1. PREFACE

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to describe a conceptual approach that would create a series of different street and development characters in the North/Northeast Quadrant Plan study area. This document has been developed to assist the project’s Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) in its deliberations on this topic -- and others -- that will eventually be prepared in a long-range plan to guide the quadrant’s future redevelopment and evolution.

This document is a tool that is intended to help visualize different public street spaces and imagine the experiences in them. It outlines the issues and opportunities presented by the existing street and connectivity network, presents a comprehensive conceptual street system for the entire quadrant, and then elaborates on each street character type using a series of graphic drawings and renderings.

Efforts in N/NE quadrant will influence other Central City quadrant planning processes

The N/NE quadrant today features pathway segments, scattered attractions and large undefined areas
1. PREFACE, continued

BACKGROUND

The street and development character concepts described in this document are derived from broader design themes explored in the Design Central City, Volume 1 document. This document is a discussion draft that identified urban design issues and proposed place-making concepts for the entire Central City. It was prepared by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s Urban Design Studio as a part of the Central City 2035 planning process in July of 2010.

One of the three themes in Design Central City was “Transform the Public Realm” which proposed being more intentional in developing more street diversity throughout the Central City. Offering more diversity in streetscape and public space experiences increases the attractiveness of the place to a broader range of people and makes it a more compelling place to live, work, visit, and socialize. The intent behind developing a system of different street and development characters for the quadrant is to take better advantage of this considerable Central City-wide public resource, testing and refining the concept at the district level.
2. INTRODUCTION

Historically, Portland evolved as a city that was strongly influenced by transportation systems; in the first half of the 20th Century, it was the streetcar. As the primary mode of mass transit, the streetcar got everyone where they needed to go. Streets that included streetcars became the active central hubs of commercial and retail activity. Today, the flexibility of the automobile has blurred this previous clarity, and the challenge is enlivening current (and proposed) retail concentrations, while expanding the range of other distinctive characters, experiences and places on streets not likely to be retail-emphasised.

A key objective is to broaden the design character of the street from primarily facilitating the movement of goods and vehicles to more multifunctional public spaces for people. This approach organizes the N/NE Quadrant street system to better link public parks and open spaces, tree canopy corridors, natural resources or features, city activity centers and civic places. The intention is to describe the different connections, identify where they would be located, and offer one idea – but not the only – of how they might feel.

For some time, retail store frontages have been seen as the only answer to a longstanding Central City-wide “active ground floor use” objective. While this objective for active ground floors remains, it has become clear that even with thousands of more residents, workers and visitors, every street in the quadrant can not support a vibrant retail or shopping district. The considerable amount of public realm in the quadrant offers great potential for a diversity of compelling urban experiences for people beyond just shopping and commercial activities. In addition, clarifying the design intent for different streets in the quadrant increases certainty and creates more choices – reducing some risk – for interested developers, property owners and/or new investors.

The experience of “place” is a combination of character of the street -- function, streetscape design, etc. -- framed by the buildings along it -- scale, setbacks, ground floor use, etc. For example, NW 13th in the Pearl District is a slow-moving, two-way street that has a uniform, curb-less concrete surface recalling the historic rail-spur-street that existed before. The street is framed by many of the original 3 - 4 story industrial buildings – now repurposed – and their associated loading docks. The resulting experience of the street is a combination of the modern interpretation of an industrial streetscape with a preserved set of historic industrial structures. A cohesive set of street and development characters, or street types that more directly links the design of both the public and private realms, offers the greatest potential to create a set of new, distinct, and lasting public places in the quadrant.
3. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Issues and opportunities that prompted the street development character concept were derived from urban design, land use and transportation analysis. They include:

A. Quadrant lacks a sense of place
B. Market for new retail is limited
C. Current land uses and characters are dispersed
D. Street network is homogenous
E. Street design guidance is outdated
F. The unique system presents opportunities
G. Couplets pose design challenges

A. There are a lot of streets, but not a lot of “there there.” Most of the public streets in the quadrant – primarily in the Lloyd District – do not convey a strong sense of place for the current and future residential, employment and visiting populations. The experience of most of the public realm in the Lloyd District is dominated by transportation functions: freeway interchanges, major north-south and east-west couplets, large internal circulators and major high-capacity transit corridors. While these access and movement facilities are critical to the quadrant’s ongoing growth, they have not yet catalyzed a distinct place or places that attract a lot of new people to gather, interact and live; A notable exception being the eastern end of NE Broadway. The potential exists to expand Broadway’s character, but there are opportunities for equally compelling experiences (suggested by these street and development character concepts) along other streets that can be just as attractive to new residents, workers and visitors.
B. There is limited market support for more retail. Market studies show that in 2035 there will be a potential retail demand of roughly 410,000 new square feet, with more than half of it being absorbed by the Lloyd Center Mall. The Lloyd Center Mall is unique to the quadrant and currently features some 1.5 M square feet of largely national retail stores and businesses, with the potential to expand significantly on its own properties. As many of the mall’s stores, shops and restaurants currently serve the quadrant’s population today, expanding those services may make it challenging to generate new interest and energy outside the mall itself. To better ensure some level of retail activity outside the mall, requirements for retail uses could be targeted at high visibility streets with significant recent investments, such as the new streetcar alignment. Additionally, a district-wide retail development strategy should be considered.

C. Street storefront retail is more successful when clustered. Expectations, current zoning and regulations for retail in the quadrant are too broad, and do not facilitate or clearly direct the cultivation of concentrated, active retail districts. While different from the Central City, some of the City’s most distinctive retail streets, such as NW 23rd, SE Hawthorne, or N Mississippi, feature a compressed zoning pattern that allows retail in a limited area. Other cities, such as Vancouver BC, employ an intentional and much more limited approach toward allowances for retail in their city centers. Recent studies looking at Central City retail districts by Economics Research Associates (ERA) and the Leland Consulting Group, both in 2009, recommended closer examination of retail feasibility by geography, and the subsequent application of tools to encourage its growth in target areas while discouraging it in others. Both reports include findings that recommend reconsideration of policies that allow retail uses broadly throughout the Central City.
3. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES, continued

D. Streets with different characters add to the diversity and texture of cities. The livability of cities requires the provision of public spaces that offer residents, workers and visitors a wide range of experiences: resting, socializing, celebrating, being entertained, or taking a quiet stroll. The Central City features a vibrant street network, but would benefit from the development of streets that support specialized districts or neighborhoods. One type worth considering is the urban residential street, where the predominant ground floor building characteristics include landscaped setbacks, building lobbies, stoops, and/or patios. These types of streets exist outside the Central City, in a wide range of neighborhoods, as well as in other highly urbanized city centers, such as New York or San Francisco.

E. Current Transportation System Plan (TSP) Design Classifications do not address unique conditions and street design opportunities of the Central City adequately. They are adapted from Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and do not speak with enough specificity to the unique streetscape and high-density adjacent land use issues that currently exist (or are envisioned) in the N/NE Quadrant. The proposed street and development character concepts for the quadrant are intended to inform a larger investigation of the entire Central City’s design classifications. The proposal is intended to better support existing and future land use clusters and stimulate new economic development.
F. The public realm system of the quadrant – and by extension the Central City – is unique, and could make it a more attractive place to be. The N/NE Quadrant -- the Lloyd District in particular -- is a part of the Central City and has some of the highest land use densities possible in the region. Creating attractive, livable and active high density communities in the Central City has been shown to directly address greenhouse gas reduction targets set in the Climate Action Plan. A new, more coordinated approach to the quadrant’s public realm system: its transportation network, the character of adjacent land uses, and new open spaces serving high density residential and employment districts, could maximize the catalytic effect of targeted public investments. This more responsive and resilient system in the quadrant would still be linked to the City and region’s larger transportation network and modal classification systems, but could offer more tailored, distinct urban experiences, making the quadrant, and Central City by extension, more attractive to people, more of the time.

G. Couplets present design challenges. Couplets, or paired one-way streets such as MLK/Grand, Broadway/Weidler or Vancouver/Williams, provide high-volume multi-modal transportation corridors that serve the quadrant but spread retail uses, design, and urban activity expectations across a broad area. Couplets are typically half a historic commercial main street – e.g. Broadway – and half a formerly quieter residential (or other) street that was reconfigured later to increase capacity in the automobile era – e.g. Weidler. One couplet street, usually the historic main street, typically outperforms the other in terms of urban vitality, development character, and pedestrian activity. However, design and land use expectations for both streets are frequently the same. A new design strategy that recognizes the different roles of both streets in couplet pairs and provides more clarity of intent would better manage development and community expectations.
4. CONCEPT

The street and development character concept for the N/NE Quadrant area is intended to create a high quality system of connections and public spaces that supports the existing and envisioned range of uses, districts and businesses in the quadrant area. The concept is based on the quadrant’s existing network of streets, corridors and pathways, and expands opportunities for new, high density development in under performing parts of the area currently defined by a sense of “placeless-ness” and dominated by an automobile-oriented built pattern.

The concept unites expectations for streetscape designs with those of adjacent land uses and building forms, developing a more coherent and varied set of public “places” throughout the quadrant. It should be noted that while the street itself stays the same, the character along its length can vary through the quadrant.

Specifically, this concept:

- Builds on the existing pattern of streets in the quadrant
- Develops and strengthens a series of different street and development characters
- Supports existing and future lands use concentrations
- Offers alternative active ground floor use responses to the retail storefront
- Identifies only the key/major connections – every street in the quadrant does not get a designation

Implementation of this concept would potentially make changes to the Transportation System Plan (TSP) Design Classifications, development regulations in Title 33 Planning and Zoning of the Portland Zoning Code, and the Lloyd District design guidelines. Some development regulations in Title 33 that could be affected include ground floor active use areas, required building lines, parking access restrictions, and bonus option target areas, among others. The extent of amendments to the TSP, the Portland Zoning Code or the design guidelines will require more analysis in the next phases of the project.
Aerial View Looking East over Central Lloyd Area
5. PROPOSED CHARACTER TYPES

**Type 1. “RETAIL / COMMERCIAL” STREETS**
- CIVIC
- DISTRICT
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- Busy, continuous, active streets with high visibility, high volumes of vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, nighttime character
- Limited or less-visible “green” features (high canopy or columnar trees, less visible or hardscaped swales, smaller building setbacks, etc.)
- Required/strongly encouraged ground-floor retail uses, multi-level or specialized retail encouraged

**Type 2. “BOULEVARD” STREETS**
- CIVIC
- DISTRICT
- NEIGHBORHOOD
- Busy, continuous streets with nodal activity and emphasis on access, movement and flow, high volumes of vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians
- Visible “green” features encouraged (larger canopy/spreading trees, more prominent swales and planting strips, landscaped building setbacks, etc.)
- Allowed ground-floor retail uses, encouraged at key locations

**Type 3. “FLEXIBLE” STREETS**
- CONNECTION
- TRAIL
- INTERIOR CONNECTION
- Quieter low volume streets, alternative routes for pedestrians and potentially bicyclists
- Parts of a connected, primarily pedestrian network that reaches the river
- Highly specialized or localized designs responsive to community needs, adjacent land uses/development
- Visible “green” features encouraged (larger canopy/spreading trees, more prominent swales, landscaped building setbacks, etc.)
- Limited or restricted ground-floor retail uses, allowed at some locations
- Public or private ownership

**Type 4. “TYPICAL” STREETS (not mapped)**
- Quieter, low volume local streets, featuring more standard sidewalk, planting strip and roadway treatments
- Visible “green” features encouraged (larger canopy trees, more prominent swales, landscaped building setbacks, etc.)
- Limited or restricted ground-floor retail uses, allowed at key locations
5. Proposed Character Types, Plan

ASSUMPTIONS FOR ALL TYPES:

- Active adjacent ground floors – residential, commercial, institutional or retail space habitable by humans, not parking areas
- Good sidewalks with safe crossings
- Attractive and diverse public amenities and furnishings
- Storm water management functionality; some have it more visibly than others
- Same traffic capacity as today – does not imply changes to modal system classifications
- Adjacent development scaled in response to local geography, surrounding context(s), envisioned character
**TYPE 1. “RETAIL COMMERCIAL”**

**QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE**

These are the busiest streets in the quadrant, with high volumes of motor vehicles, transit, bikes and pedestrians, consistent ground level retail storefronts, and “center” like character(s) for the community. They are where most of the quadrant’s residents, workers and visitors come together and experience the urban character of the quadrant. These streets feature a strong sense of urban enclosure as they are framed by buildings scaled to each unique geographic setting. They are high visibility streets that are active by day and animated at night, accentuated with civic-scaled places, works of public art and unique signage and lighting systems.

**MOBILITY AND ACCESS**

They offer high-volume multi-modal access, sometimes including the highest levels of transit and motor vehicle service, safe bicycle facilities, and generous sidewalk space to accommodate high levels of pedestrian and transit rider activity. The streetscape includes special paving patterns and/or materials, unique street lights and generally a less-dominant street tree character, perhaps more columnar in form. Surface storm water management is accomplished through a series of more hard-scape and perhaps less visible solutions along the corridor, or alternatively could be addressed more visibly at intersections with cross streets.

**ADJACENT LAND USE AND FORM**

Adjacent ground floor uses and building forms typically reflect the high visibility and citywide significance of these transportation arteries. Common building uses and characteristics include main entrances or building lobbies, ground floor windows and doors, smaller hard-scape building setbacks suitable for outdoor gathering or dining, and specialized or distinctive building lighting and/or signage. Retail sales and service uses at the ground level on these streets are required, and multi-level or specialized retail businesses are encouraged.

**POSSIBLE STREETSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

**Streetscape:**
- Special sidewalk and intersection paving materials
- Unique street lighting
- Trees with less canopy (more columnar)
- Less visible/more hardscaped storm water management
- Wide sidewalks/pedestrian facilities
- On-street parking
- Civic-scaled public art at key locations/intersections
- Curb extensions for additional seating, gathering
- Signature transit service and facilities

**Development:**
- Limit building setbacks, hardscaped
- Main entrances, lobbies
- Required ground floor retail space, multi-level retail space encouraged
- Larger building volumes oriented to street
- More elaborate, distinctive building signage and night lighting
- Building service, parking access limited, discouraged
**PROPOSED RETAIL / COMMERCIAL STREETS**

Different scales:

**Civic** – Regional, make big connections beyond quadrant  *Broadway, MLK, Grand*

**District** – Central to the quadrant, opportunities for new community activity centers, transformative  *7th, Multnomah*

**Neighborhood** – Local focal points, infill and intervention approach, continuation of existing character and patterns, transitional  *Williams, Russell*
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - CIVIC
NE Broadway + 3rd Ave. (2012)

Existing Street Section (Looking West)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - CIVIC
NE Broadway + 3rd Ave. (2020)

Interim Street Section (looking West)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - CIVIC
NE Broadway + 3rd Ave. (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking West)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - CIVIC
NE Broadway + 13th Ave. (2012)

Existing Street Section (Looking West)

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Street & Development Character CONCEPT: DRAFT February 2012
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - CIVIC
NE Broadway + 13th Ave. (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking West)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - DISTRICT
NE 7th + Clackamas (2012)

Existing Street Section (looking North)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - DISTRICT
NE 7th + Clackamas (2020)

Interim Street Section (looking North)
RETAIL COMMERCIAL - DISTRICT
NE 7th + Clackamas (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking North)
NE 7th Ave. + Clackamas St. (2035)
**TYPE 2. “BOULEVARD”**

**QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE**

These streets should be considered at the same level as the Retail Commercial streets, and can offer a few different experiences in the quadrant. They can be the “second” street of a couplet; they can create and define a district “edge”; or they can strengthen – and perhaps celebrate – a local transportation and/or transit route within through the quadrant. They provide a more landscaped, green (at least in color) character that is a distinct alternative to the more hardscaped and consistent retail storefront experience on the Retail Commercial streets.

**MOBILITY**

They frequently offer high-volume multi-modal access, sometimes with the highest levels of transit and motor vehicle service, safe or perhaps signature bicycle facilities, and generous sidewalk space, to accommodate the high levels of pedestrian activity. The streetscape includes special paving patterns and/or materials, perhaps unique street lights and a more-dominant street tree character, with more canopy coverage. Surface storm water management, using swales for example, is more prevalent along these streets. Opportunities to extend the curb into on-street parking areas could include additional trees, storm water management facilities and seating for pedestrians.

**ADJACENT LAND USE AND FORM**

Adjacent ground floor uses and building forms along these streets strengthen the retail concentrations along other streets by incorporating alternative responses. These could include commercial, neighborhood service, or institutional uses, main entrances and/or building lobbies, ground floor windows and landscaped planters. Adjacent buildings could also feature setbacks with additional landscape materials for building storm water management and/or seating areas. Because there may not be as many direct physical connections between the sidewalk and the ground level of adjacent buildings, matching grades is not always necessary. Retail sales and service uses on these streets would be allowed, but not encouraged.

**POSSIBLE STREETSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

**Streetscape:**
- Special sidewalk and intersection paving materials
- Trees with more spreading canopy
- Visible storm water management
- Wide sidewalks/pedestrian facilities
- On-street parking
- Curb extensions with additional landscaping, trees
- Signature transit service and facilities

**Development:**
- Landscaped building setbacks allowed/encouraged
- Main entrances, lobbies
- Required ground floor retail space allowed, not encouraged
- Larger building volumes oriented to street, full block buildings could see step down from nearby “first” couplet street
- Building service, parking access limited, discouraged
**PROPOSED BOULEVARD STREETS**

Different scales:

**Civic** – Regional, could be part of couplet corridor, extend beyond quadrant  
Weidler, 15th/16th, 9th, Lloyd Blvd., Interstate

**District** - Central to the quadrant, opportunities for distinctive corridors, some offering specialized transit or other mobility facilities  
Wheeler, E Multnomah, Holladay*

**Neighborhood** – Local, continuation of existing character and patterns, transitional  
Vancouver
BOULEVARD - CIVIC
NE Weidler + 6th Ave. (2012)

Existing Street Section (looking East)
BOULEVARD - CIVIC
NE Weidler + 6th Ave. (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking East)
BOULEVARD - CIVIC
NE Weidler + 9th Ave. (2012)

Existing Street Section (looking East)
BOULEVARD - CIVIC
NE Weidler + 9th Ave. (2020)

Interim Street Section (looking East)
BOULEVARD - CIVIC
NE Weidler + 9th Ave. (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking East)
QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

These streets and spaces make up a system of local connections through the entire quadrant area, linking its different districts to each other and to the surrounding communities. An alternative set of routes to the busier street network, they generally provide more of a quieter, park-like character, offering relief from the rest of the quadrant’s busier public realm system. Due to their more local orientation, they are more internally-focused and offer local workers and residents additional opportunities for passive and active recreation.

While the connectivity would be consistent in its orientation, the design of each segment of the system could vary according to unique or specialized conditions of adjacent land uses and/or block faces. In Lower Albina, for example, new flexible connections would offer an alternative route for pedestrians, and potentially bicycles, through the district while maintaining freight and truck mobility and access. More than the other types in the quadrant, this flexible type moves across public and privately-owned properties and utilizes connections through large blocks in concert with parts of the street system less burdened with traffic movement functions.

MOBILITY AND ACCESS

This is primarily a pedestrian network, though portions or segments of the system could offer additional low stress bicycle connections, local vehicular access, building loading and/or parking. Some of these streets or segments could offer expanded surface stormwater management facilities and/or larger-canopy trees.

ADJACENT LAND USE AND FORM

Adjacent ground floor uses along these streets include ground level residential units (townhouses, porches, patios, stoops, etc.) live/work spaces, residential building common areas, and potentially other types of neighborhood services such as day-care facilities. Retail sales and service uses would be discouraged and/or limited on these streets except at key locations.

POSSIBLE STREETSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Streetscape:

- Special paving materials, at intersections with other types(?)
- Trees with more canopy (more spreading)
- Visible, expanded storm water management
- Generous pedestrian areas, trail-like facilities in some cases
- On-street parking
- Curb extensions with additional landscaping, trees
- Reclaimed portions of the right-of-way for additional public uses, non-transportation
- Low stress bike facilities
- Curbless roadway, “festival street”-like quality
- Bollards
- “Gateway” or traffic-calming features
- Public art
- Unique lighting, wayfinding signage
- Safe crossings at intersections with other streets

Development:

- Building setbacks (up to 20 feet?) allowed/encouraged
- Ground floor residential entries
- Stoops, patios, semi-private dwelling unit access
- Ground floor retail space discouraged, prohibited?
- Large buildings podium edges
- Building service, parking access
PROPOSED FLEXIBLE CONNECTIONS

Some potential variations (specific variations, locations TBD):

“Woonerf” – Allows through motor vehicle access, parking

“Festival Street” – Allows some motor vehicle access, parking, can be closed off for events

“Strand” – Allows truck access, loading, movement and parking, features some wayfinding clues, potentially through Lower Albina, industrial areas

“Pathway” – Limited or prohibited motor vehicle access and parking, coordinated pedestrian links, some could accommodate signature bicycle, transit facilities, also alternative routes through superblocks

“Open Space” – Limited or prohibited motor vehicle access and parking, street provides open space and recreational functions

“Bridge” – Primarily pedestrian/bicycle movement-oriented, provide connections across major barriers, link Central City districts, places and activity centers
FLEXIBLE
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2012)

Existing Street Section (looking South)
FLEXIBLE
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2020)

Interim Street Section (looking South)
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2020)
FLEXIBLE - “Woonerf” Alternative
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2035)

2035 Street Section (looking South)
FLEXIBLE - “Festival Street” Alternative
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2035)

View/Section Locale

2035 Street Section (looking South)
NE 6th Ave. + Wasco (2035)
FLEXIBLE - “Open Space” Alternative
Connection through Super Block (2035)

2035 Section (looking South)
Open Space Alternative (2035)
FLEXIBLE - “Strand” Alternative
N. Kerby Ave. + Tillamook St.

Existing (looking North)
FLEXIBLE - “Bridge” Alternative
NE 7th Ave. + Lloyd Blvd.

Existing (looking East)
“Bridge” Alternative (2035)

View from I-84 Westbound
TYPE 4. “TYPICAL” (not mapped)

QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

These are the typical, or “local access” streets in the quadrant. While typically limited to two travel lanes, the character of these streets wouldn’t necessarily emphasize one theme or another. They would provide local access to buildings and businesses, offering a street with less motor vehicle traffic and a pleasant experience for pedestrians.

MOBILITY

These streets are fairly evenly split between roadway and sidewalk space. The usually have two travel lanes, on-street parking, and adequate sidewalk space. Due to the much lower traffic volumes on these streets, some may provide lower stress bike options that may include bike lanes or “sharrows.” They provide an opportunity for street trees with broader canopy, and enhanced storm water management facilities.

ADJACENT LAND USE AND FORM

Adjacent ground floor uses and building forms reflect the non-signature nature of these streets, with the predominant character being individual residential unit entries, some neighborhood service or commercial uses, in addition to building loading and service access facilities. Except for some key locations, retail sales and service uses on these streets would be limited or prohibited.

POSSIBLE STREETSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Streetscape:
- Trees with more spreading canopy
- Visible storm water management
- On-street parking

Development:
- Landscaped building setbacks allowed
- Required ground floor retail space limited or prohibited
- Larger building volumes oriented to other, more prominent streets
- Building service, parking access allowed
5. Next Steps...

This street and development character concept will be explored in more depth, with more discussion, deliberation and direction from the SAC, in the plan development phases of work for the project. As planning for the Centra City continues, this framework will be expanded to the other Central City quadrants as they undergo similar planning efforts. Ultimately, implementation of this concept will help guide future decision making and more strategic investments in the quadrant (and Central City's) public realm system.
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