



## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Design Review Board

**From:** Angela Ruggeri, AICP, Senior Planner

**Date:** June 21, 2010

**Subject:** **DESIGN RESPONSE CONFERENCE #20**  
**TOUCHSTONE (PARKPLACE)**  
**FILE DRC09-00002**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Touchstone's proposal is for design review of a 1.8 million sq. ft. mixed-use project that includes 1.2 million sq. ft. of office space and an additional 300,000 sq. ft. of retail. Other uses include a hotel and athletic club.

The approved Master Plan has established the building and open space locations, access points and grid for the internal road system. The zoning specifies building heights, setbacks and other development parameters. The Design Review Board (DRB) is now in the process of working with the applicant on the design of the buildings and open spaces. The approved Design Guidelines for Parkplace will be used by the DRB to guide this process.

*\*\*Please bring your copy of the Master Plan and Design Guidelines for Parkplace to the meeting on 6/28/10. Updated drawings of Building E will be provided to the DRB by the applicant on Friday, 6/25/10.*

### **II. PREVIOUS DESIGN RESPONSE CONFERENCE**

At the June 7, 2010 meeting, The DRB continued their discussion of Building E. The following is a summary of their comments.

#### **Building E:**

Massing:

- Existing entrances to the pedestrian path/lobby (on both sides) still aren't well articulated.
- Materials palette is not diverse enough to articulate the massing proposed.

- In working on the two issues above, there might be an opportunity to break up the massing (for example, the building may feel more like two volumes if it is divided by an entry articulation).
- The mass on the south side needs to be stepped back above the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. This additional step back should be explored as a continuation/wrap-around of the landscaped terrace on the west side.

Interaction with the Peter Kirk Park:

- The DRB endorses the effort by the applicant to work with the Parks Board on landscaping and circulation within the park adjacent to the project to enhance connectivity.
- The DRB agrees with the idea of having street parking on the west as well as the east side of the north/south access road adjacent to the park.

Other required submittals:

- Elevations showing adjacent buildings (including the Emerald Building, Continental Plaza, Bungie building,, Teen Center and KPC both existing and what could be built there, etc.).
- The DRB reiterated their request for an East/West lobby section to explore the scale of the pedestrian connection through the building.
- Further development and information about building design at the pedestrian level – particularly on the west around the “foot” section of the building, but the entire building should be studied.
- Show the development of the shelters over the elevator and escalator. *The applicant has asked to wait to bring the details of these enclosures with the design of Building F due to their internal work plan.*
- The DRB encouraged sketches showing options rather than final detailed drawings of the massing.

Attachment: Letter from Kenneth Davidson

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June 16, 2010

VIA MESSENGER

City of Kirkland  
Design Review Board  
123 - 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033

RECEIVED  
JUN 17 2010

AM PM  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
BY \_\_\_\_\_

*Re: Build E of Parkplace Proposal*

Dear Board Members,

I work and live in Kirkland. I have been involved in the development of the Downtown Plan in Kirkland's Comprehensive Plan, including service on the Downtown Action Team appointed by the City. A long-standing value and goal of the Downtown Plan has been the creation and enhancement of pedestrian pathways and amenities to encourage travel on foot through and across the Downtown. Section 3.E of the Downtown Plan on Circulation mandates that pedestrian circulation be given equal priority to vehicular circulation around the Downtown.

The importance of pedestrian routes and amenities is summarized on page XV.D-17 of the Comprehensive Plan in these words:

Downtown Kirkland is a pedestrian precinct unlike virtually any other in the region.  
It is almost European in its scale and quality.

I attach other sections of the Comprehensive Plan which give mandate significant pedestrian amenities in any development and further define the vision for a pedestrian oriented Downtown.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies a major East-West pedestrian pathway which runs down Second Avenue, through the Continental Plaza, Emerald Building and Parkplace properties, through the Park and down Park Lane. (Sometimes referred to as the Park Walk Promenade in the Downtown Plan) See Figures MB-4 and MB-6 attached. That major pathway has operated for over 15 years on lighted public walkways, dedicated easements required in the development of the Emerald and Continental Plaza buildings and sidewalks through Parkplace.

Now Touchstone proposes to place its proposed Building E on top of that major pedestrian pathway. Instead of dividing the proposal into two buildings and allowing the Park Promenade to run a direct route between the buildings, Touchstone has proposed to run the pathway through the building. While they have shown you a lovely rendering of such a pathway through the building with a Starbucks and sidewalk tables, there is no legal guarantee that it will function in this way or be open for certain hours. For example, Building E could be leased to a

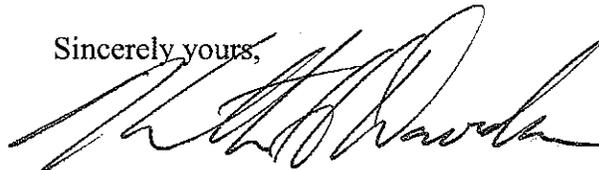
*DAVIDSON, CZEISLER & KILPATRICK**June 16, 2010**Page 2*

single tenant who has high security requirements and who allows nothing on the pathway but a security guard desk and keeps it open to the public only 40 hours per week. Thus, while the design for this pedestrian pathway should aspire to be an inviting and attractive public space for the continuation of the Park Promenade, the DRB should also require that the pedestrian pathway around the south end of the building be designed to the standard of a major pedestrian pathway, since it will be the route of the Park Walk Promenade for East-West travel when the building is closed. The last design presented showed a 7 foot sidewalk passing by a service bay. Interestingly, the sidewalk on the north side of the building is 11 feet wide and is not a primary pathway. Since the sidewalk around the south end of the building is a part of a major pedestrian pathway in both the Downtown Plan and the Parkplace design guidelines (see "Pedestrian Connections" on page MP-7 of the guidelines), it should be the 10 or 11 foot width of a major pedestrian path and designed with appropriate amenities.

The comments by Touchstone's architects that a usage survey of the Park Walk Promenade should be done to justify the concern the DRB expressed for a better design of this important pedestrian pathway misses the point on two accounts. First, the Park Walk Promenade is well used. My office is in the Emerald Building and I use it at least once a day and sometimes 2 or 3 times. I nearly always see other pedestrians on this pathway when I use it. The four office buildings at 520 through 610 Kirkland Way contain around 160,000 square feet. For the 600-700 workers in these buildings, the pedestrian pathway is the most direct route to the Kirkland transit center and shops and restaurants on Park Place and Central Way and the Park. It is also the most direct route to downtown for residents of the 5-story Watermark Apartments and of the condominiums east of Sixth Street.

Second, and more important, the continued improvement of this and other pedestrian pathways through the Downtown is a stated value and goal of the community. Just as the major improvement of the transit center now underway will encourage and promote more use of public transit, the major improvement of pedestrian pathways will enhance and encourage pedestrian circulation through the Downtown. The DRB was correct in requiring better designs of the segment of the Park Walk Promenade through and around Building E. I particularly encourage you to insist that the sidewalk around the south end of the building be wider and provide a more pedestrian friendly experience.

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth H. Davidson

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Enclosures

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### 3. DOWNTOWN PLAN

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regulations. New regulations could range from protecting the character of designated historic buildings to protecting the actual structure. Some form of preservation would provide continuity between the Downtown vision and its unique past.

#### *Public Views*

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***Important Downtown views are from the northern, southern, and eastern gateways.***

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A number of dramatic views exist in the Downtown and its immediate vicinity due to the hills, the valley, and the sloping land areas which form the bowl-like topography characterizing the City's center. One of the views most often associated with Downtown Kirkland is from NE 85th Street just west of Interstate 405. From this vantage point, the hills north and south of the core area form a frame for a sweeping view of Lake Washington in the distance and the Olympic mountain range beyond.

Another striking view, identified in Figure MB-4, is from the Market Street entry into Downtown. This approach is met with a view of the lake, Marina Park and its pavilion, and the City's shoreline. This view could be enhanced with redevelopment of the GTE site, where the existing massive building substantially diminishes this broad territorial view.

Where the Kirkland Avenue and 2nd Avenue South rights-of-way cross Lake Street and continue to Lake Washington, an unobstructed view of open water is visible to pedestrians and people traveling in vehicles. These views are very valuable in maintaining the visual connection and perception of public accessibility to the lake. These views should be kept free of obstruction.

#### *Gateways*

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***Topographic changes define gateways into the Downtown area.***

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The gateways into Downtown Kirkland are very clear and convey a distinct sense of entry. Two of the Downtown's three major gateways make use of a

change in topography to provide a visual entry into the area.

At the eastern boundary of the Downtown area, Central Way drops toward the lake, and the core area comes clearly into view. This gateway could be enhanced by an entry sign, similar to one located farther up the hill to the east, or some other distinctive structure or landscaping feature.

A second major gateway is the Downtown's northern entrance where Market Street slopes gradually down toward Marina Park. The historic buildings at 7th Avenue begin to form the visual impression of Downtown's character and identity, and the landscaped median adds to the boulevard feeling of this entryway. Some type of sign or other feature could be incorporated into the improvements to the Waverly site.

At the Downtown's southern border, the curve of Lake Street at about 3rd Avenue South provides a very clear gateway into the commercial core. It is at this point that the transition from residential to retail uses is distinctly felt. Here, also, is an opportunity to enhance this sense of entry by creation of literal gateposts, signs, or landscape materials.

#### *Pathways*

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***An extensive network of pedestrian pathways covers the Downtown area.***

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The size and scale of Downtown Kirkland make walking a convenient and attractive activity. An extensive network of pedestrian pathways covers the Downtown area, linking residential, recreational, and commercial areas. Downtown Kirkland is a pedestrian precinct unlike virtually any other in the region. It is almost European in its scale and quality.

The core of the shopping district, with its compact land uses, is particularly conducive to pedestrian traffic. Both sides of Lake Street, Park Lane, and Kirkland Avenue are major pedestrian routes. Many

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residents and visitors also traverse the land west of Lake Street to view and participate in water-oriented activities available there.

The Downtown area's major east/west pedestrian route links the lake with Peter Kirk Park, the Kirkland Parkplace shopping center, and areas to the east. For the most part, this route is a visually clear pathway, with diversity and nearby destinations contributing to its appeal to the pedestrian. Enhancement and improved definition of this important east-west pedestrian corridor would help link Parkplace with the rest of the shopping district.

Minor pedestrian routes link the residential areas north of Central Way and south of Kirkland Avenue. These linkages need to be strengthened in order to accommodate the residential and office populations walking from the Norkirk Neighborhood and core frames, respectively. Additional improvements, such as brick paver crosswalks, pedestrian safety islands, and signalization, are methods to strengthen these north-south linkages.

#### ***Enhancement of Downtown pedestrian routes should be a high-priority objective.***

Enhancement of the Downtown area's pedestrian routes should be a high-priority policy and design objective. For example, minor architectural features and attractive and informative signs should be used to identify public pathways. Public and private efforts to make pedestrian walkways more interesting, functional, convenient, and safe, should be strongly supported. Figure MB-4 highlights a number of projects proposed for this purpose. These projects are discussed in detail elsewhere in this text.

## D. PUBLIC FACILITIES

### **OPEN SPACE/PARKS**

Four major park sites are critical to the Downtown's feeling of openness and greenery. These parks weave a noncommercial leisure-time thread into the fabric of the area and provide a valuable amenity,

enhancing Downtown's appeal as a destination. Each of the major approaches to the Downtown is met with a park, with the Waverly site and Marina Park enhancing the northern entry, and Peter Kirk Park and Dave Brink Park augmenting the eastern and southern approaches. Physical improvements in and near these parks should strengthen their visual prominence and prevent view obstruction.

Marina Park and Peter Kirk Park in particular are well-used by families and recreational groups. Public facilities at these parks should continue to expand opportunities for residents, such as the installation of permanent street furniture and play equipment for children at Marina Park.

#### ***Pedestrian improvements should be made to improve connections between parks and nearby facilities.***

Downtown projects which are not directly related to the parks should continue to locate adjacent to the parks, and in some cases, should share access or parking. Impacts from projects, such as the tour boat dock at Marina Park and the METRO transit center at Peter Kirk Park, should be minimized. Efforts to provide continuity between these facilities and the parks through the use of consistent walkway materials, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities will help to reduce the appearance of a separation of uses at these locations.

The boat launch ramp which exists at Marina Park is an important amenity in the community. It should be retained until another more suitable location is found.

### **OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES**

City Hall and the Peter Kirk Park civic and cultural center add to the community atmosphere and civic presence in the Downtown area. The plan for Downtown developed in 1977 recommended that the City Hall facility be moved from its previous location in the core area to its present site overlooking the Downtown from the northern slope. In its new location, City Hall is close enough to Downtown to contribute workers to the retail and restaurant trade,

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as well as to provide a visually prominent and symbolic landmark when viewed from the Downtown.

***Public efforts to assist the Downtown business district should be continued.***

The City should help to foster economic vitality in the Downtown by working with the private sector and by encouraging independent efforts toward economic development by the private sector. Such assistance to the business community might include supporting efforts to establish local improvement or business improvement districts. This could take the form of seed money for preliminary studies and the dissemination of information.

Other public efforts to strengthen the Downtown business climate should include the continued promotion of public projects such as the tour boat dock, in addition to continued support for private projects such as the Lakeshore Plaza Boardwalk, which would help to implement public policy goals.

## E. CIRCULATION

### PEDESTRIAN

Pedestrian routes should have equal priority to vehicular routes in Downtown circulation.

Pedestrian amenities and routes should continue to be improved, and should be given equal priority with that of vehicular routes for circulation within the Downtown. Modifications to the street network and traffic patterns should not be allowed to disrupt Downtown pedestrian activity and circulation.

To be a truly successful walking environment, the core area of the Downtown must be safe, convenient, and pleasant for the pedestrian. Pedestrian safety would be increased greatly by reducing opportunities for conflicts with cars. The reprogramming of crosswalk signals to favor the pedestrian would discourage jaywalking and allow sufficient time for slower walkers to cross the street.

Convenience to the pedestrian will be enhanced by improving the directness and ease of pedestrian routes. "Shortcuts" between streets, or even between buildings, can link pedestrian routes over large distances where vehicles cannot circulate. Coordinated public directory signs and maps of walkways should be developed to clearly identify public pathways for the pedestrian.

***A system of overhead coverings should be considered to improve the quality of pedestrian walkways year-round.***

The pleasures of walking in the Downtown area would be enhanced by the installation of minor public improvements, such as street furniture (benches, planters, fountains, sculptures, special paving treatments), flower baskets, and coordinated banners and public art. The creation of a system of overhead coverings such as awnings, arcades, and marquees would provide protection to the pedestrian during inclement weather, allowing for pedestrian activity year-round. All of these features would add visual interest and vitality to the pedestrian environment.

Brick crosswalks have been installed at 3rd Street and Park Lane in conjunction with the METRO transit center facility. The expansion of the use of brick for crosswalks throughout the Downtown should be considered. In any case, additional restriping of crosswalks in the Downtown area should be actively pursued.

The establishment and improvement of pedestrian pathways between activity centers should be a high-priority policy objective. Major pedestrian routes within the Downtown area are identified in Figure MB-4. Major pathways include the extensive east-west "spine" or "Park Walk Promenade," which links the lake with points east of 6th Street and the shoreline public access trail.

The Downtown Master Plan also identifies other important pedestrian routes which provide north-south pedestrian access. Improvements to these pathways should be promoted, particularly at the

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intersection of 6th Street and Central Way. Elevated crosswalks should be considered among the alternatives reviewed for pedestrian access across Central Way. Disadvantages to elevated crosswalks which should be considered are potential view blockage and the loss of on-street pedestrian traffic.

The portion of the Park Walk Promenade spanning Peter Kirk Park was installed by the City during renovation of the park facilities. The walk serves the Peter Kirk Park civic and cultural center, as well as commercial areas to the east and west. This walkway should be expanded upon when the remaining land south of Kirkland Parkplace develops.

Figure MB-4 illustrates pedestrian system improvements for the two major routes which are intended to serve several purposes. These projects would improve the safety, convenience, and attractiveness of foot traffic in the Downtown, provide shelter from the weather, and create a unifying element highlighting the presence of a pedestrian linkage.

***A large public plaza should be constructed west of buildings on Lake Street to enhance the Downtown's lakefront setting (See Figure MB-4).***

The Lakeshore Plaza shown on the Downtown Master Plan envisions a large public plaza constructed over structured parking. Ideally, the plaza would be developed through public/private partnerships to provide a seamless connection between the Downtown and the lake. The plaza would be at the same grade as Lake Street and would provide visual and pedestrian access from a series of at-grade pedestrian connections from Central Way and Lake Street.

The Park Walk Promenade identified on the Downtown Master Plan should consist of a series of minor structures placed at prominent locations along the walkway in order to clearly identify the pathway throughout its length, as well as to provide some protection during wet weather. The plexiglas and metal "space frames" used at Mercer Island's Luther Burbank Park and at the Seattle Center are possible

design options for protective structures. The concrete and metal gateway feature where Parkplace abuts Peter Kirk Park is a good model for visual markers along the east-west pedestrian spine.

#### VEHICULAR

Automobiles and public transit are the modes of transportation which move people in and out of the Downtown, and often between the core area and the frame. Within the Downtown, pedestrian circulation should be given equal priority with vehicular circulation. A primary circulation goal should be to emphasize pedestrian circulation within the Downtown, while facilitating vehicle access into and out of the Downtown.

***Alternate traffic routes should be considered.***

Lake Street should be designated to function as a major pedestrian pathway. The objectives for land use and pedestrian circulation should be seriously considered during any plans for traffic and roadway improvements on Lake Washington Boulevard. The goal to discourage commuter traffic on the boulevard should not be viewed independently from the need to retain vehicle access for tourists, shoppers, and employees to the Downtown.

State Street should continue to serve as a major vehicular route, bringing shoppers and workers into the Downtown area. Sixth Street should be developed to accommodate additional vehicles. Future plans for Lake Street and Lake Washington Boulevard may include the diversion of cars from the Downtown area, and 6th Street would provide the most appropriate north/south alternative route. The existence of commercial development on this street renders it more appropriate than State Street to handle substantial commuter traffic.

***The use of public transportation to the Downtown should be encouraged.***

Third Street has been designed for the pedestrian and public transit user, with the METRO transit center

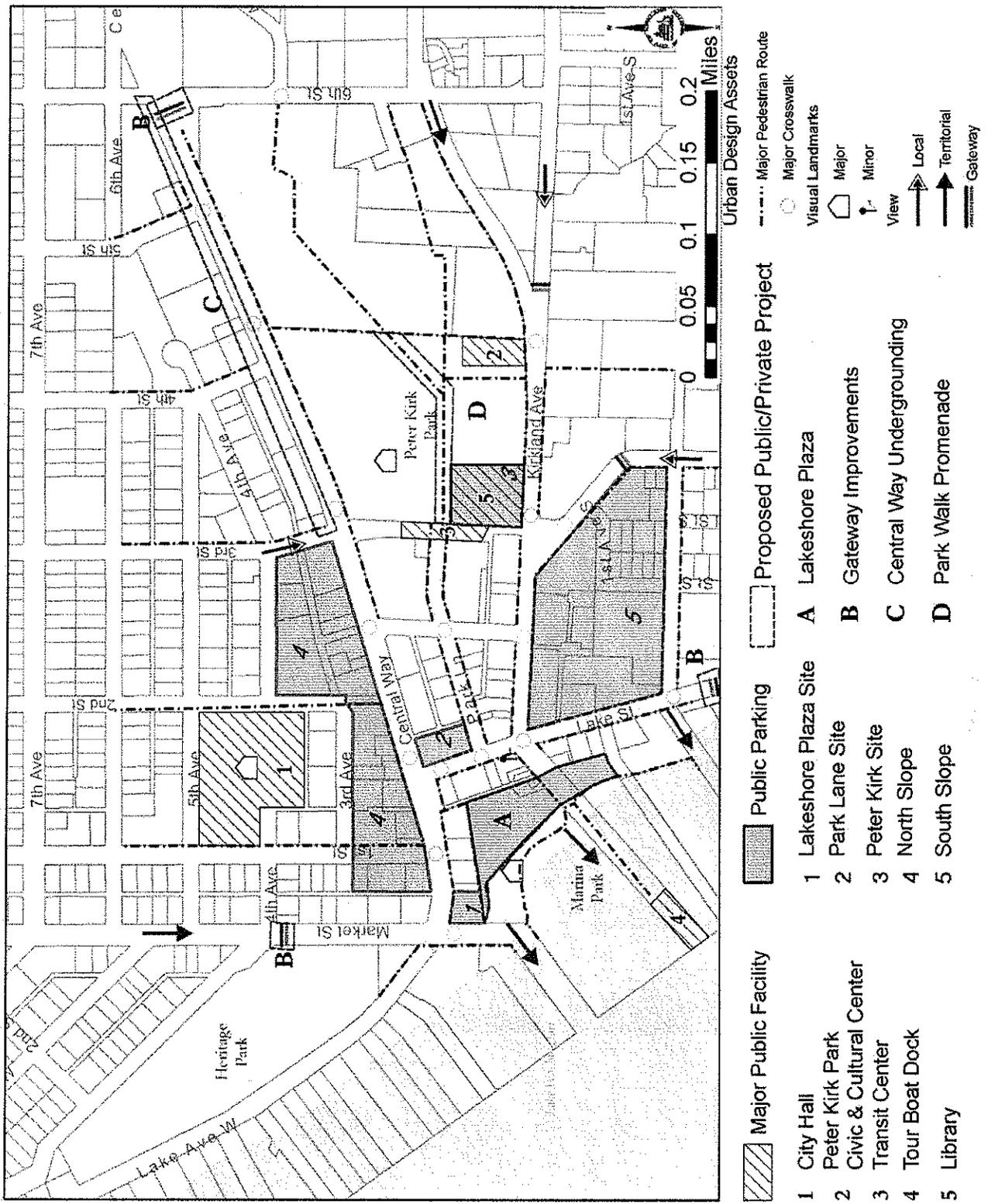


Figure MB-4: Downtown Master Plan

