★ **Roll Call Number**

Agenda Item Number
27

Date October 22, 2012

APPROVING THE 6TH AVENUE STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN AND AUTHORIZING STAFF TO PROCEED WITH DESIGN FOR A LIMITED PORTION OF THE OVERALL PROJECT.

WHEREAS, in recent years the 6th Avenue community has been considering streetscape improvements for the corridor; and,

WHEREAS, in a letter dated May 13, 2008, the River Bend Neighborhood Association formally requested that a streetscape plan be prepared for 6th Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the scope of the project has been identified as running along 6th Avenue from I-235 on the south to the Des Moines River Bridge on the north; and

WHEREAS, the 6th Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan has been developed through public involvement generated by a steering committee comprised of 6th Avenue businesses, property owners, and area neighborhood stakeholders, as well as City staff from various departments; and,

WHEREAS, the 6th Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan addresses the needs identified by the 6th Avenue community to increase safety by reducing the vehicle travel lanes from five (5) lanes to three (3) lanes and by installing wider sidewalks, bus stop improvements, pedestrian enhancements, street trees, and low-maintenance landscaping; and,

WHEREAS, the 6th Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan has been well received and supported by the 6th Avenue community and the River Bend Neighborhood Association; and,

WHEREAS, the 6th Avenue Corridor, Inc. has applied for and received grant funding from the State of Iowa in the amount of $50,000 to be used for final design of the streetscape project;

(Continued)

★ **Roll Call Number**

Agenda Item Number
27

Date October 22, 2012

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa that the 6th Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan, a copy of which is on file in the office of the City Engineer, be and is hereby approved and staff is authorized to proceed with design for a limited portion of the overall project.

MOVED by _____ to adopt.

FORM APPROVED:

(Council Communication No. 12-553)

Michael Kelley
Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED APPROVED

_____ Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

_____ City Clerk

6TH AVENUE Streetscape

Conceptual Design
18 October 2012

Approved by City of Des Moines City Council on 22 October 2012,
Roll Call number:

CITY OF DES MOINES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

6TH AVENUE CORRIDOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Steering Committee

Mike Baldus, RBNA Board Member
Jordan Collins, Neighborhood Development Corporation
Tim Davis, Anawim Housing
Brian Douglas, RBNA Board Member
Alecia Kates, 6AC Executive Director
Regina Lloyd, St. Vincent DePaul
Aaron Todd, 6AC Board Member & RBNA Board Member
Terry Vorbrich, 6AC Board Member & City of Des Moines Economic Development Staff
Anne Wright, Mercy Hospital

Technical Committee

Bruce Braun, Street Maintenance Administrator
Gary Fox, City Traffic Engineer
Gary Hlavka, Sr. Civil Engineer
Darwin Larson, Engineering Design & Construction
Kyle Larson, City Planner
Dave Miller, Sewer Enterprise Administrator
Erin Olson-Douglas, Urban Designer
Mike Ring, Principal Traffic Engineer

Public Art

Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation
Indigo Dawn

Graphics

Genus Landscape Architects

Transit

Elizabeth Presutti, DART

6TH AVENUE CORRIDOR

CITY OF DES MOINES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PROCESS: Context

Project Overview & History

A revitalized streetscape has been a goal for 6th Avenue dating back to the 6th Avenue Revitalization Plan by RDG completed in 1995 and later updated in 2003. In August 2008, Aaron Todd and Brian Douglas conducted a visioning exercise on behalf of the Riverbend Neighborhood Association with various 6th Avenue and River Bend stakeholders, residents, and business owners. The visioning exercise established the following vision statement:

> *The 6th Avenue Corridor through the historic River Bend and Cheatom Park Neighborhoods is a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, culturally diverse area that encourages all of Des Moines to socialize, work, shop, and play.*

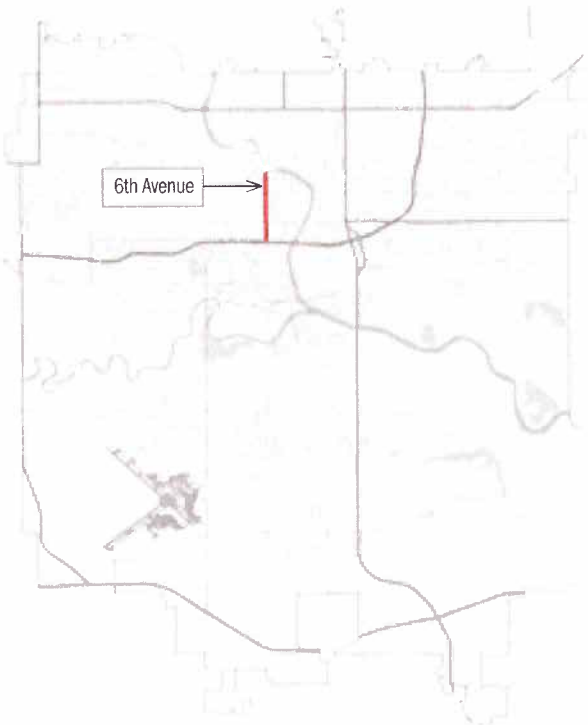
This visioning exercise also identified the following priorities of a revitalized 6th Avenue streetscape:

- Improvement of the pedestrian experience
- Improvement of the vehicular experience and traffic calming
- Improvement of residents' and visitors' experience
- Promotion of appropriate commercial development
- Improve water quality and drainage

In December 2008 the 6th Avenue Corridor in partnership with the River Bend and Cheatom Park Neighborhoods requested that the City of Des Moines initiate a conceptual streetscape design process for the 6th Avenue corridor. The idea gained even greater traction following the designation of the 6th Avenue Corridor as an Urban Main Street by the IEDA in 2009. Utilizing the results of the recently completed visioning process, staff from the City's Community Development Department, with assistance from other City departments, began to work with a streetscape steering committee to develop the conceptual streetscape design, including project scope, design, and cost estimates.

Project Area

The scope of the 6th Avenue streetscape project focuses on the 6th Avenue corridor, specifically the public right-of-way along 6th Avenue. The 6th Avenue corridor is a two mile corridor through the near north side of Des Moines and serves as a key gateway into and out of Downtown. The project area begins at the Des Moines River near the Hickman Avenue/Arlington Avenue intersection and proceeds south to the intersection with Interstate 235.



east side of 6th Ave. near Arlington/Hickman and Des Moines River
this northern area is mainly residential with multifamily housing and historic homes in the Riverview Park Plat National Historic District

looking south on the east side of 6th Avenue between Franklin and Jefferson Avenues.
River Trace Apartments are in the foreground; the downtown skyline is visable from here

looking north along the east side of 6th Avenue near College Avenue.
the Wherry Buildings on the west side of the street were restored / built by the Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC) in 2005-2008

looking north along the west side of 6th Avenue.
the corridor has narrow sidewalks with utility poles blocking the walkway and a wide, 5-lane roadway

looking north along the east side of 6th Avenue between Indiana and Forest Avenues. The restored Temple Block Building is at the NW corner of 6th and Forest Avenues

looking north along the east side of 6th Avenue.
this section of the corridor has a number of restored single family homes.
the Bethel Mission is on the west side of the street

looking south along the east side of 6th Avenue near University Avenue. A small QuikTrip is located at the NE corner. The Biomat USA Plasma Donor Center is in the foreground

looking north along the west side of 6th Avenue near University Avenue and across the street from Mercy Hospital. 6th Avenue is one of the most heavily used transit routes in the DART system.

looking north along the east side of 6th Avenue.
this section of the corridor shares 1-way traffic with 7th Street, splitting from 1-way to 2-way just north of Laurel Street

looking south along the west side of 7th Street near I-235 with the downtown skyline in view. 7th Street shares 1-way traffic with 6th Avenue in this area.
The Holiday Inn is in the foreground

PROCESS: Site Analysis

Right-of-way Constraints

Public right-of-way along 6th Avenue varies from 60' to 66' wide along the length of the project area. The right-of-way between University Avenue and Clark Street measures 60' in width. While the right-of-way from Clark Street north to the Des Moines River measures 66' wide. This is a very narrow right-of-way width to serve a commercial corridor such as 6th Avenue. Opportunities to expand the right-of-way were considered early in the planning process but were found to not be feasible to pursue.

Sidewalk Conditions

The majority of the corridor is served by sidewalk with sidewalk conditions varying from block to block. The sidewalk dimension for the corridor tends to be four feet wide with sidewalk on both sides of the street. This is inadequate for a commercial corridor such as 6th Avenue. Pedestrian usage of the sidewalk along 6th Avenue is very high with the presence of the DART transit line, as well as many non-profit service providers having facilities on 6th Avenue. It is recommended that sidewalk along 6th Avenue should at a minimum be five to six feet wide to serve the current and future demands. At intersections, curb ramps and crosswalks need to be updated to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Traffic Conditions

Over the years, the 6th Avenue roadway has been expanded within the limited right-of-way to a five-lane roadway. This roadway configuration limits the potential for expanding the sidewalk along the length of the corridor, as well as pedestrian spaces, such as in and around bus stops. Having 2nd Avenue and 6th Avenue in close proximity and serving similar roles as north-south connectors opens up some opportunities for potential changes to the roadway configuration of 6th Avenue.

Lighting

The street lighting along 6th Avenue is comprised of the standard wood poles and generic cobra head style light fixtures. The primary focus of the lighting along the 6th Avenue corridor is on the roadway with lighting of the sidewalk and pedestrian areas being a secondary result. Because of this it is recommended that lighting be a priority for both the street and sidewalk to improve the pedestrian experience and safety.

Overhead Utilities

Most of the overhead utilities visible on this section of 6th Avenue are believed to be associated with the streetlights. As the lighting is replaced with implementation of the streetscape, these utility lines will be buried underground. There are major utility lines crossing 6th Avenue south of University and College Avenues. Due to cost constraints, these will likely need to remain in place. Minor crossings at Forest and Franklin Avenues are assumed to be buried with streetscape implementation.

PROCESS: Site Analysis (continued)

Impervious Pavement

The 6th Avenue corridor is dominated by impervious paving (concrete and asphalt). There may be opportunities to explore transforming some of the impervious surfaces into vegetated areas to capture storm water runoff, known as green infrastructure. With sufficient planning and maintenance, green infrastructure can be a functional amenity of an enhanced streetscape. This should be explored in greater detail in the next stage of the project.

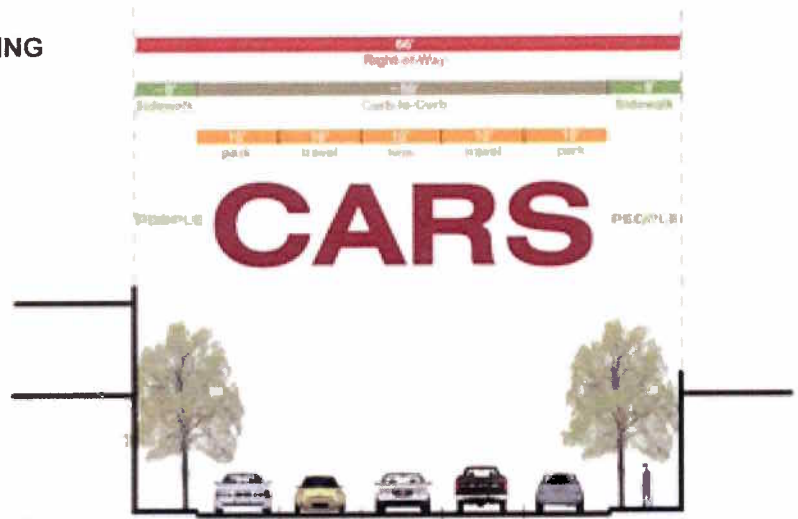
Site Furnishings and Pedestrian Amenities

The corridor has an inconsistent and overall lack of site furnishings and pedestrian amenities. The locations of benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, flower planters and other amenities can be classified as random and not necessary placed in areas of highest and best usage. A more well thought out placement plan is needed along with consideration of existing and future demands for DART bus stops and transit amenities.

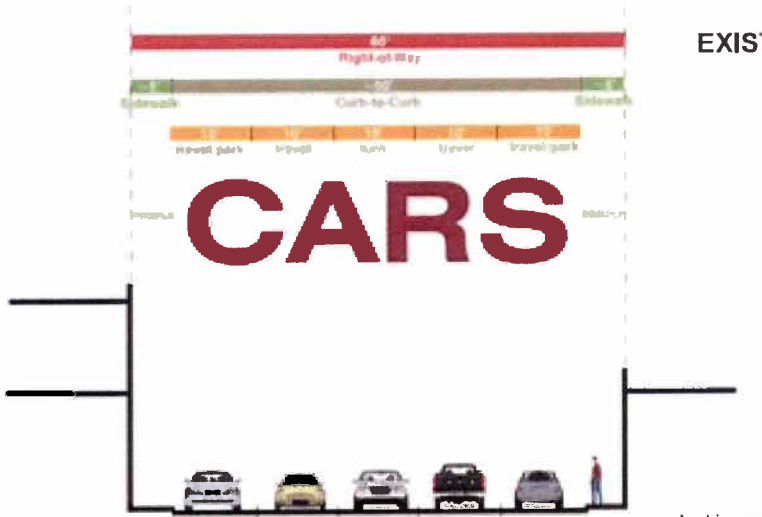
Transit

The 6th Avenue corridor is a key transit corridor for Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART). The corridor carries riders into and out of downtown, serves a large population base on Des Moines' northside, as well as has stops at Mercy Medical Center and Des Moines Area Community College Urban Campus. Ridership on Route 3, which serves 6th Avenue, is among the highest of any other DART bus route. Because of this, it was important to involve DART in the planning process and accommodate their current and future needs within the streetscape plan. The table on the next page was provided by DART staff and represents the existing bus stop locations, as well as the average daily on/off counts for both north- and south-bound riders.

EXISTING

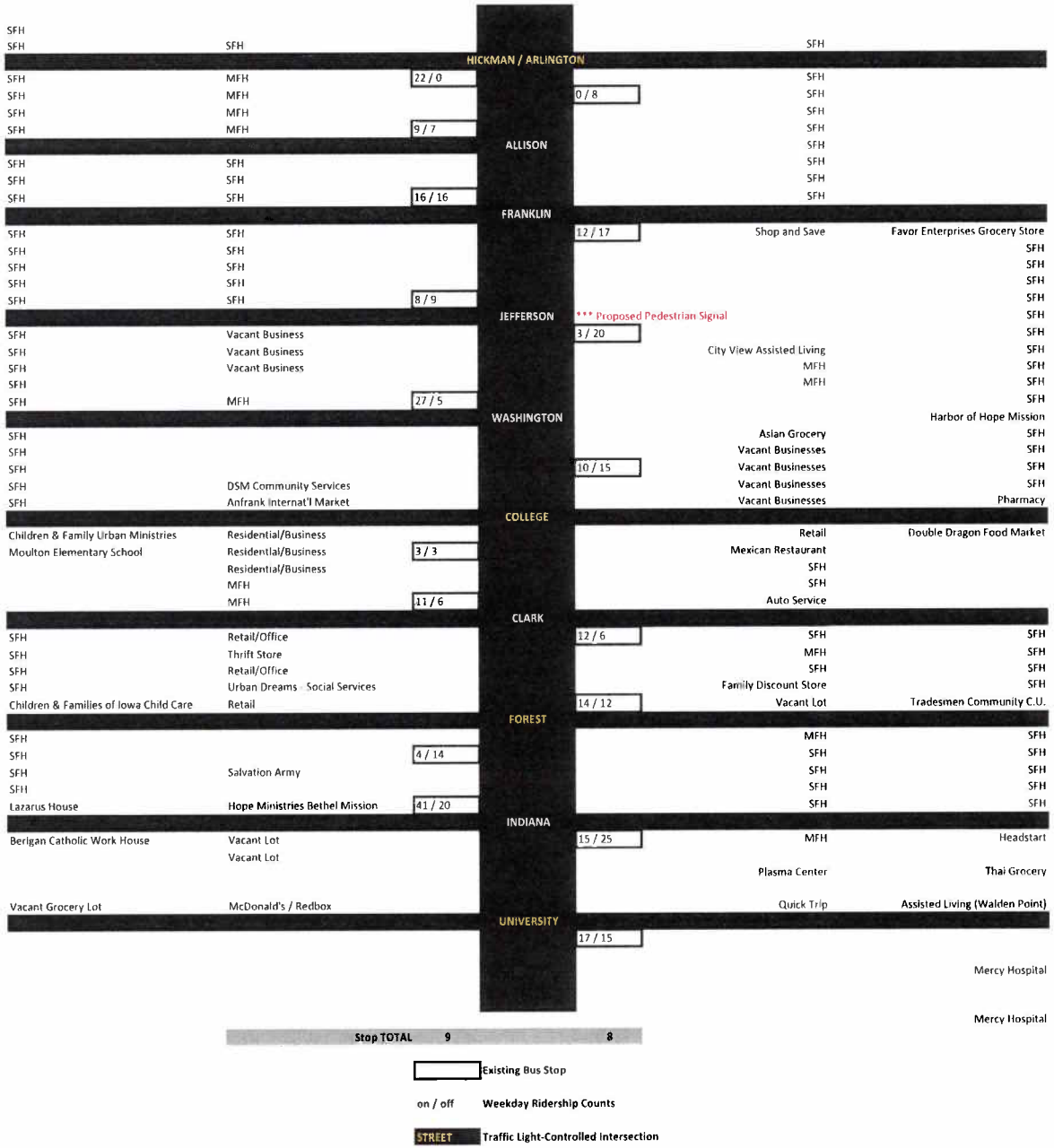


looking south at
Hickman - Clark Street



EXISTING

looking south at
Clark - University



Existing DART stops and usage along 6th Avenue

ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS

narrow ROW/
wide roadway/
low traffic volume

heavy pedestrian use

safety concerns

transit needs / accommodations

variety of uses
(including many non-profits)

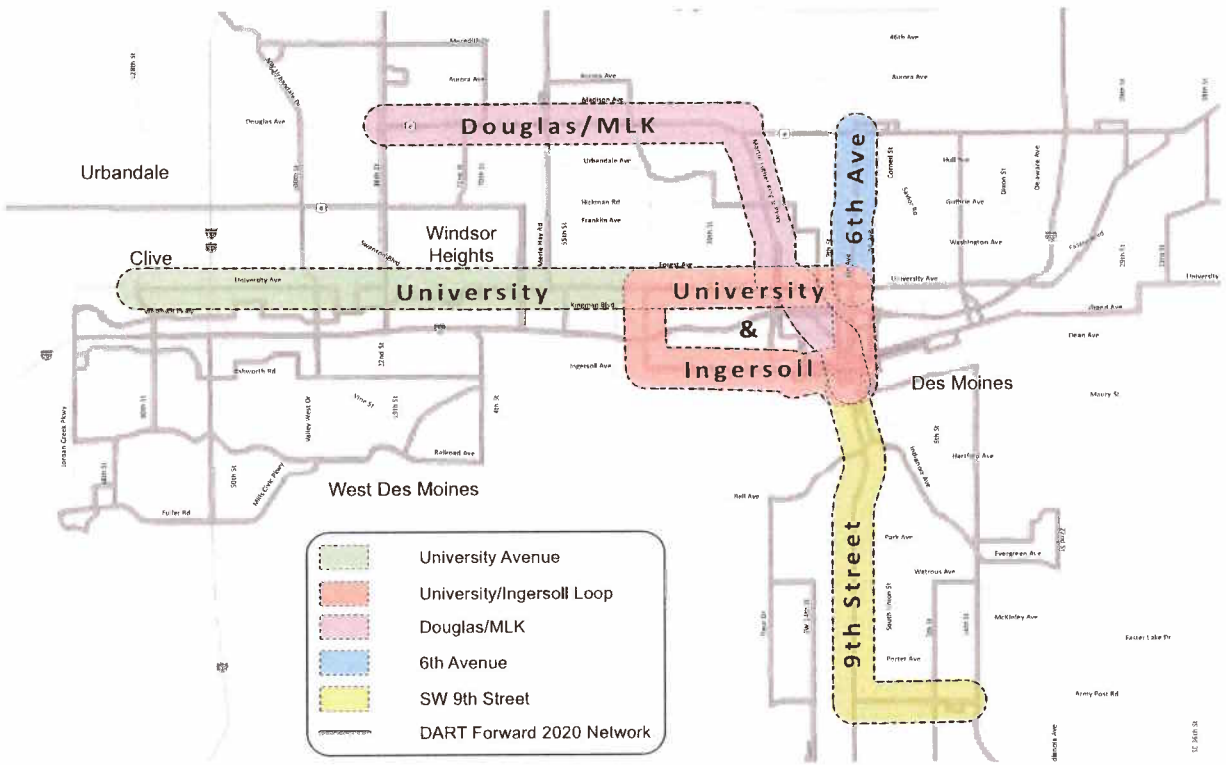
PROCESS: Concurrent Planning Efforts

River Bend Neighborhood Plan update

As part of the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), the River Bend Neighborhood was selected in November 2011 to conduct a neighborhood-led process to update their neighborhood plan. This is an entirely new process than the NRP typically follows. For this initiative, the River Bend Neighborhood Association will take the lead in the planning process, with the City acting as a stakeholder. If successful, this new neighborhood-led process could become a model for motivated and skilled neighborhood associations to update their plan goals independent of the City's process but in a manner that can be supported by the City.

DART (DART Forward 2035/Alternatives Analysis)

In 2010, the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority launced a year-long planning effort to develop a blueprint for building a better public transit system. The DART Forward 2035



plan provides a long-range vision for what could be and offers the step-by-step directions for delivering the system that the market demands, starting in 2012. DART Forward 2035 provides a budgeting plan to put DART on a financially sustainable path. At the heart of the plan are service recommendations establishing a new transit network. More than a series of independent routes, the intertwining network will serve thousands more residents by going more places, more often, with quicker travel times.

In addition to traditional bus routes, the study identified five routes that are future candidates for bus rapid transit (BRT) lines. The streetscape design study area of 6th Avenue was identified as one of these routes. BRT includes many features to improve the level of transit service along the line, including higher frequency service, bus stations, and accelerated travel times.

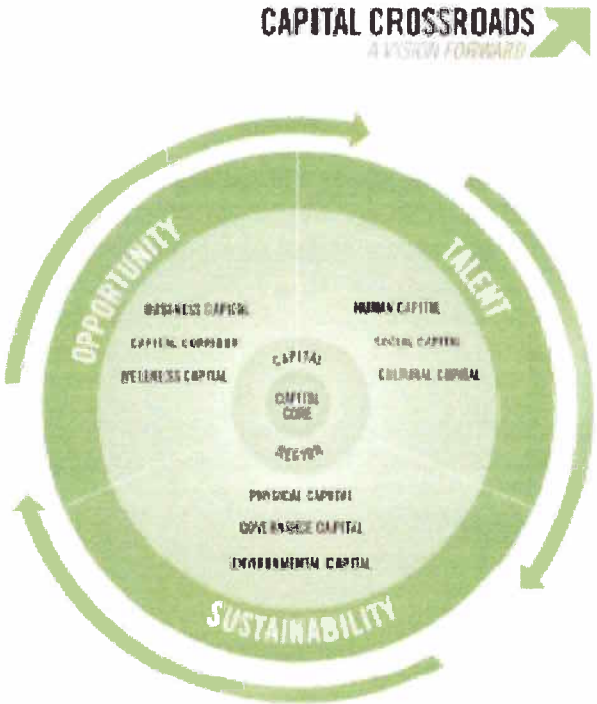
Stormwater (WRA)

The City of Des Moines, like many cities, has a sewer network that includes some combined sewer systems. Combined sewer systems are sewers that collect stormwater runoff, sewage and wastewater in the same pipe. The system carries this wastewater to the metro sewage treatment plant, where it is treated and then discharged into the Des Moines River. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt, however, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system. When the capacity of the system is exceeded the combined sewer systems can overflow and discharge untreated wastewater into area streams and rivers.
In the Des Moines metro the Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) operates the treatment plant and works with municipalities to manage the sewer network. The WRA, in accordance with the Clean Water Act, is implementing a series of projects to upgrade

facilities and reduce combined sewer overflows by separating the combined sewer system into dedicated storm sewer and sanitary sewer systems. The plans for the 6th Avenue corridor call for sewer separation work at Forest and College Avenues. The timeline for these activities is currently projected to occur between 2020 and 2025.

Capital Crossroads

Greater Des Moines and Central Iowa is at an important crossroads. The region has vibrant neighborhoods, a strong business community, dynamic arts and recreational attractions and a desirable quality of life. But the region also has its challenges. Local leaders feel the time is right to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges through a clear vision and plan for Iowa's capital region. In 2011, this process, branded *Capital Crossroads*, resulted in the development of a new five-year vision strategy for the region. The plan is comprised of eleven "Capitals" including: Urban Core, Capital Core, Business Capital, Capital Corridor, Wellness Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, Physical Capital, Governance Capital, and Environmental Capital. Elements of the Urban and Capital Core sections address the 6th Avenue Corridor area. The planning process was comprehensive, inclusive and forward-seeking to build consensus on the dynamics of the region's future and foster momentum for achievement of implementation success. At the end of the months-long effort, Greater Des Moines and has a consensus-based, achievable roadmap to guide the area's path to short and long-term economic growth. Capital Crossroads was initiated by the Greater Des Moines Partnership and the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation.

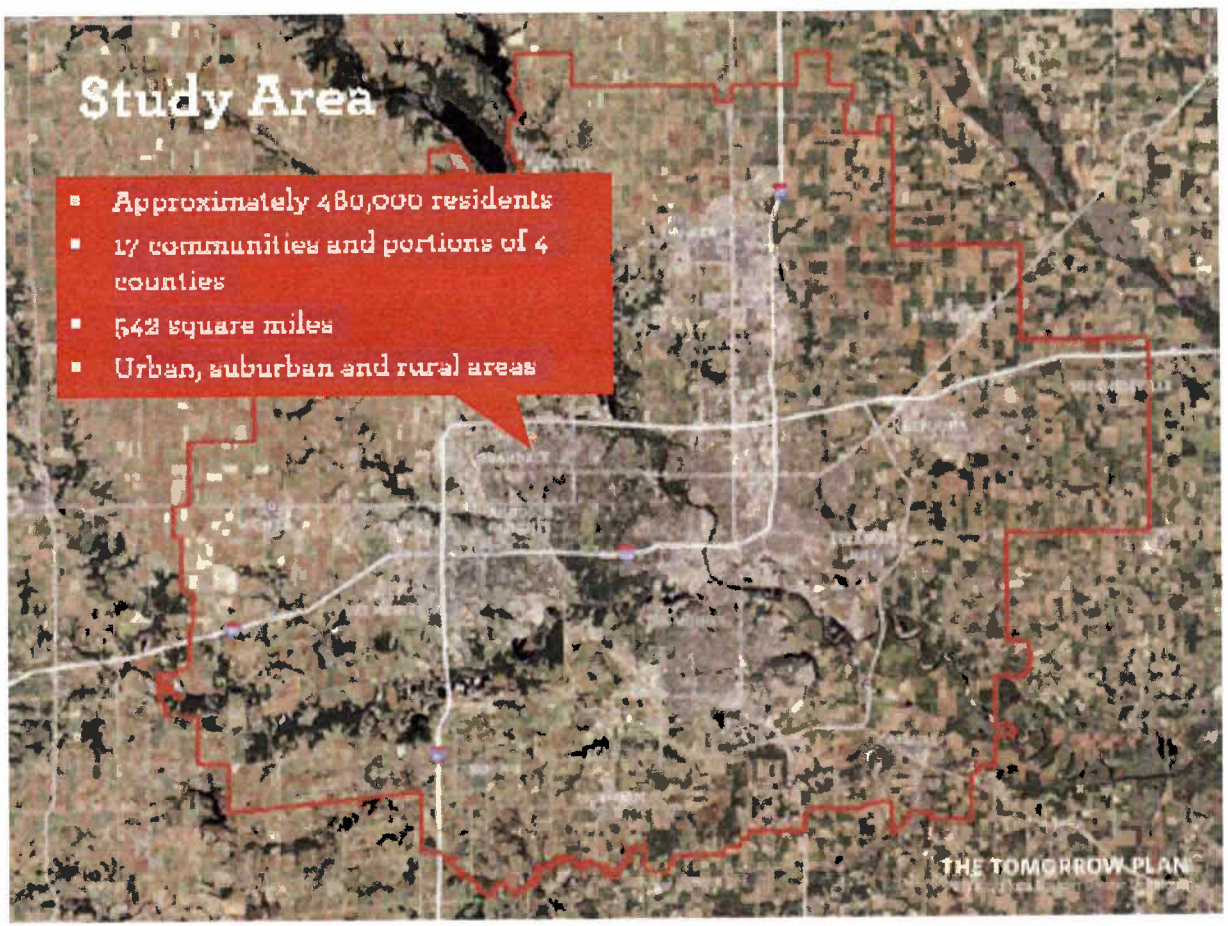


Public Art Foundation

The Greater Des Public Art Foundation awarded $20,000 to the 6th Avenue Corridor to support the early integration of art in the streetscape improvement planning process. Artist Chaden Halfhill was selected to develop ideas. Rather than designing individual works of art, Halfhill considered the broader role that art will play as it is integrated though out this revitalized corridor. "The multicultural and diverse character of 6th Avenue Corridor's residential and commercial neighborhood is unique, and the vision for its passageway is spectacular!" remarked M. Jessica Rowe, Director of the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation. "Our partnership with 6th Avenue Corridor helps to nurture the City's wider strategies for economic, social and cultural development – our aim is to enrich the lives in our community by advancing the best of public art." Halfhill identified a framework for art interventions along the corridor and the Public Art Foundation elected to fund the development of one of the intervention sites, the 6th Avenue bridge. In early 2012, the Foundation hosted a national competition for artists to create a public art to coordinate with the replacement of the bridge railing and committed to funding implementation of the arts component.

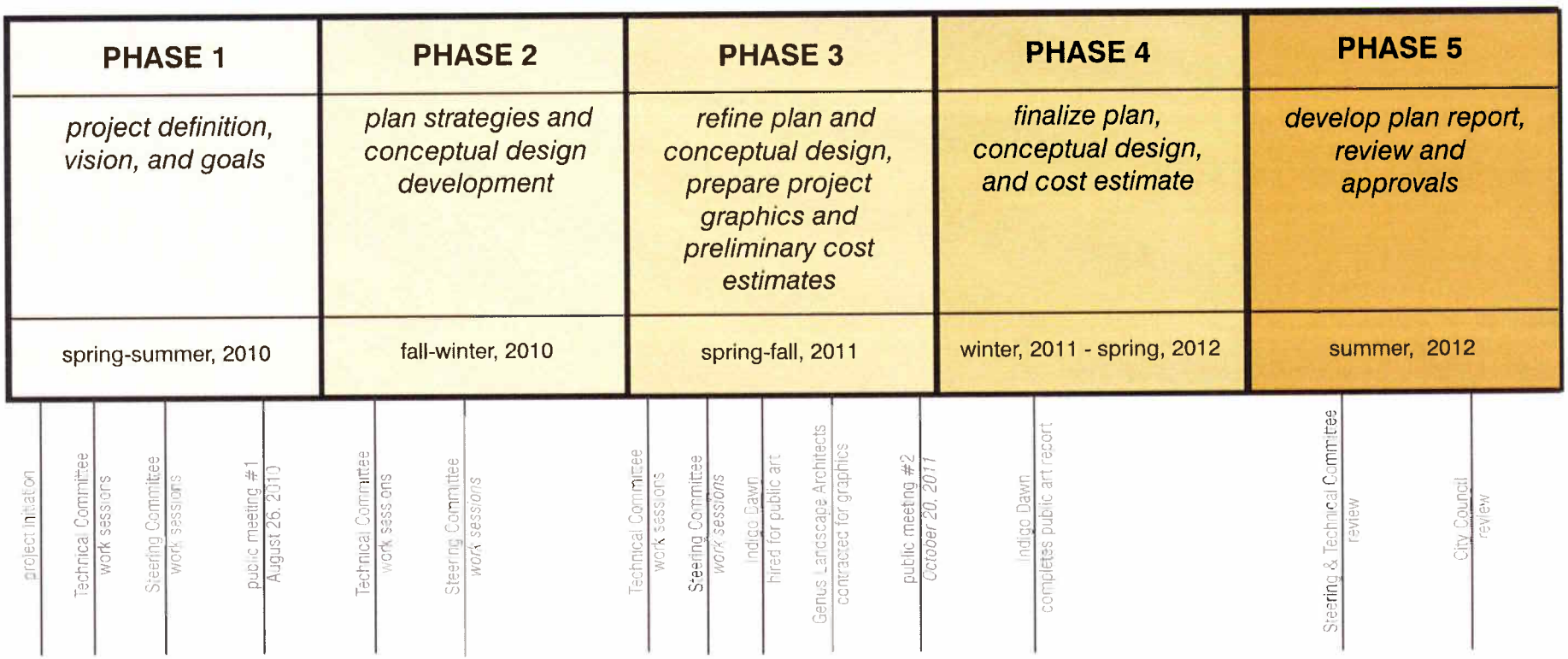
Tomorrow Plan

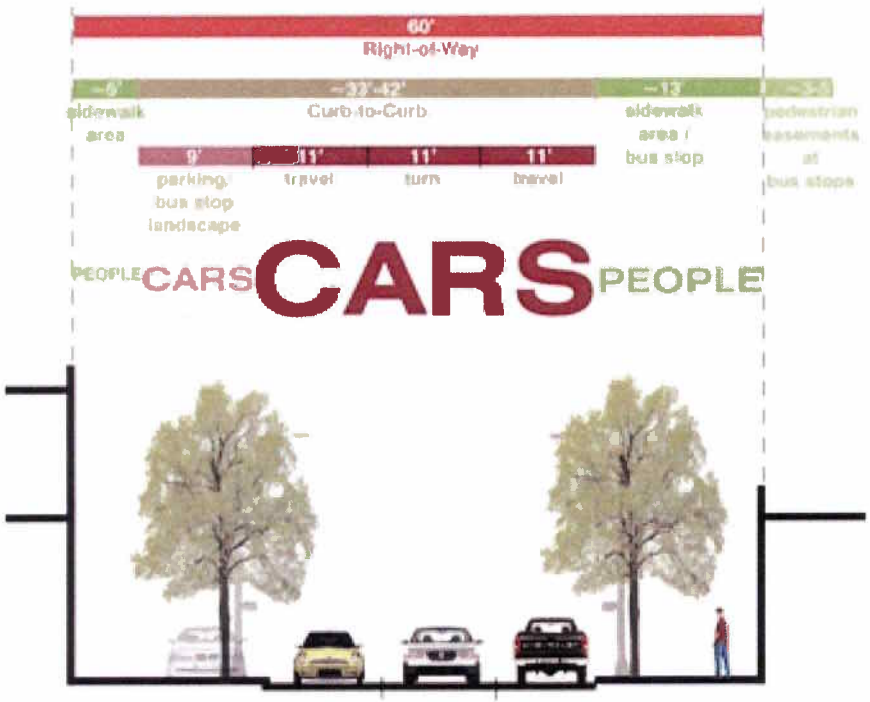
The Tomorrow Plan brings together residents, elected leaders, the professional community, and civic groups in a conversation around how to best ensure the long-term health and vitality of the Des Moines region. Regional planning is about collaboration and coordination. It is an approach to planning and governance that aligns economic, social, and environmental issues to guide investments and provide for the long-term health of the region. The Tomorrow Plan will result in land use, policy, and implementation recommendations. Equally important, it will foster discussion and increased collaboration throughout the greater Des Moines region.
The Tomorrow Plan is led by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization with funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. The Tomorrow Plan will be complete in 2013.



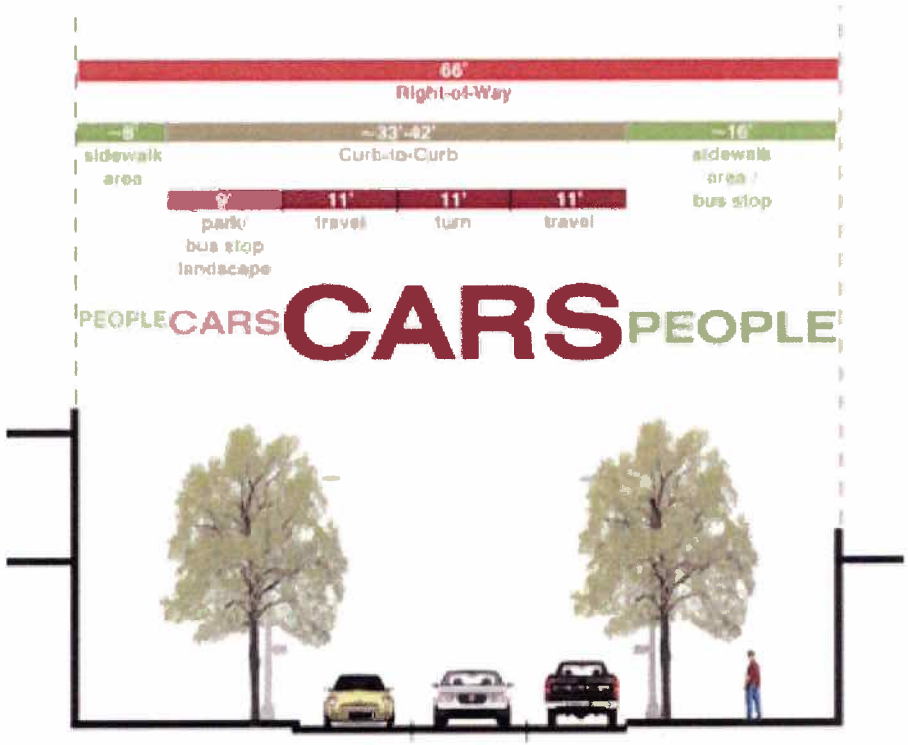
PROCESS: Planning Process

The conceptual planning and design process was guided from start to finish by stakeholder and community input. Direction came from a streetscape steering committee that was comprised of various business, resident, and community stakeholders. Public meetings were also conducted to gather additional community input, as well as to test and refine the design concepts as they were being developed. The following timeline illustrates the planning and design process:





proposed 60' right-of-way section between University Avenue and Clark Street looking south
Roadway dimension includes two travel lanes and one turning lane with permanent on-street parking on the east side. Sidewalks on the west side are approximately 13' wide with a new row of street trees; Sidewalks on the east side are narrower (approximately 5') with the parking area buffering pedestrians from the traffic and bump-outs on the east side at corners to facilitate street crossing and allow street trees and at mid-blocks to provide street trees and lighting. Easement areas on the east side may be required to provide bus stops/shelters along the corridor (see plans).



proposed 66' right-of-way section between Clark Street and the Des Moines River looking south
Roadway dimension includes two travel lanes and one turning lane with permanent on-street parking on the east side. Sidewalks on the west side are approximately 16' wide with a new row of street trees; Sidewalks on the east side are narrower (approximately 8') with the parking area buffering pedestrians from the traffic and bump-outs on the east side at corners to facilitate street crossing and allow street trees and at mid-blocks to provide street trees and lighting.

II. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Priorities and Needs

Streetscape Priorities:
- Wider sidewalk, improved pedestrian amenities
- Pedestrian safety, crosswalk and lighting improvements
- Bicycle friendly street, shared lanes and bike parking
- Retain on-street parking for businesses
- Plan for improved bus stops
- Beautification enhancements, street trees and flower planters

Neighborhood Priorities:
- Connection to the Des Moines River, 6th Avenue river bridge improvements
- Changes to 6th Avenue and Hickman Road intersection

Conceptual Design

Existing Conditions
- Deteriorated sidewalk conditions immediately adjacent to roadway higher speed roadway traffic; see photos on page 7
- Narrow right-of-way dimensions a limiting factor in the proposed design
- Existing 5-lane roadway configuration with two dedicated travel lanes, two shared travel/ off-peak parking lanes, and center turn lane

Proposed Improvements
- Asymmetric street section to provide better pedestrian experience
- Three-lane roadway configuration with two dedicated travel lanes, center turn lane, and a dedicated on-street parking lane on the east side of the street
- Wider sidewalk on west side of the street with continuous line of street trees
- Shared use roadway w/ bicycle "sharrows"
- Improved street lighting, street trees and beautification enhancements
- "Priority blocks" between Forest and Washington Avenues with increased levels of pedestrian amenities and streetscape investment

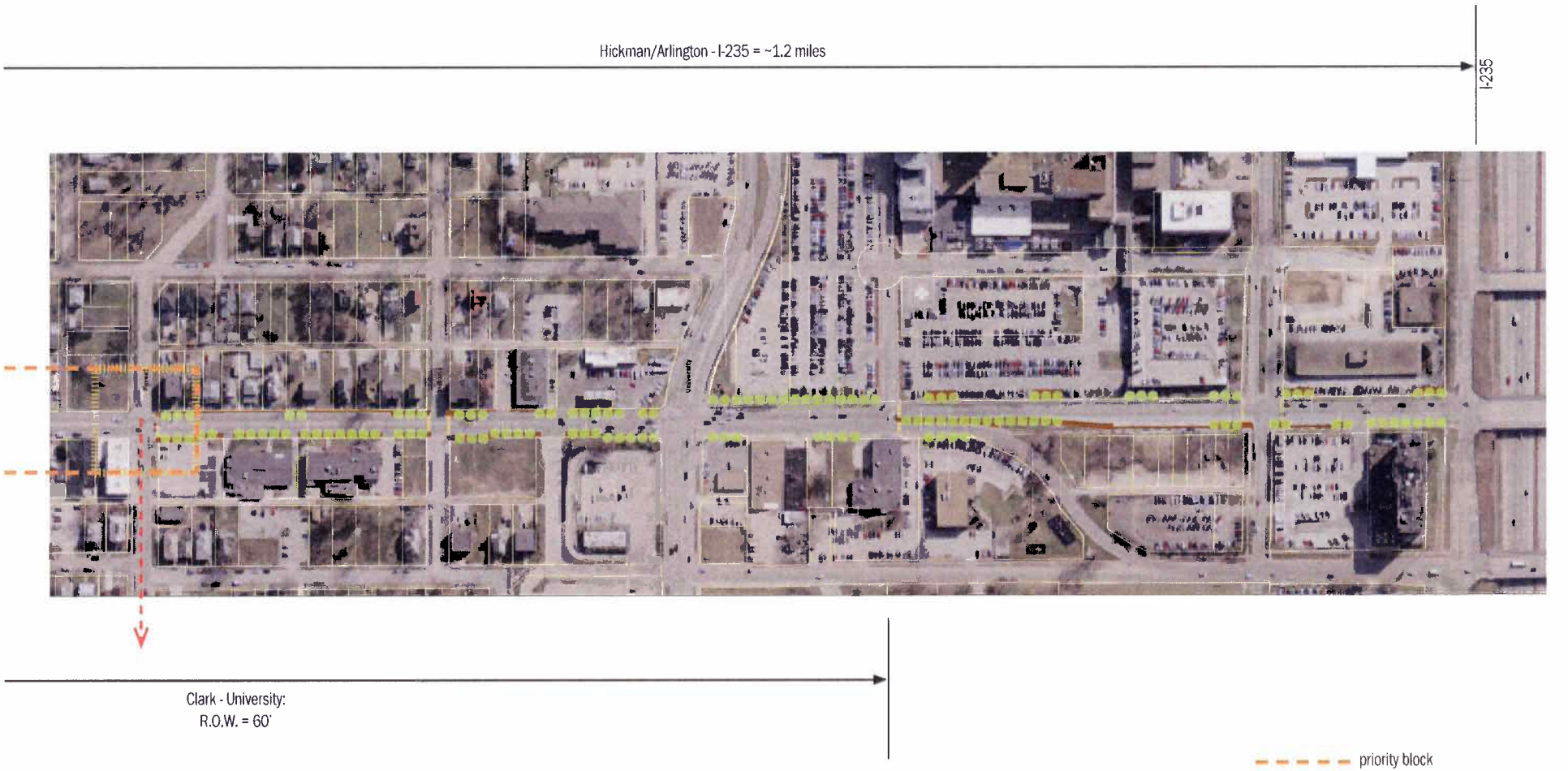
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: Objectives

Improve pedestrian experience
widen sidewalks
narrow roadway
improve safety at crossings
traffic calming
increase lighting

Improve vehicular and bicycle experience
2 travel lanes (1 in each direction) with a turning lane and permanent parking on one side

Improve resident and visitor experience
increase lighting
incorporate landscape
relocate utilities
connect to River and downtown
integrate public art
enhance transit amenities
re-establish alleys

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS: Framework


Hickman/Arlington - I-235 = ~1.2 miles
I-235
Clark - University:
R.O.W. = 60'
priority block
priority intersection
proposed bike lane
(per Bicycles and Trails master plan)

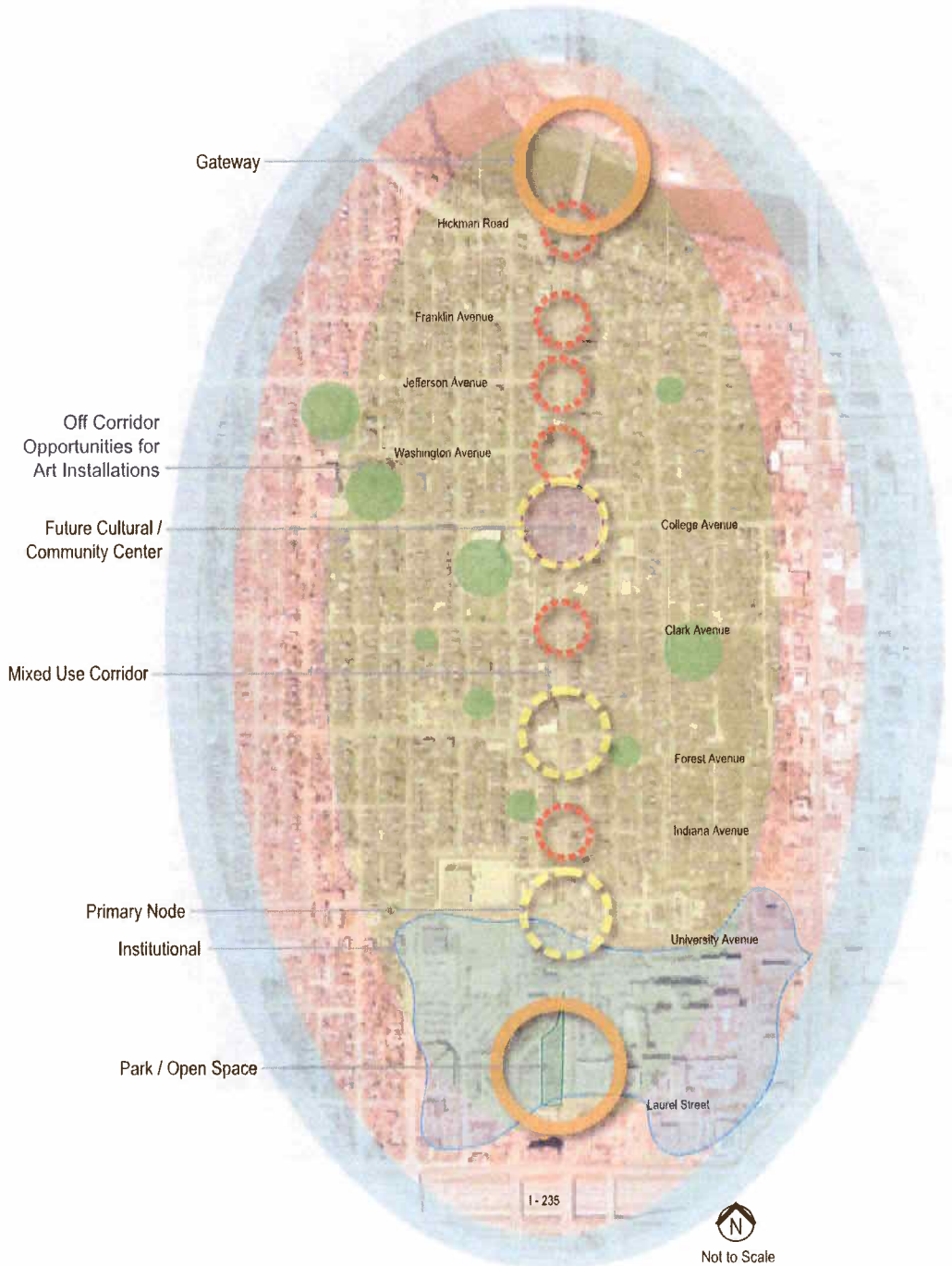
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Art

With funding from the Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation, the 6th Avenue Corridor hired local artist and developer Chaden Halfhill of Indigo Dawn, LLC to prepare an arts proposal and consider multi-phase public art installations in the area. The initial phase of this process included several rounds of discussions with the diverse populations surrounding the 6th Avenue Corridor. Themes from the input included:

a) celebrate the diversity of people in the district,
b) create a strong sense of entry on the north and south ends of the Corridor, with the river bridge providing an immediate opportunity for improvement,
c) increase connectivity through public events,
d) emphasize beauty and color to provide vibrancy to street experience,
e) highlight the history of the neighborhoods and their development, and
f) establish 6th Avenue Corridor as a destination, attracting people to the area to enhance business opportunities.

The resulting framework for public art proposed in the final report (*Un Nuevo Amanecer*) includes gateways at the Des Moines River bridge and south of University Avenue and a series of nodes along the length of the corridor. The nodes would set the tone for new character in the 6th Avenue corridor and could include the design for major signage, bus shelters, or landscape planters.



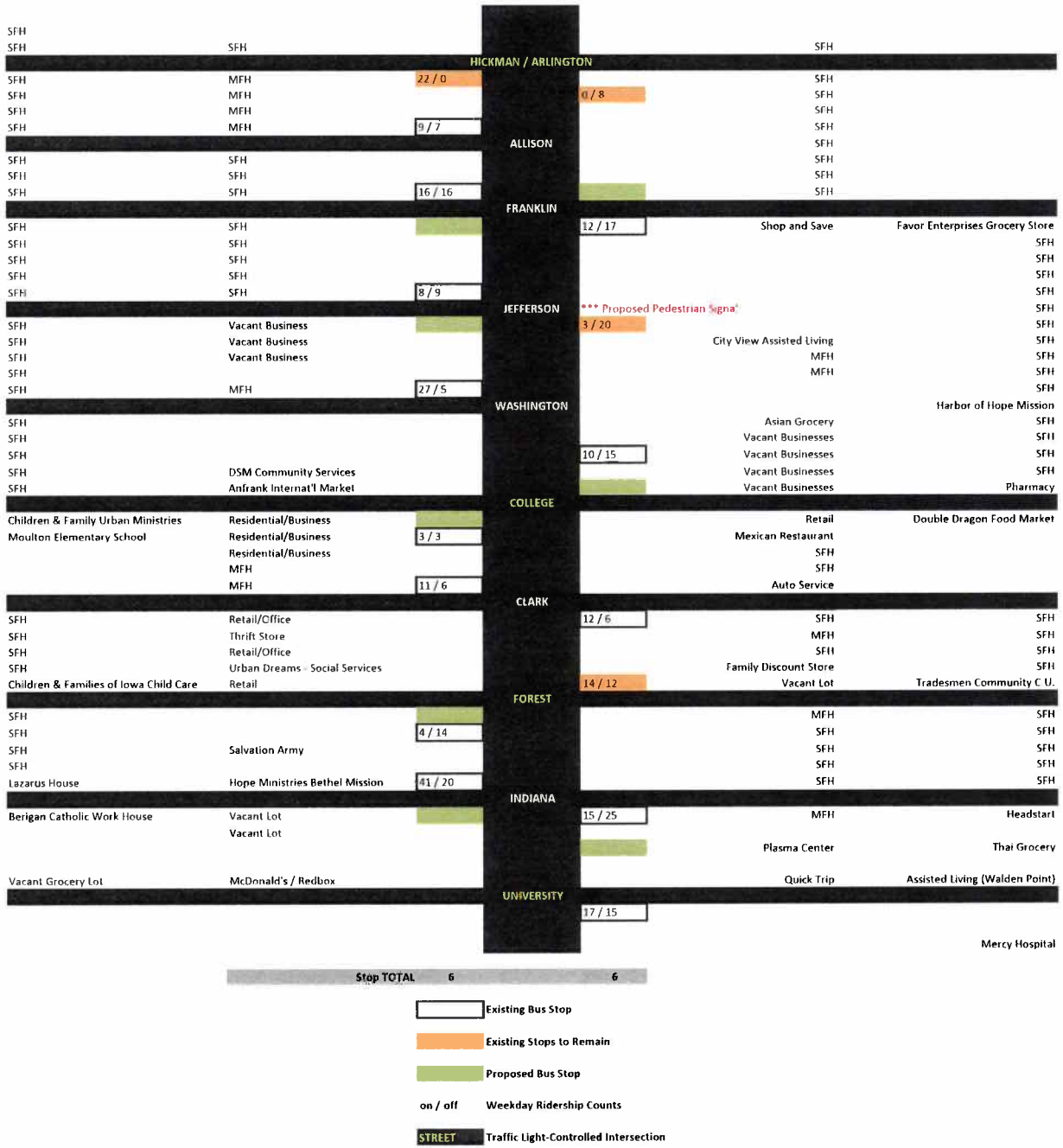
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Transit

With high ridership in the 6th Avenue Corridor, the streetscape sought to integrate DART into the planning efforts to better serve existing riders and cultivate higher ridership, while responding to the changes in traffic pattern proposed by the streetscape plan.

The table was provided by DART and represents the proposed locations for bus stops, existing bus stop locations, as well as the existing average daily on/off counts for both north- and south-bound riders. This proposal consolidates 17 existing bus stops to 12 locations for stops. Based on ridership counts, these locations should better serve transit users, while facilitating traffic movement in the corridor. In addition, the "Plan Recommendation" pages indicate proposed bus shelters near Jefferson, Forest, and Indiana Avenues.

6th Avenue is part of two future bus rapid transit lines (BRT) planned for the region (map on page 12). One of the lines would serve the entire 6th Avenue corridor with end points in downtown and Douglas Avenue. The first BRT line proposed for the DART system also includes the portion of the 6th Avenue streetscape south of University Avenue and would connect the 6th Avenue Corridor to downtown, Drake University and Ingersoll Avenue. Future design of the streetscape should coordinate with DART's plans for BRT in the 6th Avenue Corridor.



Proposed DART stops along 6th Avenue to coincide with implementation of the streetscape

landscaped medians at Hickman and Arlington

bus stops

north- and southbound travel lanes with bicycle 'sharrow'

center turning lane

move curb and paving to create narrower pedestrian crossing

on-street parking

bus stops

remove overhead utility lines

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

sidewalk bump-out with street trees

8' sidewalk (investigate potential for preserving existing curb)

16' sidewalk

signalized pedestrian walk

bus shelter; investigate potential for easement

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Des Moines River - Jefferson Street

The Des Moines River is a natural gateway to the 6th Avenue Corridor and is slated for enhancement through bridge renovation in 2012 and a potential public art installation funded by the Greater Community Public Art Foundation. Hickman and Arlington are planned to receive medians. If sensitively designed, the medians should be a pedestrian amenity helping to increase safety and create stronger connections between the 6th Avenue Corridor and the River and points north. The 66' right-of-way is comprised of two travel lanes with a center turning lane and permanent on-street parking on the east side. The east side of 6th Ave. has an ~8' sidewalk and street trees at intersections and bump-outs; the west side of the street has ~16' sidewalks and a consistent line of street trees. A bus shelter and signalized pedestrian walk is planned south of the intersection of Jefferson Avenue.

EXISTING

PROPOSED

north- and southbound travel lanes with bicycle 'sharrow'

center turning lane

sidewalk bump-out with street trees

on-street parking

bus stops

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

8' sidewalk (investigate potential for preserving existing curb)

16' sidewalk

alley improvement and re-surfacing

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Washington Street - College Avenue

The area between Washington Street and College Avenue is part of the "priority block" and is planned to receive streetscape enhancements including: benches, bike racks, pedestrian-scaled light fixtures, some special paving on the sidewalks, and landscaping at the bases of the trees. The width of the right-of-way increases at Clark Street from 60' to 66', so the sidewalk widths in this area and areas to the north are wider. The public arts report identifies the intersection at 6th and College Avenues a primary node, calling for a "culture or community center" in this area.

EXISTING

PROPOSED

north- and southbound travel lanes with bicycle 'sharrow'

center turning lane

on-street parking

alley improvement and re-surfacing

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

sidewalk bump-out with street trees

8' sidewalk (investigate potential for preserving existing curb)

16' sidewalk

bus shelter; investigate potential for easement

remove overhead utility lines

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

College Avenue - Forest Avenue

This area of the 6th Avenue corridor is the "priority block". These blocks contain most of the commercial businesses along the corridor and are identified for a higher level of amenities, or "streetscape enhancements," such as benches, bike racks, pedestrian-scaled light fixtures, some special paving on the sidewalks, and landscaping at the bases of the trees. A bus shelter is proposed for the northeast corner of Forest and 6th Avenue; the sidewalk could be maintained in its full width if a small easement for the shelter could be secured on the site that is currently vacant on this corner. With the change to permanent on-street parking, services will be provided from the alley and improvements to the alley should occur simultaneous to implementation of the 6th Avenue streetscape.

bus shelter: investigate potential for easement

north- and southbound travel lanes
with bicycle 'sharrow'

center turning lane

sidewalk bump-out with street trees

on-street parking

6' sidewalk (investigate potential
for preserving existing curb)

12' sidewalk

alley improvement and re-surfacing

existing drive

bus shelter at bump-out

existing drive

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

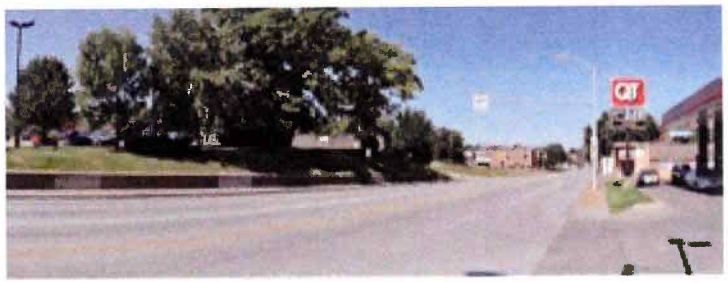
southbound right turn lane;
investigate sidewalk easement and retaining wall reconstruction

tree planting on private property to
match street trees @ 25'-30' o.c.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

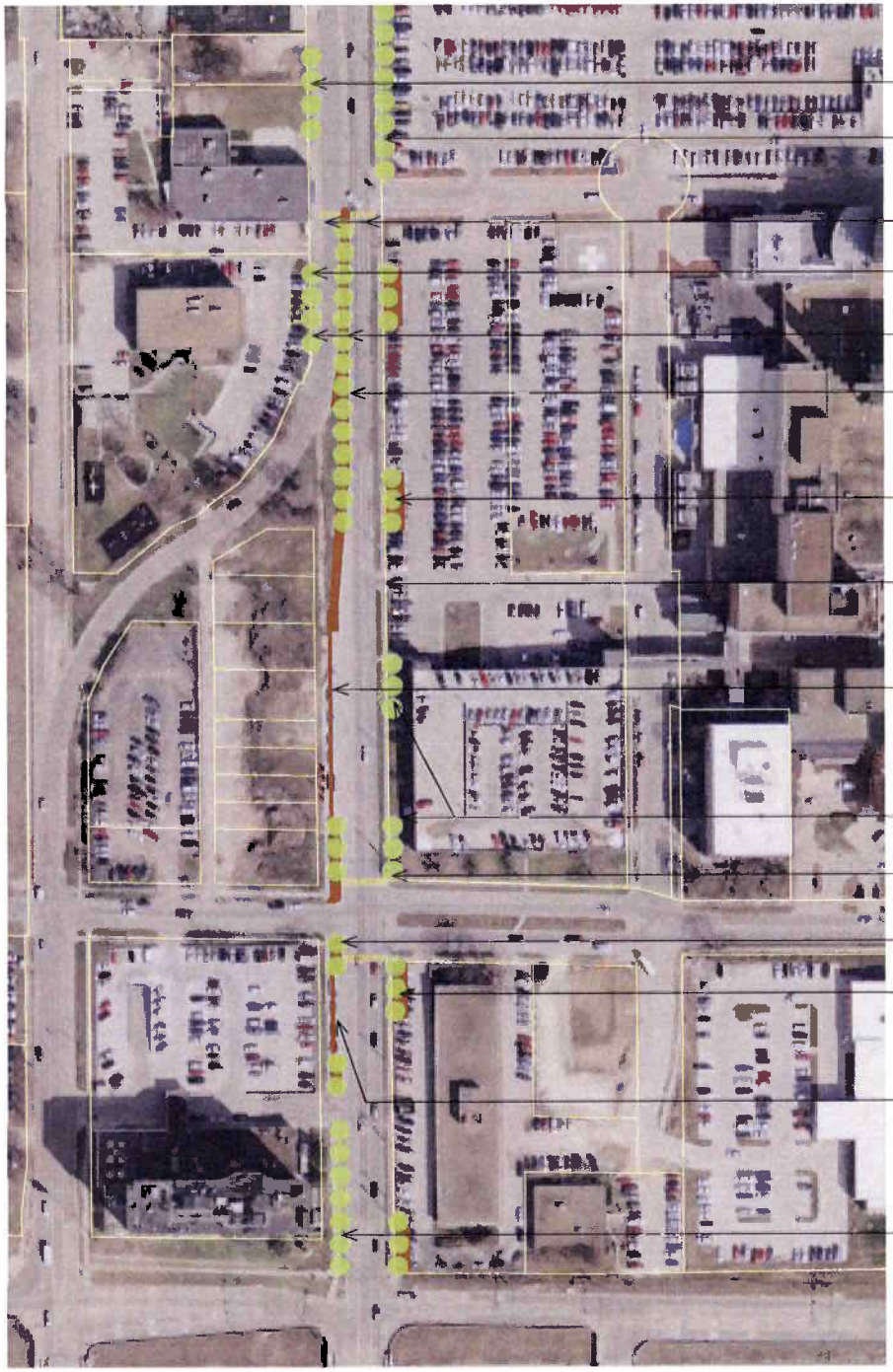
Forest Avenue - University Avenue

The area of 6th Avenue between Forest and University Avenues is a transition zone between the downtown and the 1-way traffic pattern south of University and the proposed 3-lane roadway north of University to the Des Moines River. The base improvements for the streetscape are established in this area, including the new roadway configuration, wider sidewalks, street trees and lighting. Bus shelters are envisioned for the east side of 6th Avenue midway between Indiana and University Avenues and at the southwest corner of the Forest Ave. intersection. With the addition of permanent on-street parking, there will be increased service needs on the alleys, as such improvements to the alleys will be needed. The public arts report calls for a primary node at the intersection of 6th Avenue and University Avenue.



EXISTING

PROPOSED



existing sidewalk

tree planting on private property to
match street trees @ 25'-30' o.c

crosswalk; connect at existing Mercy sidewalk

bus stop

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

adjust curb; create median with sidewalk (12'min.)

tree planting on private property to
match street trees @ 25'-30' o.c.
(eliminate ~14-16 parking spaces this lot)

existing sidewalk

new sidewalk (~

on-street parking;
relocate curb and recontruct sidewalk (8' min.)
investigate tree planting on private property

tree planting on private property to
match street trees @ 25'-30' o.c.

bus stop

bump-out with street trees

tree planting on private property to
match street trees @ 25'-30' o.c.
(eliminate ~12 parking spaces this lot)

on-street parking;
relocate curb and recontruct sidewalk

street trees at 25'-30' o.c.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mercy Hospital entry drive - I-235

This section of the 6th Avenue Corridor has a different character from areas to the north. The roadway splits into a 1-way pair with 7th Street and leads in and out of downtown. The east side is dominated by Mercy Hospital and its associated parking lots, entry drive and medical offices. Recommendations are aimed to better connect this area to the remainder of the 6th Avenue Corridor and improve pedestrain safety. The line of street trees should be extended from northern area of the Corridor. On the east side of the street in this area, the planting would occur on Mercy-owned property. Recommendations call for re-shaping the median at the 1-way split to slow traffic, reduce the paved area, and provide a pedestrian crossing at the Mercy entry drive. The Public Art Foundation study recommends that the area between 6th and 7th Streets should serve as an entry gateway.

EXISTING

PROPOSED

III. IMPLEMENTATION

Streetscape projects require a significant capital improvement expense for the planning, engineering, construction, and also the long-term maintenance. Because of this and the fact that City funds continue to be limited, the City requires that project costs be shared between the City and community stakeholder group seeking streetscape enhancements. The completion of this conceptual design is the beginning of a multi-step process to turn this community vision into a reality. The next steps in the process will be to develop a public and private fundraising strategy to secure the necessary funding for construction, identify a long-term maintenance strategy, prepare the final project design, and initiate construction.

Phasing

The project recommendations call for changing the location of the curb to narrow the roadway and increase the pedestrian sidewalk. This change would reduce the traffic lanes from five to three, which makes phasing the roadway reconfiguration difficult. It is necessary to complete this in a singular phase to reduce traffic conflicts. Phasing of the streetscape enhancements may be a possibility and could be explored further in the next phase of the project.

Estimated Project Costs

Cost estimates for the project were prepared as part of the conceptual planning process. This was done to give City and community leaders an indication of what costs are associated with the proposed improvements. The cost breakdown can be found below, with more detailed costs on file with the City's Engineering Department. Base improvements include: sidewalk, curb, MidAm-supported street lighting, street trees, sod. Streetscape enhancements include: pedestrian furniture, bike racks, custom light fixtures, pedestrian lighting, public art, landscape beds, planters, trash recepticles, material upgrades (i.e. brick, stone, etc.), and entrance features. Without this public/ private cooperation, projects such as the 6th Avenue streetscape project would not be possible.

Hickman Road to University Avenue	
Base Improvements	~$2,300,000
Streetscape Enhancements	~$ 600,000
University Avenue to I-235	
Base Improvements	~$ 700,000
Streetscape Enhancements	~$ 150,000

Long-term Maintenance

One of the most important aspects of a streetscape project is accounting for the long-term maintenance of the streetscape enhancements. The tool that is utilized to account for this is a Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID). A SSMID is an additional tax levy imposed on property within the SSMID district. Chapter 386 of the Iowa Code regulates the establishment of a SSMID and defines how the revenues are collected and how they may be utilized. Within the streetscape process it is necessary to have the SSMID in place and approved prior to the final bidding and construction process. 6th Avenue is somewhat unique in comparison to other areas in Des Moines that have an established SSMID in that there is a fairly substantial concentration of tax exempt properties. This may affect the amount of revenue that a SSMID would generate and should be considered going forward.

The conceptual plan recommends a manageable level of landscape enhancements. Specific types of plant material was not identified in this phase, however it is anticipated that there will be a mix of annual and perennial plantings. Because the type and amount of landscaping has yet to be established the maintenance costs have yet to be determined. This will be accounted for in the next phase of the project, however it is important that the project strikes a balance of landscaping that is appropriate for the 6th Avenue corridor.

Plant material is not the only aspect that will require maintenance over the life of the streetscape. Vertical elements such as street lights, bike racks, trash receptacles, benches, decorative planters, and other elements need to be considered as well. It will likely be necessary to establish an insurance policy to cover any damage to the vertical elements of the streetscape. SSMID revenues will be utilized to fund the insurance premium and deductible payments.