

## 2. Plan Context

This chapter sets a context for the West Broadway Alive plan in several ways. It connects it to studies and plans that were done previously. And it explores the character of the community that surrounds West Broadway, exploring its population mix as well as property characteristics.

### Previous Plans and Studies

West Broadway Alive, like all planning studies, is built on previous work. A number of other important planning and transportation studies have been completed in recent years that bear on the West Broadway corridor area. These studies were conducted by the City and County, as well as various neighborhood groups, business associations and foundations. This chapter is intended to overview the most important of these studies.

#### Policies from the Minneapolis Plan:

- Minneapolis will encourage both private and public development that provides gathering spaces in city neighborhoods.(Policy 1.2)
- Minneapolis will work to enhance the appeal of city living by improving residents' actual and perceived sense of safety and security.(Section 1.9)
- Minneapolis will encourage reinvestment along major urban corridors as a way of promoting growth in all neighborhoods. (Section 4.1)
- Minneapolis will support development in commercial corridors where it enhances the street's character, improves its ability to accommodate automobile traffic and foster pedestrian movement, and expands the range of goods and services offered. (Section 4.3)
- Minneapolis will grow by increasing its supply of housing. (Section 4.9)
- Minneapolis will improve the availability of housing options (Section 4.11)
- Minneapolis will continue to support the role of arts in tourism and community pride. (Section 6.6)
- Minneapolis will continue to build, maintain and require a pedestrian system which recognizes the importance of a network of private and public sidewalks which achieve the highest standards of connectivity and amenity. (Section 8.3)
- Minneapolis will work with private and other public sector partners to invest in new development that is attractive, functional and adds value to the physical environment. (Section 9.6)

### The Minneapolis Plan

The Minneapolis Plan (left) was adopted by the Mayor and City Council in March of 2000. It is the city's foundational policy document, with policies that express general city values and goals. The West Broadway Alive Plan is compatible with the goals and spirit of The Minneapolis Plan. While the City is currently in the process of updating the Minneapolis Plan, policies excerpted at left from the 2000 Plan emphasize the importance of making areas like West Broadway strong and vital.

Although it is consistent with these and other goals of the Minneapolis Plan, the West Broadway Alive plan recommends that certain elements of The Minneapolis Plan be modified. These are based on a clarification of our understanding of the types of places we're trying to create along West Broadway. Specifically, this plan includes recommended changes to the maps in The Minneapolis Plan that guide land use and development. These recommendations are discussed fully in Chapter 4 of this document.

### West Broadway Plans

This section summarizes the findings and salient recommendations of previous studies of the West Broadway corridor spanning several decades, starting in the 1960's and extending to the present. Major studies were done in the 1980's, 1990's and this decade.



iron, stone walls, fences and hedges to create an urban feel to the area. The report further suggested accommodating the retail needs of the surrounding community, attracting business from NW Minneapolis, and establishing community space. Recommendations for specific zones included creating a gateway to West Broadway at Girard Crossing. Along Girard to James the suggestions included changing the vista and view of the downtown, creating mixed land uses, adding a park on Broadway, slowing traffic, creating a more amenable pedestrian environment and providing more community and human services.

**St Thomas Market Study (1998)**

This study utilized shopper surveys, phone surveys and focus groups to explore why people shopped or did not shop on West Broadway, and develop recommendations for how West Broadway can better position itself to grow, and better serve the area. The study concluded with a recommendation to “differentiate West Broadway by meeting community needs and developing its diversity.” Rather than competing head to head with big box areas such as Brookdale and the Robbinsdale malls, the study advocated the selective recruitment of businesses to address established needs such as a business center, moderate priced family clothing and shoe stores, and sit-down restaurants. It also suggested that West Broadway could be an appropriate home for a north Minneapolis cultural center, and a job/educational center.

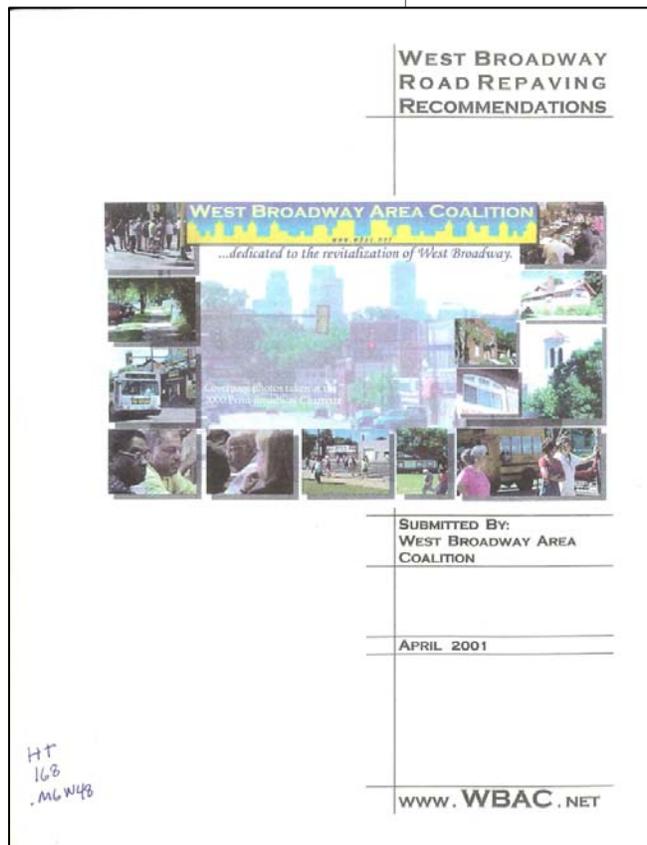
**Penn-Broadway Charrettes (2001)**

The Penn-Broadway Charrettes were conducted in July, 2000. They sought community input on design standards for development in the area near the Penn-Broadway intersection. The results affirmed community support for new urbanism design principles—the creation of a livable, walk-able and viable urban fabric with new buildings close to the sidewalk and parking in the back and on the side. Business owners and design team members endorsed additional housing development as a support to business development. It was recommended that new housing be deliberately designed and targeted to attract a broad residential market from low-income to middle- and upper-income households.

**West Broadway Road Repaving Recommendations (2002)**

In response to Hennepin County’s intent to reconstruct the entire West Broadway right of way from the west city limits to Girard Avenue, the West Broadway Area Coalition (with financial support from the City of Minneapolis) hired Biko Associates

to provide an independent analysis of road design options. Extensive public input was solicited, and findings were communicated to Hennepin



County engineering staff. These findings included potential roadway configurations, parking and turn lane strategies, and production of a report entitled West Broadway Repaving Recommendations.

The report identified four distinct segments of West Broadway between Girard Avenue and the western City Limits. They were termed the West Gateway, the Penn/Broadway commercial node, the Curve, and the Irving Avenue Business District. The primarily residential West Gateway section of West Broadway was to be enhanced by landscaping in order to feel compatible with the character of Theodore Wirth Parkway. The Penn Broadway commercial node was considered to function as a neighborhood scale main street. The Curve was redefined as predominantly residential, and the Irving Avenue Business District was deemed an acceptable location for neighborhood scale businesses.

Eight design principles were also articulated as follows: 1) Evoke a strong neighborhood identity. 2) Create a livable street. 3) Invest in the public realm. 4) Improve connections between pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit riders. 5) Celebrate existing strengths. 6) Promote public safety. 7) Encourage environmental responsibility. 8) Involve the community in the process.

### **West Broadway Rezoning Study (2003)**

The impetus for this zoning study was the realization that existing zoning patterns would not foster development that conformed to community preferences as expressed in the Penn-Broadway Charrettes and other planning processes. In particular, expressed community desires for the development of medium density housing and the maintenance of the traditional storefront character in the Penn-Broadway district were not fully supported by existing zoning. City staff worked with a committee of the West Broadway Area Coalition to develop and advance recommended zoning changes in support of these policy objectives. The proposed zoning changes were supported by the affected neighborhood organizations and approved by the City Council in early 2003.

### **Corridor Housing Initiative (2004)**

Corridor Housing Initiative (CHI) work on West Broadway used a very hands on and interactive process to create development scenarios for four selected sites on West Broadway near the Penn Broadway intersection. The two public meetings also resulted in the creation of design and

development guidelines for new development on West Broadway.

### **Penn/West Broadway Transit Oriented Development Study (2006)**

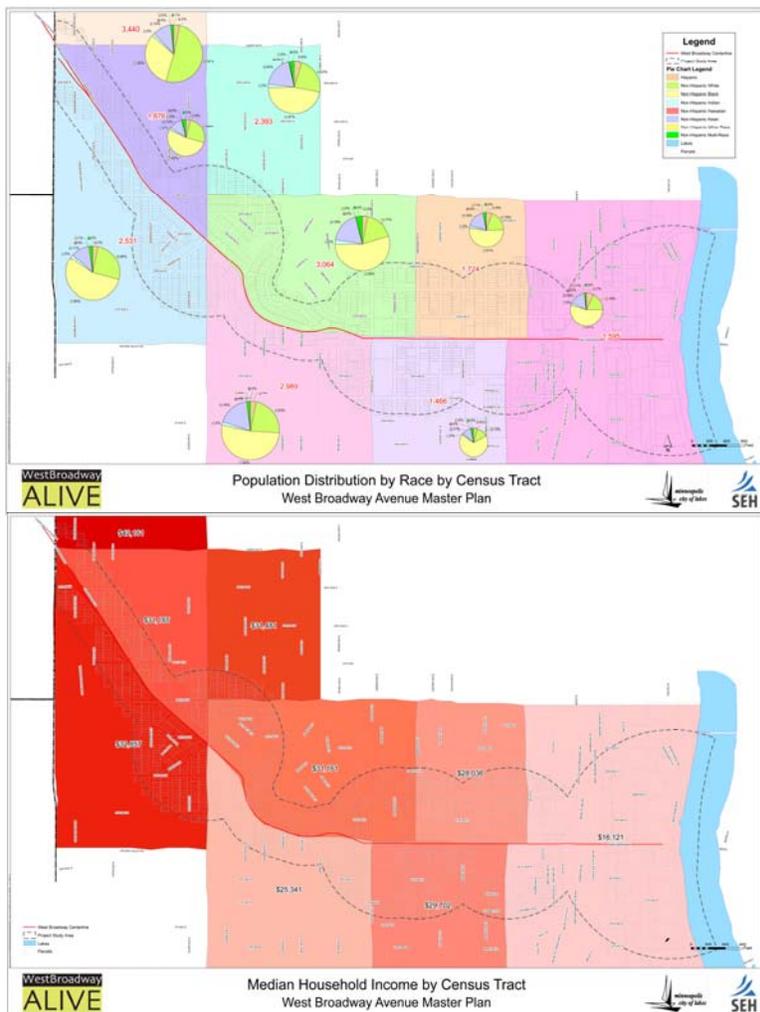
Penn/West Broadway Transit Oriented Development study took a look at the development opportunities that are present in the vicinity of the Penn Broadway intersection given the premise that a bus rapid transit line



would be coming on West Broadway. It yielded refined development guidelines that built on those produced through the CHI process. And it offered development scenarios for all four quadrants of the Penn Broadway intersection. These scenarios have now been incorporated into this plan.

### Northway Trust/Mike Berne Market Scan

Northway Trust recently sponsored a market scan of north Minneapolis, using Michael Berne with MJB Consulting to do the research and analysis. The focus was on the various retail corridors and nodes in north Minneapolis—what level of business activity they could each realistically support and how they should be positioned. The findings of the Northway Trust/Mike Berne study are discussed in some detail in chapter 7. The insights it offers have been highly beneficial to this study of West Broadway.



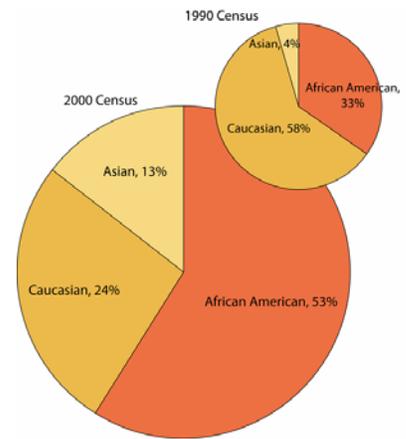
## Community Context People

The boundaries of the West Broadway Alive! (WBA) study area include property in four Minneapolis neighborhoods—Hawthorne, Near North, Jordan and Willard-Hay. Around 9,500 residents live in these four neighborhoods. With a median age of 35 years old (2000 census), these are strikingly young neighborhoods. The combination of an increasing percentage of youth, an aging population, and a falling level of middle-aged adults indicate an increasingly dependent population in the WBA plan area. And families are dealing with capacity issues. Of families with kids, about half are in female headed families with no husband present.

The demographics of the plan area have changed dramatically from 1990 to 2000. Over that time period, the population of African-Americans has increased by 20-percent, the Asian population has more than tripled, and the Caucasian population

has dropped by more than half. This trend is particularly evident in the school population.

The West Broadway area is a low income community. Among the four neighborhoods that border on West Broadway, income levels are lowest in the Hawthorne Neighborhood. Hawthorne residents had a median income of \$21,865 at the time of the 2000 census. Willard-Hay households had the highest median income at \$33,482. This is still significantly less than the city-wide median income of \$44,116.



Race Demographics

### Property

Those familiar with West Broadway will recognize the existing land use pattern. Industrial uses are concentrated at the east end of the corridor. The part of West Broadway in the “commercial core” shows a uniform pattern of commercial development along West Broadway. This area also has most of the very large commercial properties. The Penn Avenue intersection has a critical mass of commercial land uses. Outside of these areas there is a mix of residential and commercial development.



Of the 3,123 housing units within the boundaries of the WBA plan area, the majority are single family homes. 21% are duplexes, and the remaining 5% are in multifamily buildings. The resulting household density is lower than in some comparison areas that are a similar distance from downtown Minneapolis. The residential vacancy rate is 7.7% in the study area compared with a citywide average of 4.3%. Around half of the housing units are renter-occupied and half are owner-occupied. These levels are pretty similar to Minneapolis citywide levels.

There are a lot of older homes in the West Broadway area. Most of the homes were constructed before 1939. Only 153 new units have been built since 1990, or 3.2% of the total. Many older units were demolished between 1990 and 2000, but older homes built before 1940 still constitute 53% of the total housing stock. Median home values are low but span a large range. Homes in the Willard-Hay neighborhood have a median value of \$79,500, while home values in the Hawthorne neighborhood are extremely low, with a median value of \$47,000. By way of comparison, the median value of a Minneapolis home is \$226,900. The lower home values in the West Broadway area are a result of less demand for the neighborhood, and disinvestment and deterioration in the housing structures themselves.