



DOUGLAS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN

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THE NORTHSIDE REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

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DOUGLAS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to improve one of Racine's most important streets. The plan is the result of a highly collaborative public process between the Northside Business and Professional Association, the City of Racine, and area residents and business owners. The process was facilitated by Schreiber/Anderson Associates, an Urban Planning and Design firm, and the Best Real Estate Group.

Study Area

The study area includes a 2.5 mile stretch of Douglas Avenue between 3 Mile Road and State Street.

Public Input

The plan is shaped by public input. The planning process included multiple opportunities for public input including three public planning meetings, design workshops, and a business survey. Results from each of these events are included as an appendix.

Douglas Avenue Vision and Project Goals (Chapter 1)

Douglas Avenue will be a vibrant, dynamic, and diverse gateway corridor connecting Racine's north side to Downtown and the larger metropolitan area. Douglas Avenue will be safe and accessible to surrounding neighborhoods, convenient for commuters, and attractive to business owners and patrons. Douglas Avenue will be a destination for the north side neighborhoods, the community, and the region.

Summary of Project Goals:

- Douglas Avenue will be a unique, diverse, and visually appealing street that provides key connections to Downtown Racine and the surrounding metropolitan area.
- Douglas Avenue will be a convenient and efficient regional corridor that provides automobile, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility in a manner that enhances local and neighborhood connections to the street.
- Douglas Avenue will enhance the quality of life for area residents by providing businesses and services for neighborhood and north side residents.

Existing Conditions (Chapter 2)

The revitalization process should build on Douglas Avenue's unique position in the region. Douglas Avenue is one of a few well-traveled, direct regional connections between Racine and Milwaukee. As an entrance corridor, the appearance of the street speaks to the vitality of the community. At the southern end of the street, this key community entrance corridor also becomes a distinct entrance point to Downtown, near the intersection with the revitalizing State Street. Aside from its regional importance, Douglas Avenue plays a key role as a neighborhood "Main Street", especially south of Yout Street. Finally, Douglas Avenue benefits from being home to several local and regional anchor businesses. These are found in all parts of the corridor.

Market Assessment (Chapter 3)

Douglas Avenue represents 2.5 miles of an ever changing landscape of commercial and residential properties. As this street grew from south to north, it has left behind a visible imprint of those time periods, which is both a positive and negative from a revitalization standpoint. What was a vital business district through the 1970's, was challenged by the growth of new retail strip centers that met the needs of today's consumers.

Strengthening a commercial district such as Douglas Avenue can not be accomplished by working on any single level. The factors that have made commercial districts slip in the market are complex and will require a significant investment by a committed organization. Unlike many compact neighborhood districts or downtown areas, Douglas Avenue traverses through multiple neighborhoods, business niche areas, and a widely varied age of the real estate. Revitalization of Douglas Avenue must be approached with understanding the benefit to the whole, even if the majority of the efforts at any one time are in a select area.

Douglas Avenue must build upon its positive market strengths:

1. Great traffic counts for a commercial district.
2. Good access to an employment base.
3. Solid residential neighborhood and population numbers along much of corridor.
4. solid anchor businesses in this area.
5. There are properties with excellent architectural components.
6. Important redevelopment opportunities.
7. Proximity to Downtown, the River and marina area, and the Lake.
8. Interesting clusters of commercial properties.
9. The mix of uses.
10. There are good neighborhood population numbers in this south study area.
11. The neighboring residential building stock is varied, interesting and affordable.
12. The ethnic diversity creates a viable and growing market niche.

Key Recommendations (Chapter 4)

Transportation

Many of these recommendations will be implemented at a time when Douglas Avenue is reconstructed, or when the specific planning for reconstruction is initiated.

- Communicate the Plan's priorities for an improved streetscape, traffic calming, and improved pedestrian accommodations when the street is designated for reconstruction. (T1)
- Promote shared commercial driveways and limit curb cuts. (T2)
- Conduct a detailed analysis for future signalization needs to provide "gaps" in traffic so as to better access properties and businesses. (T3)
- Provide highly visible crosswalks. (T4)
- Promote better visibility and safer circulation at Layard Avenue. (T5)
- Improve condition of sidewalks. During reconstruction, increase the sidewalk and pedestrian zone to a minimum 4 feet for the terrace and 5 feet for sidewalk, where right of way can be acquired. This will allow for additional street tree plantings. (T6)
- Consider intersection realignment, street vacation, right-in/right-out, or curb bulb-outs on Charles Douglas Avenue and Yout Street. Take these efforts to eliminate an awkward intersection and combine with efforts to add additional parking and plaza space to serve the businesses at this intersection. (T7)
- Provide better definition to the Douglas/Superior/Albert Street intersection by adding additional landscaping and pedestrian amenities. (T8)
- Maintain and enhance bus and transit options as an important part of maintaining the viability of Douglas Avenue. Work with the Belle Urban System as specific opportunities for improvements arise. (T9)

Parking

- Preserve on-street parking between Yout and State Streets. (P1)
- Promote organized and shared parking with connections to adjacent properties. (P2)
- Add landscaping, lighting, and other improvements to improve appearance of parking. (P3)
- Consider new accommodations for on-street parking including right-of-way expansion, peak hour restrictions, and shared off-street parking. (P4)

Urban Design

- Adopt two urban design “overlay” districts to guide the aesthetics of buildings and properties. Adopt one district from 3 Mile to Yout Street to promote improved conventional design. Adopt another district from Yout Street to State Street to promote historic preservation and compatible new construction and redevelopment. (U1)
- Develop a coordinated streetscape program addressing lighting, street trees, and street furniture. (U2)
- Develop a comprehensive program for entry signage, banners, specialized street signs, wayfinding, and interpretive signage. (U3)
- Reduce the visual impact of overhead utilities. (U4)
- Create a plaza at the Flower Island Site. (U5)
- Add landscaping at the Jonas Statute. (U6)
- Add landscaping at the edges of Douglas Park. (U7)
- Open views to Lake Michigan through redevelopment projects. (U8)
- Coordinate closely with the State Street Revitalization Committee. (U9)
- Restore the facades to historic buildings. (U10)

Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Priority Areas

- South Street and Douglas. (R1)
- Yout Street and Douglas. (R2)
- Rapids Drive – St.Patrick Street and Douglas. (R3)
- Superior – Albert- and Douglas. (R4)
- Hamilton Streets and Douglas Avenue. (R5)

Design Guidelines (Chapter 5)

Detailed design guidelines for public spaces (streets, parks, plazas) and private property are included in Chapter 5. These support the recommendations in Chapter 4. The guidelines are based on a set of principles that represent the concepts behind some of the most popular and economically viable urban commercial business districts and corridors in the United States. These concepts include walkable streets, human-scaled architecture, public spaces, street furnishings, landscaping and common design features that make these places attractive places to shop, work, and live

Implementation (Chapter 6)

The successful revitalization of Douglas Avenue requires a comprehensive and coordinated implementation strategy. This includes detailed organizational and funding recommendations to support the key redevelopment and business development efforts discussed in the plan. In terms of organization, Douglas Avenue currently benefits from having a well organized steering committee, with broad representation. There are opportunities to expand this organization to reach additional members in the community. Potential funding sources are also identified for the many different projects. Finally, this chapter includes a detailed “strategic plan” outlining important next steps to occur in the next five years.

1.1 Background and Project History

The *Lexicon of the New Urbanism* defines an “avenue” as a limited distance, free-movement thoroughfare connecting civic locations within an urbanized area. In many ways, that is an appropriate way to start a description of Racine’s Douglas Avenue. However, the story of Douglas Avenue is much deeper as the street performs a variety of complex roles in the greater metropolitan area. These roles include state highway, commercial strip, neighborhood business district, and downtown gateway.

Construction on the Avenue dates from the 1890s to the 1990s. In recent years, Douglas Avenue has declined as a commercial area as the focus of development has shifted elsewhere, leaving vacant buildings and deferred maintenance in its wake. At the same time, however, some business and property owners have invested in the area by adapting old buildings to new uses and maintaining a level of vitality.

In the spring of 2003, the Northside Business and Professional Association (NBPA) formed a steering committee to guide the creation of a revitalization plan for Douglas Avenue. The purpose of the plan is to provide the following:

- Analyze Douglas Avenue’s place in the area economy and its future potential.
- Establish Goals and Objectives for the revitalizing the corridor and area businesses
- Analyze potential development plans and provide comprehensive development recommendations
- Develop a strategy for implementation

1.2 Study Area

The study area is the 2.5 mile stretch of Douglas Avenue from 3 Mile Road to State Street. Planning sub areas include:

North: 3 Mile Road to Melvin Avenue
Central: Melvin Avenue to High Street
South: High Street to State Street

The analysis and recommendations address these specific areas as well as the corridor as a whole.

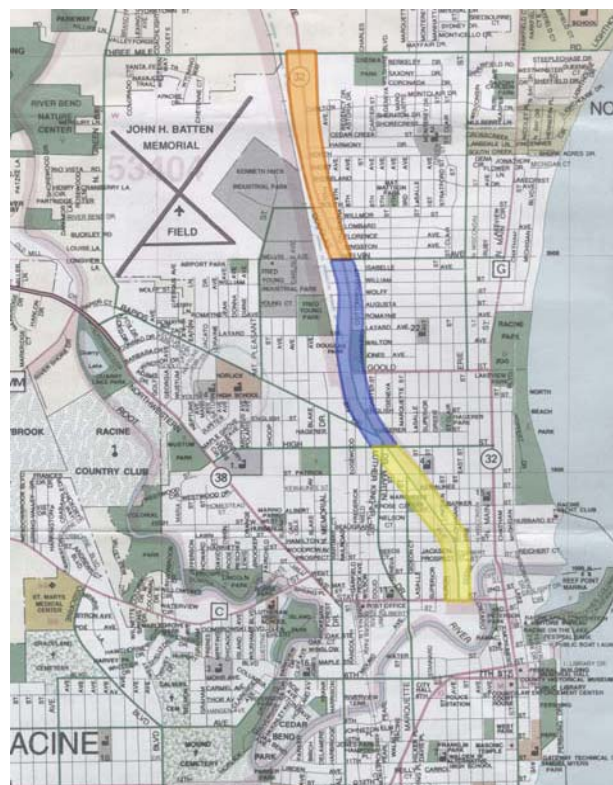


Exhibit 1.1 The Douglas Avenue Study Area

1.3 Plan Process

The development of the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan involved a highly collaborative process between the project steering committee, City of Racine, business owners, neighbors, and project consultants. The process involved the following key phases. The work of each of these phases is included in the plan.

- Data Gathering and Background Research
- Setting Neighborhood and Community Goals for Project
- Market Assessment
- Analysis of Opportunities
- Development of Plan Recommendations
- Implementation Strategy

1.4 Public Involvement

Public Involvement was a key component of the process. The following is a summary of public involvement activities for this planning process. Responses for all events are included as an appendix.

a. North Side Revitalization Steering Committee

A steering committee consisting of City alderpersons, district and community business owners, and other concerned citizens was set up by the North Side Business and Professional Association. This group provided input and direction on all phases of plan development. Members of the steering committee took a key role in organizing public meetings and assisting in the property inventory. The steering committee held five meetings with the planning team to go over different parts of the Plan.

b. Public Kick-Off and Visioning Meeting

A public kick-off meeting was held in the Flat Iron Village Mall on November 20, 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to review the plan process and to discuss the public priorities for Douglas Avenue. The participants were divided into multiple groups and participated in two exercises. The results of these exercises were key in forming the project vision statement, goals, and ultimately the plan recommendations. This information is included in the Appendix.

c. Stakeholder Interviews

The project team conducted interviews with property owners, business owners, neighborhood residents, and city officials identified by the steering committee. These sessions provided a detailed look at some of the challenges and opportunities facing Douglas Avenue.

d. Douglas Avenue Business Survey

A business survey was mailed out to all businesses along Douglas Avenue. A total of 300 surveys were mailed out with 75 being returned. The survey provided information used in the market analysis and was reviewed to prioritize planning issues.

e. Public Meeting #2, Review of Opportunities

A second community meeting planning meeting was held on March 11, 2004 at San Juan Diego School. The meeting provided an opportunity for residents to review and comment on series of preliminary opportunities and recommendations presented by the consultant team. Results were used to create the specific recommendations discussed in Chapters 4 and 5

f. Public Meeting #3, Review of Plan Recommendations

A third community forum was held to obtain public input on the draft plan recommendations on June 23, 2004. The consultant team provided a brief presentation and then invited questions from the community. Exhibits explaining draft plan recommendations were set up in an open house format and participants were encouraged to review the recommendations.

g. Façade Design Workshop

Property and business owners on Douglas Avenue were invited to participate in one-on-one work sessions with the project architect. The purpose of these sessions was to identify building and site design improvements for specific properties. The recommendations were based on the design guidelines, presented in Chapter 5 of this document.

1.5 Vision Statement

Douglas Avenue will be a vibrant, dynamic, and diverse gateway corridor connecting Racine's north side to Downtown and the larger metropolitan area. Douglas Avenue will be safe and accessible to surrounding neighborhoods, convenient for commuters and attractive to business owners and patrons. Douglas Avenue will be a destination for the north side neighborhoods, the community, and the region.



Exhibit 1.2

A concept sketch for the vacant corner of Douglas Avenue and St. Patrick's Street showing new construction, landscaping and streetscape. This opportunity is further discussed on page 4.14.

Existing Condition- View from Marquette Street.



1.6 Project Goals and Objectives

A. Overall Corridor Goals

Goals and objectives provide the general framework from which the plan recommendations and implementation strategies were created. These benchmarks were developed after input from the first public meeting as well as from ideas generated by the steering committee

- 1. Douglas Avenue will be a unique, diverse, and visually appealing street that provides key connections to Downtown Racine and the surrounding metropolitan area.**

Objectives:

- Create and enhance the character of key entrances to Douglas Avenue and the City of Racine.
- Improve the visual appearance and physical condition of the public streetscape.
- Improve the visual appearance and physical condition of private property along Douglas Avenue.
- Improve the appearance of public and private signage in the corridor.

- 2. Douglas Avenue will be a convenient and efficient regional corridor that provides automobile, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility in a manner that enhances local and neighborhood connections to the street.**

Objectives:

- Improve navigation and wayfinding throughout the corridor.
- Identify the physical improvements needed to calm traffic or improve traffic flow at problematic intersections and other points along Douglas Avenue.
- Create a safe and enjoyable environment for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists to access and use Douglas Avenue.

- 3. Douglas Avenue will enhance the quality of life for area residents by providing businesses and services for neighborhood and north side residents.**

Objectives:

- Provide an increased mix of retail, restaurant, employment, service, and residential opportunities that will serve both the surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Racine area.
- Attract new anchor tenants and destinations to Douglas Avenue.
- Encourage the development of ethnically diverse businesses that will serve the neighborhood and community.

B. Specific District Goals & Objectives

North Study Area

The northern portion of Douglas Avenue will be an attractive entranceway to Douglas Avenue and the City of Racine.

Objectives

- Create an identity unique to Douglas Avenue and the north side of Racine through improvements to public and private property.
- Minimize the visual impact of existing overhead utilities.
- Create gateway features at key entry points along the northern portion of Douglas Avenue.
- Provide an interesting physical environment that is attractive to both motorists and pedestrians.

The northern portion of Douglas Avenue will attract new anchor tenants because of the corridor's high traffic counts, excellent visibility, and attractive built environment.

Objectives

- New and infill development will consist of well-designed sites and buildings that enhance the character of Douglas Avenue.
- New and infill development will "raise the bar" in terms of the quality of development expected along Douglas Avenue.
- New and infill development will create destinations that serve the surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Racine area.

Central Study Area

Preserve and enhance the unique and historic character of the central Douglas Area.

Objectives

- Restore the character of the area's historic structures.
- Promote infill development that respects and complements the area's historic architecture and distinct urban character.
- Enhance the design of public spaces in the central area.

Stabilize and enhance the existing business mix in the central Douglas area.

Objectives

- Retain existing anchor businesses.
- Fill vacant and underutilized properties.
- Encourage the development of mixed-use properties.
- Promote opportunities for owner-occupancy in the commercial and residential properties in the central Douglas area.

Create a positive image and identity.

Objectives

- Perform routine building and site maintenance to develop pride in the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Reduce instances and perceptions of crime.
- Encourage building and site designs that promote safety and a lively street.
- Encourage pedestrian activity in the central Douglas Area.

South Study Area

Position the south side of Douglas Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods for stabilization.

Objectives

- Create an organization and organizational structure to support neighborhood and corridor revitalization.
- Attract new tenants and retain neighborhood anchor businesses.
- Create an attractive environment for entrepreneurs to invest in the corridor and surrounding area.
- Create a market for infill and redevelopment.
- Create visible change that is noticed in the market.
- Support efforts to increase owner occupancy in corridor businesses and surrounding homes.

Enhance and restore the visual character of the south end of Douglas Avenue.

Objectives

- Perform simple short-term clean up and other efforts to improve district identity.
- Restore the character of historic structures.
- Promote infill and redevelopment that complements the historic character of the area.
- Incorporate improvements to the public street that enhance pedestrian and neighborhood access to Douglas Avenue.

2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 About the Existing Conditions Analysis

The following analysis has been prepared to better understand the current conditions on Douglas Avenue. This chapter includes the following sections:

- “Big Picture” Analysis
- Roles of Douglas Avenue
- Streetscape Character
- Architectural Character
- Transportation
- Parking
- Utilities
- Land Use Patterns
- Zoning

2.2 “Big Picture” Analysis

The revitalization process should build on Douglas Avenue’s unique position within the community and South Eastern Wisconsin. Douglas Avenue is one of a few well-traveled, direct regional connections between Racine and Milwaukee. As an entrance corridor, the appearance of the street speaks to the vitality of the community. At the southern end of the street, this key community entrance corridor also becomes a distinct entrance point to Downtown, near the intersection with the revitalizing State Street. Aside from its regional importance, Douglas Avenue plays a key role as a neighborhood “Main Street”, especially south of Yout Street. Finally, Douglas Avenue benefits from being home to several local and regional anchor businesses. These are found in all parts of the corridor.

The following map illustrates the role of Douglas Avenue in the community. The map also provides a summary of the information described in this chapter. Additionally, the map also shows a series of anchor businesses, community facilities, and key redevelopment sites in or around Douglas Avenue. These figures are keyed to a number on the map. These figures are identified below:

Anchor-Destination Businesses:

1. Ace Hardware
2. Shorecrest Shopping Center
3. Kenneth Huck Industrial Park
4. Garbo Motors
5. Rapids Plaza
6. Gibsons Restaurant
7. Douglas Hardware
8. O & H Bakery
9. Wells Fargo Bank
10. Lopez Bakery
11. Yardarm Restaurant
12. CNH

Community Facilities:

1. Horlick High School
2. Caesar Chavez Community Center/Douglas Park
3. Racine Zoo
4. Flat Iron Mall (Business Incubator)
5. Douglas Business Center (Business Incubator)
6. St. Patrick’s Church
7. Farmers Market Location
8. City Hall



Existing Land Use

Residential

Multi-Family Residential

Commercial

Mixed-Use Commercial

Industrial

Open Space

Bike Route / Trail

Downtown

Potential Redevelopment

Community Facilities

Anchor / Destination Businesses

Improved Streetscape

DOUGLAS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS



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2.3 Roles of Douglas Avenue

Douglas Avenue is a unique urban corridor that it performs several varied roles. The following is a summary of these roles.

North Study Area

The north study area marks a transition for Douglas Avenue. North of 3 Mile Road, Douglas Avenue has recently been reconstructed as a five lane (four traffic lanes plus a center turn lane) corridor serving mostly large commercial properties in a low-density, suburban setting. Many of the businesses serve a regional market and thus include several large properties. Upon entrance into the city limits, the role of the street becomes more varied. Between 3 Mile Road and Melvin Avenue, Douglas Avenue plays the following roles:

- Gateway and entrance into the City of Racine
- State Highway 32.
- Home to large anchor businesses on large properties including auto dealers, hardware stores, and other similar businesses.
- Home to smaller neighborhood businesses and services including barbers, banks, restaurants, fast food and gift stores.
- Major access to industrial park.
- Home to single and multi-family homes located directly on and adjacent to the corridor. This issue is a key difference between areas north and south of 3 Mile Road.

Central Study Area

The central study area represents a transitional zone for Douglas Avenue. North of Yout Street, Douglas Avenue maintains similar characteristics to those described above. In the central area, Douglas Avenue plays the following roles:

- Transition between the historic and newer sections of Douglas Avenue.
- Home to both regional anchor businesses and neighborhood serving businesses.
- Home to well-maintained single family homes and other residential buildings. There is an increased residential presence compared to the north study area.
- Entrance to Memorial Drive and other north-south corridors.
- Access to industrial areas along Memorial Drive.
- Supports additional on-street parking compared to the north.

South Study Area

In many ways, the south study area resembles the central study area in terms of its relationships to the surrounding neighborhoods. Unique to the south side of Douglas Avenue, however, is the proximity to Downtown. Douglas Avenue ends at a redesigned State Street near the CNH headquarters. The location for the Downtown Farmers Market is also at the end of Douglas Avenue. The south side of Douglas plays the following roles:

- Home to small business incubators.
- Home to largely neighborhood serving commercial stores, many relying on on-street parking.
- Supports on street parking almost throughout the study area.
- Home to several community centers, church groups and other institutional anchors.
- Location of several clusters of historic buildings with several infill/redevelopment opportunities intermixed.
- Growth as a Hispanic business district.
- Gateway to Downtown and the location of Downtown Farmer's Market.

2.4 Existing Streetscape Character

Streetscape character refers to the overall appearance of the street, sidewalk, terrace, and associated amenities. The placement of buildings and lot design also contributes to the visual character of the street.

North District

- Limited community entrance signage.
- Unappealing entrance at airport clear zone.
- “Suburban-style” development.
- Mix of building setbacks.
- Large expanses of unattractive parking lots.
- Narrow sidewalk/terrace area.
- Very limited landscaping, few street trees.
- Proliferation of overhead utilities, especially north of Layard Avenue.
- Private signage clutter along right-of-way.
- Standard “cobra head” lighting located on utility poles.
- Limited green space.



Central District

- Buildings have stronger orientation toward street.
- Buildings have a “tighter” blockface- generally closer together north of Yout Street.
- Historic streetcar posts used in some instances for more decorative street lighting supports.
- Mix of building and pole signage, generally less cluttered than north study area.
- Overhead utilities less dominating.
- Jonas Statue, Douglas Park, positive green and public spaces.



South District

- Approach from State Street is not a welcoming connection to Downtown.
- Douglas Avenue begins to bisect grid system creating multiple point intersections.
- Clusters of historic buildings with many vacant/underutilized parcels interspersed.
- Lacking street trees or other plantings.
- Parking and storage areas not screened from the street.
- Sidewalks are lacking defined terrace areas.



2.5 Architectural Character

Douglas Avenue is a complex urban corridor that varies, from one end to the other, in both character and scale, with a wide variety of building types and architectural styles. It is estimated that building construction dates from the 1890s up through the 1990s. The corridor grew southward from Downtown, thus more recent construction is found in the north part of the study area.

The architectural character of the northern study area can be characterized as a mix of free-standing commercial and strip commercial center buildings. A majority of these buildings are one story tall. Building setbacks vary greatly throughout the district.

The architectural character of the central area notes a transition in the Douglas Avenue “blockface”. Near Yout Street, the street takes on a more historic character. Buildings are typically two stories and have a stronger orientation toward the street. Attractive buildings with a strong street presence add a great deal to the overall appearance of the street. Buildings in poor condition in this area have a strong negative visual impact.

Buildings along the south district generally maintain the historic characteristics that start in the central area. Several historic properties in this area are in various states of disrepair or have had alternations to the historic facades. Both instances generally have a strong negative visual impact on the corridor.

The following is a summary of some of the general building types found throughout the corridor:

Historic Buildings

Central, South Study Areas

- Two or more stories.
- Vertical massing.
- Built to the street.



Residential Buildings Converted to Commercial/Other Use:

North, Central, and South Study Areas

- Two stories.
- Pitched roof.
- Free standing.



Strip Commercial Structures

North Study Area

- One story.
- Horizontal massing.
- Multiple tenants.
- Front surface parking.



Contemporary Commercial Buildings

North Study Area

- Larger one story building.
- Free standing.
- Horizontal massing.
- Front surface parking.



Franchise Architecture

North and Central Study Area

- Typically one story.
- Corporate design.
- Free standing.



Auto Sales and Service Buildings

- Single story.
- Large portion of site devoted to parking.
- Limited screening of parking and storage.



Single Family Residential Buildings

- Two stories.
- Well maintained on Douglas Avenue.
- Green space.
- Strong street orientation.
- Several "bungalows".

Multi-family Residential Buildings:

North, Central, South, Study Areas

- Two stories.
- Large structures.
- Green space.

2.6 Existing Transportation Conditions

The primary means of transportation in the City of Racine is by automobile. Streets are generally classified according to administrative authority and function, that is who owns and maintains them and what types of uses they are designed to handle. Racine's road network is owned and maintained by three administrative levels: the City, the County and the State.

Traffic Patterns

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count data can be used to determine the traffic demand in various sections of Douglas Avenue. AADT is a measure of the average number of cars traveling on a specific road segment on a given day. AADT information can be useful in determining future uses and development along a given roadway. AADT data for Douglas Avenue is illustrated on Exhibit 2.2 at the right.

It is not surprising to note that Douglas Avenue evidences its highest traffic counts in the northern portion of the study area. This is because it coincides with Highway 32 until the intersection with Goold Street. Highway 32 traffic is then routed off Douglas Avenue east along Goold Street to Main Street. The expected consequence of this routing would be that traffic counts might drop off sharply after the intersection of Goold and Douglas. Instead, the AADT drops off one block south at the intersection of Yout Street and Douglas Avenue. This is likely due to the grid street pattern in the area that provides many alternate routes which, in turn, diffuses traffic rather than forcing all traffic onto Goold Street.

The traffic volumes do diminish in the southern portion, however, and the street becomes more integrated with the surrounding neighborhood providing an opportunity for small scale neighborhood businesses.

The northern portion of the corridor is primarily a thoroughfare. The traffic counts suggest that this area could support a wide variety of retail, office and industrial uses. Because this is also one of the primary gateways into the community, any development or redevelopment, including the placement and appearance of signage, should be designed to have a positive impact on the corridor. Numerous direct access curb cuts in this portion of Douglas Avenue inhibit traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

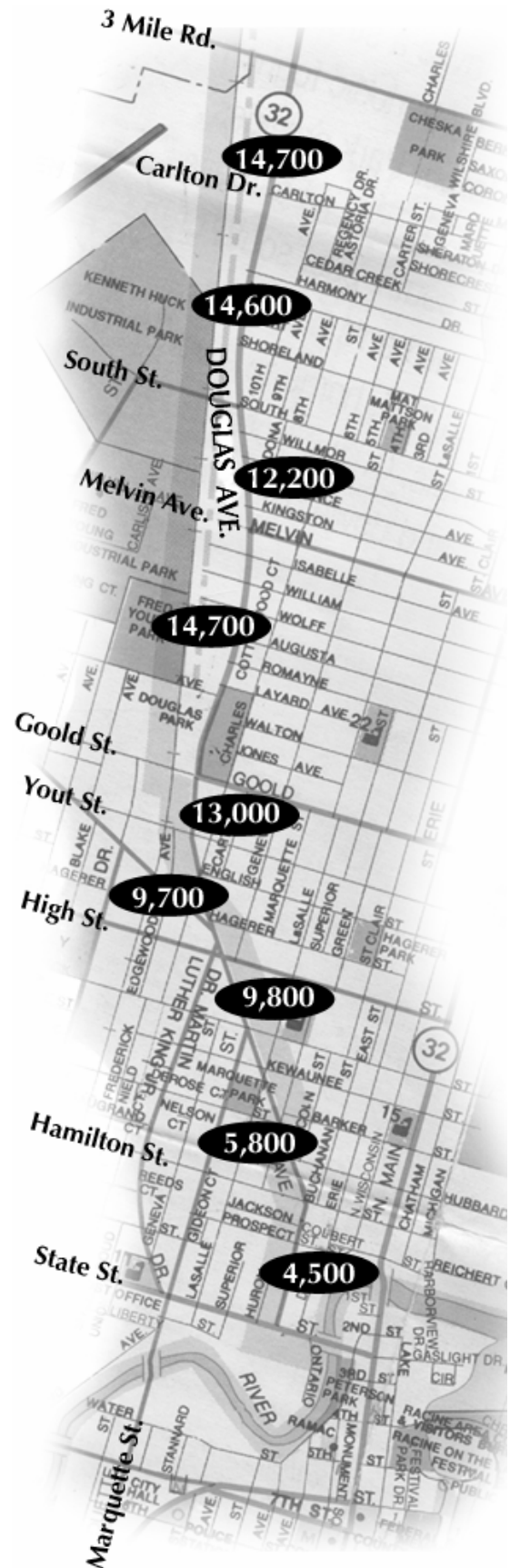


Exhibit 2.2: Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts, Douglas Avenue, 2002

Exhibit 2.3 Annual Average. Daily Traffic Trends on Douglas Avenue 1990-2002

Segment of Douglas Avenue	1990	1993	1996	2002
3 Mile Rd. to Carlton Dr.	16,750	17,670	17,200	14,700
Carlton Dr. to South St.	17,400	17,750	18,400	14,600
South St. to Melvin Ave.	17,300	16,790	15,800	12,200
Melvin Ave. to Goold St.	16,340	16,290	16,100	14,700
Goold St. to Yout St.	14,480	17,160	13,330	13,000
Yout St. to High St.	12,320	12,460	11,000	9,700
High St. to Marquette St.	10,520	11,770	9,300	9,800
Marquette St. to Hamilton St.	5,270	7,210	5,300	5,800
Hamilton St. to State St.	5,210	6,210	4,300	4,500

Exhibit 2.2, above, presents the AADT counts since 1990. In general, traffic counts on Douglas Avenue decreased through the 1990s, up to and including the counts for 2002 shown on Map 1.1. The most significant decrease occurred in the area north of Yout Street between 1996 and 2002. There was also a substantial decrease in traffic counts for the southern portion of Douglas Avenue between 1993 and 1996, however these counts increased slightly after 1996.

Street Classifications

- **Douglas Avenue** or STH 32 is used as a connector between the Racine and Milwaukee Metropolitan areas. The roadway, classified as a “Principal Arterial” also acts as a south bound route into Racine for drivers who exit I-94/41 in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Highway 32 is routed off of Douglas Avenue at Goold Street and continues south on Main Street into Downtown. As previously mentioned, this significantly influences traffic counts along the street. Douglas Avenue has signalized intersections with the following streets: 3 Mile Road; South Street; Goold Street; Yout Street; High Street; and Marquette Street. For Douglas Avenue traffic counts, please refer to **Map 2.1**. Rights-of-way along Douglas Avenue vary between 60 to 66 feet wide including sidewalks.
- **Three Mile Road** is an important east-west connection across Douglas Avenue. Three Mile Road connects east to Main Street and Lake Michigan, and west to N. Green Bay Drive. A 2-lane road for much of its length, Three Mile Road expands to four lanes with dedicated left turn lanes at the intersection with Douglas Avenue. The western leg of Three Mile at this intersection also evidences dedicated right turn lanes for the traffic turning east off of Douglas Avenue and the traffic turning north onto Douglas. Between Douglas Avenue and Main Street, Three Mile Road is classified as a minor arterial and carries an average of 6,000 to 10,000 vehicles each day according to 2002 City of Racine Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts. In addition, Three Mile Road west of the corridor evidences an AADT of 6,800.
- **Carlton Drive** is one of several collector streets connecting Douglas Avenue to streets and destinations west of the corridor study area. On average, the residential Carlton Drive carries between 1,200 and 2,000 vehicles daily exhibiting higher volumes closer to Douglas Avenue.
- **South Street** is also a collector street which carries an average of 5,300 vehicles between Douglas Avenue and La Salle Street and nearly 10,000 west of the corridor where it serves as a primary entrance to the Kenneth Huck and Fred Young Industrial Parks as well as to Rapids Drive.

- **Melvin Avenue** is another collector street which primarily carries traffic east from Douglas. Melvin Avenue carries 1,000 to 1,500 in AADT between Douglas Avenue and Main Street.
- **Goold Street** is a principal arterial according to functional street classification data provided by the City of Racine. East of Douglas Avenue Goold Street coincides with Highway 32 until Main Street, where Highway 32 traffic proceeds south on Main. Interestingly, the AADT counts on Goold are between 4,700 and 8,400 from Main Street to Douglas Avenue but increase to 9,600 immediately west of Douglas Avenue where the street no longer coincides with the state highway.
- **Yout Street** is a local street east of Douglas Avenue, and a minor arterial west of it. West of Douglas Avenue Yout carries an average of 5,700 vehicles daily. East of the corridor it carries an average of 2,800 vehicles daily.
- **Rapids Drive** is an important arterial street. Closest to Douglas Avenue it is a minor arterial but it is considered a principal arterial as it approaches STH 38 and N. Green Bay Road, west of Douglas Avenue. Rapids Drive carries AADT volumes of 5,100 cars immediately west of Douglas Avenue increasing to 16,600 cars near Highway 38.
- **High Street** is a minor arterial which carries around 5,000 vehicles daily east of Douglas Avenue and decreases to around 4,000 vehicles daily west of the corridor.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive** is a minor arterial running south between the southern portion of Douglas Avenue and State Street. MLK, Jr. Drive and Marquette Street form a one-way street system, in which MLK, Jr. Drive provides the southbound travel lanes. It exhibits traffic volumes of 4,600 vehicles on average.
- **Marquette Street** parallels MLK, Jr. Drive and is also considered a minor arterial. Marquette Street provides the northbound travel lanes in the one-way system. It continues further south to Washington Avenue south of City Hall. The street carries slightly higher traffic volumes between State and Douglas approaching 4,700 to 5,500 average daily vehicles.
- **Hamilton Street** is the southern most east-west collector street that intersects Douglas Avenue. It carries between 1,700 and 3,000 vehicles daily according to the 2002 AADT counts.
- **State Street** or STH 38 marks the southern terminus of Douglas Avenue and the boundary of the study area. State Street has recently undergone a significant reconstruction and revitalization project. This street acts as a principal arterial, carrying over 10,000 vehicles west of the corridor and 5,000 as it enters Racine's central business district east of Douglas Avenue.

Bicycles

Douglas Avenue does not provide dedicated bicycle lanes and has numerous curb cuts that decrease the safety of the road for bicyclists. The Root River Trail and County Bike Trail are west of the study area and the developing Lake Michigan Pathway will be to the east. The Root River Trail parallels Douglas Avenue along the railroad corridor as far south as Layard Avenue where it is routed further west. Both 3 Mile Road and South Street are identified as on-street bicycle connectors between the County Bike Trail and the Lake Michigan Pathway.

Walking and Pedestrian Traffic

Sidewalks are provided on both sides of Douglas Avenue. However, in many areas they are frequently interrupted by curb cuts creating a less well-defined and uncomfortable pedestrian zone.

The sidewalks vary between 4 and 7 feet wide with an intermittent landscaped (grass) terrace between the sidewalk and road. Generally the sidewalks are widest where the terrace is absent, making the overall pedestrian zone a fairly consistent 8 feet in width.

Concerns were raised during the public forum and in the focus groups regarding pedestrian circulation in the district. Overall, the public has indicated that walking along Douglas Avenue is inconvenient and unsafe.

Pedestrian connections across Douglas Avenue are often awkward and dangerous. This is especially the case at intersections where streets connect at angles leaving large stretches of pavement for pedestrians to navigate. Marked pedestrian crossing points in the study area are typically located at intersections. In the northern portion of the study area, where blocks are long, this can be an inconvenience.

All along Douglas Avenue pedestrians compete for motorists' attention with visual clutter (e.g., signs, overhead power lines), an abundance of driveways, problematic left-hand turns, and a high volume of quickly moving vehicles. Consequently, even in the narrowest portions of Douglas Avenue, it can be difficult for pedestrians to cross safely.



View of the County Bike Trail looking north from Layard Avenue



View looking south from the southern end of the County Bike Trail at Layard Avenue. It could potentially continue past this point.



Bus shelter on Douglas Avenue.

Bus Traffic - Transit

The study area is well connected to other community destinations by the Racine Belle Urban System (B.U.S.). Route One provides service along the length of Douglas Avenue on weekdays, evenings and weekends. Route Four provides service to the south end of Douglas Avenue on weekdays and weekends, and Route Five provides service to all of Douglas Avenue on weekdays.

2.7 Existing Parking Conditions

The success of a commercial corridor is dependent on access to convenient parking and the ease of flow of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle movements. As in most communities, a concern of the district users and business owners is the supply of parking spaces.

As part of the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan, the consultants completed an inventory of on-street parking regulations and public off-street parking areas. The only off-street public parking area found along Douglas Avenue is the lot located at the rear of the Flatiron Mall. This lot has 48 parking spaces.

Map 2.1 at right illustrates the location of on-street parking along Douglas Avenue and the applicable restrictions. All areas without indicated restrictions denote sections where parking is allowed and largely unregulated. Note that most of the on street parking along Douglas is located in the southern portion of the study area, but it is generally regulated. The central portion is similarly regulated but evidences more “No Parking” areas. On-street parking in the northern section is primarily found on the eastern side of Douglas Avenue and again many areas are signed “No Parking.”

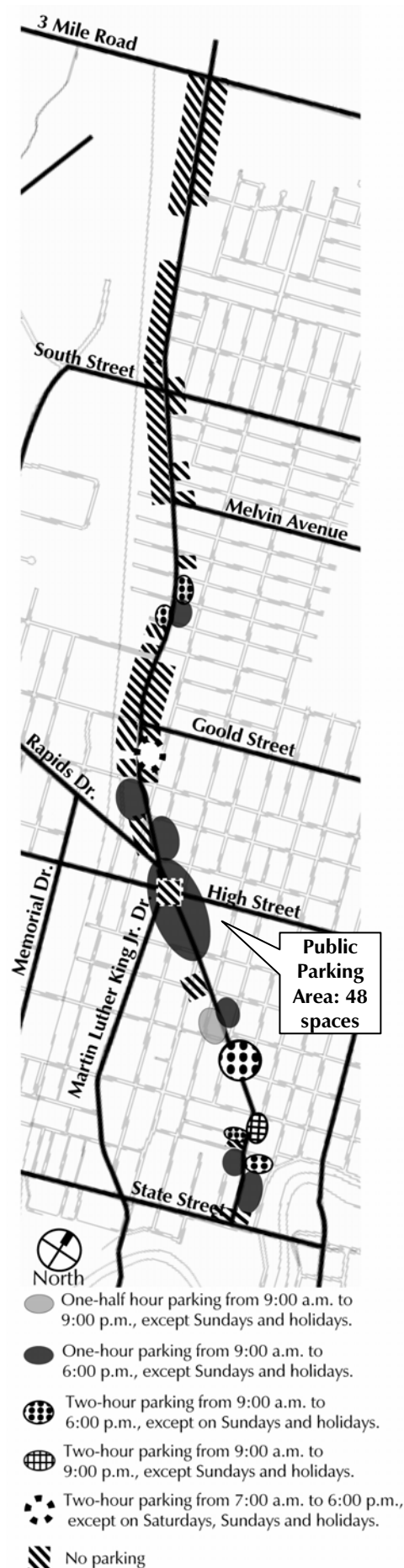


Exhibit 2.4: On-Street Parking Locations and Restrictions

2.8 Summary of Existing Utility Information

Streets:

From 3 Mile Road to Goold Street, Douglas Avenue consists of a concrete surface. Pavement width (not including sidewalks and terraces) generally varies between 46 and 50 feet. South of Goold to State Street, Douglas Avenue has an asphalt surface. Pavement width (not including sidewalks or terraces) again varies from 46 to 50 feet.

Storm Sewer:

Douglas Avenue is served by City storm sewer. Storm sewer main is located beneath Douglas Avenue from 3 Mile to Isabelle and then from Romaine Avenue to Goold Street. Between Hagerer Street and Hamilton Street, no storm sewer main is located. Sewer main is again beneath Douglas between Hamilton and Prospect. Storm sewer manholes at various depths are located on Douglas Avenue. At this time, the consultants are not aware of any immediate deficiencies regarding the storm sewer service.

Sanitary Sewer:

Sanitary Sewer Main is found beneath Douglas Avenue, throughout the corridor. At several points, several side streets feed into the Douglas Avenue main.

Overhead Utilities

Overhead Utilities are located within the street terrace from Layard Avenue to 3 Mile Road and Beyond. At Layard Avenue these utilities are moved to the rear of the property. Many concerns have been raised about the visual character of these poles. Any substantial changes will likely occur at a time when the street is reconstructed, or when significant redevelopment projects take place. Recommendations for overhead utilities are included in the Design Guidelines, Chapter 5.

2.9 Existing Land Use Patterns

North Study Area

The land use pattern in this study area shows primarily auto-oriented retail uses lining both sides of Douglas Avenue. This is surrounded by early suburban residential neighborhoods to the east and large-scale industrial land uses west of Douglas Avenue. The railroad separates the street from the large industrial uses to the west.

Another significant land use adjacent to this study area is the John H. Batten Memorial Airport. This use requires a substantial clear zone space, some of which fronts the northernmost portion of this study area.

Nearby public uses include Jerstad Agerholm Elementary/Middle School east of Douglas Avenue. This area also evidences scattered park and recreational land uses including the County bike trail west of Douglas Avenue and Mattson Park, a small neighborhood park.

Central Study Area

The land use pattern in the central study area evidences a continuance of the auto-oriented retail uses along the avenue as far south as Yout Street. In this portion of the study area there are a greater number of single family homes along the street, many of them bungalows. The character of the street changes near the Yout Street intersection, where the commercial and retail uses start to exhibit historic facades and minimal building setbacks.

Adjacent land uses in this study area include large industrial sites west of the corridor on Memorial Drive.

The residential uses continue to have a strong presence to the east as they do along the length of the corridor. The character of the residential land uses gradually changes as one moves south towards downtown Racine. Moving southward, homes are generally older and closer together. In the central area the single-family residences transition from early ranch style units (characteristic of the postwar period) to bungalow and American foursquare (and other architectural styles characteristic of the mid 19th century to the early 20th). Residential lot sizes and street widths also decrease as one moves from north to south along Douglas Avenue.

Cesar Chavez Community Center represents a significant public space and park area located on Douglas Avenue in this study area. Additionally, Horlick High School is located west of the study area. Directly east of the corridor is the Racine Zoo along Lake Michigan. Smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces are also scattered throughout the neighborhoods east of Douglas Avenue, and the designated bike trail continues west of Douglas up until Layard Avenue.

South Study Area

The south study area evidences a mix of retail service and institutional uses. The block faces are smaller than those in the north with greater physical and functional connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Residential uses are found to the east and west of the corridor. The building stock is largely of 18th or 19th century construction on small lots and narrow streets, consistent with the area's proximity to Downtown Racine.

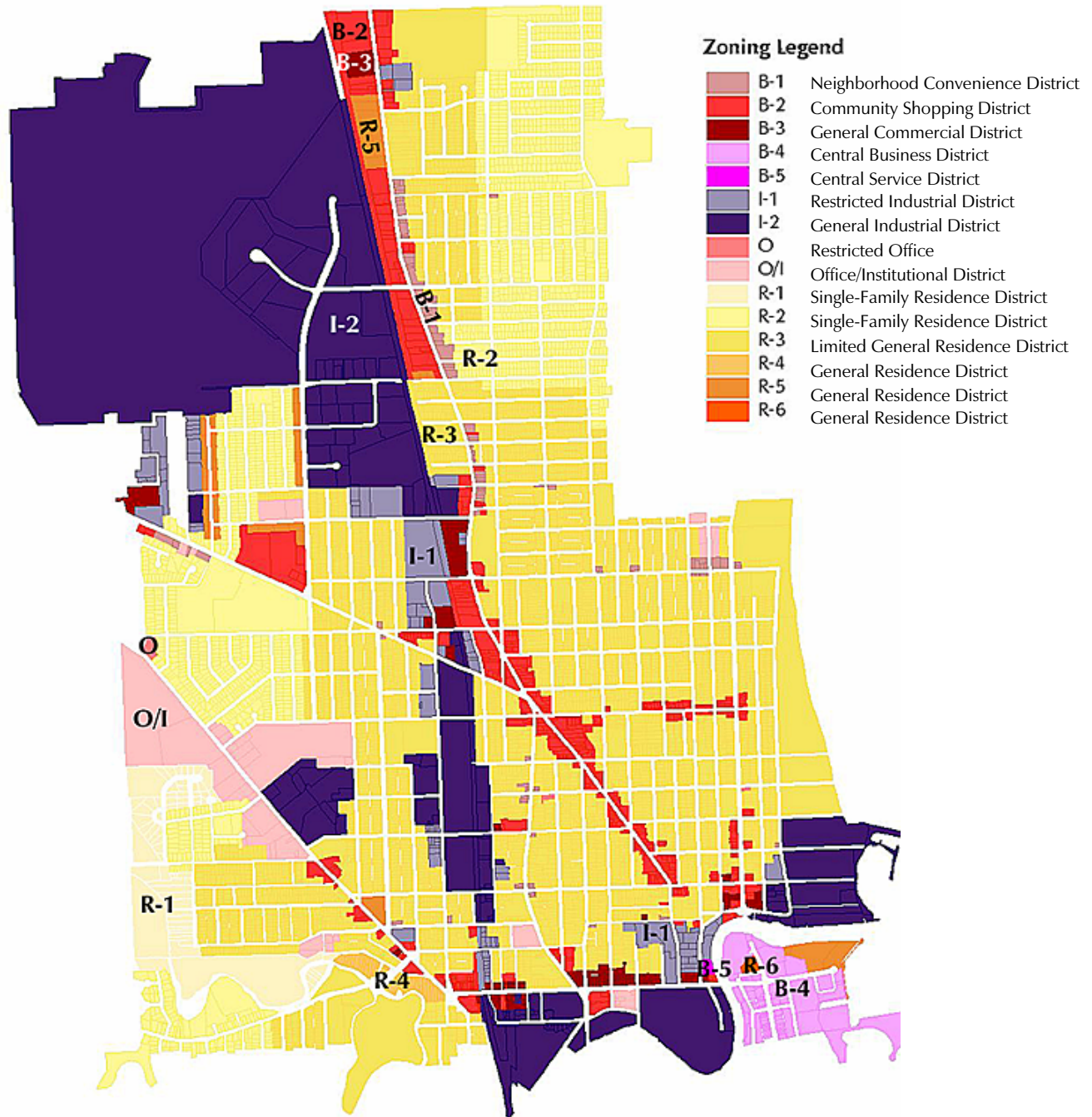
Industrial uses are found on Douglas Avenue in the southernmost portion of the study area and represent a blend of modern and historic facades. Generally the industrial footprint is smaller than for those industrial uses identified in the north and central study areas.

Recreational uses, public places and nearby park lands include the Marquette Park, North Beach Park, the Root River Trail, St. Patrick's School and San Juan Diego Middle School. Additionally, there are views of the lake, river, and downtown in this area.

2.10 Existing Zoning

Exhibit 2.5 Douglas Avenue Zoning

Existing Zoning Situation



There are six (6) residential and seven (7) non-residential zoning districts along Douglas Avenue. The street frontage along Douglas Avenue is primarily zoned as a mix of the B-2 Community Shopping District, the B-1 Neighborhood Convenience District and the R-3 Limited General Residence District. Other classifications located along the street include: the B-3 General Commercial District, the I-1 Restricted Industrial District and the R-5 General Residence District.

Non-Residential Zoning Districts

- **B-1 Neighborhood Convenience District**

A significant portion of the northern section of Douglas Avenue is comprised of the B-1 Neighborhood Convenience District zoning classification. This district is “intended to provide convenience shopping to close proximity for persons residing in nearby residential areas by allowing only such uses as are necessary to satisfy basic shopping needs which occur daily or frequently, and selected additional uses which normally attract little vehicular traffic and are otherwise compatible with residential areas.”

The permitted and conditional uses allowed in the B-1 district are outlined in the ordinance. Four conditions are established and paraphrased here that apply to all permitted and conditional uses in this district:

1. Businesses shall be retail and service establishments dealing directly with customers. All goods produced on the premises shall be sold at retail on the premises.
2. Business establishments are restricted to a maximum gross floor area of 6,000 square feet each, exclusive of floor area devoted to off-street parking or loading facilities.
3. Businesses shall be conducted within completely enclosed buildings.
4. Establishments of the drive-in/drive through services are not allowed.
5. The parking of trucks as an accessory use shall be limited to 1 ½ tons capacity when located within 75 feet of a residence district boundary line. Further, parking of trucks on lands adjacent to residential property shall be screened by a wall, fence, or dense hedge.

- **B-2 Community Shopping District**

A majority of the primary study area is covered by the B-2 Community Shopping District. The stated intent of this district is to “accommodate the needs of a much larger consumer population than is served by the neighborhood convenience district, thus a wider range of uses and structure sizes is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping”.

The permitted and conditional uses allowed in the B-2 district are outlined in the ordinance. Four conditions are established and paraphrased here that apply to all permitted and conditional uses in this district:

1. Businesses shall be retail and service establishments dealing directly with customers. All goods produced on the premises shall be sold at retail on the premises.
2. Businesses shall be conducted within completely enclosed buildings.
3. Establishments of the drive-in/drive through services are allowed by conditional use permit.
4. Parking of trucks on lands adjacent to residential property shall be screened by a wall, fence, or dense hedge.

Mixed-use buildings are permitted as a conditional use. The ordinance states that there must be 2,400 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit.

- **B-3 General Commercial District**

A portion of the central study area is zoned B-3 General Shopping District. The stated purpose of the district is to accommodate those commercial activities which may be incompatible with the predominantly retail uses permitted in other business districts; and whose service area is not confined to any one neighborhood or community.

Allowed uses in this district are subject to the following paraphrased from the zoning ordinance:

1. Dwelling and rooming units are not permitted.

2. Business, servicing, or processing shall be conducted within completely enclosed buildings, however, drive-in/drive through services are allowed.
3. Parking of trucks on lands adjacent to residential property shall be screened by a wall, fence, or dense hedge.

In terms of lot dimension, the B-3 District does not dictate a minimum lot size. However, a front and side yard setback of 25 feet is required. This differs from the B-2 district in which no setback is dictated.

- **I-1 Restricted Industrial District**

The I-1 Restricted Industrial District is located along a small portion of the northern study area, a significant portion of the far southern end of Douglas Avenue and just off the corridor in the central section Douglas Avenue. The intent of this district is to provide an environment suitable for industrial activities that do not create appreciable nuisances or hazards, or that require a pleasant, hazard-free and nuisance free environment.

The following conditions apply:

1. Dwelling units not allowed unless authorized within a planned development.
2. All businesses, servicing or processing shall be within enclosed buildings.
3. Storage should be indoors or screened.
4. Retail uses are generally not allowed with the exception of select uses including bakeries, banking, dry cleaning, and other uses accessory, and incidental to permitted and conditional uses.

There are no lot size requirements. Side or rear lot buffers of at least 25 feet are required when the district coincides with an adjacent residence or business district. When across the street or sharing a block face with a residential district, a minimum yard setback of up to 25 feet may be required by the Plan Commission.

- **I-2 Restricted Industrial District**

Much of the area west and south of the Douglas Avenue planning area is zoned I-2. However, none of the parcels fronting on Douglas Avenue have this designation. The purpose of this district is to accommodate those industrial activities that may produce moderate nuisances or hazards in areas that are relatively remote from residential and commercial development.

The following conditions have been established for this district:

1. Dwelling units are generally not allowed, however, they may be permitted as part of a planned development.
2. Business, servicing, or processing conducted within 300 feet of a residence or commercial district shall be completely within enclosed buildings.
3. Storage within 300 feet of a residence must be screened or enclosed.
4. Retail uses are generally not allowed with the exception of select uses including bakeries, banking, dry cleaning, and other uses accessory, and incidental to permitted and conditional uses.

No lot or yard requirements are defined for the district with the exception of transitional districts as defined for the I-1 district. The maximum floor area ratio for the district is 4.0

Exhibit 2.6: Characteristics of Non-residential Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Maximum Floor Area Ratio	Required Setbacks
B-1 Neighborhood Convenience District	2.0	None for Non-Residential
B-2 Community Shopping District	4.0	None for Non-Residential
B-3 General Commercial District	2.5	25 feet
I-1 Restricted Industrial District	1.5	Transitional setbacks of 25 feet required when adjacent to residential or business
I-2 General Industrial District	4.0	Transitional setbacks of 25 feet required when adjacent to residential or business

Residential Zoning Districts

- **R-3 Residential District**

Much of the residential area surrounding and fronting the study area is zoned R-3 residential along with a significant portion of the Douglas Avenue frontage in the northern portion of the study area. The purpose of this district is to provide areas which are to be occupied substantially by single-family and two-family dwellings and attached dwellings. Permitted uses include single family, two-family, multiple family, and community living arrangements.

- **R-5 Residential District**

In the northern portion of Douglas Avenue on the western side of the street a small section of frontage is zoned R-5. The intent of this district is to provide medium to high density residential areas adjacent to major shopping areas and convenient to places of employment. This district requires utilities of high capacity and community facilities sufficient to service the population, and a street system capable of accommodating relatively heavy traffic.

Uses include those in the R-4 such as nursing homes, religious institutions, day care, and other conditional uses, plus apartment hotels and multiple family dwellings including restaurants, drugstores, retail food shops, valet shops, beauty shops and barber shops and similar buildings meeting certain standards

The evolving role of business districts, in a changing and competitive market, pose a particularly challenging set of problems. Unlike conventional new shopping centers, office parks or residential complexes that have been carefully designed to meet today's marketplace requirements, aging neighborhood districts must work hard to maintain, stabilize or reinvent themselves. Making neighborhood business districts competitive involves understanding their market potential, and what opportunities are available for these districts to restore or maintain their economic vitality, and make them more responsive to consumers. In addition to understanding market potential, it is important to understand that re-energizing business districts such as Douglas Avenue requires sustained citizen involvement, sensible planning and the active implementation of a well-thought out plan that can protect, preserve and enhance the unique qualities of the market area.

To be competitive with other shopping environments, Douglas Avenue must undertake the development of an organization that would reflect the joint interests of this specific area. With a very long district and many different aspects to the street, organization will be vital to initiating any projects or functions. Getting people involved in the process is key to the success of any organization. Resistance to get involved by residents, business owners and property owners can be the most common obstacle to getting started. It takes a combination of education, promotion, public relations, confidence, friendly persuasion, and sometimes pushing forward despite the opposition. Whether this organization is led by volunteers, or eventually a paid staff person, there are many tasks, both short-term and long-term, that need to be done. Therefore, many participants or volunteers will need to be involved in the process. They must buy into the value of this work, and be excited about the possibilities.

3.1 About the Market Assessment

Strengthening a commercial district such as Douglas Avenue can not be accomplished by working on any single level. The factors that have made commercial districts slip in the market are complex, and require a focused strategy, a comprehensive plan and the ability to act upon that plan with solid implementation.

Douglas Avenue represents 2.5 miles of an ever changing landscape of commercial and residential properties. As this street grew from south to north, it has left behind a visible imprint of those time periods, which is both a positive and negative from a revitalization standpoint. What was a vital business district through the 1970's, was challenged by the growth of new retail strip centers that met the needs of today's consumers. Customers wanted the clustering of stores, with convenient parking lots, near newer neighborhoods. Older districts such as Douglas Avenue, started to find in the 1980's and 1990's that many of their original, anchor businesses had been eroded away, leaving a hodge-podge of retailers, service businesses and vacancy. Once a district begins to lack an identity within the community, it's not unusual for the apathy to set in and the deterioration of the real estate to begin.

In our analysis of Douglas Avenue, we have identified three segments of the street:

- South – High Street to State Street
- Central – Melvin Avenue to High Street
- North – 3 Mile Road to Melvin Avenue

While driving the street, one can quickly transition from one area to the other without realizing it. However, upon closer examination, it's apparent that each of these areas has their own identity, attributes and issues.

Creating change along Douglas Avenue will require a significant investment by a committed organization. Unlike many compact neighborhood districts or downtown areas, Douglas Avenue traverses through multiple neighborhoods, business niche areas, and a widely varied age of the real estate. Revitalization of Douglas Avenue must be approached with understanding the benefit to the whole, even if the majority of your efforts at any one time is only in one area. No single project, or grand solution will change Douglas Avenue. Lasting economic and social recovery for Douglas Avenue will come when there is a commitment to work a plan that is in the best interest of the street, the neighborhoods, and the community.

3.2 Demographic Profile

One way to develop an understanding of the market is to evaluate the current and projected demographics of the study area. For this purpose we examined demographics for a one-half mile radius, and one-mile radius at two intersections on Douglas Avenue:

South on Douglas Avenue at High Street
North on Douglas Avenue at North Street

By examining the one-half mile and one-mile radii at these intersections, we cover the entire Douglas Avenue study area (see the attached maps). Below is a discussion of key comparisons in the following demographic categories, using the estimates for 2003:

Population

The immediate 2003 neighborhood population numbers reveal that the half-mile radius at High Street has more than double the population of the same radius at North Street (6,918 versus 2,896). This is primarily due to the impact of the airport and business park district on the northern section of Douglas Avenue. These population numbers even out somewhat as one looks at the one mile radius numbers of 19,131 at High Street, and 12,033 at North Street. When considering the potential to grow more neighborhood related retail or service businesses, the southern part of Douglas Avenue would likely be the better location due to the population density.

Race Classification

It is important to note that the amount of diversity found in the half-mile radius around High Street. Although the community is likely aware of this area of diversity, the actual depth of these figures is quite interesting: White Alone – 56.59%; Black / African American Alone – 24.11%; American Indian / Alaska Native Alone - .68%; Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Alone -- .42%; Some Other Race Alone – 14.34%; Two or More Races – 3.79%. Surrounding the south area, over 20% of the population is of Hispanic origin. This diversity provides a unique opportunity to focus a niche retail concept in the area.

Age

A neighborhood's average age is an important determinant of what the residents may want to consume. The one-half mile radius at High Street has a 2003 estimated average age of 31.56, while the one-half mile radius at North Street is 39.00. This is a significant difference in age groups, which will likely translate into other categories, such as incomes, family composition, etc.

Household Income

Looking at household income helps businesses determine whether their product or service fits that specific market area, particularly, if they are looking for economic support from adjoining neighborhoods. Businesses draw from different market areas, i.e. convenience stores draw from smaller neighborhood markets, while an auto dealership exercises a more regional draw. As one considers how Douglas could grow and support the more neighborhood related market in the southern part of Douglas Avenue, household income information will be a valuable tool in recruiting businesses. At the High Street intersection, the one-half mile 2003 average household income is \$43,329, and the one-mile radius is \$46,398. At the North Street intersection, the one-half mile 2003 average household income is \$55,376, and the one-mile radius is \$55,748.

Occupied Housing Units

As expected, there is a lower ratio of owner occupied housing to renter occupied housing in the one-half mile radius at High Street than the one-half mile radius at North Street. The numbers are:

	<u>North Street</u>	<u>High Street</u>
Owner Occupied	69.46%	52.31%
Renter Occupied	30.54%	47.65%

These ratios in the southern section are still fairly well-balanced, although growing home ownership is a benefit to any urban market area.

Housing Structures and Values

The demographics further document the growth of Douglas Avenue from the south to the north, with median structure age at the High Street half-mile radius built in 1909, and then 1942 when you get to the one-mile radius. Moving on to North Street, the one-half mile radius indicates a median structure age of 1956, and only 1957 when you go to the one-mile radius. The neighborhoods in the southern area of Douglas Avenue are interesting and diverse with many potentially historic properties. The northern part of Douglas Avenue evidences typical 1950's residential neighborhood layout and design. Median owner occupied housing values also vary from the south to the north. From High Street, the one-half mile radius indicates a median value of \$74,453, and \$86,431 at the one-mile radius. At the North Street intersection, the one-half mile radius has a median housing value of \$100,605, and \$107,188 at the one-mile radius.

3.3 Market Indicators and Findings

The following observations, opportunities, and findings have been prepared to discuss opportunities to position Douglas Avenue for better market success. Further, these findings guided the master plan recommendations included in Chapter 4. These findings are organized by project sub area (north, central, south)

A. North Study Area Market Indicators

Positive Market Aspects:

1. Major access point into Racine.
2. Great traffic counts for a commercial district.
3. Good access to an employment base.
4. Business mix that has a more regional feel.
5. Solid residential neighborhood directly to the east.

Negative Market Aspects:

1. Very bland and dated image.
2. Streetscape is non-existent, and there is no continuity with the real estate.
3. Traffic moves quickly, and there are many curb cuts and difficult left hand turns.
4. Limited entrance or gateway into the community at 3 Mile Road.

B. North Study Area Market Findings

1. Create an “entrance” into Racine from the north, along with streetscape amenities that would update the feeling of this area.

As an important gateway into Racine, this busy commercial district could do a much better job identifying itself to visitors and potential customers. Today’s customers have high expectations, and to meet those expectations, business districts must put their best foot forward visually. They should present a congruent and pleasing image to consumers, and invite them into the district by creating a visual announcement that they are approaching, and have reached something special.

When entering Douglas Avenue from Three Mile Road or north of Three Mile Road, there is limited indication that you have entered Racine. You are simply on a busy commercial street that is rather like a blank slate. Compared to the south and central areas of Douglas Avenue, this north district has a very commercial, suburban feeling, with buildings set further back off the street, and parking fields in the front of stores. It seems visually cluttered with the overhead power lines and the wide variety of signage.

There is tremendous potential here to create an entirely different feeling with the use of streetscape features. Lighting, banners, landscaping, and signage improvements, can really command the attention of consumers and let them know they are “someplace”. Utilize opportunities to work with individual businesses that may be willing to upgrade their own landscaping, or modify older, unappealing signage.

With the amount of traffic that flows in this northern section of Douglas Avenue, every day there is great opportunity to catch the attention of consumers and visitors to Racine. This is a critical market opportunity to take advantage of.

2. A Business Retention / Recruitment program would be helpful in this area to retain existing businesses, and to seek out other quality businesses that would support the regional business mix.

One of the most important components of maintaining a business district is to have healthy merchants. Healthy merchants are those that are successfully meeting their market niche, and who are achieving their own goals for growth and financial viability. Very often, no one with the district or community is monitoring the state of their district businesses.

A Business Development Committee should provide a resource data bank for ongoing support to local businesses. This support can stabilize or even save a business by offering resources (technical assistance, workshops, training, speakers, connections, referrals, etc.) in store merchandising, inventory control and buying, internet opportunities, financial planning, promotion/marketing/advertising, customer service, employee hiring/retention and succession planning. Additionally, programs that offer façade design and financing assistance, joint marketing plans, promotions or events that increase traffic, ongoing newsletters, updated consumer surveys, demographics and marketing materials can all be of assistance to existing businesses.

The other half of the work for this committee is business recruitment. There are many tasks for a Business Recruitment Committee, some of which are:

- Establish and maintain a data base of all businesses by category.
- Establish and maintain a database of relevant property information.
- Update or conduct a consumer survey.
- Update or conduct a business survey.
- Assess the current tenant mix.
- Understand market conditions and trends that impact business district viability.
- Establish a recruitment action plan.

Knowledge is strength when trying to find the right businesses for your district. Knowing everything one can about your district, such as successful merchants, not-so-successful merchants, demographics, real estate, zoning or signage regulations, or planned public improvements will give the district an edge in the recruitment process.

As buildings become vacant in any business district, two courses of action can be taken. One, simply let the landlord or their real estate agent put a sign in the window, advertise the vacancy and wait for a tenant. Two, be part of an active plan to recruit businesses in a formalized fashion that supports the overall business district.

The process of business recruitment requires a plan of action that is organized, supported by a group of interested and involved persons, and has the financial means to do the necessary work. An outline for this work is included in Section 6.3.

C. Central Study Area Market Indicators

Positive Market Aspects:

1. There are some solid anchor businesses in this area.
2. There are properties with excellent architectural components.
3. Maintains strong traffic counts until Hwy. 32 turns off.
4. Redevelopment opportunities.

Negative Market Aspects:

1. The declining property and street conditions show a sign of apathy.
2. The identity of this area is unclear.
3. Traffic is problematic.
4. Doesn't really speak "retail" as well as it could.

D. Central Study Area Market Findings:

1. Continue to move efforts for street and property clean up into this area.

Property and street maintenance is one of the least expensive tasks that can be accomplished on the street, with one of the biggest pay-offs. This applies to the entire corridor.

Additionally, consider simple changes that individual businesses can make to benefit the street. For example, auto repair businesses certainly support the local neighborhood, but some simple landscape screening could change their overall street appeal. The goal is to create a visual image that stimulates interest, presents a feeling of organization, continuity, safety and credibility.

2. Capitalize on the historic buildings and the Jonas Statue.

Every business district needs to evaluate their assets and capitalize on them. This central section of Douglas Avenue offers some wonderful historic buildings and the Jonas Statue at High Street. Use these features as another building block for stabilization.

Consumers are attracted to an area that is defined for them visually. Building types, scale, landscaping, vistas, focal points all create a feeling of definition. Initially, something as simple as a well-executed landscape plan around the statue would start to set a tempo. Look for opportunities to create visual vistas that focus on those architectural gems that are in the neighborhood. Set design guidelines that will enhance existing important historic and distinctive properties.

3. Develop a more defined plan of providing business incubation support in this area.

Although the Flat Iron Mall has been considered by some an incubator, structuring an aggressive plan of providing small retail/service business incubation could become a market niche in this area.

Organize a business incubation committee that could provide “one-stop-shopping” for entrepreneurs considering start up of a retail or service business. Provide assistance with writing business plans, understanding and locating financing, leasing or buying a retail location, store operations, etc. Many of these services are currently available in a variety of sources, they simply need to be organized in a central resource by the committee. Central Douglas Avenue could market itself as the “incubation hub” of Racine, providing support and space for new and growing retail and service businesses.

4. Look at traffic calming concepts and better identification for public parking lots.

Consumers are looking for ease of access to shopping and parking. New retail centers have the ability to design for today’s customers demands, while older business districts must re-tool to meet these customer demands.

This area of Douglas Avenue should consider ways to tame the traffic. Look at slowing down the traffic, making the many angled intersections easier to maneuver, identify distinct ways to move pedestrians safely across the street, and develop a plan to identify all public parking areas whether on or off Douglas Avenue.

5. Consider redevelopment opportunities on underutilized or vacant sites.

It’s exciting that properties such as the long vacant Kohl’s site will now offer an opportunity for new development. This particular redevelopment has come by way of the market demand, i.e. Walgreen’s wishing to fill a market need within this neighborhood.

There is the potential for a more coordinated plan of redevelopment, with the business district working to identify potential sites and opportunities. Infill development ideas might include a mixed-use retail / housing project, a retail strip center, or a larger freestanding retailer.

Successful in-fill development relies on many components, including engaging citizens in identifying a vision for the street, growing and strengthening pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that offer a mix of activities within walking distance of housing, reclaiming blight and abandoned areas to restore the neighborhoods economic and social fabric, connecting neighborhoods to transportation, providing public open spaces for recreation and visual landscapes, and finally integrating new buildings that will complement the desired architectural character of the area.

Since most significant redevelopment involves a developer, business districts and communities must consider how they can position themselves to attract the right developer. Securing developer interest in a redevelopment opportunity can be more challenging due to the potential economic constraints or seemingly endless hurdles that must be overcome. General guidelines for working with developers to address these challenges is found in the implementation chapter, Section 6.3

E. South Study Area Market Indicators

Positive Market Aspects:

1. This area of Douglas Avenue offers the closest proximity to downtown, the river and marina area, and the lake.
2. There is an overall good scale to the buildings, with many interesting clusters of commercial properties.
3. The mix of residential properties among the commercial properties, fits the age and feeling of this area.
4. There are good neighborhood population numbers in this south study area.
5. The neighboring residential building stock is varied, interesting and affordable.
6. The ethnic diversity in this area creates a viable and growing market niche.

Negative Market Aspects:

1. There is no “entrance” into the neighborhood coming from the south.
2. There is no connection with downtown, the marina or the lakefront.
3. The declining property and street conditions show a sign of apathy.
4. The reality or perception of crime in this area is a detriment to revitalization.

F. South Study Area Market Findings

1. Begin an active campaign to simply clean up the neighborhood.

Whether it is a consumer shopping on your street, a potential tenant looking at a vacant building, or a developer looking at your neighborhood for a possible new project, **FIRST IMPRESSIONS DO COUNT!** If there is a visible sense of apathy in the condition of the streets, the neighborhoods and the real estate by its current occupants, it becomes much harder to motivate outsiders to invest their time and dollars here.

Develop a set of “street standards” that outlines simple efforts or projects that can make a difference. This could include weeding sidewalks and yards, trash pick-up on the streets, sidewalks and alleys, trim trees, shrubbery and other landscaping, wash windows and sidewalks, remove graffiti. Set annual clean up events that are productive and fun. Some business districts/neighborhoods have established regular “Dumpster Days”, where the City brings in large dumpsters for community use, greatly alleviating bulk trash build-up which may have characterized certain neighborhoods.

Work with the City building inspection department to enforce, when necessary, sanitation issues with property owners or businesses. Work on a block-by-block simple beautification projects that might include flower planting, cleanup of old building signage, community gardens, local public art displays.

Neighborhoods and business districts need to reflect their own personality. They shouldn’t all look the same, or be “sanitized”. However, if revitalization is your goal, basic clean-up of the neighborhood can be a wonderful catalyst to motivate residents and businesses to become involved and invested in change. One positive act can have a large effect on creating excitement.

2. Begin a plan to work with property owners on building repair and rehabilitation.

The condition of the real estate speaks about the condition of the street. Neighborhood repair and rehabilitation creates an instant change visually and in people's mindset. But it also has an economic value to a business and property owners.

Over 15 years ago, the University of Wisconsin Extension Service conducted a study called, "Economic Effects of Storefront Improvements". They looked at 89 merchants in 20 different Wisconsin communities that had recently improved their storefronts. This study was organized to look at the relationship between storefront improvement and retail sales. In general, here's what they found:

- Merchants who made improvements to storefronts were generally happy with their decision. 83 of the merchants interviewed were "very pleased" with the results. Only 5% wished they had spent the money on something else.
- Nearly two-thirds of the merchants interviewed, thought the external appearance change had an influence upon their retail sales. Where sales had actually increased since façade remodeling, three out of four merchants gave the storefront improvement some credit for the positive change. More than one-third whose sales had not increased, indicated the storefront improvements probably help to retard an inevitable decline in sales.
- The quality or scale of the storefront renovation was not associated with retail sales results. In this small sample, all levels of quality in renovation seemed to generate customer interest.
- Concurrent changes in business practices, particularly increasing inventory level and improving the display of merchandise, showed a significant positive relationship to retail sales.

Although this study is focused on retail sales, the store is consistent with both service and professional businesses. Customers and clients are affected by the surrounds in which they buy services or goods. Consumers of today have high expectations about their shopping experiences, and will be drawn to those businesses that strive to meet their expectations.

3. Consider revamping the exterior of the Flat Iron Mall.

The Flat Iron Mall is a large property in this area with an unclear street presence. Developed in 1979, the property is no longer as competitive as it could be. In the future this could potentially be a great site for a redevelopment project on Douglas Avenue.

As an interim concept, the Flat Iron Mall could increase its own viability and benefit this central section of Douglas Avenue, by updating the building facade of the property, creating a more retail storefront on the street. Look at a façade design with lots of windows, storefront entrances, and a distinctive sign-band that would attract interest and attention from consumers and the neighborhood. Move non-retail uses to the interior of the building.

4. Work with neighborhood leaders and the City to establish a crime/safety awareness campaign.

There is a direct correlation between the perception of crime, or safety issues and the decline of a business district or shopping area. To increase the probability of attracting more consumers into this area of Douglas Avenue, certain actions must be taken to dispel or extinguish the crime/safety issue. This might include:

- Activate neighborhood watch programs.
- Enlist the police department to conduct security surveys for business and residences.
- Enlist the police department to conduct crime prevention classes for citizen groups and business groups.
- Look at enhanced lighting, both private and public spaces.
- Enforce truancy and curfew laws.
- Involve the youth in crime prevention strategies.
- Establish a city-wide Citizens Academy that supports the efforts of the local police department. Educate Academy members on department operations and what are the immediate and future needs of the department as it relates to neighborhood safety and security.
- Monitor neighborhood crime data with the police department.
- Work with property owners to better screen tenants and monitor activity.

5. Consider creative opportunities to better connect this southern Douglas Avenue area with existing amenities, such as the river, downtown and the lake.

Neighborhoods and business districts need to capitalize on every advantage they can to strengthen their position in the marketplace. This area of Douglas Avenue has an unusual benefit with its relationship to the river, the downtown and the lake, and must find better ways to connect with these assets.

When entering Douglas Avenue from the south, there is a real disconnect from the downtown and river area. There is nothing that pulls you visually up Douglas Avenue or indicates that you could be entering another special place. Look at the use of signage, decorative lighting, murals, flowers, community art, community gardens, etc.

Another way to connect southern Douglas Avenue to these other areas is with special events. Consider a bicycle race through the downtown, along the lake, past the zoo and then south on Douglas Avenue, ending at State Street. What about a river-area street dance, with a variety of ethnic bands and food? Some neighborhood and communities have rubber duck races on their rivers to raise money for special projects. Whatever the event, the goal is to find ways to attract people into your neighborhood or area that may not consider it one of their usual destinations.

5. Small ethnic businesses are already being incubated in this area, consider business recruitment and retention that could support and grow this market segment.

As ethnic segments grow in our national demographic landscape, smart retailers are learning to provide products and services that address these new niches. The Hispanic market segment has grown at an unprecedented rate, creating new business opportunities that are already springing up on Douglas Avenue.

In 2003, Hispanics/Latinos nationwide had an estimated \$643 billion in purchasing power. There is great opportunity to expand and grow this segment of consumers in Racine. The south side of Douglas Avenue could be the focus of a cultural alternative to shoppers, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic. This can be accomplished with exclusively Hispanic-goods stores (Hispanic grocery, bakery, etc.), or simply start with some popular Hispanic products in an existing retail operation.

It is important to note that Hispanics cover a broad socioeconomic arena, and they are not one homogeneous group. There is great diversity within this market segment. People from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Columbia have very different cultures and outlooks, which can translate into how and what they shop for.

6. Consider business recruitment efforts towards businesses that could support the neighborhood market area, or create a niche market.

Historically, Douglas Avenue has been a key corridor in Racine, with its southern section being the original business district for the surrounding neighborhoods. Over time, as the community grew in all directions, and Douglas Avenue stretched further to the north, the function of this specific business district was dissipated, as shopping centers and other shopping options increased in the City.

The density of population in this south area of Douglas Avenue leads one to consider the opportunity for other retail that could be supported by this neighborhood area. Consumers tend to patronize certain business categories, i.e. financial services, groceries, pharmacies, personal services (hair salon, tanning, etc.) restaurants, fast food, gas stations, within the immediate area near their homes. Whereas, consumers don't have a problem traveling outside of their home territory to shop for clothing, shoes, jewelry sporting goods, household goods, fine dining, et. When considering business recruitment, inventory the current business mix and look for potential opportunities that could be filled that would better serve the neighborhood market, and keep them from spending their dollars elsewhere.

Another opportunity is to develop certain niche markets. Niches can be based on many things, such as a particular group of customers, a specific kind of goods or services, or a specific shopping environment. Familiar niches might include arts and crafts, antiques, dining and entertainment. Successful niche business districts often have two or three consumer niches, creating the environment to draw diverse shoppers from distant communities. The niche strategy can be used to make business district retailers far more competitive than they would be if they stood alone. Even modest niches can work together in advertising and promotional campaigns. Working together they are able to project a more solid and robust image that instills in the consumer the impression of a broad selection of merchandise.

Certainly, this section of Douglas Avenue should consider the idea of ethnicity as a great opportunity for creating their niche. It's already started. Consider other ethnic groups in this area? It would be wonderful if a variety of ethnic restaurants and stores located in this area, creating a true destination for consumers. With hard work and creativity, this is a viable possibility.

4 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous chapters have discussed the overall vision, existing conditions, and market opportunities for Douglas Avenue. The following recommendations consider that information along with the public input gathered. These recommendations will take hold over the short and long term. These recommendations are supplemented by information in the final two chapters. Detailed design guidelines are located in Chapter 5. Strategies for funding, timing, and implementation are discussed in Chapter 6.

4.1 General Land Use Recommendations

The following section contains a recommended land use plan for Douglas Avenue. This plan supports the continuation of Douglas Avenue as a mixed-use corridor and provides a framework to support the detailed recommendations discussed in the following sections. Five Land Use categories have been created:

Land Use Categories:

- Community Gateway
- Residential- Mixed Use
- Urban Transition
- Historic Mixed Use
- Downtown Gateway

A. Community Gateway (*Recommended for 3 Mile Road to Melvin Avenue*)

This land use designation is recommended between 3 Mile Road and Melvin Avenue. It is recommended that this area support mix of regional destinations and neighborhood uses including commercial, office, residential and open space along an attractive corridor that creates a unique entrance into the city. It is recognized that this district will continue to serve primarily auto-based consumers. An emphasis should be made to promote off-street parking as the district evolves. Provisions to encourage more attractive conventional design (as presented in Chapter 5) should be phased in over time. Such improvements should also include improved accommodations for pedestrians and transit users. Streetscape enhancements should follow those guidelines for “General Corridor Streetscape” in Chapter 5.

As outlined in current zoning, more intensive commercial uses should continue to be located on the west side of Douglas Avenue or on the east side when not sharing a border with residential property.

One issue that relates to this and other districts is the potential request for rezoning from residential properties. The following minimum criteria should be considered as rezoning requests are considered:

- Existing residential property has a blighting influence on the corridor.
- Proposed rezoning will result in improved traffic circulation and limits in off-street parking.
- Rezone will not provide a nuisance or provide conflict with remaining residential uses, either on or off the corridor.

B. Residential and Mixed Use *(Recommended for Melvin Avenue to Goold Street)*

This land use designation is recommended between Melvin Avenue and Goold Street. It is recommended that the area continues to support the preservation of the existing single-family housing stock as well as promote neighborhood and regional destination commercial and business. Such non-residential uses should be clustered along key nodes and intersections in the area. In terms of streetscape, residential portions of the street should follow the guidelines for “Residential Corridor Streetscape” in Chapter 5. Other portions are recommended for “General Corridor Streetscape”. Non-residential properties in this area should follow the building and site design guidelines outlined for “Improved Conventional Design”. Rezoning should be considered when it meets the criteria outlined in Section A.

C. Urban Transitional *(Recommended for Goold Street-Rapids Drive)*

This land use designation is recommended between Goold Street and Rapids Drive. It is recommended that this area support both residential and local/neighborhood commercial and business uses. The addition of new civic and community space is encouraged. This area includes the entrance into the historic and more urban portion of the corridor at Yout Street. Non-residential properties north of Yout Street should follow the guidelines for “Historic Preservation and Compatible New Construction” in Chapter 5. Any potential rezoning should be considered only after it meets the criteria outlined in Section A. The “General Corridor Streetscape” is recommended for much of this area. Additionally, “Full Streetscape” features should be considered in conjunction with the potential development of a Plaza as outlined in Chapter 5.

D. Historic Mixed Use District *(Recommended for Rapids Drive to Hamilton Street)*

This land use designation is generally recommended between Rapids Drive and Hamilton Street. The intent is to support a mixed-use district that restores the area’s historic character and promotes compatible new construction. Uses should include commercial, employment, business incubation, residential, and office. The district should follow the building and site guidelines for “Historic Preservation and Compatible New Construction”. Streetscape design should follow the guidelines for “Full Streetscape” between Rapids Drive and St. Patrick Street and near the Albert Street area. The “General Corridor Streetscape” is recommended for remaining areas.

E. Downtown-State Street Gateway District: *(Recommended for Hamilton-State Street)*

This land use designation is recommended between Hamilton and State Streets. The intent of the district is to support mixed-use and historic preservation as described in Section D. Additionally, the use mix in this area should promote employment, residential, business and continued civic uses. There are opportunities to coordinate streetscape design with State Street and guidelines for “Downtown Gateway Streetscape” should be followed. This district should also follow the guidelines for “Historic Preservation and Compatible New Construction” to guide redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts in the area.

MASTER PLAN MAP

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- P 1:** Preserve on-street parking between Yout and State streets.
- P 2:** Promote organized shared parking with internal connections.
- P 3:** Add landscaping, lighting and other improvements to public and private parking lots.
- P 4:** Consider new accommodations for on-street parking in North Douglas including right-of-way expansion, peak hour restrictions, and shared off-street parking.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- T 1:** Communicate plan priorities for street redesign and reconstruction including improved streetscape, improved pedestrian connections, and traffic calming.
- T 2:** Promote shared commercial driveways and limit curb cuts.
- T 3:** Conduct analysis for future signalization needs.
- T 4:** Provide highly visible crosswalks.
- T 5:** Promote better visibility and safer crossings at Layard Avenue.
- T 6:** Increase the sidewalk and pedestrian zone to a minimum 4 feet for terrace and 5 feet for sidewalk zone, where right of way can be acquired.
- T 7:** Improve Charles Street Intersection and consider realignment, right in-right out access, curb bulb outs, and increased angled or perpendicular parking to serve businesses.
- T 8:** Improve the Superior and Albert Street intersection, with better definition and additional landscaping

REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITY AREAS

Recommended private property restoration, infill construction, and coordinated public improvements.

- R 1:** South Street and Douglas Avenue
- R 2:** Yout Street and Douglas Avenue
- R 3:** Rapids Drive - St. Patrick Street - Douglas Avenue
- R 4:** Superior Street - Albert Street - Douglas Avenue
- R 5:** Hamilton Street and Douglas Avenue

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

- U 1:** Adopt two urban design overlay districts:
 - U 1 a:** North District: Improved conventional site and building design
 - U 1 b:** South District: Historic and compatible design
- U 2:** Develop a coordinated streetscape program (based on Design Guidelines, Ch 5)
- U 3:** Develop a comprehensive signage program utilizing new identity logo.
 - U 3 a:** Entry signage and landscaping
 - U 3 b:** Banners
 - U 3 c:** Specialized street signs
 - U 3 d:** Wayfinding signage
 - U 3 e:** Interpretive signage
- U 4:** Reduce the visual impact of overhead utilities.
- U 5:** Intersection improvements with Flower Island area improvements.
- U 6:** Additional landscaping at Jonas Statue
- U 7:** Additional landscaping at Douglas Park
- U 8:** Open views to Lake Michigan with redevelopment projects
- U 9:** Coordinate design and revitalization with the State Street revitalization effort
- U 10:** Restore historic facades and buildings.



DOUGLAS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN

4.2 MASTER PLAN MAP

4.3 Transportation and Parking

There are a variety of transportation and parking issues to address. The Revitalization Plan provides a series of recommendations, many of which will be formally planned and implemented as the street, or portions of it, are redesigned and reconstructed. The following recommendations recognize that the street must accommodate high traffic volumes as well as include design elements that help connect neighborhoods to the street.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide priorities and general recommendations to guide the future local street redesign process
- Use Douglas Avenue to connect neighborhoods, not divide them.
- Better organize traffic and access throughout the corridor.

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the transportation improvements are considered long term improvements and will be made as the street is reconstructed. The following should be considered priorities for the reconstruction process.

P1: Preserve on Street Parking South of South Street.

On-street parking south of South Street should be preserved. This parking supply is critical to many smaller businesses and acts as a traffic calming measure in residential areas. Additionally, traffic volumes are lower in this area compared to areas north of South Street.

P2: Promote organized and shared parking with internal connections.

The overall parking supply can be enhanced by reorganizing, landscaping, connecting and combining surface parking areas. For private property, this can be achieved through formal shared parking agreements, which can be facilitated, in part, through the work of the Northside Steering Committee.

P3: Add landscaping, lighting and other improvements to public and private parking lots.

Work with property owners to make parking lots more attractive. Follow the detailed design guidelines in section 5.3 that discuss parking lot recommendations.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES

Issue: Speeds along the street make crossings and left turns difficult. Traffic calming techniques should be identified for Douglas Avenue to bring the design speed of the street in line with the posted speed limits of 30 mph.

Issue: Douglas Avenue bisects the street grid at an angle throughout much of the southern portion of the study area. This creates several complicated intersections that are difficult for motorists and pedestrians.

Issue: There are several curb cuts and access points in many areas leading to inefficient and potentially dangerous conditions.

Issue: There are conflicts between the need for on street parking and the desire to improve traffic flow.

Issue: Pedestrian circulation is difficult and uncomfortable throughout the corridor due to high traffic speeds, poor pedestrian zones, wide turning radii, and limited marked crossing points.

Issue: North-south bicycle connections are limited and there are limited connections to community wide trail systems like the Root River Trail and the Lake Michigan Pathway.

P4: Consider new accommodations for On-Street Parking (North Douglas)

On-street parking between 3 Mile Road and South Street should be relocated over time, as replacement parking can be created. This section of the corridor has the highest traffic volume on the street and the most potential conflicts. This effort needs to be closely coordinated and planned with property owners. The following alternatives should be considered:

- a. Additional right-of-way for a dedicated parking lane as street is reconstructed.
- b. Peak hour parking restrictions.
- c. Shared off-street parking lot.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

T1: Communicate plan priorities for street redesign and reconstruction.

During the course of the planning process, several priorities for street improvements were discussed by the public and steering committee. Many of these improvements will not be implemented until a time when the street goes through a formal reconstruction process. Design guidelines in chapter 5 provide specific recommendations. The general priorities to consider are:

- a. Improved Streetscape
- b. Improved Pedestrian Connections
- c. Traffic Calming

T2: Promote shared commercial driveways and limit curb cuts.

As Douglas Avenue is reconstructed, work with property owners to limit the number of access points to private property. Efforts should be made to limit the width of driveway openings and to encourage shared access points between adjoining properties, where feasible. The shared access drive at the corner of South and Douglas is a good example of shared drives, access, parking lot screening and landscaping and should be used as a model for other parts of Douglas Avenue.

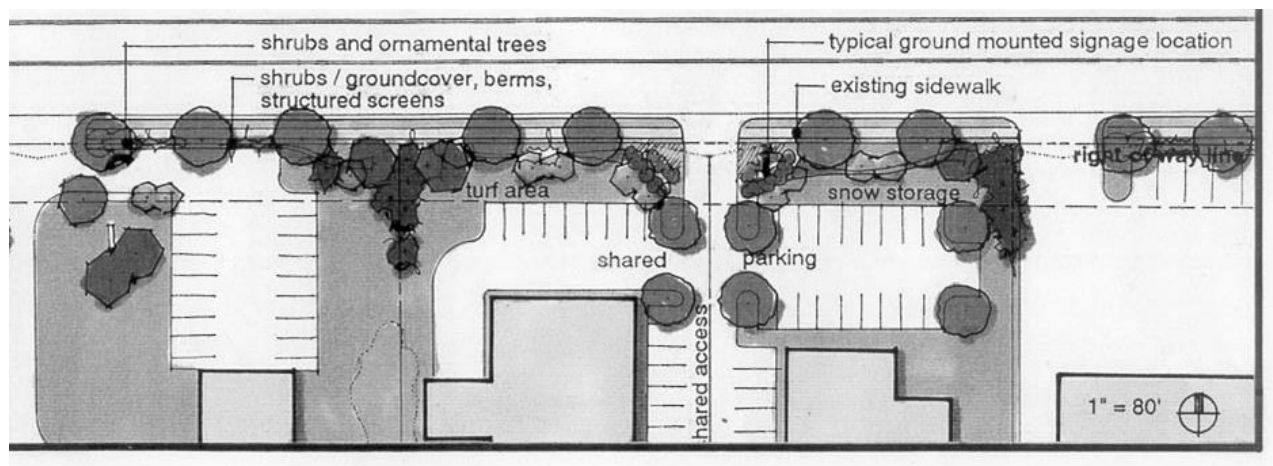


Exhibit 4.2 Shared parking and access sketch. Sketch also illustrates private property landscaping adjacent to the street.

T3: Conduct an analysis of the existing signal system

Work with the City to perform the necessary analyses to determine whether additional signals may be necessary. One intent is to determine whether larger “gaps” in traffic flow could be created for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian crossings in and out of businesses and properties. Priority locations for this detailed engineering study include the Carlton Drive and Layard Avenue intersections.

T4: Provide highly visible crosswalks

As the street is reconstructed, attention should be given to improve the appearance and functionality of several of the key crosswalks. This is important in areas where pedestrian activity is high, or where it is encouraged. Different materials exist, including durable textured pavement that should be considered. Recommended intersections include the following:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| a. Carlton Drive | d. Yout Street | f. Albert Street |
| b. South Street | d. High Street | g. Hamilton Street |
| c. Layard Avenue | e. St. Patrick Street | h. State Street |

T5: Improve circulation, and visibility at Layard Avenue, for all modes of traffic.

As the street is reconstructed, various circulation and visibility concerns for Layard Avenue should be addressed. Aside from more visible crosswalks to better connect the bike and pedestrian traffic to the community center, the Northside Steering Committee should begin a dialogue with property owners to discuss ways in which current on-street parking and visibility conflicts can be addressed. Additional coordination with City Engineering should be considered to discuss access opportunities to improve or eliminate dangerous turning movements at this intersection.

T6: Improve Sidewalks with Reconstruction

Increase the sidewalk and pedestrian zone to a minimum four (4) feet for the terrace and five (5) feet for the sidewalk zone, where right-of-way can be acquired. Encourage private property landscaping along the sidewalk where this cannot be accomplished.

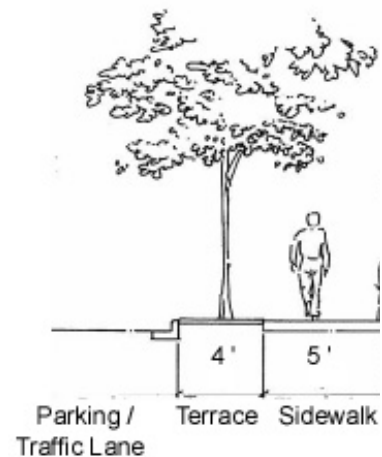


Exhibit 4.3 Proposed Sidewalk Plan

T7: Charles Street Intersection Improvements

Evaluate options to improve the Charles Street intersection including realignment, right-in/right-out access, medians, street vacation, access control, curb bulb-outs, and other methods to improve crossings for both automobiles and pedestrians. This recommendation is part of the overall redevelopment strategy for this intersection and should provide additional parking to serve businesses in this area.

T8: Superior and Barker Intersection Improvements

Evaluate the removal of excess pavement and redefining of angled intersections at the Barker, Superior, Albert Street intersections. Aside from improving difficult intersections, new definition of these corners can provide additional area for landscaping, lighting and pedestrian amenities. See the Concept Sketch in Exhibit 4.5. Similar improvements should also be considered for La Salle Street.

T9: Maintain convenient Bus and Transit Options

Maintaining and enhancing bus and transit options is an important part of maintaining the viability of Douglas Avenue. Many Douglas Avenue residents, patrons, and workers rely on the bus. Efforts should be made to keep bus stops and shelters attractive, comfortable, and clean. Additionally, members of the steering committee should work with the Belle Urban System as specific opportunities for improvements arise.

4.4 Urban Design and Visual Character

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide site and building design recommendations for new construction.
- Promote the rehabilitation of historic structures.
- Improve the perception of safety through good design decisions.
- Provide incentives and a regulatory framework to implement guidelines.
- Reduce visual clutter associated with signage.
- Improve the appearance of the public street through streetscape enhancements such as benches, banners, lighting, and other amenities.
- Provide unifying themes to connect all of Douglas Avenue while affording districts an opportunity to express distinct neighborhood character.

RECOMMENDATIONS *

*Design Guidelines (Chapter 5) provide more detail on the following recommendations.

U1: Adopt two design overlay districts on Douglas Avenue to promote quality urban design on Private Property.

Design overlay districts are adopted as a part of the zoning code. The existing zoning ordinance deals primarily with the regulation of land use and intensity. The overlay district regulates the form of development to promote higher quality development.

The north design district should encourage good conventional design. This district should extend from 3 Mile Road to Yout Street. The South design district should extend from Yout Street South to State Street. This district provides different standards to promote historic rehabilitation and compatible new construction that is sensitive to the historic context of this district.

URBAN DESIGN ISSUES

Addressing the following urban design issues will help shape the visual character of Douglas Avenue.

Issue: Douglas Avenue is one of a handful of gateway corridors leading to downtown Racine, but lacks a coordinated streetscape character consistent with an important community corridor.

Issue: Douglas Avenue lacks green spaces and is typically described as having a “hard” appearance.

Issue: Douglas Avenue lacks visual interest and a sense of place that capitalizes on its unique assets such as its proximity to Lake Michigan, downtown Racine and its diverse neighborhoods and business districts.

Issue: The visual character of Douglas Avenue is one of a vast auto-related strip center in the north and central portions, with uses separated from the street, multiple curb cuts, unscreened parking in front of buildings and limited connections between uses and the public sidewalk.

Issue: Much of the corridor’s building stock lacks a cohesive identity or visual character. Exceptions include the historic blockfaces in the south and south-central study areas.

Issue: Douglas Avenue is within walking distance of Lake Michigan but this connection is not visually apparent from the corridor, and the streetscaping does not reflect this connection.

Issue: South Douglas Avenue is today, and has historically been a diverse, multi-cultural business district with a unique identity; this identity is not signified by the corridor streetscape.

U2: Develop a coordinated streetscape program for Douglas Avenue.

A detailed plan for the Douglas Avenue streetscape should be developed. Certain elements such as pedestrian and roadway lighting will be completed as the street is reconstructed. Other elements, including banners and hanging baskets could likely be added in the short term to provide an immediate visual improvement. More detailed guidelines on streetscape design are included in Chapter 5.

U3: Develop a comprehensive signage program for Douglas Avenue.

In conjunction with U2, prepare a comprehensive signage program that includes the following:

- a. entry signage and features,
- b. banners,
- c. street signs,
- d. wayfinding, and
- e. interpretive signage.

This will provide a new image for the corridor. Additionally, take opportunities to highlight diverse and distinct districts and places on the corridor. Detailed guidelines can be found in Chapter 5.

A related component to this recommendation is to create a new Douglas Avenue logo as a component to be included on these signs. This is a part of the “branding” of the street as a way to improve the overall image and identity. Area residents could be involved in the design of this logo through a committee or formal competition. This will help add to the public interest in the street and ongoing revitalization process.

U4: Reduce the visual impact of the overhead utilities (3 Mile to Layard Avenue).

Based on input received from public meetings and steering committee comments, there is a strong desire to underground the overhead utilities along Douglas Avenue as an important part of improving the aesthetics of this corridor.

Undergrounding utilities is an expensive proposition that will require a cooperative effort and a funding commitment by the City, WE Energies, the State Department of Transportation, and the business association. A project of this magnitude can be accomplished as part of the Highway 32 reconstruction project. Other communities have been able to undertake projects of this nature as part of highway reconstruction.

The cost for this project will include undergrounding the primary service within the public right-of-way and the cost of connecting commercial and residential properties to the primary service. A cost analysis should be developed to begin discussions on options for funding this project.

Although undergrounding utilities is the preferred solution, other options should be considered depending on the cost and availability of funding. These options include:

- Work with WE Energies to install more attractive poles and provide street tree plantings below the utility lines.
- Moving utility poles to other corridors off the Douglas Avenue corridor.

U5: Yout / Charles Street - Flower Island Area Improvements

Give consideration to purchasing and converting the “Flower Island” property into a landscaped plaza. An opportunity exists to create an urban square, framed by the historic Charles Street facades and a new façade at the Kohl’s property. This could be a dynamic entrance feature to the historic portion of Douglas Avenue and meet related needs of providing needed green space and potentially off-street parking.

U6: Provide additional landscaping at the Jonas Statue.

This statue marks one of the most defining features of the street. A detailed engineering study should be performed to see if it is feasible to remove one lane of traffic to MLK Drive in order to increase the landscaping space at the statue. At a minimum, landscaping should be added to the existing site. A Plan illustration of this concept is included in Exhibit 4.4.

U7: Provide additional landscaping around Douglas Park.

Douglas Park and the Caesar Chavez community center represent one of the most important civic spaces on the street. Additional plantings and landscaping along the park’s perimeter should be considered to improve the visual character of the street.

U8: Consider opening views to Lake Michigan in Redevelopment Projects

Open views onto Lake Michigan from the corridor where slopes permit and strengthen Douglas Avenue’s connection to these amenities.

U9: Coordinate Streetscape Improvements with State Street

The stretch between State and Prospect Streets is a key entrance corridor. Today the corridor does not appear to be a lively inviting corridor. Improve focal points and create pedestrian scaled amenities to bring Downtown’s “human scale” into Douglas Avenue. Capitalize on the area’s close proximity to the river and nearby by anchors such as CNH and the Yardarm restaurant. Promote façade restorations to key buildings, including the Douglas Building Center.

U10: Historic Preservation Core Areas

The intersection of Albert, Barker, Superior, and Douglas is a key intersection for targeting historic preservation efforts in the South district. This corner represents a core of historic buildings that could be restored. Use of the city’s façade program should be strongly encouraged. Additionally, add pedestrian scaled amenities starting in this area to note a special district.

The area between Rapids Drive and St. Patrick Street also includes several historic buildings that add to the character of the street. Redevelopment efforts should combine restoration of the historic stock and infill construction that complements the character.

Other properties of historic significance and visual interest are interspersed throughout the corridor and worthy of preservation consideration.

4.5 Redevelopment and Rehabilitation

Redevelopment is a broad term that can refer to different types of projects. For example, redevelopment projects include building rehabilitation, additions, infill construction, or demolition and new construction. There are also multiple ways redevelopment can occur. This plan first seeks to encourage market-driven approaches that come from property owners. In many cases, these efforts may benefit from different incentive programs offered by the City or other resources. Many programs are highlighted in Chapter 6. Other redevelopment projects result from more intensive involvement from the City and its Redevelopment Authority (RDA). These projects often involve the RDA purchasing, assembling, and reselling the property to new developers.

The following section outlines several redevelopment and rehabilitation concepts in key portions throughout the corridor. The concepts illustrated in this chapter often combine multiple properties and would benefit most from a combination of public and private improvements. The implementation of concepts similar to those illustrated here will have a significant impact on improving the character of the street.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Better utilize vacant or underutilized parcels.
- Make land use and zoning decisions that enhance a sense of place.
- Promote mixed-use development.
- Take advantage of southern Douglas Avenue's proximity to downtown, the Root River, and other locational amenities.
- Expand and intensify development on underutilized land within Douglas Avenue to better utilize the existing infrastructure.
- Coordinate land use and redevelopment projects on several parcels, to create larger, concentrated revitalization efforts.
- Coordinate public improvements including signage and streetscape with these improvements.
- Promote mixed use developments including live-work studio space, upper floor office, and similar arrangements throughout the corridor.
- Continue to promote public and private home and business ownership programs, especially in the areas surrounding the southern portions of Douglas Avenue. Home ownership is a key to neighborhood stabilization.

REDEVELOPMENT & REHABILITATION ISSUES

Issue: While there are several long-standing businesses that support community needs, the corridor as a whole lacks a business mix that can capitalize on its role as a neighborhood center and community gateway corridor.

Issue: Maintenance issues on some of the properties create the sense that the area is in decline.

Issue: There is a great physical housing stock adjacent to the area that could create strong and vital neighborhoods around Douglas to support the business districts.

Issue: Significant natural and cultural resources are located immediately adjacent to the corridor, such as the Root River, Lake Michigan, and downtown Racine. However, there is no sense along the corridor that such features are nearby and connections to those features are not apparent.

Issue: Dense residential neighborhoods surround this corridor, yet neighborhood serving businesses have actually decreased in many parts of the corridor.

Issue: Adjacent neighborhoods provide a great opportunity to attract new residents, urban pioneers, and others willing to provide "sweat" equity to the area.

Issue: A substantial potential workforce exists in the south and central portions of the study area. Many of the historic buildings are natural business incubators, and currently act as such.

SUGGESTED REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

R1: Douglas and South Street

A prime redevelopment site exists on the high traffic corner of Douglas and South Street. The site represents an opportunity to help establish a blockface at the corner, as well as to build on shared parking and access located in the area. Multiple properties adjacent to the corner one could be considered for larger efforts.

Potential Private Property Improvements:

- New construction on the vacant site that better defines the corner with parking moved to the side of building. Multi-story or one-story building with extended parapet encouraged.
- Shared driveway access and parking with surrounding properties
- On-site landscaping and plantings
- Add monument-style signage with landscaping and work with nearby property owners to replace their existing pole signs.

Potential Public Projects:

- Public Street Sign Improvements: Banners, Signage, Wayfinding
- General Corridor Streetscape Improvements (Chapter 5) including:
 - unique roadway lighting;
 - removed visibility of utility poles;
 - and enhanced crosswalks with striping or specialty pavement.



Concept sketch of Douglas and South Streets, looking north. Illustration shows landscaping, monument signage, and new construction at this corner.

R2: Douglas and Yout Street

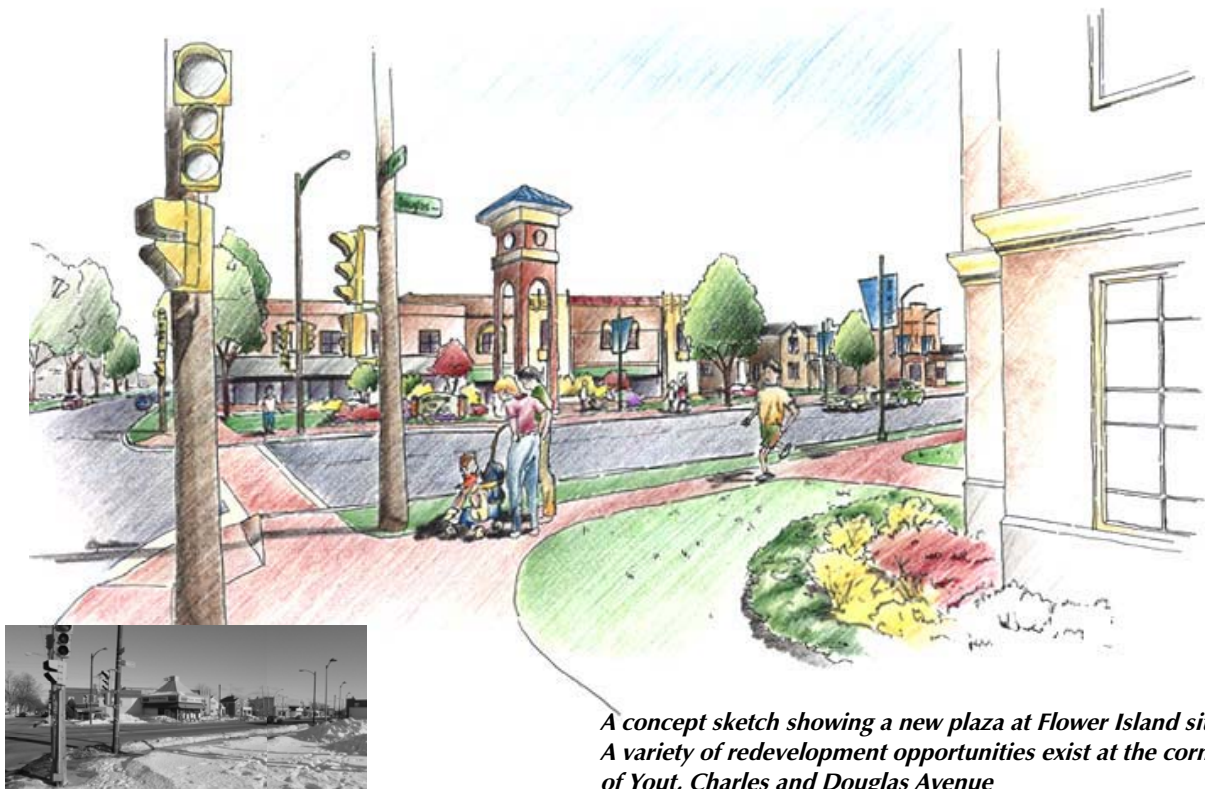
There is an opportunity to coordinate several improvements at the Yout, Charles and Douglas Street intersection. Overtime, this will create a new entrance to the historic portion of Douglas Avenue.

Potential Private Property Projects:

- The new Walgreen's Building (former Kohl's Site) represents a key redevelopment area in itself. It marks the entrance into the historic portion of Douglas Avenue. Landscaping and placement of the new building could help improve site conditions at Yout and Douglas and complement the historic structures at Charles Street. At a minimum, Walgreens should have a strong connection to the public sidewalk and landscape at the intersection. With its prime location, this site could also serve as a major transit point for the area.
- Façade and site improvements to Douglas Hardware-Auto zone properties. A coordinated effort could allow for business expansion, improved facades, well designed shared signage, and shared drives.
- Restoration of the historic facades along Charles Street that would help frame the future plaza.

Potential Public Space Projects:

- Reconfigured Charles Street intersection, with consideration given to realignment, right-in/right-out access, medians, street vacation, access control, curb bulb outs, and other methods to improve crossings for both automobiles and pedestrians. Increased parking to support area businesses.
- Public plaza at the Flower Island property
- Streetscape in the plaza area featuring "Full Corridor Streetscape"



A concept sketch showing a new plaza at Flower Island site. A variety of redevelopment opportunities exist at the corner of Yout, Charles and Douglas Avenue

R3: Douglas Avenue and Multiple Opportunities between Rapids Drive- St. Patrick Street

There are multiple improvements between Rapids Drive and St Patrick's Street. New infill construction that complements the scale of surrounding buildings should be promoted at the corner of St. Patrick's and Douglas. A larger redevelopment project would include restoration of the block's historic facades and improvements to create additional business street presence at the current Flat Iron Village Mall.

Potential Private Property Projects:

- Façade restoration for key historic buildings (1)
- Improved street presence and storefront for Flat Iron Property (2)
- New construction at the St. Patrick/Marquette intersection (see p. 1-4) (3)
- Reorganized, shared parking behind buildings. Parking lot well lit and landscaped. (4)
- Potential mid-block access to parking area. (5)

Potential Public Space Improvements:

- Jonas Statue site enhancements, consider widening plaza based on detailed engineering study. (6)
- "Full Corridor Streetscape" enhancements (7)

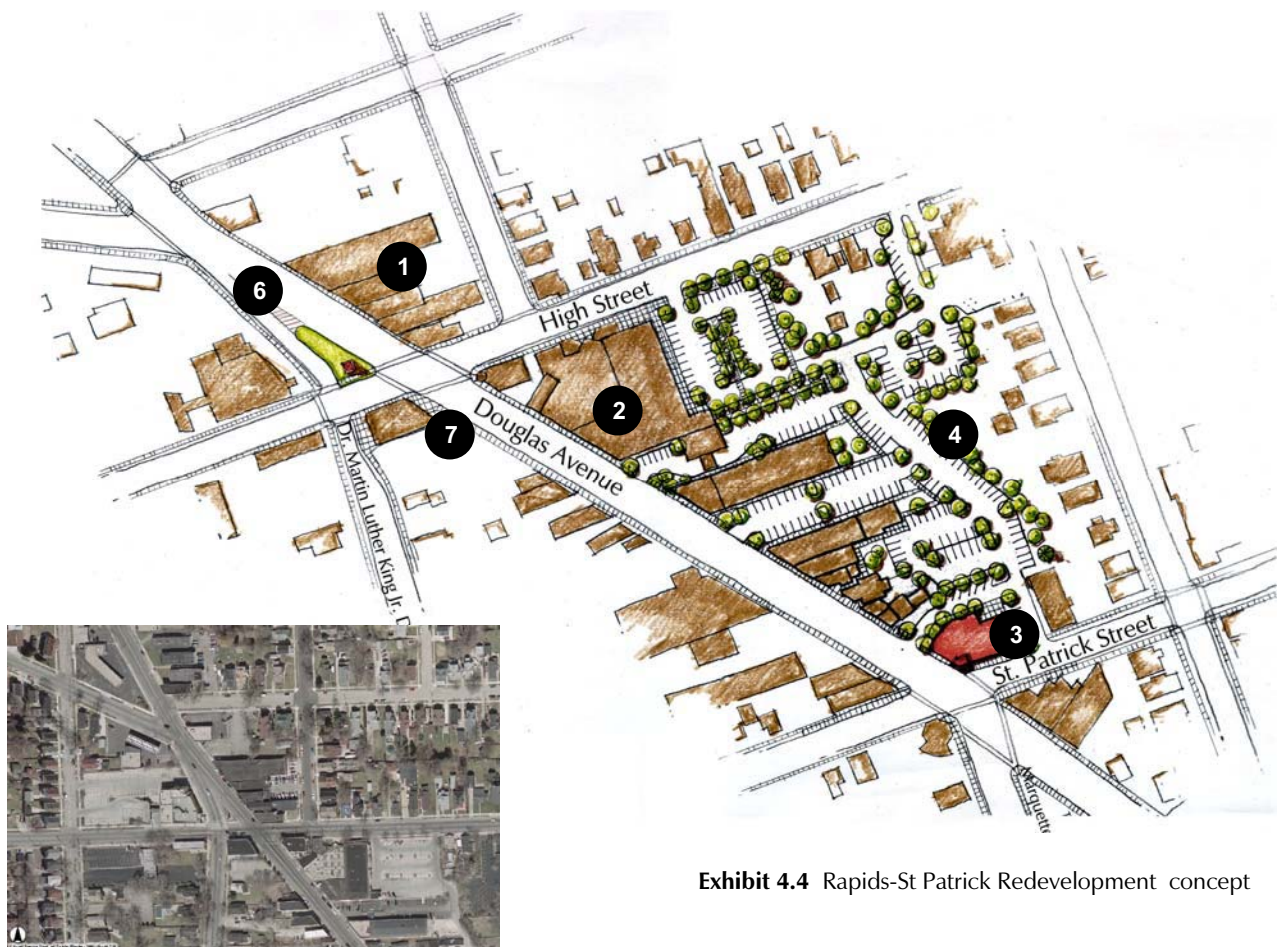


Exhibit 4.4 Rapids-St Patrick Redevelopment concept

Existing Aerial Photo

R5: Douglas, Albert, Superior, and Barker

This is a unique redevelopment opportunity to promote historic preservation where a core of historic buildings remains. This could serve as a targeted improvement area that could spread to surrounding areas on the corridor. Potential redevelopment projects immediately south of the corridor could help re-establish a blockface in the corridor and complement the restored facades. Such efforts may be spurred by city improvements to the intersection to redefine the corner and add additional landscaping.

Potential Private Property Improvements:

- Historic façade restoration for buildings at the intersection. (1)
- New infill commercial or mixed use construction south of intersection.
- New construction which meets urban infill design guidelines (2)
- Shared parking lot organized in rear of properties and is well landscaped and lit. (3)

Potential Public Space Improvements:

- Redefinition of Albert-Superior-Douglas intersection with new landscaping area. (4)
- Bump-outs along Superior Street to shelter on-street parking and increase the pedestrian zone. (5)
- “Full Corridor Streetscape” enhancements. (6)

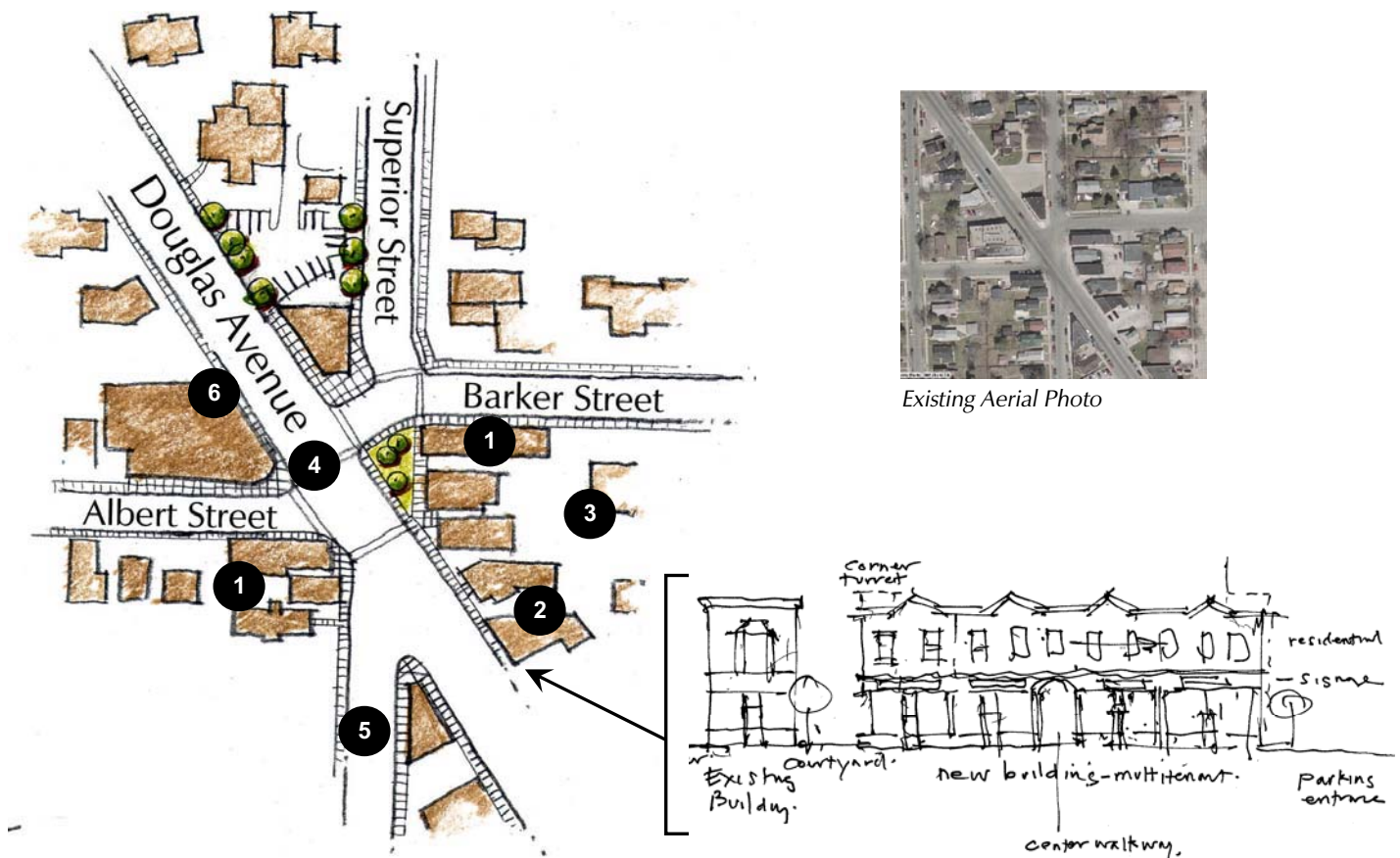


Exhibit 4.5 Albert-Barker-Superior Redevelopment Concept

R6: Douglas and Hamilton Streets

Currently there is a “hole” in the blockface at Douglas and Hamilton. New development could help define the blockface and serve as an additional stabilizing force in that block. Additionally, restoring and improving the façade of the Douglas Business Center, along with associated site and streetscape improvements, would provide an important improvement to this area.

Potential Private Property Improvements:

- New construction at the north and south corners of Hamilton Street. New construction follows historic infill design guidelines and is set close to the street edge. (1)
- Shared, organized parking with landscaping (2)
- Façade and building improvements to Douglas Business Center (3)

Potential Public Space Improvements:

- “Downtown Gateway Streetscape”. (4)
- Improved sidewalks. (5)



Existing Aerial Photo

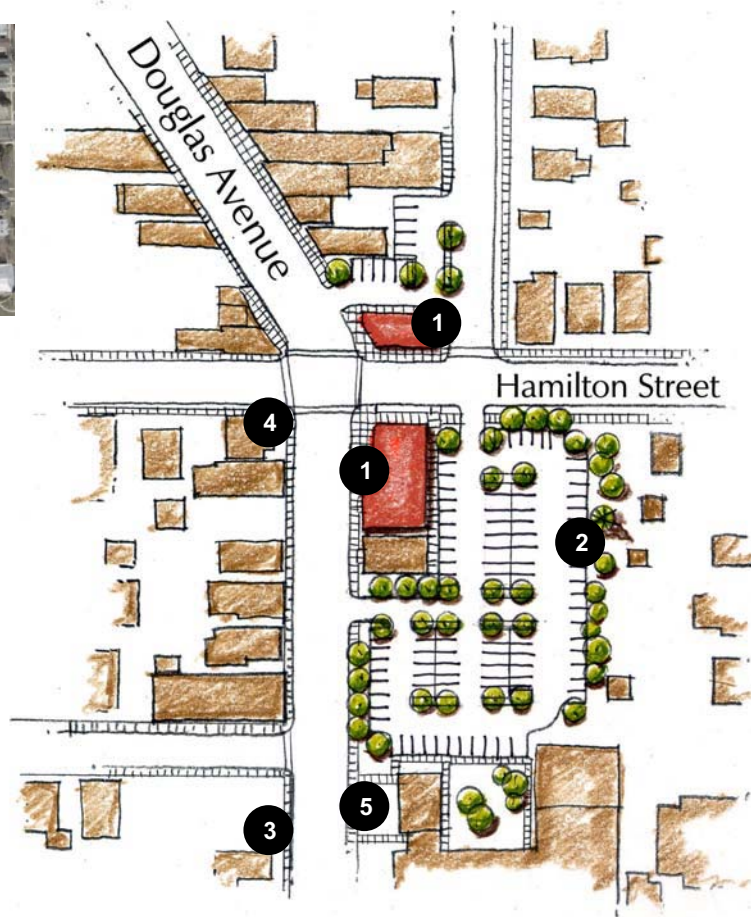


Exhibit 4.6 Hamilton Street Redevelopment Concept

5 DESIGN GUIDELINES

This chapter includes specific recommendations for both public spaces and private areas. These support the recommendations contained in Chapter 4. “**Design Districts**” describe private property improvements. This includes architecture, site layout, landscaping, and private sign guidelines. Two design districts are recommended: a northern conventional design district and a southern historic design district. The design guidelines provide recommendations for both districts. The City of Racine should formally adopt one or both design districts as an overlay zone as recommended in Chapter 4, thereby requiring additions, rehabilitations, and new construction to conform to these standards.

“**Streetscape Zones**” refer to the recommendations for the enhancing of public streets. These enhancements include planting, banners, lighting and other amenities. Four zones, with different amenity packages have been recommended that could be applied to the differing environments of Douglas Avenue.

5.2 General Design Principles

The urban design principles recommended for Douglas Avenue are not new. These principles underpin the design of some of the most popular and economically viable urban commercial business districts and corridors in the United States. Walkable streets, human-scaled architecture, public spaces, street furnishings, and landscaping are common design features that make these places attractive places to shop, work, and live.

1. Douglas Avenue should be an **attractive and functional** signature street, traversing many different urban environments.
2. Douglas Avenue should accommodate a **mix of land uses** to support the immediate neighborhoods while allowing a context for regional destinations.
3. Buildings and landscaping should contribute to physical definition of Douglas Avenue as an **attractive public space**.
4. A **convenient and attractive parking supply** is critical for a successful business district.
5. Increase street **safety through appropriate urban design**.

ABOUT THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Street design needs to achieve multiple goals including efficient automobile movements, speed control, and support for other transportation choices including bus, bike, and pedestrian uses as needed throughout the corridor.
- Douglas Avenue should include uses that support both the surrounding neighborhoods and the larger region while expressing the street’s cultural identity. Uses include retail, restaurants, residential, offices, service businesses, civic uses, and public open spaces.
- In urban environments such as Douglas Avenue, buildings and landscaping play a key role in defining the character of the street. The design and placement of buildings should work with landscaping to help frame Douglas Avenue and provide a pleasing sense of enclosure appropriate for an urban environment.
- Parking areas should be landscaped, screened, and linked between properties. Parking on the sides or in the rear of buildings is generally preferred.
- Crime exists in areas where there is access to a crime site, where surveillance is low and where there is little activity near a potential site. Proper design of the built environment can contribute to increase sense of security along the street.

5.3 General Guidelines for Improved Conventional Design

(Proposed North Design District: 3 Mile Road to Yout Street)

Parking Areas

- Locate large parking areas to the side or rear of buildings rather than in the front yards of buildings, whenever possible.
- Parking areas should be well landscaped and lit.
- Parking lots should be screened with ornamental fencing, dense hedges, or other plantings to soften the visual impact from Douglas Avenue.
- Shared parking areas are encouraged. Whenever possible, adjoining parking lots should be linked to provide internal traffic circulation.
- Internal walkways should be provided to interconnect parking lots with building entrances.



Ornamental fencing can be used to soften the visual impact of surface parking areas on Douglas Avenue.

Site Design

- Buildings should be parallel to Douglas Avenue.
- Walkways should be provided to connect the building entrance to the public sidewalk.
- It is preferred to have the front of the building or the public entrance face Douglas Avenue.
- Buildings should have a prominent location at key intersections. Parking should be moved to the sides and rear so the building can define the corner, not parking lots.



Walkways between building entrances and the public sidewalk enhance the pedestrian environment.

Building Height

- Building height adds to the character of the street. A majority of the buildings in the North Design District are and will likely be one-story buildings. New one-story buildings should contribute to the street through the addition of an extended first floor façade when a multiple story building is not feasible.



Extended first story facades add to the character of the street.

Building Design

- Avoid blank building walls with little detail or variety fronting on Douglas Avenue.
- All visible sides of buildings should be designed with details that complement the front façade. Side facades that are visible from Douglas Avenue should receive equal design attention.
- Buildings should be designed as products of their own time. Historic buildings can provide clues on how to proportion a façade, however, the copying of historic appearance and details is discouraged.
- For larger buildings, it is important to provide variation to the building face through the use of materials and color, or by dividing the building into bays to break up large facades and create pedestrian interest at the street level.
- Corner buildings play an important role in defining the intersection and should include distinctive architectural features including towers, rounded walls, recessed entries and other design features.
- Buildings should contain clear windows to provide interest to the street. Mirrored windows are discouraged.
- Brick, stone, and stucco are the preferred primary building materials.
- Accent materials such as awnings, parapets, and cornices should provide interest in facades.



Dividing buildings into bays can create pedestrian interest at the street level.

Signage

- New pylon or pole signs are prohibited.
- Preferred sign types include: a) signs integrated into the design of the building along a sign band b) monument signs of six to eight feet in height c) other architecturally integrated free standing signs, generally not exceeding a height of 10 feet unless meeting exceptional design standards.
- Individually mounted backlit letters are an acceptable form of signage.
- Small, well-designed building-mounted light fixtures are a preferred method of illuminating signage.



Signage should be architecturally integrated with the building.

5.4 Guidelines for Historic Preservation and Compatible New Construction

(Proposed South Design District: Yout Street to State Street)

The following guidelines provide direction on two types of projects: historic building rehabilitation and new construction within a historic district. It is not the intent of these guidelines to recreate historic buildings. What is recommended is that building improvements incorporate the basic facade design elements of older buildings while encouraging creative and compatible architectural expression.

Building Setback and Orientation

- Buildings should contribute to the creation of a blockface, the street wall defined by the individual facades.
- Where new buildings are “in-filled” within an established blockface, the building setback should be consistent with adjoining buildings.
- New buildings should be set back no more than ten feet from the sidewalk. In areas with minimal sidewalk width, the building setback should include additional pavement to add landscaping, amenities, and widen the sidewalk zone.
- In special cases, buildings may be set back greater than ten feet to allow for the development of usable public open spaces such as pedestrian plazas.
- Parking areas should be screened with a dense hedge, decorative fencing, or other form of street wall. This wall should maintain the setback found elsewhere within a well established blockface.



Individual buildings should contribute to a unique and cohesive historic blockface.

Building Height

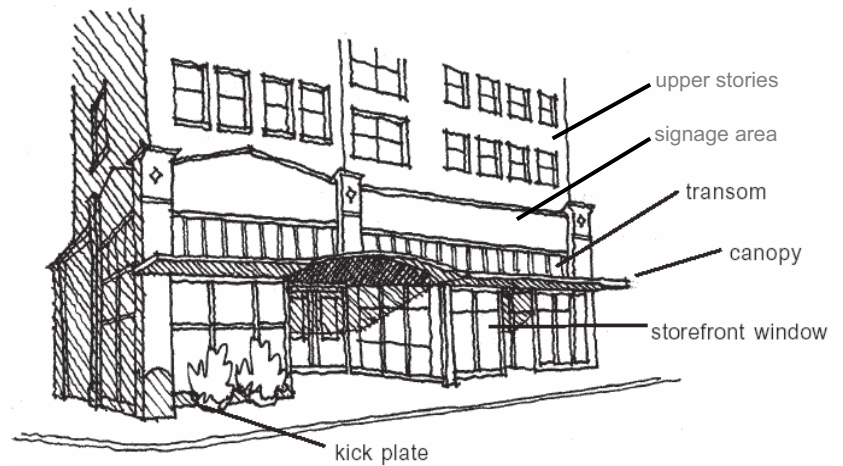
- Two-story buildings are preferred as a minimum block height. One-story buildings in a historic district are generally discouraged. Exceptions may be considered for exceptional design that includes extended one-story facades that fit the historic context of the blockface.
- New buildings should not vary by more than one-story from the average building height in blocks that exhibit a concentration of existing buildings and a well-defined blockface.



Two story buildings are preferred as a minimum block height. This historic building is located near the intersection of Douglas and Charles.

Articulation, Materials and Color

- Buildings should have clearly defined portions: base, middle, and top. Generally, heavier materials are located beneath lighter materials.
- Exterior materials should be durable, high-quality materials and appropriate for external use.
- The use of false brick or other “faux” sidings is discouraged.
- Property owners are encouraged to use a three-color paint scheme with a “base” color on the majority of the building, “trim” colors used on building features such as window and door trims and cornices, and “accent” colors on signs, awnings, and other architectural details.
- Parapets should be used to conceal mechanical equipment and provide a pleasing top edge to buildings.



The ground level of the building must provide for pedestrian interest and comfort along sidewalks.

Windows and Entrances

- Windows on the ground floor should not be darkly tinted, colored or have a mirrored finish. Privacy should be created through curtains or similar measures that keep the perception of an open façade.
- Windows in infill construction should continue the established rhythm of openings established in the existing blockface. Generally, vertical window openings are more appropriate than horizontal openings in Historic Douglas Avenue.
- The ground floors of commercial retail buildings should have over half of the street wall area devoted to windows to enhance the pedestrian character of Douglas Avenue.
- Building entrances should be designed as the focal point of the façade.
- Entrances of new buildings or additions located close to the sidewalk should include recessed entries to allow for pedestrian movement.



Building entrances should be the focal point of the façade. Windows should not be tinted, colored or have a mirrored finish.

Signage

- Preferred sign types include building mounted signs, window signs, projecting signs, and awning signs.
- Signs should be simple and easy to read.
- Sign colors should relate to and complement the primary colors of the building facade.
- Sign design and placement should fit the character of the building and not obscure architectural details.
- Signage should generally be centered within the prescribed signage area of the building.
- Plastic box signs are highly discouraged.
- Individually mounted backlit letters are an acceptable form of signage.
- The use of small, well-designed building-mounted light fixtures is a preferred method of illuminating signage.
- Window signs should not mask a majority of the storefront.



Building mounted signs are a preferred sign type.

General Guidelines for Building Restoration

Several buildings located primarily at the middle and southern ends of Douglas Avenue are older commercial structures which have historic value and interest. The ground floors of many of these structures have been altered over time while the upper stories generally retain their historic appearance.

When considering building improvements, property owners of older commercial structures are encouraged to restore the original character of the building. Property owners should refer to historic photos and conduct exploratory removals to determine the feasibility of restoration efforts. The following guidelines should be considered for improving older commercial buildings:

- The distinguishing features of the original building should be preserved. The removal or alteration of historic materials or distinctive architecture features should be avoided, whenever possible.
- Where practical, restore original masonry and reconstruct missing elements such as cornices, windows and storefronts that were part of the original building design. If restoration is not feasible, design new elements to complement the character, materials and design of the original building.
- Remove any inappropriate elements, signs, canopies, siding etc. that cover details and features of the original building.
- Painting of natural brick or stone is strongly discouraged when those materials are in good condition. Property owners should consult with a professional cleaner to identify cleaning methods that will prevent damage to the brick or stone surfaces.



Several buildings in the study area are older commercial structures which have historic value and interest. These historic structures are located along Charles Street, behind "Flower Island."

5.5 Design For Safety

The following guidelines are from the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design program (CPTED). The goal of the program is to reduce the incidence of crime and increase the perception of safety in urban areas. This program suggests that crime can occur where the opportunity exists, access to a crime site is available, surveillance is low and where there is little human activity near a potential site. Through proper design of the environment, these factors can be reduced and the sense of security for the users of the site can be increased.

Guidelines for “Natural Surveillance”

- Orient activities to the street to enhance visibility for residents and visitors.
- Backlight windows to the street for visibility to the outside and inside.
- Illuminate walkways to major activity locations.
- Provide lighting at entrances and exits of buildings.
- Lights should be placed at the rear of buildings for visibility and observation
- Pedestrian walkways between buildings should be lit after dark with continuous or sensor controlled lights.
- Open blocked-up windows for visibility.

Guidelines for “Access Control”

- Sidewalks, lighting and landscaping should clearly guide residents and visitors to activities and business on Douglas Avenue.
- Street lighting should provide security for people getting in and out of cars at parking spaces on the street.
- Fences should be used to discourage public access from dark areas such as rear or side commercial parking and storage lots. These fences, however, should allow visibility for surveillance.
- Signage for direction and a map of commercial establishments to direct residents and visitors should be considered at key locations.

Guidelines for “Territorial Reinforcement”

- Use landscaping to outline ownership of property for residential, office and mixed use structures at the interior of blocks.
- Keep sidewalks and streets clear of litter.
- Off-street parking next to buildings, at rear parking lots and at public/community parking lots should be well maintained and well lit.
- Remove graffiti within 24 hours.
- In offices or storage spaces above first floor commercial activities, lights should be on during early evening hours.
- Commercial businesses that are open after dark such as restaurants should be well lit for easy identification by patrons. Signs, entrances and walkways should be easily identifiable and attractive.
- Gateways and streetscape elements should be identified to indicate neighborhood territory.
- The maintenance of buildings can also reinforce the ownership of the area.

5.6 Streetscape Design Guidelines

These guidelines discuss recommendations for public rights-of-way and civic spaces along Douglas Avenue.

Elements of a Streetscape

Streetscape improvements include features such as lighting, landscaping, and furnishings that enhance the pedestrian use of the street. Future coordination with business owners, property owners and neighborhood residents will be needed to determine the final design theme and identity plan for Douglas Avenue

Roadway Lighting

New lighting should be considered to other areas of the street as reconstruction or redevelopment projects are scheduled. General guidelines for roadway lighting include:

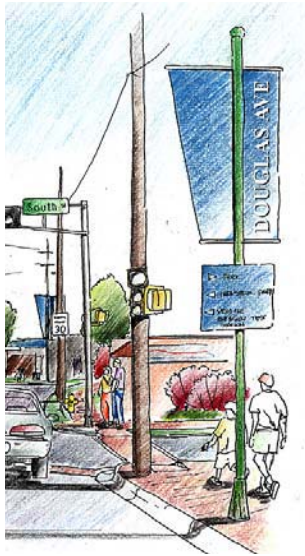
- All public sidewalks along Douglas Avenue should be lit for pedestrian safety.
- New roadway lighting should be selected to provide a unique identity for Douglas Avenue. The roadway lighting should be a consistent element along Douglas Avenue.
- New lighting fixtures should be directed toward the ground and not toward the sky.
- Existing and new roadway lighting should accommodate banners, hanging flower baskets and holiday decorations that will improve the visual character and identity of the street.



Pedestrian Scale Lighting

Pedestrian scaled lighting should be considered at targeted portions of the street. These should be added as reconstruction or redevelopment projects are scheduled. Pedestrian scale lighting programs should be initiated by the neighborhood and business community. Additional funding sources will be needed to implement and maintain pedestrian lighting.

- Yout Street Plaza
- Rapids Drive up to Marquette Street and the Albert/ Superior Street intersection are among the targeted areas to consider additional lighting.
- Pedestrian scale lighting should be designed to accommodate banners, hanging floral baskets, holiday decorations, possibly with duplex receptacles.



Street Trees and Landscaping

Reconstruction efforts should include accommodations for street trees and plantings. The addition of street trees and landscaping can have a dramatic effect on the visual character and pedestrian experience of Douglas Avenue. Today, Douglas Avenue is almost devoid of plantings and street trees. Street trees should be selected to fit the constraints of a given location. Trees that adjoin moving traffic lanes or are adjacent to buildings that are at the property line should have a vertical profile and higher branching height. Trees that adjoin parking lanes can be wider in profile with lower branching heights. Private planting easements should also be considered in areas where there is not sufficient width in the public right-of-way.

Street Banners

Banners can be a short-term, low cost method of creating identity for the street such as expressing its international character. A banner program should be a coordinated effort between the business association and the City of Racine. The banner program could include an adopted logo for Douglas Avenue or other identifying feature.

Street Furniture and Amenities

Street furniture and amenities including benches, trash receptacles, planters, drinking fountains, bicycle racks, etc. can enhance the pedestrian character of the street. The type and location of amenities will depend on the volume of pedestrian traffic. The City should assist neighborhoods and the business association in securing approvals and identifying appropriate locations for amenities within the public right-of-way. In some cases, where funding sources are available, amenities can be purchased and installed by the city with business and neighborhood input. If additional amenities are desired, neighborhoods or the business association may need to take full responsibility for funding and maintenance. Easements should be negotiated with private property owners to locate furnishings and amenities in building setback areas if the public sidewalk is too narrow.



Bus Passenger Shelters

Additional well-designed bus passenger shelters should be considered at key points along Douglas Avenue. Easements should be acquired to locate bus passenger shelters on private property if there is inadequate room within the public right-of-way. Generally, bus passenger shelters should be transparent in appearance and could include signage such as information directories. Benches should be provided at key bus stops where shelters are not located.



Wayfinding Signage

Racine has a general wayfinding program that includes signage on Douglas Avenue, however, Douglas Avenue lacks a coordinated wayfinding system that directs visitors to the many public destinations located along the street. A dedicated funding source will be needed to implement and maintain a wayfinding system. Generally, wayfinding signage should be located in the sidewalk terrace. In addition:

- Single-use wayfinding signs are discouraged. Combine information for three to four destinations per sign when appropriate.

- A consistent style should be used to create easy-to-read signs that complement the desired theme and identity of Douglas Avenue. An exception to this guideline will be regulatory signage, which must be consistent with official standards.
- The location of wayfinding signs should be coordinated with the City and DOT to avoid conflicts with regulatory signs.
- Pedestrian wayfinding signs such as information kiosks and interpretive signage should be provided at public locations.

B. Unifying Identity Elements

Douglas Avenue is a diverse corridor and should be treated as such. However, elements such as roadway lights, street signs, and wayfinding should become unifying themes creating an overall Douglas Avenue Identity. Other elements, such as unique banners, pedestrian lighting, and other features can be unique to the distinct districts on the street.

C. Streetscape Zones

Streetscape improvements will be phased in over time, or added as parts of the street are reconstructed. Amenities vary depending on the use, level of pedestrian activity and physical constraints. Four streetscape zones have been provided as the general framework for urban amenities throughout the varied environs of Douglas Avenue.

Full Corridor Streetscape (Type I)

This is the most intense streetscape zone and should be applied to the historic district or select portions thereof. Type I streetscape treatments could include concrete pavers, bulb-outs or selective curb widening, combination roadway and pedestrian lights, banners, plantings, benches, and trash receptacles. Angled intersections, such as the one at Superior/Albert may provide locations where additional pedestrian space and amenities could be added to complement clusters of historic buildings.

Downtown Gateway Streetscape (Type II)

This streetscape zone is less intense than that in the historic district, but should still provide an attractive and safe pedestrian environment in this important transition zone. This district could include roadway lights, some pedestrian accent lighting, wayfinding, banners, plantings, and gateway signage. Close coordination with ongoing State Street Revitalization efforts is necessary.

General Corridor Streetscape (Type III)

This level of streetscape is proposed for the general commercial district and transition zones that are generally more auto-oriented than pedestrian-oriented. A streetscaping program is still important to consider for the street's overall identity. Amenities will include lighting, landscaping, wayfinding, and banners. The eventual undergrounding or relocation of utilities is part of the overall streetscape considerations for this district.

Residential Corridor Streetscape (Type IV)

This is the least intense streetscape zone and is intended for residential areas, such as the Melvin to Layard Avenue Area. Additional street trees and landscaping would complement this area.

Entrance Zones

There are multiple entrance zones identified along Douglas Avenue. These key entrance points deserve special design consideration.

- Three Mile Road is the only marked entrance, with City gateway signs. This entrance way could be enhanced through additional landscaping and screening coordinated with the airport on their clear zone.
- Improvements to the Rapids Drive gateway include improvements to the Jonas Statue Site as described below.
- The South Street intersection marks a major traffic moving point. Enhancements could include Type III streetscape enhancements turning the corner at the South Street intersection along with wayfinding and related entry signage.
- The recent improvements to State Street have “turned” the corner on Douglas Avenue. To further enhance this entrance, the banner and identity program carried along Douglas should be located at this intersection.

B. Public Spaces

Douglas Avenue benefits from having a variety of public and quasi-public spaces that bring people to various parts of the street.

Jonas Statue

The Jonas Statue marks the heart of the Historic District. At a minimum, it is recommended that additional landscaping be added in the existing right-of-way to enhance this feature. The possibility may exist to expand the island beneath the statue by removing a traffic lane leading up to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. This improvement would need to be further reviewed by City engineering to ensure that such an improvement would not have an adverse impact on traffic movements. This may offer an opportunity to expand the one of the Avenue’s most prominent features.

Douglas Park/Caesar Chavez Center

These are well maintained public facilities in the center portion of Douglas Avenue. Additional plantings could be considered along the edges of the ball diamonds to help soften the overall streetscape of Douglas Avenue.

Farmers Market Site

This site is a quasi-public site. It is privately owned and used by the CNH corporation. However, the parking lot is also the home to the Downtown Farmers Market. The parking lot is well screened and lit, however, joint efforts between the business association and CNH should be considered to provide additional planting and landscaping that will help create an inviting entrance to Downtown and Douglas Avenue.

Airport Clear Zone

This is not a potential public gathering space as the airport has acquired the property to maintain a safety clearzone for aircraft. However, there are opportunities to explore landscaping and plantings along the edge to improve the overall character of the key City entrance point. Planters, dense hedges, and other planting should be considered to enhance the gateway feature at the site.

Expanded Pedestrian Areas-

As Douglas Avenue bisects the traditional grid system, wide intersections are created. An opportunity exists to add additional pedestrian zones, including one at Albert, Superior, and Douglas. This area has a core of interesting historic structures and could be a targeted improvement node. The fine grain, scale and block size of this historic district already provides the basis for a pedestrian friendly environment. To build on this, intersection improvements should focus on strong pedestrian enhancements. The concentrated core of historic buildings that could be restored and serve as a catalyst to improve facades through out the southern district.

Yout and Douglas Plaza – Public Space

At a future point, when the property is up for sale, or when other circumstances warrant, give consideration to purchasing and converting the “Flower Island” property into a landscaped plaza. An opportunity exists to create an urban square, framed by the historic Charles Street facades and a new façade at the Kohl’s property. Related to this improvement would be additional off-street parking and improvements to the intersection at Charles Street.

C. Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Crossings

Douglas Avenue is recognized as an important, high-volume automobile corridor. The market study indicates that although high traffic counts are important, excessive speed and difficult turning movements can be detrimental to a successful auto or pedestrian-based business district. Thus, design recommendations should be considered to encourage traffic to move at the posted limits. The following are summary recommendations:

- Highly visible crosswalks, including those with alternative paving materials or patterns provide visual clues for drivers to slow down. These are most appropriate in areas where high pedestrian activity exists or is planned for.
- If sections of Douglas Avenue are widened after reconstruction, pedestrian refuge islands should be added at key intersections.
- Maintain on-street parking as a traffic calming device in more pedestrian-oriented zones.
- Additional plantings, specialty paving, pedestrian amenities, awnings, and public art create visual interest in the streetscape. These improvements help establish a sense of place and enforce the sense of enclosure to give drivers visual clues to slow down.

6

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The successful revitalization of Douglas Avenue will require a comprehensive and coordinated implementation strategy. The following describes general implementation activities for Douglas Avenue improvements, activities, and redevelopment options. Also included is a summary of funding opportunities and an organizational structure to oversee these efforts.

Implementation of the recommendations in this plan will play out over the short and long term and will require leadership, cooperation, perseverance, and hard work. The development of this plan has proven that Douglas Avenue has many of the assets required to move into implementation. This chapter is organized into the following sections:

1. Organization
2. Business Development
3. Redevelopment
4. Funding
5. Recommended 5 Year Implementation Program

6.1 Organization

Douglas Avenue currently benefits from having a well organized steering committee, with broad representation. Building off of the success of this group is critical for Douglas Avenue. Opportunities exist to expand this organization to reach additional members in the community. Specifically, there is a need to further engage the business owners, property owners, and neighborhood residents throughout the district, and especially in the southern Douglas area.

Full implementation of the Plan will require the continued talents and resources of both the public and private sectors. Each of these sectors must work together to provide the leadership necessary for the successful revitalization of Douglas Avenue.

A. North Side Revitalization Committee (NSRC)

This group was originally organized by the North Side Business and Professional Organization to oversee the Douglas Avenue planning process. The NSRC is recognized as the key organization to oversee and promote revitalization efforts in the corridor.

Executive Committee

The current steering committee should continue to serve as the overall executive committee to oversee implementation of the plan as well as participate in specific activities, here organized by subcommittee.

Staff Person

A part time or shared staff person is recommended to aid in the technical and administrative tasks necessary to oversee implementation. Ongoing technical assistance could include grant application preparation, committee coordination, promotion, neighborhood outreach, and similar tasks. Along with performing these duties, the staff person would be a liaison between business owners, the City, and other available resources needed to fully implement the plan.

Subcommittees

It is recommended that a series of subcommittees be created to assist the NSRC in accomplishing many of the tasks outlined in the Plan. Subcommittees should include steering committee (executive committee) members, and provide meaningful opportunities for residents and other business owners to participate in important, tangible efforts. This will help ensure community and neighborhood support for specific initiatives.

Business Development Committee:

The Business Development Committee will be responsible for business retention and recruitment activities. The group should represent a diverse group within the community including accountants, bankers, attorneys, property owners, retailers, and Realtors. Primary tasks will include maintaining and updating the business data base, performing ongoing needs assessments for existing businesses, and other tasks, such as those suggested in Section 6.2.

Public Relations and Programming

The Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan must be sold to the community in order for successful implementation to take place. This committee would be responsible for ensuring that the community is aware of the plan and for garnering further support for its implementation. Some of the activities this committee should undertake include coordinating and writing editorials for the newspapers, developing newsletters to discuss progress, speaking on radio programs, speaking to community and service clubs. This committee would also be responsible for the programming of events in terms of arts, special events, Douglas Avenue history, and other events to highlight the corridor. Additionally, there is an outreach component to this group that should continue to expand involvement from all segments including the Hispanic and African American business owners. These efforts should be coordinated with other organizations including the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Public Design and Improvements

This committee is responsible for the public image and design of Douglas, including efforts to create and enhance the marketing and identity image(s) for the revitalized Douglas Avenue. Specific tasks include overseeing a comprehensive sign (including: private, wayfinding, and entrance signage) design program and working with City staff and the DOT on selecting updated streetscape amenities in the corridor.

Redevelopment

This subcommittee is responsible for those activities involving private redevelopment in the area. The primary task for the group is to serve as redevelopment advocate for the business and property owners along Douglas. Specific duties for this group may include design review and staffing or providing design review comments to the future Urban Design Commission. Aside from review, this group should continue to work with interested property owners and developers in promoting improvements discussed in this plan.

B. Improved Neighborhood Involvement

Despite the outreach efforts performed by the NSRC, garnering participation among a large number of Douglas Avenue business and property owners remains a challenge. To increase participation in the NSRC and its subcommittees, it is recommended that efforts to involve additional stakeholders begin at the neighborhood level. **North Douglas** (3 Mile – Yout) and **South Douglas** (Yout – State) **Sub-groups** could be created to garner interest in participating in the program. Organizing these groups could be the responsibility of Alderpersons or

known business owners with connections to their neighbors. Additionally the inclusion of “Block Captains” should be considered.

Block Captains as Neighborhood Organizers

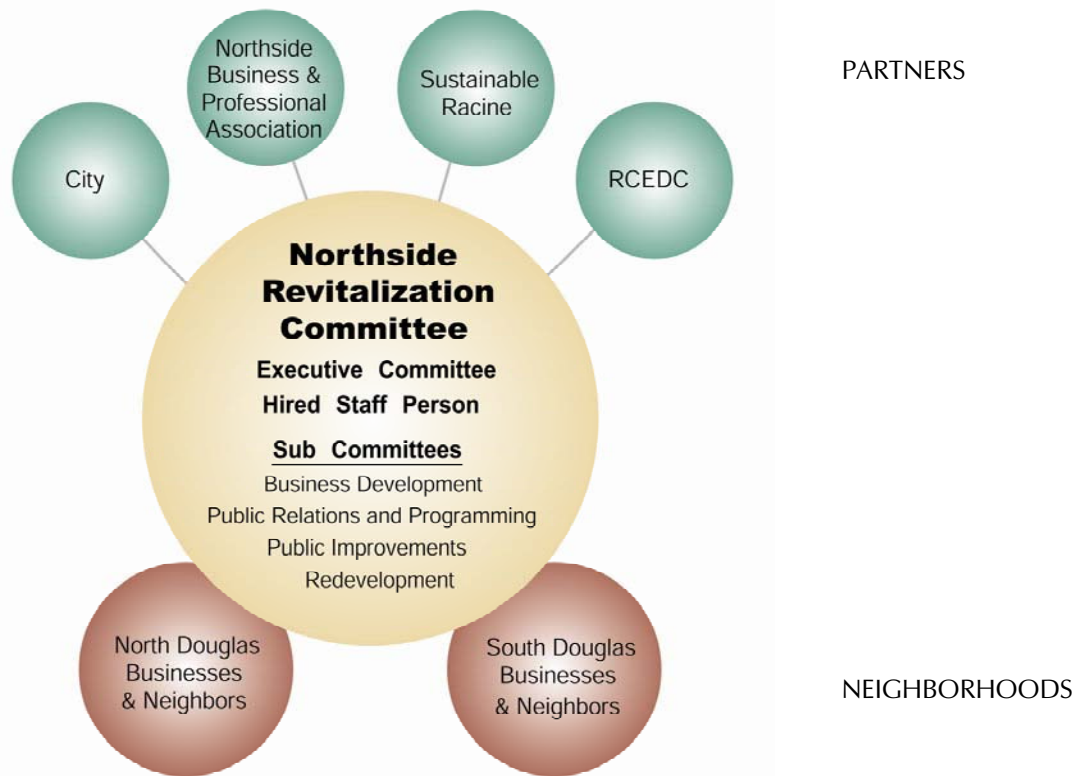
Other communities have utilized the concept of local block captains to organize projects for large corridors and business districts. A block captain may be responsible for working with a two or three block area and should be well connected to both the neighborhood and the NSRC. The block captain would work to find volunteers for subcommittees as well as communicate the concerns, needs, and desires of local business owners to the NSRC. This person helps to strengthen the link between neighborhood businesses and the NSRC.

C. Douglas Avenue Partners

A wide number of partners exist to assist the efforts of the NSRC. Partners include all of those that provide a specific technical or funding expertise. This work is ongoing in Douglas Avenue and should continue. Current partners include the City (Alderspersons and Staff), Sustainable Racine, and the North Side Business and Professional Association). Other partners need to be brought in, over time, to work with the executive committee. These may include ***WE Energies, the Department of Transportation, Racine County Economic Development Corporation, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce***, and others that can lend specific expertise and talents to the NSRC. These partners, in association with the executive committee for the NSRC, represent the project management team to oversee the wide array of revitalization efforts.

D. Implementation Model

A. Figure 6.1



6.2 Business Development on Douglas Avenue

There are a variety of unique business development activities specific to Douglas Avenue that need to be explored. These are in addition to some general business development steps that are pertinent to many districts. This section details the unique opportunities for Douglas Avenue.

A. Business Incubators and Resources

Although the Flat Iron Mall has been considered an incubator by some, structuring an aggressive plan to provide small retail/service business incubation could become a market niche on Douglas, especially in the Central and Southern portions of the street.

The business development committee should work with the City of Racine to establish a staff resource that could provide “one-stop-shopping” for entrepreneurs considering starting a retail or service business. This person would provide assistance with writing business plans, understanding and locating financing, leasing or buying a retail location, store operations, etc. Many of these services are currently available in a variety of sources, however, they would be most helpful and accessible if organized in a central resource. Central Douglas Avenue could market itself as the “incubation hub” of Racine, providing support and space for new and growing retail and service businesses.

B. Supporting Ethnic Business Incubation

As ethnic segments grow nationally, smart retailers are learning to provide products and services that address these new niches. The Hispanic market segment has grown at an unprecedented rate, creating new business opportunities that are already springing up on Douglas Avenue.

In 2003, Hispanics/Latinos nationwide had an estimated \$643 billion in purchasing power. There is great opportunity to expand and grow this segment of consumers in Racine. The south side of Douglas Avenue could be the focus of a cultural alternative to shoppers, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic. This can be accomplished by new, exclusively Hispanic-goods stores (Hispanic grocery, bakery, etc.), or by including some popular Hispanic products in an existing retail operation.

It is important to note that Hispanics cover a broad socioeconomic arena, and they are not one homogeneous group. There is great diversity within this market segment. People from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Columbia have very different cultures and outlooks, which can translate into how and what they shop for. A related task for the business committee is an ongoing assessment of the needs of this segment that may not be filled currently on Douglas Avenue.

C. Developing Douglas Avenue Niche Markets

Historically, Douglas Avenue has been a key corridor in Racine, with its southern section being the original business district for the surrounding neighborhoods. Over time, as the community grew in all directions, and Douglas Avenue stretched further to the north, the function of this specific business district was dissipated, as shopping centers and shopping options increased in the City.

The density of population in this south area of Douglas Avenue leads one to consider the opportunity for other retail that could be supported by this neighborhood area. Consumers tend to patronize certain business categories, i.e. financial services, groceries, pharmacies, personal services (hair salon, tanning, etc.) restaurants, fast food, gas stations, within the immediate area near their homes. However, consumers don’t have a problem traveling outside of their home territory to shop for clothing, shoes, jewelry sporting goods, household goods, fine dining, et. When considering business recruitment, inventory the current business mix and look for

potential opportunities that could be filled that would better serve the neighborhood market, and keep them from spending their dollars elsewhere.

Developing certain niche markets is another opportunity on Douglas Avenue. Niches can be based on many things, such as a particular group of customers, a specific type of goods or services, or a specific shopping environment. Familiar niches might include arts and crafts, antiques, dining and entertainment. Successful niche business districts often have two or three consumer niches, creating the environment to draw diverse shoppers from distant communities. The niche strategy can be used to make business district retailers far more competitive than they would be if they stood alone. Even modest niches can work together in advertising and promotional campaigns. Working together they are able to project a more solid and robust image that instills in the consumer the impression of a broad selection of merchandise.

Douglas Avenue should consider the idea of **ethnicity** as a great opportunity for creating their niche. It's already started, can it be expanded? What about other ethnic groups in this area? It would be wonderful if a variety of ethnic restaurants and stores located in this area, creating a true destination for consumers. With hard work and creativity, this is a viable possibility.

Business Retention and Recruitment Process

One of the most important components of maintaining a business district is to have healthy merchants. Healthy merchants are those that are successfully meeting their market niche, and who are achieving their own goals for growth and financial viability. Very often, no one within the district or community is monitoring the state of their district businesses.

The process of business recruitment requires a plan of action that is organized, supported by a group of interested and involved persons, and has the financial means to do the necessary work. The following is a series of steps that a business recruitment effort can use to move forward:

1. Organization of the Business Development Committee

This initial group is extremely important for establishing the enthusiasm, momentum, professionalism and organization that will be needed. The committee should represent a diverse group within the community, i.e. accountants, attorneys, property owners, retailers, and Realtors. These need to be people who can represent the "big picture" of the community and can leave their personal agendas at the door. They need to be problem solvers, and action oriented. This process needs leadership to stay on track and organized. It needs persons who can be prepared for the work and professional in their delivery. All forms of support, financial and technical, should be considered.

2. Draft a Work Plan

The first step for this group is to start with an initial work plan. All initial steps should be listed and prioritized. These steps might include the following: a) gather current data and demographics about the community; b) inventory the real estate in the target area, particularly the vacant or underutilized buildings and meet with the property owners of these vacant or underutilized buildings to garner their support in the process; c) create a simple sales package; d) develop your prospect list, etc. Realistic timeframes need to be assigned to every step. The right committee member(s) need to be assigned to every step (match skills to tasks). Most importantly, involve the community in the work and indicate that their assistance, ideas and contacts will be valuable to the process. This work plan is not static, it should be reviewed, updated and modified as needed.

3. Lay the Groundwork

The “business” of business recruitment is being able to SELL Douglas Avenue the right way, to the right parties. To sell anything, one must know as much about your product as possible. Much data has been gathered for the Revitalization Plan. Revisit this as necessary and gather additional pieces as needed. Useful data includes demographics, trade area definitions, financial incentives that may be available, tourist information, parking data, planned improvements, zoning and building code conditions or restrictions, traffic counts and pedestrian counts.

As mentioned above, it is important to inventory the real estate and secure the cooperation of the building owners and the real estate brokers if the property is listed for sale or lease. This requires a look at the present businesses and why they are working, who are the “anchor” tenants, the previous failures or relocations, a current shopper profile and an estimate of potential retail demand. All of this data should be analyzed to identify any trends or niches that seem apparent, and used to support the community profile and image.

Finally, this information will be the basis for developing a simple sales package that is interesting, informative and current. The package should summarize the major assets and cultivate a positive image of the community in the prospects mind. The cost of packages can vary considerably, so options and budget should be considered. A well designed pocket folder can be very cost effective, and hold a variety of data and community information that can be easily modified or changed. Again, staff resources outside of the committee can be used to create these pieces.

4. Design an Ideal Tenant Mix

This is perhaps the most subjective section of work. It requires evaluating the information gathered on the community, a look at available real estate opportunities, and the likely business types that could succeed in Douglas Avenue. The market assessment outlines preliminary recommendations.

Ideal businesses fill a market demand, blend with and enhance existing businesses, utilize the available vacant space wisely, create a synergy and offer a uniqueness of business type, merchandise or style. Fortify the existing niches by targeting businesses that will give shoppers a deeper range of products or experiences. It can be useful to “lease” vacancies on paper first. Create a lease plan of the target area and insert all current businesses and note the anchor tenants. Identify the vacancies and acknowledge their size and relationships to other businesses. Test ideas in the vacant spaces and see if the idea has merit.

For example, suppose a potential opportunity for a specialty food/kitchen shop has been identified. This business needs to be researched to understand their typical space needs. Does that match a current vacancy? This type of business needs to be with like minded specialty shops, not between a hardware store and a plumbing shop, even if that’s where your vacancy is located. By going through this process, one can put the best foot forward to introduce a specific space opportunity to a potential tenant.

5. Identifying Prospective Tenants

Once appropriate target business types are identified, the question remains...how does one find them? The following ideas should be considered: 1) purchase direct mail lists for just about any category or product line, 2) utilize telephone directories and city directories (many of these are now online), 3) collect retail merchant lists from other communities, 4) look for frequent advertisers in local and regional newspapers, 5) identify if a trade association for this retail or business category and advertise in their trade publications, 6) utilize national retail tenant directories, 7) visit other communities.

Additionally, don’t forget to look in your own “backyard” and identify businesses that are currently operating out of homes, expansions of existing businesses, struggling businesses that might benefit a more

appropriate niche strategy, or current store managers that want to start their own business. Again, one must inform the rest of the community. Make it known what kind of business Douglas Avenue is looking for. These connections often pay off. It is important to be open, creative and be selective. Business recruitment requires determination and time when seeking out the right businesses for the community.

6. Making Contact with Prospective Tenants

The first contact one has with a prospective tenant is important. Consider sending a well-written letter that will garner their attention. It should be personalized, not a form letter, and impress them with specific knowledge of their business. Express why Douglas Avenue would be a perfect match for their business. Enclose just enough data to tantalize them, but not to overwhelm them. Designate someone to perform follow-up phone calls to the prospective tenants to confirm receipt of the letter and see if there is interest in a meeting. A smooth, direct sales pitch should be developed to explain the benefits of this opportunity. It is important to note available incentives and how Racine and Douglas Avenue is prepared and ready to assist a new business. Be patient with the contacts. Provide them with any other information they might need, but don't speculate or guess about information given to them. If they are not interested, work that rejection into a referral.

7. Getting a Prospect to Say Yes

Even if a potential business is interested, there is much work to complete the deal. The most important part is to make it so simple to work with Douglas Avenue, that the "yes" will just happen. Every step of the way, one must be prepared to handle objections, concerns, and any obstacles that might come up. If the potential business is concerned about financing their inventory or improvements, take them to see the local banker. If the potential business wants outside dining but the zoning doesn't allow for it, work through the process with the municipality. If they object to some of the lease terms, assist in negotiating with the landlord. It is important to provide a single contact person for every prospective business to work with. This contact person is responsible for keeping negotiations moving and follow-up on all remaining details.

8. Retaining the Businesses You Recruit

The work is not complete once you have successfully found a new business for your community. It is important to generate a welcome for this business and make sure that they are settled in and operating according to their plans. Keep up contact with new businesses in both good times and bad. Involve the new business in the business association and other organizations, and, involve them in your future business recruitment efforts. They can speak from experience how the process worked and what changes could be made to the action plan.

9. Develop a Sales System

During the business recruitment process, there needs to be a critique of the work plan. It should be updated based on experience. The committee will want to create a repeatable sales process that will work again. Keep all contact files and sales materials updated. Reevaluate the recruitment criteria for the next opportunity and modify it as necessary. It is important not to forget to get what ever help you need from including consultants, Realtors, leasing agents, developers, bankers, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, UW Extension, merchandising analysts, national demographic firms, or other resources.

10. Maximize Douglas Avenue's Success

Once there has been success in recruiting a new business, all efforts and contributions should be recognized. Celebrate a grand opening with the new business, run a special ad announcing the new business in the Journal Times, have a feature article run about the business recruitment work and your success, speak at the community meetings such as Rotary about your accomplishments. After the “dust has settled” make sure to get testimonials from the new business, their landlord, from elected officials, other businesses, etc. that can be used in the next round of recruitment.

6.3 Redevelopment

A. Working with Business and Property Owners

The first priority for redevelopment implementation is to promote a strategy that allows for proactive initiatives to aid business and property owners. In this regard, the NSRC should function as an advocate for Douglas Avenue businesses. Advocacy should be promoted in the areas of design review, coordinated improvements between properties, promotion of existing programs, and serve as a liaison to help communicate the special needs of Douglas Business owners with various city departments. This role should be further developed as subcommittees are formalized.

B. Redevelopment Plans, Redevelopment Authority, and Property Acquisition

The intent of the plan is to encourage redevelopment driven by private property owners. However, future redevelopment projects of a substantial size or level of complexity may require different degrees of City assistance. Larger redevelopment projects often involve the City performing a more prominent role in redevelopment and property acquisition. In Racine, the body typically working in this capacity is the Redevelopment Authority (RDA). State Statute grants the powers specifically given to a redevelopment authority. Additionally, Statute also describes the process needed to create a compliant “Redevelopment Plan” to guide property acquisition and the redevelopment process.

The redevelopment plan generally includes the following process:

1. Determination of “blight” in the proposed study area.
2. Adoption of the project area boundaries by City Council, based on blight finding.
3. Development and Adoption of the Redevelopment Plan (plan includes future land uses, densities, proposed improvements, proposed acquisitions, and funding programs to complete)

Property acquisition may be an important component of a redevelopment plan. This is especially critical if the city creates additional public space along the corridor (Flower Island location, for example). Additionally, the redevelopment process may involve the City preparing an RFP (request for proposals) to solicit developers that can meet the guidelines of the adopted redevelopment plans.

C. Strategies for Working with Developers

Promoting development interest in Douglas Avenue is an involved, complex task. Seeking developer interest in a redevelopment area can be challenging due to the economic constraints or seemingly endless hurdles that must be overcome. The following strategies are important for working with conventional developers to promote Douglas Avenue development and redevelopment.

General:

- Leadership within the community, both public and private, is supportive of the Revitalization Plan and its goals. The multiple roles of Douglas Avenue in both the community and the region are understood.
- The incentives outlined in this chapter available for the project are defined, and there is an understanding of how, and who can use them.
- Creative funding solutions are in place and made known. Aside from conventional developers, different funding and assistance programs should be in place to attract Urban Pioneers, especially in the southern and central portions of the street.
- Appropriate design guidelines are in place which differentiate between the northern and southern portions of the street.
- Appropriate zoning is in place.

When City Acquires Property:

- Utilize land acquisition when sites critical to the overall redevelopment plan can be secured for future development.
- Community management and key decision makers are “on the same page”, so the development process doesn’t get bogged down in an inability to come to consensus.
- A list of preferred developers is organized, reflecting the specific project and the developer’s capabilities.
- The development process within the community is clear and directed, perhaps with one point of contact.
- The community has control of the property.
- A developer “hit list” is organized, reflecting the specific project and the developer’s capabilities.
- A concise RFP is developed, with clear directives and a method for weighing responses.
- Each RFP response is evaluated for how it supports the master plan aesthetically and financially, and for how it fulfills a market niche.

6.4 Funding Opportunities

A. Priority Funding Sources:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

CDBG funds are distributed through the city of Racine for a variety of projects. Although fund allocation will vary by year, there may be an estimated \$40,000-50,000 to fund select capital projects, staff resources, or as a source to leverage other funding.

General Obligation Bonds

A GO bond is used to finance select public improvements and is repayable from taxes and guaranteed only by the credit and taxing power of the City. Priority physical improvements and demonstration projects could be placed on the City's **capital improvement program** and potentially funded through this source.

Racine Commercial Façade Grant Program

The façade grant is limited to no more than 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, not to exceed \$7,500. Projects totaling less than \$1,000 are not eligible for the façade grant. Restrictions are in place and work must conform to established design guidelines or otherwise approved by department staff. Additionally, the Plan does not apply to areas north of Melvin Avenue.

“Sewer Funds”

Funds are available through sharing agreements with the Towns of Caledonia and Mount Pleasant sewer agreements. Funds are allocated to projects that result in economic development outcomes including increased tax base, job creation. The façade grant program is funded through this program.

Sustainable Neighborhood Partnership

The SNP is funded by donations from All Saints Healthcare System and the American Heart Association, in addition to individual contributions from area businesses and residents. The Sustainable Racine Advisory Board has designated these funds to be used solely for the enhancement of neighborhoods in the Greater Racine Area. Specifically, Sustainable Racine seeks project ideas that will do the following: Enhance the neighborhood, create a sense of place within the area, encourage civic engagement with the community, and build a solid foundation for neighborhood associations or coalitions. To date, over \$190,000.00 has been allocated by Sustainable Racine's SNP to support initiatives identified by neighborhood residents

Mixed Use Rehabilitation Loans

This program provides funds for the rehabilitation of residential units contained in mixed-use structures. Loan funds may be used for only the interior rehabilitation work of the residential portion of the building. Loan amount up to \$8,000 per dwelling unit, with a maximum of two units assisted in any one structure. The loan rate is 5% with a term of up to 20 years. All loans are secured with a mortgage on the property.

Wisconsin DOT: Local Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program:

This program is designed to fund projects that enhance multi-modal activities in order to improve the transportation system. Projects can include the preservation of abandoned railway corridors, rehabilitation/operation of historic transportation buildings, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, landscaping and other scenic beautification, and control or removal of outdoor advertising. Projects must relate to surface transportation. This program can provide 80% of funding.

B. Potential Future Funding Sources

Private Donation Program

Private donation programs allow the private sector to participate in funding some of the improvements through the purchasing of specialty streetscape amenities in addition to larger features. The corporate community should be approached to fund large gift items. This process could be organized through the development of a non-profit, tax exempt 501 (c) (3) program.

Lender Commitment Program

As a mechanism to fund improvements, many communities have created low interest loan pools through the cooperation of local banks to fund façade and building improvements. Typically, approval of funds is tied to compliance with established design guidelines.

Tax Incremental Financing District (TIF or TID)

Tax Increment Financing is an economic development tool to promote tax base expansion. It is targeted toward eliminating blighted areas, rehabilitating areas declining in value, and promoting industrial development. Benefits may come in the form of increased employment, an improved business climate and elimination of unsafe or unsightly areas. When a Tax Incremental District (TID) is created, the city and other taxing entities agree to support their normal operations from the existing tax base within the district. Property tax rates for the school, county, VTAE and City are based on the taxable value of the TID at the time it is created. These rates are then applied to the TID value increment which results in additional revenues collected for the TIF fund. Development costs are paid from these TIF fund revenues before the added tax base is shared.

TIF funds can be used to fund a variety of “bricks and mortar” physical projects or be applied to additional funding. In some communities, TIF revenues have been used to fund low-interest loan programs to fund rehabilitation activities or to fund select activities tied to private redevelopment including site acquisition, demolition, and preparations.

C. Expanded List of Funding Sources:

An expanded list of potential funding sources is located as an appendix to this document.

6.5 Recommended 5 Year Implementation Program

An implementation timeline has been prepared to outline the sequencing of specific projects as outlined in the Revitalization Plan. This timeline identifies the lead role for project implementation activities and recommendations for potential funding sources. While it is important to focus on a short-term implementation goal of five years, there will be many projects recommended in the Douglas Avenue Revitalization Plan that will occur beyond the five year time frame. This document should be a flexible, dynamic planning tool. As the implementation process moves forward, different opportunities may present themselves which will require adjustments in project priorities and timing. This document is a working tool that will need to be monitored and updated on an annual basis. At the start of each year, the NSRC, in conjunction with its partners should establish an annual work program based on the current need and plan recommendations.

[illegible]

Project Activity	Consultant	Subcommittee	Funding Source	2004				2005				2006				2007				2008			
				1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
II. Marketing and Public Relations																							
1. Develop marketing image and logo for Douglas Avenue.	X	Public Relations	CDBG, Sustainable, Donations																				
2. Develop Website		Public Relations	CDBG, Sustainable, Donations																				
3. Assist Business Association in newsletter reporting Douglas Updates.		Public Relations																					
4. Coordinate Media campaign to kick off implementation and Ongoing media relations.		Public Relations																					
5. Public Outreach/Education: Design Guidelines, Funding, other programs		Public Relations																					
6. Annual public meetings to discuss plan progress		Public Relations																					
7. Assist business association on special events programming.		Public Relations																					
8. Prepare History of Douglas Avenue Publication Interviews, historic photos	X	Public Relations	CDBG, Sustainable, Donations																				
9. Establish annual "Clean and Green Days" (Street and Property Clean Up Event)		Public Relations																					
10. Promote safety and safety awareness initiatives		Public Relations	CDBG, Sustainable, Donations																				
Promoting Beat Cop Promote Youth and Youth Work Programs		Public Relations																					
11. Establish store front presence on Douglas with Revitalization posters and information. Potential office space for part time staff person.		Public Relations	CDBG, Sustainable, Donations																				

[illegible]

[illegible]



DOUGLAS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN

APPENDIX