

## **Downtown Streets Strategy**

Connectivity and accessibility in the Downtown area are functions of several things, two of the most important being the locations of zones of activity and which modes of travel access those zones. Planning in Downtown has long recognized the differences in activity patterns in the office core versus the Warehouse District or near the Metrodome and organized land uses such that amenities can be tailored to support the various activity patterns. The location of freeway access points, routes across the freeway ring and river that encircle Downtown and the location of parking in and near Downtown are also elements that influence movement patterns. Because Downtown is both a regional destination and, increasingly, a residential neighborhood, trip-making patterns combine long and short distance movements.





The strategy for streets in the Downtown area is organized to bridge the destination component of downtown and the ability to move in and out of Downtown. Modal priority is the basis on which the strategy is built. In this context, a layered analysis of the transit alternatives for the downtown, needs for freeway connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle systems in downtown is used to identify which streets need to be reserved to support pedestrian activity, which need to emphasize movement of transit or bikes, and which are critical for moving traffic in and out of Downtown. From this strategy, a system of one-way, two-way, transit, pedestrian and bicycle streets is proposed. Each layer of the system is described separately and presented as a separate layer in the attached graphics.

### ***Transit***

The Downtown transit network is built around the concept of transit spines that concentrate service through Downtown. While several alternatives have been presented for the transit spines, the street strategy is initially presented using Alternative B for the transit spines. The transit layer would have the following components:

- Double-width contraflow transit lanes would be provided on Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues South between Washington Avenue and the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets
- Nicollet Avenue would be use for local transit and would provide a circulator/shuttle function across Downtown to the Convention Center
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street would be converted to a two-way street with a single with flow transit lane in each direction.
- LRT would remain on 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- A contra-flow transit lane would be provided on 4<sup>th</sup> Street until the Central Corridor LRT replaces that service
- Hennepin Avenue would not have dedicated bus lanes, but would function as one of the transit spines.

**LEGEND**

-  DOWNTOWN CORE
-  TRANSIT-ONLY SEGMENT
-  2-WAY WITH TRANSIT LANE (With Flow)
-  1-WAY WITH CONTRA-FLOW TRANSIT LANE OR LANES

Note: Transit system shown is Alternative B



## **One-Way Streets**

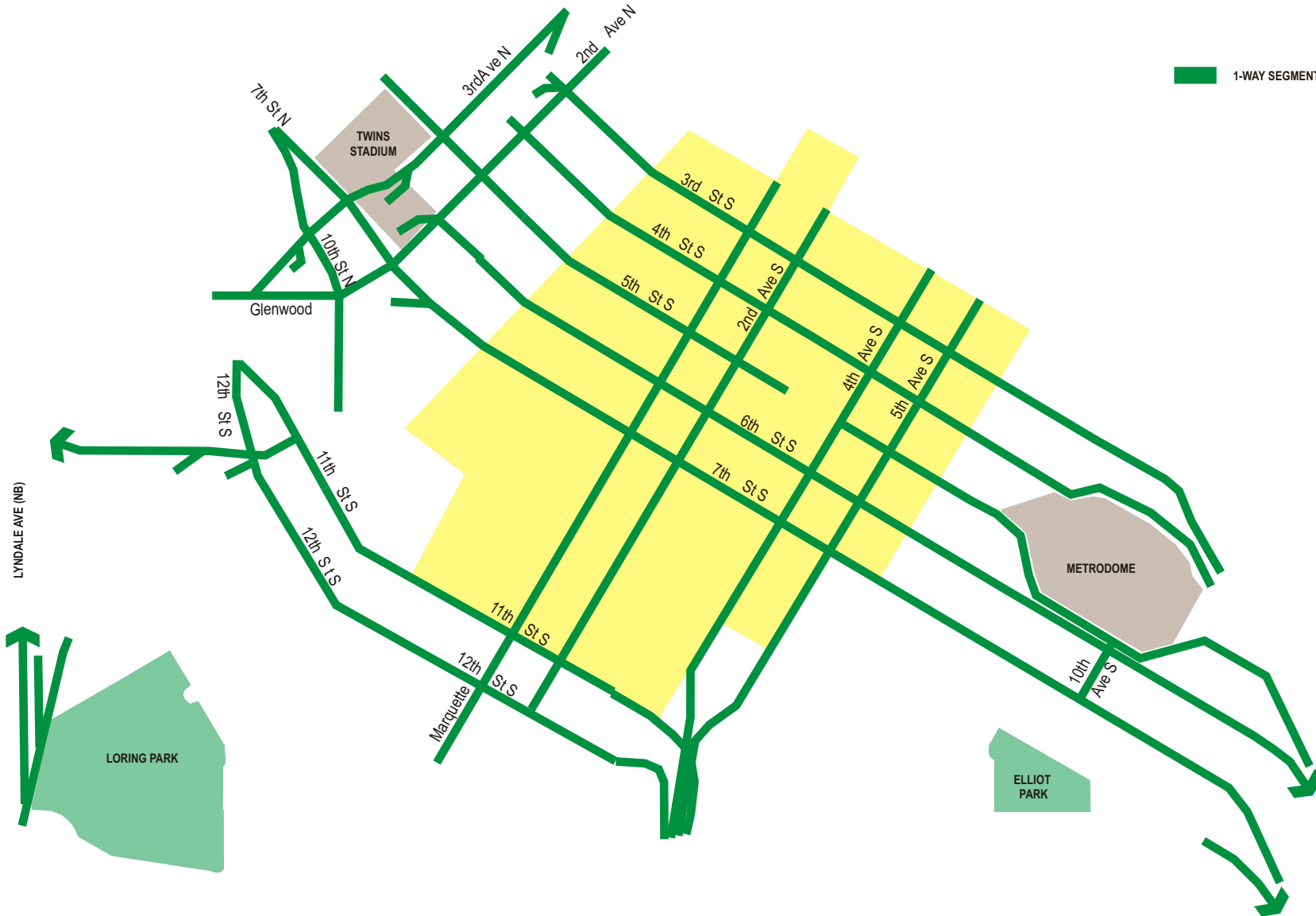
The one-way street network is designed around providing connections into the Downtown Core from the regional freeway system and supporting the transit spines. The one-way network would provide circulation couplets through the Downtown Core with the following characteristics:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets would function as a couplet that provides access to I-94 on the west side of Downtown and to I-35W on the east side. This latter connectivity would only be possible if the freeway access is modified on the east side of Downtown to provide a stronger distributor function that would disperse I-35W traffic similar to the way that the Third Avenue Distributor does on the west side. Prior to such a change in freeway access, these streets would continue to connect to Washington Avenue and the U of M.
- 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets would function as a couplet that connects to I-94 on the east side of Downtown and to I-394 on the west side. Modifications to the existing 5<sup>th</sup> Street ramp on the east side would be necessary to reorient 5<sup>th</sup> Street traffic to 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Prior to such modifications, the strategy incorporates 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South as a one-way link from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. Reorientation of the access to I-394 to make the on-ramp south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street accessible to all traffic rather than only carpools would provide for better distribution of traffic exiting the Downtown. TH 55 access at 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> would be retained.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues North would continue to serve the I-394 corridor and the Third Avenue Distributor. Similarly, sections of 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and Glenwood remain one-way.
- 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues South would connect to the I-35/TH 65 ramps on the south side of Downtown and would be one-way to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
- 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets would serve the I-35 and I-394 ramps on the east and west sides of Downtown respectively
- Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues South and 4<sup>th</sup> Street would serve auto traffic on the contra-flow transit spines.

**LEGEND**

 DOWNTOWN CORE

 1-WAY SEGMENT



## **Two-Way Streets**

The two-way street system would include streets outside the Downtown Core and on the edges of the Core:

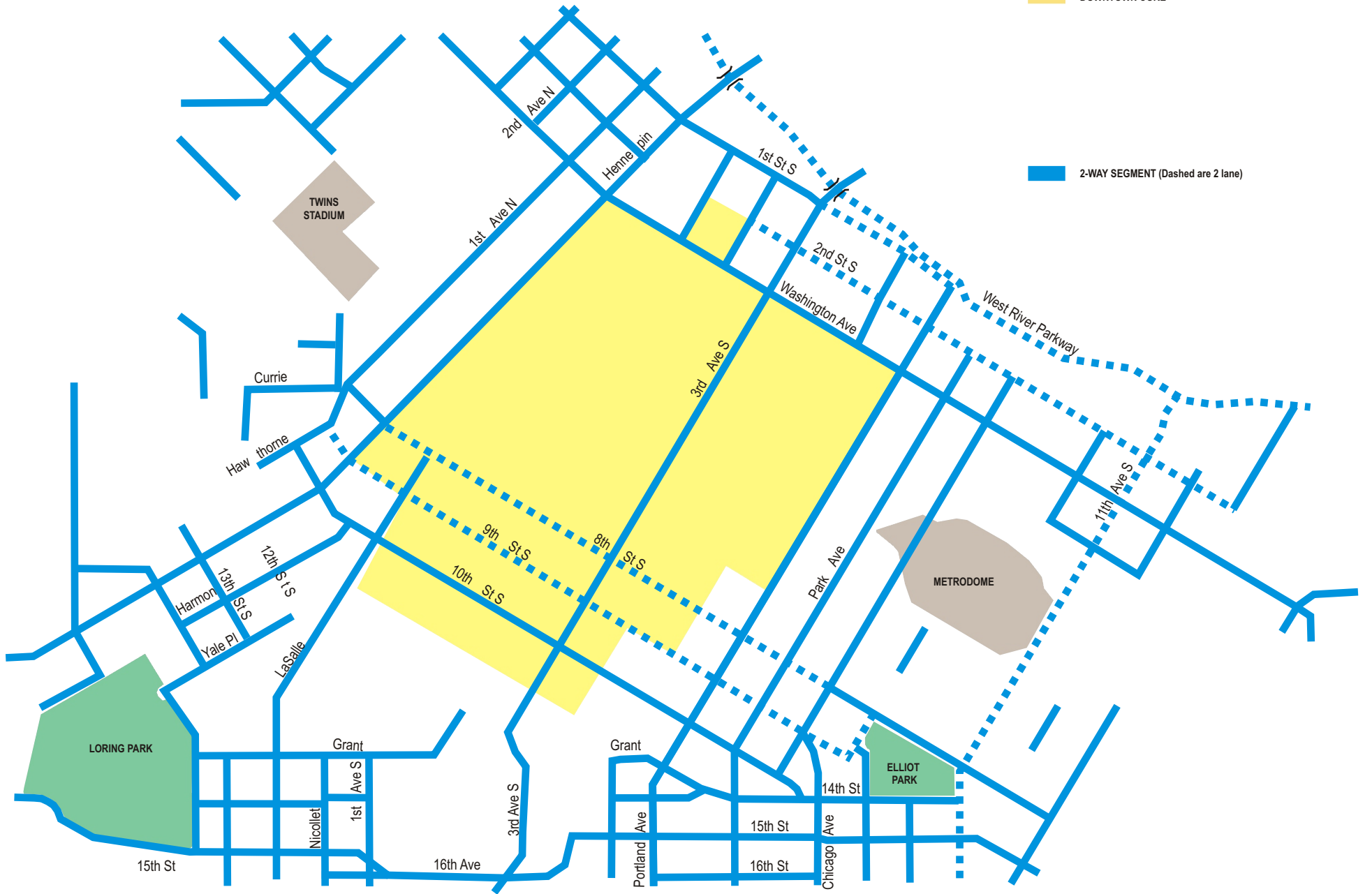
- Hennepin Avenue would become a two-way street with transit in mixed flow.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North would become two-way with two travel lanes in each direction
- 9<sup>th</sup> Street would become two-way with one travel lane in each direction, a bicycle lane in each direction and parking.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street, while a transit street, would also be a two-way street with one travel lane in each direction for mixed traffic.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South would remain as a divided two-way street.
- LaSalle Avenue south of Downtown would become a two-way street.
- Portland and Park Avenues would become two-way streets with two lanes of traffic in each direction.

The strategy would focus one-way streets and transit streets in the Downtown Core and provide for two-way circulation outside the core.

**LEGEND**

 DOWNTOWN CORE

 2-WAY SEGMENT (Dashed are 2 lane)



## **Auto Traffic Network**

The combination of the transit, one-way and two-way layers illustrates the network that would carry auto, truck and bus traffic in the Downtown.

The strategy focuses one-way streets and transit streets in the Downtown Core and provide for two-way circulation outside the core.

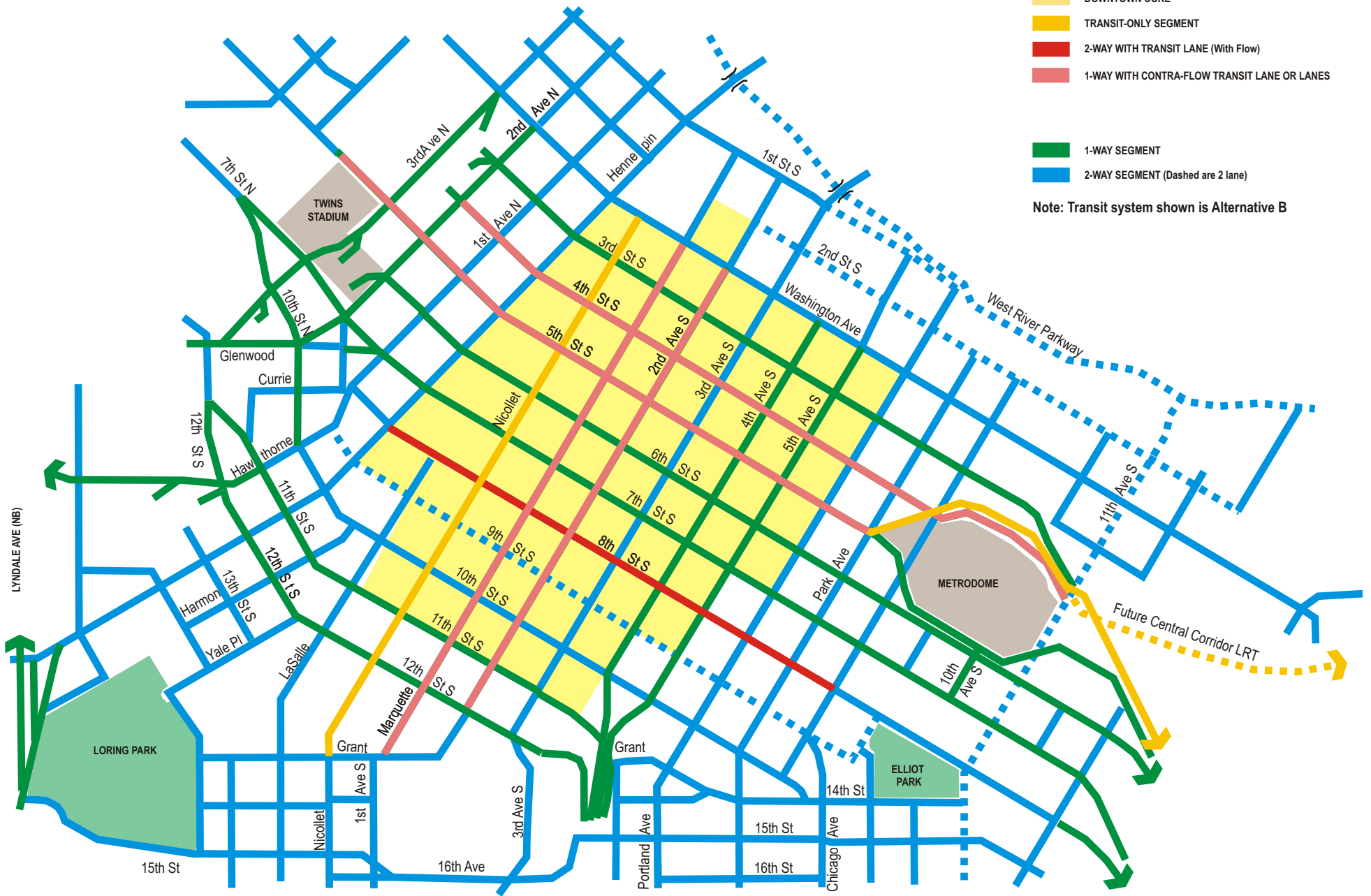
Most streets would carry three or four lanes of traffic similar to today's network. The strategy would introduce some two-lane streets into specific areas in Downtown.

**LEGEND**

- DOWNTOWN CORE
- TRANSIT-ONLY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY WITH TRANSIT LANE (With Flow)
- 1-WAY WITH CONTRA-FLOW TRANSIT LANE OR LANES

- 1-WAY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY SEGMENT (Dashed are 2 lane)

Note: Transit system shown is Alternative B



## **Primary Pedestrian Network**

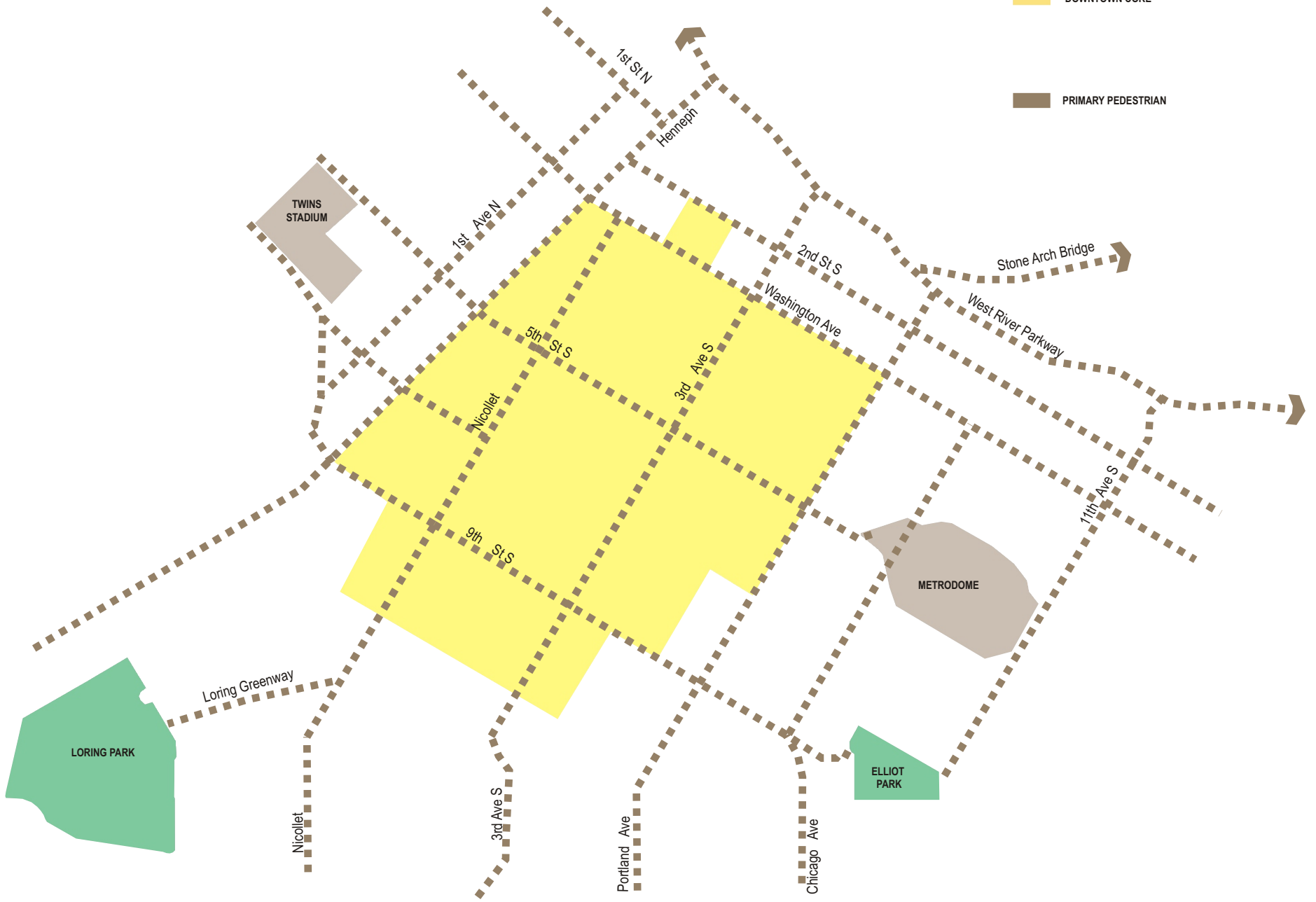
The primary pedestrian network is essentially as defined in the Downtown East/North Loop Master Plan. The goal of that plan is to “[e]stablish a hierarchy of streets that allows for differentiation between those streets that should receive a higher level of functional or aesthetic amenity because they serve - or are intended to serve - as major pedestrian connectors within and across Downtown.” The following elements would address the goals of the plan:

- A network of streets with wider walks and higher amenity level would be on Hennepin, Nicollet, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Washington Avenue.
- Depending upon the cross section used, sidewalk widths would increase on one side on Marquette, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and on both sides on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South. This would provide space for transit amenities on the transit streets and trees and other amenities on the other streets
- Portland, Park, Chicago and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue South would complete the network in the north-south direction
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South and 1<sup>st</sup> Street North would function as a pedestrian spine through the new residential areas adjacent to the river
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets would link the pedestrian network to the new Twins Stadium site and the multi-modal (Northstar) station.
- The Loring Greenway is included as a primary pedestrian link
- West River Parkway is a pedestrian corridor with separated trails.

**LEGEND**

 DOWNTOWN CORE

 PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN



## **Bicycle**

The bicycle network builds from the following directions:

1. Connections into downtown (the Cedar Lake Trail West River Parkway, the trail adjacent to the Hiawatha LRT, Portland and 11th Avenues South)
2. Extensions of these connections through downtown (Portland Ave S, 3rd and 4th Streets, 11th Ave S, West River Parkway and the Cedar Lake Trail extension to West River Parkway)
3. A loop of streets with bicycle lanes around the downtown core (1st Avenue N, 2nd Street, 11th Avenue S, and 9th Street)
4. A route across the downtown core (Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South)
5. A route on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets that connects to the main routes accessing downtown and the north-south route across downtown. This would use the Loring Greenway and Loring Park to access the existing link on Hennepin Avenue and would use 10<sup>th</sup> to reach the Cedar Lake Trail.
6. A north neighborhoods connector on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and a south neighborhoods connector that generally follows 14<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Streets

As this network was extrapolated, two basic alternates have developed that depend upon cross section. Under Alternate A, which trades off curb parking for bike lanes, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Portland Avenue would have bicycle lanes in both directions. Under Alternate B, which would allow curb parking on one side of the street, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Hennepin Avenue would operate as a one-way couplet of bike lanes (each street would have one bike lane on it), as would Portland and Park Avenues.

Existing bicycle lanes not in the above would revert to shared streets and streets not included in the above would be treated as shared streets.



**LEGEND**

DOWNTOWN CORE

BICYCLE (Dash/dotted are one-way pairs)

**BICYCLE ALTERNATE A**



**LEGEND**

DOWNTOWN CORE

BICYCLE (Dash/dotted are one-way pairs)

**BICYCLE ALTERNATE B**

## **Non-Auto Traffic Network**

The combination of the pedestrian, bicycle and transit layers illustrates the network strategy for movement of non-auto modes in and through downtown. The two versions of this network correspond to the bicycle alternatives.



**LEGEND**

- DOWNTOWN CORE
- TRANSIT-ONLY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY WITH TRANSIT LANE (With Flow)
- 1-WAY WITH CONTRA-FLOW TRANSIT LANE OR LANES
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN
- BICYCLE (Dash/dotted are one-way pairs)

Note: Transit system shown is Alternative B

**BICYCLE ALTERNATE A**



**LEGEND**

- DOWNTOWN CORE
- TRANSIT-ONLY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY WITH TRANSIT LANE (With Flow)
- 1-WAY WITH CONTRA-FLOW TRANSIT LANE OR LANES
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN
- BICYCLE (Dash/dotted are one-way pairs)

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**BICYCLE ALTERNATE B**

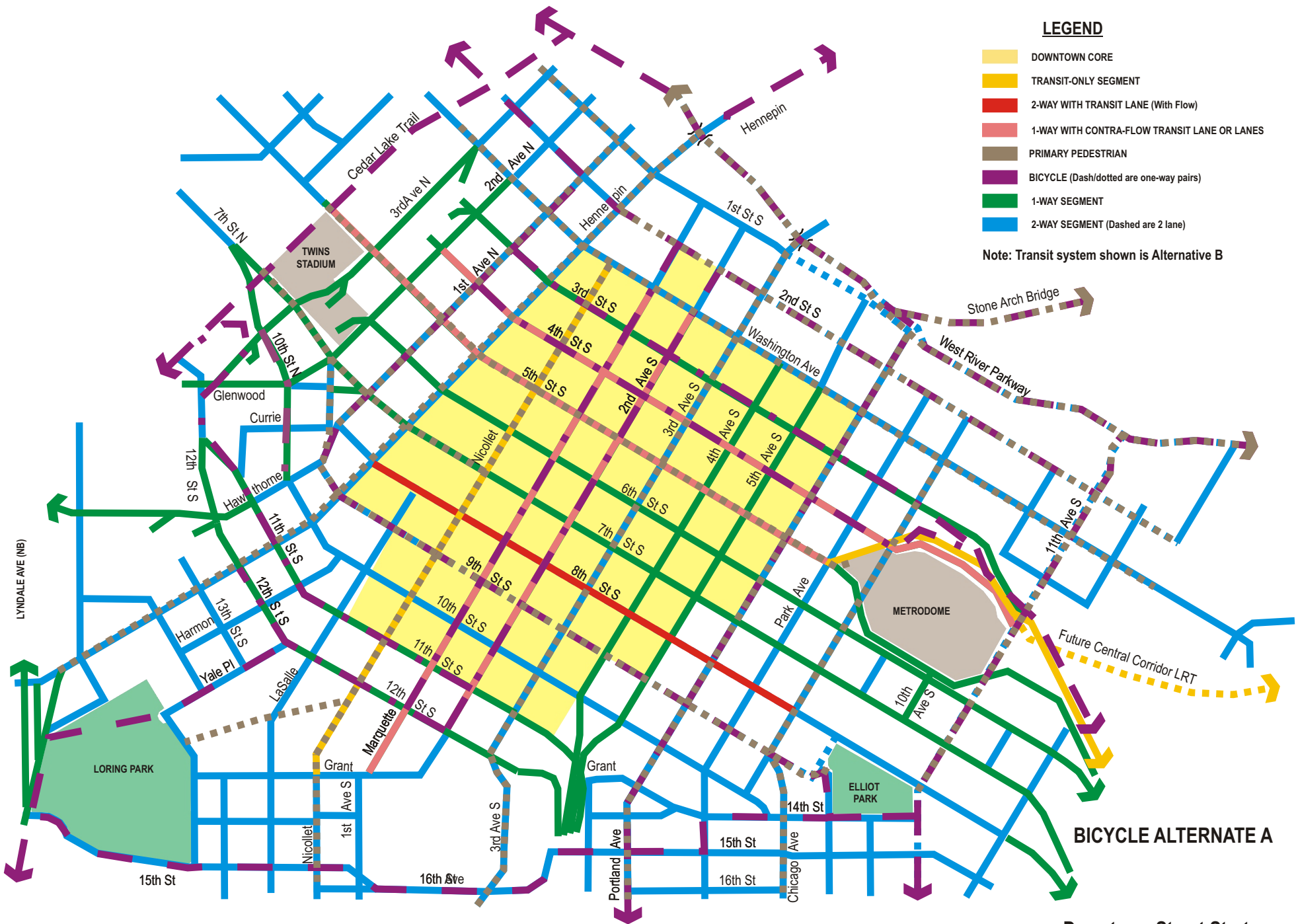
## **Downtown Streets Strategy**

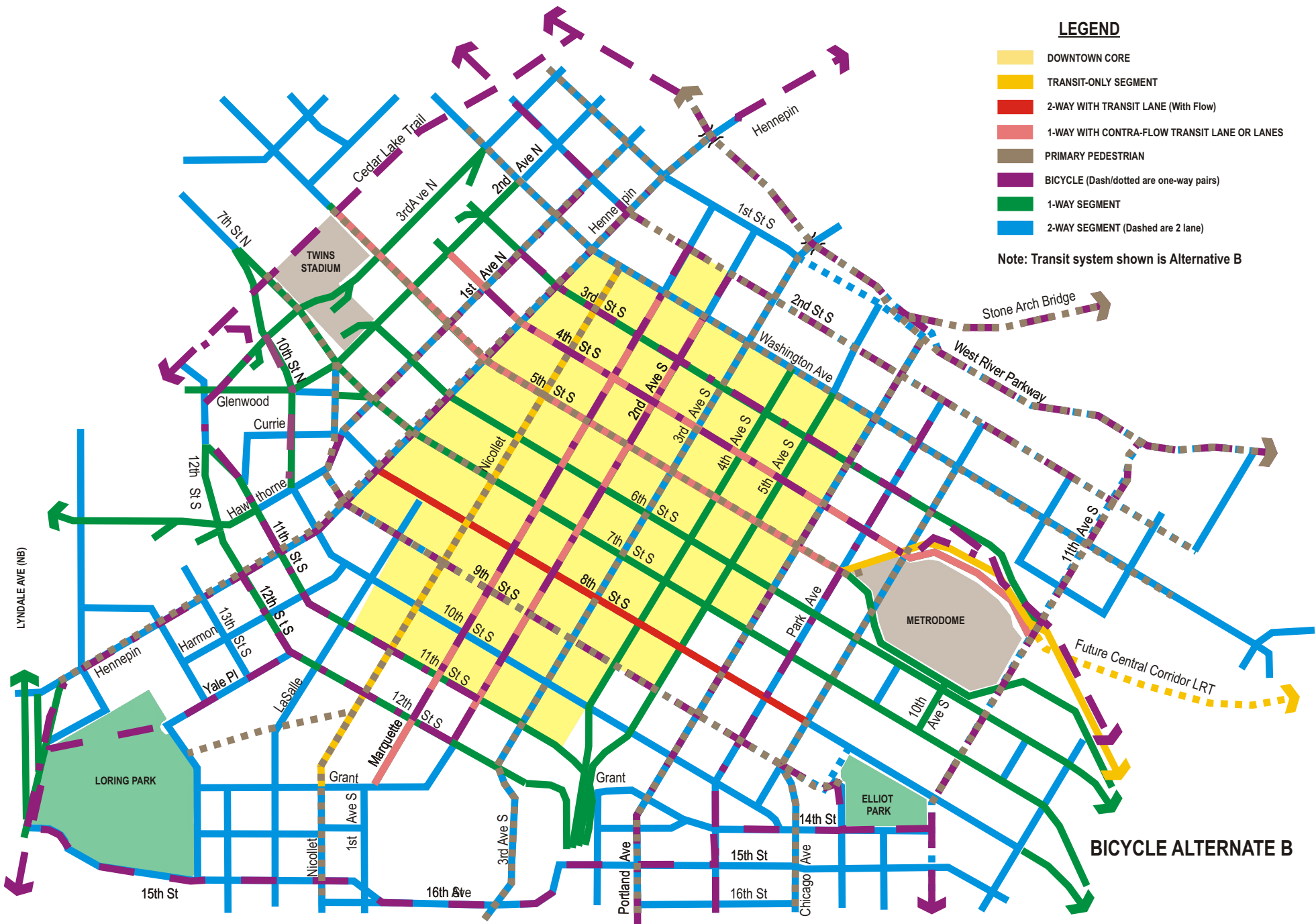
The combination of all the layers, again with two alternates for bicycles, illustrates the overall strategy for streets in Downtown Core

### **Freeway Access**

The strategy is designed to accommodate changes in freeway access and LRT extensions that will likely exceed the 10-year horizon of the plan. Changes in freeway access are needed to address the following:

- *A more-distributed system of access to/from I-35W on the east side of Downtown.* This could be achieved by changing the pattern of ramp access to use a reconnected 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenues South as collector-distributor/frontage roads to distribute I-35W access to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets directly. This concept would need to be coordinated with the Central Corridor LRT as the alignment connects with the Hiawatha LRT near the Metrodome.
- *Re-orientation of the I-94 off-ramp on the east side of Downtown to connect to 7<sup>th</sup> Street.* The Hiawatha LRT alignment on 5<sup>th</sup> Street has interrupted the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Streets couplet of access to/from I-94 to the east. Re-orienting this couplet to 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Streets would provide better connectivity into and through Downtown.
- *Better utilize the available entry points to I-394 on the Third Avenue Distributor (TAD).* Traffic entering Downtown from the TAD uses four ramps to distribute over the Downtown street system. Traffic exiting the Downtown tends to concentrate on two of the entry points rather than distributing more evenly over the available on-ramps. This is a function of both the placement of the ramps, the location of ramp meters, the designation of some of the ramps as HOV/motorcycle only, and the one-way circulation pattern of Downtown Streets. The de-emphasis of 5<sup>th</sup> Street as a cross-downtown connector when its role changed to LRT has reduced the utility of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street on-ramp to the TAD. The 10<sup>th</sup> Street ramp is HOV-only, which effectively funnels most traffic exiting Downtown to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Hawthorne Avenue on-ramps. Ultimately, the lane drop at the junction of the TAD and I-394 needs to be resolved to provide more capacity for traffic exiting Downtown. Modification of the HOV-only status of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street on-ramp to mixed traffic combined with re-oriented one-way street access would provide for a more even distribution of traffic exiting Downtown.





**LEGEND**

- DOWNTOWN CORE
- TRANSIT-ONLY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY WITH TRANSIT LANE (With Flow)
- 1-WAY WITH CONTRA-FLOW TRANSIT LANE OR LANES
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN
- BICYCLE (Dash/dotted are one-way pairs)
- 1-WAY SEGMENT
- 2-WAY SEGMENT (Dashed are 2 lane)

Note: Transit system shown is Alternative B

**BICYCLE ALTERNATE B**