

*Waterloo Downtown
Redevelopment
Master Plan Update*



The City of Waterloo and
Waterloo Development Corporation (WDC)



Vandewalle & Associates
Madison, Wisconsin



Acknowledgements

Waterloo Development Corporation Board

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Master Plan Update Steering Committee

Noel Anderson, City of Waterloo
Mary Ann Burk, Center for the Arts
Ross Christian, Waterloo Development Corporation
Tim Hurley, City Council
Jeff Kutz, Waterloo Development Corporation
Roger Olesen, Grout Museum
Bob Petersen, Waterloo Development Corporation
Rick Siedler, City Council
Don Temeyer, City of Waterloo
George S. Warren, Main Street Waterloo
Mary Ellen Warren, Main Street Waterloo
Dan Watters, Waterloo Development Corporation
Ron Welper, City Council

City Council

John Roof, Mayor
Buck Clark
Harold Getty
Bob Greenwood
Tim Hurley
Scott Jordan
John Kincaid
Ron Welper

Dan Arens, MidAmerican Energy
Ross Christensen, Christensen & Bigelow, P.C.
Ed Gallagher, Gallagher, Langlas, Gallagher
Jerry Heinlen, Waterloo Industries
Bob Koob, University of Northern Iowa
Roger Neumann, McGladrey & Pullen
Bob Petersen, Northland Products
Mary Robinson, All Nations Community Church
Barry Schaffter, John Deere Waterloo Works
Jim Walsh, V.G.M. & Associates
Dan Watters, U.S. Bank

City Staff

Donald Temeyer, Director of Planning
Noel Anderson, Planning

Waterloo Development Corporation Staff

Jeff Kutz, Executive Director

Planning provided by:

Vandewalle & Associates
120 East Lakeside Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53715
www.vandewalle.com

Brian Vandewalle, Principal Planner
Dean Proctors, Principal Urban Designer
Jamie Radel, Assistant Planner
Amy Babula, Graphic Designer
Justin Younker, Design Intern



Executive Summary

Many of the opportunities outlined in the 2000 Master Plan stemmed from the development of Exposition Grounds in the West River District, which was geared toward Vision Iowa funding; however, the City did not ultimately receive VIP funding for the Exposition Grounds, and many of the proposed activities have now been relocated to the planned TechWorks facility. As such, it is time to reexamine the land use and economics within Downtown Waterloo.

Economic Drivers

Two projects are primarily driving the update of the 2000 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan: The development of the Cedar Valley TechWorks and the construction of the riverwalk improvements and the Cedar Valley Arts Mall. Together, these activities will bring new businesses, jobs, and visitors to Downtown Waterloo, which in turn will bring an influx of capital that will enable the establishment of new retail, housing, and entertainment opportunities while strengthening existing opportunities within the project area.

Downtown Business Districts

Based on existing and planned activities and downtown circulation patterns, Downtown Waterloo was divided into four primary planning districts and several economic zones. The districts represent the key land use or theme within the sub-planning area, while the zones play important economic roles within the district.

New Economy District

The New Economy District is envisioned as an urban, high-tech campus aimed at attracting and incubating New Economy businesses with a focus on bioagriculture and advanced manufacturing.

Entertainment District

Activity, vibrancy, and the arts will be themes carried throughout the various economic zones within the Entertainment District. These elements will display the community's commitment to improving and enhancing its cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities, providing residents and visitors with an exciting urban experience, translating into an improved quality of life. Quality of life is a critical element in today's economic development environment. The creation of the Entertainment District will provide Waterloo with a unique amenity that will give the City a competitive advantage in business and workforce recruitment.

Mixed-Use Infill District

The Mixed-Use Infill District is envisioned to transition into an urban, work-live neighborhood. With excellent visibility from USH 218, river front development opportunities, and strong connectivity to the adjacent downtown areas, the Mixed-Use Infill District is envisioned to transition into an urban neighborhood. Housing within this district is within walking distance of the major downtown employment centers, including Deere & Company's Westfield Site, city and county government, and the many businesses within the existing central business district, as well as the anticipated job-base as a result of the planned activities within the New Economy, Entertainment, and Government Districts. Riverfront housing options will provide an excellent option for workforce housing with direct access to the riverwalk.

Government District

Waterloo is the county seat of Black Hawk County. The City and County buildings are located in the same area of the East River District. The Government Campus is economically vital to this area's long-term growth. As the population in the County grows, the City and County should anticipate and facilitate the expansion of the government campus in its current East River District location. Together, they should design a long-range facilities plan that integrates blight elimination and redevelopment with future governmental facilities growth. As City and County governments expand, they should maintain and grow their offices and facilities in this area.

Implementation

Implementation of the Waterloo Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan Update will continue to require a highly integrated coordination, fundraising, and management effort between the City, the Waterloo Development Corporation, and other non-profit redevelopment partners. Urban design priorities and site redevelopment priorities need to be understood amongst all redevelopment entities.

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Introduction

Many of the opportunities outlined in the 2000 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan stemmed from the development of Exposition Grounds in the West River District, which was geared toward Vision Iowa funding; however, the City did not ultimately receive VIP funding for the Exposition Grounds, and many of the proposed activities have now been relocated to the planned TechWorks facility. As such, it is time to reexamine the land use and economics within the downtown. The City of Waterloo and the Waterloo Development Corporation retained Vandewalle & Associates, the planning and urban design firm that completed the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan, to formulate an update to this document.

Public participation was critical to the development of the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan Update. To ensure that the residents of Waterloo were part of the master planning process, the City and the WDC created the Master Plan Update Steering Committee. The steering committee met four times during the four month planning process, providing feedback to the project consultants on vision, content, and recommendations made in the plan. Additionally the City also sponsored a public presentation of the preliminary recommendations, which was attended by approximately 125 community members. At the end of the presentation, the meeting was open for questions from the attendees. Finally, the City created a “studio space” in the Center for the Arts. The intent of this studio is to provide a community space in which ongoing planning endeavors are on semi-permanent display to allow for public viewing and comment.

Relevant Studies

Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan (2000)

The City and the WDC jointly sponsored the creation of the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in 2000. This plan outlined an economic repositioning strategy that leveraged new downtown development by building off existing regional and downtown assets. The two major economic drivers identified in this plan were the Cedar River and U.S. Highway 218. The downtown was divided into the East and West River Districts. In this plan, large redevelopment parcels within the West River District were conceptualized for large users, such as an exhibition center and multi-use sports stadium.

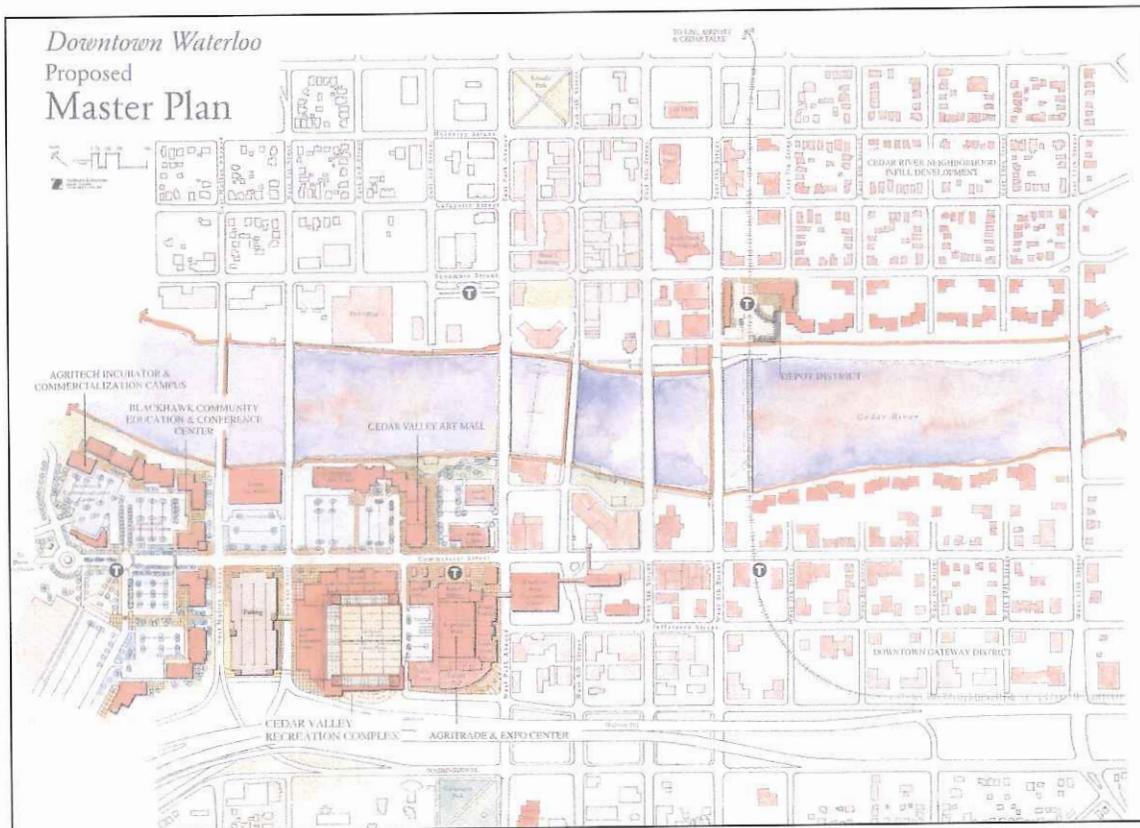
Rath Neighborhood Plan (2001)

In 2001, the City of Waterloo commissioned the Rath Area Neighborhood Plan to outline redevelopment strategies for the neighborhoods within the project area. Recommendations in the plan focused neighborhood revitalization on improving the existing housing stock, developing new riverfront living opportunities, creating townhouse living options, establishing a neighborhood commercial center at 11th and Franklin Streets.

Highway 63 Study (on-going)

The City of Waterloo and the East Side Development Task Force are working on an innovative project along the Highway 63 Corridor from Interstate 218 to Donald Street. The purpose of the study is to develop a long-range master plan for the Highway 63 corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods. The Plan will make recommendations to:

- Improve road intersections, traffic flow, safety, and design
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety
 - Identify future land use along Highway 63 and within the neighborhoods
 - Identify economic development opportunities to create new jobs for residents
- Improve park and recreation spaces
 - Improve drainage and utilities
 - The study will also evaluate “environmental justice” issues to hopefully eliminate or reduce any past or future negative impacts of road improvements on the low-income and minority neighborhoods along Highway 63



Regional Analysis

The Great Prairie

Known as the nation's breadbasket, the Great Prairie is generally comprised of prime agricultural lands in Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. With the growth of the bioeconomy, the Great Prairie is now not just a source of food, but it is also a biomass region with unlimited potential to grow and process raw materials for the bioproduct and bioenergy industries. Unlike petroleum, the world's biomass resources are an unlimited, untapped opportunity. Currently, only seven percent of the world's biomass is utilized, leaving ninety-three percent of unrealized potential. According to the USDA, the top states for corn, wheat, and soybean production are located in the Great Prairie. These crops are now being transformed into industrial building blocks, such as resins, polymers, lubricants, fibers, paints, and adhesives. America's farmers and their farming methods of planting, harvesting, and processing are technologically advanced, enabling the Great Prairie to be a key location for the transformation of the agricultural economy.

Interstate 80 Transportation Corridor

Interstate 80 (I-80) is the primary transportation corridor that connects the farmland of Iowa with the metropolitan centers of the east and west coasts. Within Iowa, the I-80 corridor encompasses the key ingredients, which include research, education, finance, and government centers, for Iowa's participation in the new economy. Specifically, these ingredients include:

- University of Iowa (Iowa City)
- Iowa State University (Ames)
- State government offices (Des Moines)
- Venture capital (Davenport)

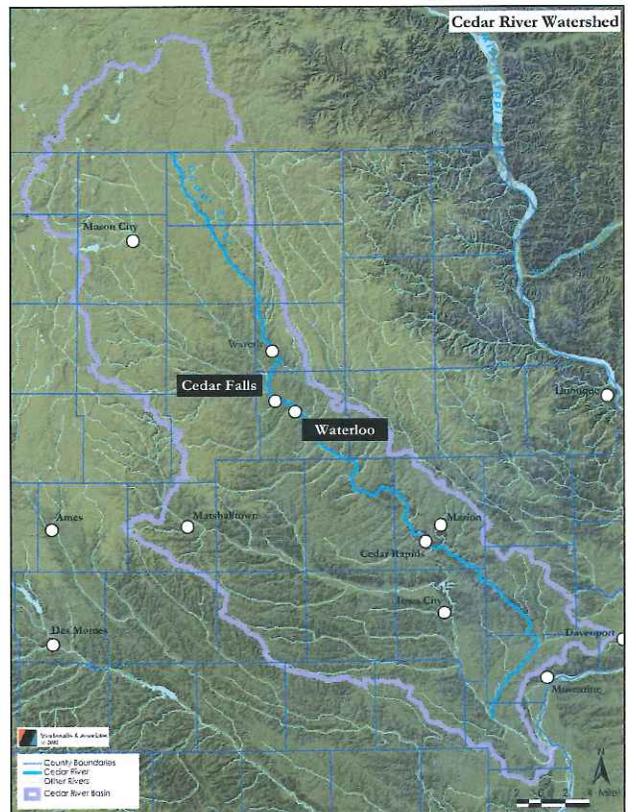
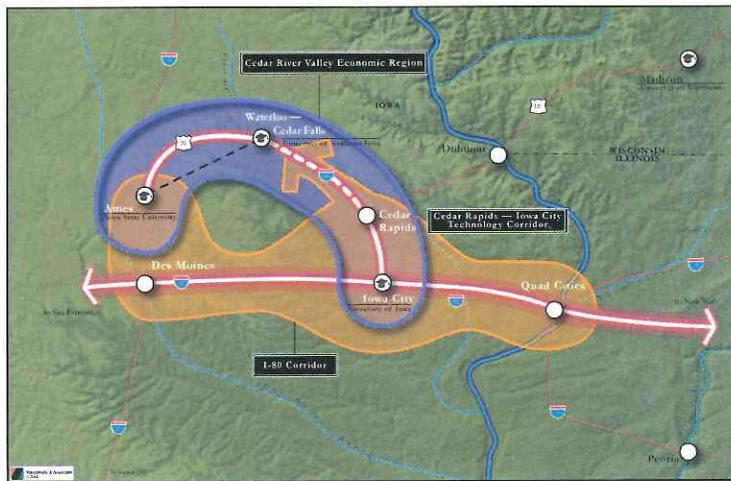
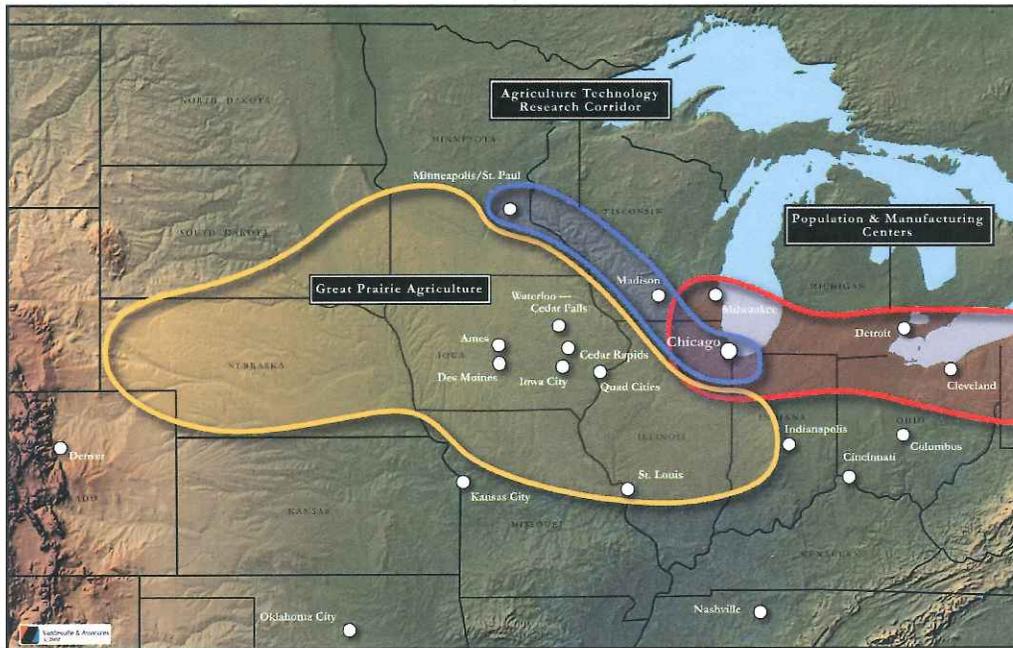
Interstate 380 Transportation Corridor

The connections between these centers provide the opportunity to further enhance the new ideas, patents, and businesses that are being generated in the I-80 corridor. These assets could be strengthened by tapping into the existing expertise in the I-380 corridor, which includes information technology and communications in Cedar Rapids, advanced manufacturing and education in Waterloo-Cedar Falls, and the agriculture and farming in the Cedar River watershed.

Cedar River Watershed

The Cedar River watershed provides a prime location for Iowa's role in the bioeconomy. The watershed is a definable agricultural region for the production of biobased, industrial crops. Within the watershed, the I-380 transportation corridor provides connections to the key communities—Waterloo-Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City—that, taken together, have many of the elements necessary to build a high-technology economy. These elements include:

- Strong research and development base
- Skilled, technical workforce
- Entrepreneurial culture
- Technology infrastructure
- Supportive business climate
- Good quality of life



Economic Drivers for Downtown Waterloo

Two projects are primarily driving the update of the 2000 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan: The development of the Cedar Valley TechWorks and the construction of the riverwalk improvements and the Cedar Valley Arts Mall. Together, these activities will bring new businesses, jobs, and visitors to downtown Waterloo, which in turn will bring an influx of capital that will enable the establishment of new retail, housing, and entertainment opportunities and strengthen existing opportunities within the project area.

Cedar Valley TechWorks

Deere & Company is donating five buildings, totaling 750,000 square feet of floor space, to the WDC to develop the Cedar Valley TechWorks. These facilities will house innovative and diverse programs and businesses with a focus on agricultural technologies of the past, present, and future. The buildings have prime visibility from USH 218 and include a combination of heavy-duty manufacturing, office, large equipment storage, and wet labs.

The Cedar Valley TechWorks is conceptualized as an innovative, urban campus with a focus on creating a market for New Uses or biobased products. The TechWorks project is unique in that it provides the key strategic facilities to support development and commercialization of biobased technologies at a single location. Planned centers within the complex include the Bioproduct Merchandise Mart, the Manufacturing Mall, the Ag-tourism Exhibit, and the Education Center.

The Cedar Valley TechWorks' location at the Deere & Company Westfield Site will promote new activities in downtown Waterloo, because lodging, services, and activities are located within walking distance of the campus. The businesses within the district will help to serve the evolution of the TechWorks, creating an atmosphere that fosters the development of a dynamic working and living environment.

Bioproduct Merchandise Mart

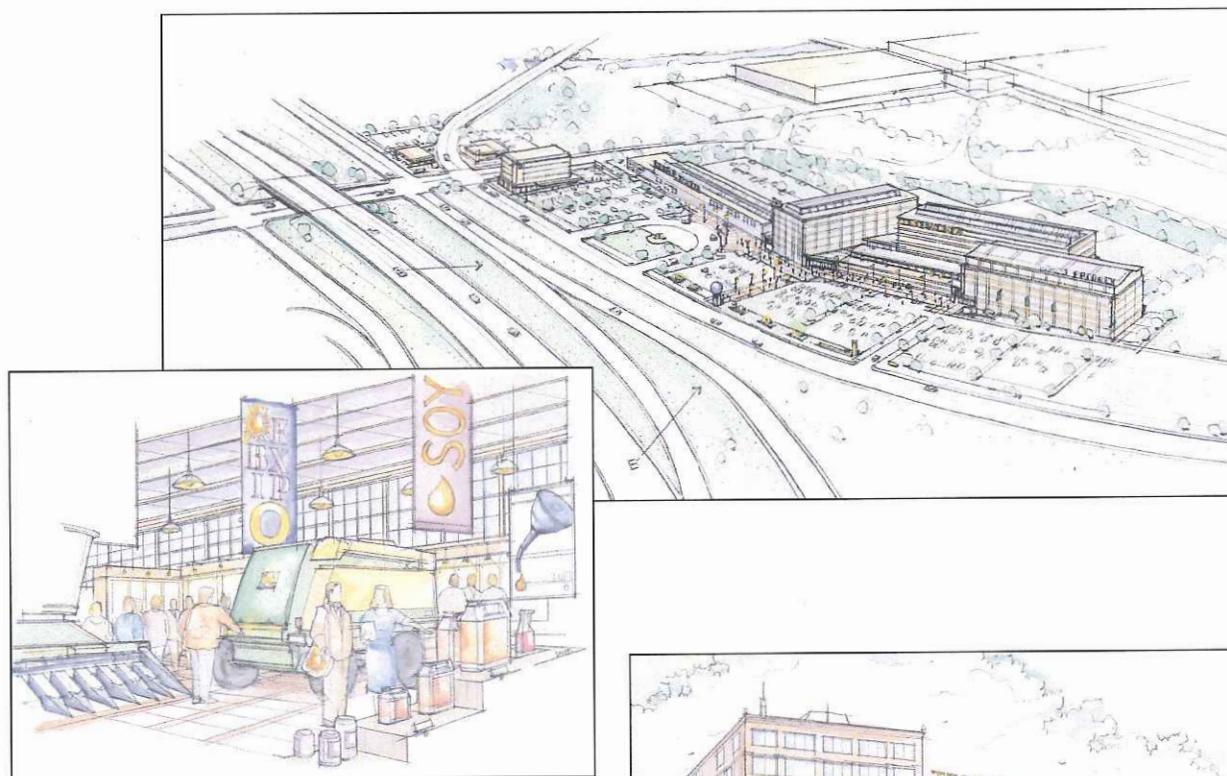
The Bioproducts Merchandise Mart is conceptualized to be the primary location to exhibit biobased products. Through a combination of permanent and revolving displays, the Merchandise Mart will be the premiere location for marketing biobased materials and products.

Manufacturing Mall

A Manufacturing Mall equipped with wet labs will provide an environment for the initial incubation of businesses as they develop their biobased products and production processes. Later, as these processes mature and are ready for commercial production, the business will be able to easily migrate into production facilities at the available manufacturing space provided within the Manufacturing Mall.

Ag-tourism Exhibit

With approximately 250,000 visitors annually, the John Deere WaterlooWorks is already a major destination for agricultural heritage tourists. The purpose of the Ag-tourism Exhibit Center will be to provide an additional venue on the agricultural heritage trail,



as well as to combine this interest in the nation's agricultural past to its future. Proposed programming includes: headquarters for the Two-Cylinder Club, a tractor restoration mart, an ag-futures family education center, a trailhead for Silos and Smokestacks, and retail and hospitality opportunities.

Education Center

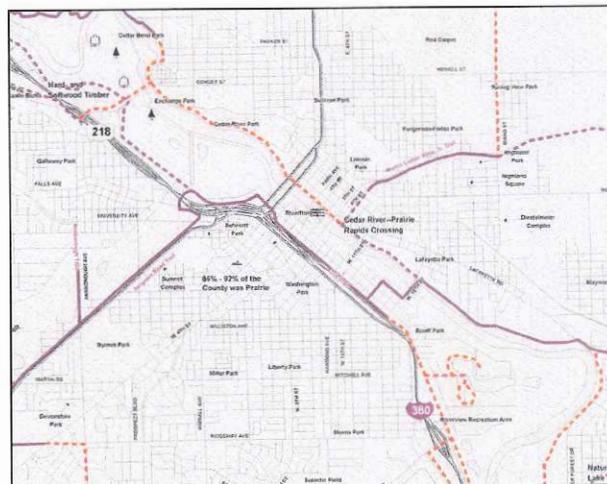
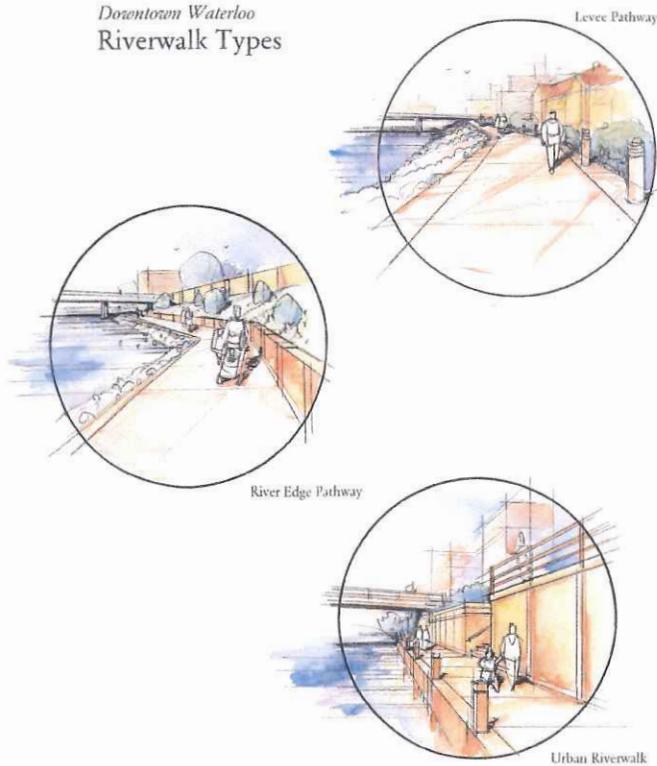
The primary purpose of the education center is to create an avenue for the continued education of the knowledge worker, while providing education to the general public regarding the benefits and uses of biobased products. Conceptualized activity centers include: the university/community college downtown campus, John Deere training and conference center, and the bioeconomy communication and education program.

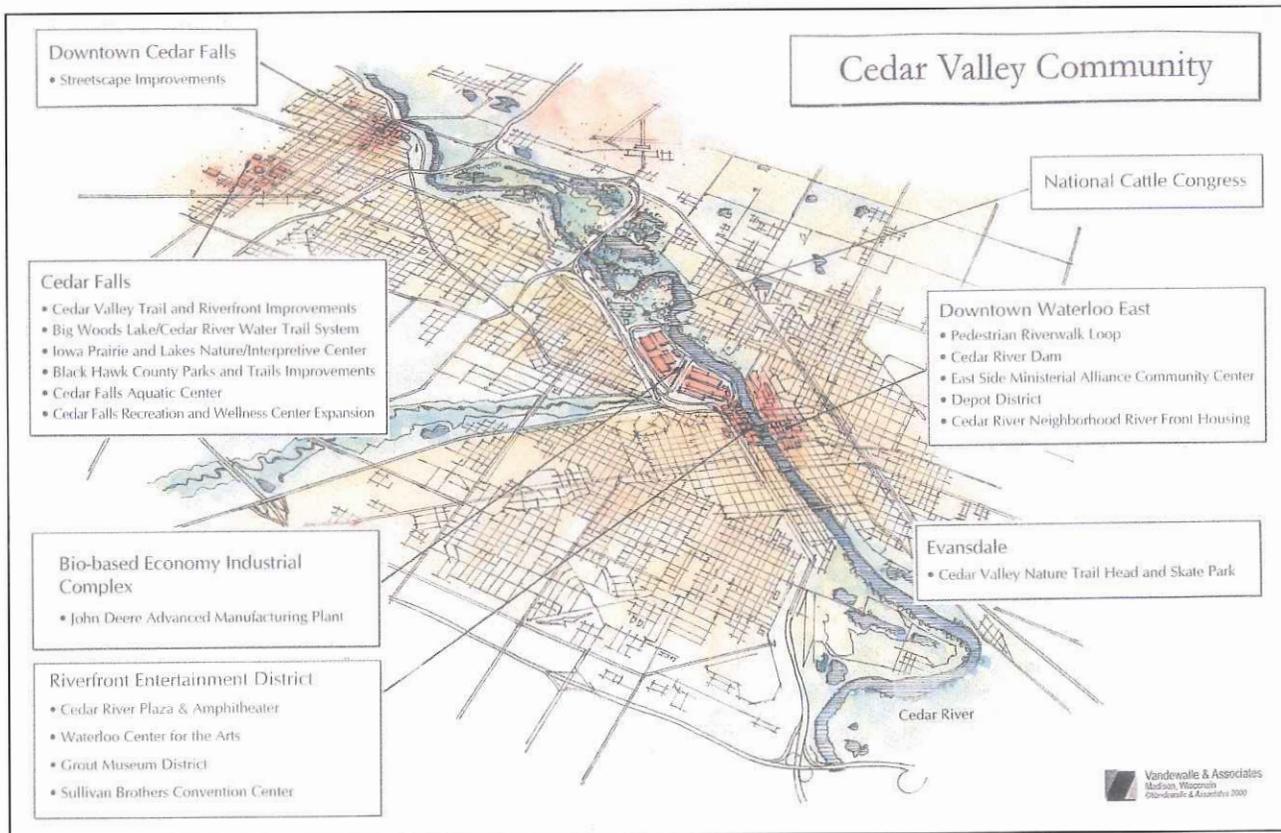
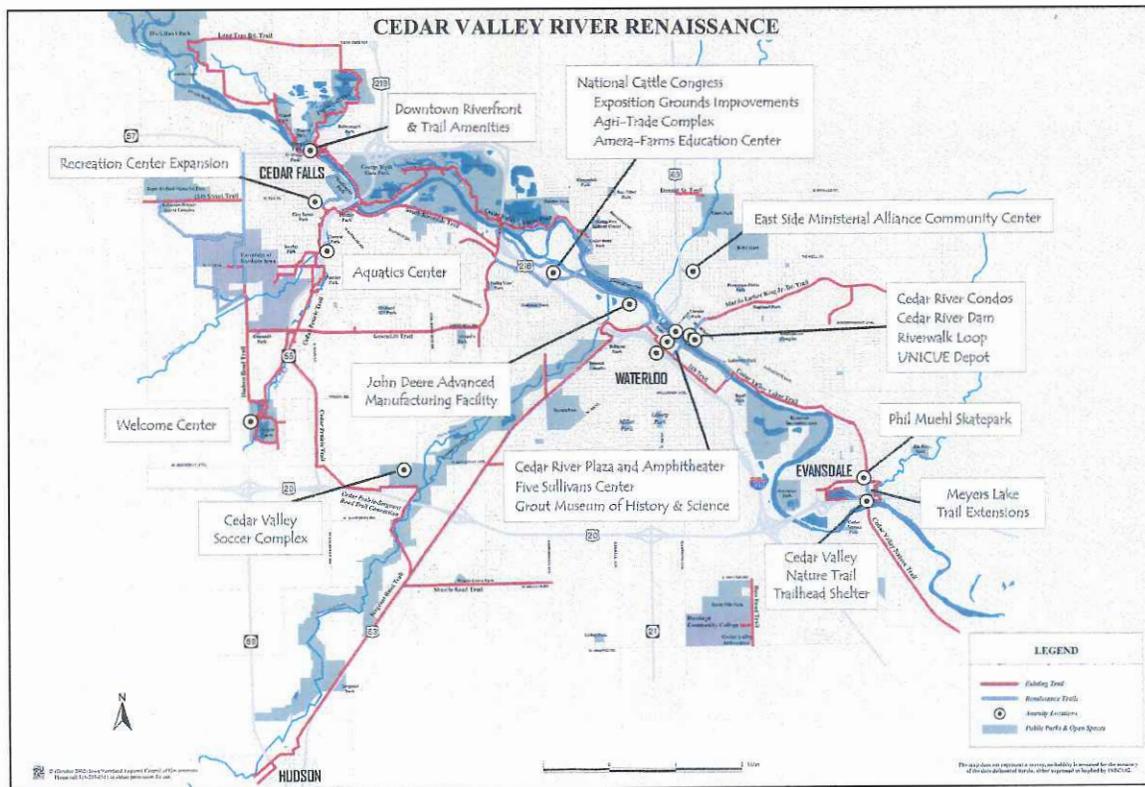
Riverwalk and Cedar Valley Arts Mall

Flowing directly through the center of downtown Waterloo, the Cedar River is the aesthetic focal point of downtown. Unfortunately this vital asset is visually separated from the downtown by a levee system designed to prevent flooding. The historic land-use pattern adjacent to the river bank has buildings and uses that are backed up against the levee, and therefore, do not utilize the riverfront location. To remedy this disconnect, the 2000 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan recommended that the downtown reconnect to the river through the development of a riverwalk system, the creation of a downtown bicycle trail following the river, and the promotion of riverfront housing options.

The City is now implementing these recommendations through the assistance of the Vision Iowa Program. The City received Vision Iowa grant funding to complete the design and development of riverwalk improvements and the Cedar Valley Arts Mall. The improvements to the riverwalk system will create new real estate opportunities for downtown Waterloo, particularly along the riverfront, including housing, office, and commercial options. The Arts Mall, which is located adjacent to the Waterloo Center for the Arts and the new Waterloo Public Library, will become a new destination for Waterloo, drawing Waterloo residents and outside visitors alike. The new activity generated in this area will add to the quality of life in Downtown Waterloo, making it a place people chose to live.

Downtown Waterloo
Riverwalk Types







Activity Centers

The identification of existing and planned activity centers in Downtown Waterloo allowed the determination of general areas of concentrated downtown activity. Together, the existing and planned activities generate critical energy that draws people downtown. Several existing activity centers are located along the Commercial Street, 4th Street, and Sycamore Street corridors. These are areas toward which new investment and redevelopment should be focused to obtain the critical mass to redevelop less marketable areas.

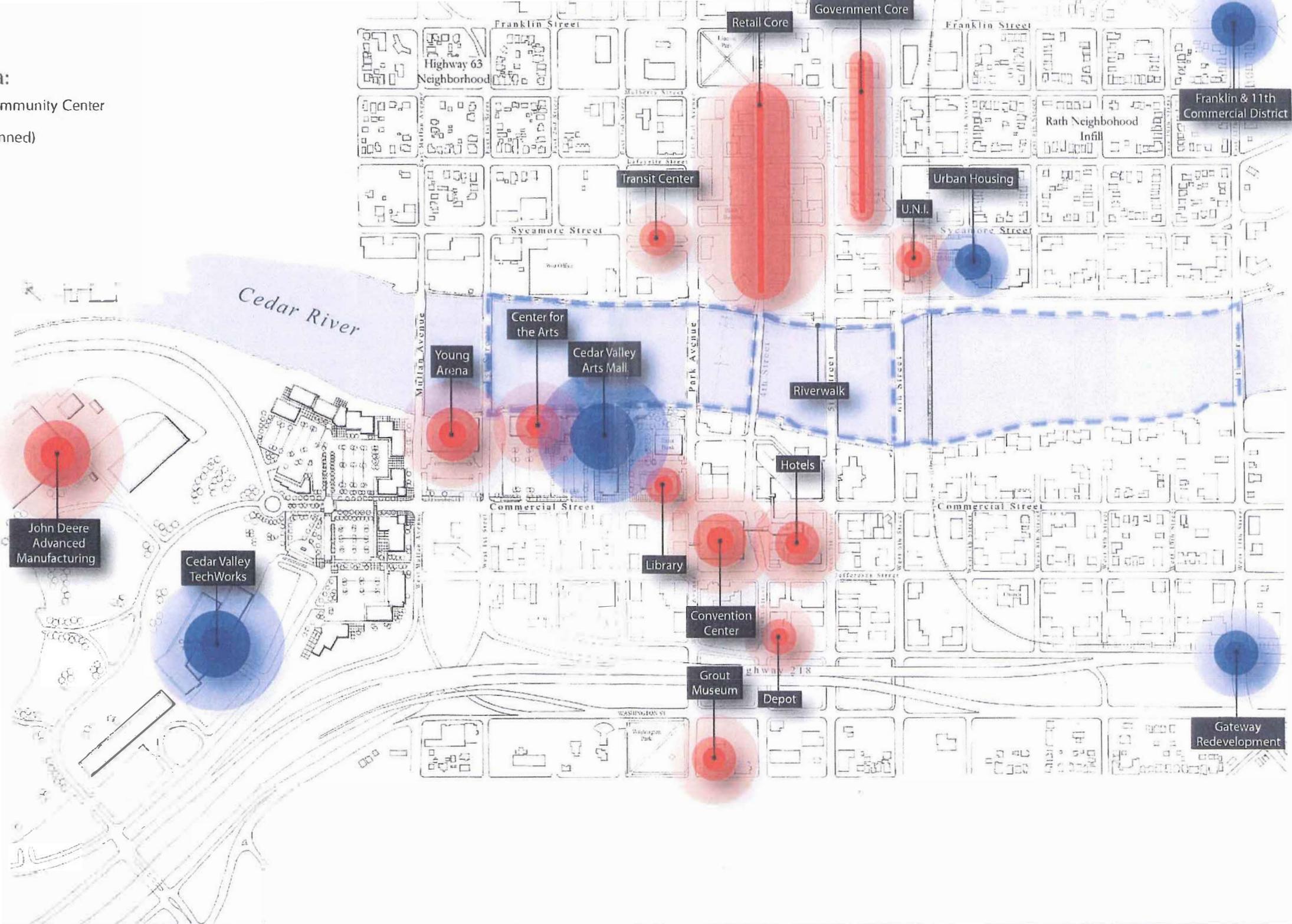
Major Activity Centers

Major downtown activity centers include: Deere & Company's advanced manufacturing facility, Young Area, Waterloo Center for the Arts, Waterloo Public Library, Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center, downtown hotels, the historic rail depot, the historic downtown retail core, city and county government buildings, University of Northern Iowa's Center for Urban Education (UNICUE), and East High School. These activity centers regularly draw a significant number of people into the downtown.

Planned Redevelopment Activity

Planned redevelopment activities that will add to the energy and activity of the downtown include: Cedar Valley TechWorks, Cedar Valley Arts Mall, 11th Street gateway redevelopment, eastside riverfront housing, and the Franklin and 11th Street commercial area. These projects will increase the draw to the downtown and will expand the areas where activity occurs.

Community Center
(planned)



Downtown Circulation Patterns

Downtown Waterloo has two important regional corridors, USH 218 and USH 63, intersecting just north of the downtown core. Unfortunately, when plans to convert USH 218 to a freeway were approved, only one interchange was included for downtown Waterloo, which has significantly affected the ability for traffic to circulate efficiently within the downtown. This coupled with the one-way traffic system on Mullan Avenue and 1st Street, 4th and 5th Streets, and 6th and 11th Streets, makes vehicular circulation in the downtown extremely difficult.

Linking Regional Trails

The City of Waterloo and Cedar Falls have worked together to implement a series of regional recreation trails that link the two cities' downtown as well as provide access to both communities to the greenspace and recreation areas along the Cedar River. The trail system will allow visitors to link to a portion of the Cedar River Discovery Trail, a cross-country bike trail that runs from Waterloo to San Francisco.

Riverwalk and Activity Nodes

The riverwalk loop is critical to integrating the Cedar River into downtown. The riverwalk loop will run on the east side of the river between Mullan Avenue and 1st Street and will provide access to the river for pedestrians and bicyclists. The riverwalk and activity nodes, which may include interpretive displays, performance areas, and display areas for art, will provide visitors with an experience of the Cedar Valley area.

One-way Pairs

Historically the primary purpose of the development of one-way street systems was to move large volumes of traffic through an area as quickly as possible. During the 1950s and 1960s people were moving from the central city neighborhoods to the new suburban neighborhoods, while retail, commercial, and manufacturing centers were still located in the central city. This change caused high volumes of traffic to move through the central cities during shift changes at major manufacturing facilities. To move the workforce back and forth, streets were converted from two-way streets to one-way streets to enable them to handle the increased traffic demands. As manufacturing businesses have relocated in greenfield industrial parks, large-scale manufacturers have retooled, and more people have chosen to reside in the suburbs, the once heavy traffic flow has decreased to the point where reinstating two-way traffic systems is now feasible and recommended to encourage economic revitalization of downtown areas.

When people were still working, living, and shopping in central cities, one-way street patterns did not affect the overall economic stability of downtowns; however as downtowns have grown more dependent on infrequent local shoppers, visitors, and tourists, one-way street patterns have negatively affected the economic potential of these areas. There are several reasons one-way street patterns detrimentally affect downtowns, including:

- Providing inadequate pauses through controlled intersections to encourage drivers to stop at retail or service businesses.
- Increasing the difficulty for drivers who are unfamiliar with the downtown to navigate to specific destinations
- Deterring pedestrian movement adjacent to fast-moving traffic and difficulty crossing multiple lanes of fast moving traffic

To realize the full economic development potential of the downtown, the existing system of one-way streets should be rerouted back to two-way streets. Returning two-way traffic to Mullan Avenue and First Street, which together carry USH 63 traffic through the downtown, should be a very high priority. As part of the Highway 63 Study, engineers and planners will be examining the potential to redirect two-way traffic to both streets, with Mullan Avenue being designated USH 63 for regional traffic and 1st Avenue providing service for local traffic movement.

Major Pedestrian Corridor

Pedestrian traffic and activity should be encouraged throughout the entire downtown area. In downtown Waterloo, a major pedestrian corridor should run from the TechWorks Facility to 6th Street via Commercial Street and between the Grout Museum Campus and Lincoln Park on 4th Street. New investment and activity should occur on these blocks to provide the continuity required to draw pedestrians along street corridors. Block-by-block, storefronts should be filled with street-level retail and amenities, such as restaurants, cafes, and pubs. Streetscaping along these corridors should draw people down the streets. (See Urban Design Priorities on page 50 for further detail on “making a street a place.”)

Visitor Loop

The development of a “visitor loop” should be implemented around the blocks bordered by Commercial, Sycamore, 4th, and 6th Streets. This loop would encourage visitors to walk between the activities at the convention center and downtown hotels to the shops and restaurants in the historic downtown area, developing a richer and more diverse hospitality zone.

Local Vehicular Loop

In order to maintain the pedestrian-friendly orientation of the major pedestrian corridors, local traffic should be encouraged to travel down specific city streets. Design of streetscaping and directional signage should be developed that encourages traffic movement down these corridors, which include: Mullan Avenue, 1st Street, 4th Street, 6th Street, 11th Street, Commercial Street, and Sycamore Street.

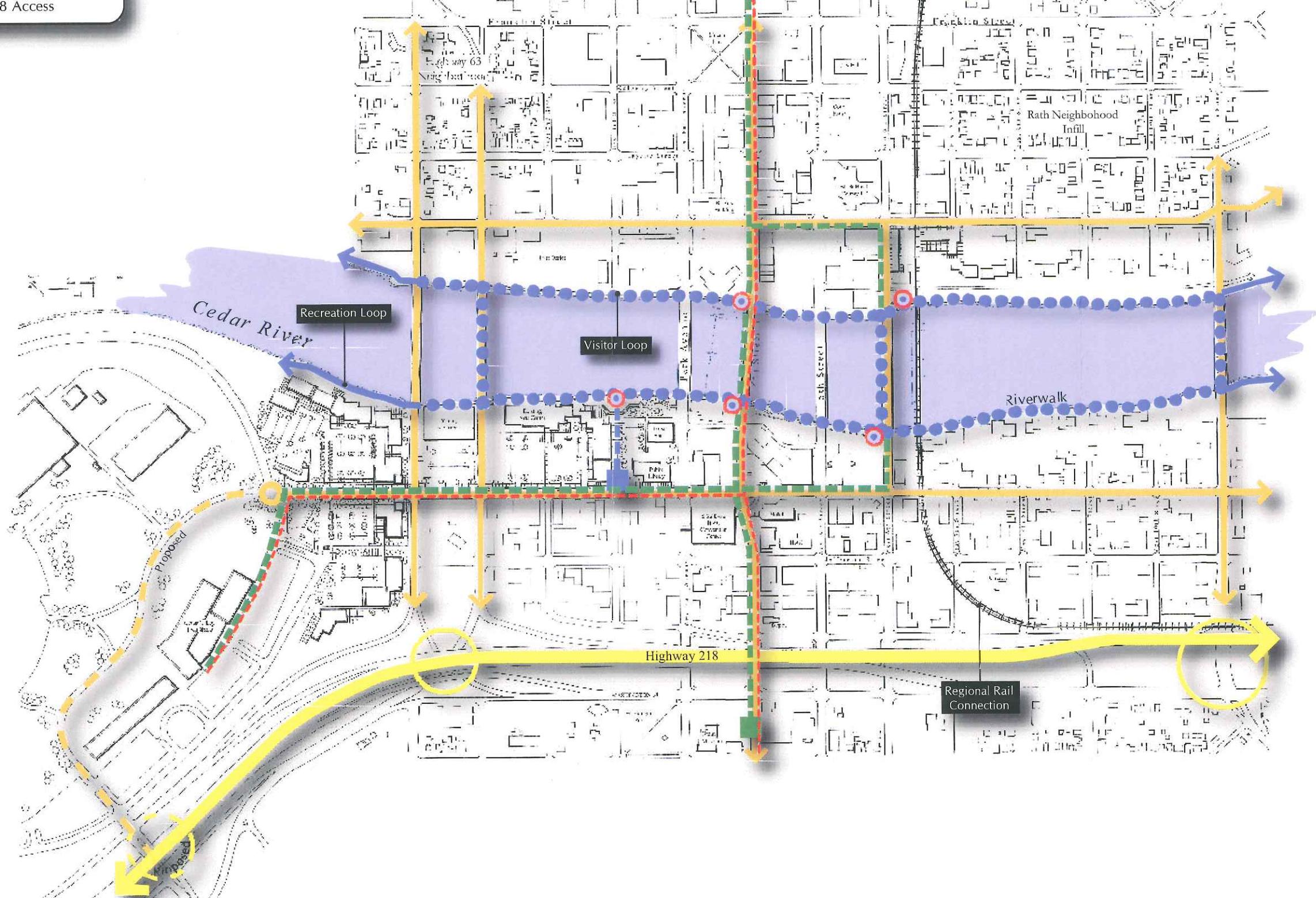
Local downtown traffic would be encouraged to travel between the east and west sides of the river via 1st Street, while regional traffic would be channeled down Mullan Avenue.

Highway 218 Access

Currently, Downtown Waterloo is served by one interchange from USH 218 at USH 63 before the freeway becomes a limited-access highway at 11th Street. The USH 63 interchange is quite confusing and difficult to navigate based on existing road patterns. A new USH 218 interchange is proposed as part of the Cedar Valley TechWorks project. This interchange would be located at the intersection of the proposed Commercial Street extension and USH 218 and would provide more direct and better access to downtown Waterloo. The feasibility of constructing this new interchange is being investigated as part of the USH 63 Study and the City is beginning to seek federal and state funding for design and construction.

Trolley Route

The City should reestablish the historic trolley link along 4th Street to provide ready access between to both sides of the river. Additionally, a rubber-tired trolley route could be developed from the Cedar Valley TechWorks to 4th Street to provide access to those working and attending events at the TechWorks Facility to the businesses and services offered in the historic central business district. (See Downtown-wide Recommendations for further information.)



Cedar River

Recreation Loop

Visitor Loop

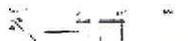
Riverwalk

Highway 218

Regional Rail Connection

Rath Neighborhood Infill

Proposed



Downtown Business Districts

Based on existing and planned activities and downtown circulation patterns, Downtown Waterloo was divided into four primary planning districts and several economic zones. The districts represent the key land use or theme within the sub-planning area, while the zones are important economic roles within the district.

The districts and zones include:

New Economy District

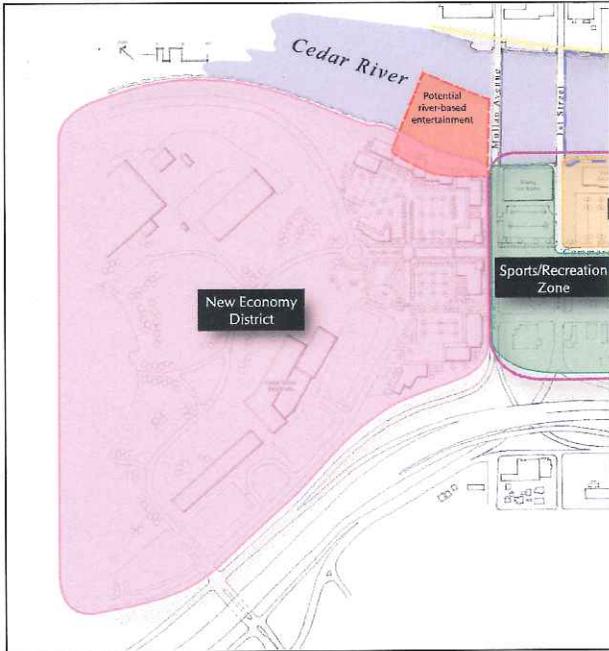
Entertainment District

- Hospitality Zone
- Arts Zone
- Sports/Recreation Zone
- Economic Expansion Zone
- Main Street Commercial Zone

Mixed-use Infill District

- Riverfront Housing Zone

Government District



New Economy District

The New Economy District is envisioned as an urban, high-tech campus aimed at attracting and incubating New Economy businesses with a focus on bioagriculture and advanced manufacturing.

Deere & Company's WaterlooWorks-Westfield Site is located within the New Economy District, which the company has recently invested heavily in retooling into a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing facility.



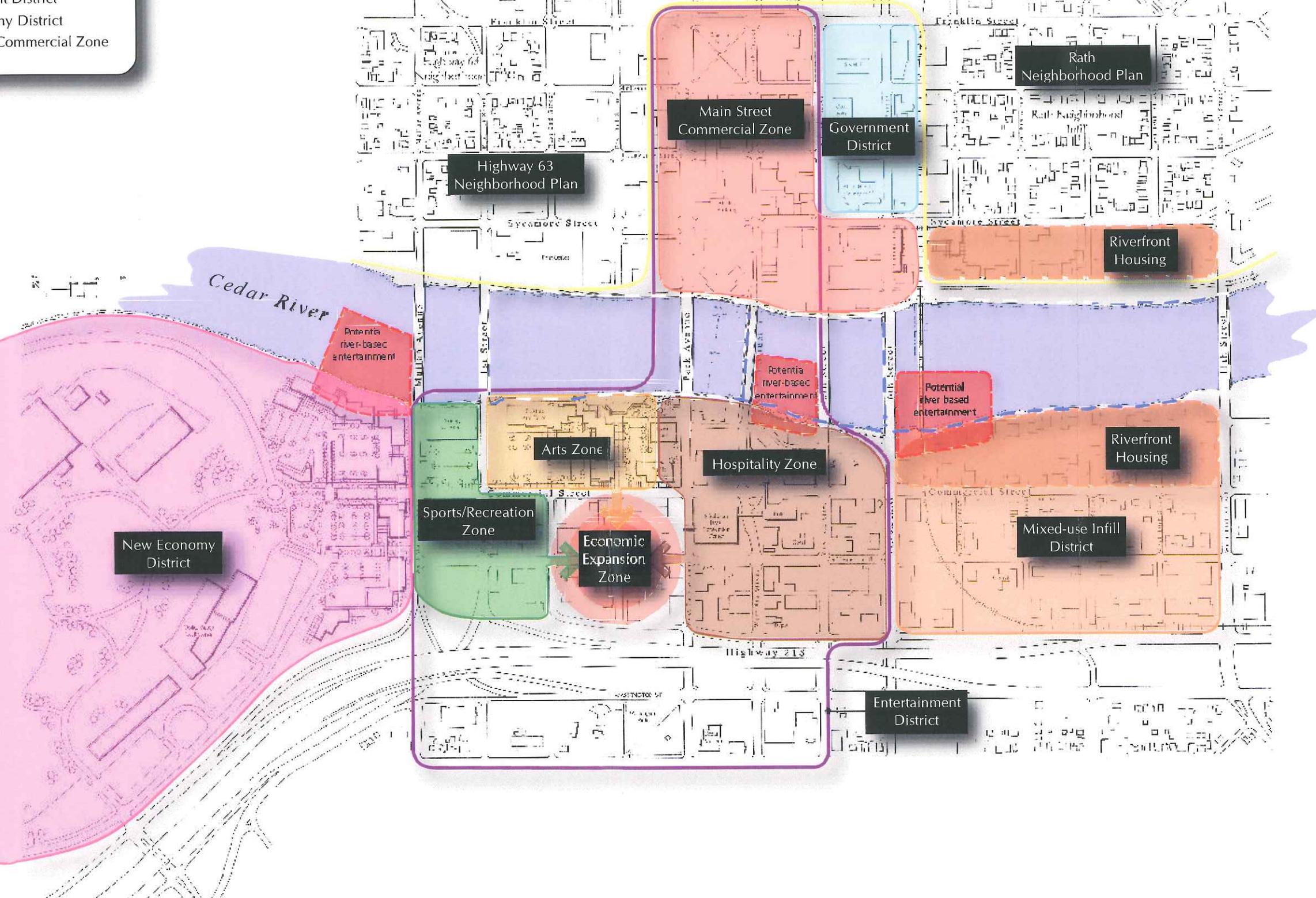
With the reworking of its manufacturing process, several manufacturing and office buildings will be vacated by Deere & Company over the next several years and the company has offered to donate five of these buildings to the Waterloo Development Corporation to house the Cedar Valley TechWorks. The other buildings not being used as part of TechWorks will be demolished once they are no longer needed by the company.

The Cedar Valley TechWorks is conceptualized as the premiere location for the display, incubation, commercialization, and manufacturing of biobased materials and products. This regional initiative is designed to incubate and create new bio-ag businesses. As these fledgling businesses grow and

In the old economy, people believed that:	In the new economy, people believe that:
Being a cheap place to do business was the key.	Being a place rich in ideas and talent is the key.
Attracting companies was the key.	Attracting educated people is a key.
A high-quality physical environment was a luxury that stood in the way of attracting cost-conscious business.	Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledge workers.
Regions won because they held a fixed competitive advantage in some resource or skill.	Regions prosper if organizations and individuals have the ability to learn and adapt.
Economic development was government-led.	Only bold partnerships among business, government, and the nonprofit sector can bring about change.

Source: *The Metropolitan New Economy Index* by the Progressive Policy Institute (April 2001)

City District
Commercial Zone



mature, they will leave the TechWorks facility and relocate to a new location within the New Economy District or the Waterloo Industrial Park, creating new jobs for the region.

The New Economy District's second niche should be advanced manufacturing. The New Economy District should become the showplace of advanced manufacturing technology and techniques. Companies interested in advanced manufacturing will be able to visit companies who are currently implementing the technologies about which they would like to learn.

The New Economy District could provide excellent sites for the development of a new corporate campus, headquarters facilities, and high-tech companies because of its strategic location, its proximity to the downtown core, its connection to high-band width fiber optics, and its access to redundant and reliable power supplies. The redevelopment sites within the district have exceptional visibility and access to USH 218, which connects to the interstate system. The district will have a direct link to the University of Northern Iowa via the extension of Commercial Street, which is renamed University Avenue at USH 218. Waterloo's downtown and all of its amenities, including auxiliary business services, lodging, housing, and entertainment, are located approximately four blocks to the south of the district. High-bandwidth fiber optics and redundant and reliable power are both crucial issues for high-tech, New Economy businesses. High-tech businesses require high-speed fiber optics and the power to keep their operations running and select building sites based on the accessibility to both of these items. Luckily, the New Economy District has wide-bandwidth fiber and a redundant power supply.

Quality of life is key to business and workforce recruitment and retention in the New Economy.

Places solely rich in natural resources are no longer able to attract new businesses. With the construction of the riverwalk system and the Cedar Valley Arts Mall, there will be a vast increase in downtown activity. These new amenities and their proximity give Downtown Waterloo a clear edge in its ability to bring in New Economy businesses.

Recommendations

ENCOURAGE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEDAR VALLEY TECHWORKS. The creation of the Cedar Valley TechWorks offers Downtown Waterloo an opportunity to become one of the centers of the New Uses Economy. This project will draw new businesses, jobs, and visitors to Downtown Waterloo, the Cedar Valley region, and the entire State of Iowa.

EXTENSION OF COMMERCIAL STREET. Commercial Street should be extended northward toward and travel westward behind the planned TechWorks facility. A formal terminus should be constructed as a roundabout that allows traffic movement to either travel down River Drive, Commercial Street extended, or back down Commercial Street into the downtown core.

CONSTRUCTION A NEW HIGHWAY 218 INTERCHANGE. To facilitate the success of the TechWorks Complex and the entire New Economy District, a new interchange from USH 218 should be developed that connects to the extended Commercial Street, which is proposed to be constructed west of the planned facility. Not only would this provide direct access to the New Economy District, but it would also provide a new visitor entrance to the downtown core and physically link the district to the UNI campus in Cedar Falls.

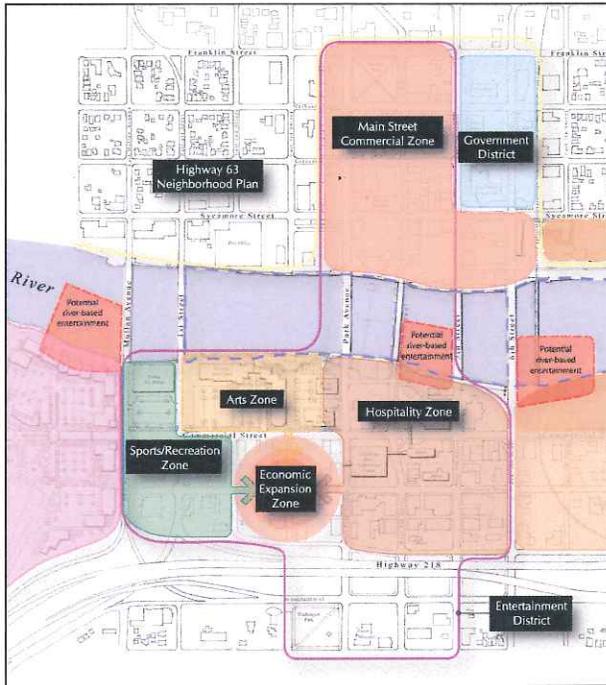
REDEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL STREET/RIVERFRONT SITE. With its riverfront location, access to USH 218, and proximity to the TechWorks Campus, the site to the east of Commercial Street extended has an excellent

opportunity to be a redeveloped part of an urban-business campus with Class-A office space. This site would provide an excellent location for a new corporate headquarters-type development. To increase the amount of developable land at this parcel, River Drive should be routed to the northwest and intersect with the terminus of Commercial Street. Buildings should be sited facing the riverfront and Mullan Avenue with parking interior to the development. This site layout provides an urban edge to Mullan Avenue, providing a buffer between the downtown core and the manufacturing uses within the New Economy District.

REDEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL STREET/HIGHWAY 218

SITE. With potential riverfront views, access to USH 218, and proximity to the TechWorks Campus, the site to the west of Commercial Street extended has an excellent opportunity to be redeveloped as part of an urban-business campus with Class-A office space. This site would provide an excellent location for a new corporate headquarters-type development. New buildings developed on this site should be sited to face USH 218 and Mullan Avenue with parking on the interior of the site. This site layout provides an urban edge to Mullan Avenue, providing a buffer between the downtown core and the manufacturing uses within New Economy District.





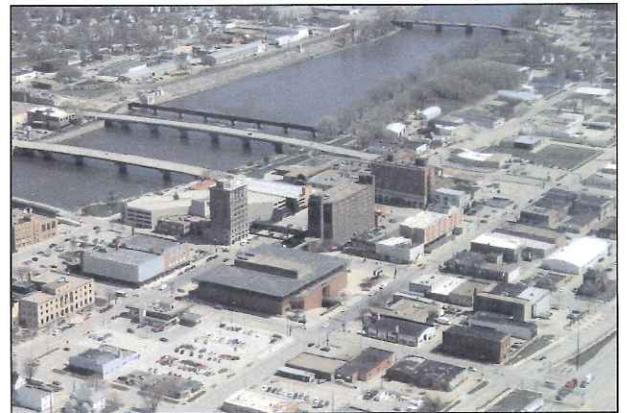
Entertainment District

Activity, vibrancy, and the arts will be themes carried throughout the various economic zones within the Entertainment District. These elements will display the community's commitment to improving and enhancing its cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities, providing residents and visitors with an exciting urban experience, which translates into an improved quality of life. Quality of life is a critical element in today's economic development environment. The creation of the Entertainment District will provide Waterloo with a unique amenity that will give the City a competitive advantage in business and workforce recruitment.

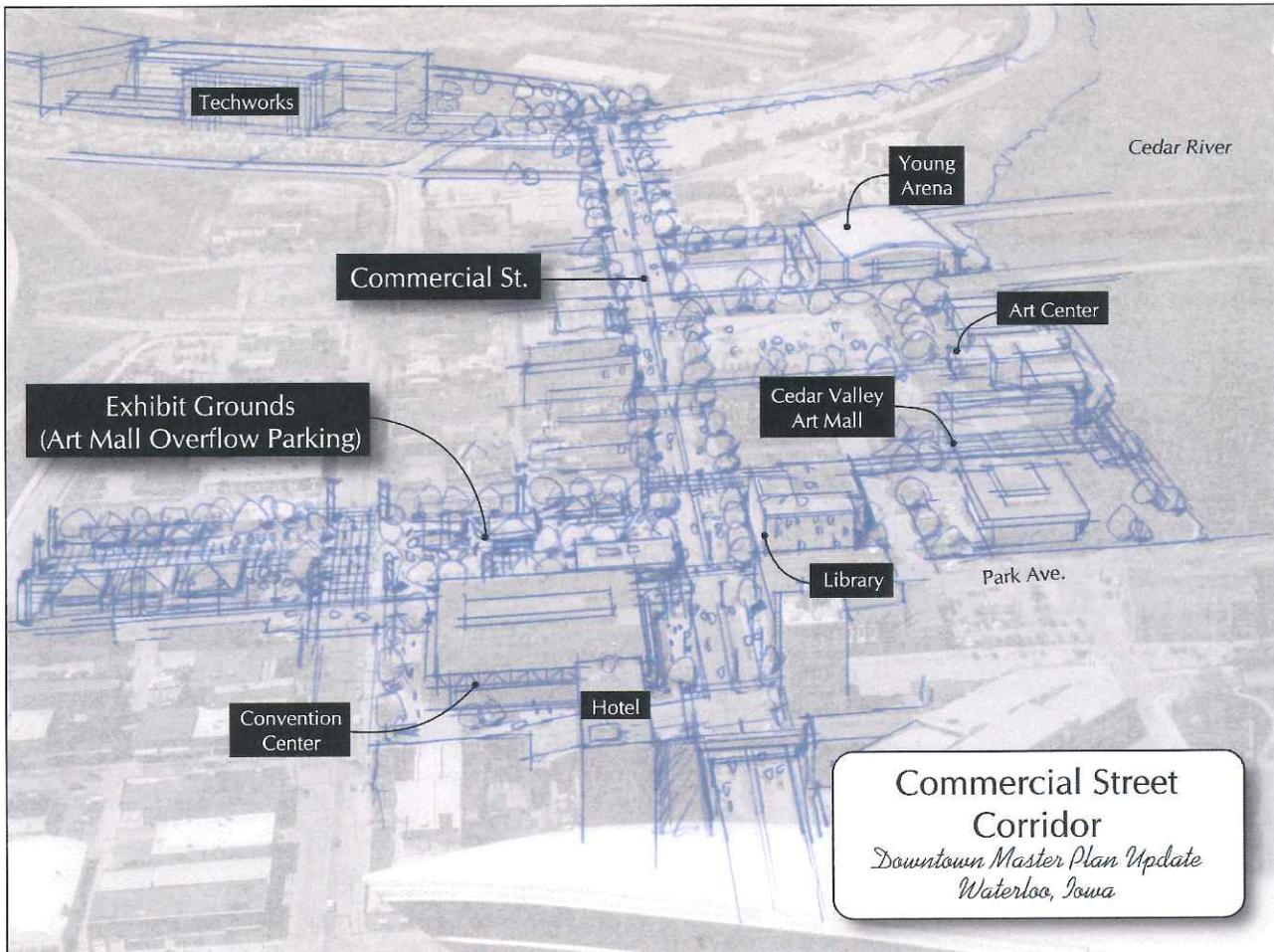
Today, the Entertainment District is a loose collection of local and regional visitor destinations, characterized by significant public-sector investment. Young Area, the Center for the Arts, Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center, and Main Street Waterloo represent key public-sector investments and improvements that have sparked interest in this area. Upon its completion the

Cedar Valley Arts Mall and riverwalk system will add to this collection of activities. To capitalize on these investments, a concentrated entertainment and visitor destination should be developed. New development within the Entertainment District should be built upon existing and planned destinations.

The excitement generated within this district will not only engage Waterloo residents, but also people from the greater Cedar Valley region and out-of-town travelers. Downtown residents will take an evening stroll down the riverwalk and listen to the band playing at the amphitheater; UNI students will bring their parents to the Entertainment District to show them their favorite restaurants, cafes, pubs, and music venues; and a visitor attending a conference will walk across the 4th Street Bridge to find unique stores and eateries. All of these activities bring people to the streets and contribute to the creation of an urban ambiance, which in turn draws more people downtown.



Hospitality Zone: The intersection of Commercial and 4th Streets is the center point of the Hospitality Zone. The Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center, the associated hotel, and the sky-bridge connection are located at this crossroads. A second hotel is located on the other side of the block. With the two downtown hotels and the convention center located here, this zone is Downtown Waterloo's front door—



the first destination to which a visitor is likely to stop. As such, the way in which this zone presents itself to the public is a critical issue.

The Hospitality Zone should be established as the premiere location for overnight stays in the region. To effectively become the hotel district of choice, programming in this area should be sensitive and coordinated with both regional and downtown marketing. The hotels will need to partner with and embrace the new riverwalk system and Arts Mall as a unique marketing element, a draw that the other hotels and communities within the marketplace cannot offer. These elements create the reason to stay in this area. Additionally, these hotels should market themselves in conjunction with the Cedar Valley TechWorks and the potential business traffic this facility will draw to Downtown Waterloo.

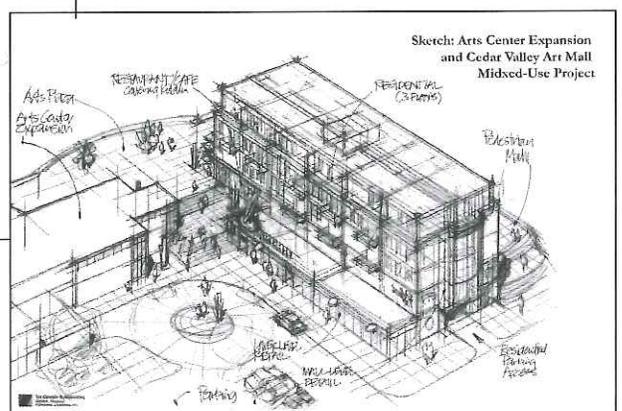
As newer, more modern conference centers have been built in Waterloo's market area, the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center has lost its edge in the marketplace. To renew interest in this facility, recent interior and exterior renovations have taken place at the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center. Additional interest could be sparked for this facility if it were to be marketed in a regional context with the UNI-Dome and the future exposition space at the TechWorks. To make the convention center a more compelling facility for larger conventions and expositions, the programming of the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center should be integrated with that of the TechWorks and the UNI-Dome.



Arts Zone: The Arts Zone is conceptualized as a synergistic mix of cultural, recreational, and entertainment uses that includes the expansion of the Waterloo Center for the Arts and the creation of a riverfront amphitheater, terrace, and plazas with a connection to the riverwalk system. The Arts Mall will be the location of community activities and festivals, ranging from arts exhibitions to outdoor music and theater.

The development of the pedestrian mall and riverfront plazas will create a visual corridor between the riverfront, Commercial Street, and the Economic Expansion Zone, that allows views from USH 218 to continue to the Cedar River. Uplighting of this area at night will make a dramatic statement, drawing eyes into the Arts Mall even at night.

Stemming from the Arts Zone, art and art-related activities should be interwoven into the entire Entertainment District. A revolving “arts walk” could be developed along Commercial Street. A public art exhibit could be placed along Commercial Street, initially from Mullan Avenue to 6th Street and expanding to the terminus Commercial Street. The arts walk could function as a “trailhead” for the Arts Mall, peaking visitor curiosity and drawing visitors to the Center for the Arts, the plaza, the riverwalk, and the amphitheater, as well as to the retail and restaurant elements of this project. As interest in the art walk grows, the riverwalk and 4th Street should be added to the arts programming.





Sports/Recreation Zone: During a sell-out, nearly 3,000 spectators are brought to Downtown Waterloo's Young Arena, yet no complementary activities have been created to augment this economic activity. Downtown Waterloo is also on the route of the American Discovery Trail, the first coast-to-coast recreation trail. Recreational retail could be built from this opportunity and from the proximity of the Cedar River to this area.

Additional sports- and recreation-related activities could be generated from the energy created by Young Arena and the national/regional trail system,

as well as by the impending improvements to the riverwalk loop and enhanced navigability of the Cedar River. Sports-themed retail, restaurants, and bars should be located in this area to capture the economic potential generated from Young Arena event-goers. These businesses should be open before and after games to extend the duration that people remain downtown. Trailhead-related retail could also be located in this area, such as a bicycle shops and sporting-goods shops, to spur additional benefit from the investment in the recreational trails and the river. Increased ability for visitors to rent outdoor activity equipment, such as bicycles and inline skates, and water-based equipment, such as canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats, should be provided in this area.

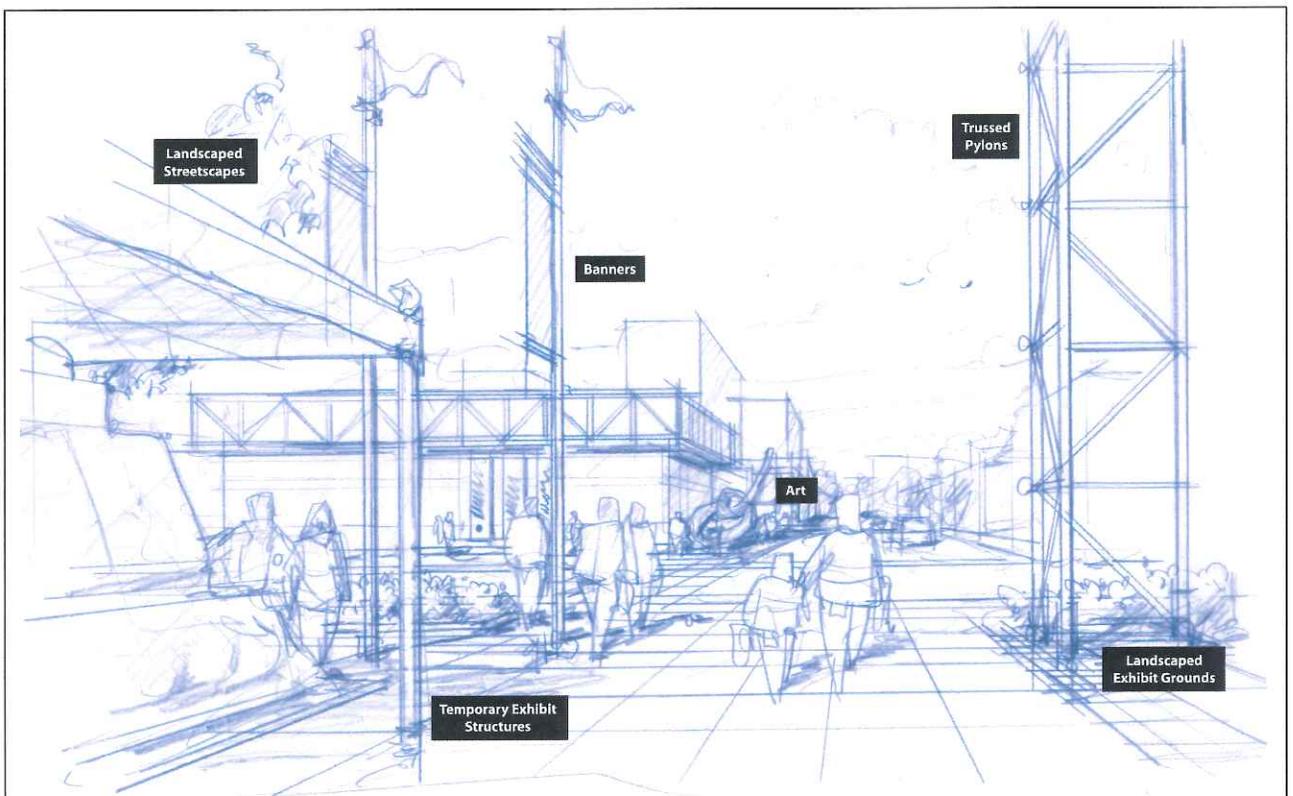
Development in this economic zone should first focus on parcels with Commercial Street frontage. Larger parcels with USH 218 visibility should be reserved for a larger user, such as a private-sector fitness facility. Parcels in close proximity to Young Arena should be reserved for this facilities potential expansion.

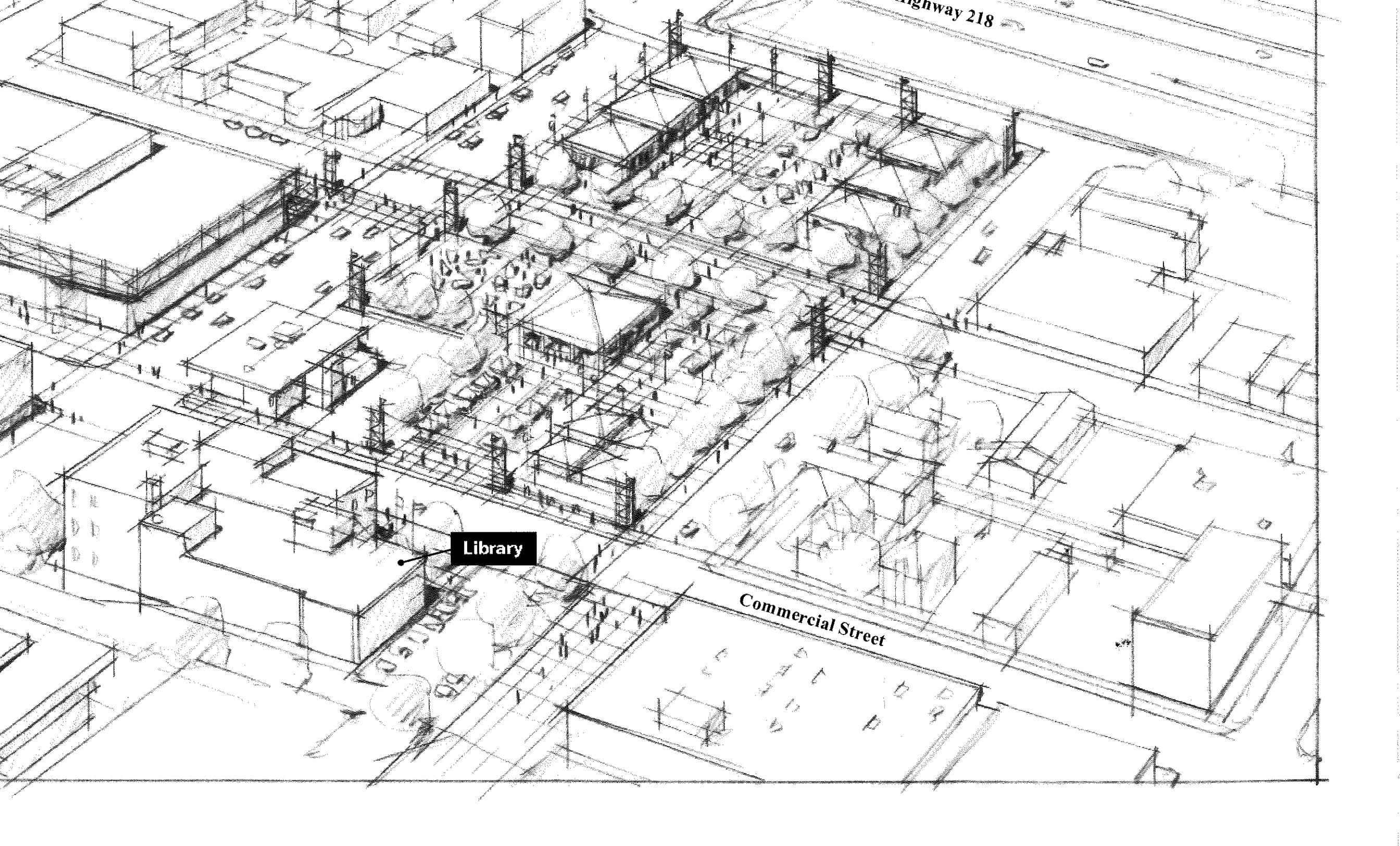


Economic Expansion Zone: The first priority for the Economic Expansion Zone would be to reserve it as a possible expansion area for indoor exhibit space at the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center; however until the need for larger exhibit space arises, this area should be assembled, held in reserve, and developed into a multi-use outdoor facility. The Economic Expansion Zone offers the opportunity to expand the impact of the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center by providing a high-quality, outdoor display area.

The design of the outdoor exhibit area should visually identify this area as an extension of the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center. Architectural features of the convention center could be reflected in decorative and utilitarian elements within the outdoor exhibit. Streetscapes should have street trees and decorative plantings. The exhibit grounds should be landscaped in a fashion that allow for flexibility of uses within the space, specifically, allowing for outdoor exhibits as well as overflow parking from the Arts Mall and community festivals and events.

When not in use as outdoor exhibit space for the convention center, this area could be used as a community event, festival, and celebration space in conjunction with other downtown venues, including the convention center, Arts Mall, and Young Arena. Possible events could include art fairs and sales, a staging area for a community music festivals, or outdoor basketball and inline hockey tournaments.





Library

Commercial Street

Highway 218

In addition to special events, weekly community events could take place in this zone. The community has been investigating the possibility of developing a farmer's market. This area would make an excellent location for a seasonal farmer's market as it is in the heart of the Entertainment District. During less temperate seasons, the farmer's market could be moved indoors to the convention center.



Main Street Commercial Zone: The Main Street Commercial Zone will give a location for many of the opportunities that arise within the Entertainment District. Within this zone is the core of the City's historical building stock, traditional storefronts, and existing businesses. Main Street Waterloo, an organization dedicated to improving the central business district, has effectively begun the rehabilitation of this district by assisting property and business owners with façade improvements, redevelopment, and construction of buildings, as well as business ventures through low-interest loans and tax rebates. Over the last several years, this organization has facilitated significant historic rehabilitation of residential and commercial uses in the East River District along 4th Street.

The revitalization of this area should continue with first-floor store fronts being filled with commercial business-

es, such as retail stores, restaurants, coffee shops, and pubs, and upper floors providing office space or apartment living. Providing office space and housing within immediate proximity of the commercial businesses ensures a built in market for these services.

Additionally, with both office and residential uses, residents and workers will remain in the Main Street Commercial Zone the entire day, giving the area a feeling of vibrancy. Storefront activities should be expanded to the street, to include outdoor café dining and sidewalk vending.

Recommendations

IMPROVE 4TH STREET GATEWAY. The 4th Street gateway is one of the primary entrances into downtown Waterloo from the western neighborhoods. The redevelopment and rehabilitation of this area is critical to the visitor image of the downtown. A streetscaping program should be created for this area that is inviting and provides a positive image for the City.

COMPLETE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CEDAR VALLEY ARTS MALL AND RIVERWALK SYSTEM. The implementation of the Cedar Valley Arts Mall and riverwalk system should proceed.

IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN STREETS CAPING. High quality streetscaping within this district will help engage visitors. A formal yet unique streetscape design should create an identifiable district within the downtown, uniting the separate economic zones. Once the streetscaping has been designed and implemented, ongoing maintenance of these improvements will be critical. The condition of the landscaping and hardscaping should be monitored to ensure that they meet the high standards that this district requires.

CREATE A COMMERCIAL STREET ARTS WALK. The City, Center for the Arts, and Main Street Waterloo should partner to create an Arts Walk Program along Commercial Street.

REVIEW ZONING ORDINANCES TO ENSURE ABILITY TO CREATE SIDEWALK CAFÉ SITTING AND OUTDOOR SALES.

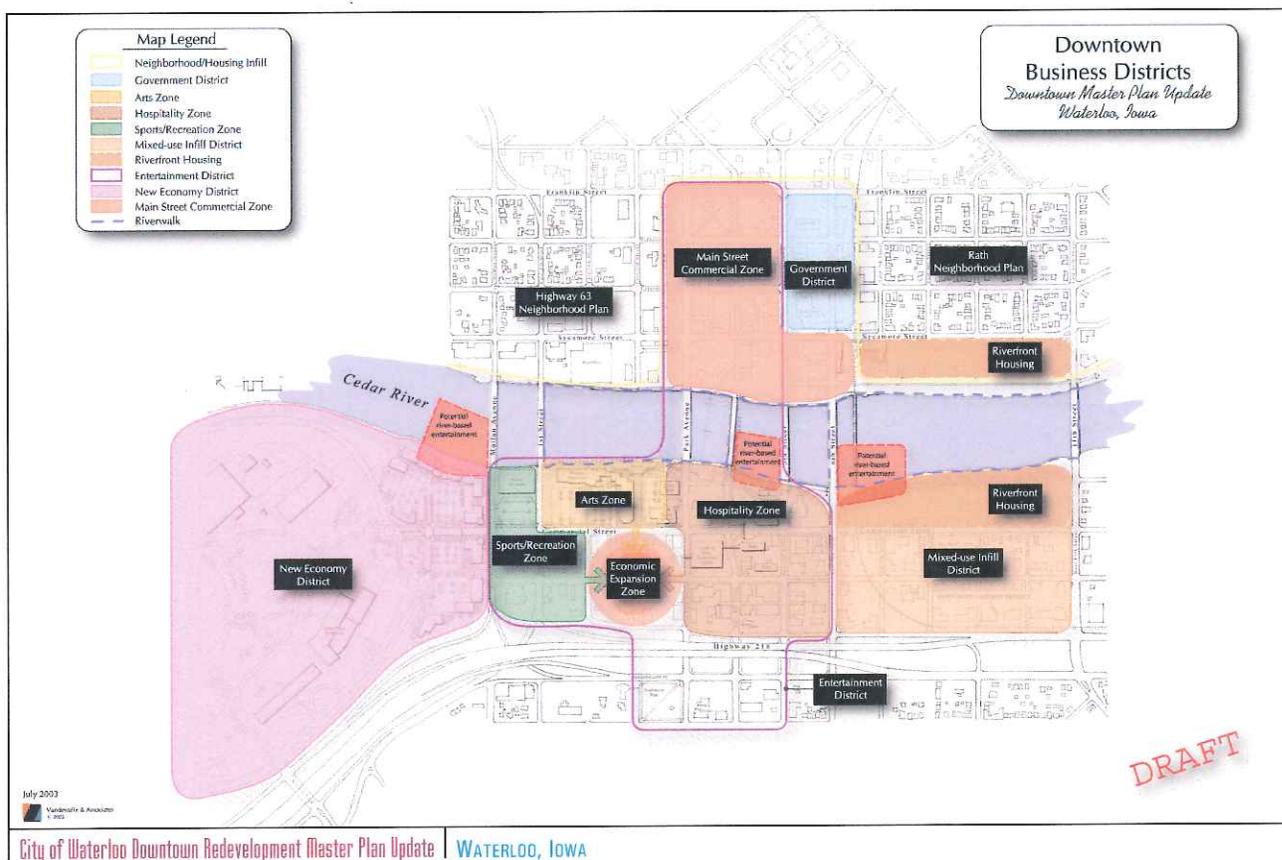
The City's existing zoning ordinances should be reviewed to ensure that they do not hinder café sitting and outdoor sales on City sidewalks. If the zoning codes do constrain these uses, an overlay district should be developed that would allow these uses.

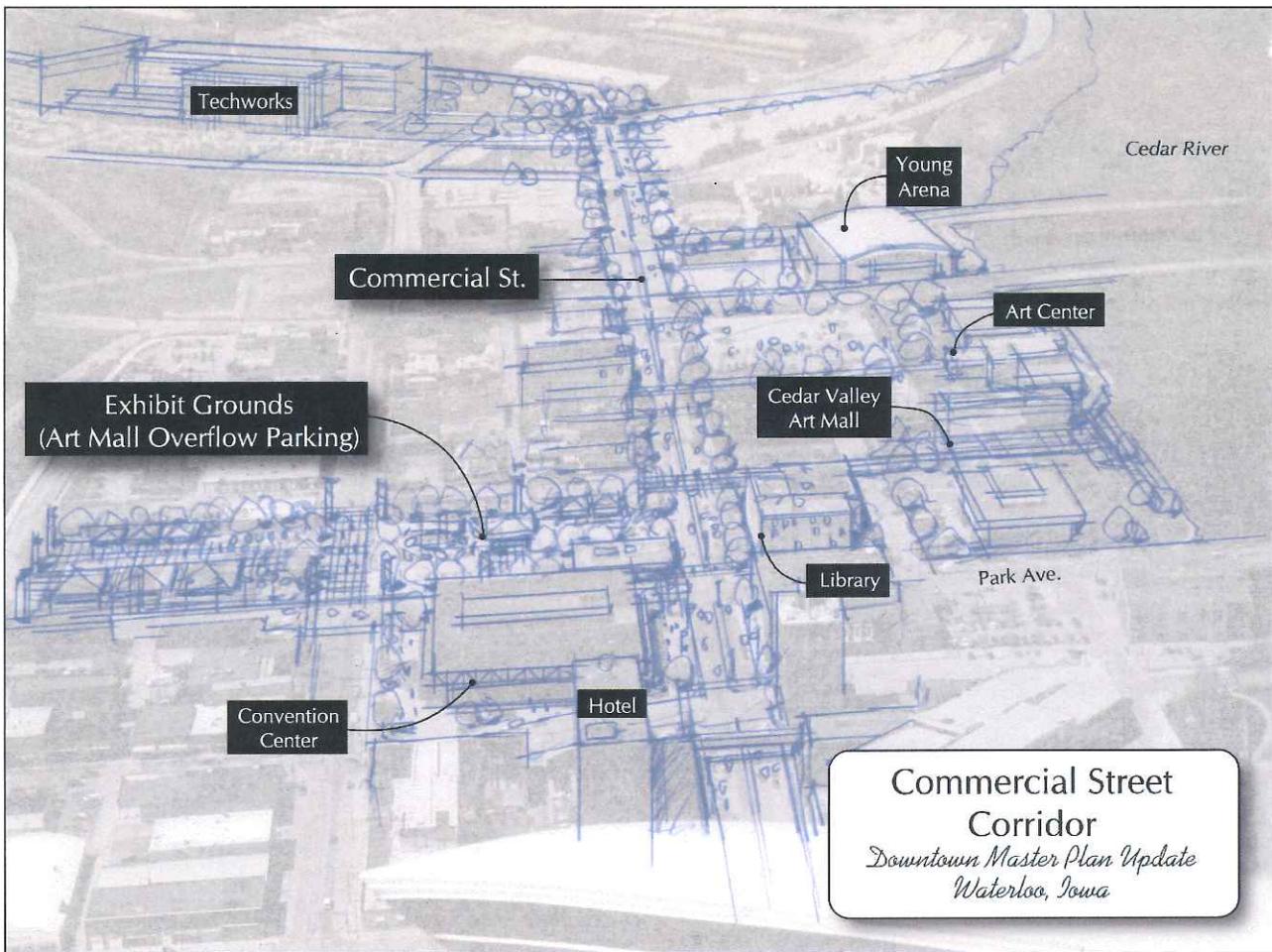
TARGET LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS. The City should continue to support Main Street Waterloo's efforts to reinvigorate this critical zone within the Entertainment District. The City of Waterloo has a well-established Main Street improvements program managed by Main Street Waterloo.

River-based Entertainment

As part of the City's Vision Iowa award, the City is studying the viability of constructing a bladder dam system that would increase the water level of the Cedar River several feet, enough to allow for water-based recreation activities. These activities could include a kayaking course, canoeing, boating, and/or a riverboat casino.

Some community members are testing the feasibility of bringing a river-based gaming facility to Waterloo. If Waterloo is granted a gaming license from the State and the development of a gaming boat becomes an option, the gaming boat facility should be located in the downtown. If sited elsewhere, entertainment and development opportunities would be siphoned from the central city. The three locations identified as river-based entertainment would be suitable locations for a gaming facility.



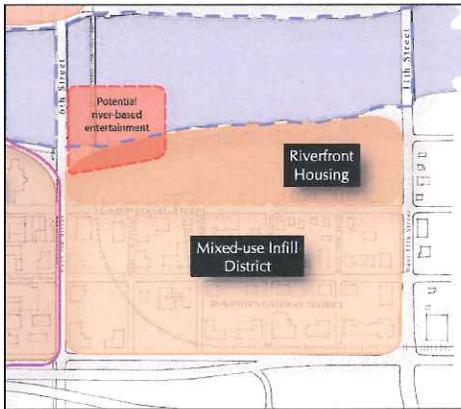


Commercial Street Revitalization

The New Economy District, and particularly TechWorks, will be a major economic driver for Downtown Waterloo, bringing new businesses and jobs to the downtown; the Entertainment District will be a concentrated visitor, cultural, and recreational destination; and the Mixed-Use Infill District provides an ideal location for auxiliary business services and workforce housing. Commercial Street runs through all three districts and acts as a uniting force between jobs, entertainment, tourism, services, and housing. Nearly all of the existing and planned activity centers

within the western portion of the downtown are located on or adjacent to Commercial Street.

Commercial Street should be designed as a compelling pedestrian- and auto-friendly corridor in the western portion of Downtown Waterloo. High-quality streetscaping should be designed that includes landscaping, street trees, and street furniture. New development on Commercial Street should emphasize zero lot-lines, and mixed-use buildings with rear parking. Wide sidewalk terraces should be constructed to allow for outdoor retail sales and dining.



Mixed-Use Infill District

With excellent visibility from USH 218, river front development opportunities, and strong connectivity to the adjacent downtown areas, the Mixed-Use Infill District is envisioned to transition into an urban, work-live neighborhood. Housing within this district is within walking distance of the major downtown employment centers, including Deere & Company's Westfield Site, city and county government, and the many businesses within the existing central business district, as well as the anticipated job-base resulting from planned New Economy activities, Entertainment, and Government Districts. Riverfront housing options will provide an excellent option for workforce housing with direct access to the riverwalk amenity.

With the built-in residential market and the close proximity to major employment centers, the 11th Street corridor could function as a neighborhood business and service center. Several active and viable businesses will need to be relocated during site assembly within the Entertainment District. Business services ranging from accountants to attorneys to printing shops to banking as well as retail functions ranging from cafes to groceries to drycleaners would be well located on 11th Street.

The Mixed-use Infill District is an ideal location for local businesspersons and small-scale developers to

truly influence the future of Downtown Waterloo. Unlike the Entertainment District, small businesspersons would be able to own the buildings in which their businesses are situated. Small-scale housing developers would have the opportunities to develop three- or four-flat buildings that would provide affordable, quality workforce housing to the knowledge workers drawn to Downtown Waterloo because of the development of the Cedar Valley TechWorks.

Redevelopment within the Mixed-use Infill District will occur from the edges—the riverfront, USH 218 frontage, 6th Street, and 11th Street. As the riverfront housing, highway oriented business redevelopment, 11th Street commercial infill, and 6th Street business infill occurs, energy will move toward the center of this district, making the residential infill more attractive.

Recommendations

INFILL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE 11TH STREET CORRIDOR. The 11th Street gateway is the last intersection on Highway 218 before it turns into a freeway. This is a very important entrance into the downtown neighborhood and should be improved. This area has excellent visibility from Highway 218. As much as possible, service and commercial businesses should be relocate along the 11th Street corridor,

REDEVELOPMENT HIGHWAY-ORIENTED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT. Special attention should be paid to the design of USH 218 frontage between 6th and 11th Streets. Upgrading USH 218 significantly altered the entrance to the City by bringing traffic through neighborhoods never intended to serve as the City's front door. Many of these parcels are no longer in their "highest and best use," which necessitates assessing the economic viability and aesthetics of this corridor. The City should create a new image for this corridor by restructuring the economics of these parcels to better

fit adjacent planned uses, as well as to create a high-quality entrance to downtown Waterloo.

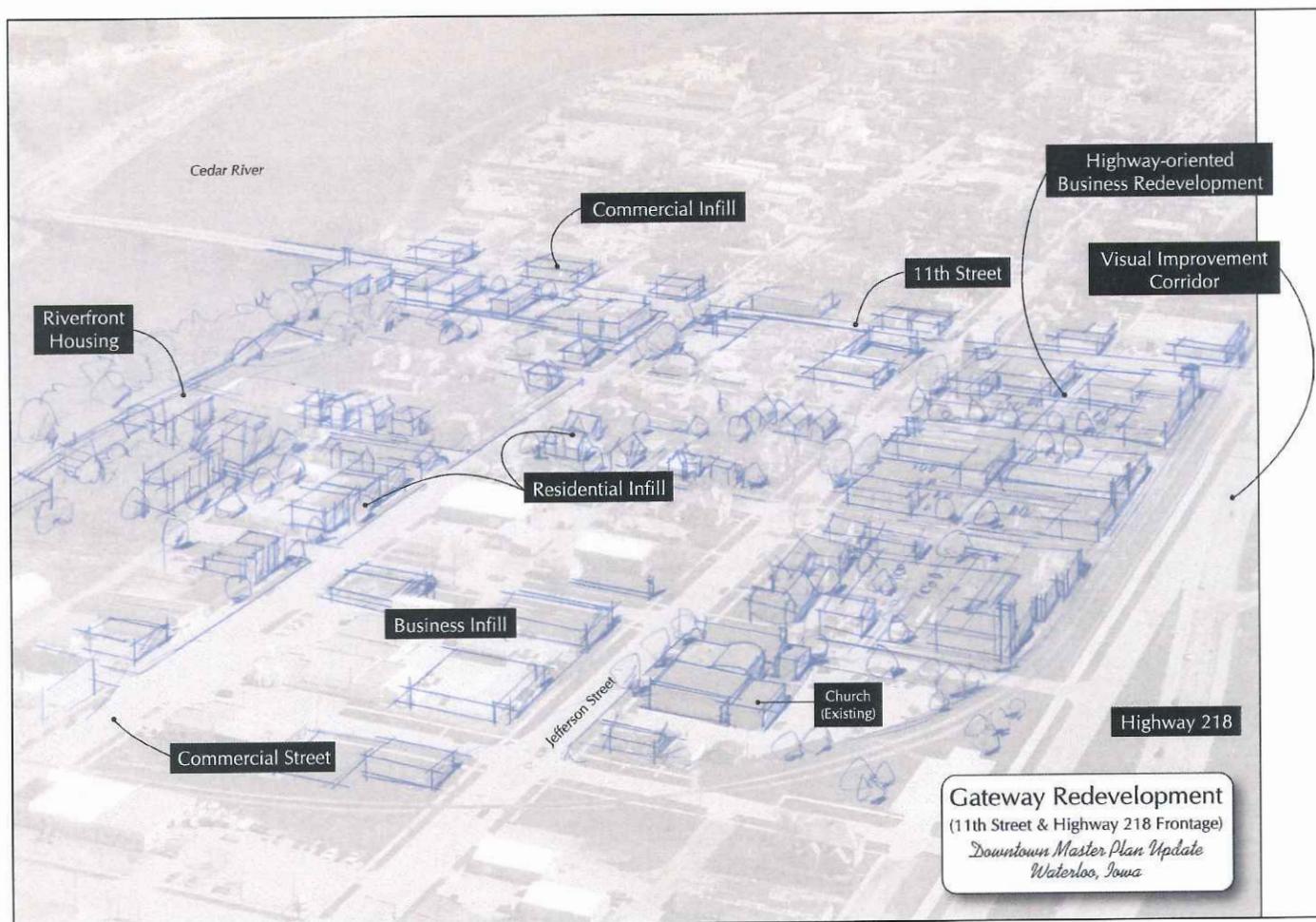
The redevelopment of this area should focus on locating locally owned businesses at the intersection of USH 218 and 11th Street and transition to multi-family residential buildings toward 7th Street. Commercial buildings should be oriented toward the highway with entrances on Jefferson Street, while the residential buildings should be oriented toward Jefferson Street.

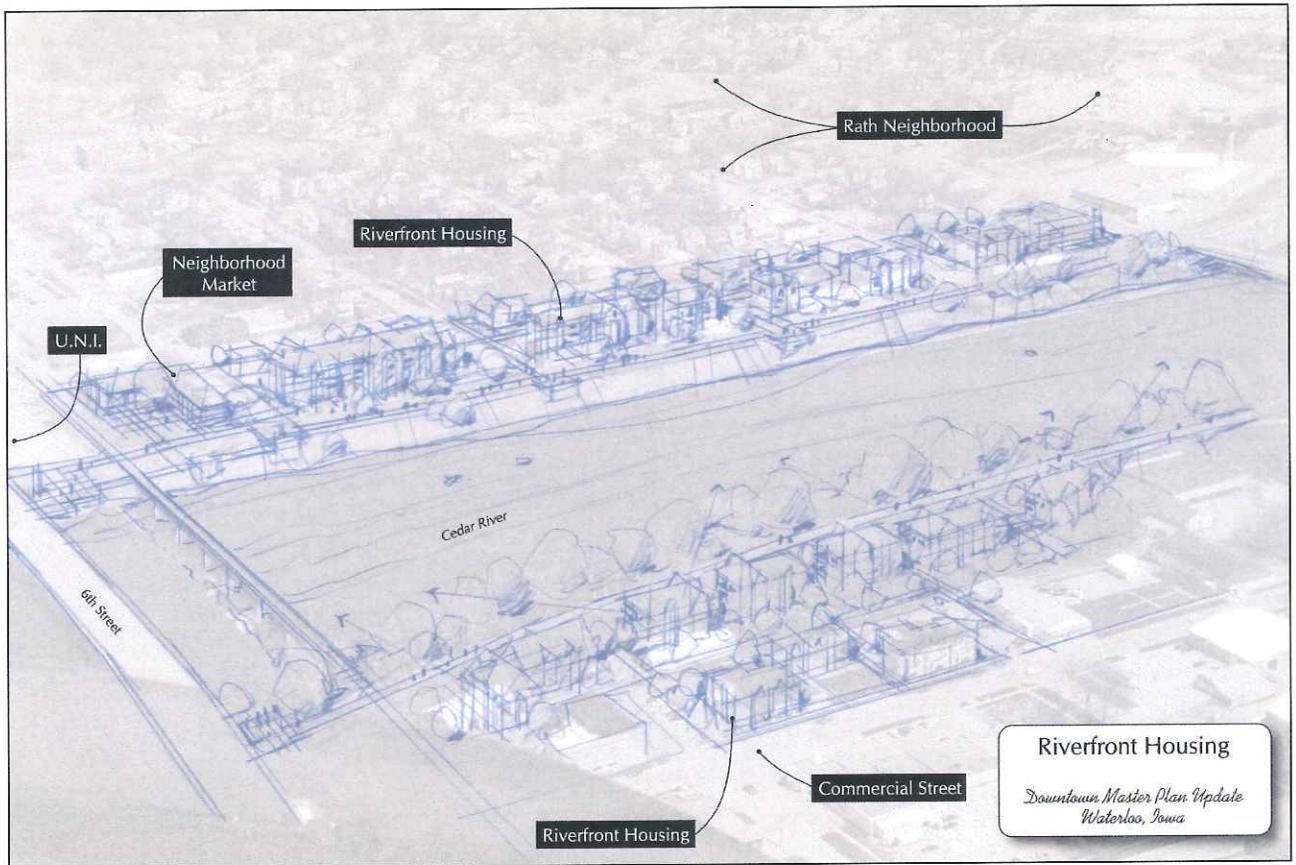
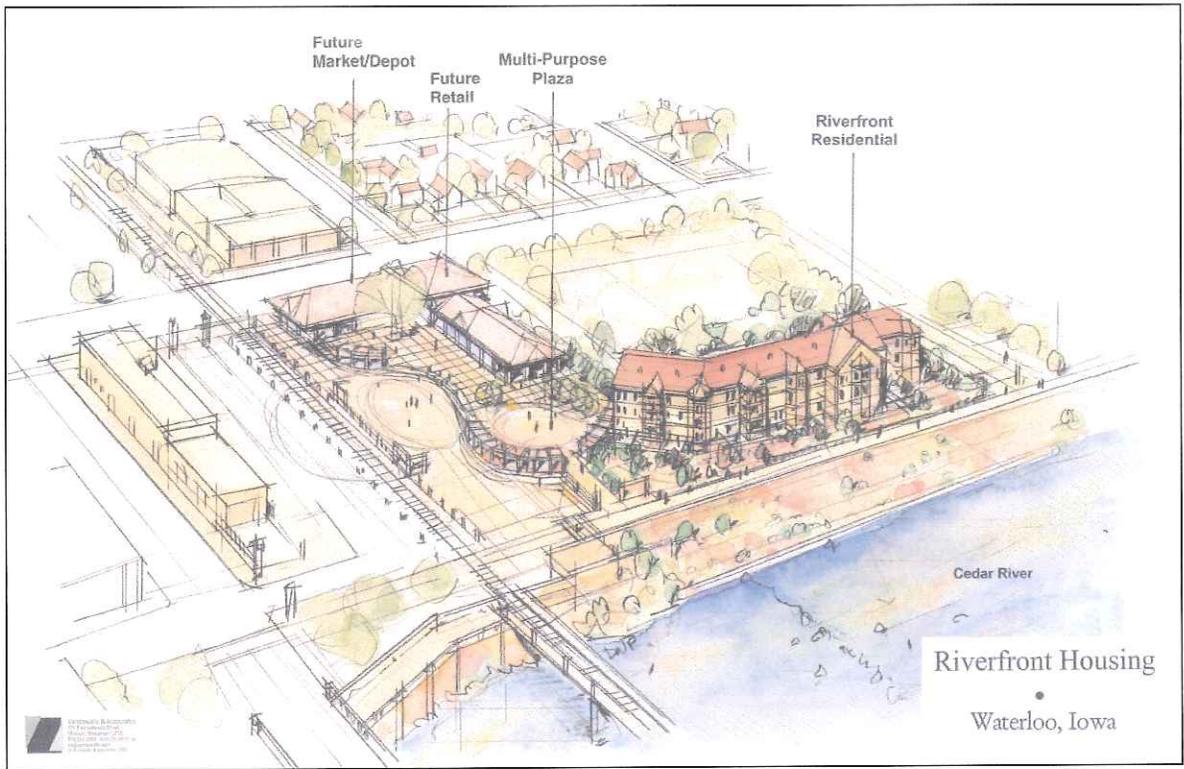
DEVELOPMENT OF RIVERFRONT HOUSING. River-oriented housing should be developed along the western bank of the Cedar River. Improvements to the river-walk loop will improve the real estate potential of these properties.

IDENTIFY PRIORITY RESIDENTIAL INFILL SITES. Priority residential infill sites should be identified within this district. Likely sites would be on Commercial Street from 6th Street to 11th Street and on the block bordered by 9th, Commercial, 10th, and Jefferson Streets.

IDENTIFY BUSINESS INFILL SITES. while less-service oriented businesses should be relocated to the area between 6th and 8th Streets between Commercial and Jefferson Streets.

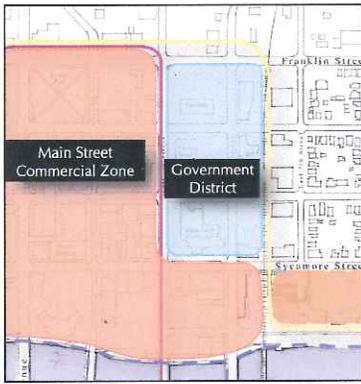
REVIEW ZONING TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO REDEVELOPMENT. The existing City zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that it permits zero lot-line, multi-family housing development. Additionally, parking requirements should be reviewed to ensure that required parking numbers are flexible within this district.





Riverfront Housing

The properties along the eastern and western banks of the Cedar River between 6th and 11th Streets represent Waterloo's best locations for the development of "market rate" riverfront housing. New housing along these segments of the Cedar River offers many amenities to residents that are currently underutilized, such as direct access to riverfront and downtown activities. With the implementation of the riverwalk, increased real estate opportunities will arise on both sides of the river. The City has already started assembling properties for riverfront housing within the eastern portion of the Riverfront Housing Zone. New riverfront housing should spark new investment in the surrounding neighborhoods.



Government District

Waterloo is the county seat of Black Hawk County. The City and County buildings are located in the East River District. The Government Campus is economically vital to this area's long-term growth. As the population of the County grows, the City and County should anticipate and facilitate the expansion of the government campus in its current East River District location. Together, they should design a long-range facilities plan that integrates blight elimination and redevelopment with future governmental facilities growth. As City and County governments expand, they should maintain and increase their offices and facilities in this area.

In addition to long-term growth and redevelopment potential, the government campus is an economic driver for this area, stimulating daytime business in

the Main Street Commercial Zone. Government employees and people doing business with the City and County come to this area each day and utilize established businesses. Maintaining these current service- and retail-oriented businesses while creating and enhancing business entrances in this area should be a high priority. With a well-planned government campus, these businesses will continue to grow and add vitality to the eastern portion of downtown.

Recommendations

COMPLETE A LONG-RANGE GOVERNMENT FACILITIES MASTER PLAN. The City and County should develop a joint long-range government facilities master plan for future space needs.

ESTABLISH A STANDARD FOR HIGH QUALITY "PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE". The City should develop a design standard for all new public buildings constructed within the Government District to set the district's "design tone"

DEVELOP IDENTIFIABLE GOVERNMENT DISTRICT STREETSCAPING. Streetscaping within the district should set it apart from the rest of the downtown and express the district's civic nature.

Rath Neighborhood

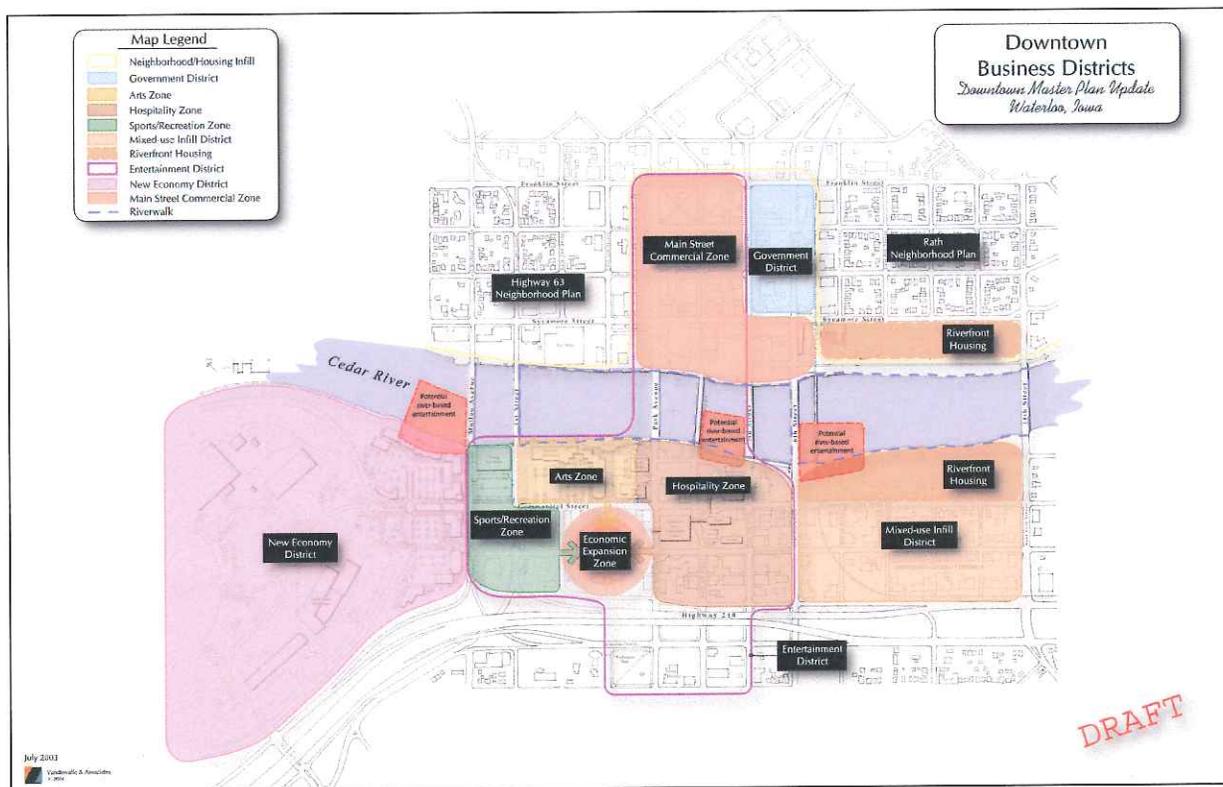
In 2001, the Rath Area Neighborhood Plan was developed. Recommendations that overlap with the Master Plan project area will be integrated into the new downtown recommendations. These include those made for the Cedar River Neighborhood, the government/institutional expansion area, and the Franklin and 11th Street commercial redevelopment area. (See Appendix 2 for Rath Neighborhood Districts Map. For further detail on the recommendations made for the Rath Area, please refer to the 2001 Rath Area Neighborhood Plan.)

Highway 63 Neighborhoods

In Spring 2003, the City began the U.S. Highway 63 Study. This process has just begun and the Downtown Master Plan Update will not make specific recommendations for this area as the public decision-making

process has not yet been completed. Land use recommendations for this area adopted as an outcome of that process should be integrated into the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan Update.

As discussed in Downtown Circulation Patterns (page 19), reinstating two-way traffic on both Mullan Avenue and First Street, the one-way pair system that routes USH 63 through Downtown Waterloo, should be a top priority in the economic restructuring of downtown. These streets were developed as a one-way pair system in order to move enormous amounts of rush hour traffic to and from the City's manufacturing plants; however, preliminary analysis of the current traffic counts does not indicate that existing traffic flow could not be handled on two-way streets. Further study and discussions with the Iowa Department of Transportation will be needed to determine the ultimate feasibility of returning to two-way traffic patterns.



Overall Downtown Recommendations

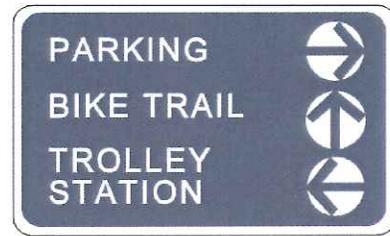
Downtown Housing

As housing has developed on the edge of Waterloo, residents have abandoned downtown living. To encourage people to reside in the downtown, the housing situation in this area needs to improve through restoration, infill, and new types of development. Stabilization and reinvigoration of the downtown housing market can be accomplished by restoring existing single-family homes and traditional neighborhoods, encouraging the continued development of rehabilitated housing in the central downtown district, and creating market-rate, riverfront housing along the Cedar River.

Offering several different types of housing within the downtown will help to draw new life into downtown. Apartments, lofts, condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes, at all price ranges, will have a niche in the downtown area. Bringing people to live in downtown will spur twenty-four hour activity, increasing the stability of existing retail and service businesses while promoting the development of additional businesses in this area.

Wayfinding

To encourage tourist travel and day trips to the Downtown, Waterloo should begin development of a regional wayfinding program in and around other regional attractions and tourist draws. Signage cannot begin just outside of downtown on USH 218; it should begin in Iowa City, the Quad Cities, and

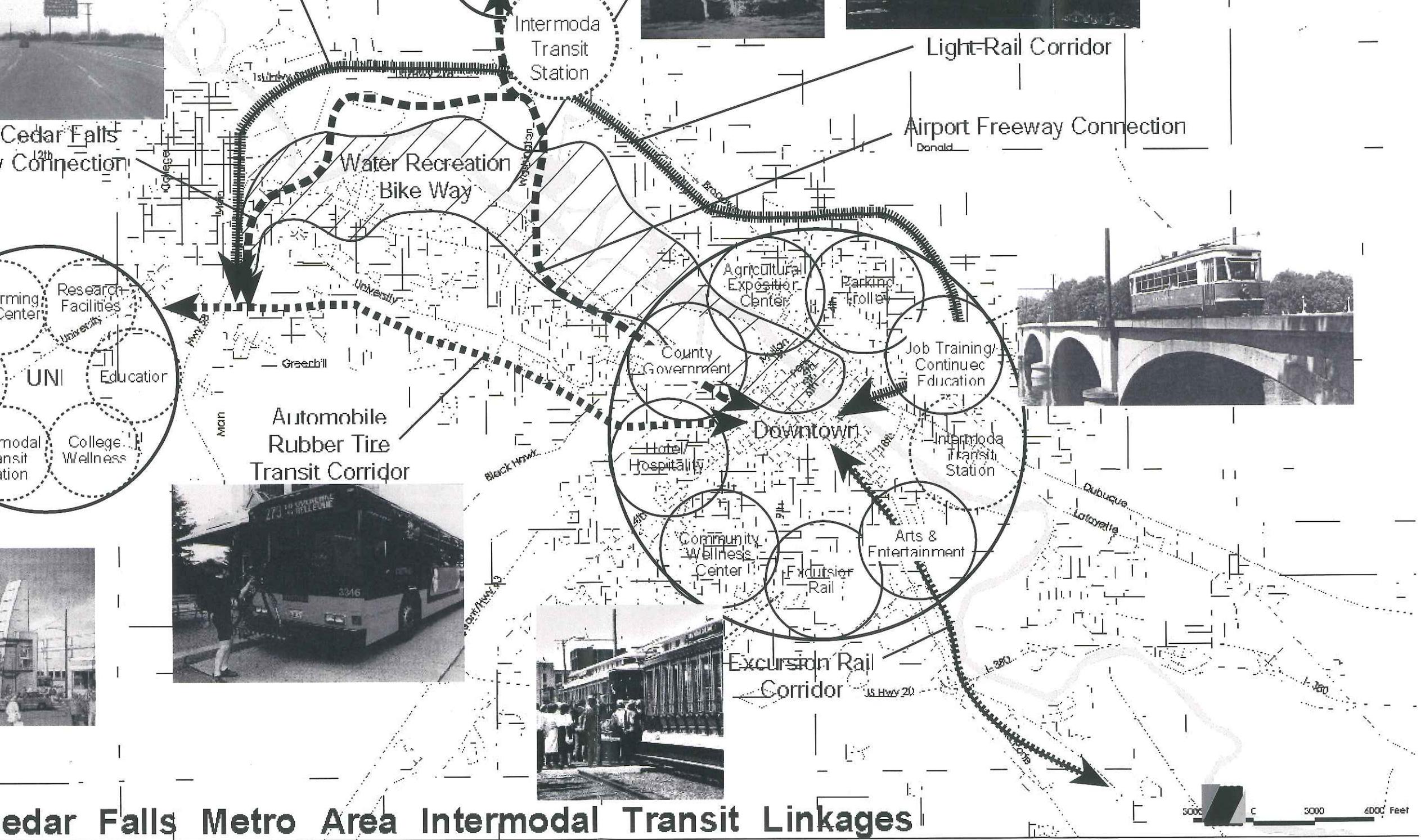


Dubuque and announce attractions in Downtown Waterloo, such as the Arts Mall, 4th Street retail, lodging, and other downtown amenities and activities.

Once off the highway, visitor destinations and parking should be well marked to facilitate easy movement within the downtown. Directive signs indicating hotels, the Convention Center, the Cedar Valley Arts Mall, and other destinations should be present immediately upon entering the downtown. People need to be made aware of the trolley so they can comfortably leave their cars in centralized parking areas, encouraging downtown pedestrian-friendliness.

Excursion Rail

With the development of the Ag-Exhibit at the TechWorks, and the historical link between Waterloo and Moline because of Deere & Company, the creation of an excursion rail connection between the John Deere Commons in Moline and the proposed Ag-Exhibit would draw agricultural history visitors to Waterloo. Additionally, excursion rail opportunities are beginning to be discussed within the Cedar River Valley, particularly connecting Cedar Rapids and Iowa City.



Cedar Falls
13th
Connection

Intermoda
Transit
Station

Light-Rail Corridor

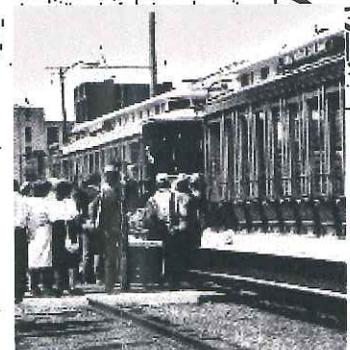
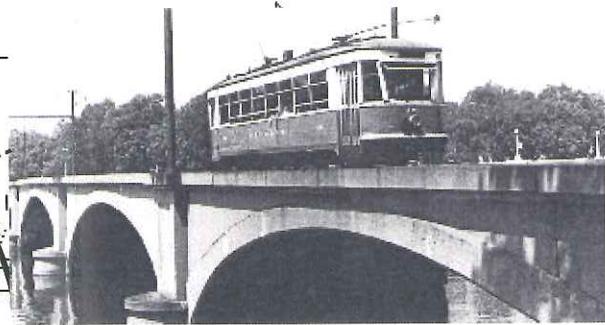
Airport Freeway Connection
Donald

Water Recreation
Bike Way

Research
Facilities
University
UNI
Education
College
Wellness
modal
transit
center

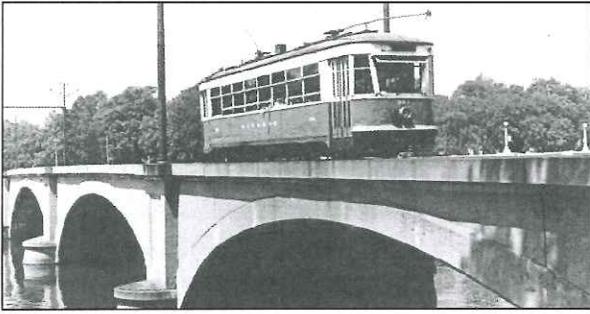
Automobile
Rubber Tire
Transit Corridor

Agricultural
Exposition
Center
County
Government
Hotel
Hospitality
Downtown
Community
Wellness
Center
Arts &
Entertainment
Excursion
Rail
Intermoda
Transit
Station
Job Training/
Continued
Education
Parking
Motels



Cedar Falls Metro Area Intermodal Transit Linkages





Trolley

The City should reestablish one strategic and historic streetcar corridor along 4th Street, linking the Group Museum Campus on the southwest side with Lincoln Park on the northeast side. In between these terminals are a number of potential stops for retail businesses, restaurants, galleries, and amenities.

This “new/old” system will be an attraction in itself; more importantly, it will allow parking in strategic locations to support large businesses, gatherings, and shopping districts on both sides of the Cedar River. This trolley/parking system will remedy potential parking problems and increase the pedestrian-friendliness of the downtown environment.

Additionally, tourists drawn to the downtown will have the ability to use the streetcar as a means of transport from shops and attractions on one side of the river to the other. This rail-based streetcar route will be complemented by a rubber-tire trolley running on an intersecting loop to connect additional destinations off of the 4th Street corridor, including Commercial Street and the TechWorks facility.

Regional Transportation System

Waterloo should maintain the railroad tracks going through the downtown. The remaining track runs through downtown Cedar Falls and all of the other cities in the Cedar Valley region. Creating synergy between the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls and the industrial commercialization potential of Waterloo remains a critical need for Downtown Waterloo. Located adjacent to the proposed eastern Riverfront Housing Zone and on the active rail line, the former Depot and Freight House is an excellent location for a transit stop for the regional transit system.

Implementation

Implementation of the Waterloo Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan Update will continue to require a highly integrated coordination, fundraising, and management effort between the City, the Waterloo Development Corporation, and other non-profit redevelopment partners. Urban design priorities and site redevelopment priorities need to be understood between all redevelopment entities.

Urban Design Priorities

The urban design of Downtown Waterloo is crucial to its success, considering future improvements will serve to provide economic development opportunities, creating places that support desired activities, and restoring community pride through a renewed image of the central city. The development of strong urban design priorities will help guide the City and its redevelopment partners to create a unique and functional urban environment that enhances the community's quality of life.

Streetscaping

Compelling streetscaping should be completed within the downtown that encourages connection between the New Economy District, the Entertainment District, and the riverwalk. Primary streetscaping should occur on Commercial Street from the USH 218 interchange to 5th Street and along 4th Street between USH 218 and the Cedar River. Secondary Streetscaping should continue along Commercial Street between 5th and 11th Street and run along 11th Street between USH 218 and Franklin Street, Sycamore Street from Mullan

Avenue to 11th Street, Mullan Avenue from Sycamore to Commercial, and on River Drive.

Making a Street a Place

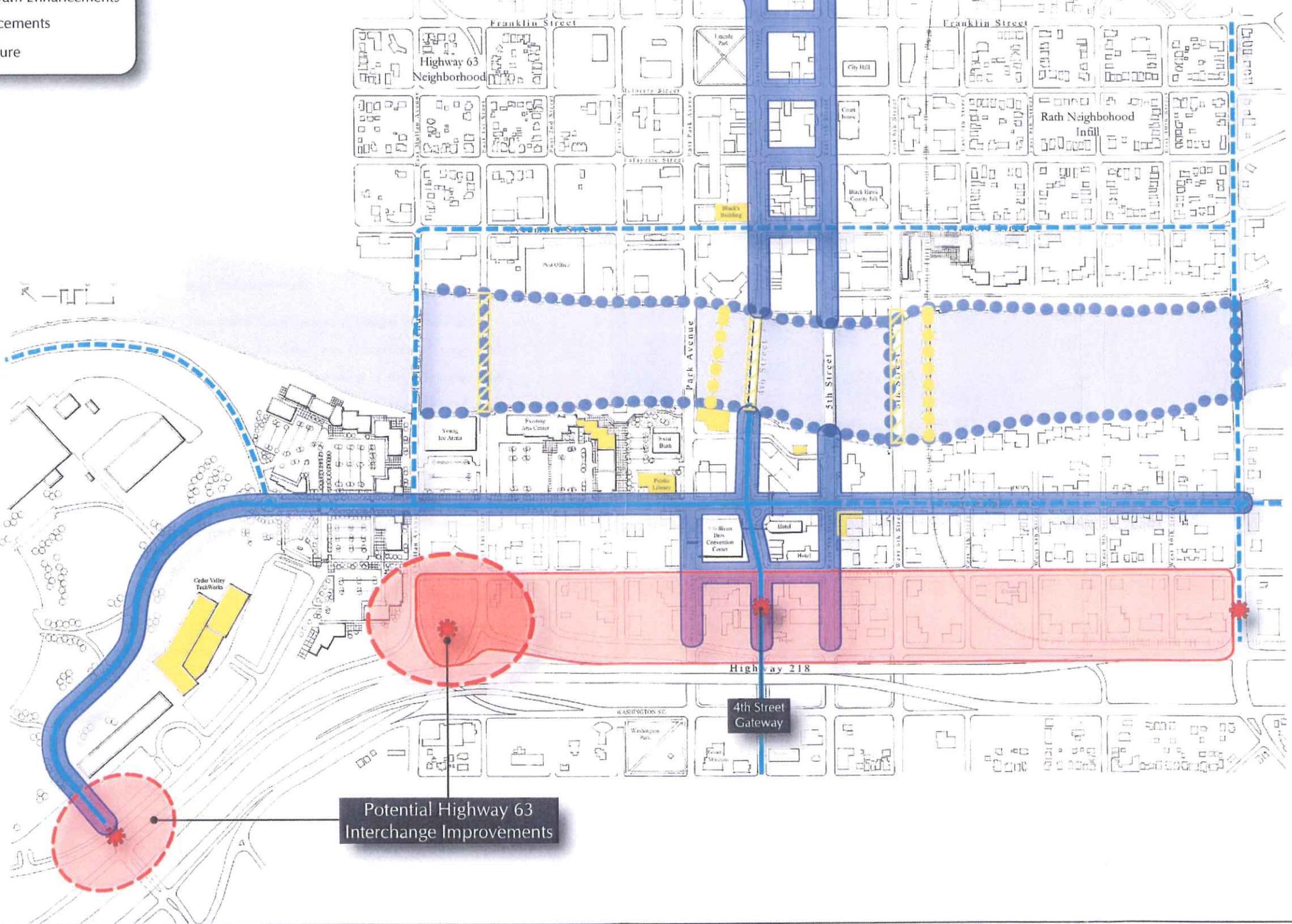
Many streets and sidewalk areas within Downtown Waterloo, specifically in the western half of the downtown, lack activity and are visually monotonous or unattractive. Instead of encouraging vibrant activity, they are a means for commuters to get from place to place. Due to the lack of definition of "place," the streets and sidewalks belong to no one. To create places within the streetscapes of Downtown Waterloo is to design a setting for human activities, such as eating, shopping, people watching, exchanging ideas, meeting, relaxing, and obtaining services. The implementation of these activities is underway within the Main Street Commercial Zone, but should be expanded to the remainder of the Entertainment District, particularly focusing on 4th, 5th, and Commercial Streets.

To increase street-level activity and to make a street a place, implementation should include:

APPROPRIATE FIRST-FLOOR USE MIX. The most important element in making a street a place is developing a mix and level of density that creates a district-like environment. A combination of restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment venues should be located in close proximity to encourage people to come to downtown Waterloo to go to dinner, meet friends for coffee, or go to local entertainment venues and events. Businesses located within first-floor properties should have the ability to take their goods and services onto the sidewalk to enliven the street.

FITTING STREETScape. Well-designed streetscape areas include highly defined uses and added amenities. A planned streetscape should clearly separate active pedestrian uses from passive uses, such as dining,

Improvements
Structure



Potential Highway 63
Interchange Improvements

4th Street
Gateway

shopping, and “people watching.” Pedestrian-scale amenities, such as seating, tables, and visual amenities, such as lighting, sculpture, banners, clocks, or kiosks should be added to further add vitality to Downtown Waterloo.

BUILDING FAÇADE TREATMENT. The storefront, upper façades, and signage of buildings provide the backdrop for “place” and help to generate visual activity. An attractive backdrop should be created by enhancing the architectural character of the façade by highlight cornices, windows, and detailing, as well as uplighting the façade at night. Well-designed signage should also be encouraged by balancing consistency (with the use of guidelines) and creating interest and character. Signs should convey store activity through simple and graphic techniques, coordination within a streetscape, and be externally lit.

STORE PRACTICES AND THE MANAGEMENT OF STREET-LEVEL ACTIVITIES. Storefronts should provide visual interest for the passerby and window shopping opportunities. They should be as open as possible to show inside activities and wares. Storefronts may physically open to connect with the street and allow for sidewalk sales of food, drink, and wares. Storeowners should co-market and allow activity to spill out onto the sidewalk. Coordinated management of sidewalk areas could allow for café dining, sidewalk sales, integrated physical improvements, and events as well as coordinated necessities, such as maintenance and snow removal.

Riverwalk

Design of the riverwalk system improvements should encourage the reconnection of the downtown to its riverfront. The river is truly the downtown’s key asset, and the City recognized that with the develop-

ment of the original riverwalk system; however, the existing design of the riverwalk does not allow for true connection to the river. To create a compelling riverwalk system, elements that should be integrated into the redesign of the riverwalk system include: overlook viewing and sitting areas, interpretive displays, wider pathways to increase capacity, systems to move through bridge connections, improved lighting, and pedestrian-scale wayfinding. Much of the infrastructure to implement these features is already in place, but it will need to be enhanced through this process. It is imperative that the redesign of the riverwalk maintains the integrity of the flood-control system that is already in place.

Visual Improvements Corridor

Special attention should be paid to the design of the USH 218 frontage between Mullan Avenue and 11th Street. The upgrading of USH 218 significantly altered the entrance to the City by bringing traffic through neighborhoods never intended to serve as the City’s front door. A set of corridor-specific design guidelines for new construction and renovations in this area should be adopted and enforced by the City. These guidelines would clearly describe the quality and type of site layout and architecture the City wants within this key visual corridor.

Gateway Enhancements

The Commercial Street extended, Mullan Avenue/First Street (USH 63), 4th Street, and 11th Street gateways need to reflect a welcoming first impression of the downtown and the entire City. Auto-scale wayfinding signage, landscaping, and bannerings should occur in these areas. Each gateway could present itself with an appropriate theme to reflect the district that is being entered.

Cedar River Dam Enhancements

The waterfalls created by the Cedar River Dams create a highly desirable aesthetic effect. Viewing points should be designed into the riverwalk so users can have access to the soothing sound and visual interest of falling water.

Bridge Enhancements

Seven bridges are located in downtown Waterloo, including Mullen Street, 1st Street, Park Avenue, 4th Street, 5th Street, 6th Street, and 11th Street. Improvements should be made to the 1st, 4th, and 6th Street bridges in conjunction with the riverwalk improvements. Elements, such as vertical towers and uplighting, would add visual interest to the riverfront.

Lighted Structures

The image of downtown Waterloo at night has an impact on community pride and perceived central city activity. The selective lighting of prominent buildings would create “skyline icons” that would be visible from USH 218 and the Cedar River, encouraging travelers to detour into downtown. Specialized lighting can also highlight distinguished architectural features visible at closer ranges that would draw people down the pedestrian corridors. Structures that should be uplit include: the TechWorks buildings, the Waterloo Public Library, the Cedar River Arts Mall, the Waterloo Public Library, the YWCA Building, Veteran’s Memorial Hall, and the Black’s Building. Decorative uplighting represents a relatively inexpensive investment with large returns.

Site Redevelopment Priorities

The City and the WDC have begun acquiring land within the downtown as properties are placed on the market. This public-private partnership must continue in order to effectively redevelop Downtown Waterloo. A strategic and intensive site acquisition program is key to the implementation of many of the reuse recommendations. Site assembly should focus on high-priority redevelopment areas and short-term redevelopment areas first with long-term parcels assembled as they become available.

High-priority Redevelopment

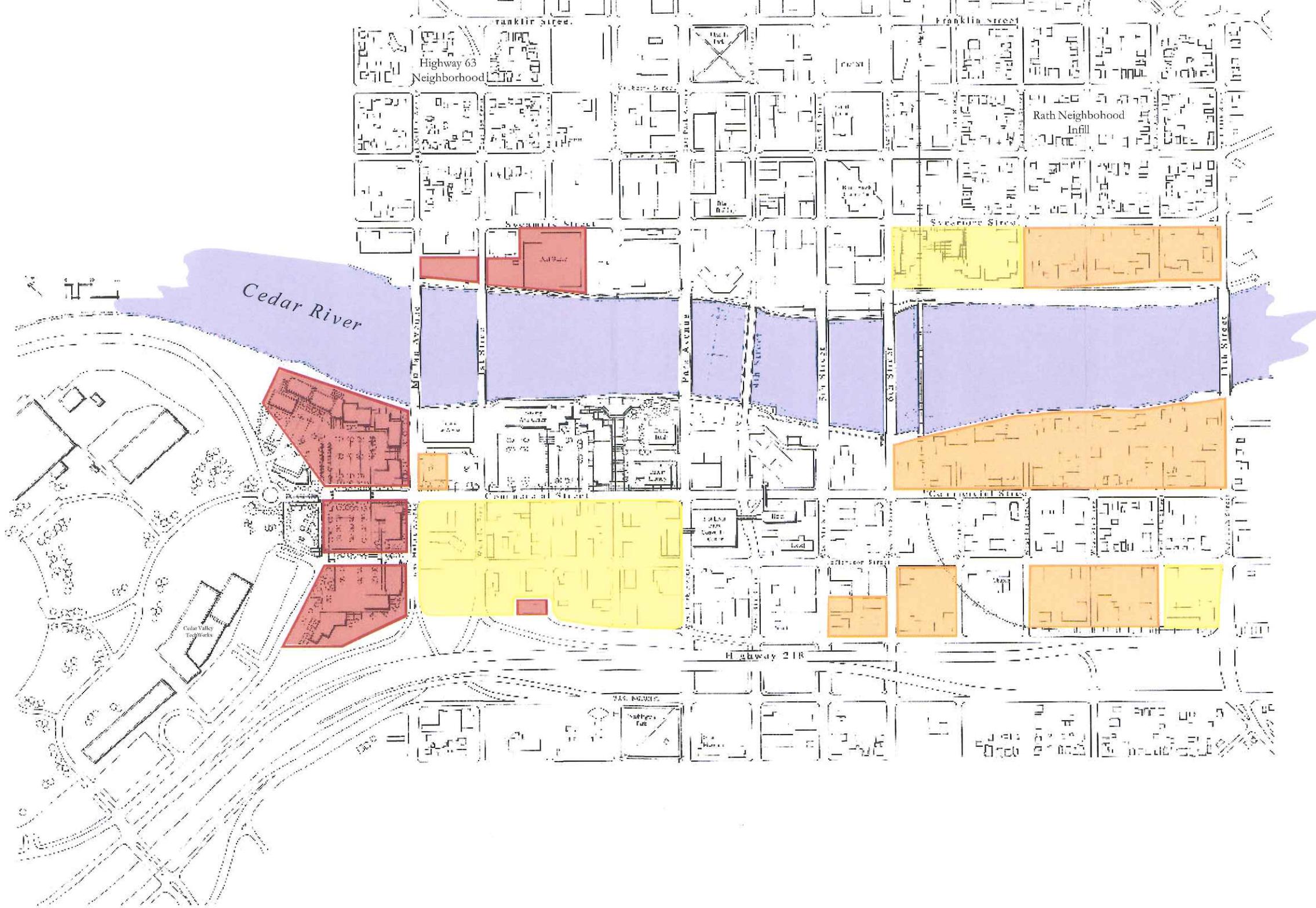
Two areas have been designated as high-priority redevelopment properties, which include the site designated for as the Economic Expansion Zone and the Gateway Redevelopment Site located within the Mixed-Use Infill District. Site specific conceptual redevelopment plans should be prepared for these sites and redevelopment should occur as soon as the sites are assembled. In the case of the Economic Expansion Zone, the funding should be sought to purchase the property and state funds found to develop the outdoor exhibition and community celebration space. As for the Gateway Redevelopment Site, the parcels should be assembled and a developer sought to bring the conceptual plans for this site to fruition.

Short-term Redevelopment

The Riverfront Housing Zones, the Sports-Recreation Zone, and sites within the visual improvement corridor along USH 218 have been designated short-term redevelopment priorities. The City and WDC should be actively working with property owners in these areas to assemble marketable redevelopment sites. Attention must be paid to those properties adjacent to the existing USH 63 interchange at Mullan Avenue and 1st Street. As the Highway 63 Study moves forward and a design alternative selected, properties within this area may be needed for the reconstruction of this interchange.

Long-term Redevelopment

Properties identified as long-term redevelopment priorities should be acquired as they become available. Due to current users, proximity to the core redevelopment area, and existing market conditions, these properties have a lesser potential to be redeveloped in the short-term.



Cedar River

Highway 63
Neighborhood

Rath Neighborhood

Highway 21R

Cedar Valley
Logworks

Security Street

Franklin Street

Midway Avenue

1st Street

2nd Street

3rd Street

4th Street

11th Street

12th Street

13th Street

14th Street

15th Street

16th Street

17th Street

18th Street

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