

Greater Lowertown Master Plan

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Greater Lowertown Master Plan Task Force

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Vision and Initiatives
3. Land Use and Urban Design
4. Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
5. Transportation
6. Parks and Open Space
7. Housing
8. Water, Energy and the Environment
9. Historic Preservation
10. Implementation

The Purpose of This Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to lay out the community's vision for its future. The Plan provides predictability to the greater Lowertown area, which extends from Jackson Street to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and from the Mississippi River to the East 7th Street. Successful implementation of this plan will result in two legacies - the physical legacy of an urban village where people can choose to live, work, and create in a unique urban setting; and the social legacy of cooperation and partnerships that enable Lowertown to define its own destiny.



1. Introduction

Introduction

Lowertown is a treasure. It is an authentic urban neighborhood with a unique history. It is changing quickly.

The layers of history of Lowertown, evident in the streets and buildings throughout, and the river and bluffs surrounding, have provided a backdrop for a steady succession of people with the desire to call Lowertown their home. Over the past 100 years, immigrants, capitalists, merchants and artists have come to Lowertown to make their mark.

Capitalists such as James J. Hill made their fortunes in Lowertown during the turn of the 19th to 20th century as the area became a major center of manufacturing, wholesaling and distributing for the entire Upper Midwest. Lured by the promise of good jobs, thousands of immigrants passed through Lowertown. The Lower Landing (Lambert's Landing) and Union Depot welcomed thousands of immigrants to the Upper Midwest as they made their way up the Mississippi by boat and across Minnesota and Wisconsin by train.

Fortunes were made and lost in Lowertown. After the Depression, Lowertown was virtually neglected and left to its own. Buildings were abandoned, streets were empty. But in the 1970s, the City of Saint Paul and the McKnight Foundation decided to reinvest in Lowertown. They took a \$10 million risk in creating the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation (LRC).

Over the next 30 years, Lowertown grew slowly, deliberately and incrementally. Over 3.5 million square feet of warehouse space was renovated; the Farmers' Market moved into Lowertown; the neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated by the City as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site; and Mears Park was rebuilt. By focusing on existing assets, Lowertown managed to avoid the ills that plagued so many urban areas during this time period: large scale demolition and urban renewal, undifferentiated architecture, chain stores and gentrification. Even during the most recent real estate boom, Lowertown remained "under the radar" when compared to other warehouse districts across the country. Lowertown protected and invested in its assets.

Today, Lowertown is a mixed-use, mixed-income community. Notably, Lowertown has a large population of artists who live and work in the

community. A major reason for the stability of the artist community has been the creation of the Lowertown Lofts Artist Co-op, and the renovations of the Tilsner and Northern Warehouse. Together, these buildings established a stable presence of artists in Lowertown — signaling to the development community that artists will always be a part of the evolution of Lowertown.

After the 30 years of hard work by the LRC and City of Saint Paul, slow and deliberate growth, and steady commitment from a pioneering set of residents, Lowertown has finally been discovered. Lowertown is no longer a secret.

Lowertown is on the brink of yet greater significant change. In recent years, new condominiums and restaurants have opened, attracting new residents and visitors. Within the next five years, Union Depot will be reborn as a 21st century multi-modal station. It will become a hub for Amtrak, Greyhound, Jefferson, commuter rail lines and the Central Corridor LRT. When the real estate market returns, Lowertown will emerge as a very desirable place to invest.

The Past and the Future

Quietly, Lowertown has emerged as a stellar example of how a community can grow slowly and organically - from the bottom up. In the early years of the LRC, Lowertown was a community of artists. They were the pioneers. By most accounts, the artists and their spirit of creativity and community still lie at the heart of what makes Lowertown unique today. But today, Lowertown is more than a community of artists. It is a diverse, vibrant community of residents who enjoy and appreciate the arts, creativity, sustainability, and their unique, historic built environment.

Lowertown residents have always been progressive and forward looking. The community carefully balances the stories and values of the past with innovative ideas for the future. The strength of Lowertown is partially rooted in the idea that you come to Lowertown to build upon what exists. You respect your surroundings and your context. You take raw space (and buildings and land) that has been neglected, you live in it, you work in it, and you turn it into something useful. You create another layer of history. In the same way the industrialists took raw materials and turned them into marketable products,

Lowertown residents took raw buildings and streets and turned them into a neighborhood.

Because artists are such a strong part of the community, it is a place where privacy, solitude and contemplation blend with collaboration and civic involvement. In Lowertown, you create both on your own and with others. There is a healthy respect for the individual creative process, but also an appreciation for the importance of collective action. In recent years, this spirit has helped cultivate the evolution of Lowertown from an “artist community” to a “creative community.” In doing so, Lowertown has become a significant economic engine of ideas and products for Saint Paul and the region.

Lowertown residents embody a spirit of respect and cooperation with each other and the built environment. This spirit was born by the early residents; it was critical as they supported each other in their individual and collective endeavors. The cooperative spirit was exemplified by the City of Saint Paul and LRC, which made its mission the nurturing of partnerships to create a healthy Lowertown. Notably, the LRC extended the vision of Lowertown to create partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods. In 1997, the LRC joined East Side community members to advocate for the Lower Phalen Creek project. This partnership was instrumental in creating the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

Strength and Fragility

After 150 years of changes, Lowertown is both strong and fragile. Decades of hard work and community building have resulted in a truly unique neighborhood. With over 3000 residents, approximately 600 artists and a variety of businesses, Lowertown is a national-model grassroots community, an example of what can happen when individuals come together to employ their creative and productive skills to build a neighborhood.

But Lowertown is as fragile as it is strong; and it is changing quickly. New public investments (LRT, Union Depot) have and will continue to bring changes to Lowertown at a pace never experienced. Suddenly, Lowertown

is not just a small corner of downtown inhabited by artists. It is a mixed community of many cultures, lifestyles and points of view. For Lowertown to weather the changes, existing and new residents must carry forth the values of neighborliness and tolerance while embracing change.

The Challenges Ahead

While there is some nervousness and concern in the community about Lowertown's recent emergence and the changes ahead, most in Lowertown look to the future with promise.

However, the challenges ahead are significant.

- How can the community of artists solidify their identity and ensure their presence amid rising property values?
- How can the community welcome light rail transit, hundreds of new residents and new public venues without becoming simply a destination or entertainment district for others in the region?
- How can the community redefine its relationship to the river when the barriers that cut it off are seemingly impenetrable?
- How can the community maintain itself as it changes from a sleepy corner of downtown to the nexus of natural and transportation corridors?
- How can the community help ensure the longevity of the loved and cherished Farmers' Market in the heart of Lowertown?
- How can the community continue to preserve and maintain the integrity of the historic district given pending and future development activities?
- How can the built environment of the neighborhood be more expressive and representative of the creativity, innovation, and diversity of people who inhabit it?
- And perhaps most importantly, how can a community take control of its future – be the primary stakeholder at the table and complete its vision of a self-reliant urban village?

The Study Area

To many in the Twin Cities, Lowertown is thought of as the few blocks around the Farmers' Market. The identity of Lowertown is closely linked to the Farmers' Market because it is a major regional attraction.

To others, Lowertown extends to Jackson Street, and includes Mears Park and the Union Depot. And to others, Lowertown extends across 7th Street into Wacouta Commons. Rarely has the identity or definition of Lowertown extended past the Lafayette Bridge.

For the purposes of this study, Lowertown extends from Jackson Street to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and from the river to East 7th Street. The "expanded" definition of Lowertown is significant because it recognizes Lowertown's emerging role to the region, city, and downtown. It is a centrally-located neighborhood in the river valley.

With the recent completion of Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and the regional efforts to connect trails, the east side of Lowertown becomes a critical focus. It is no longer the "back" of Lowertown. It offers promise for connection and amenities.

Similarly, Lowertown extends to the river. The elevated rail structure separates Lowertown from the river. However, with the recent initiatives to engage the river on a regional scale, there is new promise for connection and amenities.

The study area extends north to include 7th Street. Previous plans for Lowertown have extended beyond 7th Street to include Wacouta Commons. This Plan extends to East 7th Street, but not into Wacouta Commons. East 7th Street has changed dramatically over the past few decades, transforming from a Main Street in the middle of downtown to a main thoroughfare that divides two downtown neighborhoods.



Beneath the Lafayette Bridge



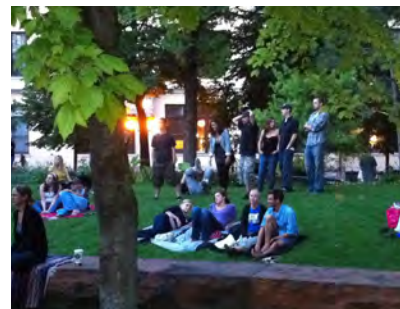
Behind the Diamond Products Building



Farmers' Market



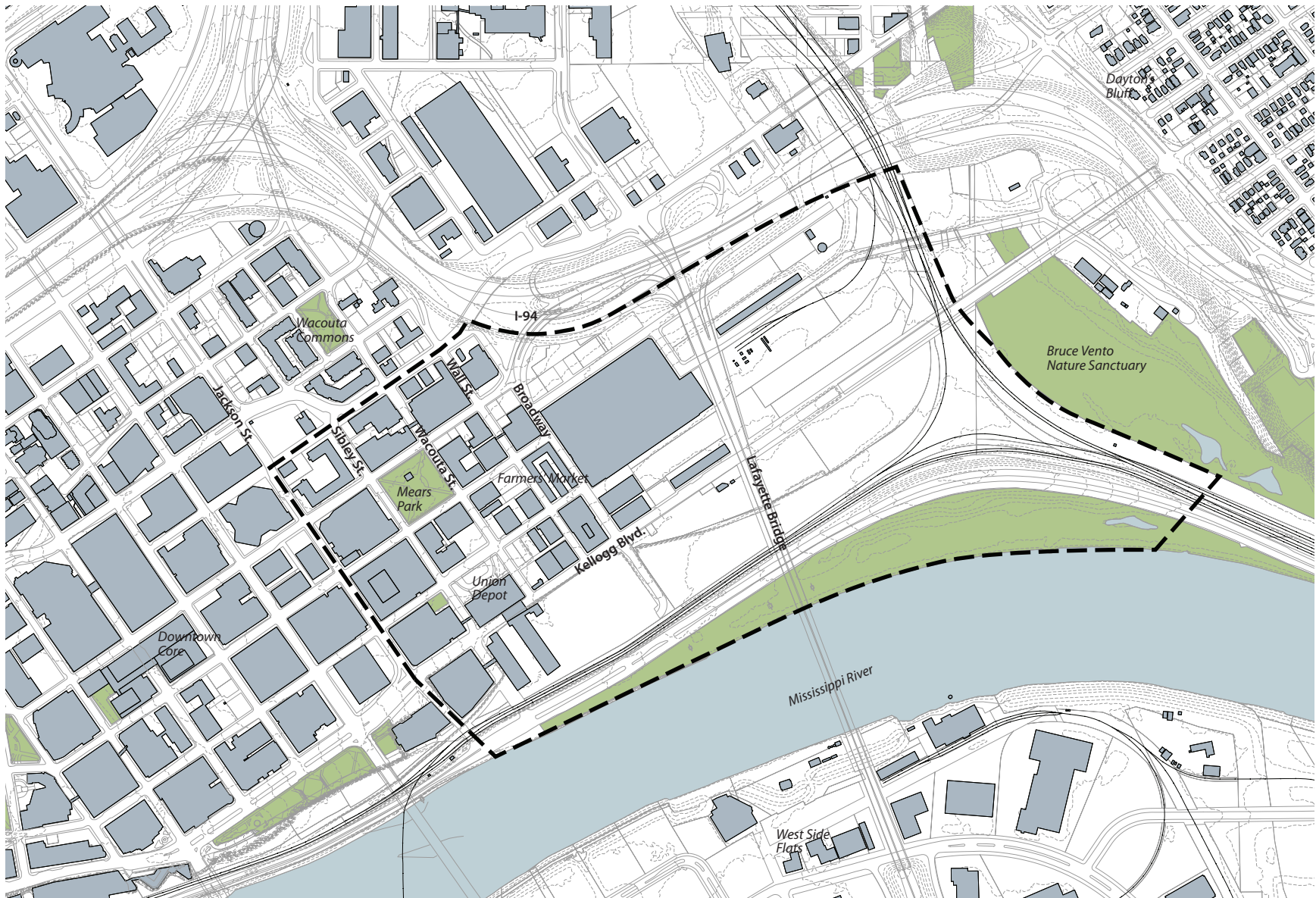
Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary



Mears Park



Converted Warehouse Buildings



Greater Lowertown Master Plan Study Area

Local and Regional Context

Lowertown is located on the east edge of downtown Saint Paul, on the Mississippi River's north bank. Here, at the bend of the river, a reach extends north into Saint Paul's neighborhoods. Phalen Creek from the northwest and Trout Brook from the northeast join at this reach before flowing into the river.

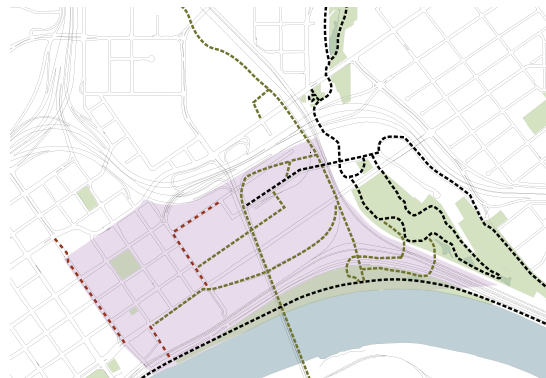
Lowertown is relatively well-connected to the region. The river, freeways, arterials, transit routes and recreational trails give access to and from Lowertown, enabling area residents to move about the region with relative ease. Planned improvements in transit, in particular Central Corridor LRT and the re-opening of Union Depot, will further improve transit service to and from Lowertown.

Although Lowertown and downtown are different in character, the areas are seamlessly connected by the downtown street grid. The Mississippi River defines Lowertown's south edge, but is nearly inaccessible due to the presence of an elevated rail deck and the lack of street connections.

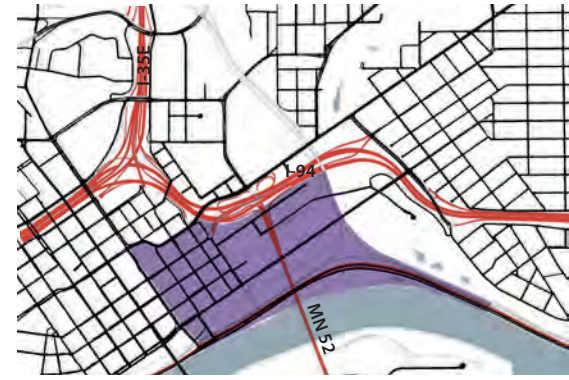
Parking lots, large industrial buildings and rail lands (Hoffman Junction) occupy the area east of Broadway, and provide no neighborhood amenity. The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, an important amenity to both Lowertown and Dayton's Bluff residents, lies just beyond these parking lots.



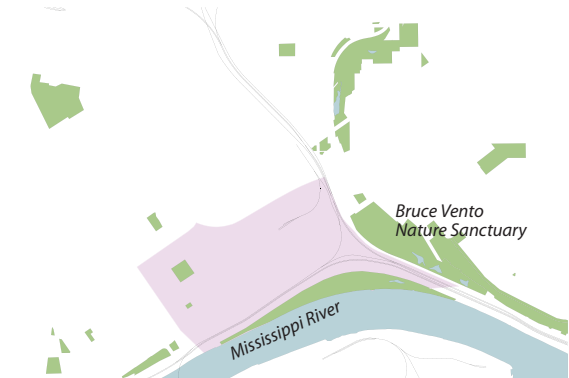
Buildings: Lowertown's buildings create well-defined streets, parks and blocks.



Trails: Several existing (black) and planned (red) recreational trails converge at Lowertown.



Streets: The downtown street grid extends to Broadway and Kellogg, and freeways and arterials are located nearby.



Parks: Lowertown is bounded on two sides by large regional open space assets.

History of Lowertown

Lowertown derives its name from the “Lower Landing” site along the Mississippi River. Used by Native Americans and industrialists, immigrants and tourists, the Lower Landing provided a soft landing at the bend of the river, with gentle access to the uplands where there is a natural break in the river’s 80-foot high bluffs. With Saint Anthony Falls and rapids upriver, the Lower Landing was the “end of the line” for most river transportation.

Until the beginning of the railroad era in the 1880s, Lower Landing was the main source of supply and communication for Saint Paul. It also served as the arrival point for tens of thousands of immigrants entering Minnesota. On average, each steamboat carried several hundred passengers, and the number of steamboat arrivals grew from 256 in 1854 to 1068 in 1858.

Soon after the rail network was built, Lowertown grew into a major warehousing and distribution center serving the entire Midwest. Lowertown’s railroad, manufacturing and wholesale companies expressed their sense of pride and permanence in the structures they erected nearly a century ago, many of them designed by some of the nation’s most renowned architects.

After the Depression, Lowertown declined. The first project to focus attention on the revitalization potential of Lowertown was the renovation of the Merchant’s National Bank Building (now McColl Building) in the late 1960s. This was soon followed by the conversion of the Noyes Brothers and Cutler Building in to a complex of offices, shops, and restaurants now known as Park Square Court. The City’s Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) became involved in 1973 when Mears Park was redesigned by William Sanders and renamed after Norman B. Mears, a Saint Paul businessman who spurred Lowertown redevelopment. The HRA and City of Saint Paul have since encouraged renovation and development in Lowertown.

In April, 1978 the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation was organized with the goal of creating “a place for people, a highly livable urban village in the midst of the city, which will bring new jobs, housing, commercial development, and year round activities to Lowertown and infuse the city with renewed vitality.” Enabled by an unprecedented \$10 million grant by the McKnight Foundation, the LRC assumed the role and responsibility of driving the revitalization of Lowertown.



Lowertown in 1959

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, artists moved to Lowertown. Attracted by low rents, raw space and relative quiet, artists from around the region saw opportunity in Lowertown. Slowly and quietly, a new, risk-tolerant population began to bring life to the buildings and the streets of Lowertown.

Initiated by the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation and supported fully by the City of Saint Paul, Lowertown was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. This gave the area protection under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The next year, the City of Saint Paul designated the Lowertown Historic District as a Heritage Preservation Site.

Aided by these designations and the associated tax credits, Artspace, the LRC, the City and others partnered to renovate three buildings dedicated to the arts. The Lowertown Artists Lofts Cooperative, the Tilsner and the Northern Warehouse were renovated and became the anchors for the arts community.

Throughout the years, there has been a steady commitment to incrementally reinvest in the assets of Lowertown. Instead of demolishing and building new, Lowertown remained committed to a slow, deliberate and steady approach to redevelopment.

This approach allowed Lowertown to remain a relatively quiet neighborhood on the edge of downtown. Such an approach was particularly supportive of the artist community, as it respected the financial and environmental needs of working artists.

In 1982, the Saint Paul Farmers' Market moved to Lowertown. An institution since the late 1800s, the Farmers' Market was an anomaly of sorts for Lowertown - it was a destination in the middle of a relatively quiet neighborhood. The market now draws 20,000 people each weekend in the summer.

Recently, a few new buildings have been added to the mix, attracting new residents paying market rate for condominiums. In addition, restaurants and other regional attractions have opened in Lowertown, continuing Lowertown's evolution.

Today, over 3.5 million square feet of warehouse space have been renovated. Mears Park has been redesigned and improved, and Union Depot is undergoing a major renovation to be restored as a train depot and transit hub. Lowertown is a model example of how the deliberate act of historic preservation can be a successful economic development tool. Without the economic assistance enabled by designating the area an historic district, buildings most likely would have been demolished and the unique sense of place that exists today would be lost. Preserving the unique qualities of Lowertown over the past 30 years enables Lowertown today to thrive as a desirable authentic urban neighborhood.



Early Saint Paul Skyline, Union Depot and the rail yards at Hoffman Junction

Arts and the Creative Community

Unlike many similar warehouse-artist neighborhoods across the country that transitioned quickly from an artist neighborhood to a gentrified neighborhood, Lowertown has held onto its working/living artists. Together, they have created a strong sense of community, independence, a spirit of cooperation and a mutual respect for each other and the arts. They are qualities that remain today and are adopted by newcomers whether they are artists or not.

Today, Lowertown has approximately 600 working artists. Due in part to the small studios and compact urban environment, most of the artists practice in the traditional media arts (painting, drawing, etc). However, the arts community has grown in recent years to include composers, the culinary arts, performers and other media.

The sheer number of artists has attracted related businesses and organizations to Lowertown. Today, Lowertown is home to several arts organizations and foundations. The Jerome Foundation, Springboard for the Arts, Zeitgeist, Public Art Saint Paul and State of Minnesota Arts Board add richness to the arts community.

In recent years, the identity of the Lowertown community has evolved to become less an “artist community” and more a “creative community.” Designers, architects, musicians and programmers have come to Lowertown to work and live within the creative environment originally established by the pioneering artists. Many are attracted by inexpensive raw space, but they also are attracted by the potential to collaborate, exchange and integrate ideas across professions and disciplines. Collectively, this creative sector has begun to build a network of collaborations and self-employed entrepreneurs.

Lowertown – An Artist Neighborhood in the Creative Economy

Lowertown has the potential to be Saint Paul’s engine of innovation producing the ideas, products, and culture of the new century. It is the kind of district prized by cities around the world trying to compete in the global creative economy – the city’s most significant and dense cluster of artists, and creative individuals and enterprises.

An analysis of just over 300 business establishments within the 55101 ZIP code area (based on 2007 data) revealed that 15.11 percent of all establishments were considered creative businesses. This compares with a county and metro area average of half that percentage. This represents 47 firms, but does not include the self-employed or sole proprietor businesses. The number of artists in the neighborhood, most of whom are self-employed, is estimated to be approximately 600.

Creative Places Nurture Entrepreneurs

Since the 1990s, urban neighborhoods that are diverse and welcoming to newcomers, and that offer a lively mix of social and cultural activities, became important engines for economic development, community pride and livability. Scholars, planners and researchers alike cite the presence of cultural and social activities, receptivity and local aesthetics as key indicators of – and contributors to – economic vitality and residents’ sense of connection to place.

Creative Industries and Creative Class Workers Defined

Policy makers, economists, scholars and others concerned with the quality of life and economies of cities around the world have recognized the emergence and importance of the creative economy since the mid-1990s. They have also been working to fashion a formal and useful definition of Creative Industries. Those enterprises or businesses considered part of the creative sector include nearly every kind of artist and, more broadly, products and services in which creative intelligence is applied to produce work that is novel and useful. One of the most widely-used definitions states that creative industries include:

- *Enterprises and people involved in the production and distribution of goods and services in which the aesthetic, intellectual and emotional engagement of the consumer gives the product value in the marketplace.*
- *Creative workers include those people commonly considered fine artists but incorporate people involved in a broader range of professions, businesses and culturally-based pursuits. Creative enterprises include:*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • <i>Advertising</i> | • <i>Software</i> |
| • <i>Architecture</i> | • <i>Toys and games</i> |
| • <i>Art</i> | • <i>TV</i> |
| • <i>Crafts</i> | • <i>Radio</i> |
| • <i>Culinary arts</i> | |
| • <i>Design</i> | <i>Certain manufacturing of decorative or</i> |
| • <i>Fashion</i> | <i>ornamental metals, glass, ceramics and other</i> |
| • <i>Film</i> | <i>materials are also included. Products that have</i> |
| • <i>Music</i> | <i>historic or symbolic meaning in a given place, or</i> |
| • <i>Performing arts</i> | <i>are created by hand using skills, knowledge or</i> |
| • <i>Publishing</i> | <i>natural materials associated with a particular</i> |
| • <i>R&D</i> | <i>place or cultural tradition, can also be included.</i> |

The Artistic Dividend

Ann Markusen, an internationally-known Minnesota-based economist, has written extensively on the positive effects of creativity, which she calls the “artistic dividend.” Her work focuses on the impact of a creative community on larger, established enterprises, as well as on start-ups. In addition to these impacts, she asserts that, as a growing part of the overall economy, “the arts and cultural sector is the nation’s most under-rated economic engine, producing millions of well-paying jobs.” In 2010, Markusen concluded that “creative places nurture entrepreneurs.”

Lowertown has established itself as a welcoming and supportive place for working artists and for visitors. It has grown into a center of small creative cultural organizations as well as home to the Saint Paul Art Crawl and the Saint Paul Farmers’ Market, marketplaces in which local producers have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with buyers. This welcoming character, with its rich fabric of cultural life, is critical to a city’s capacity to be globally competitive and to attract and nurture creative talent.

Adjacent to Lowertown are many other cultural and natural assets. They include the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary to the east, and institutions such as the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Saint Paul Public Library, Minnesota Public Radio, Fitzgerald Theater and other resources to the west. To the south lies the lower landing of the Mississippi River, and to the north lie major medical complexes and State government.

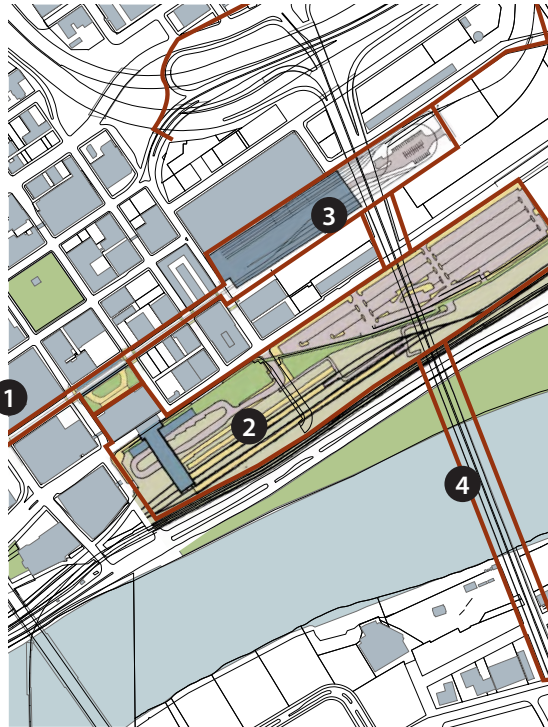
Cities in every corner of the world are bending over backwards to attract and retain the kind of creative cluster and core of creative talent that Saint Paul has built in Lowertown over the past 30 years. Lowertown, as a hub of creative people and small arts organizations, is pivotal to the region’s cultural vitality and economic success.

Planning

This Plan will be adopted as part of Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan. It will be the recognized small area plan for Lowertown. As such, the Plan looks to the Comprehensive Plan for policy guidance.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, this Plan is coordinated with several other on-going and recently completed initiatives. Among them:

- Downtown Station Area Plan and Central Corridor LRT
- Chapters 73 and 74 in the Legislative Code
- Lowertown Design Review Guidelines
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- Rehabilitation of Union Depot and associated property
- Lafayette Bridge reconstruction
- Planning around Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and Regional Trail
- Trout Brook trail connections to McCarrens Lake
- Great River Passage Master Plan
- Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework Plan
- Central Corridor Public Art Plan



Current public investments in Lowertown: Current investments in Lowertown will have great impacts on the neighborhood. Upon completion of the LRT project in 2014, Lowertown will look very different from today.

- 1 Central Corridor LRT
- 2 Union Depot Multi-Modal Station
- 3 Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF)
- 4 Lafayette Bridge

Downtown Station Area Plan

The Downtown Station Area Plan, completed in 2010, establishes a policy framework for development around the station areas in downtown Saint Paul, including Lowertown. The Plan establishes aggressive targets for growth throughout downtown:

- 5,000 – 6,000 rental units of housing
- 750 – 1,200 ownership units of housing
- 1.8 million SF office space
- 100,000 – 150,000 SF of retail
- 300 new hotel rooms

The Plan assumes these targets will be met by absorbing surface lots, promoting reinvestment in strategic sites, and prohibiting new single-use parking structures

In addition, the Station Area Plan lays the groundwork for public realm improvements, such as the creation of urban rooms connected by a ring of neighborhood park streets.

Public Engagement in the Master Plan Process

The Greater Lowertown Master Planning process was initiated by community interests in the greater Lowertown area - including parts of the East Side/Dayton's Bluff. The process was led by the Lowertown Master Plan Task Force and the consultant team, with input from stakeholders throughout the community and the City.

The process began in November 2010 and ended in June 2011. Throughout the seven month process, the team gathered input from stakeholders through:

- 36 focus group meetings
- 3 public meetings
- 9 task force meetings
- 2 arts workshops
- Arts survey
- 10 follow-up staff/stakeholder meetings

In total, approximately 900 people participated in the meetings.

In addition to the above meetings, the team maintained a website (VisionLowertown.com) to distribute and collect information.



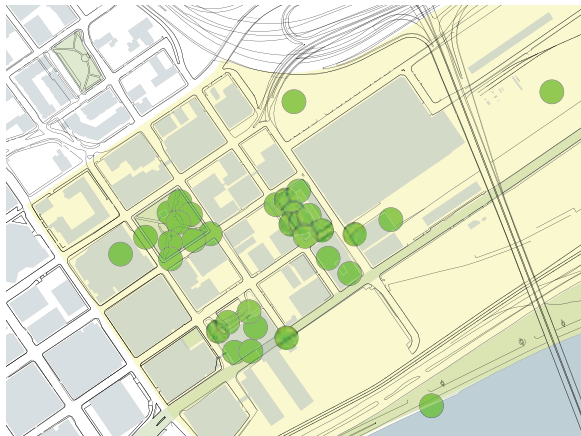
Public Participation: Discussions, exercises, and presentations were part of the public engagement process.

The consultant team engaged stakeholders in Phase 1 through a “Dot-mocracy” exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to map the strengths and weaknesses of Lowertown so the plan recommendations:

- Leverage existing strengths
- Eliminate or reduce existing weaknesses

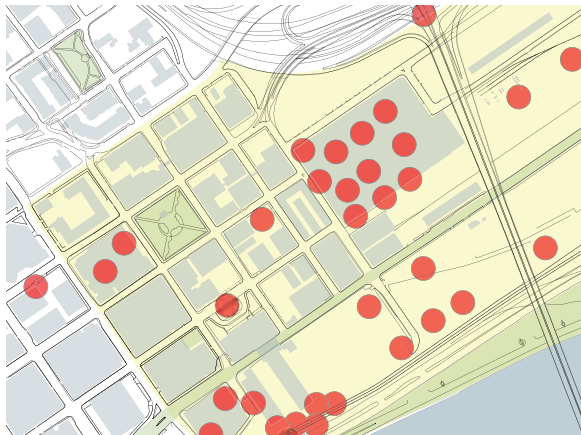
Strengths

- Mears Park
- Union Depot
- Farmers’ Market
- Arts Community
- Historic Character



Weaknesses

- Gillette Building / Diamond Products Site
- Shepard and Warner Roads
- Rail Lines and Parking Ramp
- Access to River



Participants were asked to locate on a map the three strongest places and the three weakest places. After all participants completed this exercise, the general pattern of strengths and weaknesses emerged. This data helped the team prioritize and focus its efforts. This process was critical to the consultant team because it clearly identified where it was most important to make changes and introduce interventions.



Farmers' Market



Surface Parking

Lowertown Values

Lowertown residents and stakeholders value their community. Lowertown residents share three commonly held values: Arts, Sustainability and Historic Preservation.

The Arts and Creativity

For the past 30 years, Lowertown has cultivated a community through the businesses of artists, creators and innovators. Even before Lowertown's recent emergence, Lowertown was home to James J. Hill and other entrepreneurs whose innovations changed the country. Today, there are approximately 600 practicing artists in Lowertown. In addition, Lowertown is home to several arts organizations and foundations serving the arts community. Recently, Lowertown has attracted and produced several companies (technology, graphics, design, etc.) that rely on innovation and creativity as their stock and trade. Creativity and innovation are a part of Lowertown's past, and should be a part of its future.

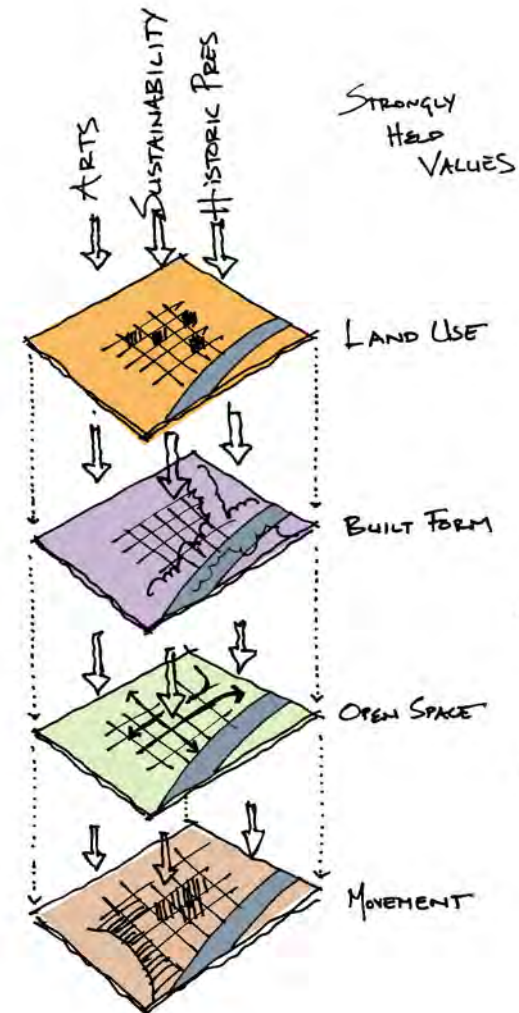
Sustainability

Lowertown residents pride themselves on creating a community and encouraging lifestyles that have low impacts on the environment. The community desires to create a complete urban village - a place where one can live and have most daily activities of life within walking or biking distance.

Historic Preservation

Many choose to live in Lowertown for its unique historic character. The older buildings and narrow streets allow residents to live within and side-by-side with the layers of history that create the on-going and constantly evolving story of Lowertown. Lowertown's historic resources define the physical character of the neighborhood, create a strong sense of place, enhance the quality of life of residents, and connect residents to each other and the city. Saint Paul has embraced preservation as an important tool for maintaining economic and social vitality. During the past 25 years, historic preservation has been used to transform Lowertown. The commitment to Lowertown by residents, the City and other organizations has led to increased investment and higher property values, and has made the neighborhood a better place to live, work and recreate. Through historic preservation, Lowertown and Saint Paul have remained attractive and vital to those who seek an urban lifestyle.

Lowertown residents recognize that historic preservation is a deliberate act - it does not happen by chance or default. Historic resources are an asset that need to be nurtured and protected. If not, they will be lost and never recovered. Historic resources are also an asset that can fuel economic development. Redeveloping buildings with sympathetic developers and tenants will further differentiate Lowertown from other communities.





2. Vision and Initiatives

Vision Statement

Lowertown is urban and lush.

Historic brick buildings are softened by shade trees, flowers, and parks. The neighborhood is alive with residents and visitors. Independent businesses, restaurants and galleries thrive.

The Farmers' Market, Union Depot, and artists' residences and studios enhance the vitality of Lowertown. Striking Mississippi River vistas, access to safe trails, and convenient public transit make Lowertown an inviting community, allowing residents and visitors alike to enjoy the neighborhood without the hassles and costs of a car.

Seven Initiatives of the Master Plan

The Plan is organized around six primary initiatives. Each is accompanied with a narrative followed by illustrations and photographs that further describe the specific physical recommendations associated with the Goals.

Goals

1. Complete the Village
2. Grow the Market
3. Advance the Arts
4. Connect to the River
5. Stitch the Seam
6. Preserve the District
7. Evolve the Task Force

Initiative #1: Complete the Village

- **Maintain the eclectic character of Lowertown.**
- **Carefully and incrementally add new community supporting facilities, programs and activities to Lowertown.**
- **Aggressively pursue sustainability initiatives to develop Lowertown's self-reliance.**

Lowertown is often referred to as a “village.” Residents cite the neighborhood character, strong sense of community and desire for self-sufficiency as essential qualities of their Village. Lowertown is a friendly place where residents respect and help each other. Some of the Lowertown neighborliness is rooted in the independent spirit of the neighborhood - born several decades ago by pioneering artists who settled in Lowertown when no one else would. These early residents established a strong bond as they stuck together, and helped each other out as the Lowertown community emerged.

In the ensuing decades, the community spirit was nurtured (by the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation) over years of slow organic growth. Instead of capitalizing on every developer interested in Lowertown, the LRC pursued a vision of an Urban Village - a place where a tight network of diverse people work together to create a self-reliant, walkable and sustainable community. The future of Lowertown should not depart from the ideals originally articulated by the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation.

The future will bring very different challenges than those faced decades ago. Lowertown will experience large public investments on a scale never before experienced. LRT, the restoration of the Union Depot, the new Lafayette Bridge and potential riverfront improvements will likely be completed as the housing slump ends and capital markets loosen up. It is therefore reasonable to anticipate increased demand to invest in and live in the Lowertown Urban Village.

Over the next 15 years, Lowertown will focus on maintaining the eclectic character of the community, incrementally adding new community-supporting amenities, facilities, programs and sustainability initiatives that increase Lowertown's environmental stewardship.

Maintain neighborhood character

Lowertown will maintain a mix of housing (rental and ownership; market-rate and affordable) for new and existing residents. With the Lowertown Lofts Cooperative as a model, additional buildings will become artist-owned, thereby securing the neighborhood as a safe, quiet, supportive place for artists to live and work.

The few remaining “unimproved” buildings will be renovated into apartments, condominiums and loft space for working studios. New buildings will rise on the remaining vacant parcels for market-rate housing and non-residential uses that support the neighborhood.

Green spaces are critical to the health of the Urban Village. The Plan recommends a new tot lot, a market-park and a plaza for gathering and performances in front of the Union Depot. In addition, the Plan promotes continued bike and trail connections so residents of the Village can access other neighborhoods, and vice versa.

New community-supported uses

Over the next 15 years, Lowertown will actively recruit regional and local attractions that support Lowertown's eclectic character. The new attractions will plug into and benefit from Lowertown's creative character. Their facilities and agendas will be shaped by Lowertown residents. In particular, the Plan recommends recruiting new arts venues to support the arts community: galleries, academies, museums, an arts center and performance spaces that allow the Lowertown arts community to showcase itself to the region. A parallel effort to recruit creative industries (technology, design, etc.) that would benefit from collaborations with others in the community will amplify the entrepreneurial spirit of Lowertown.

With an established and growing residential base, and several new attractions, three defined retail clusters will take shape:

- Food and art around an improved Farmers' Market
- Restaurants and entertainment around Mears Park
- Neighborhood services and retail on East 7th Street

These three clusters will help improve and define the pedestrian experience in Lowertown, and increase the viability of individual business endeavors.

Sustainability initiatives

Lowertown will build on its legacy by investing in and championing a new generation of sustainability initiatives. Long before sustainability became a buzzword, Lowertown rehabilitated and re-purposed 3.5 million square feet of historic buildings, created a walkable mixed-use neighborhood, and was instrumental in implementing the largest, most successful biomass-fueled hot water district heating system in North America. Over the next 15 years, this Plan recommends Lowertown implement and support a number of efforts directed at reducing the neighborhood's environmental impacts.

Among them, the Plan suggests:

- Expanding district heating to Wacouta Commons and the Riverfront
- Full support of LRT, commuter rail, high speed rail and other mass transit options
- Developing a car share, Hour Car program, car pooling programs
- Battery charging stations for hybrid vehicles
- A grey water reclamation system
- Stormwater harvesting
- Raingardens
- Community-scale composting, gardening and food production
- Four-season farmers' market to promote local and regional food production
- Solar farms on roof tops and east of Lafayette Bridge
- Third-generation investments in building insulation and HVAC systems
- The preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings
- Bike-sharing kiosks
- Green roofs

Complete the Village



- 1 Infill Development (in pink)
- 2 Transit Connections
- 3 Trail Connections
- 4 Sustainability Initiatives
- 5 New Gathering Places
- 6 Renovated Buildings (in orange)



Local pride



Places to gather



Active sidewalks



Sustainability initiatives

Initiative #2. Grow the Market

- **Ensure the longevity of the Farmers' Market in the heart of Lowertown.**
- **Make the Farmers' Market site an amenity to the neighborhood throughout the week.**

The Saint Paul Farmers' Market is an institution. Since 1852, the Market has provided fresh fruits and vegetables from local growers to thousands of families throughout the region. Over the past 150 years, the Market has moved several times, settling on its current location in Lowertown in 1982. Currently, the Market houses over 160 vendors and attracts over 20,000 people each weekend throughout the growing season. It is one of the largest and best local markets in the country. Residents of Lowertown consider the market one of the primary assets of living in Lowertown.

Despite the support for and success of the Farmers' Market, its future on the current site is not guaranteed. The Saint Paul Growers Association does not own the site; they lease it from the City.

This Plan recognizes the value of the Market to the City and neighborhood, and encourages proactive steps to preserve the Market in Lowertown.

The best way to preserve the Market in the heart of Lowertown is to invest in the site and the Market - to make the Market more than a two-day/week event and to make the site more than a parking lot that hosts a market. Improvements to the Market and the site will likely enhance the financial viability of the Market while connecting it more deeply with the community. Investments in the site can improve it as an amenity to the neighborhood while the Market is not in session, thereby increasing its value to the community.

Ultimately, a stronger, year-round Farmers' Market can become an anchor and incubator to other food and culinary-related goods and services, perhaps even a culinary institute. The reputation of the Market would grow from its niche to become a year-round destination that serves Lowertown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Likewise, the creation of a small plaza would be a benefit to residents of Lowertown, as it would augment Mears Park and become a casual gathering place for residents.

The Plan suggests a phased approach to investing in the Market and the Site.

Step 1: Accommodate near-term Market growth.

Given the layout of the site, if the Growers Association desires to add vendors, an indoor component or to diversify with arts/crafts vendors or more food trucks while maintaining the current number of vendors, it will have to expand off-site. Several options exist for near-term Market growth and expansion:

- Locate a permanent market or related vendor operation (such as culinary classes, canning, specialty foods and additional market vendors) in the retail space of the OMF.
- Grow the market along 4th Street towards Union Depot and/or Mears Park.
- Add doors and enclosure to some of the Market sheds so the selling season can be extended.
- Expand the Market to weekdays. As the population (both residential and visitors) of Lowertown increases, a weekday market could be well-supported.

Step 2: Reinvest in the site to create a year-round neighborhood amenity.

Eventually, the best way to ensure the longevity of the Farmers' Market in the heart of Lowertown is to invest in the site so it is not a surface parking lot five

days of the week during the summer and seven days of the week the rest of the year. This Plan recommends modifying the site so a portion of it can become a valuable amenity to the neighborhood all week long and throughout the year. Modification of the site can be minor or major, from a small park-like space with seating, tables and public wi-fi to a larger open space, underground parking and other neighborhood amenities.

Step 3: Dedicate the site as public open space and improve it for current operations.

The Market needs to be protected from development. The City should adopt policy that protects the site in the same way that public parks are protected. At the same time, the City, neighborhood and Growers Association should work together to improve operations and aesthetics of the site.

Initial discussions with the Growers Association identified several near-term initiatives that would improve market-day operation, such as multiple customer parking options, dedicated vendor parking, a pick-up/drop-off zone for customers, allowing parking on both sides of Wall Street, and hiring police officers to assist parking and traffic flow. Each of these initiatives will improve operations and the customer experience without altering the basic function of the Market.

Grow the Market



- 1 Indoor Market in the OMF
- 2 Plaza Street
- 3 Indoor/Outdoor Market
- 4 Passive Plaza and Gathering
(see following page)
- 5 Additional Overflow Market Vendors

Saint Paul Farmers' Market Park:
Long-term vision of a dedicated Market site and park with underground parking for the neighborhood



7 day a week market



Diverse offerings



Outdoor Market



Shared Street / Plaza Street

Potential Options for Long-Term Improvements



Minor improvements to the site will enhance the Market and provide an amenity to the neighborhood throughout the week and the year. Most of the site can remain intact while a few vendors would move to adjacent streets or into the front of the OMF building.

Initiative #3: Advance the Arts

- **Make the arts integral, accessible and visible.**
- **Maintain the community as a place for artists to live and work.**
- **Encourage the creative skills of artists to be used to address a wide range of neighborhood issues.**

The Art Crawl brings thousands of people to Lowertown each year. However, with the exception of such scheduled events, much of the creativity, crafts and innovation occurring in Lowertown are invisible to visitors and even many residents. With the exception of the Art Crawl, the Black Dog, Springboard for the Arts and the few public venues such as Nautilus Theatre, there is not a strong **public** presence of the arts. Most of the creative activities occur on upper floors of buildings, in kitchens or in the solitude of the studio.

Despite having one of the largest concentrations of artists in the Twin Cities, Lowertown's artist community is fragile. With many artists already priced out of Lowertown, future development pressures, if not appropriately channeled, threaten to dismantle this important community asset. While large in numbers, the arts community has no formal organizational structure, advocate or dedicated space to interact with the greater community or champion its specific needs.

The Plan focuses on strengthening the arts community by:

- Maintaining affordability
- Making the arts more visible and accessible
- Promoting artists as leaders and involved citizens
- Creating gathering places
- Promoting a stronger arts economy
- Organizing the arts community
- Documenting local resources and spaces

Maintaining affordable housing and studio space for artists is critical. Currently, there are only 29 artist-owned studios in Lowertown. While several buildings are dedicated to artists, they are rental buildings and not fully protected. The Plan identifies several immediate opportunities to increase the number of artist-owned units.

The Plan envisions a Lowertown where the presence of art and artists is evident to all. The Plan offers several opportunities to create a vibrant street-level arts presence. Galleries, streetscapes and public art are a few opportunities for art to enhance the public realm. In the immediate short-term, efforts to create temporary interim galleries and display spaces in vacant buildings should be pursued. These “pop-up” galleries and installations are quick, inexpensive and simple ways to advance the art community's agenda, and build markets and audiences for artists' work. In addition, near-term efforts can focus on connections with local restaurants and offices - Lowertown's walls should be enhanced with Lowertown's arts.

The Plan also recommends exploring the possibility of a Lowertown Art Community Center. The Lowertown Art Community Center would contain meeting rooms, classrooms, shared resources, rotating gallery and potentially a retail component where Lowertown artists would gain greater exposure and revenue potential.

Many artists have lived and worked in Lowertown for 30 years or more. They have focused on their work and on building a stimulating environment and community of artists in which to work. With change coming to the neighborhood, artists and arts groups have turned attention to solidifying their community and their relationships with other residents, businesses, neighborhood organizations and City government. In the implementation steps, this Plan proposes that artists join forces with CapitolRiver (District Council 17) and look into forming and/or playing a major role in a Business Improvement District or other local association to represent their interests.

This Plan also recommends that artists collaborate closely with the Heritage Preservation Commission and representatives from the historic preservation community to explore opportunities for place-based, context-sensitive public art within the historic district.

With a critical and active mass of artists, Lowertown can become home to a greater number of arts-related organizations. With the assistance of local organizations and foundations, Lowertown can recruit arts-related organizations from around the region and the country to locate in Lowertown.

An early effort can concentrate on finding a permanent home for the collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art. The MMAA closed in 2009 and its collection has been in storage. A new MMAA in Lowertown would be an important addition to the community.

Finally, the Plan strongly recommends that artists be promoted as leaders, involved citizens and creative problem-solvers. Many artists have a refined skill in non-traditional problem-solving. The Plan supports the City's ordinance that requires public art as part of all City capital projects, in addition artists should be involved in County capital projects and private development review. Streetscapes, new buildings, parks and other elements of the public realm should be informed by the unique viewpoints of the artist community.



Public art events



temporary pools



temporary sidewalk cafes



Functional art



public pianos

Pop-Up Urbanism



temporary park



Art on unused objects

Initiative #4: Connect to the River

- **Increase access to and views of the river.**
- **Maximize the river for its recreational, restorative and habitat value.**

Lowertown is a river community. Ironically, however, adjacency to the river has not translated into superior access to and enjoyment of it.

For over a century, the river was a working river, an economic driver, but not an amenity to the city or Lowertown. Only recently has the river been a resource to engage with and place to enjoy.

While much of the industrial infrastructure up and down the river has been dismantled, in Lowertown much of it still exists. Many of the large infrastructure projects (Hoffman Junction, the main railroad lines, Union Depot rail deck) related to the industrial uses along the river and regional transportation remain, thereby limiting Lowertown's ability to enjoy the river as a recreational amenity.

The Great River Passage Master Plan promises an even more active and enjoyable riverfront throughout Saint Paul. In downtown, the Great River Passage Master Plan envisions promenades, attractions and gathering places, such as a new Lower Landing Park with native gardens, landforms and overlooks. However, this new riverfront park alone will not benefit Lowertown unless access to it is improved. This Plan focuses on creating high-quality connections to the new riverfront park.

Most of the efforts to connect to the river will require a close partnership with Ramsey County and the rail companies. The elevated rail deck extends from

Jackson to Broadway and restricts access to the river. Working with the County and the railroads, Lowertown will work to extend Broadway beneath the deck to connect to Warner/Shepard Road. This connection, ideally, will eventually be a full vehicular connection with a dedicated bike lane and generous sidewalks. The rail deck above would be opened to daylight the connection. New bridges and trestles would be required to carry the trains.

The beauty and grandeur of the Union Depot will be highlighted with a balcony or bridge out from the end of the waiting room towards the river. A new connection to the river through the waiting room would help activate the vast waiting room and provide a spectacular view of the river.

The River Balcony will be a public walkway connecting Kellogg Mall to the Union Depot along the south edges of the Post Office and the Ramsey County building. It will connect to Union Depot and Sibley Street - a direct connection to Warner/Shepard Road and the riverfront.

Lowertown will work with Ramsey County to develop buildings on Kellogg Boulevard. With so few remaining vacant sites within Lowertown, the Ramsey County sites on the Union Depot property become critical. They are the only remaining large urban sites in Lowertown with the potential to overlook the river.

Shepard Road will be modified slightly to encourage slower speeds. It will remain a four-lane road, but traffic will be slowed and intersections will be improved in order to make them more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

Connect to the River



- 1 River Balcony
- 2 Development with views of the river
- 3 Improved riverfront park
- 4 Broadway connection
- 5 Bridge or Overlook
- 6 Vertical connections to river



Overlooks



Bridges



River Balcony per the Great River Passage Master Plan

Initiative #5: Stitch the Seam

- **Create a front door to Lowertown, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and the East Side.**
- **Connect recreational trails to Lowertown and to the River.**
- **Aggressively pursue sustainability initiatives that increase Lowertown's self-reliance.**

Lowertown has typically been thought of as a neighborhood on the edge of downtown. Until recently, the front door to Lowertown was Jackson Street. However, as the city has gradually re-oriented itself to the river, Lowertown has made efforts to create a second front door to the neighborhood. Recent efforts by East Side neighborhoods to become more connected to downtown and the river suggest that Lowertown now has a third front door - this one to the east.

The east side of Lowertown is often forgotten. After the rails were removed and the Lafayette Bridge was built, the land east of the bridge went unused for decades. The Gillette Company built large, imposing buildings that effectively defined the eastern end of Lowertown at Broadway. With the re-purposing of the Gillette/Diamond Products site, the extension of Prince Street to 4th Street, and the opening of the 27-acre Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary (with the potential for the Imniza-ska Cultural Center), the east end of downtown becomes of great value to Lowertown and the city.

Airport zoning regulations prohibit typical urban development (buildings and places to congregate) in this area. Restrictions notwithstanding, this large area can accomplish many important objectives for Lowertown. With approximately 11 acres available, the area could be put to highly productive use for community or urban agriculture, active recreation, energy generation and stormwater harvesting.

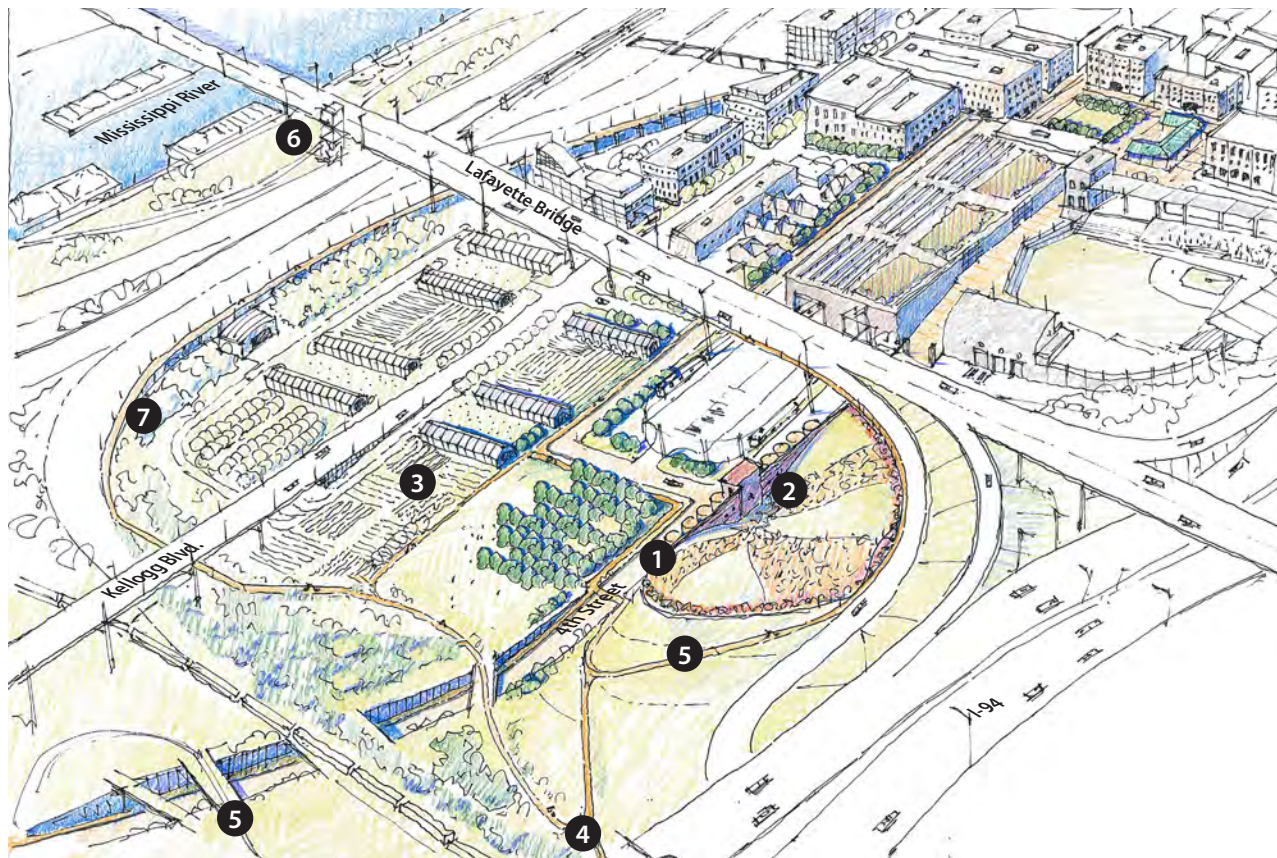
Specifically, the Plan recommends working closely with MnDOT on the Lafayette Bridge reconstruction to implement an innovative stormwater strategy. The stormwater washing off the bridge will be captured and retained between 5th and 7th Streets. The Plan recommends designing the stormwater basin as a grey water harvesting device, so the water that is captured and filtered can be put to productive use instead of being sent into the groundwater and river. With the LRT vehicle-washing facility located adjacent to the bridge, there will be a high-volume demand for grey water within a few years. Ultimately, the grey water system can extend into Lowertown on a building-by-building basis, perhaps even being used to irrigate Mears Park.

The Plan recommends the Seam develop with both active recreation and community or urban agriculture - two other potential users for grey water. Locally-produced food will provide employment and education opportunities, while addressing community concerns of food safety and affordability. Community and urban agriculture can also connect and relate to other culinary and arts-related initiatives in Lowertown.

Active recreation is another need in Lowertown and on the East Side that can be located in the Seam. Given the environmental sensitivity and inaccessibility of adjacent open areas, the Seam provides a good location for recreation. In particular, residents cite adventure sports, dog park and ski trails as pressing needs for surrounding neighborhoods.

The Seam offers the exciting possibility to tie together several of the region's recreational trails. Fourth Street, Willius Street and Prince Street will have a bike trail connecting the East Side to Downtown and Lowertown. Eventually, when the full network is completed through the Seam, Lower Phalen Creek Trail, Trout Brook Trail, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, the riverfront, Union Depot, Lowertown, downtown and the East Side will all be seamlessly connected with recreational trails.

Stitch the Seam



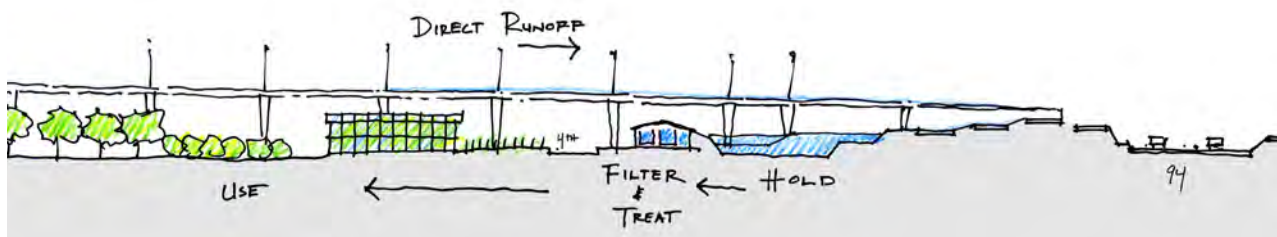
- 1 4th Street Trail connection
- 2 Stormwater Harvesting
- 3 Community / Urban Agriculture
- 4 Trout Brook Trail Connection
- 5 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Connection
- 6 Marsupial bridge beneath Lafayette Bridge
- 7 Depot / River Balcony Trail Connection



Marsupial bridge



Community / Urban agriculture



Stormwater harvesting

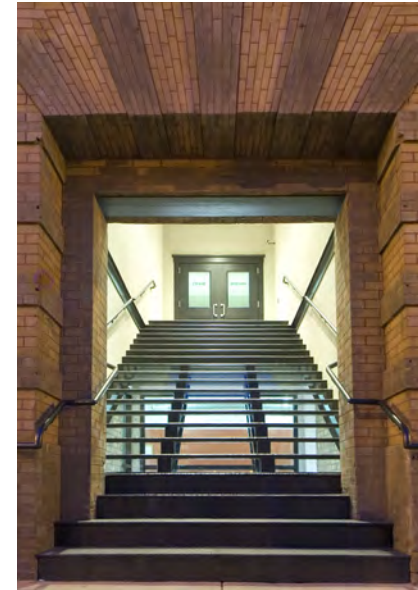
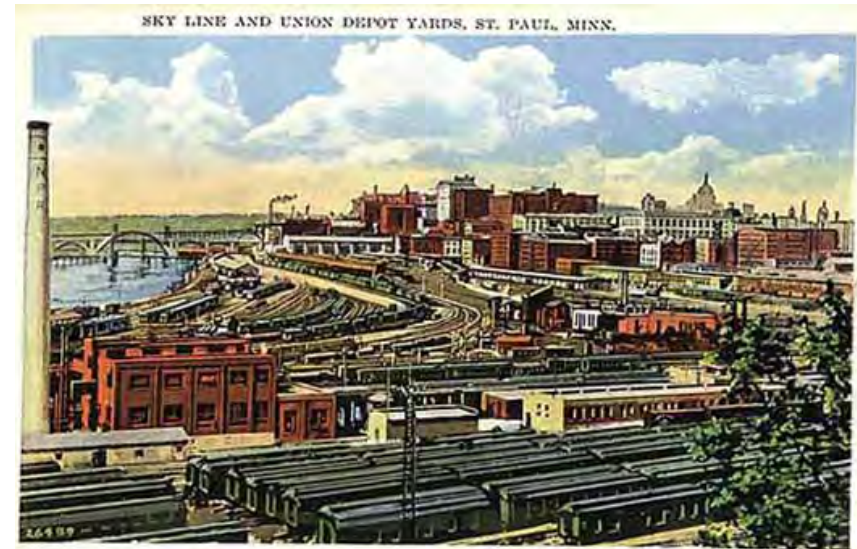


Recreational trails

Initiative #6: Preserve the District

- Continue to recognize, preserve and celebrate the industrial warehouse character of Lowertown Historic District.
- Ensure that every new increment of development enhances the character and value of Lowertown as an historic district.

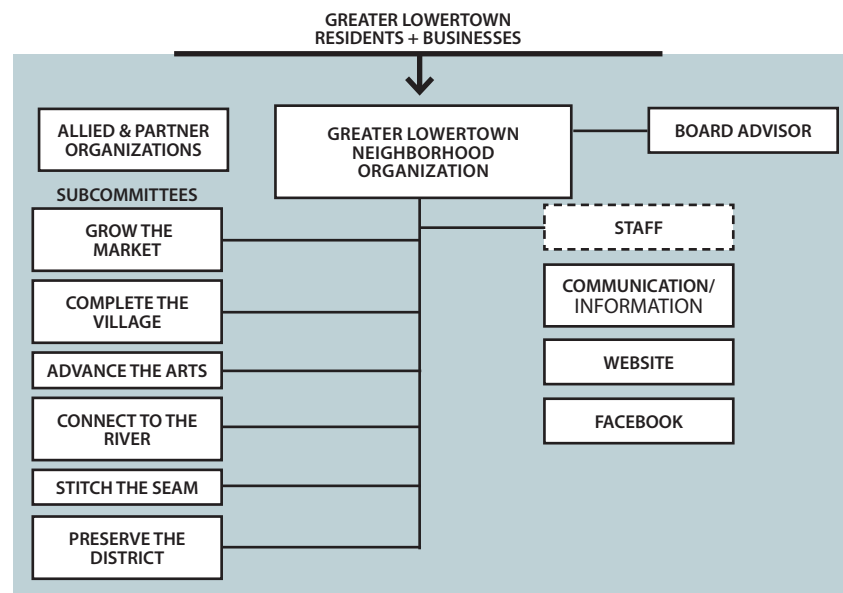
Preservation is a widely-held community value. The narrow streets and warehouse buildings are part of what makes Lowertown unique and loved. Lowertown residents recognize preservation does not occur by accident. It requires diligence and constant attention. Without it, one of the neighborhood's greatest assets will be lost. By protecting the historic character and fabric of a community, residents and visitors of Lowertown can connect with the people and events that underlie their past. This Plan also recognizes the need for on-going support and education about the District, particularly through stewardship of historic resources.



Initiative #7: Evolve the Task Force

Successful implementation of this Plan requires a strong and organized neighborhood voice. The Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation provided the organizational capacity to represent and amplify that voice throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, since then, the neighborhood has not had a strong position at the table. The result has been missed opportunities and lack of coordination for projects in Lowertown.

This Master Plan was made possible through the volunteer efforts of the Master Plan Task Force and the generosity of the Lowertown Future Fund, the Saint Paul Foundation and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. The Task Force and funders recognize that implementation of this Plan will require a more organized and coordinated effort than volunteers can offer. Therefore, the Plan recommends a new organizational structure charged with representing the neighborhood, nurturing partnerships and leading implementation in the Plan.



Possible Organizational Structure





3. Land Use and Urban Design

Summary

Primary Observations

- Lowertown is a downtown neighborhood with a mix of uses, although the retail sector is underdeveloped.
- Lowertown's eastern edge is in transition.
- Lowertown is becoming a regional draw.
- Lowertown is a transit-oriented village.
- The street grid in Lowertown has remained largely intact and is a character-defining feature of the Historic District.
- The land use pattern in Lowertown is major public spaces/parks (Mears Park, Farmers' Market) surrounded by buildings that enclose them.

Goals

- Remain a sustainable urban neighborhood.
- Be a dense, transit-oriented urban village.
- Become fully connected to the East Side and the riverfront.
- Welcome new investments that enhance and augment the unique qualities of Lowertown.
- Maintain the historic character of the district and neighborhood.
- Maintain and enhance Lowertown as a place for the creative community to live, work, produce, collaborate and share with each other and the region.

Objectives

- Organize retail around clusters and anchors.
- Manage parking to minimize its impacts and accommodate demand.
- Utilize the land east of the Lafayette Bridge for uses beneficial to Lowertown and the East Side.

Strategies

- Prioritize building rehabilitation and redevelopment of surface parking lots over building demolition.
- Build three retail clusters: neighborhood services and retail on 7th Street, food and arts around the Farmers' Market, restaurants and entertainment around Mears Park and Union Depot.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties surrounding Union Depot.
- Create a permanent home for the Farmers' Market and a year-round community amenity.
- Extend Lowertown east of the Lafayette Bridge to connect with the East Side of Saint Paul and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.
- Introduce urban agriculture, recreational uses and sustainability initiatives east of the Lafayette Bridge in "The Seam."
- Create a parking plan for downtown and Lowertown that prioritizes full occupancy of existing parking spaces over construction of new parking.

Summary (cont'd)

- Improve Kellogg Boulevard by developing a liner building on the north edge of the Union Depot rail deck.
- Develop more gathering spaces for the neighborhood.
- Maintain and create affordable housing and studio space in Lowertown.
- Attract additional arts investments such as galleries, museums, performance venues, schools, and academies.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- **Lowertown is a downtown neighborhood with a mix of uses, although the retail sector is underdeveloped.**
- **Lowertown's eastern edge is in transition.**
- **Lowertown is becoming a regional draw.**
- **Lowertown is a transit-oriented village.**
- **The street grid in Lowertown has remained largely intact and is a character-defining feature of the Historic District.**
- **The land use pattern in Lowertown is major public spaces/parks surrounded by buildings that enclose them.**

Lowertown is a mixed-use village. With approximately 3,000 residents, the village has a strong residential presence. The residential population gives Lowertown its neighborhood feel and distinguishes it from other parts of downtown Saint Paul such as the office core and Rice Park. The historic character of the streets and buildings distinguish Lowertown from other downtown neighborhoods such as Irvine Park and Wacouta Commons.

The residential character comes from a combination of renovated and new buildings. Unlike many renovated warehouse districts around the country that grow based on high-end, market-rate housing, Lowertown deliberately evolved into a neighborhood with both affordable and market-rate housing. Currently, approximately 20 percent of the 2,000 units in Lowertown are "affordable," and 80 percent are market-rate.

Artists live throughout the neighborhood. However, among the renovated buildings, three are particularly noteworthy for their commitment to the arts community:

- **The Tilsner Artist Co-op:** 66 studio live/work units
- **The Northern Warehouse:** 52 studio live/work units.
- **The Lowertown Lofts Cooperative:** 29 owner-occupied units

Most retail in Lowertown is located on east-west streets because they are the transportation routes into and out of downtown. Only a few of the buildings were designed to have retail on the ground floor. These buildings - the mercantile buildings - are generally clustered on East 7th Street and along the north edge of Mears Park. The remainder of the buildings were designed for warehousing and distribution. Over the years, some have been renovated and retrofitted with stores and restaurants, but the majority of them do not have active public uses at street level.

There are approximately two million square feet of office space in Lowertown, housing approximately 4,835 employees. Office workers in Lowertown are concentrated in information, finance and insurance, professional scientific and technical services, and public administration.

The Farmers' Market and the working artists are a significant form of commerce and economic development in Lowertown. With approximately 160 farmers and approximately 600 artists, Lowertown is home to an unusually high number of self-employed entrepreneurs. Most of this economic activity is non-traditional - it does not occur on a typical 9AM to 5PM schedule, as it does in the downtown core.

Mears Park, the only true year-round gathering space, is a jewel. There is great pride in maintaining and promoting it. Lower Landing Park, also public, is part of a regional system and is located on the edge of Lowertown - therefore it is not considered as much of a community amenity. Otherwise, residents venture into the core of the East Side for other public uses.

Lowertown has wide range of land uses - from residential to industrial rail lines. Most of Lowertown is a tightly packed mixed-use community with a strong residential component. This is the prevailing pattern between Broadway and Jackson, Kellogg Blvd and East 7th Street. Within this approximately 20 block area most of the formerly warehousing and distribution buildings have been converted to housing, offices or studios.

Analysis

Lowertown has a wide range of land uses - from residential to industrial rail lines. After decades of being primarily industrial and commercial, Lowertown has evolved into a mixed use neighborhood with a strong residential component. Some retail, restaurant, entertainment, office and arts related uses complement the residential uses. These uses are mostly located on the ground floor of buildings leaving most of the upper floors of the buildings are apartments or condominiums. Despite the many conversions into residential and mixed-uses, so industrial and rail uses remain on the edges of Lowertown. Whereas the rail deck along Kellogg Blvd will remain in place and become more active in the future; the future of the Diamond Products operation is less certain.

The uses are tightly-packed in the urban grid. This is the prevailing pattern between Jackson, Kellogg Boulevard, and East 7th Street. Within this approximately 20 block area, most of the formerly warehousing and distribution buildings have been converted to housing office or studios.

The urban pattern of Lowertown changes dramatically east of Broadway. This area was flood prone and never developed with warehouses. Rail spurs extended off the main lines and occupied this area until the 1960s. Some rail lines spurred into Union Depot, others into warehouses on Broadway. In the 1960s, the Gillette Corporation built a large warehouse/manufacturing facility on Broadway. Their large building has been vacant for more than a decade, and the remaining land has been used as surface parking for several decades.

Building Type



	Mercantile Building
	Residential Building
	Warehouse/Loft (converted)
	Parking Building
	Industrial Building
	Office
	Podium and Tower
	Other



Warehouse Building



Mercantile Building

Goals

- **Remain a sustainable urban neighborhood.**
- **Be a dense, transit-oriented urban village.**
- **Become fully connected to the East Side and the riverfront.**
- **Welcome new investments that enhance and augment the unique qualities of Lowertown.**
- **Maintain the historic character of the district and neighborhood.**
- **Maintain and enhance Lowertown as a place for the creative community to live, work, produce, collaborate and share with each other and the region.**

Objectives

- **Organize retail around clusters and anchors.**
- **Manage parking to minimize its impacts and accommodate demand.**
- **Utilize the land east of the Lafayette Bridge for uses beneficial to Lowertown and the East Side.**

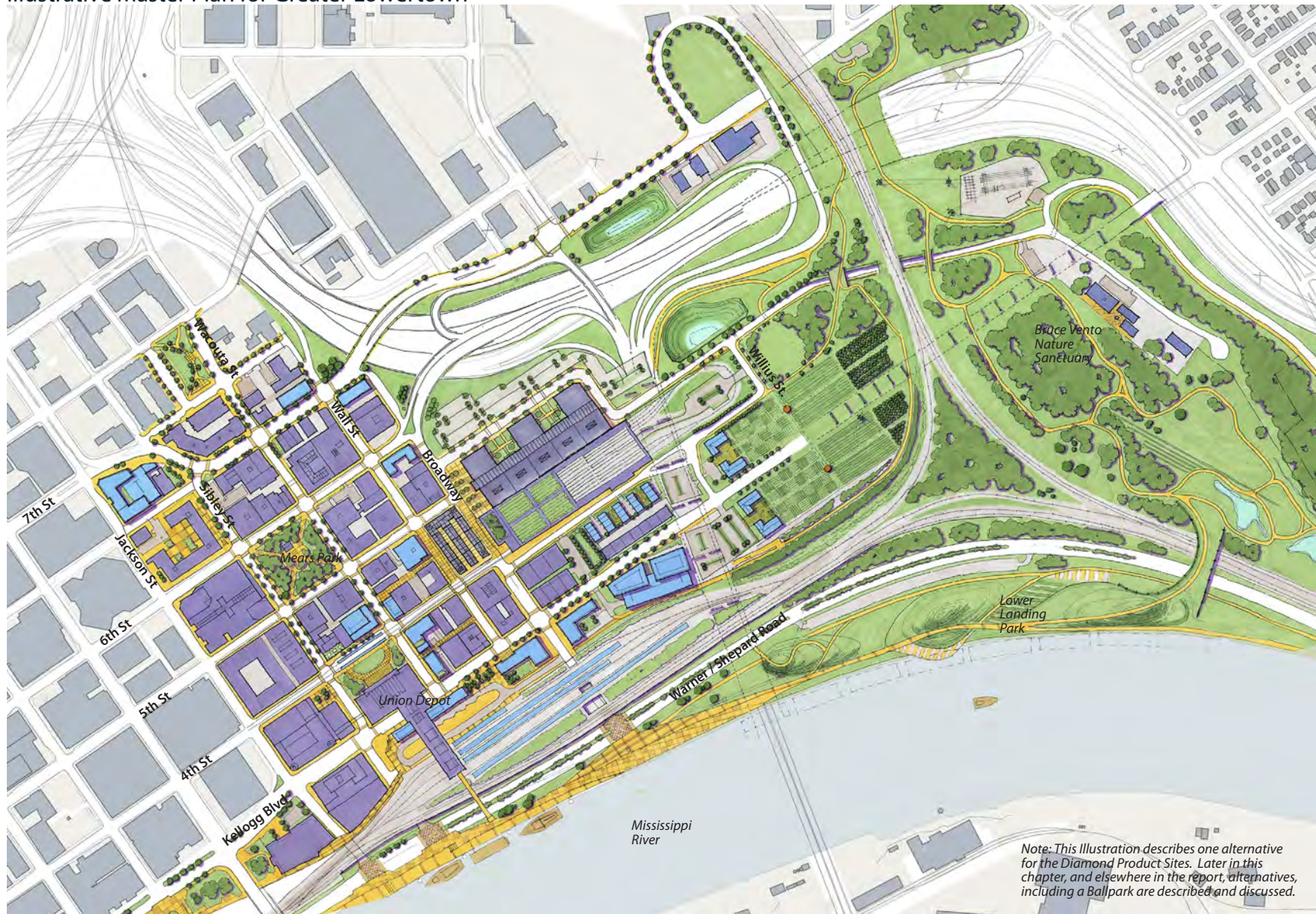
Lowertown aspires to remain a dense, transit-oriented, mixed-use urban neighborhood. Over the past several decades, Lowertown has been a quiet corner of downtown. Today, the community recognizes that changes are underway. There is great opportunity to further enrich the community with new residents, investments, connections and amenities.

Overall, land use patterns in much of Lowertown will remain similar to today: dense, urban and mixed-use. The significant changes will occur east of Broadway, where industrial uses are receding and parking lots will no longer be the optimum use of land. Lowertown will grow east of Broadway to engage this part of the neighborhood. It will become the seam between the East Side and Downtown with urban agriculture, energy generation and recreation.

Within the core of Lowertown, land use changes will be less significant. Building renovations and maintenance, some in their third and fourth generations, will continue, and many surface parking lots will eventually give way to new affordable and mixed-use housing. The neighborhood will remain primarily residential; however, efforts should be made to enhance the non-residential components of the community to support residents. Eventually, three retail clusters will emerge around food and the arts, restaurants and retail, and neighborhood-serving retail and services. Renovations and on-going maintenance and redevelopment will occur within the context of historic preservation values and guidelines for the district.

Special effort will be required to continue growth of the arts in Lowertown in a way that both maintains and strengthens its character as a community of resilient artists. Special emphasis will be made to preserve Lowertown as a place for the creative community to live, work, produce and collaborate. In addition to being a place where artists collaborate with each other, Lowertown will become a place where Lowertown artists can share with the region. Galleries, performance space, venues, schools and academies will choose to locate here because of its uniquely creative culture and unparalleled connectivity.

Illustrative Master Plan for Greater Lowertown



Strategies

Prioritize building rehabilitation and redevelopment of surface parking lots over building demolition.

Building rehabilitations have been the backbone of Lowertown's real estate investments over the past 30 years. These "second-generation investments" have granted a second life to dozens of buildings. They have resulted in 3.5 million square feet of renovated space, modernized and adapted for current uses. Only a few buildings in Lowertown have not had significant second-generation investments.

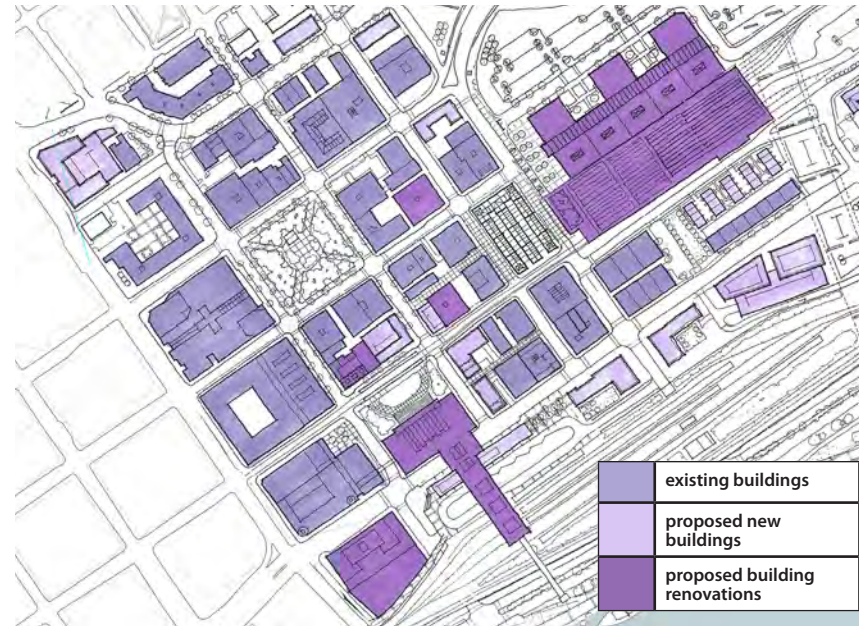
Over the next 15 years, the remaining unimproved buildings will be modernized and renovated with second-generation investments. As has been the practice in the past, demolition should be discouraged. In addition, these buildings should be considered for both affordable housing and live/work studios, as well as market-rate (rental and ownership) units.

The Post Office is by far the largest potential renovation project in Lowertown. At 750,000 square feet, it is larger than all the other potential renovations combined. The Plan supports local and national designation of the Post Office in order to help preserve and reuse it. Most likely, the building will be redeveloped in phases and leased to multiple tenants. Given the size of the building and the variety of floor plates, the building could contain offices and housing, as well as parking.

Rehabilitation of historic buildings in Lowertown will comply with the City's Historic Preservation Plan and the Lowertown District Historic Guidelines. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties will guide preservation, restoration or rehabilitation of historic properties.

Over the next 15 years, the buildings that have already been renovated should consider "third-generation investments" that ensure their long-term viability and sustainability. These include (but are not limited to):

- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Smart metering and low flow fixtures



Potential Infill Buildings and Building Renovations

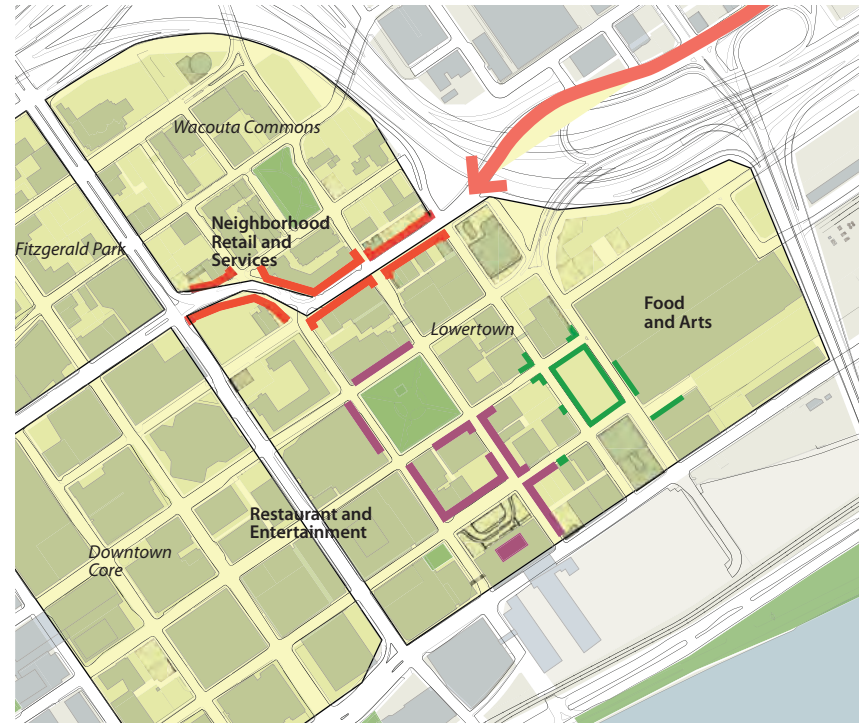
- Grey water systems
- Roof top gardens
- Additional density by adding floors
- Energy production

Surface parking lots will undergo redevelopment pressure in the coming years. With the demand for downtown living and the arrival of LRT service, it is likely that properties with little capital investments, such as parking lots, will become desirable to investors for development. Generally, these sites should be redeveloped with housing (market-rate and affordable, rental and ownership) on the upper floors and active public uses on the ground floor. Special attention should be given to redeveloping these sites to create a broad range of housing options in Lowertown.

Create three distinct retail clusters: food and arts, neighborhood service and retail, and restaurants and entertainment.

For retail to succeed, it must be organized into clusters. A retail cluster is a compact organization of related stores and services. Retail clusters are important because they allow customers to patronize or compare several merchants at once. Complementary clusters help merchants because they receive additional exposure from customers with the same preferences. Ideally, each cluster is located adjacent to an anchor use or destination that has the potential to attract high volumes of people to a location. The Plan recommends three distinct retail clusters for Lowertown.

The area around the Farmers' Market should evolve into a **food and arts cluster**. Anchored by the Farmers' Market and the three artists-owned/operated buildings, this area has the potential to develop additional food/stores/services and art galleries/services on the ground floors of buildings surrounding the Farmers' Market. The Saint Paul Growers Association will be integral to developing this cluster and is encouraged to pursue a year-round indoor market at the Operations and Maintenance Facility. In addition, opportunities exist to promote local artists at the weekly market with an ancillary art market or other seasonal arts programming. Finally, if an arts community center or similar facility is feasible, it should be located in this general area.



Retail Cluster Strategy: Retail can be focused around existing and proposed urban rooms: Mears park, Union Depot and Farmers' Market. The Neighborhood Retail and Services cluster is located on 7th street - the zipper between two neighborhoods.

Mears Park and the streets connecting to Union Depot can develop as a **restaurant and entertainment cluster**. With recent openings of Faces, Barrio and Bulldog, this cluster is organically emerging. There are several other opportunities to continue the development of a food/entertainment cluster. Among them:

- Renovation of the Cray Plaza Food Court so it relates better to Mears Park and the sidewalk
- Ground floor of the CoCo Building (currently vacant)
- Cosmopolitan Building
- Food carts in Mears Park
- Ground floor of Strauss Apartments (currently vacant), and
- Ground floor of new development around LRT Station.

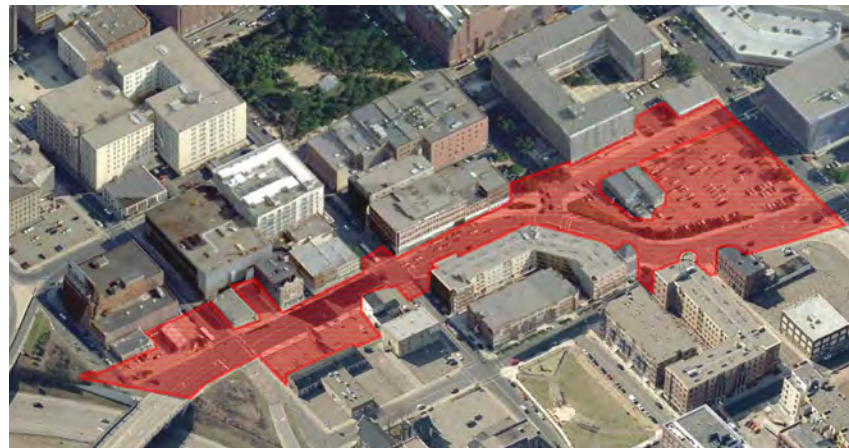
The Plan recommends East 7th Street develop into a **neighborhood retail/service cluster**. As a main connector between Downtown and the East Side, 7th Street originally developed as a Main Street with retail uses and relatively high volumes of transit, cars and pedestrians. Unlike other parts of Lowertown, East 7th was lined with mercantile buildings: two- or three-story buildings with shop fronts abutting the sidewalks. Over the years, East 7th Street's role as a Main Street has devolved, as retail in Downtown migrated to the skyways. However, with the emergence of Wacouta Commons and Lowertown in recent years, East 7th can be re-born as a Main Street for several neighborhoods. Mercantile buildings can be renovated with active



The role of 7th Street in Downtown and Surrounding Neighborhoods



Existing Conditions on East 7th Street



East 7th Street: Changes to the street and surrounding buildings have eroded the spatial enclosure and comfort of the street

ground floor uses that cater to the surrounding neighborhoods. New infill buildings should respect the pattern and cadence of existing buildings with shop fronts and clearly articulated vertical bays to reinforce the familiar and comfortable rhythm to the street.

A neighborhood retail service cluster would congregate uses that would be shared primarily by the surrounding neighborhoods, not visitors. Uses such as an art materials store, print shop, small health clinic, small bank branch, pharmacy and bicycle shop are all appropriate for a neighborhood retail service cluster.

As in other parts of Lowertown, renovating existing older buildings and filling existing vacancies should occur before new construction. Efforts should be made to eliminate vacancies and the appearance of vacancies. If long-term, market-rate tenants cannot be found in the near-term, building owners are encouraged to work with the community to reduce the appearance of vacancies. Temporary displays, “pop up” retail, art installations and galleries are a few examples of simple, low-cost efforts that add vitality and interest.

Minor changes to the roadway will significantly improve East 7th Street for pedestrians and retailers. Intersection bumpouts, selective lane narrowing, traffic calming and regularly-spaced street trees will create a more pedestrian-friendly environment conducive to an urban main street.

A gateway element at East 7th Street and Broadway will help calm traffic and create an identity for the area. Westbound drivers need to be appropriately transitioned as they enter Lowertown and Downtown along East 7th Street. The highway bridges and ramps tend to accelerate vehicle speeds and create poor environments for pedestrians. A gateway element on the west side of the highway bridge will help the transition and can be an expression of the creative identity of Lowertown.

On-street parking should be maximized and managed to support the attraction and retention of neighborhood-serving retail and services on East 7th Street. Meters should be calibrated to encourage short visits and discourage long-term parking. Eventually, a district parking ramp may be necessary to support full redevelopment of the area.



Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties surrounding Union Depot.

In 2014, the Central Corridor LRT will begin running between Union Depot and downtown Minneapolis. In 2012, Union Depot will begin receiving Amtrak trains. As the Depot adds capacity and becomes a multi-modal hub for intra-city trains, commuter trains and buses, annual ridership, will grow to four million people within 25 years. These two investments (LRT and Union Depot) will have a profound effect on the real estate dynamics in Lowertown. Vacant lots and parking lots will become potential building sites; unimproved buildings will become redevelopment opportunities.

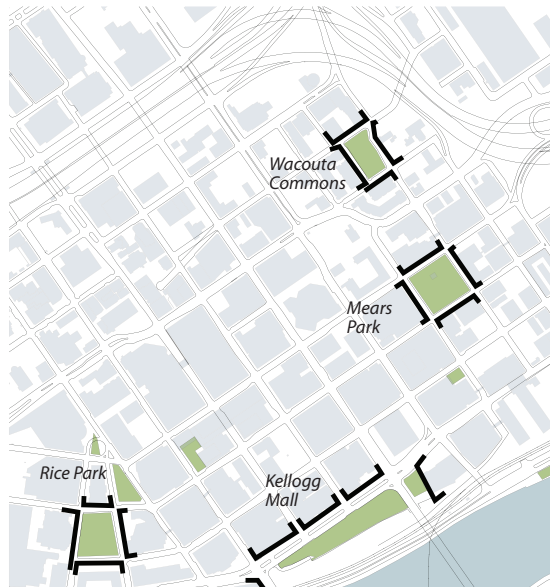
Lowertown has an opportunity to add to Downtown Saint Paul's collection of great urban spaces by completing, celebrating and re-purposing the space in front of the Union Depot to become an active outdoor room. Re-purposing and re-functioning of the space needs to respect the integrity of the Depot setting and the key character-defining elements of the space - symmetry,

formality and simplicity - and the fact that it is a lawn. This Plan recommends activating the space with temporary installations such as art, performances, events, movable seating, markets and food carts. Such interventions would be temporary and respectful of the underlying design and setting.

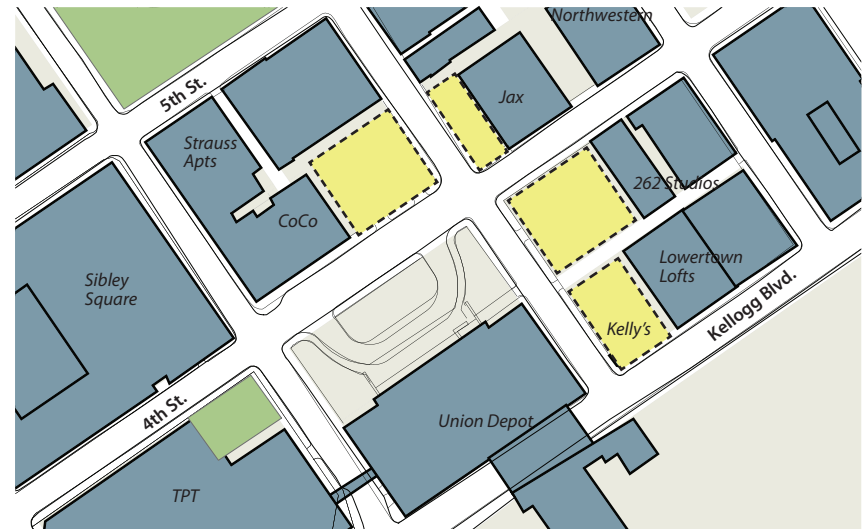
Redevelopment Opportunities

Every building and property surrounding Union Depot will undergo development pressure in the next 15 years. Redevelopment of the sites surrounding the Union Depot are an important part of activating the great urban room. It is important that surrounding buildings have active ground floor uses that create a high-quality pedestrian environment.

Parking needs should be accommodated under building envelopes or within mixed-use parking buildings. Access to transit, walkable streets and a mix of uses should reduce the need for parking. Existing surrounding parking resources should be fully utilized and maximized before building new parking within the immediate blocks of the LRT Station.



Urban rooms in Downtown Saint Paul



Redevelopment Opportunities: Redevelopment of vacant parcels (yellow) surrounding the LRT Station will help enclose the space, create active edges and take full advantage of the transit investments.

Redevelopment Around Union Depot



	Existing	Potential	
A	2 story parking	Mixed-use	40 Units
B	Vacant lot/ surface parking	Mixed-use	16 Units
C	Vacant Lot/ surface parking	Mixed-use	40 Units
D	Pkg Lot/ bar	Mixed-use	24 Units
E	Drop Off Lane and Lawn	Setting for art installations, performances and food carts	



Activate the Room
with temporary
art, performances,
food carts,
installations and
events.

Designate a permanent home for the Farmers' Market and a year-round community amenity.

To many, Lowertown is the area around the Farmers' Market. Several decades ago, artists settled in the warehouses surrounding this parking lot and created the beginnings of a small neighborhood.

This sub-area of Lowertown will undergo significant changes in the upcoming years. With the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF), Prince Street extending east, an LRT station a block away, and changing real estate pressures, it is important to plan for a future that strengthens this area as the artistic and creative core of Lowertown and permanent home to the Farmers' Market.



Existing Conditions





The Farmers' Market

Like Mears Park and the Union Depot Plaza, the Farmers' Market site is a major landmark and urban room on the weekends.

The Farmers' Market is an important amenity in Lowertown. It is the fifth largest outdoor market in the country, attracts visitors to the area (20,000 per weekend in the summer) and provides healthy local food to residents and restaurants throughout the region. The Farmers' Market is a vital amenity, focal point, meeting place and Lowertown icon. The Saint Paul Growers Association brings 160 vendors to Lowertown two days a week during the growing season, filling the site and adjacent streets with residents and visitors. The Growers Association leases the site from the City.

The Market is certainly well-supported by residents, as well as by the significant weekend patron visits. However, despite this affection and love for the Market, it is not permanent or protected in the same way that a park is protected by public policy. The site could potentially be redeveloped, thereby forcing the Market to find another location.

This Plan recommends working with the Growers Association and the City to prevent displacement of the Market. Incremental investments in the site and Market, combined with supportive public policy, will help evolve the Market to a more permanent fixture in Lowertown.

	New buildings
	Existing buildings



Illustrative Master Plan

Step 1. Preserve the Farmers' Market in the heart of Lowertown

In order to preserve the Market on its current site, the Plan recommends:

- Improvements to operations and to the site.
- Legal and policy protections that preserve the site as if it were a City park.

Interviews with the operator of the Market reveal concerns for vendor and customer parking in the future. The Market's dedicated parking on the Diamond Products site and along Prince Street will likely be absorbed by development in the future. The Market therefore needs a plan for future customer and vendor parking, establishment of a pick-up/drop-off zone, and a positive working relationships with the City so traffic flow is smooth and parking is secure.

Transit and bicycling will replace some of the parking demand; however there will always be a demand for customer and vendor parking. As surface parking lots are redeveloped, the Diamond Products building can serve as **interim** parking for customers and vendors. It is adjacent to the Market and can be retrofitted to provide safe, convenient comfortable parking. Another opportunity for convenient weekend parking is to permit it on both sides of Wall Street. Ultimately, however, the long-term parking solution for the Farmers' Market will require shared parking structures as well as better access and circulation to existing parking structures.

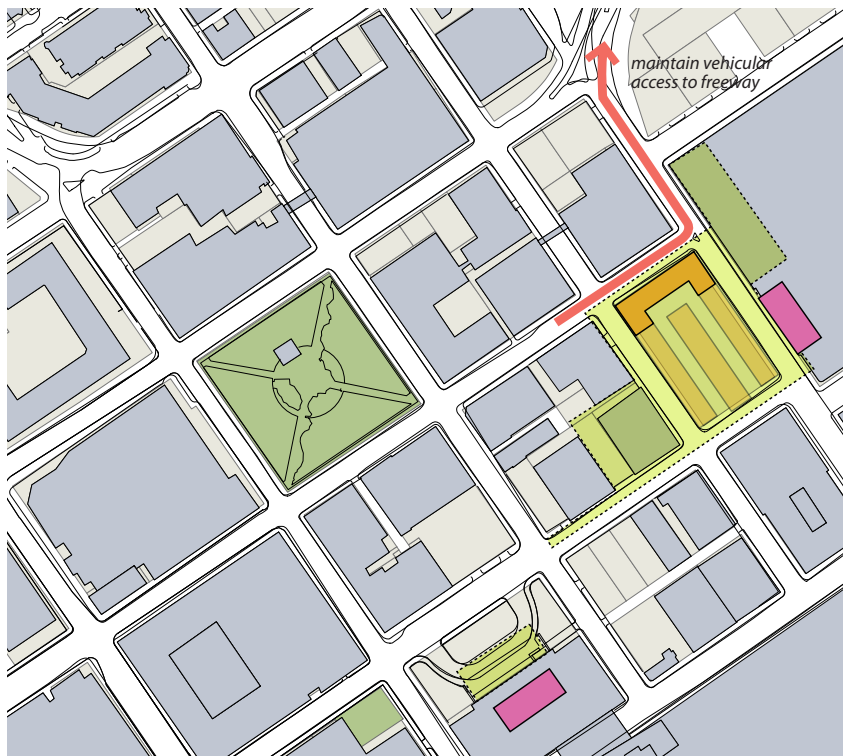


The neighborhood and the Market should also work with the City to legally protect the site from redevelopment that would displace the Market from the heart of Lowertown. With minimal capital investments on the site and a ten-year lease, displacement due to redevelopment is always a possibility.

Step 2: Accommodate near-term growth in the Market

Several options exist for near- or medium-term growth, expansion and diversification of the Saint Paul Farmer's Market. If the Growers Association aspires to include new vendors, additional vendors surrounding streets and buildings will come into play. Options include:

- Locate a year-round indoor market or related vendors in the retail space of the OMF.
- Grow the Market along 4th Street, in alleys and along surrounding streets toward Union Depot.
- Add garage doors to selected sheds so the selling season can be extended.



Street Market



Three-season shed



Indoor Market

Step 1: Accommodate Near-Term Market Growth and Expansion

- Off-Site Expansion: Street Market around the sheds and along 4th Street
- Options for Indoor Market
- Three-Season Sheds

Step 3: Reinvest in the site to improve the Market and to create a year round neighborhood amenity.

Eventually, the best way to ensure the longevity of the Farmers' Market in the heart of Lowertown is to invest in the site so it is more a Farmers' Market than a surface parking lot. This includes adding amenities to the site and moving some vendors to surrounding streets, plazas and buildings. It is critical that improvements to the site maintain the capacity and operation of the Market. Growers must maintain the ability to simply drive into the Market and operate out of their trucks. Whereas a limited number of vendors may, in the future, sell from tents, most must maintain the ability to sell from trucks.

Minor improvements to the site will enhance the Market and provide an amenity to the neighborhood throughout the week and the year. Most of the site can remain intact while a few vendors would move to adjacent streets or to within the front of the OMF building.



Potential Improvements to the Farmers Market Site:

Diamond Products Site

The Diamond Products site is the largest privately-owned property in Lowertown. Currently, the City of Saint Paul is working with the Saint Paul Saints to locate a regional ballpark facility on the northerly Diamond Products site.

The Plan offers three alternatives for redeveloping the Diamond Building/Site.

- Reuse the existing building (arts related and/or indoor recreation).
- Redevelop the site for a regional ballpark.
- Redevelopment with mixed-use buildings (arts-related).

The Diamond Products Building is a large, clear span industrial building. As the Plan encourages for other buildings in Lowertown, reusing the building should be considered prior to demolishing it. With very little investment, the building could contain uses beneficial to Lowertown.



Diamond Products Site: Existing Conditions



Diamond Products Site: Building Reuse



Diamond Products Site: Regional Ballpark



Existing Conditions



Diamond Products Building: The large clear span spaces of the Diamond building can be used for community-supporting uses such as indoor recreation, large sculpture studio, fire arts, and specialty manufacturing or a museum.



Multi-use plaza at Camden Yards Ballpark in Baltimore, MD



Interior of OMF in Minneapolis

Regional Ballpark: If the Diamond Products building is demolished and a Regional Ballpark is built, it is important to maintain access through the site and to create an active, interesting north wall of the OMF

The building could be reused to support the arts community in Lowertown. As a large clear-span building, it could house arts production that is not allowed inside traditional multi-story warehouses and live/work units, such as ceramics, fire arts, film production, metal working and other large noisy, forms of specialty production. A portion of the Diamond Products building could also be used as a arts community center or arts market.

A second option is to develop a regional indoor recreational facility in the building. The building is large enough for climbing walls, indoor soccer and other recreational uses.

The Saint Paul Saints and the City of Saint Paul have been working together to fund and locate a regional ballpark in Lowertown. Together, they have identified the northerly Diamond Products building and site as feasible for such a facility. The regional ballpark would have 7,500 seats. If this project is funded, there are several ways in which the building and team can be fully integrated with the neighborhood, including:

- Maintain a public or semi-public trail or pedestrian space between the OMF and the ballpark. This space could be closed during games, but open otherwise.
- Locate tailgating to the east of the ballpark. Look for opportunities to use space beneath the bridge for tailgating. This space should be City-owned shared parking with pervious paving or grass-crete.
- Create a plaza space in front of the ballpark on Broadway. The space should be designed to be used for Farmers' Market expansion or arts programming.
- Work with the artists in Lowertown to incorporate public art into the building and have an artist-in-residence on-site.
- Work with the City to create a traffic and access management plan so that through-traffic is routed to the edges (East 7th and Kellogg) of the neighborhood, not through the middle (Prince Street).
- Work with the neighborhood to coordinate scheduling of events and games.
- Design the site and building to host events other than baseball.

Consideration should be given to winter use for skating, etc.

- Work with the Metropolitan Council to enhance the north wall of the OMF. Large windows exposing the inner workings of the OMF would provide interest and create an active wall to the outfield plaza.

A Community Benefits Agreement or a three-party Memorandum of Understanding between the City, Saints and the neighborhood is one mechanism by which the above provisions can be accomplished.

A final option is to demolish the building and redevelop the site. Initial investigation into redevelopment revealed MPCA covenants on the site that will prohibit some uses. Nonetheless, if the site is redeveloped, 5th Street could extend through the site, connecting to Willius and 4th Street on the east side of the Lafayette Bridge. Several new buildings could be developed, creating a new arts quarter, housing studios, offices and potentially new residences.



Diamond Products Site: Private Redevelopment

Prince Street Extension and Redevelopment Between the Lafayette Bridge and Broadway

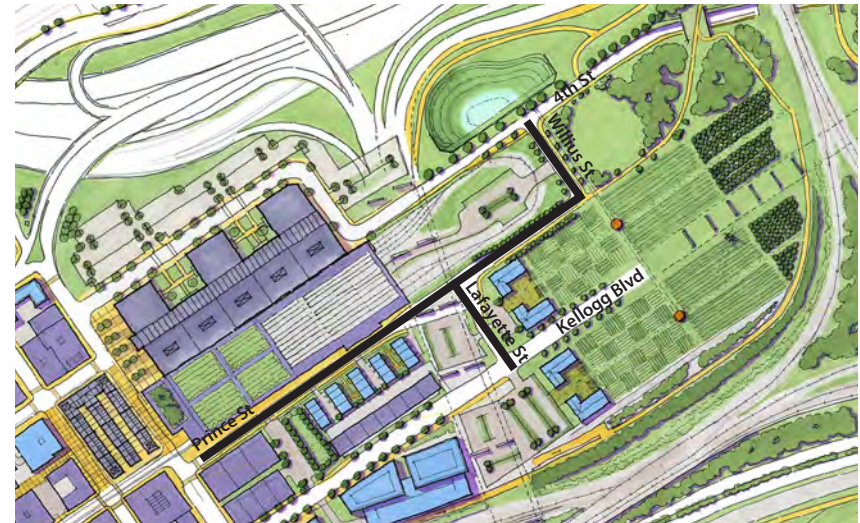
Prince Street will be extended east to Willius Street and 4th Street. It will become the primary connection to the East Side and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. It will be designed as a local road with an off-street bike path. The trailhead to the Bruce Vento Regional trail should be relocated to Prince Street and Broadway.

In addition, Prince Street will provide access to one of the larger redevelopment sites in Lowertown – the Trans Park surface parking lot. The Plan recommends the site be redeveloped with low-rise attached housing that appeals to families with children and others who desire residential units with direct access to the ground. Redevelopment of this site should also contain a small green space for residents to enjoy.

It is important to coordinate development of this site with development of surrounding sites. New district parking should be located beneath the Farmers' Market as well as on the south side of Kellogg Boulevard. This parking needs to be in place and available to residents of the Tilsner and the Northern before the site is developed.



Low-scale, medium-density housing with direct ground access



Proposed Lowertown street extensions east of Broadway

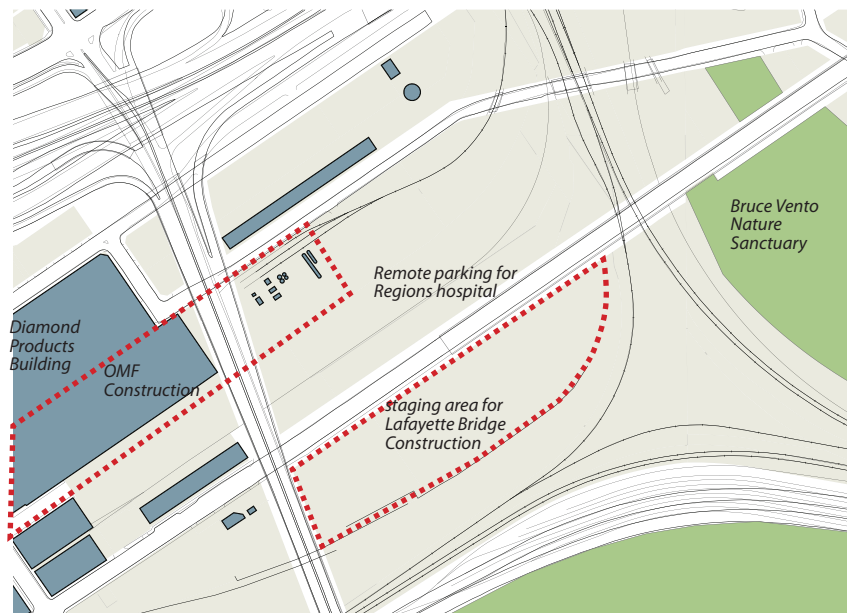


Proposed new development east of Broadway

Introduce urban agriculture, recreational uses and sustainability initiatives east of the Lafayette Bridge in "The Seam."

The current land use east of the Lafayette Bridge is primarily surface parking and vacant. Urban development is generally restricted on these lands due to proposed airport zoning regulations that prevent habitable structures and uses where people congregate.

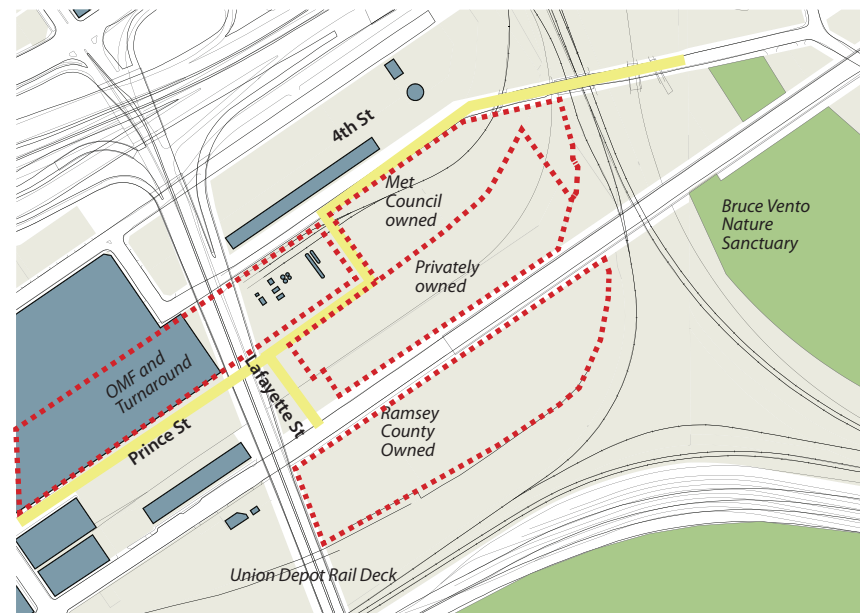
This part of Lowertown has been considered the "back side" of the neighborhood - dominated by rail lines, rail spurs and surface parking. However, with investments in the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, including a cultural center and the potential to knit together several regional trail networks, Lowertown and the East Side see great potential to create valuable amenities for both neighborhoods.



Existing Conditions

The Plan recommends the land between the Lafayette Bridge and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary be put to productive use for low-intensity uses such as non-bird attracting stormwater treatment, grey water processing, solar farming, soil reclamation, urban agriculture, community farming and passive recreation. In addition, this area can be used to stitch together recreational trails and create an improved entrance to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.

Raised beds and container gardening for community gardens and small plots could be located west of Willius Street, on top of the current parking lots. A contiguous, multi-acre urban agricultural operation would be located east of Willius where raised beds are not necessary and the land arrangement is more conducive to a larger agricultural operation.



Anticipated Conditions in 2014



East of the Lafayette Bridge: Due in part to development restrictions, the east edge of Lowertown can become a valuable resource for urban and community agriculture, stormwater management and recreational connections.



Community gardens closer to the neighborhood



Row crops on larger contiguous parcels

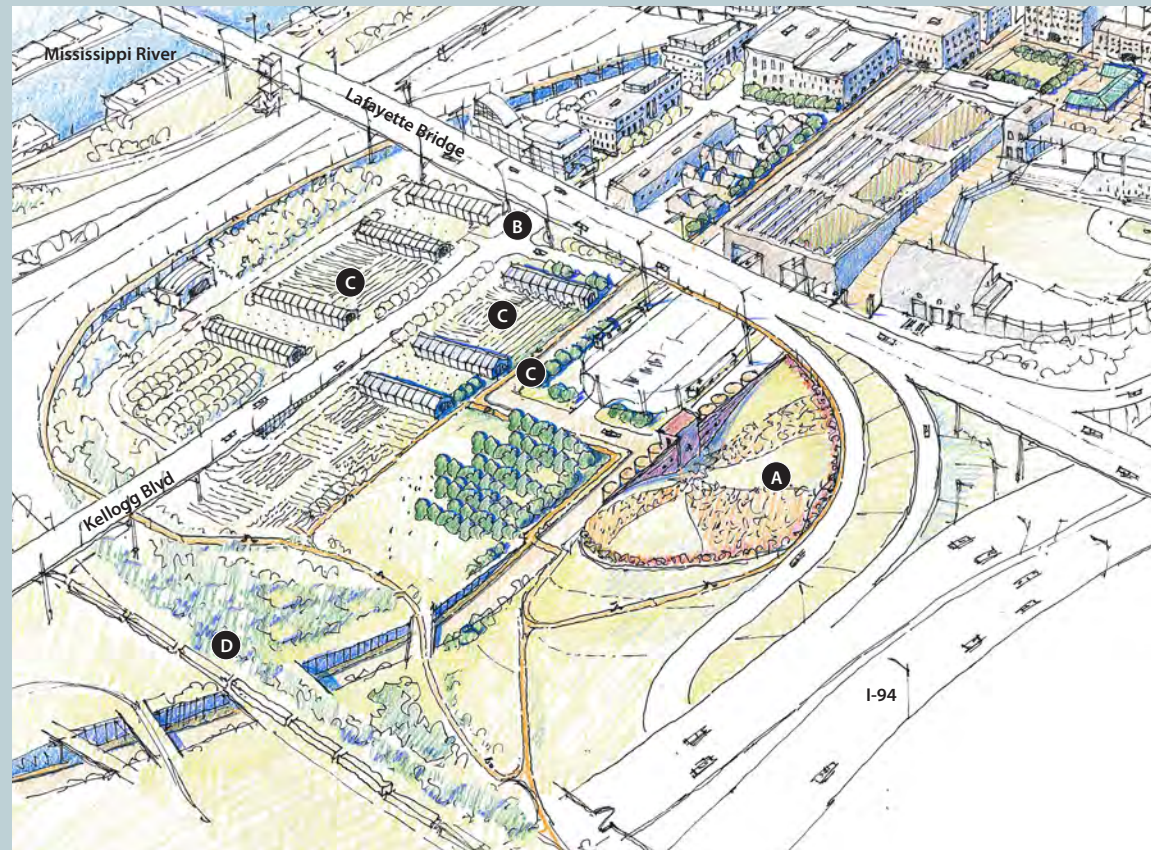


Greenhouses for year round production and educational programming

The Seam



	Existing	Potential
A	Unused	Stormwater and grey water harvesting
B	Beneath Lafayette Bridge	Tailgating and public art
C	Vacant Lot/surface parking	Urban agriculture and recreation
D	Unused	Trail connections



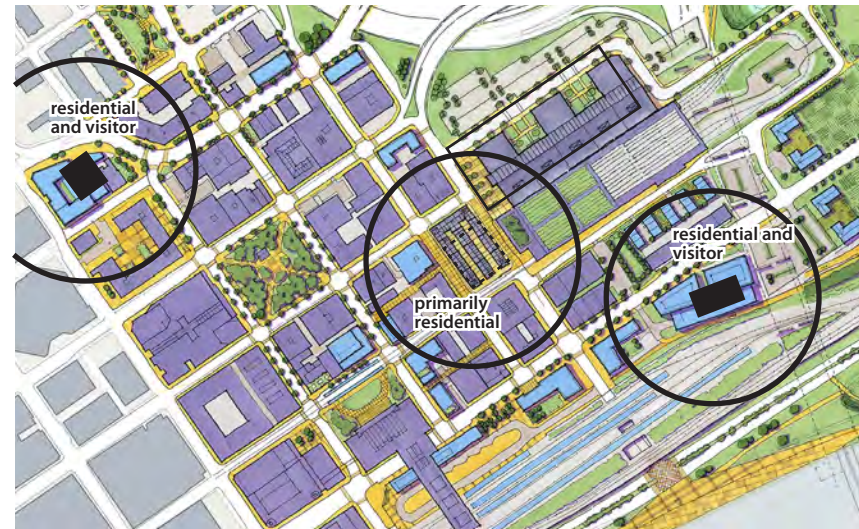
Proposed Cultural Center at Bruce Vento Sanctuary

Create a parking plan for downtown and Lowertown that prioritizes full occupancy of existing parking spaces over construction of new parking.

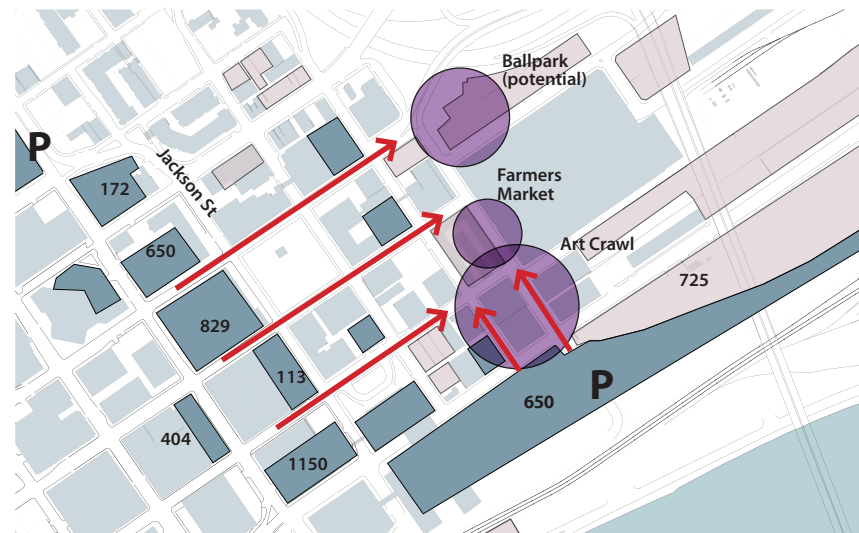
Lowertown will continue to evolve as a transit-oriented village where transit, biking, and walking are the preferred means of moving around. In order to facilitate redevelopment and the creation of a mixed-use transit-oriented village, it is important to manage the parking supply in Lowertown. With the existing, current and future investments in transit, the demand for parking considerably less than most areas of the region. Furthermore, as transit options increase in the future, access to the neighborhood will increase, thereby further reducing the need to build parking at the same rate as elsewhere in Saint Paul.

Too much surface parking that is poorly managed can be a blight on the neighborhood, while too much structured parking will prevent the creation of a true mixed-use transit-oriented urban village. As is common in warehouse districts, redevelopment of existing buildings requires parking be located off-site or adjacent to the building. It is the rare warehouse building in which tenants can park within or beneath the building. Generally, new buildings are “self-parked” while existing buildings rely on off-site or adjacent parking.

New buildings should continue to provide parking for tenants and residents either below or behind the buildings. Generally, the parking should be concealed within the building. In order to support active sidewalks and transit use, new development should create no more than one parking space per residential unit. The parking spaces should be managed as a pooled resource and leased to residents. By leasing - not selling - parking, residents can choose to have two cars or no cars. Furthermore, by leasing parking, the overall pool of parking can be shared across buildings and for general use in the neighborhood.



Potential new parking structures



Event Parking Strategy: Event parking should be directed to the edges of the neighborhood, not the center. Shuttles and a pedestrian friendly environment will improve the visitor experience note: Diamond Products Building should be considered for near term parking

Inevitably, much of the surface parking will be absorbed by redevelopment. In order to manage these changes, Lowertown should create sub-district parking plans (along with a downtown overall parking plan) that address the different parking needs of the different users: resident, employee, visitor and event parking. This approach will also allow parking needs to be coordinated more closely with redevelopment plans. The sub-district parking plans will allow a more fine-grained analysis of parking supply and demand. This analysis will enable existing parking resources to be more fully utilized, thereby preventing the construction of new parking structures before they are needed.

Event parking (Farmers' Market, Art Crawl, Jazz Fest) will continue to be a complicated issue in Lowertown. This Plan contains multiple recommendations to improve transit and bicycle connections throughout Lowertown and the surrounding areas, thereby reducing the overall parking needs in Lowertown. Over time, driving to Lowertown will remain the preferred choice by fewer and fewer people.

A complete solution for event parking in Lowertown should be studied in the context of a downtown-wide parking and access management plan. Generally, instead of building additional parking structures for events in the core of Lowertown, the existing reservoirs of parking west of, south of and within

Lowertown should be better utilized. Event-goers should be encouraged to park on the edges (East 7th, Kellogg, Jackson) of Lowertown and walk to the events. The street network and event-day management should reinforce the concept of parking on the edges and walking to the event.

Generally, parking west of Jackson is used by office employees during the week, but available on weekends and in the evening for events in Lowertown. Distributing the parking away from the event will have several benefits. Among them:

- Pedestrian traffic will increase visibility and patronage of ground level-restaurants and retail.
- The existing street network will be better utilized to distribute traffic loads.
- Visitors will have better exposure to Lowertown and will be encouraged to extend their stay beyond the event itself.

This Plan offers two additional locations for parking structures that could be used for events: Kellogg Boulevard and East 7th Street. Both are located on the edges of the neighborhood. The Lafayette Street connection (together with careful design of Prince Street) will be required to adequately access the Kellogg parking structure, while simultaneously keeping traffic on Prince Street from penetrating the core of Lowertown.

Improve Kellogg Boulevard by developing a liner building on the north edge of the Union Depot rail deck.

The edge of the rail deck along Kellogg Boulevard creates an inhospitable space for pedestrians. As Ramsey County considers redevelopment of its land south of Kellogg (between the rail lines and Kellogg), it is important to create a liner building along the south edge of the rail deck between Wacouta Street and the Lafayette Bridge. The Union Depot project is cutting back the rail deck one full bay west of Broadway and along Sibley in order to widen the sidewalks and create an improved pedestrian environment. Eventual redevelopment east and west of Broadway should continue to improve the quality of Kellogg Boulevard. Buildings should be 3 to 4 stories in height, except where they do not block views. Towards the Lafayette bridge, new buildings can be 80 feet, per the airport zoning ordinance.



Existing Conditions on Kellogg Blvd.



Potential redevelopment south of Kellogg Blvd.

Develop more gathering spaces for the neighborhood.

Lowertown residents cherish their gathering places. The Black Dog Cafe and Mears Park are two examples of well-loved gathering places in Lowertown. They also represent different types of gathering places: Black Dog is indoor and private, Mears Park is outdoor and public. Gathering places are used for a range of public and civic activities including celebration, collaboration, performance, art and informal visiting.

As the neighborhood grows and diversifies over the next 15 years, additional gathering spaces will be required to support it. With new visitors coming to Lowertown, it will be particularly important to build the infrastructure of neighborhood-scaled gathering places. New spaces should augment and diversify the overall inventory of gathering spaces in Lowertown. Consideration should be given to creating Wi-Fi hotspots in parks so the parks are more usable and attractive to a broader range of people. In addition, new spaces should be distributed around the neighborhood so all residents have access and proximity to these valuable community assets.



Gathering Places

Maintain and create affordable housing and studio space in Lowertown.

Affordable housing will remain a key component of Lowertown. Near-term efforts should be made to secure the Tilsner and Northern Warehouse buildings as artist-owned buildings. Similarly, efforts should be made to combine the bottom two floors of 255 Kellogg Boulevard with the Lowertown Lofts Artist Cooperative to complete the original vision of an artist-owned building.

Maintaining raw space will also be critical for Lowertown to support working artists. In recent years, much of the raw space that was used by artists has been redeveloped into market-rate housing. There are precious few buildings remaining that have not been improved and converted to condominiums or apartments.

Whereas it is important to maintain raw space, if there is no investment in these older buildings, eventually they will deteriorate. The challenge, therefore, is to invest in the buildings such that they remain physically viable, but in a way that they remain “raw” and affordable for artists. One way to do this is to allow additional density in existing buildings by adding a floor or two of market-rate housing or studio space as was done to the Heritage House in the 1980s. Most of the older buildings are over-engineered for current uses. Structurally, many can hold additional floors. If set back from the street, they would become secondary facades, clearly distinguished from and deferential to the original structures. This should only be achieved in compliance with the historic district’s design guidelines. Redevelopment should never compromise the historic integrity of an individual property or the entire district.

Additional raw space can also be developed in the Diamond Products Building. Studio space in the Diamond Products Building would be very different from that which exists in other warehouse buildings throughout Lowertown. It would attract different artists and producers that need larger clear-span spaces. The Diamond Products Building could house film production, specialty manufacturing, large sculpture production and other arts uses that do not fit into existing warehouses.

Attract additional arts investments such as galleries, museums, performance venues, schools, and academies.

There is increasing interest among arts organizations throughout the region to locate in Lowertown. The creative culture of Lowertown and the large population of individuals working in the creative sector are an attraction to arts organizations and institutions. Regional investments such as these can help build the creative sector in Lowertown because they offer exposure, employment opportunities and access to resources and customers.

Schools, colleges and academies are also important additions to Lowertown. They provide learning, teaching and employment opportunities for all residents of Lowertown – especially artists and seniors. Lowertown should recruit institutions and schools interested in expanding or being close to the creative community in Lowertown.

One potential new arts investment is the Minnesota Museum for American Art. Currently, their collection is in storage and they have been looking for a permanent home for several years. Lowertown can become the home for this museum by either renovating an existing building or incorporating the museum into a new building. State tax credits for historic rehabilitation can assist in financing.

Stakeholders have also expressed interest in creating an “arts community center” in Lowertown. A Lowertown Community Arts Center could contain classrooms that local artists use, gallery space to showcase local artists, office space to house arts organizations, and general meeting space for residents.



4. Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy

Summary

Analysis

- Lowertown has a large contingent of self-employed individuals, artists, small firms and non-profits engaged in the creative economy.
- The creative community is primarily engaged in art production and creative services, as opposed to presentation and marketing.
- Over 30 years of investment have been made in creating affordable live and work space for artists and creative enterprises.
- Lowertown's identity as an artist and creative community is not immediately evident in the physical environment and has not been asserted clearly.
- The vulnerability of the creative community to market forces in real estate on the one hand, and the community's need to attract a market for its products on the other, are in some ways in conflict.
- The artist community is well-networked but, at-large, not strongly organized or fully engaged in neighborhood activities, governance and other creative sector businesses.

Goals

- Position and expand the Lowertown creative cluster as a significant contributor to the regional economy.
- Maintain and expand live and work spaces, as well as gathering places, that are affordable for artists and attractive to the creative community.
- Define and grow the identity of Lowertown as a vital community of creative and cultural production.
- Foster a more diverse and complete mixed-income residential community that provides walkable access to daily needs and services.
- Strengthen the network and quality of creative output of artists, arts producers, creative entrepreneurs and creative sector workers.

Objectives

- Protect the affordability of residential artist buildings from escalation in the real estate market, and increase the number of affordable work spaces and gathering places suited to artists and creative entrepreneurs.
- Advance an identity that serves to maintain the neighborhood as a creative sector cluster producing high-quality work.
- Integrate public art, creative design and streetscaping, and other cultural activity in the public realm and built environment.
- Build markets for artists and creative entrepreneurs, their skills and work product.
- Create a neighborhood that is inclusive, culturally diverse and connected to other communities.
- Develop artists and creative community members as leaders in Lowertown, the city and the region.
- Identify opportunities for using Union Depot as a site for arts activities, arts marketplace or work spaces for artists.
- Establish a strong and integral role for creative producers in district management and implementation of the Master Plan.

Summary

Strategies

- Identify the most immediate opportunities for stabilizing artist live/work spaces and gathering places.
- Prepare a comprehensive database to map the creative community (individuals, venues, activities) and develop economic data to measure the impact of the Lowertown creative cluster.
- Inventory underutilized and vacant spaces and work with property owners, the artist community, the City and potential occupants to create appropriate arts-related uses.
- Work with existing networks and organizations to strengthen the creative community, the creative cluster infrastructure, district identity, and participation of artists and creative entrepreneurs in leadership development activities.
- Encourage policy makers to protect the creative sector workforce and work spaces, and steer developers to create appropriate spaces and support services using Community Benefits Agreements to protect and enhance creative sector jobs, spaces and programs.
- Explore opportunities to grow educational spaces and opportunities for creative skills transfer.
- Maintain state-of-the-art technology infrastructure needed for a competitive creative sector.
- Explore the value of an Arts or Creative Overlay District in collaboration with historic preservation representatives.
- Work with Union Depot managers to incorporate public art, public programs, retail marketing and other opportunities.
- Seek out and develop appropriate venues and partnerships to enhance markets for locally-produced creative products.
- Leverage the diverse range of people who come to Lowertown for the Farmers' Market, Art Crawl and other events – as well as those who travel through the Union Depot – to create a welcoming multi-cultural environment.
- Identify appropriate spaces, partners and activities to expand networking and career development among artists and creative workers.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- **Lowertown has a large contingent of self-employed individuals, artists, small firms and non-profits engaged in the creative economy.**
- **The creative community is primarily engaged in art production and creative services, as opposed to presentation and marketing.**
- **Over 30 years of investment have been made in creating affordable live and work space for artists and creative enterprises.**
- **Lowertown's identity as an artist and creative community is not immediately evident in the physical environment and has not been asserted fully.**
- **The vulnerability of the creative community to market forces in real estate on the one hand, and the community's need to attract a market for its products on the other, are in some ways in conflict.**
- **The artist community is well-networked but, at-large, not strongly organized or fully engaged in neighborhood activities, governance and other creative sector businesses.**

Individuals working in the arts are ten times more likely to be self-employed than workers in all other industries. Those in the more broadly-defined creative sector are twice as likely to be self-employed. Lowertown is home to approximately 600 artists and in the arts sector; many more work in a variety of other creative occupations. This indicates an unusually high number of self-employed residents in Lowertown. Self-employed workers and those who work in home-based businesses maintain more varied schedules and spend more daytime hours in their neighborhoods than most residents. Public or semi-public gathering places such as coffee shops, libraries and non-profits involved in community building or professional development – as well as regular social and cultural events – are especially important to the success of creative communities such as Lowertown.

Arts or cultural districts in cities vary widely. Some focus on arts consumption, some primarily around cultural or ethnic communities, others house creative workspace in older industrial buildings. Lowertown combines creative professionals and live/work space for artists within a dense historic downtown

residential and business environment. With some non-profits and small presentation venues, Lowertown represents a creative cluster where art is made, where artists live, and where other creative services are produced. Working mostly in residential studio spaces, Lowertown artists are active in the visual arts, painting, drawing, photography, media and sculpture, with some working in performance, music, writing and other forms. Other professionals work in design, architecture, software development and other creative enterprises.

Led by efforts of the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, Artspace Projects, other investors and many pioneering artists, the vacant warehouses of Lowertown evolved into a thriving and productive residential community. Several buildings were redeveloped purposefully as affordable live/work space for artists; others were re-purposed or built for mixed and market-rate housing. More than three decades of work and investment have brought Lowertown to this vital and pivotal point. Now the creative community faces significant changes and challenges.

As home to many working artists, Lowertown has become a well-known enclave within the Twin Cities arts community, perhaps the densest concentration of artists and creative live/work spaces in the region. The semi-annual Art Crawl, over 30 years old, draws wide interest. Whether by conscious choice or lack of organized marketing, significant public promotion of the district or even banners and signage on the street level have not been pursued. While the neighborhood's thriving, award-winning artist community works with little fanfare, it is now becoming a focal point for new investment. Some would like wider visibility for the creative community; others fear that attracting too much attention could elevate real estate values and make Lowertown unaffordable – a not uncommon phenomenon in cities around the world.

Lowertown's artist community is well-established and comes together for Art Crawls and other events, or around critical issues as needed. This cohesion is not perceived outside the arts community and has not been harnessed to advance the collective interest of the creative sector. Artists are not fully integrated into other on-going planning and development in Lowertown. While some individuals choose not to be engaged, there are more opportunities to connect artists with the District Council and other formal associations representing the area.

Arts Workshops

The planning process included two Arts Workshops. The purpose of these workshops was to reach out to working artists in Lowertown to better understand the challenges they face and the opportunities they present to the Greater Lowertown community. Approximately 40 artists attended each of the meetings. The meetings consisted of open dialogue, brainstorming and problem-solving around topics related to how the artists, arts and creative economy can flourish in Lowertown.

Selected Quotations from the Arts Workshops

Find ways to cross-fertilize with the broader creative community, foster innovation, incubate new ideas and businesses, create leaders. Create a great park, bigger than a square block or at least make it more natural. Give us places to learn new things: languages, cooking, even the arts, like the ballet school but for adults, lecture series, etc.

These several blocks where artists and others live and work is not unlike a farm community of a half century ago. People work together, look out for one another and help when and where they can. It is a feeling of solidarity that I have not felt in other parts of the Twin Cities that I have lived in, or even other parts of the country.

What was supposed to be artist friendly rents are suddenly increasing, forcing one to find non-artistic work to pay the bills.

Invite us to the table- to be part of the discussion and vision for this place. Help put to rest the impression that artists are unstable wackos that refuse to conform. That non-conformity part can actually be a virtue when you need new solutions to intractable problems. I'd love to see people clamoring to get a spot in Lowertown, because it is such a hotbed of ideas. I wish the City and businesses made it part of their modus operandi to have creatives at the table. Now I will grant that some of my tribe are indeed kinda wacky and wouldn't be the best choices for this fusion, but many of us are self employed entrepreneurs.

My biggest hope is that the artist community will not be destroyed/dispersed because of the light rail coming through.

I like being part of an artists' community--my neighbors are always up to something: working on a new piece, getting ready for a show, etc. It contributes to a creative vibe in the community that is almost tangible. Being part of an artists' community also provides great opportunities for artistic collaboration and creative cross pollination. Also, it is not uncommon for artists in my building (Northern Warehouse) to loan and/or donate equipment and materials to other artists in the community. As far as what is specifically good about being in Lowertown: A) The St. Paul Art Crawl and all the exposure/opportunity that comes with it and B) the space I live in is much less expensive than a comparable space in Minneapolis would be.

I feel that having the creative community present at the table during discussions involving the rapid change/growth in Lowertown is vitally important. Whatever we can do to reduce a feeling of powerlessness regarding neighborhood development would be a good thing. We need to feel that inclusion of the creative community in big decisions is not a token gesture, but born of a genuine interest in our feedback and an underlying belief that we have, can, and do make valuable contributions. Assistance with assessing our strengths and weaknesses as a community, learning how to speak with a common voice, and generally advocate for ourselves could be very helpful.

I would like to see the public coming to Lowertown to experience and support the art community on a regular basis, visiting galleries and shows, coming out to hear a concert, whatever their interest is. If the community is going to thrive we need the public and if they are going to show up it has to be fun.

Goals

- **Position and expand the Lowertown creative cluster as a significant contributor to the regional economy.**
- **Maintain and expand live and work spaces, as well as gathering places, that are affordable for artists and attractive to the creative community.**
- **Define and grow the identity of Lowertown as a vital community of creative and cultural production.**
- **Foster a more diverse and complete mixed-income residential community that provides walkable access to daily needs and services.**
- **Strengthen the network and quality of creative output of artists, arts producers, creative entrepreneurs and creative sector workers.**

This Plan calls for bold actions to affirm and grow this community. It lays out comprehensive strategies to: 1) establish the key role of this creative cluster in the region; 2) to dedicate sustainable living, working and gathering spaces for the creative community; and 3) to build on the creativity produced through a diverse, livable transit-friendly neighborhood. The Plan recognizes that the introduction of light rail and other infrastructure improvements, along with a likely increase in the attractiveness of Lowertown as a residential and retail area, may be perceived as a threat to the continued presence of many artists and creative entrepreneurs in the neighborhood.

Based on research conducted for other cities, the significant cluster of creative industry and enterprises in Lowertown can be assumed to have great impact on other sectors of the regional economy. A full assessment of the cluster's scope and impact is needed to build awareness of its importance, and to provide policymakers, developers, and investors with more information on how this creative cluster can be protected, fostered and better integrated as an economic driver.

Only one of the artist live/work buildings in Lowertown is under ownership of its artist residents. Others are more vulnerable to market forces. For the Lowertown creative cluster to thrive, living and studio spaces need to be kept

affordable, and the availability of work spaces needs to be expanded for an increasingly varied range of creative endeavors. The popular Black Dog Café has provided a critical informal gathering place for the creative community. As the community grows, more opportunities, events and gathering places are needed to stimulate the social, professional, and aesthetic/creative development of the community.

A tension exists within Lowertown's creative community. Its ability to remain intact, let alone grow, is highly vulnerable to market forces in real estate. On the other hand, the community needs to attract attention to its assets and to build a market for its products. These are in some ways in conflict as the community works to maintain affordable space in light of its increasing attractiveness as a place to live, visit and do business. Defining the best approaches to identify and promote Lowertown as an arts district or creative cluster will be critical to finding the balance between these forces. This will include making the case for the vital role cultural and creative producers have in the region's economic and cultural well-being.

With a growing residential population and construction of new transit infrastructure, retail and service amenities become more viable. Artists and other residents desire an urban village with more complete services (See Complete the Village, Chapter 1). A neighborhood that is welcoming and provides housing and opportunities for people of diverse incomes and ethnicities is more vibrant, creative and sustainable. The artist community will continue to contribute to an inclusive and welcoming place, to the success of new retail, and will help local businesses be more unique and aesthetically stimulating.

Building on relationships within the artist community, while expanding the network to be more inclusive of the creative sector, will broaden the base for advocacy, grow the capacity of the creative community to take action on its own behalf, and stimulate the creative range and quality of work. New leaders will emerge from the ranks of the artist population. The Saint Paul Art Collective, parent of the Art Crawl and First Friday openings, represents a well-established network within the Lowertown arts community. While its emphasis is on the visual arts, it has good reach across disciplines. This, or another group, could expand its network to embrace creative sector workers in all fields to build a stronger voice for Lowertown's creative sector.

Objectives

- **Protect the affordability of existing residential artist buildings from escalation in the real estate market, and increase the number of affordable work spaces and gathering places suited to artists and creative entrepreneurs.**
- **Advance an identity that serves to maintain the neighborhood as a creative sector cluster producing high-quality work.**
- **Integrate public art, creative design and streetscaping, and other cultural activity in the public realm and built environment.**
- **Build markets for artists and creative entrepreneurs, their skills and their work product.**
- **Create a neighborhood that is inclusive, culturally diverse, and connected to other communities.**
- **Develop artists and creative community members as leaders in Lowertown, the city and the region.**
- **Identify opportunities for using Union Depot as a site for arts activities, arts marketplace or work spaces for artists.**
- **Establish a strong and integral role for creative producers in district management and implementation of the Master Plan.**

The possibility of market-driven turnover of the Northern Warehouse, Tilsner, Jax and other buildings causes instability in the artist community and affects its productivity. Investments in the city's economic vitality should include leveraging a more stable structure for ownership and rental for these and future creative residential workspaces in Lowertown. New development, either the restoration/re-purposing of existing buildings, or leveraged investment in new creative live/work and gathering spaces, will grow the community of creative producers – allowing an essential element of the Saint Paul economy to thrive. The transformation of the Diamond Products Building/site into a cluster of creative workspaces that includes offices for creative sector start-ups and light industrial uses would be an excellent addition.

Arriving at a Lowertown brand that both protects and expands the creative sector will set the stage for strengthening and growing the cluster in ways

that maintain its productivity, high quality of output, and contribution to the regional economy and quality of life. This will require a continuing effort between the artist community, Greater Lowertown Master Plan Task Force, CapitolRiver Council, City of Saint Paul, local businesses and others.

Thoughtfully building on the historic assets and character of Lowertown, public art and other cultural events can unfold on the sidewalks, facades and other public spaces. The 4th Street Artway, called for in the Downtown Station Area Plan, connects the light rail terminus to the central business district. It will provide a key spine to bring new creative work into the public arena. Integrating a historic signature into new design will be important to bridge the community's past and future.

Activities including the Art Crawl, First Fridays, the Farmers' Market and Springboard for the Arts's successful Community Supported Art model (based on Community Supported Agriculture) represent existing collective efforts at connecting producers directly with buyers and efforts at expanding markets. Every artist, every farmer and every creative entrepreneur has developed his or her own relationships with buyers, suppliers and support services. Seeking to grow these through collaborative marketing and market development opportunities will help advance the creative community in Lowertown.

Creative environments thrive on a diverse mix of people, ideas and cultures. A diverse and welcoming environment is considered a fundamental ingredient for a thriving creative economy. The arts can serve as a bridge across cultures and across incomes, involving people in a multitude of celebratory events and volunteer community activities. Lowertown will take advantage of its rich arts community to engage more people while creating a lively, interactive and welcoming neighborhood. This includes opening its connections to the east and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. Public art work and gateways, in addition to programs engaging artists, youth and others in the Vento Sanctuary can help build these connections.

Other sections of this Plan address an on-going and evolving role of the Greater Lowertown Master Planning Task Force, and implementation of other forms of district coordination or management. Strong leadership from

the creative community in future Lowertown management will be critical to maintaining and growing the neighborhood's economic, social and cultural vitality and maximizing its contributions to the larger region.

As a regional transit hub, a reinvigorated Union Depot offers new opportunities as it re-emerges as an active public space. It can house public art, public events and/or a marketplace for local art and creative products. Alongside planners, architects, engineers, historians, City officials, project managers and many others, the artist will play a key role in transforming this important civic place. Ideas include a micro-cinema, flexible galleries, artist incubator spaces, events and music, artist-made furnishings, and an artist-in-residence creating work and engaging visitors on a daily basis.

Growing the creative community from within requires artists and others to step into various leadership roles to expand both internal networks and relationships across the larger community including businesses, non-profits, government and other civic groups. New and existing opportunities in the area for leadership development will help expand community capacity.

Strategies

Identify the most immediate opportunities for stabilizing artist live/work spaces and gathering places.

Existing buildings occupied by artists provide the most likely opportunities for stabilizing ownership to protect low-cost space for artists. Investigation can begin with the Tilsner and Northern Warehouse buildings, and possible development of the lower floors of Lowertown Lofts Artist Cooperative. The Diamond Products Building and site should be considered for creative work spaces. Other social and professional gathering places also need to come on-line. This can include cafes, non-profits with regular cultural programming, or other market-driven facilities. The Union Depot may provide an important space as a creative sector meeting ground.

Prepare a comprehensive data base map to the creative community (individuals, venues, activities), and develop economic data to measure the impact of the Lowertown creative cluster.

A comprehensive inventory and mapping of artists and other creative enterprises and workers in Lowertown, along with presentation venues, will be important to document and calculate the scope and impact of the creative cluster. Surveys identifying the nature of artists' work, their revenues, business networks and supplier needs would be an important follow-up. Calculating the economic activity, impact and reach of the Lowertown creative cluster using proven economic measuring tools will help to better understand and illustrate the sector's true importance to the region. At the same time, data can be collected to examine other activities and contributions, including skills transmission and impact on youth, seniors and other social sectors.

Inventory underutilized and vacant spaces and work with property owners, the artist community, the City and potential occupants to create appropriate arts-related uses.

Opportunities for adding artist live/work spaces, creative business incubators, venues for presentation and sales, education and training, and other support services related to creative production will enhance the future of the neighborhood. This includes residential space, live/work space, and various workspace options. Conducting a full inventory of physical space use, condition and opportunities will be needed to advance the sector. A site such as the Diamond Products property and building provides an ideal opportunity for creative work space that could include light industrial uses for artists engaged in activities such as metal fabrication and others that create noise or require large spaces.

Work with existing networks and organizations to strengthen the creative community, the creative cluster infrastructure, district identity, and participation of artists and creative entrepreneurs in leadership development activities.

Existing groups with interest in neighborhood development, including the Saint Paul Arts Collective, Springboard for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, Saint Paul Foundation, McNeely Foundation, and Public Art Saint Paul provide a skeleton for building a stronger network and nurturing leadership. This will be done in concert with the Greater Lowertown Master Planning Task Force, Lowertown Future Fund and others. A reformulated network or possible new entity will be needed to implement identity development and marketing, advocacy and development of new and expanded services in support of artists and creative entrepreneurs. Grassroots advocacy by residents who have a stake in Lowertown's creative sector will require people stepping into a variety of leadership roles. Appreciating the range of skills needed for various levels of civic involvement will help make that process more productive. Local groups offer community leadership programs open to artists.

Encourage policy makers to protect the creative sector workforce and work spaces, and steer developers to create appropriate spaces and support services using Community Benefits Agreements to protect and enhance creative sector jobs, spaces and programs.

A strengthened and broadened network of artists, creative entrepreneurs and creative sector workers, equipped with data on the impacts of the sector, will position the community to affect public policy around space use and valuation, public and private investments and the direction of new development in Lowertown. This includes influencing City policymakers, and making the case for both public and private investment. Needs identified through this planning process include live and work spaces with guaranteed affordability, shared work spaces, and gathering places for social and professional interaction. Likely future private or public development – whether for sports facilities, residential or business developments or additional public infrastructure – and the impact of these developments, will be mitigated through negotiation of Community Benefits Agreements. These legal tools guarantee distribution of public benefits or short-term or long-term funding streams. These might be used for building or operating public amenities or to offset the impact of property value increases on existing residents.

Explore opportunities to grow educational spaces and opportunities for creative skills transfer.

Teaching is one of the most common secondary occupations for artists. A creative workforce is one of the priorities of contemporary businesses of all kinds. Growing the numbers of people prepared to contribute to creative enterprises and to the cultural arena is a valuable role artists also fulfill. Locating and advocating for educational spaces in Lowertown will provide great synergy.

Maintain state-of-the-art technology infrastructure needed for a competitive creative sector.

Public and private investment in upgrading and maintaining communication technology infrastructure is critical to growing the creative economy. As home to Twin Cities Public Television, Cray Research and nearby Minnesota Public Radio, and as Saint Paul's strongest creative cluster, Lowertown is the ideal spot for expanding this investment.

Explore the value of an Arts or Creative Overlay District in collaboration with historic preservation representatives.

Protecting and enhancing historic assets and the creative community in Lowertown may be accomplished with the assistance of municipal tools such as an overlay district. It could help direct public funds and leverage private investment, stabilize long-term values of live/work spaces, and provide incentives for sales of art work in the district through a sales tax exemption. If established by the State, an overlay district could provide income tax reductions. Investment incentives, as well as regulatory, zoning or tax exemptions, can be packaged within an overlay district to achieve some objectives in this Plan. Whereas most permanent building design issues will be regulated by the current and future design guidelines, an overlay district could incentivize the conversion of vacant storefronts into temporary arts-related spaces or displays.

Work with Union Depot managers to incorporate public art, public programs, retail marketing and other opportunities.

Revitalizing the Union Depot as a regional transportation hub creates an opportunity for new public art and public programming. Public Art Saint Paul, the Saint Paul Arts Collective and other local groups will partner to generate permanent and temporal work, manage galleries, or operate artist-in-residence or work spaces. These will be carried out to enhance Lowertown's identity, to create new opportunities for artists and performers, and to add to the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors.

Seek out and develop appropriate venues and partnerships to enhance markets for locally-produced creative products.

The identification of Lowertown with the Farmers' Market and the level of traffic it generates is an asset the artist community can build on in working to develop buyers for their work. Exploring partnerships with the Farmers' Market, as well as building on the success of the Art Crawl, offer some possibilities for expanding the economy for Lowertown's creative community. Development of a center for artists to network, offer workshops, and connect with wider publics should be explored.

Leverage the diverse range of people who come to Lowertown for the Farmers' Market, Art Crawl and other events - as well as those who travel through Union Depot - to create a welcoming multi-cultural environment.

While Lowertown has a friendly feel, its residential diversity has not kept pace with changing demographics. Regular events such as the Farmers' Market and Art Crawl draw many and diverse visitors. Light rail transit and rail connections at the Union Depot will generate many more visitors, workers and customers. Activities, events and public art representative of diverse cultures, along with a welcoming atmosphere, will be produced and fostered by Lowertown leaders, artists and arts groups.

Identify appropriate spaces, partners and activities to expand networking and career development among artists and creative workers.

Existing resources for artists and an expanded network of entrepreneurial support services will help advance individual and group capacity for generating income, and for artists and creative workers to act in concert. Lowertown artists have local access to Springboard, Public Art Saint Paul, Minnesota State Arts Board, the Jerome Foundation and other resources. Entrepreneurs now find a home in CoCo, a new incubator facility. Nautilus, Zeitgeist, Ballet Minnesota, McNally Smith College of Music, Twin Cities Public Television and other producing groups generate daily activity. These and others can help connect and bolster the success of artists and creative start-ups.



5. Transportation

Summary

Primary Observations

- Lowertown has an efficient urban grid that extends to the north (to Wacouta Commons) and west (to downtown), but not the south (riverfront) and east (toward Vento Sanctuary).
- Lowertown is well-served by two freeways: I-94 and 35W. The pedestrian environment is worse where the local streets interface with the highways.
- Lowertown is at a nexus of recreational trail connections. 85 miles of regional trails are connected through Lowertown.
- Transit in Lowertown is improving rapidly. With LRT and the renovation of Union Depot, Lowertown will soon be as well connected by transit as any place in the region.
- Surface parking has become the default use for several parcels.

Goals

- Provide safe access and mobility for vehicles.
- Prioritize safe, convenient, and inviting pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility.
- Be a multi-modal transportation hub centered on Union Depot.
- Create a multi-modal transportation network that is well-connected to the region's transportation network.
- Create a multi-modal transportation network that is internally integrated, providing the facilities needed for easy switching from mode to mode.

Objectives

- Connect Lowertown to the Mississippi River and regional trails.
- Shift mode split away from single-occupant vehicles.
- Incrementally and selectively modify streets to be more pedestrian-friendly.
- Expand Lowertown's open spaces with shared streets and plaza streets.
- Prioritize full occupancy of existing parking garages before building new.

Strategies

- Construct a complete and connected on-street bike network and preserve sufficient right-of-way for transit on 4th, 5th and 6th streets.
- Connect Kellogg Mall to Bruce Vento Regional Trail (via the River Balcony and Union Depot).
- Improve connections between Lowertown and the Bruce Vento Trail System.
- Connect Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary to the Sam Morgan Trail.
- Provide bicycle storage facilities at all major attractions.
- Connect Lowertown streets to the Lafayette Bridge vertically.
- Design the streets surrounding parks and plazas as part of the adjacent open spaces.
- Extend Broadway to Warner Road.
- Create a street network east of the Lafayette Bridge that connects Lowertown to the East Side
- Reconsider Downtown's / Lowertown's one-way circulation system.
- Selectively reconstruct intersections on 7th Street to encourage pedestrian crossings.
- Reconstruct select intersections of Warner Road to enable safe bicycle and pedestrian crossings.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- Lowertown has an efficient urban grid that extends to the north (to Wacouta Commons) and west (to downtown), but not the south (riverfront) and east (toward Vento Sanctuary).
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Local Streets

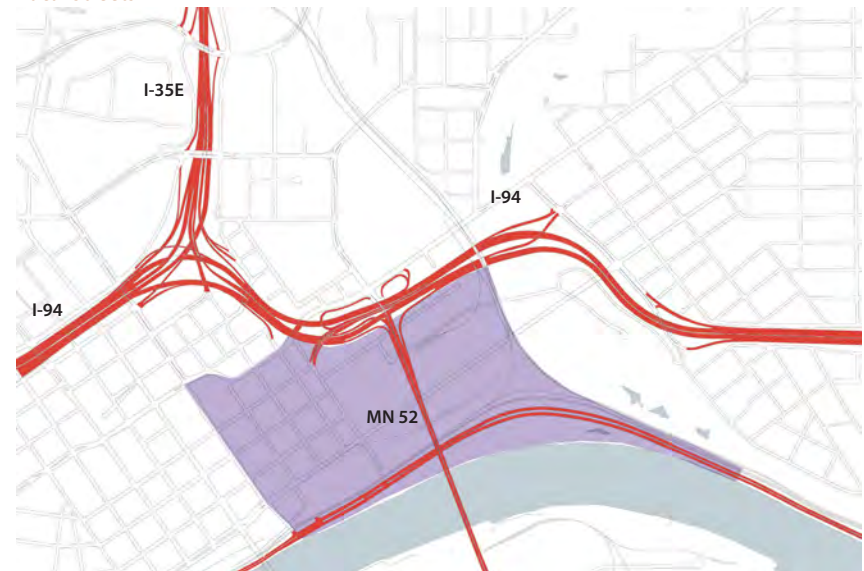
Lowertown's local street pattern is an urban grid, efficiently providing internal circulation. The streetscape is urban – on-street parallel parking on some streets, minimal landscaping and sidewalks up to zero-lot line development. West of Mears Park, most Lowertown streets have one-way circulation and are an extension of the downtown street network. East of Mears Park, most streets have two-way circulation, except the 5th / 6th Street east-west one-way pair.

Regional Vehicle Connections

Two regional corridors impact Lowertown. The Lafayette Freeway/Highway 52 passes over Lowertown and connects to 7th Street and the Interstate. Interstate 94 forms the northern boundary of Lowertown. The highways, topography and rail lines block nearly all vehicular access to Dayton's Bluff and the University/Lafayette areas. The result is that a few bridges over I-94 carry high volumes of vehicular traffic. Kellogg Boulevard, 7th Street and Jackson Street are the few exits out of Lowertown, and all carry high-traffic volumes, are wider roads, and are less friendly to non-motorized modes moving along and across the streets. In addition, I-94 ramping connects with the east end of 6th Street so that the 5th and 6th Street one-way pair is a feeder from downtown Saint Paul to the Interstate. Standards for appropriate speed and



Local Streets



Regional Connections

the presence of other modes abruptly changes with little transition as drivers move between Lowertown's urban streets and the Interstate. Yet human driving expectations do not change as quickly, so motorists tend to still have Interstate-level mobility expectations as they approach and leave the ramps.

Non-Motorized Connections

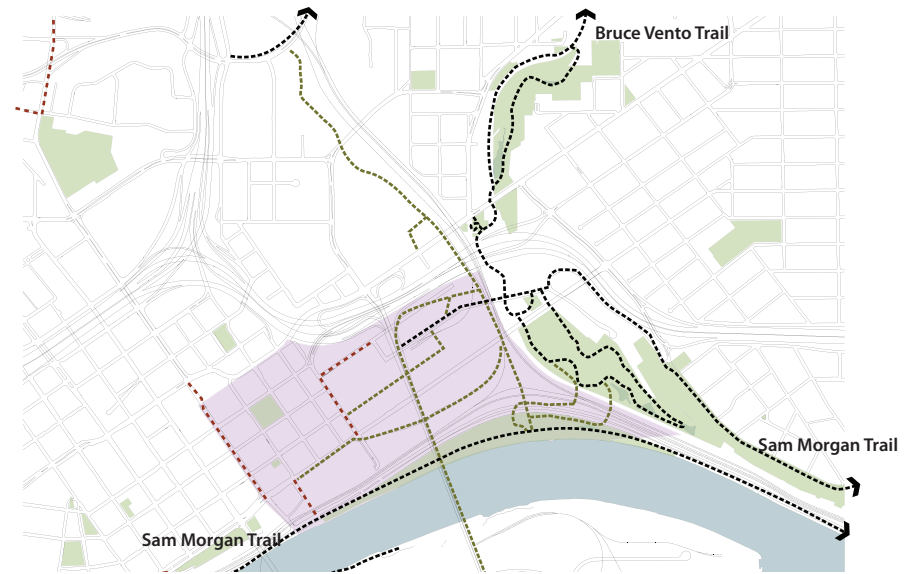
The Sam Morgan Regional Trail along the Mississippi River connects to Lowertown through the Jackson/Sibley Street tunnels and an on-street bike route. The Bruce Vento Regional Trail is east of the rail lines and connects to Lowertown via the recently-completed connection along 4th Street.

Internal to Lowertown, the sidewalk network is very urban in nature and relatively connected. There are few missing sidewalk connections. Except on sidewalk sections adjacent to surface parking lots, poorly designed parking structures, loading and trash areas, and along Kellogg Boulevard, walking on Lowertown sidewalks is relatively comfortable. Moreover, some streets are bleak, with little vegetation and poor frontage.

Lowertown is on the east edge of downtown Saint Paul's skywalk network and the lack of a skywalk system helps form the Lowertown character. Generally east and south of Mears Park, private development is not connected to downtown Saint Paul via skywalks.

Transit Service

The 5th / 6th Street one-way pair is Metro Transit's consolidated corridor for east-west circulation through downtown and Lowertown. This routing provides frequent and convenient transit service for those traveling into and out of downtown.



Recreational Trails and Paths

Transit service to Lowertown will improve dramatically with the phased evolution of Union Depot to a multi-modal hub. Union Depot will be the first stop on the Central Corridor LRT line, which will improve transit service to the west to downtown Saint Paul, the Central Corridor and Minneapolis. Metro Transit will establish a bus transfer station at Union Depot, solidifying frequent bus transit service along 5th, 6th and Broadway. Private regional bus lines and Amtrak have indicated they will use Union Depot as their regional stop. In the long-term, regional commuter rail from the east and south suburbs will end service at Union Depot, and in the very long-term, Union Depot will be the Twin Cities stop for inter-city high-speed rail.

Goals

- **Provide safe access and mobility for vehicles.**
- **Prioritize safe, convenient and inviting pedestrian, bicycle and transit accessibility.**
- **Be a multi-modal transportation hub centered on Union Depot.**
- **Create a multi-modal transportation network that is well connected to the region's transportation network.**
- **Create a multi-modal transportation network that is internally integrated, providing the facilities needed for easy switching from mode to mode.**

Lowertown's multi-modal transportation network must simultaneously serve many purposes, including access to the regional network; internal accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, personal vehicles, delivery trucks and emergency vehicles, and economic activity space for ground-floor retail, recreation and events.

Lowertown's streets, sidewalks, trails and future rail transit are critical for internal movement within the neighborhood, connecting the neighborhood to the region, and shaping and providing locations for commerce both on streets and on private property.

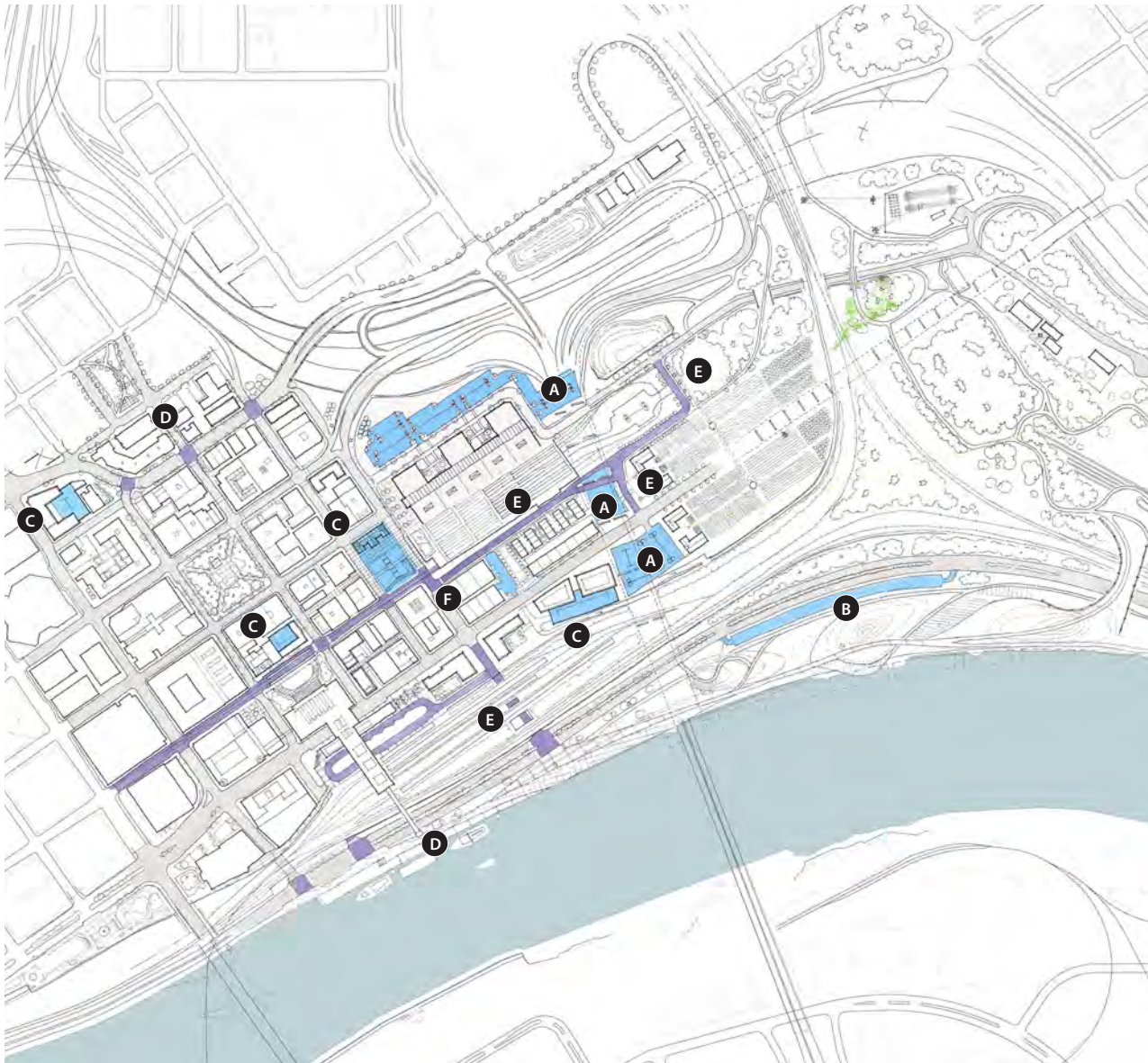
Lowertown's transportation system will be vastly improved in the near future. Improvements to regional recreational trails; new LRT connecting to Minneapolis and a renovated Union Depot with commuter rail, high-speed rail, intra- and inter-city bus, taxi and bike facilities will transform Lowertown into a fully-connected, multi-modal neighborhood where one can live comfortably without a car.

The public street system will remain a critical and valued piece of the public realm. The public right-of-way that is now dominated by moving cars will be used more for commerce, celebration, relaxation and repairing environmental systems.

Objectives

- **Connect Lowertown to the Mississippi River and regional trails.**
- **Shift mode split away from single-occupant vehicles.**
- **Incrementally and selectively modify streets to be more pedestrian-friendly.**
- **Expand Lowertown's open spaces with shared streets and plaza streets.**
- **Prioritize full occupancy of existing parking garages before building new.**

Lowertown Movement and Access Plan



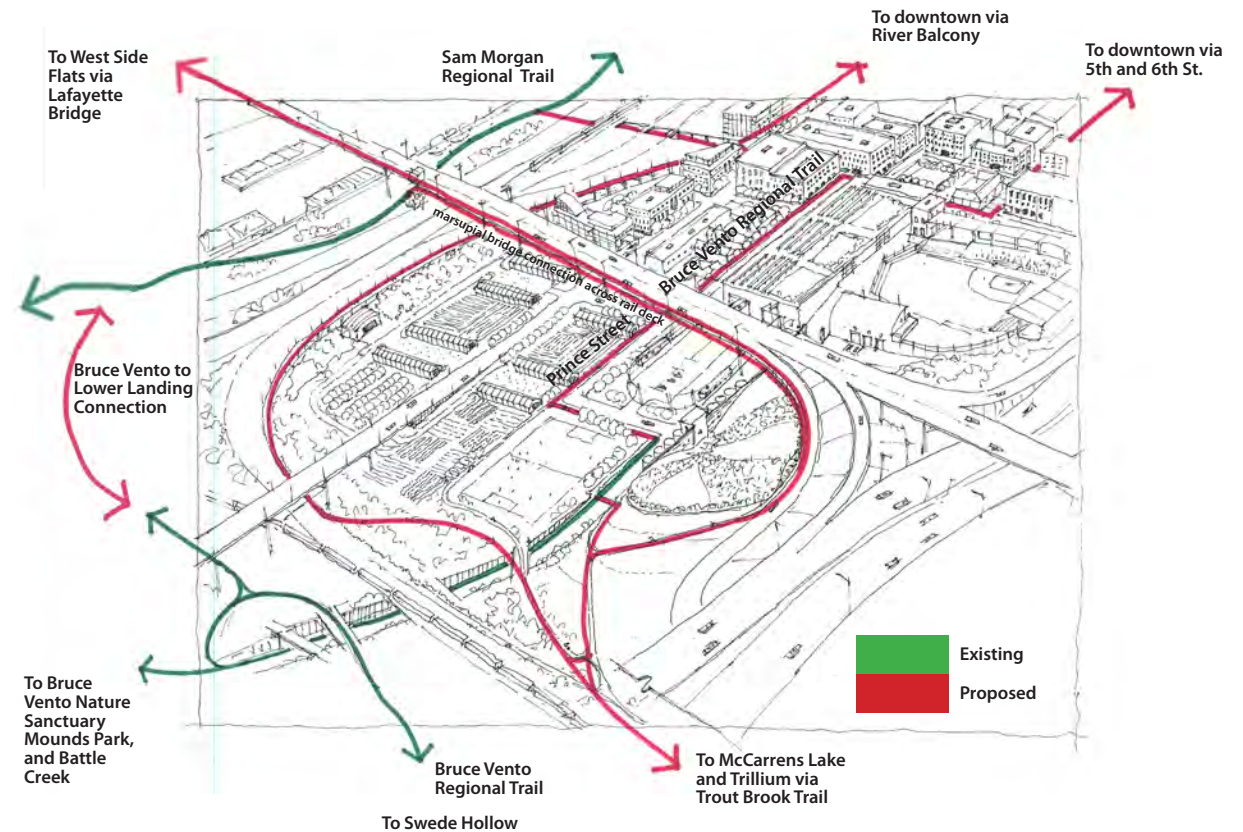
- A** Tailgate / Market parking
- B** Lower Landing parking
- C** Structured parking
- D** Improved Intersections
- E** New Streets
- F** New Trailhead

Strategies

Construct a complete and connected on-street bicycle network and preserve sufficient right-of-way for transit on 4th, 5th and 6th Streets.

Public transportation and utility projects and private redevelopment projects are opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment. All street frontages in Lowertown should have a wide sidewalk, street trees and street furniture. Surface parking lots and blank walls should be redeveloped to include street-oriented active uses with a high degree of transparency. Pedestrian safety should be a priority and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles should be considered in streetscape and private development construction.

The 5th / 6th Street one-way pair is Metro Transit's consolidated corridor for east-west circulation through downtown and Lowertown, and LRT will run on 4th Street through Lowertown. The limited street right-of-way should be allocated to provide sufficient space for transit uses, at the expense of wide vehicle travel lanes.



Proposed bicycle and trail network

Connect Kellogg Mall to Bruce Vento Regional Trail (via the River Balcony and Union Depot).

This Plan supports constructing the bicycle path included in the Union Depot redevelopment plan that runs parallel and north of the rail line to connect 4th Street and Kellogg/Broadway intersection. The bicycle path should seamlessly continue west through the Union Depot project and connect to the recommended River Balcony. Bridging will be necessary over Broadway and Sibley streets.

Improve the connection between Lowertown and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail system.

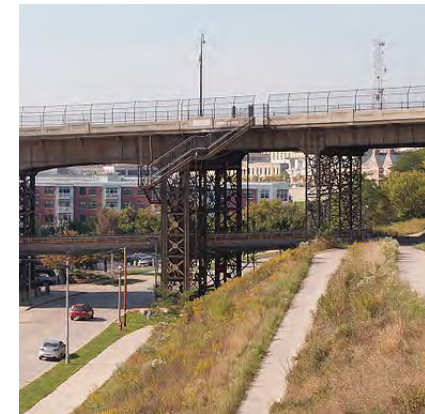
This Plan supports building a bike trail connection from the proposed 5th and 6th Street bike lanes to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail trailhead at Broadway. The existing trail head should move to a new location at Prince and Broadway. Due to the size of the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) and the surrounding infrastructure, a trailhead or public art installment should be added as a way to improve visibility and access to the trail.



Bicycle Facilities



Marsupial Bridge



Marsupial Bridge

Connect Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary to the Sam Morgan Trail.

The Plan supports creating a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the rail lines and Warner Road as indicated in the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary Master Plan and the Great River Park Master Plan. The connection should be designed as a land bridge that accommodates bicycles, pedestrians and habitat to cross the rails.

Provide bicycle storage and bicycle sharing facilities at all major attractions.

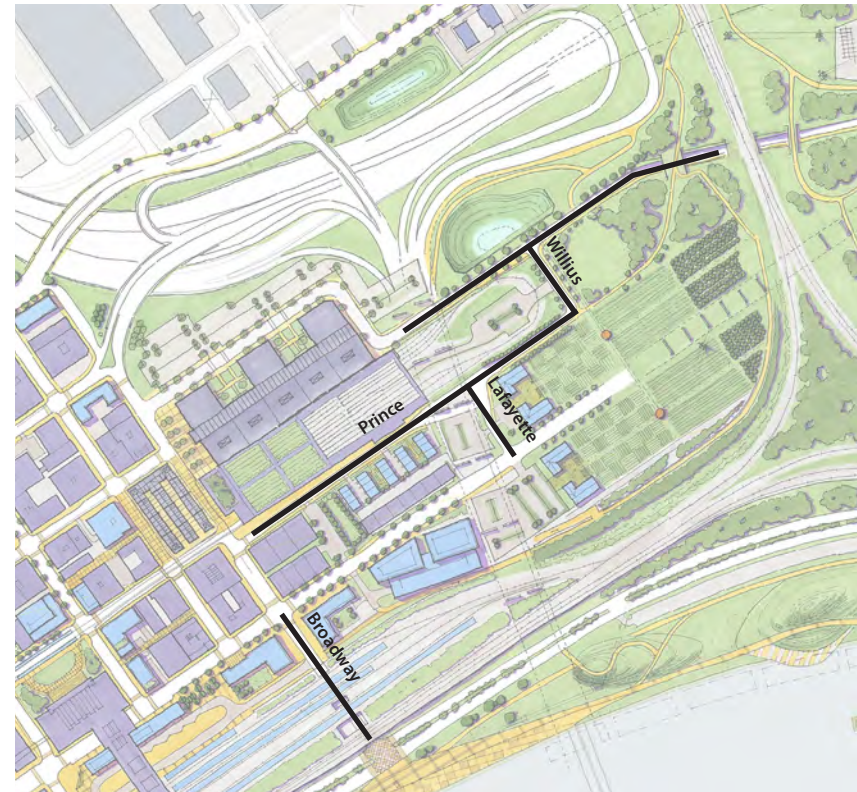
Bicycle parking racks and lockers should be provided at all major attractions. The City should require private development projects to provide protected bicycle parking to encourage bicycle commuting. A bike station (a secured and attended storage area) should be constructed as part of the Union Depot multi-modal transportation hub. Major public attractions, such as the Farmers' Market and regional ballparks should provide sufficient and prominent bicycle racks and/or lockers. The bicycle racks are an opportunity for innovative, design and should be considered a part of the artistic expression of Lowertown.

Connect Lowertown streets to the Lafayette Bridge Vvertically.

The Lafayette Bridge passes over the east end of Lowertown without connecting to the local street network. As an alternative to the proposed 50-foot stair tower connecting the Lafayette Bridge deck to the riverfront, this Plan proposes a "marsupial bridge" beneath the bridge deck connecting to the planned earthen forms on the Riverfront. The bike lane on the bridge deck would remain and be connected to the marsupial bridge with a simple one level staircase. The marsupial bridge would connect directly to earthen forms to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail on 4th Street/Prince Street and to the main Lafayette Bridge deck via a simple staircase.



Plaza Streets / Shared Streets / Convertible Streets



Proposed New Street Network East of Broadway

Design the streets surrounding parks and plazas as part of the adjacent open spaces.

Lowertown hosts many events in its open spaces such as Mears Park, the Farmers' Market, the future regional ballpark and the recommended Union Depot Plaza. In every case, the design of the cross-section of the street should enable occasional use of the street right-of-way as part of the open space. For example, the design of the sidewalk around the Farmers' Market should allow vendors to back up to the sidewalk with their vehicles.

The streets around Mears Park should enable infrequent use of the adjacent streets for additional event space. Streetscape elements that could be considered are street tree placement, sidewalk width, sidewalk material and pavement design, locations of street amenities such as bicycle racks and newspaper sales boxes, and mountable curbs. When designing the open spaces of Mears Park, the Farmers' Market, the future regional ballpark, and the recommended Union Depot Plaza, the City should consider their boundaries to be the entire adjacent public right-of-way and should define their edges by the facades of surrounding buildings. Design must always be in the context of the historic district's design guidelines and the City's Historic Preservation Plan.

Extend Broadway to Warner Road

A short extension of Broadway to Warner Road will have a large impact on Lowertown and the riverfront. A full street connection will help to reduce the barrier effect of the rail deck by providing a second direct connection between Lowertown and the riverfront.

Ramsey County has recognized the potential benefits and positive impacts of redeveloping parts of the deck that are not used for trains and the surface parking lot on Kellogg Boulevard. The Broadway street extension will have to be coordinated with potential development on Kellogg Boulevard, as it may require modifications to the driving ramp up to the top of the rail deck.

The Broadway Street extension will require negotiations with the rail carriers, as they own the edge of the rail deck for their main lines. An easement would have to be negotiated to get any form of a connection. A street extension would run beneath the main lines and would require a new structure as well.

The Broadway extension would align with a new parking lot for the Lower Landing Park. The intersection would effectively move the urban section of Warner/Shepard Road approximately 1/4 mile to the east.

Create a street network east of the Lafayette Bridge that connects Lowertown to the East Side.

Lowertown's local street network should be extended east to provide access to the under-utilized area between the Lafayette Bridge and the rail lines. All street connections in this area should be designed as local streets, with narrow travel lanes, standard urban intersections, turn lanes only where necessary, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The design and alignment of these new connections should favor access to the recommended open space facilities over efficient and fast through-travel.

While the street connections may be necessary due to events such as those associated with the Farmers' Market and regional ballpark, the event traffic should not be the design level of traffic. Similarly, the streets should be designed carefully with a focus on preventing unnecessary infrastructure and new barriers between the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood and Lowertown.

While event traffic may cause a strain on the Lowertown road network for several hours on a handful of days, new road connections will shape and impact Lowertown every minute of every day. These road connections can be designed as local streets since development is limited east of Broadway Street due to airport safety regulations and environmental constraints. When there is a major event traffic control officers can ensure efficient and safe entry in and exit out of Lowertown at critical intersections. Congestion related to large events should be expected, accepted and anticipated, which will encourage event attendees to travel via multi-occupant vehicles, bus, bike and LRT.

A bicycle connection along Prince Street is planned and should be constructed. However, there should be as many bicycle and pedestrian-oriented connections as possible, including a path between the OMF facility and any redevelopment to the north. The non-motorized connections should be wide and comfortable, either on an off-street trail or combined with a low-volume local street.

Fourth Street is a critical bicycle and local street connection between Lowertown and the east side, and should be maintained and improved for safety, especially for pedestrians and bicycles. However, this portal between Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and the recommended open space facilities should not be widened to encourage further vehicular traffic.

Reconsider Downtown's / Lowertown's one-way circulation system.

The one-way street system in Lowertown is confusing for new and infrequent visitors, encourages higher vehicular speeds, makes pedestrian street crossings less predictable, and hampers first-floor retail uses. However, Lowertown's street circulation pattern is integrated with that of downtown Saint Paul. Any future changes to the one-way network in Lowertown must be part of a city-wide reconsideration of the downtown circulation pattern and its connection to interstate ramps. The Downtown Saint Paul Station Area Plan recommends the exploration of converting 5th and 6th Streets to two-way circulation. Lowertown should support a reconsideration of the one-way system and conversion to two-way circulation of small street sections and entire corridors.



Recommended Changes at East 7th Street

Selectively reconstruct Intersections on 7th Street to encourage pedestrian crossings.

This Plan recommends that 7th Street grow as a neighborhood retail center. Vehicles passing through Lowertown on 7th Street between downtown and the East Side travel too fast, which discourages both pedestrian crossings and street-oriented retail uses. A series of small intersection improvements will improve the pedestrian connection between Lowertown and Wacouta Commons.

- Intersection narrowing – Install bump-outs at corners on blocks with on-street parking, such as 7th/Wacouta and 7th/Wall.
- Spot intersection narrowing – The City should confirm the necessity of the double northbound left-turn lane on Sibley at 7th Street. During the winter it is used as snow storage, suggesting that it is not necessary. In an effort to make the area more pedestrian-friendly and conducive to redevelopment the intersection should be neither free-flow nor high speed. Reclaim the lane for a sidewalk expansion between 7th Place and 7th Street, which could still be used for snow storage.
- Construct standard urban intersections – at the Jackson Street/7th Street intersection, reconstruct the northeast quadrant of the intersection to decrease the wide westbound right-turn radius. A typical urban corner turning radius that assumes trucks but at appropriate urban speeds will narrow the pedestrian crossing distance.
- Plant street trees – Street trees are an effective method of slowing vehicle traffic, as well as creating attractive and pleasant streetscapes that enhance human comfort. There are no street trees between Wall and Wacouta, and there are some missing spots between Wacouta and Sibley.
- Appropriate traffic calming – The City should include surface texture in pedestrian crossings at major intersections to alert drivers to pedestrian crossings. Surface textures will not reduce capacity however they reduce speeds and increase pedestrian safety. They should be carefully chosen and located to minimize noise increases.

Proper redevelopment of private parcels will also encourage drivers to operate their vehicles at speeds that enable safer pedestrian crossings. Large surface

parking lots indicate to drivers that parts of 7th Street are not active and that no pedestrians will be present.

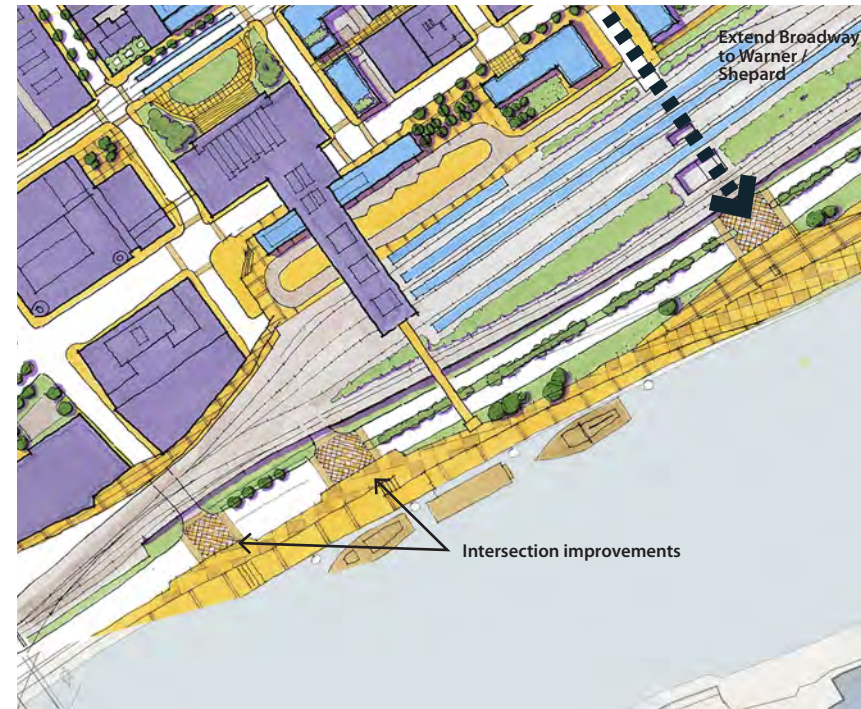
- Redevelopment – All infill redevelopment on 7th Street in Lowertown should be built to a zero lot line infill and should be at least 3 stories.
- Signage – All signage should be sized for slow urban traffic and pedestrians. All billboards should be removed as soon as possible.
- Gateway – Although 7th Street is an urban street east of Metropolitan State University, westbound drivers get indications from the interstate ramps, the bridge over the interstate, and the suburban-style development between Mounds Boulevard and Wall Street that it is appropriate to increase vehicle speeds. All infill redevelopment on 7th Street between Mounds Boulevard should be urban in form, with minimal front setback and should be at least 3 stories. Additionally, a Lowertown physical gateway on the west end of the interstate bridge will indicate to drivers that they are entering a neighborhood and should drive appropriately. The physical gateway is an opportunity for innovative design and should be considered a part of the artistic expression of Lowertown.

As dense redevelopment in the 7th Street corridor occurs, further intervention to accommodate and encourage pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety could be justified. As the street's pedestrian increases, the City should a wide array of potential additional interventions. Pedestrians are currently crossing 7th Street midblock between Wall and Wacouta; as redevelopment density increases, the City may consider a midblock pedestrian crossing to increase pedestrian visibility and safety. The City should measure traffic levels to determine when widespread redevelopment will meet warrants for a traffic signal at Temperance and 7th Street. When the Jackson/7th Street/7th Place block redevelops, the City should reconsider the access and mobility roles of 7th Place between Sibley and Jackson and possibly re-route 7th Place to improve the East 7th Place/Sibley/East 7th Street intersection for pedestrians and motorists."

Reconstruct select intersections of Warner Road to enable safe bicycle and pedestrian crossings

The Sam Morgan Regional Trail is disconnected from Lowertown because of the rail line and the design of Warner Road's intersections. Given current traffic levels, it is possible to make intersection changes to Warner Road's four-lane cross-section while maintaining excellent regional vehicle traffic flow. The City should consider changes to safely get bicyclists and pedestrians between Lowertown and the Sam Morgan Trail.

- Maintain Warner Road's four-lane cross-section. While a two-lane Warner Road could theoretically handle existing traffic volumes, a narrower road will make safer pedestrian and bicycle crossings counter-intuitively more difficult. A four-lane Warner Road will allow more signal time at the Jackson, Sibley and future Broadway intersections to be dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle crossings.
- Maintain Warner Road's double eastbound left turn lanes between Jackson and Sibley to maximize the vehicle capacity of the intersection, and thus maximize pedestrian crossing time.
- Modify the intersections at Jackson and Sibley and design the future Broadway intersection to provide safer pedestrian and bicycle crossings. At all three intersections, allow pedestrian crossings on both the east and west sides of the intersection, install pedestrian signals, and provide a center refuge median.
- Change access to the Lower Landing parking lot between Sibley and Broadway – In the near term, shorten the excessively long eastbound right deceleration lane. In the long-term, provide access to this parking lot at the future Broadway intersection.



Recommended changes to Warner / Shepard Road



6. Parks and Open Space

Summary

Primary Observations

- Mears Park is a jewel, but it needs relief.
- The riverfront is an asset, but inaccessible.
- Growth in the neighborhood will require better connections to existing parks and open spaces.
- Recreational connections are incomplete; they can be completed east of the Lafayette Bridge.
- The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary offers unique access to nearby wilderness just a short walk from Lowertown, but it is difficult to find the trail that connects the two areas.
- The Lowertown population will grow in numbers and diversity; the neighborhood's open spaces should adapt to these changes.
- There is a lack of recreational opportunities for children and seniors.

Goals

- Be lush and connected.
- Be a neighborhood in a river valley.
- Have a variety of ample outdoor spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the year.
- Meet the diversity of needs for a growing Lowertown.
- Maximize proximity to existing parks and open spaces.
- Create indoor recreational opportunities.

Objectives

- Increase access to existing parks.
- Leverage new investments to create semi-public parks and gathering spaces.
- Create opportunities for active recreation - both indoor and outdoor.
- Consider streets and alleys as part of the open space system.
- Leverage atriums and skyways and other semi-public spaces for indoor recreation and programming.
- Complete the recreational network through Lowertown.

Strategies

- Activate the lawn and former drop-off area in front of the Union Depot with temporary installations, art and programming.
- Enhance the Farmers' Market site to become a greater neighborhood amenity.
- Create the River Balcony connecting the Science Museum, Kellogg Mall and Union Depot to the Trout Brook Regional Trail.
- Create Prince Street Park.
- Locate additional recreation space east of the Lafayette Bridge.
- Activate the Riverfront with a promenade, Lower Landing Park and programming per the Great River Passage Plan
- Incrementally improve sidewalks to become part of the neighborhoods valued open space system.
- Expand the use of temporary / seasonal cafes and plazas.
- Create roof top gardens as part of the open space system.
- Raise visibility and improve awareness that the Bruce Vento Regional Trail connects Lowertown to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Swede Hollow Park, and other East Side recreational destinations.
- Explore use of the Diamond Products building for indoor recreation.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- Mears Park is a jewel, but it needs relief.
- The riverfront is an asset, but inaccessible.
- Growth in the neighborhood will require better connections to existing parks and open spaces.
- Recreational connections are incomplete; they can be completed east of the Lafayette Bridge.
- The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary offers unique access to nearby wilderness just a short walk from Lowertown, but it is difficult to find the trail that connects the two areas.
- The Lowertown population will grow in numbers and diversity; the neighborhood's open spaces should adapt to these changes.
- There is a lack of recreational opportunities for children and seniors.

Lowertown is home to three parks: Mears Park, Lower Landing Park and the children's play space at TPT. Mears Park is one of the finest urban parks in the country. Since being renovated in 1991, Mears Park has become one of the most loved and cared for places in all of Downtown. Mears Park is heavily programmed and well cared for by the City, Friends of Mears Park and an army of local volunteers. However as the neighborhood grows, Mears Park will need to be augmented with additional open spaces and parks.

The Children's Play Space was built in 1994 and turned over to the City of Saint Paul in 2004. It is well used by visitors to TPT, downtown day care centers and downtown residents.

Lowertown is adjacent to Lower Landing Park. This park provides access to recreational trails and passive activities. Access to this park is limited - users have to cross an inhospitable Warner / Shepard Road to access the park. However once in the park, visitors have access to large network of regional trails. The Great River Passage Master Plan envisions significant



improvements to Lower Landing Park, including a promenade and landforms.

The parks and open spaces surrounding Lowertown are as important and significant as those within Lowertown. Wacouta Commons, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Kellogg Mall, and Swede Hollow are all within a short walk or bike ride of Lowertown. Improving access to these parks will greatly improve the quality of life for residents of Lowertown.

Lowertown Open Space Plan



- A** Trail connections
- B** Lower Landing Park
- C** Land Bridge
- D** Farmers' Market Plaza
- E** Prince Street Park
- F** River Balcony

Goals

Goals

- Be lush and connected.
- Be a neighborhood in a river valley.
- Have a variety of ample outdoor spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy throughout the year.
- Meet the diversity of needs for a growing Lowertown.
- Maximize proximity to existing parks and open spaces.
- Create indoor recreation opportunities

Objectives

- Increase access to existing parks.
- Leverage new investments to create semi-public parks and gathering spaces.
- Create opportunities for active recreation - both indoor and outdoor.
- Consider streets and alleys as part of the open space system.
- Leverage atriums and skyways and other semi-public spaces for indoor recreation and programming.
- Complete the recreational network through Lowertown.

The Lowertown network of open spaces is made up of a variety of elements, including pedestrian-oriented streets, public parks, the riverfront, recreational trails, a series of public squares and semi-public outdoor space amenities, and private spaces related directly to the residential environment. The public spaces that make up the primary public framework for Lowertown are:

- The riverfront (existing)
- Mears Park (existing)
- Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary (existing)
- Children's Play Space (existing)
- Depot Plaza (existing)
- Farmers Market Plaza/Park (proposed)
- Recreation fields in the Seam (proposed)
- River Balcony (proposed)
- Various trail connections (proposed)
- Prince Street Park (proposed)

In addition to those listed above, the Lowertown open space network will connect to a much larger system of parks throughout Saint Paul and the region.

This wide range of open space opportunities is related to the evolution of Lowertown from a small neighborhood on the edge of Downtown to a neighborhood with regional destinations within it. Lowertown has become an important public destination; a year-round resource serving the city and the region, as well as its own residents.

The Network of Open Spaces in Lowertown

There is a range of open space resources throughout Lowertown. First a network of public spaces - the streets, parks and riverfront give Lowertown its public face and sense of accessibility. They accommodate a range of public cultural and commercial activities - all celebrating the relationship of Lowertown to the rest of the city, county and region. As significant public amenities, they will make Lowertown more desirable to residents, employers and visitors.

A series of streets, trails and paths augment the public open space system noted above. Lowertown's sidewalks should be comfortable for pedestrians; the streets should be balanced with cars, transit and bicyclists; and the off-street trails should be a premium facility for cyclists and pedestrians. Together, this system will connect Lowertown to the open spaces within and beyond.

In addition to the overtly public open spaces (streets, parks and riverfront), there are other open spaces directly related to the residential environment of Lowertown. These spaces are private and semi-private; they are often shared by a group of residents. Roof gardens, shared patios, courtyard, and mews are examples of this second layer of open space in Lowertown.

Finally, Lowertown should consider existing (and new) semi-public indoor spaces such as skyways and atriums as valuable resources. They can be used for indoor recreation, exercise, gathering, dancing, and performances. These spaces can be critical resources to creating a livable winter city.

Strategies

Activate the lawn and former drop-off area in front of the Union Depot with temporary installations, art and programming.

At one time, the space in front of Union Depot processed 20,000 train passengers a day. The space was originally designed to extend to Mears Park, but eventually was built as a well-proportioned space, a hallmark of the City Beautiful design movement.

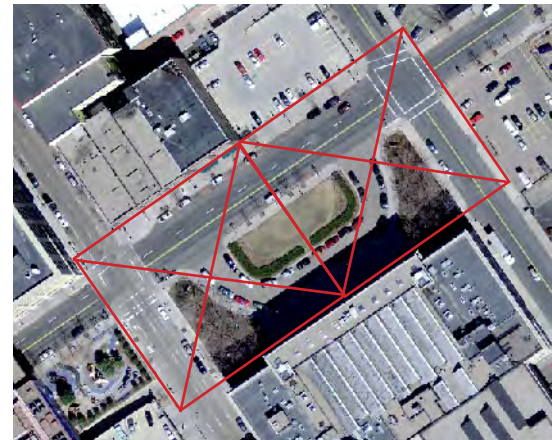
Despite its legacy and the beauty of the Depot facade, the space is not fully occupied and enjoyed today. It suffers from lack of active edges (several surrounding sites are vacant), lack of activity and movement through the space and lack of programming. There is great opportunity to activate this urban room to become an even more valuable asset to the neighborhood.

It is imperative that interventions to the space in front of the Depot are mindful of the historic nature of the property. Therefore, this Plan proposes re-activating (not re-designing) the space in front of the Depot with temporary installations, art and active programming that allows people to occupy and enjoy the space without altering the original design of the space. Temporary programming and non-permanent (seasonal or annual) events that are introduced into the space will help activate the great urban room, elevating it along side other great spaces in downtown Saint Paul.

Activating the edges of the space with new mid-rise mixed-use residential buildings should complete the edges of the room with active ground floors as well as balconies and roof top patios that allow residents to enjoy programming of the proposed spaces.



An LRT station will be located in front of the Union Depot. The drop-off area will be converted to a pedestrian space. The lawn will be preserved.



The space in front of the Depot is carefully proportioned into two identical squares. New infill buildings will help define the edges of this space.



The space in front of the Union Depot can be activated with displays and events such as the temporary decking shown in the image above, that can provide a flexible festive space. Art, food service and live performances will all add life to the space and allow the space to be preserved, celebrated and an amenity to the neighborhood. This rendering also illustrates the potential for new infill development to front on and define the street envelope with a variety of architectural languages that share the fundamental form and pattern found in the Lowertown Historic District



Food carts and flexible seating



Events and Programming



Functional and Interactive Art

Enhance the Farmers' Market Site to become a greater neighborhood amenity.

Lowertown recognizes the value of the Saint Paul Farmers' Market as one of the most successful and oldest outdoor markets in the country. An institution for over 100 years, the Market brings 20,000 people into downtown every summer weekend. Some of the value of the Market to the neighborhood is its location, in the heart of the community. Unlike many markets of this size that are located in industrial districts or on the edges of downtowns, the Saint Paul Farmers' Market is in the heart of the Lowertown neighborhood - it contributes to the identity of Lowertown. It is a vital amenity, focal point meeting place and icon. Therefore, an important initiative of this Plan is to support and promote improvements to the Market and to the site to ensure the longevity of the Market on its current site while at the same time improving the site as an amenity to the neighborhood the remaining 5 days of the week.

The Downtown Station Area Plan establishes the policy guidance for investing in the Farmers Market Site to create a "Great Urban Room." Whereas the site functions as a great room while the market is in session, it under performs



From the Downtown Saint Paul Station Area Plan 2.4 Public Realm: Create Urban Rooms at Station Areas and Special Places

The LRT stations and special places should evolve as the collective hearts of an enhanced downtown. By building on the successful experiences of places such as Rice Park and the Farmers' Market, targeted public realm improvements at station areas and special places have the potential to rapidly change the image of downtown for the thousands of people who come via LRT each day. Improvements in these areas should focus on the creation of high-quality public spaces capable of integrating the needs of a wide range of users and accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicular movement. As in Rice Park, the success of these improvements will be dependent on their ability to create an urban room that is flexible and capable of accommodating a range of civic activities, yet is distinct in feel and character



Figure 2.23 The station areas provide an opportunity to build on Saint Paul's legacy of creating great urban rooms.

as a surface parking lot the remainder of the week. This Plan recommends improvements to the site to maintain a successful Farmers Market but also becomes a valuable part of the public realm the remainder of the week and year.

Activate the edges of the room.

Wherever possible, the ground floor of surrounding buildings should contain active uses that attract people throughout the week. The 8,000 SF at the OMF should house uses related to the market or the arts. Additional ground floor space is available in the Rayette Building, the Lofts at Farmers Market (under construction) and the potential redevelopment of the Diamond Products building north of the OMF as well as the proposed Saints Ballpark.

Redesign streets to become “convertible streets.”

Broadway, 4th Street, 5th Street and Wall Street should be reconstructed to become “convertible” streets that can accommodate a range of uses. Sometimes referred to as “plaza streets” or “shared streets”, they are effective ways to expand the use of the public realm and to create a singular seamless space between the edge of a building and an open space across a street. Consideration of historic preservation will be critical as the street grid is a defining character of the District.

Redesign and construction of all surrounding streets must also consider market operations and potential expansion to include a street market.

Create a year-round amenity / gathering place that enhances the Market.

A portion of the Farmers’ Market site should be redesigned to encourage gathering, seating and other informal uses. This area should be designed for both market days and non-market days. It may include seating, wi-fi, small performance and, potentially, a small green space.

Utilize the Market sheds year-round.

The existing Market sheds should be used throughout the year. By enclosing some of the sheds with garage doors they could be used throughout the Spring and Fall for vendors. In the winter, the market space and sheds can be used for the Winter Carnival related activities.



Gathering and Seating



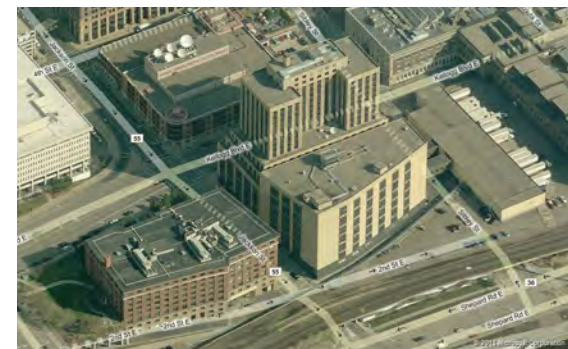
Convertible Streets

Create the River Balcony connecting the Science Museum, Kellogg Mall and Union Depot to the Trout Brook Regional Trail.

The planned bike trail connecting Trout Brook Regional Trail to the Union Depot should extend west to Kellogg Park and the Science Museum along a linear balcony located on the south edge of the Ramsey County Building and the former Post Office. The Kellogg Balcony would be south-facing with spectacular views of the river valley. The Balcony would gradually slope and step down from Kellogg Park to the Union Depot train deck.



Proposed River Balcony



Existing

Create Prince Street Park.

Prince Street will extend east of Broadway along the south edge of the OMF. The plan anticipates eventual redevelopment of the Prince Street parking lot with low rise, ground-related housing such as townhouses or mews housing. In conjunction with this development, a new park should be created between the Tilsner/Northern Warehouse and the Kellogg Professional Building. A new park may require rearrangement of existing parking - it would not require replacement of existing resident parking.

The Prince Street Park will be approximately 1/3 acre - a neighborhood-scaled open space. The space should be programmed for children's play and social interaction among neighbors. The park should be designed and operated in partnership with the Tilsner and Northern Warehouse.



Prince Street Park



Locate additional recreation space east of the Lafayette Bridge.

The Plan recommends a recreation field to be located east of the Lafayette Bridge, in the Seam. The recreational field should be multi-purpose and flexible. It would be well-connected to the regional trail system and immediately accessible to the Lowertown and East Side neighborhoods. The proposed earthen mounds as part of the overall design for the area could be integrated into sloped seating for the active rec fields.



Activate the Riverfront with a promenade, Lower Landing Park and programming per the Great River Passage Plan

The recently completed Great River Passage Plan provides direction for improvements to the riverfront. These improvements will greatly benefit to residents of Lowertown as they will create attractions along and connections to the river. The Great River Passage proposes the following for the riverfront:

- Native gardens and water quality wetlands
- Connection to Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary
- Potential skate park
- Landforms and overlooks
- Potential skate park
- Potential dog park
- Lambert's Landing
- Improved and increased parking
- Landforms and overlooks
- Connections fro Lowertown



- A** native gardens and water quality wetlands
- B** signature pedestrian bridge / gateway
- C** potential skate park
- D** potential dog park
- E** Lambert's Landing
- F** on-site full access parking
- G** landforms and overlooks
- H** Broadway / Lowertown access

Incrementally improve sidewalks to become part of the neighborhoods valued open space system.

Sidewalks are critical pieces of the public open space system. They are not only places to walk, but they are the approach to every business and residence in Lowertown. Sidewalks in Lowertown are relatively narrow - few are wider than 10 feet. At less than 10 feet, there is little room for furnishings and amenities (lamp posts, benches, newspaper boxes, bike racks). Sidewalks 10 feet or wider can accommodate these amenities as well as allow private use of the sidewalk for tables or merchandise display.

New buildings that have retail on their ground floor should be designed for a minimum 10 foot sidewalk. This will help assure a comfortable pedestrian experience. If necessary, buildings with ground floor retail should be set back from the front property line, slightly, to create a 10-15 foot sidewalk if in compliance with historic district guidelines.

Expand the use of temporary / seasonal cafes and plazas.

Seasonal cafes are an effective and efficient way to improve the public realm and pedestrian experience. They should be strongly encouraged throughout Lowertown, but especially in the restaurant/retail cluster around Mears Park and the Depot.



Temporary sidewalk cafe



Create roof top gardens as part of the open space system.

The open space system can be extended into private spaces by creating roof top gardens and patios. These spaces give residents of Lowertown valued outdoor space for private / shared use. Roof top gardens can be used for social functions, growing food, or relaxing. Roof top gardens will help reduce solar heat gain, nurture habitat, and retain rainfall. Per HPC Guidelines, roof gardens should be set back from the main elevations.



Raise visibility and improve awareness that the Bruce Vento Regional Trail connects Lowertown to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Swede Hollow Park, and other East Side recreational destinations.

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is a world class amenity less than a half mile walk from the core of Lowertown. When Prince Street is completed, the Bruce Vento Trail will connect the Sanctuary to Lowertown. However in the near - term the connection to the Sanctuary, Swede Hollow and other east side recreational destinations will traverse unpopulated lands, surface parking lots and vacant parcels. In order to improve this connection, a trail head or signage to a nearby trailhead can be located at Prince Street and Broadway.

Explore use of the Diamond Products building for indoor recreation.

The south portion of the Diamond Products building is a clear span building with tall ceilings and a very large floor plate. This Plan suggests exploring the possibility of creating an indoor recreation facility. Such a facility could contain a climbing wall, indoor skating, volleyball, indoor soccer, etc.





7. Housing

Summary

Analysis

- There are approximately 2000 units in Lowertown, most in renovated buildings.
- The neighborhood is mixed with both rental and ownership, affordable and market-rate housing.
- The three arts-oriented buildings are national models.
- Affordability in Lowertown exists, but it is not guaranteed.

Goals

- Maintain housing affordability for artists and members of the creative community.
- Continue renovating buildings for housing.
- Offer opportunities for new construction that is compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Provide a range of housing types and prices.
- Create housing choices that take advantage of the transit investments.
- Create added and sustained value for resident owners in Lowertown.
- Promote transit use and Transit-Oriented Development as an affordable housing strategy.
- Create housing opportunities that appeal to all segments of the creative community.
- Recognize housing opportunities in relation to and on the Riverfront.

Objectives

- Develop additional artist-oriented housing.
- Diversify housing to attract new residents to the neighborhood.
- Continue investing in the amenities (public space, community retail, etc) that sustain values for all residents.

Strategies

- Provide a broad range of housing types, prices, choices and sizes to accommodate diverse residential needs.
- Work to convert the vacant and under-utilized buildings into artist-owned live / work buildings.
- Convert the bottom two floors of the Lowertown Lofts Cooperative to artist use.
- Develop in-line and townhouse units along the south side of the new Prince Street extension.
- Develop market-rate housing south of Kellogg.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- **There are approximately 2000 units in Lowertown, most in renovated buildings.**
- **The neighborhood is mixed with both rental and ownership, affordable and market-rate housing.**
- **The three arts-oriented buildings are national models.**
- **Affordability in Lowertown exists, but it is not guaranteed.**

Lowertown is a housing success with over 2000 units located within the general study area and more being added in 2011 (the Lofts at Farmers Market – 58 units). Since 2000, about 25 percent of the units delivered in downtown Saint Paul are located in the Lowertown area. Most of these units are rental; of the approximately 1,530 rental units, 1,142 are market-rate. Approximately 240 units are estimated to be affordable or have income-restrictions. Of the roughly 2000 units about 470 of these are owner-occupied. Overall vacancy rate (as of the 3rd Qtr of 2010) was about 8 percent. An estimated 147 units are considered artist-related or supportive housing.

Total units :	2010
Rental	1540 (77%)
Owner-occupied	470 (23%)
Market-rate rental	1142 (57% of total)
Affordable	240 (12% of total)
Artist units	147 (7% of total)

Demographically Lowertown residents differ from Saint Paul in several categories:

- Higher percent of new residents
- Higher percent of educated population (bachelor degree or higher)
- Higher income residents
- Higher percent of residents not married
- Higher percent of residents without school age children
- Higher proportion of females vs. males
- Higher percent using alternative form of transportation
- Significant percent of population that do not own a car

Reviewing the housing development pattern reveals a number of conditions and characteristics that may influence future investment and renovation/redevelopment. The graphic below illustrates existing residential buildings (dark gray); proposed new/infill buildings (light blue) and potential renovations (dark blue). In general housing units are located in proximity to two major areas of Lowertown, Mears Park and the Farmers Market.

Over 1000 units are located on or very near Mears Park; and almost 500 units are located around or near the Farmers Market. A portion of the Wacouta Commons area is shown as context; this well-formed green space provides a center to over 600 units.

The Downtown Saint Paul Station Area Plan identifies a number of potential infill development sites and existing buildings. Thus a third “center” for residential development is clearly emerging in the station area anchored by the Union Depot.

Housing Inventory (partial)



Airye	101	For Sale
River Park Lofts	120	For Sale
Market House	58	For Sale
Union Depot Lofts	33	For Sale
Essex on the Park	38	For Sale
Great Northern Lofts	53	For Sale
Lot 270	45	For Sale
On the Park Condominiums	16	For Sale
Chicago Great Western	8	For Sale
sub total	470	
Galtier Towers	366	Market Rate For Rent
The Parkside	53	Market Rate For Rent
Lowertown Lofts	107	Market Rate For Rent
Cosmopolitan	255	Market Rate For Rent
Lowertown Commons	111	Market Rate For Rent
Mears Park Place	250	Market Rate For Rent
sub total	1142	
Heritage House	58	Affordable Rental
American House	13	Affordable Rental
Strauss Apartments	49	Affordable Rental
Crane	70	Affordable Rental
Mears Park Place	50	Affordable Rental
sub total	240	
Lowertown Lofts Cooperative	29	Artists Residential Ownership
Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative	52	Artists Residential Rental
Tilsner Artists' Cooperative	66	Artists Residential Rental
sub total	147	
TOTAL	1999	

Goals

- **Maintain housing affordability for artists and members of the creative community.**
- **Continue renovating buildings for housing.**
- **Offer opportunities for new construction that is compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood.**
- **Provide a range of housing types and prices.**
- **Create housing choices that take advantage of the transit investments.**
- **Create added and sustained value for resident owners in Lowertown.**
- **Promote transit use and Transit-Oriented Development as an affordable housing strategy.**
- **Create housing opportunities that appeal to all segments of the creative community.**
- **Recognize housing opportunities in relation to and on the Riverfront.**

Objectives

- **Develop additional artist-oriented housing.**
- **Diversify housing to attract new residents to the neighborhood.**
- **Continue investing in the amenities (public space, community retail, etc) that sustain values for all residents.**

Strategies

Provide a broad range of housing types, prices, choices and sizes to accommodate diverse residential needs.

As noted in the Downtown Station Area Plan, there are several sites and parcels that may accommodate new investment and infill development. A majority of this new investment should include a variety of housing types and sizes to address the wide range of housing needs from entry level, to move-up, artist-supportive, singles, families, rental, affordable, owner-occupied, and the higher-end market. One challenge may be securing parking for all units, but as a transit-oriented station area, it is very appropriate to provide less parking for many sites and buildings.

Existing and underutilized buildings represent individual increments of the historic fabric that respond to the creative market place needs (loft and warehouse type spaces) with buildings along 4th Street. Other opportunities focused on the potential higher-end market could include buildings like the old Post Office, where the upper floors would be converted into units with sweeping views of the Mississippi River valley.

Work to convert the vacant and underutilized buildings into artist-owned live/work buildings.

A number of buildings today are vacant, in poor condition or are underutilized. A focused strategy is to direct the necessary resources (public and private) to reclaim these buildings as opportunities for artists and creative types to live and work in Lowertown. Like most buildings in Lowertown, these may likely have a non-residential use or operation on the ground floor and apartments/condominiums or live-work units above. The Rayette building located on 5th Street is an example of building with “good bones” and generous floorplate but is currently being used for parking.

Convert the bottom two floors of the Lowertown Lofts Cooperative to artist use.

With the need to provide more and different space for artist-related use, one idea is to utilize the lower two floors of the Lowertown Lofts for such use. With a floorplate of approximately 12,000+ square feet, a number of live-work units could be realized. Another option would be considering the two floors for a single user.

Develop in-line and townhouse units along the south side of the new Prince Street extension.

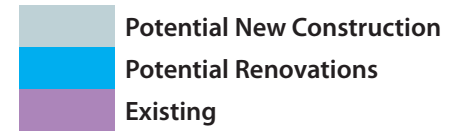
Outside of the historic district are a few sites that may be able to accommodate new and different residential types, assuming the airport approach regulations are not restrictive. One such site is along the proposed Prince Street extension south of the Operations and Maintenance Facility. A private site that is used for daytime parking (and a very popular parking spot for Farmers Market patrons), it could easily accommodate in-line or townhouse units organized around courtyards and self-parked. This represents the possibility to provide a different housing type (other than lofts, apartments or condos) that may be a good choice for families and extended families. A potential feature located just west and contiguous to this site would be a local park that would serve the surrounding residents with green space and perhaps an area for small children to play.

One consideration of developing housing on this site is the extremely long, blank wall of the OMF. For this reason, the site plan illustrates the buildings oriented along a north-south axis with views and windows oriented to entries and courtyards. The blank wall could also be considered a public art canvas that would enliven the street and add to the overall artistic character of the area.

Develop market-rate housing south of Kellogg.

Long term there may be development opportunities with some of the property surrounding the Union Depot terminal and railroad structure currently owned by the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority. The Downtown Station Area Plan identified a number of parcels that have development potential, primarily west of the Lafayette Bridge and separated from the future rail operations and interface areas. To gain the maximum efficiency and relate to the street, the reuse of a portion of the railroad deck should be evaluated to allow for more effective building floorplates. These buildings would rise only 3- 4 stories to create a well formed street-wall along Kellogg and provide non-residential uses on the ground floor and residential units above. The railroad deck was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While the current multi-modal transportation project was determined to meet applicable standards for rehabilitation, future construction requiring removal of portions of the railroad deck would have to be carefully considered for its impact on the integrity of the Union Depot landmark.

Proposed New Housing





8. Water, Energy and the Environment

Summary

Analysis

- Lowertown is a part of the Capitol Region Watershed District.
- Phalen Creek and Trout Brook Creek converge at the east end of Lowertown prior to entering the Mississippi River.
- The soils east of the Lafayette Bridge are contaminated; water that infiltrates these soils becomes contaminated.
- District Energy does not extend to all buildings in Lowertown and Wacouta Commons.

Goals

- Reduce use of potable water.
- Use grey water and stormwater as a resource for irrigation and within buildings, and as an amenity in open spaces.
- Increase the use of clean and renewable energy sources.
- Encourage all transportation options that reduce the use of fossil fuels.
- Highlight and make visible the process of resource use, and waste production and management.

Objectives

- Implement a grey water system for Lowertown.
- Integrate stormwater management into the public realm and streetscape.
- Integrate public art into stormwater solutions, energy generation and waste management.
- Use open spaces, large flat roofs and other unused spaces for solar arrays and micro wind farms.

Strategies

- Support the “Bring Water Back to Saint Paul” campaign by the Capitol Region Watershed District to restore surface water features and build better stewardship for area water ways (e.g., Trout Brook, Phalen Creek, etc.).
- Harness water from the Lafayette Bridge and use as a resource for the neighborhood; coordinate efforts with Prince Street reconstruction.
- Work with the Metropolitan Council to use grey water for washing LRT vehicles.
- Engage the artist-in-residence at the Capitol Region Watershed District to create an amenity out of the Lafayette Bridge stormwater facility.
- Extend the LRT infiltration trench in front of Union Depot to adjacent blocks.
- Encourage new and existing developments to mitigate stormwater by utilizing green roofs and providing cisterns.
- Extend District Energy throughout Lowertown and into Wacouta Commons.
- Consider the use and application of alternative energy sources including low elevation domestic wind turbines.

Analysis

Primary Observations

- **Lowertown is a part of the Capitol Region Watershed District.**
- **Phalen Creek and Trout Brook Creek converge at the east end of Lowertown prior to entering the Mississippi River.**
- **The soils east of the Lafayette Bridge are contaminated; water that infiltrates these soils becomes contaminated.**
- **District Energy does not extend to all buildings in Lowertown and Wacouta Commons.**

The history of Lowertown is very much a history of water – its use, its course and control. From the Mississippi River that was home and habitat for native peoples and later acted as the transportation and economic corridor, water has always and will always be a defining characteristic of the neighborhood. Historic water courses may not entirely exist today but the geographical and geophysical setting remains – a riverside confluence that exhibits the bluff and valley form but has been altered over time with more modern versions of infrastructure and progress. Lowertown sits on the river but in many ways does not always connect visually or physically.

Like water, energy is also closely tied to the river as a source of power generation at multiple points on the river. Today, Lowertown remains a model for a more sustainable, connected development pattern that relies on District Energy, reuse and renovation of existing historic building stock, and soon light rail transit that will connect residents to the State Capitol, University of Minnesota and downtown Minneapolis.

Environmentally, Lowertown has changed radically since the early days of Native American habitation, paddle boat landings and warehouse development. Creeks and wetlands have been moved, channeled or buried; heavy industry has had environmental impacts and some still remain; and rail has been in use for over a century and will continue in the foreseeable future. Using best practices and incremental reinvestment the Greater Lowertown area can be a model of sustainable living for decades to come.

Sustainability begins by asking the question “where?” Where do we live, work, shop, and play in relation to how near or far we are located to these basic daily functions of life? Lowertown residents have a higher percentage using alternative means of commuting including working at home (or studio or live/work unit), walking and utilizing public transportation. A significant percent (compared to the city as a whole) of the Lowertown population does not own an automobile. The combination of historic buildings being reused for housing and work, numbers of residents also working at home or in the district, efficient District Energy resources and the soon-to-be operational Central Corridor LRT make Lowertown one of the most sustainable neighborhoods in the city and metropolitan area. Of course, more can be done such as enhancing building performance standards, accommodating additional residential and live/work space, treating stormwater runoff and managing the “up-stream” implications of water use, and supporting local urban agriculture that results in local jobs and local food.

Another important initiative identified in the Partnership in Lowertown report (August 1981, Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation) is the potential of solar energy. At that point in time the LRC had received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and worked with the Solar Energy Research Institute to conduct solar energy assessments and analysis.

Goals

- Reduce use of potable water.
- Use grey water and stormwater as a resource for irrigation and within buildings, and as an amenity in open spaces.
- Increase the use of clean and renewable energy sources.
- Encourage all transportation options that reduce the use of fossil fuels.
- Highlight and make visible the process of resource use, and waste production and management.

Objectives

- Implement a grey water system for Lowertown.
- Integrate stormwater management into the public realm and streetscape.
- Integrate public art into stormwater solutions, energy generation and waste management.
- Use open spaces, large flat roofs and other unused spaces for solar arrays and micro wind farms.

Strategies

Support the “Bring Water Back to Saint Paul” campaign by the Capital Region Watershed District (CRWD) to restore surface water features and build better stewardship for area water ways (e.g., Trout Brook, Phalen Creek, Mears Creek, etc.) and the Lower Phalen Creek Project mission.

CRWD hopes to “Bring Water Back” to Saint Paul by crafting a vision for the watershed that includes the best of innovation and collaboration to treat stormwater as a resource instead of a waste product.

CRWD’s first watershed plan was adopted in 2000 to identify goals, policies, and action plans for fulfilling CRWD’s mission, “to protect, manage, and improve the water resources of the Capitol Region Watershed District.” The District is embarking on its second decade of work under a new plan that will continue the long-term work of protecting and improving the District’s waters. The 2010-20 Watershed Plan:

- Recognizes the challenges of water quality improvement in a highly urbanized watershed and recommends and prioritizes unique and creative approaches to watershed management;
- Recommends and prioritizes water quality and quantity improvement projects, based on CRWD modeling and monitoring results;
- Recommends and prioritizes District programs for improved watershed awareness;
- More effectively defines the respective roles and responsibilities between CRWD and the local units of government, other agencies, and other organizations; and
- Addresses emerging challenges posed by federal Clean Water Act requirements for impaired waters (those with quality too poor for their designated uses)

The Lower Phalen Creek Project is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen Saint Paul's East Side and Lowertown communities by developing and maximizing the value of local parks and trails, ecological and cultural resources and connections to the Mississippi River. Founded by Friends of Swede Hollow and catalyzed in 1997 by the engagement of the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation, the Lower Phalen Creek Project is led by a community based Steering Committee and actively partners with the City of Saint Paul and others to:

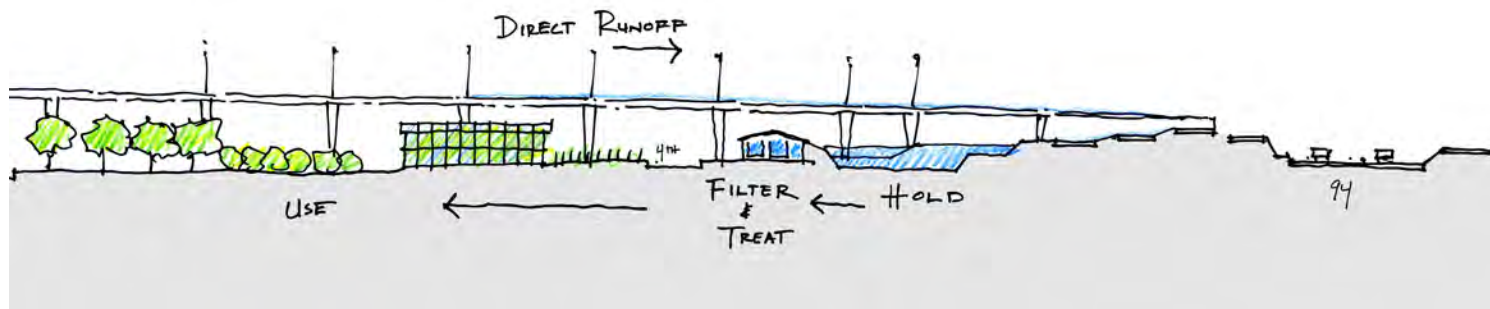
- *Complete the redevelopment of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary as an ecological, cultural and educational resource and key community asset;*
- *Establish and promote trail connections between the Sanctuary, the Lowertown/Downtown neighborhood and the Mississippi River; and*
- *Capture and filter stormwater through multiple strategies.*

Harness water from the Lafayette Bridge and use as a resource for the neighborhood; coordinate efforts with Prince Street reconstruction.

Discussions with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, US Representative McCollum and local stakeholders provided interest and support for the potential to address stormwater runoff in a more sustainable and productive way. The idea is to capture the runoff from the north end of the Lafayette Bridge (and supporting infrastructure and other areas), treat the water to a level that is acceptable for irrigation and non-potable applications and then from a central set of reservoirs or connected cisterns use the grey water as an irrigation source for urban agriculture uses and/or for practical applications (like LRT car washing.)

Work with the Metropolitan Council to use grey water for washing LRT vehicles.

Metro Transit controls key buildings and parcels in the Greater Lowertown area. The Master Plan looks to partner with stakeholders like the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit in order to move important strategies and initiatives forward. One initiative, explained above, suggests how locally “harvested” water resources can be applied in the Operations and Maintenance Facility, such as car washing and other operations



Engage the artist-in-residence at the Capitol Region Watershed District to create an amenity out of the Lafayette Bridge stormwater facility.

Beyond its functional purpose the contours, walls and reliefs of stormwater management facilities related to the Lafayette Bridge are unique physical forms. Infrastructure related to the stormwater management pond located just north of 4th St (east of the bridge) can be artistically enhanced with retrofits to the retaining wall and ground plane. An interpretive display explaining how the water is harvested and held in cisterns could also provide an opportunity for improved aesthetics.

Utilize and reference the Water Quality Manual: Improving the Water Quality of the Mississippi River in Saint Paul. (October 2007)

Made possible by The McKnight Foundation, this document is intended to advance best stormwater management practices specific to Saint Paul across four scales: site, block, neighborhood and city. The relevant scales are included here from the manual; refer to the full document for more detailed information (Riverfront Corporation website:http://www.riverfrontcorporation.com/?page_id=278)

Overall, the neighborhood should be considered a connected “system environment” coordinated by one authority, such as the Capitol Region Watershed District. The area between the Lafayette Bridge and Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary contains several opportunities where stormwater can be retained, diverted and/or harvested, including parking lots, open space and rooftops. Specific sites include:

- The Diamond Products site - whether retrofitted, redeveloped or built as a regional ballpark - includes a vast area that may be utilized to address runoff from roof structures or interceptor treatments within parking lots.
- Prince Street new construction should be explored as a way to treat runoff in underground trenches and boulevard plantings in keeping with green, light-imprint and Complete Streets principles.
- Prince Street residential development is proposed at a scale that individual solutions such as rain gardens, rain barrels and surface parking treatments can be implemented (and should be a requirement in the development approval process).
- Prince Street Park is a new green space that could be configured to accommodate runoff within above- or below-ground structures. This new open space could include improvements oriented to children learning about runoff and the natural environment.
- Lafayette Bridge/ramps/runoff areas include locations that could initially store and then treat stormwater runoff directly from the bridge and ramps. Once treated, this “free” water source could be used to irrigate nearby urban agriculture and landscape, and be used to wash LRT cars in the Operations and Maintenance Facility.



9. Historic Preservation

Summary

Analysis

- Much of Lowertown is within the National Register and local Lowertown Historic Districts, in which preservation, new construction and demolition are guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the adopted Lowertown Design Review Guidelines.
- Lowertown's historic character is established by the architectural significance of the individual buildings, the collection of those buildings, and the established street grid and streetscape; they are fundamental to the neighborhood's physical identity.
- The history of Lowertown is on-going, containing multiple layers across multiple eras. The National Register Nomination establishes the Period of Significance for the Lowertown Historic District as 1867-1929.
- The historic resources of Lowertown are assets that have and can continue to fuel economic development.
- Preservation, alteration, new construction and demolition are guided by the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Lowertown Design Review Guidelines.
- Given recent Central Corridor and Union Depot projects, the Post Office and Union Depot train deck have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Goals

- Continue to value and support the National Register and local designation of the Lowertown Historic District.
- Continue to preserve the historic character of the Historic District.
- Continue telling the story of Lowertown's culture and history through investments in the built environment (streetscape and buildings).
- Integrate expressions of Lowertown's contemporary cultures into the Historic District while maintaining its architectural and historical integrity.
- Welcome and celebrate changes and investments in Lowertown by managing them within the strong historic fabric.

Objectives

- Focus redevelopment on the stewardship of historic resources by seeking building uses that are compatible with the historic character of the buildings.
- Promote the reuse of existing building stock as a green and sustainable practice.
- Encourage the arts community and the historic preservation community to work together to develop an understanding of appropriate place-based, context-sensitive public art within the historic district.
- Prioritize new construction on vacant or underutilized lots over additions on top of historic buildings.

Summary

Strategies

- Apply the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the local Design Review Guidelines to all repair, alteration, new construction and demolition in the Historic District.
- Work with the City's PED and HPC to revise and expand the Lowertown Historic District Design Review Guidelines. The Guidelines should better address new construction, signage, public art, streetscape and sustainability within the Lowertown Historic District.
- Educate and engage the community, new residents and business owners of the significance of the Historic District and the applicable design review guidelines.
- Explore listing the Post Office to the National Register and designating it a local Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.
- Explore expanding the Union Depot National Register site to include the adjacent train deck, and designate it a local Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.
- Prepare a Historic Structures Report for the Post Office building to explore adaptive reuse.
- Conduct a study on historic streetscape and infrastructure to inform future open space and streetscape proposals.
- Encourage the use of temporary and experimental "pop up" installations within the District as a way to activate buildings and spaces without disrupting the well-preserved assets.
- Complete the Lowertown Historic District signage program.

Analysis

Primary Observations

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- **Lowertown's historic character is established by the architectural significance of the individual buildings, the collection of those buildings, and the established street grid and streetscape; they are fundamental to the neighborhood's physical identity.**
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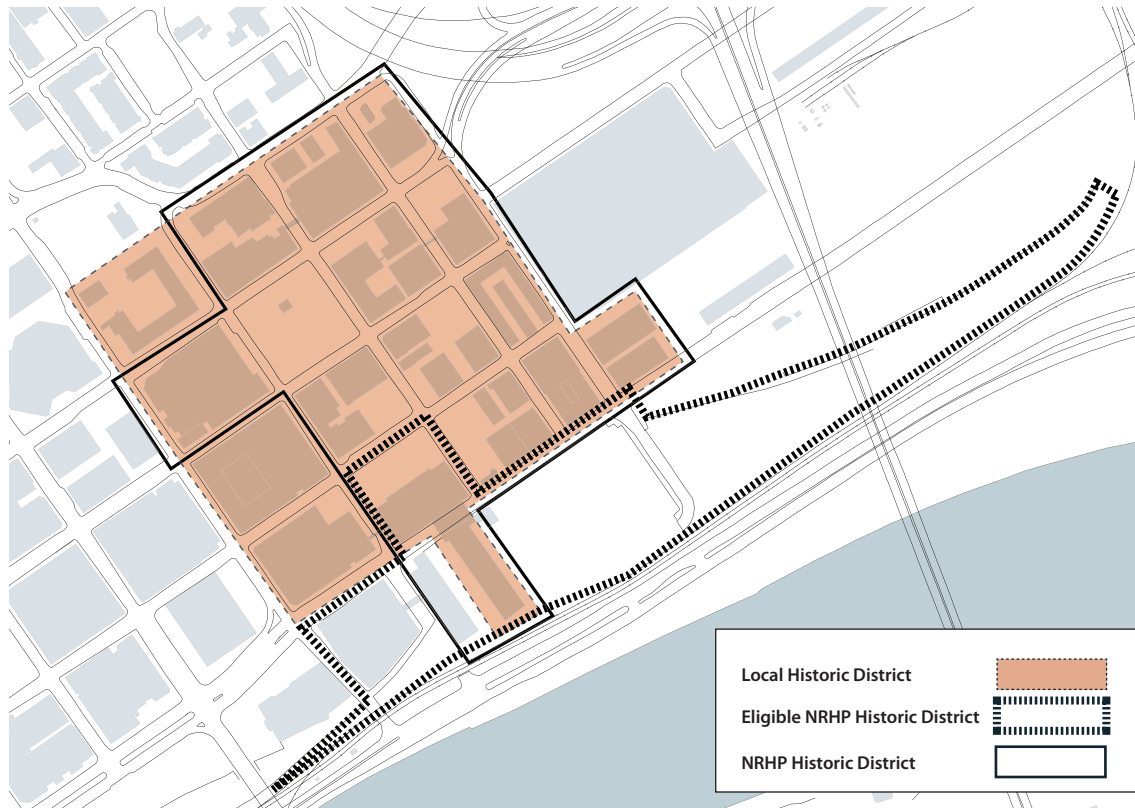
Lowertown residents recognize the economic value of being designated an Historic District as preservation is a widely-held community value. In 1983, the National Register Lowertown Historic District was created to help protect the historic resources by incentivizing investment in them. The process required the establishment of a Period of Significance and extensive documentation of buildings, spaces, and analysis of significance. The outcomes of both the National Register and local designations have been several adaptive reuse projects, rising property values, and the preservation/creation of a cherished place.

Lowertown is architecturally significant for its remarkably intact concentration of commercial buildings designed by the city's most prominent architects in styles ranging from the Italianate style of the early 1880's to the Beaux Arts of the early twentieth century. Lowertown is significant in the history of landscape architecture and city planning due to the dramatic street pattern and grade changes which were made in the 1870's. Lowertown's significance is also due to the fact that a park (Mears Park) encompassing an entire city block has been preserved since the 1880's in the midst of a large warehouse and industrial area with tightly clustered buildings.

Today, Lowertown's dense concentration of commercial buildings located on streets which form a grid-iron pattern that gradually slope down to the Mississippi River are part of what defines its character. Most of the buildings are four to six stories tall and faced in red or buff brick with stone accents. In general, pre-1900 buildings are under seven stories tall and had storefronts with storage or manufacturing space above. Many also have cast-iron storefronts which were manufactured locally. Post-1900 buildings were generally built for a single purpose such as freight storage or offices and were immense utilitarian structures with Classical Revival detailing. They were also taller than the Victorian structures and were built employing reinforced concrete and structural steel.

While much of Lowertown's success is rooted in its historic character, residents recognize that history is not a fixed object, or a singularly defined era in time. They recognize that history is ongoing; today's actions become tomorrow's history. They are committed equally to preserving historic resources and to exploring new innovations - and they want that evolution to be expressed in the physical environment.

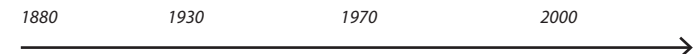
Since the designation in 1983, Lowertown has continued to write its history. Over the past several decades Lowertown has established itself as a model urban village with a strong arts producing community. The artist-owned and operated buildings (created in large part with assistance granted to it by the Historic Tax Credit legislation and Gap Financing through the LRC) have become national models for creating and protecting an arts producing community. It is the desire of the community to continue preserving the assets that make Lowertown unique while at the same time, to create a physical environment that is representative of who they are.



Historic Districts, Existing and Eligible

From Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan:

- Preservation is a core community value.
- Historic preservation is a priority for the City of Saint Paul.
- Preservation is a critical component of neighborhood vitality, quality of life and sense of place.
- Preservation is key to making Saint Paul an economically, socially and physically sustainable city, through the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of buildings as well as the broader protection and celebration of neighborhood character.
- Preservation is an essential tool to accomplish economic development.
- Historic resources are unique and irreplaceable, and should be treated accordingly.
- Preservation should be integrated with the broader city and neighborhood planning process and with other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.



1st generation investments

Industrialists capitalists and merchants build Lowertown leaving a legacy of rail lines, buildings and streets

Lowertown declines

2nd generation investments

LRC is formed. Buildings are preserved and repurposed; urban pioneers move to Lowertown. The area is stabilized and slowly brought back to life by artists and other urban pioneers. National register and Local District established

3rd generation investments

New residents, new investments in transit, the arts, livability and sustainability leaving a legacy of a productive living / working/ collaborating arts district within a thriving urban neighborhood.

Goals

- Continue to value and support the National Register and local designation of the Lowertown Historic District.
- Continue to preserve the historic character of the Historic District.
- Continue telling the story of Lowertown's culture and history through investments in the built environment (streetscape and buildings).
- Integrate expressions of Lowertown's contemporary cultures into the Historic District while maintaining its architectural and historical integrity.
- Welcome and celebrate changes and investments in Lowertown by managing them within the strong historic fabric.

The Master Plan includes a number of important goals that are focused on Lowertown's historic story, character and environment. Paramount among these is the Historic District itself and how that unique character and setting are maintained and enhanced. And this should not be done not just by a single party but from the many voices and stakeholders that value Lowertown. This should include accommodating new investments, new public art work, and new policies that preserve the history while celebrating the future..



Objectives

- Focus redevelopment on the stewardship of historic resources by seeking building uses that are compatible with the historic character of the buildings.
- Promote the reuse of existing building stock as a green and sustainable practice.
- Encourage the arts community and the historic preservation community to work together to develop an understanding of appropriate place-based, context-sensitive public art within the historic district.
- Prioritize new construction on vacant or underutilized lots over additions on top of historic buildings.

A number of objectives respond to the broader nature of Lowertown as a role model for illustrating the power of geography and location as it relates to sustainability. Lowertown is already an established urban village exhibiting compact form, well connected public realm and mix of uses. With the addition of light rail, Lowertown will represent the most sustainable, transit-oriented village in the Twin Cities. To maintain the sustainable, cyber-village objectives will focus on compatible uses, reuse of existing building stock and celebrating the history and creativity of the place.

Strategies

Apply the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the local Design Review Guidelines to all repair, alteration, new construction and demolition in the Historic District.

The guidelines reference the Secretary of Interior's Standards; these should apply when rehabilitating buildings in the Historic District. Future projects may also incorporate additional involvement and review processes if historic tax credits are being sought or if there is federal funding. The same Standards will apply as well.

Work with the City's PED and HPC to revise and expand the Lowertown Historic District Design Review Guidelines. The Guidelines should better address new construction, signage, public art, streetscape and sustainability within the Lowertown Historic District.

Most development is governed by the Lowertown Heritage Preservation District Guidelines for Design Review. As a part of a mitigation plan for the Central Corridor Light Rail Project, the City of Saint Paul and the Metropolitan Council are committed to updating these Guidelines. This Plan recommends the pending guidelines address a more comprehensive approach to building rehabilitations, signage, streetscape, infill construction and public art that would offer clarity and predictability for residents, property owners, developers and investors. Guidelines should be informed by the broad constituents throughout Lowertown.

Educate and engage the community, new residents and business owners of the significance of the Historic District and the applicable design review guidelines.

Building owners and residents change over time, while the District designation stays with the structures and spaces. This requires on-going and constant communication among organizations and individuals.

Explore listing the Post Office to the National Register and designating it a local Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.

Prepare a Historic Structures Report for the Post Office building to explore adaptive reuse.

The Post Office has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register, and several covenants for the building's preservation are part of the sale of the site. The Post Office is a mostly vacant 750,000 SF building that will be a great challenge to redevelop. However, it is a valuable asset that plays an important role in Saint Paul's history; preparing a Historic Structures Report will guide appropriate new uses. Listing the building on the National Register would render the building eligible for Historic Tax Credits and other grants and funding possibilities, such as the Legacy Amendment. Local designation would ensure preservation of the site for the long term.

Explore expanding the Union Depot National Register site to include the adjacent train deck, and designate it a local Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site.

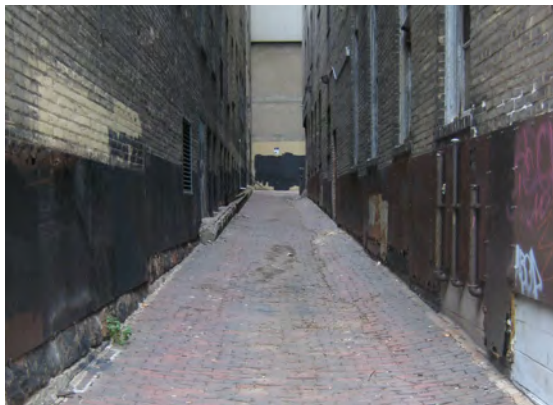
The Union Depot train deck was determined eligible for listing on the National Register during the Central Corridor Cultural Resources investigation. The current work by the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority meets applicable preservation standards, and a National Register nomination will be completed. Listing the site as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site would ensure preservation of this site for the long term.

Conduct a study on historic streetscape and infrastructure to inform future open space and streetscape proposals.

A context study to identify and inventory remaining historic features within Lowertown's streetscape, along with a history of how Lowertown's streetscape has progressed, should be completed. This study will inform future proposals and explore where historic features should be restored to provide greater interpretation and reinforce the District's character. For example, the historic street lights were reconstructed during the 1980's revitalization.



Post Office Building



Brick Alley

Encourage the use of temporary and experimental “pop up” installations within the District as a way to activate buildings and spaces without disrupting the well-preserved assets.

The Historic District is a well-preserved environment of buildings and streets. The current and future guidelines will reinforce the defining character of the District as they relate to the defined Period of Significance (turn of the 20th century). Temporary and “pop up” installations are a way to activate the District (public spaces and unused spaces) by infusing it with experimental and contemporary interventions. Temporary installations do not compromise the historic character of a District. Some recent examples of “pop up” urbanism include: public reading rooms, food carts, public piano and ping pong, temporary pools, and temporary sidewalks.

Complete the Lowertown Historic District signage program.

In 2003, the HPC and Public Works designed a unique logo, and fabricated and installed signage for all Saint Paul historic districts for half of the intersections. The signs increased awareness of all of Saint Paul’s Historic Districts while highlighting their uniqueness. The remaining intersections within the District should be identified with these signs to complete the program and define the boundaries.



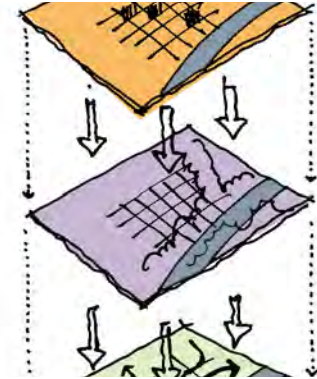
Temporary Park



Public Pianos



Temporary Shops



10. Implementation

Implementation

The Master Plan represents a wide variety of ideas, visions, and recommendations. Some can be (and should be) acted on immediately; others will take years to realize. Implementation, in a general sense, is an on-going activity – various plans, policies and projects are always in some stage of completion. This chapter is focused on two key points:

- 1) Providing a level of priority and timing for the various strategies;
- 2) identifying responsible parties for each strategy.

Overall, the Master Plan represents a locally-driven, neighborhood-based effort. For the first time in Lowertown, a community-based process is listening to and acting on the preferences and expectations of the resident and business stakeholders. As such, it is critical that a well – organized body emerge from this effort to guide and shepherd the goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan. The most immediate priority for implementation is to ‘Evolve the Task Force’ into a fully-functioning, non-profit neighborhood organization. This is a strategy that the Master Plan will depend on as the implementation process begins. It is a very exciting prospect and much work is to be done.

The over-arching priority is to ensure that an organizational model is considered and adopted that will seamlessly accommodate the transition from the Greater Lowertown Master Plan Task Force. A number of ideas for this organization may be appropriate. Whatever form it takes it should be community-based and representative of the Greater Lowertown stakeholders. And it should be closely aligned with the CapitolRiver Council (District 17). The new organization ideally would encompass the broader meaning of “Greater Lowertown” and include the residents and businesses north of 7th St (the Wacouta Commons area). A neighborhood association with non-profit status may be the best structure to address the next steps and provide the capacity needed to move the Master Plan forward.

At this time, the GLMP Task Force is exploring options for how to evolve as an organization. The Task Force is actively discussing and looking into options and models for the organization. It will definitely remain involved in the implementation of the Greater Lowertown Master Plan and will most likely

evolve over multiple phases or steps.

Initially, the Task Force will operate in its present form – an independent community-based task force working with CapitolRiver Council and City representatives. The immediate focus will be to oversee a few top priority projects as defined in the Master Plan. In this form and capacity, the Task Force will be able to:

- prove its effectiveness and success to the Lowertown Community, CapitolRiver Council, City of Saint Paul and funders;
- support real, implementable projects that will help to evolve its organizational direction; and
- take the necessary time needed to explore organization models and review/consider options to create an organizational structure that optimally serves the Greater Lowertown Community.

Goal

The goal of evolving the Task Force, in the immediate term, is to find shovel-ready or otherwise ready projects quickly to demonstrate Task Force successes. This will help the Task Force determine their strengths, gain funding and help to define their role all while benefiting the Lowertown Community.

Next Steps for the Task Force are to be determined. All possibilities are now being considered, but currently include:

- a non-profit 501 (c) (3), potentially as outlined in detail in the following pages
- a Main Street Organization to manage a Main Street Program. The Main Street Program is sponsored program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program is a well tested strategy for revitalization, a powerful network of linked communities, and a national support program. (<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/>)
- a neighborhood organization that would be a project-oriented and not a policy-oriented initiative. Unlike the CRC which is the neighborhood association focusing on civic and community engagement, crime prevention, etc., a Greater Lowertown Neighborhood Association would.....

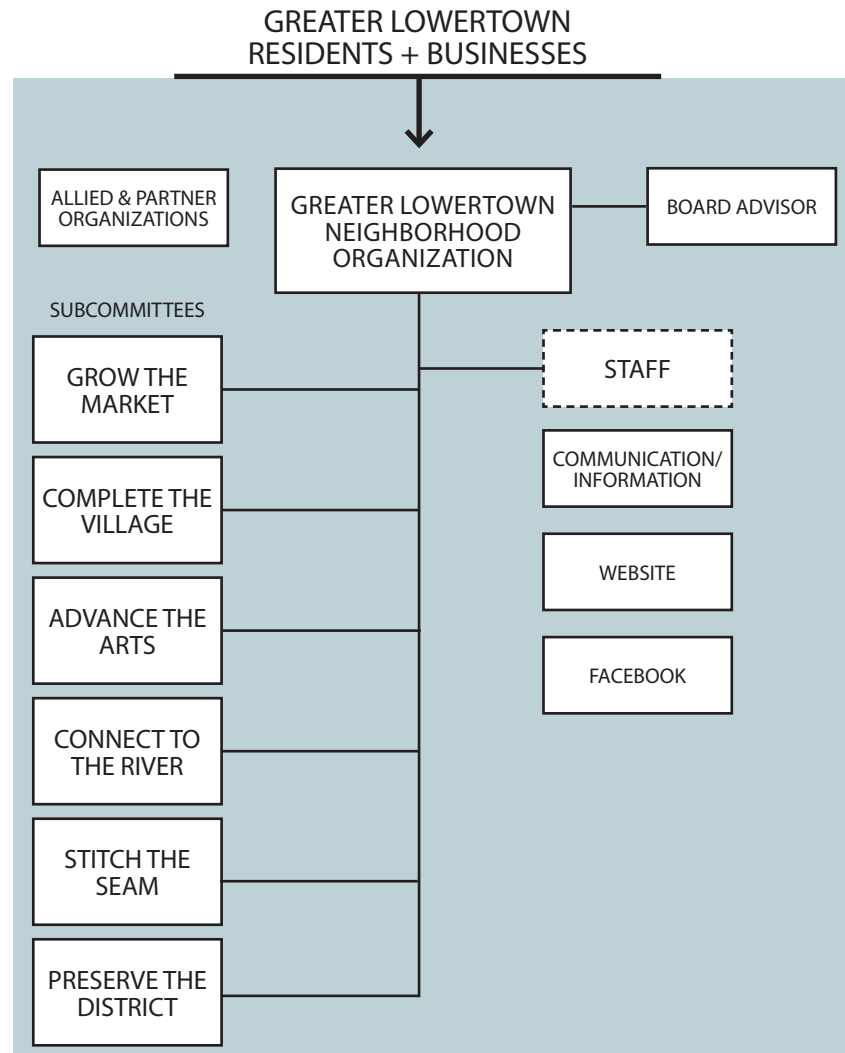
- an independent Task Force enlisting resources such as Neighborhood Development Corporations, etc.
- operate with the Capitol River Council as a special Task Force or work initiative
- or other unexplored organizational possibilities

In any case, an organization could identify a number of sub-committees that would specifically address the five goals of the Master Plan. Each sub-committee would be led by a committee chair. In addition, a sub-committee would need to be formed to address communication and information, and to continue and/or expand the website.

Once the task force is more formally organized and recognized, it can begin to consider personnel and funding needs, grant opportunities and partnerships with the many allied groups and organization of Greater Lowertown. A number of options and directions are available for managing and coordinating efforts including programs like the Minnesota Main Street, a business improvement district (BID), or partnering with allied organizations on specific initiatives or strategies.

The Implementation chapter is organized according to the topical chapters; the strategies are then categorized as policy, program or capital. Each strategy includes a listing of the responsible party or parties, and then coded by a general timeframe: on-going; immediate (0-1 year); short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-9 years) and long-term (10+ years).

Possible Organizational Structure



Land Use

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize building renovations and redevelopment of surface parking lots over building demolition. 	PED, Private Owners	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build three retail clusters: Neighborhood services and retail on 7th Street, Food and Arts around the Farmers Market, restaurants and entertainment around Mears Park and the Depot. 	PED, Private Owners, GLNO, RC	Short-Mid term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties surrounding Union Depot 	PED, HPC	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a permanent home for the Farmers' Market and a year-round community amenity. 	PED, PR, SPGA, GLNO	Short-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend Lowertown east of the Lafayette Bridge to connect with the East Side of Saint Paul and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. 	PED, PR, CRWD, RC, MET, LPCP, MnDOT, Private Owners, D4	Short-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce urban agriculture, recreational uses and sustainability initiatives east of the Lafayette Bridge in "The Seam." 	PED, LPCP, DC, SPGA	Medium-term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a parking plan for downtown and Lowertown that prioritizes full occupancy of existing parking spaces over construction of new parking. 	PED, CRC	Short-term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Kellogg Boulevard by developing a liner building on the north edge of the Union Depot rail deck. 		
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more gathering spaces for the neighborhood. 	PR, PW, GLNO, PED, DC	Short-term

Land Use (cont'd)

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and create affordable housing and studio space in Lowertown. 	HRA, PED, Developers	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract additional arts investments such as galleries, museums, performance venues, schools, and academies. 	SA, PASP, GLNO	On-going

Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the most immediate opportunities for stabilizing artist live/work spaces and gathering places. 	GLNO, Private Owners, PED	Immediate
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a comprehensive database and map the creative community (individuals, venues, activities). 	GLNO, SA, PASP, CRC	Immediate
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory underutilized spaces and work with property owners, artist community, the City, and potential occupants to create appropriate arts-related uses. 	GLNO, Private Owners, SA, PASP, Mayor's Office	Immediate
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with existing networks and organizations to strengthen the creative community, the creative cluster infrastructure, and district identity. 	GLNO, PASP, SA, Mayor's Office	Immediate
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage policy makers to protect the creative sector workforce and work spaces, and steer developers to create appropriate spaces and support services using Community Benefits Agreements to protect and enhance creative sector jobs, spaces and programs. 	PED, CRC, GLNO, Mayor's Office	On-going
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to grow educational spaces / opportunities for creative skills transfer. 	PASP, SA, GLNO	Short-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain state-of-the-art technology infrastructure needed for a competitive creative sector. 	GLNO, PED, PW	Short and medium term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the value of an Arts or Creative Overlay District. 	PED, HPC, GLNO, PASP, CRC	Short-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Union Depot managers to incorporate public art, public programs, retail marketing and other opportunities. 	GLNO, HPC, RC	Short term

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out and develop appropriate venues and partnerships to enhance markets for locally-produced creative products. 	GLNO, PASP, SA, Mayor's Office	Immediate
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage the diverse range of people who come to Lowertown for the Farmers' Market, Art Crawl and other events – as well as those who travel through the Union Depot – to create a welcoming multi-cultural environment. 	GLNO, D17, SA	Short term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate spaces and partners to expand networking among artists and creative workers and opportunities for collaborations. 	PASP, TC, SA, GLNO	Short-term

Transportation

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Capital	• Construct a complete and connected on-street bike network ; retain right-of-way for transit on 4th 5th and 6th St.	PW	Mid-term
Capital	• Connect Kellogg Mall to Bruce Vento Regional Trail.	PR, LPCP MC, PW, LPCP, CRC	Mid-Long term
Capital	• Improve connections between Lowertown and the Bruce Vento Trail System.	PW	Short-term,
Capital	• Connect Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary to the Sam Morgan Trail	PW, PED, RCRR, LPCP, PR	Mid-term
Capital	• Provide bicycle storage facilities at all major attractions.	PW, PR	Short-Mid term
Capital	• Connect Lowertown Streets to the Lafayette Bridge vertically.	PW, MnDOT	Mid-term
Capital	• Design the streets surrounding parks and plazas as part of the adjacent open spaces.	PW, PR	Mid-Long term
Capital	• Extend Broadway to Warner Rd.	PW, RC	Mid-term
Capital	• Create a street network east of the Lafayette Bridge that connects Lowertown to the East Side.	PW, LPCP MnDOT, D4, DC, PED	Short-Mid term

Transportation (cont'd)

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider the Downtown / Lowertown's one-way circulation system. 	PW, PED	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectively reconstruct Intersections on 7th Street to encourage pedestrian crossings. 	PW, RC	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruct select intersections on Warner Road to enable safe bicycle and pedestrian crossings. 	PW, RC	Mid-term

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate the lawn and former drop-off area in front of the Union Depot with temporary installations, art and programming. 	PR, MC	Short-Mid term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the Farmers' Market site to become a greater neighborhood amenity. 	GLNO, GASP, PED, PR	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the River Balcony connecting the Science Museum, Kellogg Mall and Union Depot to the Trout Brook Regional Trail. 	PW, RC, Private Owners	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Prince Street Park. 	PR, PW, Private Owners	Mid-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate additional recreation space east of the Lafayette Bridge. 	PR, LPCP	Short-Mid term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate the Riverfront with a promenade, Lower Landing Park and programming per the Great River Passage Plan 	PR, DC	Short-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incrementally improve sidewalks to become part of the neighborhoods valued open space system. 	PW, PR	Short-term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of temporary / seasonal cafes and plazas. 	PW, PED, Building Owners	Immediate
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create roof top gardens as part of the open space system. 	Building Owners	On going
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise visibility and improve awareness of the Bruce Vento Regional Trailhead in Lowertown and its connection to Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and, Swede Hollow Park, and other east side recreational destinations. 	GLNO, D4, LPCP, PR	Immediate
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore use of the Diamond Products Building for indoor recreation. 	GLNO, PED	Short term

Housing

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a broad range of housing types, prices, choices and sizes to accommodate diverse residential needs. 		
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to convert the vacant and under utilized buildings into artist-owned live / work buildings. 	Private Market	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert the bottom two floors of the Lowertown Lofts Cooperative to artist use. 	Private Market	Short-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop in-line and townhouse units along the south side of the new Prince Street extension. 	Private Market	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop market-rate housing south of Kellogg. 	Private Market, Developers RC,	Long-term

Water Resources

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the “Bring Water Back to Saint Paul” campaign to restore surface water features and build better stewardship for area water ways (e.g., Trout Brook, Phalen Creek, Mears Creek, etc.). 	CRWD, LPCP, CRC, D4, DC, PED, DSI	Immediate
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harness water from the Lafayette Bridge and use as a resource for the neighborhood. Coordinate efforts with Prince Street reconstruction. 	MnDOT, LPCP, MC, PW, DSI	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Met Council to use greywater for washing LRT vehicles. 	MC, MET, LPCP, MnDOT, PW	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the artist in residence at the Capitol Region Watershed District to create an amenity out of the Lafayette Bridge stormwater facility. 	CRWD, PASP, LPCP	Short-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the LRT infiltration trench in front of Union Depot to adjacent blocks. 	MET, PED	Short term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage new developments to mitigate stormwater by utilizing green roofs and providing cisterns. 	PED, GLNO	Mid-term
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend District Energy throughout Lowertown and into Wacouta Commons. 	PED, GLNO	Mid-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the use and application of alternative energy sources including low elevation domestic wind turbines. 	PED	Short term

Historic Preservation

	Strategies	Responsibility	Timeframe
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, and the Design Review Guidelines to all repair, alteration, new construction and demolition in the Historic District. 	HPC, Private Owners, PED	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City's PED and HPC to prepare an update to the Lowertown Historic District Design Guidelines. The Guidelines should be informed by an HPC/Arts working committee and should address new construction, signage, and public art and streetscape, for the Lowertown Historic District. 	HPC, PED, Private Owners, GLNO	On-going
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate and engage the community, new residents and business owners of the significance of the Historic District and the applicable design review guidelines. 	GLNO, PED, HPC, PASP, SA	Short-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore listing the Post Office to the National Register and designating it a local St. Paul Heritage Preservation Site. 	HPC, SHPO, CRC	On-going
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore expanding the Union Depot National Register site to include the adjacent train deck and designate it a local St. Paul Heritage Preservation Site. 	HPC, SHPO, RC, CRC	Short-term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Historic Structures Report for the Post Office building to explore adaptive reuse. 	HPC, Building Owner	Short-term
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a study on historic streetscape and infrastructure to inform future open space and streetscape proposals. 	HPC, PED, PW, PR	Mid-term
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of temporary and experimental "pop up" installations within the District as a way to activate buildings and spaces without disrupting the well-preserved assets 	GLNO, PED, Private Owners	On-going
Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Lowertown Historic District signage program. 	GLNO, CRC, PW	Short-term

List of Organizations

Greater Lowertown Neighborhood Organization (**GLNO**)

City of Saint Paul

Mayor's Office

Public Works (**PW**)

Housing & Redevelopment Authority (**HRA**)

Parks & Recreation (**PR**)

Planning & Economic Development (**PED**)

Technology & Communications (**TC**)

Port Authority (**PA**)

Planning Commission (**PC**)

Heritage Preservation Commission (**HPC**)

Safety and Inspections (**DSI**)

Capitol Region Watershed District (**CRWD**)

Lower Phalen Creek Project (**LPCP**)

Public Art Saint Paul (**PASP**)

Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center (**DC**)

Springboard for the Arts (**SA**)

Minnesota Department of Transportation (**MnDOT**)

Metropolitan Council (**MC**)

MetroTransit (**MET**)

Ramsey County (**RC**)

Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority (**RCRRA**)

District Energy Saint Paul (**DESP**)

CapitolRiver Council - District 17 (**CRC**)

Dayton's Bluff - District 4 (**D4**)

Saint Paul Growers Association (**SPGA**)