V. Opportunities and Constraints

A. Overview of Opportunities and Constraints

In reviewing and reporting on the existing conditions, redevelopment potentials and market and economic conditions in St. Louis, we have recognized many opportunities that will create a healthy Downtown. We have also identified constraints, which we believe are just opportunities waiting to happen. The following is a summary of those findings.

Location

St. Louis is blessed with a great location, at the crossroads of rivers, rails and roads; it is the "Gateway to the West" and the center of the region. It is close to the geographic center of the US, and has an airport in close proximity providing access to anywhere in North America in three hours or less. The City is also strategically located amongst an excellent highway system, and freight-carrying rail system, providing an excellent opportunity for businesses of all kinds, particularly those requiring distribution of goods.

The River

People recognize the river as an asset, however it has yet to be celebrated. Strategies to bring more people to its edge and to connect it to the City must be developed. The pedestrian connections from Downtown, past I-70, over the Arch grounds and to the water's edge must be reviewed. The existing jogging trail and bike route along Leonor K. Sullivan Boulevard should be connected to a larger green system within the City and to region. More active use of its waters should be developed.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Freeway System
The existing highway system provides excellent access to Downtown from all directions in the region. This is a great advantage in marketing Downtown for new business, cultural and residential locations. The downside is that the system is a physical barrier to the neighborhoods around the edges of Downtown, as well as the river.

In addition, freeway signing is confusing for drivers not familiar with the area. In several instances, drivers are given too many decisions to consider at one time. To some extent, this is compounded by freeway design. P.M. peak hour traffic congestion appears to be concentrated in the immediate vicinity of on-ramps to I-64 and I-70.

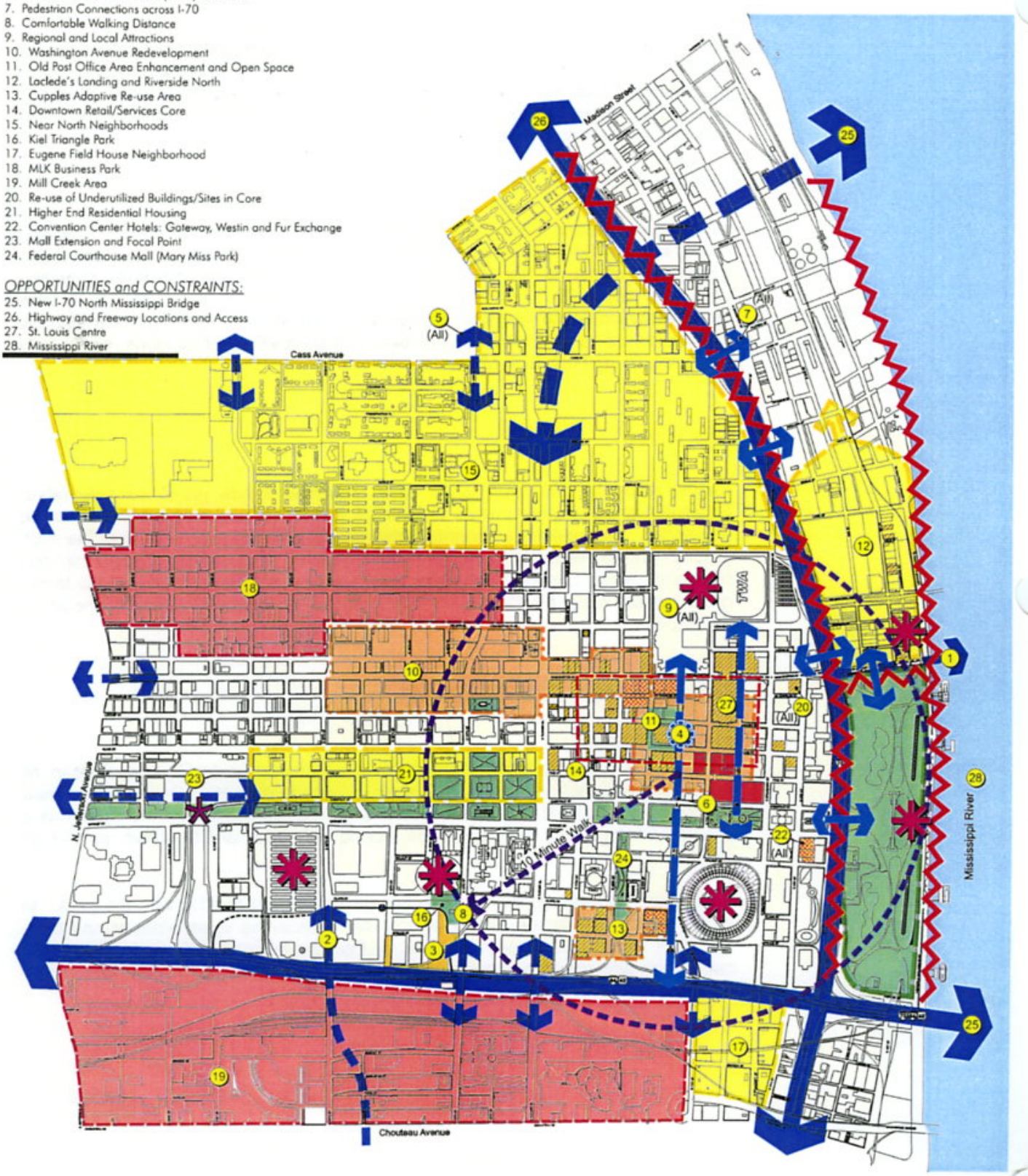
Opportunities and Constraints

OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Eads Bridge Re-decking
2. Grattan Street Parkway
3. Multi-Modal Station
4. Downtown Transit Center
5. Improvements of Local Street Connections into Downtown
6. 6th and 8th Streets Streetscape Improvements
7. Pedestrian Connections across I-70
8. Comfortable Walking Distance
9. Regional and Local Attractions
10. Washington Avenue Redevelopment
11. Old Post Office Area Enhancement and Open Space
12. Laclede's Landing and Riverside North
13. Cupples Adaptive Re-use Area
14. Downtown Retail/Services Core
15. Near North Neighborhoods
16. Kiel Triangle Park
17. Eugene Field House Neighborhood
18. MLK Business Park
19. Mill Creek Area
20. Re-use of Underutilized Buildings/Sites in Core
21. Higher End Residential Housing
22. Convention Center Hotels: Gateway, Westin and Fur Exchange
23. Mall Extension and Focal Point
24. Federal Courthouse Mall (Mary Miss Park)

OPPORTUNITIES and CONSTRAINTS:

25. New I-70 North Mississippi Bridge
26. Highway and Freeway Locations and Access
27. St. Louis Centre
28. Mississippi River



Downtown Now!

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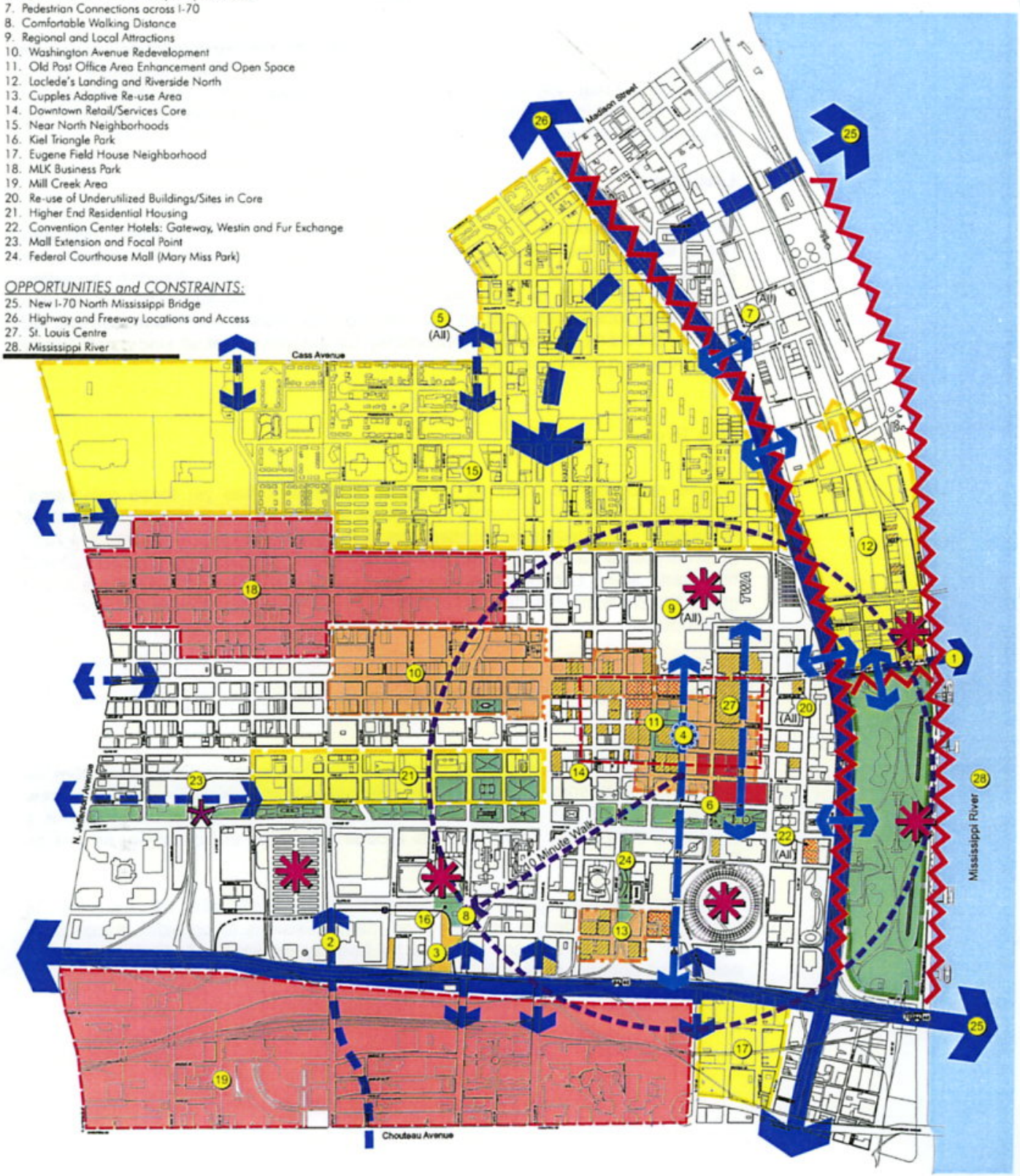


Downtown Now!

I-70

The current configuration of I-70 isolates the riverfront from the City. It occurs below and above grade, being crossed at only a few points by eastbound streets and narrow sidewalks. Memorial Drive acts as a frontage road with little streetscaping to make the walk along it feel comfortable and safe for pedestrians. The combined width of these streets is a huge barrier for pedestrians to cross between Downtown and the Arch Grounds an. Near Laclede's Landing I-70 comes above ground and transitions into an elevated structure, forcing pedestrians to cross underneath it, in a currently uninviting connection.

Either decking over I-70, as it runs parallel to the river or creating an at-grade parkway would do much to improve the connectivity of Downtown to the river and the Arch grounds and the walking experience of pedestrians. This should be done with high quality connections with enhanced landscape and streetscape.

New I-70 North Bridge

This project will provide important connectivity from the region to Downtown. How it is designed, the height of the elevated structure and where it touches down will have a significant impact on the existing street grid, existing businesses and future land uses. The connection can be designed to minimize the impact on neighborhoods, enhance access into Downtown, and provide economic benefit to Downtown. Since the project is still in the planning stages, the time to evaluate options is now.

Eads Bridge

The redecking of the upper level of Eads Bridge provides an opportunity to create improved pedestrian and bicycle connections across the Mississippi River. The planned design for the upper deck of the Eads Bridge will provide only limited opportunity for cross-river pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The design should be evaluated to provide these enhancements.

Downtown Streets and Traffic Circulation

In general, downtown St. Louis enjoys good traffic and transit access. While some specific improvements may be justified, traffic capacity should not be a constraint on reasonable levels of downtown growth. Except in the A.M. and P.M. peak hours, traffic volumes are well below capacity. Even in the peak hours, capacity is generally adequate.

Because the street network is underutilized, there is an opportunity to create two-way streets out of one-way couplets, or to narrow the pavement widths to create wider streetscaped sidewalks, or to provide angled parking. All of these options would enhance the Downtown pedestrian environment by slowing traffic and providing opportunities for active attractive sidewalks.

Grattan Street Parkway

The proposed connection from the neighborhoods south of Downtown through this new parkway will provide a vehicular link into Downtown currently separated by the freeway.

Utilities and Infrastructure Conditions

The existing streets and sidewalks in many areas of the Downtown are in dire need of improvements. This visual and sometimes physical impediment only adds to the negative perceptions people have of the Downtown. The lack of a working and integrated street lighting, traffic signalization and signage system adds to the disarray. Street repairs and improvements will be necessary throughout the City.

Street use management needs to be improved. There appears to be little or no control of the placement of construction dumpsters or other equipment, nor the timing of their presence on the street. This is compounded by partial street closures resulting from fences around vacant buildings.

Transit

Multi-modal Station

The proposed multi-modal station will provide a node for the existing transit system, as well as provide the future potential for high-speed rail. Not only does this encourage the use of alternate modes of travel, but also this type of facility can be a catalyst for surrounding development, encouraging mixed-use higher density projects. The Spruce Street ramp will, however, restrict development alternatives in that area.

Downtown Transit Center

A centrally located transit center near the Old Post Office would give Downtown an additional access advantage. Provided at grade, in conjunction with a proposed public urban square, it would help activate the Downtown and spur development around it. The addition of a Downtown shuttle to connect to the multi-modal station and circle Downtown is a proposal that is worthy of consideration.

Bus Shelters

New bus shelters will be provided in the next few years. These could be designed as part of an overall street furnishings, lighting, streetscape and signage system for Downtown, which will help improve the pedestrian environment and activity Downtown.

MetroLink

There are four MetroLink stops in the core within a five-minute walk to most locations in the Downtown. This is a tremendous asset that should be used to market Downtown. It is a safe, fast, convenient, frequent and affordable means of transportation, bringing people to and from Downtown who choose not to drive or who do not have cars. Areas around stations are natural locations for higher density mixed use development which can provide minimal parking. This concept is supported by the fact that there is no parking requirement in Downtown.

Any opportunity to expand the system, such as the proposed extension into St. Clair County and the north-south link, should be taken. These will help bring more people into Downtown, which is a goal of the plan and a healthy Downtown.

Cooperative Process

The East-West Gateway provides a forum for discussion and coordinated transportation efforts for eight counties. This collaboration has, among other

things, helped develop the very successful MetroLink system. Continued collaboration can only help the City of St. Louis.

Pedestrian Environment

Comfortable Walking Distance within Core

One of the greatest assets to the Downtown Core is how 'walkable' it is. Almost the entire Downtown Core is within a 10 minute walk from the center of the Core, which is also the location of a MetroLink station (8th and Pine).

Streetscape Improvements

The current state of many sidewalks downtown is fair. Improving the experience of walking in Downtown will be an important enhancement to make people feel comfortable. Replacing and, in some places, widening sidewalks will provide continuous linkages for pedestrians to move through Downtown. Adding street trees, pedestrian lighting, and accent paving will introduce detail and interest, and will also help to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic, providing a sense of safety. Adding banners and awnings will add color, variety and provide a sense of scale. Implementing a street furniture program will provide an opportunity to create a unifying theme for downtown.

6th Street and 8th Street Pedestrian

6th Street and 8th Street are primary pedestrian corridors where initial planning efforts have begun to instill street level activity. 6th Street is taking on a restaurant focus. 8th Street is the primary connection and visual link between the Convention Center and Busch Stadium. There are also some thriving commercial ventures on Olive Street. The character of these streets and the types of ground level space available support the continuation of retail and pubic serving uses.

Signalization

Pedestrians pay little or no attention to the traffic signals, but because during most hours traffic volumes are light, conflicts are minimal. The maintenance of the pedestrian signal indications could be improved to correct broken units or burned out bulbs. This may contribute to pedestrian disregard for signals. The proposed resignalization of Downtown is an opportunity to provide an updated coordinated system.

Tourism, Entertainment, Retail and Office

Regional and Local Attractions

St. Louis is fortunate in having great attractions for local residents and tourists in the Downtown. The Arch, Union Station, Busch Stadium, Kiel Center, America's Center and Laclede's Landing attract people Downtown, but additional destination attractions should be considered. Ideas discussed include sports venues, a transportation museum and a Smithsonian Museum, with potential locations on the Mall, along Washington and in LaClede's Landing. The objective is to bring more people Downtown and keep them there, whether it is the work force, tourists, residents from the county or students attending school. More entertainment venues should be provided.

Convention Center Hotels
Construction of the Westin Hotel in the Cupples Station area and the new Convention Center Hotel in conjunction with the Gateway Hotel will bring more visitors and conventioneers Downtown. These new uses should also have a multiplier affect on other Downtown businesses.

Lack of Connectedness of Activity Centers
Activity centers exist in the Downtown, but the need for pleasant connections to them is lacking. There is a need to create retail entertainment corridors, connected with well-designed streetscape

Riverfront Festival Sites
The Arch Grounds are the largest area of open space in Downtown and a beautiful site for passive enjoyment. With spectacular views of the river and the Arch as a dramatic framing element, the Grounds present an opportunity for more active uses. Ideas discussed include a permanent outdoor amphitheater for a variety of festivals and related outdoor events. More active recreational uses could also be incorporated into the Grounds.

Downtown Retail
There are great opportunities for retail within the Downtown. Existing street level spaces could be improved for immediate occupancy. The current condition of some of these spaces is an obstacle, much of it being run down and not highly visible. 43% of the existing retail space is vacant. Catalysts for attracting businesses should be explored, such as a single lease structure or improvement incentives. A coherent merchandising strategy should be developed. A determination will need to be made as to where efforts should be concentrated for attracting additional retail, restaurants and service industries so that a critical mass can be supported and successful. An added benefit to the re-introduction of ground floor public uses will be the activity it brings to the street and the liveliness it will bring to Downtown.

Neighborhood Retail
The development of supporting retail uses for residents will be necessary as residential development increases. Dry cleaners, grocery stores and coffee shops are just a few of the typical neighborhood services that will be required.

St. Louis Centre
St. Louis Centre in its current state does not support the vision for a viable Downtown. Much of the building is vacant, with the viable uses being located on the upper floors and inwardly focused. The ground floor is vacant, with access only provided to the upper floors. The ground floor presents a great opportunity for accessible ground floor retail, which would help activate the streets that surround it.

Washington Avenue and Laclede's Landing
Both Washington Avenue and Laclede's Landing offer current entertainment and retail venues, with room for much more. Building on the residential component will bring people to these areas and neighborhood services and entertainment uses will follow.

Old Post Office
The proposal to reuse the Old Post Office and create a new urban square will reinforce the central historic core and celebrate great public architecture. Reusing

the building for a great public purpose and creating outdoor public places for people to relax and linger will bring new activity to Downtown.

Existing Buildings

The Downtown core has a significant number of existing historic buildings that are underutilized, yet have great potential for reuse as residential lofts, boutique hotels, education and cultural venues and unique Class A and B office space. The buildings set a tone and scale for the character of Downtown, framing the street space and emphasizing a strong street grid. Ground floors are transparent and ready to accept new retail uses, such as restaurants, cafes, galleries, office and residential support uses. Re-using the existing buildings offers great cost savings over new construction.

Market numbers show that rehabilitated buildings providing Class A and B office space would be absorbed at a rate of 120,000 to 140,000 square feet per year. The existing building stock in Downtown provides almost limitless opportunities for this kind of product.

Quality Office Tenants

Keeping the current office tenants and attracting new ones are key to creating a vital Downtown. Absorption rates indicate that new Class A office space could be provided and be filled in the current market, and Downtown provides several opportune sites.

Downtown Workers

There are currently approximately 88,000 people working downtown. Downtown could support an additional 21,000, with the build out of the office space identified in the market analysis.

Neighborhood and Housing Redevelopment

Potential Demand for Housing

The market can sustain a wide variety of housing options. Downtown can handle a higher share of the regional market in market rate housing. Potential demand turns into effective demand "right product in right locations."

"Near North" Neighborhood

The "Near North" area of Downtown has a great deal of underutilized land that could be redeveloped into a neighborhood that would have easy access to the Downtown. This neighborhood would become the gateway neighborhood to the Downtown from the north from the future I-70 connection into Downtown. It provides an opportunity to develop a variety of densities, from single family homes to higher density multi-family, and commercial uses clustered around the I-70 touchdown.

Cass Avenue/Murphy Park

This area includes vacant lands that were once the site of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing development. Like the "Near North" neighborhood, this area provides land for re-creation of the urban fabric through construction of lower density housing.

Washington Avenue Lofts - Redevelopment

Washington Avenue has begun its renaissance as a unique mixed-use district, with the conversions of some buildings into loft apartments, with restaurants, galleries

and nightclubs on the lower levels. This area is an important physical link to Laclede's Landing and to the river from Downtown. This area has already seen some changes, and with continuous growth resulting in a larger concentration of workers and residents, it will become livelier.

Laclede's Landing and Riverside North Neighborhood
The existing historic character of Laclede's Landing presents a unique setting for a mix of loft rehabilitation and new apartments. It is close to the riverfront and has great views. Vacant land to the north of the present Laclede's Landing provides opportunities for lower density construction of townhomes combined with some higher density condominiums and apartments. The development of this area as a neighborhood would provide an identifiable place with an a-typical opportunity for residential uses along the riverfront in the Downtown.

Eugene Field House Neighborhood

This vacant land just south of the Downtown has been discussed for redevelopment into housing. The location again provides an opportunity to develop new housing in close proximity to the Downtown.

Cupples Station
Numerous redevelopment proposals have been talked about for this grouping of structures that acts as a gateway to the Downtown from the south. The gamut of land uses, from residential to museums, to hotels, have been proposed at one time or another. With such active interest in redeveloping these structures, this is one area that may turn around on its own without strategic input from the City.

High-End Residential Housing
There is currently a lack of high-end housing in the Downtown but the opportunity is there. This type of product would be developed only in smaller increments and only after a general increase in Downtown housing was established. A prime location for this product would be along the Mall, which provides green space, a forecourt and a great amenity for new Downtown residents.

Other Market Opportunities

Potential Growth Markets
The market analysis shows strong growth markets in industrial uses, healthcare, financial, visitor-serving industries, professional services and high-tech industries. Downtown could become education and learning center.

Tele-communication Gateway
St. Louis has the opportunity to become a leader in urban redevelopment and create an electronic commerce community to serve the growing global demand. There are several key features regarding the St. Louis site that are unique and which, when combined with a flexible technology infrastructure, provide for few competitive locations. St. Louis provides an excellent opportunity to become the first electronic business center in the world because of its superb location and its accessibility to all modes of transportation.

Technology Infrastructure
Downtown could be revitalized to provide a technology infrastructure that would place St. Louis in the technological forefront of world class communities. This infrastructure would be developed using tested and proven technologies. This

would not be an experimental community. A state-of-the-art St. Louis Development would also create an industrial base dealing in information, with an infrastructure to attract large, global companies while supporting and helping small businesses to compete internationally.

E-Commerce/ E-Business – The Next Big International Business Initiative
The theme for this redevelopment is an integrated urban development that creatively incorporates a number of technology-enhanced uses that would complement the surrounding communities. These uses include high technology employment areas and community-compatible, and smart-home residential neighborhoods.

Hindrances

Brownfield Sites
An excessive number of Brownfield sites exist in the Downtown area which require clean up. These can deter development due to unknown conditions. If these sites were cleaned up and ready to go, development could proceed at a quicker place.

Perceptions
There are numerous negative perceptions about safety and security in Downtown St. Louis which can be the greatest detriment to a Downtown's survival. Perceptions are formed due to:

- vacant buildings that are neglected and boarded up
- streets that are empty after 5 P.M. and on weekends;
- word-of-mouth comments on perceived crime and homelessness;
- a crumbling infrastructure: sidewalks in bad shape; vacant lots that are unimproved.

Regulations
The existing development, permitting and regulating process needs to be re-organized in order to assure a straightforward process for any potential developer. Many discussions have occurred and articles written about the difficulty and frustration people feel when trying to develop in the City. This frustration even seems to occur internally, where no clear organizational hierarchy and decision making exists. The City is currently undergoing a study to re-organize some of these processes.

B. First Directions

The Planning Process So Far

This brief report summarizes key strategies and high priority actions for downtown revitalization identified during the planning process for the St. Louis Downtown Redevelopment Action Plan. The purpose of this report is twofold: to inform the public and encourage debate on the study team's initial thoughts, proposals and strategies for downtown revitalization; and to establish a preliminary framework for the more detailed Downtown revitalization plans to follow during the course of the study.

Work on the Downtown St. Louis Action Plan: Phase II began in early April 1998, and is a direct outgrowth of the Downtown St. Louis Development Action Plan: Phase I. The Phase I report, completed in December 1997, identified an overarching vision for the Downtown. This vision emphasized:

- the value of downtown as the urban center for the region;
- the need to strengthen its role as the place that engages, empowers and celebrates all of the region's diverse populations; and,
- a comprehensive series of principles and priorities for Downtown revitalization and redevelopment.

The vision, principles and priorities identified during the Phase I study were based on a series of over twenty meetings scheduled during the fall of 1997, involving more than five hundred City and regional citizens, business owners, public officials and other stakeholders.

The primary goal for the Downtown and waterfront plan process is to develop detailed physical design and implementation plans for the Downtown and its districts. When completed, this plan will identify a refined guiding vision directing the sense of place and design for the Downtown; a development program and phasing strategy; a transportation and transit plan; a parking plan; and a pedestrian circulation plan.

This plan process is in its early stages. To date the consultant team has:

- undertaken a detailed analysis of existing physical conditions;
- met with representatives of Downtown business groups, educators, residents, developers and public agencies; and,
- conducted a one-day "What If..." workshop session to identify the widest possible range of priorities and directions for Downtown redevelopment.
- met with the Task Force to present background information and review preliminary downtown redevelopment strategies.

The "What If..." workshop was a day-long session involving approximately thirty-five participants representing Downtown Now, government and public agencies, educational institutions and the business community. The objectives of the workshop were:

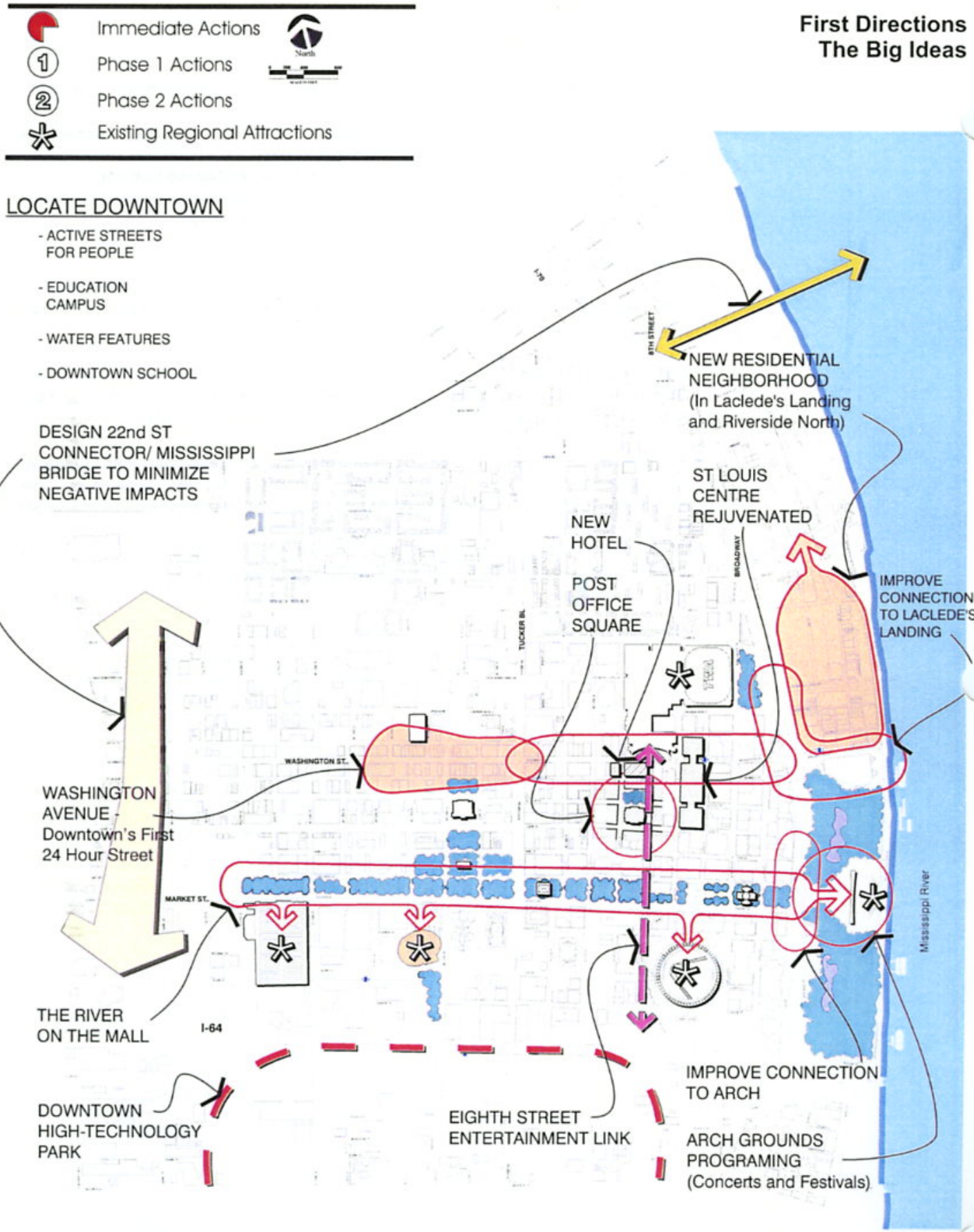
- to explore the full range of ideas for the revitalization of Downtown St. Louis;

- to set the overall revitalization themes that will direct the future work of the study team;
- to prioritize the early action projects that would be most effective in promoting revitalization;
- to identify actions and proposals that are feasible and should be considered further and to discard those that are not feasible;
- to identify areas and ideas that need further work, and those that don't;
- to identify those projects which build on existing strengths of the downtown and contribute to creating a "critical mass" within the downtown.

This report represents the very early thoughts of the planning team for everyone's review. It does not provide conclusions or recommendations but rather an articulated sense of the way we see the planning process heading over the next months. These are our ***first directions***.

Two matters central to any downtown regeneration are not dealt with in this document - requirements for funding, and the locus of responsibility for each initiative. On these issues we will have much to say in later reports.

This report has three main sections: The Big Ideas are presented first to indicate thinking about the major actions being considered for the Downtown. An immediate Action Program is described next, listing the kind of initiatives that could be taken this year to improve the condition of the Core of the city. That is followed by the Comprehensive Action Strategy, which lists all of the favored actions and concepts organized by the major strategic thrusts of the plan.


Immediate Actions
Phase 1 Actions
Phase 2 Actions
Existing Regional Attractions
North
LOCATE DOWNTOWN
- ACTIVE STREETS FOR PEOPLE
- EDUCATION CAMPUS
- WATER FEATURES
- DOWNTOWN SCHOOL
DESIGN 22nd ST CONNECTOR/ MISSISSIPPI BRIDGE TO MINIMIZE NEGATIVE IMPACTS
NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD (In Laclede's Landing and Riverside North)
ST LOUIS CENTRE REJUVENATED
NEW HOTEL
POST OFFICE SQUARE
IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO LACLEDE'S LANDING
WASHINGTON AVENUE - Downtown's First 24 Hour Street
THE RIVER ON THE MALL
DOWNTOWN HIGH-TECHNOLOGY PARK
EIGHTH STREET ENTERTAINMENT LINK
IMPROVE CONNECTION TO ARCH
ARCH GROUNDS PROGRAMING (Concerts and Festivals)
WASHINGTON ST.
MARKET ST.
TUCKER BL
BROADWAY
8TH STREET
I-64
Mississippi River

The Big Ideas

The study team and "What If" workshop participants focused on the idea that Downtown must evolve into a vibrant, multi-use, multi-activity center which is alive for residents, workers and visitors alike; where the individual pieces combine to create a cohesive, attractive and connected whole; and where the Downtown gains competitive advantage from the interest and vitality of the total urban environment.

This section highlights the major elements in the study team's thinking - the big ideas - and organizes them around the strategies that emerged from the 'What If...' workshop.

What If...*downtown became a twenty four hour, seven day a week (24/7) urban center, a sustainable community where people live, work, shop and enjoy a full range of recreational activities in a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment?*

- *Washington Avenue can become St. Louis' first twenty-four hour street*: a place where people live, shop, work and have fun. Washington Ave. has the opportunity to become once again one of the major streets of the City, linking Laclede's Landing and the Mississippi to a rejuvenated St. Louis Centre, to the cluster of activity around America's Center and the Old Post Office on to the excitement of lofts, galleries and specialty restaurants and retail toward the City Museum and beyond.

  The initial spark has been lit along Washington Ave., with its growing nucleus of residential lofts, nightclubs and art and design studios. But more immediate initiatives are needed, including:

  - a comprehensive streetscape improvement program comprising widened sidewalks, street trees and landscaping;
  - the visual interest of awnings, banners and projecting signs along buildings;
  - new art/showroom facilities; a program to animate vacant storefronts with art displays and artists' works; and,
  - an effective financing and development program to facilitate the more rapid creation of new residential lofts along the corridor, focussing on the area between the Convention Center hotel and the City Museum.

- *Laclede's Landing and the Riverfront North area can become Downtown's first true residential neighborhood:* Laclede's Landing is another area that offers many attractions for future residents including:

  - excellent views and proximity to the riverfront;
  - a wide variety of activities, nightclubs and restaurants in the immediate area;
  - a safe, well-populated environment;
  - sufficient scale to create a new neighborhood of real interest.

To date, very little housing has been developed in the Laclede's Landing area. However, there are numerous opportunities to develop a true neighborhood in this area with a mix of housing types ranging from upper-story lofts in historic, mixed use buildings to the creation of a largely townhouse residential district on the large vacant sites in the North Riverfront area north of the Martin Luther King Bridge. The financial and organizational impediments preventing such major residential development must be removed, and an RFP for residential development on the vacant Riverside North section should be issued expeditiously.

- *St. Louis Centre can become an integral part of a downtown retail strategy aimed at re-merchandising downtown to fit the needs of a 24 hour City.* Components of this strategy will include an uncompromising focus on street level retail and lively, active retail visible and easily accessed from the street. Dollars and management initiatives in the early years must be focused in no more than a ten block area, beginning along Olive Street and spreading to St. Louis Centre and Locust Street as early successes lead the way.

  The implications for St. Louis Centre may include:

  - creative down-sizing of retail and a dramatic shift of lively attractive retail to visible, accessible locations on the ground level
  - introduction of non-retail uses -- office, major destination entertainment, convention/meeting, or other
  - strengthening ties to the convention center as a "third anchor"
  - links to Olive Street on-street retail, newly organized with a coherent merchandising strategy

What If.... *Downtown became a full service entertainment, tourism and cultural center for the region, with restaurants, clubs, festivals, theaters, concerts and arts venues that augment the existing major attractions?*

- *The Arch Grounds can become the place for major festivals and attractions*: The Arch Grounds are the largest area of open space in Downtown - a marvelous opportunity vastly under used, providing an ideal venue for major events, festivals, and concerts currently dispersed throughout the Downtown and the region. Over the short term, permission of the National Park Service is required to program major activities, such as music festivals on the Arch Grounds, along with more flexible recreational use. Eventually, a permanent multi-purpose staging facility, which could be used for a wide variety of outdoor concerts, festivals and events, (and in the longer term potentially including another destination attraction on the Arch Grounds), should be developed to take advantage of the drama of the Arch and the panoramic view of the Mississippi River. The Arch together with the Mall, can become a wonderful continuous urban park, picking up new character and activity in its different areas.

- *Another destination attraction should be secured for the Downtown*: The existing Downtown destination attractions have strong sports emphasis that could be augmented by the contemplated baseball museum in the appropriate location. Exciting ideas about a branch of the Smithsonian, a transportation museum and an aquarium would round out the Downtown tourism experience.

If possible, these new attractions should be plugged into the Mall or Washington Ave., which are seen as the future tourism spines of the City.

- *All the major Downtown attractions can be connected by a network of inviting active streets.* Downtown St. Louis now has an impressive variety of major attractions, but they are not well connected and there are few incentives for visitors to linger and explore the Downtown area. St. Louis needs a network of active, interesting, pedestrian-oriented streets lined with stores, restaurants, cafes, night clubs and other events of visual interest. Key connecting streets include the Mall, Washington Ave., 8th St., 20th St., and the riverfront. These connections could be strengthened by:

  - a looped shuttle route along the key connecting streets, preferably one that uses quiet, non-polluting vehicles;
  - easy and attractive connections between Washington Ave., Laclede's Landing, the Arch Grounds and the Mall, through landscaping, designated pedestrian walkways, intersection improvements and attractive, pedestrian-scaled lighting;
  - promoting 8th St. as an attractive pedestrian corridor and visual link across the Downtown;
  - animating the riverfront through dedicated cycling and jogging trails and improvements and extensions to the promenade and viewing areas along the riverfront; and,
  - quick-starting retail activity on strategic streets such as Olive Street between 7th and 11th, through coordinated leasing of vacant streetfront retail space or promotion of displays of artists works in vacant storefronts.

- *The Old Post Office can become a lantern in the Downtown -- glowing with new life from within, and graciously overlooking a new public square.* As a magnificent example of U.S. public architecture, the Old Post Office deserves vital, attractive, compatible uses that will be able to provide the care the building deserves and to benefit from the stature and image such occupancy would provide. Marking the central, historic Core of the Downtown, this mature and attractive building can also mark the southern edge of a new urban square on nearly vacant parcels to the north, providing a critical linkage to the Convention Center, and an attractive foreground and development incentive for the Post Office and for the American Theater and growing hotel district. Whatever use goes into the Old Post Office should complement its architecture. Some uses - like museums or certain types of galleries - probably won't work well in its distinctive interior spaces.

  Part of the in challenge creating an attractive, inviting, populated Downtown Core is to provide pleasant places where people can sit outside, linger, have lunch, relax or watch other people. In St. Louis, the area surrounding the Old Post Office presents such an opportunity. Its benefits will be felt in the growing Washington Ave. "neighborhood", at the Convention Center, along Olive and Locust Streets and down 8th Street to the Mall.

What If... *twenty-first century educational and technological innovation and excellence was a distinct element of the new Downtown with state of the art technology, a high-quality workforce, and excellent educational institutions?*

- *Downtown can become the site for an Education Campus with a special focus on training and professional development*: The quality of education at all levels is an issue very much in the forefront of public debate and a key concern for the business community and the future competitive advantage of Downtown. Many of the major regional educational institutions have some presence in and around the Downtown. Focusing educational and training programs from several of these institutions into a strategic Downtown location, such as the Arcade building south of the Old Post Office, and coordinating the development of these Downtown programs with new student housing (perhaps in the Washington Ave. corridor), would provide numerous direct benefits for Downtown including:

  - provision of a well-educated workforce in the heart of Downtown;
  - a ready resource location with state of the art facilities for professional development at all levels;
  - rehabilitation and reuse of Downtown's beautiful and unique historic buildings;
  - increased activity and population in the Downtown Core;
  - the presence of progressive, well educated group of faculty and students would stimulate the development of downtown cultural and entertainment activities.

- *Downtown can have a reputation for offering the very best in early childhood and junior education.* Through the development of uniquely managed and marketed pre-school and junior grade educational facilities, Downtown can establish a reputation for educational excellence that can serve not only existing residents but raise the attractiveness of future residential activity. Such a school can take advantage of private or institutional sponsorship, potentially from the senior post-secondary educational organizations to be located in the Downtown.

- *The vacant lands adjacent to downtown can evolve into Downtown Technology Parks*: The edges of Downtown were traditionally the focus for industrial and warehousing activities - the "high tech" businesses of their time. Over the years, many of these activities have left the central city, leaving behind acres of vacant land and empty buildings, particularly to the south and west. Downtown can offer many competitive advantages for high technology firms when compared to peripheral locations if the right kinds of environment is provided, including:

  - a convenient location in the center of the region, and its labor market;
  - excellent road and highway access, and easy linkage to MetroLink;
  - access to sophisticated technological and communications systems.
  - adjacency to the business and cultural center of the region
  - a location near the "in-places" for young professionals to live;

The Mill Creek Valley/I-64 corridor, south of Downtown, presents a significant opportunity. A technology or business park, perhaps arranged around the

recreation of Chouteau's Pond, the valley's original water feature, would provide needed new employment in the Downtown area and create a clear southern boundary to the Downtown.

- *Some of the older Class B buildings now vacant can be upgraded with new technology*: At least two Downtown office buildings have recently been transformed into smart buildings through the introduction of new communications technology. Assessment of the range of potential additional candidate buildings needs to be undertaken to identify the right structures.

What If... *Downtown was a place where walking was a pleasure, where transit was readily available and convenient to use, and the major road corridors supported Downtown's role as a primary destination, the "center of the Region" without creating barriers to the River, Downtown attractions or in-town neighborhoods?*

- *the feel and presence of the Mississippi can be brought back into Downtown, to remind residents and visitors of its power and influence on St. Louis' history.* The Mississippi was the source of St. Louis' growth and development in the 19th century and its major 'highway', but over the years the City has turned away. The River can be brought back, symbolically, into Downtown, by thinking of the Arch Grounds and the Mall as a wonderful green river flowing through the City to the Mississippi, along which all kinds of major attractions are organized and within which all kinds of events can take place, specifically:

    - a series of fountains, water features and continuous streams running the full length of the Mall from Union Station to the Arch Grounds;
    - creation of a broad tree-lined continuous pedestrian promenade, linking Union Station, Kiel Center, Busch Stadium, and the Arch Grounds by, if possible, reducing the number of traffic lanes in Market Street.
    - this grand boulevard can become even more of a center-piece of the downtown, with Market and Chestnut Streets redesigned as one-way streets framing the invigorated spaces and places of the Mall.
    - filling these new and exciting green spaces of the Mall with "Tavern-on-the-Green" type restaurants and kiosks and active and recreational uses of the open spaces;
    - the western end of the Mall, which will be a very significant location, should be reserved to give pride of place to the right kind of signature building and activity.

- *Downtown traffic arteries can become "Streets for people" as well as for cars*: Successful downtowns have high quality pedestrian environments, and special efforts are needed to create a more pedestrian supportive environment throughout the Downtown Core, through:

    - Schedule the improvement of a comprehensive streetscape improvement program, including street tree plantings, landscaping and street furniture, to all Downtown streets by 2004;
    - targeting of early funding to make a visible memorable difference to currently dilapidated physical environment in a few strategic areas;
    - using water features, awnings or misting to make the outdoor environment more comfortable, particularly in summer;
    - widening sidewalks and providing more on-street parking;

- stabilizing vacant historic buildings to protect them for future re-use;
- a widespread and imaginative public art program.

The major connecting streets described above, including Washington, 8th St., 20th St. and the Mall, could serve as the primary focus for these efforts. Eventually, streetscape improvements should be expanded into a comprehensive program addressing all streets in the Downtown Core.

- *New access points can be introduced serving the Downtown without negatively impacting adjacent neighborhoods, businesses or the urban environment.* The proposed new bridge over the Mississippi will provide an important new vector of connectivity for the Downtown. Ramps from I-64 northwards have the same potential. However, re-design of these current proposals and the corridor between them, is essential to maintain the benefits of freeway access while ensuring minimal negative impact on existing businesses and establishing the conditions for healthy urban growth in affected districts.

- *New access points are also needed between Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods.* Revitalization of 20th Street would improve linkages to Murphy Park and other neighborhoods to the north. The near south neighborhoods of Soulard, LaSalle and Lafeyette Square are located within a short walk of Downtown. Attractive pedestrian friendly connections across the Mill Creek Valley would strengthen the linkages between Downtown and those neighborhoods.

An Immediate Action Plan

Momentum, enthusiasm, and even the signs of an improved private investment market are evident Downtown. It's critical to show some progress Downtown Now!

The 1993 Downtown Strategic Plan and Phase II of this planning process has yielded a number of excellent ideas that the planning team has had the chance to assess and augment in the past month.

It is important that immediate results from all this effort be encouraged where they are clearly in harmony with the long-term directions emerging for the Downtown plan. To that end a list of immediate actions has been prepared on which work by the appropriate agencies and individuals can commence. At the same time mobilization of funding, organizational development and regulatory approval can be initiated for the kinds of projects identified as Phase I and II actions in the next section.

Realistically not all of these actions can be taken up this summer but even to do some would be a great breakthrough and the balance can be implemented over the next year.

Supporting Housing Downtown:

- residential conversion of Marquette Building;
- residential parking permits for Washington Ave. loft district residents;
- develop a financing program for Washington Ave. loft development
- commence an RFP process for new townhouse development on Riverside North site;

Creating Lively Streets:

- "eat-out" program, in which sidewalk cafes are actively promoted;
- "night-out" program, in which restaurants coordinate their evening opening hours; "after work" events in public spaces;
- build upon daytime walking tours and night-time club tours;
- themed street parties (especially on Washington Ave., Broadway and 8th St.) coordinated with sporting events; art shows in the Mall;
- day-time walking tours/nighttime club tours;
- self-guided walking tours (historic buildings, Washington Ave. warehouse district, riverfront views/history);
- sports team or beer company-sponsored street activities: beer gardens/outdoor cafes or restaurant;
- Arch Grounds programming: concerts/festivals; informal recreation;
- art-related window displays along Washington;
- signage and maps

Improving the Environment:

- flower boxes/hanging planters along selected streets, possibly Washington Ave., 8th St., Broadway;
- awnings and banners on Washington Ave.;
- change signage codes or get waivers for projecting signs;
- promote bright colorful signs and advertisements;
- art/design competition for freeway underpass Laclede's Landing;
- 1/2% sales tax for public art program

Promoting the Technology Advantage:

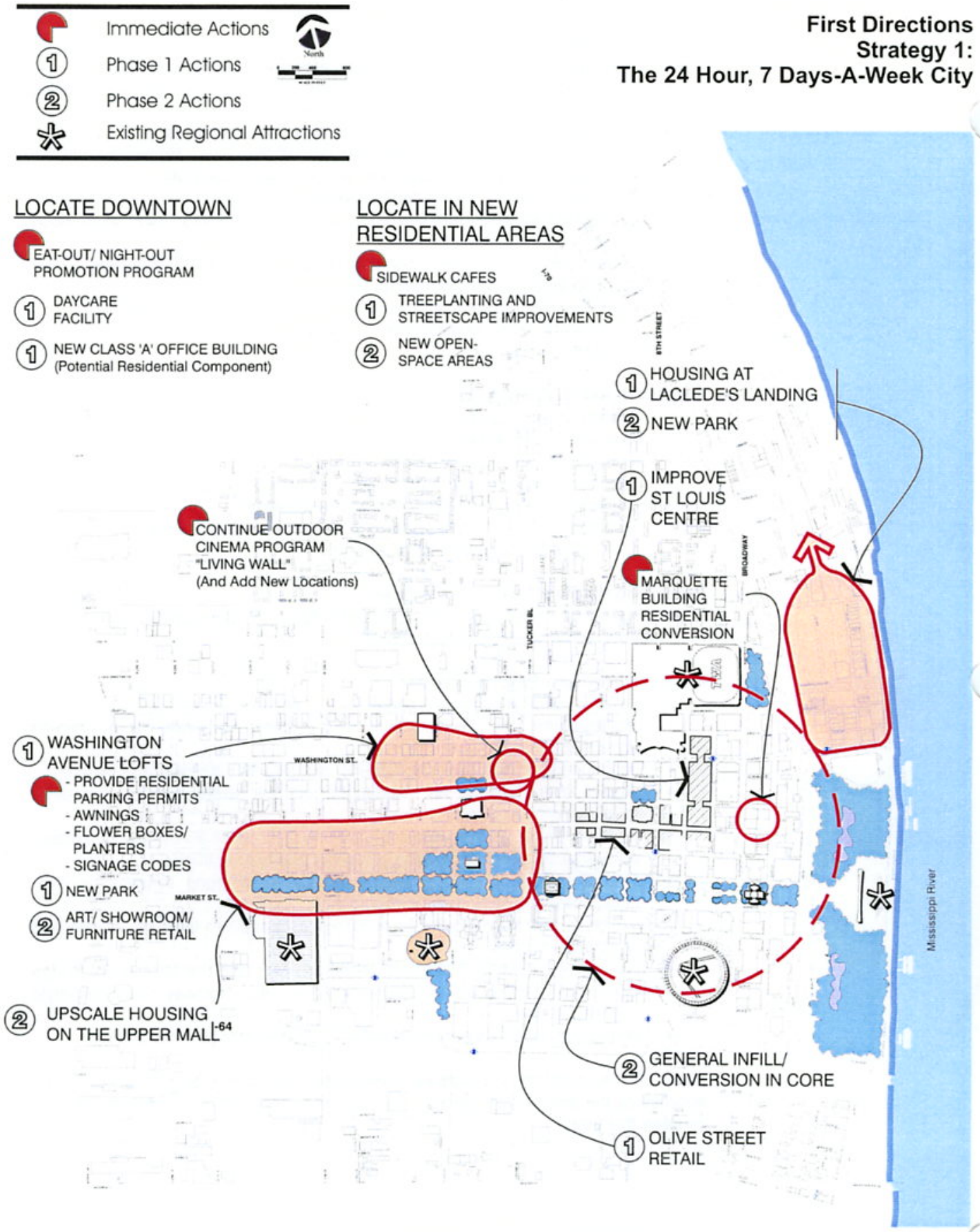
- advertise awareness and opportunities of Downtown high quality telecommunications infrastructure;

Making Downtown Easy to Access:

- better management of street use: permit street vendors, better management of construction and other activities that restrict traffic/pedestrian flow;
- continue to improve pedestrian/tourist signage for both cars and people;
- angled street parking on Washington (permit street parking on other roads, where feasible);
- promote 8th St. as the pedestrian and visual corridor across the Downtown with targeted street decoration and retail and cafe activities;
- start distinctive downtown shuttle vehicle route along Washington Ave, 20th Street, the Mall, and the Riverfront;
- design modifications to the Eads Bridge proposals to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access;
- redesign of 22nd St. connector/Jefferson Ave.; and the Mississippi Bridge ramps into Downtown to create attractive, non-highway boulevard-style connecting street;
- immediate remedying of most obvious negative sidewalk conditions.

Much of this program of relatively inexpensive and discrete actions could be adopted by the appropriate agencies as soon as possible so that visible results can be seen this year.

First Directions
Strategy 1:
The 24 Hour, 7 Days-A-Week City



Downtown Now!

Comprehensive Action Strategy
The Comprehensive Action Strategy summarizes the program of immediate, first and second phase actions identified so far by the study team. Each set of actions, organized by major strategy, is graphically represented on the Downtown concept plans on the adjacent page.

- "Immediate Actions" concern projects and programs that are relatively straightforward, and could be implemented this summer.
- "Phase 1 Actions" concern projects and programs that require additional planning and financing, but could be implemented within the next 5 years.
- "Phase 2 Actions" are longer term, more complex proposals that would likely be implemented beyond the 5 year horizon.

The Comprehensive Action Strategy is set out as follows:

Strategy 1: The 24-Hour, 7-day a week City, for living, working and having fun

Immediate Actions:
Housing:
- residential conversion of the Marquette Building;
- residential parking permits for the Washington Ave. loft district residents;
- develop a financing program for additional loft development on Washington Ave.

Retail:
- "eat-out" and "night-out" program in which sidewalk cafes restaurants and Downtown stores coordinate their evening opening hours;
- build upon nighttime club tours;

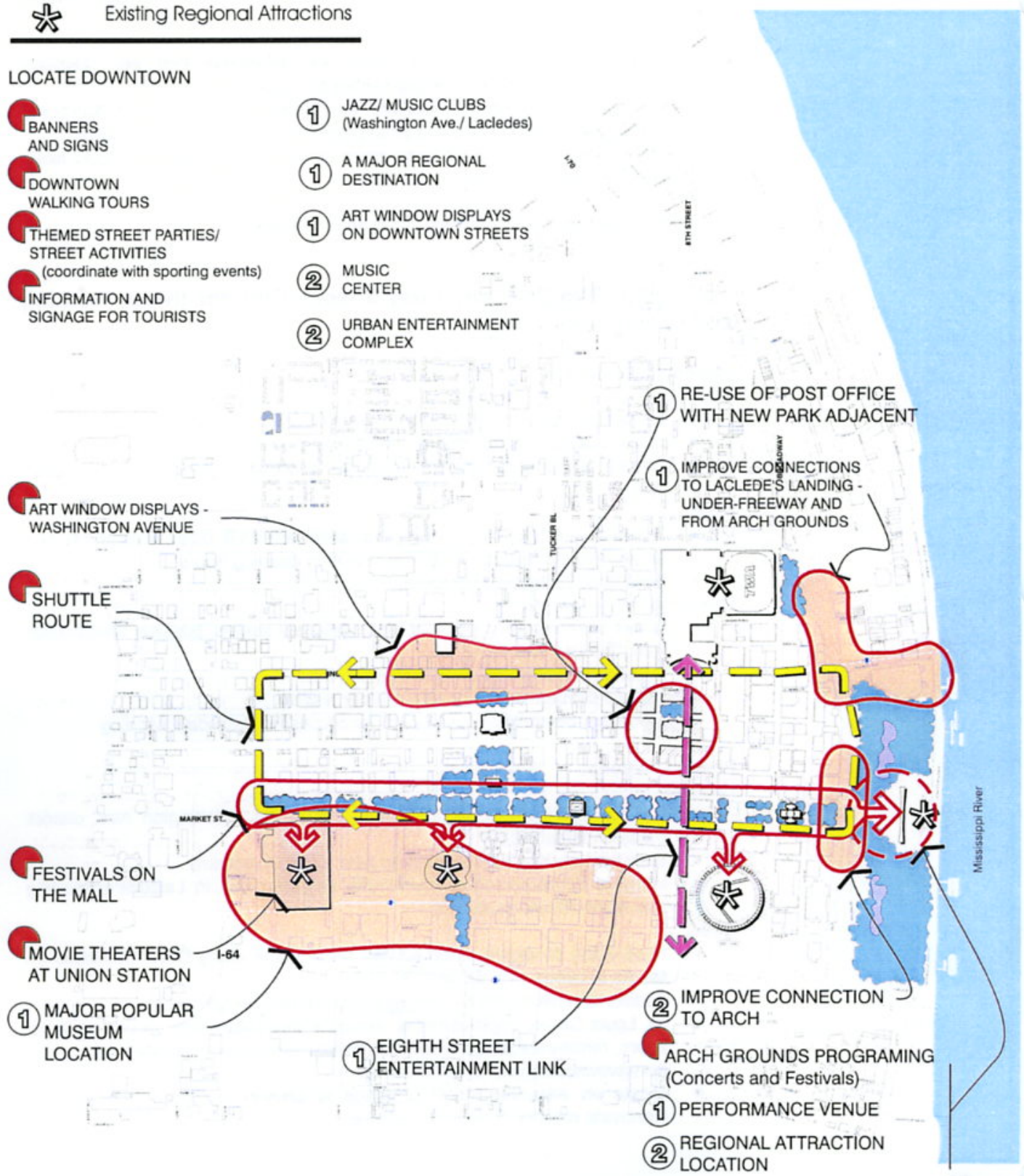
Improving the Environment:
- flower boxes/hanging planters along selected streets, possibly Washington Ave., 8th St., Broadway;
- awnings and banners on Washington Ave.;
- change signage codes to be more permissive;
- art/design competition for freeway underpass to Laclede's Landing

Phase 1 Actions:
Housing:
- funding and facilities for additional lofts in the Washington Ave. district between 9th and 16th;
- additional parking for Washington Ave. loft development
- instigate development of townhouse neighborhood in Laclede's Landing and North Riverside district;

Retail:
- head lease of vacant street-related retail space along Olive St. Focus on blocks between 11th St. and 7th St.;
- additional retail on 8th St. frontage at Olive St. intersection;
- St. Louis Centre improvements: entrance improvements, re-use of upper floors, removal/redesign of bridges linking Dillards and Famous Barr; more transparency/activity on ground floor
- create an attractive street entrance to Dillards at Metro Link Station. Renovate exterior of Dillards building;

First Directions
Strategy 2:
The Entertainment and Tourism Center

Immediate Actions
Phase 1 Actions
Phase 2 Actions
Existing Regional Attractions



Downtown Now!

Office:

- identify a site for a new class A office building in the Downtown Core;
- Improving the Environment:
- new small parks to support residential development of loft district;
- create additional day care facility or expansion to existing facility;

- stabilize key historic buildings in the Downtown Core: identify corporate/institutional sponsors and other funding sources (historic tax credit, TIF's) for essential repairs

Phase 2 Actions:

Housing:

- development of a new "Near North" neighborhood (southern extension of Murphy Park): family-oriented; mixed income residents;
- promote new higher density housing on the upper mall: for middle and high income;
- residential infill/office building conversions in the Core.

Retail:

- expand Olive St. retail program;
- expand retail along 8th Avenue;
- develop art/showroom/furniture store along Washington Ave.;
- develop new grocery store/convenience stores to support residential development.

Improving the environment:

- additional open space intervention in Downtown Core area; new urban square in Laclede's landing.

Strategy 2: The Entertainment and Tourism Center of The Region

Immediate Actions:

Connections:

- themed street parties (especially along Washington Ave., North Broadway and 8th St.) coordinated with sporting events and conventions;
- festivals in the Mall;
- day-time walking tours/nighttime club tours organized by Metropolis;
- self-guided walking tours (historic buildings, Washington Ave. warehouse district, riverfront views/history);
- sports team or beer company-sponsored street activities: beer gardens/outdoor café or restaurant;
- Arch Grounds programming: concerts/festivals and recreation;
- art-related window displays along Washington Ave.;
- shuttle connector along these key streets.

Attractions:

- cinemas in Union Station

Phase 1 Actions:

Connections:

- attractive and pedestrian friendly connection under freeway between Washington Ave/TW Dome and Laclede's Landing;

First Directions
Strategy 3:
The Education and Technology Continuum

Immediate Actions
Phase 1 Actions
Phase 2 Actions
Existing Regional Attractions

LOCATE DOWNTOWN

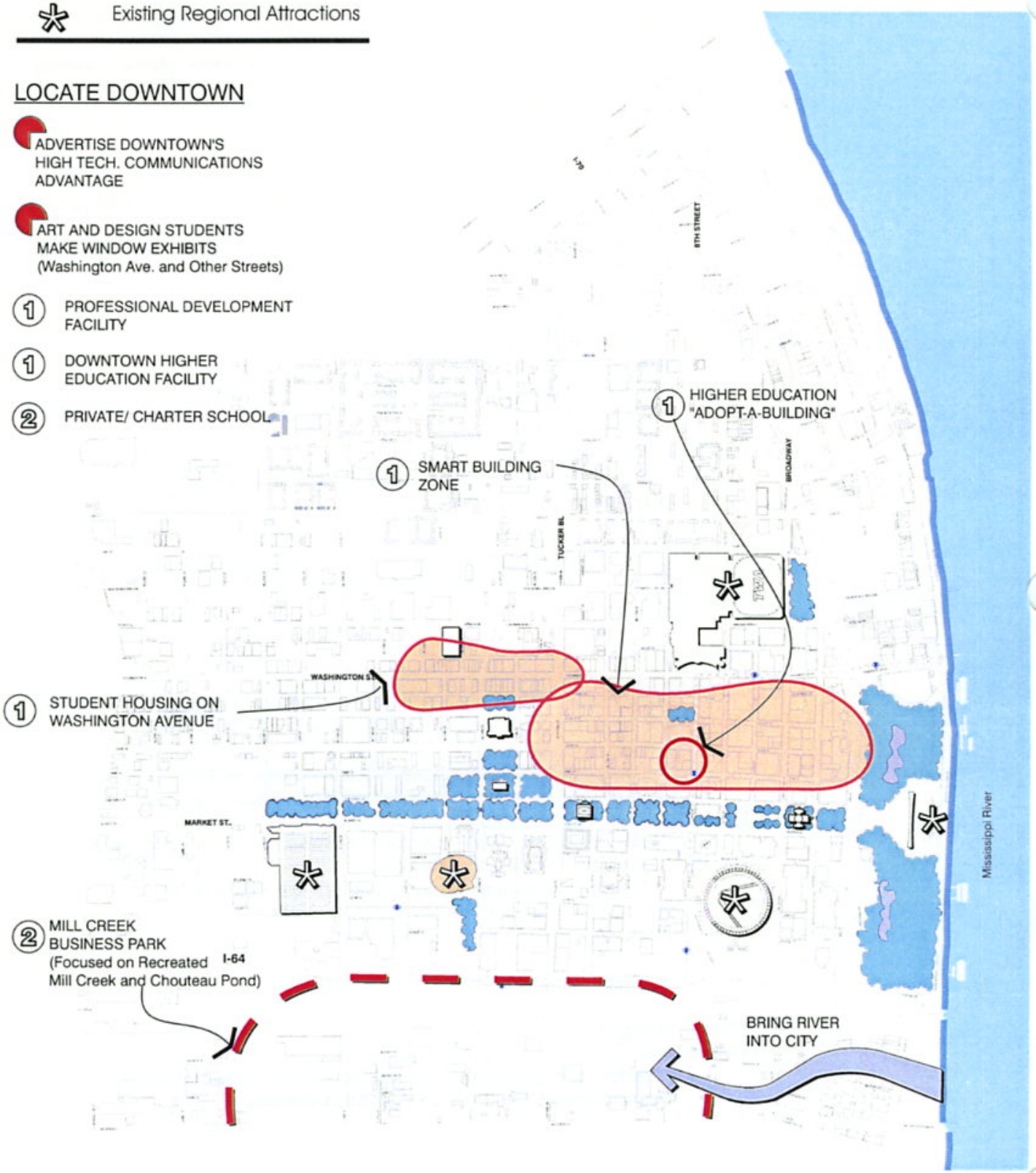
ADVERTISE DOWNTOWN'S HIGH TECH. COMMUNICATIONS ADVANTAGE

ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS MAKE WINDOW EXHIBITS (Washington Ave. and Other Streets)

(1) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FACILITY

(1) DOWNTOWN HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITY

(2) PRIVATE/ CHARTER SCHOOL



Downtown Now!

- clear and direct pedestrian connections between Arch Grounds and Laclede's Landing;
- reuse of Post Office: gala events (associated with Convention Center, fund raising, or cultural activities); offices on upper floors; release RFQ for Post Office reuse;
- develop major urban square as a setting for the Post Office (preferred location parking lot north of post office);
- expand concept of "art window displays" to 8th street, and additional areas along Washington;

Attractions:

- major nation-scale popular museum attraction such as a branch of Smithsonian Museum (possible locations: Cupples, Opera House, Old Courthouse, other location along Mall; location on or near Washington Ave.)
- development of a major performance venue on the Arch Grounds;

Phase 2 Actions:

Connections:

- improve connections to Arch across I-70 corridor, potentially incorporating additional parking for Adams Mark hotel;
- reuse historical buildings near Post Office;

Attractions:

- feasibility analysis of an Aquarium and/or Transportation Museum ;
- development of America's Music Center at appropriate location and/or promoting music and a destination throughout the Downtown ;
- identify location and developer for a downtown Urban entertainment complex; (possible locations: along the Mall; St. Louis Centre; site in the old Downtown Core, on or near Washington Ave.)

Strategy 3: The Education and Technology Continuum

Immediate Actions:

Education:

- Commission art and design students to create window displays on Washington Ave. and other Downtown streets.

Technology:

- promote the opportunities associated with Downtown's high quality telecommunications infrastructure;

Phase 1 Actions:

Education:

- locate local University professional schools or faculties in the Downtown. Possible locations for professional school/faculty: Arcade Building or another big historic structure.
- coordinate with new Downtown student housing along Washington Ave.
- negotiate with the major universities to fund the stabilization of one or more key historic buildings in the Downtown Core: a University "adopt-a-building" program.
- promote development/relocation of commercial professional development institutions in the Downtown Core.

First Directions Strategy 4: Streets for People

Immediate Actions
(1) Phase 1 Actions
(2) Phase 2 Actions
Existing Regional Attractions

GENERAL

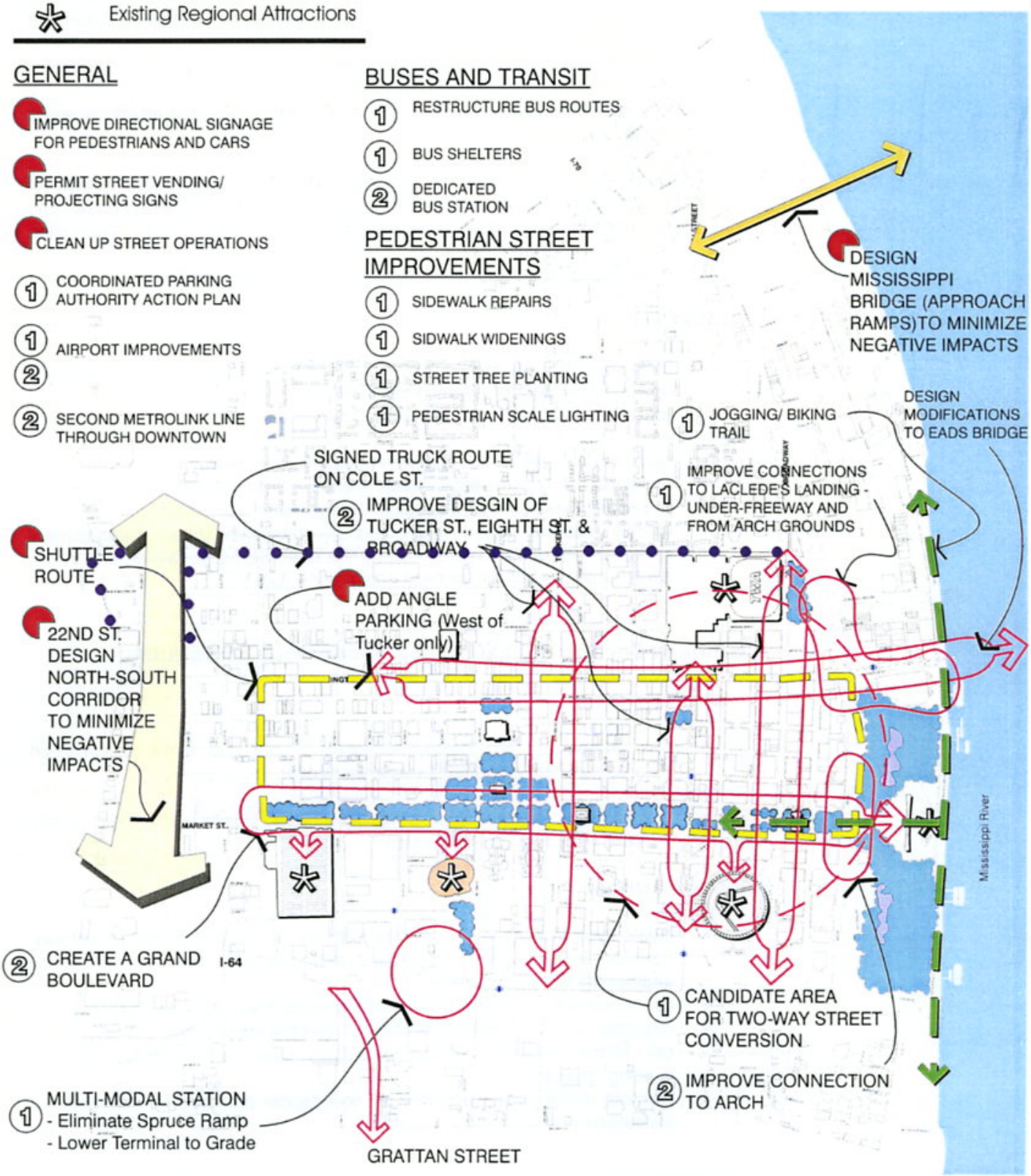
- IMPROVE DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CARS
- PERMIT STREET VENDING/ PROJECTING SIGNS
- CLEAN UP STREET OPERATIONS
- (1) COORDINATED PARKING AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN
- (1) (2) AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS
- (2) SECOND METROLINK LINE THROUGH DOWNTOWN

BUSES AND TRANSIT

- (1) RESTRUCTURE BUS ROUTES
- (1) BUS SHELTERS
- (2) DEDICATED BUS STATION

PEDESTRIAN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- (1) SIDEWALK REPAIRS
- (1) SIDWALK WIDENINGS
- (1) STREET TREE PLANTING
- (1) PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING



Downtown Now!

Technology:

- use nexus of telecommunications infrastructure focused on Southwestern Bell buildings as a incentive to locate new computer/communications-dependent businesses in adjacent office buildings;
- identify Class B buildings in the Core for technology up-grade

Phase 2 Actions:

Education:

- develop a private/charter school Downtown

Technology:

- develop a business/technology park in Mill Creek Valley area. Coordinate with re-creation of Mill Creek and Chouteau's Pond.

Strategy 4: Streets For People

Immediate Actions:

- better management of street use: permit street vendors, better management of construction and other activities that restrict traffic/pedestrian flow;
- improved pedestrian/tourist signage for both cars and people;
- angled street parking on Washington Ave. (permit street parking on other roads, where feasible);
- district Downtown shuttle vehicle route along Washington Ave, 20th St., 8th St., the Mall, Riverfront;
- Eads Bridge design modifications to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access;
- redesign of 22nd St. Connector/Jefferson Ave.; and Mississippi Bridge ramps into Downtown to create attractive, non-highway boulevard-style connecting streets;
- immediate remedying of most obvious negative sidewalk conditions.

Phase 1 Actions:

- program for comprehensive improvement of all Downtown streets by 2004:
- pedestrian scaled lighting;
- widened sidewalks/reduced pavement widths
- street trees/landscaping
- coordinated street furniture
- special sidewalk paving;
- better identification of MetroLink stations;
- coordinated parking strategy, establishment of a coordinating parking authority;
- riverfront improvements including generous jogging, walking area; bike trails connected to regional trail systems; viewing platforms;
- redesign of downtown bus routes, provision of bus shelters;
- recreate two-way streets Downtown.

Phase 2 Actions:

- Major Mall Redesign
- confirm Mall's status as a major organizing feature of the City develop as an urban boulevard with three eastbound lanes (Market); three westbound

lanes (Chestnut); close off three lanes of Market to create a continuous, tree lined promenade along south side of Market Street;

- redesign of existing Mall open spaces: focus for multiple water features from 20th St. to Arch Grounds symbolizing the presence and power of the Mississippi, recreation and other attractions.
- redesign of Tucker Street, 8th Street, Broadway
- develop second Metro Link route through downtown (north south route?)

Next Steps

Implementing a strategy for Downtown revitalization will require support from the City and its agencies and from the senior levels of government, from the business community, and from residents of the St. Louis region. This range of small, medium and large size projects must be coordinated in a strategic fashion to achieve the long-term vision for Downtown. This report presents our first directions in setting out the key opportunities and direction for downtown revitalization.

To continue these "First Directions," the study team will provide numerous opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide input into this preliminary strategy. The consultant team will then test alternative scenarios within this strategy for achieving Downtown development, examining and amending this list of possible actions in much finer detail. Each alternative will draw upon the Big Ideas and action strategy to identify an effective coordinated and synergistic mix of action to make up a Downtown St. Louis Action Plan.

In early fall, the study team will conduct a series of workshops and public meetings to present these alternatives, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and choose a preferred development scenario. This preferred scenario will be the basis of the detailed Downtown plan to be completed toward the end of this year.