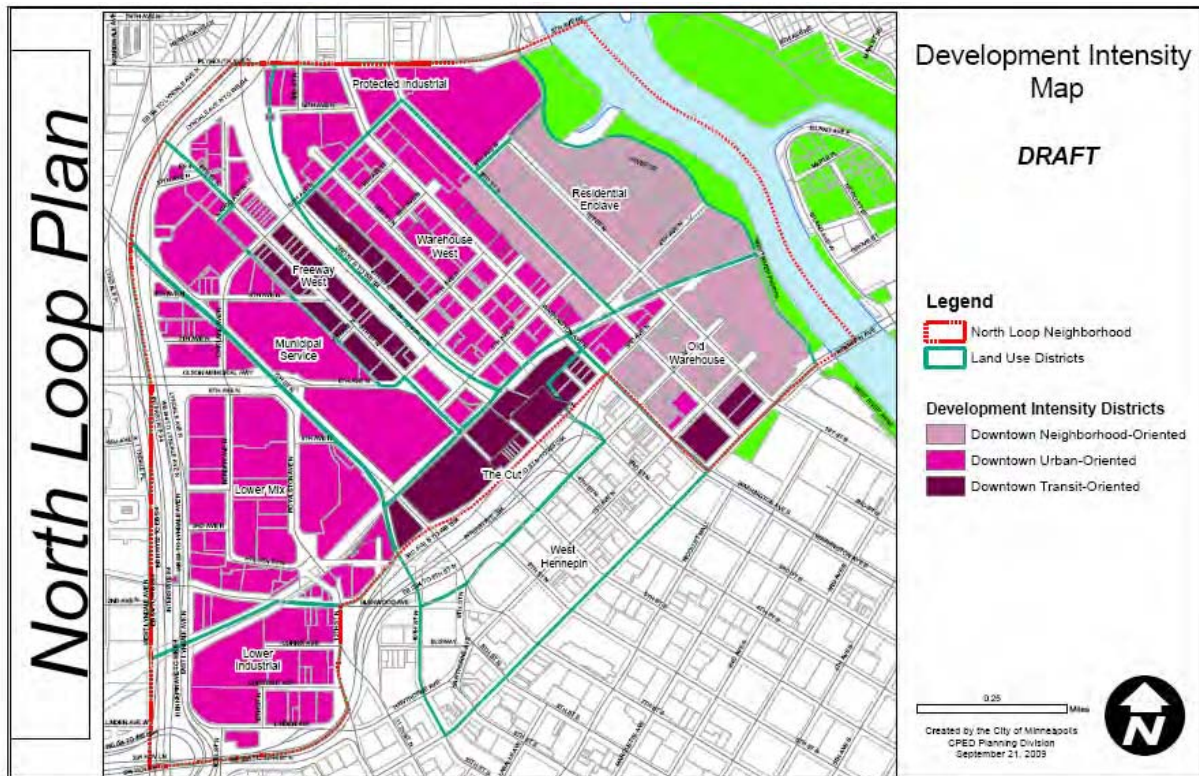


3rd St N is historically wide but generally safe for pedestrians

Display: What should be the character of new development? How should publicly-owned properties be managed or developed?

Recommendations:

- Increase development intensity consistent with the character of a Downtown neighborhood.
- Buildings should have an urban street frontage with direct access to the public sidewalk.
- Existing industrial and public sites should transition to additional landscaping and screening.
- Parking for new development should be underground or behind the building.
- Improve greening and landscaping along public sidewalks.
- Increase opportunities for publicly-accessible open spaces.
- Building facades should include prominent front entrances and abundant window glass.
- Principal entrances of buildings – commercial, industrial, residential – should face the street and public sidewalk.



INTENSITY DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION
DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD-ORIENTED	Appropriate building types include residential or commercial buildings of two to six stories. In commercial areas, buildings may include commercial businesses on the ground floor.
DOWNTOWN URBAN-ORIENTED	Appropriate building types include housing and commercial structures of two to ten stories. This type is generally consistent with the bulk and height of historic warehouse structures in the neighborhood.
DOWNTOWN TRANSIT-ORIENTED	Appropriate building types include a mix of uses with commercial businesses on the ground floor. They are greater than ten stories and geared toward a nearby transit station.

Factors in evaluating additional height:

- Zoning code considerations for a CUP for height
 - Access to light and air of surrounding properties.
 - Shadowing of residential properties or significant public spaces.
 - The scale and character of surrounding properties.
 - Preservation of views of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies.
- If a development is achieving these plan priorities:
 - Publicly-accessible open space.
 - Dedication and construction of public right-of-way to implement the plan's recommended street connections.
 - Design of the site to allow for a pedestrian and/or bicycle public easement connecting opposite sides of the block.

NORTH LOOP PLAN UPDATE
Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5

Wednesday, October 7, 2009
City of Minneapolis Public Service Center
3:00 – 5:00 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

Committee members present: Karen Rosar, Adrienne Hannert, Bob Schmitz, Bruce Rubin,

Committee members absent: Paul Adelman, Mary de Laittre, Ryan Kronzer, Erin Fitzgerald

City staff present: Beth Elliott, Joe Bernard

Others present: none

Open House

Beth Elliott summarized the September 23 open house. Sixty-five people signed in and the majority were new faces to the planning process. Both Karen and Bob attended and they thought it was well-received and participants were generally supportive of the plan's direction.

Beth and Joe went through some of the comments received during the open house.

Street condition – Many participants mentioned that they hope the plan emphasizes the poor condition of some of the streets, particularly the historic brick streets. A number of people want to see 5th Ave N reconstructed because of its uneven surface and difficult pedestrian space. Joe and Beth told the CAC that this issue can be explained easily in the draft in a way to emphasize street condition as a livability issue.

Streetcar – The need for streetcar on Washington was articulated in the open house. Staff will better explain the citywide Streetcar Feasibility Study and highlight the fact that Washington Ave N is one of the preferred routes. Streetcar will also be listed with other modes in places where the plan lists aspects of multimodalism.

Height – Staff heard during the community meeting mixed comments on the issue of height and density in the North Loop neighborhood. Some comments received emphasized promoting density without excessive restrictions on height while other participants are worried about tall buildings, particularly in the historic area of the neighborhood. Beth explained the concern of some residents who live at Tower Lofts of the height of buildings on the south side of 2nd Street. The current draft Development Intensity Districts identify everything on the south side of 2nd Street and north to the river in the Downtown Neighborhood-Intensity District which calls for heights of 2-6 stories. From the perspective of these open house participants, height should be set at 4 stories on 2nd Street and step down to the river. Additionally, they pointed out that the

majority of buildings along 2nd Street are currently 4 stories. Beth explained that some buildings are higher than 4 stories (e.g. Itasca) and the 6-story limit is consistent with the historic district guidelines.

CAC members were mixed on whether to keep the 6-story limit or reduce it to 4 stories in some or all of the Downtown Neighborhood-Oriented District. A member pointed out the historic character and explained that many residents purchased units because the area felt like a compact Paris neighborhood. Another member supports opportunities to grow our Downtown in order to support the nearby transit.

A couple blocks in particular were identified as questionably located in the Downtown Urban-Oriented District which allows for heights up to ten stories – these blocks run along the west side of 3rd Ave N between Washington and 1st St. The Colonial Warehouse is in this area and an historic resource. Staff explained the boundaries were drawn to be consistent with the Warehouse Historic District guidelines but they would do additional research as to what the historic district guidelines say for both the Warehouse district and the St. Anthony Falls district.

** After clarifying the issue with CPED Preservation & Design staff, those two blocks in question are indeed located in the Warehouse Historic District and the blocks north of 2nd Street are located in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District . In the updated Warehouse design guidelines, 3rd Ave N is the boundary between two distinct sub-areas – 19th Century Warehouse and 20th Century Warehouse. The 20th Century Warehouse sub-area is located on the west side of 3rd Ave N and allows for heights up to 10 stories. While a building like the Colonial Warehouse is a similar height to buildings across the street, it does not exhibit the same character to structures built in the era of the 19th Century Warehouse sub-area – the size and type of building is different. The St. Anthony Falls guidelines set a height standard of 4-6 stories for new construction in the “North First Street Warehouses” sub-area which runs along 1st St from 3rd Ave N to 8th Ave N.

Timeline

Staff will be writing the plan during October. CAC members are comfortable with having two weeks to review the draft document before it becomes available for the 45-day review. Staff will make revisions based on CAC feedback and likely start the public review in the middle of November.

Once the 45-day review is complete, staff will again distill the public comments and make revisions to the document as necessary. This revised draft will be presented to the Planning Commission during a public hearing and forwarded on to the City Council for final approval – this should happen in the first part of 2010.

The City will be trying a new method of reaching additional audiences during the 45-day public review. The Wiki Pilot Project was first introduced during the open house. It will be hosted by the North Loop Neighborhood Association on a separate website but be linked from the plan’s official City page. The concept is to provide an opportunity for interested stakeholders to edit and comment on the draft plan document on a flexible schedule. City staff will compile the

comments from the Wiki Pilot Project with all other public comments and revise the plan as necessary for the approval process. CAC members are generally supportive but want to make sure participants will be able to see a history of other people's comments.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm

MARKET ANALYSIS:
OVERVIEW of DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS
in the
LOWER NORTH LOOP
Minneapolis, MN

Prepared for:

The City of Minneapolis
Dept. of Community Planning and Economic Development

By:

W-ZHA, LLC

May, 2009

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DOCUMENT SCOPE, PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS

This document presents an initial, overview-level analysis of real estate market conditions in the Study Area, which comprises the portion of Minneapolis's North Loop district that is situated to the southwest of 7th Street North (and which may be referred to herein as the "Lower North Loop Study Area").

**MAP 1: LOWER NORTH LOOP STUDY AREA
(SHADED)**



The purpose of this document is to inform a broader planning process for the overall North Loop district. This broader process may produce specific and/or

broad policy recommendations for various parts of the North Loop. This document, however, is limited to an overview of the development potential that is provided by known or reasonably foreseeable conditions and factors that will shape development viability.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The Study Area's most important asset is its proximity to Minneapolis's downtown core.
- Future assets that will exert important positive influences on the Study Area's development prospects include a potential LRT station serving the Southwest LRT Corridor, and a prospective large-scale development that anticipates a new Lund's grocery store at the edge of the downtown core, just one block from the Study Area.
- The Study Area's development constraints include (1) its prevailing uses, which include primarily industrial and social service providers, (2) its perceived access barriers to downtown, (3) its difficult internal circulation systems, and (4) an absence of buildings with the character desirable for conversion to higher-value uses.
- Prospective developments in the Study Area would most likely encounter ample competition among residential projects and weak market prospects for retail and office projects. Despite these obstacles, the Study Area may be able to offer opportunities among:
 - Lower-priced (but market-rate) multi-family residential developments;
 - Entertainment-related businesses;
 - Ongoing industrial tenancies; and
 - Small-scale renovations for office/industrial users.
- In seeking to enhance development potential, properties at or near the Royalston Avenue/Glenwood Avenue intersection present key locations for public improvements and private developments. With the construction of a new Southwest Corridor LRT station and additional circulation improvements, this area can provide potential sites that (1) maximize access to downtown and (2) can serve as potential catalysts for other developments in the surrounding area.

- Timing will present an important consideration in weighing City decisions. Public infrastructure such as a new Southwest LRT station would provide an important asset for future projects, as would other circulation improvements and new private developments anticipated on the southern edges of downtown. Such improvements, however, are not likely to be completed within the next 3-4 years. At the same time, if new developments are not ready to move forward within the next ten years, they may lose the opportunity to capitalize on the broad demographic trends that have provided the impetus for the recent wave of multi-family development in and around downtown Minneapolis.

ORGANIZATION OF DOCUMENT

Following this general summary and introduction, this document begins with discussions of existing conditions (Section I), as well as anticipated improvements and their likely impacts (Section II). The document concludes in Section III with a qualitative overview of long-term outlooks among the various development types, along with a summary of potential niches and key locations.

I. PREVAILING CONDITIONS and GENERAL OUTLOOK

This section describes the Study Area's market context, with an overview of dominant features and trends in downtown Minneapolis and the North Loop area.

A. DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS: ROLES AND NICHES

The following characterize downtown Minneapolis real estate markets:

- The downtown office market contains a total of roughly 30 million square feet of public and private space.¹ This accounts for the dominant share (47 percent) of the Twin Cities' overall office market inventory as well as its Class-A market (56.5 percent). While some suburban office buildings may attain rents that are comparable or even higher in some cases, downtown Minneapolis occupies the dominant niche for high-end office tenants. This inventory is heavily concentrated in the core area bounded by Washington Avenue, 5th Avenue South, Hennepin Avenue, and 12th Street. Within this core area, the prime blocks along Nicollet Mall maintain greater health than the overall downtown market; brokers report that the most strategically located properties achieve a 6-7 percent vacancy rate and the highest lease rates in the market.

¹ See *Downtown Commercial Market Analysis* prepared for the City of Minneapolis Dept. of Community Planning and Economic Development by ZHA, Inc. 2007.

TABLE 1

**CBD SHARE OF TWIN CITIES
OFFICE SPACE AND CLASS-A OFFICE SPACE
(millions sq. ft.)**

	<u>Twin Cities</u>	<u>CBD Submarket</u>	<u>CBD Share</u>
Total Inventory	71.3	25.6	35.9%
Class-A Inventory	33.5	14.5	43.1%
Class-A Share	47.0%	56.5%	

Source: Northmarq Commercial Real Estate Services; W-ZHA, LLC

- Downtown Minneapolis occupies the dominant location for upscale hotels and conventions. Downtown Minneapolis contains 25 hotel properties, with a collective supply of nearly 6,400 rooms.
- The downtown retail market comprises nearly 3.25 million square feet, of which roughly 2.2 million are located within the office core². Office workers comprise the primary market for retailers in the office core. Outside the office core, restaurants, bars and nightclubs are concentrated along First Avenue in the Warehouse District as well as the northern parts of the North Loop.
- Other cultural venues and entertainment venues are concentrated in the Warehouse District and the riverfront; these occupy a broad range, encompassing art museums, theatres and other performing arts venues, nightclubs, and adult entertainment establishments.

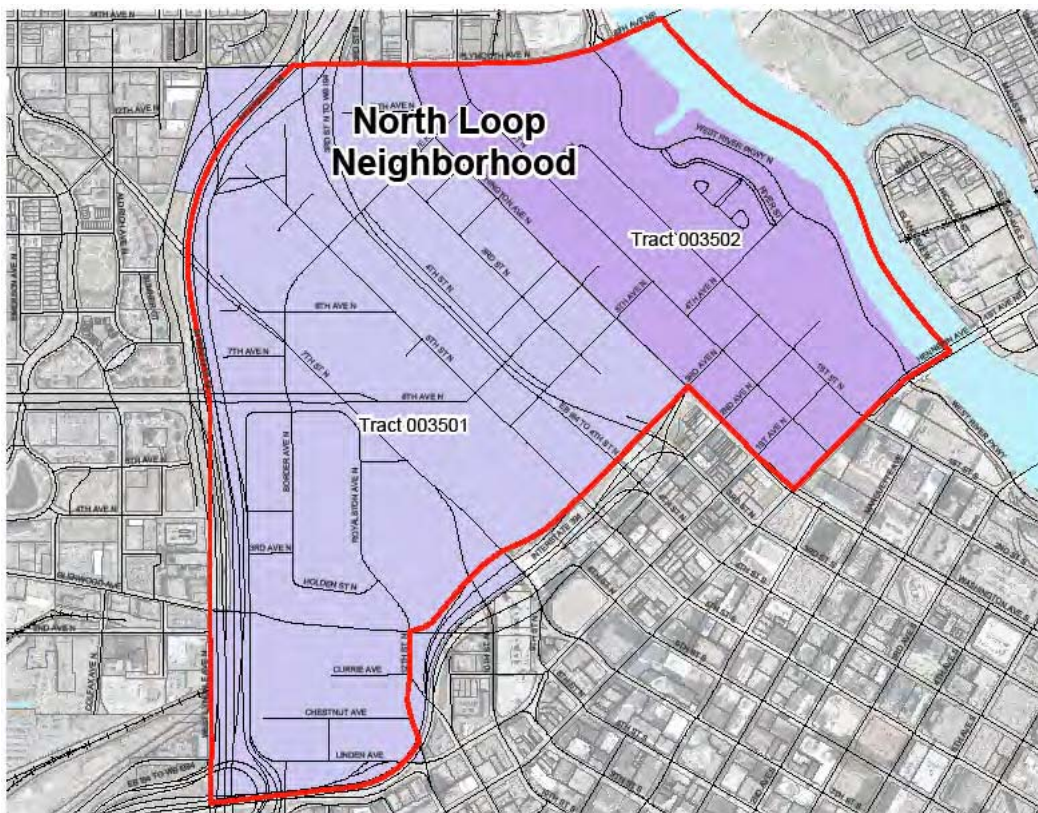
² The City of Minneapolis 2000 *Downtown Transportation Study* estimated downtown retail space at 4.55 million square feet. This supply, however, encompasses substantial spaces devoted to entertainment venues, car dealerships, office uses in retail properties (Macy's) and adult-oriented businesses. Without a precise estimate, a reasonable adjustment based on block-by-block estimates reduces this estimate by 1.5 million square feet, bringing the total estimate to roughly 3.05 million square feet. Further adjustments involve the significant changes that have occurred since 2000: these include the additions of Block E (130,000 square feet, excluding its 88,000 square foot cinema) and the downtown Target store, and the elimination of roughly 100,000 square feet from City Center (3rd floor). These changes have added a net total of 200,000 square feet to the market, bringing the total inventory to an estimated 3.25 million square feet.

- Residential development: Since 2000, multi-family developments have increased downtown Minneapolis households from approximately 12,460 to 14,650. Most of these developments have offered market-rate units in new buildings or renovated industrial buildings. These developments have concentrated most notably in the areas around the riverfront, in old industrial buildings in the North Loop, and in parts of the downtown core and its immediate surroundings.

B. NORTH LOOP AND LOWER NORTH LOOP STUDY AREA

The North Loop occupies the northern and western portions of downtown Minneapolis, bounded by Plymouth Avenue on the north, I-94 on the west and south, and Hennepin Avenue on the southeast. Situated just northwest of the downtown core, the North Loop has been characterized recently by conversions of old industrial warehouse buildings to office, residential and entertainment-related uses, concentrated primarily in its eastern portions.

MAP 2: NORTH LOOP NEIGHBORHOOD



1. Redevelopment in the Upper North Loop

As shown below, since 2000 the North Loop (as defined by census tract #s 3501 and 3502) has grown by more than 2,000 households, with most of the growth attributable to new market-rate condominiums and apartment buildings. As a result of this growth, the owner/renter mix has changed substantially, with renters declining from 68.3 percent to 41.6 percent in 2008. Median household income in the North Loop is estimated at approximately \$69,000, which is higher than in the larger downtown area or the overall city.

TABLE 2

Demographic Indicators: Selected Areas, 2000-2013					
	2000	2008	Avg. Ann. Change	2013	Avg. Ann. Change
Households					
Minneapolis	162,352	168,788	0.5%	172,174	0.4%
Rental %	46.8%	47.1%			
Downtown	12,460	14,649	2.0%	15,533	1.2%
Rental %	74.9%	69.8%			
North Loop	640	1,961	15.0%	2,481	4.8%
Rental %	68.3%	41.6%			
Median Household Income					
Minneapolis	\$38,172	\$52,443	4.1%	\$66,554	4.9%
Downtown	\$27,264	\$41,532	5.4%	\$56,372	6.3%
North Loop	\$50,771	\$68,997	3.9%	\$87,790	4.9%

Source: ESRI; stdb, inc.

In addition to new residential uses, North Loop properties have also been redeveloped as office space. Properties listed in the Northmarq Compass report show that, of downtown Minneapolis's 30.3 million square feet of private, multi-tenant office space, the North Loop contains 2.6 million square feet, or 8.6 percent of the total. Most of this space is in the Warehouse District portion of the North Loop; none is located in the Study Area.

Other types of businesses that have established themselves in the North Loop over the last 15 years include new restaurants, a small number of specialty or convenience retailers, and a Marriott Towne Place hotel. Again, virtually all of this business activity has occurred in the Warehouse District or in the Upper North Loop, northeast of the 5th Street viaduct.

2. Study Area Conditions

The Study Area has not participated in the North Loop redevelopment trend. In the Study Area, in approximately the last 10 years the only substantial investments in new development or redevelopment have been limited to one small industrial property (33,000 square feet) remodeled for office use, the City of Minneapolis's construction of a new Public Works facility, and the general maintenance and continued use of most existing properties.

In the Study Area the pre-dominant land uses include shelters and service providers for indigent and homeless persons, City public works storage and maintenance operations, and a broad range of industrial uses that encompasses engineering- or design-related businesses, manufacturing operations, storage and warehouse operations, and the Excel Energy facility.

At this time, market-rate residential uses are limited to one small building on Linden Avenue; Lee's Liquor Lounge constitutes the only thriving retail business.

Other notable features include the City Farmers' Market, occupying the block bounded by Border Avenue, Cesar Chavez Avenue, 3rd Street and Lakeside Avenue; and the International Market Square, a furniture design center located just west of the Study Area on Glenwood Avenue.

Overall, even as upscale redevelopments have taken hold in the Upper North Loop over the last 15 years, despite its proximity to downtown Minneapolis, the Study Area retains its status as a relatively obscure industrial area with limited prospects for new development.

II. KEY INFLUENCES and ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS

This section presents qualitative discussions of the key existing and anticipated factors that will influence the prospects for new development in the Study Area.

A. KEY ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS (EXISTING)

In attracting new development, the Study Area's strongest assets are its:

- **Proximity to downtown Minneapolis:** Among all the areas flanking downtown Minneapolis, the Study Area is arguably the closest to the downtown core, as measured from the IDS Tower block on the Nicollet Mall. While the interstate highway acts as a significant barrier, and the Study Area's existing image creates a mental disconnection from the CBD, the Study Area is physically closer to the downtown core than most parts of Loring Park, Elliott Park, Northeast Minneapolis, Downtown East, and the Upper North Loop.
- **Low costs (relative to downtown):** While current costs are unavailable, assessed (2008) land values in the Study Area generally range from \$7 to \$15 per square foot.³ In comparison, assessed per-square-foot land values range from roughly \$30 to \$50 in the other downtown fringe areas (e.g., Upper North Loop, Downtown East, Loring Park), from \$75 to \$110 in the Warehouse District, and from \$140 to a high of \$220 in the downtown core.

The following constraints counter these assets:

- **Existing land uses:** As alluded to in the preceding discussion, existing land uses in the Study Area are predominantly industrial or social-service oriented. This creates a low-end image, which presents a barrier to new investment.
- **Access, circulation, topography:** In addition to its low-end mix of uses, other constraints to new development include the Study Area's constrained access to downtown Minneapolis, its confusing internal

³ City of Minneapolis Assessors Office, Jan. 2008 values.

- circulation systems, and an irregular topography that can contribute to a sense of disorientation.⁴
- Security: Some parts of the Study Area – most notably along Royalston Avenue – have been the subject of reported security issues that are linked to nearby social service facilities.
 - Building character: In contrast to the Upper North Loop, the Study Area lacks buildings that offer the historic character that can drive successful redevelopments. Even in relatively undesirable locations, the historic significance or other unique charms can overcome unfavorable location issues. For instance, the market has supported new condominium units -- the Sears building along Lake Street and the IMS building on Glenwood Avenue present two notable examples -- despite locations that are otherwise unremarkable locations. The Study Area, however, contains few if any such buildings; most are one-or two story industrial buildings offering little or no historic amenity.

B. STADIUM AND LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

Two major improvements near the Study Area may influence its development potential.

- Target Field, the new Minnesota Twins' Major League Baseball stadium, will open in 2010 on a site just east of the Study Area. With a seating capacity of 40,000, this venue will host (at a minimum) 81 regular-season baseball games per year, drawing crowds of roughly 2 to 3 million spectators.
- A new light rail transit station will be constructed at 5th Street and 5th Avenue North, just north of Target Field. This multi-modal station will serve bus transit routes and will serve as the rail terminus for: (1) the existing Hiawatha light rail line, (2) the anticipated Central Corridor light rail line linking downtown Minneapolis with downtown St. Paul, and (3) the Northstar Commuter Rail line extending northwest into Sherburne County, and eventually to St. Cloud. In addition, Hennepin County is currently studying the possibility for additional LRT lines as well as intercity commuter rail services to connect at this station.

⁴ Preparation of this document did not include any investigations of soil qualities or environmental contamination issues.

- An additional light rail transit station will serve the Southwest Corridor line, which is anticipated to provide service to the southwestern suburbs including St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. This line will include one station in the Study Area; the specific location has not been determined.

This document does not present in-depth analysis of the impacts of these anticipated improvements; it does, however, provide an outlook regarding potential impacts, based on a review of articles, studies⁵, past experience, and anecdotal evidence focusing on such improvements in the Twin Cities and in other cities.

1. Key Lessons: Target Field

Sports stadiums are often expected to serve as catalysts for new development in their immediate surroundings. Actual results, however, vary widely. For instance, the existing Metrodome facility has spawned little if any new development in its surroundings; similar results have occurred in cities such as Baltimore, Phoenix, Philadelphia and others. On the other hand, stadiums built in downtown Denver and Cleveland have been credited for substantial contributions in generating new development activity in their surroundings. The nature and extent of such enhancement is determined in large part by the following:

- **Competitive Locations:** where crowds flow easily and naturally to other locations, ballpark environs are placed a relative disadvantage. This is illustrated in the area around Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards; Baltimore's Inner Harbor and its neighboring Fells Point district offered established locations containing restaurants, nightlife and (in Fells Point) an historic urban character. Similarly, in the areas around the Metrodome, new retail or restaurant establishments would have faced direct competition with locations in the downtown core and the warehouse district. In both of these cases, the stadiums generated little new private development activity.

Conversely, the areas around Jacobs Field in Cleveland enjoyed relatively successful redevelopment; much of this success involved businesses moving to the area from the Flats District, which is located in a relatively inaccessible part of downtown Cleveland. Perhaps the largest successes occurred in the area around Coors field in Denver, which is credited with substantial contributions to redevelopment in

⁵ Informal case studies are presented in *Neighborhood Impacts of the Proposed San Jose Stadium*, prepared for the San Jose Redevelopment Agency by Bay Area Economics in 2006.

the “Lower Downtown” warehouse district situated between the downtown core and the stadium.

- **Suitable Redevelopment Opportunities:** New stadiums have spawned redevelopment where surrounding properties have offered attractive opportunities. Such opportunities have featured (1) relatively low costs that allow for relatively low-rise developments rather than compelling large-scale high-rise investments; and (2) properties such as former warehouse buildings that contribute to a “trendy” urban character. In Denver, the advent of Coors Field coincided with the growing popularity of urban “loft” living in converted warehouses, making Lower Downtown a popular redevelopment location even without the new stadium.

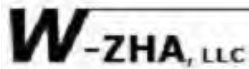
In contrast, in Baltimore the areas around Oriole Park at Camden Yards contained surface parking lots, bordered by neighborhoods in which historic preservation laws and ongoing economic viability prevented new development activity. Similarly, development of the properties around the Metrodome would have involved either large-scale new developments or relatively difficult conversions of large properties such as the Minneapolis Armory.

- **Parking and Pedestrian Orientations:** In Denver, the lack of surface parking around the new Coors Field, combined with a free (and permanent) transit shuttle to the area, helped generate pedestrian traffic through the Lower Downtown district, which featured pedestrian-friendly urban neighborhoods.

Applying these factors to the current situation, the Study Area is not likely to derive significant new business activity directly from the new Target Field. The primary entrances and pedestrian flows to Target Field will come from the downtown core on the east, and from the northern parts of the North Loop and the Light Rail transit station on the north. These areas would offer prime locations even without the new stadium, and older properties for redevelopment remain available in these areas.

In comparison, new developments in the Study Area would be separated from the stadium and its entrances by the Hennepin County Energy Recovery Center on the west, as well as by highway and topographical barriers on the south.

Moreover, the Study Area properties closest to the stadium are occupied by uses such as the City of Minneapolis Royalston and Olson Public Works facilities and the Mary’s Place and Sharing and Caring Hands properties serving homeless and indigent populations. Given the ongoing existence of



these uses and institutions, and given the competition from other properties in the North Loop and in the downtown core, the Lower North Loop Study Area will probably not capture substantial redevelopment opportunities generated by the stadium and the multi-modal transit station.

2. Key Lessons: Transit Stations

The multi-modal transit station on the north side of the stadium will improve access between the downtown core and Target Field and the northern parts of the North Loop. To the south of this station, however, the Hennepin County Energy Resource Center and Target Field present substantial visual and physical barriers between the station and the Lower North Loop Study Area.

An LRT station serving the Southwest Corridor, however, could offer substantial benefits to the Study Area.

The Twin Cities' experience with the initial Hiawatha Light Rail line has established that LRT stations are sufficient in and of themselves to attract residential development to locations that would not otherwise attract such projects. Outside of downtown Minneapolis, examples of such projects include the Hi-Lake Flats near the Lake Street station; Oaks Hiawatha (I and II) near the 46th Street Station; Olin Crossings and others near the 54th Street station area; and Reflections near Bloomington Central Station. The anticipated Southwest LRT line is likely to generate similar development opportunities, and may generate more attractive opportunities, since it will link downtown Minneapolis with suburban locations containing relatively upscale businesses and affluent communities.

Given these considerations, the Southwest Corridor LRT station, if appropriately situated, can help generate multi-family and possibly other types of developments as well.

C. OTHER ANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS

While Target Field and LRT stations are identified as the primary catalysts for the North Loop area, other anticipated events could also exert positive influences on development potential in the Study Area. These include:

Alatus Development: While construction is not imminent, a new development on the blocks bounded by Hennepin Avenue, I-94, and 10th and 11th Streets – just east of the Study Area -- would most likely feature high-density office and residential development, along with a new Lund's grocery store on the ground floor. This improvement could exert a strong influence;

the presence of a local grocery store has been perhaps the most important residential convenience/amenity absent in downtown Minneapolis and its environs. While I-94 would separate the prospective grocery store from the Study Area, the Study Area would be closer to this store than any existing residential neighborhood.

Depending on its final mix of uses, this project would present formidable competition to any project targeting a high-end, downtown-oriented market. Despite this, the presence of nearby high-end businesses and residents may enhance development prospects in the Study Area, which would gain from increased exposure, and from proximity to downtown workers and residents.

Ryan Companies Bassett Creek Redevelopment project: At this time, the City of Minneapolis and Ryan Companies have entered into an agreement whereby the City would sell the City's automobile impound lot property – located just west of the Study Area in the northwest quadrant of the I-394 and I-94 interchange -- to Ryan Companies for a redevelopment project. This major undertaking would require extensive environmental remediation and new infrastructure construction; development plans envision 300-500 multi-family dwelling units and three or four buildings containing 700,000 to 1 million square feet of office space. The project has targeted a 2010 start date, with subsequent development phases extending into a 2015-2020 time frame.

Like the Alatus Development, this project would present additional competition for potential development projects in the Study Area. Such competition, however, would most likely target high-end office and/or residential tenants. Consequently, the successful development of this project may enhance rather than constrain development prospects in the Study Area, which would gain opportunities to serve new workers and residents.

Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC): Located at the intersection of 5th Street and Olson Parkway – on the west side of Target Field – this facility uses state-of-the-art technologies to convert garbage into new energy and other resources. HERC plans new improvements involving educational displays, pedestrian/park improvements, and circulation improvements that will maximize its attractiveness while minimizing noxious emissions.

While the facility will present a physical barrier between the Study Area and the ballpark-driven pedestrian flows, these improvements will help to minimize any potential negative perceptions of the facility and its surroundings.

D. LIKELY IMPACT SUMMARY

The Lower North Loop Study Area will face significant barriers in deriving development potential from the Target Field or the 5th Street multi-modal transit station. Such barriers include the Hennepin County incinerator, the topography, the Mary's Place property, and substantial competition from other developments to the north and east.

The Lower North Loop Study Area could derive more important benefits from the Southwest LRT station and the proposed Alatus development with its Lund's grocery store. Improved access to the southern end of the downtown core (rather than to the stadium and multi-modal station) will maximize prospects for new development in the Lower North Loop Study Area.

III. LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS and CONTINGENCIES

This section presents overview analyses of the development outlooks for the Study Area, as well as discussions of the Study Area's key issues and locations.

A. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Study Area's residential development prospects are shaped by the following considerations.

1. Key Market Considerations

Location Amenities: As discussed in the preceding section, the Study Area's proximity to downtown, a station on the Southwest LRT Corridor, and other improvements such as Target Field and a nearby grocery store (Lund's) will generate interest in residential developments near the prospective Southwest LRT station.

Broad Demographic Trends have provided a primary force driving much of the recent wave of downtown condominium development. These trends have featured (1) a growing "empty nester" (primarily 50-64-year-old) household component, and (2) an increased level of affluence, as the regional economy has increased its base of professional, high-compensation jobs.

Hennepin County is likely to furnish most of the market support for prospective residential developments in the Study Area. As shown in Table 4, Hennepin County households with annual incomes above \$75,000 account for all of the County's household growth; households with incomes below this level have been declining.

Then, among households with annual incomes above \$75,000, the 45-to-54-year old age group is the County's largest cohort; the 55-to-64 is projected to achieve the highest growth over the next five years.

In addition to the empty-nester cohorts, strong growth is also projected in the 25-34 age group. This group typically features new households attracted to the area by new employment, and the group experiences relatively high turnover rates, with householders moving as they change their employment, marital status, and income levels.

TABLE 4

Selected Household Growth Sectors, Hennepin County, 2000-2013					
	2000	2008	2013	2008-2013 Change	
				#	ann. %
Total Households	456,278	483,159	496,282	13,123	0.5%
Incomes <\$75,000	314,930	256,746	210,008	-46,738	-3.9%
Incomes \$75,000 +	141,348	226,413	286,274	59,861	4.8%
25-34	23,250	31,512	42,468	10,956	6.1%
35-44	41,865	54,017	59,257	5,240	1.9%
45-54	42,518	63,521	76,012	12,491	3.7%
55-64	19,915	42,344	56,583	14,239	6.0%
65-74	7,522	15,181	23,415	8,234	9.1%
75+	4,237	13,250	19,172	5,922	7.7%

Source: ESRI, STDB, Inc., W-ZHA LLC.

Long-Term Demographic Trends and Development Timing: Notwithstanding the foregoing, “empty nester” age groups will reach a plateau in the period between 2010 to 2020, and will decline thereafter. As shown below, long-term forecasts prepared by the State of Minnesota Demographic Center project that in Hennepin County the 45 to 64 age group will decline after 2015. It should also be noted that, while households without children will continue to increase after 2015, virtually all of this increase will be attributable to the senior (65+) segment. This anticipated decline among empty nesters will weaken the primary force underlying the recent condominium boom (which may resume as the national and regional economies recover from the current recession). As this demographic force declines, even new projects that do not target this demographic group will face increased competition from other well-situated projects. Thus, if improvements such as the Southwest LRT station, a new grocery store (and accompanying development) and other improvements are not implemented by 2015, the potential for multi-family residential development in the Study Area will become increasingly limited.

TABLE 5

Hennepin County Household Projections by Age & Type of Household 2005-2030						
	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total	462,759	472,630	482,120	490,560	496,400	501,000
W/o Children	330,268	347,470	363,240	374,430	381,110	387,250
15 to 24	28,212	29,710	28,210	26,350	27,310	27,900
25 to 44	187,683	174,750	172,440	173,950	175,140	171,970
45 to 64	171,323	188,850	192,200	185,240	170,700	161,960
65+	75,541	79,320	89,270	105,030	123,250	139,160

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center.

Ample Market Competition: Over the next ten years, developers will be able to identify competitive multi-family residential sites at new LRT stations along new corridors, as well as locations in the Upper North Loop, Downtown East, Northeast Minneapolis, Loring Park, Elliott Park and others. Given competition from these locations, it is likely that prospective developments in the Study Area would have to target relatively low-end market tiers.

2. Study Area Development Outlook

With potential access to LRT transit, excellent proximity to employment and entertainment amenities of downtown Minneapolis, and relatively low acquisition costs, the Study Area may offer opportunities for multi-residential development. This potential, however, will be constrained by:

- **Timing:** as discussed above, while some Study Area improvements may not be in place until approximately 2015, some segments of the market will begin to weaken after this time.
- **A limited ability to compete in mid-high market tiers:** Projects would not likely compete with upscale or even middle-market projects in price ranges above \$250,000. Rather, projects would target a less affluent market that would include renters and younger “urban pioneers” seeking convenience and entertainment rather than security or upscale features. Prospective developments targeting this niche would face significant economic challenges, which might require innovate cost-saving designs and other measures.

B. OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

1. Key Market Considerations

General Market Context: The *Downtown Minneapolis Commercial Market Analysis* prepared for the City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (2007) finds that:

- Through the year 2020, the downtown market is likely to support 6.4 to 7.7 million square feet of new office absorption, and 5.4 to 6.6 million square feet of new development.
- Remaining underutilized properties in the central core area (bounded by Washington Avenue, Hennepin Avenue, 5th Avenue South, and 12th Street South) will continue to offer prime redevelopment opportunities.

The report also anticipates that office developments will prove feasible in outlying parts of downtown, such as the North Loop. Given the overall (approximately) 6 million square foot envelope, however, new office space in locations such as the North Loop are not likely to capture significant shares of new office development, which will continue to seek high-amenity, high-image locations. Within the North Loop, locations such as the site of Hines Development's proposed North Loop Green development are well positioned to capture this market.

Competitive Low-Cost Niche: The Study Area does offer a relatively low-cost location in close proximity to downtown but it must be noted that the downtown office market – currently and historically – is weakest in its lower-cost Class B and C tiers. At this time, for instance, brokerage firms estimate overall downtown office vacancy at 13 to 15 percent. Within this envelope, however, brokers estimate lower vacancies of just 6 to 7 percent in prime properties in the 600 through 1000 blocks of the Nicollet Mall. In contrast, Class-B and C properties maintain considerably higher vacancies, estimated in the range of 20 to 21 percent in both categories. Moreover, this pattern has generally persisted through strong and weak cycles of the downtown market. Given this pattern, new low-cost space in the Study Area would face ample competition from a persistent supply of available Class-C space closer to the downtown core.

2. Study Area Development Outlooks

Given the limited prospects for substantial office developments outside the downtown core area, the Study Area is not likely to attract substantial high-rise or Class-A office development. Moreover, in seeking lower-end office development, the Study Area would face formidable competition not only

from other locations in the Upper North Loop or Downtown East, but also from available space in existing Class-B and Class-C office properties close to the downtown core.

Notwithstanding its limitations, the Study Area may prove attractive to some small office users and other businesses seeking space for a mix of office and industrial operations. Such tenants would not need to project high-end images for customers or employees, but may simply enjoy proximity to downtown and its various amenities. In addition, the available surface parking at existing buildings in the Study Area can provide another competitive amenity⁶. Cosmetic improvements to some of the Study Area's existing structures can effectively serve a small niche for this type of small-scale businesses.

C. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

1. Key Market Considerations

Current Downtown Retail Market: Most retail brokers estimate the prevailing downtown retail vacancy rate at roughly 15 to 20 percent (Colliers Turley Martin Tucker, Northmarq), as compared with 7 to 8 percent in the overall metropolitan area. While downtown vacancies are actually lower than in past years, the downtown has continued to sustain losses of several major national retail franchises, with recent departures by Crate & Barrel, Polo Ralph Lauren, Borders Books, Williams Sonoma and others.

Office Worker Support: Downtown workers comprise the largest source of demand for downtown retail space, and the primary retail locations in downtown Minneapolis are heavily concentrated at the center of the skyway system in the core office area. The table below illustrates the consistent pattern followed by downtown office and retail vacancy rates; this illustrates the relationship between office worker spending and the retail market.

⁶ New developments with surface parking are currently prohibited in the entire "downtown" area defined as the area within interstate highways 94, 394, and 35.

TABLE 6

CBD Commercial Vacancies: 2000-2009		
	CBD Vacancies	
	Office	Retail
2000	10.1%	10.5%
2006	20.3%	23.7%
2009	15.5%	17.6%

Source: United Properties, Northmarqcompass.com

While residential development over the last 15 years has substantially increased the downtown population, downtown neighborhoods are scattered among several different locations around the downtown core, and no single neighborhood is likely to contribute substantial support for new downtown retail tenancies.

2. Study Area Development Outlooks

Absent substantial market-rate office and residential development, the Study Area is not likely to attract substantial numbers of general retail businesses. While new retailers will occupy space when the office market improves, they will seek to fill vacancies in the downtown core. And while new multi-family housing development may resume in the Upper North Loop, increased retail activity serving these developments will seek nearby locations in the Warehouse District and/or groundfloor spaces in mixed-use developments in the Upper North Loop.

Notwithstanding the negative outlook for general retail development, the Study Area may be able to provide suitable locations for entertainment-related destinations. Such destinations encompass a wide variety, but could include nightclubs, music venues, theatres, and other such entertainment venues. The Study Area may prove attractive for such uses because of it's:

- Relatively low costs for land and buildings in close proximity to downtown – in comparison with rising costs in the Warehouse District;
- Potential availability of low-rise buildings with large floorplates appropriate for conversion to such uses.
- Proximity to other entertainment-related uses, including professional sports venues (hosting a minimum of 122 sports events/year),

- performing arts theatres, bars and restaurants in the Upper North Loop;
- Availability of surface parking as well as light rail transit; and
 - Potential ease of permitting, which may face greater obstacles in areas with greater residential concentrations.

It should also be noted that the popularity of downtown Minneapolis for eating/drinking/entertainment functions has increased steadily over a long-term period. As shown below, restaurant (non-liquor) revenues have increased at an average annualized rate of nearly 5 percent since 1996; liquor revenues have increased even more rapidly, at 6.7 percent per year.

TABLE 7

Downtown Minneapolis Sales/Use Taxes 1996-2007		
	<u>Restaurant (non-liquor)</u>	<u>Liquor</u>
1996	\$6,255,616	\$1,900,700
1997	\$6,506,351	\$1,970,855
1998	\$7,145,563	\$2,372,985
1999	\$7,492,664	\$2,520,098
2000	\$8,192,127	\$2,769,212
2001	\$7,769,374	\$2,773,742
2002	\$7,963,195	\$2,908,520
2003	\$8,063,313	\$3,111,367
2004	\$8,961,302	\$3,483,046
2005	\$9,870,400	\$3,626,226
2006	\$10,258,407	\$3,674,404
2007	\$10,607,021	\$3,879,329
Avg. Ann. Change	4.9%	6.7%

Source: Minnesota Dept. of Revenue

D. INDUSTRIAL

For the most part, the Study Area is already built-out with industrial uses. Notwithstanding existing conditions, this discussion addresses the Study Area's future outlook for continued industrial use.

1. Key Conditions

Demand for industrial property with central locations and good highway access: The Study Area offers a strong location for industrial tenants seeking a central location in the region, access to the interstate highway system, and/or proximity to downtown customers and amenities. These issues comprise the most important factors in Minneapolis industrial tenants' location decisions, as indicated in the *Industrial Land Use Study and Employment Policy Plan* prepared for the City of Minneapolis in 2006. This study also indicated that, while conversions to other uses have caused the supply of centrally-located industrial land to dwindle, industrial tenants will continue to demand such property.

2. Study Area Development Outlooks

New industrial development is unlikely in the Study Area. New industrial development is most attractive where property is undeveloped and relatively inexpensive. In the Study Area, most parcels are developed with permanent structures. In regard to costs, the above-referenced *Industrial Land Use Study and Employment Policy Plan* identified a median value of \$3.26 per square foot in Minneapolis; in comparison, assessed values in the Study Area range from \$7 to \$15 per square foot in most cases.⁷ The Study Area's relatively high land costs, combined with the added costs of demolition and redevelopment would limit the financial viability of redevelopment for industrial use. In general, redevelopment of industrial properties occurs in response to opportunities to capture the higher values derived from condominiums or office space.

Notwithstanding its limited prospects for new construction, many of the Study Area's existing buildings should be able to maintain industrial occupancies over at least a ten-year span. The following factors contribute to this likelihood:

- With the exception of manufacturers seeking large-scale or highly specialized operations, most industrial tenants seek space in existing buildings. Given its central location and highway access, the Study Area's existing buildings should be attractive for industrial tenants.
- As residential redevelopment resumes in the Upper North Loop, this will continue an ongoing displacement of industrial uses. Many of these industrial tenants will prefer to maintain their general orientations, and will most likely find relatively less-expensive properties in the Study Area desirable.

⁷ See footnote 3.

- The availability of surface parking areas at the Study Area's existing buildings provides a competitive advantage for businesses seeking "flex" industrial space, many of which use relatively high portions of their space for office uses. Such businesses prefer onsite, off-street parking. In downtown Minneapolis, zoning regulations prohibit new developments from providing new onsite surface parking lots. Given the scarcity of properties near downtown Minneapolis with surface parking lots, the Study Area's existing buildings provide an advantage for any businesses seeking proximity to downtown.

E. SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

The following summarizes key niches and issues for future development potential in the Study Area.

1. Potential Niches

Existing assets and constraints will be favorably enhanced by currently anticipated improvements, but compared to other locations around downtown Minneapolis and along light rail corridors, the Study Area's niche for new development will be defined not by its amenities or image, but rather by its relatively low costs and proximity to downtown.

Likely niches include:

- Industrial uses in existing buildings: many of the Study Area's existing properties are likely to remain viable for industrial uses. While such uses will not affect changes to the area, the ongoing viability of existing buildings helps to (1) maintain occupancies and thereby guard against severe deterioration of conditions; (2) decrease the likelihood of sudden conversions and dislocations.
- Low-Middle-Market Residential: While Study Area developments would face formidable competition in the market's upscale or middle-market tiers, the Study Area may provide opportunities for "urban pioneer" households that place high values on proximity and access to downtown. Such households value access to employment, transit, and entertainment features; lower priorities are given to noise issues, neighborhood image, sophisticated architecture, etc. This niche will be narrow, and will present difficult financial challenges to developers, but innovative developers may be able to offer open-floor formats, innovative parking arrangements, and other cost-saving measures that can assist in targeting this market.

- Entertainment-related uses: The Study Area offers relatively low-cost land nearly adjacent to professional sports and other entertainment venues. As costs and residential components rise in other downtown-adjacent areas, this niche may provide opportunities.
- Very small-scale renovation projects: While the Study Area is likely to remain obscure and thus “below the radar” of many investors, small-scale renovations and other improvements may prove viable for small-scale developers, existing property owners, and other innovative investors; such projects could involve virtually any type of use.

2. Locations and Issues

While this document does not recommend redevelopment strategies (or even objectives), in enhancing the Study Area’s future development potential the City would need to create development sites and opportunities that would:

- Offer optimal access to downtown. Close proximity to downtown is the Study Area’s strongest asset, and should be maximized to stimulate initial projects. This can be achieved by (1) controlling a site close to downtown access points on either on 10th, 11th, 12th Streets (which extend from Royalston) or Glenwood Avenue, close to downtown; and (2) siting a light rail transit station adjacent or nearby. If situated close to the Study Area’s downtown access points, the LRT station would give the Study Area a southern access point to downtown, as an alternative to the access points through the Upper North Loop and the anticipated multi-modal station.
- Influence the development potential in its surroundings. To achieve a greater influence, better internal circulation within the Study Area is needed. While Glenwood and Olson Parkway provide reasonable East-west circulation, improved north-south connections would increase the area’s isolation from the Upper North Loop as well as to -- and from -- the Stadium area. Circulation improvements might involve changes in the street system, improvements to existing streets, and possibly the use of a new LRT station to bridge physical or perceived gaps.

Royalston/Glenwood Intersection: All of the key access points from the Study Area to downtown pass through or intersect with Royalston Avenue and/or Glenwood Avenue. Therefore, the area around the intersection of these streets presents the best opportunity to achieve the two above objectives. In promoting new development, development sites in this area can target one or more of the niches described above.

Timing Issue: In seeking to enhance new development opportunities, appropriate City actions must be timed so that: development opportunities will benefit from (1) public infrastructure improvements (including the anticipated LRT station as well as additional internal circulation improvements), and (2) new private developments anticipated on the southern edges of downtown. At the same time, new developments should be ready for implementation within the next ten years. This will enable them to capitalize on the broad demographic trends that have provided the impetus for a two-decade wave of multi-family development. While Study Area residential projects are not likely to target upscale empty-nester niches, a recession in this market niche will cause developments at other sites around downtown Minneapolis to target the market's remaining niches; this will diminish development prospects for locations in the Study Area.



BRIDGING THE GAP:

THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH LOOP'S "OTHER" SIDE



Final Report
May 2009



PA 8081 Capstone, Spring 2009
Hall • Phenow • Roth

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Bridging the Gap: The Future of the North Loop's "Other" Side

Prepared by Adele Hall, Patrick Phenow, and Katie Roth
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Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bridging the Gap: The Future of the North Loop's "Other" Side explores the development potential of the southwest portion of Minneapolis' North Loop neighborhood, referred to throughout this document as the Lower North Loop. The study area is bounded on the west by Interstate 94 and on the south by Interstate 394. Local streets 12th Street North and 3rd Avenue North form the eastern edge of the study area. The diagonal 7th Street North forms the remaining border of the area.

Big changes are coming to the Lower North Loop. The study area is located just south and west of Target Field, future home of the Minnesota Twins, and next door to a multi-modal transit station, now under construction. Up to four light rail lines, one heavy rail commuter line, and many local buses will one day converge here. These significant public investments could have a major impact on the neighborhood and this study aims to understand the issues in the area that will shape the potential for development and change in the area.

Bridging the Gap is based on four themes, each of which will address a specific question about development in the area:

- *Barriers*: What barriers—physical, political, cultural, or otherwise—may inhibit this area from realizing its full development potential?
- *Connectivity*: How can multi-modal connectivity be improved within the North Loop, to Target Field and the multi-modal station, into the downtown core, and to Near North?
- *Balance*: What is the right balance of uses to complement and not compete with the downtown core?
- *Public Realm*: What improvements are needed on public sites and within the public realm?

The answers to these questions will be presented in three chapters within this report:

- *Diagnosis*: The diagnosis chapter will focus upon the current state of the study area, examine relevant planning documents and peer experiences, and identify barriers to development, connectivity issues, and land uses.
- *Vision*: The vision chapter will focus on the development potential for the study area, with an eye toward resolving the barriers discussed in the diagnosis chapter.
- *Action Plan*: The action plan will describe how the barriers can be specifically addressed and how the vision can be realized by the City of Minneapolis.

Bridging the Gap is prepared at the request of the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development, which will use the study to inform a small area plan for this portion of the North Loop neighborhood.

Diagnosis: Barriers to development

One of the most pervasive barriers to redevelopment of the Lower North Loop is the lack of connections within the area, as well as to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Inside the area, a series of super-blocks make internal travel difficult on foot or bicycle. In addition, the Lower North Loop is bordered on all sides by high-speed roadways located either above or below the prevailing elevation of the neighborhood.

In addition to existing connectivity issues, several substantial barriers will impede and discourage development if not addressed.

- **Funding:** Initiating development in the Lower North Loop will require a significant investment by the public sector.
- **Political feasibility:** There are few residents in the area and thus few constituents to please, and the area itself holds little political influence.
- **Public involvement:** The Lower North Loop has the potential to become valuable real estate, but developers, elected officials, and current will likely have competing visions for the Lower North Loop.
- **No cohesive area identity:** The Lower North Loop exists neither as a stand-alone area nor as an involved part of another established neighborhood.
- **Safety and security:** Existing uses provide very little street life or pedestrian traffic that could provide natural surveillance for the area.
- **Industrial legacy of the land:** Based on existing uses, it is anticipated that much of the land in the Lower North Loop will need to be cleaned up before it can be redeveloped.
- **Housing providers:** The transient population in the Lower North Loop could be a deterrent to both residential and business development.
- **Hennepin Energy Recovery Center:** The HERC facility raises problems for all nearby development due to the odors given off by trucks transporting waste to the facility.
- **Current land uses:** Much of the Lower North Loop is occupied by large-scale public facilities (Metro Transit, City of Minneapolis) and quasi-public facilities (Xcel Energy) uses that will not likely be altered.

- Scale problems: Grade-separated roadways that surround most of the neighborhood create differences in scale that are unwelcoming to pedestrian activity and create creepy nooks in the neighborhood.
- Inadequate streetscape: Streetscaping is minimal or nonexistent throughout the neighborhood.
- Bicycle gaps: Gaps in the Minneapolis bike network make it difficult and dangerous for bicyclists to get to destinations in the neighborhood.

Vision: Possibilities when barriers are resolved

The vision for the Lower North Loop is about possibility and what can happen if the barriers identified in the diagnosis are removed or resolved. The vision revolves around three themes of the study.

A balanced mix of land uses: new structures and green spaces

In the future, the neighborhood will consist of a mix of land uses including housing, offices, retail shops, live-work artist spaces, housing providers, and publicly owned facilities. Because of its relatively strong connection to downtown and visibility from the ballpark, the intersection of Glenwood and Royalston Avenues will become a small entertainment area with Lee's Liquor Lounge anchoring a corner with several new bars and restaurants. Conversion of existing warehouse spaces to office will be spurred by the strong transit connections and proximity to other downtown businesses; these will be the first changes to the area. Eventually, mixed income housing will be added to the emerging office and entertainment uses and the neighborhood will be home to an increasingly diverse mix of uses. Public investment in parks, streetscapes, and new road and sidewalk connections will help to turn the Lower North Loop into a livable neighborhood.

An improved public realm: coexistence between new and old

An influx of residents, shops, offices, and restaurants will reshape much of the land in the Lower North Loop between now and 2030. During the same timeframe, however, the public facilities and emergency housing providers located in the area are unlikely to leave. What will change is the way these uses are integrated with their neighbors.

New residential developments will house residents of mixed incomes, avoiding the creation of a vast disparity within the Lower North Loop. Public areas will provide connections between old and new residents, rather than isolating them from one another. The city's public facilities in the area will also be better neighbors. A green, friendly public realm will bring together existing facilities and new development to form a cohesive and welcoming neighborhood, inviting visitors to explore the area, and giving residents a reason to take pride in their neighborhood.

Effective connections: a gateway to the City of Minneapolis

Public investments taking place in and adjacent to the Lower North Loop, with its prime geographic location, will transform it into a primary gateway to the city. New transit lines will make it into one of the most easily accessible places in the city. Several improvements in local accessibility will ensure that the neighborhood takes advantage of this boon in connectivity to the neighborhood.

The Lower North Loop will be replete with green spaces, including trails and larger park spaces. Traffic calming measures will improve existing pedestrian connections to the Near North, Sumner-Glenwood, Harrison, and Downtown neighborhoods. Non-motorized accessibility will also be improved by extending four local streets through the central part of the neighborhood. This newly traversable and inviting neighborhood will accommodate all modes of travel safely and efficiently.

Action plan: Making the vision a reality

The action plan delineates actions for implementing the vision. Suggested actions range in scale, intensity, and priority and are organized according to the three themes incorporated in the vision.

A balanced mix of land uses: new structures and green spaces

Because the Lower North Loop is isolated from adjacent neighborhoods, has few residents, and is primarily an industrial area with several overnight housing providers, we anticipate that without significant public investment, it will be difficult to inspire the private development needed to realize the vision for this area. We propose two methods of luring private development to the Lower North Loop.

First, the City of Minneapolis could attempt to acquire several connecting parcels in order to facilitate a large-scale redevelopment effort and reduce the possibility of a failed “pioneer” development. As land assembly is a difficult barrier for developers to overcome, possession of a large developable parcel could give the City of Minneapolis some leverage to negotiate with a developer for features that the City considers important, such as a refurbished farmers’ market, right-of-way for new connecting streets, and a public park. Second, if resources are available, tax increment financing (TIF) is another tool that the city can use to incite development in the Lower North Loop.

Zoning changes can also facilitate changes to the area. The parcels across Glenwood Avenue from Lee’s Liquor Lounge should be rezoned to accommodate additional bar, restaurant, or entertainment business. In addition, the City should maintain zoning that is conducive for future Metro Transit expansion near the Heywood Garage facility.

An improved public realm: coexistence between new and old

Improvements to the public realm are focused on lighting and greening the study area, adding amenities throughout the neighborhood, managing the on-street parking supply, and creating a public identity for the area through a branding campaign.

Significant investments in lighting will not only improve the appearance of the neighborhood, but will also address the barrier posed by unsafe-feeling streets and sidewalks and improve perceived security. The appearance of the public realm can also be vastly improved by greening the area. The City can encourage private property owners to voluntarily green their properties through tax incentives. The City can also use improvements to the public realm to create a cohesive area identity. We also recommend that the city partner with a local nonprofit youth art center to add mural-like paintings to the concrete support posts underneath I-94.

Finally, managing the on-street parking supply will be crucial in implementing a multi-modal, mixed use district. The city can implement variable-rate meters in portions of the Lower North Loop to achieve parking goals in the area. These measures will ensure that the area does not share the fate of the Downtown East neighborhood, whose streets are packed during game times at the Metrodome.

Effective connections: a gateway to the City of Minneapolis

As an industrial neighborhood that is essentially bounded on all sides by freeways, connectivity and accessibility must be improved to spur development. To ensure that private development and to make the neighborhood more appealing to those that would use its current and future amenities and those that would live here, a set of infrastructure improvements presented here will make the Lower North Loop a more accessible place. These actions are intended to address access both to and from this neighborhood, as well as connectivity within the neighborhood.

Glenwood Avenue, currently designated as an Industrial Street in the Minneapolis Action Plan, will become an Activity Area Street, as it will be one of Lower North Loop's activity centers and a primary gateway to downtown. Glenwood will be densely populated with automobiles, bikes, and pedestrians, and will require a marked on-street bike lane, filling one of the major bicycle network gaps in the neighborhood. Other major gaps in the bicycle network will be filled on 7th Street and 10th Street by adding on-street bicycle lanes. Traffic calming measures will improve existing pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Overall accessibility in the neighborhood will be enhanced by extending four roads through the center of the area.

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INTRODUCTION TO *BRIDGING THE GAP*

Bridging the Gap: The Future of the North Loop's "Other" Side explores the development potential of the southwest portion of Minneapolis' North Loop neighborhood. In the last decade, the upper portion of the North Loop changed steadily as new residents moved into historic warehouses converted to condominiums, and coffee shops, bars, and restaurants followed. The "other" (south) side of the North Loop neighborhood, which is the focus of this study, has seen little of these changes, and remains mostly a light-industrial area with few residents.

Problem statement

Now even bigger changes are coming to the North Loop neighborhood, and this time to the "other" side. The study area is located just south and west of Target Field, future home of the Minnesota Twins. Next door, a multi-modal transit station is under construction. Up to four light rail lines, one heavy rail commuter line, and many local buses will one day converge here. These significant public investments could have a major impact on the neighborhood and this study aims to understand the issues in the area in order to inform the potential for development and change in the area.

Change is coming to the North Loop Neighborhood—this time to the "other" side.

Report structure

Bridging the Gap is based on four themes, each of which will address a specific question about development in the area:

- *Barriers*: What barriers—physical, political, cultural, or otherwise—may inhibit this area from realizing its full development potential?
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CHAPTER 1: DIAGNOSIS

AREA BACKGROUND

This chapter, the first of three, is focused on a diagnosis of the study area. As such, it will address the *barriers* theme most heavily, with some discussion of *connectivity* and the *public realm*.

This section provides background information about the study area, including a definition of the study area’s boundaries, an inventory of the current uses in the area, and demographic information about the residents of the area.

Study area location

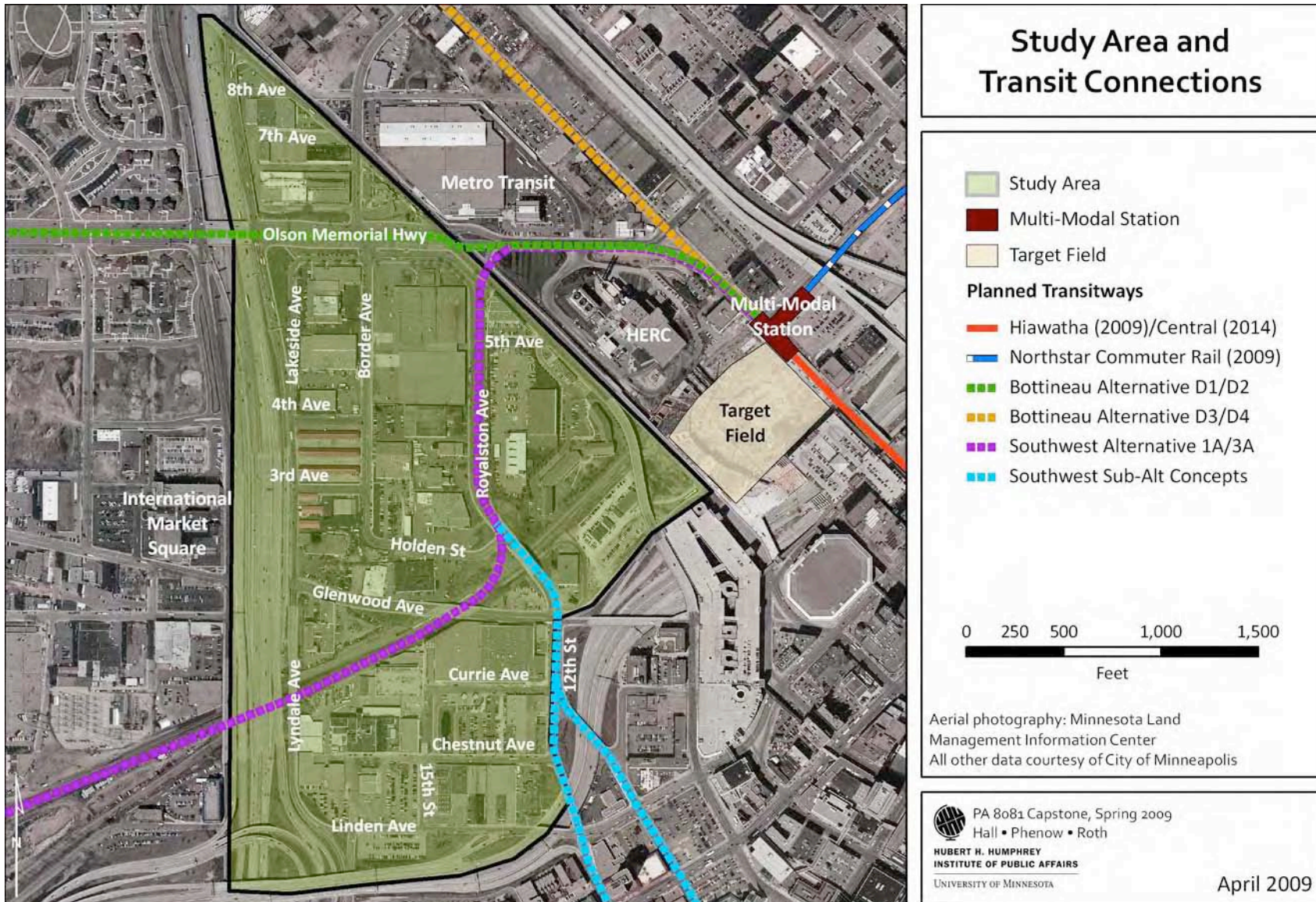
This study focuses on a portion of the North Loop neighborhood to which little attention has been paid in the past. Located south of the ballpark and the multi-modal station, North Loop neighbors refer to this area as the “other” side. Because of its geographic relationship to the more highly developed northern portion of the neighborhood, we refer to the study area as the *Lower North Loop* throughout the report.

North Loop neighbors refer to this area as the “other” side.

The Lower North Loop, illustrated in Figure 1-1, is bounded on the west by Interstate 94 and on the south by Interstate 394. Local streets 12th Street North and 3rd Avenue North form the eastern edge of the study area. The diagonal 7th Street North forms the remaining border of the area.

The entire study area covers approximately 152 acres of land; however, only 84 acres are occupied by distinct land uses. The remaining land is occupied by transportation infrastructure, including surface streets throughout the area, I-94 on the west side of the study area, and the I-94/I-394 interchange in the south-west corner.

Figure 1-1 | Study Area Boundaries and Planned Transit Connections



Current land use

Land use in this area is characterized by large-scale municipal facilities, temporary housing providers, and industrial and warehouse uses. Commercial uses are located north of Olson Memorial Highway, south of the Cedar Lake Trail, and in other small concentrations throughout the area. Industrial uses are distributed throughout the study area, and congregate living facilities owned by Catholic Charities and Sharing and Caring Hands are located on the 7th Street border of the study area and at the corner of Glenwood Avenue and Lyndale Avenue.

Property ownership

Parcels in the study area occupy 84 acres, or just over half of the study area’s total 152 acres. The remaining 68 acres are occupied by large-scale transportation infrastructure, including the elevated portion of Interstate 94, which forms the western border of the study area and covers nearly 24 acres of urban land. Right-of-way allowances, surface streets, and Olson Memorial Highway comprise the remaining non-parcel area.

Table 1-1 contains a summary of the area’s 13 largest property owners and the amount of land they each hold. The locations of these properties are illustrated in Figure 1-2 on page 9. The largest property owners in the area are the City of Minneapolis (22 percent of the total parcel area), Xcel Energy (14 percent), and ICIDS, LLC, a private company which owns two adjoining warehouse/industrial buildings at 501 and 415 Royalston Avenue (9 percent). Also present among the largest property owners is Sharing and Caring Hands, whose properties along 7th Street North amount to 7 percent of the study area.

A striking characteristic of the property ownership summary is the diverse range of property owners present in the study area. Public, private, and non-profit property owners are all present in the Lower North Loop. Among the top 13 largest owners shown in Table 1-1, seven are private entities, with two—Xcel Energy and BNSF—considered quasi-public in the scope of their businesses. The City of Minneapolis, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Ballpark Authority represent the public sector, while Sharing and Caring Hands is a non-profit landowner.

Public, private, and non-profit property owners are all present in the small study area.

Residents

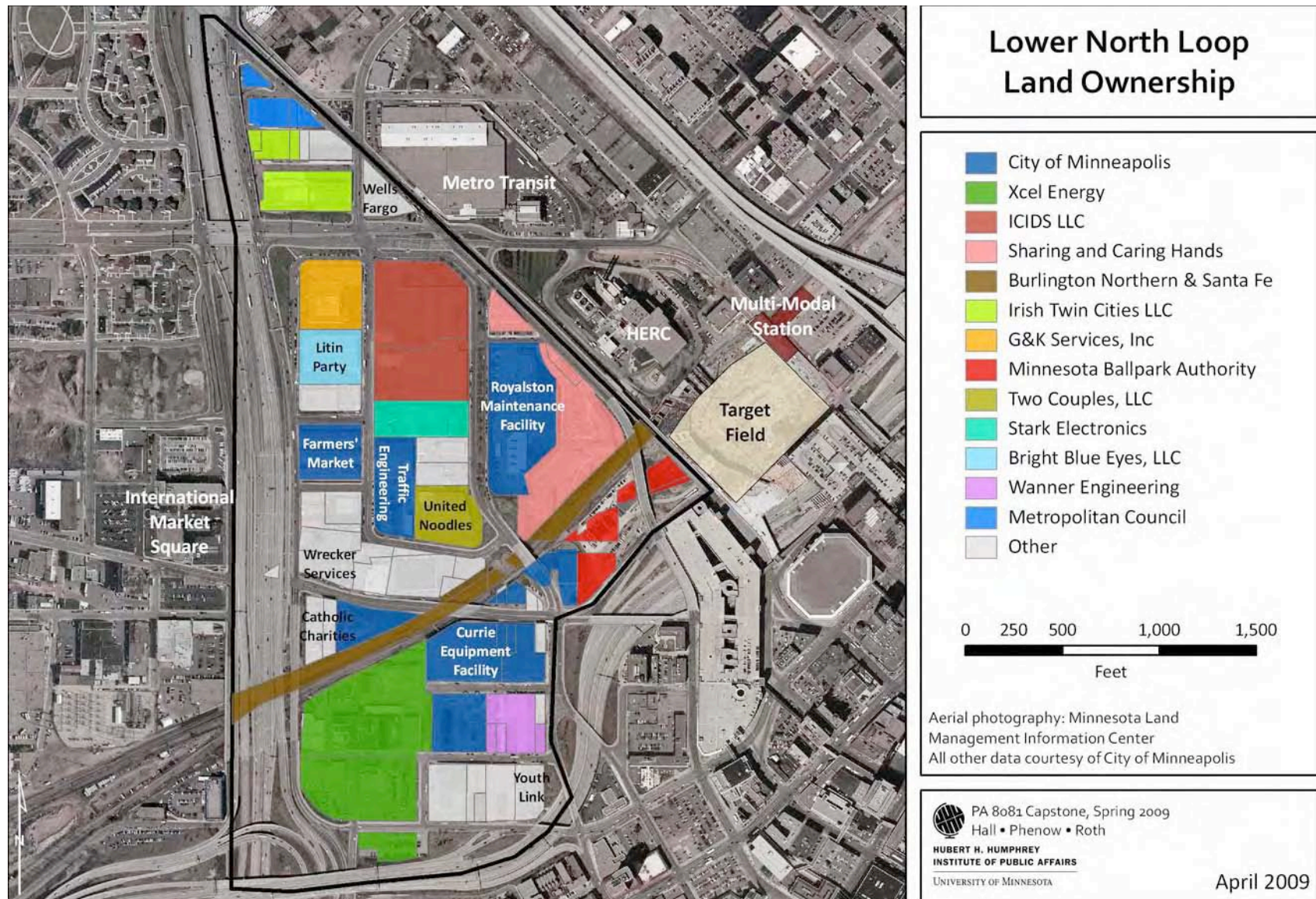
Several limitations hinder a useful demographic analysis of the residential population of the Lower North Loop. The most recently collected Census data dates back to 2000, and when the data is disaggregated enough to show population for this area, little information is available beyond age, sex, and race. Most importantly, the census data shows a permanent population of only 67 residents living in 50 housing units within two buildings¹.

The transient population in the Lower North Loop is larger than the population of permanent residents. The Sharing and Caring Hands facility known as Mary’s Place consists of 82 transitional housing units that house up to 500 persons. In addition, Catholic Charities maintains the 80-bed Glenwood Residence facility for chronic alcoholics, as well as an 88-unit housing facility for homeless men and women called the Evergreen Residence.

Table 1-1 | Property Ownership

Property Owner	Number of Parcels	Total Acreage	Percent of Study Area
City of Minneapolis	14	18.8	22%
Xcel Energy	3	11.9	14%
ICIDS, LLC	2	7.9	9%
Sharing and Caring Hands, Inc	3	5.9	7%
BNSF	4	5.1	6%
Irish Twin Cities, LLC	4	3.1	4%
G&K Services, Inc	1	2.6	3%
Minnesota Ballpark Authority	4	2.4	3%
Two Couples, LLC	1	2.3	3%
Stark Electronics	1	2.1	3%
Bright Blue Eyes, LLC	1	2.1	2%
Wanner Engineering	4	1.9	2%
Metropolitan Council (Metro Transit)	3	1.4	2%
Other	32	17.9	19%
TOTAL	74	83.9	100%

Figure 1-2 | Primary Property Owners



Current zoning regulations

Prior to formal approval of the 2008 Minneapolis Plan, five different zoning types existed in the study area:

- C2: Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District
The Wells Fargo property in the northwest portion of the Olson Memorial Highway/7th Street intersection is zoned C2.
- I1: Limited Industrial District
The I1 district encompasses the majority of the study area south of Glenwood Avenue, including the Xcel Energy property and the Currie Maintenance Facility.
- I2: Medium Industrial District
The majority of the study area is zoned I2.
- OR3: Institutional Office Residence District
South of Linden Avenue and west of 15th Street, a very small portion of the study area is zoned OR3.
- B4S: Downtown Service District
The border of the study area along 3rd Avenue North is zoned B4S.

Future land use plans within the 2008 Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth call for the majority of the study area to be zoned *transitional industrial*. This zoning designation will act as a placeholder until a small area plan for the Lower North Loop can be completed and implemented. In the meantime, the zoning will allow the city to keep a tight hold on any development in the area to ensure continuity with its plans.

OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This study considers a variety of documents both directly and indirectly relevant to the Lower North Loop. This section consists of three document categories: concurrent and recently completed planning documents, planned connections, and best practices.

Concurrent and recently completed planning documents

Bridging the Gap exists precisely because of a lack of a long-range plan to date for this site. Formal plans have been written that encompass or are adjacent to the Lower North Loop influence what planning can and should look like in the area. Influential planning documents are briefly examined in this section.

Downtown Minneapolis Multi-Modal Station Area Master Plan

The Downtown Minneapolis Multi-Modal Station Area Plan was produced for the Hennepin County Transit and Community Works Department in 2002. While over seven years old, it is one of the few documents that deals directly with planning in the Lower North Loop. The Station Area Plan identified a need for additional planning and direction for development in this areaⁱⁱ.

The Downtown Minneapolis Multi-Modal Station Area Plan yielded some useful insights for application to the Lower North Loop:

- The Farmers' Market should be expanded into a year-round facility and incorporated with a future Royalston LRT stationⁱⁱⁱ.
- Better transit connections will enhance the study area's attractiveness for office, light retail, and industrial development.
- For housing to be successful here, appropriate sites, types, quantities, and price points must be identified.
- Street environment, particularly along Glenwood, should be more inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Downtown East-North Loop Master Plan

Attention to the Downtown East-North Loop Master Plan is vital to maintaining a balance that will not compete with the downtown core. This area should serve to complement the downtown core, not draw business away from it. The study area is part of the North Loop neighborhood, but plans for it are strikingly absent from the existing master plan. While the Lower North Loop is not directly addressed in this

plan, many of the goals and principles of the Downtown East-North Loop Master Plan will affect the Lower North Loop or should be applied there as well:^{iv}

- Development of “complete communities” in both Downtown East and the North Loop so that people can walk to where they work, shop, and play;
- Preference for mid- to high-density mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, and retail uses in a collection of distinct, readily identifiable new neighborhood clusters;
- Land uses organized to encourage and support movement by public transit, bicycle, and walking as viable alternatives to the private automobile;
- Structured parking built below, or embedded within, mixed-use development projects in a way that allows for and encourages active uses on all street frontages both at-grade and above the street level; and
- Promotion of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, street-facing retail, transit nodes, and neighborhood services that are organized into compact “neighborhood” nodes.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

The Lower North Loop is an excellent candidate for increases in employment density.

The City of Minneapolis recently completed its 2008 update to its comprehensive plan, known as the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. Several policies and key points within the plan relate to potential development in the Lower North Loop. First, the plan calls for high job density. Given the Lower North Loop’s proximity to downtown, the area is an excellent candidate for increases in employment density. Second, the plan suggests branding as a way to create a business district. In addition, a policy within the plan outlines the city’s stance in favor of large-scale revitalization through infrastructure investment. The ballpark and multi-modal station are excellent examples of this type of infrastructure investment.

Access Minneapolis

In the summer of 2007, the Minneapolis City Council approved the Downtown Action Plan, part of Access Minneapolis, the city’s ten-year transportation action plan. The plan identifies specific actions that should be taken in line with the policies outlined in the Minneapolis Plan. Two elements of the plan are of particular interest in this study. First, the plan identifies infrastructure needs throughout the downtown area. In the Lower North Loop, a number of sidewalk gaps and on-street bicycle network gaps are identified. Also in terms of the Lower North Loop study area, the action plan calls for the completion of a linkage between the Cedar Lake Trail and West River Parkway. The link, which will directly connect the Lower North Loop to the greater neighborhood and the rest of the city, will be part of a future Primary Pedestrian Corridor.

Market Analysis

Concurrent to this study, the City of Minneapolis has retained a consultant to conduct a market analysis of the study area. The final market analysis will include:

- The anticipated impacts to the study area from both the ballpark and transit improvements
- The development competitiveness of the area in comparison to other parts of the city
- The types of development that have the most potential in the area, including several likely development scenarios and the identification of key sites and catalysts for development
- The possible contingencies that could further enhance or constrain development activity in the study area, focusing primarily on public improvements and regulations

The purpose of the report is to outline the development issues, potential, and contingencies that can inform possible courses of action for the City of Minneapolis to encourage optimal development of the area.

Planned connections

The Lower North Loop has become a focus for long-range planning partly because of planned transit connections that will radically improve accessibility in the area. This section will identify and briefly examine those planned connections, illustrated in Figure 1-1 on page 6.

Northstar Commuter Rail

The Northstar Commuter Rail is a heavy rail transit line, currently under construction, that begins in the city of Big Lake, 40 miles northwest of downtown Minneapolis. The line will approach downtown Minneapolis from the north and terminate at the multi-modal station. When the line becomes operational at the end of 2009, the schedule will include three peak-direction rush hour trips in the morning and the evening, as well as one reverse-commute trip during each peak period.

Southwest Transitway

The Southwest Transitway is a proposed light rail transit line between downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie. Currently, three proposed routes are under consideration, two of these routes would pass through the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis, following existing right of way under I-94 and then rising to street grade at Royalston Avenue, in the heart of the Lower North Loop. With a station planned for Royalston Avenue, the Southwest Transitway has excellent potential to serve and connect the Lower North Loop to the city and the greater Twin Cities region.

The Southwest Transitway has excellent potential to serve and connect the Lower North Loop.

Bottineau Transitway

The Bottineau Transitway is a proposed transitway that would link downtown Minneapolis to a northern terminal in either Brooklyn Park or Maple Grove. As the line is currently in the Alternatives Analysis stage of planning, alignment decisions that would affect the Lower North Loop have not yet been determined, though the Bottineau Transitway is planned to connect to other transitways at the multi-modal station. At present, the line is likely to approach the multi-modal station via either Olson Memorial Highway or a guideway adjacent to the I-94 viaduct.

Best practices: Peer review

As planning in this area progresses, it is important to consider the failures and successes of other developments that have faced similar opportunities and problems as the Lower North Loop. The construction of Target Field and the existing and planned connections at the multi-modal station create the potential for the Lower North Loop to become an exciting new place in Minneapolis' North Loop neighborhood. What follows are peer cities' experiences with areas that underwent revitalization as a result of similar infrastructure improvements.

Transit-oriented development

The eastern edge of the Lower North Loop is less than half a mile from the multi-modal station, which will bring travelers from all ends of the metropolitan area to the neighborhood and the downtown core. The Lower North Loop is a currently marginal industrial neighborhood that has the opportunity to benefit greatly from this new influx. Below is a brief examination of two areas whose past experiences can contribute to successful planning in the Lower North Loop.

Portland's Pearl District

Portland's Pearl District reminds planners of the potential of transit as a revitalizing force in a blighted industrial area that may be applied to the Lower North Loop. The most valuable lesson of the Pearl District's success is that a vibrant, mixed-use destination depends on the creation of accessible and affordable public spaces for all. In addition, the Pearl District has high connectivity and transit access throughout the neighborhood; without improved pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections the Lower North Loop will be merely adjacent to a major multi-modal hub that will directly improve region-wide accessibility.

Some of the following principles and goals outlined in the Pearl District Development Plan should be considered for the Lower North Loop:

- Investigate ways to reduce impacts of changes on established businesses.

Vibrant, mixed-use destination depends on the creation of accessible and affordable public spaces for all.

- Encourage both private actors and public agencies to support development to ensure successful development.
- Ensure that new developments support and reinforce public infrastructure investments^{vi}.
- Reduce the dominance of public buildings.
- Establish facilities that are appropriate for the neighborhood.
- Enhance or create public open spaces.
- Capitalize on current and potential employment opportunities.

Denver

Like Portland, Denver has also used transit as a springboard to transform its urban fabric. In November of 2004, voters in the Denver region approved the \$4.7 billion FasTracks program to build and extend eight transit lines, all of which will be complete by 2016. Denver plans to make historic Denver Union Station (DUS) the center of its multi-modal transportation system. Built in 1881, DUS currently hosts two Amtrak trains each day, and the C-line light rail transit (LRT) train terminates at the station. However, the DUS Master Plan calls for the intersection of LRT, regional and local bus service, commuter trains to the North Metro Area and Denver International Airport, regional rail service to mountain communities and other Colorado cities, as well as charter buses, taxis, shuttles, and limousines, and bicycle and pedestrian connections at DUS, morphing it into a bustling multi-modal facility.

Like Portland, Denver has also used transit as a springboard to transform its urban fabric.

The location of DUS and its surrounding neighborhood are similar to the location and surrounding neighborhood of the multi-modal station planned in Minneapolis. Located on the edge of downtown, DUS is adjacent to Lower Downtown (LoDo), an area that has absorbed a significant portion of the residential growth in Denver over the last decade with the conversion of historic warehouse buildings to condominiums^{vii}. Coors Field, where the Colorado Rockies play, is less than one half mile from the station.

The Denver Union Station Master Plan highlights two strategies that model best practices and should be integrated into plans for the development surrounding the Minneapolis multimodal station:

- The Denver Comprehensive Plan calls for the integration of affordable housing into new residential development. Without a strategy for affordable housing in the area, the Lower North Loop risks loss of potential demographic, economic, and land-use diversity in the new development.
- Denver's new development program near DUS calls for mixed use with mostly residential development. This type of development is compatible with the City of Minneapolis' desire to develop uses compatible with and not competitive with downtown.

Urban ballparks: Development catalysts?

Upon its completion in 2010, Target Field will be the latest in a wave of new ballparks constructed in urban centers throughout the country. This new generation of single-use, context-sensitive ballparks has been developed in part due to a widespread belief in the ability of such large-scale public investments to spur adjacent development and play a substantial role in reviving downtown core areas^{viii}. In this section, the study examines the lessons that can be learned from three similar ballparks in Baltimore, San Diego, and Denver.

Baltimore: Camden Yards

Completed in 1992, the Baltimore Orioles' Oriole Park at Camden Yards was on the leading edge of the new generation of urban ballparks. The park sits adjacent to the Baltimore Ravens' football-only stadium, completed in 1998, together forming the Camden Yards sports complex. The location of Camden Yards relative to Baltimore's downtown core is similar to the North Loop site of Target Field; however, the complex is also directly adjacent to the Inner Harbor entertainment district, a major activity generator containing tourism-oriented retail and an aquarium. No similar district exists in Minneapolis, though the waterfront amenity in part resembles the Mississippi riverfront.

The Camden Yards complex was constructed with the initial goal of retaining Baltimore's Major League Baseball team and attracting professional football to the city, though as the project progressed, city officials and the media began to see the project as a way to revive the southwestern sector of the city's downtown core. The two facilities were largely financed with public funds, costing the state of Maryland over \$500 million, and expectations were high for those public costs to be recouped by way of adjacent development^{ix}.

Since completion of the complex, however, development has not changed the Camden Yards area in the way many hoped. Though the area has seen the renovation and repurposing of several warehouse structures for ballpark-related development, housing team offices, the stadium authority's headquarters, and a gift shop, as well as other private uses, the western edge of downtown Baltimore has been strikingly unaffected by the facilities' construction. Instead of spurring new development, Camden Yards shaped the surrounding area by growing demand for parking in the area, resulting in the clearing of several blocks around the ballpark to make way for surface parking lots.

Denver: Coors Field

Much like Target Field and San Diego's Petco Park, Coors Field is also located in an old warehouse district. Known as Lower Downtown or LoDo, the area is home to what was once the hub of warehousing and

Growing demand for parking near Camden Yards resulted in the clearing of several blocks around the ballpark to make way for surface parking lots.

manufacturing in Denver, a collection of 1860-1880s vintage buildings, many of which have been transformed into a mix of office, retail, gallery, restaurant, and residential uses. These changes began in the mid-1980s when Denver approved a series of major plans, code changes, and investments in and around Lower Downtown, which created opportunities for new development in the area while retaining its architectural flavor^x.

There are several things to learn from Coors Field. First, The LoDo Neighborhood Plan identifies Coors Field as the anchor of the lively and active street life in LoDo, and the neighborhood plan credits the increased pedestrian traffic in the area to the active street-level focus of the neighborhood’s design. Second, though a major league baseball park, Coors Field was designed on a small scale. There is little dedicated parking near the site; most is shared parking with downtown uses, and the ballpark fits within one city block. The stadium sits flush with the sidewalk, making the brick and terra cotta detailing visible to passersby, and an attractive Bulova clock tower sits over the main entrance, visually linking Coors Field to the old Denver neighborhood^{xi}.

San Diego: Petco Park

Petco Park, located at the terminus of the San Diego trolley line, is in a once-underused warehouse district near the San Diego Convention Center and adjacent to the trendy Gaslamp Quarter. A nearby warehouse is integrated into the seating of the ballpark, shown in Figure 1-3.

Figure 1-3 | Petco Park, San Diego



Much like the new Target Field in Minneapolis, construction of Petco Park was funded by local taxpayer dollars. However, the City of San Diego approached development aggressively and engaged in an agreement with the Padres that ensured the ballclub’s investment in redevelopment adjacent to the stadium. As of 2004, the Padres’ development arm had committed to \$311 million worth of development projects, and engaged other developers in \$593.3 million worth of hotel, residential, retail and parking structures^{xii}. Though the opportunity has passed for Target Field, a similar agreement should be considered for future stadium development in the Twin Cities.

STAKEHOLDERS

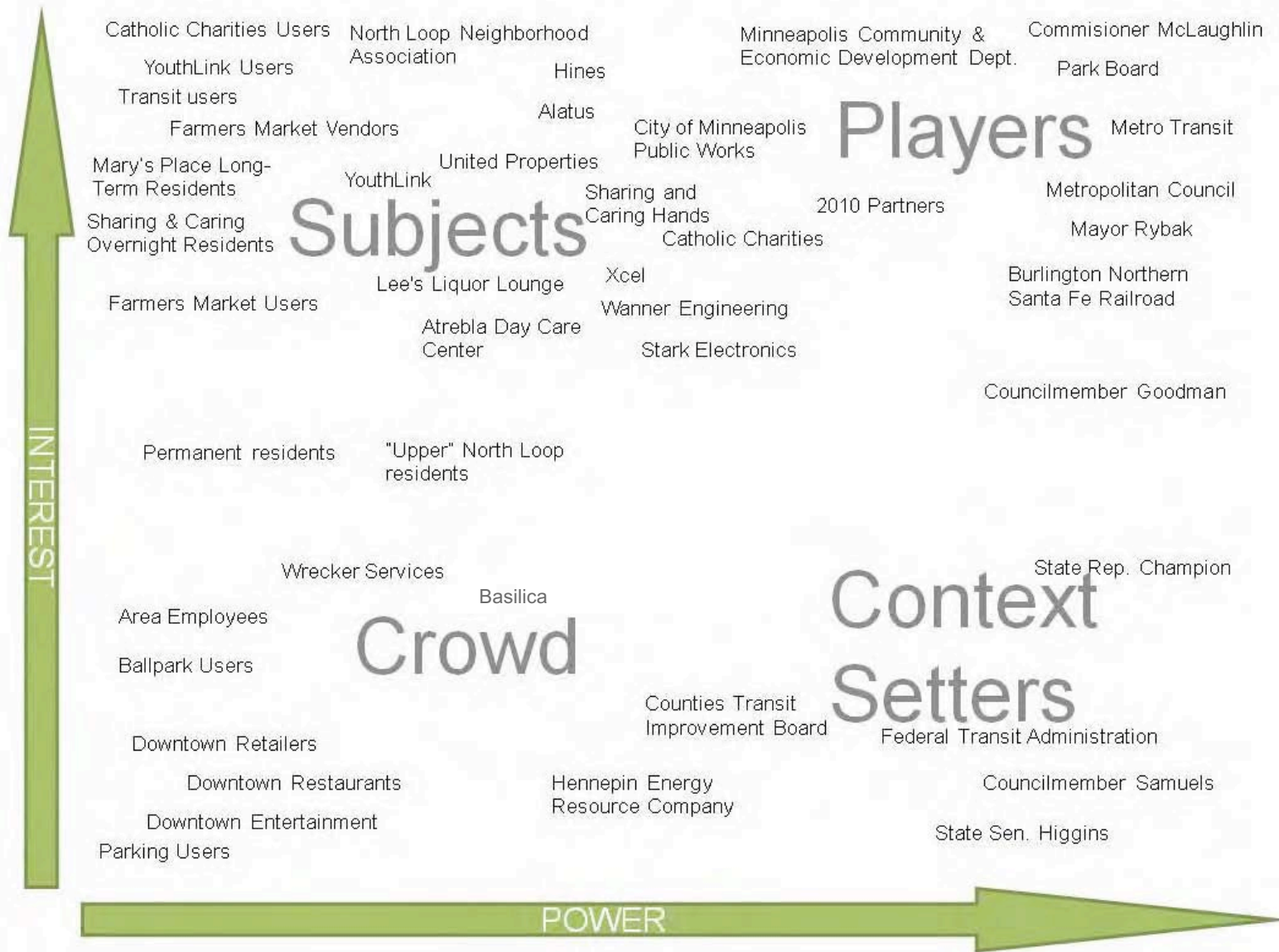
Policy and planning literature encourages leaders organizing a major change effort to consider the ability of various stakeholders to make their voices heard during the change^{xiii}. Power-Versus-Interest Grids are a tool that can be used to understand the relationships between stakeholders in a project according to stakeholders' decision making power and interest in the project. Before a development or major public investment begins, a Power-Versus-Interest Grid can illuminate which individuals or groups are likely to voluntarily engage in the process, and those whose participation may need to be encouraged. Power-Versus-Interest Grids can also be helpful in determining or understanding alliances and conflict amongst involved individuals and groups.

The Power-Versus-Interest Grid shown in Figure 1-4 displays the people and groups this study considers to have a stake in changes to the study area. Stakeholders' places on the grid correspond to their perceived powers and interests. According to their position on the Power-Versus-Interest Grid, stakeholders are separated into four categories:

- Players are stakeholders with high power and high interest.
- Context setters are stakeholders with high power and low interest.
- Subjects are stakeholders with low power and high interest.
- The crowd consists of stakeholders with low power and low interest.

The study team used the Power-Versus-Interest Grid and recommendations from the client to reach out to a range of stakeholders and select interviewees. The city should also use this tool as it moves forward in the planning process.

Figure 1-4 | Power-Versus-Interest Grid



SWOT ANALYSIS

This section contains a SWOT analysis of the Lower North Loop. A SWOT analysis addresses the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats that will be considered in the planning for the Lower North Loop. *Strengths* and *opportunities* are the positive aspects of the study area that should be emphasized and highlighted. The *weaknesses* and *threats* are things that need to be mitigated or eliminated where possible. The *strengths* and *weaknesses* denote the internal physical, political, and environmental issues that affect this area's future. The *opportunities* and *threats* denote the external physical, political, and environmental issues that must be considered. Figure 1-5 illustrates this analysis.

Purpose

The goal of this SWOT analysis is twofold: to identify barriers to development that must be directly and indirectly mitigated, and to identify those opportunities present that, if properly highlighted or encouraged, will lead to the success in this area. Accomplishing these two goals will help ensure that the Lower North Loop becomes a successful and vibrant Minneapolis district, taking full advantage of the development potential spurred by the large-scale improvements in the area.

Figure 1-5 | Lower North Loop SWOT Analysis

		POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
INTERNAL	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to city center • Good transit service that will get better with Bottineau and Southwest transitways • Large parcel sizes make land acquisition easier • Several parcels owned by City • Cedar Lake Trail provides accessibility for recreational bikers as well as commuters • Farmers' Market as major destination for area 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interconnectivity • Lyndale, 7th, Olson Highway create barriers that impair local circulation • Public land holdings are not likely to leave or change form • Major grade separation from downtown makes accessibility difficult • Without connection over 7th street, area might not see benefits of the ballpark • Odor from HERC could dissuade developers, tenants • Adjacent immobile land uses could hinder development possibilities (HERC, Metro Transit) • Streetscape needs major improvements
	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve transit access for transit-dependent populations • Foster region-wide accessibility through multi-modal station • Ballpark and downtown entertainment encourages development, residents 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential disruption of vulnerable populations • Failure to develop this area would be a loss of opportunity • Environmental contamination from industrial legacy could discourage or slow development • Widespread community concern for future of Sharing and Caring Hands/Mary's Place • Small-scale, piecemeal development could cause safety concerns for "pioneers" to the area
EXTERNAL			

CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS

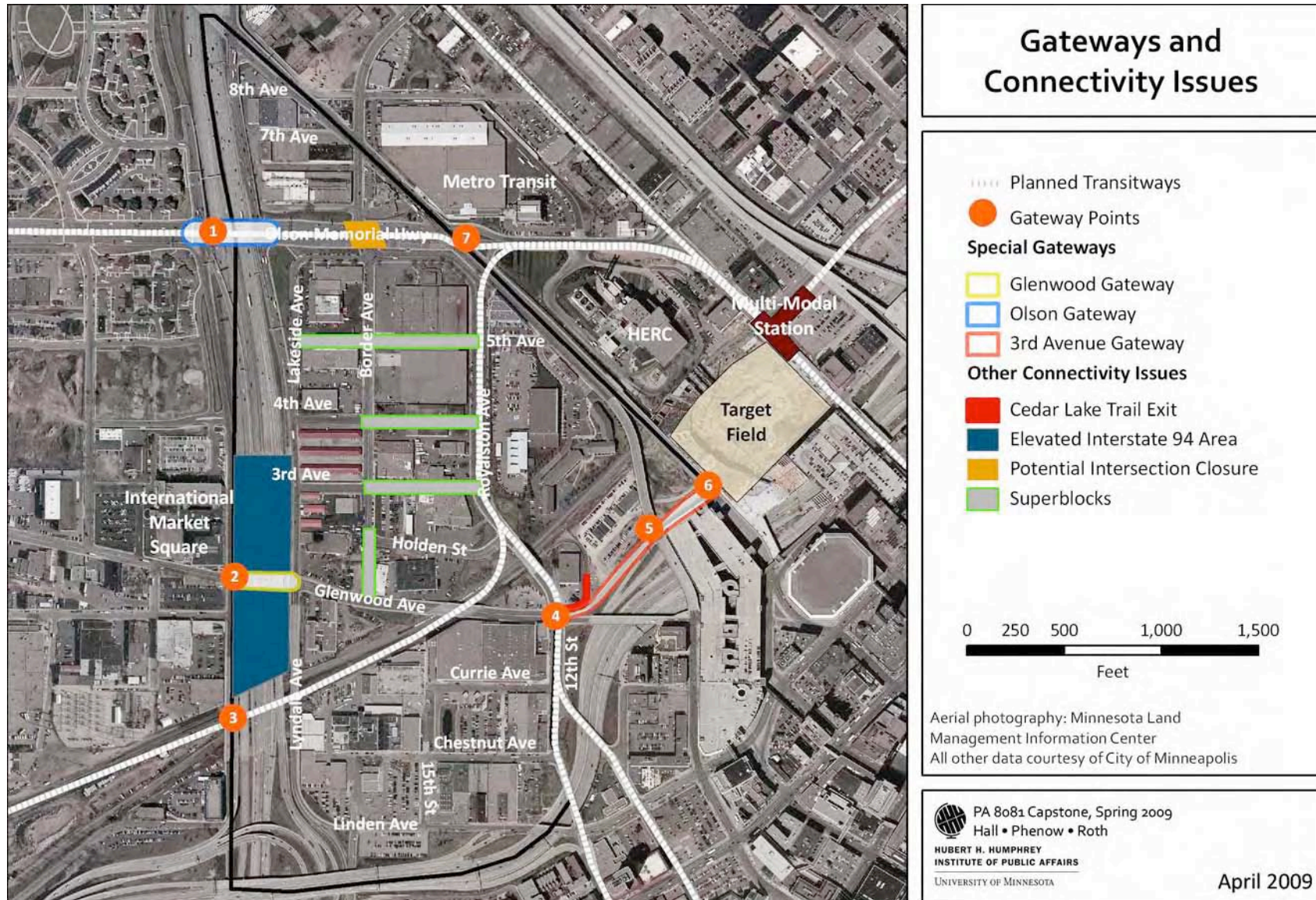
One of the most pervasive barriers to redevelopment of the Lower North Loop is the lack of connections within the area, as well as to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Inside the area, a series of super-blocks make internal travel difficult on foot or bicycle. In addition, the Lower North Loop is bordered on all sides by high-speed roadways located either above or below the prevailing elevation of the neighborhood. These elevated and depressed roadways enable high-volume vehicular through and around the neighborhood, but physically cut off the Lower North Loop from adjacent areas, effectively making the area an island in the middle of the city.

Two types of connection issues are discussed in this section:

- **Gateways** are external connectivity points between the Lower North Loop and other neighborhoods. Special Gateways are of particular interest for future development in the area.
- **Internal issues** are other connections (or lack thereof) that affect the internal connective fabric of the Lower North Loop and may hinder development.

Figure 1-6 on the following page displays the locations of the connectivity issues identified in this analysis.

Figure 1-6 | Gateways and Connectivity Issues



Gateways

A number of intersections on the periphery of the study area function as gateways between the Lower North Loop and adjacent neighborhoods. These gateway points, represented in Figure 1-6 with orange markers, are described in Table 1-2. The rightmost column refers to positive and negative issues surrounding the gateway point, including possible connections (marked with a “+” sign) and the aspects of the gateway that may hinder successful development or make the gateway unpleasant for users (marked with a “-” sign).

Table 1-2 | Gateway Points

Gateway Point	Location	Issues (+/-)
1	Olson Highway & I-94/Lyndale Avenue	Connection to Heritage Park (+) Poor pedestrian visibility (-)
2	Glenwood Avenue & I-94/Lyndale Avenue	Connection to Harrison neighborhood(+) Connection to International Market Square (+) Glenwood Design Corridor (+) Non-pedestrian friendly scale (-)
3	Cedar Lake Trail at I-94	Unightly storage under I-94 (-) Safety of cyclists (-)
4	Glenwood Avenue & 12 th Street	Activity center: Lee’s Liquor Lounge (+) Unightly SE & NE portions (-)
5	10 th Street & 3 rd Avenue	Connection to Downtown (+) Wide sidewalks (+) No adjacent land uses at grade (-) Overlooks I-394 and sunken parking area (-)
6	7 th Street & 3 rd Avenue	Connection to Downtown (+) Wide sidewalks (+)
7	Olson Highway (6 th Avenue) & 7 th Street	High traffic volumes (-) Poor crosswalk conditions (-) Potential crossing for Bottineau/Southwest (-)

Special gateways

Of the identified gateways, three stand out as especially important for future development, identified in Figure 1-6 as special gateways. In the future, the Lower North Loop will serve as an important bridge between the region’s largest transit hub and neighborhoods to the west. These critical points deserve special

attention in light of their function as connections between the Harrison and Near North neighborhoods and the regional attractions just east of the Lower North Loop.

Glenwood Gateway

Glenwood is the only street to cross under I-94 for almost a mile.

Interstate 94 and the Lyndale Avenue frontage road form a nearly impenetrable border on the western edge of the entire Lower North Loop. For almost one mile between Olson Memorial Highway and Dunwoody Boulevard, Glenwood Avenue is the only street to cross this border, making the Glenwood Gateway an extremely important connection for the Lower North Loop.

The Glenwood Gateway serves as the primary east-west connection point between the Harrison neighborhood and the Lower North Loop, the future multimodal station and ballpark, and downtown Minneapolis. Metro Transit Route 9 travels on this segment of Glenwood, connecting downtown Minneapolis to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood and St. Louis Park. International Market Square stands directly west of this intersection, along with several up-and-coming design centers.

Figure 1-7 | Glenwood Gateway (Glenwood Avenue under I-94)

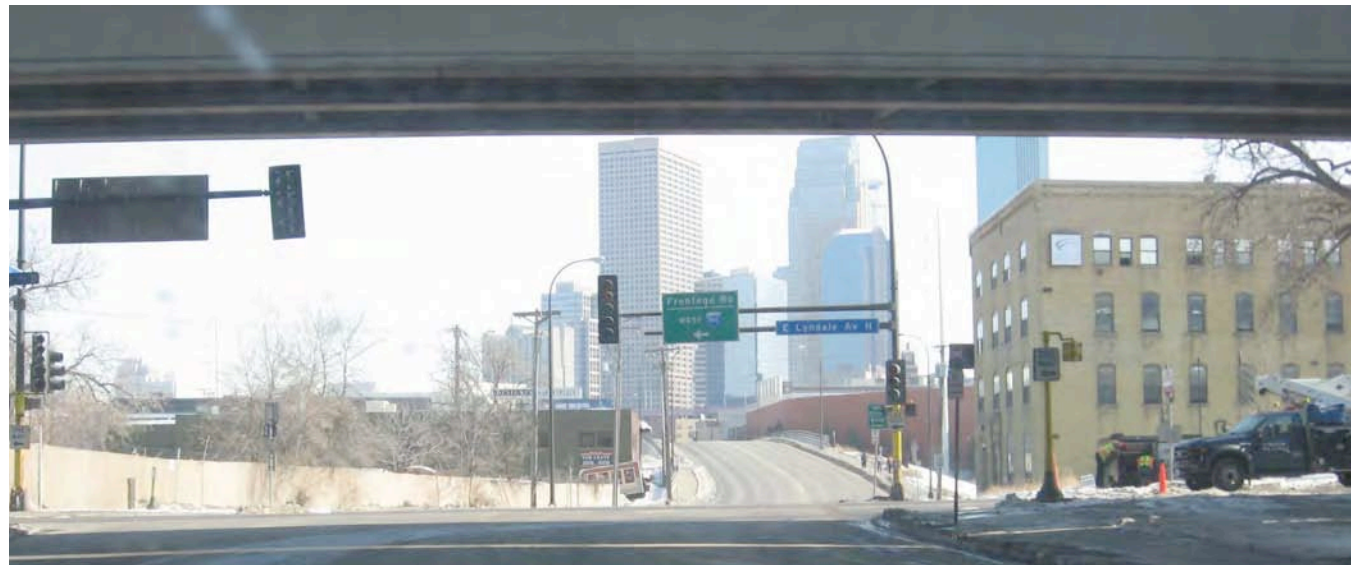


Figure 1-7 illustrates the current condition of this critical access point. As it passes under Interstate 94, Glenwood Avenue is poorly lit and wide open on either side, creating a poor sense of security for pedestri-

ans, cyclists, and transit users under the overpass. Parking lots are located on both sides of the roadway. These lots sit vacant during most hours of the day, and are mainly used by commuters looking for a cheap place to park and ride a bus into the downtown core. The gateway’s current condition is not conducive to non-automotive connections.

Olson Gateway

Olson Memorial Highway forms another east-west connection between the Lower North Loop and the adjacent Near North neighborhood, including the Heritage Park development. The high-volume roadway is an efficient connection for automobile, bus, and truck travel, but is not conducive to non-motorized travel.

A site visit revealed a particular issue for pedestrians using the sidewalks on the south side of the roadway, pictured in Figure 1-8. As cars and trucks approached the intersection from the south on Lyndale Avenue, numerous vehicles failed to stop completely at the intersection on a red light. Instead, many vehicles completed right turns on red without yielding to approaching pedestrians who have the right to cross on the green light. This practice puts pedestrian safety in jeopardy and may serve as an impediment for residents of Near North to reach the Farmers’ Market, ballpark, and transit station.

The high-volume Olson Highway is not conducive to non-motorized travel.

Figure 1-8 | Olson Gateway (Olson Memorial Highway at Lyndale Avenue)



This gateway corridor should be given special attention in the future to ensure that it remains an inviting place for non-motorized traffic.

3rd Avenue Gateway

The 3rd Avenue Gateway extends on 3rd Avenue from 12th Street to 7th Street, connecting the ballpark to Lee's Liquor Lounge. While conditions on this gateway are not as treacherous for pedestrians and cyclists as on Olson or Glenwood, this gateway corridor should be given special attention in the future to ensure that it remains an inviting place for non-motorized traffic. 3rd Avenue serves as the primary connection across the high-volume 7th/10th Street corridor, bridging the divide created by these roadways. In addition, the Cedar Lake Trail exits onto this section of road. This gateway is currently outfitted with on-street bicycle lanes, wide sidewalks, and adequate lighting.

Internal issues

While the external connections identified as gateways in the previous section will be important to ensure links to adjacent areas in the future, other internal issues will play a larger role in the future redevelopment success within the Lower North Loop.

Four specific issues have been identified:

- Cedar Lake Trail exit at 12th Street/3rd Avenue
Currently, the Cedar Lake Trail exits to the intersection at 12th Street and 3rd Avenue. Cyclists exiting the trail are able to travel in one direction only at this point, as 3rd Avenue is a one-way street traveling west into Glenwood Avenue.
- Elevated portion of I-94
The area beneath the elevated section of I-94 presents a unique connectivity issue. In this area, the problem lies not in physical barriers but in a psychological barrier that deters pedestrian movement between the Lower North Loop and the Harrison neighborhood.
- Potential intersection closure at Olson Highway/Border Avenue
Two of the four current alternatives for the Bottineau Transitway would effectively close the Border Avenue/Olson Highway intersection, eliminating a north-south connection.
- Superblocks between Royalston and Lyndale Avenues
Green blocks in Figure 1-8 illustrate areas where superblocks interrupt street grid connections. These superblocks will make neighborhood-scaled development in the area difficult.

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT

In addition to existing connectivity issues, several substantial barriers will impede and discourage development if not addressed. Barriers were developed as a result of site visits, stakeholder interviews, and review of relevant literature presented earlier in this chapter. Twelve barriers are identified in this section.

- **Funding**
Initiating development in the Lower North Loop will require a significant investment by the public sector. Connectivity and streetscapes need improvement; private partners will likely seek environmental cleanup funds; using tax increment financing as an incentive for a large scale private development will have to compete for limited city, county, or state funds.
- **Political feasibility**
Though the Lower North Loop is represented by Minneapolis city council members Lisa Goodman and Don Samuels, there are very few residents in the area and thus few constituents to please, and the area itself holds little political influence. Although Farmers' Market users and vendors could potentially be mobilized in this area, rousing elected officials' interest in this area could be an uphill battle.
- **Public involvement**
Hidden beneath freeways and out of sight from downtown Minneapolis, the Lower North Loop is a somewhat forgotten corner of the city. With the large-scale public investments nearby, however, the Lower North Loop has the potential to become valuable real estate. When the development community starts to take interest, elected officials pay attention, and current businesses and residents sense the possibility of displacement, there is likely to be a large discrepancy amongst stakeholders in the vision for the Lower North Loop. The City's Small Area Plan will help to clarify the City's position on the neighborhood when potential conflicts and a multitude of visions arise.
- **No cohesive area identity**
In addition to housing very few residents, the Lower North Loop exists neither as a stand-alone area nor as an involved part of another established neighborhood. Although the Lower North Loop belongs to the North Loop Neighborhood, residents and other stakeholders do not feel that the area is truly a part of the neighborhood. In addition, although the Farmers' Market serves as the area's major amenity and a citywide destination, the site is not used to enhance the identity of the Lower

North Loop. Current signage, shown in Figure 1-9, is utilitarian but not unique. As a result, the area lacks the cohesive identity that could boost future development opportunities.

Figure 1-9 | Current Farmers' Market signage



- Safety and security
Several of the barriers noted here feed into the problems created for safety and security in the neighborhood. Existing uses provide very little street life or pedestrian traffic that could provide natural surveillance for the area.
- Industrial legacy of the land
Based on existing uses, it is anticipated that much of the land in the Lower North Loop will need to be cleaned up before it can be redeveloped.
- Housing Providers
A sometimes real and sometimes perceived threat, the transient population present in the Lower North Loop could be a deterrent to both residential and business development. However, the social service organizations in the area provide important resources, and their location near downtown

and many transit options is important to their function of serving low-income, homeless populations.

- Hennepin Energy Recovery Center

Immediately to the east of the Lower North Loop and directly adjacent to Target Field, the HERC facility raises problems for all nearby development due to the odors given off by trucks transporting waste to the facility. While some measures are being taken in conjunction with Target Field construction that will mitigate this problem, many worry that those measures will not go far enough. The perception as well as the reality of this problem has discouraging effect on potential developers, tenants, and residents.

- Current Land Uses

Much of the Lower North Loop is taken up by large-scale public facilities (Metro Transit, City of Minneapolis) and quasi-public facilities (Xcel Energy) uses that will not likely be altered. Another public space, the Farmers' Market, will likely not be changed due to its power as an important neighborhood attraction during the summer months. However, the Market sits vacant and unutilized for most of the year. The placement of these sites throughout the neighborhood limits the scale of redevelopment that can take place.

Figure 1-10 | Panoramic view from underneath I-94 overpasses



- Scale problems resulting from grade separations

Major grade separations that surround most of the neighborhood create differences in scale that are unwelcoming to pedestrian activity. Huge overpasses create dark, uninviting spaces (Figure 1-10). Other grade-separated roadways create impenetrable barriers to adjacent neighborhoods.

- Lack of Streetscape

Likely due the heavy focus on industrial uses, streetscaping is minimal or nonexistent throughout the neighborhood. Where sidewalks exist, they are often in disrepair or of insufficient width. There is a preponderance of concrete and asphalt and minimal greenspace. There is virtually none of the street furniture that provides barriers between pedestrian spaces and automobiles (Figure 1-11).

Figure 1-11 | Current streetscape on Border Avenue



- Bicycle gaps

The City of Minneapolis notes several gaps in the bicycle network in and adjacent to the Lower North Loop, primarily along Glenwood, 7th Street and 10th Street. This study has also added Royalston Avenue as a gap in the bicycle network that currently limits north-south connectivity. These gaps make it difficult and sometimes dangerous for bicyclists to get to destinations in the neighborhood.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented relevant background information related to the Lower North Loop, examined pertinent planning documents related to the study area, analyzed stakeholders, and examined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the study area. The connectivity analysis and summary of barriers in the study area forms the basis for the visioning and action planning to follow in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 2: VISION

VISION STATEMENT

“Redevelopment in the Lower North Loop will fuse existing residents and places with new structures, spaces, and people to create a lively gateway district that serves as both an origin and a destination for city and regional residents.”

This chapter contains the study’s vision for the Lower North Loop in the year 2030, incorporates issues raised in the diagnosis, and acts as the guide for implementation. The diagnosis focused on the first theme of the study, the barriers to redevelopment and change in the Lower North Loop, as well as on the current state of connectivity in the area. The vision statement is about possibility and what can happen if these barriers are removed or resolved. The vision for the Lower North Loop revolves around the remaining three themes of the study:

- A balanced mix of land uses: new structures and green spaces
- An improved public realm: coexistence between new and old
- Effective connections: a gateway to the City of Minneapolis

A balanced mix of land uses: new structures and green spaces

With the Minneapolis Farmers’ Market firmly established within the area, the Twins Ballpark nearing completion, and transit stations planned for construction in the not-so-distant future, the Lower North Loop has tremendous potential to attract new development. By attracting office and residential development and the neighborhood retail that goes hand-in-hand with downtown homes, the city can ensure an all-day stream of activity and reconnect the Lower North Loop to the rest of Downtown.

The Lower North Loop will consist of a mix of land uses including housing, offices, retail shops, live-work artist spaces, housing providers, and publicly owned facilities. Together they will create a district that will function throughout the day and into the evening. Connections to the nearby neighborhoods of Harrison, Sumner-Glenwood, and Downtown, as well as to the ballpark and multi-modal facility, will inspire the private development that will change this area. Because of its relatively strong connection to downtown and visibility from the ballpark, the intersection of Glenwood and Royalston Avenues will become a small entertainment area with Lee’s Liquor Lounge anchoring a corner with several new bars and restaurants. Conversion of existing warehouse spaces to office will be spurred by the strong transit connections and

The Lower North Loop will consist of housing, offices, retail shops, live-work artist spaces, housing providers, and public facilities.

proximity to other downtown businesses; these will be the first changes to the area.

Eventually, mixed income housing will be added to the emerging office and entertainment uses and the neighborhood will be home to an increasingly diverse mix of uses. Public investment will help to turn the Lower North Loop into a livable neighborhood. A public pool and small adjacent park will be a welcome source of greenery and open space. Mixed-income residential development between Holden and 5th Avenues will take advantage of the pool and park, as well as the transit station on Royalston, and will be built in the style of many South Minneapolis apartment buildings, shown in Figure 2-12 below.

Figure 2-12 | Lower North Loop housing



An improved public realm: coexistence between new and old

What will change is the way existing uses are integrated with their neighbors.

An influx of residents, shops, offices, and restaurants will reshape much of the land in the Lower North Loop between now and 2030. During the same timeframe, however, the public facilities and emergency housing providers located in the area are unlikely to leave. Political realities and significant existing investments will ensure that these uses remain intact regardless of the development that will change the rest of the area. For better or worse, residents and users of future development in the Lower North Loop will coexist with shelter residents, stored bulldozers, and burning garbage.

What will change is the way these uses are integrated with their neighbors. In the future, housing providers will no longer be seen as a threat to would-be visitors and neighbors, but as an essential service for a diverse urban neighborhood. Stepped-up security, community outreach, and improvements to the built environments of the Sharing and Caring Hands, Mary's Place, and Catholic Charities campuses will make

these facilities part of a new neighborhood fabric. New residential developments will house residents of mixed incomes, avoiding the creation of a vast disparity within the Lower North Loop. Public areas will provide connections between old and new residents, rather than isolating them from one another. Building facades will be updated and new construction will be held to a higher aesthetic standard.

The city’s public facilities in the area will also be better neighbors. Rather than being isolated from the community behind barbed-wire fences, city facilities will be made over with a green brush to reflect the theme of open space in the area. The city’s traffic engineering operations will be relocated to another place, and the site of the ancient, bunker-like facility on Border Avenue will be occupied by new mixed-use development.

City facilities will be made over with a green brush.

Figure 2-13 | Future Improved Public Realm at 12th Street and Glenwood Avenue



A green, friendly public realm will bring together existing facilities and new development to form a cohesive and welcoming neighborhood. Streets and sidewalks will be rejuvenated through an ongoing beautification and maintenance campaign, through which attractive lighting and public art will be added to

the area to improve the pedestrian experience. Wayfinding signs and banners will welcome visitors to the area and direct them to the heart of the Lower North Loop, the Farmers' Market. The improved public realm in the Lower North Loop will invite visitors to explore the area, and will give residents a reason to take pride in their neighborhood.

A Gateway to the City and Other Neighborhoods

The major public investments taking place in and adjacent to the Lower North Loop, with its prime geographic location, will transform it into a primary gateway to the city. New transit lines will make it into one of the most easily accessible places in the city. Several improvements in local accessibility will ensure that the neighborhood takes advantage of this boon in connectivity to the neighborhood.

The Lower North Loop will be replete with green spaces, including trails and larger park spaces. The Cedar Lake Trail is a valuable transportation and recreation amenity and it is important that employees and future residents of the Lower North Loop have access to the trail. Assuming that the Southwest Transitway will run at grade on Royalston Avenue, with a stop on Royalston near 5th Avenue, the current exit from the trail to the intersection of Royalston and Glenwood Avenues will be maintained, and bike lanes will be extended west on Glenwood and north on Royalston Avenue, through the heart of the study area. The existing boulevard on Royalston Avenue will be planted and landscaped in order to create a green corridor and bike- and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. Traffic calming measures will improve existing pedestrian connections to the Near North, Sumner-Glenwood, Harrison, and Downtown neighborhoods. Non-motorized accessibility will also be improved by extending four local streets through the central part of the neighborhood.

This newly traversable and inviting neighborhood will accommodate all modes of travel safely and efficiently.

In the next 10 years, transit lines will bring people from the northwest, the southwest, the south, and the east to Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. All of these lines will either come through or adjacent to the Lower North Loop, and this neighborhood will be the point at which millions of people enter Minneapolis each year. Improved connectivity throughout the neighborhood will make all the new adjacent and interior development accessible to residents and visitors to Minneapolis. This newly traversable and inviting neighborhood will accommodate all modes of travel safely and efficiently.

CHAPTER 3: ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines an implementation plan for carrying out the vision described in the previous chapter. Suggested actions range in scale, intensity, and priority and are organized according to the three themes incorporated in the vision:

- A balanced mix of land uses: new structures and green spaces
- An improved public realm: coexistence between new and old
- Effective connections: a gateway to the City of Minneapolis

The action plan for each of these themes consists of an implementation table that delineates actions that the City of Minneapolis and its partners can take to ensure that the vision for the Lower North Loop becomes reality; a map that shows specific places referred to in the implementation table; and a narrative, explaining the significance and justification for the prescribed actions.

A BALANCED MIX OF LAND USES: NEW STRUCTURES AND GREEN SPACES

Because the Lower North Loop is isolated from adjacent neighborhoods, has few residents, and is primarily a low-density industrial area with several overnight housing providers, we anticipate that without significant public investment, it will be difficult to inspire the private development needed to realize the vision for this area. We propose two methods of luring private development to the Lower North Loop. First, the City of Minneapolis could attempt to acquire several connecting parcels in order to facilitate a large-scale redevelopment effort and reduce the possibility of a failed “pioneer” development. As land assembly is a difficult barrier for developers to overcome, possession of a large developable parcel could give the City of Minneapolis some leverage to negotiate with a developer for features that the City considers important, such as a refurbished farmers’ market, right of way for new connecting streets, and a public park. Actions related to the development of a balanced mix of land uses are outlined in Table 3-4; Figure 3-14 shows the locations of these suggested actions.

If resources are available, tax increment financing (TIF) is another tool that the city can use to incite development to the Lower North Loop. Though the City’s TIF requirements are necessarily stringent, the Lower North Loop is a critical connecting area between Downtown and North Minneapolis with much room for improvement. Mixed-use development in the Lower North Loop has the potential to satisfy the city’s requirements of increasing the tax base, providing diverse housing stock, cleaning contaminated sites, creating new jobs, and eliminating blight in the city.

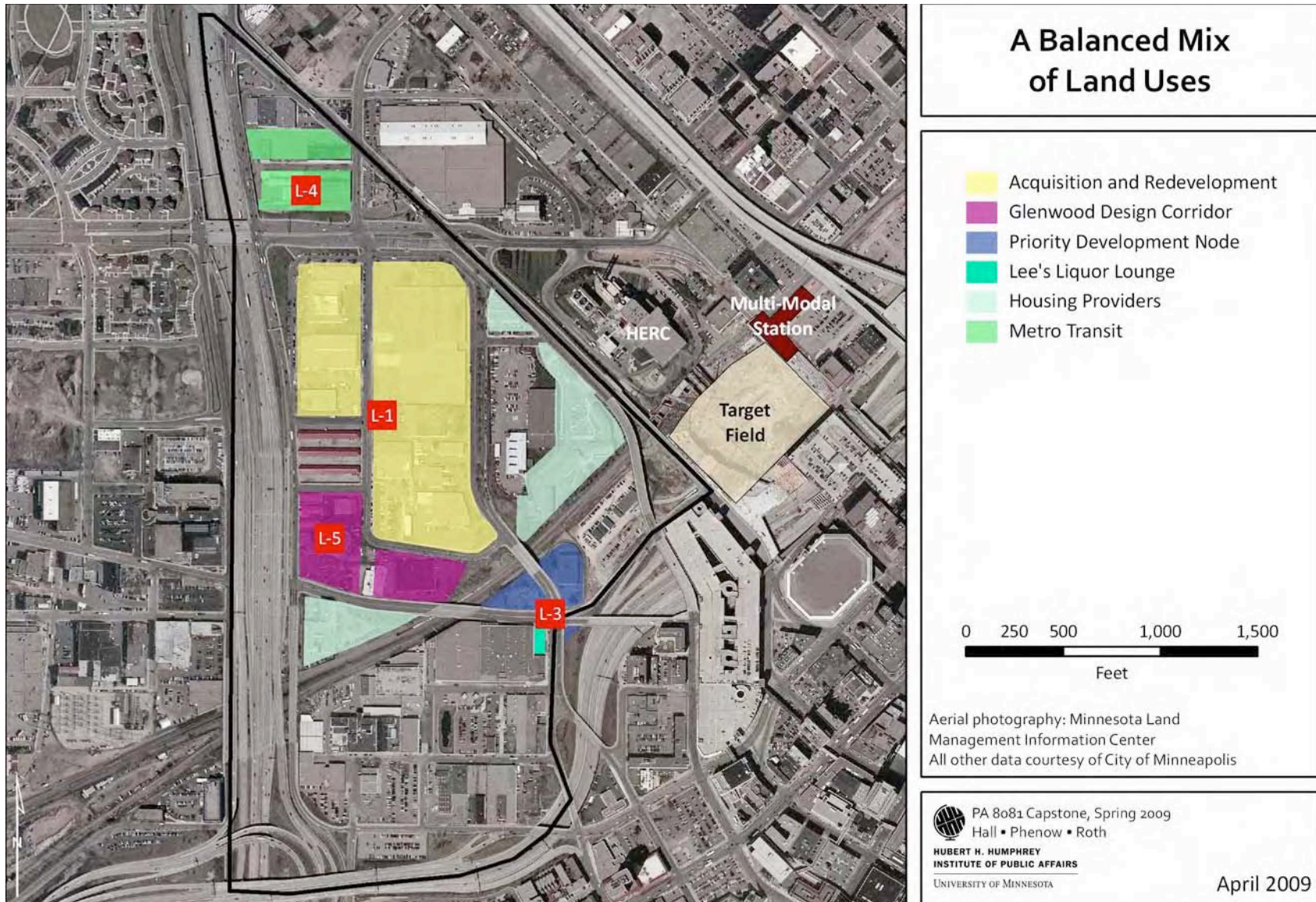
Zoning changes can also facilitate changes to the area. Currently, Lee’s Liquor Lounge is located in an OR3, office residential zone. The parcels across Glenwood Avenue from Lee’s, which are recommended for additional bar, restaurant, or entertainment business, are also zoned OR3. Changing the zoning to C2 commercial reduces restrictions on the size and type of restaurant establishment and eases the development of these new businesses.

Because the triangle area north of Olson Memorial Highway is relatively small and completely surrounded by highways, its potential for redevelopment is limited. Metro Transit has expressed interest in expanding transit police and storage facilities near the Heywood Garage facility; this appears to be the best use of the triangle-shaped area, excluding the Wells Fargo parcel. To this end, the City should maintain zoning that is accommodating of Metro Transit’s expansion; the current zoning of I2 is complementary. The city should also work with Metro Transit to ensure that any agency expansion in this area is done so in an area-appropriate way.

Table 3-3 | Land Use Actions

LAND USE ACTIONS				
Number	Action	Responsible Agency	Partners	Goal year
L-1	Acquire adjacent parcels between Royalston and Border Avenues from willing sellers	Mpls TPW		2015
	• Assemble land and offer for resale to developer	Mpls CPED		2015
	• Use large parcel as leverage with developer to take desired actions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of low-income housing • Improvements to Farmers' Market to make a year-round facility • Land set-aside for park with playground 	Mpls CPED		2015
L-2	Establish a TIF district for implementation of Planned Unit Development	Minneapolis City Council		2013
	• City Council pass an ordinance allowing for a tax increment financing of the PUD.	Minneapolis City Council		2013
L-3	Rezone Glenwood & Royalston Avenue Intersection from OR3 to C2	Mpls CPED	Mpls City Council	2015
L-4	Retain existing zoning north of Olson Memorial Highway	Mpls CPED		N/A
	• Retain C2 zoning for Wells Fargo Bank Branch	Mpls CPED		N/A
	• Retain I2 zoning for remainder of area	Mpls CPED		N/A
	• Encourage Metro Transit to consider the parcels within for expansion of transit police and maintenance facilities.	City of Minneapolis	Metro Transit	N/A
L-5	Encourage development of Glenwood Design Corridor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create artists' live-work space 	Mpls CPED		2015

Figure 3-14 | Land Use Actions



AN IMPROVED PUBLIC REALM: COEXISTENCE BETWEEN NEW AND OLD

Public realm integration measures are outlined in Table 3-4. Improvements to the public realm are focused on lighting and greening the study area, adding amenities throughout the neighborhood, managing the on-street parking supply, and creating a public identity for the area through a branding campaign. Public realm improvements are shown in Figure 3-15.

Significant investments in lighting will not only improve the appearance of the neighborhood, but will also address the barrier posed by unsafe-feeling streets and sidewalks and improve perceived security. As such, the city should address lighting in the area on major corridors, including Glenwood and Royalston Avenues, in the near term. The addition of street furniture will also address security concerns through environmental design, allowing passersby to dwell in the public realm and add “eyes” to the streetscape.

The appearance of the public realm can also be vastly improved by greening the area. The city can encourage private property owners to voluntarily green their properties through tax incentives. Targeted areas for these initiatives are identified as “Greening Gaps” in Figure 3-15.

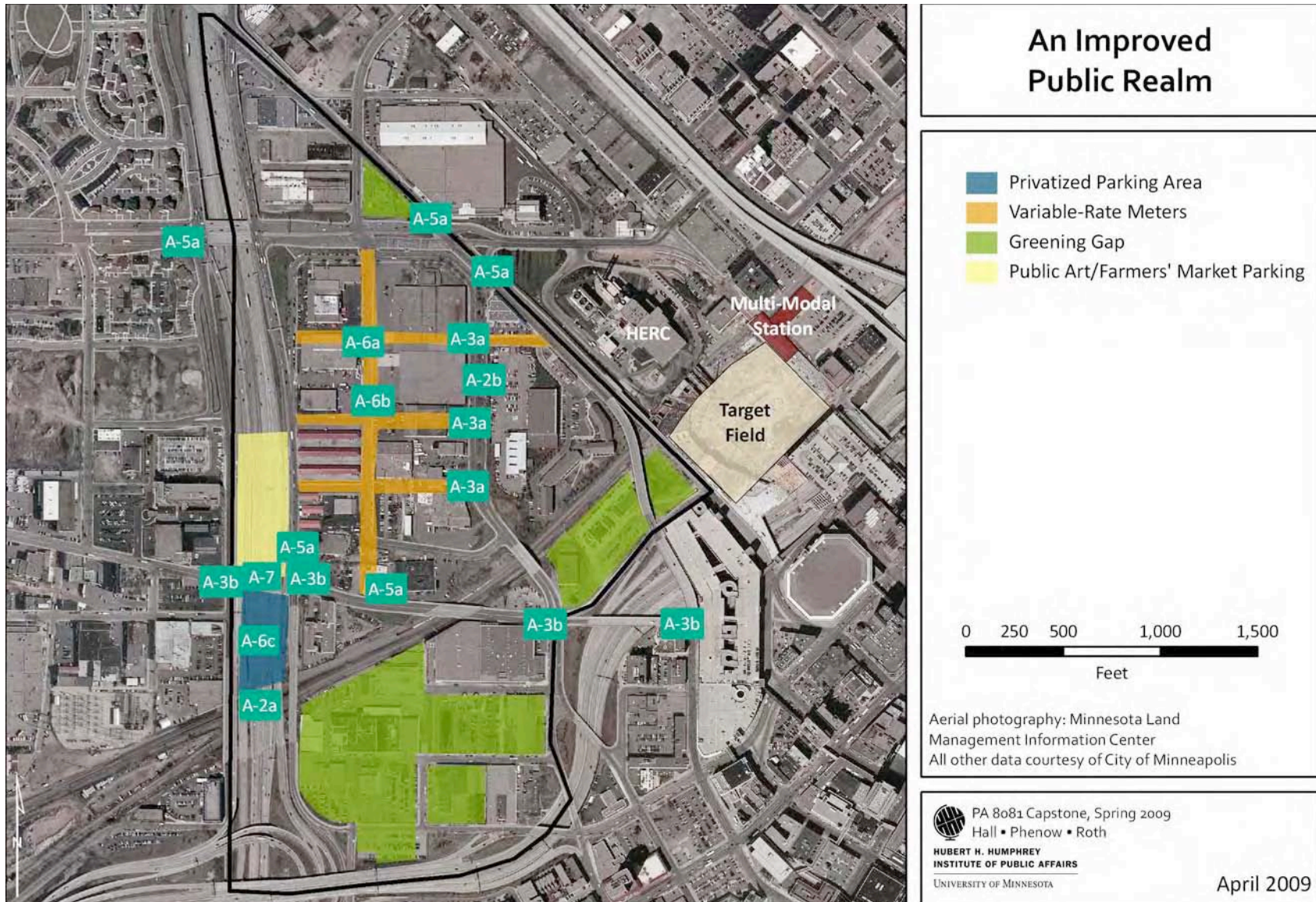
The City can also use improvements to the public realm to create a cohesive area identity. Banners affixed to lighting fixtures in the area can advertise the Farmers’ Market, using repetitive graphics and words for consistency throughout the district. Improved wayfinding signs can be added to the arterial streets in the area to bring visitors to the Lower North Loop. We also recommend that the city partner with a local non-profit youth art center, such as Juxtaposition Arts, to add mural-like paintings to the concrete support posts underneath I-94. Painting the posts with Farmers’ Market-themed art can improve the parking area underneath I-94 and visually tie it to the neighborhood. Public art can also be added to the utility boxes throughout the area for a splash of color in the landscape.

Finally, managing the on-street parking supply will be crucial in implementing a multi-modal, mixed use district. The city can implement variable-rate meters in portions of the Lower North Loop to achieve parking goals in the area. By setting rates low or free during Farmers’ Market times and raising rates during ballpark events, the City can ensure that parking is available when it is needed most and deter ballpark visitors from using the neighborhood for cheap parking. These measures will ensure that the area does not share the fate of the Downtown East neighborhood, whose streets are packed during game times at the Metrodome.

Table 3-4 | Public Realm Actions

PUBLIC REALM ACTIONS				
Number	Action	Responsible Agency	Partners	Goal Year
A-1	Address pavement issues identified in Downtown Action Plan	Mpls TPW		2015
A-2	Improve neighborhood lighting	Mpls Public Works		2010
A-2a	• Address security perceptions on Glenwood under I-94 with lighting			2010
A-2b	• Install neighborhood-style lighting fixtures on Royalston and Border			
A-3	Encourage fast-tracking of Glenwood and Royalston Avenues in Minneapolis Coordinated Street Furniture program	Mpls TPW	Selected vendor	2025
A-3a	• Install benches and trash receptacles on Royalston Avenue			
A-3b	• Install standard bus shelters on Glenwood Avenue at Lyndale Avenue and 3rd Avenue			
A-4	Encourage private landowners in greening gap to make properties more presentable	Mpls CPED	Mpls City Council	N/A
	• Offer tax incentives for installation of green roofs and voluntary reduction of impervious surface in the Lower North Loop			N/A
	• Practice effective and stringent code enforcement			N/A
A-5	Embark on a branding campaign for the Lower North Loop focused on the Farmers' Market	Mpls CPED	Meet Minneapolis	2015
A-5a	• Install wayfinding signage on 7th Street, Glenwood, Lyndale, and TH 55			2015
A-5b	• Design and install banners advertising the Farmers' Market throughout neighborhood			2015
A-6	Improve parking situation throughout neighborhood and discourage free/cheap parking during ballpark events	Mpls Traffic & Parking Svcs	Mpls City Council	2020
A-6a	• Install programmable, variable-rate meters to accommodate Farmers' Market users but discourage cheap Target Field parking			2015
A-6c	• Privatize commuter parking underneath I-94 south of Glenwood and require maintenance			2015
A-6d	• Retain and improve parking under I-94 for Farmers' Market; allow free parking during market times and regulate with			2015
A-7	Improve spaces under elevated sections of I-94	Mpls CPED	Artists, nonprofits	2025
	• Partner with local artists or nonprofit to paint murals on Glenwood support beams			

Figure 3-15 | Public Realm Actions



EFFECTIVE CONNECTIONS: A GATEWAY TO THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

With its proximity to the multi-modal station, the Lower North Loop is going to become one of the most connected neighborhoods in the state. However, improvements need to be made to the local connectivity for this neighborhood. As an industrial neighborhood that is essentially bounded on all sides by freeways, connectivity and accessibility will be improved to spur development. To ensure that private development and to make the neighborhood more appealing to those that would use its current and future amenities and those that would live here, we present a set of infrastructure improvements that will make the Lower North Loop a more accessible place. These actions are intended to address access both to and from this neighborhood, as well as connectivity within the neighborhood. contains details on the actions to be taken to improve connectivity. Connectivity improvements are shown in Figure 3-16.

Glenwood Avenue, currently designated as an Industrial Street in the Minneapolis Action Plan, will become an Activity Area Street, as it will be one of Lower North Loop's activity centers and a primary gateway to downtown. Activity Area Streets are located near transit nodes or retail centers and support retail, service commercial, and residential land uses. The Glenwood Design Corridor will be densely populated with automobiles, bikes, and pedestrians, and will require a marked on-street bike lane, filling one of the major bicycle network gaps in the neighborhood.

Improvements to primary pedestrian connections to the neighborhood will make walking more appealing and less physically threatening. For the more treacherous crossings (along Lyndale Avenue, 7th Street and 10th Street) this will include the following calming measures, consistent with the Design Guidelines for Streets and Sidewalks in the Access Minneapolis plan: ladder-striped crosswalks, improved lighting, curb extensions, and refuge islands. At 11th Street North and 12th Street North, ladder-striped crosswalks will be added as well as signage to alert cars to crossing pedestrians.

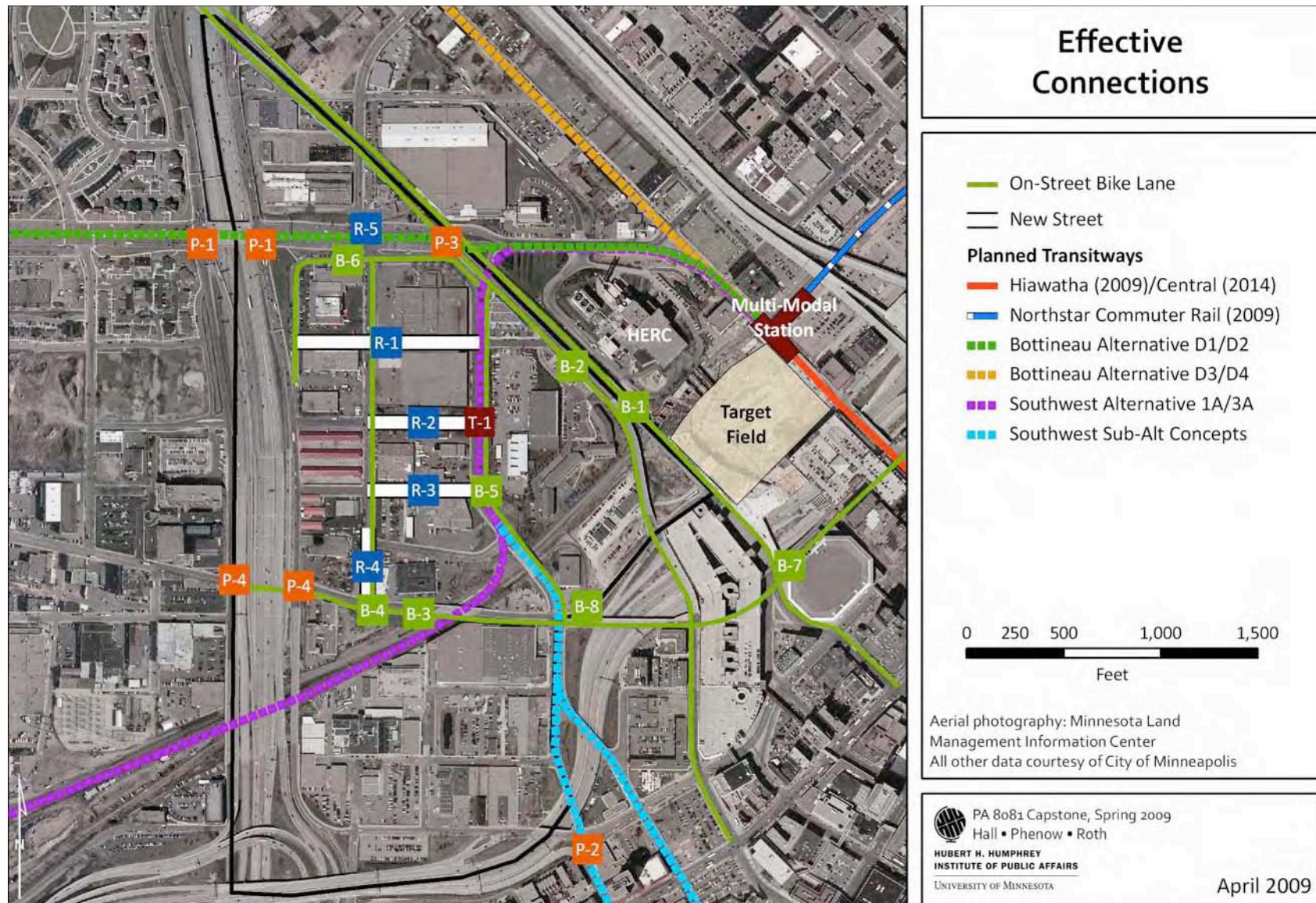
Other major gaps in the bicycle network will be filled on 7th Street and 10th Street by adding 6-foot on-street bicycle lanes. Signage designating streets as shared bicycle lanes will be added to other interior neighborhood connections, noted in the table below.

The City should strongly advocate for a Southwest LRT alignment that includes a stop at Royalston. On-street bike lanes will be added to major corridors, as well as throughout the neighborhood. Finally, four roads will be extended to increase accessibility to uses within the center of the neighborhood.

Table 3-5 | Connectivity Actions

CONNECTIVITY ACTIONS				
Number	Action	Responsible Agency	Partners	Goal year
Pedestrian Actions				
P-1	Implement traffic calming measures, including no right on red designation at Olson Memorial Highway/Lyndale Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
P-2	Implement traffic calming measures on 12th & 11th Streets	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
P-3	Implement traffic calming measures at Olson/7th Street	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
P-4	Implement traffic calming measures on Glenwood Avenue at Lyndale Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
P-5	Sidewalk improvements on east and west sides of Royalston Avenue	Mpls TPW	Private Developer	2020
Transit Actions				
T-1	Advocate for inclusion of Southwest LRT stop at Royalston Avenue	Mpls TPW	Hennepin County	2015
Bicycle Actions				
B-1	Add on-street bicycle lane striping on 7th Street, from Target Field to Lyndale Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
B-2	Add on-street bicycle lane striping on 10 th Street, from 7 th Street to Glenwood Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
B-3	Add on-street bicycle lane striping on Glenwood Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
B-4	"Share Lane with Bicycles" signage on Border Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2010
B-5	Add on-street bicycle lane striping on Royalston Ave from 7 th St Glenwood Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2015
B-6	"Share Lane with Bicycles" signage on Border Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2015
B-7	Narrow 7 th Street to two lanes to accommodate on street bike lane	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2009
B-8	Maintain Cedar Lake Trail exit at 3rd Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2009
Roadway Actions				
R-1	Extend 5th Avenue N from Royalston to Lakeside Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2014-2020
R-2	Extend Cesar Chavez Avenue from Border to Royalston Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2014-2020
R-3	Extend 3rd Avenue from Border to Royalston Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2014-2020
R-4	Extend Border Avenue from Holden Street to Glenwood Avenue	Mpls TPW	Mpls CPED	2014-2020
R-5	Discourage closure of Oak Lake Avenue at Olson Memorial Highway due to Bottineau Transitway	Mpls TPW	Hennepin County	2009

Figure 3-16 | Connectivity Actions



CONCLUSION

The potential for change in the Lower North Loop is immense. This study is the first step toward widespread recognition of the Lower North Loop as a viable part of Minneapolis. The forthcoming small area plan will build on the barriers, connections, public realm issues, and land use possibilities identified in this study to formalize a long-term vision and plan for the area. Beyond the boundaries of the Lower North Loop, creation of this plan will also turn the attention of city council members, planners, developers, and the public to this previously forgotten area.

In the meantime, however, the findings of this report can contribute to improvements in the area. As the Southwest and Bottineau transitways become reality, rising land values in the Lower North Loop will invite higher and better uses. Parallel to the transitway and small area planning processes, the City should examine the actions presented in this document for feasibility and priority. Implementing these actions will ensure that the Lower North Loop can capitalize on growing demand for residential and commercial land in the city center as the economy rebounds in coming years.

Interviews conducted for this project:

Charles Carlson, Facilities Planner, Metro Transit
David Frank, President, North Loop Neighborhood Association
Greg Goeke, Director of Property Services, City of Minneapolis
Minneapolis City Council Member Lisa Goodman
Heather Huseby, Ed. D., Executive Director, YouthLink
Mark Klinkner, Mark Klinkner Realty
Chuck Leer, North First Ventures
Robert C. Lux, Principal, Alatus, LLC
Bruce Maus, Senior Vice President, Grubb & Ellis|Northco
Michael Mechtenberg, Associate Planner, Metro Transit
Dick Paik, Consultant, W-ZHA, LLC
Janet Pope, Catholic Charities
Minneapolis City Council Member Don Samuels
John Saunders, United Properties
Lou Sirian, Owner, Lee's Liquor Lounge

ⁱ American FactFinder, <http://factfinder.census.gov>, 2009, accessed February 2009

ⁱⁱ Hennepin County Transit and Community Works Department, Downtown Minneapolis Multi-Modal Station Area Master Plan, 2002, www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/docs/Multi-Model.pdf, accessed March 2009, pg. 3

ⁱⁱⁱ Hennepin County Transit and Community Works Department, Downtown Minneapolis Multi-Modal Station Area Master Plan, 2002, www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/docs/Multi-Model.pdf, accessed March 2009, pg. V

^{iv} City of Minneapolis Planning Department, Downtown East North Loop Master Plan, October 2003, <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/master-plans/downtown-east-north-loop/> accessed February 2009

^v Portland Development Commission, Pearl District Development Plan, October 2001 http://www.pdc.us/pubs/inv_detail.asp?id=234&ty=14, accessed February 2009, pg. 5

^{vi} Portland Development Commission, Pearl District Development Plan, October 2001 http://www.pdc.us/pubs/inv_detail.asp?id=234&ty=14, accessed February 2009, pg. 13

^{vii} City and County of Denver. Denver Union Station Master Plan, September 2004. City and County of Denver. http://www.denverunionstation.org/master_plan/mp_document.aspx.

^{viii} Chapin, T. 2004. Sports Facilities as Urban Development Catalysts. *Journal of the American Planning Association*;70:2.

^{ix} Chapin, T. 2004. Sports Facilities as Urban Development Catalysts. *Journal of the American Planning Association*;70:2.

^x City and County of Denver. Lower Downtown Neighborhood Plan, August 2000. City and County of Denver. http://www.denvergov.org/Planning_Services/SmallAreaPlans/tabid/428096/Default.aspx

^{xi} (Coors Field, Architectural Record August, 1996 pg 110)

^{xii} Post, Nadine. 2004. San Diego's Ballpark Neighborhood Is a Grand Slam Against Slums. *ENR: Engineering News-Record*, March 8.

^{xiii} Bryson, John Moore, and Barbara C. Crosby. 1992. *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

North Loop SAP Wiki – Analytics – 02.01.10

The wiki pilot project for the North Loop Neighborhood Master Plan was live from December 7, 2009 until January 20, 2010. During those 45 days the wiki site experienced varying levels of engagement, detailed synopses of which follow.

WIKI BACKGROUND

For those who are unfamiliar with a wiki, its definition comes from the Hawaiian language – meaning “fast” or “quick.” It has also been said it is an acronym for “What I Know Is...”

A Wiki is defined as: “a collaborative web site comprised of the perpetual collective work of many authors. Similar to a blog in structure and logic, a wiki allows anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the Web site using a browser interface, including the work of previous authors. In contrast, a blog, typically authored by an individual, does not allow visitors to change the original posted material; only add comments to the original content.”

The most well-known version of a wiki is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. This wiki pilot is being endorsed and hosted by the North Loop Neighborhood Association. It is being tested as a supplement to the City of Minneapolis’ existing public engagement process, and while also endorsed by the City, it remains a separate entity.

WHY DID WE TEST IT?

The intention behind piloting a wiki in this small area planning process was an attempt to bolster and more deeply engage the citizenry in a new and unique form of public participation. It was seen as a possibility to enhance public participation in a variety of forums city-wide. This process had been tested briefly in 2008 with a chapter of the new Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. That success was noticed and adopted by the City of Afton, MN; Melbourne, Australia, and San Jose, CA. The desire was to build off the original idea and continue to enhance ways in which the public can engage in shaping the place they live. Ultimately, we are promoting new ways of education and awareness.

- **LET’S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION**

The wiki was being tested as a new component of the current public participation process. This component is about “continuing the conversation” – a conversation that may begin at a public meeting, or may begin at the coffee shop. This forum allows the public the opportunity to continue talking about ideas whenever they strike. The wiki allows contributions beyond the slated time of public meetings – after the kids are in bed, at midnight, during your lunch break, or on Saturday morning.

- **YOUNGER GENERATIONS – WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

It was a desire to engage new segments of the population – those for whom social media, the web, and interfaces like this are second nature. Their opinions on how to make our neighborhood better are important and rarely heard. The hope was to broaden the conversation – to amp up the creativity. Who knows, the next big idea may be born in the mind of a brilliant 10th grader?

- **RECLAMATION OF EXPERTISE**

The general public can be experts too! The population of Minneapolis has its own capacity to think, understand a problem or challenge, and craft a solution. Expertise may be legal, it may be technology, it may be the arts, and it may be dog-walking or industrial machines. This does not preclude anyone (or excuse them) from having their own unique insight into how the neighborhood could and should evolve.

PROCEDURE & EXPECTATIONS

During this time, the public was physically able come to this site and edit the draft document. **Yes – actually change the document. Paragraphs could be rewritten, sentences changed, ideas enhanced or offered anew.** During this time, it was possible to have online discussions with other users about the topics at hand and self-educate prior to contributing.

ONLINE CONTRIBUTION RULES

The following rules were outlined for those members of the public wishing to contribute to the wiki site. They were based on the idea of civil discourse, and that there is some civility still left in discourse. These rules may seem obvious, but they can, and should be put in place as a baseline for future online forums.

Abuse will not be tolerated – period. In this process, the North Loop Neighborhood Association agreed to endorse this pilot program because of their belief in the possibility of thoughtful civil discourse. To that end, behavior should be as if visiting someone’s home – respectfully. If users cannot behave in a respectful manner, they will be blocked from the site immediately and their contributions removed.

No personal attacks/sniping. We are here to begin a new era of public discourse – one where we can engage in constructive and creative conversations, not destructive ones. To that end, we request that users write only about the issue/challenge at hand, not individuals.

Open forum – anyone can participate. Thoughts are welcome from across the street and across the world. There might be someone in NE Minneapolis, South St. Paul, or possibly Copenhagen, who has a really great idea that could be applicable here – why should they be excluded?

Moderators. Moderators or city planning staff may also participate if they so choose – they have ideas too. Perhaps they can help clarify a question, or offer insight that helps guide the discussion. They must be welcomed and engaged as an equal and effective part of the community, just as all users are.

End Date. There will be an end date for this process. This end date will be 45 days after the draft is released for public comment. After that point, the wiki document will be frozen and its contents reviewed in the same way that all other public commentary for planning projects is reviewed.

Maybe You're "IN," Maybe You're "OUT" It must be clear that all changes made to the wiki may not be used. Do not be disappointed or angered if individual contributions are not adopted – that is part of any collaborative creative process. Alternately – users can and should have a strong sense of ownership and recognition when they see a sentence or perhaps an idea or two, that has managed to gain the support of your peers and the city staff and be included. This reinforces that the public has – within this civil and collaborative framework – been recognized for the strength of their contributions, the value of their ideas, and the skills of their trades.

Have Fun! Most of all – have fun with this. Challenge peers and colleagues to see what heights this forum can be taken to? What flashes of brilliance and insight are possible when the expertise of such an amazing group of people is focused?

ANALYTICS: VISITORS – December 7, 2009 to January 20, 2010

SITE USAGE/VISITS: WIKI vs. CPED NORTH LOOP WEBPAGE –

Due to the way the city's website is analyzed, we were not able to get specific data to compare ALL categories. The city categories that had analytics available will be written in **RED**.

- **383 total visits/8.5 visits per day** – this tabulates the total of all visits to the site. This includes visits by one-time & returning visitors and the average of visitors per day.
- **280 unique visitors** – this tabulates how many individual visitors came to the site.
- **1,616 page views/642 page views** – this number shows how many total pages were viewed by all the visitors who came to each site.
- **4.22 pages/visit** – this is an average of how many pages each visitor viewed while on the site.
- **3:07 minutes/1:25 minutes** – this is an average of the total amount of time that each visitor stayed on the wiki or city site.
- **72% of visits were new visits** – this number calls out how many visits were new vs. returning. Meaning also that 28% of the visits were returning visits.

- **49.9% bounce rate/25% bounce rate** – this number shows the percentage of visitors that left or “bounced” off the site from the first (landing) page. The lower this number is, the “stickier” the website is. This is an indicator of engaging content that keeps visitors on a site for longer periods of time and delving deeper into the content of the site. The week of December 27th – January 2 was interesting in that it had the lowest bounce rate of the entire 45 day period at 38%. This might lead one to conclude there was more time for study of the website during the holiday, thus less likelihood to leave quickly.

Most visits (66%), and thus most data on visitors, came in the first two weeks of the launch. The third most popular week was the 5th week, with nearly 10% of the visitors.

LOYALTY –

- Nearly 72% of all visitors to the wiki site came only **ONCE**.
- About 10% of all visitors came **TWICE**.
- Close to 5% of all visitors came to the site between **9-14 times**.

LENGTH OF VISIT –

- About half of the visitors – 52% - stayed on the site for **only 10 seconds**.
- About 29% stayed on the site between **1-10 minutes**.
- Just over 4% stayed for **10 minutes or longer**.

MOBILE –

- 4 visits to the wiki came via iPhones.

LOCATION OF VISITOR –

- **381 visits** to the wiki came from the **United States**, averaging 4 pages/visit and 3 minutes on the site.
- **1 visit** came from **Brazil** and was negligible, looking at the Main page and exiting.
- **1 visit** came from the **United Kingdom**. This visitor reviewed 18 pages and spent 40 minutes on the site.

Some of the analysis that can be seen via these statistics tends to indicate that the front (landing) page may have been too dense. The amount of information and its clarity may have

been difficult for users to access quickly and easily; thus the bounce rate, loyalty, and visit length numbers.

Instructions may have not been clear enough for first-time users to understand how to utilize the wiki – so most visitors appeared to use it for information gathering rather than actual engagement and editing.

ANALYTICS: TRAFFIC SOURCES – December 7, 2009 to January 20, 2010

OVERVIEW –

- The highest numbers of visits – nearly 60% - were **REFERRED** to the wiki via other websites.
- Direct traffic a.k.a. going straight to <http://northloopsap.wetpaint.com/> garnered about **40%** of the visits.
- Only about **2%** of the visits came from **search engines**. This low number speaks possibly to the lack of knowledge about using a wiki for this type of public engagement, thus, no one searching for it.

REFERRING SITES –

- **220 visits came from 19 outside sources.** These 220 visitors spent an average of 3 minutes on the site and viewed about 4 pages during their visit, consistent with the overall numbers.

The top sources were as follows:

1. www.northloop.org = 101 visits
2. www.facebook.com = 38 visits
3. www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us = 37 visits
4. www.northloopfriends.blogspot.com = 13 visits
5. www.millcityexplorer.com = 07 visits
6. www.google.com = 07 visits
7. www.twitter.com = 06 visits

8. www.linkedin.com = 02 visits

The fascinating metric here is how much traffic was driven to the site via “social” functions – either social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) or just community networks (North Loop neighborhood organization website and blog). The fact that nearly an equal number of visits came from Facebook as did the City of Minneapolis’ website is intriguing and bodes well for the theory of using social media to engage different user groups.

DIRECT TRAFFIC –

- **155 visits** came directly to <http://northloopsap.wetpaint.com/>

SEARCH ENGINES –

- **7 visits** came from www.google.com
- The visitors who searched for the wiki looked at **140%** more pages on the site than the average visitor at just over **10 pages/visit**.
- These visitors also had a much lower bounce rate than the average at **14.3%**.
- The search engine visitors also spent about **HALF** the average time on the site – **1:30 minutes**.

ANALYTICS: CONTENT – December 7, 2009 to January 20, 2010

PAGEVIEWS: WIKI vs. CPED NORTH LOOP WEBPAGE –

Due to the way the city’s website is analyzed, we were not able to get specific data to compare ALL categories. The city categories that had analytics available will be written in **RED**.

- There were **1,616 page views** during the active period of the wiki, **1,196 unique views**, and a **49.9% bounce rate**.
- There were **642 page views** during the active period of the city website, **380 unique views**, and a **25% bounce rate**.
- There were **1,616 page views/642 page views** during the active period of both sites – this number highlights the total number of pages viewed, including repeated views of a single page.

- There were **1,196 unique views/380 unique views**. This number tabulates the number of visits during which one or more of the pages were viewed.

- The top content was as follows:

1. Main Entry (Landing) Page =	466 page views
2. Executive Summary, Chapter 1 =	91 page views
3. Recommendations, Chapter 6 =	75 page views
4. Members page =	64 page views
5. What's New page =	46 page views
6. Forum page =	42 page views
7. Photos page =	31 page views
8. Forum/General Discussion page =	29 page views
9. Maps page =	29 page views
10. Introduction, Chapter 2 =	28 page views

Total wiki page views = 1616 page views

1. City of Minneapolis – North Loop Small Area Plan Web Page = 642 page views

- The top exit pages were as follows:

1. Main Entry (Landing) Page =	204 exits
2. Recommendations, Chapter 6 =	23 exits
3. Executive Summary, Chapter 1 =	16 exits
4. Maps =	13 exits
5. Members page =	10 exits

CONCLUSION –

The ability to test this concept in a larger arena was one that was helpful to understanding the opportunities and challenges associated with utilizing wikis and other social media as public engagement tools.

Some take away items from this pilot project include:

- A better, more engaging, simpler, and more aesthetically pleasing Main Entry (Landing) page is needed to draw user further into the site.
- A stronger reason for users to edit the document is needed – perhaps not much difference was seen between this and the standard way of commenting on a draft plan. Perhaps the inclusion of users in creating the plan earlier could incite them to have a larger stake in participation?
- “Social” functions – either social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and community networks (North Loop neighborhood organization website and blog) were large drivers of traffic to the site. The fact that nearly an equal number of visits came from Facebook as did the City of Minneapolis’ website is intriguing and bodes well for the theory of using social media to engage different user groups.

The exciting metric from this segment comes from the comparison of page views from the wiki and from CPED’s North Loop Small Area Plan Web Page. As can be seen above, over **2.5 times more** page views occurred on the wiki, and just over **3 times more unique** page views also occurred on the wiki vs. the city website.

Again, this seems to be reinforcing that, in this instance, social media played a strong role in driving traffic to read the draft plan document.

- Page views indicated the tendency of users to focus on information gathering and education, rather than engagement and editing. This is borne out by the Top 3 content pages reviewed – Main Entry page, Recommendations, and Executive Summary. These 3 pages were also the Top 3 exit pages. This could be interpreted as satisfaction with the existing draft, or non-interest/misunderstanding of how to use the wiki to edit the draft.