

# 03. Development Framework

This chapter lays out a conceptual development framework for East Billings. This concept is further detailed in the following chapter with specific implementation strategies that will help this framework evolve into reality.

## 3.1 CREATING A NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR EVOLVING MARKETS

In creating a development framework for the study area, Big Sky Economic Development Authority, the City, the consultant team, and its public and private stakeholders (the Team) considered not only the study area, but adjacent neighborhoods and the overall Billings region. The Team was mindful that redevelopment of the site must serve today's residents as well as future generations in a technologically evolving global market. In doing so, the Team balanced the need to grow the Billings economy for future job creation and business enterprise, as well as to establish livable neighborhood centers. To this end, several guiding "districts" with differing but compatible opportunities for land uses, a development concept, and a new form-based code zoning strategy are envisioned to establish a flexible framework for evolving residential, industrial, and hospitality markets.

At almost 500 acres, the East Billings Neighborhood area is too large to be treated as one unified whole, but must rather be considered in pieces. For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions apply:

**Study Area.** In approaching East Billings, the Team considered the official Urban Renewal District and adjacent areas that share physical and economic characteristics with the urban renewal area.

**Districts.** Districts are areas that share a particular development concept to be encouraged through incentives, priorities for investment, and branding strategies, but not limited in terms of use or even design guidelines.

**Zones.** Zones are clusters of districts that are intended to share a general physical character, which will help the community begin to differentiate between various parts of the larger East Billings area. Specific regulatory zones will shape physical characteristics while allowing flexibility in land use.

## 3.2 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT & DISTRICT CHARACTER

This section outlines an overall development concept based on existing patterns of development and economic opportunities, followed by a more fine-grained concept of district character as well as implementation priorities.

With a long history, and little development guidance from fairly flexible zoning regulations, the neighborhood today is an eclectic mixture of uses and building styles that gives it an indistinct physical character. To give shape to districts and zones within it, the Team used a figure ground study and a development suitability analysis.

A figure ground study is a fairly simple mapping technique in which buildings are shown as black, with everything else shown in white. This creates a bold image of current development patterns – large buildings; small buildings; undeveloped areas; and so forth (see Figure 3.2-1 Existing Figure Ground).

The development suitability analysis applied in this case is an educated but subjective analysis of which properties are likely to undergo significant change in the next generation. For instance, an area with few substantial buildings or high value economic uses is likely to change, while an area with venerable buildings and/or high-value uses is less likely to change. Figure 3.2-2 Figure Ground & Development Suitability Analysis shows an overlay of the figure ground and development suitability maps.

### Development Theory Redevelopment & Infill

The area along the southern edge of the study area – especially along Montana Avenue – features many substantial masonry buildings originally built to service the adjacent rail line. These buildings give this area a distinctive character that lends itself to rehabilitation of major older buildings and in-fill development between them. Given the recent revitalization of Montana Avenue to the west, it is easy to imagine that character moving east through the study area.



Figure 3.2-1 Existing Figure Ground



Figure 3.2-2 Figure Ground & Development Suitability Analysis

- Venerable buildings and/or high-value uses - less likely to change
- Existing Figure Ground

### Selective In-Fill Opportunities

The western edge of the study area is adjacent to the CBD. Land in this area is largely underutilized and is beginning to infill with new commercial and office uses. This area is poised for growth and infill. Land in this area is less expensive than land in the CBD; however, parking codes have much greater requirement;

### Connections & Long-Term Transitions

The area along the north edge of the study area between 4th and 6th Avenues N is dominated by automobile-oriented uses and heavy industrial businesses that are likely to eventually seek lower-priced locations farther from the center of town. As such, this area can be seen as one of connections and long-term transitions.

### Redevelopment

The area in the west-center of the study area, roughly between N 16th and N 20th Streets, contains a significant concentration of older houses in sub-standard condition, as well as undeveloped properties. As such, these may offer the study area's best opportunity for substantial redevelopment – perhaps as a more complete residential neighborhood or as a public or private campus of some sort.

### Evolving Industrial

The area in the east-center of the study area is Billings' hard-working historical industrial core. Many of the businesses in this area are doing just fine as they are as agricultural supply, small-scale manufacturing, and automotive services. Consequently, this area is not a logical target for near-term major changes. At the same time, it could use improvements to the public realm, and industry is always changing (today toward greener and cleaner technologies). In sum, this might best be seen as an evolving industrial area.

### Infrastructure & Redevelopment

Finally, the area at the eastern edge of the study area adjacent to MetraPark is highly underdeveloped and deficient in stormwater infrastructure. It is also the first area one encounters when heading to central Billings from the Heights or from Interstate-90 from the east. This area represents a substantial opportunity for infrastructure improvements and large-scale redevelopment, perhaps aimed at the hospitality industry in support of MetraPark.

### Redevelopment Districts

Taking this concept to a somewhat finer grain, the Team defined eight distinct districts (Figures 3.2-3 and 3.2-4) – each with a distinct character – and with general boundaries defined by the conceptual bubbles, by existing land uses, and by issues of adjacency and buffers between incompatible uses. These districts are non-regulatory, describing compatible uses and character. Figure 3.4-1 (later in the chapter) illustrates proposed zoning,

**1. Montana East** – One of the most celebrated assets of Downtown Billings is the successful revitalization of the Montana Avenue corridor in the CBD. Building on this success, adaptive reuse of historic brick buildings and warehouses into mixed office, residential, and retail uses and strong streetscape features should continue east along this corridor.

**2. Downtown East** – Residential and office infill is occurring at a slow but steady pace west of N 22nd Street, or the nexus of the CBD and the EBURD. A new transit station, a federal court house, and other significant developments are in progress to the west that will likely spur additional desired mixed-use infill that spills over into the study area. This should be accepted and encouraged as a primary economic opportunity to capture tax increment revenues.

**3. Rail Spur Village** – The central portion of the neighborhood contains a large number of underutilized, substandard, and vacant housing, as well as commercial and industrial properties in deteriorated condition. Assembling land in this area for a mixed-use residential village for workers associated with adjacent industrial uses or a health / educational campus with a research and development focus would catalyze redevelopment in the larger study area. Civic uses such as a public library, central public green, or recreational facilities could anchor the village, and pedestrian- and bike-friendly connections would extend to nearby destinations.

**4. The 6th Avenue Find** – This district is envisioned to capture auto-oriented commercial or industrial retail activity that would be generated by the high level of traffic flowing from the Heights Neighborhood and I-90 through the study area. Tile stores, home-improvement centers, and retail uses that accommodate industrial businesses within the neighborhood are envisioned.

**5. Green Workforce Center** – Throughout the master planning process, stakeholders have expressed interest in a “green” mixed-use neighborhood that would retain industrial and manufacturing uses and attract re-investment and create jobs. Initial discussions for the industrial portion of the plan focused on recycling land uses and encouraging businesses that endorse sustainable values or manufacture green products. Opportunities include water-sensitive urban design, solid waste recycling, alternative energy district heating, combined heat and power distribution, and “green-collar” job creation. Locating the green-collar and labor-intensity portions of this concept between the Rail Spur Village and the more industrial and recycling uses to the east creates a nice buffer.

Note: District names are preliminary. Final names and identity should be addressed in the context of branding and marketing. Coordinate closely with the Chamber of Commerce on "Trailhead" theme.

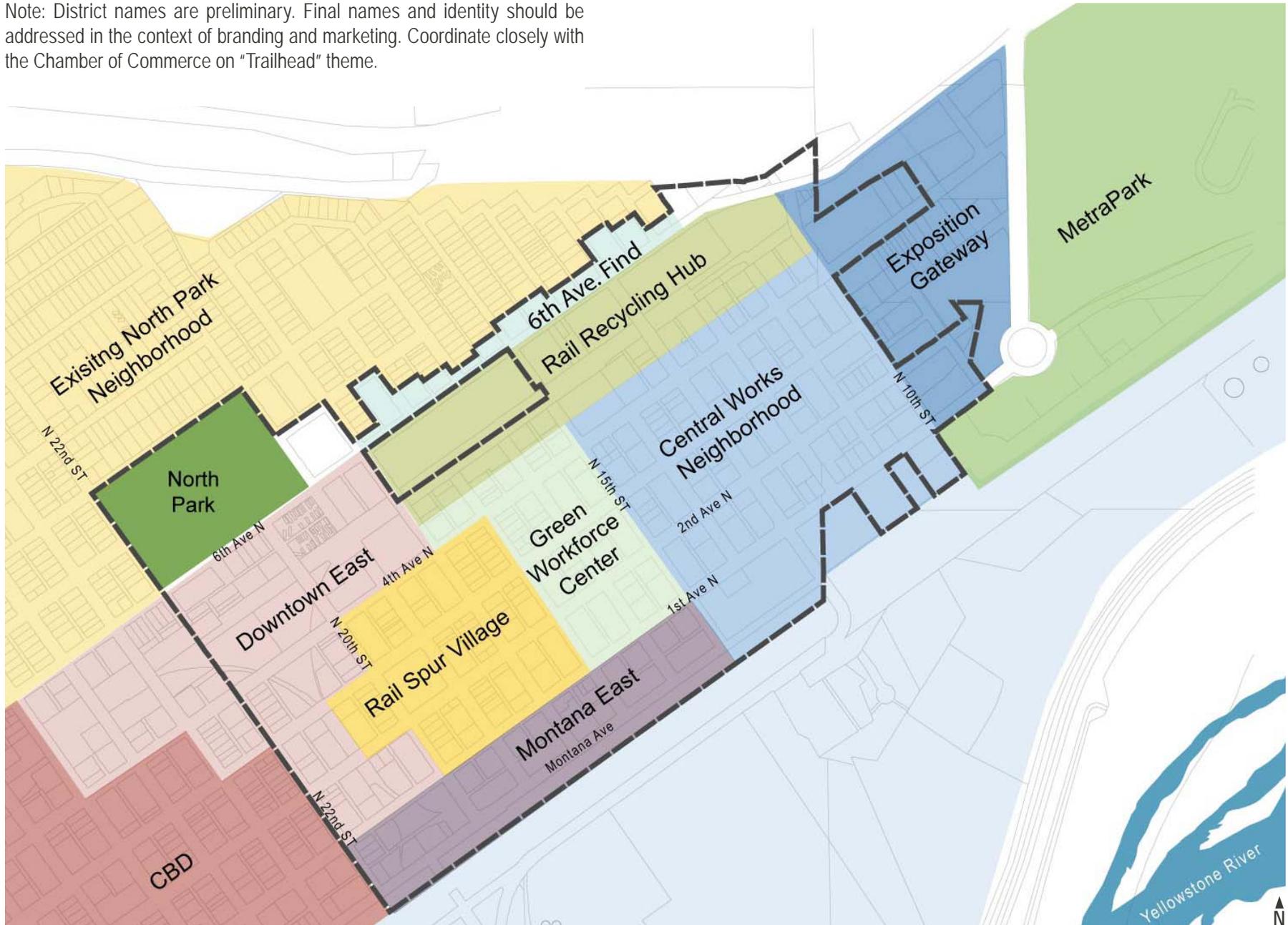


Figure 3.2-3 Development Districts

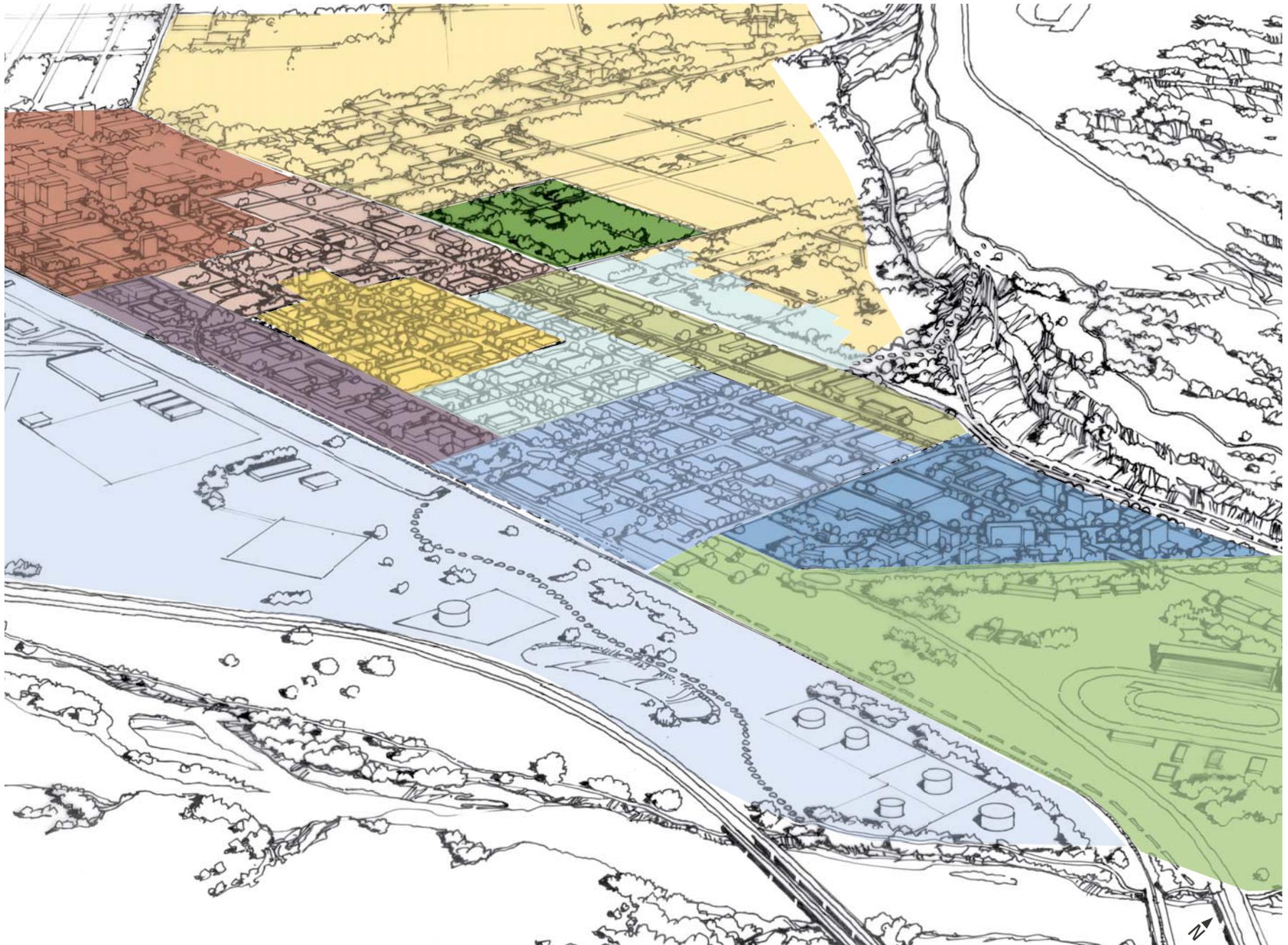


Figure 3.2-4 Axonometric Sketch of the Development Districts

**6. Central Works Neighborhood** – Rooted in a hard-working history, the Billings industrial core is home to many regionally significant commercial industrial uses, such as agricultural supply, saddle production, scrap yards, and automobile servicing and retail. Many of these uses will continue over time, while others may choose to adapt and innovate to capture new markets in distribution, manufacturing, or research and development. This district is intended to allow existing uses to prosper while offering incentives to new enterprises by providing modern infrastructure.

**7. Rail Recycling Hub** – By maintaining the existing rail spur as an asset for future industrial uses, this district can capitalize on the rail line to service a regional recycling center for heavy metals, glass, plastic, building materials, or other recyclables. The rail line could bring in recycled materials from other parts of Montana and the region to process anew in the recycling hub and fill an existing gap in statewide demand for recycling services.

**8. Exposition Gateway** – The east end of the study area, outside of the existing Tax Increment Financing District in County jurisdiction and adjacent to MetraPark, is envisioned as a prime location for hospitality uses that could serve tourists and locals attending MetraPark events. Restaurants, hotels, and a significant gateway feature (such as a gateway park) would provide a visual anchor and welcome visitors to the east gateway of the City. This district also offers central Billings its strongest opportunity for a real connection to the Yellowstone River south of MetraPark. Implementing this district in a cohesive manner can be best accomplished through a master planning exercise, rather than an incremental approach as in other parts of the study area.

These districts are one part of the guiding framework for evolving development. They are not envisioned as regulatory or to preclude property owners /

entrepreneurs from realizing specific land uses where opportunities emerge.

### 3.3 REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

With the concept for development districts presented above, a framework can be created for urban design, streetscape design, and infrastructure to bring these districts alive. Figure 3.3-1 Development Concept is an overall concept of one way this redevelopment plan might emerge in the generation ahead; however, how this plan is actually implemented will have more to do with seizing the right opportunities when they appear than with having much control about which opportunities emerge. Taking advantage of opportunities and shaping them as they move forward will require that East Billings leadership understand the urban design, streetscape, and infrastructure concepts outlined here.

#### Urban Design

Each of the eight districts described above should convey its own character and identity. At the same time, stakeholders and Billings' leadership agree that whatever guidance is given for these districts should also offer flexibility to property owners and potential investors. Therefore, this plan recommends a form-based rather than use-based zoning code, and that priority for incentives be given to projects that meet the spirit of the urban design concepts described below.

**1. Montana East** – The Montana East District should take its urban design cues from the existing revitalized section of Montana Avenue between N Broadway and N 22nd Street. Rehabilitation of older masonry buildings should be encouraged. In-fill buildings should face Montana Avenue adjacent to the sidewalk and contiguous to existing buildings whenever possible. Streetscape improvements compatible with Montana

Avenue improvements to the west should be encouraged.

**2. Downtown East** – In-fill development opportunities should be sought throughout the Downtown East District. Especially desirable in this area are office and commercial uses that support the Central Business District, such as back office and operations facilities for downtown and medical corridor facilities, both in the public and private sectors. Buildings should be oriented toward major streets; density and height should be encouraged.

**3. Rail Spur Village** – The proximity of several blocks of underdeveloped property in the Rail Spur Village District offers a major opportunity for substantial redevelopment. This, in turn, allows the creation of a unique environment, characterized by landscaping, public spaces, civic uses, interior courtyards, and mid-rise development, giving it the feel of a residential or a campus village (Figure 3.3-2).

**4. The 6th Avenue Find** – 6th and 4th Avenues N are automobile oriented and will continue to be in the future. As such, opportunities should be sought for businesses that can take advantage of the district's excellent automobile access. These may include home improvement stores, movie theaters, and others that capture district traffic between downtown Billings, the Heights, and Interstate-90. Streetscape improvements should focus on softening the environment both for pedestrians and drivers. Street trees and parking lot landscaping should be encouraged.

**5. Green Workforce Center** – The Green Workforce Center District has two distinct and compatible objectives – first, to create a center for developing clean industries that can support each other and the Billings workforce; and second to provide a transitional buffer between the Rail Spur Village District and the heavier industrial uses in the Central Works Neighborhood

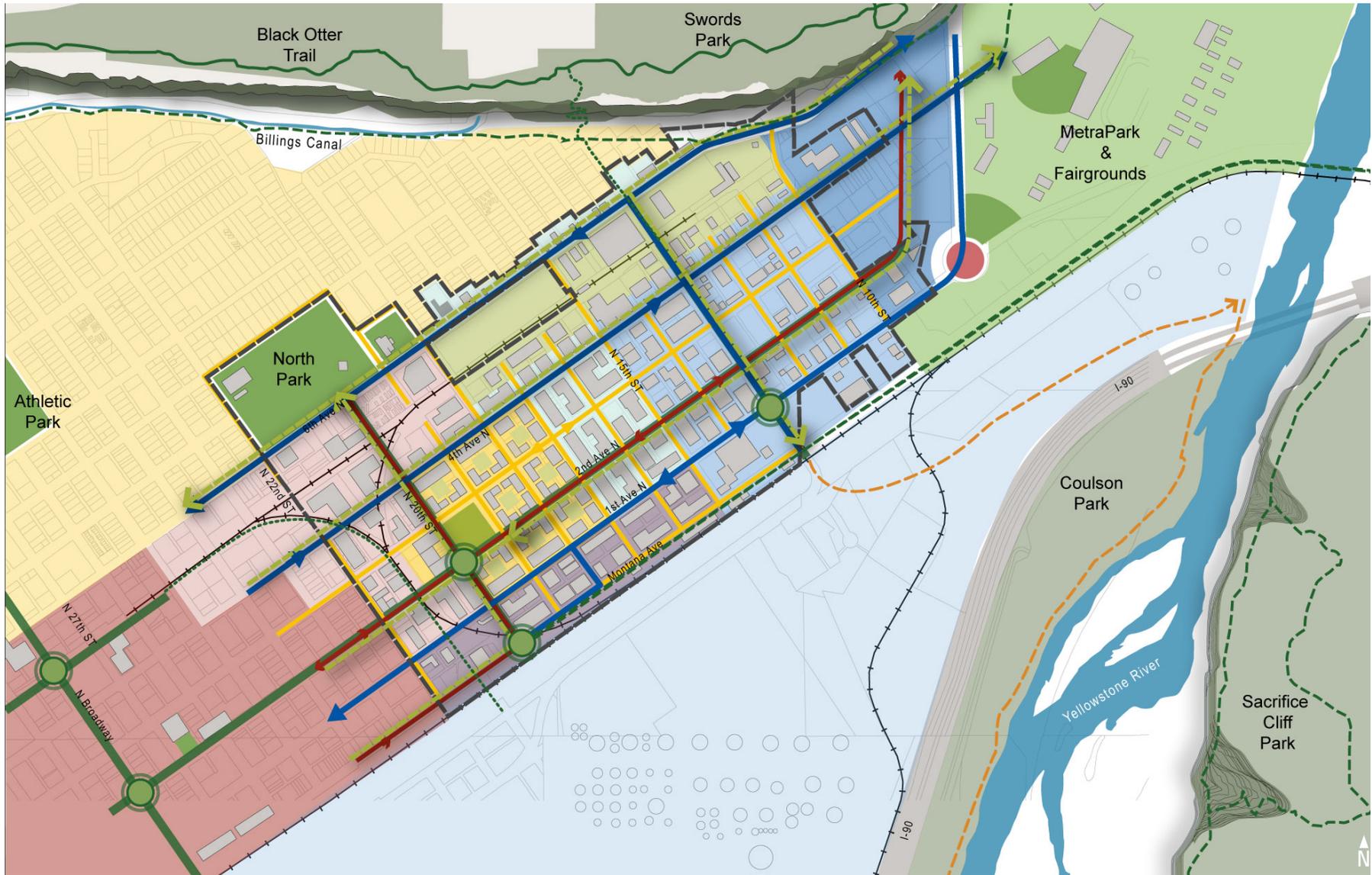


Figure 3.3-1 Development Concept

KEY

-  Existing North Park Neighborhood
-  Rail Spur Village
-  CBD
-  Downtown East
-  Montana East
-  6th Avenue Find
-  Rail Recycling Hub
-  Green Workforce Center
-  Central Works Neighborhood
-  Exposition Gateway
-  Oil Refineries
-  Parks & Green Space
-  Enhanced Intersection in Public Right-Of Way
-  Enhanced Streetscape
-  Arterial Roads
-  Main Streets
-  Local Streets
-  Bicycle
-  Multi-use Path
-  Planned Trail
-  Proposed Trail
-  Existing Trail
-  Gateway Feature



Figure 3.3-2 Rail Spur Village Concept

and Rail Recycling Hub Districts. Incentives should be used to attract and grow clean manufacturing and service businesses. Buildings should be oriented toward major streets when possible, and softening landscaping should be encouraged.

**6. Central Works Neighborhood** – The Central Works Neighborhood District is working well now. Existing businesses should be encouraged to remain. Uses that are not so compatible with industry (residential, for example) should be discouraged. Infrastructure improvements – especially stormwater – are the top priority in this district. When opportunities arise, landscaping and street orientation for buildings should be encouraged.

**7. Rail Recycling Hub** – The Rail Recycling Hub is all about taking advantage of the existing rail spur to connect existing and new recycling businesses with Montana's increased needs for such services. Cutting-edge recycling activities should be encouraged, and these uses should be protected from uses that might be put off by noise and odors.

**8. Exposition Gateway** – The Exposition Gateway District is a major opportunity for full-scale redevelopment. Infrastructure improvements and a comprehensive planned development can create a pleasant, pedestrian-oriented collection of hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality businesses serving MetraPark and the rest of the community as a

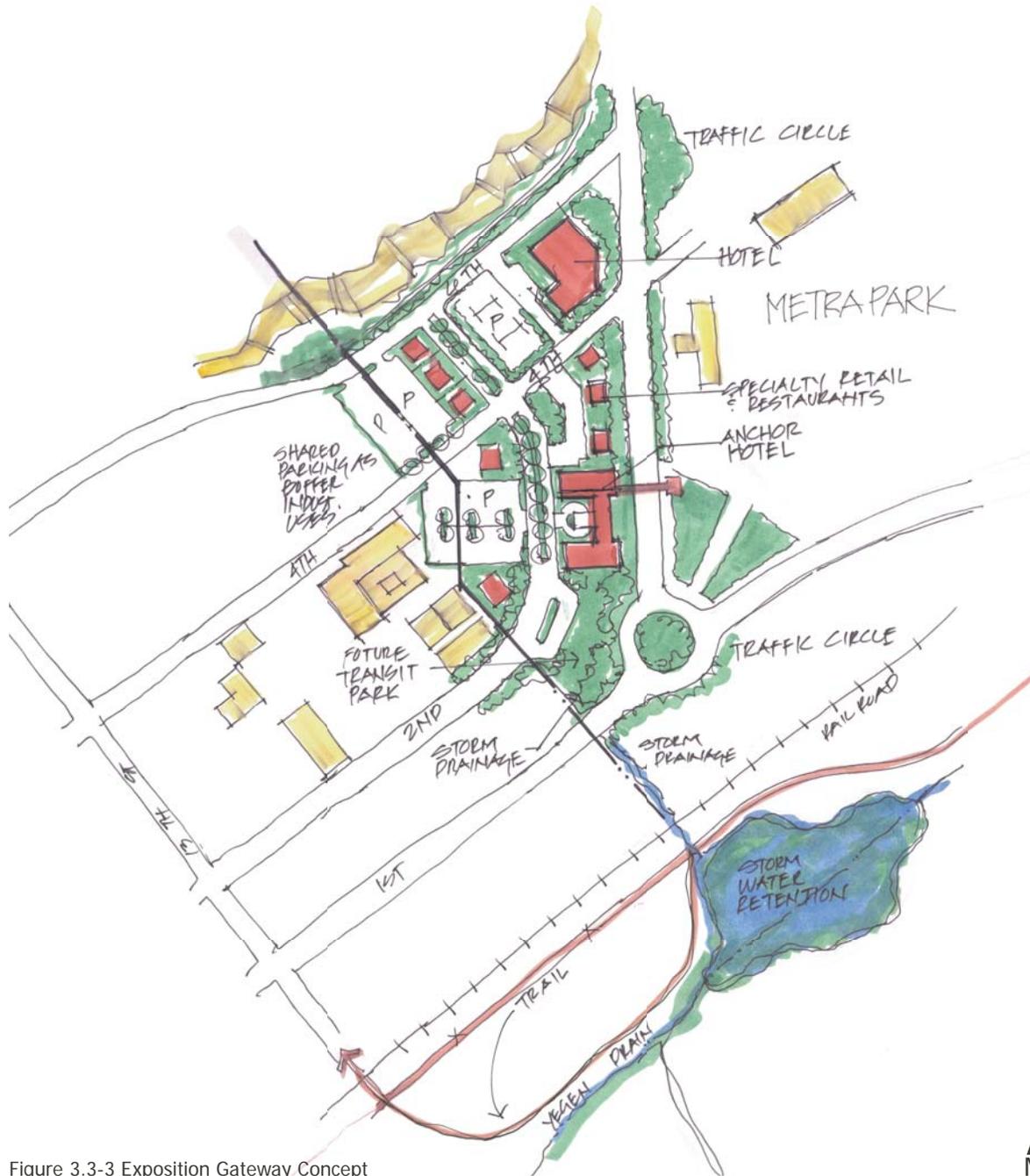


Figure 3.3-3 Exposition Gateway Concept

welcoming gateway from Interstate-90, the Heights, and the rest of Billings. Landmark landscaping should be used to create a real sense of arrival from the Interstate and from the Heights. Realizing this vision will require two major planning moves: first, the area between the City limits and MetraPark should be annexed into the City and the Urban Renewal District. Efforts have already begun on this behalf. Second, the entire district should be master planned, allowing for land assembly, road realignment, and unified design themes throughout (Figure 3.3-3).

At the same time each of the districts is developing a distinct look and feel, the whole study area shares a number of interconnected issues related to open space, transportation, and infrastructure. These include creating a “main street” along 2nd Avenue N, with building orientation, landscaping, and other improvements to the public realm to create a unique character and pleasant passage through the district for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. Additionally, a network of bicycle connections through the area with connections to the Central Business District, the Rims, and the Yellowstone River will complete several important pieces of Billings’ bicycling master plan. Also, seeking opportunities for public and/or shared parking will act as incentives for businesses to locate in the district.

### Green & Open Space Network

One distinguishing but unfortunate feature of the study area is the absence of landscaping and open space. As such, the development concept described in the previous section should be complemented with a network of green spaces to soften the district and serve important cooling, air quality, and stormwater retention functions. Figure 3.3-4 illustrates this green and open space network. Key features include a “main street” and “green street” concept on 2nd Avenue N.

In addition, N 20th Street and N 13 Street are seen as “green streets.” Main streets and green streets are further described in the following section. Key to the open space network presented here is concentrating landscaping investments to create a density of green to make an impression on passers-by.

The green and open space network also envisions several enhanced intersections with major landscaping features at the intersections of main streets and green streets, as well as a major gateway feature at the southwest corner of MetraPark, near 1st Avenue N. This intersection might include a highly landscaped roundabout with significant public art in a “Welcome to Billings” motif.

In addition, the Rail Spur Village District in the center of the EBURD might contain a network of smaller green spaces and a major public green in support of residential and/or campus uses. Finally, the Billings trails network should be enhanced through the district, with connections along key streets as well as the BNSF line to the riverfront, the rail spur to the Downtown area, and N 13th Street to the Rims and the Black Otter Trail.

**Complete Streets**

One of the guiding principles for this master plan is to provide a variety of transportation connections and choices throughout the study area and surrounding areas. Developing multi-modal transportation options is critical for supporting the neighborhood’s economic development efforts and will enhance quality of life and transportation choices. Figure 3.3-5 Transportation Network shows the transportation elements of the overall development concept.

Table 3.3-1 lists Complete Streets strategies for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and motorized transportation modes.

Pedestrian	Bicycle	Transit	Motorized
Identify missing and damaged sidewalks	Identify missing segments of bicycle lanes	Construct enhancements and include passenger amenities at bus stops (signage, lighting, shelter, bench, bike parking)	Reconstruct roadways to support multi-occupant vehicle use
Ensure continuous pedestrian connections	Ensure that bicycle lanes are designed to be wide enough and differentiated from neighboring lanes (striping and colored pavement)	Build curb bulbs at intersections with transit stops	Optimize signal coordinates and address intersection bottlenecks
Install or upgrade wayfinding	Construct underpass or underpass at high volume locations	Optimize stop placement	Implement efficiency and safety improvements
Add enhanced pedestrian crossings and signals	Install sufficient bike parking at transit facilities		Design roadways that accommodate safe bike and pedestrian travel
Improve lighting where necessary			
Make pedestrian improvements at key transit stops and other prioritized areas			
Mandate that pedestrian-oriented design be considered in development review			

Table 3.3-1 Complete Streets Design Strategies

The Complete Streets model has become a common way of moving the use of our streets away from auto-domination and balancing the need for bicycle and pedestrian movement. Complete Streets are “designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along a Complete Street ” (Nelson\Nygaard 2009).

At the same time, the area also offers the opportunity to create streets that are both “Complete” and “Green,” with attention to indigenous landscaping, alternative stormwater management, and microclimate enhancements for humans and wildlife.

Complete Streets have the following characteristics:

- Offer a full range of travel choices
- Connect to a network that offers choices



Figure 3.3-4 Open Space Network

Key

- |   |                     |   |   |   |                                  |
|---|---------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Existing Park       |  | New Urban Green                               |  | Enhanced Streetscapes (priority) |
|  | Special Use Park    |  | Private Open Space                            |  | Existing Trail                   |
|  | Existing Urban Park |  | Enhanced Intersections in Public Right-Of-Way |  | Planned Trails                   |
|   |                     |   |   |  | Proposed Trails                  |

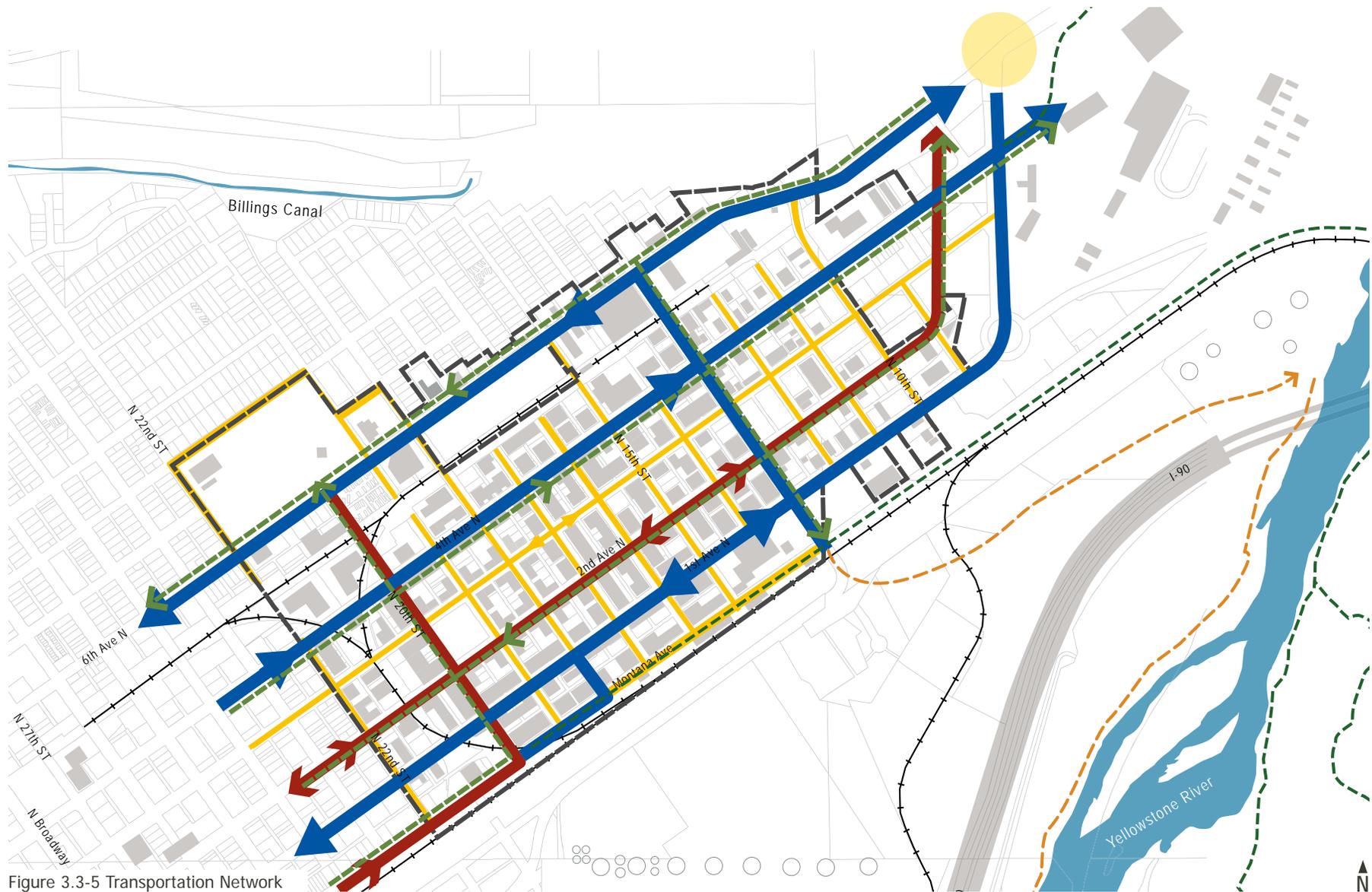


Figure 3.3-5 Transportation Network

Key

- Arterial Roads
- Main Streets
- Local Streets
- Bicycle
- Multi-use Path
- Planned Redesign

- Are fully accessible to all: children, older adults, and people with disabilities
- Support and contribute to life in pleasant, convenient neighborhoods

The approach will help to increase safety for all users, especially bicyclists and pedestrians; increase transportation options; improve access for the non-driving population; reduce vehicle miles traveled over time, thereby lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; and raise physical activity levels.

Complete Streets can support economic development efforts as they provide accessible and efficient connections between many key destinations such as residences, schools, parks, public transportation, workplaces, and retail. In this respect, the approach recognizes the importance of tying EBURD to neighboring commercial, residential, and activity centers throughout the community. Research shows that Complete Streets can bolster the economy, increase property values, and lead to job growth. Without a network of surrounding Complete Streets, it is difficult for employers to attract and retain employees. Street designs that promote multi-modal transportation options improve conditions for existing businesses and help to revitalize neighborhoods and attract new development.

The guiding principles identified in Chapter 1 stress the importance of improving access to the district by public transportation. While a number of transit routes pass through the district today, it is not a transit-friendly destination due largely to the poor quality of the pedestrian environment and lack of passenger facilities. Complete Streets are important for transit because the pedestrian network serves as the connective tissue of the transit system. Poorly planned access to bus stops can be a significant barrier for disabled travelers as well as a psychological barrier for other travelers.

### Complete Streets Design

The following objectives should be kept in mind when designing Complete Streets:

- Accommodate all modes of travel on local, collector, and arterial streets or in specific districts.
- Implement flexible level of service (LOS) policy that allows consideration of a variety of transportation goals. This may be more challenging on arterial streets such as 1st, 4th, and 6th Avenues N, which serve a key role in moving vehicles through the district between other parts of Billings. However, most other district streets are for local circulation and making short connections; their future success should not be measured by traditional traffic LOS standards, but by their ability to catalyze and support new development in the district.
- Create flexible roadway design options based on land use context and modal function. Fairly specific street design standards are developed for EBURD; however, as the district develops, these should be considered design guidelines and serve as a starting point.
- Flexible lane width options based on land use context and modal function. Close coordination with City Public Works and Fire Departments is recommended.

### Green Streets

The Green Streets approach is a method of street design that seeks to incorporate the street into a larger “green” infrastructure and adopts a watershed approach to improving the region’s water quality. A key component of this approach involves the design

of innovative stormwater treatments within the street right-of-way, which minimize the amount of water that travels directly to streams and rivers and blends with the aesthetics of the community. This approach also uses street tree coverage for stormwater interception as well as temperature mitigation and air quality improvement. While the term “Green Street” connotes a lush, wet environment, it can be applied in arid climates as well using native vegetation and tailored practices.

The Green Streets approach complements the development of multi-modal streets and can be compatible with the Complete Streets model. Both involve rethinking the way that streets function to incorporate a variety of uses, promote connectivity, and require more integrated decision making. Likewise, they require rethinking the conventional street hierarchy and functional classification system.

The purpose of Green Streets is to :

- **Maintain and restore natural processes:** Green Streets address shortcomings of streets that were designed for automobiles only. This approach considers the impact of streets on stormwater filtration, stream corridors, tree canopy coverage, and the life of nearby communities.
- **Conserve, protect, and restore habitat quantity and quality:** Protection and enhancement of natural resources improve habitat for wildlife and have a significant effect on quality of life for people.
- **Improve water quality:** New development, including roads, must reduce impervious surfaces, allowing rain to infiltrate as near as possible to where it falls (“ubiquitous infiltration”).

- **Provide permittable, cost-effective solutions:** Green Streets and infrastructure design solutions should be permittable and cost-effective in terms of initial construction, maintenance, and long-term replacement.
- **Foster unique and attractive streetscapes that protect and enhance neighborhood livability:** A streetscape design with multiple functions that incorporates the natural elements in urban landscapes can create a unique identity for a community. There are opportunities to incorporate public art into stormwater treatments.

At the same time, the unique geography and economy of this district require that attention be paid to the need for through-district travel, as well as the distinct needs of the manufacturing, agricultural, industrial, and hospitality businesses in the area. Specific actions include:

- Retain sufficient capacity for east-west traffic connections.
- Maintain large truck access and circulation.
- Connect Downtown through the district to MetraPark.
- Connect the district to adjacent bicycle trail networks.
- Create trailer storage within the district.

### Implementation Challenges

Billings has a history of incremental redevelopment of streets, utilities, and walks. This approach makes it more challenging to implement Green and Complete Street concepts. The plan recommends reallocation of right-of-way and complete redevelopment of 2nd Avenue as the most complete and multi-modal street. The District

and City should look for funds or design new policies to facilitate full-scale implementation of Complete Street concepts in this corridor. Other corridors should place priority focus on pedestrian connectivity and stormwater management. A corridor-by-corridor assessment of incremental retrofit may be required if reconstruction programs and funding are not available for constructing in minimum one-block increments.

### Bike Paths

The first non-motorized transportation plan for Billings was adopted in 1995. Over the past ten years, the community built several miles of attractive pathways and trails including a multiple use path along the Yellowstone River. The Heritage Trail Plan recommends extension of the trail into Downtown, a concept that has been strongly supported throughout the EBURD planning process. The proposed alignment is for the trail to follow the Yegen Drain from the Yellowstone River to N 15th Street, where the trail will cross under the rail and run parallel to the tracks on the north side. Assuming that right-of-way can be acquired and safe street and rail crossings developed, a sidewalk will run north from N 20th Street following the alignment of the active rail spur west to the current site of City offices. A very preliminary estimate of costs has been developed. Construction and engineering are estimated to cost \$2.8 million. Assuming \$4 per square foot of land, the land value and acquisition costs would be \$1.2 million, for a total project cost of \$4 million. The rail underpass should be developed in coordination with storm drainage improvements or improvements to the N 13th Street underpass. A more complete cost and feasibility study should be prepared.

### Infrastructure

As described in Chapter 2, the EBURD is plagued by a stormwater system that is undersized and in places non-

existent. Addressing these problems requires a series of improvements throughout the district and beyond, as illustrated in Figure 3.3-6 Stormwater System.

The first place to start with any stormwater system is uphill. The EBURD actually drains much of the hillsides to the north and west of the district. Much of this water enters the district at or around North Park. As such, the City of Billings should reshape some of the very flat ground in North Park and landscape it to slow the water as it enters the district during rainstorm events.

Several stormwater mains converge at the southeast end of the district; the water must go somewhere, preferably not directly into the Yellowstone River. The City of Billings should build a regional stormwater detention pond in the area north of Interstate-90 and the Yegen Drain.

To minimize demand on stormwater facilities downstream, it is also desirable to catch and slow stormwater within the neighborhoods, allowing it to percolate into the ground before reaching the underground stormwater system. A series of storm inlets and catch basins should be built in the public rights-of-way to capture some of the stormwater and allow it to percolate and infiltrate into the ground below, or to enter the piped system more slowly (Figure 3.3-7 Storm Inlet & Catch Basin). Additionally, parking lots and public rights-of-way should be landscaped with bioswales (a ditch that is engineered to move water slowly, allowing it to percolate/infiltrate) and indigenous plantings. This provides both natural irrigation and stormwater management (Figure 3.3-8 Landscaped Bioswales). The most efficient solution will result from an integrated plan that looks at stormwater management for parks, rights-of-way, and private land.



Figure 3.3-6 Stormwater System

### 3.4 REGULATORY STRATEGY

During the master plan public engagement process, community stakeholders and property owners were especially interested in maintaining land use flexibility within the neighborhood while improving upon the development character and aesthetics of the overall neighborhood. As such, the Team recommended regulating development by intensity and character rather than by use through the application of three new zones that would encourage quality development and neighborhood character while allowing for land use flexibility (refer to Figure 3.4-1 Proposed Zones).

The 500-acre study area is currently governed primarily by CI zoning (refer to Figure 2.2-3 Zoning) and requirements set forth in the Billings Montana City Code (BMCC). This zone allows tremendous land use flexibility, except for restrictions on residential development. While single-family housing is permitted under special review, a rezone would be required to achieve mixed-use residential development. As identified during the public process and articulated in the 2006 Urban Renewal Plan, "housing should be a part of the [District] but should be configured and designed in a way that better addresses... surrounding functions." For livability and health purposes, the Team recognized that residential uses should be limited in areas where heavy manufacturing is underway and at the same time, mixed-use residential/office/light industrial can co-locate. A "form-based" zoning code and performance standards were suggested to address the intensity rather than the use of development, livability standards for various land uses, and the character of the public and private realm. Table 3.4-1 provides an overview of these features.

A Form-Based Code (FBC) is a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form, with a lesser focus on land use, through City or County

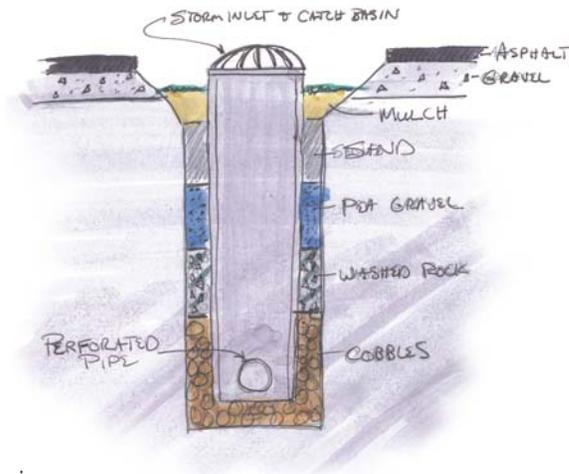


Figure 3.3-7 Storm Inlet & Catch Basin

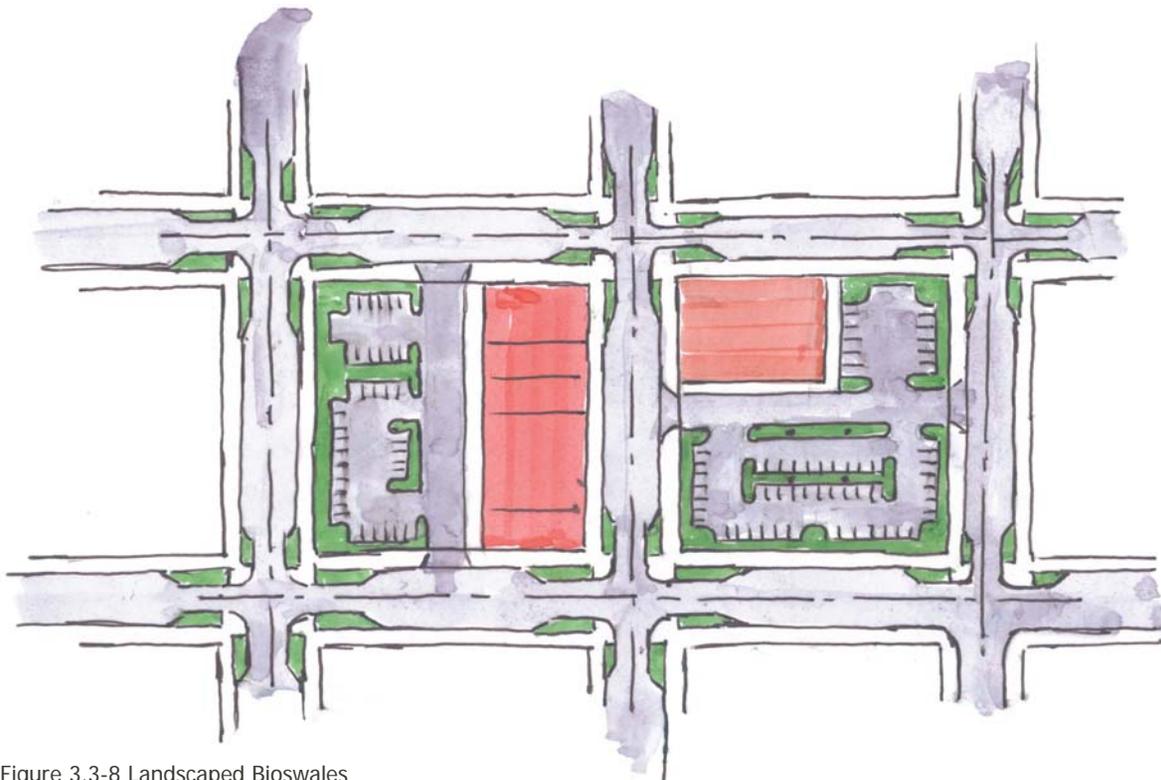


Figure 3.3-8 Landscaped Bioswales

	Zone 1: Mixed-Use Livability	Zone 2: Industrial Sanctuary	Zone 3: Exposition Gateway
Common Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows land use flexibility</li> <li>• Encourages livability and district character</li> <li>• Provides incentives for redevelopment and investment</li> <li>• Encourages green industries, buildings, and healthy environments</li> <li>• Provides predictability in permitting; streamlines regulatory process</li> </ul>		
Variations	Protects livability of residential areas while also allowing industry use (provides noise, air, and parking standards for new development)	Protects manufacturing uses (provides noise, air, and parking standards appropriate for industrial use)	Protects gateway image of the City of Billings (adopts process for Planned Unit Development)
	Provides incentives for compact development and public amenities	Provides incentives for manufacturing and heavy industry associated with green industries (e.g. recycling hub)	Provides incentives land assembly and public amenities

Table 3.4-1 Overview Features of Proposed Zones

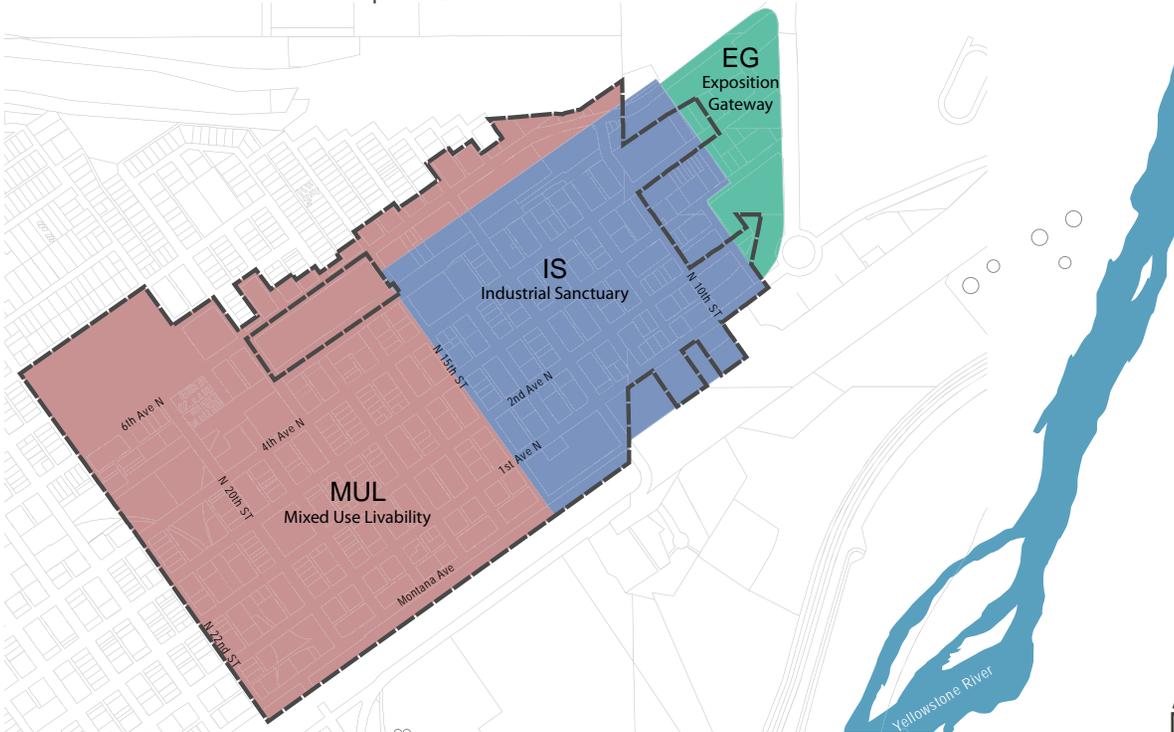


Figure 3.4-1 Proposed Zones

regulations. Non-professionals find FBCs easier to use than conventional zoning documents because they are much shorter, more concise, and organized for visual access and readability. This feature makes it easier for nonplanners to determine whether compliance has been achieved.

Depending upon the extent of direction provided by FBCs, the need for design guidelines is significantly reduced or potentially nullified. Design guidelines can be difficult to apply consistently, offer too much room for subjective interpretation, and can be difficult to enforce. They also require less oversight by discretionary review bodies, fostering a less politicized planning process that could deliver huge savings in time and money and reduce the risk of takings challenges.

### 3.5 INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME

The EBURD is a big district, there is significant competition for development from the west end of town and from the adjacent Central Business District, and Billings' overall growth rate is expected to remain at a modest 1% per year on average. Together, these factors mean that development in the EBURD will be incremental over a long time. The development concept illustrated in Figure 3.3-1 will take decades to realize. Nevertheless, EBURD leadership needs to have a clear grasp of the development concept and its urban design, transportation, and infrastructure objectives to ensure that each opportunity or catalytic development project builds on the last, bringing the district over time toward the overall vision of an economically and culturally vibrant neighborhood, providing multi-faceted opportunities for residents and serving as a gateway to the community and the river.

Figure 3.5-1: Incremental Development illustrates how development might proceed over time in a representative portion of the EBURD. The point here is not to predict exactly what will get built when, but to show that buildings are oriented toward key streets, entry locations favor priority main streets, and how street improvements could evolve. At the same time, public sector investments into priority streetscapes should be developed in similar incremental fashion as funds become available. In this way, one investment will build on the last, ultimately creating a whole that is much more cohesive than just the sum of arbitrary and piecemeal developments.

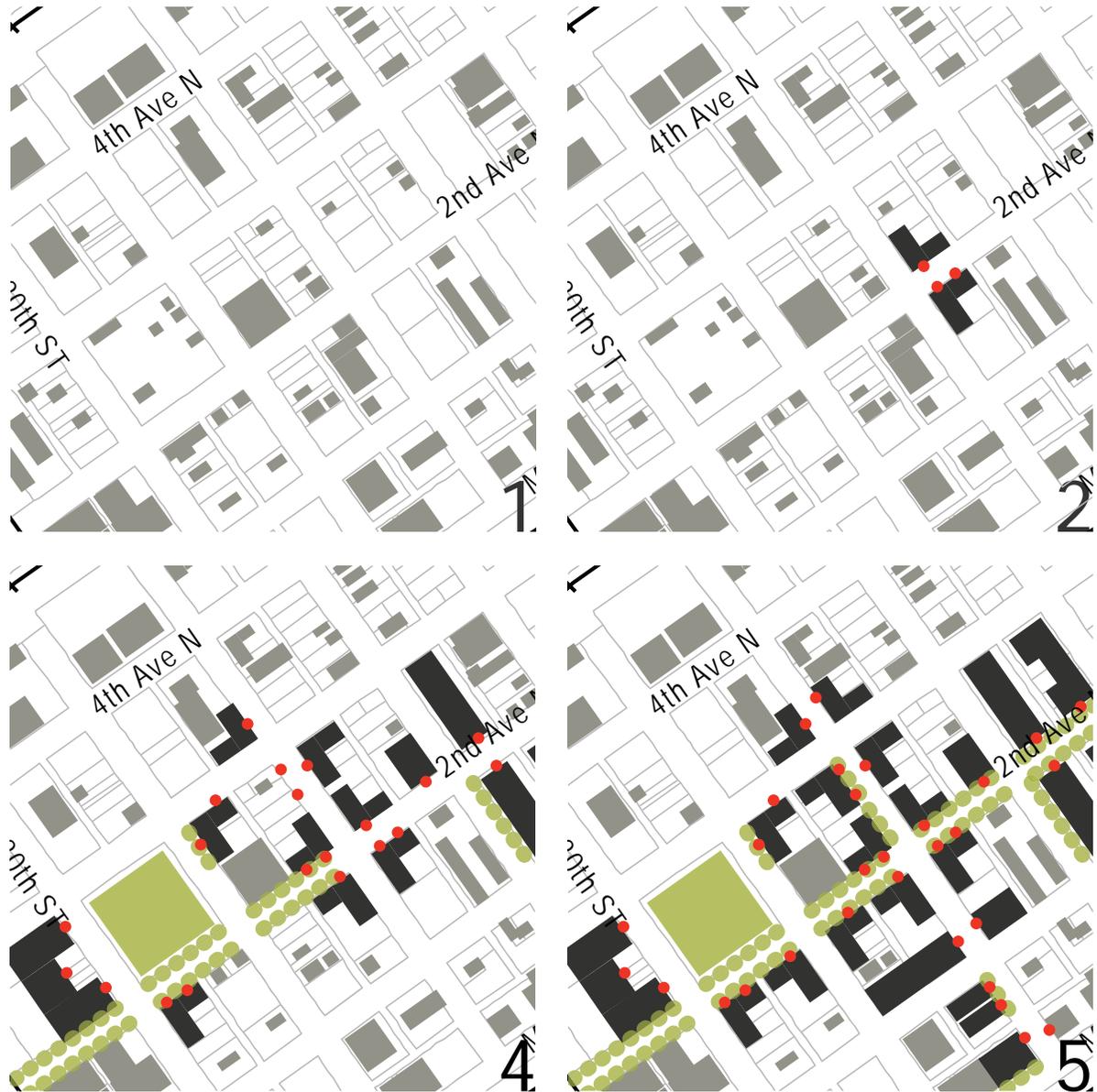


Figure 3.5-1 Incremental Development

