



Midtown Greenway at Lyndale Avenue (Soo Line Gardens at right)



The Greenway is used for commuting, traveling, recreation and other purposes.

Introduction

Project Background

The Midtown Greenway consists of the former railway corridor running along 29th Street across central Minneapolis from Lake Calhoun in the west to the Mississippi River to the east. The intent for the railroad bed, currently owned by the Hennepin County Regional Transit Authority, is to combine rail transit service with bike and pedestrian trails. The first phase of paved trails opened in 2001, the second phase in November 2004. The final phase from Hiawatha Avenue to the river was opened in September 2006.

Land uses are changing dramatically along the Greenway spurred by the new Greenway amenity and by the construction of new projects such as Urban Village in Uptown (north of the Greenway between Aldrich and Colfax Avenues) and the Midtown Exchange near Chicago Avenue and Lake Street. Development pressure is also responding to the prospect of future rail transit along the Midtown Greenway corridor. A plan is needed to create a comprehensive vision and implementation strategy to guide development and public improvements along the entire length of the Midtown Greenway corridor.

Project Goal and Objective

The primary purpose of the plan is to provide clear policy direction for land use and development along the Midtown Greenway. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan evaluates the long-term viability of existing land uses along the corridor. Future land uses are proposed along the Midtown Greenway as are development guidelines and concepts for selected case study sites that represent a range of development opportunities throughout the project area. These concepts take into consideration the development of Lake Street, current land use patterns, existing transit service and the anticipated rail transit under consideration for the area. Possible approaches to key implementation issues, such as open space ownership and management strategies, are explored and outlined in this report.

Following successful completion and public review of the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, it is being presented to the Minneapolis Planning Commission and City Council for approval as official policy direction within the study area. The Plan is to be used by city planners, Planning Commissioners, policymakers, developers, neighborhoods and other stakeholders to guide future land uses and development along the Midtown Greenway.

Planning Process

A planning process that included extensive input from the community through a process of stakeholder and public engagement guided the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. This process was directed by City staff and a Steering Committee, and was structured around an iterative methodology where planning and design solutions reflect shared community values. This process enabled the consultant team and City staff

to gather a wealth of information and insight that was incorporated into the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan.

Project Steering Committee

The City formed a project Steering Committee before preparing the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan to provide process guidance and assist with community outreach. In addition to Minneapolis CPED staff and members of the consultant team, members of the Steering Committee represented organizations such as Hennepin County, advocacy organizations, neighborhood groups, City Council staff and the Metropolitan Council.

The consultant team met with the Steering Committee six times throughout the planning process to update them on the study progress and to identify issues for Steering Committee resolution. Please refer to *Appendix A* for summaries of each meeting.

Community Outreach and Engagement

In addition to Steering Committee meetings, seven well-attended public meetings and one developer round table discussion were held. These public meetings were publicized on the City's project website, through flyer handouts, in local newspapers, through neighborhood and business organizations and on community radio stations. Attempts were made to see that all members of the community were represented and invited to these public meetings, including neighborhood organizations, residents (homeowners and renters), business organizations, business owners/managers, advocacy groups and property owners. The following are brief summaries of the purpose and content of each public meeting; more detailed meeting summaries are included in *Appendix B* of this document.

Community Meeting #1

The first community meeting and open house was held in July of 2005 at Intermedia Arts near 28th Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South. At this meeting, the consultant team and City staff presented the project team, stakeholders, purpose, process and final product examples. The second half of the meeting was held in an open-house format where participants were invited to ask questions regarding the purpose of the project, existing land use, zoning, development and market conditions in the Greenway. Meeting facilitators solicited input on the Greenway-Friendly Development Principles for the project (see Chapter IV. Vision and Principles of Development), and asked participants to identify on aerial photographs Greenway area assets and opportunities – potential areas of change. In addition, facilitators obtained feedback through a short survey completed by meeting participants.

Community Meetings #2 and #3

The second and third community meetings were held in August of 2005 at Salem Lutheran Church and the Midtown YWCA, respectively. These meetings were held on successive evenings to obtain input and feedback from the western and eastern halves of the Greenway project area. At both of



Seven public meetings were held throughout the process and project area to maximize public input

these meetings, attendees were given a presentation on the first open house, City policy and housing density in the Greenway area and the basics of the development market. Preliminary opportunity sites along the corridor were also presented (see Chapter V. Case Study Sites and Appendix F for a description of these sites). Staff, consultants and Steering Committee members facilitated small group discussions to obtain feedback on the Development Principles and Opportunity Sites for the project.

Community Meetings #4 and #5

The fourth and fifth community meetings were held in October of 2005, also at Salem Lutheran Church and the Midtown YWCA, to obtain input and feedback from the western and eastern halves of the Greenway project area. At these meetings, the consultant team gave a presentation that reviewed the inventory and analysis of the corridor and gave an overview of the four Case Study sites chosen to represent redevelopment opportunities in the Greenway (see Chapter V for a discussion of the roles and characteristics of these sites). Again, small group discussions helped obtain input from participants on the development concepts for each Case Study site and solicited new ideas for redevelopment.

Community Meeting #6

The sixth community meeting was held in November of 2005 at the Midtown YWCA. Members of the consultant team reviewed development trends in the corridor as well as street and block patterns, types and conditions. Additionally, greenspace implementation strategies, including preliminary ownership and management suggestions, and preliminary development guidelines, were presented to participants. Afterwards, participants broke down into small groups of eight to 10 to discuss greenspace strategies and development guidelines, and to provide feedback and suggestions.



The final public meeting was conducted both as a presentation and an open house

Community Meeting #7

The seventh and final community meeting and open house was held in February of 2006 at Intermedia Arts. At this meeting, the consultant team and City staff presented an update on the project's background and processes. The draft future land use plan was presented, as were the updated development guidelines, public realm features and open space management strategies. To obtain meaningful and reproducible input into these important plan elements, participants were invited to ask questions regarding the future land use, development and the public realm, and were asked to record their comments on comment sheets and notes on graphic boards. Additional information was obtained through a short survey that meeting participants completed.