

Elliot Park

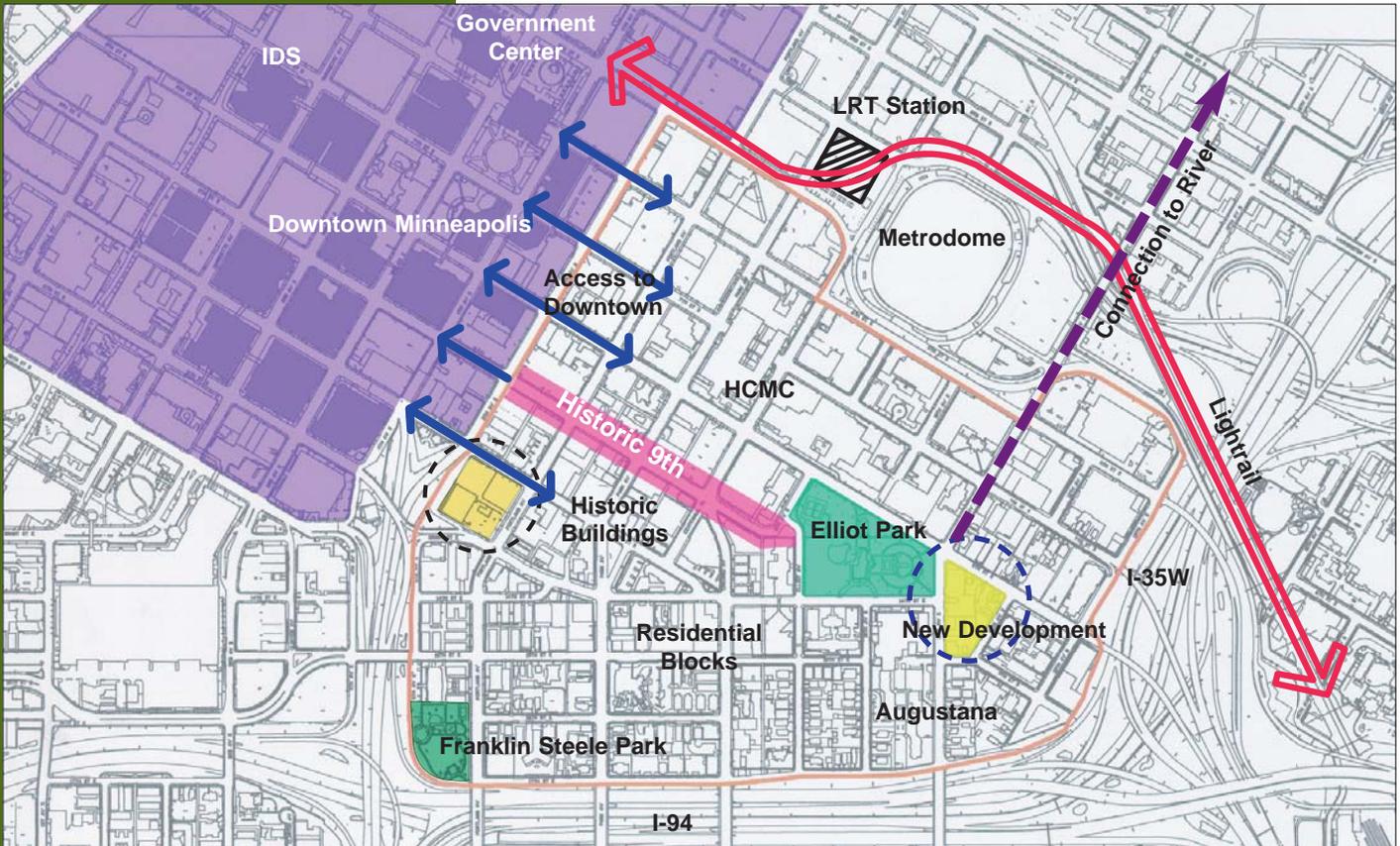
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Neighborhood Master
Assets and Challenges

Plan

August 2002

Building on Existing Strengths



Neighborhood Strengths

- **Compact, cohesive neighborhood**
- **Numerous opportunities for redevelopment**
- **Committed institutional partners**
- **Expanding role of public transit**
- **Strong neighborhood leadership and commitment from residents**

What attributes do we have to work with?

Neighborhood leaders, Study Team members and other community stakeholders worked together to identify and evaluate a list of shared neighborhood values and positive attributes on which to build this plan. An inventory of important buildings, streets, public parks and other amenities helped define neighborhood priorities, identify key issues and determine Master Plan objectives.

Although parking and traffic are an ongoing challenge, Elliot Park also has the opportunity to take advantage of the large number of people moving through the neighborhood to support new business, restaurant and shopping attractions.

Critical to the success of this Master Plan is the preservation, restoration and enhancement of existing neighborhood strengths and assets. With respect for the past and a greater understanding of the many cultures now settling here, Elliot Park has an opportunity to creatively blend the old with the new, the historic with the contemporary, and bring forward a strong action plan for the future.



The lights of Downtown Minneapolis serve as a backdrop for Elliot Park at night. (Photo courtesy of Zach Hilpert)



East Village housing under construction

Neighborhood Assets

- Close to Downtown core and the river
- A variety of historic buildings
- New housing going up right now
- Nearby job opportunities
- The “park”- neighborhood centerpiece
- High quality residential blocks
- Hierarchy of streets, good access and circulation
- Access to transit

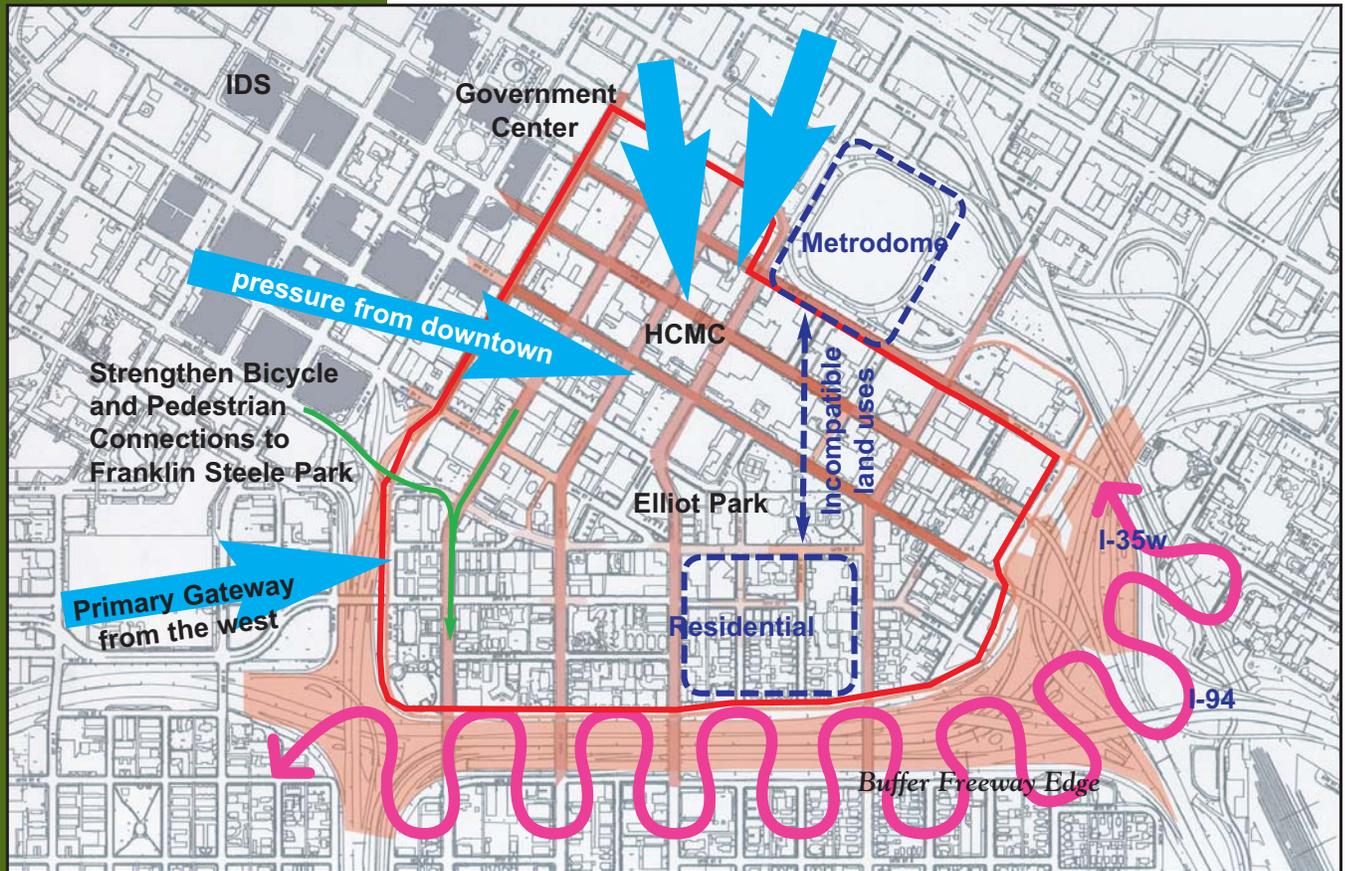


Historic buildings located at 9th Street and Park Ave.



Example of a residence adjacent to Augustana

Identify Issues and Challenges



Neighborhood Issues

- Development pressures from downtown
- Impact of the freeways
- Preservation of neighborhood character
- Incompatible land uses

What challenges do we face?

The counterpoint to neighborhood strengths and assets is, of course, an evaluation of neighborhood issues and challenges. Once again, an inclusive process of Study Team discussion and mapping brought forward a list of concerns to be addressed in the final Master Plan.

The single most significant challenge for Elliot Park is based on the geography of the city. Close proximity to downtown and to the streets and freeways that serve the core of Minneapolis provide many benefits, but also create a number of problems. High volume traffic and the reservoir of parking lots to serve downtown workers and special events at the Dome impact neighborhood character and activity.

Unfortunately, for the past several decades this neighborhood has been perceived as more of a 'pass-thru' district than a destination - with greater emphasis on moving cars than creating places for people. The neighborhood has expressed a strong mandate for change, protecting its valuable resources while participating in a broader discussion about city-building and the shape of redevelopment within and adjacent to its borders.



Unclear transition between public and private spaces; very few pedestrian scale amenities along the street.



Elliot Park sits between I-94 and Downtown Minneapolis



Challenge to accommodate some surface parking lots but still improve the street edge, reduce signage 'blight' and encourage pedestrian activity



Shaded areas indicate large percentage of land dedicated to surface parking lots within and around the neighborhood

Neighborhood Challenges

- High traffic volume on local streets
- Numerous parking lots
- Diverse mix of uses and architectural character
- Development options
- Providing job training, access, incubation
- Day care need and availability
- Understanding and celebrating the cultural mix
- More neighborhood greening
- Community pride, character & identity
- Recreational amenities - current and future needs

Focus Areas

- **Identify and define the entries, boundaries and edges of the neighborhood:** How can these borders be highlighted to help define the distinctive character of the neighborhood? In fact, where does Elliot Park truly begin and end? What elements and unifying features can be emphasized to make the statement: “You are now entering Elliot Park”?
- **Delineate connections to the broader community:** How can such corridors be utilized by the neighborhood to maximize the connections they provide and also be “captured” to reflect the character and serve the needs of Elliot Park?
- **Identify and define distinct sectors of Elliot Park:** Are there distinct or unifying features in the neighborhood that can be identified; and if so, how can they be accentuated or linked to create a definable community?
- **Exploit the distinctive themes of Elliot Park:** How can the historical significance, diversity, and pedestrian-scale be preserved and enhanced?

What are the issues to be explored?

As a result of a neighborhood inventory and evaluation of assets, challenges, demographics and development trends, a number of ‘focus areas’ were identified. The following images depict some of the issues discussed in the sidebars.



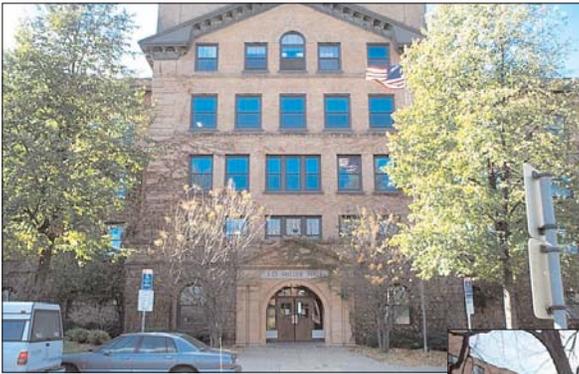
A series of brownstone apartments serves as one kind of edge.....



and HCMC serves as another.



Transition from downtown into the Elliot Park neighborhood must consider building scale, land use, traffic patterns and street character



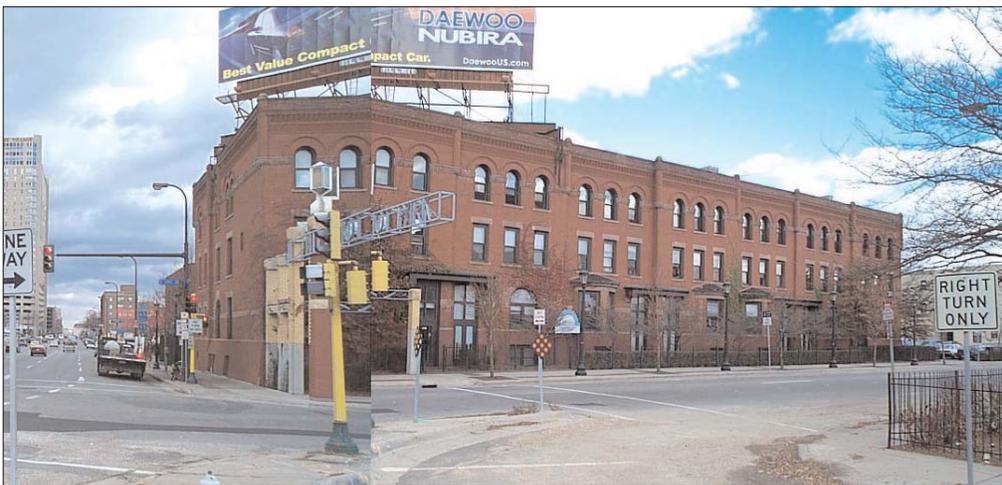
Dormitory at North Central University



Some areas of Elliot Park are distinctly residential; how should their character be preserved?



Buildings such as the Lenox can be renovated to fulfill a need (housing, retail etc.) and still retain the character of the neighborhood



- **Describe the character of the public realm:** What is public and what is private space in Elliot Park? What is the rhythm, scale, and proportion of the experience of public space in the neighborhood? And how can these spaces be identified and articulated in the future development of Elliot Park?
- **Develop in-fill housing/commercial mixed use:** How can the distinctive style, rhythm, proportion, diversity and sensitivity to location that defines Elliot Park be emphasized?
- **Identify potential commercial corridors/cluster areas:** Where and how will future commercial/ retail development occur in Elliot Park?
- **Parking lot recovery:** How can a long-term vision and strategy to reclaim parking lots for in-fill housing and commercial uses be accomplished?
- **Greening and gardening:** How can efforts to beautify this neighborhood with community gardens, landscape and other improvements to the public realm be supported and implemented?

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

Urban Design Principles

- Foster a sense of place and community
- Invest in the public realm
- Broaden the mix of uses
- Improve connectivity
- Preserve and enhance heritage resources
- Respect architectural form, scale and context
- Support 'greening' as a major component of development
- Balance economic vitality with quality of life
- Reinforce safe environments
- Promote sustainable neighborhood development strategies

Identify opportunities for additional public parks and squares as key neighborhood gathering/celebration nodes.



Having identified the issues and 'focus areas' it wished the Master Plan to address, the Elliot Park Neighborhood worked with a team of urban design consultants to conduct a series of community forums and workshops. During the early stages of this process, participants articulated the following objectives and outcomes for this Master Plan including:

- create a pedestrian-scaled urban neighborhood with a broad continuum of housing opportunities and sufficient commercial, institutional and recreational facilities to sustain and build community.
- make Elliot Park a safer, more attractive and more appealing neighborhood.
- generate an exciting vision based on sound urban design principles to describe the future of Elliot Park.
- produce graphic scenarios for future land uses in the neighborhood that reflect appropriate utilization of space on an urban, pedestrian scale.
- provide evaluative and developmental tools, such as building prototypes and design guidelines, that will assist in implementing the Master Plan.
- suggest short and long-term strategies, and target specific priority projects to ignite development interest and promote the Master Plan as a call for action.



Chapter 4 - The Master Plan

Study team workshops, neighborhood meetings and stakeholder interviews used these principles and objectives to create the Master Plan (outlined in Chapter 4). This plan defines the specific actions, strategies and priority projects for Elliot Park.