

## J. User Framework

### Overview

The user framework refers to some general urban design perceptions about Downtown St. Louis. What is it like to walk on a Downtown street? Where do we go to eat, shop, sit, or take a photo? Where do we go at night or congregate during the day? What memories persist and shape our present day experiences? And, how does the physical environment contribute to or hinder the functioning of a Downtown for people?

### Building Street Level Transparency

The level of ground floor transparency is often a good indicator of the quality of the pedestrian experience in a downtown. Buildings that meet the street, are inviting, and present activity, enliven the street experience and create visual interest. Opaque buildings, particularly those that are not designed at a pedestrian scale, deaden the street and make walking around Downtown less attractive. Often, a four block walk on an interesting street passes in a flash and is viewed as pleasurable by even the most car-dedicated among us, while the same walk on a street with blank, overscaled walls seems quite long to many and is usually avoided, regardless of the quality of streetscape.

Transparency, though, is more than just glazing for a good pedestrian street is one that is marked by a combination of activity, visual access to buildings, and pedestrian scale. A close examination of historic buildings in Downtown, such as the Wainwright, the Arcade, and the Syndicate, offer clear examples of this combination of retail frontage, clear entries, finely scaled details, and a distinction between the base and the shaft of the building. Similarly, buildings such as the Civil Courts and the old Federal Building at Tucker and Market, while not literally transparent, present prominent entries with welcoming stairs combined with well scaled and detailed street frontages that signify their civic importance.

A general overview of street frontages suggests considerable opportunities for potential street activity on core streets within the Downtown. Indeed within the core area on Olive and Locust from Tucker to 4th Street, most buildings are at least 50% transparent (with many approaching 100%) with a consistently built street frontage containing storefronts, building lobbies, and significant glazing. On Olive Street, existing retail frontage is surprisingly consistent from Tucker to 4th, with the section from 10th to 4th fairly well leased, although that leasing is more sporadic from 6th to 4th.

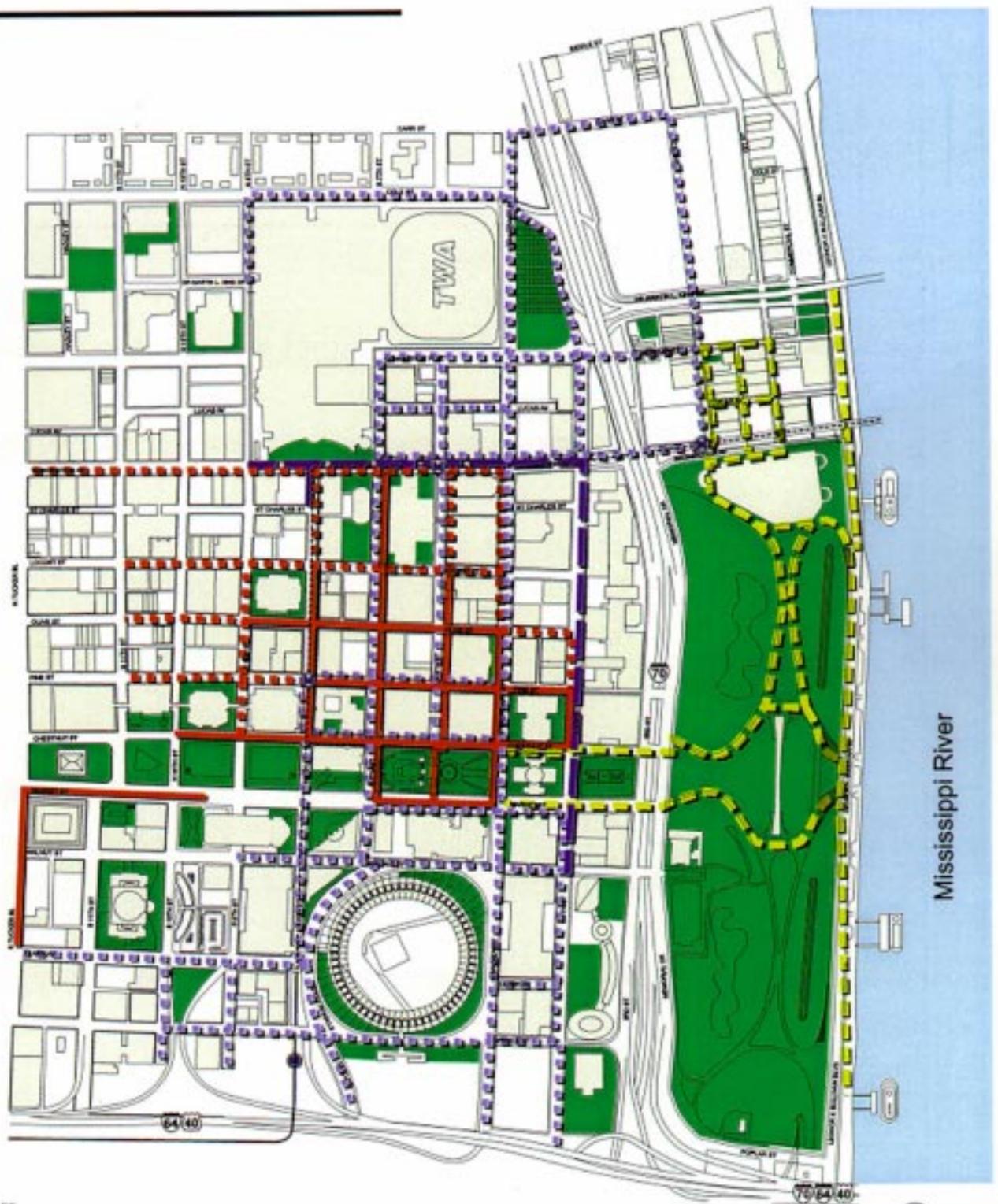
This core area contains the bulk of the existing retail and restaurants in the Downtown too. Retail is concentrated on Olive, with restaurants along Broadway, 6th, 7th, and near Kiener Plaza.

Locust Street in the St. Louis Center area is noticeably dark and bland. Whatever transparency exists is overshadowed (literally) by the skybridge and parking garage near 6th, and a series of more opaque frontages between 6th and 4th. The St. Louis Center itself does not present an attractive edge to the street, particularly on the 7th Street side that is dominated by the service entry and blank walls.



# User Framework: Pedestrian Corridors and Open Space

-  9-5 (Typical Workday, High Volume)
-  9-5 (Typical Workday)
-  Sporting Events
-  Convention Events
-  Tourist Circulation
-  Open Space



Notes:  
 Base map provided by S&JDC.  
 Information based on visual observation and local user patterns.



The Washington Avenue area also offers a pedestrian scaled, consistently transparent, finely detailed street frontage as is befitting what once was an active wholesaling and retailing area. Although, the street has a overall appearance of vacancy, many of the frontages have some form type of activity, often behind many years of facade neglect.

The north-south streets in the core are inconsistent with generally the older buildings built to the property line with retail frontage and prominent lobbies, and newer buildings setback with landscaping, arcades, and parking garage entrances. Particularly problematic are the parking garage on 7th at Pine and the garage entry near the MetroLink stop on 8th Street south of Pine.

Fourth Street has an interesting array of older buildings with offices at the ground floor which are very transparent while on the east side of the Street, the Mansion House complex alternates between active retail frontages and parking entries, punctuated by setback building entrances.

Newer buildings near the Mall, tend toward a less consistent street frontage as befitting their more object-like designs. Buildings are setback with retail usually in the setback areas. As a result, although the buildings are “transparent” they are remote from the sidewalk and don’t enliven the mall. Buildings to the north of the Mall are more responsive to the street, particularly the ground level of the parking garages between Broadway and 7<sup>th</sup>, which contain a number of restaurants. To the south of the Mall, though, the object buildings are very inward-focused with podiums and architectural statements taking precedence over the pedestrian experience. In certain instances, this experience is mitigated by excellent landscaping, such as on 10th and 11th at the Mall, but this landscaping is tempered by the rather dreary pedestrian passage that occurs on 9th Street under the Nations Bank building.

The consistent challenge through much of the core is to enliven the excellent building frontages that already exist on most of the streets north of Pine. Transparency is rendered meaningless if the building is empty. Indeed, in such instances the transparency serves to exacerbate the vacancy of the building. A more difficult challenge is to activate the ground floors of the newer buildings in the Mall area, many of which were designed with their backs to the street.

## **Pedestrian Corridors**

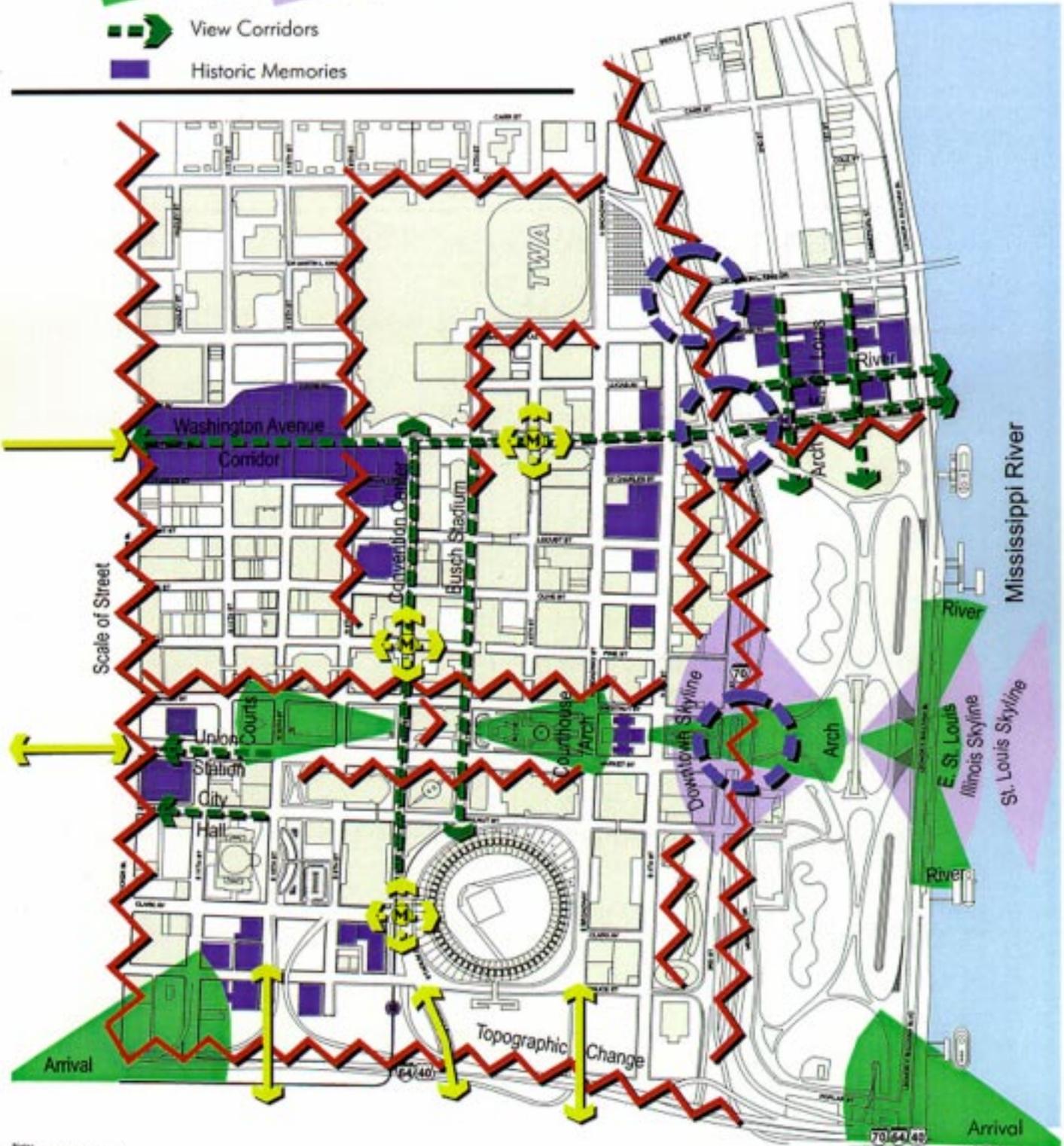
Pedestrian Circulation within the Downtown Core includes a clear path of daytime employee circulation versus tourist and visitor circulation. The primary paths of 8-6 circulation occur north to south along Broadway, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets, with connections to surface parking lots in Mill Creek continuing the north-south movement along Broadway and 8<sup>th</sup>. East-west movement for Downtown employees occurs primarily along Washington, Locust, Olive, Pine, Chestnut and Market from Broadway to 8<sup>th</sup>, with some further west movements along Chestnut and Market for traffic traveling to Union Station and also along Locust and Pine.

Pedestrian circulation for sporting events will vary depending on which venue is being used. Primarily, pedestrian traffic will flow from those parking structures within the core north to America’s Center, south to Busch Stadium, and southwest to Kiel Center. America’s Center also pulls pedestrian traffic along Cole as



**User Framework:  
Linkages/Barriers/Views/  
Historic Memories**

-  Pedestrian Linkages into Downtown
-  Visual, Physical and/or Perceived Barriers
-  Visual and Perceived Barriers
-  Vistas  Skyline Views
-  View Corridors
-  Historic Memories



Notes:  
Base map provided by SLDC.



additional parking structures west of the Center and surface parking lots east of I-70 north of Laclede's Landing.

Convention Center activity will likewise flow from surrounding parking structures, and as well from each of the hotels within the Downtown. As some of the larger hotels are located on Broadway, a significant amount of this foot traffic may occur along Broadway to Washington.

Tourism circulation occurs primarily from the designated Jefferson Memorial Expansion Grounds structure located east of I-70 and south of Washington to the Arch and north to Laclede's. Some of this traffic will flow east-west between the Arch grounds and Downtown west of I-70, however most tourists currently are probably not taking advantage of venturing into the Downtown area.

Some of these pedestrian activity corridors do not take place along very pedestrian friendly environments and/or open space. There is a good deal of movement east to west along both sides and through the mall, however the experience, especially along Market, is not ideal due to have traffic movement, lack of adequate landscaping and building location, massing and street level architectural quality. Tourist travel within the grounds may be a pleasant experience, but once those tourists leave the Arch grounds and try to either go north to Laclede's or west into Downtown, there is a definite breakdown in the quality of the pedestrian environment that tourists are exposed to.

Some of the north-south movements within the office core do allow for pocket parks and plazas to be experienced, however the quality of these spaces does not necessarily provide an adequate relief from a poor quality street level building massing.

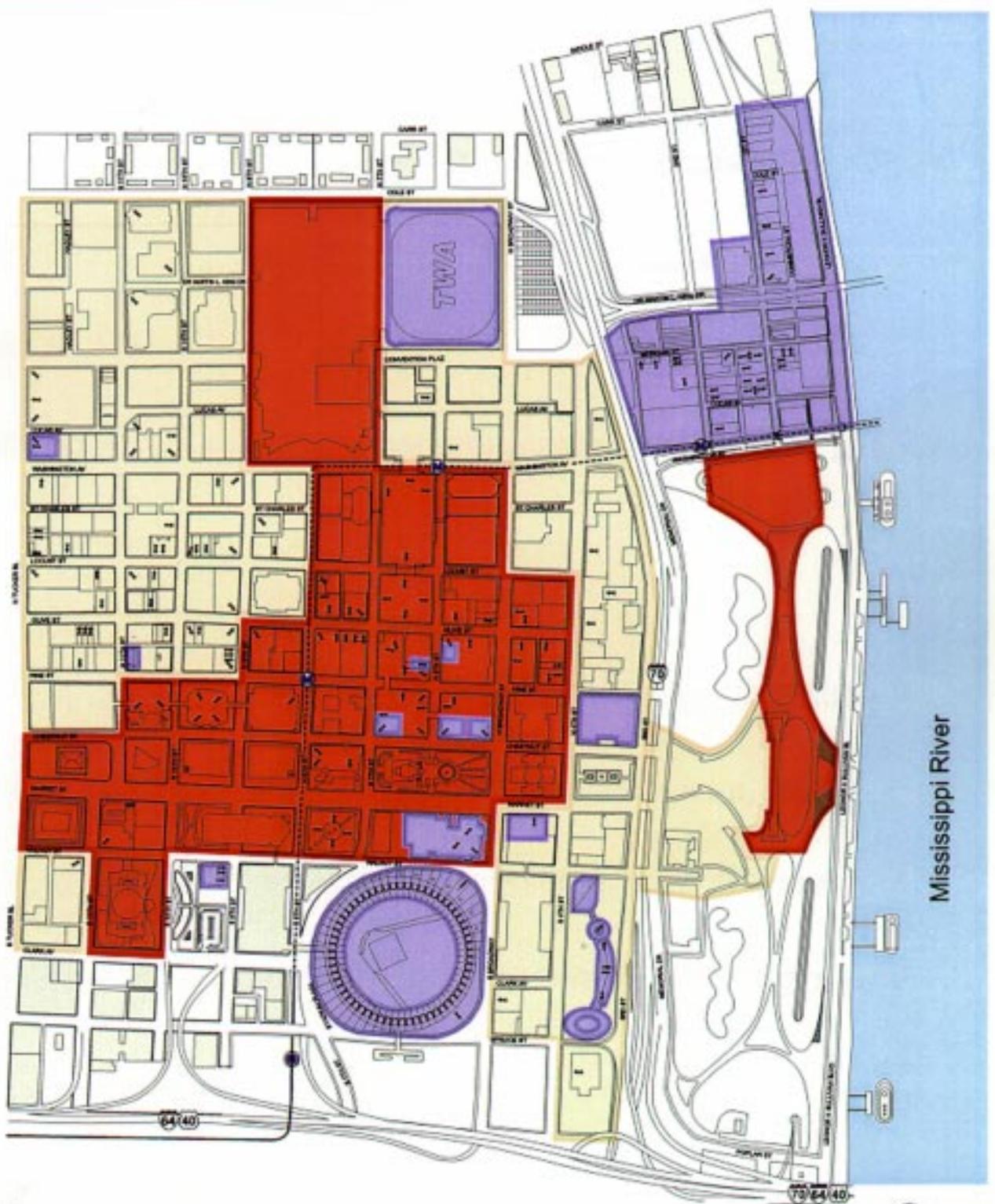
Overall, the existing districts and streetscapes in Downtown St. Louis suffer from a mix of building styles and setbacks, pavements, and vertical elements such as signage, lighting and bus stops that all contribute to a chaotic environment. Further, the lack of street trees and other 'green' elements along streets and the absence of clear pedestrian crosswalks contribute to the perception of a non-friendly and unhealthy user environment. Improvements in connections into and through the Downtown for tourists as well as for day-to-day users must be completed on a comprehensive level to return the existing urban fabric back to a more livable environment for those users for whom it has the greatest impact. These improvements can include redesign of existing spaces but also includes a comprehensive streetscaping effort to allow a linear experience that is pleasant for all types of pedestrians.



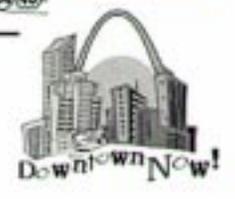
- Primary Daytime Activity Zone
- Secondary Daytime Activity Zone
- Daytime and Nighttime Activity Zone
- Individual Uses: Restaurants, Bars, and Retail



**User Framework:  
Existing Daytime and Nighttime  
Activity Zones and Uses**



Note:  
Base map provided by SLDC.



## Existing Daytime and Nighttime Activity Zones

Daytime activity is concentrated in the office core area and the Arch grounds reflecting the two primary daytime users: office workers and tourists.

Within the office core area, the Mall and adjacent blocks near Olive, Pine, 6th, 7th, and 8th Streets, is a focal point of activity, especially during the lunch hours. This activity is due to the concentration of restaurants, services and office buildings in this area. St. Louis Center also draws a good lunch crowd, primarily through the 6th and Locust entrance. Similarly, the Mall area near Tucker is a hub of activity due to the proximity of government offices and courts. With the imminent opening of the new Federal building, this area will see increasing activity.

Tourist and visitor activity is concentrated in the Arch Grounds, particularly between the Arch and the parking garage, Laclede's Landing and around America's Center. Before and after daytime baseball games, the area in and around the Mall sees considerably more activity as well.

The remaining areas of the core are secondary daytime activity zones. There are uses west of 8th Street, but they are not consistent. As a result, activity is concentrated near occupied buildings and the connections to more active services east of 8th Street.

Nighttime activity is concentrated in Laclede's Landing and around the few restaurants and bars that are open in the evening. They include the Adams Mark, the Marriott, and the restaurants along the Mall.

On nights with sports events, the restaurants and bars have increased patronage before, during and after the games, and there is noticeable activity in adjacent parking garages. The increased vehicular traffic on freeway access streets also adds considerable liveliness to the downtown.

