

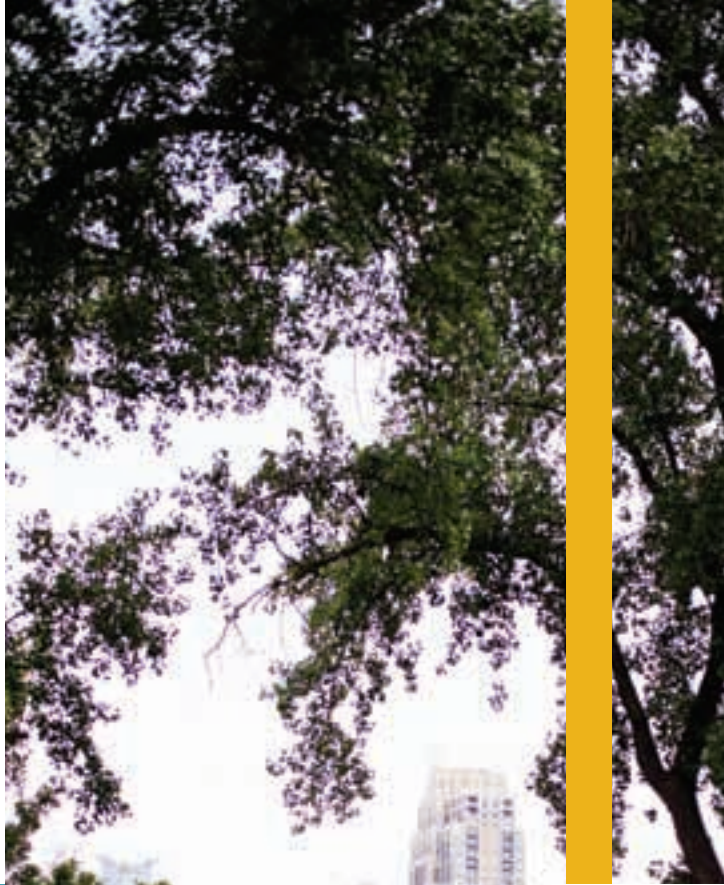
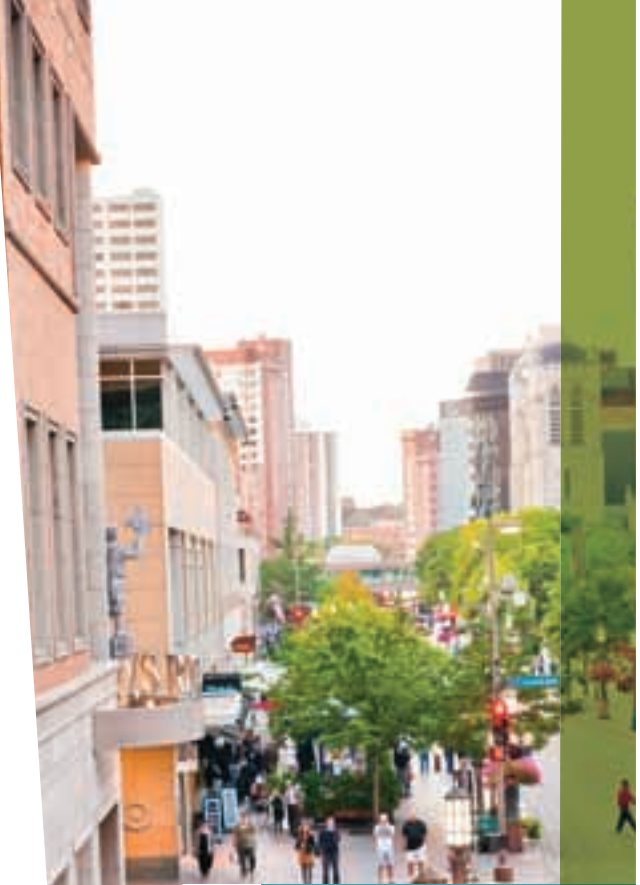


# INTERSECTIONS

*DOWNTOWN 2025 PLAN*









## A VISION OF DOWNTOWN. A ROADMAP TO GET THERE.

Since the 1970s, Minneapolis has been home to one of the nation's most admired downtowns. But in a world of astonishing change, no city, not even a successful one, can rest on favorable reviews. The Downtown we envision in 2025 is a striking departure from today's Minneapolis, because conditions and markets demand a new kind of city: Doubling our downtown residential population will lead to livelier streets, advanced transit options, innovative retail, lush green infrastructure and the other ingredients required to build and sustain a flourishing 21st century city. In 2025, our Downtown will be thriving, livable, connected, green, exciting and welcoming. It will be the kind of city that not only keeps pace but wins the race.

**Writer:**

Steve Berg

With special thanks to the Downtown 2025 Steering Committee chaired by John Griffith of Target Corporation, and to Sam Grabarski of the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Bob Parr of Ryan Companies.

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Minneapolis Downtown Council

Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership

Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Economic Partnership

Minnesota Timberwolves/Minnesota Lynx

Minnesota Twins

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University of Minnesota

University of St. Thomas

Walker Art Center

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## GLOBAL FORCES ARE RESHAPING DOWNTOWNS

Cities are constantly evolving; they are periodically shaped and reshaped by global forces and shifting markets.

When the U.S. economy fell into depression in the 1870s, cities remade themselves to match the demands of the Industrial Age. Minneapolis was no exception, organizing its center into a cluster of office buildings and retail stores, connected by an impressive network of streetcars to the surrounding industrial sites and residential neighborhoods.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the pent-up consumer demand that followed changed cities again. The lure of elbow room, stoked by federally subsidized freeways and mortgages, pushed homes and businesses ever outward. Downtown Minneapolis responded by emulating suburban office parks and shopping malls, complete with climate-controlled skyways and convenient parking. A renewed cultural scene also helped Downtown retain its relevance in an age of suburban domination.

Now, as the economy struggles to regain its footing after the 2008–2010 recession, downtowns are resetting themselves yet again. Major shifts in the economy, demographics, technology, energy and the environment are placing a premium on **location efficiency**. This time, downtowns enjoy an advantage; they have a template of density and transit around which homes, jobs, shopping and entertainment can be efficiently organized and connected. Cities that reimagine and retrofit their downtowns as compact, yet attractive, livable and compelling places will prosper in the decades ahead.

### DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS: A COMMITMENT TO COMPETE

Downtown Minneapolis intends to be foremost among those thriving places. By 2025, Downtown will have an abundance of new housing, a revived retail scene, and a burst of innovation and creativity to drive new business. It will have beautiful parks, green shady streets, a new focus on the Riverfront, an enhanced and expanded transportation system and a walking and biking atmosphere that is safe and comfortable for all. It will continue to have the exciting arts, culture and entertainment scene expected of a great city.

As the global economy sorts winners from losers, it's clear that no metropolitan market can truly compete for talent, creativity and prosperity without a strong core. In 2025, Downtown Minneapolis intends to be that strong core, boosting the velocity of our metro region and state for decades to come.

This report, "INTERSECTIONS.2025", offers a vision of the next Downtown Minneapolis, retooled to match the emerging marketplace. No longer is Downtown defined simply as a central business district (CBD) neatly compartmentalized into office, residential, retail and cultural components. The next Downtown is a broader ecology in which all activities intermingle and depend on one another. Think of Downtown as a series of intersections where human energy and creativity come together to elevate and to innovate, as a place of convergence that is **thriving, livable, connected, green, exciting and welcoming—our vision for 2025**.

## ACHIEVING OUR VISION

To achieve that vision requires realistic planning, candid evaluation and strong implementation. A city must understand four things: where it has been, where it is now, where it must go, and how to get there.

Downtown's condition in 2011 might be best summarized as having extraordinary places but poor connections, much as a human body might have healthy organs but weak connective tissue. The outdoor walking environment is often uninviting and inconsistent. Transit circulation within Downtown is lacking. There is no signature attraction to draw the larger numbers of residents, workers and visitors that Downtown needs in order to prosper and compete in the decades ahead.

**To meet those demands by 2025, this plan sets forth 10 major initiatives:**

### 1. DOUBLE DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL POPULATION.

Expand the residential population to 70,000 as a catalyst for driving Downtown's next wave of business vitality, social improvement and cultural renewal. Add 15,000 housing units; expand Class A, multi-tenant office space by 3 million square feet; add 1,100 hotel rooms, and build 200,000 square feet of retail space, including at least two new grocery stores. Emphasize and facilitate office and housing development near a new Gateway Park on the north end of Nicollet. Expand opportunities for back-office space and live/work options. Broaden the appeal of Downtown living for a wider variety of residents, especially families, children, college students and senior citizens. Ensure that every school-age child who lives Downtown will be able to attend school Downtown. Build at least one new downtown school and focus on making Downtown's workers the best-educated in the nation. It is time to expand, not contract.

### 2. TRANSFORM NICOLLET INTO A "MUST-SEE" DESTINATION.

Extend and invigorate the original mall segment; establish "must-see" destinations along its route. Redesignate the Nicollet corridor as running from the Walker Art Center, through Loring Park to the Mississippi River, and ending at the foot of the Father Hennepin Bridge. Redesign that corridor as the region's premier walking experience—a linear park lined with trees, flower gardens, shops, restaurants, residential buildings, hotels and office towers. Animate the street with a curb-less walking environment that shares space with bicycles and with quiet, zero-emission vehicles (electric buses or modern streetcars) that offer free shuttle service every few minutes. Interpose at intervals public plazas that feature stunning art pieces, water features, dramatic lighting, interactive programming and other attractions. Taken all together, this new Nicollet will become by 2025 the region's signature place and its iconic identity.

### 3. BUILD GATEWAY PARK.

A new linear park, stretching from the light rail station on 5th Street to the river, will constitute the new Nicollet's north end. The park's central feature will be a large public gathering place just north of the Central Library. Gateway Park will be a development catalyst for the empty blocks that, in 2011, characterize Nicollet's north end.

### 4. CREATE A CONSISTENTLY COMPELLING DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE.

Deliver a consistently excellent pedestrian experience that inspires people to explore Downtown block after block, no matter the season or time of day—24/7/365. Embrace density to build the kind of critical mass required to sustain a successful urban core. Leverage theater, music, art and sports attractions to aid in that pursuit. Position Downtown as an international center for creativity and design. Establish an Arts Corridor of street-level galleries, studio spaces, performances and public art along Hennepin Avenue, from the Walker Art Center to the Riverfront.

## 5. ESTABLISH A DOWNTOWN SPORTS DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES A NEW VIKINGS STADIUM.

The district, centered around Target Field, will also include a renovated Target Center and the region's busiest transit hub (the Transportation Interchange), all designed to maximize Downtown's long-term entertainment value.

## 6. LEAD THE NATION IN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS.

Maintain and improve high capacity for commuters on our streets. Increase transit's mode share for daytime commuters from 40 percent to 60 percent. Increase circulation within Downtown by installing a Downtown Circulator (whether streetcars or zero-emission buses) while intensifying regular transit service in close-in neighborhoods. Emphasize accessible, forward-leaning transportation technology. Improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility. Build the Transportation Interchange as the metro area's primary transit hub. Secure stable, reliable transit funding for expanding and maintaining the system.

## 7. CREATE AND SUSTAIN A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE—AND SHOWCASE THE RIVERFRONT.

Establish and intensify the tree canopy throughout Downtown. Create green corridors that connect downtown districts and close-in neighborhoods. Enhance and emphasize the Riverfront as a world-class destination and Downtown's green focal point. Beautify Downtown's entry points, including freeway embankments, ramps and medians. Launch a Greening and Public Realm Conservancy to perpetuate the greening program.

## 8. FORGE CONNECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

Leverage the Central Corridor's light rail service to create a stronger link between campus and Downtown. Extend green corridors over the freeway trench that separates the CBD from the West Bank campus and establish a major new residential district on and around the Metrodome site. Generate business synergies that benefit both the U's mission and Downtown's prosperity.

## 9. END STREET HOMELESSNESS.

Extend housing and outreach efforts so that the 300–500 people who sleep outside or in inhumane places have shelter, treatment and job training that keep them off the streets.

## 10. LAUNCH A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

An annual festival will bring visitors, innovative thinking and civic energy to a city already noted for its citizen involvement. The festival will focus on creating a better future for all—locally, nationally and globally.

## MOVING FROM PLAN TO REALITY

Turning these initiatives into reality will require talent, perseverance and a spirit of partnership from a new generation of civic, neighborhood and business leaders. The Minneapolis Downtown Council is eager to lead the coalition.

An Implementation Committee will meet quarterly. Subcommittees will study projects in depth. Priorities and goals will be set. Progress will be measured. Results will be expected. We have inherited an extraordinary hometown, but the task is not finished. Now it's our turn to imagine—and to build.





# CHAPTER 1

## A HISTORY OF LOOKING AHEAD.

“INTERSECTIONS.2025” is a planning vehicle to help leaders and citizens build on Downtown’s assets and guide its development in ways that reflect the community’s aspirations for a Downtown Minneapolis that is thriving, livable, green, connected, exciting and welcoming in the decades ahead.

For a more than a century, Downtown Minneapolis has been the commercial and cultural nexus for a vast northern territory stretching from the Great Lakes to the Rockies. First as a center of flour milling and grain trading, then as a generator of civic energy and technical achievement, Downtown, with its glassy skyline, has come to symbolize a forward-leaning metropolitan region with an exceptional quality of life.

By 2025, Downtown intends to strengthen its position by taking advantage of trends moving its way.

Those trends are best summarized by the term **location efficiency**. Global shifts in economics, demographics, technology, energy and the environment are driving human activity onto smaller footprints. The closer that people and their daily destinations can be clustered, the greater the potential savings. Downtowns have a built-in advantage in that regard. They have a template on which homes, jobs, shopping and entertainment can be conveniently organized and connected by cost-effective transportation. Cities that reimagine and retrofit their downtowns as relatively compact, yet attractive, livable and compelling places will prosper in the decades ahead.

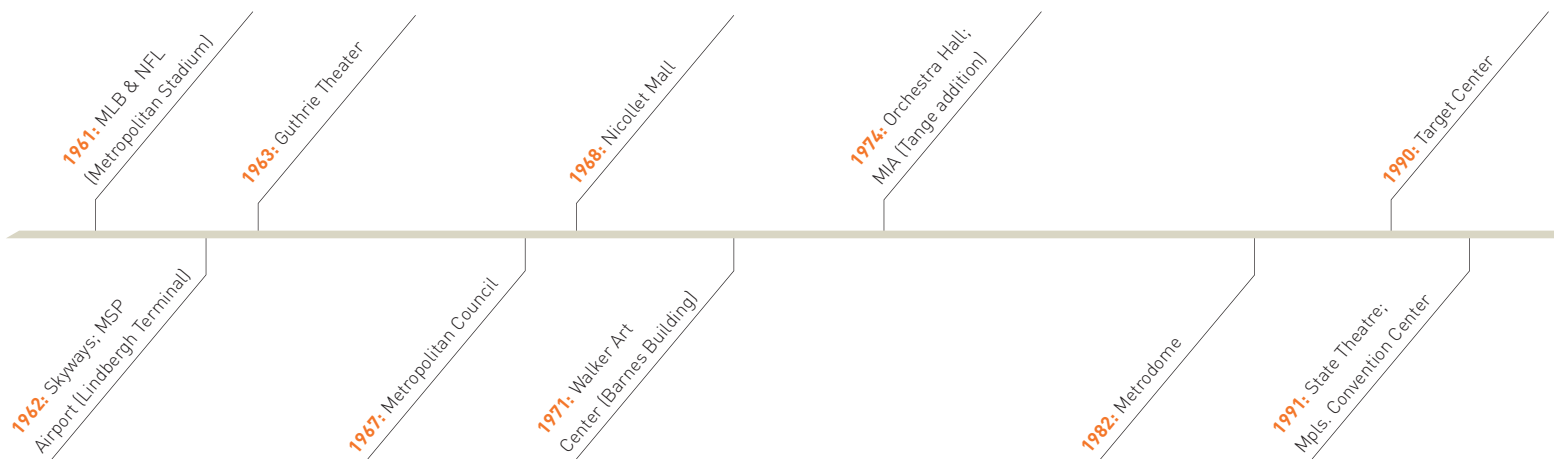
Downtown Minneapolis intends to be foremost among those thriving places. By 2025, Downtown will have an abundance of new housing,

a revived retail scene, and a burst of innovation and creativity to drive new business. It will have beautiful parks, green shady streets, an enhanced and expanded transportation system, and a walking and biking atmosphere that is safe and comfortable for all. It will continue to have the kind of thriving arts, culture and entertainment scene expected of a great city.

As the global economy sorts winners from losers, it's clear that no metropolitan market can truly compete for young talent, creativity and prosperity without a strong core. In 2025, Downtown Minneapolis intends to be that strong core, boosting the velocity of its metro region and state well into the 21st century.

### HISTORY AS PROLOGUE

As in the past, Downtown's future rests on sound planning. Planning is not an exercise in wishful thinking, but a careful, realistic anticipation of the future based on the best possible evidence. Only through sound planning can citizens achieve the city they want, rather than having to settle for whatever comes along. Minneapolis has always felt compelled to take an active hand in its future. The tone was set in the 1880s when the park system's farsighted pioneers began laying out a network of public lakeshore and greenways.



It continued into the early 20th century with the audacious “Plan of Minneapolis 1917.” The elegant document began with the now-famous words of the celebrated planner Daniel Burnham:

**“MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS; THEY HAVE NO MAGIC TO STIR MEN’S BLOOD.”**

Indeed, Burnham’s Chicago associate, E. H. Bennett, led the Minneapolis effort, employing his “outside eyes” to imagine a grand city with the look and feel of Paris. Densely spaced mid-rise buildings, broad tree-lined boulevards, and traffic circles with plazas and majestic monuments were part of the vision. [See page 16]

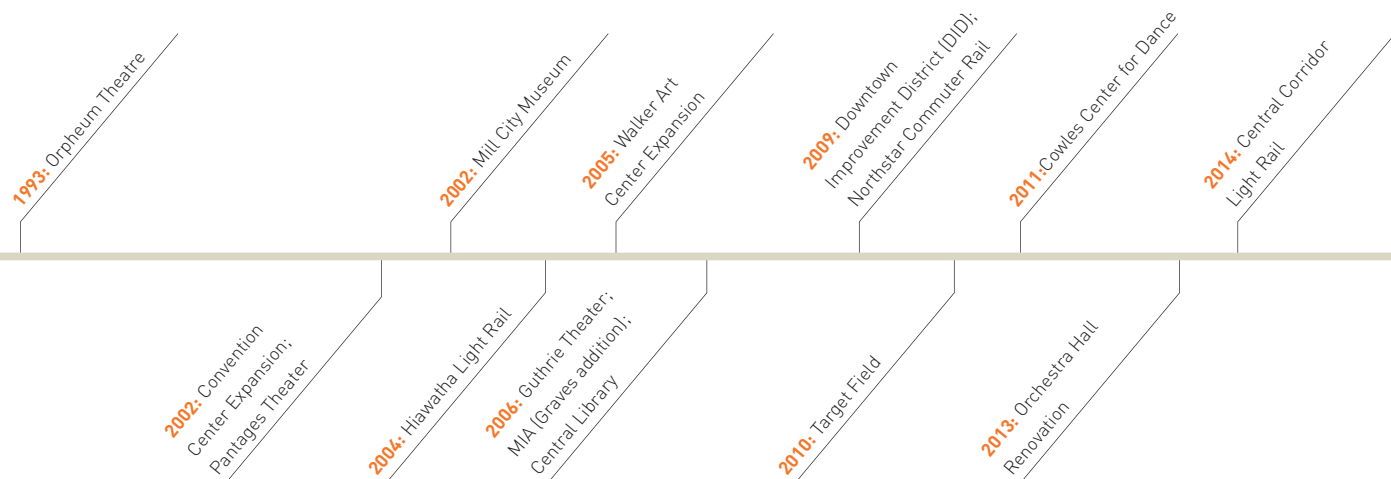
### A BURST OF CIVIC ENERGY

Although never realized, the 1917 plan infused Minneapolis with high expectations. In the 1950s, when General Mills and other major employers abandoned Downtown for corporate campuses in the suburbs, and when Southdale emerged as a retailing rival, an alarm was sounded. The result was a burst of civic energy that produced a remarkable string of accomplishments. During the 1960s, the Nicollet Mall, the skyway system, Orchestra Hall, major

league sports, the Guthrie Theater, a new Walker Art Center, a new Central Library, a new airport terminal and the Metropolitan Council all took shape. These assets were intended collectively to offset the trend toward suburban decentralization, and at the advent of non-stop coast-to-coast jet travel, to secure Minneapolis-St. Paul’s place on the national map. The community vowed not to become “flyover territory.”

Those accomplishments were celebrated in a memorable 1973 *Time* magazine cover story. While much has changed for better and worse since then, the renewal of Downtown’s civic assets continued into the early 21st century. A new Guthrie, Walker, Central Library and Cowles Center for Dance were built; rail transit was restored; and a new Twins ballpark was opened.

This plan continues that work. It begins by asking four fundamental questions. The first we’ve already discussed: **Where have we been?** The other questions are: **Where are we now? Where should we go? How shall we get there?** It is through this basic lens that Downtown Minneapolis will see its way toward 2025.



# How this report was produced

“INTERSECTIONS.2025” is a product of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, the city’s premier business organization. The plan reflects a community vision for a thriving, livable, green, connected, exciting and welcoming Downtown in the decades ahead.

It’s built on the work of previous plans. The series began in the late 1950s and has been updated every 10 to 15 years, most recently by “Minneapolis Downtown 2010,” completed in 1996.

The “INTERSECTIONS.2025” process was launched early in 2010 with the formation of a Steering Committee headed by John Griffith, Executive Vice President for Property Development at Target Corporation. Griffith selected Bob Parr, Director of Development for Ryan Companies, to organize, coordinate the overall project and oversee the production of the report.

The nine-member Steering Committee, working with Downtown Council President and CEO Sam Grabarski, organized its work into five areas: Development; Transportation and Transit; Greening and Public Realm; Entertainment and Hospitality; and Education, Faith and Human Services.

In late 2010, five subcommittees covering those areas were formed, with 80 members serving. Altogether, the effort resulted in more than 100 meetings, conferences, study sessions and other events, including an emphasis on community outreach. The Downtown Council, while primarily a business organization, recognized the changing character of Downtown and its expanding identity. No longer is Downtown just a central business district; it’s a multi-dimensional convergence of business, residential, educational, recreational, governmental, cultural and entertainment interests, all dependent on one another.

The makeup of the subcommittees reflected that change, as did their research. Residential neighborhood organizations were engaged, as were groups of employees and students. Nine focus groups were assembled, including those from the Elliot Park, Loring Park, North Loop and Downtown Minneapolis neighborhood

associations; Target Corporation and U.S. Bank; the Urban Land Institute Minnesota’s Young Leaders Group; and Cristo Rey and DeLaSalle high schools. In addition, the University of St. Thomas conducted a survey of 1,200 downtown residents, workers and visitors.

One memorable piece of advice came from high school students, “Go big or go home,” a plea for big imaginations and aspirations for Downtown.

Advice was sought also from Metro Transit, and from city and county elected leaders, including Mayor R.T. Rybak; Council President Barbara Johnson; council members Lisa Goodman, Diane Hofstede, Robert Lilligren, Kevin Reich and Sandra Colvin Roy; Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Chair John Erwin; Hennepin County Board Chairman Mike Opat and Commissioners Peter McLaughlin and Mark Stenglein. Experts from the city and county government staffs were also consulted, and several were included in the makeup of the subcommittees.

It’s important to add that faith communities were also involved. They were especially influential in directing attention to education, homelessness and health care—challenges that this report might not have otherwise highlighted.

To synthesize the research and write the report, the Downtown Council hired urban design consultant and writer Steve Berg. To design the report in its printed form, the council selected Olson, the Minneapolis-based advertising agency. Support was also provided by the Target Corporation’s Marketing and Printing Services organizations.

The publishing of this plan in the Fall of 2011 is just its beginning. “INTERSECTIONS.2025” will live on in digital form, evolving and adapting as conditions dictate. The plan will be guided to completion by an Implementation Committee selected by the Minneapolis Downtown Council.



## STEERING COMMITTEE

John Griffith, Target Corporation, Chair  
Sam Grabarski, Downtown Council  
Sarah Harris, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District  
Elliot Jaffee, U.S. Bank  
Russ Nelson, Nelson Tietz & Hoyer  
Tim O'Connor, Hays Companies  
David Sternberg, Brookfield Properties  
Andrea Walsh, HealthPartners  
David Wilson, Accenture  
Bob Parr, Ryan Companies, Coordinator

## SUBCOMMITTEES

### Development

Collin Barr, Ryan Companies, Chair  
Bob Anderson, Loring Green East resident  
Jon Buggy, AECOM-Ellerbe Becket  
Mike Christenson, City of Minneapolis, Community Planning and Economic Development  
Cindy Eliason, Macy's  
Brent Hanson, Wells Fargo  
Matt Hemsley, Clover Fields Capital  
Jeannie Joas, JB Hudson  
Paul Johnson, Nelson Tietz & Hoyer  
Bob Lux, Alatus  
Paige Rickert, CB Richard Ellis  
George Rosenquist, Downtown East/West Residents Association  
Mike Ryan, Ryan Companies  
Rich Varda, Target Corporation  
Kent Warden, BOMA  
Dave Wright, U.S. Bank

### Education, Faith and Human Services

Tim Hart-Andersen, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Co-chair  
Chris Puto, University of St. Thomas, Co-chair

Kevin Bennett, Downtown K-12  
Cathy ten Broeke, Heading Home Hennepin  
Phil Davis, Minneapolis Community and Technical College  
Lynette Dumlaga, Nelson Tietz & Hoyer  
Marion Etzwiler, Loring Park resident  
Art Gonzalez, Hennepin County Medical Center  
Michele Martin, J.P. Morgan  
Rick Nelson, Central Lutheran Church  
Becky Roloff, YWCA  
Lois Thompson, Hennepin County Library

### Entertainment and Hospitality

Ralph Burnet, Burnet Interests, Co-chair  
Dave St. Peter, Minnesota Twins, Co-chair  
Matt Baker, CB Burnet  
Lynn Casey, Padilla Speer Beardsley and Meet Minneapolis Board Chair  
Eric Dayton, Dayton Interests  
Kieran Folliard, The Local  
Shawn Gensch, Target Corporation  
Michael Henson, Minnesota Orchestra  
Tom Hoch, Hennepin Theatre Trust  
Susan Mabry, W Foshay  
Scott Mayer, Mayer Company  
Steve Poppen, Minnesota Vikings  
Melvin Tennant, Meet Minneapolis  
Olga Viso, Walker Art Center  
Chris Wright, Minnesota Timberwolves

### Greening and Public Realm

David Wilson, Accenture, Chair  
Jon Baker, Baker Investments  
Matt Baker, CB Burnet  
Anthony Desnick, Bentz/Thompson/Rietow  
Frank DiLapo, Minneapolis Club  
John Erwin, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

David Frank, City of Minneapolis, Community Planning and Economic Development and the North Loop Neighborhood Association  
Pat Grazzini, Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
Sarah Harris, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District  
Jeremy Hanson-Willis, City of Minneapolis, Mayor's Office  
Ben Hertz, resident  
Jeff Johnson, City of Minneapolis, Convention Center  
Richard Johnson, Hennepin County Administrator  
Dolores Karan, Downtown Network  
Thom Lasley, Target Corporation  
Bob Lux, Alatus  
David Motzenbecker, Minneapolis Planning Commission  
Gene Rerat, Base Management  
Binky Wood Rockwell, Resident  
Beth Shogren, Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District  
Amy Wimmer, Hines Interests  
Charlie Zelle, Jefferson Lines

### Transportation and Transit

Charlie Ferrell, Faegre & Benson, Co-chair  
John Wheaton, Faegre & Benson, Co-chair  
Tom Holloran, Loring Park resident  
Tina Hoyer, Nelson Tietz & Hoyer  
Todd Klingel, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Steve Kotke, City of Minneapolis, Public Works  
Brian Lamb, Metro Transit  
Dave Marquis, Target Corporation  
Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Commissioner  
Judi Nevenon, U.S. Bank  
Bob Pfefferle, Hines Interests  
Peter Wagenius, City of Minneapolis, Mayor's Office



# Historic gem: The 1917 plan

The city imagined by the lavish 1917 “Plan of Minneapolis” is hard to recognize a century later. Minneapolis was to become, according to its visionaries, a kind of Paris on the prairie, complete with broad, tree-lined boulevards, grand monuments, public fountains, traffic circles, and mile after mile of classical buildings.

The city in 1917 was about as large as it is now (in 2011)—approaching 400,000 people on 54 square miles. But the plan projected that it would grow to 1.5 million people by the 1950s and that it would annex an additional 100 square miles.

The plan drew its inspiration and ambition from the City Beautiful Movement of 1890–1920. The trend was seen as a reforming response to the dirty and crowded cities of the Industrial Age. It was thought that architectural grandeur and natural beauty could instill civic virtue while attracting investment and prosperity.

The 1917 plan’s centerpiece was the 6th Avenue Artery, a magnificent, tree-lined diagonal boulevard that followed Portland Avenue southeast from Downtown to the shores of Lake Harriet, ending with a monumental Watergate on the lake’s northeast corner. Huge civic plazas at Lyndale Avenue, the Institute of Arts and 8th Street were envisioned along the way, complete with impressive fountains and public sculpture.

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the rush to the suburbs in the 1950s snuffed out the City Beautiful dreams. Minneapolis failed to foresee that suburban municipalities (and other factors) would choke off its growth. The city’s population would peak at 522,000 in 1950, and Minneapolis never expanded beyond 54 square miles. Still, the 1917 Plan set an ambitious tone for a city that, nearly a century later, continues to reimagine itself and work toward a better future.





SECTION OF BRIDGE VIEWED AT THE RIVER.

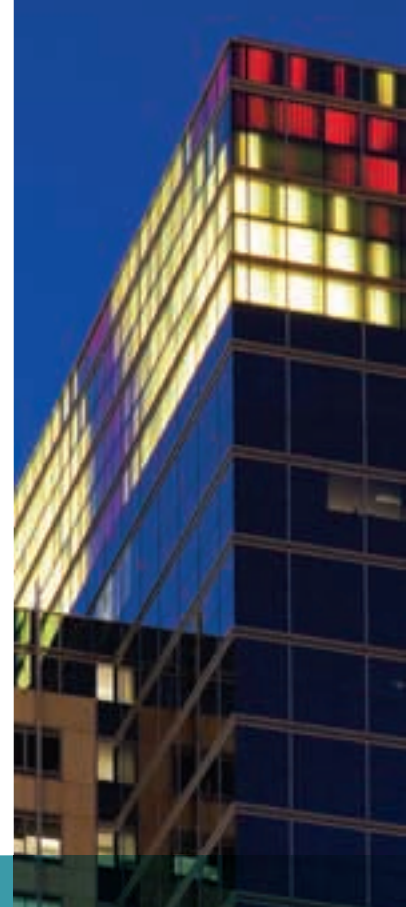


PLAZA AT INTERSECTION OF CEDAR AVE. POTTERS ST. & WASHINGTON AVE.



ELEVATION OF THE STATE HOUSE, TRUNK CENTERWAY, A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH END OF STATE HOUSE.



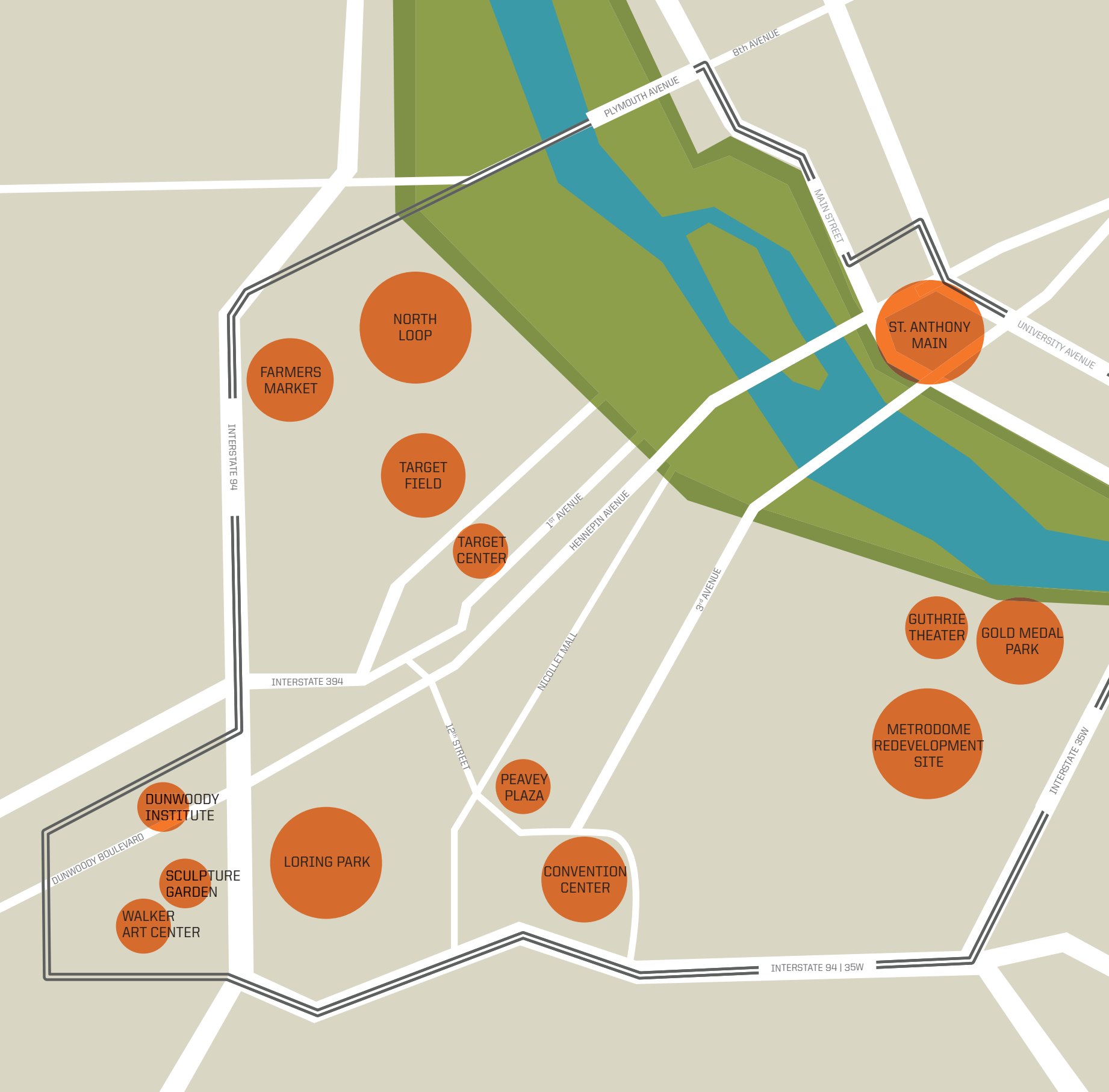




# CHAPTER 2

## DOWNTOWNS ARE CHANGING.

They are spreading out and becoming multi-purpose, 24-hour, 7-day districts; not just for working and shopping anymore.



INTERSTATE 94

INTERSTATE 394

INTERSTATE 94 | 35W

DUNWOODY BOULEVARD

PLYMOUTH AVENUE

8th AVENUE

MAIN STREET

UNIVERSITY AVENUE

NORTH LOOP

FARMERS MARKET

TARGET FIELD

TARGET CENTER

ST. ANTHONY MAIN

GUTHRIE THEATER

GOLD MEDAL PARK

METRODOME REDEVELOPMENT SITE

PEAVEY PLAZA

CONVENTION CENTER

LORING PARK

DUNWOODY INSTITUTE

SCULPTURE GARDEN

WALKER ART CENTER

1st AVENUE

HENNEPIN AVENUE

3rd AVENUE

NICOLLET MALL

12th STREET

INTERSTATE 35W

A stylized map of downtown Minneapolis is shown on the left side of the page. It features a light beige background with white lines representing roads and a blue line representing the Mississippi River. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right. The map is partially obscured by a yellow horizontal bar at the top.

## DEFINITION OF DOWNTOWN

The boundaries of Downtown reflect its evolution beyond the traditional CBD. For purposes of this plan, Downtown is bounded by I-35W on the east, I-94 on the south, and I-94/I-394 on the west. On the north it is bounded by Plymouth/8th Avenue NE, Main Street and University Avenue.

While every city wants to be distinctive, none can succeed by swimming entirely against the tide. And a strong global tide is reshaping every American city, including Minneapolis, with changes in the economy, demographics, technology, energy and the environment.

The lingering impact of the 2008 collapse in housing and finance is probably the best reminder that markets are shifting, that the “good old days” may not return in quite the same way, that old methods of doing business may no longer work and that old lifestyles may no longer be sustainable. **A realization has set in that there has been too much easy credit, too much wasted energy, wasted time, wasted space and wasted cost—and not enough preparation for what’s next.**

A successful recovery will demand cleaner, more efficient ways of living, working, traveling and arranging our communities. Cities anticipating those changes will catch the next wave of prosperity.

### EVOLVING DOWNTOWNS

Similar transformations have happened before. After the Panic of 1873, the U.S. economy trended rapidly from agricultural to industrial. The shift dictated new spatial arrangements summarized as urbanization. Dense urban neighborhoods clustered around industrial centers. Sharp distinctions arose between home and work. Cities divided into separate zones for jobs, homes and amusements, all connected by motorized trolleys. At the center, big downtowns grew skyward and flourished. Among the strongest cities were tightly bound industrial powerhouses like Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

The opposite happened after the Great Depression of the 1930s as the economy shifted toward engineering and product development. The change was hastened by huge government investments in mortgages and interstate highways that greatly expanded the suburban landscape. The old industrial cities crumbled in the rush toward the roomy edges of Atlanta, Houston, Phoenix and other Sunbelt expanses. Autos replaced trains as the primary urban conveyance. While downtowns retained their symbolic importance, most of them declined as retail and employment destinations.

Now, at the dawn of an information age, the economy is resetting yet again. This time, downtowns have a chance for a comeback, not so much in their traditional form as islands of skyscrapers and parking ramps, but as broader, more diverse “central districts,” places more European in flavor with dense mixes of housing, offices, shops, parks, restaurants and cultural attractions, all connected by attractive walking, biking and transit options.

### GOOD BUILDINGS, WEAK CONNECTIONS

The task ahead for Minneapolis is to retrofit its downtown to match the approaching market. That means taking stock and candidly assessing strengths and weaknesses (See page 24).

If there’s an overarching challenge that stands out for Minneapolis, it’s this: Ours is a downtown of wonderful places—attractive office towers, museums, theaters, sports venues and so on. But it’s a downtown of weak connections, especially for pedestrians at street

level. We are like a body of healthy organs with bad connective tissue. To become a truly successful urban center, Minneapolis must improve its door-to-door experience. Urban life is not just about the destination; it’s about the trip along the way. Are we walking past an interesting store? A tempting restaurant? A shady park? Are we encountering creative people who challenge our thinking? Who generate new ideas? Who help our businesses to innovate and grow?

These are the intersections that drive great cities. For Minneapolis, the task ahead is to replace parking lots with new housing, to add lush green spaces, to expand transportation options, to encourage business vitality—both for established corporations and for startups—and to sustain the city’s impressive lineup of cultural, sports and entertainment attractions.

**Most of all, the task is to prepare for intense competition against other cities—and against suburban town centers—as the market sorts out the winners and losers.**

Assuring a place for Downtown Minneapolis in the winner’s circle is the objective of this report. It’s a goal that should be strongly supported by all who care about the future of Minnesota and the metro region. A regional economy is far stronger when its downtown is vibrant and successful.





# The Skyway Paradox

Skyways are a blessing and a curse for Downtown Minneapolis. Anyone who has lived through a Minnesota winter knows the upside of life “under glass” on a frigid day. The ability to navigate indoors through an eight-mile elevated skyway system is a big advantage.

Not only are skyways popular with the public, they generate extra revenues for the buildings they connect, and they help to define a distinctive, glassy character for Downtown Minneapolis. But the drawbacks are also apparent. Skyways pull the life and energy off the street level, leaving sidewalks barren and storefronts empty. The result is a two-tier pedestrian system that’s out of step with an emerging market that places increasing value on lively street life.

This report takes seriously the paradox that skyways present. The noted Danish urban designer Jan Gehl has described Minneapolis as “no longer up to the beat” of a world-class winter city, blaming the skyways’ “defensive posture” against nature. But Gehl also suggests that Minneapolis can improve its chances by embracing positive street-level design that rewards people for being outdoors for 300+ days each year. If the Grand Rounds parkways are popular in winter (which they are), then downtown streets can be alluring as well.

One remedy for Minneapolis to consider is to forge clear and user-friendly connections between skyways and sidewalks. Those could take the form of exterior elevators or stairways, along with a way-finding system that directs pedestrians between the street and skyway levels. Those vertical connections are critical to the mission of creating a livelier, greener and safer street life. Another approach to consider is to limit the expansion of the skyway system.



# WEAKNESSES

*of Downtown*

*Higher costs of development*

*Intra-downtown transit circulation*

*Retail*

*Skyways (weak sidewalk-level activity)*

*Surface parking lots*

*Homelessness*

*Lack of green space*

*Not family-friendly*

*Lack of consistent experience*

*Lack of public restrooms*

*Perceived lack of safety*

*Bike trails*

*Renewal of cultural assets*



*Skyways*

*Architecture*

# STRENGTHS of Downtown

*Creative class synergy*

*Restaurants and bars*



*Cultural/sports/entertainment assets*



*World-class companies*



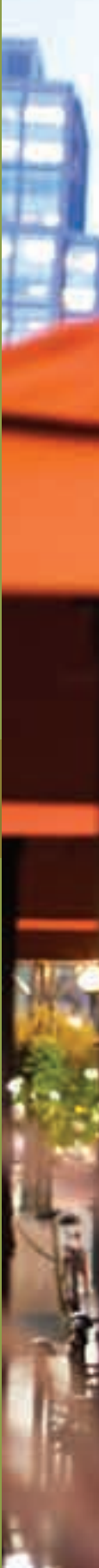
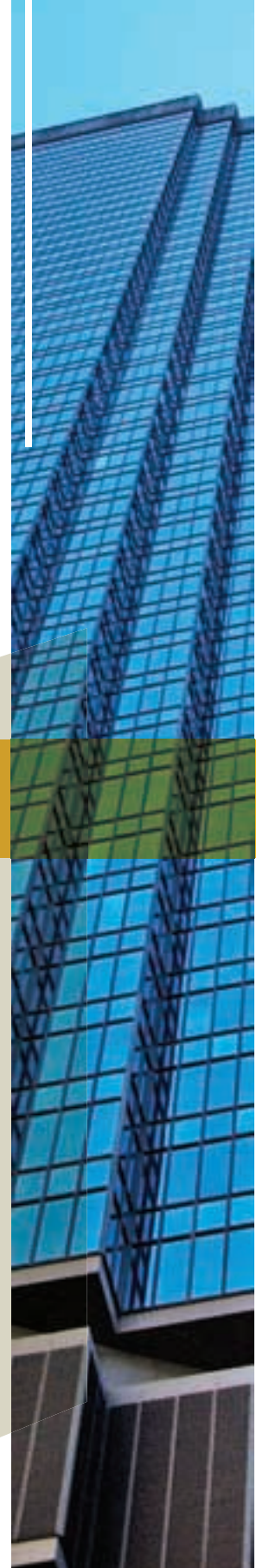
*Riverfront*



*Commuter transit*



*Central location*





# CHAPTER 3

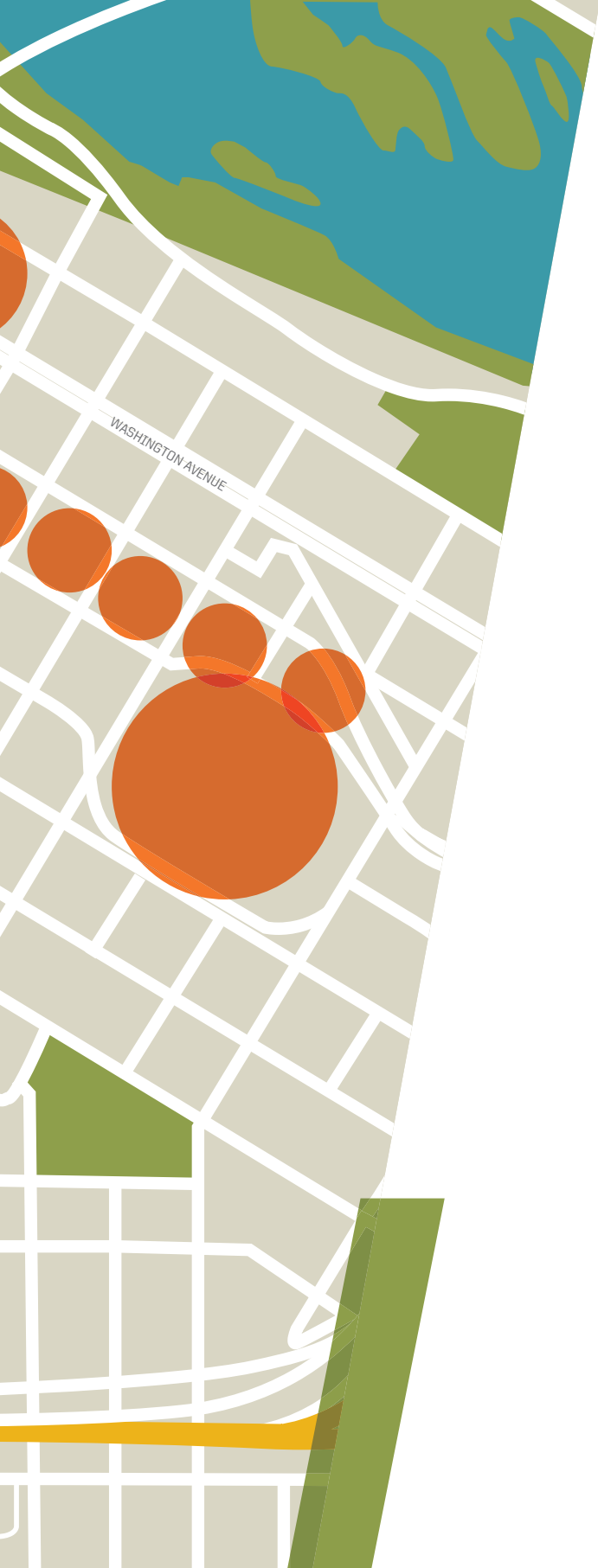
## ASPIRATIONS: FINDING A VISION.

'Umami' is a Japanese culinary term for flavor that elevates a dish from good to great. Downtown Minneapolis in 2025 will have achieved umami; it will have gone from good to great.

## MAJOR OPPORTUNITY SITES

There are more than 100 infill development sites, some shown here, that are mainly in Downtown East and the North Loop areas. This indicates Downtown's impressive potential for growth.





In the mid-1980s, with Denver flat on its back, Mayor Federico Peña pleaded with his constituents to **imagine a great city**. Those four small words were magic for Denver back then, and they carry a potent message for Minneapolis in 2025:

- No city, not even a successful one such as ours, can move forward without aspiration; a city must want to grow and improve.
- No city can move forward without imagination; a city must clearly visualize what it wants to become.

To aspire and to imagine are essential first steps to finding a vision.

A great city is a thing that's better felt than enunciated. Images do better than words in describing why Paris is so special or San Francisco so appealing. Still, words are sometimes all we have. Here are some of the words offered by the investigators who launched this report. Together, they describe what Downtown Minneapolis will be in 2025:

**VIBRANT. ROBUST. OPEN. DIVERSE. APPEALING. COMPELLING. DISTINCTIVE. AUTHENTIC. SUSTAINABLE. GREEN. CONNECTED. LIVELY. BEAUTIFUL. ARTFUL. EDUCATED. SMART. WELCOMING. EXCITING. SAFE. COMFORTABLE. CONVENIENT. CONSISTENT. CONVIVIAL. EFFICIENT. OPPORTUNITY-DRIVEN. EMPHASIS ON DESIGN. WHERE EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES TO AN EXPERIENCE THAT INSPIRES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING. WHERE DIVERSE PEOPLE AND FAMILIES LIVE, WORK, STUDY, PLAY, WORSHIP AND THRIVE.**

There's a Japanese word that best summarizes all of the above: **umami**. It's a culinary term for flavor ("savory but not salty") that elevates a dish from good to great. Downtown in 2025 will have achieved umami. **It will have gone from good to great.**

It will be **thriving, livable, green, connected, exciting and welcoming**. And when you put all of those attributes together, the mixture will exceed the sum of its parts. Minneapolis will be widely admired as one of the nation's best places to live, visit and do business.



**THRIVING:** Beyond the obvious, there are two reasons why Downtown must thrive.

- The decline of federal and state financial support puts Minneapolis increasingly on its own. More than ever, the health of the city depends on the success of Downtown. Without the growth in tax base and population that Downtown can supply, the city will be unable to provide the services that residents expect. Downtown has huge potential for adding both jobs and housing. (See map on page 28)
- The metro region is a far stronger competitor with a strong Downtown Minneapolis at its core. The benefits of Downtown's success are felt far beyond its borders.

**LIVABLE:** Thriving is not just about financial success. It's about physical, social and spiritual well-being. It's about openness to new ideas and new people. It's about experiencing an active, healthy and sustainable lifestyle. It's about livability. By 2025, Downtown will have broadened and deepened its appeal as a place to live, work, shop, learn and play. Streets and sidewalks will be consistently

safe, lively and compelling, throughout all seasons. But livability is more than that. To step into a truly livable urban place—an intersection of fine architecture, beautiful public spaces and appealing experiences—is to reach an elevation that few cities achieve. Minneapolis intends to be one of those cities.

**GREEN:** Nature has a special allure for Minnesotans. Long, snowy winters make green grass, flowers and trees almost intoxicating. There's no mystery about why Minneapolis residents savor the city's lakes, parks, tree-lined streets, biking, sailing and other outdoor activities. It's truly a green city—except for Downtown, where nature has been conspicuously shut out. The CBD is a grid of hard surfaces. Green plays second fiddle. That will change by 2025. Every street and parking lot will be lined with trees. Every freeway entrance will be landscaped. The Riverfront will be fully incorporated into the life of Downtown. The objective isn't just beauty and vitality. Greenery will passively filter storm water flowing into the Mississippi River, generate adjacent development, and stimulate an active lifestyle that draws talented young people and creative businesses.

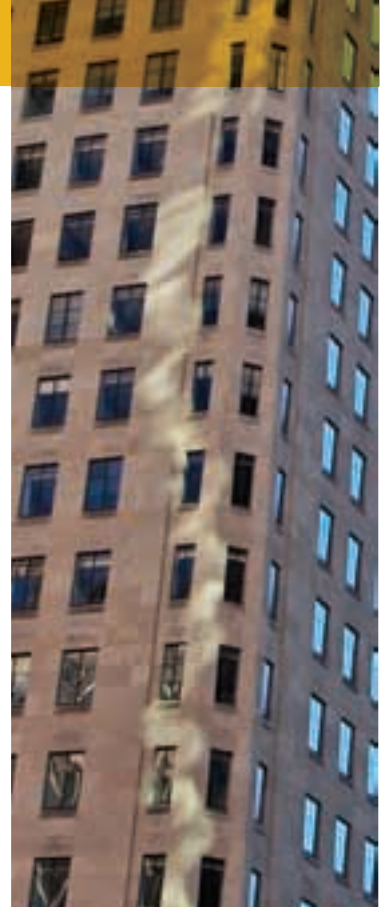
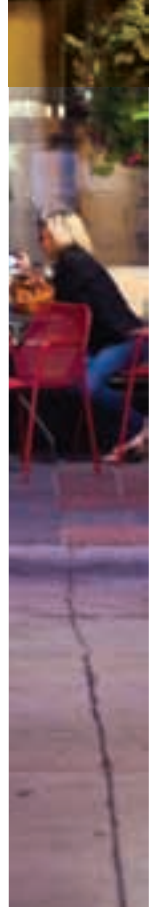
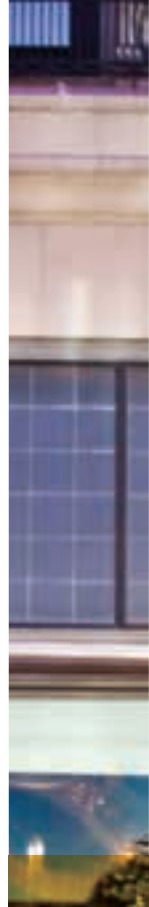
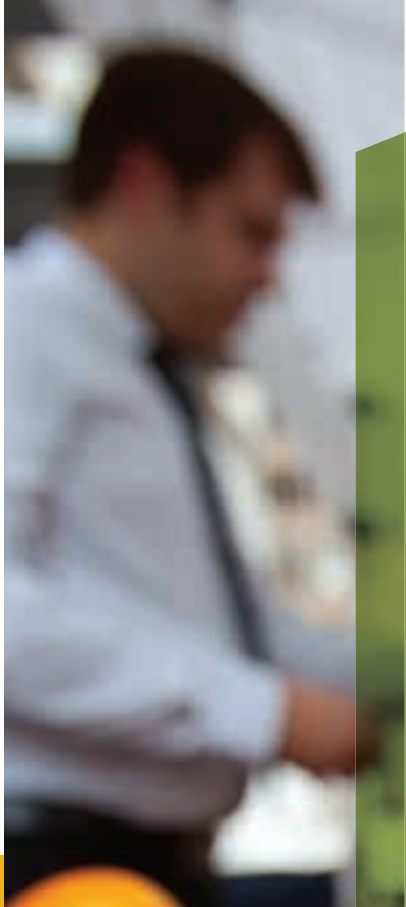




**CONNECTED:** From the days of riverboats and streetcars, transportation has dictated the living patterns of the Twin Cities. For Downtown to match the market expectations of 2025, a multilayered transportation system is needed. Cars will continue as a major player, but won't dominate as they did in the last half of the 20th century. Buses and trains, which supplied 40 percent of workday trips to Downtown in 2010, will increase their share to 60 percent by 2025. The Transportation Interchange, near Target Field, will become the region's hub for rail and bus service, with more than 1,500 arrivals and departures every weekday. Intra-downtown circulation—via zero-emission buses or streetcars—will provide vital connections and bring big-city circulation options to Downtown. Choices that include Hour Car, Nice Ride bicycles and a more flexible taxi system will add to the mix. Intermodal connections—guided by new hand-held technology—will be smoother, more available and less mysterious. Walking and biking will become far more important as people find ways to reduce distances. Indeed, for Downtown, **proximity** will emerge as the most efficient—and most important—transportation mode of all.

**EXCITING:** Despite impressive remakes of attractions like the Guthrie, the Walker Art Center, Target Field and the Cowles Center for Dance, Downtown Minneapolis doesn't yet offer the exciting overall experience of a great city. The absence of adventurous shopping is part of the void, as is the lack of a consistent urban landscape. The beginnings of an updated city are in place, however: rail transit, cultural and sports assets, good restaurants, popular and growing residential neighborhoods and the creative work force that cities love to attract.

**WELCOMING:** It's sometimes said that competitive cities "need a people climate as much as a business climate." Indeed, a city that excludes new people and new ideas will find it hard to attract the creative talent needed to prosper in the next economy. Downtown Minneapolis will benefit greatly by fostering an attitude of openness to all people. In a changing America, diversity is an important asset to a community that aims to take its downtown from good to great. The next chapter explains in detail how Downtown Minneapolis intends to proceed on 10 major initiatives.





# CHAPTER 4

## 10 MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2025.

The Downtown Council's subcommittees, along with participants in focus groups, surveys and other investigations, identified dozens of ideas to drive Downtown's future. This chapter summarizes their work. It lays out 10 major initiatives for building a thriving, livable, connected, green, exciting and welcoming Downtown Minneapolis in 2025.



## DOUBLE DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL POPULATION

- + As a catalyst for Downtown's next wave of economic, social and cultural vitality, double the residential population to 70,000.*
- + Emphasize and facilitate office development on the north end of Nicollet.*
- + Broaden the appeal of downtown living to a wider variety of residents.*
- + Ensure that every child who lives Downtown can attend school Downtown.*



To compete in the decades ahead, the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro region must be more balanced in its population and income growth. For decades, the metro population has grown only in the outer suburbs, with jobs and wealth shifting outward as well. While our metro region as a whole still outperforms key competitors like metro Seattle, Portland and Denver, our original central cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul) fall short by comparison.

Sharpening our region's competitive profile requires Minneapolis to grow again, and to reverse the outward trends in jobs and higher incomes. Downtown Minneapolis intends to do its part. By 2025, Downtown will have doubled its population—from 34,000 in 2010 to 70,000. That means it will have added 15,000 housing units—the equivalent of three large residential towers each year.

That kind of residential growth anticipates a full recovery in the real estate market. It further anticipates the demolition of the Metrodome to facilitate housing and connections to the University of Minnesota. All of that residential growth would spur downtown jobs and shopping, although this report's employment and retail targets are comparatively modest. The downtown workforce peaked at 165,000 in 2007. The 2007–2010 recession, along with continued job shifts toward the suburbs, drove those numbers to below 160,000 in 2011. Still, the need for efficiency, clustering and energy saving gives Downtown a potential advantage in the decades ahead.

### **DOWNTOWNS MUST COPE WITH THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK.**

By 2025, Downtown expects to add 3 million square feet of Class A, multi-tenant office space, the equivalent of three 50-story towers. That represents, by past standards, a quarter of the office space added during the 1980–1995 period. The reasons for the relatively low square footage are several: current high vacancy rates; new business standards that reduce the square footage required per person, and trends toward work-at-home options.

All in all, Downtown's job growth may come less from large firms with expensive office space than from lower-cost consultants and project workers. The challenge may be to find a way to capture as many of those workers as possible in unconventional settings—converted factories and warehouses, live-work lofts and studio spaces. Providing those kinds of affordable workspaces may turn out to be Downtown's greatest challenge in the decades ahead.

A similar shift has overtaken retail. Downtown expects to add 200,000 square feet (including two grocery stores) during a 15-year period. One reason for the relatively low expectation is the likely continued growth of online shopping. Another is that regional shopping destinations, including major malls, may continue to lose market share to big box stores and smaller neighborhood clusters that place stores closer to people's homes.



The 1,100 new hotel rooms are a similarly modest expectation, due largely to the hotel building spree leading up to the 2008 Republican convention.

In 2011, Minneapolis still has one of the nation's best major-city downtowns. It expects to have an even better one in 2025, mainly by filling in blank spots with new residential buildings while depending on a growing downtown population to drive investments in new jobs and retail. Successful downtowns have the critical mass to generate economic, social and cultural energy all day, all week and in every season. Downtown Minneapolis intends to reach critical mass by 2025.

**EMPHASIZE AND FACILITATE OFFICE AND HOUSING ON NICOLLET'S NORTH END; EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BACK-OFFICE SPACE AND LIVE/WORK OPTIONS THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN**

One might assume that a popular light-rail station on Nicollet, a station expected to handle 8,000 to 10,000 riders per day by 2014, would produce at least one major office tower. After all, the station's two lines offer convenient connections to the airport and (in 2014) the University of Minnesota. But development never happened. A half dozen empty blocks, used mostly for surface parking, sit on the station's doorstep. Nicollet's north end has become, quite literally, the "other side of the tracks."

Making the underachieving area attractive for new office, residential and hotel development is one of this plan's top objectives. Aside from light rail, Gateway Park (See page 53) should provide extra incentive. Green spaces have driven development through much of Minneapolis' history. Whatever other incentives might be required, developing the Powers and Ritz blocks on Nicollet's north end and the 10th and Nicollet parcel on the south end are top priorities.



Seeking opportunities and strategies to add office, studio and live/work space for creative vendors and other contract workers should also be pursued. This brings added vitality and creativity directly to Downtown. The Warehouse District, the North Loop, Loring Park, Elliott Park, the Mill District, the Metrodome area and a new Hennepin Avenue Arts Corridor offer especially attractive possibilities.

### **BROADEN THE APPEAL OF DOWNTOWN LIVING TO A WIDER VARIETY OF RESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY FAMILIES, CHILDREN, STUDENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS**

To reach its 2025 population and housing goals, Downtown must broaden its appeal, especially to families with children, baby boomer-era retirees and college students. In a normal recovery, the city might expect to add 8,000 downtown housing units over 15 years, most of them occupied by young professionals working

nearby and a narrow slice of empty nesters looking to downsize. But aiming to capture 15,000 new units requires a whole new approach. Making Downtown a greener, more appealing place (See page 72) will help draw interest, as will providing a superior intra-downtown circulation system. Finding ways to make Downtown more child-friendly and more convenient to health services is another necessity.

Portland, Seattle and Dallas are examples of cities that have broadened their downtown living appeal in recent years. Each added about 20,000 downtown housing units during the 1990–2010 period. Minneapolis should be able to nearly match that rate by 2025. Converting historic office buildings is one approach. Filling in the numerous surface parking lots in the city core is another. There's plenty of room for new housing, especially if the Metrodome site and its adjacent blocks become a high-density residential neighborhood with a park, ball fields, skating rinks and so on.

Downtown's housing stock should be marketed to a wide variety of renters and buyers—and at various price points. In 2011, the vacancy rate was reported to be 4.2 percent, with fewer than 2,000 units (2 percent) available for people of modest means. This plan supports the growth of diversity of every sort in the downtown housing scene. All are welcome: buyers, renters, younger, older, people of various incomes and ethnic backgrounds with various needs for housing types, from studio apartments in high-rise buildings to live/work lofts to three-bedroom townhouses. More residents will bring livelier, safer, more attractive street life—a key element in building Downtown's future.

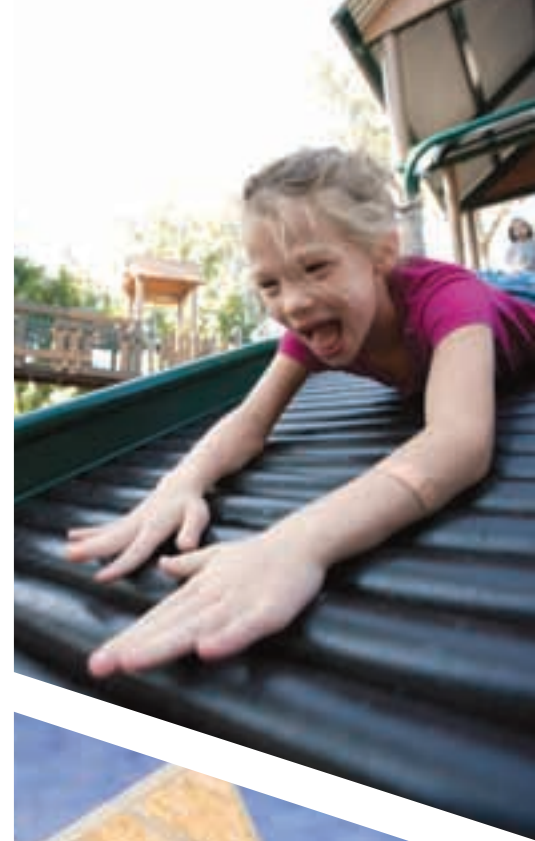
### **ENSURE THAT EVERY CHILD WHO LIVES DOWNTOWN CAN ATTEND SCHOOL DOWNTOWN; BUILD AT LEAST ONE NEW DOWNTOWN SCHOOL; FOCUS ON MAKING DOWNTOWN'S WORKERS THE BEST-EDUCATED IN THE NATION**

A downtown that's counting so heavily on drawing creative talent and residential growth must be attractive to young families with children. That means a rather dramatic atmospheric turn for Downtown—from child-ambivalent to child-friendly. More greenery and more playgrounds are part of the answer. But a top priority must be adding a school (or schools) that are trusted by parents to deliver high-quality education from preschool through high school.

An educated workforce has long been a prime competitive advantage for the Minneapolis-St. Paul region and for Downtown. Minneapolis ranks among the most educated major cities in the nation, with 41 percent of residents over 25 holding college degrees. Only Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Raleigh, N.C., rank higher. That's extremely good news for Downtown's employment prospects—but it comes with a huge asterisk.

The city's educational achievement is overwhelmingly white. Sixty percent of the city's white residents hold college degrees, but only 25 percent of non-whites do. With minority populations making up a greater portion of the future workforce, Minneapolis schools must improve student performance. The city and Downtown will begin to lose their advantage unless minority students do better in the classroom.

While closing the achievement gap lies outside the scope of this report, Downtown's educational institutions—at all levels—must play a part in the solution. One action that the downtown community can take is to **ensure that every school-age child living Downtown can attend school Downtown**. Another action is to insist on the excellence of schools, whether they are public or private, new or existing. Proximity to the city's energetic business community should bring innovation, expertise and a greater possibility of success to Downtown schools.







## STRENGTHEN THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTS, EMPLOYEES AND VISITORS

In a twist of irony, Downtown has a nationally acclaimed medical center (the Hennepin County Medical Center) that downtown employees and residents seldom use. The same holds for Downtown's collection of medical offices, which Downtowners often skip over for appointments in the suburbs.

The principle of location efficiency should change those patterns. The convenience of nearby medical care should be a draw to downtown business and residential vitality. Conversely, new residents should generate demand for new medical and dental offices Downtown, especially near the Hennepin County Medical Center in Downtown East. Indeed, housing for senior citizens near HCMC and new adjacent medical offices form a logical synergy. It's a great frustration in planning circles that so many elderly citizens choose to isolate themselves in auto-dependent suburbs, having to depend on others for getting to doctor appointments.

An attractive urban lifestyle would offer many of them freedom, independence and convenience.

Indeed, the downtown lifestyle should be seen as a healthy choice. Downtown living means more walking and biking, more interaction with neighbors, more places to go and things to do without having to depend on cars. Movies, coffee shops, cultural attractions and sporting events are steps away. Healthy, active lifestyles should be part of Downtown's location advantage.





## TRANSFORM NICOLLET INTO A 'MUST SEE' DESTINATION

- +Extend and invigorate the original mall segment, establishing plazas and signature attractions along its route.*
- +Designate the Nicollet corridor as running from the Walker Art Center, through Loring Park, to the river.*
- +Redesign Nicollet as the region's premier walking experience—a linear park with overhanging trees, flowers, shops and office towers.*
- +Animate the street with a curb-less walking environment that shares space with quiet, zero-emission transit vehicles.*



To thrive in the decades ahead, Minneapolis and its metro region must be seen less through the self-deprecating lens of Garrison Keillor and the Coen brothers, and more as an appealing, livable and energetic place, a city that embraces its seasons and offers creative opportunities and world-class attractions. It needs a symbol that people can see in their mind's eye, an image that defines the city, much as the Space Needle defines Seattle or the Liberty Bell defines Philadelphia.

By 2025, Nicollet will be as much a signature for Minneapolis as the Boston Common, the San Antonio Riverwalk, the Embarcadero in San Francisco, or the Magnificent Mile in Chicago. Like those places, Nicollet will be a civic organism that lives, moves and interacts with residents, workers and visitors. It will be a place not just for looking and admiring, but also for participating and embracing, no matter the season.

How to accomplish all this?

THE ICONIC PLACE FOR MINNEAPOLIS AND ITS REGION WILL BE A REDESIGNED, REENERGIZED AND EXTENDED NICOLLET CORRIDOR.

**REDESIGN THE MALL AS THE REGION'S PREMIER WALKING AND BIKING EXPERIENCE—A LINEAR PARK LINED WITH TREES, FLOWER GARDENS, SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND OFFICE TOWERS**

By 2025, the Nicollet corridor will extend from the Walker Art Center to the Sculpture Garden, then across/over Hennepin Avenue into Loring Park, to Peavey Plaza, through the heart of the business and shopping district to a new Gateway Park, which will stretch from the light rail station on 5th Street, curl around the Central Library and end at the Mississippi River, near the foot of the Father Hennepin Bridge.

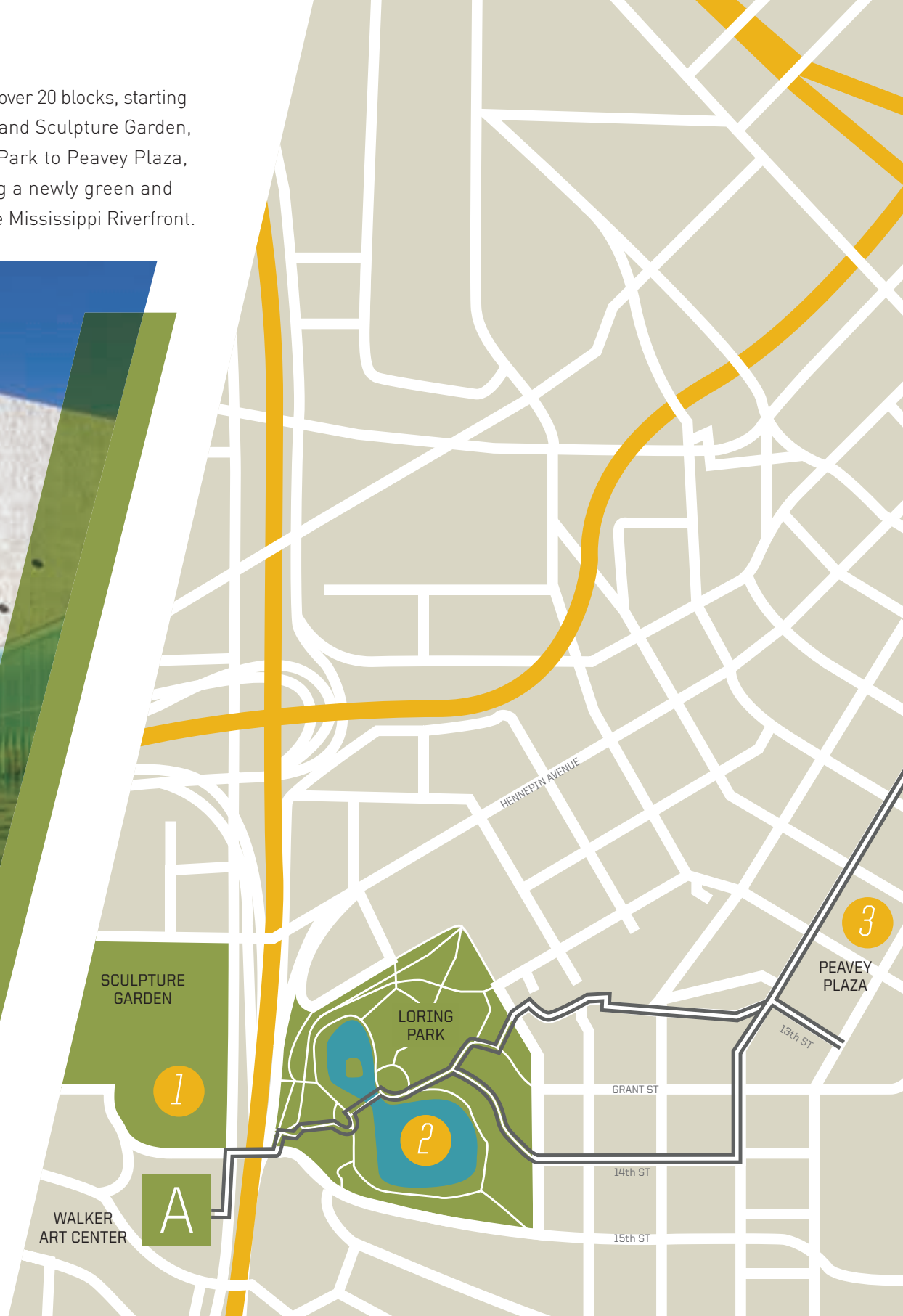
The new Nicollet corridor will cover 20 blocks. That's nearly two miles. But pedestrians will be rewarded by one of the world's best walking experiences. The Sculpture Garden, Loring Park, Peavey Plaza, the new Gateway Park and the Mississippi Riverfront will be as impeccably maintained as other world-class green spaces. New plantings and art pieces along the street itself will be first-rate. New residential buildings and office towers will bring a reenergized retail scene, including unique, local shops not found in suburban lifestyle centers. Sidewalk cafés will continue to be a big part of the Nicollet experience. Updated signs and digital information will provide guidance, transparency and added value. Indeed, the new Nicollet will be branded and marketed as running from the Walker Art Center to the river.

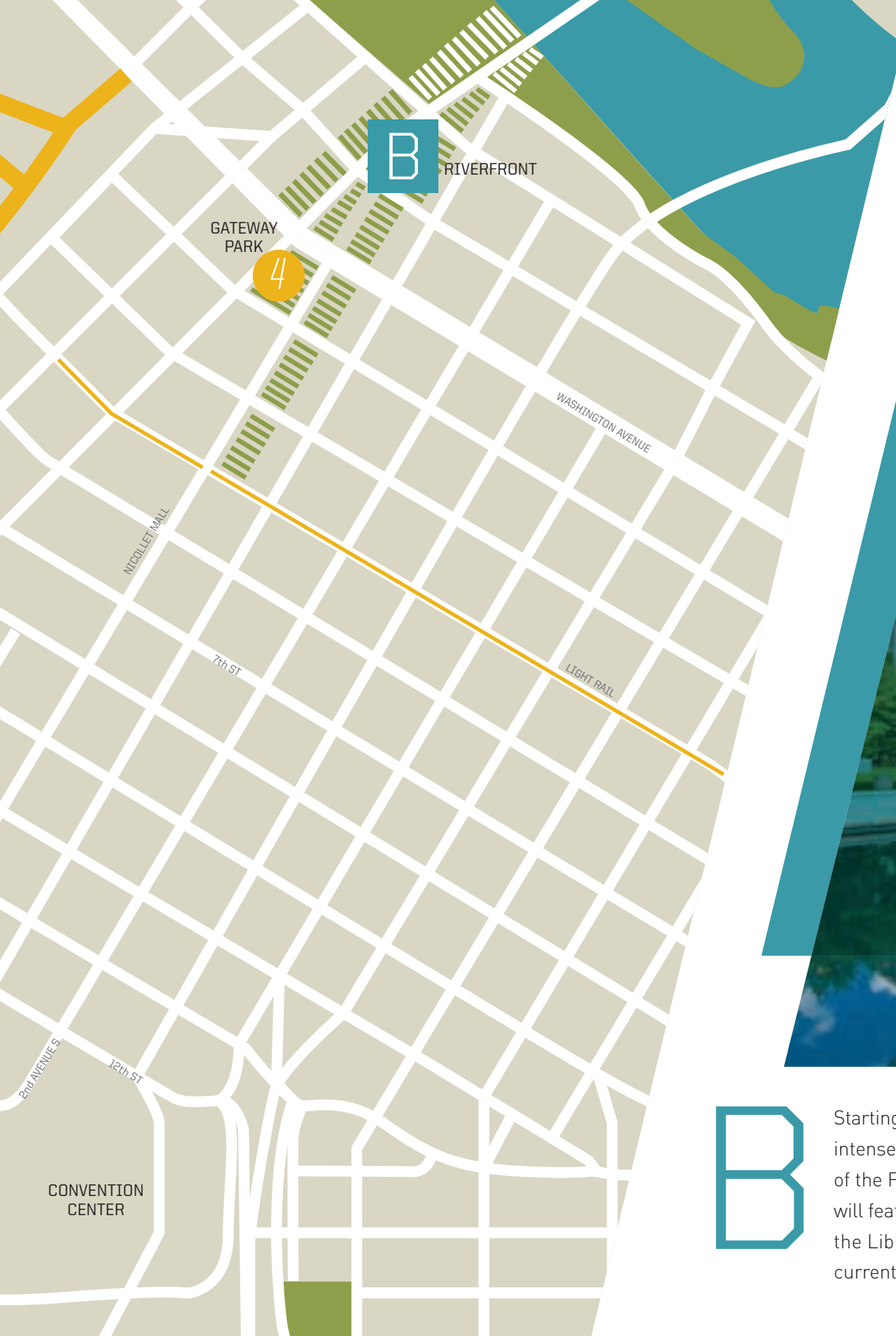




# A

The Nicollet corridor will cover 20 blocks, starting at the Walker Art Center and Sculpture Garden, running through Loring Park to Peavey Plaza, then heading north along a newly green and fashionable Nicollet to the Mississippi Riverfront.





B

Starting at the 5th Street light rail station, a strip of intense greenery will run for six blocks to the foot of the Father Hennepin Bridge. This Gateway Park will feature a large gathering space just north of the Library and a “step down” to the river on the current site of the Post Office parking ramp.











## **ANIMATE NICOLLET WITH A CURB-LESS WALKING ENVIRONMENT THAT SHARES SPACE WITH QUIET, ZERO-EMISSION TRANSIT VEHICLES—ELECTRIC BUSES OR MODERN STREETCARS—THAT OFFER FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE EVERY FEW MINUTES**

By eliminating curbs, the new Nicollet will give pedestrians extra dominion over the space. Indeed, the space will be designed to attract crowds and active lifestyles. Trees, kiosks, flower beds, water features, art pieces, lighting and vertical connections to skyways will all be part of the experience, as will moderately sized, quiet and zero-emission transit vehicles—either low-profile buses or modern streetcars of the type gaining popularity in many cities. These vehicles will provide frequent and free circulation along Nicollet and throughout Downtown. The overall effect—in greenery, technology and active living—will make Nicollet the greenest urban street in America.

## **INTERPOSE, AT INTERVALS ALONG THE ROUTE, PUBLIC PLAZAS AND GATHERING SPACES THAT FEATURE STUNNING ART PIECES, WATER FEATURES, DRAMATIC LIGHTING, INTERACTIVE PROGRAMMING AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, BECOME THE REGION'S SIGNATURE PLACE AND ICONIC IDENTITY**

Those navigating the Nicollet corridor's entire length will seldom experience the same trip twice. That's because Peavey Plaza, Gateway Park and the other public nodes along the way will be in constant motion. A farmers market one day, a jazz concert the

portrait painters, urban rock-climbers, model boat racers. You never know what you'll find on Nicollet. It's a combination of the State Fair and Rockefeller Plaza with a North Woods accent.

Nicollet will be alive 24/7/365/4—that's an all-day, all-week, all-year, four-seasons experience. People will live on it, work on it and play on it. Ten million people a year will visit the corridor by 2025, making it an increasingly popular tourist destination. Nicollet will be more than a "must-see" stop; it will be a "must-have" experience.

First, however, must come the realization that Nicollet Mall needs to be reimagined and refreshed. The serpentine pedestrian/transit design was innovative in 1968, and a remarkable success during the next several decades. In its heyday, the Mall hosted such prestigious retailers as Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Mark Shale, and department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Nieman Marcus and Dayton's. But after the Mall of America opened in 1992, Nicollet began to lose its shopping luster. Other changes in retailing and in the city's demographics during the 1990s contributed to a gradual diminishing of retail options. The faster pace of job and population growth at the suburban edge also played a part. Nicollet Mall became less of a regional destination and never achieved national status.

Still, Nicollet remains Minneapolis' centerpiece. A number of prestigious stores remain and the street continues to be an impressive address for corporations and law firms. Most of its energy has shifted to the south end, matching the presence of Target's corporate headquarters and a string of lively outdoor cafes. In contrast, the north end is drab and vacant. Gaping blank



## **ANIMATE NICOLLET WITH A CURB-LESS WALKING ENVIRONMENT THAT SHARES SPACE WITH QUIET, ZERO-EMISSION TRANSIT VEHICLES—ELECTRIC BUSES OR MODERN STRETCARS—THAT OFFER FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE EVERY FEW MINUTES**

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## **ANIMATE NICOLLET WITH A CURB-LESS WALKING ENVIRONMENT THAT SHARES SPACE WITH QUIET, ZERO-EMISSION TRANSIT VEHICLES—ELECTRIC BUSES OR MODERN STRETCARS—THAT OFFER FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE EVERY FEW MINUTES**

By eliminating curbs, the new Nicollet will give pedestrians extra dominion over the space. Indeed, the space will be designed to attract crowds and active lifestyles. Trees, kiosks, flower beds, water features, art pieces, lighting and vertical connections to skyways will all be part of the experience, as will moderately sized, quiet and zero-emission transit vehicles—either low-profile buses or modern streetcars of the type gaining popularity in many cities. These vehicles will provide frequent and free circulation along Nicollet and throughout Downtown. The overall effect—in greenery, technology and active living—will make Nicollet the greenest urban street in America.

## **INTERPOSE, AT INTERVALS ALONG THE ROUTE, PUBLIC PLAZAS AND GATHERING SPACES THAT FEATURE STUNNING ART PIECES, WATER FEATURES, DRAMATIC LIGHTING, INTERACTIVE PROGRAMMING AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS THAT, TAKEN TOGETHER, BECOME THE REGION'S SIGNATURE PLACE AND ICONIC IDENTITY**

Those navigating the Nicollet corridor's entire length will seldom experience the same trip twice. That's because Peavey Plaza, Gateway Park and the other public nodes along the way will be in constant motion. A farmers market one day, a jazz concert the

portrait painters, urban rock-climbers, model boat racers. You never know what you'll find on Nicollet. It's a combination of the State Fair and Rockefeller Plaza with a North Woods accent.

Nicollet will be alive 24/7/365/4—that's an all-day, all-week, all-year, four-seasons experience. People will live on it, work on it and play on it. Ten million people a year will visit the corridor by 2025, making it an increasingly popular tourist destination. Nicollet will be more than a "must-see" stop; it will be a "must-have" experience.

First, however, must come the realization that Nicollet Mall needs to be reimagined and refreshed. The serpentine pedestrian/transit design was innovative in 1968, and a remarkable success during the next several decades. In its heyday, the Mall hosted such prestigious retailers as Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Mark Shale, and department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Nieman Marcus and Dayton's. But after the Mall of America opened in 1992, Nicollet began to lose its shopping luster. Other changes in retailing and in the city's demographics during the 1990s contributed to a gradual diminishing of retail options. The faster pace of job and population growth at the suburban edge also played a part. Nicollet Mall became less of a regional destination and never achieved national status.

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## BEFORE & AFTER

Creating a consistent experience for pedestrians requires active storefronts and a compelling sidewalk atmosphere, as shown in the contrasting images below.





# 3

## BUILD GATEWAY PARK

- +Fill in the blanks on Nicollet's empty north end.*
- +Create a grand connection between the CBD and the Riverfront.*
- +Provide an iconic gathering place that will become the metro region's 'central park.'*

### GREEN SPACE

A green space that steps down to the river would replace the Post Office parking garage and open Downtown to the Riverfront.



The Gateway District on Nicollet's north end never fully recovered from the slum clearance frenzy of the 1960s. The area was supposed to fill up with "towers in a park," the modernist concept popularized by French architect Le Corbusier. Only a few such buildings were built, however, most notably the Towers condominiums, the Federal Reserve, the Central Library, Marquette Plaza and the ING ReliaStar building. The rest of the area has for decades been relegated to unsightly surface parking. The effect is that of a six-block "dead zone" standing between the downtown core and the Riverfront. Not even the arrival of light rail, with a prominent station at 5th and Nicollet, has been able to revive the area.

By 2025, however, a new Gateway Park, stretching from the light rail station to the river—with a major community gathering space just north of the library—will inspire new office, hotel and residential towers on a half-dozen adjacent sites. At the same time, the park will provide a critical link to a Riverfront that many downtown visitors miss altogether. The Gateway will be the "green anchor," "the grand promenade," the "Millennium Park," that the city and region have been missing. Indeed, the Nicollet-Hennepin-Washington intersection will form a nexus at which all sections of the city converge, making it an ideal focal point for large outdoor gatherings, festivals and other events.

Quiet corners might also be set aside for reflection. Bryant Park, located adjacent to New York's main library, has an outdoor reading room that may provide a model. Rice and Mears parks in St. Paul offer closer-to-home examples of exquisite urban green spaces. A major art piece that becomes a signature for Minneapolis may be most appropriate in this space. Light, water, fire and ice are possible themes. In both appearance and in programming, this green anchor should be adaptable to activities in every season.

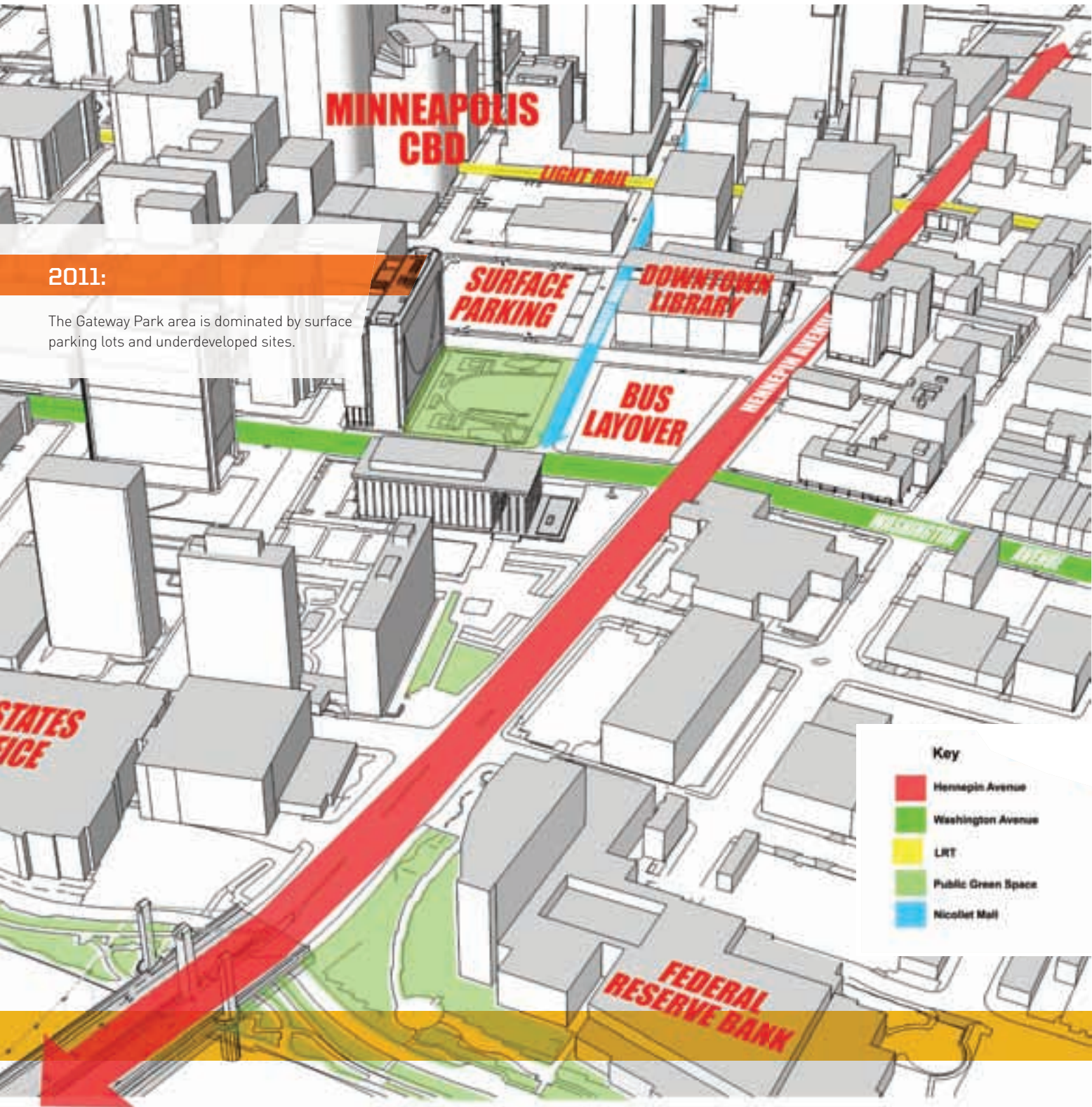
The park will open a view corridor to the river through the fountain and existing Gateway green strip that runs along Hennepin Avenue to the Post Office. It's contemplated that the unsightly parking ramp built onto the historic Post Office building could be removed, thus opening the way for a dramatic step-down to the river from beside the majestic Father Hennepin Bridge. Restaurants and other retail attractions along the Post Office building's lower-level colonnade are also contemplated as part of the Gateway experience.

All in all, Gateway Park will dramatically upgrade Nicollet's under-achieving north end and join the Riverfront to the downtown core—which will undergo its own green revolution (See page 72) by 2025.

## GATHERING SPACE

A major community gathering space would straddle Nicollet near the Washington-Hennepin intersection.



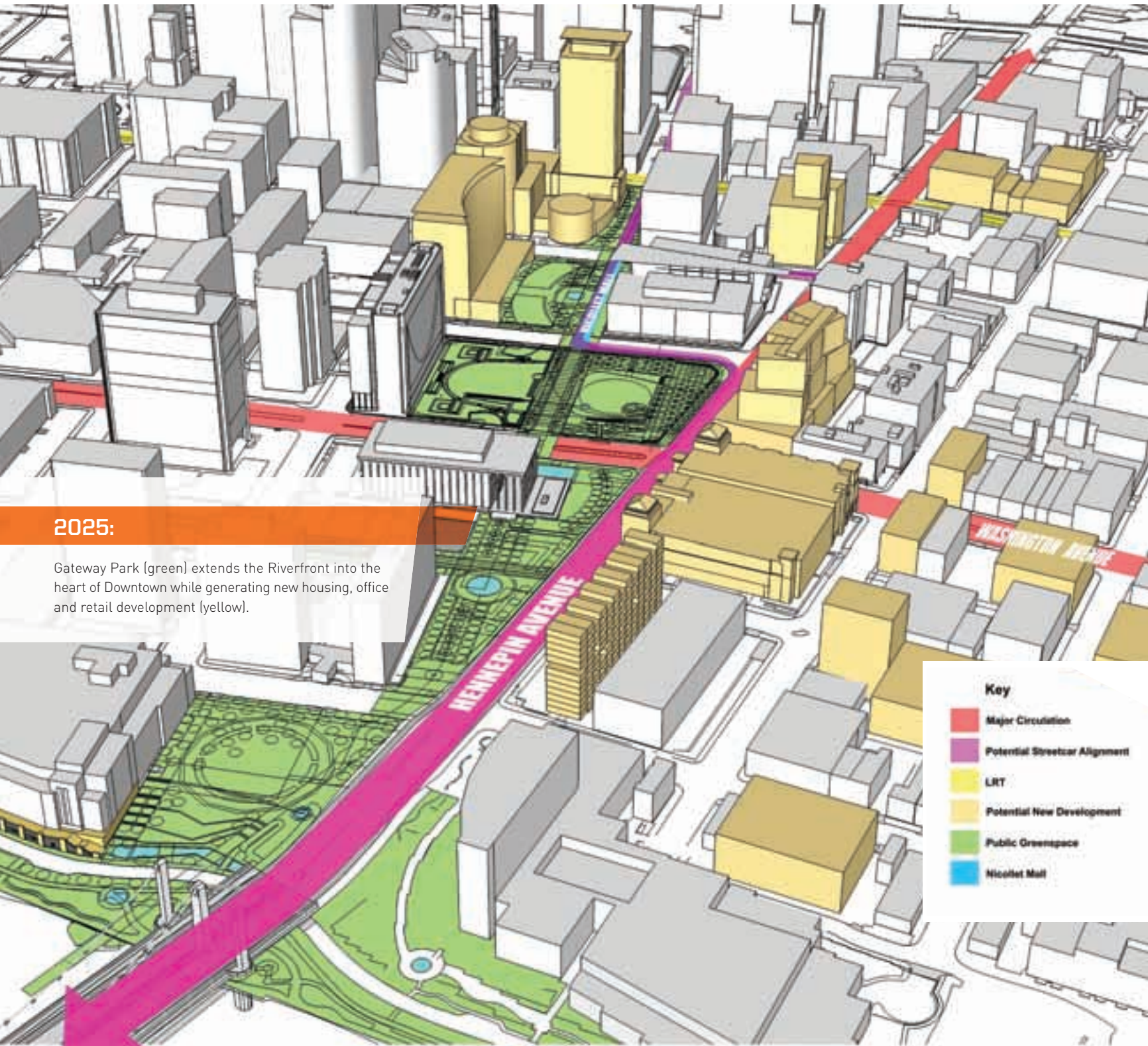


**2011:**

The Gateway Park area is dominated by surface parking lots and underdeveloped sites.



**BEFORE**



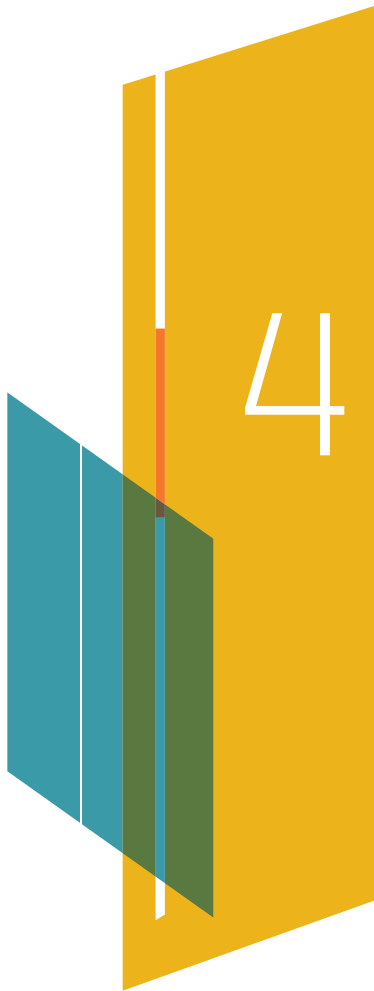
## 2025:

Gateway Park (green) extends the Riverfront into the heart of Downtown while generating new housing, office and retail development (yellow).

### Key

- Major Circulation
- Potential Streetcar Alignment
- LRT
- Potential New Development
- Public Greenspace
- Nicollet Mall

AFTER



## CREATE A CONSISTENTLY COMPELLING DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

- +Deliver a consistently excellent pedestrian atmosphere that inspires people to explore Downtown block after block, 24/7/365.*
- +Embrace density to build the critical mass needed to sustain a great city.*
- +Concentrate a seamless connection of visual, physical and social experiences along a 'triple spine' of Nicollet, Hennepin and 1st avenues.*
- +Position Downtown as an international center for creativity and design.*
- \* Establish Hennepin Avenue as the region's primary arts corridor.*





Referring to her hometown in 1937, Gertrude Stein said, “**the trouble with Oakland is that when you get there, there isn’t any there there.**” Not so for Downtown Minneapolis in 2025. The city intends to become an even more distinctive, competitive and attractive place in the decades ahead, a place that’s as much an **experience** as a destination.

That means that Downtown will continue as a place for doing things while becoming a far better place for just being. All great cities have that special quality. Even if you’re not going to a ball game, concert or restaurant, it’s fun to be on Chicago’s Magnificent Mile, New York’s Central Park West or Boston’s Newbury Street.

Downtown Minneapolis doesn’t yet have that experiential X-factor. Its great flaw might be best explained by elementary physics: the city lacks consistency in time and space.

**TIME** Weekdays are livelier than weeknights. Weekend days aren’t lively at all. Summers are livelier than winters. A more consistent 24/7/365 experience is needed.

**SPACE** In many cities, it would be pleasant and interesting to walk across downtown for a mile or two, the same distance as, say, from the Guthrie to the Walker Art Center. But in Minneapolis you’d have to pass by weedy parking lots, blank storefronts and crumbling pavement as well as lovely parks and beautiful buildings. Filling in the blank spots with beauty and vitality, and improving the consistency of the door-to-door experience, is a primary task that lies ahead.

At its root, the challenge is largely cultural; Minnesotans tend to see life as a series of destinations. Getting from home to a concert and then directly back again is the objective. To arrive early for dinner, to stroll down Nicollet, to linger afterward in a beautiful place, to embrace the best of urban life by being as well as doing,

is a behavior that Downtown can cultivate—but only if its sidewalks and multiple attractions can be made more consistent and inviting.

### **INSPIRE PEOPLE TO EXPLORE DOWNTOWN THROUGH A SEAMLESS CONNECTION OF VISUAL, PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCES; CONCENTRATE THESE EXPERIENCES ALONG A 'TRIPLE SPINE' OF NICOLLET, HENNEPIN AND 1ST AVENUES**

Downtown Minneapolis has extraordinary buildings, but its connective tissue is not in the same class. The outdoor walking environment is often uninviting. Perceptions persist that some areas are not safe, despite a remarkably low crime rate. Retail is nearly absent on the street level. Skyways are lively and effective in winter, but they remove vitality from the streets on most days of the year. Public gathering spaces are rare, and many are poorly maintained. Transit circulation within Downtown is too infrequent and confusing to reach its full potential. Taxis are expensive and available only at designated stands. Districts within Downtown aren't well labeled or designated. Directional signage is poor, both on the skyway and street levels. Signs are important because the city is quite poorly arranged: the Guthrie, the historic Hennepin Avenue theaters, Orchestra Hall, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Target Field, Target Center, the Cowles Center for Dance, the Convention Center, the Walker Art Center, the Central Library and the Mill City Museum are all major destinations. But they are scattered randomly apart from one another.

By 2025, Downtown will be filled in and knitted together to provide a more consistent and livelier door-to-door experience for visitors, workers and residents. Special attention will be given to concentrating redevelopment and pedestrian amenities along

a "triple spine" of Nicollet, Hennepin and 1st avenues, as well as along their major east-west connections.

User-friendly connections will be forged between skyways and sidewalks. In other words, it will be far easier to get from the skyway level to the street and vice versa. (See page 46) Another improvement will be the installation of clean and safe public restrooms in the Warehouse District and throughout Downtown.

### **POSITION DOWNTOWN AS AN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CREATIVITY AND DESIGN**

Minneapolis has a concentration of arts, theater, design and music that other cities would die for. But those creative expressions seldom pour out into public places, or penetrate the consciousness of the wider public. By 2025, Downtown intends to leverage its impressive cultural assets in a way that builds a more beautiful, compelling and prosperous city center.

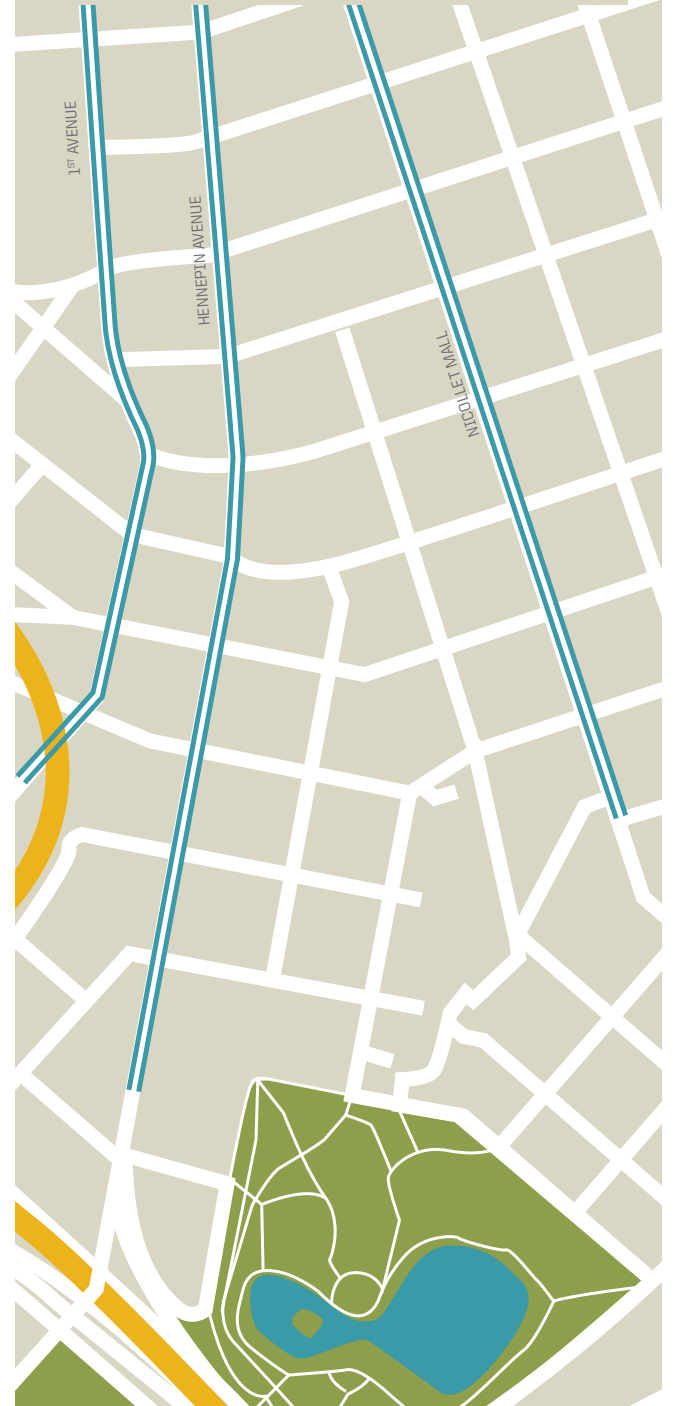
The influence of the arts will be seen everywhere: in new and revived public gathering spaces; in upgraded landscaping; in high-quality materials used in buildings; in live/work studio spaces at street level; in extensive programming that brings a wide variety of culture and entertainment to plazas and street corners; and in experiences that inspire a sense of community and belonging.

For Downtown, art and design will no longer be sequestered in institutions, but will spill out onto the streets to define who we are as a city and celebrate where we live.



## TRIPLE SPINE

To create a more consistently excellent block-by-block experience for pedestrians, a concentration of activities and streetscape amenities will be focused along Nicollet, Hennepin and 1st avenues, as well as along their major east-west connectors.



# Public safety:

## Perception is more important than reality

Despite a low and declining crime rate, many metro residents perceive Downtown as unsafe. In surveys, focus groups and private conversations, fear of crime overwhelmingly emerges as the primary deterrent for people who might otherwise spend time Downtown. Until that perception changes, the goals of this report will be difficult to achieve.

A good starting point for addressing the problem is to understand that, in this case, perception is more important than reality. If people look at a street and see litter, broken pavement, shabby or vacant storefronts and sketchy-looking characters hanging around, they will feel unsafe and do all they can to avoid that street.

Thanks to the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District launched in 2009, Downtown has begun to present a far cleaner and somewhat greener appearance. In addition, a joint effort among police, private security guards, social workers and city prosecutors has helped to reduce lifestyle crimes like loitering, public intoxication and aggressive panhandling.

Still, progress is slow and difficult. It's not illegal to stand on the street and look menacing. Yet, that's enough to cause a perception of danger. So, what to do?

This report is interlaced with ideas for making Downtown a more consistently livable and appealing place. Planting trees and flowers, repairing streets and sidewalks, and demanding higher standards of appearance for parking lots and storefronts will help. Encouraging visual transparency between sidewalk and street-level business is important. Street fairs, farmers markets and other programming held in public spaces (in all seasons) is vital. Dispersing east-west bus routes away from 7th Street is another strategy. Limiting the expansion of skyways is another possibility.

The key to solving the safety-perception problem is to put more people on the street. On days when Twins games draw huge crowds, it's hard to imagine "danger" because the perception of danger is overwhelmed and outnumbered by people having a good time. Building confidence in public spaces requires multiple strategies. Police, courts, social workers, businesses and investors must all be involved and committed to making long-term changes.





### **ESTABLISH AN ARTS CORRIDOR TO BRING VISIBILITY AND FOCUS TO THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY**

It's unfortunate that so much of Minneapolis' vibrant arts community operates behind closed doors. Historic industrial structures, such as the Northrup King building in Northeast Minneapolis, offer reasonably priced studio and exhibition space, but are open to the public only occasionally. Even during semiannual festivals, these large spaces operate as single-purpose destinations, similar to suburban malls.

A true arts corridor, with street-level galleries and adjacent studio and live/work spaces would open the arts scene to more general pedestrian traffic and broaden the appeal of local artists and their works. A string of live/work studios along Hennepin Avenue, or clustered near other cultural attractions, would create the kind of arts district that brings traffic, business and attention to artists in New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C. and other cities.

Such a district would also mend the weak links between Minneapolis' numerous arts organizations; establish synergy with the city's vibrant and creative advertising industry; and revive a string of historic, underused buildings and storefronts along Hennepin Avenue. Such a district would add immeasurably to the consistency and vitality of downtown street life, and contribute to the growing sports/arts/entertainment scene.

By 2025, Downtown intends to bring 5 million visitors a year to its new Arts Corridor along Hennepin Avenue as well as to reinforce the benefits of living near arts attractions.



5

## ESTABLISH A DOWNTOWN SPORTS DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES A NEW VIKINGS STADIUM

*+Renovate Target Center and build the Transportation Interchange.*

*+Maximize connections to the Entertainment/Theater District and the CBD.*



The opening of Target Field in 2010 was a revelation to Downtown Minneapolis. The new Twins ballpark showed how a professional sports stadium can bring multiple benefits not only to a team, but to the surrounding community. Target Field enlivened the city's street life; bolstered restaurants, bars and hotels; reintroduced Downtown to a wider audience; generated development in adjacent blocks; and showed how transit could efficiently serve large crowds.

It's important now for Downtown to leverage the Twins experience in order to stabilize and strengthen its other professional sports assets, namely the Vikings, Timberwolves and Lynx. That means:

- Building an iconic new stadium for the NFL team and other community events.
- Attractively renovating Target Center for NBA and WNBA games, as well as for other community gatherings.

To ignore these assets and allow the teams to leave the market would be a serious mistake. Professional sports bring major benefits to Downtown and to the metro region. They boost the economy and local government. They bring community pride and identity.

And they contribute significantly to the quality of life. The Twin Cities—and all of Minnesota—would be a lesser place without

pro sports. Twice before, this market has lost major sports franchises—in basketball and hockey. Replacing a professional team is a costly proposition.

Building a new Vikings stadium would leverage an abundance of assets already in place. By clustering Target Field, Target Center and a new NFL venue near the metro region's prime transportation hub (See page 70), then adding the theaters, restaurants, hotels and music clubs in and around the Warehouse District, a powerful sports and entertainment district would be created. Such a district would attract world-class events and ensure the long-term viability of professional sports in the Twin Cities market.

By 2025, and with these venues in place, Downtown intends to attract professional soccer, **the MLB All-Star Game, the Super Bowl, the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament, the NHL Winter Classic, the NBA All-Star Game and the Big Ten Basketball Tournament.**

Each of those events brings important economic benefits and potential marketing bonanzas to Minneapolis and the metro region.

A major Sports and Entertainment Initiative will be formed to recruit those and other events, and to ensure a superior experience for visitors and potential investors in the region.



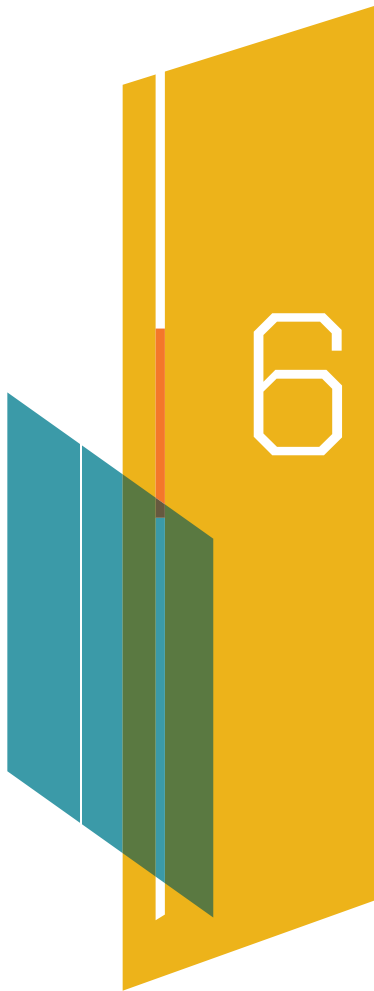




## A SPORTS DISTRICT

The Twin Cities metro market would achieve a competitive advantage if it concentrated a critical mass of sports venues, as well as entertainment and hospitality assets, around the region's primary transportation hub, to be located near Target Field.





## LEAD THE NATION IN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- + Expand and enhance transportation options to encourage new jobs, housing and business vitality.*
- + Maintain and improve high capacity for auto and transit commuters.*
- + Increase the daily transit share from 40 percent to 60 percent.*
- + Increase circulation within Downtown.*
- + Build the Transportation Interchange as the metro's primary transit hub.*
- + Secure stable, reliable transit funding.*

Transportation is the bloodstream that keeps Downtown alive and humming. It's also a prime catalyst for new investments and new prosperity. Without adequate freeways, HOV lanes, surface streets, parking capacity, bus and train lines, taxi service and other modes of transportation, Downtown couldn't function—and couldn't grow.

For decades, transportation planners were obsessed with reducing travel times to keep traffic flowing into downtowns and other employment centers. But “building your way out of congestion” with wider freeways and more cars proved to be a dead end. It was too expensive and took up too much space. Eventually, congestion was accepted as a fact of life in successful city centers, an indicator of economic well-being.

To continue growing, downtowns have shifted their emphasis from adding lanes to adding options—especially mass transit, with its impressive ability to move more people, in less space, at less cost. Moreover, the focus has shifted from reducing travel times to reducing travel distance. Living close to destinations turns out to be the most efficient option of all, and brings a huge benefit to downtowns. That's one reason for an increasing emphasis on walking, biking and downtown circulators (small electric buses or modern trolleys that shuttle passengers within a downtown zone).

For Minneapolis to achieve the goals set forth in this report—especially goals of new jobs and housing—transportation's capacity and options must continue to grow, both for Downtown's long-distance commuters and for its close-in residents. Given the likelihood of rising fuel prices and the lack of space for freeway expansion, transit—both trains and buses—will be a key player in transportation in 2025. Indeed, the health and growth of the transit system is tied directly to the health and growth of Downtown Minneapolis. Ensuring transit's continued expansion and viability will be a top priority for Downtown in the decades ahead.

## **MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE HIGH CAPACITY FOR COMMUTERS; INCREASE DAILY TRANSIT SHARE FROM 40 PERCENT TO 60 PERCENT**

By big-city standards, Downtown Minneapolis is relatively easy to navigate. Freeway access is adequate. Parking is plentiful. Transit service is reliable and quite popular, with 40 percent of daytime commuters and visitors arriving by bus or train.

But there are significant challenges that dampen Downtown's appeal and threaten its future growth. Suburban visitors and others are deterred by the high cost of parking and the inability to park adjacent to their destinations. Parking meters are difficult to read, especially at night or during the winter when they are buried in snow. Traffic patterns are confusing and sometimes intimidating (one-way streets, disappearing lanes, off-curb parking, lack of adequate signage). Bottlenecks at freeway access points cause frustrating delays. Transit frequencies are greatly reduced on nights and weekends. Some bus stops are crowded, or even frightening. Connectivity (transferring buses, finding freeway entrances, etc.) is mysterious to many. Taxis are expensive and sometimes hard to find.

A number of improvements have been made. Concentrating commuter buses on the Marquette–2nd Avenue spine has increased capacity and decreased travel time. Reducing the number of bus stops throughout Downtown has also helped. Light rail and commuter rail have successfully demonstrated their ability to serve big crowds at Twins and Vikings games. LRT is a popular link to the airport and to downtown jobs. The perimeter parking ramps built over I-394 in the Warehouse District are working well.

But Downtown must address a number of persistent problems. Parking challenges must be solved. Street patterns and transit connectivity should be clearer, more consistent and more intuitive. Bottlenecks near freeway access points should be unplugged. Crowded bus stops should be dispersed.

Most important, transit's mode share for daytime commuters and visitors should increase from the 2011 level of 40 percent to 60 percent in 2025.

### **EXPAND TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO ADVANCE DOWNTOWN AS A LOCATION OF CHOICE FOR EMPLOYERS, SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES, AND NEW HOUSING**

A growing transit system and a growing, prosperous Downtown are inextricably linked. By 2025, mass transit should be more than a transportation choice; it should bring a distinct marketing advantage to Downtown by adding jobs, housing and visitors. Those who live, work or seek entertainment in Downtown shouldn't need or want a car to pursue most of their activities.

### **INCREASE CIRCULATION WITHIN DOWNTOWN BY INSTALLING A DOWNTOWN CIRCULATOR AND INTENSIFYING REGULAR TRANSIT SERVICE FOR CLOSE-IN NEIGHBORHOODS**

While access to Downtown remains a critical need, circulation within Downtown will rise in importance as the resident population doubles and the number of workers and visitors continues to grow. By 2025, Downtown will no longer be a tight central business district (CBD) covering a few blocks and connected by skyways, but a diverse central district that stretches from the Walker Art Center to the West Bank, from Elliot Park to the North Loop, from the Farmers Market to Dinkytown. Reliable connections within this "greater downtown" are vital.

As outlined elsewhere in this chapter, green corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists are an important solution. Bike-share and car-share programs also play a part, as does an affordable and accessible taxi zone within Downtown. Metro Transit's Free Ride service on Nicollet has been well received and should be taken as a model for future improvement. Transit is a key element. Every successful downtown has a transit circulation network that's so frequent, safe and reliable that people don't have to touch their cars—or even consult transit schedules—to complete their daily routines.

To achieve that aim by 2025, Downtown should pursue two internal circulation strategies:

- A frequent and free **Downtown Circulator** that operates in a tight zone within the CBD. That zone should include the Convention Center, Nicollet, Hennepin Avenue and key downtown destinations. Whether the Circulator is an electric bus or a modern streetcar, it should be accessible to all people and environmentally friendly. That means wide doors, roll-on features and zero emissions. It should be compatible with pedestrians, sidewalk cafes and vibrant street life—and should be supported by dedicated funding.
- **Intensified regular bus service in Central Minneapolis** that connects the Downtown core to major attractions including the Riverfront, the University of Minnesota and the neighborhoods on Downtown's periphery. The service would be free within Metro Transit's Downtown Zone. It would be frequent, predictable, reliable, easy to use and clean running. Evening and weekend operations would be expanded. This enhanced service would be part of Metro Transit's Primary Transit Network with regular routes slightly modified to support both commuters and intra-Downtown riders. East-west routes through Downtown would be spread out to alleviate crowding on 7th Street.

Providing these two systems of internal circulation will add greatly to Downtown's value and appeal.



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## CIRCULATOR OPTIONS

Denver uses zero-emission buses with trolley bells and folding doors to serve its popular 16th Street Mall. Portland employs modern streetcars to circulate through downtown and to attract housing and retail vitality. It is anticipated that Minneapolis will have the opportunity to choose one or both of those options to enhance circulation and investment downtown.





## EMPHASIZE ACCESSIBLE NEW TECHNOLOGY

Lack of transparency is a huge barrier to luring transit riders. People don't know when a bus is coming. They don't know for sure where it's going, how much it costs to ride to where they want to go or how long it will take to get there. Technology can answer all of these questions. Using smartphones or other hand-held devices, riders will soon, through advanced applications, be able to plan trips, pay fares, make restaurant reservations, buy movie tickets and get shopping discounts all with the same application. The next generation of customers should be able to navigate Downtown with a point and a click.

## SECURE STABLE, RELIABLE TRANSIT FUNDING

Downtown's future might be diminished by the insufficient and unreliable status of transit funding, whether for new projects or ongoing operations.

Demand across the country is extremely high for new projects. Federal sources cannot meet all demands, thus intensifying the competition for federal-share dollars, particularly for rail projects.

Farsighted metropolitan areas are creating stable, long-term revenue streams in order to attract and leverage scarce federal funding. That strategy enables several rail lines to be built simultaneously and it gives federal and local partners more bang for the buck. Denver, Salt Lake City and Los Angeles are among the metro areas that have adopted—or plan to adopt—that approach. Building multiple lines brings a competitive advantage to those cities, and it offers real estate investors and transit customers certainty about when and where the next transit lines will open.

Minnesota's one-line-at-a-time approach provides no such certainty. Its matching money is limited and subject to legislative vagaries. That tends to stretch out the time between major projects, raising the cost of those projects and confusing the real estate picture.

Transit operation carries similar burdens. Funding is insufficient and volatile. There is also a perverse twist to the funding system; part of transit's revenue relies on the auto sales tax. That means that transit must count on more people buying more cars—and not riding transit.

Haphazard funding for both capital and operations puts Downtown and the metro at a competitive disadvantage. Uncertainty obscures not only future transit options, but the real estate market as well. Elected officials should explore replacing current funding with dedicated sources. And they should explore issuing state and federal debt to leverage a build-out of a broader system, repaid by local revenue sources or "value capture" funding.

As this report makes clear, transit is not a social service but a critical transportation choice that successful cities need in order to grow and flourish.

# Build the Transportation Interchange as the metro's primary transit hub

Transportation has always shaped development. Riverboats, and later rail lines, enabled Minneapolis' early sawmills and flour mills to flourish. Streetcars gave the city its form, branching out from a bustling Downtown. When freeways arrived, the busiest roads crisscrossed Downtown Minneapolis, solidifying its role as the transportation hub for the Upper Midwest.

Even more than roads, transit service reflects Downtown's role as regional anchor. Nearly 60 percent of regional transit routes and half of all weekday bus trips serve Downtown. Light rail and commuter rail corridors focus on Downtown. The Hiawatha and Northstar lines, as well as the Central line (2014) and the Southwest line (planned for 2017) terminate next to Target Field. That makes the ballpark area the most logical location for the metro region's primary transit hub.

Hennepin County calls the site the Transportation Interchange, and for good reason. When the Central line opens in 2014, the location will handle nearly 500 trains each weekday. Add to that more than 1,900 bus connections, more than 7,000 parking spots, two adjacent freeways, a regional bicycle trail and the entry point to Downtown's extensive skyway system. The location also maximizes transit ridership to big sporting and entertainment events nearby.

Building the Transportation Interchange will stimulate development and strengthen Downtown's position as the transportation hub of the Upper Midwest. If national and regional high-speed rail projects are built, including connections to Chicago, Madison, Duluth and other points, the Interchange will make Downtown Minneapolis an essential stop.



Aerial view of the Transportation Interchange, looking south







## CREATE AND SUSTAIN A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE—AND SHOWCASE THE RIVERFRONT

- +Employ nature to elevate Downtown's economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being.*
- +Establish and intensify the tree canopy throughout Downtown.*
- +Create green corridors.*
- +Enhance and emphasize the Riverfront as a world-class destination and Downtown's green focal point.*
- +Beautify Downtown's entry points.*
- +Launch a greening and public realm conservancy.*

When Horace Cleveland and the other farsighted pioneers of the city's park system secured the lakeshores for public use, and established the Grand Rounds parkway system beginning in the 1880s, they infused a green ethos into Minneapolis. The whole city was to be, in Charles Loring's words, "a New England picture set in a prairie frame." Its residential areas would be heavily wooded to match the back-East sensibilities of its civic leaders. As a result, their steadfast emphasis on nature, greenery and public spaces has remained Minneapolis' greatest asset for more than a century.

Except for Downtown. Somehow Downtown got left out. There is no central park, no tree-lined boulevards, and no flower-filled window boxes. The overall impression is of a no-nonsense place for people to do business and then to retreat to lovelier places when the day's commerce is finished.

But that kind of spatial segregation utterly fails to match 21st century needs. The evolution of downtowns into complete places for working, living, shopping and entertaining brings with it the expectation of natural beauty. A downtown that excludes greenery will simply fail to draw the attention and investment required to compete with suburban rivals, or with more attractive places across the country and globe.

## **GREEN BRINGS A BIG RETURN**

That's an insight that Minneapolis should instinctively understand. For a century its own greenest places—lakeshore and parkway—have attracted the most attention and the highest real estate value. Greenery has proven to be a sound investment; for a relatively small down payment, it brings a big return.

Beauty and prosperity aren't the only reasons for Downtown to get green. A properly landscaped Central Minneapolis will produce significant environmental and health advantages, especially in filtering storm water that flows unimpeded down vast hard surfaces into the Mississippi River. A clean, healthy, active river is vital to Downtown's future.

Green streets also promote active lifestyles. When there are pleasant features to stroll past, people think nothing of walking a mile or two within a downtown as part of their daily routines. Research clearly shows that active cities—those relying less on autos for every trip—have healthier residents.

Although green has been a low priority historically, Downtown began to turn a corner in 2009 with the founding of the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, a privately led effort to make for a cleaner, greener and safer city center. A movement to establish Gateway Park on Nicollet's north end was also launched (See page 50). Still, much work remains to be done.

## **ESTABLISH AND INTENSIFY THE TREE CANOPY THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN—ON EVERY BLOCK AND WITHIN EVERY SURFACE PARKING LOT**

Minneapolis' notable urban forest should find its way into Downtown. Mature trees should grow along every sidewalk of every block, as well as around the perimeter and into the midst of every surface parking lot. Ground-level plantings should accompany the new leafy canopy. There should be a cadence and order to this uninterrupted pattern. In that way, sidewalks become pleasant, shady connections between daily destinations.

The green pattern will differ a bit from block to block, complicated by the presence of utility lines and extensions of buildings running beneath some sidewalks—and by the narrow width of public right-of-way. On those blocks, trees, shrubs and flowers will have to be contained in aboveground planters. Whenever streets, curbs and sidewalks are rebuilt, however, the utility lines should be relocated and areaways eliminated to make way for trees and ground-level plantings. In that way, greenery becomes a "public work," as integral to the public form of the city as the street, curb and sidewalk.

The new form will employ the latest planting technologies to increase the lifespan of trees. Storm water retention will become an important function of this new pattern. For the plan to succeed, the city government will have to pass new standards dealing with minimum numbers of trees per block, sidewalk widths, and requirements for tree-planting and greening of surface parking lots and other private properties. Collaboration among the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District and other partners will be required to assure that hardy, native species are planted and that the new canopy and ground plantings are impeccably maintained.

### **ENHANCE AND EMPHASIZE THE RIVERFRONT AS A WORLD-CLASS DESTINATION AND DOWNTOWN'S GREEN FOCAL POINT**

It's ironic that Downtown sits on the banks of one of the world's great rivers and yet only tepidly acknowledges the river's presence. True, enormous strides have been made in recent decades to reestablish productive life among the ruins of an abandoned industrial landscape. New homes, businesses and recreational trails have risen. Historic buildings have been restored and reused. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has launched an ambitious effort to reimagine and redesign the river all the way from St. Anthony Falls to the city's northern boundary.

Despite these herculean efforts, the Downtown Riverfront hasn't come close to achieving its full potential. It has its charms, but it's not a world-class destination in the same league with Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Seattle's Pike Place Market area, San Antonio's Riverwalk or San Francisco's Embarcadero.

Except for Gold Medal Park, common areas are not lushly landscaped. The river itself seems almost off-limits to recreational boating and other water activities. The café scene is limited, especially on the CBD side. Aside from the Mill City Museum, which backs up to the river, there's no interpretive center, no central gathering point to orient a visitor and no key attraction at the water's edge. It's spectacular to

stand on the Guthrie's cantilevered perch to overlook the river. But there's no "invitation" for how to get closer to the river itself. Neighboring streets and blocks don't acknowledge that the continent's greatest river is just steps away.

Preparing the Riverfront for prime time in 2025 will require another major push that includes world-class water attractions and upgraded landscape, maintenance, signage, orientation, marketing and programming, all in collaboration with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and other partners.

### **CREATE GREEN CORRIDORS**

Picture the residential neighborhoods on the outer edges of the CBD—Loring Park, Elliot Park, Marcy Holmes, Old St. Anthony, the Mills District, the West Bank, the North Loop. Now picture intensely green corridors that connect these neighborhoods to Downtown's major destinations—the Central Business District, the Walker Art Center, the Central Riverfront, Target Field, the Farmers Market, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Government Plaza and so on.

The resulting hub-spoke configuration is, in essence, a web of linear parks. They are green, shady streets that are intensely landscaped and designed to accommodate pedestrians, bikes, transit and cars. They are urban parkways with wide sidewalks and human-scale lighting intended to encourage active lifestyles. They are, in the parlance of planners, complete streets.

Wherever possible, green corridors should be laid out along routes where they can be catalysts for private development. Consider, for example, 9th Street between Elliot Park and the CBD. It runs through a vast sea of surface parking lots that should become new street-level shops, homes, offices and live/work lofts.

In 2011, Downtown had only one green corridor—the pedestrian-only Loring Greenway that connects Loring Park to the Nicollet Mall. By 2025, it should have many more.





## BEAUTIFY DOWNTOWN'S ENTRY POINTS, INCLUDING FREEWAY EMBANKMENTS, RAMPS AND MEDIANS

First impressions are important, especially for a city intending to attract new residents, visitors and investors. Unfortunately, Downtown's entry points are an embarrassment. Landscaping on freeway embankments, ramps and medians is either missing or poorly maintained. The impression given is of a city that doesn't care. Arriving in Downtown Minneapolis is a lot like going to dinner at the home of a person who hasn't bothered to cut the grass or pull the weeds. Even some of the city's signature areas—the median along Hennepin/Lyndale avenues in front of the Walker Art Center for example—has been overtaken by weeds.

By 2025 or sooner, Downtown's entry points will be fully landscaped and impeccably maintained. They will be free of litter and graffiti. It's not a small thing, but rather a welcoming first impression of Downtown for our visitors and ourselves.



# Launch a greening and public realm conservancy to develop and maintain Downtown's green infrastructure

Solving Downtown's "green deficit" is doubly difficult: the city has come very late to acknowledging the need, and now that it has, adequate funding is not available. Even on greening and reclamation projects, the competition for public/private dollars is fierce, especially considering the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's ambitious plan to redevelop the Upper Riverfront. While this report supports that effort, it must be noted that the city's appetite for parkland development far exceeds its ability to fund it. If Downtown's green agenda is to be realized, a new nonprofit entity must emerge.

A **Greening and Public Realm Conservancy** will be established to aggregate public, private and nonprofit funding toward the design, development, maintenance and programming of existing and new parks and public realm amenities Downtown. Coordination and alignment among the many current and planned parks and public realm initiatives would be a core function of this new Conservancy. The aim will be to create high-quality beautiful and healthy spaces while coordinating with other pressing public priorities.

Key components will include flexibility among various initiatives; robust fundraising capability; cooperation among many stakeholders; strong management; and the ability to operate "at scale" with minimum redundancy among existing organizations.

The conservancy approach works well in other downtowns, for example, the Central Park and Prospect Park conservancies in New York, and the Lincoln Park and Grant Park conservancies and the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association in Chicago.







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## FORGE CONNECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

- +Leverage the Central Corridor light rail service.*
- +Extend green corridors over the Interstate 35W freeway trench.*
- +Establish a new residential district on the Metrodome site—with links to the U of M.*
- +Generate business/education synergy.*





So close, yet so far. The state's greatest generator of jobs, innovation and economic energy lies at the doorstep of Downtown Minneapolis, yet the University of Minnesota's presence is barely felt. A top priority of this report is to strengthen the connections—both physical and otherwise—between Downtown and the U. The effort is not to absorb the campus into a Greater Downtown by 2025, but to establish the two as next-door neighbors sharing mutual benefits.

For its part, Downtown offers venture capital potential for the U, as well as an attractive setting for jobs and housing for students, faculty and alumni. In turn, the University offers ideas, talent and a proven record of success. By working together to assemble a greater share of that intellectual energy on their own doorsteps, the University and Downtown can produce a critical mass that brings competitive advantage to both. It's a win-win situation—but one that will be difficult to achieve. In her classic book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the celebrated urbanist Jane Jacobs defines the problem as "the curse of border vacuums." In this case, the border vacuum that separates the two neighbors is not so much the Mississippi River but the freeway trench that carries I-35W. The trench forms a nearly half-mile-wide no-man's land between Downtown East and the West Bank campus.

There is no attractive connection over the trench, and no recognition that the trench must be breached if both sides are to benefit. The simplest physical connection would be to transform the structure that carries Washington Avenue toward Seven Corners into a tree-lined corridor that emphasizes transit, pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A similar green corridor could be built alongside the Central light-rail tracks between the Metrodome area and the West Bank campus.

A supporting idea is to provide a University-themed landscape to freeway entrance ramps along I-35W and I-94, treating these entry points as part of the campus.

## ONE TRAIN STOP AWAY

The Central Corridor light rail line offers another linkage opportunity. By 2014 Downtown East will be one stop from campus. Including the University in a reduced downtown fare zone would help advance synergy between the two neighbors. Transforming the nine-block Metrodome area into a University-branded district is yet another possibility. The Metrodome site itself could become a small lake, surrounded by a leafy urban village of new homes, shops and ball fields that in essence, could link the campus to Downtown. The historic Armory building could be repurposed as a University laboratory, recreation center or continuing education building. One idea is to market the district's new housing to retired alumni. University activities would be a short train ride away. Major health care facilities—at Hennepin County Medical Center, the University hospitals or along the Chicago Avenue corridor—are all close by. So are the Guthrie Theater and the Riverfront.

With the proper synergy in place, the University might consider downtown locations for certain professional graduate school functions, especially in business and law. Downtowns in Chicago, Denver and Phoenix, for example, offer graduate programs at downtown locations. Relocating the MBA program to 4th and Nicollet (four stops from campus) could be a goal. Launching a business intern incubator program within the CBD might be another possibility. Executive training could be considered. The greatest upside for each partner would come if Downtown's periphery emerged as a launching pad for University-generated start-up businesses.

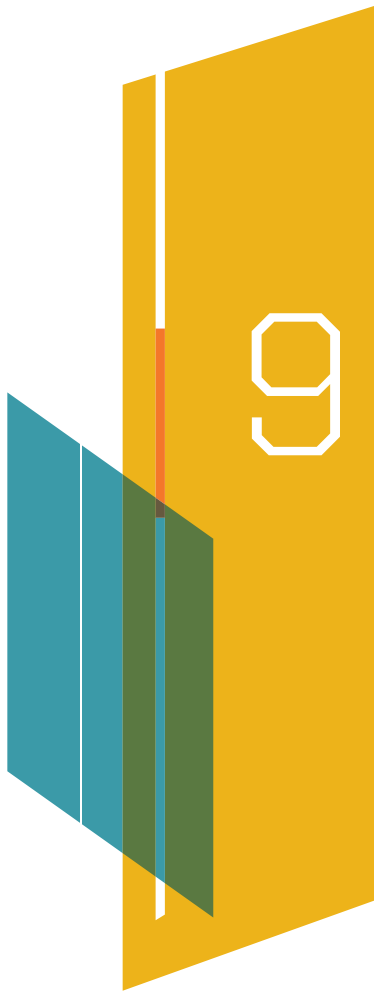
Downtown and the University should actively explore what they can accomplish together.

## WASHINGTON AVE. BRIDGE

One of Downtown's Green Corridors should include greening the Washington Avenue Bridge connecting Downtown East and the Mills District to Seven Corners and the University of Minnesota.







## END STREET HOMELESSNESS

- +Extend housing, treatment, job training and outreach efforts.*
- +Become the first major U.S. downtown to solve this chronic problem.*
- +Educate citizens about the best response to panhandlers.*

Homelessness is not a new condition in Downtown Minneapolis. For decades, the Gateway District (centered on the Hennepin-Nicollet-Washington intersection) was notorious for idle people, cheap bars and “flophouses” that provided nominal shelter. A 1951 report from the Chamber of Commerce described Gateway residents as “petty criminals and human derelicts roaming among the industrious men and women who reside in the area only by force of economic circumstance.”

Edwin Hirschhoff’s and Joseph Hart’s remarkable *Down & Out: The Life and Death of Minneapolis’s Skid Row*, documents the Gateway’s destruction in the 1960s. Clearing slums, it was naively believed, would solve Downtown’s social problems.

While federal programs helped to tear down the single room occupancy (SRO) hotels that had provided shelter for transient or homeless people, other federal programs added complexity to the homelessness problem. Most influential was the 1963 Community Mental Health Act under which thousands of psychiatric patients were released from state hospitals and essentially dumped onto downtown streets across the country. As problems mounted, so did neighborhood opposition to local efforts to provide halfway houses and affordable housing. The 2007–2008 meltdown of the mortgage market added yet another dimension, as families who had lost their homes to foreclosure found themselves on downtown streets.

On a typical night in Minneapolis, 300–500 people sleep outside or in places unfit for habitation.

## STREET HOMELESSNESS IS A SOLVABLE PROBLEM

This problem is solvable, however, if resources can be assembled. The solution is smart, cost-effective and doable. **Minneapolis intends to become the first major U.S. city to end street homelessness.** The estimated cost (presumably through public and private sources) will be about \$4 million for the first year, with declining amounts needed in subsequent years.

More specifically, this funding would support housing, rent subsidies, staff, outreach support, communication, community education and employment/activities.

Ending street homelessness is defined as providing shelter for all who sleep on the streets or in other unsuitable places. It means chemical dependency and mental health treatment, job training and “meaningful activities” to occupy those who are unemployable and hang out aimlessly on the streets. It also means continuing the impressive and ongoing efforts by police, the city attorney’s office and the Minneapolis DID to target Downtown’s top 100 street offenders, people who are arrested repeatedly for lifestyle crimes such as public intoxication, public urination and aggressive panhandling. Nearly all of these chronic offenders are homeless.

One of the most important communications goals is to teach citizens that giving “spare change” is an unwise response. Contributing to proven relief programs is far more effective. Altogether, this proposed program would provide homes, deliver social services (drug and mental health treatment) and offer job training or “meaningful activities” to the chronically homeless.

The result will improve the lives of homeless people. And it will save public money. A 2005 study found that just 37 chronic offenders cost the city and county \$3.7 million a year. That’s an average of \$100,000 per offender for jail, detox, hospitalization and shelter.

Ending street homeless will also decrease the negative behaviors (loitering, panhandling, public intoxication, etc.) that damage livability and deter investment in Downtown. Eliminating street homelessness will be a huge force in moving forward the other major goals of this report.



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## LAUNCH A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- +An annual festival will bring visitors, innovative thinking and civic energy.*
- +It will probe ways to improve business, government and quality of life.*
- +It will celebrate Minneapolis' reputation for citizen involvement.*



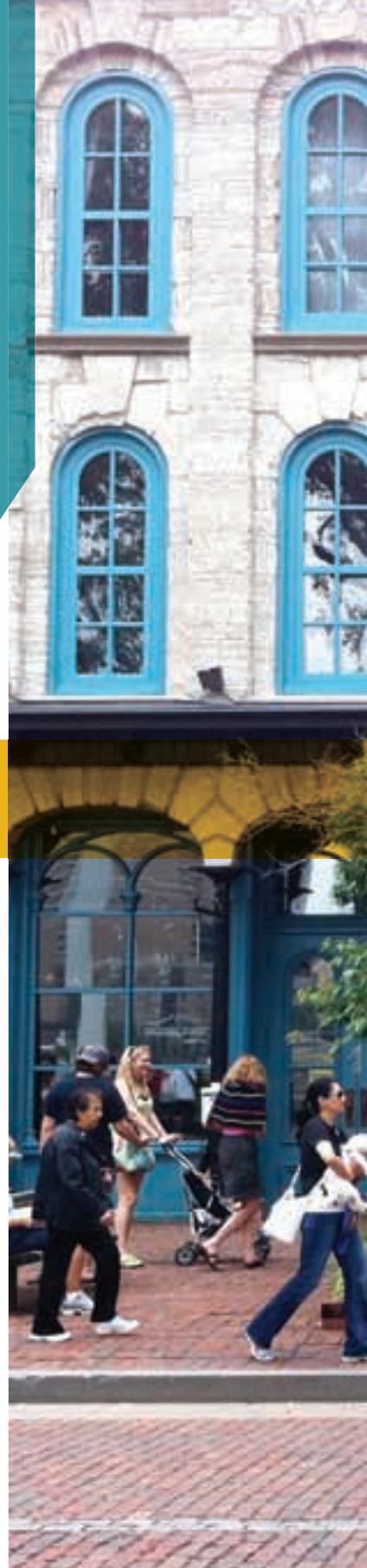
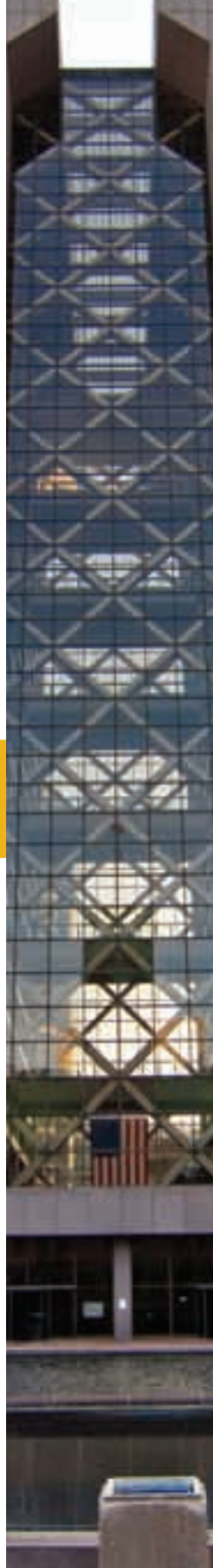


Minnesota is sometimes called the “Land of 10,000 Organizations.” The organizations are needed, it’s said, because Minnesotans love to admire their problems.

That makes Downtown Minneapolis a perfect setting for an annual Festival of Ideas and Civic Engagement. What better place for light bulbs to go off and for insights to develop? Our earnest attempts at community betterment could draw thousands of participants from around the world, each with ideas about their own communities. The world is badly in need of better ideas.

Downtown intends to build a collaboration of corporate, public, education and faith partners to promote Minneapolis as a leader in civic engagement. A weeklong festival of speakers, writers, academicians, artists and others would meet in multiple Downtown venues (indoor and outdoor) to think and learn together in an exciting and green urban context. The nation and world need smart, constructive discussions about how to build a better future. Modeled on idea festivals in Aspen, Colo., Chautauqua, N.Y., Indianapolis, and Portland, Ore., the Minneapolis event would launch in 2013, coinciding with the opening of a newly remodeled Orchestra Hall and a revived Peavey Plaza.

The festival would bring more than business to Minneapolis. The city’s reputation as literate, cultured, and forward-thinking would be enhanced. And there’s nothing wrong with being close by when exciting ideas are explored.







# CHAPTER 5

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This report is a living document that will evolve as time goes by. In that sense, it has no shelf life, no moment of expiration. But it does have a time line and it does carry great expectations for our downtown in the decades ahead.

There will be a moment when our vision, our striving and our elbow grease will be judged. Did we hit the bullseye? Did we miss some grand opportunities? History always intervenes to alter even the best-laid plans. But that doesn't diminish our determination to seek the best for our city.

Turning these 10 major initiatives into reality by 2025 will require exceptional talent and leadership from a new generation. The Minneapolis Downtown Council is eager for the challenge.

An **Implementation Committee** will meet quarterly—or more frequently if necessary. Its five subcommittees will reflect the same diversity of interests as the subcommittees that guided this report:

### **DEVELOPMENT; TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT; GREENING AND PUBLIC REALM; ENTERTAINMENT AND HOSPITALITY; AND EDUCATION, FAITH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Priorities will be established. Annual goals will be adopted. Metrics will measure progress. Periodic reports will be submitted and reviewed at the Downtown Council's annual meetings.

### **A CALL TO ACTION**

It seems overly dramatic and perhaps a bit self-serving to suggest that Downtown's future rides on this great project. But in an era of limited government resources, responsibility falls more heavily on the private sector and depends more fully on a collaborative spirit.

Strong partnerships will be essential. All sectors—public, private and nonprofit—will be needed to bring these initiatives to life.

As we undertake this work, we should pause to remind ourselves that we have an extraordinary hometown with a remarkable heritage and an impressive record of accomplishment. Look at a map. We inhabit a cold and remote corner of this country. Yet, through uncommon effort and a spirit of self-reliance, we have built for ourselves and our children a place that is widely admired. Who would expect to find one of the world's great symphony orchestras here? Or a fine opera company? A large and influential theater community? A full array of professional sports teams? An engaged and literate citizenry? An impressive lineup of corporate headquarters? An exquisite system of parks, lakeshore and riverfront?

We have come a long way, but we cannot stop. It's sometimes lamented that the old families and the old hometown companies no longer have the power and sway to do exceptional things, but a new generation of corporate and civic leaders has the opportunity to step forward. It's our turn to imagine—and to build.

# **1. DOUBLE DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL POPULATION**

**DOUBLE DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL POPULATION TO 70,000 BY ADDING 15,000 HOUSING UNITS; EXPAND CLASS A, MULTI-TENANT OFFICE SPACE BY 3 MILLION SQUARE FEET; ADD 1,100 HOTEL ROOMS AND 200,000 SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL SPACE, INCLUDING TWO GROCERY STORES**

- + Emphasize and facilitate office development on the north end of Nicollet; expand opportunities for back-office space and live/work options on the periphery of the downtown core
- + Broaden the appeal of downtown living to a wider variety of residents
- + Ensure that every child who lives Downtown may attend school Downtown

## HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Use city, county and state incentives to develop high-density condominiums, rental apartments and senior living projects in Downtown.
- Launch a task force to use state and federal historic tax credits for converting older CBD office buildings to residential use. Such buildings might include the Baker block, Medical Arts, Plymouth, Lumber Exchange and Soo Line, among others.
- Create a special development district along the “triple spine” (Nicollet, Hennepin and 1st avenues) from 5th Street to the river.
- Launch a marketing effort to encourage metro companies to relocate to Downtown; brand Downtown for active living and energy saving.
- Persuade the City of Minneapolis to create an employee incentive program to motivate large employers to locate Downtown.
- Offer parking discounts and tax credits to employees and corporations.
- Cultivate small creative firms, start-ups and back-office operations throughout Downtown.
- Encourage live/work art spaces with street-level studios as a way to add excitement and population growth.
- Demolish the Metrodome and redevelop Downtown East.
- Establish a master plan and a funding plan for transforming the Metrodome site and its surroundings (9 blocks) into an urban village that includes at least 1,800 housing units, a park, ball field, skating rink and other recreational assets.
- Develop at least two new grocery stores to support residential growth.
- Encourage a family-friendly environment that’s open to new ideas and new people.
- Add an elementary school and build small parks near residential communities with children.
- Establish a student-housing cluster near the Central Corridor’s light rail stations.
- Promote senior living development with easy connections to health care providers.
- Insist on continuing quality medical care, especially at Hennepin County Medical Center; consider joint ventures with the University of Minnesota and Mayo Clinic.

- Offer transitional housing as part of the homelessness solution.
- Seek diminished rates of poverty and disparity as well as increased physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Encourage a lively cultural atmosphere.
- Encourage developers to provide housing for families with children.

## HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Have 15,000 housing units been added by 2025? Has the residential population doubled to 70,000?
- Have 3 million square feet of Class A, multi-tenant office space been added by 2025?
- Have 1,100 hotel rooms and 200,000 square feet of retail space (including two grocery stores) been added?
- Does Downtown have its share of start-up businesses, especially in creative fields?
- Have an elementary school and multiple playgrounds been built?
- May every child who lives Downtown attend school Downtown?
- Are there a wide variety of people living Downtown, including families with children and seniors? Is there sufficient housing for families with children? For those of various incomes? For artists and other creative workers?
- Are adequate financial systems in place to make the ownership/rental market successful in Downtown?
- Has Downtown added to Minneapolis’ reputation as among the best-educated cities in America? Is Minneapolis measuring its educational success against top rivals?
- Are there active partnerships between corporations and local schools—from elementary to the university level?
- Are students getting the financial help they need?
- Have poverty and disparity diminished?
- Are more downtown workers seeking medical care from downtown providers?

## 2. TRANSFORM NICOLLET INTO A 'MUST-SEE' DESTINATION

### EXTEND AND INVIGORATE THE ORIGINAL MALL SEGMENT, ESTABLISHING PLAZAS AND SIGNATURE ATTRACTIONS ALONG ITS ROUTE

- + Designate the Nicollet corridor as running from the Walker Art Center, through Loring Park, to the river
- + Redesign Nicollet as the region's premier walking experience—a linear park with overhanging trees, flowers, shops and office towers
- + Animate the street with a curb-less walking environment that shares space with quiet, zero-emission transit vehicles

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Create a Nicollet Master Plan to guide planning, redesign and construction over time.
- Designate a chief executive/manager with responsibility for programming, including food markets, festivals, parades, concerts, theater, winter activities, restaurant weeks, outdoor art galleries, Twins and Vikings tailgating, Wiffle ball fields, urban rock climbing, etc.
- Concentrate programming on Nicollet, but not to the exclusion of other areas.
- Establish operating funds for robust programming of events, perhaps under the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District.
- Assure that the master plan and the Nicollet executive coordinate with this plan. To every extent possible, unify all Nicollet efforts, including this report, the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, the Greening Committee, the Streetcar Study and others.
- Establish a funding plan for the corridor's ongoing maintenance.
- Establish a funding plan for large-scale improvements, including massive greening, elimination of curbs, and the establishment of pocket parks and plazas.
- Launch a Nicollet branding and marketing effort; assure that proper signage identifies the corridor as running from the Walker to the river.
- Insist that all storefronts along the Nicollet have a viable use.
- Provide opportunities for startup retailers and designers to "audition" on Nicollet.
- Ensure public safety and security.
- Employ economic incentives to promote development of the Ritz and Powers blocks (along Marquette Avenue between 3rd and 5th streets) at the north end of Nicollet.
- Allow profitable events on the corridor to fund its upkeep.
- Improve access and visibility between the skyway and street levels.
- Focus on linear linkages.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Have the flow, branding and signage succeeded in extending the Nicollet corridor from the Walker Art Center to the river?
- Is Nicollet widely recognized as "the greenest urban street in America"?
- Has the corridor achieved 10 million visitors a year?
- Has all vehicular traffic, except for emissions-free transit circulators, been removed from Nicollet?
- Is the corridor vibrant in all seasons?
- Has programming been successful?
- Are there must-see attractions?
- Is there adequate public/private funding for sustained maintenance?



## 3. BUILD GATEWAY PARK

### FILL IN THE BLANKS ON NICOLLET'S EMPTY NORTH END

- + Create a grand connection between the CBD and the Riverfront
- + Provide an iconic gathering place that will become the metro region's 'central park'

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Build Gateway Park using collaboration, sound planning and public/private financing.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has Gateway Park been established to run from the Nicollet's lightrail station to the river?
- Has the Post Office parking ramp been removed?
- Have portions of the Ritz and Powers blocks been developed, along with other blocks bordering Gateway Park?
- Has the park increased foot traffic in the north Nicollet area?
- Is it programmed with activities in all seasons?
- Has the park become a brand by which nearby properties identify themselves?

# 4. CREATE A CONSISTENTLY COMPELLING DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

DELIVER A CONSISTENTLY EXCELLENT PEDESTRIAN ATMOSPHERE THAT INSPIRES PEOPLE TO EXPLORE DOWNTOWN BLOCK AFTER BLOCK, 24/7/365

- + Embrace density to build the critical mass needed to sustain a great city
- + Concentrate a seamless connection of visual, physical and social experiences along a 'triple spine' of Nicollet Mall and Hennepin and 1st avenues
- + Position Downtown as an international center for creativity and design
- + Establish Hennepin Avenue as the region's primary arts corridor

## HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Establish high standards and greater consistency to create positive impressions and better experiences for Downtown's visitors, residents and work force. Insist on a more consistently vibrant Downtown, no matter the time of day or season of the year. Use infill development, greening, programming and other tools to create a physical environment that's consistently appealing from block to block. Engage in branding, training and surveys to support higher standards.
- Create a signature attraction that brings a unique experience and national identity to Downtown.
- Insist that high-quality design drive decisions on the walking environment and property development.
- Concentrate most heavily on the 'triple spine' of Nicollet, Hennepin and 1st avenues. Make those streets "the heartbeat of the city."
- Improve marketing, signage and training for taxi drivers and other unofficial "ambassadors."
- Expand public gathering spaces throughout Downtown, including the Farmers Market, Vikings Stadium, Transportation Interchange, Gateway Park and the Downtown East/Metrodome site.
- Identify and map infill development opportunities, including those along 1st Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets; near Hennepin and Washington avenues; the Gay 90s block; the Skyway Theater block; the National Camera building and the 10th Street-Hennepin Avenue intersection, among others.

- Explore distinctive retail opportunities.
- Develop a strategy for vacant storefronts.
- Develop an Arts Corridor along Hennepin Avenue that includes live/work space; change zoning and offer incentives as part of a new downtown arts package.
- Install latest-technology public restrooms in the Warehouse District and throughout Downtown.
- Launch a branding campaign that recognizes these downtown districts: Arts, Theater, Sports, Retail, Warehouse, Historic Mill, Financial/Business and Northeast Arts.
- Support the initial planning of the corridor by implementing the NEA "Our Town" planning grant.

## HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Is the infill map updated periodically to check progress?
- Do statistics show an increase in pedestrian vitality all day, all week and during all seasons?
- Is there an arts corridor along Hennepin Avenue?
- Has retail been revived?
- Does Downtown present an improving, overall first impression? Is being Downtown an overall better experience?
- Have safe and attractive public restrooms been installed?
- Has Downtown been redesigned to the highest standards in landscaping and building materials?
- Is Downtown known as an international center for creativity and design?

# 5. ESTABLISH A DOWNTOWN SPORTS DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES A NEW VIKINGS STADIUM

## RENOVATE TARGET CENTER AND BUILD THE TRANSPORTATION INTERCHANGE

+ Maximize connections to the Entertainment/Theater District and the CBD

### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Build a new Vikings stadium Downtown near Target field and the primary transportation hub.
- Renovate Target Center as the home of the Timberwolves and Lynx.
- Attract professional soccer, an MLB All-Star Game, Super Bowl, NCAA Final Four, NHL Winter Classic, NBA All-Star Game and Big 10 Basketball Tournament.
- Settle on a metrowide funding and governance solution for major sports facilities.

### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has a new Vikings stadium been built near Target Field and the primary transportation hub?
- Has Target Center been renovated?
- Has the Metrodome been demolished and its surroundings redeveloped?
- Has a Vikings stadium and a renovated Target Center significantly improved downtown vitality?



## 6. LEAD THE NATION IN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

### EXPAND AND ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO ENCOURAGE NEW JOBS, HOUSING AND BUSINESS VITALITY

- + Maintain and improve high capacity for auto and transit commuters
- + Increase the daily transit share from 40 percent to 60 percent
- + Increase circulation within Downtown
- + Build the Transportation Interchange as the metro's primary transit hub
- + Secure stable, reliable transit funding

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Among Downtown weekday commuters, increase transit ridership from 40 percent to 60 percent by 2025.
- Eliminate bottlenecks at Downtown's freeway access points.
- Improve parking options and expenses.
- Build the Southwest and Bottineau light rail corridors.
- Continue to develop commuter rail and bus rapid transit (BRT); consider streetcar and inter-city rail.
- Maintain clean and safe transit stations and bus stops.
- Improve intra-downtown circulation by (1) adding frequency to regular downtown service and (2) launching a Downtown Circulator.
- Insist that all intra-downtown buses are low-emission or zero-emission vehicles.
- Install either modern streetcars or zero-emission buses for free, frequent shuttle service along the Nicollet corridor.
- Use advanced technology, including mobile, hand-held devices, to make transit service more consistent, predictable and user-friendly.
- Use technology to provide free or easy-payment methods for transit trips within Downtown (bicycle and car-sharing service might also be included); investigate technology available to summon taxis.
- Improve bicycle lanes and secured parking for bikes.
- Build the Transportation Interchange.
- Continue to develop suburban transit stations.
- Insist that all significant inter-city rail lines stop in Downtown Minneapolis from the first day that service begins.
- Keep Downtown's parking supplies stable as the daytime population increases.
- Eliminate on-street parking on high-volume streets within the Circulator area to make room for taxis, pick-up/drop-off and truck deliveries.
- Encourage on-street parking on lower-volume downtown streets.
- Segregate buses and cars during peak commute times.
- Disperse east-west bus routes.



- Emphasize perimeter bus stations.
- Improve signage for parking, transit riders and pedestrians.
- Ensure adequate funding for transit operations and capital projects.
- Consider an overlay-zoning district in the CBD within which development fees and taxes could be applied to transit needs within the zone.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has the percentage of Downtown workers taking transit increased from 40 percent in 2011 to 60 percent in 2025?
- Has the pressure for parking spaces remained steady as the daytime population increases?
- Have mass transit trip times remained competitive (within 1.5 times car travel time)?
- Has the Transportation Interchange been built?
- Has transit oriented development become commonplace Downtown?
- Has transit ridership increased? Have transit capital and operating budgets kept pace?
- Have east-west buses been dispersed?
- Has the pedestrian environment improved?
- Has the Downtown Circulator been established and intra-downtown transit circulation improved? Is the service free, user-friendly and well marketed?
- Is it a reasonable option to live Downtown without a car?
- Is transit service considered a key economic asset for attracting jobs, housing and visitors to Downtown?



# 7. CREATE AND SUSTAIN A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE—AND SHOWCASE THE RIVERFRONT

## EMPLOY NATURE TO ELEVATE DOWNTOWN'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

- + Establish and intensify the tree canopy throughout Downtown
- + Create green corridors
- + Enhance and emphasize the Riverfront as a world-class destination and Downtown's green focal point
- + Beautify Downtown's entry points
- + Launch a greening and public realm conservancy

### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Collaborate on a policy that requires greening and public realm improvements to be integrated into all public and private building projects.
- Collaborate with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to increase tree planting that uses sustainable methods.
- Collaborate with the owners and managers of private properties on opportunities to increase plantings.
- Adopt a policy requiring all new street and sidewalk construction to include trees planted in the ground; underground utilities will be required to be relocated to make room for plantings. All other areas not under construction will be required to install aboveground planters with trees. Right-of-way issues (sidewalk widths, etc.) will be adjusted to accommodate the planters. A limited palette of native species will be planted as recommended by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The design will create variety while keeping a consistent tree canopy.
- Where underground utilities cannot be moved, large and appropriately weighted planters will be used to accommodate trees.
- Trees will be planted using the latest technology to extend their life span and provide storm-water retention.
- Ground-level plantings will be economically and environmentally sustainable.
- Collaborate with the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District and property owners to establish a new parking lot ordinance to enhance surface parking lot greening fencing materials.
- Seize planting opportunities as they arise.
- Change policies so that any sidewalk built or rebuilt can accommodate trees or greening.
- Establish green corridors to connect major destinations in Central Minneapolis (University of Minnesota, Convention Center, Riverfront, Uptown, Midtown Greenway, Grand Rounds, Elliot Park, North Loop, Loring Park, Walker Art

Center, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Near-North Side, Target Field, Farmers Market, Cedar Lake Trail, Old St. Anthony, etc.).

- Develop advocacy and neighborhood input to support green corridors.
  - Replace existing streets with “complete streets” as streets are reconstructed.
  - Coordinate Downtown’s greening program with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s plan to redesign and redevelop the Upper River north of St. Anthony Falls.
  - Increase public awareness of the Downtown Riverfront as the city’s central green feature.
  - Insist on preserving the historic character of the Riverfront (including the Post Office building and the Pillsbury A Mill) while also embracing adaptive reuse and modern elements.
  - Create additional access points from the CBD to the Riverfront, especially at Hennepin and 3rd avenues.
  - Employ a variety of funding (city, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, foundations, National Park Service, Met Council, state bonding and others) to leverage current work and meet Riverfront goals collaboratively.
  - Encourage significant use of river-level space in the Post Office building to include the arched colonnade running parallel to the parkway.
  - Research existing conservancy models; educate the public about those models; garner support among public and private partners; decide whether an existing entity (the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District, for example) could become the conservancy or whether a new nonprofit entity should be created. Negotiate arrangement with entities currently maintaining downtown assets. Educate potential funders, develop sponsorships, identify profitable opportunities, encourage volunteers, and identify succession and endowment plans.
  - Establish a Greening and Public Realm Conservancy.
  - Ensure that baseline public services will be maintained.
  - Collaborate with public and private partners to ensure that landscaping of freeway embankments and downtown entry points are a priority.
  - Make the greening of these gateways a priority for the new Conservancy.
- Use models and images from other cities to encourage adoption.
  - Coordinate with MnDOT and others to reallocate resources as a way of achieving the goal.
  - Consider sponsorships for these landscaping projects. Urge the University of Minnesota to design and brand the freeway entrance areas near campus.
  - Ensure high-quality maintenance.

## HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has the city government established greening (trees and boulevards) as a priority for development and infrastructure improvements in both policy and practice?
- How many trees have been planted each year? Is that the maximum number per block?
- Are plantings well cared for? What is the survival rate?
- Has a “complete streets” plan been adopted for Downtown?
- Is it reviewed annually? What percentage of the plan has been implemented?
- Have green corridors been established?
- Has a conservancy been formed?
- How many open spaces has the conservancy developed or restored? How many volunteers has it engaged? How many jobs has it created? How many events has it programmed, and how many visitors has it attracted?
- How many freeway embankments and entrance/exit ramps have been identified, prioritized and landscaped along interstates 94, 35W and 394 in the downtown area?
- Has an updated parking lot ordinance been passed?
- Has the University “adopted” and branded freeway entrances near campus?

## 8. FORGE CONNECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### LEVERAGE THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL SERVICE

- + Extend green corridors over the Interstate 35W freeway trench
- + Establish a new residential district on the Metrodome site—with links to the U
- + Generate business/education synergy

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS:

- Recruit a top business executive (or retired executive) with strong ties to the University of Minnesota to lead the implementation.
- Consider moving the Carlson School of Management's MBA program into the downtown core, probably on the Central Corridor light rail line.
- Convince the University to have an administrative or marketing presence in Downtown.
- Identify schools or programs within the University that could benefit from stronger ties to the Downtown business community.
- Establish a business intern incubator program within the CBD.
- Offer executive training and leadership classes at CBD locations.
- Include the East Bank and West Bank campuses in Metro Transit's Downtown Fare Zone, or offer students free passes for LRT trips to Downtown.
- Designate buildings near Downtown's Central Corridor line

stations as zones for University-related business incubators and startups.

- Renovate the Minneapolis Armory as a University building, perhaps as part of a University-themed urban village in the nine-block Metrodome area.
- Transform bridges over the I-35W freeway trench into green corridors.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

- Has a stronger Downtown-University connection been established?
- How much business growth has the University brought to Downtown Minneapolis by 2025? How has a stronger downtown connection benefited the University?
- Have physical connections (transit and green corridors) brought Downtown and the U closer together?
- Has Downtown East redevelopment benefited both the U and the CBD?

## 9. END STREET HOMELESSNESS

### EXTEND HOUSING, TREATMENT, JOB TRAINING AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

- + Become the first major U.S. downtown to solve this chronic problem
- + Educate citizens about the best response to panhandlers

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Gather information to assess the downtown community's interest in ending street homelessness.
- Retain a public relations firm to guide a campaign and extend public awareness.
- Build a meaningful volunteer program that leverages charitable contributions aimed at specific targets recommended by social service experts.
- Estimate the investment needed to cover outreach services during the times most needed.
- Ensure that adequate shelter beds are available for people younger than 24.
- Help generate employment or community service options for those with newly found homes.

- Provide meaningful daytime activities as a way of preventing panhandling and other nuisance behaviors.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has homelessness ended for the 300–500 people who in 2011 were either sleeping outdoors or in places unfit for human habitation?
- Do people younger than 24 have sufficient shelter beds?
- Is there an adequate budget in place?
- Is the public aware that giving money directly to panhandlers exacerbates the problem?
- Has panhandling declined? Have various lifestyle crimes (loitering, public urination, trespassing, etc.) declined in frequency?
- Have more businesses opened at street level?

## 10. LAUNCH A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### AN ANNUAL FESTIVAL WILL BRING VISITORS, INNOVATIVE THINKING AND CIVIC ENERGY

- + It will probe ways to improve business, government and quality of life
- + It will celebrate Minneapolis' reputation for citizen involvement

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE:

- Gather committees to launch a Festival of Ideas and Civic Engagement to coincide with the reopening of Orchestra Hall and Peavey Plaza.
- Engage sponsors and secure city permits; create a budget; recruit the initial program participants.

- Evaluate the event to determine whether it will be an annual affair.

#### HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS:

- Has a Festival of Ideas and Civic Engagement been launched?
- How many people attended?
- What were the costs and benefits?

# DOWNTOWN IN 2025

This matrix is intended as a guide for the Minneapolis Downtown Council's subcommittees and their partners to ensure that they understand how each of the priorities may affect multiple initiatives as they develop their implementation plans.

| SUBCOMMITTEE                                 | RECOMMENDATIONS  |
|--|--|
| <b>DEVELOPMENT</b>                           | Double downtown residency to 70,000 people                         |
|  | Transform Nicollet into a 'must-see' destination                   |
|  | Establish sports district; include Vikings Stadium                 |
|  | Add 3 million square feet of office space; focus on north Nicollet |
|  | Forge connections between Downtown and the U of M                  |
| <b>EDUCATION, FAITH &amp; HUMAN SERVICES</b> | Be first major U.S. city to end street homelessness                |
|  | Create an annual Festival of Ideas and Civic Engagement            |
|  | Ensure that every downtown child can attend school Downtown        |
|  | Provide world-class health and well-being                          |
|  | Provide diverse housing options for all                            |
|  | Have best-educated work force among major U.S. cities              |
| <b>ENTERTAINMENT &amp; HOSPITALITY</b>       | Focus on Triple Spine: Nicollet, Hennepin, First avenues           |
|  | Ensure long-term viability of pro sports                           |
|  | Create vibrant 24/7/365 public gathering spaces                    |
|  | Create Arts corridor with a Hennepin Avenue focus                  |
|  | Create consistent, compelling door-to-door experience              |
|  | Integrate skyway and street levels                                 |
| <b>GREENING &amp; PUBLIC REALM</b>           | Build Gateway Park   |
|  | Establish and intensify the street tree canopy                     |
|  | Establish green corridors  |
|  | Develop the Riverfront as a world-class destination                |
|  | Create Greening & Public Realm Conservancy                         |
|  | Green freeway embankments and ramps                                |
| <b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; TRANSIT</b>          | Lead the nation in transportation options                          |
|  | Enhance Nicollet transit: frequent, zero-emission                  |
|  | Build Transportation Interchange                                   |
|  | Enhance intra-downtown mobility, including circulator              |
|  | Develop stable, sufficient transportation funding                  |

1. DOUBLE DOWNTOWN'S RESIDENTIAL POPULATION

2. TRANSFORM NICOLLET INTO A 'MUST-SEE' DESTINATION

3. BUILD GATEWAY PARK

4. CREATE A CONSISTENTLY COMPELLING DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

5. ESTABLISH A DOWNTOWN SPORTS DISTRICT THAT INCLUDES A NEW VIKINGS STADIUM

6. LEAD THE NATION IN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

7. CREATE AND SUSTAIN A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SHOWCASE THE RIVERFRONT

8. FORGE CONNECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

9. END STREET HOMELESSNESS

10. LAUNCH A FESTIVAL OF IDEAS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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