

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division

Small Area Plan/Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Date: February 11, 2008

Project Name: West Broadway Alive

Submitted By: CPED Community Planning Division

Planning Staff and Phone: Thomas Leighton, 612-673-3853

Wards: 3, 4, and 5

Neighborhood Organizations:

- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
- Jordan Area Community Council
- Hawthorne Area Community Council

Current Minneapolis Plan Designations:

- Commercial Corridor—West Broadway from the Mississippi River to 26th Avenue
- Community Corridor—West Broadway from 26th Avenue to City Limits
- Auto-Oriented Shopping Center—West Broadway and Lyndale Avenue
- Neighborhood Commercial Node—West Broadway and Penn Avenue

Background

West Broadway is the commercial main street of North Minneapolis, but by many measures it has fallen on hard times. At one time it was a destination shopping district for north Minneapolis and beyond. But today it serves primarily as a convenience district for residents in the adjacent neighborhoods. Loitering, shoplifting and other criminal activity dampens interest in the corridor and makes it more difficult for businesses to thrive. With “modern” developments and large surface parking lots replacing traditional storefronts at different times over the last several decades, and little in the streetscape that has aesthetic character, the visual landscape is somewhat chaotic and forbidding. It is against this backdrop that the West Broadway Alive planning effort was launched.

In early 2006, at the encouragement of the West Broadway Area Coalition, and with financial support from the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, the CPED Planning Division began work on the West Broadway Alive Plan. The idea was to create a plan that would focus attention

and resources on making the corridor work better from a business perspective, more attractive from a development perspective, and more aesthetically cohesive and welcoming from a design perspective.

From the beginning of 2006 through the Fall of 2007, City staff and the project consultants worked with a community-based Steering Committee made up of representatives from the neighborhood organizations, the West Broadway Business Association and West Broadway Area Coalition (since merged), and other area institutions, as well as appointees of City Council members and Mayor RT Rybak. This committee served in a consultative role to the staff and consultants, and met monthly throughout the process. Five community-wide meetings were held to gather community input on plan direction and strategies. These had an average attendance of around 130 people. Information was also gathered from the community through:

- Street interviews
- A shopping survey
- Stakeholder meetings with business owners, property owners, and developers
- Meetings with 11 north Minneapolis neighborhood organizations, and 4 sub-neighborhood groups
- A project website that included a link for input

Other outreach included radio interviews, advertisements in neighborhood newspapers, full-sized poster boards at local businesses, door-to-door flyers, e-mail distribution, communication through local churches, a project website, and the identification of specific Hmong and Somali partners to spread the word in those ethnic communities.

The plan document was completed at the end of November, 2007. The 45-day public review period began on December 1, 2007 and ended on January 15, 2008. At the January 28, 2008, meeting of the City Planning Commission it was continued to February 11, 2008.

Purpose of Plan

The West Broadway Alive plan has two purposes. The first is to provide current and detailed policy direction for land use and development in the West Broadway corridor. The desired character of different parts of West Broadway is described, including proposed land uses and levels of density. Design guidelines are provided so that new development and improvements to existing development will build toward a more unified and cohesive visual environment. The second purpose of the plan is to outline a revitalization action agenda. This set of proactive steps is intended to foster change, and improve the market for existing businesses and new development.

Plan Summary

Guidance. The West Broadway Alive plan offers a layered vision for the West Broadway corridor.

- The values and objectives related to making improvements to the West Broadway corridor were articulated through the creation of a vision statement and guiding principles.

- The plan also identifies West Broadway themes, which can be thought of as current strengths that can be reinforced as focal points for further improvements. The four identified corridor-wide themes are “Main Street”, “Activity Center Destination”, “Art and Design”, and “Cultural Diversity”. Distinct districts along West Broadway are also identified, with themes that characterize those areas.
- Further guidance offered by the plan is less conceptual and more specific. It includes:
 - Proposed West Broadway street layout and cross-section, to be implemented with West Broadway street repaving
 - Proposed Land Use, utilizing the following categories—residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial
 - Proposed development intensity of property, utilizing three categories—Transit-scale, Urban-scale, and neighborhood-scale
 - Map of development opportunity areas
 - Design Guidelines for new development, façade improvements, landscaping and fencing, and streetscaping

Action Plan. The West Broadway Alive plan also includes recommendations related to a robust collection of implementation actions. It calls out probable lead parties and rough timeframe for each strategy. Implementation actions are highlighted in each topical chapter of the plan in “Recommended Strategies” boxes. The final chapter of the plan is titled “Implementation Strategies.” In it the strategies are consolidated and organized in table format under topical headings. The Implementation Strategies chapter also offers additional information on what it takes to implement the proposed strategy. In some cases, next steps or follow-up activities are called out.

Recommended implementation strategies include:

- Rezoning property along West Broadway consistent with the land use guidance in the plan
- Reconstruction of the eastern part of West Broadway to allow for pedestrian improvements such as the widening of sidewalks and bumpouts, as well as streetscaping improvements
- Capital and landscaping improvements to Emerson and Fremont Avenues to extend aspects of the character of Van White Memorial Boulevard northward to West Broadway and beyond.
- Ongoing development support for redevelopment projects in development opportunity areas
- Improving the retail mix through providing the services of a leasing agent to property owners
- Creating a public plaza at Hawthorne Crossings that can be programmed for community activities on a regular basis
- Improving storefront facades in accordance with the plan’s design guidelines

- Formalizing a West Broadway annual public art installation
- Bringing streetcar service to West Broadway

Compatibility with The Minneapolis Plan

The Minneapolis Plan currently designates West Broadway a commercial corridor from the Mississippi River to 26th Avenue North, and a community corridor from 26th Avenue North to the city limits. The area around the West Broadway & Lyndale Avenue intersection is designated an “Auto Oriented Shopping Center”, and the West Broadway and Penn Avenue area is designated a “Neighborhood Commercial Node”.

The West Broadway Alive plan is largely in keeping with the geographic policies of these existing comprehensive plan designations. The single exception relates to the area currently designated an Auto Oriented Shopping Center. The West Broadway Alive Plan identifies this area as a development opportunity area. Its recommended development would be a relatively high-density mix of destination commercial and residential development. It would be pedestrian-oriented in the proximity and alignment of new development to West Broadway, with parking in the interior or rear of the block, or in a parking structure.

The plan’s recommended development of the Broadway Lyndale area doesn’t square well with its existing designation as an Auto Oriented Shopping Center. It is, however, very compatible with a designation in the draft 2008 Minneapolis Plan. That designation is titled “Major Retail Center”.

Major Retail Centers are defined as having a large concentration of retail floor space, with at least one major grocer or retail establishment and ample public parking, and with convenient access to a major road or highway. Major retail centers are supportive of pedestrian oriented design because they call for the incorporation of “principles of traditional urban design in new and phased development, including buildings that reinforce the street wall, have windows that provide eyes on the street, and principal entrances that face the public sidewalks.”

The West Broadway Alive plan includes recommendations for the designations that should be used for West Broadway in the updated comprehensive plan—i.e. that the Broadway Lyndale area be designated a Major Retail Center, and that other existing designations for West Broadway be retained. It also includes recommendations for how to code property in the Future Land Use map of the updated comprehensive plan so that the coloration of properties in the Future Land Use map will be compatible with the land use guidance of the West Broadway Alive plan.

Public Comments

The West Broadway Alive plan enjoys broad community support. This is expressed through formal endorsements of the plan by the three neighborhood organizations that border on West Broadway—Hawthorne Area Community Council, Jordan Area Community Council, and Northside Residents Redevelopment Council. Four additional comments were received by e-mail during the public comment period. Two were from inter-agency partners of the City of Minneapolis, and the other two were from

community members. The content of these comments is summarized in this section, with a description of the action they generated.

Bus Service. Metro Transit staff pointed out that their Route 19 was omitted from a section of the plan that described existing high frequency bus transit in the West Broadway area. That language has now been amended to reference Route 19 as a high frequency route.

Transportation comments. Hennepin County staff submitted comments concerning the transportation chapter of the plan. In consultation with city Public Works staff some modifications were made to the language in the plan's transportation chapter. In addition, the comments from Hennepin County staff in their entirety are being appended to the plan's appendix.

Bicycle facilities. A neighborhood resident submitted comments concerning his view that the proposed design of the street was inadequate in the way it accommodated bicycling. In response to this comment, language was added to the plan that:

- Clarifies the recommendation that on-street bicycle lanes be explored between the Mississippi River and Lyndale Avenue when the engineering and design work for street reconstruction takes place.

City Planning Commission direction. In addition to the comments received from the public and the city's interagency partners, the City Planning Commission made several suggestions for refinements to the plan during its January 16 Committee of the Whole meeting. These related to strengthening the plan's content concerning its overarching vision, its recommendations for open space and green linkages, its orientation toward gentrification concerns, and the character of the community engagement process. Plan modifications were made to strengthen its treatment of each of these areas.

Future Related Actions

- **Comprehensive plan changes.** Changes to the city's comprehensive plan will be made in conjunction with the rewrite of that plan currently underway.
- **Rezoning of property.** The rezoning of property in the West Broadway corridor is necessary in order to align the zoning of property with the land use guidance of the West Broadway Alive plan. This rezoning project is in the 2008 CPED Planning Division work program.
- **Development review.** A number of development projects along West Broadway are in preliminary stages and are likely, over the next year or two, to require formal development review including the review of development applications such as rezonings, conditional use permits, and site plan review. The Planning Commission also has a role in recommending whether proposed land sales in the West Broadway corridor, and the establishment or modification of West Broadway redevelopment districts are in conformance with the city's comprehensive plan.

Attachments

- Letters from neighborhood organizations

- Comments received during the 45 day public comment period
- Updated draft of the West Broadway Alive Plan (Appendices can be found on the project website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/planning/west-broadway.asp>)

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – PLANNING DIVISION:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council **adopt** the West Broadway Alive plan as an articulation of and amendment to the policies found in the City’s comprehensive plan.