

Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan Minneapolis, Minnesota

Adopted by the Minneapolis City Council June 26, 2009



Prepared by the:
City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development
Department as an amendment to the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan

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Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan

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Executive Summary

In early 2008, the Community Planning and Economic Development Department's Planning Division began work on the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan, following the adoption of the Uptown Small Area Plan. Early in the Uptown planning process, a decision was made to follow it with a Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan so that there would be detailed planning guidance for both of these "sister" Activity Centers.

During this planning process, City staff worked with a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the four surrounding neighborhoods, the Lyn-Lake Business Association, and the Midtown Greenway Coalition. Council Members Ralph Remington and Robert Lilligren each appointed additional individuals who did not represent specific groups. During the year long development of the plan, five steering committee meetings and four community meetings were held. Other outreach included direct mail, an online survey, regular e-mail updates, a project website, and updates at regularly held neighborhood and business association meetings.

The primary purpose of the plan is to provide more detailed policy direction for land use and development in the Lyn-Lake area. The plan builds on the existing land use policies in the *Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*, the *Uptown Small Area Plan* and the *Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan*.

Principles that guide the plan include the need to:

- Maintain and grow an independent and diverse business mix.
- Promote a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Maintain and cultivate a residential and commercial identity that is uniquely Lyn-Lake.
- Support a dense environment with housing options for a variety of incomes and lifestyles.
- Encourage incremental greening through the development of small urban green spaces and environmentally sensitive design.
- Balance the needs of automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers while recognizing the exceptional nearby amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and the Midtown Greenway.
- Continue to plan for the parking needs of area businesses, residents, and visitors while balancing the need for a walkable, well developed area.

The plan includes a demographic and real estate market analysis conducted by Joe Urban, Inc. and a series of development case studies and conceptual "build-out" sketches created by Bonestroo, Inc.

The plan contains a series of recommendations designed to strengthen the business core, provide design considerations in the case that rail service is implemented within the Midtown Greenway, further historic preservation efforts, encourage incremental additions of green space, and provide guidance on building scale and design.

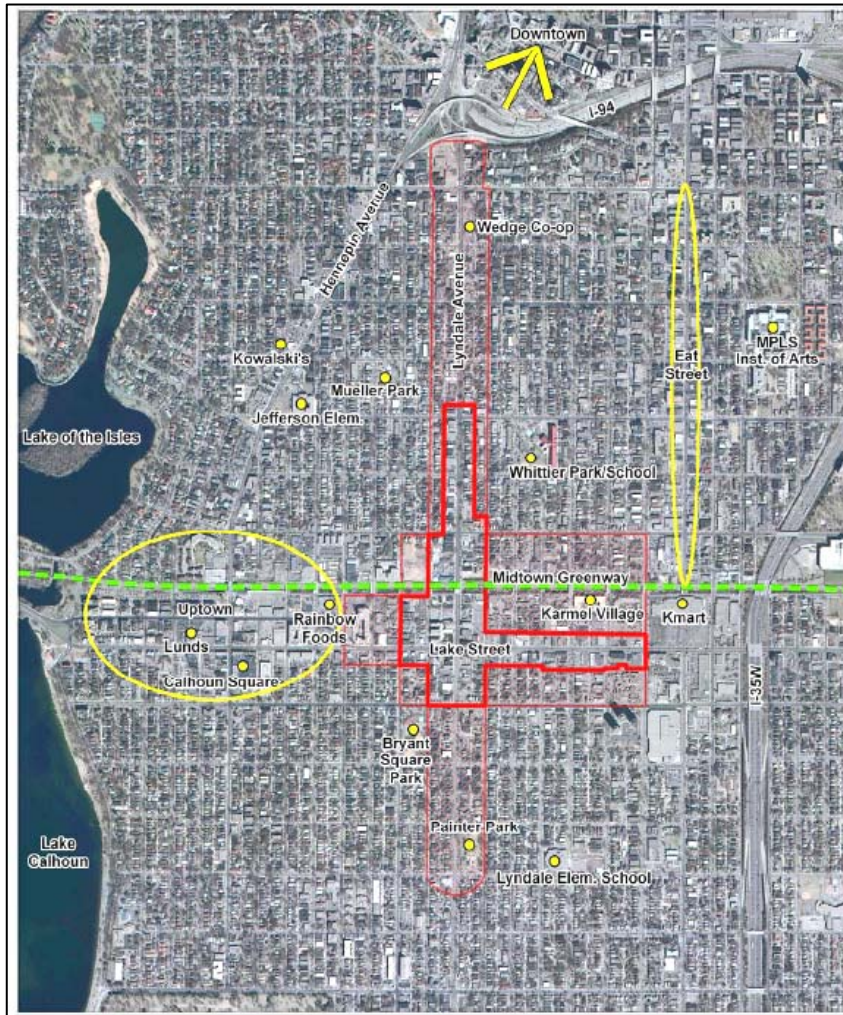
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This chapter provides background on the study effort and explains the purpose of the plan. It also reviews past planning efforts and existing City policy and presents a community vision in order to provide context for recommendations presented later in the document.

BACKGROUND

The Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan is focused around the intersection of Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street in southwest Minneapolis. It is a dynamic area made up of a variety of restaurants, arts venues, and businesses. The intersection of Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake, commonly referred to as just Lyn-Lake, is surrounded by four unique neighborhoods: Lowry Hill East, CARAG, Whittier, and Lyndale.

Lyn-Lake is approximately a half mile from the intersection of Hennepin Avenue and West Lake Street which is the heart of the Uptown area. Lyn-Lake is considered by some to be part of Uptown, but it has a character and flavor that is unique and separate.



In recent years there has been strong residential and commercial development interest throughout the Uptown and Lyn-Lake areas, particularly along the Midtown Greenway. In early 2006 a small area planning process was initiated for the Uptown area. At that time, including Lyn-Lake in the boundaries of that study was considered. However, it was ultimately decided that a separate process would be more appropriate. In early 2008 the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department initiated the Lyn-Lake Small Area Planning process to provide more detailed planning guidance for the area.

Geographic Orientation of the Lyn-Lake Study Area

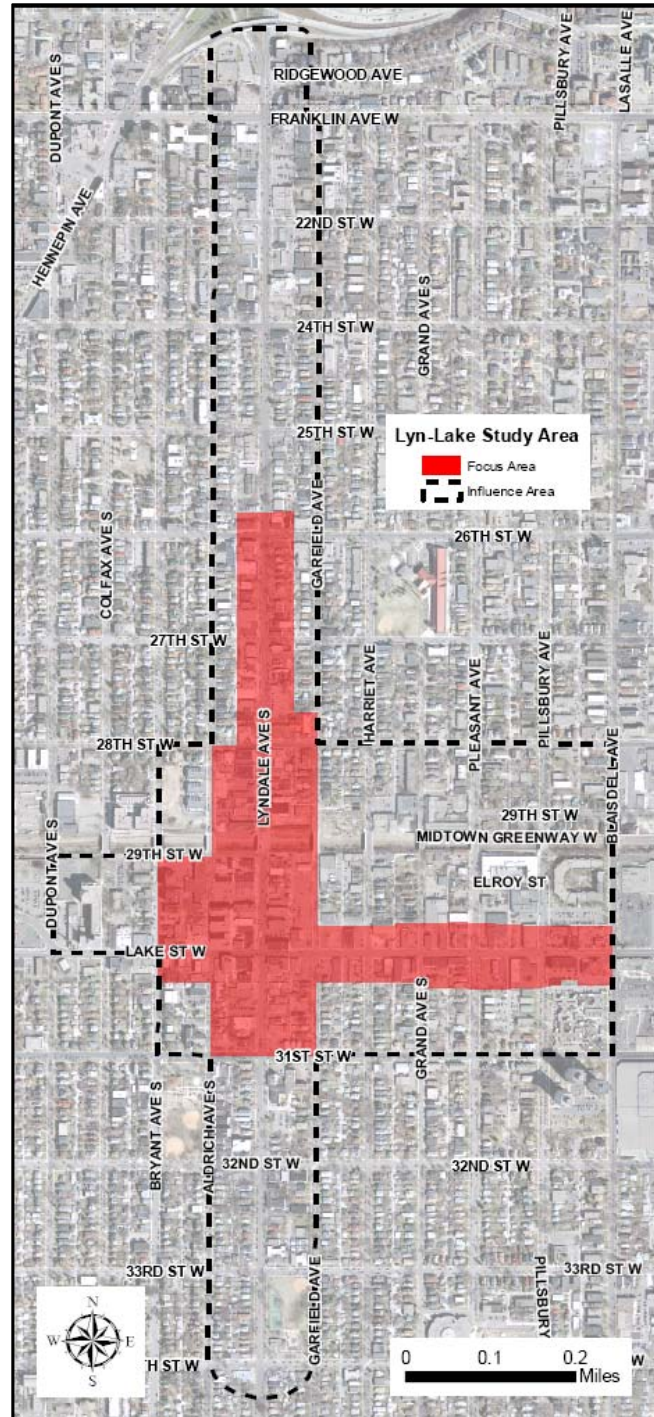
Defining the area in need of study was a challenging task. The Uptown Small Area Plan's eastern boundary is Bryant Avenue South, and the Midtown Minneapolis Land Use and Development Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in 2005, has a western boundary of Blaisdell Avenue.

Thus, the east/west boundaries were apparent. However, much thought was given to how far the boundaries should stretch along Lyndale Avenue South. In addition, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in 2007, covers all parcels along the Greenway. Ultimately, a two tiered approach of having an "influence area" and a "focus area" was decided upon. The focus area below is drawn tightly around locations that currently lack specific future land use policy at a small area plan level. The influence area boundary includes areas that play a major role in shaping the place known as Lyn-Lake, but require less detailed guidance than the focus area.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

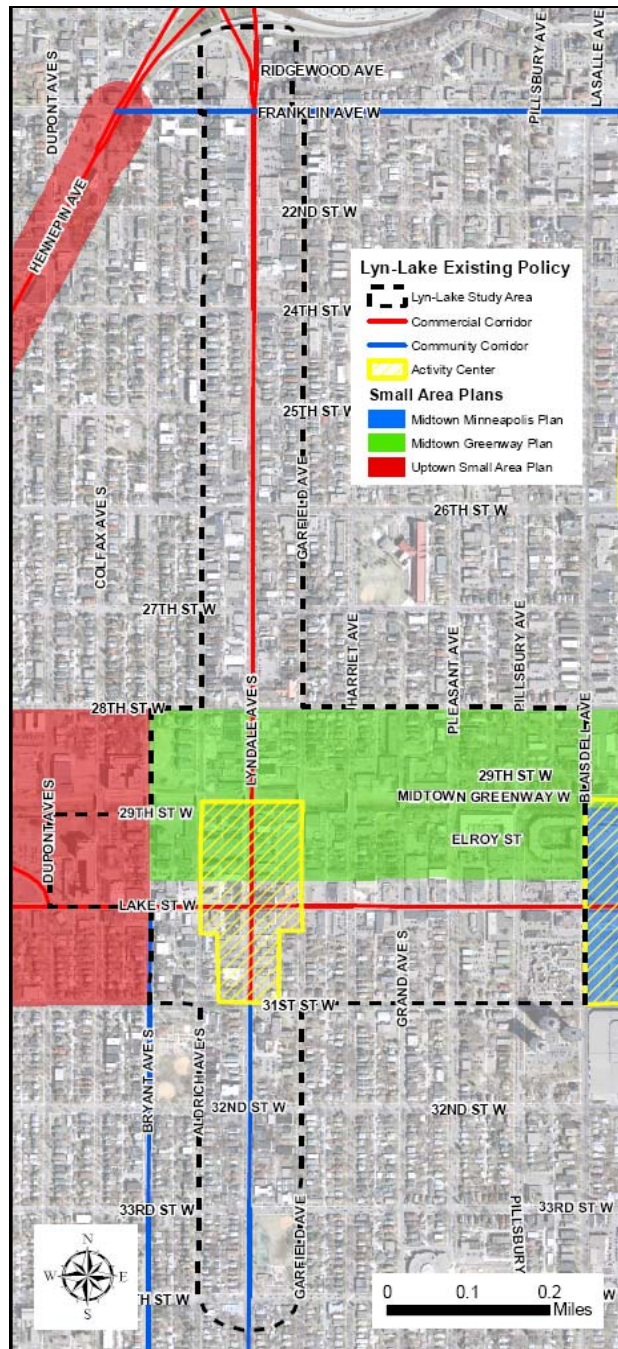
A small area plan is a plan that is developed for a clearly delineated area and gives more specific recommendations than would be provided in the City's comprehensive plan. It builds on the goals, policies and implementation steps in the comprehensive plan to provide a finer level of detail.

The Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan outlines a long-range vision of approximately 10 to 15 years for land use and development in the area. This plan examines the current conditions of the area, develops a future vision of what residents, business owners, and other stakeholders want the area to become and then formulates specific goals, objectives, and policies that will help implement that vision.



Study Area

Following the completion and public review of this document, it will be presented to the City Planning Commission and City Council for adoption as official policy direction for the study area. It will become part of the City’s comprehensive plan and be used by various city departments, Planning Commissioners, policy makers, developers, and business and community organizations to guide future land use and development decisions.



Adopted City Plans that influenced the study boundaries

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Lyn-Lake area was initially developed in the late 1880s, with some additional housing in the surrounding neighborhoods being developed as late as 1930. Before that time, local Dakota lived on the eastern shore of Lake Calhoun and forest land surrounded the lakes [Imboden, 2004]. Lake Calhoun became the site of large resort hotels by the 1870s, and the area around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South developed because it was a major streetcar transfer point between downtown Minneapolis and Lake Calhoun. Many homes were constructed here at the time so that people could escape the congestion of downtown. In 1890 when the streetcar lines were electrified there were approximately 50 businesses at the intersection, five years later there were over 90 [South Minneapolis: A Historic Context, 2000]. Today, the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South retains a commercial character. While some traditional commercial buildings from the era remain, many others were demolished and replaced with buildings designed for an emerging automobile focused lifestyle. This is particularly evident in the portion of the study area that runs along West Lake Street from Garfield Avenue to Blaisdell Avenue.

What is now the Midtown Greenway was originally the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and was built in 1884. In 1912 the rail line was lowered and the existing trench was created. At that time, the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor were primarily residential and comprised mostly of modest working-class houses, over half of the properties directly adjacent to the rail line were industrial, and Lake Street was rapidly developing as one of the city's major commercial corridors [National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2005]

Around the time train service was eliminated in the corridor, it was developed into a pedestrian and bicycle trail by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority with support from the Midtown Greenway Coalition and others. The section that traverses the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan study area was opened in 2000, with other phases opening in 2004 and 2006. It is expected that transit in the form of light rail or streetcar will be placed in the Midtown Greenway at some time in the future.



Courtesy of MN Historical Society



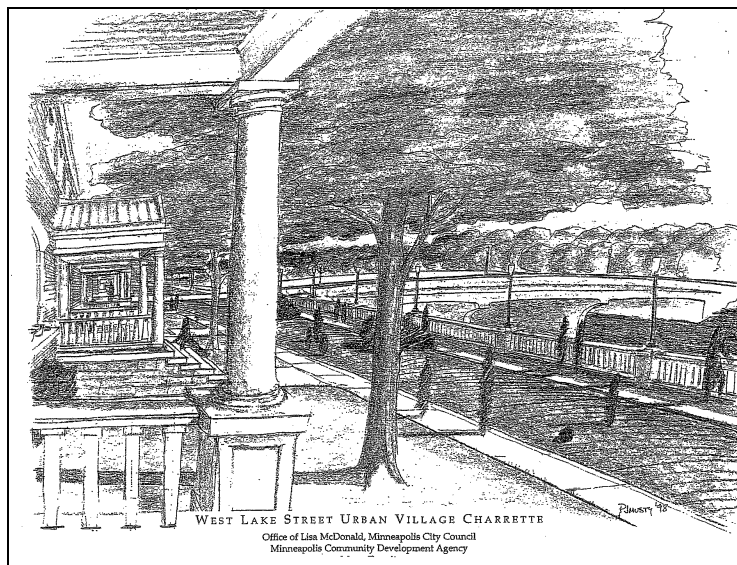
June 2009

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

In 1997, the City of Minneapolis adopted a plan titled “Lyndale Avenue: A Vision”. This plan was produced in reaction to the widening of Lyndale Avenue South which was proposed in 1994. A task force was formed and developed the plan in order to outline a vision for a more pedestrian friendly Lyndale Avenue South. The study area for the plan included areas along Lyndale Avenue South from West Franklin Avenue to the Crosstown Highway.

The plan informed the designs for the rebuilding of Lyndale Avenue South, south of West Lake Street, which is currently underway. While the plan was valuable for the purpose of influencing the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue, its remaining content is now somewhat out of date. In addition, many of the elements that are now common in a small area plan, such as a future land use map, are absent from this document

In 1998, a community based design charrette was held to outline a community vision for the area bounded by Humboldt Avenue South, West 28th Street, Garfield Avenue South and West 31st Street. While the plan, referred to as the West Lake Urban Village Charrette, focused on an area closer to the intersection of Hennepin Avenue South and West Lake Street, it also contained recommendations related to the development of the Midtown Greenway and the further redevelopment of West Lake Street, especially between Hennepin and Lyndale Avenues. Results of the charrette process provide valuable background information and outline many concepts that are still relevant today, such as the desire for strong and safe pedestrian connections, the need to enhance the public realm whenever possible, and the need to have a good business mix housed in quality architecture. While many elements of the plan have in fact already been implemented, the plan was never formally adopted by the City Council.



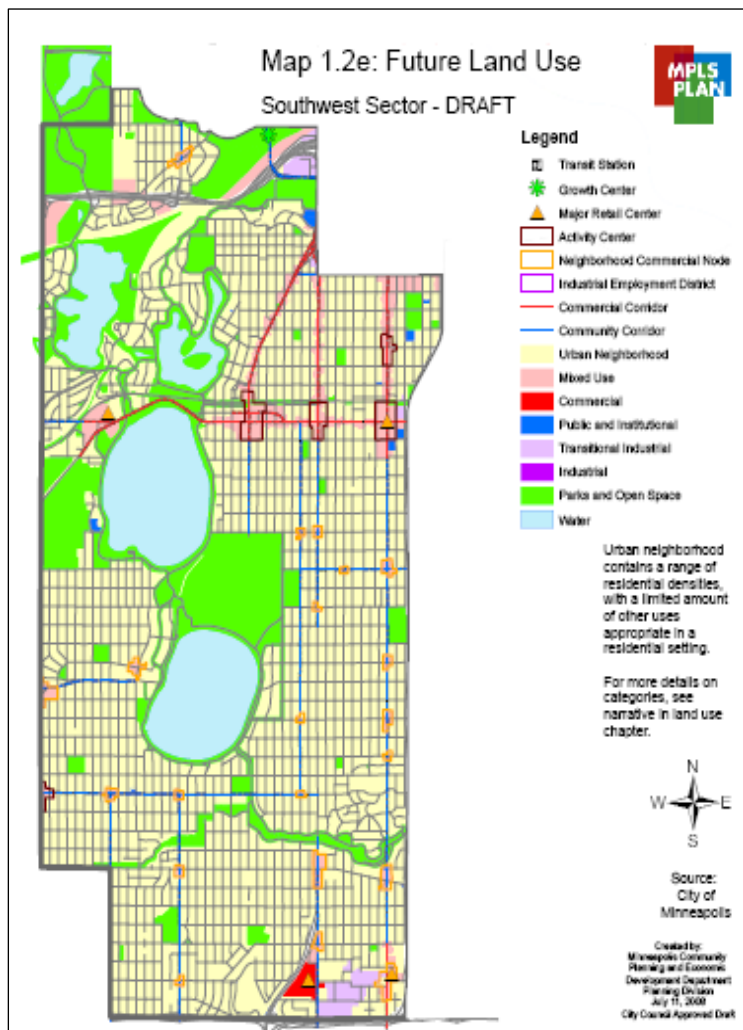
West Lake Urban Village Charrette report cover, 1998

EXISTING POLICY

This small area plan is intended to fill a gap in detailed planning in the area. However, there are several recent and relevant adopted plans that set the stage for this work.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth

The City's comprehensive plan was recently updated, providing a future vision and strategy for the entire City. It covers a variety of topics including land use, transportation, housing, heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and urban design. The land use section of the comprehensive plan focuses on a series of land use features, several of which are applicable to the Lyn-Lake area.



Southwest Land Use Features from the Comprehensive Plan

Activity Centers

The comprehensive plan identifies several “Activity Centers” throughout the city. The intersections of Hennepin and Lake, Lyndale and Lake, and Nicollet and Lake are all designated as Activity Centers along the western portion of West Lake Street. Activity Centers are the places that shape Minneapolis’ urban identity. They attract residents, workers, and visitors from the rest of the city and region. Activity Centers support a wide range of commercial, office, and high- to very high-density residential uses. They typically have a busy street life with activity throughout the day and into the evening. They are heavily oriented towards pedestrians, and maintain a traditional urban form and scale. Activity Centers are also well-served by transit. It is the City’s goal to support Activity Centers by preserving the mix and intensity of land uses and by enhancing the design features that give each center its unique urban character.

Commercial Corridors

The comprehensive plan designates West Lake Street as a Commercial Corridor. Typically, Commercial Corridors can accommodate intensive commercial uses and high levels of traffic. Commercial Corridors support all types of commercial uses, with some light industrial and high density residential uses as well. While the character of these streets is mainly commercial, residential areas are nearby and impacts from commercial uses must be mitigated as appropriate. Additionally, the City encourages new medium- to high-density residential development along Commercial Corridors, particularly as part of mixed-use development.

Community Corridors

Lyndale Avenue South is designated as a Commercial Corridor north of West 31st Street, and a Community Corridor south of West 31st Street. Community Corridors support limited commercial uses concentrated at Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and low- to medium-density housing

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan

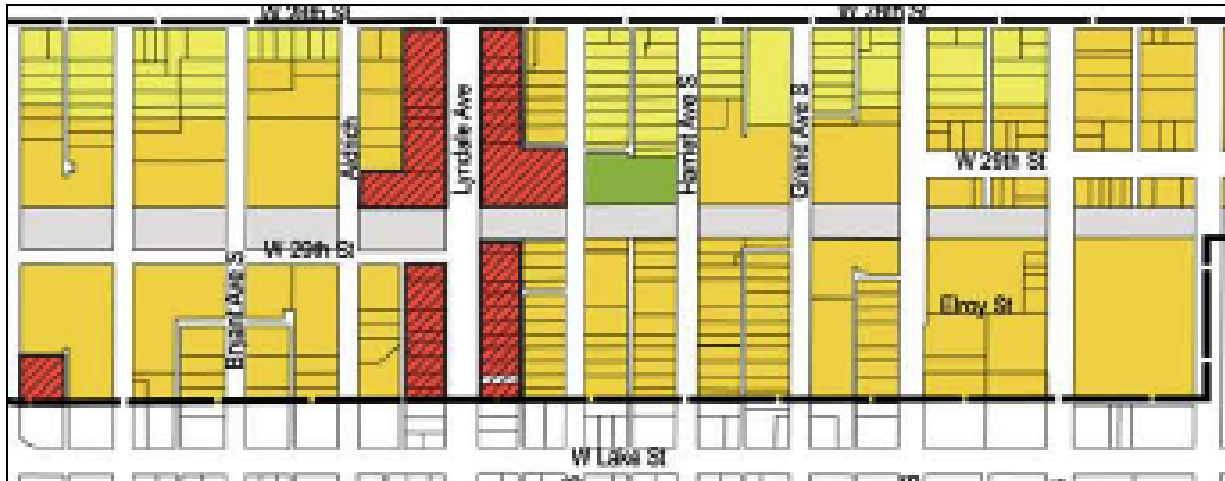
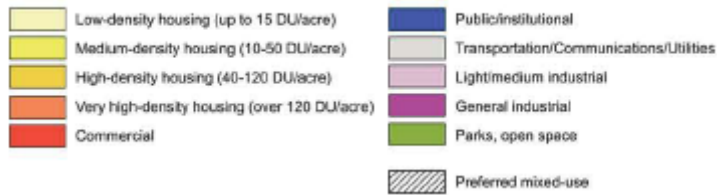
The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan sets policy direction for possible future change along the Midtown Greenway corridor from the western city limits to the Mississippi River. Adopted by the City Council in January of 2007, this plan recommends future land uses and public infrastructure improvements. The Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan builds on the recommendations outlined in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan.

Key recommendations from the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan that are relevant to the Lyn-Lake area include:

- Concentrating commercial and mixed-use development at intersections of existing commercial corridors and the Midtown Greenway.
- Encouraging high-density residential development along the Midtown Greenway near major corridors.
- Reestablishing West 29th Street between Emerson and Dupont Avenues and securing additional property where needed to provide a sidewalk along the Greenway edge.
- Providing a linear public “promenade” or walkway wherever possible between private development and the Midtown Greenway and other spaces.
- Considering opportunities to acquire property at future transit stations to create expanded and enhanced public spaces.

The following map shows the future land uses adopted as part of the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan also provides development guidelines that address development intensity and desired characteristics of new development.

Future Land Use Categories:



Future Land Use Plan from the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To understand and recognize the unique nature of the Lyn-Lake area, at the beginning of the planning process three exercises were done to get a sense of what the community values, what concerns exist, and what communal vision exists for the area. First, steering committee members were asked to detail what they like and dislike about the Lyn-Lake area. Second, an online survey was posted and advertised to ask a larger group what they value and what concerns they have about the area. Third, similar questions were asked at the first community meeting held on June 24th, 2008. At the community meeting and on the survey people were also asked to provide three adjectives that describe how they'd like the Lyn-Lake area to be in the future. From this input, the following vision statement and guiding principles were crafted for this plan:

The Lyn-Lake area highly values its independent and diverse business mix. This colorful destination will be supported and enhanced by encouraging the continued development of a clean, dense, and vibrant district. Lyn-Lake's diversity and urban character is valued; it will continue to be an artsy enclave that serves as a home to a diverse population. It will continue to be a place where people choose to walk, bike, and take transit to enjoy all that the area has to offer.

Principles that guide this plan include:

- Maintain and grow an independent and diverse business mix.
- Promote a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Maintain and cultivate a residential and commercial identity that is uniquely Lyn-Lake.
- Support a dense environment with housing options for a variety of incomes and lifestyles.
- Encourage incremental greening through the development of small urban green spaces and environmentally sensitive design.
- Balance the needs of automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers while recognizing the exceptional nearby amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and the Midtown Greenway.
- Continue to plan for the parking needs of area businesses, residents, and visitors while balancing the need for a walkable, well developed area.

The following Chapters will outline existing conditions in the area, summarize the input received from the community, review the issues discovered, and make a series of recommendations that respond to the principles outline above.

CHAPTER 2: Existing Conditions

This chapter provides an overview of conditions within the study area at this general time. Existing conditions include both social and physical characteristics, and will serve as background information for the recommendations presented later in the plan document.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Lyn-Lake area is focused around a business center located at the intersection of four unique neighborhoods: Lowry Hill East, CARAG, Whittier, and Lyndale. The Whittier neighborhood is largest in area and population.

The most detailed and well documented demographic trends can be found in the US Census. This document first looks to this data to establish general conditions and then examines recent development projects and population forecasts that affect neighborhood demographics.

The four neighborhoods surrounding Lyn-Lake make up 9% of the city's population of 383,618. Populations increased both citywide and in the four Lyn-Lake area neighborhoods between 1980 and 2000. Even though the Lowry Hill East and CARAG neighborhoods lost population during that time, the Whittier and Lyndale neighborhoods increased in population. This accounted for an overall growth rate in Lyn-Lake that was higher than the city as a whole from 1980 to 2000. It's important to note, however, that probable population increases from recent residential developments in Lowry Hill East are not reflected in the numbers below.

Table 1: Population, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	% change 1980 to 2000
Lowry Hill East	6,187	5,933	5,912	-4.44%
CARAG	6,223	5,825	5,907	-5.08%
Whittier	12,729	13,051	15,247	19.78%
Lyndale	7,167	7,239	7,690	7.30%
Area Total	32,306	32,048	34,756	7.58%
Minneapolis	370,951	368,383	383,618	3.41%

Source: City of Minneapolis and US Census

Demographically, the Lyn-Lake area is dominated by a younger population group. Age in the general area is displayed below as is age distribution by neighborhood. The Lyn-Lake area has the greatest number of people in the age 25 to 44 cohort, with the under 25 cohort ranking second.

Table 2: Age Distribution, 2000

	0-17 years	18-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 + years
Lowry Hill East	380	1,269	3,333	761	169
CARAG	457	997	3,261	795	397
Whittier	2,652	3,154	6,964	1,871	606
Lyndale	1,484	1,239	3,206	1,127	634
Total	4,973	6,659	16,764	4,554	1,806

Source: City of Minneapolis and US Census

The residents in neighborhoods surrounding the Lyn-Lake intersection primarily self identified as White in the 2000 US Census as displayed below. Whittier and Lyndale neighborhoods are both more diverse in racial make up than Lowry Hill East and CARAG neighborhoods, which have similar ethnic distributions.

Table 3: Ethnic Distribution, 2000

	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Others
Lowry Hill East	4,919	391	59	160	217	166
CARAG	5,087	281	54	184	168	133
Whittier	7,148	3,018	360	915	3,165	663
Lyndale	3,786	1,477	101	330	1,646	350
Total	20,940	5,167	574	1,589	5,196	1,312

Source: City of Minneapolis and US Census

INCOME

In part because the Lyn-Lake population is largely made up of younger people, the majority of household incomes were below \$50,000 in 2000. In the Lyn-Lake area 74% of households had incomes of less than \$50,000, whereas, city wide, 63% of households had incomes of less than \$50,000.

Table 4: Number of Households at different income levels, 2000

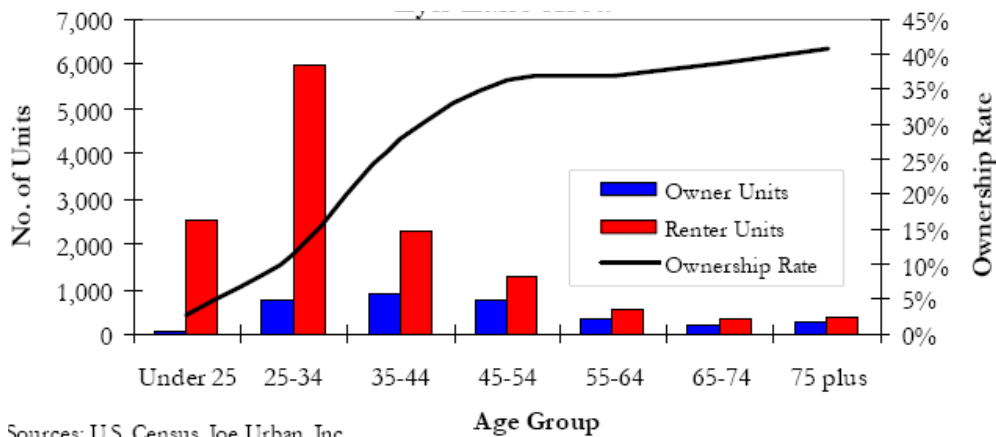
	Less than \$25,000	% of households	\$25,000-\$50,000	% of households	\$50,000-\$100,000	% of households	\$100,000 plus	% of households
Lowry Hill East	1,160	33%	1,390	39%	815	23%	180	5%
CARAG	925	26%	1,450	40%	980	27%	235	7%
Whittier	3,020	43%	2,680	38%	1,110	16%	235	3%
Lyndale	1,420	42%	1,050	31%	775	23%	150	4%
Total	6,525	37%	6,570	37%	3,680	21%	800	5%

Source: City of Minneapolis and US Census

HOUSING

Since the Lyn-Lake area is home to many younger adults, more people chose to rent rather than own a home. Another reason for the high number of renters is the diversity of availability of rental housing stock in the area. The chart below shows the number of rental and ownership housing units by age of householder in the Lyn-Lake area. The chart illustrates not only a larger number of rental units occupied by the younger portion of the population in the Lyn-Lake area, but also shows that that ownership rates among older cohorts still lag behind the citywide averages.

Chart 1: Household Tenure by Age of Householder



Sources: U.S. Census, Joe Urban, Inc.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Household size is smaller in the Lyn-Lake area than in Minneapolis as a whole. In 2000, in Lowry Hill East the average household size was 1.6 people. It was 1.7 in CARAG. Whittier and Lyndale both had household sizes of 2.1, which was closer to the city wide average of 2.3. This is reflective of a national trend of more people living in homes without children [see Appendix A-Market Study].

The City of Minneapolis gathers health data by neighborhood group. Lyndale Avenue is the border between the Calhoun Isles community and the Powderhorn community. Generally speaking, the Calhoun Isles community ranks higher than Powderhorn on a series of social indicators related to health conditions and behaviors [see Appendix B – Powderhorn and Calhoun Isles Community Health Data]. This is important to consider in a future land use plan because of the relationship between health and access to services and general comfort of the neighborhood environment.

All four neighborhoods have strong neighborhood associations that strive to better the community. The Lyn-Lake Business Association coordinates with the larger Lake Street Council. The business association has approximately seventy members which include business, churches, developers, and non-profit organizations.

CURRENT LAND USE AND ZONING

In the Lyn-Lake area, most land uses located around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South and along West Lake Street to the east end of the study area are commercial. Along the Midtown Greenway several recent high-density residential and mixed-use development projects have replaced previous industrial uses. Lyndale Avenue South north of West 27th Street contains a mix of land uses including small commercial establishments, older homes converted to apartments, and smaller apartment buildings.

The existing zoning is generally compatible with the existing land uses. Commercial zoning is found along West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South. South of West 31st Street along Lyndale Avenue South, the zoning is a mix of residential and office-residential districts with some commercial zoning districts located at the intersections. Some properties that have yet to be redeveloped along the Midtown Greenway are zoned industrial. Excerpts of the City's land use and zoning maps for the Lyn-Lake area are shown on the following page.



Residential development along the Midtown Greenway



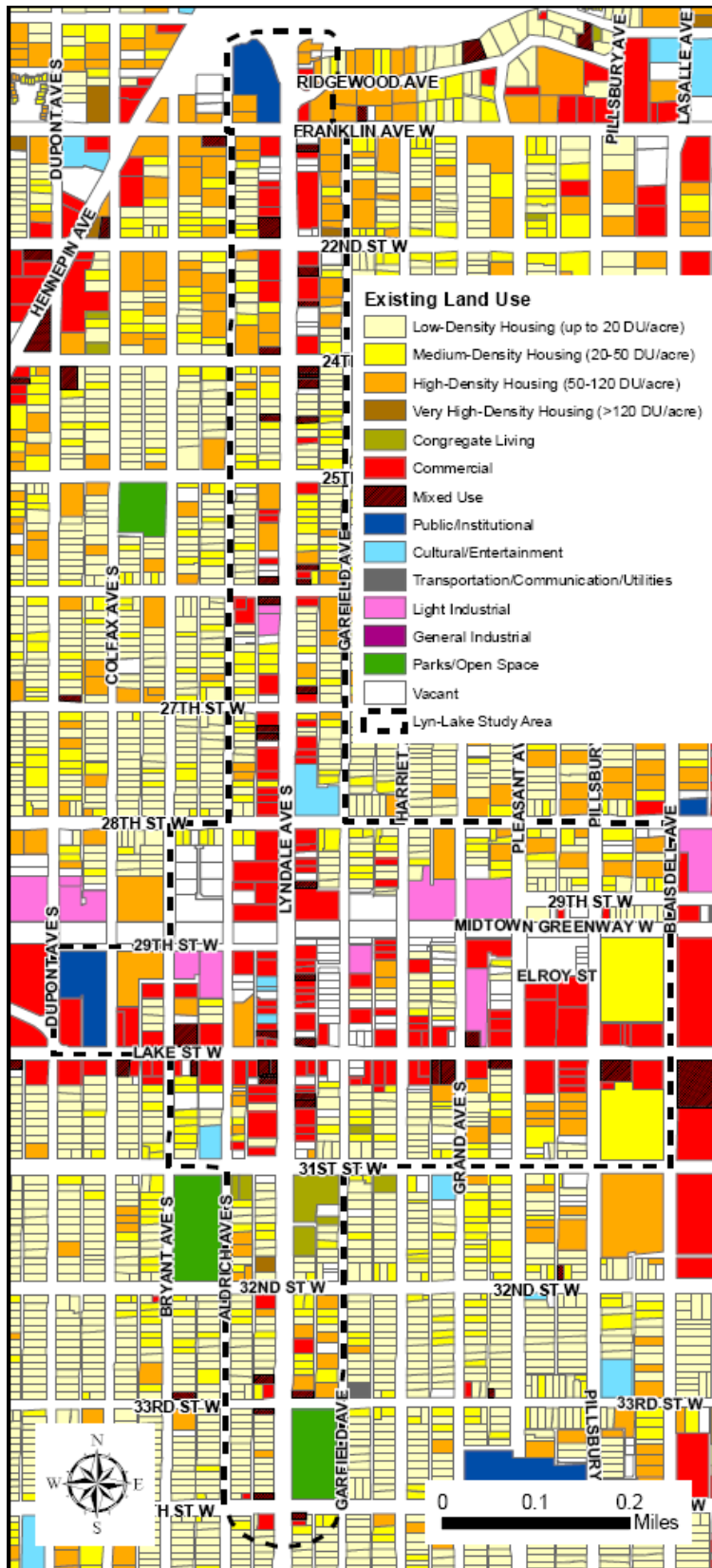
Lyndale Avenue at 22nd Street



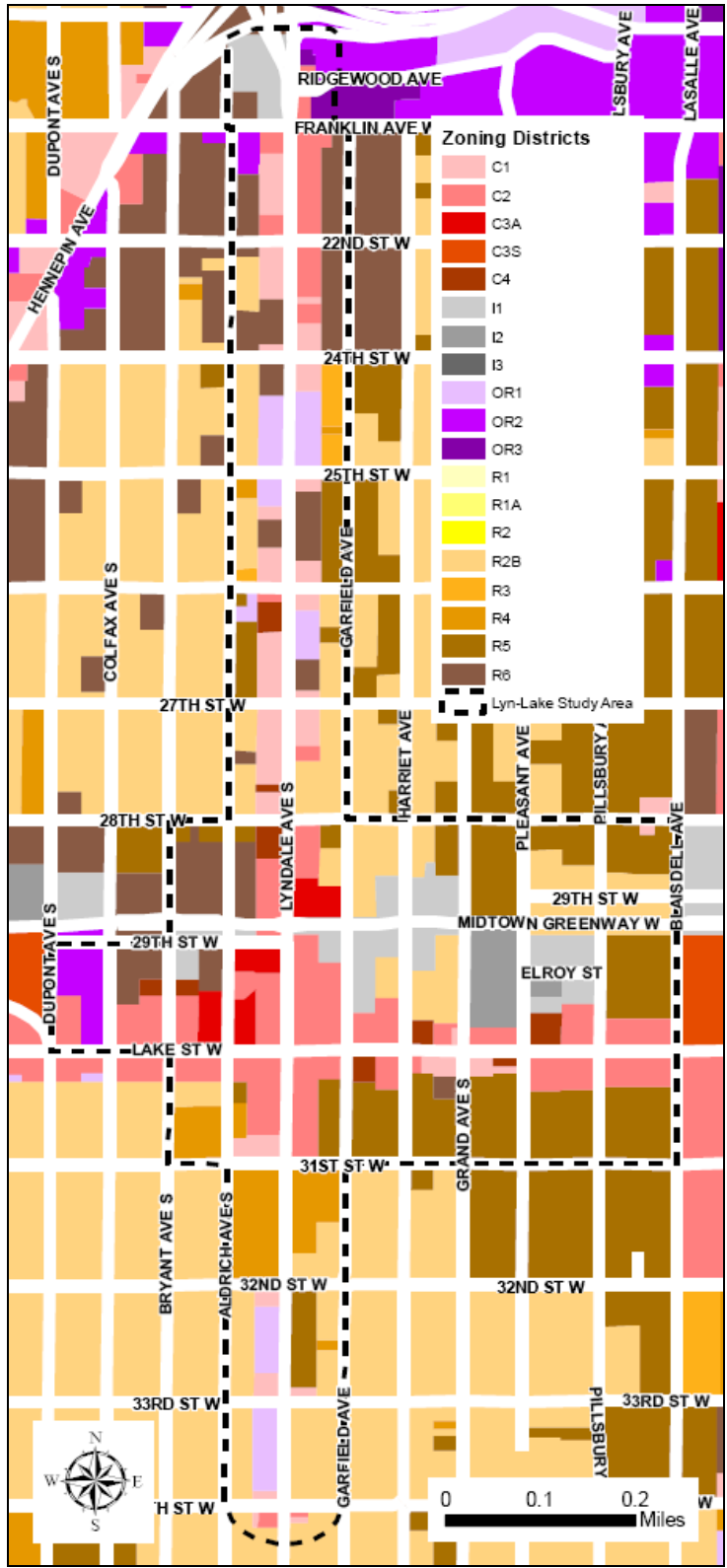
Lyndale Ave. between Lake St. and the Midtown Greenway



Lyndale Avenue at 24th Street



Existing Land Use



Existing Zoning

RECENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The business districts of Lyn-Lake and Uptown are a draw for people desiring urban amenities. This has been a driving factor in the redevelopment of industrial parcels along the Midtown Greenway into mixed-use and residential buildings, which is in line with existing land use policy for the area. Several recent development projects are representative of this shift in land uses; the “Blue” apartments along the west side of Aldrich Avenue South between West Lake Street and West 29th Street; “The Murals of Lyn-Lake” at the northeast corner of the intersection of Lyndale Avenue South and the Midtown Greenway; and “Karmel Village” between Grand and Pleasant Avenues along the Midtown Greenway.

Several other mixed-use projects have been proposed and or approved. Two key sites with current proposals are the southwest corner of the intersection of the Midtown Greenway and Lyndale Avenue South and the site of the Salem Church at West 28th Street and Lyndale Avenue South.

BUILT FORM

The built form in the study area varies greatly. Around the intersection of Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street, there are older buildings that range from one to five stories. To the east of the intersection, there are smaller, more auto oriented buildings that are typically one story. Along the Midtown Greenway there is a new six story building at Lyndale Avenue and the Greenway. This building drops down to two stories where it is adjacent to traditional homes.



Recently approved development: The Murals

Off the main corridors of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South, there is a mix of land uses that includes, single family homes, duplexes, smaller apartment buildings, and some light industrial buildings.

There are a number of parking lots in the study area that provide necessary access to local businesses. However, many of these lots are dark and isolated, inviting crime. Theft from motor vehicles is a serious problem in the area, particularly in the public parking lot at West Lake Street and Garfield Avenue South.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The City of Minneapolis has surveyed the Lyn-Lake area to assess the potential for the designation of historic districts and historic landmarks. There is one nationally designated landmark and one locally designated landmark in the study area. However, the fabric and history of the structures near the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South may make that immediate area eligible for designation as a historic district as suggested in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

The building located at 2957 Lyndale Avenue South, which houses the “Its Greek to Me” restaurant, was designated as a local landmark in 1985 because it was the first large scale development that accompanied the expansion of the streetcar system in southwest Minneapolis. The building, which was built in 1888 and is referred to as the Cromwell Block, is exemplary of the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style.

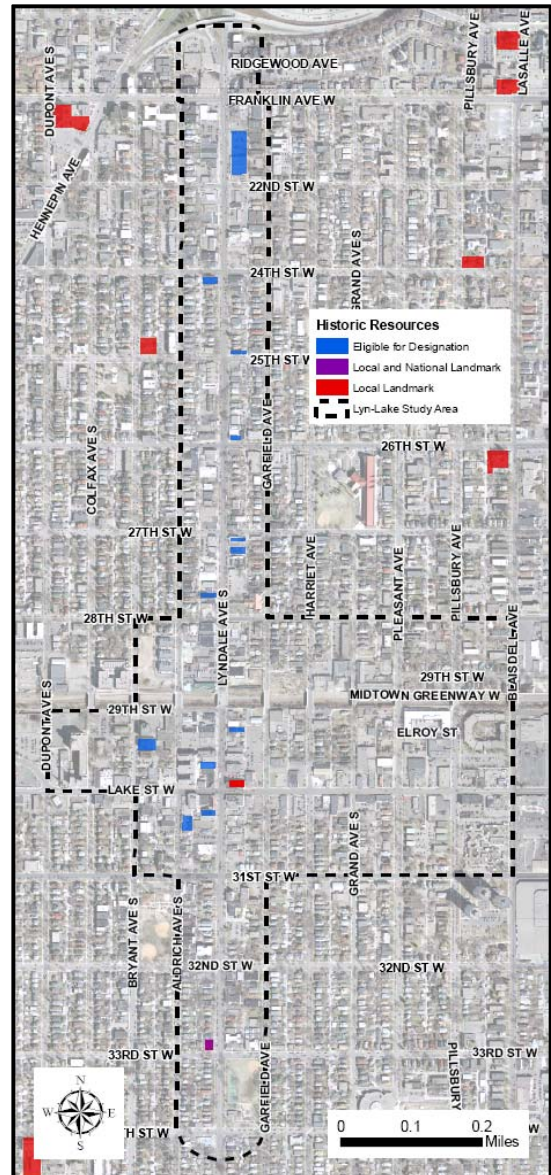
The former White Castle restaurant at 3252 Lyndale Avenue South is both locally and nationally designated. It was built in 1936 and is considered historically significant because it represents the spread of the fast-food restaurant phenomenon.

Several other sites in the study area have been deemed to be potentially eligible for designation based on both historic and cultural significance. These buildings are not protected at this time, but may merit future study and consideration. These include:

- 2105 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2400 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2457 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2555 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2701 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2709 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2711 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2744 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2917 Lyndale Avenue South
- 2934 Lyndale Avenue South
- 3008 Lyndale Avenue South
- 3013-23 Aldrich Avenue South
- 2917 Bryant Avenue South

In addition to individual sites, larger areas can be designated. The Midtown Greenway trench, bridges, retaining walls, and two adjacent properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the

Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Grade Separation. This designation impacts what types of alterations can be made to the trench, bridges, and retaining walls. Any demolition plans for buildings within the boundaries may be subject to additional review. Properties within the study area of this plan and the boundaries of the historic district include 2836 Lyndale Avenue South, 2848 Pleasant Avenue South, and 2900 Pleasant Avenue South. These buildings are “non-contributing” structures to the district but are within the boundary.



Historic Resources

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Because the focus and influence areas of the study area are largely built out, there is a lack of substantial outdoor gathering spaces. However, a number of parks and park facilities surround the study area.

Painter Park is located at West 34th Street and Lyndale Avenue South and Bryant Square Park is nearby at West 31st Street and Bryant Avenue South. Whittier Park is located at West 26th Street and Harriet Avenue South. Mueller Park is the smallest and is located at West 25th Street and Colfax. Painter, Bryant, and Whittier Parks have community centers with multi-purpose rooms.

In addition to public parks, open spaces such as The Soo Line Community Garden (located along the Midtown Greenway at Garfield Avenue) serve as a gathering space for neighborhood residents. This garden was established in 1991 and serves over 100 gardeners. The Midtown Greenway also provides green space, but it is focused on a very specific activity and portion of the populace.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Automobile

The dominant means of transportation in the Lyn-Lake area today is by automobile. In the study area, both Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street are considered A-Minor Arterials and carry a sizeable volume of traffic. On average, Lyndale Avenue South carries 27,800 vehicle trips per day, while West Lake Street carries 20,800 vehicle trips per day through the study area. This volume of traffic has shaped the variety of uses that exist in the study area, and poses considerable opportunities and challenges for nearby residents and businesses.

Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street share similar traffic volumes with other major streets in the Minneapolis area. However, it is interesting to note the distinctly different land uses that surround the examples below.

Table 5: Traffic on Comparable Local Road Sections

Street	Segment	Average Daily Traffic Volume
Lyndale Avenue	from Franklin Avenue to 26th Street	27,800
Lake Street	from Bryant to Lyndale Avenue	20,800
Hennepin Avenue	from 24th to 26th Street	26,800
Hiawatha Avenue	from Lake Street to 42nd Street	31,500
Broadway Street NE	from Marshall Street to University Avenue	22,900
France Avenue S	from 69th Street to I-494	27,500

Minnesota Department of Transportation - 2007

Parking

In developed urban areas, parking is typically a challenge because many of the structures were built before driving became common. The positive aspect of this challenge is that developed urban areas like Lyn-Lake are typically a more enjoyable place to walk than are areas with a great deal of parking.

It is fortunate that parking supply was identified as an issue at Lyn-Lake several years ago and some strategic action was taken. In 1997 the City Council directed staff to prepare a budget, designs, land acquisition agreements, zoning changes, an operations agreement, and to initiate an assessment process for two public parking lots. In 1998 a Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Board was established and \$2,282,000 in bond debt was issued to create the Garfield lot and the Aldrich Avenue lot, which is now the site of the Uptown City Apartments (but still contains sixty-six public parking spaces).

The Garfield lot, which is located on nine parcels along Garfield Avenue South between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway, contains one hundred and thirty spaces and is operated with a drop box, or honor system, set up. The City of Minneapolis owns and operates the lots with the assistance of a private parking lot management company. The Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Board offers recommendations concerning parking in the area to the City's Department of Public Works.

The City of Minneapolis administers an assessment process for the repayment of the original bond by the businesses that benefit from the parking lots. All businesses within 300 feet of the Garfield lot are assessed based on a calculation that includes the following factors: market value, building area, parcel area, and a parking shortage calculation (which is based on parking requirements for various uses outlined in the zoning code).

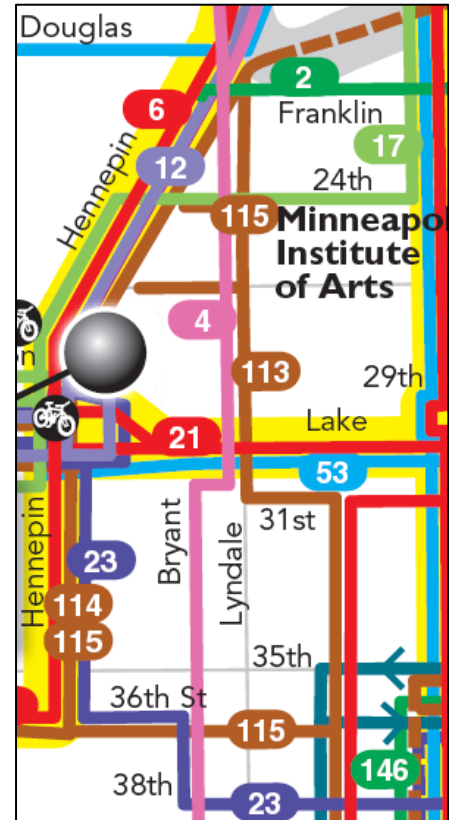
An inventory of parking between Bryant Avenue South and Blaisdell Avenue and between West 28th Street and West 32nd Street can be found in Appendix C. North of West 28th Street there is on-street parking on both sides of Lyndale Avenue South and there are some small off-street parking lots associated with individual businesses. On Lyndale Avenue South between West 32nd Street and West 34th Street there are two small parking lots associated with adjacent uses. Along West Lake Street there are few off-street parking spaces between Dupont Avenue South and Lyndale Avenue South, but there are many small off-street parking lots associated with individual business between Lyndale Avenue South and Blaisdell Avenue.

Transit

Bus

Current bus service in the Lyn-Lake area is robust with multiple routes serving the area. Route 21 which runs along West Lake Street operates at a frequency of 10 minutes during rush hours, and route 4 which runs along Lyndale Avenue South has a frequency of seven to 15 minutes during rush hour. These two routes have the most frequent service and account for the greatest number of boardings and departures at the intersection of Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street. Weekend and evening service is also available.

Express bus service to the University of Minnesota campus also runs north and south on Lyndale Avenue South during the fall and spring semesters. The route 53 bus runs east and west through the study area and serves riders heading to downtown St. Paul. The northern end of the influence area is also served by bus routes 2 (traveling east and west along West Franklin Avenue) and 17 (running from the western suburbs through downtown to Northeast Minneapolis).



Existing Bus Routes

Rail

The Midtown Greenway has long been targeted as a route for future rail transit. The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority is currently evaluating routes for a light rail line that would connect the southwest suburbs to downtown Minneapolis. This project, referred to as the Southwest Transitway, currently involves two possible light rail alignments. One of these possible routes would travel along the Midtown Greenway and then turn north and access downtown via Nicollet Avenue. The other potential route would follow the Kenilworth Trail west of Lake of the Isles. These two routes are being evaluated through an Environmental Impact Study and a final route is scheduled to be selected in mid 2009. If the alignment through the Midtown Greenway is chosen there will be stations at Hennepin Avenue South and the Midtown Greenway and Lyndale Avenue South and the Midtown Greenway. There is potential for the Southwest Transitway to be in operation by 2015 if all of the appropriate authorization and funding is received.

The City of Minneapolis has also studied the Midtown Greenway as a possible route for a streetcar line. The Midtown Greenway was selected as one of six potential streetcar corridors. However, typically modern streetcar networks are initiated with a “minimal operable segment”, which is the smallest section that can be built and still be effective, in order to speed implementation and bolster creative funding options. The Midtown Greenway route was not considered a viable minimal operable segment in the Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study

that was published in 2007, but is being pursued in an ongoing process by a collection of private partners.

Bicycle

Lyn-Lake is home to and a major hub for bicycle activity. The Midtown Greenway provides east/west access across the south side of the city and there is a concentration of bike shops in the area. In 2007 the first large body of comparative bicycle count data was collected in the Midtown Greenway. The major finding of a report issued in July of 2008 about bicycle usage in the Midtown Greenway was that it is increasing at a substantial rate. The count location on the Midtown Greenway was at Hennepin Avenue, where in June of 2007 there was an average of 2,680 bicyclists a day. One year later at the same location there was an average of 3,620 bicyclists a day. The highest one day total recorded was Sunday, June 1st, 2008 when 5,336 cycling trips were recorded. The area has multiple access points to the Midtown Greenway trench. The Bryant Avenue South access point serves areas west of Lyndale Avenue and the access point between Garfield and Harriet Avenues provides access to areas east of Lyndale Avenue. Bryant Avenue South is also a marked bicycle route providing north/south access to the area.

A bicycle master plan is currently being drafted by the City's Public Works Department. This plan will make recommendations related to the prioritization of routes and improvements throughout the city.

Pedestrian

The intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South was recently reconstructed and now has sidewalks that are approximately 20 feet wide at the intersection. New street trees, benches, bike racks, and decorative pavers have been added creating a comfortable pedestrian environment. The pedestrian enhancements also exist east and west of Lyndale Avenue South on West Lake Street, but the sidewalks are narrower.

The sidewalks on Lyndale Avenue South north of the Midtown Greenway are in fair condition. However, the streetscape character varies greatly with boulevards in some sections and not others. On Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street the pedestrian environment is more typical of a neighborhood, with narrower sidewalks and slightly larger boulevards with larger trees.

The City of Minneapolis is in the process of developing its first pedestrian master plan. This document will provide guidance on design and maintenance of the pedestrian realm. In addition, the City has developed a Coordinated Street Furnishing Program that addresses the placement of bus shelters, benches, trash cans, and newspaper kiosks throughout the city.



Recent streetscape improvements

CHAPTER 3: Community Engagement

This chapter provides an overview of the community engagement process used during the development of this plan. Additional information on this process, including summaries of comments received, can be found in Appendix D.

STEERING COMMITTEE

In February of 2008, a group of individuals and representatives from various organizations were invited to serve on a steering committee for the planning process. Each of the surrounding neighborhoods was asked to send two representatives, as was the Lyn-Lake Business Association. The Midtown Greenway Coalition and the Midtown Community Works Partnership were also invited to send a representative. In addition, the two City Council offices representing the area each appointed four individuals to the committee. The two Council Members and their aides also attended steering committee meetings as their schedules allowed. Although not all committee members were able to make the meetings, they were all kept on an e-mail list and received regular updates about the project. The steering committee met five times during the planning process.

The role of the steering committee was to:

- Advise on process. The steering committee provided guidance to city staff on how to structure the planning process.
- Communicate with appointing organizations. Steering committee members served as a communication link between the study process and their appointing organization.
- Help engage the public. Steering committee members were asked to help get the word out about public events related to this study.
- Advise on plan content. The steering committee was asked to be a sounding board and offer preliminary feedback on plan content in preparation for broader public meetings.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

A series of community meetings were held to share information with the public, and to collect input from stakeholders for the plan.

Meeting #1 (June 24th, 2008)

The purpose of the first community meeting was for the public to hear an overview of the process, to review information about existing conditions and land use policy, and discuss their vision for the future of the Lyn-Lake area.

The meeting was an open house format. After a brief presentation, attendees were encouraged to walk around the room, look at presentation boards, and talk to city staff. There were three main stations at the meeting for participants to learn about the area and interact with City staff.

Station 1:

At station number one, a presentation was given covering the reasons for the upcoming planning process, and a description of what a planning document is intended to accomplish. A general timeline and steps to come were shared, along with the types of materials that would be produced and incorporated into the final document.

Station 2:

At station number two, there were poster boards containing information about existing land use policy, existing land uses, and zoning in the study area. Several recent planning efforts have taken place near the Lyn-Lake area, and staff discussed how these various plans would interact with the Lyn-Lake planning process as it moved forward. A number of questions were asked regarding how zoning interacts with adopted policy, and what zoning regulations can accomplish.

Station 3:

At station number three, meeting attendees were invited to answer three questions that were aimed at focusing planning efforts on specific issues in the community. The three questions were:

- What do you value most about the Lyn-Lake area?
- What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the Lyn-Lake area?
- What three words describe your vision for Lyn-Lake?

The responses to these questions were used to draft a vision statement, and to generally guide the planning recommendations.

Also available at the meeting was a general survey that was previously available online. A detailed description of materials presented at the meeting and questions asked by attendees can be found in Appendix D.

Meeting #2 (September 15th, 2008)

The second meeting was designed to report on the vision established at the first meeting, inform participants on the findings of the market study undertaken for the area, and get input on what parts of the study area were valued and what parts were problematic. The project market consultant Joe Urban, Inc. presented preliminary findings from the market study. These findings are detailed in other sections of this plan, and the full report can be found in Appendix A.

After the presentation there was an opportunity for meeting attendees to provide feedback on three issues



presented by City staff. The questions were asked as part of a mapping exercise, to look at where in the study area certain positive and negative attributes could be found. The three issues presented were:

- Identify your favorite place in the study area and explain why.
- Identify your least favorite place in the study area and explain why.
- Identify where in the study area it is difficult or unpleasant to travel – by car, bike, foot, etc – and explain why.

Maps showing the location of responses can be found in the appendix, along with a list of all comments recorded during the meeting.

Meeting #3 (December 18, 2008)

A third meeting was held to discuss the work of the urban design consultants. The consultants were asked to examine building height in the study area and explore potential design concepts for three case study areas. These were located at Lyndale Avenue South and West 26th Street, West Lake Street and Pleasant Avenue South, and West Lake Street and Garfield Avenue South (on the Garfield parking lot).

At this meeting the consultant presented their design concepts and considerations for the case studies. After the presentation, meeting attendees were invited to examine poster boards of the designs and asked to post their comments on the boards. A comment card was also distributed. The concepts for the case studies can be found in coming chapters.

Meeting #4

The fourth meeting was held to explain the recommendations in the plan and kick off the 45-day public review period. Staff presented the major recommendations in the plan and explained the process for adoption.

For each of these meetings e-mail notices were sent out to all who had expressed interest in the project and press releases were sent out. For the first meeting flyers and posters were distributed in the study area. For the second meeting a flyer was sent to all property owners and renters in the study area.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

In addition to steering committee meetings and community meetings, a total of fourteen updates were given to smaller groups at their regularly scheduled meetings throughout the process. These groups included: the Whittier Alliance, CARAG, the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association, the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, the Whittier Business Association, the Midtown Community Works Partnership, the Nicollet-Lake Business Association, and the Lyn-Lake Business Association.

OTHER OUTREACH MECHANISMS

Other outreach efforts included periodic e-mail updates and a project website. Approximately 140 people were on the project e-mail list. People signed up for the list at meetings, and the list also contained neighborhood associations and other groups. All meeting agendas and

summaries were placed on the project website. These summaries can be found in the Appendices of this document.

Early in the study process, an online survey was also posted on the website. The survey focused on peoples' hopes and concerns for the area.

As mentioned, to ensure that people without access to a computer were also made aware of the process, a direct mailing was sent out early in the planning process.

Project updates and meeting announcements were included in several area newsletters and several newspaper articles were written about the process.

45 DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Upon completion of the draft plan, a draft was distributed for a 45 day public comment period. It was placed on the City's website, and copies of the document were placed at the Public Service Center, Bryant Square Park, Walker Library, and Hosmer Library. Copies of the plan were also sent to the area neighborhood organizations, the Lyn-Lake Business Association, and the Midtown Greenway Coalition. The public was notified of the availability of the draft through an e-mail announcement and a press release. Staff attended each of the area neighborhood group meetings and a joint meeting of the Nicollet-Lake and Lyn-Lake Business Associations to review the major recommendations and explain the process for adoption of the plan.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Issues

This chapter provides an analysis of the issues that were revealed through the planning process. Some of these issues were identified through an analysis of existing conditions. Others were identified through the work of a real estate market consultant, Joe Urban Inc., and an urban design firm, Bonestroo Inc., both of which were hired to help with the planning process [see the Appendix A for the full market study].

DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The Lyn-Lake area draws upon its unique character to attract a wide variety of residents, businesses, and visitors. While a large percentage of those residents are from a young demographic, urban living is becoming an attractive option for many older people as well. National trends indicate an increase in childless households, including singles, couples, roommates and adult family members living together. Thus, it is likely that Lyn-Lake will continue to be a place that attracts smaller households.

These trends indicate a shift away from large families living in urban homes, with the exception being families that have recently immigrated to the United States. With a prominence of smaller household size, there will continue to be a demand for more dwelling units. This has the potential to create a shift in which some renters choose to live in larger multi-unit buildings instead of in older, formerly single family homes.

REAL ESTATE TRENDS

While current market conditions may slow development, Lyn-Lake and the greater Uptown area will remain an attractive location for residential and commercial development because of its proximity to downtown, the lakes, the Midtown Greenway, and a variety of businesses.



A variety of housing types exist in the area

Commercial

One issue facing area businesses are increasing lease rates. Rent rates are indicative of an increased attractiveness of an area, but they can make it difficult for “mom and pop” stores to remain in the area. Lyn-Lake will be directly impacted by changes in Uptown and any potential future development at Nicollet Avenue and West Lake Street. Generally speaking, property values and lease rates are the highest in Uptown and then decrease incrementally to the east along West Lake Street. Any future development at the Kmart site on West Lake Street could alter that.

Lyn-Lake will have to continue to strive to retain its unique character and “brand” as changes occur up and down West Lake Street. With the exception of the cluster of restaurants near the Lyndale/Lake intersection, the retail market lacks synergy, due to the wide variety of destinations and spacing between them. This is an issue that can be addressed through strategic marketing of certain properties and good planning of commercial space.

Residential

As discussed previously, the demographic trends will likely result in the continued demand for high density housing. Much of that may be rental, but for sale housing may also increase from its current share of 20% of existing households.

Availability of affordable housing will continue to be an issue. Land value is likely to remain high and the cost of new housing units will reflect the high land values. In addition, if transit service is added to the Midtown Greenway, there will be an additional increase in demand and cost of new housing.

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

Land uses in the study area are changing quickly. Several former industrial parcels along the Midtown Greenway have been redeveloped into high density housing and several small to medium sized commercial developments are proposed along Lyndale Avenue South.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in early 2007, calls for high density housing along many sections of the Midtown Greenway and policies in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth call for a mix of uses along Commercial Corridors such as West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South (north of West 31st Street). These recommendations are based on real estate trends and historic land uses along major streets in Minneapolis.

The primary land use and built form issue facing Lyn-Lake is determining how land uses will change. While transition to higher density residential development is called for in much of the surrounding area, some industrial uses and single family homes near the greenway will likely remain for some time. This plan aims to guide phased infill development in a way that will ensure continued economic viability, enhance neighborhood livability, and minimize the negative impacts that are sometimes associated with change.

In order to explore issues related to land use and built form the design firm of Bonestroo Inc., was contracted to complete an analysis of existing and allowable building height and do three development case studies. The analysis of existing building height is presented below. It shows that some taller buildings (five to six stories) are found near the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South, two to four story buildings are scattered along Lyndale Avenue South and portions of West Lake Street, and several lower scale buildings exist in the study area. Particularly, along West Lake Street, east of Lyndale Avenue South are many sites with large surface parking lots which result in a less comfortable pedestrian environment.



Existing building shape and height

The Activity Center

The built form around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South creates a quality environment with an almost solid series of attractive facades and new, wide sidewalks and street furnishings. Maintaining and enhancing the “street wall,” a continuous series of building facades, will be important. Gaps in a street wall can cause a less desirable pedestrian experience.

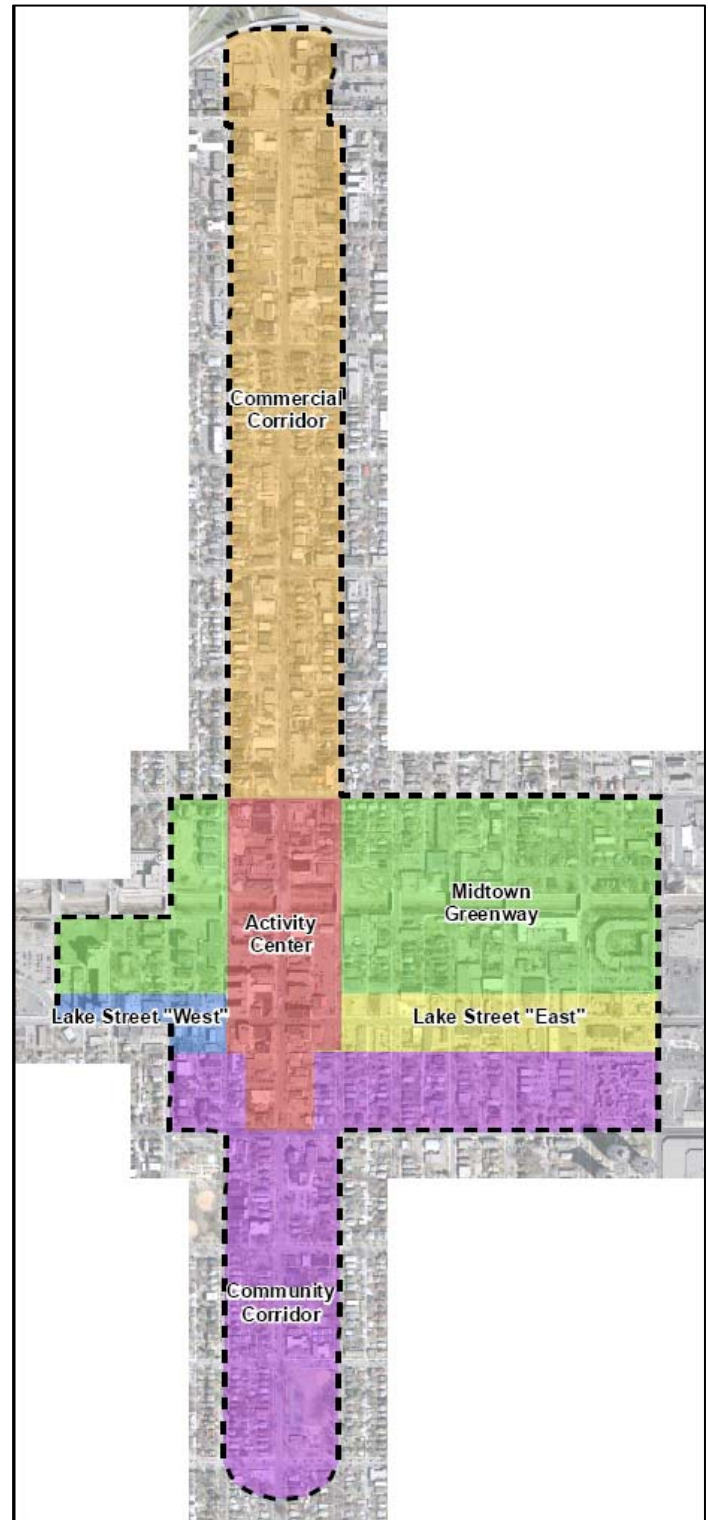
This intersection is the heart of the area. The current mix of restaurants and theaters creates a destination. In order for Lyn-Lake to remain vital and continue to be a destination, this business mix must be supported and potentially expanded. A specific challenge facing the area is maintaining the appropriate amount of parking for entertainment uses while maintaining a walkable environment.

Lake Street “West”

This area is particularly important because it links two strong, but distinct activity centers. The recent streetscape improvements and infill development has enhanced this section of Lake Street, but additional opportunities exist. Promoting land uses that enhance the street should be a priority.

Lake Street “East”

West Lake Street east of Lyndale Avenue South has a more fragmented urban form. Many auto oriented uses are located along West Lake Street between Lyndale and Blaisdell Avenues; this section is less desirable than areas to the west because of the lack of pedestrian oriented destinations. However, the existing businesses do provide valuable goods and services.



Character Areas

Traffic near the intersection of Pillsbury Avenue South and West Lake Street was raised as a concern during a community meeting held to get input for this plan. Commercial destinations along the Midtown Greenway have created traffic congestion on side streets. Traffic impacts should be given special attention when evaluating the merit of future development in this area.

The Midtown Greenway

As mentioned, land uses along the Midtown Greenway are slowly transitioning away from industrial uses and single family homes. New commercial uses have been developed along major roadways that cross the Midtown Greenway like Lyndale Avenue South, and higher density residential development has occurred on side streets near the Midtown Greenway. Adopted City policy in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and the Industrial Land Use and Employment Policy Plan, support the active transition away from industrial use in some areas of the city and the concentration of industrial uses in other areas of the city.

With the change in land use has come a change in built form. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and the Uptown Small Area Plan both suggest building designs that limit shadowing of the Midtown Greenway. In addition, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan suggests creation of a promenade along the top of the greenway trench as part of new development.

The Commercial Corridor

Land uses along Lyndale Avenue South north of West Lake Street are an eclectic mix, as is the built form. There are small shops, restaurants, small apartment buildings, and single family homes. The eclectic mix is something that is valued by many residents and visitors, but there will likely be infill development. Maintaining the existing character while allowing for new development that is appropriate along a major commercial corridor will be a challenge.

The Community Corridor

Uses along Lyndale Avenue South, south of West Lake Street currently transition well from a dense, heavily commercial area to a more typical neighborhood scale. Maintaining this transition and keeping strong pedestrian connections between the residential areas to the south and the Lyn-Lake intersection should be a priority, particularly since Painter Park and the neighborhood commercial node at West 36th Street and Lyndale Avenue South are destinations a few blocks to the south of the Lyn-Lake intersection.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

There are parks in each of the neighborhoods surrounding the Lyn-Lake area. However, other than the Midtown Greenway and the Soo Line Community Garden, there is little open space in the core of the study area. As development is proposed opportunities for the inclusion of small green spaces can be encouraged to create a more interesting and comfortable streetscape. In addition, opportunities may exist to enhance spaces within the Midtown Greenway, particularly with the addition of potential future transit stations.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Land use and transportation are directly linked. As land uses change in the Lyn-Lake area, specific steps must be taken to ensure that traffic and parking are well managed. At the same time, scenarios calling for major improvements in transit service, whether with buses or some form of rail transit in the Midtown Greenway, should be considered. Such transit service improvements would have a strong impact on the area's development potential, transit patterns, and parking demand.

Automobile

Part of the Lyn-Lake area's strength is that it is located at the intersection of two major roadways that traverse the city from north to south and east to west, making the area very accessible. West Lake Street has recently been reconstructed between Dupont Avenue South and Blaisdell Avenue, along with Lyndale Avenue South from West 29th Street to West 31st Street. The section of Lyndale Avenue South from West 31st Street to Minnehaha Parkway is scheduled for reconstruction through 2009. Lyndale Avenue South, north of West Lake Street will also be reconstructed sometime in the future, but Hennepin County has not targeted a timeline for that work.

West 26th Street and West 28th Street are a major one-way pair that cross part of the study area. These streets add to the accessibility of the area, but also create some challenging intersections from a pedestrian and bicycle perspective.

Many of the roadways in the study area carry a large number of cars, but the network functions generally well. Regular traffic management will continue to be an issue, but overall the roadway network is not a primary issue. However, any opportunity to restore the street grid should be taken as outlined in existing City policy. There is the potential to regain sections of West 29th Street that have been given up by the City in the past. An opportunity to reconnect Nicollet Avenue may exist in the future and this would also have a positive impact on the Lyn-Lake area.

Parking

Parking is a major issue for the Lyn-Lake area. Ideally more and more people would walk, bike, or take transit to the area, but many people still drive, particularly to evening entertainment venues. The Garfield parking lot serves the necessary function of accommodating auto users that visit Lyn-Lake and is considered a great asset to the area.

Other public parking exists in the Uptown City Apartments and in the development Blue. However, these lots are less visible and some people are hesitant to use the parking without a full understanding of the ticketing system.

The Garfield parking lot is frequently full in the evening, but has spaces available during the day. Businesses in the Lyn-Lake area can buy “parking credits” in the Garfield parking lot, and businesses frequently take this option rather than supplying their own parking on site. This is beneficial because it cuts down on the number of surface parking lots; however there is the potential for the Garfield parking lot to reach capacity.

When the Garfield parking lot reaches capacity a decision will need to be made regarding how parking needs will be accommodated in the long term. Building a ramp would likely involve additional bonding, which would be paid off through assessments. The potential exists for a developer to build a ramp as part of a larger development project, but this would involve the City selling the Garfield property which still carries bond debt and has dedicated parking credits that would need to be honored.

An additional issue related to the Garfield parking lot is the impact of a potential transit line in the Midtown Greenway. If the Midtown Greenway is chosen as the route for the Southwest Transit Corridor or a streetcar, commuters could choose to use the Garfield parking lot as a park and ride lot (this is more likely if there is light rail connecting to downtown than if there is a street car connecting the Southwest Transitway to the Hiawatha LRT line). This has the potential to either help or hurt local businesses. On one hand it could bring people to the area and on the other hand it could create congestion and a higher demand for parking. The potential scenario of the Garfield parking lot serving as an informal park and ride lot could also have implications for other station areas.

Transit

The Lyn-Lake area is currently well served by bus transit. As mentioned, there is the potential for light rail or streetcar to be developed in the Midtown Greenway. Either option could make Lyn-Lake an even more desirable place for entertainment and urban living. It could also create more demand for development and increase property costs.

If the Midtown Greenway is chosen as a transit route and a station is located at Lyndale Avenue South, an additional level of planning involving detailed design work related to pedestrian connections and public space will be needed.

Bicycle

In recent years bicycle use of the Midtown Greenway has increased dramatically. Making destinations bicycle friendly along the Greenway is more important than ever. The zoning ordinance was recently amended to require that bicycle parking be incorporated into most developments, and a bicycle master plan process is currently underway that will outline policies for future bicycle infrastructure investments.

Pedestrian

The Lyn-Lake area is generally pedestrian friendly, but there are areas that need improvement. The pedestrian environment along West Lake Street has been recently improved, as has Lyndale Avenue South from West 29th Street to West 31st Street. However, north of West 29th Street sidewalks vary in quality and design, and some land uses are more inviting to walk by than others. Hennepin County has not identified a target year for the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue South from West 29th Street to Franklin Avenue, but the construction of a quality pedestrian environment should be a priority when that project is undertaken. In the meantime, as new development is proposed, special design attention should be given to the streetscape design and the provision of pedestrian amenities.

CHAPTER 5: Recommendations

This chapter provides a series of recommendations based on the analysis presented earlier in the plan. These recommendations will be implemented over time. Some recommendations are relatively simple action items, and others are goals that will be reached incrementally. The Implementation Chapter which follows assigns a timeframe and responsible parties to each recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER ADOPTED PLANS

As mentioned in the Existing Conditions chapter, there is existing City Council adopted land use policy for the area in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth. The somewhat dated 1997 Lyndale Avenue: A Vision document also provides recommendations related to the road design of Lyndale Avenue South. These recommendations are being implemented south of the study area.

Future Land Use

This plan refines some portions of the future land use map found in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. That plan calls for commercial development (with a preference for mixed-use) fronting Lyndale Avenue South between West 28th Street and the Midtown Greenway study area boundary. The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan also calls for high-density housing (40-120 dwelling units an acre) along the Midtown Greenway and some medium-density housing (10 to 50 units an acre) along the south side of West 28th Street.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth refined the definitions of medium and high-density housing to 20 - 50 units an acre for medium-density and 50 – 120 units an acre for high-density development. This plan follows the guidance in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth and thus slightly alters the densities found in the earlier Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan where this plan overlaps with the earlier plan.

A second alteration to the future land use map in the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan relates to the area between Colfax and Lyndale Avenue South and between West Lake Street and West 29th Street. Previously parcels not fronting West Lake Street were designated for high-density housing. While it is still the desire to have housing along the Greenway and commercial uses along West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South, these blocks may be redeveloped as part of a larger project in the future that contain both retail and residential uses, and thus they are designated as commercial mixed-use to allow for greater flexibility in design and zoning options. This is also the case for parcels lining the eastern side of Aldrich Avenue South and the western side of Garfield Avenue South between the Midtown Greenway and West 28th Street.

The parcels that make up the public parking lot on the west side of Garfield Avenue South, just north of West Lake Street, have also been re-designated. These parcels had previously been recommended for a future high-density residential development. This plan changes the future land use to commercial with a preference for mixed-use. The Garfield parking lot is discussed in

more detail later in this chapter. This plan recommends the eventual development of a parking ramp book-ended with residential development along the Midtown Greenway and commercial uses along West Lake Street.

West 29th Street

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan promotes the redevelopment of West 29th Street in many locations. Between Lyndale and Fremont Avenues, reconstruction and a slight widening to add sidewalks to the Midtown Greenway edge is recommended, as is the acquisition and reconstruction of the previously vacated section of West 29th Street between Emerson and Dupont Avenues.

This section of West 29th Street is in very poor condition. Once the future of transit in the Midtown Greenway is known, 29th Street West should be recommended for addition to the City's Capital Improvement Program. The design should follow the City's Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, which make accommodations for pedestrian priorities. West 29th Street is an important piece of the street network west of Lyndale Avenue South and provides a great opportunity for improving place-making along the Midtown Greenway and improving public safety.

Between Pleasant and Blaisdell Avenues where West 29th Street is north of the Greenway, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan suggests that it could be vacated in favor of high-quality development fronting the Midtown Greenway. This plan supports that recommendation.

Promenades along the Midtown Greenway

Where West 29th Street does not exist next to the Midtown Greenway and there are no plans expressed for regaining lost road right of way, the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan recommends the creation of a promenade as properties are redeveloped. Since the adoption of the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, several developments have included a promenade, strengthening the value of this recommendation.

Lyndale Avenue South

In the mid 1990s a citizen task force developed a plan for the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue South from West Franklin Avenue to the Crosstown Highway. Most of the recommendations relate to the narrowing of the roadway to create a more pedestrian friendly street. Various sections of Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 29th Street have either been reconstructed, are under construction, or are scheduled for reconstruction soon. However, Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street has not been scheduled for reconstruction, although completing the reconstruction is a goal for Hennepin County.

The goals stated for Lyndale Avenue South between West Franklin Avenue and West 28th Street include: development of visible crosswalks/pedestrian crossings, the retention of parking on both sides of the street, the installation of bump-outs at corners to reduce crossing distance for pedestrians and slow traffic, preservation of existing trees to the greatest extent possible,

improvement of intersections with decorative street lighting, creation of visual connections to the Midtown Greenway, and the beautification of the boulevards. This plan supports these goals and acknowledges that further design development will be needed before the street is reconstructed. Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Works, Metro Transit, CPED, and the community should collaborate to ensure that a future street design follows the City's Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, which aim to create "complete streets", balancing all needs.

Future Transit Station Location

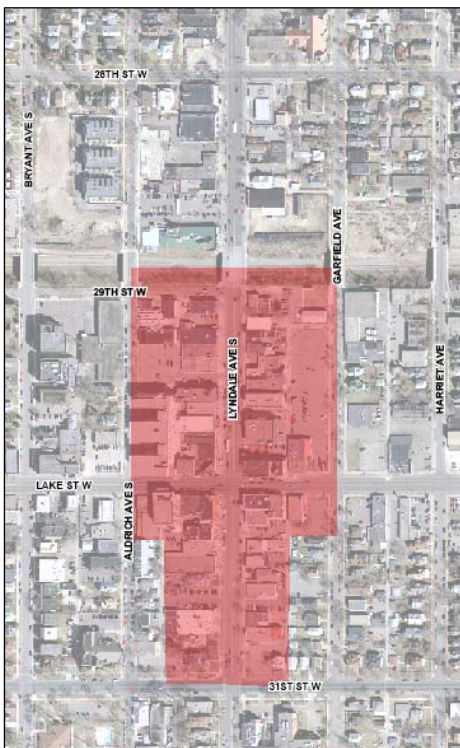
As discussed in the Existing Conditions Chapter, if it is decided that the Southwest Transitway route should run in the Midtown Greenway, there will be a station located in the Greenway trench near Lyndale Avenue South. In the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan, a future station location was indicated by a dot on the west side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge. This plan recommends that either the station platform be placed on the east side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge or that a split platform design is used placing platforms on each side of the bridge. A location on the west side of the bridge is in keeping with Hennepin County's current preliminary engineering for the station. Because the City owns the nearby Garfield parking lot, there is more opportunity to influence transit oriented development on the east side of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge. However, future transit users will likely travel to and from the transit station in the Midtown Greenway from both sides of Lyndale Avenue South so access points should ideally be located on each side of the bridge.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan recommends that, as opportunities arise, the City give serious consideration to buying or otherwise controlling land contiguous to the Midtown Greenway in station areas. This allows for public space and place making at the Greenway trail level that interacts with future development, the Midtown Greenway, and a future transit station. Opportunities may exist for this to be achieved through a public-private partnership.

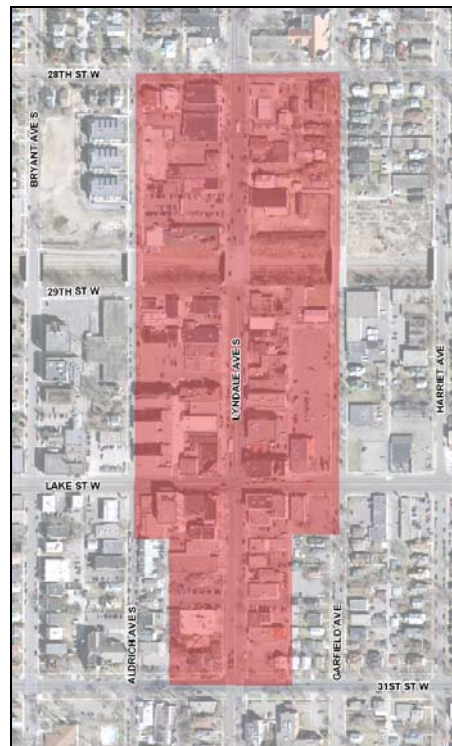
Land Use Designations

In the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth there are several land use designations that apply to the Lyn-Lake area. The area surrounding the West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South intersection is designated as an Activity Center. West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South north of West 31st Street is designated as a Commercial Corridor. Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street is designated as a Community Corridor.

This plan recommends an adjustment to the Activity Center boundary. In the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth the northern boundary of the Activity Center is located along the Midtown Greenway. This plan recommends extending the northern boundary to 28th Street West. This change is being made because the Midtown Greenway serves as a major asset to the area, and more intensive development on each side of this open space and commuter resource is appropriate. Lyndale Avenue South is currently designated as a Commercial Corridor in the comprehensive plan. Commercial Corridor policies call for various commercial use and high density housing along Commercial Corridors. Activity Center policies more specifically encourage mixed-use development and discourage auto oriented uses and call for high to very high density housing.



Current Activity Center Boundary



Proposed Activity Center Boundary

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

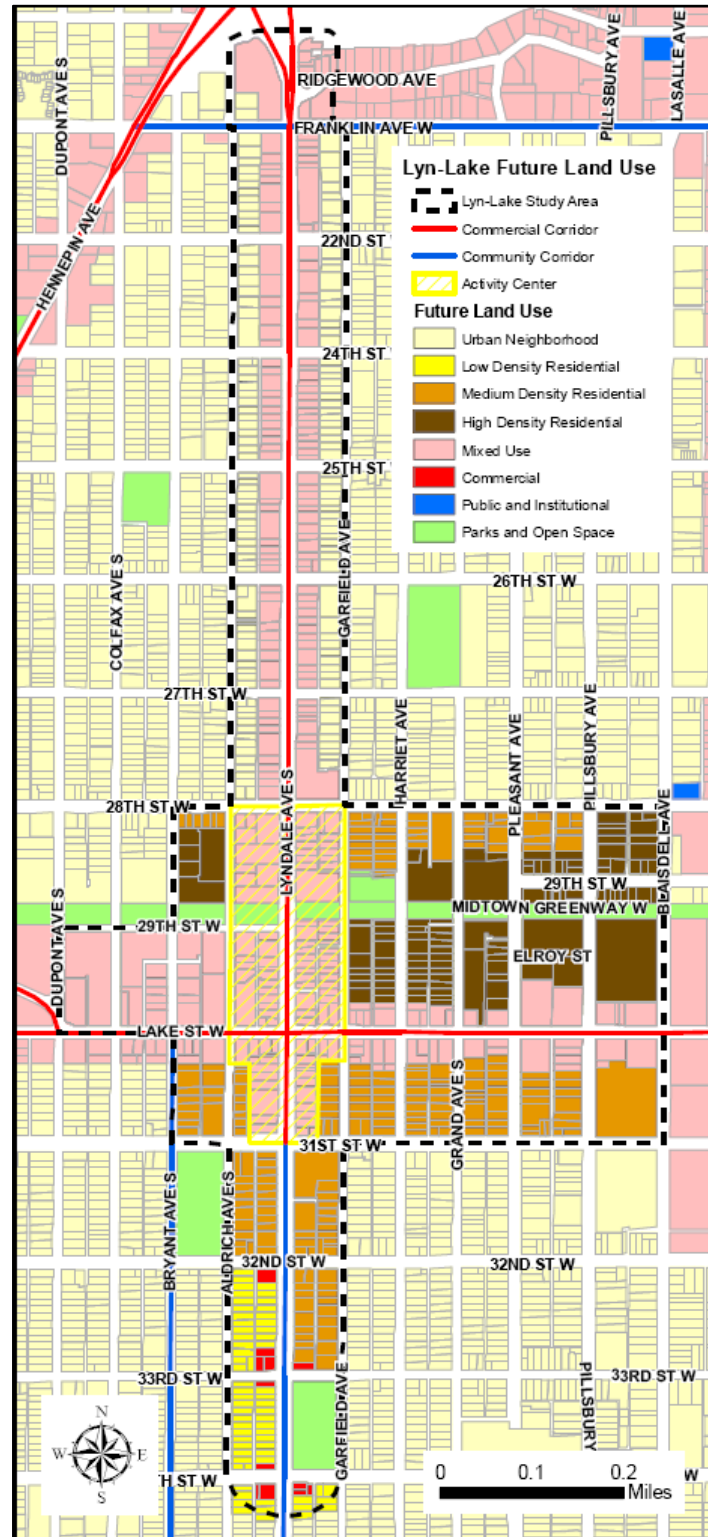
This plan aims to guide phased infill development in a way that will ensure continued economic viability, enhance neighborhood livability, and minimize the negative impacts that are sometimes associated with change.

The future land use map that is part of this document will guide future land use decisions. As with the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan and other planning documents, the future land use plan does not imply that uses will or should change immediately. Rather, it provides guidance for how the area should transition over time. For example, industrial uses and single family homes that are found in the study area are valuable land uses, but plans for orderly transitions should be made as market pressures affect change.

The density ranges depicted on the land use map are those found in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth: Urban Neighborhood, less than 20 units and acre; Medium Density, 20-50 units an acre; High Density, 50-120 units an acre. High density development is appropriate on Commercial Corridors and High to Very High Density is appropriate within Activity Centers.

During the study process, an urban design firm was hired to explore design and land use issues through three case studies. These case studies are discussed below.

Because the study area is varied in character and land use, in addition to a



Future Land Use Map

future land use map, different “character areas” are defined to describe recommendations for different parts of the study area. A map of these areas can be found on Page 30.

Building height and character is discussed in the context of each character area below. However, some general principals apply to the whole study area. Higher heights should be concentrated in the Activity Center, and height above six stories (84 feet) should be substantially set back from the lower floors.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth encourages building heights of at least two to along Commercial Corridors, in keeping with neighborhood character. West Lake Street and that part of Lyndale Avenue South, north of West 31st Street are both Commercial Corridors.

When redevelopment projects are proposed, stepped down building heights, a transition of uses, and buffering to adjacent residential areas is encouraged. In addition, shadowing of sidewalks and the Midtown Greenway should be minimized to ensure as comfortable of a pedestrian environment as possible.

Area 1 – The Activity Center

The Activity Center encompasses the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South and the area adjacent to where Lyndale Avenue South goes over the Midtown Greenway. The current mix of restaurants and arts organizations in this area creates a major destination. In order for Lyn-Lake to remain vital and continue to be a destination, this business mix will need to be supported and expanded. The addition of uses that strengthen the daytime population should be encouraged.

Existing City policy for Activity Centers:

- Encourages a variety of commercial and residential uses that generate activity all day long and into the evening.
- Encourages mixed-use buildings, with commercial uses located on the ground floor and secure entrances for residential uses.
- Encourages active uses on the ground floor of buildings in Activity Centers.
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Activity Centers, such as automobile services, surface parking lots, and drive-through facilities.
- Encourages a height of at least two stories for new buildings in Activity Centers, in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Encourages the development of high- to very high-density housing within the boundaries of Activity Centers.
- Encourages the development of medium- to high-density housing immediately adjacent to Activity Centers to serve as a transition to surrounding residential areas.
- Supports district parking strategies in Activity Centers, including shared parking facilities with uniform signage, and other strategies.
- Encourages architectural design, building massing and site plans to create or improve public and semi-public spaces in Activity Centers.

- Encourages developments to incorporate climate sensitive site and building design practices.

In this Activity Center the majority of parcels have a recommended future land use of commercial, with a preference for mixed-use development that includes residential and commercial uses. Commercial zoning that allows residential uses may be appropriate along Aldrich Avenue South to help facilitate developments in the space between Lyndale and Aldrich Avenues. However, commercial uses should be focused on Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street, while residential uses should line Aldrich and Garfield Avenues. Surface parking and loading areas that support development on the main corridors should be discouraged on Aldrich Avenue South and Garfield Avenue South where such uses could impact adjacent residences.

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances includes a provision for a Pedestrian Oriented zoning district. One such Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District exists around the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South. The purpose of this district is to preserve and encourage the pedestrian character of commercial areas by promoting street life and activity. This is done by regulating building orientation and design, and by prohibiting certain high impact and automobile-oriented uses such as gas stations and drive-throughs. This district should be expanded to the revised boundaries of the Activity Center. In addition, a minimum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 should be added to this Pedestrian Oriented Overlay district to discourage buildings less than two stories tall.

Existing building height in the Activity Center ranges from one story to six stories. During the study outreach process there was general consensus that the existing feel of the area near the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South is pleasant because the buildings come up to the property line creating a street wall and the fronts of the buildings, or facades, have windows and interesting details. The area has a very comfortable scale at the street level, creating a comfortable pedestrian environment. Thus, it is recommended that when new development is constructed the building face along Lyndale Avenue South or West Lake Street not exceed six stories (84 feet) in the Activity Center so that the new construction will fit into the existing context at the street level and not detract from the existing character. If additional height is proposed, the additional stories should be substantially set back from the lower floors so they do not increase the amount of shadowing that would be created by the six story facade. However, there may be situations in which the provision of quality amenities may be a trade off for increased shadowing.



Conceptual sketch of possible future development, Bonestroo Inc.

Area 2 - Along the Midtown Greenway

The character area referred to as the Midtown Greenway covers the land on each side of the Greenway between Dupont and Blaisdell Avenues and from West 28th Street to approximately mid-block between the Greenway and West Lake Street, with the exception of the area that is part of the Activity Center.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan calls for high-density housing along the Midtown Greenway and medium-density housing along West 28th Street in some locations. This plan supports these future land uses since the market for housing along the Midtown Greenway is expected to remain. Commercial uses would be more well suited along West Lake Street rather than along the Midtown Greenway where vehicular access is more constrained.

The Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan suggests building design that limits shadowing of the Midtown Greenway. Stepped back building design and a promenade along the Midtown Greenway are recommended to minimize the impacts of shadowing on the Midtown Greenway.

Area 3 – West Lake Street, West of Lyndale Avenue South

The section of West Lake Street between Dupont and Aldrich Avenues is of particular importance because it provides the connection between Uptown and Lyn-Lake. In fact, this area is part of both the Uptown Small Area Plan and this plan because of its importance to both areas. This plan takes precedence over the Uptown Small Area Plan with regard to land use for the areas in which the two study areas overlap (bordered by the Midtown Greenway, West Lake Street, Bryant Avenue South and Dupont Avenue South). In addition, where the plans overlap the Uptown plan takes precedence with regard to sculpted building envelope strategies. Quality development and public infrastructure improvements that make this area

more pedestrian friendly are key to the vitality of both Uptown and Lyn-Lake. Mixed-use development along West Lake Street on the blocks between Dupont and Aldrich Avenues is encouraged to improve walkability and connectivity between the Uptown and Lyn-Lake Activity Centers. In addition, encouraging people to walk or take transit between the two areas can increase business and ease congestion and parking pressures.

On the block back between Bryant Avenue South (the Uptown Small Area Plan boundary) and the Aldrich Avenue South (the Activity Center boundary), building should not exceed four stories on the South side of West Lake Street and should step down to residential areas to the south. Taller buildings may be appropriate on the north side of West Lake Street, but the potential impacts should be balanced by the provision of street level public amenities

It is likely that in the future the Minneapolis Public School System will no longer need the Lehman Center building (formally the Buzza Building) located on West Lake Street between Dupont and Colfax Avenues. Reuse or redevelopment of this site presents a great opportunity for the area. As with other school sales an open Request for Proposal process should be followed, and any proposal should address the goals of this small area plan and the Uptown Small Area Plan. Specifically, efforts to preserve the building and create daytime population should be supported.

West Lake Street is designated as a Commercial Corridor in the comprehensive plan. Existing City policy for Commercial Corridors:

- Supports a mix of uses such retail sales, office, institutional, high-density residential and clean low-impact light industrial – where compatible with existing and desired character.
- Encourages commercial development, including active uses on the ground floor, where Commercial Corridors intersect with other designated corridors [like Lyndale Avenue].
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian character of Commercial Corridors, such as some automobile services and drive-through facilities, where Commercial Corridors intersect other designated corridors.
- Encourages a height of at least two stories for new buildings along Commercial Corridors, in keeping with neighborhood character.
- Encourages the development of high-density housing on Commercial Corridors.
- Encourages the development of medium-density housing on properties adjacent to properties on Commercial Corridors.

Future commercial mixed-use development is encouraged for the block dominated by the Lehman Center and the parcels fronting West Lake Street between Dupont and Bryant Avenues. High-density residential development is encouraged along the Midtown Greenway between Colfax and Aldrich Avenues because the Midtown Greenway is considered a major corridor through the city, much like West Lake Street. Even though residential uses are preferred along the Midtown Greenway, the entire area is designated as commercial mixed-use to expand zoning options and potentially accommodate larger projects.

The presence of West 29th Street in this section of the study area allows for better vehicular circulation which may support larger development projects in this area.

Area 4 – West Lake Street, East of Lyndale Avenue South

West Lake Street east of Lyndale Avenue South has a more fragmented urban form than other parts of the study area. Many auto oriented uses are located along West Lake Street between Lyndale and Blaisdell Avenues. Because of the lack of pedestrian oriented destinations, this section is considered less walkable than areas to the west. Nevertheless, the existing businesses do provide valuable goods and services.

The future land use designation along West Lake Street is commercial mixed-use, although the market may only offer single use commercial development. No matter what the use, bringing buildings to the front of the parcels and placing parking in back as the current zoning code requires will improve the pedestrian comfort in the area and create a safer environment by providing more activity along the street. Buildings along West Lake Street should be designed with an abundance of windows and uses within the building should interact with the sidewalk. Where appropriate, buildings should be setback to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular taller buildings should offer additional public outdoor space fronting West Lake Street as an amenity.

Taller buildings will be more appropriate on the north side of West Lake Street where more infill development between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway is expected. On the north side of West Lake Street, buildings should be encouraged to provide setbacks to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular taller buildings should offer additional public outdoor space compliant with the Comprehensive Plan's Winter Cities standards as an amenity. If proposed buildings exceed the height of the base zoning, the potential impacts should be balanced by the provision of street level public amenities, such as privately owned, semi-public open space that opens up and connects to the existing sidewalk on the north side of West Lake Street having the effect of creating an expanded sidewalk, public alcoves/plazas, or other public amenities to substantially enhance the pedestrian realm. The resulting spaces should be designed in compliance with Winter Cities standards as stated in the Comprehensive Plan and Plaza Standards, when applicable, in promoting four-season use. On the south side of West Lake Street buildings should not exceed four stories and should step down in height as they approach the lower density residential areas to the south to reduce impacts on the adjacent properties.

Residential uses are recommended to the north and south of the commercial parcels along West Lake Street. On the north side of West Lake Street high-density residential uses are recommended in keeping with the Midtown Greenway Land Use and Development Plan. To the south of West Lake Street, the future land use designation is medium-density housing which is indicative of what's existing on many of the parcels in this section.

As part of the planning process design options for several parcels at West Lake Street and Harriet Avenue South were explored. While the drawings are only concepts and not actual development proposals, they represent the recommendation of having development transition in scale and use from West Lake Street to areas to the south and north.

In addition, this conceptual sketch depicts what a build out scenario along West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway could look like.



Case Study at West Lake Street and Harriet Avenue South
 Created by Bonestroo Inc. (see Appendix E for larger scale drawings)



Conceptual sketch of West Lake Street future development. See Appendix E for larger scale.

Area 5 - Lyndale Avenue South, North of West 28th Street

Land uses along Lyndale Avenue South north of West Lake Street are an eclectic mix, as is the built form. There are small shops, restaurants, small apartment buildings, and single family homes. The eclectic mix is something that is valued by many residents and visitors. Future development should be sensitive to the existing context, particularly the residential uses along Aldrich and Garfield Avenues.

Like West Lake Street, Lyndale Avenue South is designated as a Commercial Corridor north of West 31st Street. However, not all Commercial Corridors are the same, nor is one Commercial Corridor usually consistent in its character. Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street has unique sub-areas.

Between West 26th Street and West 28th Street, Lyndale Avenue South is likely to have more intense development than some portions of the street to the north because 26th and 28th Streets provide quick access across the city. These blocks can provide a transition between the Activity Center and areas to the north.

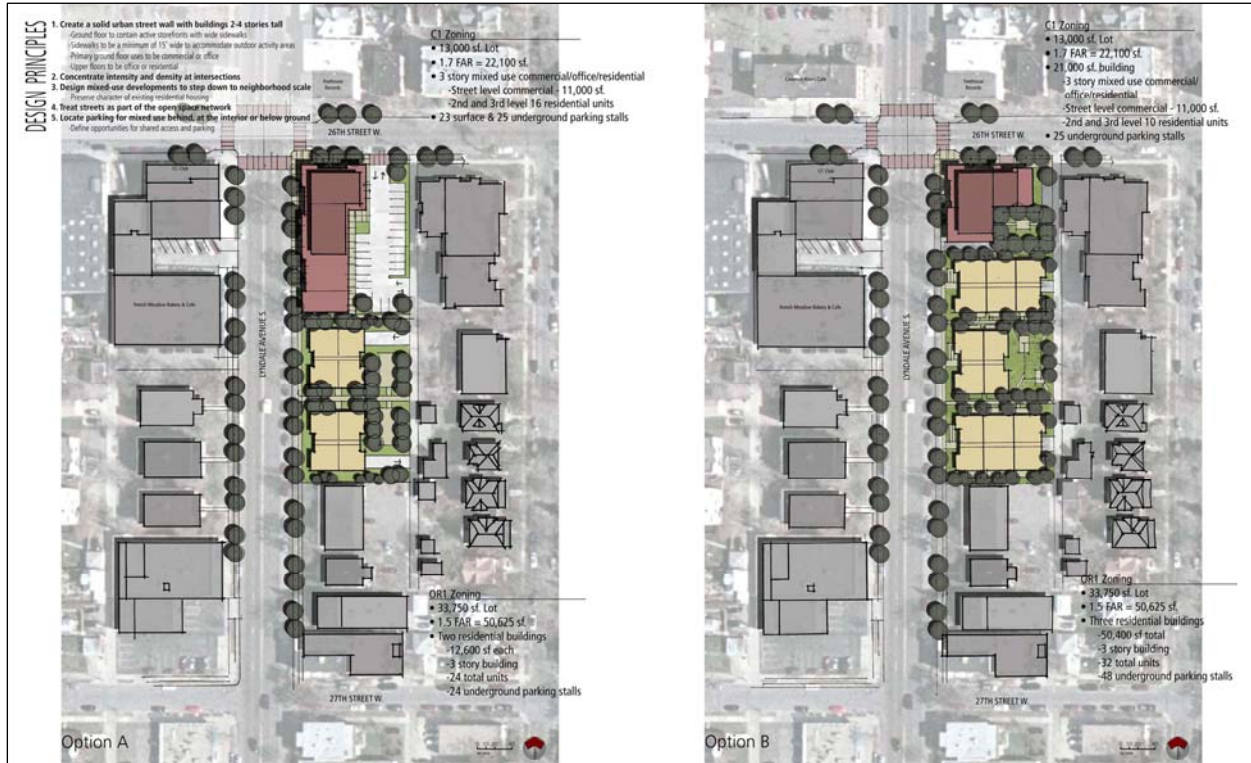
Between West 24th Street and West 26th Street, there are more residential uses than in other sections of Lyndale Avenue South. Since there is a somewhat solid stretch of homes in these blocks, efforts should also be made to preserve the existing fabric and feel of the street, and when possible retain the existing building stock. Commercial uses may be appropriate in order

to allow the existing structures to remain. If new development is proposed, the scale and design should complement the existing residential structures.

Between West Franklin Avenue and West 24th Street there are buildings with larger footprints and more off-street parking. This development is typical of a Commercial Corridor, but as properties are redeveloped access and aesthetics should be improved.

The intersection of West Franklin Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South is a gateway to Southwest Minneapolis, and improvements should be made. Roadway alignments north of West Franklin Avenue make this area uncomfortable for pedestrians and limit development options. This area should be studied in greater detail in the context of the larger connections between Hennepin Avenue, Lyndale Avenue South, and Interstate 94.

The parcels along Aldrich and Garfield Avenues that share an alley with parcels fronting Lyndale Avenue South have been designated as “Urban Neighborhood” rather than being assigned a density level. Urban Neighborhood is a broad term used in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth to describe areas which are predominantly residential with a range of densities. This categorization represents the variety of densities that exist block to block. Densities of 8-20 units an acre are typical in the Urban Neighborhood areas. The Urban Neighborhood designation is not generally intended to accommodate significant new growth, other than the replacement of existing buildings with those of similar density. It is a land use designation that is placed on the majority of the residential areas in the City. This plan supports the desire of adjacent neighborhoods to retain the residential character, and thus commercial uses are encouraged on Lyndale Avenue South and not on Aldrich or Garfield Avenues.



A second case study was done by Bonestroo Inc. for several parcels at Lyndale Avenue South and West 26th Street. The two options above show conceptual designs for commercial and residential infill development along Lyndale Avenue South. The sketch below shows what infill development along Lyndale Avenue S. might look like in the future.



Conceptual sketch of possible future development along Lyndale Avenue South based on Case Study above.

Area 6 - Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street

Land uses along Lyndale Avenue South, south of West 31st Street currently transition well from a dense, heavily commercial area to a more typical neighborhood scale. Maintaining this transition and keeping strong pedestrian connections between the residential areas to the south and the Lyn-Lake intersection should be a priority, particularly since Painter Park and the neighborhood commercial node at West 36th Street and Lyndale Avenue South are destinations for residents in the neighborhood.

Lyndale Avenue South is designated as a Community Corridor south of West 31st Street in the comprehensive plan. Existing City policy for Community Corridors:

- Supports the continued presence of existing small-scale retail sales and commercial services along Community Corridors.
- Supports new small-scale retail sales and services, commercial services, and mixed-uses where Community Corridors intersect with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Discourages uses that diminish the transit and pedestrian oriented character of Community Corridors, such as automobile services and drive-through facilities.
- Discourages the conversion of existing residential uses to commercial uses outside of Neighborhood Commercial Nodes.
- Encourages the development of low- to medium-density housing on Community Corridors to serve as a transition to surrounding low-density residential areas.
- Promotes more intensive residential development along Community Corridors near intersections with Neighborhood Commercial Nodes and other locations where it is compatible with existing character.

The future land use map calls for commercial uses where they exist at West 32nd Street, West 33rd Street, and West 34th Street, but then calls for medium-density and low-density residential uses on other parcels in this stretch of Lyndale Avenue South.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As mentioned in the Existing Conditions chapter, there are several individual structures in the study area for which additional assessment of their historic value is warranted. In addition, the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South has been identified as an area that may be eligible for designation as an historic district. The area that may be eligible for designation is referred to as Lyndale Corners in preliminary analysis conducted by the City's Heritage Preservation staff.

Buildings in historic districts typically have shared characteristics while individual landmarks span a variety of architectural styles and architects. While all buildings have a history, historic designation means that a property has a greater significance to local or national history. The significance may be the way the building or landscape is designed, or the significance may be the persons associated with the building, including owners, tenants, and designers. In the case

of Lyn-Lake the buildings immediately adjacent to the intersection are of significance (the Cromwell Block at 2957 Lyndale Avenue South is already designated as a local landmark).

Specific criteria have been established for determining if an area or building is worthy of local or national designation. A cursory review indicates that buildings surrounding the intersection of West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South meet these criteria, but additional analysis and documentation are needed. This plan recommends that the City engage property owners, the business community, and residents in a dialogue about the value of historic districts and explore the additional analysis needed at the Lyn-Lake intersection.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Interest in additional green space and efforts that promote a more sustainable urban environment was expressed by residents during the public outreach process. Unfortunately, available land is limited. In addition, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board's focus is on maintaining existing facilities, while expanding in areas of the City where open space and park needs are even greater.

Thus, it is likely that additional open spaces will have to be provided with new development. As development is proposed the inclusion of green spaces and plazas should be encouraged. In appropriate locations, trade-offs for the provision of open space, such as allowance for additional height should be considered. Open space that is accessible to the general public should be given priority, but private spaces can also provide environmental benefits and beautification to an area.

In addition, opportunities may exist to enhance spaces within the Midtown Greenway, particularly with the addition of a potential future rail transit station. A rail transit station in the Greenway is an opportunity to create a public, or publicly-accessible, plaza down at the trial-and-transit elevation contiguous with the train station. Development fronting a well designed lower level open space at the train station has the potential to weave together the Midtown Greenway with surrounding area up above it. Elsewhere, a promenade along the top edge of the Midtown Greenway would provide linear open space for mobility along the trench rim and overlooks. On the Greenway's north edge, such a promenade can also provide important connections to stairways and ramps for trail access. It may be appropriate for some developments on the north side of the Greenway to open up at the lower level in some key locations (introducing more pedestrian access on the south side of the Greenway is discouraged because if rail is implemented it will be placed on the south side). Development with well-designed open space has the potential to weave together the Midtown Greenway and surrounding areas.

The Soo Line Garden is a valued open space that has seen more demand for use as development has increased. This land should be preserved as a community garden and opportunities for additional community gardens should be pursued.

Developers are also encouraged to pursue sustainable designs for buildings and landscapes. Designs incorporating energy efficiency measures, enhanced storm water management, green roofs, living walls, enhanced landscaping, and native plantings can add to the character of the area and promote a “green spirit” for the area.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The transportation system in the Lyn-Lake area works generally well. The area is well connected to the north, south, east, and west. While there are opportunities for additional pedestrian enhancements, particularly on Lyndale Avenue South north of West 28th Street, the reconstruction of West Lake Street has provided great improvements.

Automobile

When Lyndale Avenue South is reconstructed north of the Midtown Greenway, pedestrian amenities should be enhanced. Hennepin County and the City’s Public Works Department should engage the community in developing a design that balances all needs. The intersections of Lyndale Avenue South and 26th Street West and 28th Street West are of particular concern and in need of designs that make the intersections more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

The reconstruction and reestablishment of West 29th Street west of Lyndale Avenue South should be a top priority. As redevelopment occurs, vacated portions of West 29th Street should be rededicated as public right of way. Once reconstructed and reestablished, West 29th Street will provide needed automobile and pedestrian connections, but it is currently dark and in very poor repair. Opportunities exist, particularly if transit is added to the Midtown Greenway, to make West 29th Street a key pedestrian amenity.

The roadway bridges that go over the Midtown Greenway are another key element in the transportation network. Many of these bridges are old and in need of reconstruction. It is important to keep these north/south connections open. As the bridges are replaced, they should be designed in a way that provides location identification and place-making in the Midtown Greenway, and within the constraints of the historic district.

An opportunity to reconnect Nicollet Avenue may exist in the future and this would also have a positive impact on the Lyn-Lake area. The re-opening of Nicollet Avenue is recommended in many other small area plans. Although Nicollet Avenue is out of this plan’s study area, this plan supports the reopening because of the positive impacts it would have on Lyn-Lake.

Vehicular congestion on many of the north/south streets east of Lyndale Avenue South such as on Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues can be improved by encouraging commercial uses to front on West Lake Street rather than between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway.

In addition, a variety of near term solutions should be explored to mitigate traffic on Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues. These could include, but may not be limited to, education about and enforcement of traffic laws, additional signage, a shared parking plan, alternative transportation plans, and relocation of commercial uses to West Lake Street building frontages.

Parking

Parking is a major issue for the Lyn-Lake area. Ideally, more and more people would walk, bike, or take transit to the area. However, many people still drive, particularly to evening entertainment venues. The Garfield parking lot, which is owned by the City of Minneapolis, is a great asset to the area and strategic plans for its enhancement should be made.

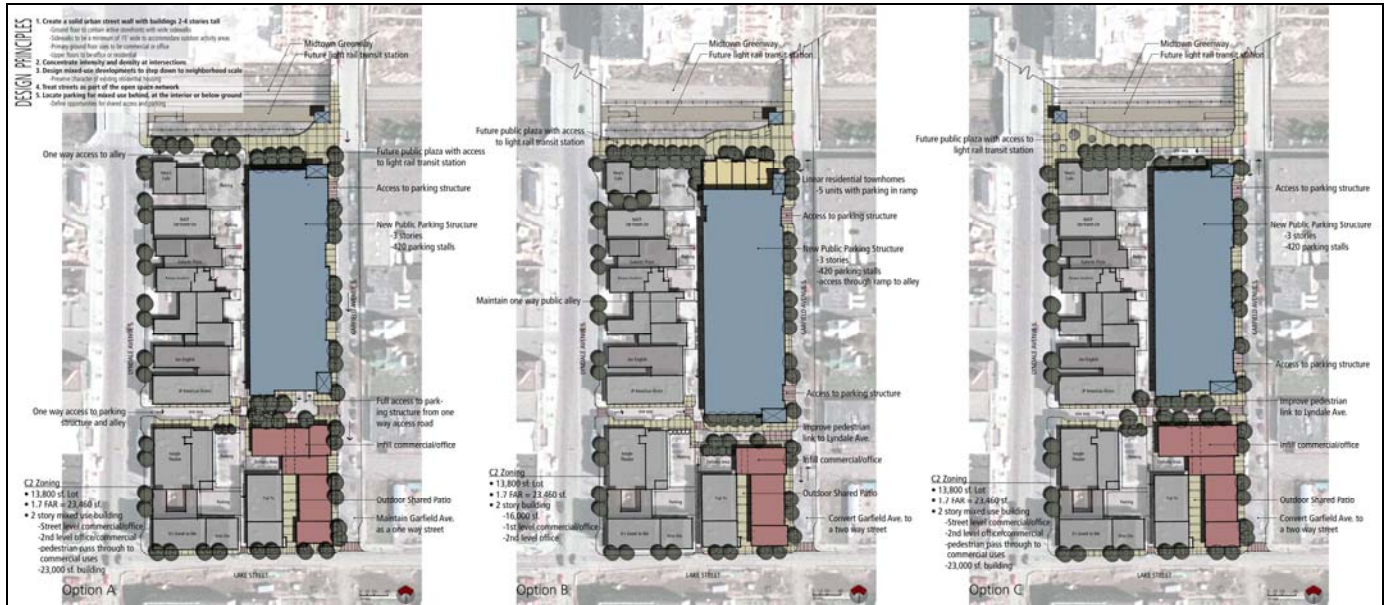
The Garfield parking lot enhances economic development by providing district-wide parking. At some point in the coming years, the lot will reach capacity with the sale of “parking credits” to area businesses. Currently all business within 300 feet of the lot pay a special assessment that pays down the original bonding used to construct the lot.

If a parking ramp is constructed on the Garfield parking lot the following recommendations should be pursued:

- A ramp should be constructed with multi-story retail fronting West Lake Street and housing fronting the Midtown Greenway. This would most likely and ideally entail a public-private development partnership and potentially the purchase of additional parcels. If a ramp is constructed only on the City owned parcels, accommodations should be made to encourage development on adjacent parcels.
- The area that benefits from the Garfield parking lot is arguably larger than 300 feet from the lot, and will likely continue to grow. Thus, the plan recommends analyzing the special assessment area to determine possible new boundaries. Because an additional special assessment may harm businesses in the current economic climate and because more will be understood about potential parking demands after a decision has been made pertaining to transit implementation in the Midtown Greenway, further analysis should be done related to the appropriate timing of the assessment.
- When development occurs access should be re-evaluated. Garfield Avenue South is currently a one-way street running south, and this creates confusion and safety issues. Options for better access to a redeveloped lot could include either: a new access off Lyndale near the Midtown Greenway, alterations to the existing access mid-block of Lyndale Avenue South, or analyzing the feasibility and impact of converting Garfield Avenue South to two way traffic south of the Greenway . The future development of adjacent parcels could affect which access options would be the best, and further coordination with Public Works will be needed.
- The Garfield Avenue South side of the parking ramp should be designed in conformance with the City’s zoning code requirements and provide an attractive façade along Garfield Avenue South.

The Garfield parking lot, in its current form or as a future ramp, should not serve as a park and ride lot for future transit in the Midtown Greenway. Doing so could push out parking resources for area businesses and create vehicular congestion. This City owned parcel can be a key catalyst for transit oriented development rather than simply a parking resource. If the lot is developed as a ramp, a plan for special ticketing procedures to avoid use as a park and ride lot should be implemented.

During the planning process, three conceptual designs were developed for how a potential future ramp might interact with existing structures, the Midtown Greenway, and a future transit station and future development.



Case Study of the Garfield Parking Lot, created by Bonestroy Inc. See Appendix E for larger scale drawings.

There is also public parking under the Village Green Apartments and the Blue development at West Lake Street and Aldrich Avenue South. Despite the fact that these areas are signed as public parking, people seem more hesitant to use these lots. Efforts should be made to better promote this existing parking. Opportunities exist to create maps and flyers that describe the available parking at Lyn-Lake. Promotional materials could be created by the business association and placed in area restaurants and entertainment venues.

Transit

If the Midtown Greenway is chosen as a transit route and a station is located at Lyndale Avenue South, an additional level of planning involving detailed design work related to pedestrian connections and public space planning will be needed.

This plan supports the placement of the rail platform to the east of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge or a split platform on both sides, but all corners surrounding the Midtown Greenway and Lyndale Avenue South should have coordinated pedestrian amenities that allow for easy access to and from the Midtown Greenway to the surrounding properties.

The Lyn-Lake area already has many elements of a transit oriented area. It should be expected that development interest will increase if transit is available in the Midtown Greenway. Uses that support transit, such as office and residential land uses, should be encouraged as should services that potential future transit users would need.

The current bus transit system is robust and serves the area well. However, evening traffic and parking demand can be heavy and encouraging people to take transit to evening events can be challenging. The area business associations (Uptown, Lyn-Lake, and Whittier) and neighborhoods should work with Metro Transit to pursue options for an express circulator transit service that could service the major activity centers. This would allow people to move freely between the activity centers without moving their car. It could reduce parking demand and create new business. Such a service, if successful, could even be expanded to include other business areas such as Eat Street and be used as a marketing tool for the area.

Bicycle

In recent years bicycle use of the Midtown Greenway has increased dramatically. Making destinations bicycle friendly along the Midtown Greenway is more important than ever. The zoning ordinance was recently amended to require bicycle parking as part of most developments, and a bicycle master plan process is currently underway that will outline policies for future bicycle infrastructure investments. If transit is implemented in the Midtown Greenway, it should be designed in such a manner that bicycles can easily move from street level, down into the trench, and on to a train. Bicycle sharing programs should also be considered in the Lyn-Lake area.

Pedestrian

The Lyn-Lake area is generally pedestrian friendly, but there are areas that need improvement. North of 29th Street West sidewalks vary in quality and design, and some land uses are more inviting to walk by than others. Hennepin County has not identified a target year for the reconstruction of Lyndale Avenue South from 29th Street West to Franklin Avenue, but the construction of a quality pedestrian environment should be a priority when that project is undertaken. In the meantime, as new development is proposed, special design attention should be given to the streetscape.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Lyn-Lake will have to continue to strive to retain its unique character and “brand” as changes occur up and down West Lake Street. With the exception of the cluster of restaurants near the Lyn-Lake intersection the retail market lacks synergy, due to the wide variety of destinations and spacing between them. This is an issue that can be addressed through strategic marketing of certain properties and good planning of commercial space. In addition, the business association can continue to strengthen the branding and marketing of the area.

The current economic conditions have been hard for many businesses. In addition, the reconstruction of West Lake Street has created an added hardship. With West Lake Street open again, business should improve and it may be timely for some businesses to pursue assistance with improvements.

The City has two business development programs that are particularly applicable to the Lyn-Lake area. The two-percent loan program provides financing to small businesses (retail, service

or light manufacturing) to purchase equipment or to make building improvements on commercial properties located in designated Commercial Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes (West Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue South are Commercial Corridors). A private lender provides half the loan at market rate and the City provides the rest, up to \$75,000 at 2-percent interest. The loan term is set by the private lender and can be up to 10 years.

The Façade Improvement Program is currently being pursued by the Whittier Alliance and the Lake Street Council. The Façade Improvement Matching Grants program provides building owners and business owners, who are located in areas with an active façade improvement grant contract, to apply for a matching grant to help pay for eligible storefront improvements.

A variety of other programs, including Tax Increment Financing, are also available, their applicability would be dependent on individual site proposals.

HOUSING

Availability of affordable housing will continue to be an issue. Land value is likely to remain high and the cost of new housing units will reflect the high land values. In addition, if transit service is added to the Midtown Greenway, there will be an additional increase in demand and cost for new housing. Increasing density (providing a variety of unit sizes) and providing transit access are two ways to provide more affordable living options without direct public subsidization.

As with business development, the City does manage a variety of grants and programs that can assist with the development of affordable housing. Many of these funds are dedicated to areas that are more impacted by blight and in more need of public funds to stabilize a neighborhood. However, developers are provided with incentives such as density bonuses for providing affordable units. In addition, any City assisted housing project of ten or more units must keep twenty percent of the units affordable to households earning 50% or less of the median metro-area income. Developers are encouraged to pursue these options to provide more affordable units in areas like Lyn-Lake.

SUMMARY

These recommendations represent a guide for future development and a series of steps that can be taken to better the Lyn-Lake area.

At the beginning of the planning process a vision statement and several guiding principles were outlined:

The Lyn-Lake area highly values its independent and diverse business mix. This colorful destination will be supported and enhanced by encouraging the continued development of a clean, dense, and vibrant district. Lyn-Lake's diversity and urban character is valued; it will continue to be an artsy enclave that serves as a home to a diverse population. It will continue to be a place where people choose to walk, bike, and take transit to enjoy all that the area has to offer.

Principles that guide this plan include:

- Maintain and grow an independent and diverse business mix.
- Promote a clean, safe, pedestrian friendly urban environment.
- Maintain and cultivate a residential and commercial identity that is uniquely Lyn-Lake.
- Support a dense environment with housing options for a variety of incomes and lifestyles.
- Encourage incremental greening through the development of small urban green spaces and environmentally sensitive design.
- Balance the needs of automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travelers while recognizing the exceptional nearby amenities of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and the Midtown Greenway.
- Continue to plan for the parking needs of area businesses, residents, and visitors while balancing the need for a walkable, well developed area.

These recommendations can make this vision and these principles a reality. In the following chapter the recommendations will be summarized and timelines and responsible parties associated with them.

CHAPTER 6: Implementation

The following chapter outlines an implementation methodology for the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan and offers how the recommendations might be realized and when. After adoption by the City Council the plan will become part of the City's comprehensive plan.

While many of the implementation strategies will be the responsibility of the City, others will take cooperative effort over time. The future land use plan will be implemented incrementally over time as development is proposed. However, the City is required by law to have zoning be in keeping with adopted plans, so a City initiated rezoning study will likely occur. The rezoning study will involve a separate public involvement process, but will be based on this plan and other adjacent plans.

Recommendation	Responsible parties	Time Frame
<i>Land Use</i>		
Continue to encourage promenades along the Greenway as part of new development. (Page 37)	CPED	As opportunities arise
The City should give serious consideration to buying or otherwise controlling land contiguous to the Midtown Greenway in station areas in order to allow for public space that interacts with future development, the Midtown Greenway, and a future transit station. (Page 38)	CPED	As opportunities arise
Extend the northern boundary of the Activity Center defined in the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth to West 28 th Street. (Page 39)	CPED	0-5 years
Encourage land uses that expand the daytime population. (Page 41)	CPED, business community, neighborhood groups	As opportunities arise
Commercial uses should be focused on Lyndale Avenue South and West Lake Street, and residential uses should line Aldrich and Garfield Avenues and Midtown Greenway (except where it goes under Lyndale Avenue S.) (Page 42)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
The boundaries of the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay should be extended to the revised boundaries of the Activity Center. (Page 42)	CPED	0-5 years
A minimum Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 should be added to this Pedestrian Oriented Overlay. (Page 42)	CPED	0-5 years

Taller buildings should be concentrated in the Activity Center, and height above four stories should be substantially set back from the lower floors. (Page 41)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
When redevelopment projects are proposed, stepped down building heights, a transition of uses, and buffering to adjacent residential areas is encouraged. In addition, shadowing of sidewalks and the Midtown Greenway should be minimized to ensure as comfortable of a pedestrian environment as possible. (Page 41)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
When new development is constructed the building face along Lyndale Avenue South or West Lake Street not exceed four stories in the Activity Center so that the new construction will fit into the existing context at the street level and not detract from the existing character. If additional height is proposed, the additional stories should be substantially set back from the lower floors so they do not increase the amount of shadowing that would be created by the four story facade. However, there may be situations in which the provision of quality amenities may be a trade off for increased shadowing. (Page 42)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
Residential uses should exist along the Midtown Greenway and Commercial uses would be more well suited along West Lake Street. (Page 43)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
Along the south edge of the Midtown Greenway, stepped back building design for upper floors, combined with building setback south of a promenade and/or 29 th Street are recommended to minimize the impacts of shadowing on the Midtown Greenway. (Page 43)	CPED, developers	As opportunities arise
If the Lehman Center is sold an open Request for Proposal process should be followed, and any proposal should address the goals of this small area plan and the Uptown Small Area Plan. Specifically, efforts to preserve the building and create daytime population should be supported. (Page 44)	MPLS Schools, CPED, neighborhood groups	0-5 years

<p>Taller buildings will be more appropriate on the north side of West Lake Street where more infill development between West Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway is expected. On the south side of West Lake Street buildings should not exceed four stories and should step down in height as they approach the lower density residential areas to the south to reduce impacts on the adjacent properties. (Page 44 and Page 45)</p>	<p>CPED, developers</p>	<p>As opportunities arise</p>
<p>Buildings along West Lake Street should be designed with an abundance of windows and uses within the building should interact with the sidewalk. Where appropriate, buildings should be setback to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular higher buildings should offer additional public outdoor space fronting West Lake Street as an amenity. (Page 45)</p>	<p>CPED, Public Works, developers</p>	<p>As opportunities arise</p>
<p>On the north side of West Lake Street, buildings should be encouraged to provide setbacks to create additional space for outdoor seating and other amenities. In particular taller buildings should offer additional public outdoor space compliant with the Comprehensive Plan's Winter Cities standards as an amenity. If proposed buildings exceed the height of the base zoning, the potential impacts should be balanced by the provision of street level public amenities, such as privately owned, semi-public open space that opens up and connects to the existing sidewalk on the north side of West Lake Street having the effect of creating an expanded sidewalk, public alcoves/plazas, or other public amenities to substantially enhance the pedestrian realm. (Page 45)</p>	<p>CPED, developers, neighborhood groups</p>	<p>As opportunities arise</p>
<p>Between West 24th Street and West 26th Street efforts should also be made to preserve the existing fabric and feel of the street, and when possible retain the existing building stock. Small commercial uses may be appropriate in order to allow the existing structures to remain. If new development is proposed, the scale and design should complement the existing residential</p>	<p>CPED, developers</p>	<p>As opportunities arise</p>

structures. (Page 47)		
The City should engage property owners, the business community, and residents in a dialog about the value of historic districts and explore the additional analysis needed at the Lyn-Lake intersection. (Page 50)	CPED, property owners, neighborhood groups	0-5 years
Transportation		
Uses that support transit, such as office and residential land uses, should be encouraged as should services that potential future transit users would need. Auto-oriented uses near the transit station should be discouraged. (Page 54)	CPED	0-5 years
Once the future of transit in the Midtown Greenway is known, West 29 th Street should be redesigned as appropriate with a strong emphasis on pedestrian amenities and added to the City's Capital Improvement Program. (Page 37)	Public Works, CPED	0-5 years
Pursue design options that keep the potential future rail platform to the east of the Lyndale Avenue South Bridge to link to development opportunities at the Garfield lot. (Page 38)	HCRRRA	0-5 years
Reconstruct Lyndale Avenue South, north of the Midtown Greenway with an emphasis on pedestrian amenities. (Page 51)	Hennepin County, Mpls Public Works	5-10 years
The intersection of West Franklin Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South is a gateway to Southwest Minneapolis, and improvements should be made. This area should be studied in greater detail in the context of the larger connections between Hennepin Avenue, Lyndale Avenue South, and I94. (Page 47)	Public Works, MNDOT, Hennepin County, CPED, neighborhood groups	5-10 years
A variety of near term solutions should be explored to mitigate traffic on Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues. These could include, but may not be limited to, education about and enforcement of traffic laws, additional signage, a shared parking plan, and alternative transportation plans. (Page 51)	Public Works, Police	0-5 years

Analyze the benefits and impacts of expanding the special assessment area for the Garfield parking lot. (Page 52)	Public Works, CPED, Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Committee, business and neighborhood groups	0-5 years
The development of a ramp book-ended with retail and residential uses should be pursued on the Garfield parking lot. (Page 52)	Public Works, CPED, Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Committee	0-5 years
When development of a ramp occurs access should be re-evaluated. (Page 52)	Public Works, CPED, Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Committee, business and neighborhood groups	0-5 years
The Garfield Avenue side of the parking ramp should be designed in conformance with the City's zoning code requirements and provide an attractive façade along Garfield Avenue. (Page 520)	Public Works, CPED, Lyn-Lake Parking Advisory Committee	0-5 years
The Garfield parking lot, in its current form or as a future ramp, should not serve as a park and ride lot for future transit in the Midtown Greenway. (Page 52)	CPED, Public Works	0-5 years
If transit is implemented in the Midtown Greenway, it should be designed in such a manner that bicycles can easily move from street level, down into the trench, and on to a train. (Page 54)	HCRR	0-5 years
Open Space		
As development is proposed the inclusion of green spaces and plazas should be encouraged. (Page 50)	Developers, CPED, neighborhood groups	As opportunities arise
Opportunities may exist to enhance spaces within the Midtown Greenway, particularly with the addition of a potential future transit station. It may be appropriate for some developments to open up to the Midtown Greenway at the lower level in some key locations. (Page 50)	Developers, CPED, Midtown Greenway Coalition	As opportunities arise

Soo Line Garden should be preserved as a community garden and opportunities for additional community gardens should be pursued. (Page 50)	Property owners, CPED	As opportunities arise
Other		
If the Midtown Greenway is chosen as a transit route and a station is located at Lyndale Avenue South, an additional level of planning involving detailed design work related to pedestrian connections and public space planning will be needed. (Page 53)	CPED, HCRRA	0-5 years
Area business associations should work with Metro Transit and other to explore express service that could serve evening patrons of the area activity centers. (Page 53)	Business community	0-5 years
The business community should continue to work with CPED in exploring business development funds. (Page 54)	CPED, business association	0-5 years
Developers should work with CPED to pursue incentives for the development of affordable housing. (Page 55)	CPED, developers	0-5 years