

8. Plan Elements

Introduction

This section of the Plan separates concepts from the previous section of the Plan into their functional urban components: Built Form, Open Space, and Access. The purpose of delayering the recommendations is to understand how they relate to each other as well as to other elements. This section is intended to be used by investors, developers, city staff, and neighborhoods as they seek direction for how to incrementally implement the Plan.

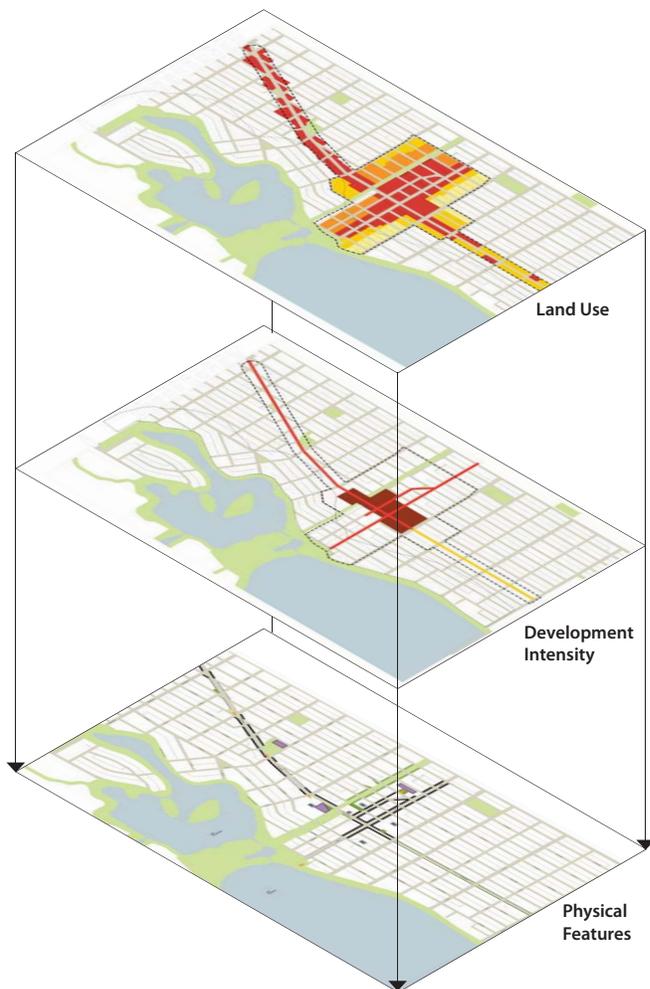
These Plan elements are intentionally interrelated. They offer investors and implementers of the Plan a means of separating out their specialty or one component of the Plan.



Built Form: Land use patterns, and the arrangement of buildings and their component parts contribute to the making of memorable and identifiable urban places. The photos above, while showing buildings taller than encouraged in Uptown, nonetheless illustrate important urban design concepts of stepping buildings and wide generous sidewalks.

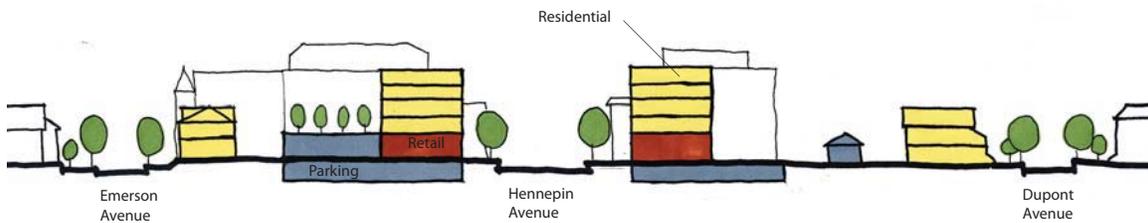
9.1 Built Form

Built Form consists of three layers: Land Use, Development Intensity, and Physical Features. These three sub-layers fully describe how buildings will shape the public realm in Uptown. Investors, developers, neighborhoods, and City Staff are encouraged to use these three layers together as they implement the Plan.

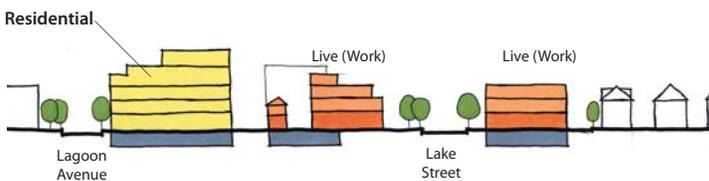


Land Use

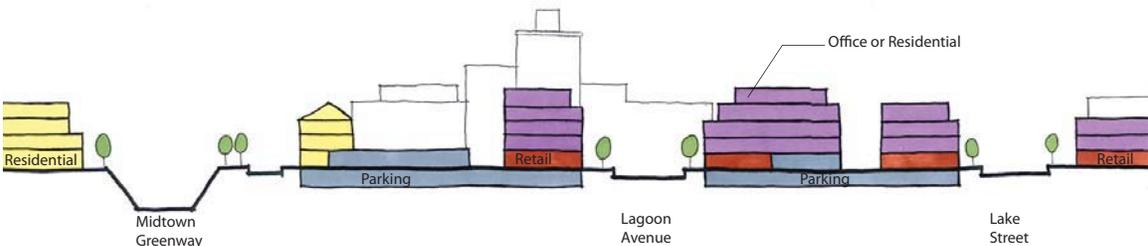
Uptown is, and will remain, a mixed-use area. This Plan clarifies land use patterns by concentrating retail activities at key locations on Hennepin Avenue and along Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue (east of Hennepin and east of James Avenue). The Plan recommends vertically mixing land uses throughout much of Uptown. The ground floor should contain active uses, typically retail (however, other uses are acceptable), while upper floors should contain offices or residential uses.



Section AA (Hennepin Avenue at Franklin Avenue): The Main Street character of Hennepin Avenue should be reinforced with medium density mixed-use buildings. Most should contain retail at grade and residential or small offices above. Residential at grade is acceptable if located mid-block.



Section BB (West Lake Street at Irving Avenue): The West Lake Street Live/Work District should contain apartments, lofts and live/work buildings. Small scale retail related to the arts or to lake/recreational activities is acceptable on corners.



Section CC (Urban Village at Emerson Avenue): The Urban Village should contain multi-story buildings with parking beneath. Retail should line Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street.

Density

The Land Use Plan defines three different housing densities. Housing density is the measurement of the number of units per acre of a particular project. Defining densities is important because it helps establish consumer markets and demands for public investments such as transit and open space, as well as private investments such as retail and entertainment.



High Density Housing: Mid Rise
(50 to 120 units/acre; R6 and C3A zoning) Note: R6 allows 6 stories; C3A allows 4 stories "by right"; CUP is required for additional stories



High Density Housing: Low Rise
(50 to 120 units/acre; R4, R5, C1, C2, OR2 zoning)



Medium Density Housing
(20 to 50 units/acre; R3, R4, C1 zoning)



Low Density Housing
(<20 units/acre; R1, R1A, R2, R2B zoning)

Height, the Zoning Code, and Community Preference

Each zoning category in the zoning code contains height and density standards as well as regulations related to what kind of uses are permitted. In mixed-use and multiple family residential zoning districts, there are three height standards depending on the individual zoning category. These height standards are 2.5 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less; 4 stories or 56 feet, whichever is less; or 6 stories or 84 feet, whichever is less.

If a developer proposes to build higher than these heights or more stories than is permitted, he or she has the right to apply for a Conditional Use Permit for additional height. In granting or denying a Conditional Use Permit, the City Planning Commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- Access to light and air of surrounding properties.
- Shadowing of residential properties or significant public spaces.
- Scale and character of surrounding uses.
- Preservation of view of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies.

This Plan strives to give guidance for how build-



Height vs. Stories: It is possible to have two buildings at the same height with a different number of stories. Likewise it is possible to have two buildings with the same number of stories and have different heights. For this reason stories are used in general descriptions and feet are used in most graphics in this Plan.

ings can be designed to achieve the above goals at a variety of heights. As discussed in earlier sections of this plan, the community values the existing character of Uptown, which is varied. Thus, preferences for height responsive to the context of each area were described. This Plan attempts to balance the desire for contextual design and transitions with allowed heights in the Zoning code.

Stakeholders in Uptown desire to see a future Uptown whose urban form is varied, eclectic and diverse. This desired urban form cannot be achieved through application of the zoning code alone since the zoning code provides height regulations on a parcel by parcel basis, thus a sculpted building envelope is suggested.

There is general consensus that building exceeding the outlined building envelope should set off their potential impacts by providing public amenities such as access to the Greenway, public parking, affordable housing, green roofs, etc. Whereas this Plan gives specific guidance on a sculpted building envelope with a maximum height of 84' (between the Greenway and Lake Street), a broader public discussion that evaluates and weighs the overall public contributions and merits of an individual project should be expected on occasion in the future in the event that a taller building is proposed.

Setbacks and Stepbacks: Sculpting Taller Buildings

In most of the character areas, the Plan reinforces existing patterns. The building and land use pattern proposed in the Uptown Core will be more intense, taller, and denser than the existing conditions. The design of the buildings, in particular how they are sculpted on their upper floors, will be critical to the success of the overall area.

New growth in the Core of Uptown should not be mandated with one consistent height limit. Each project should be judged on how well it addresses the suggested building envelope described on the following pages. Uniform height would not respect the unique features (open spaces, historic buildings, and the Greenway) of Uptown, would not create transitions to the neighborhoods, and would not leverage the streets, the sidewalks, and the Greenway as primary assets of Uptown. Imparting a single height limit across the Core of Uptown would not be in keeping with residents' vision of Uptown as a unique urban place with varied buildings and spaces. In addition, a single building height would artificially suppress the market supply, which would likely lead to additional development pressures along the edges and within the neighborhoods.

Additional development pressures in the neighborhoods will destabilize the neighborhoods and their edges.

Instead of a single height limit across the Core of Uptown, this Plan recommends a **sculpted building envelope** that responds to the area's unique conditions. The proposed building envelope assures orderly and predictable, yet incremental and organic growth patterns. The proposed building envelope balances the need for development capacity with the need to protect low rise neighborhoods. The proposed building envelope balances the need for solar exposure to sidewalks and the Greenway with the equally important need to use building facades to enclose streets and create pedestrian friendly sidewalks.



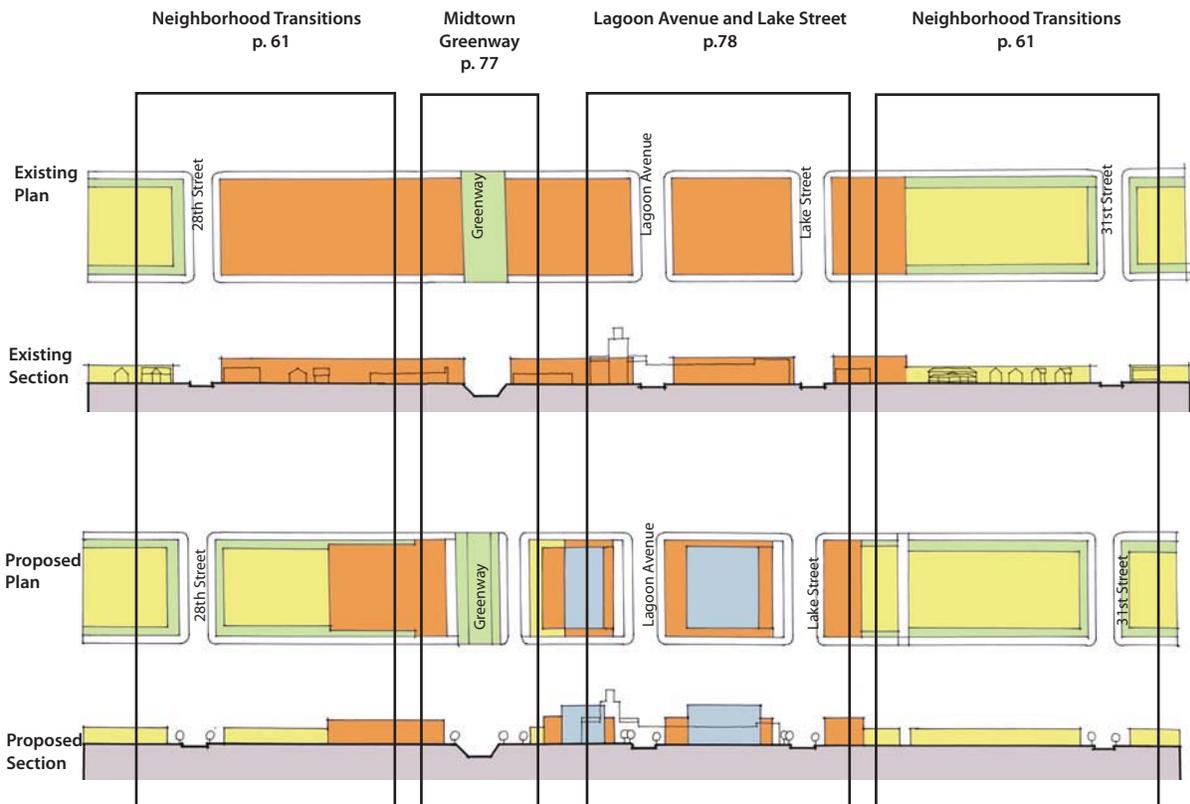
Single building height and unarticulated street wall (not recommended)



Varied building heights and articulated street wall: (recommended)

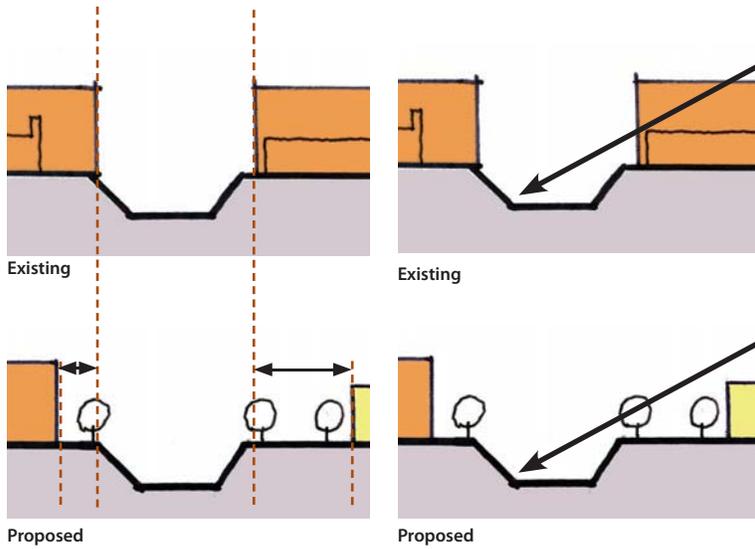
The proposed building envelope contains:

- Building setbacks on both sides of the Greenway to create public promenades and overlooks.
- Stepbacks and roof terraces between the Greenway and Lagoon Avenue such that shadows on the Greenway are minimized.
- Low rise buildings along the south edge of the Greenway and buildings up to 84 feet in the middle of the blocks between Greenway and Lake Street.
- Generous step backs on the south side of Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street to minimize shadowing on streets and the Greenway and modest step backs on the north side of Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street to prevent a 'canyon' effect.
- Generous setbacks on the north side of Lake and Lagoon to create broad sidewalks that accommodate heavy pedestrian use, outdoor cafes, and robust streetscapes.
- In addition, the Plan recommends continuous retail activity along both sides of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue and residential frontage along both sides of the Greenway and the north south streets. Finally, the Plan recommends upper floors of all buildings are a healthy mix of residential uses and office uses.

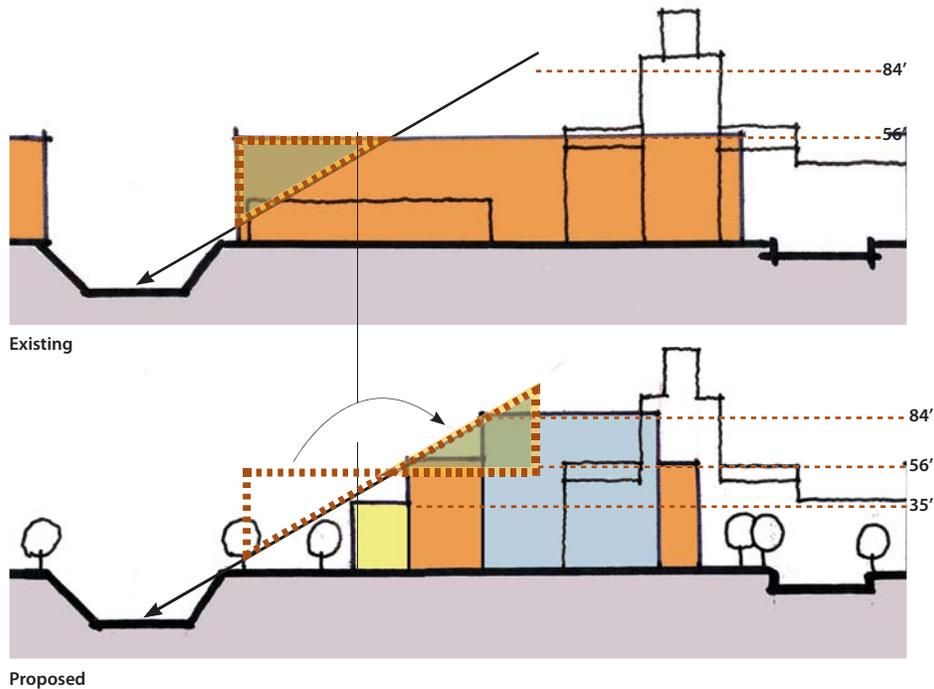


Sculpted Building Envelopes: 35' (yellow), 56' (orange), 84' (blue) The Plan recommends a sculpted building envelope that achieve neighborhood transitions, and allows greater height in the Core.

Midtown Greenway

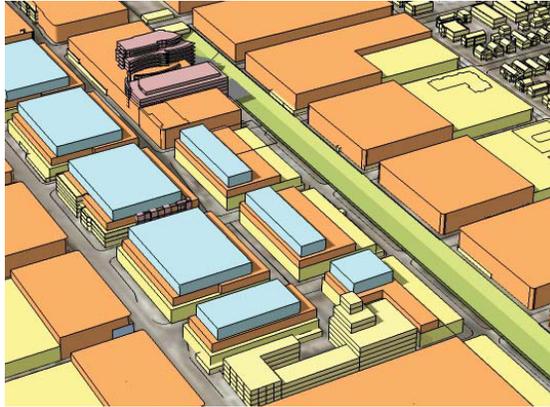


Public Access and Solar Access to the Greenway: The Plan recommends public access along the top edge of the Greenway as well as setbacks that permit sunlight into the Greenway.

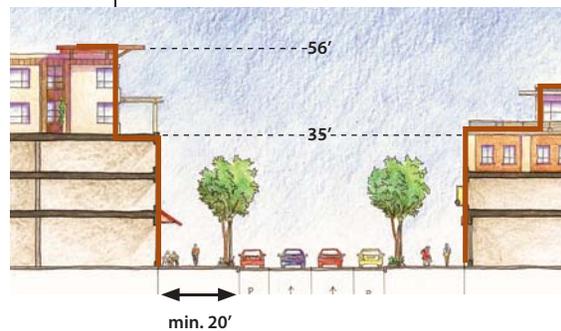
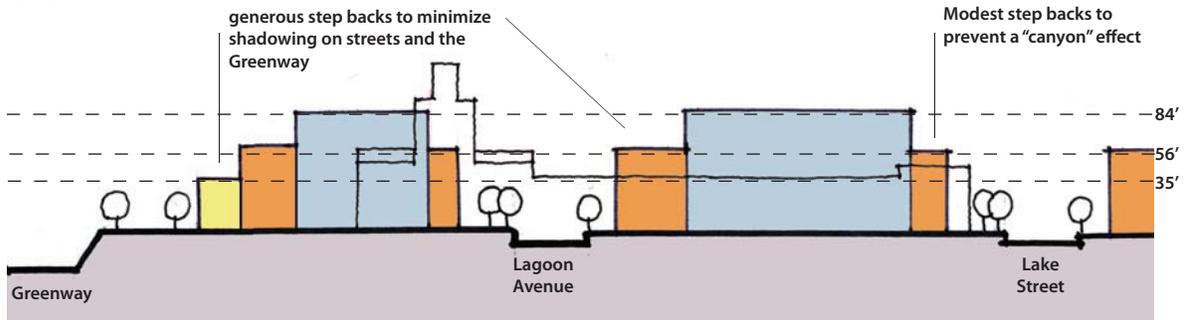


Redistribution of Height: The Plan recommends redistributing the massing of the building from the Greenway side of the block to mid-block by setting buildings back at the ground floor and stepping back the upper floors, for public and solar access. The result is a sculpted building envelope that accommodates development capacity without encroaching on the neighborhoods.

Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue



Conceptual Massing: 35 feet (yellow), 56 feet (orange), 84 feet (blue). Not all buildings will have the same height. Uptown will evolve incrementally assuring a varied street wall and an eclectic urban fabric.



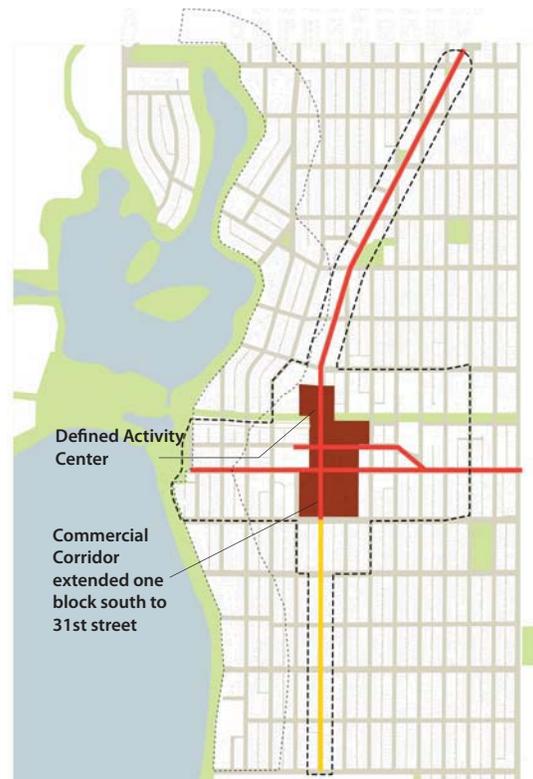
Lagoon Avenue (left) and Lake Street (right), looking east: Lagoon Avenue should become an urban street with multi-story buildings. Building elements taller than four stories or 56 feet should be set back from the front facade. Stepbacks on the south side should be greater than stepbacks on the north side. Buildings on the north side of the street should be set back from the property line 8 feet to create minimum 20' sidewalk/promenade.

Land Use Recommendations

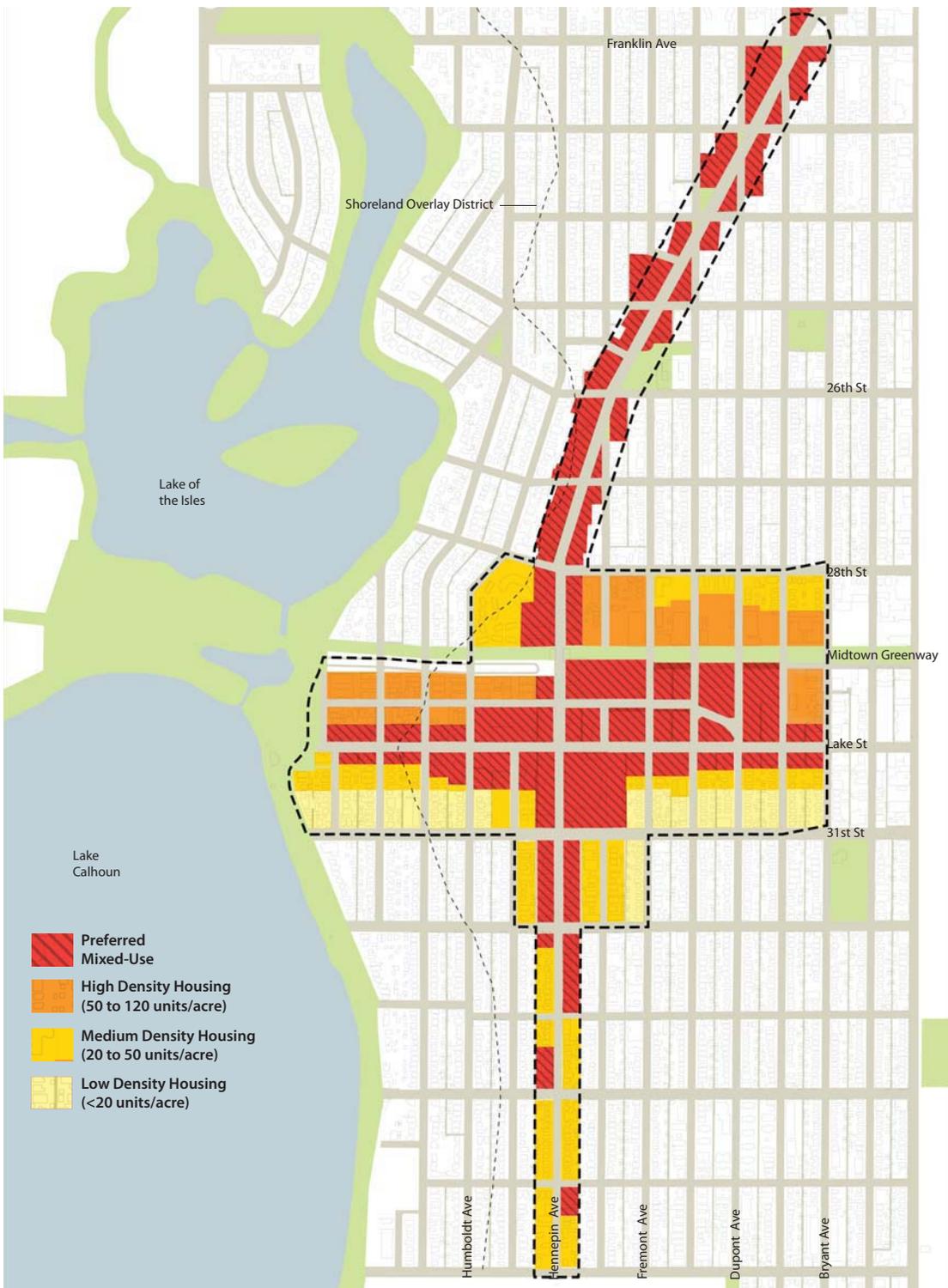
- Discourage one-story commercial buildings.
- Encourage retail on Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue, east of Hennepin Avenue, and on Hennepin Avenue north of 31st Street.
- Encourage mixed-use blocks along Lake Street with the goal of improving walkability and connectivity between Uptown and Lyn/Lake.
- On mixed-use blocks east of Hennepin Avenue in the Core, reinforce retail uses on Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue and residential uses on the north/south streets.
- Encourage office and employer uses in the Core as means of boosting daytime population.
- Create transitions between the Core and the neighborhoods by encouraging medium-density housing.
- Encourage medium density housing and neighborhood retail on Hennepin Avenue, north of 28th Street.
- Create a Live/Work district on West Lake Street.
- Preserve the character of existing residential low-density housing.
- Define the Activity Center boundaries as shown below. Extend the Commercial Corridor designation on Hennepin Avenue one block south of 31st Street as Calhoun Square is more typical of commercial corridor development than community corridor development.



Existing Comprehensive Plan:



Proposed Changes to Comprehensive Plan:



Future Land Use

Development Intensity

This section of the Plan describes how private development (buildings) will contribute to and reinforce the public realm in Uptown. The section provides guidance for intensity of use, building heights, building types, and how buildings should be designed at the street level.

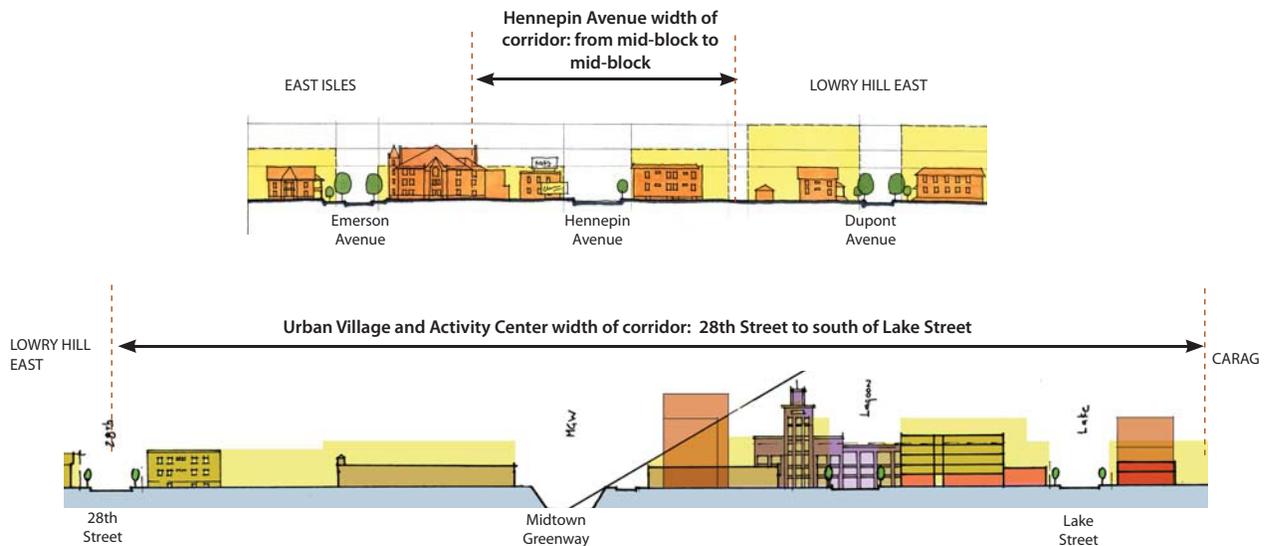
The Plan defines three different development intensities (Transit-Oriented, Urban-Oriented, and Neighborhood-Oriented). Development intensity is defined by building type, density of land use, and frontage type. When applied, there is overlap between the recommended building and frontage types. This overlap helps reinforce the transitions.

In general, the Plan concentrates the most intense development in the Core of Uptown (The Activity Center and the Urban Village South Sub-Area): The area generally bound by Lake Street, Hennepin Avenue, the Greenway, and Bryant Avenue. It is in these areas that the most square footage of development is encouraged, where the tallest buildings are suggested and where the most active and regional uses should be located. Specifically, the Plan proposes a building envelope in the Core that ranges from 35 feet on the south edges of the Greenway, to 84 feet in the middle of the blocks

between the Greenway and Lake Street. The Plan also pays particular attention to the low-scale surrounding neighborhoods by recommending that buildings transition in height down to the neighborhoods.

The Core has been identified for intense development for several reasons:

- Lack of current identity.
- Prevalence of surface parking lots and single-use buildings.
- Distance from the low-scale neighborhoods. Unlike the Hennepin Avenue corridor, where the low scale neighborhoods are within a half block of the corridor, the distance between the single family homes south of Lake Street and north of the Greenway is approximately 800 feet. There is ample distance to transition from taller buildings to low-scale neighborhoods.
- Access to transit and retail infrastructure.
- Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue identified as Commercial Corridors by The Minneapolis Plan.



Development Intensity and Neighborhood Transitions: The most intense development is directed to the Core (Activity Center and Urban Village) where the corridor is wide and transitions can be made to the neighborhoods.



Existing Allowable Density



Recommended Intensity



Current Zoning Analysis, Allowable Height: Current zoning directs growth to different parts of Uptown, including into the neighborhood.



Proposed Height Distribution: The majority of new development should be directed to the core of Uptown, between Hennepin Avenue and Bryant Street, the Greenway, and Lake Street.

Building Frontage

A building’s physical impact and contribution (positive and negative) to the public realm is determined largely by the type and quality of its frontage. The frontage is the manner in which a building interacts with the sidewalk, how the building feels when one walks next to it, and how it contributes to the public realm. A building’s frontage can also be thought of as “the first 15 feet and the first couple of floors.” The design of the “first fifteen feet” should:

- Reflect the uses at ground level.
- Provide opportunity for personalization (by resident or shopkeeper).
- Perform the transition between public and private realms.
- Be inviting and comfortable to pedestrians and passersby.

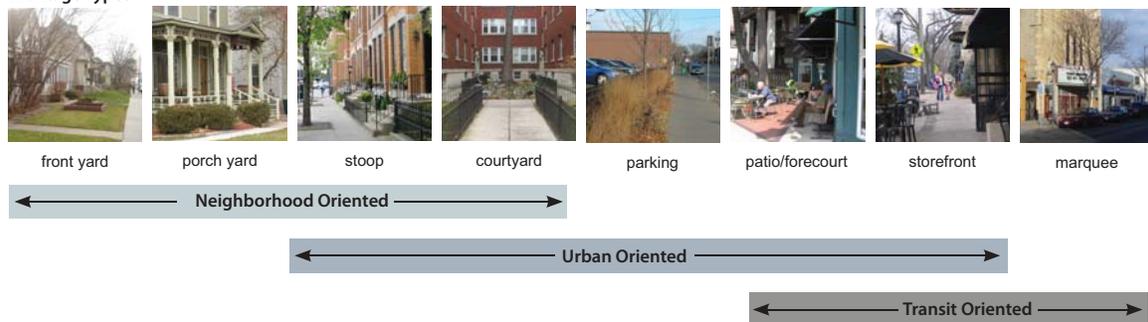
The “first couple of floors” are equally important as they dominate the cone of vision of both pedestrians and motorists. The design of the lower floors of a building defines the public quality and the private purpose of the buildings. The lower levels of buildings should:

- Be especially well designed and executed with high quality materials and finishes.
- Be punctuated with frequent windows and entrances that lend interest and activate the sidewalk.
- Reflect the scale of surrounding development.
- Contain signage that is appropriately scaled and designed.

There are several different types of frontages in Uptown. The Plan defines several of the frontage types and stipulates which types are appropriate in which areas of Uptown. The frontage types described in this Plan represent a spectrum, ranging from Transit-Oriented to Neighborhood-Oriented. Neighborhood-Oriented frontages typically consist of landscaped front yards with porches, whereas Transit-Oriented frontages typically consist of storefronts set directly on the sidewalk.

The design of the private buildings, in particular, the frontage, can have a positive impact public safety. Buildings with transparency, and a strong relationship to the sidewalk and the street provide indirect or “civic” surveillance of the street and the sidewalk.

Frontage Types



Frontage Types: The first 15 vertical feet of the building are important because they define how pedestrians interact and relate to buildings. The Plan recommends a range of frontage types that are consistent with the recommended development intensity map.

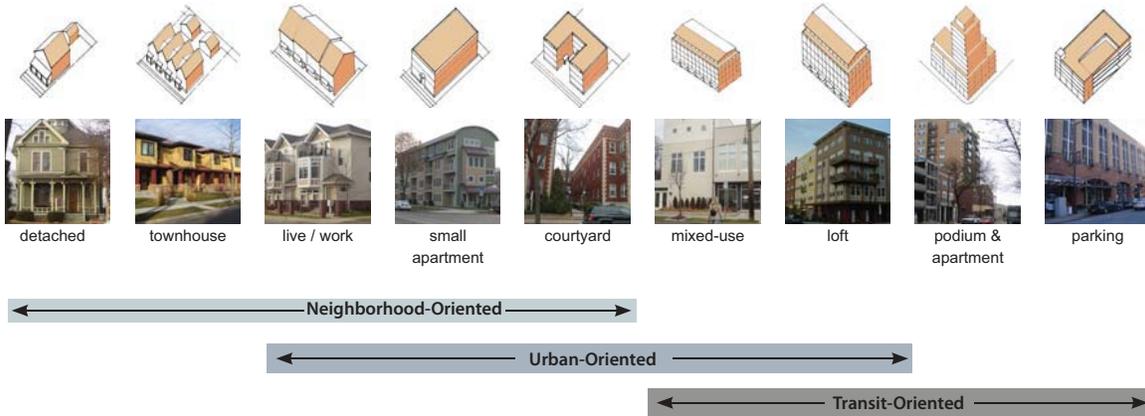
Building Types

Like frontages, the Plan recommends a range of appropriate building types for Uptown. The selected building types represent a selection of the existing inventory of appropriate urban buildings in Uptown. While the City does not regulate materials or styles, these building types provide guidance for the types of structures that are appropriate. If Uptown is developed with regard to appropriate building type and frontage type, architectural style will and should vary.

which has been an issue of concern in Uptown. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a philosophy about designing the physical environment to enhance defensible space. CPTED principals such as natural surveillance and well designed outdoor spaces should be considered when evaluating use and design.

Building types and frontages can also impact safety,

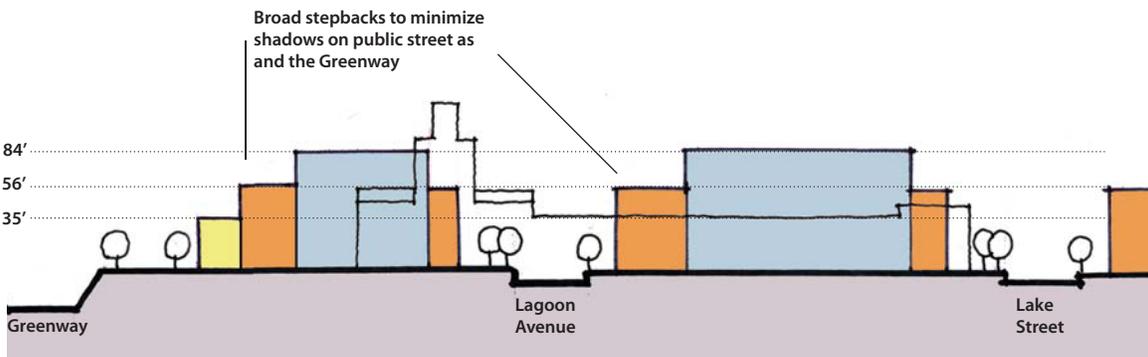
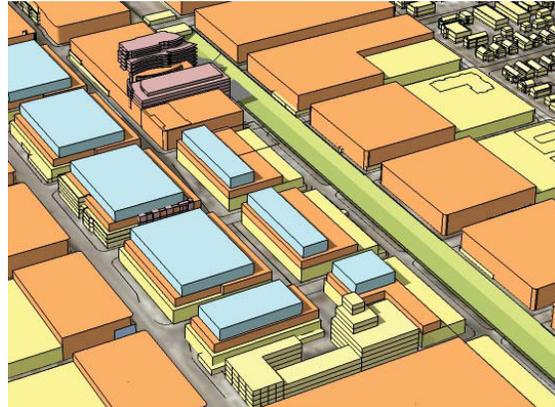
Building Types



Building Types: A range of building types in Uptown will assure transitions are smooth and density is focused in the appropriate locations.

Setbacks and Stepbacks

The Plan recommends concentrating density and height in the Core of Uptown. However, the Plan also recommends that height be carefully distributed within selected blocks of the core so solar access to the public realm is maintained and a high quality public realm is created. Generally, the Plan recommends stepbacks and setbacks in order to create a sculpted building envelope.



stepback and penthouse



narrow side to the street



stepback

Sculpting taller buildings

The photos, while showing buildings taller than encouraged in Uptown,, nevertheless illustrate important urban design concepts relevant to future buildings in Uptown



stepback and change of materials



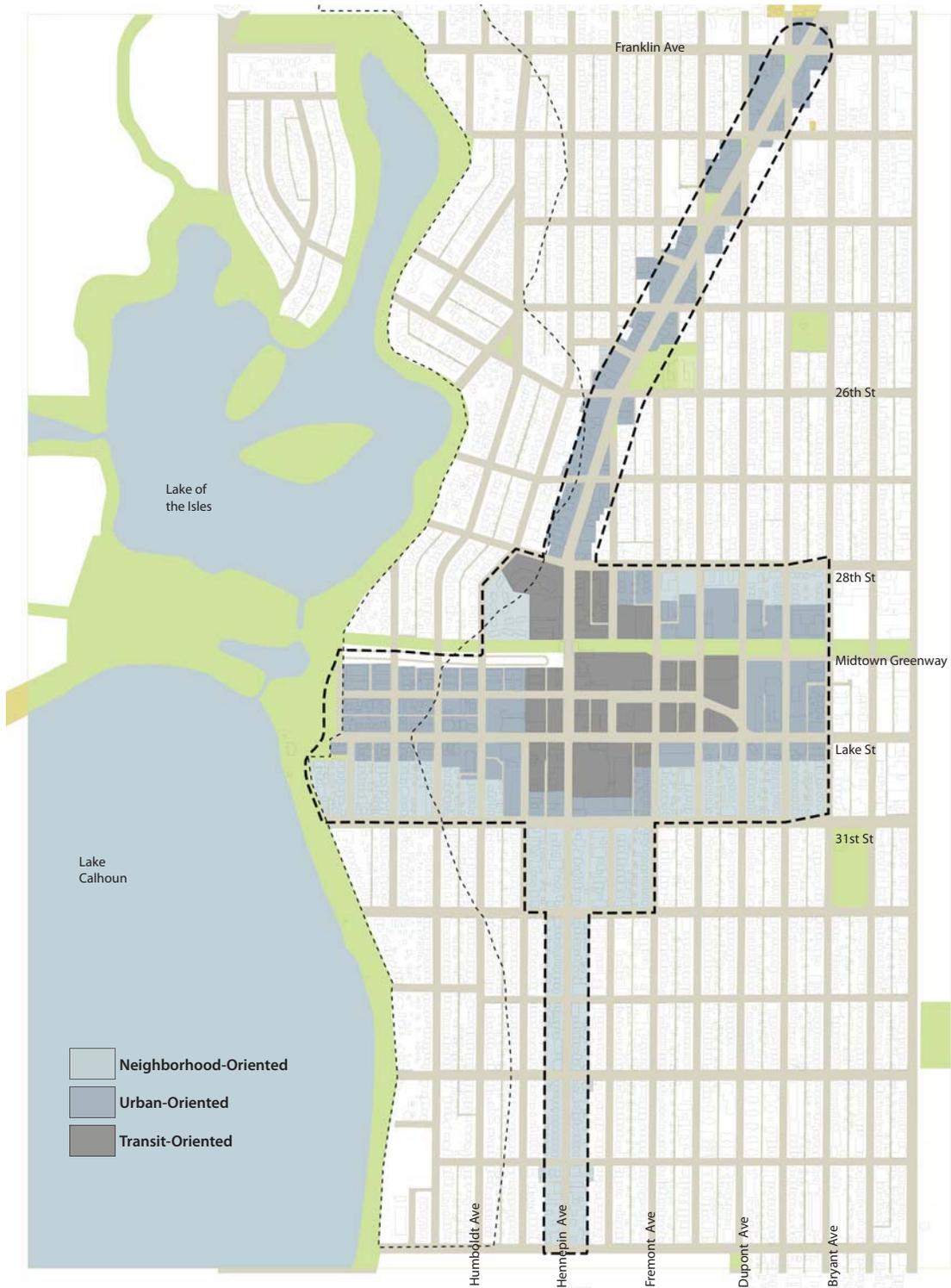
roof terraces



roof terraces and podium

Built Form Recommendations

- Concentrate density and intensity in the Core.
- Encourage buildings in the Core to fit within a sculpted envelope that maximizes sunlight to the Greenway, Lake Street, and Lagoon Avenue.
- Encourage all buildings on Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue, east of Hennepin Avenue, to contain storefronts.
- Set buildings back on the north side of Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street to create broad sidewalks.
- Encourage buildings south of Lake Street to step down to meet the neighborhood scale.
- Encourage buildings on Lagoon Avenue to create a three to four story street wall.
- Encourage buildings west of Irving Avenue to gradually step down in height from the height of the Sons of Norway Building to 2.5 stories at the Lake.
- Encourage buildings on Hennepin Avenue, north of 28th Street, to contain active fronts and wide sidewalks.
- New buildings throughout Uptown, and in particular on the Greenway, are encouraged to be designed as Green buildings with sustainable landscaping



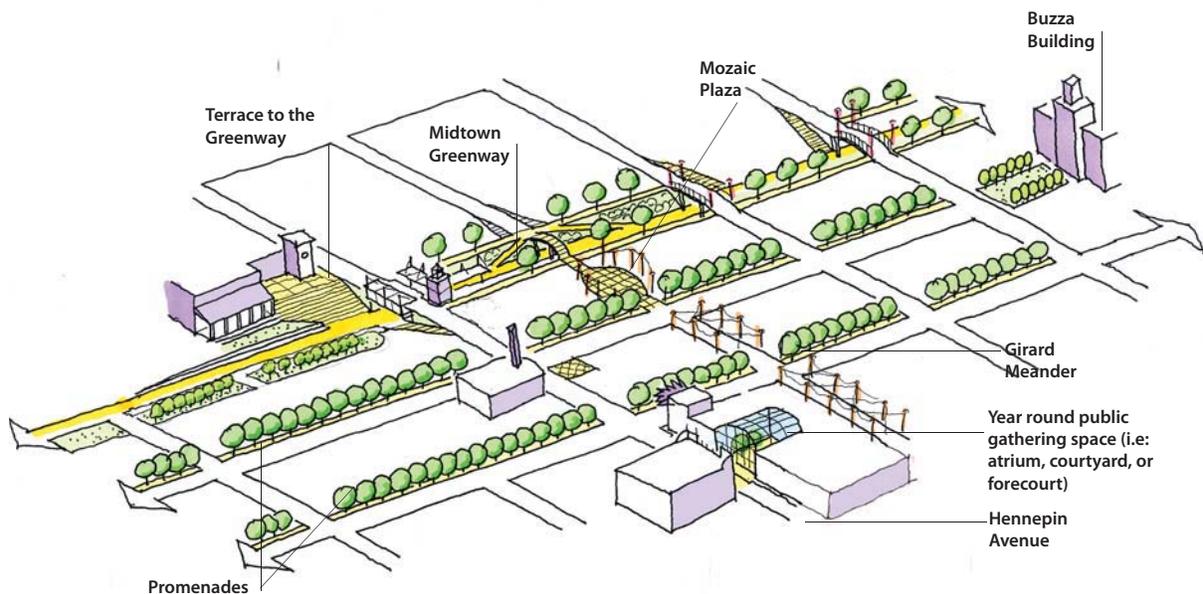
Proposed Development Intensity

9.2 Open Space

Open Space in Minneapolis is an important component to the overall quality of life and livability of the City. The Minneapolis park and open space system is one of the most complete and extensive of any City in the country. As a system, it connects neighborhoods to natural/recreational systems. However, it does not provide small urban spaces within commercial nodes, Activity Centers, or along Community or Commercial Corridors. Uptown itself does not contain meaningful open space or gathering spaces within it. In the past, the atrium at Calhoun Square has filled the role of community gathering space; however, that role has diminished with the changes to the property over the past several years. In the more recent past, private businesses such as restaurants, bookstores, coffee shops, and community buildings, such as the YWCA and the Library, have filled the need for gathering spaces.

The Public input process revealed the desire to preserve the environment, and to have access to additional green spaces in the core of Uptown. In addition, participants in the process identified the need for improved and additional gathering spaces and an overall improved public realm in Uptown. The Plan recommends the future of open spaces in Uptown not be in the form of large parks or broad recreational connections, but rather in the form of a series of smaller urban oriented spaces that are connected to each other and the regional system via high quality sidewalks and promenades.

The Plan relies on the design of superior open spaces for pedestrians in Uptown. Such spaces will function as gathering places, addresses for new mixed-use development, nodes for commercial and retail activity, and settings for urban events (markets, festivals, and fairs) and public art (static and performance). They should be designed for people of all ages and physical abilities.



Possible Open Spaces: Several small urban gathering spaces can be developed to highlight buildings (Suburban Theater, Uptown Theater, Buzza Building, original Walker Library, and the new Library/YWCA).

Open Space Recommendations

- Create several small urban gathering spaces.
- Create a year round indoor/outdoor gathering space in Calhoun Square that accommodates existing and attracts new, diverse residents and customers.
- Establish upper pedestrian promenades on both the north and south sides of the Greenway.
- Create Girard Meander, a narrow street with wide sidewalks connecting Mozaic to Calhoun Square. Design Girard Meander such that it can be closed to vehicular traffic as necessary during evenings and on weekends.
- Where sidewalks are less than 8 feet wide, consider either setting back buildings 5 feet to 8 feet to create wider sidewalks that can be used for outdoor seating, narrowing the street, and widening the sidewalks to provide additional pedestrian amenities.
- Consider a public open space at the eastern terminus of Lagoon Avenue in front of the Lehman Building.
- Aggressively pursue private/public funding and operational options for the development of additional public spaces.
- Explore options for additional greening of 31st Street east of Hennepin Avenue.
- Create broad promenades along the north side of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue.
- Create additional small triangular urban plazas on Hennepin Avenue north of 28th Street as properties are redeveloped.
- Create terraces to the Greenway on development blocks that are graded down to the Greenway.
- Encourage new development on the north side of the Greenway to animate the Greenway with active privately owned open spaces.





Open Space Plan: The Plan recommends creating additional East/West connections through Uptown as well as a series of smaller urban spaces in the core of Uptown.

9.2 Access

Organizing and prioritizing access to Uptown is critical to the success of the area. Uptown suffers from, as well as thrives on, its regional location. It is close to the Lakes; however, the Lakes interrupt the regional network and force traffic to concentrate on Lake Street. Uptown is adjacent to downtown; however, since downtown Minneapolis is the region's largest job center, thousands of people per day drive through Uptown to get to downtown.



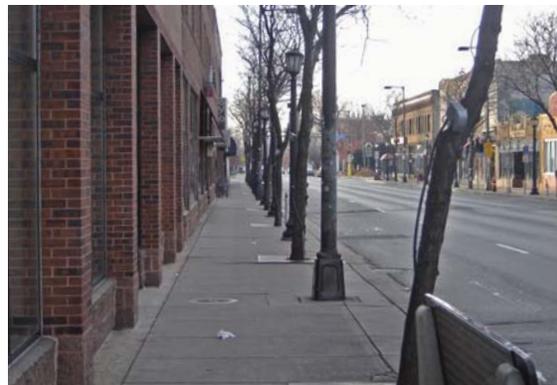
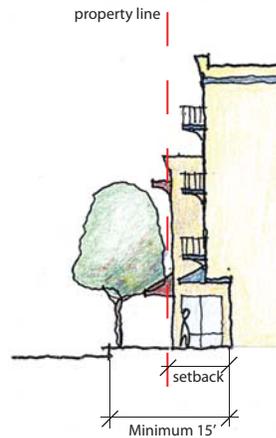
Pedestrians and Bicycles

Uptown is a community that wants walking and biking to be the preferred mode of travel for local needs. Uptown residents view biking and walking as a major factor in the livability and quality of life. It is viewed by most as more than simply a recreational activity. It is viewed as a viable means of traveling for all purposes, including commuting, shopping, etc.

One of the reasons Uptown residents support bicycling is that the neighborhoods are remarkably well-connected to the regional recreational system. The Midtown Greenway, the Chain of Lakes, and the Grand Rounds grant access to the regional open space system. These amenities are well-used assets that help define Uptown as a unique community. In addition to recreational cycling on the Greenway and Chain of Lakes, Uptown residents view cycling as a desirable means of travel for all daily activities of life; unfortunately, much of Uptown is not particularly bicycle friendly. There are no bicycle facilities along either of the corridors, bicycle storage and parking is limited (in particular on the west side of Hennepin Avenue, north of 26th Street), and the inter-neighborhood connections (between the four adjacent neighborhoods) are non-existent.

The Plan's strategy towards bicycling is to design the physical environment such that it is a fully supported, attractive, and encouraged means of travel for everyday needs. Achieving this goal will require several interventions and investments by both private investors and the public sector. In addition, the Plan encourages innovative solutions to achieve this goal.

The Plan encourages the surrounding neighborhoods to create inter-neighborhood (or "park to park") bike connections on residential north/south and east/west streets. Such connections would facilitate movement among the four neighborhoods, allowing individuals and families to visit friends and parks in a comfortable and safe manner. In addition, the Plan suggests a bicycle connection between the Lakes and the core of Uptown. This can occur either along the



Sidewalks: Where possible, new development should set back from the property line in order to create a minimum 15 feet sidewalk on commercial corridors.

Greenway, or along Lake Street, in the proposed promenade, or along 31st Street.

The Plan promotes increased use of bicycles as a mode of transit to and from Uptown as well as between destinations in Uptown. Therefore, the Plan supports adding to the existing inventory of bike racks with new centralized bike rack facilities for multiple bikes. These should be located close to the Core, perhaps at the top of the Mall where the Greenway meets Uptown, as well as where the proposed inter-neighborhood or “park to park” routes intersect Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue. In order for such facilities to succeed, they should be well designed, visible, and accessible. Further, the plan supports improved bike parking on each block of the core, integrated with street furniture and within easy access of businesses.

Pedestrian

Whether one arrives to Uptown by car, transit, or bike, everyone in Uptown is a pedestrian. Uptown’s pedestrian infrastructure is substandard and in need of improvement. In locations throughout Uptown, sidewalks are too narrow, crosswalks are not well marked, and street trees are damaged or missing. Consistent with the currently proposed Access Minneapolis street guidelines, the Plan recommends widening sidewalks to a minimum of 12 feet (preferably 15 feet in commercial areas) by either narrowing the street or setting buildings back. In addition, the Plan recommends creating additional pedestrian connections along the Greenway and through larger blocks where streets have been vacated. Additional pedestrian amenities can be located in wider sidewalks and setbacks.



Promenades and Wide Sidewalks: Sidewalks on Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street should be widened to become promenades connecting the Lakes to the core of Uptown.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Recommendations

- Establish a group of business leaders, property owners, and residents that would promote better management of existing parking resources, promote transit options, and help implement other transportation recommendations.
- Shorten the walk distance for pedestrians crossing streets in Uptown by providing bump outs at signalized intersections.
- Install pedestrian count down signals at busy intersections in Uptown so pedestrians know how much time they actually have to cross the street.
- Reestablish practice of striping crosswalks annually rather than every two years so that markings are clearly visible to drivers and pedestrians.
- Where streets have been vacated, encourage new and existing development to establish publicly accessible sidewalks, paths, trails, or promenades to complete the pedestrian network.
- Encourage setback for new developments in areas where the existing sidewalk is less than 12 feet wide.
- Pursue placing the reconstruction of Lake and Lagoon on the Hennepin County Capital Improvements Program.
- Study the narrowing of the curb-to-curb dimensions of Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue, west of Hennepin Avenue; use the additional width to create promenades on the north sides of these streets.
- Consider reducing the lane count on Lake Street to two lanes in each direction, thereby matching the lane count on East Lake Street.
- Explore interim measures for improving pedestrian comfort and safety.
- Develop the Girard Meander to connect the Mozaic to Calhoun Square.
- Where possible, create an upper pedestrian promenade on both the north and the south sides of the Midtown Greenway. In locations where buildings engage the Greenway at the lower level, efforts should be made to maintain pedestrian connectivity.
- Ensure that new development (residential and commercial) provides an adequate number of bicycle parking stalls.
- Encourage centralized bicycle parking (such as on-street bike parking corrals) at convenient locations for bicyclists to “park their bikes and walk” to several places in Uptown.
- Work with the neighborhoods to identify inter-neighborhood bicycle routes and/or “park to park” routes.
- Improve bicycle connections between the Greenway and the Core of Uptown.
- Explore design options for bike lanes on 31st Street and Bryant Avenue.



Pedestrian and Bike Plan: The Plan should increase pedestrian connectivity and improve existing pedestrian areas.

Transit

Improving transit service in Uptown is fundamental to the future success of Uptown. Superior transit service in Uptown is necessary to relieve congestion, improve air quality, encourage economic activity, maintain affordability, and restore the retail infrastructure.

Currently transit service in Uptown is relatively good. The Uptown Transit Station is well used, ridership is high, and there is strong local support for additional transit investments. Despite this strong base, transit in Uptown has not reached its full potential. In particular, the land use mix in Uptown is not fully transit supportive due to some remaining auto oriented uses, the lack of high density housing along the corridors, and the relatively low daytime population of employees. In addition, the design of the streets and rider facilities such as waiting areas and amenities have made transit less desirable than it would be if more attention were paid to such matters.

Superior transit throughout Minneapolis in general, and to Uptown specifically, via streetcars and LRT is a stated policy supported by Access Minneapolis (a ten year transportation plan currently being drafted). Both Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue are defined by Access Minneapolis as important pieces to the PTN (Primary Transit Network). The Primary Transit Network has five performance criteria:

- Frequency: service all day at frequencies of 15 minutes or better.
- Span: service at least 18 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Speed: average operating speed of no less than 30% of the speed limit.
- Reliability: service operates as posted and expected.
- Loading: generally passengers have seats available, and standing, while acceptable, is not excessive and uncomfortable.



Transit in Uptown: Alternative means of accessing and circulating through Uptown are critical. The Plan strongly supports regional, local, and private/public transit investments. Streetcars, circulators, enhanced bus service, and LRT can help define the unique identity of Uptown.

Access Minneapolis states “The Primary Transit Network’s value, as well as its success, relies on a three way interdependence among Density, Service Quality, and Ridership.” These three strategies are interdependent and self-reinforcing.

This Plan fully supports improving transit service by creating a physical environment that increases density, improves passenger facilities, and encourages ridership.

Density

This Plan supports a future Uptown with more households, businesses, and employees. With added density, transit service will improve; Uptown can become a community where transit is a preferred option. The future land use mix will support transit by:

- Increasing the number of uses that support and rely on transit such as higher density housing, neighborhood and community serving retail, high-density employment, social services, and community uses.

Service Quality

Improving service quality is not the sole responsibility of the transit agency. Transit service quality should be more broadly defined from the perspective of the user and their trip “from door to door.” From this perspective the waiting time and the ride itself are just a small portion of the trip and experience. The experience includes the process of walking or biking to the station as well as the process of walking or biking to the final destination, and all experiences in between. When service quality is more broadly defined to include such issues as the ability to complete an errand en route to the station, to roll one’s suitcase to the station and onto the vehicle, to easily and safely park one’s bicycle, and to comfortably cross a street on foot, all become critical issues as they relate to service quality.

Transit Recommendations

- Establish a group of business leaders, property owners, and residents that would promote better management of existing parking resources, promote transit options, and help implement other transportation recommendations.
- Encourage new developments to provide transit facilities (shelters and boarding areas). Coordinate locations with Metro Transit.
- Implement Southwest Transit Corridor to either connect through Uptown or to extend to the possible future streetcar system to future West Calhoun Transit Center.
- Enhance and expand service on existing and new routes (increase frequency, hours, and non-rush hour service).
- Explore a reduced rate for “Uptown Zone” riders or aggressively market and promote existing low cost fares and services.
- Pursue, through public/private cooperation, a circulator along Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue/Greenway or 29th Street connecting Uptown with the Lakes and Lyndale/Lake. This circulator should augment, not compete with, other transit plans for the area.
- Support the possible future development of streetcars on Hennepin Avenue.
- Support transit by promoting land uses and development densities that create and support strong transit markets, such as high density housing, employment, and retail.
- At the future rail transit stop at Hennepin Avenue, create a new gathering space at the Greenway level
- Encourage employers to increase transit use by participating in existing programs that allow them to treat the costs of employee bus passes as a business expense.
- Design streets that prioritize the transit experience, including comfortable loading and waiting areas, and that do not require buses to exit traffic flow. Curb extensions for transit facilities will impact traffic flow, but will improve transit service.
- Work with Metro Transit and the business community to improve transit operations. This would include assessing bus stops to determine most efficient locations passenger payment and loading procedures, marketing, and passenger facilities.



Transit

Parking

During the public process, the issue of parking was raised by several participants. Residents, business owners, property owners, and visitors discussed their personal challenges as they related to lack of parking, access to existing parking, price of parking, and ease of parking. Opinions varied from those who believe there is not enough parking and that it is too expensive and hard to find, to those who stated there is too much parking and that it is too inexpensive and too accessible.

Parking plays an important role in creating vibrant urban places. Parking itself, however, is a means to an end. The goal is to improve access to Uptown, not necessarily to maximize parking. Parking is simply one of many ways to access Uptown. Parking has to be accessible and affordable while not dominating and obtrusive. It must be well designed so as to contribute to the public realm by reinforcing pedestrian and vehicular patterns, easy to find and well signed so as to avoid “cruising” or

“circulating,” integrated into the architectural fabric of Uptown, and effectively operated and managed.

Parking solutions for Uptown should be as varied as the parking problems they intend to solve. There is no one single solution to parking in Uptown, rather, there are several small solutions. In Uptown there are short term, medium term, and long term parking needs. These parking needs vary according to the time of day and the day of the week. They also vary from one part of Uptown to another. For example, on-street parking (not including the neighborhoods) should turn over frequently and is reserved for short term parking needs (maximum two hours). Upper floors of parking garages should be reserved for long-term parking and employees.

Several parking issues emerged throughout the process. They include:



Parking Edges: Parking lots adjacent to streets should be enclosed with well designed edges.



Parking Buildings: Parking garages that are visible from public streets should be designed with architectural facades.

- Overflow parking (medium and long term) into the neighborhood during the weekday by employees, and on the weekends and evenings by employees, visitors, and bar patrons.
- Negative signing (“Parking for Customers Only, Violators will be Towed”) not conducive to parking once and walking to several places (short-term and medium-term).
- Businesses with no dedicated parking suffer from the high cost and inaccessibility of short-term public parking.
- Confusing and inconsistent on-street and off-street parking regulations. Rules differ from one neighborhood (several blocks in CARAG have been designated a Critical Parking Area and have 24 hour parking restrictions) to the next and from one commercial block to the next. Visitors are confronted with different parking options depending on where they are in Uptown.

Parking occupancy studies show that in Uptown there are several empty parking stalls even while the demand for parking is at its highest on weekend evenings. Many privately owned parking lots are underutilized at different times throughout the day due to the specific demands of each business type. Underutilized parking lots during times of peak demand show that the parking supply in Uptown is not well managed, coordinated, or accessible. Adding more parking without addressing these management issues will not solve problems and will



Parking Signage: Coordinated graphics and technology can improve wayfinding in Uptown.

possibly exacerbate them.

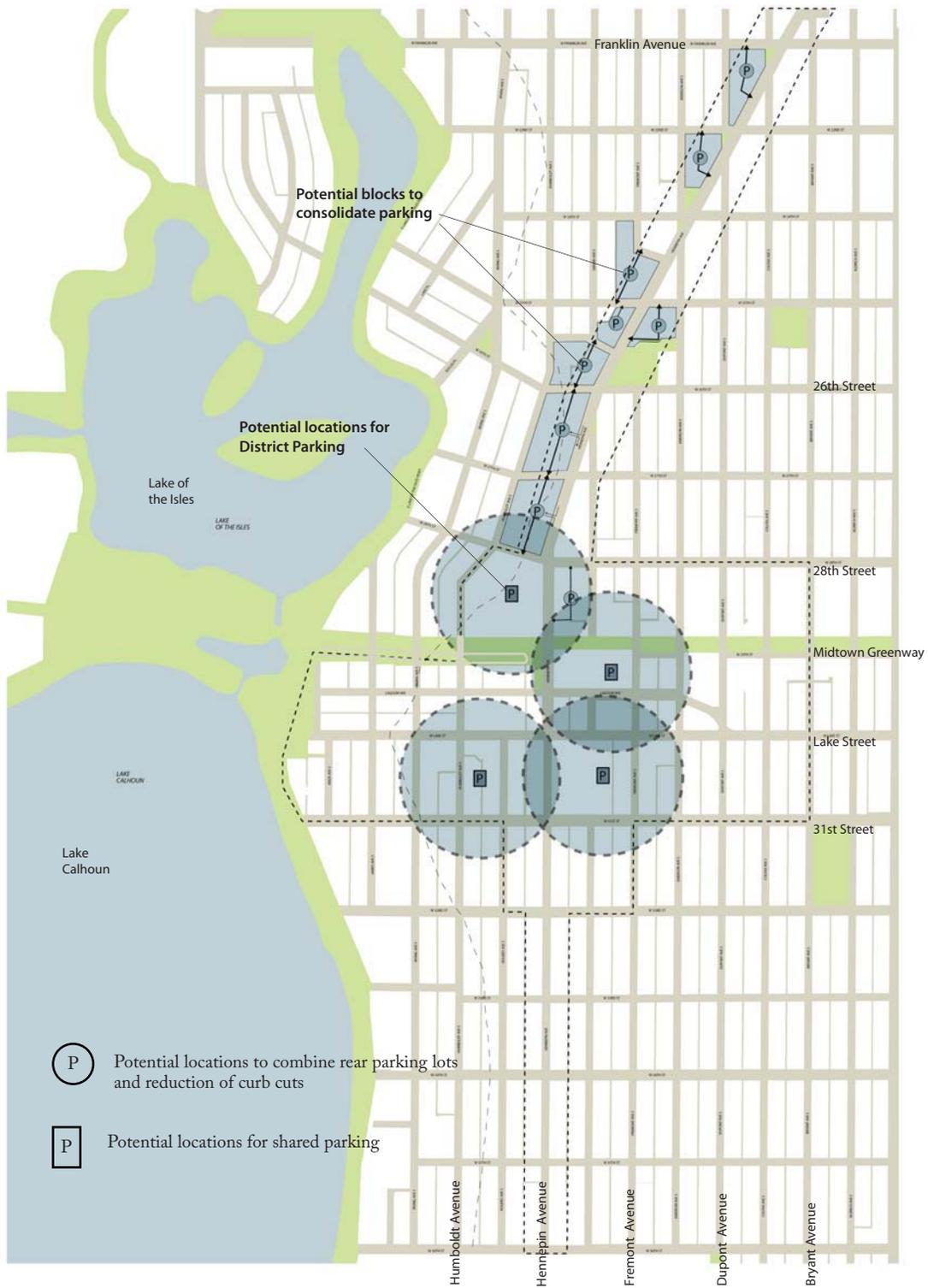
Parking issues should be addressed on two fronts. First, in the immediate years, the current parking supply should be better managed and organized. Second, as parking demand tightens, additional parking should be carefully and selectively added in locations it is needed. Determination of need should consider the negative effect of excess parking, blank unadorned facades, and potential impacts on surrounding properties. It can be assumed that additional public parking will likely be needed in the core to support additional retail and entertainment uses. Additional public parking should be “District Parking” serving multiple needs and uses throughout Uptown.



Parking on Hennepin Avenue between 28th Street & Franklin Avenue: Private property owners are encouraged to combine their rear lots in order to reduce curb cuts, thereby maximizing on and off-street parking and reducing mid-block left turns.

Parking Recommendations

- Establish a group of business leaders, property owners, and residents that would promote better management of existing parking resources, promote transit options, and help implement other transportation recommendations.
- Establish shared parking practices which could allow for better utility of large lots such as Lunds, Sons of Norway and the YWCA in the evenings.
- Encourage property owners on Hennepin Avenue (north of 28th Street) to combine parking lots in the rear of their buildings and to connect them to side streets allowing the reduction of curb cuts, the addition of on-street parking, and the reduction of mid-block left turns.
- Develop district parking facilities in the Core.
- Encourage shared parking practices between complementary uses such as entertainment and offices.
- Adjust cost of parking at metered on-street parking to maintain approximately 85 percent occupancy throughout the day and evening. Low occupancy is inefficient; occupancy greater than 85 percent discourages parking and encourages “cruising” or “trolling.”
- Work with businesses to create a voucher parking program for visitors and consumers.
- Create a transportation and parking guide.
- Promote the existing parking card (debit card to eliminate need for quarters at parking meters) similar to Downtown.
- Coordinate the criteria and processes of the Critical Area Parking System with area wide parking supply and demand.
- Improve signage and wayfinding (LCD screens with directional arrows to available parking spaces) to public parking areas. Use “smart signs” and consistent signing practices to assist motorists in finding available parking thereby reducing cruising.
- Encourage parking garages to the interior of the block, minimally visible from the street. If the façade of a garage is visible from the street, it should be architecturally treated as a “parking building.”
- Conduct employee surveys to determine where they live and what improvements would encourage them to use transit.



Parking

Traffic and Streets

In great cities, streets serve many purposes. As public right-of-way, streets have the important utilitarian responsibility to move traffic and provide access to properties. Beyond this functional requirement, streets are places to interact, invest, do business, as well as travel by car, foot, transit, and bicycle. Streets are the single most connected element of the public realm; they are the City's highly valued civic spaces and are the settings for private development - the primary generator of revenue. This Plan proposes modifications to the existing street network in order to prioritize streets as:

- Opportunities for placemaking and high quality addresses for redevelopment.
- Means of getting to (as opposed to getting through) Uptown via transit, bicycle, foot, and/or car.

Due to Uptown's geographic location and its responsibility to the region, the streets will continue to accommodate through traffic. However, this Plan recommends the streets be designed to encourage access and connectivity, not mobility and capacity.

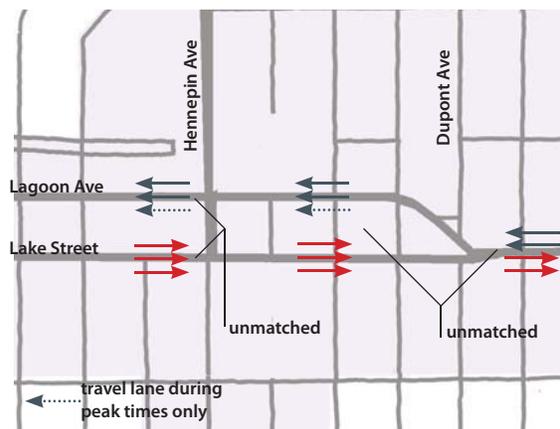
The Plan recommends improving streets,

reconnecting streets, reexamining the one way pairs and reconfiguring intersections.

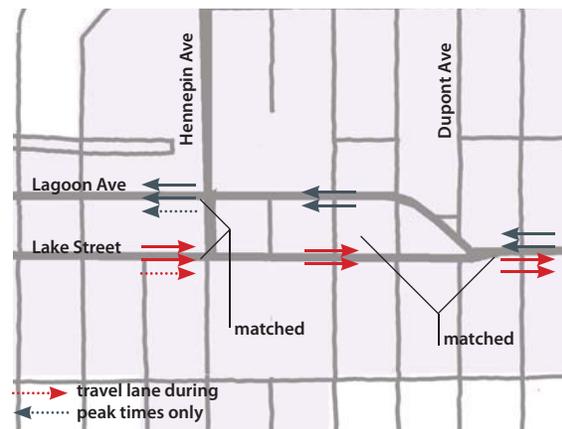
Improved Streets

As discussed in the previous section, the Plan recommends baseline improvements to Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue as one-way streets. The Plan recommends using the benefits offered by one-way streets (no need for a dedicated left turn lane) to improve Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue for pedestrians, bicyclists, businesses, and local traffic. Improvements include narrowing lane widths (to match the East Lake Street reconstruction) and building curb extensions (curb bump outs). The end result of these changes will be equal capacity and through-put, but with slower traffic, greater storefront visibility, a better pedestrian environment, enhanced transit operations, and improved environment for development.

The prevailing direction of traffic flow in Uptown is from eastbound Lake Street to northbound Hennepin Avenue, and vice versa. The lane requirements of Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street therefore differ from east of Hennepin Avenue to west of Hennepin Avenue. East of Hennepin Avenue the Plan recommends reducing the travel way of Lake Street from three to two lanes. Reducing the travel-way to two lanes would match the eastbound portion of Lake Street from Dupont



Existing Lane Configuration



Potential one-way lane configuration: Eliminate a lane from Lake Street between Hennepin Avenue and Dupont Avenue. And consider peak-hour parking restrictions (note: peak-hour parking restrictions eliminate the possibility of curb extensions and should therefore be carefully considered)

Avenue to the Mississippi River, where volumes are relatively similar.

West of Hennepin Avenue, the Plan recommends modifying the travel-way of Lake Street to match its westbound pair, Lagoon Avenue. Lake Street could be modified to two full time through lanes, and one lane that was peak hours only.

Reconnected Streets

Over the years, several streets have been vacated and eliminated from the grid. Whereas a single street vacation has a minor effect on circulation, the accumulated effects of several broken links in the grid is significant. Vacated streets result in disrupted (vehicular and pedestrian) circulation patterns, larger block sizes that are less pedestrian friendly, additional vehicular stress on the remaining streets, and less real estate frontage. The Plan therefore identifies several blocks where the street grid can be reconnected as the properties redevelop in the future: Holmes Avenue between Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue, 29th Street between Dupont Avenue and Emerson Avenue, and a new road on the north side of the Greenway between Hennepin Avenue and Fremont Avenue.

Conversion to Two-Way Streets

Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue were converted in 1984 to one-way pairs as a response to an EPA mandate that air pollution at the intersection of Hennepin and Lake be improved. Idling cars and congestion (Level of Service below D) was cited as the primary source of air pollution; the one-way pairs significantly reduced the idling cars and the air pollution as the new system efficiently pushed cars through the intersections with less delay. Following the conversion to one-way pairs, downtown employment and western metro residential growth grew significantly. The one-way pairs partially enabled this growth as they permitted efficient commuting through Uptown.

One-way pairs enable through-traffic, minimize travel time through the area, and maximize the capacity of the roadways. Whereas one way pairs enable and maximize capacity and mobility, the negative aspects of one-way pairs are significant

and measurable, especially when the users of the streets are more broadly defined to include not just regional motorists, but local motorists, pedestrians, transit users, retail businesses, and adjacent neighborhoods. One-way streets:

- Encourage higher speeds due to lack of vehicular side friction. Slower traffic can increase visibility of signage as well as improve conditions for pedestrians.
- Can create more potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts due to of the multiple permutations of traffic flow at any given intersection. On a given one-way intersection there are likely fewer pedestrian conflicts than at a given two-way intersection. However, at two-way intersections, pedestrians have to only encounter two possible scenarios; with the introduction of one-ways into an intersection, pedestrians have to negotiate up to 16 possible traffic scenarios. The additional permutations can create confusion for pedestrians and vehicles alike due to multiple potential turning lane scenarios.
- Can cause confusion and frustration for drivers who cannot move through an area based on intuition. In a competitive retail and development environment, user confusion can have a significant impact on economic performance.
- Cause additional vehicular miles due to restricted movements and rerouting.
- Create a less desirable retail environment because businesses get more exposure to traffic during either the AM or PM commute, but not both.
- Diminish access to parking and other destinations because of restricted movements.
- Cause increased reliance on signage because a direct path of travel is not possible and wayfinding is no longer intuitive.

- Cause transit routes to be more complex and less user friendly due to the need to split the routing around a block. Users cannot easily and intuitively know where “to get back on the same bus in the other direction.”

In the 20 years since Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue were converted to one-way pairs, several factors have emerged suggesting a conversion to two-way streets may be viable. Among them:

- Vehicles have become cleaner; the same amount of idling and congestion in 1984 causes far less air pollution today, and likely even less in the future.
- High quality pedestrian and transit experience is increasingly important in urbanizing areas such as Uptown.
- Uptown and the surrounding neighborhood’s desire to rebalance the function of Uptown streets to reflect on increased concern for walking, transit, and biking.
- Where it is possible that reverting to two-way operations will diminish levels of service at some intersections during the rush hours, Uptown residents have expressed an increasing willingness to accept lower level of vehicular service in return for more livable, walkable, developable, and transit friendly streets (yet not at the expense of air quality).
- Uptown’s desire (as expressed in this Plan) to promote employment and residential growth within Uptown as their contribution to a regional smart growth strategy. In effect, a desire to create land use and development patterns that allow individuals and employers to locate in Uptown as opposed to driving through Uptown.

This Plan encourages a thorough analysis of the impacts and implications of converting Uptown’s one-way street system to a two-way system including an air quality assessment. The Plan

acknowledges the benefits of one-way streets (greater through-put, possibly wider sidewalks, more curb extensions), but believes there are also benefits to two-way streets that may outweigh the benefits of one-way streets in Uptown.

Prior to the thorough study of converting the streets to two-way, this Plan recommends making immediate low-cost improvements to Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue. Well designed planters, restriping the lanes and curb extensions would increase pedestrian safety, comfort, and amenities. In effect, these low cost projects could replicate (on an interim or temporary basis) potential long term investments.

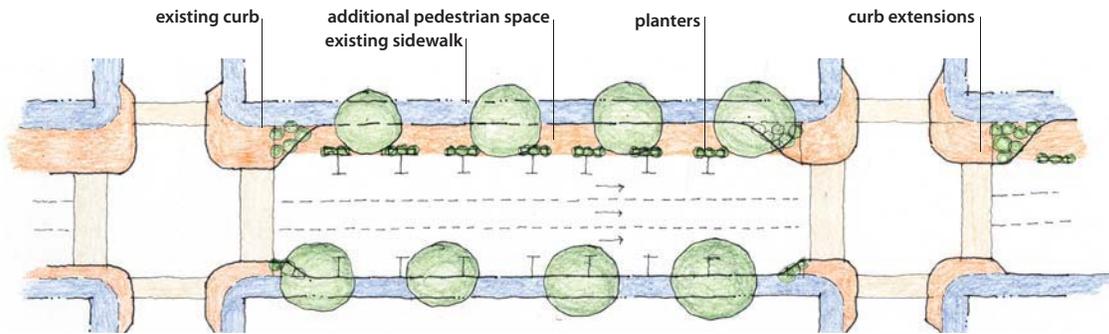
Reconfigured Intersection

The intersection at Lake Street and Dupont Avenue and Lagoon Avenue was cited in the public process as both a priority area for change as well as a significant traffic problem area. Prior to the one-way conversion, the Lagoon Avenue intersection with Dupont was a T-intersection at approximately the location of the Lehman Center driveway. As is typical with one-way pair streets, they split and reconnect, often creating undevelopable block sizes and geometries that favor vehicular traffic. This is the case on the east end of Lagoon Avenue where Lagoon Avenue splits from Lake Street at Dupont Avenue. The resulting geometry at Dupont Avenue has produced a virtually undevelopable block that has yielded a drive through fast food restaurant. The CARAG neighborhood and the City will be partnering on the “Break in Lake” which will improve the geometries of this intersection slightly, resulting in a better gateway and improved pedestrian crossings. It will not, however, change the development pattern of the compromised block.

This Plan recommends a long-term solution of either further reconfiguration of the intersection to create developable blocks or an eventual conversion of the street grid to two-way.

One option for reconfiguring this intersection is to treat the intersection with two 90-degree signalized turns. Such an approach may improve pedestrian conditions and create a block that can be redeveloped. Such a solution would have to

be analyzed for its geometric and operational implications. Any intersection reconfiguration would require a coordinated redevelopment plan involving the property owners of Rainbow and the Arby's site since there would likely be a significant effect on both properties.



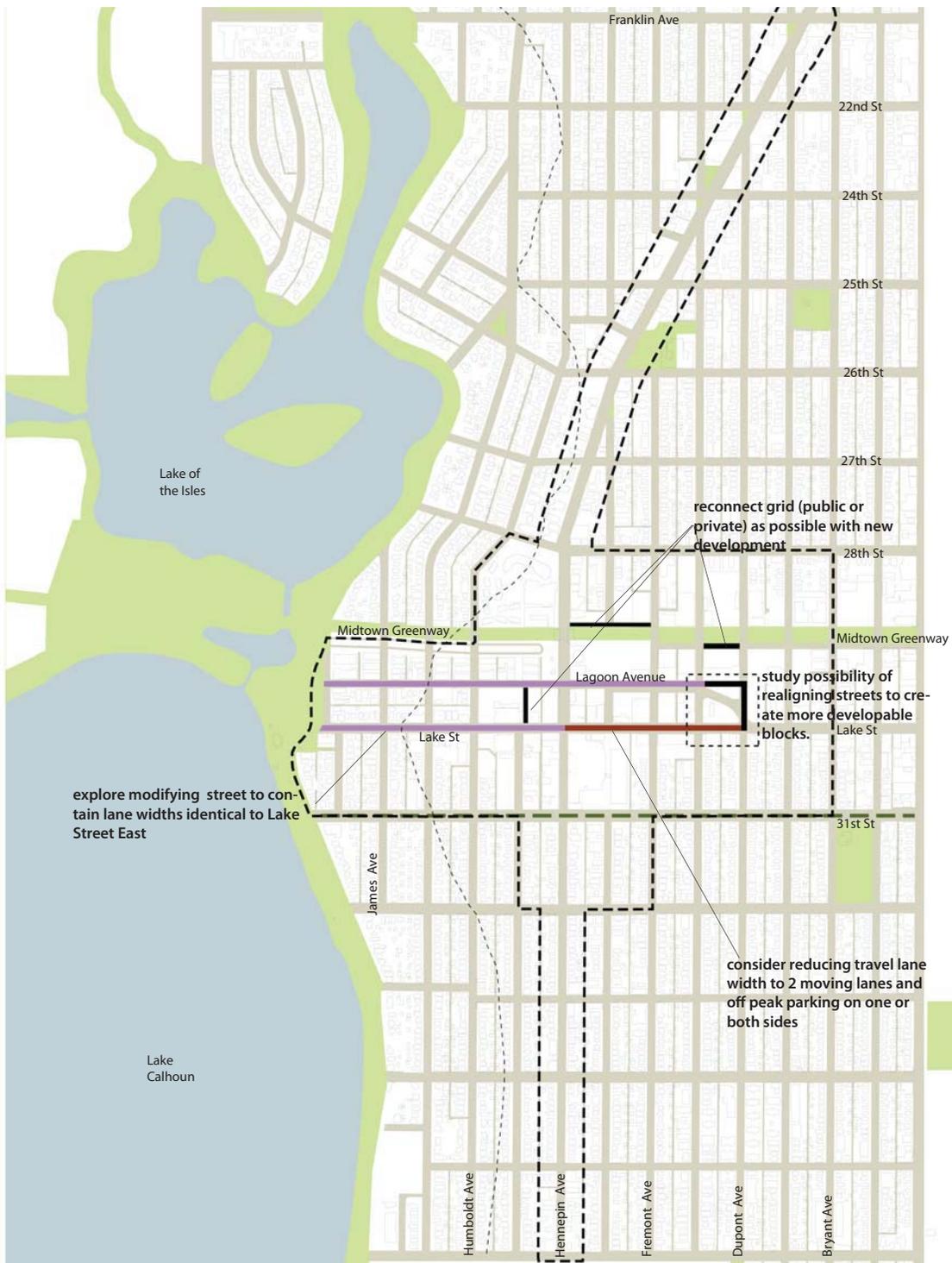
Interim Improvements: Short term improvements can include re-stripping the lanes, building curb extensions, installing countdown timers, and installing well-designed planters to narrow the street and create additional pedestrian space. (Note: curb extensions temporary or permanent, eliminate the possibility of peak-hour parking restrictions as well as dedicated curbside left turn lanes)



Interim Improvements: Steps one through three address ways to improve existing street conditions.

Traffic Recommendations

- Establish a group of business leaders, property owners, and residents that would promote better management of existing parking resources, promote transit options, and help implement other transportation recommendations.
- Reduce lane widths on Lagoon Avenue and Lake Street to match East Lake Street reconstruction standards.
- Study design options and impacts of converting Lake Street and Lagoon Avenue into two-way streets. Key criteria in judging the feasibility should be expected traffic impacts, air quality impacts, potential loss of existing and future pedestrian space, and potential impacts on businesses.
- Consider reducing lane count on Lake Street east of Hennepin Avenue to two lanes in each direction, thereby matching the lane count on East Lake Street.
- Reconnect street grid as it becomes possible when these properties are redeveloped. Connections can be public streets or private lanes that permit public access.
- Examine possibilities for improving the Dupont Avenue/Lake Street intersection by creating developable blocks and restoring the street grid.



Traffic and Streets