

Downtown Development Action Plan: Phase One - Principles and Priorities Report



Mayor's DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN



St. Louis, Missouri

▪

Clarence Harmon, Mayor

▪

December, 1997



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Downtown Development Action Plan

December, 1997



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Mayor's Call to Action

On October 15, 1997 Mayor Clarence Harmon announced the formation of **Downtown Now!**, a unique partnership designed to initiate positive change within Downtown St. Louis.

The Mayor appointed five Co-Chairs



John Fox Arnold
Chairman; Downtown St. Louis Partnership



Robert Baer
President and CEO; Unigroup

Senator John Danforth
Chairman; St. Louis 2004



Richard Fleming
President; RCGA

Michael Jones
Chief of Staff; Mayor Harmon's Office



who brought together St. Louis 2004, the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association, the Downtown Saint Louis Partnership, and the City of St. Louis in a unique



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collaborative effort to work with a Mayor-appointed Task Force to implement some immediate priorities and to clearly identify the financial and institutional resources necessary.

The Mayor challenged the Task Force to utilize determined, rational decision-making and creative problem-solving to develop an implementation framework that

- builds upon the work of the 1993 Downtown St. Louis Strategic Plan and
- sets an agenda for development activity over the next 3-5 years

Immediate priorities were outlined as follows:

- Housing
- Washington Avenue
- Connect the Riverfront to the Core
- Convention Headquarters Hotel.

Staff from the partnering organizations organized the planning process, prepared research materials, and, along with the Co-Chairs, Task Force and citizens of the City and the region, developed the enclosed recommended principles and priorities.



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Phase One Accomplishments

In 1993 the St. Louis Board of Aldermen passed Resolution 154 which accepted and adopted the Strategic Objectives and Major Goals of the 1993 Strategic Plan as “the policy framework for ongoing preparation of a comprehensive plan for the downtown area of the City of St. Louis.” Over the past year, several forums - through St. Louis 2004, the Peirce report, the American Institute of Architects, and others - have reinforced the critical role that Downtown St. Louis plays as the symbolic, economic, civic, and geographic center of the region.

In this planning process, through a series of more than twenty meetings over the course of the last two and one half months, more than 500 City and regional citizens, business owners, public officials, and other stake-holders reviewed the 1993 Strategic Plan and summarized the key components of a phase one revitalization strategy for Downtown St. Louis into the attached Development Principles and Priorities.



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At the November 1 public meeting small group exercises were conducted to develop the initial drafts of the Development Principles and Priorities. At that same meeting, Mary Means and Barry Elbasani, nationally recognized urban redevelopment experts, spoke about the importance of planning and creating unique public spaces and projects that would become the catalysts for the revitalization of Downtown.

Ongoing comment and refinement of the draft Development Principles and Priorities occurred through three Task Force meetings and five small group meetings with key stake-holders and participants. A second public meeting on December 6 provided public review and comment. As a result, the Development Principles and Priorities went through six major revisions before being adopted by the Task Force as presented here on December 24, 1997.



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Summary of Development Principles

As the heart of the region, Downtown should demonstrate the community's value of the urban environment and strengthen its role as the place that engages, empowers, and celebrates all of the region's diverse populations.

MISSION: Downtown revitalization will capitalize on and strengthen the center city's role as the premier office location in the region and will utilize retail, entertainment, housing, and cultural attractions to extend the time people spend Downtown, enhance liveability, and attract visitors.

- Downtown revitalization will be supported by private sector investment leveraged by public resources and financial incentives primarily in targeted development areas.
- Downtown revitalization will focus on residential and business retention, promotion, and growth in order to strengthen and diversify the economic and residential base.
- Downtown revitalization will be interdependent with the economic, physical, and functional strengths of the City's neighborhoods in order to maintain its role as the economic anchor of both the City and the region.
- Downtown revitalization will concentrate immediately on targeted development areas and incremental growth strategies which build upon past investments to achieve major transformation.



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- Downtown will consist of identifiable and unique places and districts that are compact, pedestrian-scaled, and have a distinct character and diversity of uses and users.
- Downtown will incorporate a public space network that links each district with one another, city neighborhoods, and the region through attractive, clearly identified corridors and landmarks.
- Downtown will be supported by a hierarchical transportation system consisting of an effective access, circulation, and parking system, that integrates and balances the use of public transit, the highway system, city streets, and pedestrian and bike corridors in a manner consistent with each district's character and use.
- Downtown development will be facilitated by an aggressive district management system that effectively markets and maintains attractive, clean, and safe environments within Downtown.
- Downtown redevelopment will be facilitated by a coordinated and comprehensive strategy that includes a streamlined, one-stop, customer-oriented service delivery system that facilitates the attraction of new businesses and the retention of existing ones.



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Development Principles: Illustrations and Best Practices

■ Seattle is one city in which a high quality of life is an undisputed objective for civic action. In the past twenty-five years Seattle's leaders created programs to keep its neighborhoods and downtown strong and healthy. Seattle cleaned up its waters, created a municipal arts commission, enacted an artists' zoning ordinance, and institutionalized historic preservation.



Downtown St. Louis

Overarching Vision



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As the heart of the region,
Downtown should
demonstrate the community's
value of the urban
environment and strengthen
its role as the place that
engages, empowers, and
celebrates all of the region's
diverse populations.

■ In 1988 Columbus completed a Downtown Strategic Planning process that created a new vision for downtown. Columbus created a central city of scenic and comfortable public spaces, pedestrian paths, new architecture and old building, and new retail businesses to recreate downtown as “the place to be.” Columbus also created new festivals and built up its river recreation to keep this new spirit intact.



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■ In downtown Fort Worth, the development of an 11-screen movie theater at Sundance Square had the double benefit of providing a reason for the downtown worker to linger after 5:00 and of reviving a floundering restaurant and retail district.

■ Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica was plagued with rampant vacancies and substandard tenants, until the city sponsored renovation of the pedestrian mall and negotiated development deals with cinemas; today it is one of the most notable pedestrian-oriented entertainment districts in the country.

■ The Centertainment project in Kansas City hopes to replace the blighted area around the Power & Light building with cinemas, shops, and restaurants; the Kansas City Tax Increment Financing commission has approved a plan to use future taxes to pay for \$176 million of the \$444 million development costs.



Metropolitan Square, St. Louis

Development Mission

Downtown revitalization will capitalize on and strengthen the center city's role as the premier office location in the region and will utilize retail, entertainment, housing, and cultural attractions to extend the length of the workday, enhance liveability, and attract visitors.



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*Example from: Kansas City - the New York Life Building
Brochure cover courtesy of UtiliCorp United.*

- Also in Kansas City Tax Increment Financing was used for part of the \$35 million costs of renovating the New York Life building for new office space with state-of-the-art energy, communications and environmental capabilities.
- Phoenix made the shift from a 9-to-5 office center to the metro's hub of cultural, entertainment and tourism by developing projects such as the Orpheum Theater, Symphony Hall, America West Arena, Museum of History Phoenix Art Museum and Bank One Ballpark within walking distance of one another.



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■ The Cincinnati Equity Fund was launched in 1995 with a \$25 million contribution from the Proctor and Gamble Co. Five Tri-State banks later contributed \$10 million, dependent on fund organizers raising an additional \$15 million. The fund provides gap financing for downtown projects based on a number of criteria, including a demonstration that the project would create jobs and help revitalize downtown.

■ Indianapolis used an amenity infrastructure system in the early 1980's as an economic development strategy through generous private sector contributions led by the city's Lilly Endowment which decided to channel its resources to improve the quality of life in Indianapolis. The result has been investment over a 10-year period of \$136 million with another \$850 million in related downtown investment for a series of civic facilities that have made Indianapolis the nation's amateur sports capital.

Development Principle

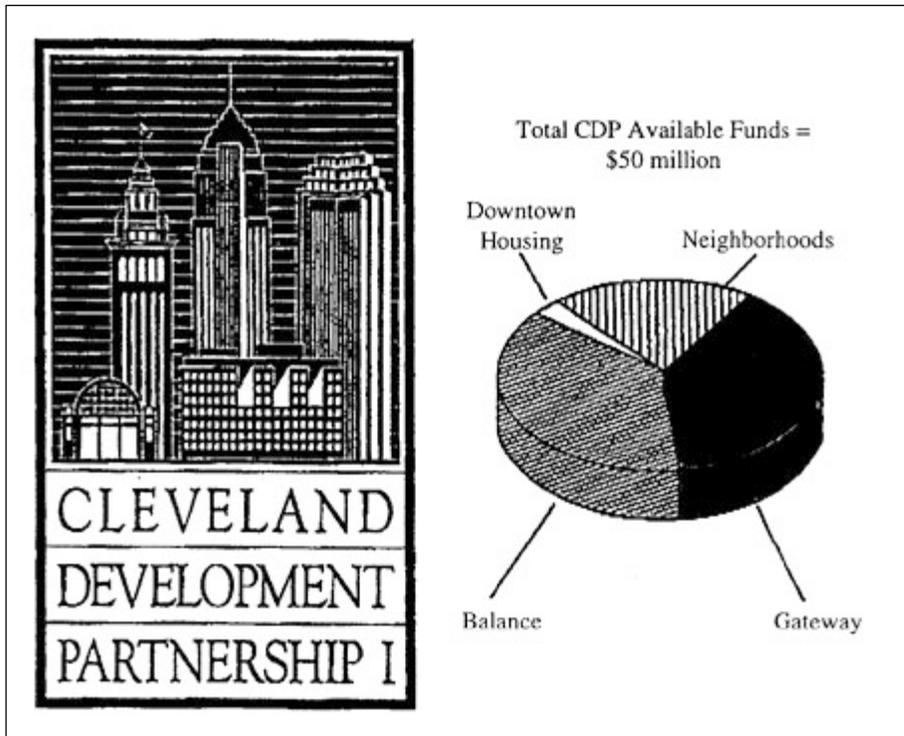
Downtown revitalization will be supported by private sector investment leveraged by public resources and financial incentives primarily in targeted development areas.



America's Center, St. Louis



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*Example from: Cleveland.
Graphics courtesy of Cleveland Tomorrow.*

- In 1985, Cleveland Mayor George Voinovich assembled 57 corporate CEO's to form Cleveland Tomorrow which initiated a \$50 million downtown development fund through the Cleveland Development Partnership that has been used in conjunction with public dollars to fund more than \$4 billion of downtown development.
- The city of Battle Creek, Michigan merged with its wealthier suburban township in the mid-1980's, doubling the size of the city and increasing its tax base by 122%. Additional benefits were realized by big employers who were now in a city with a much lower tax rate. As a result, the Kellogg Co. put all of its savings into an economic development fund. When 40 other companies followed suit and the Kellogg Foundation matched the total amount, a fund was established to provide incentives, mainly low-interest financing, to lure business to Battle Creek.



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■ Baltimore implemented a “shopsteading” program to sell vacant city lots to the commercial sector. Because of a variety of grant and loan programs whole neighborhoods have simultaneously been revitalized. This dual philosophy of downtown and neighborhood redevelopment was very popular with voters allowing for the passage of numerous bond referendums for City Center-Inner Harbor projects.

■ Pittsburgh began to target *quality of life* as a guiding principle for economic development in 1984. “Quality of life plays an important role in attracting new businesses and in strengthening bonds with existing companies. As economic activity becomes less dependent on physical resources or location, the attractiveness and livability of the region become increasingly important.” (Quality of Life Task Force of the Allegheny Conference.)

Development Principle



Southwestern Bell Complex, St. Louis



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- San Antonio began an aggressive effort to attract high-technology firms and research centers in the early 1980s. The city focused on arts and conservation in order to appeal to the generally well-educated employees of these high-tech firms. The Paseo del Rio, the walkway on the San Antonio River, was saved from being paved over in the 1920s and now is a great example of high quality urban design.



The Paseo del Rio, San Antonio.



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■ Seattle avoided urban decline by fostering close-in neighborhoods that support a downtown retail core. The city government works with its active neighborhoods through a system of community councils, the Parks Department's community centers and the Neighborhood Improvement Program. Seattle also agreed to "down-zone" areas where potential high-rises could block residents' views of Puget Sound and Seattle's other stunning natural resources.

Development Principle

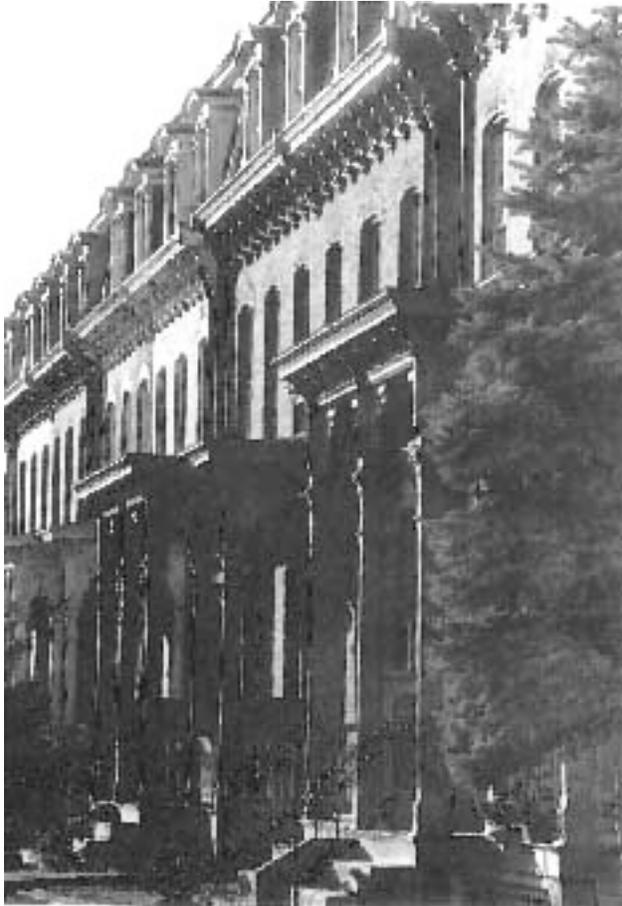
Downtown revitalization will be interdependent with the economic, physical, and functional strengths of the City's neighborhoods in order to maintain its role as the economic anchor of both the City and the region.



Soulard, St. Louis



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Manchester neighborhood, Pittsburgh.

- Although Pittsburgh's initial redevelopment of downtown Renaissance I, focused on the central business district. By the early 1970s, city neighborhoods assumed a more prominent place in planning and execution. Paul Brophy, director of Urban Redevelopment Authority said "What had been the public-private partnership became, of necessity the public-private-neighborhood partnership."



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■ The 1986 Downtown Area Plan from Denver outlines specific district plans that define the special issues and needs within each Downtown district to build on or enhance their distinctive characters and previous investment. The districts are built off of the Framework that is the “skeleton around which development will evolve over time -- the structure which links the various individual investments into a mutually reinforcing system.” (Downtown Area Plan)



Gentry's Landing, St. Louis

Development Principle

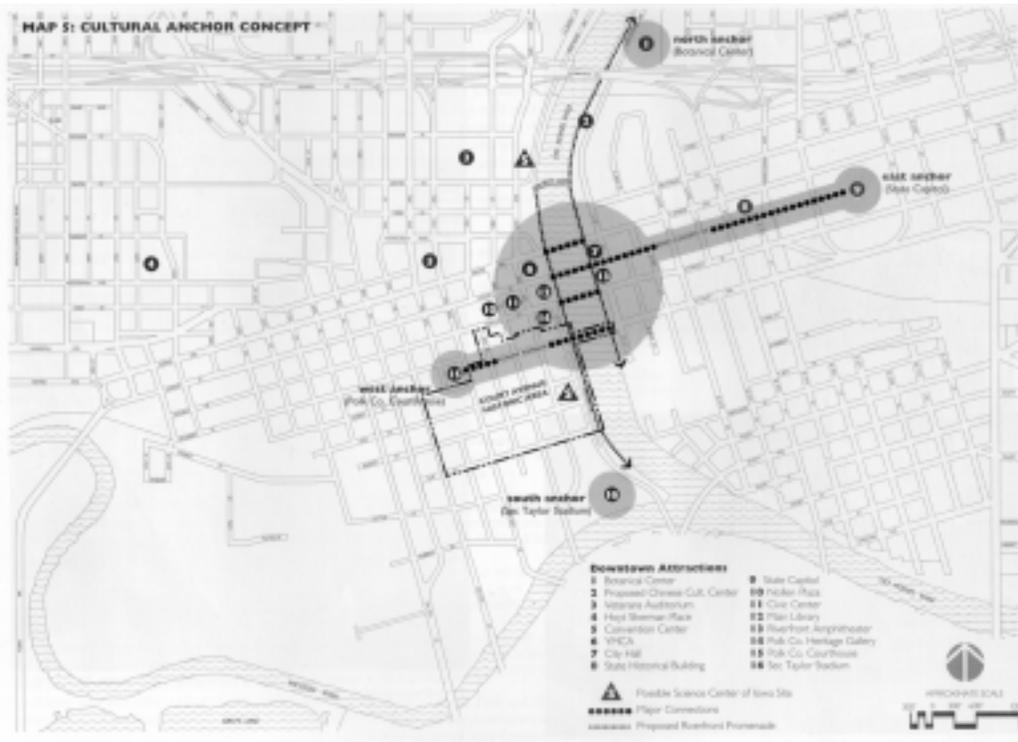
Downtown revitalization will concentrate immediately on targeted development areas and incremental growth strategies which build upon past investments to achieve major transformation.



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■ The 1995 Downtown Plan for Des Moines utilized a cultural anchor concept as a target area solution in order to provide the downtown with a year round, sustaining core of activity

■ Projects alone do not provide solutions to downtown revitalization; leadership, management and cooperation are essential elements of any redevelopment effort.



Example from: Des Moines, Iowa.

Map courtesy of Destination Downtown, An Action Plan for Iowa's Urban Place, December 1995.



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■ In 1988, Denver utilized historic district designation in Lower Downtown both to retain a sense of place and to enhance economic development. Included in the legislation, which prohibited demolition, was a stringent design review process and the elimination of parking as a use by right. To mitigate the potential impact on property rights, a revolving loan fund was created to provide gap financing for rehabilitation projects and the city council established a review mechanism that required an economic analysis of the historic district every two years for the district's first six years. The council agreed to rescind the historic district ordinance if it proved to be detrimental to property values.



Keiner Plaza, St. Louis

Development Principle

Downtown will consist of identifiable and unique places and districts that are compact pedestrian-scaled, and have a distinct character and diversity of uses and users.



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*Example from: Minneapolis.
Diagram courtesy of Minneapolis Downtown 2010, November 1996.*

- The 1996 Minneapolis Downtown 2010 plan outlined policies intended to increase the synergy among retail, entertainment and the convention center and proposed a compact retail core with major retail facilities within an approximate 10-block area that would serve as the primary center of retailing activity in downtown.
- Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, an ardent advocate for good urban design within the urban environment, fought the state transportation department to prevent the construction of the Park East Freeway because of the negative impact it would have had on downtown Milwaukee and its relationship to the lakefront. He predicts that the great public works of the next century will be the deconstruction of freeways once economists apply themselves to the investigation of the economics of transportation.



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Development Principle

Downtown will incorporate a public space network that links each district with one another, City neighborhoods, and the region through attractive, clearly identified corridors and landmarks.

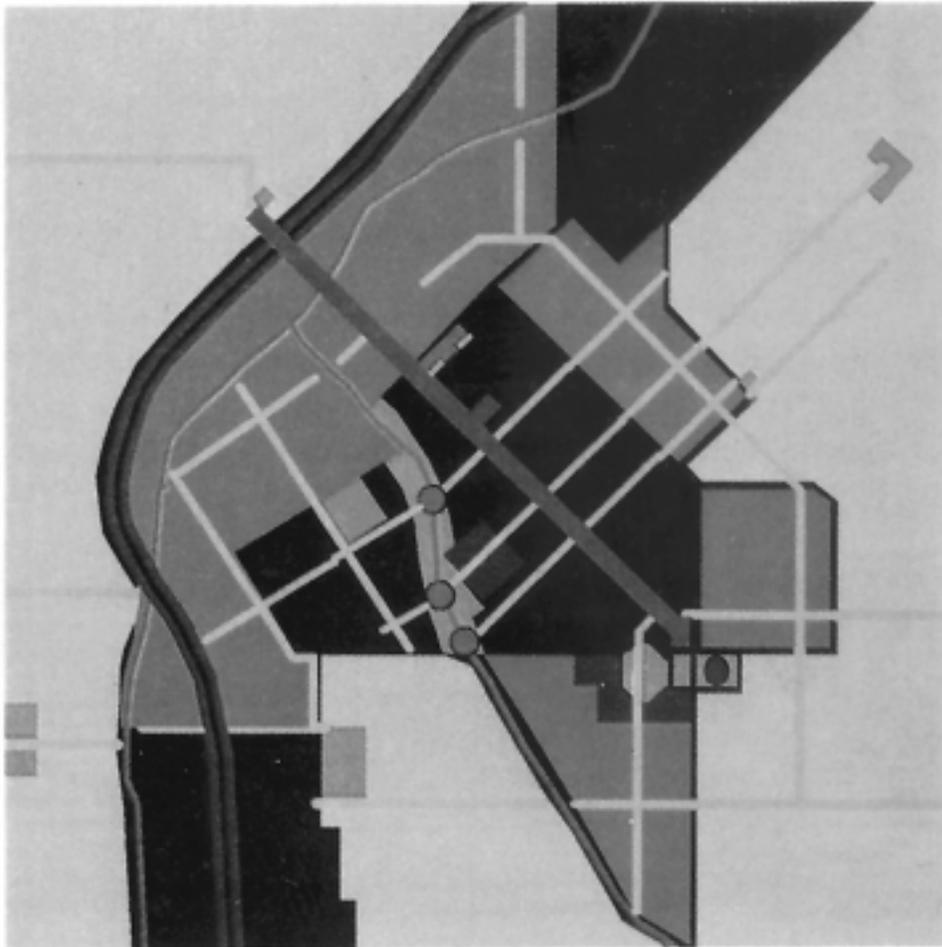


"Meeting of the Waters," St. Louis.



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NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



- The 1986 Denver Downtown Area Plan incorporated a system of connections that would physically link amenities, districts and neighborhoods in an understandable way. Selected streets received improvements -- such as amenities, streetscaping, land use incentives, development/enhancement of major anchors, and improvement/addition of landmarks -- to help them function as links in the connections system.

*Example from: Denver.
Graphic courtesy of Downtown Area Plan, A Plan for the Future of Downtown Denver, Spring 1986.*



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■ Memphis enlivened its Main Street Mall with the addition of the Main Street Trolley which serves many downtown attractions and Riverfront attractions. The authentic vintage trolley cars are heavily used by downtown workers and tourists.

■ Philadelphia has been able to capitalize on its remarkably intact Center City by enhancing streetscapes to the degree that one of the distinguishing characteristics of life is the journey to work. Of the 68,000 people living within a mile of City Hall, 43% walk to work and 25% use transit.

Development Principle

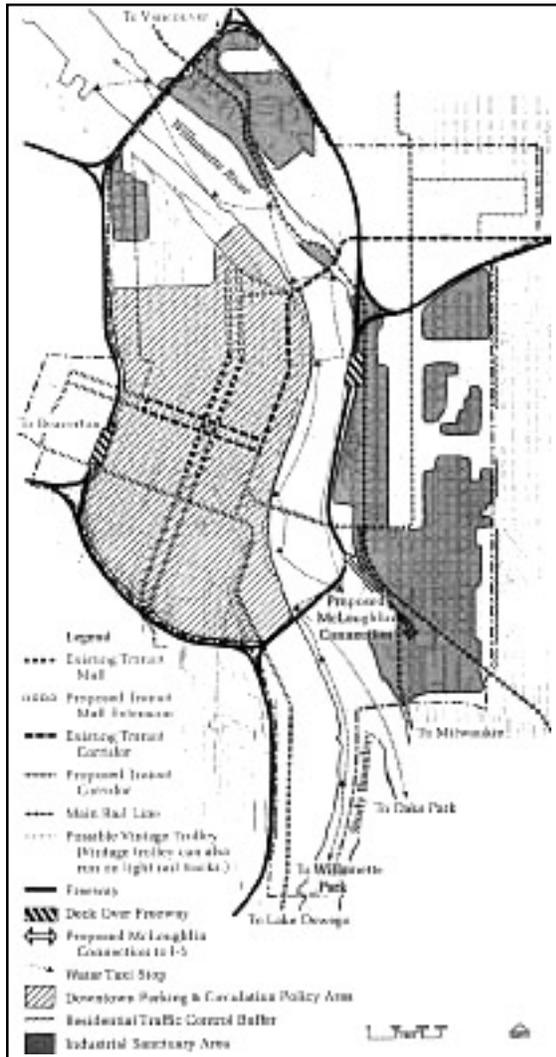
Downtown will be supported by a hierarchical transportation system consisting of an effective access, circulation, and parking system that integrates and balances the use of public transit, the highway system, city streets, and pedestrian/bike corridors in a manner consistent with each district's character and use.





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- The City of Portland, Oregon is currently revising a draft Pedestrian Master Plan designed to guide the city over the next 20 years in making improvements that will make walking safer and more convenient; the plan includes a set of Pedestrian Design Guidelines, a List of Capital Projects, and an Implementation and Funding Strategy
- The City of Cleveland through an ordinance passed in 1995, has put a moratorium on the development or expansion of surface parking lots within four downtown districts in order "to preserve the urban architectural character of the most intensively developed portions of downtown Cleveland" (City of Cleveland, Ordinance #1876-94).



Example from: Portland. Map courtesy of ULI - the Urban Land Institute and Central City Plan, Portland, Oregon, 1988.



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■ The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc., provides retailers with professional, in-store consultation in management, marketing, and operations as part of its centralized retail management program.



Keiner Plaza, St. Louis

Development Principle

Downtown development will be facilitated by an aggressive district management system that effectively markets and maintains attractive, clean, and safe environments within Downtown.



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*Example from: Philadelphia.
Photo courtesy of ULI - the Urban Land Institute.*

- The Center City District in Philadelphia has become a model for private sector commitment to revitalization by achieving its simple goal: “to ensure that the walk from the office to the train, from the hotel to the restaurant, and from the art gallery to the garage was clean, safe and attractive.” As a result, crime is down by over 18% and, most significantly, independent surveys of employees, residents and visitors indicate that people felt that the atmosphere, safety and cleanliness of the Center City has dramatically improved. The CCD is funded by Philadelphia business leaders who chose to pay extra for sidewalk cleaning, public safety, hospitality services and retail promotion.



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■ In 1997, Mayor Daley initiated a package of reforms that have made Chicago a preservation-friendly city by waiving the building permit requirement for any owner who rehabs a landmark building. Under a separate proposal to the Cook County board, property tax assessments on a commercial landmark would be cut nearly in half for a period of 10 years after the owner spends more than half the building's value on rehab expenses.



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Downtown redevelopment will be facilitated by a coordinated and comprehensive strategy that includes a streamlined, one-stop, customer-oriented service delivery system that facilitates the attraction of new businesses and the retention of existing ones.



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*Example from: Denver -- the 16th Street Mall.
Photo courtesy of ULI - the Urban Land Institute.*

■ In 1981, Denver developed a plan for the 16th Street Mall that would use transit services effectively to supplement existing city programs and enhance the mall's influences on Denver's downtown economy. This was planned through a centralized management system of the mall district, through elements such as complementary public improvements, a comprehensive parking program, design standards and mall management.



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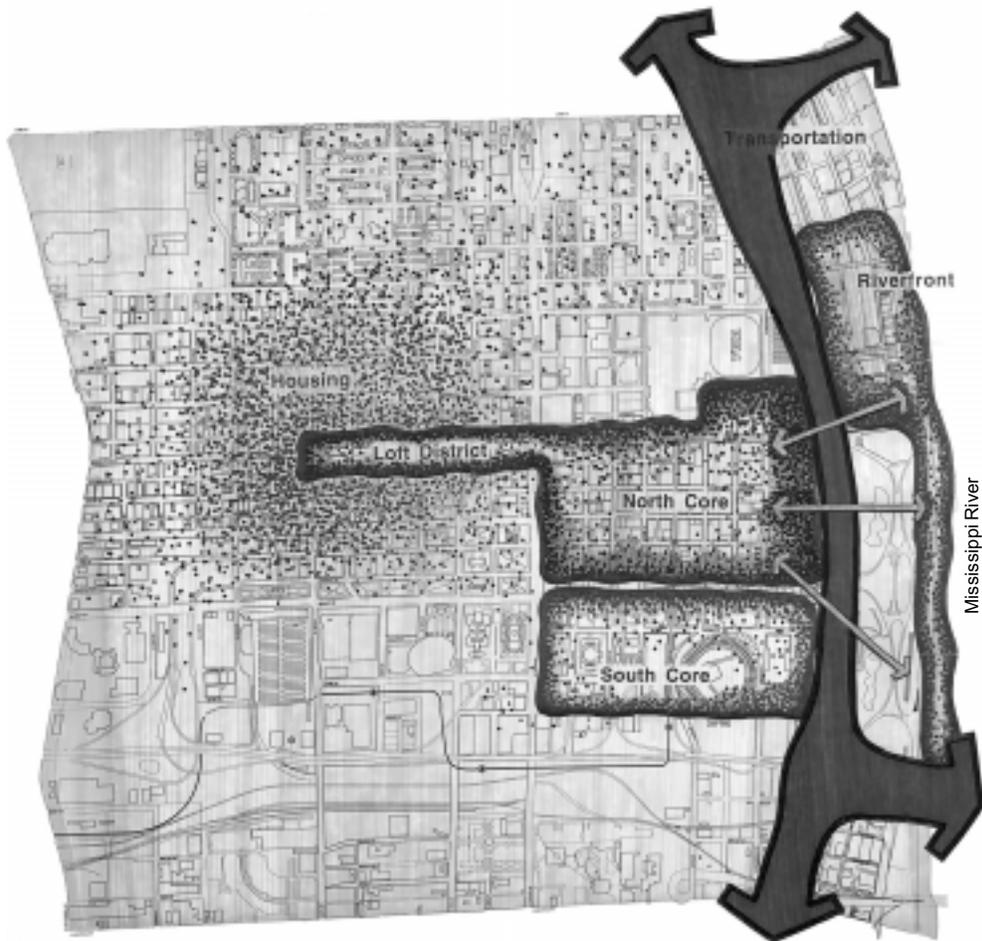
Areas for immediate targeted action and pro-active concentration from the public sector are highlighted and supported by surrounding market-reactive areas.

The public objective must be to realize significant change in targeted areas; however, it does not preclude public participation in or support of other projects.

Map of Development Priorities



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Phase Two: The Next Steps

The second phase of the Downtown Development Action Plan will consist of specific planning that will lead us to concrete projects which will be initiated in the next three to five years.

The **Downtown Now!** Co-Chairs and Staff Coordinating Team will hire consultant teams to prepare redevelopment plans for both the core of Downtown and related transportation and circulation systems.

Public involvement will continue to be paramount to the success of this planning process and will help determine and refine the redevelopment plans.

Notes



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Downtown Development Task Force Members

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Loretta Walker
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Larry Williams
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