

I GUTHRIE DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE



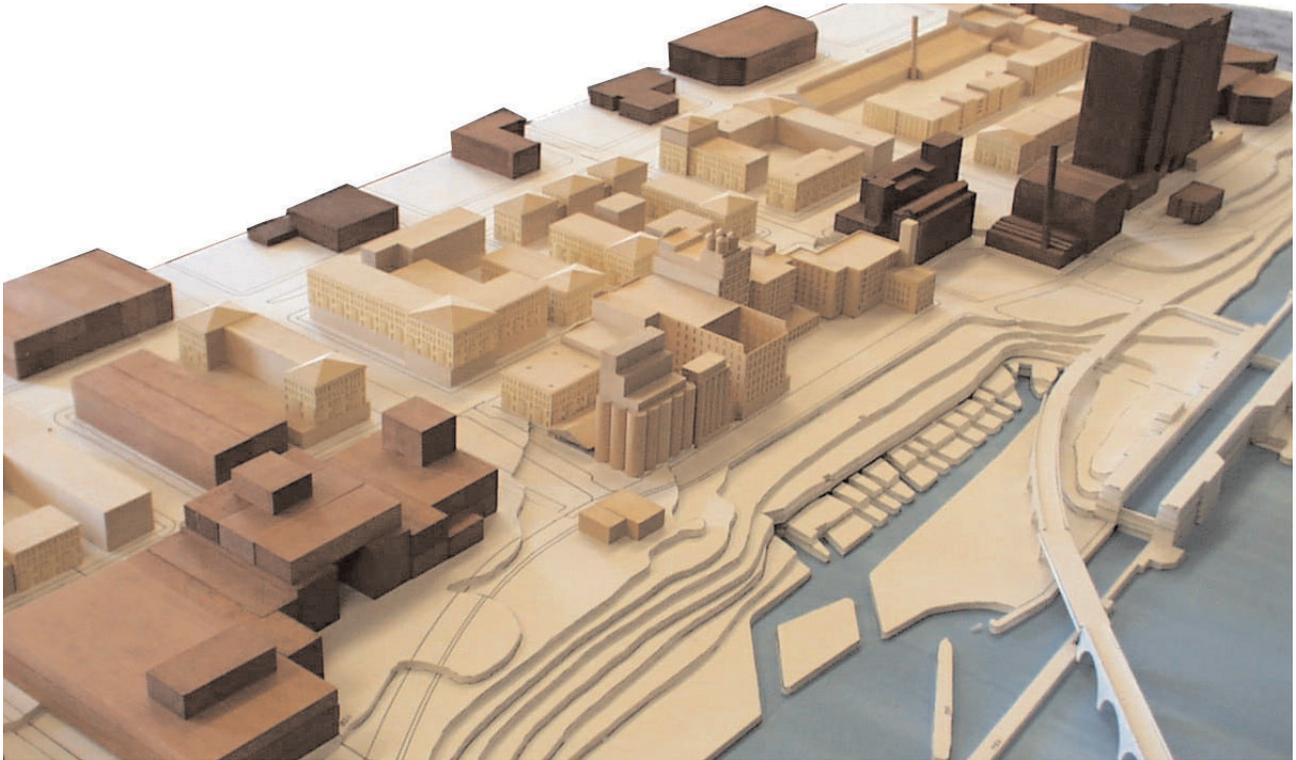


Figure 1 A transformed Historic Mills District will invite Minneapolis residents back to the central riverfront.

1 Introduction

Background

The Historic Mills District Master Plan was published in June 1998 and was the product of a public participation planning process which featured stakeholder focus groups, meetings with the adjacent neighborhoods, a three day design charrette, and two public meetings. The final Master Plan included an urban design plan and design guidelines for each block of the District. In addition, the Master Plan established seven overall urban design concepts to inform the redevelopment of the District. These concepts can be summarized as follows:

- Complete the riverfront park, trail and parkway system, connecting them to downtown
- Extend the downtown street grid to the river
- Provide improved pedestrian access across Washington Avenue
- Preserve and celebrate the riverfront historic sites and buildings
- Link new residential, cultural and recreational development to the downtown and the riverfront
- Create centrally located multi-purpose parking
- Build a transitway to link the Airport, neighborhoods and parking with downtown and the central riverfront

The Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) established three goals for redevelopment of the Historic Mills District, once known as Industry Square:

- Create new downtown housing
- Attract and retain business
- Respect the historic integrity of the district

The Historic Mills District area includes numerous historically-significant structures and sites. Given the importance of this historic fabric in the planning process, redevelopment in the area should address the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* when appropriate.

The 1998 Historic Mills District Master Plan had two alternatives: the Residential Development Alternative; and the Stadium Development Alternative. These two differed in the use of land east of Chicago Avenue, one showing residential development, and the other showing a new baseball ballpark for the Minnesota Twins. The City is continuing to explore alternative ballpark sites, including a site south of Washington Avenue and fronting on Portland Avenue.

In the two years since publication of the plan, a significant number of projects have been undertaken or announced in conformance with the urban design plan and the design guidelines including the Tailrace Phase of Mill Ruins Park, two hotels, renovations to the Milwaukee Road Depot, conversion of the Train Shed to an indoor ice skating facility, conversion of the North Star, Stone Arch, and Utility Buildings into residential lofts, and new residential apartments on Parcel D. The Minnesota Historical Society has also proceeded with its plans to put a Mill City Museum in the Washburn Crosby Building in partnership with a developer who will be converting part of the building into professional offices. In addition, the Open Book Center has opened along Washington Avenue.

This project was not specifically anticipated by the 1998 plan but achieves the basic goals identified in the plan.

Early in 2000, MCDA determined that the Historic Mills District Master Plan would need to be updated to deal with three new conditions:

- Selection of a riverfront location by the Guthrie Theater for its new three-playhouse facility on the site previously designated as the potential ballpark site
- Decision to locate the Light Rail Transit (LRT) line along South 5th Street and not in the median of Washington Avenue as proposed in the June 1998 plan
- The need to develop a coherent parking strategy for the Historic Mills District

The Historic Mills District Master Plan Update Planning Process

An Historic Mills District Master Plan Update planning task force, chaired by MCDA, was formed to include City, County, State agencies, and other major stakeholders. Funding for the update plan was by MCDA and the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

Urban Design Associates was selected, along with SRF Consulting Group, Inc., to conduct a three month planning process which would re-engage the District stakeholders and the public to produce a revision to the Historic Mills District Master Plan. The revision focused primarily on the area bounded by the Mississippi River, Washington, 3rd, and 11th Avenues.

The first steps were to gather data on all the new development projects underway, including the Milwaukee Road Depot, the Brighton Development projects, and the Mill City Museum, and to meet with the Guthrie Theater to discuss their plans for the riverfront site. Stakeholder meetings with property owners, developers, and agencies were held in April 2000.

A two day design charrette was conducted at the offices of MCDA in May 2000, culminating in a public meeting on 25 May 2000 at City Hall to present the results of the charrette.

A draft Update plan was prepared in June 2000. The final Update Plan was revised later in 2000 and will become an amendment to the Historic Mills District Master Plan in 2001.



Figure 2 View of the Mills District from the northwest

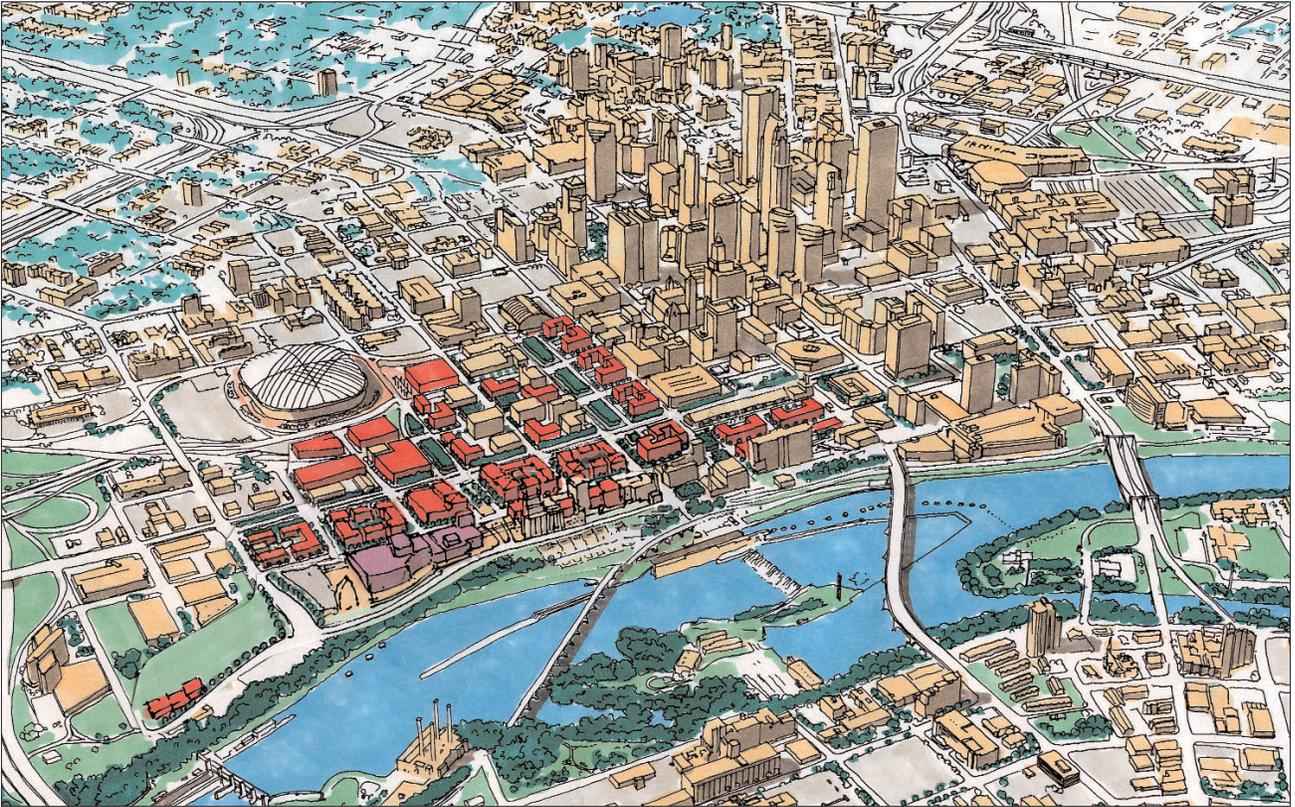


Figure 3 Aerial view of the Guthrie Alternative

2 The Guthrie Alternative

The Guthrie Alternative, illustrated above and on the following pages, amends the Historic Mills District Master Plan to accommodate the future construction of the Guthrie Theater on a site east of Chicago Avenue and north of 2nd Street. Plan revisions proposed for amendment as part of the Guthrie Alternative are limited to the area illustrated in Figure 5. Plan elements shown for other portions of the Historic Mills District are either: a) illustrations of elements included in the previously approved Mills District Plan that were not reconsidered as part of this planning phase, or b) options being proposed for further future consideration (e.g., potential parking options south of

Washington Avenue). Important issues that are addressed in the Guthrie Alternative include:

- A refined design for Chicago Avenue
- Site plan and architectural guidelines for the future Guthrie Theater
- A new residential prototype block to supplement the five prototype blocks in the June 1998 Historic Mills Master Plan
- A revised streetscape treatment for Washington Avenue and streetscape design guidelines for the district
- A parking strategy for the Historic Mills District

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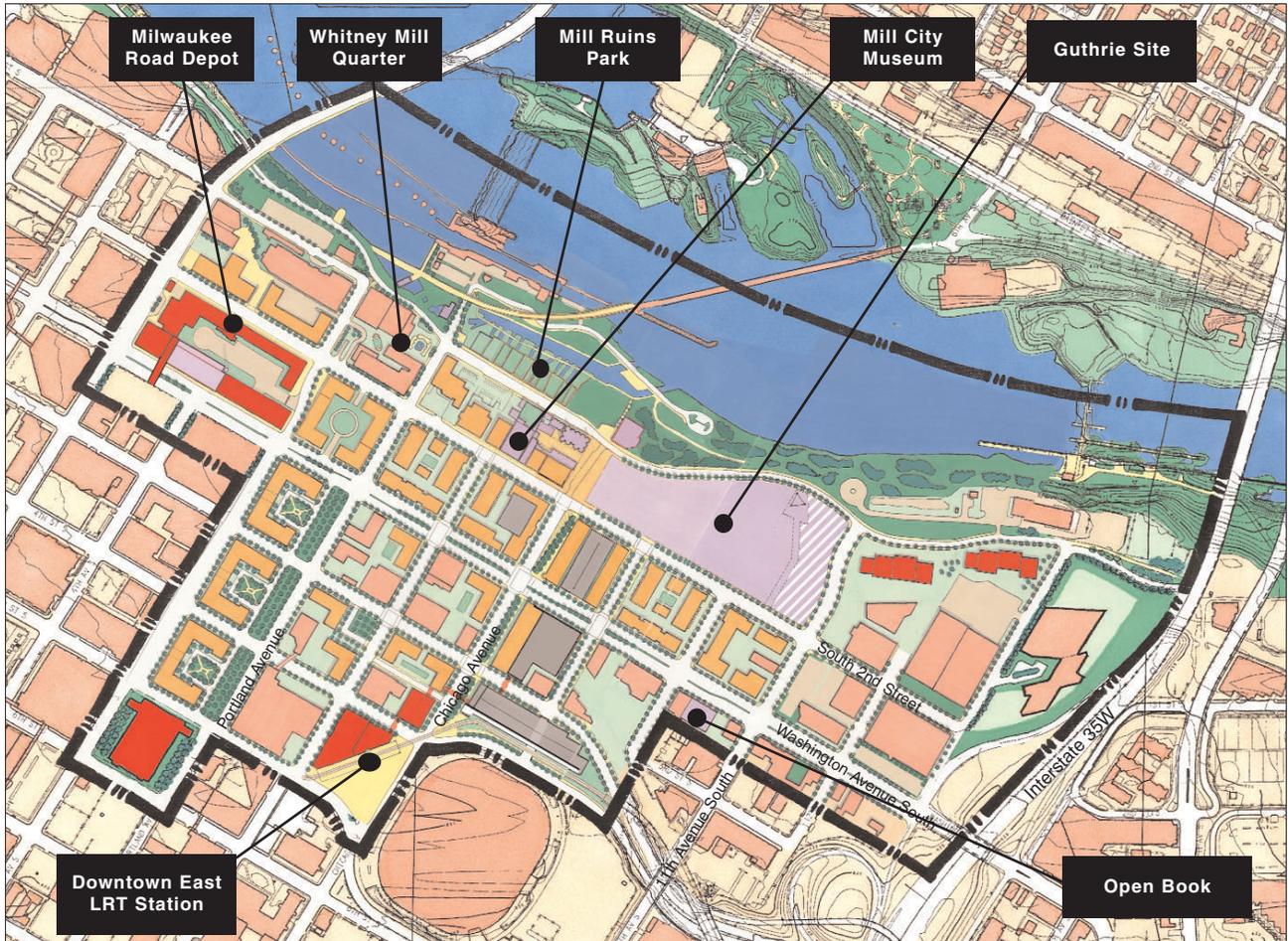


Figure 4 Vacant industrial sites will be transformed into a downtown cultural and residential district

Legend	
	Parks & Open Space
	Mixed-Use Development
	Commercial Development
	Cultural/Recreation/Entertainment
	Guthrie Expansion
	Structured Parking
	Existing Buildings
	Plaza

The issue of massing was also addressed. Participants felt the massing plan should not diminish the prominence of historic buildings and agreed that an eight- or nine-story height was appropriate for the area south of Washington Avenue. In addition, participants agreed that Parcels 'A' and 'B' should be limited to four or five stories. For Parcels 'C', 'D' and 'E', participants agreed that the general height limit would be four to five stories. Occasional taller heights would be allowed (up to a maximum of eight stories) if

needed for functional reasons, to add architectural variety, to increase density, to maintain marketability, or to preserve view corridors.

West of Chicago Avenue

Most of the urban design plan west of Chicago Avenue has remained intact, including the street framework, open space plan, parking plan, phasing plan, and building heights. The key changes to the plans have been to illustrate the actual building foot-

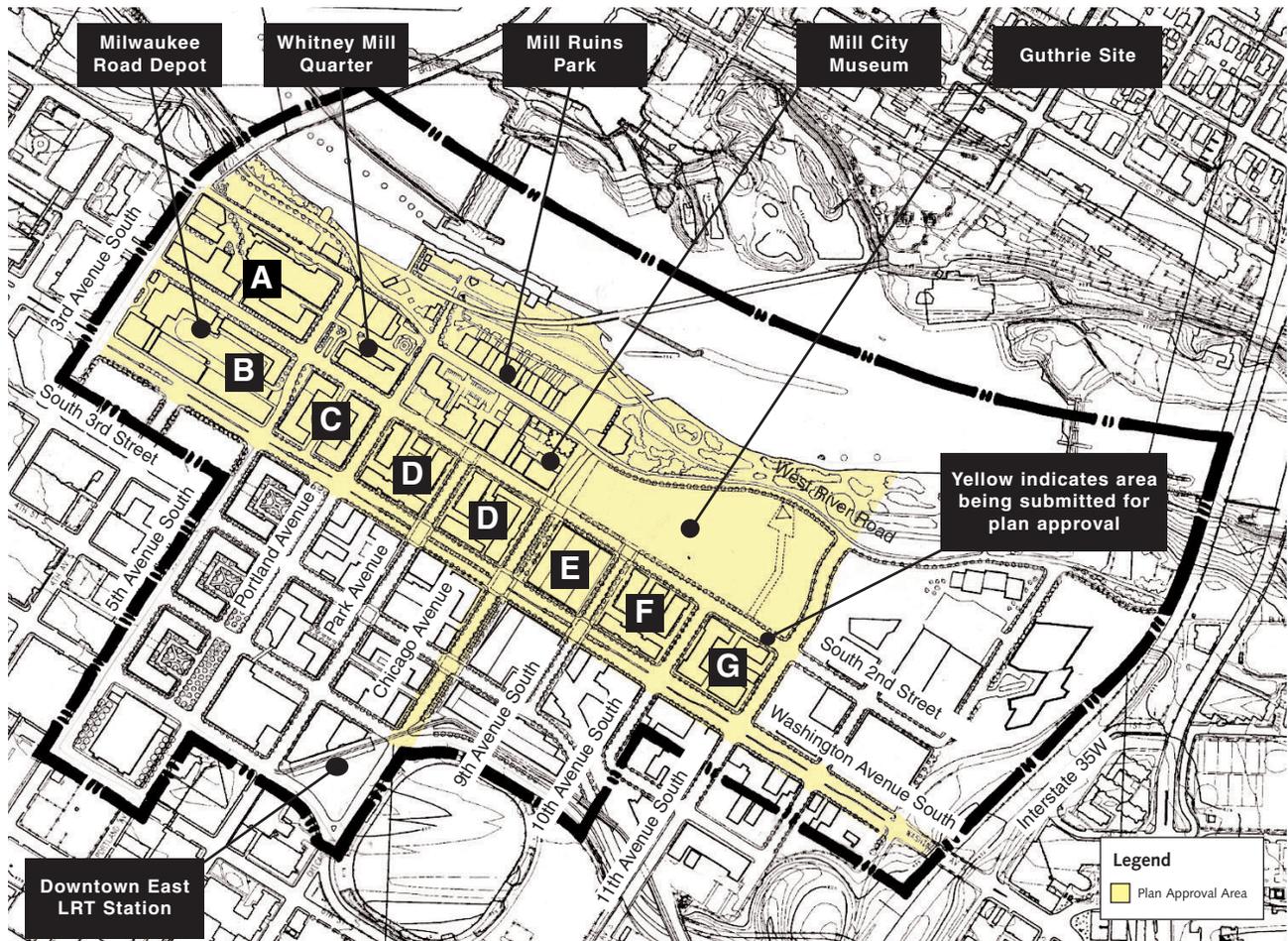


Figure 5 Parcel Designation Plan

prints of the Milwaukee Road and Brighton Developments and the two proposed residential projects along 2nd Street south of the RiverWest apartment building. The approved skyway connection across Washington Avenue at the Depot project is also illustrated in the Master Plan.

East of Chicago Avenue

The Guthrie Theater site is smaller than the proposed ballpark site. It is bounded by Chicago Avenue on the west, 11th Avenue on the east, the West River Parkway on the North,

and 2nd Street on the south. This permits the development blocks south of 2nd Street to be residential with ground floor retail. Ground floor retail is necessary at Chicago Avenue and Washington Avenues, and is strongly encouraged along 2nd Street, especially at corners. An on-street parking test should be conducted on Washington Avenue since short-term parking is important to retail success. An electrical substation for Xcel Energy will have to be accommodated in or near the development area, and discussions with Xcel Energy to identify a substation

location that complements the proposed Mills District development have been started.

Chicago Avenue

Chicago Avenue should receive special treatment to create a high-quality, pedestrian-friendly connection from the Downtown East LRT station/Metrodome to the riverfront.

The planning process revealed that the design of Chicago Avenue between 2nd Street and the West River Parkway is a critical issue. There were two differing approaches:

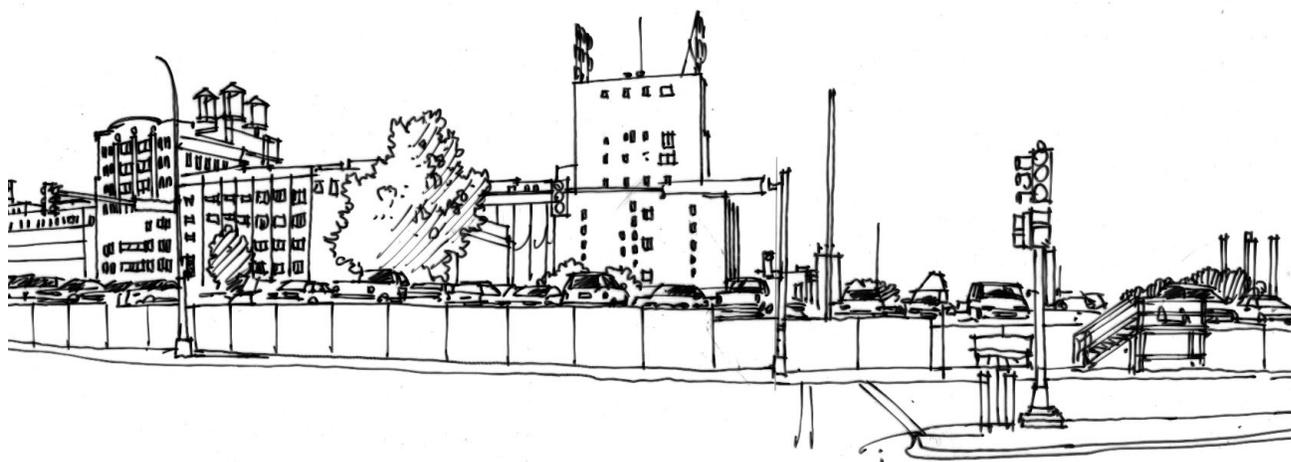


Figure 6 Existing view from Chicago Avenue towards the river

connect Chicago Avenue to West River Parkway as proposed in the June 1998 plan; or create a cul-de-sac or plaza with no vehicular connection to West River Parkway. Discussions with stakeholders resulted in agreement that a cul-de-sac was unworkable and a plaza with no vehicular connection (except for emergency vehicles) was the preferred alternative between 2nd Street and West River Parkway. A pedestrian and bicycle connection to West River Parkway will be created, and a driveway off of 2nd Street will provide access to the Mill City Museum and Humboldt complex.

The remaining public right-of-way between 2nd Street and West River Parkway will be open space. The design of the open space will be determined in the future in a separate process that needs to be inclusive of stakeholders. The design will need to consider the plaza's relationship to the environment including the river, historic district, Guthrie,

retail, and residential development. Consideration also needs to be given to plaza safety and programming. The plaza must be a special and exciting public place. The plaza design should allow for a future vehicular connection between 2nd Street and West River Parkway. This vehicular connection could be implemented in the event that the Guthrie Theater decides to site the theater complex in a manner that does not embrace and support a plaza. Thus, instead of a full public plaza, an intermittent street where vehicular access is limited, or a full vehicular access street could be developed. The bus staging area for the Mill City Museum will be along 2nd Street downriver from the driveway.

From 2nd Street to Washington Avenue, Chicago Avenue will be a two-way, non-divided street with a wider sidewalk on the east side. Suggested improvements are included on page 25.

Washington Avenue

The planning process reiterated the participants' desire to transform Washington Avenue into a pedestrian/retail-friendly urban boulevard. Suggested improvements are included on page 27. Creating an environment that supports ground floor retail uses in existing and newly built structures remains a primary objective. An on-street parking test should be conducted on Washington Avenue since short-term parking is vital to retail uses.

Retail Development

As the new residential neighborhood develops, it will one day be necessary to have neighborhood service retail. It will be important for spin-off retail (especially eating and drinking establishments) to locate near the cluster of entertainment, recreational, and cultural uses that are proposed. The hope is that one day

Washington Avenue will be less of a barrier and the neighborhoods north and south of Washington will feel like they are more of a consistent whole. In such a case, 2nd Street South would not be the focal center of the area. Instead, Washington would be the center of a new neighborhood that would extend south from the river. Streets that connect from Elliot Park and Downtown East to the river (Chicago and Portland), would be of a higher order than those that do not connect (Park, 9th, and 10th). The intersections of high priority streets are the first places to encourage retail uses. Once retail is established at a select group of major intersections, retail could infill in the center of the blocks along the high priority streets. Building designs that allow for conversion of street-level space to retail uses should be considered. The location of retail should occur according to the following list of priorities ranked in order:

- 1 Intersection of Washington and Chicago
- 2 Intersection of 2nd and Chicago
- 3 Infill in interior of block along Chicago between Washington and 2nd Street South
- 4 Intersection of Washington and Portland / intersection of 11th and Washington / intersection of Washington and 5th
- 5 Intersection of 2nd and Portland
- 6 Infill in interior of blocks along Washington
- 7 Infill in interior of blocks along Chicago, south of Washington

Transit and Parking

The construction of the Downtown East LRT station will provide a new transit choice for the Mills District (see Figure 20). In order to further enhance transit access to and from the Mills District, the Guthrie Alternative recommends extension of a Metro Transit route (tentatively No.18) from the Nicollet Mall downtown, through the Mills District on 2nd Street, to the Downtown East LRT station. This route will need a turnaround/layover location, tentatively proposed for inclusion in parking to be built south of Washington.

In addition to vehicular parking needs, several uses will need locations for bus parking. These include school and tour buses for the Heritage Center, Guthrie and Metrodome. In the short-term, these could be accommodated in the ground floor of the Gateway parking facility. In the longer-term, bus parking also could be included in parking facilities to be built south of Washington.

The Guthrie Alternative proposes a plan to meet the parking needs for developments north of Washington, which is described in more detail in Part III of this report. The parking approach from the June 1998 plan remains in effect: all parking should to the maximum extent possible be below-grade. Where there is above-grade parking, buildings should line all or most of the exterior of the parking deck. Such 'liner' buildings should include actively programmed residential, commercial, or cultural uses. Parking for residential uses is

proposed to be included in the residential developments. The Milwaukee Depot project will include sufficient parking to meet its needs. Parking facilities on Parcels A and C will be sized to also support the parking needs for the Whitney Mill Quarter and Mill Place. Three additional public parking facilities are proposed to serve other new non-residential developments north of Washington. A 390-space ramp on Parcel D (lined on four sides by residential development) will provide the primary parking supply for the Mill City Museum and the office tenants above it. A parking facility of about 500 spaces is proposed under the Guthrie complex and will be used by Guthrie guests and other uses in the area. Another 500-space facility on Parcel E (lined on two sides by residential development) will meet overflow Guthrie needs, plus help support the parking needs for other non-residential uses in the area.

The proposed development in the Historic Mills District will displace about 2,900 existing surface parking spaces. Users of these existing spaces include the developments north of Washington, many buildings south of Washington that do not have their own dedicated parking, downtown commuters, and Metrodome and other special events. The parking plan described above will meet the needs of existing and new developments north of Washington but will not address the remaining displaced parking needs for the area south of Washington or downtown commuters.

In addition to encouraging enhanced transit options, the Guthrie alternative outlines two options for addressing these remaining displaced parking needs (see Part III). As shown in Figure 15, two major parking facilities totaling about 2,000 spaces could be built between Washington and the Metrodome, east of Chicago Avenue. These facilities would serve area buildings without sufficient parking, including Thresher Square, Open Book and Valspar, as well as Metrodome events. Proximity to the Downtown East LRT station also would allow these facilities to provide some peripheral downtown parking.

An alternative way to meet displaced parking needs would involve construction of about 2,000 parking spaces in mined underground space (see Figures 16 and 17). CNA Consulting Engineers explored utilizing mined underground space (i.e., in the sandstone layer about 60 feet under the surface, rather than immediately under the surface) for parking. They concluded that this type of parking is feasible in the Mills District. In the mined space parking alternative, only a small above-grade

facility would be required south of Washington, to provide transit lay-over and bus parking and some additional parking.

Both of these parking options merit further exploration as part of additional planning in the area, but neither is proposed for approval at this time.

Proposed Pedestrian Connections

A pedestrian tunnel under 2nd Street is proposed to connect the Parcel E parking facility to the Guthrie complex. If parking needs on the south side of Washington are met by above-grade facilities, skyways connecting those parking facilities to the Downtown East LRT station are recommended. With the exception of the approved skyway connection to the Milwaukee Depot, no skyways crossing Washington Avenue or crossing streets anywhere on the north side of Washington are recommended. Strict limitations of off-grade pedestrian systems will help to cultivate a healthy, vibrant street life in this new downtown neighborhood.

Plan Implementation

The Historic Mills District Master Plan establishes a framework to guide future land uses in the greater Mills District. This Plan Amendment is limited to the sub-area represented in Figure 5. Within this sub-area, all blocks except two are zoned C3A (Community Activity Center) which allows for the proposed uses. The two blocks bounded by West River Parkway, 10th, 11th and Washington Avenues are zoned I1 (Light Industrial). In order to implement the Plan Amendment, it is recommended that these two blocks each be rezoned to C3A at the appropriate time. This document's following sections—Guthrie Design Guidelines, Streetscape and Landscape Guidelines, Recommended Parking and Transportation Strategy, and Stormwater Management—provide additional information that will be valuable as the Plan Amendment is implemented.

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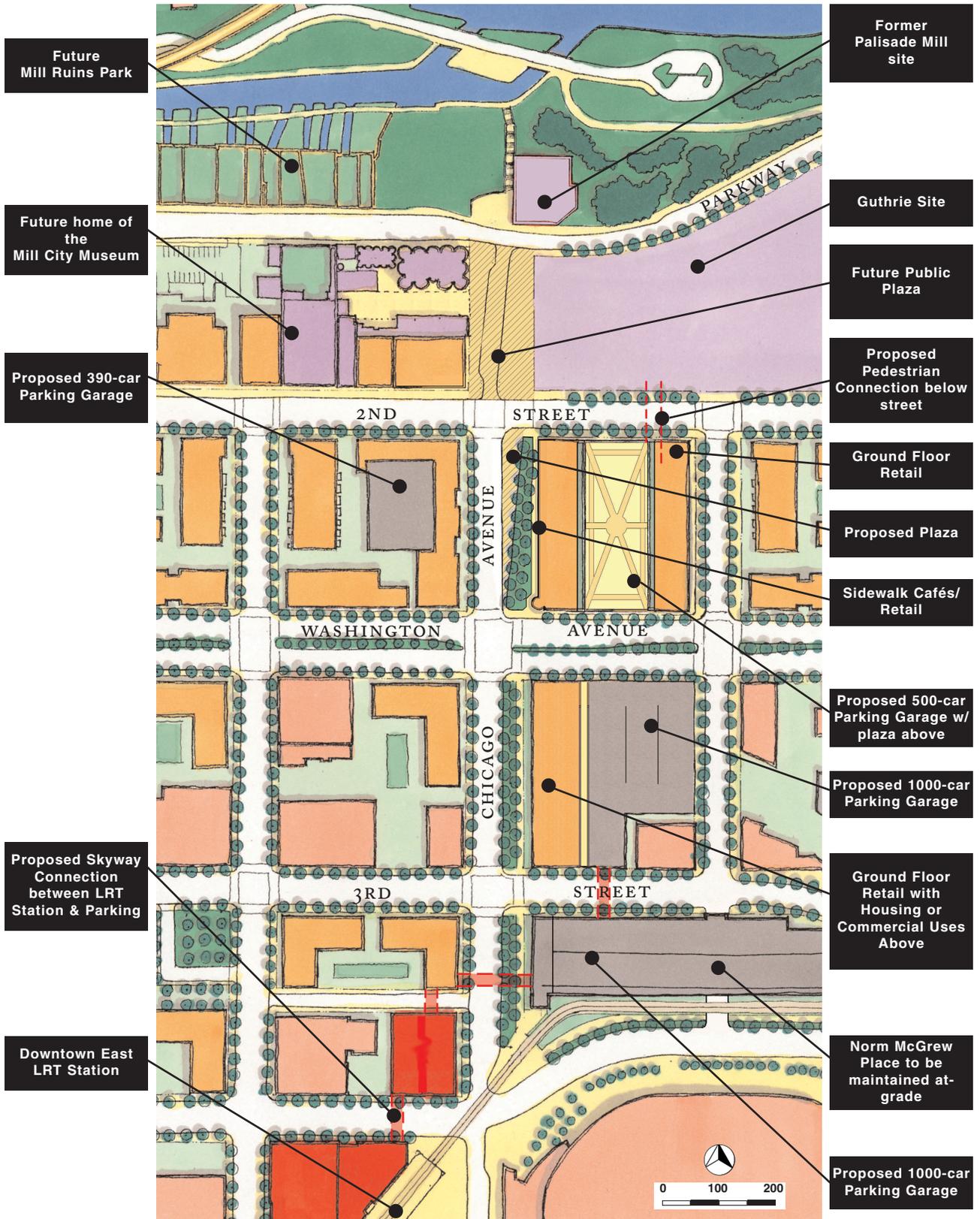


Figure 7 Chicago Avenue Preferred Alternative – Sidewalk Cafés/Retail Scheme

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Figure 8 Chicago Avenue Today: A parking lot from Washington Avenue to the Parkway



Figure 9 Chicago Avenue Tomorrow: The creation of a new public space will compliment the restoration of the Historic Mills Buildings, new residential development and the Guthrie Theater

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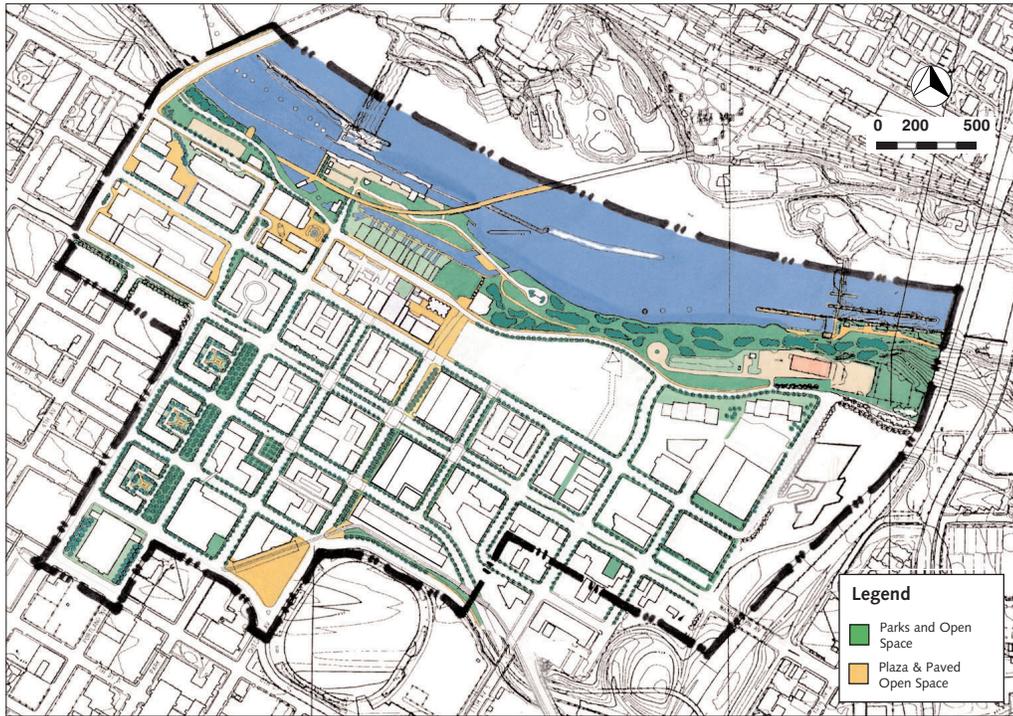


Figure 10 Streetscapes/Parks and Open Space Plan: Fingers of green space will connect the riverfront park to Downtown Note: To preserve the historically industrial character of the Mills District, new street trees are not recommended along street frontages which contain historic buildings

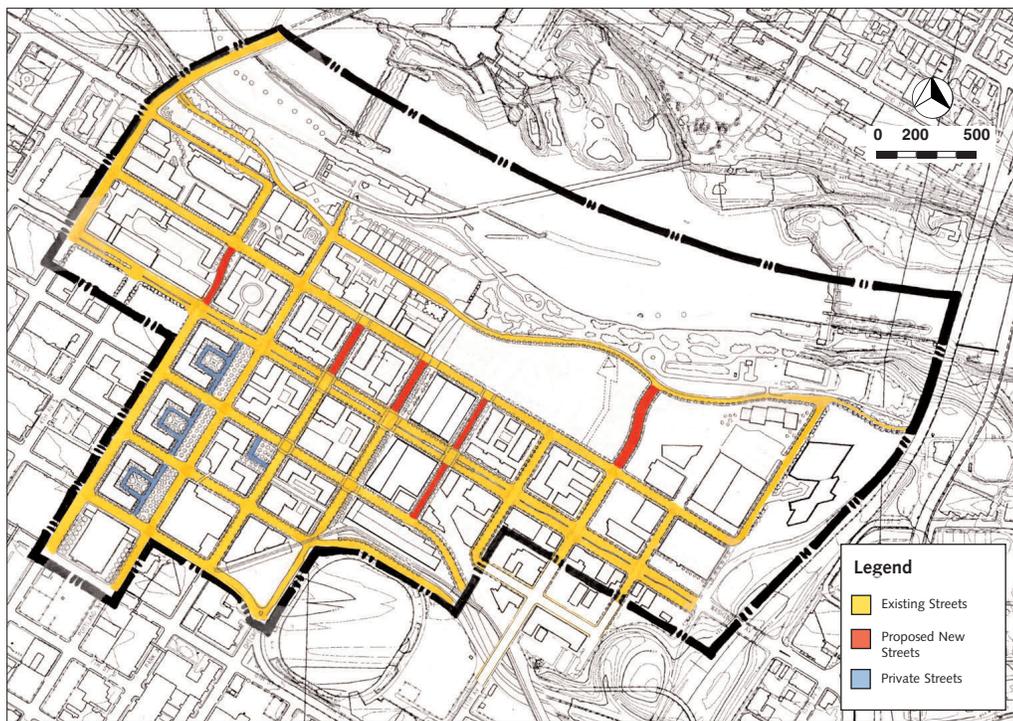


Figure 11 Public Improvements Plan: Downtown street grid will extend to the river

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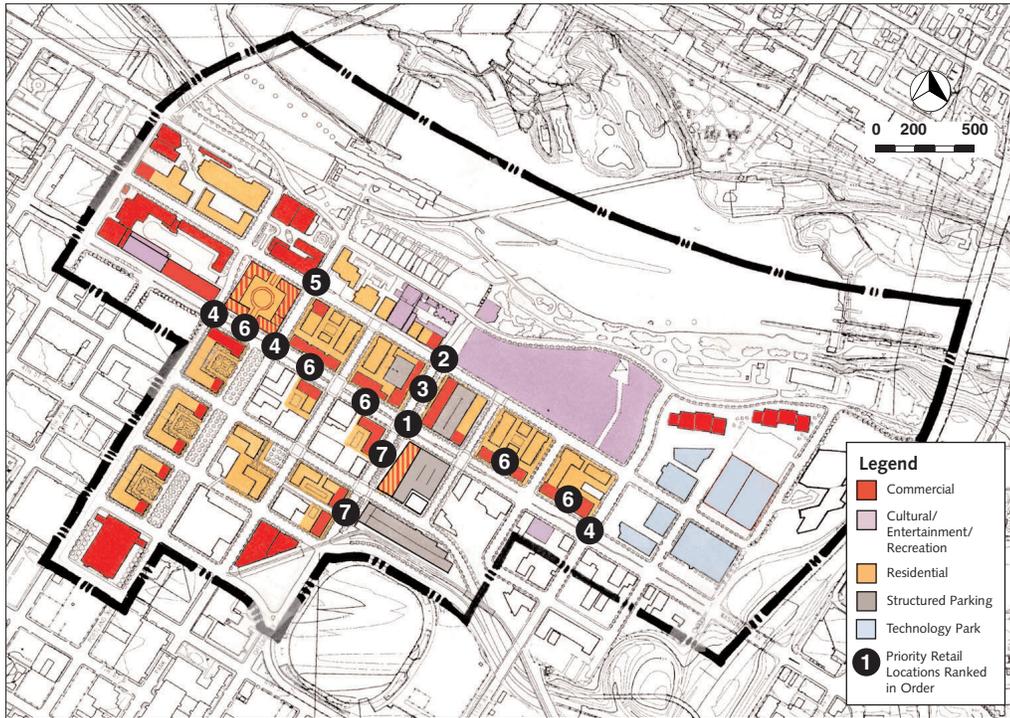


Figure 12 Ground Floor Land Use with Retail Prioritization indicated (does not include mined space parking)

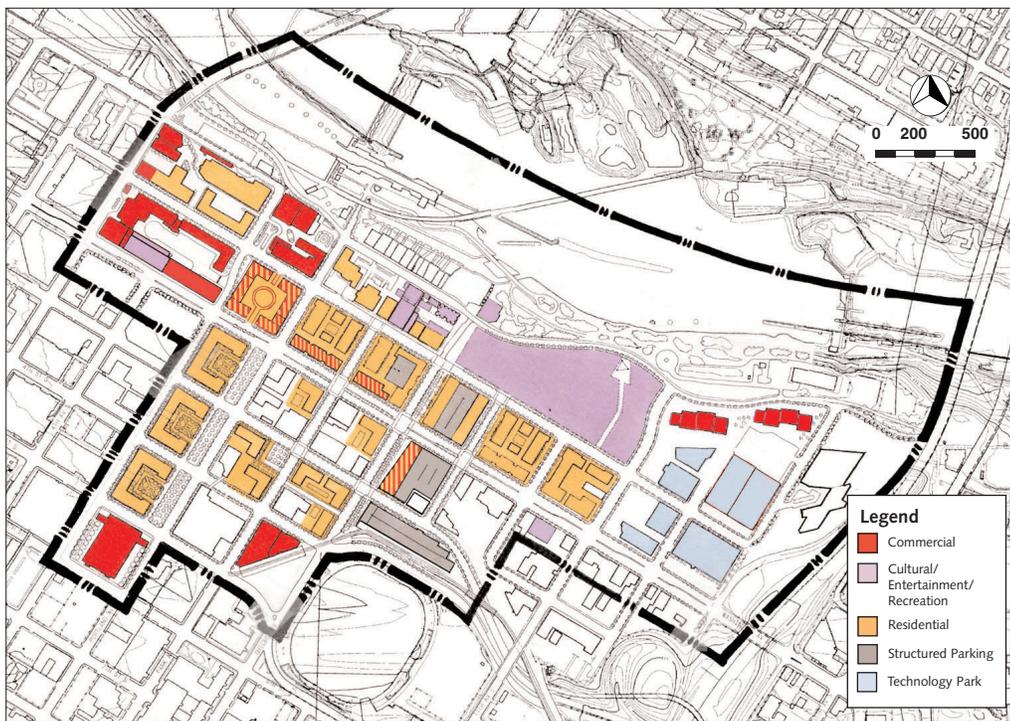


Figure 13 Land Use Second Story and Above

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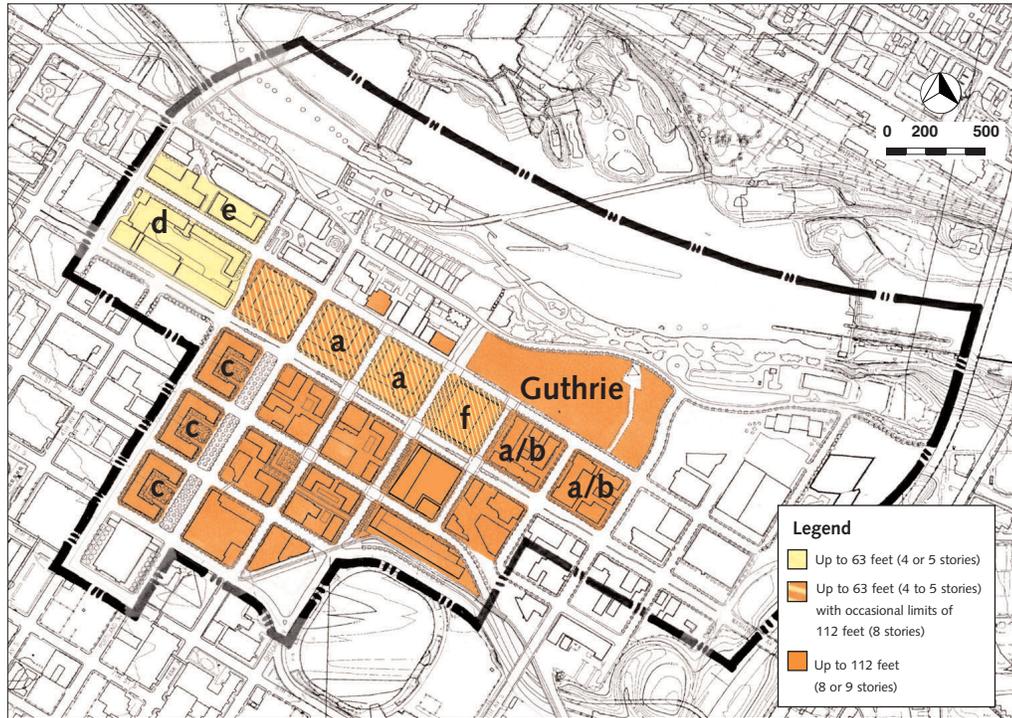


Figure 14 Proposed Building Heights (Letters reference block prototypes/illustrations)
Note: Prototypes a–e can be found in the original Historic Mills District Master Plan (published June 1998) adopted by the City Council in June 1999.

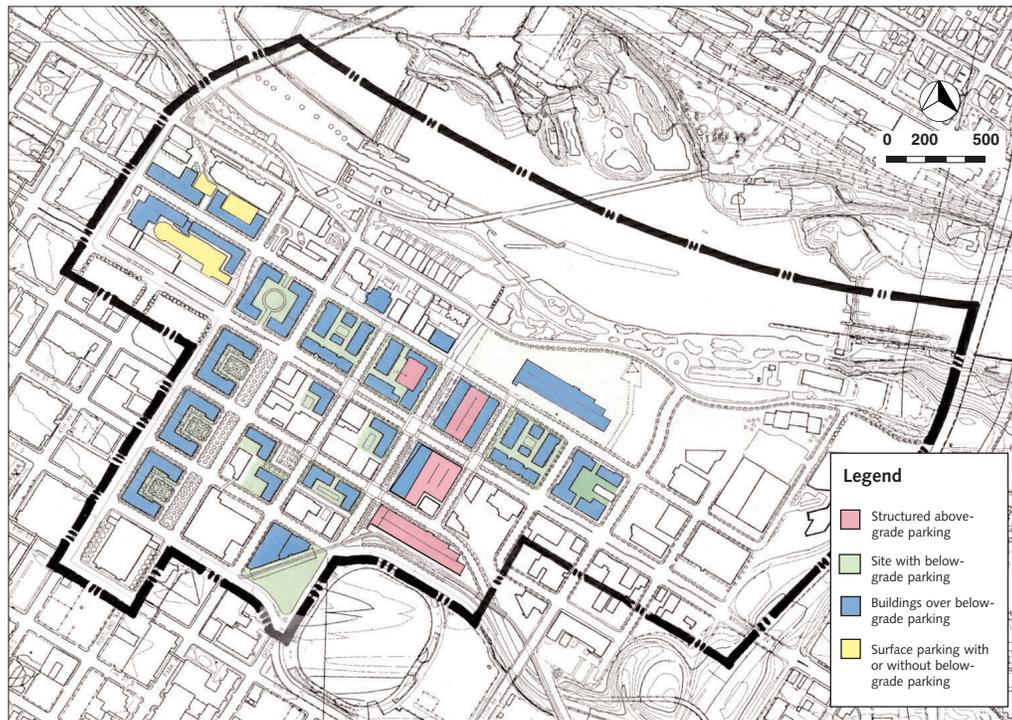


Figure 15 Parking: Each block's residential parking will be self-contained below-grade. Parking for non-residential uses will be provided in several strategically located shared parking facilities (does not include mined space parking).

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Figure 16 Mined Space Parking Master Plan

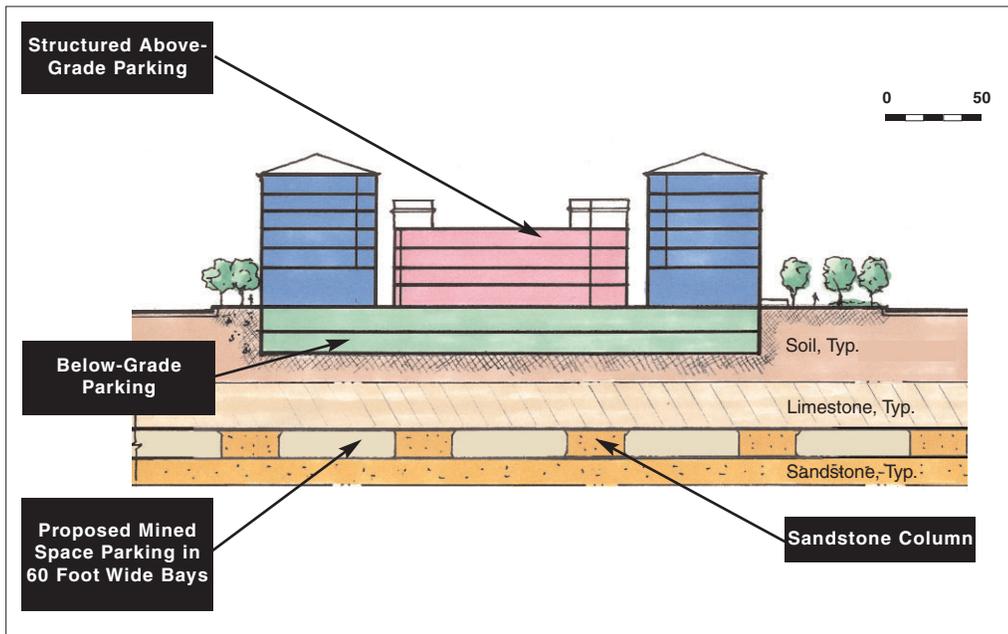


Figure 17 Cross Section illustrating structured above-grade parking, structured below-grade parking, and mined space parking within the sandstone layer.

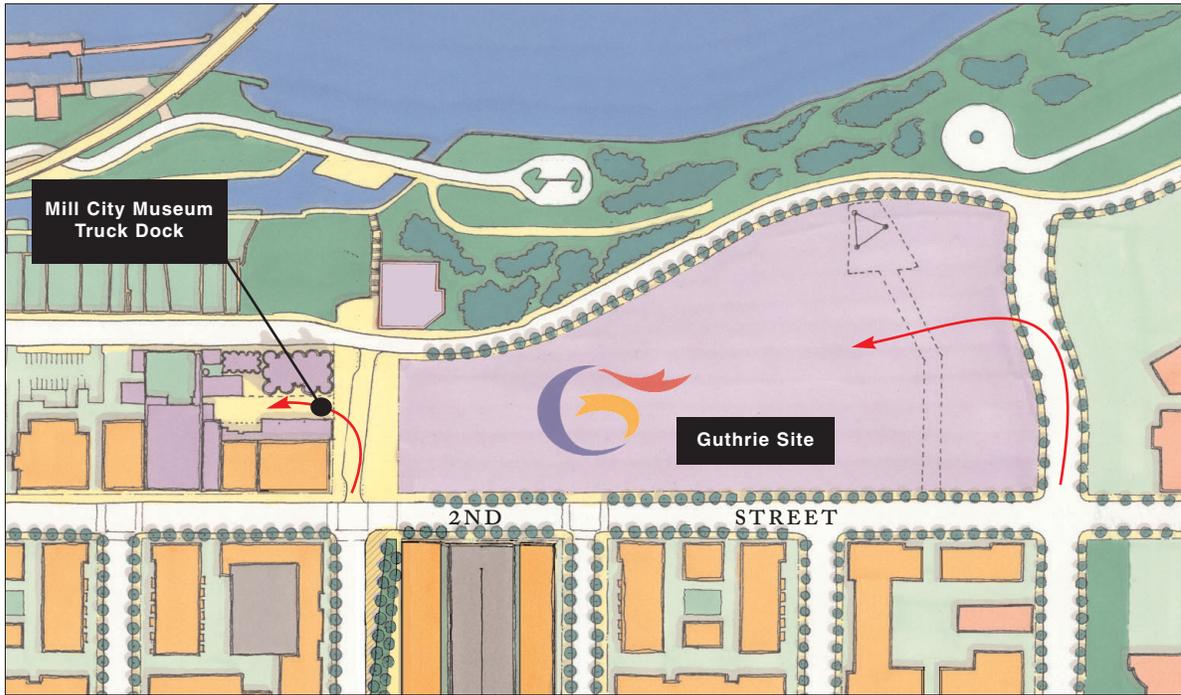


Figure 18 Proposed Truck Access: Truck access is not permitted along West River Parkway and will not be possible on the Chicago Avenue side of the building if a plaza is built. Truck access is possible on 2nd Street South if it is sited so that it does not create conflicts with pedestrian movements or increase truck traffic on primarily residential streets.



Figure 19 Proposed Bus Staging

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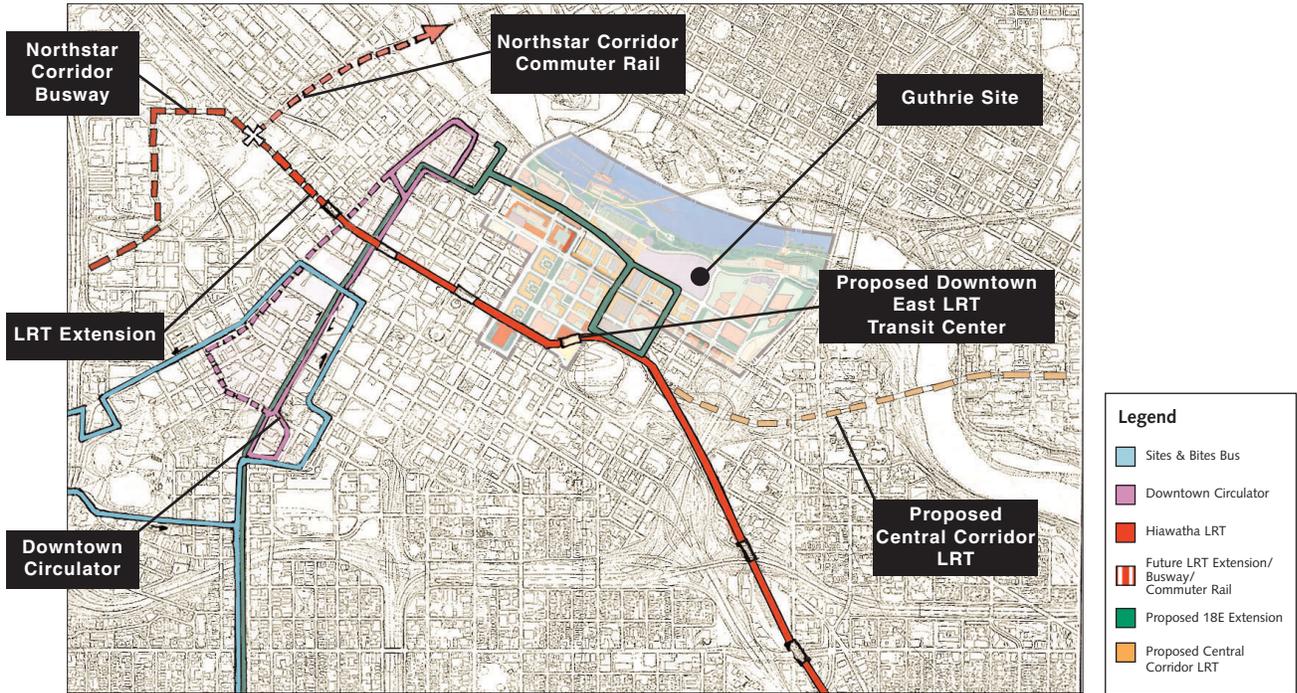


Figure 20 Major Transit Connections (Note: In addition, bus routes 7, 19 and 20 serve Washington Avenue east of 4th Avenue South; Routes 18 and 20 serve 4th Street South; and Routes 10, 17 and 25 serve the western end of the plan area along 3rd Avenue South.

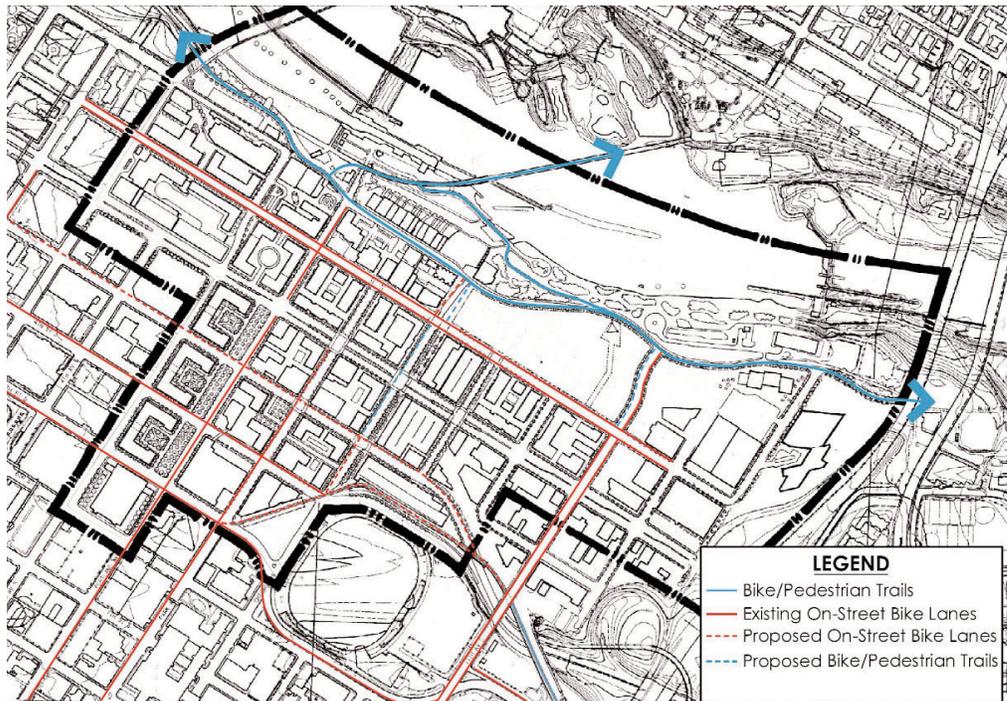


Figure 21 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan: Creates links to existing connections

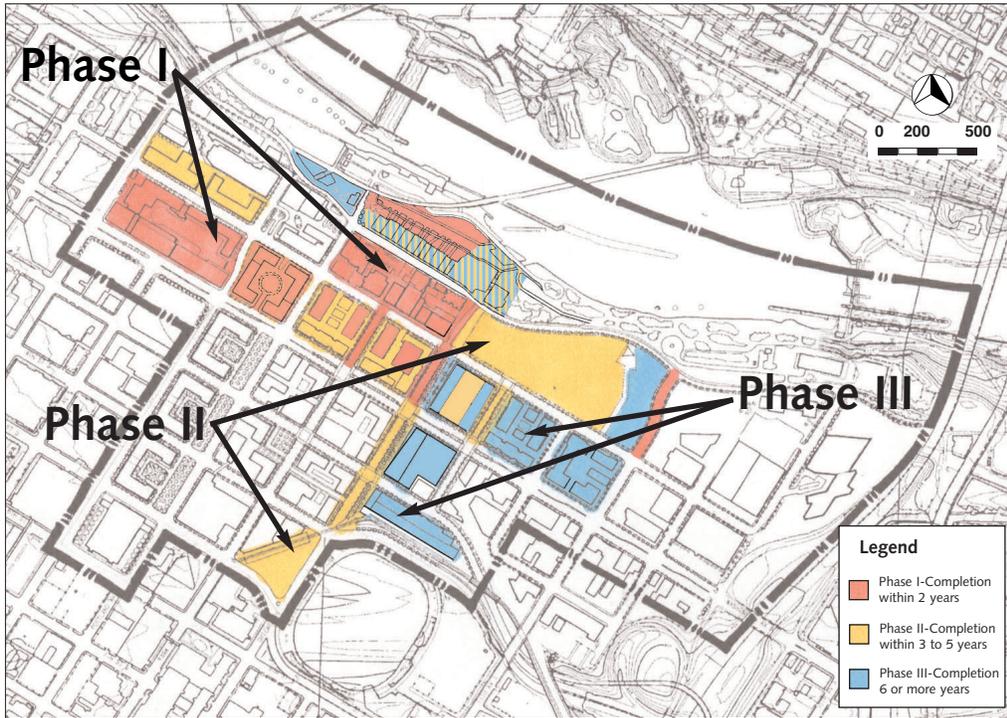


Figure 22 Phasing Plan: Build on existing strengths