Minneapolis
City of Lakes

PATHWAYS TO PLACES
Shaping Downtown Together

City of Minneapolis

Downtown

Public Realm Framework Plan

June 2016

City of Minneapolis

Downtown

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Preface

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Figure 1.1 Photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

A Roadmap for Partnership

How the Public Realm Framework Will Be Used

Pathways to Places

City Goals and Values

Purpose and Need

Trends in Implementation

1 Introduction

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework (DPRF)* is the City's contributing plan to the joint *Pathways to Places* initiative of the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board:

> *Pathways to Places is a joint effort between the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to holistically plan and vision parks and public spaces in Downtown Minneapolis.*

The purpose of the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* is to provide unified guidance to inform and coordinate the work of public and private entities that shape and invest in the public realm. The Plan includes a survey of existing policies as well as new policy recommendations for shaping the future of key corridors and the riverfront district of Downtown Minneapolis. It is intended to inform and guide outcomes in capital planning, site plan review, and public/private partnerships toward the coordinated enhancement of the public realm.

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* was developed in concert with several companion pieces, including:

- The *Public Realm Guidelines,* a manual of the City's guidelines for public realm enhancements citywide
- The *Placemaking Hub*, an online one-stop shop for those seeking information about public realm enhancement programs and requirements.
- The *Downtown Minneapolis Programmable Space Inventory,* a study that identified and inventoried potentially programmable public spaces Downtown.
- The *Implementation Index*, a catalogue of funding and implementation strategies that have been used locally and nationally for public realm enhancement.

None of the four companion pieces will be adopted policy, but rather serve as valuable tools and references for those interested in public realm enhancement and placemaking.

Figure 1.2 Downtown Minneapolis images, courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

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Figure 1.3 The Downtown Public Realm Framework area encompasses or intersects fourteen neighborhoods. It extends beyond the traditional Downtown boundary, seeking to establish public realm connectivity among all close-in neighborhoods, to downtown and each other.

A Roadmap for Partnership

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* plan establishes policy guidance for a framework of streets, connections, and the riverfront district to inspire initiative and guide decisions by public, private, and nonprofit actors. Because street character is something that is shaped over time by both public and private actions, a key goal of the plan is to establish a common playbook for reference by the multiple actors who may impact streetscape enhancement and connectivity. Importantly, the plan does not propose "turnkey" enhancements as capital projects to be delivered solely by government - instead, it anticipates incremental implementation, over time, through the combined efforts of multiple contributors to street and district character – from property owners and developers to the Downtown Improvement District (DID), from the actions of nonprofits, businesses and individuals to decisions by multiple City departments. Street character and a sense of place are enhanced by many interwoven elements: ground floor uses, street furnishings, greening, façade improvement, public art, bike and pedestrian amenities, activation, and numerous other variables. The sum of these elements of perceived enhancement is neither solely public nor solely private. Facilitating coordination and partnership among public, private, and nonprofit actors are therefore at the heart of this plan's intent. Success is when public, private, and nonprofit actors make decisions that incrementally contribute to the implementation of enhanced streets, thereby achieving corridor identity. Some possible examples of where the plan could influence outcomes include public sector, private sector, or nonprofit consideration of:

» Where planners should encourage developers to concentrate their active ground floor uses, and equally important, where to discourage curb cuts and building service areas;

» Where to focus limited public resources to increase greening and establish wayfinding;

» Where the City and Downtown Improvement District should especially encourage private property owners to install privately maintained greening features;

» Where to encourage property owners, the Park Board, or the City to provide a missing link to establish desired pedestrian connectivity, should the opportunity arise to do so;

» What City Public Works should consider and aspire to should one of the streets identified in the plan be up for full reconstruction;

» Where partners should consider prioritizing investment in wayfinding and expanded tree canopy;

» How existing municipal programs and their beneficiaries, such as the City's Great Streets program or Art in Public Places program, might contribute to the enhancement of priority corridors; or

» Where a nonprofit should give special consideration to supporting placemaking or activation initiatives Downtown, based on the City's policy framework for priority streets and places

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* plan is not a capital plan and does not make recommendations for or prioritize capital projects. The policy guidance outlined in this plan is in addition to, not replacing, the "Activity Street" policy guidance established for all Downtown streets in *Access Minneapolis, the City of Minneapolis' Ten Year Transportation Action Plan*.

How the Public Realm Framework Will Be Used

The plan outlines a shared vision that can be incrementally achieved through public/private partnerships, development opportunities and capital street reconstruction projects. The primary method of implementation is to ensure that the plan is referenced by staff and applicants at relevant times, for relevant projects, in both the development review process and capital planning process.

For development applications impacting a relevant corridor or district (see Chapter 3), the Downtown Public Realm Framework priorities will be stewarded by the assigned City planner, who will engage in conversations with the applicant about fulfilling the policy intent. The planner will also make the Planning Commission aware of the Downtown Public Realm Framework policy guidance applicable to the project.

For City of Minneapolis capital projects on or impacting a priority corridor, consideration of Downtown Public Realm Framework policies will be triggered by questions on the City of Minneapolis' Complete Streets Checklist and will be stewarded by Public Works and Community Planning and Economic Development staff. Staff will alert the Planning Commission when capital projects are planned on identified priority corridors as outlined in the Downtown Public Realm Framework.

For capital projects by system partners (e.g. Hennepin County), the Downtown Public Realm Framework priorities will be provided by City staff to project managers and relevant City representatives participating in the process.

The plan enables public, private, and nonprofit actors to make decisions based on guidance for key corridors in the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* area (see Figure

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Figure 1.4 Pathways to Places logo

1.3). The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* area does not reflect the standard "Downtown" boundary; it extends to capture key connections that reinforce relationships to close-in neighborhoods.

The plan does not request allocation of new public funds but instead clarifies a shared vision for enhancement by public and private stakeholders. Success requires the involvement and participation of many. The plan does not rely on one actor for implementation.

Pathways to Places

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* contributes to a holistic vision for the whole Downtown public realm, comprised of parks, trails, and streets. While the City created this plan for streets and city-owned public spaces, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) simultaneously created the *Downtown Service Area Master Plan (DSAMP)* for parks and trails. Together, these two plans provide a whole vision for the Downtown public realm, jointly known as *Pathways to Places.* The two plans shared stakeholders, processes, resources, data, and findings in order to maximize the value of the outcome to the community as a whole.

City and Park Board staff formed a shared Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, conducted joint community engagement, and shaped the overall project as a cohesive and integrated team. Through these efforts, the Park Board and the City have developed a shared strategic vision for public realm planning, and have advanced the dialogue about how streets, public rights-of-way, parks and trails connect people to experiences and destinations.

The Authority of the City and Park Board

Although the plans are related and were conceived in concert, it is important to distinguish between the procedural and decision-making authorities of the two entities. The City of Minneapolis has authority over streets, City-owned public

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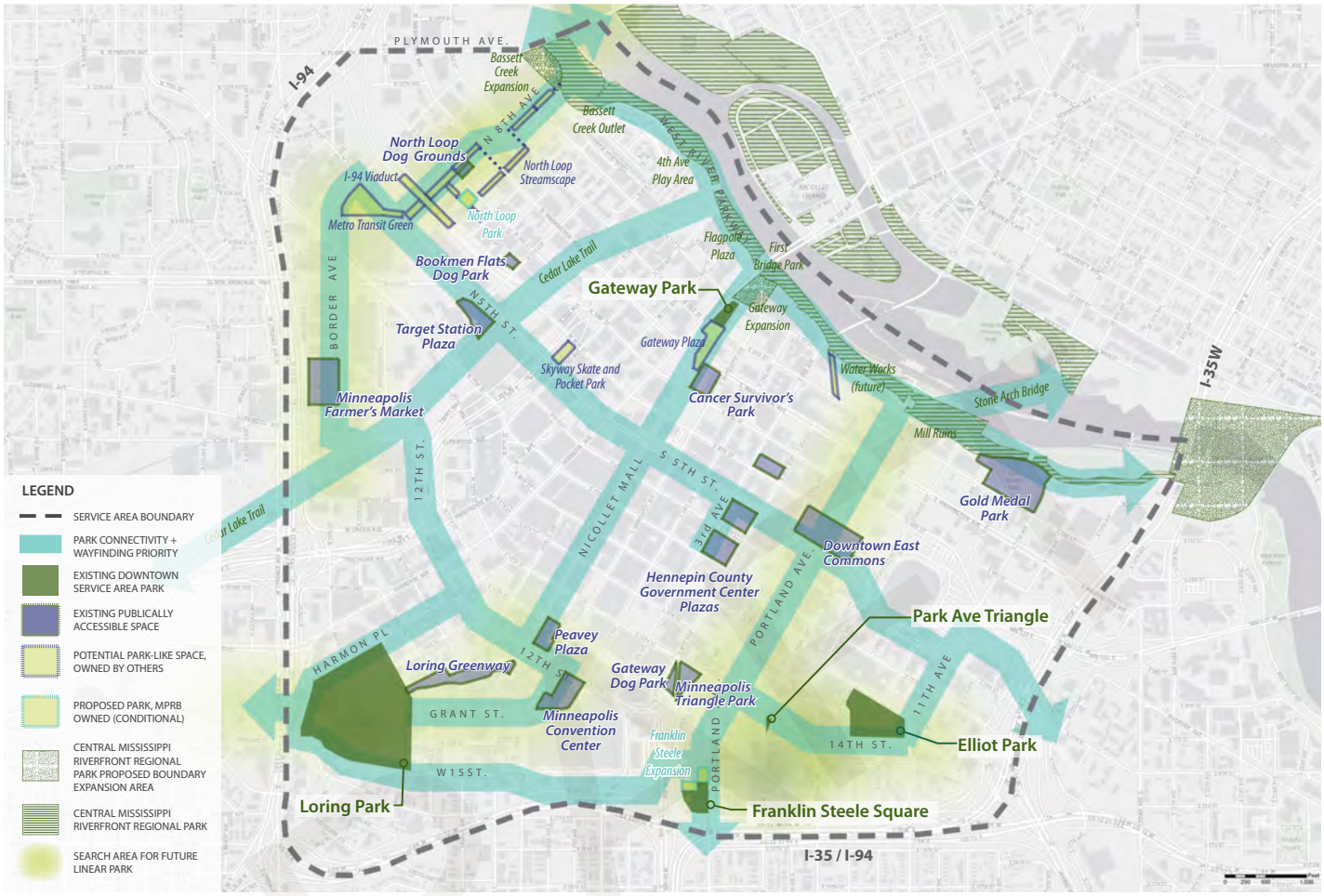

Figure 1.5 The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) contribution to Pathways to Places is the Downtown Service Area Master Plan, which, in addition to park planning, proposes priorities for future parks-oriented wayfinding. The full plan is available on the MPRB website.

spaces, and the regulation of private property; the Park Board has authority over street trees, parks and trails. This means that while there is a holistic vision and collaborative spirit behind both plans, there is by necessity two separate documents, separately adopted, with two distinct decision-making and implementation processes.

While the City is focused on policy, establishing a framework of priority corridors for connectivity and enhancement, the Park Board is focused on the planning and design of Park Board assets. The *Downtown Service Area Master Plan* includes a park plan for each of the Downtown parks—planning the future of each of the park assets, and identifying new assets where needed. The Park Board plan will imagine the future of park and recreation development in the Downtown area, and seeks to establish a new, urban model for service delivery, maintenance, funding, and operation of Downtown parks. The *Pathways to Places* partnership between the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board provided a unique opportunity to set a precedent for thinking about park and trail planning and setting City policy for streets as a cohesive and coordinated public realm effort.

Creative Engagement

The City worked with local artist Stephanie Glaros, the local photographer behind "Humans of Minneapolis," to collect and catalog intercept interviews with Downtown visitors, residents and workers to guide and inform policy recommendations as part of the planning process. The results are visually and informationally rich interviews of community members sharing their experiences and thoughts about what is working well, what needs improvement, and what is enjoyable about Downtown.

Throughout the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* document, photographs of interviewees have been included as insets,

Public Engagement Artist
Stephanie Glaros

The City worked with local artist Stephanie Glaros to collect and catalog interviews with Downtown visitors, residents and workers to guide and inform policy recommendations as part of the planning process. The results are visually and informationally rich photographs and audio recordings that capture what it is like for residents, visitors and workers in Downtown. The one-on-one interviews allowed for community members to share their experiences and thoughts about what is working well, what needs improvement, and what they enjoy downtown.

Figure 1.6 Stephanie Glaros

Figure 1.7 Mahlet Tamrat, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"Mostly I take my lunch break at this government city area. I like the fountain, especially summertime is when I come out. It feels like it's a bit quieter than the Nicollet Mall, or the other part of downtown. And I'm right across to it, and it's very convenient, and there is a lot of sitting areas. A little shade if you want the shade, there is sunny areas, too, if you wanna be in the sun. That's the thing that I like about this area. It's not too crowded, and the fact that there are times that they have live music right by the other side. And it's just refreshing, you know, on my lunch break to come out and just enjoy… I have a few friends throughout downtown, so every time we plan to meet up for Happy Hour or something, there is so many places that we can go and hang out for an hour or two before going back to home. So that part I really like downtown…I tend to come mainly for work Monday through Friday, and anything (that) happen right after work, otherwise I rarely make a trip just to have fun in downtown, I guess maybe 'cuz I spend most of my week hour in downtown…"

–Mahlet Tamra, Worker

"My name's Ethan Ramsay…I take the Megabus, like, 5 times a year, from Minneapolis to Chicago."
"Have you ever had difficulty locating the Megabus (bus stop)?
"Yeah, definitely once it moved, the first time. And actually a couple times since then. It's just very hard to figure out exactly where it is with the ramp and everything, me not knowing the city extremely well because I'm a visitor…It's a hard place to find for sure."
"What would help solve that problem?"
"Signs, at least off the main streets would help…They once had the bus stop in a different location, and that was a lot easier to find. So either moving it, or using signs, making it easier to find it."

-Ethan Ramsay, Visitor

Figure 1.8 Ethan Ramsay, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

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with segments of the interviews highlighted. The interviews provide readers with a glimpse of the qualitative input that helped to inform the plan. Watch or listen to complete interviews on the City of Minneapolis website, or read the full transcripts located in the Appendix.

City Goals and Values

Every four years following municipal elections, the Mayor and City Council develops and adopts goals, values and strategic directions to guide the work of the City. These goals are intended to provide clear long-term direction and to create a framework and direction for the work of the City Enterprise.

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* is not a citywide document, but it seeks to build on the spirit of the City goals by clarifying the role of the public realm in delivering on desired outcomes for Downtown. While there are connections to every City goal within the objectives of the Downtown Public Realm Framework, the goals that are uniquely relevant are as follows:

Living Well

Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life.

- All neighborhoods are safe, healthy and uniquely inviting
- Neighborhoods have amenities to meet daily needs and live a healthy life
- High quality and convenient transportation options connect every corner of the city
- The city grows with density done well

A Hub Of Economic Activity And Innovation

- Businesses, big and small, start, move, stay and grow here
- Infrastructure, public services, and community assets support businesses and commerce

Great Places

- Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected
- All Minneapolis residents, visitors and employees have a safe and healthy environment
- We manage and improve the city's infrastructure for current and future needs
- Iconic, inviting streets, spaces and buildings create a sense of place
- We welcome our growing and diversifying population with thoughtful planning and design

Purpose and Need

The purpose of adopting the Downtown Public Realm Framework is to establish a policy framework for connectivity and corridor enhancement so that the public sector, private sector, nonprofits, and other stakeholders are able to pull together toward a common vision. The public realm can enhance our city's livability, sustainability, safety, and health. A vibrant and high performing public realm contributes to the region's competitiveness and the image of the city, attracting people to live, work, and visit Minneapolis.

Partnerships help to advance desired outcomes in the public realm. Many enhancements require capacity and resources for both capital costs and maintenance, or programming elements beyond the ability of the municipality alone to provide. Setting the table for partnership requires establishing a shared vision that enables the private sector, public sector, and nonprofits to contribute collectively and in a coordinated way to incremental enhancement and activation.

The Public Realm Framework in Downtown Minneapolis will leverage the expertise and commitment of our largest Special Service District, the Downtown Improvement District. Notably, Downtown has seen the most growth and private

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Figure 1.9 Downtown Minneapolis images, courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

development activity in Minneapolis over the past 15 years. Over $6 billion of development activity, including primarily commercial ($4.4 billion) and multifamily ($1.5 billion), flowed into Downtown Minneapolis from 2000-2015, and projected growth indicates that similar levels of investment can be anticipated to 2040. With growth on the horizon, the Downtown Public Realm Framework is well-positioned to influence private sector investment and initiative in the public realm in the years to come.

Trends in Implementation

All cities are looking for new and innovative ways to fund the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. Nationally, a shift is underway at all levels of government to advance an innovation culture that proactively seeks collaborative relationships to make new projects possible. Improving infrastructure and the public realm, including public rights-of-way, is widely perceived as a key innovation space for cities, whether in the interest of green infrastructure and climate action goals, transportation and multimodalism, smart city technologies, equity, creative and cultural placemaking, or large civic public space projects. As these priorities gain momentum, so do the opportunities for new funding models. This plan does not offer funding recommendations, but the Implementation Index, a companion document, provides local and national examples of public realm funding strategies.

In Minneapolis, enhanced greening, wayfinding, distinctive pavements, and street furnishings are typically achieved through assessment. This can occur as a component of a capital street reconstruction, or in Special Service Districts, where commercial properties have opted to be assessed for the enhanced maintenance costs for those elements.

On most streets, standard maintenance and operations is managed by the City, including snow removal on streets, litter pick-up, and street sweeping. Street tree maintenance

is provided by the Park Board. Many neighborhoods seek an enhanced level of service on their streets, but not all are either eligible or able to form a Special Service District.

Some peer cities are finding ways to deliver public goods through innovative partnerships, tax instruments, or revenue models. In Seattle, a zoning tool and a special levy is used: incentive zones raise in excess of $30 million annually for affordable housing, preservation, and public realm improvement, while a voter approved special parks levy raised $148 million over 6 years for needed improvements. In Chicago, simply lending City support to private initiatives has been a strategy: City-supported Kickstarter campaigns for projects that contribute to economic development are championed and promoted by the City as part of "Seed Chicago."

How can Minneapolis innovate in the areas of public finance, strategic partnership, and project delivery to deliver a livable 21st century city? This question impacts the work of policymakers, multiple City departments, and community stakeholders, and although it is relevant and related, the full scope of it lies beyond the purview of the *Downtown Public Realm Framework plan*.

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Figure 2.1: Photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

CHAPTER 2

Context + Background

- Local Goals
- Resident Demographics
- Existing Policy Analysis
- Existing Conditions Analysis
- Community Engagement Summary

2 Context and Background

Local Goals

While Downtown has always served a central role in the identity of Minneapolis, the area has begun to transform in ways that are broadening its reach and enhancing its role as the heart of a thriving urban region. These changes include significant growth in our residential population Downtown, expansion of sports, entertainment, and dining options, and an increasing focus on the Central Riverfront as a destination for leisure, culture and historic interpretation.

These positive changes were possible as a result of growth. Minneapolis has sustained growth of around 4,000 people per year since 2010, and has added around 30,000 people in total since 2000. The Downtown share of growth over that period translates into over $6 billion of private development activity in Downtown. Growth in Minneapolis over the past 15 years has fueled the reclamation of our riverfront as a place for people; the development of major cultural and entertainment destinations, and whole new residential districts which have themselves attracted new retail and dining options. In addition to significant growth Downtown, Minneapolis has seen the resurgence of Uptown around the Midtown Greenway, a population and development boom in the University area, the expansion of transit infrastructure, and substantial institutional investment.

Minneapolis is not alone. Cities across the United States are seeing growth due to a renewal of interest in urban living. This trend has driven demand for multi-family housing in central city neighborhoods, new public spaces that serve a variety of expressions of public life, and an increased focus on the pedestrian, supported by transit, car-sharing and bike-sharing, as the primary mode of mobility.

Minneapolis is projected to attract close to 30,000 more residents by 2030 and around 20,000 more on top of that by 2040. In total, Met Council projects that our 2040 population will reach around 460,000. City leaders have dreamed even bigger, setting our population goal at 500,001.

Growing our population and enhancing our economic competitiveness is both a projection and a goal of both the City and the Downtown Council. More people will bring more positive change. More capacity to support amenities like retail. Lower cost per capita to build and maintain infrastructure. Increased tax base to advance public goals. Minneapolis will continue to grow, and will seek to grow equitably.

To achieve the population goal of 500,001 by 2040, Minneapolis will need to sustain growth of around 3,600 people per year for the next 25 years. To achieve the Downtown Council's goal of 70,000 Downtown residents by 2025, 3,200 of those new residents would be deciding to live Downtown each year for the next 10 years. These are big goals which require proactive steps, including pursuit of our City Goal to be a city of *Great Places*. The Downtown Public Realm Framework establishes a roadmap for multiple actors to contribute to building a more livable and vibrant Downtown to attract new and serve existing residents, businesses, and visitors.

Resident Demographics

Downtown Minneapolis has seen a lot of change over the last 20 years. Census data alone does not tell the whole story but it gives a picture of the transformation that is happening both locally and nationally towards a more vibrant, active and mixed-use urban core. In general, there are a few key trends to notice about demographics in Downtown Minneapolis and their effect on the public realm.

Downtown is growing

The population of Downtown has seen a 40% increase in the last 20 years, and that trend shows no signs of slowing down. Driven by strong development in areas such as the North Loop and the Mill District and now in Downtown East, the residential

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Figure 2.2 Ben Jensen, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"I work in the IDS, right here on the corner, and then I live down closer to Loring Park…I walk to work, so in summer (and) fall when I can tough it, I'll walk down Nicollet. I'll take the skyway in winter, or drive if I really need to, but I'd say I walk to work probably 80% of the time.

I obviously go out. Restaurants, bars, things like that around here. So I'll go out down Nicollet, just 'cuz I'm pretty close to it, but over towards First Avenue as well…There's plenty to do downtown, and it's one of the reasons I live down here. . .It's enjoyable, you can pretty much do whatever you want at your fingertips. I also do grocery shopping downtown. Twins games, Timberwolves games, I go to all those as well. There's just so much going on…I would say the one thing that (downtown is) missing would probably be more shopping. There's not a lot of street-level retail. . . I would say that kind of retail would be a good addition down here."

- Ben Jensen, Resident/Worker

population is expanding rapidly and bringing a new kind of pedestrian to Downtown streets and open spaces. That new pedestrian is more and more frequently an elderly person or a child as more retirees and families move into Downtown. The growth and character of the new Downtown residential population has created an increased demand for public amenities, human-scaled pedestrian environments, active streetscapes and vibrant public spaces that accommodate a range of activities and expressions of public life.

Downtown is racially and ethnically diverse

The racial and ethnic makeup of Downtown is largely reflective of the diversity of Minneapolis as a whole. While predominantly white, particularly in areas like Loring Park and the North Loop, downtown has a significant black population with concentrations in Elliot Park, Downtown West and Downtown East. Downtown East and Downtown West also have significant Asian populations. This diversity of communities brings with it a diversity of experiences, cultural practices and expectations for how public space gets used. For the DPRF, it necessitates an approach that embraces multiple perspectives on what constitutes thriving public realm.

Downtown is age diverse

The resident population of Downtown is largely of working age with a growing presence of families with children. Additionally Downtown Minneapolis has a slightly larger percentage of seniors compared to the city as a whole. This has created a need for intergenerational spaces to which families can bring children and in which seniors can feel connected to community and to amenities and services.

Downtown is economically divided

While, in general, the median household income of Downtown has increased significantly over the past 15 years, nearly half of all residents make less than $35,000 per year, well

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below the citywide average. In contrast, nearly a third of the population makes more than $75,000, leaving just a quarter of the Downtown residents in the middle range of $35,000 to $75,000. This reality reflects larger trends and challenges in the city as a whole and illustrates the widening gap between the economically advantaged and those living with far less, particularly communities of color, who make up the vast majority of citizens living in poverty. For the Downtown Public Realm Framework, it presents a challenge to better connect lower income residents who may be experiencing reduced access to public amenities. The public realm is a place for people of all means, walks of life, and cultural backgrounds to interact, relax, work, play and engage with their urban environment.

There are 36 organizations providing services to homeless individuals within the Downtown Public Realm Framework area. Eight of the entities are overnight shelters serving up to 224 families and 665 individuals on any given night, with additional spaces for overflow accommodations. On average these facilities serve between 1,000- 1,200 people each night. The shelters Downtown provide a place to stay for 70% of families and 77% of individuals in need of shelter in all of Hennepin County.

Downtown is predominantly a rental community

The residential population of Downtown Minneapolis is dominated by renters, but has a steadily increasing share of homeowners. Currently, renters make up about 75% of households, a much higher percentage than the city at large which is about 50% renters. This is reflective of recent development trends that have been focused primarily on mixed-use rental housing development. As a trend, it also illustrates the changing desires of urban dwellers to spend less time and money on their homes and more on active living, interaction, and experiences in the city.

Existing Policy Analysis

Formulation of the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* recommendations involved an extensive survey and synthesis of existing policy documents, including the comprehensive plan and the many adopted small area plans that govern decision making in the Downtown area. The staff team reviewed and aggregated all public realm and corridor guidance into one map, and then analyzed where guidance overlapped. Those overlaps established key recommendations for the creation of a whole system of connectivity, consistency and priority. Recommendations were divided into several categories including site circulation, connectivity, green streets, bike facilities, and gathering places. These recommendations were then broadened into larger categories of intervention and informed the creation of the corridor typology and corresponding design guidance. Plans analyzed include:

SMALL AREA PLANS

- Cedar-Riverside Small Area Plan (2008)
- Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Master Plan (2014)
- Downtown East / North Loop Master Plan (2003)
- North Loop Small Area Plan (2010)
- Historic Mills District Master Plan(1998) and Update (2001)
- Minneapolis Near Northside Master Plan (2002)
- Elliot Park Neighborhood Master Plan (2002)
- The Loring Park Neighborhood Master Plan (2013)
- Nicollet Island East Bank Small Area Plan (2014)
- Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan (2007)
- St. Anthony Falls Historic District Guidelines (2012) RiverFirst Plan (2012, MPRB)
- Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan (2015, MPRB)

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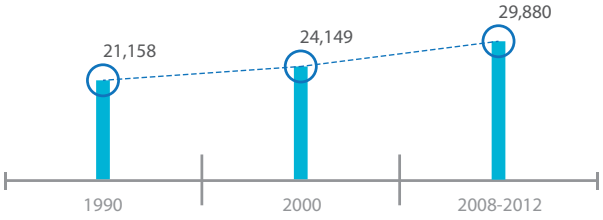
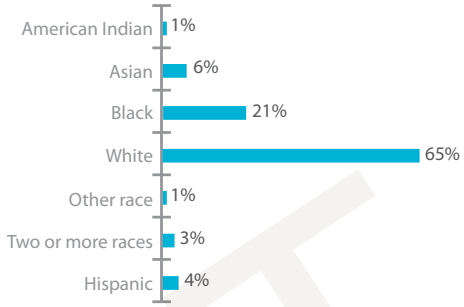
Downtown population

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)



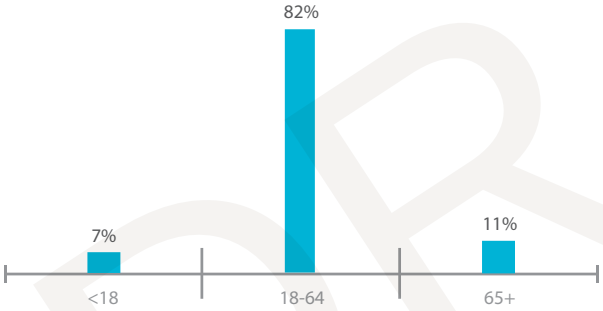
Population by race/ethnicity, 2008-2012

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)



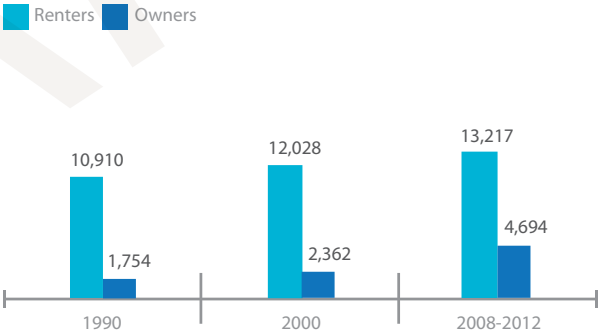
Population by age group, 2008-2012

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)



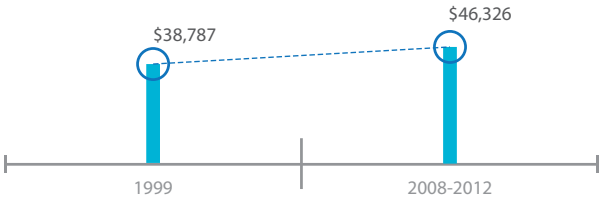
Households by tenure

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)



Median household income (2012 dollars)

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)



Households by income, 2008-2012

(Downtown East, Downtown West, Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop, Steven's Square - Loring Heights)

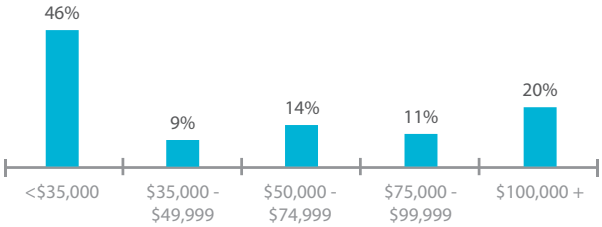


Figure 2.3 Demographic diagrams

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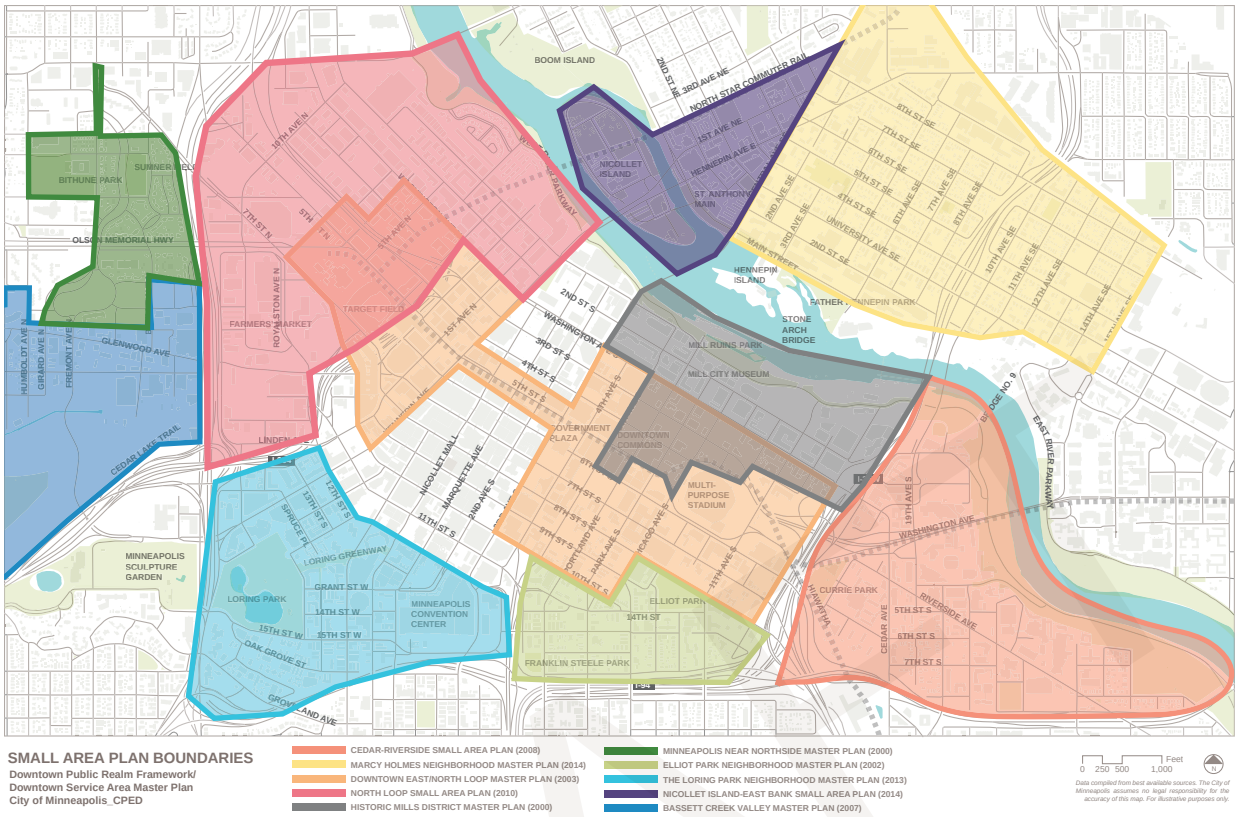

Figure 2.4 Small Area Plans analyzed in the development of the Downtown Public Realm Framework

Figure 2.5 Small area plans contributing to the Downtown Public Realm Framework

CITYWIDE POLICY PLANS

- The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (2008)
- Access Minneapolis – Ten Year Transportation Action Plan (2008)
- Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board Comprehensive Plan 2007-2020 (2007, MPRB)

OTHER REFERENCES

- Minneapolis Bike and Ped Counts (Annual, Public Works)
- Minneapolis Capital Improvement Plan (Annual, Public Works)
- Metro Transit, Existing & Planned Transitways
- Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar – Locally Preferred Alternative Council Action
- Metro Transit Service Improvement Plan
- Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan

The City's primary transportation planning document, *Access Minneapolis,* provides a foundation for many of the recommendations in the *Downtown Public Realm Framework*. The *Access Minneapolis Design Guidelines for Streets and Sidewalks* contains detailed guidance on streetscape design, and lays a foundation from which to develop more specific policy recommendations. In particular, it divides the pedestrian right of way, or the "pedestrian zone", into several sub-zones, each with specific recommendations for dimensions and programming. They serve as the backdrop against which public realm enhancement can take place. The staff team and committees members considered these elements in the development of the physical framework and a corridor typology system that supplements select streets with local character guidance in addition to their classification in *Access Minneapolis.*

The Downtown Public Realm Framework utilizes the same logic as *Access Minneapolis* – both separate streets and roadways into a classification system. In *Access Minneapolis,* this system is applied citywide to many, but not all streets, and is highly correlated with the Future Land Use Map in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Street types include: Activity Area Street, Commerce Street, Community Connector, Commuter Street, Industrial Street, Neighborhood Connector, and Parkway Street. In Downtown Minneapolis, nearly every street is designated as an Activity Area Street. Access Minneapolis defines an Activity Area Street as follows:

> *Activity Area Streets support retail, service commercial and higher intensity residential land uses in a large node of several blocks (sometimes very large like downtown). Activity Area Streets are found primarily near the land use categories of activity centers, growth centers and transit station areas. They may also be found near some neighborhood commercial nodes or major retail centers. Activity Area Streets may have many different design characteristics and capacities depending on the unique needs within the specific area where they are located.*

Key to this definition as it relates to the work of the DPRF is the need to define the "unique needs within the specific area" for each key corridor in Downtown. As *Access Minneapolis* acknowledges, not every street has the same characteristics, adjacencies or programming needs with relation to pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic. When it comes to specific public realm guidance such as additional greening and street furnishing, further clarification is needed. This is where the physical framework comes in. It provides an additional layer of guidance with regard to the public realm.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Downtown Minneapolis is a nexus of economic and creative activity. Downtown's streets reflect some of this unique character in key nodes and corridors, especially those areas in the core, such as Nicollet Mall and Hennepin Avenue. However, the City's unique character is not apparent in most of the streetscapes across downtown. An existing conditions survey of streetscape amenities was undertaken and highlights some of the disparities in distribution of features across neighborhoods downtown and the lack of a cohesive network of features. In general, street amenities are not positioned consistently in the public realm, with several features consistently encroaching on the "Pedestrian Through Walk Zone". Further, amenities did not reflect priorities related to corridor typology, and did not provide cues to nearby destinations or activity hubs. In

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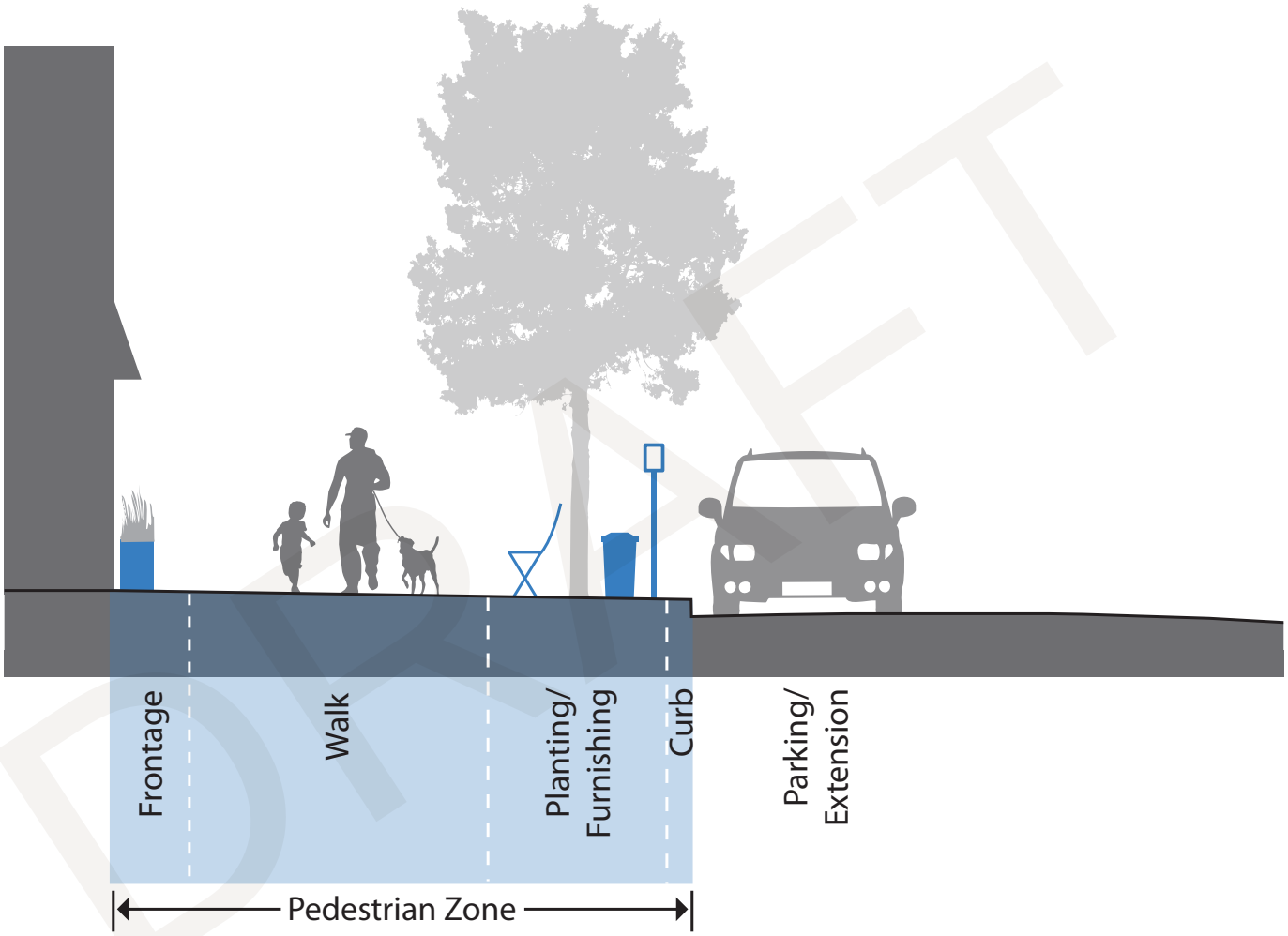

Figure 2.6 Illustrated pedestrian zone

ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS PEDESTRIAN ZONE DIAGRAM

The Guidance for the Downtown Public Realm framework builds off of Access Minneapolis chapter 10: Pedestrian Facility Design. The DPRF is primarily concerned with the pedestrian zone as defined in the above diagram. This covers the space from the curb to the building frontage and includes the planting / furnishing zone as well as the through walk zone (see Figure 2.6).

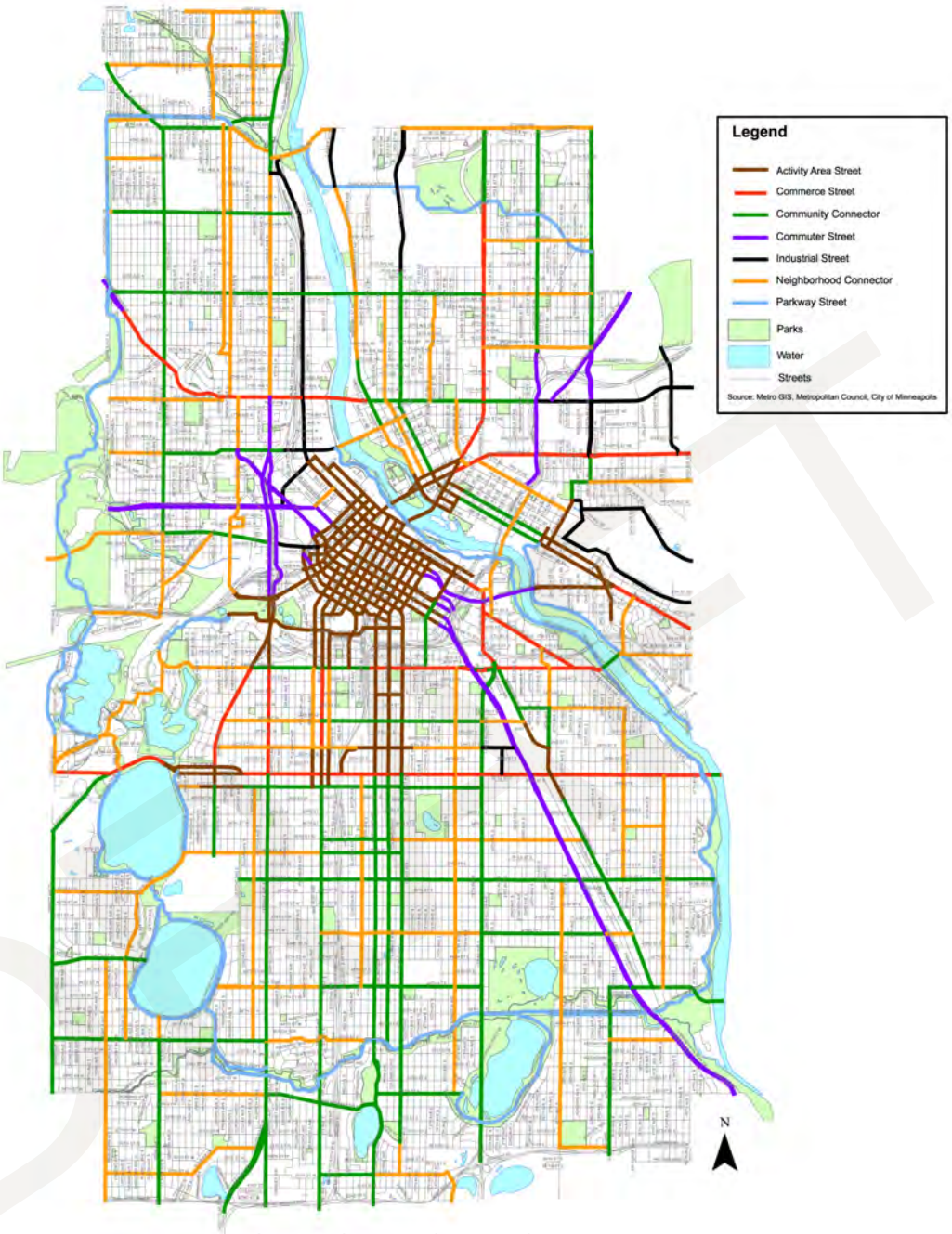

Figure 2.7 ACCESS Minneapolis Citywide Action Plan street design types

ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS STREET DESIGN TYPES

Access Minneapolis lays out very specific design guidance for particular street types throughout the city. The Downtown Public Realm Framework Plan builds off of this guidance by providing more specific guidance for Downtown area streets. Currently, as shown in Figure 2.7, Downtown Minneapolis streets all have the same designation of "Activity Area Street." The DPRF goes one step further in providing specific guidance for different street types within downtown (see Chapter 3: Physical Framework).

Figure 2.8 John Wilson, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"So as far as you're concerned, if you're signing over here (on Nicollet), or you're signing on Hennepin, doesn't really matter?"

"No. It's just a spot to sit, that's all, 'cuz I can't stand no more. I have to put a pillow in my backpack, that's the only way I can sit down. My butt hurts me all the time, but I deal with it everyday. I'm out here for at least eight hours a day…They need more bathrooms, that's for sure. The IDS used to have three or four of them, but they shut 'em all down. Why would you shut the bathrooms down just 'cuz of the homeless people? I mean, alls you gotta do is watch 'em, you know, it's no big deal. You got Target and you got Macy's. That's it. The bookstore, Barnes & Noble? I don't go in there no more. 'Cuz they want you to buy a book just to go to the bathroom (laughs). Who wants to buy a book just to go to the bathroom? I don't."

-John Wilson, Resident

short, existing conditions in the public realm did not offer a curated experience to users on the street. In street design it is crucial that amenities are added to enhance the experience of a street, not detract from it. Additionally, amenities should be positioned to support nearby infrastructure and not impede operations and maintenance of a street.

Inventory

From May 2014 through July 2015, City of Minneapolis Urban Design staff conducted a field inventory of existing features in the public realm of Downtown Minneapolis utilizing mobile devices and tablets enabled with a GIS application to drop map pins and establish detailed data points for analysis. The geography of the inventory included the neighborhoods of Elliot Park, Loring Park, Downtown East, Downtown West, North Loop, portions of Sumner-Glenwood, Cedar Riverside, Marcy Holmes, and Nicollet Island/East Bank. The physical inventory was undertaken to examine the existing features populating the sidewalks in Downtown. These features provide clues as to where features are most desired and also where features may have been forgotten. Staff collected information that indicates level of use, paths of desire, level of service, condition, and ownership. The areas catalogued included the spaces between building frontage and the roadway. Some features were collected if they impacted the sidewalk, such as a piece of public art or a banner. These features may not be within the limits of the sidewalk but impact the experience of a user on the sidewalk. Through this process, it became clear that there are thousands of amenities in the sidewalk but their function, use, and placement could be better curated to enhance the pedestrian experience in the public realm.

Methodology

The method of collection was an on-foot survey of the study area by staff and interns equipped with tablets. Data points were created in the field through the use of an application

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Figure 2.9 Existing conditions images, photography by the City of Minneapolis

allowing staff to drop pins to map objects and enrich them with data. The application allowed staff to collect detailed data on a large number of features, link the data point to a photograph, and spatially locate all data points in a map. Staff developed a form that allowed data to be collected consistently on each feature, with questions ranging from feature type (bike rack, seating, vegetation), to specifying ownership or details about a feature.

4408 streetscape features have been collected in the inventory. Including the following amenities:

- 1865 Vegetation
- 634 Bike Racks
- 367 Seating
- 197 Newspaper Stands
- 643 Garbage/Recycling Bins
- 172 Art Features
- 416 Wayfinding Features

Data Not Collected

There are myriad features in the public realm that benefit a streetscape environment. Many features were not collected based on the following factors:

- Features not explicitly city-owned or allowed by permit or managed by regulation
- Features attached to buildings
- Data available elsewhere (examples: street lights and street trees)

Some features were not collected either due to time constraints or complexity, these features include:

- Pavement type
- Utility boxes

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Figure 2.10 Physical inventory map

» Features in parks, public plazas, or skyways

Observations

In the course of conducting the field inventory, staff made the following general observations, organized thematically by type of feature:

GREENING

» Lack of variety and diversity of plantings

» Inconsistent siting

» Lack of or minimal maintenance

» Parking lot screening is generally substandard and un-maintained, only minimum investment near parking structures

» Overuse of gravel and other aggregate materials in areas intended for greening

BIKE RACKS

» Unevenly distributed, with a majority located along 1st Avenue N and Hennepin Ave.

» Hitch-style bike racks are inconsistently placed; some are parallel, perpendicular, diagonal to the curb depending on concentration of racks

» Overcrowding of racks at destinations such as stores and businesses

» Little to no bike parking in Downtown East and North Loop

SEATING

» Generally concentrated in the downtown core

» Seating not well paired with other amenities like greening and tree canopy

» Lack of seating available in Furnishing zone

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Figure 2.11 Existing conditions images, photography by the City of Minneapolis

NEWSPAPER STANDS

- Generally concentrated near transit stops
- Located principally in the Frontage or Furnishing zone
- Often placed immediately adjacent to existing light poles or street sign posts

LITTER RECEPTACLES/RECYCLING

- Generally concentrated in the downtown core
- Located principally in the Frontage or Furnishing zone
- Often placed immediately adjacent to transit stops, existing light poles or street sign posts
- Some encroach on Pedestrian Through Walk zone

ART

- Generally concentrated in the downtown core
- Located principally in the Frontage or Furnishing zone
- Often incorporated into pavement, bike rack, tree guard/grate, building walls (murals), or fences
- Sculpture is most prevalent

WAYFINDING

- Generally concentrated in the downtown core
- Consists of banners, directional signage, maps and kiosks
- Overwhelming majority consists of transit-related signage
- Existing systems do not interconnect or relate to each other

These observations were used to inform conversations with the project committees and to serve as a starting point for understanding where intervention and guidance was most needed to enhance the public realm.

Community Engagement Summary

The City of Minneapolis defines community engagement as the empowerment of people to influence city government decisions that shape their city and their lives. With this in mind, the DPRF utilized a range of engagement methods and approaches in order to involve the most diverse range of stakeholders.

Methodology

The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* project initiated its community engagement process in November of 2014, ending in May 2016. The process was conducted in three phases; Initiation/Analysis, Research/Outreach, and Recommendation/Comment.

The engagement was structured to inform, educate, gain insights, and capture priorities while providing opportunities for meaningful connections and conversations with stakeholders. This was achieved using several methods listed as follows:

- Steering Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committees
- Public Open House/Meeting

Existing Projects

MARQ2

Completed in 2009 the MARQ2 project is an example of a successful public realm enhancement project utilizing key partnerships and coordination. MARQ2 was a partnership between Metro Transit, the City of Minneapolis, and MN/DOT made possible by a federal grant from the Urban Partnership Agreement. The primary goal of the project was to decrease downtown congestion by improving the public transit system. In addition to improving transit MARQ2, through its partners and planning, allowed for improved pedestrian zones on the sidewalks, reduced stormwater runoff, and utilized a planting system to support the growth of over 200 trees in a dense urban environment.

Figure 2.12 Public realm enhancements on Marquette, photograph by the City of Minneapolis

Figure 2.13 Parklet on 29th Street, photograph by The Musicant Group

29TH STREET PARKLET

Enabled by the City's new Parklet Program the Musicant Group designed and placed a public parklet on 29th Street. A parklet is a streetscape enhancement that adds a public gathering space to streets, by placing a structure in the parking lane to extend the sidewalk and provide amenities. The parklet on 29th Street was one of the first community sponsored parklets in Minneapolis. It was built to celebrate the redevelopment project planned for 29th street. Parklets provide an unique opportunity for communities and business owners to add public pedestrian space in areas typically reserved for vehicles.

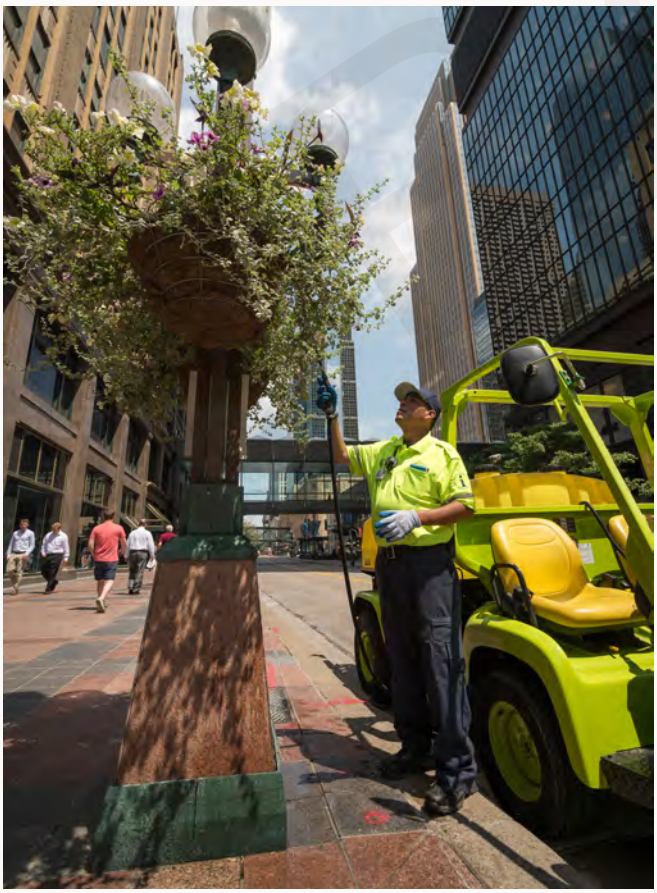
- Focus Groups
- Events
- Public Hearings
- Artist Engagement Intercepts
- Online interactions

The tools staff utilized to gather feedback were:

- Project website and social media
- Survey
- Project exercises
- Photography
- Visual essays
- Interviews
- Tabling at events

DID AMBASSADORS

The Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) Ambassadors are the friendly faces of downtown: people who are approachable and welcoming. They can offer suggestions for things to do, help with directions, and even open a door for you if your hands are full. The Clean Ambassadors also focus on making downtown shine and Safe Ambassadors are on hand to keep an eye out for you and your surroundings. The DID Ambassadors are a wide variety of people with one thing in common: They love downtown. They each bring unique talents and interests to their work in downtown. Get to know them—they're a helpful bunch!



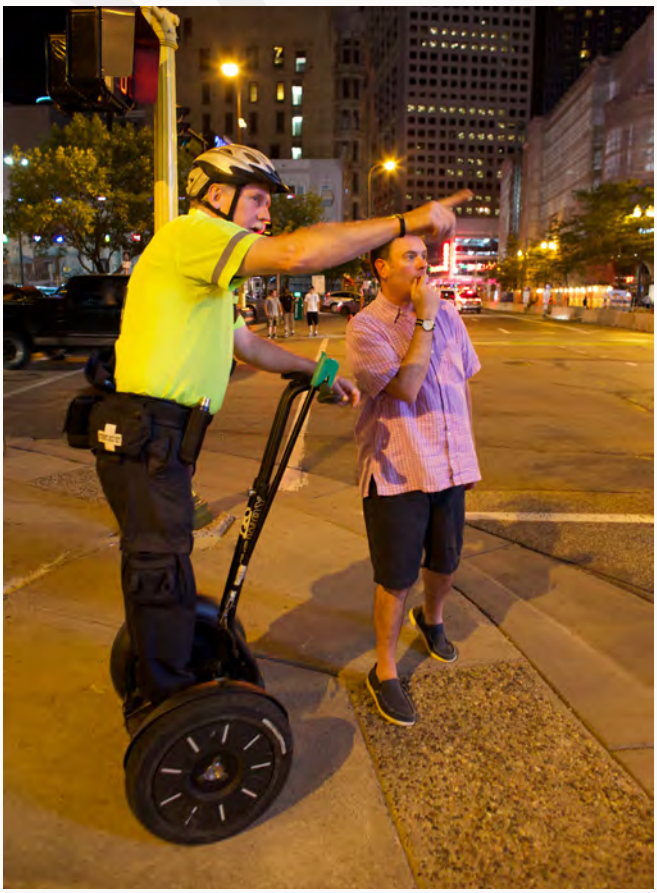


Figure 2.14 Downtown Improvement District Ambassadors, photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

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Figure 2.15 Community engagement photos, photography by the City of Minneapolis.

Project Website And Social Media

Staff maintained a project website and used media to promote and share project updates and events through news releases, @GrowingMPLS on Twitter, the City website, email subscription services, and other digital media, as appropriate. Together, these tools kept stakeholders up to date throughout the process. Staff also collaborated with Council Members using newsletters, Facebook pages, and Twitter accounts to advertise events and opportunities to provide input to the plan.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups afforded staff the opportunity to engage with small groups of stakeholders regarding their opinions, attitudes and perspectives on a range of topics relevant to the plan. Each focus group had specific presentations to inform participants and guide discussions around topics ranging from access to amenities to the safety of streets. Discussions were conducted with the following stakeholder groups:

- American Indian
- East African
- Business/Worker
- Visitor/Tourism
- Developer
- Residential

Public Open House/Meetings

Public meetings and open houses were an opportunity to engage and exchange ideas with the community around the *Downtown Public Realm Framework*. Attendees were invited to share ideas, voice opinions and discuss projects and practices relevant to their neighborhood or interest. These events typically included a public presentation, followed by

an open house during which participants could view posters, participate in engagement exercises and ask questions. The meetings were an opportunity to share with the public and to gather feedback and perspectives on priorities for the plan.

Advisory Committees

The City of Minneapolis is host to Advisory Committees that play vital roles in reviewing and providing input on planning processes and shaping projects citywide. Staff engaged with several advisory committees seeking specific feedback and providing updates on the progress of the planning process. The following advisory committees were crucial to the development of the plan.

- Committee on People with Disabilities
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging
- DID 2025 Homelessness Committee
- Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission

Artist Engagement Intercepts

The City of Minneapolis worked with artist and photographer Stephanie Glaros to collect and catalog intercept interviews with Downtown visitors, residents and workers. Stephanie's role was to engage with individuals and groups asking specific questions about their experience in Downtown Minneapolis. These intercepts are catalogued and categorized by key word themes. Individual portraits and highlights from interactions appear as insets throughout this document, and reoccurring themes are summarized.

Events

Community events and fairs offered City staff a unique opportunity to meet residents, visitors and workers in the places where they were already interacting with their

Figure 2.16 Hani Ali, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"I work at Macy's and I also go to school here. The Art Institute, Fashion Design. I take the train. It's very convenient. Three stops later, I'm everywhere…I like to eat, especially in the skyway, there's a lot of food and restaurants. We do grocery shopping sometimes, and then the veggies and fruits, like, on the streets. Me and my aunt get them sometimes, like every Thursday…I see a lot of people come out to bars and stuff like that, but I can't relate to that…(My) favorite thing (about downtown) is you see everybody. People that do work, people that don't work. For me, in the mornings, I get motivation a little bit, where everybody's going to work, or doing something. In the summertime I see a lot of musicians and stuff like that. But I wish there was more art, or multicultural stuff. You know, people can go to hang out and get to know people. For example, 'Cultural Night,' or something like that. Somewhere where people were expressing themselves. I would like that kind of thing. It would be really good."

-Hani Ali, Worker

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community. Partnering with local groups and organizations to participate and meet the community in their neighborhood offered increased visibility of the project and planning process, and reduced barriers for engaging directly with the City. Each event hosted offered a venue in which to host displays, ask questions, and participate in shared learning exercises while building relationships with the community. Staff attended the following events in 2015:

- Mini-Polis
- Lyndale Open Streets
- Mill City Farmers Market
- Loring Park National Night Out
- Downtown Open Streets

Online Interactions

The City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board hosted a survey tool Mapita to invite individuals to participate in an online mapping exercise. Mapita collected data points and responses using a survey form and map. 515 responses were collected with over 3,000 data points identified on the map. These responses informed and supported the identification of key corridors and destinations identified in the plan.

Committees

Through the joint effort known as Pathways to Places, the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board were able to share both a Steering Committee (which also functioned as the Community Advisory Committee for the *Downtown Service Area Master Plan*) and a Technical Advisory

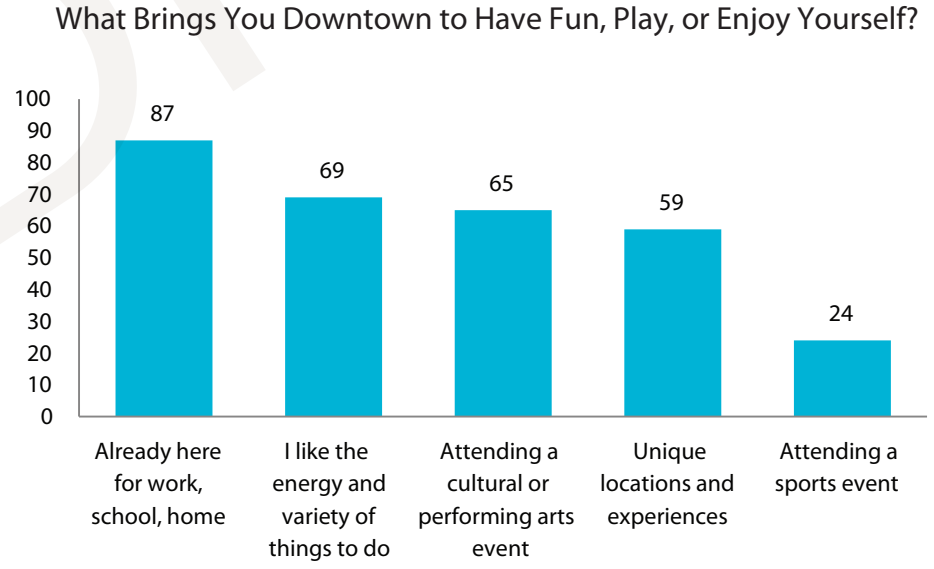

Figure 2.17 Pie charts and bar graphs

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Figure 2.18 Leah Erickson, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

I feel like the downtown in Minneapolis is a lot more abandoned then downtown, say, Chicago, 'cuz there's less current stores that are useful to the population nearby. It's located by a big university, but there's not as much appeal for college students.

What kinds of things do you think students might enjoy that would bring them downtown that maybe aren't there now?

Green areas, and then also more current stores. Maybe not as high-end, have a few options for price range. Just stores that have more appeal to younger generations. I wouldn't say there's as much stuff to engage with. I wouldn't have any initiative to go downtown myself for any reason. I would tag along with a group, so it would be more (about) the company and being in the area, (rather) than using the stores. . .I'll go to Uptown because there's all these little interesting shops. So if there was a little bit of that incorporated, but not overwhelming, because it's not Uptown, it's downtown.

-Leah Erickson, Visitor

"We live a couple blocks away, so we just walk. At least once a week, it's awesome. It's right by the water, so we walk the paths, and pick up some snacks at the Farmer's Market, and just hang out. We only have one car, so we walk everywhere. I walk to work, I walk her to daycare, we hang out exclusively pretty much downtown (laughs). By the Twins Stadium quite a bit, there's that new concert area. They play movies for the kids and have snacks, and a bunch of kids hang out over there, too.

I wish there was more green space, I wish there was more green area for our puppy and our baby to play in.

I'd say maybe some more kid-oriented events, things like that. I think it'd be really fun to get a big water area, or something that more kids and families could congregate to. Or maybe even planting a garden, having a city urban garden? I think that'd be neat, too."

-Nicole Goodman, Resident

Figure 2.19 Nicole Goodman, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

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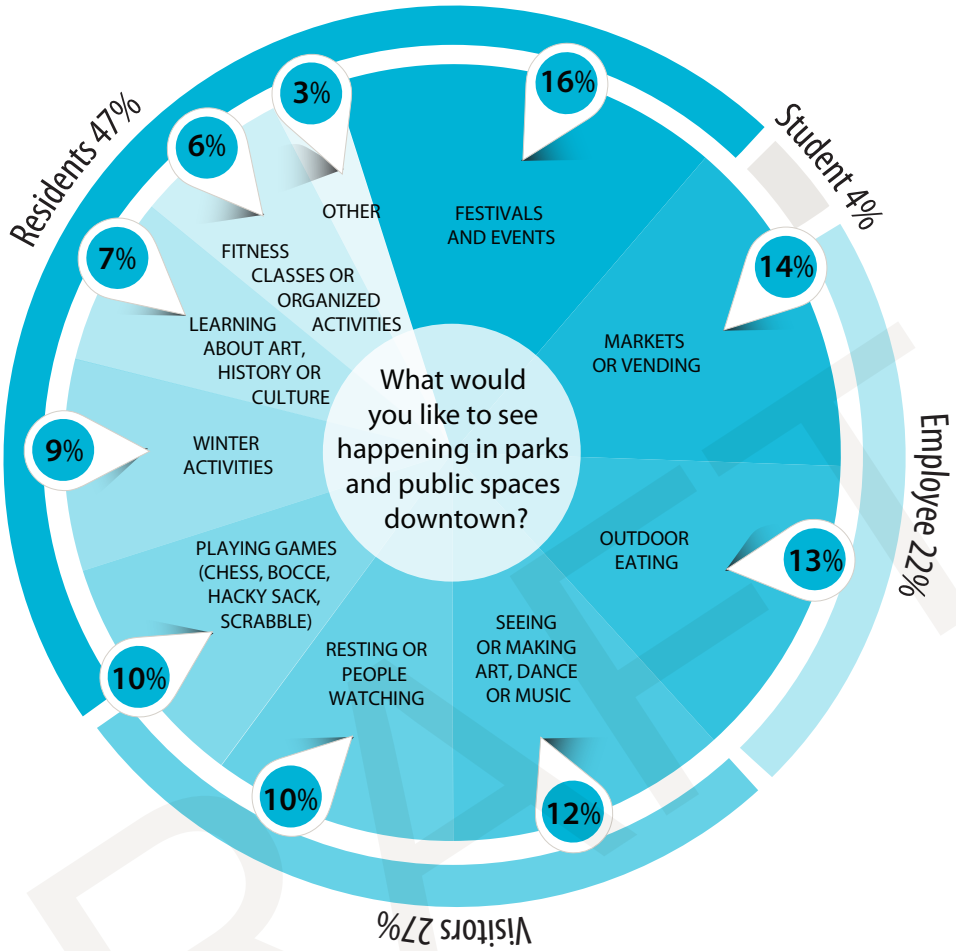

source: intercept board results at community engagement events

Figure 2.20 Community engagement process

Committee. Since similar individuals would logically contribute to both plans, sharing a single series of meetings maximized their ability to provide knowledgeable, coordinated, and timely input for both plans while reducing their overall time commitment. The shared process ensured that both City and Park Board staff were actively collaborating, and were receiving similar direction from stakeholders to support a shared vision for the future of Downtown Minneapolis.

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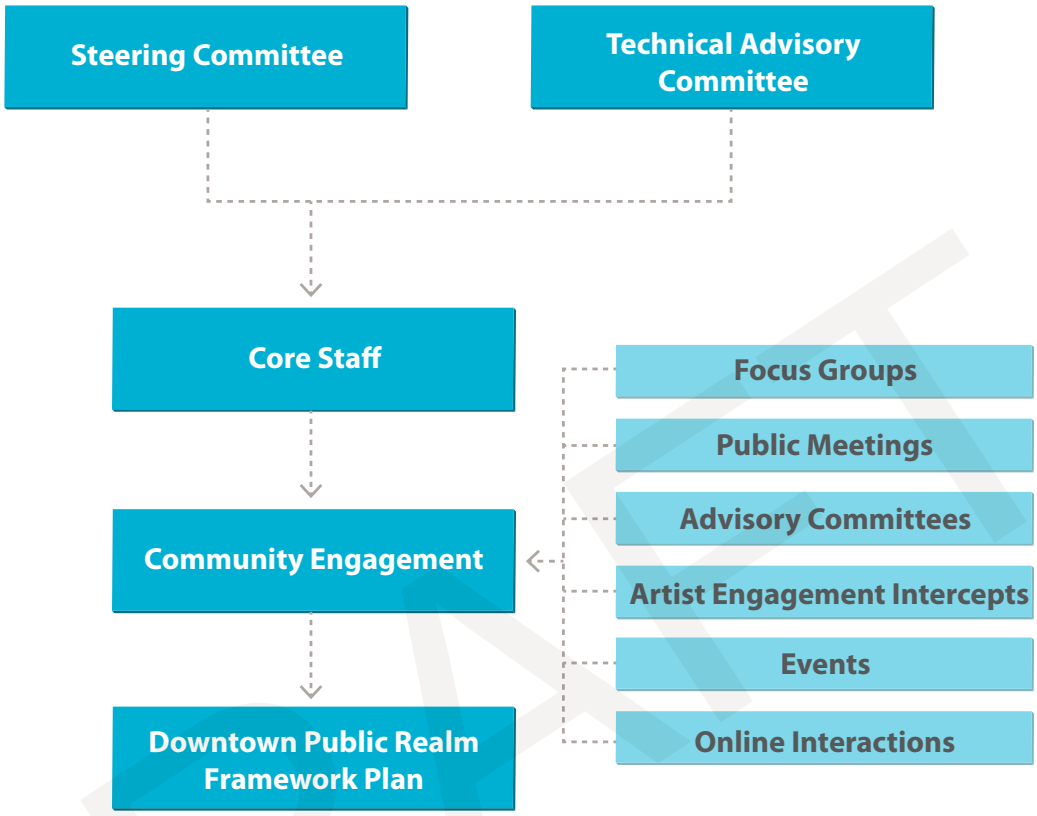

Figure 2.21 Community engagement process

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Figure 3.1 Photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

CHAPTER 3

Physical Framework

Introduction
Policy Principles
Physical Framework
Potential Linkages
Corridor Typology
Central Riverfront Feature District
Incremental Implementation

Physical Framework

Introduction

The Physical Framework is a whole systems plan that connects urban streets and plazas to the broader system of parks, trails, attractions and recreation opportunities in and around Downtown Minneapolis. The Physical Framework identifies new connections and clarifies existing connections along key corridors within the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* area. It also provides recommendations for enhancing the pedestrian experience through greening strategies, street furnishing and land use decisions.

Background

The framework was created through an intensive process of community and stakeholder engagement and a thorough analysis and synthesis of existing policy guidance for streets and corridors from City-adopted plans. The Steering and Technical Advisory Committees (see Acknowledgments), in cooperation with the core staff team, conducted and participated in numerous exercises and explored several methodologies for approaching prioritization of corridors and public realm enhancement before arriving at the final *Downtown Public Realm Framework* plan. Three lenses were considered in the analysis of the Downtown experience: visitor, resident, and worker. Understanding how Downtown works for these three types of users helped the team to clarify strategies for enhancing the experience of Downtown for a wide audience.

Through a series of mapping exercises, committee members worked to identify a hierarchy of corridors for each user group and then synthesized those findings into a framework of key corridors for prioritization. City staff, along with key stakeholders, then further clarified that data into a typology that separates key corridors into three categories of policy guidance, with differentiated recommendations. This framework for corridor planning serves as the backbone of the policy recommendations in the plan.

Figure 3.2 Anthony Bond, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"I just come down for the nightlife…I usually drive…I think they need more parking, free parking at that. They got the transit and buses, but if they can come up with somethin' that's a little bit more convenient for those who just can't afford (it), or people who would just like to come downtown to enjoy art or whatever, have somethin' that's available for them…I think it'd be more positive if they had less club nights, and more family outing nights, or block party nights, where everyone can generally come down and just enjoy the nightlife, versus, like, a certain demographic of people just comin' down to go to the clubs…Kind of like how they do the Taste of Minnesota? Do like a Taste of Downtown Minneapolis, or somethin' like that. Food events bring me out to downtown more, and family outings, family events where you can bring your kids to. 'Cuz I got teenagers."

-Anthony Bond, Visitor

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3.2 Policy Principles

Two key lenses (Whole System Planning and People First) provide the foundation of values for the plan and align with City goals and priorities. The policy principles emerged through work with staff and community stakeholders, and gained clarity and specificity through iterative reviews.

3.2.1 Whole System Planning

For the purposes of the plan, Whole Systems Planning refers to the following goals, which should be considered in capital projects and development activities impacting Downtown Public Realm Framework corridors or the Central Riverfront Feature District.

3.2.1.1 PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

There should be clear and pleasant pedestrian, bike, and vehicular movement supported by wayfinding and enhancements along identified framework corridors, connecting all Downtown neighborhoods to each other and to Downtown destinations.

» 3.2.1.1.1 Where paths and connections are broken and linkages are possible (see section 3.4, Potential Linkages), actions should be taken to create connectivity. Connectivity should be pursued incrementally, as opportunities arise, according to the Physical Framework plan and identified Potential Linkages.

3.2.1.2 INTEGRATED MODES

Easily navigable transfer points from one mode to another should be a priority within the Downtown Public Realm Framework area, including all modes: walking (including to and from skyway access points), biking, driving, taxi service, car sharing, and transit.

» 3.2.1.2.1 It should be easy to move from one mode to another, and clear wayfinding should be present at mode transfer sites.

» 3.2.1.2.2 Consideration of accommodating multiple modes is encouraged, both in capital projects and development projects.

3.2.1.3 GREENING & RESILIENCE

Planting in the right-of-way is not only people friendly, it provides environmental services. The City of Minneapolis is committed to environmental and community sustainability as demonstrated by *The Minneapolis Climate Action Plan and* the *Great Places* City Goal. The *Great Places* City Goal focuses on how natural and built spaces work together and the environment is protected. The *Climate Action Plan* focuses on reducing emissions to shrink the City's carbon footprint. There is a benefit to not only shrinking emissions, but to growing the city's green footprint to increase carbon consumption and reduce the heat-island effect. Planting and greening in the right-of-way also contribute to stormwater management, provide urban wildlife habitat, increase property values, contribute to positive mental health outcomes, and establish a sense of place.

» 3.2.1.3.1 Projects impacting a Downtown Public Realm Framework corridor will consider environmental services like carbon capture, stormwater management, and urban wildlife habitat in the course of capital project planning or development review.

» 3.2.1.3.2 Street reconstruction projects, and major development projects of over $1 million permit value, on or impacting a Downtown Public Realm Framework corridor or district will be required to have an established plan for long term maintenance of new greening in the public right-of-way. For trees, they must consult the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to gauge the feasibility of, and establish objectives for, tree planting. For other greening, they should consult with the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) to gauge the willingness and

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feasibility of, and establish objectives for, maintenance by the DID of greening. For greening that falls outside of the DID boundaries, they should consult with Public Works staff.

» 3.2.1.3.3 Project teams engaged in greening are encouraged to make proposals that are consistent with corridor intent and context as defined in the Downtown Public Realm Framework.

3.2.1.4 SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT

A strong sense of place and corridor identity will be shaped not only by enhancements in the public realm, but by supportive development. Supportive development may contribute to the character and quality of a Downtown Public Realm Framework corridor through compatible ground floor uses, design considerations, activation through density or programming, or by facilitating connectivity (especially in the case of a desired but missing link, as identified in section 3.4, Potential Linkages).

» 3.2.1.4.1 Supportive development opportunities, including compatible ground floor uses, design considerations, activation through density or programming, and facilitating connectivity where potential linkages exist, should be considered in the review of all development applications for Downtown Public Realm Framework corridors.

» 3.2.1.4.2 Compatible ground floor uses should be discerned based on corridor typology (see section 3.5). Downtown Public Realm Framework corridors establish a hierarchy that informs developers and plan reviewers about goals for pedestrian experience. For instance, retail storefronts make more sense in some places than others; and pedestrian-unfriendly conditions (like loading zones) are not appropriate on some corridors.

» 3.2.1.4.3 Guiding policies of the Central Riverfront Feature District (see section 3.6) should be an additional lens in framing opportunities for supportive development on corridors within the Riverfront Feature District.

3.2.2 People First

Putting people first is crucial to building and maintaining a more cohesive and livable Downtown. A people first perspective contributes to the design of healthier spaces, areas with a strong identity, areas that serve people of all ages and all abilities, and places designed for good business. A people first perspective for all projects in the Downtown Public Realm Framework area aligns with the process identified in the City's Complete Streets Policy.

3.2.2.1 ADHERENCE TO THE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

The Downtown Public Realm Framework is consistent with, and supplements, the City's Complete Streets Policy.

Complete Streets Policy

The City of Minneapolis is committed to building a complete and integrated public right-of-way to ensure that everyone – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists – can travel safely and comfortably along and across a street. The Complete Streets policy will inform decision-making throughout all phases of transportation projects and initiatives. The overarching policy purpose is the establishment of a modal priority framework that prioritizes public right-of-way users in the following order: people who walk, people who bike or take transit, and people who drive motor vehicles.

» 3.2.2.1.1 Projects that are in development on an identified priority Corridor or in the Central Riverfront Feature District - whether they are capital projects (like road reconstructions) or development projects (like new

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building construction) - will be expected to adhere to the process laid forth in the City's Complete Streets Policy. Implementation will adhere to the process outlined in the Complete Streets project delivery checklist.

3.2.2.2 PLACEMAKING

Social cohesion is gaining traction as a fundamental component of why people choose to live in one place versus another. Social spaces, places of gathering, and street life are key elements of successful cities, and the sense of civic identity that they generate will make our city more resilient. Sustainable partnerships and private initiatives help to create vibrant and livable places.

» 3.2.2.2.1 Private initiatives for enhancement are encouraged when they are well-planned, have properly coordinated with appropriate City departments and processes, and are feasible to implement and maintain.

» 3.2.2.2.2 Social spaces and activation is desirable on Destination Corridors and Local Commerce Corridors.

To facilitate more knowledge about how to achieve placemaking objectives, four companions to the Downtown Public Realm Framework plan have been developed:

» The *Public Realm Guidelines* is a manual of the City's guidelines for public realm enhancements citywide

» The *Placemaking Hub* is an online one-stop shop for those seeking information about public realm enhancement programs and requirements

» The *Downtown Minneapolis Programmable Space Inventory* is a study that identified and inventoried potentially programmable public spaces Downtown

» The *Implementation Index* is a catalogue of funding and implementation strategies that have been used locally and nationally for public realm enhancement

3.2.2.3 EQUITY

The public realm serves as the civic and social heart of our community. Where the public realm feels cared for and cared about, so does the community. Eliminating racial and socioeconomic disparities is a top goal of the City of Minneapolis. Because many of our public realm enhancements require private sector participation to pay for enhanced maintenance, those enhancements are placed only in areas where properties are willing to be assessed. Implementation challenges arise from the lack of available tools or funding to deploy projects across the city based on other criteria, such as establishing cultural identity for commercial districts or contributing to environmental justice.

Resolution 2016R-151, Street Infrastructure and Neighborhood Park Funding Plan, which passed on April 29, 2016, prescribes the utilization of a criteria-based system with a focus on racial and economic equity to determine equitable distribution of funding. The criteria have not yet been developed but racial and economic equity will be key considerations. Adopted City policy will inform the criteria, including the *Downtown Public Realm Framework*.

Figure 3.3 LeBron Patterson, photograph by Stephanie Glaros

"This is part of my biking trail that I like to utilize, mostly on the weekends. The trail system in the Twin Cities and around Minneapolis is excellent. Very smooth, very nice trails. It's a very safe, secure area that allows me to ride, and look at the scenery, as well as interact with people. So if I wanna stop at the (Farmer's) market, or if I want to just sit for a few minutes, it's an excellent area, especially when I'm riding my bike. I enjoy it, a lot."

-LeBron Patterson

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3.3 Physical Framework

The Physical Framework plan is a policy map identifying priorities for creating a cohesive and dynamic public realm in Downtown Minneapolis.

The Framework establishes goals for connectivity, provides guidance for how the public realm should be enhanced, and identifies where enhancement should be focused. It is composed of the following policy features: Potential Linkages (section 3.4), Corridor Typologies (section 3.5), and the Central Riverfront Feature District (section 3.6). Policy recommendations and a clear description of intent are provided for the policy features.

The Physical Framework supplements existing City policy governing rights-of-way. It defers to existing zoning and land use regulations. It is intended to provide a more nuanced layer of policy guidance in areas identified as key to the creation of a cohesive public realm Downtown. Many considerations within the Framework are already encouraged in the City's Chapter 530-Site Plan Review Standards.

How to Use the Physical Framework

The Physical Framework is a map of the policy guidance for the Downtown Public Realm Framework (DPRF). Streets are marked according to a corridor classification system with three key corridor types: Destination Corridor, Local Commerce Corridor, and Connector Corridor. More specific descriptions of each can be found in Section 3.5, Corridor Typologies. The designations are to be read as an overlay to existing Comprehensive Plan Land Use Feature designations and guidance outlined in Access Minneapolis: Ten Year Transportation Action Plan.

The primary audiences for the Framework plan are developers seeking to enhance the public realm through a Downtown development project, system partners, and City staff in CPED and Public Works involved with development review and capital improvement project planning and implementation. The Framework provides guidance for public realm enhancement goals and shared priorities for incremental investment, whether made by the private development community or by public agencies such as the City or County.

Figure 3.4 Public Realm in Downtown Minneapolis, photograph courtesy of the Minneapolis Downtown Council

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PRIVATE SECTOR

The DPRF should be consulted by the development community when considering a project in Downtown Minneapolis that impacts the public realm, including rebuilding or replacement of sidewalks, plazas, and other publicly accessible open spaces. The plan contains guidance on the placement and selection of enhancement elements that can serve as a useful resource for presenting a more complete development submittal, thereby saving time, effort and money later in the development review process.

CITY STAFF

Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) and Public Works staff will take the following actions:

- For development applications where the project is impacting a Framework corridor or are within the Central Riverfront Feature District, the assigned planner will engage in conversations with the applicant about fulfilling DPRF policy intent. Staff will make the Planning Commission aware of relevant policies when an application they are considering is located on a DPRF priority corridor or within the Central Riverfront Feature District.
- For capital projects on or impacting a priority corridor, DPRF priorities will be addressed in the planning process, through the use of the Complete Streets Policy checklist. The Public Works project manager or CPED planner assigned will make the Planning Commission aware when a capital project they are considering is located on a priority Corridor or within the Central Riverfront Feature District.

SYSTEM PARTNERS

Relevant DPRF policies and priorities will be provided by CPED or Public Works staff to project managers and staff participating in a project not led by the City. Other public agencies and system partners will find the DPRF most useful in the development of complementary, overlapping and adjacent policy plans, capital improvement plans, development plans and community investment strategies. For example, if Hennepin County is planning a capital street reconstruction project on a Downtown street or if the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is considering investment in public realm amenities for parks and parkways, the DPRF and its companion documents (referenced in section 3.2.2.2) can help to align priorities for site design and layout, feature selection and placement, and inter-agency partnership on funding and maintenance activities.

Important partners include but are not limited to:

- Metro Transit
- Meet Minneapolis
- Minneapolis Convention Center
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Hennepin County
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Institutional Partners (University of Minnesota, Hennepin County Medical Center, etc.)
- Metropolitan Sports Facilities Authority
- Minneapolis Downtown Council/Downtown Improvement District
- Other Special Service Districts or Cultural Districts

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Physical Framework Explanation of Key Terms and Elements

Future LRT Station – Planned light rail transit (LRT) stations that have yet to be built as a part of the Southwest Light Rail Transit Green Line Extension and the Bottineau LRT Blue Line Extension projects.

Existing LRT Station – LRT stations that are currently completed and operational

Commuter Rail Station – North Star Commuter rail Downtown Minneapolis station

Adopted Activity Center – – The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth provides this definition: "Activity Centers support a wide range of commercial, office, and residential uses. They typically have a busy street life with activity throughout the day and into the evening. They are heavily oriented towards pedestrians, and maintain a traditional urban form and scale. Activity Centers are also well-served by transit." [1]

Existing Attractions – Publicly accessible destinations such as parks, institutions, cultural amenities and open spaces.

Potential Linkages – Desired connection points to eliminate gaps in the connectivity of the public realm; these require additional study, investment, new connections, and/or reconfiguration. For the full list and description of Potential Linages, see section 3.4.

Corridor Typologies – Policy features describing the character and intent for priority corridors. For a full description of corridor types (Destination Corridor, Local Commerce Corridor, and Connector Corridor), see section 3.5.

Central Riverfront Feature District – Policy feature describing the character and intent for areas proximate to the Mississippi River, on both banks of the Central Riverfront. For a full description of this policy feature see section 3.6.

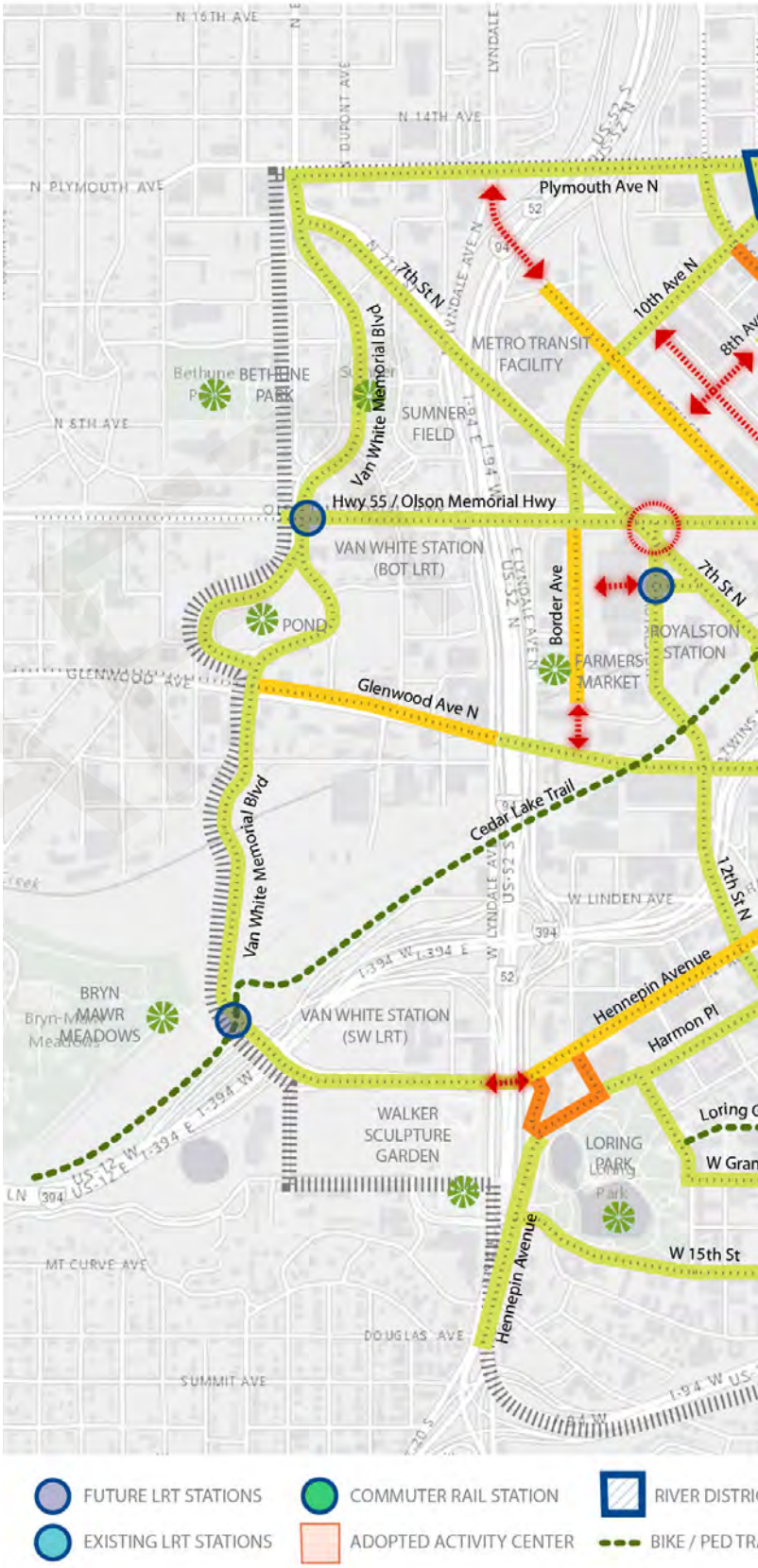
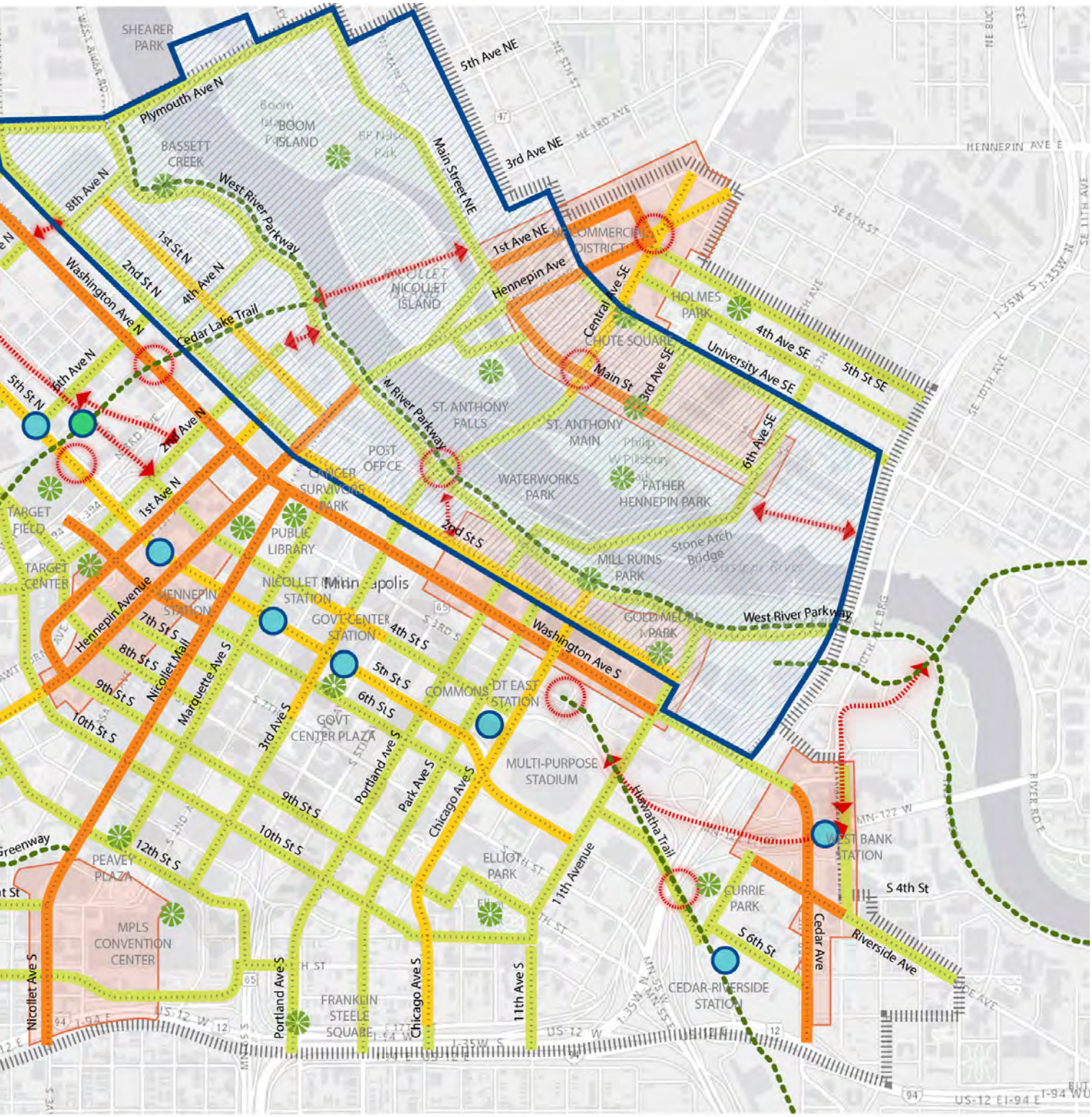


Figure 3.5 Physical Framework plan


SHEARER PARK
Plymouth Ave N
BOOM ISLAND
BASSETT CREEK
8th Ave N
West River Parkway
1st St N
2nd St N
4th Ave N
Washington Ave N
Cedar Lake Trail
5th St N
6th Ave N
2nd Ave N
1st Ave N
TARGET FIELD
TARGET CENTER
Hennepin Avenue
HENNEPIN STATION
7th St S
8th St S
9th St S
10th St S
Nicollet Mall
Marquette Ave S
3rd Ave S
Greenway
12th St S
PEAVEY PLAZA
MPLS CONVENTION CENTER
Nicollet Ave S
Portland Ave S
FRANKLIN STEELE SQUARE
Chicago Ave S
11th Ave S
5th Ave NE
3rd Ave NE
Main Street NE
1st Ave NE
Hennepin Ave
NICOLLET ISLAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY
NICOLLET STATION
GOVT CENTER STATION
GOVT CENTER PLAZA
4th St S
5th St S
6th St S
9th St S
10th St S
Park Ave S
Portland Ave S
Chicago Ave S
11th Avenue
ELLIOT PARK
MULTI-PURPOSE STADIUM
COMMONS
DT EAST STATION
Washington Ave S
Hiawatha Trail
CURRIE PARK
S 6th St
CEDAR-RIVERSIDE STATION
WEST BANK STATION
S 4th St
Cedar Ave
Riverside Ave
West River Parkway
GOLD MEDAL PARK
MILL RUINS PARK
Stone Arch Bridge
FATHER HENNEPIN PARK
WATERWORKS PARK
ST. ANTHONY MAIN
ST. ANTHONY FALLS
N River Parkway
POST OFFICE
CANCER SURVIVORS PARK
Central Ave SE
CHUTE SQUARE
Main St
3rd Ave SE
6th Ave SE
HOLMES PARK
4th Ave SE
University Ave SE
5th St SE
HENNEPIN AVE E
SE 6TH ST
SE 10TH AVE
SE 11TH AVE
I-35W S
RIVER RD E
US-12 W
US-12 E I-94 E
I-94 W
DESTINATION CORRIDOR
CONNECTOR CORRIDOR
DPRF BOUNDARY
LOCAL COMMERCE CORRIDOR
POTENTIAL LINKS & CONNECTIONS
EXISTING ATTRACTION

Potential Links and Connections Diagram

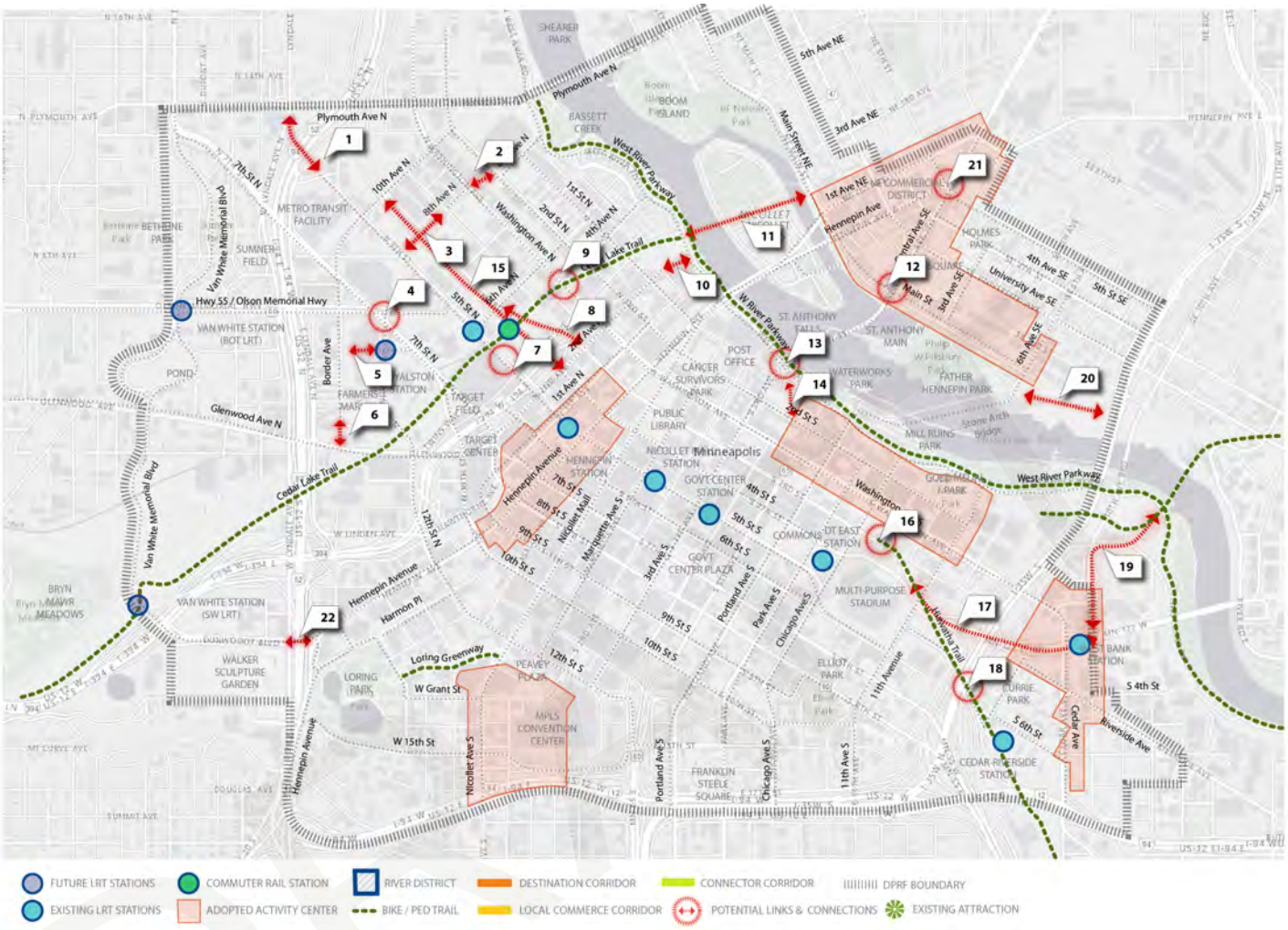


Figure 3.6 Potential links and Connections diagram

3.4 Potential Linkages

The following potential linkages are drawn from existing adopted small area plans and policy guidance as well as from the extensive engagement process conducted during the creation of the Downtown Public Realm Framework. Sources are indicated with each connection. These potential connections are highlighted for their utility in creating a more connected and accessible downtown public realm. They are not presented in any order of priority but as a catalog of existing and proposed linkage or connectivity opportunities.

Potential Links and Connections Diagram Key

1. **5TH STREET NORTH EXTENSION** – Create a connection over Interstate 94 from N 5th Street to Plymouth Ave N. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
2. **8TH AVE N CONNECTION FROM WASHINGTON TO 2ND ST N** – Create a publicly accessible pedestrian and bicycle connection between Washington Ave N and 2nd Street N. *Source: North Loop Small Area Plan*
3. **8TH AVE N CONNECTION FROM 3RD ST N TO 5TH ST N** – Create a publicly accessible vehicular and/or pedestrian and bicycle connection from 3rd Street N to 5th Street N. *Source: North Loop Small Area Plan*
4. **INTERSECTION OF 7TH ST N, 6TH AVE N AND ROYALSTON AVE** – Create a publicly accessible

Potential Links and Connections Diagram Key, Continued

pedestrian and bicycle connection between Royalston LRT Station and 10th Ave N.

5. **ROYALSTON STATION CONNECTION TO 10TH AVE N** – Create a publicly accessible pedestrian and bicycle connection between Royalston LRT Station and 10th Ave N.
6. **BORDER AVENUE CONNECTION TO GLENWOOD AVE** – Create a publicly accessible vehicular and pedestrian / bicycle connection from Border Avenue to Glenwood Avenue.
7. **TARGET FIELD STATION CONNECTION TO CEDAR LAKE TRAIL** – Create a vertical bicycle connection between Cedar Lake Trail and Target Field Station Platform / 5th Street N. *Source: Public Works Transportation Planning Staff Comments*
8. **3rd STREET VIADUCT PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE** – Improve the Pedestrian connection along the 3rd street viaduct between 2nd Ave N and 5th Ave N.
9. **WASHINGTON AVE N & CEDAR LAKE TRAIL CONNECTION** – Implement clear wayfinding strategies to guide bicycles from Washington Ave N to Cedar Lake Trail via Dock Street Flats connection. *Source: Public Works Transportation Planning Staff Comments / DPRF Public Engagement Process*
10. **2ND AVE N EXTENSION** – Create a pedestrian and bicycle connection between 2nd Ave N and West River Parkway. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
11. **NICOLLET ISLAND CEDAR LAKE TRAIL EXTENSION** – Explore the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian connection on the BNSF Rail bridge across Nicollet Island to Main Street N. *Source: Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan*
12. **3RD AVENUE BRIDGE / MAIN STREET CONNECTION** – Improve the vertical connection for pedestrians and bicycles between 3rd / Central Avenue and Main Street SE. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
13. **3RD AVE BRIDGE / W RIVER PARKWAY CONNECTION** – Create a vertical connection from the 3rd Ave Bridge at the intersection of 1st St S to the West River Parkway for pedestrians and bicycles. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
14. **2ND STREET SHARED STREET CONNECTION**– Continue to explore ways to connect the Mill District via 2nd St and the Mill City Quarter Woonerf to the West River Parkway. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
15. **4TH STREET FREEWAY VIADUCT** – Explore options for the future of the 4th Street Freeway Viaduct, owned by MNDOT, from activation underneath up to and including its removal at the end of its useful life, shifting the 94 on-ramp north. *Source: Comments, DPRF Engagement Process*
16. **HIAWATHA TRAIL AND 10TH AVE S** – Create a new bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Hiawatha Trail and 10th Ave S. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
17. **WASHINGTON AVE BRIDGE TO HIAWATHA TRAIL CONNECTION** – Create a direct bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Washington Avenue Bridge and the Hiawatha Trail through the Green Line LRT Trench. *Source: Bicycle Master Plan*
18. **SAMATAR CROSSING / CEDAR RIVERSIDE STATION** – Create a clear and accessible connection between Cedar Riverside LRT station and the future Samatar Crossing. Establish wayfinding between Samatar Crossing / Cedar Riverside LRT and neighborhood commercial district. commercial district. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
19. **BLUFF STREET BIKEWAY WAYFINDING** – Implement clear wayfinding between future protected bikeway on 19th Ave S to and from the Bluff Street Bikeway and Bridge #9. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
20. **DINKYTOWN GREENWAY** – Complete the bicycle and pedestrian connection from the Stone Arch Bridge to the Dinkytown Greenway. *Source: Bicycle Master Plan*
21. **HENNEPIN / CENTRAL AVE / 5TH ST INTERSECTION** – Simplify vehicular traffic flows and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety with updated infrastructure, wayfinding and circulation strategies. *Source: DPRF Engagement Process*
22. **DUNWOODY UNDERPASS** – Establish a hospitable pedestrian link beneath Interstate 94 connecting Downtown with Uptown

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3.5 Corridor Typology

3.5.1 Destination Corridor

Characterized by the highest level of active use, these corridors function as regional destinations that support a wide range of uses, and have a clear identity and character. They are heavily oriented toward pedestrians, are well-served by transit, and incorporate pedestrian-scale urban design including a continuously active streetwall with a high degree of transparency and interactivity. Frequently overlapping with activity centers, destination corridors are most active during mid-day, evenings and on weekends and contain the highest concentration of entertainment venues, restaurants, bars, nightclubs and other leisure-time active uses.

Destination corridors are frequently associated with highly individualized programs or with the identity of their surrounding neighborhoods and therefore may incorporate significant place branding strategies into their public realm. This may include specialized wayfinding, customized street furnishing, and signage. These elements help to support the corridor's identity and to market their function to the city and region as a whole.

EXAMPLE CORRIDORS

- Hennepin Avenue
- Nicollet Avenue S
- 1st Avenue
- Main Street SE
- Washington Avenue

Figure 3.7 Destination Corridor diagram

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Destination Corridors

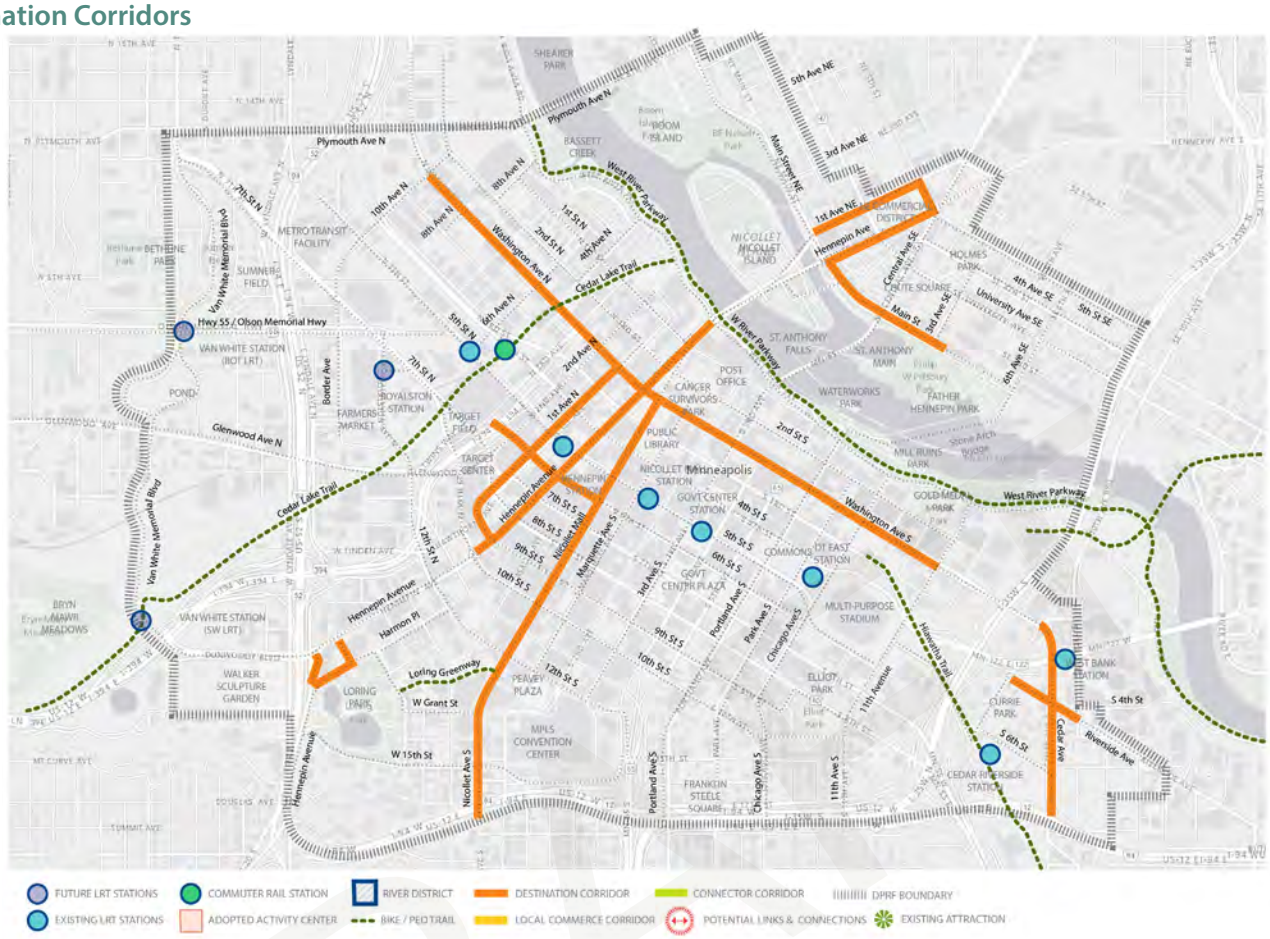

Figure 3.8 Destination Corridors

Policy Recommendations: Destination Corridor

POTENTIAL GROUND FLOOR USES:

- Retail storefront
- Restaurant / bar
- Sidewalk café
- Entertainment venue (i.e. theater, cinema, nightclub)
- Department store / Shopping center
- Hotel lobby
- Publicly accessible open space / courtyard / pocket-park
- Transit facility / station / hub

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Encourage continuous active uses along the entire streetwall.
- Discourage building utilities/mechanical / parking / vehicular access.
- Create a high-degree of transparency / visibility between interior and exterior of buildings.
- Encourage a high frequency of building entrances and access points.
- Activate corners with building entrances
- Encourage taller ground floor heights (15' min).
- Minimize building setbacks (5' or less).
- Plantings should be primarily hardscape such as tree grates, raised planters, and permeable pavers and spaced to allow for heavy pedestrian traffic.
- Street furnishings should minimize conflicts with the flow of heavy pedestrian traffic and should allow for intermittent spaces for rest, interaction and public art.

Destination Corridor: Existing

Figure 3.9 Destination Corridor , existing conditions, photograph by the City of Minneapolis

Destination Corridor: Proposed

Figure 3.10 Destination Corridor: incremental implementation by stakeholder groups.

DESTINATION CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION

Completing an enhanced corridor is accomplished incrementally by a variety of stakeholder groups. The figure above shows features provided by: special service districts (seasonal decorations, freestanding planters), Public Works (bicycle parking, neighborhood identification signs), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (boulevard trees), neighborhood organizations (neighborhood identification signs), and the fronting property owner (freestanding planters, bicycle parking).

3.5.2 Local Commerce Corridor

These corridors are characterized by more intermittent pedestrian traffic throughout the day and contain a mix of uses including single use office buildings, residential buildings and mixed-use buildings. The retail presence may include smaller cafes and restaurants and is serves the downtown population of residents and workers. Due to lower pedestrian volumes and a potentially higher residential population, local commerce corridors are encouraged to have more generous planting in the public realm including planted boulevards, street trees and green screening of non-active building functions. Street furniture such as benches and movable furniture is encouraged to provide places of respite and quiet interaction away from busier retail corridors.

EXAMPLE CORRIDORS

- Chicago Avenue S
- Central Avenue SE
- 5th Street N/S
- 2nd Street N/S

Figure 3.11 Local Commerce Corridor diagram

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Local Commerce Corridors

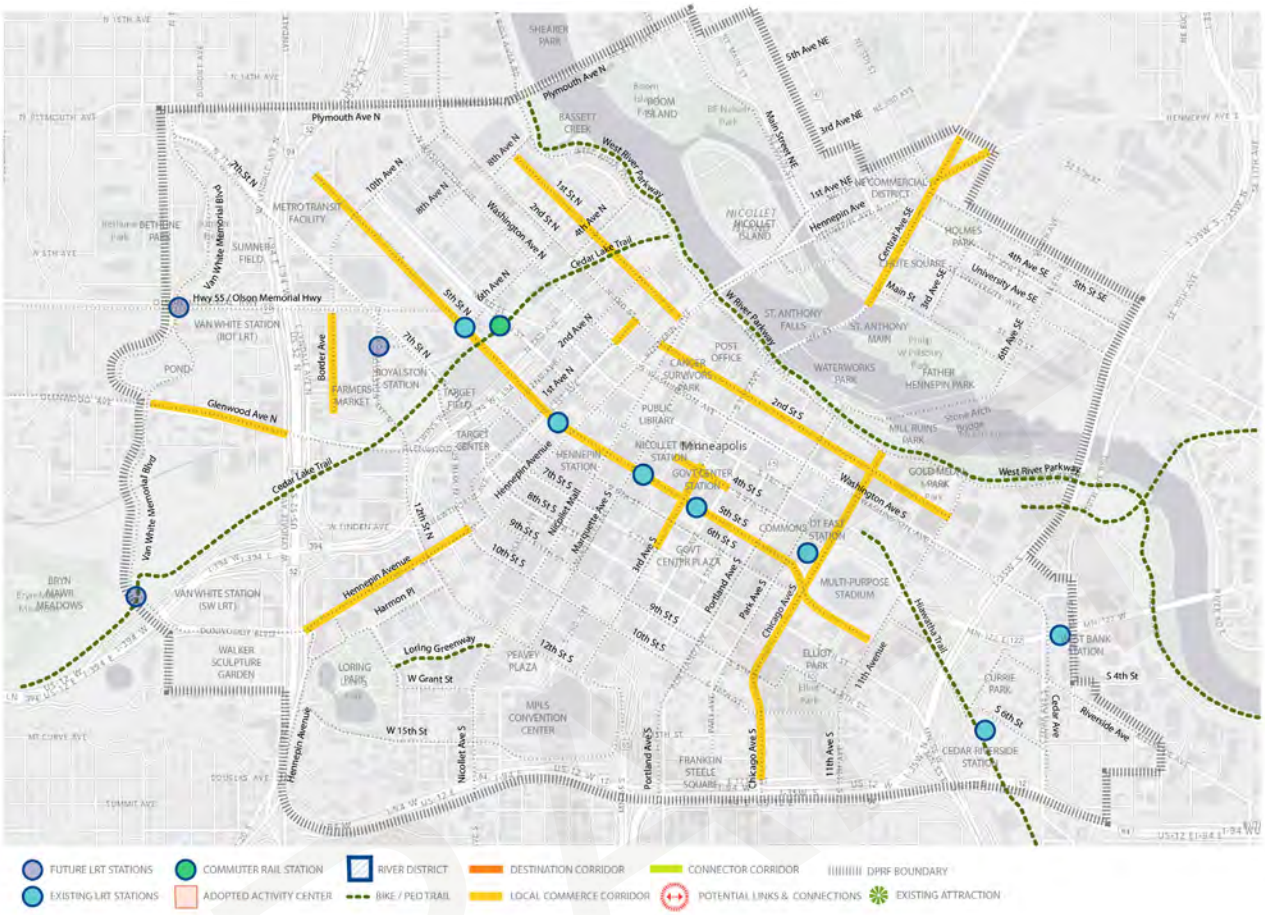

Figure 3.12 Local Commerce Corridors

Policy Recommendations: Local Commerce Corridor

POTENTIAL GROUND FLOOR USES:

- Urban grocery store
- Professional services/Family services (such as daycare, doggie daycare, or clinic)
- Restaurant / Sidewalk café
- Retail storefront
- Residential lobby
- Green space / Green buffer / Green wall
- Residential amenity space
- Pocket park
- Office lobby
- Hotel lobby
- Walk-up townhomes / Condos / Apartment units
- Transit facility / station / hub

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Implement a more landscaped public realm, including planted boulevards, street trees and green screening of non-active or private ground floor uses
- Separate walk-up residential units from the sidewalk with a green buffer or raised entryway to create privacy
- Encourage pocket-parks, publicly accessible green space, and street furniture to create places of respite and interaction
- Appropriately screen any non-active uses such as mechanical, parking, and other "back of house" functions or large expanses of blank street wall.
- Whenever possible place active uses towards the corners of the block

Local Commerce Corridor: Existing

Figure 3.13 Local Commerce Corridor, existing conditions, photograph by the City of Minneapolis

Local Commerce Corridor: Proposed

Figure 3.14 Local Commerce Corridor: incremental implementation by stakeholder groups.

LOCAL COMMERCE CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION

Completing an enhanced corridor is accomplished incrementally by a variety of stakeholder groups. The figure above shows features provided by; special service districts (freestanding planters), public works (bicycle parking), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (boulevard trees), Community Planning and Economic Development (public art), and the fronting property owner (benches, freestanding planters, bicycle parking).

3.5.3 Connector Corridor

Connectors are streets used primarily as connections between destinations. They are multi-modal and may carry large volumes of pedestrians, bicycles, and cars, particularly during peak commuting times. Their use characteristics are varied but generally contain a mix of active and non-active uses and may have swaths of industrial, under-utilized or institutional land. When considering street furnishing and planting characteristics, priority should be given to wayfinding, transit accessibility, and pedestrian safety. Similar to local commerce corridors, Connector corridors provide more opportunity for greening and should be more generously planted where space allows. In particular, any non-active uses should be appropriately screened with plantings and pedestrian scaled lighting.

EXAMPLE CORRIDORS

- » 10th Ave N
- » 11th Avenue
- » Portland Avenue
- » 7th Street N
- » 9th Street S
- » 10th Street S

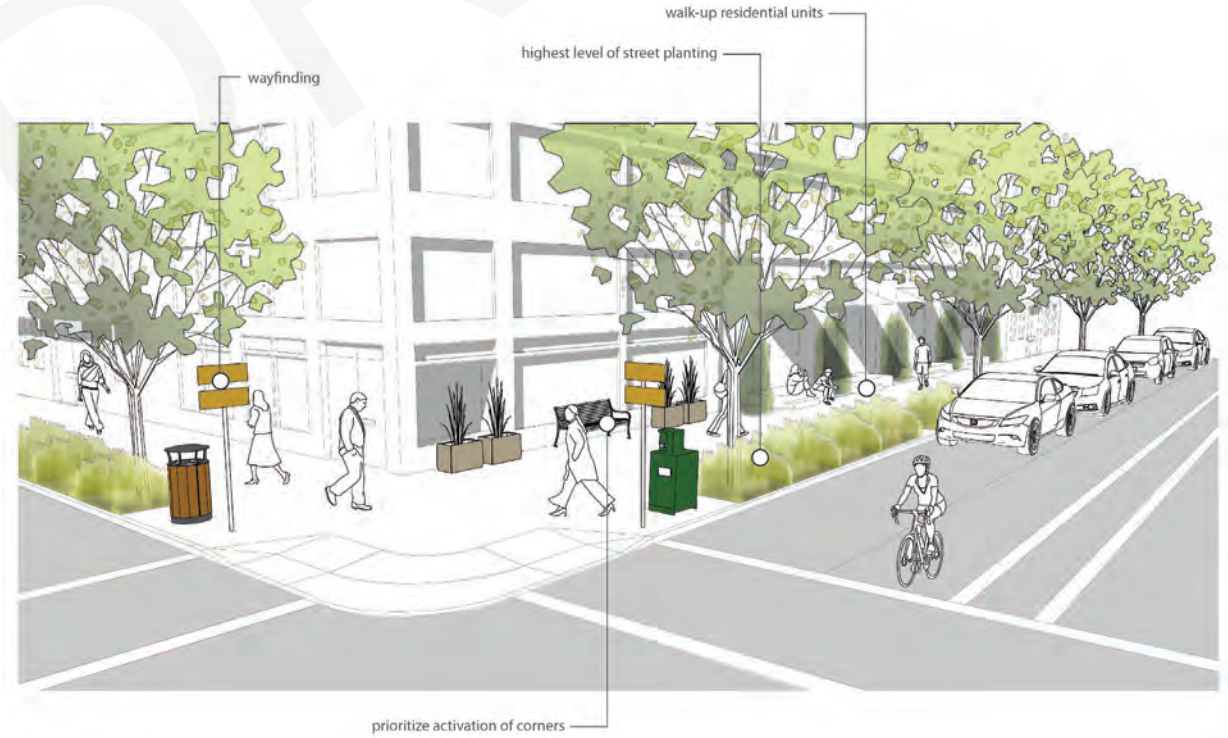

Figure 3.15 Connector Corridor diagram

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Connector Corridors

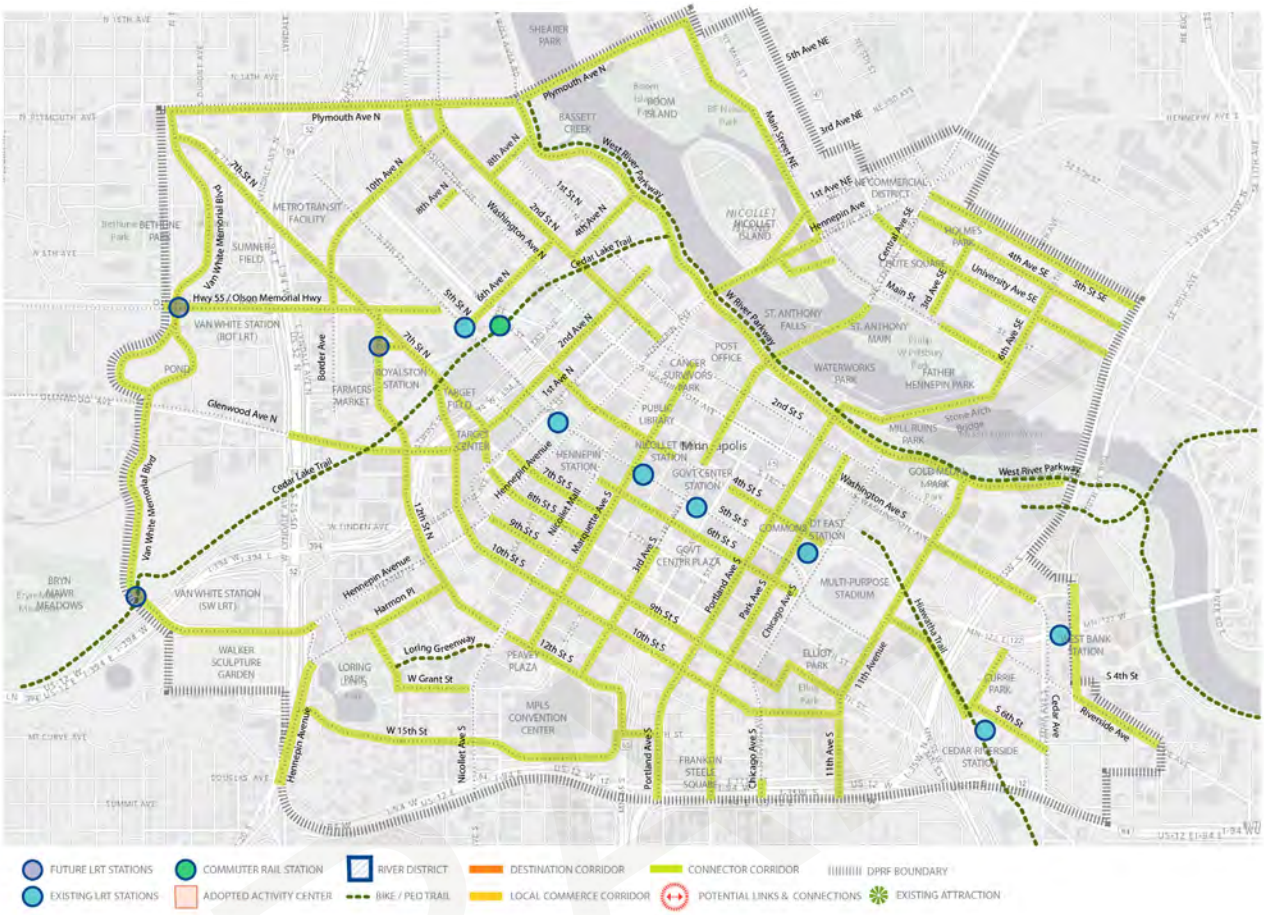

Figure 3.16 Connector Corridors

Policy Recommendations: Connector Corridor

POTENTIAL GROUND FLOOR USES:

- Office lobby / Office space
- Small-scale retail storefront
- Residential lobby
- Residential amenity space
- Hotel lobby
- Green space / Green buffer / Green wall
- Light industrial / Manufacturing use (appropriately screened and planted and/or with a storefront component)
- Walk-up residential units
- Transit facility / station / hub
- Institutional use (i.e. hospital, clinic, higher education, public agency)

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Appropriately screen any non-active uses with plantings, public art or materials of visual interest
- Provide clear wayfinding to destination places and corridors, particularly at transit stops and intersections or intermodal exchanges
- Maximize the safety of pedestrians and bicycles with the careful placement and visual connection of any curb-cuts, loading areas or parking access points
- Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting, particularly through non-active use corridors

Connector Corridor: Existing

Figure 3.17 Connector Corridor, existing conditions, photograph by the City of Minneapolis

Connector Corridor: Proposed

Figure 3.18 Connector Corridor: incremental implementation by stakeholder groups.

LOCAL COMMERCE CORRIDOR

Completing an enhanced corridor is accomplished incrementally by a variety of stakeholder groups. The figure above shows features provided by; Metro Transit (transit stops), Public Works (protected bikeways), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (boulevard trees), and the fronting property owner (enhanced boulevard plantings, enhanced plantings on private property adjacent to the public realm).

3.6 Central Riverfront Feature District

Background

The Mississippi Riverfront has been at the heart of Minneapolis since its birth as a city and continues to play a major role in shaping its identity. That role has evolved from what was initially a primarily industrial waterfront to a more mixed character in recent years. Today it includes many recreational and cultural destinations, along with a thriving residential population. Local planning efforts helped shape this transformation, preserving the history and character of the post-industrial landscapes while protecting the natural beauty and ecological health of the river. Today, as the character and uses of Downtown become more mixed and the population of Downtown residents and visitors continues to increase, the Central Riverfront continues to develop its role as the heart of a thriving Downtown public realm.

Foundational Planning & Policy

Minneapolis' riverfront is already a highlight of the city's cultural identity and a thriving place for recreational activities, historic interpretation and day-to-day life. Its success is no accident, but rather the result of a number of critical planning initiatives that helped shape its increasingly dynamic future. Much of the visionary work in these plans has been implemented but much has yet to be realized. The *Downtown Public Realm Framework* seeks to build on these past efforts and help shape the context around which the Mississippi River and its adjacent communities can continue to thrive.

3.6.1 Guiding Principles For The Central Riverfront Feature District

The Mississippi River is central to the public realm in Downtown both because it is a major attraction for recreation and leisure but also because it provides a natural focal point for shaping and enhancing a sense of place and identity for the whole of downtown. While much of the Central Riverfront is already developed or park land, key sites still exist as long-range opportunities to create new destinations. Additionally there is much room for improvement in wayfinding and strengthening connections from the downtown core to and from the riverfront. The Downtown Public Realm Framework seeks to provide guidance in those areas.

3.6.1.1 ALL PROJECTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT FEATURE DISTRICT ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER AND CONTRIBUTE TO ADVANCING THE FOLLOWING GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK:

a) Strengthen and enhance connections to the Central Riverfront from Downtown

b) Elevate the presence and visibility of the Central Riverfront

c) Enhance the resident, worker and visitor experience by investing in public amenities and programming

d) Create a sustainable and ecologically integrated public realm

e) Guide future development to contribute to creating a vibrant and active Central Riverfront

f) Work with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to achieve an active and accessible Central Riverfront experience

3.6.2 Connections & Visibility

The DPRF is primarily concerned with creating and enhancing connections to the river, especially from key corridors identified in the Physical Framework plan. Enhancing connections involves creating a public realm that is safe, inviting, and hospitable, with clear wayfinding and access to destinations and attractions. The key connections identified in this plan rely heavily on those identified by the Central Mississippi

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Figure 3.19 Young Lei and Huimin Yuan , photograph by Stephanie Glaros

Yong Lei: *"We come here occasionally, probably one or two times every month I would say. We like the Stone Arch Bridge, the river, checking out the Mill City Museum. Places for my daughter, like MacPhail Music Center, and many other places we can take her to."*
Huimin Yuan: *"Take a walk in here, or take her to the park over there."*
YL: *"We also like the restaurants here, a lot of different varieties, we like to check out all the restaurants here in downtown. Yeah, that's pretty cool. It's a combination of both the natural beauty and the cultural spots. So that's really good."*

-Young Lei and Huimin Yuan

Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan (CMRRP) as well as the key corridors identified through the DPRF public engagement process.

3.6.2.1 ALL PROJECTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT FEATURE DISTRICT ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING CONNECTIVITY AND VISIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS.

a) Establish and maintain clear wayfinding to and from the central riverfront along all key corridors identified in the DPRF

b) Complete the pedestrian and bicycle connection from the Dinkytown Greenway to Main Street

c) Establish a new connection to the riverfront at 8th Ave N

d) Explore the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian extension of the Cedar Lake Trail across Nicollet Island to the East Bank of the river at the existing rail bridge

e) Create a more robust and accessible connection from the 3rd/Central Ave bridge to the Main Street SE

f) Enhance and strengthen the Gateway Park connection from the downtown core to West River Parkway

3.6.3 Parks And Open Space

The DPRF embraces the recommendations and planning guidance contained in the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan and defers to that plan with regard to all land currently held by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Additionally this plan encourages the full implementation of the *RiverFirst* plan including the Scherer park site and the Water Works park concept design, adopted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in September, 2015. The DPRF supports these initiatives with the following recommendations:

3.6..3.1 PROJECTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT FEATURE DISTRICT ARE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLY WITH THESE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) Support the development of activation, programming and maintenance strategies for parks and open space along the central riverfront

b) Strengthen connections to and between parks and open spaces in and around downtown by creating clear wayfinding and completing missing links

c) Explore the creation of recreational "loops" that provide

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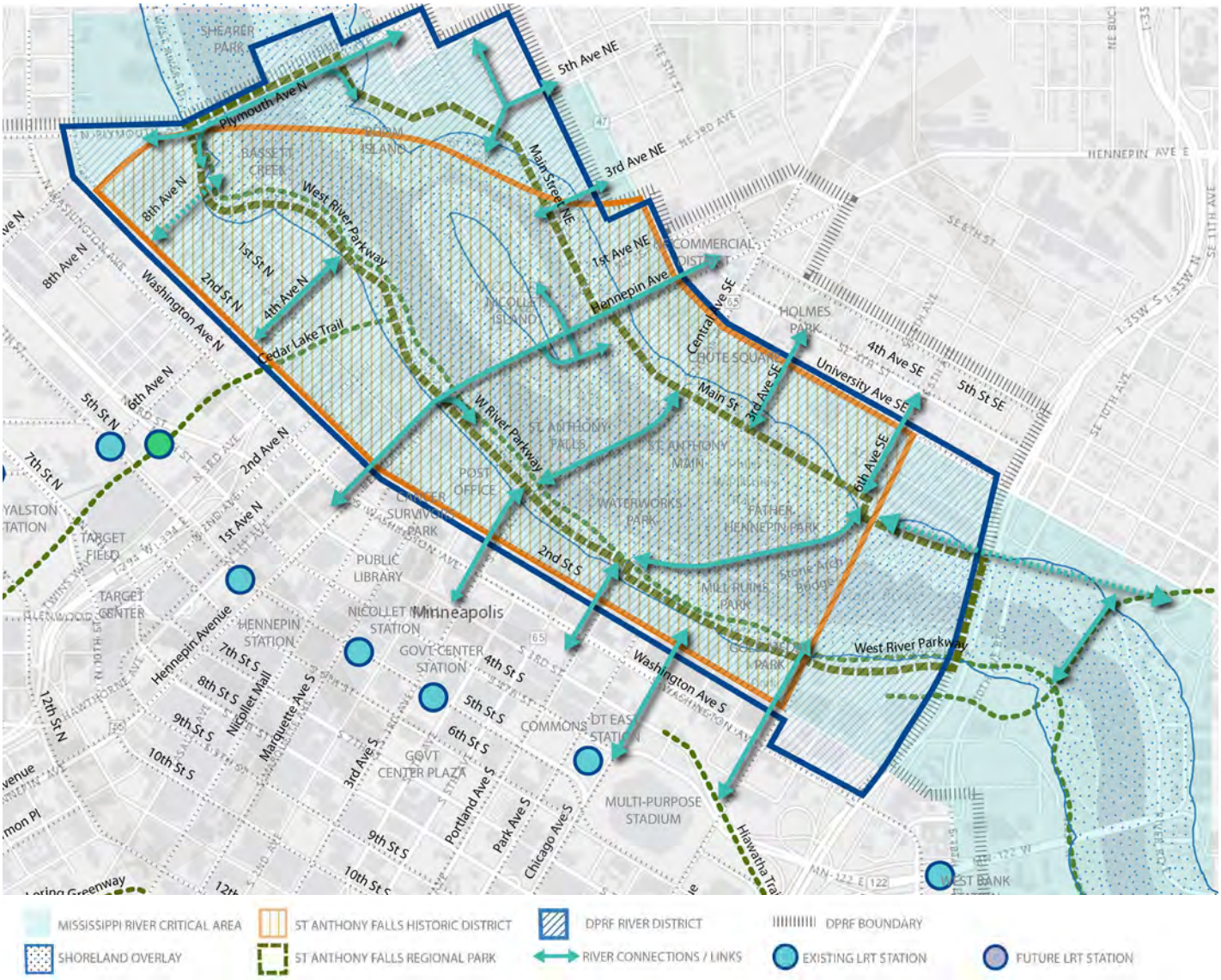

Figure 3.20 Central Riverfront Feature District map - detail

Key for Central Riverfront Feature District Map

Mississippi River Critical Area – The Mississippi River Critical Area Program is a joint local and state program that provides coordinated planning and management for 72 miles of the Mississippi River, four miles of the Minnesota River, and 54,000 acres of adjacent corridor lands. The designated Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor stretches from Ramsey and Dayton, Minnesota, to the southern boundary of Dakota County on the west/south side of the river and the boundary with the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway on the east/north side of the river, and runs through the heart of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Shoreland Overlay District – The SH Shoreland Overlay District is a zoning district within the City of Minneapolis code of ordinances. It is established and deployed in strategic areas to preserve and enhance the environmental qualities of surface waters and the natural and economic values of shoreland areas within the city, to provide for the efficient and beneficial utilization of those waters and shoreland areas, to comply with the requirements of state law regarding the management of shoreland areas, and to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

St. Anthony Falls Historic District – As defined and described in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines, this district lies at the heart of Minneapolis and includes areas of particular historic importance such as St. Anthony Falls, Marcy Holmes, the Mill District and Nicollet Island. It was written and adopted to provide guidance and standards on the appropriateness of work that is planned in the district including new structures, historic preservation, streetscapes and planting.

St. Anthony Falls Regional Park – The St. Anthony Falls Regional Park (SAFRP) takes its name from St. Anthony Falls, which have defined the river character for centuries and lie at the heart of the park. The SAFRP encompasses approximately 350 acres and 1.75 miles of riverfront along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. It is part of a larger continuous regional park system along the river, abutted by the Above the Falls Regional Park to the north and the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park to the south. SAFRP Lies wholly within a unit of the National Park system, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is served by two National Scenic Byways: The Grand Rounds and the Great River Road. Also, it is served by the first and only state bikeway, the Mississippi River Trail.

Downtown Public Realm Riverfront Feature District – The Central Riverfront feature district as outlined in the Downtown Public Realm Framework in a policy feature that brings together guidance from multiple sources, plans and existing policy tools to reinforce the connection of the Mississippi River to Downtown Minneapolis. It highlights key elements of existing plans including critical connections, design standards and values that seek to continue to develop the riverfront as a focal point of the downtown public realm.

River Connections / Links – River Connections and links as defined in the Downtown Public Realm Framework are critical routes and connection points from the downtown public realm to the riverfront. They include major thoroughfares, side streets and pedestrian / bicycle access points as well as connections across the river. The DPRF strives to strengthen these connections through the establishment of clear wayfinding, visibility and access to and from the riverfront.

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opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists to move between parks and open spaces downtown in clear, legible and minimally interrupted movements

3.6.4 Ecology and Sustainability

The DPRF supports the establishment and maintenance of a sustainable and ecologically integrated public realm that manages stormwater to help improve water quality and public health. It also encourages enhancing the public realm in a way that is complimentary to the natural ecological systems of the Central Riverfront. This includes planting native species that will thrive and that connect visitors to historic and contemporary cultural and natural landscapes.

3.6..4.1 PROJECTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT FEATURE DISTRICT ARE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLY WITH THESE PRIORITY ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) Wherever possible, plantings in the public realm should reflect and complement the existing and historic landscapes of the Central Mississippi Riverfront

b) Continue to implement stormwater best management practices for new capital improvements and development projects

3.6.5 Existing St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines

Adopted by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission in 2012, the St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines prescribe very specific requirements for how infrastructure, historic preservation, rehabilitation and infill development should proceed within the St. Anthony Falls historic district. Guidelines that are particularly relevant to the goals of the Central Riverfront Feature District are listed in Figure 3.21.

Existing Critical Policy Guidance for the Public Realm: St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines [2,3]

- 5.4 – Preserve the location and width of existing street and alley rights-of-way
- 5.5 – Preserve historic paving materials; otherwise, provide new compatible materials
- 6.1 – Retain existing features of historic landscapes including but not limited to plant materials, waterways and grade changes
- 6.2 – Design new landscapes to be in harmony with the overall historic character of the district
- 6.3 – Use landscape designs to promote energy efficiency and water conservation
- 6.4 – New or replacement street furnishings, such as street lights and street furniture, shall be compatible with the context of the individual character areas
- 6.5 – Consider integrating interpretive materials into street furnishings
- 6.6 – Streetscape plantings should be compatible with the context of the individual character areas
- 6.7 – New designs for open spaces and parks should be compatible and reflective of the historic context of the individual character areas

Figure 3.21 Existing critical policy guidance for the public realm: St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines

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3.6.6 Guiding Principles for how the Central Riverfront Feature District Contributes to the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan [4]

Adopted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in 2015, the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan seeks to provide guidance on the redevelopment and enhancement of existing facilities and resources, as well as the acquisition of additional property and expansion of the regional park boundary.

3.6.6.1 PROJECTS WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVERFRONT FEATURE DISTRICT ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM THE CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI RIVERFRONT REGIONAL PARK PLAN:

a) Connect people to the river by foot, bicycle, transit, boat, and private vehicle

b) Restore and enhance natural resources, improve wildlife habitat, and water quality

c) Reveal and interpret past and present, nature and culture

d) Engage visitors through activities, amenities, food, and events

e) Adapt within the changing social, economic, and ecological realities

3.7 Incremental Implementation

A key characteristic of the *Downtown Public Realm Framework* plan is the groundwork that it lays for incremental implementation over time, as opportunities arise.

The Central Riverfront of Minneapolis is largely built out with existing uses and structures. It was the first place to be settled in the city and is fully developed. It exists today as a mix of historic industrial landscapes as well as more recent residential and cultural developments.

Still, the city is a living thing, and as growth continues in Downtown, evolution and change will continue to occur.

The Downtown Public Realm Framework is designed to serve as a platform for partnership with the goal of incremental implementation. Public, private, and nonprofit partners are invited to contribute to the holistic vision in the many ways that they can, incrementally over time.

3.7.1 Public and private actors will be encouraged to participate in incremental implementation of the Downtown Public Realm Framework.

Over time, as Downtown continues to grow and as the riverfront continues to evolve, opportunities will arise for development investment and capital projects to contribute to Potential Linkages, Corridors, and the Central Riverfront Feature District.

3.7.1.1 PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK AREA ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DPRF POLICIES.

3.7.1.2 PUBLIC PROJECTS, INCLUDING CAPITAL PROJECTS, WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK AREA ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DPRF POLICIES.

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References

References

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1 *Sennett, Richard. Quant: The Public Realm. http:/www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/templates/general2.aspx?pageid=16&cc=gb*

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1 *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth – Land Use Chapter, p 1-17*

2 *Consult the guidance for individual character areas in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design guidelines, chapter 10 p.123*

3 *St. Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines, 2012: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/convert_255677.pdf*

4 *Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park Master Plan, 2015: https://www.minneapolisparks.org/_asset/d6kv9t/central_riverfront_masterplan_approved.pdf*

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