

## 5. Transportation

West Broadway has been an important transportation connector in north Minneapolis from the earliest days of the City of Minneapolis. The alignment of West Broadway is along land that was originally identified as high and dry. Thus it was originally created as an oxcart trail between early settlements along the Mississippi River and communities to the north and west such as Osseo. After north Minneapolis was further developed, it became an important streetcar route, which influenced the development of the two and three story commercial buildings that lined the street.

Because transportation and development are inevitably interrelated, this plan takes a close look at a number of elements of the West Broadway transportation system. Recommendations presented in this chapter were developed through an integrated planning/design process that took land use, economic development, and livability into consideration while formulating transportation improvement strategies. The recommendations are consistent with the West Broadway Vision Statement and Principles of Development (Ch 3), and Transportation Development Principles outlined below.

### *Transportation Topics*

The Transportation Chapter of this plan addresses the following topics:

- Transportation Context
- Transportation Development Principles
- Transit
- West Broadway Street Design
- Interstate 94 Bridge Enhancements
- Pedestrian Street Crossing Improvements
- Parking Analysis and Strategies
- Gateway Corridors



### Transportation Context

West Broadway serves multiple roles that can come into conflict at times. It is a Hennepin County road that is identified in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Highway Plan as an Augmenter-Type, “A” Minor Arterial. As such, it is a regional transportation route that is intended to meet travel demand for commuters between downtown Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs. It supports frequent bus service via a bus line along West Broadway, and several that intersect it. And it is a commercial street that requires an environment supportive of pedestrian movement.

It is a challenge to balance these multiple functions. If free-flowing traffic is prioritized in support of its regional function, the corridor could be handicapped as a business district and community center. But pursuing an urban design ideal at the expense of West

Broadway’s transportation functionality would be similarly

counterproductive. In a balanced scenario, residents would have a safe street, with reasonable speeds and ample sidewalks, and an ability to cross the street comfortably at signalized intersections—without significantly diminishing the capacity of the corridor to move traffic.

### **2005 Road Reconstruction**

In 2005, West Broadway was reconstructed by Hennepin County between Girard Avenue North and the western City Limits. The design for the reconstructed roadway was developed cooperatively by Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, in consultation with a community organization—the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC)—and the

broader public. The objectives for the reconstructed roadway right-of-way included:

- on-street parking
- sidewalk widths that would allow pedestrians to safely and conveniently circulate across and along West Broadway
- transit facilities
- traffic signalization at the Humboldt/West Broadway intersection (a critical location where school children cross the street)
- raised medians in residential sections of the street



Because the roadway design objectives competed for space in a very constrained right of way, the approved design for West Broadway struck a balance that did not fully achieve some objectives. Most importantly, sidewalks were widened minimally or not at all. And on-street parking was lost during rush hour due to the construction of dedicated turn lanes.

It is anticipated that the County will reconstruct the remaining segment of West Broadway that is within north Minneapolis within 10 years. This street segment is between Girard Avenue North and West River Road. In anticipation of this need, and because of the opportunities that are generated by the street reconstruction, the West Broadway Alive proposes a design for the reconstructed street. During the West Broadway Alive public engagement process, community members had several opportunities to offer their input on the proposed design scenarios.

### **Penn Broadway TOD Plan**

The Penn Broadway Transit Oriented Development Plan (see Chapter 2) included transportation related recommendations. These recommendations informed the analysis and recommendations of the West Broadway Alive plan, and are integrated into it as appropriate.

## Transportation Development Principles

The following transportation development principles grew out of an examination of existing conditions (especially traffic and pedestrian conflicts) and the evaluation of potential changes at particular locations on West Broadway. They pertain to further improvements to the street, and are intended to provide a rationale for some of the more specific recommendations that follow.

- Accommodate transit operations
- Provide infrastructure, whenever possible, to support multi-modal forms of transportation, including transit, bicycling, and walking
- Provide adequate sidewalk widths to ensure space for convenient pedestrian circulation and installation of street furniture
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings and reduce potential vehicular-pedestrian conflicts through good design of physical features (street, curbing, crosswalks) and other management strategies
- Construct planted medians within districts where the street width allows it
- Provide boulevards between the street and sidewalk in residential areas
- Synchronize traffic signals to ensure efficient, east/west signal progression.
- Accommodate left-turns at critical intersections to facilitate through movements:
- Maintain on-street parking wherever possible

## Transit

Transit service along and intersecting West Broadway is highly important to North Minneapolis households, many of whom are without automobiles and rely on local transit to get to work and shopping areas.

Existing transit service is adequate to meeting local needs, but this plan calls for improvements to the West Broadway commercial core that will augment its character as a destination shopping area. Transit service improvements ought to respond to and support these changes. Beyond this, it should not be forgotten that transit improvements can also play a leading role in stimulating transformation. It is well known that such improvements, and particularly fixed guideway transit systems, can stimulate improvements in an area. The streetcar service that is under consideration for the West Broadway corridor could serve this purpose.

## Bus Service

Metro Transit's Route 14 provides existing transit service along West Broadway, linking to Downtown Minneapolis on one end, and Robbinsdale and Golden Valley destinations on



Bus Service

the other. Additional bus routes intersect West Broadway, connecting to downtown on one end and various destinations on the other. They include:

- Route 5, which is the most frequent bus service to north Minneapolis, crossing West Broadway at Emerson and Fremont Avenues North
- Route 7, which serves Washington Avenue North
- Route 19, which serves Olson Memorial Highway and Penn Avenue North
- Route 22, which serves Lyndale Avenue North
- Route 32, which does not serve West Broadway, but instead runs along Lowry Avenue. It is the only route that crosses the Mississippi River and directly links north and northeast Minneapolis.

The existing transit network provides good coverage of North Minneapolis from a spacing perspective. And the presence of high frequency service on Routes 5 and 19 is an important asset. As the West Broadway area is improved, however, housing growth is anticipated, along with growth in customer traffic to West Broadway businesses. This will increase the demand for transit service above its current levels. As this occurs, frequency of service as well as extensions to the transit network ought to be reconsidered to ensure that demand is being met, and that transit improvements are supportive of business district improvements. This plan recommends the following specific changes be considered as improvements occur in the West Broadway corridor area.

It is important to note that coverage by itself isn't the whole story with respect to bus service to North Minneapolis. Quality of service is important as well. In particular, antisocial or criminal behavior occurs frequently enough on some buses that it has a negative effect on ridership.

### **Transportation: Bus Service Recommendations**

Reevaluate service frequency of buses serving West Broadway periodically, with improvements when warranted to support new residential development and the expansion of commercial activity. Routes 14 and 22 in particular should be considered for service improvement based on the development anticipated in this plan, along with bus service connecting across the river to connect Northeast Minneapolis to West Broadway.

Metro Transit should take steps as needed to ensure that the use of buses to and from West Broadway is perceived as consistently safe and comfortable on every bus route.

### ***Bus Rapid Transit / Light Rail Transit***

In recent years, other transit service has been under consideration for West Broadway. These include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT). Bus Rapid Transit proposals that were developed in the

early 2000s would have served West Broadway on routes that would have terminated in the northwest suburbs. These have been taken off the table in favor of an analysis of options that include Light Rail Transit. The bus rapid transit project invested considerable time and expense into acquisition and design of bus rapid transit stations on West Broadway. Although a bus rapid transit route that serves West Broadway looks unlikely to be resurrected, the idea of enhanced bus areas on Broadway has merit and may retain some support on the part of Metro Transit staff.

An Alternatives Analysis is currently being designed to explore mass transit options that would serve the northwest suburbs. West Broadway is currently not being considered as an alignment option; it was, however, evaluated two decades ago as part of the 1991 Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority's LRT Comprehensive Plan, and it was eliminated from consideration.

### Streetcar

The City is exploring the development of a streetcar network. In recent years, streetcar lines have been developed or are being planned in many American cities because they can provide a high-quality rail transit service at a lower capital cost than the higher capacity light rail transit lines. They can effectively catalyze and organize economic development. And they can attract private funding.

In August of 2007, the City released a draft final report of the "Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study," which was the product of several phases of analysis to evaluate the potential for streetcar service to improve transit service in existing primary bus corridors and to catalyze economic development in those corridors. Evaluation criteria included

physical and geometric constraints, transit supportive land uses, economic development potential, transit operations, transit demand, cost-effectiveness, and funding. The draft final report identifies a long-term streetcar network made up of seven corridors that could be implemented within 20 to 50 years, depending on funding availability. West Broadway/Washington Avenue North between downtown and the Robbinsdale Transit Center is one of the long-term network corridors. A first stage line reaching West Broadway and Emerson was also identified.



The draft final streetcar study report does not recommend a first streetcar corridor for the City to pursue because that decision must be based upon further assessment of community support, private sector interest and the ability to generate sufficient capital and operating funding in each corridor. The study recommends several next steps to ensure the long-term potential for streetcar operations in the seven corridors and to pursue an appropriate first streetcar segment, including further corridor-by-corridor evaluation of economic development potential, developer

support, community and political support, and funding sources, maintenance facility locations. The study also recommends development of streetcar design guidelines to ensure that streetcar requirements are considered when streets are reconstructed.

This plan strongly supports the development of a north Minneapolis streetcar line. Streetcar service on West Broadway would improve the ridership and quality of transit service on an important transit corridor. It also has the potential to make a significant difference in the extent and quality of new development that is built along West Broadway. New housing and commercial development at key development opportunity sites has the reciprocal effect of boosting ridership for the streetcar line. Coordinating streetcar development with the reconstruction of West Broadway between Girard Avenue and the Mississippi River might save some costs associated with Streetcar development.

### Transportation: Streetcar Recommendations

Encourage prioritization of a West Broadway streetcar line because of its importance from a community development perspective.

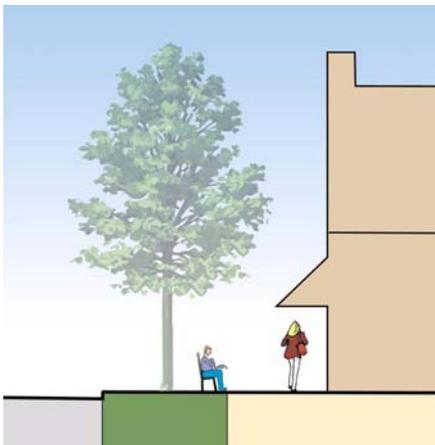
Coordinate future evaluation of streetcar finance tools and economic development potential between the streetcar and the West Broadway community development initiatives.

Explore synchronizing the development of the streetcar line with reconstruction of West Broadway between Girard Avenue and the Mississippi River.

### West Broadway Street Design

This part of the West Broadway Alive plan considers how the street itself can contribute to a commercial environment that is more active and successful, as well as more comfortable and attractive. Efforts were made in the planning process to determine how design features might be provided along West Broadway to improve characteristics of the corridor that have a negative impact on pedestrians and transit riders. These characteristics include: (a) sidewalks that are at minimum widths (6 or 7 feet in some locations), (b) lack of aesthetic features and points of interest to enhance the pedestrian experience, and (c) street and traffic signal designs that facilitate pass-through traffic movements.

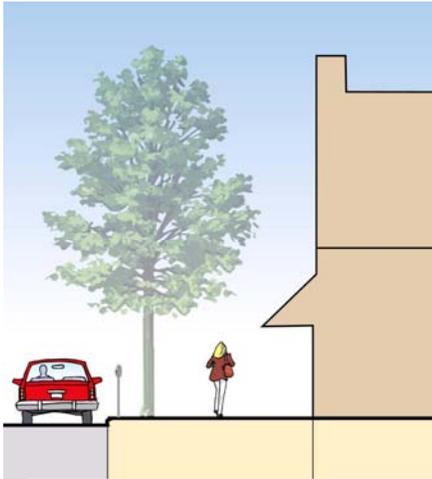
The primary opportunity for street redesign is in the part of West Broadway that has not yet been reconstructed—the section of the street between the Mississippi River and Girard Avenue. Reconstruction of this section of West Broadway is tremendously important because it provides an opportunity to address many blocks of the narrow sidewalk condition, and to install pedestrian oriented lighting and other streetscaping elements. In anticipation of eventual street reconstruction,



*Cross section of residential area  
from building façade to street*

this plan developed detailed design treatments for the following street segments.

- The Hawthorne Crossing area—between Bryant and Emerson Avenues
- The Broadway/Lyndale area—from Interstate 94 to Bryant Avenue
- The Interstate 94 bridge



*Cross section of commercial district from building façade to street*

In addition to these areas, the Penn/West Broadway TOD Plan made some recommendations concerning changes to the right of way at the Penn/West Broadway intersection. These have also been incorporated into this document.

Other parts of Broadway receive a more general review for transportation enhancement opportunities in the sections that follow.

Street layouts and cross-sections include specific dimensions in order to provide a clear proposal for how a given part of West Broadway might be constructed to balance transportation and community development objectives. The specificity of the diagrams should not, however, be taken to imply that the proposed scenario is the only way, or even necessarily the best way, to balance these objectives. Further analysis, consideration and negotiation will occur during subsequent design processes prior to street reconstruction.

### **West Gateway**

This area is west of the Broadway/26<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection, and was part of the 2005 West Broadway street reconstruction project. No further changes to street layout or cross-section are envisioned in this plan. However, sidewalks and boulevards remain substandard in many parts of this street segment. This plan recommends that, as redevelopment occurs, boulevards and sidewalks are widened and improved to the dimensional goals stated above.

The streetscaping installed as part of the street reconstruction included center medians and pedestrian scale decorative lighting. While this represents a significant improvement to the look of the street, the streetscaping remains fairly understated and the landscaping of the median area is somewhat sparse. Future projects could include the addition of streetscape elements consistent with these plan recommendations. There are also opportunities for improved landscaping of medians or the areas surrounding street trees, as described in the Development Guidelines chapter.

### **Penn-Broadway**

This street segment extends from Oliver Avenue to the 26th Avenue North intersection, and was part of the 2005 West Broadway street reconstruction. It is a mix of housing and commercial development, and functions as a neighborhood commercial node. Based upon the analysis of the Penn Broadway TOD Plan, additional improvements are

recommended (as illustrated) at the Penn Broadway intersection to shorten the distance required to cross the street in order to facilitate pedestrian movement. Signal countdowns are also recommended, as are special crosswalk treatments.

The narrow width of sidewalks through most of this commercial district is of great concern as it contributes to an inhospitable environment for pedestrians. This plan recommends that, as redevelopment occurs, boulevards and sidewalks are improved to the standards of the City's adopted Transportation Action Plan.



Future projects could also include the addition of streetscape elements consistent with these plan recommendations, as well as improved landscaping of medians or the areas surrounding street trees, as described in the Development Guidelines chapter.

### ***The Curve***

Same as West Gateway, above.

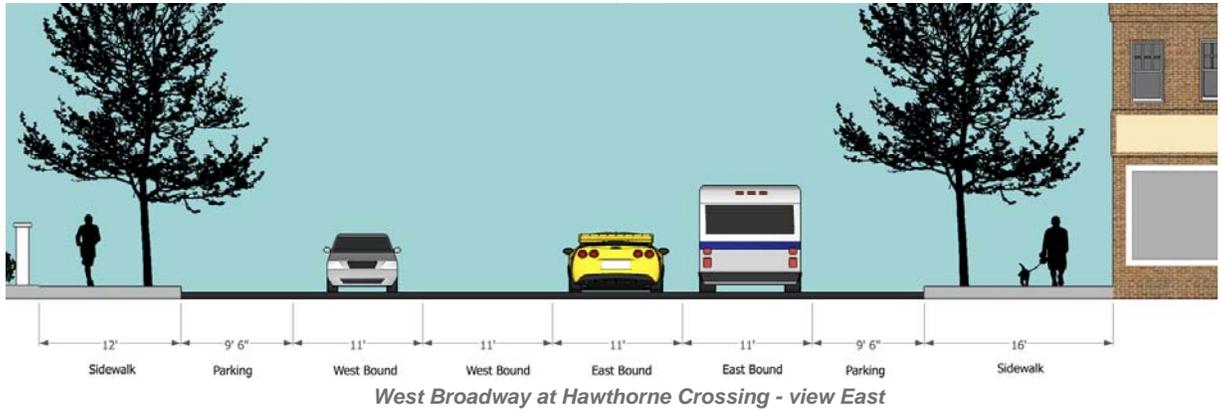
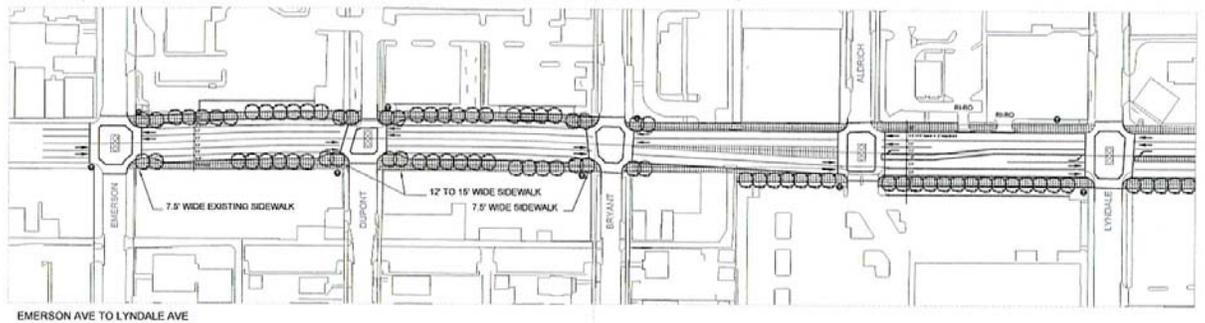
### ***Hawthorne Crossing / Historic Storefronts***

This section of West Broadway extends from Aldrich Avenue to Girard Avenue. It was not reconstructed as part of the 2005 West Broadway street reconstruction. Emerson and Fremont are the significant intersecting streets. The area supports a mix of housing and commercial development, with commercial development predominating. It is part of the commercial core of West Broadway. The West Broadway Alive planning process devoted significant attention to considering how to transform the character of this area to a commercial main street that is comfortable and attractive, and highly activated with pedestrian activity and successful businesses.

The redesign of West Broadway through this area plays an important role in the transformation of this commercial sub-district. The recommendations for redesigning this segment of West Broadway should be taken into consideration at such time as the street is reconstructed.

The following transportation-related concerns were identified during the course of this planning process:

- The inadequate sidewalk width adjacent to storefronts makes it an uncomfortable pedestrian environment.



- The speed and volume of traffic, and the width of the street, make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street.

As illustrated in the accompanying diagrams, this plan recommends that the street be realigned through this area in order to expand the sidewalks on the south side of the street. Street reconstruction also allows for the implementation of a full streetscape treatment. Also recommended are improvements at the signalized intersections to make it safer for pedestrians to cross the street. These include curb extensions that shorten the walk distance for pedestrians (by approximately 12 feet) as they cross the street. The curb extensions also help define the areas along the street where on-street parking will be permitted.

### ***Broadway / Lyndale***

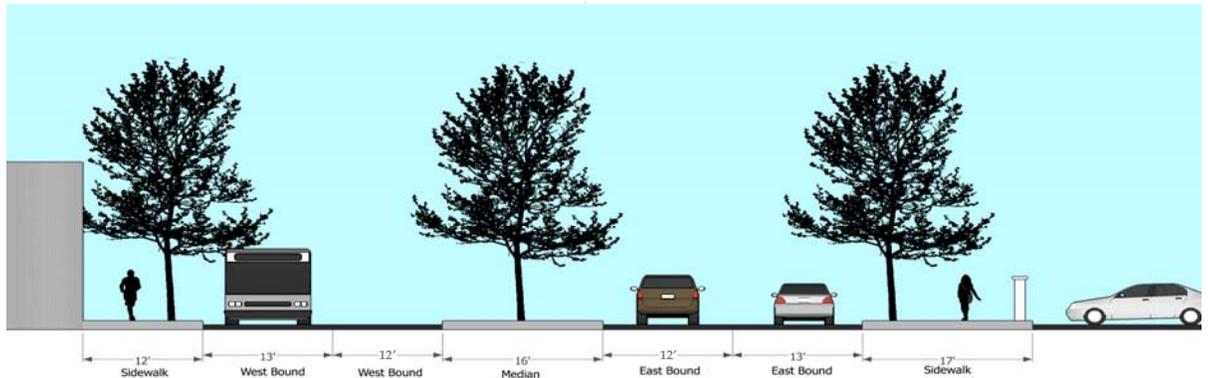
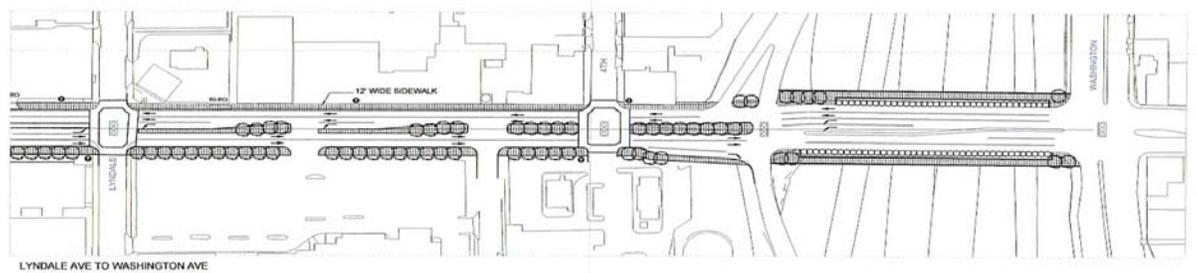
This section of West Broadway extends from Interstate 94 to Aldrich Avenue. It was not reconstructed as part of the 2005 West Broadway street reconstruction. Lyndale Avenue is the significant intersecting street. The area supports a mix of commercial development and, along with the River Gateway section, carries the most traffic of any part of West Broadway. It has immediate freeway access. The West Broadway Alive planning process devoted considerable attention to considering how to turn this area into a lively pedestrian oriented, high-density, mixed use district organized around ground floor destination goods and services.

The redesign of West Broadway through this area can support these objectives in several ways. These recommendations for redesigning this

segment of West Broadway should be taken into consideration at such time as the street is reconstructed.

The following transportation-related concerns were identified during the course of this planning process:

- Expansive and underutilized parking lots on south side of street.
- Buildings tend to be deeply set back from the street, which is inconsistent with building a sense of place, and makes it difficult to foster an environment that feels safe.
- Inadequate sidewalk width impacts pedestrian circulation and is not consistent with place-making
- The speed and volume of traffic, and the width of the street, make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street.



*West Broadway at Lyndale - view West*

As illustrated in the accompanying diagrams, street reconstruction allows for several improvements that improve the character and marketability of the area. This plan recommends that property be acquired as part of the street reconstruction project to accomplish several objectives. Most importantly, sidewalks can be widened and a landscaped median can be constructed in the street, supporting landscaping and potentially a gateway feature. Street reconstruction allows for the implementation of a full streetscape treatment. Similar to the Hawthorn Crossings/Historic Storefront district, changes are recommended that make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street. These include brightly striped crosswalks, signal countdowns, and a median of sufficient width to provide a landing

spot for pedestrians that can't make the crossing within the time available.

Because of the abundance of parking in this street section, the acquisition of additional right of way leaves ample parking for the existing businesses.

### **River Gateway**

This section of West Broadway extends from the West River Parkway to Interstate 94. Washington Avenue and the West River Parkway are significant intersecting streets. Recently the Mayor has led a blue ribbon panel of planners, architects, urban designers, developers and economists to consider how to convert Washington Avenue into a grand boulevard that links downtown southward to the Seven Corners area and northward to West Broadway.

While West River Parkway provides an important amenity and anchor to the east end of West Broadway, the benefit of this connection is largely lost because of the condition of the environment between the Parkway and West Broadway's commercial core. Businesses in this area include several industrial buildings that present a mixed front on West Broadway, two bars, a liquor store, an adult entertainment (strip club) establishment, and a recently rehabilitated bowling alley that now operates as a commercial office building. The area has been had public safety issues in recent years.

On-street parking is permitted along both sides of the street in this section of West Broadway but most of the uses that line the street provide off-street parking.

This area is envisioned to support redevelopment of the street frontage as high density offices, with industrial uses at the rear. Both street reconstruction and redevelopment bring opportunities to change the physical infrastructure so that it is better serves its role as gateway to West Broadway, and supports an activated pedestrian environment. A street layout and cross-section design for this section of West Broadway is not proposed as part of this plan. It would have to be developed as part of a future street reconstruction. When developed it can consider changes to the street similar to those proposed in the Broadway/Lyndale District and the Hawthorn Crossings/Historic Storefront district.

It may be possible to add on-street bicycle lanes on West Broadway between West River Road and Lyndale Avenue. This would probably require the elimination of on-street parking through this stretch, and may also require some property acquisition. At Lyndale Avenue, this bicycle way should be connected north and south to existing bicycle facilities on Plymouth and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenues. The merits of this concept should be evaluated as part of the reconstruction of the eastern half of West Broadway.

## Transportation: West Broadway Street Design Recommendations

Encourage the reconstruction of West Broadway on an expedited timeline.

Acquire additional property as necessary in order to meet the objectives identified in this plan.

Utilize the preceding objectives and design illustrations to inform the street design.

Engage in a thorough exploration of concept design alternatives, with community engagement, and giving consideration to issues and opportunities raised in this plan, prior to doing a detailed design for the River Gateway section of West Broadway.

## Interstate 94 Bridge Enhancements

The Interstate 94 Bridge was built in 1974. It is a 33-year old structure that is utilitarian in design, and devoid of any aesthetic enhancements. It provides a first impression of West Broadway for people entering West Broadway from Washington Avenue, and is an important element in the landscape that greets people coming from across the Mississippi River. Its unsightly appearance is an impediment to attracting commercial

customers to West Broadway. It also deters pedestrian circulation to the Mississippi River from North Minneapolis.

From a transportation perspective, the intersections on either side of the bridge have been identified as high crash intersections. Sidewalks on the bridge are only six feet in width. They are an

uncomfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists because of their narrow dimension and the absence of physical protection between the sidewalk and the road.

This plan calls out connections to the Mississippi River as an important strategic objective. To create this continuity, this bridge has to contribute to that objective. Design enhancements to the bridge can improve its sense of comfort for pedestrians and



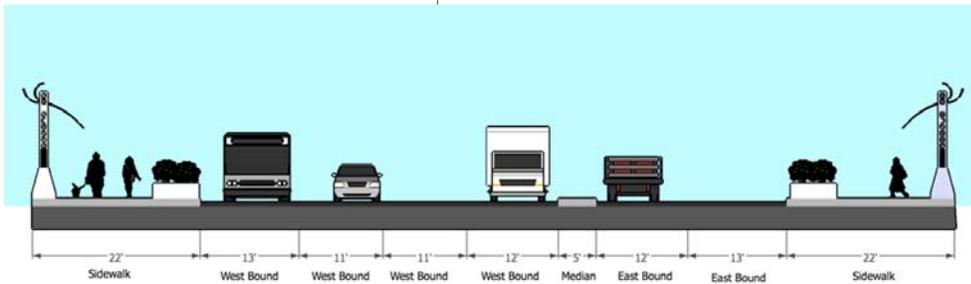
*Bridge Scenario 1: Redesign within existing row.*



*Artistic Bridge Concept*

bicyclists. They can be designed to extend elements of the proposed West Broadway streetscape. And they can go beyond this to create a distinctive landmark that truly announces the entrance to North Minneapolis's main street.

Two bridge improvement cross sections follow. The first involves enhancing the bridge within the existing bridge width. The lanes on the bridge are wider than necessary, and if brought into alignment with minimum state aid standards several feet of width can be gained on each side of the bridge for sidewalks. A barrier of some kind can be placed at the edge of the sidewalk to improve the sense of safety for pedestrians. And some lighting or artistic treatment could be added to the outside walls of the bridge.



*Bridge Scenario 2: Expanded bridge deck.*

The second scenario involves increasing the physical width of the bridge deck, allowing a more complete set of design improvements. The structure in this instance is able to provide a much improved space to accommodate both

pedestrians and bicyclists, with a sense of ample protection from the traffic. It can support a full streetscape treatment, supporting a continuity of design that connects West Broadway all the way to the Mississippi River. Streetscape elements can include lighting, landscaped planters, and artistic elements that marks West Broadway from the Interstate below as a distinctive and desirable location. The artistic bridge concept below is one illustration of how the bridge could become a special environment.

Improvements to the Interstate 94 bridge go beyond what can be funded through city resources. Special funding will need to be pursued to meet this objective. Furthering this goal might start with creating a more detailed design proposal for the bridge that would allow for the estimation of the cost of the project.

### **Transportation: I-94 Bridge Enhancements Recommendations**

Pursue improvements to the I-94 bridge that extend elements of the West Broadway streetscape and create an engaging gateway to the West Broadway commercial core.

Develop a more detailed proposal for the bridge with associated cost estimates.

Identify and pursue potential funding for the improvements.

## Pedestrian Street Crossing Improvements

One of the challenges to establishing a welcoming pedestrian-friendly street is the intimidating effect of automobile traffic. And where people can't easily cross the street, it's difficult for business districts to thrive. West Broadway faces this challenge. Traffic volumes make West Broadway a difficult street to cross. It is approximately 66 feet wide, curb-to-curb, and needs to accommodate bus boarding and alighting operations, parked cars, and moving traffic. West Broadway stands out as an area of concern in City accident statistics.



*Curb Extension*

West Broadway street reconstruction offers an opportunity to make changes that would improve the safety of the street for pedestrians, as well as to enhance the aesthetic character of the corridor. In that context, the following improvements are recommended for West Broadway.

- Curb extensions should be installed at the corners of signalized intersections. These would bookend the on-street parking areas and would not reduce the number of travel lanes. They would shorten the distance pedestrian walk when crossing the street, and improve visibility between pedestrians and motorists prior to entering intersections.
- The design of crosswalks should serve to boldly mark the pedestrian zone. Crosswalks can also contribute to making the area distinctive. Zebra-type crosswalk striping is effective in highlighting the pedestrian zone for pedestrians and motorists alike. To further this effect, as well as add character to the corridor, consideration should be given to additional design features such as retrofitting the crosswalk zone or intersection zones with colored concrete or asphalt, as in the accompanying illustration.
- Signal countdowns should be added to traffic signals along West Broadway. This requires a modification to the standard traffic light assembly. Signal countdowns clearly display the seconds remaining to cross the street.

At the Penn-Broadway intersection, the lack of dedicated parking lanes prevents the use of curb extensions as a strategy to enhance pedestrian safety. As an alternative, this plan recommends exploring the installation of islands at the acute angles of the intersection to narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians, consistent with the recommendations of the Penn/West Broadway Transit Oriented Development Plan.

### Transportation: Pedestrian Street Crossing Improvements Recommendations

Pursue the identified improvements as opportunity allows and with street reconstruction.

Investigate the viability and desirability of making the proposed intersection changes at Penn and West Broadway.

## Parking Analysis and Strategies

A parking supply/demand analysis was conducted as part of the West Broadway Alive study to evaluate the adequacy of parking in the commercial core of West Broadway. The area evaluated was along West Broadway between Interstate 94 and Fremont. It included on-street parking and off-street parking, including parking lots behind the storefronts along West Broadway.

Detailed findings from this parking analysis can be found in an appendix to the plan. Some of the key findings include the following:

- The Hawthorne Crossings area does not have a parking deficiency. The total parking supply for this area (which includes parking to the north and south of West Broadway, on-street and off-street) is 323 parking spaces. At no point were the off-street parking spaces more than 53% occupied.
- On-street parking plays an important role in the Hawthorne Crossings area. It has a higher occupancy rate than the off-street parking lots, which illustrates the fact that people see it as a convenient way to come to the business district.
- Because of efforts to breathe additional vitality into this commercial district, there may be a need to accommodate more vehicles in the future and a significant reduction in the parking supply would not be recommended.
- Parking at the rear of the storefront buildings should be improved to the standards of a new parking area. This entails additional lighting, landscaping, and security elements, and in some cases new paving.
- Regardless of ownership and management of the parking lots, the goal should be to keep them available for the general public, and allow patrons of any business in the business district without restriction.
- The Broadway Lyndale area does not have a parking deficiency. Both Broadway Center and Cub Foods have large surface parking areas that are far from being full at the busiest times of the day and week.
- New development could be constructed in the Broadway Lyndale area along West Broadway without replacing the displaced parking. Redevelopment of this area to its capacity would require the addition of some structured parking.

## Gateway Corridors

Improvements to West Broadway are by definition a goal of this plan. But to attract people to West Broadway, it is also important to pay attention to the character of some of the streets that carry traffic to West Broadway. The most important north-south corridors that intersect West Broadway are West River Parkway, Washington Avenue, Lyndale Avenue, Emerson and Fremont Avenues, and Penn Avenue. Of this set, three streets hold particular promise and opportunity in terms of future enhancement. These are West River Parkway (under the leadership of the MPRB), Washington Avenue (which is a special interest of the

Mayor), and the Emerson/Fremont pair (explored as an element of this plan).

### **West River Parkway**

West River Parkway is currently being improved by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The improvement will ultimately extend the parkway-type street and trail amenities from their current terminus at approximately Plymouth Avenue north past West Broadway to around 26th Avenue North. The proposed design includes an opportunity for public art at West Broadway.



*West River Parkway Concept*

### **Washington Boulevard**

Washington Avenue is a major north/south street that extends from the northern City Limits, through north Minneapolis and downtown Minneapolis, and into south Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota in southeast Minneapolis. The section of the street between West Broadway and “Seven Corners” has been identified as having particular significance and opportunity. Its width, existing character, and development potential make it a candidate for boulevard style improvements. The Mayor

has been a particular booster of this vision. He and an urban design team have been exploring scenarios for greening the street, and dressing it up with aesthetic improvements. It would become a promenade, connecting downtown to the University of Minnesota on the south end, and West Broadway on the north end.



*Washington Boulevard Concept at West Broadway*

### **Emerson / Fremont**

The Emerson Fremont one-way pair serves as an important collector through North Minneapolis between Plymouth and Lowry Avenues. It carries Metro Transit’s Route 5, the most frequent and heavily utilized North Minneapolis bus route. It represents an exceptional opportunity for enhancement. In a part of the city that lacks natural amenities, it is well located to be improved as an enhanced street, being about equidistant from Theodore Wirth Parkway and West River Road. It is identified in the city’s bicycle master plan as the right place to provide a principal north-south on-street bicycle connection through the heart of the neighborhood. It crosses West Broadway at the key Broadway-Emerson intersection, which is a gateway to Broadway’s commercial core and which itself has great potential for aesthetic enhancement. And most intriguing, it is precisely positioned to serve as an extension of Van White Memorial Drive, which ends on an Emerson Avenue alignment at

its terminus at Plymouth Avenue. The opportunity explored in this planning process is the extension of design features from the parkway style Van White Memorial Drive northward along Emerson and Fremont. This would brand the street as a special street up to West Broadway or Lowry Avenue, and potentially even further. If distinctive design improvements were implemented along Emerson and Fremont, it would serve as an invitation to North Minneapolis from Interstate 394, as well as a gateway to West Broadway.

During the West Broadway Alive process, the Minneapolis Public Works Department also happened to be conducting a study of the Emerson Fremont pair. The study was responding, at least in part, to the complaints of residents concerning the speed of traffic along Emerson and Fremont Avenues. These excessive speeds have been confirmed empirically, and have resulted in some tragic accidents. The Public Works study focused on how to calm traffic along Emerson and Fremont, and in particular gave careful consideration as to whether conversion of the streets to two way streets should be part of the solution. City staff took care to coordinate the analysis and processes related to the two studies.

Two scenarios are presented in this section. These are illustrative of the kinds of improvements that are being considered for the two streets.

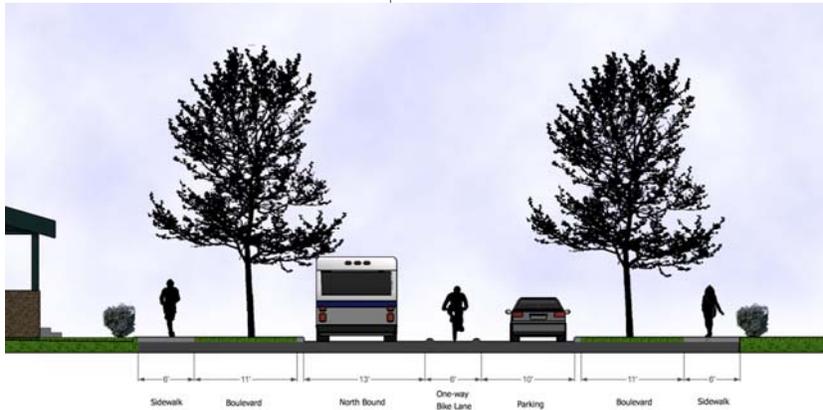
#### Scenario #1: Emerson/Fremont with minimal reconstruction



Scenario 1 shows a street design that requires minimal reconstruction of the street because the changes occur by and large within the existing street curbing. Existing lane widths, currently wider than necessary, would be narrowed to the city standard. This in and of itself would have the effect of slowing traffic. Narrowing traffic lanes creates sufficient space to allow the addition of the one-way on-street bike lane. Sidewalks would remain in their current locations. In

addition to these changes, the streets could be narrowed at the intersections by adding curb extensions at intersections on the side of the street where the parking lane is located. This has two effects. The narrowed street at each intersection has an additional traffic calming effect. And the reduced crossing distance makes it more comfortable for pedestrians to cross the street.

## Scenario #2: Emerson/Fremont reconfigure within existing street curbing



Scenario 2 shows a street design that narrows the physical dimension of the street pavement in favor of an expanded space off the street that can be utilized for extra landscaping and other amenities. The idea is to create a street pair that is as similar as possible to the elegant, parkway-style Van White Memorial Boulevard, albeit in a different setting. Emerson and Fremont would become truly distinctive amenity streets through North Minneapolis, and add a sense of

place through the core of the neighborhood. Specifically, the street design captures additional amenity space by eliminating one of the two moving lanes on Emerson and Fremont. Preliminary analysis indicates that the traffic volumes can be accommodated in a paired street system where each street is a one-way street. Width can be added at Plymouth, West Broadway, and Lowry if necessary to support turning lanes.

Beyond the elimination of a moving lane on each street, Scenario 2 also calls for narrowing traffic lanes, adding a one-way bike lane on each street, and constructing curb extensions at intersections on the side of the street where cars park.

### Community Input

Community input was solicited on potential changes to Emerson and Fremont. In terms of values, slowing traffic was highest priority and improving safety was highest priority. The Public Works study found that it would work from a traffic perspective to convert streets to two way streets, and this received a lot of attention from community residents. While there were a mix of reactions, and some strongly held views, most were opposed to this conversion. There was support for adding a bike lane, and some strong support for pursuing the high amenity street alternative, Scenario 2.

### Transportation: Gateway Corridors Recommendations

Support the development of boulevard-style improvements to Washington Avenue that extend to West Broadway on the north.

Pursue further investigation of parkway style enhancements to Emerson and Fremont consistent with Scenario 2 above, including a more detailed potential design with associated cost estimates.