

H E A R T  
O F  
P E O R I A

CHARRETTE DATE: JUNE 20-28, 2002

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# H E A R T O F P E O R I A

PEORIA, ILLINOIS  
JUNE 2002

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## INTRODUCTION

**The History.**

Like many places in the American heartland, Peoria has struggled with the consequences of the economic, social, and demographic changes that have re-shaped our cities over the past four decades: the decline of the older industrial economy and consequent shifts in employment base; the steady drift of jobs, population, and shopping from downtown to the expanding suburban edges; the decay of inner city neighborhoods as a result of concentrations of poverty, increasing crime rates, and the need for new investment in physical infrastructure by increasingly financially strapped cities. In the face of these challenges, Peoria has held its own, responding to the challenges of the past decades with a variety of precisely targeted efforts.

**The Current Plan and Recent Initiatives.**

The current plan has come about as a result of a recognition, by citizens and key leaders of Peoria, that the holding actions of the past will not be sufficient to maintain the competitiveness of Peoria's downtown or the quality of life in Peoria's core neighborhoods over the next twenty years. This recognition reflects the not always encouraging reality of the underlying economic and demographic trends, some related to Peoria's place in an ever more global economy. Most importantly, however, it also reflects a clear sense of Peoria's promise, and a concern regarding some uncertainties in realizing that promise.

According to the report submitted by Hunter Interests, Inc. during the charrette, Peoria's downtown office market hovers on the edge of viability, not quite strong enough to support the construction of new office space but solidly promising. Meanwhile, retailers have almost completely fled and restaurants struggle to survive in a city that empties out after dark.

Much of downtown Peoria's architectural legacy has been lost to sometimes unfortunate modernization, but Peoria has maintained the "strong bones" of its traditional street grid and the basic structure of its historic neighborhoods.

Much of the housing in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core was built before 1940 and stands in need of renovation, but this housing stock still remains an important

asset for the future, defining the character and quality of Peoria's traditional neighborhoods. Peoria's core neighborhoods struggle with historic preservation and improvement, but even dedicated citizens are in danger of being worn down by escalating problems of crime, neglect, and the flight to the suburbs of families with the resources to move.

There have been focused planning efforts and public works programs focused on the enhancement of the historic neighborhoods, with great successes to show for them. Both citizens and leaders have been involved in a growing number of public projects and initiatives intended to strengthen Peoria's older neighborhoods, protect its rich architectural heritage, and bring new cultural life to the downtown.

Most recently, several important new initiatives have emerged, including a proposal to expand the civic center, a proposal to create a new and innovative museum complex, a proposal to strengthen the economic vitality of the city with a bio-research collaborative; and a plan to re-design Peoria's most obvious asset, the riverfront. Taken together, these initiatives add up to an extraordinary opportunity to reverse both the erosion of the vitality of the downtown and the slow decay of the nearby historic neighborhoods. At the same time, there is concern regarding the success of these efforts, born in part of disappointment in the way some of the most recent projects have been implemented.

Even in a time of no growth, the discouraging trends can be reversed, but it will take concerted and consistent effort to create a place that is attractive to new residents, new businesses, and new visitors. In order to accomplish this, the available resources for redevelopment need to be organized, focused, and guided by appropriate principles, allowing the effects of both small incremental changes and big projects to accumulate in the creation of a great regional city.

In this context, the current plan is a strategic document intended to muster the available energies in order to make the downtown, the heart of Peoria, competitive with the suburbs. The overall strategy is simple: in order to bring new value to the downtown, it is necessary to restore its vitality as a "24/7 city," encouraging both a mix of housing opportunities

and an appropriate range of retail activity. In this way, Peoria would be prepared to benefit from the re-discovery of American downtowns and the attractions of urban life that has taken place in the 1990s.

**The Goals.**

A lively downtown is important for several reasons. First, a restoration of the downtown's viability as a regional center for shopping, entertainment, and cultural activities will have the direct effect of bringing new economic vitality to the city. Second, an attractive, livable, and energized downtown is necessary for recruiting and retaining the young professionals and executives required by both the current tenants of downtown office space and those who might choose to relocate to an attractive place.

There are some advantages to slow growth that are worth noting. The city is not overwhelmed by the influx of people and new development, as are many of the cities in the faster growing areas of the country. Most importantly, however, Peoria's situation highlights the fact that it is as important to retain the people and resources that are here already, as it is to attract new people. In this regard, this plan is not just for the benefit of the people who might come, or for the visitors, but for the benefit of the citizens of Peoria who are already here, both the young and the old; it is a plan that will serve generations of Peorians.

In order to accomplish its goals, this plan focuses on three kinds of efforts: First, the plan establishes a general framework and principles for Peoria's growth and development. Second, the plan proposes specific revisions of existing regulatory conditions governing downtown development, in order to insure that they reflect consistent principles of good urban design, and create an environment of predictability that will encourage investment in downtown projects. Third, the plan makes a number of specific proposals pertaining to existing initiatives, providing guidelines and, in some cases, suggested modifications in order to take advantage of a more consistent, focused, and coordinated approach.

In particular, the plan focuses on the key asset of the riverfront, recommending that the existing design for what is

essentially a linear park be replaced with a design that provides a more complete range of experience from the natural green space of a park to an active urban riverfront appropriate for the city center. This more urban riverfront is tied to the nearby warehouse district, where private investment and renovation of historic warehouses into loft apartments, artists studios, galleries, shops, and restaurants has started a very promising resuscitation of life in downtown Peoria.

**The Challenges.**

These tendencies are promising, but by no means as yet certain of success. Such trends can easily die in their early stages if not supported and nurtured with carefully crafted planning and public policy - especially in a period of a relatively weak economy.

In spite of its strengths, downtown Peoria has suffered from the absence of a strong common vision, registered in the mixed messages offered by its streets and buildings, and by the evident difficulty in establishing a clear and distinctive character for the new development along the riverfront. This plan proposes that the emerging warehouse district, insofar as it is bringing new life to the downtown and taking advantage of Peoria's legacy of historic architecture, represents both an opportunity and a potential model for the future redevelopment - particularly as an example of the possibility for fruitful collaboration between public and private interests.

Finally, some propositions in this plan are not necessarily related to existing initiatives. This final category reflects wishes and ideas expressed by citizens and leaders at the charrette, drawn up by the design team and translated into proposals for projects and specific interventions.

Although, the study area was focused on the downtown core, it is important that it also includes a broad swath of surrounding residential neighborhoods. Each of these neighborhoods has been the focus of specific planning efforts over the past decade. Although there are dozens of great ideas contained in the existing plans, it has evidently not been easy to see them implemented. The goal of this plan is to create a framework that will help to re-energize these more local plans, increasing the likelihood that there will be

resources and interest necessary to address problems and implement ideas for enhancement. The current plan builds on the solid foundation established by the planning efforts of the past decade, taking advantage of the significant new initiatives in order to create both a general framework for development and a series of specific tactical interventions that will create the momentum necessary to implement the principles and realize the goals of this plan.

#### The Premises.

The proposals for the downtown are strategically conceived to insure that the redevelopment efforts in the core will add value to the surrounding neighborhoods as well, establishing conditions conducive to broader re-investment in the historic neighborhoods. In addition, this plan includes several specific proposals for interventions at strategic points, establishing momentum for change, and demonstrating principles that can be applied more widely. The following premises are embodied in the proposals for intervention.

1. **The current plan supplements rather than replaces the prior plans.** Where the prior plans have focused on the specific issues in specific neighborhoods, this plan is to provide an encompassing framework of consistent principles and tools for implementation that have been lacking in past plans.
2. Although many of the interventions proposed by this plan can be implemented immediately, **the plan is intended to provide a vision for long term growth and re-development** of the Heart of Peoria.
3. In recent years, there has been little or no growth in either the population or the economy, and there is nothing to suggest that this prospect will change in the near future. **The success of this plan takes advantage of the ability to re-direct and organize existing opportunities rather than waiting for growth that hasn't yet materialized.** At the same time, the plan ensures that Peoria is prepared to grow in a balanced and healthy fashion as it begins to attract more new growth to its core areas.
4. In order for downtown Peoria to compete successfully with conventional suburban development, **the process of redevelopment must be made**

**predictable so that private sector investment will drive the building out of the intentions of this plan.**

5. A key function of this plan must be to **resolve the contradiction between Peoria's urban aspirations** as a center for culture and economic life, and a persistent pattern of encouraging development that is inappropriately suburban in character, often with a destructive impact on urban vitality.
6. It is essential, in particular, to **give clear definition to the urban character of Peoria's downtown riverfront**, establishing its distinctiveness as a regional destination and helping to create a supportive context for the redevelopment of the nearby warehouse district (already under way in the form of private sector initiatives).
7. As part of the effort to **re-energize the downtown**, the wide downtown streets need to be re-configured - with two way traffic and on-street parking - **to improve their quality and character for pedestrians and bicycles.**
8. The implementation of this plan will depend on the persistence of Peoria's citizens and the commitment of their leaders. **The Heart of Peoria plan is intended to provide them with the seeds of a common vision, and the tools necessary to realize that vision.**

One of the difficulties faced by Peoria is a set of contradictions between the ambition of its evident aspirations as a city and its relatively modest approach to implementation. For example, the legacy of Peoria's urban aspirations leaves the downtown with very wide streets, allowing cars to move too quickly and presenting a relatively inhospitable environment for pedestrians. Concern for the movement of traffic, at the expense of the character of the streets, has dictated the removal of on-street parking. Many of the newer buildings create long stretches of frontage that are relatively unfriendly to street life; subsequent efforts to beautify the streets with landscaping have reflected suburban, rather than urban, standards often only contributing to the unfriendliness of the streets for pedestrians. The design of the new riverfront, from its picturesquely planted and wandering footpaths to its parking lot and fast food restaurants, also draws from an

uneven suburban palette of landscaping, engineering, and architectural design, missing the opportunity for the riverfront to contribute to the urbanity of Peoria's downtown. A key focus of this plan will be to re-introduce the full palette of design and engineering standards appropriate to a city of importance.

#### The Process.

The ideas represented in this document are the result of a *charrette* that was held in the Peoria Civic Center from June 20 to June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002. A *charrette* is an intensive planning workshop composed of a series of meetings and presentations in which citizens, designers, and community leaders collaborate in the creation of a clear vision for the future of their community. Over 1000 people participated in the discussions over the course of the week, voicing their complaints, concerns, recommendations, and hopes for their city. Members of the DPZ team met with large groups of stakeholders to identify specific challenges and issues related to parking, traffic, transportation, retailing, real estate development, historic preservation, public works, housing, crime prevention, and a host of specific projects being planned for the downtown area. In addition, dozens of meetings were held with particular groups and stakeholders, with field trips to specific sites and neighborhoods in order to take a closer look at the challenges and opportunities represented by the current state of the neighborhoods. These *charrette* sessions both provided a forum for citizens to engage in honest discussion, and an opportunity for the design team to get immediate feedback on proposals that emerged.

#### HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The *Heart of Peoria* plan is not just another planning document. It represents a new approach to urban planning and development, one that views the collaboration of public and private actions as a continuous and evolving process. This process began months before the *charrette* and will continue for years to come. The aim of this plan is to identify general initiatives and specific projects that will maximize private investment while enhancing the public realm of the downtown.

The text and graphics that follow provide a snapshot of this ongoing development process as of the middle of 2002. The plan itself sets forth actions that are necessary for the *Heart of Peoria* plan to achieve its objectives. The document includes proposals for public action and proposals for private development, as well as general strategies for downtown revitalization and neighborhood enhancement. Some of these efforts are already well under way or will be executed over the coming months. The implementation of other projects will have to wait until conditions permit, opportunities arise, or new collaborations are worked out under the framework provided by the plan. The plan itself should continue to evolve as conditions change and projects are executed. This plan conceives of the public and private actions necessary to make a great city as an ongoing and evolving process, just as the growth of the city itself is an ongoing evolution.

#### THE COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

The *Heart of Peoria Plan* can be best understood as consisting of two different categories of product: **General Controls** and **Specific Interventions**. The *General Controls* are the least glamorous part of the plan, but they are the fundamental framework that will allow and encourage new growth to occur in a form that improves urban vitality rather than undermining it. Central to the system of General Controls is the **SmartCode**, an alternative zoning ordinance described below and provided under separate cover. In contrast, the **Specific Interventions** are the pilot projects and other proposals that often get most of the attention. It is important that these are most useful if they are understood not as mandatory construction efforts but as illustrations of the way new construction can best occur in accordance with the General Controls. While it would indeed please us to see all of these projects built as designed, their real value is to communicate the types of projects that the city should encourage in its efforts to improve the downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The General Controls can be broken down into the following documents:

- **The A/B Frontage Assignment:** One key to a

successful downtown is to acknowledge that not every street must correspond to the highest standards for pedestrian-friendliness. Some streets will inevitably provide sites for a variety of automotive-oriented uses that generally disrupt the pedestrian quality of the frontage (for example, fast-food drive-throughs, parking structures, automobile repair shops). Rather than imagining that such places can be eliminated entirely, our plan locates these streets in a way that avoids disrupting the integrity of the downtown pedestrian network. A-Streets, serving pedestrians as well as cars, will be asked to achieve the highest frontage standards of the SmartCode, while B-streets will be available for those businesses that focus primarily on automotive traffic. Both are profitable uses; the key is to keep them separate in order to create a continuous network of high-quality pedestrian frontage for the downtown.

- **The Street Reconfigurations:** As discussed in the Street Reconfigurations section of this report, most of the streets in downtown Peoria are currently configured with the primary goal of allowing automotive and truck traffic to move through the downtown at relatively high speeds. The historic width of right of ways originally built to accommodate street car lines, the width of the travel lanes, the implementation of one-way pairs, and the removal of parallel parking from some streets have all contributed to the domination of Peoria's downtown by the automobile - at the direct expense of pedestrian and commercial life on the streets. In addition, Interstate 74 has had a mixed impact on the downtown. On the one hand, it provides easy access to the downtown from suburban areas, but on the other hand has helped to drain the downtown of residents who no longer see sufficient incentives to living downtown. Most importantly, however, we found that the interstate has the unfortunate effect of creating a dramatic dividing line between the neighborhoods of the north and the neighborhoods of the south, both physical and psychological. It presents a significant obstacle to maintaining connectivity between neighborhoods, especially for

pedestrians and by bicycle, as there are limited crossings and those that exist provide narrow sidewalks where one is surrounded by traffic on one side and a guardrail over submerged highway lanes on the other. The current proposal for improvement of I-74, although promising to have a significant impact on the overall safety of the facility, results in an even further overall reduction of opportunities to create comfortable connections across the interstate. Central to our plan is a reconfiguration of streets within the study area to a more pedestrian-friendly design.

- **The SmartCode:** As mentioned above, the SmartCode (provided under separate cover) is an ordinance that provides an alternative to the Zoning Code of the City of Peoria, the City of Peoria Plan, and the Growth Management Strategy. Such an alternative is necessary because the existing ordinances include regulations that work against the realization of a revitalized, pedestrian-friendly downtown, and the renovation and preservation of Peoria's inner city neighborhoods. The SmartCode, in contrast with existing codes, focuses on the creation of mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. As part of the implementation of the Heart of Peoria Plan, the SmartCode would immediately be made available to developers as an alternative to existing regulations.
- **The Regulating Plan:** The *SmartCode* is organized on the basis of the urban-to-rural transect, a tool used to identify the principles that define the quality of internally-consistent environments of varying urban intensity (explained and illustrated below). For example, an area in the Urban Center zone would have taller buildings that would be spaced closely adjacent to one another to form a pedestrian-friendly street wall, with wider sidewalks and more formal downtown streetscaping, while an area in the Urban General zone would be composed of lower, detached buildings with a more residential character. The Regulating Plan is an instrument that identifies the Transect zones as they are distributed throughout

the area. The Regulating Plan for the *Heart of Peoria* plan is presented in the General Controls section of this plan.

If they were implemented quickly, the four documents described above would probably be enough to produce dramatic positive change within a few years, as each specific project, whether renovation or new construction, is guided by the principles outlined in them and thereby contributes to the overall quality of the city's streets and neighborhoods.

During our time in Peoria, however, we were told about many opportunities for renovation, redevelopment, and new construction, some in the form of projects already well underway, others in the form of dreams and desires on the part of Peoria's citizens, business people, and community leaders. Additional ideas were developed and proposed for discussion by the design team. The most promising of these projects have been developed into the Specific Interventions that make up a large part of this report. The Specific Interventions are organized under two headings: proposals relevant to the **Downtown** (which includes the crucial redevelopment of the riverfront), and proposals intended to carry the benefits of this plan effectively into the **Neighborhoods**.

**The Specific Interventions** include the following types of projects:

- **Private Development of Private Land:** Many private properties within the study area are currently lying fallow because their owners are unable to find a profitable way to develop them within existing zoning ordinances. Another problem is that the existing ordinances, if they don't discourage re-development altogether, tend to provide incentives for development that would not be supportive of the quality of character of urban experience required to sustain a general pattern of re-development and improvement of Peoria's downtown core. In addition, existing regulatory structures fail to provide the kind of predictability required to encourage sustained and large-scale investment in downtown redevelopment. Aside from a general revision of the zoning ordinance

and building codes relevant to adaptive re-use of historic buildings, the plan recommends a number of specific interventions as illustrations of the sort of development to be encouraged (and as demonstrations of its potential). The goal is to encourage an escalating pace of investment and re-development, following on the successes of the projects that have already established the Warehouse District, such as 401 Water Street and the Vieux Carre.

- **Private Development of Public Land:** Some of the most important pieces of land within the scope of this plan are currently in public ownership. Many cities have taken advantage of a strategy of offering long-term leases on public lands to private developers willing to develop them along the lines indicated by the SmartCode and the city's downtown master plan. This strategy has been used with great success in recent years, and has the benefit of catalyzing development without selling off the City's assets. Much of the development of the land along the immediate riverfront (not dedicated to parks and public spaces) might be handled in this way. These projects should be put forward by the city in the form of public Requests for Proposals, where the terms of the lease and the opportunities for public/private partnership would encourage developers to create projects similar to those proposed in this plan or otherwise in alignment with the principles outlined here.

The most prominent parcel in public ownership is the Sears Block, with the potential to be the keystone development that anchors both the downtown core and the riverfront. In addition to the possibility of the location of the Lakeview Regional Museum complex, which this plan recommends as the central and signature component of its redevelopment, the Sears block is large enough to accommodate a residential component, a high-quality hotel, and a mix of other uses that would bring activity to both the internal public spaces and the surrounding streets. In addition to the availability of the land for

redevelopment, public ownership means that the City can insure that it is redeveloped appropriately, in a way that contributes to the realization of the goals of its downtown plan.

- Public Works on Public Land:** A successful downtown revitalization can never rely completely or even primarily on public funding to accomplish its goals. Even if the money were available for extensive public works, the long term success of the downtown depends on the ability to attract private investment in much greater proportion. However, it is expected that the leasing of public land for private projects, and the tax revenue from those projects, will eventually generate a pool of funds large enough to support a program of public improvements strategically geared to create great streets, public spaces, and other civic amenities. In addition to the street reconfigurations proposed in the plan, the plan includes other proposed enhancements of the public realm and a network of large and small public squares, plazas, and pedestrian walkways (such as the riverfront promenade).
- Public Works on Private Land:** There are a number of locations within the downtown, particularly on the Sears block or in proximity to the riverfront, where private property can best be used to serve public functions. In the same way that the city would joint-venture with private developers on its own land, the city is also encouraged to collaborate with these individual parties to convert certain private lands to public use, either through the outright purchase of property, a land swap, transfer of development rights, property tax breaks or development bonuses involving the mix and density of the project, so long as the bonuses are consistent with the master plan.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN DOCUMENT

### Analysis

*The Heart of Peoria* plan begins with analysis of existing conditions, including a consideration of the regional context, the existing urban fabric, and the neighborhood structure and pedestrian sheds, and the current location of parks, schools, and bicycle routes. This section includes some of the basic information and diagrammatic studies developed during the *charrette* as a basis for the general and specific proposals found in this plan. The section represents background and foundational material for the plan.

### General Controls

As described above, the General Controls are the fundamental framework that will allow and encourage new growth to occur in a form that improves urban vitality rather than undermining it. They include the Regulating Plan, proposed Street Reconfigurations (including proposed revisions to the plan for improving I-74 as it bisects the city), the A/B Street Assignment, and proposals for crucial transformations of the city's codes. Under this heading, we have also included some management-related proposals that are of general relevance to the implementation of the General Controls.

### Specific Interventions

The Specific Interventions have been organized under two categories: Downtown and Neighborhoods. They have been summarized in the form of a series named Projects for easy reference (The entire list is available in the matrix on page VI.9). In order to balance the need for clarity with the need for explanation, each Project is outlined in three parts:

- Finding:** an initial observation based on field observation, citizen input at the charrette, or available documentary evidence.
- Discussion:** a more extended explanation of the finding, its significance in context, relevant issues, and the principles at stake.
- Recommendations:** specific action steps recommended as a response to the finding.

## Regional Context

### The Historic Core.

The title of this plan, *Heart of Peoria*, refers in part to the fact that the study area encompassed by this plan corresponds closely to the historic center of Peoria as a river town. The plan covers an area that includes the downtown core, the Southside neighborhood, the neighborhoods of the near north side and up to Averyville, and the neighborhoods of both the East and West Bluff.

### The Surrounding Region.

In order to understand its potential, Peoria has to be seen in its regional context. Peoria has seen little or no economic growth over the past decades, and there is no indication among the regional or national economic trends to suggest any reversals of this pattern in the near future without substantive intervention. In fact, Peoria's experience reflects a regional condition. The regional economy of Central Illinois declined from the 1970s to the mid 1980s, and its ability to benefit from the more recent pattern of economic growth in the country as a whole has been affected by its traditional reliance on labor-intensive manufacturing.

### The Economic Conditions.

According to one economic study: "The key conclusion emerging from our review of Central Illinois' economic history is this: Central Illinois' critical economic development for the early 21<sup>st</sup> century will be to diversify even further away from dependence on a few major employers and to develop new competitive advantages in industrial clusters that can and will profitably export goods and services to markets outside the region" (Judy & Lommel, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce: Central Illinois*, 2002). These authors suggest that the solution lies in the "knowledge-based economy."

### The Demographic Analysis.

The City of Peoria has experienced demographic changes over the last three decades similar to those in the rest of the region, but with a sharper impact. Since 1970, the City of Peoria has experienced a steady decline in population, both in absolute terms and in terms of its overall share of the population in the tri-county area. While census tracts in the northern part of the city (encompassing the areas designated as "growth cells" by the city) saw an increase in population of up to 41.6% between 1990 and 2000, the census tracts

included in the study area saw the highest rate of decline in population in the city.

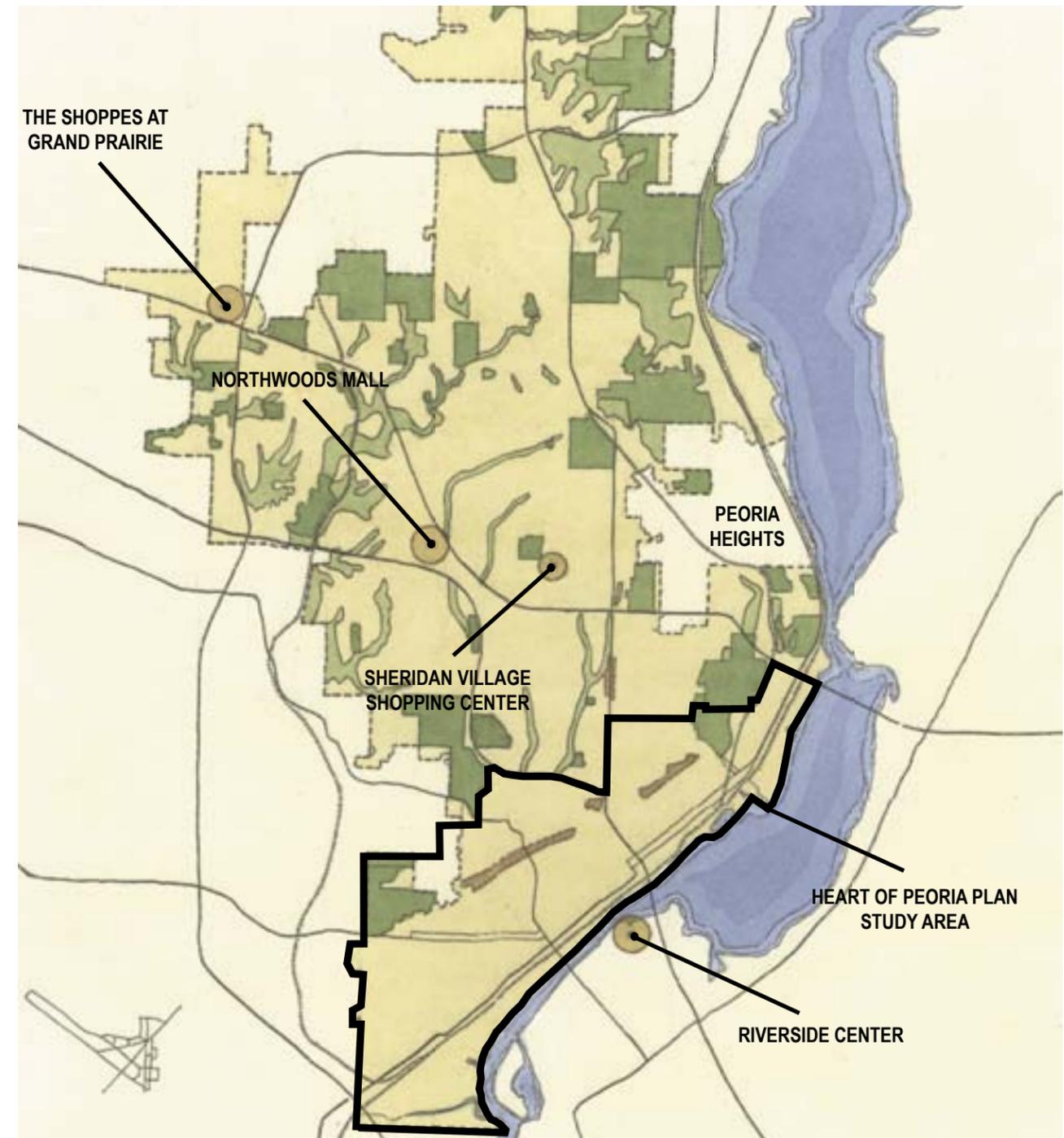
### The Strengths and Weaknesses.

As a consequence, Peoria doesn't have the luxury (nor the problems) of the kind of growth that has provided so much economic impetus in the cities of the so-called Sunbelt. The key to the future health of downtown Peoria, therefore, lies in making the most efficient and effective use of available economic energies, focusing those that would otherwise be spent in relatively disconnected efforts, and attracting investment that might otherwise be drawn outside the city or dissipated in conventional suburban development. In this regard, Peoria's crucial asset is its location on the riverfront, and the capacity to become the center of the regional economy and culture, the urban heart of a suburbanizing region.

The City has wisely prevented the fiscal benefits of growth from completely escaping its boundaries, taking advantage of a series of strategic annexations, but at the expense of encouraging the trend for development to move away from the historic heart of the city.

Location on the riverfront gives Peoria a great natural asset, but also adds to the challenge of maintaining the vitality of the downtown. Restrictions on downtown development typically push growth out to the suburban edges. In Peoria's case, the riverfront actually brings the suburban edge much closer to the downtown core. Suburban shopping centers and big box retail are available to anyone capable of making the short drive across the river to East Peoria. In addition, there is a reported perception that East Peoria is, in general, more welcoming to developers.

As a general rule, downtown revitalization requires a concerted effort to compete with the suburbs - not by doing what the suburbs do, but by offering what they cannot: the activity, ambience and amenities of an urban center. Given the proximity of suburban options, it becomes all the more important to establish Peoria's identity clearly as such a center.



*THE CITY.* This illustration shows the current city limits of Peoria, indicating the way the city has expanded northward from its original core, generally outlined by the Heart of Peoria Plan Study Area. The green areas indicate major parks. The orange circles indicate major retail centers, which compete with the retail of downtown Peoria. The dark orange areas indicate the open space along the bluffs. The location of the bridges crossing into Peoria clearly points to the importance of the downtown core and its necklace of neighborhoods above and below the bluffs as the key to Peoria's regional significance. The light green indicates natural open space (in the form of creekways, tree stands, etc.), and the dark green indicates designated open space (in the form of parks, golf courses, etc.).



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**The Urban Fabric**

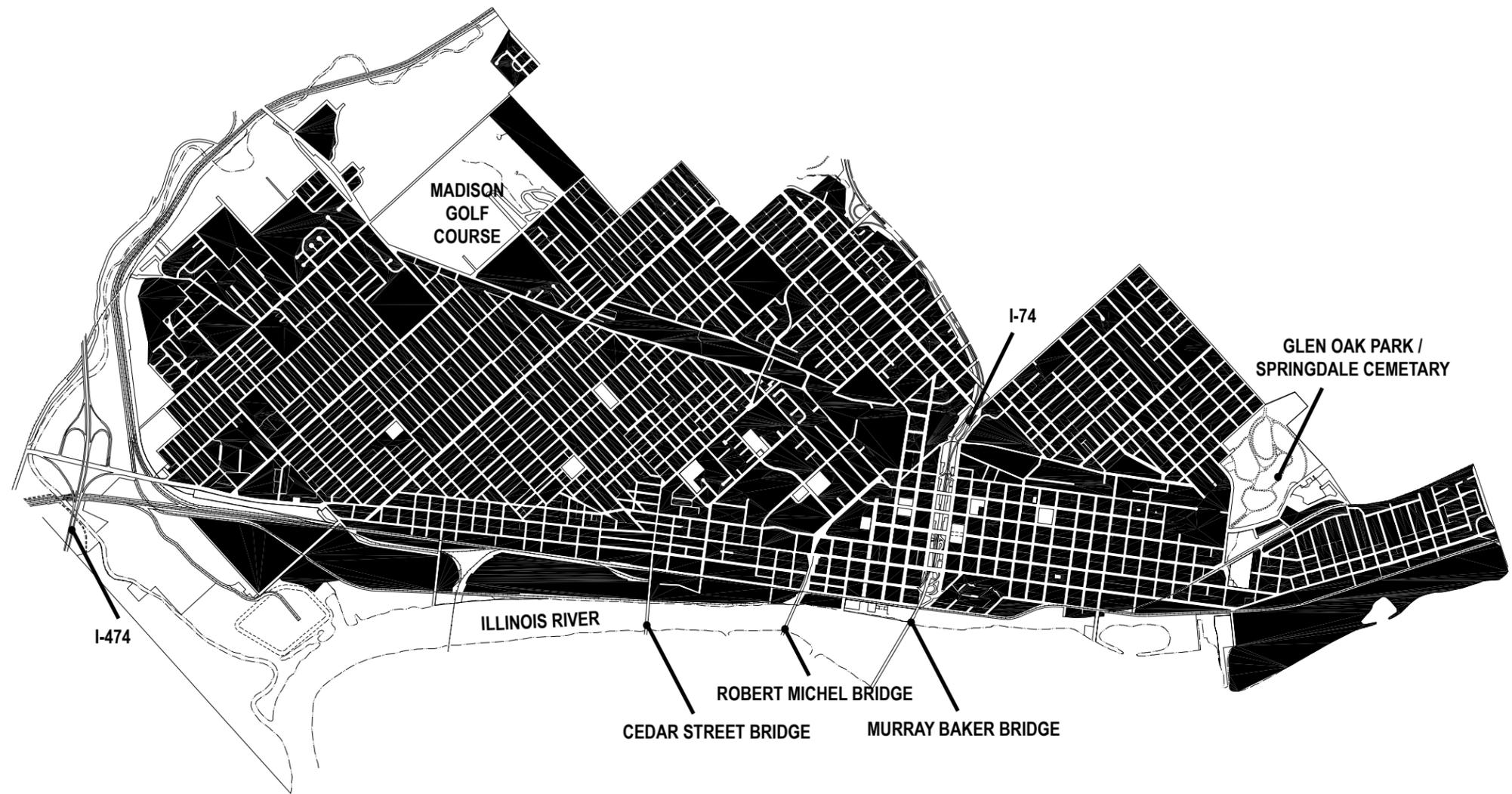
One of the clear challenges posed by the size of the study area is that it includes diverse neighborhoods and a variety of conditions, from the old industrial areas of the riverfront to the historic homes of the whiskey barons and the neighborhood surrounding Bradley University and the West Main Street corridor; from the deteriorating neighborhoods of the Southern Gateway area to the historic homes of the north side. As diverse as it is, however, the study area is held together by the historic street grid of 19<sup>th</sup> century Peoria, still largely intact, which provides network connections common to all the neighborhoods. Taken together, the grid of streets and the buildings along them form the built environment of the heart of Peoria. This built environment is commonly called the urban fabric.



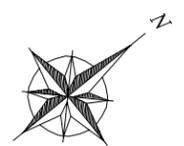
*PEORIA'S TRADITIONAL HEART.* This image of Peoria in the 1800's shows the original street grid and the heart of Peoria's identity as a river town. It covers almost exactly the area encompassed by this report.

Analysis of the existing urban fabric, illustrated by the diagram shows that this part of Peoria is composed of two street grids, intersecting along the southern edge of the downtown and interrupted only by the geography of the bluffs.

The strength of this street grid is one of the most significant features of the study area, and an important asset for Peoria's future. A traditional street grid offers an efficient way to address key issues of traffic management and access throughout the city, while supporting the creation of neighborhoods that are pedestrian-friendly and walkable. Peoria's grid has several other notable features: it's potential for creating strong connections from Peoria's downtown neighborhoods to the riverfront; a clear system of corridors as connections between neighborhoods; and a well-defined neighborhood structure.



*THE URBAN FABRIC.* The existing urban fabric is characterized by two distinct grid patterns, each with its typical block size and shape. In this diagram, one can identify the main corridors connecting the neighborhoods above the bluffs with those below, as well as the north-south corridors along the riverfront. The downtown core, with its square blocks, is clearly delineated by I-74 to the north and the interruptions in the grid to the south. The block pattern on the south side is well-suited to walkable neighborhoods, although connections to the downtown core and the riverfront appear uncertain as a result of interruptions in the grid.

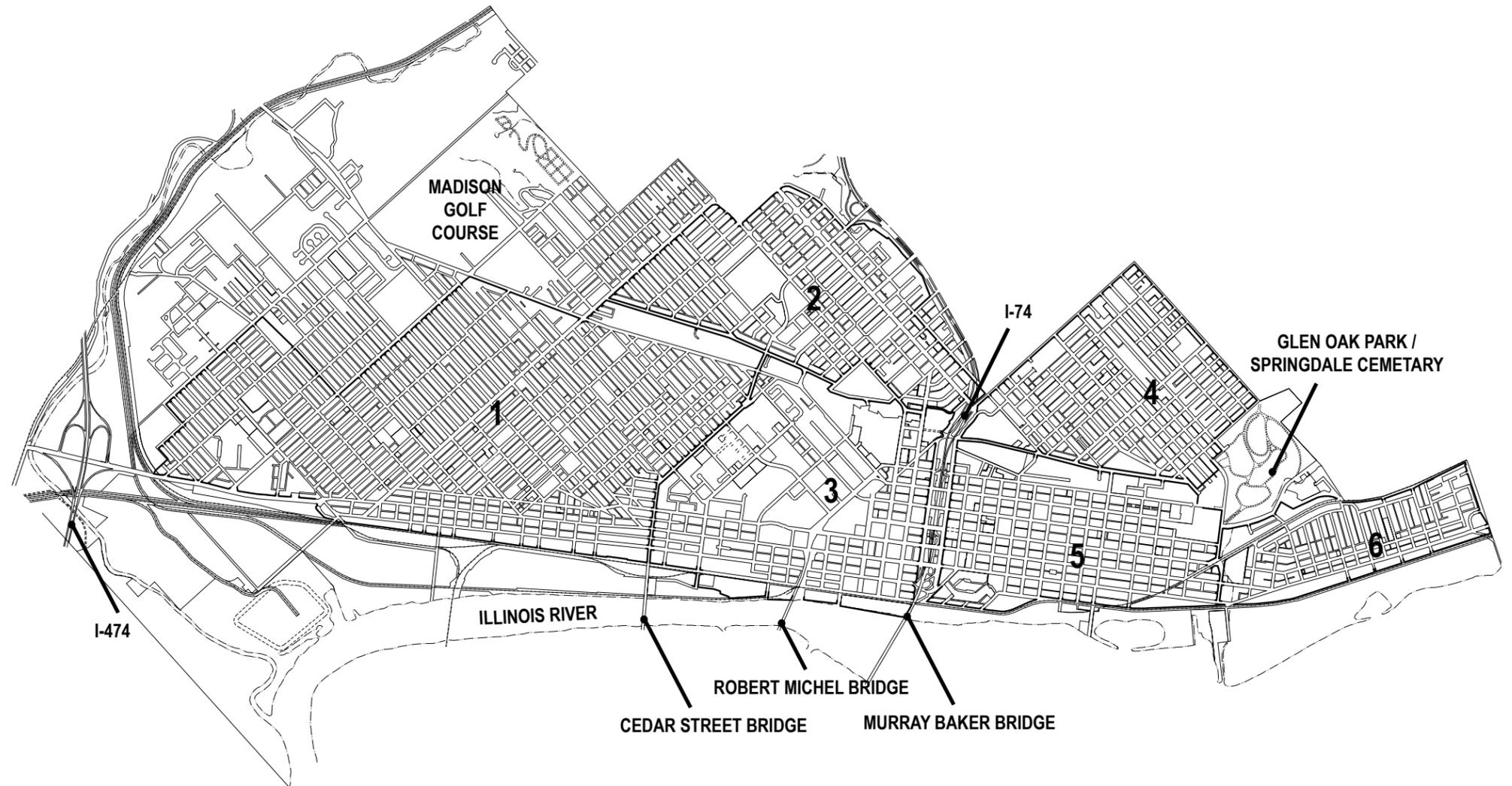


**The Neighborhood Structure**

Although the study area includes some of Peoria's most beautiful historic homes, it also includes neighborhoods characterized by the highest concentrations of poverty, the highest concentrations of violent and drug-related crime, and the most persistent problems of absentee landlords and code enforcement. The strategy for these neighborhoods has to be a combination interventions aimed at enhancing the urban quality of these neighborhoods and increasing the value of near-downtown residential property, with a full arsenal of techniques for addressing the social and economic problems of these communities.

The map locates the areas covered by existing neighborhood associations, which are listed at the bottom of the map. The actual areas of jurisdiction claimed by these associations vary in size from whole neighborhoods to portions of a single block, and the purposes of these associations vary similarly in scope from limited neighborhood beautification or historic preservation efforts to more broad ranging interests in neighborhood revitalization. In recent years, the city has made a valiant effort to bring some unity to the neighborhoods, with efforts like the Neighborhood Development Commission.

Although this list represents the neighborhoods for political purposes, it actually bears only slight relationship to the underlying physical geography of Peoria's neighborhoods. Traditional neighborhoods are defined in terms of something called a pedestrian shed: the distance that people will walk in order to fulfill their daily needs. Historically and by convention, the standard pedestrian shed is ¼ mile in radius, or a five minute walk from center to edge. In some cases, neighborhood centers might draw from a larger pedestrian shed—a circle ½ mile from center to edge. These major centers would be appropriate locations for uses that draw on both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and which serve more than daily needs (for example, a major grocery store).



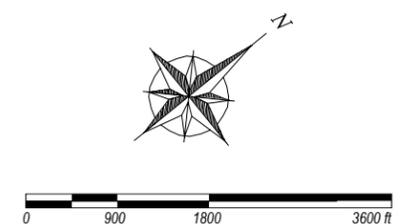
*NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS. This diagram shows the boundaries of the proposed consolidation of the territories covered by the neighborhood associations into six major neighborhoods, the definition of which is clearly suggested by geography and the structure of the urban fabric. While maintaining the existing associations, recognizing their particular purposes, these more encompassing divisions might counterbalance some of the fragmentation of effort and provide a basis for collaboration between neighborhood associations, as well as a basis for more effective interactions between the neighborhood associations and the City. The major neighborhoods include, but are not limited to, the neighborhood associations listed as follows.*

- 1. SOUTHSIDE:
  - Trewyn Neighborhood Association
  - Southside Pride
  - Logan Park West
  - Common Place Neighborhood Association
  - Olde Towne South Residents Association
- 2. WEST BLUFF
  - Columbia Terrace North
  - Armstrong Ellis Neighborhood Association
  - The Uplands Residential Association
  - University East Neighborhood Association
  - Flora Ellis Association
  - Midtown Bluff Neighborhood Association

- 2. WEST BLUFF (continued)
  - Randolf-Roanoke Residential Association
  - Moss Bradley
  - Arbor District Neighborhood Association
  - Franklin School Neighborhood Partnership
  - Western Avenue Greenway
  - College District
  - West Bluff Council
  - West Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services
  - High Wine Homeowners Association
- 3. DOWNTOWN

- 4. EAST BLUFF
  - East Bluf NHS
  - Kansas Street, 600 Block
  - Hillcrest Place Neighborhood Association
  - United Neighborhoods
  - East Bluff Serenity Neighborhood
  - Glen Oak Park Neighborhood Association
  - Glen Oak Improved Neighborhood Group
- 5. NORTHSIDE
  - Northside Action Council
  - Olde Towne North Residents Association
  - Northside/Averyville Coalition

- 6. AVERYVILLE
  - Northside/Averyville Coalition
  - Averyville Improvement Assication
  - Harvard Area Homeowners Association



In order to understand the neighborhood structure of Peoria, the charrette team identified a series of locations in which it is possible to see at least the traces of what were once neighborhood centers. The team began by identifying probable locations on the map, at points where it was possible to see the intersection of major streets. These expectations were then checked by direct field observation and adjusted accordingly. The team rarely found it necessary to adjust the location of neighborhood centers by more than a block or so. Once the centers had been identified, the team then mapped the neighborhood structure in terms of the pedestrian sheds defined around them.

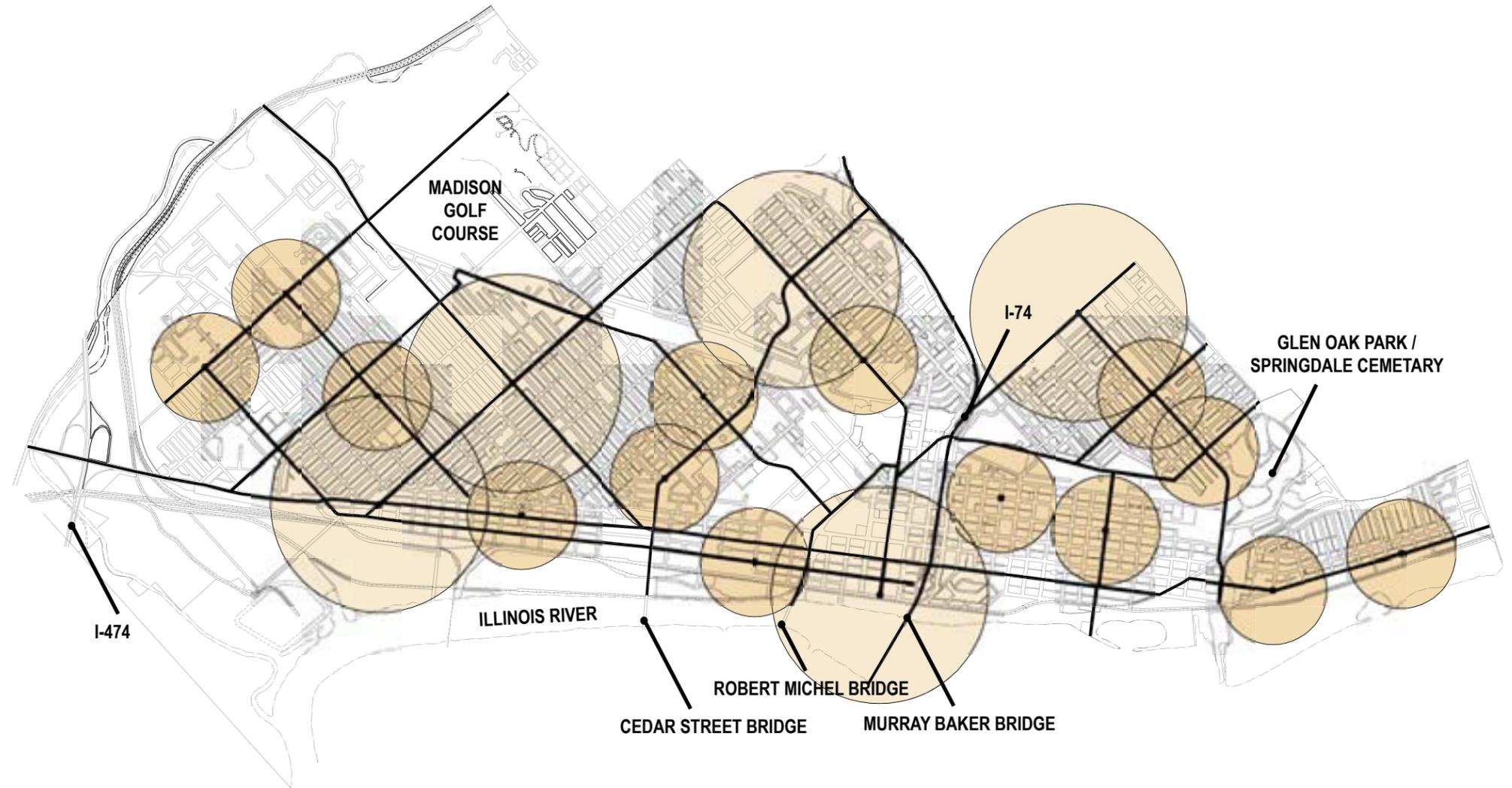


**NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, EXISTING CONDITIONS.** Throughout the older neighborhoods, one can find the traces of what used to be neighborhood centers, in the form of buildings like the ones pictured above, with corner entrances to first-floor commercial space. Many of the commercial uses have disappeared, or in many cases the corners have been converted to more automobile-oriented commercial uses (see below).



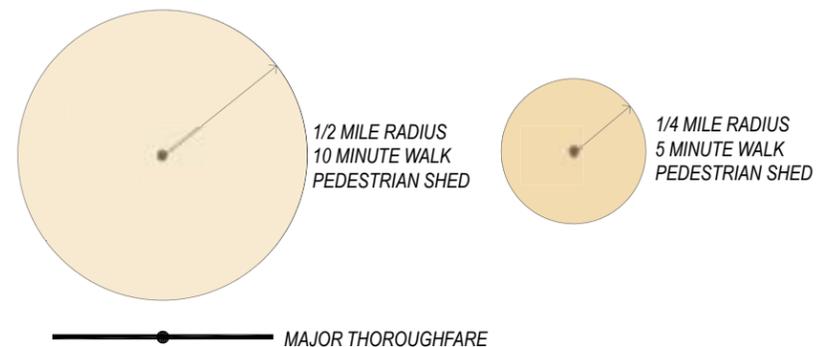
In the map of neighborhood centers, we can see the historic structure of Peoria as an interconnected system of walkable neighborhoods, joined by major corridors. The functioning of this neighborhood structure has been damaged by the decay of the traditional centers, and by allowing a mix of urban and non-urban types of development to occur side-by-side. The restoration of this structure is a key to revitalizing the inner city.

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**THE NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE AND THE URBAN FABRIC.** Analysis of the existing urban fabric reveals a clear structure of neighborhood centers with their associated pedestrian sheds. Typical pedestrian sheds are defined by a ¼ mile walk from center to edge. Major neighborhood centers are capable of drawing from a ½ mile pedestrian shed. Within each pedestrian shed, the block pattern provides a good basis for walkable neighborhoods. The long sides of the rectangular blocks create increments of residential streets conducive to a sense of neighborhood, while the block dimensions are generally at a scale that makes it easy to walk from block to block or to the neighborhood center. This diagram also emphasizes the network of major and minor streets that provide impressively consistent connections between neighborhoods.

**KEY**



**Schools**

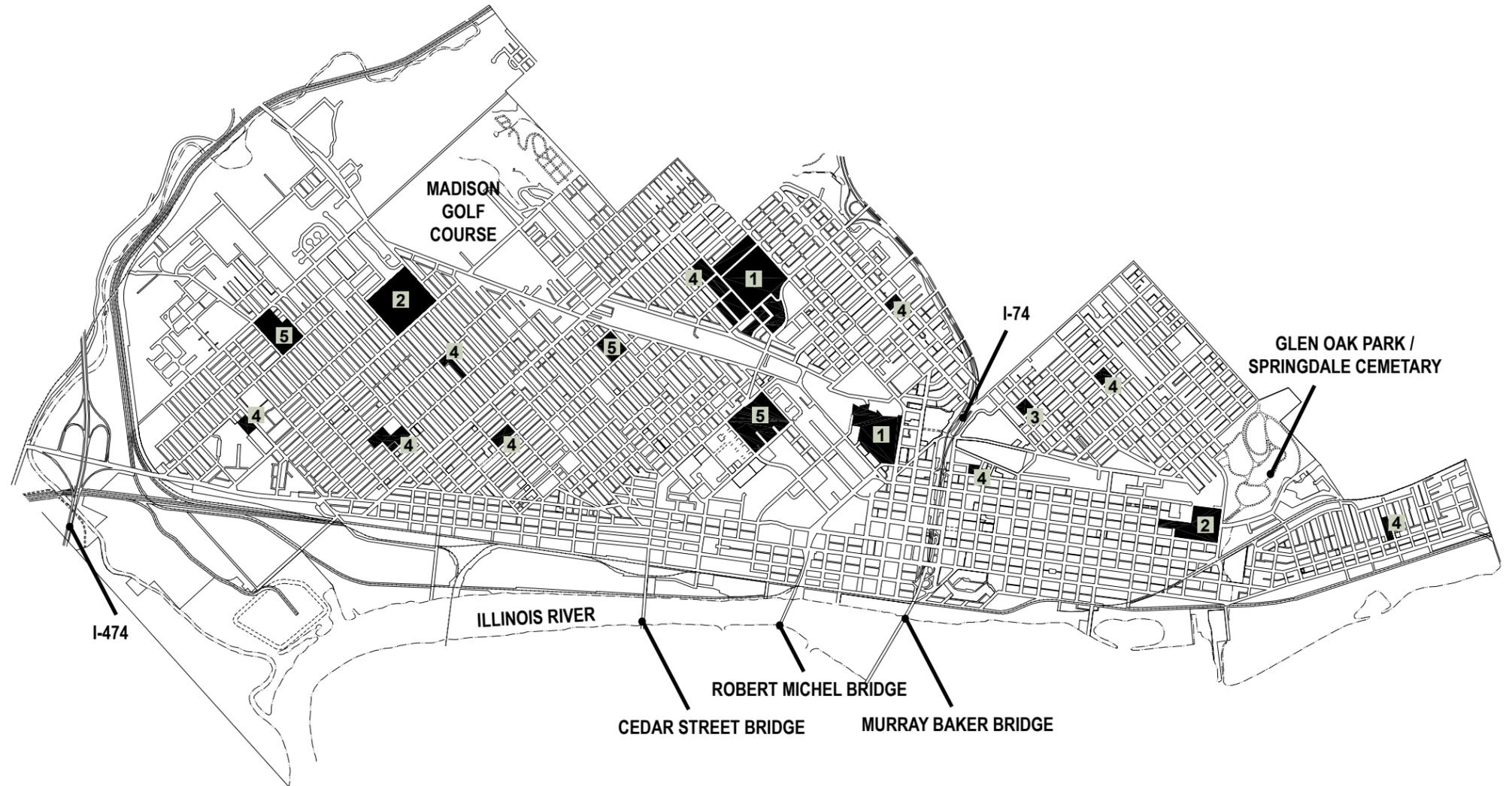
This diagram shows the location of schools, showing that the schools in Peoria's older neighborhoods are not only older buildings, but also date from a time when schools were given prominent locations in neighborhoods. This legacy of an earlier age is an important asset in these neighborhoods.

One of the most significant factors in making inner city neighborhoods competitive with suburban neighborhoods is the quality of the schools. If the schools are suffering from problems of poor performance, crime, and physical decay, families with a choice will move to another district. The decline of inner city schools is often a central part of the self-reinforcing cycle of neighborhood decay. As problems in the schools encourage families to leave, the lack of population makes it difficult to justify continued investment in those schools and the declining tax base makes such investment difficult anyway.

The school buildings sprinkled throughout the study area were one of the first features noted by the *charrette* team. The buildings are not only beautiful, but well located from the standpoint of maintaining the neighborhood structure of the city. This makes the city's schools even more important as components of Peoria's neighborhoods. It was also noticed, however, that many of these buildings had solid panels instead of glass in some of the windows, probably installed as part of an economizing or modernizing program at some point, but giving the impression of a building under siege. (For the plan's recommendation in this regard, see N-13 below).



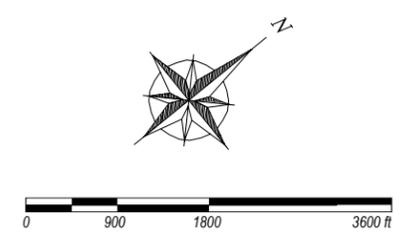
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**SCHOOLS.** One of the most important attributes of the kind of traditional neighborhood structure found in Peoria is the location of schools at the heart of the neighborhoods. In addition to its primary and secondary schools, Peoria has both a university and a medical school campus located within the study area.

**KEY**

- 1** UNIVERSITY:  
Bradley University  
University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria
- 2** HIGH SCHOOL:  
Manual High School  
Woodruff High School
- 3** MIDDLE SCHOOL:  
Trewyn Middle School  
White Middle School  
Blaine-Sumner Middle School
- 4** PRIMARY SCHOOL:  
Harrison Primary School  
Garfield Primary School  
Tyng Primary School  
Whittier Primary School  
Irving Primary School  
Kingman Primary School  
Franklin Primary School  
Glen Oak Primary School
- 5** SPECIALTY SCHOOL:  
Roosevelt Magnet School  
Valeska Hinton Early Childhood



**Parks and Squares**

This diagram illustrates the locations of the existing parks and squares. There is a healthy sprinkling of parks and public squares throughout the study area, but this pattern could be more complete - especially in the neighborhoods to the south and the far north. The gaps in the distribution of small neighborhood parks and squares is most evident when one compares this diagram with the diagram of the neighborhood structure.

The most striking aspect of this diagram, however, is the fact that Peoria's urban heart is ringed with a nearly complete belt of green. A number of the proposals in this plan are intended to complete this ring, and to provide continuous green corridors connecting the system of parks and public spaces on the urban waterfront to a regional system of greenways. To the north, the plan proposes completion of a green corridor linking existing parks and green space along the southern edge of the city to the heart of the riverfront. This would also provide access to the riverfront for the network of bike trails approaching the city from the north. To the south, the plan proposes reserving riverfront land that is currently taken up with industrial uses for future inclusion in the greenway system (see CR-1 below).



*PEORIA'S PARKS. This diagram indicates an almost ideal relationship between the urbanism of Peoria's downtown neighborhoods and a system of parks and natural open spaces. The "proposed additions" indicate a few crucial steps in completing this system. The existing pattern already strongly suggests the relationship between urban and natural areas appropriate to Peoria. Although the downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods have access to the natural features of the landscape in which Peoria sits, their quality as urban areas isn't blurred by confusing parks in urban neighborhoods with preserved natural landscape on the urban edge. Peoria's parks are typically well-designed and well-integrated into their neighborhoods.*

**KEY**

- Existing Parkland: To Be Redeveloped
- Existing Parkland: To Be Maintained
- Proposed Parkland: To Be Acquired



**The Bicycle Network**

Peoria has a well planned and well developed network of bicycle routes and trails. Although the network is perhaps not quite as extensive as it might be, its design reflects a fundamental principle to be reinforced by this plan. The network includes three ways of accommodating bicycles: trails, lanes, and routes. Bicycle trails, providing a path that is actually separated from vehicular rights of way, are appropriate facilities in rural or suburban settings where vehicular traffic is moving quickly, and where part of the point is to accommodate access to locations that might be inaccessible to automobiles. Bicycle lanes are an appropriate way to accommodate bicycles in suburban or urban locations where bicycles need to share the right of way with vehicles but the traffic speeds require some separation of bicycles from vehicular traffic. Finally, bicycle routes are an appropriate way to accommodate bicycles in urban areas where the traffic speeds have been reduced or the traffic has been calmed sufficiently to allow bicycles to share the same roadway with other modes of transportation. One of the effects of the proposed reconfiguration of downtown streets for pedestrian friendliness would be to make the whole of the downtown and riverfront safely accessible by bicycle. Current thinking in transportation planning suggests that if we want to keep up with the demand for mobility and accessibility in our cities, we need to think in terms of multiplying the modes of transportation, and not just the lanes of traffic.



*THE BICYCLE NETWORK. The existing bicycle network includes designation of three classes of bicycle access to the city: trails, bike lanes, and bike routes. Most of the bicycle access to the area is in the form of designated routes, on which bicyclists share travel lanes with vehicular traffic. A key to the safety and comfort of bicycle routes, of course, is the speed of the vehicles which have to share the roads. Improvement of the pedestrian-friendly character of the downtown and neighborhood streets should also enhance bicycle access beyond the currently designated routes.*

**KEY**

- Class I : Trails
- - - Class II : Lanes
- Class III : Routes



**TIF Districts, Existing and Proposed**

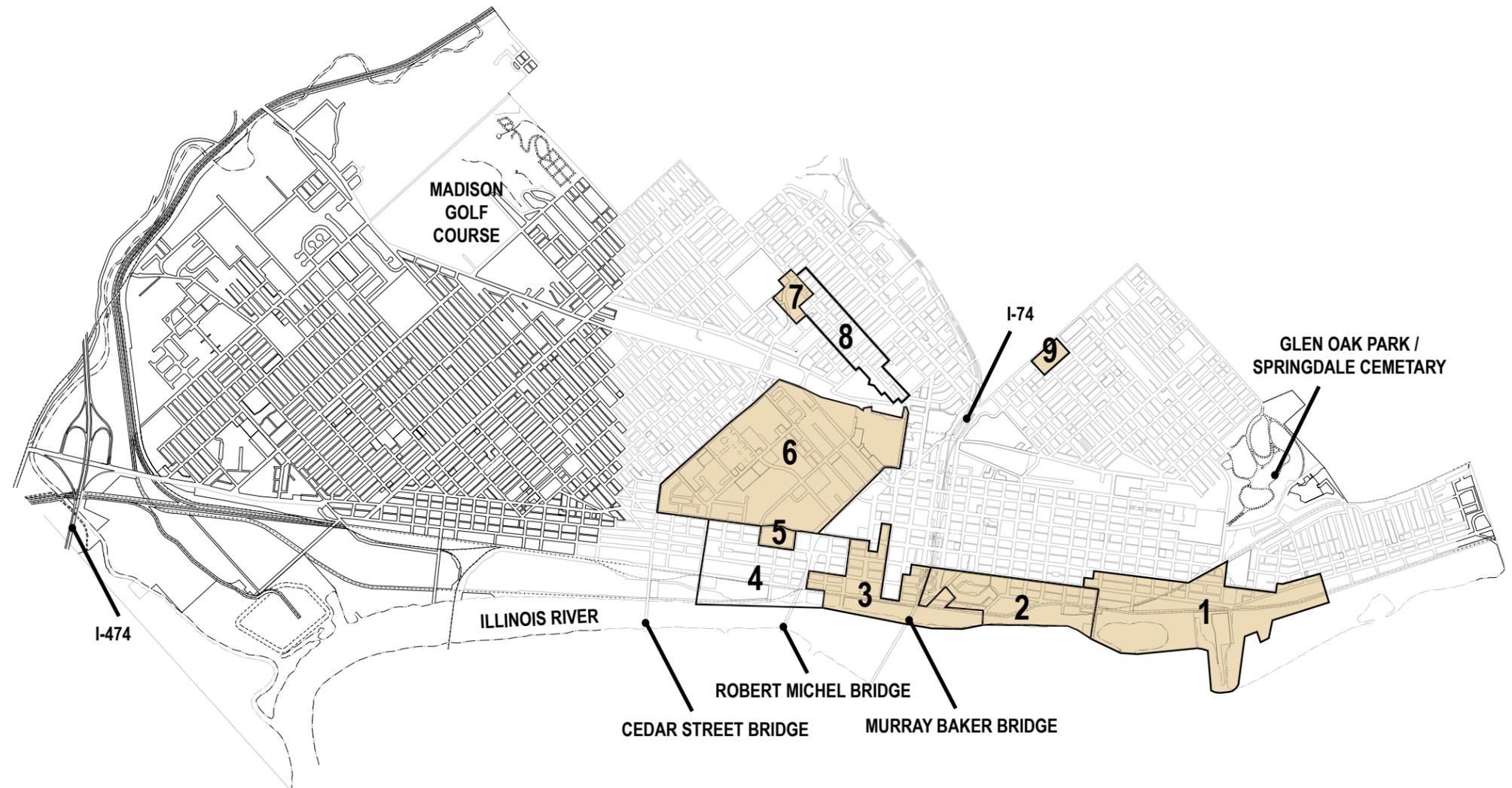
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows a district so designated to benefit directly from tax revenues generated by the increased value of property in the district. Tax revenues based on assessed values existing at the time a TIF district is established continue to accrue to the local general fund. Only the increased tax revenues which result from higher assessments accrue to the TIF fund to be used directly for improvements which benefit the district. Establishment of a TIF program would require a determination of "blight" and designation of the district as a "community redevelopment area" (CRA).

TIF funds can be used for a variety of purposes, including assembly of property for resale and redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and to leverage other funds. The projected flow of tax revenues over time can also support the issuance of bonds to provide upfront monies for improvements. In addition, designation as a CRA makes an area eligible or more readily qualified for various other public funds benefitting "lower income" and "distressed" areas. CRA designation also provides an outlet for commercial banks to meet their "community reinvestment" goals and obligations. The results of this "reinvestment" could include providing low interest loans to property owners and landlords to improve conditions and values of their properties.

It is important to note that a community does not have to be blighted under the classic definition (e.g., deteriorating and dilapidated housing) to be designated as a CRA. Instead, it provides a relatively painless means to an end - the creation of an ongoing funding source for improvements without raising taxes or imposing assessments on unwilling property owners. Therefore, the design team felt that at certain key locations, the designation of TIF districts would help to spur growth where little or none is currently projected for the near future.

The illustration indicates the the seven existing TIF districts, including one on the Riverfront, one in the area in and around Bradley University, one in the Southtown area currently characterized by large surface parking lots and development suburban in character. In addition to these, the city should seek designation for the greater West Main Street area and the Warehouse District on the riverfront south of downtown.

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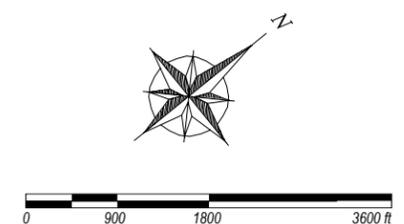


*TIF DISTRICTS. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are an effective strategy for assembling the resources necessary to support the public improvements and other costs of revitalization. This map shows the areas covered by two existing TIF districts, and indicates three additional TIF districts intended to help support key components of this plan: the Bio-Research corridor along West Main (3); the South Town redevelopment area dividing downtown from the southside neighborhoods (5); and the Warehouse district (4).*

**KEY**

- Existing
- Proposed

- |   |                           |   |                      |
|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | Northside Business Park   | 6 | Southtown            |
| 2 | Northside Riverfront      | 7 | Campustown           |
| 3 | Central Business District | 8 | Bio-Science Research |
| 4 | Warehouse District        | 9 | Midtown Plaza        |
| 5 | Downtown Stadium          |   |                      |





*DOWNTOWN PEORIA TODAY.* This perspective shows the existing condition in downtown Peoria, where the automobile has been allowed to dominate the downtown.



*THE HEART OF PEORIA.* This perspective shows the proposed condition in downtown Peoria, where mixed-use development and walkable streets provide an active and inviting environment.

**General Controls Overview**

One of the first tasks undertaken by the *charrette* team was a review of the existing zoning codes and future land use map. The existing zoning in the downtown, although originally written with the intention of encouraging development, has had the unintended consequence of limiting incentives for re-investment or re-development in the downtown neighborhoods. Existing zoning also fails to provide guidelines specific enough to support the consistent preservation (or restoration) of neighborhood character in cases where there has been redevelopment.

The general recommendation is that the city should pursue a re-organizing and streamlining of the existing zoning code using a transect-based system. For the longer term, this plan recommends systematic implementation of the *SmartCode*

(see under separate cover) as an incentive-driven overlay to the existing codes.

Because of the complexity of the issues and the political difficulties often associated with a wholesale overhaul of existing codes, it may be necessary to divide the code-related interventions into some that can be made relatively immediately and in the short-term, whereas others might need to be taken on as part of a more wide-ranging and long-term effort.

It is recognized that a systematic transformation or replacement of existing codes can be a long and politically arduous process, and one that can actually hold up the implementation of the plan for an indefinite period. Such

delay can completely undermine the success of a plan of this sort.

Given the fact that there are a large number of projects moving quickly through their planning stages, it is especially important to pay attention to the opportunities for implementation of this plan in the short term. It is crucial to lower the obstacles to development as soon as possible, but to do so with a certain delicacy and precision. Code revisions should be carefully calibrated to do two things simultaneously: create a predictable environment that levels the path to good development, and makes sure that the projects that emerge (especially in the short term) are most likely to reflect the principles of the plan.

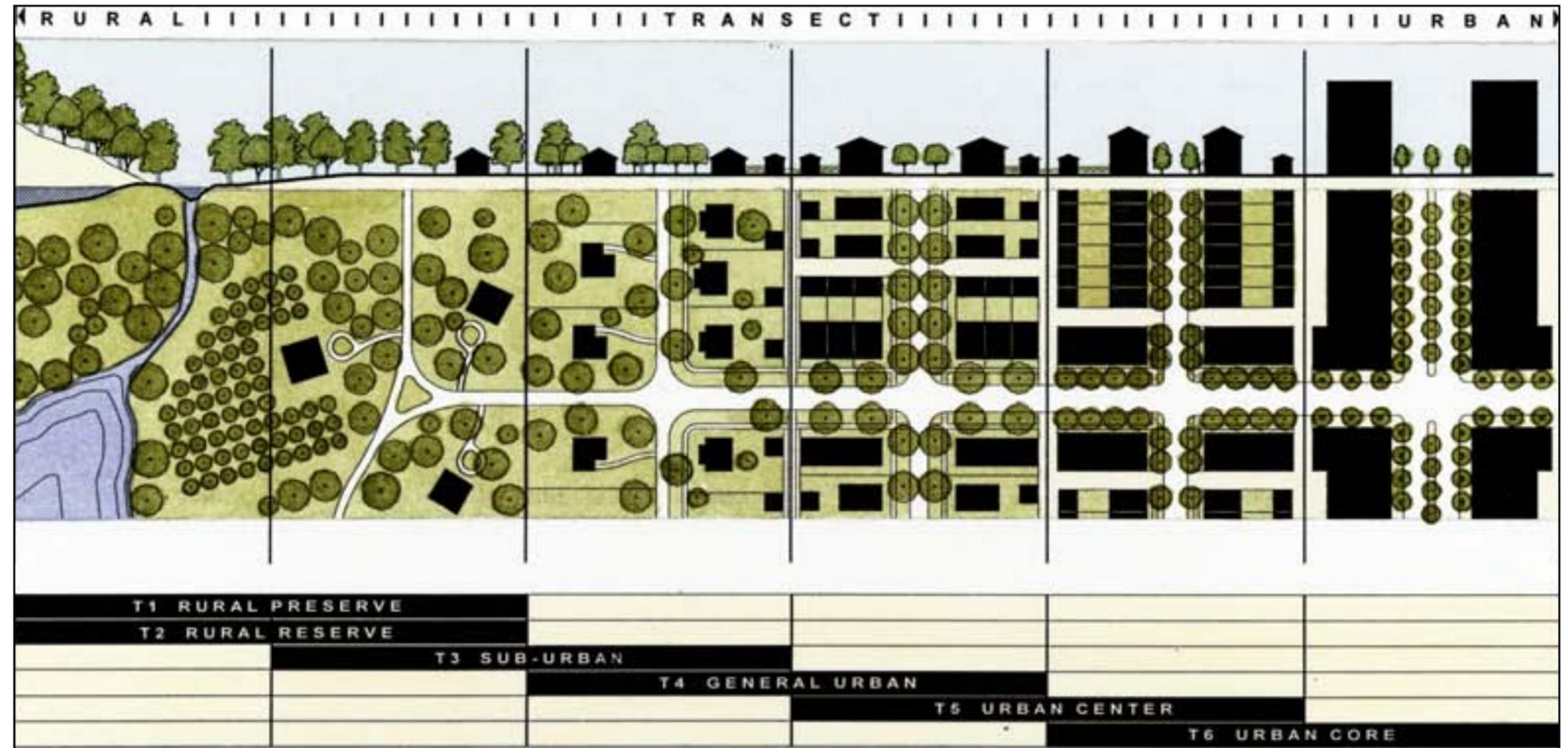
Toward this end, this plan proposes a series of specific interventions that would enable a translation of existing zoning into transect-based classifications. The short-term interventions are generally aimed at responding to specific conditions with immediate consequences, but they are also intended to establish the principles and precedents that would be involved in the longer term and more extensive updating of the codes. They are, in a sense, demonstrations that show how to make the translation from existing zoning to a system based on the urban transect. In each case, they operate in a way that enables the city to provide incentives for development that realizes the goals of this plan while avoiding any substantial harm to development potential of specific parcels that might be in play.

**The Transect**

The Transect is a system of classification of human habitats based on a conceptual continuum from the most rural to the most urban conditions. This system makes it possible to specify the character of the typical elements of the built environment—streets, buildings, landscaping, etc.-- in a way that is appropriate to different kinds of places, located at different points along this continuum. For example, a street is more urban than a road, a curb is more urban than a swale, a brick wall more urban than a wooden fence, and an allee of trees more urban than a picturesquely arranged cluster.

The Transect technique is derived from ecological analysis, where it is applied in order to understand an ecological system as a sequence of distinct but interconnected natural habitats, each differentiated by its terrain, as well as the vegetation and animal life typically found in that particular ecological location. For example, it is a way of mapping the differences encountered as one moves from a coral reef to the shoreline, across the dunes, and into the upland habitats. Similarly, the gradient from rural to urban, when subdivided into rational categories, becomes the urban transect and serves as the basis for zoning categories: Rural (T1 & T2), Sub-Urban (T3), General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), and Urban Core (T6).

Conventional zoning has been oriented primarily to separating incompatible uses, and typically doesn't address the question of the way different uses are actually connected to each other, more or less in proximity, in order to create different kinds of human habitat. A zoning system based on the urban transect focuses attention on the problem of specifying the way different uses need to be disciplined in order for them to form neighborhoods of varying character. The goal of a transect-based system is to make it possible for a city like Peoria to sustain a complete palette of great neighborhoods from which people can choose, from the most rural to the most urban, according to the tastes and lifestyle preferences. A transect-based system provides the tools necessary to grow the full range of choices, insuring that they not only grow consistently but aspire to the highest possible quality.



*THE TRANSECT. The transect is a classification system ranging from the most rural to the most urban types of environments. It is the basis for a method of land-use planning focused on the overall character of the places to be preserved or built. Downtown Peoria is primarily composed of places and conditions that can be characterized as General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), or Urban Core (T6). However, there are important exceptions: areas along the riverfront that should be designated as Rural Reserve (T2), and areas that have to be defined as special Districts.*

**T3 - Sub-Urban Zone**

The Sub-Urban zone of the Transect is somewhat rural, approximating the country. It is characterized by single-family homes, generous setbacks, curbless road beds, no sidewalks, and irregular planting of trees in a relatively natural setting. The Sub-Urban areas are not found in the downtown, but are located to preserve and reinforce existing neighborhoods that are intended to remain exclusively residential, composed of detached single-family homes on larger lots and with private landscaped yards.



TRANSECT: SUB-URBAN ZONE: *Character of a block in the Sub-Urban Zone*

**T4 - General Urban Zone**

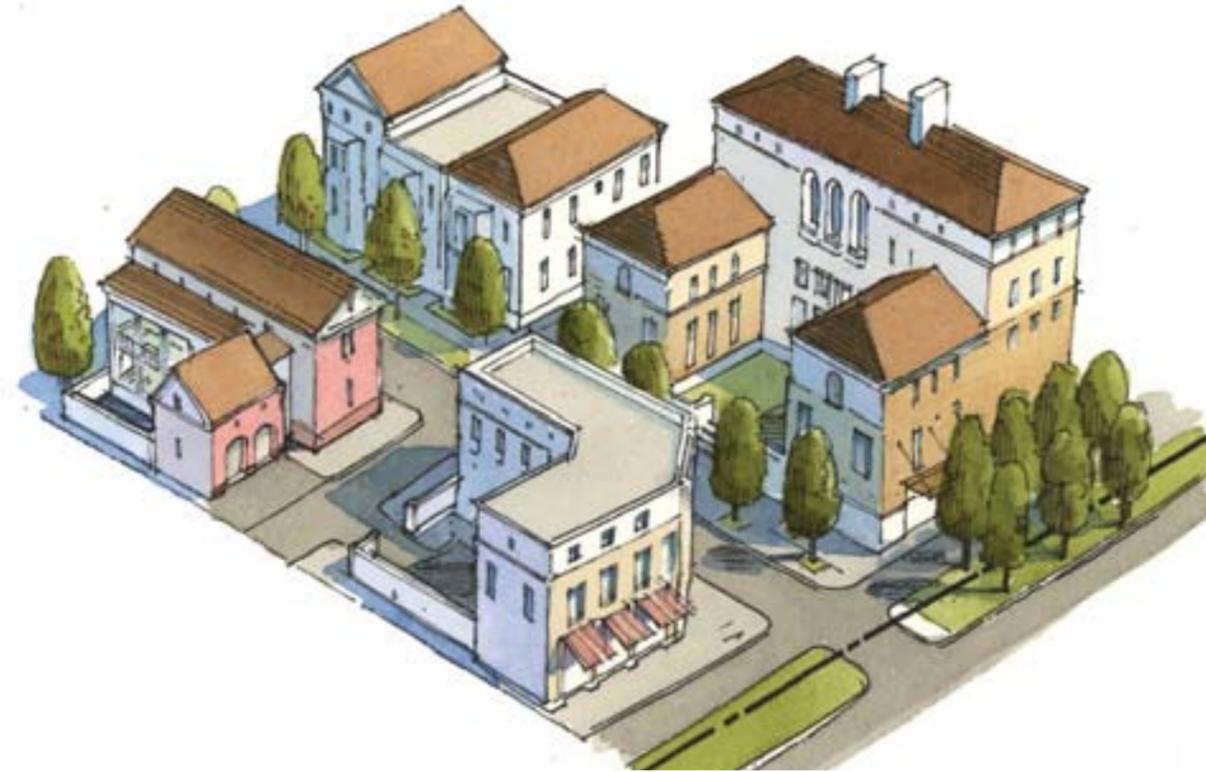
The General Urban area is primarily residential but more urban in character. It is located closer to the town center. A mix of housing often shares a common setback and garden wall. A regular row of street trees gives the residential streets a distinctive canopy and defined edges. The General Urban Areas of the Regulating Plan encourage compatible infill in the neighborhoods near downtown. They also create consistent opportunities for neighborhood centers with limited mixed-uses oriented toward meeting neighborhood needs, and opportunities for introducing live/work units.



TRANSECT: GENERAL URBAN ZONE: *Character of a block in the General Urban Zone*

**T5 - Urban Center Zone**

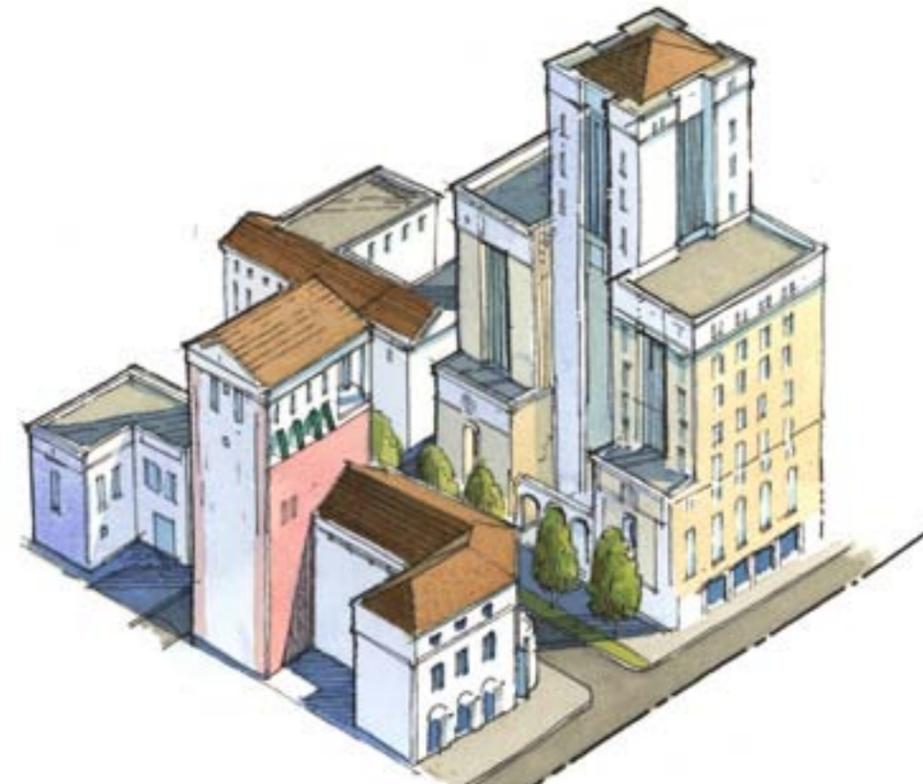
The mixed-use Urban Center is composed of two- to five-story buildings with retail at street level and commercial and residential uses above. The alignment of storefronts forms a continuous streetwall, and open space takes the form of regularly shaped streets, squares, greens and plazas. This is the most common zone in the downtown and is applied to help protect and establish the pedestrian-friendly fabric of the historic core and the center of each surrounding neighborhood.



TRANSECT: URBAN CENTER ZONE: *Character of a block in the Urban Center Zone*

**T6 - Urban Core Zone**

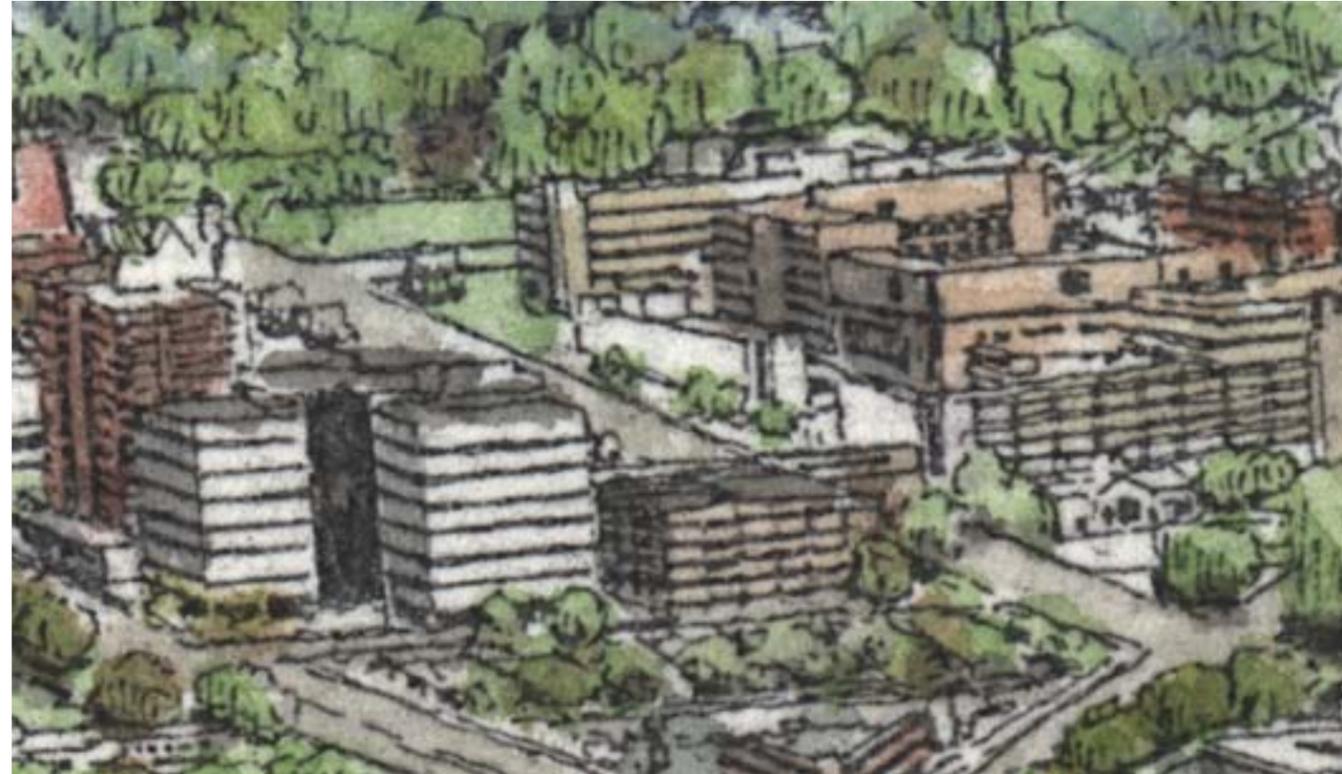
The Urban Core contains the most dense construction and the tallest buildings. This area often occurs along major thoroughfares but may also be located along waterfronts or in other areas where property values are highest. The Urban Core is either thoroughly mixed-use or within walking distance of a mixed-use Urban Center. While accommodating the intensity of development implied by high property values, the Urban Core zone imposes urban standards that will require buildings in these areas to respect the street, help frame the public realm, and provide public vistas to the riverfront.



TRANSECT: URBAN CORE ZONE: *Character of a block in the Urban Core Zone*

**D - District**

The last of the transect categories relevant to Peoria's downtown is the District. Some uses are difficult to accommodate without disruption of the typical urban fabric, or, like hospitals, they may be too complex and variable in their needs to be effectively regulated within the framework provided by any specific zoning. A district is a way to accommodate categories of use that have a tendency not to fit in (industry, hospitals, college campuses). It is also a way to designate an area with conditions or aspirations that require more specific, delicate or flexible regulatory interventions. In Peoria, the hospital district and the warehouse district on the riverfront are two significant examples of the need to couple flexibility in the general controls with an ability to respond to specific conditions.



*TRANSECT: DISTRICT. The hospital campus is a good example of an area that has to be handled as a District. Hospitals need to have their own planning as they grow in capacity, add new facilities, and change with new medical knowledge and technology. Although there are some ways that the hospital complex could be more compatible with the surrounding urban fabric at its edges, hospitals are institutions requiring buildings and facilities that may not fit comfortably within the regular urban transect zones. The key point may be simply that their planning is driven by the functions contained on their campus, not by considerations of urban form.*

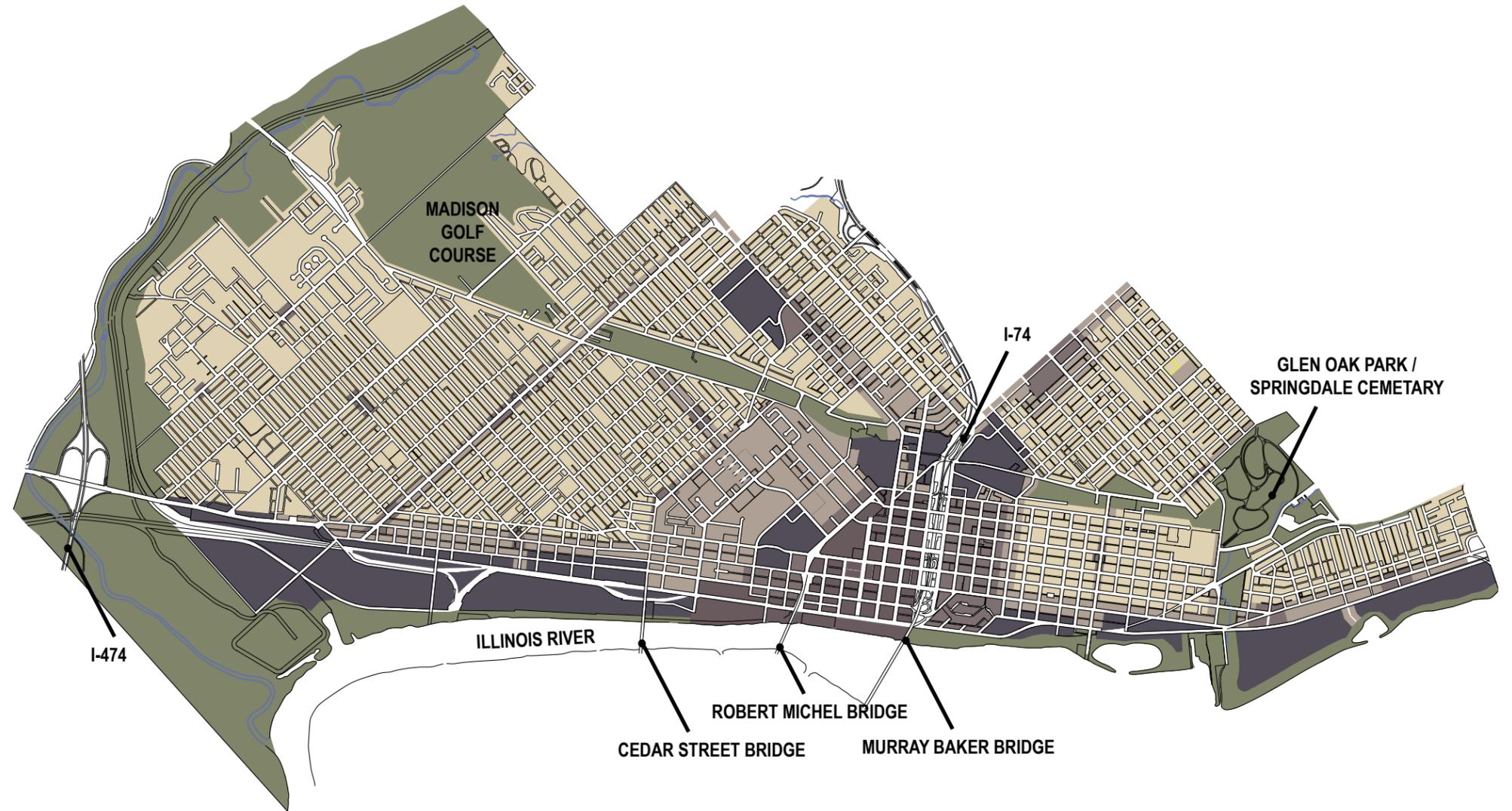
**THE REGULATING PLAN**

The layers of complex land use regulations that have accumulated over many generations have only reinforced the gradual erosion of the downtown and the city's neighborhoods. The Regulating Plan summarizes the simplification and systemization of the existing zoning and land use, using transect based planning described above.

This Regulating Plan is based on an both field observation of existing land uses and an analysis of the future land use plan. As it currently stands, the Regulating Plan is only a first cut at the process, with the aim of repairing the most obvious of the problems in the existing land use plan and making mostly subtle changes in accordance with the goals of this plan. Specifically, proposed changes focus on the following goals:

- protect and enhance the character of in-town residential neighborhoods.
- establish the pedestrian friendly, mixed-use character of the downtown core.
- accommodate more development along the waterfront that is supportive of the vitality of the downtown core.
- correctly regulate development along commercial corridors and in neighborhood centers.
- redirect automobile-oriented types of uses and development to separate districts (in combination with the A/B frontage assignment).

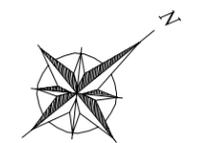
In order to re-establish the urban character of the downtown, the Regulating Plan simplifies the existing downtown zoning into three categories of internally consistent environments. These categories are General Urban, Urban Center, and Urban Core. The Regulating Plan ensures that everything—the height of the building, the setbacks, the degree of complexity, the kind of lighting, the kind of landscaping—acts to reinforce the qualities that make each of these zones a distinctive place within the city. This reinforcing of difference is the key to insuring that the city offers the full range of choices and opportunities responsive to different tastes and different needs.



*THE REGULATING PLAN. The Regulating Plan reflects a re-working of the current existing land use plan in order to establish the pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use character of the downtown core; accommodate a more urban pattern along the downtown waterfront; protect and enhance the character of the in-town residential neighborhoods, and re-direct more automobile oriented development to separate districts. In this diagram, you can clearly see the progression from the most rural areas to the most intensely urban areas of the downtown core. Note, also, the way the regulating plan indicates a direction for the redevelopment of the Southern Gateway Corridor area.*

**KEY**

- URBAN CORE
- URBAN CENTER
- URBAN GENERAL
- SUB-URBAN
- RURAL RESERVE
- RURAL PRESERVE



Ironically, much of the current visual attractiveness of Peoria's downtown is due to efforts that are in fact part of the problem when it comes to bringing life and economic activity to the downtown streets. The key to creating great neighborhoods and great cities lies not just in great buildings or great streetscapes, but in the consistency with which the pieces are put together. One of the persistent problems in Peoria is a tendency to think of beautifying or improving the cityscape only in terms of greening it with berms, bushes, flowers, and trees. Andres Duany describes this as a tendency toward "ruralizing" the city. Trees and flowers have their place, even in great cities, but it is important that they behave in an urban fashion.



It is not that this landscaping is unattractive visually. Everyone agrees that it is beautiful. The problem is that whereas bushes and berms are attractive to the eye, they do not make good or effective pedestrian frontage. In fact, they have a tendency to discourage pedestrianism and disrupt any effort to create continuous pedestrian-oriented routes in the downtown. If Peoria is to restore the vitality of its downtown, it will be crucial for the citizens and the planners to reverse this impulse to use suburban means to try to beautify the downtown. Peoria needs to understand what it takes to be a beautiful city, and not just a collection of buildings lurking behind attractive landscaping.

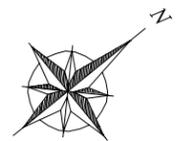
This diagram is only a first step. The City of Peoria will need to develop and approve a detailed regulating plan, in order to create a simpler and more predictable environment for development, with particular focus on targeted areas in the downtown core, the riverfront and warehouse district, and around the neighborhood centers (see discussion under specific projects below).



REGULATING PLAN, DETAIL. This detail of the regulating plan shows a close-up of the Urban Core, with corridors of Urban Center and Urban General radiating out from it: up West Main, south along Adams, and west along Lincoln Avenue. Potential neighborhood centers appear as areas of Urban Center punctuating corridors of Urban General, behind which the neighborhood is mostly Sub-Urban and residential.

KEY

- URBAN CORE
- URBAN CENTER
- URBAN GENERAL
- SUB-URBAN
- RURAL RESERVE
- RURAL PRESERVE



**A/B STREET FRONTAGE ASSIGNMENT**

The mapping of Existing Frontage Quality indicates how certain streets, due to their current characteristics, are more or less promising as future pedestrian routes and corridors of pedestrian-oriented activity. The map indicates places where the frontage is “good” from the standpoint of pedestrian-friendliness, “acceptable,” and “regrettable.”

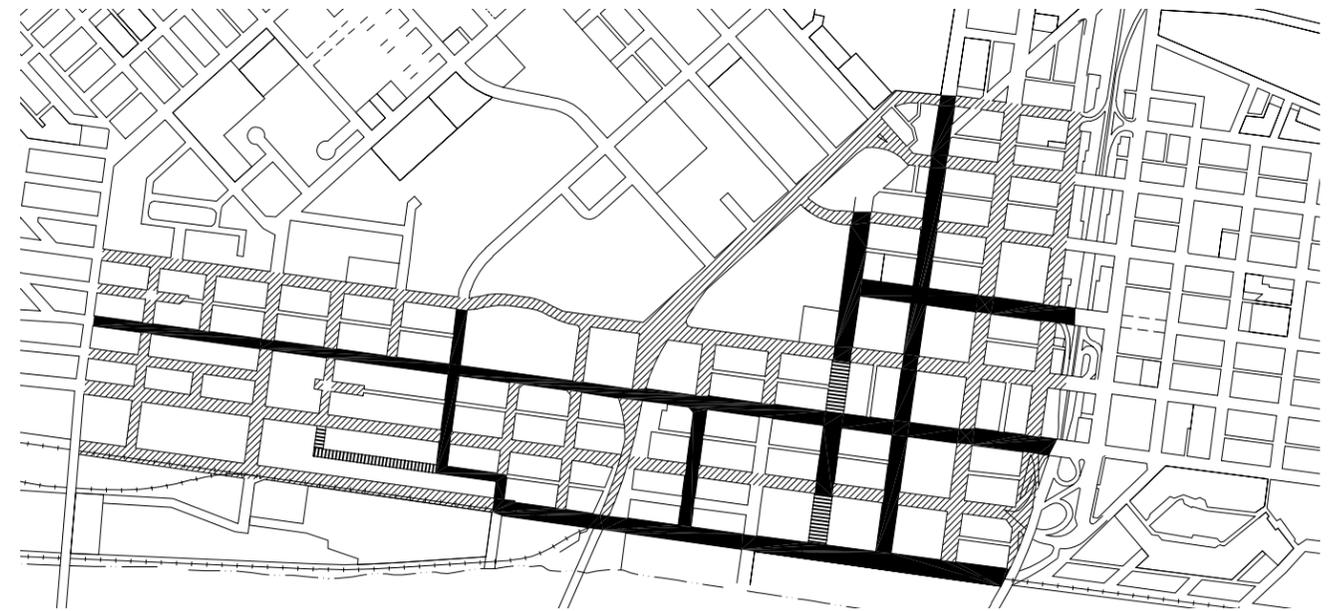
Unfortunately, it is commonplace for American cities to have very little pedestrian-friendly frontage of particularly high quality. Towns with as little as three or four continuous blocks of first-rate frontage often become destinations for tourists and shoppers coming from long distances away. The important finding in Peoria is not that there is very little first-rate frontage in the downtown at all, but that none of it is continuous. One finds a block here, half a block there, but never enough in one place to establish the pedestrian network and always interrupted with substantial stretches of “regrettable” frontage.

The A/B Street Frontage assignment takes these conditions into account in proposing which streets should be directed toward pedestrian-oriented use and which should be allowed to maintain their orientation toward uses that require more automobile orientation (e.g., parking garage entrances, drive-through windows, etc.).

Streets with the most potential to form part of a continuous, tightly connected, and high-quality pedestrian network are designated “A streets.” The primary A streets are Main Street and Fulton Street, running east and west, Adams Street and Water Street running north and south. Water Street is designated as an A street down to Oak Street, where it turns west through the warehouse district in order to make a connection to the baseball stadium.

Streets that are allowed to maintain their orientation toward the automobile are designated “B streets.” Washington Street was initially a candidate for the A grid, but was selected as an important B-street because many of the city’s parking garages open on to it. (This is not to say that it has to be unattractive. See proposal for the Caterpillar garage, project D-7 below.)

The A/B Frontage assignment, in addition to informing City redevelopment efforts, is referenced by the SmartCode to indicate the level of regulation that will apply along different streets within the Plan. As mentioned earlier, A-Streets are not necessarily any more profitable than B-Streets, but business owners abutting a B-Street may at their own discretion collectively elect to re-designate themselves as an A-Street, if they wish to follow A-Street requirements. The City should designate a policy for such a re-designation.



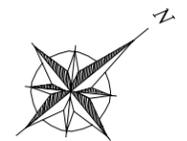
**KEY**

-  PRIMARY STREET NETWORK (A FRONTAGE - PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED)
-  SECONDARY STREET NETWORK (B FRONTAGE - AUTO ORIENTED)
-  NEW PRIMARY STREET



**KEY**

-  GOOD
-  ACCEPTABLE
-  REGRETTABLE



## MANAGEMENT

## GC-1

**Project Name:** Town Architect.

**Finding:** Much of the disappointment with recent projects, most prominently those on the riverfront, has to do with failures in attending to the details of design.

**Discussion:** One of the hardest won lessons of great cities is that design matters, and the devil is often in the details. For example, it is agreed that the river itself is the great asset for downtown redevelopment, yet few of the recent projects take any real advantage of this location. Although the new restaurants on the recently constructed deck at the riverfront would seem to be in a position to overlook the river, it turns out that it is actually difficult for patrons in those restaurants to see the river from the tables.

The successful redevelopment of Peoria's downtown is likely to be very sensitive to the correct execution of detailed pieces of urban design and architectural treatment. This is especially the case for the riverfront area and the warehouse district, but also pertains to the relatively delicate task of developing successful neighborhood centers and commercial corridors. In order that it be done right, it will be important for the City to be prepared to make informed judgments on many detailed matters of design. For this reason, it is necessary to insure that planning staff and elected officials have the support of a design expert on a routine basis. For this reason, many cities have established the office of the town architect, or alternatively, an architectural review committee made up of distinguished practitioners in the field.

**Recommendation:** Establish a position in the City's planning department for a town architect or a committee for architectural review, a practitioner(s) skillful and talented in design.

## GC-2

**Project Name:** Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**Finding:** Many citizens report that the existing historic preservation ordinance has not been effective.

**Discussion:** Such ordinances are a complex and delicate matter. Some feel that the ordinance is effective enough, while others think it is too effective, to the point of creating unnecessary obstacles and disincentives to renovation of older homes by imposing unreasonable expectations on the property owner.

If an ordinance is to be effective, the process of approval must be simple and brief; it should not add more than two weeks time to a building that meets its requirements. Also, the requirements must be reasonable and not precious, enabling those who wish to use historic buildings in novel ways, or construct new buildings of unique but compatible character, do not find their paths blocked. Finally, new buildings and additions to older buildings must be allowed—and indeed encouraged—to blend in seamlessly with the traditional fabric.

Many problems and concerns might be resolved by the new codes associated with this plan, by insuring that codes and standards applying to all buildings are adequate to the task of preserving neighborhood character. Sometimes problems are created when the banner of historic preservation is raised simply in order to protect the most routine aspects of a traditional neighborhood, for example the character of traditional wooden front porches. Unnecessarily demanding standards of historical accuracy are sometimes invoked when simpler adjustments of the codes would accomplish the same goals and still allow desirable freedom for the property owners.

**Recommendation:** Ascertain that Peoria's historic preservation ordinance is both succinct and effective in its implementation.

## GC-3

**Project Name:** Streamlining the Permitting Process.

**Finding:** Property owners in the warehouse district report obstacles to renovation that result from the permitting and inspection process.

**Discussion:** Zoning ordinances, building codes and the requirements of the permitting process are often written assuming that one is dealing with new construction. As a result, those who want to re-develop existing urban buildings often find themselves at a serious disadvantage: forced to negotiate complex variances at every step, and subject to the sometimes arbitrary judgments of inspectors and other officials who have to struggle to apply regulations that don't clearly apply to the case at hand. In addition, one of the challenges of re-using old industrial buildings is that one often doesn't know what one will find until opening up the walls and actually starting the process of renovation. It is both difficult and expensive to have complete and accurate drawings at the beginning of a project.

In order to encourage re-development of the downtown, it is necessary to find ways to make the process easier. The possibility of conditionally expediting the process can be used as a very powerful incentive to attract interest in development and to encourage developers to do the right thing.

**Recommendation:**

- Developers who agree to work within the guidelines of the specific area plans for the downtown and riverfront areas should find their permitting relatively painless.
- In the case of developers who are renovating historic buildings, the city should make it possible to get a permit without complete drawings, making approval of the work subject to inspection.

**GC-4**  
**Project Name: Parking Management Plan.**

**Finding:** Downtown Peoria has 12,160 spaces of off-street parking, and 995 space for parking on the streets.

**Discussion:** Although a recent survey of tri-county residents regarding the downtown revealed a perception that parking is the most important problem, the reality is that there are a very large number of parking spaces, both public and private, located in both structured and surface parking lots in downtown Peoria. The perception of a parking problem has to do more with the allocation and management of parking than it has to do with sheer numbers of available spaces. The available parking is either not perceived as conveniently located, or it may actually not be known or accessible to the public.

To some extent, the perceived parking problem is a matter of bringing suburban expectations to the city. Whereas one might reasonably expect to park in front of a specific store in a suburban shopping center, the trade-off of a city is that one gets a mix of activities in a pedestrian-oriented destination at the expense of the most convenient possible parking. In a city, it is actually desirable to have people walking a block or two from the parking lot to their destination, since this insures that they inhabit the streets and walk past the businesses on the street (similar to the way shopping malls separate their anchor stores, so that shoppers are forced to walk past the in-line stores).

The relative convenience of parking locations is perceived very differently if the quality of the pedestrian experience is high as one walks from one's car to one's destination. In downtown Peoria, it seems a special hardship to walk two blocks from the parking lot because it is likely that the walk along the street will be uninteresting or even uncomfortable.

The requirement that each building provide its own parking has a doubly unfortunate impact on a downtown. First, the requirement that each project provide its own parking becomes a disincentive to development, especially in comparison to suburban sites where the cost of providing parking is relatively low. The cost of redevelopment is driven up, making it nearly impossible for development to occur except on larger parcels, in larger increments. Second,

when people come and go from a parking lot on site, the building shares much less of its activity with the surrounding streets. Finally, it is simply unnecessary, given the existing parking and the untapped opportunities for expanding convenient on-street parking.

**Recommendation:**

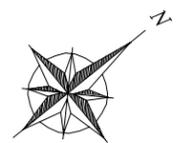
- Remove the parking requirement for downtown development projects.
- Develop a parking management district, like a public utility, empowered to coordinate the location and allocation of the plentiful existing parking.



**EXISTING PARKING LOCATIONS.** The illustration shows the existing parking lot or structure locations of both private and public parking facilities within downtown Peoria, as located by a field survey during the June 2002 charrette\*. With a parking management district defined and proper management for that district provided, Peoria's perceived parking 'problems' could be easily alleviated. Public spaces could be better located to areas of imminent need, while private spaces could be provided convenient to places of work or residence. As well, shared parking principles could be utilized to allocate parking to time of use in addition to use itself. It is also important to note the damage that the current parking locations do to the urban fabric of the downtown; not a single street in the central downtown of Peoria is without a parking facility (and the typically unfriendly pedestrian experience that they provide).  
 \* parking locations may not match official city designation

**KEY**

 EXISTING PARKING



**STREET RECONFIGURATION**

**SR-1 Interstate 74 Improvement.**

Interstate 74, following the pattern common in the 1960s, bisects the city of Peoria. Where this was done around the country, it has generally created problems, since bringing the highway into the city not only damaged the fabric of the city but turned a facility well-designed for intercity travel into a local arterial, undermining some of its capacity. In Peoria, however, the damage was mitigated by the design. The highway was cut through lower than the street grid, allowing the city's streets to cross over. As it cut through the city, furthermore, it brought the countryside with it along the landscaped embankments and retaining walls, giving it the relatively attractive character of a parkway. The current problem with the facility, however, is that the exit and on-ramps are relatively short by contemporary standards, originally designed to provide much more frequent access to the freeway than now considered necessary or desirable.

The transportation consultant, Rick Hall, carried out an analysis of the design by the Illinois DOT for the improvement of the segment of Interstate 74 that slices through the middle of the study area. He found that the proposed design is well conceived from the standpoint of enhancing the safety of the freeway system itself. Extended ramp lengths will allow interaction with the main flow of traffic on the Interstate at full operating speed. Both entering and exiting traffic will have ample time to increase or decrease speed, respectively, in relation to full interstate speed.

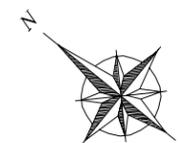
However, a second consideration is the manner in which the traffic from the Interstate will interact with the local street grid. The new design reduces the number of ramps in the downtown area, making it even more important to insure that traffic is effectively dispersed into the downtown grid. Analysis of the proposed ramp system identified particular points where the interaction with the grid system might be improved.



SEE PROJECT SR-1a, PAGE III.12

SEE PROJECT SR-1b, PAGE III.13

*PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO I-74. This drawing shows the changes to I-74, along the stretch passing through downtown Peoria, as proposed by the Illinois DOT. These changes are designed, in general, to improve the safety of the road by lengthening the ramps and allowing more time to accelerate or decelerate when entering or leaving the freeway. One of the results of these changes, however, is that there will be fewer exits and on-ramps connecting to the downtown street grid.*



**SR1-a**  
**Project Name: Revision of I-74 Improvement Plan I.**

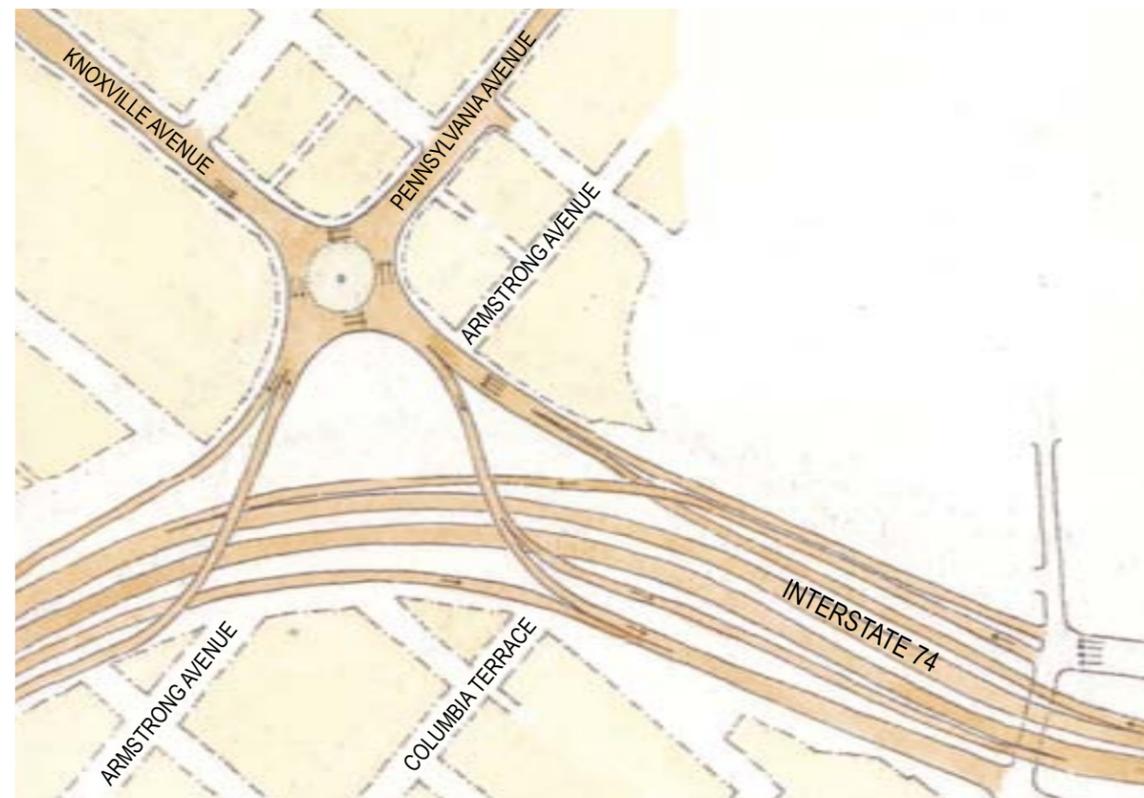
**Finding:** The proposed improvement of I-74 results in a confusing intersection at Knoxville and Pennsylvania Avenues.

**Discussion:** The proposed configuration of the exit ramps produce an awkward intersection at Knoxville and Pennsylvania Avenues. In the DOT proposal, traffic entering I-74 from Knoxville Avenue, for example, has to move to the right in order to go left to the interstate, whereas traffic continuing to the intersection of Knoxville and Pennsylvania Avenues has to move left. Traffic arriving at the intersection from any direction faces a confusing set of choices as a result of the awkward geometries of the intersection.

**Recommendation:** Consider an alternative configuration, as illustrated (below, right). The ramps have been sorted out so that one moves in a more intuitive manner (moving right to go right). In addition, the awkward intersection is simplified with the use of a roundabout, allowing traffic to disperse smoothly in any of the available directions.

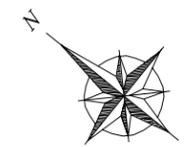


ILLINOIS D.O.T. PROPOSAL



DPZ PROPOSAL

*I-74 IMPROVEMENTS. One of the proposed improvements of the I-74 ramps results in the confusing intersection depicted in the drawing on the left. After studying the intentions of the DOT proposal, the design team developed the alternative on the right. The proposed alternative straightens out some of the crossing of the off-ramps leading to the intersection, and resolves the intersection itself with a modern roundabout. Not only does this simplify the design, but research has shown modern roundabouts to be safer for both vehicles and pedestrians.*

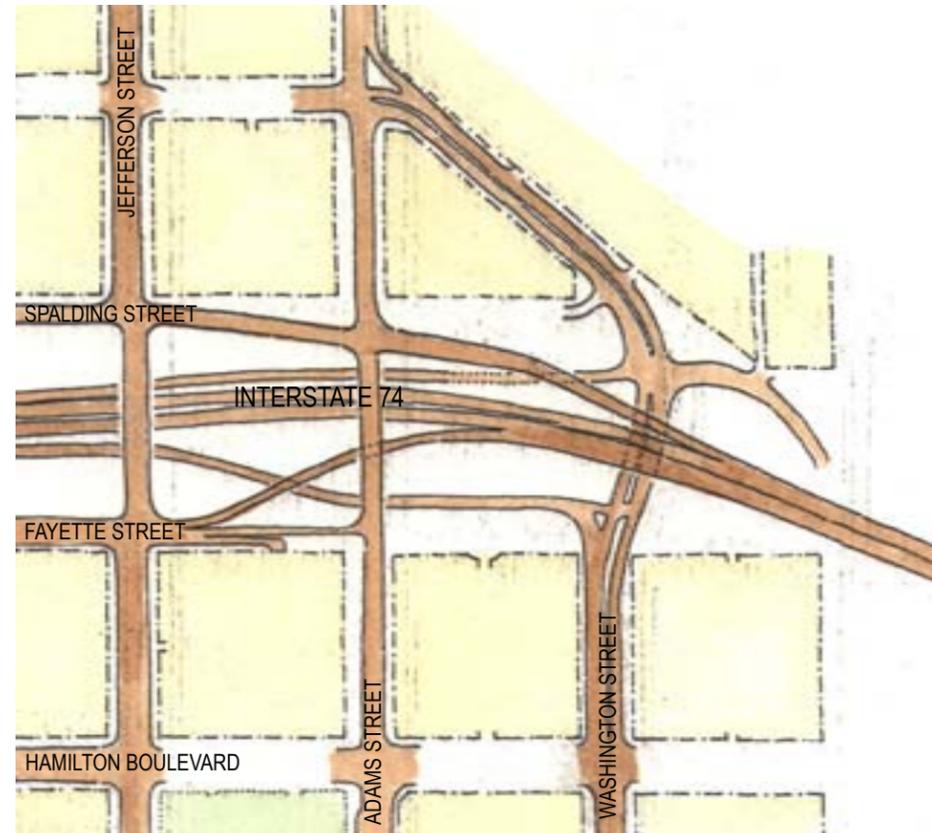


**SR-1b**  
**Project Name: Revision of I-74 Improvement Plan II.**

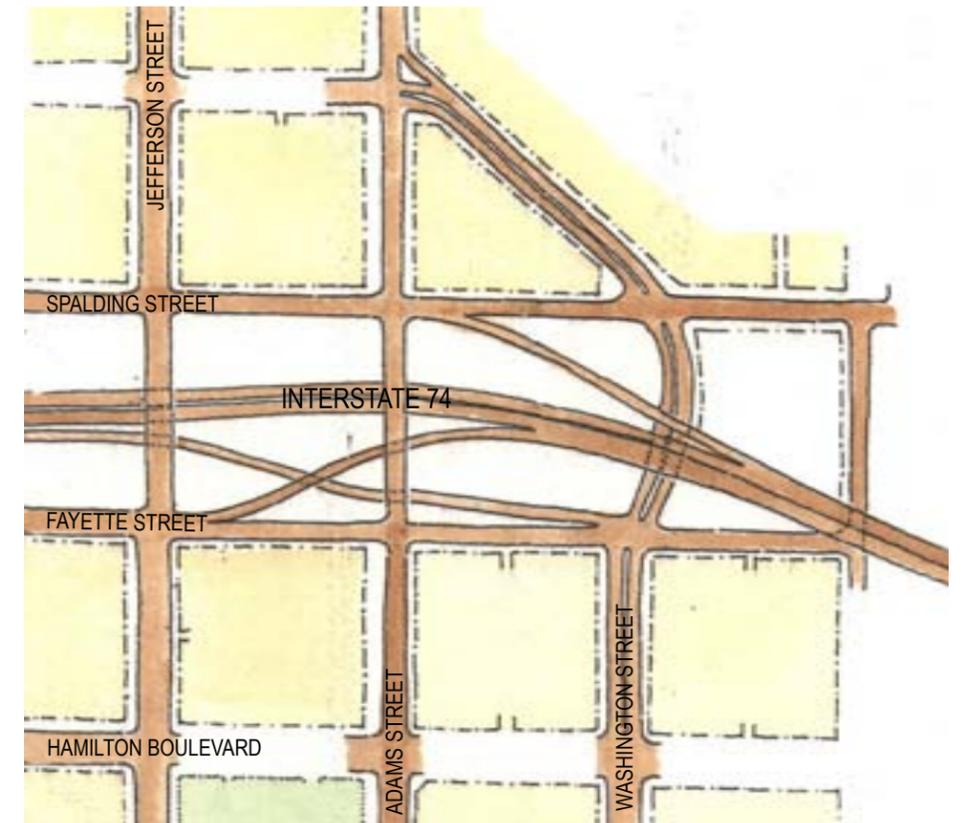
**Finding:** The proposed improvement of I-74 introduces new interruptions to the street grid.

**Discussion:** In the proposed configuration of exit ramps and the street grid, traffic exiting to Spalding Street (at Adams) has no direct way to connect back down to the riverfront. This situation is exacerbated by the current system of one-way streets. Both Spalding and Fayette are clipped between Adams and Washington Streets. Aside from the interruption of the connectivity of the street grid, this configuration also limits access to several parcels of land, thereby limiting their development potential.

**Recommendation:** Consider an alternative configuration, maintaining the grid as illustrated (far right). In the recommended alternative, both Fayette and Spalding extend all the way from Adams Street to Water Street on the riverfront. By restoring the grid pattern, the parcel between Spalding and the Interstate, west of Washington, becomes available for possible development.

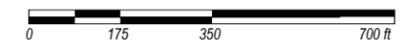
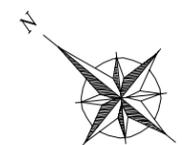


**ILLINOIS D.O.T. PROPOSAL**



**DPZ PROPOSAL**

*I-74 IMPROVEMENTS. The illustration on the left shows the reconfiguration of the first ramp encountered as one crosses the river into Peoria, as proposed by the DOT. Spalding and Fayette Streets are both clipped, limiting connections back to the riverfront from the exit ramp. The alternative proposed by the DPZ team is shown on the right. The exit to Spalding Street is simplified and both Spalding and Fayette are restored in alignment with the grid.*



**SR-2**  
**Project Name: Conversion of One-way Streets.**

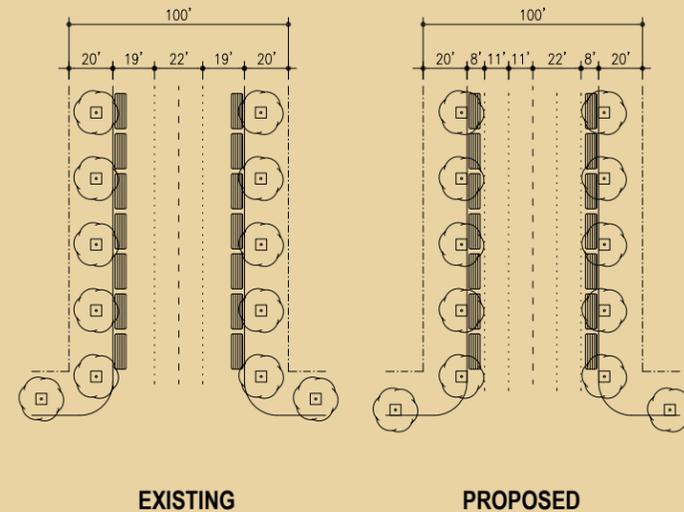
**Finding:** Much of the downtown grid has been organized into pairs of one-way streets, including the two primary north-south corridors along Adams and Jefferson.

**Discussion:** Systems of paired one-way streets were a fashion among an earlier generation of traffic planners, and as a result they became commonplace in American downtowns. However, although one way streets can smooth traffic flows, they allow traffic to speed up to the point where the street becomes increasingly hostile to pedestrians. At the same time, the one-way streets make local access within the grid more difficult by requiring more trips around the block to get to any particular destination. Especially in combination with the impact of higher traffic speeds and wide streets on pedestrian comfort, this has been shown in many places to have an unfortunate impact on downtown retail. There are many examples of locations where reversion to two way operation has greatly enhanced the economic viability of the downtown. West Palm Beach is one example, where the removal of the one way pattern (along with other recommendations) generated an explosion of new downtown development.

Current thinking among transportation experts is that it is necessary to design streets to accommodate multiple modes of transportation, if they are to meet present and future needs for mobility and accessibility. In particular, downtown streets need to be regarded not just as car sewers but as a crucial component of the public realm, designed for the quality of human experience as well as traffic capacity. A key to the economic vitality of the downtown is the presence of people on the streets.

According to the transportation consultant, the typical 60 foot wide street section in downtown Peoria is far too wide for one way traffic, given either the existing or the proposed travel demand. Traffic flow, at the levels indicated by the available data, is simply not a sufficient justification for continuing the one way pattern.

**Recommendation:** Reconfigure Jefferson and Adams Streets for two-way traffic, with on-street parking.



**TWO-WAY STREETS.** The conversion of wide one-way streets back into two-way streets would help to create an environment that is more comfortable and attractive for pedestrians, as well as making it easier for people driving into town to get to specific places.

**SR-3**  
**Project Name: Downtown Traffic Signal Timing.**

**Finding:** Traffic signals are currently timed to facilitate the flow of vehicles through the downtown at speeds higher than appropriate for a downtown area.

**Discussion:** The timing patterns of traffic signals can effectively direct traffic to selected corridors with great precision. The goals of this system need to be considered carefully. The current system seems to be oriented mostly toward facilitating the flow of traffic through the downtown, rather than being oriented toward enhancing the quality and character of the downtown as a destination. Future timing plans should be developed in conjunction with community goals for a mix of transportation modes. For example, if increased pedestrian comfort is adopted as a goal, then lower speeds can be effected by developing a signal system timing plan.

**Recommendation:** Develop a signal system timing plan oriented toward slowing vehicle speeds in the downtown and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle comfort.

**SR-4**  
**Project Name: On-Street Parking**

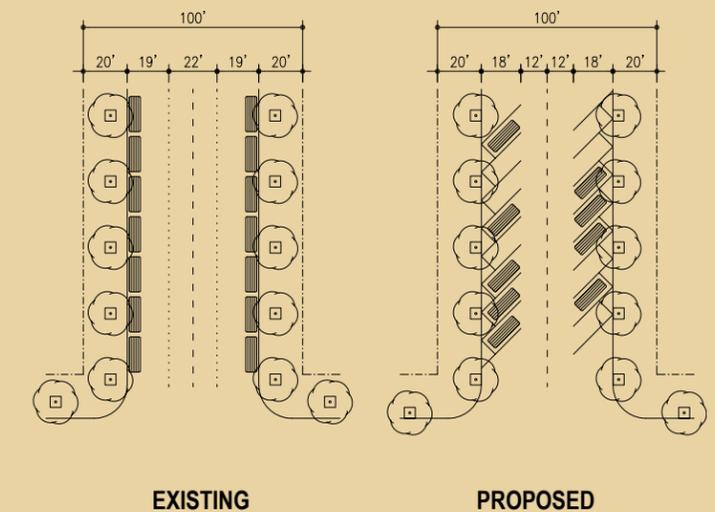
**Finding:** The typical street sections in downtown Peoria are 60 feet wide, flanked by sidewalks that are 20 feet wide.

**Discussion:** Downtown Peoria is characterized by both wide streets and wide sidewalks. The width of the streets, however, especially combined with the one-way pattern, tends to encourage vehicle speeds much higher than desirable for pedestrian safety and comfort. The distance from curb to curb, in itself, makes pedestrian crossing more of a challenge. The distance between the buildings limits the sense of street enclosure, also contributing to the feeling that the streets are not intended to be part of a pedestrian environment. In addition, frequent occurrences of driveways (for parking garages or drop-offs) routinely prohibits parallel parking on the street as well as interrupting pedestrian routes.

Where curb cuts are necessary to accommodate these driveways, the curb radius is often unnecessarily large for a downtown street, further reinforcing the expectation that cars will be turning in from a street on which they are traveling at relatively high speeds for a downtown. The large curb radius often doubles the length of pedestrian-oriented street frontage interrupted by these driveways. Whereas the width of the streets and sidewalks might be considered an asset for the downtown, the cumulative effect of suburban treatment of these streets is a relatively hostile pedestrian environment, an absence of both reason and opportunity for high-quality pedestrian oriented frontage, and limitations in both pedestrian and vehicle access to retail.

**Recommendation:**

- Driveways and curb cuts need to be prohibited on designated "A" streets and tightly regulated otherwise. Where driveways are necessary, the width of the allowable curb cut (and the curb radius) should be limited.
- Streets should be re-stripped for on-street parallel parking where possible.



**DIAGONAL PARKING.** The width of the streets allows sufficient room for diagonal as well as parallel parking. On-street parking is crucial for street-oriented retail, as well as helping to calm traffic speeds. This reconfiguration would only be proposed as redevelopment increases, in the heaviest commercial sectors.

**SR-5**  
**Project Name: Crosstown Boulevard.**

**Finding:** Even with the proposed improvements to the DOT plan, the stretch of Interstate 74 that cuts through the middle of Peoria remains a facility with limited ability to respond to expanding demand.

**Discussion:** When the design team was reviewing the DOT plans for I-74 during the charrette, it was noted that one of the long-term responses to the clash between a highway designed to handle interstate travel and the local travel associated with an urban street grid is for the highway to be transformed into a boulevard as it enters the city limits. Although this seemed a shocking and implausible suggestion to some, it is an idea that reflects two broad changes in attitudes toward traffic engineering. First, there has been a broad movement among U.S. municipal governments to re-think the expressways that have caused so much damage to our cities since their introduction in the 1960s. Some cities have gone as far as demolishing existing expressways, whereas others have halted projects not yet built. Second, there has been a re-discovery and refinement of the techniques for designing a boulevard as a facility that can handle relatively heavy traffic flows and filter those flows into an urban street grid with both efficiency and flexibility.

After the charrette, the team was asked to develop this idea into a proposal to be considered as a long-term possibility.

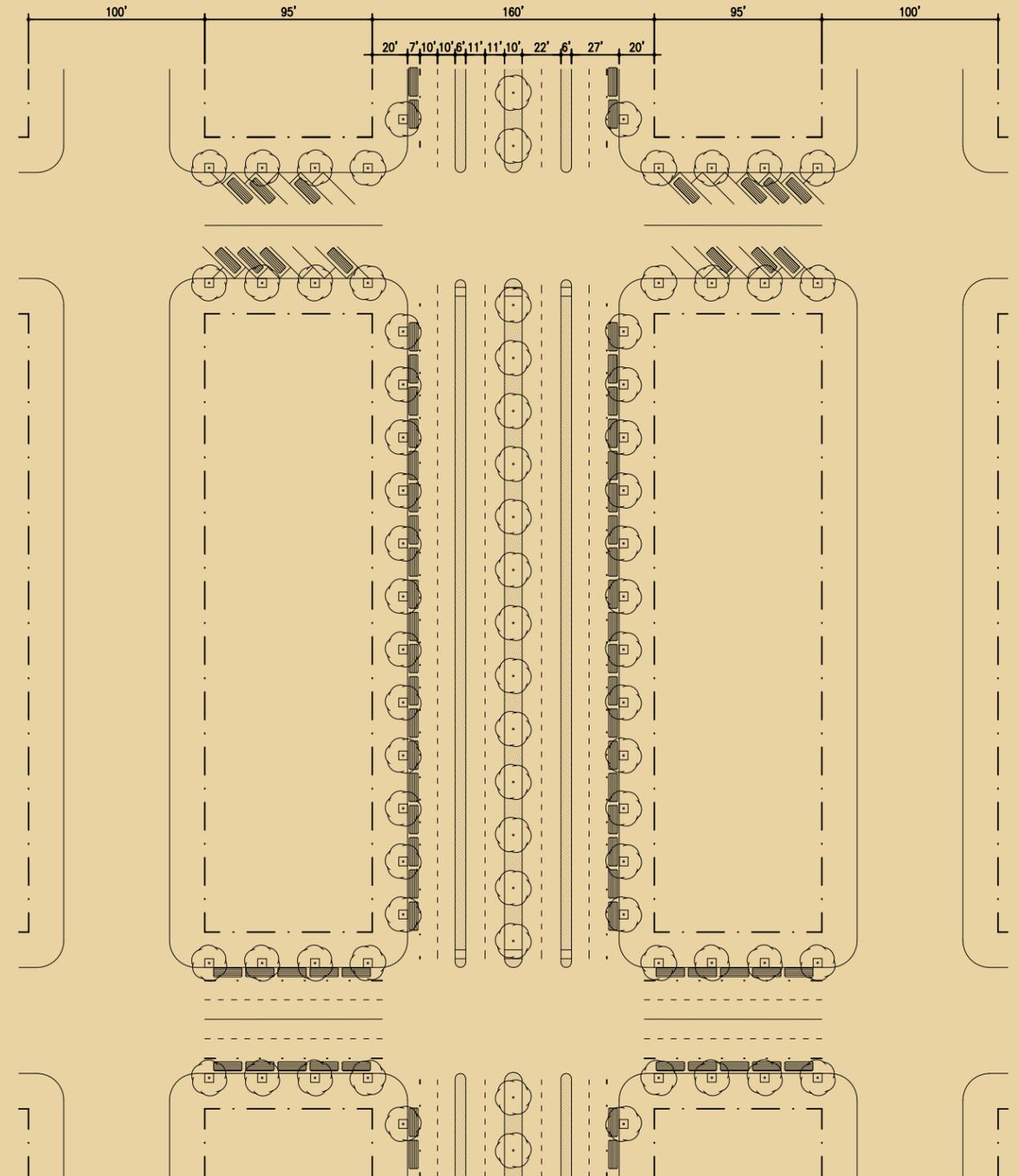
This proposal responds to particular conditions in Peoria. In addition to the usual expense and difficulty of acquiring additional land for the purpose of widening a highway, I-74 is limited in its ability to grow any wider by the fact that it is sunken below street level as it moves through downtown Peoria. In this respect, its lifespan as an expressway may be limited. At the same time, the expressway and its associated ramps and berms both take up a substantial amount of land, and put limits on the development of adjacent land. One of the great advantages of a boulevard is that it combines the mobility of relatively free-flowing center lanes with parking, pedestrian frontage, and access to land that can be developed along the frontage roads to either side. A boulevard can also be a grand urban amenity, part of the identity of a great city.

a boulevard. These long-distance, free movement thoroughfares that cross through towns and cities, when correctly used, accommodate the high traffic volumes and speeds of cross-town traffic without destroying the quality of life of surrounding neighborhoods. Boulevard accomplish this using “smart design” techniques taken from examples in European cities where they have been in use for decades.

Boulevards provide on street parking, sidewalks, medians and planters to simultaneously handle various levels of service. The multi-tasking nature of this thoroughfare type differs greatly from the single purpose “dumb design” of the conventional highway model. Central lanes are used by traffic with regional origins and destinations. They are free of on street parking and are buffered from sidewalks and buildings by landscaped medians. The medians and landscape lessen the noise of the fast moving traffic making it possible to pull buildings closer to the sidewalk. Separating the cross-town traffic from the immediate neighborhood traffic are deceleration lanes, which flank both sides of the central high-speed lanes. They are designed as local streets and include on street parking for the adjacent buildings. The deceleration lanes further serve to distance people and buildings from the faster moving through traffic at the center of the boulevard. This makes the fronting sidewalks usable by pedestrians. Buildings with no setbacks and sidewalks that are pleasant to walk on activate street life. This is why, throughout Europe, it is possible to sip a coffee at a sidewalk café that happens to be on a boulevard of eight or more lanes and easily handling traffic counts of 60,000 cars per day and more. Such an experience is impossible on conventional American highways.

The possibility of such experience provides the added benefit of increased property value. Because buildings can be placed immediately adjacent to a boulevard, developable land need not be turned over to the obtrusive infrastructure of noise barriers and retaining walls. Land value remains high, raising tax revenues for the municipality.

**Recommendation:** Study the feasibility of and develop a scheme for a crosstown boulevard to replace the existing sunken Interstate 74 through downtown Peoria.



BV-160-120

*BOULEVARD. The flexibility of the Boulevard allows both for various speeds of traffic as well as various modes of transportation. This accomodation also provides attractive real estate on the land directly adjacent to the Boulevard, something not possible on a typical interstate highway.*

## SR-6

## Project Name: Re-design of Main Street.

**Finding:** Main Street is both the central spine of the downtown and the primary approach to the downtown core and the riverfront from the neighborhoods on the bluffs and beyond.

**Discussion:** Although Main Street is a main street in both name and function, there is little in its design or character to distinguish it. Approaching downtown from West Main, there is currently very little to signal arrival in the “heart of Peoria.” The single block of very high quality pedestrian-oriented frontage (near the Pere Marquette hotel) is currently isolated and occupied by a mix of uses not typical of a healthy urban core.

As noted in the discussion of the streets (previous), the typical street sections in downtown Peoria are very wide, encouraging relatively high vehicle speeds for a downtown. Main Street poses a particular problem in this regard, as it sweeps down from the bluff. As a result of its width, however, there is an opportunity to give Main Street the relative grandeur and dignity that it deserves, while at the same time creating both identity and street enclosure necessary to make Main Street a great pedestrian place.

In addition to the re-configuration of the right of way in the form of a boulevard, the illustration shows the potential effect of well-designed in-fill projects as they complete the street wall with pedestrian-oriented frontage. Although the buildings on the right side of the street (in the image) are not necessarily unattractive in themselves, the net effect of their vertical proportions and lack of attention to the human scale and the street frontage is a boring and unattractive walk for passing pedestrians. The infill project illustrated on the left, with its canopy, shop windows shaded to allow visibility from the street, and horizontal proportions, would encourage pedestrians to walk past, drawn by the interest of the windows or even the possibility of staying dry under the canopy on a rainy day. (Note: This is the kind of infill project that would be encouraged under the new code.)

Another advantage to the boulevard design is that the median can be used to reserve excess right of way for use by a future transit system, at such time when downtown Peoria reaches

a level of maturity that requires it.

**Recommendation:** Main Street, from the riverfront to the proposed square at Fulton Street (see proposal below), should be re-designed as a boulevard, with landscaped median and on-street parking.



**MAIN STREET, EXISTING CONDITION.** The photograph above illustrates the existing condition on Main Street. The width of the street combined with the uneven quality of the frontage on both sides leaves this important piece of Peoria's downtown with no definite character, and makes for a rather uninteresting and unappealing walk to or from the riverfront.



**MAIN STREET CONFIGURED AS A BOULEVARD.** In-fill projects designed to complete the street wall with pedestrian-friendly frontage increase both interest and pedestrian comfort. The trees in the median help to bring the streetscape down to a more human scale as well, while the median itself holds space for a bike lane or eventual transit.



*LEFT, DOWNTOWN PEORIA TODAY.* This perspective shows the existing condition in downtown Peoria, with its wide streets and the domination of the urban fabric by parking lots and parking structures. From this angle, one clearly sees the extent to which the automobile has been allowed to dominate the downtown.

*BELOW, THE HEART OF PEORIA.* In the proposed vision for downtown Peoria, the gaps created by parking lots and parking structures are either filled in with mixed-use development or masked behind liner buildings that maintain the continuous quality of pedestrian-oriented frontage. At the center, the proposed museum complex defines a new civic space on the Fulton Street axis, a focal point for activity between the Civic Center area and the new riverfront. The riverfront itself is given a more defined and urban character, with pedestrian-oriented frontage both along the river itself and lining the series of squares.

### Downtown Interventions Overview

Downtown Peoria has been characterized by a pattern of decline that is typical of many Midwestern cities. In the 1980s, the downtown lost 32.6% of its population and although this trend has slowed, it is projected to continue with an additional 4.8% loss between 2001 and 2006. As the little remaining population growth shifted to the suburban fringe, the largest concentration of low-income households in Peoria remains located within a one-mile ring around the downtown. 69.6% of the households have an annual income below \$25,000 (Source: Claritas, Hunter Interests Inc.).

At the same time, the downtown core has lost its retail to the suburban shopping centers developed to the north or across the river. Only the ghost of its former role as a retail center remains in the form of the now vacant Sears store at the end of Fulton Street. It is telling that this store is identical to one that might be found at any suburban mall, suggesting that the success of the downtown cannot depend on simply emulating the suburban shopping experience. In general, there remains very little retail business downtown, with only a scattering of shops and restaurants generally concentrated along Main Street between Jefferson and Adams. A collection of relatively recently opened restaurants and small shops at the riverfront are surviving on the visitors drawn to the improved riverfront, but indications are that businesses dependent on visitors and



tourists are, as the market consultant describes them, “struggling.”

Like many downtowns, then, Peoria’s downtown core is mostly comprised of offices. Over 65% of the region’s office space is downtown. The consultant found the downtown office market to be surprisingly healthy, particularly in the Class A category. Vacancy rates for class A space are at 7.21%, while the rate for class B space is 22.1% (see report submitted by Hunter Interests, Inc.). Four downtown buildings that make up the inventory of Class A space: the Becker Building, Hamilton Square, Janssen Law Center, and Technology Center. All completed in the 1990s, the consultant believes these buildings to account for the higher vacancy rates in Class B space. Even the relative success of these four buildings is therefore indicative of the “soft market” for downtown office space.

Although the market for downtown space shows no significant growth or increases in demand, the numbers still show a stronger market than generally perceived by community leaders. The consultant’s market analysis found that the leasing rates are hovering just at the threshold of a level that would make investment in new construction financially feasible, and it has been suggested that even a modest increase in the demand could stimulate new development.

Another strength of the downtown is the hotel business, much of which is sustained by visitors brought to town by the activities of the Civic Center. Surprisingly, the occupancy rates are relatively consistent throughout the year, suggesting that a downtown that offers attractions for visitors year around might broaden the economic benefits of this flow of convention business into the hotels. It was also suggested that a downtown with more shopping and entertainment for visitors might help the Civic Center to compete successfully in the regional convention market.

The *Heart of Peoria* plan addresses these issues by proposing a strategy for strengthening the identity of the downtown as a center for business, entertainment, the arts, and for those segments of the residential market who want to live in an urban setting (a growing trend in recent years).

The plan proposes a series of interventions aimed at four key components of downtown redevelopment:

**Strategic projects.** The plan identifies a series of opportunities for projects that would set the momentum and character of development in the downtown, as well as adding substantial attractions to the downtown as a place to live, do business, hold a convention, or visit. These include the redevelopment of the Sears block as the site for the new Lakeview Regional Museum Complex, and the creation of the warehouse district as an arts and entertainment center. There are certainly other projects that will appear, once a few projects have pointed the direction.

**The public realm.** The plan identifies opportunities for crucial improvements to the public realm necessary to transform Peoria’s wide, automobile-dominated streets into a network of pedestrian-friendly routes and well-populated public spaces. This includes proposed reconfiguration of the streets such as the re-design of Main Street as a boulevard, and the creation of a system of squares and public plazas as a way to establish focal points for downtown activity. The aerial photograph of Peoria’s downtown tells much of the story regarding the existing conditions. Although the downtown has plenty of assets going for it—the Civic Center and City Hall, the Caterpillar headquarters, the historic Pere Marquette Hotel on the short walkable portion of Main Street, the baseball stadium, the riverfront with its new restaurants, the newly developed condominiums on Water Street—they are scattered and not connected in a way that might enable them to have a cumulative impact on downtown life. Anyone walking between any of these places would find themselves walking past parking lots and parking structures, along streets with little for the pedestrian to see or do. As noted in the frontage analysis, there are no continuous stretches of high-quality pedestrian oriented frontage.

**Improvements to the downtown riverfront.** Currently, the new development along the riverfront appears as a disconnected set of pieces that happen to be near the river, without really taking advantage of the riverfront or creating a coherent sense of place by maintaining a consistent urban and architectural character. To a large extent, the potential value of the riverfront is not being fully realized, and the

current design puts too much emphasis on ill-defined green space and not enough emphasis on those aspect of an urban waterfront that might attract people on a year around basis. Still, the new development along the river has succeeded in attracting people to the downtown riverfront, especially during the summer. The successful development of loft apartments on Water Street has demonstrated the potential demand for residential opportunities downtown. The key is the mix of residential, entertainment, shopping, and the arts, which has already begun to give the downtown riverfront a distinctive identity and character. This plan proposes a series of interventions intended to guide and strengthen this emerging trend, improving both the pattern and the character of riverfront development so that it is not only sustained but develops in a way that contributes to the value and attraction of downtown Peoria as a whole.

**A balanced mix of uses.** Many of the proposed interventions are aimed at encouraging a balanced mix of uses necessary to create a 24 hour, 7-day-a-week city. This includes development of a complete palette of residential choices for the downtown, from luxury condominiums or artists lofts to affordable townhouses. The emphasis on mixed use development also includes an appropriate mix of retail opportunities, oriented both to visitors and commuters and the new downtown residents.



*AN URBAN RIVERFRONT. This illustration shows the way mixed-use in-fill projects (in black) can bring activity to the downtown, create pedestrian-friendly streets, and also help define public squares that serve as centers for activity and connections between the riverfront and the downtown. In the areas to the immediate north and to the south, residential development will be attractive both for its relationship to the river itself, and for its proximity to the activities of the central downtown riverfront and warehouse district.*

### Riverfront Overview

The most distinctive and important asset of Peoria's downtown, aside from but closely tied to its potential as a regional economic and cultural center, is the riverfront. This has been recognized for some time, and is reflected in the series of redevelopment plans that have been developed over the past decade. The consistent message received by the design team at the *charrette*, however, was a sense of disappointment at the outcomes of the recent redevelopment efforts. Although there are a number of successful pieces, some quite attractive, the overall effect is simply not of sufficiently high quality. The landscape plan is inappropriately naturalistic for an urban waterfront, which needs people and activity rather than wandering paths and empty grassy areas. Even if some of the pieces are adequate in themselves, the overall effect is a collection of disconnected pieces.

The proposals made in this plan are intended to do several things:

First, the recent renovation of several old warehouse buildings into condominiums, artist lofts, and shops has begun a trend that promises to bring people and investment to the riverfront. This plan for the warehouse district encourages and capitalizes on the current trend, suggesting changes in the codes that will allow the momentum to build and proposing specific projects as models for development to follow.

Second, the plan proposes design changes in the section of riverfront immediately in front of the downtown core, encompassing two blocks to three blocks to either side of Fulton Street. The plan recommends a more urban look to the riverfront itself, with shops and restaurants facing the riverfront promenade and giving people more reasons to be there (and to be there in all seasons). Equally important, the plan proposes a series of squares at the termination of each street as it crosses Water Street, serving as attractive

pedestrian destinations, as drop-off points for vehicular traffic, and as actual as well as visual connections to the riverfront from the downtown above Water Street.

Third, the plan recommends either the Sears block or the west end of Fulton Street as locations for the new Lakeview Museum complex, but offers specific proposals with respect to both the program and the form of redevelopment. It is crucial that this project have an appropriately urban character, and that it not waste the opportunity to bring a mix of uses that will help activate Peoria's downtown both day and night.

If the Sears block site is selected for the museum, the continuation of the axis of Fulton Street across the site makes the new museum complex an effective point of intersection between the riverfront and the Civic Center area.

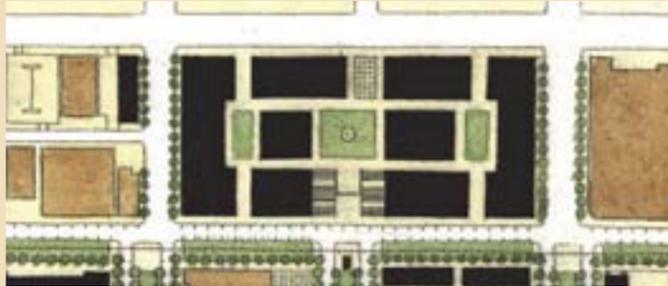
If the Fulton Street site is selected, the museum complex

would benefit from proximity to the Civic Center and could contribute to redevelopment of the western edge of the downtown core. Another suitable anchor would need to be found for the Sears block.

Fourth, the plan identifies a series of opportunities for new residential development, including loft apartments in the warehouse district, riverfront condominiums as part of the Sears block, and riverfront townhouses on the near north side.

## D-1

## Project Name: Sears Block Redevelopment.



*THE SEARS BLOCK. The proposed plan for the Sears block includes multiple buildings around a central green.*

**Finding:** The site of the now vacant Sears store occupies a critically important block and represents the most significant re-development opportunity in the downtown area.

**Discussion:** This block represents an extraordinary opportunity to establish the directional momentum necessary for sustained and cumulative downtown redevelopment. The unusually large site is perfectly located to provide a dramatic connection between the civic heart of the downtown core and the cultural and entertainment centers of the riverfront. Given the size and strategic importance of this site, it is crucial that development utilize the site to maximum advantage, with a mix of uses carefully selected to optimize the site's ability to energize the downtown area, attracting visitors to populate the site on a 24 hour basis.

Early in the charrette, the Lakeview Regional Museum emerged as the most probable candidate to become the central component of the redevelopment of the Sears block. The team found that it makes sense for the museum to be part of this central location to both the city and the museum, provided the museum's development collaborative accepts the responsibilities implied by the site. The Sears Block is a significant part of downtown Peoria, and any buildings that it holds must be configured as such.

The design team has prepared a schematic design for this block, encouraging an appropriate intensity and a mix of uses that will help to activate the downtown day and night and in all seasons. The design incorporates a possible museum layout as well. Note that the footprint of the components of the proposed museum includes buildings of substantial size

- sufficient to accommodate, for example, a building the size of the main block of the Pere Marquette Hotel. If the museum decides to pursue a more suburban site, leaving the Sears block for other projects, the same building footprints could accommodate a wide range of alternative uses on the site.

Whatever uses the site eventually includes, there are several key principles to its successful redevelopment. First, it is important that each component of the redevelopment be designed with appropriate street frontage, since the site controls at least three crucial links to the riverfront. Second, the site should incorporate a mix of uses that will bring activity to the area both day and night. For this reason, the inclusion of a residential component is particularly important. At opposite ends of the block, the scheme includes a hotel and a condominium, both of which would have dramatic views of the river and downtown Peoria. Third, the scheme needs to repair the connection to the riverfront along Fulton Street, which currently comes to an undignified end on the west side of the Sears block. In the proposed scheme, the Fulton Street axis is continued as a pedestrian walkway through a central plaza. This scheme has several powerful advantages: it continues the view corridor from the downtown to the river; it re-establishes an attractive pedestrian route from the Civic Center to the riverfront entertainment district; it establishes a dramatic sequence of views for pedestrians as they pass through the museum plaza, potentially defining one of the most memorable and imageable locations on Peoria's improved riverfront.

**Recommendation:** Develop a plan that makes optimal use of the whole block, taking full advantage of its central location as a crucial link between the Civic Center area and the riverfront. The plan should emphasize the following conditions:

- The axis of Fulton Street must be visually received by the Museum, and the axis must be continuous, either as a street or a pedestrian passage, through the Sears Block from Washington Street to Water Street.
- The Sears Block must contain a mix of uses



*THE SEARS BLOCK, EXISTING CONDITION: In its existing condition, the Sears block is largely taken up with dilapidated parking structures. Even when operating, this development provided a rather undignified termination of Fulton Street, as well as cutting off both physical and visual access to the riverfront from the downtown.*



*THE MUSEUM COMPLEX AND THE RIVERFRONT. In this perspective drawing, one can see how the Fulton Street axis might be continued through the Sears block in a dramatic sequence of pedestrian-oriented public spaces. From the central green of the museum complex, the change in grade down to the riverfront creates a dramatic view across the plaza and skating rink to the river itself. Note that even the monumental architecture of the museum complex still maintains the pedestrian frontage along Water Street.*

complimentary to the Museum, specifically retail and residential, in order to enhance the vitality of the Sears Block and encourage Peoria's efforts to become a city that is active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- The street frontages of the buildings of the Sears Block must be active. Water Street should have the highest level of pedestrian activity; Main and Liberty should provide support in their pedestrian connection between the Downtown and Riverfront; and Washington Street should allow a proper location for service access while remaining pedestrian-friendly. Significant gaps in the street edge, low-laying structures, service uses and blank walls at the street edge all contribute to a hostile environment unsuitable for street life.
- All parking must be contained within the block in order to remove inactive deck facades from street level frontage.
- Residual plots for any future private development must provide an attractive footprint size and orientation and allow for efficient layout of requisite parking facilities. Access to both to Washington and Water Street is necessary; Washington is a B-grade street that will provide car and service vehicle access, while Water Street is planned to become an A-grade street offering a high quality pedestrian environment
- At a minimum, the height of the building(s) must be the equivalent of two stories in order to relate in scale to the urban fabric of downtown Peoria.
- All open space must be designed to be complementary to the urban context of the surrounding buildings and uses. Any natural areas, no matter their size, must be contained within hardscape and must be programmed to remain active during non-business hours while still facilitating the Museum's needs.
- The chosen architect of the Museum must be an acknowledged master, appropriate to the scale and importance of this civic site.

D-2

Project Name: The Downtown Riverfront.

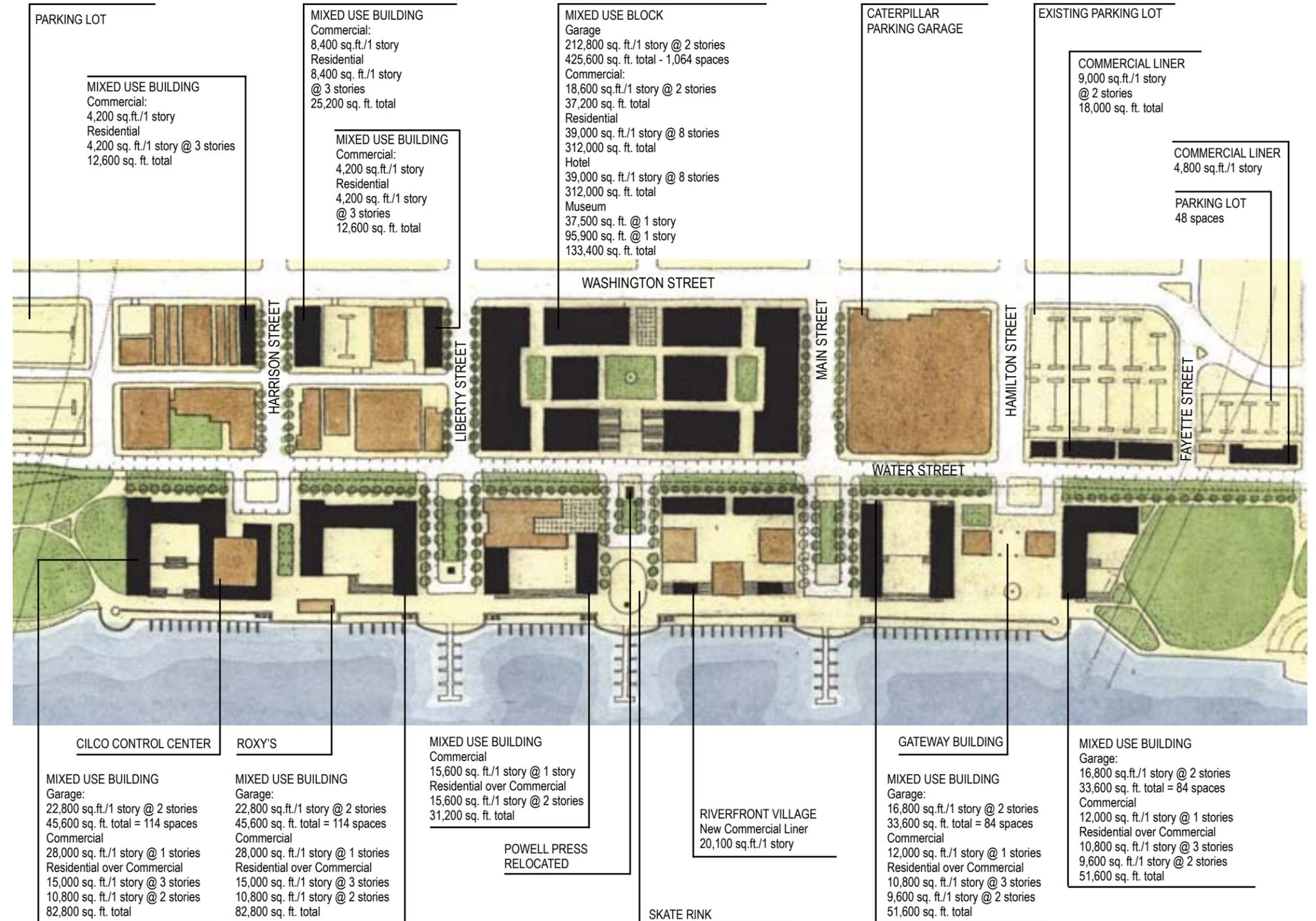


**Finding:** The existing riverfront plan does not envision a sufficient intensification of urban use along the central riverfront, immediately adjacent to the downtown core.

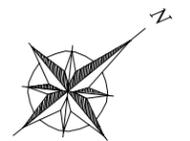
**Discussion:** Peoria is very fortunate to have the advantage of a riverfront that has not been cut off from its downtown by the kind of road building projects that have ruined so many of the riverfront cities across the country (e.g., Louisville, Cincinnati). The design team felt that Peoria's downtown riverfront has the potential to become one of the great urban waterfronts of the country. To accomplish this, however, it is necessary to encourage the right mix and quality of public and private uses, occurring in some concentration at this strategic intersection between the most urbanized part of Peoria and its most significant natural feature. In fact, it is this intersection of urbanism and nature at the downtown riverfront that represents the key distinctive quality of Peoria as a regional center.

In recent years, Peoria's riverfront has seen much improvement and has been developing considerable momentum for redevelopment under a Riverfront Plan that has already been revised several times in the past decade. The team observed, however, that the emerging pattern of development lacks the form and quality appropriate to an urban waterfront, especially when the riverfront has been identified as one of the primary assets supporting aspirations for the downtown. Citizens expressed both excitement regarding the potential implied by the Riverfront Plan and substantial disappointment with recent projects that have been implemented as part of it, by both private and public initiatives.

The team recognized that it wouldn't make sense for the "Heart of Peoria" plan to presume to replace the ideas and effort of the citizens and consultants involved with the



**DETAIL OF THE DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT PLAN.** This detail of the downtown riverfront shows the proposed pattern of mixed-use development around the Sears block and along the riverfront, taking advantage of existing buildings but completing the frontage along both streets and the riverfront promenade. Commercial liner buildings are proposed to mask parking lots or structures. The proposed configuration of the three riverfront squares is clear. Note that the historical building (used as a visitors' center) has been relocated to sit on axis with the continuation of the Fulton Street street axis, and the existing surrounding plaza is intended to remain in place, the manner in which to be determined. Each of the five streets terminating at the riverfront ends in a square that allows vehicles as well as pedestrian access, but also allows views through to the river from the downtown streets above.



existing plan, but *charrette* discussions and observations suggested that it is necessary for the riverfront plans to be adjusted in the light of what has been learned from recent experiences.



**MAIN MARKET:** This print of the “Main Market,” loaned to the design team by a charrette participant, illustrates the historic use and look of Peoria’s wide sidewalks as an active market. The same look, with its characteristic awnings, is proposed for the riverfront redevelopment.

A crucial characteristic of the existing plan is that it has been consistently suburban in character—dominated by a naturalistic park-like approach to design of the whole waterfront, with picturesque walking paths, green space with no clear program, and some relatively fussy landscaping not in keeping with an urban setting. Even where the plan recognizes the need for development of a more urban character, it lacks specificity on key points and fails to provide the guidelines needed to stimulate the right quality and character of development.

There are three key challenges that continue to plague existing efforts to create a high-quality urban riverfront, each making development difficult and each requiring creative solutions in both the short and long term:

- Susceptibility to flooding, and the need to adjust the design of any new projects to meet current FEMA regulations.



**EXISTING RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT.** This photograph shows the existing condition of the riverfront promenade along Riverfront Village. Aside from the regrettable appearance of the deck with parking beneath, it is evident that there is no consistency in the design of the light fixtures, benches, and railings. What would attract anyone to sit on those benches?



**THE NEW RIVERFRONT PROMENADE.** This rendering illustrates the potential to turn Peoria’s riverfront into one of the great urban waterfronts of the country. It shows the kind of effect that should be the goal of redevelopment efforts, although it is clear that careful study is needed in order to develop specific designs adjusted to local conditions. The illustration demonstrates key principles, however: The continuous line of buildings facing the river both takes advantage of the river view and brings activity to the space. Customers in the café, seated on a deck raised so that they are on eye level with people walking by, are able to watch both people and boat traffic. Consistent design of light fixtures and railings, as well as the varied treatment of the paving, contribute to the sense of place.

- The provision of sufficient parking to support new uses and attractions.
- The proximity of the railroad tracks along Water Street.

With regard to the FEMA regulations, the simple solution has been to elevate all uses to a certain height above the water, placing parking underneath. The result, however, has been an unfortunate visual and functional separation of the retail and entertainment opportunities from both the river and the riverside pedestrian walk, and a regrettable impact on the pedestrian experience in general. Such solutions, although efficient in certain respects, ultimately come at the expense of both the aesthetic quality and the functioning of the riverfront as a retail and entertainment location. It becomes very difficult for successive projects to contribute in a cumulative way to creating an active and genuinely urban riverfront.

During the charrette, the team consulted with building inspectors and other authorities in order to confirm that there could be other ways to allow for at least some occupation of the ground level of buildings. Experience in other places indicates that there are a variety of ways that buildings might be designed to handle periodic flooding (using flood gates, for example), or more subtle changes in level. There are also a variety of ways to elevate regularly occupied space above frequent flooding, yet incorporate pedestrian-friendly frontage that would be aesthetically satisfying, distinctive in character, and supportive of the necessary critical mass and mix of activity. If the goal is a lively and economically vital riverfront, alternatives need to be studied and more appropriate solutions encouraged.

Although it is important to insure the development of adequate parking to support the intended mix of retail, entertainment, and residential uses along the riverfront, it is important to avoid the danger of allowing large areas of surface parking (or parking structures) to dominate the experience of the riverfront. Parking needs to be handled delicately, distributed judiciously and, when concentrated in any particular place, masked wherever feasible with liner buildings. It should be recognized that some parking needs

can be served by the re-introduction of on-street parking throughout the downtown. More generally, parking for the riverfront area should be carefully considered as part of the overall parking plan for the downtown, taking into account the goal of placing parking strategically in a network of streets that offer first-rate pedestrian connections. It should be kept in mind that in order to create places worth visiting, it may be necessary for people to walk from parking that is not always immediately adjacent to each particular use. Parking needs to be designed as a common utility necessary to provide access to an environment that supports pedestrian-oriented activity.

Although the traffic on the railroad tracks is currently limited, the tracks are nonetheless perceived as an important constraint on redevelopment of this area. As a long-term possibility, the removal or relocation of these tracks would open up additional land for redevelopment, as well as allowing a more seamless connection of the riverfront with the downtown. As industrial use of the tracks has diminished, the city might also explore re-use of the rail corridor for a “rails to trails” project or as a transit corridor that could serve the downtown riverfront (one way to turn the tracks into an asset might be to introduce an historic train as an attraction that runs along the riverfront).

In the scheme developed during the charrette, both Main and Liberty Streets terminate in a riverfront square, with a civic structure or piece of public art giving both purpose and identity to the space. The current open plaza on the riverfront suffers from being both too open and too unstructured. In contrast, the proposed squares have a central green, lined with trees that will frame the view down each street to the river. The historic visitors’ center should be moved slightly to align it correctly on axis with Main Street. At the center of the plan, on axis with Fulton Street and the proposed central green of the museum complex (see discussion below), another square includes a location for a skating rink. (It is important that the riverfront provide reasons for people to come in every season.) The existing restaurants are embedded in a more consistent pedestrian environment. The squares provide attractive routes to the riverfront, creating multiple points of connection between the downtown above

Adams Street and a riverfront promenade that offers a range of reasons to be there. Aside from providing pedestrian routes, these squares also offer aesthetically composed glimpses of the river, allowing the benefits of this important asset to be spread up into the core of downtown Peoria.

**Recommendation:** Elaborate a specific plan for the downtown segment of the riverfront, drawing on local architectural and urban traditions. In developing this plan, three elements should be given particular attention:

- A careful study of flood conditions and FEMA regulations in order to elaborate a variety of solutions that would contribute cumulatively to the quality and character of Peoria’s riverfront.
- A parking study that would adjust on-site parking requirements in the light of a general parking plan, and design guidelines that would integrate parking into a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Development of a long-term plan for the possible removal or relocation of the railroad tracks, and for the reclaiming and re-use of the rail corridor.



**RIVERFRONT PLAZA.** *The quality and character of public space depends heavily on the way it is given definition and identity by the structures that face it and fill it with activity. The recently redeveloped riverfront appears as a collection of unrelated pieces, with public spaces that are not well-defined by either the landscaping or the buildings. This plaza is faced by a parking lot, and by the side of the historic visitor’s center (placed off center in relation to the axis of the street). The landscaping and even the signage would be more appropriate for a suburban shopping mall, and do little to contribute to a distinctive sense of place.*

D-3

Project Name: The Warehouse District.

**Finding:** Recent redevelopment of warehouses and industrial buildings along the riverfront has demonstrated the potential for successful residential development in the downtown area, and has established this area as an emerging entertainment district.

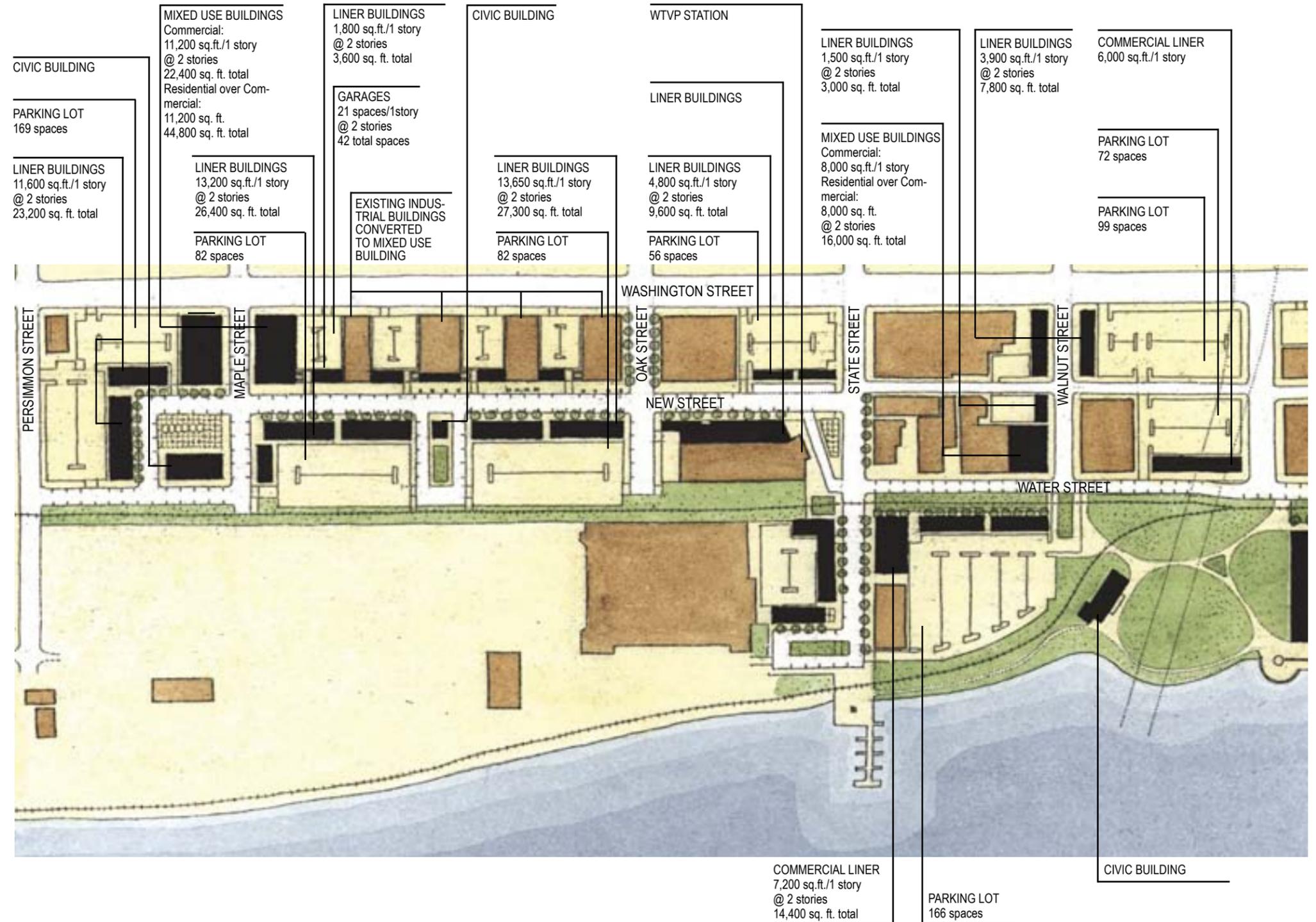
**Discussion:** The old warehouses and former industrial buildings of Peoria's riverfront are an important architectural legacy, and have the potential to become a key part of the look and attraction of Peoria's downtown. Many of these buildings have already been lost, but a few recent projects have demonstrated their potential for redevelopment as artist lofts, art galleries, shops, restaurants, bars, and condominiums. These projects have established a trend that needs to be nurtured and expanded.

This area is important not only because it represents a potentially significant preservation of Peoria's industrial past, but also because its adaptive re-use reflects a fashionable and attractive urban aesthetic, offering residential options and urban amenities that are a significant draw for the kind of young professionals that will be crucial to Peoria's cultural and economic future.

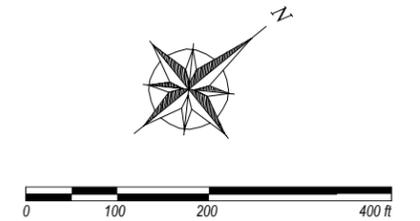
If redevelopment of this district is to be successful, the city needs to strike a delicate balance between lowering obstacles and insuring that development of the right character and quality takes place.

**Recommendation:**

- Officially establish this area as a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district, and use these resources to encourage renovation and re-use of existing buildings as well as compatible in-fill projects.
- Designate this sector as a "District" in the zoning code, enabling it to be redeveloped according to a specific plan.
- Use the incentives of a streamlined permitting process to attract investment in the plan.



*THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT. This illustration shows the first phase of the proposed development of the Warehouse District. The first phase is focused on the re-use of existing warehouse buildings along Water Street, currently with their backsides to an alley. (Existing buildings are in brown). In this plan, the alley becomes the central spine of this phase. The existing buildings are interspersed with parking structures that are masked with liner buildings along New Street (the former alley). Existing parking, such as that in front of the post office building and that on either side of the Robert Michel Bridge, is intended to be included in the proposed Parking Management Plan (see Project GC-4). Liner buildings, where necessary to provide a pedestrian-friendly street, are incorporated into these existing parking lots. New Street is anchored at its southern end by a square surrounded with mixed-use and liner buildings, and a proposed civic building.*



D-4

Project Name: New Street, Warehouse District.



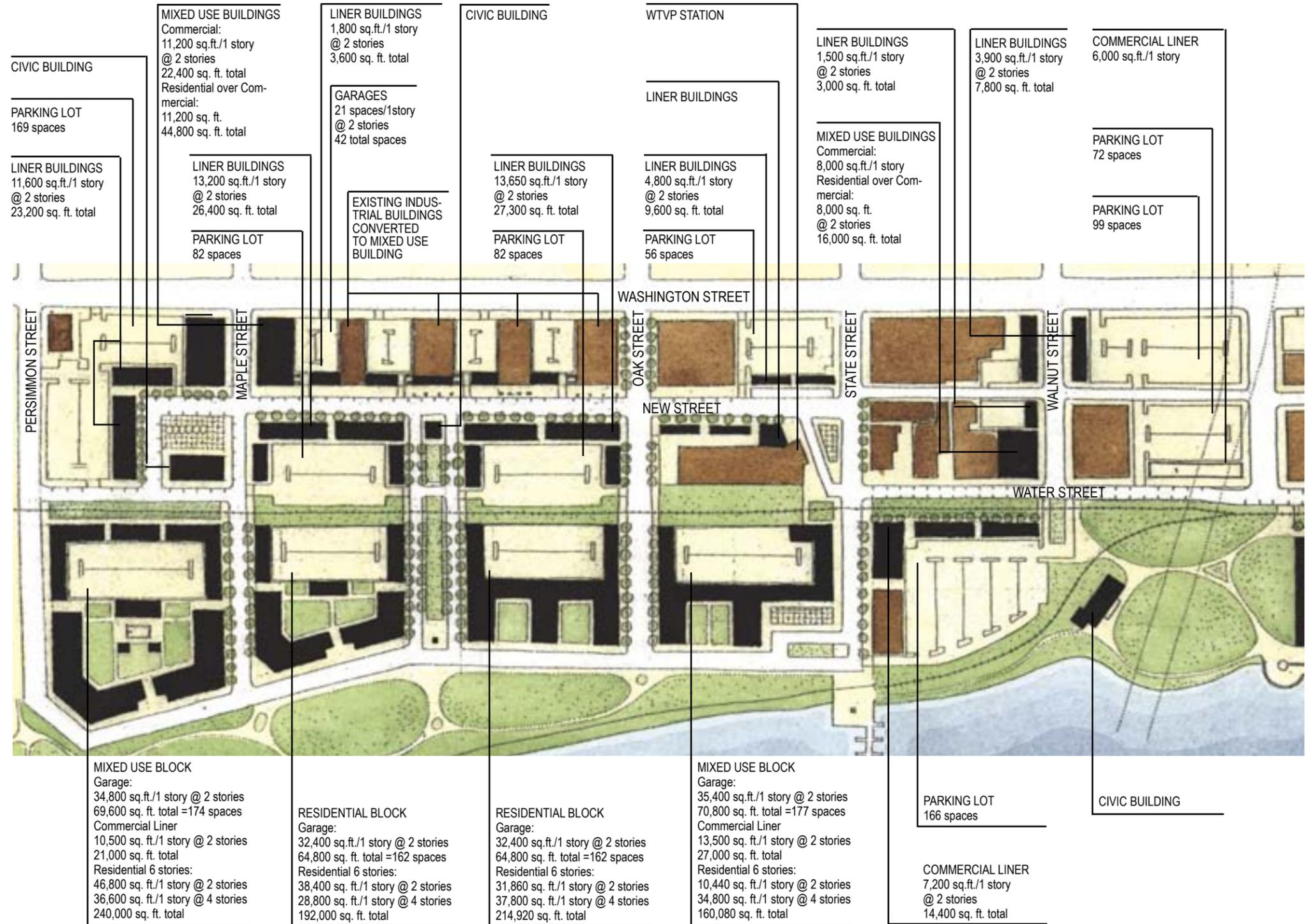
**Finding:** A row of existing warehouse buildings along Washington Street offer an opportunity for redevelopment as part of the Warehouse District.

**Discussion:** Successful redevelopment of nearby buildings as loft apartments and artists studios suggests the development potential of this row of buildings. The design team has developed a scheme for the development of the Warehouse District, beginning with this row.

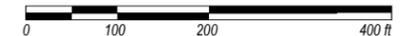
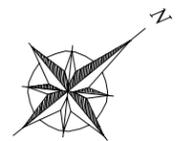
The core of the scheme is the alley that runs from State Street south almost to Persimmon Street. The scheme utilizes the row of existing buildings along Washington Street, interspersing parking structures that can be masked with liner buildings. Because Washington Street has been designated as a "B" street, the parking garages would open on to Washington, with the liner buildings on the alley side (referred to in this plan as New Street).

These new loft buildings could effectively have two fronts, one facing Washington Street and the other facing New Street. This condition enables each building to double its potential for accommodating street-level store fronts. Because of the change in elevation from Washington Street down to New Street, the entrances along New Street would be one level down.

More parking structures are located to the east of New Street, masked by liner buildings that define and activate that side of the street. At mid-block between Oak and Maple Streets, the scheme includes a small public square with a civic structure.



*THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT, SECOND PHASE. In this phase, the street grid is extended to a riverfront park, and more extensive residential development is proposed along the riverfront street. Additional parking structures are masked from the streets. The central square is extended to the riverfront, connecting the New Street area to the water.*



With the expected success of the district, and as the land becomes available along the riverfront, the scheme proposes a second phase of development extending down to the riverfront. The second phase includes an extension of the central square down to an open riverfront green, maintained as public realm. On the east side of the street running along this green, new loft buildings would have the benefit of both proximity to the amenities of the district and a spectacular view of the river.

The other buildings indicated in black are additional in-fill opportunities, important for completing the pedestrian frontage. The continuous quality of the pedestrian experience is an important factor in drawing people deep into the district. Research has shown that when pedestrians encounter a long stretch of blank wall, a parking lot, or otherwise hostile stretch, they are likely to turn back rather than walk past any businesses located beyond. It is especially important to develop the connection between the existing riverfront and the new warehouse district.

The photograph of the existing condition of the alley and the associated perspective illustrate the transformation of an alley into an attractive street, turning the loading docks into an arcade and completing the street with in-fill of similar architectural character. The middle building has been knocked down and replaced with a parking structure and liner building. The liner buildings in front of the western parking structures are visible on the right.

**Recommendation:** Develop a specific plan for the Warehouse District, with appropriate design guidelines.



*ALLEY IN THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT: The photograph above shows the existing condition along the alley currently running through the Warehouse District. Although this is currently the backside of these buildings, the architecture is striking and the loading docks represent an opportunity for pedestrian-oriented frontage that one doesn't often find in old warehouse buildings.*



*NEW STREET, WAREHOUSE DISTRICT: This illustration shows the proposed transformation of an existing service alley into New Street, lined with storefronts and galleries. The low structure between the two transformed warehouses is a liner building on the parking structure. Access from this side is a level below access from the Water Street side. This is also a good illustration of the architectural quality of these old warehouses.*

D-5

Project Name: WTVP Television Studio.

**Finding:** WTVP plans to build a new television studio at the corner of State and Water Streets.

**Discussion:** During the charrette, members of the design team analyzed the architectural design for the new television studio. Aside from the general fact that this is one of several projects that are in the works for the study area, this project occupies an important site at pivotal point between the existing downtown riverfront area and the warehouse district. With the success of the district, this area is likely to become an important location for ground-floor retail and entertainment.

The team found the building itself to be architecturally compatible with the character this plan proposes to reinforce in this area, but noted a number of missed opportunities in the site plan. In particular, the building has a rather large expanse of blank wall on the façade facing the street to the west. The area in front of this wall has been designed as a lawn with a randomly wandering path, inappropriately suggesting a more suburban location. The small plaza in front of the entrance doesn't reinforce the lines of the street.

The design team developed an alternative scheme, introducing several refinements intended to situate the studio more effectively in its urban setting. In place of the entrance plaza, the alternative proposal suggests a drop-off area that includes some parallel parking. The remaining plaza is lined with street trees planted in a straight row, as appropriate for an urban street. In general, the result is an approach to the entrance that is both more urban its aesthetic and more functional for its setting.

In place of the suburban landscape and blank wall, the alternative proposal suggests the insertion of a liner building, both utilizing the space more profitably and contributing a pedestrian-oriented façade to the street.

The liner building could be designed in one of two ways. The first option is what is referred to as "flex-space," or space that can be divided off in segments as the market warrants. It can be rented out by the property owner as commercial space (potentially low-intensity retail, but more likely office space).

Examples of buildings are this type are available. Most of the investment is spent on the façade, while the side walls and roof are those of a simply and relatively inexpensive building (like a Butler building). In this case, the shell of the entire building would be built, with an open floorplan and columns spaced (usually at 16') so as to provide the increments for partition walls to meet the specific demand for space required by tenants. The key is flexibility and responsiveness to the market. The façade would have many doors, and large openings to accommodate the fact that there are no service doors at the back. It is a very basic building type, functional and "industrial" in a way that would fit in nicely with the existing building stock in the area.

The second option is to incorporate residential uses in the form of what are sometimes called "live within" units (a variant on the "live-work" unit, designed to optimize use of limited space). This is the only residential type recommended for this location, since it allows the first floor entrance to occur at grade. Standard residential units (which would have to comply with codes requiring a raised first floor) would allow less flexibility in adapting the building to future uses as the surrounding area is developed and there is increased demand for commercial uses on the ground floor of buildings. Whereas residential units (like townhouses) need to be elevated above grade, commercial uses need to be at sidewalk level so that pedestrians can see merchandise displayed in windows.

Given that the building has no access and no windows in the back, the best "live within" unit would be an 18' wide loft, with a double-height workspace in the front, kitchen facilities behind on the ground floor, and a lofted bedroom above. All the light enters from the front wall, which needs to be almost entirely window.

**Recommendation:** Re-design site of proposed television studio to include a re-configured entrance from the street and a liner building facing the street along the western façade.



*SITE PLAN FOR THE WTVP TELEVISION STUDIO: This drawing shows the current design for the WTVP Television Studio, as shown on the plans submitted to the City. Note the berm and landscaping on the west side of the building (intended to soften the blow of the blank expanse of wall) and the plaza on the north side. The landscaping shown here would be inappropriate for the urban streets which surround this*



*PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE WTVP TELEVISION STUDIO: In the site design proposed by the DPZ team, the plaza is replaced with a driveway that allows cars to pull up to the entrance. The plaza has been reduced in size and the landscaping has been simplified. A liner building covers the blank wall of the studio and replaces the landscaping with pedestrian-oriented frontage in character with the rest of the*



## D-6

**Project Name:** Re-opening of Fulton Street.

**Finding:** Fulton Street is an important axis connecting the downtown core with the riverfront. It is currently closed to vehicle traffic between Adams and Jefferson Streets, coming down to a dead-end at the Sears block.

**Discussion:** The segment of Fulton Street that has been closed to vehicle traffic is currently configured as a pedestrian walkway and rather under-used park. It is lined with frontage that supports little or no activity on the “street,” contributing to its lack of attractiveness as an urban destination or a pedestrian route. People like to walk past active shop fronts with windows, not blank walls and buildings with nothing happening on the ground floor.

Another problem that results from this closing of Fulton Street to vehicles is that it breaks the continuity of the street grid, without delivering any particular increase in activity or amenity to justify or compensate for this interruption.

With the proposed re-development of the Sears Block, this stretch of Fulton Street will become even more important for both pedestrian and vehicular access to what will be one of the jewels of Peoria’s downtown: the proposed museum complex. As such, it would also gain substantial development potential in itself, as both a symbolic and functional corridor connecting City Hall and the Civic Center to the new centerpiece of the riverfront. Note that the proposed schematic design for the Sears Block (see Project D-1) includes a plaza that would open the view corridor down Fulton Street to the river. As a result, the activity generated by the proposed museum complex could also be shared by Fulton Street. The Fulton Street corridor would be an important conduit for transmitting the real estate value generated by the new riverfront development up into the core of the downtown.

**Recommendation:** Re-configure Fulton Street for vehicular traffic, and encourage re-development of its frontage.



*FULTON STREET, EXISTING CONDITION:* The photograph (above) shows the lower end of the Fulton Street pedestrian mall. The building on the corner is currently vacant, and the frontage on Fulton Street suggests little that would attract activity.



*FULTON STREET REVIVED:* This illustration shows Fulton Street converted back to vehicle traffic. In addition to opening the street, the frontage has been transformed by the introduction of more windows, bringing more life and interest to the street. There are indications that several buildings once had entrances on this stretch of Fulton Street, but those entrances (and businesses associated with them) have been closed down.

## D-7

## Project Name: Caterpillar Garage

**Finding:** One side of the existing Caterpillar garage opens on to Water Street, a street designated in this plan to be treated as an “A” street.

**Discussion:** Typically, a parking garage would not be a desirable use for a street on which one hopes to create continuous stretches of high quality and pedestrian-friendly frontage. Such automobile-oriented uses would ideally be allocated to the “B” streets. However, an existing condition like the Cat garage might be treated as an asset in this case. Although parking garages are often considered aesthetically regrettable, the Cat garage is an impressive structure with extraordinary architectural qualities—although often currently overlooked, to judge from comments made by citizens during the charrette. It could easily be turned into an aesthetic asset, with a make-over intended to highlight its architectural form and give it a more positive presence on the street.

The design team developed a conceptual illustration of the kind of make-over that might achieve this. This illustration is not a completely realized design, but intended only to provide a visual demonstration of some of the principles.

The structure itself, with its ramped decks and multiple layers of columns, could be enhanced with well-designed lighting. A canopy helps both shelters pedestrians and helps to bring the structure down to a more human scale, rendering it less imposing from the point of view of passing pedestrians. If desired, space could be carved out of the garage at street level in order to create a liner of small shops. At mid-block, an angled screen gives the structure a slightly less transparent façade. It could also be used as a projection screen, visible from a second level plaza across the street. The treatment of the corner entrance gives the structure a more meaningful monumental presence. Finally, an important part of improving the frontage quality of this stretch of Water Street would be well-designed in-fill development on the side opposite the Cat garage, again bringing both enclosure and activity to the street.

**Recommendation:** Encourage the addition of a new “skin” for the Water Street façade of the Caterpillar garage.



*THE CATERPILLAR GARAGE: The photograph (above) shows the existing condition along Water Street. The Caterpillar garage (on the left) is an impressive structure with a lot of visual interest, but its massive scale, prominence along the downtown riverfront, and relative isolation mean that it dominates the street in a way that makes this stretch of Water Street inhospitable for pedestrians.*



*TRANSFORMATION OF THE CATERPILLAR GARAGE: This view shows the effect that might be created by giving the Cat garage a new “skin,” emphasizing the visual effect of its distinctive forms with aesthetic enhancements that also give the structure a street-level presence at a more human scale. In-fill development on the opposite side of the street are crucial to completing the scene, enabling the transformed garage to be a uniquely contributing element of an attractive street.*

**D-8**  
**Project Name: Hospital Campus and Lower Main Street Corridor.**

**Finding:** It is likely that both the Civic Center and Methodist Medical Center will expand in the near future, with potential impact on the western edges of the downtown core.

**Discussion:** The area between the Civic Center and the College of Medicine has a great deal of land that is currently in use for surface parking. As both the Civic Center and the various institutions in the medical area expand, they are likely to use of this available land and create a tighter transition from the downtown core to the medical district. Current proposals for expansion in the medical district indicate a tendency to continue an essentially suburban land use pattern, with buildings planted in the center of parking fields. In addition, this area of convergence of between these two expanding uses happens to occur at a point of intersection between two different grids that compose the street system in Peoria. Current proposals do nothing to repair some of the awkwardness of the way these two grids connect.

The design team has prepared an alternative scheme intended to organize the expansion of these different institutions in relation to a simplified street system. First, the winding street system of the medical campus has been replaced with a system that is more compatible with the surrounding grid, and which would continue the pedestrian-friendly character of the downtown core.

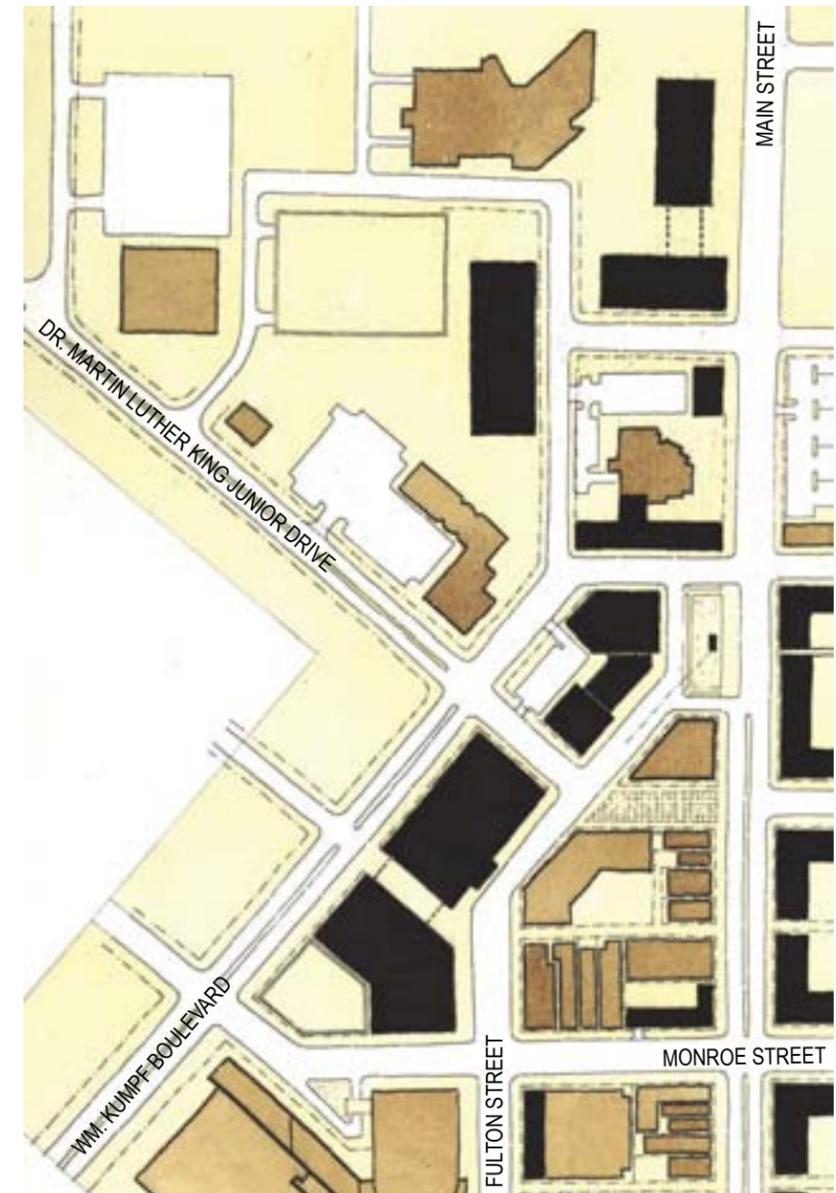
At the same time, confusing irregularities in the street grid are repaired in a way that opens up new development potential (and gives it an appropriate urban character). Fulton Street, which currently finds an ignoble end in a parking lot, is continued at an angle that allows it to connect back to Main Street. The small square introduced at this intersection becomes a landmark indicating the entrance from Main Street to both the medical campus and the Civic Center area. It becomes an ideal location for a small civic structure or piece of public art. This square also marks the entrance into the downtown proper, the point at which Main Street becomes a boulevard.

The five-sided block just to the south becomes an appropriate site for a significant building (e.g., a symphony hall). Across

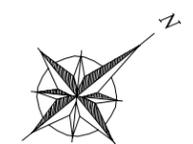
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 Revision Date: 06-05-03; 0215-04-Downtown.indd



*CIVIC CENTER AND HOSPITAL CAMPUS, EXISTING CONDITION. The current pattern of the hospital campus is relatively suburban, with no clear connections to the downtown core or the Civic Center area—other than the view across the parking lot.*



*POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF THE HOSPITAL AND CIVIC CENTER. In this plan, the likely expansion of both institutions is used to create a more defined and urbane edge to the downtown core, also contributing to the quality of the lower Main Street corridor as it moves up toward the bluffs. Proposed hospital expansion is given a more orderly relationship to the surrounding street grid and urban fabric, while still allowing the necessary flexibility. Reconfiguration of the upper end of Fulton Street creates an opportunity for a public square and significant civic building that could mark arrival in the*



the street to the west, in-fill site provides another opportunity for significant architecture at the termination of the vista up Knoxville Avenue from the Civic Center.

More generally, the scheme illustrates the importance of in-fill built up to the right of way along the north side of Main Street, in order to bring definition and activity to the lower Main Street corridor.

During the charrette, many of Peoria's citizens commented on the need for more (and higher quality) public space in and around the downtown. This scheme includes a square and plaza, both helping to giving importance as a pedestrian-oriented destination to the area surrounding the intersection of Main Street and Fulton.

**Recommendations:**

- Repair the continuity of the street system in the area defined by Main Street, Wm. Kumpf Boulevard, and Monroe Street.
- Encourage a more pedestrian-oriented approach to expansion of both the Civic Center and the medical campus.
- Encourage in-fill along Fulton and Main Streets, according to the principles outlined in this plan.
- Use the opportunities afforded by the replacement of surface parking in order to reinforce the pattern of walkable and attractive streets from the downtown core to the Medical School.

**D-9**

**Project Name: Civic Center West Entrance.**

**Finding:** The existing wheelchair entrance to the Civic Center Auditorium is located on Monroe Street, near the loading dock.

**Discussion:** The design team was struck by the relative indignity of the existing entrance to the Civic Center Auditorium intended to provide accessibility for people in wheelchairs. It gives the impression of being "around the back," relatively inconspicuous and a long distance from the front entrances along Fulton Street. In addition, it was noted that this side of the Auditorium faces the parking lots that are the likely site for expansion of the Civic Center, probably increasing the importance of this entrance.

In response, the design team designed a turn-off that would accomplish several goals at once. First, the entrance would be more accessible to the handicapped, who could be dropped off right in front. Second, this area could be used during off-hours by trucks that need to pull off Monroe Street. Finally, this solution would allow for a more elegantly designed and covered Monroe Street entrance to the performance and exhibit halls from this side.

**Recommendation:** Re-design the west side of the Civic Center to create a drop-off point and a more elegant entrance.

## D-10

**Project Name:** Riverfront Row Houses.

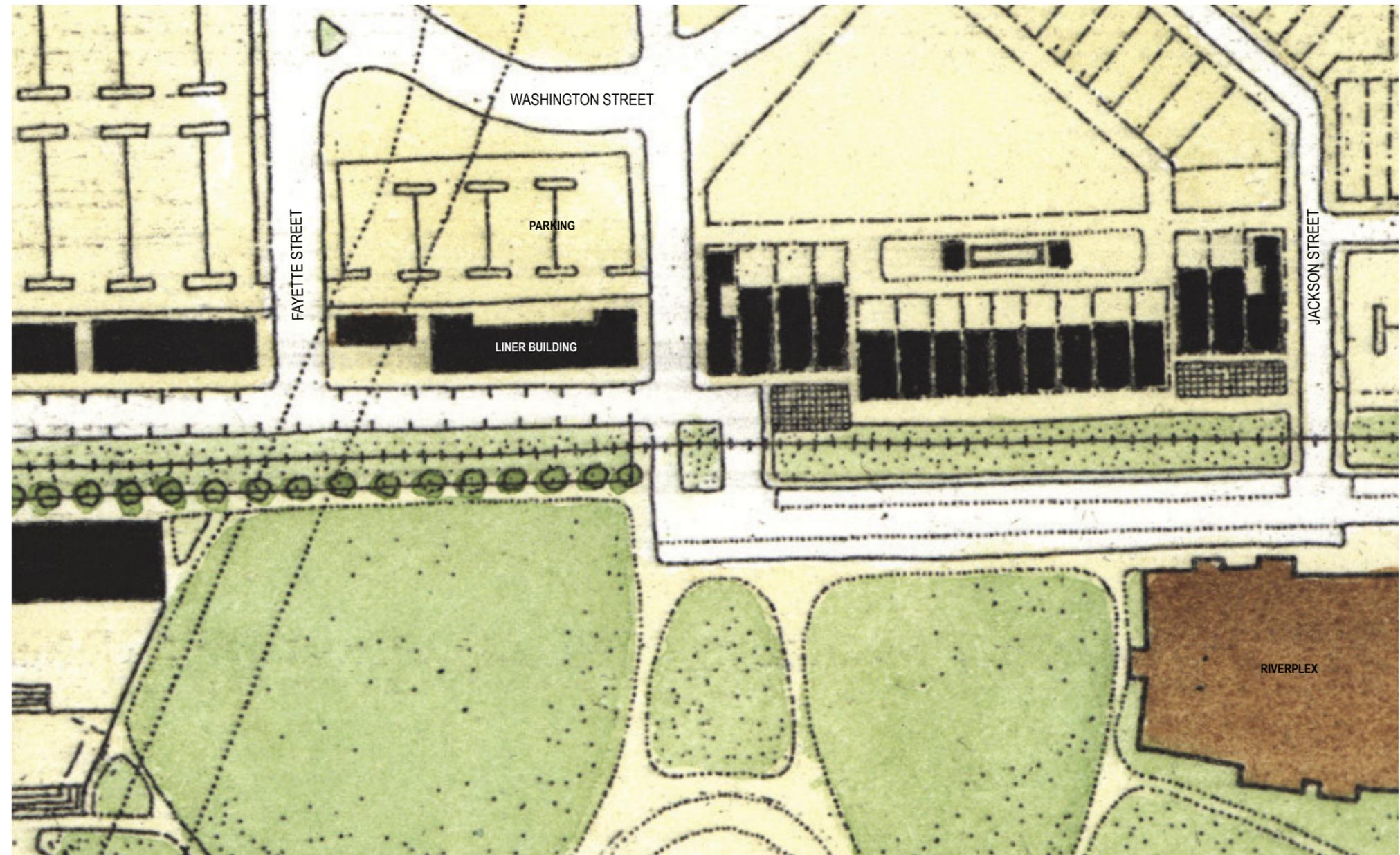
**Finding:** The Peoria P. H. A. is interested in gradually phasing out the existing barracks-style public housing at Taft Homes, bordered by Eaton, Adams, and Green Streets.

**Discussion:** The Taft Homes occupy an unusually attractive piece of real estate, near the riverfront recreational complex and close enough to the river to afford attractive views. In addition, the private owner of a site in the vicinity of the Recplex has expressed an interest in residential development. This convergence of public and private interests represents a unique opportunity for focused redevelopment of this stretch of riverview property as near-downtown residential neighborhood. This kind of housing is extremely attractive to both the kind of young “knowledge workers” and the active seniors that would enjoy living within walking distance of the downtown and the activity centers of the downtown riverfront.

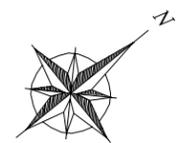
The design team developed a schematic proposal for a rowhouse development facing the river and riverfront recreational complex across the new continuation of Irving Street. The plan includes two small public squares, and common civic space providing some separation between the rear yards of the row houses and the adjacent parcels. A liner building is shown to mask parking under the I-74 bridge; masking the parking is necessary to provide a pedestrian-friendly connection under the bridge along Water Street, as is relocating the existing sewage facility to a nearby more isolated location. In addition, the plan proposes to maintain Fayette Street (rather than close it, as IDOT proposes) since it provides both pedestrian and automobile connection between this developable area of the riverfront and downtown Peoria .

The team also developed a plan for incremental redevelopment of the Taft Homes with similar building types. A reconstructed street grid carves the site into segments appropriate for phasing redevelopment in a way that could avoid the necessity for relocating large numbers of existing tenants at one time. The plan also includes small public squares, including a small green enclosed in the center of a block.

**Recommendation:** Develop a public/private partnership to pursue re-development of this site as rowhouses, to be completed in phases.



RIVERFRONT ROW HOUSES. This detail shows the proposed row houses across the street from the Riverplex recreation center.



## D-11

## Project Name: Whitewater Race Course.

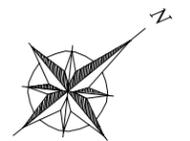
**Finding:** The current riverfront plan includes a large amount of open space that currently lacks any particular program, particularly in the stretch along the near north side.

**Discussion:** Unprogrammed open space can offer long views and abstractly attractive naturalistic landscapes, but often isn't the best use of space in relatively urbanized areas. It is expensive to maintain well, difficult to maintain reliably crime-free, and often either under-utilized in general or taken over by relatively segments of the population who are more likely to make the area less welcoming or usable by the rest of the citizens. In order to maintain the riverfront as a space that is safe and accessible to the broadest number of citizens of Peoria, as well as contributing to the general ability of the downtown area and the riverfront to attract life and economic vitality, it is necessary to do as much as possible to populate these spaces with activity relevant to every season. The area just to the north of the Riverplex recreational complex represents a strategic opportunity to activate this stretch of riverfront, increasing its ability to bring people from other parts of the city as well as enhancing the desirability of nearby real estate.

**Recommendation:** Pursue development of a whitewater race course, utilizing available land to the north of the current recreational and fitness complex.



*THE NEAR NORTHSIDE RIVERFRONT.* In the proposal illustrated here, the recreation complex and riverfront park are integrated into a mixed-income neighborhood of townhouses that would incrementally replace the existing public housing. Where existing proposals for redevelopment of the riverfront involve large expanses of relatively unprogrammed open space, this plan proposes activation of that space by introducing more definite reasons to be there: an amphitheatre across from the riverfront townhouses; a whitewater race course.



## Neighborhood Overview

Over the last decade, Peoria's neighborhoods have been the focus of a great deal of discussion and effort. At the *charrette*, the design team was presented with an impressive stack of existing plans focused on various neighborhoods, each filled with detailed observations and recommendations. Some of the recommendations have been implemented, whereas others are still awaiting action.

Past and existing plans have focused on a myriad of large and small improvements that are specific to each neighborhood. This plan doesn't try to replace them but instead proposes an overall strategy, organized around the idea of neighborhood centers, to help focus the work of neighborhood redevelopment and improvement. In addition, the design team has developed a set of proposals intended both to identify specific opportunities and to provide clear examples of the way the principles and goals embodied in this plan can be realized.

In general, the design team found that although the housing stock in the neighborhoods is aging, it is generally sound and attractive. In recent years, the neighborhoods below the bluffs have lost population and have seen a decline in the proportion of owner-occupied houses. In some neighborhoods, especially on the bluffs and on the north side, historic preservation interests have helped to slow and even (in specific cases) reverse the tendencies for these older neighborhoods to lose both population and value. The interventions described in this plan are intended to create a more consistent pattern of redevelopment and reinvestment, while at the same time offering some immediate improvements in the quality of life of the residents.

One crucial problem has to do with the decay of what was once a more orderly mix of building types and uses, from residential to neighborhood-oriented commercial areas, that reflected and reinforced this neighborhood pattern. Over the years, major commercial corridors have either suffered from the competition from suburban shopping centers, or have been degraded by a pattern of increasingly automobile-oriented uses. Some of the older neighborhood centers, with recognizably commercial building types, have lost most or all of their commercial uses. The uses that remain are limited and often not particularly desirable in a healthy neighborhood.

In other areas, problems are created when residential buildings on the edges of active commercial corridors have been haphazardly converted to commercial uses. A key to improving the neighborhoods is recovering the traditional structure by creating a clear order of distinctions between the predominantly residential streets and the areas that support a more varied mix of commercial activity as part of the neighborhood. This is the function of the transect-oriented revision of the zoning code discussed under General Controls.

The changes in the codes proposed in the section on General Controls are an important first step to repairing the overall pattern of neighborhood development. In order to achieve as well as regulate the finely-grained mix of uses necessary to complete a neighborhood, the Regulating Plan identifies corridors and neighborhood centers, and suggests changes in the codes necessary to guide their development.

An important part of maintaining the traditional neighborhoods of Peoria has to do with recognizing, preserving, and, when necessary, reinforcing their historic character. Peoria has a well-written historic preservation ordinance, backed by a well-organized interest and commitment on the part of many neighborhood residents. At the *charrette*, some citizens expressed concern that the ordinance might need to be enforced more strenuously than it currently is, while others were concerned that its stringent application might be an obstacle to needed renovation of older structures. This plan provides some additional ways to think about maintaining and reinforcing the character of neighborhoods, allowing for both preservation of contributing historic structures and compatible redevelopment where necessary.

It is not enough, however, to propose this repair of the physical structure of the neighborhoods. If the reinvigorated neighborhood centers are really to complete the neighborhoods with walkable destinations and access to goods and services related to daily needs, it will be necessary to provide leadership in the form of successful examples of neighborhood centers. Toward that end, this plan proposes two kinds of intervention: First, the plan outlines a "neighborhood center module," a kit of parts for creating neighborhood centers that can serve effectively as anchors

for the community. This model is described in generic terms. Its implementation will likely require an innovative public/private partnership and creative use of available opportunities with regard to site, tenants, and financing.

Second, the plan includes several examples of neighborhood centers that might be developed in identified locations (for example, the intersection of Western Avenue and Lincoln, and Western Avenue and Adams). It also includes projects that represent examples of the kind of neighborhood development that might take place as part of these neighborhood centers. The reconfiguration of the YWCA housing development is an example of this.

Peoria is lucky to have a structure of neighborhood schools that pre-dates the more recent tendencies toward consolidation and centralization. This plan recommends that this pattern be continued and reinforced, in part by making sure that the physical condition of the schools reflects their importance as a neighborhood asset.

Finally, this section includes a series of proposals that have to do with the management and governance of neighborhoods rather than simply their physical improvement. During the *charrette*, many neighborhood residents made it clear that their most immediate and pressing concerns have to do with the problems of crime and personal safety, problems involving landlords and tenants not taking adequate responsibility for the property they control, problems involving incivility as well as violent crime in their neighborhood, and problems involving trash and traffic. All of these problems can be difficult to address, and in some cases the solutions will have to be very specific to the neighborhood. This plan proposes a few general measures that can be taken: enhanced community policing, tighter regulation of landlords, coordination of neighborhood efforts through a consolidation of neighborhood associations into broader coalitions, and a coordinated system of effective code enforcement.

In general, the proposed interventions might be integrated with the City's existing Target Neighborhood Program. The key to success lies in establishing a focused and consistent pattern of effort fitted to the specific needs of each neighborhood.

In the City of Peoria's Affordable Housing Plan, it is noted that there is generally sufficient housing affordable for those who wish to become owners, but a potential gap in the market for rental housing that is affordable by lower income residents. If this is the current situation, the problem could be exacerbated by neighborhood redevelopment of the sort that reduces the stock of relatively low rent housing opportunities. Overall, the proposals outlined in this plan are intended to respond to the challenge of maintaining a balance between the need to attract more affluent households (typically headed by middle-aged and empty-nester householders) in order to sustain the economic vitality of the city's neighborhoods, while at the same time insuring that patterns of neighborhood redevelopment are also responsive to the needs of those lower income residents, younger households with children, and elderly residents who currently comprise much of the population of these neighborhoods. Much will depend on the way these proposals are implemented in specific neighborhoods.

**N-1**  
**Project Name: Neighborhood Centers.**

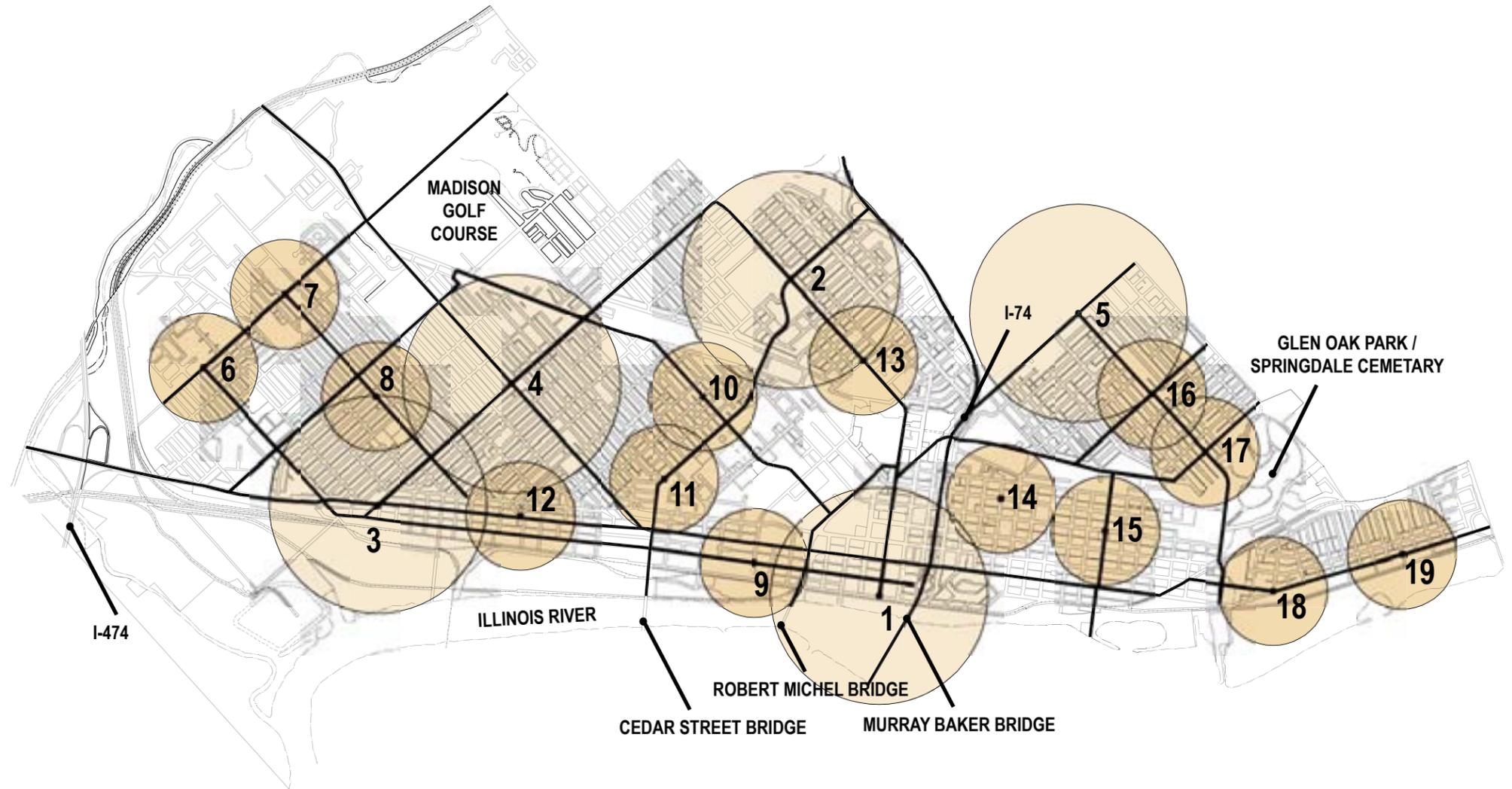
**Finding:** The historic street grid of Peoria reveals a strong underlying structure of walkable neighborhoods.

**Discussion:** Although the neighborhood structure of Peoria is still clearly apparent, many neighborhoods have been weakened as a result of the deterioration of what had once been mixed-use neighborhood centers.

Unfortunately, the idea of a “neighborhood center” can be confused by common and often imprecise usage of the word “center.” It is important to understand that a “neighborhood center” is not the same thing as either a “shopping center” or a “community center,” as commonly understood. Shopping centers are a conventional suburban form, but one can generally ask of them: the center of *what*? They are typically *not* the center of a neighborhood, and are characterized by their orientation almost exclusively to access by automobile. A “community center” is usually a specific facility intended for common use by members of a community. A “neighborhood center” is not a single facility but a central area (commonly defined by an intersection of main streets) in which one finds a mix of uses that support the quality and comfort of life within what is called the “pedestrian shed” (a five or ten minute walk from the edge of the neighborhood to the center).

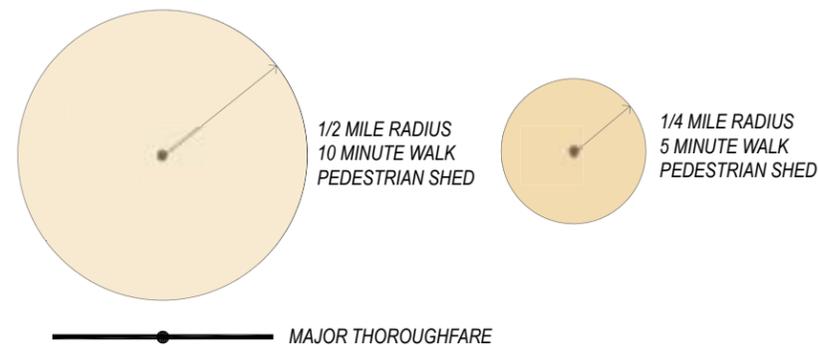
A crucial part of maintaining the walkability and livability of neighborhoods is insuring that each neighborhood is complete, in the sense that it is possible to take care of most of one’s daily needs within the neighborhood. In addition, it is important that each neighborhood have its share of public spaces and “third places” (informal gathering places) where neighbors can encounter each other in their daily round. This is especially important for lower income neighborhoods, where people tend to rely more heavily on the resources immediately available in their neighborhood.

Two tendencies have contributed to the decay of neighborhood-oriented retail and services in the past several decades. First, there has been a general trend toward exclusively automobile-oriented retail, associated with a movement away from the centers of urban neighborhoods and onto arterial roads or to more suburban locations. Second, problems of poverty and crime have helped to make



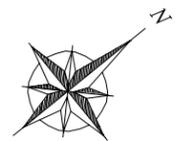
**NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS AND PEDESTRIAN SHEDS.** This diagram shows the structure of neighborhoods in terms of five or ten minute walking distance from a neighborhood center. Each neighborhood center was located by analyzing the street map and then confirming by field observations of existing neighborhood commercial locations. With the development of mixed-use neighborhood centers, it becomes possible to acquire one’s daily needs without a car.

**KEY**



**ADDRESSES:**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Riverfront (Water St. & Main St.) | 10. John H. Gwynn Jr. Ave. & Charlton St. |
| 2. University St. & W. Main St.      | 11. McArthur Highway & Brotherson St.     |
| 3. Adams St. & Western St.           | 12. Jefferson St. & Western Ave.          |
| 4. Lincoln Ave. & Western Ave.       | 13. Sheridan Rd. & W. Main St.            |
| 5. Frey St. & Knoxville Ave.         | 14. Green St. & Perry Ave.                |
| 6. Laramie Ave. & Krause Ave.        | 15. Monroe St. & Spring St.               |
| 7. Laramie Ave. & Starr St.          | 16. Frey St. & Wisconsin St.              |
| 8. Starr St. & Arago St.             | 17. Frey St. & Prospect Rd.               |
| 9. Adams St. & Garden St.            | 18. Jefferson St. & Camblin Ave.          |
|                                      | 19. Adams St. & Sloan St.                 |



corner stores and other neighborhood gathering places into liabilities rather than assets for their neighbors—often not only a locally unwanted land use, but a real threat to the safety of the residents.

One of the results of the decline of inner city neighborhoods has been the increasing loss of the public areas (streets, parks, and even playgrounds) to a fear of crime that leaves residents effectively imprisoned in their homes much of the time. In Peoria, residents of many of the neighborhoods encompassed by this plan report that they are afraid even to take their garbage cans to the curb at certain times of the day. Clearly a key component of improving these neighborhoods would be empowering the residents to take back the streets of their neighborhoods as public space. The revival of neighborhood centers would mean expanding services and amenities available to the residents without having to drive out of the neighborhood. Perhaps more importantly, however, it would both require and facilitate enhanced collaboration of residents and law enforcement in policing of the streets of the neighborhood. The re-development of neighborhood centers would imply making it safe for residents to walk to them, and by enhancing the reasons for law-abiding citizens to walk through the neighborhood, would help to reinforce efforts to make the streets safe.

The design team identified likely locations of neighborhood centers on the map, and then confirmed these locations with field observations. Some locations were adjusted based on these observations, but in all cases, the team was able to identify at least the traces of what had once been neighborhood-related commercial activity. Based on these observations, the team developed a map of neighborhood centers and their surrounding “pedestrian sheds.” Some locations are suited for a more intensive mix of uses, capable of serving a broader neighborhood with a greater selection of goods and services. These locations fall at the center of a wider pedestrian shed, defined by a ½ mile radius or a 10 minute walk.

The resulting map identifies specific opportunities for completing and strengthening the neighborhoods.

**Recommendations:**

- Adjust zoning code to support and encourage development (or re-development) of locations for neighborhood-oriented retail and services, organized at the center of an appropriate pedestrian shed.
- Link redevelopment of neighborhood centers closely with community-based solutions to neighborhood problems and to the enhancement of community policing.

**N-2****Project Name: Southern Gateway Area.**

**Finding:** Although an important connection between the downtown and the neighborhoods and suburban areas to the south, the Adams corridor is generally visually unappealing and dominated by an inconsistent mix of uses oriented more to through-traffic than to the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Discussion:** The southern section of Adams Street, along with its surrounding neighborhoods, has been identified by the City of Peoria as the “Southern Gateway Area.” This area serves as the entrance to Peoria from Interstate 474 and the airport. To the north of Adams, the neighborhood includes an historic school, an aging housing stock, and Harrison Homes, a 56 acre public housing development constructed as early as 1942 and currently the focus of a HOPE VI revitalization grant application. Although the Adams Street business corridor has deteriorated substantially in some places, it includes (according to the “Revitalization Strategy for the Southern Gateway Area” prepared by PGAV Urban Consulting in 2001) viable businesses and substantial opportunities for new economic development. To the south of Adams Street, a large area that contains a mix of heavy industrial uses is located in a flood plain.

The report describing the current strategy for revitalization of this area presents an excellent analysis of current conditions. The general recommendations framing this revitalization strategy are sound in principle, compatible with the general goals and principles of the “Heart of Peoria” plan, and generally in need only of reinforcement and encouragement. The revitalization strategy includes not only the HOPE VI reconstruction of Harrison Homes, but a variety of proposals to bring jobs, retail, and services to the southside neighborhoods. The strategy correctly emphasizes the interconnection between economic development along the corridor and the health of the nearby neighborhoods, and the importance of strategic partnerships (like the one between the City of Peoria and the Peoria Housing Authority) that support the kind of coordination of efforts necessary for a balanced revitalization of a neighborhood.

The DPZ team did note a number of specific elements of the revitalization that need to be reconsidered in the light of the broader goals associated with this plan. In particular, the

proposed streetscape improvements and redevelopment strategies offer some potentially effective short-term solutions to problems identified along the Adams Street corridor, but they are relatively suburban in character, form, and function, and would therefore be at odds with the goal of strengthening Peoria’s southside neighborhood and downtown.

The development of a gateway feature marking entrance to Peoria would be a very positive move, but it needs to be followed by street and building configurations that indicate the transition from suburbs to city. In the proposed improvements, the landscaping and the street section maintain the look as well as the geometries of a highway or suburban arterial rather than an urban street. This is reinforced by the pattern of the proposed infill, by the way it is set back from the street with parking located in the front. Both the buildings and the parking in the existing plan are consistently suburban in character, where they should reflect an increasingly urban character as one approaches the downtown core. Although this approach might make it easier to attract certain kinds of development in the short run, it will ultimately limit development capabilities of the surrounding landowners, as well as giving an inappropriate character to the city’s “gateway.” The current pattern of land use along the corridor reflects the common result of the erosion of an older urban fabric by the introduction of uses that are oriented to the automobile traffic generated along this route. The result is not only visually unappealing, but detrimental to the redevelopment potential of the nearby neighborhood. Even with respect to the corridor itself, the outcome of reinforcing these suburban patterns is likely to be a long term pattern of uneven development along the corridor, rather than a consolidation of redevelopment efforts into a sustained pattern of improvement. The adjustment proposed by this plan would re-establish healthy urban fabric, as an effective way to encourage redevelopment along the corridor and as a way to create an appropriate gateway experience.

In addition, this pattern of redevelopment reinforces the character of Adams Street as a “corridor,” but at the expense of disrupting the historic street grid. This is likely to have the effect of intensifying traffic congestion along both Adams and Jefferson, and also severs important connections to the

nearby neighborhoods.

The design team developed a design for an example of an infill project on Adams Street that represents a potential repair to this erosion of the streetscape, and a redevelopment compatible with the effort to restore the viability of the neighborhood structure. In the proposal, the existing mixed use building with pedestrian-oriented frontage (shown in photograph) is renovated and incorporated into redevelopment of the block. The continuous frontage and street trees not only provide a more comfortable environment for pedestrians, but also signal to drivers that they are entering a more urban area and arriving at a specific place. As a result, development along the corridor both enhances the approach to the city and adds value to the flanking neighborhoods.

For another example of this approach to the Adams corridor, see the Southern Gateway Neighborhood Center, described below (Project number N-3).

**Recommendation:**

- Orient cosmetic improvements of the Adams Street corridor and infill development to reinforcing the historic street grid and neighborhood structure.
- Encourage infill development that is appropriately urban, according to the principles illustrated in this plan.

Develop a specific plan for the Adams Street corridor that adjusts both streetscape and street sections to its function as a heavily traveled gateway to the heart of Peoria, managing the transition from highway to urban street configuration.

**N-3**

**Project Name: Southern Gateway Neighborhood Center.**

**Finding:** Although a potentially significant point along the southern approach to downtown Peoria, the intersection of Adams and Western is currently surrounded by unattractive uses.

commercial activity of the center to the residential areas to the west.

**Recommendation:** Develop this intersection as a major neighborhood center.

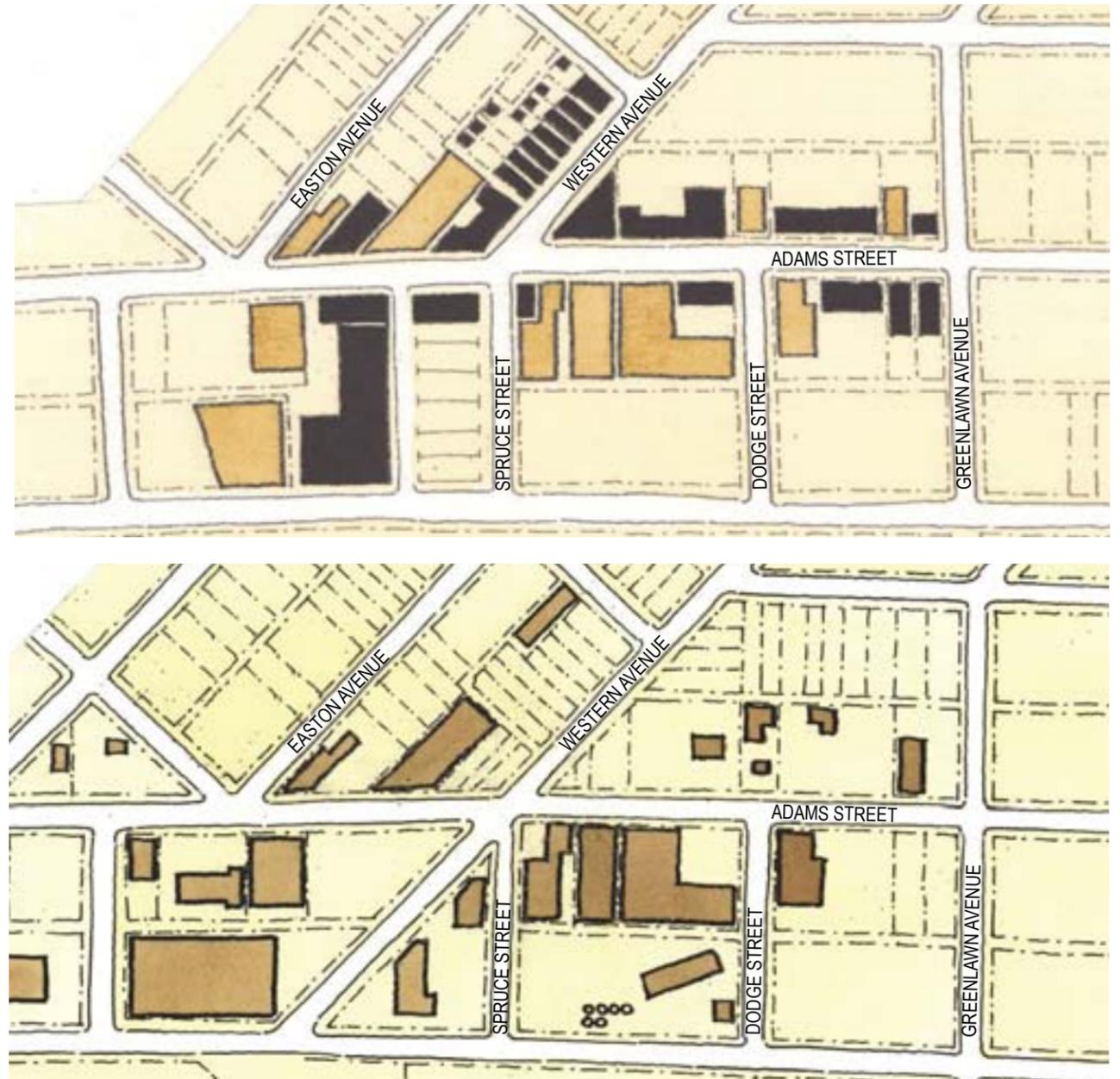
**Discussion:** As currently configured, the diagonal line of Western Avenue continues past Adams in a way that is not clearly defined as public right of way. Its status is ambiguous enough, and its use limited enough, that it is currently being used primarily by the owner of an adjacent property for his own purposes. The current pattern of use and vacant land offers an opportunity for redevelopment as a major center for the Southside neighborhood to the west. In addition, the location of this intersection along the major axis of the Adams corridor gives it potential as a viable location for a major retailer (e.g., a grocery store).

Analysis of the neighborhood structure, as well as the Adams corridor, indicates that this is a good location for redevelopment of a major neighborhood center, serving both automobile traffic along the corridor and pedestrian traffic within range of a ten minute walk. The plan illustrates both the pattern of a neighborhood center and the infill strategy that would produce this kind of connection between neighborhood and corridor.

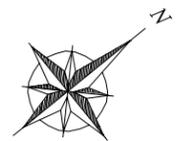
The proposed plan turns Western Avenue in alignment with the surrounding grid, and re-claims land that would otherwise be difficult to redevelop in a manner that would contribute to improvement of the Adams corridor. Parking is hidden behind a “liner building” that occupies the southeast corner of the intersection. Infill on the east and west sides of Adams establish continuous pedestrian-friendly frontage. The building with a larger footprint (to the south of the proposed parking lot) could be a major grocery store, serving the entire Southside rather than leaving them to cross the river into East Peoria.

Redevelopment of the northeast corner—the triangular building—would help to create a distinctive identity for the place, and mark the turn up into the neighborhood. To the east of the building on the southwest corner, row houses provide a pleasing transition from the relatively intensive

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**SOUTHERN GATEWAY NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER.** The illustration on the left shows the existing conditions at the intersection of Adams and Western Avenue. The illustration on the right shows the proposed reconfiguration of the streets and the use of infill development (in black) to create a major neighborhood center. The triangular building represents a distinctive opportunity to make this neighborhood center a significant part of the approach to downtown along the Adams corridor, as well as providing an entrance to the neighborhoods to the west.



**N-4****Project Name: Adams Corridor Infill.**

**Finding:** Although an important connection between the downtown and the neighborhoods and suburban areas to the south, the Adams corridor tends to be visually unappealing and dominated by an inconsistent mix of uses oriented more to through-traffic than to the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Discussion:** The southern section of Adams has been associated with the southern “gateway” to Peoria, an approach that is likely to become increasingly important as the airport grows and as additional development takes place around and beyond the airport. The corridor is flanked on the east by an area of industrial uses, and it is flanked on the west by low-income areas that include the successful HOPE VI project and the Harrison Homes public housing complex. The pattern of land use along the corridor reflects the common result of the erosion of an older urban fabric by the introduction of uses that are increasingly oriented to the automobile traffic generated along this major route into the city. The result is not only a visually unappealing approach sequence for visitors arriving from the airport, but also a barrier to the redevelopment potential of the neighborhood.

The design team studied the 2001 *Revitalization Strategy for the Southern Gateway Area* and found that, although a great source of information about the area, the concept designs for the area were far too suburban in character, offering a great deal of buffering and surface parking lots. In response, the team developed a design for an example of an infill project on Adams Street that represents a proper repair for the eroding streetscape, a redevelopment model compatible with the effort to create neighborhood centers. In the proposal, the existing mixed use building with pedestrian-oriented frontage (shown in photograph) is renovated and incorporated into surrounding mixed-use redevelopment. The continuous frontage and street trees not only provide a more comfortable environment for pedestrians, but also signal to drivers the entrance into an urban place. As a result, development along the corridor both enhances the approach to the city and adds value to the flanking neighborhoods.

**Recommendation:** Encourage a pattern of infill development along the Adams corridor, particularly in association with proposed neighborhood centers.

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*ADAMS CORRIDOR, EXISTING.* This photograph shows a typical stretch of Adams, with remnants of an older Peoria scattered along a corridor increasingly dominated by parking lots and uses set back from the street like the gas station in this picture.



*ADAMS CORRIDOR, REVIVED.* The perspective illustrates the way infill development can be used to repair frontage that has been fragmented by automobile-oriented development in a more suburban pattern. The somewhat neglected building shown in the photograph has been renovated and flanked with compatible infill development. Street trees help to create a more humane pedestrian environment as well as a helping to indicate arrival in a place that people care about.

## N-5

## Project Name: Community Anchor.

**Finding:** In many of Peoria's older neighborhoods, the neighborhood centers are either deteriorated or absent, making it difficult for the residents of these neighborhoods to fulfill their daily needs without a car.

**Discussion:** Given current real estate and development practice, it would be unrealistic to expect the development of neighborhood centers with an appropriate mix of services to happen spontaneously, without initial leadership, clear guidance and a proven model on which future projects can be based. It may even be necessary to organize a level of public subsidy, and to craft carefully designed public-private partnerships in order to create neighborhood centers with the right mix and character for the particular neighborhood. In the present climate, market forces are unlikely to be sufficient.

In order to achieve the desired results with respect to providing important services, creating safe neighborhood-oriented public space, and establishing an appropriate identity for each neighborhood, the design team has developed a model for an ideal neighborhood center, designed not just as another version of the familiar strip center but as a community anchor. The community anchor is essentially a kit of parts intended to serve neighborhood needs in a way that can be closely tailored to the specific neighborhood. The most important attribute of the community anchor is its proximity to the residents of the neighborhood in which it is located. The ability to walk to a destination is a vital component of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods. In a mixed use, pedestrian friendly environment the average distance most people are willing to walk is approximately five minutes.

The model includes a small market, in which neighbors could pick up milk, groceries, or other goods that are staples of everyday life. A second retail space would be available, depending on the neighborhood's needs. The facility includes space for a child care facility and associated play area, responding to a common need in neighborhoods where there is a high percentage of single mothers and working parents. A laundromat provides a needed service, but can also serve as a social center, especially in association with a neighboring

café or bar. The site plan includes a small square, suitable to be used as a neighborhood public space, and also as a location for a transit stop.

The model responds to two other concerns. In neighborhoods with a high percentage of rentals rather than owner-occupied homes, especially those characterized by lower income, residents tend to move more often. For this reason, a small space is dedicated to post office boxes, available to neighborhood residents as a stable mailing address. Finally, the community center includes a small office that can serve as a base of operations for the police, in support of the community policing program that has been proposed but implemented in only very limited ways.

The concept has been illustrated to show two versions. The first is a two-story version, offering the possibility of including small residential units on the second floor. This addition to the mix of uses helps to populate the center and bring "eyes on the street" both day and night. These units could be designed as senior housing, both affordable and convenient to services, transit, and social contact. This component could also help to finance the project. (One possibility would be for one of these centers to be developed in partnership with the Peoria Public Housing Authority). This version is also designed to be more compatible with more residential settings. The second design illustrates the possibility of a one story version, designed to be both inexpensive to build and utilizing a standard commercial building type in order to be compatible with neighborhoods that already have an active commercial presence.

The proposed neighborhood centers would be "community anchors" in several senses. First, they would provide subsidized opportunities to "anchor tenants" who would form what would hopefully be a core of neighborhood-oriented retail and services. Almost every mall gives away prime locations rent-free to the so-called "anchor tenants" that will bring shoppers from a distance. Cities should also be prepared to offer similar subsidies—even free leases on land—in order to secure a desired mix of uses. On a similar principle, operators of facilities within the community anchor should be given the space, on the condition that they meet



*COMMUNITY ANCHOR, WITH RESIDENTIAL UNITS ABOVE. This two-story version of the community anchor includes affordable apartments on the second floor. This perspective also illustrates the possibility of adjusting the architectural character of the neighborhood center to reinforce the character and identity of different neighborhoods.*



*COMMUNITY ANCHOR, SINGLE STORY. This perspective shows a one-story version of a model neighborhood center, utilizing a standard commercial building type in order to be compatible with existing commercial buildings.*

certain expectations for service.

Second, these centers would “anchor” the community life of the neighborhood by providing a safe and dignified opportunity for neighbors to meet and interact as part of their daily routines. In his book *The Great Good Place*, sociologist Ray Oldenburg describes modern U.S. society as one in which people’s lives are increasingly divided between a workplace and a private home, with only a torturous commute to mediate. He believes people need a “third place,” more relaxed than work, less private than home, for socializing. Such third places have existed throughout history, the world over, he writes: the ancient Greek agora, classic French cafes, English pubs, old-fashioned taverns, even soda fountains on classic American Main Streets. The Neighborhood Center in traditional design offers an excellent location for creating Oldenburg’s “third place” where citizens can gather for multiple purposes, one of which is transit. In traditional cities, neighborhood centers and the “third places” they possess serve as the location of transit stops. Places of gathering make public transportation practical and efficient. The many neighborhoods of New York City, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia are all served by various modes of transit. Each neighborhood center represents a five-minute walk to the transit stop for residents of the neighborhood. By offering a convenient location for people to congregate, transit becomes a viable and attractive alternative to the car.

Neighborhood Centers and transit stops must follow seven important steps in order to be successful. These are:

1. Locate stations or stops at cross streets. Intersections are natural hubs for retail, which can make transit locations lively and safe. Corner locations also eliminate the need for pedestrian bridges, which are outdated and expensive.
2. Old suburban development should not be replaced with new suburban development. Transit locations need city-style development, including wide sidewalks, store windows on the street, parking lots behind stores, buildings that mix uses such as retail, offices, and apartments. Space should also be reserved for civic uses such as libraries, post offices, and government

services.

3. Pre-existing neighborhood shops and restaurants should be incorporated into transit locations; transit riders provide the customers that can support these often small-scaled local businesses.
4. Designs should remain simple. There is no need for polished granite, elaborate steel, or decorative glass canopies. Simple signage hung from or in front of stores and cafes is sufficient to indicate a transit location.
5. Open space is welcome near transit locations, provided it is the appropriate type; paved plazas are most useful, as they offer space to wait and congregate. Any parks should be small and friendly greens or squares, places where they won’t squander sites best suited to attract businesses that serve transit riders.
6. Riders’ comforts can be provided by shops or cafes located at stops; their seats and waiting areas, pay phones, bike racks and restrooms (with diaper-changing facilities), provide necessary amenities for transit locations. Regular police patrols are also a must.
7. Transit should be considered when planning large intersections. Cloverleaf “interchanges” have no place in a transit-friendly neighborhood and are extremely difficult to retrofit. City-styled “intersections” allow people to walk to and from transit stops and area businesses.

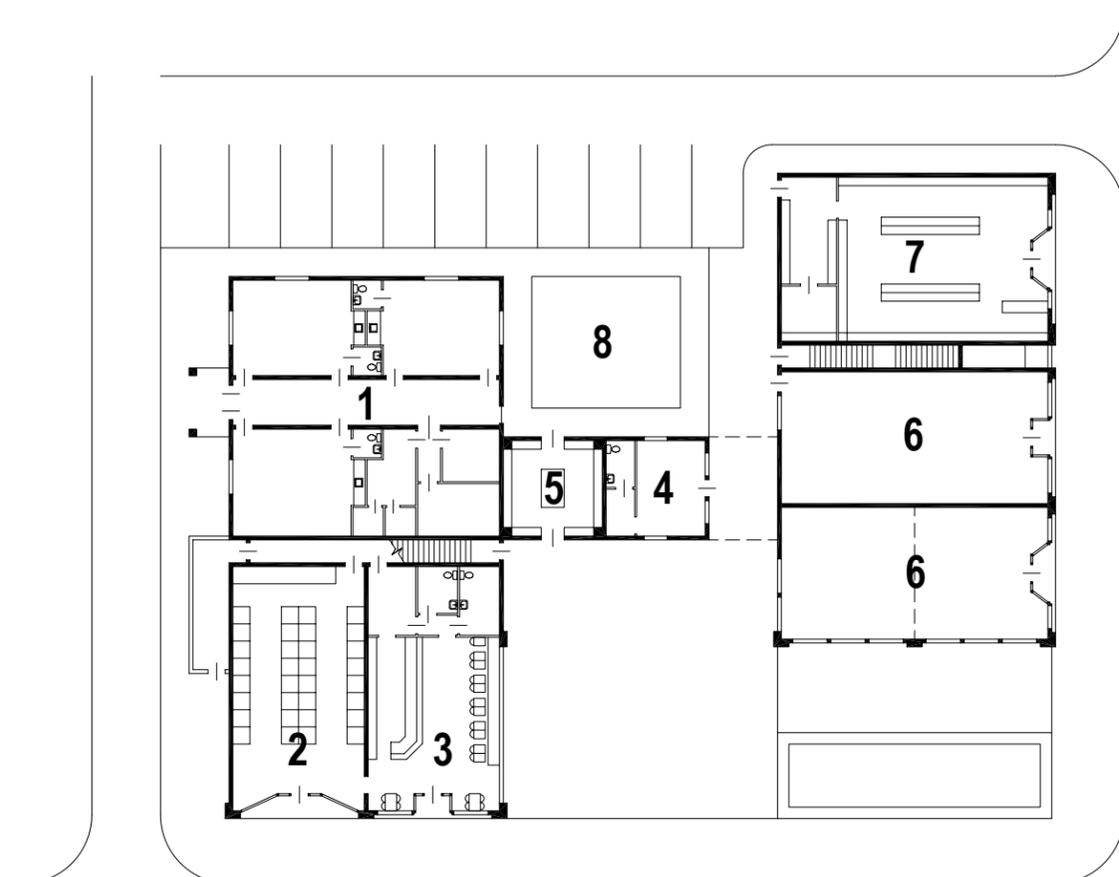
In addition to their programmatic elements and urban design characteristics, it is important that the community anchors be effectively managed; maintain tenant mix, insure quality operations, and suitable property maintenance.

**Recommendations:**

- Encourage development of model neighborhood centers as “community anchors,” through public-private partnerships, as a technique for stimulating and facilitating the broader redevelopment of the centers of Peoria’s urban neighborhoods.
- Tenants need to be selected carefully and the contracts written so that the contract can be terminated in a relatively short time frame if the tenant is not performing as expected.

**COMMUNITY ANCHOR MODULE PLAN:**

- |                        |                      |              |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Child Care Facility | 4. Police            | 7. Market    |
| 2. Laundromat          | 5. P.O. Boxes        | 8. Play Area |
| 3. Cafe / Bar          | 6. Additional Retail |              |



CREDIT: Mouzon & Associates Architects

*COMMUNITY ANCHOR MODULE. This plan illustrates the kit of parts that make up a model “community anchor” that could be used to revive the mixed-use centers of Peoria’s neighborhoods. The mix of neighborhood-oriented retail and services is arranged both for convenient access (within a five minute walk of residents) and to create a safe, attractive and useful public space at the heart of each neighborhood. The precise mix of uses would be adjusted to meet the needs of a particular neighborhood, but probably won’t meet all the needs. Part of the purpose of the “community anchor” is to stimulate and help make possible a more extensive redevelopment of each neighborhood center.*

**N-6**

**Project Name:** Western Avenue Neighborhood Center.

**Finding:** The Illinois Department of Transportation is planning a program of street improvement for the intersection of Western and Lincoln, clearly a neighborhood center.

**Discussion:** The proposed street improvements are a good example of the way the historic neighborhood fabric is being eroded by suburban development patterns. These patterns, characterized by single-use development of parcels with deep setbacks and surface parking, create unattractive, car-oriented gaps in the walkability of the neighborhoods. These patterns also tend to preclude the relatively tight mix of uses necessary to provide for daily needs in the form of walkable destinations. As an example of this, the intersection of Western and Lincoln lies at the center of one of the larger pedestrian sheds, well-located on major streets and in relationship to the neighborhoods of the Southside. Undoubtedly, this is one of the reasons it was a originally an attractive location for stores like the Walgreens, which exemplify the introduction of a suburban pattern into a relatively urban setting. This site offers some distinctive opportunities for infill and redevelopment, as a result of the presence of large surface parking lots on opposite corners. The immediate threat of the IDOT proposal gives this project some urgency.

In the proposed schematic plan, buildings designed to meet neighborhood needs fill in the gaps created by large swaths of existing surface parking, helping to redefine Western Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented environment as well as introducing the opportunity for the mix of uses required to function as a major neighborhood center.

**Recommendation:** Develop a neighborhood center at the intersection of Western and Lincoln, as a coordinated infill project.



*WESTERN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER. The illustration on the left shows the existing conditions at the intersection of Western Avenue and Lincoln. This existing neighborhood center is currently dominated by parking lots. The proposed street improvements would make the area even more inhospitable to pedestrians. The illustration on the right shows the proposed plan for a neighborhood center at this location. The new buildings (in black) would both contain neighborhood-oriented retail and services, and, by being built on the street, would help to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.*



N-7

Project Name: Bio-Research Campus, West Main Street.

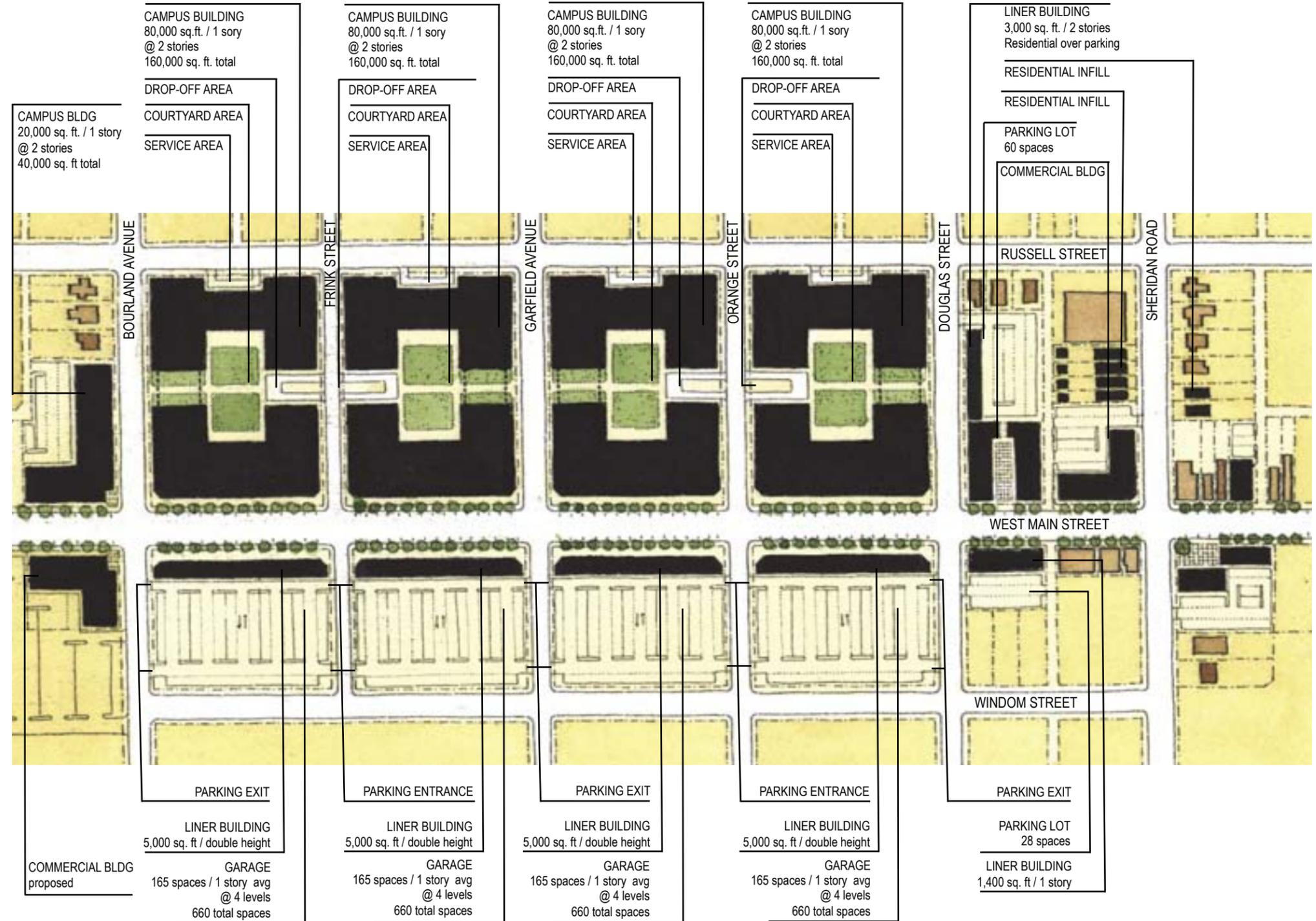
**Finding:** West Main Street is a strategically important corridor, connecting Bradley University with the hospitals and the downtown core, and serving neighborhoods on either side.

**Discussion:** There is enough of the historic urban fabric along this corridor to indicate its potential for re-development, but its quality is currently diminished by traffic and an unnecessarily unfriendly pedestrian environment, by the decay of its commercial life, and by the dilapidated condition of many of the properties. There has also been some regrettable new development which has contributed to this decay.

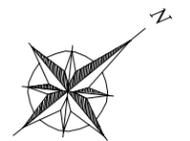
At the *charrette*, there was a great deal of discussion of the proposed bio-research collaborative, an effort that has engaged the interest of the university, the medical school and hospitals, the nearby agricultural research center, and local industry. It has also been recognized as potentially an important component of Peoria's economic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The West Main Street corridor is the logical place for facilities that would serve this collaborative, offering both a central location and ample opportunities for the nearby development of services and amenities that would be necessary to support this kind of campus.

The most common approach to developing a bio-research campus is the suburban model: a relatively isolated cluster of buildings located on some wide-open stretch of university campus or on a greenfield site in the suburban fringe. However, this approach would neither offer the attractions of an urban setting to the researchers and staff, nor would the resulting development bring the same benefits to the community and the immediately surrounding neighborhoods. A research "campus" along the West Main Street corridor could be a model for re-development, as well as bringing both activity and investment interest to the area.

The proposed scheme is intended to create an urban extension of the Bradley University campus, while maintaining the street wall and strengthening the viability of the West Main corridor as a significant center serving several adjacent neighborhoods. The campus portion of the scheme is



*BIO-RESEARCH CAMPUS. This plan shows a schematic design for an urban research campus that would serve both as a center for the proposed bio-research collaborative and as a way to enhance the West Main Corridor. The buildings along both sides of West Main provide opportunities for retail, services, and entertainment serving both the Bradley campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. The parking is masked with liner buildings to maintain the quality of the pedestrian environment.*



organized around a series of courts at the center of each block. The main entrances to the buildings would front on these courtyards, which would serve as public space within each block, offering a place for researchers and visitors to meet that is relatively insulated from the noise and activity of the busy street. Each courtyard would have a drop-off area on one side, entered from mid-block, and a green on the other side that continues the network of pedestrian walkways toward the next block.

The buildings facing West Main would be 2 or 3 stories of mixed uses, with pedestrian-oriented retail at street level. The perspective is intended to provide an illustration of what it might look like if built to three stories.

The buildings facing Russell Street would be limited to two stories in order to step down the scale from the commercial intensity of West Main and blend into the adjacent residential neighborhood.

With this scheme, the barricades currently blocking the street grid along Russell Street could be safely removed and the neighborhood reconnected with what will be the new and improved West Main Street. The redevelopment of West Main and the bio-research campus itself would remove conditions and uses that have created concern in the past, and the presence of people and businesses on the street would increase safety and decrease the presence of crime in the area. The street enclosure created by the campus buildings, along with the mid-block drop-off points, would provide a natural traffic calming that would also help insulate the neighborhood from the activity and traffic of West Main Street.

Parking lots would be on the other side of West Main Street, behind liner buildings that maintain the continuity of the street wall as well as providing additional opportunities for retail activity.

In-fill projects at the intersection of West Main and University Street would be crucial to complete the intersection and provide an appropriate connection between the main university campus, University Village, the West Main area,

and the new bio-research campus.

**Recommendation:** Develop a bio-research campus as an in-fill project and a key component to re-developing the West Main Street corridor.



*WEST MAIN STREET, EXISTING CONDITION.* In its current state, West Main Street presents a contradictory experience. On the left, older mixed use buildings are built close to the street, with sidewalks that are too narrow for comfort when walking along a street that has the design characteristics of a relatively high speed suburban arterial. On the right, new buildings have been set back behind a landscaped berm and parking, reinforcing the suburban quality of the street.



*WEST MAIN STREET, PROPOSED.* In this rendering, West Main Street is shown transformed into a pedestrian-friendly, mixed use neighborhood. The buildings on the right are the street frontage for the bio-research campus. These buildings not only provide opportunities for a mix of uses to bring activity to this area, but complete the feeling of street enclosure necessary to help calm traffic and create an environment that is comfortable for pedestrians. Redevelopment of this neighborhood corridor would accomplish three things: resolve some existing problems associated with a neighborhood area that is suffering from an uncertain transition; provide retail and services for the Bradley University campus and the nearby neighborhoods; and contribute to the long-term attractiveness of the area for university students, researchers and professionals, and neighborhood residents.



*COURTYARDS.* The courtyards of the bio-research campus provide for internal connections between the various buildings and relatively quiet public space in the interior of each block. The result is a campus environment for the research community but in close proximity to the activity of West Main. Overall, the research campus helps to buffer the residential neighborhood from the activity along West Main Street, but also creates a safe and attractive walk from the neighborhood to the west.

## N-8

## Project Name: YWCA Housing.

**Finding:** The YWCA currently owns property in the study area, and has been developing a plan to build in-fill housing.

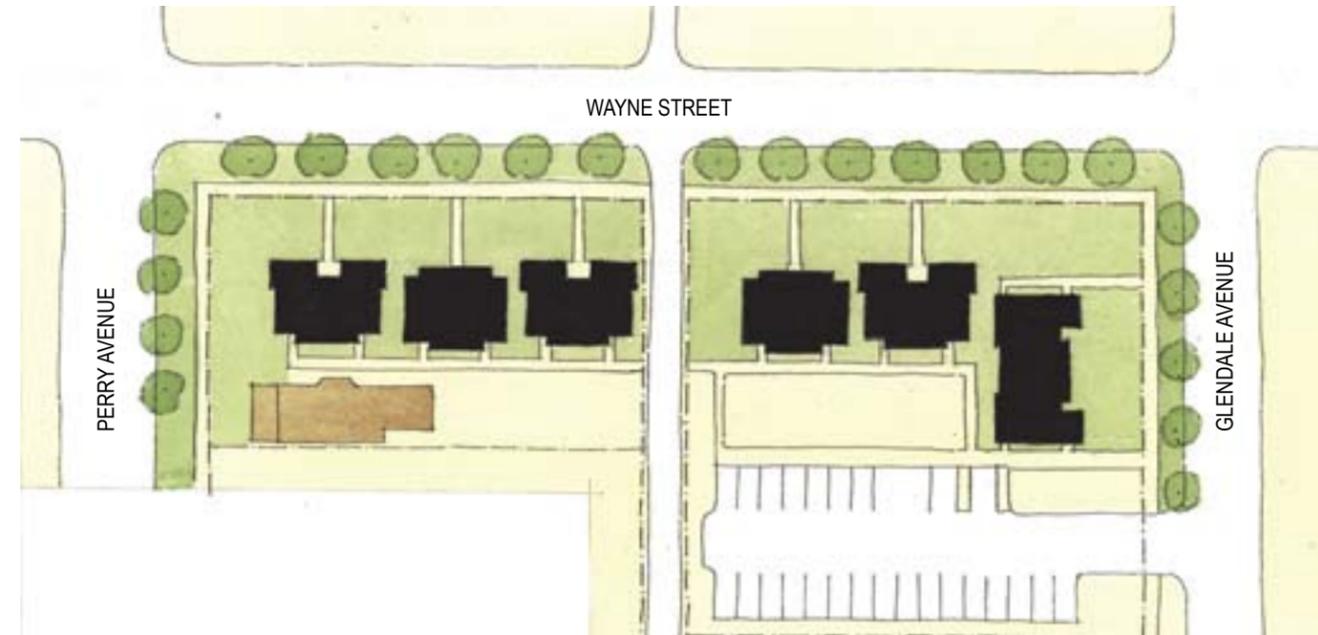
**Discussion:** During the charrette, members of the design team analyzed an existing proposal for the a series of triplexes to be constructed on vacant land near an existing building owned by the YWCA. The property includes a corner site that might well be developed in conjunction with a neighborhood center on another corner of the same intersection. The team identified a number of potential problems with the existing proposal. The proposed new housing is set back farther than necessary from the street, leaving a great deal of common lawn in front. In the rear, the units share a single poorly defined green space that promises to be little more than a buffer between the houses and the parking lot. Both corners are left as part of the common lawn.

In the alternative scheme proposed by the design team, the corner parcels between Perry Avenue and the alley are developed as rowhouses, each with a small private yard and a detached garage accessible from an alley. The rowhouses, aside from the additional amenity in the private realm, are also a building type more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood on that side. The half block fronting on Wayne Street has been re-designed to accommodate a cluster of triplexes similar to those in the original proposal. Instead of the deep setbacks, the buildings are arranged to create a well-defined courtyard. The buildings front on this green space, instead of turning their backs to it. As a result, this common space can be watched from the windows of the units, making it both safer and more useful to the residents. In the original proposal, the corner facing a potential neighborhood center was left as part of the common lawn. The status of this section of lawn would tend to be ambiguous, neither clearly public nor clearly private. Given its location on the corner, it is likely to attract trash and uses undesirable for a lawn directly connected to private space, while management of such nuisances would tend to be uncertain. In the alternative proposal, this space has been given the intentionally public quality of a small square. As a result, it would be managed and policed as public space. It would also define the corner in a manner appropriate to its location as

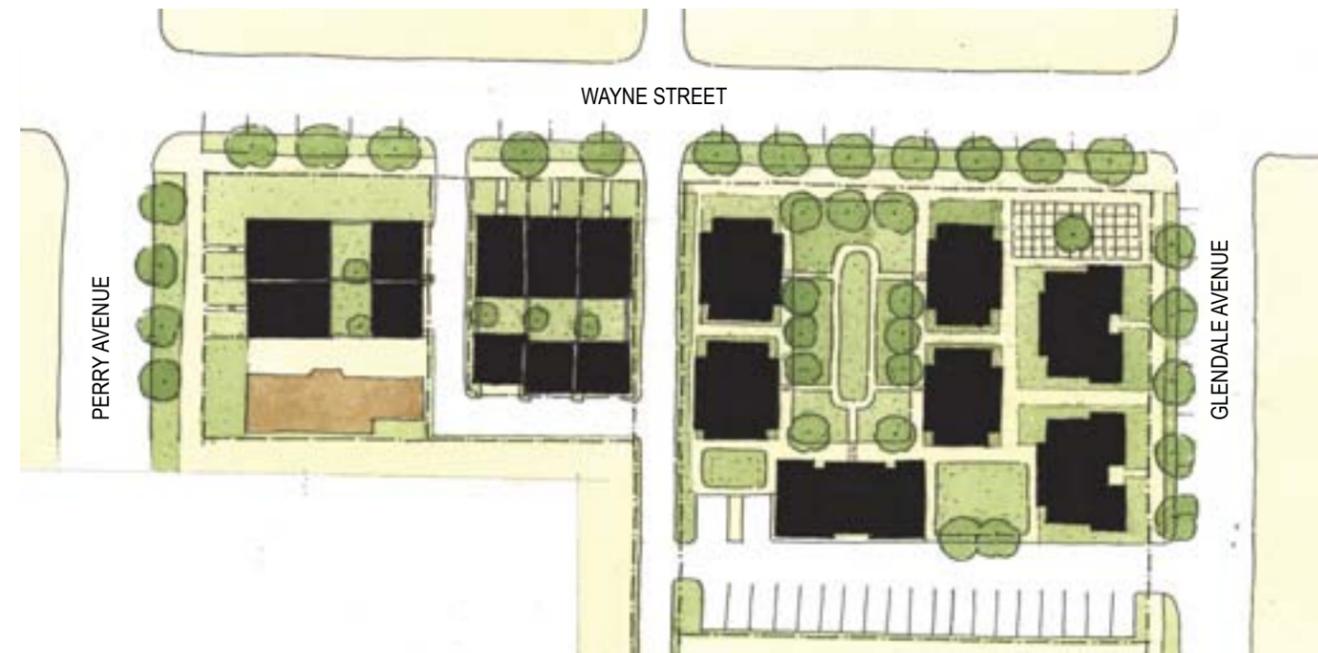
part of a neighborhood center, helping to give definition and identity to the center.

Overall, this scheme demonstrates both the way the other corners of a neighborhood center might be completed, and the way that an attractive and functional transition might be made from the higher density and slightly more intense public uses of the neighborhood center to the surrounding neighborhoods.

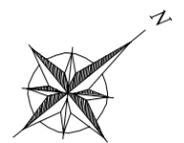
**Recommendation:** Re-design the proposed YWCA housing according to the principles outlined in this plan, and take advantage of the opportunity to reinforce the development of a neighborhood center.



*EXISTING PLAN FOR YWCA HOUSING. This illustration shows the current configuration of housing that is being planned for development by the YWCA. Deep setbacks and large front yards allow no private yards or usable public space.*



*MODIFIED PLAN FOR YWCA HOUSING. This illustration shows the proposed modification of the plan in order to make more efficient use of the site, to create usable outdoor space, and to create a clear balance between public and private necessary for that space to be both useful for the residents and appropriately managed. The six original units are now placed on only half the site, along with an additional building. These seven buildings are arranged around a shared central green, and the corner has been redesigned as a small plaza. The remaining half of the site is available for row houses with detached garages and small private yards, compatible with existing structures.*



**N-9****Project Name: Community Policing.**

**Finding:** Neighborhood residents report a growing sense of insecurity as a result of both an increase in violent crime and an increase in general incivility on the streets.

**Discussion:** When the *charrette* team organized a meeting of neighborhood residents with the intentions of discussing issues of code enforcement, management, and physical conditions in the neighborhoods, we were brought up short by the passionate expression of concerns having to do with fundamental issues of public safety. Residents reported that they were simply afraid to go outside of their houses at certain times of the day and night, and talked about coordinating the times when they would take their garbage cans to the street for pickup—in order to avoid potentially dangerous encounters on the street. Long-time residents, although expressing steadfast commitment to their neighborhoods, reported that it was becoming increasingly difficult to stay as they watch family after family leave as soon as they have the opportunity. The reality of the statistically evident increase in the rate of serious crimes in the downtown neighborhoods was clearly reflected in the perceptions and experiences of the residents, many of whom described a situation in which threatening confrontations of one kind or another provide a daily reminder of the danger to law-abiding citizens who are only trying to maintain their property in respectable condition. Residents report being verbally and physically abused when trying to confront people who throw trash in their yards. They report being afraid to report drug deals and other illegal activity to the police, not trusting the police to respond effectively and fearing that the perpetrators would take revenge.

Residents perceive that some of the increase in crime and incivility on the streets is due to an influx of a criminal element that has been driven out of other areas (possibly as an unintended consequence of HOPE VI and other changes in HUD policy and practices regarding public housing).

These fundamental conditions of crime and insecurity are a major obstacle to re-investment and re-development of the downtown neighborhoods, not to mention their impact on the ability of these neighborhoods to retain the population they have. Both the statistical reports and the subjective experiences of the residents suggest a dangerous cycle that

could accelerate the tendencies toward decay of the neighborhoods.

**Recommendations:**

- Take seriously the recommendations that appear in a number of the neighborhood plans and institute an ambitious and rigorously implemented program of community policing.
- Continue and enhance programs such as those developed under the “Weed and Seed” Program, emphasizing a coordinated approach to the problems of neighborhood decay that involves the neighborhood organizations and every relevant municipal agency—code enforcement, public works, planning, and the police department.

N-10

Project Name: Neighborhood Code Enforcement System.

**Finding:** The deterioration of the older neighborhoods is reflected in the residents concerns regarding crime, trash, noise, and code enforcement issues.

**Discussion:** Planners and architects sometimes forget—and citizens are quick to remind them—that design is only part of the picture. The other part is maintenance and management, pertaining to the safety, cleanliness, and business practices of the public realm.

There is a list of requirements that are necessary in order to insure that maintenance, management, and the behavior of residents and landlords, adds up to a safe, clean, and attractive streets and neighborhoods. For example, lawns should not exceed three inches, parked cars should not be used for businesses, front porches should not be enclosed, and buildings should be painted regularly. These requirements range from the most fundamental and categorical expectations to the most luxuriously desirable but not always attainable conditions. Since different streets and neighborhoods have different aspirations and are capable of different levels of maintenance, these requirements cannot be applied uniformly. People in relatively low income neighborhoods, for example, cannot be expected to paint regularly, but they should be required to keep the lawn free of trash. Meanwhile, the residents of other neighborhoods might demand a higher level of maintenance and stricter standards of behavior from themselves and each other. Because of the differences between neighborhoods, this plan recommends a method by which there are three different levels of standards to be applied.

This is not a prejudicial system in which streets are rated according to some arbitrary system. It is a system intended to provide some basic flexibility in the application of regulations, so that they can be tailored to the needs and capabilities of existing neighborhoods. At any time, a street or neighborhood may elect to upgrade its status and hold itself to a higher standard.

The system of self-regulation would be enforced through the use of management tickets that work like traffic tickets (see

right). These tickets would list violations to urban etiquette and corresponding fines. On X-quality streets, the list of offenses would be the longest and the fines the largest. On Z quality streets, very few of the offenses would be finable. None of the fines would be high enough to create serious hardships, but they would be high enough to be as painful as a parking ticket.

A suggested format for such a ticket is illustrated (see right). The list of potential violations is based on discussion with citizens at the charrette. The design team proposed a possible list, and several additional items emerged from the discussion. Both the specification of the violations and the appropriate fines would have to be refined through further discussion.

Implementation could work several ways. The city may elect to enforce these violations on a city-wide basis, in which case they would employ staff to do so. At the other extreme, a street or neighborhood electing to set a self-imposed standard would designate a private individual to make rounds. It is also possible to implement a hybrid of these two options, in which the city could enforce standards established by its constituent streets and neighborhoods. Another possibility might be to coordinate this program with an enhanced and expanded community policing effort.

**Recommendation:** Institute a system for issuing tickets (similar to traffic tickets) for a variety of specific code violations relevant to the quality of life in the neighborhoods.

VIOLATION	
DATE	
NAME	
LOCATION	
OFFICER'S SIGNATURE	
<p><b>1. OCCUPANCY INFRACTIONS</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal multifamily building \$500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds number of allowable apartments in building \$500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal enclosure of porch \$500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal conversion of garage to residential use \$500.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal use of parked vehicle as residence \$100.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal use of parked vehicle as business \$100.00</p> <p><b>2. MAINTENANCE INFRACTIONS</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to maintain paint \$50.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to repair wood trim \$50.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Debris blocking front yard \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Debris blocking side yard \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Debris blocking alley \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal storage on front porch \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal shopping cart on property \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grass exceeds five inch maximum height \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exceeding two yard sales per year maximum \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to trim back tree limbs from roof and chimney \$25.00</p> <p><b>3. MANAGEMENT INFRACTIONS</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to post owner/manager information on building \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to maintain owner/manager information on building \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to provide manager for a building exceeding 4 apts \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to provide minimum six month lease \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal collection of rent on more than a monthly basis \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to provide affidavit concerning lease \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal lease to prostitute \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal lease to drug user/dealer \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal lease to persons with criminal records \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegal parking between sidewalk and curb \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to park boat or camper in side yard \$25.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illegally parked bus, semitruck, etc. \$25.00</p> <p><b>5. OTHER INFRACTIONS</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____ \$ _____</p>	

NOTIFICATION
DATE
NAME
LOCATION
OFFICER'S SIGNATURE
<p><b>1. ILLUMINATION</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The storefront display should be illuminated by halogen lighting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The facades of the building should be softly illuminated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The display lights should be kept on at 60% until 10 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting emphasis should be on the window display and the back wall</p> <p><b>2. MERCHANDISE</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The window display should not have a backdrop</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The displays of the entire store should be designed to be seen through the storefront</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Items should be displayed on tables and associated with life-style artifacts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Name brands should be promoted with signs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise on the storefront and the backdrop should be displayed in a coarse grain to increase legibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Shelves should be full but not crowded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The cash register should be as far to the rear of the store as feasible</p> <p><b>3. MAINTENANCE</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to sweep sidewalks twice a day and/or machine-scrub them once a week</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to wash the doors daily and/or wash the windows weekly</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scuffing due to insufficient maintenance by painting</p> <p><b>4. MANNERS</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid signs with negative messages</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to greet the customer</p> <p><b>5. OTHER NONCOMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>

VIOLATIONS. The forms shown above are examples of the kind of tickets that might be handed out as part of the Neighborhood Code Enforcement System. The form on the left would be used for residential properties. The form on the right is intended to address issues that arise with the integration of retail into the neighborhood.

**N-11****Project Name: Landlord Licensing System**

**Finding:** Citizens report that many of the problems plaguing their neighborhoods can be traced to the increasing number of landlords who do not maintain or exercise adequate supervision over their properties.

**Discussion:** Many of the complaints voiced by citizens at the neighborhood meetings, echoing comments documented by the City at prior meeting, converged on the issue of an increasing number of landlords who don't live in the neighborhood or even in the city. Many of the citizens reported that many formerly owner-occupied homes are being bought up by landlords who are accumulating strings of rental properties in Peoria's inner city neighborhoods. Although many of the landlords protect their investment with proper maintenance and respond to problems in the neighborhoods when necessary, many of the landlords do not. One of the problems is that it is sometimes difficult even to track down the owner. The City has a program for registering landlords, but it seems to be applied inconsistently and with little effect.

One of the proposals that emerged at the *charrette* was the idea of a system of mandatory licensing for landlords, perhaps specifying those who own more than a certain number of properties. It was suggested that the ability to withdraw a license to do business in the city might give the city some leverage over landlords who consistently ignore citations for code violations or neighborhood complaints.

**Recommendation:** Create a system of mandatory licensing of landlords, excluding owner-occupied rentals.

**N-12****Project Name: Coordinated Neighborhood Initiatives.**

**Finding:** Peoria has a tradition of well-defined neighborhoods, each with a strong sense of identity and a population of active residents who have been responsible for a proliferation of neighborhood-oriented initiatives.

**Discussion:** The team was told during the *charrette* that people tend to identify themselves as being from "the Southside" or from "the West Bluff," rather than as being from Peoria. The good news is that this identification with the neighborhoods has provided the basis for mobilizing substantial energy and commitment in a wide variety of efforts to address problems in the neighborhoods, ranging from crime and code enforcement to historic preservation and enhancement of neighborhood parks. The team was impressed by the number and scope of the plans and programs, some initiated by the city's planning department, some by citizens themselves, but all of them involving tremendous amounts of public input and participation. A review of these plans and programs revealed that there are probably very few ideas and approaches to neighborhood revitalization that haven't been at least proposed in Peoria. The bad news, however, is that our meetings with many citizens suggested that these plans and programs have often had limited success in addressing many of the pressing issues in these neighborhoods, often because of limited implementation of the proposals.

A map showing the existing neighborhood organizations revealed an unusually large number of small associations, some overlapping and some oriented toward very specific goals. The list of neighborhood associations suggests a kind of "balkanization," a fragmentation of the neighborhoods into increasingly specific, competing and possibly conflicting interests. This kind of fragmentation can sometimes make it very difficult to get much accomplished.

The proliferation of initiatives itself can be a problem, straining available funding and pushing the limits of the available social capital. Working people have only so many evenings to spare.

**Recommendation:**

- Without being dismissive of the interest invested in the existing organizations, pursue a consolidation of neighborhood-based leadership into a smaller number of encompassing organizations clearly linked to focused initiatives.
- Consolidation of neighborhood leadership should be tied to concrete neighborhood enhancement programs focused on specific projects (like the code enforcement program or the development of community anchors, see below).

**N-13****Project Name: Neighborhood Schools.**

**Finding:** Peoria has maintained an architectural legacy of attractive brick school buildings, well located in its inner city neighborhoods.

**Discussion:** This plan has little to say about the schools, beyond emphasizing their importance to the revitalization of neighborhoods. However, the issue of the schools came up again and again at the *charrette*. Peoria's inner city schools are reported to be in much better shape than in many cities, with some particularly noteworthy successes such as the programs at Harrison School. At the *charrette*, however, a number of citizens brought up the possibility of closing and replacing the inner city schools—including, most prominently, the downtown high schools. At a time when many cities are re-discovering the importance of smaller scale neighborhood schools to healthy communities, Peoria has an opportunity to capitalize on a resource that fortunately hasn't yet been lost as a result of the fashion of the 1960s for increased centralization.

**Recommendation:**

- Encourage the continuation and expansion of programs to strengthen Peoria's well-located historic schools, using available funds to renovate and enhance rather than consolidate or replace these schools.
- As a priority, renovation should include restoring the glass in the windows.

SPECIFIC CODE REVISIONS

CR-1

Project Name: T2 (Rural Reserve).

**Finding:** There is a broad swath of industrial land at the southeastern tip of the study area that appears to be in transition, and may soon be available for other uses.

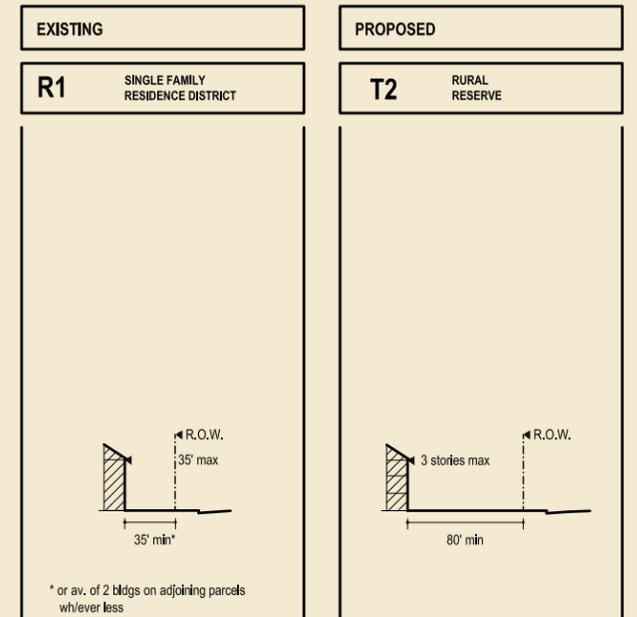
**Discussion:** At the *charrette*, it was noted that one of the consequences of the changes in industry that have taken place in the last decades is that cities are seeing “the glacier of industry” receding, gradually relinquishing what become prime locations in and near revitalizing downtowns. The area south of downtown and east of Adams fits this description. Although it is not yet vacant land, it is likely that the existing industrial uses will gradually fade or move away, leaving a substantial piece of riverfront to be recovered. As this happens, there is danger that it will be re-developed piecemeal, and in a manner that will not be supportive of the effort to strengthen the downtown and enhance the attractions of the Southside neighborhoods. Because this land is both “brownfield” land and within the flood plain, environmental conditions impose limits on its potential for appropriate redevelopment.

In addition to such constraints, it was observed that redevelopment of this area would be a significant opportunity to re-connect the Southside to the waterfront through an extension of the existing system of greenways that encircles the city to the south. This would make possible a network of trails and bike paths connecting to the riverfront and even the downtown along a green corridor. It would be a shame to miss the opportunity to guide re-development of this significant portion of Peoria’s waterfront.

**Recommendation:**

- This land should be assigned to the T2 zone (Rural Reserve), reserving it for future recovery of a piece of the natural riverfront in close proximity to the downtown.
- The current R1 category should be assigned to this transect classification. In contrast with R1, T2 would involve increasing the setback from the ROW from

35’ to 80’ minimum in the front, and from 25’ to 50’ in the rear. The principal building would be limited to 3 stories rather than 35 feet. Only the Common Lawn frontage type would be permitted. The minimum lot size would be 1.5 acres, as opposed to a 21,780 square foot minimum and a density of 2 dwelling units per acre.



	EXISTING R1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	PROPOSED T2 RURAL RESERVE	
<b>LOT</b>			
Area	21,780 sq ft. min, 80 ft min front & 100ft min corner	1.5 ac. min., 80 min front	DISPOSITION
Lot Coverage			
Density	2 dwelling units / ac.		
<b>SETBACK</b>			
Front	35 ft. min or avg. of 2 bldgs. on 2 adjoining parcels	80 ft. min	CONFIGURATION
Side	15 ft min corner / 12 ft. min, 30 ft min comb.	15 ft. min	
Rear	25 ft. min	50 ft. min	
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>			
Edgeyard		permitted	FUNCTION
Sidyard		prohibited	
Rearyard		prohibited	
Courtyard		prohibited	
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>			
Common Lawn		permitted	
Porch & Fence		prohibited	
Dooryard		prohibited	
Forecourt		prohibited	
Stoop		prohibited	
Shopfront		prohibited	
Gallery		prohibited	
Arcade		prohibited	
<b>HEIGHT</b>			
Principal Building	35 ft. max	3 stories max	
Outbuilding		2 stories max	
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>			
Residential	permitted	restricted	
Lodging	special	limited	
Office	prohibited	prohibited	
Retail	prohibited	prohibited	
Manufacturing	prohibited	prohibited	
Meeting	special	by warrant	
Civic	special	by warrant	

**CR-2**  
**Project Name: T3 (Sub-urban).**

**Finding:** A vast portion of downtown Peoria is of the scale and quality of the great American urban neighborhoods common in Chicago, New York and elsewhere; however, portions of these neighborhoods are zoned to allow for densities out of character with existing development. Typically used by slow-growth communities to spur development, the practice of designating multiple, and higher density, zoning categories onto older neighborhoods encourages a practice known as “land banking.” Under conditions of slow growth, a property owner whose lot is zoned for higher densities will delay renovations or new construction of housing in character with surrounding existing structures in order to gamble that the market will catch up to the “potential” of his property as reflected by the zoning. More often than not, the zoning applied by the municipality is based not on market realities but on wishful thinking. The incentive to wait for the big payoff encourages landowners to assemble and hold property, a practice commonly known as land banking. Land banking under such conditions inhibits investment in the community and often contributes to its deterioration.

**Discussion:** Lot size is limited consistently to 5,000 square feet, with a minimum of 40 feet of frontage. Setbacks are set to 15 feet minimum or an average of the 2 buildings on adjoining parcels (in order to be responsive to the context of existing neighborhoods). Side setbacks are set at a consistent minimum of 5 feet and rear set back requirements are reduced to 20 feet minimum, with 5 feet minimum setback for outbuildings (not specified in the existing code).

**Recommendation:** R2, R3, and R4 (single family residential districts distinguished largely by allowable density) should be assigned to transect classification T3 (Sub-urban).

	EXISTING			PROPOSED
	R2 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	R3 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	R4 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	T3 SUB-URBAN
	* or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels wh/ever less	* or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels wh/ever less	* or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels wh/ever less	
<b>LOT</b>				
Area	10,890 sq ft., 70 ft. min front & 95 ft. min corner	6,000 sq ft., 40 ft min front	3,750 sq ft., 37 ft min front	5,000 sq ft., 40 ft. min front
Lot Coverage				50% max
Density	4 dwelling units / ac.	7.6 dwelling units / ac.	11.62 dwelling units / ac.	
<b>SETBACK</b>				
Front	25 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	25 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	15 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	15 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels
Side	10 ft. min corner / 8 ft. min, 20 ft. min comb	10 ft. min corner / 5 ft. min + 1 ft per 2 ft over 25 ft. bldg. ht.	8 ft. min corner / 4 ft. min or 20 % frontage + 1 ft per 2 ft over 25 ft. bldg. ht.	5 ft. min
Rear	25 ft. min	25 ft. min	25 ft. min	20 ft. min, 5 ft min outbuilding
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>				
Edgeyard				permitted
Sideyard				prohibited
Rearyard				prohibited
Courtyard				prohibited
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>				
Common Lawn				permitted
Porch & Fence				permitted
Dooryard				prohibited
Forecourt				prohibited
Stoop				permitted
Shopfront				prohibited
Gallery				prohibited
Arcade				prohibited
<b>HEIGHT</b>				
Principal Building	35 ft. max	35 ft. max	35 ft. max	3 stories max
Outbuilding				2 stories max
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>				
Residential	permitted	permitted	permitted	limited (live-work)
Lodging	special	special	special	limited
Office	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	limited
Retail	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	limited
Manufacturing	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited
Meeting	special	special	special	by warrant
Civic	special	special	special	by warrant

**CR-3**  
**Project Name: T4 (Urban General).**

**Finding:** Several existing zoning classifications relevant to both the downtown core and the surrounding neighborhoods discourage development by implicitly requiring a relatively large increment of development while preventing any development from including a mix of uses balanced to fit the neighborhood.

**Discussion:** Existing zoning classifications are intended to identify single-use zones and sort out potentially conflicting uses. As a result, however, a suburban separation of uses is imposed on urban streets and neighborhoods, preventing the finely grained mix of uses necessary to achieve an attractive, walkable, and sustainable urban neighborhoods. In this example, a number of relatively specific single-use classifications are translated into T4 (Urban General). Andrés Duany refers to T4 as the “messy” category on the transect, because it encompasses the diverse uses and urban conditions necessary to achieve mixed-use neighborhood centers and commercial corridors necessary to create complete neighborhoods.

In particular, this proposed translation has two effects. First, it makes it possible to develop mixed-use neighborhood centers, and provides guidelines necessary to form them correctly. Second, it is necessary to apply the standards of T4 (Urban General) in order to encourage the re-development of existing warehouse and industrial buildings as mixed-use projects.

Specification of T4 is intended to guide consistent development without reducing the development potential. There are several significant aspects of the way T4 has been specified. It proposes an average lot size of 5,000 square feet, in contrast with existing categories that either don't specify or specify large lots. A 5,000 square foot lot size encourages development by allowing for smaller increments of development. Existing categories allow for buildings up to 96' maximum but impose setbacks of as much as 50 feet plus 1 additional foot for every foot of height exceeding 45 feet. When buildings are built to these standards, the result is a scattering of tall buildings with deep setbacks and a suburban frontage. Instead, T4 specifies a 3 story height limit, but allows for 75% maximum coverage of the lot, a maximum of

	EXISTING					PROPOSED
	R6 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	R7 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	R8 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENCE DISTRICT	C1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	C2 LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL	T4 URBAN GENERAL
	* or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels whichever less			TBY Transitional Buffer Yard	TBY Transitional Buffer Yard	
<b>LOT</b>						
Area	7,500 sq ft., min lot area per dwelling unit 2,900 sq. ft.	7,500 sq ft., min lot area per dwelling unit 2,170 sq. ft.	7,500 sq ft., min lot area per dwelling unit 1,089 sq. ft.	None min, 8 ac, max, none min front	50,000 sq. ft. min	5,000 sq ft avg.
Lot Coverage						75 % max
Density	15.02 dwelling units / ac.	20 dwelling units / ac.	43 dwelling units / ac.			
<b>SETBACK</b>						
Front	30 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	25 ft. min	15 ft. min	20 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	20 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	15 ft min, 25 ft max, or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels
Side	12 ft. min corner / 10 ft. min or 20 % of lot frontage comb	10 ft. min corner / 6 ft. min or 15 ft. min comb	10 ft. min corner / 6 ft. min or 15 ft. min comb	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft min
Rear	25 ft. min	30 ft. min	30 ft. min	None	None	5 ft min
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>						
Edgeyard						prohibited
Sidyard						permitted
Rearyard						permitted
Courtyard						permitted
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>						
Common Lawn						permitted
Porch & Fence						permitted
Dooryard						permitted
Forecourt						permitted
Stoop						permitted
Shopfront				permitted	permitted	permitted
Gallery						prohibited
Arcade						prohibited
<b>HEIGHT</b>						
Principal Building	45 ft. max	45 ft. max	75 ft. max	35 ft. max	45 ft. max	3 stories max
Outbuilding						2 stories max
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>						
Residential	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted (with restrictions)	permitted (with restrictions)	open use
Lodging	special	special	special	special	permitted	open use
Office	special	special	special	permitted	permitted	limited use
Retail	special	prohibited	prohibited	permitted	permitted	limited use
Manufacturing	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited
Meeting	special	special	special	permitted	permitted	by warrant
Civic	special	special	special	permitted	permitted	by warrant

DISPOSITION

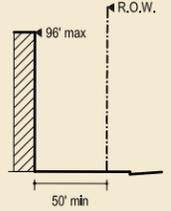
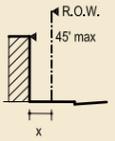
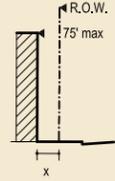
CONFIGURATION

FUNCTION

25 feet of front setback, and a minimum side setback of 0 feet. This coding makes more efficient use of the land, as well as encouraging the use of building types more compatible with maintaining a consistent urban fabric.

Throughout Peoria, zoning categories that hold out the possibility of unusually high buildings (in many cases taller than everything existing) create an unintended obstacle to development. The perceived availability of greater densities through the provision of larger lots and taller height allowances within zoning districts have similar consequences on development as those of land banking, especially when used in slow growth communities. While these provisions can permit higher densities, they are rendered ineffective when saddled with suburban setback requirements that make high density too expensive to construct. The requirements are often a defense mechanism by planners in an attempt to prevent the construction of buildings entirely out of scale with the neighborhood. The unintended consequence is that the only solution is to build small footprints and compensate for the loss of lot area by building tall structures. The cost of building is usually prohibitive to most developers unless they are developing in high growth markets. As a result, the outcome in slow growth communities is often one tall structure surrounded by large areas of grassy landscaping in neighborhoods of one and two story homes, bungalows, and duplex apartments. These tall buildings typically absorb market demand for several years and severely limit the potential pool of developers able to participate, thus contributing to long spells without construction. In addition, the tall building begins to affect the surrounding neighborhood by making it unattractive to low-rise development. It is now generally acknowledged that low-rise development, when designed correctly, can provide for high-density neighborhoods and can do so with a broad range of building types that are compatible to one another, similar to the historic fabric of the community. This provides housing variety, which appeals to a larger group of home buyers and renters and offers opportunities for a broader range of builders to participate in development.

To encourage a friendlier homebuyer and builder environment, it is recommended that the zoning be changed to permit more

	EXISTING				PROPOSED
	O1 ARTERIAL OFFICE DISTRICT	O2 EXCLUSIVE OFFICE PARK DISTRICT	I2 RAILROAD / WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	I3 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	T4 URBAN GENERAL
					
	x - 10% of lot depth	50 ft. min + 1 ft. per 1 ft. bldg. exceeds 45 ft. ht.	x - avg. of existing block or none if no structures are on block	x - avg. of existing block or none if no structures are on block	15' min
<b>LOT</b>					
Area	None	2 ac. min, subdivisions into smaller lots allowed	None	None	5,000 sq ft avg.
Lot Coverage					75 % max
Density					
<b>SETBACK</b>					
Front	10 % of parcel depth	50 ft. min + 1 ft. per 1 ft. bldg. exceeds 45 ft. ht.	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	15 ft min, 25 ft max, or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels
Side	10 ft. min	30 ft. min + 1 ft. per 1 ft. bldg. exceeds 45 ft. ht.	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width or depth, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width or depth, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft min
Rear	20 ft. min	30 ft. min + 1 ft. per 1 ft. bldg. exceeds 45 ft. ht.	None	None	5 ft min
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>					
Edgtyard					prohibited
Sideyard					permitted
Rearyard					permitted
Courtyard					permitted
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>					
Common Lawn					permitted
Porch & Fence					permitted
Dooryard					permitted
Forecourt					permitted
Stoop					permitted
Shopfront					permitted
Gallery					prohibited
Arcade					prohibited
<b>HEIGHT</b>					
Principal Building	45 ft. max	96 ft. max	45 ft. max	75 ft. max	3 stories max
Outbuilding					2 stories max
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>					
Residential	prohibited	permitted (with restrictions)	permitted (with restrictions)	prohibited	open use
Lodging	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	open use
Office	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted	limited use
Retail	prohibited	special	permitted	prohibited	limited use
Manufacturing	prohibited	prohibited	permitted	permitted	prohibited
Meeting	permitted	special	permitted	prohibited	by warrant
Civic	permitted	permitted	special	prohibited	by warrant

DISPOSITION

CONFIGURATION

FUNCTION

flexibility. This is accomplished by removing the perceived high-density provisions encouraging tall buildings and replacing them with provisions that foster actual high density by encouraging greater use of lot coverage.

Finally, T4 achieves an adjustment to the list of allowable uses to include residential, to limit office and retail, to prohibit manufacturing, and to allow civic uses by warrant. This approach opens the way to achieving an appropriate mix of uses, the balance of which can then be defined.

**Recommendation A:** Areas currently zoned as O1 (Arterial Office District), O2 (Exclusive Office District), I2 (Railroad/Warehouse Industrial District, and I3 (General Industrial District) should be assigned to T4 (Urban General). This assignment is specifically relevant to the warehouse district.

**Recommendation B:** Areas currently zoned as R6 (Multifamily Residence District), R7 (Multifamily Residence District), C1 (General Commercial District), C2 (Large Scale Commercial) should be assigned to T4 (Urban General). This assignment is especially relevant to achievement of mixed-use neighborhood centers.

**CR-4**

**Project Name:** T5 (Urban Center).

**Finding:** Several zoning classifications directly relevant to the downtown require relatively deep setbacks and restrict the possibility of mixed use development.

**Discussion:** A number of areas that currently fall under existing zoning classifications need to be re-defined as T5 (Urban Center) in order to encourage and facilitate development of an appropriately urban pattern. C1 (General Commercial District), C2 (Large Scale Commercial) both require a 20' minimum front setback, and impose a 35' and 45' height restriction. In contrast, T5 would allow building to 5 stories or 50' maximum, with no front setback required and a potential for 100% coverage of the lot. In return for allowing this intensive use, T5 requires that the first 20' (minimum) of the front of the building be habitable space, with windows on the street to help insure a building that offers something to the public realm. Also, residential uses are permitted but not on the first floor. T5, again, creates the possibility for a broad mix of uses.

**Recommendation:** Some areas currently zoned as C1 (General Commercial District), C2 (Large Scale Commercial), I2 (Railroad/Warehouse Industrial District), and I3 (General Industrial District) are to be assigned to transect classification T5 (Urban Center).

	EXISTING				PROPOSED
	C1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	C2 LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL	I2 RAILROAD / WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	I3 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	T-5 URBAN CENTER
<b>LOT</b>					
Area	None min, 8 ac. max, none min front	50,000 sq. ft. min	None	None	5,000 sq ft. min
Lot Coverage					100% max
Density					
<b>SETBACK</b>					
Front	20 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	20 ft. min or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	0 ft. min, 10 ft. max, or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels
Side	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	0 ft. min, 10 ft. max
Rear	None	None	None	None	0 ft. min
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>					
Edgeyard					prohibited
Sideyard					permitted
Rearyard					permitted
Courtyard					permitted
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>					
Common Lawn					prohibited
Porch & Fence					prohibited
Dooryard					prohibited
Forecourt					permitted
Sloop					permitted
Shopfront	permitted	permitted			permitted
Gallery					permitted
Arcade					permitted
<b>HEIGHT</b>					
Principal Building	35 ft. max	45 ft. max	45 ft. max	75 ft. max	5 stories max, 2 stories min
Outbuilding					2 stories max
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>					
Residential	permitted (with restrictions)	permitted (with restrictions)	permitted (with restrictions)	prohibited	open use
Lodging	special	permitted	prohibited	prohibited	open use
Office	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted	open use
Retail	permitted	permitted	permitted	prohibited	open use
Manufacturing	prohibited	prohibited	permitted	permitted	limited use
Meeting	permitted	permitted	permitted	prohibited	by warrant
Civic	permitted	permitted	special	prohibited	by warrant

**CR-5**  
**Project Name: T6 (Urban Core).**

**Finding:** In the existing zoning of the Central Business District (B1), buildings are allowed to be built to a height of 1.5 times the width of the street, plus 3 feet for each foot the building sets back from the ROW.

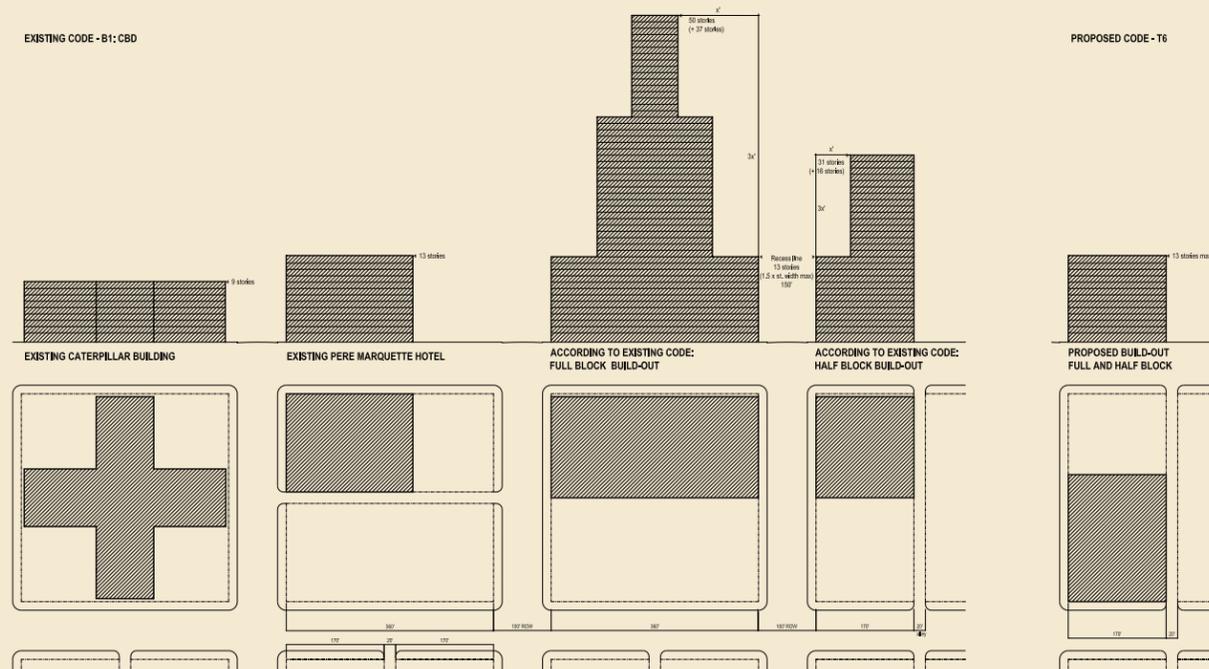
**Discussion:** As a result of this zoning, downtown buildings are allowed to be built to 1.5 times the street width before the first step back: 150 feet or about 13 stories. Once the building has stepped back, it can climb as much as 3 times the step back distance. If a full city block were to be built out, assuming a 300' block and a 100' ROW, the building could be 50 stories tall. Using only half the block, a building could be built up to 31 stories.

It is unlikely that any building would be built out to these limits in the near future, and therefore unnecessary to allow buildings of this height. However, the expectation created by this possibility can have a negative impact on the development potential of downtown land. Property owners tend to overvalue their land, or to wait for the market to catch up with their expectations of value. Developers tend to look only at

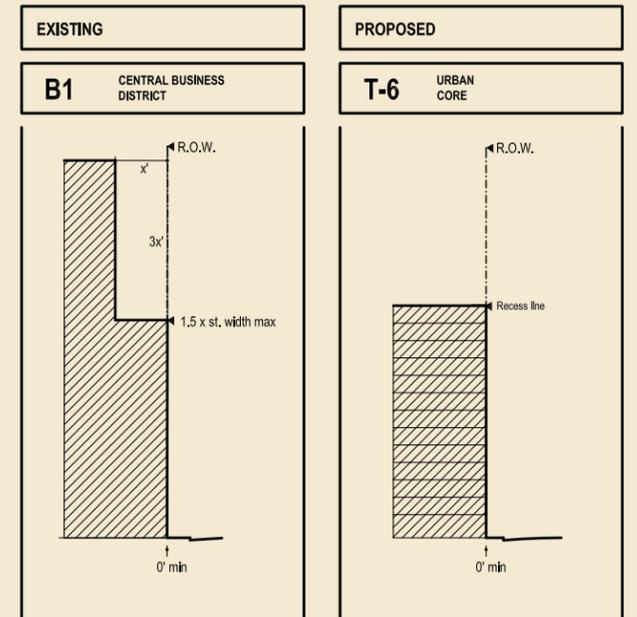
parcels big enough to accommodate the setbacks of a tall building, while the potential of smaller parcels is ignored. If a building were to be built out to these standards, the available market would be soaked up very quickly and further development would come to a grinding halt for some time. Finally, it becomes impossible for a developer to sell a view when at any time it could suddenly be blocked by a taller building. In order to create a predictable environment for downtown development, it is necessary to create a set of rules that is both more realistic and encourages a more consistent and sustainable pattern of development.

The illustration below shows the proposed build-out under the T6 alternative. Although the height would be limited to 13 stories—the same height as the Père Marquette hotel - the allowable lot coverage would be greater.

**Recommendation:** Areas currently zoned as B1 should be assigned to T6, with a height restriction of 13 stories maximum, 2 stories minimum.



**ZONING COMPARISON.** The illustration shows a comparison of the height of the existing downtown buildings (left), to the maximum building height allowed by the current B1 zoning (center), to the maximum building height that would be allowed by the proposed T6 zoning (right). From this diagram, it is evident that T6 zoning would provide development in character with the existing buildings of downtown Peoria, while the current B1 zoning allows for development that would dwarf the existing buildings by comparison.



	EXISTING	PROPOSED		
<b>LOT</b>				
Area	None	5,000 sq ft. min, max uninterrupted frontage 200 ft.	DISPOSITION	
Lot Coverage		100% max		
Density				
<b>SETBACK</b>				
Front	0 ft. min	0 ft. min, 5 ft. max, or av. of 2 bldgs on adjoining parcels	CONFIGURATION	
Side	0 ft. min	0 ft. min		
Rear	0 ft. min	0 ft. min		
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>				
Edgeyard		prohibited	CONFIGURATION	
Sidyard		prohibited		
Rearyard		permitted		
Courtyard		permitted		
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>				
Common Lawn		prohibited	CONFIGURATION	
Porch & Fence		prohibited		
Dooryard		prohibited		
Forecourt		permitted		
Stoop		permitted		
Shopfront		permitted		
Gallery		permitted		
Arcade		permitted		
<b>HEIGHT</b>				
Principal Building	1.5 x st. width + 3 ft. for each 1 ft. bldg. sets back from PL	13 stories max, 2 stories min	FUNCTION	
Outbuilding				
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>				
Residential	permitted (with restrictions)	open use		FUNCTION
Lodging	permitted	open use		
Office	permitted	open use		
Retail	permitted	open use		
Manufacturing	special	prohibited		
Meeting	permitted	by warrant		
Civic	permitted	by warrant		

CR-6

Project Name: D (District).

**Finding:** Areas like the hospital and warehouse district require more flexibility and specificity than offered by standard zoning classifications.

**Discussion:** Specific areas, currently zoned for industrial and institutional uses, need to be defined as a District. In some cases, districts can't be adequately regulated through the use of categorically defined rules. They are special cases that are often full of necessary exceptions to rules that might be applied generally elsewhere. For that reason, all of the relevant conditions of disposition, configuration, and function of buildings need to be determined by a specific plan and, in some cases, even by development of a detailed design that is responsive to highly particular conditions. The Warehouse District (see Project D-3) is such a case. The existing buildings represent a very specific set of opportunities. In order to continue and accelerate the pattern of redevelopment already emerging, it is necessary to develop a specific set of urban and architectural guidelines that will reinforce the current tendencies.

**Recommendation:** Specific areas currently zoned as I1 (Industrial/Business Park District), I2 (Railroad/Warehouse Industrial District), I3 (General Industrial District), and N1 (Institutional District) should be assigned to transect classification D (District).

	EXISTING				PROPOSED
	I1 INDUSTRIAL / BUSINESS PARK DISTRICT	I2 RAILROAD / WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	I3 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	N1 INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT	D DISTRICT
<b>LOT</b>					
Area	0.5 ac., 100 ft min front	None	None	None	by specific plan
Lot Coverage					
Density					
<b>SETBACK</b>					
Front	25 ft. min	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	Avg. of existing block or none if no bldgs on block	25 ft. min	by specific plan
Side	20 ft. min, unless in TBY 10% of lot width or depth, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	None, unless in TBY 10% of lot width or depth, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	None, unless in TBY 10% of lot width or depth, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	25 ft. min corner, 5 ft. min rear, 20 ft. min non rear, on TBY 10% of lot width, 10 ft. min, 25 ft. max	
Rear	20 ft. min	None	None	20 ft. min	
<b>BUILDING TYPE</b>					
Edgeyard					by specific plan
Sidyard					
Rearyard					
Courtyard					
<b>FRONTAGE TYPE</b>					
Common Lawn					by specific plan
Porch & Fence					
Dooryard					
Forecourt					
Stoop					
Shopfront					
Gallery					
Arcade					
<b>HEIGHT</b>					
Principal Building	45 ft. max	45 ft. max	75 ft. max	132 ft. max	by specific plan
Outbuilding					
<b>BUILDING FUNCTION</b>					
Residential	prohibited	permitted (with restrictions)	prohibited	permitted (with restrictions)	by specific plan
Lodging	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	prohibited	
Office	permitted	permitted	permitted	permitted	
Retail	permitted	permitted	prohibited	permitted	
Manufacturing	permitted	permitted	permitted	prohibited	
Meeting	permitted	permitted	prohibited	permitted	
Civic	special	special	prohibited	permitted	

Implementation in General

Ref. #	Project Name	Description	Product/Location	Responsibility	Implementing Agent	Feasibility Analysis	Project Financing	Timing
GC-1	Town Architect	Establish the position of town architect as part of the City's planning department, to provide assistance on design-related matters.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Planning Department	Planning Department	General Funds	P2
GC-2	Historic Preservation Ordinance	Review the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance to insure its effective and appropriate enforcement, and to insure that it works in a coordinated way with other initiatives for neighborhood improvement.	N/A	Historic Preservation Commission	Planning /Economic Development	Planning Department	N/A	P1
GC-3	Streamlining Permitting Process	Establish permitting procedures that offer incentives for developers willing to implement projects in accordance with the goals of the plan.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Inspections/ Planning/ Econ. Dev./ Public Works	Same as implementing agent	General Funds	P1
GC-4	Parking Management Plan	Develop a public parking utility and management plan that can effectively address parking issues while removing the parking requirement for new development.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Planning / Public Works Department	Planning Department	N/A	P1

P1 = Priority One, Immediate Action

P2 = Priority Two, Initiate Within Five Years

P3 = Priority Three, Initiate Within Ten Years

Ref. #	Project Name	Description	Product/Location	Responsibility	Implementing Agent	Feasibility Analysis	Project Financing	Timing
SR-1	Interstate 74 Improvements	Revision of DOT design for improvements of Interstate 74 in order to minimize disruptive impact on the downtown street network.	Interstate 74	IDOT	IDOT	IDOT/Public Works Department	State Funds	P1
SR-2	Conversion of One-Way Streets	Conversion of current system of pairs of one-way streets to two-way travel with on-street parking.	Jefferson and Adams Streets	Peoria City Council	Public Works Department	Public Works Department	Capital Funds	P2
SR-3	Downtown Traffic Signal Timing	Adjustment of traffic signal timing as way to regulate vehicle speeds on downtown streets.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Public Works Department	Public Works Department	N/A	P1
SR-4	On-Street Parking	Reconfiguration of the downtown streets to provide more on-street parking, including re-striping of some streets to allow diagonal parking.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Public Works Department	Public Works Department	Capital Funds	P2
SR-5	Crosstown Boulevard	Conversion of Interstate 74 to an urban boulevard.	Interstate 74	IDOT	IDOT	IDOT/Public Works Department	State Funds	P3
SR-6	Re-design of Main Street	Transformation of Main Street into a boulevard, with a planted median and appropriate street trees on both sides.	Main Street	Peoria City Council	Public Works Department	Public Works Department	Capital Funds	P2

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Ref. #	Project Name	Description	Product/Location	Responsibility	Implementing Agent	Feasibility Analysis	Project Financing	Timing
D-1	Sears Block Redevelopment	Redevelopment of the Sears block, with the new Lakeview Museum complex as the central and signature component, flanked on either side by mixed use development including a possible hotel and condominiums.	Site of the now vacant Sears store and its associated parking deck	Peoria City Council & Lakeview Museum	Economic Development & Lakeview Museum	Economic Development	Capital Funds (City Portion) & Private Funds (Museum Portion)	P3
D-2	Downtown Riverfront	Develop a revised specific plan for the downtown riverfront, incorporating proposals for adjacent development and the principles of this plan. Provide 192,500sf commercial; 312,000sf hotel; 662,400sf residential; 133,400sf museum; and 603,200sf or 1,508 spaces new parking.	Central Riverfront adjacent to the downtown core	Peoria City Council	Economic Development	Economic Development	Capital Funds	P2
D-3	Warehouse District	Develop a specific plan for redevelopment of the warehouse district as a center for the arts, entertainment, and fashionable residential opportunities. Provide 50,800sf commercial; 100,900sf flexspace; 60,800sf residential; and 307,200sf or 768 spaces new parking.	Warehouses and Industrial Buildings along the riverfront.	Peoria City Council	Economic Development	Economic Development	Capital Funds	P3
D-4	New Street, Warehouse District	Re-develop the existing alley and warehouse buildings as the central spine of the warehouse district. Additionally, provide 48,000sf commercial; 807,000sf residential; and 270,000sf or 675 spaces new parking.	Washington Street	Peoria City Council	Private Sector	Economic Development, jointly, with Private Sector	Private Reinvestment	P3
D-5	WTVP Television Studio	Line existing WTVP Television Studio with flexspace and adjust proposed infrastructure and landscaping changes to accommodate an urban pedestrian environment.	Water and State Streets	WTVP	WTVP	WTVP	Private	P1
D-6	Re-opening of Fulton Street	Convert the existing Fulton Street pedestrian mall back to a street that allows vehicle traffic as part of the downtown grid.	Fulton Street between Adams and Jefferson Streets	Peoria City Council	Public Works	Public Works	Capital Funds	P2
D-7	Re-design of Caterpillar Garage	Design a new "skin" for the Caterpillar garage in order to enhance its visual appeal and improve its frontage on Water Street.	Water Street	Caterpillar Inc.	Caterpillar Inc.	Caterpillar Inc.	Private	P1
D-8	Hospital Campus and Lower Main Street Corridor	Extend Fulton Street west to Main Street, and restore the street grid at the point where the expansion of the Civic Center is likely to meet the expansion of the hospital campus.	Between Civic Center and College of Medicine	Peoria City Council	Public Works	Economic Development, Public Works, & Civic Center	Capital Funds	P3
D-9	Civic Center West Entrance	Re-configure the west entrance to the Civic Center in order to improve wheelchair access and connection to potential expansion to the west.	Monroe Street	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria Civic Center	P2
D-10	Riverfront Row Houses	Create a public/private partnership to redevelop the existing public housing site as a neighborhood of townhouses.	Taft Homes bordered by Eaton, Adams, and Green Streets	Peoria Housing Authority/ Private Sector	Peoria Housing Authority	Peoria Housing Authority	HUD Funds/ Private Investment	P3
D-11	Whitewater Race Course	Create a whitewater race course as an activity center in the riverfront park to the north of the RiverPlex.	Land to the North of the Current Recreational and Fitness Complex	Peoria City Council, Peoria Park District, and Private Sector	Private Sector	Economic Development, Peoria Park District	Private Investment	P3

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Ref. #	Project Name	Description	Product/Location	Responsibility	Implementing Agent	Feasibility Analysis	Project Financing	Timing
N-2	Southern Gateway Area	Redevelop the Adams Street Corridor as a major gateway into downtown Peoria	Adams Street Corridor	Private Srector	TBD	Economic Development; Planning & Neighborhoods	HUD Funds/ Private Investment	P3
N-3	Southern Gateway Neighborhood Center	Redevelop the intersection of Adams and Western as a major neighborhood center.	Intersection of Adams and Western	Private Sector	TBD	Economic Development; Planning & Neighborhoods	HUD Funds/ Private Investment	P3
N-4	Adams Corridor Infill	Redevelop an infill pattern along existing Adams Street Corridor, focusing on historical neighborhood center locations.	Adams Street Corridor	Peoria City Council; Private Sector	TBD	Economic Development; Planning & Neighborhoods	HUD Funds/ Historic Preservation Funds/ Private Investment	P2
N-5	Model Community Anchor	Develop public/private partnership(s) in order to implement development of model neighborhood centers as "community anchors."	TBD	Peoria City Council; Private Sector	TBD	TBD	HUD Funds/ Private Investment	P3
N-6	Western Avenue Neighborhood Center	Redevelop the intersection of Western and Lincoln as a neighborhood center.	Intersection of Western and Lincoln	Private Sector	TBD	Economic Development; Planning & Neighborhoods	HUD Funds/ Private Investment	P3
N-7	West Main Street Bio-Research Campus	Develop a campus for the bio-research collaborative that is close to the Bradley University campus and contributes to the redevelopment of the West Main Street corridor itself.	West Main Street Corridor	Peoria City Council; Peoria NEXT; Private Sector	Economic Development; Peoria NEXT	Economic Development	Various Public & Private Funds	P1
N-8	YWCA Housing	Adjust design of housing proposed for development by the YWCA in order to make better and more appropriate use of the site.	Perry Avenue and Wayne Street	YWCA	YWCA	YWCA	YWCA Funds	P1
N-9	Community Policing	Encourage more extensive or consistent implementation of existing proposals for community policing, particularly in coordination with the development of neighborhood centers.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Police Department	Police Department	General Funds; Federal Funds	P3
N-10	Neighborhood Code Enforcement	Create a more effective and immediate system of code enforcement that is also more responsive to the specific needs of neighborhoods, using a system similar to traffic tickets.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Inspections & Legal Department	Inspections & Legal Department	General Funds	P1
N-11	Landlord Licensing	Develop a system of licensure for landlords that provides more recourse for the cities and neighborhood residents in dealing with the owners of properties that represent chronic problems.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Inspections & Legal Department	Inspections & Legal Departments	General Funds	P2
N-12	Coordinated Neighborhood Initiative	Create a structure to consolidate and coordinate the efforts of the many neighborhood associations.	N/A	Peoria City Council	Neighborhood Development	Neighborhood Development	NA	P1
N-13	Neighborhood Schools	Encourage the continued presence of neighborhood schools and maintain their physical condition at a level appropriate to their importance as neighborhood institutions.	N/A	Peoria School District 150	Peoria School District 150	Peoria School District 150	Peoria School District 150	P2

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P2 = Priority Two, Initiate Within Five Years

P3 = Priority Three, Initiate Within Ten Years

Ref. #	Project Name	Description	Product/Location	Responsibility	Implementing Agent	Feasibility Analysis	Project Financing	Timing
CR-1	T2 (Rural Reserve)	Designation of land currently characterized by declining industrial uses for future recovery as park land or preserve.	N/A					
CR-2	T3 (Sub-urban)	Simplification and adjustment of existing zoning categories relevant to residential neighborhoods.	N/A					
CR-3	T4 (Urban General)	Simplification and adjustment of existing zoning categories relevant to encouraging mixed use development in the downtown and neighborhood centers.	N/A					
CR-4	T5 (Urban Center)	Simplification and adjustment of existing zoning categories relevant to encouraging mixed use development appropriate for the downtown.	N/A					
CR-5	T6 (Urban Core)	Simplification and adjustment of existing zoning categories relevant to encouraging more consistent redevelopment in the central business district, and setting more appropriate guidelines for height and setbacks of buildings.	N/A					
CR-6	D (District)	Creation of a special zoning category for areas that require more specific and/or flexible regulation.	N/A					

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