

6. Housing

The housing stock in the West Broadway area has value. The original homes are aging, but they were built in a time when quality materials were used and they have a distinctive character. The structures are relatively large by Minneapolis standards.

The area is, however, being confronted with a number of serious challenges. North Minneapolis is the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis in the upper Midwest. It is common to see two or three vacant and boarded houses on a block. Visual blight is present here and there, although it is not rampant. These conditions have driven property values down, which in turn dampens interest in reinvestment—and the capacity for it.



Despite these conditions, retention of the existing housing stock and the development of new housing are essential to realizing the vision of the West Broadway Alive plan. Many West Broadway businesses find it difficult to stay afloat in a neighborhood where the average household buying power is so low. If the number of households diminishes, business conditions will become more precarious. The reverse is also true. New housing brings an increase in households—which in turn creates an expanded market for West Broadway goods and services. New housing also supports transit infrastructure, and adds foot traffic which contributes to a safer environment.

This chapter considers where housing growth should happen in the West Broadway area, and what kind of housing is desirable. It touches on the issues related to attracting high quality housing development, but this is explored in more detail in the Economic Development chapter.

Geography

The West Broadway Alive plan supports housing development along most parts of the corridor, with the notable exception of the industrial area between Interstate 94 and the Mississippi River. That part of West Broadway is in an Employment District, which by policy prohibits the introduction of housing so that land suitable for industrial businesses might be preserved. In the commercial districts along West Broadway, housing development is allowed and even encouraged over ground floor commercial businesses.

Opportunities for new development are called out in the Development Opportunities map. And the Development Intensity map provides information related to the appropriate density of new housing developments.

Type of Housing

To take the temperature of the community, people were asked to weigh in on what kind of housing was needed in the West Broadway area. The results reflected support for new housing that was varied and met the needs of multiple markets. Housing for seniors, families and singles were supported in equal measure. There was support for housing that would meet the needs of low income households, as well as that which would attract middle income and more affluent households.

Interestingly, in terms of building style single family homes and townhomes received few votes. Perhaps this was because people did not see those housing types as being compatible with a busy street like West Broadway. The same may be true of ownership housing, which also got few votes. But it also may not have been clear to people what that meant in a corridor development context. It may have been more clear if the choice had been phrased “condominiums and townhomes”.

“WHAT KIND OF HOUSING DOES WEST BROADWAY NEED?”	
HOUSING TYPE	# of VOTES
Low income housing	65 votes
Market rate housing	55 votes
Upscale housing	47 votes
Housing for seniors	45 votes
Housing for families	44 votes
Housing for singles	44 votes
Rental housing	33 votes
Ownership housing	19 votes
Single-family homes	14 votes
Townhouses and condominiums	12 votes
	TOTAL =378

The diversity of public responses to this question aligns well with city housing policy. City policy supports the provision of a variety of housing choices. It emphasizes the need for affordable housing, but in disadvantaged communities it calls for attending to the socioeconomic sustainability of the community by adding market rate and even upscale housing options. A policy approach that calls for a wide variety of new housing types addresses the polar concerns of gentrification and concentration of poverty. The affordable housing units that are part of the mix ensure that as the community stabilized it doesn’t experience wholesale influx of middle class and affluent residence at the exclusion of working class and more economically challenged households—adding to the existing affordable housing developments in the community. And on the other pole, high quality ownership and rental housing that broadens the mix and extends the capacity of the residential community contributes to the stability of the community.

Objectives such as these Housing objectives concerning mixed income, mixed rental housing This mixed income, ownership strategy is also responsive to concerns about outlined While neighborhoods such as this are sensitive about gentrifications, New mixed income housing adds to

the stock of affordable housing, even as it diversifies the socioeconomic mix of the community. In that sense, it advances the One consequence of this is anti-gentrification. It should not lead to a replacement of housing and households with a substitute is designed and developed for a mixed income market

Housing: Type of Housing Recommendations

Facilitate the development of new housing development in appropriate locations along and near West Broadway.

Support the development of a good mix of ownership and rental housing, as well as housing for individuals and families.

Exert efforts to foster housing targeted to markets that will improve the socioeconomic mix in the West Broadway area.

Development challenges

Housing development has slowed city-wide. While this reflects nationwide trends, it is also part of a recurrent market cycle that will reverse itself in due course. When the housing market rebounds, it will still be quite challenging to build housing in the West Broadway area due to the area's crime, disinvestment, etc. And the objectives related to housing mix compound this challenge because housing that targets a middle income or higher income market is not eligible for most public sources of development support.

Because of the importance of fostering new housing development in the West Broadway area, and the need to attract a sustainable mix of new owners and tenants, all reasonable measures must be taken to surmount the difficulties described above. The Economic Development chapter of this plan includes a more full discussion of strategies that may serve to foster West Broadway area development that meets community and city goals.