

blocks with the IDS Crystal Court as its primary hub. By 2002 there were 5 miles (8 kilometres) of skyways and tunnels, and 62 bridges (see Figure 10.22 for an example). They join 65 blocks linking 2000 stores, plus coffee shops and kiosks, 34 restaurants, 1500 apartment units, 4000 hotel rooms and 2 million square feet (190,000 square metres) of office space. In mid-2002, Minneapolis' city-planning department unveiled the final phase of the plan focusing on completing the remaining links by 2015. It also specified that the links (or alternatives) had to be operational while buildings were under construction or renovation.

The Skyway Advisory Service, part of the municipal government's Downtown Council, was formed in the late 1970s. While it is only an advisory service it has developed considerable political clout over the years. It is thus able to insist on particular types of links even though private corporations whose buildings are joined own the links. Building the links is not easy. To build across a street, owners first must obtain an encroachment permit and post a \$500,000 bond to cover later removal costs if they become necessary. The cost of a link varies from about \$550,000 to \$6.3 million. The former is for a standard link between two buildings and the latter is the cost of the skyway and tunnel combination linking Minneapolis City Hall with the United States Court House, the Grain Exchange and the Jerry Haaf Memorial Ramp.

The design of the links must follow a number of guidelines and controls. The links must be at least 3.6 metres (12 feet) wide and no wider than 8.27 metres (27 feet), and be horizontal in appearance even if their passageway slopes. Street clearance must be 5.2 metres (17 feet) and they must have

glass walls to make orientation easier for the users of the system. The trade-off is that heat gains and losses are high with such walls. The design guidelines for the exterior appearance are highly permissive so the look of the bridges varies considerably. They are supposed to be 'in harmony' with the buildings they link. Achieving 'harmony' is often difficult because the appearances of the buildings the links join are often very different. The links themselves cannot be used for retail purposes and the handing out of political literature is prohibited. They are truly just links. They do block certain vistas for the pedestrian in the street but they create new vistas for those on the links.

While the skywalk is in the ownership of many private hands, it is open to the public from 6.30 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and for shorter periods on weekend days. It is very well patronized especially during winter months when temperatures often plunge well below zero degrees celsius and even fahrenheit. The busiest link is between the IDS Block and the Baker Block. Twenty-three thousand people use it each day. They are primarily middle class and almost 60% of them are women.

Is the skyway a success? One hallmark of its success is the increase in the number of links over the years. They have been deemed to be desirable. It is certainly successful in terms of the comfort, ease and sense of security that it provides pedestrians. It is in terms of second floor retail activity. It has, however, taken much business off the street level. Closed shops attest to that. At the same time, the downtown area of the city has become more attractive to investors in terms of what it offers. It has enabled the city centre to compete with suburban sites for development although the cost of building bridges