CHAPTER 5: Recommendations

This chapter provides a series of recommendations based on the analysis presented earlier in the plan. These recommendations will be implemented over time. Some recommendations are relatively simple action items, and others are goals that will be reached incrementally. The Implementation Chapter which follows assigns a timeframe and responsible parties to each recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER ADOPTED PLANS

As mentioned in the Existing Conditions chapter, there is existing City Council adopted land use policy for the area in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. The somewhat dated 1997 Lyndale Avenue: A Vision document also provides recommendations related to the road design of Lyndale Avenue South. These recommendations are being implemented south of the study area.

Future Land Use

This plan refines some portions of the future land use map found in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. That plan calls for commercial development (with a preference for mixed-use) fronting Lyndale Avenue South between West 28th Street and the Midtown Greenway study area boundary. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan also calls for high-density housing (40-120 dwelling units an acre) along the Midtown Greenway and some medium-density housing (10 to 50 units an acre) along the south side of West 28th Street.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth refined the definitions of medium and high-density housing to 20 - 50 units an acre for medium-density and 50 – 120 units an acre for high-density development. This plan follows the guidance in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth and thus slightly alters the densities found in the earlier Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan where this plan overlaps with the earlier plan.

A second alteration to the future land use map in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan relates to the area between Colfax and Lyndale Avenue South and between West Lake Street and West 29th Street. Previously parcels not fronting West Lake Street were designated for high-density housing. While it is still the desire to have housing along the Greenway and commercial uses along West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South, these blocks may be redeveloped as part of a larger project in the future that contain both retail and residential uses, and thus they are designated as commercial mixed-use to allow for greater flexibility in design and zoning options. This is also the case for parcels lining the eastern side of Aldrich Avenue South and the western side of Garfield Avenue South between the Midtown Greenway and West 28th Street.

The parcels that make up the public parking lot on the west side of Garfield Avenue South, just north of West Lake Street, have also been re-designated. These parcels had previously been recommended for a future high-density residential development. This plan changes the future land use to commercial with a preference for mixed-use. The Garfield parking lot is discussed in

more detail later in this chapter. This plan recommends the eventual development of a parking ramp book-ended with residential development along the Midtown Greenway and commercial uses along West Lake Street.

West 29th Street

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan promotes the redevelopment of West 29th Street in many locations. Between Lyndale and Fremont Avenues, reconstruction and a slight widening to add sidewalks to the Midtown Greenway edge is recommended, as is the acquisition and reconstruction of the previously vacated section of West 29th Street between Emerson and Dupont Avenues.

This section of West 29th Street is in very poor condition. Once the future of transit in the Midtown Greenway is known, 29th Street West should be recommended for addition to the City's Capital Improvement Program. The design should follow the City's Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, which make accommodations for pedestrian priorities. West 29th Street is an important piece of the street network west of Lyndale Avenue South and provides a great opportunity for improving place-making along the Midtown Greenway and improving public safety.

Between Pleasant and Blaisdell Avenues where West 29th Street is north of the Greenway, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan suggests that it could be vacated in favor of high-quality development fronting the Midtown Greenway. This plan supports that recommendation.

Promenades along the Midtown Greenway

Where West 29th Street does not exist next to the Midtown Greenway and there are no plans expressed for regaining lost road right of way, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan recommends the creation of a promenade as properties are redeveloped. Since the adoption of the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, several developments have included a promenade, strengthening the value of this recommendation.

Lyndale Avenue South

In the mid 1990s a citizen task force developed a plan for the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue South from West Franklin Avenue to the Crosstown Highway. Most of the recommendations relate to the narrowing of the roadway to create a more pedestrian friendly street. Various sections of Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 29th Street have either been reconstructed, are under construction, or are scheduled for reconstruction soon. However, Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street has not been scheduled for reconstruction, although completing the reconstruction is a goal for Hennepin County.

The goals stated for Lyndale Avenue South between West Franklin Avenue and West 28th Street include: development of visible crosswalks/pedestrian crossings, the retention of parking on both sides of the street, the installation of bump-outs at corners to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians and slow traffic, preservation of existing trees to the greatest extent possible,

improvement of intersections with decorative street lighting, creation of visual connections to the Midtown Greenway, and the beautification of the boulevards. This plan supports these goals and acknowledges that further design development will be needed before the street is reconstructed. Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Works, Metro Transit, CPED, and the community should collaborate to ensure that a future street design follows the City's Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, which aim to create "complete streets", balancing all needs.

Future Transit Station Location

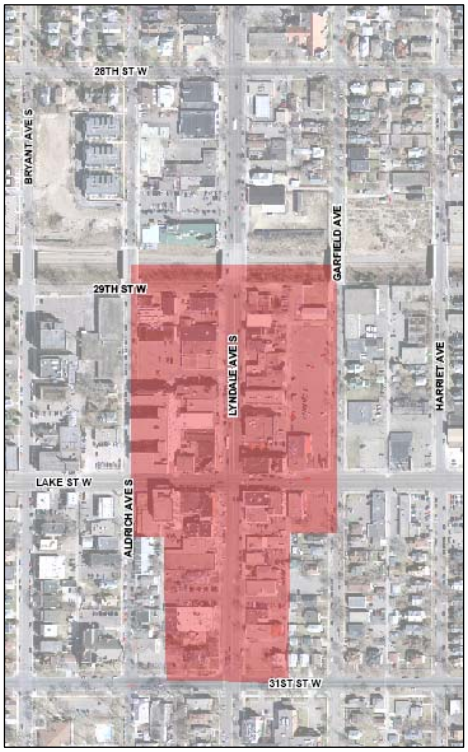
As discussed in the Existing Conditions Chapter, if it is decided that the Southwest Transitway route should run in the Midtown Greenway, there will be a station located in the Greenway trench near Lyndale Avenue South. In the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, a future station location was indicated by a dot on the west side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge. This plan recommends that either the station platform be placed on the east side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge or that a split platform design is used placing platforms on each side of the bridge. A location on the west side of the bridge is in keeping with Hennepin County's current preliminary engineering for the station. Because the City owns the nearby Garfield parking lot, there is more opportunity to influence transit oriented development on the east side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge. However, future transit users will likely travel to and from the transit station in the Midtown Greenway from both sides of Lyndale Avenue South so access points should ideally be located on each side of the bridge.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan recommends that, as opportunities arise, the City give serious consideration to buying or otherwise controlling land contiguous to the Midtown Greenway in station areas. This allows for public space and place making at the Greenway trail level that interacts with future development, the Midtown Greenway, and a future transit station. Opportunities may exist for this to be achieved through a public-private partnership.

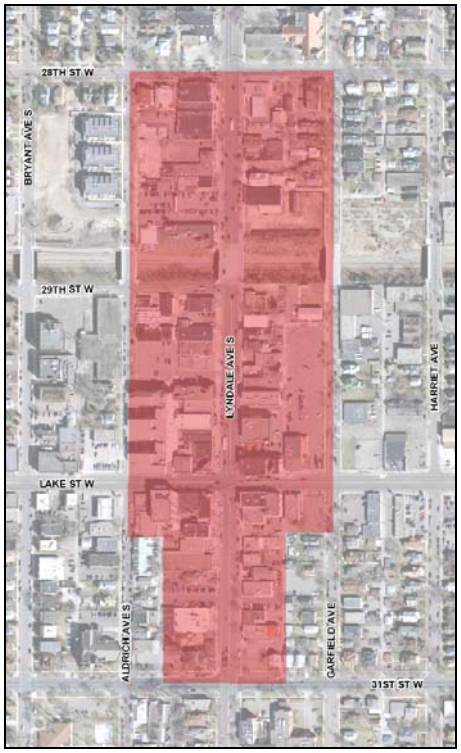
Land Use Designations

In the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth there are several land use designations that apply to the Lyn-Lake area. The area surrounding the West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South intersection is designated as an Activity Center. West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South north of West 31st Street is designated as a Commercial Corridor. Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street is designated as a Community Corridor.

This plan recommends an adjustment to the Activity Center boundary. In the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth the northern boundary of the Activity Center is located along the Midtown Greenway. This plan recommends extending the northern boundary to 28th Street West. This change is being made because the Midtown Greenway serves as a major asset to the area, and more intensive development on each side of this open space and commuter resource is appropriate. Lyndale Avenue South is currently designated as a Commercial Corridor in the comprehensive plan. Commercial Corridor policies call for various commercial use and high density housing along Commercial Corridors. Activity Center policies more specifically encourage mixed-use development and discourage auto oriented uses and call for high to very high density housing.



Current Activity Center Boundary



Proposed Activity Center Boundary

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

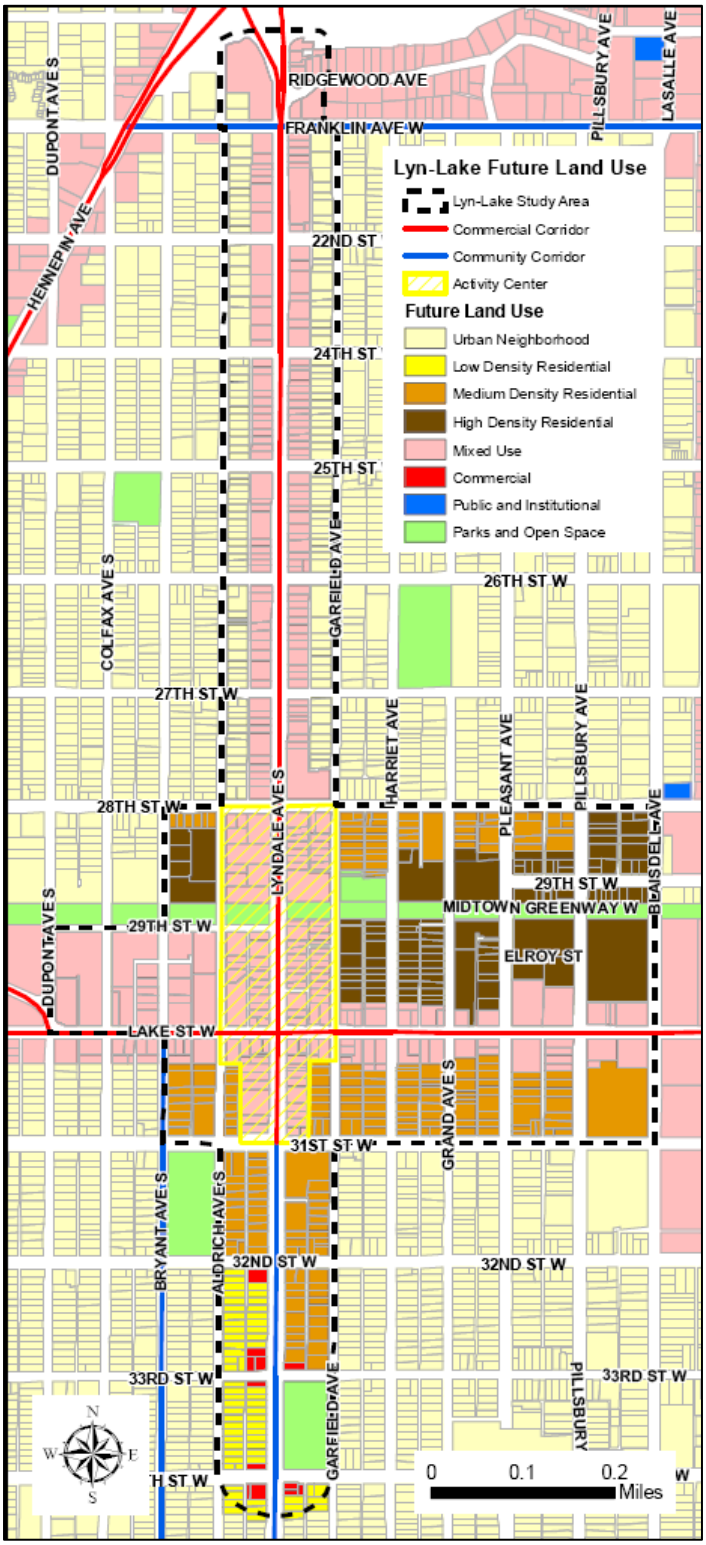
This plan aims to guide phased infill development in a way that will ensure continued economic viability, enhance neighborhood livability, and minimize the negative impacts that are sometimes associated with change.

The future land use map that is part of this document will guide future land use decisions. As with the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and other planning documents, the future land use plan does not imply that uses will or should change immediately. Rather, it provides guidance for how the area should transition over time. For example, industrial uses and single family homes that are found in the study area are valuable land uses, but plans for orderly transitions should be made as market pressures affect change.

The density ranges depicted on the land use map are those found in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth: Urban Neighborhood, less than 20 units and acre; Medium Density, 20-50 units an acre; High Density, 50-120 units an acre. High density development is appropriate on Commercial Corridors and High to Very High Density is appropriate within Activity Centers.

During the study process, an urban design firm was hired to explore design and land use issues through three case studies. These case studies are discussed below.

Because the study area is varied in character and land use, in addition to a



Future Land Use Map

future land use map, different "character areas" are defined to describe recommendations for different parts of the study area. A map of these areas can be found on Page 30.

Building height and character is discussed in the context of each character area below. However, some general principals apply to the whole study area. Higher heights should be concentrated in the Activity Center, and height above six stories (84 feet) should be substantially set back from the lower floors.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth encourages building heights of at least two to along Commercial Corridors, in keeping with neighborhood character. West Lake Street and that part of Lyndale Avenue South, north of West 31st Street are both Commercial Corridors.

When redevelopment projects are proposed, stepped down building heights, a transition of uses, and buffering to adjacent residential areas is encouraged. In addition, shadowing of sidewalks and the Midtown Greenway should be minimized to ensure as comfortable of a pedestrian environment as possible.

Area 1 – The Activity Center

The Activity Center encompasses the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South and the area adjacent to where Lyndale Avenue South goes over the Midtown Greenway. The current mix of restaurants and arts organizations in this area creates a major destination. In order for Lyn-Lake to remain vital and continue to be a destination, this business mix will need to be supported and expanded. The addition of uses that strengthen the daytime population should be encouraged.

Existing City policy for Activity Centers:

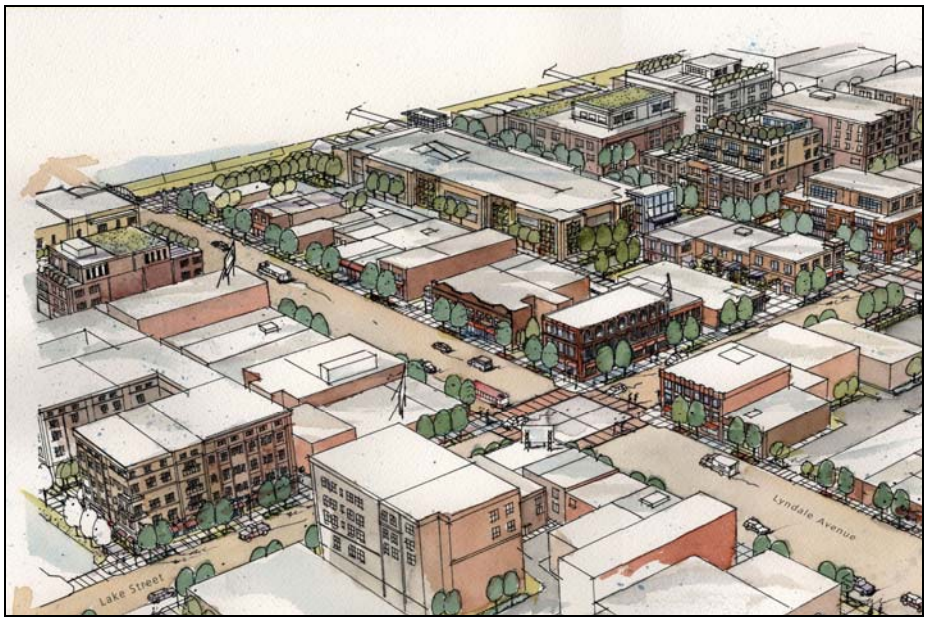
- Encourages a variety of commercial and residential uses that generate activity all day long and into the evening.
- Encourages mixed-use buildings, with commercial uses located on the ground floor and secure entrances for residential uses.
- Encourages active uses on the ground floor of buildings in Activity Centers.
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Activity Centers, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities.
- Encourages a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Activity Centers, in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Encourages the development of high- to very high-density housing within the boundaries of Activity Centers.
- Encourages the development of medium- to high-density housing immediately adjacent to Activity Centers to serve as a transition to surrounding residential areas.
- Supports district parking strategies in Activity Centers, including shared parking facilities with uniform signage, and other strategies.
- Encourages architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces in Activity Centers.

- Encourages developments to incorporate climate sensitive site and building design practices.

In this Activity Center the majority of parcels have a recommended future land use of commercial, with a preference for mixed-use development that includes residential and commercial uses. Commercial zoning that allows residential uses may be appropriate along Aldrich Avenue South to help facilitate developments in the space between Lyndale and Aldrich Avenues. However, commercial uses should be focused on Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street, while residential uses should line Aldrich and Garfield Avenues. Surface parking and loading areas that support development on the main corridors should be discouraged on Aldrich Avenue South and Garfield Avenue South where such uses could impact adjacent residences.

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances includes a provision for a Pedestrian Oriented zoning district. One such Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District exists around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South. The purpose of this district is to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas by promoting street life and activity. This is done by regulating building orientation and design, and by prohibiting certain high impact and automobile-oriented uses such as gas stations and drive-throughs. This district should be expanded to the revised boundaries of the Activity Center. In addition, a minimum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 should be added to this Pedestrian Oriented Overlay district to discourage buildings less than two stories tall.

Existing building height in the Activity Center ranges from one story to six stories. During the study outreach process there was general consensus that the existing feel of the area near the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South is pleasant because the buildings come up to the property line creating a street wall and the fronts of the buildings, or facades, have windows and interesting details. The area has a very comfortable scale at the street level, creating a comfortable pedestrian environment. Thus, it is recommended that when new development is constructed the building face along Lyndale Avenue South or West Lake Street not exceed six stories (84 feet) in the Activity Center so that the new construction will fit into the existing context at the street level and not detract from the existing character. If additional height is proposed, the additional stories should be substantially set back from the lower floors so they do not increase the amount of shadowing that would be created by the six story facade. However, there may be situations in which the provision of quality amenities may be a trade off for increased shadowing.



Conceptual sketch of possible future development, Bonestroo Inc.

Area 2 - Along the Midtown Greenway

The character area referred to as the Midtown Greenway covers the land on each side of the Greenway between Dupont and Blaisdell Avenues and from West 28th Street to approximately mid-block between the Greenway and West Lake Street, with the exception of the area that is part of the Activity Center.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan calls for high-density housing along the Midtown Greenway and medium-density housing along West 28th Street in some locations. This plan supports these future land uses since the market for housing along the Midtown Greenway is expected to remain. Commercial uses would be more well suited along West Lake Street rather than along the Midtown Greenway where vehicular access is more constrained.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan suggests building design that limits shadowing of the Midtown Greenway. Stepped back building design and a promenade along the Midtown Greenway are recommended to minimize the impacts of shadowing on the Midtown Greenway.

Area 3 – West Lake Street, West of Lyndale Avenue South

The section of West Lake Street between Dupont and Aldrich Avenues is of particular importance because it provides the connection between Uptown and Lyn-Lake. In fact, this area is part of both the Uptown Small Area Plan and this plan because of its importance to both areas. This plan takes precedence over the Uptown Small Area Plan with regard to land use for the areas in which the two study areas overlap (bordered by the Midtown Greenway, West Lake Street, Bryant Avenue South and Dupont Avenue South). In addition, where the plans overlap the Uptown plan takes precedence with regard to sculpted building envelope strategies. Quality development and public infrastructure improvements that make this area

more pedestrian friendly are key to the vitality of both Uptown and Lyn-Lake. Mixed-use development along West Lake Street on the blocks between Dupont and Aldrich Avenues is encouraged to improve walkability and connectivity between the Uptown and Lyn-Lake Activity Centers. In addition, encouraging people to walk or take transit between the two areas can increase business and ease congestion and parking pressures.

On the block back between Bryant Avenue South (the Uptown Small Area Plan boundary) and the Aldrich Avenue South (the Activity Center boundary), building should not exceed four stories on the South side of West Lake Street and should step down to residential areas to the south. Taller buildings may be appropriate on the north side of West Lake Street, but the potential impacts should be balanced by the provision of street level public amenities

It is likely that in the future the Minneapolis Public School System will no longer need the Lehman Center building (formally the Buzza Building) located on West Lake Street between Dupont and Colfax Avenues. Reuse or redevelopment of this site presents a great opportunity for the area. As with other school sales an open Request for Proposal process should be followed, and any proposal should address the goals of this small area plan and the Uptown Small Area Plan. Specifically, efforts to preserve the building and create daytime population should be supported.

West Lake Street is designated as a Commercial Corridor in the comprehensive plan. Existing City policy for Commercial Corridors:

- Supports a mix of uses such retail sales, office, institutional, high-density residential and clean low-impact light industrial – where compatible with existing and desired character.
- Encourages commercial development, including active uses on the ground floor, where Commercial Corridors intersect with other designated corridors [like Lyndale Avenue].
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Commercial Corridors, such as some automobile services and drive-through facilities, where Commercial Corridors intersect other designated corridors.
- Encourages a height of at least two stories for new buildings along Commercial Corridors, in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Encourages the development of high-density housing on Commercial Corridors.
- Encourages the development of medium-density housing on properties adjacent to properties on Commercial Corridors.

Future commercial mixed-use development is encouraged for the block dominated by the Lehman Center and the parcels fronting West Lake Street between Dupont and Bryant Avenues. High-density residential development is encouraged along the Midtown Greenway between Colfax and Aldrich Avenues because the Midtown Greenway is considered a major corridor through the city, much like West Lake Street. Even though residential uses are preferred along the Midtown Greenway, the entire area is designated as commercial mixed-use to expand zoning options and potentially accommodate larger projects.

The presence of West 29th Street in this section of the study area allows for better vehicular circulation which may support larger development projects in this area.

Area 4 – West Lake Street, East of Lyndale Avenue South

West Lake Street east of Lyndale Avenue South has a more fragmented urban form than other parts of the study area. Many auto oriented uses are located along West Lake Street between Lyndale and Blaisdell Avenues. Because of the lack of pedestrian oriented destinations, this section is considered less walkable than areas to the west. Nevertheless, the existing businesses do provide valuable goods and services.

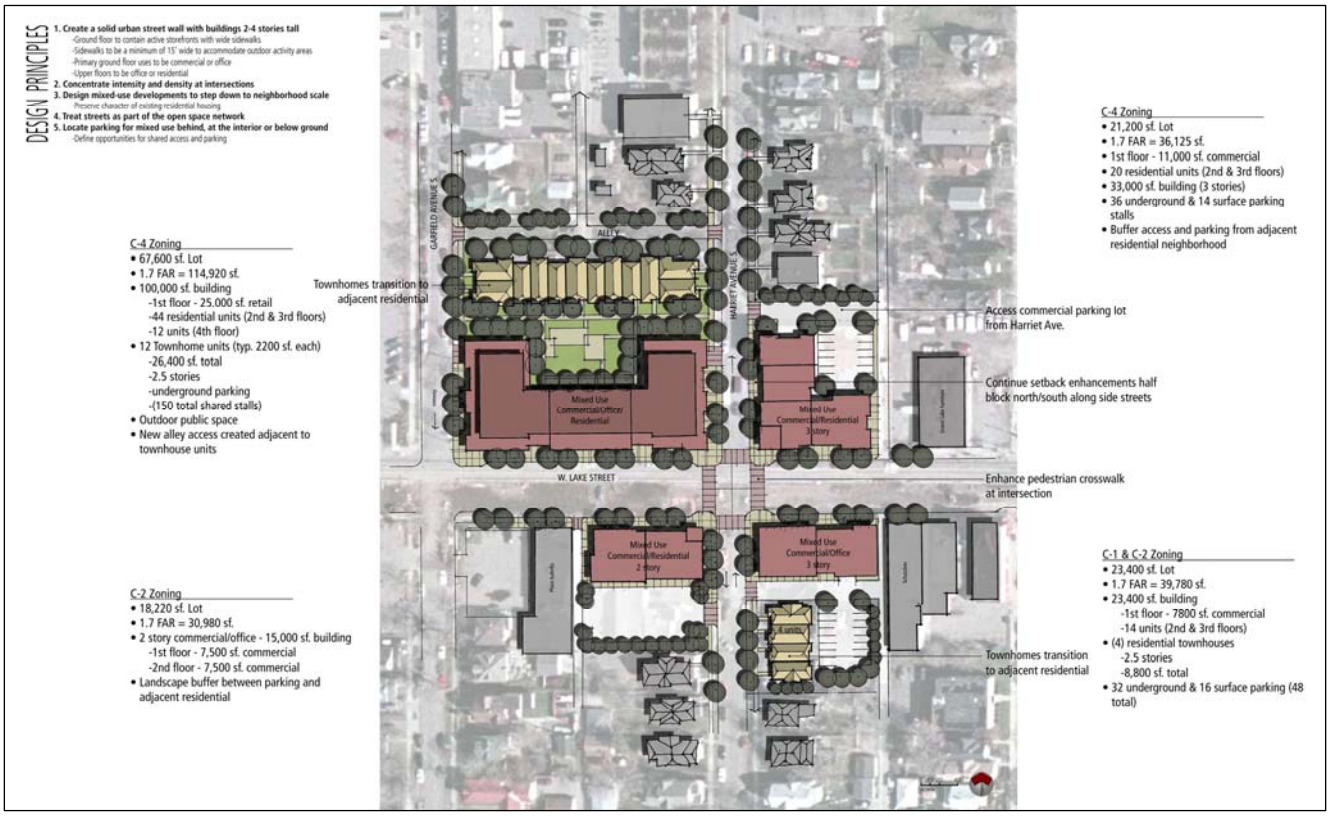
The future land use designation along West Lake Street is commercial mixed-use, although the market may only offer single use commercial development. No matter what the use, bringing buildings to the front of the parcels and placing parking in back as the current zoning code requires will improve the pedestrian comfort in the area and create a safer environment by providing more activity along the street. Buildings along West Lake Street should be designed with an abundance of windows and uses within the building should interact with the sidewalk. Where appropriate, buildings should be setback to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular taller buildings should offer additional public outdoor space fronting West Lake Street as an amenity.

Taller buildings will be more appropriate on the north side of West Lake Street where more infill development between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway is expected. On the north side of West Lake Street, buildings should be encouraged to provide setbacks to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular taller buildings should offer additional public outdoor space compliant with the Comprehensive Plan's Winter Cities standards as an amenity. If proposed buildings exceed the height of the base zoning, the potential impacts should be balanced by the provision of street level public amenities, such as privately owned, semi-public open space that opens up and connects to the existing sidewalk on the north side of West Lake Street having the effect of creating an expanded sidewalk, public alcoves/plazas, or other public amenities to substantially enhance the pedestrian realm. The resulting spaces should be designed in compliance with Winter Cities standards as stated in the Comprehensive Plan and Plaza Standards, when applicable, in promoting four-season use. On the south side of West Lake Street buildings should not exceed four stories and should step down in height as they approach the lower density residential areas to the south to reduce impacts on the adjacent properties.

Residential uses are recommended to the north and south of the commercial parcels along West Lake Street. On the north side of West Lake Street high-density residential uses are recommended in keeping with the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. To the south of West Lake Street, the future land use designation is medium-density housing which is indicative of what's existing on many of the parcels in this section.

As part of the planning process design options for several parcels at West Lake Street and Harriet Avenue South were explored. While the drawings are only concepts and not actual development proposals, they represent the recommendation of having development transition in scale and use from West Lake Street to areas to the south and north.

In addition, this conceptual sketch depicts what a build out scenario along West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway could look like.



Case Study at West Lake Street and Harriet Avenue South
Created by Bonestroo Inc. (see Appendix E for larger scale drawings)

Conceptual sketch of West Lake Street future development. See Appendix E for larger scale.

Area 5 - Lyndale Avenue South, North of West 28th Street

Land uses along Lyndale Avenue South north of West Lake Street are an eclectic mix, as is the built form. There are small shops, restaurants, small apartment buildings, and single family homes. The eclectic mix is something that is valued by many residents and visitors. Future development should be sensitive to the existing context, particularly the residential uses along Aldrich and Garfield Avenues.

Like West Lake Street, Lyndale Avenue South is designated as a Commercial Corridor north of West 31st Street. However, not all Commercial Corridors are the same, nor is one Commercial Corridor usually consistent in its character. Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street has unique sub-areas.

Between West 26th Street and West 28th Street, Lyndale Avenue South is likely to have more intense development than some portions of the street to the north because 26th and 28th Streets provide quick access across the city. These blocks can provide a transition between the Activity Center and areas to the north.

Between West 24th Street and West 26th Street, there are more residential uses than in other sections of Lyndale Avenue South. Since there is a somewhat solid stretch of homes in these blocks, efforts should also be made to preserve the existing fabric and feel of the street, and when possible retain the existing building stock. Commercial uses may be appropriate in order

to allow the existing structures to remain. If new development is proposed, the scale and design should complement the existing residential structures.

Between West Franklin Avenue and West 24th Street there are buildings with larger footprints and more off-street parking. This development is typical of a Commercial Corridor, but as properties are redeveloped access and aesthetics should be improved.

The intersection of West Franklin Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South is a gateway to Southwest Minneapolis, and improvements should be made. Roadway alignments north of West Franklin Avenue make this area uncomfortable for pedestrians and limit development options. This area should be studied in greater detail in the context of the larger connections between Hennepin Avenue, Lyndale Avenue South, and Interstate 94.

The parcels along Aldrich and Garfield Avenues that share an alley with parcels fronting Lyndale Avenue South have been designated as “Urban Neighborhood” rather than being assigned a density level. Urban Neighborhood is a broad term used in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth to describe areas which are predominantly residential with a range of densities. This categorization represents the variety of densities that exist block to block. Densities of 8-20 units an acre are typical in the Urban Neighborhood areas. The Urban Neighborhood designation is not generally intended to accommodate significant new growth, other than the replacement of existing buildings with those of similar density. It is a land use designation that is placed on the majority of the residential areas in the City. This plan supports the desire of adjacent neighborhoods to retain the residential character, and thus commercial uses are encouraged on Lyndale Avenue South and not on Aldrich or Garfield Avenues.

A second case study was done by Bonestroo Inc. for several parcels at Lyndale Avenue South and West 26th Street. The two options above show conceptual designs for commercial and residential infill development along Lyndale Avenue South. The sketch below shows what infill development along Lyndale Avenue S. might look like in the future.

Conceptual sketch of possible future development along Lyndale Avenue South based on Case Study above.

Area 6 - Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street

Land uses along Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street currently transition well from a dense, heavily commercial area to a more typical neighborhood scale. Maintaining this transition and keeping strong pedestrian connections between the residential areas to the south and the Lyn-Lake intersection should be a priority, particularly since Painter Park and the neighborhood commercial node at West 36th Street and Lyndale Avenue South are destinations for residents in the neighborhood.

Lyndale Avenue South is designated as a Community Corridor south of West 31st Street in the comprehensive plan. Existing City policy for Community Corridors:

- Supports the continued presence of existing small-scale retail sales and commercial services along Community Corridors.
- Supports new small-scale retail sales and services, commercial services, and mixed-uses where Community Corridors intersect with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian oriented character of Community Corridors, such as automobile services and drive-through facilities.
- Discourages the conversion of existing residential uses to commercial uses outside of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Encourages the development of low- to medium-density housing on Community Corridors to serve as a transition to surrounding low-density residential areas.
- Promotes more intensive residential development along Community Corridors near intersections with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and other locations where it is compatible with existing character.

The future land use map calls for commercial uses where they exist at West 32nd Street, West 33rd Street, and West 34th Street, but then calls for medium-density and low-density residential uses on other parcels in this stretch of Lyndale Avenue South.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As mentioned in the Existing Conditions chapter, there are several individual structures in the study area for which additional assessment of their historic value is warranted. In addition, the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South has been identified as an area that may be eligible for designation as an historic district. The area that may be eligible for designation is referred to as Lyndale Corners in preliminary analysis conducted by the City's Heritage Preservation staff.

Buildings in historic districts typically have shared characteristics while individual landmarks span a variety of architectural styles and architects. While all buildings have a history, historic designation means that a property has a greater significance to local or national history. The significance may be the way the building or landscape is designed, or the significance may be the persons associated with the building, including owners, tenants, and designers. In the case

of Lyn-Lake the buildings immediately adjacent to the intersection are of significance (the Cromwell Block at 2957 Lyndale Avenue South is already designated as a local landmark).

Specific criteria have been established for determining if an area or building is worthy of local or national designation. A cursory review indicates that buildings surrounding the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South meet these criteria, but additional analysis and documentation are needed. This plan recommends that the City engage property owners, the business community, and residents in a dialogue about the value of historic districts and explore the additional analysis needed at the Lyn-Lake intersection.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Interest in additional green space and efforts that promote a more sustainable urban environment was expressed by residents during the public outreach process. Unfortunately, available land is limited. In addition, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board's focus is on maintaining existing facilities, while expanding in areas of the City where open space and park needs are even greater.

Thus, it is likely that additional open spaces will have to be provided with new development. As development is proposed the inclusion of green spaces and plazas should be encouraged. In appropriate locations, trade-offs for the provision of open space, such as allowance for additional height should be considered. Open space that is accessible to the general public should be given priority, but private spaces can also provide environmental benefits and beautification to an area.

In addition, opportunities may exist to enhance spaces within the Midtown Greenway, particularly with the addition of a potential future rail transit station. A rail transit station in the Greenway is an opportunity to create a public, or publicly-accessible, plaza down at the trial-and-transit elevation contiguous with the train station. Development fronting a well designed lower level open space at the train station has the potential to weave together the Midtown Greenway with surrounding area up above it. Elsewhere, a promenade along the top edge of the Midtown Greenway would provide linear open space for mobility along he trench rim and overlooks. On the Greenway's north edge, such a promenade can also provide important connections to stairways and ramps for trail access. It may be appropriate for some developments on the north side of the Greenway to open up at the lower level in some key locations (introducing more pedestrian access on the south side of the Greenway is discouraged because if rail is implemented it will be placed on the south side). Development with well-designed open space has the potential to weave together the Midtown Greenway and surrounding areas.

The Soo Line Garden is a valued open space that has seen more demand for use as development has increased. This land should be preserved as a community garden and opportunities for additional community gardens should be pursued.

Developers are also encouraged to pursue sustainable designs for buildings and landscapes. Designs incorporating energy efficiency measures, enhanced storm water management, green roofs, living walls, enhanced landscaping, and native plantings can add to the character of the area and promote a "green spirit" for the area.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The transportation system in the Lyn-Lake area works generally well. The area is well connected to the north, south, east, and west. While there are opportunities for additional pedestrian enhancements, particularly on Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street, the reconstruction of West Lake Street has provided great improvements.

Automobile

When Lyndale Avenue South is reconstructed north of the Midtown Greenway, pedestrian amenities should be enhanced. Hennepin County and the City's Public Works Department should engage the community in developing a design that balances all needs. The intersections of Lyndale Avenue South and 26th Street West and 28th Street West are of particular concern and in need of designs that make the intersections more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

The reconstruction and reestablishment of West 29th Street west of Lyndale Avenue South should be a top priority. As redevelopment occurs, vacated portions of West 29th Street should be rededicated as public right of way. Once reconstructed and reestablished, West 29th Street will provide needed automobile and pedestrian connections, but it is currently dark and in very poor repair. Opportunities exist, particularly if transit is added to the Midtown Greenway, to make West 29th Street a key pedestrian amenity.

The roadway bridges that go over the Midtown Greenway are another key element in the transportation network. Many of these bridges are old and in need of reconstruction. It is important to keep these north/south connections open. As the bridges are replaced, they should be designed in a way that provides location identification and place-making in the Midtown Greenway, and within the constraints of the historic district.

An opportunity to reconnect Nicollet Avenue may exist in the future and this would also have a positive impact on the Lyn-Lake area. The re-opening of Nicollet Avenue is recommended in many other small area plans. Although Nicollet Avenue is out of this plan's study area, this plan supports the reopening because of the positive impacts it would have on Lyn-Lake.

Vehicular congestion on many of the north/south streets east of Lyndale Avenue South such as on Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues can be improved by encouraging commercial uses to front on West Lake Street rather than between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway.

In addition, a variety of near term solutions should be explored to mitigate traffic on Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues. These could include, but may not be limited to, education about and enforcement of traffic laws, additional signage, a shared parking plan, alternative transportation plans, and relocation of commercial uses to West Lake Street building frontages.

Parking

Parking is a major issue for the Lyn-Lake area. Ideally, more and more people would walk, bike, or take transit to the area. However, many people still drive, particularly to evening entertainment venues. The Garfield parking lot, which is owned by the City of Minneapolis, is a great asset to the area and strategic plans for its enhancement should be made.

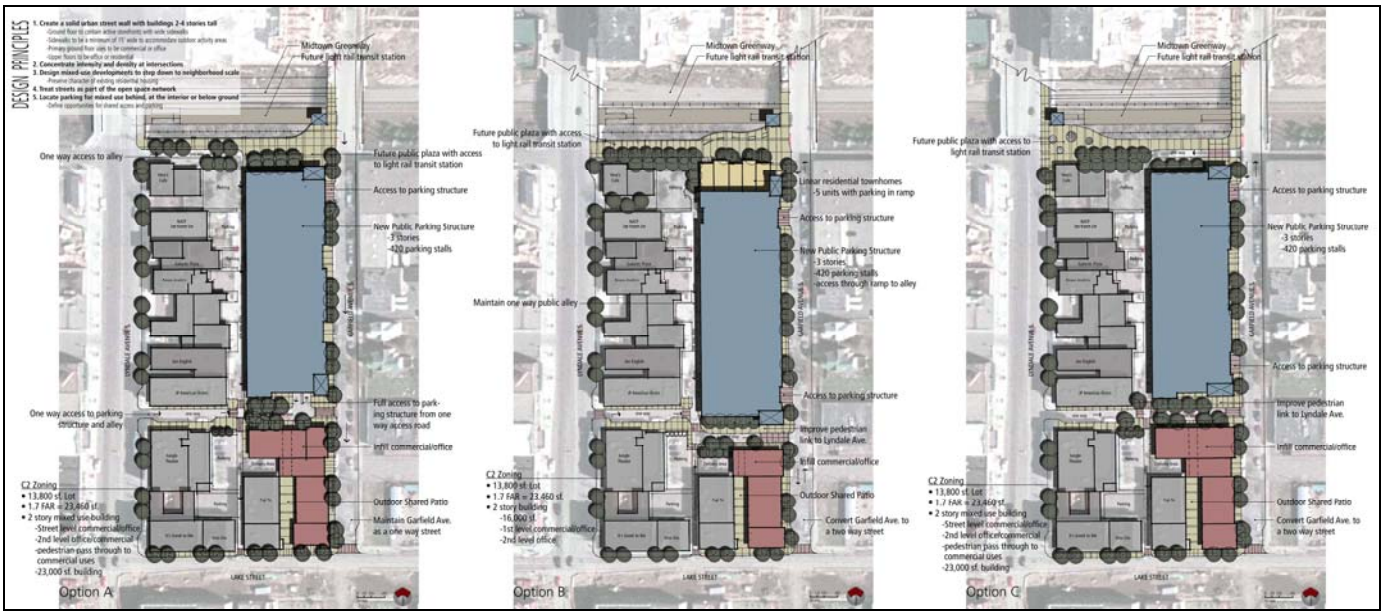
The Garfield parking lot enhances economic development by providing district-wide parking. At some point in the coming years, the lot will reach capacity with the sale of "parking credits" to area businesses. Currently all business within 300 feet of the lot pay a special assessment that pays down the original bonding used to construct the lot.

If a parking ramp is constructed on the Garfield parking lot the following recommendations should be pursued:

- A ramp should be constructed with multi-story retail fronting West Lake Street and housing fronting the Midtown Greenway. This would most likely and ideally entail a public-private development partnership and potentially the purchase of additional parcels. If a ramp is constructed only on the City owned parcels, accommodations should be made to encourage development on adjacent parcels.
- The area that benefits from the Garfield parking lot is arguably larger than 300 feet from the lot, and will likely continue to grow. Thus, the plan recommends analyzing the special assessment area to determine possible new boundaries. Because an additional special assessment may harm businesses in the current economic climate and because more will be understood about potential parking demands after a decision has been made pertaining to transit implementation in the Midtown Greenway, further analysis should be done related to the appropriate timing of the assessment.
- When development occurs access should be re-evaluated. Garfield Avenue South is currently a one-way street running south, and this creates confusion and safety issues. Options for better access to a redeveloped lot could include either: a new access off Lyndale near the Midtown Greenway, alterations to the existing access mid-block of Lyndale Avenue South, or analyzing the feasibility and impact of converting Garfield Avenue South to two way traffic south of the Greenway . The future development of adjacent parcels could affect which access options would be the best, and further coordination with Public Works will be needed.
- The Garfield Avenue South side of the parking ramp should be designed in conformance with the City's zoning code requirements and provide an attractive façade along Garfield Avenue South.

The Garfield parking lot, in its current form or as a future ramp, should not serve as a park and ride lot for future transit in the Midtown Greenway. Doing so could push out parking resources for area businesses and create vehicular congestion. This City owned parcel can be a key catalyst for transit oriented development rather than simply a parking resource. If the lot is developed as a ramp, a plan for special ticketing procedures to avoid use as a park and ride lot should be implemented.

During the planning process, three conceptual designs were developed for how a potential future ramp might interact with existing structures, the Midtown Greenway, and a future transit station and future development.



Case Study of the Garfield Parking Lot, created by Bonestroo Inc. See Appendix E for larger scale drawings.

There is also public parking under the Village Green Apartments and the Blue development at West Lake Street and Aldrich Avenue South. Despite the fact that these areas are signed as public parking, people seem more hesitant to use these lots. Efforts should be made to better promote this existing parking. Opportunities exist to create maps and flyers that describe the available parking at Lyn-Lake. Promotional materials could be created by the business association and placed in area restaurants and entertainment venues.

Transit

If the Midtown Greenway is chosen as a transit route and a station is located at Lyndale Avenue South, an additional level of planning involving detailed design work related to pedestrian connections and public space planning will be needed.

This plan supports the placement of the rail platform to the east of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge or a split platform on both sides, but all corners surrounding the Midtown Greenway and Lyndale Avenue South should have coordinated pedestrian amenities that allow for easy access to and from the Midtown Greenway to the surrounding properties.

The Lyn-Lake area already has many elements of a transit oriented area. It should be expected that development interest will increase if transit is available in the Midtown Greenway. Uses that support transit, such as office and residential land uses, should be encouraged as should services that potential future transit users would need.

The current bus transit system is robust and serves the area well. However, evening traffic and parking demand can be heavy and encouraging people to take transit to evening events can be challenging. The area business associations (Uptown, Lyn-Lake, and Whittier) and neighborhoods should work with Metro Transit to pursue options for an express circulator transit service that could service the major activity centers. This would allow people to move freely between the activity centers without moving their car. It could reduce parking demand and create new business. Such a service, if successful, could even be expanded to include other business areas such as Eat Street and be used as a marketing tool for the area.

Bicycle

In recent years bicycle use of the Midtown Greenway has increased dramatically. Making destinations bicycle friendly along the Midtown Greenway is more important than ever. The zoning ordinance was recently amended to require bicycle parking as part of most developments, and a bicycle master plan process is currently underway that will outline policies for future bicycle infrastructure investments. If transit is implemented in the Midtown Greenway, it should be designed in such a manner that bicycles can easily move from street level, down into the trench, and on to a train. Bicycle sharing programs should also be considered in the Lyn-Lake area.

Pedestrian

The Lyn-Lake area is generally pedestrian friendly, but there are areas that need improvement. North of 29th Street West sidewalks vary in quality and design, and some land uses are more inviting to walk by than others. Hennepin County has not identified a target year for the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue South from 29th Street West to Franklin Avenue, but the construction of a quality pedestrian environment should be a priority when that project is undertaken. In the meantime, as new development is proposed, special design attention should be given to the streetscape.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Lyn-Lake will have to continue to strive to retain its unique character and “brand” as changes occur up and down West Lake Street. With the exception of the cluster of restaurants near the Lyn-Lake intersection the retail market lacks synergy, due to the wide variety of destinations and spacing between them. This is an issue that can be addressed through strategic marketing of certain properties and good planning of commercial space. In addition, the business association can continue to strengthen the branding and marketing of the area.

The current economic conditions have been hard for many businesses. In addition, the reconstruction of West Lake Street has created an added hardship. With West Lake Street open again, business should improve and it may be timely for some businesses to pursue assistance with improvements.

The City has two business development programs that are particularly applicable to the Lyn-Lake area. The two–percent loan program provides financing to small businesses (retail, service

or light manufacturing) to purchase equipment or to make building improvements on commercial properties located in designated Commercial Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes (West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South are Commercial Corridors). A private lender provides half the loan at market rate and the City provides the rest, up to $75,000 at 2-percent interest. The loan term is set by the private lender and can be up to 10 years.

The Façade Improvement Program is currently being pursued by the Whittier Alliance and the Lake Street Council. The Façade Improvement Matching Grants program provides building owners and business owners, who are located in areas with an active façade improvement grant contract, to apply for a matching grant to help pay for eligible storefront improvements.

A variety of other programs, including Tax Increment Financing, are also available, their applicability would be dependent on individual site proposals.

HOUSING

Availability of affordable housing will continue to be an issue. Land value is likely to remain high and the cost of new housing units will reflect the high land values. In addition, if transit service is added to the Midtown Greenway, there will be an additional increase in demand and cost for new housing. Increasing density (providing a variety of unit sizes) and providing transit access are two ways to provide more affordable living options without direct public subsidization.

As with business development, the City does manage a variety of grants and programs that can assist with the development of affordable housing. Many of these funds are dedicated to areas that are more impacted by blight and in more need of public funds to stabilize a neighborhood. However, developers are provided with incentives such as density bonuses for providing affordable units. In addition, any City assisted housing project of ten or more units must keep twenty percent of the units affordable to households earning 50% or less of the median metro-area income. Developers are encouraged to pursue these options to provide more affordable units in areas like Lyn-Lake.

SUMMARY

These recommendations represent a guide for future development and a series of steps that can be taken to better the Lyn-Lake area.

At the beginning of the planning process a vision statement and several guiding principles were outlined:

The Lyn-Lake area highly values its independent and diverse business mix. This colorful destination will be supported and enhanced by encouraging the continued development of a clean, dense, and vibrant district. Lyn-Lake's diversity and urban character is valued; it will continue to be an artsy enclave that serves as a home to a diverse population. It will continue to be a place where people choose to walk, bike, and take transit to enjoy all that the area has to offer.

Principles that guide this plan include:

- Maintain and grow an independent and diverse business mix.
- Promote a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Maintain and cultivate a residential and commercial identity that is uniquely Lyn-Lake.
- Support a dense environment with housing options for a variety of incomes and lifestyles.
- Encourage incremental greening through the development of small urban green spaces and environmentally sensitive design.
- Balance the needs of automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers while recognizing the exceptional nearby amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and the Midtown Greenway.
- Continue to plan for the parking needs of area businesses, residents, and visitors while balancing the need for a walkable, well developed area.

These recommendations can make this vision and these principles a reality. In the following chapter the recommendations will be summarized and timelines and responsible parties associated with them.