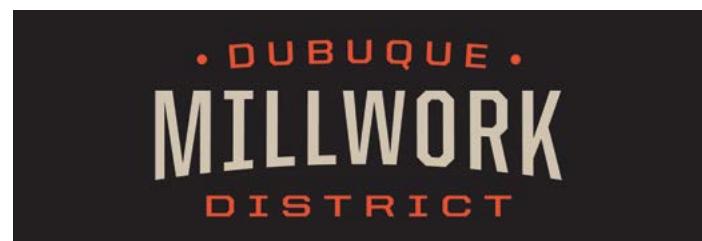


# Historic Millwork District Master Plan Update

Dubuque, Iowa  
May 2024



Prepared for:  
City of Dubuque

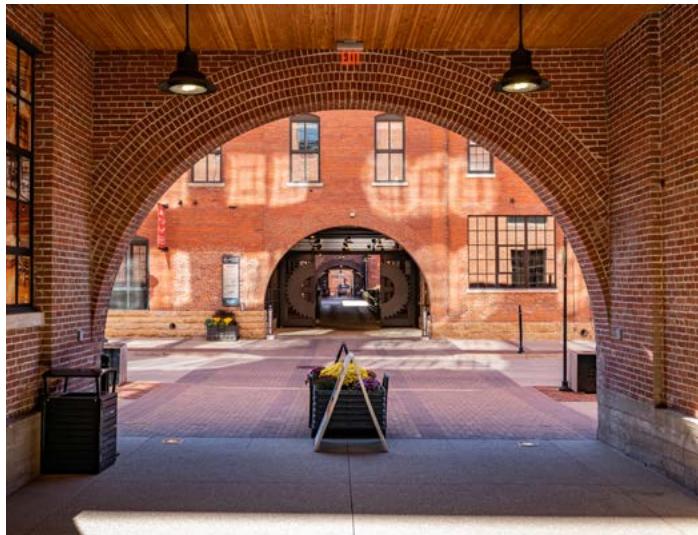
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## Acknowledgements

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# Preface

Over the past several decades Dubuque has been slowly reinventing itself from an aging and declining Midwest city to a thriving modern progressive amenity laden riverfront City. Central to the City's reinvention has been a rediscovery of the Mississippi River and a commitment to restoring and redeveloping the buildings that make Dubuque unique. The Millwork District sits squarely in the middle of the community's reinvention because it is where the City started and where it's future lies.

The City's turnaround is due in no small part to the public / private partnerships that share a commitment and vision of what the city can become.

Over the past 15 years the City has presented steadfast support for the redevelopment of the Millwork District. Standing in partnership with property owners and developers the City has contributed \$25.5 million in economic development and revitalization incentives, to developers to help redevelop buildings in the District. Above that, the City has aggressively pursued federal and state grants while locally funding over \$20 Million in public infrastructure - rebuilding roads and utilities to modernize the infrastructure necessary to sustain the district another 100 years.

This update to the original Master Plan represents the beginning of the next stage of redevelopment for the District and the next stage of the successful public/private partnerships in the District.



DUBUQUE'S COMMITMENT TO REVITALIZING THE MILLWORK DISTRICT

**\$13.5 Million**  
Economic development  
incentives

**\$18.9 Million**  
Public Infrastructure

**\$12 Million**  
Community  
Development Block  
Grants

# Executive Summary

## About This Plan

The Historic Millwork District has enjoyed a successful revival since the original Historic Millwork Master Plan was adopted in 20010. However, city officials, stakeholders and the community recognize there is still more work to be done. Despite numerous successful developments and public infrastructure projects, this district remains "in progress". The purpose of this master plan update is to provide recommendations for improvements over the next decade.

The recommendations in the plan are multi-faceted and share a common goal of connecting people and businesses within this district to the adjacent districts in the city and to the larger region.



***The responsibility to implement this plan does not rest solely on the shoulders of the public sector. Success will rely on continuing to build upon the public/private partnerships that enable complicated urban projects to happen. Dubuque has a proud history of such partnerships and the success of the Historic Millwork District would not be possible without it.***

***It is important to note that for the district to evolve and grow, so must the partnerships and networks that revived the district over the past 15 years. New investors, stakeholders, residents, businesses, and property owners will be key to growing the district and its influence beyond what it is today.***

## Opportunities and Challenges

The Historic Millwork District has a very strong sense of place in part due to its recognizable and characteristic large warehouse buildings, red brick façades, and brick streets. These qualities make it unique to the city and the region. These are the qualities that the City is committed to preserving as the uses within the buildings evolves over time.

While this district has a strong sense of place and is well defined it is also separated from its surroundings and somewhat isolated. This master plan update recommends several action items for overcoming these barriers and stitching the District into the daily lives of more residents throughout Dubuque.

Large warehouse buildings define the form and character of this district. Over the past century these buildings have housed many different uses, proving their flexibility and ability to withstand trends and economic cycles. Currently, Several buildings have been transformed into apartments, hotels, event centers, offices, stores, and restaurants in the last decade. The remaining unimproved buildings offer significant opportunities for future use and development, however the sheer size and age of the buildings make redevelopment complicated and expensive.

The intention of this master plan update is to re-affirm the City's commitment to redevelopment of the District by supporting property owners, providing direction for the growth of the district and by prioritizing public investments that will integrate the district into broader fabric of the community. Ultimately, this will be accomplished by generating more foot traffic, enhancing wayfinding and a sense of welcome, improving public spaces, and cultivating cultural and economic programs that support, invite, and celebrate people living, visiting, working, and investing in the Historic Millwork District.

# Executive Summary

## The Vision

The central theme of this update to the Master Plan is "connectivity". The idea that regardless of how unique and special the District is, it MUST encourage and invite a broad range of people to visit and spend time in this unique and rich cultural resource.

***The Historic Millwork District will become a vibrant urban neighborhood by connecting people to the history and future of Dubuque, to each other, to surrounding city districts and to the larger Driftless Region.***

*The design of the District will achieve this vision by focusing on:*

### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

*Continue to nurture an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community*

### **ECONOMY**

*Encourage a network of mutually-beneficial businesses that result in a united but diverse landscape of workplace, residential and business ventures*

### **CULTURE**

*Use the district to educate and celebrate Dubuque's unique industrial history, present-day events and future opportunities*



## Priority Actions

<b>Near Term (0-3 Years) Recommendations</b>	
Built Environment	Study the one-way to two-way conversion of White St and Central Ave
Economy	Implement a coordinated parking strategy for the District and surroundings
Economy	Expand the District's media and on-line presence
Built Environment	Design and construct the Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building at the corner of Washington and 10th St.
Culture	Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces
Culture	Create an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats
Built Environment	Construct strategically located bump-outs for street trees and other amenities
Economy	Support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit programs to assist in rehabilitating historic buildings. Seek additional resources to support the redevelopment of remaining buildings
Economy	Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to everyday needs of residents and employees in and around the District
Culture	Explore artist-in-residence program(s)

# Executive Summary: Build on the Strengths and Mitigate the Weaknesses

## DISTRICT ASSETS and how this Plan LEVERAGES them:

THE DISTRICT IS RECOGNIZED AS A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT, therefore the Plan:

- Supports ongoing redevelopment of historic warehouse buildings
- Celebrates the District environment through programming and art
- Expands opportunities for local and destination businesses and experiences
- Proposes new wayfinding and interpretive signage that helps educate people

THE DISTRICT IS A DESIRABLE PLACE FOR EVENTS, HOSPITALITY AND VISITORS, therefore the Plan:

- Encourages new businesses closely related to tourism and special events
- Proposes a coordinated parking and active transportation strategy that ensures easy access to the District

## DISTRICT LIABILITIES and how this Plan MITIGATES them:

THE DISTRICT LACKS A BROAD CROSS SECTION OF PEOPLE ON A WEEKLY AND DAILY BASIS, therefore the Plan:

- Supports the development of 500 new housing units, both within the District and the surrounding area
- Encourages events that attract people to the District from throughout the region
- Encourages recruiting an anchor tenant that has deep existing relationships throughout the city and region

THE DISTRICT LACKS A PUBLIC SPACE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, therefore the Plan:

- Proposes a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building
- Supports the preservation and expansion of the District's 'Activated Alley'
- Proposes small seating/amenity areas on existing streets

THE DISTRICT IS AN EMERGING NEIGHBORHOOD, therefore the Plan:

- Supports redevelopment of over 500 new residential units, encouraging smaller simpler units for a wider variety of residents
- Encourages recruiting amenities for daily use such as a grocery, lunch spot, and a local park
- Supports the arts through public art, events, and recruitment of an arts anchor for the District

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS HAVE BEEN ESSENTIAL, therefore the Plan:

- Looks for additional anchor tenants and stakeholders who are aligned with the mission of the District to participate in the future of the District
- Commits to public improvements that support private redevelopment
- Supports use of local, state and federal funding to support redevelopment

THE DISTRICT IS NOT WELL CONNECTED TO OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY, therefore the Plan:

- Proposes improvements to area streets so the District feels better connected to downtown
- Proposes bike connections to the Port of Dubuque, Chaplain Schmitt Island, and the rest of downtown
- Proposes improvements to signage and wayfinding that make the District welcoming and easy to get to

THE DISTRICT HAS A CURATED FEEL TO IT AND LACKS STREET LIFE, therefore the Plan:

- Proposes interactive artworks that attract people to the district
- Supports the recruitment of an arts tenant to the District
- Supports new and innovative events that celebrate the unique qualities of the District
- Supports creative co-tenanting operations that allow pop-up businesses and small entrepreneurs to incubate businesses

# Executive Summary: Primary Recommendations

## Vision Statement:

The Historic Millwork District will connect people to the history and future of Dubuque, to each other, to surrounding districts and to the larger Driftless Region by focusing on three categories of improvements; **built environment, economy and culture**.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

*Continue to nurture an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community by:*

#### **B1: Investing in spaces that are inviting, inclusive, and social.**

[B1a: Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building.](#)

[B1b: Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees.](#)

[B1c: Preserve and enhance the existing "activated alley" running between Jackson Street and Washington Street.](#)

#### **B2: Improving connectivity between the District, other parts of Downtown and the City.**

[B2a: Improve the relationship to Downtown by enhancing pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets.](#)

[B2b: Improve Central and White Streets by making them safer, slower, easier to cross and more conducive to redevelopment.](#)

[B2c: Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding, signage, and artful/active underpasses.](#)

[B2d: Improve the Underpass Experience](#)

[B2e: Create a 7th Street Connection: "From Shot Tower to Clock Tower".](#)

### ECONOMY:

*Encourage a network of mutually-beneficial businesses that result in a united but diverse landscape of workplace, residential and business ventures by:*

#### **E1: Continuing to support the reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures in the District**

[E1a Actively support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit program to assist; and aggressively seek additional resources to advance redevelopment of buildings.](#)

[E1b Support creative development opportunities with anchor tenants that are aligned with the vision of the District.](#)

[E1c: Implement a parking management strategy](#)

#### **E2: Attracting young and innovative residents, employees, and companies to the Historic Millwork District**

[E2a Encourage smaller residential units that would appeal to a younger demographic within and around the District.](#)

[E2b Support artist lofts and/or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements.](#)

[E2c: Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees.](#)

[E2d: Expand the District's online and media presence](#)

#### **E3: Activating the public realm through creative, innovative and experimental businesses, ventures and events.**

[E3a: Pursue co-tenant arrangements between anchor and related entrepreneurs.](#)

[E3b Encourage events and arrangements that support low cost/low barrier to entry business endeavors.](#)

### CULTURE:

*Educate and celebrate Dubuque's unique industrial history, present-day events and future opportunities by:*

#### **C1: Creating educational opportunities for people to learn about the history and current happenings of the District**

[C1a Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces.](#)

[C1b Design and implement an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats.](#)

[C1c: Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events that draw attention to the unique environment of the District.](#)

#### **C2: Supporting opportunities for an expanded performance and visual arts presence in the Historic Millwork District**

[C2a: Explore artist-in-residence program\(s\).](#)

[C2b: Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/manufacturing companies and individuals in the District.](#)

[C2c: Recruit an arts oriented anchor to the District.](#)

[C2d: Install signature and interactive artwork throughout the District](#)

[C2a: Activate and build stewardship of public spaces with regular and event programming](#)

# Executive Summary: Primary Recommendations

		How Does the Plan Support and Enhance these District Strengths				How does the Plan help to Mitigate these District Weaknesses			
	Recommendations in the Plan	THE DISTRICT IS RECOGNIZED AS A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT	THE DISTRICT IS AN EMERGING NEIGHBORHOOD	THE DISTRICT IS A DESIRABLE PLACE FOR EVENTS, HOSPITALITY AND VISITORS,	PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL	THE DISTRICT LACKS A BROAD CROSS SECTION OF PEOPLE ON A WEEKLY AND DAILY BASIS	THE DISTRICT LACKS A PUBLIC SPACE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS	THE DISTRICT HAS A CURATED FEEL TO IT AND LACKS STREET LIFE	THE DISTRICT IS NOT WELL CONNECTED TO OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY
Built Environment	Create a Community Space								
	Construct bump-outs to plant street trees.								
	Preserve and enhance the existing "activated alley"								
	Enhance pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets								
	Improve Central and White Streets								
	Improve the entry experience								
	"Shot Tower to Clock Tower" Connection								
	Create better Bicycle connections								
Economy	Support Historic Tax Credits; seek additional resources								
	Anchor tenants aligned with the vision of the District								
	Target smaller residential units within and around the District.								
	Support Artist lofts and/or buildings								
	Recruit businesses : successful market segments as well as everyday needs								
	Encourage events open to emerging businesses.								
	Pursue co-tenant arrangements between anchors and entrepreneurs.								
Culture	Instal Interpretive signage								
	Develop an Integrated educational tour								
	Encourage Artists, cultural groups to host events								
	Support an Artist-in-residence program(s).								
	Recruit craft/artisan/manufacturing companies and individuals								
	Recruit an Arts oriented anchor								
	install Signature and interactive artwork								
	Activate public spaces with regular and creative programming								



## 2. BACKGROUND

# Background

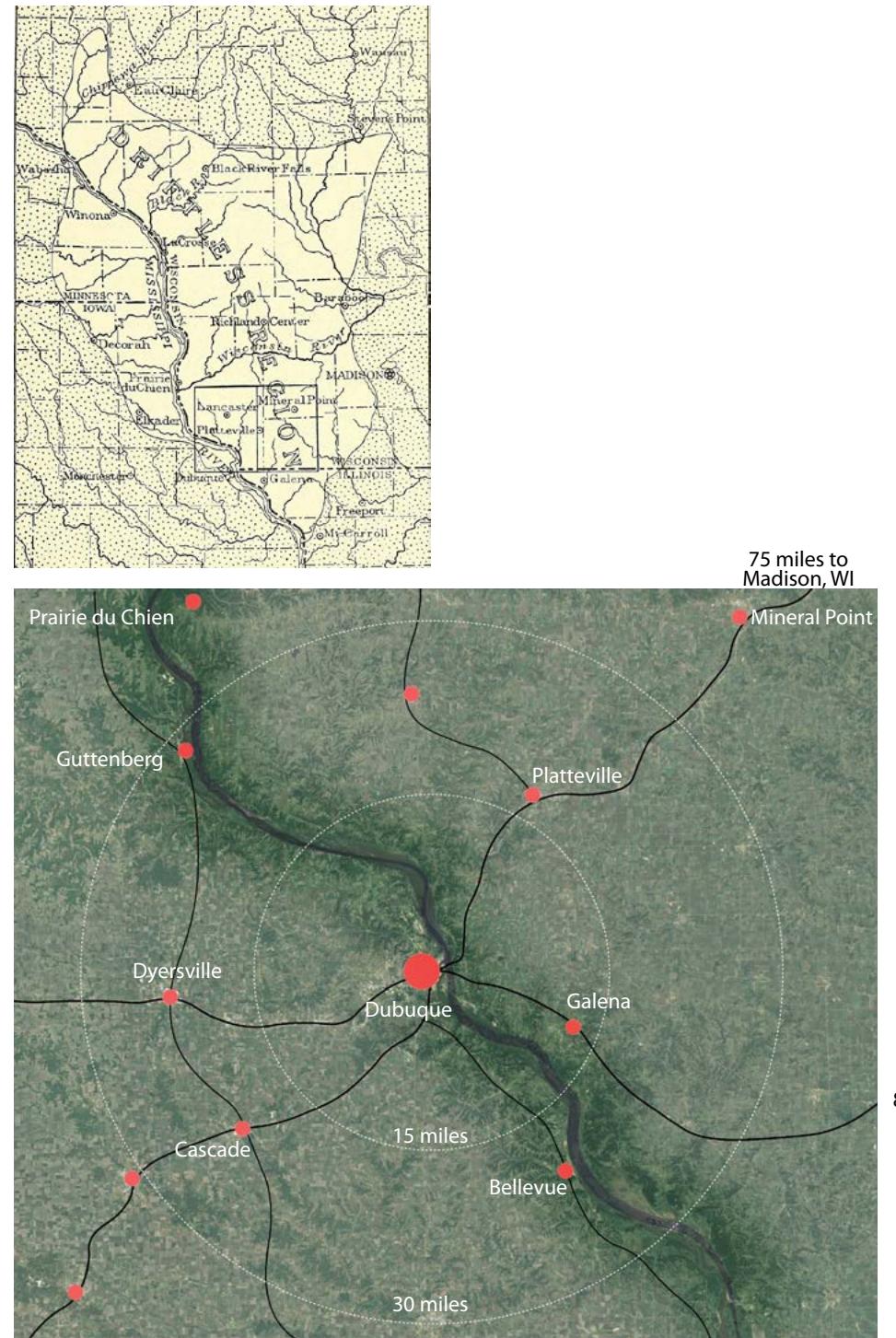
## Regional Context

The story of Dubuque is one of resilience and resourcefulness. Located in the Driftless Region, the area was inhabited by Meskwaki peoples prior to European settlement. Due to its strategic location on the river and access to resources, the city grew quickly, with the Millwork District at the heart of its economy. With globalization in the second half of the 20th century, the city endured economic hardship with industry closing amid broad economic shifts. Over the past twenty years however, the city has reestablished itself as a regional center, and has grown into a modern city, outperforming most others of its size over the past twenty years.

The Historic Millwork District, though small, has played an outsized role in the economy, identity, and fabric of the city. It is where Dubuque's industrial economy was born, and where its future is emerging.

The future of the District will be determined by the people and partnerships that invest their time, voices, perspectives, resources, and energy into making the place inclusive and welcoming to all.

The District is the place where old buildings spawn new ideas. This plan will embody that idea and ensure the cultural and economic momentum of the District continues into the next decade. This plan reconfirms the importance of the District to the city and the region while confronting current and future challenges with innovation, inclusivity, and actionable implementation.



## The Dubuque Formula for Success

Dubuque's revival over the past several decades is built, in part, on the simple concept that growth will come from its people, public private partnerships, and active planning. Together these ingredients create a truly unique and authentic place that attracts sustainable investments.

Dubuque applied this strategy on the original Historic Millwork Master Plan in 2010 with significant positive results, and Phase 1 was completed while weathering the great recession and Covid-19 pandemic.

In the fifteen years since completion of the original plan, the District has attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in public and private investment, resulting in over 200 residential units, dozens of businesses, new streets, an intermodal facility, and a new public parking ramp and other parking areas.

**PEOPLE**  
+ PLANNING  
+ PARTNERSHIPS  
**PLACE**

# History of the Millwork District

## The District Before World War II

Dubuque is located in the Driftless Region, so named because it was never covered by glaciers during the last ice age, the area lacks the characteristic glacial deposits known as drift. Instead, the area is characterized by steep hills, forested ridges, deeply carved river valleys; a unique natural environment that distinguishes itself from most of the Midwest.

Located on the Mississippi River, the area we call Dubuque today was inhabited by Meskwaki people for hundreds of years prior to European settlement. Arriving in 1785, Julien Dubuque is generally considered the first permanent European settler in the city. In the late 1700's the bluffs and cliffs in the river valley were mined for lead deposits, with the extracted material used for ammunitions, protective coatings and ceramics.

As lead resources diminished, Dubuque became a center for the timber industry because of its proximity to forests in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Throughout the mid 18th to 19th centuries, Dubuque's position on the river and access to timber enabled it to exert its strength in many millwork-related businesses, including boat building, barrel making, furniture, and more recently doors and windows.

At its peak, the Millwork District was home to industry giants such as Caradco and Farley Loetscher - employing 3,000 people, many of whom would walk and take the street car to and from work from the nearby Washington and Central Avenue Neighborhoods.

## The District After World War II

Once the economic engine of the city, the District fell into disrepair and neglect as businesses relocated and urban sprawl de-centralized the focus on development in the downtown core. The roads were torn up, train cars were abandoned, and the buildings became uninhabitable. If you ventured into the District, you risked breaking an axle or an ankle.

Though in great disrepair, it was also a place with appeal to those who saw its potential. For a decade in the early 2000's, Tim McNamara (local supporter of the arts, civic leader, and owner of several buildings in the District), gave license to a group of artists (Voices) to put on annual productions and exhibits (Voices from the Warehouse). Between 2005 and 2015, Voices from the Warehouse hosted events, parties, exhibitions, showcasing all forms of art, media, and performance in a largely abandoned and empty district of warehouse buildings.

In 2010 City leaders and property owners recognized the potential (and urgency) to simultaneously preserve the buildings through adaptive reuse while positioning the city for a 21st Century economy. Property owners/developers with a financial interest, and city leaders envisioned the District as the keystone to a modern urban economy—a place where old buildings can spawn new ideas.

A plan was developed in 2010 to guide a coordinated set of public and private investments. Though slowed down by the great recession and Covid-19 pandemic, in the subsequent dozen years since the Plan was adopted the District has attracted several hundred million dollars of both public and private investments. Those investments built new roads and infrastructure, created a multi-modal facility and a parking ramp, and redeveloped a dozen buildings for new residents, businesses, and non-profits to call home.

Today the District is no longer off the radar and is no longer in disrepair. It has been transformed. It is clean, safe, attractive, and a greater contributor to the economy than it was twenty years ago.



# Economy

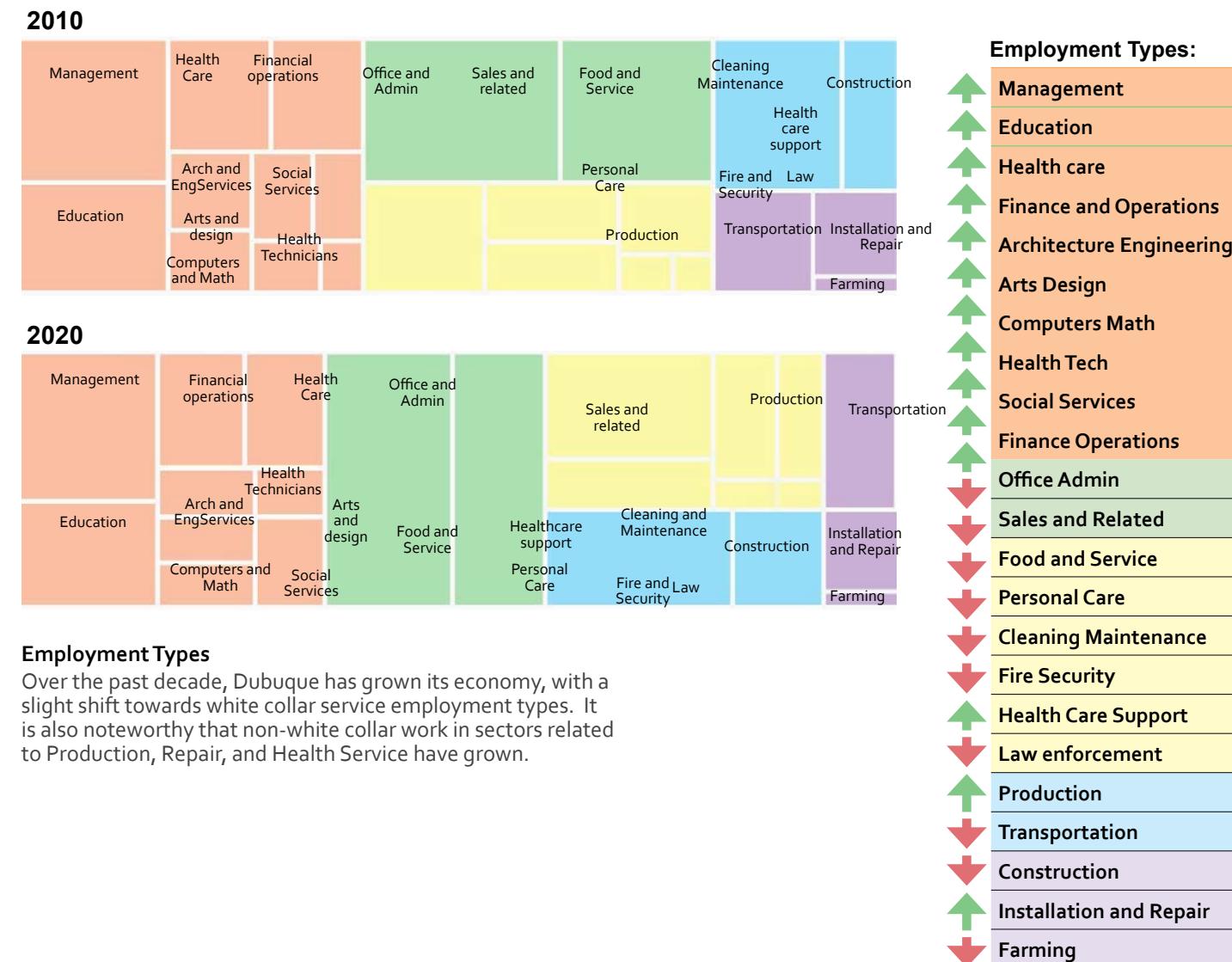
Since the original Master Plan in 2009, Dubuque's economy has continued to grow modestly and steadily with a balanced manufacturing / service economy. In part, due to the balanced economy and slow growth, the recession of 2008-2009 did not hit Dubuque as hard as it did fast growing regions that relied heavily on the real estate sector.

More recently, disruptions to the economy due to the pandemic have had a significant impact on Downtown Dubuque and the Millwork District. As more companies move to a "hybrid" or "work-from-home" model, the daily population in downtown has dropped, and the businesses that relied on that daily population have been slow to recover. Some have closed permanently.

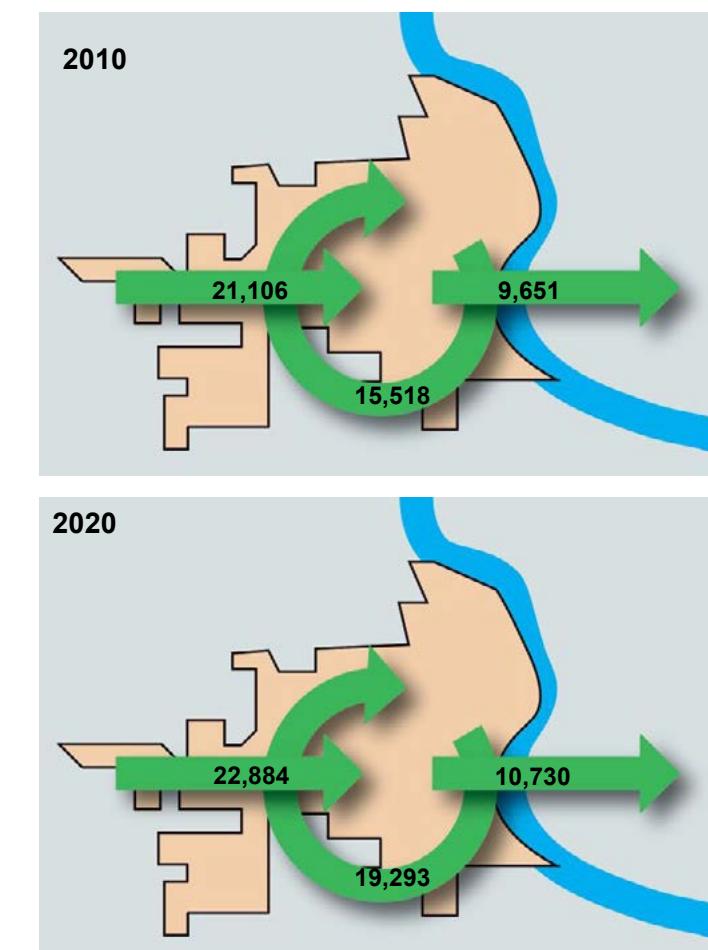
While the full economic impact of the pandemic remains to be seen, the recovery of downtowns is likely to be determined more by how well they serve and attract residents than how well they attract large new businesses. While employment uses will remain an important part of the mix in a downtown, they likely will not return to the dominant use they had been in the past.

Cities can capitalize on these changes by investing in the amenities that existing and prospective downtown residents desire, such as walkability, access to recreation, groceries, restaurants, and entertainment. Cities can also rethink land use policies that reserve the core of downtown for large offices and parking structures. By transitioning office space and offering more land for new housing, developers can provide different housing products for the emerging market demand for downtown living.

## Employment Changes: 2010-2020



## Commuting Inflow/Outflow



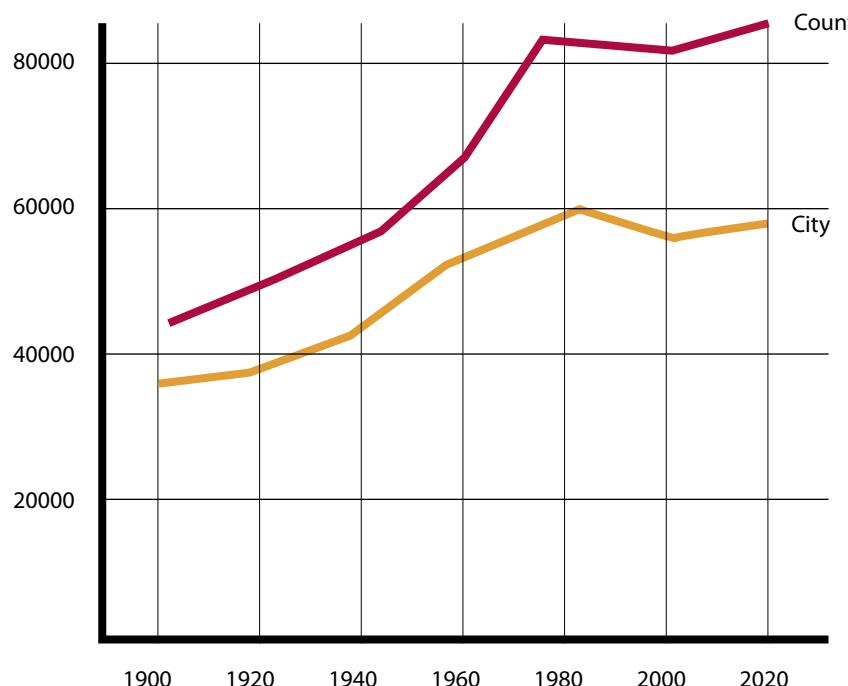
# Demographics

After a decline in population in the 1980's the population of both Dubuque County and the City of Dubuque have stabilized and grown modestly. Over the past ten years, Dubuque County has gained population while every surrounding county (with the exception of Grant County WI) has experienced population declines. And while the city of Dubuque has experienced only 3.9% growth in the past decade, the addition of 2,262 people to the city represents 43% of the county's growth during that period.

In general, the population in Dubuque is getting older and households are getting smaller. With parents having fewer children, couples delaying having children, and people living longer, the average household size is dropping. However with changing family structures, the number of households is increasing - even if population remains flat.

Following trends throughout the country, the number of "traditional" households (two parents and children) is decreasing. Today, only 14% of households have two parents and children, down from 22% in 2000.

## Population in Dubuque (City and County)



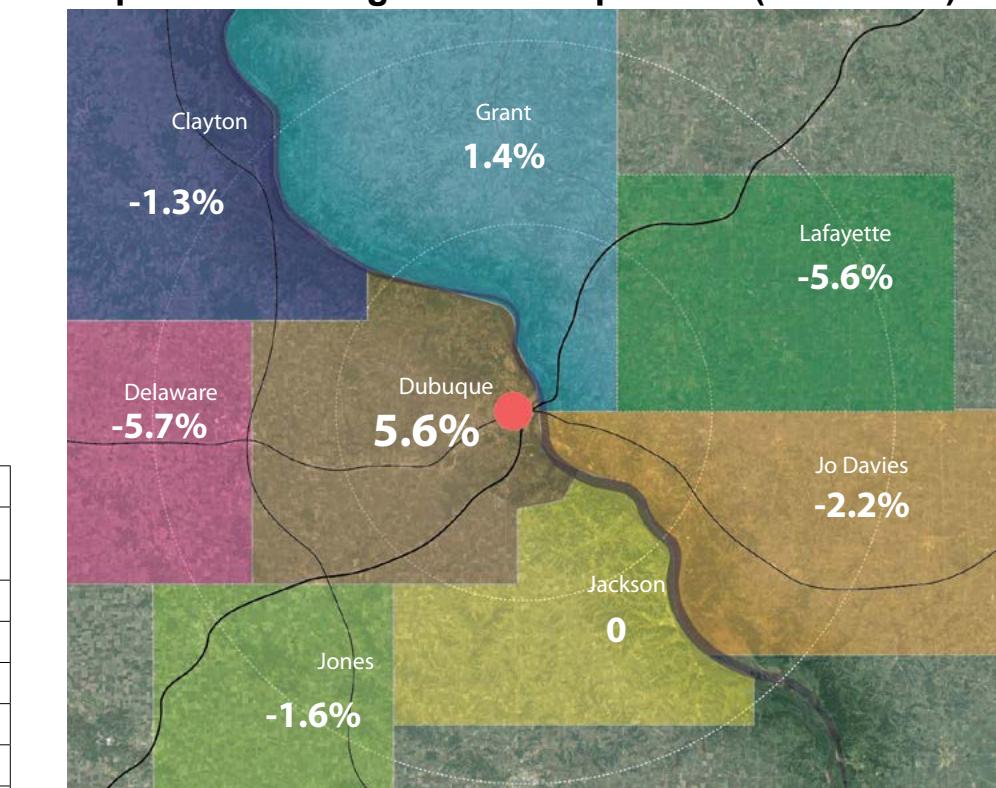
Dubuque and Surrounding Counties				
County	2010	2020	change	
Dubuque County	93,600	98,677	5,277	5.6%
Grant WI County	51,200	51,900	700	1.4%
Lafayette WI County	22,768	21,400	-1,278	-5.6%
Jo Davies IL County	19,848	19,485	-443	-2.2%
Jackson IA County	20,638	20,432	-2	0
Jones IA County	17,764	17,488	-276	-1.6%
Delaware IA County	18,127	17,093	-1,043	-5.7%
Clayton IA County	16,863	16,611	-252	-1.3%

Cities in Dubuque County				
City	2010	2020	change	% of County growth
Dubuque	57,637	59,899	2,262	3.9%
Asbury	4,170	5,943	1,773	42%
Dyersville	4,158	4,477	319	7.7%
Cascade	2,159	2,388	227	10.5%
Epworth	1,860	2,023	163	8.8%
Peosta	1,377	1,908	531	38.6%
Farley	1,537	1,766	229	14.9%

### City of Dubuque Fuels Dubuque County's growth

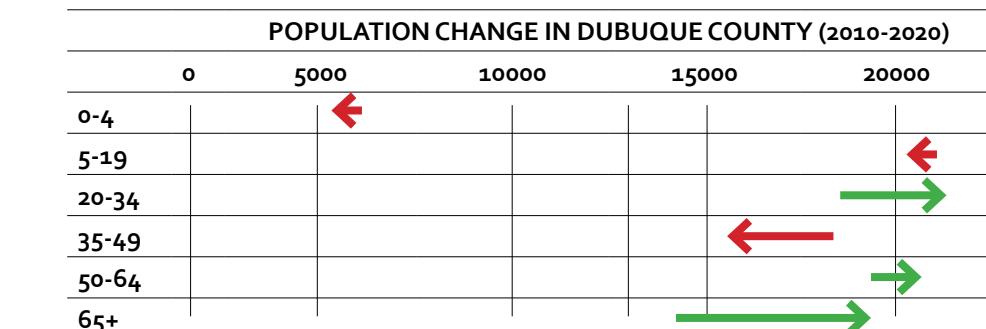
While some surrounding communities are growing at a faster rate, the City of Dubuque remains the center of population and is responsible for 43% of the County's population growth, despite limited land and shrinking household size.

## Population Changes in Dubuque Area (2020-2022)



### Dubuque County is a Regional Center

Dubuque County has seen population growth over the past few decades, much of it within the City of Dubuque. Population in surrounding counties has been declining.



### Older Population, More Households

Similar to the rest of the country, Dubuque County is getting older. As the baby boom generation ages, the number of people over fifty years of age is increasing. Meanwhile, with families having fewer children the number of children is declining. This results in more smaller households.

# Trends Analysis

## Dislocation of workers

Covid introduced hybrid work opportunities for nearly all office workers. With nearly all downtown office workers no longer attached to their office space five days a week, they have more flexibility with where they choose to live, and for some when they choose to work.

Office-reliant downtowns are most impacted and will likely be very slow to fill vacancies. . With lower demand for office space we are likely to see office to residential conversions as companies reduce their office building footprints. Downtown retail businesses that rely on office workers (printing, restaurants, support services) will also likely contract if they have not done so already.

With the tether between home and the traditional downtown office frayed we are likely to see more remote, decentralized and locally-based work environments. Some in homes, others in coworking spaces, and yet others in public spaces.

### **What this might mean for the Millwork District:**

The Millwork District population is relatively low, only a few hundred people. Assuming many are in industries that support hybrid work, the District likely maintains its daytime population. As an attractive and comfortable place with amenities the Historic Millwork District serves as an “outpost office” either in the home or in a coffee shop, lobby, or lounge, for residents and others looking for a good non-office location to work.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- B1a:** Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building.
- E2b:** Support artist lofts and or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements.
- E2a:** Target smaller residential units that would appeal to a younger demographic within and around the District.
- E2c:** Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees.

## The commute isn't what it used to be

Commuting patterns have changed significantly and there is no sign of them going back to “two peaks” per work day. Infrastructure (roads and highways) designed to move large amounts of cars to downtown offices is not a driver of economic development as it once was.

With this change, cities can reclaim right-of-way space, and work with neighborhoods and communities to re-purpose and re-localize public rights-of-way so they meet the modern needs of economic development. Some cities are turning to car free zones, others to road diets that include safe and protected bike lanes, some are peeling back highways that have divided their downtowns, and others are reversing one-way streets back to two-way traffic.

### **What this might mean for the Millwork District:**

While there are no one-way roads within this district, pedestrian-friendly space within the right-of-way is still limited due to the minimal distance between many historical warehouse buildings and the width required by today's modern two-way roads — especially with the inclusion of on-street parking.

The edges of the District are heavily impacted by one-way roads that were originally designed to move high volumes of cars into or through the downtown. In particular, White Street, Central Avenue, and 9th Street create poor pedestrian environments and a daunting barrier to those crossing between Main Street and the Millwork District.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- B2a:** Improve the relationship to Downtown by enhancing pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets.
- B2b:** Study the two-way conversion of White Street and Central Avenue.
- B2c:** Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding, signage, and artful/active underpasses.

## Being outdoors is healthy

Thanks in part to the pandemic, people are rediscovering the restorative power of nature and generally valuing being in the outdoors. Biophilic design, or using nature to heal, is emerging as an important consideration in architecture and urban design. Not to be construed as a rejection of city living, this trend should be viewed by city planners as an opportunity to rethink public spaces as an integral part of a holistic public health strategy.

### **What this might mean for the Millwork District:**

The large historical structures in the district are both its greatest asset and one of its greatest challenges. The scale of the buildings limit the ability to create traditional green space and streetscape amenities like trees and plant beds that soften the urban environment.

While it is unreasonable to expect the Millwork District to be transformed into a garden-like environment, attention can be given to make existing and future public spaces more lush, a human-scaled counterpoint to the imposing form of the buildings.

It is also important to consider the connections to city-wide and regional open spaces. Trails and paths that are safe, well-marked, and direct will enhance these connections and make this district a more desirable place to live and work. Enhanced pedestrian connectivity will also facilitate more foot traffic and result in an increased sense of public safety and greater economic activity.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- B1a:** Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building.
- B2e:** Enhance bicycle connections to the District by creating a protected bike network between this district, Bee Branch, Port of Dubuque, Chaplain Schmitt Island, and Main Street.
- B1b:** Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees.
- B2d:** Create the 7th Street Connection: “From Shot Tower to Clock Tower”.

## E-commerce won the pandemic

The trend towards e-commerce accelerated during the pandemic. Online retail businesses grew significantly. This put added stress and pressure on most 'brick and mortar' businesses. Commodity based grocery, electronics and clothing are three of the retail categories most impacted by e-commerce. And the impact on physical storefronts has been transformative, even dubbed the "retail apocalypse".

Traditional 'brick and mortar' retail is still desirable for many customers because they value the experience and the connection to a local retailer. However even small local retailers who are surviving in the competitive market likely have an online presence that supports their bottom line.

### ***What this might mean for the Millwork District:***

For retail patrons, a visit to a store must be an experience. Similar to individual storefronts, the public's experience of the Millwork District, from their first impression to when they leave, is incredibly important if we want to invite, retain and keep people coming back.

There are various types of business within this district that require year-round foot traffic during the day and night. A rich mix of uses that drive foot traffic, together with events and high density employment and housing can support small retailers in the Millwork District.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- E2c:** Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees.
- C1c:** Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events that draw attention to the unique environment of the District.
- C2b:** Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/manufacturing companies and individuals in the District.
- E1b** Support creative development opportunities with anchor tenants that are aligned with vision of the District.

## Rise in urban production districts

After the recession of 2008 many unemployed workers turned to craft and artisan ventures. This trend accelerated in 2020 with re-shoring and uncertainty of supply chains, resulting in a rise in demand for in-town urban production space. Advanced manufacturing, local food, artisan production, and craft industries have been on a steady rise for the past ten years. These craft industries are generally clean, small and reliant on specialized skills and access to workforce, rather than access to highways, distribution networks, large facilities and bulk materials. These emerging companies often need smaller, affordable spaces instead of the expansive warehouses or even traditional office buildings that larger corporations require. Their needs for space are often well tailored to former industrial areas that are adjacent to or even co-mingled with urban neighborhoods.

### ***What this might mean for the Millwork District:***

The Millwork District was a production and manufacturing district employing thousands of people and driving the pre-20th Century economy of Dubuque. Dubuque remains a strong manufacturing economy, however most of that employment is now on the west end of town or spread throughout the county. The Millwork District could leverage its mixed-use vision to spur new urban production or artisan uses.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- E2b** Support artist lofts and or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements.
- C2b:** Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/manufacturing companies and individuals in the District.

## Public space + culture = shared public value

Cities are increasingly realizing the value of public spaces that reflect their people and culture. Some cities create cultural districts in which extra efforts are made to celebrate and preserve the legacy of an area, promote equitable development, promote community ownership, and increase access to wealth-building and educational opportunities.

The Millwork District has regional importance; it drove the regional economy and was a source of employment for thousands of Dubuquers for decades. It is also significant as one of the places in Dubuque where artists and creatives found a home and expressed their talents for a decade in the early 21st Century. This area also has significant historical and cultural value related to the indigenous peoples who made their home here prior to colonization by European immigrants.

### ***What this might mean for the Millwork District:***

While the district has a defined period of significance for the purposes of federal designation, it should be recognized it has been home to a variety of people and experiences, and all are important. The historical context of the Millwork District provides an important lens to consider in the design of public spaces throughout the district.

#### **Plan Recommendations Related to this Trend**

- B1a:** Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building.
- C1c:** Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events that draw attention to the unique environment of the District.
- C2a:** Explore artist-in-residence program(s).
- C1a** Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces.
- C1b** Design and implement an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats.
- C2d:** Install signature and interactive artwork throughout the District.

# 2010 Historic Millwork District Master Plan Summary

## The 2010 Master Plan

The original master plan established a vision for defining the District as a new and unique neighborhood for the city. One that leverages the appeal of living and working amongst buildings that represent the industrial history of Dubuque to become a mixed use, urban neighborhood unlike any other in the city. By leveraging the embodied energy of old warehouse buildings that were the engine of the Dubuque economy, a new neighborhood would contribute to the evolution of downtown and the broader city renaissance.

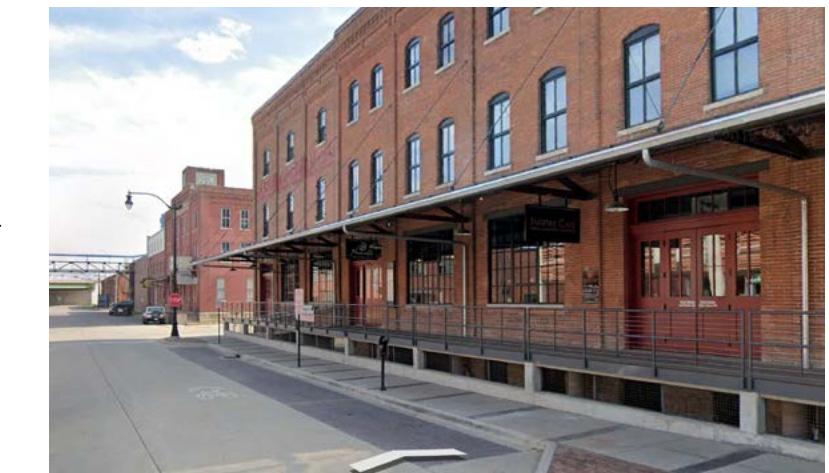
Though development was delayed initially by the great recession (2008), the city remained committed to the plan and began implementing regulatory changes and infrastructure investments to accommodate private development. With grants from the state and federal governments, and support for historic tax credits, the city rebuilt several streets, built a parking garage, and an intermodal facility. Soon thereafter, with help from historic tax credits, developers began renovating a few of the larger buildings on the north portion of the District.

2010

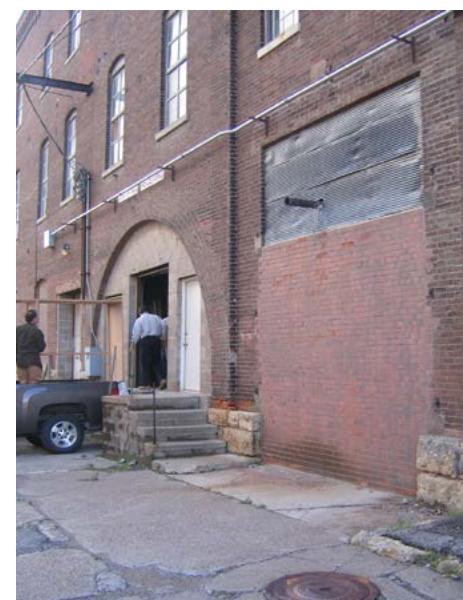


Caradco Building (2010)

2023



Caradco Building (2023)



Alamo Building (2010)



Alamo Building (2023)

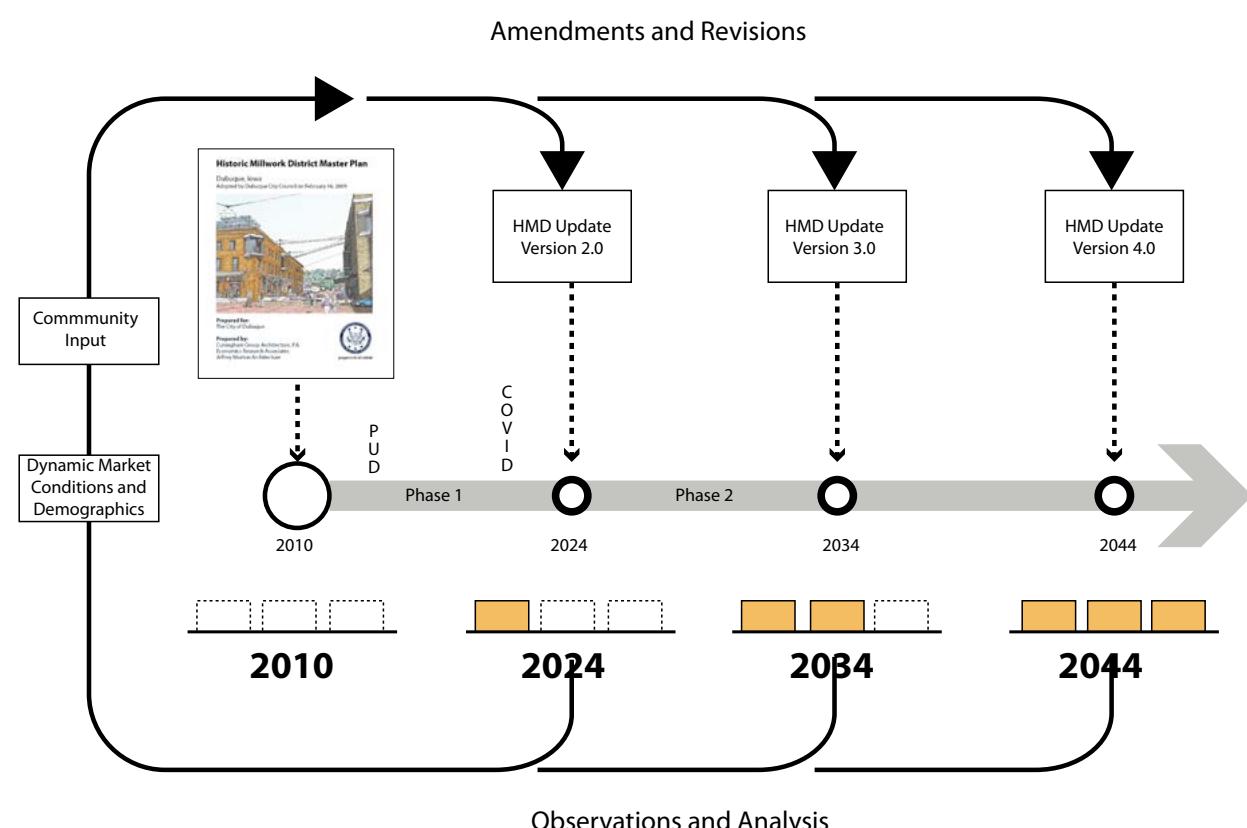
# Purpose of this Master Plan Update

## Why Update a Successful Plan?

The purpose of this plan is not to re-envision the future of the Millwork District. Most agree it is and should always be a special place, and should continue to play a growing role in the success of the city.

This update is an opportunity to take an objective look at how the past decade has played out, to recognize what has been gained, and to be honest about what may have been lost in the District's evolution. It is an opportunity to bring stakeholders together—both those who have been at the table, and importantly, those who have not—to address the current needs of the District while making sure we are also taking the long view to preserve and evolve the qualities of the District that make it special. Now that the District is up and running, this is the correct time to discuss how to enhance its relationship with the greater urban core of downtown Dubuque.

It should remain a special place, but it can't be an island unto itself.



## A Living Document

This document is likely the first of several intentional updates to the original Master Plan, which was intended to be a living document designed to change, to yield, and to integrate new information as the District evolves and conditions inevitably change.

# Planning Process

## Community Input

This plan is a collaborative effort amongst a multitude of stakeholders from both within and outside the geographic definition of the District. A steering committee was formed in fall 2022 to work closely with the consultant team to engage the community and update the master plan. The thirteen-member steering committee represents a range of interests and expertise, consisting of business and property owners, residents, community leaders, city staff and others with a strong interest in the future of the District. The committee met monthly with the consultant team throughout the winter and spring of 2023.

In addition to working with the steering committee, the consultant conducted six focus group meetings. These meetings assembled five to ten individuals of common interests or passions to take a deeper dive into specific topics. Focus groups included business owners, the arts and creative community, city staff, youth, and neighboring residents.

The consultant team also conducted an online survey that was deployed city-wide in order to get input from residents who may not otherwise engage in District activities. The survey yielded over 600 responses, representing a broad cross-section of the community.



# Audit of the 2010 Master Plan Vision Statement

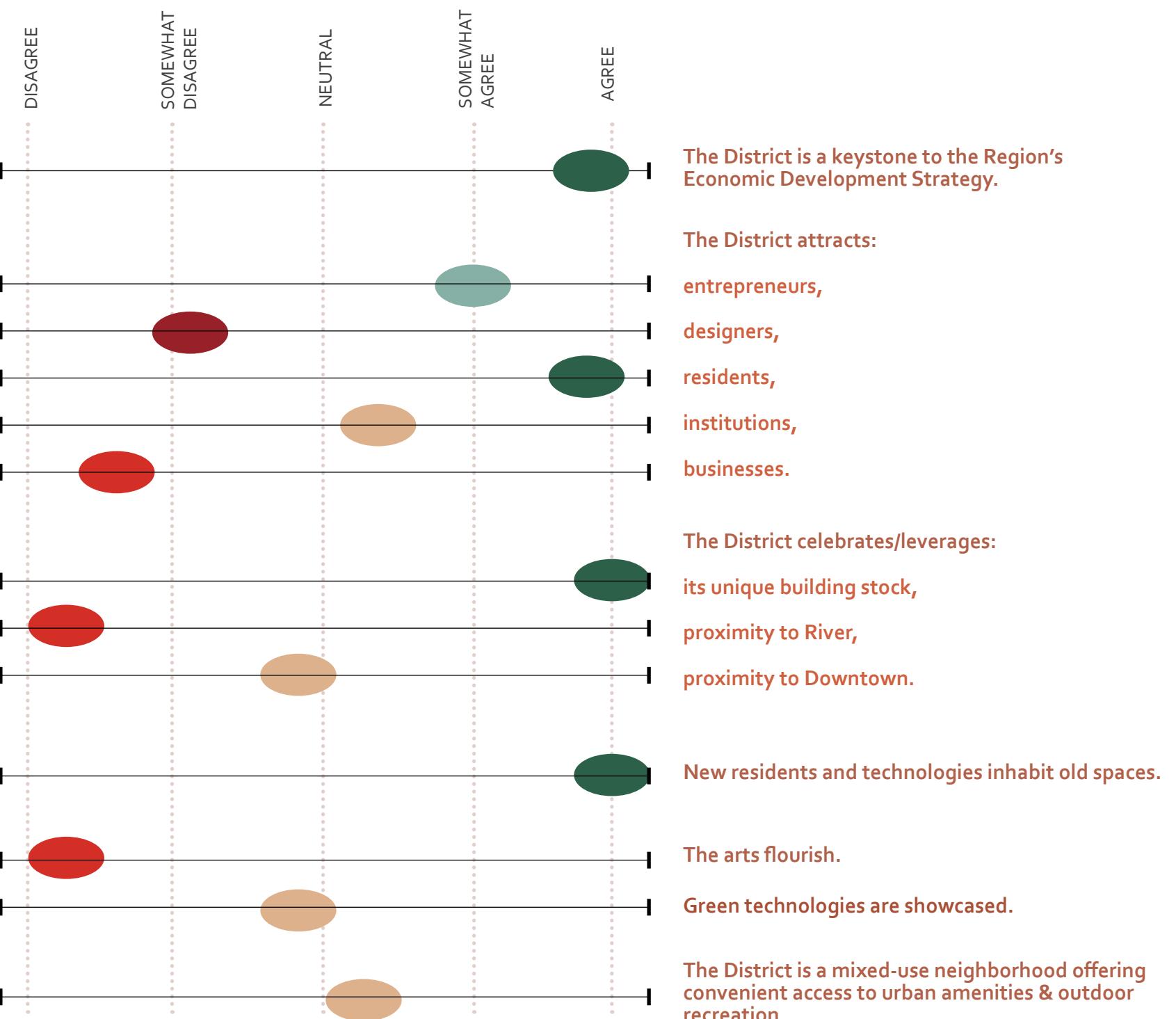
As a part of the planning process, the steering committee was asked to conduct an audit on the vision statement from the 2010 Historic Millwork District Master Plan. The vision statement was deconstructed into its component parts, and individuals were asked to rate the progress of the District against each part of the vision statement. Each of the steering committee members conducted the exercise individually. The graphic at the right illustrates the composite evaluation.

In many categories, the District's revival over the past decade has been in alignment with the vision. It is a key component to the regional economic development strategy, it attracts residents and entrepreneurs, and the old buildings have become the centerpiece of the revival.

While there is much to celebrate, there are areas of the vision that have not been accomplished over the past decade. Businesses, especially retail, have struggled to gain a foothold, the arts do not have a strong presence, and proximity to the river is not leveraged as an asset.

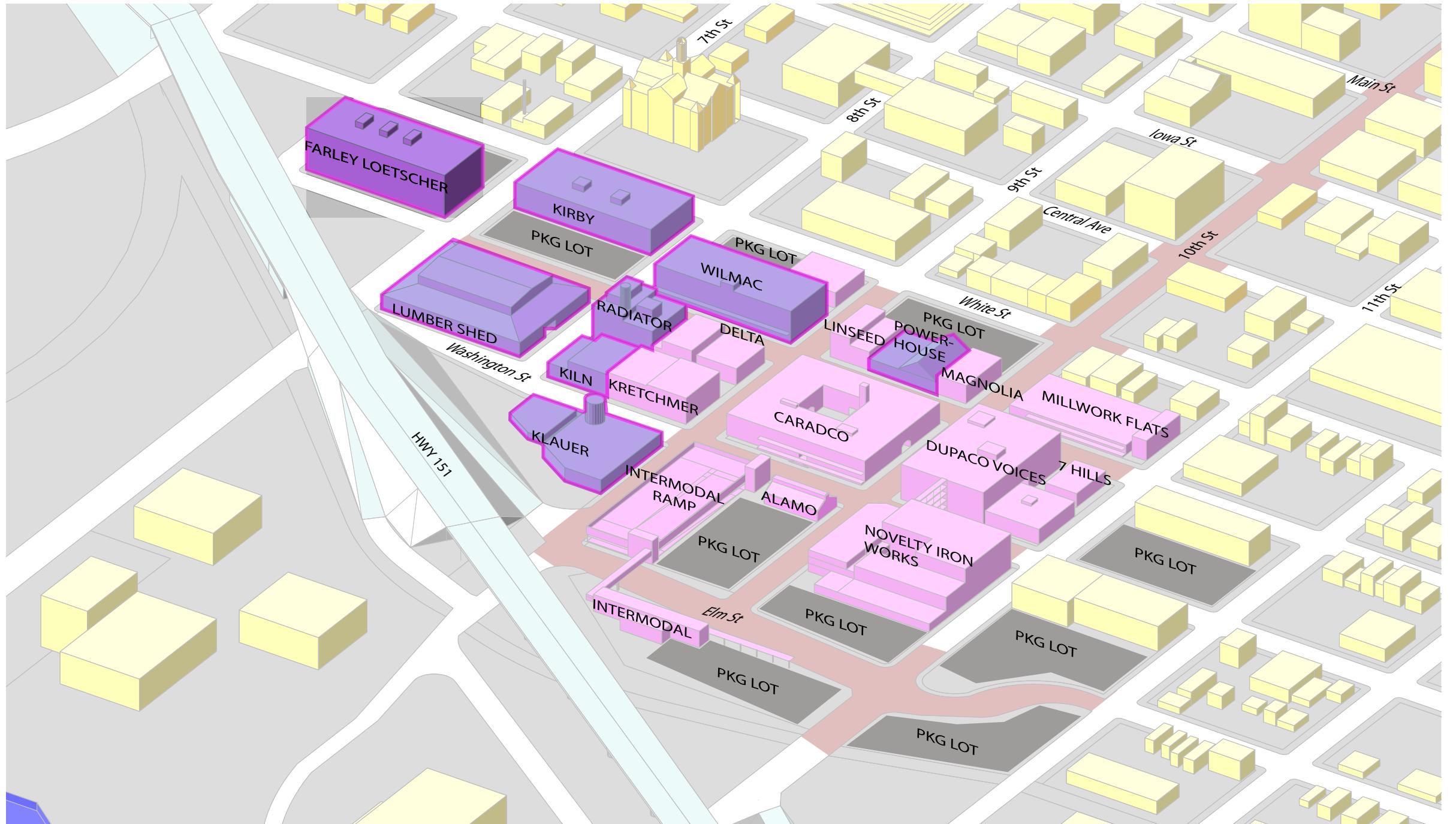
## 2010 VISION STATEMENT

*The District is a keystone to the Region's Economic Development Strategy. The District attracts entrepreneurs, designers, residents, institutions, businesses. The District celebrates/leverages its unique building stock, proximity to River, proximity to Downtown. New residents and technologies inhabit old spaces. The arts flourish. Green technologies are showcased. The District is a mixed-use neighborhood offering convenient access to urban amenities & outdoor recreation.*



## Progress to Date

## The District Today



The first phase (ten years) of redevelopment has yielded approximately 200 residential units and 400,000 SF of commercial development (hotel, event space, retail and office).

During this time, the city has invested in new roads, a parking structure, an intermodal facility, and new surface parking lots.

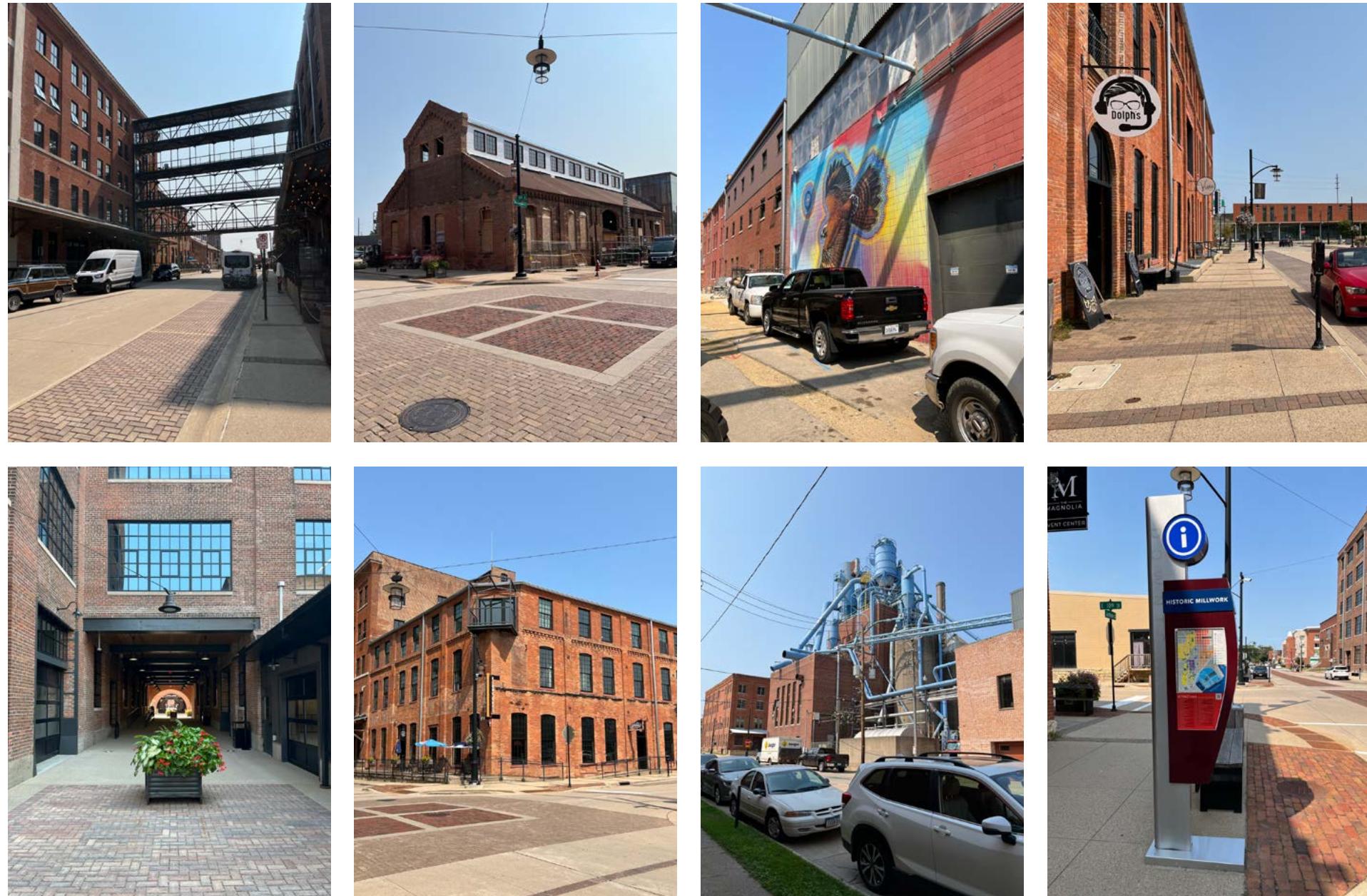
# Public Realm Audit

The most distinguishing characteristic of the Historic Millwork District is a consistent architectural vernacular that includes multi-story warehouse buildings constructed with brick façades that feature tall windows and first floors elevated above the street level. It is obvious that many of these buildings were constructed during a similar time using similar materials. The result is a uniform, canyon-like urban experience, more similar in urban form to a major urban downtown like Minneapolis or Chicago than a city of 60,000 people.

The brick materials that typify most of the buildings are now celebrated in the ground plane through the walkways and streetscapes of the district, resulting in a cohesive aesthetic. Upon arrival, it's clear that there is a great appreciation for the historic beauty and a recognition that this architectural framework is integral to the identity of the district.

The preservation of architectural forms, while integral to the sense of place, also creates challenges to wayfinding. Without obvious landmarks or repeating wayfinding signage that deviates from the meticulously maintained corridors, it can be disorienting which direction and which part of the district you are in. Wayfinding challenges are also exacerbated by the lack of visibility of businesses from the street due to many storefronts obscured by shadows beneath historical overhangs, elevated railings and fences separating businesses from the street level, and buildings that stretch for an entire block without an obvious entrance. At times it feels like the architecture is more obstacle than amenity.

However, the areas that have been recently improved are obvious examples of how these architectural challenges can be overcome to create spaces that are unique, intriguing, and when fully developed, can be a destination for people throughout the city and region looking for a mix of historical and contemporary experiences. Pedestrian-scale improvements like street trees, planters, art, gateway features and wayfinding signage will soften the district's rigid grid and more inviting experience for visitors to explore the fascinating history and modern amenities that exist in the district.



# Existing Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

The district is defined by White Street to the west, Highway 151 to the east, 11th Street to the north and East 6th Street to the south. The resulting footprint is a narrow triangle of thirteen blocks, not including some triangular partial blocks along the eastern edge of the district. Within this thirteen-block footprint is a wide variety of roadway typologies, including a major one-way arterial road, two-way arterial truck route and local roads with parallel parking and on-street bike lanes. There is also a high percentage of surface parking throughout the district.

Fast moving traffic and physical barriers along the edges of the District makes it difficult to get in and out of the district. The edges are clear, but they are not welcoming.

Comparatively, the immediate core of the District is relatively comfortable for pedestrians due to narrow streets, comfortable sidewalks and safe intersections. However as the District grows to the north and south the high speeds on 9th Street and 11th Street will become problematic to pedestrians.

The Intermodal Parking Ramp is a destination point for vehicles and a point of beginning for many pedestrian trips. The entire district is accessible from this relatively central location that allows people to walk to the edges of the district within five minutes. The Dubuque Intermodal Transportation Center is also located along 9th Street, which serves as a gateway into the district from the adjacent Highway 151 off-ramp to the east.

There are solutions for slowing traffic and enhancing the existing underpasses to Highway 151. Recommendations are included later in this report to slow traffic surrounding the district, create a sense of arrival at key intersections along the edges, and encourage through traffic to provide more obvious points of entry and exit for vehicles and pedestrians to, from, and within the Historic Millwork District.

## Vehicular Circulation



## Pedestrian Circulation



# Walkability Analysis

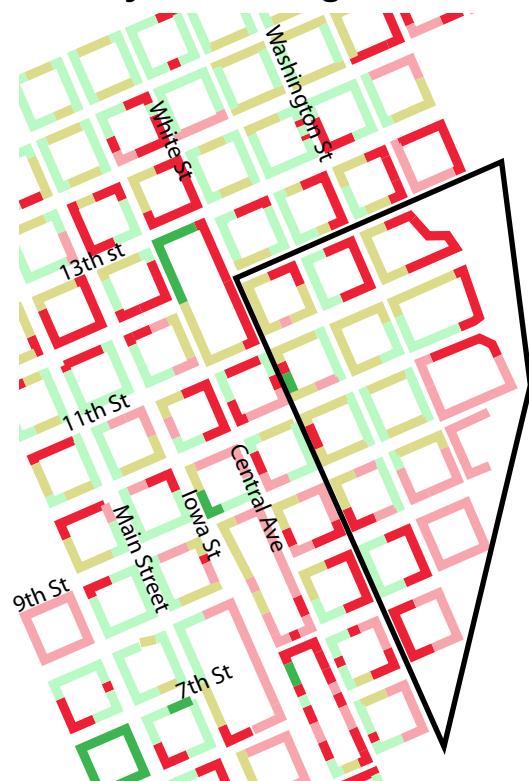
The success of urban environments relies heavily on the quality and comfort of their pedestrian environments. Unlike suburban shopping or office districts that depend on automobile access, parking visibility, and large developments, downtowns attract people because they are inviting, walkable, varied and comfortable at a human scale.

The pedestrian environment in downtowns is generally defined by the sidewalk and its relationship to the street and the private properties alongside it. High quality pedestrian environments tend to attract pedestrian scaled and oriented developments. Poor quality pedestrian environments deter investment.

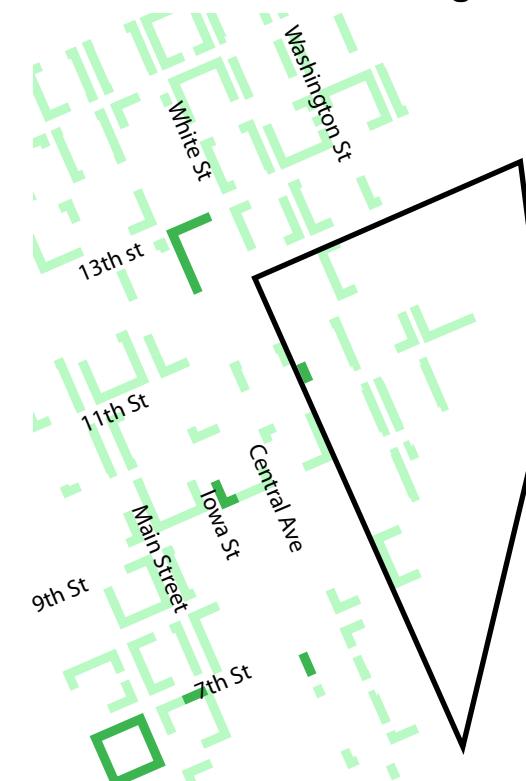
Continuity of the pedestrian environment across multiple blocks and between districts is essential to the overall success of a Downtown for the simple reason that it offers visitors and residents easy access to a variety of experiences as they move throughout the city.

The analysis diagrams on this page rate each block face in downtown Dubuque according to the quality of its pedestrian environment. Block faces with comfortable sidewalks (minimum of 6' wide and shaded, with on-street parking to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic) and building fronts with multiple doorways and frequent windows are considered "good" or "great". If a sidewalk lacks width, is directly adjacent to fast moving cars, or fronted with blank walls or surface parking, it is considered "poor" or "bad".

## Quality of Frontage



## Good and Great Frontages



### Great and Good Frontages:

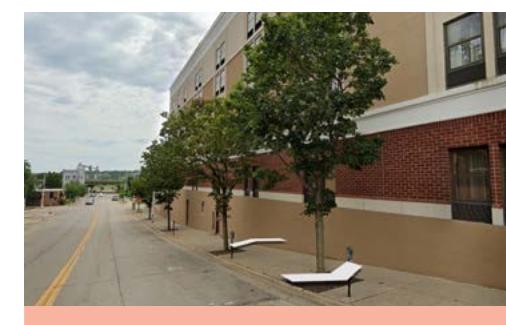
The highest quality pedestrian environments follow a clear pattern: they are generally located on the north/south streets - defining the core of Main Street, the Millwork District and the Washington Neighborhood. Yellow indicates streets with good or great pedestrian frontages on both sides of the street.



Great



Good



Poor



Bad

## Poor and Bad Frontages



### Bad and Poor Frontages:

Most east/west streets and several of the heavily traveled north/south streets are poor pedestrian environments. This contributes to the perceived disconnection of downtown and the feeling that downtown consists of "islands". Blue indicates streets that have bad or poor pedestrian frontages on both sides of the street.

# Key Findings: Assets and Liabilities

## What is working?

### IDENTITY AND CHARACTER:

The District is a unique physical environment unlike any other in the city and region. The buildings, streets and sidewalks together create an environment that pays honor to the City's past while looking to the future. Businesses and residents choose to come to the District because it offers an environment one cannot find elsewhere.

### AN EMERGING NEIGHBORHOOD:

Housing has been successful. People enjoy living in the District. Many are proud of living in the District and enjoy sharing their neighborhood with others.

### EVENTS, HOSPITALITY AND VISITORS

The District has become a destination for visitors in the region and home to several event venues for weddings, fund-raisers and exhibitions. The unique spaces and shops offer a special and flexible environment for people visiting for the weekend or the day. The Historic Millwork District is typically cited alongside other regional attractions such as the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, the Port of Dubuque, Galena, and Dyersville.

### PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Consistent with other success stories throughout Dubuque, the revival of the Historic Millwork District can be partially attributed to the public / private partnerships that have come together to advance the vision. The public sector providing leadership, regulatory and policy support, and funding; and the private sector bringing capital, creativity, and risk to the table. Notably, the partnerships have evolved over time as stakeholders in the District have evolved. Today, the future of the District is in the hands of many different people, not just property owners. Residents, business owners, and others work alongside institutions, the public sector, and the real estate community to advance initiatives and grow the District.

## What is NOT working?

### PUBLIC SPACE:

*The Historic Millwork District lacks prominent public space for gathering, relaxation, and recreation* for visitors and daily users. The streets and sidewalks are comfortable and well-designed, but they do not offer space for activity other than walking or driving.

### INCLUSIVITY:

*The Historic Millwork District lacks a broad cross section of people on a daily and weekly basis.* The District attracts visitors on weekends and for events, however it lacks a critical mass of people coming and going on a daily basis. For many in Dubuque, there is little reason to visit the District, except perhaps for a special occasion.

### CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

*The Historic Millwork District is not well connected to other parts of the city.* People know where it is, but the edges are 'hard'. There is a sense that there is no front door to the District or a welcoming entry experience. Once in the middle of the District, people can get oriented; however due to lack of wayfinding it can be hard to find. Though only a few blocks from Downtown and the riverfront, the District can feel isolated.

### STREET LIFE

*The Historic Millwork District has a curated feel to it* which has the unintended consequence of creating an air of formality, exclusivity, and inaccessibility. Though the streets are public, there is no true public space for gathering. Many food and retail offerings have relatively high price points, catering to a narrow clientele.

### AMENITY

*The District lacks some amenities that are important for daily users.* Simple lunch options, grocery and green space in the District were cited by many as basic amenities that would make living and working in the District more pleasant.



## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

# Executive Summary: Primary Recommendations

## Vision Statement:

The Historic Millwork District will connect people to the history and future of Dubuque, to each other, to surrounding districts and to the larger Driftless Region by focusing on three categories of improvements; **built environment, economy and culture**.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

*Continue to nurture an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community by:*

#### **B1: Investing in spaces that are inviting, inclusive, and social.**

[B1a: Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building.](#)

[B1b: Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees.](#)

[B1c: Preserve and enhance the existing "activated alley" running between Jackson Street and Washington Street.](#)

#### **B2: Improving connectivity between the District, other parts of Downtown and the City.**

[B2a: Improve the relationship to Downtown by enhancing pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets.](#)

[B2b: Improve Central and White Streets by making them safer, slower, easier to cross and more conducive to redevelopment.](#)

[B2c: Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding, signage, and artful/active underpasses.](#)

[B2d: Improve the Underpass Experience](#)

[B2e: Create a 7th Street Connection: "From Shot Tower to Clock Tower".](#)

### ECONOMY:

*Encourage a network of mutually-beneficial businesses that result in a united but diverse landscape of workplace, residential and business ventures by:*

#### **E1: Continuing to support the reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures in the District**

[E1a Actively support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit program to assist; and aggressively seek additional resources to advance redevelopment of buildings.](#)

[E1b Support creative development opportunities with anchor tenants that are aligned with the vision of the District.](#)

[E1c: Implement a parking management strategy](#)

#### **E2: Attracting young and innovative residents, employees, and companies to the Historic Millwork District**

[E2a Encourage smaller residential units that would appeal to a younger demographic within and around the District.](#)

[E2b Support artist lofts and/or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements.](#)

[E2c: Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees.](#)

[E2d: Expand the District's online and media presence](#)

#### **E3: Activating the public realm through creative, innovative and experimental businesses, ventures and events.**

[E3a: Pursue co-tenant arrangements between anchor and related entrepreneurs.](#)

[E3b Encourage events and arrangements that support low cost/ low barrier to entry business endeavors.](#)

### CULTURE:

*Educate and celebrate Dubuque's unique industrial history, present-day events and future opportunities by:*

#### **C1: Creating educational opportunities for people to learn about the history and current happenings of the District**

[C1a Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces.](#)

[C1b Design and implement an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats.](#)

[C1c: Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events that draw attention to the unique environment of the District.](#)

#### **C2: Supporting opportunities for an expanded performance and visual arts presence in the Historic Millwork District**

[C2a: Explore artist-in-residence program\(s\).](#)

[C2b: Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/ manufacturing companies and individuals in the District.](#)

[C2c: Recruit an arts oriented anchor to the District.](#)

[C2d: Install signature and interactive artwork throughout the District](#)

[C2a: Activate and build stewardship of public spaces with regular and event programming](#)

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

*Continue to nurture an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community by:*

- **B1: Investing in spaces that are inviting, inclusive, and social.**
  - B1a:** Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building
  - B1b:** Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees
  - B1c:** Preserve and enhance the existing “activated alley” running between Jackson Street and Washington Street
- **B2: Improving connectivity between the District, other parts of Downtown and the City.**
  - B2a:** Improve the relationship to Downtown by enhancing pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets
  - B2b:** Study the two-way conversion of White Street and Central Avenue
  - B2c:** Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding, signage, and artful/active underpasses
  - B2d:** Study the feasibility of a 7th Street Connection: “From Shot Tower to Clock Tower”
  - B2e:** Enhance bicycle connections to the District by creating a protected bike network between this district, Bee Branch, Port of Dubuque, Chaplain Schmitt Island, and Main Street.



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**B1: Investing in spaces that are inviting, inclusive, and social.**

**B1a:** Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building

**B1b:** Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees

**B1c:** Preserve and enhance the existing “activated alley” running between Jackson Street and Washington Street



# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### B1a: Design and construct a Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building

Throughout the gathering of public input, some of the most common terms that were brought up were, "green", "community", "public art" and "performance space". While these amenities could be provided within some of the existing buildings, the plan recommends creation of a prominent, year-round, community space adjacent to the Alamo Building to serve as the heart of the District.

In contrast with the ample square footage inside the buildings of this district, there is relatively little available outdoor space to provide a sizeable community gathering space required to accommodate so many of the amenities requested by the people of Dubuque. The only outdoor site in the Historic Millwork District with appropriate scale, visibility, and adjacent context is the existing surface parking lot to the east of the Alamo Building. While this lot is currently utilized, parking does not provide the most public good to the District at this location. The ongoing parking study has also identified multiple alternative solutions to provide additional parking in the District if this lot were no longer available.

This outdoor community space is an opportunity to provide the District with a luminous, vibrant, verdant, public "face" that highlights not only the District brand, but the intention of the District to be a destination for tourists and residents alike. It could facilitate a variety of programming throughout the year such as a winter pop-up ice rink, concerts and performances, food truck festivals, craft markets, and arts and culture events. Green infrastructure and other built features to support active and passive recreation opportunities will activate the space on a daily basis, and provide a comfortable urban oasis for District visitors and residents.



Kiener Plaza - St. Louis, MO



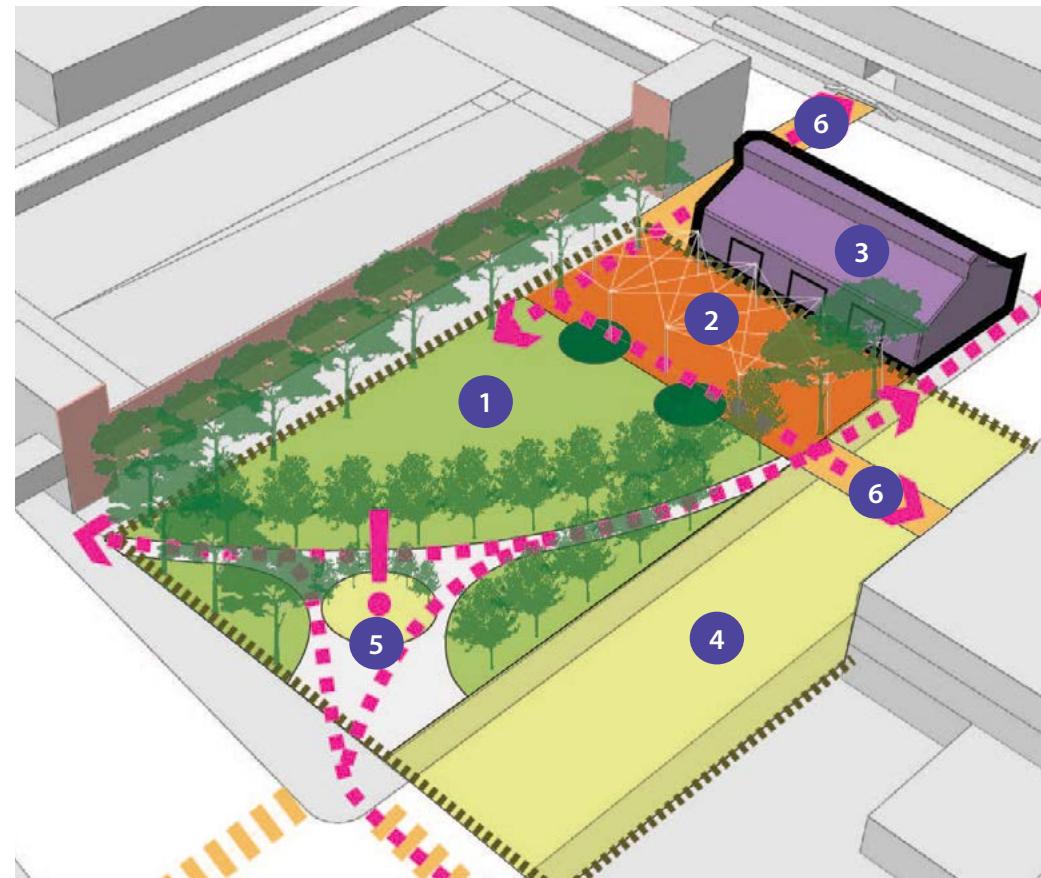
Pulaski Park - Northampton, MA



City Line - North Dallas, TX



Klyde Warren Park - Dallas TX



Note: Community space rendering is a preliminary concept. Additional design study including a robust public input process should be included in the next stages of design to tailor space programming based on community input and feedback.

- 1 PASSIVE RECREATION FOR FLEXIBLE USE
- 2 OUTDOOR SEATING AREA AND EVENT SPACE
- 3 REPURPOSED ALAMO BUILDING
- 4 OPPORTUNITY FOR TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURE AND PUBLIC EVENTS
- 5 LANDMARK AND BRANDING OPPORTUNITY
- 6 EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK

A Community Space (and redevelopment of remaining buildings) are the two most catalytic projects in the Plan. As shown in the [Executive Summary](#), a Community Space supports and catalyzes many of the remaining recommendations while also supporting the District's assets and mitigating its liabilities.

The City has allocated funds for the Park, however it is likely additional funds will be needed to ensure the park has the features and amenities needed to be support year round programming, community gathering, and the range of activities envisioned by the community.

It is important that this space be a public asset - for all of Dubuque. As a destination for all and a community wide asset it will help the growth, vibrancy and serendipity of the District.

In order to move this recommendation forward the City should issue an RFP for Design Services for Schematic Design of Community Space. RFP scope should include:

- » Environmental study to determine subsurface conditions and constraints.
- » Public and private stakeholders
- » Robust public input from the broad community
- » Estimate of probable cost
- » An implementation strategy (phasing and funding)
- » An operations and maintenance plan.

#### Precedent Imagery

Seasonality is a key consideration for the design of this public space. Activating the space with community events, local performances, and scheduled food truck events can provide existing residents and visitors new experiences and a reason to spend time together outdoors.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### B1b: Construct strategically located bump-outs to plant street trees

In order to create a street environment that is more habitable, pleasant, and supportive of foot traffic, the plan recommends adding street trees in strategic locations throughout the District and along streets connecting to Main Street. In order to maintain a standard sidewalk width with the limited right-of-way available, the only way to incorporate an urban tree canopy into the District is to extend the curb line towards the street and replace an on street parking space with plantings, pedestrian amenities, and street trees. Consideration should also be given to using these bumpouts for stormwater management.



### B1c: Preserve and enhance the activated alley

The District's blocks between Washington and Jackson Street share a mid block alley stretching from the Lumbershed to 11th Street. Developed originally as a service alley for moving materials and accessing back-of-house portions of the factories and warehouses, it has today become a unique semi-public feature in the District and an important element of the pedestrian circulation system. The Caradco Building and Dupaco Voices Building have integrated the alley into their renovation, creating a series of courtyards and pedestrian walkways that have become one of the defining features of the District.

As the District continues to build out, the plan recommends this activated alley continue to extend north to the Lumbershed, and south to the Marriot Hotel block.

Consideration should be given to how the alley terminates at both locations. The Lumbershed should have an entry located at the end of the alley. Over time, the parking Marriot hotel parking lot should be encouraged to redevelop with a semi-public space located at the north end of the activated alley.

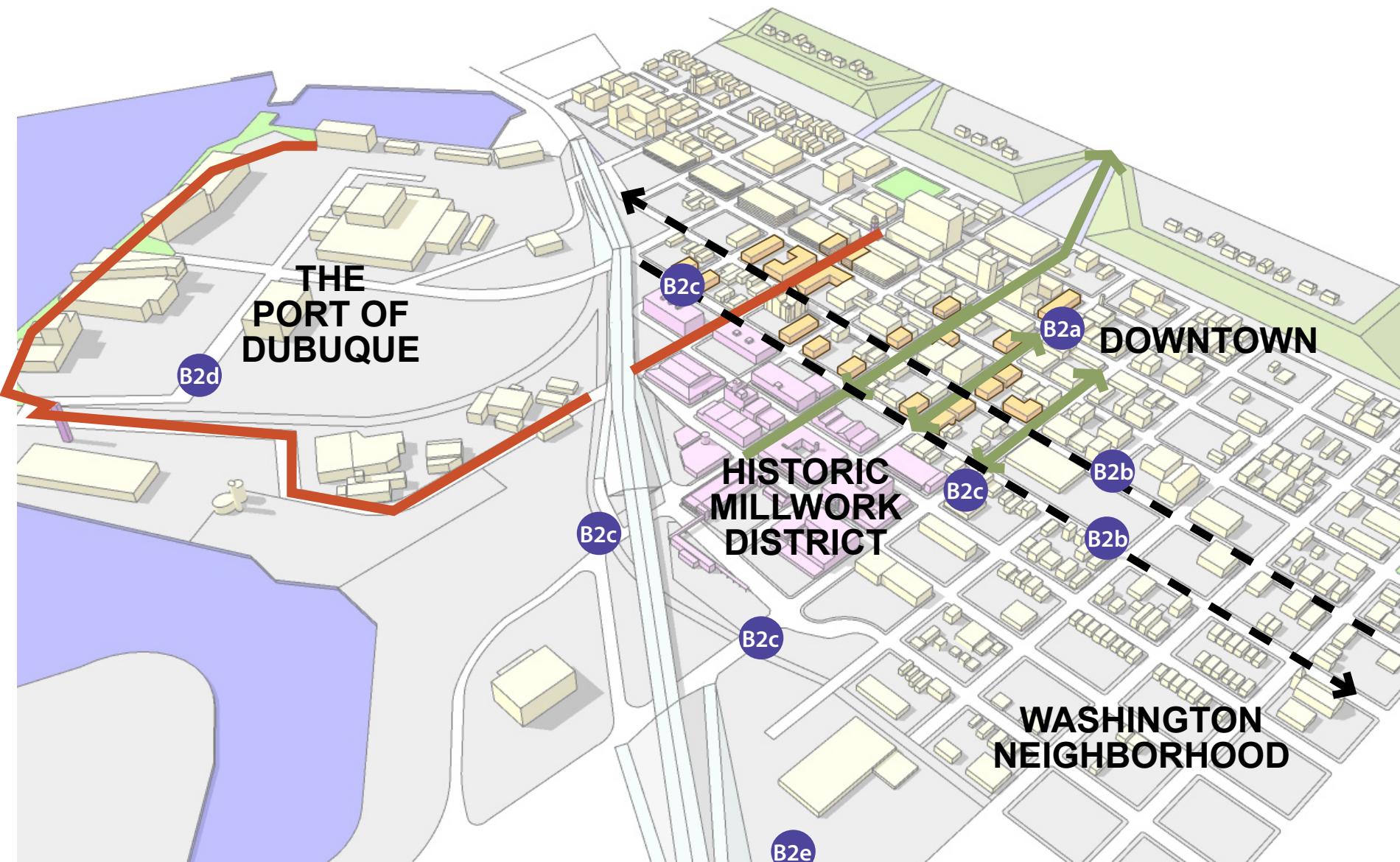
In order to create a successful activated alley, building owners should promote the space as a pedestrian area by creating secondary entrances to buildings, hiding dumpsters, and taking care with the location of exhaust and other service elements of the building.



#### Activated Alley

The Activated Alley runs between Jackson and Washington Street from 7th St to 10th St. It connects courtyards and entrances creating an intimate space that can be celebrated as a special destination within the District.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT



**B2: Improving connectivity between the District, other parts of Downtown and the City.**

**B2a:** Improve the relationship to Downtown by enhancing pedestrian comfort along 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets

**B2b:** Study the two-way conversion of White Street and Central Avenue

**B2c:** Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding, signage, and artful/active underpasses

**B2d:** Study the feasibility of a 7th Street Connection: "From Shot Tower to Clock Tower"

**B2e:** Enhance bicycle connections to the District by creating a protected bike network between this district, Bee Branch, Port of Dubuque, Chaplain Schmitt Island, and Main Street.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

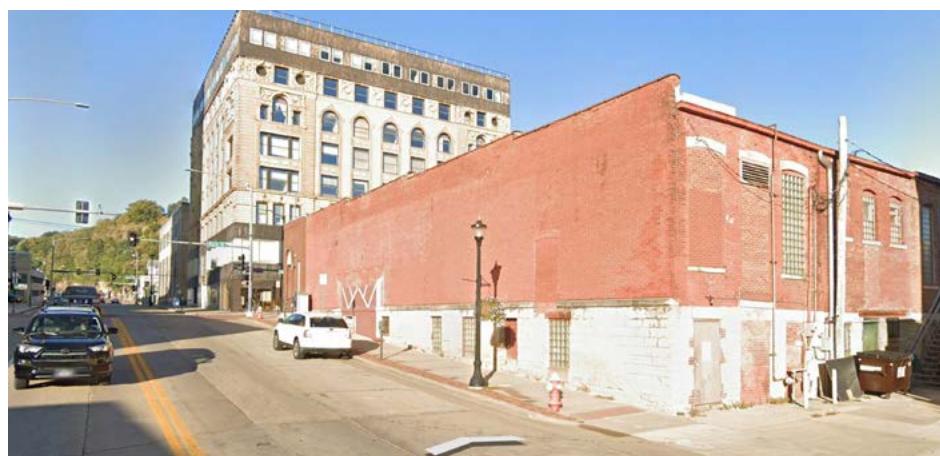
## B2a: Improve the relationship to Downtown by improving pedestrian comfort along 7th 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets

Improvements and investments along 7th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets are essential to creating a complete connection between the District and Main Street, and overcoming the perception that the District and Main Street are far away from each other. Improvements to 9th and 11th Streets within the District will also be important as the District grows north and south beyond its existing core.

The original master plan recommended converting 9th and 11th to two-way streets. While the conversion has improved vehicular access and pedestrian comfort slightly, they still lack adequate sidewalks, lighting, signage, and other amenities for pedestrians. This plan recommends further improvements to ensure these important pedestrian corridors between Main Street and the District are high quality pedestrian environments.

Due to the historic patterns of development in this area of Dubuque, the blocks are oriented north/south. All buildings face the north/south streets of Central, White and Iowa Street - the opposite direction of most pedestrian traffic. This relegates the pedestrians to the sides and backs of the buildings, making it uninviting to walk along the east/west streets.

In order to make a more comfortable connection between downtown and the Historic Millwork District, new development in this area should reorient itself to the east/west streets wherever possible.



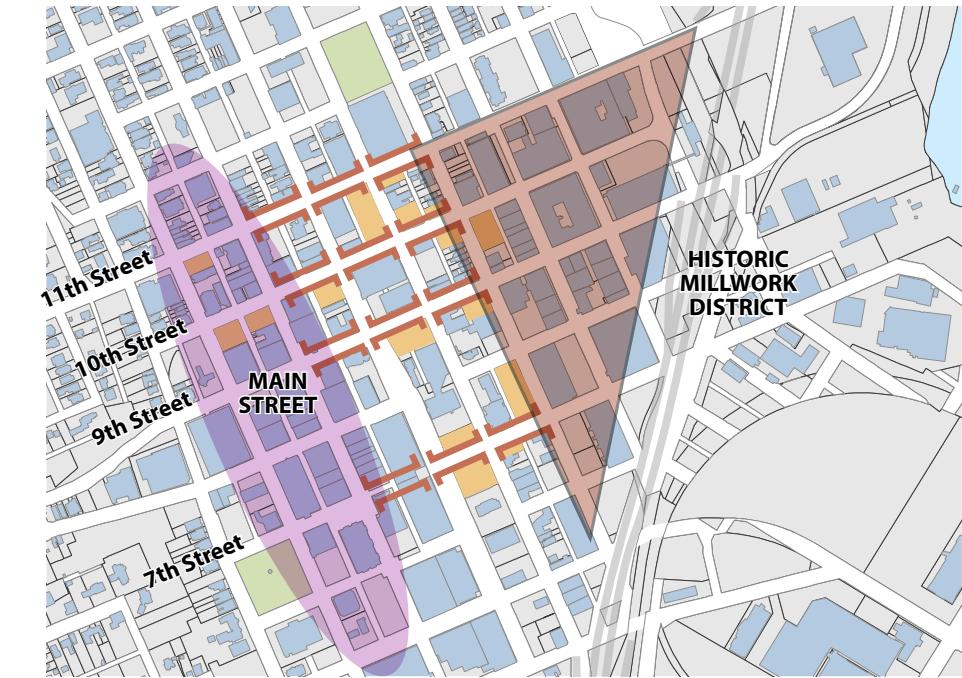
### West 9th Street

The image above illustrates a typical east/west cross street where development faces onto either White Street or Central Avenue, thereby relegating the cross street to blank facades or parking lots.



### Reorienting buildings to cross Streets

Infill development should orient towards the east/west streets, with attractive frontages and comfortable sidewalks.



### Connections to Main Street

7th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Street are important connections between Main Street and the Historic Millwork District. Though there have been some improvements to 10th Street, further enhancements to these streets will be important to overcome the perception that the two areas are far apart.

Potential Improvements to east/west Streets							
	Wider sidewalks	Pedestrian lighting	Street trees	Bike Amenities	Wayfinding and signage	Stop signs to slow traffic	
7th St	X	X	X	X	X		
9th St				X	X	X	X
10th St				X		X	
11th St	X						X

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## PRIORITY PROJECT **B2b: Improve Central and White Streets by making them safer, slower, easier to cross, and more conducive to redevelopment.**

Though only three blocks apart, Main Street and the Historic Millwork District are perceived by many to be far away, separated by an uncomfortable walk. The perceived gap between the two areas is in part due to the pairing of Central Avenue and White Street which shuttle fast-moving, relatively low volumes of traffic (+/- 6,000 vehicles per day) through the downtown on parallel two-lane, one-way roads.

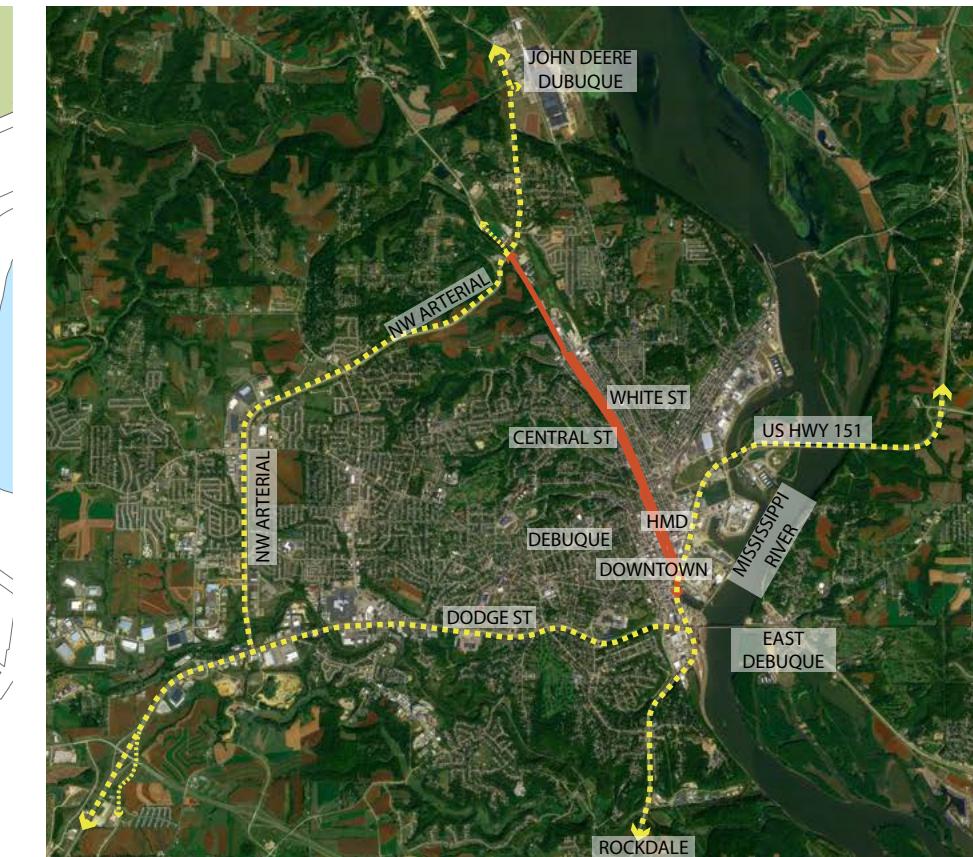
Traffic calming modifications (reducing through-lanes, signal adjustments) can be made to encourage drivers to slow down, which will create a more comfortable environment. However, consideration should be given to study a conversion to a two way system, which will provide better access to both downtown and the Millwork District while calming traffic considerably.

Any modifications to Central Avenue and White Street should take into consideration the commercial and freight needs of area businesses.



### Central Avenue and White Street

Central Avenue and White Street are one-way, two-lane roads with direct access to highway ramps. Though posted at 25 MPH, speeds regularly exceed 40 MPH. With only 6,000 vehicles per day, both roadways can be considered for lane reductions and possibly a two-way conversion.



### Downtown One-Way Streets and Regional Travel

The downtown one way roads (White and Central) were designed to ease traffic movements through Dubuque. However, the Northwest Arterial (built in 1997) provides alternative access to regional highways, which has reduced the need for one-way roads in downtown.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## B2c: Improve the entry experience to the District from all directions through wayfinding and signage - for people arriving by car, bike and on foot.

Improvements to wayfinding and signage will help visitors and locals get to and navigate the District and the surrounding areas.

Consideration should be given to:

- working with the Iowa DOT on adding the Historic Millwork District identification to signage on Highway 61
- adding Historic Millwork District identification to Downtown District signage
- clarifying and simplifying signage and wayfinding to the Elm Street parking lots
- Removing the landscape berms around the Elm Street parking lots and providing clear pedestrian access between parking and the sidewalk to provide a clear line of sight and direct access between the lots and the District
- Creating a welcoming space, kiosk, or wayfinding element for people arriving at the intermodal center.
- Creating entry or threshold signage at the edges of the district - oriented and scaled for people arriving by foot, car, or bike.



### Signage

Signage throughout the city and on the Highway 151 fails to call out the Historic Millwork District as a destination. Though people may know the District is in or adjacent to downtown, it is difficult to find because it is tucked away into a corner of downtown and up against a viaduct.



### Elm Street Lots

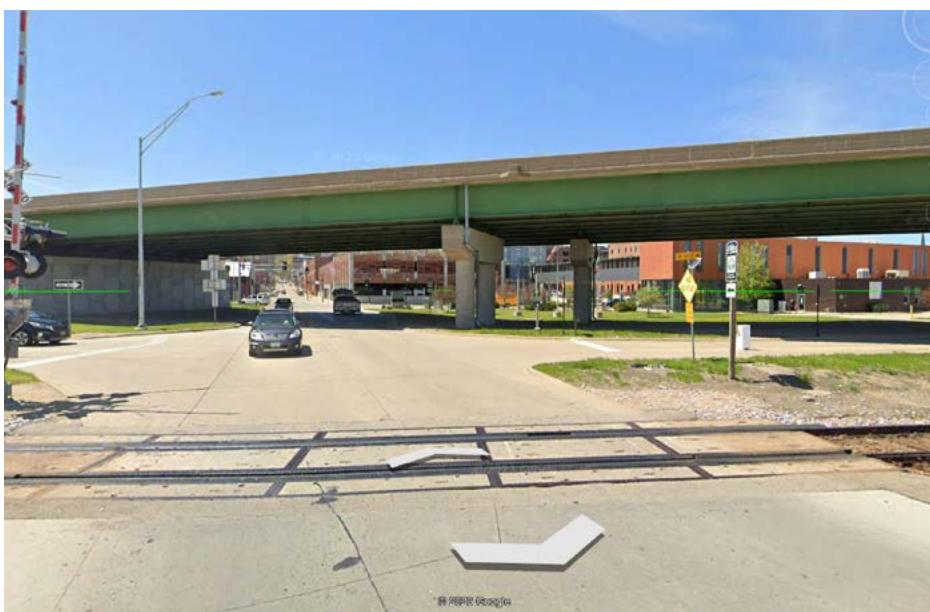
Many spaces in the Elm Street parking lots are under utilized, in part because visitors don't know they are available, and in part because pedestrian connections and visibility to the District are lacking. Simple improvements in wayfinding signage and comfortable sidewalks can help remedy the situation.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

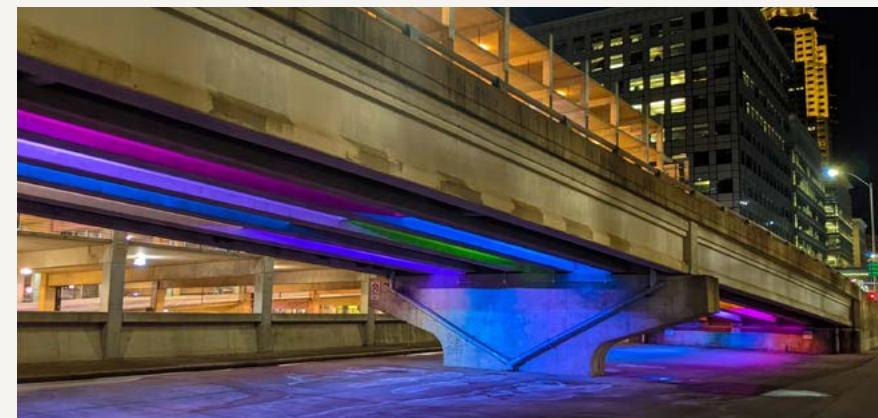
## B2d: Improve the underpass experience

The underpasses on the east edge of the District are important areas for investment because they are the first impression a motorist has of the city upon exiting Highway 151 or visiting from the Port of Dubuque. Consideration should be given to enhancing these areas with artful installations to create gateways that tell the visitor this is a special place and 'you have arrived'.

Improvements to the underpasses will also help connect the District to the Port of Dubuque, emphasizing proximity to nearby destinations and parking ramps.



### REGIONAL PRECEDENTS



#### BOREALIS: 8th Street Viaduct, Des Moines, Iowa

Created by artist Alex Braden, BOREALIS transforms the poorly lit, dreary, concrete wasteland beneath the 8th Street viaduct into a dynamic and engaging light and sound show. The gently shifting lights recall the aurora borealis, the Northern Lights.



#### Bike Tunnel: Okoboji, Iowa

Thomas F. Agran of Iowa City recently completed a mural along the bike trail in the tunnel under the Highway 71 bridge in Arnolds Park. The brightly colored work of art includes renditions of nutty bars, boats, fishing and many more items that represent the essence of the Iowa Great Lakes.



#### Pickleball in Milwaukee

While art is often used to enhance the pedestrian environment under and around highway infrastructure, these spaces can also be used for active recreation and other community activities.

**Jordan Creek Trail Murals: West Des Moines, Iowa**  
The West Des Moines Public Arts Advisory commission sponsored a dozen murals to be installed on Jordan Creek Trail underpass entrance walls. The colorful portals create a more inviting space and help contribute to the enjoyment of biking and walking in the park.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

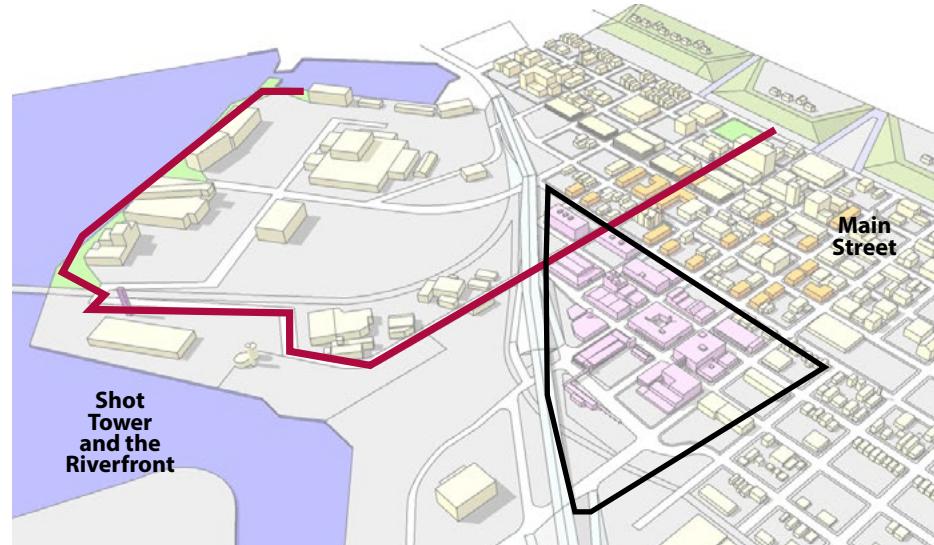
## B2e: 7th Street Connection: the “Shot Tower to Clock Tower” Trail

7th Street offers a primary opportunity to create a strong, high quality, signature connection between three of Dubuque's most important assets: the Historic Millwork District, Main Street, and the Port of Dubuque - as well as to a future asset : DUMA (Dubuque Museum of Art) which is being planned one two blocks west of Main Street.

7th Street could be redesigned as an inviting promenade or a multi-use trail that moves people between these destinations. As a pedestrian throughfare, it could tie together aspects of recreation, history, education, culture, art and economic development.

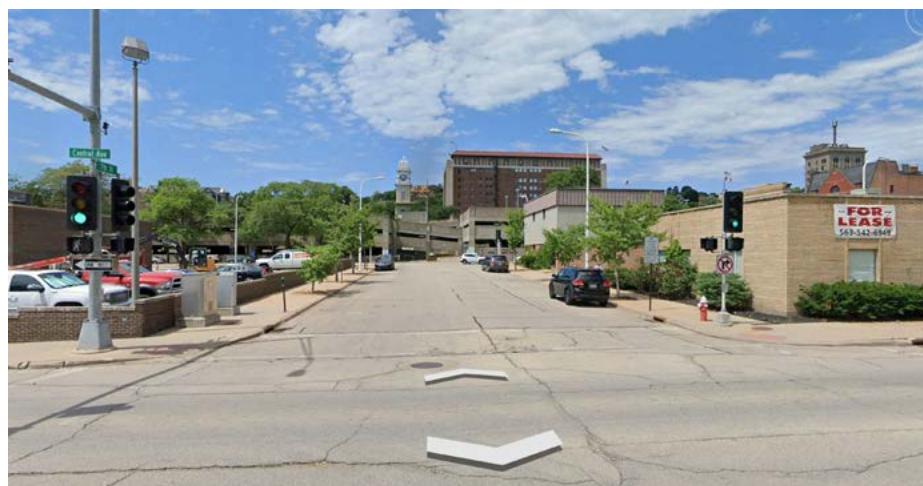
The concept would require changes to the parking garage on Iowa Street. Preliminary analysis suggests a pedestrian connection from Iowa Street to Main Street can be accomplished with removal of one of the ramps connecting north and south parking plates.

the Tower to Tower Connection would also require improvements to 7th Street towards the river. However, as a primary connection between districts it would likely spur economic development along the corridor.



### Shot Tower to Clock Tower Connection

7th Street can be redesigned as a promenade or multi-use trail connecting several important destinations and Districts within the city.



### 7th Street towards the Clock Tower

Currently, 7th Street is terminated with the ramps between two parking garages. Clock Tower Square and Main Street is located just beyond the garages. The plan recommends exploring ways in which 7th Street can become a strong pedestrian connection between Clock Tower Square and the Port of Dubuque.



### PRECEDENT

#### Indianapolis Cultural Trail

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is an 8.1-mile-long urban shared-use path and linear park located in Indianapolis, Indiana. It consists of a downtown loop and three spurs that extend into adjacent neighborhoods and cultural districts. The entire trail is identifiable by tinted concrete pavers, providing visual continuity. Street furniture, trash receptacles, signage, and lighting are also consistent throughout the route.

# Economy:

## ECONOMY:

*Encourage a network of mutually-beneficial businesses that result in a united but diverse landscape of workplace, residential and business ventures by:*

→ **E1: Continuing to support the reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures in the District**

**E1a** Support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit program to assist in rehabilitating historic buildings. Seek additional funds to support redevelopment.

**E1b** Support creative development opportunities with anchor tenants that are aligned with vision of the District.

→ **E2: Attracting young and innovative residents, employees, and companies to the Historic Millwork District**

**E2a** Target smaller residential units that would appeal to a younger demographic within and around the District.

**E2b** Support artist lofts and or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements.

**E2c:** Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees.

→ **E3: Activating the public realm through creative, innovative and experimental businesses, ventures and events.**

**E3a** Encourage events and arrangements that support low cost/low barrier to entry business endeavors.

**E3b:** Pursue co-tenant arrangements between anchor and related entrepreneurs.



# Economy:

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### E1a Actively support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit program to assist; and aggressively seek additional resources and avenues to advance redevelopment of buildings.

Approximately half of the historic warehouse buildings in the District have been redeveloped over the past 10 years. There remains about 600,000 SF in approximately ten buildings that are not yet renovated. redevelopment of these buildings is essential to the ongoing health and growth of the District.

Three of the ten remaining buildings (Kirby, Farley-Loetscher, and Wilmac) are typical warehouse buildings with large floor plates, between 3-6 stories, with heavy concrete structures. As contributing buildings to the Historic District, Wilmac, Kirby, and Farley-Loetscher are eligible for State and Federal Historic Tax Credits.

Together these three buildings make up more than half of the remaining square footage in the District: approximately 430,000 SF. As in the original master plan, this update recommends that these three buildings be redeveloped as primarily residential use. However, non-residential ground floor uses should be considered, especially fronting 7th Street. In order to further diversify the population living in the District, consideration should be given to smaller market rate units or live/work studio units. Depending on the layout and size of units, the three buildings will likely yield in the range of 450-500 units in total.

#### Former Jeld Wen Properties

At the time of the 2010 Master Plan, Jeld-Wen (door and window manufacturer) was operating in several buildings on three of the District's blocks. In 2010 there was no indication that Jeld-Wen would cease to operate so the master plan assumed the District would redevelop around them. However, in 2014, as part of a larger corporate strategy, Jeld-Wen ceased operations and subsequently sold their buildings and properties in Dubuque.

Unlike the Wilmac, Farley-Loetscher, and Kirby Buildings that are all similar building types (multi-story warehouse), the former Jeld-Wen buildings are all unique in size, structure and type. Conversion to housing is possible in some of the smaller multi-story buildings, but unlikely in the larger ones because they have either very large footprints or, in the case of the Lumber Shed, a large single open space not convertible to multi-floor housing.

#### Lumber Shed Building

While not likely to convert to housing, the Lumber Shed building presents a unique opportunity to attract an anchor tenant to the District. A full-block building with clear heights and timber framing, as well as a notable history (it was featured in the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair, then disassembled and reassembled in Dubuque) it has the potential to become a spectacular home for any number of tenants. While this master plan update does not prescribe a particular future use or tenant for this building, its value to the District as an anchor tenant that can bring new people into the District on a regular basis, either as a primary employer, a visitor attraction, or a local destination, should not be ignored. Particular consideration should be given to a tenant who can advance innovation, the arts, recreation or community health and drive visitor traffic to the District throughout the week and year.



Wilmac Building      Kirby Building      Farley-Loetscher Building      Lumber Shed

Redevelopment of the remaining buildings in the district (and the community Space) are the two most catalytic projects in the Plan. As shown in the [Executive Summary](#), redevelopment of these buildings supports and catalyzes many of the remaining recommendations while also supporting the District's assets and mitigating its liabilities.

It is essential for the city to continue to support owner applications for Historic Tax Credits and to advocate for the program at the State and Federal level. Given the complexity and costs associated with these projects they will likely require additional funding support from programs such as [Low Income Housing Tax Credits](#), [Workforce Housing Tax Credits](#), [Sustainability and Climate Change Programs through the Inflation Reduction Act](#), and [Opportunity Zone Funding](#) - among others.

The City should also lend its support to help recruit anchor tenants and potential development partners. However given that the buildings are privately owned, the City can't lead the redevelopment process.

# Economy:

## **E1b: Support creative developments with anchor tenants that are aligned with the vision of the District**

The District is home to several large buildings that likely need anchor tenants that are stable and well capitalized in order to support a feasible redevelopment. Several of the remaining undeveloped buildings in the District are well suited to house anchor tenants. The Kirby, Farley-Loetscher and Wilmac buildings are large buildings with a considerable amount of square footage that would suit an office type anchor tenant. The Lumber Shed and Klauer Buildings are single story buildings better suited to an entertainment, arts, production, or recreational use. While this plan does not identify specific tenants, it recommends seeking anchor tenants in categories related to the arts, craft or artisan production, and/or health and recreation. Ideally, new anchor tenants in the District can:

- advance entrepreneurship through innovation
- bring unique experience-based offerings to the patrons
- bring established links and relationships to networks and communities across the larger region
- bring a high density of workers or visitors into the District throughout the week and all year long
- have a social and outward-facing marketing component

While an anchor tenant can come from outside Dubuque, it is more desirable for it to be from within the community. By finding anchor tenants and partnerships within existing local and regional networks, a single anchor tenant can have the exponential effect of opening the District's door to additional local groups and communities.

# Economy:

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### E1c: Implement a parking management strategy that ensures adequate and well-utilized parking for all users

A downtown parking and mobility plan was conducted at the same time as this master plan update. The findings from that study helped inform the recommendations in this plan.

Access to parking is important to support growth in the District and downtown and in order to maximize access to parking, the city should leverage policies and technology that allow the city to manage parking resources while improving the customer experience for the users.

The primary finding from the Downtown Parking and Mobility Plan is that downtown has a large supply of parking that is not effectively managed, which leads to a perception of scarcity and inconvenience.

With approximately 600 publicly-owned off-street parking spaces in the District (in one ramp and three surface lots), and several thousand publicly-owned spaces within three blocks of the District, and current observed utilization of those spaces being relatively low, there is adequate parking supply in and around the District to support near term growth of the District.

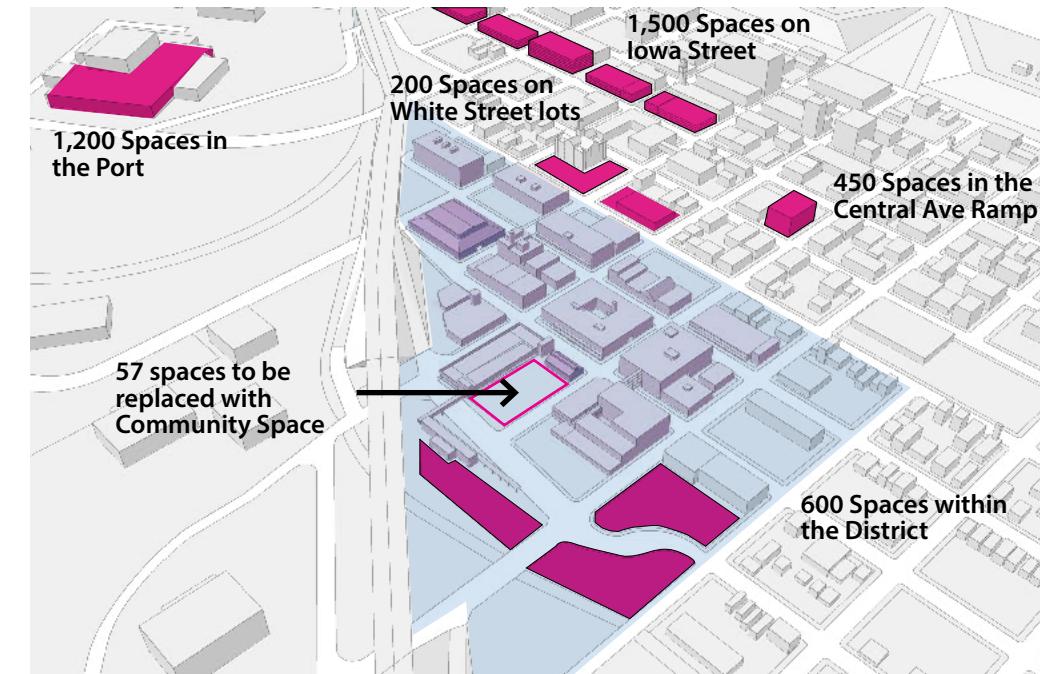
In order to utilize the full complement of parking resources within a few blocks of the District, users will have to reorient their expectations from "parking in the middle of the District" to "parking along its edges". This will be increasingly important when the Alamo Lot is redeveloped as a community park.

In concert with the Downtown Parking and Mobility Plan, this plan recommends:

- **PRIORITY:** Invest in new parking payment collection, access control, and permitting technologies that enable the City to appropriately operate and manage all off-street surface lot and ramp parking in the District for optimal use efficiency, balancing the needs of residents, visitors and employees.
- **PRIORITY :** Invest in wayfinding, lighting, and pedestrian connectivity to enable safe travel around the District and to connect between the District and the rest of downtown.

Special attention should be given to the Elm Street Lots that are highly underutilized yet only a block away from the District.

- **PRIORITY:** Engage the county in a partnership to better utilize parking around the county courthouse.
- Look for opportunities to gain access and control of new surface parking facilities to add to the publicly managed supply of parking. This may come in the form of city purchase and/or shared use agreements with private owners.
- Provide and manage on-street parking and curb areas in the District with a focus on leveraging these areas for use by curb loading and unloading, short-term parking, and other flexible curb uses.
- Consider partnerships with developers that transition surface lots to redevelopment while maintaining the public supply of parking via on-site (e.g., podium) parking. This protects overall parking supply while removing surface parking lots, which are a deterrent to walkability and urban form.
- Encourage shared parking (either between private parties, or between the city and a private party) to encourage efficient parking utilization.
- Continually monitor the issuance of parking permits for access to public-owned and operated off-street facilities, as well as the utilization of these facilities by permitted and non-permitted (short-term/transient) parkers for ongoing management purposes. If facilities are consistently 90% utilized or greater, additional public off-street supply may be needed.
- Ensure that market rates are charged for short-term and long-term permit parking in the District across all users.



#### Parking in and around the District

As the District develops it will have to utilize existing parking spaces along the edges and a block or two away from the District. In order to support a high quality pedestrian environment, public expectations will have to transition from "parking in the middle" to "parking on the edges" of the District.

# Economy:

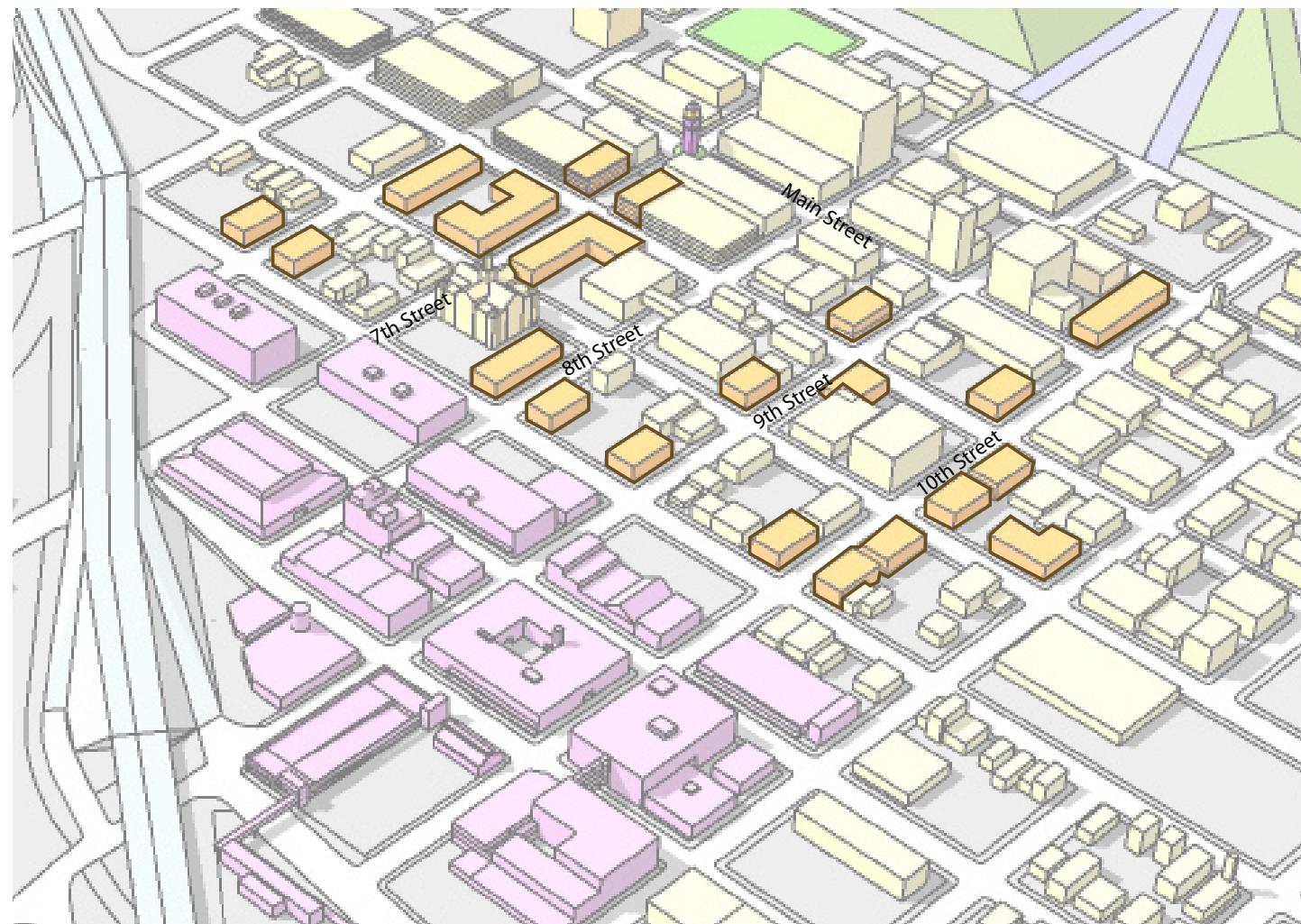
## E2a: Encourage smaller, simpler residential units that would appeal to a younger demographic in and around the District

Typically, warehouse districts in former industrial areas attract young artists or urbanites with a pioneering attitude that choose to live and work in an unfinished, un-amenitized, evolving, and often under-the-radar environment. While Voices from the Warehouse used the District in this manner for several years those were events, not a formal living or working arrangement.

Unlike other warehouse Districts that may move slowly, incrementally and organically towards redevelopment, The Historic Millwork District moved quickly. With full road reconstruction, a parking ramp and a few very large buildings fully redeveloped, the first wave of redevelopment was primarily with and for residents who were willing to pay above-market rates (based on SF) for a finished and high quality environment with built-in amenities. This was due in part to the cost of redevelopment, but also due to the dimensions and layout of existing buildings that enabled larger units and prohibited smaller more affordable units. The success of these projects demonstrated the marketability of a relatively high dollar per square foot price.

With the demonstrated success of renting upper level market rate units, it will be important for the District (and surrounding area) to focus on diversifying as a neighborhood by attracting a wider range of residents. The remaining three large buildings (Wilmac, Kirby and Farley-Loetscher) may serve this need, however it is also possible that the dimensions and cost of redevelopment may prohibit this, as was the case with Caradco and Novelty Iron Works.

It is possible, therefore, that the District will have to look at its surrounding areas as potential locations for smaller, simpler units that would likely attract a younger, less affluent resident. In particular, the area west of the District has several surface parking lots and non-historic buildings that could be considered for redevelopment into smaller market rate and affordable apartment buildings. Due to space restrictions, they would likely have limited parking and limited amenities on these properties. But the appeal of these sites would be their proximity to the District and Main Street.



### Potential infill housing adjacent to the District (in orange)

In contrast to the large buildings in the District, infill housing opportunities adjacent to the District will likely be on smaller lots. This offers the opportunity to build small, simple, "amenity-light" buildings that can be rented at a lower price point relative to the larger warehouse buildings.

# Economy:

## E2b: Support artist lofts and/or buildings that accommodate live/work arrangements

The post Covid economy is proving the desire and need for more advanced and deliberate live/work arrangements. With acceptance of hybrid work, and the premium put on reducing commute times, many people desire a residential arrangement that allows them to work from home ; or adjacent to home.

Consistent with other objectives in the plan that seek to advance the arts in the District, consideration should be given to converting one of the three large warehouse buildings to an artist based live-work building.

Live-work arrangements can also occur in new construction within and adjacent to the District. Common live-work arrangements are:

- live within: where the workplace and the residence is overlapping and the demarcation between the two is constantly adjusted. An artist loft where one works and lives in the same unit is an example.
- live above: where ground floor and street facing portion of the building is dedicated to a workplace and the residence is above. Typically the two spaces are under the same ownership in an arrangement that resembles a townhouse. Typically the workplace has a public facing component to it, inviting customers and passersby to visit.
- live behind: where the workplace is in front of the residential unit. Typically this takes the form of a house located in the rear lot, separated by the storefront with a courtyard.
- live in front : where the structure is a single family home or townhouse in which the studio or workplace is located towards the rear of the building. Typically, the work is production work with limited public interaction.

### PRIORITY PROJECT

## E2c: Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to the everyday needs of residents and employees

Retail needs foot traffic and foot traffic creates the demand for retail. While commercial and retail uses have been slower to get their footing in the District, patterns of success are emerging and should be used as a basis for additional retail recruiting.

Events, weddings, tourism, and destinations have all performed relatively well in the District because its venues and environments are unique and accessible. As a result, businesses related to these markets have also performed relatively well. For example boutiques, destination retail, dining, and personal services related to weddings, events, tourism and hospitality tend to do well. Consideration should be given to recruiting more related businesses such as floral arranging, printing, catering, and live entertainment.

At the same time, for the District to become a thriving residential neighborhood it needs a few important basic goods and services to support its residents. Grocery and simple lunch options were frequently cited as needs that would make the neighborhood yet more liveable. It is important to note, however, that not all needs should or can be satisfied within the District. In fact, it is important to consider the full downtown customer base for residentially-oriented goods and services.



### PRIORITY PROJECT

## E2d: Expand the District's online and media presence

A consistent issue raised throughout the planning update process was the lack of a digital and media presence for the District. While the District receives a considerable amount of regional praise for its accomplishments and unique offerings, local exposure for events, businesses, and accommodations relies on just a Facebook page. A dedicated website and sophisticated social media strategy will greatly enhance the visibility, reach, and popularity of the District.

Mixed-Use Urban Buildings with Neighborhood Amenities

# Economy:

## E3a: Encourage Hybrid Co-Tenanting and Event Partnership

Unlike Main Street where rows of narrow mercantile buildings provide individual spaces and entries for each business, many of the Millwork District buildings have large loft-like spaces without interior walls or exterior storefronts. This unique building stock offers opportunities to create interesting spatial relationships among retailers, artists, and other businesses.

Therefore in addition to the strategic selection of tenants in the District, the thoughtful arrangement of combined spatial relationships to each other provides opportunity for unexpected retail offerings and experiences.

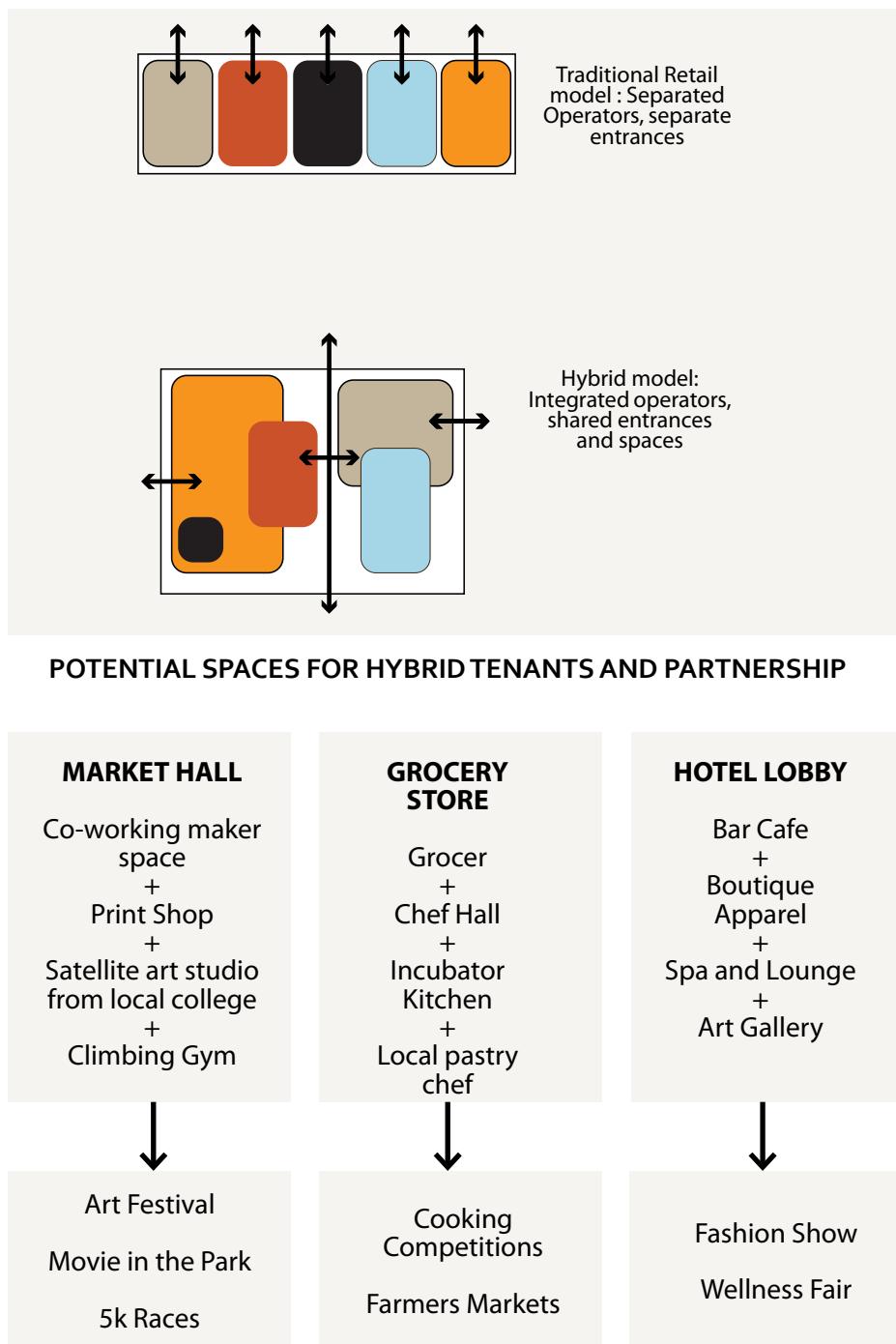
When appropriate pairings are combined, this will not only result in unique retail experiences, but also spark events that activate the public realm. Through thoughtful placement, the logic of tenant groupings at strategic locations can activate public (or semi-public) spaces throughout the District.

### PRECEDENT



#### The Food Building, Minneapolis MN

The Food Building is a 30,000 SF building (similar in size to the Klauer Building) housing multiple artisan food production companies. Though their primary function is production and distribution, the businesses are also open to retail customers on select days. The common space in the building is used for events such as fund-raisers and holiday markets. The building is anchored by a 5,000 SF restaurant that showcases its co-tenant products and other artisan producers.



## E3b Encourage events and arrangements that support low cost/low barrier to entry business endeavors.

In keeping with efforts to increase foot traffic, public realm activation, and the growth of the creator and creative economy, this plan recommends creating events and arrangements that offer low barrier to entry for small and local businesses in Dubuque. Current events such as the winter market and farmers markets are examples of integrating public activation with economic development. The District should continue to promote these events along with other similar events such as food truck fairs, art festivals, retail pop-ups, and craft markets.

With the proven success of the District's appeal to tourists, efforts should be made to help coordinate merchant efforts with scheduled tourist events such as the arrival of the Viking Cruise Ship and other occasions that bring waves of outside visitors to the District. These are good times to organize events with pop-up businesses that expose entrepreneurs to visitors seeking a local shopping experience.

Consideration can also be given to creating a small business incubator facility with a shared co-maker space, perhaps with a focus on small scale production. Such a facility could be integrated with live/work spaces and galleries to activate the local artisan economy and support a budding creative class in Dubuque.



# CULTURE

**CULTURE:**  
*Educate and celebrate Dubuque's unique industrial history, unique present-day events, and future opportunities by:*

- **C1: Creating educational opportunities for people to learn about the history and current happenings of the District**
  - C1a** Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces
  - C1b** Design and implement an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats
  - C1c**: Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events that draw attention to the unique environment of the District.
- **C2: Supporting opportunities for an expanded performance and visual arts presence in the Historic Millwork District**
  - C2a**: Explore artist-in-residence program(s)
  - C2b**: Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/ manufacturing companies and individuals in the District
  - C2c**: Recruit an arts oriented anchor to the District
  - C2d**: Install signature and interactive artwork throughout the District



# CULTURE

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### C1a Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces

The history and significance of the Historic Millwork District to the city and the region is not readily apparent to those who visit. Many are attracted to the District for the collection of impressive old buildings and unique offerings, yet there is little opportunity to learn about the many stories, accomplishments, and far-reaching impacts that the District has had on the city and region. While it is not the intent to turn the District into a static museum, this plan recommends a thoughtful and well-designed interpretive signage program that can engage and educate visitors on the significance of the District. An updated identity signage program can also assist in wayfinding through the District as all buildings used to be identified with numbers related to manufacturing purposes.

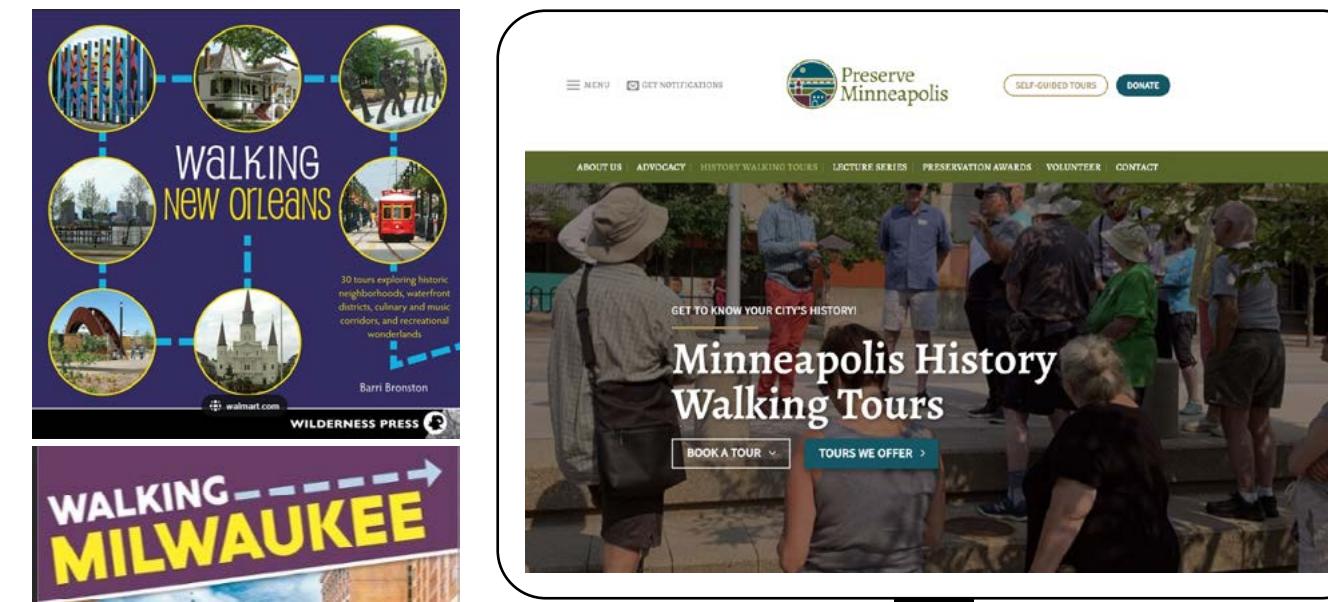


## PRIORITY PROJECT

### C1b Design and implement an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats

In addition to physical signage, this plan recommends the creation of both digital and in-person tours that creates additional opportunities for visitors to engage with the current and past of the District. Monthly walking tours by local experts add a layer of entertainment, interaction, and performance to the educational aspects of the tour. An in-person tour can patronize local businesses for a shopping, food, and cocktail breaks, thereby supporting the retail economy of the District as well.

A digital, self-guided tour of the District can offer a different experience for visitors, one that can be customized to individual interests and time of day, and can be enjoyed at the user's convenience.



# CULTURE

## C1c: Invite artists, cultural groups, and event coordinators to host events and that draw attention to the unique environment of the District

The unique physical qualities of the District and its setting between downtown and the river offer many opportunities to partner with local arts and culture organizations to host events that activate and engage the public realm.

It should be noted this is not a new idea for Dubuque or the District. Prior to the recent redevelopment of the District, Voices Productions hosted a very successful spectacle for engagement from 2005 to 2015. "Voices from the Warehouse" was an annual event that brought thousands of people into the District to engage with art exhibitions and events in the mostly empty warehouses. The events provided a platform for emerging and established artists, and showcased the raw beauty of the historic industrial buildings.

Using the District as the setting, the goals of activation are to draw new people into the District, to celebrate the unique environment and context of the District, to explore innovative ideas and pilot concepts.

Events and spectacles for arts and culture engagement can be:

- events that raise awareness and highlight the identity of the District
- iconic permanent or temporal art installations that invite people to see their environment differently
- performances or exhibitions in which the District itself is integral to the experience and outcome
- events that rely on the unique features of the District to be successful.

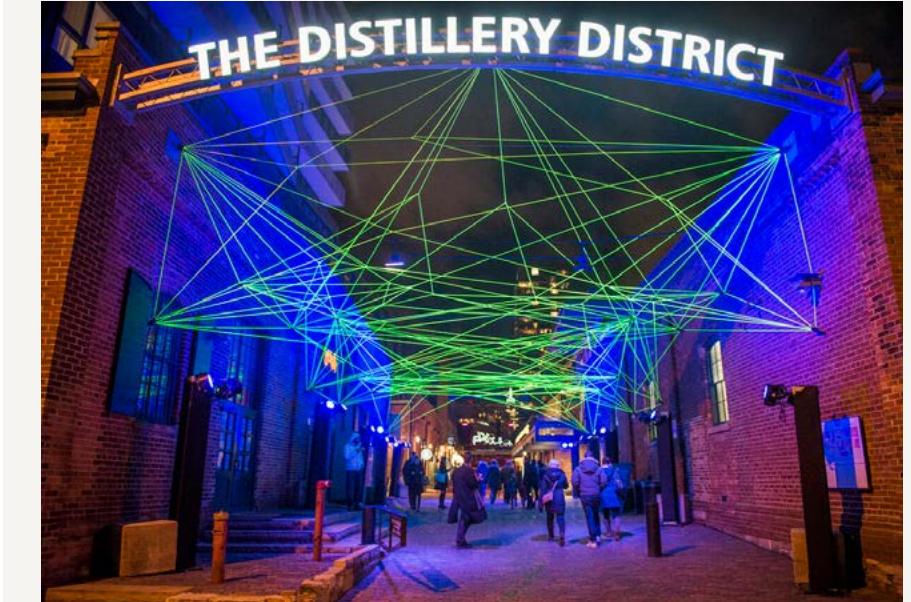
### PRECEDENT



#### CREATE The Community Table: Minneapolis, Minnesota and others

Conceived and produced by artist Seitu Jones "The Community Table" brings forth stories of food in an artful experience across a shared table that exposes differences and inequities, illuminates similarities and connections, and builds bridges of understanding between people.

### PRECEDENT



#### The Toronto Light Festival : Toronto, Ontario

This festival offers "a visual journey and a playful adventure throughout the walking streets of The Distillery District."

The festival exhibits local and international light artists. Artworks are curated to educate, warm hearts, inspire or just put a smile on visitors faces. During the cold, dark days of winter, this festival offers visitors a reason to bundle up, get outside and celebrate the season, creativity, and the Distillery District.

### PRECEDENT



#### Choose your Own Adventure: Baltimore Maryland (Graham Projects)

Charles Street in Baltimore is transformed by this temporary art installation into a colorful play-scape of pedestrian pathways and hanging beach balls. Numerous beach balls feature hand painted instructions offering choices for adventures such as "write a poem in the dirt" and "Change your name for the summer".

# CULTURE

## PRIORITY PROJECT

### C2a Explore artist-in-residence program(s)

An artist-in-residence Program can be developed to help support multiple objectives in this plan. The purpose of an artist-in-residence Program is to offer a unique opportunity to an (often young and emerging) artist to explore and investigate their craft or work within the context of a new space and environment. These programs are most successful when they are fair exchanges between the host and the artist.

By granting access to the resources of a museum, city district, or institution, the artist-in-residence can derive new inspirations, conduct research, produce works and explore new dimensions of their work. In return, the host (museum, district or institution) receives the benefit of increased exposure, new perspectives, and new appreciation for the qualities of their environment.

The purpose of an artist-in-residence program in the Historic Millwork District could be to use the specialized skill of a selected artist (or group of artists) to produce work, provide advice, and/or promote the District. Specifically, an artist-in-residence could focus on strategies for activating the public realm, for highlighting the rich history and varied stories within the District, or to create pathways for a greater range of people to add their own layer of history to the District.

Artist-in-residence programs require a host to provide space, a stipend, resources to conduct the work, and oversight. In the Millwork District, this can be achieved through a partnership, not necessarily through a single non-profit (which is a common model). A property owner can offer studio space, a non-profit and corporate sponsor can provide stipend and resources, and a local arts administrator can provide oversight and serve as a liaison to the District.

### C2b Support the recruitment of specialty craft/artisan/manufacturing companies and individuals in the District

The roots of the Millwork District are in manufacturing and industry. Originally a center for lumber production, the District transitioned to millwork production, eventually becoming the largest millwork producer in the world. In the 1930's over 3,000 people were employed by the three primary companies in the District. The District remained a stronghold of industry into the mid 2010's when Jeld-wen, maker of windows and doors, finally closed their doors.

In keeping with the history and DNA of the District, and goals of becoming a unique mixed-use neighborhood, this plan recommends recruiting new, modern businesses to the District related to the design and making of products. This could include small-scale production such as cabinetry, advanced fabrication, or wooden boat building (which was also a strong industry in Dubuque). Or it could include artisan or craft production such as jewelry, ceramics, or printmaking.



## C2c Recruit an arts-oriented anchor to the District

Throughout the planning process, the lack of the arts in the District was a consistent theme. Though there are a few working artists, a gallery, and studios in the Caradco Building, the District does not announce itself as a District that showcases the arts. One way to enhance the District as a place that welcomes the arts and creative expression is to recruit an arts anchor into the District. An arts anchor tenant can play the important role of bringing new people into the District on a continual basis throughout the year as well as serve as an amenity for those living in and around the District. An arts anchor can take many forms; it can be a performance venue, a public museum with a strong outreach component, a satellite studio for a local college, or a community arts center offering classes.

## C2d Install signature and interactive artwork throughout the District

A great urban district needs great art. In service to goals related to public realm activation, district identity, and foot traffic, this plan recommends the District become home to a series of place-specific art installations. The installations should be made specifically for the District, and inspired by the District. They should be located in the public realm, gateways, along the activated alley and other thoroughfares, and gathering spaces.

The Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building is a logical location for a high profile, signature art piece. It is visible from the highway and central to the District, having the potential to become an instant landmark. An art installation at this location should attract people by being interactive and tactile, serving as a destination and landmark in and of itself.



### Loop IC: Iowa City, Iowa (Ottoblix)

Loop IC, is a temporary installation, that invites participants to sit inside a giant zoetrope-inspired pod, on a see-saw style bench with a shared lever. When activated by participants, images and a soundtrack appear on the inside of the pod.



### Los Trompos: Oakbrook, Illinois (Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena )

Inspired by Mexican textiles and a tabletop spinner, the giant spinning tops invite people of all ages to interact, spin, play or just observe the sheer joy that people have when given the opportunity to inhabit a life size version of a simple child's toy.



### Red Planet Playground: Shanghai, China (100 Architects)

A graphically vibrant red playground turns a plaza into a center of play and interaction. It includes a basketball court, running track, and lots of objects to climb, sit on, lay on or slide down.

# CULTURE

## C2a: Activate and build stewardship of public spaces with regular event programming.

Activating the use of public spaces in the District will be essential to its success. Activation and stewardship of the public realm can:

- Improve the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors
- Address issues of spatial equity and social justice
- Increase safety, health, and security
- Bring people together in different ways
- Create a sense of identity
- Bring vitality to streets
- Aid in greening the urban environment

From temporary to semi-permanent, urban activations frequently use a combination of programming and physical improvements. Open space activation uses public spaces for people in ways that improve the quality of life and community awareness through dynamic engagement. Open space enhancements focus on improving the aesthetic qualities of a public space. This plan offers recommendations for both aspects of public space stewardship.

With Dubuque's commitment to partnerships, and the District's role in celebrating the past while preparing for the future, efforts to enhance the use of the District's public space can go a long way towards increasing the reach of the District into the community.





## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

***The responsibility to implement this Plan does not rest solely on the shoulders of the Public Sector. Success will rely on continuing to build upon the public/private partnerships that enable complicated urban projects to happen. Dubuque has a proud history of such partnerships and the success of the District would not be possible without it.***

***It is important to note that for the District to evolve and grow, so must the partnerships and networks that revived the District over the past fifteen years.***

***New investors, stakeholders, residents, businesses, and property owners will be key to growing the District and it's influence beyond what it is today.***

Priority Actions (0-3 Years)			
Chapter	Recommendation	Notes	
Built Environment	B2b	Study the one-way to two-way conversion of White St and Central Ave <b>IN PROGRESS</b>	Resulting recommendations should be prioritized for funding and implementation. Review report recommendations to be coordinated with infill development projects (Recommendation E2a and E2b), and regional connections such as the NW arterial.
Economy	E1c	Implement a coordinated parking strategy for the District and surroundings <b>IN PROGRESS</b>	Resulting recommendations specific to the Historic Millwork District should be prioritized for funding and implementation. Improvements may include new parking payment collection, access control, and permitting technologies that allow City to improve parking management.
Economy	E2d	Expand the District's media and on-line presence	Partner with partners at Travel Dubuque, Main Street, and GDDC to develop a coordinated online presence and communication strategy. Create a new hub or elevate the presence of an existing hub for information about what is happening in the district for tourists and locals.
Built Environment	B1a	Design and construct the Community Space adjacent to the Alamo Building at the corner of Washington and 10th St.	This is a priority project based on its transformative nature and potential for supporting numerous additional recommendations.  See recommendation page for RFP scoping recommendations.
Culture	C1a	Design and install interpretive signage at significant historical structures and spaces	Partner with Travel Dubuque, Planning Services, Main Street, and Office of Shared Prosperity, and GDDC for the design and implementation of interpretive signage throughout the district. Implementation may be facilitated through a public RFP or city departments.
Culture	C1b	Create an integrated educational tour of the District across digital and in-person formats	Partner with partners at Travel Dubuque, Main Street, and Office of Shared Prosperity. Potential exists for a combined design and implementation strategy with recommendation with C1a.
Built Environment	B1b	Construct strategically located bump-outs for street trees and other amenities	Work with Public Works, Leisure Services and Property owners to develop a strategy that balances placemaking and parking needs.
Economy	E1a	Support State and Federal Historic Tax Credit programs to assist in rehabilitating historic buildings. Seek additional resources to support the redevelopment of remaining buildings <b>ONGOING EFFORT</b>	Pre-development of larger buildings should trigger related recommendations such as recruiting an anchor and arts-related housing.
Economy	E2c	Recruit businesses related to successful market segments as well as to everyday needs of residents and employees in and around the District <b>ONGOING EFFORT</b>	Partner with partners at Travel Dubuque, Main Street, and GDDC to conduct a detailed market study and district tenanting plan to further define the retail markets.
Culture	C2a	Explore artist-in-residence program(s) <b>ONGOING EFFORT</b>	Seek partners (building owners, arts community, and local university) to develop a short term pilot program.

# Immediate Action Steps to Begin Implementation of the Plan (0-1 year)

**Convert a portion of the central parking lot into a summertime parklet to serve as a welcome space for visitors and a place for daily respite and relaxation.**

- A small temporary seasonal plaza will add greenery to the District, provide a space to enjoy the outdoors, a welcome space for visitors to learn about the district as well as an opportunity to incrementally adjust the parking patterns.

**Recruit organizations to use public spaces in the Millwork District for events, activities and temporary art installations.**

- Using the streets, the central parking lot and buildings for events and installations will bring more people into the District. This will support local businesses, bring vitality to the district and allow the public spaces to be enlivened by a broader cross section of the community.

**Issue an RFP for concept design for the Community Space**

- A community space adjacent to the Alamo building has the potential to transform the District. The city should work with stakeholders to develop and issue a design RFP to initiate this important project.

**Install four way stop signs on 9th and 11th Streets at key intersections within the District**

- Small improvements to 9th and 11th Street within the District will slow down east/ west traffic through the District allowing better pedestrian access and allowing the core District to expand north and south.

**Establish a pilot project on (i.e curb bump outs) on Central Ave and White Street west of the District to create better pedestrian and bike connections between Main Street and the District.**

- Concurrent with the Central Ave and White Street redesign project, the City can initiate a pilot project to test alternatives focusing on improving safety of intersections and overall access to the District.

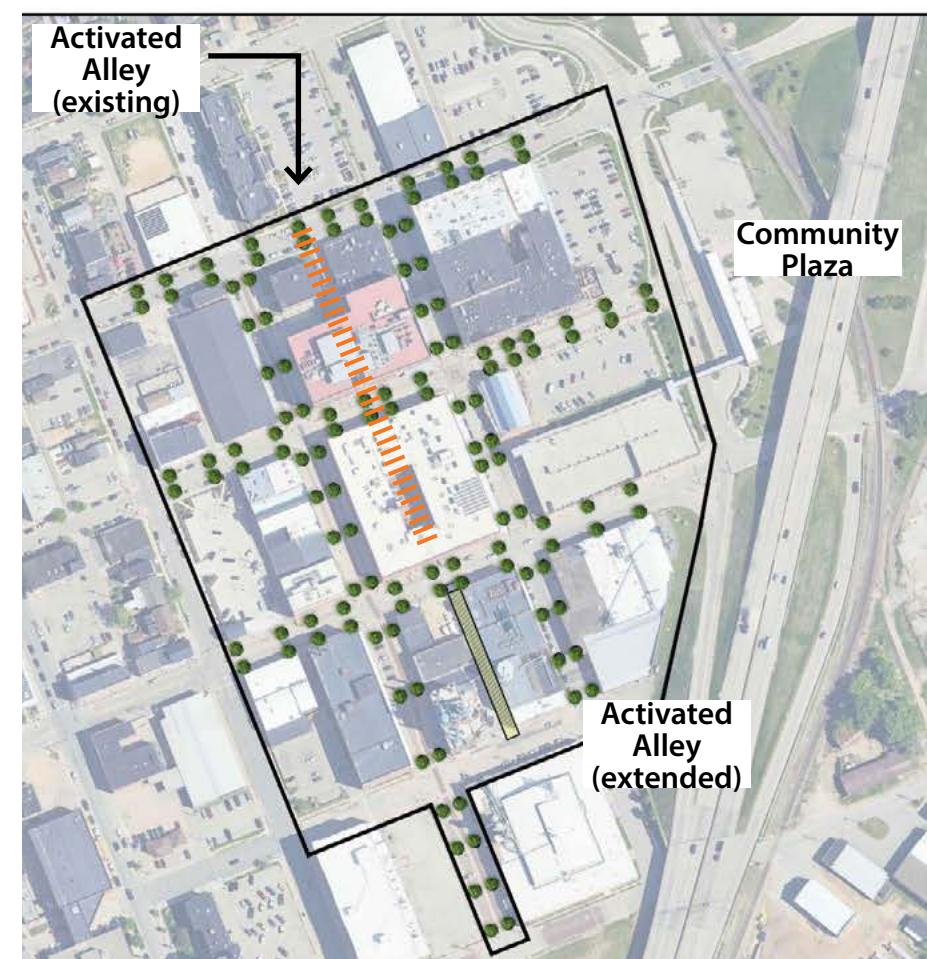


# Preliminary Planning Level Cost Estimates

## Community Plaza (Recommendation B1a)

Creation of a community park and plaza adjacent to the Alamo Building was a key recommendation in the Master Plan. Since completion of the Plan, stakeholders have conducted some visioning and sketch designs for the space, as well as how it might integrate with the redevelopment of the Alamo Building.

While there is more design (and engagement) work to do to arrive at a final design, using the sketch plans, we estimate a preliminary (design + construction) budget of approximately \$2 Million.



## District Greening: Bump Outs (Recommendation B1b)

Traffic calming and increased greenery in the District is a goal of the Master Plan Update. The plan ties these two efforts together with recommendations for strategically located curb extensions that serve to slow traffic and provide landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Assuming corner and midblock curb extensions on each block, we estimate a preliminary (design + construction) budget of approximately \$1,000,000.



## Activated Alley (Recommendation B1c)

The Master Plan recommends extending the "Activated Alley" between Washington and Jackson Street south from the Caradco Building to the Lumbershed – from 8th Street to 9th Street. Currently the alley is privately owned. As the properties on the block are redeveloped the City could work with the owners to acquire (or obtain an easement) to utilize and develop that alley as an extension of a key pedestrian spine through the District. While it can be used as a service alley property owners and the City could work together to ensure it is a pleasant place for pedestrians as well. Special attention should be given to trash enclosures and other typical service items.

Assuming a full reconstruction of the alley, we recommend a preliminary (design + construction) budget of approximately \$750,000.



Existing Alley to be upgraded to an "Activated Alley"

Disclaimer: All cost opinions associated with construction projects are provided only as a reference to support long term project planning. Actual project construction and design costs may vary based on future design development including revisions to project scale and programing, environmental research, and unexpected fluctuations in inflation.

# Preliminary Planning Level Cost Estimates

## Millwork to Main Redevelopment Study: (Recommendation E2a)

Encouraging infill development in the area between the District and Main Street was identified in the Plan as an important initiative. Though only three blocks apart, the perceived gap between the two areas is greater than the actual gap – due in part to the lack of development, the one way streets, and grade changes and narrow sidewalks.

We recommend a study to determine the feasibility of re-orienting future developments along 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Streets between the Millwork District and Main Street. The study would include the following:

- Inventory all properties to determine ownership patterns and use
- Identification of existing zoning and policy that guides redevelopment
- Review of housing inventory, prevailing rents, and recent housing production
- Sample proforma to determine scale of project necessary to clear a standard Internal rate of Return hurdle rate
- Interviews with stakeholders (brokers, property owners, banks) to determine investment climate
- Set of recommendations to the City (development, policy, regulations)
- A Redevelopment Study is estimated at \$50,000



### REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

**Preliminary Cost Estimate**  
» 50,000

**Key Partners**  
» Economic Development, Planning, Local development community

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# Preliminary Planning Level Cost Estimates

## Downtown Bicycle Implementation Study (Recommendation B2d and B2a)

Creating a strong bike connection between each of the Downtown Districts, including the Millwork District, Washington Neighborhood, Town Clock District, and the Port of Dubuque, is important to the success of each individual district and the downtown as a whole. Bicycling between districts is a viable mode of transportation and can be leveraged as a draw for visitors and tourists as Dubuque celebrates its many outdoor amenities.

The East Central Intergovernmental Agency (ECIA) recently completed the 2023 Dubuque Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan, which was subsequently adopted by the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study Policy Board.

The Plan recommends several investments within the downtown generally, and the Millwork District specifically. Among them

- 11th Street from Main Street to Kerper boulevard as a ***signed on-road route***
- 9th Street through downtown and the Millwork District connecting to Kerper Boulevard as ***a signed on-road route***
- Kerper Boulevard from 16th to 11th as ***a signed on-road route***
- Washington Street from 7th to 10th Street ***as a signed on-road route***

However, an on-road sign provides the least amount of separation and safety from vehicular traffic and does not serve the majority of potential bike riders. While appropriate for low volume, low speed roads, it is not appropriate for Downtown. Consideration should be given to a higher quality and safer bike facility that invites a wider range of bicyclists. East-west routes through Downtown are more constrained and may require the elimination of on-street parking to create safer and more comfortable bike routes. There are fewer restrictions on Kerper Boulevard and 7th/Commerce Street where there is likely to be ample right of way.

Disclaimer: All cost opinions associated with construction projects are provided only as a reference to support long term project planning. Actual project construction and design costs may vary based on future design development including revisions to project scale and programing, environmental research, and unexpected fluctuations in inflation.

The City is going to conduct a pilot study for an east west route this spring/summer and the forthcoming RAISE grant will address a Complete Street approach to Kerper Boulevard.

Following the pilot study this spring and summer we recommend completing the detailed design for the selected east west routes and constructing the improvements in fall 2024 or Spring 2025.

Following the construction of an east west route, we recommend a more detailed implementation study aimed at improving bicycle connectivity and amenities throughout Downtown, estimated at \$50,000. Such a study would provide recommendations for the types of facilities (on-street shared, on-street dedicated, off-street) for each of the routes as well as the amenities (bike lockers, racks, rentals) that would help promote biking Downtown. It would also provide more detailed cost estimates as well as identification of special conditions such as pinch points and bridges.

### DOWNTOWN BICYCLE STUDY

#### Preliminary Cost Estimate

» \$50,000

#### Key Partners

» Public Works, Planning, Engineering, ECIA, Leisure Services, Tri State Trail Vision, local bicycle advocates



Safe and stressless bicycle connections to and through Downtown are important investments to promote economic development, neighborhood livability, and tourism.

# Preliminary Planning Level Cost Estimates

## Wayfinding Plan and Initial Installation of Artwork beneath the Viaduct (Recommendation C1a and B2c)

The Plan identifies the lack of District signage and the District's "hard" edges (viaduct) as challenges for visitors to navigate to the District for the first time. In particular, visitors to the District are not given any indication of where to turn upon descending from the viaduct at 11th, 9th, or 7th. Since the Plan was created, district signs have been installed on Highway 151.

There are several levels of existing wayfinding:

- Green DOT signs that call out the different Districts (Downtown District, Eagle Point district, Port of Dubuque, West End)
- Red signs that call out specific destinations (Welcome Center, Five Flags Center, Cable Car, Diamond Jo)
- Kiosk signs located on sidewalks in the downtown that include a map showing locations of public rest rooms, parking, summer trolley stops, attractions, hospitals, and trails throughout the downtown area.

An audit of signage should be conducted by Staff or by an outside consultant to determine if the Millwork District (and other Districts) are appropriately represented on existing signs and whether additional signs should be located at other key locations – such as at the off-ramps from Hwy 61 to help visitors who have to make an important directional decisions.

The plan also includes recommendations to improve the underpasses so the overall experience of passing beneath the highway is more pleasant. Doing so will extend the District's ability to connect to the riverfront and the Port of Dubuque. The plan recommends a public art installation in coordination with potential geometric improvements.

We recommend a preliminary \$100,000 budget for design and installation of Public Art beneath the viaduct. IDOT will be a key partner in this project. Funding for additional wayfinding signage will be based on needs identified by the audit findings. We recommend a \$40,000 budget to conduct an audit of signage with recommendations for consolidation, improvement, clarity, and prioritization of signage and wayfinding.



Multiple Signs and Sign Types throughout Downtown and at the entrances



Upon entry to the Downtown Area it is important for visitors to know how to get to different Districts and Destinations

# Preliminary Planning Level Cost Estimates

## Shot Tower to Clock Tower Feasibility Study (Recommendation B2d)

We recommend a feasibility study to create a strong bicycle and pedestrian connection along 7th Street/Commercial St from Main Street to the Riverfront. This route was identified in the recently completed Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan with an estimated cost of \$84,000. This estimate of cost does not align with the necessary roadway construction efforts required to accommodate bikes and pedestrians.

We recommend a more detailed analysis of cost and feasibility of the Tower to Tower Connection – one that includes substantially improving the connection with appropriate amenities for vehicular traffic as well as bikes and pedestrians. The planned lifespan and structural condition of the Iowa Street Ramp will also be included as part of this feasibility study.

The feasibility study should include:

- Typical cross sections along 7th and Commercial St
- Identification of all available right of way, and determination if additional right of way is needed
- Strategies for crossing the viaduct and rail lines (at grade and tunnel) and other situations that require special considerations
- List of potential amenities to include along the route
- Potential resolution to the western most block, between Iowa and Main Street. (Retrofit and improvements to the double garage on Iowa Street)
- Preliminary Cost Estimates

The Tower to Tower Feasibility Study is estimated at \$150,000.



**SHOT TOWER TO CLOCK TOWER FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**Preliminary Cost Estimate**  
» \$150,000

**Key Partners**  
» Public Works, Engineering, Planning, Transportation Services, Leisure Services, Property Owner



The Iowa Street Double Ramp currently blocks the connection between Main Street and The Millwork District along 7th St. A feasibility study will determine how the ramp can be reconfigured to enable the connection for cyclists and pedestrians.

\* This document adopted in 2024 references concepts prohibited in IA HF856 amending Ch 19 of the Iowa Code. It was adopted prior to HF856 passage on May 27, 2025. Changes will be made if and when the document is revised.