



Streets & avenues: reopen Nicollet at Lake, revitalize Broadway & Lowry, realize Washington Boulevard

What's working

We're thinking about roadways in a broader context.

- There's greater interest in making all our streets more livable.
- There's increased recognition that transit modes are interrelated and interdependent.
- We're doing more to integrate multi-modal transit improvements.

We're making progress on key initiatives.

- When completed, Lake Street will be nicer looking and easier to travel.
- The opening of the Midtown Greenway provided a public relations benefit for the Lake Street area.
- Three-quarters of Lowry Avenue between the

west city limits and Lyndale Avenue North has been reconstructed, and the rest is slated for this construction season.

- West Broadway Alive is moving along well. City planners made a real effort to engage the community.
- We're seeing meaningful progress — economic development, housing and streetscaping — along commercial corridors in north Minneapolis.
- Off-peak hour parking meters have been installed on Washington Avenue.
- The neighborhood raised \$25,000 to plant trees along Washington Avenue.
- There's an informal understanding that a new ramp alignment should be designed to relieve traffic pressure from Interstate-35W into downtown.

What isn't working

Our comprehensive plan is being held hostage.

- We need to implement the City's new comprehensive plan, but it's being held hostage by the Metropolitan Council. While the plan sits, the City is in limbo. We can't say "no" to projects we oppose, and it's harder to push for the projects we want.

Economic and social issues impact our plans.

- The Nicollet and Lake community is eroding. Without economic stimulus, you won't see investment in this area.
- Small businesses are getting priced out of the city.
- We're paying a lot of attention to the Broadway and Lowry business nodes, but there are lots of vacant houses. Without housing, there can be no support for businesses.

City tools can only go so far.

- The City's tools to promote growth — infrastructure, tax increment financing, etc. — are helpful, but not enough to promote investment. We need a market catalyst.
- The Public Works capital program sets out a five-year schedule to fix infrastructure, but Public Works can't always know when development will occur. As a result, some areas are short-funded and no right-of-way or replacement costs are built in. There isn't a total package that encompasses infrastructure *and* development. We haven't clarified whether Public Works' role should be extended to include earlier involvement in economic development projects.

- South Nicollet is a high priority. The City is addressing the section from 31st to 40th as a reconstruction project in 2014/2015. Even though the plan includes the section from 28th to Lake Street, there's not much Public Works can do until the Kmart site is developed.

Progress is stalled on Nicollet and Lake.

- Without relocating Kmart, Nicollet can't be reopened and we're unlikely to get federal assistance for a new bridge over the Midtown Greenway. The Kmart site needs more visibility to generate private sector interest; we don't have a focused project.
- The plan for Nicollet and Lake is hampered by on-again, off-again capital dollars and site assembly funds.
- Although there's support from elected officials and residents to reopen Nicollet, City departments don't seem to be stepping up to make this happen.
- City departments are working on reopening Nicollet. Staff believe there is energy for market change, and are perplexed by this situation.

Lowry Avenue faces challenges.

- Lowry Avenue between Second Street North and Marshall Street NE is closed and will not be reopened until a new bridge is built.
- There is no roadway plan for Lowry and Central. The County has put millions into Lowry, yet we're not seeing the improvements we had hoped for. We need more help with redevelopment.

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What isn't working *continued from previous page*

We don't always think enough about the big picture or long-term consequences.

- It was a mistake to shut down Third Avenue North for the ballpark and block Nicollet for a Kmart.
- When we put forward the Bus Rapid Transit station, we didn't talk about what would happen at street level; vertical circulation from the bridge to the greenway wasn't in the conversation.
- Planning related to Lake Street and Nicollet is tangled together. Portions of our infrastructure are deteriorating and won't last until the I-35W interchange there is rebuilt.
- The Metropolitan Council's map arrows point *out* of Minneapolis instead of *into*

Minneapolis. There's a political statement made by the direction of those arrows.

- We're too vehicle-focused.
- City government needs to do a better job of seeking creative ideas from the private sector.

We don't incorporate streetscaping from the start.

- We don't plan for trees from the beginning. As a result, planting is more costly and difficult because we have to work around underground utilities. Tree planting on Washington Boulevard should have been done in the first place.
- The first sketch of the Second and Marquette project didn't show trees. We can do better.

What should be done next

Reinvigorate the effort to reopen Nicollet at Lake Street.

- Get City staff and private sector representatives together to brainstorm about replacing Kmart with something new. Creative ideas and market interest will come from this.
- Step up City efforts to create market interest for reopening Nicollet.
- Plan for a seamless vertical connection between the Bus Rapid Transit station on the bridge over I-35W and the Midtown Greenway.

Get the City and County talking about Washington Boulevard. Get the freeway ramp shovel-ready so we can take advantage of stimulus funding.

Change our way of approaching street projects.

- Downsize roadway plans for the traffic volume we want.
- Exercise a stronger voice through municipal consent so we build roads we *want* rather than roads we'll *accept*.
- Don't make decisions that stop us from making a truly gigantic fix in the future. Agree now on what the project *should* be — even if we can't do it now.
- Get ready with transit for the area north of Washington Boulevard. Set policy for the entire area rather than limiting planning to half a ramp.

- Set aside dollars for economic development infrastructure.
- Preserve people space in neighborhood corridors. Put more effort into projects that support pedestrians, bikes and buses.
- Insist that vital streetscaping be incorporated in projects from the start. Plant trees right away to ensure we don't have to work around underground utilities.
- Encourage businesses to routinely install public art to enhance street projects.

Don't shut down any more of our streets.

- Learn our lesson from the ballpark and Kmart — never sacrifice the grid for development. The grid is more important than any building.

Offer incentives.

- Develop incentives to encourage businesses to open along Nicollet and Lowry.
- Create more incentives for bike-riding or taking public transportation.

Improve departmental coordination and involvement.

- Clarify the roles of the Public Works and Community Planning and Economic Development departments so we can integrate infrastructure and economic development.
- Involve Public Works in streetscape planning.

“Because our planning is driven by traffic volumes, we’re always thinking about expansion. Instead of fitting roadways to the traffic volume we project, let’s design streets for the traffic volume we want.”

- Public Works employee