



# Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan

An Update to the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan



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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Overview

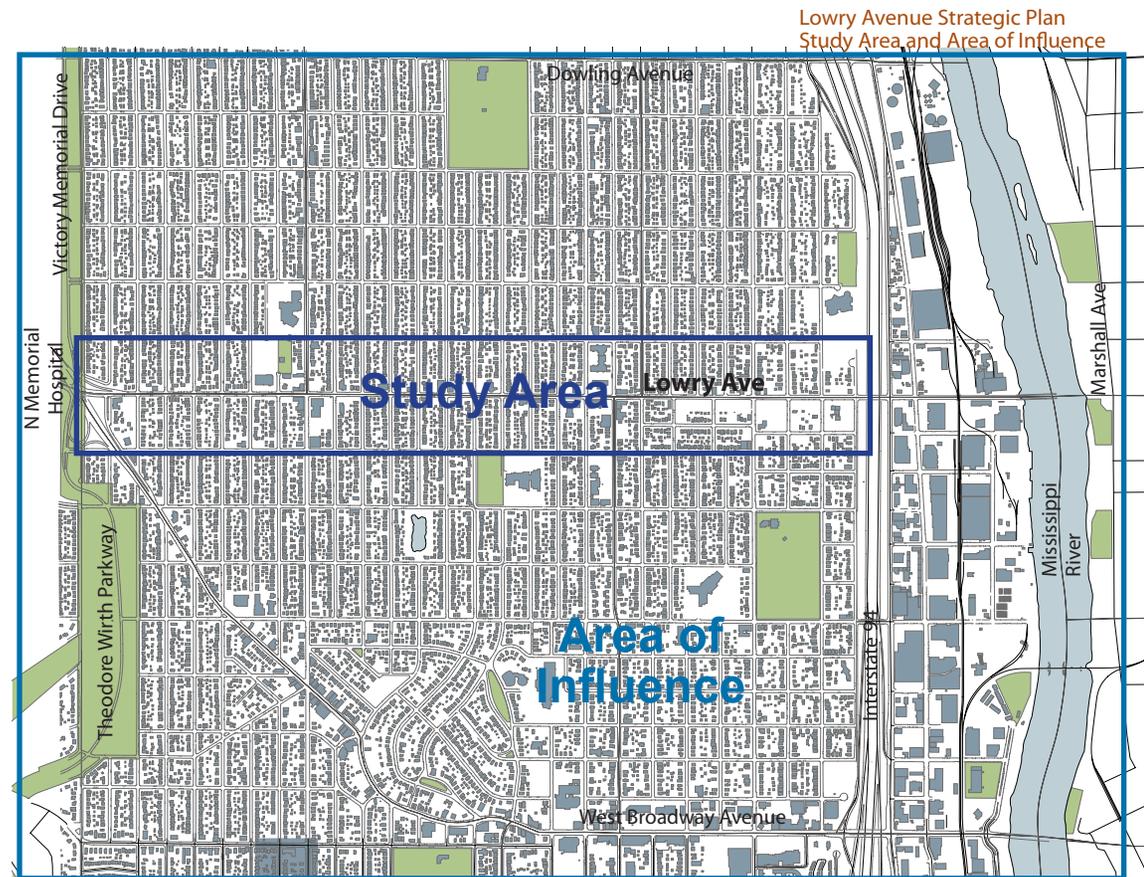
Lowry Avenue has a new look in North Minneapolis. Outfitted with planted boulevards, wider sidewalks, new benches, bus shelters, and light fixtures, the recently realigned and repaved Lowry is the first major physical change resulting from the 2002 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan.

The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan established a compelling general vision for Lowry Avenue, and emphasized the public infrastructure improvements that could be made to make the corridor more appealing and attractive. This plan, the Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan, builds on the foundation established by the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan, providing a complementary focus and recommendations. It includes the development of more detailed long-term land use and development guidance than was offered in the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan. And it offers a holistic implementation program for incentivizing property and business investments along Lowry Avenue. The implementation program is comprised of strategies and actions that can be initiated and supported by various Lowry Avenue stakeholders such as the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the neighborhood organizations, Lowry Avenue businesses, and developers.

The plan's study area was the subject of detailed consideration. It extends from the city limits on the west to the Mississippi River on the east, and from 30th to 33rd Avenues. But the study area is subject to many important influences that are outside of these boundaries. Important examples include the Mississippi River to the east, North Memorial Hospital to the west, and the retail offerings on West Broadway Avenue.

There were three parts to the planning process:

- **Background Scan.** Initial review of materials, study area and market conditions. Community meeting and focus groups focused on project introduction, and community goals and investment priorities.
- **Sharpening the Vision.** Land use and development guidance utilizing development scenarios for several key areas along Lowry Avenue. Community meeting and focus group input was solicited in response to analysis, maps and development scenarios.
- **Implementation Plan.** Implementation strategies for Lowry Avenue development and placemaking. Community meeting was held and feedback solicited on proposed implementation strategies, and a detailed future land use map.



## 1.2 History of Lowry

Lowry Avenue was shaped by many influences over the course of the last century. Settlement patterns and demographic shifts, changes in transportation technology and American shopping habits--these and other elements contributed to the present appearance and functionality of Lowry Avenue.

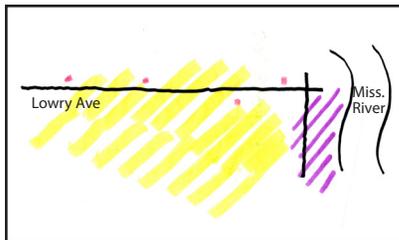
Although it is beyond the scope of this document to capture its history in depth, the sketches below highlight some of the events that were significant in this story. Some additional historical information related to transportation can be found in Chapter 3.

## 1.3 Origin of This Planning Initiative

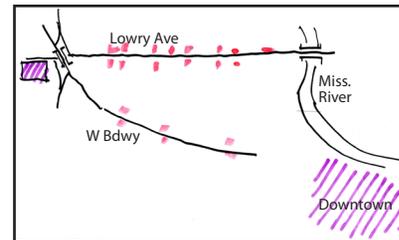
This Plan is the result of a process initiated by the five neighborhood organizations that border on Lowry Avenue—Cleveland, Folwell, Hawthorne, Jordan, and McKinley. At the conclusion of the reconstruction of Lowry, a much more attractive and pedestrian-friendly street and sidewalk environment had been created. This led to discussion between the neighborhoods about how to foster the complementary private investments on Lowry that would keep the momentum going, and make the corridor more attractive and vibrant. They agreed to collaborate on a planning project

that would focus community and City attention on the Lowry corridor, identifying additional strategies for revitalizing the corridor. The process was funded by neighborhood NRP monies and a City of Minneapolis Great Streets grant.

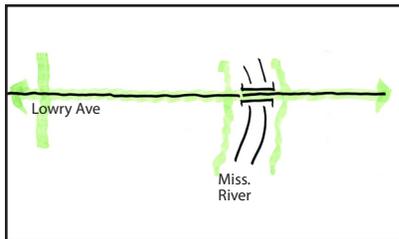
CPED Planning Division staff served as the project manager. The Cuningham Group, in collaboration with key personnel from Donjek and Biko Associates, was hired to assist with the development of the plan and the community engagement process.



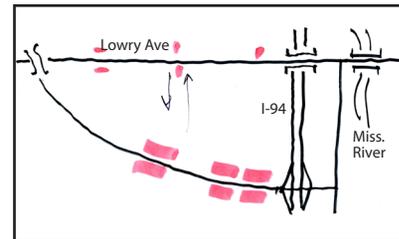
**1900s:**  
Development reached Lowry.



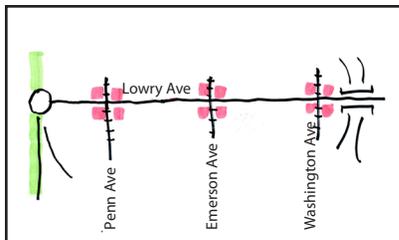
**1950s:**  
North Memorial established.  
Downtown grew.  
Bridge over Lowry replaced traffic circle in the 1960s.



**1915:**  
Park Board planned to use Lowry as northern path of Grand Rounds.  
Bridge linked North and North-east Minneapolis.



**1980s:**  
I-94 completed without access to Lowry.  
Emerson & Fremont became one-way pair.



**1930s:**  
Streetcars served Penn, Emerson and Washington Avenue.  
Traffic circle connected Lowry, West Broadway, and Crystal Lake Road.



**2002:**  
Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan envisioned new road and streetscape, three retail nodes.

## 1.4 Related Plans & Policies

### Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan (2002)

The foundational plan for Lowry Avenue, the Corridor Plan includes recommendations related to street and streetscape improvements, transit facilities, the commercial nodes, green space connections, and phasing.

#### Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

The Lowry Avenue Corridor plan recommends consolidating the scattered commercial businesses into three commercial nodes—at Penn, Emerson-Fremont, and Lyndale Avenues. Each of these north-south corridors hosts a bus line. Specific recommendations for the nodes include:

- Penn: consolidate commercial uses.
- Emerson-Fremont: add retail and residential and extend 31st Avenue between Dupont and Humboldt Avenues. Designate as a transit node, a key intersection for the Bottineau transit corridor.



- Lyndale: add retail and residential.

For all areas, the Corridor Plan recommends rezoning and supporting incremental change.

#### Green Space Connections

The Corridor Plan advocates for green space connections to connect Lowry to nearby amenities and add value to the corridor. These include:

- Enhancing the connection between Lowry Avenue and the Victory Memorial and Theodore Wirth Parkways.
- Connecting Jordan Park School to Folwell Park with a green corridor along Humboldt Avenue.
- Connecting Cityview School and Farview Park with a green corridor along 4th Street.
- Making a strong connection with the Mississippi River as recommended in the Above the Falls Plan.

### Retail Market Analysis (2005)

The Retail Market Analysis looked at the Emerson-Fremont and Lyndale Neighborhood Commercial Nodes on Lowry, and made recommendations for retail development for the two areas.

- Emerson-Fremont: Expand the range of retail and service businesses for an expanded market area.

- Lyndale: Add destination retail and service businesses on both south corners.

### North Minneapolis Market Strategy (2008)

The North Minneapolis Market Strategy was an independent look at the entire North Minneapolis retail landscape. Its important general conclusion is that there is insufficient customer market to sustain high quality retail businesses at the numerous retail nodes and centers that exist in North Minneapolis. It devotes specific attention to each designated retail area, including those along Lowry Avenue. It offered the following recommendations for the Lowry Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

- Penn: retain as strong neighborhood business district with a focus on convenience retail and fast food, as well as some non-retail commercial such as medical offices.
- Emerson-Fremont: consider reinventing as an Asian-focused ethnic specialty commercial district since the node is currently weak.
- Lyndale: maintain some convenience retail, but due to limited trade area it should be mostly residential

## 1.4 Related Plans & Policies

continued

### West Broadway Alive Plan (2008)

The West Broadway Alive Plan is a plan for the revitalization of West Broadway Avenue. From the Mississippi River to James Avenue, West Broadway is about a mile south of Lowry. At James Avenue, West Broadway turns northeast, and intersects with Lowry at the western city border. West Broadway is a direct influence on Lowry, as it is the center of North Minneapolis commercial activity. In comparison with West Broadway, Lowry Avenue serves as a more neighborhood-focused retail area. The economic analysis conducted as part of the West Broadway Alive process includes information relevant to Lowry Avenue.

### Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (2009)

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, the City's overall guiding planning document, designates Lowry Avenue as a Community Corridor. According to the Plan, a Community Corridor is a minor arterial with moderate traffic volumes, and "is primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections" called Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. The kinds of commercial uses that characterize Community Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are "generally small-scale retail sales and services, serving the immediate neighborhood." Three Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are designated in the comprehensive plan along Lowry Avenue—Penn, Emerson-Fremont, and Lyndale.

The recommended scale of development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes is high density (50 to 100 du/acre). On community corridors it is medium-density (20-50 dU/acre), with transitions to low-density in surrounding areas.

### Homegrown Minneapolis (In Progress)

Homegrown Minneapolis is a policy initiative which strives to "improve the growth, sales, distribution, and consumption of fresh, locally grown foods in order to positively impact the health, food security, economy, and environment of the city and surrounding region."

Land Access Recommendations from a 2009 progress report include the following:

- Establish a system that makes readily available open spaces accessible to residents who want to grow food.
- Develop a city land use policy framework that strategically prioritizes and preserves land in every sector of the city for food production purposes.
- Design new development and redevelopment projects (residential and commercial) in the city in ways that allow potential food production.



## 1.5 Existing Conditions

### Population

The study area includes parts of the five neighborhoods of Cleveland, Folwell, McKinley, Jordan, and Hawthorne. As of 2000, approximately 31,000 people lived in these five neighborhoods, based on the US Census. Population numbers remained stable or grew between 1980 and 2000. Neighborhood demographics are heavily weighted toward children, youth and young adults. In Hawthorne, Jordan, McKinley, and Folwell, about half the population is under twenty-five years of age. Cleveland is an exception, with a more balanced age profile. All neighborhoods recorded an increase in minority and immigrant populations between 1980 and 2000.

There are distinct differences in income levels and number of people living in poverty between the neighborhoods north and south of Lowry. As of 2000, households in Cleveland, Folwell, and McKinley (north of Lowry) averaged from slightly below to just above the Minneapolis median household income, while average household incomes in Jordan and Hawthorne (south of Lowry) are significantly below the city average.

### Housing

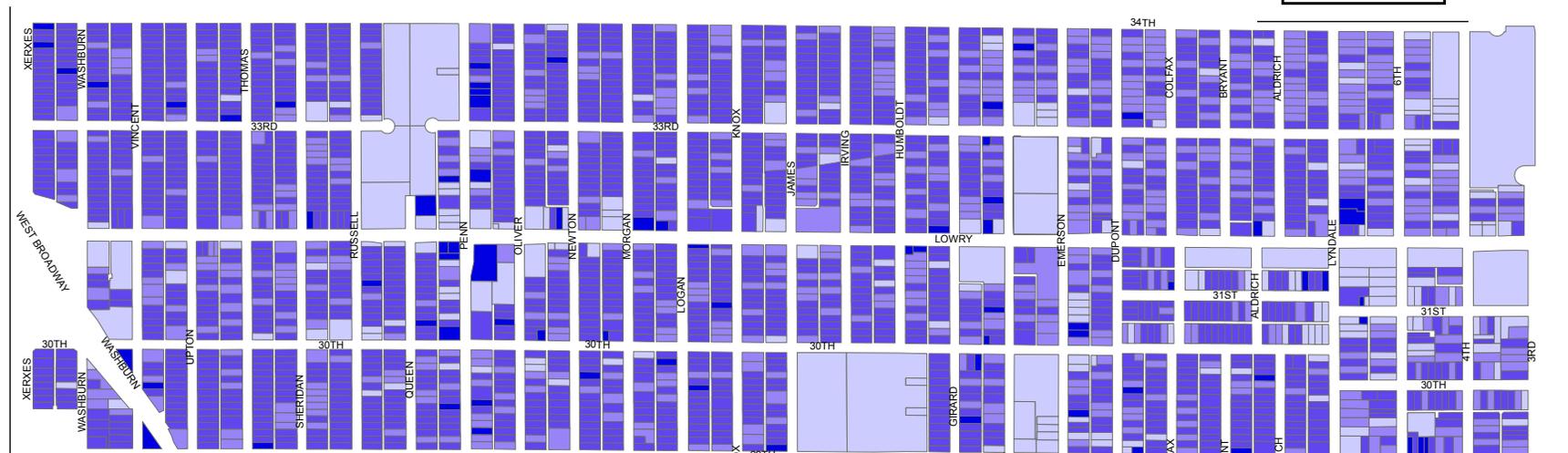
Housing in the five neighborhoods consists mostly of single-family detached houses built in the early 20th Century. A limited number of flats in high-rise buildings exist in Jordan and Hawthorne. Other multi-family housing development,

ranging from duplexes through small apartment buildings, are found scattered throughout the five neighborhoods.

In the Hawthorne Neighborhood, there are a good many more renter-occupied houses than owner-occupied. In Jordan there are roughly equal numbers of both. In the three neighborhoods north of Lowry Avenue, most single family homes are owner-occupied.

The foreclosure crisis has impacted all of the Lowry Avenue neighborhoods, as evidenced by for sale signs, vacant and boarded buildings, etc.

## Lowry Avenue -- Value per Square Foot



## 1.5 Existing Conditions

continued

### Commercial

Commercial uses are concentrated primarily at two intersections: Penn, and Emerson-Fremont. But other retail and service businesses are found intermittently along the length of Lowry, interspersed with housing. There is a high vacancy rate in commercial properties along Lowry, and some buildings are in disrepair.

### Amenities

In North Minneapolis, Theodore Wirth Parkway and Victory Memorial Drive anchor a pattern of higher residential values on the west side of the study area. Conversely, impacts from Interstate 94 contribute to lower residential values on the east. The amenity value of the Mississippi River does not seem to influence property values on Lowry, which testifies to both its disconnection from these neighborhoods, and the fact that park and recreational features have not been developed along this part of the City's riverfront.

Other community assets contribute to the value of the Lowry Avenue neighborhoods. These include schools, parks, and institutions, as well as neighborhood retail and services. The newly constructed Lowry Avenue, with generous sidewalks, benches, and unified feel has become a community asset in its own right. Specific amenities identified by stakeholders include:

- Established neighborhoods
- Community pride
- Schools and parks

- North Regional Library
- Anchor businesses
- Transit Service
- Excellent north-south access
- Stable residential markets in Cleveland
- New developments like the Hawthorne Eco-Village
- Proximity to downtown
- Future access to the Mississippi River
- Planned greenways
- Access to Grand Rounds
- North Memorial Hospital

Victory Memorial Drive



## 1.6 Market Summary

### Commercial Marketplace

Lowry Avenue once was a thriving commercial corridor. Over time, however, cultural and technological shifts led to households buying fewer goods and services in their own neighborhoods. More shopping is now done further away in big box oriented commercial destinations. Lowry can and should recapture a greater local customer market, but it will continue to contend with competition from destinations further afield. Closer to home, it will need to carve out a niche as an attractive source of neighborhood goods and services alongside the destination-oriented goods and services offered at nearby West Broadway Avenue.

Lowry Avenue's commercial buildings are characterized by substantial vacancy rates. Despite a limited supply of commercial space, vacancy rates are high and rents are extremely low. The low rents place downward price pressure on all commercial space on Lowry, further decreasing the viability of the marketplace. Commercial vacancies on Lowry have been aggravated by the current recession and associated stress in the real estate market.

Because commercial space is sparsely scattered along the length of the Avenue, customer traffic around and between the commercial areas is limited. This adds to the sense of emptiness, and the perceived lack of safety in some areas. It also hampers the benefits retailers and office users could receive from additional foot traffic and the mixing of patronage between businesses.

Despite the challenges, Lowry Avenue has some

significant commercial success stories. Many businesses, such as So Low Grocery, North End Hardware, and Tooties, thrive by filling niches for items desired locally and around the region. Aldi and Family Dollar also draw from the larger community.

Still, the attraction of West Broadway as a community hub for products and services, negative perceptions of North Minneapolis in the region, and a profile of commercial space that spreads foot traffic over a lengthy area—each of these factors impacts the prospects for reinvigorating Lowry Avenue's retail and office marketplace.

### Housing Marketplace

The residential marketplace is similarly stressed, with the foreclosures and vacancies compounding long-standing neighborhood conditions which undermine renovation and reinvestment efforts.

Although the housing marketplace is improving, the neighborhoods on the Lowry Avenue corridor continue to struggle with the impact of recession on both the job and housing market.

These stresses are not limited to areas on and around the Lowry Avenue corridor, but the market here is more sensitive to the negative consequences of these shifts due to homogeneity of housing stock and perceptions about the neighborhood that already limit the homeowner and investor markets.

### Marketplace Opportunities

Although the availability of commercial and residential space and comparatively modest prices reflect challenging neighborhood conditions, they are also seeds of opportunity from an economic development perspective. They can be leveraged as an asset to attract new market interest in the Lowry area.



## 1.7 Public Participation

### Planning Process

Over a six-month period, there were three community meetings, focus groups and interviews, and regular meetings with the steering committee and technical advisory committee .

### Steering Committee

The steering committee helped guide the process and served as liaisons to the neighborhoods and businesses. The 20-member steering committee met monthly. Members included:

- 8 neighborhood representatives.
- 3 community representatives.
- 1 business owner.
- 1 non-profit developer.
- 3 organization leaders/directors/managers.
- 1 Minneapolis City Council member.
- 2 CPED representatives.
- 2 Hennepin County representatives.
- 

### Sub-Committees

Three sub-committees helped with public outreach



Project Schedule

efforts, public workshop hosting, and focus group organizing and assembly. Sub-committees met several times throughout the process, and individuals from each sub-committee distributed materials, recruited participants, and helped to organize workshops and focus groups.

### General Public

Each of the three public workshops consisted of a short presentation followed by discussion. The first two workshops used a small group activity format for participants to comment, offer feedback, and suggest ideas. The third workshop used an open house format to field responses from participants.

The public workshop schedule was:

- November 19: Background.
- January 28: Sharpening the Vision.
- March 25: Implementation.

### Focus Groups

The following focus groups were assembled for more specialized discussions:

- Neighborhood residents from each of the five neighborhoods.
- Business owners from the Penn and Emerson-Fremont nodes, and from areas between the nodes.

### Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with the following key stakeholder organizations.

- Project for Pride in Living
- North Memorial Hospital
- Wellington Management

### Bus Tour

The steering committee took a tour of local developments and similar commercial areas in Minneapolis that could serve as examples for future development on Lowry Avenue. Some sites visited were:

- Franklin Avenue
- Phillips Park
- Portland Place
- Eat Street
- 38th Street
- West River Commons
- Main Street Bungalows

## 1.7 Public Participation

continued

Several methods were used to gather feedback from participants in the planning process:

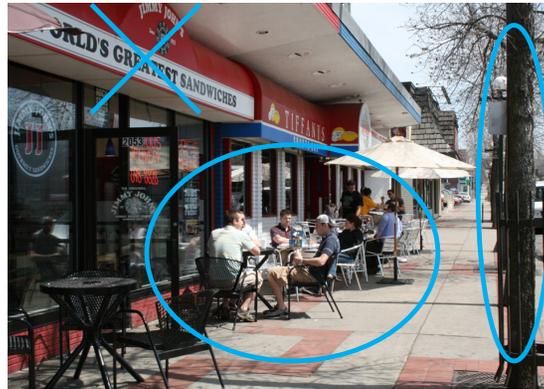
- Small group discussions.
- Keep & change exercises.
- Photo response surveys.
- Photo ranking exercises.
- Small group responses to proposed project objectives and challenges.
- Individual responses to maps and drawings with attached sticky-notes.

### Photo Survey Sample Response Poor Examples for Lowry



**Not Suitable:** Parking lot in front of building.

### Photo Response Survey Sample Responses Good Examples for Lowry



**Desirable:** A place to meet (not gather), small businesses good.



**Desirable:** Public gathering, seating, open air, canopy, stimulating, destination, landmark.

### Resident Focus Group Sample Response What would you keep at Emerson-Fremont?

- Library
- Historic Bremer
- Bremer Way
- Troy's Auto Repair (business)
- So Low Grocery
- Buildings on NE corner

### Public Workshop Group Sample Response What would you like to see in 10 years at Penn?

- Public square
- Butcher/baker
- Community center (+1 vote)
- Greenhouse (to help grow food for grocery)
- Bank
- Sit-down moderately-priced restaurant (+1 vote)
- Mixed-use retail/housing
- Greater non-profit presence
- Car share (Zipcar, Hourcar)

## 1.7 Public Participation

continued

### Public Input

The following are key ideas about the future of Lowry Avenue that emerged from the community meetings and focus groups.

#### Transportation

- Keep and add good transit connections.
- Create transit hub at Lyndale.
- Have good bus and light rail service.
- Add more parking for new buildings.
- Don't have parking fronting the street.

#### Open Space

- Keep green spaces.
- Add community gardens.
- Keep urban farm idea.
- Keep farmers market idea.
- Add public space.
- Make greenway connections.
- Add more trees.

#### Business Development

- Keep and recruit useful businesses and institutions.
- Focus on local and neighborhood-serving businesses.
- Add more businesses.

- Add daily use places to spend money.
- Add new office space.
- Add professional services.
- Add sit-down restaurants.
- Add a bank.
- Add a co-op grocery.
- Add a medical clinic.
- Add more amenities to draw people here.

#### Redevelopment

- Keep character-defining buildings.
- Make property improvements.
- Restore old buildings and build new buildings.
- Add density.
- Keep small town feel.
- Increase housing density along Lowry, not in the neighborhoods.
- Focus commercial at nodes but continue supporting existing commercial in-between.
- Build new kinds of housing.
- Add upscale housing.
- Add affordable and supportive housing.
- Add market rate housing.
- Develop public land first.
- Invest in what's here before building more.
- Add mixed-use development.
- Clean up building facades.

- Make new development pedestrian-friendly.
- Build on existing amenities.
- Develop standards for operation and design.
- Decrease number of blighted properties.
- Decrease commercial and housing vacancies.

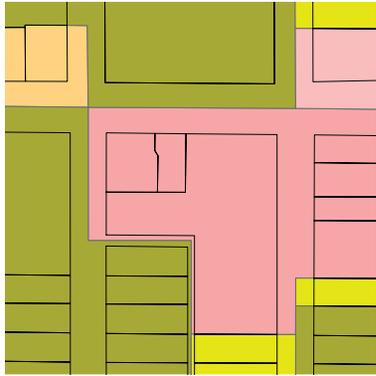
#### Communication

- Identify roles for county, city, developer, property owners, and residents.
- Focus on better communication and better ability to work together.
- Create better relationship with City.

#### Other

- Reduce crime.
- Make it easier to keep tenants.
- Reinforce and build on existing amenities.
- Host events that celebrate Lowry.
- Develop "sustainable" theme for North Minneapolis.
- Reintegrate Lowry with neighborhoods and Mississippi River.





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## 2. Land Use & Development Guidance

- 2.1 Existing Policy
- 2.2 Land Use & Development Intensity
- 2.3 Development Objectives
- 2.4 Design Themes
- 2.5 Development Opportunities

## 2.1 Existing Policy

The City’s land use and development policy is layered. High level guidance is established in its comprehensive plan, titled The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth (TMP). Small area plans such as this one add detail through maps and narrative. Zoning of property adds further specificity and puts regulatory teeth into land use guidance.

This chapter starts with an overview of existing land use and development policy that pertains to Lowry Avenue. It then offers new and refined guidance concerning land use and density, development objectives and design guidelines. It concludes w/ suggesting opportunity areas for new development.

### The Comprehensive Plan

In the language of The Minneapolis Plan, Lowry Avenue is a Community Corridor, as are the three major north-south corridors that cross it. The areas where they intersect are all Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. The table below describes the land use and density that are suggested for these designated areas.

The community corridor designation is appropriate for Lowry in that it denotes a street that is an “important travel route for both neighborhood residents and through traffic.” The design and development of community corridors are encouraged to be “oriented towards the pedestrian experience and residential quality of life.”

Commercial development on Lowry Avenue is primarily clustered at the three existing Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, although there are scattered commercial businesses along the length of Lowry. At Lyndale Avenue most of the former commercial businesses were displaced by the street reconstruction.

The designations in The Minneapolis Plan provide general, broad brush guidance for how the area ought to develop over time. This plan, however, proposes a slight modification to this direction in that it proposes the elimination of the Neighborhood Commercial Node designation at the Lyndale/Lowry intersection. This is discussed in more detail below.

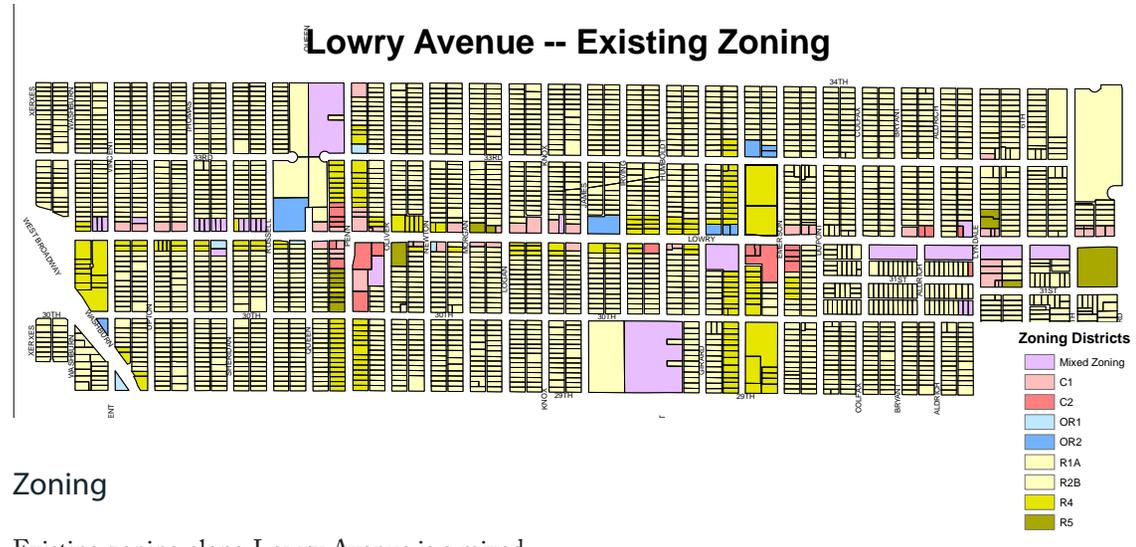
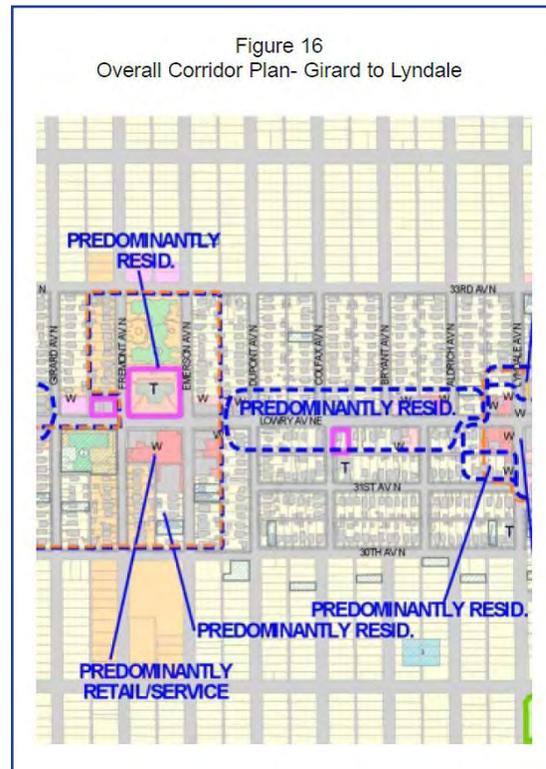
Land Use Feature	Feature Names	Land Use Description	Residential Density Range (est)
Community Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowry Avenue from the Mississippi River to Victory Memorial Drive</li> <li>• Lyndale Avenue from Plymouth Avenue to 49th Avenue</li> <li>• The Emerson/Fremont Avenue pair from Plymouth Avenue to 33rd Avenue</li> <li>• Penn Avenue from Cedar Lake Avenue to 44th Avenue</li> </ul>	Primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections in nodes. Commercial uses, generally small-scale retail sales and services, serving the immediate neighborhood	Medium density (20-50 du/acre), transitioning to low density in surrounding areas
Neighborhood Commercial Node	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowry &amp; Penn</li> <li>• Lowry &amp; Emerson-Fremont</li> <li>• Lowry &amp; Lyndale</li> </ul>	Generally provide retail or service uses on at least three corners of an intersection. Serve the surrounding neighborhood, with a limited number of businesses serving a larger area. Mix of uses occurs within and among structures	High density (50-120du/acre), transitioning down to medium density in surrounding areas

## 2.1 Existing Policy

continued

### The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan

The 2002 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan is approved city policy. While less specific than usual for city small area plans, it provides some land use and development guidance for Lowry Avenue beyond what is found in the The Minneapolis Plan. The map below shows the general land use guidance for Lowry in the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan. This document updates the land use guidance for Lowry Avenue and brings it to a parcel level of specificity.



### Zoning

Existing zoning along Lowry Avenue is a mixed bag of residential and commercial zoning that supports various levels of development density. As would be expected, commercial zoning is particularly concentrated at the areas around Penn Avenue and the Emerson-Fremont area. But there are quite a few commercially zoned properties scattered along Lowry Avenue between these nodes.

Much of the residential zoning on Lowry Avenue would support medium density development, but there are also sections of Lowry where single family zoning is predominant.

The existing zoning is not entirely consistent with the land use guidance offered in the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan. The land use guidance developed in this plan provides the policy foundation for making changes to zoning that are consistent with the land use and development objectives for Lowry Avenue.

The remainder of this chapter represents new and refined development guidance for Lowry Avenue, beginning with this section on land use and development intensity.

## 2.2 Land Use & Development Intensity

Land use guidance established by this plan is based on an understanding of the characteristics of the area, its assets and liabilities, and market conditions for different types of development. It is generally consistent with the historical guidance referenced above in that it sees Lowry as a mixed use corridor with residential development predominating. It supports a medium to higher density development pattern along the entire length of the corridor.

### Locations for Commercial Development

It is important to be realistic about the extent of commercial development that can be supported along Lowry. Market research over the last few years shows that there is additional local buying power that can be captured for neighborhood-level shopping, and that Lowry Avenue can be positioned to attract some of that market. There

are also certain destination businesses that can serve as anchors to expand destination niche markets. However, even with improved conditions it seems doubtful that the extensive intermittent commercial development pattern along Lowry Avenue can be sustained over time. For this reason, a more focused pattern of well defined, attractive commercial spaces at intervals along Lowry has a greater likelihood of being a neighborhood asset over the long run.

Given that, this plan recommends ways to strengthen the retail mix and customer base for Lowry. It also proposes a reduced commercial footprint, suggesting that the retail node at Lowry & Lyndale not be reestablished after many businesses were demolished when Lowry Avenue was reconstructed.

The proposed future commercial development pattern, as illustrated in the diagram below, includes two robust neighborhood commercial nodes at Penn Avenue and Emerson-Fremont, and “micro-nodes” at three intermittent locations, including Lyndale Avenue. This concept would offer the convenience of providing some neighborhood-scale goods and services within a short walking distance of any residence near Lowry Avenue, while still being quite focused in comparison with the former commercial development pattern.

The intent is not to require the abandonment of existing commercial establishments which are outside of the identified commercial areas. Instead it guides the location of new commercial development, and assumes that the complexion of the street will change over time as properties are redeveloped.



Upton

Penn

Knox

Emerson-Fremont

Lyndale

## 2.2 Land Use & Development Intensity

continued

### Future Land use

Below is the parcel specific Future Land Use map that will guide development over the life of this plan. It reflects the commercial development guidance as described above. “Mixed Use” signifies support for both commercial and residential development, either in separate buildings or in developments where housing is developed over ground floor commercial. Where possible, new developments are encouraged to include both residential and commercial.

Note that new medium-density housing development is supported along the length of Lowry Avenue between the commercial areas, as well as on the north-south corridors of Lyndale, Emerson-Fremont, and Penn.

### Development Intensity

Additional and intensified development along Lowry Avenue is critical to its vitality. More homes and businesses increase the customer market for Lowry Avenue businesses, and make it easier to attract new businesses. They contribute to a safer street because criminal activity is deterred in areas that are well populated and active. Increased density can also support efforts to strengthen public transit service to the area.

The idea of intensifying residential development along Lowry Avenue has been explored a number of times with the residents of the area, including during development of:

## Lowry Avenue -- Future Land Use



## 2.2 Land Use & Development Intensity

continued



Judging by the public engagement during development of this plan, it seems that most community members have grown comfortable with the idea of increased development intensity along Lowry Avenue, and realize that it is an important component of revitalization. A few residents felt that multi-story development on Lowry would be out of scale with their largely single-family neighborhood. Another concern focused on the possibility that much of the new housing development would be built for rental housing.

Recommended density in the study area is for medium density development along Lowry Avenue and the north-south community corridors, and higher density development at the three intersections where public transit service is strongest, at Penn and Lyndale Avenues, and the Emerson-Fremont pair. This concept is illustrated in the diagram below.



Adjustments to the scale of development, and design features that are compatible with neighboring properties, should be employed to make sensitive transitions between new development and adjacent single family neighborhoods.

- The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan
- The Minneapolis Plan
- A Request for Proposals for the city-owned SE corner of the Penn-Lowry intersection
- A Mayor's Design Team scenario for the NW corner of the Penn-Lowry intersection



## 2.3 Development Objectives

Development objectives are simply an expression of the character of development that is desired in a location. Expressing these objectives in a document such as this makes it more likely that property improvements that occur over time, and by different parties, build toward community and city goals. This section includes development objectives that pertain to new development anywhere on Lowry, as well as objectives focused on:

- Housing
- Open space, including urban agriculture
- Particular geographic areas of focus that have the potential to become more interesting, useful and attractive places—Lowry & Penn, Lowry & Emerson-Fremont, Lowry & Lyndale

Developers and property owners should review these objectives as they design property improvements on Lowry.

### General Development Objectives

New development in economically challenged neighborhoods must place a high priority on development quality. In order to be an enduring community asset it must use high quality, long-lasting materials. It must project character and attractiveness. And it must be sensitive to its context. The following general development objectives should characterize new development along Lowry Avenue.

- **Mixed Use.** New development in commercial areas are encouraged to be mixed use development, with residential dwelling units over ground floor commercial.

- **Density.** All new development on Lowry should be two or more stories.
- **Articulated Facades.** Buildings should have well articulated facades that break up massing.



- **Design Detail.** Varied materials and interesting and ample design details should be employed in building facades to create visual interest.



- **Entrances.** Buildings should direct prominent primary entrances toward the public sidewalk. They should front on Lowry when possible, with primary entrances of buildings onto the Lowry Avenue sidewalk.

- **Windows.** Buildings should utilize lots of window area to increase visibility on the public realm.
- **Transitions.** Careful attention should be given to making good transitions between new development on Lowry and single family neighborhood homes. Building scale adjustments, and design elements should be utilized to make this transition and improve compatibility between new and existing development.



- **Open Space.** Employ landscaping, appropriate setbacks, public spaces and open areas in the design of new developments to maintain a sense of intermittent light and space as Lowry development progresses.
- **Design Elements.** To contribute to a Lowry look, new development should, to the extent possible, incorporate the design themes identified in Section 2.4.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

### Housing Objectives

Housing objectives are discussed in Chapter 4.

### Greening/Open Spaces Objectives

The Lowry Avenue neighborhoods are built in a largely single family development pattern, and that heritage is embraced as an important aspect of community identity. While medium and higher density development belongs on Lowry Avenue, its visual impact should be mitigated through the use of landscaping and open space. The following menu of green space strategies can beautify Lowry Avenue and strengthen community compatibility.

- **Connections to Existing Parks.** The northwest corner of Lowry & Penn is very close to Cleveland Park, and represents a fabulous opportunity to create a visible gateway connection to the park from the Lowry & Penn retail node. Green space connections are recommended along Humboldt Avenue to Jordan Park and Folwell Park, and along 4th Street between Farview Park and Cityview School. The important connections to the parkways at the west, and the Mississippi River at the east, should also be highlighted utilizing gateway treatments and design continuity.



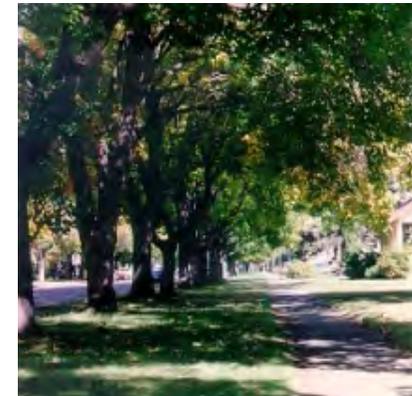
- **Landscaped Medians.** Enhanced landscaping in center medians near Lowry & Lyndale could be a powerful gateway element. It requires the identification of a party to take ownership over ongoing maintenance.



- **Transit Stations/Public Plazas.** Given the frequency of bus service on Penn Avenue, and the Emerson-Fremont corridor, as well as the presence of underutilized land, those intersections are good candidates for construction of an enhanced transit station facility. Other new commercial developments should consider creating a public plaza or outdoor seating.
- **Open Space in New Development.** Outdoor community space or landscaped areas that are visible from Lowry Avenue are encouraged in new housing developments. The cost of this space can be offset by a reduction of the newly instituted park dedication fee.
- **Location-specific Landscaping Opportunities.** Large setbacks and vacant land make it possible for property owners to collaboratively create a unique landscaped area at Emerson-Fremont, utilizing three of the corners at Lowry & Fremont, and two corners at Lowry & Emerson.

Five blocks of publicly owned Lowry frontage between I-94 and Colfax Avenue allow for an intentionally landscaped gateway to North Mpls.

- **Setbacks.** Residential setback standards can be developed that support high quality landscaping between buildings and the public sidewalk while still supporting an urban housing sensibility. Landscaping that screens surface parking lots is another opportunity for greening the public edge.
- **Boulevard Trees.** The boulevard tree pattern along the north-south cross streets can be intentionally continued all the way to Lowry Avenue. New development may present opportunities to plant additional trees along Glenwood as well.



- **Specific Plants.** The selection of particular plant varieties is encouraged as a contributor to a Lowry Avenue look. Once selected, property owners from one end of Lowry to the other should be encouraged to find ways to utilize them.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

### Lowry & Penn

Having over twice the commercially zoned land as the Emerson-Fremont business area, the goal of Lowry and Penn development is to create a vibrant community-serving mixed-use retail area—where north Minneapolis residents can do multiple tasks and activities such as shopping, eating, banking, and utilizing professional services.

#### Lowry & Penn Development Scenario



The following objectives should inform development of the Lowry & Penn area:

- **Business Development.** The mix of businesses that are national (international even) and local is healthy and desirable. Further expansion of the business mix is of highest importance at Lowry & Penn. Additional anchor businesses such as a drug store or bank would be suitable additions, as would any of a score of smaller scale businesses such as book store, bike shop or flower shop,

or neighborhood services such as restaurant, medical office, or tax accountant.



- **Fill Storefronts.** Filling vacant retail space next to North End Hardware, Aldi, and Family Dollar is a high priority near term objective.
- **Community Space.** Outdoor public space can play an important role in animating neighborhood retail areas. Opportunities should be sought to create a plaza, outdoor restaurant seating, etc.



Redevelopment of publicly owned land could include a public plaza.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

- **Scale.** New development of some scale is needed to establish this area as a neighborhood retail center. The best opportunity for this is on the publicly owned land at the northwest quadrant of the intersection. Increasing the footprint of available land would offer additional flexibility and make it easier to achieve target densities.
- **Housing.** Housing development is desirable as a component of any new development in the Lowry Penn area. Because of the nearby park and school, the northwest quadrant of Lowry Penn is a particularly good location for new housing over retail.
- **Park Linkage.** The development of the northwest quadrant of Penn and Lowry should capitalize on the proximity of Cleveland Park by including a gateway and linkage to the park as a prominent part of the development.
- **Post Office.** The post office at Lowry & Queen is a wonderful community service that seems disconnected from the rest of the commercial node. Every effort should be made to improve its linkage to the retail node, particularly with the redevelopment of the northwest quadrant of Penn Lowry. Pedestrian access should also be improved at the Post Office site itself.
- **Liquor Store.** Bringing the liquor store closer to the Penn-Lowry corner would reduce the distance between anchor businesses at the intersection, and provide opportunity for a better buffer between the store and nearby housing.
- **3118 Oliver.** Establish a well-defined edge condition along the northern property line of this property. In the short term this could be accomplished through high quality landscaping between the parking lot and public sidewalk.



Parkside Living concept looking south from Cleveland Park.

### Phasing

#### Near Term (1-3 years)

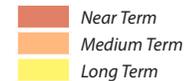
- A. Fill Vacancies
- B. Proposed Housing near Christ English Lutheran Church
- C. New Development Phase 1

#### Medium Term (3-7 years)

- D. New Development Phase 2
- E. Complete Penn-Lowry Crossing
- F. Create Parkside Living

#### Long Term (7+ years)

- F. New Development Phase 3
- H. Redevelop Surface Lot and Infill



The illustration above outlines the possible phasing of some of the important development opportunities in the Penn Lowry area.

Another development scenario for the Penn Lowry area was developed through a Great City Design Team exercise in 2007. The product of that exercise is reproduced in the Appendix of this plan.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

### Lowry & Emerson-Fremont

The Emerson-Fremont commercial node is the part of Lowry Avenue best served by the city's transit service. It is comprised of an assortment of

businesses, institutions, and residences of disparate sizes and conditions. North Regional Library and So Low Foods are anchors, complemented by three traditionally structured, small-scale storefront strips.

The concentration of storefront buildings is unique on Lowry. They represent good opportunities for

#### Lowry & Emerson-Fremont Development Scenario



small business entrepreneurs, and can provide a varied and interesting assortment of goods and services to nearby residents. However, the current condition and appearance of the commercial buildings are fair to poor, with the exception of the newly remodeled library building.

The grand Historic Bremer condominium building, with its well landscaped front lawn, dominates the landscape on the north side of Lowry.

Issues and opportunities abound in this district. Its identity can be enhanced by capitalizing on greening opportunities, exploring the prospect of an enhanced transit station, and restoring the quality and value of the small scale commercial buildings. Development objectives include the following:



## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued



- **Storefront Revitalization.** The storefront strips in their current condition and management are not attractive to the neighborhood customer base, and they dampen further investment in the area. Improving the condition of the buildings and the success of its business tenants should be of highest priority. Strategies for addressing challenged properties such as these are found in the economic development chapter. Facade improvements at So Low Foods would be helpful as well.

- **Transit Station.** The area is served by Metro Transit's Primary Transit Network, and there is space available at the Lowry-Emerson corner for the development of a distinctive station and plaza. Development of this asset should follow improvements to the storefront strip across Emerson Avenue.

- **Greening.** This district is unique in that so many of the corners of the intersections have space for high quality landscaping. With cooperation

between property owners the area can be marked by the presence of gardens, common plant materials, even new public spaces.

- **So Low Foods.** So Low Foods is the anchor retailer at this commercial node, and has developed a successful market niche. But it is difficult for the retail node as a whole to benefit from its success because the site configuration doesn't facilitate pedestrian connections between So Low and other businesses. Parking lot and sidewalk improvements could help to knit the district together. A more comprehensive approach would be to add a building to the site, or redevelop it completely, establishing the business in another location. Three examples are illustrated below. The red buildings represent new construction.



Buildings with good architectural value.



Coffee shop at the Fremont-Lowry intersection as part of the library, as an infill use, or to fill an existing vacancy.



So Low Alt 1: Addition to building and improved parking.

So Low Alt 2: Small outbuilding located on Lowry.



So Low Alt 3: Store rebuilt in the base of a larger mixed-use building.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

### Lowry & Lyndale

Lowry & Lyndale serves an important connecting function. It is a gateway to north Minneapolis from northeast Minneapolis, and links North Minneapolis to the Mississippi River—a connection that will grow in importance in the future as the riverfront parks and trails system is developed in accordance with the Above the Falls plan. The dramatic rise in elevation from

#### Lowry & Lyndale Development Scenario



the river to Lyndale Avenue will make gateway enhancements more effective.

Eco-village, a multifamily residential development will anchor the southeast quadrant of Lowry & Lyndale with two-plus blocks of new development. The county owns the next two blocks of Lowry Avenue frontage to the west, making four contiguous blocks of cleared land available for new development. Recent market analysis does not support extensive new commercial development at this node.

Facade improvements and adding public space could enhance traditional-style buildings on north side of Lowry.



Development objectives for Lowry & Lyndale include:

- **Housing Development.** Multifamily housing development should predominate on developable land on the south side of Lowry. It could include a small commercial presence at the Lyndale intersection. The design of new housing should be consistent with the general development objectives earlier in this section.
- **Site Acquisition.** Development of the county-owned blocks is constrained by the extremely shallow property depth. Acquisition of the south side of the blocks should be pursued to support higher quality development.
- **Gateway.** Artistic gateway elements should be developed to mark the entry to North Minneapolis from the east, and to capitalize on the proximity to the Mississippi River. With the cooperation of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority and Hennepin County, landscaping continuity could be created for the first five blocks of Lowry west of the freeway.
- **Eco-Village Brand.** Although still largely in a design phase, “Eco-village” has proved a successful brand in capturing community support and a grant from the Home Depot Foundation.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

Hawthorne Eco-Village Plan courtesy of PPL  
Dark colored buildings are new construction.



It may also be effective for attracting tenants to the new development. Sustainable design, and the Eco-Village brand, should be expanded to include all new development in the Lowry Lyndale vicinity.

- **Problem Properties.** Some commercial properties on the north side of Lowry are fine historic structures worthy of preservation, but are thought of as problem properties—attracting criminal activity and deterring honest customer

### Phasing

#### Near Term (1-3 years)

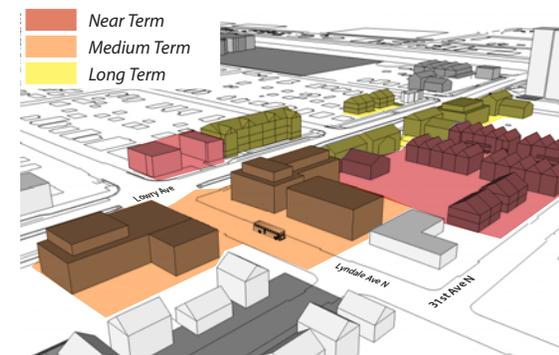
- A. Rehabilitate selected buildings, fill vacancies
- B. Create temporary or interim uses on vacant land and buildings (temporary use not shown)
- C. Complete the Eco-Village

#### Medium term (4-7 years)

- E. Develop infill housing on Lowry Avenue

#### Long Term (7+ years)

- F. Create permanent urban agriculture/education/commerce



traffic. Attending to these is a high priority in order to attract quality new development to the area.

- **Green Linkages.** Compatible with the sustainability theme, green pedestrianways along 4th Street would make and mark connections to Farview Park to the south, and City View School to the north. Consideration should be given to transforming east-west 31st Avenue into a green street to tie Eco-Village east of Lyndale in to the expanded Eco-Village blocks west of Lyndale.

## 2.3 Development Objectives

continued

### Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture and community gardens are categories of open space that are receiving a lot of attention recently. They hold promise for improving the health and availability of food, for providing entrepreneurial opportunities for urban farmers, for building community through shared use of land. They can make use of land that is difficult to develop.

These land uses may have a role to play on Lowry Avenue because of the many properties that are vacant or in public ownership, and the likelihood that the reemergence of a robust development market is not likely in the short-term.

In Milwaukee, Growing Power ([www.growingpower.org](http://www.growingpower.org)) employs people from nearby neighborhoods to grow food year-round. They raise fish in ground tanks, grow greens in 25,000 pots above them, and produce 1,000 trays of sprouts per week—all in 14 greenhouses on two acres in an urban neighborhood. In Madison, there

are plans for an urban school and curriculum based entirely on growing food in the city.

A potential urban agriculture site on Lowry is adjacent to City View School. This gateway site is across the street from the Eco-Village, another model for sustainable living along Lowry Avenue. An urban farm on this site might include:

- 5-tier greenhouse production
- Aquaponics
- Orchard
- Farmers market
- Employment
- Training
- School curriculum
- Youth involvement
- Community kitchen
- Community classrooms
- Volunteer opportunities
- Access for all to healthy food



Badger Rock Middle School in Madison, WI



Local food production in high tunnels and greenhouses, and distribution at farmer's markets



Potential Site for Urban Agriculture

## 2.4 Design Themes

Lowry Avenue has a characteristic look that can be built on and strengthened with careful attention to design. Inspiration can be drawn from existing visual characteristics such as small scale storefront buildings, the use of traditional building materials, and the presence of gardens and tree lined streets. Other design themes can be gleaned and patterned from new streetscape features such as the monuments, medians and signs, as well as the powerful and distinctive basket-handle design of the soon-to-be-built Lowry Avenue bridge.

The general and open space development objectives, detailed above, will assist in strengthening the visual character of Lowry. The following design themes, inspired by all of these sources, are suggested as themes to be incorporated



in creative ways along Lowry Avenue. This list can be maintained and enhanced over time by the Lowry Avenue business and residential communities.

- **Brickwork.** Brick can be used in new development, fence piers, etc, to echo both traditional architecture and the distinctive new Lowry Avenue piers.
- **Tree-lined Side Streets.** The boulevard tree pattern along the north-south cross streets can be intentionally continued all the way to Lowry Avenue.
- **Gardens.** The several gardens along Lowry should inspire others.
- **Specific Plant Materials.** The selection of particular plant varieties is encouraged as a contributor to a Lowry Avenue look. Once selected, property owners from one end of Lowry

to the other should be encouraged to find ways to utilize them.

- **The Bridge Outline.** The outline of the new bridge, an arch over a horizontal plane, constitutes a simple yet distinctive line combination that can find its way into building architecture, signage, Lowry logo, etc.



## 2.5 Development Opportunities

Development opportunity sites are properties that are likely to attract development interest in the future.

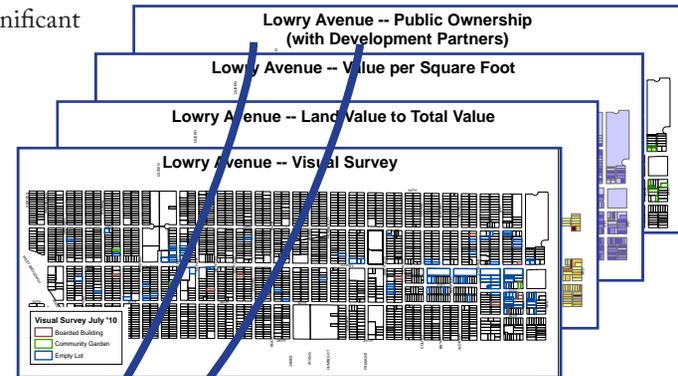
Many opportunity sites are privately owned properties, and where this is the case the term does not imply that there is an intent or strategy to acquire the property and redevelop the site. Nor does it imply that there is something wrong with the existing development. Rather, based on site characteristics, identifying a site as a development opportunity simply means that, under certain circumstances, redevelopment of the property may be financially possible.

A broad set of criteria was used to flag these sites, including the following:

- Property value per square foot
- Ratio of land value to building value
- Ownership--City, County, and Development Partner
- Vacant Lots
- Vacant and Boarded structures
- Opportunity to bundle properties for significant redevelopment projects

Each of these characteristics was mapped, and factored into a composite Development Opportunities Map. The background maps are available in the Appendix.

The Development Opportunities map can be useful for setting City priorities for development related activities such as site assembly and development support. It can also be employed in conversation with developers about what opportunities might be available for redevelopment.



### Lowry Avenue -- Development Opportunities





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## 3. Transportation & Infrastructure

- 3.1 Historic Context
- 3.2 Existing Conditions
- 3.3 Corridor Improvements
- 3.4 City Transportation Policy
- 3.5 Objectives and Strategies

### 3.1 Historical Context

Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis has been an important east-west transportation connector from the earliest days of the City. It connects to the northwestern suburb of Robbinsdale on the west. On the east it connects across the Mississippi River to northeast Minneapolis. It functions as a B minor arterial in the Metropolitan Council's classification system, which implies an important role in collecting and distributing traffic within communities and to the higher capacity regional roadways. It's classification in Minneapolis's Access Minneapolis schema is a "Community Connector", which is described as: "Medium capacity; connects neighborhoods together and with commercial corridors and other districts, districts with each other; serves as the main street of a neighborhood commercial node."

Lowry Avenue North spans both north and northeast Minneapolis to traverse the width of the City. In 2005 prior to its reconstruction, the traffic it carried was ten to fifteen thousand cars per day, with the highest volumes between Lyndale and Penn Avenues.

Access between Lowry and major regional roadways is limited; there is no access to or from I-94 on the east, and there is grade separated access from West Broadway on the west. The grade separation at West Broadway treats Lowry as secondary to West Broadway, and the need to exit based on reading signs rather than seeing the street underscores this. However, access between the neighborhoods, larger community, and Lowry



1936. American Lutheran Christ Church. Lowry & Oliver. Minneapolis Photo Collection, Hennepin County Library.



1957. Looking east on Lowry Avenue across Penn. MN Historical Society Digital Collections.

### 3.1 Historical Context

continued



Circa 1910. Bremer School, 1200 Lowry Avenue. MN Historical Society Digital Collections.

Avenue is consistent because of the regular and predictable street grid pattern.

In the early 1950's, after the street car era, and with the introduction of freeways, travel patterns in the City changed significantly. Today, "arterial" streets function as the backbone of the city's transportation system and many corridors continue to provide important activity centers and commercial nodes that serve nearby neighborhoods. Lowry Avenue west of the river has functioned as one such arterial in the City. Over the years, many plans have attempted to redefine Lowry Avenue North. Theodore Wirth, in his 1920 Park Plan, described Lowry as: "... a Cross-town Boulevard connecting two important points of the grand rounds to be known as the Northeast and Northwest Gates". The most recent

transformational plan was the 2002 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan prepared by Hennepin County. This plan called for significant alteration of the 1950's street configuration and appearance. This is further discussed in section 6.3.

The street reconstruction and streetscape improvements west of I-94 were completed in 2009 as per the 2002 Plan. They have projected a positive ambience along the corridor. These improvements have created a community asset that projects durability and attractiveness. They support additional real estate and business investments that can transform Lowry back to its former vigor.



1941. Fire at the Rollerdrome, 2139 Lowry Avenue. MN Historical Society Digital Collections

## 3.2 Existing Conditions

### Street

Lowry Avenue N traverses the standard street grid of Minneapolis, with the short side of the blocks abutting the Lowry corridor in most locations. The block spacing is typically 330 feet on center with the major exceptions in the three 440-foot blocks on the south side of Lowry between Lyndale Avenue and Dupont Avenue.

The 2010 cross section of Lowry Avenue varies in different sections of Lowry. Generally, it comprises of a two-lane roadway expanding to four lanes with

turn lanes at the major nodes. The roadway width ranges from approximately 40 feet to 80 feet within a right-of-way width of 60 feet to 120 feet.

There are sidewalks on both sides of Lowry Avenue for the entire length of the corridor. Sidewalks vary in width from 5 feet in some residential areas to around 20 feet at the major nodes. In many areas of the corridor the sidewalks directly abut the curb. Utility poles have for the most part been undergrounded and new traffic signals, street signs and decorative lighting have been installed as part of the recent reconstruction effort.

New landscaped medians have been installed in several locations along Lowry Avenue N. Street trees have also been installed. In most of the residential areas and on some commercial properties, there are trees and landscaping in the private yards. Most of the side streets that intersect with Lowry Avenue N have full canopies of mature trees. In certain areas, there are narrow grass boulevards between the street curb and public sidewalk. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show aerial images of the corridor after street reconstruction, and figure 6.4 shows the street during reconstruction.



Lowry & Lyndale. Source: Bing Maps 6/16/10.



Lowry & Fremont. Source: Bing Maps 6/16/10.



Lowry & Penn. Source: Bing Maps 6/16/10.

### 3.2 Existing Conditions

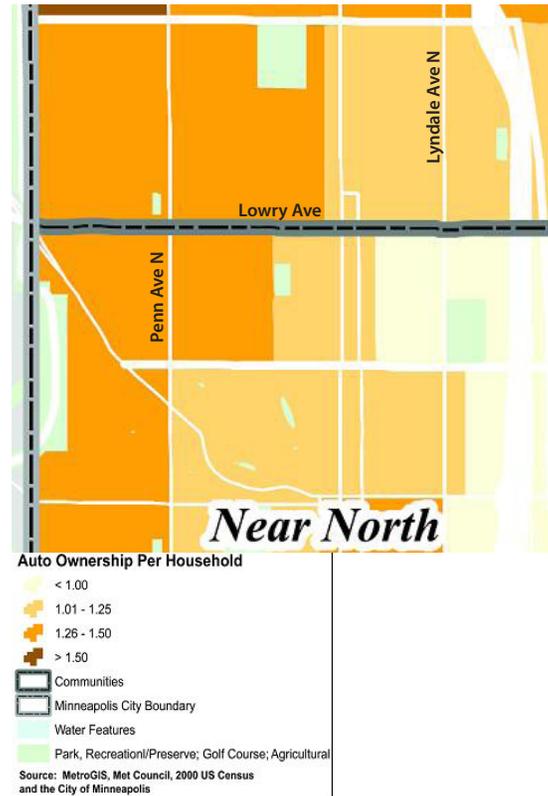
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#### Traffic Counts and Auto Use

The table below illustrates the road capacities and traffic volumes for the major streets servicing the Lowry Avenue N corridor study area. The main inference from this table is that all the major connectors, namely, Lowry Avenue N, Lyndale Avenue N, Emerson-Fremont Avenues N, and Penn Avenue N have a ratio of volume to capacity of under 1.0. This means that the roadways currently have enough capacity to accommodate present day traffic as well as for projected conditions in 2030.

The roadway on Lowry Avenue N has been reduced to 2 lanes in most sections. However, at key intersections additional moving or turn lanes have been added, improving the performance of the roadway in terms of its ability to move traffic. Lowry Avenue can thus accommodate additional auto and transit trips without failing, as might occur with additional commercial or housing development.

Auto Ownership  
(Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS -- Ten Year Transportation Action Plan)



The map at left illustrates the average number of cars per household for census tracts in the Lowry area. It indicates below-average auto ownership in these neighborhoods, particularly in the southeast quadrant of the study area, such as in the Hawthorne Neighborhood. This makes the area a strong candidate for improved transit service. This is particularly true with the increased development density that is envisioned by this plan.

Street Name	Segment (a)		Street Type	Recommended Number of Lanes Per Street Type	Existing Number of Lanes	Capacity	ADT			VIC			Parking	Peak Hour Parking Restrictions	Transit		Pedestrian	Bicycle		Freight
	From	To					2005	2015	2030	2005	2015	2030			Existing	PTN		Gap	Existing	
Lowry Ave N	Victory Memorial Dr	Penn Ave N	Community Connector	3	4	20500	9600	10100	10600	0.47	0.49	0.53		Yes	Yes	Recommended PTN				Truck Route
Lowry Ave N	Penn Ave N	Fremont Ave N	Community Connector	3	4	20500	14200	14900	16000	0.69	0.73	0.78		Yes	Yes	Recommended PTN			On-Street	Truck Route
Lowry Ave N	Fremont Ave N	Lyndale Ave N	Community Connector	3	4	20500	15500	16300	17400	0.76	0.80	0.85		Yes	Yes	Recommended PTN			On-Street	Truck Route
Lowry Ave N	Lyndale Ave N	Washington Ave N	Community Connector	3	4	20500	10700	11200	12000	0.52	0.55	0.59		Yes	Yes	Recommended PTN				On-Street
Penn Ave N	West Broadway Ave	Lowry Ave N	Community Connector	2T	2	11250	10000	10500	11300	0.89	0.93	1.00			Yes	Recommended PTN				Truck Route
Penn Ave N	Lowry Ave N	Dowling Ave N	Community Connector	2T	2	11250	8500	8900	9600	0.76	0.79	0.85			Yes	Recommended PTN				Truck Route
Fremont Ave N	W Broadway Ave	33rd Ave N	Neighborhood Connector	2	2(1-Way)	19000	4200	4400	4700	0.22	0.23	0.25			Yes	Definite PTN				On-Street
Emerson Ave N	Plymouth Ave N	W Broadway Ave	Neighborhood Connector	2	2(1-Way)	19000	5000	5300	5600	0.26	0.28	0.29			Yes					
Lyndale Ave N	West Broadway Ave	Lowry Ave N	Neighborhood Connector	2	2	11250	8800	9200	9900	0.78	0.82	0.88			Yes	Candidate PTN				Truck Route
Lyndale Ave N	Lowry Ave N	Dowling Ave N	Neighborhood Connector	2	2	11250	7100	7500	8000	0.63	0.67	0.71			Yes	Candidate PTN				Truck Route

Notes  
Source - 2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic, City of Minneapolis  
XXXX - 2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic  
XXXXX - 2003 Average Annual Daily Traffic  
ADT Percent Growth Per Year = 0.5  
MSA - Municipal State Aid Roadway  
CSA - County State Aid Roadway  
TH - Trunk Highway

Street Conditions, Volumes and Capacity  
(Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS -- Ten Year Transportation Action Plan)

## 3.2 Existing Conditions

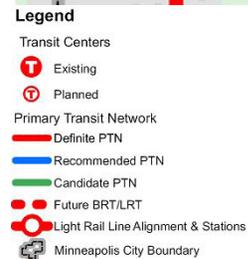
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### Transit

High quality transit service improves the attractiveness of an area, and supports new development. Lowry Avenue has strong bus service on its intersecting corridors. However, east-west service along Lowry Avenue is infrequent.

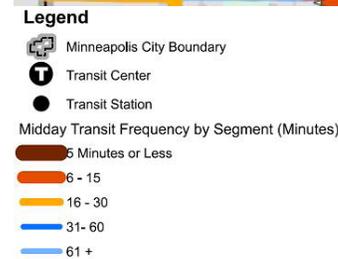
As seen in Figure 6.6, Route 19 along Penn Avenue N, and Route 5 on Emerson-Fremont

Primary Transit Network  
(Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS -- Ten Year Transportation Action Plan)



Avenue serve the area well, operating at a frequency between 6 and 15 minutes at midday. The map immediately below shows that they are accordingly part of the city's Primary Transit Network. Route 32 along Lowry Avenue and Route 22 on Lyndale Avenue operate at a lesser frequency of 16 to 30 minutes. Each of these bus routes are routed for longer distances and connect to major activity centers, namely Downtown, the University area, Chicago Avenue hospitals, Brookdale area, and the

Existing Bus Service  
(Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS -- Ten Year Transportation Action Plan)



West Broadway commercial core. Note that the green line for Lowry Avenue in the figure at left signifies that it is a candidate to serve as part of the city's primary transit network at some point in the future, which would imply a commitment to high frequency service.

The Bottineau Transitway project has progressed since the 2008 adoption of Access Minneapolis. At the conclusion of the Alternatives Analysis in 2010, neither of the two alignment alternatives that are considered most promising for future LRT traverse the length of Lowry Avenue. One follows Hwy 81/West Broadway Avenue from the Terrace Mall to Penn Avenue, and from there follows Penn South to Olson Memorial Highway. This would put a North Memorial serving transit station a quarter of a mile northwest of the Lowry/Victory Memorial Drive intersection.

Transitway Alignment Alternatives  
Bottineau Transitway Alternative Analysis Study,  
Hennepin County



## 3.2 Existing Conditions

continued

### Bike Facilities

The maps on this page show existing and planned bike facilities in the vicinity of Lowry Avenue. Note the reference in the figure below to “Proposed 2010 On-Street Facilities” for Lowry Avenue. These facilities were completed with the reconstruction of Lowry. Bike lanes were constructed along the length of Lowry from 2nd Street on the east to Vincent Avenue on the west.

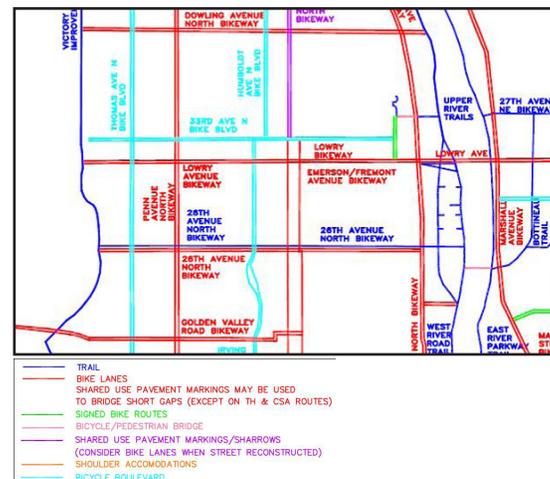
Existing and Imminent Bike Facilities Sources: Metro GIS Metropolitan Council, City of Minneapolis



Bicyclists on Lowry Avenue can connect with three existing north-south bike facilities. At the east end of Lowry Avenue, near the Mississippi River, there is a connection to north-south bike lanes on 2nd Street North. Lanes are being striped this year (2010) on northbound Emerson and southbound Fremont Avenues.

At the west end of Lowry Avenue, there is a connection with Theodore Wirth Parkway (to the south), and Victory Memorial Drive (to the north), with their associated off-street bicycle trails. These parkways are part of the city’s renowned “Grand Rounds”, which encircles the city. With Lowry bike lanes terminating at Vincent Avenue, there is a stretch of about 500 feet between this termination point and Victory Memorial Drive where bike facilities are absent, and bicyclists must share the road with automobile traffic.

2010 Draft Bikeway Master Plan  
Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS - Ten Year Transportation Action Plan



Proposed bikeways planned in the vicinity of the project area are shown in the accompanying illustration. They support and augment recommendations that came out of the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan. The planned bicycle boulevards on 33rd Avenue N, Irving Avenue N, and Thomas Avenue N will significantly improve the bike amenities in the area, as will bike lanes on Penn Avenue. These amenities can serve as important community assets, attracting better housing and related commercial development.

## 3.2 Existing Conditions

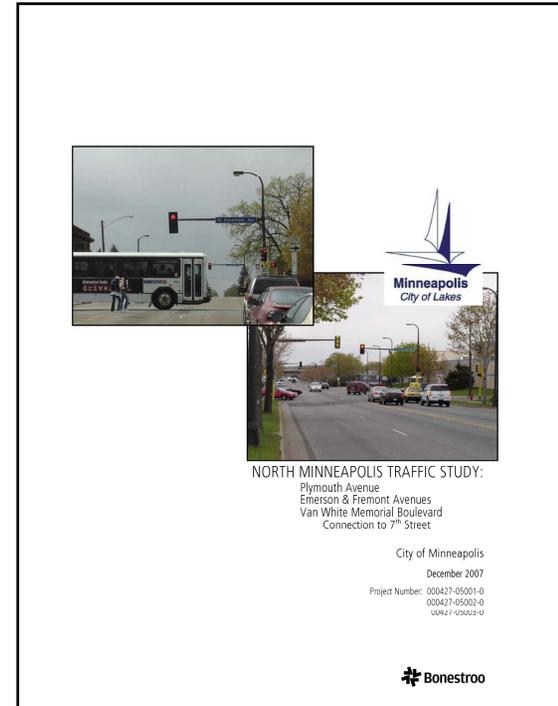
continued

### North-South Corridors

Penn Avenue N, Emerson-Fremont Avenues N and Lyndale Avenue N all provide critical connections to other area destinations, including the downtown, the region's most important activity center. They intersect with West Broadway Avenue, the destination retail center of north Minneapolis, where the City has invested heavily in revitalization programs and new development. And they connect to the stable residential neighborhoods further north. Most commercial enterprise on Lowry is concentrated at the intersections with these well-traveled north-south streets.

Washington Avenue is another north-south connecting street that is likely to have increased importance in the long-term. Future plans for the Upper River area call for an improved connection to the river between Interstate 94 and the Mississippi River, and redevelopment of this three block stretch along on both sides of Lowry Avenue. The intersection of Lowry and Washington is expected to serve as a North Minneapolis gateway.

Emerson and Fremont Avenues are paired one-way streets, converted from two-way operation in 1956. A study of their operation and safety was



completed in 2007. This study, entitled “North Minneapolis Traffic Study,” found that conversion to two-way operation would contribute to calming traffic, while adequately accommodating existing traffic. However, with community concerns taken into consideration, the conclusion of this study is for these streets to remain one-way streets with the possible installation of other traffic calming measures.

### 3.3 Corridor Improvements

#### Lowry Avenue Street Reconstruction

The Lowry Avenue N corridor seen today is the result of Hennepin County's design and reconstruction of the street from Interstate 94 to Theodore Wirth Parkway. The design process involved elected officials, neighborhood groups, public employees and consultants. Reconstruction occurred in three phases, beginning in 2005 and concluding in 2009. Goals for reconstruction were established in the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan, and refined through the design process. The following were some key features and objectives for this project.

#### Roadway Design Features

- Lowry Avenue maintained at four lanes from Lyndale to Interstate 94. Right-of-way acquired to allow for left hand turn lanes, on-street parking, pedestrian and landscape amenities.
- Lowry Avenue narrowed to two lanes from Xerxes to Lyndale Avenue with on-street bicycle lanes.
- Intersection improvements at Penn, Emerson-Fremont, and Lyndale.

#### Pedestrian and Aesthetic Improvements

- Wide sidewalks, one-way on-street bicycle lanes, large treed boulevards, medians and pedestrian lighting.
- Decorative streetscape treatments at commercial nodes and gateways.

- Integrated storm water infiltration

The project was successful in achieving its street reconstruction goals.

#### The New Lowry Avenue Bridge

The Lowry Avenue Bridge is an important transportation corridor and neighborhood connection in Minneapolis. Hennepin County initiated the bridge replacement in 2007 and the old bridge was demolished in June 2009 for known

structural issues. A two-phased implementation approach was initiated. Phase I includes the replacement of the bridge over the Mississippi River which is now underway and scheduled for completion in 2011. Phase II involves construction of the roadway approaches to the new bridge over the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

When completed, this bridge is expected to contribute greatly to the economic vitality of the Lowry Avenue N corridor by improving connections to northeast Minneapolis.



### 3.4 City Transportation Policy

In recent years, transportation planning in the City has been better integrated with land use planning. This is reflected in the synchronization between the objectives and corridor classifications in the City's comprehensive plan with the roadway classifications featured in Access Minneapolis, the City's Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, Lowry Avenue N is a designated Community Corridor in the City's 2009 comprehensive plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

Corridor Designations  
Source: The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth



**Legend**

- Transit Station
- Growth Center
- Major Retail Center
- Commercial Corridor
- Community Corridor
- Activity Center
- Neighborhood Commercial Node
- Industrial Employment District
- City Boundary
- Water

In the Access Minneapolis plan, the following characteristics are identified with community corridors:

- Connect more than two neighborhoods.
- Moderate traffic volumes and may be principal travel routes.
- Primary Transit Network corridors with some exceptions.

- Primarily residential with intermittent commercial uses clustered at intersections in nodes.
- Small scale retail sales and services serving immediate neighborhood.

The maps on this page from the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Access Minneapolis Action Plan respectively illustrate the synchronization of transportation classifications and planning objectives described above.

Street Design Types  
Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS - Ten Year Transportation Action Plan



**Legend**

- Activity Area Street
- Commerce Street
- Community Connector
- Commuter Street
- Industrial Street
- Neighborhood Connector
- Parkway Street
- Parks
- Water
- Streets

### 3.4 City Transportation Policy

continued

#### Street Design Typologies and Characteristics

Access Minneapolis includes street design typologies. These are characteristics that are typical or desirable for the various street classifications in the plan. Table 6.2 shows the street design typologies that apply to Lowry Avenue N and surrounding arterials.

- **Community Connector Street.** A Community Connector street is a medium capacity street that connects neighborhoods with each other, neighborhoods with commercial corridors and other districts, districts with each other and serves as the main street of a neighborhood commercial node. Many are county-owned

roads. Examples are Nicollet Avenue South and Lowry Avenue North.

- **Neighborhood Connector Street.** A Neighborhood Connector street is a low capacity street (usually under city jurisdiction) that connects neighborhoods with each other. Examples are Emerson Avenue North and Bloomington Avenue South.
- **Local Street.** A Local Street is a low capacity street that serves abutting property in residential neighborhoods or single use (industrial/employment) districts.

- **Alley.** An alley is a shared local street used exclusively for property and parking access.

It is important to note that in the context of these street type classifications, both Lowry Avenue N and Penn Avenue N are Community Connectors, meaning they are intended to carry higher traffic volumes and accommodate higher commercial and residential density. Emerson-Fremont and Lyndale are neighborhood connectors, implying lower traffic volumes and less development intensity.

Street Design Types  
Source: ACCESS MINNEAPOLIS - Ten Year Transportation Action Plan

Proposed Street Types	Description	Equivalent Functional Class	Through Traffic Lanes	Target Operating Speed	Transit	Pedestrian Facilities	Bicycle Facilities <sup>5</sup>	Freight	Connection to Freeway System	Median	Turn Lanes	Curb Parking <sup>6</sup>	Curb Extensions	Driveway Access	Trees and landscaping
Community Connector	Medium capacity; connects neighborhoods together and with commercial corridors and other districts, districts with each other; serves as the main street of a neighborhood commercial node. Some streets have a commuter function that require special frontage design	B Minor Arterials and Collectors	2-3 <sup>2</sup>	30 mph	PTN and Local routes	Yes	Yes if in Master Plan	Local truck routes	Provisional	Optional	Optional	Yes	Yes	Allowable where side or rear not feasible	Yes
Neighborhood Connector	Low capacity; connects neighborhoods with each other. Some streets have a commuter function that require special frontage design	Collectors	2	30 mph	PTN and Local routes	Yes	Yes if in Master Plan	Local deliveries	Provisional	Optional	Optional	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Parkway Street	Low-capacity thoroughfare designed to provide circulation adjacent to and through parkland	Locals	1-2	25 mph	Provisional	Yes	Yes (on Parallel paths)	No	No	Optional	Optional	Recessed in bays	Yes	Optional	Yes
Local Street	Low capacity; serves abutting property in residential neighborhoods or single use (industrial/employment) districts	Locals	1-2 <sup>3</sup>	30 mph	Local Routes	Yes	Yes if in Master Plan	Local deliveries	No	No	Optional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alley	Property and parking access	Locals	1-2	5 mph	No	No	No	Local deliveries	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

### 3.5 Objectives and Strategies

There are many opportunities to make continued improvements to the public realm along Lowry Avenue. The transportation objectives and strategies for this plan are organized under the transportation objectives of the Access Minneapolis Action Plan. They reflect the inferences from the corridor data above, and incorporate community aspirations as expressed in the public process. They also take into consideration the land use strategies outlined in this Plan, that is to increase residential densities along the corridor and intensify development in the major nodes.

**Objective 1: Make transportation design decisions based on place type in addition to street function.**

**Short Term Strategy**

- **Sidewalks and development.** Apply the City’s recently adopted Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines to all private and public partnered development projects to achieve public realm improvements where desirable.

**Objective 2: Ensure that all streets in the City are safe, convenient and comfortable for walking.**

**Short Term Strategies**

- **Improve pedestrian connectivity.** Maintain and improve pedestrian network connectivity, building on the newly established streetscape and ensuring through the review process that the pedestrian network connects well to building

entrances and principal facades which will now be oriented towards Lowry Avenue.

- **Signal timing.** Review signal timing at existing striped crosswalks to ensure that there is adequate time for pedestrians to cross the street.
- **Signal countdowns.** Retrofit pedestrian crosswalk mechanisms with accessible/audible signals with countdown timers where applicable.



**Long Term Strategies**

- **Crosswalk markings.** Improve crosswalk markings at the primary signalized nodes designated in the future land use map, including consideration of crosswalks utilizing decorative surfacing materials.
- **Green streets.** Pursue implementation of pedestrian-oriented green streets at 4th Street Humboldt Avenue, and 31st Avenue.

**Objective 3: Provide a well-connected grid of bike lanes.**

**Short Term Strategy**

- **West end connection.** Design and construct a higher quality linkage between the western terminus of the Lowry Avenue bike lanes and the Victory Memorial Drive/Theodore Wirth Parkway off-street bike trails.

**Long Term Strategy**

- **Implement bike plan.** Partner with the City’s Public Works Department to implement the additional bicycle facilities on 33rd, Penn, Irving and Upton Avenues identified in the City’s Bicycle Master Plan.



## 3.5 Objectives and Strategies

continued

**Objective 4: Provide the best possible transit service on a Primary Transit Network.**

### Short Term Strategy

- **Bus stops and development.** Consider bus stop location and design improvements in conjunction with major new developments.

### Long Term Strategies

- **Transit hub.** Explore with Metro Transit the construction of a high-quality transit hub at the Penn and/or Emerson-Fremont cross streets. This could include bike parking facilities, and improved transit information such as electronic schedule boards.
- **Bus frequency improvements.** As additional development progresses along Lowry, work with Metro Transit to study and improve speed and reliability of bus routes 22, 32, 5 and 19.

**Objective 5: Encourage people to walk, bike, take transit rather than drive.**

### Short Term Strategies

- **Employer incentives.** Encourage larger area institutions, local businesses, and housing providers to establish or improve the incentives they offer for walking, biking and transit use, such as offering free or subsidized transit passes to employees or tenants.

- **Employer assisted housing.** Establish and strengthen Employer Assisted Housing programs for large area institutions.

### Long Term Strategy

- **Bike share.** Expand the Nice Ride bike share program to Lowry Avenue.

**Objective 6: Manage and Operate Streets to Support All Modes of Transportation.**

### Long Term Strategy

- **Traffic calming on Emerson and Fremont Avenues.** Evaluate and pursue speed management strategies, and bike and pedestrian safety improvements to slow traffic, and facilitate pedestrian movement at the Emerson-Fremont business node.

**Objective 7: Make consistent decisions for curbside uses.**

### Short Term Strategy

- **Clear zones.** Provide enforcement and education to maintain minimum clear zones (on-street parking prohibited) from intersections and crosswalks in order to improve safety for both pedestrians and drivers.

### Long Term Strategy

- **Area parking.** Explore the development of additional and shared off-street parking where needed at designated commercial areas along Lowry.

Transit Center at Chicago & Lake





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## 4. Housing

- 4.1 Overview
- 4.2 Housing Objectives
- 4.3 Housing Types
- 4.4 Redevelopment Strategies

## 4.1 Overview

The neighborhoods surrounding Lowry Avenue are characterized by single-family detached houses oriented primarily to north-south streets. There is a mix of owner-occupied and rental housing, and the condition of the housing varies significantly. Vacant lots and houses in foreclosure are scattered throughout the five neighborhoods, but well-kept century-old homes in good condition are prevalent as well. They exert a stabilizing effect and establish a design standard.

Along Lowry Avenue, the housing pattern is less clear. Most housing is single family, but multi-family buildings are common as well. Commercial and institutional buildings are interspersed. Some buildings are oriented toward Lowry, and others toward the side street. There are various building types and design styles.

In neighborhoods north of Lowry, at least 75 percent of housing units were owner-occupied in 2000, the most recent year of available Census data. Jordan neighborhood has a 60% owner-occupancy rate. In Hawthorne it is 25%. Vacancy rates are rising in all neighborhoods except Cleveland, and the foreclosure crisis has impacted all neighborhoods, leaving them with empty buildings and lots, and many houses for sale.

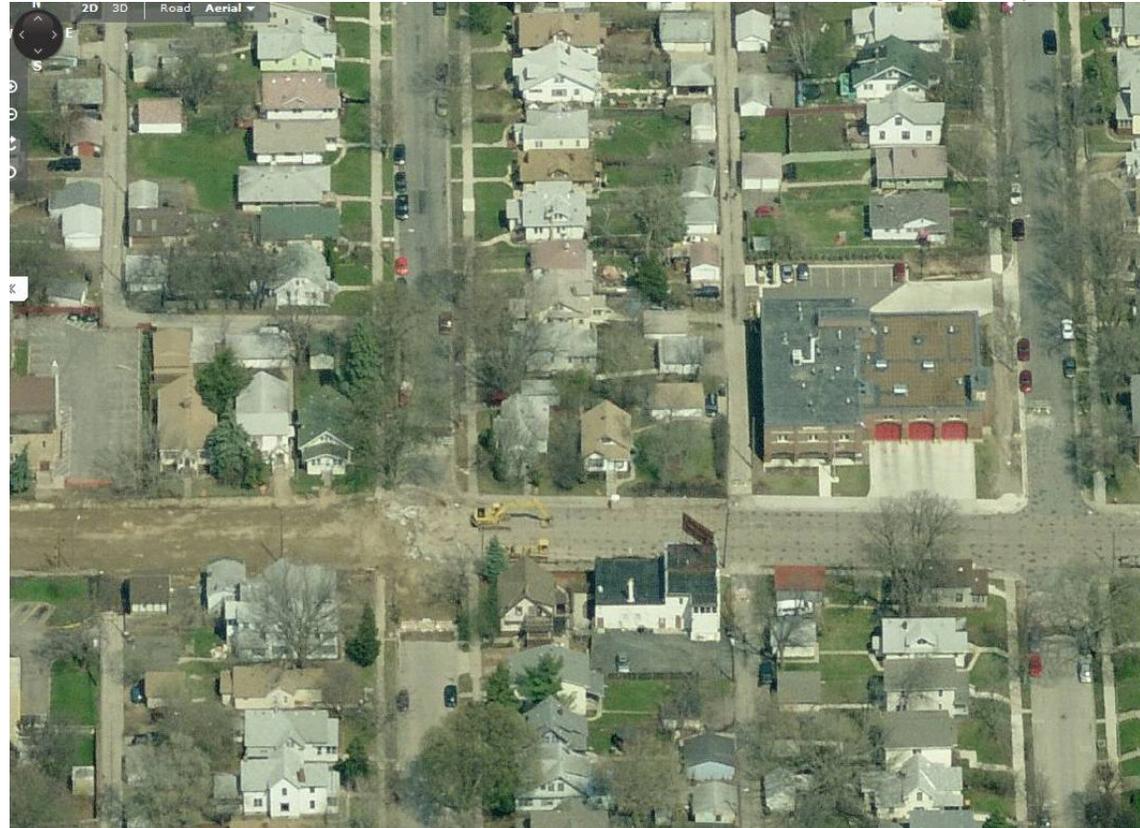
In 2000, median home values in the six Census tracts adjacent to Lowry Avenue were 56% to 72% of the City's median. Because of the extra housing supply available and the lack of confidence in the market, sale prices of homes have plummeted in the area in the last few years, along with associated housing values. This undermines renovation and reinvestment efforts, and makes it harder to

attract new development. The silver lining is that low housing prices can make it easier to assemble property for larger residential development projects.

In some respects, the housing market seems to be improving again. The median sale price in North Minneapolis rebounded by 57 percent from the start to the end of 2009, and one new residential development—the Hawthorne Eco-Village—is underway—albeit slowly.

This is good news for Lowry Avenue, as the entire metro region has witnessed the impact of job losses, tighter access to capital for home purchase and renovation, and diminished housing values. Still, the Lowry Avenue market is more sensitive to the negative impacts of these shifts, due to homogeneity of the housing stock and perceptions of the neighborhood that already limit the audience of homeowners and investors.

Housing at Lowry & Newton



## 4.2 Housing Objectives

Attracting new development to Lowry Avenue is a key component to this plan's revitalization strategy. It is important to increase the density of both residents and activity, because that supports local businesses and high quality transit service, and it dampens criminal activity. Vibrant, safe places require people.

Having stated the importance of housing development, it is also vital to attend to the character of the housing, and the household mix that is being attracted to the community.

City housing policy highlights the importance of broadening the residential market in disadvantaged communities. That means creating a healthy mix of rental and ownership housing, and attracting middle income households in addition to housing low income residents. These objectives are perfectly relevant for the Lowry Avenue corridor.



Achieving these goals on Lowry is complicated by the fact that new housing in low-income areas generally requires financial subsidy. And programs offering subsidy place significant constraints on the housing that is created. Most forms of public subsidy are better suited to rental housing than for-sale housing. And most require that tenants be income qualified—meaning that household income cannot be higher than a certain threshold—over a 15 to 30 year time frame.

Beyond this, the market may not support certain ownership or higher end housing products at the current time.

Given these constraints a housing mix that is ideal from a policy perspective may not be achievable on Lowry in the current funding and market environment.

This does not diminish the importance of setting clear goals and objectives. They can support the pursuit of programmatic changes that would relax income qualification requirements in disadvantaged communities. And they can be employed with housing developers by tying the extension of local financial support to the satisfaction of city and community objectives to the extent that it is practicable to do so.

In all cases, high quality design and strong property management should be non-negotiable. They are necessary to ensure that new housing is a community asset. Fortunately, there are a number of local housing developer that have a strong track record on both fronts.

The following housing objectives relate to the purposeful mix of housing that should be attracted to Lowry Avenue over time.

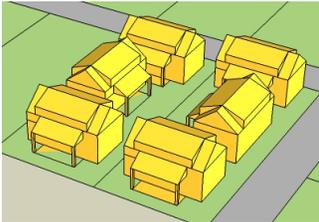
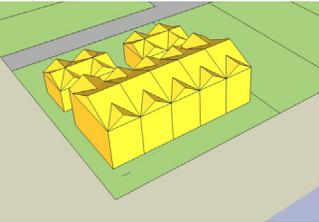
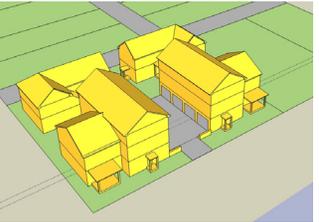
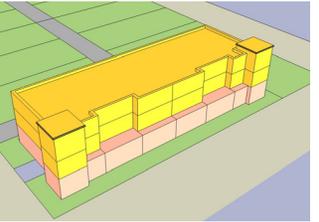
- **Rental and Ownership.** A balance of ownership and well-managed rental housing should be pursued.
- **Economic Balance.** Affordable, income-qualified housing should be balanced with housing that is targeted to middle and even higher income households.
- **Scale and Design.** A mix of housing styles is desired including well-detailed apartment or condominium flats, townhouses and rowhouses, and others.
- **Market Niches.** Lowry Avenue housing should be designed for and marketed to a wide demographic and cultural spectrum—families and singles, seniors, artists, local church members, employees of area institutions, etc.



### 4.3 Housing Types

There are many reasons for diversifying the types of housing available on Lowry Avenue. Doing so will assist in opening up new residential markets for developers. And it will assist in accommodating the needs of households of different sizes and at different life stages.

Within the medium to higher density continuum of new housing that is recommended for Lowry Avenue, the following general housing types should be encouraged.

Cottage Cluster	Townhouse	Live-Work House	Courtyard Building	Mixed-Use Building
				
				
<p>Detached buildings in a tight formation.</p> <p><b>Units:</b> 6 on 2 lots.  <b>Market:</b> those who want detached housing but no yard maintenance, increased sense of safety due to proximity to neighbors, new construction. Ownership.</p>	<p>Mid-size living units in an attached multi-family building.</p> <p><b>Units:</b> 3+ on 2+ lots.  <b>Market:</b> those who want small living units in a multi-family building, small outdoor space, private garage, new construction. Ownership or rental.</p>	<p>Small living units above and connected with ground floor work spaces in an attached multi-family building.</p> <p><b>Units:</b> 2 on 1 lot.  <b>Market:</b> those who want to work at home but in a separate space with a storefront. Ownership.</p>	<p>Small living units with outdoor community space in an attached multi-family building.</p> <p><b>Units:</b> 40+ on 3+ lots.  <b>Market:</b> those who want small living units, no maintenance, lower cost than detached housing. Ownership or rental.</p>	<p>Small living units above commercial spaces in an attached multi-family building.</p> <p><b>Units:</b> 24+ residential, 2+ commercial, on 4+ lots.  <b>Market:</b> those who want small living units, no maintenance, lower cost than detached housing, underground parking, new construction. Ownership or rental.</p>

## 4.4 Redevelopment Strategies

Although attracting new housing development is an important aspect of revitalizing the Lowry Avenue corridor, it is certainly easier said than done. Fostering new development in the heart of North Minneapolis faces significant challenges. Important among these are the following:

- **Site assembly.** New development on Lowry will often require the acquisition of multiple properties. And preparing the site for development may involve related activities such as demolition of existing structures, and relocation of existing occupants. This increases the cost of development. It also increases risk to the developer, because the time it takes to complete site assembly once initiated is often uncertain. Developers incur holding costs in this interim period related to property maintenance and interest on development financing.
- **Residential market.** A developer will not build if they are not confident that they will be able to cover their costs by sale or rental of the property. Such return on investment is related to the expected sale or rental income that the property will generate. In a community that faces the livability and public safety challenges of the Lowry Avenue area, a project's expected financial return may not be very high. This challenge is heightened by the fact that there is little new housing available on Lowry, so there are not comparables that developers can look at to gauge what the market is. Criminal activity, vacant or unattractive storefronts, and problem properties can all discourage a potential developer that is envisioning marketing a new residential product on Lowry.

These challenges must be addressed in a vigorous

way in order to attract new development to Lowry Avenue. After a few attractive and well-managed housing developments have been created on Lowry, the perceived challenges of building housing will be reduced, and it will be somewhat easier to attract subsequent projects.

### Strategies

The following are primary strategies for fostering new housing development on Lowry Avenue.

- **Third party site assembly.** The challenges of developing new housing on Lowry are daunting without expecting a developer to do land assembly. In strategically important opportunity areas, the public sector and related intermediaries will need to take on the acquisition and holding costs related to readying multi-parcel development sites. It is a complicated strategy that is explored in more detail below.
- **Branding Lowry as a great place to live.** One of the greatest barriers to housing development on Lowry is that there are no examples that market Lowry Avenue as a desirable address for housing. But market recognition can to some extent be built—or at least augmented. “Living on Lowry” can become a phrase that celebrates the unique assets of living in an affordable yet hip, engaged, and diverse community with all the assets and amenities inherent in North Minneapolis. This goes beyond any single slogan to include marketing the many unique features of the Lowry Area, and ensuring that first new residents on Lowry have a terrific experience in their community.

- **Marketing Lowry to developers.** Information about Lowry Avenue and its retail market area can be assembled to interest prospective developers in Lowry. This may open their eyes to the attractive qualities of the place, the success that certain anchor businesses are having, and the strengths of neighborhood assets. A prospectus should be developed of opportunity sites, and materials about target markets for residential development. Other information to include: a list of area amenities, the zoning map, and an inventory of development-related support and resources.
- **Rezone property.** The regulatory environment can be prepared for multifamily development by proactively rezoning property along Lowry. Consistent with the recommendations in the Land Use and Development chapter of this document, zoning should support medium density housing development along Lowry, and high density mixed use development at the two neighborhood commercial nodes.



## 4.4 Redevelopment Strategies

continued

- **Expand the market—Product mix.** Although there is a demand for a variety of housing types in North Minneapolis, there is a limited supply of some types. For example, rowhouses are scarce but may be attractive to some residents.
- **Expand the market—Household mix.** Lowry is not suited to only one type of household. Nearby parks and schools make the area suitable for families. Other characteristics could attract price-conscious urban hipsters. Residential submarkets may also be associated with existing communities. These include employees of large local institutions such as North Memorial Hospital, members of local churches, Hmong households from across the Twin Cities, artists, and GLBT (gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender) households. Broadening the target market can open up new possibilities, and shed light on needed environmental improvements. Real estate market consultants could assist in the identification of these candidate submarkets, and the development of tailored marketing approaches to each. Collaborating with an identified submarket in the design of a new development may reduce risk for a developer. And environmental improvements can be paired with specific target markets. For example, it may be easier to attract families with children if “safe routes to schools” strategies are implemented in collaboration w/ area schools.
- **Employer assisted housing.** Employer assisted housing (EAH) can leverage the interest and resources of a major area employer. It refers to strategies that assist employees with their housing needs. In some instances the employer provides a benefit such as downpayment

assistance to employees for purchasing a home near the employer. In others the employer participate more directly in the creation of housing suitable for its employees. North Memorial Hospital is on the doorstep of Lowry Avenue, and would be a suitable candidate for partnering on employer assisted housing strategies.

- **Address problem properties.** A high priority must be placed on dealing with blight or unruly behavior at properties near potential development because they will dampen developer interest and quickly erode the living conditions of new residents. A specific strategy should be developed for each problem property, utilizing approaches such as incentives and management support along with a willingness to regulatory enforcement, legal action and police interventions.
- **Financial support.** Supporting a development financially is a very direct way to improve the development pro forma, as well as reduce risk for the developer. This can come in many forms. Gap financing falls under this heading, and for first developments on Lowry there may need to be a willingness to make gap financing available that goes beyond what is normally considered appropriate. A particular challenge is identifying gap financing for ownership housing, an important part of the housing mix. Predevelopment money is another category of financial support that in some instances may be key to inviting developer interest, as predevelopment activities are difficult to finance privately. Where site assembly flows through public ownership, public land write-downs to support desirable development can be considered.

### Site Assembly

Public or third party site assembly may sometimes be necessary in order to attract developer interest. The recession’s silver lining is that more property is available at lower cost. But the resources of governments and partnering institutions are always constrained, and there are significant holding costs associated with maintaining a property inventory. This plan highlights the importance of continued property acquisition on Lowry Avenue. But it also proposes criteria for evaluating and prioritizing acquisitions. Specifically, acquisition opportunities should be evaluated utilizing criteria that includes the following.

- **Development Opportunity Map.** Is the acquisition candidate in one of the development opportunity areas identified in this plan’s Development Opportunity Map?
- **Adjacency.** Some property by its adjacency to an already assembled development opportunity, would result in an ability to do a higher quality development. A notable example of this is the lots on the south half of the county owned 701 and 801 blocks of Lowry Avenue.
- **Blighting influences.** Acquisition may be the most effective approach in the long-run for some problem properties not responsive to supportive outreach and regulatory actions.
- **Market strength.** The stronger and more stable west end of Lowry may generate expected returns on investment that offset somewhat larger site assembly costs.



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## 5. Economic Development

- 5.1 Overview
- 5.2 Business Development
- 5.3 Redevelopment Strategies

## 5.1 Overview

At one time, nearly fifty businesses operated at the Penn and Lowry Avenue intersection. In the decades since, shifts in transportation and shopping habits resulted in a decline in demand for the goods and services found on Lowry Avenue. While Lowry Avenue will not likely recover the full spectrum of businesses that were present in the 1950s, the business mix can be diversified and the character of the commercial places on Lowry can become more vibrant.

This Plan organizes Economic Development into two sections: Business Development, and Redevelopment Strategies. The purpose of treating these two areas separately is to recognize that a revitalized Lowry Avenue will require attention and investment at several levels. Existing businesses and new entrepreneurs choosing to do business on the Avenue are as important to the revitalization of Lowry as are larger investors interested in assembling property to build new buildings.

There is a strong connection between business development (supporting existing businesses) and commercial redevelopment (new construction). Without viable businesses, real estate is underutilized. This results in a seeming oversupply of commercial space, which dampens interest in development.

### Access and Connections

Retail business success relies, in part, on access and exposure. Although traffic volumes on Lowry Avenue are reasonably high (approximately 10,000 to 15,000 average vehicles per day according to

MnDOT), the lack of access to regional roadways due to grade separation at Broadway and no direct access to I-94 suggests much of this traffic is local and is generated by the surrounding neighborhoods or places along Lowry.

Given these restrictions in connectivity, there is little regional exposure to businesses on Lowry. The Lowry and Penn commercial district may be an exception to this, as it seems that there is some commuter traffic from parts of North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Center that

come by the intersection en route to downtown Minneapolis.

### Recent/Past Market Studies

Two previous market studies have focused on the Avenue:

- Retail Market Analysis by McCombs Group, Ltd., 2005.
- North Minneapolis Economic Development Strategy by MJB Consulting, 2007.



Strong Local Access, Weak Regional Access

## 5.1 Overview

continued

The 2005 study was conducted prior to road construction. It focused on Emerson and Lyndale Avenues, the impact of the future road construction, and the viability of commercial development in those areas. It concluded with a recommendation that 40,000 square feet of new retail to be located at Emerson and/or Lyndale.

The 2007 study was larger in scope, and was conducted after the roadway construction had begun. With the benefit of a larger geographical context, the North Minneapolis Commercial Development Strategy arrived at recommendations that were different and partially conflicting with those of the earlier study. The report supported a Neighborhood Business District at Emerson, possibly focusing on ethnic niche businesses while recommending that business activity at Lyndale Avenue be contracted, not expanded.

### Trade Area and Demographics

According to both of the studies referenced above, the trade area for Lowry Avenue extends from 39th Avenue to 26th Avenue North. This trade area is relatively small (approximately 1 mile to the north and 1/2 mile to the south) due, in part, to nearby competing retail areas such as West Broadway, Terrace Mall, and Camden, and the awkwardness of regional connections to Lowry. The trade area includes all of the Cleveland, Folwell, and McKinley neighborhoods, and parts of Jordan and Hawthorne. In general, the incomes and buying power of the trade area are higher in neighborhoods north of Lowry and lower in neighborhoods south of Lowry.

The population of the five adjacent neighborhoods is approximately 31,000, but the housing density (at approximately seven units/acre) and associated spending power is low in comparison with most Minneapolis communities.

There are several positive demographics that support the need for enhanced local commercial activity. According to the 2005 Retail Market Analysis:



Approximate Trade Area and Competing Retail Areas

Population of Surrounding Five Neighborhoods			
	1980	1990	2000
Hawthorne	6,036	6,032	5,985
Folwell	4,964	5,115	6,331
McKinley	3,286	3,298	6,658
Cleveland	3,220	3,216	3,440
Jordan	7,861	7,737	9,149
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,408</b>	<b>25,398</b>	<b>31,563</b>

## 5.1 Overview

continued

- About 1/4 of the population is transit dependent and therefore more likely to support local retailers.
- 25 percent of the population has a college or graduate degree, and 32 percent have at least a 2 year degree.
- Almost half the trade area is 19 years of age or younger. This plus an above average household size suggests the need for budget-priced apparel.
- The trade area has two dominant age cohorts: persons under 15 years of age and persons between 25 and 54 years of age.
- 47 percent of the population is African American and 16 percent is Asian Pacific Islander; these populations may provide the base for specialty businesses that draw from a large geographic area.

### Existing Business Inventory

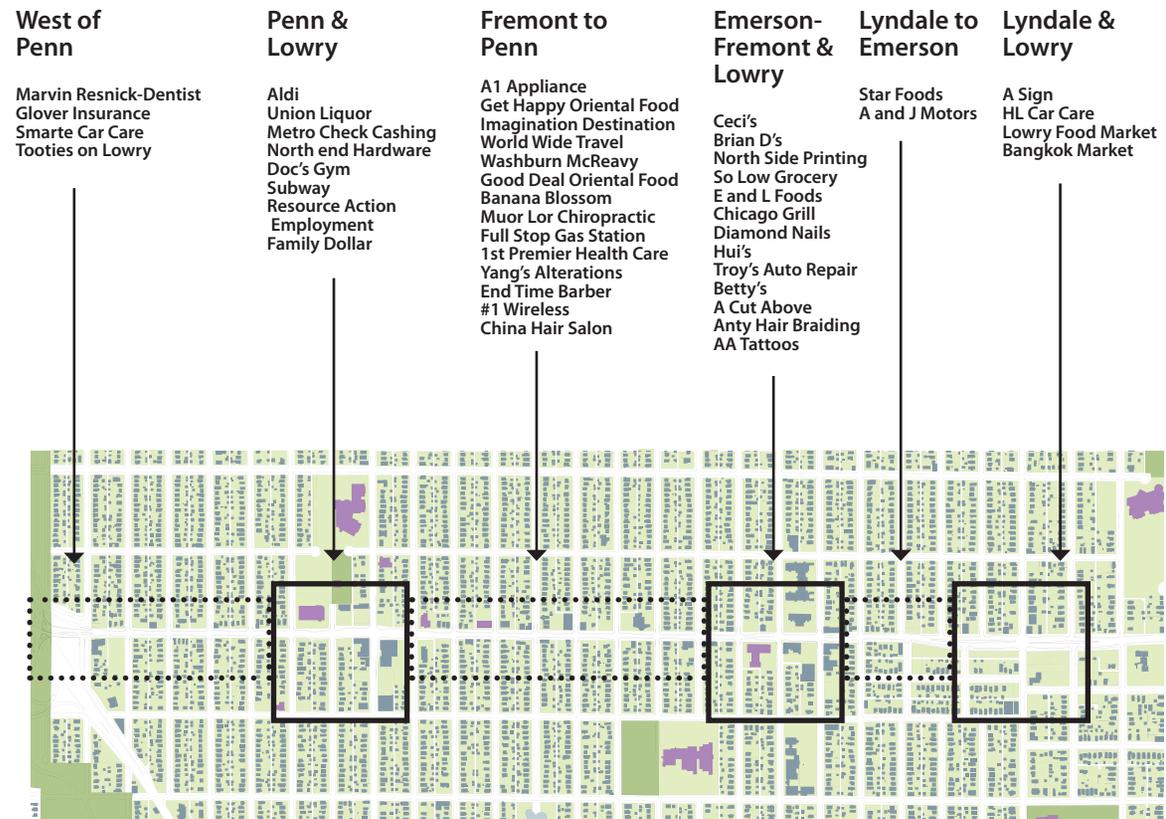
According to the 2005 Retail Market Analysis, prior to the road reconstruction there were approximately 72 businesses (32 retail and 40 service businesses) on Lowry Avenue. Takings for the new right-of-way, the impact of road construction, and a poor economy reduced the number of businesses to approximately 43, with 25 of them at the three neighborhood commercial nodes.

The 2002 Lowry Avenue Plan recommended land between the nodes eventually transition from a

mix of commercial and residential to medium-density housing. Nevertheless, today there remain approximately 15 businesses located between the nodes. Most of these are service-oriented businesses.

Dispersion of market activity along Lowry Avenue is evident from the physical characteristics of

commercial space. Over 80 percent of the office space was built before 1965. Survey data identify 383,000 square feet of commercial space on Lowry Avenue, including Lowry Avenue east of the Mississippi River, among 36 buildings. The North Minneapolis stretch of Lowry represents only about a tenth of this supply, with just 13 buildings averaging about 3,000 square feet in size.



## 5.1 Overview

continued

The dispersion of commercial space and activity along Lowry Avenue reduces the benefits that retail and office businesses receive from additional foot traffic and mix of patronage. Dispersion also increases the demands of automobile traffic and parking on the corridor, compounding perceptions of parking problems.

The low supply reflects the limited demand that exists for office space on Lowry. Office buildings on Lowry are prone to conspicuous vacancy, particularly between the nodes. These spaces are in some cases available for exceedingly low rents (\$3-\$5 per foot gross), maintaining downward price pressure on commercial spaces located elsewhere on Lowry. The impact of the current recession has exaggerated vacancy along the Lowry corridor. The six Census tracts that comprise the project area have business vacancies of 8-30 percent.

### Current Economic Conditions

The current economic market is extremely soft and the commercial real estate market is in transition. Credit for new businesses and real estate investments remains tight; only the most creditworthy investors are able to secure loans.

Nonetheless, Lowry Avenue is not without commercial success stories. Multiple businesses, such as So Low Grocery, North End Hardware, and Tooties, continue to thrive by filling niches for items desired locally and around the region. Aldi and Family Dollar discount store are each reported to perform among the top stores in their respective chains.

Availability of commercial space and comparatively modest rent levels are challenges from a planning perspective, but are seeds of opportunity from an economic development perspective. Together, these are valuable assets to a broad range of audiences, and the community has an opportunity to use affordable space to continue attracting business owners to occupy and use Lowry Avenue space.

Development opportunities are plentiful if measured by land available at a relatively low price. Lowry Avenue is the spine of five desirable in-town urban neighborhoods, each with its own identity and set of urban amenities. Vacant land, underperforming buildings, and underutilized properties are located at each of the nodes. Therefore, the challenge for redevelopment along Lowry is not one of lack of demand to live, work, and invest in the City, but one of matching existing demand with existing supply.

New development proposals are likely to wait for additional signals that the market is stabilizing. In the shorter term, this plan emphasizes strategies to fill existing commercial space, and to leverage the strengths of existing assets.

### Local and Destination Markets

Given the proximity of West Broadway Avenue, and the plethora of retail centers and malls that can be reached in a five mile radius of Lowry Avenue, the core customer base for Lowry Avenue will continue to be people that live within five to ten blocks of the street. Having said that there are existing businesses on Lowry that are known

to draw from a much wider market. The prime example of this is So Low Foods, which boasts a customer base that extends into the suburbs. But Aldi, North Regional Library, and some of the Asian-owned businesses pull in customers and patrons from more distant areas as well.

Destination markets can augment local markets. In addition to increasing the customer base, they also diversify it with different shopping profiles and needs. The different markets may also have different peak shopping times, keeping a business active more hours of the day. Businesses that have a destination customer base benefit their neighbors by exposing them to potential customers that might not otherwise be in the neighborhood.

While Lowry Avenue will not compete with West Broadway in its range of community-level goods and services, it may be able to capitalize on some of the niche markets that already exist on Lowry. An example is the range of Hmong-owned stores. There is not a competing Hmong-oriented shopping area in North Minneapolis, so to consciously build this character could yield additional customer traffic in the form of Hmong households that live in north Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs.

## 5.2 Business Development

This plan establishes two main goals for business development:

- Improve the success of existing businesses through support strategies.
- Attract new businesses to current vacancies.

These goals are interrelated. As existing businesses are more successful, they in turn attract businesses that provide complementary products or services. Improving the success of existing businesses also starts a positive investment cycle. It generates resources for the business owner that can be utilized to make business and property investments. These improvements will have the effect of further improving the attractiveness of the area for other prospective businesses. And the increased number of customers to Lowry is also a draw to businesses that may be considering a new location.

And new businesses benefit existing businesses. High quality new businesses improve the cachet of the area, which increases the potential customer base for existing businesses.

### Support for Existing Businesses

There are a surprising number of business anchors on Lowry Avenue that are thriving and seem to be creating economic coat-tails for other local businesses. But there are also local businesses that are visibly challenged, and the recessionary environment is undoubtedly one of the causes of their distress. A high priority should be placed on reaching out to existing businesses, and exploring ways of ensuring their ongoing success. In doing

this it should be recognized that there are some challenges in the Lowry environment that many businesses on Lowry may be facing. They include the following.

- **Resource deficit.** Businesses that are in inexpensive tenant spaces on Lowry Avenue are often entrepreneurs that had few resources to invest in their business start. This condition can be self-perpetuating, because business owners operating on a shoestring budget may not be able to make improvements to facilities, inventory or marketing that are necessary to improve the success of the business.
- **Isolation.** Business owners are generally not local residents. They are of various cultures and ethnicities. And Lowry Avenue lacks a strong affiliation between businesses. All of this may yield a sense of isolation for individual business owners. Important conversations may not be occurring about things like business skills and strategies, and getting neighborhood shoppers in the door. City regulatory actions without also marketing available City resources and services may exacerbate this sense of isolation. Businesses need to feel like they are part of a network of businesses, that they have some connection to the community they serve, and that the resources of the City and other organizations are available to support their endeavors.
- **Conflicting loyalties.** Some low-traffic businesses are “adopted” as comfortable environments by local youth or gangs because their activities are unlikely to be disrupted by lots of customer traffic. The business owner may feel pressure not to make changes that would disrupt the status quo. Sometimes they are even the

subject of overt threats. In these instances it may feel quite risky to disrupt the status quo.

These challenges may be difficult to surmount, requiring improvements to the external environment, various specific business support, and sustained and coordinated attention by many parties. However, maintaining the viability of existing businesses ought to be the first order of business on a plan implementation agenda. The following are strategies that would contribute to addressing the identified challenges, and improving the business climate in general. Some of these strategies are types of support that can be extended to individual business owners. Others would benefit the commercial areas in general through marketing, relationship building, or addressing conditions in the environment.



## 5.2 Business Development

continued

- **Technical support.** Technical support comes in a great many flavors. It includes assistance with developing a business or marketing plan, and instruction in topics like keeping books and hiring competent employees. Local businesses can be encouraged to connect with one or more of the many organizations that offer technical support.
- **Financial support.** Some programs are available to provide financial support to business owners for business or building improvements. City staff and providers of technical support are resources for helping business owners find suitable financial resources. Local businesses are particularly encouraged to participate in programs that offer matching funds for façade improvements, because in addition to drawing customer traffic to the business, a more attractive storefront benefits the look of the whole commercial area.
- **Coordinated response.** Businesses facing serious challenges including public safety issues, conflicting customer bases, and/or multiple regulatory requirements, may benefit from an “all hands on deck” coordinated approach. Bringing parties with business supporting resources together with enforcement/police staff and neighborhood representation might offer a balanced conversation about how issues are being seen by outside parties, and what support is available to make a change.
- **Block club adoption.** Adoption of a local business by neighboring residents can open up conversation about what products are needed in the community, and what would make residents more comfortable shopping at the store. This is

invaluable information to a business owner, who can, in being responsive, create a loyal customer base that can spread the word about its products or services.

- **Marketing.** A coordinated marketing approach should be developed for Lowry Avenue. Marketing Lowry can springboard off its strong assets including a beautiful streetscape, a useful business mix, and its wonderful business anchors. The program would benefit from the information derived from target market studies and potential customer surveys.
- **“Shop Local” campaign.** This is another approach to increasing resident loyalty to “their own” commercial corner. Having proven to be successful in other locations, the creation of a “Buy on the Avenue, Sell to the Neighborhood” program helps to engender positive relationships that serve the common needs of businesses and residents. The program could include welcome packets for new residents, business representation on neighborhood boards, and resident representation on a reestablished Lowry Avenue Business Association.



- **Events.** Events are fun, and should not be overlooked as a strategy for generating enthusiasm for commercial areas. The broader idea is to draw people to a place, and give it recognition, through programming it.
- **Place-making.** One can't overemphasize the importance of place-making! It is important to continue to make the physical environment increasingly vibrant and interesting. New development, and improvements to existing properties, should incrementally build the sense of an exciting, interesting and walkable place. Outdoor settings such as outdoor restaurant seating or public plazas are a key ingredient. Design coordination among business and property owners should be strongly encouraged.
- **Interim uses.** Creative interim and temporary uses on vacant land and in vacant buildings can play a short-term role in energizing an environment. Examples include galleries, events, seasonal retail, art installations, and storefront murals. These low cost investment can generate foot traffic, exposure, and interest in an area during a weak economy when larger investments are unlikely.

## 5.2 Business Development

continued

### Attracting New Businesses

Attracting new businesses is required to fill vacant spaces and improve the business mix on Lowry. As referenced above, there are many assets on Lowry that would be of interest to prospective businesses, including successful anchor businesses and decent traffic volumes. But other local conditions may give caution to prospective businesses that would otherwise consider launching a venture on Lowry. These include public safety issues, the evident disinvestment and poor visual appearance of some properties, the lack of a strong business association, and tenuous community support for Lowry Avenue businesses. These concerns must be addressed in order to attract new businesses to Lowry. Strategies to be considered should include the following.

- **Build from success.** Successful anchor businesses on Lowry include three grocery stores, Aldi, So Low, and Bangkok Market, as well as Family Dollar, Union Liquor, North



End Hardware, Good Deal Oriental Food and Restaurant, Subway, and the public post office and library. Businesses that offer complementary products and services to these are good targets for recruitment efforts. Anchor businesses should also be referenced in marketing materials.

- **Develop a marketing plan and packet.** Information about Lowry Avenue and its retail market area can be assembled to interest prospective businesses in Lowry. This may not replace the location oriented research that a business would conduct before opening up in a new location. But it may open their eyes to the attractive qualities of the place, the success that certain anchor businesses are already having, and the buying power of the neighborhood. There is no substitute for being knowledgeable about specific space opportunities available on Lowry. A space inventory should be assembled as part of these materials and kept current. Low cost existing commercial space is an attractive asset for certain retail establishments. Other information to consider including: parking availability, zoning, business-related support and resources.
- **Identify target businesses.** An overall tenancing plan, managed by a Lowry Avenue Business Association, should be developed for each of the business areas on Lowry. The prospective business categories in the plan should be selected to build toward useful and interesting business mixes for each area building the existing successful anchor businesses. It should also bolster the unique character of each area. Professional support from a business development specialist may be useful in

developing this plan. In addition to focusing recruitment efforts, a tenancing plan can give a feeling of predictability to existing businesses.

- **Explore destination niches.** As discussed above, if niche destination markets can be identified and augmented through marketing and improvements to the business mix, this would add to the overall customer base and vibrancy of the corridor. A Hmong commercial center is a possible niche that can be explored.
- **Staff support.** There's no substitute for having someone paid to dedicate time toward business recruitment and other activities that market the area. The neighborhood organizations should place a high priority on co-funding a position dedicated to economic and business development of Lowry Avenue. A Lowry Avenue business coordinator could execute promotion strategies and events, work on business recruitment, and strengthen relationships between the neighborhoods and Lowry businesses. It might ultimately be sponsored by a resurgent Lowry Avenue Business Association.
- **Financial incentives.** Consideration should be given to the creation of a program that subsidizes initial lease payments for target businesses that are doing a start-up on Lowry.

### 5.3 Redevelopment Strategies

The current market for new commercial development is weak. As an example, Wellington Management has not been able to proceed with development of the well-positioned vacant land east of its new Aldi store at Lowry & Penn. Over time, however, the market will strengthen and demand for in-city living, working, and entrepreneurship will support consideration of development activity once again. As has been

discussed previously, Lowry Avenue has a mix of assets and liabilities that will impact developer interest or lack thereof.

A primary goal of this Plan is to attract new development to Lowry Avenue by pursuing strategies that “set the table” for development by reducing barriers and lowering development risk. The challenges and strategies related to attracting

new commercial development are very similar to those that pertain to housing development. The Housing chapter of this plan includes a full discussion of strategies that may serve to foster Lowry Avenue development in a way that meets community and city goals.

Wellington development at Lowry & Penn





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## 6. Implementation

- 6.1 Overview
- 6.2 Organizational Strategies
- 6.3 Implementation Matrix

## 6.1 Overview

Full implementation of this Plan will result in a new environment on Lowry Avenue. In thirty years hundreds of additional households may live in Lowry Avenue developments. Dozens of businesses will be thriving, and local institutions will be strong. Sidewalks will be busy. Biking will be a viable choice for almost everyone. Transit service will be improved. Perhaps most importantly, residents of North Minneapolis will exude a sense of pride that Lowry Avenue is one of their prized places. Living on, working on and spending on Lowry Avenue will be in itself an act that people take pride in. Neighborhoods will show loyalty to Lowry Avenue businesses, which will in turn be responsiveness to community needs.



But these improvements won't happen overnight, nor will they come about if there is little commitment and time investment. Revitalization of Lowry Avenue will be a long term endeavor. There has been a market shift toward investing in core cities, but larger investments will continue to wait for recovery in the real estate market, which is contending with conditions such as tight credit markets, the constrained budgets of public agencies, and consumer trepidation.

The good news is that, while market recovery proceeds, there is much that can be done in the near term. The Lowry Avenue community can prioritize two kinds of efforts that will establish momentum for change.

- **Stabilize and improve the existing commercial infrastructure.** This means making small scale investments such as façade improvements, providing support for existing businesses, and recruiting businesses to fill existing vacant commercial space.



- **Create organizational capacity and build relationships.** Much can be done to build the collaboration that is needed to effectively undertake the full menu of Lowry Avenue improvements. It involves strengthening leadership, engaging key stakeholders and partners, and clarifying roles.

## 6.2 Organizational Strategies

While many strategies for improving Lowry Avenue have been given their due in preceding chapters, more should be said about building the organizational capacity and focus that is required to accomplish the objectives in this plan. The strategies identified above are little more than a wish list unless real people and organizations take ownership over them and do the hard work required to advance them. The following organizational strategies should be carefully considered for immediate action in order to support and advance the many and varied strategies identified in this plan.

- **Organizational leadership.** While leadership will be required at many levels, in most cases an overall lead organization is best suited to advance a revitalization agenda over time. The lead organization would keep the agenda in mind, build partnerships with the other organizations and stakeholders necessary for advancing various strategies, and advocate for its completion. Although there are multiple options for this lead organization forms, and it could change over time, the five neighborhoods adjacent to Lowry Avenue have already exercised leadership by stepping up, raising funds, and highlighting the importance of this neighborhood corridor. They



have demonstrated dedication to the cause, and for that reason may be best suited to playing an initial lead role in advancing it--perhaps augmented by additional residential and business representation. Because a collaboration of this kind can face challenges in making efficient decisions and playing an executive role, bringing on staff support dedicated to Lowry Avenue will be important.

- **Staffing.** The path of least resistance for staffing Lowry Avenue initiatives may be to apply for programmatic grant resources, and staff such programs one by one under the management of the existing neighborhood or business organizations. A case can be made for creating a position that offers more comprehensive support for Lowry Avenue initiatives. Then programmatic funding would be administered by that position to the extent that it matches the skillset of the staff person. This could be structured as an employee of one of the neighborhood organizations. It could be a contracted individual. Or it could be managed through a contract with an existing organization (e.g. West Broadway Coalition, Lake Street Council) for some of the time of an employee of that organization.
- **Business organization.** The business community on Lowry can play a key role in advancing a number of the plan strategies. A reenergized Lowry Avenue Business Association can exert positive peer pressure that can yield outcomes such as spruced up buildings and joint marketing.
- **Partnerships.** Reaching out and building partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders builds capacity for accomplishing the plan objectives. Near term conversations should include meetings with the following parties: business owners, organizations that offer business resources and support, prospective developers, City development staff, Hmong business owners, area churches, principals of neighborhood schools, and North Memorial Hospital. Some of these initial conversation should be strategy sessions related to near term priorities and how to collaborate on strategies. Others would focus on raising awareness and interest, with more tangible outcomes emerging over time.
- **Implementation champions.** Ongoing advocacy for attention to, and resources for, Lowry Avenue is critically important. Advocacy should come from multiple stakeholders, key among which are the neighborhood organizations and the residents they serve, the business community, and elected officials including the City Council members whose wards include Lowry Avenue.



### 6.3 Implementation Matrix Business Development

Objectives	Strategies	Who	When
Support Existing Businesses	Make technical support available to existing businesses	City, Service providers	Near Term
	Offer financial support for business improvements	City, Others	Near Term
	Provide a coordinated approach to challenged or “problem” businesses	City, Business Organization, Community	Near Term
	Organize block club adoption of local businesses	Community	Near Term
Improve business districts	Create and implement a marketing strategy for Lowry	Business Organization, Community	Medium Term
	Start a “Shop Local” campaign	Business Organization, Community	Medium Term
	Stage more Lowry Avenue focused events	Business Organization, Community	Near Term
	Make incremental design improvements to foster distinctive and attractive places	Business Owners, Business Organization	Ongoing
	Pursue creative interim and temporary uses for vacant property	City, County, Community	Near to Medium Term
Attract new businesses	Develop and implement a marketing plan to attract new businesses to Lowry	Business Organization, Community	Near to Medium Term
	Recruit target retail and service businesses	Business Organization, Community	Near to Medium Term
	Explore the expansion of destination market niches	Business Organization, Community	Near to Medium Term
	Explore the creation or identification of financial incentives to attract target businesses	Business Organization, Community, City	Medium Term
	Staff these and other efforts w/ a Lowry Avenue improvements coordinator	Business Organization, Community	Near to Medium Term

near term = 1-3 years  
medium term = 3-7 years  
long term = 7+ years

### 6.3 Implementation Matrix Commercial and Housing Redevelopment

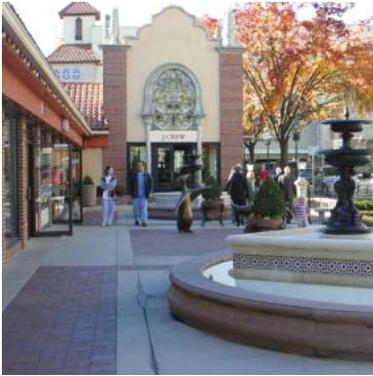
Objectives	Strategies	Who	When
Cultivate developer interest	Create and implement a marketing strategy to attract developers	Community, City	Near Term
	Address problem properties and other deterrents to new development	Business Owners, Business Organization	Ongoing
Offer tangible support	Continue to do strategic site assembly	City, County, Development Partners	Ongoing
	Develop and utilize creative financial support for new development	City, County, Community	Near to Medium Term
Enhance residential market	Create and utilize branding for Lowry Avenue as a great place to live	Community	Near Term
	Rezone property to support long range land use guidance	City	Near Term
	Promote a wider mix of housing types on Lowry	Business Organization, Community	Medium Term
	Identify and cultivate a range of target residential markets	Business Organization, Community	Medium Term
	Promote employer assisted housing with large area institutions	Business Organization, Community	Near Term

near term = 1-3 years  
medium term = 3-7 years  
long term = 7+ years

### 6.3 Implementation Matrix Transportation and Infrastructure

Objectives	Strategies	Who	When
Improve pedestrian facilities	Improve public pedestrian facilities w/ new development	Developer	Ongoing
	Improve front door to sidewalk connections w/ new development	Developer	Ongoing
	Review and improve signal timing at key intersections	City	Near Term
	Install signal countdowns	City	Medium Term
	Improve quality of crosswalk markings at Penn & Emerson-Fremont	County, City	Long Term
	Create green streets at 4th Street, Humboldt Ave, and 31st Ave	City, Developer	Long Term
	Utilize enforcement and education to prevent parking near crosswalks	City	Medium Term
Improve bicycle facilities	Improve the Lowry Avenue bike lane connection to Victory Memorial Drive	County, City	Medium Term
	Implement additional bicycle facilities on 33rd, Penn, Irving and Upton	City, Community	Long Term
	Expand bike share program to Lowry	Nice Ride	Medium Term
Improve transit facilities	Improve bus stop facilities w/ new development	Developer, Metro Transit	Ongoing
	Build transit hub at Lowry & Emerson or Lowry & Penn	Metro Transit	Long Term
	Improve frequency of local bus service	Metro Transit	Long Term
Improve mode share	Work w/ local employers & institutions to provide incentives for using alternatives to driving	Employers	Near to Long Term
	Encourage local employers to adopt employer assisted housing programs	Employers	Medium to Long Term
Improve street system	Pursue traffic calming measures on the Emerson-Fremont one way pair	City	Long Term

near term = 1-3 years  
medium term = 3-7 years  
long term = 7+ years



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## 7. Appendix

- 7.1 Workshop #1
- 7.2 Workshop #2
- 7.3 Workshop #3
- 7.4 Penn Lowry Charrette

## 7.1 Workshop #1

1. Resident Focus Group & Public Meeting Overview
2. Public Meeting Agenda
3. Resident Focus Group and Public Meeting Small Group Exercise Results
4. Property & Business Owners Focus Group Meeting Notes
5. Twin Cities Bus Tour Suggested Destinations List

# Memorandum

To: **Binoy Panicker**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Resident Focus Groups & Public Meeting**  
Date: **December 14, 2009**  
Copy To: **File**

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G R O U P

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## Resident Focus Groups

On November 18, 2009, the project team met with residents from neighborhoods along the Lowry Avenue Corridor. Tom Leighton (CPED), Andrew Dresdner (Cuningham Group), Cindy Harper (Cuningham Group), Jon Commers (Donjek), and Bill Smith (Biko Associates) attended the focus group meeting. Sixteen residents also attended.

Three separate focus groups worked concurrently during this session. Each resident chose to participate in one of the groups. The three groups included:

- 1) Lyndale/Lowry and surrounding area.
- 2) Emerson-Fremont/Lowry and surrounding area.
- 3) Penn/Lowry and surrounding area.

Each person in each group responded to two questions and together participated in one small group exercise. The three groups then reconvened, and a member of each group presented his or her group's results to the larger group. After these presentations, participants engaged in an open large group discussion.

## Public Meeting

On November 19, 2009, the project team and steering committee hosted a public meeting. Tom Leighton (CPED), Mike Lamb (Cuningham Group), Andrew Dresdner (Cuningham Group), Cindy Harper (Cuningham Group), and Bill Smith (Biko Associates) attended the meeting. Six steering committee members also attended. Total attendance was approximately 40 persons.

Like the resident focus group meeting, three separate focus groups worked concurrently during this session. Each resident chose to participate in one of the groups. The three groups included:

- 1) Lyndale/Lowry and surrounding area.
- 2) Emerson-Fremont/Lowry and surrounding area.
- 3) Penn/Lowry and surrounding area.

Each person in each group responded to two questions and together participated in one small group exercise. The three groups then reconvened, and a member of each group presented his or her group's results to the larger group. After these presentations, participants engaged in an open large group discussion.

CCH/cch

**END OF MEMO**

John W. Cuningham, FAIA  
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Timothy Dufault, AIA  
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John G. Pfluger, AIA  
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Michael P. Strand, AIA  
Brian Tempas, AIA  
Kathryn M. Wallace, AIA  
Jonathan V. Watts, AIA

# Meeting Agenda



**CUNNINGHAM**  
G R O U P

To: **Binoy Panicker**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Public Meeting Agenda**  
Location: **North Regional Public Library**  
Meeting Date: **November 19, 2009**  
Meeting Number: **First Public Meeting**  
Attendees: **See sign-in sheet record**  
  
Copy To: **File**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Duration</b>
1	Introduction and Background	6:10	15 min
2	Small Group Discussion and Exercise (3 groups) Question: What is one thing you would keep on Lowry Question: What would you like to see on Lowry in 10 years Exercise: Group photo sorting – appropriate, not appropriate	6:25	1 hour
3	Reconvene and Report Results (from small groups)	7:25	30 min
4	Adjourn	7:55	

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Brian Tempas, AIA  
Kathryn M. Wallace, AIA  
Jonathan V. Watts, AIA

**Lyndale & Lowry:**  
**What would you keep?**

**Resident Focus Group**

- Nice building structure
- Character-defining buildings
- Historic homes
- Green space - house/building tear-downs

**Public Meeting Group**

- Nothing - feels unsafe, too much open space and loitering
- Tree nursery
- Bangkok market
- Cool old building next to the freeway
- Grocery store on corner (building - good aesthetics)

**Lyndale & Lowry:**  
**What would you like to see in 10 years?**

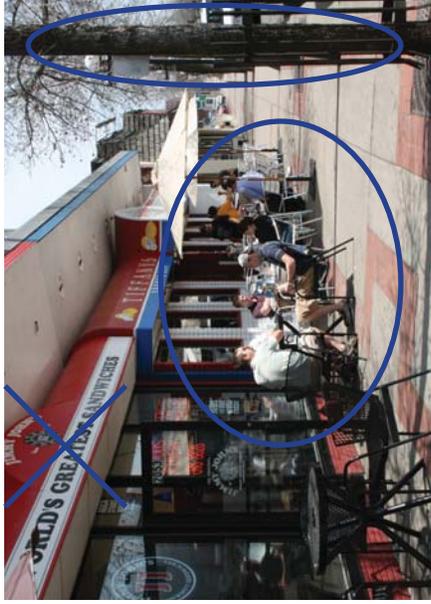
**Resident Focus Group**

- Functioning transit hub
- Welcome sign/gateway statement
- Businesses
- Develop/redevelop spaces or existing businesses
- Property improvements - residential character
- Neighborhood diner
- Non-profit/service industry
- Places to spend money

**Public Meeting Group**

- Mom & pop sit-down restaurant
- Upscale restaurant
- Gathering place
- Good coffee shop
- Piano bar
- Small venue local entertainment
- Bank
- Co-op / Whole Foods
- Mid-range grocery
- Bakery
- Dental/medical professional

Lyndale & Lowry: Good Examples



**Comments**

A place to meet (not gather), small businesses good.



**Comments**

Reminds of public art, public art good, expressive.



**Comments**

Building design interesting.



**Comments**

Good mixed look with materials, not necessarily housing, higher income residents.



**Comments**

Place where neighbors and families want to meet, ice cream, something for kids to do while parents drink coffee.

### Lyndale & Lowry: Poor Examples



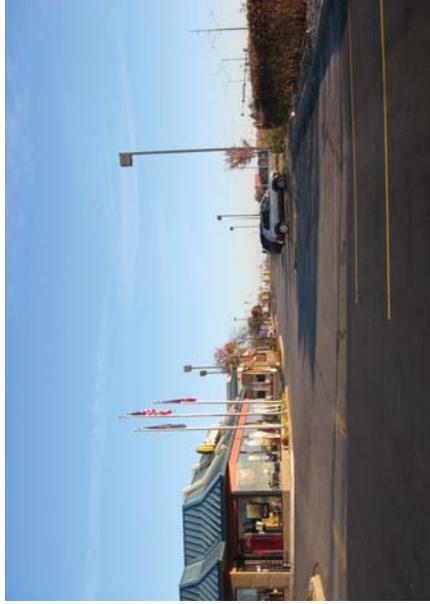
**Comments**

Does not create community neighborhood space.



**Comments**

Not inviting.



**Comments**

Parking lot.



**Comments**

High rise.



**Comments**

Strip mall.

Lyndale & Lowry: Good Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
Mixed-use, three stories.

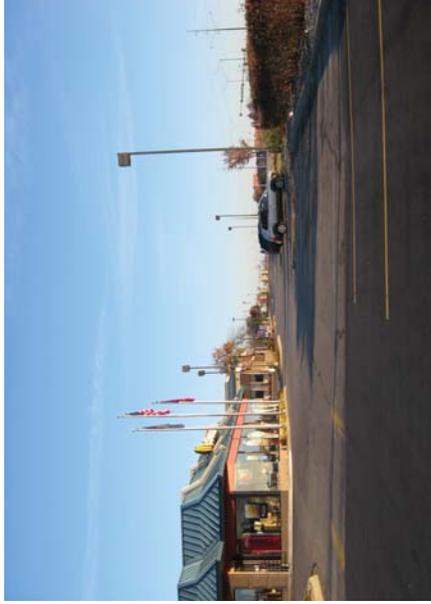


**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
With amphitheater.

Lyndale & Lowry: Poor Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.

**Emerson-Fremont & Lowry:  
What would you keep?**

**Resident Focus Group**

- Library
- Historic Bremer
- Bremer Way
- Troy's Auto Repair (business)
- SoLow Grocery
- Buildings on NE corner

**Public Meeting Group**

- Historic Bremer
- Stop lights
- Library
- Troy's auto repair
- Funeral home

**Emerson-Fremont & Lowry:  
What would you like to see in 10 years?**

**Resident Focus Group**

- Day care center
- Auto repair
- Dry cleaner
- Barber
- Corner grocery (fresh food)
- Laundromat
- Clinic
- Multi-story, family-oriented rental housing
- Primary transit hub 2 (multi-modal)
- Increased density housing (Lowry to Jordan Park), a mix of condos and apartments
- Wider mix of retail services (commercial)
- Community-serving institutions
- Kid-oriented businesses and spaces

**Public Meeting Group**

- Coffee shop
- East-west transit
- More space around transit
- Restored buildings
- New buildings
- Restaurant
- Office space
- Teen or youth center
- Green space
- Co-op grocery
- Medical professional services
- Wider sidewalks
- Movie theater
- Light rail service

Emerson-Fremont & Lowry: Good Examples



**Comments**

Public gathering, seating, open air, canopy, stimulating, destination, landmark.



**Comments**

Capacity for rental housing, good light, entertainment.



**Comments**

Historic feel.



**Comments**

Yeah! Individual entries.



**Comments**

Community within a community, homeowner, balanced lines.

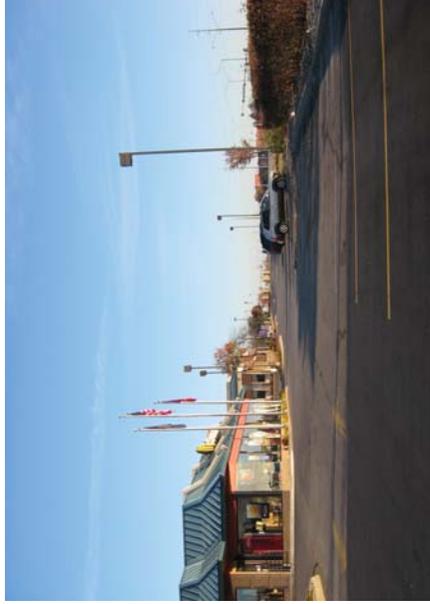
Emerson-Fremont & Lowry: Poor Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.

### Emerson-Fremont & Lowry: Good Examples



**Comments**  
At Emerson and Fremont.



**Comments**  
3-4 empty lots, south side of Lowry at Emerson.



**Comments**  
Green space for people. No cars.



**Comments**  
Yeah! Individual entries.



**Comments**  
Public art in the square.

Emerson-Fremont & Lowry: Poor Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.

## Resident Focus Group & Public Meeting Group

### Penn & Lowry: What would you keep?

#### Resident Focus Group

- Aldi

#### Public Meeting Group

- Green spaces (+2 votes)
- Good transit connections (+3 votes)
- Hardware store (+1 vote)
- Aldi (+1 vote)
- Subway
- Christ English Church

### Penn & Lowry: What would you like to see in 10 years?

#### Resident Focus Group

- Co-op
- A bank
- Fremont clinic to move to the corner
- Place like Homewood Studio, classes for kids
- Bigger building in the park, fountain, bike path, senior services
- Plaza, trees, community garden
- 34th & Penn, old gas station
- Medical alley between Penn & North Memorial
- Garden store at Vincent (Old Hanson Bros)
- Density, something that appeals to the senses, music, aroma, people-watching, something is going on, there is activity
- Lighting, banners, hanging baskets
- Trash containers
- Address problems of devalued housing stock, inadequate parking
- Good bus service
- Easy to cross Penn

#### Public Meeting Group

- Public square
- Butcher/baker
- Community center (+1 vote)
- Greenhouse (to help grow food for grocery)
- Bank
- Sit-down moderately-priced restaurant (+1 vote)
- Mixed-use retail/housing
- Greater non-profit presence
- Car share (zipcar, hourcar)

Penn & Lowry: Good Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
Plaza yes, architecture no.



**Comments**  
Put large chess board in center.



**Comments**  
Like!



**Comments**  
Cheap signage no.

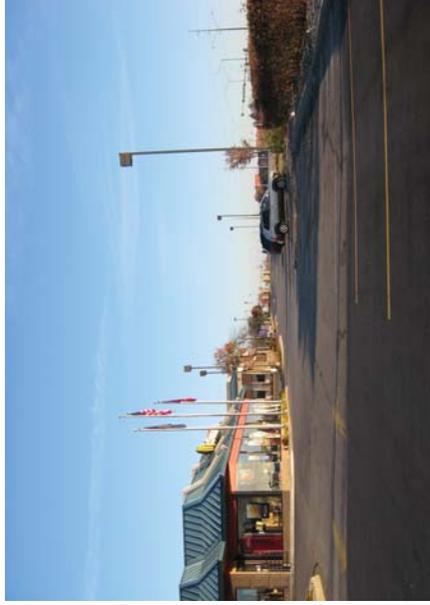
Penn & Lowry: Poor Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No fast food.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.

**Penn & Lowry: Good Examples**



**Comments**

Public area integrated with businesses.



**Comments**

Mass, mixed-use.



**Comments**

Architectural features and planters.



**Comments**

Smaller.



**Comments**

With wider sidewalks, mixed-use, fewer stories.

Penn & Lowry: Poor Examples



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No fast food.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**Comments**  
No comments.



**CUNNINGHAM**  
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# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Property & Business Owner Focus Groups**  
Date: **December 8, 2009**  
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On November 24, 2009, the project team met with property/business owners along the Lowry Avenue Corridor. Tom Leighton (CPED), Erik Hansen (CPED), Andrew Dresdner (Cunningham Group), Cindy Harper (Cunningham Group), and Jon Commers (Donjek) attended each focus group meeting.

Three separate focus groups were scheduled for this session. Scheduled groups included:

- 1) Property/Business Owners at Penn/Lowry and west.
- 2) Property/Business Owners at Emerson-Fremont/Lowry.
- 3) Business Owners from along Lowry, from the city limits (west) to the river (east). Group 3 did not meet because no invitees attended.

Each person in each group responded to six questions and then participated in an open discussion.

## **Property/Business Owners at Penn/Lowry and West**

### Attendees

Lili Johnson, Tooties on Lowry  
Darryl Weivoda, North End Hardware  
Greg Olson, Northside Chiropractic & Doc's Gym  
Nick Johnson, Tooties on Lowry  
Mitch Curtis, Metro Check Cashing

### Identify one Strength of Lowry Avenue

Connection with North Memorial Hospital (2 votes)  
Friendly community  
Strong blue collar base  
Two bus routes

### Identify one Weakness of Lowry Avenue

Blighted properties  
Not enough businesses  
Street goes nowhere due to bridge construction (2 votes)  
Crime

### What is your business/property and how long have you owned/operated?

Tooties: owned 22 years, been in business 26 years, trying to buy property now  
North End Hardware: owned 8 years, employee 32 years  
Chiropractic: owned 22 years, Doc's Gym: owned 1 year, been in business 5 years  
Metro Check Cashing: owned 15 years

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#### What are your biggest challenges?

**Tooties:** In the overall big picture, we haven't felt like the City is a partner, though that is starting to change; for example, they're helping us buy the building. We hope that partnership continues. It seems we're working together better now after the road has been completed. But in the past it's been difficult working with the health department, building inspector, and other inspectors (it took two years to get a wine license). Also, Lowry has bad name recognition, and the media always uses Lowry as a cross street for crime, even if the crime was blocks away. That bad publicity hurts our business. Also, police response is slow.

**North End Hardware:** Theft and City regulatory issues. Everyone has lots of challenges because we're in a challenged area. We're the ones who are investing here. For example, we got rid of a drug store as a favor to the City, and now they're making other things more complicated.

**Metro Check Cashing:** Property taxes.

**Northside Chiropractic & Doc's Gym:** Sign visibility. I'm not allowed to hang a sign so it can be seen from Lowry. I can't even have an overhang sign perpendicular to my building so it can be seen from Lowry.

#### What are your short and long term goals?

**Tooties:** We want to stay—we *need* to stay. Otherwise, the North side will go to the criminals. Now our interest and investment is paying off. The whole neighborhood is taking off and evolving in a positive way. There are new efforts at homeownership, even in the past two-four years. It's worth it to stay.

We want to see adjacent properties meet specific needs. For example, we need a convenience store, but not the kind Super America became. We are more than willing to trade our needs for a convenience store for something else that doesn't cause as much trouble.

What people need and want is important. Pay attention to what true stakeholders need. We want more homeownership, too.

**North End Hardware:** In the past, there were as many as 47 businesses at the corner of Penn and Lowry. They were all part of the North Town Businessmen's Association. Businesses need to come together to recreate that.

We need to provide a more complete mix of businesses and services, and we need to concentrate on recruiting businesses. There is interest from fish fry fast-food type restaurant for my building, but the neighborhood wants a sit-down restaurant. I'm trying to wait for something better, but places like Caribou Coffee won't come here, even though it's a great corner for them—exactly the place they look for to be visible and catch morning traffic.

I'm not interested in redevelopment. Aldi and Subway replaced many businesses. We had a lot, and now we have two. Redevelopment killed that corner. Also, there are too many troubles with building rehab: SAC, seating capacity, and knowing what to grandfather in.

**Metro Check Cashing:** As a business owner, I want to stay for the long term. As a property owner, I want to collect rent in the short term. I have everything where I want it right now.



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Northside Chiropractic & Doc's Gym: I want to be left alone. I'm between two Great Streets facades so there's no need to redo my own, my property taxes have risen upwards of \$6,000, and the inspector has tagged me. I just want people to stay out of my business.

What needs to happen around you for you to succeed?

Tooties: Something needs to happen on adjacent properties. There is too much focus on the nodes. Some things are better in nodes, but some are better elsewhere. A bar isn't good at the corner because of crime, but bike repair, gift shops, unique/individual storefronts—anything that is neighborhood-oriented. I prefer commercial to housing. There are already too many vacant houses. We don't need any more. And we don't want housing to take away opportunities for commercial, providing there is support for them, and they are the right kinds of commercial and are located correctly.

North End Hardware: Redevelopment prices are too high for reasonable rent. Second generation spaces are important. More related businesses can help each other out, such as consecutive daily-use places. If anything new is built, it shouldn't be like the Common Bond Communities model without commercial on the ground floor. It should be mixed-use development with commercial on the ground floor.

Metro Check Cashing: Anything that won't cause problems is great. My situation is good. Renters are good for my business, but homeowners are good for me personally. New well-managed big rental buildings would work.

Northside Chiropractic & Doc's Gym: My market is about four miles for chiropractic, and about 30 miles for Judo. Judo makes people come here. There should be more they can do while here. We need to ask what would make people come *here*. What makes Lowry unique? Why would anyone come here for Subway or Aldi? Complementary health or services would help the chiropractic practice.

Discussion

Any ideas about the flavor we want in this area?

GLBT community is starting to build community in the area. It's an example of how the area is changing. The pace of change is different here than in the east part of Lowry.

North Memorial has a lot of power. Visitors there are sent to Tooties. People will walk to Tooties and onto Penn if there's something interesting in-between. This would also encourage walking. People are less afraid now.

Is there a formal business association for Lowry? Should there be one?

No, there isn't one for Lowry. Our informal group is more Penn to North Memorial, and neighborhood groups are a part of it.

**Property/Business Owners at Emerson-Fremont/Lowry**

Attendees

Adil Albosaad, E&L Foods, Star Foods

Scott Godes, So Low Grocery

Steve Gotham, SE corner Emerson & Lowry

Identify one Strength of Lowry Avenue

Street redone and nice

Main thoroughfare from Robbinsdale



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Identify one Weakness of Lowry Avenue

City doesn't care about business or property owners

Trouble keeping tenants

New challenge every day

Lowry police used to have consistent beat, now there are fewer assigned to area

Police response is slow

Tax and license fee is too high

Vacant housing in neighborhood

Vacant apartment above E&L can't rent

Vacant commercial (though not as much of an issue as vacant housing)

Theft, but it's part of the game

Property owners get blamed for all that happens on street and in buildings

What is your business/property and how long have you owned/operated?

E&L Foods: owned since 1994, owned building since 1997

Star Foods: owned since 2000

So Low: owned since 2000, in business since 1974

SE corner: owned since 1999

What are your biggest challenges?

E&L Foods: Attracting and keeping tenants. I have to offer six months free rent to get tenants, even after \$16K remodel. Here we don't rent per SF; instead we rent per space. Star Foods rents for \$600 and isn't rising. Property taxes are going up, though. The City seems to kick us when we're down instead of helping us. I wish the City was on our side.

So Low: Not many challenges.

SE Corner: Low parking supply. Every time someone complains it's about us and our properties, and then we have to pay.

What are your short and long term goals?

E&L Foods: Would sell if possible. I recently had a buyer and should have sold, but didn't. Now I have buyer for the business but not the building. I'd like to keep Star Foods. But everything is for sale at the right price.

So Low: Short term would like to expand, long term would like to tear down and rebuild.

SE corner: Short-term want to keep it rented, long term want to retire.

What needs to happen around you for you to succeed?

Keep kids in school.

Improve safety—there are customers who won't come into this neighborhood.

Businesses to attract other businesses so there can be more of us. Node idea doesn't have enough room for enough businesses.

Parking. Node approach has no parking and we need parking. Business owners park on the street so they can watch their cars, but then there's no parking for customers on the street.

Lower license fees and lower property taxes.

Public safety—we need faster police response.

Need support from neighborhood groups. Don't feel it exists in Folwell or Hawthorne.



Discussion

Impacts from Aldi?

E&L didn't see a hit, but mostly sell tobacco and pop.

So Low didn't see a hit because of specialty meat counter.

Loss of bridge has had major impact.

Lender feedback?

No. Have worked with the same lender for many years.

Other comments?

Don't like trees covering up signs. Put trees in the back, not in front of buildings. Show parking, not trees.

**END OF MEMO**

CCH/cch

# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Twin Cities Destinations**  
Date: **November 23, 2009**  
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At the first public meeting for the Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan on Thursday, November 19, Tom Leighton (CPED) asked participants to name Twin Cities locations that exemplify the kind of development they might like to see along Lowry Avenue. These locations may be chosen as destinations for a local bus tour. Participants suggested the following:

Edina/Minneapolis: 50th and France  
Maple Grove: Arbor Lakes residential area  
Minneapolis: 38th St and 42nd Ave, Riverview Theater area  
Minneapolis: Hennepin and Lake  
Minneapolis: Lyndale and Lake  
Minneapolis: Linden Hills commercial area  
Robbinsdale: Downtown, Wuollet Bakery corner  
Saint Paul: Marshall and Cleveland, Izzy's area  
Saint Paul: Victoria and Grand

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**END OF MEMO**

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## 7.2 Workshop #2

1. Steering Committee Bus Tour Notes
2. Property & Business Owner Focus Group Notes
3. Resident Focus Group Notes
4. Public Meeting Agenda
5. Public Meeting Comments
6. Challenges & Objectives List
7. Public Meeting Comment Sheet Results

# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Steering Committee Bus Tour notes**  
Date: **January 12, 2010**  
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On January 12, 2009, the steering committee and two northside councilmembers took a bus tour of successful housing and commercial development projects, community corridors, and commercial nodes in other historically challenged areas of Minneapolis. The tour was designed specifically to deepen the committee's understanding of and discussion about what kinds of projects and efforts from other parts of the city make sense for Lowry Avenue.

## Attendees

Tom Leighton (CPED)  
Binyo Panicker (CPED)  
Andrew Dresdner (Cunningham Group)  
Cindy Harper (Cunningham Group)  
Anne McCandless (Jordan)  
Barbara Johnson (Councilmember Ward 4)  
Chris Morris (McKinley)  
Chris Wilson (Project for Pride in Living)  
Dan Rother (Jordan)  
Debbie Nelson (Cleveland)  
Diane Hofstede (Councilmember Ward 3)  
Georgiana  
Ian Alexander  
Melissa Pohlman (Christ English Lutheran)  
Roberta Englund (Folwell)  
Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County)  
Jose Velez (Ward 5 Aide to Councilmember Don Samuels)

## Tour Destinations

Commercial development (11th Ave S and Franklin)

- Low-rise commercial with higher density residential nearby.
- Mix of old and new buildings.
- Owning real estate was the key to turning the area around.
- Mix of tenants and institutions.

Phillips Park housing development (25th St and Chicago)

- Medium-density development.
- Townhouses, carriage flats, condos.
- Mix of old and new buildings.
- Community within a community.
- Common open space.
- Private development project.

Portland Place

- Medium-density development.
- Townhouses, twin homes, duplexes.
- Common open space.



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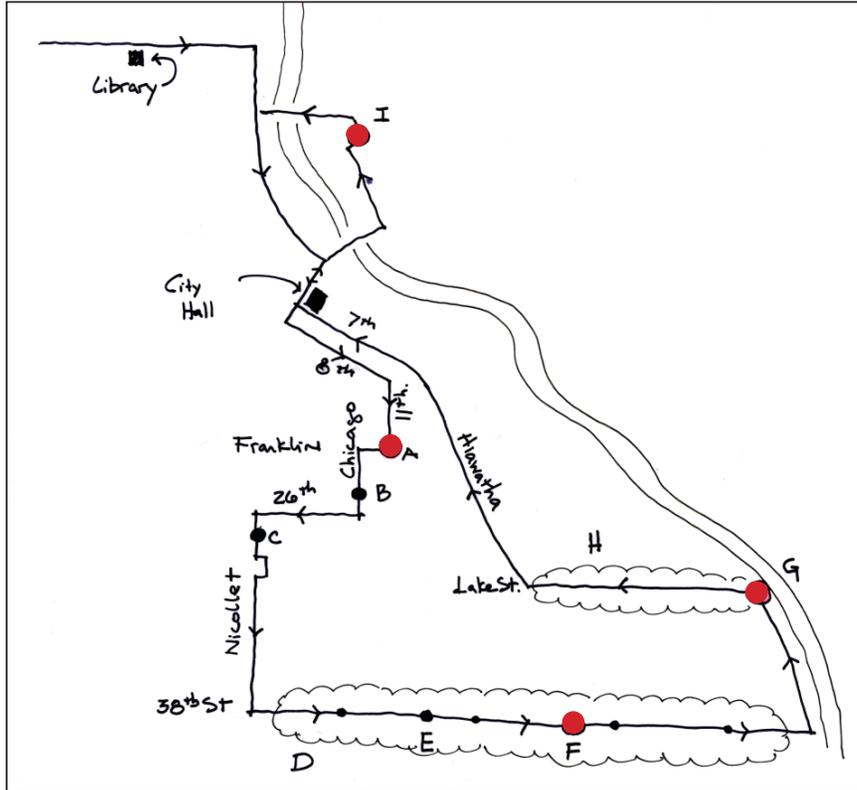


- Many funding sources.
  - PPL development project.
- Eat Street commercial and housing development (26th St and Nicollet)
- Organized business community decided to brand Eat Street.
  - Businesses used ethnic identity to market themselves.
  - Four-story mixed-use building steps back from the street using form, materials, color.
- 38th St commercial corridor (4th Ave S, Bloomington, Chicago, Cedar, 23rd)
- Is Lowry's parallel in South Minneapolis.
  - Crosses the city.
  - Has repeating pattern of commercial nodes and single-family houses.
- Mixed-use development (28th Ave S and 38th St)
- Medium-density development.
  - 3-story building with enclosed ground floor parking and one commercial space.
  - 12 residential units above.
- West River Commons (Lake St and W River Pkwy)
- Medium-density development.
  - 4-story building with parking underneath and some parking on the ground floor.
  - Four commercial spaces on the ground floor.
  - 50+ residential units above, with some ground-entry townhouses below.
- Main Street Bungalows housing (8th Ave NE and Main)
- Medium density development.
  - 6 single-family houses on 2 single-family lots.
  - Homes arranged around common space with garage stall parking on alley (one stall per unit).
  - Several funding sources.
  - Good neighborhood support.

### **Observations, Thoughts, Ideas, Questions**

- Think “big” on the Lowry block faces. The kind of development we want needs a few lots and more space, especially for parking and playing areas.
- Welcome more density along Lowry.
- Build projects like the medium-density development at 28th Ave S and 38th St.
- Encourage private development to back off the property line to create a wider sidewalk for cafes and walking, similar to the west end of West River Commons.
- Push for employer-assisted housing: North Memorial, Coloplast, the U of M.
- Use momentum of LRT at Broadway or Penn for high density housing development.
- Consider theme or guidelines for façade design.
- Encourage existing and new businesses to erect awnings for cohesiveness, character, and vibrant neighborhood feel.
- If development projects have open space, consider geothermal heating option.
- Build developments like Phillips Park. That model is very good and very appropriate for Lowry.
- Good lifecycle housing option at Main Street bungalows.
- How were the different projects funded?
- How much private, non-profit, public investment did it take?
- How many people made them happen?

# Route and Schedule



			Community Corridor	Coordinated Businesses	Neighborhood Scaled Business District	Medium Density Housing
	1:15	City Hall				
●	A 1:30-1:45	Franklin Ave		X		X
	B 2:00	Phillips Park				X
	C 2:15	Eat Street		X		X
	D 2:25	38th St (4th, Bloomington, Chicago, Cedar, 23rd, 28th, 42nd)	X		X	
	E 2:35	38th St and Bloomington	X	X	X	
●	F 2:45-3:00	38th St and 28th Ave	X		X	X
●	G 3:15-3:30	West River Commons	X		X	X
	H 3:30-3:40	East Lake Street	X		X	
	3:50	City Hall				
●	I 4:00	I. Main Street Bungalows				X

# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Property/Business Owner Focus Group**  
Date: **January 27, 2010**  
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On January 27, 2010, the project team met with property/business owners along the Lowry Avenue Corridor. Tom Leighton (CPED), Binoy Panicker (CPED), Andrew Dresdner (Cunningham Group), Cindy Harper (Cunningham Group), and Mike Lamb (Cunningham Group) attended the focus group meeting.

Tom Leighton presented project background information, and Mike Lamb presented the project team's ideas, conceptual development scenarios, and suggested housing types in three categories: Penn & Lowry, East Lowry (Fremont to Lyndale), and Housing.

During and following the presentation, participants engaged in an open discussion about what should be included in the plan.

## Attendees

Judy Grommes, Housing Plus Rental Property Owner  
Gary Rother, Union Liquor  
Micha McDonald, Cleveland Neighborhood  
Scott Godes, So Low Grocery  
Adil Albosaad, E&L Grocery, Star Market  
Gary Wold, Electrician  
Darryl Weivoda, North End Hardware  
Vicki Karr, Penn-Lowry Crossing  
Steve Washa, Washburn McReavy Funeral Chapel  
Shantae Holmes, Small business owner  
Steve Gotham, Emerson-Lowry property owner

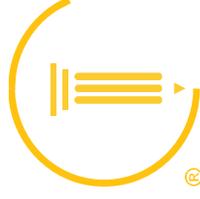
## Development Scenarios: Questions, Comments, Suggestions

**Tom:** A development scenario like that shown at Penn-Lowry would require cooperation among existing property owners. It is important to work with existing businesses as well to help them work better. The idea is to support and improve existing businesses while welcoming new investment.

**Mike:** Even though the market is not ideal for redevelopment, there are ways to think about ways it can be feasible.

**Participant:** If mixed-use or commercial buildings are suggested for northwest corner of Penn-Lowry, there should be more parking. Not enough is shown in the drawings.

**Participant:** We own the apartment south of Cleveland Park at Penn-Lowry and are open to redevelopment.



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Kathryn M. Wallace, AIA  
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Participant: Is the county going to buy the buildings at Emerson-Fremont? If not, who will? What is the timeline?

Tom: You are experts on your own buildings and businesses. We'd like you to tell us what you need in this plan. The government is not who is spearheading this new investment.

Mike: The next step is to figure out how to direct investment and reinvestment.

Participant: We need upscale housing. It doesn't make sense to add affordable housing.

Participant: We need more amenities to draw people to Lowry.

Participant: We need to spiff up businesses.

Participant: We need to get North Memorial people to come through the city instead of around it.

Participant: What do you do first? And how do you do it? What would a business do? My customer count is the same, but business is down. People are still coming in but they are buying cheaper items and are buying less of them.

Participant: Housing is doing all right.

Participant: What is the city going to do with the blocks at Lyndale?

Tom: County is holding onto it until opportunities arise. This plan will look at what some of the options are.

Participant: There is a general housing trend shift that we need to change. Landlords don't care about tenants, and tenants don't care about the area. We need to change this trend. I like the urban farm idea because gardens and farms are much better than vacant lots.

#### Development Scenarios: Likes/Dislikes

Participant: I'm excited to see optimism to rebuild in North Minneapolis. I want to open a small business and I want to invest here. Also, housing needs to be affordable and supportive.

Participant: The development scenarios need to be presented as concepts. You need to address that all need to get along—businesses, city, and neighborhoods. We need more cooperation among these groups for anything to happen. Union Liquor Store is an example: it's not just one developer, it's everyone together.

Participant: We need to have another meeting to see implementation and plan for county land. We need to know who is doing what.

Participant: It can be helpful to identify logical roles for various parties, such as the county, city, developer, property owners, and residents.

Participant: We want to be in the loop because we need to work together. We need to have better communication.



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Participant: I tried to get into a new building but it didn't happen. I want everyone to realize that we want to be in our location. We want a new location, but we want to be here. We want to partner in a new development or new building. But we don't want to be landlocked by LRT.

Participant: I'm uncomfortable with the government redeveloping properties. Heritage Park emptied North Minneapolis out. We have plenty of people here, and we have room for small apartment buildings on Lowry. But if we want to help Lowry be a better place, we need to help people understand how to be in business so they can stay in business.

Tom: We're identifying housing to offer different markets, in an incremental way. These would be developed by the private market, not the government.

Andrew: The goal is not just to shift people around but to bring in new people. It's about adding people. It's not all about moving people around, and it's not about moving people out.

**END OF MEMO**

CCH/cch

# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Resident Focus Group Notes**  
Date: **January 27, 2010**  
Copy To: **File**

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On January 27, 2010, the project team met with residents from neighborhoods along the Lowry Avenue Corridor. Tom Leighton (CPED), Mike Lamb (Cunningham Group), Andrew Dresdner (Cunningham Group), and Cindy Harper (Cunningham Group) attended the focus group meeting.

Tom Leighton presented project background information and Mike Lamb presented the project team's ideas, conceptual development scenarios, and suggested housing types in three categories: Penn & Lowry, East Lowry (Fremont to Lyndale), and Housing.

During and following the presentation, participants engaged in an open discussion about what should be included in the plan.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the plan update is to sharpen the vision and work hard to accomplish it. This update is not a plan for the road. It is an update to the current policy document, the 2002 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan.

## **Penn-Lowry**

### Development Scenarios

This is an implementation vision that requires private property. This means cooperation and partnerships.

## **East Lowry**

### River Connections

There was a suggestion for a co-op that could be part of the Eco-Village and linked to the river. One person noted that many people live near the river and look for amenities but go elsewhere now.

### Silver Lake Plan

There was a suggestion to revisit the Silver Lake Plan. It could help link Perkins Hill to the 33rd Avenue Greenway. Jordan loves Jordan Pond, which would be similar, but it should have been geothermal beneath.

### Greenway Connections

There are several greenway plans in the works that residents believe the plan scenarios should connect to. The east-west proposals are for the 33rd Avenue Greenway and the 26th Avenue Greenway. There is also a short one that's being built right now between Penn and Knox. No vehicular traffic will be allowed when it's complete. The north-south proposals are for Humboldt and may be one that links the Eco-Village with Perkins Hill and Farview Park.



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of  
Cathryn V. Watts, AIA



### Transit Hubs

There was a question about the kinds of transit hubs that are appropriate for Lyndale. Stand-alone? Park and ride? Integrated into another use? The group did not envision a parking lot, but acknowledged the need for one if LRT comes. They would rather have a gateway statement people can see as they approach North Minneapolis from the east. They want room on the sidewalk for transit riders to wait for, board, and get off the bus. There was a request for public art at the bus station, as well.

### **Housing**

#### Housing Types

There is a need to assemble properties to add density. Neighborhoods believe they can welcome different kinds of housing. But they noted a fear of high-rises from the larger community.

#### Housing Locations

The group agreed that the appropriate place to grow is along Lowry, not within the neighborhoods.

There were questions about how deep into the neighborhoods redevelopment should occur. There are several approaches. Some envision one block north and one block south of Lowry. Others believe it should be only a few properties to prevent leap-frogging, but be enough to accommodate high-quality medium density development, like 120 feet to 150 feet. Some asked the question, if we have good housing stock, why would we tear it down? As a strategy, some suggested zoning up to where we want it to stop.

#### In-Between Areas

There was a question of what the plan is for the scattered commercial buildings, which led to a question of land use. Existing commercial can stay as long as possible. The new scenario addresses what is most appropriate as a replacement, if the opportunity for replacement arises.

And about Cleveland in particular, there was a question about the limitation on development between nodes. New commercial use can replace existing commercial use, even if zoning has been changed to residential. But if residential use replaces existing commercial use within residential zone, it cannot go back to commercial use. So, the group noted, a site like the Super America site could become medium-density residential to help Lowry become a successful transit corridor.

#### Connecting Lowry and Surrounding Neighborhoods

There was a comment that it is good to see the plan tying into neighborhoods more than it was before, and emphasizing the importance of north-south connections. A suggestion followed that this plan should reintegrate Lowry with the neighborhoods and the river, as well as other plans for the area.

One person suggested a need for the plan to look at other transit corridors like Dowling.

**END OF MEMO**

CCH/cch

# Meeting Agenda



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To: **Binoy Panicker**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Public Meeting Agenda**  
Location: **North Regional Public Library**  
Meeting Date: **January 28, 2010**  
Meeting Number: **Second Public Meeting**  
Attendees: **See sign-in sheet record**

Copy To: **File**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Duration</b>
1	Introduction and Background	5:30	15 min
2	Presentation	5:45	45 min
3	Small Group Discussion Penn & Lowry Opportunities, Challenges, Objectives East Lowry Opportunities, Challenges, Objectives Housing Opportunities, Challenges, Objectives	6:30	45 min
4	Large Group Reconvene and Report Back	7:15	15 min
5	Adjourn	7:30	

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# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Cindy Harper**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **09-0032**  
Subject: **Public Meeting Comments**  
Date: **January 28, 2010**  
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After the presentation, six small groups met to answer the following questions about

1. The lists of challenges faced by and objectives for development at Penn & Lowry, East Lowry (Lyndale to Emerson-Fremont), and housing along Lowry Avenue
2. What they liked and disliked about the development scenarios presented
3. What they would add or change about the information presented.

This memo includes all comments recorded from each of the small groups. Lists of challenges and objectives from each area are included after the memo.

## PENN & LOWRY

### What do you think about the Challenges?

- O.K.
- Access – 14R bus to U of M
- Liquor should not be near park
- Not the right retail
- Retail isn't inviting
- Poor presentation and safety
- East-west transportation
- Changing resident mindset
- Better city buy-in
- Aldi
- Parking
- Safety
- East-west transit
- Attract new businesses

### What do you think about the Objectives?

- Need office support
- Dog park
- Develop public land first
- Encourage development at street with mix of uses
- Need to fill in empty ROW
- Transit hub
- Need institutional use
- Need more sit-down restaurant space with outdoor patio space
- Restaurants to walk to
- Bremer Way residents would like restaurants to socialize in
- 42nd & Lyndale coffee shop – live entertainment
- Won't walk due to safety

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- 3-4 story should be occupied, provide jobs, lived in
- What would help people to stay living here and spend money in the neighborhood
- North side of Lowry and Penn – provide parking
- Park side living
- Humboldt Greenway – nice housing character
- Look to other developments in city
- Better traffic flow from Robbinsdale
- Local-serving businesses
- Bank
- Restaurant
- Art gallery
- Unique businesses
- Pharmacy
- Improve businesses
- No parking fronting the street
- Buildings like apartment building, liquor
- In park
- Invest in what's there before you build more
- Don't just tear down and build new
- More friendly attitude in businesses
- Businesses need education
- Clean up the environment
- Clean up the facades
- Expensive business
- Transit access/connections
- Business objectives
- Access from 94 – better connections
- Work intentionally with neighborhoods and business owners

#### **What are your likes/dislikes?**

- Good that visible property is priority
- Mix by income for housing
- The higher the density the better
- Encourage local businesses
- Builds on existing amenities
- Walkability
- Businesses that serve residents
- Like heights and types of buildings
- Lack of connection

#### **What would you add or change?**

- Exercise facility
- Events that celebrate Lowry
- Emphasis on creating pedestrian-friendly development
- Entertainment
- Dry cleaner
- Higher quality investments



- Night life
- Sit-down meals
- Medical clinic
- Better facades
- Invest in existing businesses
- Business incubator
- Building our street environment

### **EAST LOWRY**

#### **What do you think about the Challenges?**

- More land zoned residential-is that informed by reality of housing market?
- Sense of lack of safety-to to Robbinsdale businesses
- Lack of police presence
- Lack of critical mass at nodes
- Lack of clean, inviting restaurants
- Emerson-Lowry – problem convenience store is drug hangout but handsome building
- Place to hang out
- Emerson-Fremont buildings on south side of road demolished
- Parking
- Safety
- East-west public transit

#### **What do you think about the Objectives?**

- Preservation of good historic structures
- Local-serving businesses
- Like reuse and renovate building on southeast corner of Lowry-Fremont and E&L building
- Like develop county land
- Save our history
- Small town feel
- Need parking
- Parking on many corners
- Restaurants
- Cultural offerings

#### **What are your likes/dislikes?**

- Eco-Village is good
- Library a store resource
- Need something constructive to do – Y, community services
- May need to be a non-profit
- Someone who will work with children when parents are disengaged
- Eco-Village – add community garden
- Like keeping Troy's Auto
- Like keeping attractive buildings
- Like higher density on bus lines
- Bus lines good place to start with higher density



- Higher density to change transit patterns
- If urban farm, be sure it's well-defined
- Bremer Way
- Street trees
- Main street quality
- Like trees x 100
- Like library
- Like Bremer Way – well-maintained, repurposed
- Like business
- Dislike some of the businesses/quality of structure and operations
- Dislike lack of parking
- Dislike lack of restaurants
- Dislike houses that are boarded
- Like green space/farmers market
- Like greenhouses
- Like flea market

**What would you add or change?**

- Move urban farm off Lowry Avenue to internal block
- Everyone would like a co-op
- “Sustainable theme” for north Mpls
- Open space, greenery, bike lanes, community gathering
- Public art incorporated into urban farm
- Transportation node instead of farm
- Transit station
- Keep farm but move it
- Leave Lyndale-Lowry green space
- Like the greenhouse – make carbon free
- Tie to greenway concept

**HOUSING**

**What do you think of the Challenges?**

- Mindset
- No place to shop
- Concerned about how much parking is required

**What do you think of the Objectives?**

- Rehab
- Tax incentives for home buyers
- Business TIF District
- Face Lowry
- Like townhouse image with tuck-under parking
- Best kept secrets
- Common space

**What kinds of housing are appropriate on Lowry? Where?**



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- What does it take to attract developers?
- Housing diversity, mix of prices
- Housing options for single parents, retired people – lifecycle housing
- Problem rental properties around Bremer Way
- 60 percent home ownership, 40 percent rental units
- Investor buying houses is bad
- Change name Lowry Avenue to Lowry Parkway
- Need condominium living – no maintenance
- Townhome setting with tuck-under garages
- Housing with stoops to encourage neighborhood interaction
- St. Olaf assisted living
- Medium density
- Mixed-use
- Live-work
- Bar building
- Better city buy-in
- High-density housing to support businesses
- More market-rate
- Mix of homeownership/rental
- Blighted housing to be taken away
- Have cluster housing
- Respect existing housing stock
- Change
- Senior housing
- Townhouses
- Condos
- Multi-use
- Help maintain
- Cluster housing
- Communal housing/youth
- Transit/rental
- Market rate

### **What new markets should this plan attract?**

- Mixed
- Lowry should flow from east to west
- Encourage people to come together
- Need “Lowry Commons” a gathering spot for safety, business
- We need jobs
- We need good business people
- Storefront improvements needed
- Grad students
- Downtown dwellers ready to move
- Single mothers with kids who don’t want single-family homes
- Pulls tenants from single-family houses to different kinds of houses, opens up single-family houses for others
- Rental properties



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- Standards for operations and design
- Senior boomers
- On-transit
- Split level housing
- Trader Joe's on Excelsior
- Youth housing

**How should new housing extend into the neighborhoods?**

- Needs to be scaling up from single-family to dense 4th and 3rd and 6th to 31st
- Girard is spotty – two years ago 9 owner-occupied houses out of 24
- Limited number of rental licenses per block
- A couple of blocks razed and replaced with a pond or lake
- Public-private separation of housing
- Youth housing
- Neighborhood block clubs

**END OF MEMO**

CCH/cch

# Penn & Lowry

## Challenges

- Some properties are too small or oriented incorrectly for new development.
- The wide road reduces site size and requires a stronger building edge.
- Many buildings are vacant or in disrepair
- Some buildings are located within potential development sites.
- There is no immediate market for new construction.
- There is no clear target commercial market.
- There is too much retail space for the local market.
- New businesses have not succeeded as expected.
- Current zoning limits development options.

## Objectives

- Fill vacancies in building adjacent to North End Hardware and storefront next to Subway.
- Develop county land.
- Develop medium-density residential, retail, and office uses.
- Improve connection and access to Cleveland Park.
- Introduce parkside living on east edge of Cleveland Park.
- Reduce and manage surface parking.
- Improve aesthetics and visual quality of the Penn-Lowry intersection and surrounding buildings.
- Establish new markets for residential, retail, and office.

# East Lowry

## Challenges

- Some properties are too small or oriented incorrectly for new development.
- The wide road at Lyndale requires a stronger building edge.
- Many buildings are vacant or in disrepair
- Some buildings are located within potential development sites.
- Decent small buildings are in need of renovation.
- There is no immediate market for new construction.
- There is no identifiable amenity at Lyndale
- There is no clear target market.
- There is too much retail space for the local market.
- Current zoning limits development options.

## Objectives

- Reuse and renovate southeast corner of Lowry and Fremont building and the E&L building.
- Improve aesthetics and visual quality of the surrounding buildings.
- Remove buildings in disrepair.
- Develop county land.
- Develop area with residential, retail, and office uses (a mix of uses).
- Reinforce the proximity of Lyndale to Emerson -Fremont.
- Expand Eco-Village concept to include complementary housing, urban agriculture, employment, and economic development.
- Manage surface parking.
- Establish new markets for residential, retail, and office.

# Housing

## Challenges

- Some properties are too small or oriented incorrectly for new development.
- Many buildings are vacant or in disrepair.
- Some buildings are located within potential development sites.
- There is no immediate market for new construction or rehab.
- There is no clear target market.
- There is no proven development model.
- There are businesses located between commercial nodes.
- Current zoning limits development options.

## Objectives

- Develop housing that currently does not exist in neighborhoods surrounding Lowry Avenue.
- Support existing housing if it is in good condition, well located, and of the appropriate scale.
- Develop new housing that supports transit, walkable retail, and existing local businesses and institutions.

# Memorandum

To: **Tom Leighton**  
From: **Andrew Dresdner**  
Project: **Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan**  
Project Number: **090032**  
Subject: **Public Meeting Comment Sheets**  
Date: **February 1, 2010**  
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- Get the buildings in disrepair either fixed or torn down, empty lots are better than bad buildings
- Can building facades have similar features so they connect with each other visually along the avenue
- Is there parking for businesses
- That would make Lowry Avenue a destination for the rest of the City? Attract some service or business that brings people
- Cluster supporting businesses around each other
- What are the demographics of the people who might live on Lowry avenue – what might they need?
- Pre plan for crime – new businesses should partner with Neighborhood and MPD to safeguard their businesses . Camera installations and private security should communicate with MPD
- Jobs for local businesses
- Limit the number of types of businesses – convenience stores hair and nail shops
- Public art spaces
- Coffee Shop with Drive thru and outdoor seating.

- Not clear which buildings are to be saved and which are to be torn down

## **East Lowry**

- o Eco Village
- o North Side Coop
- o Community Farms and Gardens
- o Community Art
- o Walkability
- o Needs identity as a place: reason to be there
- o Park space and bike paths
- o Maybe pond and walking path
- o Coffee shop and gathering space
- o Gateway to the North Side – important to help define the North side as a neighborhood to outsiders.
- o O.K. to remove houses north and south of Lowry
- o If housing redeveloped, then neighborhood.
- o Community friendly – create space where neighbors can meet and be in community together

## **West Lowry**

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- Businesses that serve residents and people who work in the neighborhood such as hospital staff. Give people reason to want to be there and spend money on our local businesses.
- Like idea of neighborliness. Like places where neighbors can be in community together

---

### **Penn Lowry**

Higher density the better

Prefer “bar building mixed use style” transit hub station similar to Lake and Hennepin

Feeder bus to Bottineau Station

Add station and Penn and Lowry between North memorial and Penn and Broadway

### **East Lowry**

Love the idea for gardens for eco village

### **Housing**

High density is good, mixed-use residential / commercial

But don't a senior housing facility

Mixed/use commercial is great stuff

---

Traffic light timing on Emerson and Fremont Crossing needs to be improved the wait is too long , many people simply drive thru red light

Lights should be smart and change on basis of demand

--

Please make sure you address the traffic congestion on Dowling Ave near Emerson. Dowling is not Lowry Ave but it does have a direct bearing on Access to Lowry as a major street that connects to I-94. (Lowry does not have an on/off ramps)

Idea: move Perkins Hill Park to Lowry –(take out blighted houses) then put in new housing where Perkin hills Park is now. (great views of the city). This new Perkins Hill Park could provide space for urban agriculture and use City View School programs in conjunction (City View has a garden Program already) and is next to Perkins Hill Park. What about producing its own energy with solar panels or a wind turbine on top of the old battery garage (I 94 and Lowry) This could be an artist's addition / a gateway to the River

Idea – move Fremont Clinic to Penn and Lowry, then perhaps redevelop their existing property as a part of a new Silver Lake Park – old building could be used as a North Side Senior Center

Idea – create small park and plaza across from the Library as a part of a redevelopment.

What about taking the existing Food Market and redevelop it into a Coop with the possibility of expanding eventually into the building next door.



---

Store fronts and signs on Lowry as you travel west towards Theo Worth is in dire need of improvement. Could we design cohesive signage and storefront improvements to add to the aesthetic of exteriors and in turn offer a friendlier / safer looking place for the neighborhood to shop.

Urban greenhouse growing produce for a coop or So Low is a fantastic idea. Could a project like this be tied into Jordan School and the space around the school.

---

Challenges: Lowry is disconnected from I 94 which discourages outside travelers from venturing in the area.

Objectives: give people a reason to come to the area. The only landmark in the area is North Memorial Hospital. Create destinations to bring people to the area. I travel 15 miles to Caffe Latte – why would someone in St Paul come here.

Ideas: greenways connect Lowry to Wirth Parkway with parkways and not just treeed boulevards. Lake farmers markets Coop Grocery Stores. Good restaurants, book stores, home improvement stores

But before any new improvements can be successful the entire Avenue needs to be cleaned up / remodeled or demolished. No one would cook dinner in a dirty pan, we need to clean up the area before we put anything new or fresh into the dish.

**END OF MEMO**

[Replace With Preparer's Initials] / [Replace With Typist's initials]

### 7.3 Workshop #3

1. Public Meeting Comments Sheet
2. Public Meeting Comment Sheet Results







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# Memorandum

To: Tom Leighton  
From: Andrew Dresdner  
Project: Lowry Avenue Strategic Plan  
Project Number: 09032  
Subject: Public Meeting Comments  
Date: March 30, 2010  
Copy To:

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Please find below the comments collected from the handout at last week's public meeting.

## LAND USE

### **How does the future land use map support the kind of development you want to see on Lowry Avenue?**

To an extent; I would like to see more businesses however viable businesses what would make Lowry more inviting and keep money in north Minneapolis

I think we are ready for more density and I look forward to vital business nodes.

More restaurants

No ugly housing developments. Insert what is needed to make them great.

Looking at future land use map of Lowry and Emerson new multi-family housing is desired from what I can see on the map. I am all for it. If it will help Bremer into a safer area and stand out more then I think it is a good idea.

Overall OK

Generally O.K.

I like the idea of filling existing spaces and developing a lowry Avenue Association / Organization.

Hopefully attracts mixed-income. Owner / rental development on Lowry

Get the bridge rebuilt.

### **Are there ways the future land use map *does not* support the kind of development you want to see on Lowry Avenue?**

Not really. Too much medium-density housing and not enough businesses.

No. Keep green spaces in mind.

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Mix use between Oliver and Newton next to the Christ English Lutheran Church,

Christ English Lutheran Church needs more parking and a mixed use in a building on Newton and end of blocks. Office on the first floor and residences on the second floor.

Add more green gathering spaces and parking.

How does this impact public transit.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

**Are the implementation recommendations sufficient to achieve the kind of development you want to see on Lowry Avenue?**

**Are there additional strategies to pursue?**

Consider bringing some national chains onto Lowry. I think they are evil too, but a limited number would provide stability. Examples: Trader Joes, Noodles and Co, Starbucks, Barnes and Nobles, Chipolte, etc. Also we need tacos on Lowry

Not from my currently dead brain.

Don't crowd Lowry Avenue with housing/businesses. Lots of greenspace. Neighborhoods can have gardens.

Off street parking, green spaces

Survey employees in area to see if they would move into this area if new housing was available.

U of M's Business Retention and Expansion Program.

A place to gather in an open informal area – maybe 26<sup>th</sup> and Lyndale in the Park. – change the park . Open (remove trees) water, brick work and benches, to inspire walking and biking.

Annual parties and parades.

Involve more young people. Maybe visit the high schools; create a contest about “what they want to see in their neighborhood” – art classes, environmental or science classes involved with projects.

**Partnerships are critical to implement this Plan. What organizations should be encouraged to participate?**



**CUNINGHAM  
GROUP**

Involve ethnic area groups and their organizations. Hmong community leaders, Hispanic groups, Somali Community. Churches, Mosques, HCMC Clinics

Public and private developers

Make sure we have jobs for our neighbor both during development and in the life of the corridor.

Summit Academy OIC, University Urban research and Outreach Center

Local bank, Private developers

U of M; Metro Transit; NECDC; UPlan Center from Midway Community, - good for Strategic Planning.

Churches in the area have people who do not live in the area. Can they help with getting people involved? Can these people stop and shop in the area after services?

Neighborhood organizations Churches , businesses, schools, parks, local people, MTC, Fire Department.

Community gardens with City neighborhood walking club leading from Washington to Parkway.

## **What role can residents have in implementing this Plan? Business owners?**

We can support the businesses and they can cater to us.

New businesses support of businesses

Residents can commit to support existing and new businesses. Ensure new businesses is the “right” kind – no more salons or convenience stores.

Help Plan and support businesses. I am not a fan of chain businesses but people do cater to them. A few would encourage people to come to the area. Does North memorial have workers that need housing? . Rainbow Foods? Do they have workers that need to live nearby?

Should have an “in kind” service where they commit, we commit to their business,.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

Great idea about the coffee shop next to the Library. Hope to see it happen!

# PENN & LOWRY MAYOR'S GREAT CITY DESIGN TEAM



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## LEGACY PROJECT

AIA turns 150 years old and gives a gift to the community in the form of The Blueprint for America.

## AIA MINNEAPOLIS' LEGACY

Project began with

## RT RYBAK'S RE-WEAVING THE URBAN FABRIC ADDRESS

February 28, 2006

## BLUEPRINT FOR AMERICA

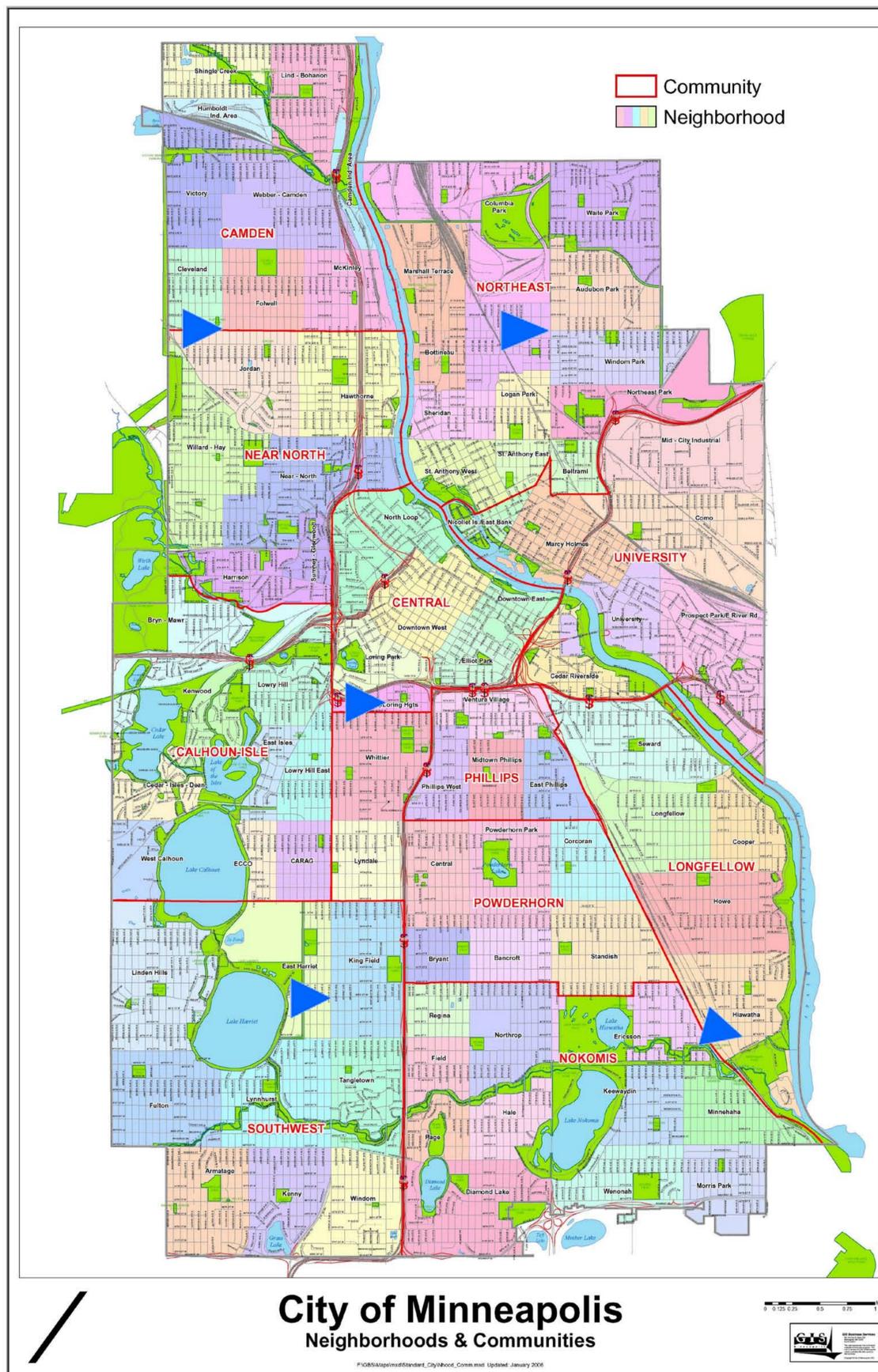
Through state and local components, AIA architects will initiate, convene, and participate in Blueprint initiatives that utilize community engagement, in a collaborative process, and quality design as keys to improving a community's livability



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**Nicollet Avenue and 18th Street**  
Co-leader Destin Nygard & Jeremiah Sagel

**Penn Avenue N. and N. Lowry Avenue**  
Co leaders Raymond Dehn & Wayne Olson

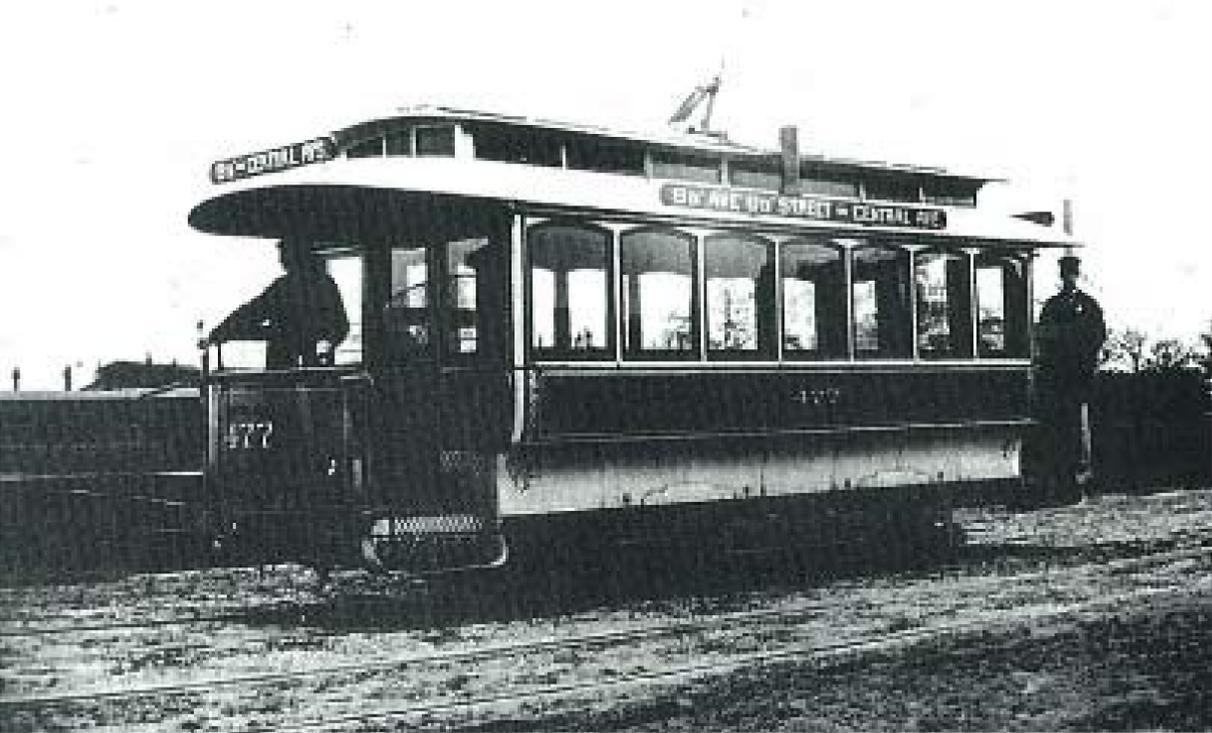
**Central Avenue NE. and N. Lowry Avenue**  
Co leaders Neil Weber & Wynne Yelland

**46th Street S. and 46th Avenue E.**  
Co-leader Paul May & Kathy O'Connell

**40th Street and Lyndale Avenue S.**  
Co-leader Christine Albertson & Adam Arvidson

# AIA'S PRINCIPLES FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Penn & Lowry



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## AIA'S 10 PRINCIPLES FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

### 1. Design on a Human Scale

Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents to walk to shops, services, cultural resources, and jobs and can reduce traffic congestion and benefit people's health.

### 2. Provide Choices

People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation, and employment. Variety creates lively neighborhoods and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.

### 3. Encourage Mixed-Use Development

Integrating different land uses and varied building types creates vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and diverse communities.

### 4. Preserve Urban Centers

Restoring, revitalizing, and infilling urban centers takes advantage of existing streets, services and buildings and avoids the need for new infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promote stability for city neighborhoods.

### 5. Vary Transportation Options

Giving people the option of walking, biking and using public transit, in addition to driving, reduces traffic congestion, protects the environment and encourages physical activity.

### 6. Build Vibrant Public Spaces

Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art, and gather for public events.

### 7. Create a Neighborhood Identity

A "sense of place" gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment, and creates pride in the community.

### 8. Protect Environmental Resources

A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.

### 9. Conserve Landscapes

Open space, farms, and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational, and cultural reasons.

### 10. Design matters

Design excellence in the foundation of successful and healthy communities.



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## ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE:

- Linkage through site to existing Playground Park
- Alternate use of existing ball parks
- Liquor store could remain as a stand alone building or part of a larger mixed use project
- Residential units
  - Market
  - Affordable
  - North Memorial housing/hotel- overnight or short term stays
- Small business/retail incubator
- Retail and office space with housing above— a Variety of neighborhood services
- Strong pedestrian environment – link is critical— connection to a community room
- Complement new project on the southeast corner
- Utilization of the transit node
- Sustainability - green connection to the park
- Car share
- Energy – contribute back to the grid
- Eyes on the street relating to issues of crime and safety
- Eastern most corner of Lowry take away—Art Park/Ornamental Public Garden
- Incorporation of art into/on the buildings.
- A gateway or marker for the community

## TIMELINE

February 28, 2006 Re-Weaving the Urban Fabric Address, Mayor RT Rybak  
February, 2007 Selection of 5 neighborhoods of Mayor's Great City Design Teams  
March 26, 2007 Community kick off meeting  
April 17, 2007 Team meeting to discuss Goals  
April 21, 2007 Community workshop/charrette  
May 15, 2007 Design Team workshop  
May 24, 2007 Community presentation

## LOWRY AND PENN MAYOR'S GREAT CITY DESIGN TEAM MEMBERS

Raymond Dehn – Elness Swenson Graham Architects – Co-leader  
Wayne Olson – Olson Development Consulting Inc - Co-leader  
Philip Briggs - Elness Swenson Graham Architects  
Brad Aldrich – Emmons & Olivier Resources  
Tom Ososki – Tom Ososki Design Services, LLC  
Elizabeth Olson– University of Minnesota student  
Cirra Mantz – University of Minnesota student  
Satoko Muratake – Juxtaposition Arts

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

J. LaVerne  
Grover Jones  
Kurt Lawrason  
Aaron Nelson  
Micha McDonald  
Matthew Hendricks  
Julie Szamocki  
Lynne Moriarty  
Emily Ero-Phillips  
John Helgeland



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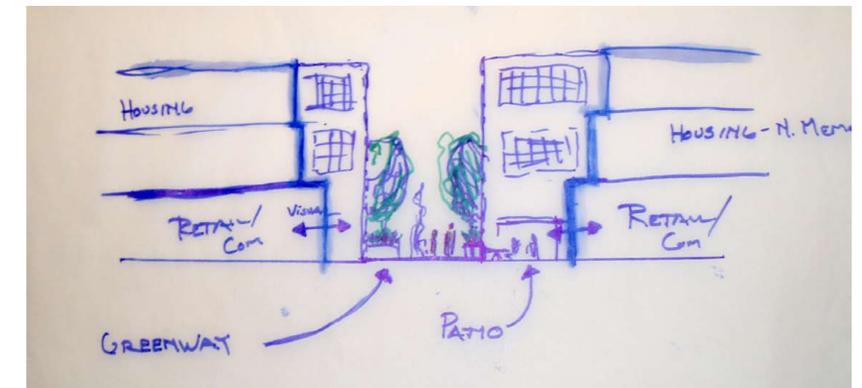
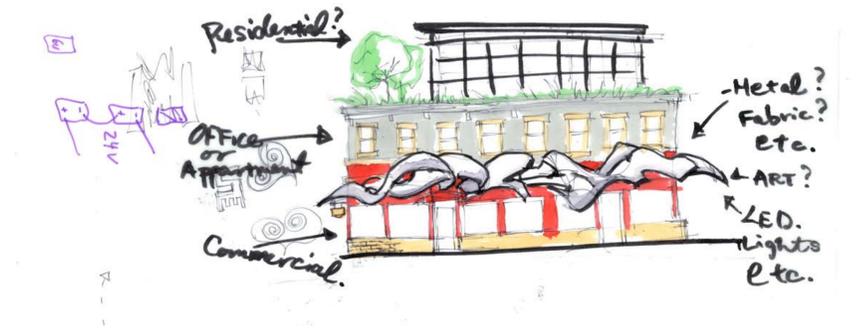
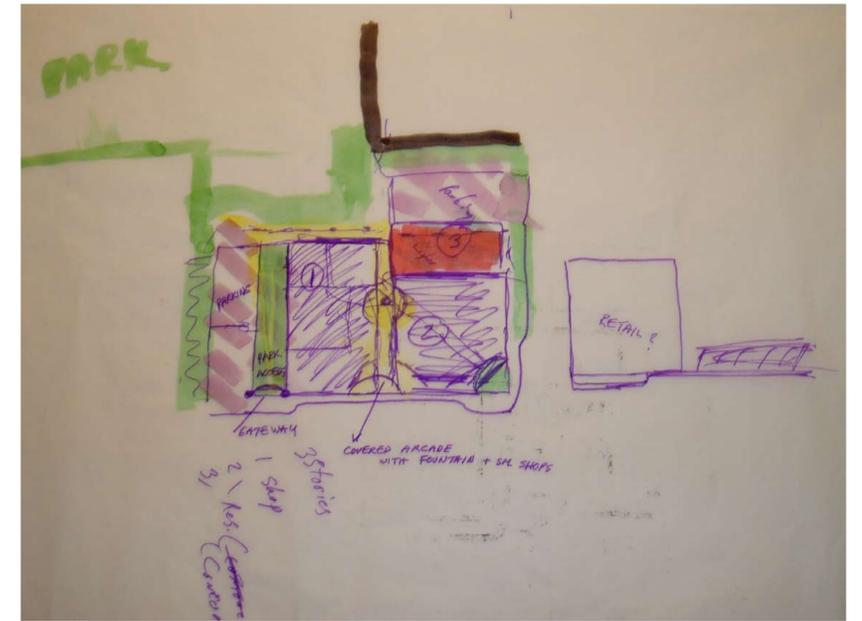
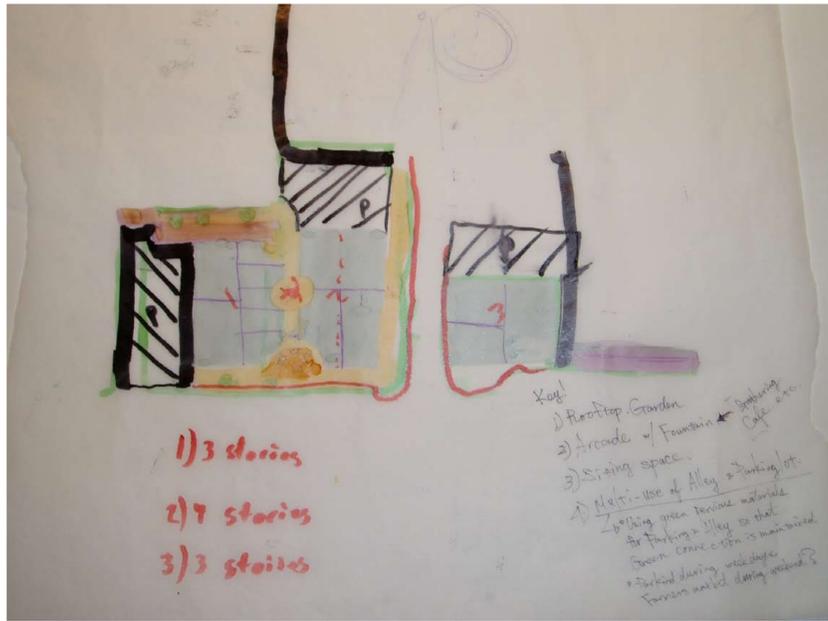
# DESIGN CHARETTE



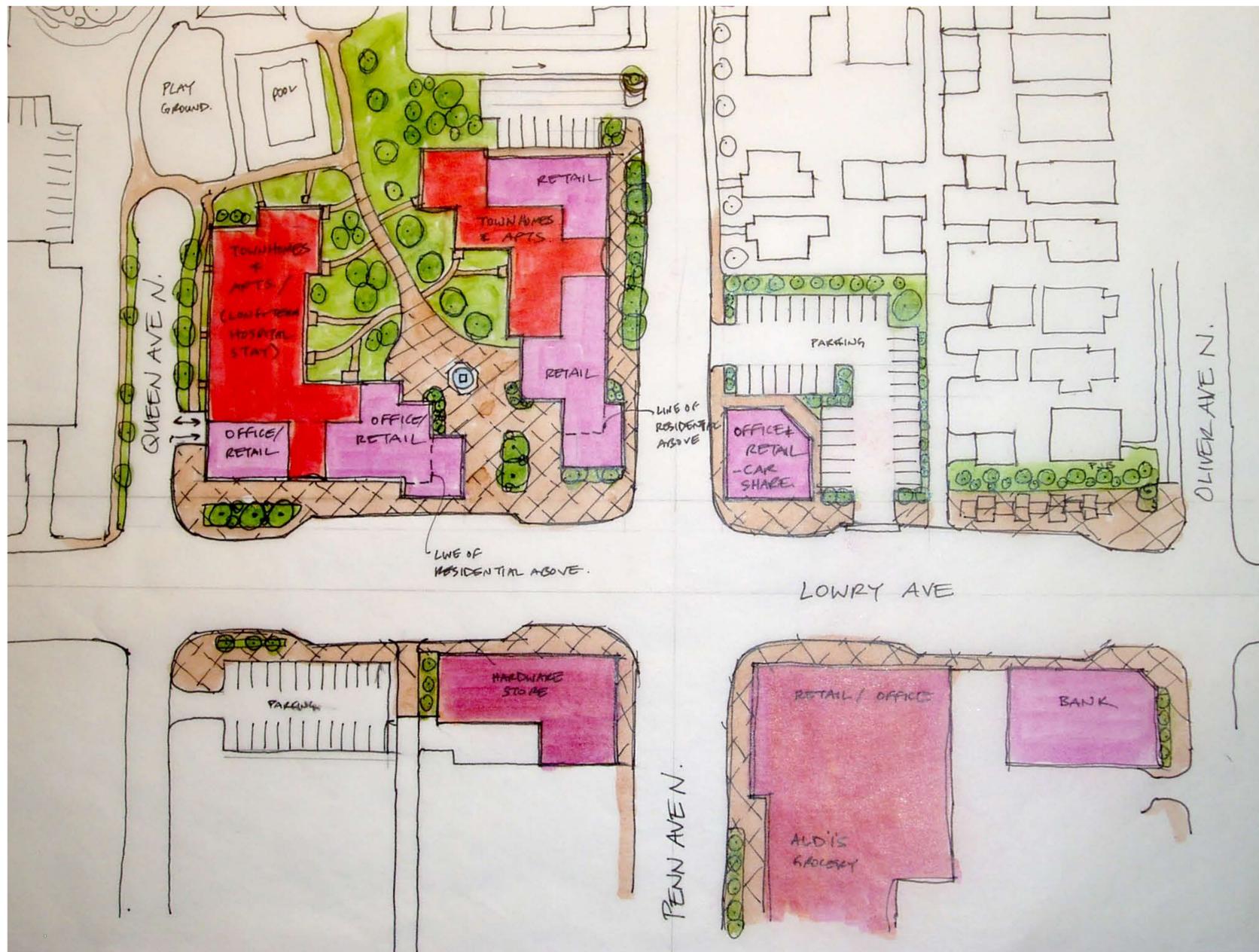
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SCHEME I



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# SCHEME I



before



after

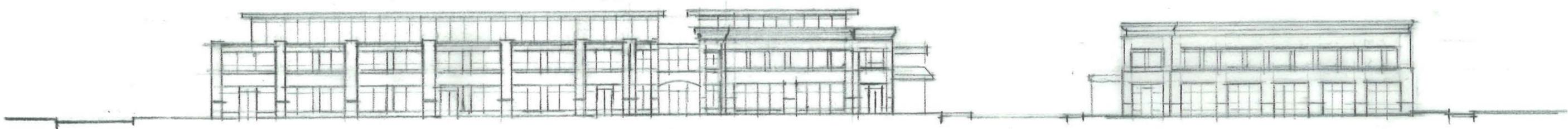


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SCHEME 2



SCHEME 2



before



after



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