

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY AVENUE: BEFORE THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Created by the students and faculty of the *Transportation Geography Senior Seminar*
and the *Urban Social Geography* courses in the Geography Department at
Macalester College, Spring 2011

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There are many individuals and organizations we would like to thank for their immeasurably valuable help in the process of constructing this Atlas. The Atlas was created by the students and faculty of two Geography courses at Macalester College: the *Transportation Geography Senior Seminar*, taught by Professor Laura Smith, and *Urban Social Geography*, taught by Professor Daniel Trudeau. This project represents an opportunity for students to collaborate with residents, local business owners, organizations, and political leaders on issues relevant to the St. Paul community. A project of this scale and scope could not be completed without the invaluable assistance and support of Macalester College, its faculty, as well as numerous community members and organizations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAP INDEX	i
REFERENCE MAPS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION I: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
Chapter One: Initiating an Era of Development on the Central Corridor: A Cross-Examination of Urban Design Plans with the Form of University Avenue Prior to Light Rail Installation <i>by James Christenson and Mikey Perkins</i>	3
SECTION II: ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
Chapter Two: An Economic History: How Transportation Has Shaped the Economic History of University Avenue <i>by Jillian Benson</i>	37
Chapter Three: Businesses and Consumers: Sales, Expenditures, and Opportunities for the Future <i>by Nolan Levenson</i>	49
Chapter Four: Nighttime: Informal Economies and Street Prostitution <i>by Sarah Ziegenhorn and Corey Koscielniak</i>	80
Chapter Five: Dallas to the Twin Cities: A Quantitative Analysis of Land Value Change from Light Rail Construction <i>by Cory Copeland</i>	100
SECTION III: SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
Chapter Six: Central Corridor Subsidized Housing: Exploring Existing Patterns <i>by Lily Gordon-Koven</i>	117
Chapter Seven: Exploring the Relationship among Transportation, Urban Form and Crime <i>by Jill Goforth</i>	144

Chapter Eight: Evaluating Light Rail Transit as a Tool for Place-Making <i>by Ainsley Judge</i>	171
Chapter Nine: Public Art at Transit Stations <i>by Maya Fehrs</i>	186
SECTION IV: TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ALONG UNIVERSITY AVENUE	
Chapter Ten: The Pedestrian Environment <i>by Katie Purdham</i>	207
Chapter Eleven: Gravity Modeling of Commuting along University Avenue Post-Light Rail Construction <i>by Adam Van der Sluis</i>	217
Chapter Twelve: LRT Traffic Impacts <i>by Troy Groenke</i>	228
SECTION V: GENTRIFICATION AND THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR	
Chapter Thirteen: Who's Your Neighbor? Density and Diversity of Residential Neighborhoods in St. Paul <i>by Bo Scarim</i>	247
Chapter Fourteen: <i>Stops for Us</i> & Susceptibility to Displacement in Rondo <i>by Dan Otte</i>	254
Chapter Fifteen: Where are the Gaps? <i>by Adam Van der Sluis</i>	262
Chapter Sixteen: Gentrification's Possible Effects on the Central Corridor Nonprofit Sector <i>by Emma Kalish</i>	270
Chapter Seventeen: Brownfields: Utilizing Untapped Potential along University Avenue <i>by Lauren Dutkiewicz</i>	277
Chapter Eighteen: University Parking: The True Value of a Parking Space <i>by Jesse Horwitz</i>	285
CONCLUSION	292

MAP INDEX

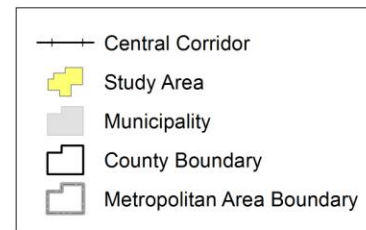
Map Title	Page Number	Map Title	Page Number
Central Corridor: Twin Cities Metropolitan Area	iii	Land Value in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Central Corridor in 2010	111
Central Corridor: St. Paul, Minn.	iv	Affordable Rental Units in Saint Paul, Minn.	124
Central Corridor LRT Station Areas	v	Underserved Block Groups	125
Central Corridor Neighborhoods	vi	Affordable Rent Based on Income	126
Fairview Station Area	4	Average Household Size	127
Snelling Station Area	5	Median Household Income	128
Hamline Station Area	6	Median Income Under \$35,000	129
Lexington Station Area	7	Median Income \$35,000 - \$50,000	130
Victoria Station Area	8	Median Income \$50,000 - \$100,000	131
Dale Station Area	8	Median Income above \$100,000	132
Western Station Area	9	White Population	135
Rice Station Area	10	Non-White Population	136
University Avenue Block Groups	42	Black Population	137
Overall Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures, and Opportunity Gap	56	Hmong Population	138
Retail Sales by Order	57	Hispanic Population	140
Consumer Expenditures by Order	58	Only English Spoken at Home	141
Low-Order Business Sector: Overall Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures, and Opportunity Gap	60	Spanish Spoken in the Home	141
Medium-Order Business Sector: Overall Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures, and Opportunity Gap	61	Asian Language Spoken in the Home	141
High-Order Business Sector: Overall Retail Sales, Consumer Expenditures, and Opportunity Gap	62	Theft Along University Avenue 1937, 1971	149
Consumer Expenditures Per Capita: Low-Order, Medium-Order, High-Order, Overall	66	Theft Along University Avenue 1981, 1991	150
Specific Business Sector Sales: Liquor Store, Food Service, and Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealership	67	Theft Along University Avenue 2001	151
1999 Income by Census Block Group on University Avenue	85	Robbery Along University Avenue 1937, 1971	153
2010 Popular Crime Arrests by Neighborhood	85	Robbery Along University Avenue 1981, 1991	154
2010 Prostitution Arrests on University	91	Robbery Along University Avenue 2001	155
		Aggravated Assault Along University Avenue 1937, 1971	157
		Aggravated Assault Along University Avenue 1981, 1991	158
		Aggravated Assault Along University Avenue 2001	159
		Rape Along University Avenue 1937, 1971	161
		Rape Along University Avenue 1981, 1991	162

Map Title	Page Number
Rape Along University Avenue 2001	163
Burglary Along University Avenue 1937, 1981	165
Burglary Along University Avenue 1991, 2001	166
Tax-Exempt Civic Institutions	177
Neighborhood Tenure by Property Sale Date	181
Types of Station Art Along Central Corridor	196
Sound Pollution Distribution	238
Central Corridor Population Density, 2010 Estimate	250
Central Corridor Racial Diversity: Section 1	251
Central Corridor Racial Diversity: Section 2	251
Central Corridor Racial Diversity: Section 3	251
Residential Parcels, by Occupancy Status, near Rondo Area	258
Central Corridor LRT Stations	
University Avenue Light Rail Corridor	265
Rent Gaps Along University Avenue	267
Potential Brownfield Sites in the Central Corridor	279
Central Corridor Property Values	280
Potential for Brownfield Redevelopment	281
Highlighted Brownfield Redevelopment Potential	282

REFERENCE MAP 1



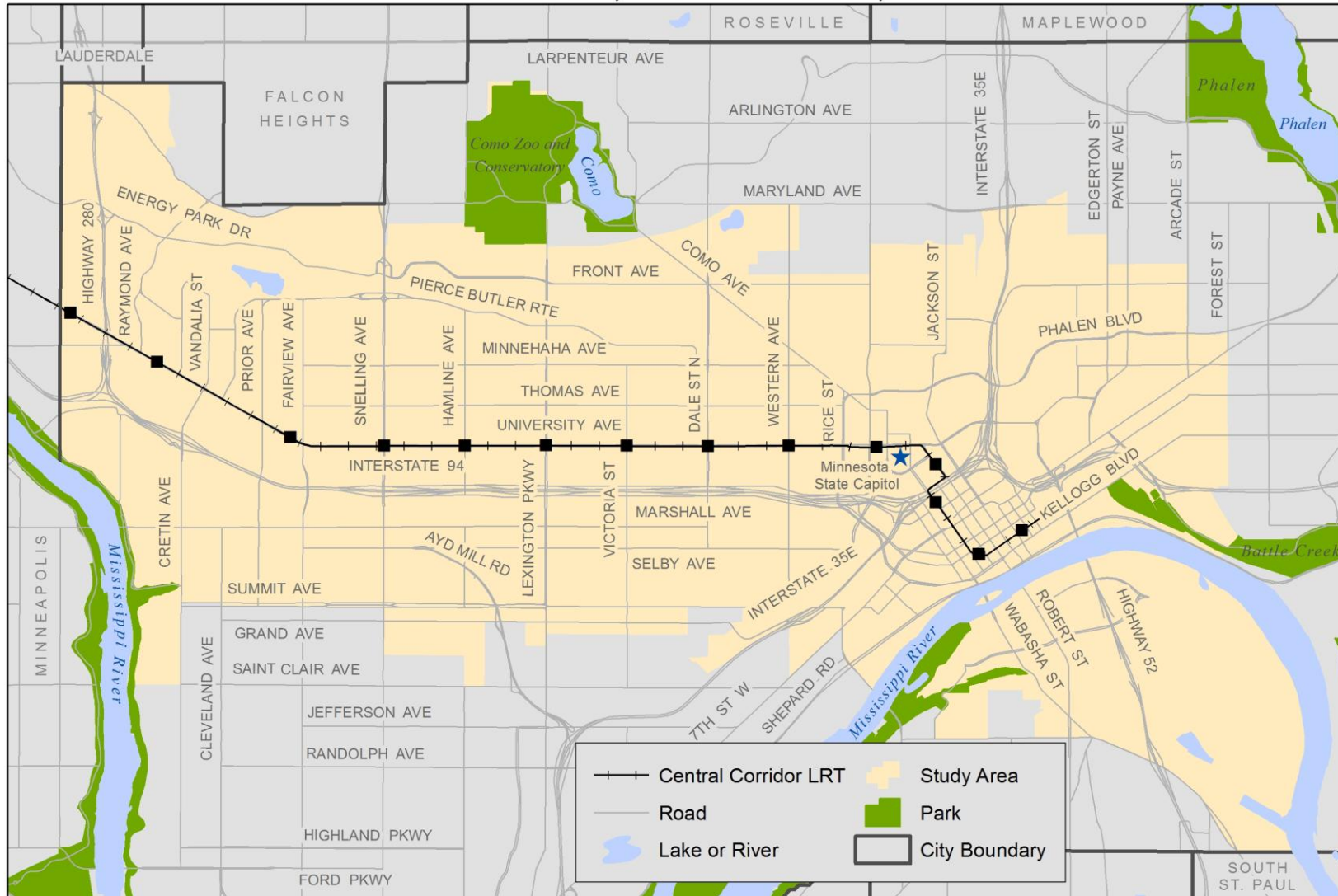
Central Corridor Twin Cities Metropolitan Area



Nolan Levenson
Sources: ESRI, MetroGIS
Projection: NAD83 UTM Zone 15N

REFERENCE MAP 2

Central Corridor, Saint Paul, Minn.

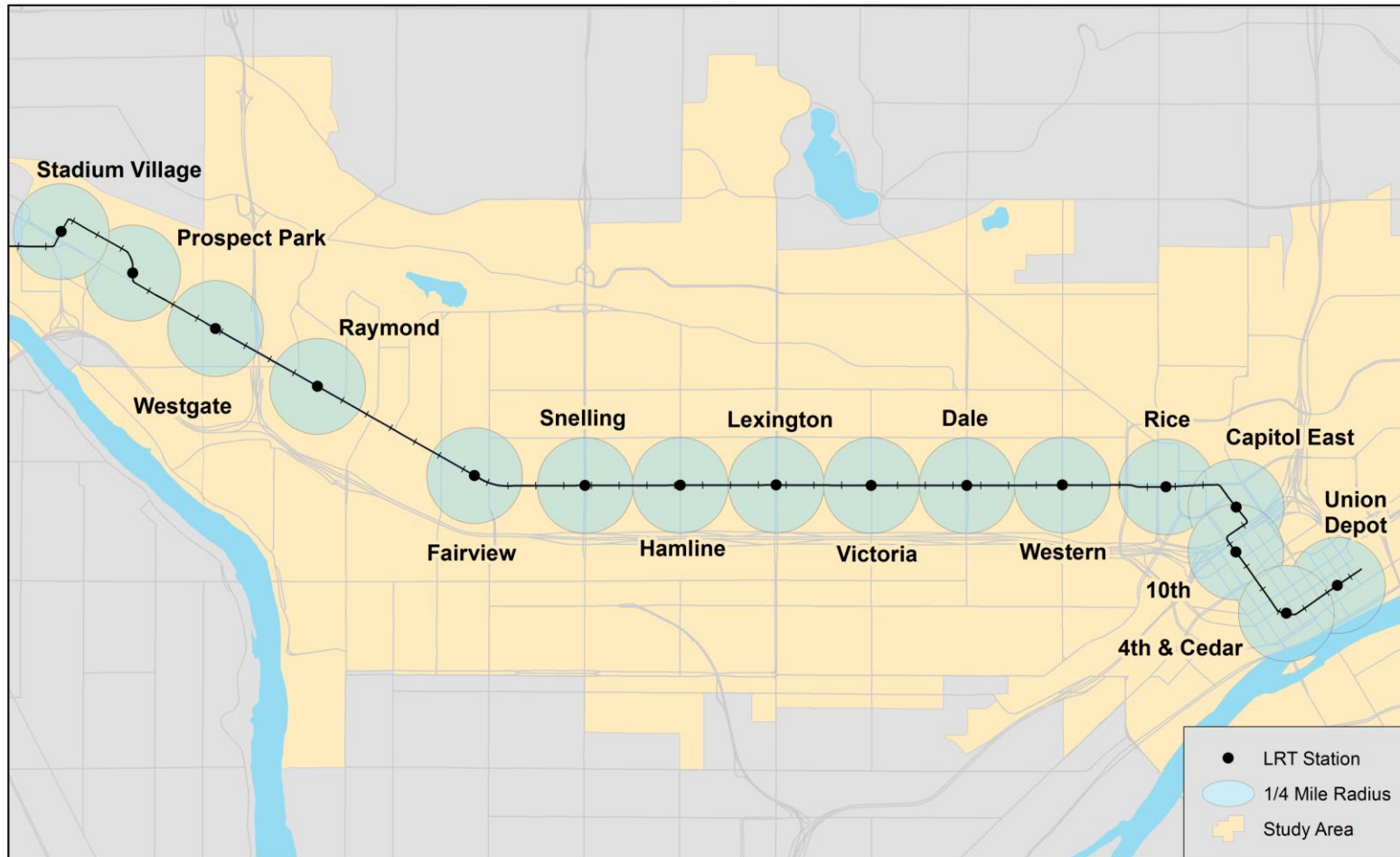


Cartographer: Lily Gordon-Koven, April, 2011
 Source: MetroGIS, ESRI 2010, US Census 2000
 Projection: UTM 15N NAD83

*The Study Area includes all block groups within a one mile radius of the Central Corridor light rail line. 0 1 2 Miles

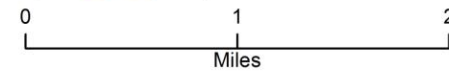
REFERENCE MAP 3

Central Corridor LRT Station Areas



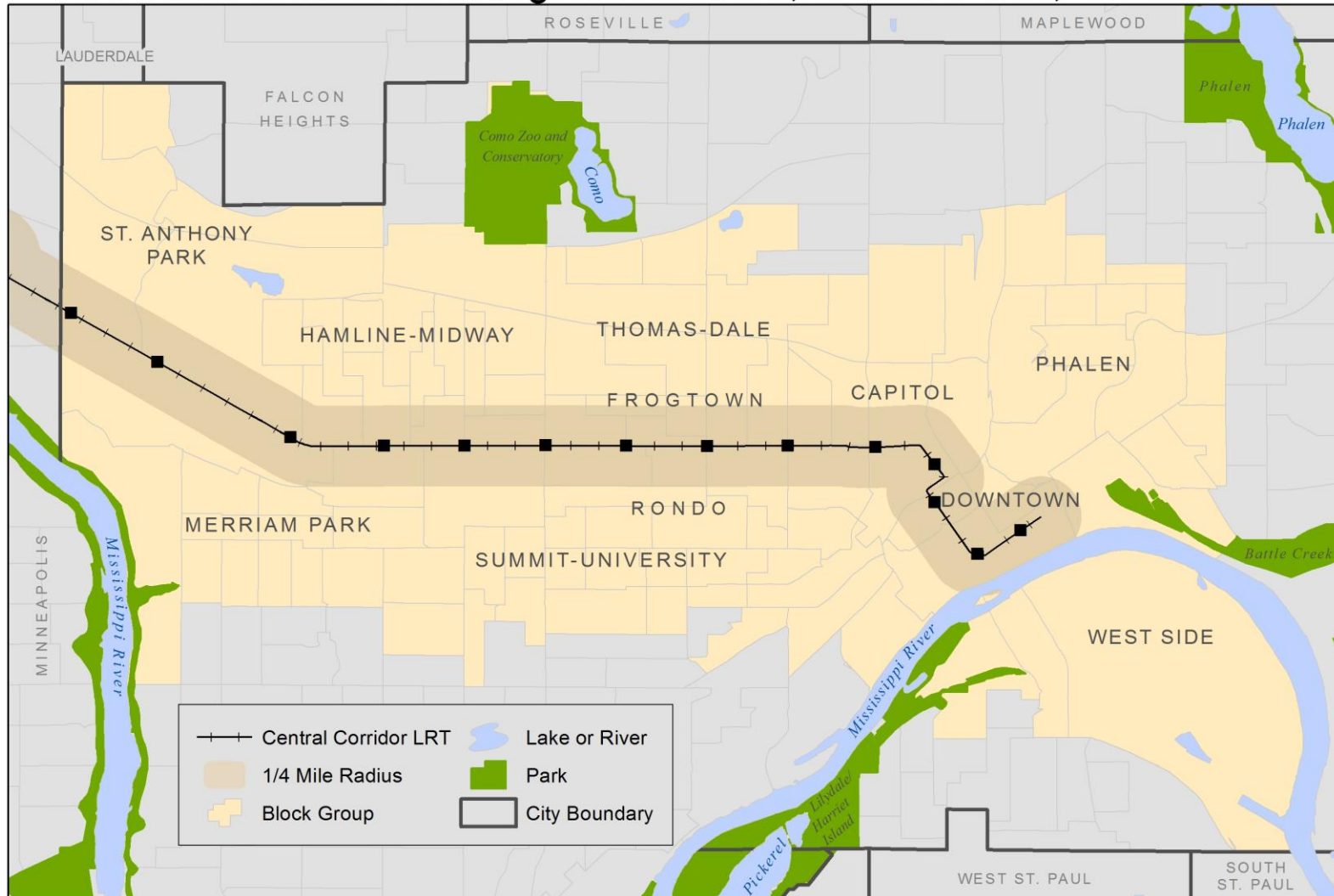
Nolan Levenson
Sources: ESRI, MetroGIS
Projection: NAD83 UTM Zone 15N

*Note that these are not all of the stations in the Corridor.
These are the stations included in our study area.



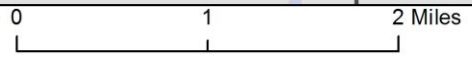
REFERENCE MAP 4

Central Corridor Neighborhoods, Saint Paul, Minn.



Cartographer: Lily Gordon-Koven, April, 2011
 Source: MetroGIS, ESRI 2010, US Census 2000
 Projection: UTM 15N NAD83

*The Study Area includes all block groups within a one mile radius of the Central Corridor light rail line.



INTRODUCTION

The Macalester College Department of Geography takes great pride in a long tradition of civic engagement work in courses and seminars. Some of the most influential and enduring civic engagement projects have resulted in community atlases, such as the Grand Avenue studies produced by Professor David Lanegran's seminars in the 1980s, or the Payne-Arcade atlas in 1998.

The neighborhoods around University Avenue – known as the “Central Corridor” – are poised to transform in dramatic ways through the introduction of Light Rail Transit (LRT). This year represents a unique time in the Twin Cities' transportation history as construction began on the Central Corridor LRT along University Avenue between downtown St. Paul, the University of Minnesota, and downtown Minneapolis. This provided an opportune time to document and analyze the Avenue as an automobile-focused corridor. In a few years, students of another Geography Department seminar will revisit this research and study the effects of converting the Avenue to a transit-

based corridor. The focus of our atlas is to address the question: What will the transition from an automobile-focused to a transit-based system mean for the urban economic geography and social diversity of the Avenue?

Two Geography classes participated in the making of this study: the *Transportation Geography Senior Seminar*, taught by Professor Laura Smith, and *Urban Social Geography*, taught by Professor Daniel Trudeau. Students used a variety of methods, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and qualitative techniques, to investigate the economic and social state of the Avenue. The authors researched the Central Corridor using literary resources as well as through fieldwork, generally conducted through personal observations and interviews. Additionally, there were numerous opportunities throughout the semester for all students to engage with community members, business owners, and political officials who had interest in or knowledge of the University Avenue Light Rail Project.

The students from Professor Laura Smith's Transportation Geography seminar, in fulfilling their Geography capstone requirement,

conducted an original, independent research project on a topic of their choosing that was relevant to University Avenue and the Central Corridor. The six students from Professor Dan Trudeau's Urban Social Geography class focused specifically on the potential for gentrification, one of the preeminent concerns of residents who live along the corridor.

All chapters of the atlas are meant to act largely as a baseline study; most of the chapters include recommendations about what should be analyzed going forward in order to observe changes as they occur during and after light rail construction. The atlas is organized into five sections, the first four including work done by students from the Transportation Geography seminar, followed by a section discussing gentrification along the Corridor completed by the Urban Social Geography class. The section themes progress as follows: I. The Built Environment; II. Economic Impacts of the Built Environment; III. Social Impacts of the Built Environment; IV. Transportation and Accessibility along University Avenue; V. Gentrification and the Central Corridor.