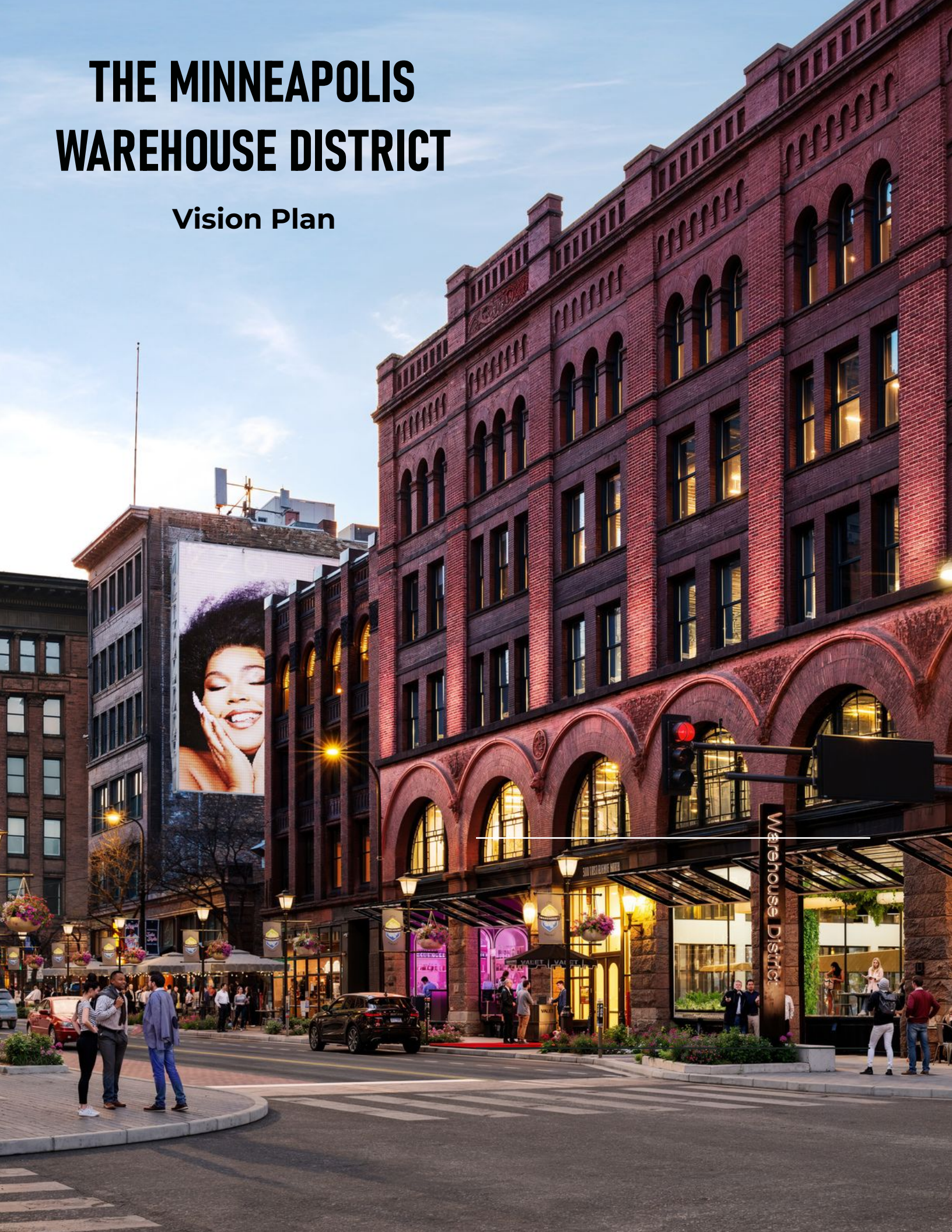


# THE MINNEAPOLIS WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

## Vision Plan



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# Introduction

## *Building a Vision for the Warehouse District Public Realm*

The Minneapolis Warehouse District is uniquely positioned to transform into a connected, vibrant neighborhood of urban density, regional attractions, and distinct local amenities. With its historic character, proximity to major venues like Target Center and Target Field, access to the regional transportation hub at Target Field Station, and rich cultural heritage, the Warehouse District holds enormous potential — yet development has stalled, the public realm is disconnected, and its identity has been lost between downtown and the North Loop.

The public realm encompasses streets, sidewalks, open spaces, alleys, parks, plazas, and all publicly accessible areas. Enhancing it is essential for four interconnected reasons:

**Heritage Preservation & Identity** — Celebrating the Warehouse District's rich industrial history through design elements that honor its past, including repurposed warehouses and industrial artifacts in public art.

**Social Interaction & Community Cohesion** — Creating gathering spaces where people can build connections and foster belonging.

**Economic Vitality & Livability** — Attractive streetscapes and vibrant programming drive economic activity and support local commerce.

**Sustainable Urban Development** — Prioritizing walkability, green infrastructure, and public transportation to reduce car dependence and promote healthier lifestyles.

Revitalization requires strategic connections between neighborhoods, establishing community gathering spaces, developing an undeniably walkable character, and overcoming community barriers while increasing public safety.



# Framework

## Vision Statement

To create a dynamic, people-centered public realm in the Minneapolis Warehouse District that balances historic character with forward-thinking design, fostering an inclusive and thriving community through pedestrian streets, gathering spaces, activation, branding, and seamless connectivity.

## Guiding Principles

### Flexibility

Design adaptable spaces that can accommodate diverse uses throughout the year, ensuring vibrancy in all seasons and adaptability to future needs.

### Social Interaction

Prioritize spaces that encourage human connection and celebrate community, with amenities that appeal to diverse groups and foster cultural expression.

### Connective

Ensure the Warehouse District is seamlessly connected to surrounding neighborhoods, transit hubs, and key destinations through pedestrian and multimodal networks.

### Sustainable

Incorporate green infrastructure, energy-efficient designs, and climate-responsive solutions to promote ecological health and resilience.

### Safe

Use design interventions and programming to create spaces that feel welcoming, secure, and comfortable for all users, day and night.

### Attractive

Maintain the Warehouse District's unique character while introducing innovative design elements that enhance its visual appeal and brand identity.

### Accessible

Design for universal access, ensuring physical, social, and economic inclusion for individuals of all abilities and backgrounds.

### Inclusive

Reflect the diversity of the community in design, programming, and branding, creating spaces that are welcoming for everyone



## Pedestrian Focused Streets

We can incorporate strategies such as widening sidewalks, installing street furniture (such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles), planting trees and greenery, and improving lighting to create a more welcoming and pedestrian-friendly environment.



## Gathering Spaces

The focus on the public realm gathering spaces should explore strategies to create inviting, accessible, and multifunctional spaces that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.



## Activation

The Public Realm can be activated through permanent, temporary or seasonal interventions, such as pop-up markets, art installations, ice skating, food truck gatherings, and outdoor performances.



## Branding

Public realm design is an integral part of a city or town's identity and – when done well – can create safer, more cohesive communities. Signage directly impacts how visitors experience public spaces and wayfinding is essential for navigating city streets and sites.



## Connectivity

The public realm is made up of spaces that are open and accessible to everyone, such as streets, parks, and public plazas. Connectivity in the public realm can help people travel to and from destinations safely and effectively.

## Pedestrian Focused Streets

### Streetscape Enhancements

One aspect of improving the public realm involves streetscape enhancements focused on the pedestrian environment. We can incorporate strategies such as widening sidewalks, installing street furniture (such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles), planting trees and greenery, and improving lighting to create a more welcoming and pedestrian-friendly environment. These enhancements not only improve the aesthetics of the streets but also contribute to safety and comfort for pedestrians. Some of the design initiatives we considered for First Avenue included the following:

- Widening the Pedestrian Space
- Maintain metered parking wherever possible
- Add outdoor seating dining wherever possible
- Add graphics / art / wayfinding
- Add trees & landscape
- Enhance lighting and security

### First Avenue Design Initiatives

Public Works is reconstructing half a mile of 1st Avenue N, between Washington Ave and 8th St N. The project will improve the right-of-way for all people in all the ways they move around. Some of the project goals are to build and improve:

wide, accessible sidewalks and crossings  
green storm water infrastructure  
lighting and public art  
active public spaces  
wayfinding and signage



## Gathering Spaces

### Gathering Spaces

Open space, alleys, parks and plazas play a crucial role in providing spaces for recreation, relaxation, and community gatherings. We explore opportunities to enhance existing parks or create new ones within the Warehouse District. This might involve adding amenities such as playgrounds, dog parks, seating areas, water features, and event spaces.

Design considerations could include incorporating elements that reflect the district's industrial heritage while also providing opportunities for cultural programming and public art installations.

Overall, the focus on the public realm gathering spaces should explore strategies to create inviting, accessible, and multifunctional spaces that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

### Warehouse District Live (WDL)

WDL was implemented along First Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets as a proactive effort to address disruptive late-night activity while fostering a more positive, multigenerational environment. By combining enhanced safety personnel and strategies with curated programming—including selective live entertainment, interactive activities, and temporary pickleball courts—the initiative helped calm the corridor and shift its overall character toward a more welcoming and engaging public realm.

While future funding remains uncertain, WDL demonstrated a compelling model for activating this stretch of First Avenue. As the corridor continues to evolve, there is a clear opportunity to build on this momentum through coordinated seasonal programming and special events, particularly during the summer months as the street is further repurposed.

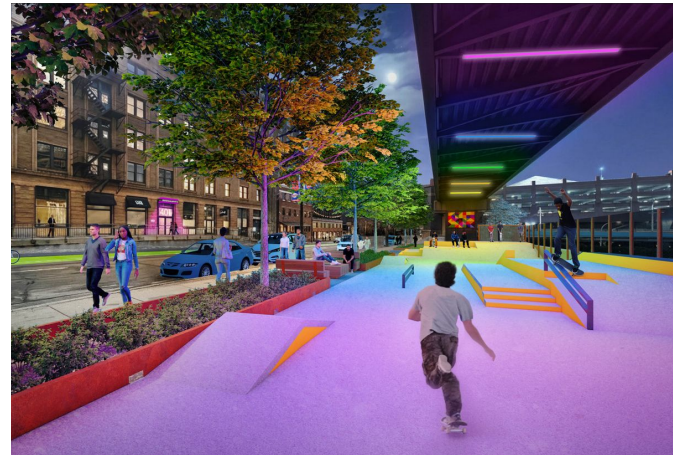


### Breakroom Skate Park

A multi-use pocket park at 2nd Avenue North and North 4th Street — adjacent to Target Center and Target Field.

This common access point for millions of visitors sits within a dense network of office buildings and a growing residential community.

Features include a skatepark, meeting and eating places, art installations, enhanced lighting, and stormwater management infrastructure.



### Ramp C Barking Lot

As the Warehouse District develops into a residential neighborhood, a dog park becomes essential.

Near-term plans include a relief area at 2nd Avenue and North 3rd Street adjacent to Ramp C, with the ramp opening to create a covered indoor area with a coffee bar.

Long-term plans envision the top of Ramp C as a larger dog park facility with shelters, restrooms, bar/restaurant, and event space — a district-wide and downtown destination.



### Surface Lot Repurpose

Parking lots and vacant spaces are targeted for transformation through both temporary and permanent programming from pop-up markets and live entertainment in the near term to permanent mixed-use development longer term.

These spaces represent immediate opportunities to build momentum and demonstrate the district's potential.



### Alley Districts

Alleys expand the public realm, prioritizing pedestrians and increasing safety. Themed alley districts reflect block character and adjacent uses:

Entertainment: Beer gardens, concerts, movies, game day activation.

Food: Outdoor dining, food festivals, pop-up vendors, food halls.

Fashion: Pop-up craft events, fashion shows, distinct shopping.

Art: Interactive art, murals, performance art, galleries.

Park & Recreation: Greenspace, sport courts, climbing, dog run.

Seasonal: Holiday themes, winter markets, light shows, sauna village.

The long-term Alley PARK Concept envisions repositioning buildings and redeveloping parking to create a residential neighborhood with alleys as the neighborhood park including sport courts, stage performance areas, first-floor activation, plazas, and greenspace.



# Activation

## Programming the Public Realm

The Public Realm can be activated through permanent, temporary or seasonal interventions, such as pop-up markets, art installations, ice skating, food truck gatherings, outdoor dining, and outdoor performances.

These initiatives not only bring vibrancy and excitement to the Warehouse District but also provide opportunities for local businesses, artists, and performers to showcase their talents and engage with the community.

A variety of activation will attract a variety of people and keep them coming back to experience all the Warehouse District has to offer.

Larger concerts, sporting events and seasonal activities should be embraced as unique attractions in the Warehouse District and theme based programming can build upon their popularity.

It will be important to build upon Minneapolis as a winter city and provide programming the embraces year round activation.

Activation through permanent, temporary, and seasonal interventions brings the public realm to life. The programming strategy operates at three levels:

**Daily Programming:** Fitness classes, food trucks, art installations, and interactive experiences

**Event Hubs:** Signature annual events — art walks, music festivals, holiday markets, and cultural celebrations

**Partnerships:** Collaboration with local businesses, artists, sports teams and community organizations for authentic programming



## Alley and Space Activation

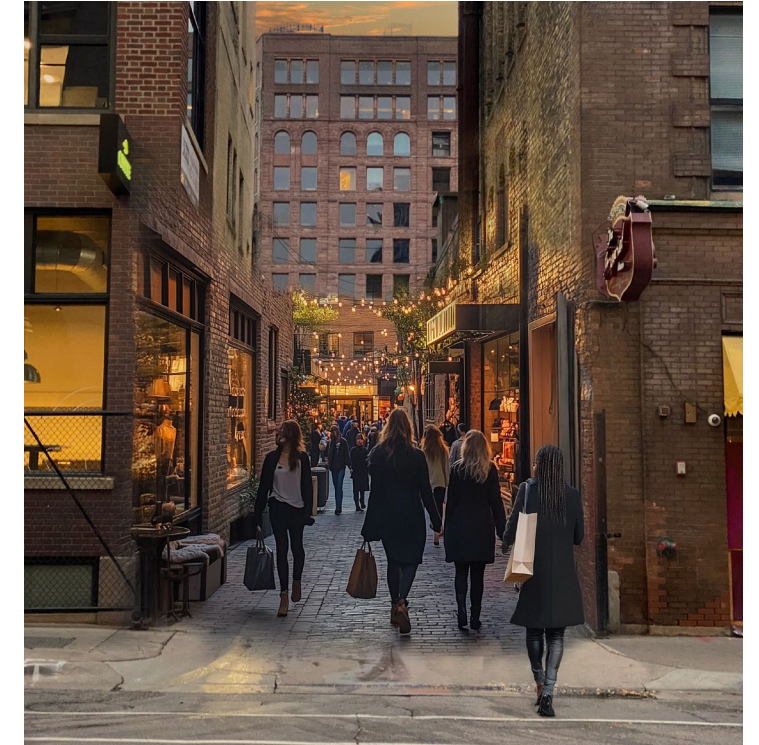
Year round programming is important to successful activation of the Warehouse District. Each themed alley features distinct programming:

Entertainment (beer gardens, concerts, game day);

Food (outdoor dining, pop-up vendors);  
Fashion (craft events, shopping);

Art District (interactive art, sculptural canopies, murals);

Seasonal (holiday themes, winter markets, sauna villages). Building upon Minneapolis's identity as a winter city, programming embraces year-round activation including heated areas, light installations, and seasonal markets.



# Branding

## Signage and Wayfinding

A cohesive branding strategy using signage, wayfinding, and consistent design elements reflects the Warehouse District's character. Key components include:

Identity Creation: A unified brand and logo for the Warehouse District

Gateway Signage: Identifying key entry points to the Warehouse District and key areas within

Wayfinding System: Orientation signage and visitor information at key decision points

Lighting Design: Ambient and artistic lighting to enhance safety and extend evening use

Storytelling: Plaques, murals, and interactive exhibits sharing Warehouse District history

## Digital Billboards

Digital billboards on tops of buildings and walls, murals on solid surfaces, and digital projections for large-scale images and color create visual impact district-wide.

Billboards and projections are themed for events and celebrations, creating selfie-moment opportunities.

A district-wide map identifies key billboard and digital projection locations primarily along 1st Avenue, Hennepin Avenue, and Washington Avenue corridors.



# Connectivity

## Connecting People to Places

It is important to ensure that the public space network is well connected and easy to navigate for people walking and cycling.

- Design streets, sidewalks and walkways to encourage a walking culture.
- Provide more room to the pedestrian in the streetscape.
- Improve the street crossing experience by prioritizing people moving across intersections.
- Provide more direct and intuitive connections to the river from the Warehouse District and to the North Loop neighborhood.
- Provide a wayfinding system that includes signage, landmarks and other cues to improve connectivity.

### Key connectivity initiatives include:

**The Green Mile Corridor:** A mile-long pedestrian green corridor from Target Field/Target Center to US Bank Stadium along 5th Street, converting one traffic lane to a pedestrian corridor.

**District Internal Movement:** Enhanced pedestrian movement for easy, safe circulation throughout the Warehouse District

**North Loop Connection:** Enhanced pedestrian connections over the rail line

**Guided Tours:** Guided and self-guided tours of the Warehouse District

**Digital Parking Wayfinding:** Live digital wayfinding and signage for parking access



# New Construction and Repurposing

## Infill and Conversion

There are many opportunities to develop existing parking lots and vacant lots in the district. But there is also the opportunity to reposition existing commercial office space into residential.

Historic districts can make it difficult to reposition buildings, but an increase in residential population will increase the viability of the Warehouse District long term.

- Conversion of existing commercial space into residential.
- Infill open space with mixed use development.
- Develop space over the freeway.
- Activate the edges of the parking structures.
- Convert the SE building of Ramp B into a Minneapolis Grand Central Station regional mobility hub.
- Develop housing on top of Ramp B.
- Activate existing ground level storefronts.



## Top of Ramps

Building on the Air Rights Development Study (2014), the ABC ramps are structurally designed to support additional weight, unlocking significant rooftop potential:

- Ramp B Rooftop: Residential housing increasing Warehouse District population
- Ramp C Rooftop: Dog park with at-grade relief area and indoor dog café
- Ramp A Rooftop: Recreational greenspace — courts, mini fields, fitness stations

Additional uses include a downtown sports park, urban food plots, public/private plazas, outdoor movies, sporting events, concerts, playground space, and community events.

## Ramp Street Facade

Ground floors of parking structures are repurposed for micro-retail: commercial pop-ups, food and beverage stands, maker and artist spaces, merchandise shops, and seating/gathering areas.

Long-term facade transformation includes housing (artist lofts, workforce), restaurants, retail, artist studios, digital billboards, and office spaces.



# Implementation Roadmap

## Near-Term Opportunities (NOW)

The near-term urban design solutions for the Warehouse District could deliver quick wins and immediate actions that enhance public spaces, improve safety and accessibility, and activate vacant areas. This could include installing temporary art, street furniture, enhanced lighting, and improved pedestrian crossings. Vacant spaces could be utilized for pop-up markets and events, infusing the area with vibrancy and energy. Pilot programs may explore innovative ideas like car-free zones and shared streets, while community-driven initiatives could foster neighborhood beautification and greater community engagement, setting the stage for long-term success.

Through the stakeholder engagement, the following tasks and goals have been identified as priorities:

- Safety and Infrastructure
  - Implement a safety plan
  - Implement and engage a Night Mayor
  - Build/Convert so that a safety plan can work
  - Traffic study on 1st and 2nd Avenue
- Identity and Promotion
  - Identify district to create potential incentives
  - Temporary branding and marketing efforts to promote the Warehouse District
  - Minnesota Mainstreet involvement

- Generate strong idea/identity that people can get behind
- Architectural and Design Guidelines
  - Establish guidelines around architecture
  - Temporary wayfinding solutions that identify the Warehouse District
  - More art/murals to reflect the character of the Warehouse District
- Activation and Public Spaces
  - Public/private activated space (events + activation)
  - Activate surface lots and vacant storefronts
  - Continue and expand WDL
  - Provide a Dog park
  - Create opportunities for Walk up windows
  - Focus on Side street connections from North Loop
  - Alleyway popup events/ gatherings
  - Utilize Shipping containers as a pop up concept
- Food and Retail
  - Provide opportunities for Kiosks, food trucks, and popups
  - Create more opportunities for Late night food vs brick/mortar
- Community Engagement and Support
  - Coordinate Volunteers at gateways
  - Engage Guide to Minnesota



## Mid-Term Opportunities (1-5 Years)

The mid-term urban design solutions for the Warehouse District offer the potential for transformative changes through strategic infrastructure improvements, redevelopment, and economic strengthening. Upgrading transportation networks, such as enhancing public transit connections, could significantly improve mobility, while investing in utilities and green infrastructure might foster sustainable growth. The repurposing of historic buildings into mixed-use developments and creative spaces presents opportunities for adaptive reuse and the adoption of sustainable practices, like green roofs and energy-efficient designs. By supporting local businesses with grants and incubators and attracting new investments through developer incentives, the Warehouse District could see a revitalized economy and a thriving community.

Through the stakeholder engagement, the following tasks and goals have been identified as priorities:

- **Tenant Curation and Diversity**
  - Curate tenants on 1st between Washington and 5th
  - Focus on diversity and motivated people
- **Infrastructure and Flexibility**
  - 1st Ave Reconstruction Design - emphasize focus on pedestrian / plaza
  - I-94 Viaduct study
  - Activate garage/ramp frontages

and rooftops where feasible  
(Ramps A, B, C)

- **Activation and Entertainment**
  - Expand WDL
  - Affordable entertainment
  - Family-friendly destinations
  - Food truck plaza
  - Alley activation and subdistrict creation
  - Heated Winter Activation
- **Subdistrict Creation**
  - Creation of subdistricts: Fashion, Food, Manufacturing, Historic
- **Art, Culture, and Public Spaces**
  - Expand art and culture
  - Connective and consistent within the Warehouse District
  - Geocaching/scavenger hunts
- **Signage and Wayfinding**
  - Iconic identity to the Warehouse District
  - Emphasis on pedestrian access
- **Housing and Community**
  - Target middle-market housing
  - Health and wellness - community
- **Property Ownership and Incentives**
  - Incentivize/engage property owners' policy
  - Target inactive building owners with potential penalties
  - TIF or other policies for conversions



## Long-Term Opportunities (5+ Years)

The long-term urban design solutions for the Warehouse District could lead to comprehensive redevelopment and sustainable growth, with a focus on resilience and cultural integration. Large-scale projects, such as transit-oriented developments, have the potential to create iconic public spaces like parks and plazas that define the Warehouse District. Additionally, fostering a sense of community through cultural events, sporting events, and public art, alongside ensuring equity and inclusivity in development with affordable housing and community centers, could enhance the Warehouse District's social fabric and make it a vibrant, inclusive place for all.

Through the stakeholder engagement, the following tasks and goals have been identified as priorities:

- **Identity and Experience**
  - Create positive experiential memories
  - Develop icons for the Warehouse District
  - Build off existing anchor tenants
  - Create new anchors (housing, redevelopment, youth)
  - Provide programming to turn into a safe and popular area
  - Bring in diversity with street art and murals
- **Connectivity and Public Spaces**
  - Connect the Warehouse District - North Loop, River, Downtown East

- Vision for meaningful park and plaza space
- Family-oriented development (e.g., music museum, visitor center)
- Increase focus on greenspace, parks, and public plazas
- More / enhanced lighting.
- Complete streets
- **Development and Infrastructure**
  - Indoor food hall concept
  - Development priority to connect to North Loop.
  - Target Center Redevelopment / Relocation

## A Call to Action

The Warehouse District's transformation is achievable through coordinated effort among property owners, city officials, community organizations, and stakeholders.

By starting with immediate quick wins and building toward the long-term vision, Minneapolis can create a truly dynamic, people-centered public realm that celebrates its heritage while embracing its future. The time to act is now.



# Acknowledgments & Appreciation

The Warehouse District Vision Plan reflects a shared commitment to reimagining one of Minneapolis's most important corridors. It is the product of collaboration among individuals and organizations who believe deeply in the future of our city and its potential for renewal.

## Project Leadership & Design Collaboration

We extend our sincere gratitude to the team at Confluence – Landscape Architects. Their thoughtful design leadership and creative vision have been instrumental in shaping a bold yet achievable framework for a revitalized Warehouse District.

## Minneapolis Renaissance Coalition

This effort has been guided by the leadership and dedication of the Minneapolis Renaissance Coalition:

### Founder

Erin Fitzgerald

### Board of Directors

Dario Anselmo, President  
Kristin Anderson, Vice President  
Nancy Aleksuk, Treasurer  
Randy Larson, Marketing/ Banding committee  
Alyssa Carlson  
Nathan Evans, Skate Park committee chair  
Kylee Brisch  
Deane Espelding

### Past & Present Committee Chairs

Britton Jones, Dog Park committee  
Bob Lund, WD Committee

### Executive Coordinator

Joanne Kaufman

### Social Media Manager

Audrey Edwards

## City of Minneapolis

We appreciate the engagement and partnership of key public sector leaders who have helped inform and guide this work:

- Mayor Jacob Frey
- Council Member Michael Rainville, Ward 7
- Luke Hansen & Leoma Vandort, Public Works
- Erik Hansen, Meg McMahan & Shanna Sether, Community Planning & Economic Development
- Ben Johnson, Arts & Cultural Affairs
- Lisa Goodman, Director of Strategic Initiatives
- Kristina Anderson, Recreation Supervisor Downtown Parks, Mpls Parks & Recreation Board

Your collaboration is critical to aligning this vision with the city's broader goals and ensuring a path toward implementation.

## Community Members & Partner Organizations

We are grateful for the contributions and perspectives of engaged community members and partners:

- ULI Minnesota (TAP study on Warehouse District)
- Jake Halsne, Midwest Skateboarding Alliance
- R.T. Rybak, Minneapolis Foundation
- Adam Duininck, Mpls Downtown Council
- Ned Abdul, Swervo Development
- Jon Lanners, Onward Investors
- Kristi Oman, Kickernick Building
- Sarah Anderson, BOMA
- Mike Logan, Minneapolis Regional Chamber
- Melvin Tennant, Meet Minneapolis
- Heidi Swank, Rethos
- Cailin Rogers, Alta Via
- Mark Oyaas, Neerland Oyaas
- North Loop Neighborhood Association
- Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association

## Looking Ahead

Together, we are laying the foundation for a new chapter in Minneapolis—one defined by a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with activated public spaces, thoughtfully repurposed historic buildings, and a renewed identity as the city's entertainment heartbeat.

This vision is more than a plan—it is a call to action. Through continued collaboration, investment, and creativity, we have the opportunity to spark a true renaissance in the Warehouse District and create a destination that serves residents, businesses, and visitors for generations to come.

*Thank you for helping shape what comes next.*





