THE 38TH STREET AND CHICAGO AVENUE
SMALL AREA / CORRIDOR FRAMEWORK PLAN

WITH FOCUS ON CHICAGO, BLOOMINGTON AND 4TH AVENUE BUSINESS NODES

ADOPTED BY THE MINNEAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 21, 2008

a people-centered, asset-based approach to urban planning, policy and design

community design group
The 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan

Prepared for
Bancroft Neighborhood Association
Bryant Neighborhood Organization
Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization
Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association
The 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Business Association

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“I believe that we are here not just to build the city but to weave it together, to restore the fabric that differentiates a great city from just another housing development, office park or shopping center.

The New Minneapolis will not be about just housing, jobs or transportation in isolation, it will be an integrated collection of urban villages with quality jobs and housing within walking distance of our homes ... It is about how transit, community development, public art, design, green space, and more all work together to create great, sustainable spaces.

This vision is about change and about action ... We need to seize this special moment with a sense of urgency and purpose. We can be the Great American City of our time and we should settle for nothing less.”

Mayor R.T. Rybak
Inaugural Address
January 3, 2006
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan is to support the ongoing improvement and revitalization of the area of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue by proposing specific policies and strategies to guide its evolution.

This work was initiated by area residents, business owners, and other community leaders in early 2004. It has since advanced through several phases of refinement under the direct guidance of residents and neighborhood organizations. This work has been supported, financed and adopted by the four neighborhood organizations around 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, and by other business and civic organizations in the area.

Vision

“38th Street and Chicago Avenue will be vital corridors and places in our City. They will be hubs for prosperous, inviting, healthy, safe and artful communities, unique places and destinations where people connect with each other and have the opportunity to grow and develop socially, artistically, economically and ethically.”

What we value

This Plan seeks to attract and support development that:

- Furthers local economic development and wealth creation
- Enhances sustainability
- Recognizes and respects community diversity
- Encourages and supports pedestrian orientation
- Provides needed amenities
- Improves public safety and deters crime
- Includes the arts as a means for community connection
- Encourages safe and healthy lifestyles
- Fosters a sense of community

Framework

The area of and around 38th Street and Chicago Avenue has long been lacking a strategic vision for “placemaking,” a comprehensive approach for addressing the several urban systems making up our concept and experience of place.

This Plan seeks to provide guidance for improvement of the
project area in physical and economic terms by addressing land use, housing, transportation, economic development, community health, mobility, public safety and arts-based community development.

The Plan identifies six Focus Areas within the project area where specific recommendations are directed. Included in these six Focus Areas are three nodes identified by the Minneapolis Plan as “Neighborhood Commercial Nodes:” Chicago Avenue and 38th Street, Sabathani / 4th Avenue and 38th Street, and Bloomington Avenue and 38th Street.

**Recommendations**

In general terms, this Plan seeks to intensify land uses in the project area by promoting increased residential and commercial density along the Chicago Avenue and 38th Street transit corridors.

The recommendations in this Plan respond to comments, preferences and guidance provided by residents, community organizations, City of Minneapolis staff and elected representatives. This Plan also responds to and includes recommendations from the recently completed Corridor Housing Initiative study of the area.

Among the recommendations included in this Plan are:

**Land use**

The Plan recommends locating new higher density development adjacent to transit corridors, and proposes changes in existing land uses to make that possible.

Building heights ranging up to four stories are recommended for the neighborhood commercial nodes at the Sabathani and Bloomington nodes. At the 38th and Chicago node, the Plan’s focal location, a slightly higher range of two to five stories is recommended to make use of and support improvements in transit infrastructure along Chicago Avenue and 38th Street.

The Plan also identifies preferred locations for mixed-use commercial/residential development.
**Housing**

This chapter presents some brief recommendations for increasing residential densities in the project area, including the potential adoption of an accessory housing overlay.

**Mobility and Transportation**

The Plan presents recommendations to increase the transit, pedestrian and bicycle orientation of the project area, including improvement of pedestrian crossings, and upgrading of bicycle facilities and street amenities.

The Plan recommends new bicycle transportation facilities along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street (within the existing right of way) to increase access to this mode of transport. It does not recommend any physical modification to existing roadways or to the existing automobile infrastructure in the area.

**Economic Development**

The Plan makes recommendations for marketing and promoting the project area, and for increasing access to training and other resources for small businesses located in the project area. It also proposes a more active role for neighborhood organizations in support of small businesses located in the area’s commercial nodes. Additionally, the Plan makes recommendations to support the development of a long-standing community initiative to start a community-owned business in the project area.

**The Arts**

The Plan presents a survey of local arts and art-related organizations and makes recommendations for encouraging and making use of arts-based community development strategies. It also recommends the establishment of a high visibility arts center near the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue.

**Community Health**

Developed in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (DHFS), this chapter presents health information for the community living in and around the project area and makes design recommendations, supported by Public Health research, for improving the project area’s built environment.
Public safety
The Plan presents recommendations for addressing lingering perceptions of lack of safety in the project area. Among the recommendations is the assignment of a beat officer to the area near the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, provision of improved pedestrian lighting, and increased enforcement of existing regulations against unkempt and shuttered structures that currently exert a blighting influence.

Public realm
This chapter of the Plan presents recommendations for improving the quality of the urban realm in the project area and for increasing walkability, pedestrian and transit orientation, and for improving safety and the perception of safety through specific design decisions.

Urban design guidelines
The Plan presents a set of guidelines for development that respond to the preferences and ideas expressed by participants in this planning process. The guidelines are meant to supplement the policies guiding the development of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and Community Corridors presented in the Minneapolis Plan, and to respond to and incorporate elements included in the Minneapolis Zoning Code’s guidelines for Pedestrian Oriented Overlay Districts.

The guidelines address various elements of design and the physical landscape, including building orientation and placement, storefronts and façades, pedestrian orientation, and signs and other streetscape elements, among others.

Implementation
The Plan offers guidance for implementing the changes recommended in the document. Establishing a Plan Implementation Committee, for example, is recommended in order to maintain citizen oversight of the development process. Other additional resources, including a prioritization timeline, and businesses development, training and financing resources are also included.