

# Bridge for Revitalization

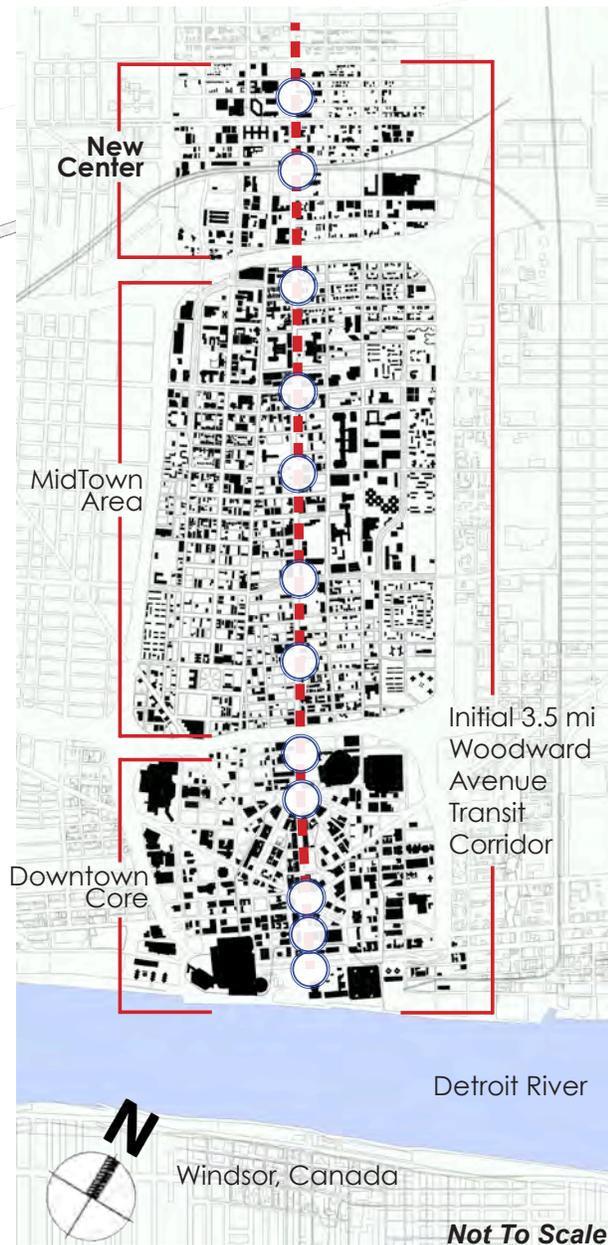
## An Urban Design Vision for the New Center District in Detroit

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### Design Context - Existing Situation

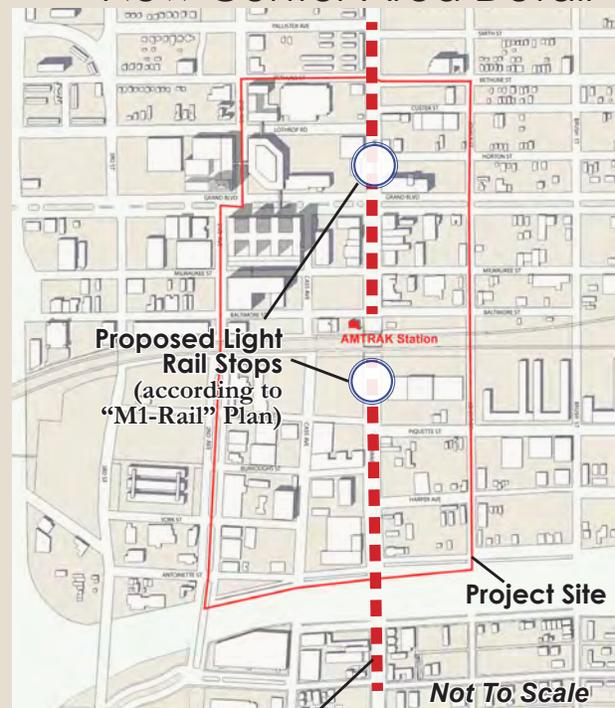
In April 2009, several independent organizations were exploring the possibility of constructing a 3.5-mile light rail corridor along Woodward Avenue in downtown Detroit,

MI. This corridor would serve as a crucial initial link in a broader regional transit plan and connect many of Detroit's most significant cultural, business, and historic institutions. The various Detroit light rail groups had already completed a considerable amount of design and planning, and state and local politicians regularly expressed excitement about their proposals in the popular press. Although there was significant positive momentum at the state and local levels, and a seemingly supportive federal administration in place, to that point planning amongst the various Detroit light rail groups had been fragmented and discrete. Additionally, very little thought had been given to the development that the introduction of a light rail system would generate along the Woodward corridor or the form that this development should take.



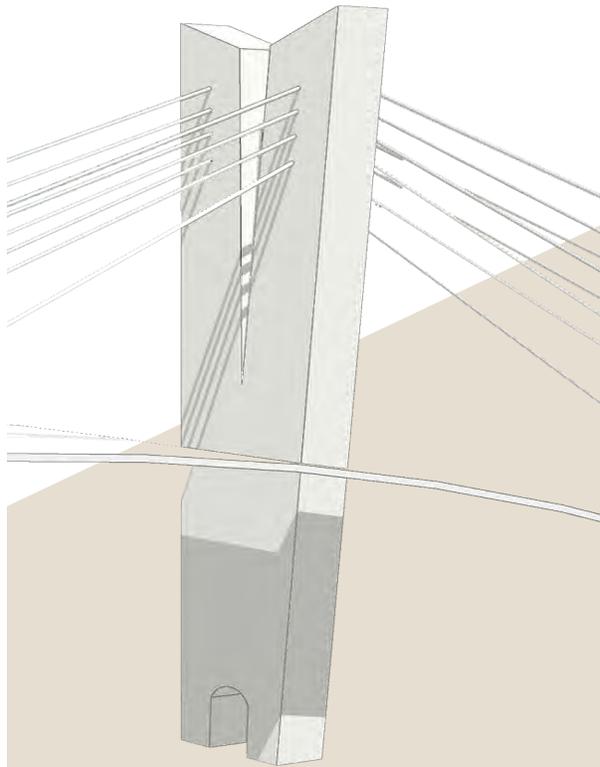
Context Map - Downtown Detroit

### New Center Area Detail



#### Woodward Avenue

(Michigan's most significant cultural/historic road, and the proposed thoroughfare for a new light rail system.)



## Design Challenge - The Future of the Woodward Avenue Transit Corridor

*Develop a design proposal for the New Center area of the Woodward Corridor that...*

1. Distills the competing plans and designs for light rail along Woodward, incorporating the strengths of each and providing an appropriate common vision.
2. Adheres to the generated investment assumptions given by the M1 Rail planning group.
3. Embraces the cultural significance and historic importance of Woodward Avenue as Michigan's most prominent pathway, M1.
4. Advocates sustainable urbanism as a guiding approach for development that occurs as a result of the light rail.
5. Considers how the large number of complex and interconnected urban systems on the New Center site can be accommodated and clarified.
6. Inspires stakeholders and development interests to act upon the design recommendations given.



Detroit, Michigan Photos: Scott Curry

The current AMTRAK station and rail culvert at Woodward Ave. and Baltimore St. (above) is an unattractive and uninspiring shadow of Detroit's former Michigan Central Station (below). At the time of its construction in 1913, Michigan Central Station was one of the most iconic transportation landmarks in the country and the tallest rail station in the world. Reimagining the current station as a landmark structure that is woven into the fabric of a larger urban development plan is key to our proposal.

Detroit, Michigan Photo: Spencer Olinek



# Site Plan



## Building Key

1. **Multi-Modal Transit Station North** (AMTRAK Station, mixed-use)
  2. **Multi-Modal Transit Station South** (Bus Transfer Station, Supermarket, Pharmacy, mixed-use)
  3. **AMTRAK Boarding Platform**
  4. **Light Rail Boarding Platforms and Woodward Pedestrian Bridge**
  5. **North Light Rail Boarding Platform**
  6. **Movie Theatre** (6 screens)
  7. **Detroit Youth Foundation: “YouthVille Detroit”**
  8. **Detroit Culinary Institute**
  9. **LRT Vehicle Service Building**
  10. **Corporate Suite Hotel** (300 rooms)
  11. **Conference Center**
  12. **Corporate Spa & Hotel Restaurant**
  13. **Relocated Auto Dealer Site**
  14. **New Center Marketplace Development** (Outdoor “Fresh Market” and Artist’s Market)
  15. **American Iron Beauty Building: Adaptive Reuse Site 1**
  16. **Adaptive Reuse Site 2**
  17. **TechTown Extension**
  18. **Woodward BP Fueling Station Replacement Building**
  19. **East Woodward Residential Infill**
  20. **Cass Townhome Development Infill**
  21. **Parking Structure and Retail** (650 spots including 10 “ZipCar” spots)
  22. **“Transit Link” Mixed Use Buildings & Plaza**
  23. **Woodward Retail Facade Extensions**
  24. **Grand Boulevard Restaurant & Retail Infill**
  25. **North Transit Mixed Use Infill**
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- A. **Albert Kahn Building** (Historic Office Building)
  - C. **Cadillac Place** (Former GM Headquarters, currently houses State of Michigan Govt. Offices)
  - F. **Fisher Theatre**
  - N. **New Center One** (Office and Retail)
  - T. **Taubman Center for Design Education** (Historic Argonaut Building Reuse includes College for Creative Studies Classrooms & Dormitories, Charter Middle/High School for the Arts, and Gymnasium)



3. AMTRAK Boarding Platform



5. North Transit Station



10. Hotel - View to Multi-Modal Station



22. “Transit Link” Mixed-Use and CCS Art Lawn

## Design Approach

Three primary design principles guided the creation of the development design proposal illustrated here. These three principles are:

1. **Celebrating Travel**
2. **Enabling the “15-Minute” Lifestyle**
3. **Building Upon the Existing Character and Identity of New Center**

## Design Principles

### The “Bridge for Revitalization” Development Proposal Celebrates Travel by...

- Suggesting a monumental transit station to serve as a landmark gateway for the City of Detroit.
- Providing a powerful connection point between a large number of transportation systems in order to create a node of activity and encourage transit ridership.
- Providing ample opportunity for the display of transportation-themed art exhibits (presumably in conjunction with the CCS expansion and the Model T Automotive Heritage Complex.)

### The “Bridge for Revitalization” Development Proposal Enables the “15-Minute Lifestyle” by...

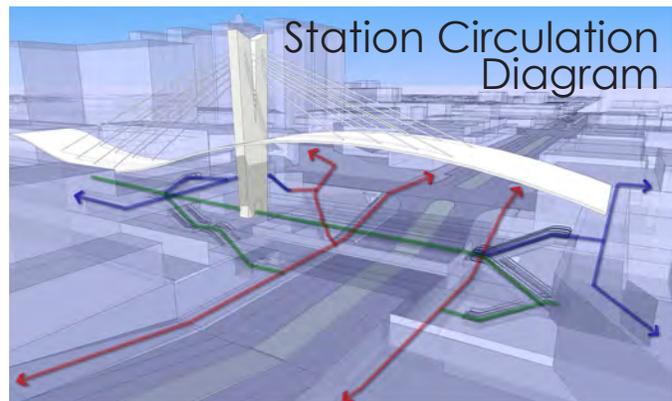
- Using the form of proposed development to create strong, direct, physical connections between the existing activity in the New Center area and the two proposed transit stations.
- Prioritizing residential development as well as land uses that are currently lacking in the New Center area.
- Incorporating those uses that are immediately necessary for a variety of urban lifestyles within a 1/4 - mile walking radius.
- Promoting pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the site to foster a culture of alternative transportation lifestyles.

### The “Bridge for Revitalization” Development Proposal Builds Upon the Existing Character and Identity of New Center by...

- Adaptively reusing existing structures wherever feasible.

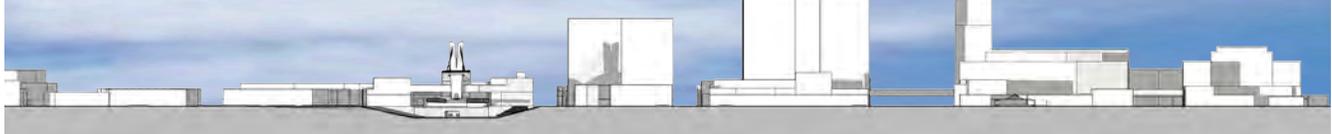
- Extending the existing institutions and uses of the area, specifically TechTown, the College for Creative Studies, the Detroit Youth Foundation: YouthVille Project, and Detroit’s culinary wealth.
- Strengthening the streetscape environment along Woodward Ave. through infill development on vacant parcels.

These guiding principles reinforce an ethos of **sustainable urbanism** by promoting transit ridership and by creating an efficient and vibrant urban density in the New Center area that the City of Detroit so desperately needs.



## Woodward West Elevation

1" = 400'



## “Bridge for Revitalization”

Creating a coherent plan for the design of a multi-modal transit station was a key component to accomplishing all three of these greater objectives. The design of the station incorporates a mix of uses and a monumental structure that is meant to become a landmark for the City of Detroit and serve as a literal and figurative *“Bridge for the Revitalization of Detroit.”*

**In an abstract sense, the development proposal is meant to serve as a bridge between...**

- Detroit’s automotive past and it’s future as a renewable energy and alternative transportation hub,
- Downtown Detroit to the south and Metro Detroit to the north, and

- A combination of everyday occurrences and special experiences.

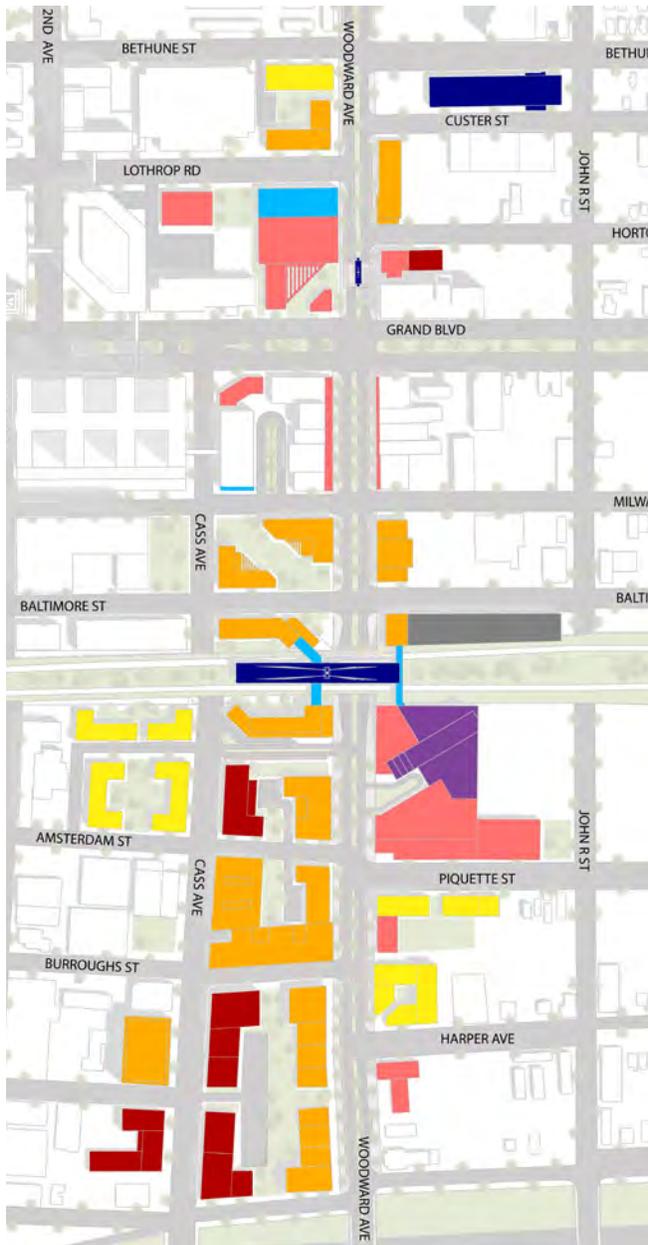
**In a more functional sense, the multi-modal station is meant to serve as a bridge between...**

- Different forms of transportation (AMTRAK, light rail, bus, auto, bicycle, and pedestrian),
- The different sides of Woodward Avenue, and
- A variety of different land uses and activities.

The monumental nature of the structure itself is both reminiscent of a bridge span in a physical sense, and a nod to the landmark nature of historic rail stations, such as the iconic Michigan Central Station.



## Land Use Diagram



A primary focus of the proposal was to create a beneficial mix of uses, if not in the same building, then at least in the immediate area. In general, retail uses were concentrated in the areas designed to generate the heaviest foot traffic. The TechTown area is the largest proposed addition of office space. Residential uses are suggested throughout the entire development, with a handful of residential only developments proposed.



## Investment Model

### Cost Estimate for Light Rail Construction

in 3.5 mile Initial Woodward Light Rail Link  
**\$120,000,000**

in .7 mile New Center District  
**\$24,000,000**

### Economic Development Multiplier Assumption Range

**\$4 to \$8** per \$1 of light rail construction cost,

gives

**\$96,000,000 to \$192,000,000** of generated investment estimated for New Center District

### Building Cost Estimate for Development Proposal by Phase

PHASE 1:  
**\$83,343,806**

PHASE 2:  
**\$151,812,820**

PHASE 3:  
**\$151,268,482**

# Phasing Plan

In order to realistically illustrate how development should occur in association with the light rail proposal, it was necessary to estimate the breadth of impact that the introduction of light rail will have for the Woodward Avenue transit corridor. The phasing plan and investment model (*opposite*) are based upon figures given by the M1-Rail planning group for potential investment along the entire 3.5 mile Woodward Avenue transit corridor. These numbers, generally considered to be on the conservative end of typical generated economic development for light rail construction, have been translated here into the expected investment for the New Center area alone, about a .7 - mile portion of the corridor. In this manner the proposal is grounded in a realistic prediction of generated economic development. Though optimistic, the generated investment and square footage of development illustrated in the proposal is realistic and sound, even for an urban environment as distressed as Detroit.



## PHASE 1 (0 – 10 years)

Given these assumptions, Phase 1 is an immediately feasible approach operating at a level of investment well below the conservative investment assumptions given for the New Center area. Phase 1 focuses on the two transit stations themselves, and those parcels we feel should be developed to complement the activity they would generate.

## PHASE 2 (10 – 20 years)

Phase 2 illustrates how continued development could begin to take place at a level of investment that more closely resembles the assumptions given. This is the development that we believe would occur as a result of the investment generated over a short-term period after the light rail is constructed.

## PHASE 3 (20+ years)

Phase 3 shows what long-term development could likely be leveraged as a result of the light rail and the activity occurring in the initial development phases.

### Investment Assumption Data from:

Lang, Ann. [Quoting John Hertel]. (2009, Jan. 14). "TRAIL Welcomes New Legislation Key to Advancing Detroit's Woodward Transit Line." Downtown Detroit Partnership.

### Building Cost Data from:

Reed Construction Data Inc. (2008). "RS Means Square Foot Costs." 29th ed. Kingston, MA.

Engineering News Record. (2009). "Square Foot Costbook." Design and Construction Resources.