Dead End Urban Corridors: Reconnecting Urban Space

Molly Macklin

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, mmacklin@huskers.unl.edu
DEAD END URBAN CORRIDORS
RECONNECTING URBAN SPACE

By Molly Macklin

A Terminal Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska Lincoln
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Architecture
Major: Architecture
Under the Supervision of Professor Thomas Laging

Lincoln, Nebraska
May, 2011
## CONTENTS

### 6-11 Project Abstract

### 12-111 Research

- 14-21 Typological Precedents
- 22-31 Renewal Precedents
- 32-51 Historical Context
- 52-65 Nicollet Corridor
- 66-73 Neighborhoods
- 74-95 Site Analysis
- 96-109 Infrastructure
- 110-111 Physical Model

### 112-131 Conceptual Premise

- 114-115 Preliminary Sketches
- 116-117 Driving Concepts
- 118-131 Design Guidelines

### 132-155 Development Proposals

- 134-135 Development Components
- 136-145 Development Proposal 1
- 146-155 Development Proposal 2

### 156-179 Schematic Design: Master Plan

- 156-177 Nicollet-Lake Master Plan
- 178-179 Presentation Model
PROJECT ABSTRACT
THESIS STATEMENT [Revised Thesis Statement, 12/2010]

This proposal seeks to look at urban renewal through the analysis of main street thoroughfares that weave through the urban fabric connecting neighborhoods and people as vital life-lines within cities. How does history, culture, economics, and existing infrastructure feed these corridors? And what happens when this artery is blocked by development?

Specifically, this thesis is focused on exploring a non-urban oriented, dead-end corridor typology that has been forced onto the urban main street resulting in an area that has become blighted, under utilized, and disconnected from the surrounding urban environment.

The main argument is aimed at critiquing overlaying typologies onto urban areas with little or no regard to the context in which these areas are sited. While typological precedent and patterns can be the starting point for analysis and investigation into renewal solutions, the application of a type-based approach alone, will not solve the problem. Urban patterns and characteristics vary from location to location, and resultingly each place becomes unique with its own story and evolution.

Instead, the intention is to prove that design solutions must be heavily rooted in a holistic understanding and response to the affected site’s history, culture, economics, and existing and future infrastructure. These criteria must be analyzed and evaluated on the varying scales of the urban environment, including: the immediate site, the urban neighborhood, the urban corridor, and the larger city context. This approach is driven by creating the ‘story of place’ and finding solutions that work within these contextual constraints.

The goal of this thesis is to prove that by creating a story of place through the holistic understanding of context, the resulting design and architecture can convert these non-urban oriented, dead-end typologies into places that reconnect urban space, people and businesses in ways that are relevant in today’s society and optimal for the future.
INTENT
Nearly eighty percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas, many of which suffer from deteriorating community infrastructure, limited green spaces, under utilized space planning, decreased safety, and declining neighborhood stability. It is the intent of this proposal to examine current trends in urban revitalization projects that attempt to restore and preserve urban neighborhoods as economic, cultural and political centers.

The growth and evolution of the urban fabric is vital to the future of our cities. Realizing that evolution is key, this examination will go beyond typical renewal solutions and attempt to offer a new typology that considers the context of the technological, cultural and economical future of the urban fabric. Through investigation into community development, analysis of policies, and the study of urban architecture, this exploration of the urban corridor will be approached from a realistic perspective. The goal being to balance visionary optimism and hard-headed realism to derive solutions that not only maintain the richness and complexities of the urban fabric, but ones seeking revitalization that gives back to and feeds the larger urban context.

Understanding the urban neighborhood and its role within the larger scale of the city will also be key in this investigation. Neighborhoods substantially define the civic life of cities and any renewal solution must aim to revitalize that fundamental unit of civic culture, the neighborhood. Americans lead more mobile and private lives. Theses new life styles along with economic decline have influenced the built environment. This has resulted in urban neighborhoods that have become disconnected and have lost a sense of place typically associated with urban development.

THE URBAN CORRIDOR
More specifically, this proposal seeks to look at urban revitalization through the analysis of main street thoroughfares that weave through the urban fabric connecting neighborhoods and people as vital life-lines within our cities. How does the history, culture, economics and existing infrastructure feed these corridors? And what happens when this artery is blocked by development? It is the primary argument of this thesis that blocked corridors are areas that typically suffer from deterioration, and because these avenues are vital to the survival and maintenance of our urban centers, these dead-end conditions are areas in which urban revitalization is necessary.

While this thesis proposal will be highly involved with urban planning, it is the intent to define architectural solutions for these obstructed nodes, specifically looking at the reopening and redevelopment of these areas. How does architecture aid in reconnecting discontinuous main streets? Is it enough to repeat the typical demolition and simply overlay the old with new construction? Or can these reopened nodes provide opportunities for support to the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the entire length of the corridor? How will the architecture respond to the history, culture, and economics of the immediate site as well as the neighborhood in which it is sited and the larger city context. How can architecture redefine this sense of place that has been damaged and disconnected? The final goal of this thesis is to prove that through proper and progressive architectural design and planning, urban neighborhoods can be reconnected and revitalized through solutions that are relevant in today’s society as well as optimal for the future.
SITE

The site of exploration for this thesis topic is at the intersection of one of Minneapolis, Minnesota’s historic main streets and one of its oldest commercial corridors. The corner of Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street posses unique and remarkable potential for meaningful redevelopment and architecture.

The Nicollet Avenue corridor has a rich diversity. In downtown Minneapolis, Nicollet Mall is home to the corporate headquarters of many major companies in the upper Midwest. Nicollet Avenue is a transportation corridor and vital bus route that links the downtown with southwest Minneapolis. Nicollet Avenue is a place where people live and it serves as a focal point for the neighborhoods that it traverses. It supports local trips by bus, car, foot, or bike. Businesses along the avenue provide for the daily needs of southwest Minneapolis residents. In short, by offering something for everyone, Nicollet Avenue serves as one of Minneapolis’s main streets by connecting business, entertainment, shopping, housing, and services.

The Nicollet-Lake site is centrally located along the corridor. To many, it represents the intersection of several neighborhoods where downtown, uptown, midtown and southwest neighborhoods collide. The closure of Nicollet Avenue at Lake Street with the development of a K-mart in the late 1970’s sharply reduced the amount of traffic on Nicollet and reduced commercial capacity. It was part of an economic development strategy for the intersection and the surrounding area. While the store has been successful by providing a needed discount retail service to the surrounding neighborhood, this strategy turned its back on the Nicollet corridor effectively placing a tourniquet on the flow of consumer traffic to the Nicollet-Lake intersection and along Nicollet generally. In sum, the results of this disruption to the Nicollet corridor has led to a gradual urban deterioration in and around this site.

The design of the K-mart site hugely contributes to the bleak environment at this intersection. The Nicollet-Lake intersection typifies the incongruity that can result when a suburban development pattern is forced onto an urban setting. The scale and form of the commercial and institutional buildings that characterize this section cater to automobile traffic and are inconsistent with the high level of pedestrian traffic and transit service that exist here. Large parking lots, which facilitate auto access, make for a poor pedestrian environment. The scale and form of the buildings and the expansive parking lot poorly define the street edge, and, in essence, “erode” the north and southeast corners of the intersection. The blocking of Nicollet here along with the planning and architecture on the site has slowly turned this once vibrant neighborhood into a place of deteriorating neighborhood stability, decreased safety, and has caused a lack of identity along the length of the corridor.
SITE OPPORTUNITIES
The Nicollet-Lake site has several adjacent opportunities for redevelopment that would positively benefit the surrounding neighborhoods and the corridor as a whole. The Midtown Greenway transverses the site on the north side. This commuter and recreational corridor is a 5.5 mile long former railroad line that currently provides bicycling and walking trails. For most of its distance across the city, the corridor is grade-separated from the street grid, either in a gorge passing under bridges carrying streets overhead, or on a levy with traffic passing underneath it. It consists of two one-way bike lanes and one two-way walking path. This offers barrier-free bicycling that can make cross-town commuting faster than going by car or bus. The Greenway eventually connects with the Light Rail Train (LRT) on the southwest side of Minneapolis. Reopening Nicollet at this intersection would provide more visible and safe access to the Greenway corridor.

‘Eat Street’ is the stretch of Nicollet starting just north of the Nicollet-Lake site extending to Grant Street on the south end of downtown. Eat Street was created in the 1990’s to promote the neighborhood as a destination for ethnic restaurants. The neighborhood’s 15,000 residents represent 30 countries, and over 25 language groups. Reopening Nicollet would provide easier access to Eat Street’s many ethnic restaurants, grocery stores and markets.

On April 2, 2010, the Minneapolis city council passed a 30-year proposal for the expansion of the Streetcar and Light Rail transit system. Minneapolis planners have been working on reviving this long-lost piece of Twin Cities history—a streetcar system that once was the envy of the nation, but in the 1950’s was completely demolished due to the advancement of the automobile. The current proposal plans on renovating the Midtown Greenway to include a street car system along its route, as well as adding a Nicollet Avenue line. The proposed Nicollet line stops just north of the Nicollet-Lake site instead of connecting through the entire length of the corridor. Reopening Nicollet would allow these new transit routes to connect the neighborhoods that it transverses more effectively.

The reopening of Nicollet Avenue at Lake street is a tremendous opportunity to explore urban renewal. It would not only revitalize the immediate site and Nicollet Avenue, but could also contribute to the success of redevelopment efforts along adjacent corridors. The revitalization of Nicollet Avenue as a continuous corridor will provide an urban landscape that has a recognizable identity along which residents, workers, and visitors can celebrate its many distinctly different and unique parts.
The following pages document the research phase of the project. Each area of research will be presented, first, with the Primary Conclusions drawn from the specified area of research, and second, will document the information obtained.
PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS

THE DEAD-END

As a starting point for investigation, several typological precedents were studied. The main intent for analysis was to conceptualize the scale of the project site using familiar sites as reference. Several typologies were studied including the goal oriented typology, the public square typology, the urban shopping district typology, and the pedestrian-oriented or auto-less typology. Each category is summarized using specific precedents. The final analysis of this research was used to draw conclusions about the site of exploration.

The following pages document each typology and the precedents used to define them. Below is the conclusions that were drawn from critically comparing these precedent studies to the Nicollet-Lake site.

- **Non-urban oriented, lack of density**
- **Transverse Intersection Typology:** Dead-Ends into a parking lot
- **Non-Figure Typology:** A figure is presented at the dead-end, but there is no clear spatial characteristics delineating it from the street or enclosing it as a separate space.
- **No clear spatial patterns of movement** other than the street.
- **Solids do not create hierarchy of streets**
- **Few Path-Room relationships**
- **Open spaces (voids) are not enclosed,** they erode onto the street creating no clear separation from the street
- **Inconsistent texture:** course & fine-grained both exist with no spatial relationship between the two

The following representations are all drawn at the same scale and the same orientation. The intent here is to help conceptualize the scale and size of the projects program using sites that are familiar at the same scale to compare to. This is an exploration into spatial patterns, street hierarchies, ground plan dimensions. The goal of this study is to help develop the differences between formal ordering and actual movement in the space.

The figure-ground drawing is used for representation. This type of representation is abstract and simplified. The black and white figure-ground only differentiates inside from out, solid and void with little regard for section, material, or time. Its strength and use here is as tool to quickly and clearly delineate the spatial patterns of the voids and solids of the urban fabric. The following typological diagrams are used as spatial comparative analysis to the project’s site.
The goal oriented typology was chosen for investigation as a way to explore a positive notion of a ‘dead-end’ condition. Instead of focusing on dead-end conditions that negatively impact the surrounding urban environment, the focus was to identify conditions where this typology actually supports the surrounding urban space.

The decision was made to identify this typology not as a dead-end condition, but as a goal oriented type delineating itself from the possible negative assumptions of its physical nature. Five sub-types were identify within this typology: the landscape end, the square, the hub intersection, the transverse intersection, and a figural end. All of these types present strong instances off urban space where pathways and/or corridors terminate into another urban void (space).

- A view of the landscape at the end of a street will always nurture an expectation of a better view and of reaching a border or destination
- Washington square is a pedestrian park cutting both the longitudinal and transverse city grid
- The longitudinal axis is a landscape end typology offering a street end with landscaped views
- The transverse access is more of a figural typology with the alignment of a large arched opening with 5th avenue
- Proposals to extend the grid through the park have been unsuccessful

- A square at the end of a street will give the immediate impression of reaching a space for interaction
- The meaning of movement leaves the impression of emptying out into a different place which surrounds and concludes the focused movement providing a calm
- The square is the goal of the journey
- The above example, exists within an even larger sequencing of streets and squares beginning at the city’s Duomo and ending at the Arno river
A HUB INTERSECTION

- A street which ends in a hub makes up one arm of a Y-shaped figure (goal).
- Precise shape can vary, and the number of streets emanating from the hub can increase.
- The corner of a hub intersection will suggest the actual goal of forward movement.
- The above example is a unique star-shaped traffic-circle symbolizing Paris’ urban form & reinforcing the city’s internal image.
- The 2nd outer ring street allows local traffic to service the buildings on the circle.

TRANSVERSE INTERSECTION

- Situations in which the street meets a crossing street are the most difficult in a dense city.
- Typology where one street dead-ends into the longitudinal wall of another street at 90 degrees.
- Savannah’s plan is a unique allotment of streets and parks creating the feeling of being in a conglomeration of parks rather than a city with parks.
- Each street offers different spatial sequences:
  - Pedestrian movement: square-street-square
  - Vehicular traffic: movement around each park.

A FIGURE

- The figure typology forms characteristic motifs which emphasize the termination of the street.
- As in the example above, the building and piazza present the goal as a coherent volume, delineating it from the street as an independent structure.
- Unseen in plan, the silhouette of St. Peter’s dome and the intensify the expression of arriving at the building, which in turn, is to be entered.
- The elliptical colonnade also creates enclosure of this space creating a grand ‘end’ condition.
The Public Square Typology was chosen for exploration because from the early onset of the project, the notion of incorporating open public space into the design was considered. It was therefore important to identify successful urban voids that embodied positive elements associated with the public square as an opportunity to create a place for unique urban activity and interactions.

Four public square types were identified including the equilibrious square, the directional square, the centralized square and the linked square. All of these types become context specific, meaning that their spatial shape and link to the greater urban fabric is defined by the surrounding urban solids. Each void or space becomes a unique focal point within its spatial sequence.

- An equilibrious square is at rest, directionalities are not over accentuated, neither out of the space nor into the space and are offset and equal
- The most important characteristic of this typology is the continuity of its enclosure acting as a container with a neutral function for changing backgrounds
- The Madrid square is enclosed by a 4-story facade with a uniform colonnade along the ground level
- Its uniformity and subdued articulation reveals its distinct society: politics, economy and culture are embedded in its form and history
The most important characteristic of a directional square is the accentuated directional tendency towards one of its sides.

- The campo in Sienna is a shell-shaped public space that emphasizes direction.
- It slopes downward towards the town hall’s clock tower as the main focus of the space.
- There is access from varying vantage points due to its location within a medieval street typology.
- The three curved walls enclosing the non-dominant side are highly continuous, minimizing competing directionalities.

Central focus with the most important characteristic being its concentration on and movement out from and around its central point.

- Gives the space the impression of equilibrium around its edges, uniting and accentuating the compaction of the intersection.
- Circle Park has a 300’ tall monument in the middle.
- Buildings surrounding Monument Circle have substantial mass to form the square’s walls, giving the circle a strong sense of enclosure.

Linked typology is comprised of multiple squares.

- Enclosure is established by an experience of spatial continuousness and involves the interrelationship between the shared structure of linkage.
- In the above example, the Campanile acts as a pivot point between the 2 spaces, allowing for a dynamic shift from a large space to a smaller one.
- Diverging walls meet at 2 points while all other corners remain hidden behind the basilica, giving the perception that the basilica floats within both spaces, relating the inherent structure of each.
The Urban Shopping District typology was chosen for investigation because the Nicollet-Lake site is classified as a Commercial Shopping District. Therefore, it was important to identify with various types of shopping districts that maintained stronger connections to the urban fabric than the Nicollet-Lake site currently provides. Three types of shopping districts were identified including: festival markets, plaza shopping centers and mixed-use centers.
The Pedestrian Only or Auto-Less typology was chosen for exploration because currently, on the Nicollet-Lake site, there is no street that passes through the block. Since the automobile was taken out in the 1970’s, it seemed possible that the corridor might be able to be reopened without including automobile traffic through the site. This would possibly be able to create a pedestrian zone of activity for the Nicollet-Lake site.

Two pedestrian only or auto-less street typologies were identified including: the Victor Gruen Theory and an Experiment in Traffic Control. Pedestrian only streets were somewhat of a trend in the 1960’s and 1970’s, most of which failed because of the advancement of the automobile. Now, many cities are trying to encourage more environmentally friendly forms of transportation, so pedestrian only or auto-less typologies have a new potential for success in the future.

---

**THE VICTOR GRUEN THEORY**

- Plan was to focus autos around the perimeter of the city and to place parking around the periphery
- The downtown area was to become completely pedestrian, a business district with shopping malls
- The typology located parking facilities that would give pedestrians no more than a 2.5 min. walk from their autos to businesses and shopping
- Plan was never implemented

**EXPERIMENT IN TRAFFIC CONTROL**

- Closure of Broadway from 42nd to 47th made permanent in 2010
- Made into public plazas for pedestrians and bicyclists
- To encourage people to drive less and walk more
- Financial and Aesthetic benefits
- Reduced pedestrian injuries, increased retail sales,
- Traffic flow improved for some streets, but worse for others
The next phase of research was focused on studying current trends in revitalization projects, both locally within the city of Minneapolis, as well as nationally. This area of investigation was necessary in order to obtain a general knowledge base of renewal solutions and identifying characteristics in planning process, urban-form, ecology, connections and market. The diagram to the left summarizes the precedent findings within these categories.

The final analysis led to the development of defining fundamental renewal components that are essential for growth. Growth being the underlying purpose for redevelopment of under utilized urban areas. The diagram at the right defines these components which include: the impetus, the catalyst, the anchors, the attractors, the connectors, the node and finally, the district.

It is the primary conclusion that in order to sustain and promote new development and ultimately new growth, all of these components are not only necessary but must work together in a cohesive whole.
**PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS: FUNDAMENTAL RENEWAL COMPONENTS**

**ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GROWTH**

**IMPETUS** • • • • *The concept for Growth*
- The driving force for design.

**CATALYST** • • *The starting agent for Growth*
- Entity or entities that lead to further development in an area.
- Can be economically, socially, aesthetically or community driven.
- Is the foundation for change.
- Can be a specific building or program.

**ANCHORS** • *The stabilizing agent of Growth*
- Entities that stabilize economic development within an area.
- Hospitals, sports facilities, cultural centers, religious establishments and private businesses.
- Generate revenue.

**ATTRACTORS** • • *The magnets for Growth*
- Entities that aid in attracting people, goods & services to an area.
- Can be pieces of the built environment or can be events that take place within the development area.
- Destinations that lure patrons to come to an area.

**CONNECTORS** • • *The life-lines for Growth*
- The channels along which people and/or goods travel and move.
- Vital to move people and goods to, from and through an area.
- Streets, walkways, bridges, transit lines, rails, skyways.
- Link between anchors, attractors, nodes and districts.

**NODE** • • • • • • *The foci for Growth*
- Areas in a city where an observer can enter and are the intense foci to and from which the observer is traveling.
- Points, primary junctions, crossing or convergence of paths.
- Can be the focus and epitome of a district.

**DISTRICT** • • • • • • *The result of Growth*
- Medium to large sections of the city where the observer can enter inside of and is recognizable as having an identifying character.
During the investigation into local precedents, two adjacent areas to the Nicollet-Lake site were identified, Uptown and Lyn-Lake. Both of these small areas are transversed by Lake street which also transverses the Nicollet-Lake site. The Uptown and Lyn-Lake Small Areas, in combination with a proposed Nicollet-Lake small area designation, together could form a new economic district. Whereas each node has unique characteristics, the strength of the three areas combined has the potential to enhance growth and sustain a high level of urban quality.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN - RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

The Riverfront District Revitalization exhibits three decades of progress in a combined effort by public and private entities. This development strategy successfully established a vision, removed barriers, added infrastructure, built on strengths to provide amenities, and created opportunity for other development. The driving force behind redevelopment was to preserve the area’s history and communicate its significance.

BACKGROUND
- Formally home to large flour milling industry
- Land was blighted and unused by the 1970’s
- Plans for revitalization began in the 1970s
- Development was evolutionary and incremental
- Used overlay zoning techniques

AMENITIES
- Strong residential component w/in 1/4 mile radius of amenities
- Strong catalytic development/anchors 1/2 mile from each other
- Walkable
- Mix-use Development
- Close proximity to CB

ANCHORS
- St. Anthony Falls
- Nicollet Island and Nicollet Island Inn
- Historic Main Street
- Mills District
- Guthrie Theater
- The Depot
- Reused historic buildings and good building stock
- Developed integral parks and open space
- Strong residential component - increased densities

CONNECTIONS
- Pedestrian and bike paths connect anchors
- Connection across river: Stone Arch Bridge
- Parking Overlay Districts

OUTCOMES
- Successful attractors bringing visitors to area
- New Residential Community
- Jobs and Economic Activity that did not exist prior
- Increased Real Estate Taxes, Increased Land Value
MINNEAPOLIS, MN - UPTOWN

Uptown is a popular commercial district in southwestern Minneapolis. The area is known for shopping, food, entertainment and leisure. Uptown offers the best qualities of urban living. It is green, well-connected, and urban.

BACKGROUND
- Chain of Lakes has been a destination since the 1870s
- Was the premier retail district outside downtown until the 1970s; the proliferation of single-use buildings with large parking lots had replaced the multi-tenant commercial buildings
- Renewal plans in 1980s to restore back to urban retail district
- Because of increased traffic flow and an increase in crime rate, a 20-year renewal plan for Uptown was established

AMENITIES
- Adjacent to Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles
- Minutes from Downtown Minneapolis
- Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Community
- Regional Destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment
- Full-Service Community with daily uses and activities
- Walkable
- Access to Parks and Open Spaces

ANCHORS (CHARACTER AREAS)
- Hennepin Avenue Commercial Corridor: Primarily retail/service based, more mixed use development since 2008
- West Lake Street Live/Work: Eclectic mix of higher-density housing and converted to retail/service use on Lake edge and adjacent Midtown Greenway; Primarily residential-live-work
- Urban Village (North and South Sub-Areas): Primarily mixed-use and residential
- Activity Center: Calhoun Square as the focal point at the crossroads of Hennepin and Lake St.; Uptown Theater; balanced mix of daytime and evening uses
- South Hennepin Community Corridor: Primarily residential and office, small commercial;
- Neighborhood: Residential; Well Established and Maintained

CONNECTIONS
- Pedestrian and bike paths (Midtown Greenway and Lakes)
- Future Streetcar along Hennepin Ave and Greenway
The Lyn-Lake area is focused around the intersection of Lyndale Ave. and Lake St. in southwest Minneapolis. It is a dynamic area made up of a variety of restaurants, arts venues, and businesses. Lyn-Lake is approximately 1/2 mile from the intersection of Hennepin Ave. and Lake St. It is not considered part of Uptown because Lyn-Lake has its own unique and separate character and flavor.

**BACKGROUND**
- Developed as a commercial area in the 1890s-1900s as a result of intersecting streetcar lines on Lyndale Ave. and Lake Street
- Today, the intersection retains a commercial character
- Traditional commercial buildings from the early era remain, but many were demolished and replaced with buildings designed for an automobile lifestyle
- Currently under the Lyn-Lake Small Area Redevelopment Plan

**AMENITIES**
- Strong residential communities surrounding area
- Walkable, strong pedestrian environment
- 20 foot wide sidewalks at the intersection of Lake and Lyndale
- Mixed-use Development
- Continuous Attractive building facades

**ANCHORS (CHARACTER AREAS)**
- **Activity Center**: Heart of Intersection; Mix of restaurants and theaters creates a destination
- **Lake Street “West”**: Links two strong, but distinct activity centers; Recent streetscape improvements and infill development has improved area; Mixed Use / Commercial
- **Lake Street “East”**: Fragmented urban form; Many auto oriented uses; Lack of pedestrian oriented destinations
- **Midtown Greenway**: Transitioning from light industrial to high density residential & mixed-use
- **Commercial Corridor**: Eclectic mix in built form; Small shops, restaurants, small apartments, and single family homes
- **Community Corridor**: Transition from dense, heavily commercial area to neighborhood scale

**CONNECTIONS**
- Pedestrian and bike paths (Midtown Greenway)
The East Baltimore Revitalization Initiative is a large-scale, effort to transform a deeply distressed neighborhood adjacent to the Johns Hopkins University and Hospital complex into a mixed-income residential community and create an engine of economic opportunity for both long-time and new residents.

**BACKGROUND**
- Tough neighborhood: high concentrations of disinvestment, poverty, vacancy, and social distress
- Untapped economic potential

**VISION AND GOALS**
- Mixed-income, mixed-use sustainable community
- New public transportation options
- Create 2,200 new and rehabilitated green homes
- Create 2 million sf of commercial space

**STRATEGIES**
- Intensive community engagement
- Responsible relocation and right to return
- Responsible demolition
- Cross-sector partnerships and financing

**NEW & PLANNED ANCHORS**
- East Baltimore Community School
- New Affordable Rental Housing
- New mixed-Income rental Housing
- Life Science Park (The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Graduate Student Housing

**OUTCOMES**
- Achieved many successes including relocation, economic inclusion, financing, and the sustained alignment of the public, private, philanthropic, and community sectors.
- Catalyst for new development in surrounding communities.
- Demolition protocol used has become new model for city
- Drawn support from Baltimore City Public Schools
- Project has generated significant interest across the country

**THE VIEW AHEAD**
- Remains a work in progress
- Challenges include recession, financing middle-income housing, assisting former residents, and attracting market-rate buyers
- Build a strong retail base for the community
PORTLAND, OR - PEARL DISTRICT

The Pearl District is an award-winning, internationally recognized leader in urban renewal. Often considered the “gold standard” of live, work and play mixed-use space, the Pearl District proves that a high quality of life can rise from the ashes of urban decay.

BACKGROUND
- Portland’s best known art district
- Area of warehouses with light industrial purposes
- Strong presence of artists.
- Revitalization of 34 brownfield acre site began in late 1990’s.

AMENITIES
- Within 1/2 mile of CBD
- Amenities within 1/4 mile radius: Mixed use developments; Walkable; More than 10 basic services
- Historic buildings restored into living and commercial spaces
- Design Central with more than 70 stores
- Best of Portland’s dining establishments
- Variety of cultural activities including theater, music and over 20 art galleries
- Trendy retail fashion and unique gift store retail
- Interesting and soothing urban parks
- Spa, salons, beauty and health services

ANCHORS
- Hoyt Street Mixed-Use Development
- Tanner Springs Park, Jamison Square
- North Park Blocks
- Brewery Blocks: Adaptive Reuse
- Powell’s Book Store

CONNECTIONS
- Portland Street Car: Connects Pearl District, Northwest Portland, CBD, South Waterfront
- Pedestrian pathways connect to central city paths

SUSTAINABILITY
- Many LEED renovations & new designs: Brewery Blocks: LEED Gold; Named ‘One of the Best New Developments’ in 2005
- Eco-friendly district with transportation options
- Simpler, greener lifestyle in a clean and safe area
- Stormwater Control Plan
- Sustainability Policy
CHATTANOOGA, TN - RIVERFRONT DISTRICT & WAREHOUSE ROW

Warehouse Row’s metamorphosis from shopping center to community retail concept begins with a lush aesthetic inspired by the humble grandeur of the original architecture. Warehouse Row is located in Chattanooga’s Riverfront District which underwent an ambitious urban redevelopment program.

BACKGROUND
- Was site for a series of railroad warehouses in early 1900’s
- Re-designed in 2006 into mixed-use project consisting of 330,000 sf of retail and office space
- Part of the Prime Outlets family
- Riverfront District is undergoing redevelopment which started in the 1990s, includes expansions along the Tennessee River
- In the 1990s, Chattanooga won national attention with its successful downtown and neighborhood revitalization
- Named one of the most livable cities in the United States

AMENITIES
- Close proximity to CBD
- Residential Development
- Access to waterfront activities
- Mixed use development
- Event space
- Convenient front door parking & covered garage parking
- Free 2-hour parking
- Food Market
- Urban Market
- Warehouse Row as Chattanooga’s Premier Shopping and Dining destination

ANCHORS
- Warehouse Row Shopping Outlet
- Chattanooga Convention Center
- Tennessee Aquarium
- Hunter Museum of American Art
- Tennessee Riverpark
- Ross Landing Park
- Creative Discovery Museum

CONNECTIONS
- Pedestrian paths
- Bike Lanes
- Walnut Street pedestrian bridge
- Free electric shuttle connecting opposing riversides
SITE: NICOLLE AND LAKE

The site of exploration for this project is at the intersection of one of Minneapolis, Minnesota’s historic main streets and one of its oldest commercial corridors. The history of the Nicollett-Lake site is very unique in its cycle. From birth to re-birth, this site has come full circle. The following pages will document, in detail, the complete historical development. The Nicollett-Lake site is rich in its historic influences, as well as its consequences, creating a story that is uniquely Nicollett-Lake.
The birth of the Nicollet-Lake intersection began in the 1870’s with transportation. The rise of the site continued to be centered around transportation access with the construction of electric streetcar lines and also the creation of public space, the Nicollet Baseball Park. The ballpark attracted businesses and aided in establishing the intersection as a prosperous commercial node.

The decline of the site was centered around the advancement of the automobile. The loss of the streetcar lines and the ballpark, the new lure of suburban shopping centers, and the construction of I-35W corridor all contributed to this decline.

The failure of the site was in a renewal solution that was invested in overlaying a suburban development pattern onto the site as a means of attracting consumer populations back to the area. K-mart anchored this development siting their store in the middle of Nicollet Avenue forcing its closure.

Out of Failure, did arise one anomaly of opportunity. The closing of Nicollet, blocked consumer flow to the North Nicollet businesses and many closed. This resulted in decreased property values which new immigrants bought up in the early 90s and began opening ethnic establishments. This section of North Nicollet became designated as “Eat Street” and is a currently a diverse city destination for residents and tourists.

The rebirth of the site will be anchored around new transportation connections. Proposed streetcar lines for Nicollet Ave. and the Midtown Greenway, and the possible addition of a transit station in the center of I-35W at Lake St. will create better connections to the site.
1874 The history of development at Lake and Nicollet predates the city’s formal incorporation of this area. In 1874, Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street are intersecting rural dirt roads outside city limits. No development exists at the intersection.

1879 An independent company, the Lyndale Railway Co., later renamed the Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka Railway Co. began operation of a three foot gauge line from Minneapolis to Lake Calhoun along Nicollet Avenue and 31st St. Short trains were pulled by two 0-4-2 type steam engines enclosed in streetcar-like wooden bodies. The nearby lakes were popular resort and tourist destinations, and the railway saw an opportunity to make money providing transportation to lake-goers in a time where horse-drawn carriages and dirt roads were the primary means of transportation.
Rapid development around Nicollet-Lake site due to the steam powered, interurban railroad line that extended along Nicollet to 31st St, and along Lake St. out to Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet.
1890 Construction of mass transit along both Nicollet and 31st Street in the form of electric streetcar lines. The effect was more rapid real estate development. Only one building at Lake and Nicollet existed.

1891 Minneapolis electric cable and streetcar railway lines

1896 Construction of Nicollet Ball Park, home of the Minneapolis Millers baseball team, occupying Nicollet from 31st to Lake Street.

1898 platmap showing development around the Nicollet-Lake intersection
1900  The intersection was well established as a commercial center that served both transferring streetcar passengers and, increasingly, more automobile drivers.

1905  The Selby-Lake interurban streetcar line is completed on Lake Street.

1907  The Nicollet Station, located on the southwest corner of 31st Street and Nicollet Avenue, was the main shop on the system. Many of the system's streetcars were constructed here.

Entrance to Nicollet Station at 31st St. and Nicollet Ave. (1912)

Train yard at Nicollet Station at 31st St. (1920)

1914 platmap showing development around the Nicollet-Lake intersection
The baseball years: Baseball fans traveled to Nicollet Park from all over the upper midwest to cheer on the Minneapolis Millers and watch various other teams that used the park. The Nicollet Ball park attracted businesses to located their shops and facilities around this community landmark. Ultimately, the Nicollet Ball Park aided in establishing the Nicollet-Lake intersection as a prosperous commercial node within the city.
Looking northwest at the corner Lake and Nicollet

Looking northeast at the corner Lake and Nicollet

Looking southwest at the corner Lake and Nicollet

Looking southeast at the corner Lake and Nicollet
The Nicollet-Lake intersection sustains a dense population in the surrounding neighborhoods making it one of Minneapolis's most desirable places to live, work, and visit.
Streetcars were the dominant mode of transportation in the Twin Cities until 1920. By the 1930's, the Great Depression and the rise of the mass produced automobile, caused the rail lines to decline. Bus routes were becoming more dominant and frequently used and the streetcar routes, especially those with low ridership, were cut back. In 1949, Twin Cities Rapid Transit had new ownership which began the dismantling of the railway system and the switch to buses. The Nicollet and Lake street lines were some of the last lines to remain in operation.

Many alleged that the tear down of Twin Cities Rapid Transit rail system was associated with actions General Motors took in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, arguably with the intent purpose of destroying streetcar systems to promote bus and automobile travel. GM, along with Firestone and Standard Oil formed National City Lines, a holding company that engaged in hostile takeovers of streetcar lines in 45 cities.

The Nicollet Station was eventually converted into a bus garage.
1955  Demolition of Nicollet Park.
1956  Opening of the metro area's first suburban shopping center, Southdale Mall in Edina.
1960  Interstate freeway system excludes southbound access to Lake Street from the plans for I-35W.
1967  Construction of I-35W forces many families to move away.

A lively field: One of the last games played by the Minneapolis Millers at Nicollet Park.
A park in ruins: winter 1955, the remains of the once vibrant and beloved Nicollet Park.

The loss of the baseball park and the streetcar lines, the new lure of suburban shopping centers, and the failure to include I-35W access at Lake Street all contributed to the erosion of the commercial viability of Nicollet and Lake that had been driving this intersection since its birth. The once bustling and vibrant node was deteriorating rapidly. By 1960, Middle-class residents began moving out, the loss of Nicollet Park led to retail failure, and a rise in crime levels around this area led to the widely excepted view that this part of the city was undesirable and poor. By the 1970's the proliferation of abandoned buildings, adult bookstores, and massage parlors prompted the city to demand attention to re-establish this area.
1972 Establishment of the area as the Nicollet/Lake Economic Development District.

1973 Nicollet & Lake became one of the city's first Tax Increment Financed (TIF) districts, land was assembled and buildings were razed.

---

**Tax Increment Finance District**

TIF is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance current improvements (which theoretically will create the conditions for those future gains). When a public project such as a road, school, or hazardous waste cleanup is carried out, there is often an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, and perhaps new investment (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example). This increased site value and investment sometimes generates increased tax revenues. The increased tax revenues are the "tax increment." Tax Increment Financing dedicates tax increments within a certain defined district to finance debt issued to pay for the project. TIF is designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed or underdeveloped areas where development might not otherwise occur. TIF creates funding for "public" projects that may otherwise be unaffordable to localities, by borrowing against future property tax revenues.

---

By 1972/3, Minneapolis got the authority to create three tax increment financed (TIF) districts from the State Legislature to do redevelopment. These were the first three TIF districts ever authorized in the State of Minnesota. Three sites were identified. The Nicollet-Lake site, one that became the Loring Park Greenway, and a third that became the City Center, all on the Nicollet corridor. The city sold bonds to acquire the land on the Nicollet-Lake site. Then immediately started to demolish property and clear the land in preparation for new development.

The city reviewed and analyzed several development strategies on how to positively affect change in and around the Nicollet-Lake site. It was believed that a large retail tenant, such as a Target or Herbergers, would be the solution to the deteriorating condition. Concurrently, suburban sprawl was on the rise. Many were fleeing the big city for lives in the nearby suburbs that had big department stores and shopping malls. The Renewal solution for Lake and Nicollet was invested on integrating a suburban typology into the urban fabric as a means of attracting consumer populations back to this area. City officials began one of their most ambitious projects of the 1970s: The vision for the 37 1/2 acre site was to incorporate a miniature version of the suburban Southdale Shopping Mall. The original plans for the Nicollet-Lake Development District, which encompassed the site of the old Nicollet Park, included two enclosed shopping malls, connected by a skyway over Lake St., double-decked ramps to accommodate 1,000 cars, an entertainment center with a 48-lane bowling alley, a nightclub, along with housing. The city encountered many problems trying to find a large retail tenant to anchor this type of development. Dayton-Hudson declined to build a Target store and Herbergers...
1974-1975 Economic recession that drove away potential builders. Property sat vacant for two years, forcing the city to dip into its general Fund to service the tax increment.

1976 K-Mart says "All or Nothing". After shelling out $2 million from the General Fund, pressure on the city was building to fix the problem. K-mart came to the table with a 'big box' store concept that required cutting Nicollet.

1977 Closure of Nicollet Avenue and project construction.

Several developers were interested in the site until a recession took hold and the would be developers were no longer able to get lease commitments from the tenants they anticipated would locate in the project. With the land already largely vacant, instead of producing a positive increment, the district was not even producing the tax revenue it had prior to the bond sales and the city was repaying bond payments out of the general fund. After several years of hemorrhaging tax dollars on the district, K-Mart stepped in just as the city was starting to loose hope. In exchange for K-Mart's commitment, city officials agreed to close Nicollet Avenue, creating a two-block parcel on which to construct an 84,000 square-foot building to house a new K-Mart and grocery store. The remaining site was set to be a sea of parking spaces. Although, the surrounding neighborhoods actively opposed the street closing, the drain on the general fund was a significant concern, and the city council approved the project.
1978  K-mart opens their doors.

Documentation from the era make clear that the closing of Nicollet was part of a well-intentioned economic development strategy for the area. This strategy was partially successful in the fact that the Nicollet-Lake K-Mart soon became one of the company's most successful stores. The store provided a much-needed discount retail service to surrounding low-income residents.

The project, however, has many design problems. It typifies the incongruity that can result when a suburban development pattern is forced onto the urban fabric. The facility caters primarily to automobiles instead of the high levels of pedestrian traffic and transit that exist adjacent to the site, especially at the Nicollet-Lake crossroads. The expansive parking lot, which facilitates auto access, makes for a poor pedestrian environment. The scale and form of the K-Mart building and its parking lot poorly define the street edge and erode the north and southeast corners of the intersection. At the time, the rerouting of commuter traffic interrupted the residential character of the neighboring one-way streets, First Avenue going north and Blaisdell Avenue going south, ultimately lowering the value of those properties. The lack of egress on the north side of the building creates an isolated environment that promotes criminal activity.
1978  Shortly after the construction of the K-mart, a group of community artists painted a mural on the building’s backside protesting the project.

A DOOR CLOSSES AND A BATTLESHIP EMERGES

Hidden from public view on the back side of the K-Mart is a silent statement in the form of public art. It is an unusual protest against the development on this site in the sense that it was conceived and is maintained on the very building on which it protests. The mural dramatizes a community struggle against blocking this major urban artery in the name of economic development. What is more surprising is that it was painted the same year that the K-Mart opened its doors.

The business man in the panels represents K-mart and its allies. As you follow the mural from left to right, you see him closing a door on the neighborhood, which is represented by a battleship symbolic of the struggle over the store’s construction.

When K-Mart made the deal to invest in the Nicollet-Lake site, not only did they stipulate the closure of Nicollet for a "big box" design, but they insisted that there only be public egress on the Lake Street side of the store leaving the north wall blank. As a concession to outraged neighbors, it was agreed that the community would be allowed to create an original piece of art to cover the bare wall.

The mural remains today, partially obscured behind trees and a chain-link fence. While some neighboring residents may not even know it exists, most are unaware of the significance it holds for past generations of a symbol of the challenge that they faced and are still faced with today.
The closing of Nicollet, a once continuous commercial corridor, now blocked the flow of consumer traffic along the street. There were especially negative consequences to the Nicollet businesses to the north of the site. The business district along this stretch of Nicollet had the life choked out of it because of the lack of exposure to automobile traffic. Property values went into a free fall and places were boarded up. Crime and prostitution became common due to this isolation. This led to a substantial decline in the neighborhood along Nicollet between the Nicollet-Lake site and Nicollet Mall in downtown.

Left: Nicollet north of site. The X’s are representative of closing businesses after the closure of Nicollet.

Right: Flow diverging over to 1st Street, effectively placing a tourniquet of consumer flow north of the site.
1980s Addition of a Super Value Grocery Store located next to the K-Mart. Findley Place, Park Square Condominiums and In-Town-On-Lake condos were built. Although development seemed to be on the rise, the "Master Plan" for the Nicollet-Lake site continued to fail. The in-Town-On-Lake condos project on the southeast corner of Nicollet-Lake collapsed financially before its completion. The rotting wood framing of the abandoned project further blightened this area. A white castle sits on one corner while prostitutes stroll along Lake St. Criminal activity around the site is increasing while safety and a sense of community are getting further depleted.

1987 The city began designating official neighborhood boundaries and the Whittier neighborhood was formalized.
New immigrants to the area of Nicollet north of the site from Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Latin America buy up cheap properties along Nicollet and open a handful of ethnic establishments including restaurants and markets.

The Whittier Alliance and Business Association created a new branding scheme called "Eat Street" for the section of Nicollet north of the site from 29th Street to Grant Street and rerouted traffic back to Nicollet north of the K-mart site.

In the 1990’s, the area on Nicollet between downtown and 29th Street, became a site of a small-business renaissance. New stores, principally owned by a growing number of Chinese, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Middle Eastern and Latin American immigrants, started opening at a rapid pace suddenly transforming this deteriorated area of Nicollet Ave. into a stable and diverse ethnic business district. These new immigrants were drawn to the district for cheap housing and employment at GFI America, the giant meat-processing plant on 28th Street that offered some of the only semi-skilled jobs in south Minneapolis.

These immigrants provided a customer base for a handful of ethnic establishments. In 1990, three Asian markets had set up shop on Nicollet between Franklin and 29th Street, along with an Asian-owned dentist’s office, photo-processing shop, and bakery. This kernel of Asian-run businesses, and the low rents on the boarded up storefronts along the avenue, began to attract more small ethnic business. These businesses quickly began drawing their customers from the entire metro region.

By the late 1990’s, the success of this area was something of an anomaly. The rebirth of this part of Nicollet Avenue seemed to be a homegrown phenomenon rather than the result of planning, and planners started to take notice. Spearheaded by local groups, like the Whittier Alliance and the Nicollet Avenue Business Association, a $7 million face-lift for Nicollet Avenue between Grant Street and 29th Street, including road repair, 200 new trees, and decorative street lighting began in early 1997.

A major component of this redesign, was to experiment with traffic control. Northbound traffic from First Ave. was re-routed back onto Nicollet at 29th Street as an attempt to reconnect Nicollet and consumer flow. The branding for this area became known as "Eat Street: 17 blocks of eating adventure". Eat Street was now a location, a very busy and lively destination completely transformed from the bleak unsafe and unattractive state is was in only a decade earlier.
2000  Sherman Associates (developer) starts planning for redevelopment of site called the Nicollet and Lake Commons Project. The project included working with K-mart to relocate their store and re-open Nicollet Avenue.

2002  K-Mart files for bankruptcy and pulls out of the Nicollet-Lake Commons project.

2003  Mitigation and Enhancements I-35W Access project proposal for the I-35W corridor includes a K-Mart site redevelopment plan and proposal for a center of I-35W at Lake Street bus transit station.
2005 Completion of the Midtown Greenway pedestrian corridor that transverses the site to the north. This new recreational and commuter trail provides walking and biking lanes.

2010 Approval of 30 year transit plan to include the potential reopening at Nicollet for a streetcar line and approved streetcar line for the Greenway. Minneapolis receives federal funding to conduct an 18-month study of the Nicollet corridor for a proposed streetcar line from downtown to the new 46th Street at I-35W transit stop. This study will explore reopening Nicollet on the K-Mart site.
PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS

NICOLET AVENUE
The Nicollet Avenue corridor has a rich diversity. It is a transportation corridor and vital bus route that links the downtown with southwest Minneapolis. Nicollet Avenue serves as a focal point for the neighborhoods that it traverses. It supports local trips by bus, car, foot, and bike. Businesses along the avenue provide for the daily needs of southwest Minneapolis residents. Nicollet Avenue serves as one of Minneapolis’s main streets by connecting business, entertainment, shopping, housing, and services.

A CORRIDOR DIVIDED
The closure of Nicollet at Lake Street turned its back on the Nicollet corridor effectively placing a tourniquet on the flow of consumer traffic to the Nicollet-Lake intersection and along Nicollet generally. This disruption to the Nicollet corridor has led to gradual urban deterioration in and around the Nicollet-Lake site, and has divided the Nicollet corridor causing a discontinuous identity along its length.

The primary site of investigation actually divides the corridor’s type designation. Nicollet North of the site is designated as a commercial corridor and Nicollet South of the site is a community corridor. Therefore, the site becomes a vital link between these two types, a transition piece, a connector and provides the opportunity as a union between commercial capacity and community identity.

[The following pages will break down the Nicollet Corridor following the divisions shown on the previous page from the Nicollet Mall to 62nd Street on the south border of Minneapolis. The intent is to identify the corridors identity and characteristics along its length.]
NICOLLET MALL

The Nicollet Mall is located on the portion of Nicollet Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. It is a pedestrian and transit mall that caters to upscale shopping and dining. Nicollet Mall forms the cultural and commercial heart of the city. The Mall has a pedestrian friendly environment with a streetscape scattered with public art, benches and plantings. The transitway is exclusively for buses, taxis and bikes.

Nicollet Avenue here is home to many of Minneapolis’s iconic buildings including the IDS Center, the former Dayton’s flagship store, Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis Public Library, and the Minnesota Planetarium. During the summer months, the mall hosts a popular farmers market and in the winter, the Holidazzle Parade. Nicollet Mall is a lively destination along the Nicollet Avenue Corridor.
This section of the Nicollet Avenue corridor was branded “Eat Street” in the late 1990’s for its over 60 ethnic restaurants, shops and markets. The appearance of these venues has helped this once struggling area to emerge as a destination for people who want to experience the tremendous ethnic diversity of the City.

Many elements have fostered the development along this “ethnic eatery” stretch of Nicollet. The hard work of small business owners who take pride in their product and place of business contributes greatly to the success of this area. The businesses offer a unique product and experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Streetscape improvements, such as plantings, lighting and seating have aided in enhancing the pedestrian environment and lessened concern about safety. The buildings are a collection of period pieces, rooted to their times, but put to new uses with lively, urban, and international flavor. The use of color and contrast in the built environment is an expression of the diverse culture of residents that live and work here. Many of the buildings have even become a canvas for artistic expression where artists paint murals or assemble mosaics. The one to two story brick and stucco buildings have limited setbacks and large front windows. These structures serve as a strong backdrop for the avenue.
29TH STREET - 33RD STREET

The Nicollet-Lake intersection typifies the incongruity that can result when a suburban development pattern is forced onto an urban setting. The scale and form of the commercial and institutional buildings that characterize this section cater to the automobile and are inconsistent with the high level of pedestrian and transit service that exist here. Large parking lots, which facilitate auto access, make for a poor pedestrian environment. These parking lots poorly define the street edge. There are several vacant or under utilized commercial structures that further detract from the pedestrian environment in this section of the avenue.

33RD STREET - 40TH STREET

Of all the sections along Nicollet Avenue, this section has the least-defined identity. There are no strong distinguishing features in the area: no topographic features, no historic sites, no landmarks, no substantial institutional anchors, and no noticeable public realm. In addition, there are no clear land use patterns. Rather than mixed-use, there is a generic mix of uses, some single family residential, a bit of multi-family residential, scattered commercial, and a few institutional uses. Many of the buildings were built prior to 1920 and, as a result, are in need of renovation and repair. Housing quality along this stretch of the avenue is generally moderate to poor and commercial land use is primarily related to and caters to the automobile.
40TH STREET - 47TH STREET

The commercial and residential uses are better defined in this section of Nicollet Avenue. The commercial nodes are better delineated and the residential areas appear to be more stable. One area with a particularly strong neighborhood-serving commercial flavor is the intersection of Nicollet and 43rd Street. There are several unique businesses including a cafe, restaurant, record store and other shops. There is another strong node at the intersection of Nicollet and 46th Street. This area has a pedestrian friendly environment. The human scale of the buildings, limited setbacks, and large shop windows are inviting and create a sense of safety here.

The stability of the residential areas is due, in large part, to the presence of Martin Luther King Park which covers four full city blocks between Nicollet and Stevens and 40th and 42nd. The park is the largest expanse of green along the Nicollet Corridor. The amenity value of the park combined with increasingly interesting topography in the area creates a more pastoral residential environment. Buildings in this area are generally in good repair. Most were constructed prior to 1930.
47TH STREET - 56TH STREET

This section of the avenue is packed with amenities and has a high quality, well maintained and stable residential area. The Minnehaha Creek meanders along the base of the gently rolling hills that comprise the Tangletown neighborhood. There are several historic structures that are sprinkled throughout the area. The residential structures have high real estate values for their unique design and also for their location near the Creek.

The one problem along this stretch of the avenue is high traffic speeds that detract from the pedestrian environment. This problem is due in large part to the excessive road with along Nicollet here and its adjacency of the I-35W corridor. People use Nicollet here to bypass peak traffic times on the interstate.

There is a strong commercial node at Diamond Lake Road that has tremendous potential to capitalize on pedestrian, bike and auto traffic. The four corners of this intersection have pedestrian friendly elements including human-scale buildings, limited setbacks and storefront windows.
This section of Nicollet Avenue, in terms of building character, is the most diverse. There is architecture representing every decade from 1900 to 1990. Not only is building character incompatible, uses vary dramatically from lot to lot. As a result of the diversity in building types and uses, there is an inability to commit to and therefore invest in any particular identity along this portion of the avenue. From north to south, as the building diversity increasingly becomes more noticeable, so does the suffering. The housing stock generally appears to be deteriorating, property maintenance is haphazard, and the litter problem is severe.

Despite the abundance of high-density residences nearby and the likely generation of foot traffic, there has been little effort to attempt to create an environment that makes pedestrians feel comfortable and safe. Public space is poorly defined and there is no accessible green spaces nearby.
 PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS

The investigation into the neighborhoods that the Nicollet-Lake site is situated is extremely important to establishing the identity and character for what the site could and should become. Urban Neighborhoods substantially define the civic life of cities and any renewal solution must aim to revitalize that fundamental unit of civic culture.

The site is located at the intersection of two neighborhoods, Whittier and Lyndale. The investigation into the site’s relationship to these neighborhoods concluded with identifying it as having the potential to be the primary commercial hub for these neighborhoods. This link should strive to balance commercial capacity with community identity. Currently, the Nicollet-Lake site does not represent the values and characteristics of these two neighborhoods.

**It is of primary importance to carry the values of the Whittier and Lyndale neighborhoods forward in order to effectively re-establish the Nicollet-Lake node and create its identity.**
PRIMARY CONCLUSIONS

WHITTIER CHARACTERISTICS
• It is known as the “International neighborhood” multicultural community. The neighborhood’s residents represent 30 countries and over 25 language groups.
• Whittier is the most populous neighborhood in Minneapolis with over 15,250 people, 450 businesses and 660 renal property owners.
• The Historic character of the neighborhood and its structures are a colorful mix of artistic culture with ethnic tradition.
• The Whittier Neighborhood embraces the presence of public art and many of its buildings become the canvas for such art.
• It is home to seven community gardens and over 60 ethnic food markets, groceries and restaurants.
• The community organization is the Whittier Alliance.
• There are above average crime levels.
• The Whittier neighborhood has a much more defined identity.

LYNDALE CHARACTERISTICS
• The Lyndale Neighborhood is predominantly residential.
• Commercial use is mainly along Lake Street.
• Although the Lyndale Neighborhood lacks a clear community identity, it has one of the highest artist populations in the nation and has gained a reputation for having such a high concentration.
• It is home to Painter Park. The park includes a basketball court, softball field, tennis court, soccer field, tot lot and playground.
• The community organization is the Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA).
This Land Use Map clearly shows the site’s commercial capacity within the two neighborhoods. The surrounding dense residential use is able to sustain a highly commercialized Nicollet-Lake intersection.
These photos either show significant landmarks or simply represent the character of these neighborhoods. They provide a general understanding of the aesthetic quality and identity associated with Whittier and Lyndale.
**Housing Demographics (2000)**

### Residential Density

- **Whittier:**
  - 1 unit: 1,325 units
  - 2 units: 1,070 units
  - 3-4 units: 685 units
  - 5-9 units: 630 units
  - 10-19 units: 840 units
  - 20+ units: 3,140 units

- **Lyndale:**
  - 1 unit: 770 units
  - 2 units: 415 units
  - 3-4 units: 355 units
  - 5-9 units: 265 units
  - 10-19 units: 840 units
  - 20+ units: 915 units

### Housing Availability

- **Whittier:***
  - 10,469 units

- **Lyndale:**
  - 7,040 units

- **Vacant Housing Units:**
  - Whittier: 351 units
  - Lyndale: 3,429 units

### Homeowners and Renters

- **Whittier:**
  - Owner occupied: 6,250 units
  - Renter occupied: 2,631 units

- **Lyndale:**
  - Owner occupied: 1,579 units
  - Renter occupied: 781 units

### Homeowners & Rental Vacancy Rate

- **Whittier:**
  - Owner vacancy rate: 0.8%
  - Renter vacancy rate: 1.0%

- **Lyndale:**
  - Owner vacancy rate: 2.5%
  - Renter vacancy rate: 2.1%

### BUILD YEAR OF EXISTING STRUCTURES

![Graph showing build year of existing structures]

### HOUSEHOLDS WITH AUTOS

![Graph showing households with autos]

**SUMMARY**

- Population is on the rise in these neighborhoods
- The majority of residents are between 25-44
- Diverse residents from many countries
- High level of residential density
- Not many vacant housing units which leads to the conclusion that these neighborhoods are desired places to live
- Very high concentration of renters representing a possible lack of attachment that residents develop living in this community

- Most resident’s length of occupancy is between 1-5 years clearly showing a lack of value residents feel towards the neighborhoods
- More than half the residents live alone
- The median household income is low
- Most of the structures were built before 1940 speaking to the character of the built environment in this area
- 40% of residents do not have vehicles which shows that these neighborhoods are well connected to public transportation.
The investigation into the immediate site revealed many of the problems that contribute to the bleak urban environment that currently exists at the Nicollet-Lake intersection. The plan consists of large one to two story buildings with expansive parking lots. The buildings have large setbacks and poorly define the street edge. The scale and form of the built environment here caters to the automobile and is inconsistent of the high level of pedestrian and transit service that exist. Buildings have no clear architectural identity or spatial relationships to one another. In general, the evolutionary character normally associated with urban development has been erased at this node, and there is a strong disconnect between the identity of the Nicollet-Lake site and the surrounding urban environment.

The following pages document analysis of building type and use, physical characteristics, greenspace, building to parking ratios, zoning, current tenants, and analysis into the need for a national discount retailer on the site.

The primary conclusions drawn from this research are shown in the diagram to the left. These were the preliminary recommendations for the site at this stage of development within the project. These decisions were based largely on optimizing a new urban landscape taking into consideration the potential for increased densities, the condition of the buildings, vacancy, proximity to the Midtown Greenway and the I-35W corridor, and current tenants.
A PARKING LOT FOR A SHOPPING CART — UNDER-UTILIZED URBAN SPACE

DISCONNECT BETWEEN BUILDINGS & STREET CREATES SPACE FOR LOITERING
Dead-end creates isolation for negative activity.

North egress: fear zone.

A stop light and a big box: framing the downtown skyline.
This section describes each building on the primary and secondary site of investigation, as well as other buildings surrounding the site that may have a potential impact on development here.

Each building study includes information about the structure and its lot including current occupant, property type, zoning, build year, lot size and market value. Each building was photographed to help illustrate its current condition and aesthetic value.

One important observation made from this study was the recognition of civic buildings that provide support to this commercial node. These include a police station, post office, hospital, fire station and bus garage. These uses help to support the idea that the Nicollet-Lake site has the potential to become the community hub for this area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Super Value Stores Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3S - Community Shopping Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>2.88 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$2,843,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>K-Mart (Sears Roebuck &amp; CO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3S - Community Shopping Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>6.9 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$6,555,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Atlas Staffing/Paydoy Loans/Western Union/African Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1972, 1915, 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>0.5 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$1,288,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Carefree Rental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Occupant</td>
<td>6-Pearle Vision/Hollywood Skin Care; 7-Chinese Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3S - Community Shopping Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>0.57 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>8-Highland Plaza Strip Mall; 9-Stop and Shop Gas Station</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3 - Community Shopping Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1987-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>3.2 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$4,745,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Wells Fargo Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>2.56 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Occupant</td>
<td>Property Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champions Sports Bar</td>
<td>Commercial - Bar, Restaurant, Club, Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred’s Auto Body</td>
<td>Commercial - Vehicle Related Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Castle</td>
<td>Commercial - Bar, Restaurant, Club, Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber Shop; Mexican Lat</td>
<td>Commercial - Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Occupant</td>
<td>Condos/Hennepin County Family Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Mixed Use - Residential, Medical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>2.29 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$6,254,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>H&amp;R Block/Call Nails/Arca De Noe/Extra Comm./Apartments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Mixed Use - Commercial, Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>0.49 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$1,475,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Park Square Condos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Single Family Attached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>R5 - Multiple-family District (high density)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>3.8 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$9,240,000 (132 units ranging in price)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Findley Place Condos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Low Income Rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>R4 - Multiple Family District (Medium Density)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>3.31 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$5,460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Occupant</td>
<td>United States Post Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Commercial - Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3S - Community Shopping Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>1.82 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Nico Properties (Metal Finishing Plant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Industrial Warehouse &amp; Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>I2 - Medium Industrial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>2.8 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$3,782,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Metro Transit Bus Garage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1900, Renovated in 1950s &amp; 1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>5.07 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupant</th>
<th>Nicollet Self - Service Car Wash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Vehicle Related Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning</td>
<td>C3A - Community Activity Center District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Built</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Size</td>
<td>0.37 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Value</td>
<td>$475,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Current Occupant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Current Occupant: Minneapolis Public Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Current Occupant: 5th Precinct Police Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Current Occupant: Minneapolis Fire Department Station No. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Current Occupant: Hennepin County Medical Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS AND CODE DESCRIPTIONS

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS

- **R1A - Single-family District (Low Density)**
  - Predominantly low density, single-family dwellings and cluster developments on lots with a minimum of 5,000 s.f. of lot area per dwelling unit. Institutional, public uses, public services and utilities may be allowed.

- **R4 - Multiple-family District (Medium Density)**
  - Predominantly medium density apartments, congregate living arrangements, single-family, two-family dwellings, and cluster developments, on lots with a minimum of 5,000 s.f. and at least 1,250 s.f. of lot area per dwelling unit. Institutional, public uses, public services and utilities may be allowed.

- **C2 - Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District**
  - Environment of retail sales and commercial services that are larger in scale than allowed in the C1 District and allow a broader range of automobile related uses. Residential uses, institutional, public uses, parking facilities, limited production and processing, public services and utilities are allowed.

- **C3S - Community Shopping Center District**
  - For the development of major retail centers where both adequate land area and transportation access can be provided. Residential uses, institutional, public uses, parking facilities, limited production and processing, public services and utilities are allowed.

- **I2 - Medium Industrial District**
  - For medium industrial uses and other specific uses which have the potential to produce greater amounts of noise, odor, vibration, glare or other objectionable influences than uses allowed in the I1 District and which may have an adverse effect on surrounding properties.
As illustrated in the site plan to the left, the site has very limited greenspace largely due to the expansive parking lots. While the primary site of investigation is lined with street trees, the section of Lake Street between the K-mart site and the I-35W corridor is void of plantings. This contributes to its non pedestrian oriented aesthetic. Street trees provide a barrier from the heavy flows of street traffic making sidewalks more inviting in character.

The greenspace to the north of the site belongs to the Midtown Greenway. This space is deceiving in plan because in reality, it is non-occupiable due its steep ravine-like slope dropping twenty-two feet from the street level.
SURFACE PARKING AREA TO BUILDING FOOTPRINT AREA

The building area to surface parking ratio on site is inconsistent with the surrounding urban texture and is more closely associated with suburban development patterns. The primary site of investigation suffers the worst, and the current sea of parking is never remotely close to being full. Instead, the parking lot sits largely vacant, since many of the K-mart go-ers travel by foot, bus or bike. This void is an example of severely under utilized urban space. Its edges eroded with no defining enclosure or boundary.
EXISTING SITE SECTIONS

The site is relatively flat with the exception of the Midtown Greenway and the I-35W corridor. These site sections illustrate the relationship of the two topographic changes. The Midtown Greenway has two levels, a pedestrian level sitting fourteen feet below the street level and the future streetcar level twenty-two feet below the street. The I-35W corridor is approximately twenty-two feet above the city grid overpassing Lake Street.
The Midtown Greenway is a 5.5 mile, former Milwaukee Road railroad corridor, that has been converted into a pedestrian thoroughfare with designated lanes for bicycling and walking. It is owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and maintained by the City of Minneapolis. Most of its length is grade separated from the street which provides for barrier free bicycling that can make cross-town trips much faster than going by car or bus. In April of 2010, the city of Minneapolis approved a streetcar route to occupy the south side of the corridor. Pedestrian trails occupy the North side.

The Midtown Greenway embodies an unusual opportunity for artistic expression. Cutting through such diverse neighborhoods that vary socio-economically, racially, ethnically, culturally and demographically, the Greenway is an opportunity for Public Art that is diverse in its content, medium, longevity and functionality thereby creating distinct places along the corridor. The corridor hosts temporary and permanent art exhibits as well as spaces for performance art.

The Midtown Greenway transverses the K-mart site to the north. There is currently ramp access to Nicollet Avenue here. Although there is ramp access to the city grid, the Greenway feels disconnected from the surrounding urban environment here. The lack of stacking density in and around the Nicollet-Lake site creates space that does not have eyes and ears watching and listening. This promotes negative activity and creates a fear zone along its length. The topography here is very steep, gorged out and possessing an almost ravine-like character. The main site considerations to address moving forward with design will be Access (use), Connection, and Visibility (safety).
above: Nicollet Avenue ramp looking towards back of K-Mart

above: looking east from Blaisdell

on: looking east

on: under Nicollet Avenue bridge
The I-35W corridor is also grade separated, elevated above the city grid at Lake Street. Currently, there are two, on-interstate bus stops located on either side of the I-35W corridor at Lake Street. Access to these stops is solely provided by an uncovered stairway bringing pedestrians from the street level to the interstate level. There is one small covered stop on the northwest corner and one on the southeast corner of the Lake and I-35W intersection.

In 2003, there was a proposed “Access” Project for this area that planned to finally add a southbound ramp at Lake Street with a transit hub centrally located between the north and southbound lanes of I-35W. Due to concern with the need to widen Lake Street in order to accomplish this strategy, the proposal was tabled. According to the Minneapolis City Planning Office, the issue has recently been activate again.

Access is still a problem however. The length of Lake Street from the K-mart site to the interstate is somewhat of a fear zone for pedestrian travelers. There is an abundance of beggars along this strip and the streetscape is not pedestrian friendly. The underpass pedestrian environment is littered with graffiti, narrow sidewalks and people loitering. The stairs leading to the I-35W bus stops are in poor condition and do not provide for accessible access to transit connections. Therefore, the primary site considerations moving forward into design will be Access (use), Connection, and Visibility (Safety).
The investigation into the need for a national discount retailer started with locating existing big-box retailers and drawing lines between adjacent stores to the K-mart site in order to establish the potential area that the current K-mart store services. Once this boundary was established, an analysis of the average household income was studied in order to better determine if a consumer need was viable here. As described in the diagrams on the previous page, the site shows that the location of a discount retailer does meet the population and income levels of the potential service area.

Once the need was established, the question became is K-mart the most appropriate retailer? Within the boundaries of the City of Minneapolis, the only other discount national retailer that exists is Target. Target stores have a stronger association and identity within the city because Target originated in the Twin Cities area. Target stores also are more willing to incorporate store designs into the urban fabric. This is exhibited in the Target store located on Nicollet Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. This store is a multi-level store with vertical parking options and does not possess the ‘big-box’ character that is typically associated with suburban big-box stores. Walmart stores currently do not exist within the Minneapolis boundary.

K-mart, on the other hand, is much more interested in maintaining its typical store design. In order for Nicollet to be re-opened, the K-mart store would need to redesign its store and typology to reorient the store and provide vertical parking. The diagram to the left, illustrates the possible outcomes for the K-mart store. Although a potential need was established in this study, the question still remains: Is a discount retailer the most optimal program for the primary site of investigation? Or does the site and its characteristics posses the potential for a completely new master plan?
Identifying the existing and future transportation infrastructure surrounding the site is crucial in understanding the Nicollet-Lake site’s connection within the larger Minneapolis context. The current site is well connected through pedestrian and transit ways. Its relationship to the I-35W transportation corridor is significant in that the site is highly visible to hundreds of thousands of passerbys daily.

The primary catalyst for change will be driven by improved infrastructure improvements. The potential addition of streetcar lines intersecting to the north of the K-mart site has the potential to transform the Nicollet-Lake.

The following pages identify first, the existing and future transportation infrastructure on the Nicollet-Lake site as well as its relationship to the city of Minneapolis. Each study shows the larger Minneapolis map and an enlarged Nicollet-Lake site map. This research includes the 30-year streetcar plan, bus routes, bikeways and bike share, and the Midtown Greenway. The diagram to the left illustrates all of these modes combined onto a single site map.

Nicollet-Lake traffic flow, traffic volume and corridor type will also be presented in this section. Understanding the movement and relationship between transit, vehicular and pedestrian traffic is fundamental in the study of the Nicollet-Lake site. These connector pieces will ultimately provide access to the new Nicollet-Lake and must seek to optimize connectivity to the surrounding urban environment.

Lastly, the existing street sections of both Lake Street and Nicollet Avenue are presented in incremental points through the site.
The city of Minneapolis is in the process of exploring an expansion to the current Light Rail Rapid Transit system. This network is to include extensions to the current LRT system as well as new streetcar lines. The Nicollet Avenue corridor and the Midtown Greenway both hold significant potential to be future rail transit corridors.
The Nicollet-Lake site is well connected to transit through the Minneapolis bus network. Not only does both Lake and Nicollet offer routes, but there are two small bus stops on the I-35W corridor at Lake Street. This connection to the larger Twin City road network provides opportunity for commuter flow from adjacent cities.
The Minneapolis Bicycle Program helps those who live and work in the city to use bicycles as a low polluting, cost-effective, and healthy way to travel. Minneapolis has been ranked the best biking city in the country by Bicycling Magazine.
The Midtown Greenway, which transverses the site to the north, is a 5.5 mile long pedestrian and bicycle path that is grade separated from the street. There is currently ramp access to Nicollet avenue just north of the K-mart site.
This diagram illustrates the current corridor types that exist in and around the Nicolle Lake site and the average traffic volume per day. A commercial corridor is intended to manage heavier levels of traffic flow typically including multiple driving and parking lanes. A community corridor should manage lower traffic flows and should balance residential safety with limited commercial flow. Residential streets are designed to manage very low traffic volumes creating safe streets for residents.

The closing of Nicollet has impacted the corridor types and traffic flow of the adjacent corridors. As shown in the diagram to the left, there are several community and residential corridors that are currently suffering from excessively high traffic volumes. This is due to congestion at the Niccollet-Lake intersection. It is clear from this analysis that the adjacent streets must handle increased traffic volumes of drivers trying to avoid this intersection.

Another traffic problem here is the flow onto the I-35W corridor. Specifically, the Intersection of Lake Street and the west frontage road is highly congested and difficult to maneuver through. This again leads drivers to use adjacent streets that were not designed for high traffic flow.

These traffic conditions remove flow not only from Nicollet, but Lake Street as well. This is undesirable for commercial businesses that want to maximize visibility from these streets. The increased traffic flow on neighboring commercial and residential corridors makes these avenues less desirable for residents lowering property value and decreasing safety.
This diagram illustrates the major directional flow of traffic in and around the site. Most significant here, is the adjacent one-way streets on either side of the Nicollet-Lake site that are used to reroute traffic flow.
The following pages illustrate the current street sections of both Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street. They are intended to document the public right of way including lane types and width, sidewalk conditions, building setbacks and street plantings that currently exist on these sections of the avenues.
EXISTING NICOLLET AVENUE CORRIDOR SECTIONS

SECTION C

SECTION D
EXISTING LAKE STREET CORRIDOR SECTIONS

NORTH

2-Story Building

8' Sidewalk

Parking Lane

8' Parking Lane

13' Thru Lane

11' Turn Lane

11' Thru Lane

13' Thru Lane

8' Parking Lane

8' Sidewalk

3-Story Building

80' Right-of-Way

SOUTH

SECTION E

NORTH

SOUTH

Environment

Vehicular

Pedestrian

Total Right-of-Way

section e

section f
ef gh

SECTION F

Parking Lot

9' Buffer

13' Thru Lane

11' Thru Lane

14' Turn Lane

11' Thru Lane

13' Thru Lane

8' Sidewalk

Building Setbacks Vary

78' Right-of-way
EXISTING LAKE STREET CORRIDOR SECTIONS

NORTH

SOUTH

SECTION G

SECTION H
EXISTING LAKE STREET CORRIDOR SECTIONS

NORTH

SOUTH

SECTION I
EXISTING NICOLLET BRIDGE & 29TH STREET SECTIONS

WEST

6' Sidewalk

33' Not Used

20' Parking Stalls

6' Sidewalk

65' Right-of-way

EAST

10' Sidewalk

59' Right-of-Way

MIDTOWN GREENWAY

SECTION J

NORTH

Hospital Parking Lot

9' Buffer

10' Sidewalk

13' Thru Lane

13' Left Turn Lane

13' Left Turn Lane

10' Sidewalk

Building Setbacks Vary

SOUTH

6' Sidewalk

6' Sidewalk

20' Parking Stalls

33' Not Used

10' Sidewalk

SECTION K

59' Right-of-Way
EXISTING PHYSICAL SITE MODEL
The construction of the physical site model was important for future three-dimensional exploration. The site model was constructed out of MDF, basswood and chipboard. The primary site of investigation was constructed as a removable insert so that future models could be placed into the context portion of the model. The scale is 1'=1/64".
The following pages document the initial conceptual premise for the project including the initial preliminary sketches, driving concepts, design guidelines and design strategies. These premises provided the base for the development of the design process throughout the project.
From the early stages of design, there were two battling notions of the approach of the site in terms of dealing with the Nicollet corridor. The first being to simply reinstate the corridor as a thoroughfare reconnecting Nicollet Avenue along its length. This would, in essence, restore the corridor back to its original state opening the road for automobile, transit and pedestrian flow through the Nicollet-Lake site.

The second idea was to use the corridor in a way that would restrict flow through the site to create a destination or a focal point along the corridors length. Restricting flow would also preserve the Eat Street community to the north of the site. Restricting flow was conceptualized at this point as re-opening the corridor but not bringing automobile flow through the site. The site would become pedestrian and transit focused, providing the opportunity to create public space that would not compete with high traffic levels.
AN INVERSION OF TYPOLOGY

*in·ver·sion* (in-ver·zhen)
- noun
  1. The act of inverting
  2. The state of being inverted

*in·vert* (in-vurt)
- verb
  1. to turn inside out
  2. reverse the position, order or condition of
  3. to subject to inversion

DRIVING CONCEPT #1

*fu·sion* (fyu-zhen)
- noun
  1. a merging of diverse, distinct, or separate elements into a unified whole
  2. the act of fusing

* fuse* (fyooz)
- verb
  1. to join or become combined; integrate

DRIVING CONCEPT #2

PROGRAMMATIC FUSION
The impetus for design was in the development of three driving concepts.

The first driving concept for design was the idea of inversion. Inversion, as the desire to attract instead of detract, to focus the edges instead of blurring them, and the overall notion of taking a site that lacks continuity and clear identity and reversing this condition.

The second driving concept was the idea of programmatic fusion. Fusion as the merging of diverse, distinct or separate elements into a unified whole, an integration or joining of program that reinforces the surrounding community identity ultimately preserving the neighborhoods as unique cultural entities, and the integration of fusing commercial capacity with community activity.

Finally, the last driving conceptual approach was the rejuvenation of place. Rejuvenation as the phenomenon of the capacity to live, grow or develop, to be restored, to return to life and to get or give new life or energy.
**DESIGN GUIDELINE #1: VISION**

Create a clear vision that addresses renewal solutions that consider the context of the technological, cultural and economical future of the urban fabric through solutions that are relevant in today’s society as well as optimal for the future.

**VISION STATEMENTS**

The New Nicollet-Lake Area......

- Will Re-Establish itself as a regional destination.
- Will be the front door to the Lyndale and Whittier neighborhoods and represent the unique diversity and values that characterize these neighborhoods.
- Will offer its own urban character focusing on the opportunity of being centered around two of Minneapolis’s oldest commercial corridors.
- Will Promote and create a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Will be a vibrant center of urban activity where people can gather, shop, live and work, enlivening the area and restoring its community presence.
The following sketch exercise was used to conceptually identify specific design guidelines that would help to organize the design process. Seven Design Guidelines statements were derived in the following areas: vision, goals, growth, character areas, access, open space and built form. Strategies for meeting these design guidelines were also identified within each category.
DESIGN GUIDELINE #2: GOALS

Outline the major design and development goals for the Nicollet-Lake Area. These goals will make the vision tangible connecting ideas with the physical place.

GOALS

Create a plan that will support the local community while still utilizing attractors to bring outside consumers to boost the area’s own economy.

Establish program and urban space that effectively links and transitions between the Nicollet “Commercial Corridor” and the Nicollet “Community Corridor.

Reinforce and strengthen the surrounding neighborhoods

- Strengthen neighborhood edges
- Reinforce neighborhood uses by limiting commercial encroachment
- Establish a high quality transition area, including green buffers between the neighborhoods and surrounding uses
- Create an identity that is representative of the Lyndale and Whittier values.
Establish a mixed-use, high density core that promotes activity and economic sustainability for the area re-establishing it as vital ‘place’ within the city.

- Support high quality mixed-use commercial and residential development
- Support a healthy mix of businesses

Recognize the value and benefits of high quality, well-located and well-designed urban density and implement density appropriately.

- Remove and/or build-up all one story structures
- Eliminate large surface parking and replace with vertical parking solutions.

Establish clearly defined public open spaces for interaction to strengthen community emphasis and serve as ‘attractors’ for the area.

- Establish a central public gathering place
- Establish a variety of smaller public urban spaces
- Use green space to improve connectivity between amenities such as the Midtown Greenway and the development Core.
DESIGN GUIDELINE #3: GROWTH

Encourage growth in the Nicollet-Lake Area that will result in positive changes for residents, strengthen the area’s urban character, eliminate fear zones, and boost the area’s economy, re-establishing Nicollet-Lake as a vital node within the city of Minneapolis.

GROWTH STRATEGIES

Define the edges of new growth and shape these edges such that the transitions into the Whittier and Lyndale neighborhoods are clear.
Growth will bring about new open spaces for gathering including improved connections for the midtown Greenway and the I-35W corridor.

Growth will support future transit and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

Growth will stabilize local businesses and create new opportunities.

Create a core where the most intense development can be focused for growth.
DESIGN GUIDELINE #4: CHARACTER AREAS

Recognize that different parts of the study area have defining characteristics and influences that will cause them to evolve differently over time, and identify strategies to integrate these parts as a common whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTER AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Core:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a core where the most intense development can be focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicollet Avenue: Community Corridor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the site as a catalyst of renewal for south Nicollet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn-Lake Overlap Area:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use this area as a way to transition from Nicollet-Lake the to Lyn-Lake small area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The I-35W Edge Area:
Create appropriate connections and separations.

Nicollet Avenue: Commercial Corridor
Maintain the commercial character of Nicollet Avenue as Nicollet transverses the site.

Use the site as a way to filter and ultimately preserve the area of Nicollet Avenue to the North, Eat Street.

Neighborhood Areas:
These are areas that are primarily residential.
- Create smooth and defined transitions into these areas.
- These areas are mostly single-family, duplex, triplex and small and large apartments.
- Should be well established and maintained.

The Midtown Greenway:
Celebrate the Locations Adjacency to the Greenway.

- Improve pedestrian connections between the Greenway and the development Core
- Limit shadowing of streets and the Midtown Greenway
- Program high density mixed-use residential to the North
Create clearly defined and safe connections for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, Parking and Traffic access.
ACCESS STRATEGIES

Promote land use and development densities that create and support strong transit markets, such as high density housing, employment and retail.

Incorporate well designed and well organized pedestrian transit understanding that walking, cycling, and public transportation are the preferred choices of many residents and potential visitors.

Support future development of streetcars on Nicollet Avenue and the Greenway.

Establish shared parking practices between multiple uses such as retail and offices.
Use open space to establish inviting and non-threatening urban space to enhance pedestrian use and interaction reinforcing a strong sense of place.

**DESIGN GUIDELINE #6: OPEN SPACE**
OPEN SPACE STRATEGIES

Create wider sidewalks through setbacks of buildings creating a safe non-crowded pedestrian zone.

Prioritize Streets as places for social interaction and urban activity instead of just as conduits for through-traffic.

Widen the Greenway at its intersection with Nicollet Avenue and provide a mid-town resting green open space for pedestrians.

Create year-round public open space near the Core development.
Establish an architectural identity informed by land use, development intensity and physical features that integrates itself within the surrounding urban fabric.

**DESIGN GUIDELINE #7: BUILT FORM**

- Establish an architectural identity informed by land use, development intensity and physical features that integrates itself within the surrounding urban fabric.
BUILT FORM STRATEGIES

Focus new built form in areas where it is most appropriate, or where surface parking, under utilized land, large parcels, and market interest is abundant.

Since much of the architectural history of the site has been lost, establish a clear architectural identity.

Establish through design and use, strong gradual transitions between residential and commercial areas, and streetscape and commercial areas.
The following pages document two contrasting development proposals for the project site. These proposals are general in their intent and were primarily focused on establishing programmatic and identifying characteristics for the new Nicollet-Lake site.

The definition for each proposal breaks down the possible arrangement of the site, focusing on defining fundamental renewal components that were derived during the research phase of the project. Each proposal also suggests where these programs would be located within the specific character areas that were defined by the projects design guidelines. Each strategy was then critically assessed based on its potential impact for success, failure, on the nicollet corridor and within the larger city context. Ultimately, neither proposal was adopted in its entirety, but certain elements from each proposal were carried forward to the schematic design phase of the project.

Each proposal will be presented followed by supplemental research and precedent studies that helped to inform the development idea.
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
FUNDAMENTAL RENEWAL COMPONENTS: (ESTABLISHED DURING RESEARCH PHASE)

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GROWTH

**IMPETUS** • • • • *The concept for Growth*
- The driving force for design.

**CATALYST** • *The starting agent for Growth*
- Entity or entities that lead to further development in an area.
- Can be economically, socially, aesthetically or community driven.
- Is the foundation for change.
- Can be a specific building or program.

**ANCHORS** • *The stabilizing agent of Growth*
- Entities that stabilize economic development within an area.
- Hospitals, sports facilities, cultural centers, religious establishments and private businesses.
- Generate revenue.

**ATTRACTORS** • • • *The magnets for Growth*
- Entities that aid in attracting people, goods & services to an area.
- Can be pieces of the built environment or can be events that take place within the development area.
- Destinations that lure patrons to come to an area.

**CONNECTORS** • • • *The life-lines for Growth*
- The channels along which people and/or goods travel and move.
- Vital to move people and goods to, from and through an area.
- Streets, walkways, bridges, transit lines, rails, skyways.
- Link between anchors, attractors, nodes and districts.

**NODE** • • • • • • • *The foci for Growth*
- Areas in a city where an observer can enter and are the intense foci to and from which the observer is traveling.
- Points, primary junctions, crossing or convergence of paths.
- Can be the focus and epitome of a district.

**DISTRICT** • • • • • • • *The result of Growth*
- Medium to large sections of the city where the observer can enter inside of and is recognizable as having an identifying character.
**PROPOSED PROGRAM**

**IMPETUS**
Celebrating the cultural characteristics of the neighborhoods.

**CATALYST**
- Minneapolis Institute of Art Museum Extension (MIA)
  - Focus on display of local and regional art
- Minnesota College of Art & Design Campus Extension (MCAD)
  - Masters of Fine Arts Studios

**ANCHORS**
- MIA Museum Extension
- MCAD Campus Extension
- Wells Fargo

**ATTRACTORS**
- Midtown Greenway “Midtown Hub”
  - Retail on Greenway level
  - Open space for display of public art
  - Outdoor amphitheater performance space
- Art Galleries
- Art Retail
- International Restaurants - continuation of Eat Street

**CONNECTORS**
- Midtown Greenway & I-35W
- Future Streetcar on Nicollet and Greenway
- Future I-35W median Transit station

**NODE**

**AN INVERSION OF TYPOLGY**

**CHARACTER AREAS**

**CORE**
Cultural Village with urban-oriented structures enclosing a public square.
- Locate anchor tenant here
- Street Level
  - Commercial space including Ethnic Restaurants & Art Retail
- Second Level
  - A series of Art Galleries & Culinary arts
- Upper Levels
  - Live/Work space for artists

**MIDTOWN GREENWAY**
- A mid-town hub & stopping destination.
  - North Side
    - Mixed Use at Intersection with Nicollet: 2-story commercial space occupying Greenway level and street level; residential units above
  - South Side
    - Public Park: Steps back to core, display of public art, amphitheater

**I-35W EDGE AREA**
- Vertical Parking Structure
  - Mixed Use: street level commercial, office space above
  - Relocate Wells Fargo here

**LYN-LAKE OVERLAP AREA**
- Mixed-Use Commercial - Residential

**NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS**
- High Density Residential

**POTENTIAL IMPACT**

**POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS**
- Preservation and Celebration of Artistic and International Community
- Strong presence of Artists already living in and around the area make the plan feasible
- Nicollet-Lake becomes a focal point and a destination within the city
- Artistic presence would help liven the area creating a center of activity
- Attract business and residents

**POTENTIAL FOR FAILURE**
- Not a strong economic anchor
- Funding to start development
- Too expensive for artists to rent in new developments

**NICOLLET CORRIDOR**
- Site as a filter
- Open to pedestrian flow
- Potential to extend future streetcar through site
- Autos would still be diverged around the Core site

**LARGER CONTEXT**
- Serve as a catalyst for a larger Cultural District Area
- Arts and Entertainment focused typology for larger district
MINNEAPOLIS: ARTS & CULTURE

Minneapolis economy relies strongly upon its artistic and cultural resources, which generate an estimated $269 million annually. Over the last ten years, the City of Minneapolis has invested tens of millions of dollars into an arts community that is rapidly growing and changing.

In 2005, the City approved the Minneapolis Plan for Arts and Culture, a ten-year strategic plan that defines the role of the City in supporting arts and culture, and the role of arts and culture in accomplishing the City's broader goals. Minneapolis has made the opportunity for the expansion of arts and culture a priority for the city.

QUICK FACTS

- Region is 2nd only to NYC in live theater per capita
- 3rd-largest theater market in U.S. after NYC and Chicago
- Ranked 16th by Art Bistro’s Top 25 Cities in U.S. for Artists & Designers in January of 2010
- Mpls is ranked in top 5 for graphic design salaries
- Regionally and Nationally known Art and Performing Art Institutions include:
  - Walker Art Museum
  - Weisman Art Museum
  - Minneapolis Institute of Arts
  - Katherine Nash Gallery
  - The Museum of Russian Art
  - Guthrie Theater
  - Minnesota Orchestra
  - Children’s Theater
  - State Theatre
  - Orpheum Theater

QUICK STATS

- Arts and recreation jobs = 11% of Mpls’s workforce
- Home to over 110 arts organizations which draw over 4.5 million visitors and audience members per year
- Minneapolis’ nonprofit arts industry generates $269 million in economic activity annually
  - $8 million in local government revenues
  - $19 million in state government revenues
  - 8,500 full-time jobs
  - $214 million is resident household income
CULTURAL DISTRICT RESEARCH

DEFINING CULTURAL DISTRICTS

A Cultural District is a well-organized, labeled area of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities and programs serve as an anchor of attraction.

- Geographically defined
- Named differently: arts district, arts and entertainment district, arts and science district, artist’s quarter, theater district
- Boost urban revitalization in many ways
- Mixed-use developments
- Have been created in the U.S. with increasing frequency
- U.S. is home to more than 100 arts and cultural districts

CULTURAL DISTRICT TYPOLOGY

CULTURAL COMPOUNDS
- The idea that culture should be linked together in one spatial area as an economic development strategy

MAJOR ART INSTITUTION FOCUS
- Anchored by large concert halls or museums
- Made up of smaller arts organizations and entertainment venues

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT FOCUS
- Made up of small theatres, private art galleries, nightclubs and innovative smaller cultural institutions are the basis for the cultural draw

CULTURAL PRODUCTION FOCUS
- Focus on providing space for artists to create their work
- Not typically drivers of tourist activity

CULTURAL DISTRICT FACILITY TYPES

MUSEUMS
DANCE STUDIO
SCHOOLS FOR ARTS
ARTIST STUDIO/LIVE/WORK
RESTAURANTS, CAFES, SHOPPING
ARTS RETAIL SHOPS
MUSIC PRODUCTION
MEDIA PRODUCTION
HISTORICAL PARKS
PERFORMANCE SPACE
GALLERIES & STUDIOS
ENTERTAINMENT VENUE
CRAFTS WORKSHOPS
CULTURAL DISTRICTS & REVITALIZATION

Economic figures show that the arts are a sound investment for a city because they:

- Beautify and animate cities
- Provide employment
- Attract residents and tourists to the city
- Enhance property values
- Expand the tax base
- Contribute to a creative and innovative environment
- Promote quality of life attracting more business

ARTISTS AND REVITALIZATION

It has been repeatedly demonstrated in cities around the U.S., that when artists make their homes in a community, there is an increase in economic activity, aesthetic improvement and private investment.

CHALLENGE:
Preserve artist presence & still bring about positive development?
CULTURAL DISTRICT PRECEDEANTS

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - NORTHEAST ARTS DISTRICT

TYPE: Mix of Cultural District types

AREA: 12 sq. miles

BACKGROUND
▪ Artist began moving there after they were financially driven out of the warehouse district in downtown Minneapolis
▪ Part of an initiative to revitalize the Northeast area by preserving the artistic community

ANCHORS
▪ 10 Studio Buildings supporting between 400 artists
▪ 8 Art Galleries host variety of events
▪ 4 art-related retail shops
▪ The Ritz Theater (performance art)

AMENITIES
▪ Close proximity to CBD
▪ Several restaurants, clubs, and cafes that host musical performances
▪ Several education / class venues ranging from dance to painting
▪ Many restaurants, coffee shops, and cafes to dine at
▪ Hotels provide a base for tourists

CONNECTIONS
▪ Largely spread out development, so connections are weak
▪ Not walkable
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY - POWERHOUSE ART DISTRICT

TYPE: Cultural Production Focus

AREA: 8 block section

BACKGROUND
▪ Historic warehouse district
▪ Currently undergoing revitalization
▪ WALDO, work and live district overlay
▪ Buildings designated for artist use
▪ WALDO has kept rental and ownership prices minimized for artists seeking live/work space
▪ Has brought more financial opportunity to the area by improving the value of land in the surrounding neighborhoods

ANCHORS
▪ WALDO Lofts has space for 300 artists
▪ Other warehouses planned for reuse
▪ Plans for Arts High School, theaters, restaurants, and art retail

AMENITIES
▪ 1 block from waterfront, across Hudson from Manhattan
▪ Surrounded by new office buildings, malls, hotels, luxury residential
▪ Nearby attractions including Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island

CONNECTIONS
▪ Subway to Manhattan takes 3 minutes
▪ Ferries access to Manhattan
▪ Light-Rail station w/ in walking distance
CULTURAL DISTRICT PRECEDENTS

DUBLIN, IRELAND - TEMPLE BAR ARTS DISTRICT

TYPE: Arts and Entertainment Focus

AREA: 5 hectare (12 acres)

BACKGROUND
- Cultural Quarter located on the south bank of the River Liffey
- More than 50 cultural organizations
- Joint venture btw public art institutions, private investors, and art community
- Promoted as Dublin’s Cultural Quarter with a lively nightlife
- Supported by Temple Bar Cultural Trust

ANCHORS
- Temple Bar and Music Centre, Temple Bar Gallery and Studio
- Irish Photography Centre
- Ark Children’s Cultural Center
- Irish Film Institute with Irish Film Archive
- Project Arts Centre
- Gaiety School of Acting

AMENITIES
- Many nightclubs, restaurants and bars
- Meetinghouse Square and the central Temple Bar Square (Active Market Spaces)

CONNECTIONS
- Medieval Street Pattern
- City Centre bus system
- 5 minute walk to red line LUAS
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA - THE CULTURAL DISTRICT

AREA: 14 sq. blocks

TYPE: Major Arts Institution Focus

BACKGROUND
- Downtown Pittsburgh’s dynamic art and entertainment scene
- Founded by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust starting in 1984 to revitalize blighted area into cultural destination
- Transformed from a red-light district into a dynamic arts and residential neighborhood with more than 14 art venues
- Serves as a model for urban redevelopment through the arts

ANCHORS
- Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts
- Benedum Center for Performing Arts
- Byham Theater
- Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School

AMENITIES
- Live entertainment - contemporary music, modern dance, visual art, theater
- Public Parks and plazas
- Commercial development
- Art Galleries
- Proximity to Allegheny Riverfront Park
- Many restaurants

CONNECTIONS
- Light Rail Transit
CULTURAL DISTRICT PRECEDENTS

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND - WEST SIDE ARTS DISTRICT

**TYPE:** Mix of Cultural Types

**BACKGROUND**
- In 1998, the state of Rhode Island passed tax incentives for artists to live and work in specific areas or districts in 8 Rhode Island communities
- Objective to promote economic development, revitalization, tourism, employment and encourage business development
- Located in neighborhoods where economic revitalization is ongoing through the direct impact and vision of the artist community
- This incentive is a result of increased real estate costs in this area and has been established to preserve artist community instead of drive them away.
- Artist community as an economic stimulus for City and State

**ANCHORS**
- Made up of industrial Mill sites
- Residential buildings bounded by streets

**AMENITIES**
- Art sold in the district is Tax Free
- Artist do not have to pay income tax for work sold in the district

**CONNECTIONS**
- Very large area, connection will be key for evolution

No Image Available
**Area:** 20 city blocks

**Type:** Mix of Cultural Types

**Background**
- Emerging artist community NW of downtown Paducah
- Once neglected, Lowertown is now home to art studios, galleries and specialty shops and restaurants.
- Unique retail area because it is located in a neighborhood and does not consist of storefront businesses like a typical downtown area
- Part of the Artist Relocation Program that has become a national model for using the arts for economic development
- Revitalized a historic neighborhood and brought economic growth for the area

**Anchors**
- Over 20 Galleries and Studios
- Etcetera Coffee shop
- Artist Studios

**Amenities**
- Streets lined with beautiful Victorian homes and renovated storefronts
- Events including weekly Gallery Walks and Lowertown Arts and Music Festival
- Artist in Residence Program
- Zoned for live/work spaces

**Connections**
- Walkable
PROPOSED PROGRAM

IMPETUS
Create a retail node that services the surrounding community & serves as a strong economic anchor for the area.

CATALYST
IKEA Store

ANCHORS
• IKEA Store
• IKEA Manufacturing
• IKEA Custom Design Offices

ATTRACTORS
• Midtown Greenway “Midtown Hub”
  • Retail on Greenway level
  • Open space
• IKEA Hotel above IKEA store
• Affordable designed living
• Sustainable design
• Swedish Market and Restaurant

CONNECTORS
• Midtown Greenway
• I-35W
• Streetcar on Nicollet and Greenway
• Future I-35W median Transit station
• IKEA Transit Station

NODE

A BRANDING OF TYPOLoGY

CHARACTER AREAS

CORE
• IKEA Retail Store (350,000-400,000sf)
• Swedish Market and Restaurant
• Showrooms
• Warehouse
• Parking (1000-1500 spaces)
• Mixed-use IKEA store with possible hotel or residential units above furnished with IKEA products
• Mixed-use: Retail, offices, residential

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
• A mid-town hub & stopping destination.
  • North Side
    • Mixed Use at Intersection with Nicollet: 2-story commercial space occupying Greenway level and street level; residential units above
  • South Side
    • Public Open Space
    • Nicollet Transit Station to connect to IKEA store

I-35W EDGE AREA
• IKEA Manufacturing
• IKEA Custom Design Office
• Relocate Wells Fargo here

LYN-LAKE OVERLAP AREA
• Mixed-Use Commercial & Residential

NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS
• Residential
  • IKEA pack homes to replace old and infill new

POTENTIAL IMPACT

POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS
• Strong Economic anchor for the site
• Will attract other businesses
• Will provide jobs for local residents
• Provides affordable, designed goods for residents
• Nicollet-Lake will become a retail destination
• Integration of sustainable technologies
• International flavor consistent with Eat Street
• The flat-pack distribution methods allow for easier transport via public transport from the store to a home assembly which is consistent with the area’s high levels of transit use

POTENTIAL FOR FAILURE
• Development based around branding
• Large retail and industrial uses are inconsistent with the scale of the neighborhoods
• Traffic congestion
• Scale and form of buildings would not match the characteristics of the surrounding architecture

NICOLLET CORRIDOR
• Nicollet as an open thoroughfare
• Continuous commercial corridor
• Open to pedestrian, transit, and automobile flow
Twin Cities ranked No. 1 in MarketWatch study on the Nation’s Best Metro Centers for Business

**MINNEAPOLIS: A RETAIL MARKET**

**IKEA AND THE TWIN CITIES**

- Currently 1 IKEA located in the Twin Cities area
- Twin Cities welcomes IKEA franchise
- Supports over 500 jobs
- Tax revenue benefits state of Minnesota
- Property Tax revenue benefits local gov’t

**MINNEAPOLIS RETAIL AREAS**

Retail areas are organized as:

- Commercial Corridors
  - Mix of uses: mainly commercial, retail and service uses, but some office, light industrial and auto-repair uses as well
- Hiawatha LRT station areas
  - Centered at stations with higher density residential uses, neighborhood and transit-oriented retail and offices
- Neighborhood Commercial Nodes
  - Small clusters of neighborhood-oriented retail and service focused around an intersection
- Activity Areas
  - Pedestrian-oriented areas that support a wide range of commercial, office and residential uses with a busy street life and levels of activity throughout the day and evening.

**LARGE RETAILERS - POSITIVE IMPACTS**

- Employment
- Tax Revenue

**LARGE RETAILERS - NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

- Many of Minneapolis’s urban residents dislike chain retail
- Can disrupt the character of local neighborhoods
IKEA is a privately held, international home products Swedish corporation that designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture, appliances and home accessories. The company is now the world’s largest furniture retailer. The first Ikea opened in Almhult, Sweden in 1954, and has grown to include 316 stores in 37 countries.

**IKEA Stores from 1 to 316**

**IKEA Design Typology**

*One-way Design* directs customers along “the long natural way”. Designed to encourage the customer to see the store in its entirety.

*No Prescribed Store Design*

Blue & yellow big-box retail outlet is typical. IKEA has no set restrictions on the design of each store which allows for more flexible design and better typological integration across cultures and sites.
FLAT-PACK CONCEPT
Flat-pack reduces costs and makes for easier transport

BLOKLOK HOUSES & FLATS
- IKEA flat-pack construction prefabricated housing
- Designed around quality-controlled factory construction
- Customizable interiors filled with Ikea furniture
- Sold at Ikea in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Great Britain

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
- No longer provide plastic bags (sell re-usable ones)
- In-Store recycling programs at many locations
- Store designs include renewable energy systems such as geothermal, solar panels, wind, water and biofuels

IKEA GREENTECH
- Affordable environmental product IKEA research division
- Exploring Energy Efficient construction of IKEA Stores
- Main focus area is research into the Commercialization of Green Technologies to be sold affordably at IKEA stores
IKEA PRECEDENTS

BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA - IKEA TWIN CITIES

STORE AREA: 336,000 s.f.
LEVELS: 3
PARKING: 1,300 spaces

CITY CONTEXT
- Across the street from the Mall of America (Part plan for MOA II Expansion)
- At the crossroads of 2 major interstates

STORE AMENITIES
- 2-levels commercial space, 3-levels parking
- 50 showrooms, 4 model homes
- Same day delivery
- Additional off-site warehouse to increase stock
- Smaland play area
- Swedish Restaurant & Bistro
- Swedish Food Market

IMPACT
- Tax revenue benefits to the state of and property tax for local government
- Supports over 500 jobs
- Regional destination

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
- Light bulb in-store recycling program
- Store uses environmentally-friendly bulb

CONNECTIONS
- No public transit directly to IKEA
- Light Rail and bus line access across street at Mall of America
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK - RED HOOK IKEA

STORE AREA: 346,000 s.f.

LEVELS: 3

PARKING: 1,400 spaces

CITY CONTEXT
▪ First Ikea in New York City (2008)

STORE AMENITIES
▪ Public Waterfront Esplanade - 22 acres of designed public landscape features a paved bike path/walkway, extensive plantings, well-lit diverse seating areas and access to the pier
▪ Uhaul Rental Kiosk, Rent a van and take it home
▪ Delivery and assembly services
▪ Ikea For Your Business department
▪ 450-seat Swedish Restaurant
▪ Swedish Food market, cafe
▪ Smaland Play area
▪ 50 room settings and 3 model home interiors

IMPACT
▪ Top-selling store in North America
▪ Controversial b/c it replaced 19th century dry dock that was still in use, concerns about traffic congestion, increased property values, and destruction of a transit-oriented neighborhood

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
▪ Light bulb in-store recycling program

CONNECTIONS
▪ Water Taxi, Subway, Bus Shuttle, Car
IKEA PRECEDENTS

COVENTRY, ENGLAND - IKEA COVENTRY

STORE AREA: 360,000 s.f.
PARKING: 800 spaces
LEVELS: 7 (3 parking)

CITY CONTEXT
▪ First full-size, new format, high rise city center superstore (2007)

STORE AMENITIES
▪ Over 50 furnished rooms and 3 life home layouts
▪ Free Parking
▪ Ikea Swedish Bistro
▪ Swedish Market Place
▪ Ikea Family discount memberships
▪ Delivery services
▪ Smaland Play Area and Day care
▪ Assembly service

IMPACT
▪ Created 1000 new jobs, 500 employed by Ikea and 500 as an effect of the development

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
▪ Open loop ground source heating and cooling system
▪ In-Store Recycling Program - light bulbs, batteries, paper, plastic bags, aluminum
▪ Re-use Furniture program

CONNECTIONS
▪ Bus routes
▪ Coventry Train Station is a short walk from the store
STARHOLMEN, SWEDEN - IKEA KING’S CURVE

STORE AREA: 600,000 s.f.
LEVELS: 4
PARKING: ????

CITY CONTEXT
- 15 minutes outside the city of Stockholm
- Economic anchor to King’s Curve Area

STORE AMENITIES
- Photography Studio
- Ikea Restaurant
- Ikea Family discount memberships
- In-store Supermarket
- Smaland Play Area
- Ikea Business Services

IMPACT
- Store has aided in the development of the King’s Curve as an area that is home to numerous other mega-stores and shopping centers with affordable prices.
- Since its opening in 1965, it has serviced the surrounding communities as well as served as an attraction for tourism.
- World’s Largest Ikea

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
- Carbon neutral Ikea free shuttle bus powered by 100% rapeseed oil and RME
- Use of energy efficient lighting
- In-Store Recycling Program

CONNECTIONS
- Subway and Bus
DENVER, COLORADO - IKEA CENTENNIAL

STORE AREA: 415,000 s.f.
LEVELS: 2
PARKING: 1500 spaces

CITY CONTEXT
▪ Located on city edge
▪ Currently under construction
▪ Occupies 13.5 Acres

STORE AMENITIES
▪ Over 50 room layouts
▪ 3 complete model home interiors
▪ Smaland Play Area
▪ 500-seat Ikea Swedish Restaurant
▪ Cafe Bistro
▪ Coworker cafeteria
▪ Swedish Food Market

IMPACT
▪ Intended to bring a unique family-friendly shopping experience to the more than 47,000 customers
▪ Economic boost for city’s tax revenue
▪ Store will employ approximately 400 coworkers

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
▪ First store in the U.S. to incorporate a geothermal heating and cooling system into its design and will be Colorado’s largest single building with a geothermal system

CONNECTIONS
▪ Connections to county roads
STORE AREA: 280,000 s.f.

LEVELS: 3

PARKING: 1150 spaces

CITY CONTEXT
- Located on the site of an old gasworks brownfield site
- Aided in revitalizing the area

STORE AMENITIES
- Christmas shop located within the store
- Ikea Family discount membership
- Ikea Food - Restaurant and Bistro
- Sweden Food Shop
- Delivery
- Smaland Play Area
- Ikea Business
- Store is raised above a car park

IMPACT
- Employees 500
- The store was part of a development scheme to build twenty new retail stores in the UK.
- Goal of overall development scheme is to create 10,000 jobs in 10 years.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
- Combination of horizontal and vertical shading devices to protect the double height blazed entrance from overheating

CONNECTIONS
- Central Bus System
The following pages document the schematic design proposal presented in December of 2010 to the The College of Architecture faculty. It will be presented along side the three driving design concepts. The proposal is more closely related with Development Proposal 1: Nicollet-Lake as a cultural node.
SCHEMATIC DESIGN: MASTER PLANNING
The master plan proposal for the larger Nicollet-Lake site is centered around creating a dense center of urban activity that celebrates the values and characteristics of the surrounding urban environment.

The intent was to create a new Nicollet-Lake site that would serve as a vital community link supporting the daily needs of residents while utilizing attractors to bring in outside consumers to boost the areas own economic vitality.

The proposal sought to balance re-establishing the site as a regional destination, a place, and a focal point within the larger Nicollet Avenue corridor with the creation of a neighborhood center that would appropriately identify itself within the Whittier and Lyndale neighborhoods.

The schematic design proposal includes the overall massing of the site as well as new infrastructure improvements, program and intent for design development.

The following pages will illustrate the proposed transformation, the projects proposed program, preliminary renderings and the physical site model.
TRANSFORMING TYPOLGY: INVERSION

The following is a series of diagrams explaining how the schematic proposal transformation might evolve. At this point in the design process, these diagrams were not intended to illustrate phasing. They were meant to clarify design thinking and illustrate inversion.

**in·ver·sion** (in-vur zhen)
- noun
  1. The act of inverting
  2. The state of being inverted

**in·vert** (in-vurt)
- verb
  1. to turn inside out
  2. reverse the position, order or condition of
  3. to subject to inversion

**EXISTING SITE**
The current Nicollet-Lake site.
RE-ROUTING NICOLLET
The first step in the site’s transformation was the re-routing of the Nicollet corridor south of the site utilizing the adjacent one-way streets as a way to diverge traffic keeping automobile flow around the perimeter of the site. The decision to re-route Nicollet on the south side was based on daily traffic flow volume analysis in order to reduce congestion on Lake Street. It was the intention that in doing this, that it would reduce the increased traffic flows on the adjacent residential and community corridors restoring them back to their intended flow levels. Keeping the traffic flow along the perimeter was also influenced by the decision to create a pedestrian-only flow through the primary site of investigation. At this point in the project, the assumption was that future streetcar improvements would first be implemented along the Midtown Greenway Corridor and that the Nicollet Line would stop just short of the Nicollet-Lake site.

RELOCATION OF THE RETAILER
The next move was the relocation of the Retailer. During the research phase of the project it was determined that there is need for a discount retailer within this community and concluded that it was appropriate to keep the presence of the retailer on the larger Nicollet-Lake site. Large retailers help to economically anchor development and attract other businesses. It was however determined that the primary site of investigation is the center of this development and held the potential to become the identity and focal point of the node representing and fostering community value. Therefore, it is the opinion of this thesis that the discount retailer be removed from the primary site of investigation and its new location should replace the current strip mall on the southeast corner of Nicollet and Lake. This store should incorporate a multiple-level layout with underground parking.
RESTORING THE AXIS
The next decision was to re-instate the Nicollet Axis by creating a pedestrian zone of activity named the Nicollet Corridor Park. Transforming the Nicollet corridor here into a public park intended to be a celebration of this grand corridor and a unique place along its length. This pedestrian right of way would begin on the south side of Lake Street and would continue through the primary site of investigation. Slightly offset from the center line of the axis, as to not disrupt the axial movement through the site and central to the Nicollet Corridor Park, is the inclusion of a new public water feature. This feature is intended to attract activity year round. Cross axis paths would connect the adjacent streets to the park.

CONTINUATION OF EAT STREET
Lining the east side of the Nicollet Corridor park, development would allow for the continuation of Eat Street onto the site. This development would be mixed use 3-4 story buildings that would provide street level commercial ethnic restaurant and market space with either residential or office space above.
MIXED-USE ARTIST COMMUNITY AND NICOLLET-LAKE PLAZA

The next move was intended to establish identity on the site that supported the surrounding communities. The Nicollet Mixed-Use Artist Lofts will create the west wall of the new Nicollet-Lake Plaza. These mixed use buildings were intended to be anchored on the street level by commercial tenants, specifically art retail, provide a unique gallery walk on the second level, and dense artist live/work units above. The ultimate goal of providing these buildings was to preserve the artist community within these neighborhoods by providing a permanent location for them to live, work and display their talents. The Nicollet-Lake Plaza will serve as un unprogrammed community space and be the central focus of the site.

THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY, MID-TOWN HUB

Completing the Nicollet-Lake Plaza enclosure to the north is a proposed Midtown Greenway, Mid-town hub. These buildings and adjacent landscape were intended to embrace and celebrate the site’s adjacency to the Midtown Greenway. To the south, the terrain would step down to the level of the Greenway as an extension of the Nicollet-Lake Plaza. To the north, the buildings would be a mixed-use community supported by street level and Greenway level retail and high density residential units above. This move was intended to connect the Greenway with the site opening it up for pedestrian flow and visibility. This hub would be a unique stopping point along the Midtown Greenway corridor where travelers could rest, shop, and congregate.
MCAD MFA CAMPUS EXTENSION

Anchoring development to the east of the plaza was the addition of the Minnesota College of Designs, Master of Fine Arts Studios and Campus Extension. The addition of the institutional component was important not only for anchoring development, but for providing community identity on the site. The Minnesota College of Design is located several blocks from the Nicollet Lake site. Currently the MFA studios are located in a warehouse building in the Whittier neighborhood far from the college’s primary site. Relocating these studios here would provide a better connection the college campus.

CONNECTIONS

The new Nicollet-Lake site would be connected by new transit and parking connections. The location of a central I-35W bus station and a new streetcar station on the south side of the greenway would allow for easy access to the site. A new vertical parking structure would replace surface parking and provide auto access to Nicollet-Lake Plaza go-ers.
NEW GROWTH
This last image represents possible new growth that could emerge surrounding the site. This new growth should continue to be mixed use in program and form.
At the street level, the program would maintain the area as a commercial shopping district. But do so in a way that creates clear patterns of movement.

The following diagrams will speak more directly to proposed land use and program. These diagrams were intended to show the overall larger planning of the site. The intent with the program development was to fuse together a mix of uses that could be supported at different times of the day, week and year.

**proposed program:** fusion

- **fusion (fyu-zhen)**
  - noun
    1. a merging of diverse, distinct, or separate elements into a unified whole
    2. the act of fusing

- **fuse (fyooz)**
  - verb
    1. to join or become combined; integrate

**COMMERCIAL SPACE**

At the street level, the program would maintain the area as a commercial shopping district. But do so in a way that creates clear patterns of movement.
The layering of mixed uses. The possibility for office space, commercial space and/or residences.

**ARTIST GALLERIES**
A specialized commercial gallery walk was intended on the 2nd level of the Mixed-use artist community where the various artists within the community could display and sell their work.
PROPOSED PROGRAM

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY
Creation of residential density to support the other programmatic pieces.

ROOF-TOP GALLERIES
Roof-top multi purpose space with views of downtown Minneapolis was intended to serve as additional gallery space or could be used as event rental space to help generate revenue for the artist community.
CONNECTORS
All of these programs would be connected through a serious of horizontal and vertical connectors that would effectively link and transition between spaces.

MCAD MFA STUDIOS
Anchoring Development, the MCAD MFA academic institution.
PROPOSED PROGRAM

TRANSIT AND PARKING
Supporting and connecting development with a new parking facility, a new streetcar station for the Greenway and a center of I-35W transit station.

GREENSPACE
New green space would anchor each end of the Nicollet corridor park providing open space for relaxation and the display of public art.
NICOLLET-LAKE PLAZA
The public plaza space would serve as a multi-purpose space. It could serve as a gathering space, a place to host markets or art sales, it could host events, or simply be unprogrammed space that allows for unique urban interaction.
1 NICOLLET ARTIST LOFTS
   - Mixed Use
   - Street Level: Commercial Retail
   - 2nd Level: Galleries
   - Levels above: Artists Live/Work
   - Roof: Galleries/Rentable Space; Community roof gardens
   - Vertical Connectors anchor each building plaza
   - Horizontal Connectors link each building

2 MIXED USE BUILDING
   - Street Level: Commercial
   - Retail

3 MIDTOWN GREENWAY, STOPPING HUB
   North Side
   - Greenway Level: Commercial
   - Street Level: Commercial
   - Levels above: High Density Residential
     - Access to Nicollet Plaza
   South Side
   - Greenway Park: Public Art Displays
     - Steps down gradually from Nicollet Plaza
     - Nicollet Streetcar Transit Station

4 NICOLLET PLAZA
   - Public Open Space
   - Nicollet Corridor Park
   - Axial icon walkway structure with seating
   - Central water feature

5 EAT STREET AXIS
   - Mixed-Use
   - Street Level: Commercial: Ethnic Restaurants & Markets, Retail
   - Levels Above: Mixed Use
   - Penthouse: Residential Units

6 MCAD MFA CAMPUS EXTENSION
   - Studios, Classrooms, Offices, Technology Labs, Art Cellar (MCAD Art Store), Gallery Space, Dorms

7 PARKING STRUCTURE
   - Serves Nicollet Plaza
   - Park and Ride for I-35W bus station users

8 I-35W TRANSIT STATION
   - Bus drop off under overpass
   - Ticketing, kiosks, cafe, etc
   - On-35 bus drop-off, pick-up

9 DISCOUNT RETAILER
   - 4-story store
   - Underground Parking

10 EXISTING RE-PURPOSED
    - Mixed Use
    - Addition of another wing of condos
    - Street Level: Commercial Retail
    - Levels above: Residential Condos

11 MED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

12 PROGRAM UNDETERMINED
   - Possible High Density Residential or Mixed-Use
   - Commercial, Residential, Office

13 EXISTING MIXED-USE BUILDING

14 EXISTING WELLS FARGO BANK AND OFFICES

15 EXISTING UNITED STATES POST OFFICE
On both the south and north ends of the Nicollet Corridor Park, a symbolic pedestrian walk axial structure rises out of the ground and terminates at the Nicollet Park Reflecting Pool. This symbolizes this grand corridor rising out of the ashes of urban decay and the renewed vitality of this place. As you reach the intersection of Lake street this structure becomes the primary transit stop for access to the site. Approaching the central plaza space, this structure can serve multiple purposes. It can be a place to sit, gather, stroll, or could even host market space.
The Nicollet Corridor Park Symbolic Walk terminates on both the north and south end at the central water feature with 4 flowing streams of water into a shallow reflecting pool. The symbolic structure becomes a representation of the broken corridor rising out of the ashes of urban decay, reconnecting people and place, and water becomes the symbolic meaning for rebirth and renewal. During the summer months pedestrians can be refreshed splashing and playing in this shallow reflecting pool, and during the winter months it is transformed into a place for visitors to ice-skate or play ice-hockey. This unifying feature would provide life to the plaza year-round and serve as a recreational attractor.
REJUVENATION OF PLACE

The Nicollet-Lake Plaza opens up to the Greenway where pedestrians can view public art displays, relax on the green slope, or wait for the Streetcar. Looking into the plaza, vertical connectors project outwards from the artist lofts connecting users with the various levels of space within the plaza.
The roof-top terrace galleries/multi-purpose space offers spectacular views of downtown Minneapolis. The angled walls of the Nicollet-Lake Plaza enclosure are oriented on the same axis as the downtown grid, re-connecting this place with the larger city context.
SCHEMATIC DESIGN PRESENTATION MODEL
Schematic Design: Presentation Model
The following pages document the design development phase of the project. It will describe the development in three phases. The first two phases of development were presented to the faculty during formal reviews and the last phase of development outlines development leading up to final documentation. The objective is to show how the project transitioned from overall masterplan to specific design intent.
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
FOCUSING DESIGN

After completion of the schematic design proposal from first semester, the area of focus was narrowed in order to reduce the overall project scope. While the larger development area was analyzed at the onset of the project, it was concluded that, in order to meet the initial intent of the thesis, the design area had to be more realistic. The fear was that, in the continued focus on the larger site, the project would never develop beyond masterplanning.

The new focus area (outlined below), consisted of the original K-mart site and the two short blocks north of the Midtown Greenway. This was determined to be the area that had the highest potential to test the original thesis questions. This area was also recognized as the center of the larger development, and therefore become the design focus for the duration of the project. There was a few minor changes to the larger site outside this area that will be described in this section. Otherwise, from this point forward, the decisions made during the schematic design phase, regarding the area outside of this boundary, were not developed further.
The single most driving force that influenced the design development phase of the project was learning of Minneapolis’s approved federal funding to explore a starter streetcar line along the Nicollet Corridor. This proposed line is to start in downtown along the Nicollet Mall and is planned to transverse the Nicollet-Lake Site terminating at 46th Street.

During the schematic design phase of the project, it was assumed that any future streetcar line would stop just short of the K-mart site. This information was derived from the original research and the City of Minneapolis’s original proposed streetcar line network. Therefore, the schematic design proposal did not address a streetcar line along Nicollet through the site.

The diagram to the left is a conceptual model illustrating the proposed connections that would affect the sites development. From here, the project moved forward with the intent that the Nicollet-Lake site would evolve around the intersection of two streetcar lines, the Nicollet Avenue and Midtown Greenway lines.
The images here were the very first attempts at integrating a streetcar line through the Nicollet-Lake site. There was an initial desire to design an elaborate bridge crossing the Midtown Greenway. The original bridge type explored was a cable stay bridge, not only for its monumental appeal but for its cable design that would help to reinforce the streetcar aesthetic. This design was abandoned because the span of the bridge was not long enough to support this type of suspended construction.
PRELIMINARY MASTERPLAN CONCLUSIONS & PROPOSED REVISIONS
Approved streetcar line to run through site from downtown to 46th street

Focus area: Midtown Greenway Hub
- Intersection of streetcar lines meet biking and pedestrian traffic
- Entry: Brings people into the site from N.S.E.W
- Stopping point: Observed and viewed on a slow paced intimate level
- Recreation
- Greenspace: Blending landscape and built environment
- Opportunity for artistic expression

Extend Midtown Greenway Midtown Hub program to east side of Nicollet

Push back the Greenway further and match this on both sides of the site creating a public park for art display

Focus area: Lake & Nicollet
- Intersection of streetcar and major bus route bringing people to the site
- Entry: Must allow passerby to see into the site
- Passing point: Observed and viewed primarily by car (higher speed)
- Commercial capacity: Intersection of 2 commercial corridors

Removal of parking structure. Restore to existing building. Deal with parking on site locating underground garages

Removal of school. Don’t need it as an anchor. Possibilities:
- High density towers??
- Bring back big box retailer on site??

After re-evaluation of the schematic design proposal, several changes were proposed at the first Design Development Review which are listed here. The most important conclusions were again, the incorporation of the streetcar line through the site, as well as areas of focus. The Nicollet-Greenway intersection and the Nicollet-Lake intersection were identified as the primary focus areas.

As proposed in the schematic design master plan, there was a public plaza and water feature at the center of the site. With the incorporation of the streetcar line, it was concluded that this feature would have to be moved off center. The incorporation of public space was still important to the programming of the overall-all site and therefore was not removed from the plan.

Maintain Nicollet-Lake plaza and mixed use artist program.
- Move plaza and water feature off Nicollet axis
- Remove large water feature in summer
- Market space
- Could there actually be a pavillion or some structure that partially encloses the space
- Flood and maintain as winter recreational activity

Address corners: Does it allow entry into the plaza or continue the line of the street??

New bike entry ramp off bike lanes on both Blaisdell and 1st Avenue to provide access to the Greenway
MIDTOWN GREENWAY HUB: FORMAL DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING LOT

MAXIMUM HEIGHT

GREENSPACE/OUTDOOR SPACE

VERTICAL CIRCULATION

STEPPING BACK

DURING MAXIMUM SUN ANGLE, A PORTION OF THE GARDEN GETS DIRECT SUNLIGHT

SHADOW STUDY (MAX SUN ANGLE)

JUNE 21
MARCH/SEPTEMBER 21
DECEMBER 21

FLOOR AREAS

4 @ 960 SF
4 @ 820 SF
4 @ 1150 SF

STEPBACK

EACH CLUSTER OF UNITS SHARES ONE GARDEN SPACE

4 @ 1150 SF

4 @ 820 SF

4 @ 1150 SF

4 @ 960 SF
The first building to be explored was the north enclosure of the site, the Midtown Greenway, Midtown Hub. This building was to set the typical programming for the site increasing density and incorporating a mixture of uses taking into consideration maximizing views, daylight and roof-top gardens. The relocation of parking beneath the street level was proposed here and an element of design that was eventually carried through to the larger site. These diagrams illustrate this formal intent.
The following drawings begin to illustrate the initial character proposed at the Nicollet-Greenway intersection. The Greenway level proposes the addition of retail tenants in order to maximize the new potential of this pedestrian and transit corridor. The Greenway and Street levels would provide a retail character with large storefront windows and space for tenants to extend their services onto the Greenway surface. The circulation buttresses dive into the Greenway creating a dramatic and monumental aesthetic. These buttresses were intended to collect stormwater runoff from the building and channel it to a drainage field running along side the streetcar line.
Defining how the different site connections would meet and come together here was also investigated. Assuming that the transit stop would reside on the south-east side of the intersection, the design of pedestrian movement into the transit hub became of vital concern. Pedestrians and bicyclists would need to be able to move from the elevated pedestrian lanes on the north side of the Greenway to the south transit stop. The sections below, show a proposed lowered bike and pedestrian bridge connecting the north and south sides.
After the first Design Development review, the next major move in the design phase dealt with how the Nicollet Corridor would transverse the site. Continuing on with the proposed auto-less typology from the masterplan, it was decided to allow for streetcar and pedestrian movement through the site, but not automobile traffic. This was a decision based upon the desire to create a highly pedestrian zone of activity on the Nicollet-Lake site.

The next design iteration (shown here) proposed the splitting of the north and southbound pedestrian and streetcar lanes widening the corridor creating a central public space in the center of Nicollet Avenue. The intent was to create a completely unique experience along the avenue’s length promoting public space and activity.

The images here show a centralized public park space lined with mixed use type buildings. As this space approached the Midtown Greenway, it would gradually step down to the level of the new streetcar line. Two ways of stepping down were explored. The first would be comprised of a series of terraces that could either host art displays or gardens. The second was to actually incorporate the buildings into the topography merging landscape and building.
creation of public space

design development review 2
The widening of the corridor created a center public space. The next decision was to sink this space to the level of the Greenway maximizing the opportunity to connect to this new street level. This was the initial move in the creation of what would become the Nicollet Plaza. The decision to remove some pedestrian movement from the level of the city grid was based on the opportunity to maximize both the benefits of street and Greenway level activity. With the addition of the streetcar to the Midtown Greenway, this corridor essentially becomes a new street providing new connections and flow into the site. Therefore, the argument to connect to this level is valid in the sense that it is not seen as taking movement off of the street, but instead is maximizing the sites capacity for multiple level flow.

In order to maintain reasonable heights, especially under bridges, the existing pedestrian lanes were lowered four feet and the streetcar lane was raised four feet meeting in the middle of their levels. The plaza space extends out at this level. Placing these all at the same height allows for easier movement between these spaces.
Lowering the plaza created the opportunity to relocate parking to this level reducing the need for surface lots on the level of the street which would under-utilize valuable land. With the addition of parking underground, the site becomes carved out and the Nicollet corridor becomes a bridge through the site. Access to the parking and plaza was initially provided with ramps from both the east and west side. The center plaza space is lined with commercial retail and gallery space maximizing the site’s commercial capacity. The center plaza was initially programmed and subdivided with the intent for it to host a public market. This space becomes the center of the site balancing commercial capacity with community identity.

At the street level, the continuation of commercial space would line the corridor. As seen above, the south entrance into the plaza from Lake Street was intended to be a grand stair that would also serve as an outdoor amphitheater space. The Nicollet Avenue pedestrian and streetcar bridge through the site would have plaza side balconies with seating allowing for pedestrians to sit and watch activity in the plaza.

Programmatically, the MCAD MFA institution was re-introduced back into the site at this point. It was a decision based on providing a long term anchor as well as aiding in linking the surrounding community’s identity with the new Nicollet-Lake site.
There was exploration into the potential for an operable canopy enclosure for the space. As seen in these images, the design was intended to be a weaving of fabric canopies. These coverings would be retractable and allow for varying levels of shading and overhead enclosure. The exploration of a special art canopy in the east/west direction was also explored. These canopies were intended to retract down the sides of the plaza at the location of the pedestrian balconies as seen in the image below. Once a year, there could be a plaza event where local artists would paint or replace the fabric panels. It was intended to be an event that was unique to the Nicollet Plaza attracting activity. The exploration of the canopy system ended here. It was decided to abandon overhead enclosures and leave the site as an open air space. However, further exploration of cross axis components are explored later in the design.
CANOPY STUDY MODEL
After establishing the plaza space, the next step in the design was to propose building massing and program for the site. The following diagrams illustrate the development of the formal intent presented at the second Design Development Review.

The relocation of the parking naturally formed structural divisions for the development of the built form of the site.

Creating access to the plaza and parking was necessary to connect the street level. This was reduced to the west side only.

The site was divided into six buildable lots: Greenway Hub, MCAD MFA Studios, and Mixed-Use communities.
### MIDTOWN GREENWAY MIDTOWN HUB

Continued development:
- Elimination of holes through the building in order to maximize residential component; replaced with deep private balconies
- Addition of residential glazing

### CENTRAL ICON

- Center icon structure with radiating bridges to serve as a focal point of the plaza
- Can be seen from various vantage points around the perimeter
- Bridges spiral out filtering pedestrians back out onto Nicollet
- Provides central vertical circulation

### MIXED-USE WEST BUILDINGS

- Maximizes commercial capacity with residential density
- Increased density with views into the plaza
- Maximizes solar gain with Lake Street portion being lower than the north building
- Private greenspace
- On axis with radial arm of the central axis opening up to the corner of Lake and Blaisdell

### MIXED-USE EAST BUILDINGS

- Residential Towers are stretched to allow units to maximize views into the plaza
- Each residential unit has either a view into the plaza, view to downtown Minneapolis skyline, or southern exposure
- Maximizes commercial capacity at street level
- Provides service access separating the north tower as an independent structure

### GREENWAY CONDITION

- Stepped massing to prevent shading along the Greenway corridor
- Setback from Greenway to create public greenspace
- Consideration of distance from building to the south to maximized solar gain on the south side

### MIXED-USE ARTIST LIVE/WORK/GALLERIES

- Stepped massing to prevent shading along the Greenway corridor

### MCAD MFA STUDIOS

- Stepped massing to prevent shading along the Greenway corridor
The plaza level plan was centered around the plaza space and the Midtown Greenway corridor. The plaza space was intended to provide a diverse mix of activity year round helping to support the surrounding built environment’s retail program. The plaza is intended to be the hub for social interactions.

The plaza level meets the Midtown Greenway better connecting this space with the Nicollet-Lake site. A new Midtown Greenway Streetcar line runs parallel to the existing bicycle and walking lanes. Greenway users are connected to Greenway level retail and services.

Public and private underground parking garages are located on this level. These garages have the potential to extend to lower levels. There is a single access ramp on the west side of site.

The central icon is the primary vertical connector allowing for flow between the street and plaza levels. On both the north and south side of Nicollet there are public stairs/amphitheater space.
The street level plan reveals the initial intent to provide pedestrian perforations from the adjacent streets into the site. Providing multiple lines of access to the central space is crucial to the development to the street level plan. Pedestrian flow is maximized here to ensure flow and optimize connections. The central icon spirals out on the west side and its arms extend to the directional line of the galleries and the west mixed use development.

The Nicollet Avenue streetcar transverses the site on this level. The streetcar will likely pass through the site twice an hour. Therefore, the Nicollet corridor here provides reduced traffic flow allowing for a pedestrian safe environment. The inclusion of pedestrian balconies off of the street provided space for views into the plaza.

The program on this level is primarily commercial providing services for residents and visitors alike. This assumed maintaining the site as a commercial shopping district as outlined by the city of Minneapolis’s zoning code.
These images show the central icon proposed. It was not, at this point, determined what this figure would be. It was thought that it could be a viewing tour, a sculpture or be programmed for some other use. It was eventually decided to eliminate this feature and to put the focus back on the development of the plaza as a whole. The interruption this structure imposed was of negative consequence. It made the access width difficult to maintain and seemed to divide the space in two. The bridges were carried forward but the radial alignment was abandoned. This alignment did not fit within the context of the existing grid and it was decided here, instead of trying to fight that, to embrace the sites presence in the grid and create connections that appropriately wove through.
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION MODEL
Following the final Design Development review, the plan was slightly modified. The major changes involved the cross-axis addition of three pedestrian bridges connecting the east and west sides of the Nicollet Corridor, the addition of vertical circulation at the ends of these bridges on both sides, extending the service/parking access to the east side, and one final re-massing of the buildings on the site.

The following images show overall the state of the design leading up to the preparation of the final documentation for the project.
Foundations for Resolution

Final Design Development
The incorporation of bridges and their development became a major focus moving towards the final design. The Nicollet corridor itself became a bridge extending the length of the whole site. Several construction types were considered (one example is shown to the right). The final decision was to design a single pier pedestrian and streetcar bridge in order to minimize the bridge’s footprint to not create unfriendly barriers on the plaza level.

Three pedestrian cross bridges were considered: one on the south side of the plaza creating a cross axis through the mixed use developments; one to the north of the central axis of the plaza linking the Galleries and MCAD; and the north bridge was intended to connect streetcar stops on both the street and Greenway levels. The north bridge was eliminated largely due to its disruption of the view from North Nicollet through the plaza space. It was determined that this bridge was not needed and that the connections to transit could be dealt with in an alternative matter.
Finally, the development of the market and the plaza space become of primary importance to the final design. This was seen as the heart of the project and needed to be developed in a way that would support multiple uses for a friendly pedestrian environment enriched with life and urban activity.

The following images show explorations into the market space. Two aisle configurations were tested: a central aisle with two side aisles; and one with two side aisles only. The activation of side aisle space was thought to be important to provide the retail tenants an opportunity to participate during market days.

It was concluded that, in order to maximize vendor potential for the site, that creating a three-aisle plan was optimal for the plaza. This created a base for designing other program here.
The following pages document the final design proposal and design materials presented on April 8, 2011 for the final review. This section will illustrate the realizations of the intentions that were presented in the original thesis abstract, as well as describe how the conceptual premise for the project including the driving concepts and design guidelines were formalized in the final proposal.
The final design proposal for the Nicollet-Lake site addresses the original intent of the thesis proposal as well as the conceptual premises that were outlined during the early stages of design. The following descriptions will present the outcomes of the final design in relationship to the thesis and conceptual intents. The hope is that these realizations will become clear to the reader in the final pages documentation through imagery, drawings and diagrams.

**THESIS INTENT**
The original goal of the thesis was to prove that through creating a story of place through the holistic understanding of context, that the resulting design and architecture would convert this dead-end typology into a place that would reconnect urban space, people and businesses in ways that are relevant in today’s society and optimal for the future. The following pages will illustrate the creation of the new story of place for the Nicollet-Lake site. A story that was derived from a thorough analysis and evaluation of the varying scales of the urban environment including the immediate site, the urban neighborhood, the urban corridor and the larger city context. The story presented here is intended to show the potential for the site and is very formalized and final in its presentation. The ultimate goal is to present the design in a way that will communicate the various ways of reconnecting urban space that have been addressed in this thesis. The layers of this proposal will communicate the complexity of realization that was achieved through design.

**DRIVING CONCEPTS**
The driving concepts (inversion, fusion, and rejuvenation) will be presented again in this section as a reminder of the projects conceptual approach. The intent is that the reader will understand how each concept influenced the design.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES:**
**VISION**
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design: re-establishes itself as a regional destination; is the front door to the Lyndale and Whittier neighborhoods representing their unique diversity and values; offers its own urban character focusing on the opportunity of being centered around two of Minneapolis’s oldest commercial corridors; aims to promote a clean, safe, pedestrian-friendly urban environment; and is transformed into a vibrant center of urban activity where people can gather, shop, live and work ultimately restoring the sites community presence.

**GOALS**
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design: creates a plan that will support the local community while still utilizing attractors to bring outside consumers in to boost the area’s own economic vitality; establishes program and urban space that effectively links and transitions between the Nicollet “Commercial Corridor” and the Nicollet “Community Corridor”; includes a mixed-use, high density core that promotes activity and economic sustainability; recognizes and implements well-located urban density; and establishes clearly defined public open space for interaction to strengthen community emphasis and serve as the primary attractors for the area.
GROWTH
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design: defines the edges of new growth; exhibits how new growth will support transit and pedestrian infrastructure improvements; creates a core where the most intensive development is focused; communicates how this new growth stabilizes local business and creates new opportunities.

CHARACTER AREAS
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design effectively addresses the character areas and embraces their differences in its design while still identifying unity in the whole.

ACCESS
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design creates clearly defined and safe connections for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, parking and traffic access. The design is focused around pedestrian and proposed streetcar connections, as they are believed to be the preferred method of travel for neighborhood residents.

OPEN SPACE
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design uses year-round open space to establish inviting and non-threatening urban space to enhance pedestrian use and interaction reinforcing a strong sense of place. It does this through the creation of wider sidewalks and building setbacks creating a safe non-crowded pedestrian zone. The design prioritizes the corridor as the primary place for social interaction and urban activity instead of creating conduits of flow for through traffic.

BUILT FORM
The proposed Nicollet-Lake design establishes an architectural identity that integrates itself within the surrounding urban fabric.

The following pages will illustrate these statements. While the belief is that all of these intents were realized within the projects design, ultimately the reader has the decision to identify if the original intent of the thesis was met.
The final design proposal for the Nicollet-Lake site is centered around creating a dense center of urban activity that celebrates the values and characteristics of the surrounding urban environment.

The new Nicollet-Lake is transformed into the Nicollet Plaza. The Nicollet Corridor itself becomes the focal point of design widening through the site creating a public plaza space inbetween its North and Southbound lanes. The corridor here provides a transit lane for the future Nicollet Avenue streetcar and two pedestrian lanes on both sides of the plaza. Carried forward from schematic design, the automobile flow is maintained on the perimeter of the site.

The creation of pedestrian oriented urban space is at the heart of the design. The plaza space is lowered to the level of the Midtown Greenway effectively connecting pedestrian flow. The Nicollet-Lake plaza is characterized by its intersecting streetcar lines, the Nicollet Avenue Midtown Greenway lines. It is a transit oriented community and effectively links the site to the larger city context. The Nicollet-Lake plaza provides for the daily needs of residents by maximizing commercial capacity while balancing community identity with the creation of public space and program that are identifiable as uniquely Nicollet-Lake.
The proposed program for the Nicollet-Lake Plaza is a fusion of mixed uses and activities. It balances commercial capacity with community identity and is supported by increased residential density. The heart of the site is the central plaza space. It provides opportunity for activity year round and is the primary attractor of development. At the Nicollet-Lake intersection, two mixed-use developments will strengthen the nodes commercial capacity and utilize urban space with the stacking of residential and mixed-use program. The intersection of the Midtown Greenway is more oriented towards creating community identity. The southwest corner of this intersection is home to a new artist community that can live, work, and sell there creations. The east side is anchored with the Nicollet Plaza Transit Station connecting streetcar passengers on both the street and greenway levels. Also on the southeast corner, is the proposed MCAD MFA campus. The north side of the Greenway proposes commercial space on both the Greenway and street level supported by high density residential above. The new Nicollet Plaza is a diverse mix of program that promotes a high quality of urban life.
The plaza level plan is centered around the plaza space and the Midtown Greenway corridor. The plaza space will provide a diverse mix of activity year round helping to support the surrounding built environments retail program. The plaza is the focus for social interaction and will be presented in more detail later in this documentation.

The plaza level connects with the Midtown Greenway better connecting this space with the Nicollet-Lake site. A new Midtown Greenway Streetcar line runs parallel to the existing bicycle and walking lanes. Greenway users are connected to Greenway level retail and services.

Public and private underground parking garages are located on this level. These garages have the potential to extend to lower levels. There are access ramps on both the east and west side of site.

A series of pedestrian ramps and stairs connect this recessed level to the street creating ample opportunities for pedestrian flow between the two levels.
The street level plan reveals the many perforations that were created into the site from the adjacent streets. Providing multiple lines of access to the central space is crucial to the development to the street level plan. Pedestrian flow is maximized here to ensure flow and optimize connections.

The Nicollet Avenue streetcar transverses the site on this level. The streetcar will likely pass through the site twice an hour. Therefore, the Nicollet corridor here provides reduced traffic flow allowing for a pedestrian safe environment.

At both the north and south end of the site, public amphitheater space steps down to the plaza level. As seen in this plan, there are secondary stairways, ramps and elevators to connect to the plaza space as well.

The program on this level is primarily commercial providing services for residents and visitors alike.

The following pages will break down both plans describing diagrammatically how the site works as an urban plan. These diagrams are meant to reveal the complex layers of urban space being proposed.
The site itself, becomes a bridge. The sinking of the plaza space and the relocation of parking below the street level requires excavation of the earth down to the level of the Greenway. The Nicollet corridor becomes a streetcar and pedestrian bridge along its length here. Two smaller pedestrian cross bridges connect both sides of Nicollet. These bridges will be shown in more detail later in this documentation.
As seen in these plans, pedestrian pathways are abundant on the Nicollet Plaza site. The main north-south pathway is the Nicollet corridor and plaza space. The primary east-west path is the Midtown Greenway. Since the north-south axis is the primary axis on the site, multiple east-west connections allow for perforation into the site. The direction of pedestrian flow is organized around these intersections. The arrows diagram points of movement between levels. These connector elements are frequent allowing for continuous access between street and plaza.
Vertical circulation, both public and controlled, was a primary area of design. In order for this plan to be feasible much time was spent determining the best locations for these vertical circulation pieces and their relationship to the other elements of the plan. The public circulation provides many access points and is aligned with the major pedestrian flows in the four cardinal directions. Accessible public ramp access is provided at the Nicollet-Lake intersection as well as from the adjacent one-way streets on both the east and west side. All of the buildings provide public elevator access between the street and plaza levels. There are main stairways along the Nicollet corridor. Each one of these stairs provide entry from the street level in both the north and south direction.
The controlled vertical circulation was designed to connect the proposed residential program above the street. Egress and entry points were the main driver of the location of these pieces. There are a few instances of overlap of controlled and public circulation. This was mainly influenced by connecting the underground parking not only to residents but to visitors as well. In these instances, there is an added level of secured transition that must occur between the street level and the upper floors.
DIAGRAMMING URBAN SPACE

These diagrams illustrate the new transit connections in and around the site. It is the intention that the streetcar will permanently replace bus service on the Nicollet corridor, so the primary transit connection to the site are the intersecting streetcar lines on Nicollet Avenue and the Midtown Greenway.
These transportation lines must be connected and accessible to pedestrians. This diagram illustrates the primary transit hub on the site as well as smaller transit kiosks where tickets could be purchased. The Nicollet streetcar is planned to stop twice as it transverses the site, once on the south end and once on the north.
DIAGRAMMING URBAN SPACE

Vehicular movement will be focused on the perimeter of the site allowing for an auto-free pedestrian and transit zone of activity. There are two main access points on the east and the west side allowing for service and parking flow to the plaza level. On the street level there are access points to small parking and service areas associated with each building. The plaza was designed to allow for vehicular access for emergency and service vehicles.
Parking is primarily located below the street level. However, each building does have a small service and/or accessible parking lot.
Service access was another primary design concern. Locating retail on the auto-less plaza and auto-less street makes it difficult to provide service. Several strategies were implemented as shown in the diagrams below. On the plaza level, service docks and internal service corridors connect service vehicles with the programmed space. Similarly on the street level, the use of internal service corridors was incorporated into the design of the buildings. Each building’s street level parking lot would provide access for service vehicles.
Commercials space is the primary component of the built environment on both levels.
Embracing the artistic community was a driving value in the design process. The location of art galleries within the plan help to connect the artistic community.
Creating public open space enclosed with strong edges was extremely important in the development of the design of the Nicollet-Lake site. The primary open space is the Nicollet-Plaza supported by smaller adjacent open spaces, particularly along the southwest side of the Midtown Greenway. The plaza opens up to a greenspace here, that can be used for recreation, lounging or the display of public art.
SITE SECTIONS

EAST/WEST SECTION LOOKING SOUTH

EAST/WEST SECTION LOOKING NORTH

FINAL DESIGN: NICOLLET PLAZA
The following section drawings show the relationship between vertical space and the stacking of programmatic layers. There are four typical conditions that occur on the site.
The following pages present images of the transformation from the existing to the proposed view of the site from Nicollet Avenue as well as the Midtown Greenway.
The new Nicollet-Lake is transformed from an under-utilized dead-end condition into an open multiple level zone of activity. While the main directionality is oriented along the Nicollet corridor, pedestrian cross bridges and the plaza paving pattern provide horizontal relief from this long axis providing a more relatable human scale to the plaza space.
On the plaza level, pedestrians are able to shop, gather and play. The surrounding built environment creates a strong sense of enclosure and the pedestrian cross bridges above help to delineate and subdivide the plaza space.
From the north, the Nicollet corridor is transformed from a dead-end into a lively layering of urban activity. This view shows the north end of the plaza, the Midtown Greenway streetcar line and the Midtown Greenway pedestrian corridor. This view also reveals the site as a bridge, which is concealed on the south side of the site by the built environment.
TRANSFORMATION:
A NEW NICOLLET-LAKE
EXISTING & PROPOSED NICOLLET AVEUNE VIEWS

SOUTH VIEW: PLAZA LEVEL

The plaza level south view is transformed from a deteriorating bridge that is a zone for negative activity into an open network of pedestrian and transit flow. This view shows the Nicollet plaza station.
The new Nicollet-Greenway east view is transformed into a lively hub of urban activity. To the north, street and Greenway level retail stores connect commercial space and to the south the Greenway opens up to a greenspace that can be used for recreation, strolling, lounging or for the display of public art.
The addition of Greenway level retail here offers Greenway users shopping and services that do not exist anywhere else along its path. It therefore becomes a unique place and destination along the corridor's length. The South enclosure of the Greenway here is a series of small Greenway Galleries where local artists can display and sell their work.
The new Nicollet-Greenway west view reveals the Nicollet Plaza Transit Station. An access ramp from 1st Avenue provides a pedestrian link from the street to the Greenway level. Also visible here is the residential units of the Greenway Hub. Residents can look down into from their private balconies. This creates a sense of security eliminating fear zones.
The new Nicollet-Greenway views also reveal the layers of recreational, commercial and transit activity that are the focus of this renewed node.
This image shows a closer view of the Nicollet Plaza Streetcar and Pedestrian Bridge. The Nicollet-Plaza retail units are built up under this bridge. The overhang of the bridge provides a covered walkway in the plaza space. It is a box truss cast-in-place concrete bridge with a single pier design. The streetcar cable supports are integrated into each truss.
There are two plaza pedestrian cross bridges. These bridges are transparent in design to not only give the bridges a lighter aesthetic, but to also create transparency between above and below. The bridges span the plaza using steel girders and plate glass inserts create the walking surface of the bridge.
The bridges align with the main street to plaza stairs. They create a covered crosswalk in the plaza.

This view also reveals a parking entrance from the plaza level.
From the street level, the transparency allows the users to peer down into the plaza.

The hand rails are a cable design relating to the streetcar aesthetic of the site.
CONNECTIONS:
NEW ROAD ACCESS
NICOLLET PLAZA SERVICE AND CAR ACCESS RAMP

This image shows the road access from the street level. Service vehicles would be allowed to cross the plaza to exit the other side.
The right image shows the typical street to plaza stair. Access to the stair is provided from both the south and the north.

The left image shows the entry into the plaza from the stair. The pedestrian bridge follow this same axis.
The right image shows the Nicollet Plaza Station Access ramp from the 1st Avenue bridge.

The left image shows the Greenway Galleries access ramp from Blaisdell Avenue.

Both of these ramps are accessible.
This image shows the multiple pathways connecting the Greenway to the artist galleries. There are two grand stairs leading up to the street level galleries as well as an accessible ramp. The stairs give access to smaller art terraces where artists can display various works. These terraces are flexible in their program and could also be used as a smaller gathering space.
The following pages are focused on the rejuvenation of place. The plaza space provides a zone of mixed-activities enlivening the site year round. The development of the plaza was a primary area of design in this project. It is the focus, the center of life here, and the place where urban interaction will take place. In detailing the plaza, it was important to design it in all four seasons of the year in order to preserve it as the primary identifiable characteristic of the site.
CORRIDOR ACTIVATORS
ENLIVENING URBAN SPACE

enlivening urban space
corridor activators
CORRIDOR ACTIVATORS:
YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITY
NICOLLET PLAZA SHOPPING

The Nicollet Plaza will provide year round shopping. Integrated plantings and benches were incorporated into the design to improve the pedestrian environment. The horizontal paving pattern along the side aisles helps to reduce the perceived scale of the space.
Nicollet will also attract shoppers year round. This image shows the view from Nicollet Avenue into the plaza as well as stair and elevator vertical connectors.
Corridor Activators: Year-Round Activity
Greenway Hub Shopping

This image shows shopping on the Greenway hub. The buildings buttress form a unique perspectival view down the retail aisle.
The Nicollet Plaza Galleries along with the Greenway Galleries and the MFA Gallery form a gallery walk on the site. This image shows the 2-story Greenway Galleries.
The south end of the plaza provides an opportunity for another year-round activity, an outdoor amphitheater space. This space can provide seating for up to 500 people. This area could host a public concert, play or other public event.
The design of the plaza was highly focused around creating a space for a public market. Minneapolis has a strong farmers market community and the new Nicollet Plaza would be a prime location to host such a market due to its adjacency to populous neighborhoods, the Eat Street Markets (ethnic markets could sell their goods here), and its new transit connections.

The proposed market plan to the left could host up to 104 vendors. This market space would hold the potential to extend onto the Greenway Hub area as well.

This image shows the plaza enlivened with market activity.
CORRIDOR ACTIVATORS:
SPRING, FALL, & SUMMER ACTIVITY
NICOLLET PLAZA MARKET

The plaza benches were designed with the market taken into consideration. When a market is on site, the benches provide space for vendors to display their merchandise eliminating the need for the vendor to bring their own display tables.

Also shown in this plaza side aisle view is the opportunity for the retailers that occupy the plaza to participate in market events.
CORRIDOR ACTIVATORS: 
SPRING, FALL, & SUMMER ACTIVITY
NICOLLET PLAZA MARKET

This space could also be used to host other markets or sales events other than a typical farmers market. Art sales or public fund-raisers could also be laid out within the plaza space. Its design was intended to be flexible enough to balance specific programmed events with unplanned or unprogrammed events.
Finally, as seen in all of these images, it is possible for vehicles to enter the plaza space on a market day. The design of the space took spacing requirements into consideration to make the market more convenient for vendors. Instead of having to park and transfer all the goods from the parking garages to the plaza, vendors would be able to pull into the plaza and sell their goods right off of the back of their vehicle.
Unique to the Nicollet-Lake Plaza is a 48 geyser jet dry deck fountain. During the hot summer months plaza and Greenway users would be able refresh themselves and play in the water. Minneapolis is a city of water and its residents identify it as an attractor to any space. Therefore the addition of the water feature holds the potential to attract many users to the site.

The fountains are at the intersections of the plaza grid. This is symbolic of the Nicollet-Lake intersection and water is representative of renewal and rebirth.
The water from the fountain would drain into catch basins that run the length of this portion of the plaza. This view is a much more formal view of the fountains which besides their playful intent provide an aesthetic value and character to the plaza space.
The same space that hosts the market and the fountain activity is transformed in the winter into an ice skating rink. Minneaplis residents enjoy winter recreational activities and skating and ice-hockey are among the activities residents enjoy best.
CORRIDOR ACTIVATORS:
WINTER ACTIVITY
NICOLLET PLAZA ICE SKATING RINK

Besides skating, the plaza could also host a community Christmas Tree during the early winter months and public celebrations could take place here.
Lastly, the Greenway also provides residents with another recreational activity in the winter, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

The Greenway galleries can also become a space where artists can display snow or ice sculptures during the winter months.

These corridor activators create unique opportunities for urban interactions and are at the heart of the rejuvenation of place. These activities will provide life to the plaza and surrounding site year round enabling visitors to strongly identify the Nicollet-Lake site as having a recognizable identity.

All of these things ultimately reconnect this urban space in a way that is relevant in today’s society as well as optimal for the future.
FINAL PHYSICAL PRESENTATION MODEL
CONCLUSIONS
Overall, I feel like the original intent and goals were met in the final design of this project.

At the Final Review, the main critiques dealt with my approach to the design. My proposal was very formal in its presentation and its development. The reviewers questioned if I could have taken a more evolutionary approach. Instead of showing a polished completed site, they would have liked to see how the site would actually develop over time. I do think that it would have been valuable for me to have approached the project this way, to show the site in 5 years time, 10 years time and 50 years time. It would have been interesting to see how my thought process would have changed had I approached the project this way.

The review panel, however, did think that I was successful in developing a smart urban plan and appreciated the thought that went into figuring out how the site would work as a whole.

For me, this project was an extreme learning experience and I gained knowledge in so many areas outside of architectural design that will be beneficial to my design career. As challenging as it was to take on a project of this scale, I feel like the final design was a collective representation and response to my research and the knowledge obtained from those investigations.


BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Wagner Fritz W., Timothy E. Joder, Anthony J. Mumphrey. Urban revitalization: policies and programs.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

There are so many people that aided in my success, not only on this project, but throughout my academic career. I would first like to thank my parents for always encouraging me to strive to do more very best and their support in all I do. They have truly been the guiding light throughout my life and I would not be where I am today without their love and support.

Secondly, I would like to thank the College of Architecture faculty for their support and the sharing of their knowledge that has aided in my development as a designer. A special thanks to Peter Hind and Rumiko Handa for participating in all of my reviews for this thesis project offering their wisdom and experience and helping me to realize my design goals. Thank you also to Peter, who, in my lowest moments offered support and showed tremendous concern for my well-being.

To Tom Laging, Thank you for enduring this project with me, for understanding the challenges I faced throughout the year, for not letting me give up, and providing support as a design mentor and also as a life mentor. I could not have completed this project without you. I have truly learned so much from you and am a better and more thoughtful designer because of it. Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart.

I would also like to thank my peers for providing support and friendship throughout my design career, for challenging me to do my very best and for helping me in the final hours of this thesis project. I would especially like to thank David Penka, Nate Krohn, Ben Delwiche and Chad Kruse.

Lastly, and most importantly, to Matthew. Thank you for being there during the good times and bad, for dealing with my craziness and my imperfections, for understanding me, for all of our design talks, for listening to me, for helping me when I needed it the most, for running errands for me when I did not have time, for watching out for my safety and health and for being my best friend and life partner. There is no one in the world that I would rather have gone through this experience with. I love you with all of my heart and I can’t wait to share the rest of our lives together.