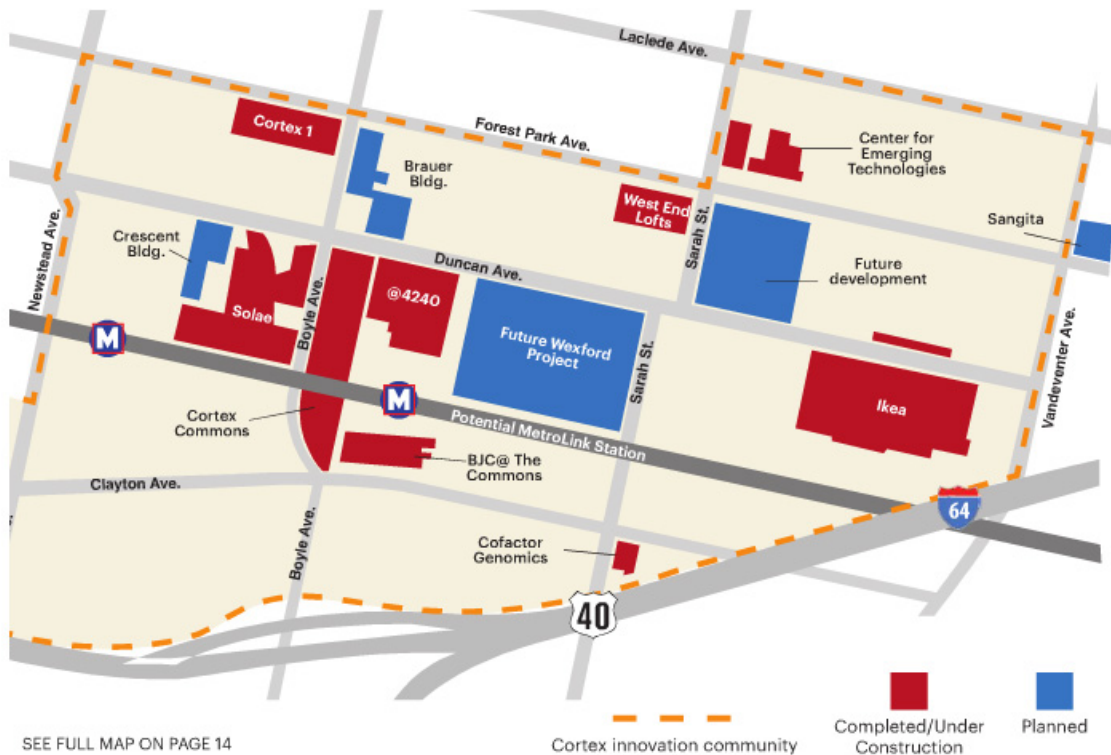


CORTEX

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in the Botanical Heights neighborhood. St. Louis-based Urban Improvement Company (UIC) bought the building in October for \$125,000.

UIC Managing Principal Brent Crittenden said the firm is poised to benefit from innovation at Cortex just a few blocks away.

"It's going to be a huge area for growth," Crittenden said. "Nowhere else in the region is there more invest-

ment lined up over the next several years than in this area. We've been laying the groundwork for the last couple of years and we're starting to see it pay out."

Lower said Cortex plans to buy more land in the future to build out the district from edge to edge – the district stretches along Interstate 64 from Newstead Avenue to Vandeventer Avenue, extending north to Forest Park Avenue.

After Ikea is finished – the retail giant is expected to be completed in summer 2015 – Lower said officials will turn their focus

toward a seven-acre site, currently the U.S. Metals & Supply site between @4240 and Ikea, that Wexford purchased in December and will develop into multiple buildings with usage similar to that of @4240. A mid-rise residential building, hotel and retail tenants are also planned, Lower said.

"The building pads we have right now should hold us for a few years but we are beginning to look at strategic planning around acquiring additional land," he said.

Until then, he's working to turn Cortex

into a dense cluster of entrepreneurs who drive company formation and "populate the whole central corridor from the Arch all the way out to West County."

Sherwood said the district reminds him of Cambridge before it became a national tech hot spot.

"Cortex to us feels very much like what Cambridge was a few years ago," he said. "Marry that into the vision and accomplishments Cortex already has and we feel like we are getting in right before it's all about to catch fire."

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