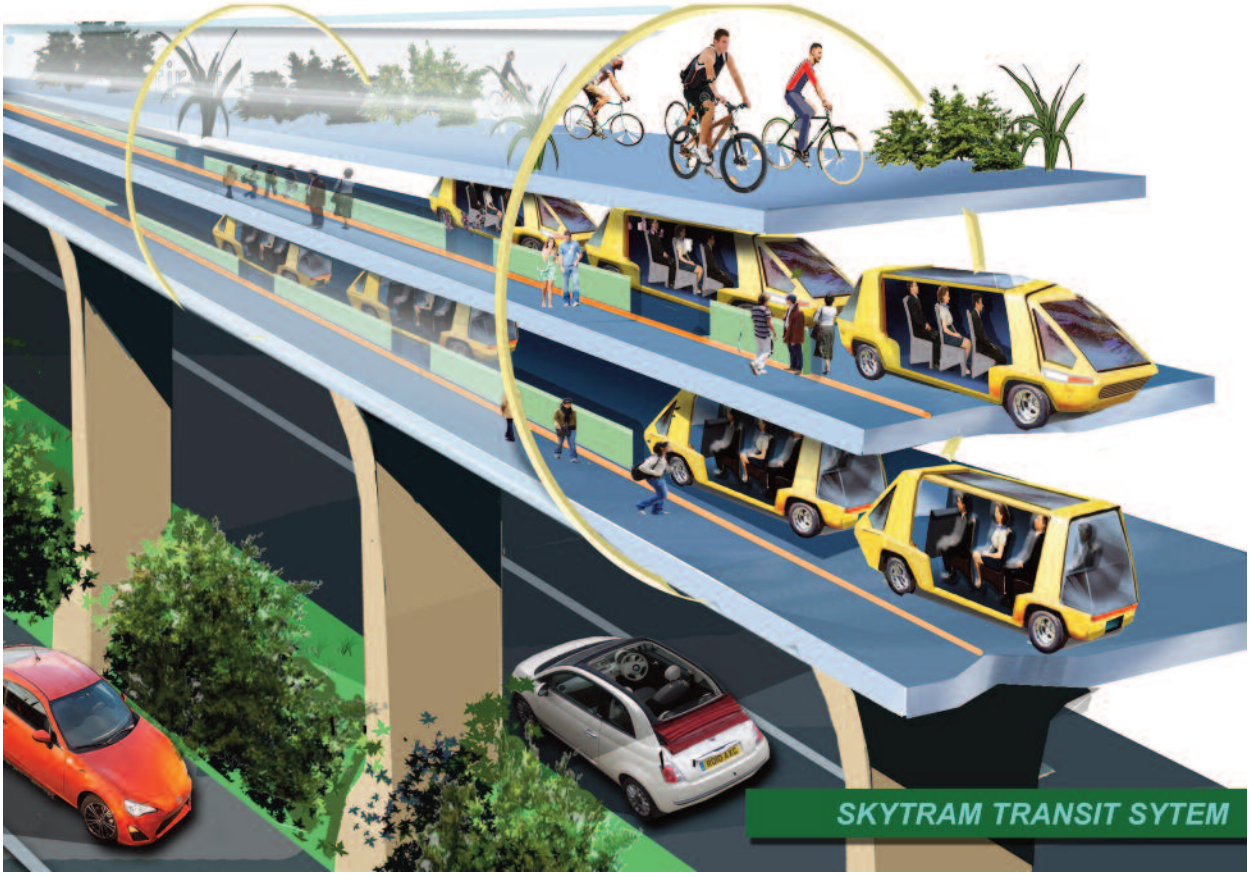
STEP 3: *SKYTRAM*

Skytram is the ideal transit and tourism system for getting around downtown Minneapolis and other concentrated developments, such as what we are proposing for the Arden Hills site. It will connect business and residential sectors. Skytram is an urban and development park application model of the Electric Transport System (ETS), an evolutionary rapid transit option and complement for light rail transit. *(See next page for detailed application.)* ■



The above sketch is one possible configuration of the support and upper superstructure for the Skytram system. The column support could be a single column underneath, one column on each side or a combination depending on the surface it is going over. Again, the general description is that of an advanced, or expanded, 2 or 3 story skyway, like the existing skyway system.

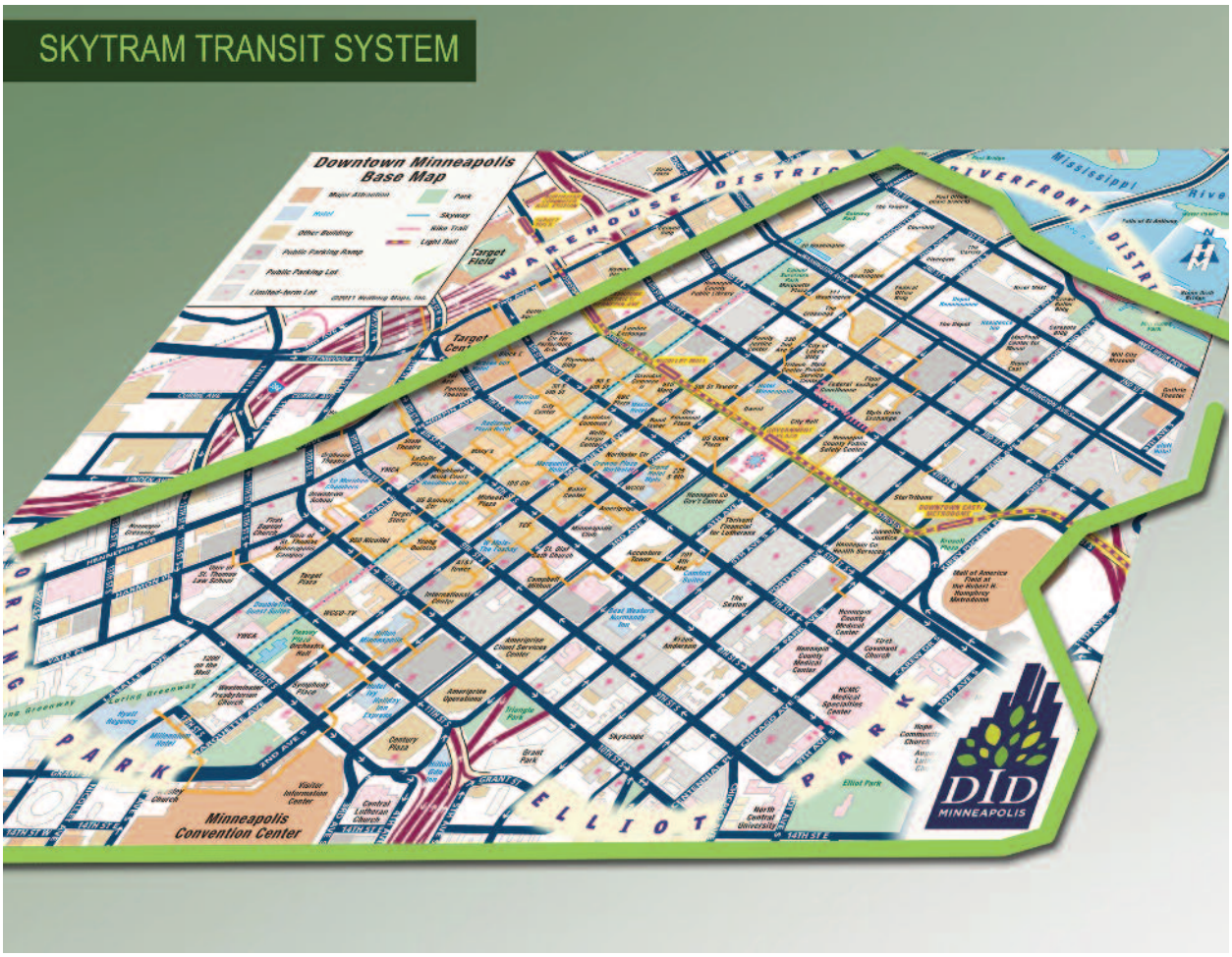
Skytram Minneapolis

The Perfect Marriage of Transit and Tourism

Connecting all the major sectors of retail, residential, and business offices

Imagine driving up to downtown Minneapolis—or more appropriately arriving by light rail—and being greeted by a stunning, elevated, and totally unique "garden concourse" that encircles the entire city center, and actually transports you around and through this vibrant urban core. Then you park near the new Vikings Stadium—or get off light rail transit (LRT)—and enter the newest national sports attraction. Soon you are entering ***Skytram,*** a bright green circular corridor to take you around and through downtown. Currently, outside of LRT and skyways there is a much-needed direct connection to the disparate businesses and residential sectors of downtown and the riverfront.

Skytram **is a multi-tiered "advanced skyway"** with an indoor electric transit system at two and a half or three levels. It is connected to downtown buildings and the Vikings stadium, much like the current skyway system in downtown Minneapolis, but winds "around" and through the city center.



Skytram Transit/Retail Level One

The main level would be wider than most skyways with a common walkway. Along one side of the structure would be the ***Skytram*** transit system of rubber-tired electric trams—standardized vans with sliding doors that bring you to additional destinations either on multiple trams hooked together or on a single tram, driven by an operator and auto guided, but without any expensive guidance structure. They are battery powered, but also could be powered by road-powered electric vehicle (RPEV) technology, which is like an "extension cord" hooked directly to the vehicles.

Retail outlets and restaurant bar stations would be directly accessible on this level and could be multi-leveled structures depending on where they would be located and the investment potential of the tenant. A number of stations (restaurant/bars/cafes) could be Minnesota tourism and downtown business services café "portals," i.e., brick and mortar webstores where you would purchase tickets, merchandise and services while having coffee, lunch or dinner.

Skytram should be designed to promote everything and not compete with current downtown development. It is intended to drive traffic, literally, to the rest of downtown, the city, and the state. Existing retailers and attractions would be given every opportunity to have a structural and promotional presence.

Skytram Green Path Level Two

Trams on one side and a bikeway, electric bike, running and walking path through a garden corridor. Large windows may open and it could open to third level sunlight during appropriate weather months.

Skytram Garden Level Three

The first, miles long, linear greenhouse, green roof, garden and solar panel level (or roof structure for the bottom two levels). It would be mostly enclosed, but possibly open late spring, summer and early fall. ***Skytram*** would be designed to be one of the most "FUTURE GREEN" structures in the country, if not the globe. It will be a living laboratory and evolving structure.

Convention hotel/anchor tenants

As envisioned for downtown Minneapolis, ***Skytram*** could be incorporated (or vice-versa) into a uniquely designed linear convention center hotel attached to the Vikings Stadium and Minneapolis Convention Center. An anchor retail tenant could also be designed into a linear/circular model. For instance, anchor tenants could be stretched over many blocks directly accessible to the public on one or more levels.

Phase One

The ***Skytram*** corridor is envisioned to "wrap" around the east and southeast sides of downtown and connect the new Vikings Stadium to the existing convention center. A convention center hotel would have the stadium complex for potential event use, and where space allows along the corridor, large event spaces would be designed, likely near the restaurant bar stations to cover the more expensive expansion of the corridor. Suggested tenants would include Target, Life Time Fitness, and Best Buy.

Phase Two

The next ***Skytram*** connection would likely either go across the river to St. Anthony Main or from the Convention Center to the West Entertainment District. St. Anthony Main has long struggled as a retail sector, but now has many residents who cannot easily access the downtown area and vice versa. Even during the summer months, relatively few people traverse the river from downtown or vice versa.

Why is Skytram vital to city centers (downtowns), especially Minneapolis and Saint Paul? Why will it be a unique attraction and use?

1) **Transit:** Downtown Minneapolis and Saint Paul, in spite of light rail and skyways, have large retail, residential and parking sectors that are not directly, or more importantly, conveniently and closely connected to the most populated sectors. The two cities have for decades tried to connect these sectors without success. Also, blocks of meandering skyways have not been the answer to maximizing the attractions and revenue of the super connected malls, business communities and now residential sectors that the downtown areas provide.
2) **Tourism:** A system that entertains, allows people to see the city, provides easy access to every part of the city, actually transports people efficiently, and is one of kind in the world will be a certain tourist attraction.
3) Minneapolis and Saint Paul need to compete with the Mall of America to provide more revenue to reduce property taxes for all Twin Cities residents.
4) We typically have eight months of inclement weather that negatively affects mobility.
5) No northern city has a year-round bikeway, walkway, running track, and indoor/outdoor garden/green space encompassing and showcasing the city. ■