



**City of Saint Paul
STATION AREA PLANNING
COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE WORKBOOK
Victoria Station Area**

November 2009

**URBAN
STRATEGIES
INC**

**COLLIERS
INTERNATIONAL**

**TURLEY
MARTIN
TUCKER**

Regina Flanagan
Art.
Landscape
Design.



PROGRAM

Welcome and thank-you for your interest in planning for the future of the Central Corridor! We hope this evening's Community Roundtable provides you with an opportunity to share and express your opinions; to learn something new; and most of all, to enjoy yourself with friends and neighbors! Today's program will be structured as follows:

5:30pm – 6:00pm: Interactive Display and Questions

Please take some time to review the panels and models on display and ask questions of the project team members here this evening.

6:00pm – 6:30pm: Welcoming Remarks and Presentation

Members of our project team, including Saint Paul Planning & Economic Development staff and our consultants Urban Strategies Inc., will present welcoming remarks, a brief overview of the Central Corridor station area planning process, and a description of the intended outcomes for the evening.

6:30pm – 7:30pm: Small Group Discussions

The core component of the evening is a series of facilitated small group discussions. After the presentation, please make your way to the table designated for your station area (this should be the station name on the cover of this workbook). Once groups are convened at their respective tables, members of our Project Team will guide participants through each of the four themes we would like to discuss this evening.

7:30pm – 8:00pm: Reporting Back

Once all groups have had an opportunity to discuss each of the four themes, a reporter will be assigned from each table to share with the larger audience the key themes, ideas and recommendations that emerged from your discussion.

WHY ARE WE HERE TONIGHT?

The City of Saint Paul is continuing with the next phase of planning for LRT in the Central Corridor: Detailed Station Area Planning. You are here because we need your help!

The recently completed Central Corridor Development Strategy (CCDS) - **a strategic visioning and policy document** - provides a strong foundation for thinking about and guiding decisions affecting public and private investment in the Central Corridor. Building on the broader, community-endorsed Vision, Principles, Initiatives and other ideas contained within the CCDS, **Station Area Plans** permit a **more detailed exploration of the many issues and opportunities contained within individual station areas and communities adjacent to the planned LRT**. The end results will be station area plans, and will include detailed land use, ordinance, urban design and implementation strategies that will assist in creating the type of place you told us the Corridor should become – a place with **vibrant neighborhoods, stronger businesses, and more beautiful urban places**.

This evening's discussion is the **first** in a series of public events designed to collect your input into this station area planning process. As a stakeholder with a specific interest in the proposed Victoria LRT station area, the Station Area Planning project team would like your help in identifying the **key issues, opportunities and concerns that this community shares**. Specifically, we would like to hear your thoughts on any number of the following issues:



- the identification of important **built and natural heritage resources** in your community, including the key gathering places that help to define this area
- needed **open space and public realm improvements**, including new and improved park and open spaces, streetscaping, and improved north-south connections between neighborhoods and University Avenue
- priorities for **capital funding projects**, such as new community spaces or road and/or sidewalk improvements
- neighborhood concerns with **transportation and parking issues**
- suggestions for **LRT station design**, including access and appearance
- any concerns related to **new land use and development**, including height, use and location
- economic development potential
- any other issues or concerns you would like to discuss with respect to planning for transit, built form and land use in the area surrounding the proposed LRT station

The ideas and recommendations shared this evening will be used to guide a forthcoming series of focused design workshops (to be attended by the Project Team, local design professionals, members of our Project Steering Committee, and other interested stakeholders). A summary of tonight's feedback will also be presented at a series of public open house events planned for January 2010. A set of draft Station Area Plans for each of these three station areas is scheduled for completion by June 2010.

WHY CREATE STATION AREA PLANS?

Simply put, a Station Area Plan is a **blueprint for integrating decisions affecting built form, land use and public transit**. The success and use of public transit is strongly linked to the quality, density and configuration of its surrounding built environment. A Station Area Plan guides adjacent land use, public realm and built form to respond over time through a greater mix of building types and uses, and guides the orientation and connection of buildings and public spaces to adjacent stations.

Specifically, issues addressed in Station Area Plans include:

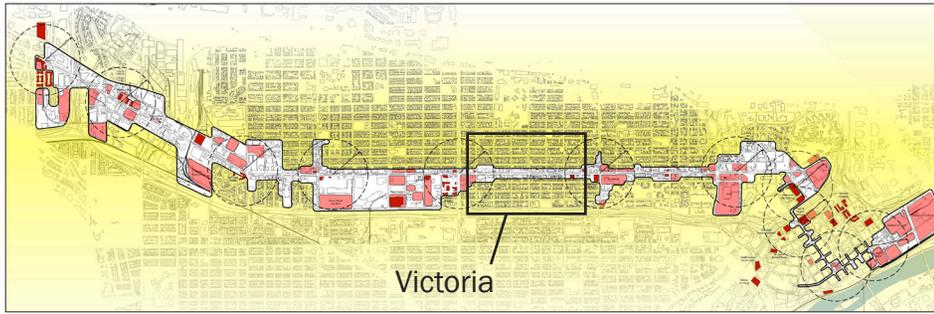
- documentation of **existing conditions**, including: open space; access, transportation and parking; built form; land use, streetscape; and key places and destinations
- a summary of **community objectives** and concerns
- detailed **station area design principles**, including location, accessibility and pedestrian connections
- **concept plans illustrating positive, transit-supportive change** over time within each station area
- **concept plans for improved public spaces**, places, streetscaping and landscaping
- **recommendations for implementation**, including policy directions and regulatory amendments

HOW DO WE USE THESE WORKBOOKS?

These workbooks are divided into two main parts.

The first section (what you are reading now) is for you to take home with you. It describes our current station area planning study process, and provides brief summaries of the four key themes we would like to discuss this evening.

The second section of the workbook (the last page) is a place for you to record and share your ideas with the project team and fellow community members. This section is divided into the four themes described in the following pages, and includes a series of questions designed specifically for your station area. Please answer these questions in any format you wish – whether point form or sentence form – or simply use this space to offer any other thoughts or comments you may have. When finished, you will have the option to share your feedback in small group discussions, or you may leave your comments with any member of our project team here this evening.



THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – BUILDING ON OUR FOUNDATION

As previously mentioned, The CCDS is a broad, strategic document describing a vision and set of strategies that, over time, will leverage public and private investment to create a place with vibrant neighborhoods, stronger businesses, and more beautiful urban places.

The following excerpts from the CCDS are four of the key themes that current Station Area Planning will address in greater detail. Collectively, these themes describe **ideas about managing neighborhood change and stability; community and City-based initiatives; public realm improvements; and desirable new, transit-supportive building types**. Each has been summarized for their particular relevance to the station area we are discussing this evening, with specific questions included at the back of this booklet. We ask that you please consider each of the themes and answer the questions that interest you the most, or simply use these to prompt any other thoughts you wish to share.

THEME 1 - AREAS OF CHANGE & STABILITY

LRT has the potential to result in many positive changes along the Corridor, but that doesn't mean change is necessary or desirable everywhere. Identifying the potential for positive change, and describing strategies to manage change so that stable neighborhoods are preserved and strengthened, is the primary aim of the Development Strategy.

An excerpt from the CCDS' Areas of Change and Stability diagram (right) delineates the area within the Victoria Station Area that will most likely be the focus of change as a result of the LRT (shown in white); and areas where existing characteristics – whether low-rise residential or employment – are intended to be protected from change (shown in yellow).

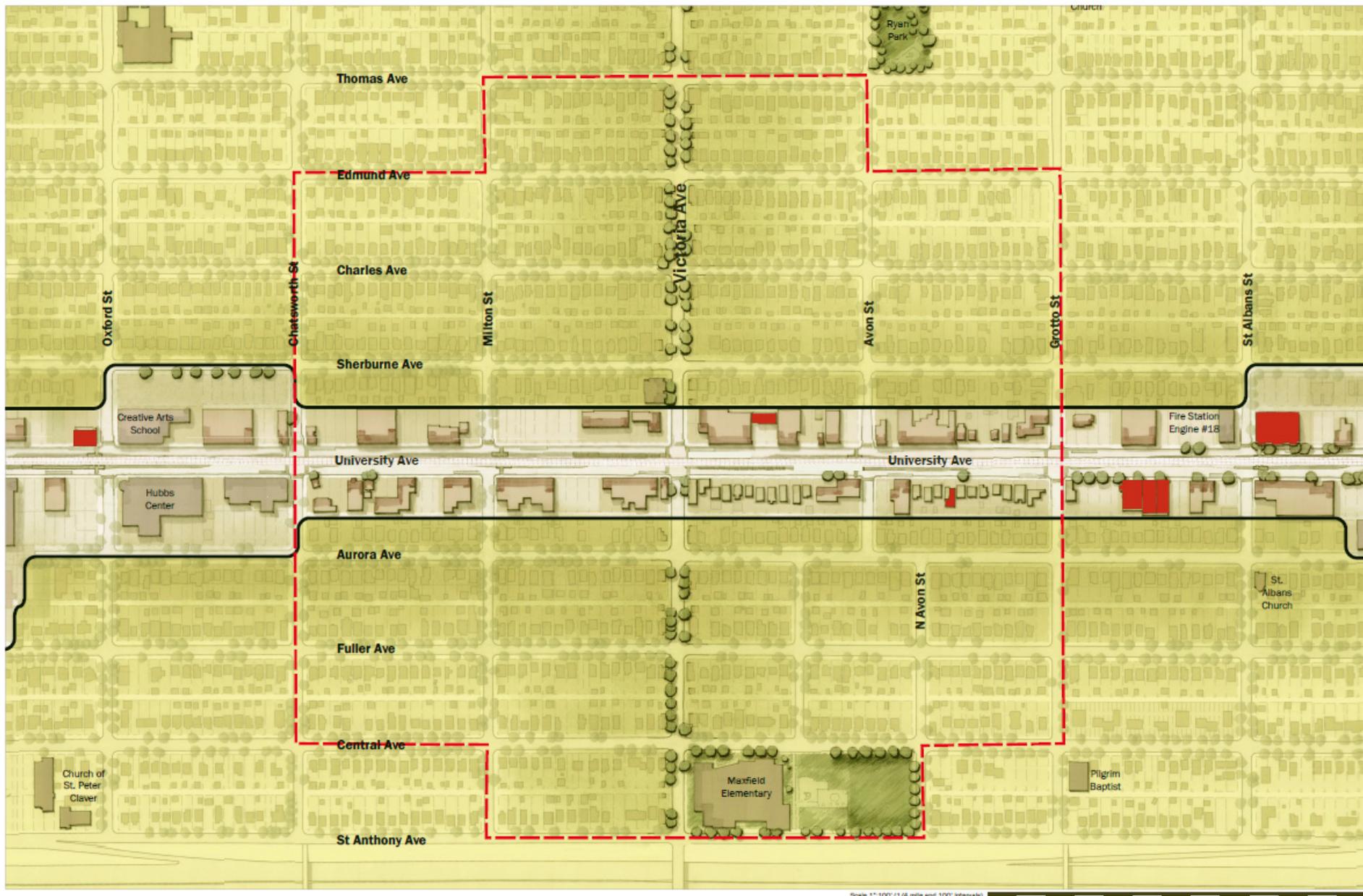
While most areas within the Area of Change boundary (the white area) will experience gradual change over time, areas in pink highlight sites that, due to their size, location, current status and others, may be entirely redeveloped over the next 20 years; while the red sites identify all recent and/or proposed development and investment.

Outside the white areas, which are the yellow or 'stable' areas, very little change is proposed. The emphasis here should be on preserving and enhancing existing characteristics, and ensuring that a stable residential end employee population lives and works in the vicinity of LRT.

Building on the strategies described in the CCDS, each Station Area Plan will contain **detailed policies for guiding new investment to the identified Areas of Change, while ensuring growth is compatible with and complementary to Areas of Stability**.

Please carefully review the boundaries identified here, and let us know your reaction to the following questions:

- Is this the right line for this Station Area?
- Should additional areas be included or omitted within either the Areas of Change and/or Stability?
- Are there sites which are under pressure to redevelop or relocate that are a concern to you? For example, a heritage building?



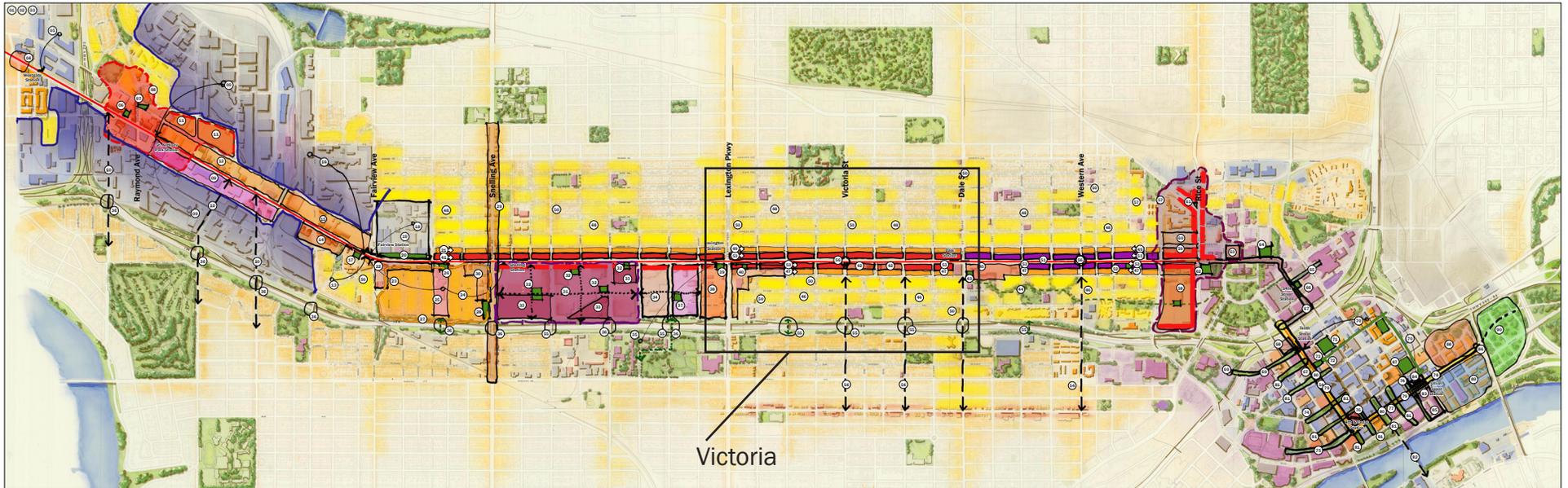
- Station Area
- Area of Change
- Stable Areas
- Recent and Proposed Developments
- Major Opportunities for Investment

AREA OF CHANGE

The Central Corridor Development Strategy defined the area enclosed by the thick black line as “areas likely to change”, and the yellowed areas as “stable” areas which should be preserved and enhanced. Are there any changes to this that you feel are necessary?

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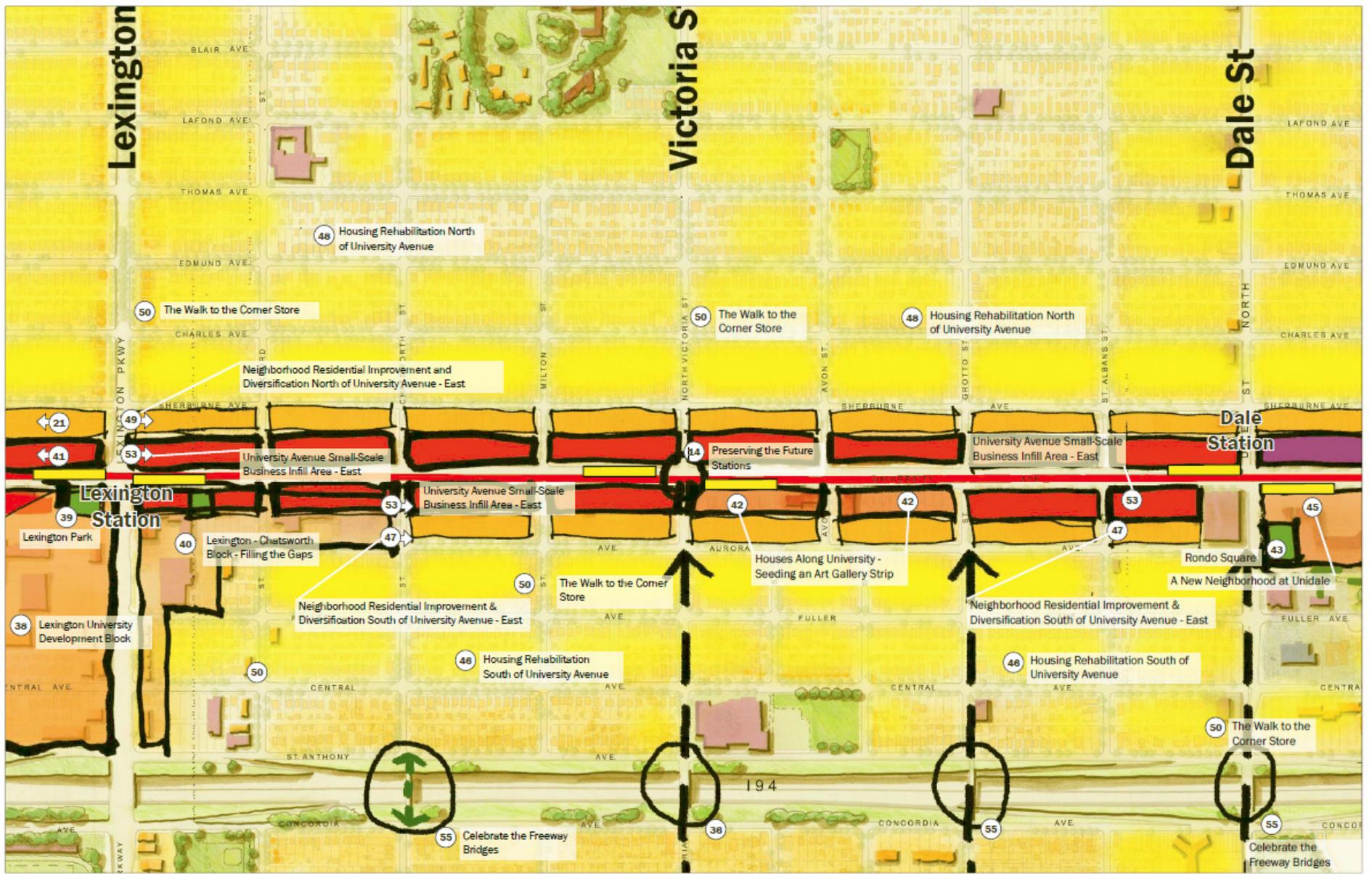
THEME 2 - 90 INITIATIVES FOR THE CORRIDOR

The CCDS contains a set of ‘90 Initiatives for the Corridor’, which describe a wide range of possible actions - from community improvement and neighborhood preservation, intensification, and improved streetscaping, open space and pedestrian and bicycle connections - aimed at attaching the LRT to the City in very tangible ways. Many of these initiatives are not new; rather, they are a shopping list of community and stakeholder ambitions and projects collected from discussions with a great number of individuals (area residents, community leaders, business owners, and various public agencies and departments) who collectively represent the broad range of perspectives along the Corridor.

Station Area Plans will include detailed recommendations for implementing these initiatives within respective station areas, but first we need to make sure we’ve got the list right.

Please review the Initiatives listed here, and share your thoughts on the following questions:

- How would you refine and/or elaborate on the improvements identified here?
- What additional improvements would you like to see around this station ?
- What words would you use to describe the character of this station area today? And in 20 years?
- What are the top 3 improvements that would make the greatest difference to this station area?



Scale: NTS

Station Platforms LRT Line

INITIATIVES

November, 2009 - Community Round Tables

Victoria Central Corridor Station Area Planning

1. Taking the Bus to LRT

Along University Avenue, there are a number of opportunities for existing and future bus routes to connect with LRT. This will help LRT reach into the surrounding neighborhoods, and offer improved transit service for both local and regional commuters. The system will need to be designed so that LRT is easy to get to by bus.

2. Riding a Bike to LRT

There are currently very poor bicycle connections running along the Corridor, and few facilities for bicyclists who wish to cycle to and through the area. An opportunity exists to develop a network of bicycle lanes and facilities along the Corridor that connect in all directions to surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Greening the Corridor

There are a number of opportunities to green the Corridor, transforming it into a more natural, pedestrian-friendly and sustainable environment. Through a program of streetscaping, re-forestation and ongoing stewardship, an opportunity exists to transform the Corridor from an asphalt strip to a green ribbon.

42. Houses Along University – Seeding an Art Gallery Strip

The strip of detached houses along University Avenue between Victoria and Grotto is a unique attribute of the Avenue that speaks to the varying character and intensity of uses along its length. The houses present an opportunity to create a gallery district that takes advantage of the unique interior spaces the houses offer.

46. Housing Rehabilitation South of University Avenue

The residential neighborhoods south of University are an important asset to the community and contribute to the quality of life along the Corridor. While most of the housing stock is in relatively good shape, there are areas where housing may be in need of repair and where an opportunity for new infill housing on vacant sites exists. Neighborhood rehabilitation has been taking place already, and it should be encouraged to continue.

47. Neighborhood Residential Improvement & Diversification South of University Avenue – East

The area between the businesses along University and the stable residential neighborhoods to the south presents a unique opportunity to repair gaps along Aurora Avenue and provide a new mix of housing for the neighborhood. Development of this area should help complete the north side of Aurora by slowly filling in the gaps with townhouses and walk-up apartments in keeping with the scale and character of the neighborhood.

48. Housing Rehabilitation North of University Avenue

The residential neighborhoods north of University are an important asset to the community and contribute to the quality of life along the Corridor. While most of the housing stock is in relatively good shape, there are areas where housing may be in need of repair and where an opportunity for new infill housing on vacant sites exists. Neighborhood rehabilitation has been taking place already, and it should be encouraged to continue.

50. The Walk to the Corner Store

Providing a mix of uses and services along the Corridor is critical to encouraging people to walk to their destinations. New development should encourage a mix of uses, and effort should be made to preserve and strengthen existing locally-based stores and services along the Corridor.

53. University Avenue Small-Scale Business Infill Area - East

The stretch of University Avenue between Chatsworth and Rice is characterized by numerous small-scale shops, restaurants and businesses. These businesses provide a range of services to the community, are a source of local employment and help make University Avenue an interesting place. Over the last several years, a number of new shops and businesses have opened, filling vacant storefronts and replacing gaps in the street with new development. This small-scale infill and improvement should continue. It adds to the vibrancy of the street while maintaining the character of the area.

55. Celebrate the Freeway Bridges

The bridges over I-94 are unique features along the Corridor, highly visible structures and symbolic connections within the community. Consistent with results from the 2003 Western Avenue Visioning Charette, the Western Avenue bridge, and others, should be celebrated as unique events and important pedestrian conduits. Each are prime candidates for inclusion within a public art program or for redesign through an open competition.

56. Preserving for Future Stations

Western Avenue and Victoria Street are important north/south connections through the corridor. The design and construction of LRT should preserve the opportunity for future stations at these intersections.



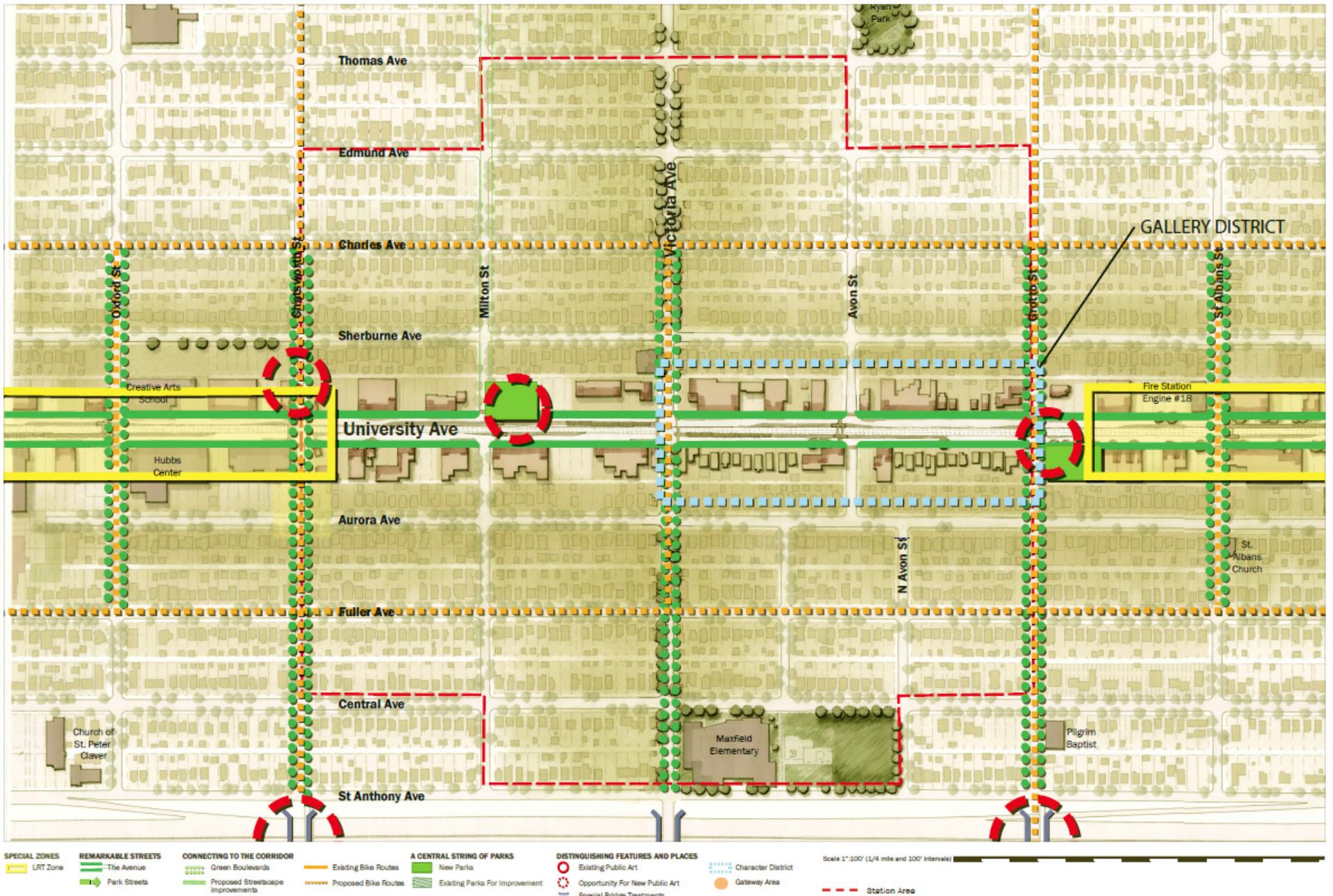
THEME 3 - PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

Streets, parks and squares are the civic glue that we all share in cities. These are the places that become enriched with distinctive heritage and culture; they are the gathering zones for planned and serendipitous meetings; they become the front and side doors that frame development, and make the transit experience more convenient and enjoyable.

A Public Realm Framework is comprised both of distinct parks and open spaces, and the linkages - streets, trails, bridges and gateways - that connect them. These are the areas that people will experience as they walk or cycle from their homes or jobs to University Avenue to catch the LRT toward their ultimate destination. These are also the places where excellence in design will have the greatest opportunity to enhance the quality of life for existing neighborhoods, and to reposition the image of the Central Corridor and Saint Paul as a remarkable and livable community.

The CCDS contains a conceptual plan for an improved Public Realm Framework in the Central Corridor. The recommended plan describes the location and integration of the following **five** key components. Please review these and share your opinions on the following questions:

- How would you get to this station area on foot or by bicycle?
- What kind of public spaces should there be and where should these be located?
- Where should key pedestrian crossings be located?
- Where should bicycle locks be located?
- What are the three most important public realm improvements for this station area?



PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

The Central Corridor Development Strategy identified a series of new parks, green boulevards, pedestrian priority areas and connections. Is there anything we missed?

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Central Corridor Station Area Planning

1) LRT Zones: It is at station areas where concern for the integration of movement modes is greatest. In these areas, the design of the public realm should place the pedestrian as the priority consideration. Elements such as special paving, enhanced landscaping and signage should be used to allow for the intermingling of the various modes of transport including LRT, buses, cycling, walking and driving. Emphasis should be placed on the ease and safety with which pedestrians can get to and from LRT. In practice, this means extending this zone of pedestrian priority to the next point of transfer, whether a bus, bicycle, or walking destination.

2) Remarkable Streets: The quality and character of the streets along the Corridor will play an important role in connecting LRT to the city. If planned successfully, it will be the streets that help bring people to LRT, spread the benefits of this investment, and assist in the transformation of the Corridor from an auto-dominated thoroughway into a remarkable people-friendly experience.

The CCDS identifies two main types of ‘remarkable streets’ within the study area, and contains a series of recommendations for each:

The Avenue – there is an opportunity to greatly enhance the visual and physical image of the Avenue with a palette of materials that will help unify the Corridor as an identifiable place, enhance the diversity of uses, and highlight the distinct and special attributes along the route.

The Park Street - These are intended to draw people along landscaped, pedestrian-friendly streets to key destinations, parks and open spaces.

3) Connecting to the Corridor: these places have been identified for their ability to connect north and south into adjacent communities and to other key Saint Paul destinations along the corridor. Enhancing these connections can occur in three key ways:

Green Boulevards - though primarily vehicular connectors, Green Boulevards should be enhanced and made comfortable for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Green Streets/Pedestrian/Bike Linkages - these streets and linkages provide key connections between the Avenue and important destinations along the Corridor.

Existing and Proposed Bike Routes - the network of existing and proposed bike routes to and from the Corridor creates an important set of connections to destinations that may be too far to walk from LRT.

4) A Central String of Parks: Introducing a set of 12 new public spaces to accompany the 12 new transit stations is an important concept of the CCDS. While illustrated in a conceptual way, the proposed new parks are intended to provide a string of “green jewels” along the Avenue and through the Capitol Area and downtown. They will create a focus for new development, provide areas for relaxation, become places of community gathering and afford the display of public art.

The CCDS has also identified a number of opportunities to improve or expand existing public spaces. In some cases, the recommendation is to turn parks from parking lots into public open spaces; while in others it is to improve the public accessibility and quality of the space.

5) Distinguishing Features and Places: these are places where we celebrate the diverse assets located throughout the Corridor, and turn ordinary moments into impressions and images of our neighborhood. Strategies aimed at highlighting the unique features of the Corridor and strengthen its sense of place include:

Public Art - The role of public art and artistic input is as broad as it is important, and should be an integral component of the intellectual design process for the Corridor.

Special Bridge Treatments - all of the bridges that cross I-94 should be improved to make them inviting, safe, visible, beautiful, accessible and better connected to to the neighborhoods south of the Avenue.

Gateways - these mark important destinations, help to establish identity, and should be integrated with an overall streetscape design strategy.

Character Districts - creating distinctive streetscape treatments and setback characteristics within each district will help to further brand these areas and to animate the experience of traveling along the Corridor.

THEME 4 - TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT TYPES

The Central Corridor comprises a variety of places, each with its own unique set of characteristics, conditions and opportunities. As the Corridor changes over time, and in response to the future LRT, new buildings will have to contribute to the character and quality of the Corridor and ensure a good 'fit' with their neighbors.

The CCDS contains a set of six Development Types, each illustrating ways that development could respond to the range of distinct site characteristics within Areas of Change. For each Development Type, a description of the opportunity is provided, and key principles identified.

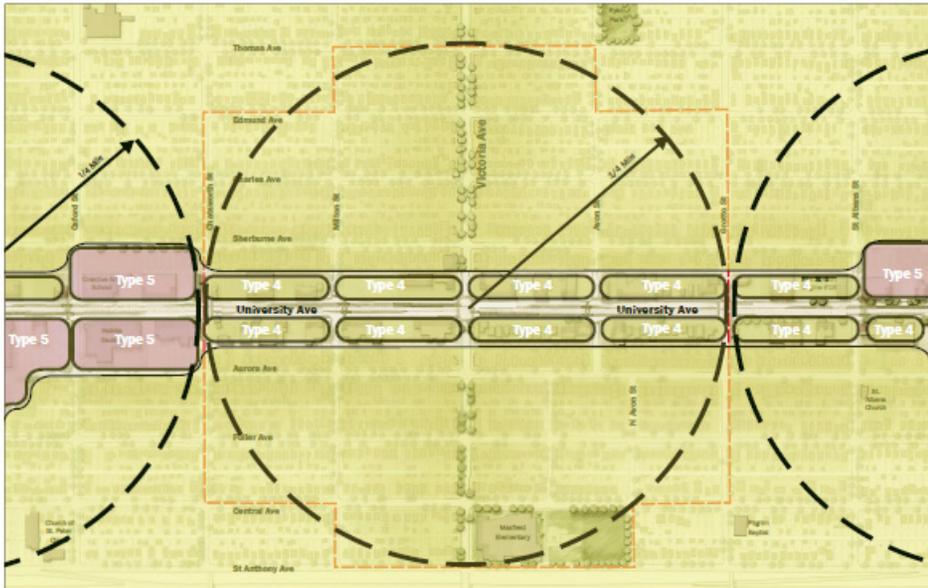
The column at right identifies the Development Types that may be appropriate for this station area. Please review these and consider the following questions:

- Are these the kinds of buildings and uses that you would like to see in areas of change around this station?
- Can you imagine the proposed scale and height of the buildings being appropriate along the Avenue? What concerns do you have with respect to building height?
- What design features/functions of the buildings are important to you in creating a more beautiful urban place around this station area?



TYPE 4 - HALF-DEPTH INFILL SITES

Type 4 sites represent **smaller parcels of vacant or underutilized land** scattered along the Corridor. They provide an opportunity to replace the gaps along the Avenue with **infill development** that is of a complementary scale to existing buildings., to intensify retail activity along the Avenue, and to provide additional residential or commercial uses on the upper levels.



Type 1 - Urban Villages

Type 1 sites represent large parcels of vacant land which provide an opportunity to concentrate high density mixed-use development close to stations, encouraging ridership and strengthening destinations along the route. They provide an opportunity to re-introduce streets and building forms that are more compact and pedestrian-friendly.

Type 2 - Market Intensification

Type 2 sites comprise larger parcels of land with large-format retail stores and extensive surface parking. By creating new parking ramps, an opportunity exists to free up areas currently occupied by surface parking and gradually fill in the gaps between buildings and along streets. This intensification will better utilize the land, improve pedestrian conditions and introduce a greater mix of uses.

Type 3 - Larger Front and Back Sites

Type 3 sites represent larger, narrow blocks of land adjacent to the Avenue. They provide an opportunity to reclaim large strips of land and fill in the gaps with new double-sided development that faces both onto University Avenue and adjacent streets, such as Charles. Their larger size presents an opportunity to create a substantial scale of development capable of supporting a range of uses with underground parking and new open spaces.

Type 4 - Half Depth Infill Sites

Type 4 sites represent smaller parcels of vacant or underutilized land sited along the Corridor. They provide an opportunity to replace the gaps along the Avenue with infill development that is of a complementary scale to existing buildings, to intensify retail activity along the Avenue, and to provide additional residential or commercial uses on the upper levels.

Type 5 - Full Depth Infill Sites

Type 5 sites represent small parcels of vacant or underutilized land that extend from the Avenue through to the neighborhoods in the rear. They provide an opportunity to both fill in the gaps with new development of a complementary scale to the Avenue and complete the residential streetscape to the rear. New development on these sites offers a chance to intensify retail activity along the Avenue and provide additional residential or commercial uses on the upper levels.

Type 6 - Urban Infill Blocks

Type 6 sites represent vacant or underutilized blocks that have the potential to be redeveloped. These sites provide an opportunity to fill large gaps along the Corridor with new development of a complementary scale to surrounding development.

Currently identified as an Appropriate Development Type for this Station Area

Scale: NTS

FEEDBACK PAGE

Please use this page to record any thoughts, reactions or comments you wish to share with us. You may use the questions included here to guide you, or simply respond to anything you have heard, read or seen this evening. Make sure to tear out and leave this page with a project team member before you depart!

Theme 1 - Areas of Change & Stability

Is this the right line for this Station Area?

Should additional areas be included or omitted within either the Areas of Change and/or Stability?

Are there sites which are under pressure to redevelop or relocate that are a concern to you? For example, a heritage building?

Theme 2 - 90 Initiatives for the Corridor

How would you refine and/or elaborate on the improvements identified here?

What additional improvements would you like to see around this station ?

What adjectives would you use to describe the character of this station area today? And in 20 years?

What are the top 3 improvements that would make the greatest difference to this station area?

Theme 3 - Public Realm Framework

How would you get to this station area on foot or by bicycle?

What kind of public spaces should there be and where should these be located?

Where should key pedestrian crossings be located?

Where should bicycle locks be located?

What are the three most important public realm improvements for this station area?

How could we make better connections south of the I-94?

Theme 4 - Transit-Supportive Development Types

Are these the kinds of buildings and uses that you would like to see in areas of change around this station?

Can you imagine the proposed scale and height of the buildings being appropriate along the Avenue? What concerns do you have with respect to building height?

What design features/functions of the buildings are important to you in creating a more beautiful urban place around this station area?

Describe your feelings for recent development in the area. Do these represent good development types for the area? Why or why not?