



## GOAL

To define a comprehensive and market-driven strategy for redevelopment in downtown Menomonie

We are using information from three perspectives to frame a mixed use strategy:

A **regulatory** perspective

what is currently permitted to happen in terms of development in downtown Menomonie

A **market** perspective

what will the market suggest are viable directions for downtown Menomonie

A **design** perspective

what feels right for downtown Menomonie in terms of creating an attractive experience that resonates with local character

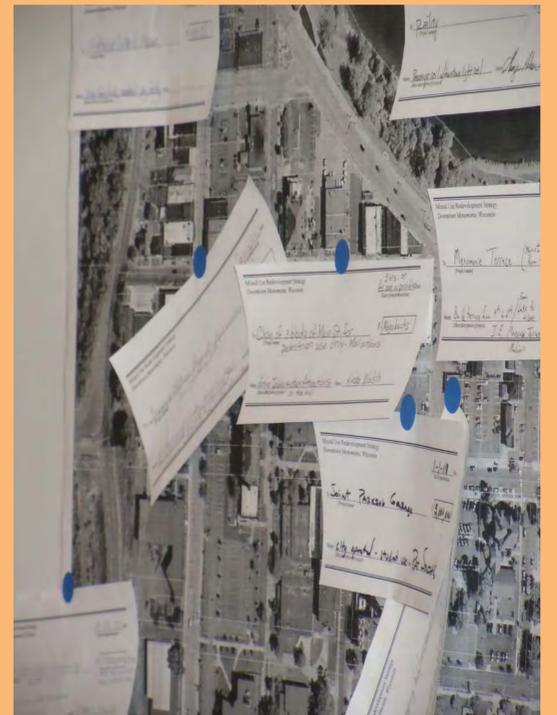
“Downtown is the place where the greatest number of activities occurs in the smallest geographic area.”

*Lewis Mumford*

*American historian and philosopher, noted for his writings on technology and science, literature, and particularly, cities and urban architecture*



**1** building an understanding of existing conditions as a way of forging new directions



**2** gathering input from the public, and working with a Redevelopment Steering Group



**3** exploring possibilities, and focusing on sites with unique potential or a need for change

**key steps in planning for an evolution toward mixed use development**

# 1: goals and process for mixed use redevelopment



### Early exploration 1

Insertion of green/gathering areas  
A range of infill opportunities

The following **challenges or desires** were noted most frequently:

- Add/reorganize parking
- Better manage vehicular traffic
- Clean the lake and provide more access to it
- Improve building storefronts and maintenance
- Add/improve pedestrian/bike access
- Add/improve public open space
- Adjust mix of business types



### Early exploration 2

Linking campus to lake through downtown  
A range of infill opportunities

The following **ideas or suggestions** were noted most frequently:

- Create a pedestrian mall or outdoor gathering space by temporarily or permanently closing streets
- Construct pedestrian and bike trails through downtown and around lake
- Reorganize parking, possibly by constructing a ramp
- Develop events and marketing around Menomonie's history and the arts
- Incubate small businesses to improve retail mix
- Encourage/enforce renovations and improvements to building maintenance
- Decorate downtown with planters, hanging baskets, Support a farmer's market
- Coordinate business hours
- Curb binge drinking
- Create a gateway into downtown



### Early exploration 3

Closure of a street  
A range of infill opportunities

## 2: community input and early studies

**Build a complete community** with UW-Stout and Lake Menomin as amenities, and history, art, and sustainability as touchstones for new additions to Downtown Menomonie.

- o Integrate physical features of the campus, such as major green spaces, pedestrian routes, and building forms, into the structure of downtown.
- o Enhance the edges where the campus and downtown touch so that each presents an attractive and engaging face to the other.
- o Using the model of a parkway or promenade, create an attractive edge along the lake that will encourage pedestrians and tame traffic.
- o Work with local and regional organizations to develop sustainable solutions to Lake Menomin's algae problem so that it can be a positive attraction in Menomonie and then use that success as a part of the community's sustainable profile.
- o Develop programs to celebrate Menomonie's historic and artistic heritage. Incorporate art and historical information into public spaces.

**Create gateways into downtown**, announcing to visitors and residents their arrival with buildings that honor Menomonie's character, streetscapes that encourage compatibility between vehicles and pedestrians, and attractions and events that signal the rich history and current vitality of Downtown Menomonie.

- o Create patterns of announcement in downtown's streetscape that highlight entry points into downtown.
- o Use buildings, and especially key features of buildings, as a part of the gateway experience.

**Provide active pedestrian experiences and vibrant, engaging public spaces** to encourage street life, enhance the livability of the Downtown area, and make the streets comfortable for visitors and residents.

- o Provide a variety of scales and types of outdoor public space, from simple benches to gathering spaces large enough for a farmer's market or outdoor performance.
- o Incorporate safe trail connections through the downtown, linking to amenities such as the Red Cedar Bike Trail.
- o Allow the character- and function-defining features of UW-Stout, Lake Menomin, and the historic street grid and buildings to shape development in Downtown.
- o Encourage development which complements the scale and style of the existing fabric of downtown.
- o Orient development to create attractive views to and from UW-Stout and Lake Menomin.

**Establish patterns of functional and economic self-sufficiency on blocks**, or demonstrate the benefits of interrelationships between blocks in Downtown.

- o Provide sufficient parking within each block to serve the needs of the development on that block.

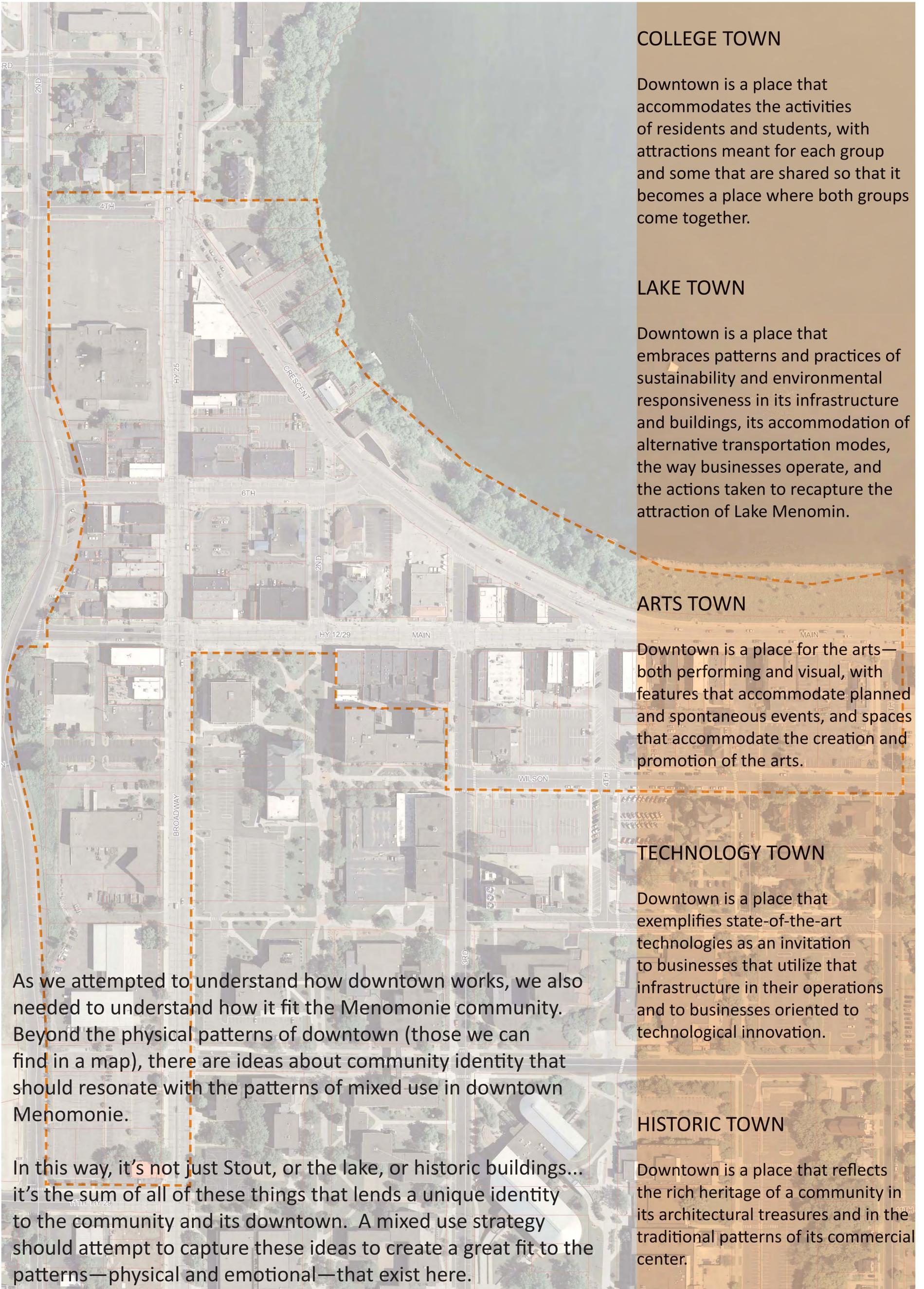
**Create partnerships to create beneficial patterns of change** in Downtown, as well as the very real possibility that no single entity can deliver a truly compelling future for Downtown on its own.

- o Develop a working relationship between city officials and UW-Stout administration to plan and support mutually-beneficial projects.
- o Encourage Downtown business owners and landlords to form a working group to deal with issues such as open hours, building maintenance, and downtown decoration.
- o Create new means of communication between the city, UW-Stout, business owners, and residents in order to facilitate efficient solutions for immediate problems and incubate ideas for long-term improvement.



Key directions for creating a mixed use strategy for downtown Menomonie were shared during a community meeting, where downtown stakeholders and the public participated in a series of exercises aimed at identifying issues and exploring possibilities. Those directions were further shaped through interactions with the Redevelopment Steering Group, a representative segment of the community charged with guiding the work of developing a plan.

## 3: mixed use development principles



## COLLEGE TOWN

Downtown is a place that accommodates the activities of residents and students, with attractions meant for each group and some that are shared so that it becomes a place where both groups come together.

## LAKE TOWN

Downtown is a place that embraces patterns and practices of sustainability and environmental responsiveness in its infrastructure and buildings, its accommodation of alternative transportation modes, the way businesses operate, and the actions taken to recapture the attraction of Lake Menomin.

## ARTS TOWN

Downtown is a place for the arts—both performing and visual, with features that accommodate planned and spontaneous events, and spaces that accommodate the creation and promotion of the arts.

## TECHNOLOGY TOWN

Downtown is a place that exemplifies state-of-the-art technologies as an invitation to businesses that utilize that infrastructure in their operations and to businesses oriented to technological innovation.

## HISTORIC TOWN

Downtown is a place that reflects the rich heritage of a community in its architectural treasures and in the traditional patterns of its commercial center.

As we attempted to understand how downtown works, we also needed to understand how it fit the Menomonie community. Beyond the physical patterns of downtown (those we can find in a map), there are ideas about community identity that should resonate with the patterns of mixed use in downtown Menomonie.

In this way, it's not just Stout, or the lake, or historic buildings... it's the sum of all of these things that lends a unique identity to the community and its downtown. A mixed use strategy should attempt to capture these ideas to create a great fit to the patterns—physical and emotional—that exist here.

# 4: mixed use themes supporting downtown's identity



The patterns of downtown—especially non-building patterns—are key to a mixed use environment. On its own, a single parking lot may not seem disruptive to the broader patterns of downtown; in aggregate, parking lots change the way people view and experience a downtown.



figure-ground plane, buildings



figure-ground plane, parking areas



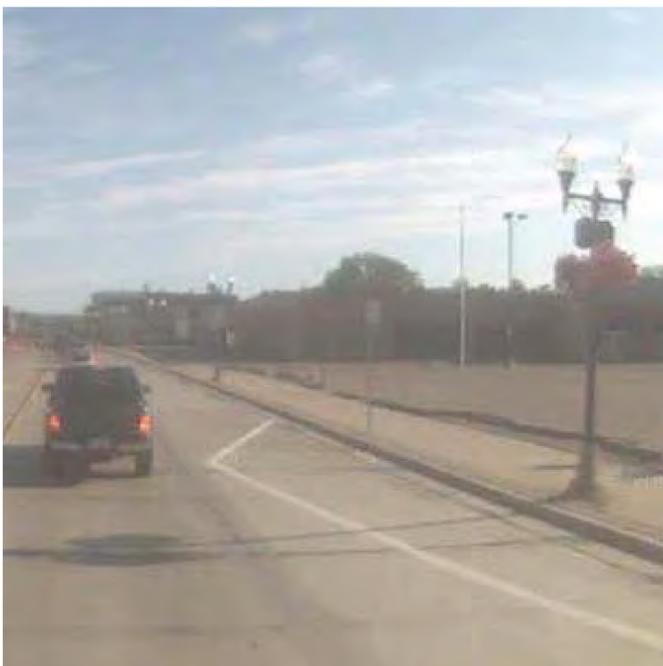
Active streets, especially ones that are not dominated by vehicles and ones where pedestrian are afforded more than basic comforts, offer character supportive of the kind of mixed use downtown desired by people of the Menomonie community.



building/parking diagram



pedestrian and bicycle routes



Some sites, such as the former Leever's site, demonstrate patterns that fail to resonate with downtown's character; still, having Leever's brought energy—or at least a certain level of activity—to downtown. People chose downtown, in part because of what they could buy here.



traffic routes and intersections



open/public spaces and parks

## 5: downtown conditions



The patterns of Lake Menomin are felt even when they cannot be seen, and it results in patterns that are unique to a lake town. The geometry of Crescent Street as it terminates downtown's grid, creates buildings and spaces that are right for Menomonie.



nodes



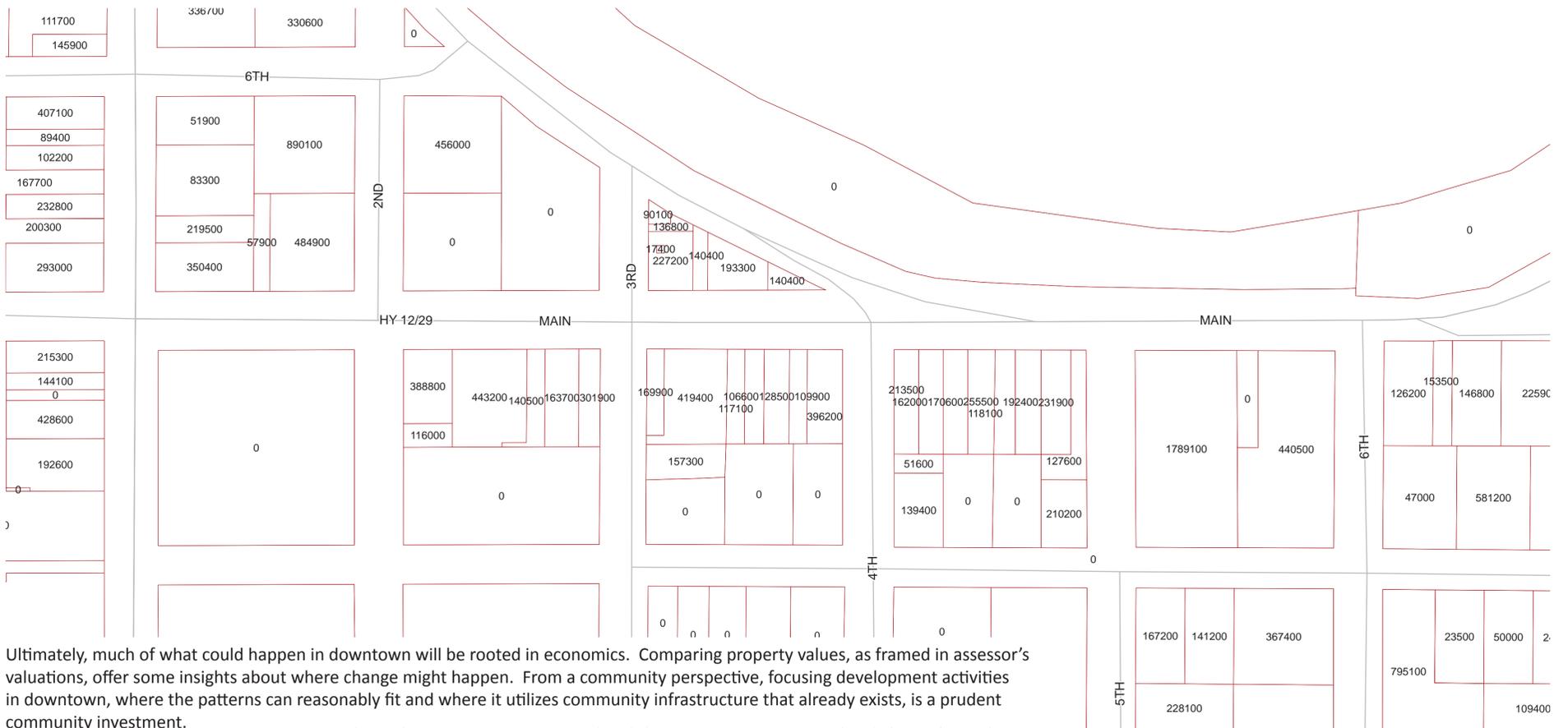
active storefronts



A few key buildings create focal points in downtown Menomonie, but as a result of their more historic architectural patterns, they don't jump from their backgrounds in downtown. New buildings will have to be designed especially well, recognizing the need for a few key buildings to remain subtly prominent even as the landscape of downtown continues to evolve.



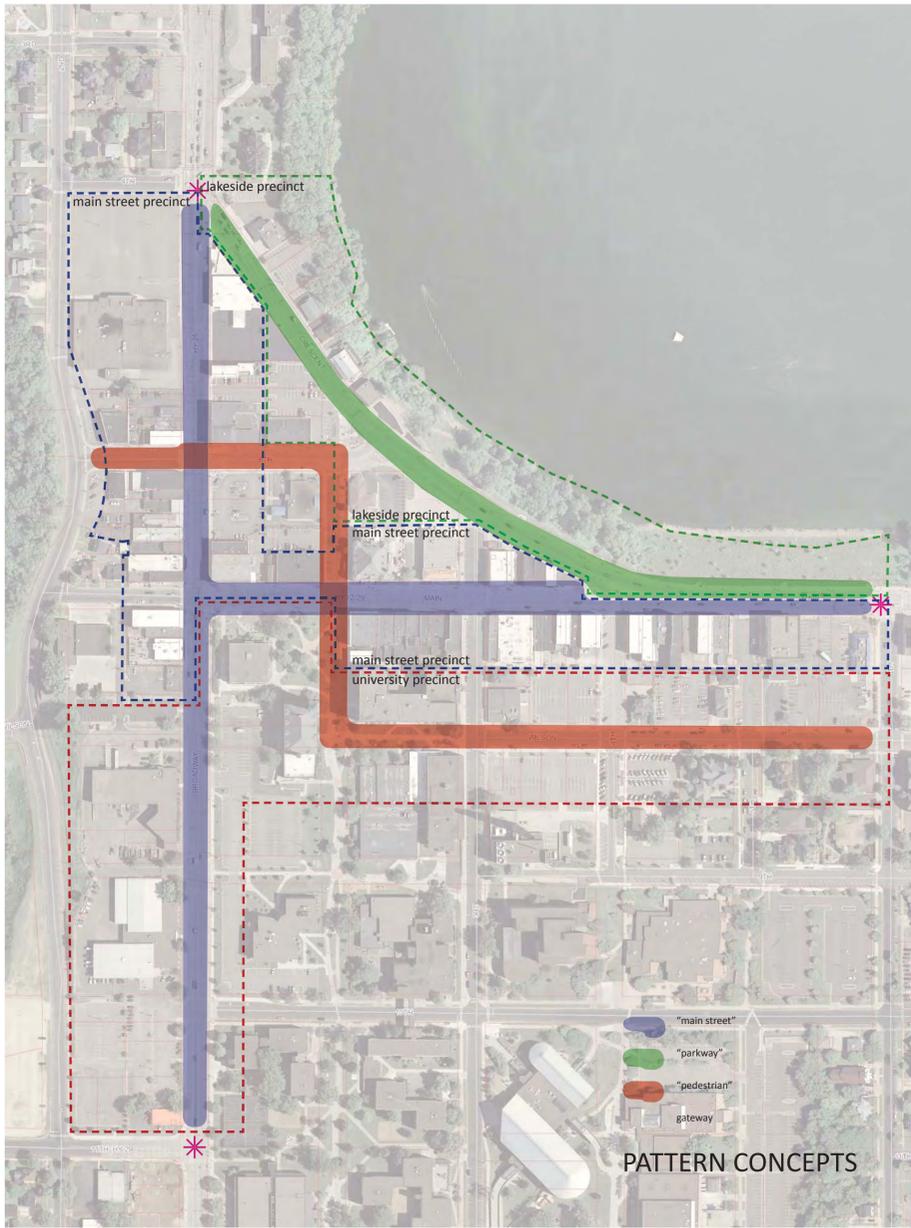
downtown character zones



Ultimately, much of what could happen in downtown will be rooted in economics. Comparing property values, as framed in assessor's valuations, offer some insights about where change might happen. From a community perspective, focusing development activities in downtown, where the patterns can reasonably fit and where it utilizes community infrastructure that already exists, is a prudent community investment.

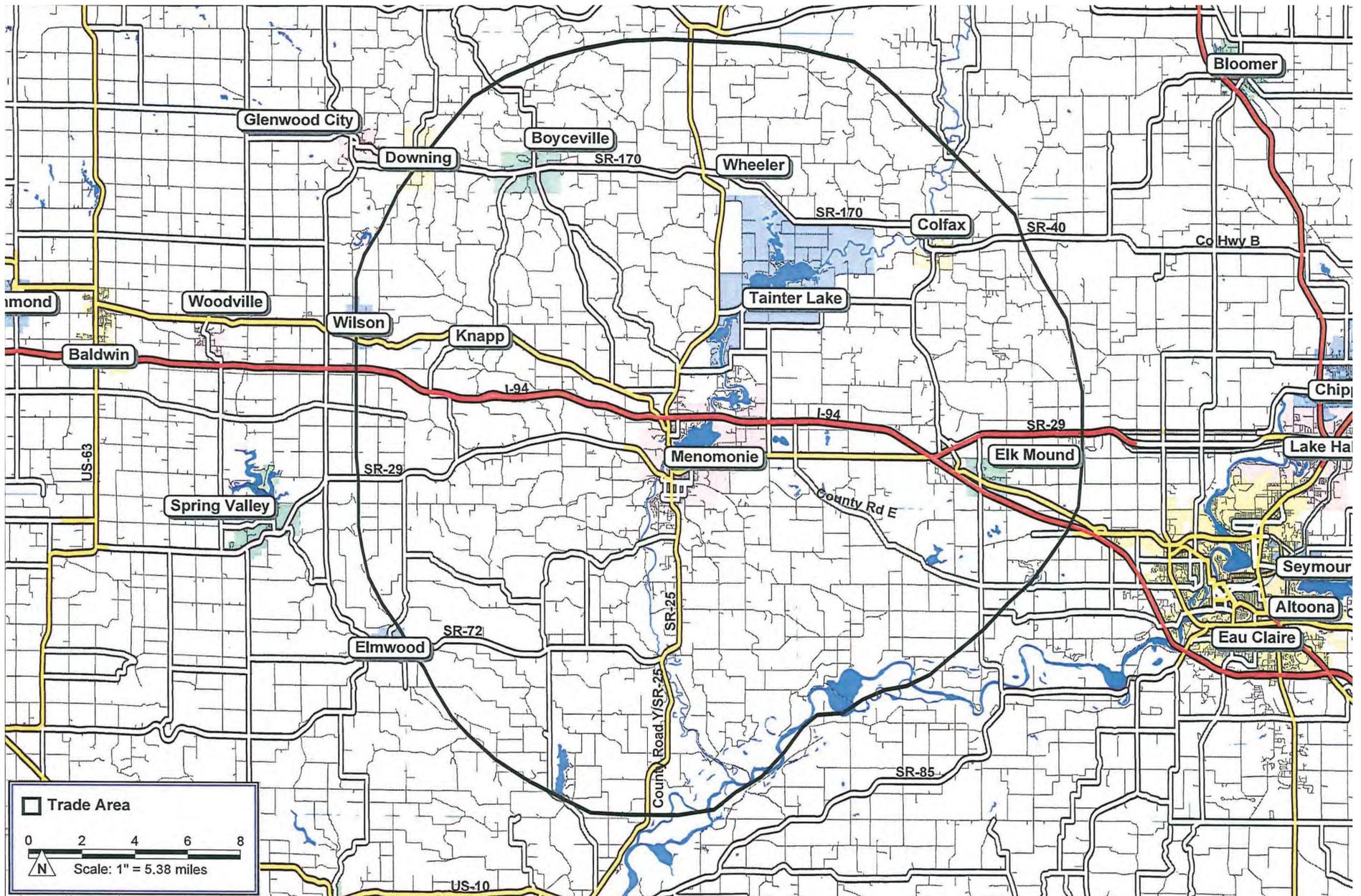
downtown property values

## 6: downtown conditions



patterns were explored with the notion of creating a mixed use environment in downtown, with four factors becoming significant: fitting patterns that already exist, linking activities through public spaces, building energy from existing generators, and seeking sites where opportunities for change might occur.

## 7: concepts supporting mixed use



### Market support, retail sector

Research indicates that retail opportunities exist in downtown, and there are specific retail types that might be added to the market (in particular, a hardware store in the trade area).

Research goes further to outline the number of square feet for each retail type in ten year increments that might be added to the market, as well as defining the likely size of each of those uses in a each of a variety of merchandise categories.

### Market support, residential sector

The residential market is challenged, not only in terms of market opportunities but in terms of the financial feasibility of new projects.

If there is a market, the potential return based on comparable values limits the market.

### Market support, office sector

There appear to be opportunities for office, with about 10,000 square feet being absorbed annually.

Not much office is “for rent,” and downtown rents are very low—suggesting that it might be difficult to make office development happen in downtown.

### Market support, senior residential

Research about senior housing potential noted a new project coming to the market in March. Research suggests that independent senior living is a lifestyle choice that might be too expensive for the market, and that assisted living is a necessity that will be filled by the new project.

Comparisons were made to local senior housing projects, which seem to be smaller scale buildings.

Still, there is potential in downtown for a small senior housing project, probably in a location that can take advantage of the lake.

### Market opportunities and issues

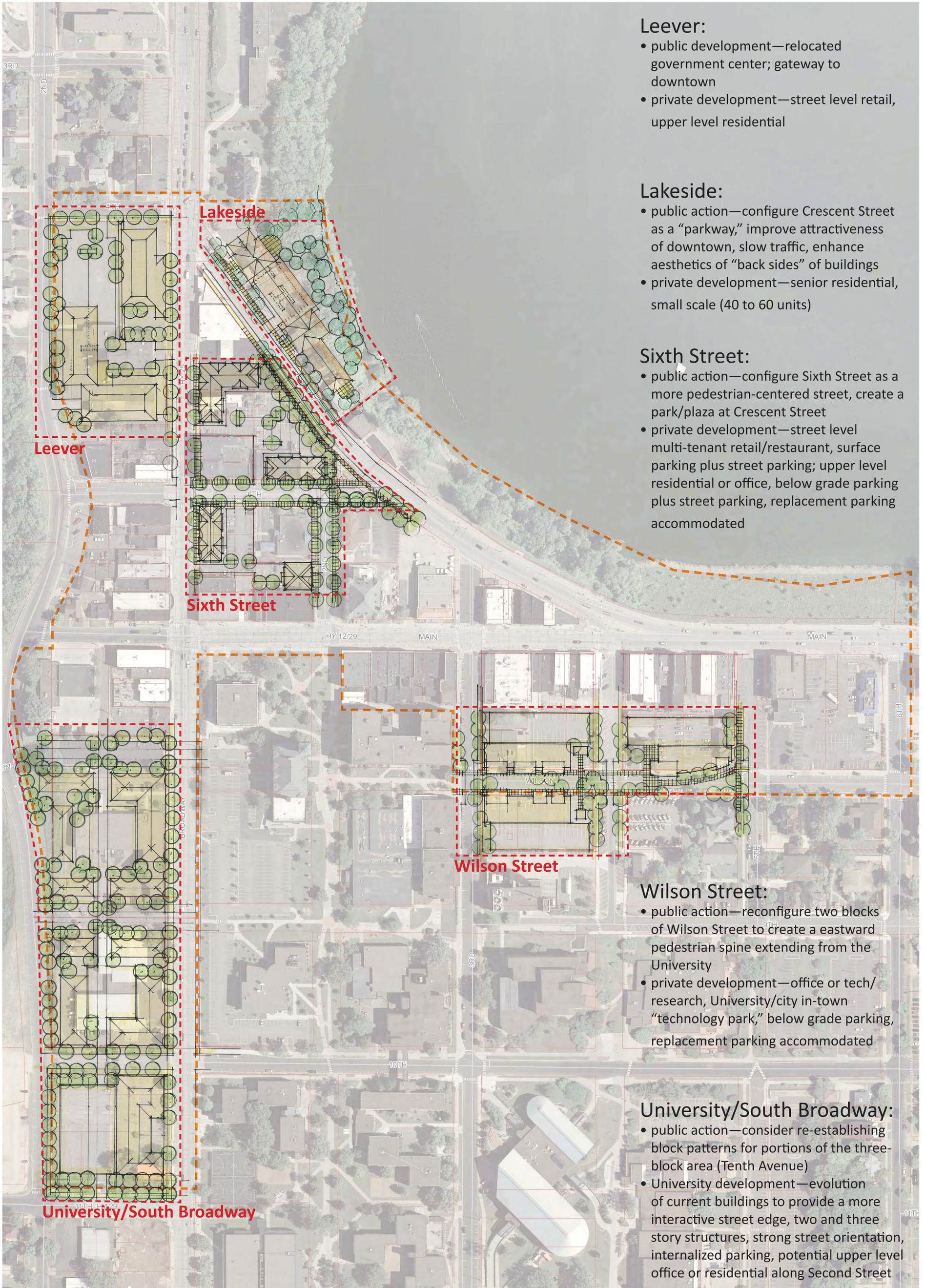
The configuration of the trade area forces about half of the people in the trade area and community to pass through downtown (because of the lake).

Issues of attractiveness and parking are significant.

## 8: key findings of the market assessment



# 9: aligning development to opportunity sites



**Leever:**

- public development—relocated government center; gateway to downtown
- private development—street level retail, upper level residential

**Lakeside:**

- public action—configure Crescent Street as a “parkway,” improve attractiveness of downtown, slow traffic, enhance aesthetics of “back sides” of buildings
- private development—senior residential, small scale (40 to 60 units)

**Sixth Street:**

- public action—configure Sixth Street as a more pedestrian-centered street, create a park/plaza at Crescent Street
- private development—street level multi-tenant retail/restaurant, surface parking plus street parking; upper level residential or office, below grade parking plus street parking, replacement parking accommodated

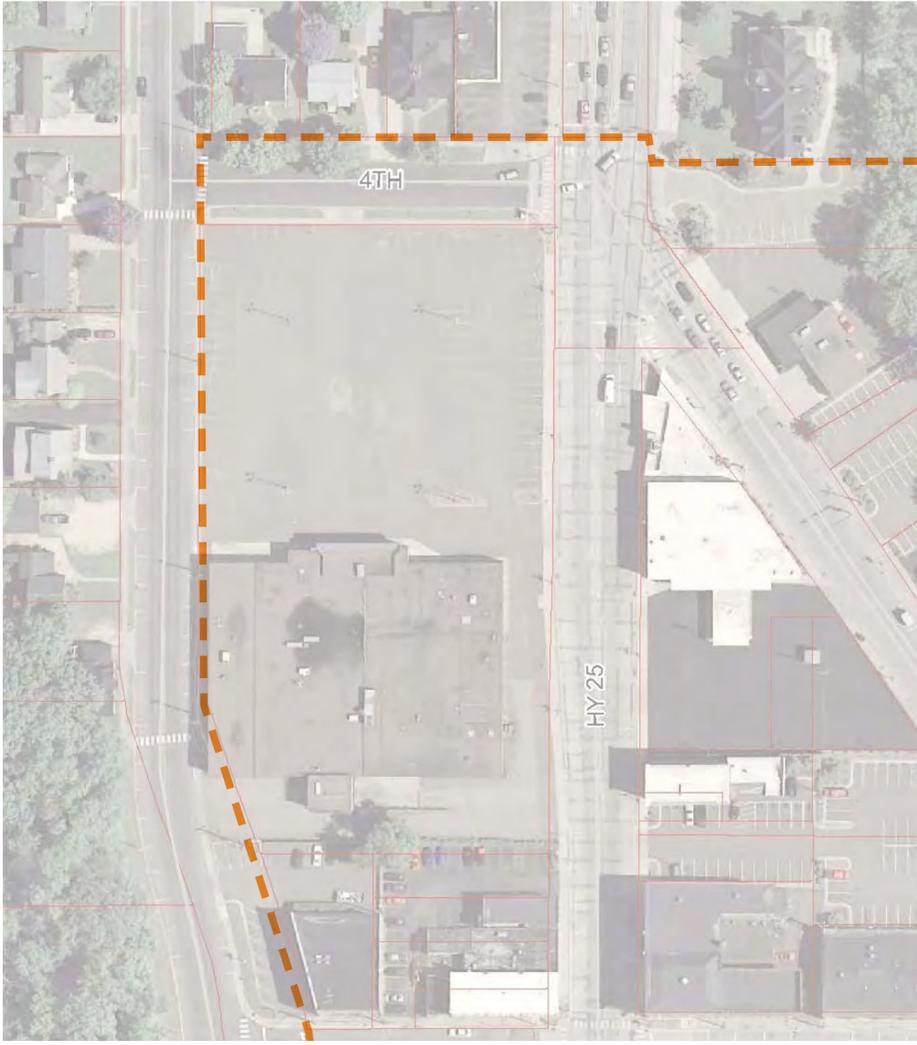
**Wilson Street:**

- public action—reconfigure two blocks of Wilson Street to create an eastward pedestrian spine extending from the University
- private development—office or tech/research, University/city in-town “technology park,” below grade parking, replacement parking accommodated

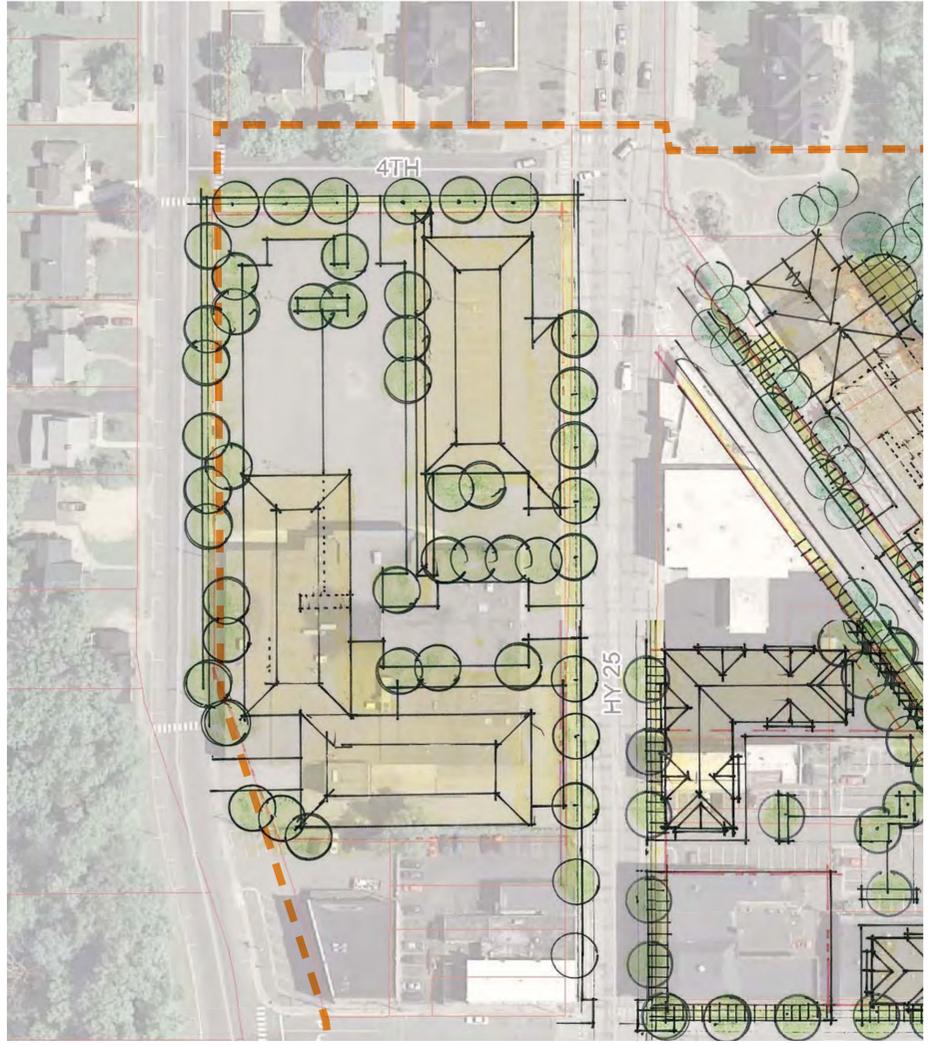
**University/South Broadway:**

- public action—consider re-establishing block patterns for portions of the three-block area (Tenth Avenue)
- University development—evolution of current buildings to provide a more interactive street edge, two and three story structures, strong street orientation, internalized parking, potential upper level office or residential along Second Street

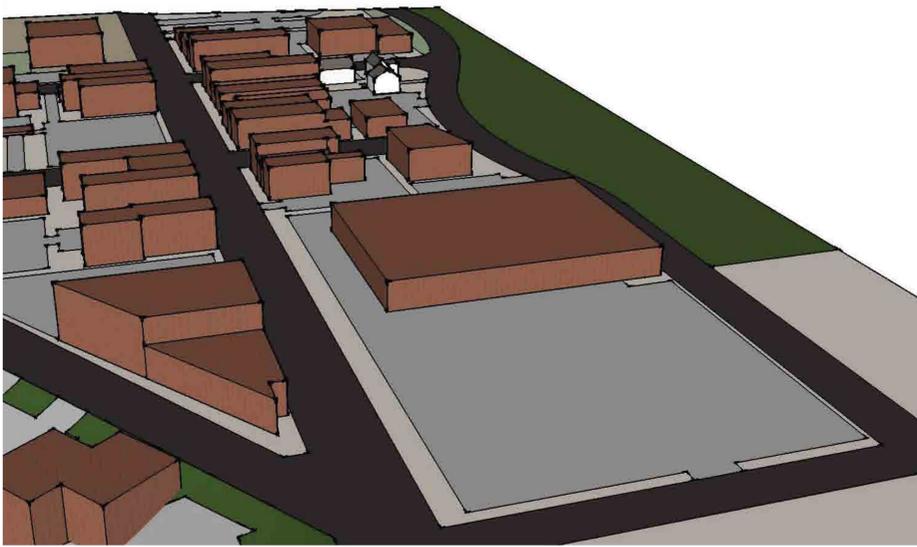
**10: assessing a path forward for potential opportunities**



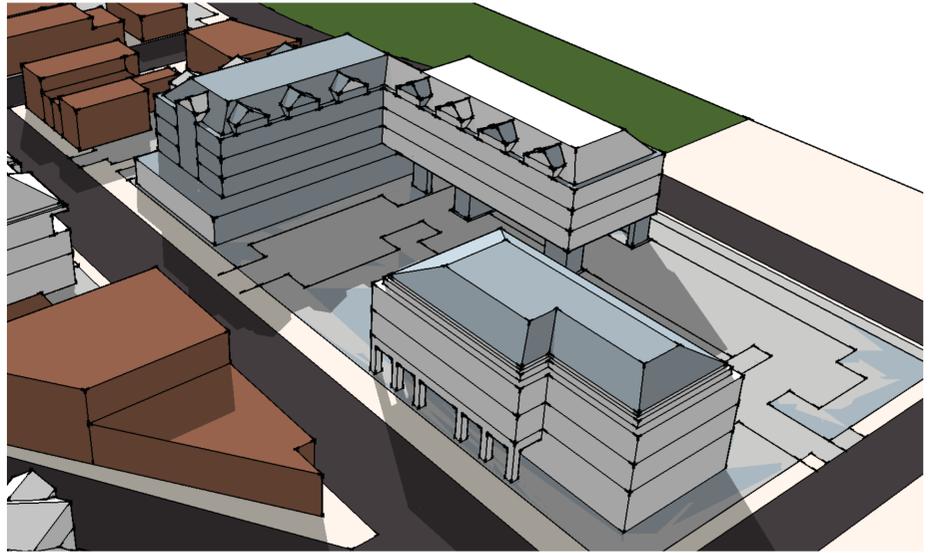
existing site



concept site plan



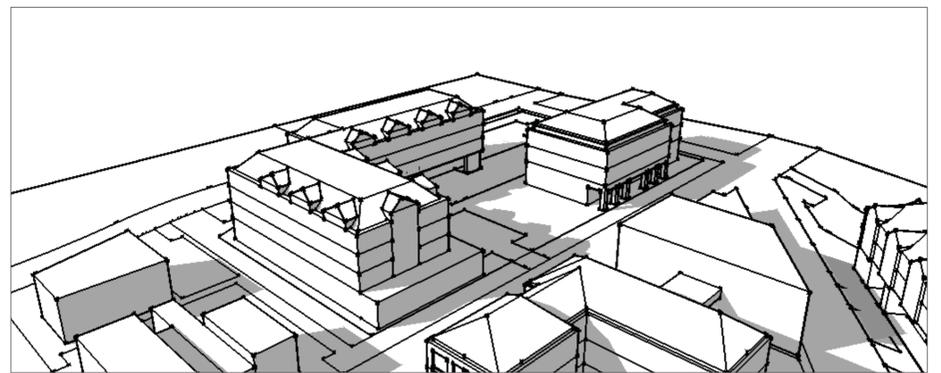
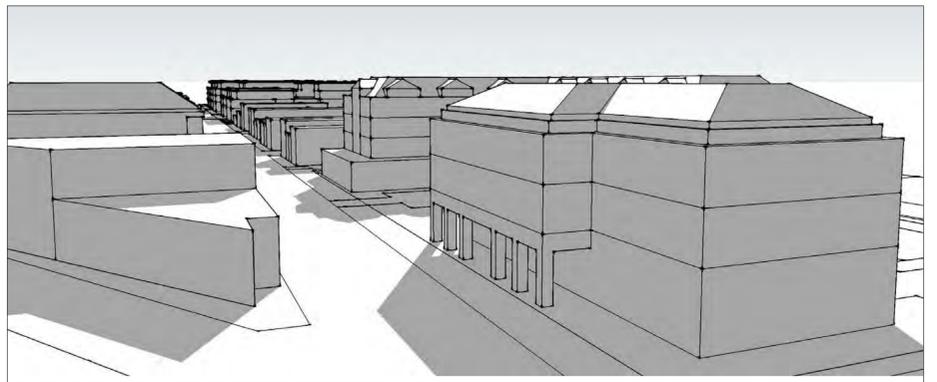
massing before redevelopment



massing after redevelopment



existing condition



preliminary views

## 11: opportunity site: Leever



existing site



concept site plan



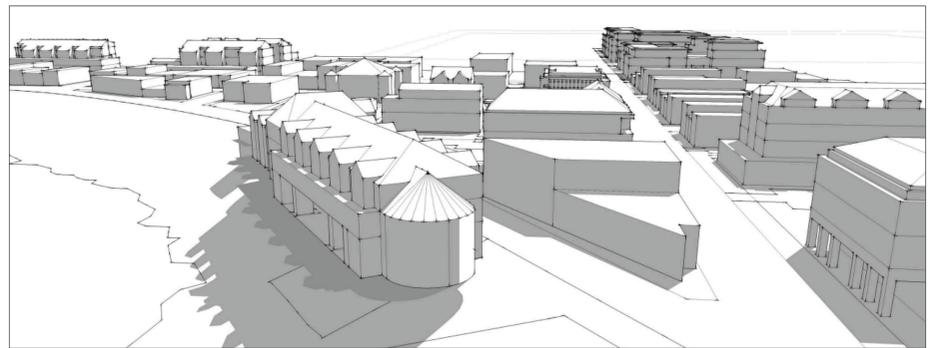
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existing condition

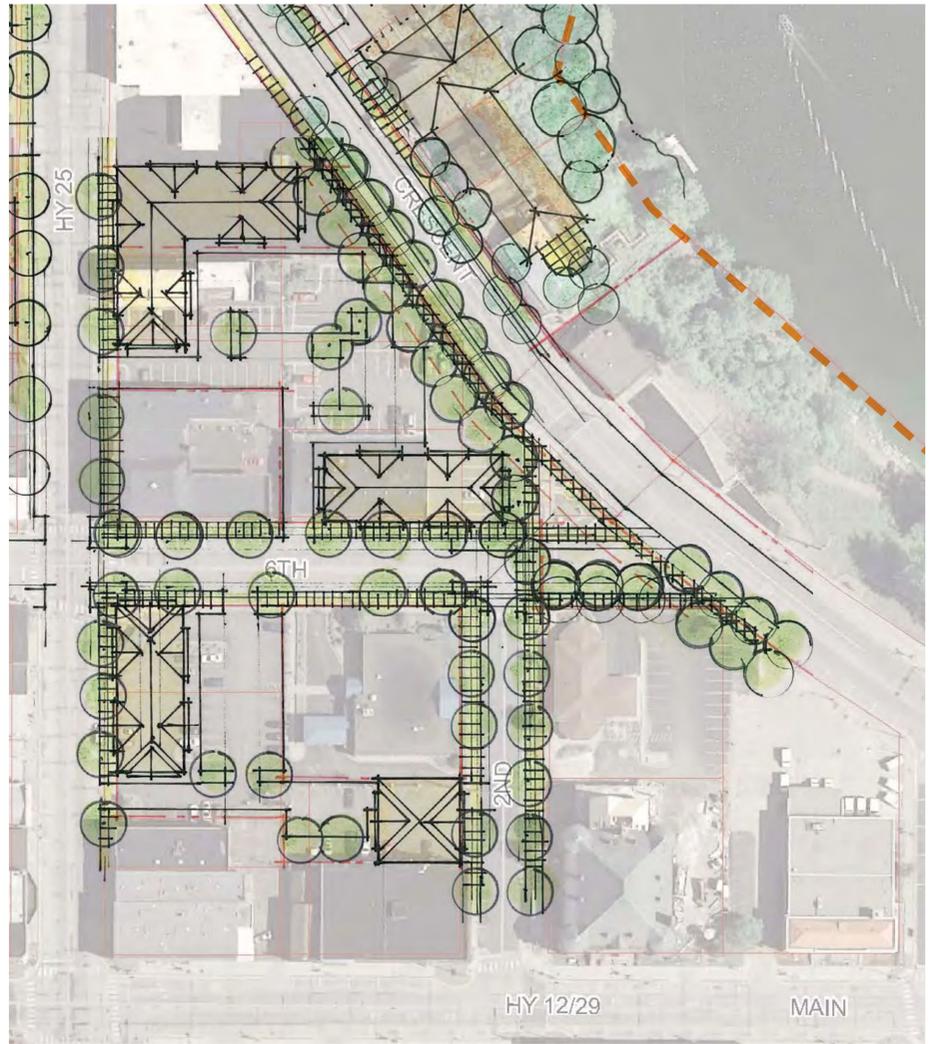


preliminary views

## 12: opportunity site: Lakeside



existing site



concept site plan



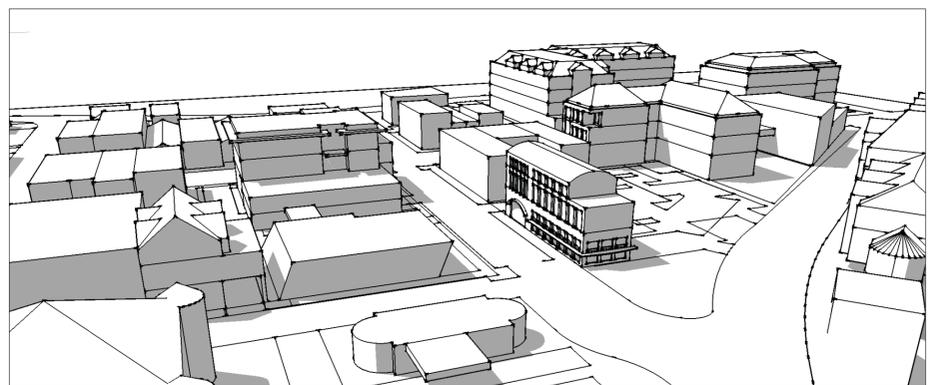
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existing condition

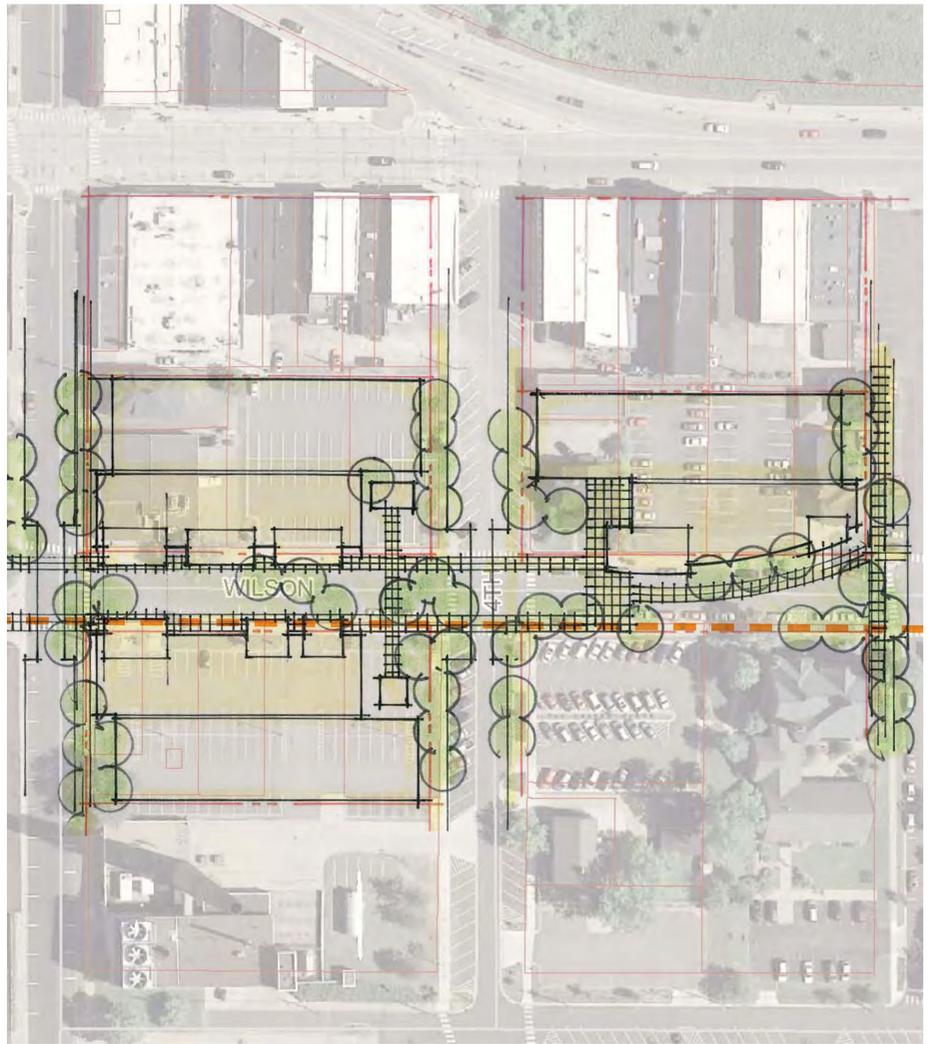


preliminary views

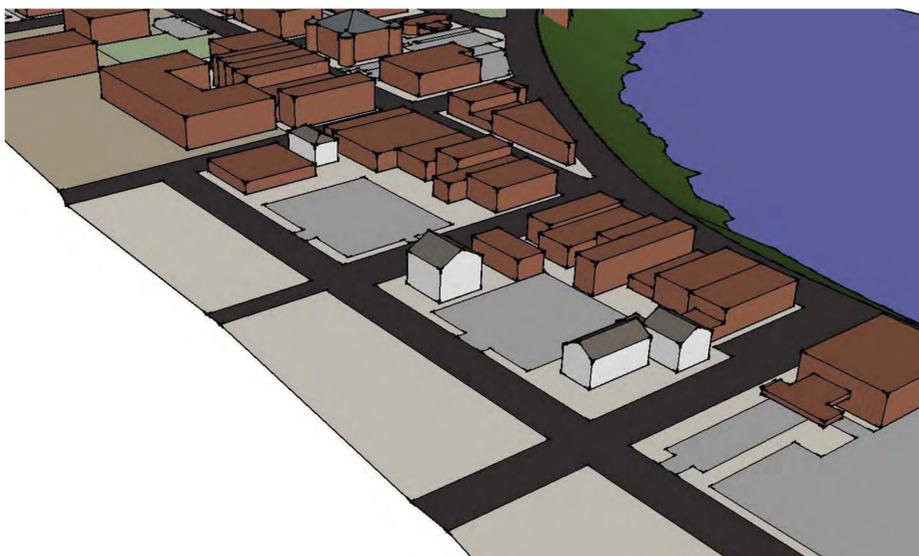
## 13: opportunity site: Sixth Street



existing site



concept site plan



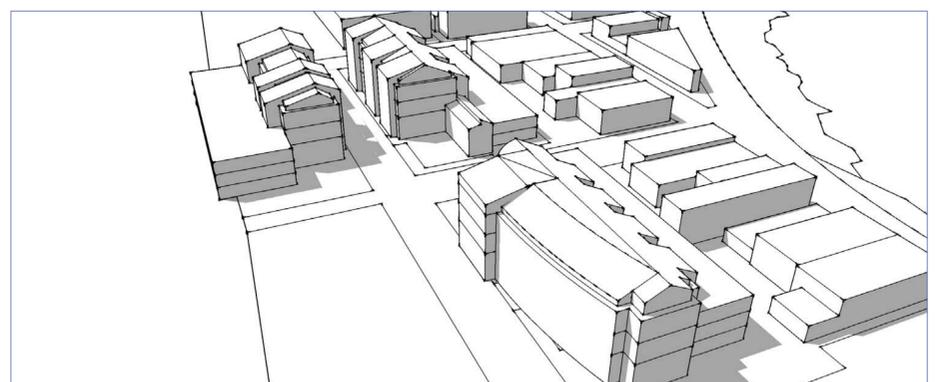
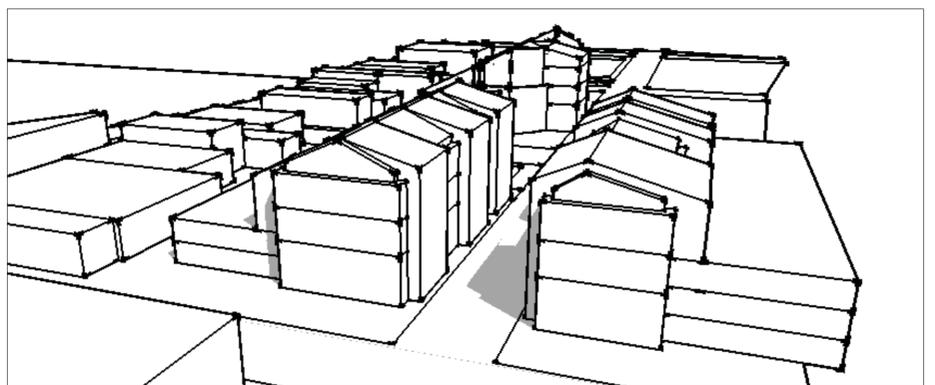
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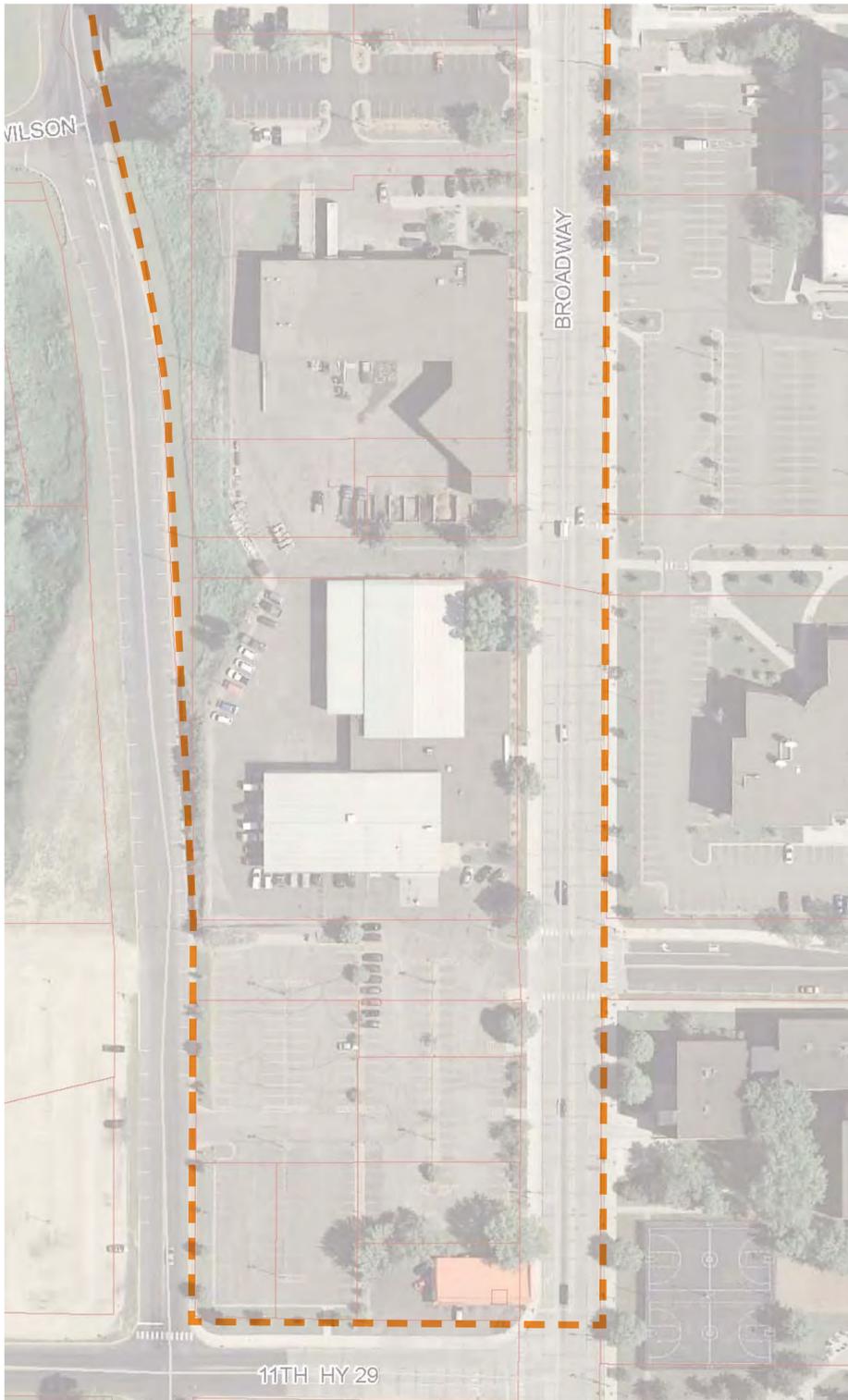


existing condition

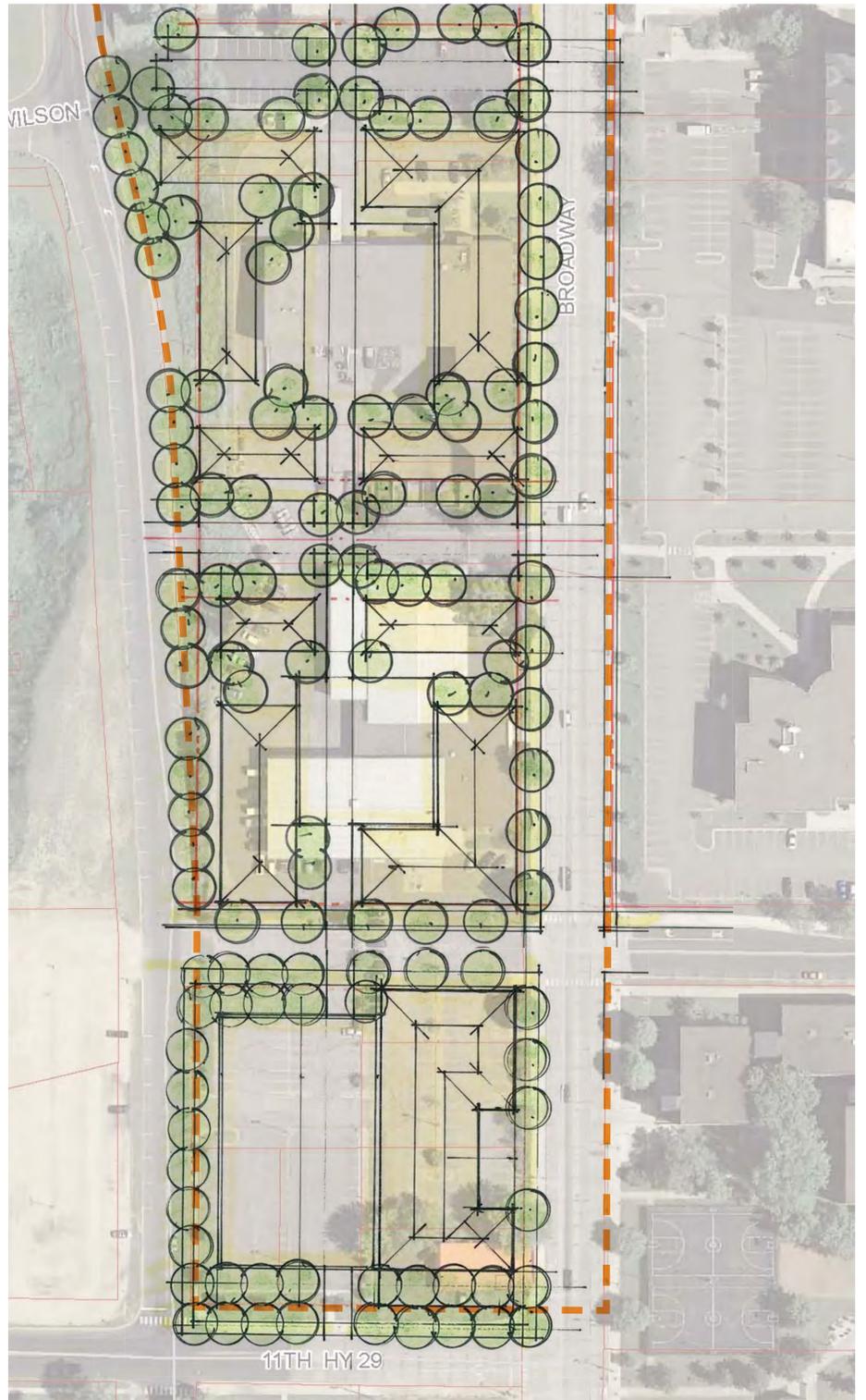


preliminary views

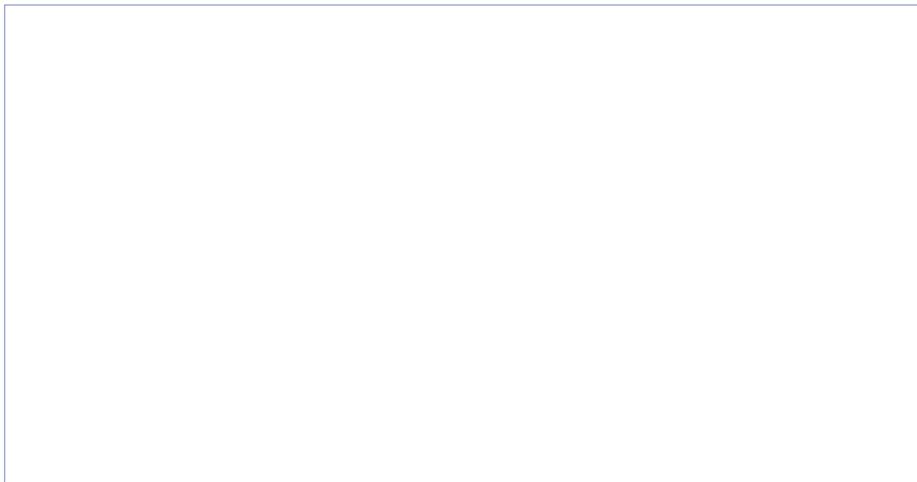
## 14: opportunity site: Wilson Street



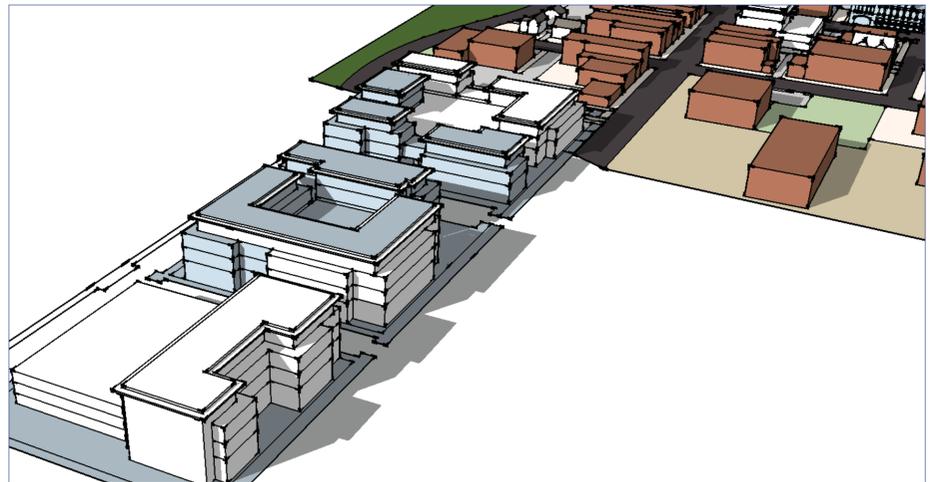
existing site



concept site plan



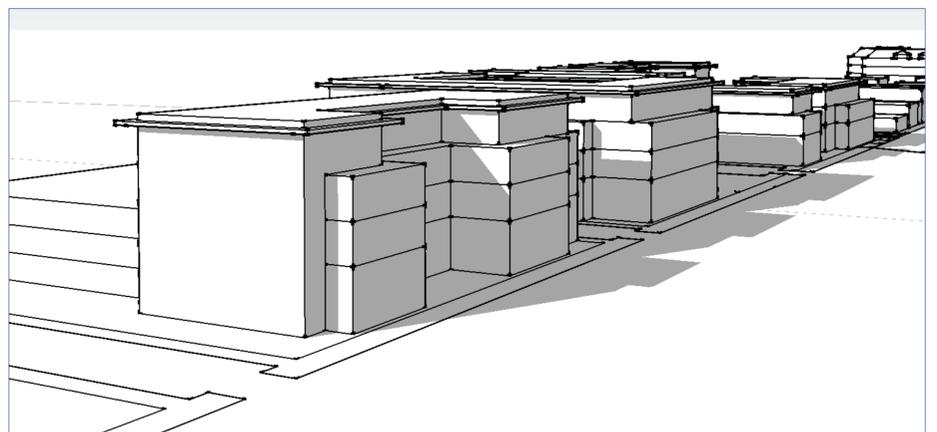
massing before redevelopment



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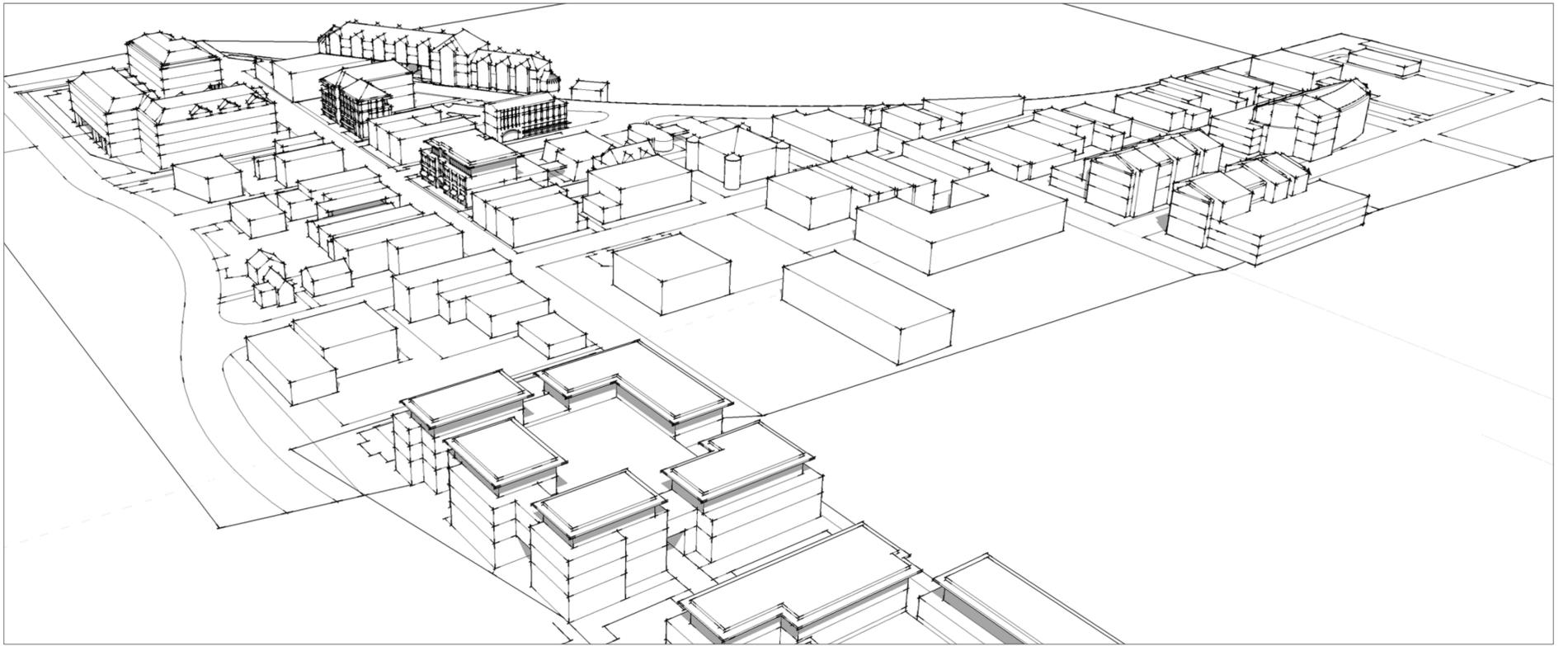


existing condition



preliminary views

# 15: opportunity site: University South Broadway



## Strategies supporting mixed use in downtown

Maintain or enhance the presence of key activity generators in downtown.

- The city and county government offices, and even facilities like the Post Office, fill one part of the mix of activities needed for downtown's vitality.
- Cultural events at the Mabel Tainter Memorial Theater remain a focus for downtown activities; providing pre- or post-function spaces that enliven areas surrounding the theater would be good additions to downtown.
- The activity created by a university located adjacent to downtown is significant to the life of downtown, but it must be balanced with the recognition that this is Menomonie's downtown. The campus has a significant interface with downtown, and like the ecotone in ecology, the margin between downtown and the campus should be the most active space.

Explore parking strategies that are more conducive to potential customers.

- While student parking can overrun downtown, accommodating customers who have choices where parking is free is an issue that needs to be addressed.
- As redevelopment consumes parking lots, replacement parking that is convenient, attractive, and safe needs to be added to downtown.
- Use viable existing downtown businesses as foundation tenants for redevelopment projects.
- The mix of businesses that will comprise a new development project might be found, to some degree, in businesses that already exist in downtown. As those established businesses seek opportunities in new or renovated buildings in downtown, existing spaces are opened for new businesses, or buildings and sites become available for upgrades or redevelopment.

Make improvements that give the sense of downtown as a destination, not a pass-through space.

- So much traffic that arrives in downtown is locally generated, and has a local destination, but most does not stop. Improvements in downtown, both public and private, should be orchestrated to induce those who typically only pass through downtown to actually stop.
- Even for those passing through, the passage should be more than a matter of convenience (as for many, there is no other logical route). Enhancements to highly travelled streets in downtown should give the strong sense of downtown character, and should be a highlight for motorists—even if they're just passing through.

Create additions to downtown that are meant for a downtown environment.

- The patterns and aesthetics of a downtown cannot be easily replicated, but they can be easily lost. New buildings and their sites should be designed with an understanding of the patterns of a downtown, where buildings directly address pedestrian activity occurring on sidewalks, and the mass of the building fairly reflects the center of the Menomonie community.
- Gathering spaces, whether public or private, large or small, contained or linear, can enrich the aesthetics of downtown and provide opportunities for activities that enliven the entire district.

## Recommended Steps for Local Government

- Channel government office growth in the downtown area whenever possible. Public sector occupancy is synergistic with private sector commercial activity.
- Enable the Redevelopment Agency to acquire and option key properties. This is necessary to assist the private sector in assembling sites and also enables government to facilitate new market-driven development.
- Establish a downtown redevelopment area Tax Increment Financing district to facilitate infrastructure outlays needed in downtown's revitalization. Infrastructure is likely to include parking decks and public area landscape.

# 16: strategies for moving toward mixed use