Block group nine, which is confined by present-day West Sixth Street, Brazos Street, Lavaca Street, and West Fourth Street, has consistently been occupied by residential, consumerism, and services. In 1885, all blocks had a prominence of residential and industrial/manufacturing uses, and in 1935, these blocks evolved to chiefly offer services and commerce (retail or wholesale). In 2017, almost all blocks changed to be occupied mainly by services, offices, and parking.

In 1885, the group’s land use consisted primarily of residential and industrial/manufacturing purposes. Blocks 42, 43, 44, 54, 55, and 56 all demonstrated use of land for residential space. Some blocks (e.g. 42, 43, and 56) contained scattered residential buildings; conversely, blocks like 44, 54, and 55 clumped their residential buildings together. For example, approximately half of the side of block 44 on W. Cedar (4th St.) was used for residential purposes, and the section of block 54 adjacent to Lavaca street was also heavily used for residential space. Additionally, all blocks in the block group contained some arrangement of services, the large majority of which were non-specialized. However, block 55 contained the specialized entertainment service of an opera theatre. Alongside these services and residential real estate were industrial and manufacturing land uses. For example, block 42 contained a self-printing newspaper called Cigar News, and block 43 was occupied by cement manufacturers and
a shoe maker. Furthermore, block 54 contained a printing press, block 55 contained a blacksmith, wagon (manufacturing) shop, and a millinery (hatmaker), and block 56 was occupied in part by a shoemaker.

From 1885 to 1935, almost all blocks experienced a significant increase in either services or commerce, and in most cases both. For example, block 56 had a great amount of variety in land use in 1885. It had a variety of storage, residences, offices, commerce, services, and manufacturing. However, by 1935, many spaces in our group’s blocks were replaced by retail, wholesale, and services.

In 1935, the block group shifted from industries and residences to being dominated by service and commerce. Blocks 42, 43, 55, and 56 experienced a sharp increase in non-specialized retail, while block 56 offered a large amount of wholesale commerce. At this time, the west side of our block group was characterized by an increase of non-specialized services; in the case of blocks 44 and 54, services changed from a specialized services like hotels to the less specialized services of used auto dealerships. The eastern side of our block group is dominated by an increase in retail. In particular, block 44 had a building dedicated to motor freight lines, and the block was predominantly occupied by warehouses while blocks 42 and 43 demonstrated an increase in retail oriented land use. In 1935, these blocks consistently presented services, commerce (retail & wholesale), and warehouses/storage spaces, potentially suggesting a commercial district.

Nearly every block exhibits a substantial amount of parking for 2017. Blocks 42, 43, 54, 55, and 56 all are representative of the increase of parking lots and garages from 1935 to 2017. In 2017, the block group’s land use reflects the overall downtown shift to service, leisure, and workspace. Blocks 44, 54, and 55 are all homes to office spaces, something that would not have
been found on the blocks in 1885. Block 55 especially experienced an uptick in office space from 1935 to 2017 while retail decreased dramatically. Blocks 42, 54, 55, and 56 all have banks within their lots. For example, block 42 contains Austin’s iconic Frost Bank Tower, block 54 is occupied by Chase, and block 56 contains a Bank of America Financial Center. Along with the offices in blocks 42, 54, and 55 our block group suggests that it is a small fragment of Austin’s financial center. On Block 42 and Block 56, workout facilities are present. This is representative of the shift towards health awareness that the U.S. has been experiencing in the past 20 years. Workout facilities and gyms were not a popular idea in 1935 much less in 1885.

In 2017, services, offices, and parking become the dominant land uses. In minor exception, block 55 contains a high density residential multi-family building; no other block has any sort of residential space. Furthermore, block 55 noticeably shifted from retail land use to service based land use; blocks 42 and 43 share this trend. Other blocks today are also service bound, especially block 44. However, parking or offices were more prevalent in blocks like 54 and 56. The overall trend for 2017 is a prevalence of services (bars, banks and restaurants), office spaces, and parking.

Over time, our block group’s land use has changed dramatically from residential and industrial/manufacturing during 1885, towards an emphasis upon retail and wholesale commerce in 1935. From 1935 to the present, we observe that services, parking, and offices have become the dominant land uses in 2017. Despite some anomalies, our six blocks in group nine have generally adhered to these trends.