

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT PLANS

Lowry Avenue NE Corridor Study

Summary of
Relevant Plans

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1 Metropolitan Council – 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (2010)

The purpose of the *Transportation Policy Plan* is to guide development of the region's transportation system to the year 2030 and to provide for an integrated multimodal transportation system that advances regional land use and growth management goals. Following is a summary of recommendation relevant to Lowry Avenue NE.

1.1 Regional Mobility and Land Use

Connecting land use decisions to transportation investments with the purpose of reducing per capita vehicle miles traveled will help minimize the growth in congestion. Land use with sufficient activity and density, including walkable streets and a local transportation network, can best support transit options. A well-connected local and collector roadway network will also support regional highways by keeping local travel off of highways and making walking and bicycling more attractive options for local travel. This supportive road network, in addition to investments in alternatives to the automobile, will support more travel-efficient land development that allows people to live and work within a reasonable commute time and to avoid congestion.

Land use strategies derived from the Metropolitan Council's Regional Development Framework that serve to bolster transit ridership and thereby contribute to congestion management include:

- Coordinate transportation investments and land development to create an environment supportive of travel by modes other than the automobile including travel by transit, walking and bicycling.
- Coordinate transportation investments and land development along major transportation corridors to intensify job centers, increase transportation links between job centers and medium-to-high density residential developments and improve jobs/housing connections.
- Intensify population density in nodes along transportation corridors, especially along existing and potential transit corridors.
- Intensify employment clusters with transit and pedestrian infrastructure.

1.2 Transit

The 2030 Transit Plan envisions two approaches to increasing transit ridership and helping meet the mobility needs of the Twin Cities:

- Maintain and grow bus ridership and
- Develop a network of bus and rail transitways.

In 2004, the Council set a goal of doubling ridership by 2030, from a 2003 base of 73 million rides to approximately 145-150 million rides in 2030. It is projected that by 2030, the transit system will carry an additional 60 million rides over 2007 ridership levels.

Although no new transit service is planned for Lowry Avenue, it is identified in the *Transportation Policy Plan* as a corridor where existing local bus routes will be improved.

1.3 Freight and Goods Movement

Within the Twin Cities region, several roads are officially designated as “Intermodal Connectors” to the National Highway System (NHS), as designated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Container-based shipping has substantially increased the efficiency of goods movement. Containers can be moved between modes without the need to repack goods.

The region has two primary rail-truck intermodal terminals. These include the Canadian Pacific Shoreham Yard in Minneapolis and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Midway Yard in Saint Paul. The Shoreham Yard, north of Lowry Avenue NE intersection with University Avenue, is connected to Interstate 94 by Lowry Avenue, a designated part of the NHS. This designation may give this route special consideration for freight-related investment.

1.4 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Recognizing the importance of walking and bicycling to a multimodal transportation system, the Council will strongly encourage local units of government to develop a safe and attractive pedestrian environment near major transit corridors and stations with linkages for pedestrians and bicyclists from origins and destinations to buses and trains. Providing a more comfortable and safe walking environment could increase transit use, since most transit trips begin and end with walking.

Many roads have not been designed with bicycling and walking in mind and are either uncomfortable or unsafe to use supports the Complete Streets concept for roadway planning and design.

2 RiverFIRST – Minneapolis Riverfront Development Initiative (2012)

In September of 2010, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and The Minneapolis Parks Foundation, along with creative partners The University of Minnesota College of Design and Walker Art Center, launched an international design competition addressing Minneapolis' Upper Riverfront. The competition sought design proposals for the area of the Mississippi River extending from the Stone Arch Bridge, north 5.5 miles to Minneapolis' city limits, including land along both sides of the river. The goals of the competition were to create a vision that:

- Established parks as the engine for economic development along the river
- Knit both sides of the riverfront together with their surrounding communities, thereby transforming the river from a barrier to a connector
- Re-focused the city toward one of the three great rivers of the world, an extraordinary environmental amenity that defines Minneapolis' civic identity—past, present and future

RiverFIRST was the selected design which offers a dynamic vision for a renewed and revitalized Upper River corridor through a proposed series of eight areas of opportunity:

- *Riverfront Trails*: a combination of pedestrian and bicycle trails along the river's banks and "Knot Bridges" attached to existing bridges—will complete critical connections in the Grand Rounds system, and better connect North Minneapolis to Northeast Minneapolis for pedestrians and cyclists.
- *BioHavens*: A protected network of floating will create riparian habitat for endangered species and migratory birds.
- *Downtown Gateway Park*: A dramatic gateway to Minneapolis at the historic gateway site of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge, linked to the new Public Library via a park and to Nicollet Mall.
- *Farview Park Expansion*: major park extension bridges Interstate 94 and reconnects North Minneapolis with the Mississippi River.
- *Northside Wetlands Park*: A molded alluvial wetland landscape is reclaimed to create new riverfront habitats.
- *Northeast Riverfront Park*: Ravine landscapes remediate storm water and form stepped eco-stairs for water, people, and wildlife; overlooking the Mississippi and downtown Minneapolis.
- *Scherer Park*: Recreational entry point to the Mississippi trail and park system; a signature 21st-century urban park landscape; flanked by Boom Island and Sheridan Park.
- *Spirit Island*: A sacred place for the Dakota Indians for generations, the now vanished Spirit Island will be symbolized by an illuminated river weir.

The proposed Northeast Riverfront Park and system of trail loops are the features in the RiverFIRST plan that most directly impacts Lowry Avenue NE. The park would be located either side of Lowry Avenue along the Mississippi River between Marshall Street NE and the river. The park would be connected with bike trails along the railroad right-of-way just east of California Street on either side of Lowry Avenue NE.

Visionary Projects 5–20 Years Northeast Riverfront Park



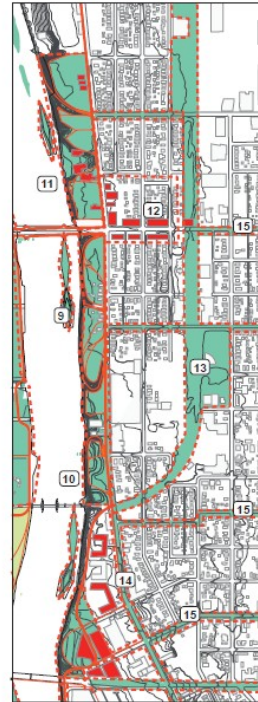
Aerial view of East Side park – biofiltration path and ravine at Gluek Park

For Northeast Minneapolis, RiverFIRST follows principles of carving produced by the constant flow of water against the river's limestone bluffs. Ravine landscapes remediate storm water and form stepped eco-stairs for flows of water, people, and wildlife, and serve as high points to overlook the Mississippi and downtown Minneapolis. These new open spaces, contemplated primarily as resources for the environment and local residents, will intermingle with existing smaller privately-owned parcels along the riverfront that contain a variety of uses. Some of the ravines are envisioned to provide public access to the river, with the potential for small boat launches and docks.

1. BNSF Pedestrian Bridge and Third Rail Cafe
2. Shardan Park
3. Psycho-Sury's
4. Gluek Park
5. 22nd Ave NE Bike Route
6. Edgewater Park
7. MWMCO Headquarters
8. Marshall Terrace Park
9. Kids Art Camp
10. Bed and Breakfast
11. Marshall Terrace Housing
12. Lowry Commercial District
13. Prairie Loop Bike Way
14. Riverfront Residential Development
15. Rain Garden Streets



0–5 Year Implementation Plan



5–20 Year Vision

3 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan (2002)

3.1 Background

The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan was developed through a cooperative effort of Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, other public agencies, and the residents and business owners along Lowry. The study envisioned a coordinated, phased plan for the entire Lowry Avenue corridor to include the recommendations noted above, plus others for Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis.

The goals of the 2002 *Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan* were to:

- Enhance access to jobs through public transportation
- Effectively link civic spaces through transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Congregate services, retail and office space around transit centers/nodes

The approach to this project included:

- Working with neighborhood leaders, citizens, businesses, property owners and other interested parties to identify the goals and visions for the Lowry Avenue Corridor.
- Providing current market research for the corridor, including the feasibility of mixed-use, transit-friendly developments.
- Identifying historic and culturally significant resources within the neighborhoods that make up the corridor.
- Preparing a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment to identify hazardous substances or petroleum products on the corridor.
- Identifying and establishing opportunities for transit, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation to link all parts of the corridor and to link the corridor to surrounding areas.
- Providing a framework for decision-making that will guide future development.

3.2 Key Issues

Community members identified the key issues – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – as part of the planning process:

Strengths – The greatest strength identified by workshop participants is the number and variety of local businesses and services that serve area residents. Second is the convenience of access to downtown and the rest of the city; the third is the river, parks and flowers and greenery that are found along the Avenue.

Opportunities – The greatest opportunity is to make the Avenue more pedestrian friendly by improving lighting, street plantings, sidewalks and parks. The second relates to the upgrading of buildings and the development of additional residential and commercial properties. The third is to open more businesses and shops for area residents along the corridors.

Weaknesses – The greatest weakness of the corridor is in the pedestrian unfriendly nature of the Avenue, with poor lighting and sub-standard sidewalks. The second has to do with roadway and parking problems, while the third is the presence of derelict properties.

Threats – The greatest threat to the Lowry Corridor is inappropriate and insensitive redevelopment that weakens rather than strengthens the fabric of the corridor. The second is drugs and crime that continue to afflict the Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods. The third is increasing traffic and insufficient and deteriorating roadway infrastructure.

3.3 Key Recommendations in the Plan for Lowry Avenue NE

- Widen Lowry Avenue to a five-lane section between Marshall Street and University Avenue to handle anticipated traffic and turning movements.
- Maintain Lowry Avenue at four lanes from University Avenue to Central Avenue to handle anticipated traffic.
- Narrow Lowry Avenue to two lanes from Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard.
- Acquire the first property abutting Lowry Avenue, either on the north side or south side, between Marshall Street and Central Avenue in NE Minneapolis to accommodate roadway, parking, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and landscaping.
- Sidewalks at least 6 feet wide (8 feet wide in most segments) on both sides of Lowry along the entire corridor;
- One-way on-street bicycle lanes 5 feet wide on both sides of the entire corridor.
- Add landscaped boulevards at least 6 feet wide from Marshall Street to Central Avenue. No boulevards from Central to Stinson Boulevard.
- On-street parking in bump-outs with landscaped nodes along the entire corridor.
- Modest redevelopment at the Lowry/Central node, with added retail and residential uses, and accommodations for transit, taking advantage of Central's strong commercial base.



4 Central Avenue Small Area Plan (2008)

4.1 Project Goals

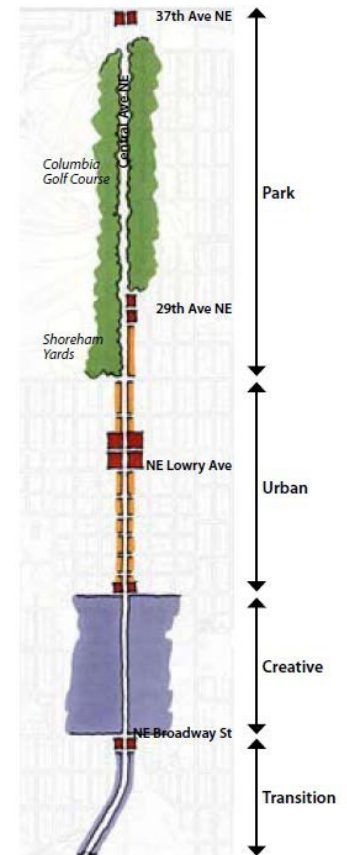
The goals of the Central Avenue Small Area Plan were-

- Reinforce an identifiable center.
- Redefine the commercial area.
- Make appropriate residential-commercial transitions.

- Generate employment opportunities.
- Leverage the arts.
- Create strong gateways.

4.2 Key Recommendations for Lowry Avenue NE from Central Avenue Small Area Plan

- Treat the segment of Central Avenue either side of Lowry Avenue as the historic commercial strip.
- Concentrate regional destinations and intense urban redevelopments at 18th Avenue NE and NE Lowry Avenue intersections. Provide housing opportunities, a series of small urban green spaces, and a range of businesses at these locations.
- Undertake a “Transformative Project” – the Commercial Core – involving the following design guidelines:
 - *Create a retail destination for Northeast.*
 - *Create a signature public space at Northeast’s 100 percent corner at Central and Lowry Avenue (see illustrations below).*
 - *Provide opportunities for substantial new investment as well as incremental investment.*
 - *Create a mix of uses that enliven the area throughout the day and evening.*
 - *Provide opportunities for new housing on Central Avenue.*
- Bike lanes on parallel routes to Lowry Avenue NE, but not on Lowry Avenue.
- The Plan recommends a narrow section for Lowry Avenue than in the 2002 Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan.



5 Audubon Park Neighborhood Small Area Plan (2008)

5.1 Executive Summary

The goal of the Audubon Park Neighborhood Small Area Plan is to encourage interaction and involvement among the people in the community and its organizations; to foster the continuing improvement of property and businesses within its boundaries; to increase security and safety within the neighborhood; and to continue to grow and develop in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.

5.1.1 Recommendations for the ACTIVITY CENTER: LOWRY AVENUE NE AND CENTRAL AVENUE NE

- Support redevelopment at the Lowry & Central node, with added retail and residential uses and accommodations for transit, taking advantage of Central's strong commercial base.
- Encourage a variety of commercial and residential uses that generate activity all day long and into the evening.
- Encourage mixed-use buildings, with commercial uses located on the ground floor and secure entrances for residential users.
- Discourage uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Activity Centers, such as automobile services and drive-through facilities.
- Encourage a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Activity Centers, in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Encourage the development of high to very high density housing within the boundaries of Activity Centers.
- Encourage the development of medium to high density housing immediately adjacent to Activity Centers to serve as a transition to surrounding residential areas.
- Support district parking strategies in Activity Centers, including shared parking facilities, uniform signage for parking facilities, and other strategies.
- Encourage architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces in Activity Centers.



5.1.2 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to recommendations specific to land uses defined by the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, the Audubon Park Neighborhood Small Area Plan makes general recommendations relevant to land use and transportation on Lowry Avenue, synthesized here:

- Encourage retail/commercial development in specific areas – Central

Avenue Commercial Corridor, Johnson Street Commercial Node, and the Lowry & Central Activity Center.

- Support on-street parking in bump-outs with landscaped nodes along the entire corridor.
- Explore design options for bike lanes along streets parallel to Central Avenue NE, Johnson Street NE, 29th Avenue NE, and Lowry Avenue NE.

6 Bottineau Neighborhood Small Area Plan

6.1 Plan Recommendations

The Bottineau Neighborhood Small Area Plan recommendations follow.

- Increase neighborhood retail and service opportunities by strengthening neighborhood commercial nodes on Lowry Avenue.
- Support increased residential density near commercial areas to support additional commercial/retail space through mixed use development. Encourage active uses on ground floor.
- Create transitions between commercial and residential uses.
- Mixed-use development and redevelopment, particularly at Marshall to support the creation of neighborhood commercial nodes.
- A diversity of commercial/retail options to allow mutual support and synergies.
- A strong emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle oriented improvements including filled sidewalk gaps, wider sidewalks, narrow street crossings, marked crosswalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and public space.
- Focus on locally-owned retail but consideration of larger entities as anchors.

6.1.1 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL NODES: LOWRY AVENUE NE AND MARSHALL STREET AND LOWRY AVENUE NE AND UNIVERSITY AVENUE

The neighborhood contains two intersections identified in the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan as Neighborhood Commercial Nodes: Lowry Avenue NE and Marshall Street and Lowry Avenue NE and University Avenue. However, the Bottineau Small Area Plan asserts that even with gradual change, Lowry and University faces substantial challenges to becoming a Neighborhood Commercial Node given auto-oriented uses at the intersections. However, the plan does express the neighborhood's preference for designating Lowry Avenue at 2nd Street as a Neighborhood Commercial Node, noting that it already contains 50,000 square feet of space ready for redevelopment. At both Lowry and 2nd Street and Lowry and Marshall, the plan recommends a pedestrian-oriented overlay district to promote pedestrian activity at the street level and to take advantage of a future public view corridor.

6.1.2 COMMUNITY CORRIDOR: LOWRY AVENUE BETWEEN MARSHALL AND UNIVERSITY

The plan indicates strong community negativity toward Hennepin County's proposed widening of Lowry Avenue. It states "the neighborhood recognizes the need for Lowry Avenue to accommodate the projected additional traffic volumes, but generally feels the plan does so at the expense of the neighborhood identity, pedestrian orientation, and creates more challenges to building vibrant neighborhood commercial nodes than it overcomes."

7 Holland Neighborhood Small Area Plan (2014)

The Holland Small Area Plan is currently being updated by the Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association, with assistance from the Cunningham Group. While the planning process is still underway, notes from public meetings held during the planning process provide a few indications of community attitudes toward Lowry Avenue. These are summarized here:

- Rail lines serve as a barrier to connectivity and break up Lowry Avenue. However, this has also created informal public spaces that are beloved and used by the community.
- If Lowry redevelopment is successful, it will also generate improvements on University and Central Avenues.
- Lowry should not be a four-lane road.
- Lowry Avenue street, streetscape, and adjacent property redevelopment are neighborhood priorities.