

# Background

## Introduction

The master plan ensures ongoing healthy and vibrant downtown development while protecting and preserving the qualities that give Lincoln its distinctive character.

### Preserving Lincoln's Character

A major challenge for any city is how to manage ongoing change. This task is extraordinarily important in Lincoln since downtown serves as the center of government and higher education in the state of Nebraska. Downtown also contributes to the area's local architectural character and rich history.

The master plan charts a course for managing change and builds upon the special qualities that are specific to Lincoln. Based on the community's vision, the Lincoln Downtown Master Plan sets a realistic agenda that public officials, private investors and the community can follow and implement.

### Continuing Momentum

Over the past few decades, downtown Lincoln has experienced steady growth and a stabilized local economy supported by the University and state government offices. Downtown has seen a rise in housing, entertainment, retail and public improvements. Recent or planned downtown projects include:

- The Douglas Grand Theatre.
- Renovation of the Cornhusker Hotel by Marriott.
- Planned 8th and 12th Street Improvements.
- National Arbor Day Foundation Building

### The Master Plan Framework

With renewed interest in downtown, this master plan is timely as a guide for public and private development. With formal adoption by the City Council and Mayor, this document will provide the foundation to guide downtown development.



*Nebraska State Capitol*



*University Towers*

## Overview

The consultant team, led by Crandall Arambula, worked with the assistant directors for the City-County Planning Department and the Urban Development Department, the President of the Downtown Lincoln Association and other individuals recommended by the City to establish the study area, review background materials and inventory resources and assets.

### Study Area

The geographic boundaries of the planning areas were identified, refined and mapped. The agreed upon study area included the edge of the University of Nebraska to the north, the railyards to the west, 17th Street to the east and the State Capitol to the south.

### Resources and Assets

The City's and County's digital mapping and data information was supplemented with field review as needed to analyze existing economic, market, transportation and infrastructure conditions.



Downtown Lincoln - view to northwest



Downtown Lincoln Study Area

# Community Process

The Lincoln community contributed considerable time and effort to the planning process.

## Public Meetings

Hundreds of people participated in four public workshops held from August 2004 through June 2005. Each public meeting included a presentation and workshop where attendees could express their views. Written comments and quantifiable preferences listed on the workshops' "ballot response sheets" were tallied and used in development of the master plan. This clear and constructive feedback drove each stage of the process.

## Outreach

Local newspapers published and 5 City-TV broadcast key public meetings and events and periodic updates on the process results. The Downtown Lincoln Association, City Planning and Urban Development Departments and the Downtown Action Team publicized meeting dates and results on the website [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: downtown) and through mailings.

## Stakeholder Discussion Sessions

Over the duration of the project, meetings and interviews were held with a wide range of individual and group stakeholders, including businesses, public institutions, private organizations, advocacy groups, the City of Lincoln, Downtown Lincoln Association and other public agencies. Before and after each public workshop, regularly scheduled briefings were held with the Downtown Action Team. An on-site reconnaissance of the downtown area was conducted to gain an understanding of the key stakeholders' objectives and issues.

Response Sheet			
Workshop #2 Lincoln Downtown Master Plan November 30, 2004 112 Benjamin Street, Room 101			3
<b>2025 Capacity Diagram</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
1. Location of Potential Land Uses	137	Yes	7 No, 9 Other
<b>Retail/Entertainment</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
2. Retail/Parking Concept	137	Yes	5 No, 13 Other
<b>Open Space</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
3. Public Square Concept (10th and F)	138	Yes	7 No, 17 Other
4. Conference Mall Concept	130	Yes	16 No, 11 Other
5. M Street Park Block Concept	123	Yes	21 No, 8 Other
<b>Civic/Cultural</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
6. Festival Garden Concept	128	Yes	27 No, 11 Other
7. Arts Corridor Concept	134	Yes	20 No, 6 Other
<b>Bicycles</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
8. On-street Bike Routes	133	Yes	22 No, 4 Other
9. Off-street Bike System	117	Yes	28 No, 2 Other
<b>Transit</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
10. Shuttle Route A	132	Yes	11 No, 9 Other
11. Shuttle Route B	123	Yes	14 No, 12 Other
12. Future Streetcar Route	109	Yes	42 No, 12 Other
13. Bus Transfer Facility on G	108	Yes	16 No, 9 Other
<b>Rail Yards</b> <span style="float: right;">Check Preference</span>			
14. Future Housing and Open Space	77		
15. Future Convention Center, Parking and Open Space	61		
More Comments? Please write on back: _____			
If you need additional time to respond please return your comments to: DANIEL WARDEN-101 OR 708-840-5016 4-FORWARD CHAIR 1024-202 4-FORWARD TO 202 4TH FLOOR-202			

Response Sheet Tally from Public Workshop



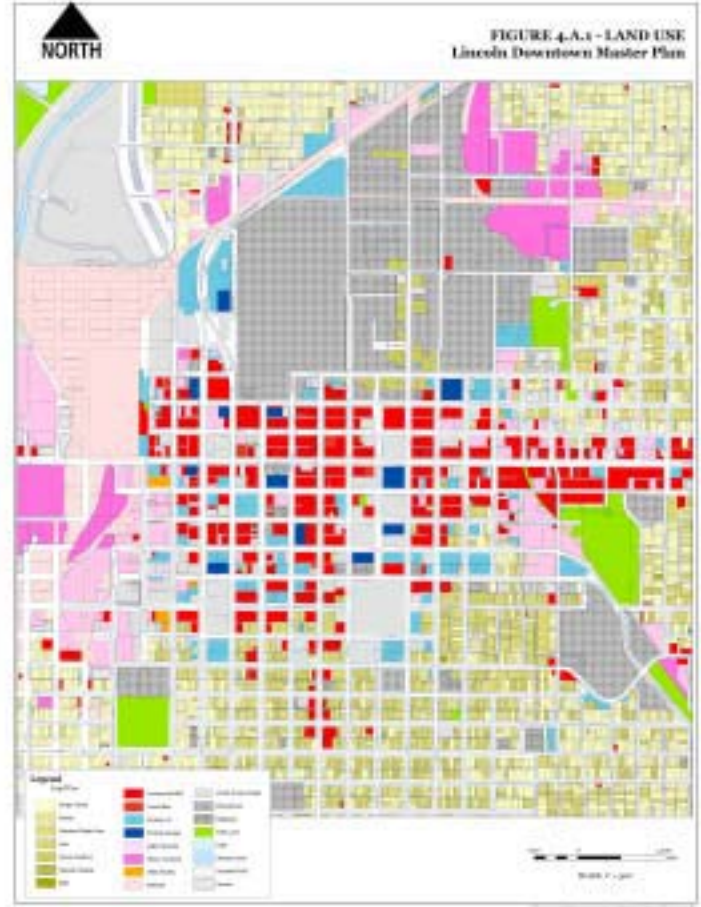
Table Group Discussion and Completion of Response Sheets

## Existing Conditions

Existing land use and market assessments were completed. This information was used as a starting point for the planning process.

### What We Have

The City of Lincoln supplied data on historic buildings and districts, existing retail, office, housing, entertainment, open space, parking, transit, auto and civic/institutional/cultural uses. From this data, base maps were created and used to develop frameworks and alternatives. In addition, a storefront evaluation diagram was developed to assess the current pedestrian environment along key downtown streets. The storefront evaluation and assesment and a typical inventory map are shown below and on the right



Existing Land Use- Typical Base Map



Criteria	Good	Fair	Poor
Openings	75% openings	between 75% and 50% openings	Less than 50% openings
Active Use	Retail, Restaurant, Theater	Commercial - Dry Cleaner, Real Estate, Travel Agent, Museum	Bank, Offices, Medical Services
Doors	Primary Entry (Front Door)	Secondary Entry	No Entry, Service Entry
Grade	Entrance at Sidewalk Grade	Entrance less than 3 feet difference	Entrance more than 3 feet difference
Transparency	Clear Glass	Tinted Glass	Reflective, Obscured Glass

Storefront Analysis and Ground Floor Edge Assesment

## Existing Market Conditions

Existing demographic and market conditions were used as a starting point for the creation of land use alternatives that meet realistic goals within a 20-year period.

### The Market Exists

Historic growth trends and demographic conditions were examined to determine baseline development demand. As a part of these tasks:

- Economic indicators were examined.
- Projected population growth was identified.
- Office, residential, and lodging market demand was assessed.
- Potential for retail market demand was defined.

Lincoln has seen steady growth in a variety of markets with employment stability attributed to the University and government offices.

### A Strategy Emerges

The overall downtown market demand is summarized to the right and represents the cumulative 20-year demand for space in the downtown. The strength of Lincoln's redevelopment efforts rests on the ability to establish a strong retail presence that attracts visitors and supports people living in downtown.

### A three pronged downtown retail strategy will create:

- A dining and entertainment strategy (100,000- 150,000 SF) consisting of new development that builds on the strength of the Haymarket District and links to the retail core.
- A neighborhood market place strategy (100,000 SF) consisting of new urban style development anchored by a grocery store along 9th and 10th Streets and N Street.
- A retail core strategy (300,000 to 350,000 SF) consisting of new development that includes strategically located retail anchors, builds off of the new cineplex along P Street, capitalizes on the existing fabric, and links to the Haymarket District.

Total Downtown Demand (2005-2025)	Square Footage	Units
Office Space	2,200,000	
Retail and Restaurant Space	600,000	
Hotel	850,000	1,000
Residential	2,400,000	2,000

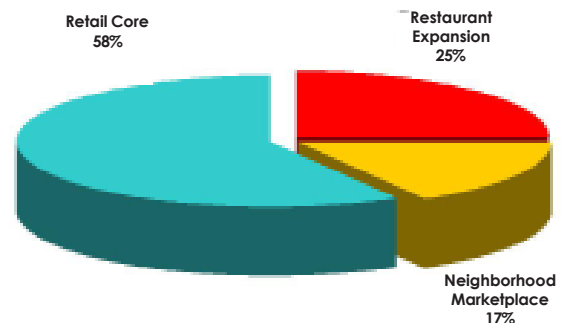
Overall Downtown Market Demand- 20 year period

### Distribution of Downtown Retail Space Demand (600,000SF)



Overall Downtown Retail Space Demand- 20 year period

### Three Pronged Downtown Retail Strategy



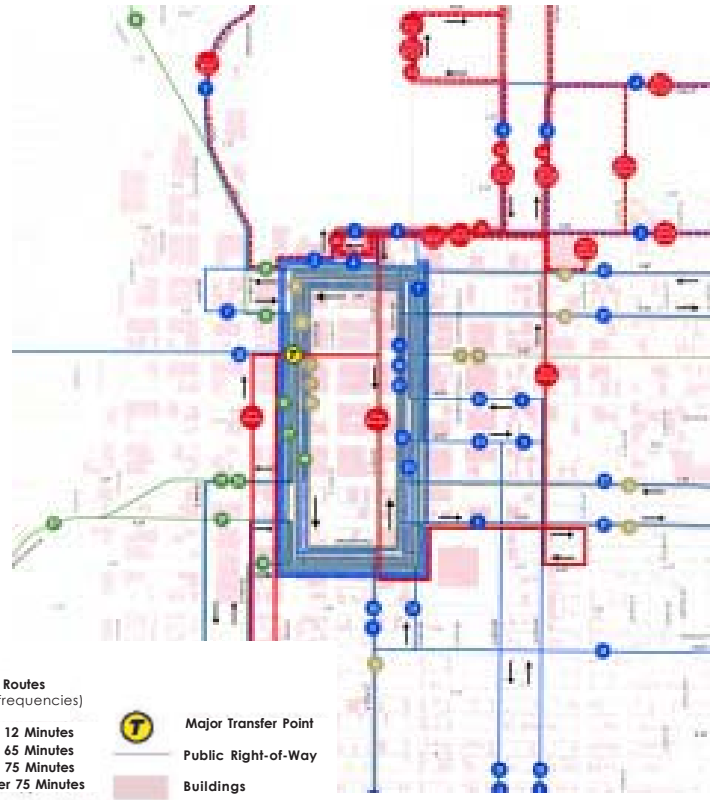
Retail Strategy- 20 year period

# Existing Transit and Bike Facilities

As part of the overall circulation framework for the downtown master planning effort, supplemental study efforts were undertaken to assess the existing bike facilities and evaluate shuttle services provided by Star Tran.

Study efforts included:

- Review of previous studies, existing circulation routes and level of service.
- Coordinated meetings with the City, stakeholders, and advocates.



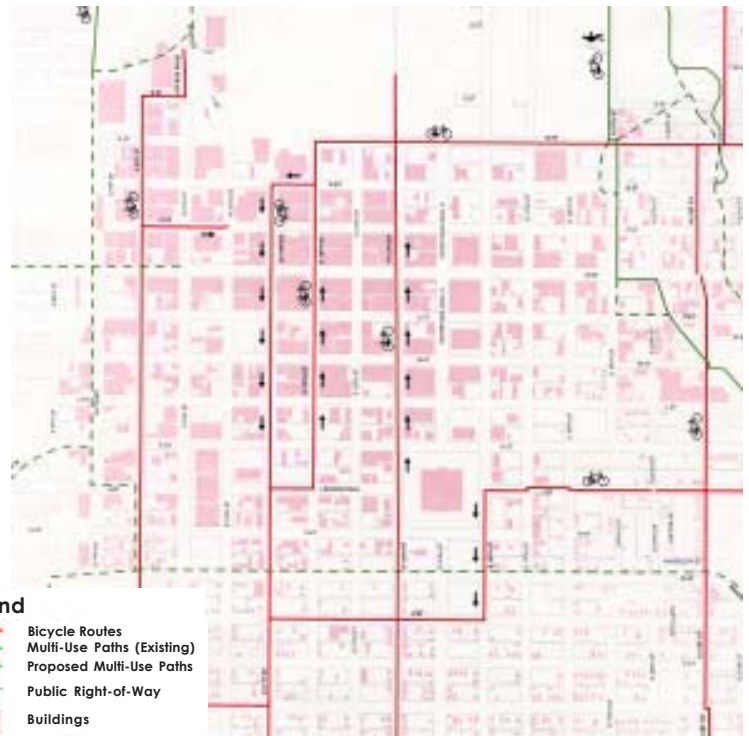
### Legend

**Weekday Bus Routes**  
(by midday frequencies)

- 10- 12 Minutes
- 55- 65 Minutes
- 70- 75 Minutes
- Over 75 Minutes

- Major Transfer Point
- Public Right-of-Way
- Buildings

Existing Transit Routes



### Legend

- Bicycle Routes
- Multi-Use Paths (Existing)
- Proposed Multi-Use Paths
- Public Right-of-Way
- Buildings

Existing Bike Routes

# Historic Resources

Lincoln is recognized nationally for its landmark State Capitol and environs along with a diverse array of architecturally significant buildings and districts that represent the historic fabric and character of the community. These assets serve as a high standard for contributing to ongoing planning, redevelopment and architectural design in downtown.

## Significant Districts

Seven districts lie in or outline the edges of downtown. The Capitol Environs and Haymarket districts are the most significant within the project study area. The Capitol Environs holds the highest level of regulations within its boundaries to maintain dominance of the Capitol over the cityscape.

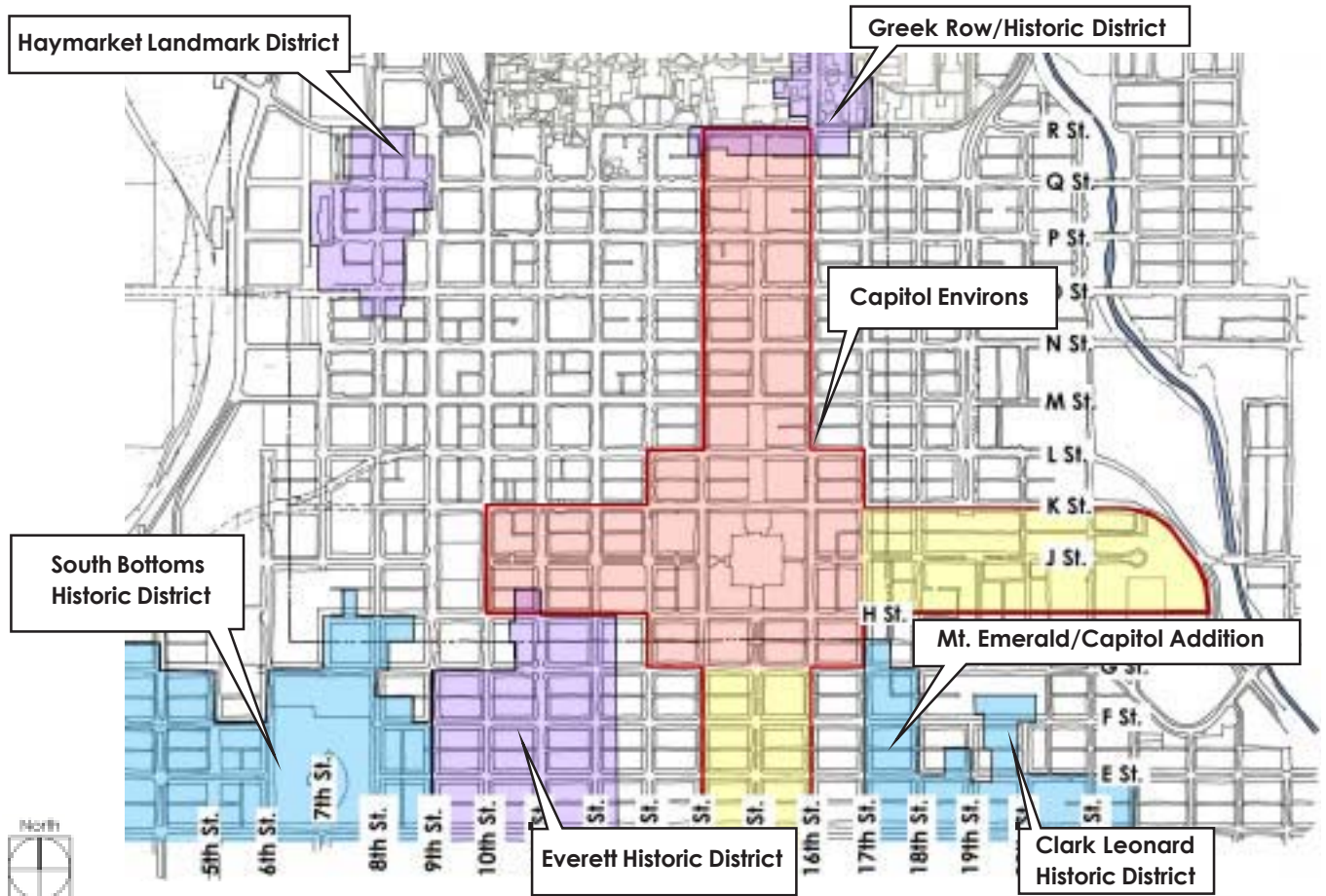
## Managing Preservation

The following groups represent the management of Lincoln's history. They provided guidance and information during the planning process and include:

- Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission
- Nebraska State Historical Society/ Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office
- City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Commission



Centerstone Building



Historic Districts and Resources



## Existing Plans, Policies and Regulations

Existing plans, policies and regulations, codes and guidelines that affect land uses and construction in downtown were gathered and reviewed. Master Plan recommendations generally complement these existing documents. The following includes the relevant plans, policies and regulations reviewed by the consultants.

- The Nebraska Capitol and Environs Plan – 1975
- Centennial Mall Workshop – November 2001
- 8th Street Streetscape Plan – 2004
- 12th Street Public Art Plan – 2002
- Harris Street Overpass Study – 2005
- Campus Master Plan for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln – December 12, 1998
- Bennett Martin Public Library Space Needs & Facility Study – March 2003
- Feasibility Analysis for a Proposed New Lincoln Convention Center and Arena- August 2004
- Downtown Lincoln Parking Study – August 2001
- East Downtown Lincoln Parking Study – September 2003
- Lincoln's Star Shuttle: An Analysis of Lincoln's Downtown Circulator Route and Opportunities for Change
- Antelope Valley Urban Revitalization and Visioning Plan – 2003
- Strategic Market Analysis for the Antelope Valley Area – July 2002
- Central Antelope Valley Design Standards – Draft July 13, 2004
- Market Study of Downtown Lincoln – May 2000
- Downtown 2001: The Heart of the City, Goals and Strategies for 1996 – 2001
- Downtown Lincoln Master Plan – Supplement to the 1985 Lincoln Center Plan Update- 1989
- Lincoln Center Development Program – December 1974
- City of Lincoln Design Standards
- City of Lincoln, Nebraska- Zoning, Title 27 Lincoln Municipal Code – Amended December 2003
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan – May 28, 2002
- City of Lincoln, NE Parking System Assessment: Final Report – November, 2004
- An Investment Strategy for a Competitive Downtown, 1998
- Parking System Assessment by Carl Walker Associates - 2004



Existing Plans

## Opportunities and Constraints

Downtown Lincoln's strengths and weaknesses were analyzed and assessed in terms of physical and market potential. Where possible, the plan builds upon the downtown's strengths and overcomes or minimizes its weaknesses.

### Opportunities

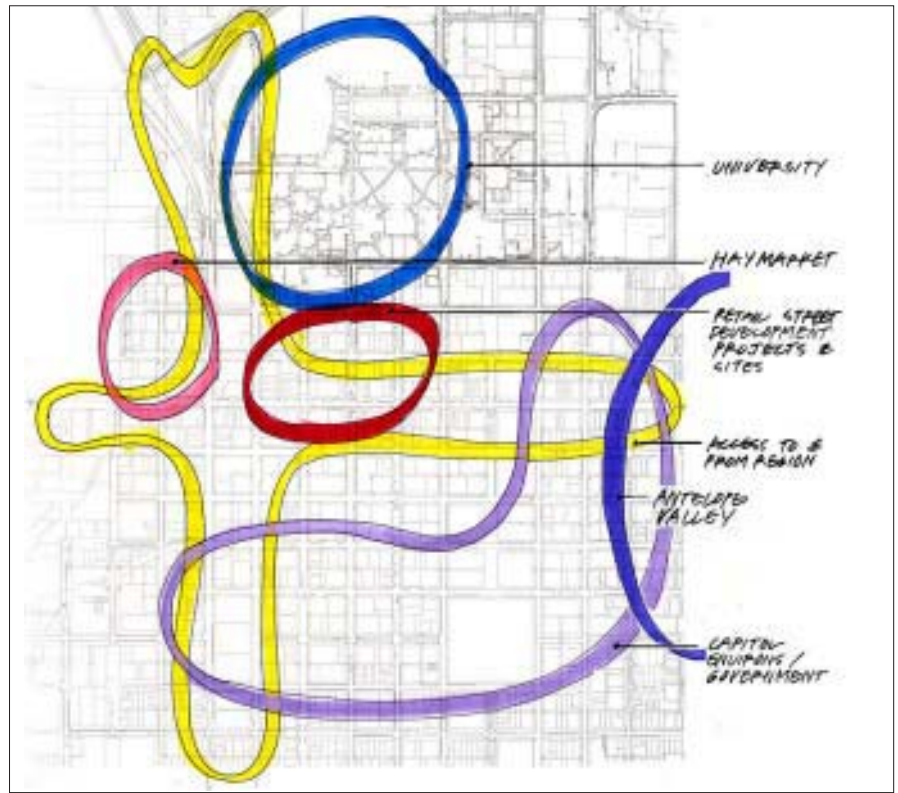
These are some of the physical opportunities that should be built upon:

- Many potential retail street development projects and sites, including existing retail anchors.
- Attractive new investment properties, entertainment facilities, museums, quality streetscapes and street improvements.
- Good access to downtown to and from the surrounding region.
- Successfully revitalized Haymarket District.
- Adjacent University provides lively street activity and employment.
- Adjacent Capitol environs and government offices provides tourist attractors and a stable downtown workforce.
- Adjacent Antelope Valley improvements will improve access to downtown and improve entryway appearance.

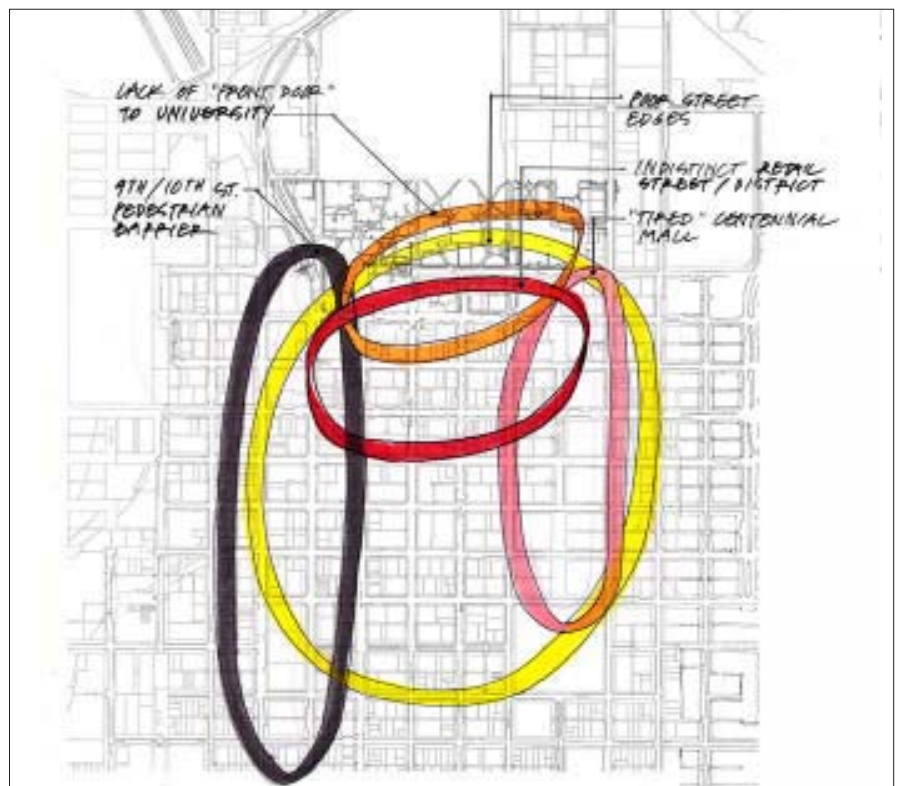
### Constraints

These are the physical constraints or obstacles that need to be overcome.

- Poor street edges around the University District.
- Lack of "front door" for the University.
- Indistinct retail streets and retail district.
- "Tired-looking" Centennial Mall.
- 9th and 10th Street pedestrian barriers.
- Portions of the western edge of the study area are within the 100-year and 500-year flood plain.



Opportunities Diagram



Constraints Diagram