

## 2. Introduction

### Background

Cedar Riverside is a unique and special place, with a one-of-a-kind location. Situated in the center of the Twin Cities region, it is bordered by the Mississippi River and two interstate highways. The neighborhood is rich in history, with heritage from the earliest days of European settlement to the idealistic visions of postwar urbanism and then to providing a home for some of the region's newest immigrants. It offers two institutions of higher learning, a major medical center, one of the region's largest concentrations of artistic and cultural offerings, a diversity of cultures from around the world, and much more. This is not an ordinary neighborhood.

Planning for this neighborhood is never an ordinary process as well. Though located adjacent to Downtown Minneapolis, Cedar Riverside has not generally been included in the various planning efforts for the central part of the city. Many plans have been produced for the neighborhood over the years, but the City has not recently taken a comprehensive look at land use and development issues specifically facing Cedar Riverside. As the buildings and infrastructure aged, and as the neighborhood grew and changed, residents and other neighborhood stakeholders identified an increasing number of improvements that were needed to preserve the character and appeal of this area.

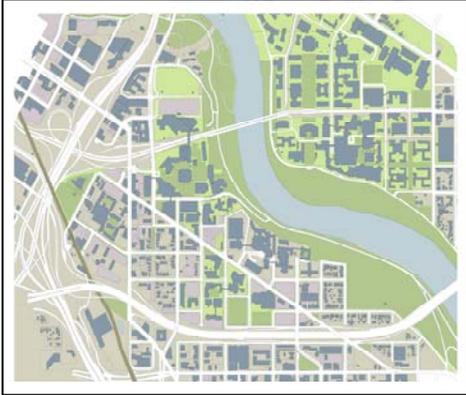
In this context, the City determined that the neighborhood needed a small area plan to provide specific guidance for Cedar Riverside and to articulate a shared vision for its future.

### Purpose of Plan

The Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan is a policy document produced by the City of Minneapolis to guide land use and development in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood for the next 20 years. It builds upon the policy direction of The Minneapolis Plan, the City's comprehensive plan. It is meant to articulate a vision for the neighborhood based on existing City policy and input from residents, businesses, students, and employees throughout the planning process. The City, public institutions, and community organizations will use the plan to guide their own decision-making processes with incremental changes to realize the full vision.

The plan examines the current conditions of the area, develops a future vision of what residents want the neighborhood to become and then formulates specific goals, objectives, and policies that will help implement that vision. The plan itself builds on past planning efforts and public involvement processes, particularly with regards to themes that have emerged repeatedly.

Following successful completion and public review of the Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan, it was presented to the Minneapolis Planning Commission and City Council for approval as official policy direction within the study



*The neighborhood is bordered by the Mississippi River and two interstates*

area. The Plan is to be used by city planners, Planning Commissioners, policymakers, developers, community organizations, institutions and other stakeholders to guide future land uses and development in Cedar Riverside. Additionally, it will be used to help guide future public investments – including transportation and other infrastructure improvements – which would impact the neighborhood.

## Vision Statement

*The Cedar Riverside neighborhood, vibrant with activity and historic character, will continue to welcome a diversity of activities and the people who support them. Residents and visitors alike will have a variety of unique shopping and cultural options that are safe and pleasant to experience as a pedestrian and bicyclist. Residential areas will provide a variety of attractive housing options at all levels of affordability. Beautiful and functional gathering spaces will bring people together. Transit amenities for residents, visitors, employees, and students will be easy to navigate and attractive to use. The neighborhood will continue its tradition as a much-beloved, unique seat of culture where memories are made and connections are built.*

## Guiding Principles

As part of the first small area plan community meeting in December 2006, participants were asked to help identify what were their top priorities for the neighborhood. Additionally, a number of other neighborhood plans (summarized in Chapter 3) were consulted to see what priorities had been identified in their public processes. Many common themes emerged from all these sources, and they were generally consistent across a diverse range of individuals and organizations. The results were summarized into ten guiding principles for the small area plan:

1. Improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians with the increased public safety presence and through environmental design features including lighting, visible doors and windows, and improved landscaping.
2. Enhance the neighborhood's economic prosperity through a varied customer base, appearance and condition of business storefronts, and more variety of destination and neighborhood-serving businesses.
3. Emphasize a lively and diverse urban environment with compact, infill development and mixed use in existing commercial areas; support existing and locally-based businesses.
4. Preserve the historic and multicultural qualities of Cedar Riverside in its residents, businesses, and structures.
5. Increase opportunities for people to both live and work in the neighborhood which are affordable and accessible, particularly ownership options.



*Participants in Cedar Riverside small area plan community forums*

6. Support an integrated multimodal transportation system while addressing neighborhood parking issues in a way that is efficient, affordable, and responsive to needs.
7. Encourage environmental sustainability through best practices in the construction of new and rehabilitated development.
8. Form a better partnership amongst community stakeholders, major institutions, and public agencies, leading to more seamless transitions throughout the neighborhood.
9. Improve maintenance, aesthetics, and amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists along streets, sidewalks, and other areas in the public realm.
10. Continue to pursue opportunities to improve the quantity and quality of gathering spaces within Cedar Riverside, and provide opportunities for information sharing between individuals and groups.

## **Plan Overview**

The plan is broken up in several main sections:

The Summary of Research, Site Conditions, and Community Engagement Process chapters provide a summary of information that sets the stage for the plan's analysis and recommendations.

The Land Use and Design Plan, Transportation Plan, and Economic Development Plan chapters provide analysis of the issues facing the neighborhood, describe options, and outline recommendations.

The Implementation Plan chapter describes the steps needed for implementing the recommendations in the previous chapters. This outlines potential options for the implementation process; a more in-depth implementation strategy will need to be formulated once the plan is adopted.