

Chapter 4- Downtown Districts

The organization of Chapter 4 into districts enables the Plan to address various areas of Downtown in greater detail. The districts are not hierarchical in importance; rather, an economically and socially vital Downtown depends upon the diversity and variety offered by a number of districts that are distinct and mutually reinforcing. Numerous approaches to identifying districts were considered, and the outline that follows is a result of much analysis and debate. Many, if not all, of the “districts” that follow merge into adjoining districts and blend into surrounding areas. Districts do not have defined edges, but rather have either geographic focal points, functional or economic synergies, or both.

In the Downtown Center District, for example, there is a geographic focal point. The dominant uses are offices and retail within a dense core area of overlapping synergies, reinforced by major investments surrounding the District. In the Old World Third District, the sports arena functions are directly reinforced by synergies with proximate hotels and dining and entertainment venues on Old World Third and Water Streets. A good example of a district in functional or economic transition is the Station District. While the Station District is recognized as an area south of Clybourn, the expanding train and bus services at the Intermodal Station can be expected to increasingly influence business location decisions northward to Michigan or even Wisconsin Avenue. As another example of overlapping districts and synergies, the Lakefront District’s office area is oriented eastward while blending into the Central District. It is also part of an extended cultural, recreational and park zone along Lake Michigan.

Downtown Center

Named for its geographical location in the broader Downtown area (see map), the Downtown Center District is that area of Downtown that contains the traditional downtown look and feel – higher densities, a varied mix of uses, and small forms on a grid block system. The district is comprised of major employers, bars, restaurants, shopping and entertainment sites, and the majority of the Downtowns historic or iconic buildings.

Like most of the downtown districts, Downtown Center is comprised of smaller sub districts or neighborhoods, each with its own history, flavor, and dynamics. Cathedral Square is a block sized park directly south of the Milwaukee School of Engineering campus surrounded by a healthy mix of bars, restaurants, civic and religious uses, and mostly low-rise, early 20th Century mixed use office buildings. The location of city's first court house, Cathedral Square hosts a number of popular events including Jazz in the Park and Bastille Days. Cathedral Square is a successful entertainment destination with potential for additional retail uses.

East Wisconsin Avenue links the lakefront and adjacent corporate office district to the river and contains wide sidewalks lined with late 19th and early 20th Century buildings including the historic Pfister Hotel. The federal courthouse is located here and by association a grouping of large law firms as well as the Johnson-Controls office complex. Sandwiched between the Cathedral Square and Wisconsin Avenue areas is a vibrant district of bars, restaurants and eclectic shops located on quaint and attractive streets including Milwaukee, Mason, and Jefferson. The distinct turn-of-the-century buildings located on these streets gives this area a comfortable, human-scale pedestrian environment inviting for store-front browsing, shopping and entertainment.

Broadway is a wide north-south street in the heart of the East Town Commercial Historic District. The south end of Broadway offers untapped potential due to its wide right-of-way, its row of historic and turn-of-the-century facades, and its position as a gateway into the Third Ward. This portion of Broadway currently suffers from vacancies, some blight, and the elevated swath of I-794 that physically and psychologically separates the downtown from the Third Ward. Two vacant lots positioned among the historic stock and straddling the Third Ward offer key commercial and residential development sites.

Between City Hall and the river is a theater district, home to the historic Pabst Theater, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater (Powerhouse Theater, Stiemke Theater and Stackner Cabaret), the Riverside just to the south and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts (Vogel Hall, Uihlein Hall and Todd Wehr Theater) just to the north of Downtown Center. The theaters are located at a nexus between three primary concentrations of Downtown, the Water Street entertainment area; Old World Third Street (connected by a pedestrian bridge across the Milwaukee River); and the office high rises of Downtown Center while

at the same time adjoins under-utilized or “visually dampening” areas – vacancies along Wells Street and the M&I parking garage at the intersection of Wells and Water Streets.

Postman Square is really a triangle – a triangular pocket park shaped by Plankinton, Wells, and Second Streets and framed by the historic Germania building and the turn of the century commercial row along Plankinton Avenue. The broader Postman Square area encompasses the small scale and largely under-utilized commercial area bounded by Wisconsin Avenue and Kilbourn to the south and north, and the river and 4th Street on the east and west. Originally proposed to be the hub of a downtown retail district in the 1999 Downtown Plan due to its store-front architecture, adjacency to the Shops of Grand Avenue, and the Riverwalk, Postman Square continues to offer potential (greater than is currently realized) as a viable area for both large and small-scale retail as well as mixed-use commercial and residential, or even entertainment. .

West Wisconsin Avenue (formerly Grand Avenue) is Downtown’s original shopping and entertainment district. From the late 1800’s through the 1960’s this stretch of Wisconsin Avenue boasted major retailers such as Gimbel’s (later Marshall Field’s), Woolworth’s, J.C. Penney’s, Chapman’s (further east on Wisconsin) and Boston Store, now the sole remaining anchor department store. The area is currently characterized by the Shops of Grand Avenue (urban mall developed around the Rouse Corporation festival marketplace concept in 1981) and the street-wall of retail, hotel and office buildings lining Wisconsin Avenue. The city’s major convention center also addresses Wisconsin Avenue. Physically, the building stock on this stretch of Wisconsin Avenue is as stable as any other area downtown. The majority of the street is clean, attractive, and busy. Were it not for a relatively high number of storefront vacancies, underutilized retail space, and some façade maintenance issues, primarily along a two block stretch from Plankinton to 4th Street, Wisconsin Avenue would be a showcase street. At the center of this equation are the Shops of Grand Avenue that weave together a number of historic buildings with creative infill spaces, sky bridges and parking. Its original cluster of shops was strategically located in the historic Plankinton Arcade building. This downtown mall suffers from high vacancy rates, second tier tenants, and low foot traffic as do many of America’s downtown malls.

Zeidler Square is located on the southwestern edge of Downtown Center and includes two significant employers: WE Energies and Assurant Health. Framed by WE Energies, Shops of Grand Avenue, and the vacant Blue Cross – Blue Shield buildings is Zeidler Union Square, a one-acre park that is host to a seasonal farmers market and various labor union events. Located a block north of the Intermodal Station and along a proposed streetcar line, Zeidler Square once served as the public gathering place for Milwaukee’s old Union Station (on the site of what is now the WE Energies building) from 1886-1965 when the current tracks ran just north of Clybourn Street. Due to its history and proximity to the Intermodal Station, Zeidler Square has the potential to develop into a high-

density transit-oriented office and residential neighborhood with retail, cultural, and entertainment uses all within a 10-minute walk.

As the geographic center of Milwaukee's downtown, the Downtown Center District will require additional density, pedestrian amenities, and commercial destinations or destination retail to not only anchor the downtown as a whole, but to provide a unique brand—a look and feel that is distinct and identifiable for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors alike.

Recommendations:

Wisconsin Avenue

- Establish a program for more aggressive retail storefront improvements in a focused area between 4th and Milwaukee Streets.
- Redevelop the vacant 4th and Wisconsin site with hotel, residential or large scale retail uses. Retail or entertainment should occupy the base of any future non-retail development.
- Establish a streetcar stop at the 4th and Wisconsin Avenue intersection.
- Consider the southern portion of the 4th and Wisconsin parcel as part of a transit oriented neighborhood focused around Zeidler Square and the Intermodal Station.
- Consider relocation and re-design of bus stops along the central portions of Wisconsin Avenue – between the river and 6th Street.
- Expand public art along Wisconsin Avenue.
- Continue to improve the streetscape and provide amenities.

Broadway Corridor

- Strengthen the connection between Downtown and the Third Ward via Broadway.
- Redevelop surface parking lots that create “dead space” or a much longer transition between Downtown and the Third Ward with ground level retail and entertainment uses.
- Preserve and enhance the existing historic character of Broadway between Wisconsin Avenue and the Third Ward.
- Consider shared parking facilities to serve both the historic building stock and future development along Broadway south of Wisconsin Avenue.
- Create an initiative or competition to design and enliven the space under the elevated I-794 expressway along Broadway, Water Street and possibly Milwaukee Street.
- Improve the pedestrian passage under I-794 at Jefferson Street with higher quality fencing, lighting and other amenities.

Postman Square

- Increase the residential population around Postman Square.
- Create a larger central space at the convergence of the three streets – 2nd, Wells, and Plankinton - including possible traffic modifications and street width reductions.
- Consider closing 2nd Street between Wells and Plankinton to further enlarge and enclose the Postman Square plaza.
- Consider converting the portion of 2nd Street from Wells Street to Wisconsin Avenue to two-way traffic.
- Orient facades surrounding the triangle to the new central plaza.
- Redevelop the surface parking lot at Wells and 2nd.

Wells Street Corridor

- Convert Wells Street to two-way traffic.
- Reconfigure Wells in a “complete street” approach, adding space to the sidewalks, creating bicycle lanes, and making provisions for a streetcar.
- Complete the closing of Market Street and Wells and establish a “City Hall Square” plaza fronting Wells Street and City Hall.
- Add street trees of substantial quality and caliper to the street, especially between City Hall and Cathedral Square.
- Encourage redevelopment of the Milwaukee Athletic Club parking garage at Milwaukee and Wells Street.
- Pursue removal of the billboard at Wells and Broadway.
- Consider enhancements to the M&I parking structure to enliven the façade. Interesting nighttime lighting patterns, for example, could help to make the façade interesting and inviting to walk past.

Cathedral Square

- Cathedral Square is a successful “place” downtown. Expand its influence through substantial streetscaping along Wells, Jefferson, and Kilbourn.
- Support efforts to improve the physical condition of cathedral Square.
- Establish Cathedral Square as a key streetcar stop.
- Add permanent amenities or public art to Cathedral Square where it would not interfere with event staging.
- Improve the connections between the Yankee Hill District and the Downtown Center District across Kilbourn to Cathedral Square with intersection improvements at the MSOE pedestrian mall.
- Consider a curbless street along Jefferson between Kilbourn and Wells.
- Improve night lighting (in an artistic way) where possible.

Kilbourn Avenue

- Continue to help Kilbourn Avenue evolve into a grand, tree-lined civic boulevard, particularly from 6th Street to the river.
- To reflect its civic status and form, change the name of Kilbourn Avenue to Kilbourn Boulevard.
- Reduce the barrier effect of an excessively wide Kilbourn Avenue between 3rd and the river with improved pedestrian crossings. Improve the current condition -a wide street with awkward vehicle turning movements and automobile dominant character – that isolates Old World Third Street from the Downtown Center District along the Plankinton and Third Street cross axes. This is a prime example of active Downtown nodes separated by overly large rights of way (gaps) hostile to pedestrians.
- Eliminate the right turn by-pass on the southeast corner of Kilbourn and Plankinton.

Iconic Buildings

- Identify locations where collections of iconic buildings can be enhanced with modern infill development and re-assembled into energetic and marketable “places” where “the whole is worth more than the sum of the parts”.
- Establish a policy initiative to help position the historic and iconic buildings on a footing more competitive with new developments. This may include special attention to parking solutions, more intricate detail restoration, ADA upgrades and general modernization.

The Lakefront

The Lakefront District consists primarily of a Class A office district located east of Van Buren Street and a large lakefront with surrounding open space and major cultural institutions, such as the War Memorial, the Milwaukee Art Museum; Discovery World Science Museum; and the Betty Brinn Children's Museum. With Lake Michigan in the foreground and the Carlos Santiago designed art museum addition along with the vertical residential and commercial buildings in the background, the Lakefront District is essentially the picture post card image for the entire city.

The lakefront district can be viewed as being comprised of three distinct parts: 1) lakefront cultural and recreational amenities; 2) Milwaukee County O'Donnell park pavilions and parking complex ; and 3) the office district west of the O'Donnell complex comprised primarily of the US Bank and Northwestern Mutual campuses as well as the Ernst & Young building. The main arteries that serve the Lakefront District are Lincoln Memorial Drive and Michigan Street. Both feed traffic onto the adjacent interstate (US 794), the Hoan Bridge, and lakefront cultural destinations such as Henry Maier Festival Park (Summerfest grounds).

The major challenge for the Lakefront District is a grade change that separates the lakefront from the downtown proper, effectively cutting off the two areas from one another and preventing a smooth interaction between the lakefront and the built urban realm of downtown.

A second challenge are restrictions upon Lakebed Grant Land (most of the lakefront, which is regulated by the State Department of Natural Resources), to land use related to navigation, fisheries, or public access to the waterfront. The positive result of this is a lakefront that is predominantly public park , museum or recreational space. The limiting result is that there are almost no private venues that might enhance the public realm, such as restaurants or bike rentals, etc.

A third challenge is that access to the lakefront is primarily designed for the automobile with pedestrian access more of an after-thought. This car-centric approach originated with a proposed lakefront freeway in the 1960's when city planners and traffic engineers designed roadways for suburban commuters, and multi-modal design for pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. was secondary or non-existent. Preference was routinely given to vehicular traffic and the resulting by-products can still be seen today in a spaghetti string collection of highways, roads, and associated empty right-of-way remnants. The epitome of this car-centric style of planning is located around a distinctly pedestrian un-friendly intersection at Lincoln Memorial and Michigan that contains multiple dedicated turning lanes and a "frogger" style crossing for pedestrians attempting to access the lakefront festival grounds and attractions.

At O'Donnell Terrace, the major transition point from Downtown to the Lakefront, the lack of active uses anywhere near the lower grade level of Lincoln Memorial Drive, does not help address the design problem of how to resolve the grade differential, link Downtown to the Lakefront while creating a dramatic approach, enhance access, and draw people from one to the other. The Calatrava and Discovery World (set back from Lincoln Memorial hugging the lakefront) do help compensate by creating a visual and physical destination point. However, the overall composition suffers from the deadening presence of the O'Donnell parking garage, which has little more than a grassy mound and a freestanding sign facing pedestrians on Michigan Street while the Downtown Transit Center has windowless precast walls with little chance for interaction except at the small, unremarkable entrance. The O'Donnell Park garage could be improved with modifications to the south of the existing structure, whereas the Downtown Transit Center will need significant changes or removal/replacement to improve this negative pedestrian condition at such a premier site.

If Milwaukee wishes to elevate itself and its image onto a more favorable and competitive level in terms of place-making and overall urban design, a better connected, pedestrian friendly lakefront area needs to be realized. Its current design is inconsistently good, only somewhat functional, but falls short of its potential. In short, the pieces are in place to make it truly grand.

Recommendations:

Michigan and Wisconsin Avenue Corridors

- Make physical infrastructure changes to narrow the gap between the downtown CBD and the lakefront.
- Encourage streetscaping, activation of building facades, enlivening uses and interesting places should all be a part of any solution to make E. Michigan a more prestigious address for current and future office and residential tenants.
- Eliminate the right-turn by-passes at the Michigan and Lincoln Memorial Drive intersection.
- Re-align Michigan Street to accommodate proposed development on either side at the Lincoln Memorial intersection.
- Extend the two-way traffic pattern of Van Buren Street south to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Treat Wisconsin Avenue as an extension of the art museum and transform it into an "Avenue of the Arts" lined with significant public art and sculptures that will draw visitors to and from the downtown and lakefront attractions.

Lincoln Memorial Drive

- Relocate the Downtown Transit Center to the Station District to complement the Intermodal Station and proposed streetcar line.
- Develop vertically above the transit center site with a single or a mix of uses with a public plaza or public winter garden occupying the ground floor and terracing down to Lincoln Memorial Drive.
- Consider redevelopment opportunities to the south of the O'Donnell parking garage at the intersection of Lincoln Memorial Drive and Michigan Street.
- The Mason Street bridge serves as a southbound gateway to the downtown lakefront. Use public art, lighting or other visual effects under and around the bridge to signify this transition between the passive open spaces of the lakefront to the north and the active and engaging uses of the downtown lakefront.
- Re-align Lincoln Memorial Drive between Michigan Street and Clybourn to meet the geometry of Municipal Pier.
- Take advantage of the Lincoln Memorial re-alignment and create a new plaza that in effect extends Municipal Pier from Harbor Drive out to Lincoln Memorial Drive.
- Program the new plaza with fountains, public art, sculptures, benches, water-themed play areas, along with food, beverage, retail kiosks and pavilions.
- Consider a public art piece that serves as a gateway element to the lakefront at Michigan. If possible, combine this with traffic calming and intersection redesign to create a more inviting experience for pedestrians coming to the lakefront from downtown.

Third Ward Connection

- Strengthen the connection between the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Third Ward, generally considered Milwaukee's "arts district". Ideally, a re-design of the I-794 Lakefront Interchange could best mitigate existing disconnects and improve the overall area for redevelopment.
- Consider the descending leg of the Hoan Bridge to meet a descending I-794 expressway at an at-grade point to best achieve this connection and at the same time create a dramatic gateway into the lakefront, much like the 6th Street viaduct bridge suspensions signal an entrance to the Menomonee Valley and Milwaukee's Near South Side.
- If an at-grade scenario is not practically or politically feasible, alternative improvements to the interchange with less obtrusive and more artfully designed cross-over ramps could yield some improvements, if tied to ground level improvements such as landscaping, lighting, etc.

Station District

The Station District is the area of Downtown surrounding the Intermodal Station at 5th and St. Paul Streets. The Intermodal Station is a recent renovation of the Amtrak train station with the addition of inter-city bus carriers of different brands. A successful modern renovation united these two forms of transit into a single facility. The Intermodal Station and its surrounding district will attract a greater number of customers and visitors with the addition of a downtown streetcar line, and a future extension of the Metra (KRM) commuter rail line to Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee as well as proposed high-speed rail service to Madison, Chicago and Minneapolis.

Adjoining the Intermodal facility on the east is a large USPS distribution center. On the west are surface parking lots and undeveloped parcels that are remnants of the recent reconstruction of the Marquette Exchange and I-794 Interstate project. The State Department of Transportation is seeking to find uses for these properties through lease or sale.

To the north of the Post Office and Intermodal Station are a coffee wholesale and processing operation, a records storage building, and offices for the regional U.S. Post Office operations. Warehouse-style buildings east of 3rd Street have been renovated into loft-style condominiums and one significant building, the Pritzlaff building at the corner of Plankinton/2nd and St Paul, has been re-developed for residential and office tenants.

The most obvious development issues for the area are the disconnection of this southwest corner of Downtown from the rest of Downtown as well as a lack of character and a comfortable pedestrian environment. While the renovated Intermodal Station and the newly- built 6th Street viaduct stand out as successful design projects, the remainder of the area evokes a grey and lifeless feeling. The elevated I-794 expressway, while creating minimal disruption to the street grid connectivity at ground level, create a perception of separation from the offices, hotels, and retail businesses just to the north.

Connectivity to the Third Ward also needs attention. Freeway on and off ramps create disruption. Multiple lanes of fast-moving merging traffic create a negative pedestrian environment. The eastern portion of this district could actually overlap the Third Ward, by extending architectural and streetscape design elements and paying close attention to pedestrian detail found in the Third Ward. Weaving these two districts together would help to figuratively “bridge” the river.

Uses that can help establish a multi-transit-oriented neighborhood identity include offices, residential uses, restaurants, neighborhood and commuter supporting uses. All should be encouraged to allow this district to develop into a more complete neighborhood. These uses would complement the existing residential loft-type buildings that have already been developed in the area.

Station District Recommendations

- Establish a “sense of arrival” at the Station District with physical improvements, primarily along St. Paul Street between 4th and 5th Streets.
- As the “spine” of the Station District, St. Paul Avenue should be landscaped with robust trees, enhanced lighting, and other pedestrian improvements.
- The pedestrian environment under I-794 should be enhanced with features and lighting to create an attractive and secure environment.
- New developments should complement the animated architectural styles of the Intermodal Station and 6th Street bridge.
- Typical plantings of trees and shrubs under I-794 would be impractical under the elevated expressway. An alternative approach to meet the intention of parcel perimeter landscaping must be used. Examples can include opaque decorative metal fencing (similar to that used for the Milwaukee Public Market), brick or stone pavers, pedestrian- scale lighting (that could shine at both the sidewalk and up towards the underside of the bridge deck to create a comfortable ambient glow), and public art. Paved driving surfaces must be kept within the perimeter of the column supports of the elevated freeway.
- The existing street grid in the district should be retained to ensure maximum flexibility for added buses and transportation connections. The 2nd Street stub end can be considered for vacation, if needed, for an adjacent redevelopment project
- Land use devoted to parking should be for parking facilities that support the local uses in the district or to support the Intermodal Station and transit uses. Parking lots for general all-day parking for users in adjacent districts should be avoided.
- One block under the expressway nearest the Intermodal Station should be allocated for expanded Intermodal Station parking. As demand increases, a dedicated structured parking garage should be built that incorporates parking for the Intermodal Station, rental car facilities, and commuter-oriented retail.
- Re-locate the Downtown (bus) Transit Center to the Station District.
- Preferred, later-phase re-development of the USPS facility includes uses that re-enforce and complement the Intermodal Station: mixed-use, multi-story developments including office, residential, hotel, with supporting parking, and retail and entertainment, including riverwalk frontage and riverwalk linkages. The current Downtown (bus) Transit Center can also be integrated into the USPS facility, if vacated.
- Future re-development of the Intermodal Station and USPS facility should include a pedestrian bridge over the Menomonee River to create connections to the Harley Davidson museum or the School of Freshwater Science campus and business park.

SPECIFIC BLOCKS:

- St. Paul Avenue between 5th Street and the 6th St viaduct (DOT SITE 6): This site is best suited for a multi-story building supporting the Intermodal Station with active ground floor uses such as a restaurant, shops or services geared to commuters. This site can also include the re-located Downtown Transit Center from the present Lakefront location. Middle levels of the building could have parking, upper levels could have commuter oriented offices or housing.
- The tri-legged billboard sign on DOT Site 6 is temporary. A sign that is integrated with a future building's upper wall or placed on the roof could be a long term replacement.
- The blocks south of Clybourn, between 3rd and 5th Streets (DOT Site 5 and 4) should be used for streetcar maintenance, parking or other transportation uses related to Station District activity. Retail activity such as a coffee café, pavilion, or drive-thru can be incorporated.
- The river-adjacent block under the expressway (DOT Site 2) should be used in conjunction with new uses on the parcel just to the south of the elevated highway, allowing driveway access to that site. . The adjacent City-owned parcel should be considered for sale to the abutting land owner to complete the parcel.
- Parcels with riverfront property must include a riverwalk, following design standards found in the Downtown Riverwalk Guidelines. Expressway support columns should be illuminated.
- At the descent of the Plankinton Avenue expressway ramp, an artistic gateway element should be installed, such as a significant piece of public art, fountain or other downtown identity element.
- On South 2nd Street, between the railroad line and the river bridge, the small unused triangular piece of land should be designed as a distinct gateway space to the district.

Old World Third

The Old World Third Street District encompasses historic Old World Third Street, Pere Marquette Park, and the large assembly venues along 4th Street, notably the Bradley Center; US Cellular Arena; and the Milwaukee Theater. The namesake for this district is Old World Third Street, a two-block stretch of N. 3rd Street that contains the last remnants of a Germanic commercial and residential neighborhood developed in the mid-1800's. The intact block faces that survive today give the present retail and entertainment strip a distinctly "old world" Germanic flavor highlighted by Mader's Restaurant and Usinger's Sausage factory.

In contrast to the small scale and decidedly 19th century architecture of Third Street is 4th Street with its line of arenas, parking garages and surface lots. There are two buildings of note on 4th Street in this district, the Turner Hall and Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel building, built in the late 19th century and 1920's respectively. Due to the location of the arena entrances, 4th Street commands a large amount of foot traffic but is dramatically pedestrian un-friendly due to both the architecture of the arenas, the width of 4th Street, and the number of nearby vacant or under-utilized parcels. This combination serves as a disconnect between the charm and amenities of Third Street and river front and the harsh environment of 4th Street. It also serves to defeat the potential lure of thousands of event-goers to 3rd Street establishments who go from car to arena and back to car.

The Old World Third District is an important place-making and entertainment district that brings large numbers of visitors to downtown Milwaukee. Since place-making and economic development opportunities are key goals of this plan, maintaining and building upon the assets in this District are key. There are two main components to accomplish this goal, supporting a new or improved Bradley Center and better integrating the assembly facilities with the Old World Third Street and riverfront amenities. Successfully doing so would create one of the most attractive and successful entertainment districts in the region.

Recommendations:

- Preserve the historic building stock of Old World Third Street between Juneau and State Street.
- Increase the residential population in the Old World Third District, preferably on vacant or under-utilized sites surrounding Pere Marquette park.
- To enhance and re-enforce the walkable, European flavor of Old World Third Street and to promote increased foot traffic and activity consider curbsless streetscaping along Third Street between Highland Avenue and State Street and between State and Kilbourn in conjunction with any re-development of the Journal-Sentinel block as shown in Chapter 5.

- Continue the two-way conversion of State Street up to 6th Street.
- Maintain Juneau Avenue as an important through-street.
- Improve the western terminus of the Highland Avenue pedestrian bridge with an improved vista from future development at 4th and Highland and more strongly connect the vibrant 3rd and Highland intersection to the 4th Street arenas.
- Any new multi-purpose assembly venue that may replace the Bradley Center should remain Downtown, preferably in the Old World Third District, between McKinley and Kilbourn and between 4th and Sixth Streets.
- In the event of a new multi-purpose assembly venue, where feasible the street level design should avoid large blank walls and dark facades that closes the facility off from its surrounds. Large, open, and glassy facades should dominate and create vistas where possible.
- Large plazas and atriums with accompanying lighting and graphics should be considered as arena entrance features. AT&T Plaza in Dallas is a good example of marrying supporting development with an arena entrance and place-making amenities.
- Development that complements the arena can be supported within the current Bradley Center blocks, which includes the two primarily vacant blocks fronting Juneau Avenue.
- Possible future commercial or entertainment uses related to any new multi-purpose assembly venue or re-development of the current Bradley Center can activate the ground floor, with parking and other commercial uses occupying upper floors. Alternatively, commercial uses can line or wrap around the arena and remaining block faces with parking can be located within the block cores.

Pere Marquette Park

- The three major public spaces along Kilbourn Avenue downtown – Red Arrow park, the Marcus Center grounds, and Pere Marquette Park, should be cohesively designed and programmed to allow these public spaces to be better connected. Kilbourn Avenue can serve as the design thread that weaves these spaces together.
- Consider an open-air bier garden at Pere Marquette Park during the warm weather months.

Kilbourn Avenue

- Transform Kilbourn Avenue, from James Lovell Street to the river into a tree-lined boulevard as was originally envisioned.
- From west of Pere Marquette Park, Kilbourn should better connect to MacArthur Square. There is currently a visual connection but not much of a physical one.

- Kilbourn Avenue between 3rd and the River needs improved pedestrian cross connections to Pere Marquette Park.
- Eliminate the right turn by-pass on the southeast corner of Kilbourn and Plankinton. This is a prime example of desirable areas being separated by large gaps of blank or empty spaces.

West of 6th

West of 6th District is a collection of three distinct areas located west of 6th Street. On the northern end is The Brewery, a commercial and residential development located in the re-developed Pabst brewery complex. South of the Brewery are the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Milwaukee County government campus capped off by the neoclassical county courthouse building and the MacArthur Square civic park. South of MacArthur Square is, essentially, the library district. Not surprisingly the library district is named for Milwaukee's Central Library that dominates the far west end of Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Milwaukee. On the south side of this stretch of Wisconsin Avenue is a collection of apartments, academic and religious uses, office buildings, and small retail storefronts.

A significant issue in this district is the physical condition of MacArthur Square and its current connection, or lack thereof, to 6th Street and the remainder of downtown. Originally planned as a grand civic square connected to the downtown by a tree lined boulevard in Burnhamesque tradition, MacArthur Square is and does neither. In reality, MacArthur Square is a poorly designed, maintained and under-used park sitting atop an underground parking garage that serves the county complex. The entire MacArthur Square park is cut off from downtown due to a grade change retaining wall and roadway system that disconnects Kilbourn Avenue at 6th Street where it splits into two one-way freeway access and exit tunnels to and from US 43.

Other issues in the district revolve around appearances, primarily along N. 6th Street. N. 6th Street is an arterial and serves as a major conveyance of cars through the downtown. As a consequence it is a natural seam in the downtown fabric and the development along it has reflected this – blank walls and poor corner development are the hallmarks of this unattractive and lifeless corridor. An example is the intersection of N. 6th and Michigan. The corners of this intersection consist of two parking decks, a surface parking lot, and a blank wall side of an office building. While the functionality of the street is a practical necessity, greater attention to appearances and softening the physical edges of both the street and abutting development should be stressed along this corridor.

The redesigned Marquette Interchange created a vacant, 10-acre parcel when an access loop was eliminated with the new interchange. Located adjacent to I-94,

the parcel is adjacent to several existing office buildings and is close to Marquette University.

Recommendations:

- Connect Kilbourn Avenue to 7th Street following the existing grade.
- The street should be redesigned to take on the qualities of a boulevard rather than a divided highway. Intersections with excessive size should be reduced to accommodate pedestrians.
- Eliminate the right-turn bypasses at the intersection of 6th and Michigan Streets.
- Eliminate the right-turn by-passes leading to and out of the Kilbourn tunnels.
- The large State owned DOT site south of Michigan and 8th Street could be a catalyst for a new Library District neighborhood, centered at 8th and Michigan.
- Market rate and affordable housing should be emphasized in this area.
- Neighborhood Identity is needed.

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Hillside-Haymarket

Similar to the West of 6th District, Hillside-Haymarket is composed of three identifiable areas – the Hillside residential neighborhood, Haymarket, and the Schlitz office park. Hillside-Haymarket also contains the western portion of the former Park East freeway corridor that is now McKinley Street. The Hillside neighborhood is the 9 square-block Hillside Terrace public housing development maintained by the Milwaukee Housing Authority. It consists, primarily, of 2-story apartment buildings ranging from one to five-bedroom units arranged on a traditional street and block grid. Complementing the residential portion of Hillside Terrace is a community resource center, Boys & Girls Club, a children's early childhood center, and a family health center. Surrounding the Hillside development to the south and west is a ring of light industrial uses that buffered the residential uses from the former Park East freeway and US 43. While some of these industrial uses are still viable and in operation two of the largest sites are currently vacant or under-utilized and susceptible to future change. Immediately north are larger, block-sized multi-family developments along with a now-vacant hospital building.

The Haymarket derives its name from an open air market that once existed near 5th and Vliet Streets and sold, among other products, hay for the large number of horses used in 19th Century Milwaukee. This nine-square block area is now largely a mixture of professional offices, small-scale warehousing, vacant lots, light industrial, and commercial vehicle storage along with civic and cultural uses, most notably the Gold Meir Public School and the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center. From a land use perspective Haymarket is underutilized in the wake of the freeway removal. No longer physically cutoff from the downtown, Haymarket now sits atop the largest and most notable re-development effort in downtown Milwaukee and presents an opportunity to evolve into an entirely new neighborhood nearly similar in size, if not in architecture, to the Third Ward given its new direct connection to downtown.

Schlitz Park is a large-scale office district located within and adjacent to the 19th Century former Schlitz brewery plant. For example, the Aurora Health Center is located in Schlitz Bottle House 'B'. A notable feature of Schlitz Park is its river frontage and river walk connections to both the Beerline neighborhood and the Water Street District. Improving these river connections by drawing them west into Haymarket would further stimulate future residential and commercial development.

The southern portion of the Hillside-Haymarket District is defined by the now-vacant Park East freeway corridor. The Park East represents the last remaining leg of the proposed Lakefront Freeway that was never fully developed. Demolition of the Park East freeway in 2002 opened up 64 acres of land for future re-development and since that time six developments are either completed, underway, or proposed. A form-based master plan and design

guidelines were established shortly following the demolition of the freeway. The Park East Master Plan emphasizes form and design features but does not emphasize use which may, for the broader focus of this plan, need to be reconciled with the overall goals of the Downtown Plan Update.

Recommendations:

- Support a mix of smaller scale, low rise residential uses in the Haymarket, including live-work space.
- Increase the overall residential density of the district.
- Focus residential development around a 4th / Vliet commons served by streetcar service and appropriate streetscape and landscaping.
- Discourage future industrial, warehousing and storage uses in the District.
- Maintain public access to the river and Riverwalk via Vliet Street east of MLK Drive. Vliet Street can be the uniting connection between the river, a future Haymarket neighborhood, the Hillside neighborhood and west to the former Pabst Brewery
- Support uses in the District that are oriented towards the creative arts and technology start-ups, including live-work space for such uses.
- Eliminate the right-turn by-passes along Walnut Street at 6th Street and MLK Drive.
- Conversion or re-development of industrial or other vacant or under-utilized sites can include institutional and community service uses.
- Encourage additional liner buildings along the Milwaukee River at Schlitz Park to take advantage of the unique riverfront location.
- Reinforce Juneau Street as a primary pedestrian and connecting corridor. Juneau Street is an important east-west connection in the larger downtown area, connecting the Yankee Hill District to the former Pabst Brewery.
- Maintain the pedestrian bridge linking Hillside and The Brewery. Future re-placement of the bridge should take on a “gateway” design as a symbol to highlight the entrance into Downtown.
- 6th Street appears and feels like a highway. The street should be redesigned to take on the qualities of a boulevard rather than a divided highway. Intersections with excessive size and with current or future pedestrian emphasis should be reduced or properly scaled.
- A large number of vacant or under-utilized parcels line the east side of 6th Street. New development should better engage 6th Street to improve aesthetics and the pedestrian environment along this stretch of 6th.
- The vacant Park East corridor, west of the river, should consist primarily of higher density, multi-story residential uses. Other acceptable uses are hotels, accessory retail and parking and other uses as detailed in the Park East Master Plan.
- Major destination retail venues should be avoided in the Park East Plan area and instead be directed to the Downtown Center area such as the vacant 4th and Wisconsin parcel.

Water Street

With possible exception of the Lakefront District, Water Street is probably the area most associated with Downtown Milwaukee entertainment due primarily to its collection of bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues that existed well before similar Downtown and Third Ward development occurred. In short, Water Street was, for a significant amount of time, the only game in town, or at least the only game downtown that offered a range of food, drink, and other leisure options. The district is unique in that it contains a distinct grouping of older and historic buildings surrounded by an increasing amount of new infill development, primarily along the river portion of the Park East corridor and the MSOE campus.

The Water Street District in this plan follows Water Street from the Brady and Water Street Intersection south to Kilbourn Avenue, encompassing the east side of the Milwaukee River up to the MSOE campus at Jefferson Street. The northern portion begins at the intersection at Brady Street, one of most successful retail and entertainment streets in the city. Improving the connection between Brady and the downtown is a key factor in the success of both districts and will bring a dynamic continuity to the Downtown and Lower East Side as a whole, effectively merging the two areas. Historically, the stretch between Brady Street and Downtown at the Water Street entertainment district was an under-utilized utilitarian zone dominated by surface parking lots, the elevated Park East freeway on one side and a vacant tannery complex on the river-side. Two developments have since spurred significant development in this area, the removal of the Park East freeway and resulting eight new city blocks available for development, and redevelopment of a large portion of the former Gallun tannery site into multi-story apartments,

Below the Brady-Downtown corridor is the Water Street entertainment district. Less than two-blocks in length, this area has long been a destination for residents and visitors alike attracted to the row of bars, restaurants and associated crowds and nightlife. Historically this area of Water Street has always been entertainment oriented and the success of the district, as in many cities, is likely due to the un-interrupted row of two and three-story historic buildings and characteristic facades that gives the area a comfortable and pedestrian-scaled atmosphere.

The south end of the district is a made up of block-sized development of primarily office and civic uses such as 1000 N. Water and the MGIC office complex as well as the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. The eastern portion of the district is a mixture of the MSOE campus, large and small scale apartment buildings and the former Blatz Brewery, since converted to both commercial and residential uses.

Ensuring and maintaining compatible and quality development on the Park East parcels will be the dominant issue for this district. Adding density and good design to future projects will ensure that Park East becomes a healthy downtown anchor.

Recommendations:

- Complete the conversion of State Street to two-way traffic.
- Improve the physical connection between Red Arrow Park and the grounds of the Marcus Performing Arts Center.
- Redevelop the Performing Arts Center parking garage block in a way that extends the Water Street entertainment district.
- Consider a permanent visitor's center at Red Arrow Park.
- Allow for the closure of Edison Street between Water and Knapp Streets related to future development.
- Continue Ogden Street into Park East Block 19 to intersect with an extended Market Street.
- Better define the Water Street entertainment district with streetscaping and signage. Create generous sidewalk space to allow for outdoor cafes.
- In connection with the Water street entertainment district, make pedestrian improvements along Juneau and Highland Streets between Water Street and the Milwaukee River.
- Widen the sidewalks along Water Street between Highland and Knapp Streets.
- Support the on-going efforts of MSOE to define its campus with banners, signage, and way finding.
- Extend Knapp Street between Van Buren and Jefferson Streets.
- Continue efforts to create a park along Water Street between Market and Broadway Streets as established in the Park East Master Plan.
- Land uses in the Park East blocks of the Water Street District should consist primarily of office and residential with supporting retail or entertainment at street level or at the base of the building. Exceptions may include academic uses by UWM, MSOE, or MATC, or hotel uses.

Yankee Hill

Yankee Hill is a Downtown residential neighborhood that begins the series of Lower East Side neighborhoods that run along the lakefront bluffs and continue along the shoreline through the north shore suburbs. It contains the highest residential density of any district downtown. It is characterized by early 20th Century construction, mainly consisting of low-rise brick apartment buildings, hotels, and a variety of classical churches of varying architectural styles. This neighborhood also contains the largest percentage of tree coverage anywhere downtown. The residential blocks of the district boast densities typically between

60 and 120 dwelling units per acre with some as high as 165 dwelling units per acre.

The western edge of this district reflects more mid-century development than early Twentieth Century roots. The area along Jackson and Van Buren is a result of the urban renewal, freeway construction spree of the 1960's, with cleared blocks taken up by multi-story apartments on a larger footprint, as exemplified by Juneau Village and the Yankee Hill apartments.

Van Buren is the commercial backbone of the district, with some additional commercial uses on Ogden and Juneau. Supported by the high density of the area and high number of people who shop on foot, two downtown supermarkets are located in Yankee Hill along Van Buren Street along with a small collection of neighborhood retail, personal services, and restaurants.

The northern edge of the district reflects a more contemporary redevelopment pattern of urban renewal land. The Park East freeway ended at Van Buren Street but land was cleared along Lyon Street to Farwell Avenue for the freeway's originally planned footprint to the lakefront. Along this route is now a four block stretch of 3-story apartments and townhomes, including an urban park, arranged along the edges of each block. Developed in the early 1990's, this development and its subsequent market success proved to be a catalyst for future downtown residential development and effectively re-wove what was once a real tear in the downtown fabric. An enlargement to the earlier established "Burns Triangle", between Franklin and Prospect provides a pleasant neighborhood green space at the northeast corner of the district.

The residential origins of the district derive partly from its bluff side location and accompanying views of Lake Michigan and the downtown skyline. Juneau Park is a county owned park that runs along the top of the lakefront bluffs. While the park contains a liberal amount of trails it suffers from an overgrowth of trees and invasive species that blocks its most valuable asset – lake views. Consideration of this asset should be re-examined in order to infuse the district with more and better place-making and quality of life amenities.

Overall, Yankee Hill is a stable and attractive corner of downtown Milwaukee. In terms of planning and investment there is little that truly needs to be done when compared to the needs of the downtown as a whole. Nevertheless, the strengths and weaknesses of the district do make clear a need to maximize its lakefront location and build up neighborhood serving retail in order to serve its relatively large residential population.

Recommendations:

Neighborhood Development

- Improve connections from Downtown to the Lower East side, especially to Brady Street, where numerous neighborhood serving uses currently exist. Connections should include streetcar and bus routes, complemented by good pedestrian environments that are safe, walkable, and engaging.
- Preserve the historic character of older portions of the area
- Revise and update C9A section of Zoning Code to reflect the current mix of retail and residential uses more consistent with today's urban real estate market.
- Complete the conversion of State Street to two-way traffic.

Van Buren Corridor

- Support continued development of the Van Buren/Jackson Corridor for neighborhood supporting retail and service uses.
- Promote new neighborhood supporting businesses and unique urban businesses, such as quick-service restaurants, personal services, bicycle shops, hardware stores, drug stores, and specialty shops, with late hour availability that will address daily needs of residents.
- Create a unique identity for the area as a neighborhood retail district.
- Consider redevelopment of the low-scale uses on the blocks north of Juneau Avenue into more sizable mixed use developments.
- Re-connect Knapp Street between Jefferson and Van Buren Streets.

Kilbourn Boulevard and Juneau Park Terminus

- Terminate Kilbourn Avenue at Juneau Park with landscape, public art, fountains or an active use such as a park pavilion to anchor this key terminus as a "place" that bookends with the Milwaukee County courthouse and completes the view corridor or vista.
- Support efforts of local neighborhood groups to develop a Juneau Park improvement plan.
- Consider improvements to the intersection of Kilbourn and Prospect Avenue, reducing right-turn by-passes and making the intersection more pedestrian friendly.
- Connect Cathedral Square to this end terminus with a wide, planted public boulevard with public art and other amenities. Some aspects of this have already been accomplished.
- Use intersection improvements to better connect Cathedral Square with the district along Kilbourn Avenue at the Jefferson Street Pedestrian mall.
- Where Kilbourn Boulevard widens, beginning at Jackson Street, consider using part of that right-of-way for enhanced storm water swales, planters, and medians.

Streetcar and Transit Connection

- Connect residents of the Yankee Hill district to the Downtown Center, the Lakefront, Third Ward and Westown by streetcar connections.
- Existing bus service and any new Bus Rapid Transit Corridors should serve residents of the Yankee Hill District with direct connections to the Downtown Center and the East Side.
- Consider new transit connections along Juneau Street to Water Street, the Old World Third St. area and the Brewery Area.
- Promote the visibility and identity of Burns Commons as a key streetcar connection.

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