

4 *Elliot Park* Neighborhood Master Plan
The Master Plan

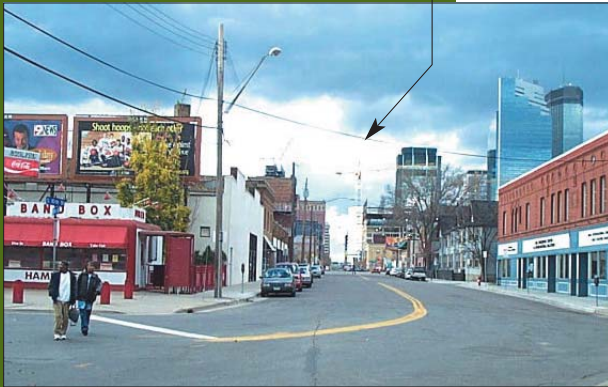
August 2002

Why Master Plan?

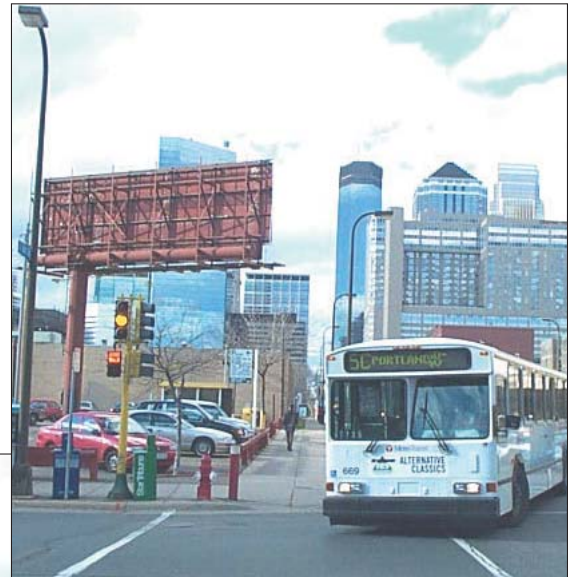
Do nothing ... or plan for the future

Change happens - witness the dramatic changes to this neighborhood illustrated in the series of aerial photographs in Chapter Two. With the extraordinary growth of Downtown Minneapolis and the Riverfront, Elliot Park is now experiencing pressure to become the next inner city area for residential and commercial expansion. As change occurs in response to desired improvements and volatile market forces, EPNI continues to position itself to help guide the economic, social and physical developments for the benefit of all residents and workers in the community.

Construction cranes signal new growth downtown as the backdrop to this smaller scale, quiet neighborhood.



Improved transit service, including light rail, and redevelopment of vacant or surface parking lots are important elements of this plan.



As a result of careful planning and thoughtful debate, this Master Plan is not just a written report to be read by development and urban planning specialists. Instead, the Plan is intended to be a highly illustrative, accessible workbook featuring clear graphics and detailed recommendations to appeal to and engage the interests of many different neighborhood audiences and community stakeholders.

Elliot Park is situated in a unique and challenging location between a primary transportation corridor and a growing downtown.

Neighborhood Participation

A History of Study

The Elliot Park Neighborhood has been the subject of, or has directly participated in, numerous studies related to a variety of issues including:

- Relationship to the rest of downtown
- Relationship to the riverfront
- Neighborhood districts
- Corridors and connections
- Amenities and attractions
- Strengths and assets
- Land use and building types
- History, culture and many more

To further refine and understand this information, we asked the following question: **What are the primary influences that will shape, determine or inform what happens next in the Elliot Park Neighborhood?**

Stakeholder Interviews

The planning process officially began with a series of individual interviews and small group discussions with neighborhood stakeholders. Each of these provided an opportunity for the planning team to hear firsthand the specific issues and concerns expressed by area employers, institutions, residents, clergy, business owners, elected officials, city staff and other interested participants.

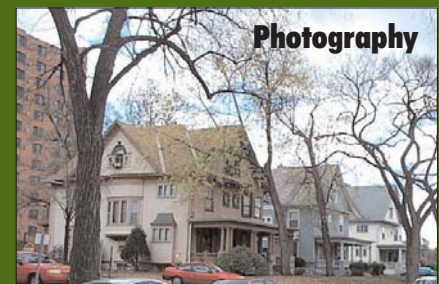
Study Team Workshops

During workshop and studio sessions, Study Teams and the urban design consultants used mapping, photography, sketches, computer modeling and even a table-sized scale model to help visualize the building massing and scale of proposed improvements. These techniques resulted in a Master Plan document that lends itself to many purposes, including recommendations for specific development initiatives, the marketing of neighborhood assets, and preparation of detailed neighborhood-level urban design guidelines.

Study teams made up of EPNI staff, task force members and other neighborhood participants used various techniques to explore options for each component.



Tools for Investigation



Layers Inform the Plan

The Elliot Park Master Plan suggests that the City and its neighborhoods are organized around inseparable systems (layers) that interact with one another: housing, parks, transit, commercial uses and infrastructure are all essential parts of the whole. Through a series of public meetings and study team workshops, Elliot Park explored each layer with a focus on:

- Patterns of Development
- Patterns of Movement
- Design of the Public Realm
- The Social/Cultural Mosaic

Detailed examination of each component (or layer) provided a much clearer picture of existing conditions, ongoing challenges and new opportunities for the Elliot Park neighborhood. Study teams then defined specific objectives for each layer, setting a strong design and development agenda for the Master Plan.

Patterns of Development

- Encourage adaptive re-use and creative infill
- Encourage mixed-use - residential/commercial
- Promote a mix of housing types
- Mitigate or redevelop surface parking lots
- Explore a 'step-down' approach to building heights, transitioning from Downtown to the residential neighborhood

Patterns of Movement

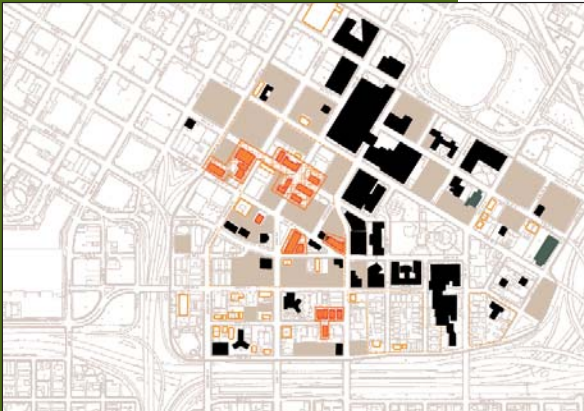
- Provide a bus circulator route through neighborhood
- Extend bus routes to connect with the new Light Rail Transit (LRT) station
- Provide additional bus service to Downtown
- Explore 'district' parking solutions
- Provide additional east-west bike routes
- Explore traffic calming solutions

Design of the Public Realm

- Promote safety throughout the neighborhood
- Improve lighting - build on existing programs
- Enhance historic 9th Street and other pedestrian corridors
- Support additional greening - urban reforestation
- 'Piggyback' on existing initiatives - LRT, Guthrie Theater, Avenue of the Arts, Historic Mills Park

The Social/Cultural Mosaic

- Evaluate existing facilities and programs offered by both public and private entities
- Explore opportunities for new community center
- Promote participatory public art projects
- Encourage shared resources among various neighborhood institutions and cultural groups
- Promote safety and security
- Explore opportunities for additional public gathering spaces - neighborhood commons



Preliminary Composite Plan

Putting the Layers Together

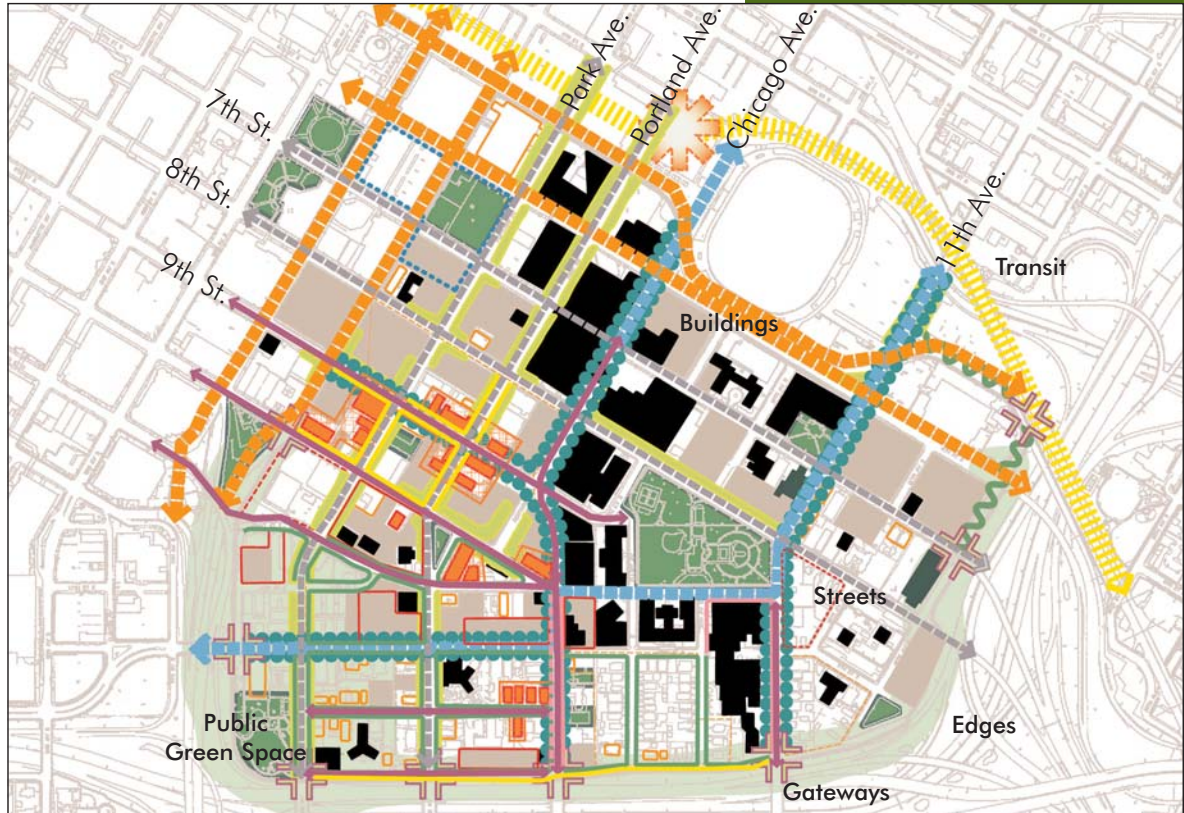
The Preliminary Composite Plan begins to illustrate the basic structure of the neighborhood highlighting the following elements:

- The strong institutional core through the heart of the neighborhood (black buildings)
- The unique historic buildings and blocks along 9th Street (red)
- The freeway trench on three sides of Elliot Park, creating an island neighborhood
- The distinct zones or districts within the neighborhood, each with unique identifiable changes in land use and building patterns:
 1. The mostly residential blocks in the south district (to be preserved)
 2. The mixed residential/institutional district on the east
 3. The 'downtown neighborhood' district to the north

Although somewhat messy at this point in the process, the Composite Plan shows an emerging physical structure for neighborhood improvements and, perhaps more importantly, sets the stage for a Master Plan that is based on respect for history and the variety of neighborhood assets to be preserved. The outcome of this approach rejects wholesale change and displacement in favor of careful in-fill and adaptive re-use with an emphasis on mixed-use, mixed-income and mixed-demographics as the foundation for redevelopment in this neighborhood.

Layers of the plan include:

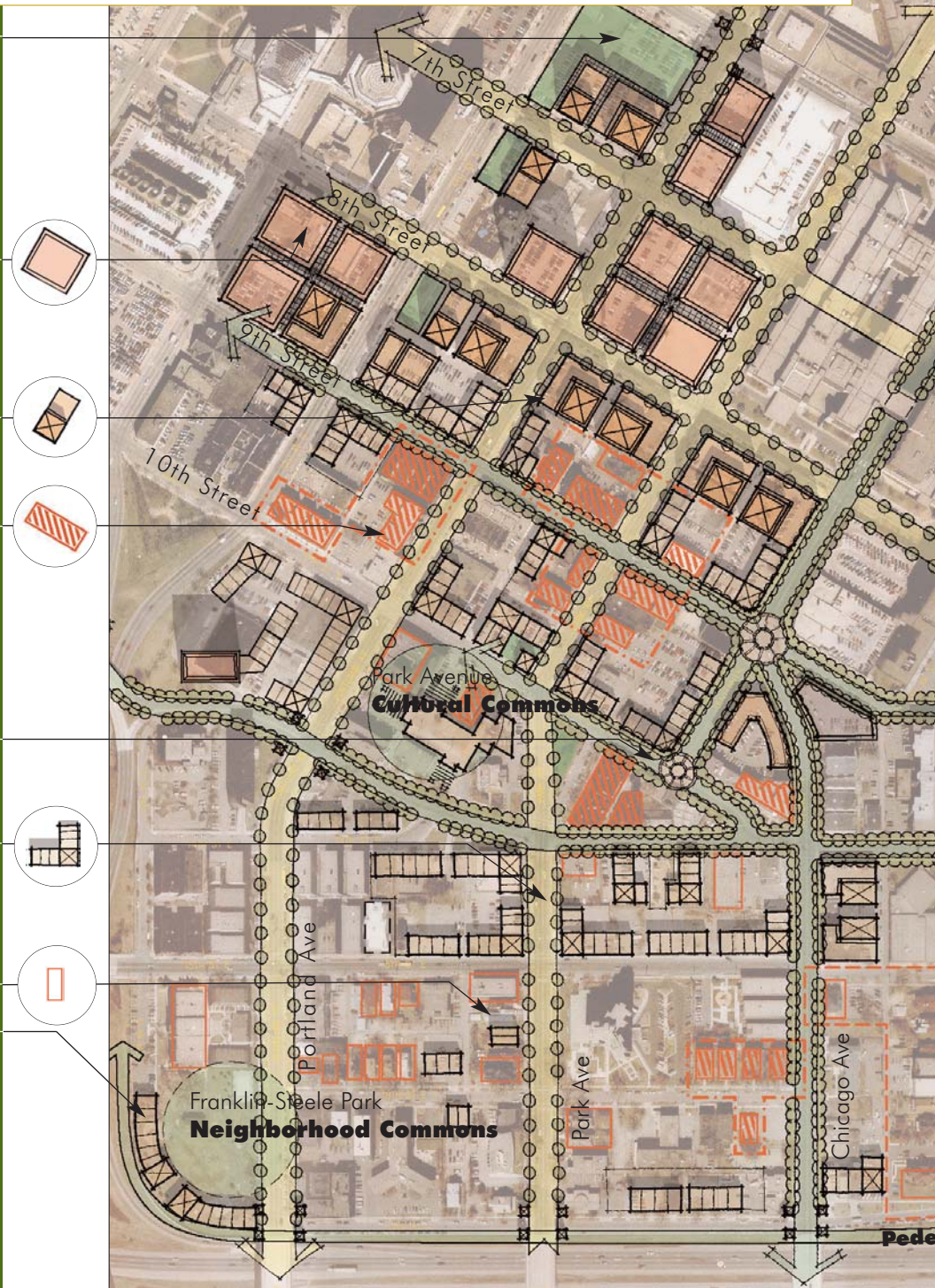
- existing buildings
- type/character of the streets
- gateways
- edges
- green space
- transit connections
- pedestrian/bicycle connections

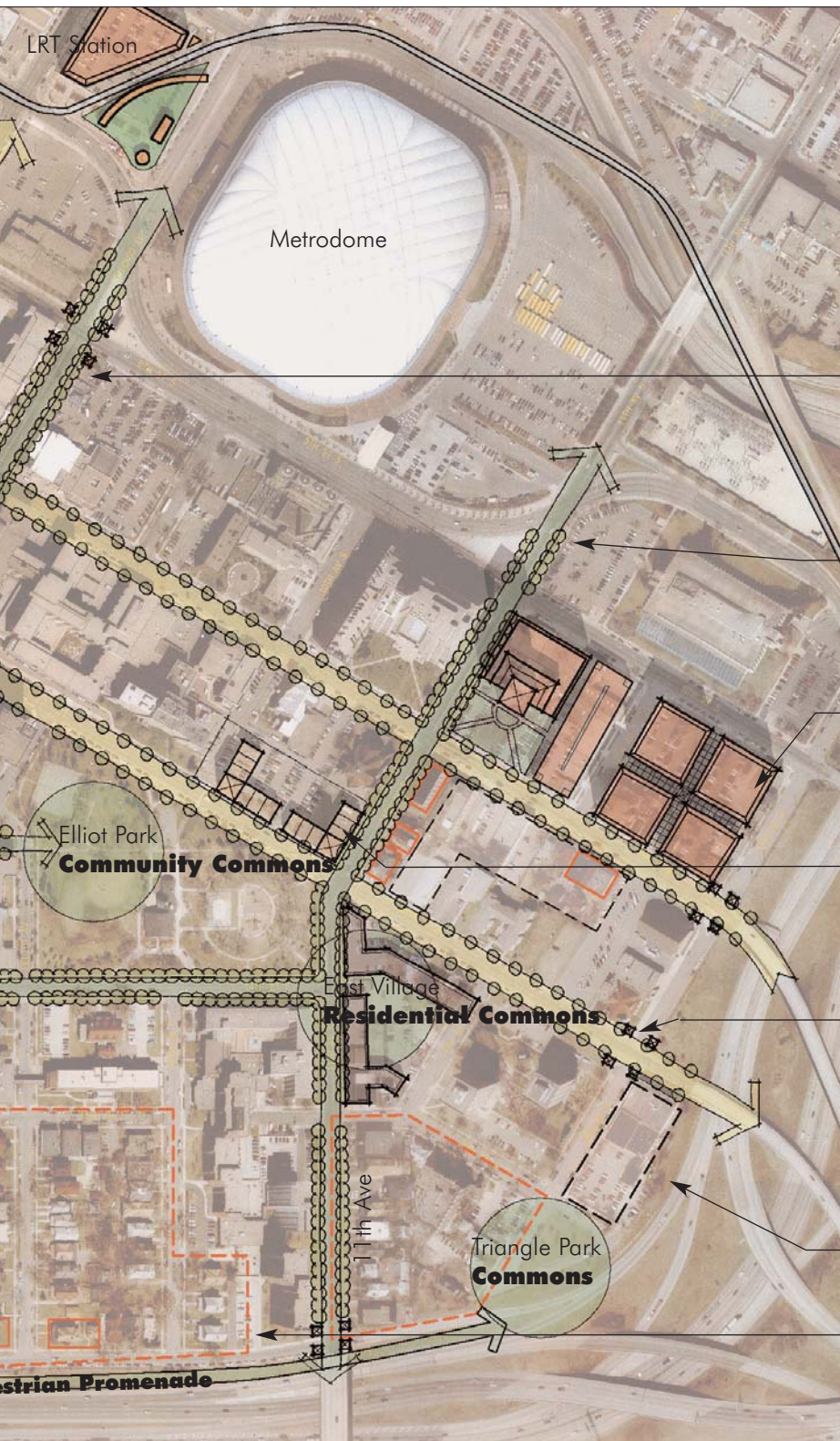


The Elliot Park Master Plan

The primary purpose of this document is to serve as a guide, a vision for the future of Elliot Park. It is a concept and a true beginning for much more discussion and detailed refinement as pieces of the plan are funded and then implemented. And finally, it represents a long-term strategy, supporting thoughtful planning and careful development for the next few decades. It is important to consider that this plan is designed to be flexible - to respect changes in the marketplace, apply technological advances and support new neighborhood priorities.

- Link new park space to the new “green” corridor as suggested in the “Downtown East Plan”.
- Contain “Downtown oriented” development 14 stories and higher to the west of the neighborhood.
- Promote 2-way traffic for both 9th and 10th Streets east of 5th Avenue.
- Transition to mixed-use development 4 - 8 stories.
- Preserve historic designated properties and districts.
- Develop streetscape improvements to promote connections to downtown along 9th Street and the new Elliot Park Boulevard.
- Create new public square, urban plaza, gathering space within the Central Core district.
- Provide new residential/infill development at 2-4 stories.
- Encourage restoration and adaptive re-use of significant neighborhood properties
- Create new housing to strengthen the neighborhood edge along the freeway and bring more eyes, casual surveillance to this public park.





- Explore additional opportunities for neighborhood green, pocket parks and community garden space.
- Promote 'right-sizing' of one-way pair connector streets, with a focus on Park and Portland, 7th and 8th Streets.
- Promote greening initiatives to soften and enhance neighborhood edges
- Create streetscape improvements along Chicago Avenue, which encourage 'green street' connection to LRT station at 5th Street and to the riverfront
- Create streetscape improvements along 11 th Avenue, which encourage 'green street' connection to the riverfront.
- Promote mixed-use development 14 stories and higher at the eastern edge of the neighborhood.
- Promote new housing and mixed-use development to take advantage of park frontage.
- Add gateway elements to announce neighborhood entries
- Create streetscape improvements that will bring greater emphasis to destination/amenity streets within the Central Core district.
- Identify potential redevelopment opportunities
- Develop residential guideline overlay district.

Understanding the Master Plan

The Master Plan reflects a set of general urban design principles and specific planning objectives. When applied to the various layers, or city-building components identified in the study team workshops, these principles and objectives begin to define the physical form, structure and overall character of the neighborhood. Further exploration of these basic building blocks led to several exciting themes that provide the framework for detailed development guidelines and strategies for project implementation discussed in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six. These themes include:



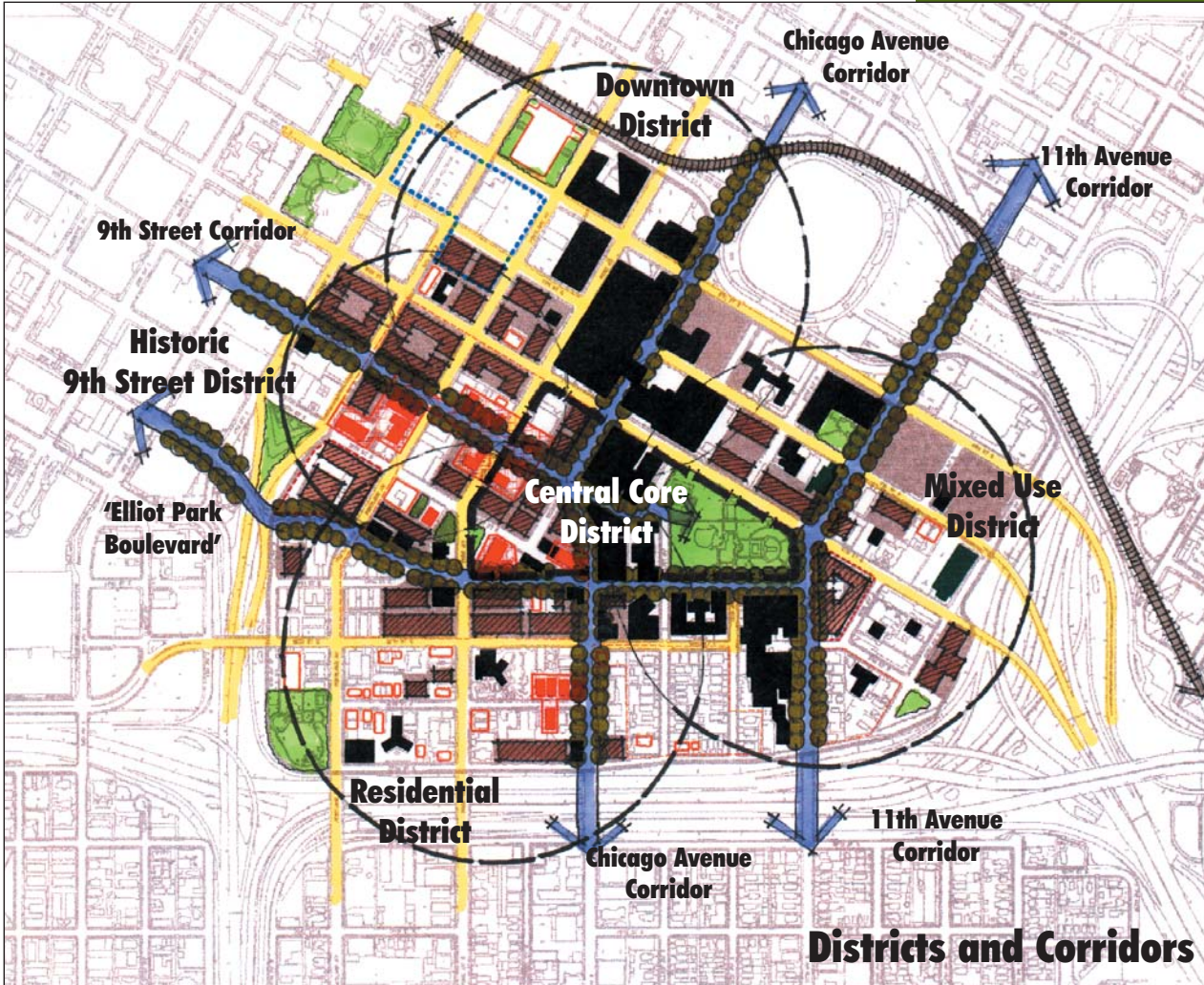
Districts and Corridors - This component of the plan identifies the unique qualities and assets within each district while recognizing the variety and character of the many streets that serve and pass through the neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Commons Initiative - Promotes partnerships to develop a series of linked public spaces, including improvements to the existing Elliot Park Recreation Center.



Weaving Sustainable Goals into the Master Plan - Encourages an approach that will integrate adaptive re-use, careful infill and new construction within existing districts, while building on neighborhood strengths and shared planning objectives.

Districts and Corridors



Districts and Corridors

The preliminary 'Composite Plan' revealed a number of distinct zones or districts within Elliot Park. These districts are defined by the quality and character of buildings, mix of uses and other amenities. Specific design guidelines and project recommendations are based on the following districts:

- Downtown District
- Residential District
- Mixed-Use District
- Historic 9th Street District
- Central Core District

Traffic movement patterns within and around Elliot Park create a variety of both positive and negative impacts. These were evaluated according to a defined hierarchy of street types (or corridors):

- Destination Streets
- Connector Streets (local and regional)
- Neighborhood Streets

For more detailed description and recommendations related to districts and corridors, see Chapter 5 - Design Guidelines.

The Neighborhood Commons Initiative

Create new public gathering spaces:

1. Park Avenue Cultural Commons
2. Central Core Centennial Commons
3. Elliot Park Community Commons
4. East Village Residential Commons
5. Franklin-Steele Park Neighborhood Commons
6. Triangle Park Pedestrian Commons
7. Elliot Park Promenade

What does 'livable community' mean?

Responses to this question are as varied as the cultures and communities represented in the different Minneapolis neighborhoods. For Elliot Park the focus is on:

- the quality of the streets
- the scale and character of new development
- the energy and activity a mix of uses can bring
- the availability of public 'breathing space' as part of the rich legacy of our local and regional parks system.

Investing in the public realm is an important component of the master plan and a crucial priority to create the truly livable community this neighborhood seeks. The primary armature for these improvements is the Neighborhood Commons Initiative. This idea, in response to the rich history and existing cultural diversity of this neighborhood, recommends a series of linked public spaces, or commons, to encourage neighborhood interaction. A creative mix of indoor and outdoor facilities would support new and existing programs, special events, outreach and other activities that invite gathering, education, cultural expression and recreational opportunities for all ages.



Sustaining a Livable Neighborhood

By choosing to invest in Minneapolis' inner city, the Elliot Park neighborhood demonstrates a strong commitment to the fundamental principles of sustainable planning: redevelopment of brownfield sites, reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure; revitalizing the city by linking to a larger urban fabric. Ultimately, sustainable neighborhood planning relies on the stewardship of its residents: "The most fruitful [sustainable] indicators build upon strengths of the community and are defined with strong involvement by a diverse cross-section of residents and stakeholders." In the first year of planning, the Elliot Park community has voiced its interest in and commitment to the following sustainable values:

- Adaptive Re-use/Preservation of historic buildings and infill development
- Focus on mixed-use, mixed-income and mixed-demographics to encourage live-work relationships and diversity.
- 'Step-down' building heights to respect the transition of building scales between the neighborhood and downtown and to increase accessibility of natural light to each block.
- Increase bus service and connect to new LRT line.
- Expand and enhance bike-routes and pedestrian corridors
- Promote 'walkability' by linking to existing amenities
- Promote urban 'Greening' or reforestation
- Increase public greenspace
- Exceed City of Minneapolis greening requirements for parking lots, streets and new development



Bioswale in parking lot collects and cleanses stormwater

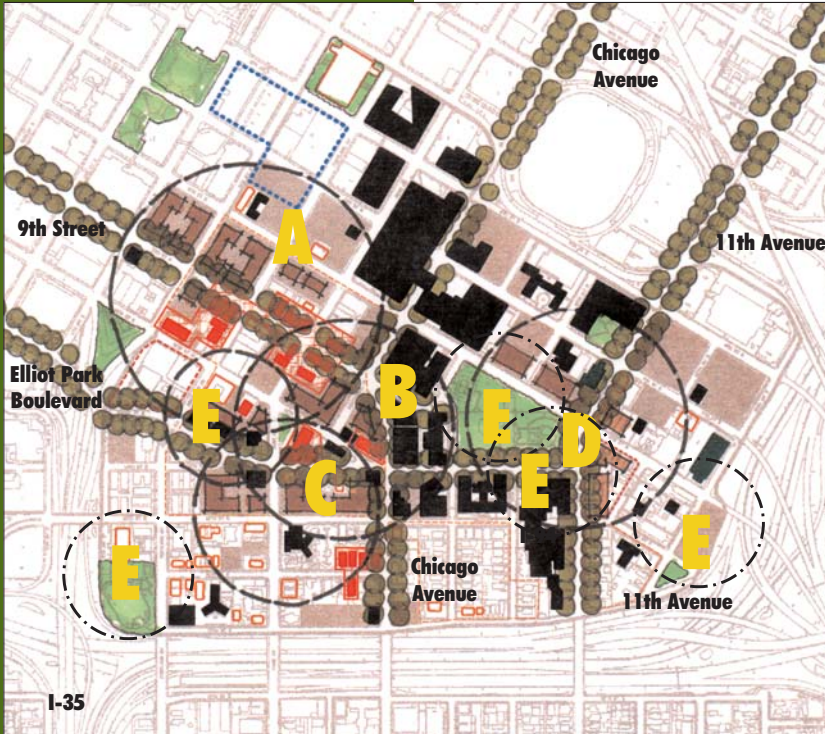
'Green' architecture and creative site planning conserve resources. Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies, Oberlin College

Sustainable issues are imbedded in good planning principles: what is good for the environment strengthens the community and the local economy as well. Taking on a more forward-thinking approach, Elliot Park has the potential to become an eminent example of innovative sustainable neighborhood development.

- **Water management:** improve water infiltration by minimizing paved surfaces and increasing vegetation. For example green roofs; tree-lined streets; permeable pavement; swales in place of gutters; native plantings; orchard parking.
- **Create shared spaces** that 'sustain' the neighborhood, such as community gardens and roof top greenhouses.
- **Consider district heating and cogeneration**, which relies on burning waste wood chips as fuel, an alternate energy means.
- **Overlay zoning ordinance** to limit parking in order to increase density, reduce paved area and promote transit alternatives.
- **Encourage cooperatives** and other environmentally sound vendors into the neighborhood.
- All new construction should follow **sustainable building guidelines**.

Priority Project Areas

The Master Plan recommends a number of specific initiatives with great potential for immediate implementation. Each of these priority projects will serve to demonstrate revitalization objectives defined in the overall plan, while encouraging additional investment in neighborhood development and public improvements.



A Historic 9th Street

Build upon the texture and character of existing historic buildings while providing an enhanced connection to the downtown core.

B Central Core

Create a mix of residential and commercial uses (service, small office, restaurant) at this confluence of the four neighborhood districts.

C Southside Housing

Explore opportunities for new housing throughout the neighborhood, including two high priority areas between Chicago and Portland Avenues.

D 8th/11th Avenue Node

Build upon the success of the East Village development by looking for opportunities to provide additional housing and possibly ground-floor retail fronting on the park at this important neighborhood crossroads.

E The Neighborhood Commons Initiative

Provide a linked series of public greens and pedestrian scale spaces where diverse communities can gather and interact.

What, Where and How?

The Master Plan identifies the type and general location for future development and neighborhood improvements. The next two chapters - Design Guidelines and Project Implementation, provide more detailed description and direction for how to get things done.

For more information related to each of the recommended priority projects, refer to Chapter 6 Project Summaries

Implementation

Southside Housing



Implementation

Historic 9th Street

