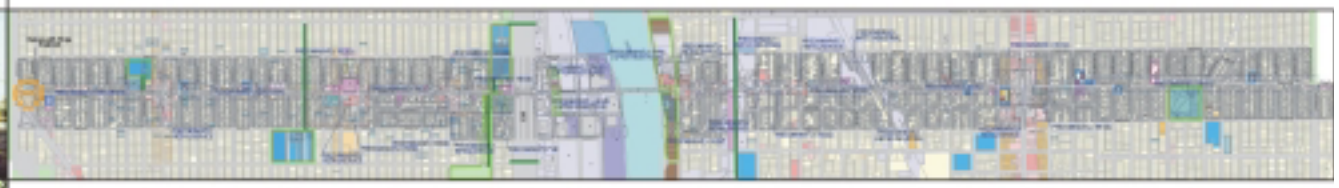

Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan

Prepared for Hennepin County, Minnesota

by
Dahlgren, Shardlow, and Uban, Inc.
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May 2002

Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan
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14. ABSTRACT The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan (May 2002) recommends transportation and land use improvements for the five-mile-long Lowry Avenue corridor, a Hennepin County roadway in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The plan summarizes previous planning studies and the several neighborhood meetings held during the planning process. It provides analysis of the urban character, traffic, history, market conditions, and potential environmental hazards in and around the corridor. The recommendations include narrowing the current four-lane roadway to two lanes in the eastern and western segments of the corridor, keeping at least the existing four lanes in the middle segment, and expanding to a five-lane section for a six-block center segment. Wider sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, landscaped boulevards and center medians, on-street parking in bumpouts, and dedicated left turn lanes area among the other improvements recommended and illustrated in the report. Appendices provide more detail on several issues.		
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Introduction

Introduction

Description of Project

Lowry Avenue spans roughly five miles as an east-west thoroughfare through the north third of Minneapolis, connecting the northwestern suburb of Robbinsdale with the northeastern suburb of Saint Anthony Village. Victory Memorial Parkway marks the roadway's west end, while Stinson Boulevard crosses its east boundary. Lowry Avenue is one of the few streets in this section of the City that bridges the Mississippi River. Lowry also crosses Interstate Highway 94, but does not have access to the freeway.

Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis

Hennepin County undertook a comprehensive study of the redevelopment potential of the Lowry Avenue corridor in 2001. The Study Area for the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan includes the first block both north and south of Lowry Avenue on the entire corridor. The corridor plan looks beyond this area as appropriate to identify linkages and connections, analyze relationships between the corridor and nearby development sites or amenities, and to respond to concerns of interested neighborhood groups.

The strategy for this redevelopment incorporates elements of market, economic, transportation, urban design, and environmental issues to enhance, promote, and link this important corridor to surrounding areas. The concepts contained in the corridor plan address the County's main goals for the planning process detailed below.

The objectives and vision reflected in the corridor plan were determined through community input, visioning exercises, ratification of previous studies, as well as new analysis and ideas. Public participation was an essential component of the planning process. The residents and business owners in the community are interested in what Lowry Avenue will look and feel like and how future plans affect their lives and property. The success of the corridor plan is dependent on how well it responds to their needs, goals, and objectives.

Lowry Avenue in Northeast Minneapolis

Goals for the Lowry Avenue Planning Process:

1. Enhance access to jobs through public transportation

   Strategies:
   - Improve the efficiency of the transportation system by creating advantages for mass transit vehicles
   - Eliminate inhospitable walking or biking avenues around transit/commercial nodes
   - Facilitate efficient movement of mass transit through the creation of transit nodes at major north-south connectors

2. Effectively link civic spaces through transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections

   Strategies:
   - Improve accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle use
   - Provide amenities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users (bike racks and bus shelters)
   - Develop design guidelines that enhance safety (lighting, traffic calming, boulevard design, and pedestrian crosswalk identification)
   - Form connections from Lowry Avenue to new, proposed and existing schools throughout the Lowry Avenue Corridor region

Congregate service around transit node

3. Congregate services, retail and office space around transit centers/nodes

   Strategies:
   - Remove obsolete commercial uses interspersed among residential areas of the corridors
   - Create intensified mixed-use, transit-friendly developments at the transit/commercial nodes
   - Maintain a pedestrian-friendly environment by keeping nodes and their associated parking compact rather than spread out

Project Approach

The Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan integrates the functional needs of moving vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians with streetscape, urban design and environmental considerations to create a sense of continuity, human scale, and a fresh identity throughout the Lowry Avenue Corridor. By incorporating a market research element, the planning process effectively responds to the opportunities and challenges posed by an evolving local economy.

The approach for this project included:

1. Working with neighborhood leaders, citizens, businesses, property owners and other interested parties to identify the goals and visions for the Lowry Avenue Corridor.

2. Providing current market research for the corridor, including the feasibility of mixed-use, transit-friendly developments.

3. Identifying historic and culturally significant resources within the neighborhoods that make up the corridor.

4. Preparing a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment to identify hazardous substances or petroleum products on the corridor.

5. 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.

6. Providing a framework for decision-making that will guide future development.

two.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

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 envisions a coordinated, phased plan for the entire Lowry Avenue corridor, and was based on three goals adopted by the County for the Lowry Avenue corridor: enhance access to jobs through public transportation; effectively link civic spaces through transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections; and congregate services, retail and office space around transit cetners/nodes.

Analysis

The Plan includes analysis of land use, market conditions, potential environmental contamination, historical elements, and transportation and traffic. Significant neighborhood input from community meetings identified the need for a more pedestrian-friendlyenvironment with more greenery and renovation or removal of problem properties. The transportation and land use analysis concludes that Lowry Avenue needs to be widened in certain segments to accommodate traffic, new bike lanes, parking, and streetscape improvements.

Roadway Improvements:

- Widen Lowry Avenue to four lanes (two lanes each direction) plus dedicated left turn lanes, plus a new landscaped median, between Marshall Street and University Avenue to handle anticipated traffic volumes and turning movements in this segment;
- Maintain Lowry Avenue at four lanes (two lanes each direction) with a new landscaped median from Lyndale Avenue to Marshall Street and from University Avenue to Central Avenue to handle anticipated traffic volumes in these segments;
- Narrow Lowry Avenue to two lanes (one lane each direction) from Xerxes Avenue to Lyndale Avenue and from Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard.
- Acquire the first property abutting Lowry Avenue, either on the north side or south side, between Lyndale Avenue and Central Avenue to accommodate roadway requirements, parking, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and landscaping.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Other Improvements:

- Sidewalks at least 6 feet wide (8 feet in most segments) both sides of Lowry along the entire corridor;
- One-way on-street bicycle lanes 5 feet wide on both sides of the entire corridor.
- Added boulevards at least 6 feet wide with landscaping, from Xerxes Avenue to Central Avenue. No boulevards from Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard;
- On-street parking in bumpouts with landscaped nodes along the entire corridor.

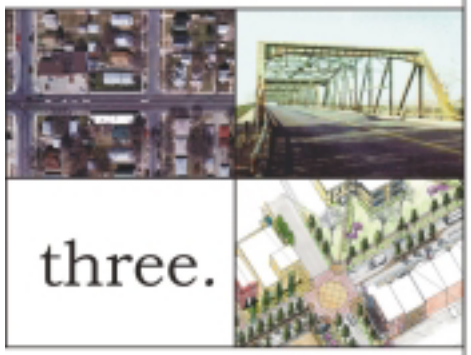
Redevelopment:

- Major redevelopment on several blocks around the Emerson-Fremont node, including added retail and residential uses, and accommodations for transit riders.
- Major redevelopment on several blocks around the Lowry/Lyndale intersection to include added retail, service and residential uses, with accommodations for transit.
- Redevelopment at the Lowry/Central node, with added retail and residential uses, and accommodations for transit, taking advantage of Central's strong commercial base.·
- Extension of 31st Avenue between Dupont Avenue and Humboldt Avenue to improve access and provide better connection between public uses and the commercial node.
- A green space connection along Humboldt Avenue between the Jordan School south of Lowry and Folwell Park north of Lowry Avenue.
- A green space connection along 4th Street North between Cityview School on the north and Farview Park on the south.
- Concentration of commercial uses at key intersections, reintroduction of residential uses between these key nodes.

Redevelopment at major commercial nodes is recommended

Phasing:

Phase 1: Fremont Avenue to I-94
Phase 2: Xerxes to Fremont
Phase 3: Mississippi River to University Avenue
Phase 4: University Avenue to Central Avenue
Phase 5: Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard



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Background Research

Background Research

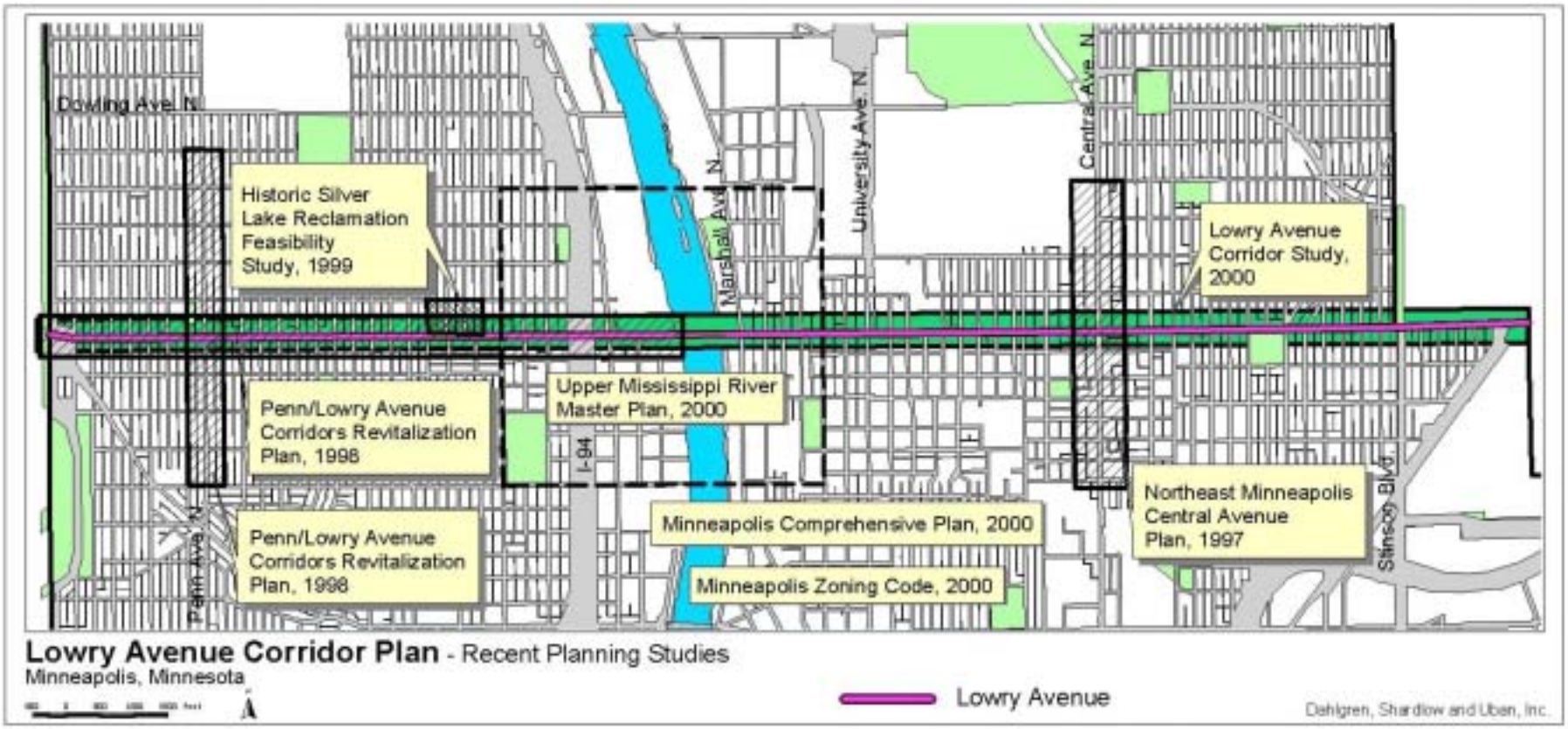
Review of Past Studies and Plans

Numerous relevant plans and studies have been completed previously that can serve to help guide the development vision for the Lowry Avenue corridor. The areas dealt with in each study are illustrated on Figure 1.

Lowry Avenue Corridor Study (1999)

An immediate precursor to this corridor plan, the Lowry Avenue Corridor Study prepared by Hoisington Koegler Group and Benshoof and Associates for Hennepin County does an effective job at outlining the socio-economic conditions of surrounding neighborhoods, an overview of land use and housing issues, as well as transporta-

Figure 1
Recent Planning Studies



tion issues and conditions along Lowry Ave. It also classifies the corridor in terms of the role it plays in the context of the larger community, identifies a number of opportunities and challenges, and comes up with recommendations on how to improve the corridor. As such, it was a valuable starting point to begin working on the Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan.

The 1999 report recommended numerous urban design improvements along Lowry Avenue. Among them were streetscape improvements in order to promote a common visual theme that identifies and unites the corridor along its length and promotes its role as an east-west connector. Also identified is the need to provide some form of gateway to the four new public schools that were completed (after the study) near, but not on, Lowry Avenue. Another important issue identified is the desirability of concentrating commercial uses over time at designated nodes and phasing out commercial functions that are scattered along its length between nodes. Because for much of its length Lowry is first and foremost a place to live, the development of an improved sidewalk system and improvements to the physical appearance of buildings are both identified as important factors to increase its livability for residents. The report also identifies a number of modifications to the street itself in order to improve traffic flow in certain areas and improve the pedestrian environment along other stretches. These modifications include changing the layout of the street to provide two continuous lanes of travel with a common left-turn lane in the middle, providing right turn lanes at specific busy intersections, prohibiting on-street parking along solely residential stretches, while providing for parking at commercial nodes, and maintaining the truck-friendly nature of the avenue along the industrial river segment.

The Minneapolis Plan (2000)

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan recognizes Lowry Avenue as an important east-west arterial. It categorizes the avenue as a community corridor with neighborhood commercial nodes identified on the west side of the river at Penn Avenue, Emerson/Fremont Avenues, and Lyndale Avenue. On the east side of the river, the intersection with Central Avenue is identified as an activity center, a higher intensity commercial area.

In the Minneapolis Plan a community corridor is identified as an important transportation corridor that has an emphasis on residential uses but supports commercial uses at specific locations. It supports new residential at medium density and neighborhood commercial uses. It is the less intense of the two classes of corridors recognized in the plan, with the more intense being the commercial corridors that have a primary emphasis on commercial uses. Design and development along community corridors is oriented toward the pedestrian experience. Streets identified as community corridors are important travel routes for neighborhood and pass-through traffic.

Community corridors are characterized by the following features:

- Streets that connect more than two neighborhoods
- A land use pattern that is primarily residential with intermittent small-scale retail and service commercial uses serving the immediate neighborhood and clustered at nodes, but no automobile oriented shopping centers
- Traffic volumes between 4,000 and 15,000 ADT
- Important traffic carriers, but not necessary the principal travel route for that part of the city
- Land use and building form exhibit traditional commercial and residential form and massing

Neighborhood commercial nodes are small-scale service locations and neighborhood focal points that are characterized by the following characteristics:

- Provide at least 3 retail or service uses to surrounding residents
- Pedestrian-oriented, with limited auto-oriented uses
- Contain between 10,000-100,000 sq. ft. of retail or service floor area
- Have a trade market area ranging from a 2,000 to 12,000 people
- Typically focused close to an intersection, often at the intersection of community corridors
- Often contain a mix of uses within structures and lots

Activity Centers are destinations that support a wide range of commercial, office-residential and residential uses, a busy street life, and significant levels of activity throughout the day and into the evening. Activity Centers are characterized by the following features:

- A diversity of uses with city-wide and regional destinations
- Medium and high-density residential
- Traditional urban form
- Significant pedestrian and transit orientation
- Long activity cycle stretching from morning to late evening

The Minneapolis Zoning Ordinance (2000)

A comprehensive rewrite of the Minneapolis Zoning Code and a remapping of the entire city under the new code designations was approved in 2000. The Lowry Avenue corridor's new zoning reflects to a significant degree pre-existing land use patterns and zoning classifications. This is congruent with one of the general intents of the zoning code rewrite project which was to clean up certain anomalies existing under the old zoning but not create a significant number of new non-conforming uses.

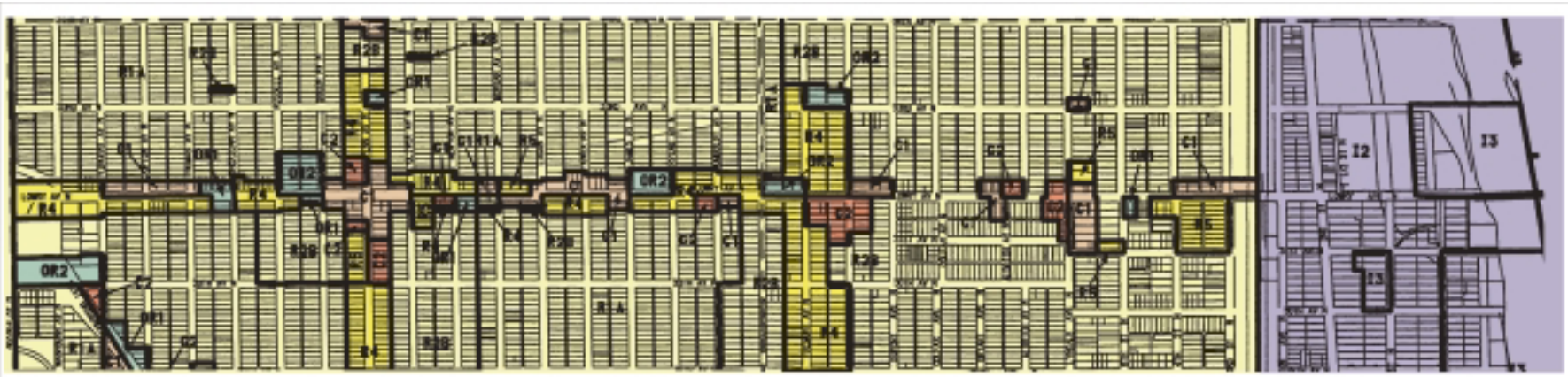
Lowry Avenue supports numerous different zoning designations along its five-mile length that may or may not be reflective of the underlying land uses currently on the site. On the west side of the river the zoning of the first two or three lots off Lowry does not share the predominant single family zoning designation of the rest of the surrounding neighborhoods. Although there is an exception to this along a relatively short stretch east of Dupont Ave, this differentiation is in keeping with its role as an important corridor, although not always in keeping with actual land use. Zoning for these first lots includes higher density residential, neighborhood commercial, and select areas of office/residential. East of the river the zoning along Lowry is commercial with some stretches of light industrial until just before the rail bridge, at which point the zoning becomes the same as the surrounding neighborhoods all the way to the eastern border of Minneapolis. The exception to this last condition is the area immediately surrounding the Central/Lowry intersection, which is zoned commercial and high intensity residential.

Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis (1999)

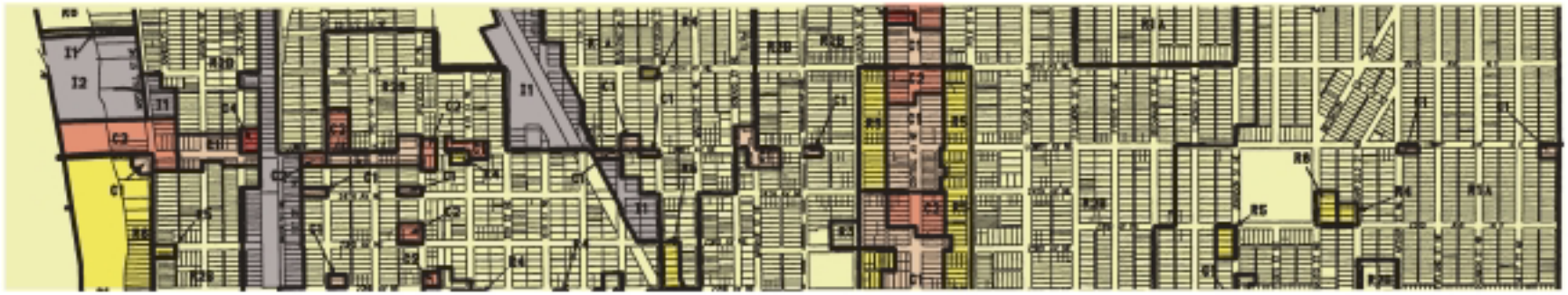
Completed in 1999 for the City of Minneapolis by a consultant group headed by BRW, the Upper River Plan charts out a long-range development vision for the Minneapolis section of the Mississippi River upstream of St. Anthony Falls. This plan would move the area away from its current industrial focus and turn it into a mixed-use area with new residential neighborhoods, parks along the river, and some remaining industrial uses in designated areas. Relevant to Lowry Avenue, the Upper River Plan identifies uses surrounding Lowry on both the east and west shore of the river.

On the west side of the river, between the riverbank and Washington Ave, the plan generally calls for the development of approximately 90 acres of riverfront land north and south of Lowry into medium-density (north) and higher density (south) housing with a total of 2,500 units. The areas immediately adjacent to Lowry Ave are projected to become a wide pedestrian plaza, the Lowry Plaza, surrounded with small office and retail buildings. The plaza extends under and on both sides of a newly constructed Lowry Avenue bridge that remains

Figure 2
Current Zoning



Victory Memorial Parkway - Mississippi River



Mississippi River - Stinson Boulevard

Data provided by the City of Minneapolis

Lowry Avenue Corridor Plan - Current Zoning
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban, Inc.

Figure 3
Above the Falls Plan

elevated all the way to Washington Avenue. In this scenario, 2nd Street N, currently a popular truck route leading through the area, is closed to traffic with traffic being diverted to Washington. Similarly, the West River Parkway would be extended from its existing end point several blocks south of Lowry and would continue northward under the new river bridge to 41st Avenue. In addition to the Plaza and the Parkway, a Lowry bridge park extends along the riverbank underneath the new river bridge to connect the two sides, currently separated by the existing Lowry riverbridge, as part of a system of parks stretching along the riverbank.

On the east side of the river the area from the river bank to Marshall Street is planned as park land, with the area north of Lowry programmed as a botanical garden. A new riverfront park is planned for the area south of Lowry on the east side of the river. Retail and riverfront entertainment functions are foreseen at the corners of Lowry and Marshall.

Lowry Avenue itself is categorized in the plan as a Riverway regional street, along with Broadway and Dowling Avenue. A Riverway street is defined as one of a system of streets with a common set of enhanced streetscape and signage elements that will lead residents and visitors to riverfronts parks. In the plan, Washington Avenue remains an important truck route, while Marshall becomes a hybrid roadway that has many of the characteristics of a parkway, but maintains four travel lanes to handle considerable volumes of truck traffic.

The Central Avenue Plan (1997)

Completed by a consultant group headed by Miller, Hansen, Westerbeck, Berger, the Central Avenue Plan was the outcome of a broad based community planning effort to develop a coherent vision for the future of Central Avenue. The report includes recommendations for the core commercial area running from 20th to 26th Avenues, the general intent of which is to reinforce its commercial vitality and enhance its appeal to pedestrians. The relevance of the plan to the Lowry corridor is that the Lowry/Central intersection, at what would be 25th Ave, is the key commercial corner along Central Avenue.

The plan suggests reinforcing the commercial uses at the corner with numerous spe-

cific suggestions for enhancing the mix of offerings, with the focus being on independent and local chain stores. Aesthetically and functionally, the plan suggests creating unified and upgraded facade treatments and a reconfiguration of the parking facilities located behind the commercial storefronts.

In the intervening three years since completion of the plan several activities have begun which serve to reinforce its goals and intent. There is a project in place to install pedestrian level street lighting along the Central Ave frontage in the commercial core area that will 'wrap around' the corner onto Lowry Avenue one half block to the alley. This will serve to provide a more appealing pedestrian environment as well as visually cueing drivers along Lowry Avenue that they are approaching the commercial center of Central Avenue. There is also a project underway involving the two blocks to the north of the Central/Lowry intersection, as well as several others along Central Avenue, to improve the condition, appearance, and safety of the rear parking areas located behind the commercial structures. This will serve to make these important parking areas more attractive to potential customers and reinforce the vitality of the traditional urban commercial storefront form of the area.

Neighborhood NRP Plans (1992-2000)

The different role that Lowry Avenue plays in the life of the communities east and west of the river is apparent in the manner in which it is treated in the neighborhood development plans that direct the funding provided through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. West of the river, three of the four neighborhoods that have completed plans include the revitalization of commercial nodes along Lowry Avenue as specific components of their neighborhood revitalization strategies. East of the river the corridor plays a far less important commercial function as only one in five of the neighborhoods makes any mention of Lowry, and then only related to traffic issues around the key intersections of Central/Lowry and Johnson/Lowry.

Cleveland (1996)

The Cleveland neighborhood recognizes that the future stability of the neighborhood as a whole depends on the stability and success of the Lowry and Penn commercial corridor. To that end they dedicated $30,000 to planning and $400,000 to implementation of a commercial strategic plan.

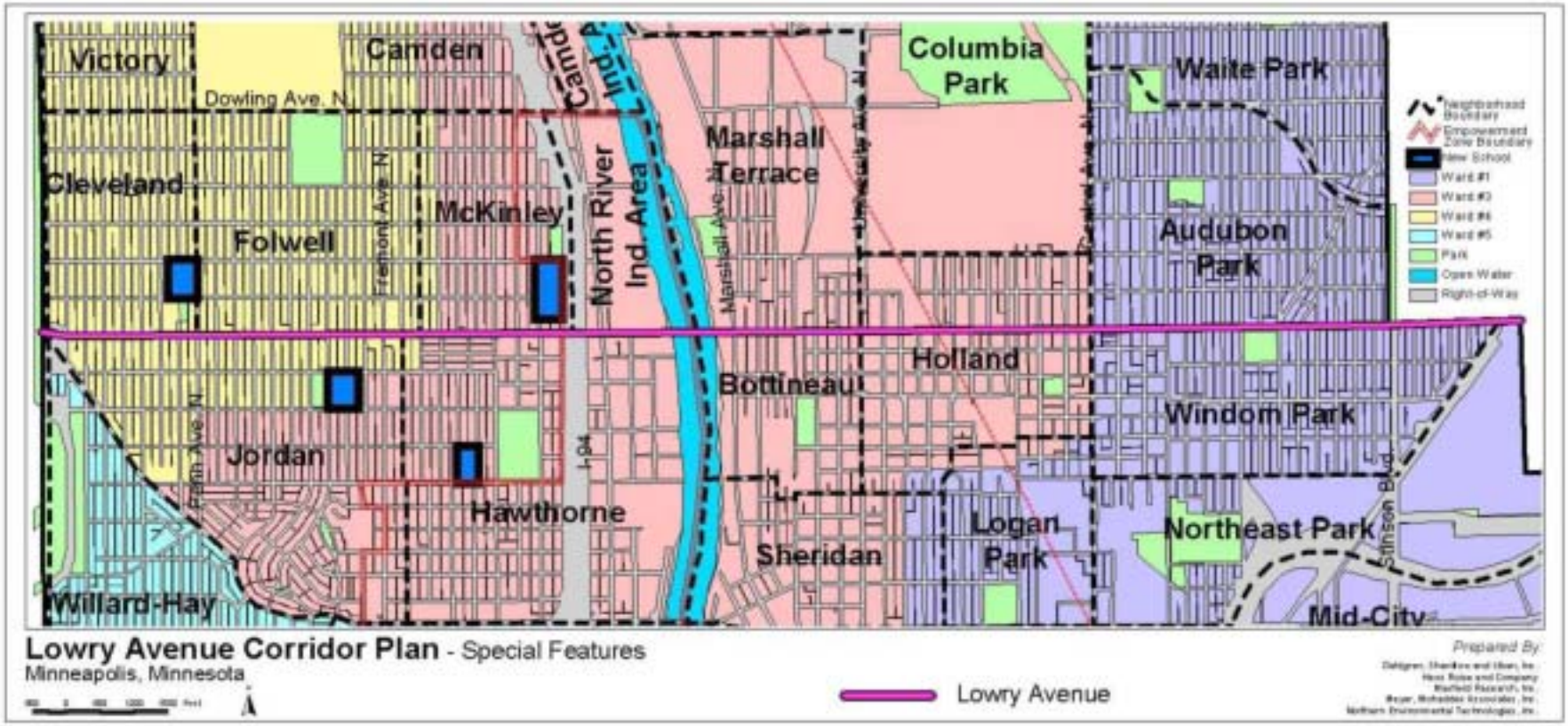
Folwell (2000)

The Folwell neighborhood recognizes the need for residential and commercial revitalization of the primary corridors of Lowry, Penn, Dowling, and Fremont in the neighborhood. To that end they have dedicated $236,572 to participate in planning and implementation for the revitalization of these corridors.

McKinley (1998)

McKinley neighborhood has yet to complete their full Neighborhood Revitalization Program Action Plan. Their first step plan focuses on housing and makes no explicit reference to Lowry Avenue.

Figure 4
Special Features



Jordan (1992)

The Jordan neighborhood plan focuses on housing improvements and crime reduction and makes no explicit mention of Lowry Avenue.

Hawthorne (1999)

The Hawthorne neighborhood recognizes the need for new development along Lowry at Emerson. To this end they have dedicated $50,000 to support the implementation of the Penn Lowry Implementation Committee (PLIC) strategy for the redevelopment of the Lowry corridor. The neighborhood has also dedicated $30,000 to streetscape improvements and a buy-down program to assist owners in the rehabilitation of their commercial properties along Lowry Avenue as laid out in PLIC's Penn-Lowry plan.

Bottineau (1995)

The Bottineau neighborhood plan makes no specific reference to Lowry Avenue except as an important east-west arterial.

Marshall Terrace (2000)

The Marshall Terrace neighborhood plan makes no specific reference to Lowry Avenue.

Holland Neighborhood (1998)

The Holland neighborhood has yet to complete their full Neighborhood Revitalization Program Action Plan. In their first step plan the neighborhood supported the development of the Central Avenue Plan and its recommendations for improving the Central/Lowry intersection, but makes no specific mention of Lowry Avenue.

Audubon Park (1996)

The Audubon Park neighborhood supports the revitalization of Central Avenue and the Central/Lowry intersection, but only devotes specific attention to Lowry Avenue in regard to traffic issues at the corners of Central/Lowry and Johnson/Lowry.

Windom Park (1997)

The Windom Park neighborhood supports the revitalization of Central Avenue and the Central/Lowry intersection, but devotes no specific attention to Lowry Avenue.

Penn/Lowry Avenues Revitalization Plan (1998)

Prepared by a consultant group lead by Biko and Associates, the Penn/Lowry study was completed for a consortium of neighborhood and business associations. The goals of the study were to identify a vision for the corridors, establish principles for redevelopment and concept-level implementation approaches, and to determine how to better links projects and development initiatives. Eight principles were brought out during the significant amount of public input undertaken during the planning process: 1) strengthen the public realm, 2) support a vibrant business community, 3) support a diversity of housing choices, 4) improve connections within the community and to larger systems, 5) reclaim open space and improve environmental integrity, 6) restore balance to streets and sidewalks, 7) improve the quality and role of mass transit and alternative travel modes, and 8) improve public safety and security.

The plan has a parks and open space framework emphasizing the creation of an interconnected system of green streets and open spaces. General recommendations and guidelines to improve the physical realm are included for neighborhood centers, connections to the river, underutilized or vacant land, neighborhood parks, and civic space and public uses.

Since the plan was developed, the PLIC has remained active in revitalizing this area. A senior housing development is planned at Penn as a result of their continued efforts.

Historic Silver Lake Reclamation Feasibility Study (1999)

Prepared by a consultant group headed by Biko and Associates and commissioned by the McKinley Neighborhood Association, the report examines the feasibility of constructing a stormwater retention facility on the north side of Lowry between Dupont and Aldrich Avenues. This is the same general vicinity as an historic lake/wetland area named Silver Lake that appears on early plat maps of north Minneapolis and was one of a network of wetlands, prairie ponds, and poorly drained areas that characterized the area before urban development. The lake/wetland was filled in and built over at the turn of the last century with an installed storm water system. A number of the areas, including the old Silver Lake site, continue to have moisture problems and

seasonal flooding in basements. The study looked at several possible scenarios with the preferred option being a 13-acre park/pond facility located between Lowry and 33rd Avenue and Dupont and Aldrich Avenues. The pond itself occupies approximately 5.5 acres with a maximum storage capacity of 17.4 acre-feet, serving as a natural filtration and stormwater storage facility with inlets from the surrounding stormwater sewer system and an outlet pipe leading to the Mississippi River. The improvements in runoff water quality to be gained by developing the pond are apparent but come at a cost. Development of the preferred alternative park/pond was estimated to cost $16.3 million in 1999 dollars, two thirds of which was for acquisition and demolition of residential properties. Because of the strong rise in property values in the area this figure will be substantial higher today in 2001. This compares to $2.5 million that the city has appropriated to complete a more traditional public works project to improve the direct storm drainage to the river. The preferred alternative would require the acquisition and removal of 98 residential properties, 80% of which were owner occupied in 1998. This housing loss must be added to the many houses removed for the construction of the four new public schools in the vicinity of the corridor. This $16.3 million does not include the development of any replacement housing to make up for lost housing units.

A storm sewer pipe is being installed to reduce seasonal flooding in basements in the area, which may make the Silver Lake project unnecessary from a storm water standpoint.

Figure 5
Silver Lake Plan

Analysis of Existing Conditions

The Lowry Avenue corridor has been analyzed in previous studies related to transportation, land use, urban design and other issues. As a five-mile-long, straight urban corridor it shares some common features from end to end, but also some unique characteristics in certain segments and individual blocks or properties.

The fundamental characteristics of Lowry Avenue are that it lacks the aesthetic and functional elements – and the physical dimensions needed to create these elements – that would make it an attractive, livable part of the City fabric. The combination of traffic congestion, inadequate sidewalks, inadequate bicycle facilities, non-existent green space, and blighted buildings create an environment that cannot attract and keep strong businesses and satisfied residents in much of the corridor. The specifics supporting this analysis are summarized below.

Lowry Avenue lacks many of the elements needed to be attractive and livable

- The cross section of Lowry Avenue is fairly consistent from end to end, comprised of four lanes with a roadway width of 46 feet to 54 feet within a right-of-way width of 60 feet to 92 feet. The narrower right-of-way is generally in Northeast Minneapolis, the wider right-of-way is in North Minneapolis.

- There are no medians or other barriers within the Lowry Avenue roadway, except in the one block between Xerxes and Washburn Avenues at the far western end where Lowry meets West Broadway. All local streets on either side of Lowry intersect Lowry, with three exceptions: 1st Street N, which goes under the river bridge at Lowry Avenue; the railroad bridge abutment that terminates the south approach of 7th Street NE; and the loop of Hayes Street NE and Brighton Avenue NE which is blocked off, separating it from Lowry. This means that 59 of the 64 local cross streets have full movement access with Lowry Avenue. Interstate 94 crosses under Lowry Avenue between 3rd Street N and Washington Avenue, but there is no interchange or other direct access to it.

- Lowry Avenue traverses the standard street grid of Minneapolis, with the short side of the blocks abutting Lowry. The block spacing is typically 330 feet on center, the major exceptions being the three 440-foot blocks on the south side of Lowry between Lyndale and Dupont in North Minneapolis, and the six 450-foot blocks either side of Central Avenue between Monroe and Fillmore in Northeast Minneapolis.

- There are sidewalks on both sides of Lowry Avenue for the entire length of the corridor, varying in width from 5 feet to 12 feet, although 5-6 feet is the most common. There are narrow grass boulevards in front of some of the residential properties abutting Lowry, but for much of the corridor the sidewalks directly abut the curb on Lowry Avenue. In many places there are utility poles, traffic signals, and street signs in the middle of the sidewalks, narrowing them even further, for example, on the north side of Lowry at Howard and Monroe Streets NE. This affects pedestrians and potential snow storage.

- Parking conditions vary along the corridor and are discussed separately in the Transportation Analysis section of this report.

- Four basic land uses predominate on Lowry Avenue: single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial. There are a few significant public uses and a number of churches, and one major park, Windom Park, between Johnson and Hayes Streets NE.

    - *In North Minneapolis between Xerxes and I-94*, the corridor is predominantly a mix of single family and multi-family residential, with three major commercial nodes: Penn Avenue, Emerson-Fremont, and Lyndale Avenue.
    - *Between I-94 and the Mississippi River* the land use is predominantly industrial. The two cross streets in this segment, Washington Avenue and 2nd Street N, are both heavily traveled industrial routes. This area is intended to be redeveloped in the next twenty years to medium and high density housing and open space following the Upper River Master Plan, with 2nd Street passing under Lowry Avenue under the proposed new river bridge.
    - *In Northeast Minneapolis between the Mississippi River and Washington Street* the corridor is mixed residential, commercial and industrial. Marshall Street, 2nd Street NE, and University Avenue are commercial corners in this segment. Larger concentrations of industrial uses both north and south of this area mean that this segment of Lowry will continue to be encumbered by significant truck traffic.
    - *In Northeast Minneapolis between Washington Street and Stinson Boulevard,* the remainder of the corridor is predominantly single family and multi-family residential, with the exception of the two blocks on either side of Central Avenue (Jackson Street to Polk Street), which are predominantly commercial and high density residential. Central Avenue, Johnson Street, and Stinson Boulevard are the busiest cross streets in this segment, but only Central has significant commercial activity.

Much of Lowry Avenue is residential in character

- About one third of the over 120 block faces abutting Lowry Avenue are non-residential uses, about two thirds are residential. This ratio is roughly equal in both North and Northeast Minneapolis. Windom Park, occupying two blocks between Johnson and Hayes Streets in NE Minneapolis, is the only significant open space on Lowry Avenue.

- Of the eighty residential blocks, about three fourths of the blocks have lots that are oriented east-west to the side streets, not to Lowry Avenue. The other quarter, or most of about twenty block faces, are oriented facing Lowry. Lot sizes for the residential lots are typical for Minneapolis: 40' to 50' wide by 100' to 150' deep. Public, multi-family, commercial, and industrial properties vary greatly in size and are usually much larger.

- The vast majority of buildings abutting Lowry are one and two stories tall for all residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The exceptions are the 17-story public housing high-rise at I-94, some taller churches, a few three-story apartment buildings, and some three-story commercial buildings at Central Avenue.

- Typical building setbacks vary along the corridor. Generally, single family residential structures are set back 10 feet to 30 feet from the right-of-way, and most apartment and commercial buildings are set on or within a few feet of the right-of-way. At the five major commercial nodes (Penn, Emerson-Fremont, Lyndale, Marshall, Central) the buildings generally anchor the corners, the exceptions being the Library and the Bremer School building (now a residential use) at Fremont.

- Because the roadway and sidewalks occupy almost the entire right-of-way and there are few boulevard areas, there are few trees or other landscaping or green space right on Lowry Avenue. In most of the residential areas and some of the less intense commercial properties there are trees and landscaping in the private yards, but these are sporadic and not coordinated into an overall landscape treatment for Lowry Avenue. Most of the side streets to Lowry have full canopies of overstory trees, and even busy Central Avenue has street trees in the areas either side of Lowry, but Lowry does not.

The condition of buildings on Lowry Avenue varies based on a visual appraisal from the street, but generally the homes and businesses are in better condition physically and aesthetically in Northeast Minneapolis than in North Minneapolis, and the best-kept homes along Lowry are generally east of Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard. Some of the areas that are in the worst condition in North Minneapolis – due to blighted or vacant buildings and undesirable businesses – are from Penn to Logan, and from Fremont east to Lyndale and I-94. In Northeast Minneapolis, the blighted areas are more scattered, with a few homes and businesses needing attention between Marshall and Quincy Streets, and the block between Central and Polk showing signs of distress.

There are relatively few trees or green spaces on Lowry Avenue

Summary of Workshops

Three sets of workshops were held with the communities along Lowry in 2001 over the course of the study. Workshops were held in February, June and November to provide information to the community about the status and findings of the project, and to solicit their feedback on the evolving recommendations and designs for improvements to the corridor.

February 2001 Workshops: Introduction and Issue Gathering

The first set of workshops took place in February at three schools located near the Lowry Corridor, with each workshop addressing one of three segments of the corridor (eastern, western, and central). The workshops introduced the planning process to the community and provided a forum for local residents and other stakeholders to get involved in the process. Attendees participated in activities designed to bring out the key issues and opportunities along the corridor. The first exercise was an image preference survey, where participants ranked the visual characteristics of a series of images illustrating different aspects of the urban environment. Participants were then asked to use their knowledge and experience to identify the corridor's main strengths and weaknesses, opportunities available to renew the corridor, and threats to this renewal ("SWOT" analysis). Finally, participants were asked to describe their vision of the future of the corridor. The input from these exercises is summarized on the following pages.

June 2001 Workshops: Preliminary Options and Feedback

A second series of workshops were held in June at schools near Lowry in North and Northeast Minneapolis; both had the same agenda and content. Preliminary options for improvements to the corridor were presented to the community for reactions and comments. Topics presented at these workshops included research to date on the market demand for development along Lowry, the environmental analysis, an inventory of potential historic sites, current and potential redevelopment sites, opportunities to improve transit connections, options for improved traffic management, potential improvements to the pedestrian environment and streetscape design issues. Participants were then asked to draw out the travel routes they regularly take along the avenue and to identify particularly good and bad areas along their routes. This information was used in the preparation of redevelopment plans for the corridor.

November 2001 Workshops: Redevelopment Concepts

A third set of workshops was held in November at the same locations as the June meetings to present the results of the analysis done to date and concepts for improvements to the roadway, streetscape, and redevelopment nodes on the Lowry Avenue corridor. The environmental inventory, historical analysis, market analysis, and transportation analysis were summarized for the audience. Then proposed designs were presented that detailed road widths, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and streetscape treatments for the five segments of the corridor, as it is divided up by roadway width requirements. Redevelopment scenarios for three nodes on Lowry were also presented based on the market analysis conducted. Priority areas were identified for suggested phasing of implementation of the recommended improvements. Reactions and suggestions from those in attendance were solicited and recorded for incorporation into the plan.

Image Preference Survey Results

February 2001

The five favorite images are balanced in that each of the four categories of images used in the survey is represented. One is an animated street scene with restaurant patrons enjoying the outdoors (general image and character), one a modern town home (residential), one a traditional storefront commercial property (commercial), and two well-appointed roadways with attractive trees, lighting, and sidewalks (roadway/streetscape).

Favorite Images- All Categories

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 4.38
Image Category: Streetscape

Average Score: 4.12
Image Category: General Image and Character

Average Score: 4.03
Image Category: Streetscape

Average Score: 3.98
Image Category: Commercial

Average Score: 3.84
Image Category: Residential

It is notable that three of the five least favorite images overall (all categories) were of Lowry Avenue itself, one from each of the three segments of the corridors (east, middle, west). Three of the five have the common element of having either cluttered, narrow, or unattractive sidewalks with no street trees or boulevards between the sidewalk and the roadway, with the other two being undistinguished buildings crowding the street.

Least Favorite Images- All Categories

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 2.04
Image Category: General Image and Character

Average Score: 2.01
Image Category: Roadway/Streetscape

Average Score: 1.88
Image Category: Residential

Average Score: 1.76
Image Category: Roadway/Streetscape

Average Score: 1.73
Image Category: General Image and Character

Most Favorite Images- General Image and Character

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 4.12

Average Score: 3.76

Average Score: 3.5

Least Favorite Images- General Image and Character

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 2.15

Average Score: 2.04

Average Score: 1.73

Most Favorite Images- Residential

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 3.84

Average Score: 3.71

Average Score: 3.66

Least Favorite Images- Residential

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 2.37

Average Score: 2.23

Average Score: 1.88

Most Favorite Images- Commercial

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 3.98

Average Score: 3.72

Average Score: 3.6

Least Favorite Images- Commercial

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 2.31

Average Score: 2.27

Average Score: 2.16

Most Favorite Images- Roadway/Streetscape

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 4.38

Average Score: 4.03

Average Score: 3.78

Least Favorite Images- Roadway/Streetscape

Strongly Positive (5) – Strongly Negative (1)

Average Score: 2.35

Average Score: 2.01

Average Score: 1.76

SWOT Analysis Results

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths

The greatest strength identified by workshop participants is the number and variety of local businesses and services that serve area residents. The second greatest strength is the convenience of access to downtown and the rest of the city, while the third is the river, parks and flowers and greenery that are found along the Avenue. Following is a summary of workshop comments on strengths:

Local businesses are seen as a strength by Lowry Avenue residents

1. Local businesses: DQ, lumberyard, Subway; services provided: fire station, post office library, schools, North Memorial hospital, community schools, churches on Lowry, long-term churches, police substation; wide variety of well maintained neighborhood serving commercial; long-term businesses; good mix of businesses and residences along corridor; collections of small businesses; long-term repair shops; gas stations; dentist office; concentrated businesses; small businesses; food and grocery; funeral home.

2. Convenient access to city/downtown freeway system, bridge over river, easy access into area, location, access - east-west link, access to downtown, Theodore Wirth park/parkway, major corridor, continuous street across city, parkway system, large corridor-wide and continuous county road.

3. Mississippi River, Windom Park, landscaped yards, parks, vegetation of older neighborhoods, nice trees, flowers and greenery.

Opportunities

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

1. Make more pedestrian friendly, sidewalks/more walkable, bike path/pedestrian ways, more green space, gardens/trails/bike lanes, cosmetic enhancement to street: trees, parks -several recreational opportunities, nice trees on Lowry, street lights -brighten up area.

2. Clean up of buildings and area, urban scale housing, senior housing, appropriate commercial development, upgrade rather than tear down, better housing, update/improve housing, blight removal, more affordable housing, removal of “seedy” retail, town homes, increase property values, underused properties, apartments over retail.

3. More restaurants, flower shop, a coffee shop, a bakery, more businesses, retail, day-to-day, more neighborhood serving commercial, know owners of businesses - local businesses that serve community, bowling alley.

Making Lowry Avenue more pedestrian friendly is the greatest opportunity seen by residents

Weaknesses

The greatest weakness of the corridor, as identified by workshop participants, is in the pedestrian unfriendly nature of the Avenue, with poor lighting and sub-standard sidewalks. The second greatest weakness has to do with roadway and parking problems, while the third greatest weakness is the presence of derelict properties. Workshop comments:

1. Pedestrian unfriendly, lack of boulevards, handicap access, bicycle unfriendly, poor lighting

2. Lack of parking for businesses, too little parking, parking on alley, bridge - derelict, hard to cross street when not signaled, truck traffic, poor road maintenance/no turn lanes, railroad crossing too low, roadway too narrow, poor traffic control and parking, need new bridge, hard to turn at University/Lowry, roadway too congested, different widths

3. Derelict properties – vacant, blighted buildings and lots signs of blight, absentee landlords.

Threats

The greatest threat to the Lowry Corridor identified by workshop participants relates to inappropriate and insensitive redevelopment that weakens rather than strengthens the fabric of the corridor. The second greatest threat identified is drugs and crime that continue to afflict the Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods. The third greatest threat identified is increasing traffic and insufficient and deteriorating roadway infrastructure. Workshop comments:

Deteriorated properties are seen as a threat to Lowry Avenue

1. Ruthless and insensitive development, absentee landlord, resident apathy, incompatible new housing, lower property values from blighted properties, deteriorating housing stock, razing housing, economic/social instability resulting in lost business, people losing buildings to redevelopment, improvements may mean area is too expensive, not including people of certain incomes, becoming too suburbanized, mixing pedestrian and cars.

2. Drug activity/prostitution, increase in crime, crime from empty buildings, the perception of crime, crime/lighting/graffiti.

3. Increase in truck traffic without improvements, speeding traffic/increased traffic (lanes too wide/narrow), increase in truck traffic, lack of parking for businesses, speeding traffic, pass through traffic, parking meters, parking ramps, failure of bridge deck.

Vision Statement Results

The elements of the future vision of Lowry Avenue most often mentioned are of an Avenue with more trees and greenery, improved pedestrian amenities, bicycles paths, and better lighting that offers a safe, clean and comfortable environment for residents. Also widely held is the vision of an Avenue that has a series of dynamic business nodes with a wide range of neighborhood serving commercial, and great diversity as a mixed-income neighborhood. Roadway improvements to improve traffic flow and parking and providing a boulevard are also desired elements of the future vision of Lowry Avenue.

Interviews with Lowry Avenue Residents and Business Owners

Interviews with residents, business owners, and representatives of neighborhood organizations led to the following feedback on the current state of Lowry Avenue Corridor, and how people would like it to develop in the future. The general sense of their responses is summarized under the headings below. The full transcripts of these interviews are attached in Appendix A.

Strengths

People from the communities along Lowry Avenue feel it is a strength that it is a well-known east-west corridor that runs the length of the City and connects to all the major cross streets and services in Robbinsdale. The Central/Lowry Avenue intersection and the businesses there are strengths, but they haven't been able to make best use of that intersection yet. There is high traffic volume and steady flow, providing good exposure for businesses. Bus service on Lowry connects to other routes and provides affordable mobility.

There are opportunities to create new mixed-use projects. Neighborhoods are working together to improve the area and to support this study in order to produce useful results. Those who use the corridor feel there is a good mix of residential and commercial uses, with some standout businesses like Little Jack's that many people recognize as assets. There are many small business owners who take an active role in the community.

Decent housing exists, especially in Northeast Minneapolis from Johnson Street to Stinson Boulevard, with NRP housing helping to further improve conditions. Real estate costs are still reasonable in North Minneapolis. Open spaces like the Mississippi River and Windom Park are amenities that enhance the livability of the corridor.

Problems

Those interviewed noted that there is deteriorating housing, and businesses aren't keeping up facades along Lowry Avenue. In the last year properties have been boarded up or abandoned, especially between Central and University on the Northeast side. These are mostly struggling businesses; otherwise there is a lack of businesses that would fit in with the character and needs of the corridor, such as restaurants and retail. Many people do not like the fact that commercial uses are spread out and sparse, rather than concentrated at nodes.

There is a lack of multi-family housing and sufficient affordable housing for lower income groups.

Crime was identified as the major concern on the North side. Drug dealing and prostitution are particularly problematic around the Lyndale/Lowry intersection. More police protection is needed in North Minneapolis.

There are heavy volumes of traffic overall. The University and Lowry intersection was identified as a problem because it is not large enough to accommodate truck traffic, which causes problems for the rest of the traffic flow. Another problem noted was that the road width varies too much. It widens then narrows, which involves a lot of switching lanes. There is a lack of parking. Bikes and cars are not able to coexist.

Lowry Avenue is not pedestrian friendly, with narrow sidewalks, insufficient lighting, and utility poles in the middle of the sidewalk. Combined with the proximity to high-speed traffic, it feels dangerous for pedestrians. Residents find that it is easier to walk along streets that parallel Lowry, rather than walk along Lowry. It's also a bad corridor for bicyclists, who are often forced on to the sidewalk, further restricting pedestrians' ability to use the sidewalks. The corridor is no longer tree-lined.

Several people complained about the lack of bus service traveling east-west connecting the length of the corridor. It serves to segment the corridor and further divide the North and Northeast side neighborhoods.

Recommendations, Strengths to Continue

There were numerous elements which people interviewed felt should be repeated along the corridor or simply retained. The street should be widened to make room for a meandering parkway/boulevard with a bike lane, bus stops, boulevards between wider sidewalks and the street, and possibly a second lane of traffic. Other recommendations included adding pedestrian-scale lighting, greenery, flowers, brick detailing on sidewalks, banners, trash cans, and bus stop shelters designed by local artists in order to beautify the space and create neighborhood identities. This would attract pedestrians and businesses, and using crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques would add additional safety and security to the public realm. Sidewalk improvements should be made especially for the safety of the elderly and disabled.

Another suggestion was to convert more streets crossing Lowry to one-ways, or add medians to prevent traffic from crossing Lowry to limit access and reduce accidents. Consider putting cameras on traffic lights to catch drivers speeding and running red lights. Signal preemption for transit would improve transit service. Get rid of managed parking, which is often ignored on Lowry, because it slows down traffic. Parking bump outs would be useful.

Respondents also suggested adding charming, neighborhood scale and neighborhood oriented businesses, and making property owners and stores' customers responsible for cleaning up their trash. They also felt that clustered commercial nodes would make them stronger assets to the corridor. Support the legitimate existing businesses and accommodate them in redevelopment plans.

There is little multi-family housing on Lowry, and several people interviewed mentioned that they expected to see more multi-family housing, for which there is demand and it would fit well on such a busy street. More owner-occupied housing is needed in North Minneapolis. Some want to restore Silver Lake in North Minneapolis and add a greenway connection along 33rd Street.

Continue planning and organizing with adjacent neighborhoods. Citizens are needed to push projects forward and lobby for funding.

Traffic and Parking

In the interviews it was noted that there is congestion at certain times. For example, traffic gets congested at Central Ave and Penn Ave, and stoplights with turn arrows would help. Overall there is great traffic flow. The intersection of University and Lowry was identified as a problem because it is not large enough to accommodate truck turning movements. On the North side turn lanes are needed at many intersections to improve traffic flow. The cross streets on the North side are dangerous as traffic moves too fast and ignores stop signs and pedestrians.

People often ignore managed parking restrictions during rush hours, slowing down traffic. Parking is terrible overall in the winter. When the streets are plowed the snow covers the sidewalks. Then when people shovel their sidewalks, the snow goes back on the street. Business owners and residents mentioned that customers couldn't get to stores when the snow restricts driving and eliminates already limited parking. Some felt that the lack of available parking along Lowry hurts businesses on the corridor, although some businesses in Northeast have their own parking. People find it is safer to park on side streets, especially with the high speed of the traffic. Particularly at the east end of Lowry in North Minneapolis, many residents avoid using the side streets as well due to theft and speeding traffic.

There are bus stops and short-term parking along the edge of the street. In interviews, people encouraged the creation of parking bays and pullover spots for buses (some already exist) and other traffic, which would free up some traffic flow.

Current Pedestrian Situation

The sidewalks are in decent repair, but they are too narrow for comfortable use since utility poles and overgrown shrubs frequently limit the path width. Bikes are often forced to use the sidewalks by the busy auto traffic rushing by, and in many places that makes the sidewalk too narrow for people to pass. Trash on the sidewalks is a problem in North Minneapolis. There are sections of unfriendly street edge with parking lots and abandoned buildings.

Numerous people interviewed commented that the pedestrian conditions are worse in winter because many people don't or can't shovel frequently. People interviewed said they find that it is easier to walk along streets that parallel Lowry. Pedestrian traffic is most noticeable at the nodes Penn and Emerson/Fremont at businesses that get foot traffic from the adjacent neighborhoods. But Lowry Avenue is not a strolling environment. The foot traffic around Lyndale is drug dealers and prostitutes. Many residents feel there are no longer many places to walk to. Crime is a major deterrent to pedestrians. It is dangerous on Lowry and crossing Lowry because of speeding traffic that refuses to yield to pedestrians.

Recommendations for Pedestrian Friendliness

Numerous recommendations were provided in the interviews, which are summarized below. People want to slow down traffic and add a bike path, which would eliminate the current problem of pedestrians and bicyclists being forced to share the sidewalk. Burying the utilities would further free up space on the sidewalks. A boulevard should be created or widened where one currently exists to separate pedestrians from the traffic. Buffers are needed between the sidewalk and the office buildings built up to the sidewalk, most of which are run-down. The buffers between the sidewalk and the street and the offices could be boxes of flowers, hanging baskets, trash cans, comfortable bus shelters, brickwork or painted sidewalks to delineate the separation of space. Facades should be made welcoming and charming with a connection to the neighborhood. The City should remove snow from sidewalks so people can use them year round. Crosswalks across Lowry are also needed.

Pedestrian-scale lighting is needed to create even brightness without shadows. Visual surveillance corridors should be maintained with low shrubbery, and hedges along sides of front yards to keep kids safely in their yards and protected from traffic. More police patrol along Lowry would add to the safety of the environment.

Things That Don't Belong in the Lowry Avenue Corridor

Almost everyone interviewed described the dilapidated housing and commercial buildings and poorly maintained properties that exist along Lowry. Structures for some businesses are slopped together, and there are some shady and illegal commercial businesses. Crime, drug dealing, prostitution, and noise pollution from loud cars do no belong along Lowry Avenue.

Some people interviewed felt that the mix of businesses along Lowry Ave corridor doesn't work. For instance, there are a number of "slap-dash" businesses that are considered atrocious and do nothing for a corridor trying to rejuvenate itself. Some services simply aren't viable anymore, because the customer base isn't there.

Several people interviewed felt that it is hard to make the corridor function with a mix of commercial and residential. An individual noted that generally north-south streets are more business focused, such as Central Avenue and Stinson Boulevard, and perhaps commercial uses should be located there instead of on Lowry Avenue.

What Makes It a Good Place/Enriches the Space

Boulevards are scarce along the corridor, so respondents took note of boulevards that are well maintained, including those in the Blooming Boulevards program. East of Fillmore Street NE, houses are set back further with nice yards, and this street edge improves the pedestrian environment. Windom Park was mentioned repeatedly as an asset for the corridor, and more green spaces like it should be incorporated into the corridor. One resident noted an auto shop that had built flower boxes at the edge of the sidewalk that create an attractive buffer, which shows they are willing to make that extra effort to improve the pedestrian environment. Attractiveness of businesses and buildings also add to the environment.

While some would prefer the corridor were only residential or commercial, others felt that the mixed-use character works for the corridor as businesses make the corridor viable. The convenience of shopping and restaurants in the neighborhood enriches the area. Trees, visiting and gathering places, such as around coffee shops and sidewalk cafes enrich the area. Commercial uses of note included some good gas stations, an historic bar, and a good hardware store.

The Old Bremer School, the Library at Fremont, the new fire station, the mortuaries, and Wirth Parkway on the North side were all identified as good places that improve the image of the corridor.

Some of the business signage is fairly good, making it easier and more convenient. Almost all respondents felt that the way Lowry cuts across the length of the city is an advantage.

High-density housing is being constructed in the Jordan neighborhood, and this addition to the community as well as additional NRP housing has helped considerably. New senior housing at Penn will help revitalize the area.

The neighbors and the unique mix of ethnicities represented in the neighborhoods along Lowry were identified as enriching the place.

Where Efforts Should Be Focused/ Prioritized

Responses included recommendations of areas to focus on, and issues to focus on. The former is summarized first. One respondent noted that a critical mass of acquisition is necessary to pull off a large-scale streetscape project like this. It lends more to the success of the project at the end.

One person felt the project should be done block by block, along the entire corridor. Another individual saw the river as the jewel in the crown of the corridor that needs to be the best that it can. Efforts should focus on improving that area and making it shine, and then efforts would spread out from there. Others thought that efforts should focus on the north side (west of the river), even though the northeast side needs help, because the former needs help more than the latter. In North Minneapolis, efforts should first be focused from Girard Ave to the river. In Northeast, the areas in need of help included from Fillmore Street NE west to the river, and the Windom neighborhood.

Priority issues included getting rid of drug dealing, prostitution, and associated crimes, and traffic calming. One local business owner felt the most effective way to increase the safety of the corridor is to have police clear the area of drunks, bums, and kids in gangs. Some feel that the project should start with traffic control by widening Lowry Ave from Central Ave to the river at Marshall St.

Efforts should be focused at key nodes, improving the look and feel of these places. People believe that owners need to be made responsible for the upkeep of their properties, from painting to trash cleanup. Another recommendation was to create a minimum appearance code because there is no cohesion or consistency along the corridor.

The blight should be dealt with. If a house is taken out, the lot should be filled in with a new house or another use, since empty lots breed problems. The need for more multi-family housing along the corridor was also noted. One respondent felt it was important to not widen Lowry in the residential neighborhoods because the residents would greatly object to losing their homes.

As described above, many people from the community asked for a more pedestrian friendly environment. This included installing better lighting, better sidewalks, and beautifying the corridor through cleaning, plantings, and public art. The plan to daylight Silver Lake in North Minneapolis described in the Historic Silver Lake Feasibility Study should be implemented.

Historical Analysis

The following is a summary of the historical analysis conducted by Hess Roise. The full report is attached in Appendix B. This analysis does not include a 106 review which would be needed before property acquisition might be considered.

Introduction

Although it spans the width of the City, Lowry Avenue never materialized into one of Minneapolis's major east-west corridors. This is probably due to its location near the periphery of the City's core and its chiefly residential character. Houses line either side of Lowry Avenue along its entire length, occasionally interrupted by a smattering of commercial buildings. Most commercial enterprise within the Lowry Avenue Corridor is concentrated at intersections with well-traveled north-south city streets like Penn Avenue North, Lyndale Avenue North, or Central Avenue Northeast. Many of the commercial and residential buildings reflect architecture from the late 1800s or early 1900s. Several commercial structures are two-story brick structures originally designed to accommodate a small business at street level and apartments on the second level. A major industrial center exists between Interstate Highway 94 and the Mississippi River. It is principally comprised of many large warehouse type buildings.

In 1915, when 32nd Avenue North on the west side of the Mississippi River and 25th Avenue Northeast on the east side of the Mississippi River officially became Lowry Avenue, many citizens probably believed that the thoroughfare would blossom into a major east-west arterial. Early on, the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners viewed Lowry Avenue as one of two potential parkways stretching the width of the northern part of the city. The board passed on its plans for Lowry Avenue only after it concluded that development along the corridor was too far along, making it impracticable to convert the roadway to a parkway. The avenue never evolved into a significant east-west route; instead, it vacillated between being a residential street and a primary road.

Lowry Avenue can be divided into two roughly equal sections that are bisected by the Mississippi River, creating a west half and an east half. The west half crosses the community of North Minneapolis, while the east half traverses Northeast Minneapolis.

Merging Settlements

The section of Lowry Avenue in Northeast developed slightly sooner than did the section in North. This came about simply because the community of Northeast was settled earlier than the community of North.

Growth in North and Northeast

While both the east and west sections of Lowry Avenue had been platted by the mid 1880s, the road segments were still distinct. Development along the roadway through Northeast was concentrated toward the east half of the corridor, while building construction on the opposite side of the river was even more restrained. Growth in the area was sparked by the extension of streetcar service (probably horse-drawn) up Central Avenue to Lowry Avenue. Initially, the land around the intersection of Central Avenue and Lowry Avenue was comprised of one- and two-story commercial buildings. Soon developers began grooming the area for residential construction as well. Like Northeast, the housing styles that existed near Lowry Avenue in North by the late 1800s varied. North had a body of water known as Silver Lake at this time which occupied parts of six blocks immediately north of Lowry Avenue near the route's west end. Regrettably, the lake would not last into the twentieth century.

Community Character in North and Northeast

As the turn of the century approached, the focus of development began to shift a bit to the region north of downtown. Streetcar lines started moving north and residential and commercial construction followed. By this time it was already apparent that Northeast was evolving into an industrial hub. This characteristic was initiated as a result of the early milling operations in Saint Anthony. It became a fixed trait with the arrival of the railroads. During the second half of the nineteenth century Minneapolis was viewed as a gateway to markets in the northwest part of the country. Several railroad lines were routed through the city, especially the northeast section of Minneapolis, effectively setting the direction of the community. The lines broke up residential development, thus creating neighborhoods less identifiable as a physically cohesive whole than other residential parts of Minneapolis. This characteristic was magnified as industry naturally gravitated toward the rail corridors. The various industries drew laborers into the area. Since many of these people could not afford carriage transportation they made their residence within walking distance of their jobs, giving rise to Northeast's traditionally blue-collar character.

Northeast could also be distinguished from other sections of Minneapolis because part of the community fell within the city's "liquor patrol limits," established by the state legislature in 1887 as those areas of the city where liquor could be obtained legally. On the east side of the river the limits encompassed a significant part of

Northeast. Some of Minneapolis's early breweries were born in Northeast. For instance, German immigrant John Orth established a brewery near the current intersection of Marshall Street N.E. and 13th Avenue N.E. in 1850. In the early 1890s, Orth combined his brewery with three other like businesses to form the Minneapolis Brewing Company (later, Grain Belt Brewery). The Grain Belt Brewery ultimately became one of the most significant industrial enterprises in Northeast.

The west end of Lowry Avenue in Northeast eventually evolved into an area known for its fine food and liquor establishments. Today, a number of dining and liquor businesses remain in this part of Northeast, some in buildings erected around the turn of the twentieth century. Most of the community of North fell outside the liquor patrol limits, thus it never received the same lively reputation as Northeast. North did, however, come to represent a laboring class section of Minneapolis, although not to the same degree as Northeast.

North had its share of industry, which was generally situated near the river and included sawmills, lumberyards, and brickyards. In the early 1900s, though, it also had a growing middle class. The streetcar lines into the area allowed downtown workers like clerks, office workers, and skilled laborers to move farther from their jobs, and North was an affordable residential location. The separation between the lower and middle classes was clearly defined. The area east of Lyndale toward the river was home to the working class and the area between Lyndale and Penn was middle class.

Diverse Communities

The working class nature of Northeast was augmented by its diverse ethnic population of unskilled immigrant laborers. These groups tended to remain distinct from one another, each preferring to create a neighborhood that reflected its own culture. Descendents from these groups continue in the community today, and make Northeast the most ethnically diverse part of Minneapolis. By the end of the twentieth century, though, the ethnicity of the area was broader than it had once been, including many without Northern or Eastern European heritage.

The ethnic makeup of North evolved more than that in Northeast. The earliest population comprised mainly Germans and Scandinavians. By the early 1900s Eastern Europeans were also calling sections of North home. Like their ethnic counterparts on the opposite side of the waterway, many of these people were day laborers and factory workers. At the turn of the twentieth century a Jewish population also made residence in North. About 1900, the African-American population was primarily concentrated south of downtown around Nicollet Avenue

and Tenth Street South. As the community grew, many individuals moved north. African-Americans began filling the homes vacated by earlier German, Scandinavian, and Jewish residents of North. Today, North is home to a large African-American community.

An Unusual Residential/Commercial Corridor

By the early 1900s the Lowry Avenue Corridor on either side of the Mississippi River was undergoing rapid growth. Frame and masonry buildings lined much of the roadway. Dwellings were the dominant structure type. By this time North's Silver Lake had been filled in to create more building space, although the western end of the corridor was still mostly undeveloped.

Also by this time residents near Lowry Avenue in Northeast had a recreational area in the form of Windom Park, purchased by the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1886. Residential construction in the vicinity of the park seemed generally upscale, with Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Shingle Style houses common. Although Lowry Avenue evolved into a corridor with mostly modest residences, the area near Windom Park, including much of the Holland Neighborhood, proved the exception as it grew into a comfortable middle-class neighborhood.

Farview Park provided residents near Lowry Avenue on the west side of the river with a recreational area, although the park was located three blocks south of the roadway between Lyndale Avenue North and 4th Street North. The almost twenty-one acres of land for the park was purchased in 1883. The coming years would bring more park amenities to North and Northeast, including access to the Grand Rounds Parkway System via Stinson Boulevard to the east and Victory Memorial Parkway and Glenwood Parkway (later, Theodore Wirth Parkway) to the west.

In the early twentieth century the streetcar line had reached the avenue, linking the route with the heart of Minneapolis. City officials authorized the construction of a five-span through truss bridge across the Mississippi River at Lowry Avenue. The bridge was completed in 1905 and tied together the roadways on either side of the waterway. This action created one of the few streets in the northern metropolitan area to span the width of the city.

The first half of the twentieth century continued to bring growth to the corridor. In North, blocks south of the avenue were filled with dwellings by the 1910s. Houses also occupied most of the blocks to the north of the

roadway. At the west end of Lowry Avenue, however, near the city boundary, few structures had been erected north of the road. A traffic circle punctuated this end of the avenue about this time. Lowry Avenue, Crystal Lake Road (later, West Broadway Avenue), Johnson Road (later, Oak Lake Avenue), Glenwood Parkway, and Victory Memorial Parkway all came together at the circle. The circle was eventually removed when a grade-separation was constructed to carry West Broadway Avenue over the other routes. Before the bridge was erected much of the area around the circle was green space.

The residential pattern along Lowry was frequently interrupted with businesses, becoming even more pronounced in the ensuing years. In Northeast, the highest concentration of houses and businesses near the corridor was at the intersection of Lowry Avenue and Central Avenue.

By the 1950s, Lowry Avenue was a cornucopia of houses, churches, schools, service stations, stores, restaurants, and industry. The number of facilities constructed to serve motor vehicles provided strong evidence of Minnesotans' growing fascination with the automobile. Also in the 1950s, North Memorial Hospital was located in Robbinsdale immediately across the Minneapolis border. The facility soon blossomed into a 546-bed medical center. Although technically in a different city, the hospital certainly benefited the neighborhoods at the western end of Lowry Avenue, bringing a certain prestige, as well as employment, to the area.

Lowry Avenue on the east side of the river reflected basically the same commercial/residential development pattern as North during this period. The exception was the Windom Park neighborhood at the far east end of the avenue. Settlement in this area was more residential than anywhere else along the corridor.

By the middle of the twentieth century, Lowry Avenue's residential/commercial profile was set. Today, it appears much as it did then, although a number of areas along the corridor are suffering blight. There was a time when residents in the area could get just about anything they needed on the avenue. Clothing, groceries, hardware, and housewares were all available along the corridor, as well as numerous other goods and services. The avenue lost a number of businesses and residences in the 1980s when Interstate Highway 94 was completed through the north part of Minneapolis. The avenue may have benefited commercially if a connection had been made with the freeway. Presently, the roadway's somewhat cluttered and neglected look contrasts with modern planning standards of wide roads, well-groomed walkways, and separate zones for industry, business, and housing. Even so, its well-used, mixed residential/commercial profile reflects a historical pattern of self-sufficiency.

Properties of Architectural Interest in the Corridor

The only property on the National Register is the former Bremer School, between Emerson and Fremont, on the north side of Lowry. Other structures are of architectural interest, however.

A visual survey of the corridor was conducted by Denis Gardner of Hess Roise, and several structures were noted that are of some architectural interest. These are not necessarily important historically, nor necessarily good examples of architectural styles, but they have not been significantly altered, as have most buildings along the corridor.

The tan brick house at the southwest corner of Lowry Avenue and Jackson Street NE is quite old (pre-1900) and is largely intact architecturally because the building has not been added to over the years. However, the structure is in poor shape and almost falling down, and suffered a fire not too long ago. Attempts were made to accommodate the house in redevelopment designs in this study, but the roadway is simply not wide enough to fit all the proposed roadway accommodations without a taking of land. This particular house is situated on the property with a very shallow setback from Lowry, allowing no room to fit these uses without taking the building as well.

Other properties on Lowry Avenue that are of architectural interest because they have not been altered architecturally, are listed below:

- SE corner of James Avenue N, two-story stucco/brick apartments
- North side between Fremont and Girard Avenues N, mid-block, Malone Funeral Home, two-story brown brick building
- SW corner of Colfax Avenue N, two-story brick building
- NW corner of 3rd Street N and I-94, the old Battery building
- SW corner of Fillmore Street NE, two-story brick apartment
- SE corner of Pierce Street NE, Grace Church
- NW corner of Buchanan Street NE, two-story brick apartment
- NE corner of Lincoln Street NE, Grace Manor
- NW corner of Cleveland Street NE, Grace Methodist Church

The former Bremer School, at Lowry and Emerson, is on the National Register of Historic Places

Other buildings of interest exist along the side streets, but they do not directly impact the improvements to Lowry Avenue proposed in this Corridor Plan.

Environmental Analysis

The following is a summary of the environmental analysis conducted by Northern Environmental Technologies, Incorporated. The full report comprises three bound volumes and is available for review upon request from Hennepin County Department of Transit and Community Works.

Northern Environmental Technologies, Incorporated (Northern Environmental) has completed a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of the Lowry Avenue Corridor to provide information regarding present and past land use, and to evaluate the potential for contamination in areas that may be acquired and/or disturbed by the road reconstruction project. This Phase 1 ESA uses reasonably ascertainable data to identify hazardous substances or petroleum products within the corridor, which may indicate a recent release, past release, or a material threat of a release in structures within the corridor, or into the soil, ground or surface water within the corridor.

The Phase 1 ESA conducted for the corridors included the tasks: Records Review, Interviews, Site Reconnaissance, and Data Evaluation and Report Preparation. The scope of this Phase 1 ESA does not include the following:

1. Lead paint survey or sampling
2. Radon survey or sampling
3. Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) survey or sampling
4. Wetland or protected water evaluation
5. Feasible remedial alternatives or response action
6. Regulatory agency response
7. Inspection of building interiors
8. Interviews with parties owning land and/or operating businesses along the corridor

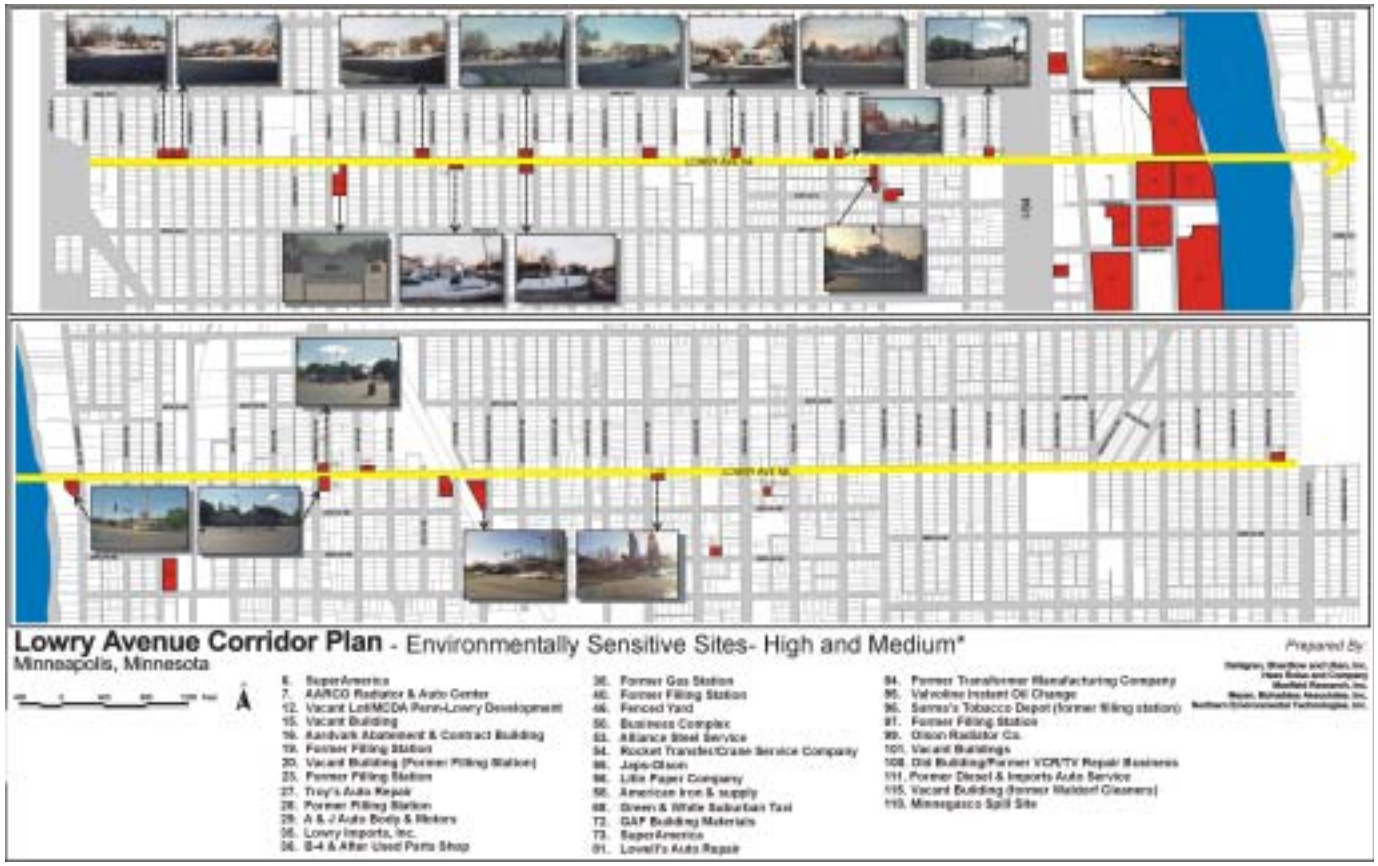
The majority of properties within the corridor study area are residential. Other properties include commercial properties located primarily near intersections, and industrial properties concentrated along the Mississippi River and near railroad tracks.

Parcels within the corridors were rated for known or potential contamination to impact subsurface conditions.

Factors considered for the rating include current site conditions, historical property use, and regulatory information. The parcels were rated as having HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW potential, and were assigned an identification site number based on their location. These sites are discussed in the text, summarized in the attached tables, and mapped on the attached figures.

Sites rated with a HIGH potential include: properties with documented subsurface contamination (including sites with cleanups issued closure by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, but with contamination left in place); sites with on-going investigation and cleanup; properties with large amounts of chemicals; and/or sites with indications that a release has occurred.

Figure 6
Environmentally Sensitive Sites



Sites rated with a MEDIUM potential for subsurface impact are sites that do not have active contamination investigation/cleanups at this time, but may have past, unreported or undocumented contamination. These sites include: properties with cleanups that have been issued closure by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; sites with underground storage tanks; and/or sites with "poor housekeeping" practices. Sites rated MEDIUM* do not meet the criteria for a HIGH rating, yet seem to have a higher potential for contamination to be present that other MEDIUM sites. These sites include:

sites identified historically with storage tanks, but with no Pollution Control Agency documentation or information regarding tank removal, and properties with a history of land use that indicates potential environmental concern, such as a filling station or auto-related business, for a time period of greater than 25 years.

Former gas stations may pose a risk for contamination

Sites rated with a LOW potential for subsurface impact include those sites where know or inferred small or very small quantities of chemicals are used or stored on the property, and where there is no obvious evidence of "poor housekeeping" practices. Sites rated with a LOW potential do no appear to warrant further investigation at this time.

The corridor was inspected by Northern Environmental personnel over the course of several days in March and April 2001. Geologic, hydrologic, and topographic conditions were observed and recorded. Inspection of the corridor did not include interiors of the structures within the corridor. The exteriors of structures present were observed where possible. Potential public or private thoroughfares, potable water supplies, sewage disposal systems, heating/cooling systems, drains or sumps, storage tanks, odors, pools of liquid, drums, unidentified substance containers, unusual electrical and hydraulic equipment, hazardous substances and petroleum products, pits, ponds, lagoons, and solid waste disposal areas observed, were noted and recorded. Areas which exhibited characteristics such as surface staining, stressed vegetation, or which were found to be littered with debris were evaluated and recorded. Obvious nearby off-site potential sources of hazardous substances or petroleum products were also noted. A general description of the corridor and adjacent properties was compiled from these observations.

This Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment identified 14 HIGH potential sites, 83 MEDIUM potential sites (23 of which are designated MEDIUM*), and 21 LOW potential sites within the corridor. In general, sites rated with a HIGH or MEDIUM* potential for subsurface impact should be investigated further. Northern Environmental recommends that soil and/or groundwater samples be collected at or near the HIGH and MEDIUM* potential sites, to determine if known or potential contamination at these properties will impact potential redevelopment within the corridor. Sites rated MEDIUM may also warrant further investigation. These sites will be determined in consultation with the Hennepin County Project Manager. Due to the large number of releases documented in the area of the corridor, and the length of time areas of the corridor have been used industrially or as filling stations, Northern Environmental also recommends that a construction contingency plan be prepared in case contamination is encountered during potential redevelopment work. The sites identified in Table 1 correspond to triangles with numbers inside them on that attached map that indicate the locations of these sites.

Table 1
Potential Sites of Concern, Lowry Avenue Corridor

Site #	Site Name	Potential Concern Rating (see page 3-48 for explanation)
6	SuperAmerica	HIGH
12	Vacant Lot/MCDA Penn-Lowry Redevelopment	HIGH
15	Vacant Building	HIGH
16	Aardvark Abatement and Contracting Building	HIGH
19	Former Filling Station	HIGH
20	Vacant Building (former filling station)	HIGH
50	Business Complex	HIGH
53	Alliance Steel Service	HIGH
54	Rocket Transfer/Crane Service Company	HIGH
55	Japs-Olson	HIGH
58	American Iron and Supply	HIGH
72	GAF Building Materials	HIGH
81	Lowell's Auto Repair	HIGH
115	Vacant Building (former Waldorf Cleaners)	HIGH
1	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM
2	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM
3	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM
4	Former Auto Filling and Service Station	MEDIUM
5	Tootie's on Lowry	MEDIUM
7	AARCO Radiator and Auto Center (former Pete's Repair)	MEDIUM*
11	Employment Action Center (former LeVahn Bros. Plumbing)	MEDIUM
13	Oliver Manor Apartments	MEDIUM
14	Christ English Lutheran Church	MEDIUM
17	Citgo Gas Station	MEDIUM
22	Dirty Alterationz	MEDIUM

Site #	Site Name	Potential Concern Rating
23	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM*
24	Group of Businesses, SW Lowry and Emerson	MEDIUM
25	Group of Businesses, NE Lowry and Emerson	MEDIUM
26	Group of Businesses, b/t Emerson and Dupont	MEDIUM
27	Troy's Auto Repair	MEDIUM*
28	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM*
29	A & J Auto Body & Motors	MEDIUM*
30	Former Welding Shop	MEDIUM
32	RT's Service	MEDIUM
35	Lowry Imports Inc.	MEDIUM*
36	B-4 & After Used Auto Parts	MEDIUM*
38	Former Gas Station	MEDIUM*
39	Lowry Towers	MEDIUM
40	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM*
41	Former Transformer Station	MEDIUM
42	GSI Graphics Specialties, Inc.	MEDIUM
43	JR Williams Co Inc./CNC Precision Machining	MEDIUM
44	Hoover Wheel Alignment & Brake Service	MEDIUM
45	Kwik Sew	MEDIUM
46	Fenced Yard	MEDIUM*
47	Zerman Construction	MEDIUM
48	Sterling Welding Company	MEDIUM
49	Shafer & Feld Printers	MEDIUM
51	Trio Supply Company	MEDIUM
52	Graf/X	MEDIUM
56	Litin	MEDIUM*
57	Williams Steel & Hardware	MEDIUM
59	Burger King	MEDIUM
60	Peabody Enterprises, Inc.	MEDIUM
61	Hell's Angels Minnesota Chapter House	MEDIUM
62	Two Old Buildings	MEDIUM
63	Sprint Print Printing and Bindery/ Advantage Signs and Graphics	MEDIUM

Site #	Site Name	Potential Concern Rating
64	Eide Minneapolis	MEDIUM
65	Advance Rubber Company	MEDIUM
66	Old Building with Debris	MEDIUM
67	OPS/Offset Plate Service	MEDIUM
68	Green and White Suburban Taxi	MEDIUM*
69	Meritex Logistics/Former Space Center MN	MEDIUM
70	Machine Craft	MEDIUM
71	Materials Storage Yard	MEDIUM
73	SuperAmerica	MEDIUM*
74	Vacant Lot/Former River Palace	MEDIUM
76	Siwek Door and Millwork Inc.	MEDIUM
77	Marshall Concrete Products Inc.	MEDIUM
83	Former Grain Elevator	MEDIUM
84	Former Transformer Manufacturing Company	MEDIUM*
85	Steve's Cycles	MEDIUM
86	Western Waterproofing Co. Inc.	MEDIUM
87	Modern Heating and Air Conditioning	MEDIUM
88	Roofer's Mart	MEDIUM
92	Caswell	MEDIUM
93	Complete Auto Body Shop	MEDIUM
94	SuperAmerica	MEDIUM
95	Valvoline Instant Oil Change	MEDIUM*
96	Sarma's Tobacco Depot (former filling station)	MEDIUM*
97	Former Filling Station	MEDIUM*
99	Olson Radiator Co.	MEDIUM*
100	Former Pioneer Steel Elevator Company	MEDIUM
101	Vacant Buildings	MEDIUM*
102	Former Crown Sidewalk and Block Company	MEDIUM
103	Vern and Sandy's Forsythe Income Tax (former Erickson Sales)	MEDIUM
104	Materials Storage Yard	MEDIUM
105	Living Hope Ministries (former machine shop)	MEDIUM

Site #	Site Name	Potential Concern Rating
106	Former Metro Electrostatic Painting	MEDIUM
107	Conoco	MEDIUM
108	Old Building/Former VCR/TV Repair Business	MEDIUM*
109	Former Auto Sales and Service	MEDIUM
110	Former Anchor Laundry	MEDIUM
111	Former Diesel and Imports Auto Service	MEDIUM*
113	Former Dry Cleaners	MEDIUM*
117	Grace United Methodist Church	MEDIUM
118	Property in the NE corner of McKinley St and Lowry Ave	MEDIUM*
8	Former Auto Repair Garage	LOW
9	US Post Office Lowry Avenue Station	LOW
10	Northend Hardware/Do It Best	LOW
18	Former Commercial Repair Service	LOW
21	Armon Communications (former Helmes Service of Sales)	LOW
31	Old Building between Lyndale and Aldrich Ave	LOW
33	Spill Site	LOW
34	Former Sign Painting Shop	LOW
37	Several Old Buildings, SE corner of Lyndale and Lowry	LOW
75	Former Machine Shop	LOW
78	Former Holmes-Hemphill Co.	LOW
79	Hoff Machinery/Hoff Appraisal	LOW
80	Old Building, SE corner of Grand and 26th St	LOW
82	Minneapolis School of Massage and Bodywork	LOW
89	Lowry Laundry and Cleaning	LOW
90	Dongo Tool	LOW
91	A.A. Battery/Trojan Battery Co.	LOW
98	M.L. Johnson Co.	LOW
112	Former Central Chiropractic Office	LOW
114	Former Milton J. Johnson Roofing Company	LOW
116	Former Shops-Photos and Printing	LOW

Market Analysis

The following is a summary of the market and economic analysis conducted by Maxfield Research. The full report is attached in Appendix C.

Housing Market: Summary of Findings

Single-Family Housing Market Conditions

- **The Lowry Corridor single-family home market has experienced a strong resurgence over the past six years.** Prices have increased by 10% annually in the Corridor, home sale market times have fallen to just 2 weeks, and over half of the sellers garnered 100% or more of asking price in 2000. By all accounts, there is strong interest in owned housing in the Lowry Corridor.

- **The sales volume in the western segment of the Lowry Corridor (west of the Mississippi River) has picked up dramatically over the past five years**, with homes selling at a faster pace than the Twin Cities overall. The Northeast segment of the Corridor has remained unchanged in sales volume over the past six years.

- **Inexpensive single-family housing is the fuel for the currently strong resale market in the Lowry Corridor.** The median price for a single family home in the Corridor ($95,800) was just over half the median of the Twin Cities overall in 2000. This low cost level is attractive to moderate-income buyers, who are having increasing difficulty buying housing throughout the Twin Cities, where the average single-family home sales price has recently exceeded $180,000.

- **The eastern segment of the Corridor, east of the Mississippi in Northeast Minneapolis, has produced the highest home resale prices in the Corridor**. The eastern segment of the Corridor appears to capture a substantial price premium over the western segment, perhaps as much as $50,000 for a comparable unit. This eastern section also has shown stronger annual price appreciation than the western segment over the past six years: 12% versus 10%.

- **The strong market demand for single-family homes is encouraging for the development of new, owned housing.** New housing on the west side of the River within the Corridor would likely be price-constrained, due to the low- and moderate-priced homes in the North and Camden markets ($80,000 and $95,000 average sales price in 2000, respectively). However, MCDA officials have cited new homes selling in Near North in the Lyn Park area (near 14th and Lyndale) for as much as $200,000, and home prices in the Humboldt Greenway redevelopment area will likely be relatively high for the area.

- **Development on the east side of the Corridor could likely attract higher prices than the west side**, given the relatively higher home resale values in the Northeast area (just over $128,000 in 2000) for older pre-WWII homes.

Rental Housing Market Conditions

- **The current rental market is "frozen" in the two areas containing the Lowry Corridor.** North Minneapolis had an overall rental vacancy of just 0.3% in the 4th Quarter of 2000, leaving virtually no opportunity for renter households to move into the community or for current renters to upgrade their living arrangement. Northeast Minneapolis fared not much better, with a 0.8% vacancy rate. Comparatively, the 1.5% estimated vacancy in the Twin Cities overall looks almost generous.

- **Rents in North Minneapolis are significantly below the Twin Cities average, reflecting an older rental stock and virtually no new units added in 10 or more years.** The rental stock in North Minneapolis is comprised of smaller (4-12 unit) buildings that are owned and operated by individuals with limited financial means or interest to reinvest in property upgrades. This constrains the evolution of the market, as little new or improved product is introduced.

Planned Housing Development in the Corridor (Owned and Rental)

- There was just one specific housing development proposal as of spring 2001 in the Lowry Corridor. Dunbar Development has proposed a **54-unit, independent senior rental building on the southeast quadrant of Penn and Lowry**. The senior units would reside above 17,000 square feet of commercial (retail) space, and 20% of the units would be at affordable rent levels.

- **Adjacent parcels on the southeast quadrant of Penn and Lowry could accommodate roughly 9-10 for-sale townhomes**, according to the MCDA. This proposal, however, depends on the elevation of the site to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) status.

- MCDA officials are also working on roughly **10 scattered sites to encourage home renovation or redevelopment in the Jordan Neighborhood, and 18 new home construction projects on derelict sites in the Hawthorne Neighborhood.** The new homes are expected to sell for $135,000 to $150,000. Eligible parcels within the Corridor itself would be subject to this condemnation and redevelopment process, although MCDA officials believe that any parcels fronting Lowry Avenue would not be likely candidates until the Corridor redevelopment plan is finished.

Market Opportunities for Housing (Rental and Owner)

Overall Assessment: strong potential for new housing in the Corridor, in both the east and west segments.

West Segment Opportunities

- Affordable owner and rental housing is strongly needed; medium density development would help keep housing costs down and would integrate well within the existing scale of the Corridor.
- Opportunities on infill sites to replace obsolete housing, and at key nodes after site clearing (Emerson/ Fremont and Lyndale intersections).

East Segment Opportunities

- Several market-rate owner and rental developments are currently proposed in areas adjacent to the Corridor (e.g. the Grain Belt Brewery area, Bottineau Neighborhood near University Avenue).
- The east segment has strong opportunities for middle-price, market-rate owner and rental housing on the sites that emerge as land is cleared for redevelopment.
- Medium to high-density housing development at key nodes such as University and Central would help strengthen the retail capacity of the Corridor.

Office Market: Summary of Findings

Current Market Conditions

- **The overall base of office space in the Lowry Corridor is small and low in value** – Market Research Partners found just 383,000 square feet of office in the Corridor in early 2001, scattered among 36 buildings. This total is roughly equivalent to Butler Square in Downtown Minneapolis, a 9-story renovated warehouse. Furthermore, over 84% of the buildings in the Corridor had valuations of under $200,000, while nearly 40% were under $100,000 in value.

- **There is virtually no newer, modern office space within the Lowry Corridor** – Market Research Partners found no Class-A buildings in the Corridor and just two Class-B buildings. This indicates a lack of market demand for professional office space within the Corridor, a lack of developer interest for new space, a lack of available development sites, or a combination of all three.

- **The Lowry Corridor office market is overwhelmingly comprised of smaller, single-user buildings** – The majority buildings surveyed in the Corridor averaged only 5,800 square feet in size; room enough for roughly 20-25 employees. More than 80% of the buildings are single-user spaces, accommodating lower-margin, “mom and pop” establishments.

- **Most office buildings in the Lowry Corridor are older with few amenities** – Over 83% of the office buildings surveyed were built prior to 1965, while no office buildings have been built on the Corridor since 1987. Just over half of the buildings were built prior to the end of WWII in 1945, and virtually all buildings lack modern office space amenities.

- **90% of the Corridor office space is located east of the River** – There are just 13 buildings west of the River, averaging just 2,900 square feet in size, or enough for about 12 workers on average. This indicates virtually no office market in the western Corridor segment (especially for multi-tenant space).

- **Over 90% of the office supply in the Corridor is located along Central and Lowry Avenues, while Central Avenue alone holds more than 57% of the Corridor supply** – Clearly, Central Avenue is the dominant commercial strip in the Corridor, with Lowry a distant follower. Within the Lowry Corridor study area, office space on Central Avenue is concentrated within 6-blocks north and south of Lowry Avenue, while the space located along Lowry Avenue is scattered over many miles.

Market Opportunities for Retail and Office

Overall Office Assessment: limited, smaller-scale opportunities at key nodes

- There is much stronger potential for office and retail development in the east segment compared to the west segment, especially near the Central Avenue commercial node.
- Specific opportunities for infill development or renovation will likely emerge as the commercial market responds to infrastructure and housing improvements.

Retail Market: Summary of Findings

Current Market Conditions

- **Retail space in the Lowry Corridor is widely dispersed among numerous small, single-user buildings** – Market Research Partners found 94 retail buildings in the Corridor in early 2001, totaling 660,000 square feet. Roughly 71% of this space is in small buildings averaging just 5,400 square feet.

- **Virtually all of the retail buildings are at least 30 years old in the Corridor, with most well over 50 years old –** Much of the retail in the Corridor is old, accommodating “mom and pop” retailers who have been established for several decades.

- **90% of Corridor retail space is located along just 6 main streets** – These include Central (49% of Corridor retail space), Lowry (19%), Penn (9%), University (6%), Johnson Street (4%) and Lyndale (3%). The 34 buildings along the six-block stretch of Central Avenue in the Corridor further confirm the relative dominance of this strip.

- **New Boston Square is the only retail complex above 30,000 square feet in the Lowry Corridor** – It was built in the late 1980s and is 3-4 blocks south of Lowry on Central Avenue Northeast.

- **Ethnic shops and restaurants and a strong base of artists have emerged in the Northeast market in recent years, taking advantage of relatively low costs for space** – Mexican and Middle Eastern shops have taken over spaces near the Lowry/Central intersection over the past 5 years. As well, hundreds of artists' studios are located all throughout the larger northeast area. These growing movements will help evolve the larger Northeast Neighborhood, attracting other demographic groups that are interested in a vibrant, urban atmosphere.

Market Opportunities for Retail and Office

Overall Retail Assessment: moderate-scale opportunities at key nodes

- Strengthen key commercial nodes at Central, University and Marshall on the east side and Penn, Emerson/Fremont and Lyndale on west side.
- Tie in with the transportation infrastructure, especially transit hubs, to take advantage of captive commuter markets for retail.
- Establish neighborhood-scale retail offerings; encourage mixed-use developments with housing, retail and office uses.

High-Priority Redevelopment Opportunity Sites (Mixed Use)

The market research effort established general development parameters for housing and other uses at key nodes in the corridor. Redevelopment in the corridor will likely take many years to accomplish. By setting housing development guidelines that are both appropriate for the neighborhood and achievable in today's market, we give local stakeholders concepts to work toward, as well as benchmark plans for assessing future development proposals as they are submitted by developers. The market research team worked closely with the urban design team to understand the sizes and locations of parcels that will likely become available for housing development in the Corridor. We focused on the key nodes at Lyndale and Emerson/Fremont, following the priorities established by DSU and Hennepin County.

To determine the number of units possible at the two key nodes, we applied typical development densities for urban multi-family areas in Minneapolis; these range from about 6- 8 units per acre on the low end to roughly 25-30 units per acre on the high end. We took as a goal for housing redevelopment in the Corridor to establish relatively high densities at key nodes; single-family detached development would represent an underutilization of the relatively-small parcels (ranging from roughly .5 acres to 3 acres) in each area. Higher density housing also helps maximize the tax base of the area.

The urban character and significant traffic in the Lyndale and Emerson/Fremont areas call for attached housing products in styles that are common to inner city areas. We identified traditional two-up/two-down four-plexes and rowhouses as owner styles that would fit well into the existing neighborhood, and townhome and low-rise walk-up buildings as compatible rental styles. For pricing, we relied on information from developers to determine appropriate price points (given site amenities and location), as well as our knowledge of what has sold in the market in other Twin Cities urban neighborhoods.

Opportunity Node 1: Emerson/Fremont and Lowry

- Strengthen area by creating a strong commercial node with newer, mostly owner units of medium density surrounding a neighborhood center.
- Key non-housing uses: transit hubs on Fremont and Emerson, a market, a child-care center, and neighborhood-oriented retail services such as a café (for seniors at Bremer complex), video rental, laundry, etc.
- Redevelop in such a manner as to support the senior housing at the Bremer site.

Housing Specifics

- Potential for roughly 110 to 175 new housing units, depending on style and density.
- Owner styles: rowhouses or townhomes, duplexes with side yards, and 4-plexes of traditional 2-up/ 2-down design.
- Price point range: $90,000 (4-plex units) to $180,000 (rowhouses or townhomes).
- Rental housing: traditional, low-rise rental building south of Lowry retail complex; moderate market-rate and tax-credit units with rough price range of $600 to $1,000; would also have some units serving low-income households (30% of median).

Opportunity Node 2: Lyndale and Lowry

- Create a point of strength for the surrounding community: retail offerings and services at the Lowry-Lyndale intersection surrounded by a mix of owner and rental housing
- Establish a community center on south side of Lowry between Lyndale and 6th; center would offer child programs not offered at nearby schools or library.

Housing Specifics

- Potential for roughly 80 to 110 new housing units, depending on style and density.
- Owner styles: rowhouses along 4th Street greenway, 4-plex or townhome units on Lowry, Lyndale, Aldrich and 31st.
- Price point range: $90,000 (4-plex units along Lowry) to $150,000 (greenway frontage); prices more limited than in the Emerson-Fremont area.
- Rental townhomes: target working families with children; low-income tax credit program (LIHTC or Section 42 program) earning 50% to 60% of area median income.

Transportation Analysis

The following is a summary of the transportation analysis conducted by Meyer Mohaddes Associates. The full report is attached in Appendix D.

Cross-Section Analysis

Growth in traffic volumes was forecast to the year 2022 and determined to be equivalent to 0.5% per year. Traffic is expected to grow from 10,000-15,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to 11,000-17,000 vpd. This analysis applied to each segment of Lowry Avenue yields a basic lane sizing requirement of a two-lane section at the east and west ends, and a four or five lane section in the middle segment.

Modal Accommodation

- *Transit:*

  The focus on is on north-south transit routes; there is need for transfer facilities at Fremont/Emerson, Lyndale and Central Avenues.

- *Pedestrians:*

  Additional sidewalk width is needed throughout the corridor; curb extensions need to be provided at crosswalks.

- *Bicycles:*

  On-street lanes on Lowry for commuters are recommended, with paths for recreational riders provided on other public streets parallel to Lowry.

- *Trucks:*

  Volumes of truck traffic in the Marshall Street - University Avenue area will not diminish as long as rail yards operate, and therefore needs to be accommodated.

- *Parking:*

  The east and west ends will have curb parking on both sides of Lowry since only one travel lane in either direction is needed. The middle segment (now “managed” parking - prohibited during rush hours) will have parking in bays beyond the two travel lanes in direction to avoid conflict with bikes. Demand patterns show low utilization of parking spaces on Lowry, thus some spaces can be removed.

Operational Requirements

Three types of intersection templates will be used on Lowry Avenue:

- West end would be shared through-right (one lane shared by straight ahead and right-turning cars), and separate left turn lanes on Lowry.
- Middle section would be two shared lanes (through-right and through-left) except between Marshall and University where dedicated left turn lanes would be needed.
- East end would be shared through-right and separate left turn lanes on Lowry.

Left turn lane locations will be determined in detailed design by Hennepin County.

Historical Traffic Trends

Historical daily traffic volumes along the Lowry Avenue Corridor were available for a 40-year period. For this project, four count stations are used to identify historical traffic patterns. The station numbers and their locations are:

- M213-Lowry Avenue immediately east of Central Avenue
- M24-Lowry Avenue immediately east of University Avenue
- M20-Lowry Avenue immediately west of Marshall Avenue
- M303-Lowry Avenue Immediately west of Freemont Avenue

Generally, the 40-year history of traffic volumes along Lowry Avenue can be characterized by minimal growth or limited change in traffic. There were, however, two notable points in time where traffic volumes 'spiked' considerably above the average. In the early 1970's (1972-74) traffic volumes were noticeably higher; this fluctuation coincides with the construction of a segment of I-35W near downtown Minneapolis. During the construction of this segment of freeway I-35W was completely closed, which forced traffic to alternate routes. It seems that Lowry Avenue absorbed some of this diverted traffic. The second fluctuation of traffic occurred in 1988 and 1989. This fluctuation is not as easily explained. However, during that time, TH 12 was being reconstructed into I-394. The re-construction was completed while maintaining traffic around the construction and was completed in 1991. It is possible that the congestion caused by the re-construction resulted in a temporary shift in traffic. Other than this, historical traffic volumes indicate that traffic volumes have changed very little along the corridor in the last 40 years. The 40-year average seems to be a reasonable representation of the future design conditions along the corridor.

The Lowry Avenue corridor is a stable corridor with respect to increases in population, commercial development, and traffic. Based on the evaluation of historical information and projected plans for these areas of consideration, it can be concluded that traffic conditions for design purposes will not exceed the 40-year averages. The historical traffic conditions that exceeded the 40-year average were aberrations at a larger regional scale and should not be considered as relevant to projecting traffic. When the 40-year average is converted to a trend, it is approximately 0.5% per year growth along the corridor. Therefore, the percentage growth increase that will be applied to the daily and peak hour traffic volumes is 0.5% per year. Table 2 compares the 2022 daily forecast at the four count stations with the 40-year average. In most cases, the forecast exceeds the average. The value at the Marshall station is within 70 vehicles per day of the average.

Table 2 Daily Traffic Forecasts

Station #	*Location*	*Vehicles per Day*		
		1999 count	*2022 Forecast*	*40 year average**
M213	Lowry E of Central	10,200	11,500	10,660
M24	Lowry E of University	13,100	14,800	12,830
M20	Lowry W of Marshall	14,700	16,600	16,670
M303	Lowry W of Fremont	12,900	14,500	12,630

Peak hour traffic forecasts were prepared similar to the daily forecasts and are illustrated in Figure 8 on page 3-70. Since the base year for peak hour forecasts was 1998, the growth rate of 0.5% was applied for 24 years to obtain the 2022 forecast.

Scope and Methodology for Sizing Analysis and Recommendations

The analysis identified the basic sizing requirements for the corridor, (i.e., the number of through lanes required) in relation to the 2022 traffic forecasts, and identified the need for left turn lanes at signalized intersections.

Lane capacity and level of service are the two primary determinants in sizing basic lane requirements on roadways. Level of Service D is used as the primary cutoff for operations in urban conditions. Lane capacity and traffic volumes are used to determine Level of Service. Cross sectional recommendations were made incorporating other factors that were not capacity related, such as: heavy truck patterns, crash patterns, park-

ing requirements, and the need of other modes. These factors were combined to determine what the minimum required basic section should be for Lowry Avenue as a whole or by segments. The cross sectional recommendations are used to inform the urban design as to what space within the right-of-way may be available for reclamation or if property acquisitions might be required.

Current Roadway Cross-section

Lowry Avenue has two different cross-sections. The first cross-section has two travel lanes in each direction with curb-to-curb dimensions that vary from 46 feet to 54 feet. This section of Lowry includes most of the corridor from Victory Memorial Parkway to Polk Avenue (immediately east of Central Avenue). There are no additional turn lanes constructed at intersections. This causes left and right turns to occur from the basic through lanes and through traffic must maneuver around vehicles making turns. Parking is located on street throughout this section with varying time-of-day and direction restrictions, except for the section between 2nd Avenue North and Marshall Avenue, where parking is prohibited at all times.

The second section, from Polk Avenue to Stinson Boulevard, is a 44-foot wide section with one travel lane and a parking lane in each direction. Curb parking is allowed at all times.

Capacity-Based Lane Requirements

Lowry Avenue is a unique arterial with multiple trip purposes of varying lengths. It is crossed by a number of north-south routes that have greater emphasis of movement and receive a larger percentage of the green time at traffic signals. Signal spacing along the corridor is irregular. Because Lowry is crossed by a number of north-south arterials, travel patterns on Lowry tend to be “Z” shaped with turns onto the corridor for short trips followed by another turn off the corridor (e.g., on at Marshall and off at Lyndale).

Due to right-of-way constraints and the desire to add non-vehicle amenities within the corridor, this analysis is hoping to identify segments along Lowry Avenue that can be constructed with fewer vehicle lanes, which will allow room for the non-vehicle amenities.

The conclusions that can be drawn include the following:

- The basic number of lanes on Lowry between Victory Memorial Drive and Lyndale may be reduced to one travel lane in each direction, including left turn lanes at all signalized intersections.
- The basic number of through lanes between Lyndale and Central must remain as two in each direction.
- The basic number of lanes from Central to Stinson may remain as one lane in each direction.

Non-Capacity-Based Lane Requirements

Building on the capacity-based lane requirement findings, non-capacity-based lane requirements were investigated to address lane needs that do not show themselves in theoretical capacity calculations. "Non-capacity" factors include turning and storage of heavy trucks, mitigation of high crash locations, and other modes.

There are a number of north-south arterials that serve heavy trucks in the north and northeast parts of Minneapolis. However, Lowry Avenue is the only arterial that provides east-west access for some distance north or south. Lowry is also one of a handful of Mississippi River crossings.

Turning Radius Issues for Trucks at University/Lowry Avenue Intersection

Inadequate turning radii at intersections on truck routes result in turning difficulties that have forced truck drivers to either occupy both moving lanes to perform the turning maneuver (see photos on previous page) or to drive on non-truck routes. This problem primarily exists between University and Marshall Avenues and appears to be a function of proximity to the railroad yards and access to I-94. Because re-routing alternatives do not exist in this segment, additional design requirements must be employed and this section of Lowry will require an additional turn lane and intersection curb radii improvements to safely accommodate truck traffic on the designated routes.

Both University and Lyndale show high occurrences of left-turn crashes, which indicate that left-turn lanes are likely necessary. This suggests that the four-lane basic section needs to extend to the west of Lyndale Avenue to accommodate adequate room for development of a left-turn lane.

Other Mode Requirements

In addition to auto and truck traffic, Lowry Avenue also carries transit, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. Each of these modes places special requirements on the roadway corridor that affect the cross-section width. Similarly, on-street parking and how it is accommodated affects the roadway edge environment and cross-section width.

Community connections that intersect the corridor (routes to parks, schools, transit stops) are being integrated into a corridor pedestrian plan. For those connections, enhanced pedestrian accommodation is desired through the development of wider sidewalks, more separation from traffic (via curb parking or wider boulevard plantings), and the introduction of center median refuges in many locations where medians are proposed, some of which will be at intersections where left turn lanes are determined to be necessary. The available right-of-way in the corridor varies from 60 to 92 feet, depending upon location. The effects of sidewalks, boulevards, parking bays, and other features on corridor right-of-way needs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as more detailed corridor plans are completed.

Lowry Avenue is designated as a future bicycle route over the length of the corridor in the city's bike plan (as of June 2001). The existing right-of-way is not sufficient in all segments to accommodate the required basic lanes *and* a marked bicycle lane on the roadway, therefore additional right-of-way width will be needed to provide the bike lane in the roadway. The river bridge is being studied for both pedestrian and bicycle use to determine what level of accommodation is possible with the existing sidewalk system on the bridge.

While the Lowry Corridor is predominantly served by north-south transit routes, east-west routes (the 18 and 32) do operate on Lowry Avenue, which introduces the requirement for curbside stops and waiting. In the current condition, buses stop in the moving lane. This would continue into the future, regardless of configuration. Lowry Avenue from Xerxes to Emerson is also an optional route being explored in the CR 81/Northwest Corridor busway project.

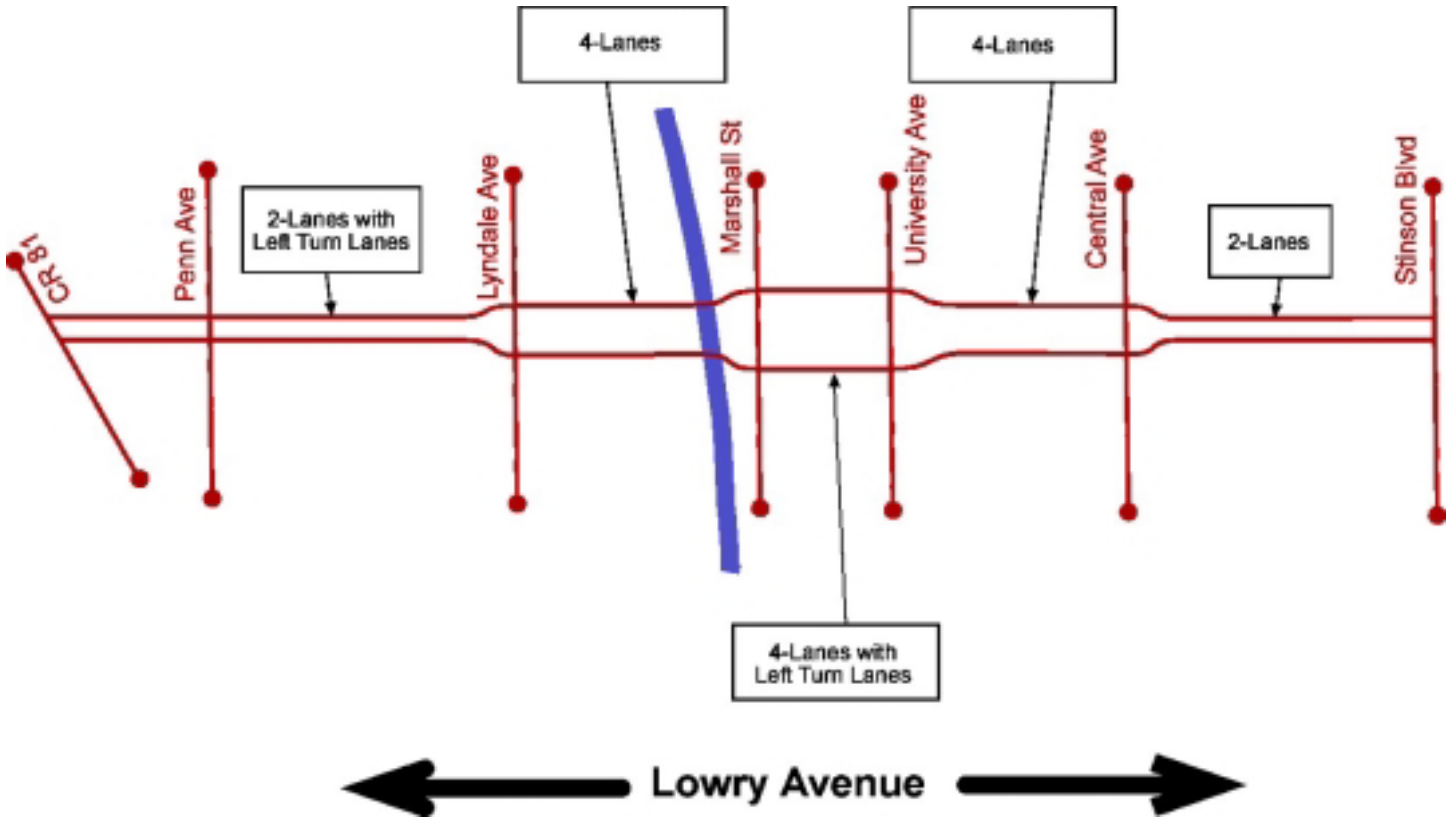
Curbside parking is allowed on most segments of Lowry Avenue, either as managed parking that shares the curb lane or in a parking lane adjacent to the roadway (east of Central Avenue). The managed parking is prohibited during peak commute periods by direction to provide for additional lanes for traffic movement. The introduction of left-turn lanes may remove some of the locations where managed parking is allowed today. Redevelopment of the corridor may remove some of the businesses that are using on-street parking today. Similarly, opportunities for off-street parking may be provided by redevelopment. The corridor plan addresses parking needs by converting managed parking to permanent parking in bumpouts.

Recommended Cross-sections

From the above analyses, the recommended basic lane cross-sections for Lowry Avenue are the following (illustrated on the graphic below and in the separate drawings at the end of the report):

- Xerxes (western limit) to west of Lyndale Avenue—one travel lane in each direction with a parking lane on either side of the roadway. Parking prohibited adjacent to intersections. Channelized left-turn lanes will be necessary at all signalized intersections.
- West of Lyndale Avenue to west of Marshall Street—two travel lanes in each direction. Parallel parking between intersections in bumpouts.
- West of Marshall Street to east of University—five-lane section (two travel lanes in each direction with left-turn lanes at all intersections) plus parking in bumpouts.
- East of University to East of Central— two travel lanes in each direction. Parallel parking between intersections in bumpouts.
- East of Central to Eastern Limit— one travel lane in each direction with a parking lane on either side of the roadway in bumpouts.

Figure 7
Basic Lane Recommendation



The recommended cross-sections are used to inform the corridor planning process about minimum curb-to-curb widths and to identify where width may be available for other modes or where additional width may be needed to accommodate other modes. In that context, the basic lane recommendations in relation to the existing width pattern show that there is insufficient right-of-way width between Lyndale and University to adequately accommodate other modes. Similarly, in the segment between Marshall and University, the right-of-way is not wide enough to accommodate the required turn lanes.

Parking Study

Curb or on-street parallel parking use on Lowry Avenue was surveyed as part of the corridor study. The survey was conducted on a Tuesday (October 30, 2001) and a Saturday (November 3, 2001) to collect data about parking use patterns in the corridor. An inventory of available parking spaces and time limits was compiled on a block-by-block basis for each side of Lowry Avenue. Parking utilization surveys were conducted by walking the study area and recording the license plate numbers of vehicles parked at the curb every two hours between 7:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. Plate numbers were matched between time periods to determine how long a single vehicle occupied a space. The time periods were chosen to allow overnight parking to be estimated from the collected data and to capture the peak parking demand from commercial activity in the corridor. These demand patterns are those that recur daily and are most associated with residents, visitors, and employees along Lowry.

The survey periods do not cover Sunday morning and consequently do not capture peak parking demand associated with churches in the corridor. Church parking demand recurs weekly rather than daily and is focused on specific sites. As such, the Sunday morning parking condition was determined not to be representative of typical parking conditions and was not surveyed.

The information from the surveys has been used to determine parking occupancy levels and parking duration characteristics on a block-by-block basis.

- Parking occupancy is a measure of how many spaces or how much of the available supply is used on a regular basis.
- Average parking duration is used to quantify the demand for short-term versus long-term parking by land use type and to provide data on how the parking supply might be regulated.

Review of the block-by-block data shows many block faces with no or very little parking activity. To provide a meaningful interpretation of the data, the block data has been summarized by roadway segment. The segment boundaries have been chosen to correspond to changes in general land use patterns along the corridor, such that contiguous blocks of similar land use (residential, residential/commercial, commercial) are grouped together. Following is a discussion of the parking supply and demand patterns.

Parking Supply

On-street parking along Lowry Avenue is controlled by signing rather than by meters. Consequently, the number of spaces per block face was calculated rather than counted. The typical length of a parking space (25 feet) was compared to the uninterrupted length of block face to determine the supply of spaces. Bus stops, driveways, and no parking zones were deducted from the available length of block face and an allowance for adequate clearance from driveways and intersections was also assumed. The net number of spaces available on a segment basis is shown in Table 3.

Figure 8
Parking Occupancy by Block

Table 3 Parking Supply

Segment	Total Spaces
Stinson-Central Ave	182
Central Ave-Washington St. NE	110
Washington St. NE-Marshall St	198
Marshall St-Colfax Ave	152
Colfax Ave-Penn Ave	236
Penn Ave-Xerxes Ave	146
Total	1,024

Parking Occupancy

The amount of total spaces occupied varies by time of day, day of week, and by segment as shown in the line graphs on Figures 9 and 10. The highest occupancy patterns were found in the segment from Stinson Boulevard to Central Avenue, where around 20% of the available spaces are used on a daily basis (slightly less on weekdays than on Saturdays). The other segments of the corridor showed very low occupancy. Most of these other segments have parking prohibited from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M., either in the westbound direction or both, which would depress the occupancy data in the early survey hours. However, the data shows less than 10% occupancy in the hours that parking is allowed for those same segments, the exception being the segment from Central to Washington Street NE where Saturday demand increases to 20% in the middle of the day. Note that on a block-by-block basis, as shown in Figure 8, 30% or fewer of the spaces are occupied on 95% of the blocks. This pattern indicates that about three of the 60 blocks have demand for half or more of the available spaces on those blocks.

Figure 9

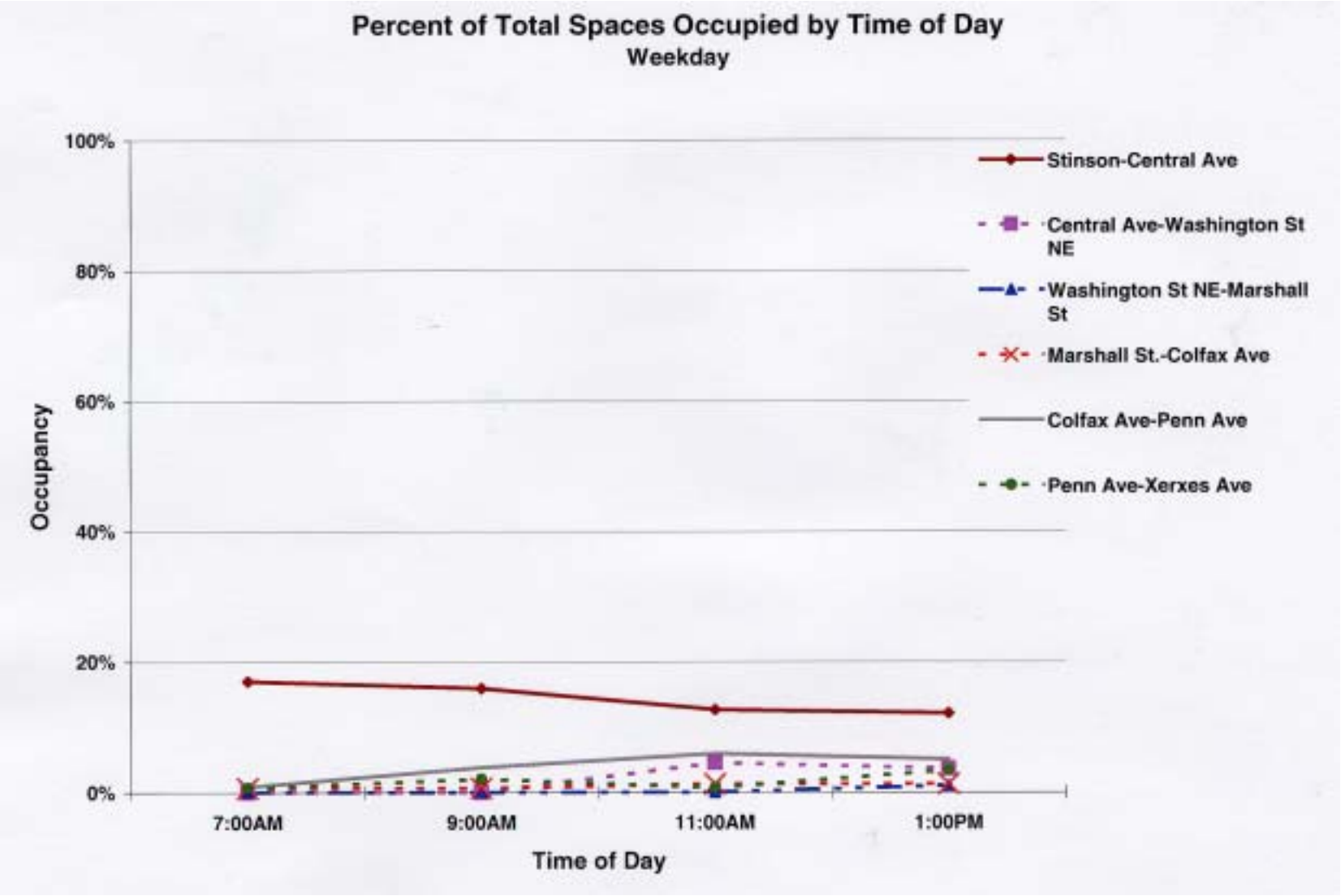
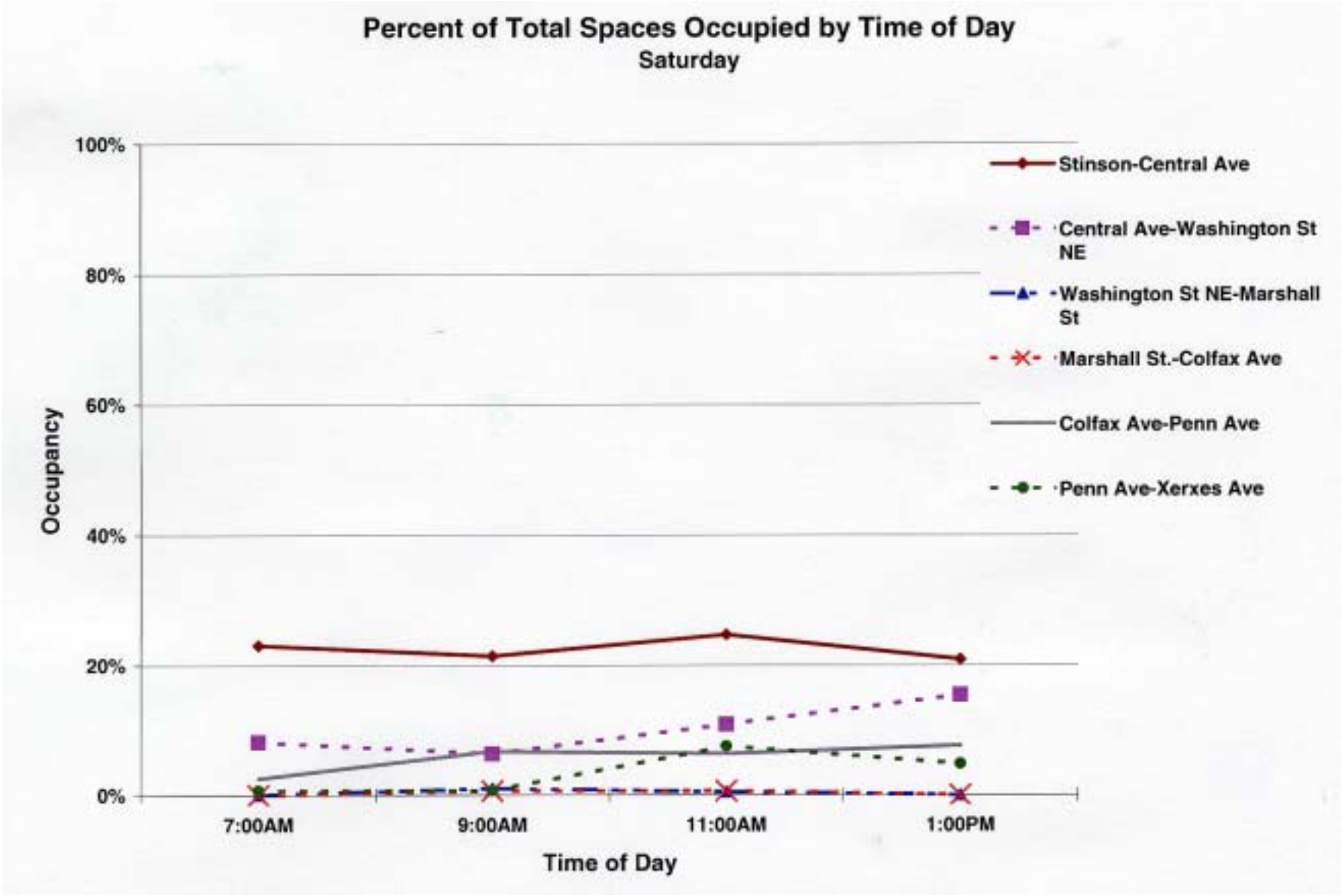

Percent of Total Spaces Occupied by Time of Day
Weekday
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
Occupancy
7:00AM
9:00AM
11:00AM
1:00PM
Time of Day
Stinson-Central Ave
Central Ave-Washington St NE
Washington St NE-Marshall St
Marshall St.-Colfax Ave
Colfax Ave-Penn Ave
Penn Ave-Xerxes Ave

Figure 10


Percent of Total Spaces Occupied by Time of Day
Saturday
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
Occupancy
7:00AM
9:00AM
11:00AM
1:00PM
Time of Day
Stinson-Central Ave
Central Ave-Washington St NE
Washington St NE-Marshall St
Marshall St.-Colfax Ave
Colfax Ave-Penn Ave
Penn Ave-Xerxes Ave

Parking Duration

The amount of time that vehicles are parked is shown in the bar charts, Figures 11 and 12. The charts are set up to show a bar for each street segment for each category of duration. Gaps between bars are street segments with no observed parkers (e.g., no one parked for two hours or less on Saturday in the segment between Marshall and Colfax). Because the survey data was collected every two hours, it is not possible to extract more finely grained information from it. However, in most cases, the time limits for parking on Lowry, where posted, are one hour. Accordingly, the data points at the left side of each chart (two hours or less) are indicative of visitor/shopper parking. The middle two sets (two to four hours and four to six hours) are indicative of employee parking and some resident parking on Lowry. The two rightmost sets of data points on both figures are representative of overnight parking. Most of the overnight parking occurs in the segment from Stinson to Central that does not have a peak-period prohibition, although the Saturday survey observed overnight parking in some of the other segments.

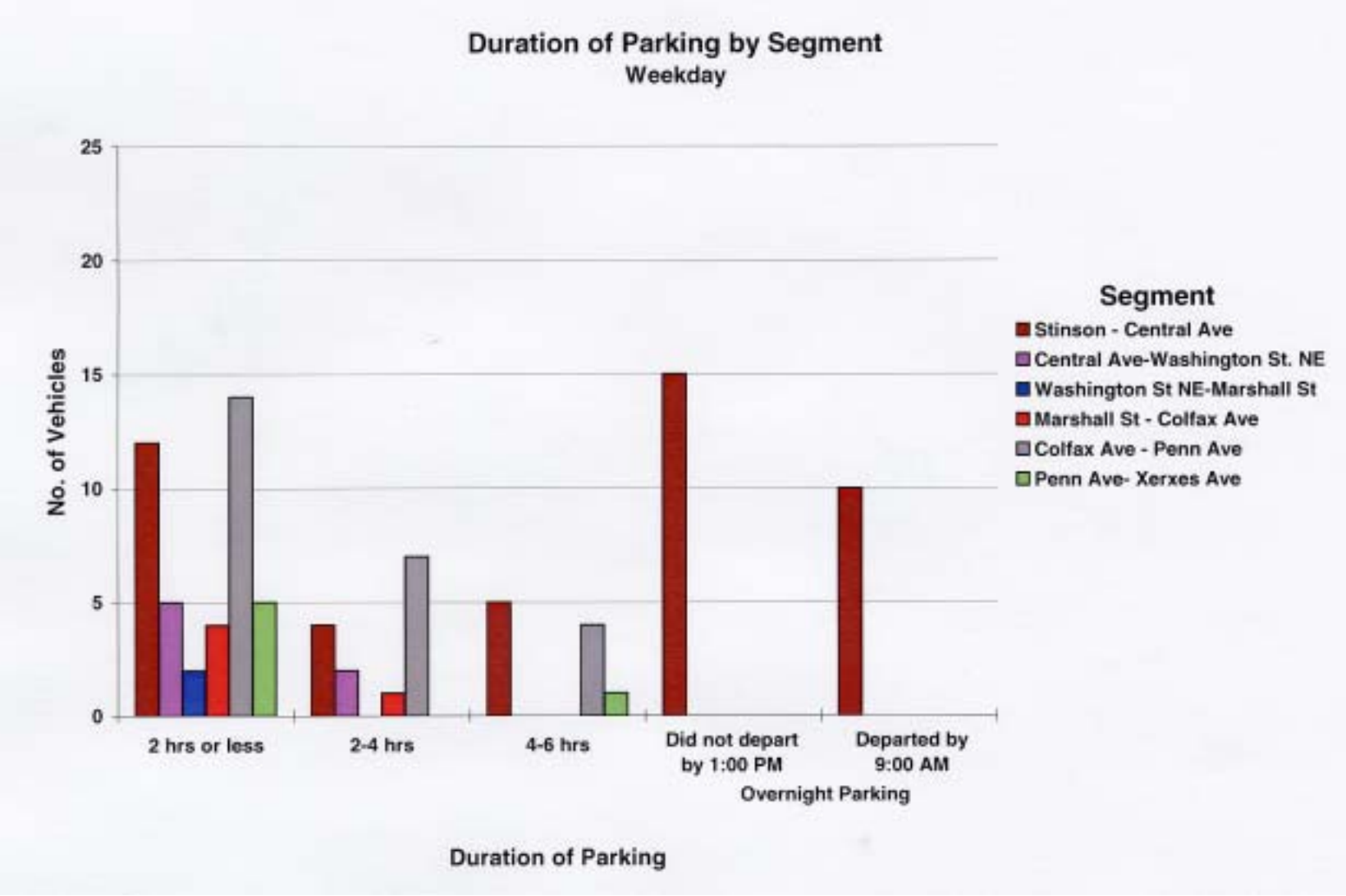
Other than those who park overnight, the majority of vehicles are parking for two hours or less and appears to be focused around businesses in the segments from Central to Washington and Colfax to Penn Avenue. The number of vehicles parking longer term occurs more in the Colfax to Penn segment and appears to be associated with commercial uses near Penn. Parking activity in all time categories occurs in the Stinson to Central segment, but appears to be related to residential uses in the corridor rather than commercial.

Parking Conclusions

The occupancy and duration data indicate that while on-street parking is being used on Lowry Avenue, the amount being used is relatively minor in relation to the supply available. In most segments, only about 10% of the available supply is used on a recurring daily basis. In the areas where the most overnight parking was observed (Stinson to Central), only about one-fourth of the available space is used on a regular basis.

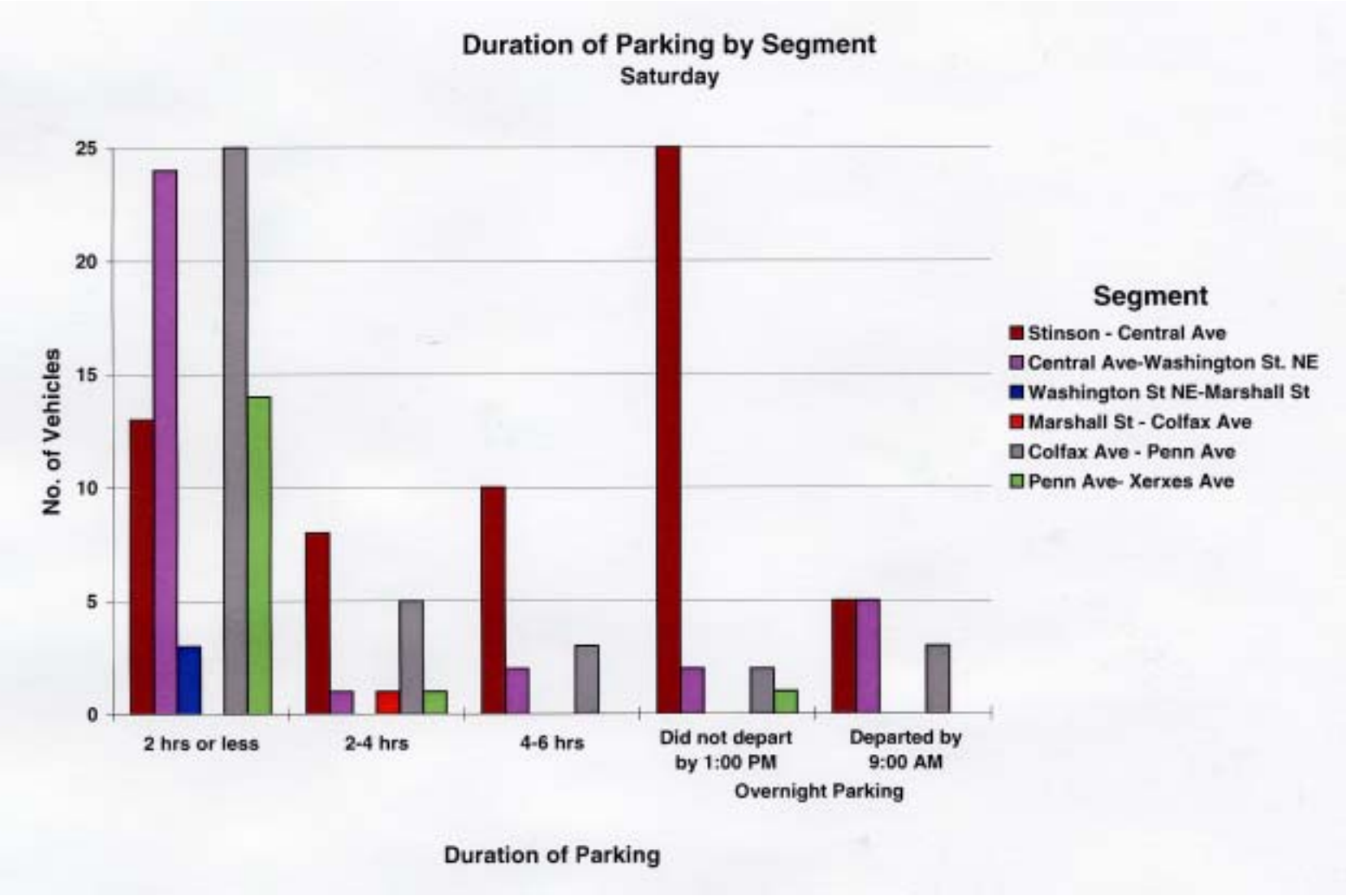
The segments of Lowry with the most short-term parking use are Central to Washington and Colfax to Penn Avenue (mostly near Penn). The amount of demand is less than 30 spaces per segment, which indicates that not all of the potentially available on-street parking is needed to support business in the corridor. The western portions of the corridor that have residential land uses have peak period parking prohibition which tends to depress the demand for parking since vehicles have to be moved periodically. However, in the eastern portion of the corridor where parking is permitted without interruption, there is more use of the on-street space for residential parking (overnight and all day in some cases).

Figure 11



The parking survey data show that it would be possible to reduce the on-street parking supply by up to three-fourths or more without significantly affecting the availability of parking along Lowry Avenue. The proposed

Figure 12



roadway designs reduce the available on-street parking by as much as half in some locations because of the bumpouts at parking bays and intersections. Therefore, there should still be more than adequate on-street parking on Lowry Avenue.

Overall Conclusions

The intersections in the west segment from Victory Memorial to Lyndale Avenue, with the exception of Penn Avenue, will operate in acceptable conditions with the proposed intersection templates that provide for a shared through-right lane and a separate left turn lane on the Lowry approaches with curb bumpouts where curb parking is provided in the cross-section. At Penn Avenue, removal of the curb bumpouts to provide for de facto right turn lanes on Lowry will provide for adequate operations in the future.

The intersections in the middle segment from Lyndale to Second Street North and from Washington to Central will operate in acceptable conditions with the proposed intersection templates that provide for two shared lanes (without separate left-turn lanes) on the Lowry approaches. Where curb parking is to be provided, it should be place in parking bays so as not to conflict with on-street bicycle lanes. The intersections in the middle segment from Marshall to University will operate in acceptable conditions with a shared through-right lane, a through lane and a left-turn lane in each direction on Lowry.

The intersections in the east segment from Johnson Street to Stinson Boulevard, with the exception of Johnson Street, will operate in acceptable conditions with the proposed intersection templates that provided for a shared through-right lane and a separate left-turn lane on the Lowry approaches with curb bumpouts where curb parking is provided in the cross-section. At Johnson Street, as at Penn Avenue, removal of the curb bumpouts to provide for de facto right-turn lanes on Lowry will provide for adequate operations in the future.

The analyses have been conducted on the assumption that general traffic signal phasing and directional priority will remain essentially unchanged into the future and that cross street lane patterns will also continue unchanged. The above conclusions incorporate those assumptions.

four. Recommendations

Recommendations

The Lowry Avenue Corridor Study envisions improvements along the entire Lowry Avenue corridor through a cooperative venture among Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the neighborhoods, the Minneapolis School Board and others. The improvements will include:

- Roadway Improvements
- Property Acquisition
- Sidewalk/Trail Improvements
- Landscaping/Aesthetic Improvements
- Commercial Nodes
- Transit Nodes
- Green Space Connections
- Five Phases

These are described below and illustrated on the attached concept drawings.

Roadway Improvements

Roadway improvements will be as described in the Transportation analysis above, and will include:

- Widening Lowry Avenue to five lanes (two lanes each direction plus continuous left turn lane) between Marshall Street and University Avenue to handle anticipated traffic volumes and turning movements in this segment.
- Maintaining Lowry Avenue at four lanes (two lanes each direction) from Lyndale Avenue to Marshall Street and from University Avenue to Central Avenue to handle anticipated traffic volumes in these segments.
- Narrowing Lowry Avenue to two lanes (one lane each direction) from Xerxes Avenue to Lyndale Avenue and from Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard, with parking in bumpout nodes.
- Intersection improvements, including left turn lanes, at key intersections identified in the transportation analysis.

These recommendations are in conceptual form only and detailed geometrics and intersection analysis will need to be performed later. The final design of the roadway will meet state aid design standards.

Property Acquisition

Accomplishing the above improvements will require acquisition of the first property abutting Lowry Avenue, either on the north side or south side, from just west of Lyndale Avenue to just east of Central Avenue. This added property will accommodate roadway requirements, parking, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and landscaping. No specific acquisition scenario has been proposed or accepted at this time. A summary of the characteristics of each block in this segment is included in Appendix E.

The size and depth of the properties varies. Where a property is acquired with its narrow dimension perpendicular to Lowry, typically 50 feet, this would be enough depth to construct the roadway, boulevard, bicycle lanes, median, and sidewalk and trail improvements. Where the acquired property is deeper, there would be room for additional landscaping and buffering to the remaining properties. Where a property is acquired with the long dimension perpendicular to Lowry, typically 100-150 feet deep, there may be adequate depth to construct the necessary improvements to Lowry and leave a new developable parcel. Where there is at least a 50-foot-wide remainder parcel, new residential development such as a single family home or a twin home would be possible. Where there is a deeper parcel, larger, more intense residential or commercial development may be possible. On blocks between major commercial nodes, this new parcel would be developed with residential uses. At or near commercial nodes, it would be redeveloped with commercial uses.

Decisions about buffering, landscaping, or redevelopment potential would need to be made on a parcel-by-parcel basis once an acquisition plan is agreed to.

Sidewalk/Trail Improvements

Improvements adjacent to the roadway will include the following:

- Sidewalks at least 6 feet wide (8 feet in many places) on both sides of Lowry along the entire corridor
- One-way on-street commuter bicycle lanes 5 feet wide on both sides of the entire corridor

Landscaping/Aesthetic Improvements

In addition to the above, aesthetic improvements are recommended, including added boulevard landscaping and landscaped nodes at regular intervals along the entire corridor. The streetscape treatment would include boulevard trees, lighting, decorative paving, a hedge or railing at the right-of-way edge where there are no buildings, and landscape enhancements for adjacent properties where needed. In some cases where property is acquired, small remnant parcels might be dedicated to the adjacent parcel. Detailed designs will need to be developed more fully later.

Commercial Nodes

Planning for the consolidation of commercial space, services, retail and office around transit centers/nodes is one of the stated goals of this corridor planning process. Several recent studies have already recommended concentrating commercial activities at key nodes along Lowry (Penn/Lowry 1998, Lowry Corridor Study 1999). Having commercial activities located around key intersections can play an important role in creating mutually supportive environments by making a node a destination point, maximizing the utility of transit linkages and transfer points, and by giving a commercial area the critical mass needed to undertake further improvements. The coordinate effort of numerous parties is required for the community to see this type of land use change actually occur. Implementation requires a plan to guide it, the energy to undertake it, and the political will to follow through with it. This corridor plan recommends:

- Major redevelopment on several blocks around the Emerson-Fremont node, including added retail and residential uses, and accommodations for transit riders. The plan for this area also includes extension of 31st Avenue N between Dupont and Humboldt Avenues to provide better access to the commercial node, public uses, and residential uses.
- Major redevelopment on several blocks around the Lowry/Lyndale intersection to include added retail, service and residential uses. The plan for this area also includes realignment of 31st Avenue N on either side of Lyndale Avenue to provide better access.
- Redevelopment at the Lowry/Central node, including added retail and residential uses, and accommodations for transit riders, taking advantage of Central Avenue's strong commercial base.
- Consolidation of commercial uses at other key nodes, including Penn Avenue, Marshall Street, 2nd Street NE, and University Avenue.

Consolidation of Commercial at Key Nodes

Zoning is the underlying regulator of land use in the city, defining what uses are permissible where. For a policy of concentrating commercial uses at key corners to succeed over time, certain changes to zoning will need to be undertaken. For zoning changes to occur numerous factors have to be present:

- The local community must have a well-articulated, broadly supported vision for the area.
- The proposed land use vision must be part of a broader plan to rejuvenate the area. This plan should include incentives for affected property owners to participate, or at least not actively resist. Standing alone, land use changes will be ineffectual.
- The City's comprehensive plan must contain policies that support the local community's vision for the area and tie these into an integrated development plan for the City.
- The local vision must have the active support of city elected officials including a willingness to work and a commitment to make the necessary difficult decisions.
- The staff of the Planning Department and the members of the City Planning Commission must share the vision as well in order to expedite the process as quickly as possible.

It should be noted that this is a policy of incremental and evolutionary change. Uses made non-conforming by changes to zoning are not closed down. A legal use rendered non-conforming by a change in zoning may continue to operate at its present capacity, have normal repairs made and maintenance done, even change ownership, subject to restrictions on expansion, reconstruction, and change of use as described in Chapter 531of the Minneapolis Zoning Code. In this instance commercial uses scattered between the nodes would continue until they either closed or moved of their own accord, at which point the land use on those properties would need to change to reflect the new zoning.

The five necessary factors for land use changes listed above appear to now be in place. The fact that the recommendations included in this plan and others have come as the result of significant community outreach efforts is one example of community support for the vision. The anticipated endorsement of this plan by affected neighborhoods will be an even stronger example of a community vision (first prerequisite). This plan contains a number of specific recommendations that go a long way to providing the supportive broader revitalization plan needed to make land use changes effective (second prerequisite). The Minneapolis Plan contains many policies supportive of the land use vision being promoted along the corridor by this plan (third prerequisite). Minneapolis

City Council members with wards along the corridor have indicated their support for the recommendations contained in the report. The extent to which this support translates into action remains to be seen but the initial impression is positive (fourth prerequisite). The Planning Commission and Planning Department will need to review and approve of the plan (fifth prerequisite). The Planning Department's ability to rank this as a high priority depends largely on the direction they receive from City Council.

Transit Nodes

Two key intersections, Emerson-Fremont and Central Avenue, are recommended as transit nodes, with accommodation for bus riders and other features such as service and retail uses (the Emerson-Fremont node is also a key intersection in one of the options being discussed in the CR 81/Northwest Corridor busway project). These two cross streets have the largest volume of bus ridership of any along Lowry, and the intent is to encourage easy use of the transit system and increase the number of residents in close proximity to these lines. This designation includes design of the roadway itself to handle bus stopping in Lowry and the cross streets, enlarged pedestrian transit plazas at the intersections, targeted redevelopment in the immediate vicinity to provide commercial development appropriate to transit riders, and the addition of appropriate medium and high density housing within easy walking distance to the intersections. These features are illustrated in concept on the attached drawings.

Green Space Connections

Creation of green corridors and connections to public uses off Lowry Avenue is recommended, including:

- Enhancement of the gateway to the west end of Lowry Avenue in some fashion to be coordinated with improvements proposed to West Broadway (County Road 81).
- A green space connection along Humboldt Avenue between the Jordan School south of Lowry and the Folwell Park north of Lowry Avenue.
- A green space connection along 4th Street North between Cityview School on the north and Farview Park on the south. This will require acquisition of property on the south side and acquisition or swapping of property on the north side.

- Connections to the Mississippi River and associated green spaces and linkages envisioned in the Upper River Master Plan.
- Careful planning of green spaces along the corridor that might be made available through acquisition of properties required by the roadway improvements.

Phasing

The redevelopment proposed in this plan is recommend in five phases:

- Phase 1: Fremont to I-94. Property acquisition on one side of Lowry from west of Lyndale to I-94, adding sidewalks, bike lanes, parking, landscaping, and connections to Cityview School and Farview Park. Beginning of redevelopment of the Emerson/Fremont and Lyndale nodes per market study recommendations.
- Phase 2: Xerxes to Fremont. Roadway improvements, including narrowing to one lane each direction, adding sidewalks, bike lanes, parking and landscaping.
- Phase 3: Mississippi River to University Avenue. Property acquisition on one side of Lowry from Marshall Street to east of University Avenue, adding sidewalks, bike lanes, turn lanes, parking and landscaping.
- Phase 4: University to Central. Property acquisition on one side of Lowry from east of University Avenue to west of Central, adding sidewalks, bike lanes, turn lanes, parking and landscaping. Redevelopment at Central would include transit accommodations and new housing.
- Phase 5: Central to Stinson. Roadway improvements, including narrowing to one lane each direction, adding sidewalks, bike lanes, parking and landscaping.

Figure 13
Overall Corridor Plan Legend

Source: City of Minneapolis, Existing Land Use

Figure 14
Overall Corridor Plan- Xerxes to Oliver

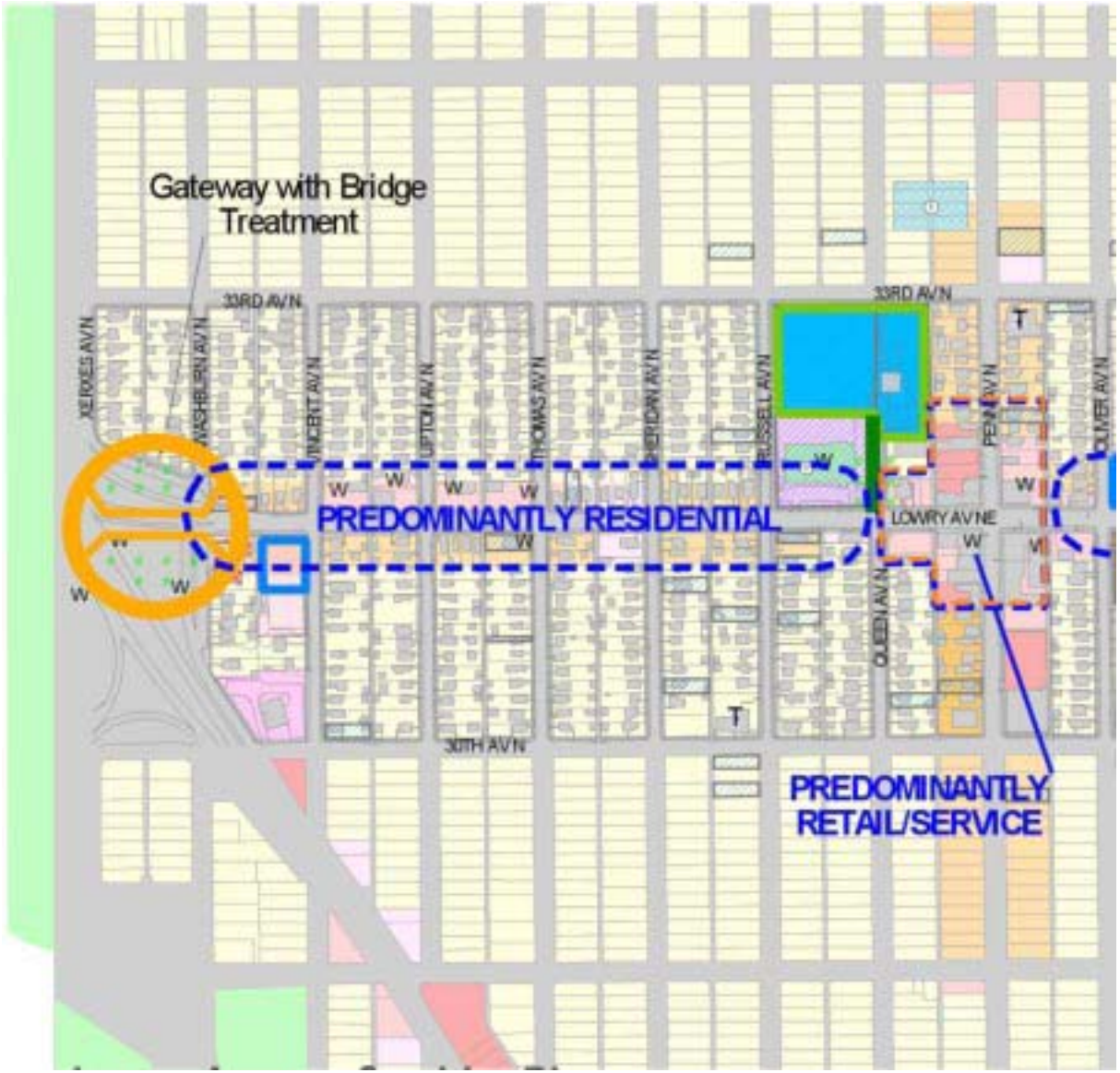


Figure 15
Overall Corridor Plan- Oliver to Girard

Figure 16
Overall Corridor Plan- Girard to Lyndale

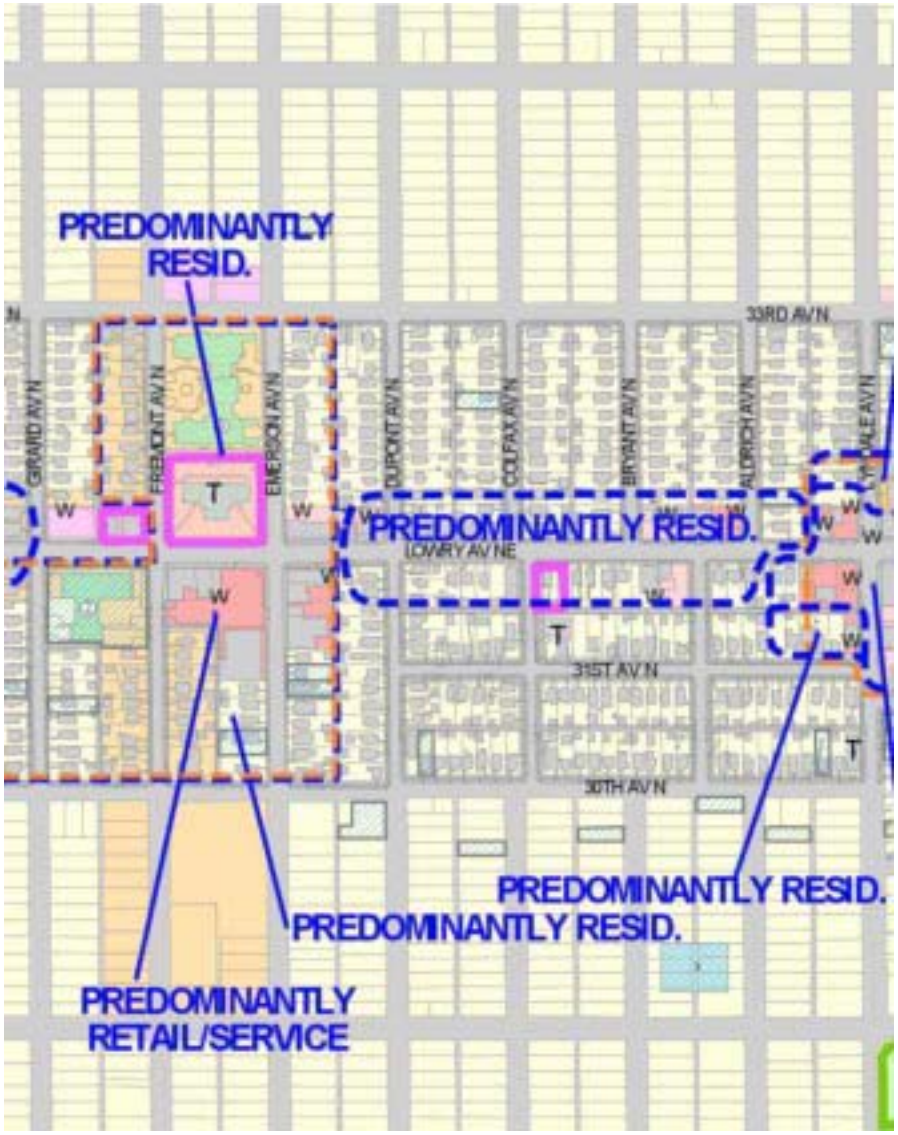


Figure 17
Overall Corridor Plan- Lyndale to Marshall

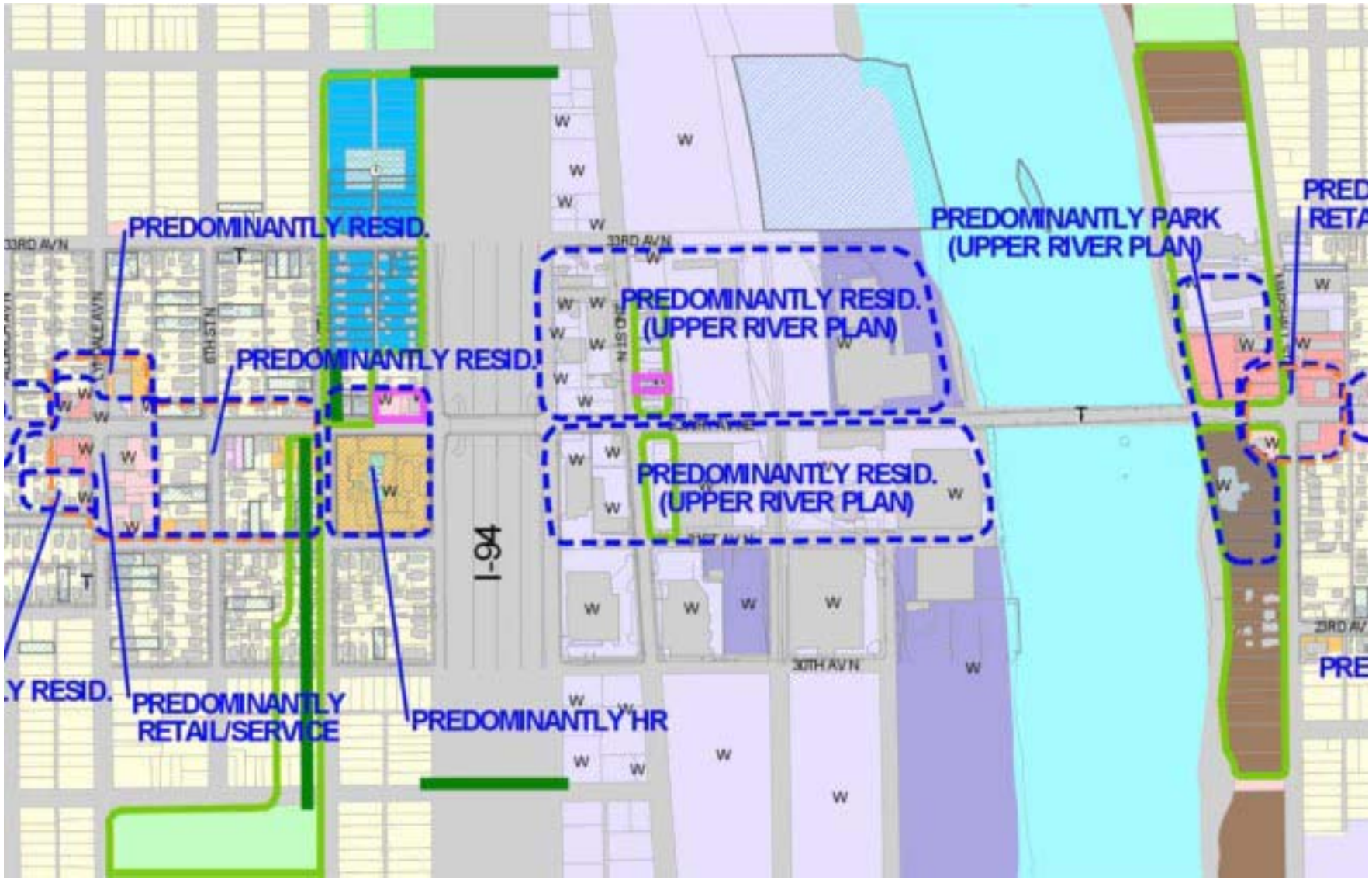


Figure 18
Overall Corridor Plan- Marshall to University

Figure 19
Overall Corridor Plan- University to Washington

Figure 20
Overall Corridor Plan- Washington to Central

Figure 21
Overall Corridor Plan- Central to Johnson

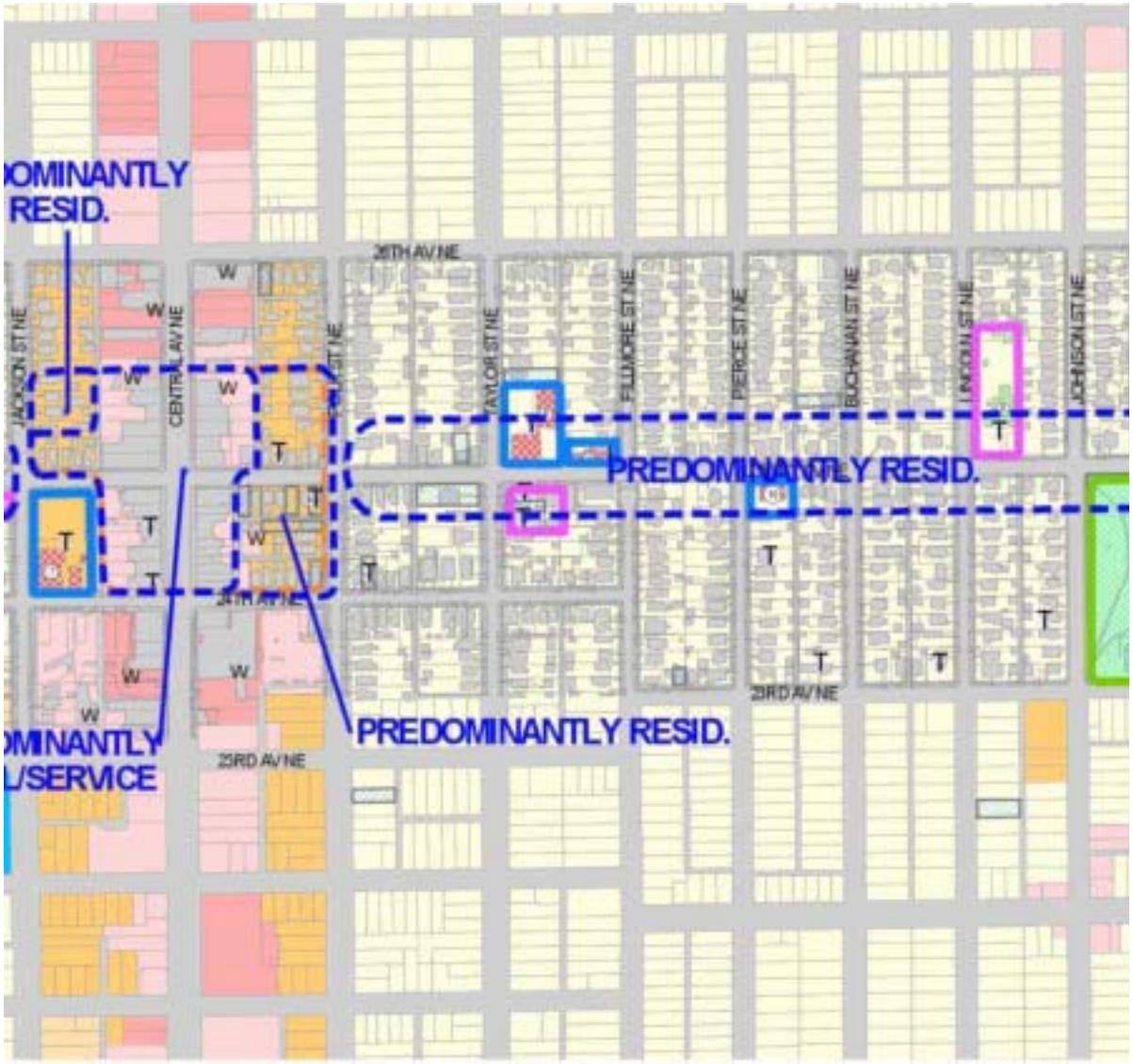
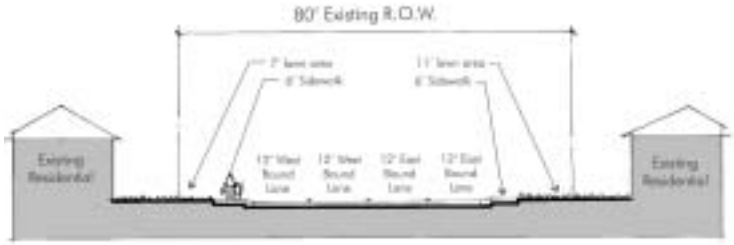
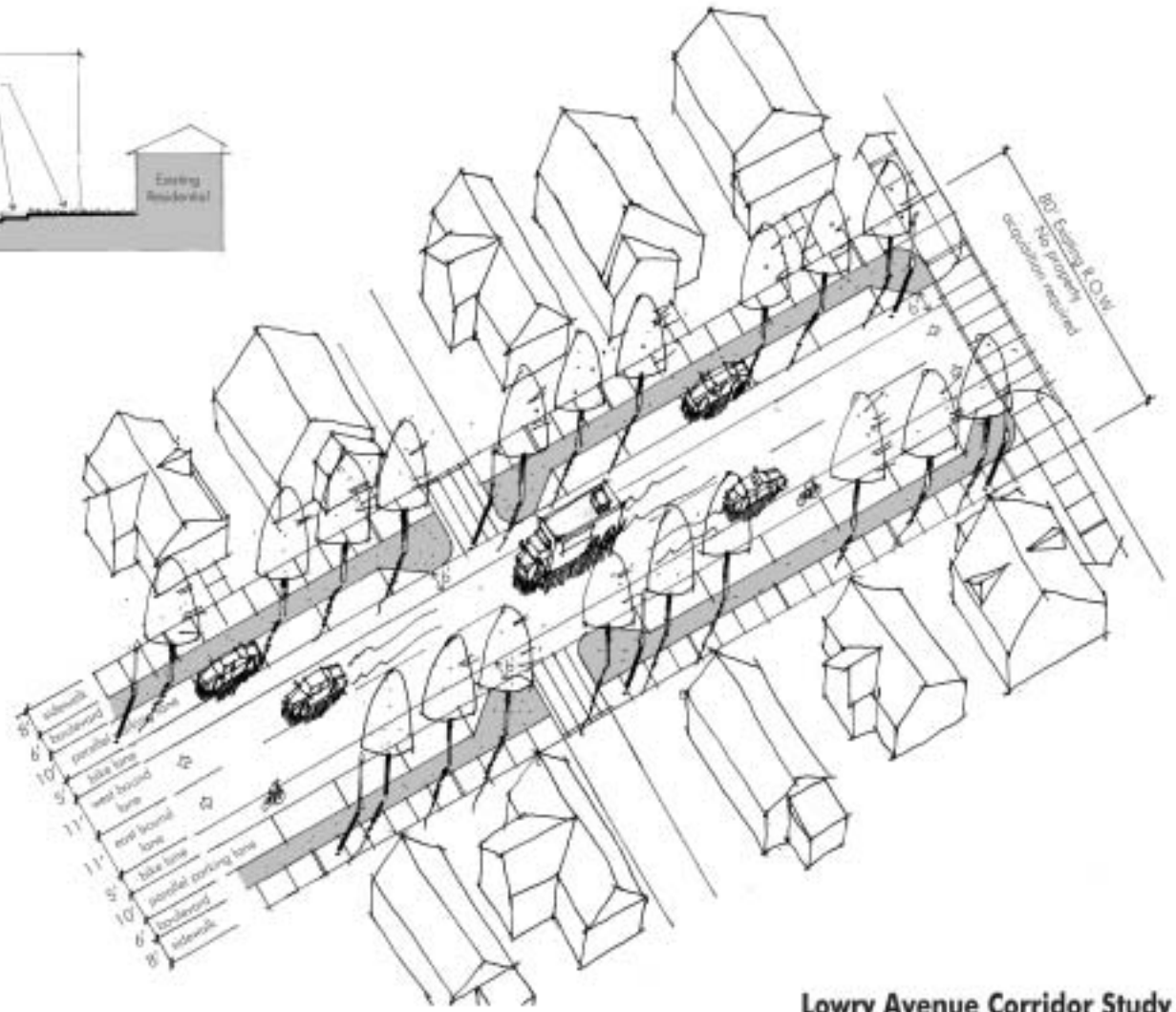


Figure 22
Overall Corridor Plan- Johnson to Stinson

Figure 23
Xerxes to Lyndale Avenue Street Section



Existing Conditions



NOTE: Bike lanes that occur next to street curb must be 6' in width.

Xerxes Avenue to Lyndale Avenue street section

Lowry Avenue Corridor Study
Typical - Xerxes Avenue to Lyndale Avenue
2 lanes with parallel parking

Figure 24
Emerson-Fremont Redevelopment Concept Plan

Figure 25
Emerson-Fremont Redevelopment Concept Axon

Figure 26
Lyndale to Marshall Street Street Section

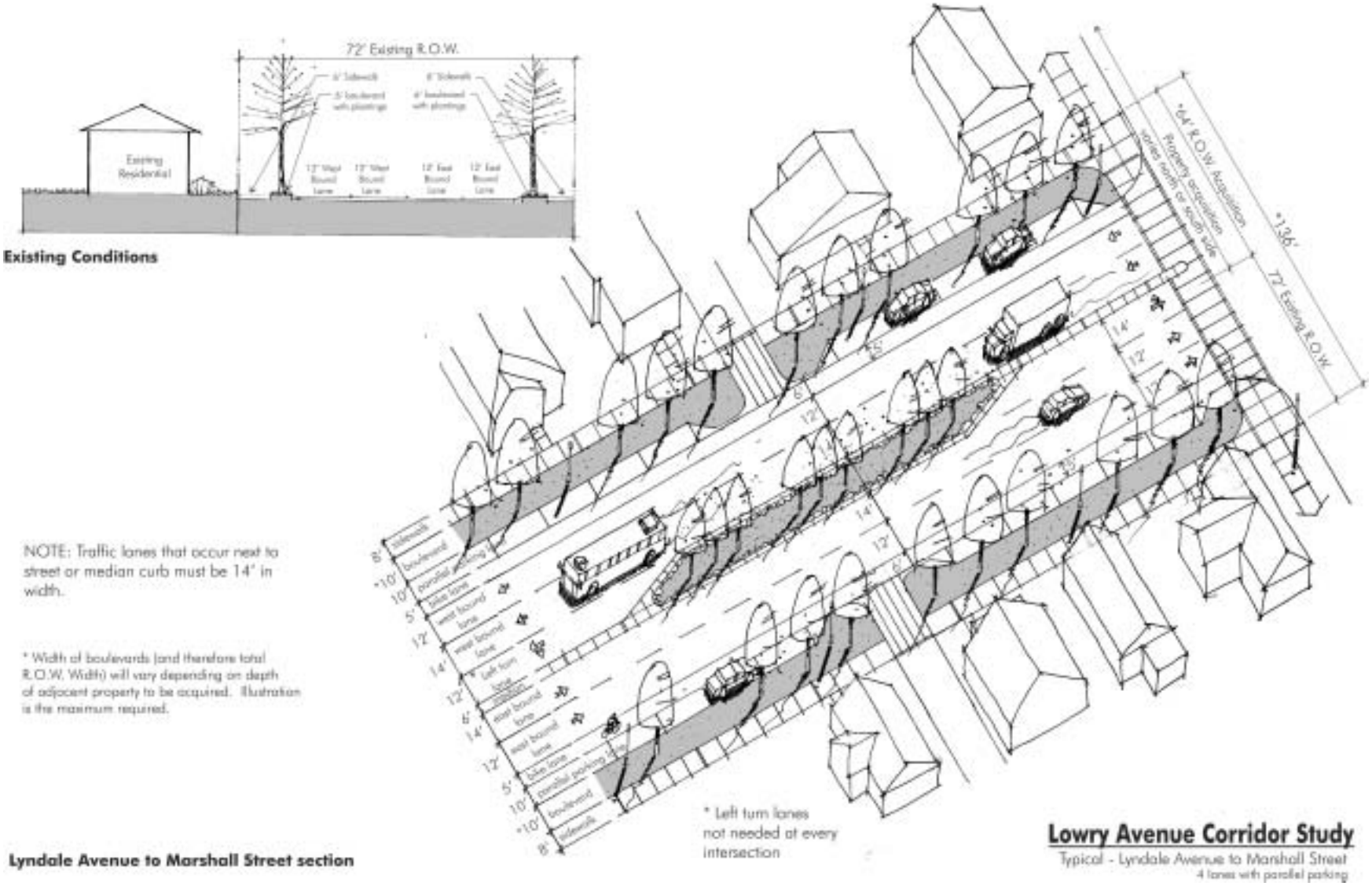


Figure 27
Lyndale Redevelopment Concept Plan

Figure 28
Lyndale Redevelopment Concept Axon

Figure 29
I-94 Bridge Section

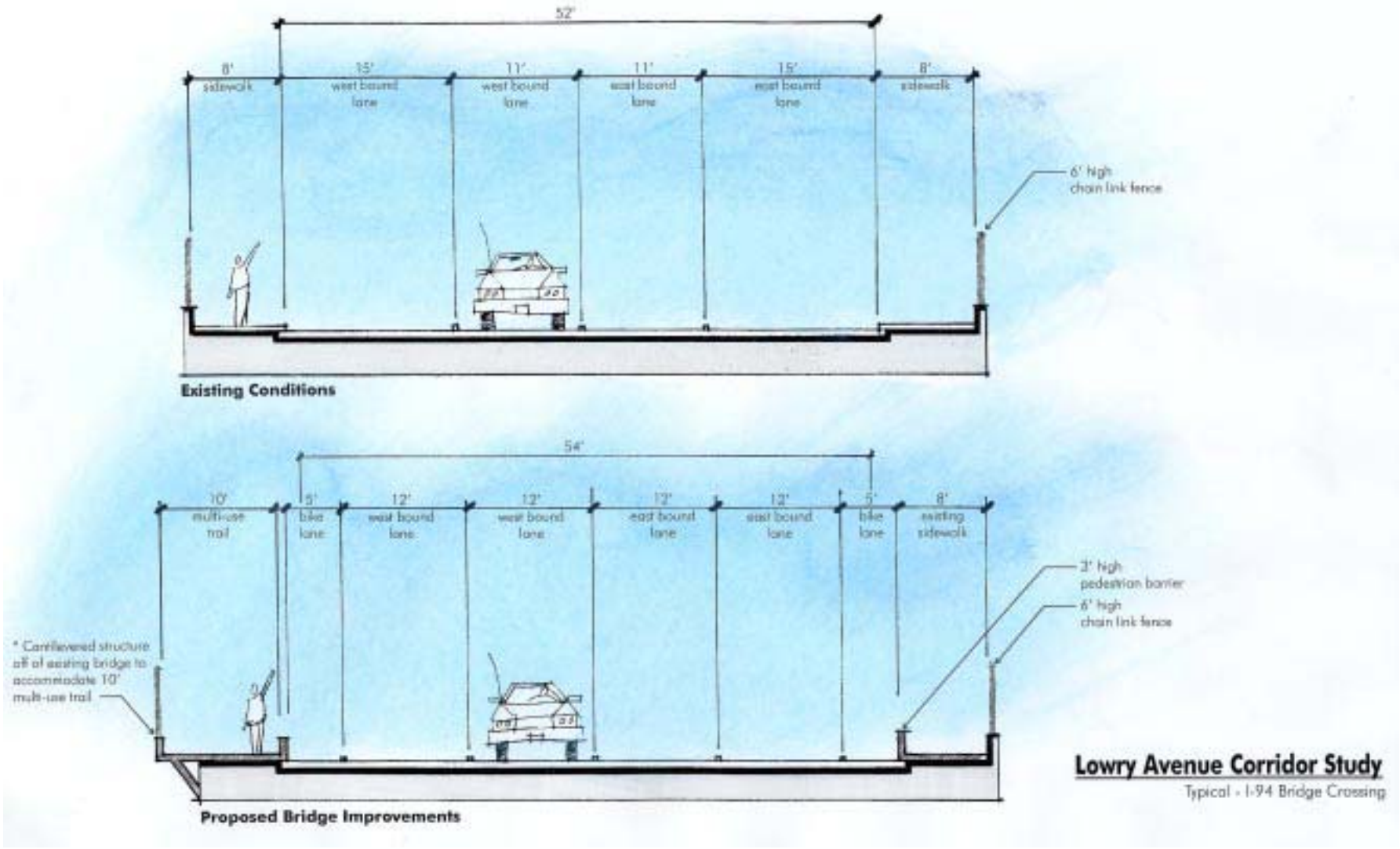


Figure 30
Future River Bridge Section

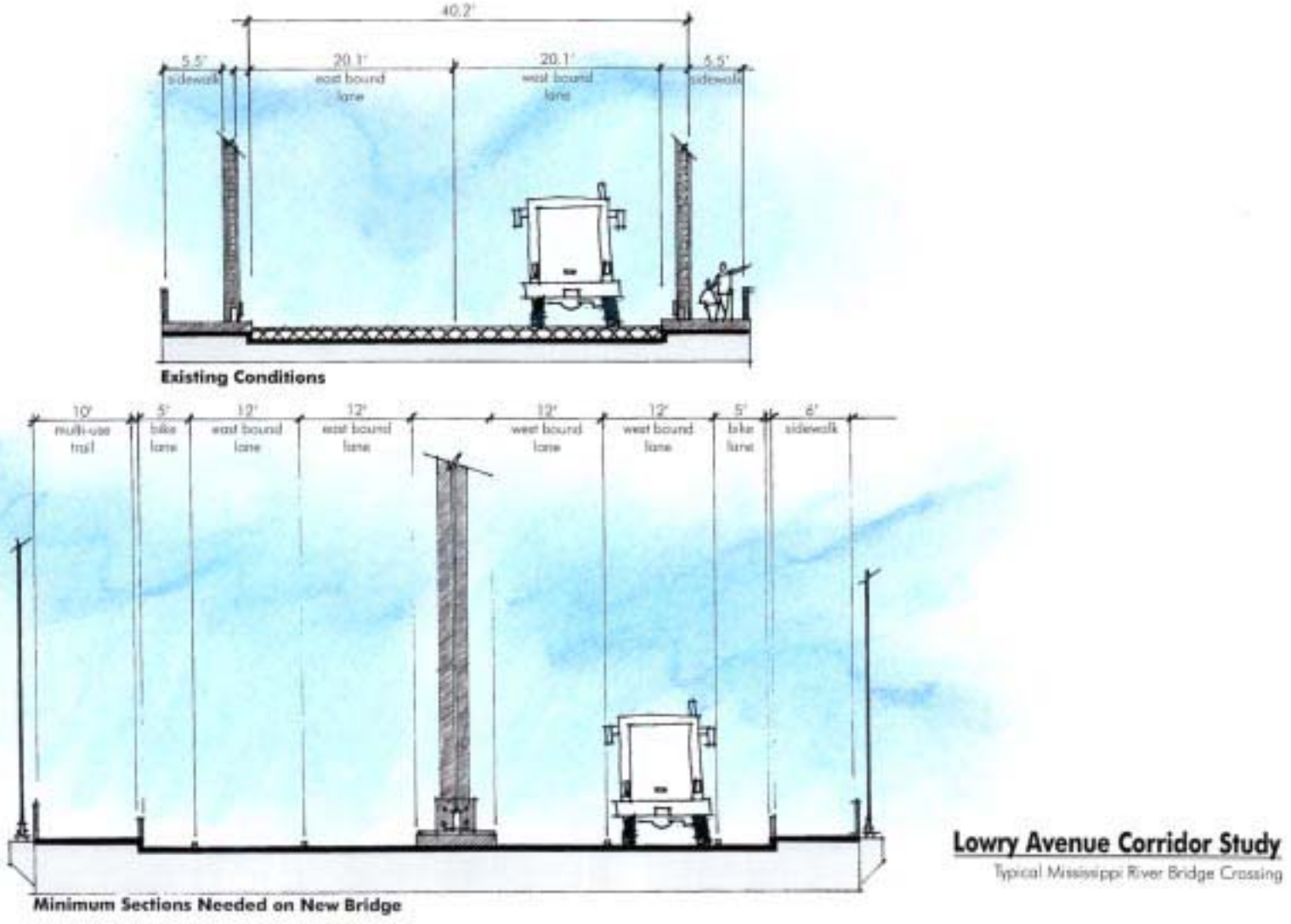
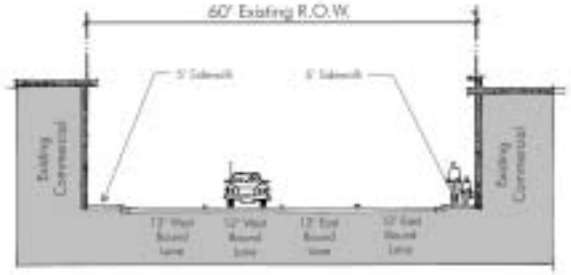
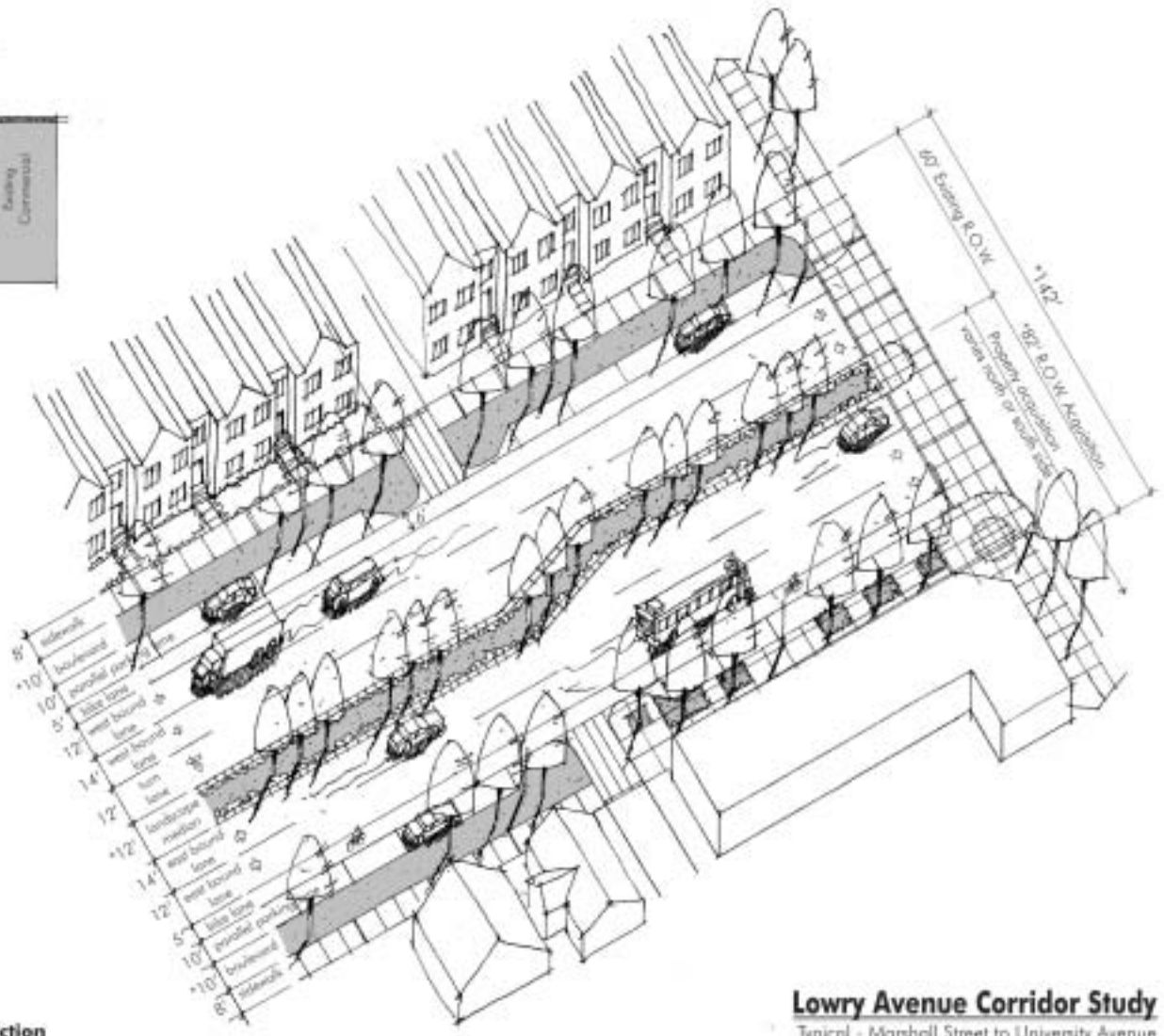


Figure 31
Marshall to University Avenue Street Section



Existing Conditions



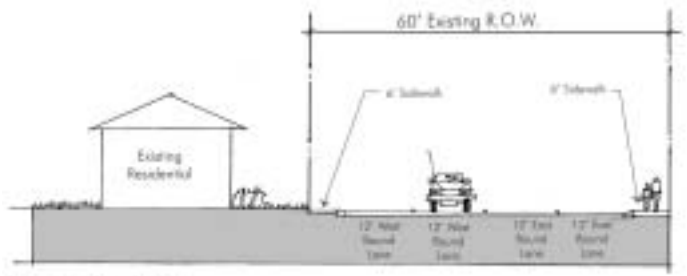
NOTE: Traffic lanes that occur next to street or median curb must be 14' in width.

* Width of boulevards (and therefore total R.O.W. Width) will vary depending on depth of adjacent property to be acquired. Illustration is the maximum required.

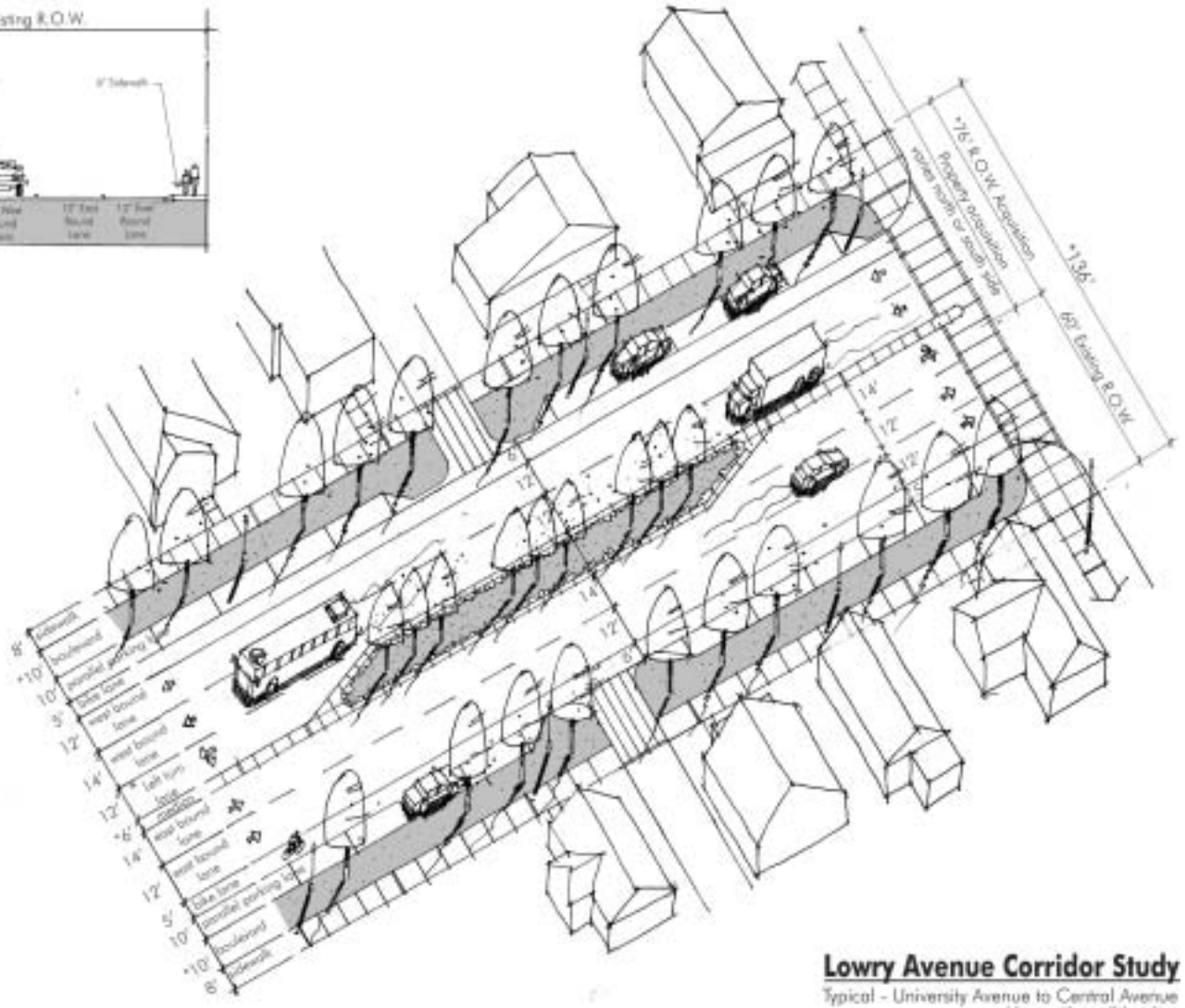
Marshall Street to University Avenue street section

Lowry Avenue Corridor Study
Typical - Marshall Street to University Avenue
4 lanes + left turn lanes with parallel parking

Figure 32
University to Central Avenue Street Section



Existing Conditions



NOTE: Traffic lanes that occur next to street or median curb must be 14' in width.

* Width of boulevards (and therefore total R.O.W. Width) will vary depending on depth of adjacent property to be acquired. Illustration is the maximum required.

University Avenue to Central Avenue

Lowry Avenue Corridor Study
Typical - University Avenue to Central Avenue
4 lanes with parallel parking

Figure 33
Railroad Viaduct Section

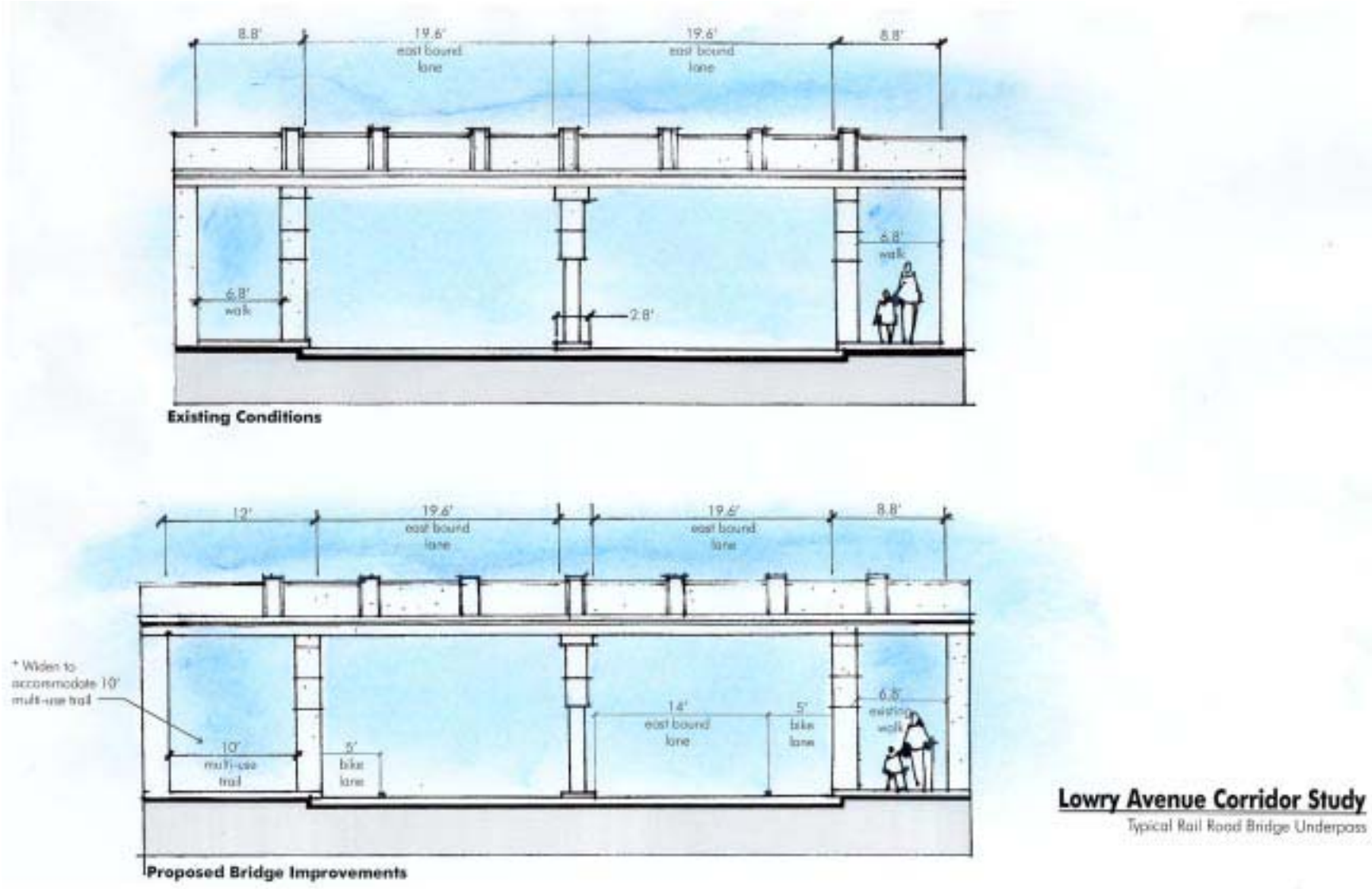
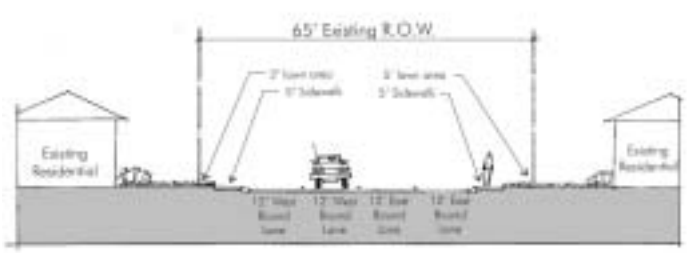


Figure 34
Central Redevelopment Concept Plan

Figure 35
Central Redevelopment Concept Axon

Figure 36
Central to Stinson Boulevard Street Section



Existing Conditions

NOTE: Bike lanes that occur next to street curb must be 6' in width.

Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard street section

Lowry Avenue Corridor Study
Typical - Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard
2 lanes with parallel parking