Section II

Proposed policy changes

This section of the Plan is the principal component of this work, and includes specific recommendations for improvement for the several “urban systems” or interrelated planning and policy spheres that, taken together, make up our experience of and vision for 38th Street and Chicago Avenue.

In this section:

2.1 - Districts and framework
2.2 - Land use
2.3 - Housing
2.4 - Mobility and transportation
2.5 - Economic development
2.6 - The arts
2.7 - Community health
2.8 - Public safety
2.9 - The public realm
2.10 - Urban character and design guidelines
“Of the man-made things, the works of engineering and architecture and town plan are the heaviest and biggest part of what we experience. They lie underneath, they loom around, as the prepared place of our activity. Economically, they have the greatest amount of past human labor frozen into them, as streets and highways, houses and bridges, and physical plant.

Against this background we do our work and strive towards our ideals, or just live out our habits; yet because it is background, it tends to become taken for granted and to be unnoticed.

A child accepts the man-made background itself as the inevitable nature of things; he does not realize that somebody once drew some lines on a piece of paper who might have drawn otherwise. But now, as engineer and architect once drew, people have to walk and live.”

~ Paul and Percival Goodman
Communitas, 1960
2.1 Framework

The recommendations made in a Small Area Plan must necessarily be specific to a place. Six specific places, called “Focus Areas” in this Plan, are identified as locations sharing some characteristics that differentiate them from surrounding areas, and that also make it appropriate to direct some specific improvements to them.

**A word about nomenclature**

It should be noted that these “Focus Areas” should not be confused with the “Node” designations utilized in the Minneapolis Plan. Focus Areas identified in this Plan are meant to supplement, and not supplant, those designations. Three of the Focus Areas identified here are also identified by the Minneapolis Plan as Neighborhood Commercial Nodes; three others are not, and this Plan does not seek to change that. It simply names them in order to make recommendations for them. Where Focus Area boundaries are identified, these are again meant to supplement (and not compete with) boundaries identified in the Minneapolis Plan.

**Focus Area descriptions**

**Gateway**

This Focus Area is located along the northern edge of the project area. Mostly residential, it includes a mix of single family and multi-unit housing, as well some land dedicated to automobile-related uses. It was identified as a Focus Area to address issues of continuity between the project area and development and other activities taking place on nearby Lake Street, the Allina / Abbott medical campus, and the Global Exchange and Market.

**Pillsbury**

This Focus Area extends between 34th and 35th Street along Chicago Avenue. Several important public and institutional uses are located here: Pillsbury House (at 35th Street) is a community institution serving children and families, and hosting several education, health, and arts initiatives and programs, including a nationally recognized professional theater company. Wilder School, on 34th Street, connects directly with Powderhorn Park, an important recreation and community asset in South Minneapolis.
**Sabathani / 4th Avenue**

This Focus Area is located around the intersection of 38th Street and 4th Avenue South, and includes a number of important institutions. Sabathani Community Center, located on 38th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue, is a community institution serving youth and the multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-generational communities living in South Minneapolis. This node also includes the offices of the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder and the Minneapolis Urban League, as well as several churches.

This Focus Area is identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan.

**38th and Chicago**

The area of and around the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue is a principal Focus Area for the work of this Plan. Community desire to improve the physical and economic conditions of this area has been one of the driving forces for this work. Several businesses and community institutions are located near this intersection.

This Focus Area is identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan.

**Bloomington**

The Focus Area at Bloomington Avenue and 38th Street is an important intersection in this part of Minneapolis, and can help connect the work of this Plan with changes and improvements taking place along Bloomington Avenue.

This Focus Area is identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan.

**Phelps / Riverlake**

This Focus Area marks the southern end of the project area, and includes the areas around Phelps Park, an important center for sports and recreational activities for young people. Located along the proposed “Riverlake Greenway” bicycle corridor on 40th Street, issues of connection and accessibility are of primary importance.
2.2 Land use: Present conditions and recommendations

The term “land use” refers to the activities that take place on the specific land parcels making up a place. Changing over time, land uses reflect larger economic, social and structural factors. They also respond to directions set forth in a city’s land use planning policies, including its zoning regulations, comprehensive plan, and other policy documents.

In this chapter we examine land uses in the project area and identify specific parcels where current uses conflict with the long-term vision included in the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Community Development Plan and the Minneapolis Plan. We propose alternative uses that, working in concert with the other recommendations that are part of this Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan, can lead us closer to realization of the community vision that forms the basis for this work.

Additionally, a set of policy changes related to land use is also presented to supplement existing city polices and to protect and enhance the project area’s pedestrian orientation.

**Goals**

- Identify “opportunity sites,” vacant or underutilized parcels where development could be directed
- Identify parcels where current uses conflict with long-term vision; propose use changes consistent with long-term vision
- Increase the number of people living in the project area
- Recommend locations for higher density development
- Protect and encourage pedestrian orientation of the project area
- Encourage construction of mixed-use, commercial / residential development where appropriate

**Existing conditions**

This section gives a brief overview, in general terms, of land uses along Chicago Avenue and 38th Street. More detailed descriptions are given for each of the Focus Areas in following sections of this chapter.

**Along Chicago Avenue**

Chicago Avenue is a busy north-south corridor connecting downtown Minneapolis to important institutional, commercial and residential locations along its path. The portion of Chicago Avenue
Existing Land Uses
38th Street and Chicago Avenue Project Area

[Map of the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Project Area with various land use categories plotted.]
within the project area has a good mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses.

Residential uses in the northern half of the project area are roughly equally divided between single family residences and multi-family units. Commercial uses are present in at least one of the corners in all the intersections in this part of the project area; at 35th Street all four corners host non-residential uses, though some vacancies and non-commercial uses are present also.

In the southern half of the project area there is a significantly higher number of commercial and non-residential uses. Much of this is due to the influence of the commercial node at the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue (designated as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” by the Minneapolis Plan). Though it faces several challenges, improvements at this node have great potential for changing people’s perception of this part of Minneapolis. There is a slightly higher proportion of single family vs. multi-unit residential uses than in the northern half of the project area.

Two important commercial and activity nodes exist in relative proximity to the project area along Chicago Avenue: the Midtown Exchange and Global Market, at Chicago and Lake, and a vibrant and vital neighborhood commercial node at 48th Street and Chicago Avenue.

Chicago Avenue is identified as a Community Corridor by the Minneapolis Plan.

**Along East 38th Street**

At present, 38th Street includes a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses. Less intensely commercial than Chicago Avenue, a significant number of parcels along it host residential land uses, including a limited number of multi-family units.

38th Street is identified as a Community Corridor by the Minneapolis Plan, which also identifies (in addition to 38th Street and Chicago Avenue) the area surrounding the intersection of 4th Avenue, and the area around the intersection of Bloomington Avenue as Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. A prospering node at 38th Street and Nicollet Avenue is also in close proximity to the project area.

---

**Great Streets: Funds for Improvement and Revitalization**

Community Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes (as designated by the Minneapolis Plan) are eligible to receive funds for improvement under the City’s recently created Great Streets Program.

The Focus Areas at 38th and Chicago, 4th and 38th, and Bloomington and 38th are classified as Neighborhood Commercial Nodes under the Minneapolis Plan, while both Chicago Avenue and 38th Street are identified as Community Corridors.

For more details on the Great Streets Program please see Chapter 3.2.
**Future land use: a caveat**

This section includes recommendations about possible future uses of land in the project area. In some cases, recommendations include changing uses or structures currently existing on a parcel, though the fact that a recommendation is made does not mean that it will happen or that it must happen.

These recommendations are provided following guidance from the City of Minneapolis CPED Planning Division. The purpose of the recommendations is to illustrate development possibilities that are consistent with the vision and recommendations from the Minneapolis Plan and with the community comments and preferences that this Plan is based on.

An important foundation for this work is the belief that sustainable improvement only takes place with the consent and active participation of those affected. Therefore, no part of the recommendations that follow in this section should be construed as evidence of a hidden development agenda; all work and development activities that proceed from this Plan will be openly announced and accessible for public review, guidance and comment.

Where possible, contact with the present use and property owner has been made as a courtesy to let present business and parcel owners know about this work and its potential implications. Several of the recommendations included in this section were included in the list of sites evaluated as part of the Corridor Housing Initiative in Fall 2006.

**Reading the land use maps**

The maps provided in the next section use these definitions:
- **Preferred mixed use** are locations where there is strong community preference for including ground-floor commercial space along with new residential development.
- **Maximum stories** (marked as a number on the gray circles) is the maximum number of stories recommended for development and construction at a location.
- **Preserve** (marked as “P” on the gray circles) indicates structures that are recommended for preservation, rehabilitation and reuse.
- **Density** is defined in terms of dwelling units (DU) per acre. Low-Density Housing includes up to 20 DU/acre; Medium-Density Housing ranges between 20 to 50 DU/acre; High-Density Housing includes between 50 and 120 DU/acre.

**A framework for site selection**

How do we choose which parcels to recommend for development? Which criteria are helpful in evaluating recommendations for changing the structures and uses in a parcel or Focus Area?

The framework provided in this section is meant to help answer some of those questions. Developed as part of the Corridor Housing Initiative with the help and support of the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) office, it asks some helpful questions for decision-making:

**Size: Is the land available of sufficient size to develop?**
- Is the parcel large enough to make development possible? Can it be combined with adjacent parcels to assemble a site that can accommodate the desired amenities and be economically viable? A typical residential parcel in the project area is approximately 5,000 square feet - a site would need to be at least 10,000 square feet to yield about 8 units of housing at R4 densities.

**Strategic impact: Can it help change our perception of the project area?**

Some things to consider:
- Site location: where is it located in the project area? Is it on a corner? How visible will it be?
- How long has it been underutilized or vacant? Do people perceive its current condition as a blighting influence?

**Feasibility: How possible is it?**

- Is it consistent with the Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan and with the Minneapolis Plan?
- Is it in a marketable site or area?
- How many transactions would be required to assemble the land for this project? (Two or less is best)
- Are developers already expressing interest in this site?
- Is the property owner actively trying to sell the property?

**Other plan objectives: What else does it accomplish?**

- Is the site well-suited for mixed-use development?
- Does it replace a non-pedestrian oriented site or use with something that improves walkability in the project area?
- Does it increase the density of households in the area? Bringing more people to the area helps improve business vitality and helps support transit infrastructure.
Focus Area recommendations

Gateway focus area

An entry point for the project area, the Gateway Focus Area is conveniently located to Lake Street and other important centers of activity, including the Midtown Exchange and Global Market (which is one block away) and the Allina hospital complex. It is also connected to high frequency transit on Chicago Avenue to downtown, and east and west on Lake Street.

It is at present mostly residential, and includes a mix of single family and multi-unit housing. Given its rich list of amenities, and its proximity to well-established commercial areas, this is an ideal site for more intense residential uses.

This Plan recommends developing townhomes or apartments on the large surface parking lot located at 3101 Chicago Avenue. This site, with around 20,000 square feet of surface area, could, under one potential development scenario, host approximately 14 dwelling units. Parking presently provided at the site could be accommodated underground or at existing nearby lots.

In the longer term, parcels currently hosting single-family could be combined to develop townhomes or additional apartments.
**Pillsbury Focus Area**

Located halfway between the Midtown Exchange and the Focus Area (and Neighborhood Commercial Node) at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, this Focus Area hosts a number of neighborhood-scaled commercial and arts-related uses. It also includes several important youth and community institutions.

The Pillsbury Focus Area is home to Pillsbury House Theatre and community center, the firehouse arts gallery, Southeast Asian Family Services, Wilder School, the PPNA offices and several smaller arts and arts-related organizations. It also includes easy access to Powderhorn Park, an important recreational and cultural asset for this part of Minneapolis.
This Focus Area includes several parcels which could be more intensely developed. This Plan recommends allowing the continuation of this district’s already established commercial uses, and infilling several smaller parcels currently hosting automobile parking uses. Development of three and four story buildings in selected parcels which are currently vacant or occupied by one-story structures would be consistent with supporting increased densities along Chicago Avenue and could also help support a strengthening of this Focus Area’s identity.

The most attractive site for development in this Focus Area is located at 3346 Chicago Avenue, currently being used as a parking lot for the Wilder School across the street. This 30,000 square foot site could, under one potential development scenario, host around 20 dwelling units.

Several layers of improvement affecting the area’s public realm, pedestrian accessibility, and perception of safety are also recommended, including improvement of pedestrian crossings, installation of pedestrian-scale lighting, planting of street trees, and provision of benches and other street furniture.

3346 Chicago Avenue (the Wilder parking lot).

A potential development scenario.
Photo: Townhomes near 44th Street and France Avenue in Minneapolis.

Looking south along Chicago Avenue, In the Pillsbury Focus Area.

New higher-density residential development in Elliot Park, in Minneapolis.
Sabathani / 4th Avenue Focus Area

This Focus Area is located around the intersection of 38th Street and 4th Avenue South, and includes a number of important institutions. Sabathani Community Center, located on 38th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue, is a community institution serving youth and the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-generational communities living in South Minneapolis. The offices of the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder and the Minneapolis Urban League, as well as several religious institutions are also located in this Focus Area.

The former site of Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. This site is currently for sale.

Several buildings and parcels located in and around this Focus Area are presently vacant. Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church (across from Sabathani) has recently vacated its former site and has announced its intention to sell. A significant number of other buildings and parcels are vacant (and listed for sale). Two of the vacant buildings are boarded.

This Focus Area was a principal focus of the 2000 Biko study (see Chapter 1.4), and is identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan.
This Plan envisions additional commercial and residential activity in this Focus Area, and recommends the development of two key sites: one at the corner of 4th Avenue and 38th Street, and the other at the Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church site. Both sites could host mixed-use, four story buildings that would bring additional residents, visitors and business to the area.

The site at 38th and 4th was first identified as an important component of revitalization strategies for the 38th Street corridor in the 2000 Biko study. If the two vacant parcels at 3800 and 3810 4th Avenue South are combined with adjoining properties at 343 and 345 East 38th Street, they yield close to 14,500 square feet, which could host about 10 dwelling units under one potential development scenario.

The Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church site comprises about 30,000 square feet and could yield about 20 dwelling units under one potential development scenario. Reconfiguration of the existing alley (which exits onto 38th Street) into an L or T configuration is recommended in order to decrease potential automobile-pedestrian conflicts.

Several smaller parcels which are currently vacant are recommended as places where townhomes or other residential uses could be located.

Several layers of improvement affecting the area’s public realm, pedestrian accessibility, and perception of safety are also recommended, including improvement of pedestrian crossings, installation of pedestrian-scale lighting, planting of street trees, and provision of benches and other street furniture.
38th and Chicago focus area

The Focus Area located in and around the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue is a principal focal point for the work in this Plan. Identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan, community desire to improve the physical and economic conditions of this area has been one of the driving forces for this work.

Several commercial establishments exist in and near this Focus Area. Present land uses in the area include a small grocery store, a pair of automotive repair shops, a discount “dollar” store, a gas station, two Mexican restaurants and several small storefronts, a large surface parking lot serving an adjoining church, a mattress and furniture warehouse, and several hair and braiding salons.

Several storefronts are vacant, including some which appear to be used for long-term storage of goods for nearby businesses. Overall, land use in the node seems unfocused, and some of the current uses work against the vision articulated for this area in this and prior projects.
Residential uses begin a few parcels south of 38th Street, and within a half a block east and west of Chicago Avenue.

Already home to the bulk of the project area’s commercial uses, this Plan envisions an intensification of commercial and residential activity at this Focus Area. The combination of high visibility and access, along with a significant number of underutilized parcels, make it an attractive and important location for development and improvement.

Two key sites are identified for development in the near term: one at the corner of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue and the other just north of the intersection.

The high-visibility site at 3800 and 3808 Chicago Avenue (the southwest corner of the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue intersection) is owned by Worldwide Outreach for Christ, a church which is planning to move to a new location.

Development of this site would go a long way towards helping change perceptions of the area’s condition and potential. Summing approximately 14,500 square feet (about 10 dwelling units under one potential development scenario), this site was also identified in the 2000 Biko study and was included in the 2006 Corridor Housing Initiative study.

The second site recommended, combining the parcels for 3721, 3725, 3731, 3733, 3741 and 3743 Chicago Avenue was submitted to the Corridor Housing Initiative (CHI) for exploration as a potential development site. CHI considered several site configurations with the purpose of illustrating potential development scenarios for increased residential densities along transit corridors. One “break even” development scenario resulted in 56 affordable housing units and 5,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial space. Several other configurations were also studied; please see Appendix A.6 for more details.

Several buildings in this district are recommended for preservation, including the two buildings at the NE and SE corners of the intersection, and the Nokomis Theater.
building (presently Wreck Brothers Auto Body and newly available for sale).

This Plan recommends the eventual replacement of existing auto-oriented uses and underutilized parcels with new development of three and four story residential and mixed-use structures that will bring additional residents and commerce to the area. Accomplishing this vision will increase the viability of existing and potential businesses and better utilize the area’s strong transit connections and programmed investments.

Additionally, this Plan recommends several layers of improvement affecting the area’s public realm, pedestrian accessibility, and perception of safety. These recommendations include improvement of pedestrian crossings and installation of pedestrian-scale lighting, installation of tree grates, planting of street trees, and provision of benches and other street furniture.
Bloomington Focus Area

Tightly centered around the intersection of Bloomington Avenue and 38th Street, this Focus Area marks the eastern edge of the project area. It includes several small and international/ethnic businesses, among which are a new small grocery, a Jamaican restaurant, a West Indies music store, and an Indian/Asian clothing shop as well as a small arts gallery. Across the intersection, there is a several-year vacant and dilapidated commercial property on the southeast corner and a gas station on the southwest.

This Focus Area is also identified as a “Neighborhood Commercial Node” in the Minneapolis Plan.

This Plan envisions potential development of up to four stories in the SE and SW corners of the intersection adding residential density and economic vitality to this area.

Although the vacant property at 3801 Bloomington Avenue has sat vacant and unkept for several years, it is, at 3,000 square feet, too small to be attractive for developers. In the long term, however, it could be combined with nearby parcels to create a more feasible development opportunity.

The buildings and small commercial spaces and storefronts existing north of the intersection are recommended for preservation.
**Phelps / Riverlake Focus Area**

This Focus Area marks the southern end of the project area, and includes the areas around Phelps Park, an important center for sports and recreational activities for families and young people. Located along the proposed “Riverlake Greenway” bicycle corridor on 40th Street, it is included as a focus area to address issues of connection and accessibility to the Park and bicycle corridor. No land use changes are recommended for this Focus Area.

*Currently proposed cross-section for the Riverlake Greenway Corridor. Source: Sanders Wacker Bergly and City of Minneapolis.*

*Phelps Park is an important recreation asset for children and families in the project area.*
Other Recommendations

Designate 38th and Chicago as a “Pedestrian Overlay District”

Many existing land uses in the project area are incompatible with the long-term vision gathered and articulated earlier stages of this work. Clear preferences for a more walkable, pedestrian oriented environment have to contend with a significant number of automobile-oriented uses, especially in the principal intersection of the project area, where a gas station, an extensive surface parking lot, several automobile repair shops, and warehouse uses work against transformation of the intersection, and are in fact in conflict with Minneapolis Plan policies applying to Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

Designating 38th Street and Chicago Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented overlay district would, over the long term, discourage these incompatible uses and promote a reutilization of land in the project area that would bring it closer to the community-articulated vision for improvement.

Established by the Minneapolis Zoning Code (Chapter 551.60), the purpose of a pedestrian-oriented overlay district is to “preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas and to promote street life and activity by regulating building orientation and design and accessory parking facilities, and by prohibiting certain high-impact auto-oriented uses.” Please refer to Appendix A.3 of this Plan for an excerpt from this Ordinance.

Improved Enforcement of Existing Zoning Regulations

During work on this Plan many residents, business owners and neighborhood representatives noted the existence of several properties that exert a negative or “blighting” influence on the project area and its prospects. Some of these properties appear several-years abandoned and unkept, while others include street-front retail spaces being used as storage. As such, these sites may be in violation of zoning, building code, and business licenses ordinances. More proactive enforcement may lead to improved conditions for areas surrounding them.

Encourage Mixed-use Development

Mixed-use commercial / residential development can help address the need for additional housing opportunities (both market rate and affordable) in the project area while also providing space for

Minneapolis pedestrian overlays

Several pedestrian areas in Minneapolis are recognized as such and protected by the Minneapolis Zoning Code. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Uptown (the Lake and Hennepin area)
- Dinkytown (by the University of Minnesota)
- Northeast (the Central and Lowry area)
- Linden Hills
- Nicollet Mall
- The Loring Park-Harmon area
business development. Bringing more residents to the project area will also help support existing and potential businesses and add riders for the area’s transit services.

**Encourage the Development of Live-Work Spaces**

Live-work spaces are those that include connected residential and commercial (gallery or storefront) uses within a single unit. Typically favored by artists and certain small businesses, these spaces can help support artistic activity and enhance a place’s pedestrian orientation (see Chapter 2.6 for additional recommendations for supporting artistic activity in the project area).

**Explore Allowing the Construction of Accessory (“Carriage”) Housing**

A carriage house, also known as an “accessory housing unit” or a “granny flat,” is an additional unit of housing that can be built on an existing lot, typically by using the space above the garages that line mid-block alleyways.

At present this practice is only allowed by a zoning overlay in the northern portion of the former Phillips neighborhood (Minneapolis Zoning Chapter 551.1020). Allowing the construction of these accessory housing units, on owner-occupied lots and with appropriate siting and architectural controls, can accomplish several goals:

- Increase housing opportunities by providing an increased number of apartment rental units
- Increase homeownership opportunities by providing potential homeowners with an additional source of income that lowers their effective mortgage payments
- Increase density without requiring high-rise construction
- Increase safety in project area neighborhoods by providing additional “eyes on the street,” specially along alleys
- Bring more residents to the project area, helping support existing and potential businesses and adding riders for the area’s transit services
- Provide attractive housing options for area residents who no longer need a full-sized home but would like to continue to live in their neighborhoods

![Artist Patricia Mendoza at work in ARTeRIA, her live/work studio space near Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street.](image)

![Allowing the construction of carriage housing (shown in orange) on owner-occupied lots will provide homeowners with additional income, increase the supply of housing, increase the number of potential customers for local businesses, and help make efficient use of transit and other investments.](image)
2.3 Housing

It is hard to imagine a statement of deeper commitment to a place than choosing to live there. What we call “housing,” the response to a universally recognized basic human need for shelter and protection from the elements, is in fact one of the foundations of community. It is in most societies the center of family life, of the nurturing of the young and the caring for the old; a place for rest and recuperation from the labors of the day, where cultural and social knowledge is passed between generations.

Words like “home” and “hearth” begin to express the special meanings that societies have associated with housing and the role it plays within them.

**Housing as a Source of Wealth**

Housing is also an economic commodity. It is, in our society, the largest investment a person makes in their lifetime, and is a means for capital accumulation and for the attainment of financial stability, an important marker in a family’s march towards prosperity and economic success.

**Varying Housing Needs**

People’s housing needs vary through their lives: while young, single people often choose studio or small apartments as they begin their independent lives; by the time they reach marriage or begin families of their own they often look for larger apartments or single family homes. Couples may gain a foothold into homeownership if they’re able to live in a duplex that provides them with an additional source of income towards their mortgage payment. As people age and their children go into the world on their own they may return to a smaller house or apartment, especially if it also offers convenient access to amenities. As people grow older they may find a smaller apartment or group quarters a better choice for their needs.

Housing needs also vary across cultures. Some ethnic and immigrant groups live as extended families that require larger (4 bedroom plus) apartments. Others may look for places where several families may live in close proximity to each other.

**Some Thoughts on Housing Density: A Neighborhood Perspective**

It is understood that increased housing density can be a useful tool in attracting development, making a location attractive to businesses, and providing more efficient use of transit and other public investments.

As our Metropolitan region grows, increased housing density can also be an important mechanism to increase the sustainability of our City and region by helping to reduce auto-dependency and urban sprawl.

More locally, it is important that specific projects that increase housing density at a particular location be done in harmony and proportion to their context.

The 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan proposes an approach that supports increased residential densities along transit corridors while respecting and complimenting the architectural integrity and context of existing homes and residential neighborhoods. The end goal? A vibrant, connected and thriving community for all to enjoy.
**Housing Stability**
Families that have a stable housing situation do better. One of the leading indicators for poor school performance in children is the number of times they have to move or switch schools during the year. Unfortunately, this is a reality for many children whose families have trouble finding or keeping housing they can afford.

**Housing as a Foundation for Economic Development**
The number of households living in a place impacts the commercial viability of its businesses. A greater density of residents means more potential customers for existing (and potential) businesses. The 1996 “Market Study of Neighborhood Commercial Areas and Nodes” (reviewed in Chapter 1.4) determined that a trade area population of at least 10,000 people is needed to support the types and variety of neighborhood-oriented uses needed for a commercial area to remain vital. A greater number of people can lead to a commercial area that supports a greater variety of businesses, and that in turn draws additional customers.

**Goals**
- To provide housing opportunities at all income levels, including opportunities for homeownership, for a variety of housing types
- To promote improvement and rehabilitation of the area’s existing housing stock
- To protect and enhance the project area’s architectural heritage
- To support the revitalization of area commercial nodes and support efficient use of transit investments by increasing residential densities and promoting development of new transit and pedestrian-oriented housing

**Present Conditions**
The four neighborhoods surrounding the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue project area are predominantly occupied by single family residences. A good number of multi-unit buildings are also located throughout the four neighborhood, though the majority of them are located in Powderhorn Park and Central neighborhoods (north of 38th Street). Many of these tend to cluster within a couple of blocks of Lake Street, Powderhorn Park, and Chicago Avenue.

There are almost 8,600 units of housing in the four area neighborhoods. More than half (56%) of them are owner-occupied, a rate which slightly exceeds the City’s overall average.

**Defining Affordability**
The issue of affordable housing is often controversial when discussing potential future development.

According to City of Minneapolis definitions and data, the estimated current median household income for a family of four living at 38th and Chicago is $49,038 - a figure that is well below the 2006 Twin Cities Metropolitan Area median household income of $78,560, which is the figure used to calculate definitions of affordability.

Under City of Minneapolis guidelines, any housing project receiving City development subsidies must make at least 20% of all the units produced affordable to people earning 50% of the area median income ($78,560 * 0.5 = $39,250 per year).

As a result, 1 out of every 5 units produced with Minneapolis funds in the project area would be available to people making up to $39,250 per year (which is almost half of all the households living in the project area).

Similarly, Federal requirements for housing development specify that 51% of all units must be available to those earning 80% of the area median income ($78,560 * 0.8 = $62,850 per year).

As a result, one of every two units produced with Federal subsidies would be available to people earning up to $62,850 per year (which includes two thirds of all households living in the area).
The remaining 44% of all housing units are rental units.

More than 70% (about 6,040) of all housing units in the area were built before 1940 and are more than 65 years old. A total of 7,344 housing units (almost 9 out of every ten units) were built before 1960.

Generally, the quality and richness of residential architecture in the four neighborhoods included in this Plan is among the best in the City, and is often cited by residents as one of the reasons they chose to live in the area.

Neighborhood associations have funded several programs and initiatives for housing preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance with the aim of preserving the quality of the area’s housing stock.

In general, the condition of housing present along 38th Street and along Chicago Avenue tends to be good, though there are also several properties in various states of disrepair. There are a number of multi-unit housing structures along Chicago Avenue that appear to have been built relatively recently on consolidated parcels. The condition of single and multi-family structures along Chicago Avenue generally improves as one heads southward.

**Recommendations**

**Continue to support housing preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance**

Preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance efforts should continue to be an important component of actions related to housing in the area. The residential architecture in the area covered by this Plan is among the richest in the city. Continuing to support homeowners’ upkeep and improvement of their properties (façade improvements and rehabilitation) will help to preserve this heritage, protect the existing supply of housing and maintain a positive neighborhood image.

**Support the development of mixed-use housing**

Mixed-use commercial / residential development can help address the need for additional housing opportunities (both market rate and affordable) in the project area while also providing space for commercial development. Bringing more residents to the project area will also help support existing and potential businesses and add riders for the area’s transit services.
Promote the development of a variety of housing types
As development proposals are submitted, include consideration of the housing needs of people at different income levels, of the requirements of people in various stages of their lives, and of the needs of non-traditional families and cultures.

Encourage the development of live-work spaces and housing for artists
Live-work spaces are those that include connected residential and commercial (gallery or storefront) uses within a single unit. Typically favored by artists and certain small businesses, these spaces can help support artistic activity and enhance a place’s pedestrian orientation (see Chapter 2.6 for additional recommendations for supporting artistic activity in the project area). Several local developers, including Powderhorn Residents Group (PRG) have experience in developing this type of housing.

Explore allowing the construction of accessory (“carriage”) housing
A carriage house, also known as an “accessory housing unit” or a “granny flat,” is an additional unit of housing that can be built on an existing lot, typically by using the space above the garages that line mid-block alleyways.

Allowing the construction of these accessory housing units, on owner-occupied lots and with appropriate siting and architectural controls, may help increase housing opportunities by providing an increased number of apartment rental units; increase homeownership opportunities by providing potential homeowners with an additional source of income that lowers their effective mortgage payments; and increase density without requiring high-rise construction.

At present this practice is only allowed through a zoning overlay in the northern portion of the former Phillips neighborhood (Minneapolis Zoning Chapter 551.1020).

Housing policy guidance from the Minneapolis Plan
The Minneapolis Plan provides specific policies guiding the planning and development of housing in the City. Some of these policies are listed here as they provide important guidance on the development of provision of higher density housing, affordable housing, and the development of a variety of housing types in the project area:

- Minneapolis will grow by increasing its supply of housing (Policy 4.9)
- Minneapolis will increase its housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households (Policy 4.10)
- Minneapolis will improve the availability of housing options for its residents (Policy 4.11)
- Minneapolis will reasonably accommodate the housing needs of all of its citizens (Policy 4.12)
- Minneapolis will maintain the quality and unique character of the City’s housing stock, thus maintaining the character of the vast majority of residential blocks in the city (Policy 4.14)
2.4 Mobility and transportation

We travel to take care of our daily needs. We go to work, get the groceries, get our children to school or daycare - and though we sometimes choose our mode of travel out of habit, we often weigh several factors before deciding on our options. How convenient is it? How expensive is it to get there? How long will it take? Will I be safe if I choose this mode or go this route? Can I see something interesting on the way if I travel in this way? Will I maybe see a friend?

In this chapter we look at transportation through the lens of “mobility,” which the dictionary defines as “the ability to move freely and easily.” We have grown, in our society, to think of transportation as something that must almost always center around vehicles. Mobility is much simpler. How do we make it more convenient to get from point A from point B? How do we make it easier for adults to get to work, for children to get to the park, for families to get their groceries in a way that responds to the goals and vision that shape this Plan?

Goals

- To achieve a better balance between pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobile travel modes
- To improve the quality of the pedestrian environment in the project area
- To make it safer and more convenient for people to choose more active and healthful modes of travel
- To improve connections with existing mobility networks in our City
- To improve access to destinations for people living in or visiting the project area, regardless of age, income, physical limitations, or access to automobile transportation

Present conditions

Both 38th Street and Chicago Avenue are connected to and are part of the existing transportation and mobility networks in our city. A summary of each of these systems is provided below.
**Pedestrian Travel**

Like most places in our City, all of the blocks in the project area provide at least the basic requirement for pedestrian circulation - there are sidewalks on every block. However, the level of additional amenities that increase the quality of the pedestrian experience (and invite more people to walk more often) is generally low.

Pedestrians have to contend with poorly marked crossings at all intersections, with speeding vehicles and “untamed” vehicle roadways that do little to discourage vehicle speeding. Portland Avenue and Park Avenue, major corridors in and out of downtown, create a barrier for pedestrian circulation within their vicinity in the project area - many comments were received, for example, about the reluctance of parents to let their children cross the street to reach Phelps Park, which borders Park Avenue.

Interstate 35W, at the eastern end of the project area, also creates a barrier to pedestrian circulation into the thriving commercial node at Nicollet Avenue and 38th Street and nearby neighborhoods. Sidewalks are provided on freeway overpasses at 35th, 36th and 38th Street. There is also a pedestrian-only freeway overpass at 40th Street.

Sidewalk widths vary through the project area. Sidewalks along Chicago Avenue are generally 10 feet wide (including planted boulevard, where present), except near 38th Street, where they widen to 14 feet. Where planted boulevard exists, it appears, at 4 feet wide, to be too narrow for maintaining tree health and sidewalk integrity. Planted boulevard on Chicago Avenue exists between 31st Street and just north of 37th Street, and again along Phelps Park between 39th and 40th Street.

Sidewalks along 38th Street are generally about 7 feet wide, except near Chicago Avenue and Bloomington Avenue, where they again widen to close to 14 feet. No planted boulevard exists along the portion of 38th Street in the project area.

**Did you know?**

- Almost 18% of all Minneapolis households lack access to an automobile.
- Households earning less than $30,000 per year spend about 25 cents out of every dollar of their income on transportation.
- About 75% of Minneapolis welfare recipients do not have access to an automobile.

**Narrow boulevards can cause damage to sidewalks and inhibit tree health.**

*Photo: An existing boulevard near 31st Street and Chicago Avenue.*
**BICYCLE NETWORK**

Although the project area is in close proximity to major amenities and important bicycle network assets, provision for bicycle travel in and through the project area is generally poor. There are no east-west bicycle routes in the project area, although space for bicyclists is provided along a portion of 38th Street adjacent to the Hiawatha LRT station, outside of the project area.

Two on-street bike lanes run north and south in the project area: a southbound lane along Portland Avenue and a northbound lane along Park Avenue. Use of these facilities is uncomfortable given the speed and volume of vehicle traffic along these major automobile transportation routes.

Two important bicycle corridors are nearby:
- The recently completed Midtown Greenway Corridor runs east-west about ten blocks north of the project area (just north of Lake Street), connecting the Chain of Lakes, trails to the southern suburbs, downtown Minneapolis, and St. Paul. A streetcar line connecting the southern suburbs with the existing Hiawatha LRT is proposed to also run along this corridor.
- The “Riverlake Greenway” running along 40th Street (the southern edge of the project area) is proposed to connect bicyclists from Lake Harriet to the Mississippi River. The majority of the proposed route is along 40th Street, turning this street into a more bike and pedestrian friendly route. Design for this project is currently underway.

**TRANSIT NETWORK**

The project area is well-connected to the existing regional transit network. Regularly scheduled transit service includes the following routes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Service description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>High frequency route. Service along Chicago Avenue connecting North Minneapolis to Downtown to the Mall of America in Bloomington. Oldest bus line in Minneapolis, has the highest level of ridership of any line in the city. Runs at 5 to 10 minute intervals during rush hours and at 7 to 8 minute intervals during midday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Hiawatha LRT High frequency route. Connects Downtown Minneapolis to the airport. Station is located about 1.6 miles from 38th and Chicago. Rush-hour frequency is 7 to 8 minutes, and at 10 minute intervals during midday hours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HIGH FREQUENCY TRANSIT SERVICE**

Many of Metro Transit’s high frequency routes (guaranteed service every 15 minutes or less) are in close proximity to the intersection of 38th and Chicago Avenue, including:
- Route 5: Service between North Minneapolis, Downtown, and the Mall of America. Runs on Chicago Avenue.
- Route 18: Connects Downtown with Richfield and Bloomington. Runs on Nicollet Avenue.
- Route 55: LRT service connecting Downtown with the airport and the Mall of America.

The project area (shown in green) is well served by transit, with convenient connections to several existing bus routes and the Hiawatha LRT.
Current and proposed plans also present great opportunities for improved transit service for the project area. Proposed transit network improvements in the vicinity of the project area include:

- More frequent bus service: Chicago Avenue has been identified in the City of Minneapolis’ 10-Year Transportation Action Plan as part of a “Primary Transit Network” where buses will run at 15 minute frequencies (or better) for 18 hours every day.
- The City’s recently completed Streetcar Feasibility Study recommends provision of north-south streetcar service along Chicago Avenue between Downtown Minneapolis and 38th Street. That study also recommends provision of east-west streetcar service within the nearby Midtown Greenway trench connecting the southern suburbs to Hiawatha LRT.
- A bus rapid transit (BRT) station at 38th Street connecting to north-south service along Interstate 35W.

**Automobile circulation**

A typically urban grid of streets connect the project area to areas north, east and south. Connection of the street grid to the west is interrupted by I-35W, which carries vehicles north and south in a trench just west of the project area. Freeway overpasses at 35th, 36th and 38th and 42nd Street connect the project area to neighborhoods to the west. More localized interruptions to the grid occur around Powderhorn Park, Phelps Park, the detention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Service description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Connects Uptown Minneapolis to the Minnesota Veteran’s home and St. Paul’s Highland Park neighborhood. Travels along 38th Street for most of its route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>High frequency route along Nicollet Avenue (0.75 miles from 38th and Chicago) connecting Downtown Minneapolis with Richfield and Bloomington. Runs at 5 to 8 minute frequencies during rush hours and 7 to 8 minute intervals during midday hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Connects Columbia Heights, Northeast, Downtown and 46th Street. Travels along 4th Avenue in this portion of its route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Connects North Minneapolis to Downtown to 54th Street and the 38th Street Hiawatha LRT station. Runs along Bloomington Avenue (the eastern edge of the project area).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Rush-hour line connecting Downtown to 54th Street. Runs along 38th Street and along Chicago Avenue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>High-frequency route. Connects Uptown Minneapolis with Downtown St. Paul through Lake Street. Runs at 7 to 10 minute frequencies during rush hour, and at 7 to 15 minute intervals during midday. Route 53 is an Express route along this alignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several high-volume surface streets carry automobile traffic through the project area. Park Avenue and Portland Avenue are a north-south, one-way, three lane street pair connecting Downtown to South Minneapolis. Each carries almost twice the number of vehicles that Chicago Avenue carries in both directions (see traffic volume chart below). Both are County State Aid Highway routes and are classified as “A Minor Arterials” by Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council. Their high speeds and volumes are often cited as barriers to east-west pedestrian circulation in the project area.

35th and 36th Street, connected to exit and entrance ramps to I-35W, function as an east-west, one-way, two lane street pair between that freeway and Chicago Avenue, where they each become two-way streets.

Interstate 35W forms the western boundary for the project area. Running north-south, it carries four lanes of traffic in each direction to and from Downtown Minneapolis. It connects with Interstate 94 at the southern edge of Downtown. Entrance and exit ramps for each direction are provided in close proximity to the project area: a northbound entrance and southbound exit at 35th Street, and a southbound entrance and northbound exit at 36th Street. The “35W Access Project,” a freeway expansion project scheduled for 2025, contemplates the possibility of moving the location of the 35th and 36th Street ramps to 38th Street. I-35W carries around 200,000 vehicles per day near the project area.

### Traffic Volumes in the Project Area

In general, vehicle traffic volumes in the project area have declined over the last five years, with the exception of the Park-Portland Avenue one-way pair. Chicago Avenue, 38th Street, 35th and 36th Street have seen traffic volume decreases of at least 10% since 2003. Park and Portland Avenue, however, have each experienced an 8% volume increase since that year. Traffic volumes on I-35W have remained steady.

**General Recommendations**

**Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle circulation**

Direct resources to projects and initiatives that explicitly seek to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the project area.

**Improve the pedestrian realm**

**Improv the environment for pedestrians throughout the project area, giving priority to improvements at the 38th and Chicago, Sabathani, and Pillsbury Focus Areas.**

- Create boulevards; widen and improve the condition of existing boulevards; plant boulevard trees
- Widen sidewalks where appropriate
- Install pedestrian-scale lighting
- Create and install community-developed public art
- Encourage or require property and business owners to improve existing landscaping and façades
- Consolidate curb-cuts; decrease automobile-pedestrian conflicts by creating L- or T-shaped alleys to replace alleys exiting on 38th Street
- Install directional signs to neighborhood institutions
- Provide amenities in front of buildings such as benches, landscaping, planters and bicycle racks
- Promote corridor-wide initiatives to improve crossings and crossing safety along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street
- Improve crossing safety by use of special pavement at crossings, durable crosswalk striping, restriction of traffic speed or of right turns on red, and rebuilding intersections to calm traffic
- Provide curb extensions (“bump-outs”) at key intersections in the project area to shorten crossing distances, calm traffic and provide space for transit stops and shelters

**Improve bicycle connections and circuation**

Create continuous connections for bicyclists through streets offering safe, inviting and convenient access to local businesses and amenities

- Add bicycle lanes on Chicago Avenue and on 38th Street
- Provide bicycle parking racks at all intersections that host commercial or institutional uses; locate racks in close proximity to the use served
- Provide safe and convenient bicycle connections from the project area to the Midwtown Greenway and the Riverlake Greenway
- Install directional signs indicating connections to area institutions, amenities, and nearby bicycle trails and corridors
• Promote corridor-wide initiatives to improve crossings and crossing safety along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street
• Improve bicyclist safety by use of special pavement at crossings, durable crosswalk striping, restriction of traffic speed or of right turns on red, and rebuilding intersections to calm traffic

“Rightsize” Streets and Other Automobile Infrastructure

Make modifications to the existing streets and streetscape to help calm traffic and make its speed more predictable to increase safety and accessibility.

• Stripe the right-side edge of automobile travel lanes along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street. The maximum width of an automobile travel lane should be 11.0 feet
• Continue to provide a continuous automobile parking lane along each side of Chicago Avenue and along each side of 38th Street
• Mark all intersections along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street. Use special treatments at important nodes in the project area, including 38th and Chicago, Sabathani, Pillsbury and Phelps/Riverlake. The minimal type of crossing treatment at these districts should be of “zebra” type

Prioritize Transit Infrastructure

38th and Chicago is well connected to the regional transit system, and is positioned to benefit greatly from transit improvements currently under consideration. The majority of transit riders walk to their stop - improvements to the pedestrian realm will benefit and attract riders. The project area’s strong connections to transit infrastructure can help us create a destination that is accessible to literally thousands of visitors without disrupting the small-scale fabric of a neighborhood-oriented commercial and residential node.

• Improve transit stops and their environments along the length of the corridor
• Provide improved shelters at high volume locations; provide improved information on transit service and connections to key destinations
• Maintain high frequency service along Chicago Avenue; support efforts to increase service along 38th Street
• Encourage and support development that is consistent with a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented commercial district
• Support the City’s Streetcar Feasibility Study recommendation for streetcar service along Chicago Avenue

Benefits of Providing Bike Parking

Providing functional, visible and secure bicycle parking offers these benefits:

• It inexpensively and efficiently increases a building’s parking capacity
• It serves those who use bicycles as a mode of transportation
• It supports and encourages bicycle use

“You can move 18,000 people in about 300 buses … or choose to move them instead in about 18,000 cars …”
~ Steve Davies, Project for Public Spaces (PPS)
**Corridor recommendations**

**Bike lanes on Chicago Avenue**

This Plan recommends adding northbound and southbound bicycle lanes along Chicago Avenue. This street, as it exists today, is wide enough (at roughly 52 feet from curb to curb) to maintain the existing number of travel lanes (one northbound and one southbound) and parking lanes (one of each side of the street) and still provide sufficient space for one 7 ft bicycle lane in each direction of travel. Striping for the lanes (and delimiting the automobile travel lane) will bring the additional benefit of calming automobile traffic and making its speed more consistent. Recommended widths are 11 ft for automobile travel lanes, 8 ft for parking lanes, and 7 ft for the bicycle lanes.

Provision of the bicycle lanes will make visible, convenient and safe connections from the project area to the Midtown Greenway, Midtown Exchange and Global Market, and the Riverlake Greenway. Additionally, they will invite additional bicycle traffic to businesses and institutions along Chicago Avenue.

**Bike lanes or shared lanes on 38th Street**

38th Street is at present 44 ft wide from curb to curb. It is possible to accommodate its present number of driving and parking lanes and add two bicycle lanes if 10 ft driving lanes, 7 ft parking lanes and 5 ft bicycle lanes are used (this configuration is a standard design in widespread use by the City of Chicago since 2002, as well as by many other cities in the US). This configuration will calm traffic and increase safety and convenience for cyclists. Studies show that roads that provide on-street cycling facilities are twice as safe for cyclists than those that don’t.

Alternatively, the roadway can also be configured to provide safe shared lane space for bicyclists on the existing right of way. The right edge of the automobile travel lanes (“fog line”) could be striped at 11 ft from the centerline of the road, designating the remaining 11 ft distance to the curb as shared bicycle and automobile parking space. Defining the edge of the travel lane will provide guidance to motorists, calm traffic, and increase safety and comfort for bicyclists and for drivers parking their automobiles along 38th Street.

**Did you know?**

A recent Twin Cities survey of potential bicycle commuters found that 79% of respondents said that on-street bike lanes would be an important factor in deciding whether or not to use a bicycle as transportation.

*Source: Minnesota Center for Survey Research, University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies, 1999.*
Focus area recommendations

The recommendations listed in the section above are to be applied over the entire project area. In addition, specific treatments are recommended for each of the Focus Areas identified in this Plan.

Gateway focus area

- Improve bicycle connection to the Midtown Greenway. Provide markers indicating routes to the trail
- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Provide bump-outs at intersection
- Improve pedestrian environment: install pedestrian lighting, widen or enhance existing boulevard.

Pillsbury focus area

- Improve access to Powderhorn Park. Provide markers indicating routes to the park
- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Restrict right turns on red. Provide bump-outs at intersection
- Improve pedestrian environment: install pedestrian lighting, install tree grates, plant trees. Provide benches and other street furniture
- Improve bicycle infrastructure: provide bicycle parking at all four corners of the intersection
- Improve transit shelters

Sabathani / 4th Avenue focus area

- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Restrict right turns on red. Provide bump-outs at intersection
- Improve pedestrian environment: install pedestrian lighting, install tree grates, plant trees. Provide benches and other street furniture
- Improve bicycle infrastructure: provide bicycle parking at all four corners of the intersection
- Improve transit shelters

38th and Chicago focus area

- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Restrict right turns on red. Provide bump-outs at intersection
- Improve pedestrian environment: install pedestrian lighting, install tree grates, plant trees. Provide benches and other street furniture
- Improve bicycle infrastructure: provide bicycle parking at all four corners of the intersection
- Improve transit shelters

**Bloomington focus area**
- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Restrict right turns on red. Provide bump-outs at intersection
- Improve pedestrian environment: install pedestrian lighting, install tree grates, plant trees. Provide benches and other street furniture
- Improve bicycle infrastructure: provide bicycle parking at all four corners of the intersection
- Improve transit shelters

**Phelps / Riverlake focus area**
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections and access to Phelps Park and to the Riverlake Greenway. Provide markers indicating routes to the park and trail
- Improve pedestrian crossings: use zebra striping and special pavement at crossings. Restrict right turns on red. Provide bump-outs at intersection. Consider stop lights on Chicago and Park Avenue (unsafe access across Park Avenue and Chicago Avenue has been listed as a concern by parents attending Plan workshops)
2.5 Economic development

Cities are places of activity and commerce. Healthy commercial areas draw in people who bring their energy and economic resources and who, through their purchases and investments, contribute towards the improvement of these places.

Small businesses provide needed goods and services for local residents, unique goods and experiences for visitors, and generate investments that remain in the communities where they are located. Small businesses also provide employment opportunities for people living nearby, and help increase the sense of connection in a community. Supporting small businesses will, in the long run, help ensure that the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue project area remains a unique and interesting destination in Minneapolis.

A “people’s empowerment zone”

One of the ideas that has been most clearly and vigorously expressed at workshops for this and earlier plans is that the true measure of success for this work will be if it results in bringing benefits to the people and businesses that are here now. Training, and economic and technical assistance for existing businesses were mentioned as priorities, as was the idea of starting up a community-owned enterprise that would help develop local entrepreneurs and provide needed services in the area.

Goals

- To encourage and support business activity
- To support aspiring entrepreneurs as they open or expand new businesses, expanding access to “tools for success” and other training, moneys and technical support
- To bring new customers to existing and potential businesses
- To support the start up of a local cooperative business
- To increase the share of local dollars spent in local businesses

General recommendations

Market 38th and Chicago and surrounding nodes

Many products and services can be found within the project area. A local guide listing useful goods and unique businesses, sights and services would be an easy way for people living in or near the area to learn where they could find items for which they normally

Did you know?

For every $100 spent at a chain store, only $14 stays in a local community - when that same $100 is spent in a local business, $45 stays there.

travel elsewhere. This guide would also include hours of operation for restaurants, and highlight local murals, sculpture and other arts as well as other relevant information. Distribution of the guide would take place through mailings, local newspapers, neighborhood websites, and at events held in the participating neighborhoods. This guide could be jointly marketed and produced with nearby nodes like 48th and Chicago.

**Develop a district identity**
Work with local residents, institutions and artists to develop an identity and logo for the area, and use this logo on banners, websites and neighborhood mailings to begin to build awareness of 38th and Chicago as a unique place to be in and visit.

**Seed the start up of a community-owned enterprise**
Residents of the project area have expressed interest in developing a community-owned cooperative grocery store going back to at least 1995 (“the Markham co-op grocery feasibility studies”). The idea has been brought up at workshops for this and earlier projects, and is included in recommendations from the March 2006 Community Development Plan, the December 2000 Biko study and the December 1994 Wende report.

Neighborhood organizations in the project area can play an important role in helping make this idea a reality: starting up a cooperative business requires not only the participation of a committed group of volunteers, but also some institutional support. One of the neighborhood associations could become an active sponsor for this project by helping with organizing and outreach, by helping secure an empty storefront as a potential business site, or by just providing a place for people to meet.

Though the type of cooperative business most often mentioned in prior plans is a grocery store, the potential types and number of cooperatives is only limited by the shared interest of their potential members. Participants in prior workshops have, for example, expressed interest in developing woodworking, artists’, and childcare cooperatives. More information on cooperatives can be found in Appendix A.4.

**Keep building a network of businesses**
An active and engaged small business community is a great asset to the project area. Continue to support the work of the 38th and
Chicago Business Association, while expanding participation and geographic focus so it also includes businesses at nearby nodes.

**Sponsor Business Training Programs**

New and existing businesses benefit from improved access to business tools and training. Organizations like Neighborhood Development Center (www.ndc-mn.org) provide aspiring entrepreneurs with essential tools for starting and growing a business: from financing and marketing knowledge to access to loans and additional training. One or several of the area neighborhood organizations can sponsor and convene the trainings. Over the long term, this can have a significant impact on the health of the project area’s business community.

**Become a Resource to Small Businesses**

Develop expertise in one or several of the area neighborhood organizations to support the needs of existing and prospective small businesses. Neighborhood staff can support business owners as they navigate through the various license applications and grant and loans programs that will help these businesses succeed. For example, obtaining an outdoor café license or applying for a façade improvement loan can be a difficult task for an overworked business owner, or for someone with limited English proficiency. Helping businesses get access to this information, and helping them secure the various licenses or funds will yield great benefits towards improving the urban realm and bringing positive activity to the project area.

**Build Mixed-use That Includes Local Small Businesses**

Work with developers to ensure that the leasing and ownership agreements in new construction include provisions that allow these commercial spaces to remain accessible to small businesses (see Appendix A.2 for additional information).

**Support Additional Residential Development**

Initiatives that provide opportunity for an increased number of people and households to live in and around the project area will benefit existing and potential businesses by increasing the number of potential customers. Support development that brings additional households to the project area.
2.6 The arts

It is by now widely acknowledged that the arts and artistic activity help revitalize places. One need not look too far in the Twin Cities to find stories of artist-led revitalization: Northeast, the Warehouse District, Lowertown in St. Paul.

What is not so often nor as widely acknowledged is the role that the arts can play in connecting us with each other and in helping us to think of ourselves and our communities in more hopeful and active terms.

The arts reflect us, assert and express our identities, announcing our contribution and our existence in the places where we live. They increase awareness, connection and engagement between people. Artistic activity is hopeful because it helps us see ourselves as producers (of culture, art, ideas) rather than just as the consumers that our society increasingly stresses as our primary role. While “consumers” lack power - they use what others make - “producers” create and can make change in the places where they live, and bring improvement that addresses their needs and aspirations. That change in thinking and attitude is one of the most important benefits the arts and culture bring communities, and goes beyond the now widely acknowledged (and important) role that artistic activity has in bringing renewed economic activity to places.

Goals

- To support and promote artistic activity already taking place around 38th Street and Chicago Avenue
- To attract new artists and artistic activity to the project area and make 38th and Chicago an active, arts-infused center for arts and culture in our City
- To make artistic activity in our community accessible to artists and non-artists alike
- To use art-making as a tool for connection between people across lines of ethnic, cultural, and generational difference, using arts-based community development (“ABCD”) strategies to improve and enhance the environment of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue for the benefit of all residents, businesses and people in the area

The Speak Project

A collaborative, youth-produced metal sculpture installation at 3644 Chicago Avenue (just north of the Baha’i Center), the Speak Project includes pieces done by young people from each of the four neighborhoods surrounding 38th Street and Chicago Avenue.

This project was conceived by Central resident and MCTC metal arts instructor Heather Doyle, and sponsored by FORECAST Public Artworks and the 38th and Chicago Business Association.
Present conditions
The project area already hosts several important arts and arts-related assets. A brief summary follows below.

Art events
A good number of arts and arts-related activities already take place in the area around 38th Street and Chicago Avenue. The annual May Day Parade has brought thousands of people to Powderhorn Park every year since 1975. The Powderhorn Art Fair, a unique collaboration between Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, brings almost two hundred artists from across the nation to exhibit and showcase their talents over two days around Powderhorn Lake. Run by volunteers, proceeds from the fair are used to pay for programs at the park, including its teen center, pottery kiln, photography lab and sound recording studio. The Powderhorn Art Fair is already part of the Minneapolis Arts Weekend, where it opens in combination with art fairs in Uptown and Loring Park.

Arts centers and institutions
Several notable arts and arts-related institutions are located either in or within close proximity of the project area. Pillsbury House Theatre, located at 35th Street and Chicago Avenue, hosts a nationally recognized professional theater company. Pillsbury House also hosts after-school arts activities for young people. Sabathani Community Center, located at 3rd Avenue and 38th Street, offers enrichment opportunities for young people including such diverse arts activities as bead work, sewing, clay sculpture, puppetry, storytelling, and drawing. Calvary Lutheran Church, at 39th Street and Chicago Avenue, hosts the “Urban Arts Academy.” Funded by an estate gift from a local jazz musician, the Academy sees its mission as “bringing neighborhood people together from diverse cultures by providing experiences in the arts through which children and families develop the gifts of self-expression and community.”

Powderhorn Park, open year-round, offers programs in cultural and fine arts, music, and dance, and is a vital partner in the Powderhorn Art Fair. Phelps Park, also open year-round and located at 39th Street and Chicago Avenue, offers arts and craft classes for children and young people. In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater, located near the project area at 15th Avenue and Lake Street, is a community cultural institution that has, since 1973, created vital, poetic theater to tell stories exploring
the struggles and celebrations of human existence. The Center for Independent Artists, at 42nd Street and Bloomington Avenue, is an important instruction and performance space.

And lastly, a list of art institutions around the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue project area would not be complete without the several schools located near the project area where artistic activity and arts instruction are important parts of the curriculum.

**Arts Projects and Installations**

There are several public art installations within the project area. A community garden at 32nd Street and Chicago Avenue hosts a tile and mosaic installation that also includes several ceramic masks and landscape elements. The Speak Project, located at 3644 Chicago Avenue (just north of the Baha’i Center) is a collaborative metal sculpture installation produced by young people living in all four neighborhoods surrounding 38th Street and Chicago Avenue. Conceived and led by Central neighborhood resident and MCTC metal arts instructor Heather Doyle, the project was sponsored by FORECAST Public Artworks and the 38th and Chicago Business Association. A metal sculpture and gateway frames a path into Phelps Park from 40th Street and Chicago Avenue. Nearby, the “Peace Garden” at Urban Arts Academy was recently completed. Additionally, many murals are located within the project area, including one on the wall of Cup Foods along 38th Street which has been cited by several participants in our project workshops as a favorite feature of the intersection.

**A home for artists**

Many musicians and visual artists call the area around 38th Street and Chicago Avenue home. What can we do to invite them to play a greater role in the improvement of our community?
**Recommendations**

**Encourage the development of housing for artists**
Live-work spaces that include connected residential and commercial (gallery or storefront) uses within a single unit are typically favored by artists and certain small businesses. Availability of these spaces can help attract artists and artistic activity to the project area. Several local developers, including Powderhorn Residents Group (PRG) have experience in developing this type of spaces.

**Establish a high-visibility arts center**
Seed the startup of an arts practice and instruction space near the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago. Though there are many artists already living and practicing their craft around the project area, there is no single and open high-visibility arts venue near the project's main intersection. By lending their organizing and funding support, the four neighborhood organizations could help catalyze a transformation of this node.

**Encourage public art and arts-infused development**
Support projects that directly involve young people and area residents in the creation and installation of art in the public realm of 38th and Chicago. Support opportunities for arts-making activities, festivals and celebrations. Include public arts-making workshops as part of improvements or investments to the public realm.
2.7 Community health

This chapter was prepared in collaboration with the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS). For questions or comments please contact Dave Johnson, MDHFS Epidemiologist at 612.673.3948. The original “Health Impact Assessment Planning Grid” document provided by MDHFS including journal citations can be found in Appendix A.7.

Our surroundings and environment have an effect on our health. A growing body of research demonstrates connections between a community’s built environment, the opportunities it provides for physical activity, and the health of its population.

For example, places with an infrastructure that supports walking and biking have populations that are more physically active and have lower levels of obesity. Conversely, places where it’s inconvenient to walk, or where it feels unsafe to be out are places where people walk less and are less active. It is also well established that places that expose people to higher levels of air pollution show increased incidences of asthma and other respiratory conditions.

The decisions that we make during the design process can help us address and improve a number of community health outcomes.

In the case of air pollution, for example, we may choose to not expand a freeway because the additional automobile traffic would bring more vehicle exhaust and pollution to the neighborhoods surrounding that road.

Working more proactively, we may decide to promote designs that make walking or biking to destinations more convenient and safe so that more people choose to walk or bike, increasing their level of physical activity and bringing improvements to their health and the overall health and wellbeing of the community. As is widely acknowledged, a population that engages in regular, moderate physical activity has a lower incidence of heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, colon cancer, osteoporosis, depression, and breast cancer.

We may also choose to promote designs that increase the potential for connection and interchange between people. Widely reported evidence demonstrates that places where people feel comfortable...
Talking with each other, and where small businesses and other local institutions serve as places of gathering and communication are also places that show improved public health and mental health outcomes.

This chapter points out some opportunities where the work of this Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan can make positive contributions to the overall health of our community. The recommendations, which were researched and prepared by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, are presented below.

**Current Community Health**

The data presented in this section provide a background about the health status of residents living in the area covered by the recommendations of the Small Area/Corridor Framework Plan. The area encompassed by this Plan is included within the Powderhorn planning area of Minneapolis, which in turn includes the four neighborhoods collaborating on this project, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods of Corcoran, Standish, Lyndale and Whittier. This is the smallest area for which detailed public health data is available.

**The SHAPE Survey**

In 2002, a collaborative effort of the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, the Bloomington Division of Public Health, and the Hennepin County Community Health Department interviewed 6,638 Minneapolis adults age 18 and over on a wide range of health topics. This survey, formally known as the *Survey of the Health of Adults, the Population, and the Environment* (SHAPE) made special effort to analyze and present public health data at the community level.

The results of this survey that apply to the Powderhorn Community, as well as comparison data for Minneapolis as a whole, are presented on the next page:

**Physical Activity and Health**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 5 days per week. Unfortunately, trends show a documented decrease in physical activity across the national population. Many of these changes correspond with changes also manifested in the design decisions shaping our cities.

Nationally, the effects of reduction in regular physical activity and the corresponding increase in sedentary lifestyles have especially impacted young people, with dramatic increases in obesity and diabetes. Children who are overweight are likely to become overweight adults. Likewise, children who learn the importance and pleasure of routine physical activity also carry these lessons throughout life.

---

| Physical Activity Measures | Data Source
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking trips</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average length of commute</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles driven</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in traffic</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence of diabetes</td>
<td>SHAPE Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Weight for Children and Adults**

## SHAPE Survey: Selected resident health data, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Conditions</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High blood pressure</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diabetes</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Behaviors</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Current smoking</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Binge drinking in past month</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Behaviors (continued)</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Overweight</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Met moderate or vigorous activity guidelines</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Care Access</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Uninsured part or all of last year</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Homes for Children (among households with children under 6)</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Child exposed to chipped paint</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child exposed to in-home secondhand smoke</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Distress</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Worried about food running out</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food shelf use</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Receiving WIC food assistance</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Factors</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Involved in neighborhood or school activities weekly</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think people can depend on each other</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel secure living in this community</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Believe this is a good community to raise kids</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel they can get help from others in community</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Felt unaccepted because of culture at least monthly</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend cultural heritage activities at least monthly</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Available Health Data

#### Births and Infant Mortality

From 2002 to 2004, there were 3,570 babies born to mothers living in the Powderhorn Community. This is 19 percent of all births in the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of births, 2002 to 2004</th>
<th>Powderhorn</th>
<th>Minneapolis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of births to teens 19 and under</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of mothers starting prenatal care in the first trimester</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of low birth weight births (less than 5.5 lbs.)</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of births that were preterm (less than 37 weeks)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of births to mothers with less than High School education</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

Health issues and recommendations for addressing them are included in this section. The recommendations listed are those most relevant to the type of projects that would fall under the scope of a document like this Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan. Although other factors may also impact these issues, they are not listed or addressed here unless they are directly related to design or development.

Overweight, obesity, and diabetes

Physical activity is an important health behavior protective against these health conditions. Creating and improving access to places for physical activity, street-scale urban design, and land use policies are recommended strategies to increase physical activity.

Recommended measures

- Street-scale development should consider design strategies that encourage and promote the safety of pedestrian and bicycle travel modes.
- Consider development uses that provide opportunities for physical activity.

Depression, mental health

One important predictor for community mental health is the degree of social connectedness in that community. Connection to nature and green space can reduce stress and improve mental health.

Recommended measures

- Green space should be considered at the building, parcel, and overall project level.
- Incorporate community gardens and community green space as part of development proposals for the project area. Gardens help build community interconnection and friendship by providing opportunities for neighbors to work together and for learning and sharing with gardeners and neighbors.
- Provide life-cycle housing as a way to encourage residents of different generations to interact.

Environmental health

Old chipping and peeling paint, most often from windows, is the main source of lead poisoning in Minneapolis. Lead in soil is another source of concern.

Recommended measures

- Use lead safe work practices for any demolition or

Did you know?

Just three hours of bicycling per week reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke by 50%.

rehabilitation.

- Support and promote building rehabilitation projects that reduce lead hazards by repairing chipping and peeling paint, and replacing or repairing windows to make them lead-safe.
- Efforts to address lead hazards should also consider that the architectural heritage and historical value of the community’s buildings is also a community asset.

**Youth Risk Behavior**

Public health research indicates that deteriorated physical environments in neighborhoods is related to a wide variety of health indicators and health behaviors, including risk of sexually transmitted infection. Youth who are positively engaged in their community have lower risk for harmful behaviors such as alcohol and other drug use, violence, early sexual activity, unprotected sexual activity, and others.

**Recommended Measures**

- Development should support efforts to remove blight and build sustainable strategies to encourage long-term neighborhood upkeep.
- Consider opportunities to incorporate art as a means to improve the neighborhood environment.
- Consider how youth can be involved in and benefit from development activities in the area.

**Crime**

Higher liquor outlet density is linked to increases in crime rates. Proper design of the built environment (through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies) can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime.

**Recommended Measures**

- Restrict the construction of retail that expands alcohol availability.
- Encourage design that makes use of CPTED strategies.

**Racial Disparities in Health Conditions**

Some important predictors are stress, discrimination, and access to health care and information. An environment that fosters connections between different cultures, and isn’t characterized by discrimination, may provide a better environment for addressing health issues in culturally relevant ways. Public health research indicates that the discrimination people of color experience throughout their lifetimes contributes to poor health conditions.
**Recommended measures**

- Create spaces and opportunities that encourage and welcome the diverse cultures of area residents. Festivals, community gardens and other special events can help improve connection between people living in the project area.

**Housing stability**

Stable affordable housing is one predictor of poor birth outcomes, as research indicates that women with unstable housing are less likely to comply with prenatal care, and their babies are more likely to be born too early and underweight.

**Recommended measures**

- Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing will provide needed stability to middle and lower-income households living in the project area.

**Nutrition**

Increased fruit and vegetable consumption decreases risk of obesity and certain chronic conditions. Communities that have no or distant grocery stores, or have an imbalance of healthy food options, will likely have increased premature death and chronic health conditions.

**Specific recommendations for this Plan**

- Encourage opportunities for co-op groceries, farmer’s markets, and establishments that provide healthy, fresh foods.
- Encourage opportunities for establishing community gardens. Gardens for food production improve access to nutritionally-rich and culturally-appropriate foods, fostering healthier eating habits. Additionally, community interconnection and healthy food habits are reinforced by learning and sharing with gardeners and neighbors.

**Financial distress**

Poverty and its related stresses contribute to a wide variety of poor health outcomes. Development projects can increase business and job opportunities in an area.

**Specific recommendations for this Plan**

- Plan projects that foster increased employment opportunities for local residents.
- Support the overall goal of the project to “strengthen commercial investment in the neighborhood” and “attract investment to support new and existing businesses.”
2.8 Public safety

People can only be comfortable in places where they feel safe. Places that are unkempt, unlit or defaced by graffiti or litter are perceived by most people to be unsafe. Places that feel unsafe (even if they are in fact safe) will deter visitors and residents from walking freely around their neighborhood, from patronizing their local businesses, and from participating in the public life of their community.

A commercial area that feels safe, and that is clean and well-kept will be more comfortable for visitors than one that is not, and will help attract investment from existing and new businesses.

Goals

- To address and decrease criminal activity in the project area
- To increase safety and the feeling of safety in the project area
- To ease mistrust and increase connection between people
- To promote physical designs that decrease opportunity for criminal activity

Present conditions

Concerns about crime and public safety are often brought up by residents when discussing perceived barriers to improvement of the project area. Among the concerns listed are recurring issues around drug dealing and other criminal activity near the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue. The project area’s four neighborhood organizations and the Business Association have spent considerable time and resources in working to address these issues. However, the perception that the area is not safe remains prominent in people’s comments about it.

The condition of the physical environment of 38th and Chicago (and of the other Focus Areas covered by this Plan) provides helpful information for understanding people’s lingering discomfort with the area.

All of the Focus Areas are poorly lit, show signs of disrepair, lack streetscape amenities, and host a number of shuttered and dilapidated structures.

The vacant structures work with the significant number of

---

A community safety center near the Midtown Exchange, at Chicago Avenue and Lake Street.

---

Improving safety: Bringing a beat officer to the project area

An important recommendation for improving safety and the perception of safety in the project area is to add a beat officer on regular duty there.

Beat officers, assigned to a specific location, are responsible for carrying out the basic functions of the Police Department which include protection of life and property, maintenance of public order, prevention of crime, response to emergency situations, arresting violators of the law, and the proper enforcement of all laws and ordinances.

Beat officers patrol assigned areas, making inquiries and inspections oriented toward prevention of crimes and accidents, and implementing community oriented policing.
surface parking lots to create a barren sensory environment that is inhospitable to pedestrians. Where there are functioning businesses, their windows are often blocked thus negating their presence and influence on the streets outside. Residents walking in the street feel uncomfortable because they are visually disconnected from other people engaged in “good” activities - it’s as if 38th and Chicago and most of the other Focus Areas included in this Plan were functioning as the inverse of Jane Jacobs’s famous maxim of “eyes on the street.”

Another important component of people’s stated discomfort with the project area revolves around the feeling of distrust of other people who may also be occupying the street at the same time. As humans, we cannot be comfortable in a place if we feel that the intentions of people near us cannot be trusted. This is not the same as feeling comfortable because we are actually acquainted with someone walking by; it is merely believing that the person walking by shares with us a basic understanding of civilized behavior, and knowing that in case they don’t, people around us can come to our aid. Being visually disconnected from others only adds to the discomfort.

Among the many roles that small businesses play in a neighborhood is that they provide a place and an opportunity for us to see others engage in the same positive activities we do, and to begin to learn to trust the strangers that share our same neighborhoods and communities.

**General recommendations**

Sustainable improvement in the project area will not take place until the streets and sidewalks feel safe and comfortable for people. Paradoxically, that will only happen when more people engaged in positive activities use the streets and sidewalks. Following are some recommendations that may be useful in this regard.

**IMPROVE CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE**

Provide trash bins at all project nodes and establish a long-term, sustainable mechanism for funding the pickup of litter and removal of graffiti in the project area.

**ADDRESS AND DISCOURAGE GRAFFITI**

Continue working to address issues around graffiti and other vandalism. Promptly remove graffiti, work with neighborhood
associations to set up a fund to hire someone to cover graffiti on an as-needed basis. Explore setting up an art murals program to cover empty walls; work with and involve young people from Urban Arts Academy, Sabathani Community Center, Pillsbury House, Phelps Park, nearby schools and other area institutions.

**Continue to advocate for increased police presence**

The presence of police personnel walking through the project area will go a great distance towards improving the perception of safety in the project area, and will decrease and deter criminal activity. Adding a beat officer on regular duty, specially to the area of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, will help support people’s change in perception of the area.

**Establish a community safety center**

Establishing a Community Safety Center / Police substation in the project area will guarantee an increased police presence in the project area. The location recommended is around the intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue. Given the intersection’s high visibility and its importance as a focal point this investment will make possible other important improvements.

**Improve enforcement of existing regulations**

There are many unkempt and shuttered structures in and around the project area. These dilapidated structures detract from the project area’s feeling of safety in multiple ways: they occupy space that could otherwise host positive uses, they provide visual indication of abandonment, and they increase the distance that a pedestrian traverses alone. Project area residents, business owners and neighborhood representatives have noted that several of these properties have been abandoned for several years, while others include street-front retail spaces being used as storage. As such, these sites may be in violation of zoning, building code, and business license ordinances. More proactive enforcement will improve conditions for the areas surrounding them.

**Discourage illegal nighttime activities**

Discourage loitering and unlawful nighttime activities by placing exterior lighting with motion sensors around businesses and around principal intersections.
**Improve Pedestrian Lighting**

Provide pedestrian lighting (which illuminates the sidewalks) throughout the project area. These lights should be provided at close intervals through all of the identified nodes. Improved lighting will help change people’s perception of safety in the project area and will make it more inviting to walk through all times of day.

**Invite Additional People and Activities**

More people using the streets and sidewalks will result in increased feelings of safety and comfort. Encourage restaurant and café businesses to use sidewalks in the summer; provide assistance to businesses navigating through the application and permitting process. Encourage the use of 38th and Chicago as a place for the many ethnic/cultural festivals that take place in our City, and support the use of public spaces in the area for family-friendly activities, from movie nights at Phelps Park to an annual festival at the intersection.

**Improve the Physical Condition of the Project Area**

The condition of buildings, sidewalks and other streetscape elements affects people’s perception of safety and comfort in the project area. Obtain funds and provide technical assistance to participating businesses to reopen windows onto the street and improve building façades in the project area.

**Design with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in Mind**

The choices made in the design process can result in the creation of spaces that encourage or discourage illicit activity. CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) is a safety strategy formulated on the premise that the proper design and effective use of the physical environment can lead to a reduction in crime, and to the creation of safer, more comfortable places in our cities. Require consideration of CPTED principles for any development proposed for the project area.

**Provide Opportunities for Connection**

Work with small businesses, churches and with local area institutions to create and support opportunities that allow for broad cross-sections of area residents and visitors to inhabit the same space. Festivals, cultural celebrations, and arts-based community development activities can help to foster a climate of familiarity and trust between people.
2.9 Public realm

The public realm is the space we inhabit when we are out for a walk, when we are out shopping or sightseeing, or simply getting from place to place. It is the sum of spaces that are open to and exist for all people that visit, pass through, or live in a place.

It includes all of the experiences and interactions that make up our experience of “place.” It is the streets and sidewalks, the buildings, the trees, the feeling of comfort or safety we experience, the sights, sounds, smells we sense and see, the activities that take place around us. It is what makes a place linger in our memories, and one of the reasons why we return.

In this chapter we look at the public realm and spaces of the project area, and make recommendations for improvement.

Goals

• To make the project area a more inviting place by fostering a sense of place and community
• To improve the pedestrian orientation of our community and increase walkability and walking
• To improve economic vitality and quality of life

Present conditions

In general, the project area’s public realm possesses some valuable assets while also being limited by several important challenges.

Sidewalks

The amount of space physically available for walking is in many cases greater than in other more active districts in Minneapolis. Sidewalks along Chicago Avenue, for example, are at least 10 feet wide through the length of the project area, and they widen (by pushing back the front line of buildings) to at least 14 feet in several of the districts identified in this Plan. By comparison, sidewalks near Calhoun Square in Uptown are less than 12 feet wide.

Existing sidewalks in the 38th and Chicago, Pillsbury, and Bloomington Focus Areas provide, at 14 foot widths, ample space for walking and for hosting other uses and amenities that can enhance the quality of the area’s public realm (outdoor seating for...
restaurants and café businesses, for example).

**Trees and Green Areas**
Although planted boulevards exist in other portions of Chicago Avenue within the project area, there are no planted boulevards, trees or tree grates in the Neighborhood Commercial Nodes located within the Plan’s area.

**Lighting, Street Furniture and Other Amenities**
Pedestrian-scale lighting is not provided. Street furniture and other elements like bicycle racks, benches and trash bins, that help make using the sidewalks or patronizing a local business more inviting and comfortable, are not provided.

**Pedestrian Crossings**
The quality of pedestrian crossings in the project area is poor, even in designated Neighborhood Commercial Nodes where one would expect pedestrian use to be an important component of node and business vitality.

**Cleanliness and Maintenance**
Several buildings in high-visibility corners are shuttered and unkempt, while others show signs of being repeatedly targeted by graffiti. Sidewalks are cracked and uneven in several of the project area’s designated Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

**Perception of Safety**
As noted above, pedestrian-scale lighting is not provided in the area’s Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Additionally, a high number of vacant or dilapidated structures, blocked windows in functioning businesses, and relatively low pedestrian use of sidewalks work against perception of the area as a safe place to be.

**Business Activity**
Although there are numerous small businesses within the project area, there is virtually no interaction between the business uses inside stores and activities taking place on the streets and sidewalks; in the majority of cases, visual connection is not even possible as windows between the store and the street are closed off or blocked by merchandise. This works against pedestrians feeling safe while on area sidewalks.
**General recommendations**

These recommendations are to be applied over the entire project area, giving priority to improvements at the 38th and Chicago, Sabathani, and Pillsbury Focus Areas.

**Improve the pedestrian realm**

Successful places are places where people feel comfortable walking around, and where there are interesting things to see and do. Improving the quality of the environment for people on foot at 38th and Chicago will do much for attracting investment and for increasing positive activity in the area.

- Increase green areas: install tree grates and plant street trees at 30 foot centers in all project area districts
- Install pedestrian-scale lighting in all project area districts
- Invite positive sidewalk activity: encourage restaurant and café businesses to use sidewalks in the summer
- Improve façades: reopen windows, improve landscaping
- Provide streetscape elements and pedestrian amenities: benches, landscaping, planters and bicycle racks
- Widen sidewalks where appropriate
- Create and install community-developed public art
- Widen and improve the condition of existing boulevards; plant boulevard trees
- Adopt and follow urban design guidelines for new development (see Chapter 2.10)

**Improve pedestrian crossings**

- Promote corridor-wide initiatives to improve crossings and crossing safety along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street
- Improve crossing safety by use of special pavement at crossings, durable crosswalk striping, restriction of traffic speed or of right turns on red, and rebuilding intersections to calm traffic
- Provide curb extensions (“bumpouts”) at key intersections in the project area to shorten crossing distances, calm traffic and provide space for transit stops and shelters

**Improve cleanliness and maintenance**

A commercial area that is clean and well-maintained will be more comfortable for residents and visitors than one that is not, and will help attract additional visitors and investment.

- Provide trash bins at all project nodes
- Establish a long-term, sustainable mechanism for funding the pickup of litter and removal of graffiti in the project area
• Improve enforcement of existing regulations against derelict and dilapidated structures

**IMPROVE THE PERCEPTION OF SAFETY**
People can only be comfortable in places where they feel safe. Places that feel unsafe (even if they are in fact safe) will deter visitors and residents from walking freely around their neighborhood, from patronizing their local businesses, and from participating in the public life of their community.
• Promptly remove graffiti
• Install pedestrian-scale lighting throughout the project area
• Install motion-activated exterior lighting around businesses
• Require consideration of CPTED principles for any development proposed for the project area; reconfigure existing sites and structures to follow CPTED principles as needed
• Improve enforcement of existing regulations against derelict and dilapidated structures

**ENCOURAGE SMALL BUSINESS ACTIVITY**
A thriving small business community draws in visitors and customers who enliven streets and sidewalks and invite additional positive activity.
• Invite additional visitors to the project area’s commercial district through marketing and other efforts
• Encourage restaurant and café businesses to use sidewalks in the summer; provide assistance to businesses navigating through the application and permitting process
• Provide tools and assistance to small business
• Work with developers to ensure that the leasing and ownership agreements in new construction include provisions that allow these commercial spaces to remain accessible to small businesses
2.10 Urban character and design guidelines

The aim of these Urban Character and Design Guidelines is to support placemaking and the development of spaces that respond to the preferences and ideas expressed and collected during the preparation of this Plan and its earlier phases.

These Guidelines are intended 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. These Guidelines also respond to the urban development recommendations prepared by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support and included in Chapter 2.7 of this Plan. Where applicable, reference to these documents is provided alongside the guidelines.

In general, the development of buildings and spaces within the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan’s study area should be human scaled, adhere to transit-oriented development principles, promote pedestrian accessibility, and promote opportunity for economic activity. More specifically, development should adhere to the following guidelines:

**Building orientation**

*How buildings relate to 38th Street and Chicago Avenue*

- Buildings on Chicago Avenue should be oriented to Chicago Avenue. Buildings on 38th Street should be oriented to 38th Street.
- Principal building entrances should provide direct access to the sidewalks along 38th Street and Chicago Avenue.
- Corner entrances are encouraged for buildings on corner lots.

**Urban design goals**

- Foster a sense of place and community
- Encourage improvement in the public realm
- Improve connectivity and access
- Preserve and improve our community’s architectural heritage
- Promote development that supports improvements in community health
- Promote human-scaled and people-oriented designs
- Improve economic vitality and quality of life
- Improve safety in our neighborhoods
- Promote sustainable neighborhood development

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5**

- Promote traditional urban form in terms of building siting and massing when undertaking new development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

**Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines**

- 551.110. Building placement - The placement of buildings shall reinforce the street wall … and facilitate pedestrian access and circulation … Buildings shall be oriented so that at least one principal entrance faces the public street rather than the interior of the site.
Building placement and setback

How buildings are placed in relation to the sidewalks, and how far they can be set back from them

- Buildings should be constructed to the front lot lines adjacent to sidewalk edges.
- At least 70% of a building’s facade should be within 5 feet of the front lot lines.
- Recessed spaces, including plazas and other spaces which are set back more than 5 feet are acceptable so long as the 70% minimum is observed.
- Awnings and architectural features may project beyond build-to lines.

Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5
- Promote traditional urban form in terms of building siting and massing when undertaking new development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines
- 551.110. Building placement - The placement of buildings shall reinforce the street wall ... The first floor of buildings shall be located no more than 8 feet from the front lot line.

Storefronts and façade treatment

- A minimum of 55% of a building’s first floor façade should be windows or doors of clear or lightly tinted glass that allow views into and out of the building at eye level. This minimum window area is measured between the height of 2 feet and 10 feet above the finished floor level of the first floor.
- Windows should be distributed in a more or less even manner.
- The finished first floor of buildings in the area of 38th and Chicago should more or less match the elevation of the adjacent sidewalk.

Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5
- Promote traditional urban form in terms of building siting and massing when undertaking new development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines
- 551.120. Building façade (a) Window area - At least 40% of the first floor facade of any nonresidential use that faces a public street or sidewalk shall be windows or doors of clear or lightly tinted glass that allow views into and out of the building at eye level. Windows shall be distributed in a more or less even manner.

Building height

- Building heights should be a minimum of two stories and a maximum of five stories within the 38th Street and Chicago Avenue Small Area / Corridor Framework Plan project area; recommended heights for specific locations within the study area are identified in Chapter 2.2 of this Plan.

Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.2
- Promote more intensive residential development along these corridors [Community Corridors] where appropriate.

From the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5
- Promote medium density residential development around Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas and promote their reuse as infill development, such as office or housing, while maintaining neighborhood compatibility.
**Building massing and articulation**

*How the mass of buildings is to be broken up to enhance the experience of people walking in the project area*

- Building walls should be broken up in order to create human-scaled, visually interesting spaces. The maximum length of unbroken or uninterrupted wall should not exceed 25 feet.
- Blank walls facing 38th Street or Chicago Avenue are strongly discouraged.
- The use of reliefs, setbacks, bay windows, cantilevered roofs and other structures is encouraged.
- Balconies and operable windows should be provided in the upper floors of buildings located in the project area.

**Building materials**

- Buildings should be finished in traditional, durable materials, including brick, stone, concrete, metal, and glass.
- Exterior finishes should be durable, weather and moisture proof, and require low maintenance.
- The use of wood and non-rustproof metals is discouraged.

**Allowable building uses; pedestrian orientation**

- Buildings should include commercial and/or pedestrian-oriented uses in the first floor. Upper floors may be any combination of commercial, office, or residential uses.
- Automobile-oriented uses, including drive-through facilities, automobile service uses, and other related uses are strongly discouraged in the project area.

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5**

- Promote traditional urban form in terms of building siting and massing when undertaking new development in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.

**General guidance for Community Corridors**

*From the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.1*

Minneapolis will encourage reinvestment along major urban corridors as a way of promoting growth in all neighborhoods.

- Develop standards based on a recognition of the qualities that make urban corridors desirable, viable and distinctly urban, including: diversity of activity, safety for pedestrians, access to desirable goods and amenities, attractive streetscape elements, density and variety of uses to encourage walking, and architectural elements which add interest at the scale of the pedestrian.

---

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.2**

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services along Community Corridors.

*From the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5*

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Restrict auto-oriented, industrial or manufacturing activities that generate significant vehicular traffic, noise or air-borne impacts on residential neighbors.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

**Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines**

- **551.90. Prohibited uses** - The following uses shall be prohibited in the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District: (1) Drive-through facilities; (2) Automobile service uses; (3) Transportation uses
- **551.100. Fast food restaurants** - Fast food restaurants shall be located only in storefront buildings existing on the effective date of this ordinance.
**Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation**

- Development proposals for the project area should explore their impacts on the experience of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Bicycle racks and other bicycle infrastructure elements should be provided along 38th Street and along Chicago Avenue. Each nonresidential use should provide at least two bicycle parking spaces.
- Pedestrian-automobile conflicts should be avoided or minimized. Automobile access to alleys should be removed from pedestrian areas; existing alleys exiting to 38th Street or Chicago Avenue should be reconfigured as “T” alleys including new buildable area or pedestrian passageways. Buildings should provide access and windows to these passageways.
- Sidewalks should include bumpouts (or “curb extensions”) to decrease intersection crossing length.

**Scale, Ownership Structure, and Economic Development Opportunities**

We recognize the relationship between the size of available commercial spaces, ownership structure of those spaces, and the potential for small entrepreneurs to start businesses that bring benefits to the project area and beyond. As such, we strongly recommend the development of small, affordable commercial spaces that include opportunity for ownership and development by small business owners.

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.2**

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services along Community Corridors.

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5**

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

**Signs and Other Commercial Elements**

Street signs increase the visibility of businesses and add visual interest to the project area.

- Awnings and canopies are encouraged in order to provide protection from the elements for pedestrians. They should be placed in locations that emphasize building uses and entrances.
- Use of over-the-sidewalk overhead signs is encouraged.

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5**

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Preserve traditional commercial storefronts at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes wherever possible.

**Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines**

- 551.175. Transit Station areas (6) Bicycle parking requirements – Each nonresidential use shall provide a minimum of 2 bicycle parking spaces or one space for each ten accessory automobile parking spaces, whichever is greater.
**Automobile parking**

*Availability of on-street parking benefits small businesses, shelters pedestrians from traffic, calms vehicle flow, and creates a more inviting pedestrian environment.*

- On-street parking should continue to be provided along Chicago Avenue and along 38th Street.
- Off-street parking should be located behind, below, or above buildings; the development of structured parking ramps that accommodate first floor commercial space is encouraged.
- Surface parking lots adjacent to 38th Street or Chicago Avenue are strongly discouraged.
- Pedestrian paths connecting parking areas to building entries should link to sidewalks on Chicago Avenue or 38th Street.
- Parking lot edges should be buffered by plantings, railings, or low walls.
- The development of shared parking is encouraged.
- Off-site parking is allowed, and may be located up to 500 feet from the use served.
- The amount of automobile parking provided should not exceed 120% of the total specified as minimum by the Minneapolis Zoning Code, nor should it be less than 75% of the total required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code.

**Guidance from the Minneapolis Plan, Chapter 4.5**

- Support the continued presence of small-scale retail sales and commercial services in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Develop parking facilities and management strategies that balance the following goals: improved customer access, protection of sidewalk traffic; reduced visual impacts, mitigated impacts on neighboring uses and shared use of parking facilities.

**Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines**

- 551.140. Accessory parking -
  
  (a) Location: On-site accessory parking facilities shall be located to the rear or interior side of the site, within the principal building served, or entirely below grade
  
  (d) Shared parking: The development of shared parking is encouraged
  
  (e) Off-site parking: When off site parking is allowed ... parking may be located an additional 500 feet from the use served
  
  (f) Maximum number of accessory parking spaces: The number of accessory parking spaces for nonresidential uses shall not exceed 150% of the minimum required ... or 10 spaces, whichever is greater.

**Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)**

*The choices made in the design process can result in the creation of spaces that encourage or discourage illicit activity. CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) is a safety strategy formulated on the premise that the proper design and effective use of the physical environment can lead to a reduction in crime, and to the creation of safer, better places in our cities. Consideration of CPTED principles shall be a requisite for any development proposed in our project area.*

**Minneapolis Pedestrian Overlay District Guidelines**

- 551.110. Building placement - The placement of buildings shall maximize natural surveillance and visibility.