

The pilot "Play on Penn" event series yielded numerous ideas for future public spaces and programming along the avenue — see "Implement placemaking and wayfinding" on page 4.



Looking for more?

Visit www.hennepin.us/penn

- Get news and updates as the program transitions to its implementation phase
- Download the entire Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework document
- Subscribe to the Penn Avenue Community Works newsletter

HENNEPIN COUNTY PENN AVENUE COMMUNITY WORKS

Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework

Executive summary

January 2016



Enhancing the Penn Avenue corridor in North Minneapolis

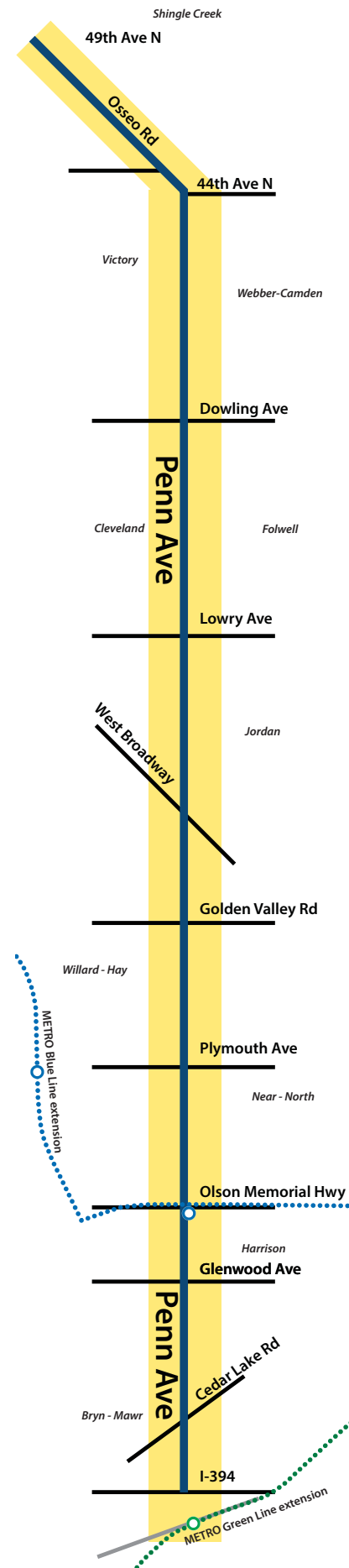
In the next five years, Penn Avenue will benefit from two major public investments: Metro Transit's C Line bus rapid transit (BRT) service and a coordinated redesign that includes streetscape improvements. The Penn Avenue Vision and Implementation Framework leverages those investments with a series of recommendations that are designed to stimulate economic development, promote beautification and enhance livability along the Penn Avenue corridor.

The framework is the result of more than two years of planning from Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, Metro Transit and communities in North Minneapolis. It is intended to guide decision-making and future investments in multimodal transportation, land use, economic development, housing and placemaking. While it has been endorsed by the Penn Avenue Community Works steering committee, its success depends on the commitment, focus and actions of these partners going forward.

Program Partners



The Penn Avenue corridor spans two blocks east and west of Penn Avenue North, and includes planned light rail transit stations for the METRO Blue and Green Line extensions.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Community members were essential in identifying priorities, and in helping to shape, review and refine corresponding strategies. The program's public participation included:

- **200+ comments** submitted through the City of Minneapolis' Creative City Making program
- **275 community events**, including advisory committee meetings, small group sessions, open houses, community meetings, interviews and more
- **2,000 individual stakeholders** reached via one-on-one meetings, door-knocking and surveys
- **Interviews and conversations** with developers, property owners, businesses, business associations, employers and workforce organizations
- **A project implementation committee** with representatives from each of the project area's 10 neighborhoods and 10 at-large representatives: residents, business owners and others



Project timeline

2012	Penn Avenue Community Works established	
2013 to 2015	Planning Community engagement Design Penn Avenue Bus rapid transit (BRT) C Line station locations	
2016	Design - C Line - Penn Avenue intersections	
2017		
2018	Construction* - C Line stations - Penn Avenue intersections Reconstruction Penn Avenue between Lowry and West Broadway aves. *pending full funding	
2019 & beyond	Ride the C Line Additional segments as funding is available	

Implementation
Economic development and redevelopment, livability and placemaking initiatives

Strategy: **Redesign Penn Avenue** Priorities: ● ● ● ● ●

Improve safety for pedestrians and make Penn more livable for everyone with a new road layout, streetscaping and BRT.



Rendering of the approved redesign for a typical section of the avenue

- Reduce the road width by approximately three feet on each side
- Add landscaped boulevards on both sides
- Maintain parking lanes on both sides
- Offer a faster, better transit experience with the C Line BRT's train-like features and specialized vehicles.
- Add streetscape concepts that support overall goals for the corridor and complement C Line BRT improvements, including accessible sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, signage, furnishings, wayfinding and plantings
- Improve access to destinations inside and outside the corridor

Bus rapid transit and a better Penn Avenue

Required bump-outs at planned stations reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve visibility and calm traffic

Stations include heated shelters, lighting, security features, real-time schedule information and trash receptacles

Learn more at www.metrotransit.org/c-line-project



RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Penn Avenue Community Works set out to identify needs, desires, concerns and observations of people in corridor communities, and to ensure the planning work addressed these priorities as well as technical analysis and policy guidance. This table shows the ties between specific community priorities and recommended strategies.

Community Priorities	Strategies					
	Create access to jobs	Improve connectivity for bicyclists	Diversify housing	Foster commercial development	Redesign Penn Avenue	Implement placemaking and wayfinding
Business and job opportunities	X			X		
Public safety		X			X	X
Green space, trees and landscaping					X	X
Community identity, character and amenities			X	X	X	X
Parking for residents and businesses					X	
Resources for redevelopment opportunities	X		X	X		
Transit access and service	X				X	X
Bicycle safety and connectivity		X				

Strategy: **Create access to jobs** Priorities: ● ● ●

Unemployment in North Minneapolis is 89% higher – nearly double – the rate in all of Minneapolis. It is an estimated 143% higher than Hennepin County's overall rate. (Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates for 2009 to 2014.)

- Establish strategic partnerships with employers and training organizations in the corridor, and within a 45-minute transit commute. Improve transit for better access to jobs outside the corridor.
- Connect residents to transit- and transportation infrastructure-related jobs
- Increase residents' spending power with transportation options that reduce automobile dependence
- Secure funding for job training and support paid internships
- Train residents for county career opportunities

Strategy: **Diversify housing**

Priorities:  

Develop options for people at all income levels with more market-rate, single-family homes for purchase and more market-rate and affordable medium- and high-density housing. Increasing the local population will also encourage new retail development.

- Create flexible funding for development
- Focus in-fill housing programs in areas with concentrations of publically owned properties, such as 27th and Penn Avenue
- Increase housing density at or near neighborhood commercial nodes
- Support homeownership programs
- Support financial literacy programs for homeownership and rental
- Support home renovation, with a focus on exterior improvements

Visions for new development

- Six key intersections include Osseo Road and 49th Avenue and Penn Avenue’s intersections with 44th, Lowry, West Broadway, Plymouth and Glenwood avenues.
- Recommended housing types and commercial uses are targeted to specific properties.
- Proposed scenarios consider context, market analysis, and existing plans adopted by the City of Minneapolis for West Broadway, Lowry Avenue, and other areas that include the Penn Avenue corridor.

Strategy: **Implement placemaking and wayfinding**

Priorities:    

Placemaking brings people together and helps create vibrant streets, unite communities and celebrate cultures and heritages. Recommendations are themed to neighborhoods; business districts; arts, culture and entertainment; health and education.

- Create spaces, plazas, and pocket parks for outdoor dining and gathering
- Highlight North Minneapolis history and culture with interpretive materials
- Reflect neighborhood character and culture with banners, public art, kiosks, signage and other identity elements
- Support greening, placemaking and wayfinding at key sites and commercial nodes
- Continue activities and programming in the vein of the successful “Play on Penn” events from 2014 and 2015

Strategy: **Foster commercial development**

Priorities:   

Address the lack of sufficient retail and entertainment opportunities in North Minneapolis, which leads people to leave the Penn Avenue corridor to purchase goods and services.

- Provide technical assistance for businesses
- Offer flexible funding to close gaps for commercial real estate projects
- Create crowdfunding and cooperative ownership models as potential funding resources
- Target business development funds
- Reduce commercial rent in new or newly renovated spaces
- Support business incubator space
- Support predevelopment and redevelopment projects
- Support development of mixed-use buildings with active ground-floor uses
- Identify policy changes that support redevelopment, including tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement, special assessments or land-value write-downs



Proposed Capri Theater expansion

Strategy: **Improve connectivity for bicyclists**

Priorities:  

North-south bike connections are important to adequately serve residents’ current and future needs, including connections to planned light rail transit stations and greenway routes.

- Develop bike boulevards on Queen and Thomas avenues north