



West Broadway **ALIVE**

Executive Summary





West Broadway Alive is a plan for the revitalization of West Broadway Avenue in north Minneapolis. Community-initiated, and highly collaborative in its development, it sets a policy foundation and action agenda for re-establishing West Broadway as a community asset—the commercial and community heart of North Minneapolis.

Context

Like the north Minneapolis community in which it is located, West Broadway faces multiple and interrelated challenges. Yet it has tremendous assets. Its commercial potential is based not on hope and idealism, but on real structural advantages such as its proximity to downtown Minneapolis, its location relative to competing commercial areas, and ready access to Interstate 94. These characteristics offer the promise of a self-sustaining future once threshold livability conditions are addressed, and the commercial and residential development markets are righted.

The West Broadway Alive small area plan envisions a vibrant and successful corridor, and it identifies key actions necessary to realize that vision. Significant and sustained investment will be required, as well as ongoing collaboration. The prize is a distinctive and attractive North Minneapolis main street that will serve as an anchor of community stability, value, and pride.

Community Engagement

The West Broadway Alive planning process employed extensive and innovative community engagement strategies in order to reach a diverse community and foster genuine ownership of the plan. A community based steering committee played a critical role in this. It prioritized and provided guidance on outreach strategies. It provided perspective on whether agendas and materials intended for public meetings would be effective in communicating information and inviting input.

Public meetings were advertised using radio, newspaper, flyers, and e-mail distribution lists. Posterboards advertising events were set up in local businesses. Community meetings were intentionally designed to be lively events with many methods of soliciting input, so that the process might get a reputation for being engaging and worthwhile. Specific outreach strategies were designed to reach the most populous ethnic communities that reside in the area.

Additional efforts were made to extend the planning process into the community. Project materials were brought to community festivals and events, as well as neighborhood meetings. Information was gathered through surveys and street



interviews. Area youth were recruited to contribute to the planning process. They conducted street interviews, administered shopping surveys, and analyzed crime patterns.

Plan Foundation

A set of core values and objectives that underpin West Broadway revitalization efforts were drafted by the West Broadway Alive Steering Committee, and fine-tuned through presentation to the broader community at the community open houses.

Vision

West Broadway is a multicultural place rich in history, civic engagement and the arts.

The West Broadway community celebrates the Avenue as a welcoming, attractive, safe place alive with the collaboration of residents, business owners and others, promoting economic vitality for future generations.

Guiding Principles

Improvements along West Broadway will help to build a unified character and identity to the corridor with improved physical environments, better functioning business districts and diverse residential developments.

Linkages and approaches to West Broadway are highly important. New development and streetscape improvements will make West Broadway feel closer and easier to get to.

Public art, façade improvements and other design features will create an outlet for community expression while unifying the street aesthetically.

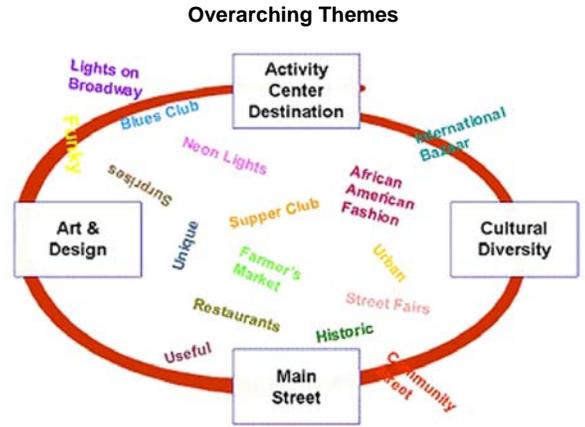
The West Broadway community welcomes new development and expects that it exhibit high-quality construction and design. New development will complement the best elements of the existing historic character of West Broadway and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The West Broadway community values and supports local businesses. New businesses are welcome as well, particularly those that add to a healthy mix of goods and services available in North Minneapolis.

Housing growth is essential because it contributes to the economic viability of West Broadway. New development will create options, adding to the area's supply of middle income and upscale housing while providing some affordable living opportunities, including ownership and well-managed rental units. New housing will meet the needs of residents in various life stages.

Overarching and Area Themes

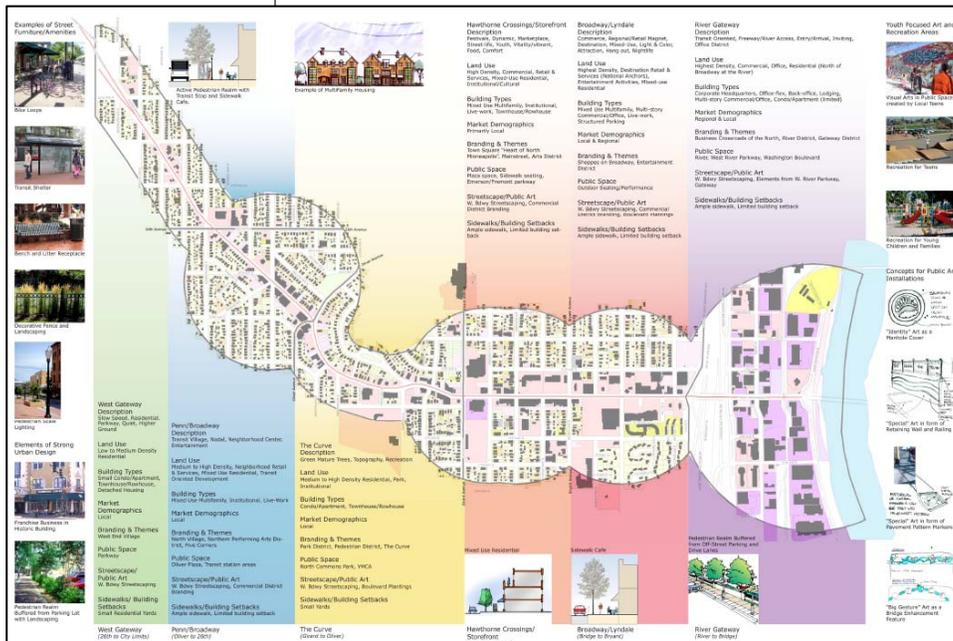
A good plan builds on existing strengths, so many initial community exercises focused on identifying the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the West Broadway corridor. The input offered through these exercises was distilled into a set of overarching themes. These represent existing strengths, as well as the nucleus of an identity that can be strengthened through future branding and marketing activities.



While the West Broadway corridor is in clear need of visual and marketing elements that strengthen the street's sense of unity and connectedness, a plan for West Broadway also needs to acknowledge the reality that different sections of the corridor serve different roles. For example, some parts of West Broadway are more residential in character, and that character should be strengthened. And some of the commercial areas are more neighborhood-oriented while others draw from a broader market area.

Six sub-areas were identified through the planning process.

- West Gateway
- Penn/Broadway
- The Curve
- Hawthorn Crossings/Historic Storefronts
- Broadway/Lyndale
- River Gateway



The District Themes map summarizes the character of these six areas in terms of their desired land use, scale of development, market area, potential marketing labels, and visual characteristics.

Frames of Reference

Three frames of reference were utilized in evaluating the corridor and in considering actions to strengthen and animate West Broadway. These multiple perspectives served to reduce blind spots and resulted in a robust and holistic vision and action agenda.

- **Development.** What can be done to invite and encourage development investment?
- **Business.** What strategies should be employed to help existing businesses and commercial nodes to thrive?
- **Design.** What design improvement and place-making projects should be undertaken to make West Broadway more beautiful and inviting?

Development Guidance

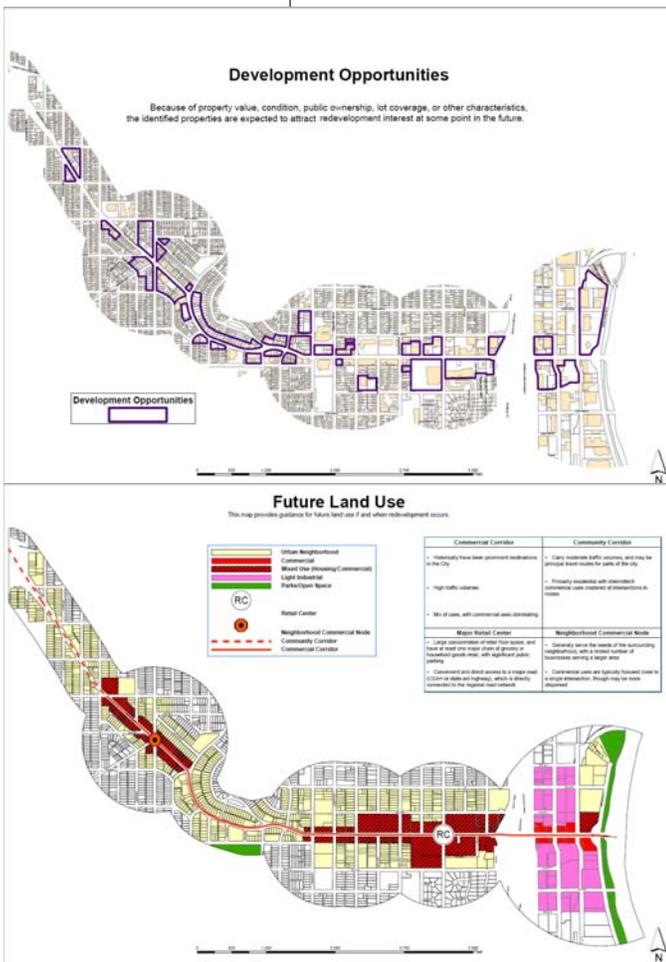
Development Opportunities

Development opportunity sites are properties that are judged to be likely candidates for redevelopment. The West Broadway Alive plan undertook an assessment of property in the West Broadway corridor to identify development opportunity sites, using a broad set of criteria.

The map can be of service in setting City priorities for development related activities such as site assembly and development support. It can also be employed in conversation with developers about what opportunities might be available for redevelopment.

Land Use and Development Intensity

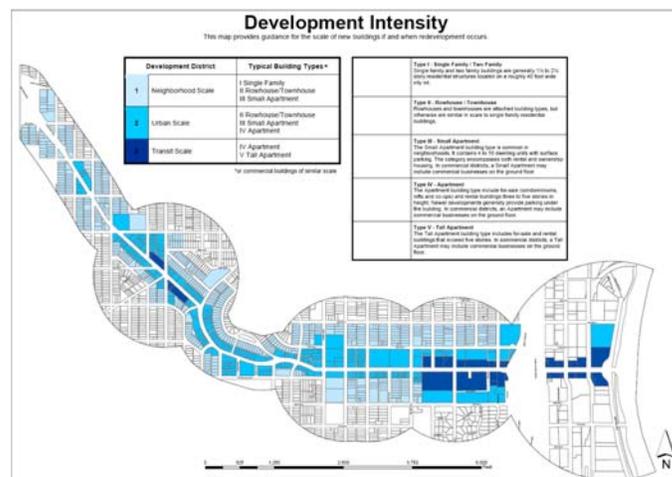
The West Broadway Alive plan offers a “Future Land Use” map that is compatible in format to the city’s comprehensive plan map. Most of West Broadway is a designated “Commercial Corridor” on this map. The “Retail Center” designation, newly created for the revised comprehensive plan, is proposed for the West Broadway/Lyndale Avenue commercial area. The area between Interstate 94 and West River Road is within a designated “Employment District”. The



coloration of property on the map represents the preferred future land use. Mixed use development (residential with ground floor commercial) is encouraged in all commercial areas except for in the Employment District.

This land use guidance promotes a West Broadway corridor that concentrates commercial development into recognizable commercial districts, and encourages multifamily housing development in between and outside these areas.

The “Development Intensity” map provides guidance concerning the appropriate level of density in the West Broadway corridor in terms of building type, height, and bulk.

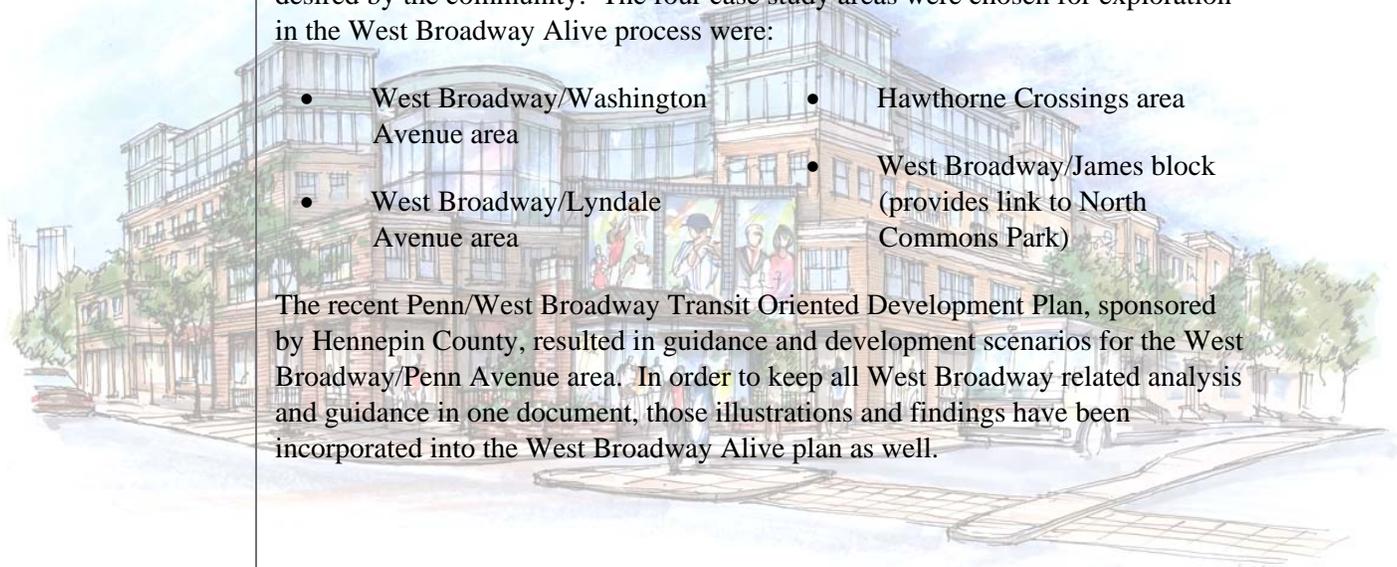


Development Case Studies

Several development case studies were selected to give community members an opportunity to weigh in on what they would like to see at specific sites, and to learn about how that relates to what is feasible from a development perspective. The sites were selected because they represented important opportunities, as well as a mix of different types of development opportunities. The scenarios that came out of this case study work are documented in the West Broadway Alive plan and will be used to communicate with future developers about the kind of development desired by the community. The four case study areas were chosen for exploration in the West Broadway Alive process were:

- West Broadway/Washington Avenue area
- West Broadway/Lyndale Avenue area
- Hawthorne Crossings area
- West Broadway/James block (provides link to North Commons Park)

The recent Penn/West Broadway Transit Oriented Development Plan, sponsored by Hennepin County, resulted in guidance and development scenarios for the West Broadway/Penn Avenue area. In order to keep all West Broadway related analysis and guidance in one document, those illustrations and findings have been incorporated into the West Broadway Alive plan as well.



Development Guidelines

Development guidelines for West Broadway were developed to ensure that improvements to property and the streetscape, although made incrementally over many years, will contribute to a coherent and unified visual environment. Design improvements and public art are high priorities because they provide an opportunity to contribute to four community objectives.

- Unify the corridor
- Express community values
- Make West Broadway distinctive
- Engage the community in the creative process

Design Threads

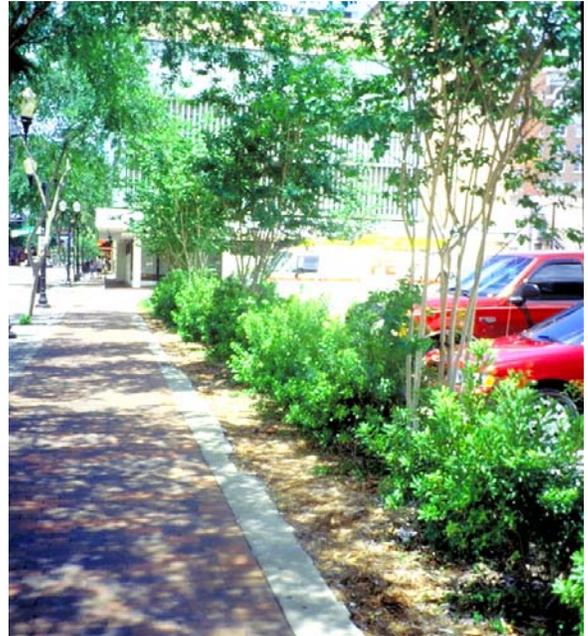
Design threads are ideas that can pull disparate elements together while also serving to make the corridor a special and distinctive place. They are simple, allowing abundant creativity within their broad guidance. Taken together they will cultivate an environment that could be described as “active”, “stimulating”, “engaging”, and “playful”.

1. **Color and Pattern.** The West Broadway environment should be marked by bright and multiple colors and patterns. Diversity in color is symbolic of the community’s diversity, and lends itself to participation in the creative process.
2. **Three Dimensionality/ Movement.** Functional and artistic elements that have depth, or evoke a sense of movement, have impact. Elements that project horizontally from buildings, or vertically from the sidewalk, are encouraged.
3. **Language.** Language can serve as a connecting thread along West Broadway. Capturing language in the built environment provides a way to express community values.



Site and Building Development Guidelines

The plan offers a set of guidelines that inform the development and improvement of private property. Improvements like façade upgrades or the addition of fencing and landscaping are undertaken by property owners, business owners, or developers, and collectively have a tremendous impact on the look and feel of West Broadway.

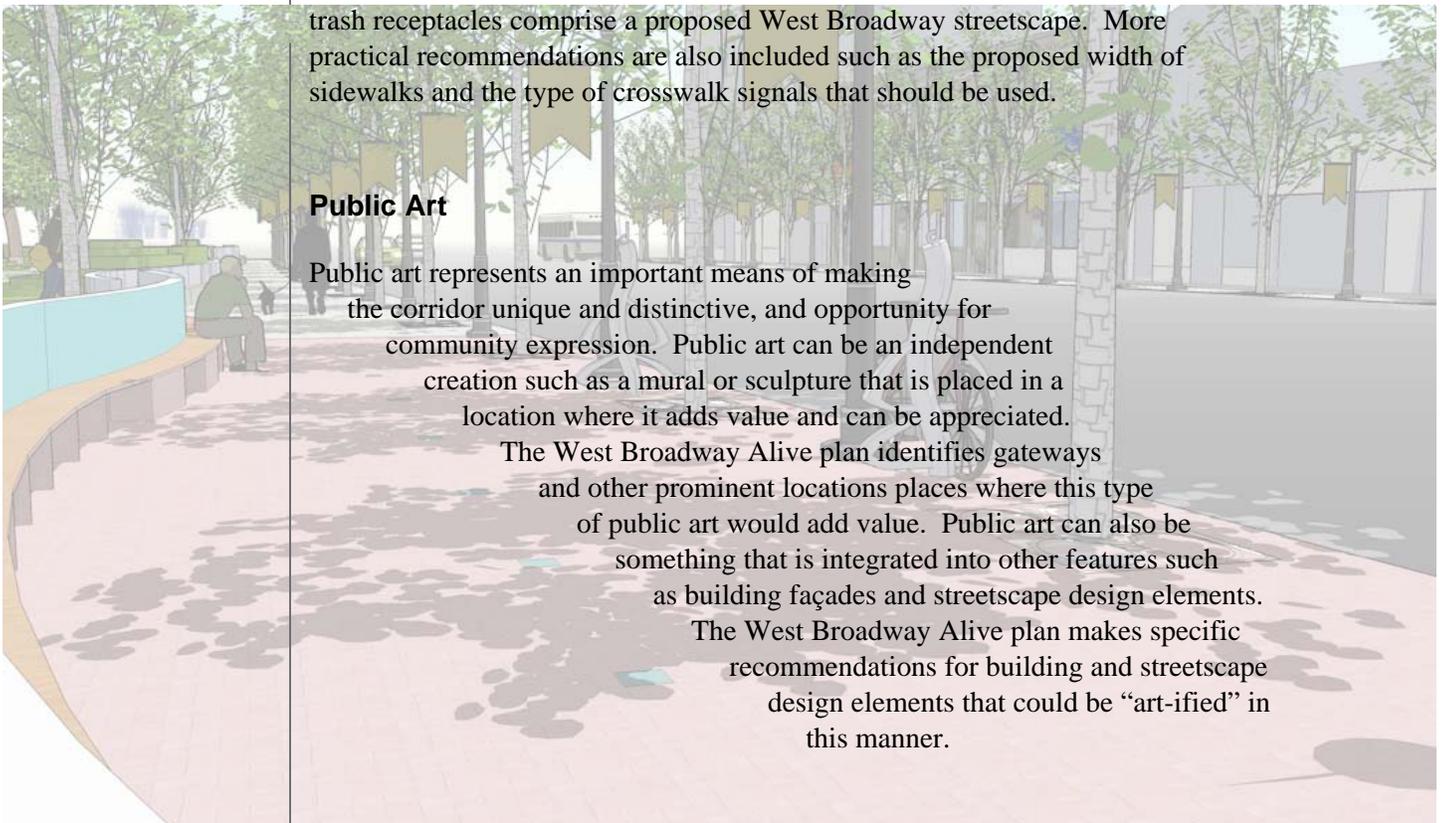


Public Realm Development Guidelines

The plan offers a set of guidelines for public realm improvements that are designed to make the street and sidewalk environment comfortable and attractive to pedestrians, and add color and character to the area as a whole. Elements such as bike racks, banners, and trash receptacles comprise a proposed West Broadway streetscape. More practical recommendations are also included such as the proposed width of sidewalks and the type of crosswalk signals that should be used.

Public Art

Public art represents an important means of making the corridor unique and distinctive, and opportunity for community expression. Public art can be an independent creation such as a mural or sculpture that is placed in a location where it adds value and can be appreciated. The West Broadway Alive plan identifies gateways and other prominent locations places where this type of public art would add value. Public art can also be something that is integrated into other features such as building façades and streetscape design elements. The West Broadway Alive plan makes specific recommendations for building and streetscape design elements that could be “art-ified” in this manner.



Action Agenda *Redevelopment*

While the number of active development projects in the West Broadway corridor is a source of encouragement, the timeline for these projects is typically very long as a result of the need to assemble multiple sources of public and philanthropic financial support. And there are important types of development that are not being built. For these reasons, attracting new development to West Broadway continues to be of the highest importance, and the West Broadway Alive process devoted significant time and attention to understanding the challenges faced by developers in the West Broadway market area. Chief among these challenges are public safety issues, and the chaotic or unsightly visual environment in many parts of the corridor.

Five categories of actions emerged as especially promising to assist developers in crossing the project feasibility threshold. They are:

- **Site assembly.** Many of the most promising development opportunities on West Broadway require the acquisition of multiple parcels—which is time-consuming and costly for developers.
- **Adjacent conditions.** Development interest in a site can be enhanced if issues related to surrounding properties are attended to.
- **Financial support.** Several specific financial strategies emerged from developer dialogs.
- **Provision of market and demand information.** Market research is costly. Demand information on promising business sectors or residential submarkets could be developed and made available.
- **Transit development.** The provision of high quality transit service (e.g. streetcar) to the West Broadway corridor could play a powerful role in strengthening the market for new development.

Business Improvements

Businesses in the West Broadway corridor are challenged by a number of area-wide conditions. Among these are real and perceived public safety issues, poor physical conditions and appearance of many structures, a limited product and business category mix, lack of an overall marketing concept, and the relatively low purchasing power of the nearby community. Improving the environment for business on West Broadway requires consideration of approaches to these challenges through two different perspectives—that of the individual business, and that of the business district.

West Broadway Business Support–Capacity Assessment

| Activity or Resource | Role/Responsibility: Primary/Operator = ● Supporting/Funder = ○ | | | | | | | | | Overall Assessment |
|--|---|-----------------|------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| | Property Owners | Business Owners | Developers | Financial Institutions | Business Association | Neighborhood Organizations | City of Minneapolis | Other Public Sector | Other Funders (e.g. Norway, LISC, NEON) | |
| Business Owners | | | | | | | | | | |
| Business loans/grants | | | | ● | | | ● | | ● | ■ |
| Business technical assistance/coaching | ○ | ○ | | | ● | ○ | ○ | | ● | ■ |
| Property Owners/Developers | | | | | | | | | | |
| Property Rehab Funding | ● | | ○ | ○ | | | ○ | | ○ | ■ |
| Facade improvement funding | ● | ● | | ○ | ● | | ○ | | ○ | ■ |
| Property Redevelopment | ● | | ● | ○ | | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ■ |
| Promoting available properties | ● | | | | ● | | | | | ■ |
| District-wide | | | | | | | | | | |
| Security & Safety | ● | ● | | | ● | | ● | ○ | | ■ |
| Marketing & Branding | | ○ | | | ● | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ■ |
| Event organizing | ○ | ○ | | | ● | ● | | | | ■ |
| | Absent | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| | Insufficient | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| | Sufficient | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| | Abundant | | | | | | | | | ■ |

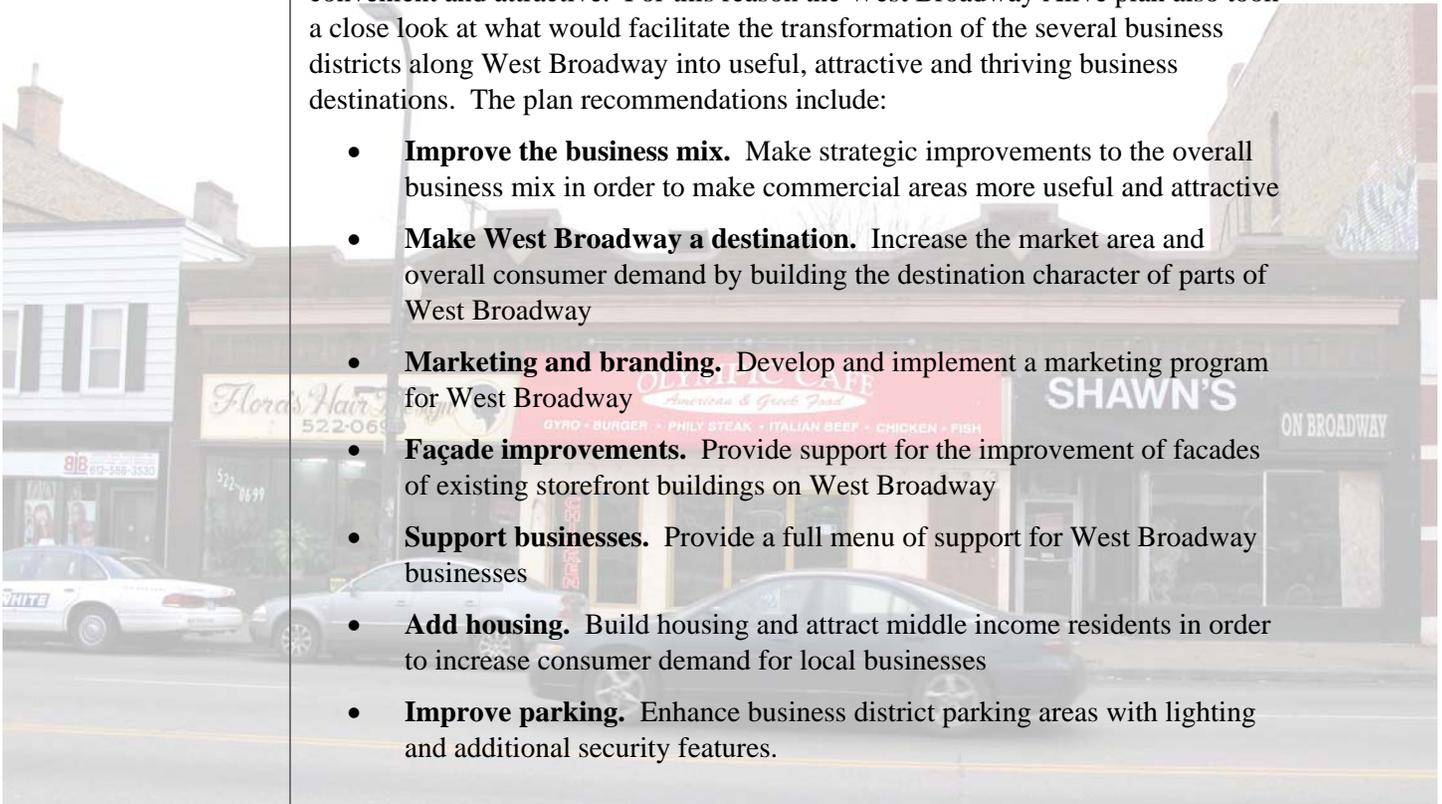
Business Support

In order to understand the availability of support for existing and future business owners in important categories, a capacity assessment was conducted. This assessment focused on the services that are currently available to business owners, and identified areas that are in need of strengthening. It found that financial support and technical assistance are generally available and improving. Identified needs include continued improvements to security coordination among store owners. And businesses would benefit from additional mechanisms for promoting available commercial space.

Business District Needs

Businesses are more successful if operated in close proximity to compatible businesses, and in areas that are convenient and attractive. For this reason the West Broadway Alive plan also took a close look at what would facilitate the transformation of the several business districts along West Broadway into useful, attractive and thriving business destinations. The plan recommendations include:

- **Improve the business mix.** Make strategic improvements to the overall business mix in order to make commercial areas more useful and attractive
- **Make West Broadway a destination.** Increase the market area and overall consumer demand by building the destination character of parts of West Broadway
- **Marketing and branding.** Develop and implement a marketing program for West Broadway
- **Façade improvements.** Provide support for the improvement of facades of existing storefront buildings on West Broadway
- **Support businesses.** Provide a full menu of support for West Broadway businesses
- **Add housing.** Build housing and attract middle income residents in order to increase consumer demand for local businesses
- **Improve parking.** Enhance business district parking areas with lighting and additional security features.



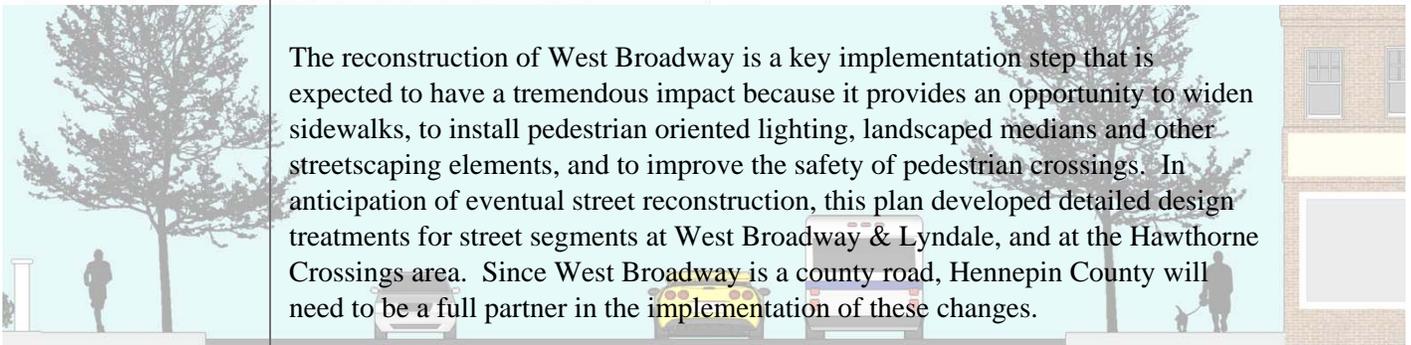
Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure improvements can play an important role in creating a supportive environment for new development and establishing a much improved aesthetic environment in the West Broadway corridor. The plan recommends major infrastructure improvements related to the reconstruction of West Broadway between Girard Avenue and the Mississippi River, enhancements to gateway cross-streets, and the addition of improved transit service to the West Broadway corridor.



Street reconstruction

The reconstruction of West Broadway is a key implementation step that is expected to have a tremendous impact because it provides an opportunity to widen sidewalks, to install pedestrian oriented lighting, landscaped medians and other streetscaping elements, and to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings. In anticipation of eventual street reconstruction, this plan developed detailed design treatments for street segments at West Broadway & Lyndale, and at the Hawthorne Crossings area. Since West Broadway is a county road, Hennepin County will need to be a full partner in the implementation of these changes.



Gateway Corridors

A couple of the approaches to West Broadway represent intriguing enhancement opportunities. The width of Washington Avenue and the importance of its route through Downtown Minneapolis from Seven Corners to West Broadway makes it well suited for enhancement as an attractive boulevard-style street. And indeed the concept is already being explored at the encouragement of Mayor RT Rybak. The West Broadway Alive plan supports the proposed improvements to Washington Avenue because it removes a barrier between downtown residents and West

Broadway and improves the desirability of redevelopment at West Broadway and Washington Avenue.

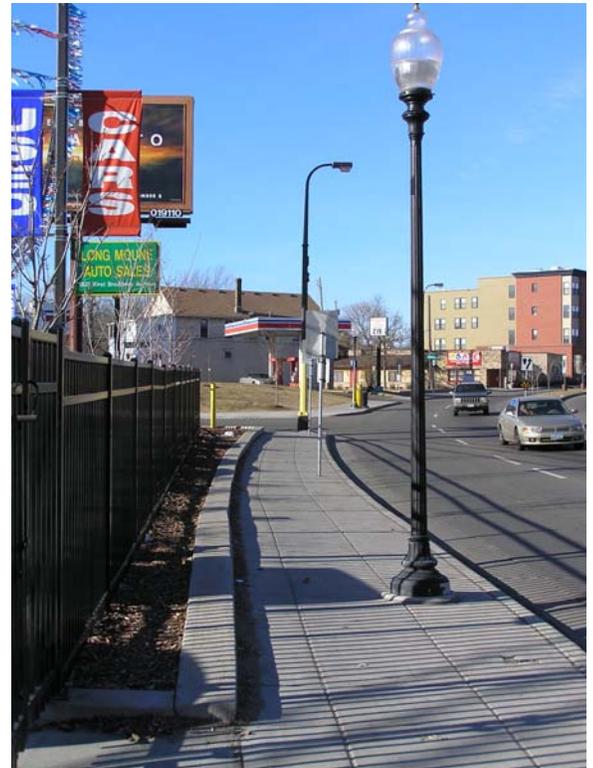
The development of Van White Memorial Boulevard from Interstate 394 to Plymouth Avenue presents a similar opportunity. Emerson and Fremont Avenues are local collector one-way paired streets that are directly in line with Van White Memorial Boulevard, and intersect with West Broadway at a key commercial node. This plan recommends that the parkway style design spirit of Van White Memorial Boulevard be extended up these streets to create an elegant and attractive gateway to West Broadway.



Washington Boulevard Concept at West Broadway

Transit development

While bus rapid transit in the West Broadway corridor is appearing less likely, the City of Minneapolis is evaluating the desirability and feasibility of developing a streetcar network. A Washington Avenue/West Broadway streetcar corridor that terminates in Robbinsdale is among a set of six alignments that are considered most promising. Streetcar development has been shown in other city's to be a powerful catalyst for new development in disadvantaged communities. This plan recommends it as an anticipated difference-maker in attracting new multi-family market rate residential development, as well as high quality commercial redevelopment between Washington Avenue and the Mississippi River.



Design Improvements

Design improvements are critical for branding the West Broadway corridor with visual distinctiveness and energy. The design guidelines of the West Broadway Alive plan provides were summarized above. The plan devotes attention to action strategies associated with fostering these design improvements. These include the following.

- **Major streetscaping improvements** would largely be installed as part of the street reconstruction project. But there are simpler public realm enhancements that can nevertheless be impactful. These require the coordination and collaboration of West Broadway property and business owners.
- **Aesthetic improvements to the Interstate 94 bridge** would remove a visual barrier to the West Broadway commercial core. Special purpose capital dollars are the most likely funding source of this type of improvements.
- **Façade improvements** can be incentivized by a public funding source, but also require the organized participation of property and business owners.
- **Public art** can be fostered at a number of levels. Strategies are identified related to collaboration between area arts organizations, and participation of the public in the development of some elements.