

A City In Transition

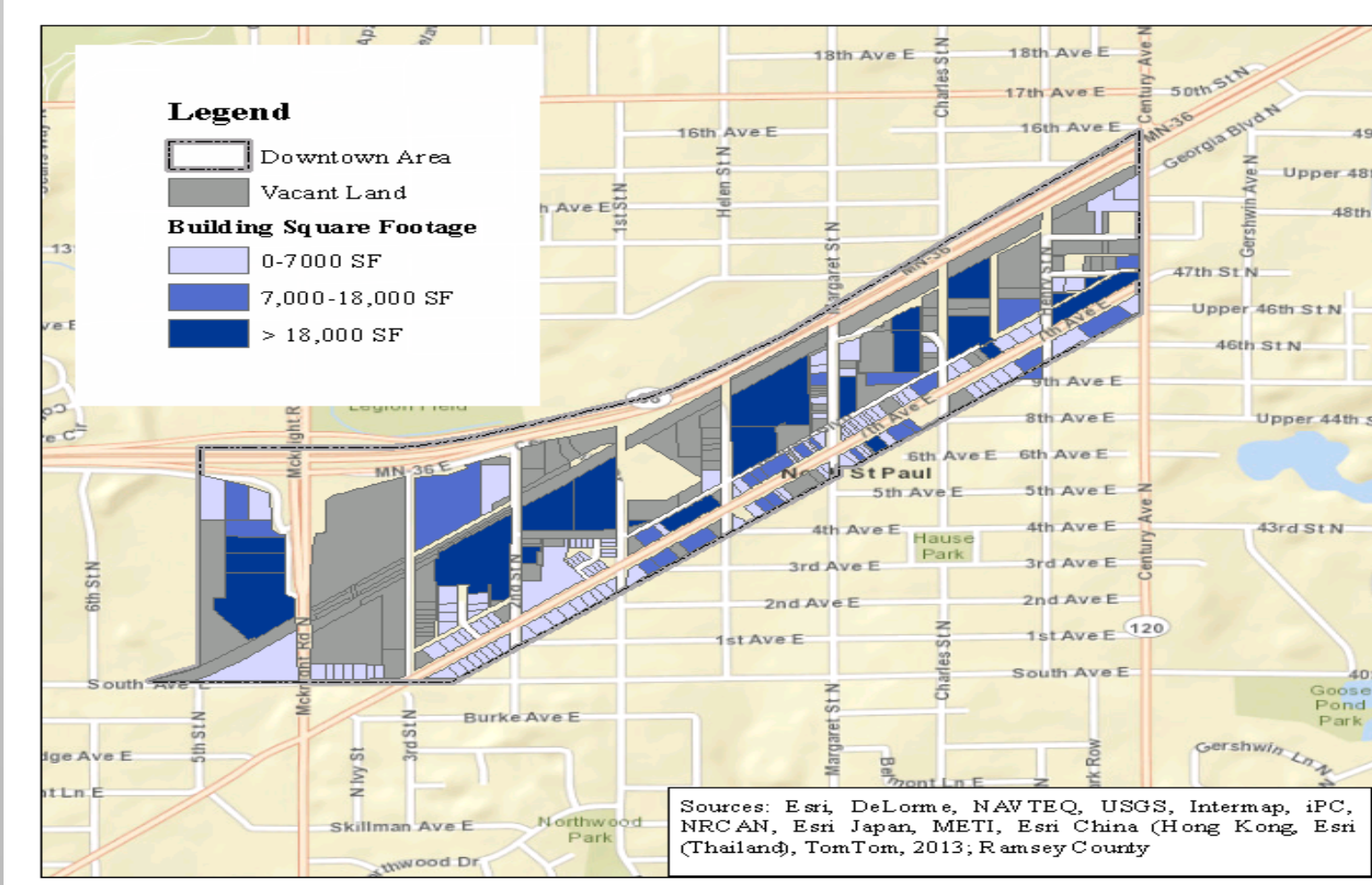
Retail Market Niche Analysis for Downtown North Saint Paul

Introduction

As a part of the redevelopment effort of Downtown North St. Paul (NSP), a team of students from the Couse PA 5511 were asked to participate in a project called **Economic Restructuring: Establishing Niche Market Segments**

Purpose:

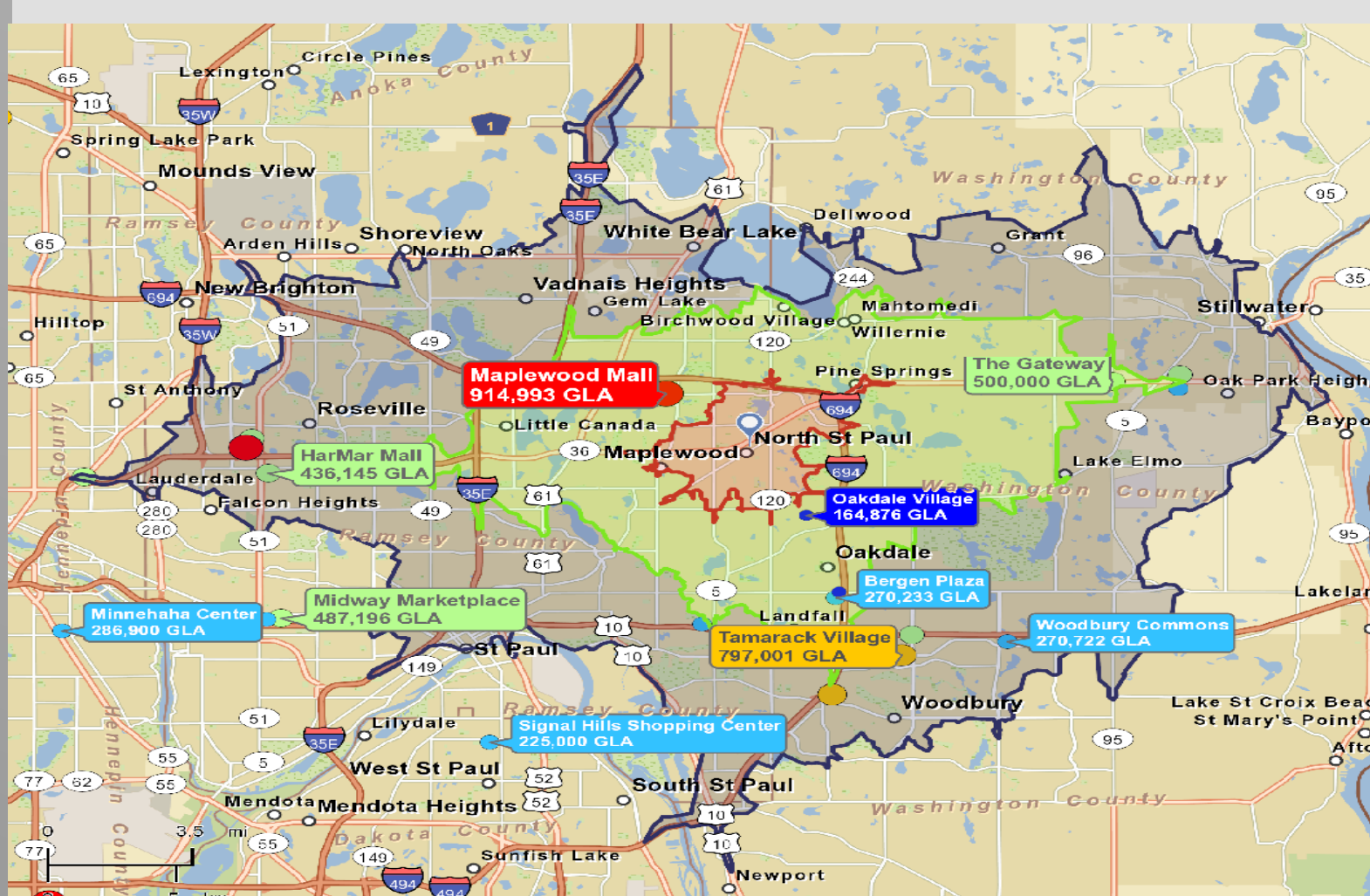
- Strengthen economic competitiveness of core retail district
- Diversify and revitalize downtown area



Methodology and Approach

The team used the following approach to achieve project objectives:

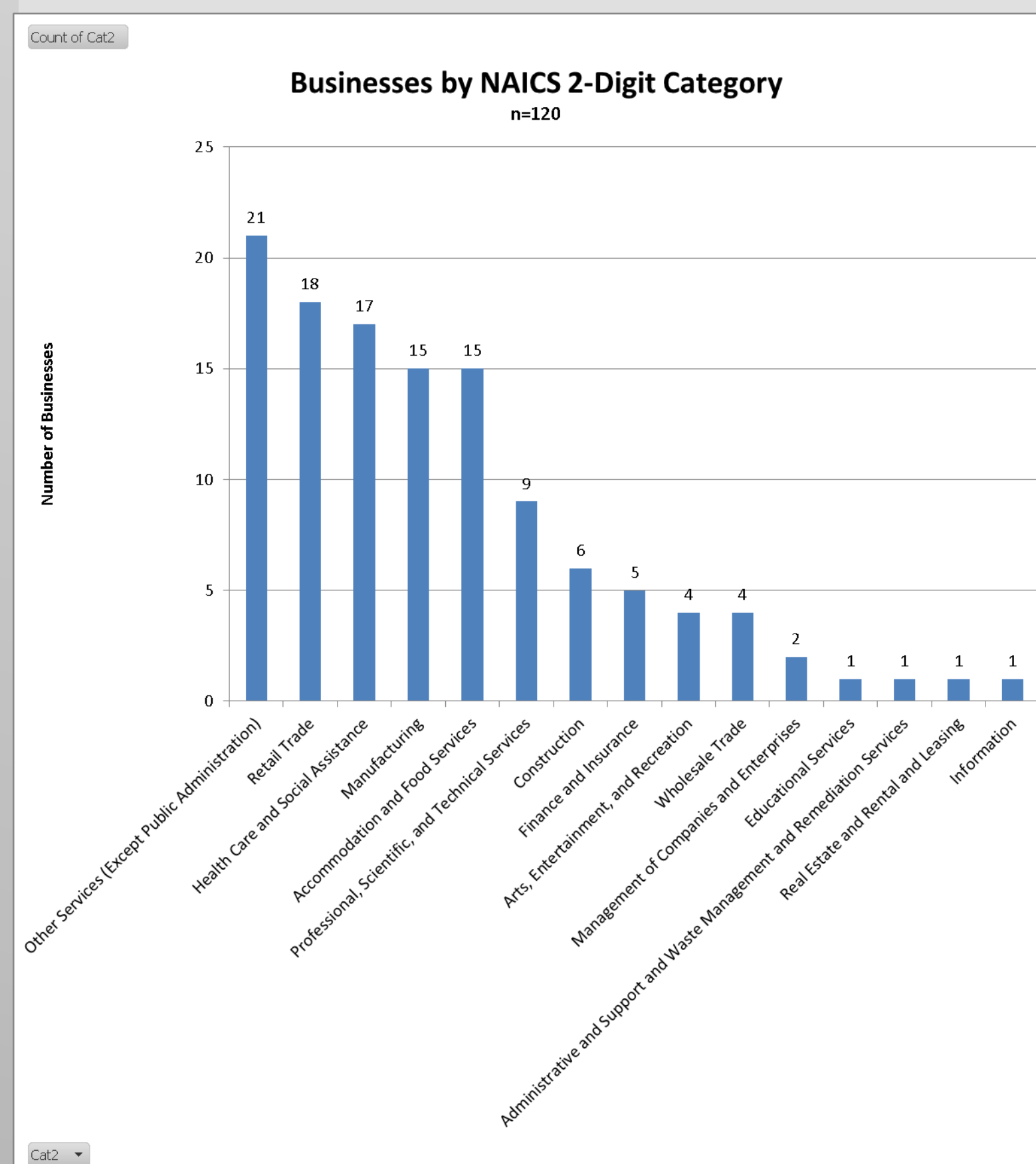
1. Building and business inventory of the North St. Paul downtown
2. Business inventory in primary market area. (outside of NSP downtown)
3. Analysis of spatial reports of downtown businesses and built environment
4. Market analysis to identify potential market gaps in retail sales in the NSP downtown
5. Recommendations for business recruitment strategies targeting niche businesses



Findings

Business Inventory Results

- Lots of underutilized space and surface parking lots
- Vacant space in downtown for compression of medical and office space to open up space for pedestrian-oriented retail and services.
- Diversity of businesses and land uses (industrial, retail and office)
- Use diversity of businesses as way to build unique identity for downtown NSP.



Past – A City Proud of its Past

- Strong retail presence
- Significant unmet demand for retail

Present – A City in Transition

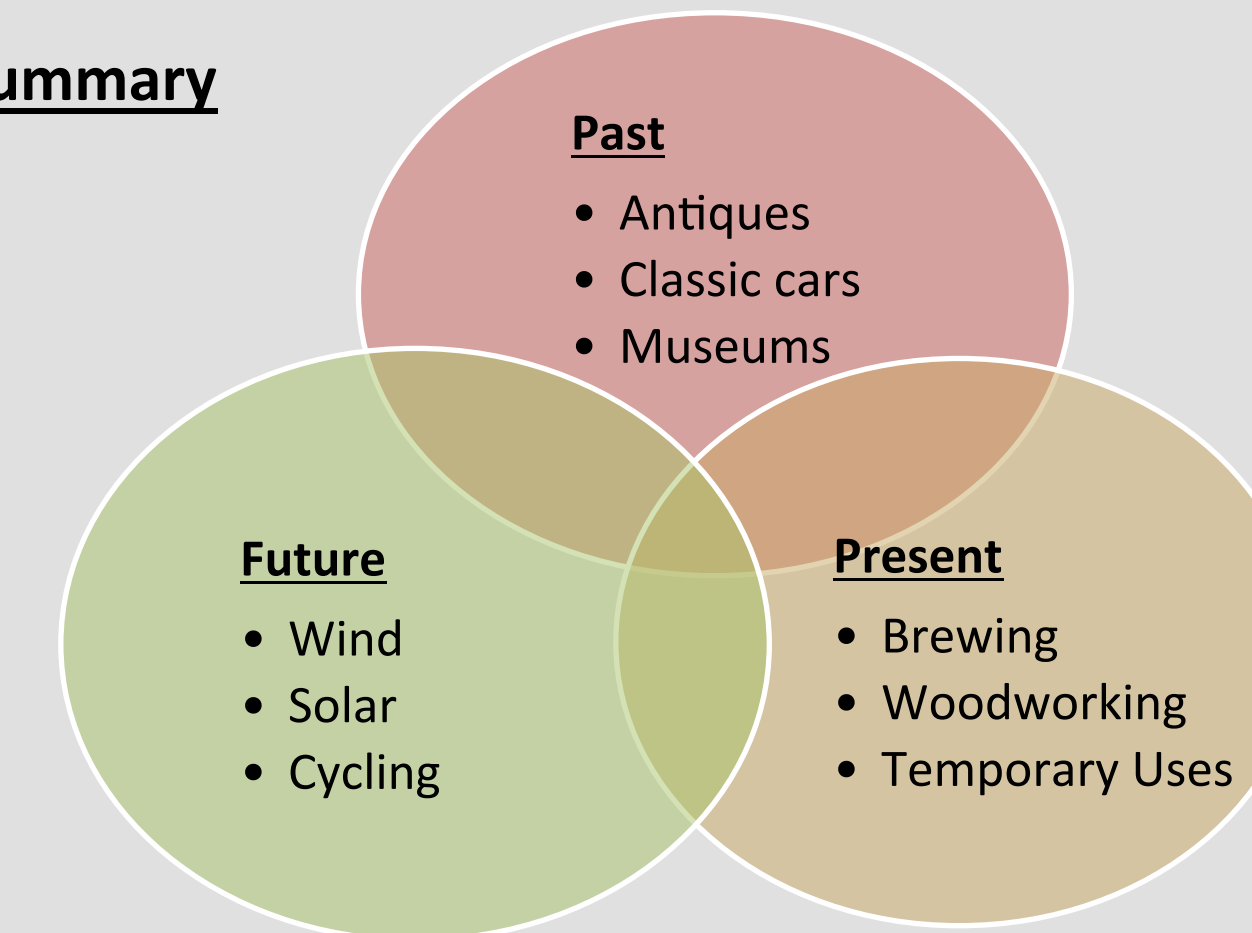
- Vacant, underutilized space
- Strong existing industrial base

Future – A Green Tomorrow

- Successful ongoing Wind Project
- Energy Education Program ongoing

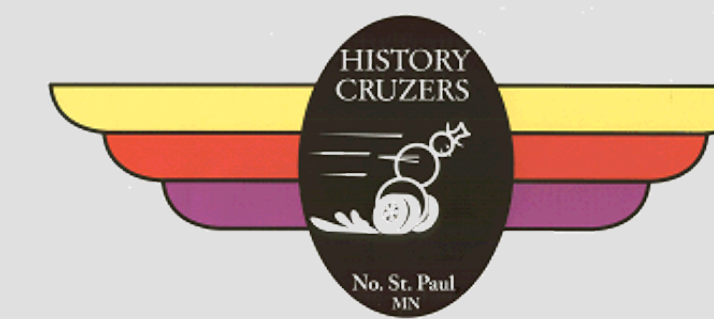
Recommendations

Niche Summary



Past – A City Proud of its Past

- Create antiques retail guide
- Use downtown business association to strengthen relationships
- Use classic cars as a way to draw complementary industries



Present – A City in Transition

- Use space and buildings creatively
- Find industries that fill current retail needs
- Provide opportunities to start small and grow
- Utilize materials from existing industries

Future – A Green Tomorrow

Clean Energy

- Expand project to include additional wind turbines
- Continue to diversify energy generation
- Develop fund to assist retrofitting for businesses

Bicycle Friendliness

- Connect the trail with NSP
- Bicycle friendly streetscape
- Promote local bicycle mode choice



Conclusions

Strong Building Blocks

- Traditional Downtown
- Existing antique niche
- Unique mix of land uses
- Green Infrastructure

Bright Future

- **History** – Connect museums, classics cars and antiques
- **Present** – Use industrial land for new purposes
- **Future** – Make a commitment to continue green investments

Leverage unique existing community attributes to maintain competitive position.

Establish a unique sense of place that is driven by high-wage jobs and quality of life



This project was completed as part of the course PA 5511: Community and Economic Development at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, with support from the Resilient Communities Project (RCP). RCP is an initiative of the Sustainability Faculty Network at the University of Minnesota, with funding and administrative support provided by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Institute on the Environment (IIE). To learn more, visit rcp.umn.edu.

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