MIDTOWN MINNEAPOLIS
LAND USE AND
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Lake Street
From Blaisdell Avenue to 11th Avenue and
The Midtown Greenway to 31st Street

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Prepared for:

City of Minneapolis
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This report documents a year-long planning and urban design process conducted to prepare a land use and development plan for Midtown Minneapolis. This plan will inform future revisions of *The Minneapolis Plan* and will be used, like the comprehensive plan, to guide development activities in the project area.

The Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan study considered the area bordered by Blaisdell and 11th Avenues and the Midtown Greenway and 31st Street in south Minneapolis, and was initiated by the City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Planning Division and three council members representing the 6th, 8th, and 10th Wards. Major public infrastructure improvements are planned for this area; because of the magnitude of the infrastructure improvements and their potential to influence development activities, it was determined that proactive land use planning and urban design analysis was warranted to ensure that future development would meet community-defined goals and objectives.

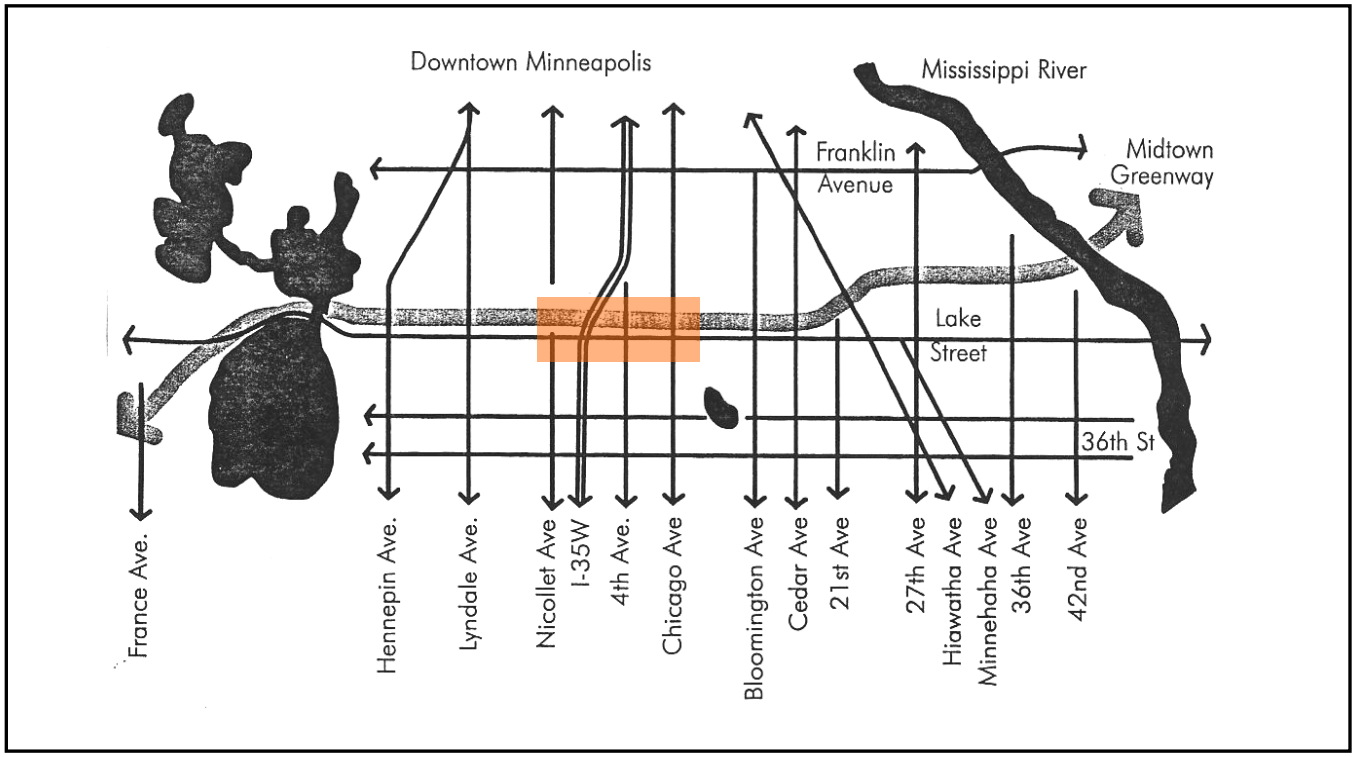


Figure 1. Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan Study Area
Study area along Lake Street, between Blaisdell and 11th Avenues is shaded. The study area extends north to south from the Midtown Greenway to 31st Street. The Midtown Greenway is shown in its ultimate configuration from France Avenue to the Mississippi River.

Background

At this time, there are four public infrastructure projects and many private develop-ment activities that are underway or in various stages of planning and design within the study area. These projects will affect this segment of Lake Street for years to come, both in terms of direct and immediate benefits and the potential to set the stage for additional, future development.

The public infrastructure projects are:

- Re-opening Nicollet Avenue as a through street across Lake Street, where today Nicollet Avenue's continuity across Lake Street is blocked by the Kmart store, which was recently acquired by Sears. This restoration of Nicollet Avenue is the highest priority goal for all area neighborhoods.
- I-35W Access Improvement project, which will provide the study area with a fully-directional interchange; the current interchange only allows southbound access to I-35W from Lake Street and northbound access from I-35W to Lake Street. In order to implement the new ramps, private property will be acquired on the north side of Lake Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.
- Lake Street Reconstruction, which will impact the study area with a wider Lake Street cross-section than exists today. The increased width, as much as 49 feet in some areas, will accommodate dedicated left- and right-turn lanes that will serve the I-35-W ramps. This project will require private property acquisitions on the north side of Lake Street between Blaisdell and 4th Avenues.
- Phase II Midtown Greenway Construction, which was completed in late summer 2004, extends the Greenway from 5th Avenue to Hiawatha Avenue and included additional access points to/from the Greenway.

Private development activities in Midtown Minneapolis include:

- Redevelopment of the former Sears site (Midtown Exchange) on the northeast corner of Chicago Avenue/Lake Street. When completed, the Midtown Exchange will consist of more than one million square feet of residential, retail, office, and institutional uses.
- Acquisition of the Kmart site for development as a Sears Super Center. Council members and City staff have met with Sears to discuss re-opening Nicollet Avenue as part of any redevelopment in this block.
- A growing number of small businesses are finding homes in existing buildings along Lake Street. Much of the small business growth along Lake Street can be attributed to the efforts of the neighborhood organizations that border Lake Street, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), Urban Ventures, and the Hispanic and Somali communities.

The project's initiators understand that the City will be in a better position to direct the character of future development and capitalize on potential development synergies presented by public and private investments if:

- A community-supported vision for the area has been defined;
- Analysis has been conducted to determine if previously identified goals and directions continue to be viable in view of current development activities;
- Previously identified goals and directions are updated to reflect any new vision elements and opportunities/constraints;
- The land use and development plan presented in the Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan provides recommendations on land use regulations that should be implemented to facilitate desired future development; and
- This report presents potential development scenarios with strategic steps that include project phasing.

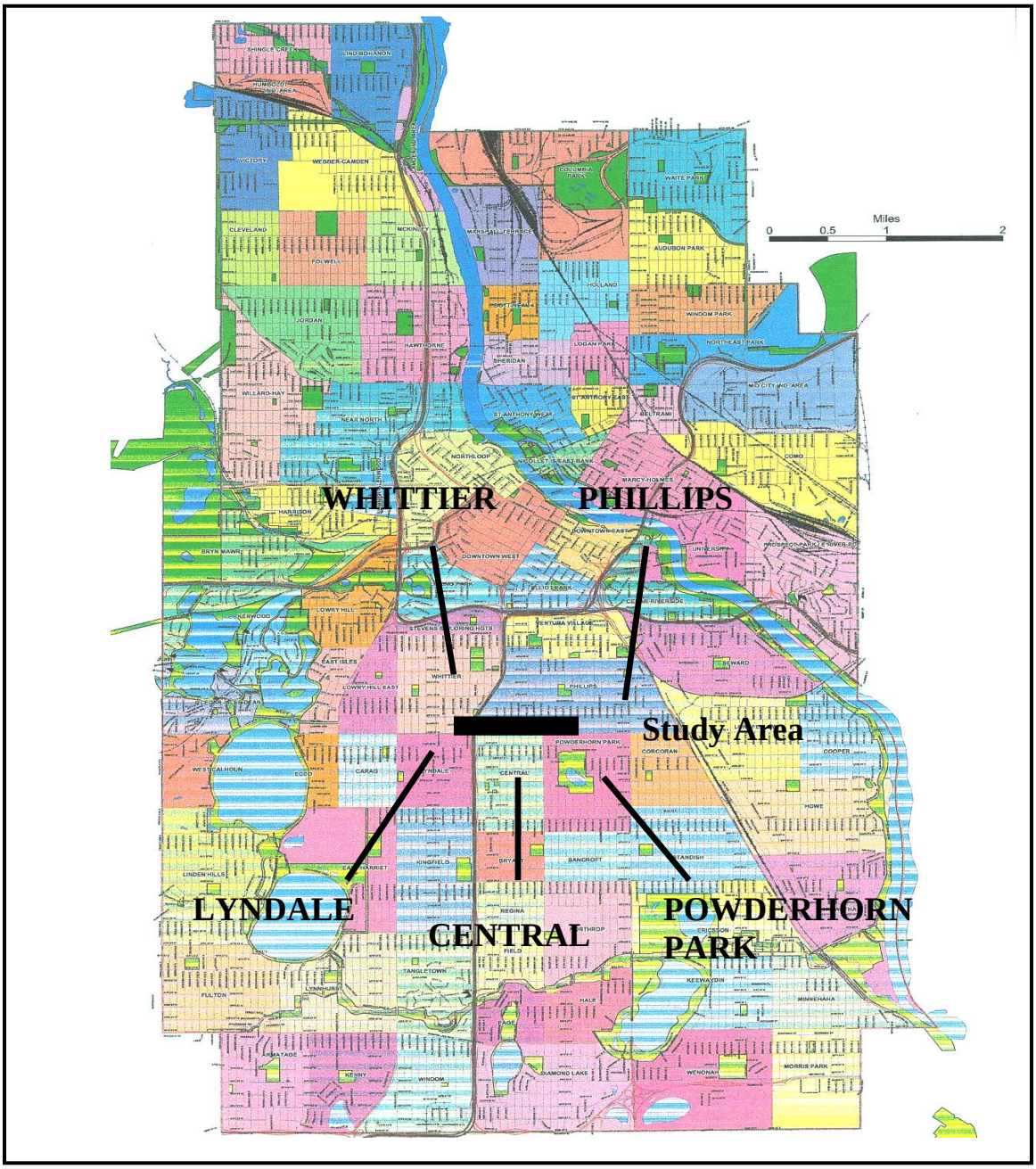


Figure 2. Study area
The study area for the Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan included five neighborhood organizations that border on Lake Street, between Blaisdell and 11th Avenues.

Planning Process

A community-based planning process was developed to conduct the study and prepare the Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan. Elements of the process included:

- Frequent interaction with the project's Steering Committee, which consisted of representatives from neighborhood and business organizations in the study area and the Midtown Greenway Coalition.
- Three community outreach meetings:
  - Two-day kick-off meeting and design workshop held in May 2004;
  - One-day design workshop held for the Hispanic community in June 2004; and
  - Community meeting held in October 2004 to present recommendations and the preliminary report.
- One-on-one meetings with key stakeholders (Midtown Greenway Coalition, property owners including Hennepin County, and directors of new immigrant organizations).
- At least two meetings with each of the neighborhood organizations and business associations involved in the study.
- Coordination with City of Minneapolis staff, from both the Planning and Economic Development divisions of CPED and Public Works.
- 45-day public review, which extended from December 14, 2004 to January 31, 2005. At the beginning of the 45-day review period, hard copies of the draft document were distributed to each participating organization through the Steering Committee, and electronic copies of the report were published on the Charrette Center.Com web site. At the conclusion of the review period, comments received from the community were reviewed and analyzed to inform revisions to the report.

Findings from the Design Workshop

Findings from the design workshop are presented in *Technical Memorandum 2: Draft Summary of Design Workshop Findings*, Biko Associates, Inc., June 18, 2004. The following primary design and development concerns were identified.

1. Desirable characteristics to promote with the plan

- Two to three story-mixed use with retail on ground floor
- Off –street parking, not surface
- "Eyes on the street"
- Small business-to mesh with North Nicollet
- Re-opening Nicollet
- Connection of I-35W to Lake
- Increased Midtown Greenway access
- Buildings that front the Greenway
- Increased affordable housing
- Home ownership opportunities
- Housing on the Greenway
- Community gathering plaza
- Big box retail urbanized

2. Elements within the study area that should be linked or connected

- Development plans and transportation plans
- Places for living and places for shopping
- Places for living and places for working
- North Nicollet to South Nicollet open
- Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway
- Lake street and improved transit services
- Parks, pedestrian circulation routes, and parkway ramps to businesses
- Incorporate transit stops into the design of buildings
- Multiple-use development and affordable housing
- Information center to common community gathering space
- Commercial theme
- Residential access

3. **Suggested land uses for the study area include**

- Theater
- Artists galleries
- Places to "just be" – public gathering spaces
- Places for cultural exchange
- Spaces for women only with the ability to be shared by time with other groups
- Spaces for the elderly where they can exercise and have medical care
- Places to pray five times a day; these could be combined with businesses
- Mosque

4. **Ideas about residential development**

- Increase opportunities for home ownership
- Establish programs that provide low interest mortgages
- 4-5 bedroom homes are needed
- Play spaces should be provided close to home
- A range of housing types (rental, condominium ownership, work/home, and mixed use) at a range of price points (market rate, affordable, and subsidized)

5. **Transportation and circulation concepts**

- Provide an interconnected system for people who do not own cars
- Reduce the volume of traffic on Lake Street
- Make it more convenient for people to walk
- Provide adequate parking for businesses within the study area
- Integrate different transportation needs into an efficient system

RESEARCH SUMMARY

The planning process for the Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan study included background research and technical analysis in addition to community involvement and outreach activities. The combination of information provided by community members and findings from the research and analysis laid a strong foundation for the planning and urban design analyses.

The research and technical analysis included:

- Review and analysis of previous plans and studies to ensure that the land use and development plan would benefit from previous community input and analysis.
- An Urban Forensic Analysis to identify important physical characteristics of the study area.
- Market research to identify land uses and land use intensities that can be supported by the market.
- Urban design analysis to address physical form issues such as linkages, the interface between public and private realms, and building height and massing.

Key Findings from the Review of Previous Studies and Plans

Findings from the review of previous studies and plans are presented in their entirety in *Draft Technical Report 1: Review of Previous Studies and Plans* (Biko Associates, Inc., March 29, 2004). A list of the studies and plans is provided as an addendum to this report. Seven key findings of this research are provided below:

1. **Lake Street is appropriately identified as a Commercial Corridor**.
   As defined in *The Minneapolis Plan* Lake Street is a commercial corridor. Its identity as a commercial corridor include the following characteristics, as compared to other streets in Minneapolis:

   - High daily traffic volumes;
   - Predominant commercial zoning;
   - Predominant building types and structures are generally similar to traditional commercial storefronts; and
   - Orientation of buildings to the street is generally similar to traditional commercial storefront building orientation.

   The Minneapolis Plan supports strengthening the city's commercial corridors through the following policies:

   - Encourage new development along the corridors;
   - Promote alternative uses such as mixed-use residential, office, institutional uses, and low-impact, clean light industrial uses;
   - Address traffic circulation, parking, transit, pedestrian and bicycle issues; and
   - Assist with the rehabilitation, reuse, and revitalization of older commercial districts and buildings.

2. **Lake Street has both positive and negative characteristics associated with its identity as a regional transportation facility.**
   Because of its location and alignment, Lake Street is a major transportation corridor in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, the City of Minneapolis, and the Midtown area. Inherent with its important transportation function are:

   - Positives:
     - High concentration of people are attracted to Lake Street in cars, buses, taxis, bike and foot;
     - Potential for economic development is high; and
     - Accessibility to any and all places is extremely high.

   - Negatives:
     - Strip-oriented land use patterns are not easily adaptable to place making;
     - Lake Street's positives are stretched out over several miles, and it is the concentration of attributes in choice locations (agglomeration) that best contributes to successful development; and
     - The negative impacts of transportation in this location, to one degree or another will always exist.

3. **Lake Street's location, alignment, and adjacent uses define it as a "strip."**
Coupling auto-oriented development with Lake Street's location and alignment has reinforced the strip development pattern. In the early days of development in this area, mass transportation was accomplished by trolley. This transportation mode contributed to nodal development where there was comparatively more intense development at major intersections and trolley stops, and less intense development in between.

In the most recent past, transportation has been largely accomplished by automobile, and, as a result:

- Intense development occurred anywhere without respecting design principles that guide the arrangement and location of buildings;
- Parking lots front on Lake Street in areas where buildings should have been located;
- The street itself is wide in order to accommodate automobiles; and
- Sidewalks are narrow and inadequately designed to facilitate pedestrian circulation.

4. **The Midtown Greenway is recognized as an organizing element.**
The Midtown Greenway, with its focus on non-automobile transportation, linear park-like environment, and proximity to commercial uses along Lake Street and the residential neighborhoods, is recognized as an element around which new development can occur and the Midtown area of the city can be unified.

5. **Re-opening Nicollet Avenue is broadly supported.**
Terminating Nicollet Avenue at Kmart's front door and closing it at Kmart's dumpster/trash containment area is viewed as a great mistake. Re-opening Nicollet Avenue as a continuous street across Lake Street is a public action that is supported by every planning study completed since the intersection was closed.

6. **Successfully linking development activities is the most cost effective approach to project implementation.**
It is recognized that the likelihood of development/redevelopment occurring along the Lake Street corridor and in Midtown Minneapolis is enhanced by the potential to link or bundle projects. There are many projects planned or underway in the project area that present synergistic opportunities are:

- Reconstructing Lake Street;
- I-35W Access Project;
- Re-Opening Nicollet Avenue;
- Phase II of the Midtown Greenway construction project;
- Redevelopment of the former Sears site (Midtown Exchange);
- Sears' acquisition of Kmart at the intersection of Nicollet Avenue/Lake Street; and
- Entrepreneurial activities within the study area, due to the efforts of Urban Ventures, recent immigrants and others.

7. **Benefits from redevelopment should be widespread.**
Opportunities for training, employment, and improved housing should be extended to people who live along Lake Street and in Midtown Minneapolis. The redevelopment of the area should reap benefits for the residents of the area, including improved wages and salaries, development of local businesses serving local needs and increased home ownership and quality rental opportunities.

Key Findings from the Urban Forensic Analysis

Findings from research and analysis of existing physical conditions and the historical circumstances from which those conditions evolved are presented in their entirety in *An Urban Forensic Analysis of Midtown Minneapolis: Technical Memorandum 5* (B. Aaron Parker & Associates | Metropeligo, PC, August 2004). The study reveals seven key findings that will facilitate judicious use of resources toward achieving the city's goals for the study area.

1. **The study area is a distinct district whose characteristics suggest that it should be called *Midtown Minneapolis*.**
The Urban Forensic Analysis identified specific characteristics of the study area that clearly support the need to recognize the study area as a distinct district *(Midtown Minneapolis)* where central, east/west arteries are Lake Street and the former rail corridor (now the Midtown

Greenway); bounded on the west by Blaisdell Avenue and on the east by 10th Avenue.

2. **Midtown Minneapolis is a natural crossroads within the city and the region.**
Midtown Minneapolis, directly south of downtown, historically has been connected by all the major avenues that pass through downtown. Nicollet and 10th Avenues define the west and east edges of both downtown and Midtown. As a result, Midtown enjoyed full and direct access to downtown along its entire breadth before the 1960's.

Located midway between downtown and Minnehaha Parkway, the Lake Street corridor is the only east/west path across the water barriers flanking south Minneapolis - the Mississippi River and the Chain of Lakes. Lake Street and the railway corridor pass through the *only* gap between the lakes in the Chain of Lakes that form the western edge of Minneapolis and are among the few transportation links that span the Mississippi River gorge.

Thus, Midtown was the natural crossroads of major regional corridors. This condition will be reinforced in the next decade by development fostered by the completion of the Midtown Greenway from the western and southwestern suburbs to St. Paul and by access to I-35W at Lake Street.

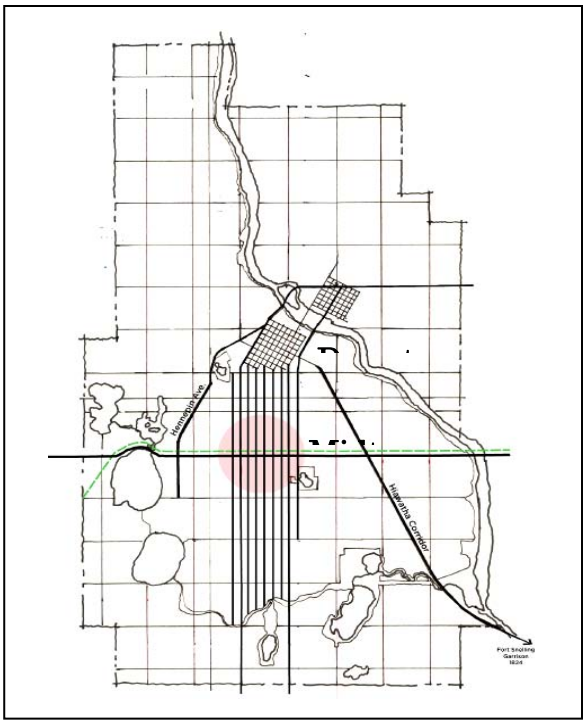


Figure 3. Midtown Minneapolis
Midtown Minneapolis can be considered a district along Lake Street.

3. **Recent transportation and land use decisions in Minneapolis have severed physical connections between downtown and Midtown.**
Originally, 16 avenues stretched south out of downtown Minneapolis. When the railway was placed below grade level, a good investment was made to allow all 16 avenues to bridge the trench. For years, that investment paid dividends in property values and commerce. Street closings in recent years have reduced that number to five avenues; only the Blaisdell/1st Avenue couplet, the Park/Portland couplet and Chicago Avenue reach downtown. Eleven avenues have been blocked to through traffic: Nicollet, Stevens, 2nd, 3rd, Clinton, 4th, 5th, Oakland, Columbus, Elliot, and 10th.

Today, the many severed streets between downtown and Midtown limit access to and vitality of both districts.

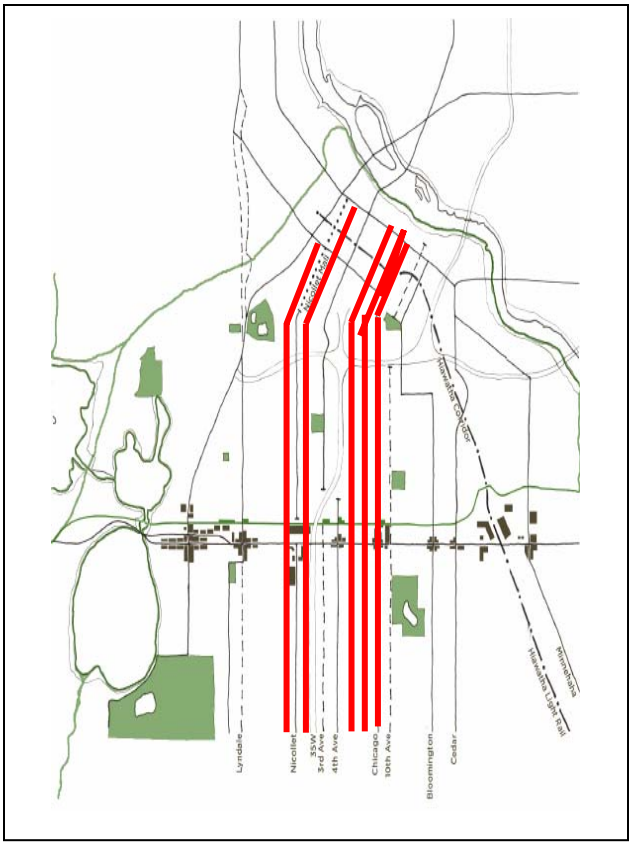


Figure 4. Existing linkages
Sixteen north/south streets once linked Downtown and Midtown. With only five of these streets intact today, social and economic linkages between Downtown and Midtown have been reduced.

4. **The shift in transportation from multiple modes to the use of automobiles caused a shift in land utilization for commercial parcels in the area.**
Initial development in south Minneapolis relied upon multiple modes of movement including individual transport such as carriages/cars, bicycles, foot traffic and transit (e.g. railed trolleys and buses). The last streetcar lines were abandoned in 1954, and reliance on the private auto began to create parking problems in areas that had previously developed within the streetcar era. The Minneapolis Zoning Ordinance was revised in 1963 and reflected this new reliance on the automobile. As a result, the code changed the physical form of post-1963 development along Lake Street.

The southwest quadrant of the study area, bounded by the Midtown Greenway on the north and I-35W on the east, contains development almost exclusively built under the requirements of the 1963 Zoning Code. In practice, approximately 70% of lot area is dedicated to surface parking, as shown in Figure 5.

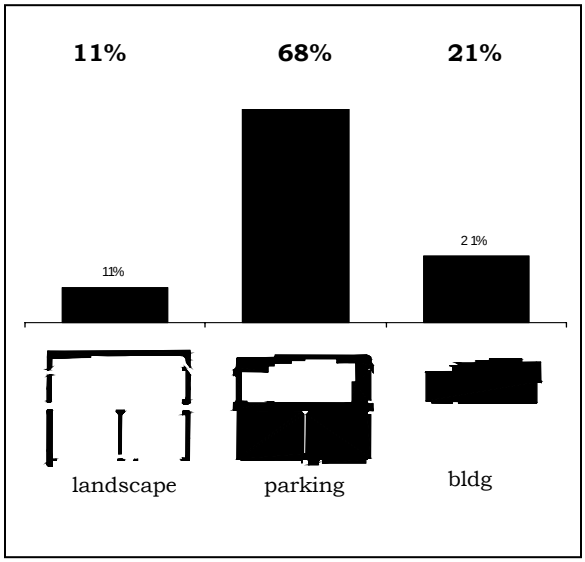


Figure 5. Percentage of land area by use

Site coverage is shown in Figure 6, the ground diagrams for two development periods in the history of Midtown Minneapolis. The first shows the pre-1963 condition where transportation was effectively multi-modal (blackened spaces are buildings).

Figure 7 shows the same area along Lake Street as Figure 6, but illustrates the post-1963 condition, after changes were implemented in the Zoning Code to require parking lots. Note the reduction in blackened spaces and the increase in white, space. The white spaces are parking lots surrounding the buildings.

Figure 6. Pre-1963 Site Coverage.

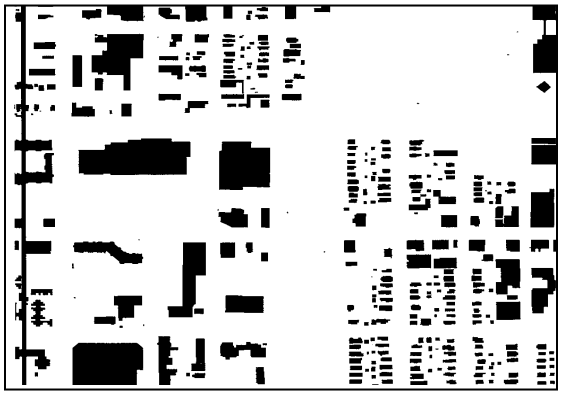


Figure 7. Post-1963 Site Coverage.

5. **Who drives on Lake Street?**
Lake Street is a major east/west thoroughfare with a high volume of traffic. Historically, a high percentage of the traffic has been through trips; today, the percentage of local trips on Lake Street is high, as the majority of east/west through trips use I-94 and TH 62 (the Crosstown).

6. **Variations in block dimension and street width in the study area have created unique development conditions with potential for special urban places.**
Wide blocks on the west of the study area accommodate oversized uses. The blocks between Nicollet and Pleasant are 440 feet wide

(centerline of street to centerline of street) instead of the typical 330 feet. Figure 8 indicates the larger blocks that vary from the typical Minneapolis block dimensions. This variation from the norm presents significant possibilities for accommodating uses that may serve the nearby community and the greater public good. Historically, the increased block width allowed Nicollet Field Baseball Park and the City's trolley barns to fit nicely into these blocks (Figures 9 and 10).

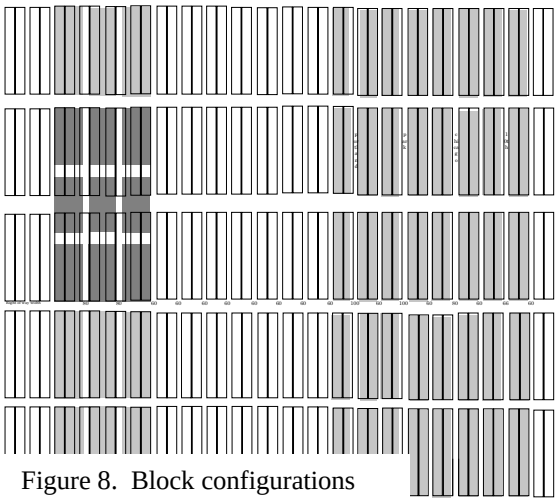


Figure 8. Block configurations

Figure 9. Midtown Trolley Barn

Figure 10. Historical block pattern.
This block pattern allowed Nicollet Field and the Midtown trolley barn to be developed at the intersection of Nicollet and Lake.

Very wide streets alternate with typical width streets between 5th Avenue and 11th Avenue. Portland, Park, Chicago and 10th Avenues are wide and have become the major north/ south thoroughfares with the standard sized streets carry mainly local traffic. Narrow blocks due to wide streets on the east side of the study area produced two conditions:

- Vacated alleys yielding large, through-block lots that allowed Park Avenue to become a street of prominent, gracious mansions. The standard width streets became service streets in this situation (see Figure 8); and
- Narrow blocks led to street closings and superblocks that now house Abbott-Northwest/Allina and the Sears Complex/Midtown Exchange.

7. The existing structure of Midtown Minneapolis presents an opportunity to revitalize a once and future sustainable district.

The streetcar development pattern that was laid out in south Minneapolis contributed to the development of high intensity mixed use intersections at transit stops (Figure 11). Some of these nodes are still very much in evidence today where Lake Street crosses Hennepin, Lyndale, Nicollet, 4th, Chicago, and Bloomington. This existing development pattern supports many of the goals the City of Minneapolis desires today and as designated in *The Minneapolis Plan*. Mixed use nodal development at these intersections has established a rhythm of activity along Lake Street. Through judicious planning of these intersections a variety of identifiable "places" will emerge creating sustainable neighborhoods with housing, retail, jobs and recreation.

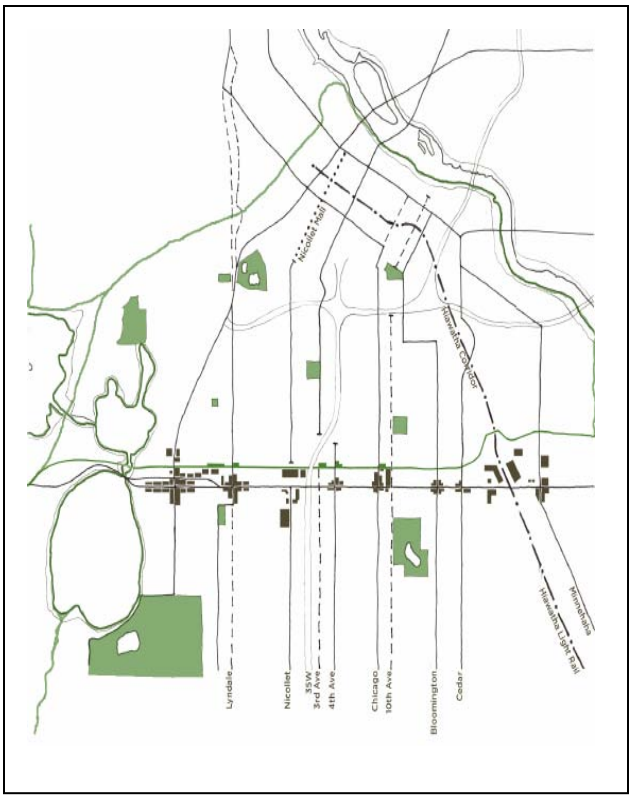


Figure 11. Historical development at streetcar nodes.

Key Findings from the Market Analysis

The scope of the market analysis included an assessment of demographic characteristics, information on existing housing and commercial properties, and an understanding of long-term market dynamics that will affect land use decision-making and development within the project area. The complete market analysis can be found in *Lake Street Market Research Findings* (Maxfield Research, Inc., June 2004).

1. **Midtown Minneapolis experienced significant shifts in population and households during the 1990s**.
   This trend is being driven, in large part, by the in-migration of new cultural and ethnic groups including Asians (Hmong, Lao, and other people from Southeast Asia); Spanish-speaking people (from Mexico and Central and South America); and Africans (from Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and other east African nations). This in-migration has increased demand for larger household sizes and has supported additional ethnic-focused retail stores and businesses in the project area. This trend is opposite that of most of the metropolitan area, which is experiencing a decline in average household size. This indicates that there is a growing need for housing to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and types.

2. **Young people in their early to mid-20s are returning to the City (urban dwellers).**
   People are choosing to settle initially in the central City, fueling demand for more housing (loft-style) and most recently, for-sale housing due to the low mortgage interest rates.

3. **Household type trends in the project area revealed strong growth in married couple families with children.**
   This need is also demonstrated in the shifts in household type that occurred from 1990 to 2000. Dissimilar to other submarkets in Minneapolis and the Metro area, where singles have grown dramatically, married couple families with children was the only demographic category to experience growth in Midtown Minneapolis.

4. **There is a need for a greater diversity of housing styles and products to meet demand from larger families as well as smaller units to meet the demand from young singles who prefer to live alone.**
   New condominiums at the *Chicago Lofts* (former Sears building) have meet with strong response from the market. Other recent

TABLE 1
POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS WITHIN THE LAKE STREET MARKET AREA (1990 – 2000)

	Census		Change 1990 - 2000	
Neighborhood Base	**1990**	**2000**	**Number**	**Percent**
Central	7,521	8,150	629	8.4
Corcoran	3,635	4,228	593	16.3
Lyndale	7,239	7,690	451	6.2
Phillips	17,247	19,805	2,558	14.8
Powderhorn	7,864	8,957	1,093	13.9
Whittier	13,051	15,247	2,196	16.8
Total	56,557	64,077	7,520	13.3
City of Minneapolis	368,383	382,618	14,235	3.9

Source: US Census and City of Minneapolis CPED

TABLE 2
HOUSEHOLD GROWTH TRENDS WITHIN THE LAKE STREET MARKET AREA (1990 – 2000)

	Census		Change 1990 - 2000	
Neighborhood Base	**1990**	**2000**	**Number**	**Percent**
Central	2,397	2,335	-62	-2.6
Corcoran	1,536	1,547	11	0.7
Lyndale	3,428	3,429	1	0.0
Phillips	6,543	6,333	-210	-3.2
Powderhorn	3,381	3,350	-31	-0.9
Whittier	6,763	7,031	268	4.0
Total	24,048	24,025	-23	-0.1
City of Minneapolis	160,682	162,352	1,670	1.0

Source: US Census and City of Minneapolis CPED

condominium developments in the general vicinity of the Lake Street area, *Franklin Lofts, Arts Quarter Lofts* and *3rd Avenue Place* have generally attracted younger buyers who are looking for contemporary, edgy designs that feature wide open spaces. These buyers are willing to sacrifice space for a moderate price point provided units offer flexible layouts.

5. **Home values have steadily risen from 1999 through 2003 for single-family dwellings. Multifamily home values have also risen but have fluctuated somewhat during the period, due to limited product.**
   Housing sells relatively quickly in the project area, within 27 days as of 2004. There is a demand for single-family homes in the area as it is one of the most affordable neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. In addition to housing affordability, many ethnic and minority groups are attracted to the neighborhood because of its cultural offerings. There is a concern that the higher costs of new construction may reduce the affordability of housing in the area.

   More for-sale multifamily housing is expected to appeal to young singles and couples that want a more convenience-oriented living arrangement in an urban area and close to the Downtown.

6. **At the eastern end of the project area, Lake Street supports a diverse mix of office and retail uses.**
   A survey of businesses in the project area revealed that:
   - 73 percent are retail;
   - 27 percent are business/personal services or industrial and non-profit uses;
   - 40 businesses rent space in larger indoor market-style buildings;
   - 60 small businesses in the project area have an ethnic focus.

   Excluding the indoor markets, the commercial vacancy rate in the project area was only 7 percent. Twenty-two businesses in the project area are non-local users or national chains. Most of these businesses are either fast food restaurants or auto-oriented franchise retailers.

   Lease rates vary widely in the project area. Net retail lease rates ranged from $8 to $17 per square foot; net office lease rates ranged from $12 to $13 per square foot.

7. **Since 2000, commercial real estate activity on Lake Street has increased with more buildings bought and sold.**
   This has increased the opportunities for new businesses to open on Lake Street. In addition to the creation of the indoor markets such as International Bazaar and Mercado Central, other retail activity includes a renovation at Chicago and Lake Street, a portion of which was leased to Footlocker.

   Existing Lake Street businesses primarily serve the local customer base; new employment, specifically at the hospital campus, is expected to support some additional spending, but primarily for convenience errands and lunches. Ethnic-based businesses are plentiful and growing on Lake Street; there has also been a growing interest from some national chains.

   The lack of customer parking for retail businesses was cited as a concern during the study process from the neighborhood and from local businesses.

8. **There has been increased interest from some soft goods retailers that are considering locating on Lake Street in new space.**
   Lake Street has traditionally been dominated by local independent retail businesses, national chain restaurants and auto service franchises. A number of ethnic businesses recently have opened on Lake Street in response to various immigrant populations that have settled in the area. Because Lake Street's traffic counts are substantial, national fast food and auto service franchise retailers have found Lake Street a strong location; less interest has been exhibited from apparel retailers. Recently, a *Foot Locker* store opened at the corner of Chicago and Lake Street in new retail space opposite *Robert's Shoes*. Depending on the spaces made available for these types of businesses in the future as the population in close proximity to Lake Street increases, it is likely that other national franchise operations will more seriously consider locations on Lake Street.

9. **There is market pressure to convert industrial buildings/property within the analysis area to alternate uses.**
   There are industrial buildings located on the Midtown Greenway that are currently marketing

units as condominiums, as the buildings are expected to be converted from an industrial use to residential. In addition, other industrial buildings and sites are being considered for conversion to residential use. There continues to be demand for industrial land in the central cities, primarily from smaller uses that want to be located near their clients and close to major transportation arteries. High cost of land and the necessity of reconfiguring existing space have deterred many industrial users from locating in the central city. Transportation access to sites in close proximity to I-35W will improve with the proposed ramps to Lake Street, but traffic congestion and difficulty in access to these sites north of Lake Street as well as rising land costs will continue to reduce their desirability to new industrial users.

10. **Improved transportation access from I-35W will enhance the desirability of parcels close to the freeway for use as retail and/or high density office development.**
    This is a long-term transition as the access construction is not scheduled to occur for several years. During the interim, market shifts are expected to increase the area's attractiveness for additional retail, office and housing. Increasing costs in the Downtown core are expected to cause larger companies with back office operations to consider locations in close proximity to the core but on the fringe, provided that transportation access and visibility to these sites are maintained.

Figure 12 summarizes estimates of projected growth and market absorption for various types of development in the analysis area.

SUMMARY OF MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS

Land Use	Existing 2004	2015 Capacity	Percentage Growth
Commercial	**14.8 SF**	**2 – 3 SF**	**14 – 20 %**
Industrial	**1.6 SF**	**.350 - .400 SF**	**22 - 25 %**
Residential	**7,700 DU (8.5 SF)**	**1,000 – 1,500 DU (1.1 – 1.65 SF)**	**13 - 19 %**
Combined Development:	**2.49 SF**	**3.45 – 5.05 SF**	**14 – 20 %**

SF: expressed in millions of square feet
DU: dwelling units
Source: Maxfield Research, Inc.

Figure 12. Summary of Market Research Findings

Land Use, Development, and Urban Design Objectives for Midtown Minneapolis

The area of Lake Street between Blaisdell and 11th avenues is an area of the City that is poised for change. Four planned public infrastructure projects will result in physical changes along Lake Street. As it responds to these changes, one of the many challenges facing the City is to assume a proactive posture on future development in the area. The City can be proactive in a number of ways - one of which is through adoption of this plan that generally defines:

- Desirable land use for the area;
- Land use intensity;
- Design and appearance of public and private realms; and
- Benefits that should directly accrue to society as a result of future development.

With an adopted land use plan in place, the City will be in a better position to initiate development projects and respond to development proposals presented by the private sector. As presented below, the land use, development, and urban design objectives prepared for the study area speak to the need for future development in the study area to:

- Be justifiable based on realities of the market;
- Meet the needs of both local residents and the larger region;
- Diversify existing land uses by increasing the mix of uses on a site by site basis;
- Incorporate residential uses within the mix of commercial uses;
- Rely on pedestrian-oriented urban design principles to ensure that the pedestrian environment is safe and attractive;
- Support and reinforce the continuity of the street grid; and
- Address the Midtown Greenway and reinforce it as a unifying element.

Community-Identified Objectives

Through community input, primary objectives of the plan were defined and used to inform this plan. Primary objectives of the community are:

- Commercial Development;
- Employment/Job Site Development;
- Housing Development;
- Automobile Transportation;
- Non-Automobile Transportation;
- Public Realm and Recreation; and
- Private Realm Design and Appearance.

Commercial Development

- Recognize and reinforce Lake Street's position as the primary commercial corridor in Midtown Minneapolis;
- Recognize and celebrate racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity as assets that can contribute to a positive commercial environment;
- Support the concept of higher intensity mixed use development at major intersections (e.g., Nicollet, I-35W, and Chicago Avenue intersections with Lake Street) and moderate- to lower-level intensity development between the major intersections;
- Provide opportunities for neighborhood and regional business development; and
- Plan to keep and grow locally-owned, small entrepreneurial businesses.

Employment/Job site Development

- Support development of commercial businesses that will benefit from Midtown's unique location in Minneapolis, the potential future improved access to the regional transportation system, and the local skilled and unskilled labor force;
- Provide living wage employment for local residents and others within the community and throughout the region; and
- Provide opportunities to train local residents to fill positions with all employers in Midtown, including Wells Fargo, Allina, and Abbott-Northwestern.

Housing Development

- Provide a variety of housing types at a range of price points (condo, rental, above street level commercial, live/work, market rate, affordable, and subsidized);
- Provide improved and affordable housing for Midtown's current residents;
- Encourage housing as one of the potential land uses along the Greenway;
- Provide housing along Lake Street; and
- Stabilize and enhance the residential environment along 31st Street.

Automobile Transportation

- Open the intersection at Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street to reconnect the street grid;
- Pursue strategic actions to reduce automobile travel and traffic congestion in Midtown;
- Ensure the continuity of circulation routes to assist in the relief of traffic congestion; and
- Ensure application of Midtown-specific parking standards and regulations that are supportive of a transit-oriented district.

Non-Automobile Transportation

- Provide adequate transit services to accommodate existing demand and encourage/induce increased, future demand in Midtown;
- Provide user-friendly, accessible and attractive transit facilities to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of transit use in Midtown;
- Provide a range of transit modes (streetcar, trolley, LRT, jitney, etc.) options;
- Provide sidewalks that can accommodate high volumes of people and allow safe and convenient pedestrian circulation; and
- Provide facilities and services to encourage bicycle transportation throughout Midtown.

Public Realm and Recreation

- Develop gathering places for socializing, entertainment, and cultural events;
- Establish public parks, plazas, bike paths, and links between green spaces;
- Re-establish connections between Downtown and Midtown; and
- Ensure application of design features to promote safety and security of the public and private realms.

Private Realm Design and Appearance

- Building frontages should be consistent address the street with a build-to line defined by the public right-of-way (the sidewalk);
- Building heights should reinforce a pattern of highest intensity development at major intersection nodes and comparatively lower intensity development between the nodes;
- Buildings should include regularly spaced windows and doors on all exposed sides to establish rhythmic articulation, provide visual interest, and eliminate blank walls; and
- Buildings should be constructed with high quality, durable materials that reflect permanence.

Land Use and Development Plans

The land use map prepared for the study area is presented in Figure 14. The plan was developed through an iterative process that included:

- Analysis of community-identified development objectives, prepared based on input from the design workshop held in May 2004;
- Review of *The Minneapolis Plan* elements addressing commercial corridors, growth centers, and Lake Street in particular;
- Interaction with the Steering Committee and the organizations and associations represented by Steering Committee members;
- Reconnaissance and scoping activities conducted within the study area to identify:
    - building use;
    - building condition;
    - movement and circulation patterns for autos, transit, bikes, and pedestrians;
    - utilization of parking facilities; and
    - opportunity sites where existing uses might be eliminated because of poor building condition, inappropriate use, acquisition associated with future transportation improvements, or opportunity to develop a higher and better use that is consistent with objectives for the study area; and
- Consultations with CPED staff.

Urban Development Districts

A key step in the plan development process was dividing the study area into "development districts." This activity was necessary because the east/west length of the study area, between Blaisdell and 11th avenues is a one mile expanse with a variety of commercial land uses and distinct environments. In order to better understand how the study area operates, was necessary to divide the corridor into manageable segments for the purposes of analysis and design.

The study area was initially divided into seven development districts to facilitate community participation activities at the workshop. Input provided by residents at the workshop indicated that the seven districts could be consolidated into five districts, because land use preferences were found to overlap. Further analysis and input provided by the Steering Committee ultimately led to the identification of three Urban Development Districts (Figures 13).

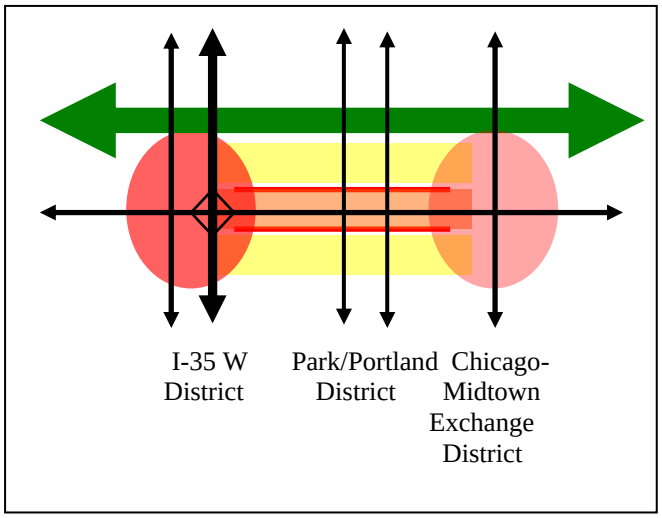


Figure 13. Schematic land use and development intensity plan High intensity commercial and mixed uses in the I-35W and Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development Districts and low intensity mixed use and residential development between these two districts, in the Park/Portland Urban Development District.

I-35W Urban Development District

It was recognized by the Steering Committee that the I-35W area from Blaisdell to Third Avenue, with its promise of improved accessibility, would result in additional traffic exiting the freeway and, traveling east and west along Lake Street. In order to meet an identified objective of reducing travel demand within the study area, it would be important to locate major trip generators within close proximity to the interchange. This would serve to eliminate the need for traffic to travel significant distances east and west of the new I-35W ramps.

Thus, the I-35W area was identified as an urban development district, where large-scale redevelopment that could take place and would benefit from improved accessibility.

Reconstruction activities slated to occur within this district include widening and reconstructing Lake Street and constructing the I-35W access ramps.

Both of these projects will include property acquisitions on the north side of Lake Street, which provides a rationale for acquiring additional property in the northeast quadrant of the interchange to assemble several small parcels into a large redevelopment parcel. This district would further include Nicollet Avenue, with a re-opened intersection with Lake Street, should be redeveloped as a major, high intensity node.

Another aspect considered by the Steering Committee was the type of high intensity land uses that should be allowed in this district. The options included:

- Light, clean industrial;
- Commercial (office, retail, or both);
- Mixed use commercial/residential; or
- A combination of the above.

While the market research indicated that the market would support any of these optional land uses, it was determined that office commercial and mixed use (commercial/ retail and commercial/residential) development were preferable in the I-35W Urban Development District. Contributing to the decision were the following factors:

Industrial Potential

- Although a parcel of sufficient size for an industrial redevelopment site could be assembled in the northeast quadrant of the I-35W/Lake Street District, the parcel just meets the minimum requirements (2.5 acres) to accommodate a 60,000 square foot industrial building, loading docks, circulation paths for trucks, and parking for 60 to 70 employees;
- Industrial uses provide living wag" jobs, but at low employment rates - approximately one employee per 1,000 square feet;
- Industrial development in Midtown would need to compete with industrial development in suburban and ex-urban areas where land is comparatively less expensive and environmental cleanup is not necessary;
- The City has made a commitment to develop industrial uses along the Hiawatha corridor. Access to these industrial jobs can be accomplished via the transit and transportation improvements proposed and planned for the Midtown area and the Midtown Greenway;
- Successful industrial uses typically are agglomerated to create districts. With the lack of available land in the study area, the number of industrial uses that could be developed is limited.

Office and Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Potential

- Successful office uses also agglomerate to create districts where symbiotic, economic relationships can develop among the offices and the smaller businesses that spin off from and support them. With Allina, Abbott-Northwestern, and Wells Fargo in the area, there is potential to successfully develop and agglomerate additional office uses in the area;
- While not paying a living wage for every job, office uses employ many people - approximately one employee for every 400 square feet. This is equivalent to five office workers for every two industrial workers;
- Existing employers occupying offices in the area have already made commitments to train local residents to fill jobs they currently have and will offer;
- Office uses, with their vertical profiles, can take advantage of high Floor:Area Ratios (FAR) to provide high density development on limited space. Because of these vertical profiles, office buildings would present a landmark on the skyline that would identify Midtown Minneapolis and would join Midtown Exchange as visible markers for the area;
- The blocks between I-35W and the Colin Powell Center and the Midtown Greenway and Lake Street are isolated from other residential areas, have poor direct access to the Greenway, and are in close proximity to I-35W.

Park/Portland Urban Development District

Using the principle of high intensity development at major intersection nodes and comparatively lower intensity development between the nodes, the Steering Committee immediately recognized that land uses between the I-35W and Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development Districts would need to be less intense than either of the study area's nodal termini. Even with this understanding, the

question remained as to how intense and what types of development should be encouraged.

Planning participants recognized that opportunities to redevelop with new construction in the Park/Portland Urban Development District should largely take place on the north side of Lake Street. This conclusion was based on the fact that property acquisitions would take place on the north side of the street between 3rd and 4th Avenues to construct tapers for the dedicated turn lanes that would serve the I-35W interchange ramps. It was also acknowledged that the condition of buildings on the south side of Lake Street, both commercial buildings and residences, was good and should be maintained.

In accordance with earlier defined objectives and taking into account all of these factors the following objectives for development were identified for this district:

- Existing commercial buildings on the south side of the Lake Street could be rehabilitated to provide affordable space for entrepreneurial, local businesses; and
- Existing housing on the south side of the street could be reinforced with newly constructed housing on the north side street to:
    - encourage a mix of land uses along commercial corridors;
    - demonstrate a commitment to residential land use as a viable option for Lake Street; and
    - provide a low-intensity land use option for the area of the corridor between two high-intensity nodes.

Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development District

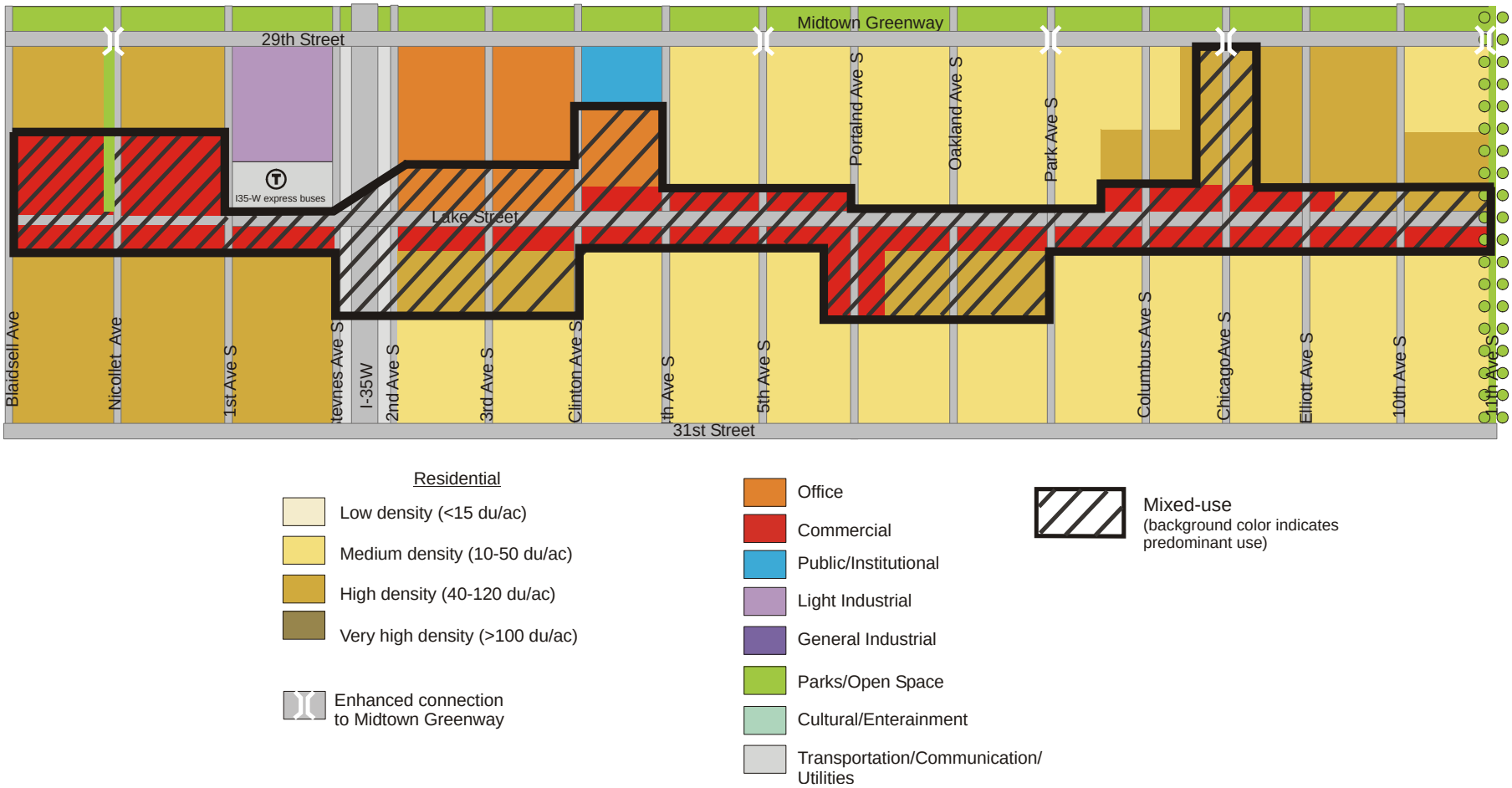
The Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development District was identified at the eastern terminus of the study area. It was logical to extend this area of high intensity land use and massing of buildings to 10th Avenue where the character of existing buildings is, by comparison, lower than it is closer to the intersection. The western end of the Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development District was identified as Columbus Avenue, where intensity and massing begin to decrease.

The Steering Committee recognized that the Chicago/Lake intersection historically existed and continues as a commercial node with office, retail, and mixed use (commercial/residential) uses. These are the uses that are identified in *The Minneapolis Plan* for transit-oriented nodes along commercial corridors and should be maintained as such. The Steering Committee further acknowledged that redevelopment of the former Sears site (Midtown Exchange) will add over one million square feet of commercial and residential uses, thus furthering the Chicago/Lake intersection position as a major node in Midtown Minneapolis.

It was decided that redevelopment within the Chicago-Midtown Exchange Urban Development District should continue the pattern that already exists - high intensity commercial use and mixed use commercial/ residential.

Figure 14.

Midtown Minneapolis
Future Land Use Plan
October, 2005



Urban Design Plan

In addition to the land use and development intensity plans, urban design plans were developed for the study area to address design and appearance of both the public and private realms. The public realm includes streets, sidewalks, bicycle paths and the Midtown Greenway, and parks. The private realm includes buildings and the way they sit on private property and how they address, or front, the street.

Public Realm

East/West Streets
The curb-to-curb width of Lake Street as designed to be 129 feet between Nicollet and 3rd avenues and 80 feet from 3rd to 11th avenues as part of the scheduled I-35W Access and Lake Street Reconstruction projects. The street section between Blaisdell and 3rd avenues includes dedicated turn lanes for the new I-35W ramps; pedestrian circulation across Lake Street in this segment may be compromised by this width. The design, however, does include medians in Lake Street, which may offer pedestrians refuge as they attempt to cross the street.

This plan proposes that 29th Street, which runs east/ west on the south side of the Midtown Greenway, should to the extent possible be a continuous street. Its continuity achieves at least two City priorities - reconnecting the street grid and providing an alternative route to reduce automobile traffic on Lake Street and increasing the efficiency of automobile travel by eliminating the need for traffic to travel several blocks out of its way along one-way street pair (26th and 28th streets).

While it is proposed that 29th Street should be opened continuously across the study area, except where blocked by I-35W, it is also recognized that it will sit on the southern rim of the Midtown Greenway. A people and bikes first design is recommended for 29th Street within Midtown Minneapolis to ensure that driving behavior will be controlled and tolerable to residents and employees along the Greenway. This type of design has been implemented in European cities where the driving envelope is at the minimally acceptable width and sidewalk widths are generous and are separated from the driving lanes by bollards and textured pavers.

North/South Street
The urban design plan calls for re-opening Nicollet Avenue as a north/south cross street forming an intersection with Lake Street. This intersection should be developed as the premier intersection on the west side of I-35W with the maximum commercial intensity allowed.

This plan proposes that uses south of Lake Street along Nicollet Avenue should include mixed use commercial/residential. An additional option presented by plan participants for Nicollet Avenue south of Lake Street is a covered athletic field, stadium, or arena. Many new residents of the area are interested in soccer, therefore, interest was expressed in a soccer stadium. The stadium itself could be lined with mixed use buildings.

Re-opening Nicollet Avenue will serve several City priorities including:

- Reconnecting the grid street system:
- Providing alternative routes for traffic; and
- Improving linkages between the Midtown Greenway and Lake Street.

Sidewalks
This urban design plan is supportive of the development of sidewalks that will accommodate pedestrian circulation and gathering. Lake Street reconstruction plans include sidewalks of minimum width of 12 feet throughout the corridor, except on the south side of Lake Street in the segment between Columbus and 11th avenues in the Powderhorn neighborhood. In this area, seven foot sidewalks have been designed as part of the Lake Street Reconstruction project in order to maintain on-street parking while providing eastbound and westbound left turn lanes at the Chicago Avenue/Lake Street intersection.

Future construction of new commercial and mixed use buildings along this segment of Lake Street will need to adjust the build-to line three feet to seven feet south of the sidewalk that will be constructed with the Lake Street Reconstruction project. This will ensure that this segment of Lake Street will have adequate sidewalk widths (10 to 14 feet) in the future.

Bicycle Paths and the Midtown Greenway
The Midtown Greenway, which extends from the City's western border to Hiawatha Avenue, is an east/west travel way for non-motorized vehicles and

pedestrians. It has been designed to accommodate both recreational users and commuters. The Greenway is located in a trench that was once an active railroad corridor and is now owned by Hennepin County. Light Rail Transit (LRT) services have been proposed in this trench in the future. Transit services of a different technology (perhaps streetcar or trolley operating on rails constructed on turf) may operate within the Greenway while waiting for LRT.

In addition to its transportation function, the Greenway has been defined as an urban park-like amenity in Midtown Minneapolis - a linear facility where development that generates human activity and use is welcome. A major focus of this planning and design effort was identifying ways to better integrate the Midtown Greenway with the rest of the study area. These efforts included identifying approaches to:

- Increase adjacent park frontage along the Greenway;
- Include recently constructed Greenway access facilities into the urban design fabric of the study area;
- Provide linkages between the Greenway and Lake Street; and
- Identify appropriate development for the Midtown segment of the Greenway.

Parks

Objectives for development call for plazas and gathering places in Midtown Minneapolis. In addition to identifying potential park land along the Greenway, the urban design plan calls for development of a 100 foot-wide, park-like boulevard along the west side of Nicollet Avenue between the Greenway and Lake Street. At a width of 440 feet, the block between Blaisdell and Nicollet avenues accommodates this park treatment. This amenity would descend via a stairway approximately 26 feet to a plaza that will be at the same elevation as the south side of the Greenway; it is at this level where future transit options would be available. A feasible design option was prepared as part of this study that includes 29th Street constructed on piers above the plaza, between 1st and Nicollet Avenues.

Private Realm

Mixed Use Street Frontages

Figure 15 indicates ground-level street frontages that should contain retail uses. All sites shown in shading on the plan should be multi-story structures. Upper floors may be either office or residential uses as-of-right.

Building Intensity

The future land use plan (Figure 14) illustrates levels of intensity of development along the corridor. Residential units are represented in terms of density (units per acre). The intent of this method is to:

- Support and reinforce the principle of high-intensity development at major nodes with lower intensity between the nodes;
- Support the character of Lake Street as a commercial corridor as defined in *The Minneapolis Plan;*
- Allow sunlight to enter the Greenway; and
- Ensure the compatibility of adjacent uses, particularly residential single family and duplex buildings south of Lake Street in the Powderhorn neighborhood and commercial and mixed use buildings that will front on Lake Street between Columbus and 10th avenues.

Community members expressed several suggestions for defining building height, however, this plan does not advocate for setting limits based on height. The suggestions put forth by the community are included here only to represent general thinking regarding future development. The suggested height limits were:

- Eight-story maximum and two-story minimum in the I-35W Urban Development District;
- Four-story maximum and two-story minimum in the Park/Portland District; and
- Eight-story maximum and five-story minimum on the north side of Lake Street in the Chicago-Midtown Exchange District and four-story maximum and two-story minimum on the south side of Lake Street in this district.

Figure 15. MIDTOWN MINNEAPOLIS DEVELOPMENT MIXED USE
Street Frontages To Retain Retail use

Potential Development Scenarios

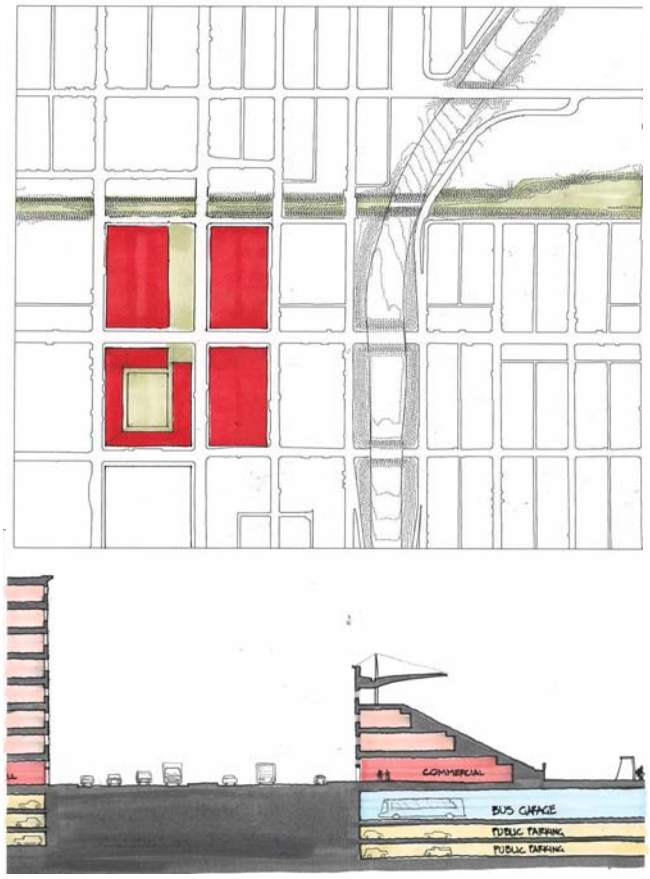
The following development scenarios are included for illustrative purposes only; these are not to be interpreted as to what 'will' be built. There should be no interpretation of explicit or implicit intent on the part of any public body to commit to construction of any publicly financed infrastructure or amenity as shown in these development scenarios. Any references or illustrations to activity north of the Midtown Greenway may have been included as one of many suggestions for that area, but being outside the boundary of this plan area, are to remain unrecognized and not considered recommendations of this plan.

I-35W Development District (High Intensity)
See Figure 16

- Relocated Kmart/Sears store at the intersection of Nicollet Avenue/Lake Street and opening of intersection/bridge reconstruction;
- High intensity, commercial office development in the northeast quadrant of I-35W/Lake Street;
- High intensity, mixed use (retail and office) at the intersection of Nicollet Avenue/Lake Street;
- Mixed use (commercial/residential) on the north side of Lake Street on the northwest corner of Blaisdell Avenue/Lake Street;
- Residential development on the south side of the Greenway between Blaisdell and Nicollet Avenues;
- Residential development south of Lake Street between Blaisdell and 1st Avenues, with mixed use (commercial/residential) fronting on Nicollet Avenue and residential as a single use fronting on Blaisdell Avenue, 31st Street, and 1st Avenue;
- Existing NICO industrial use in tact with a transit staging facility constructed along its front on Lake Street;
- Two bus stops for I-35W express buses; one that provides convenient access to Lake Street for transfers to regular route buses and the other that will allow convenient access to potential future transit facilities and services that may be located in the Midtown Greenway;
- A wide, park-like boulevard on the west side of Nicollet Avenue that is linked to the Midtown Greenway and extends to Lake Street;
- Improved access to the Midtown Greenway off Nicollet Avenue;
- Ground floor, commercial liner uses with internal parking - one located on the southwest corner of the Stevens Avenue/ Lake Street intersection and the other on the southwest corner of the 3rd Avenue/Lake Street intersection;
- 29th Street as a continuous street except at I-35W.

I-35W District (High Intensity with Soccer Stadium Option) See Figure 17

An optional Soccer Stadium, which could be constructed on the southwest corner of the Nicollet Avenue/Lake Street intersection, where Nicollet Field was located up until 1950. The stadium is shown to be surrounded on the north and east sides with mixed use (commercial/residential) development.



Figures 16 and 17. Plan and section of optional soccer stadium on southwest corner of Nicollet/Lake. Section shows eight-story mixed use retail/office building on north side of Lake Street. The stadium could include retail and office, mixed use development on Lake Street. Three levels of underground parking are shown beneath the stadium.

Park/Portland District (Low Intensity)
See Figure 20

- Mixed use (commercial/residential) development on the north and south sides of Lake Street between 4th Avenue and Portland Avenue;
- Residential development along Lake Street on the north side of the street between Portland and Park avenues;
- Residential that fronts along 29th street on the south side of the Greenway between 5th and Portland Avenues;
- Ground floor lined with commercial with parking internal to the site, on the southeast corner of the Portland avenue/Lake Street intersection;
- Rehabilitated commercial buildings along the south side of Lake Street with affordable leases for local entrepreneurs;
- 29th Street as a continuous street along the south side of the Midtown Greenway; and
- Improved access to the Midtown Greenway at 5th and Park Avenues.

Chicago-Midtown Exchange District (High Intensity) See Figure 21

- Mixed use commercial (retail/office) along the south side of Lake Street between Columbus and 11th Avenues;
- Mixed use commercial (retail/office) on the east side of Chicago Avenue between 28th Street and the Midtown Greenway;
- Mixed use (commercial/residential) along the west side of Chicago between 28th Street and Lake Street;
- Ground floor lined with commercial with parking internal to the site on the northeast corner of the Columbus avenue/Lake Street intersection;
- Infill commercial uses on the Midtown Exchange site that front on Chicago Avenue and Lake Street;
- 29th Street as a continuous street with a termination on the west side of Chicago Avenue;
- Improved access to the Midtown Greenway at Columbus, Chicago, and 11th Avenues; and
- An enhanced pedestrian and bicycle environment along 11th Avenue between Andersen School the Midtown Greenway, and Powderhorn Park.

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Figure 18. I-35W Access District [Office and Mixed Use (Office/Retail and Commercial/Residential with Optional Soccer Stadium]

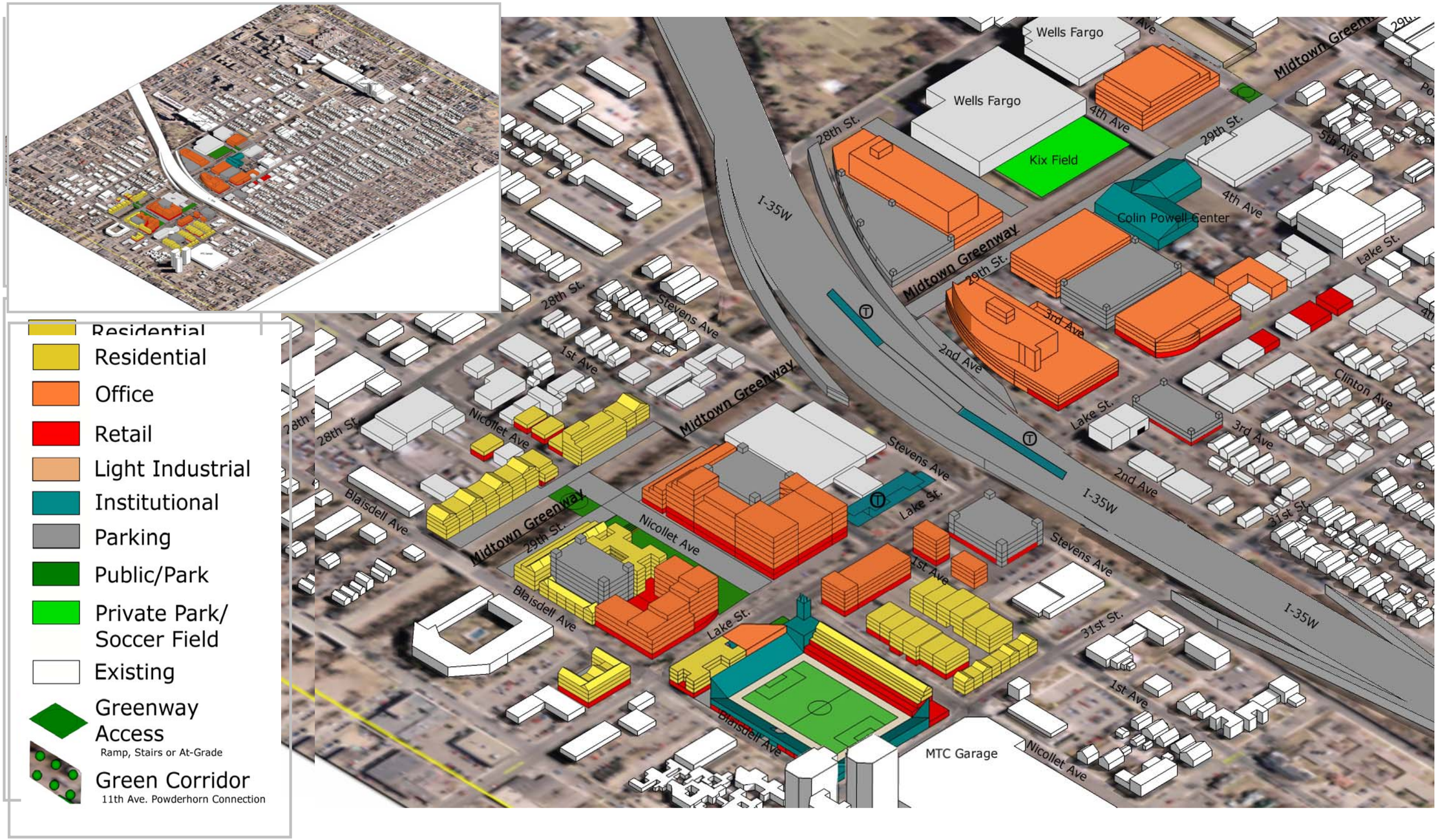


Figure 19.

Park/Portland District

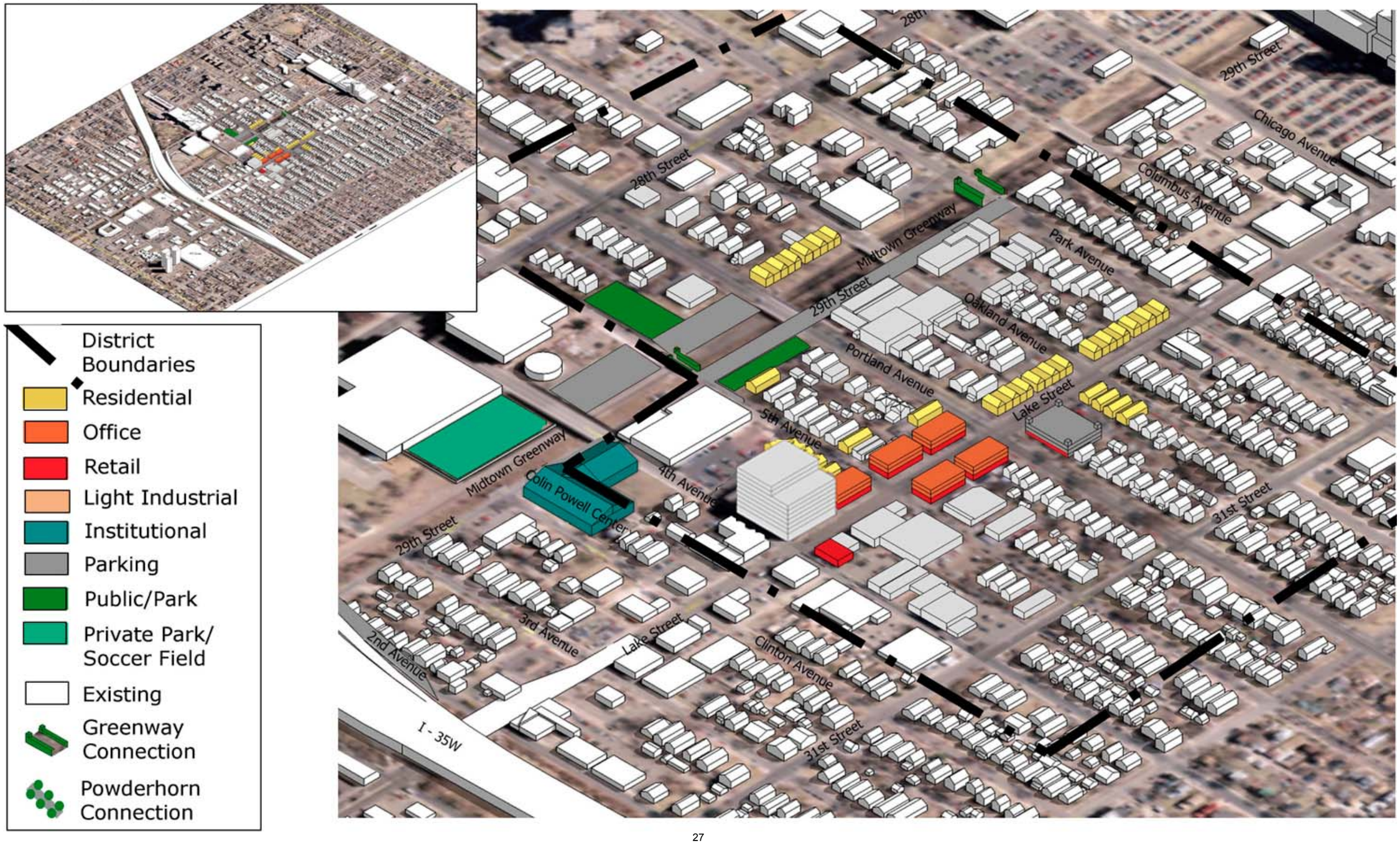


Figure 20.

Chicago—Midtown Exchange District

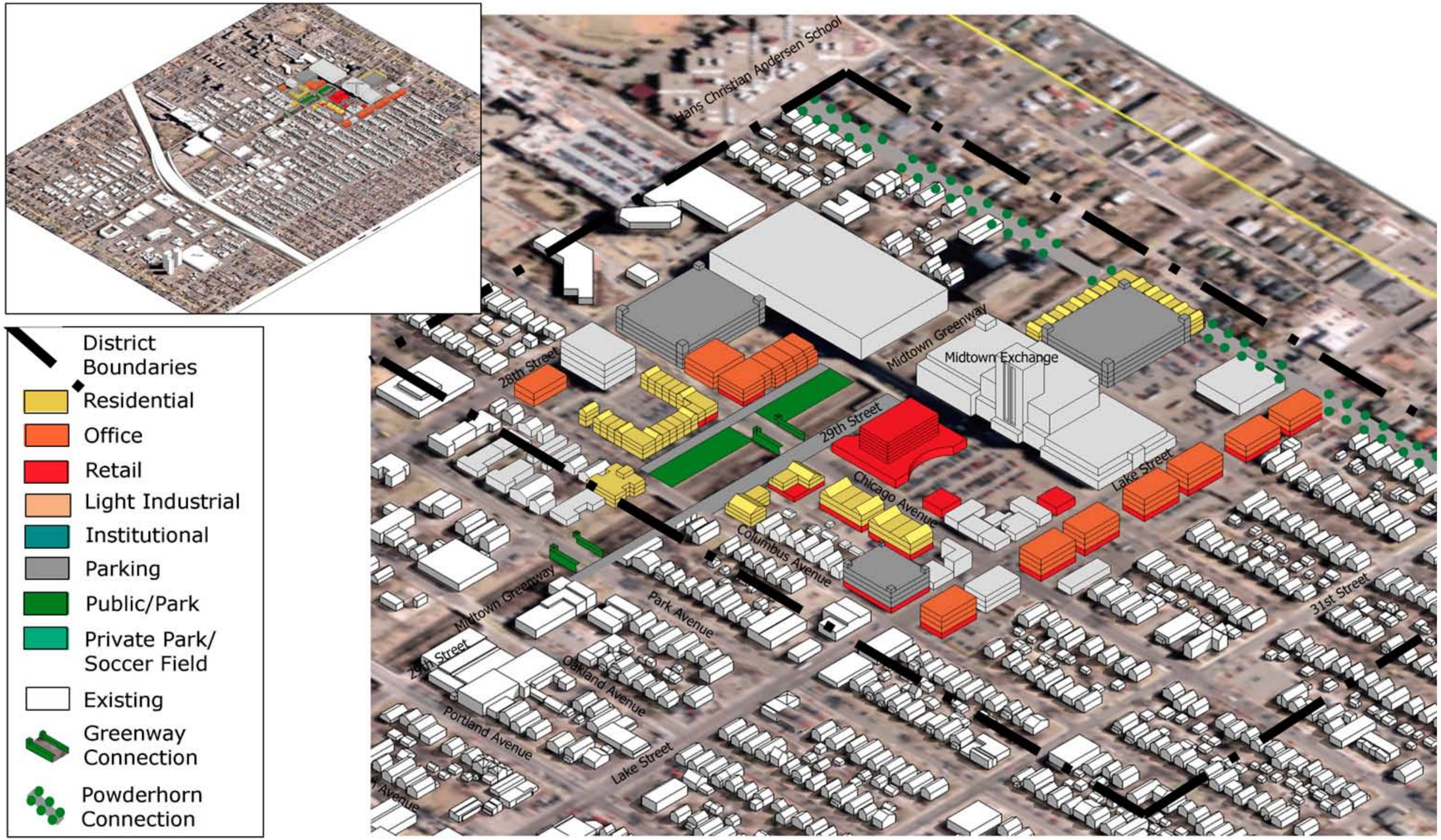
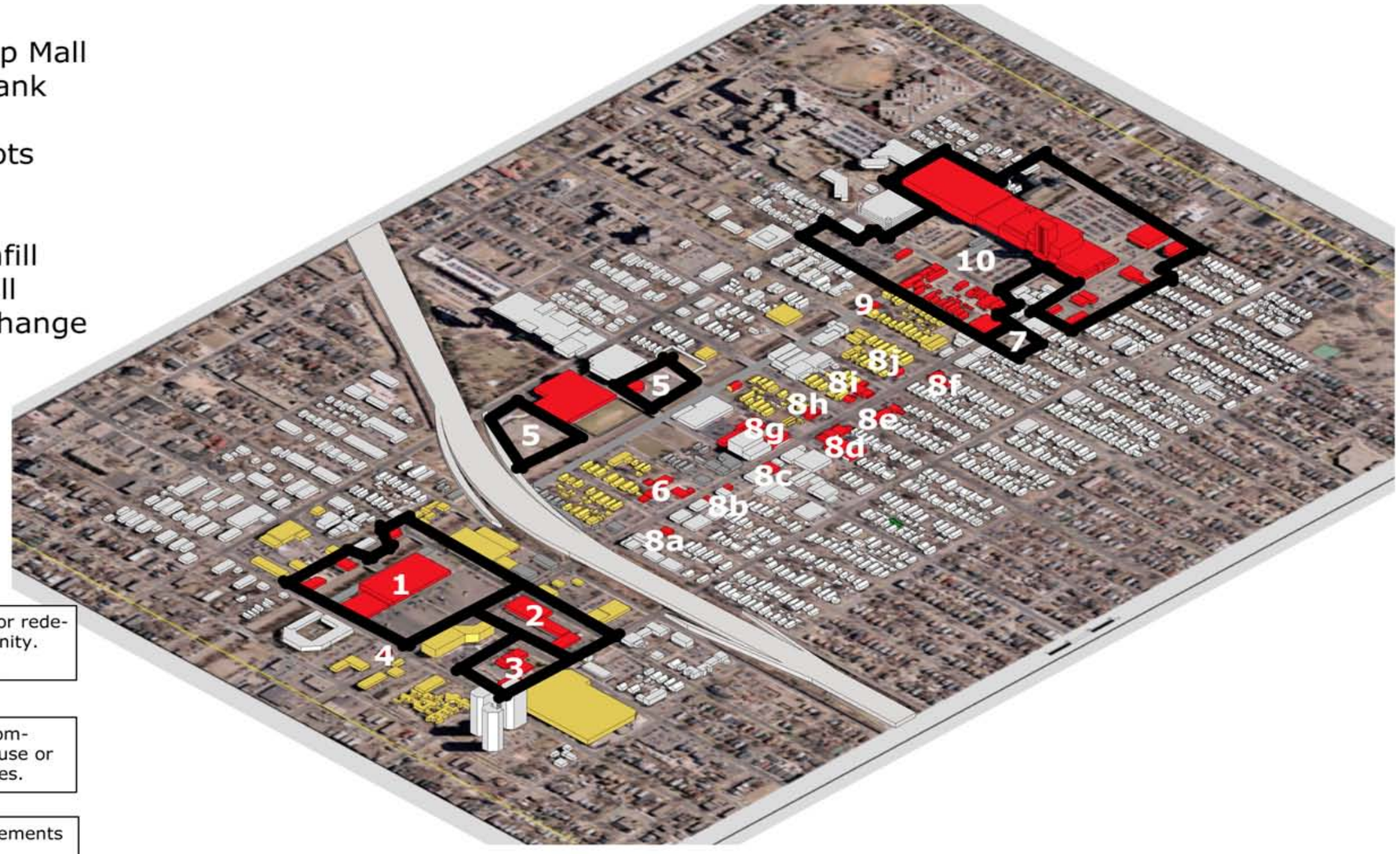


Figure 21. Lake Street Land Use and Development Plan

Locations where future development/redevelopment might occur and existing buildings that should be maintained and/or rehabilitated. The opportunity sites were identified based on the condition and use of existing buildings, potential future acquisition for transportation improvement projects, and potential to redevelop existing land use with a higher and better use that fits the characteristics of the defined development objectives.

Figure 22. Opportunities Map (Parcels & Buildings)

1.Kmart
2.OfficeMax Strip Mall
3.Wells Fargo Bank
4.White Castle
5.Wells Fargo Lots
6.3rd-4th
7.Workforce Lot
8.Lake Street Infill
9.Greenway Infill
10.Midtown Exchange



	Strong possibility for redevelopment opportunity. Highest priority.
	Improvements recommended. Possible use or type incompatibilities.
	Few, if any improvements necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION

Transit-Oriented, Mixed-Use Development in Midtown Minneapolis

Definition of Transit-Oriented, Mixed Use Development

The identified development objectives for Midtown Minneapolis between Blaisdell and 11th Avenues define transit-oriented, mixed use, urbanized districts. Generally, transit-oriented, mixed use is defined to include permitted activities mixed within the same building (vertical) or within separate buildings on the same site or on nearby sites (horizontal). For example, residential uses can be placed over ground-floor retail, office and/or restaurant uses.

Not all projects in this area must be mixed to achieve the overall objectives of this plan. For example, a new residential only project sensitively designed and located adjacent to an older existing commercial building may help to stimulate renovation and reuse. The commercial building could be adaptively reused as a restaurant with outdoor seating that services the new residents as well as existing nearby residents.

Mixed use development also allows opportunities for incorporating uses that may be difficult to accommodate in existing neighborhoods (particularly low density neighborhoods). The need to provide additional housing and alternative use opportunities (such as live/work) can be difficult to achieve in practice; new mixed use development in less intense commercial areas offers an approach to accommodate these uses while protecting the existing residential neighborhoods.

To create this character in Midtown, the overall environment will need to change at the edges of the street adjacent to private properties. These edges, the pedestrian realm, need to become comfortably walkable, lively places, with streetscape amenities, such as street trees, wide sidewalks, a limited number of curb cuts, bus/transit shelters, street furniture, identified pedestrian crossings and paths, public gathering spaces and visual interest at the ground floor of the buildings.

Benefits and Opportunities of Transit-Oriented, Mixed Use Development

The study area's transit orientation and a mix of uses are key components to a land use development strategy that improves housing options and affordability, reduces traffic congestion, makes more efficient use of infrastructure, and creates a more livable community. A transit-oriented, mixed use environment within Midtown Minneapolis presents opportunities for:

- Infill development to occur within an older part of the City;
- Establishing orderly development patterns within a part of the City where the existing mix of uses is not always orderly;
- Developing at higher densities that might not otherwise be achieved where single uses are developed;
- Developing complementary uses that can share buildings and parking facilities where parking demand periods occur at different times of the day;
- Introducing "round-the-clock" human activity to an area and increasing safety and security, both in buildings and on the street;
- Providing people the choice of carrying out everyday tasks close to home or work;
- Providing opportunities to ride the bus, walk or bike rather than drive; and
- Developing amenities, such as plazas and open spaces integrated with mixed-use buildings to serve several users during the work period (9:00 am to 5:00 pm) and after work.

Specifically, within Midtown, development should include:

- Restoration and maintenance of the grid street including:
    - Nicollet Avenue to be reconstructed as a through street within Midtown;
    - 29th Street's continuity as an east/west street on the south side of the Greenway between Blaisdell and I-35W and I-35W and Columbus; and

- Maintenance of the north/south street continuity across the Greenway on existing bridges wherever possible;

- Office, retail, and residential land uses that would be conveniently located, predominantly along Lake Street, the primary commercial corridor, and along the Midtown Greenway;
- The development of high intensity uses at the nodes, both along Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway, should contribute to the study area's continued development as a "growth center." Existing health care facilities along Chicago Avenue form the backbone of the medical corridor, and new businesses in Midtown could spin-off from these facilities;
- A rhythm of development intensity where the highest intensity development occurs at major intersection nodes (Nicollet Avenue/Lake Street and Chicago Avenue/Lake Street) and lower intensity development occurs between the nodes;
- High traffic generators being located in close proximity to the I-35W Interchange with Lake Street to help reduce the volume of automobile traffic traveling long distances on Lake Street;
- Neighborhood, community, and regional commercial businesses that can thrive by providing goods and services that meet the needs of neighborhood, community, and regional customers;
- Job opportunities for local residents where on-the-job training is provided by large employers already in the area;
- Ease in access to and use of alternative transportation modes, facilitated through provision of ample sidewalks, transit facilities/services, and bike facilities/ services;
- Sidewalks that are sufficiently wide to permit convenient pedestrian circulation and encourage gathering and commercial activity (such as sidewalk cafes) [1];
- Transit facilities (stops and informational kiosks) that are integrated into the design of gathering locations to make use of transit services convenient and accessible;
- Bicycle paths to/from the Greenway, bicycle parking (racks) located near entrances to buildings, and bike storage lockers near major transit stops;
- On-street parking to serve local businesses, ensure there is a buffer between drive lanes and sidewalks, and help define the driving envelope; and
- Shared parking where adjacent uses experience peak parking demand at different times of the day.

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[1] *Sidewalks have been designed to a minimum of 12 feet as part of the Lake Street Reconstruction and I-35 Access projects, except in one segment on the south side of Lake Street between Columbus and 11th Avenues.*

Midtown Minneapolis Development Guidelines

Guidelines are not regulations or development standards. Guidelines provide options and techniques that to assist developers in meeting meet code requirements with a project that meets the desired outcomes of this plan.

Commercial Development

The Lake Street intersections with Nicollet Avenue and Chicago Avenue form two, high-intensity nodes where the most intense commercial and mixed use (office/retail) development should occur. The segment of Lake Street between these two nodes is where comparatively lower intensity development should occur. Development within this low-intensity segment of Lake Street should include commercial, but at a lower intensity or scale than at the nodes.

Commercial development is desired for three types of businesses: regional, community, and neighborhood. The plan proposes that:

- Regional and community level commercial businesses should be developed at the nodes; and
- Community and neighborhood level commercial businesses should be developed between the nodes of Nicollet/Lake and Chicago/Lake.

The south side of Lake Street between the two nodes is recommended for community- and neighborhood-level commercial development. The commercial buildings on the south side of the street will not be acquired by the Lake Street Reconstruction project. These buildings are generally in good condition and can be occupied at low lease rates, compared to leases in newly constructed buildings. New immigrant entrepreneurs have already begun to establish businesses in these buildings with an overall positive impact in Midtown. This trend should be encouraged to continue.

The City may be able to support this level of commercial development with small business development programs that are administered through the Economic Development Division of CPED.

The concept of flexible commercial bays on the ground floor with the construction of new buildings is recommended to provide a range of commercial spaces for businesses of varying sizes. Such commercial bays facilitate in place growth and expansion without the need to relocate. For instance, a new large format retailer should be encouraged to build extra-small, small, medium, and large modular bays lining the building where fronting primary streets or public spaces. Such bays can flexibly be used as retail rental spaces or additional square footage for the main retailer.
Buildings should be designed for reuse beyond first tenant or use type. For instance, retail bays should easily retrofit into offices.

Employment/Job Site Development

Living wage employment for local residents is a key objective for future development. The plan calls for office development in the I-35W Urban Development District, where office uses would agglomerate and benefit from proximity to businesses in the existing medical corridor and Wells Fargo campus.

Existing businesses have already committed to training residents to fill new jobs. This can be augmented by the City through consideration of incentives that might be given to businesses that employ local residents. For example, with public participation in future development within the district, local residents (many of whom are people of color and women) can be tapped to participate in construction-related jobs through the City's Emerging Small Business and Equal Employment Opportunity programs.

Housing Development

Housing should be mixed in terms of affordability levels and types, including market rate, affordable, subsidized, ownership and rental.

New housing should be located in areas that will:

- Support and reinforce existing housing and further stabilize the residential character of the Park/Portland District and along 31st Street;
- Support a mix of high intensity uses in the 1-35W and Chicago-Midtown Exchange District; and
- Provide housing along the Midtown Greenway with exposures enhanced to this urban park-like amenity.

Specific areas for new housing development include:

- I-35W District
  - Nicollet Avenue between the north side of the Midtown Greenway and 31st Street; and
  - 31st Street between Blaisdell and 1st avenues.
- Park/Portland District - Lake Street between Portland and Park
- Chicago-Midtown Exchange District - Chicago Avenue between the Greenway and Lake Street.

While ground-floor retail, restaurant and other pedestrian-friendly neighborhood service uses are preferable along the pedestrian realm, ground level residential is recommended along two blocks of Lake Street between Park and Portland Avenues. Residential use can be permitted on the ground floor of buildings with the following guidelines:

- Residential on the ground floor fronting the pedestrian realm should be located above the sidewalk level or provide some other similar solution to provide privacy;
- Residential on the ground floor facing the pedestrian realm should be designed with articulated facades, including features such as awnings, elevated steps and entrances, recessed windows, doors and patios, windows treated for privacy and pedestrian interest, and drought-tolerant planting; and
- The public areas of the residential units, such as lobbies, exercise rooms, living rooms, or dining areas should face the street while more private areas, such as bedrooms, should be located in the rear of the building or on upper floors.

Automobile Transportation

The plan calls for reducing automobile use and congestion within Midtown. This will be supported by:

- Ensuring that the grid street pattern is maintained; particularly 29th Street and Nicollet Avenue;
- Establishing a Travel Demand Management Organization for high traffic generators to provide information and services for rideshare programs, transit discounts, and, if possible, arrange flexible shifts or start times for employees;
- Establishing three Parking Districts, one for each of the three urban development districts, to partner with the public sector to implement district-specific, parking policies/strategies and construct public parking facilities; and
- Minimizing the number of driveways on Lake Street that provide direct vehicular access to adjacent property; instead, access should be provided from side streets, adjacent alleys and parallel streets, if available.

As a transit-oriented environment, many of the trips accomplished in automobiles will shift to the transit (buses and potential, future rail transit) and bike modes. As mixed use environment, where housing is located near employment sites, some residents may be able to complete their trips as pedestrians. These mode shifts from automobiles will result in overall lower parking demand, both at trip destination sites and trip production sites (homes). As a result of this and opportunities for adjacent uses with contrasting peak parking periods to share parking spaces, required parking ratios and supplies could be considered for reduction. The reduction in parking supply will allow developers to use more land for buildings and less for parking, while reducing costs and increasing Gross Leasable Area (GLA).

Future development should occur in harmony with the following:

- Parking lots associated with new development should be located in back (to the rear) of buildings and never on corners. Landscaping should be provided to provide a buffer between parking lots and residential uses that may be across the alley;
- Parking lots should be well lit at night, and rear entrances to buildings should be provided so parkers are not forced to walk to the front of the building to gain entry;
- Parking should be conveniently located near non-residential uses but visibly minimized from Lake Street and public spaces;
- Consideration should be given to parking access taken directly from an alley; and
- Structured parking should be designed with liner development where a commercial use,

integrated with the parking structure, fronts on the street on the ground level.

Non-Automobile Transportation

Transit use in Midtown Minneapolis is already among the highest in the metropolitan area. Attractive and pleasant transit facilities will contribute to even greater transit use in Midtown. The cost of providing these transit facility improvements could possibly be shared with private developers who implement projects within Midtown. These facilities should include:

- Improved lighting and call boxes at bus stops;
- Temperature-controlled bus shelters;
- Comfortable waiting areas; and
- informational kiosks that are integrated into the surrounding development.

A potential Southwest LRT corridor alignment has been proposed to share the trench with the Midtown Greenway. It has also been proposed that a streetcar or trolley that runs on rails embedded in turf could operate in the trench, either as a permanent transit service or as an interim service while waiting for LRT to be implemented. The City should continue to move these concepts along by participating in studies that further investigate implementation of either of these transit technologies.

The Midtown Greenway is a key element in the City's bicycle (non-automobile) plan. With even more bike facilities in Midtown, greater bicycle usage would be expected. Bike parking racks and lockers should be established to ensure that bike riders will be able to conveniently park at their destinations and store their bikes while switching to the transit mode.

Public Realm and Recreation

An attractive streetscape is critical to the success of Midtown Minneapolis as a safe and welcoming transit-oriented, mixed use environment. The public realm of streets, sidewalks, and parks should be designed with safety and security in mind. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied in the design of all development, and particularly in public spaces.

In order to facilitate pedestrian activity, sidewalk widths designed for ongoing Lake Street public improvement projects (12-foot minimum on Lake Street) should be implemented, and new north/south sidewalks should be constructed at a minimum width of five feet.

The pedestrian realm should include the following:

- A clear pedestrian passageway, free of encroachment by landscape features, utilities, street furniture or other obstructions;
- Appropriate pedestrian amenities such as outdoor seating, bus waiting area, trash receptacles, public art, and plantings;
- For projects located at intersections, the design treatment provided for the pedestrian realm should be continued around the corner and an appropriate transition provided between the project improvements and the adjacent properties;
- Outdoor recreational furnishings, community amenities, public gathering places, trees and other plantings should be provided, where appropriate;
- In the I-35W District, new formal public space and informal access to the Midtown Greenway should be incorporated into new development;
- In the Park/Portland District, informal access to the Midtown Greenway and a formal park adjacent to the Greenway should be incorporated into new development; and
- In the Chicago-Midtown Exchange District, a linear connection between Andersen School and Powderhorn Park and grand access to the Midtown Greenway should be incorporated into new development.

www.pedbikeimages.org/ Michael King – San Antonio, Texas

Figure 23. Example streetscape

Street trees and pedestrian scale street lighting should be prominent elements along Lake Street; these can be provided without impinging on the pedestrian throughway.

Private Realm Design and Appearance
New development and redevelopment in Midtown Minneapolis should be constructed with consideration given to the following:

- Building height maximums should be increased, with maximum and minimum heights defined for each urban development district as described earlier in this report;
- Building height should transition from the maximum building height to a lower height when directly adjacent to low density residential unless the residential area is at a much higher elevation;
- To accommodate the extra floor-to-floor ceiling heights of commercial uses, new mixed use development with retail or restaurant uses on the ground floor may exceed the height limit by up to four feet as long as the building does not exceed the maximum number of stories allowed in the district;
- At least fifty percent of the ground floor façade of a commercial building should be devoted to transparent windows and/or doors;
- The form of mixed use or other infill buildings and architectural details should be designed to create visual interest at the street level using techniques such as staggering the frontage of the building, recessing doors and windows, providing varied display windows, awnings and canopies for weather protection and scale, and visually extending interior spaces outside through paving and glazing;
- Building plans and facades should vary from building to building and from project to project, and materials and colors selected to unify the building appearance and fit into the context of the pedestrian realm;
- The building design should complement the street pedestrian realm with plazas, public gathering spaces, street furniture and landscaping;
- The project design should provide visual and physical cues that demark the public space from the private space;

www.changingplaces.urbed.com
Figure 24. Example streetscape

- Security features and equipment should be permitted if completely concealed and mounted inside of the structure;
- Building designs should address privacy between residential units and non-residential uses on the site and on adjacent properties;
- Where appropriate, to integrate new buildings with the surrounding area, new buildings are encouraged to provide passageways through the buildings to allow for light and air to adjacent buildings;
- To promote active, pedestrian-friendly streets, each individual tenant or business establishment and residential lobbies should be oriented to and accessible from the major street frontage and directly from the public sidewalk;

www.planpart.co.za
Figure 25. Access should be oriented to and accessible from the street frontage and the public sidewalk.

- Where possible, service areas should be located at the rear of the building unless these areas can be concealed within the interior of the building design;
- Where possible, service areas for adjacent uses should be consolidated;
- Lot consolidation within existing blocks should be allowed when necessary, and in some places encouraged to leave more space along the pedestrian realm for street trees, other pedestrian amenities and on-street parking, as well as provide more efficient development sites;
- When consolidating lots, new development should respect the existing fabric of the community by reflecting historic development patterns though the use of building indentations, breaks, changes in color, or other methods;
- Lot consolidation should not be confused with block consolidation which requires the elimination of streets and is strongly discouraged.

Implementing Actions

The City of Minneapolis currently regulates land use through application of its "use-based" Zoning Code. Developing new zoning codes and rezoning in order to implement the transit-oriented, mixed use development recommendations in this report can be a time-consuming and politically-charged process. A less complicated approach is development of overlay zones that can be applied on a district-specific basis throughout the study area, a technique recently implemented for Transit Station Areas along the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Corridor.

The following discussion recommends consideration of an overlay zone district (or districts) that includes district-specific form-based requirements.[2] The development guidelines in this plan provide options and techniques to achieve compliance with the overlay district standards. Overlay zones typically provide for a higher, more specific level of regulations in certain areas, but may also be used to permit exceptions or less restrictive standards to help achieve the desired development.

> ***Option 1***: Develop form-based requirements as an element of a zoning overlay district that includes the entire area from Blaisdell to 11th avenues, including sub-area regulations that apply to the identified urban development districts as defined in this study. To minimize the creation of nonconforming uses or structures, designation of such districts could occur in a manner consistent with project phasing.
>
> ***Option 2***: Develop separate mixed-use overlay district classifications for Live/Work, Retail/Office, Residential/ Retail, and Residential/Office and accordingly designate specific areas in the project area. The regulations promulgated under this option could also be used in other areas of the City identified as appropriate for new mixed-use development. Again, designation of such districts could occur in a manner consistent with project phasing. In addition, provisions for interim uses and structures could be included in the overlay district standards.

Adoption of an overlay district is considered a rezoning. As such, the City must follow the process outlined in the City Zoning Ordinance, Article VI, Sections 525.250 through 525.290 and associated statutory provisions of Minn. Stat. 462.357. Either

[2] Form-Based Code – an emerging zoning technique that uses typology to specify a desired public realm. Form-Based Codes zone by intensity of use; Use-Based Codes zone by land use.

option should include the City's current regulations to incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) standards into project design. (See Minneapolis Code, Section 530.360.) as well as the following currently adopted provisions of the Minneapolis Zoning Ordinance:

- PO Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District regarding building placement, building façade, accessory parking and signage;
- Travel demand management provisions of the Lake and Hennepin area overlay district for major intersections in the I-35 District and the Chicago-Midtown Exchange District; and
- Use, area, occupancy and density standards in the IL Industrial Living Overlay District. (Note: The northeast corner of 4th Avenue and East Lake Street is currently designated as Industrial Living Overlay.)

Sensitivity to the design context and neighborhood character is crucial to the success of infill mixed-use projects. As such, the adjacent property owners, neighborhood associations, and others who may be affected should be involved early in the development of overlay district regulations.

Phasing

Base-Level Assumptions

The base-level assumptions that guided the phasing plan for redevelopment in Midtown Minneapolis are listed below:

- Actual implementation will largely be opportunity-driven, with private sector investments following some key public investments. With public sector commitment to the study area, through the Lake Street Reconstruction project, the I-35W Access project (and associated property acquisitions), and reconstruction of the Nicollet/Lake intersection, the private sector will be more likely to either respond with redevelopment proposals;
- Engines that can invigorate redevelopment will be needed in each of the three districts; and
- The likelihood of implementation actually occurring will be increased if development and redevelopment projects are bundled or linked.

It is likely that redevelopment within Midtown Minneapolis will take more than ten years. Both the intensity of redevelopment and the time period will be driven solely by the market unless there is substantial public intervention. Land assembly of many small parcels owned by disparate owners will be a key factor in furthering redevelopment.

I-35W District

Existing conditions suggest that the I-35W District will not redevelop in the next 10 years without major public investment:

- Reconstruction of the Nicollet Avenue bridge and the intersection of Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street should be first order of public priority. The relocation of Kmart/Sears is critical to redevelopment in this area, because it is the most underutilized property in the area and is in a very central location. Significant public investment will be required to acquire the land, reconstruct Nicollet and construct any desired green space.
- Another major initiative that will stimulate interest in redevelopment within the I-35W District is actual implementation of the I-35W ramp improvements. Implementation of the ramps is scheduled to be five to 10 years away, at best.
- Another long-term public investment in the I-35W District is the proposed park on Nicollet Avenue between Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway. While the park may require initial public investment, it is felt that the return will justify the cost, however, this plan implies no commitment by the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board for funding or construction of this facility.
- Expensive site assembly likely will be needed on the east side of I-35W in order for major office redevelopment to occur. Given the City's current lack of development resources, the I-35W Access project will need to be implemented before site assembly could begin. Some existing businesses will not relocate unless required to do so due to land acquisition for I-35W interchange.
- The neighborhood north of Lake Street between I-35W and Clinton is relatively

stable with some reinvestment occurring. Given its location, adjacent to I-35W and identification of opportunities for developing office uses, residential is not the highest and best use for the area. To achieve reuse as high intensity office development, property acquisitions within this neighborhood will be necessary. These acquisitions may prove expensive as a fair amount of home improvements have been and continue to be made in this area.

Park/Portland District

- The anticipated timeframe for implementation will be dependent on the level of City involvement and private developer interest. Because development intensity proposed for the district is lower than the level proposed for the I-35W and Chicago-Midtown Exchange Districts, the costs of land assembly and actual redevelopment should be comparatively lower. Consequently, there may be interest in moving redevelopment along at a quicker pace in this section.
- The major engines in the Park/Portland District will be the Lake Street Reconstruction project and the Midtown Greenway. The Lake Street Reconstruction project will result in the acquisition of property along the north side of Lake Street from Blaisdell to 4th avenues. It is suggested that the City look at completing the acquisitions from 4th to Portland avenues and assembling parcels to create redevelopment sites.
- The Midtown Greenway with improved access and adjacent park development at 5th Avenue will spur further interest in the Park/Portland District for residential development.
- Another goal for this portion of the study area is to provide opportunities for entrepreneurial activity. As shown, the best opportunities for this kind of development are along the south side of Lake Street, both in existing buildings that are retained and rehabilitated as necessary and in new buildings. A parking ramp with a commercial liner is illustrated in the development scenario at the intersection of Lake and Portland, however there is no implication that this ramp will be constructed with public funds.
- Public/private partnerships - including the City, new immigrant-oriented development organization, and lending institutions - can play a major role in assisting the desired types of development through existing small business development programs for entrepreneurs.

Chicago-Midtown Exchange District

- This district is the area currently showing the most redevelopment activity. Additional development engines will be Allina, the Lake Street Reconstruction project and the Midtown Greenway.
- Housing along the Midtown Greenway is a growing engine for development and should be developed at appropriate intensities.
- Improved access to the Midtown Greenway and new housing development will drive infill development in previously underutilized sites.
- Block faces on south side of Lake Street are owned by single owners and will likely be developed as single/assembled parcels.

List of Previous Studies and Plans

- *Lake Street Development District Plan*, City of Minneapolis Department of Planning and Development, 1972.
- *Model City: What is it?*, City of Minneapolis Model City Program, 1973.
- *Lake Street Business Profile*, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association and Lake Street Task Force, 1994.
- *Hennepin Avenue Strategic Plan*, Martin & Pitz, 1995.
- *Lake Street at the Crossroads*, Ackerberg Group, 1996.
- *Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor Framework Plan*, Close Landscape Architecture, Inc., 1999.
- *Nicollet Avenue: The Revitalization of Minneapolis' Main Street*, Nicollet Avenue Task Force, 2000.
- *The I-35W/Lake Street Access Project: A Draft Study of Transportation Planning Through a Public/Private Partnership Process*, Antonio Rosell (NPCR/CURA Research Project, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs), 2000.
- *Lake and Nicollet Commons: Pre-Development Funding*, Sherman Associates, 2001.
- *Nicollet Avenue Development Plan*, BVK Group, Inc., 2001.
- *Midtown Crossings Workshop: 10/26-28/2001 (presentation of findings)*, University of Minnesota Design Institute, 2001. .
- *I-35W Access Project Summary*, Smith Parker, 2002.
- *Phases I and II of the Architectural History Investigation for the Proposed Midtown Greenway, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Volume I*, The 106 Group, Ltd., 2002.
- *The Lake Street Initiative*, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (comments from a series of PPNA-sponsored workshops), 2003.
- *Lake Street and Midtown Greenway: MCDA Plans and Activities*, Minneapolis Community Development Agency, 2003