

Figure 4.16  
Development Precinct 12: Municipal Service

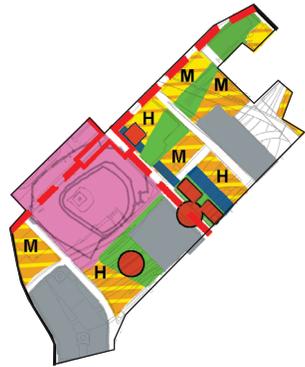


Figure 4.17  
Development Precinct 13: Air Rights  
Development Over "The Cut"

Transit facility) major redevelopment in this precinct is not likely or recommended. However, in keeping with the proposal put forth in the Hennepin County Station Area Plan, the berm along North 5th Street and Sixth Avenue North could be redeveloped with a band of medium-density, mixed use development that houses commercial or government offices and, perhaps, low-impact light industrial development. Wrapping the site with active uses would help to create a buffer between the Energy Resource Center and the developing neighborhoods to the north and east.

*Development Precinct 13: Air Rights Development District over "The Cut"*

A large swath of railway and highway lands cut through the North Loop and interrupts the fabric of Downtown Minneapolis. In the course of doing fieldwork, the Consultant Team dubbed this area of Downtown as "The Cut." In conjunction with the findings and proposals of the Hennepin County Multi-Modal Station Area Plan, the team identified it as a location ripe with major redevelopment opportunities.

Within The Cut, the existing highway infrastructure is critical to the everyday function and overall economic competitiveness of Downtown. Likewise, when existing freight rail tracks along the Burlington Northern right of way are leased for commuter rail operations, it will be necessary to use land adjacent to these tracks for new rail sidings that will accommodate multiple commuter rail lines and inter-city lines (Amtrak). Nevertheless, allowing for the large space requirements of transportation infrastructure need not inhibit a cohesive environment between the North Loop and the Downtown Core.

As has been done in other cities, the airspace above this depression could, and should be developed by decking above the existing freeway and railroad tracks and reconnecting the downtown street grid through this area. This will not only re-knit the physical environment of the surrounding neighborhoods into one another, but will also create new development sites, or air rights parcels, built

above the existing ground plane on an at-grade level similar to the surrounding neighborhoods (see Figures 4.19 and 4.20, pages 46 and 47).

Redevelopment within and above The Cut includes several key projects that are the cornerstone for developing a multi-faceted new neighborhood in this precinct. The most important of these air rights development sites include the potential for a new ballpark and a new multi-modal transit station both of which will flank the extension of the LRT corridor on North 5th Street. Existing City policy reserves the existing surface parking lots located between North 5th Street, North 7th Street, Third Avenue North and the Burlington Northern right-of-way as the site for a new downtown ballpark. However, it is still not clear that a ballpark can be developed on this site anytime in the immediate future. That being the case, the Consultant Team was asked to develop two different options for what redevelopment in The Cut should look like in twenty years. Both schemes include development of the multi-modal station and associated redevelopment north of North 5th Street. In the area south of 5th Street, Option 1 recognizes and lays out the framework for the construction of a new urban ballpark and is considered the preferred scheme. Option 2 was developed as a back-up scheme in case a ballpark is never realized at this location.

*Option 1:* Redevelopment of The Cut that includes a new Ballpark. In the event that a ballpark can be developed above The Cut, it will need to be sited and designed in such a way as to ensure maximum flexibility for the creation of at-grade rail infrastructure that will satisfy the anticipated needs of a full-blown commuter rail and inter-city rail network. In addition to the ballpark, the multi-modal station and the "underground" rail network, the remainder of this development precinct should be filled out with a host of ancillary medium-intensity, mixed-use development sites. All of these sites should be woven together with a series of meandering parks and plazas that stretch from North 5th Street to Washington Avenue North and help to reconnect the station and the ballpark