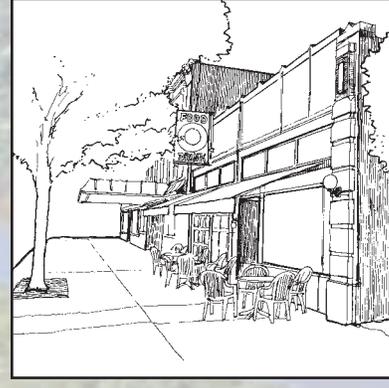
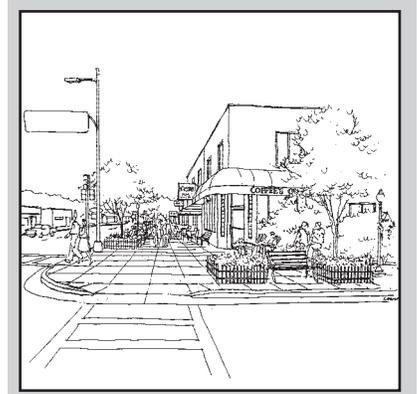


# East Lake Street Corridor Study

Lake Street  
*from*  
36<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Mississippi River







# East Lake Street Corridor Study

**Lake Street**  
*from*  
**36<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Mississippi River**

*Prepared by:*

Close Landscape Architecture, Inc.  
Hokanson Lunning Wende Associates, Inc.  
Dewar and Associates, Inc.  
Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc.

December 2000



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## Project photography

*courtesy of the Corridor Study Task Force,  
Design Center for American Urban Landscape  
and the Planning Team*



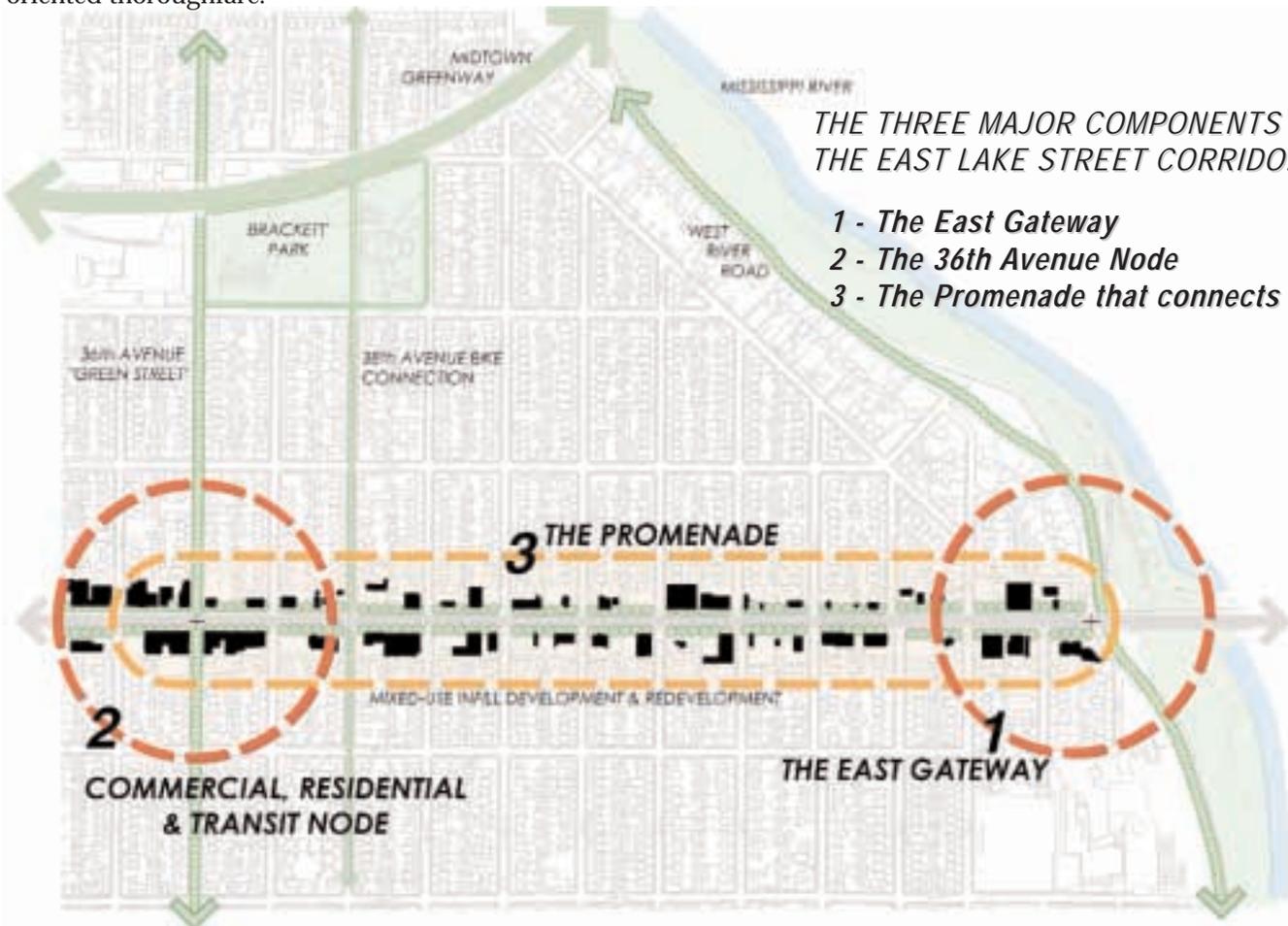
# The East Lake Street Corridor Study - Background

East Lake Street, a mixed-use commercial corridor, is the primary east-west connection through the largely residential Longfellow community. While the street is home to a number of stable businesses with long histories in the community, East Lake Street is also characterized by numerous used-car lots and other auto-related businesses, fast-food restaurants, marginal retail and commercial uses, vacant and underutilized structures of little architectural merit and numerous unsightly parking lots fronting the street. Historically a center for industry, commerce and retail activities, Lake Street remains the most important commercial street in this community and is a dramatic, heavily traveled gateway between Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Emphasizing neighborhood strengths and existing assets, the Task Force's vision for East Lake Street includes public realm improvements, infill development of mixed business and residential uses along the street and at important nodes, the redevelopment of underutilized structures and the creation of a lively, pedestrian-oriented thoroughfare.



Looking east towards the Mississippi River, this view shows a narrow ribbon of commercial uses fronting East Lake Street and residential neighborhoods spreading out to the north and south.



**THE THREE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE EAST LAKE STREET CORRIDOR:**

- 1 - The East Gateway
- 2 - The 36th Avenue Node
- 3 - The Promenade that connects the two



*Longfellow is bordered on the east by the Mississippi River Gorge, which provides excellent access to the river parkway system.*

*The former "76" gas station site at Lake Street and West River Road is a high priority for redevelopment.*

DCAUL

The Longfellow Community Council provided the leadership and direction for this study and continues to take an active role in neighborhood improvement efforts. With support from the Community Council, the Corridor Study Task Force, made up of local residents and business owners, volunteered their time and energy to develop this overall Corridor Study and the detailed **Neighborhood Action Plan** (pp.6-7) and design guidelines proposed to implement specific projects. The Task Force followed a step-by-step approach which invited neighborhood participation and input from City staff to define the specific objectives, visions and action steps needed to continue the work already begun in Longfellow's NRP plan.



### **OBJECTIVES GUIDING THIS STUDY**

- To improve the safety, appearance and image of East Lake Street
- To strengthen the economic vitality of existing desirable businesses; to attract and retain new businesses
- To build a partnership with neighborhood residents and property and business owners
- To build upon the corridor's existing strengths: recognized location, destination amenities, stable residential neighborhoods
- To promote a mix of uses: residential, commercial, recreational and cultural
- To suggest viable solutions for localized parking and traffic challenges
- To encourage both visual and physical connections with neighborhood and regional amenities
- To ensure that recommendations respond to policy and procedural issues: zoning, review and approval process

# Neighborhood Challenges

A number of issues and challenges emerged as part of the neighborhood visioning process and planning discussion. The primary challenge for this community is to actively promote creative, sustainable strategies for new development and other improvements which celebrate existing neighborhood assets, target weaknesses and respect long range objectives.

Toward that end, the Task Force understands that growth brings change and change has the potential to impact neighborhood character and overall quality of life. It is not surprising to have traffic, parking and higher density, mixed use development appear at the top of this community's issues list. Growth and development will certainly increase demands on existing systems, but appropriate, well-conceived projects, and the strategies to implement them, will provide a strong framework for the long term health of this neighborhood.

The Task Force identified the following challenges as the primary issues to be addressed in the "Neighborhood Action Plan" (illustrated on pp. 6-7):

## Neighborhood Character

*Build on existing strengths*

The easternmost segment of Lake Street (36th Avenue to the River) is challenged by its lack of high quality architecture, numerous parking lots and auto-oriented businesses. However, the Longfellow community also has charming residential streets, an interesting mix of businesses and many unique and historically significant parks and trails nearby. These assets, including the close proximity of the Mississippi River, provide a strong foundation on which to build a creative, contextual, community-based plan for action.

## Traffic and Transit

*Share the Street*

With increased development comes increased traffic. This seemingly unavoidable outcome of growth highlights one of the fundamental urban design debates, seeking balance between development and the infrastructure necessary to support it. Of primary importance to the Task Force is the desire to promote solutions for sharing the street: integrating car, bus, pedestrian, bicycle, emergency, delivery, maintenance and other uses.



*Recognized gathering places and interesting architecture along East Lake Street provide solid building blocks for the Neighborhood Action Plan.*



*The amount of space devoted to vehicles along East Lake Street contributes to the lack of pedestrian activity and creates an unfriendly public realm.*



*Parking lots along the street must be treated as neighborhood assets, not left over spaces. 26th Street at Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis.*

## **Parking**

*Provide solutions to meet round-the-clock needs*

The demand for adequate parking facilities to support new development is a primary neighborhood concern. An inventory of existing parking, provided by the Task Force, suggests that a comprehensive parking strategy must include a mix of on-street, off-street (private), off-street (public) and structured parking solutions. Refinements to City parking standards and anticipated improvements to the public transit system will bring focus to this issue as it relates to the Neighborhood Action Plan.

## **Mix of Uses**

*Balance residential and commercial development*

Based on preliminary market information (see page 36), suggested absorption rates and overall neighborhood objectives, the Task Force voiced a strong preference for a balance of uses along East Lake Street. This approach explores opportunities for more housing and additional commercial/retail opportunities in the neighborhood.



*Support a mix of uses including ground-floor commercial with 1-2 stories of residential above. Grand Avenue, St. Paul*

## **Planning Tools**

*Understand zoning and redevelopment district options*

A number of planning tools are available to support neighborhood planning initiatives including zoning, redevelopment districts, special service districts and other options. It is important that the residents and business community, the City Planning Department, City Council members and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency work together to fully understand the implications and impacts for each option.

## **Set Priorities**

*Determine phasing and funding strategies*

The Task Force identified priority projects and a phased approach for implementation as part of the Neighborhood Action Plan. This plan targets specific development objectives and provides built-in flexibility to compete for limited resources, attract the interest of high-quality developers and respond to a dynamic marketplace in the context of long-term neighborhood goals.

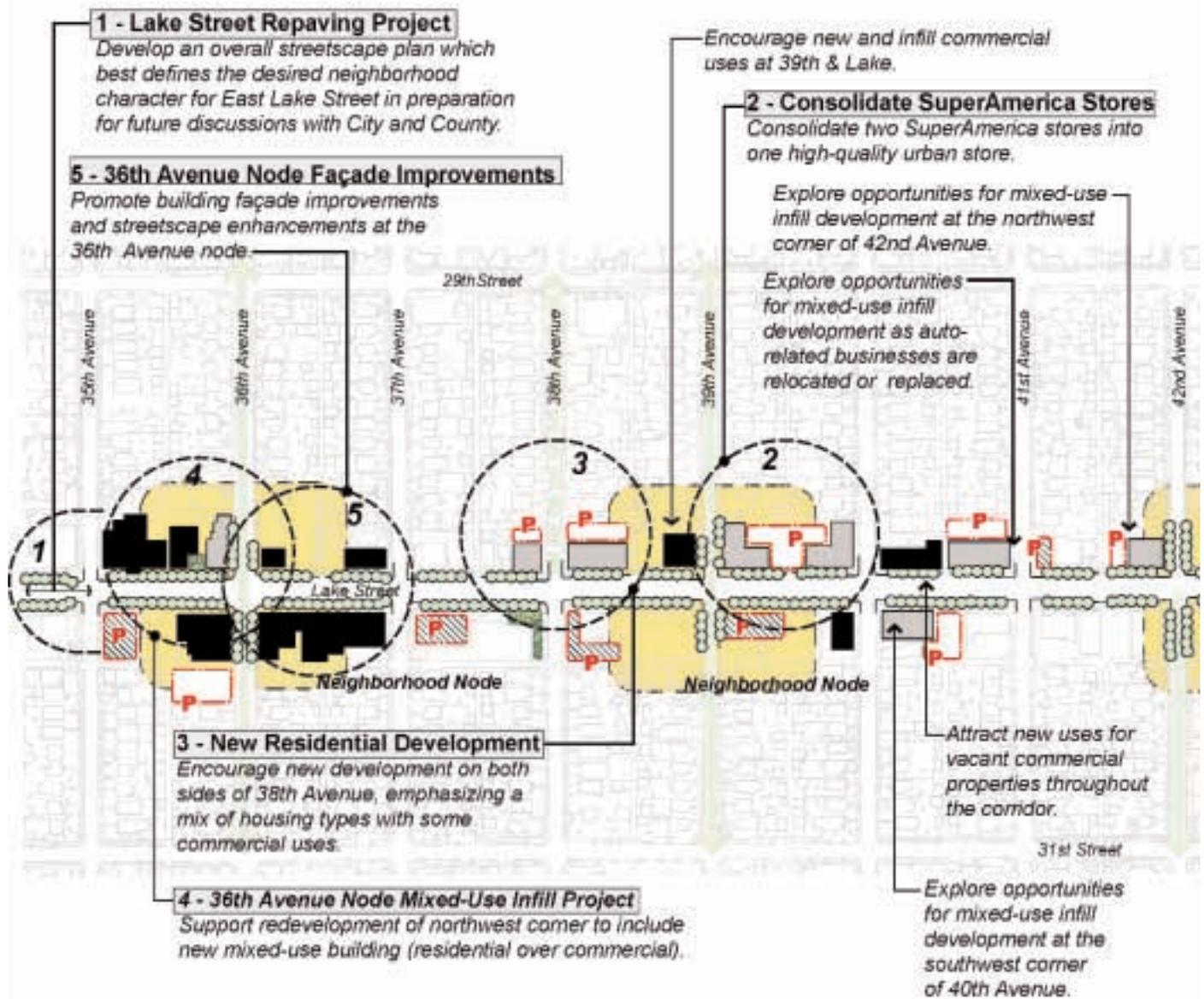
# The Neighborhood Action Plan

This **Neighborhood Action Plan** promotes the community vision and city-wide objectives (see page 3) for East Lake Street in the following ways:

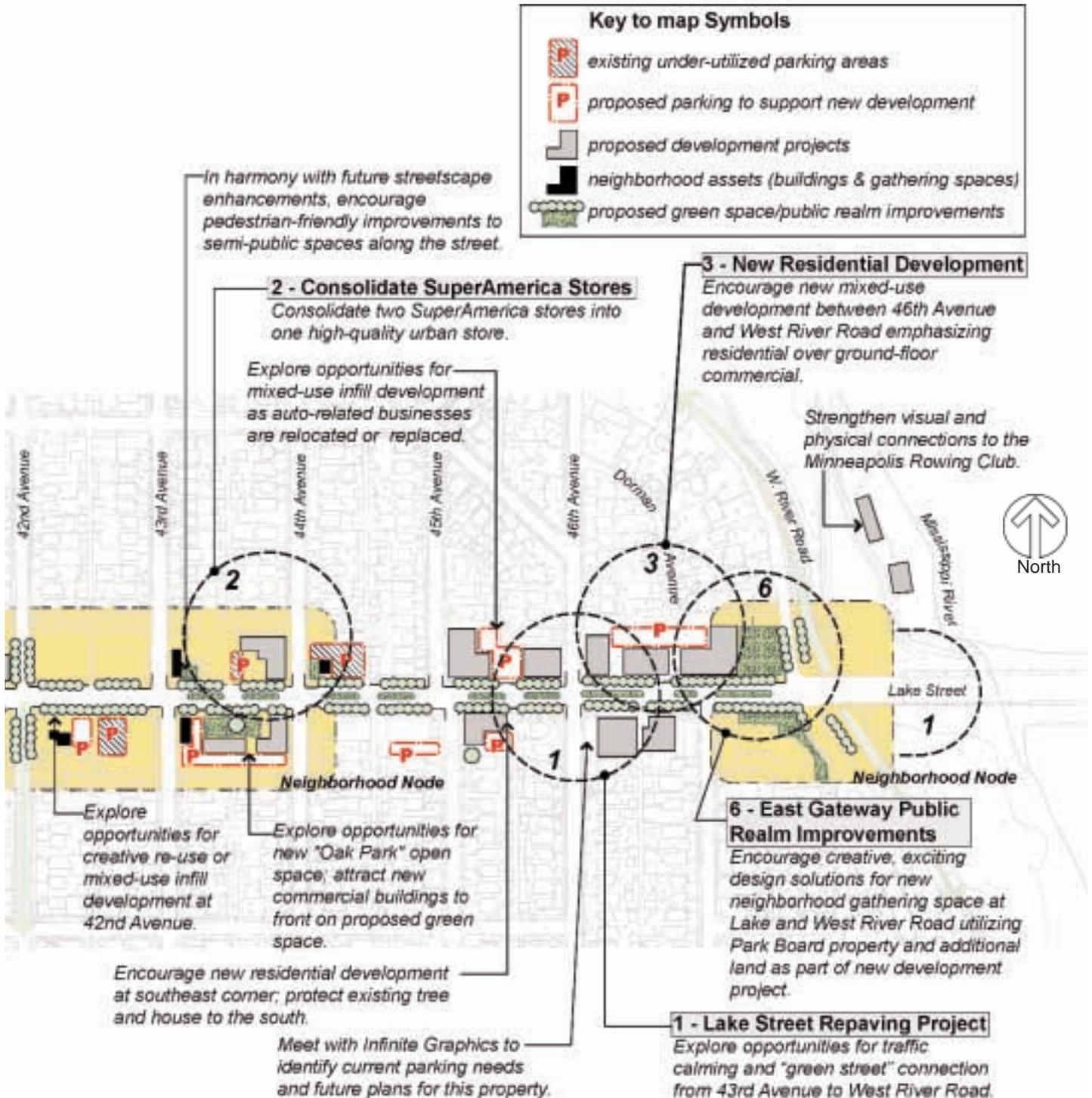
- Highlights specific neighborhood strengths and assets on which to build new development opportunities.
- Targets specific project priorities that will inform or leverage future development in the corridor.
- Provides a variety of short and long-term projects for ongoing neighborhood consideration and future implementation as more pieces of the plan are completed.

The Neighborhood Action Plan also illustrates a balanced mix of adaptive reuse and new infill projects supporting existing businesses while promoting new residential and commercial development throughout the corridor. The proposed mix of uses includes:

- 200 - 300 new housing units
- potential for 30,000 - 60,000 square feet of new commercial space to be developed over the next several decades. A summary of neighborhood assets, priority projects and additional development opportunities can be found on pages 8 - 13.



The Task Force supports the idea that new housing will top the list of priority projects, based on the assumption that more residents and increased activity in the neighborhood will lead to new, neighborhood oriented retail and commercial development.



# Neighborhood Assets - *Build on Existing Strengths*

Clearly, redevelopment along East Lake Street must be founded on, and integrated with, existing neighborhood strengths and recognizable assets. The contextual nature of city building demands a thoughtful approach that celebrates the positive physical attributes and perceptual qualities of where people live and the things that attracted them to this neighborhood in the first place. Toward that end, the Neighborhood Action Plan (pp 6-7) identifies the following strengths and assets as the basic building blocks from which various neighborhood nodes and gathering places will be developed.

## **Lake Street**

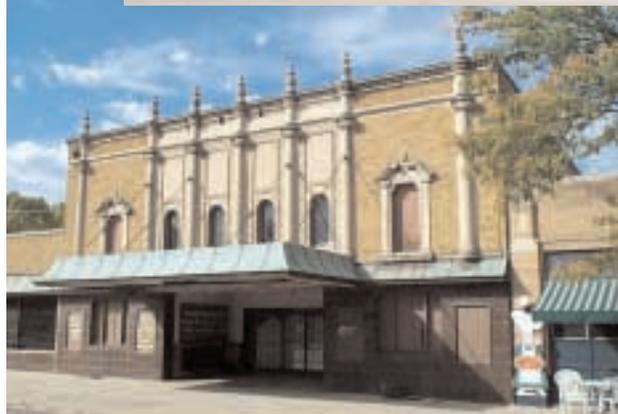
Thinking about Lake Street as an active, richly textured public promenade, inviting for pedestrians and equally interesting for automobiles, has been a primary focus for this study from the beginning. This widely recognized transit and transportation route currently provides a strong link between St. Paul, the Mississippi River and numerous Minneapolis neighborhoods to the west. In this capacity, Lake Street not only serves the Longfellow Community as a local connector, but also provides a unique opportunity to transform this existing asset into a public gathering place, cultural 'canvas' and image-maker for this neighborhood.

## **Significant Buildings**

Although East Lake Street has a reputation for a somewhat modest architectural style related to the mix of existing service and convenience businesses, there are several significant buildings worthy of preservation and enhancement. Of these, the Lake Street Garage, Victory Christian Center (both on the 3500 block), 3927-31 East Lake (currently Video Lease) and Dragon City (4301 East Lake) all have merit. In addition, future façade improvements and other neighborhood enhancement programs should be considered for many buildings near 36th Avenue: East Lake Electronics and its adjacent storefronts southwest of 36th Avenue; River Lake Hardware, Popeye's bar and several adjacent storefronts southeast of 36th Avenue; and the barber shop, jeweler and dentist's office at 37th Avenue. The Longfellow Community Council has contributed over \$430,000 in loans and grants to Lake Street business and property owners in the past 5 years and will continue to explore partnership opportunities in the corridor.



*The eastern segment of Lake Street -- a well-known Minneapolis main street -- is blessed with wide sidewalks, many active businesses serving neighborhood needs and connections to area recreational amenities.*



*Victory Christian Center, BOTTOM, and 3927-31 East Lake are two notable buildings along this segment of Lake Street.*



### ***Recognized Gathering Places***

Every neighborhood has its own, locally recognized places to meet, to get a cup of coffee, to buy a newspaper or to simply participate in the many shared experiences of daily life - East Lake Street is no exception. Certainly a trip to Dairy Queen (at 44th Avenue) is a regular occurrence here, also a visit to the Blue Moon (39th Ave.), White Castle or the Lake Street Garage (36th Ave.). Several restaurants and taverns, including Molly Quinn's (43rd Ave.), Dragon City and El Norteño (40th Ave.), add to the variety of choices along Lake Street. Food and drink are not the only catalyst for neighborhood activities. For example, the mix of businesses at 36th Avenue offers local goods and services as part of this important transit crossroads and neighborhood node.

### ***Local and Regional Amenities***

The variety of local and regional amenities within and adjacent to the East Lake Street corridor include the following:

- The unique relationship between Lake Street and the Mississippi River Gorge encourages improved physical and visual connections, sites for interpretation and environmental education, public art opportunities and other links to this incredible resource.
- The lighting and materials used along the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge not only bring variety, color and texture to this gateway, but also suggest a palette and rhythm of streetscape elements to be repeated or complemented within the rest of the corridor.
- The Rowing Club, and its new facility, invites a much stronger visual and physical connection from street level activities down to the river's edge.
- The world-renowned system of parks, trails and open space along West River Road provide close-in recreational amenities for area residents and bring thousands of visitors to this unique region each year.
- The proposed Midtown Greenway Trail will provide off-street connections to regional attractions and shopping areas for cyclists, joggers, rollerbladers and other trail users.
- And finally, the Longfellow community has three neighborhood parks, close proximity to Minnehaha Park, six elementary schools, one middle school, two public high schools and one private school in the area.



Popular East Lake Street gathering spots include Dairy Queen and the Lake Street Garage, ABOVE, as well as the Blue Moon Coffee Cafe and Molly Quinn's.



LEFT, c. 1910



The Mississippi River gorge and its many natural and recreational amenities are tremendous assets for the neighborhood and the region.

# Priority Projects - *Catalysts for Neighborhood Action*

The Neighborhood Action Plan (pp. 6-7) includes a variety of projects and initiatives targeted for both immediate action and longer term consideration. To put this plan into motion, the Task Force identified several projects which are essential to inform and direct development activities along this segment of East Lake Street. Together, these projects represent thoughtful approaches for new infill housing, local service-business opportunities, additional parks, open space, transit, traffic improvements and streetscape enhancements.

## **1** *Lake Street Repaving Project Streetscape Enhancement*

With funding from the Federal TEA-21 program, the City and County have joined forces to proceed with the repaving of Lake Street from Lyndale Avenue to West River Road. Along with the repaving of the street itself, additional monies have been identified specifically for streetscape enhancements - improvements to the public realm. To be ready for repaving from 27th Avenue to the River, scheduled for 2003, the Task Force has provided a description of preferred streetscape components and more specific guidelines to strengthen neighborhood character and identity.



**1** *Character sketch showing potential streetscape enhancements*

## **2** *Consolidate SuperAmerica Stores The new, urban store*

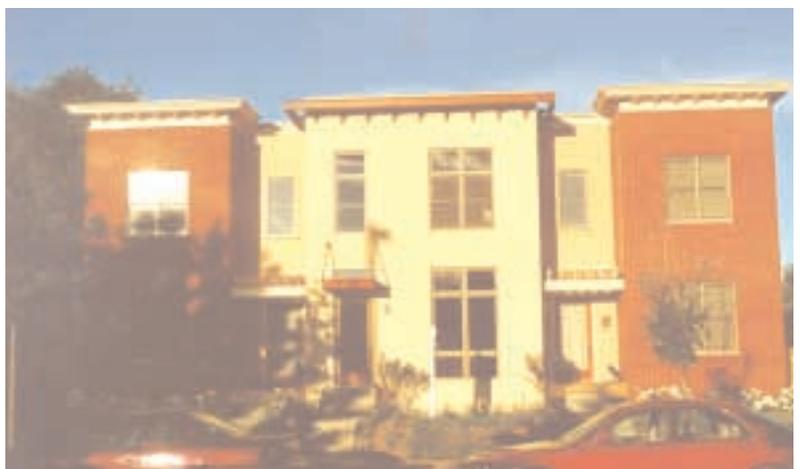
While SuperAmerica continues to be a good neighbor providing a valuable service to this community, the Task Force has placed a high priority on the consolidation of their two existing locations into one, high-quality urban store. This initiative will promote a cooperative environment for discussion, design and construction of a new facility that meets SuperAmerica's needs, is located along the sidewalk edge, and is built in an appropriate architectural style and character with an emphasis on neighborhood fit and connection to the public realm.



**2** *Architectural detail, building scale and location along the sidewalk edge all contribute to the appropriate fit of this new Super America.*

## **3** *New Residential Development Creative mix of housing types*

The Neighborhood Action Plan includes several sites for potential new or infill residential development. Along with the East Gateway project at West River Road, the Task Force also identified potential sites along Lake Street including at 38th Avenue, between 39th and 40th Avenues and at 45th Avenue. Such sites are high priorities for new housing development. These locations provide the variety and flexibility to introduce the desired quantity and mix of unit types along this segment of the corridor (see pages 36-37 for a recommended mix of uses).



**3** *New residential buildings should be appropriate in scale, materials and character*



**4** Any new or renovated buildings should enhance the street. This renovated building is at 6th Ave. SE and University Ave SE.



**5** This node at 42nd Avenue and 38th Street is a Longfellow success story and could serve as a model for improvements at 36th Avenue and Lake Street.



**6** East Lake Street and West River Road.

#### **4** 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue Node *Mixed Use Infill Project (northwest corner)*

The intersection of 36th Avenue and Lake Street has long been identified as a significant crossroads within the Longfellow community. Redevelopment of the northwest corner is especially important to strengthen the visual character, improve the physical scale, respond to transit improvements and enhance the mix of uses at this location. The Task Force encourages the creation of a new building, together with adjacent properties, as part of a more aggressive plan for redevelopment.

#### **5** 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue Node *Commercial District Facade Improvements*

The mix of buildings and uses at this location represents one of the best opportunities along East Lake Street to provide a richly detailed public realm, to promote an appropriate neighborhood character and to strengthen this commercial node as a destination amenity. Together with the proposed infill development project on the northwest corner and the planned Lake Street repaving project, the Task Force also identified this intersection as a priority for additional building and streetscape improvements. The neighborhood hopes to strengthen and expand existing programs to promote façade enhancements throughout the corridor.

#### **6** East Gateway - Mixed Use Development and Public Realm Improvements

In tandem with future mixed use development proposals for the East Gateway property, which should include residential and small-scale commercial, the Task Force has identified the intersection of Lake Street and West River Road as a one-of-a-kind opportunity to promote an important neighborhood and city gateway project. The added significance of this river-edge location demands that the neighborhood and any developer provide creative, thoughtful solutions for building scale, massing and character as well as strong visual and physical connections between Lake Street and the River Gorge, the rowing club facility and the parks and trails along West River Road.

# Additional Development Opportunities

In addition to the priority projects described on the previous pages, the Neighborhood Action Plan also illustrates a variety of additional development opportunities for evaluation as projects get built and the plan continues to evolve over time. These opportunities represent a mix of residential, commercial, recreational and cultural uses including:

## *Oak Park and a "tavern on the green"*

As the centerpiece for new development between 43rd and 44th Avenues, this new public (or semi-public) park space will preserve and celebrate the existing specimen white oak tree as the focal element within a traditional 'village green.' Together with Molly Quinn's and the (potentially reconfigured or relocated) SuperAmerica on the north, Dragon City restaurant on the west and proposed new restaurant and small shop development on the south and east, this block will certainly become a signature gathering space and neighborhood activity node. Some parking should be provided adjacent to the green with additional parking behind new buildings and along the street.



*The existing and proposed restaurants and gathering places between 43rd Avenue and 44th Avenue make this area an important neighborhood activity node.*

## *Minneapolis Rowing Club*

Explore opportunities to strengthen visual and physical connections between West River Road, Lake Street and this newly built, regionally recognized rowing facility. Improving access to this local recreational amenity will support an increased understanding and interpretation of the River's history, its variety of uses, its unique ecology, preservation issues and the significance of this precious resource.



*The Minneapolis Rowing Club is one of many links between the neighborhood and the Mississippi River that should be strengthened. This photo shows the Rowing Club's old facility; a new facility is under construction as this study is in process.*

## *New Commercial Infill Development*

A number of existing buildings or small lot infill sites offer opportunities to expand the mix of restaurant, retail and other commercial uses throughout the corridor. When asked, residents and business people indicated that they would support additional commercial development, provided that such development responds to specific neighborhood needs and promotes the appropriate scale, fit and character described in the development guidelines of this study (pp. 20-23). Vacant or underutilized property at 42nd, 40th and 39th Avenues should be evaluated for potential adaptive reuse or infill commercial use.



*New commercial buildings should contribute to the street and the businesses should serve local needs.*



As with many other restaurants in Minneapolis, outdoor seating should contribute to the overall street activity and help to create an inviting pedestrian realm.



### *Improvements to Semi-Public Spaces*

Outdoor spaces associated with recognized neighborhood destinations must contribute to the overall energy and visual character of important activity nodes. This could be accomplished by physically opening up to the street or providing visual links to the street from outdoor eating spaces as well as improving the edges of such spaces by introducing brick piers, iron fencing and layered plantings.

### *More Housing Opportunities*

In addition to the priority residential projects already discussed, the Neighborhood Action Plan also identifies a number of small, infill housing opportunities. For example, the vacant lot on the southeast corner of 45th Avenue and Lake Street, and the potential SuperAmerica consolidation, could add a mix of housing types and price ranges and provide a built-in flexibility to give this neighborhood the ability to respond to changing market demands and long-term planning objectives for East Lake Street. As the number of people living along East Lake Street increases, so will the potential for commercial development which will in turn be guided by this and other neighborhood-generated studies.



"Weatherdance," a public art installation by Andrea Myklebust and Stanton G. Sears.

### *Public Art and Cultural Celebration*

Public art is recognized as a major contributor to the urban environment, and has traditionally set great cities and neighborhoods above those that are merely average. There are many opportunities for public art to take a role in the character and function of the area, either integrated throughout public realm improvements (transit shelters and stops, bicycle facilities and informational signage), private developments, or as stand-alone pieces. Public art, like all community initiatives, should celebrate and invite diversity. It can be permanent, such as a sculptural bench, or it can be ephemeral, such as a parade, outdoor music or plays. Public art in this corridor should express the character of the community itself.

# East Lake Street Guidelines - An Overview

The Neighborhood Action Plan is intended to be a framework, within which creative design can and should occur. The following detailed development guidelines were prepared to further define the character, purpose and structure of the plan and the various projects proposed for development. In all cases, the guidelines must be applied in harmony with other existing neighborhood plans, programs and initiatives supporting desired objectives for East Lake Street.

These guidelines serve a number of different functions depending upon the intended audience, including developers, designers, the arts community, grant writers, marketing professionals, real estate representatives, investors, lenders, neighborhood residents and business owners. Their primary purpose, however, is to clarify and direct innovative solutions for streetscape improvements, best site development practices and high quality architecture.

## *Streetscape (pp. 16-19)*

Streetscape guidelines define the visual character and physical improvements for East Lake Street in advance of the City/County repaving project. The goal is to foster a safe and interesting public realm to invite pedestrian activity, promote traffic calming, increase transit use and encourage community gathering. Street trees, lighting and fencing provide the backbone for streetscape improvements. Added detail, such as special pavements, street furniture, public art and layered plantings will highlight specific nodes or uses. Materials, colors and the intensity of improvements must be consistent with the rest of the city, yet reflect the context of the surrounding neighborhood - the residential character, craftsmanship, quality and variety of detail to inform design decisions.



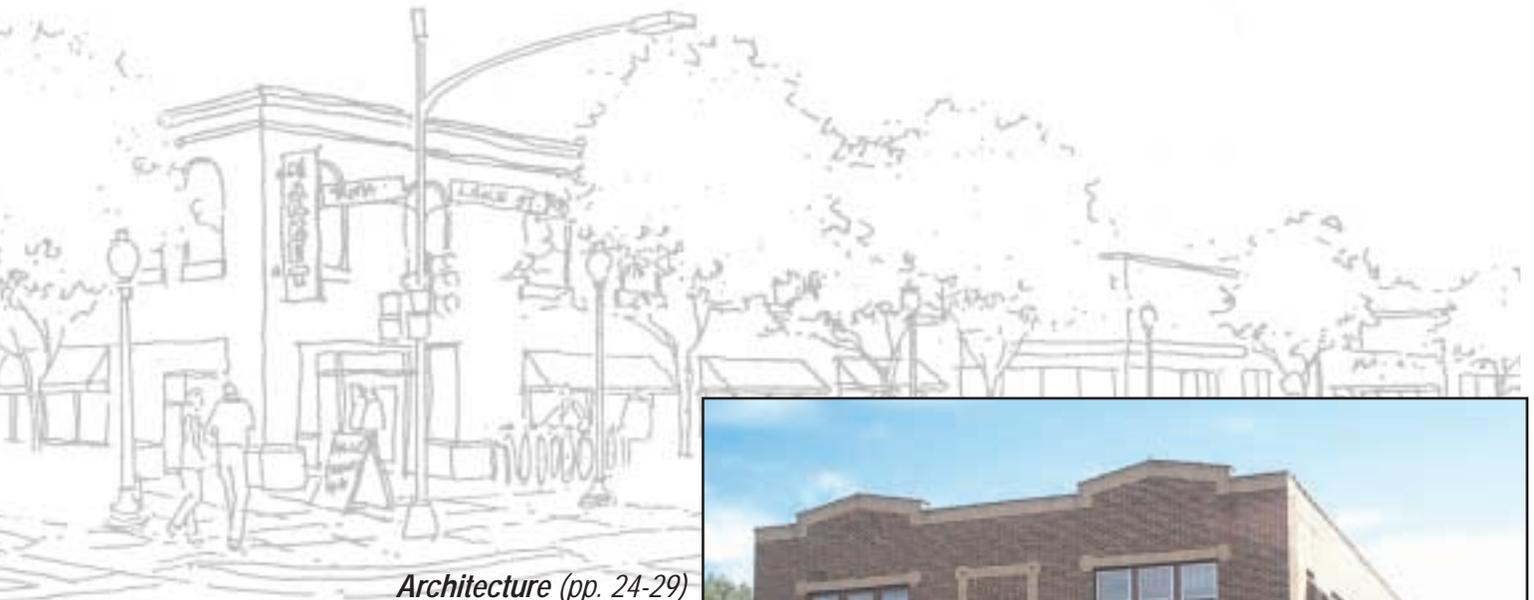
*Richly-textured and inviting streetscapes encourage pedestrian activity and economic vitality.*



*This new car repair shop on Grand Avenue in St. Paul demonstrates that service-oriented businesses can be designed and located to strengthen the public realm.*

### *Site Development (pp. 20-23)*

Site development guidelines bring definition to the interface between the building edge and the variety of public spaces that characterize this neighborhood. These guidelines imply a strong link between architecture and site - how buildings define or are defined by the spaces around them, and the visual and physical connections to the public realm. Issues related to density, land use, safety and security, access, public space, and views inform decisions about building placement, scale and massing.



### *Architecture (pp. 24-29)*

Architectural guidelines describe the character, elements and desired direction for design and construction of buildings proposed in the Neighborhood Plan. These guidelines address new construction (both residential and commercial), adaptive re-use of existing structures and a variety of façade improvement and paint-up/fix-up initiatives.



*Adaptive reuse and new infill development must respond to appropriate examples of scale, massing, materials and detailing.*

# Streetscape Guidelines - *Create More Inviting Streets*

The quality and intensity of streetscape improvements have both aesthetic and financial implications for the community. There are two options for consideration: first, the neighborhood can use standard elements (as defined by the City of Minneapolis), which require no special funding for maintenance and replacement, or the neighborhood can propose non-standard or custom elements, which require a Special Services District to support maintenance and replacement costs. Within such a district, costs beyond City standards are funded through assessments made to non-residential properties.



City of Minneapolis standard "acorn" fixture with single globe, LEFT, and double globe, MIDDLE, and a Minnehaha Park custom fixture, RIGHT.



## Lighting

Lighting includes pedestrian-scale lighting (the familiar 'acorn' or 'lantern' globes atop 12' posts) and other seasonal, special event related and/or architectural lighting. Pedestrian-scale lighting will enhance the safety and attractiveness of East Lake Street and is primary to securing the street for everyone's use.

### Applications

- ensure that the type, spacing and quality of fixtures will provide consistent lighting levels along the street
- minimize glare onto adjacent properties and into vehicular traffic on the street
- use City of Minneapolis standard fixtures and posts at recommended spacing throughout the corridor
- increase lighting levels at primary nodes, special use areas and street intersections by using a combination of multi-headed fixtures and tighter spacing

## Planting

Planting includes street trees, flowering trees and other landscape materials along the public right-of-way such as flowers, grasses, bulbs and groundcovers. Street trees provide shade, spatial structure, seasonal change and vitality to the street. The primary goal of streetscape plantings is to maintain and improve the 'urban forest,' a significant Minneapolis asset. It is an important consideration that new plantings are given the opportunity to thrive, not just survive; this requires adequate water, air, nutrients, proper soils, a reasonable root zone and an ongoing program for maintenance. Also, provide protection from snow plowing and snow storage where appropriate.

### Applications

- plant trees in the boulevard in line with light poles, or at the back of the sidewalk where space behind the curb is not available
- individual tree spacing should be 30' where possible, although planting trees in groups or in linear openings is encouraged
- refer to the City tree master plan and consult City forester to review selection of appropriate tree species - choose trees more tolerant of urban conditions
- include annual and perennial flowers, strategically located shrubs and other types of plantings to provide screening, define space and add variety, seasonal color and highlight important neighborhood nodes or gathering places



BELOW: Wedge Co-op on Lyndale Avenue.



## Special Pavements

Special pavements include textured, colored concrete, stone and unit pavers for sidewalks, crosswalks, transit stops, medians, gathering places and neighborhood connection points. Use of special paving provides an opportunity to express overall neighborhood character or to accent special areas and uses. While standard concrete is often selected because of budget constraints, much can be done with scoring and other creative techniques to improve its appearance. Paving should be kept simple and easy to maintain.

### Applications

- *use creative scoring of standard concrete for corridor sidewalks with additional detail and change of materials at important nodes, crosswalks and transit stops*
- *focus available streetscape budget on more visible elements including lighting, plantings and fencing*
- *explore opportunities to stamp concrete with neighborhood logo or street names to express community identity or provide public art opportunities*
- *work with the City Public Works Department to explore creative options for street crossings including a change in pavements or more interesting striping or marking*



*An example of pavers with concrete banding along Kellogg Boulevard in St. Paul*



*Concrete scoring patterns, outdoor seating, street trees, and signage create inviting streets in Dinkytown.*

## Fences, Walls and Railings

These include metal, brick, stone and other materials used to separate discreet spaces, strengthen the definition and character of a space, and define the edge between private and public property. Permanent, durable fencing and walls (including masonry piers at street corners), appropriately designed to integrate with other streetscape elements, further enhance the public realm. Materials, color and other details add a unifying element to the street; variations on a theme at specific locations are also appropriate.

### Applications

- *select materials appropriate to specific site conditions, land use and architectural character*
- *work with property owners and commercial tenants early in the process to discuss opportunities for improvements on private property including design character, materials, cost, maintenance issues and other concerns*
- *work with the City and County early in the process to discuss opportunities for improvements within the public right-of-way including design character, materials, budgets, schedule, special service district options and other concerns*



*High-quality fencing contributes to the character and detail of the pedestrian's experience along a street. Pictured here is 26th Street at Nicollet Avenue.*

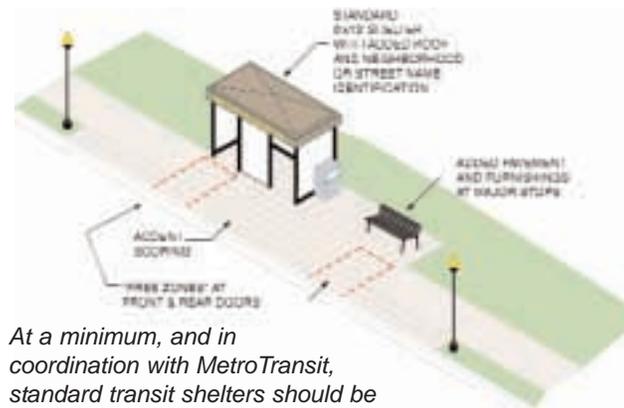
# Streetscape Guidelines - Create More Inviting Streets



Kiosk in Highland Park, St. Paul RIGHT



Even street signs can enhance a district's identity



At a minimum, and in coordination with MetroTransit, standard transit shelters should be added to stops at neighborhood nodes.



Transit facilities and street furnishings can be simple or elaborate.



## Signage

Signage includes directional signage, informational kiosks, event notices, private signs identifying commercial and retail uses. Signage is an important and complex issue, necessary to orient visitors, inform local residents and contribute to the richness of the public realm. But there is also a danger in too many, or inappropriate, signs which only add clutter or visual confusion. The best approach is to use signs where necessary, making a positive statement about neighborhood character and vitality of the street.

### Applications

- signage should not interfere with sight lines or pedestrian travel paths. No pylon signs will be allowed.
- signage should reflect the mix of activities and businesses along East Lake Street
- signage should identify and emphasize neighborhood nodes, gathering places and amenities
- signage should match, or complement, other streetscape elements in color, scale and detailing
- signage to identify private property or use could include smaller-scale signs attached to building walls, awnings and well-placed temporary sidewalk signs
- building signage should promote the ideas of permanence, durability and high quality design. Backlit signs will not be allowed!

## Street Furniture and Transit Stops

This includes benches, trash receptacles, newspaper boxes, transit shelters and other furnishings. Furniture should be used to accent special use areas, providing places for rest, waiting, meeting and people watching. Because street furniture is somewhat costly to install and maintain, careful consideration should be given to type, materials, quantity and location for these improvements as part of a Special Services District. Placement of shelters and furnishings is especially important at transit stops, where sight lines, waiting areas and pedestrian zones must all work together.

### Applications

- street furniture should match, or complement color, scale and detailing of adjacent buildings and other streetscape improvements
- street furniture should be constructed from comfortable and durable materials, including wooden bench slats or powdercoated metals
- street furniture should be mounted directly to the sidewalk or to their own concrete pads, and should be placed out of pedestrian travel paths (benches, newspaper boxes, trash receptacles)
- in collaboration with Metro Transit staff, pursue additional transit stops and shelters, potential relocations and stop improvements, especially at 36th Avenue
- use standard transit shelters where possible: domed roof style provided by Metro Transit and flat roof style provided by Transtop. Explore options for custom-designed elements to emphasize important neighborhood crossroads, including street names on shelters.

## Public Art

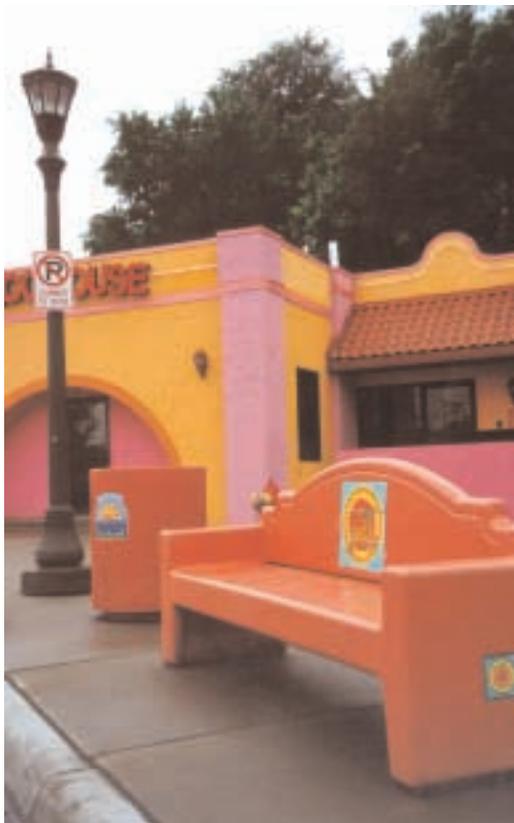
Public art must be infused throughout streetscape elements, including fences, walls, signage and furniture or as stand-alone (but integrated) pieces such as murals and sculpture. Art, in its many forms, can bring much-needed creativity, spontaneity and joy to an otherwise ordinary public realm. Perhaps the best public art is at once recognizable, challenging and a powerful aesthetic statement about the character, identity and mix of uses along the corridor.

### Applications

- *identify opportunities for public art and cultural celebration at many scales and locations throughout the neighborhood*
- *collaborate with the many neighborhood artists living in the Longfellow community to help define and implement a public art master plan*
- *work with City staff and developers to include public art and gathering space as an intentional centerpiece for the East Gateway project at Lake Street and West River Road*



RIGHT: community sculpture garden in the Phillips neighborhood



ABOVE: standard furnishings embellished with custom tiles on Concord Street in West St. Paul



# Site Development Guidelines - *Fill in the Gaps*

East Lake Street is characterized by a variety of building types, land uses and open spaces along its edge. This mixture of site conditions includes buildings fronting directly onto the sidewalk, houses set back from the street with traditional yards and surface parking lots. While visual variety can be pleasing if thoughtfully planned and carefully crafted, it is important to establish guidelines to manage future growth and define appropriate patterns for development.



Three story mixed-use building adjacent to the sidewalk



Two story office building



Streets feel safe when they are active, with outdoor seating, good lighting and windows on the sidewalk.

## Density and Land Use

This addresses the proposed mix of uses, both adaptive reuse and infill opportunities, which meet specific neighborhood objectives for new housing, business growth and public open space. The Neighborhood Action Plan proposes increased density and intensity of uses around specific nodes related to transit use, future transit system improvements, neighborhood attractions and public open space. This model for redevelopment supports neighborhood objectives for increased mobility with reduced dependence on automobile use, access to locally available goods and services, desirable street activity and block-by-block or community-wide use of park and open space amenities.

### Applications

- **periodically re-evaluate the Neighborhood Action Plan based on new market information, neighborhood polling, questionnaires and changing land use patterns along Lake Street to determine the mix of uses which best serve neighborhood needs**
- **periodically re-evaluate new development opportunities and specific sites made available by ongoing refinements to the Neighborhood Action Plan and evolution of neighborhood objectives**

## Safety and Security

This responds to both the perception and reality of 'safety', the intuitive feeling and need for human comfort, fit and belonging. Safety and security must be addressed on several levels including physical design, community 'eyes on the street' and standard policing procedures.

### Applications

- **require that new development and redevelopment projects create and maintain clear sight lines to building entries, parking areas, the sidewalk and other buildings**
- **encourage outdoor use areas, including sidewalk seating and patios with views of the street, for new and existing buildings**
- **ensure adequate but not excessive lighting levels throughout sites**
- **work with property owners and the City to ensure high maintenance levels, trash pickup, graffiti cleaning, etc.**

## Setbacks

Setbacks are the defined distance a structure is 'set back' from a given reference point such as a street right of way line, property line or another structure. Setbacks are intended to blend new building construction into the existing neighborhood fabric, matching historic patterns of development where appropriate while strengthening the visual continuity along the street.

### Applications

- *In most cases, new construction projects should place buildings close to the street (along edge of walk) matching existing building setbacks to provide continuity and encourage visual and physical interaction between building uses, sidewalk and street*



*Buildings close to the sidewalk, well-maintained facades, street trees and wide sidewalks create a comfortable and inviting street.*

## Public Parks and Open Space

This includes areas along the street that accommodate the public or semi-public activities of the neighborhood. Public parks and open space are essential to a successful neighborhood. These amenities must invite programmed, unprogrammed, active and passive uses of public space.

### Applications

- *provide a continuous, accessible and recognizable system of public spaces linked to city streets and sidewalks, to local and regional parks/trails, to the Mississippi River, to local and regional attractions and other area amenities*
- *work closely with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to explore opportunities for additional dedicated, public and semi-public park and open space as part of the mix of uses along Lake Street*



*Connections should be improved to neighborhood parks, such as Brackett Park, and to potential new green spaces.*



DCAUL

*Development at the East Gateway should strengthen connections to the Mississippi River and to West River Road*

# Site Development Guidelines - *Fill in the Gaps*



*This planted center median calms traffic and provides a pedestrian safe zone along Lexington Parkway, St. Paul.*

## Access and Connections - Vehicular Movement

This identifies the mix of transit and transportation uses in the area, describes street patterns and street types and provides an understanding of basic street function. The primary objective is to identify opportunities to 'calm' vehicular traffic while creating a balance between pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement. The integrated relationship between redevelopment, transit and the public realm demands a more comprehensive approach to ensure successful neighborhood revitalization. For example, additional housing or business growth cannot be supported without timely improvements to transit systems, parking facilities, streetscape and other public infrastructure projects.

### Applications

- *work with city representatives to explore street design alternatives which promote a balance of uses along Lake Street including the proposed landscaped median from West River Road to 43rd Avenue*
- *work with City/County representatives, as part of the Lake Street Repavement Project, to define specific objectives for traffic calming, safe crosswalks and streetscape improvements that express unique neighborhood character/identity and support for proposed redevelopment projects*
- *work with Metro Transit to identify and integrate proposed transit improvements, such as shelters, and ensure adequate transit stop areas and explore opportunities for a neighborhood circulator system*
- *pursue neighborhood traffic study*



*Creative bike facilities like these...*



*discourage this!*

## Access and Connections - Pedestrian and Bicycle

This refers to the system of streets, sidewalks, trails and alleys that provide pedestrian and bicycle access and connections throughout the neighborhood and with the surrounding community/region. The intent is to foster increased pedestrian and bicycle use. This can be accomplished in two ways: first - to provide the physical facilities that will invite this type of use, and second - to ensure that pedestrian/bicycle systems are designed and located next to safe, highly visible and interesting places to be, connected with the street and the mix of neighborhood uses/activities.

### Applications

- *explore opportunities for dedicated bike lanes/trails either on or off-street as part of the local and regional bike plan*
- *provide connections to regional pedestrian and bicycle systems related to this segment of Lake Street including the West River Road, the Mississippi River Gorge and the Midtown Greenway*
- *explore additional north/south connections such as 36th and 38th Avenues linking Lake Street with existing city parks and other open space amenities*
- *ensure that design and location of facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act*
- *ensure that detailed design and construction of new bicycle facilities support or integrate with existing neighborhood programs already underway*

## Parking

This refers to the space required to park cars based on City Planning and Zoning criteria, directly related to the mix of uses, transit facilities (existing and future) and the overall character of the street. In keeping with traditional urban design principles, the street is designed to accommodate the car while not allowing it to dominate. The same holds true for parking. To meet long range plans for new development along Lake Street, parking strategies should promote a balance of solutions including on-street, small surface lot and structured parking.

### Applications

- *where parking lots front Lake Street, promote streetscape improvements that will add interest, color, texture and pedestrian scale including masonry piers, ornamental iron fencing, plantings or other creative solutions*
- *identify opportunities for shared parking, particularly with offices and businesses that close at 5 o'clock, and facilitate continued shared parking at 36th Avenue and Lake Street.*
- *pursue discussions with City Planning and Zoning to investigate a change in regulations allowing fewer spaces per square foot of development based on transit improvements*
- *pursue neighborhood parking study and 'door-to-door' evaluation of district parking/shared parking needs and strategies*
- *continue to provide as much on-street parking along Lake Street as possible*



*Promote streetscape improvements that will add interest, color, texture and pedestrian scale along parking area edges. These photos show Grand Avenue, St. Paul, TOP, and 26th Street at Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, .*

# Architectural Guidelines - *Build a Lasting Neighborhood*

Some places are memorable because of the architectural uniformity of surrounding buildings. Other places have a more eclectic character, created over time with fewer constraints and less uniformity. Each has its own charm. While East Lake Street has a mix of buildings and spaces, future development should reflect the best of the street's existing character while allowing room to explore high-quality contemporary design solutions, thus recognizing that Lake Street's vitality comes, at least in part, from this diverse mix.

Architects frequently use familiar words in unfamiliar ways to describe ways of engaging people with their surroundings. Given this, we should start with some common understandings of what we mean by these terms and of how they can be applied to the East Lake Street environment.

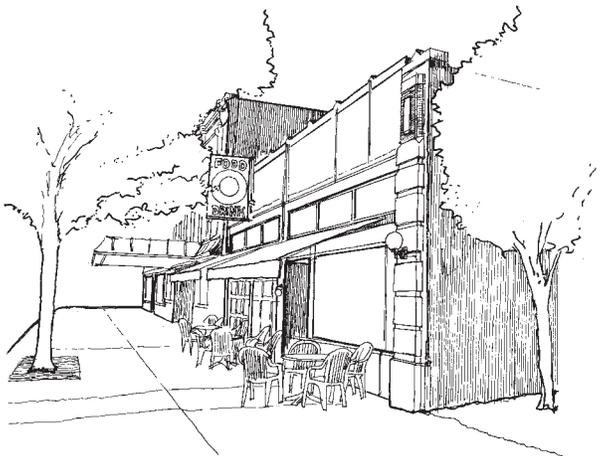


## Scale

Scale refers to the relationship between the size of a person and the dimension of spaces and building elements. Issues of scale address the sensation of feeling too large when one enters a space created especially for children or feeling insignificant when confronting gigantic structures and open spaces. Conversely, appropriately scaled buildings create "the good fit" within sensitively-designed places. A number of older buildings along East Lake Street offer examples of appropriately scaled facades that relate to human scale (see Neighborhood Assets).

### Applications

- *the Neighborhood Action Plan supports the idea of increased density and intensifying the mix of uses at specific nodes, which suggests that this community should examine a new scale of architecture at these locations; generally 2-3 story, but not to exceed 3 story buildings*
- *proposed development should reflect the scale of existing adjacent buildings where appropriate, i.e. given that there is a good contextual model to build upon*
- *building scale should respond to adjacent parks, open space and the public realm*



## Massing

Massing addresses the volumetric size and articulation of building elements. Buildings can feel too bulky or too small for their sites; in such cases, a building seems out of place. For larger structures, the perceived massiveness can be reduced by stepping the building's height up or down and breaking the facade into distinct elements. For a building that feels too small, landscape elements can strengthen its presence on the street.

### Applications

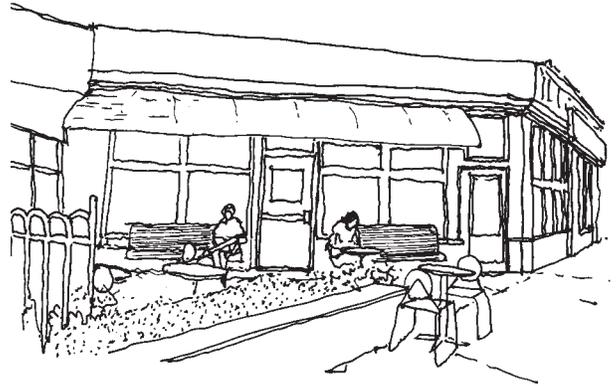
- *as new buildings are constructed on East Lake Street, the most appropriate of existing buildings should provide cues for massing*
- *larger buildings are certainly appropriate facing the street, but their massing should be responsive to their context, especially as they relate to smaller residences fronting on side streets.*
- *landscape solutions, including street trees, layered plantings and plantings for seasonal color should be used to enhance existing buildings that feel too small*

## Spatial Enclosure

This addresses the sense of free-flowing or confined space. Typically, the suburban environment is characterized by freestanding buildings surrounded by mostly uninterrupted space, while urban areas tend to be characterized by more enclosed, defined public spaces surrounded by buildings. Currently, East Lake Street has many vacant lots, commercial car sales and parking lots which reduce the continuity and spatial enclosure of the street wall.

### Applications

- *new buildings should be constructed within six feet of the street property or right-of-way line and should extend as long as practical to define and contain space at the street's edge*
- *at open lots, fencing, trellises, trees and other plantings should be employed to continue the street wall*
- *in addition, two-story buildings (maximum of three-story in some locations) should be encouraged to further increase the sense of enclosure on the street*
- *multi-family residential housing (apartments, townhomes) may be set further back from the street, but building scale and massing and site treatments must be increased to compensate for this shift*

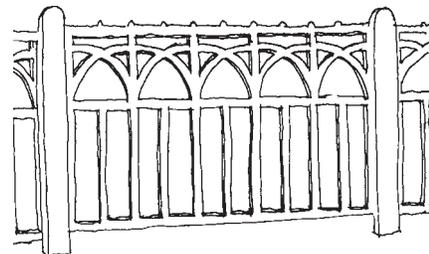
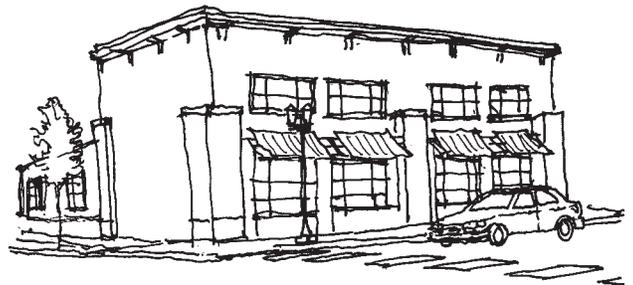


## Rhythm

Rhythm addresses the regularity or irregularity of recurring features or elements that make up the building, such as windows, porches and bays. East Lake Street has developed a diverse collection of buildings with varied forms, functions, and design motifs. When there is a regular rhythm of building forms and elements, differences seem less significant and individual structures tend to merge into a more harmonious unit. Such regular patterns amplify the natural rhythms of movement, encouraging people to continue walking along a street. When an overall rhythm of building elements is established, unique elements become more valued and meaningful.

### Applications

- *new buildings should strengthen the rhythms of East Lake Street by emphasizing increased activity at neighborhood nodes (see the Neighborhood Action Plan) and the continuity of the building wall in between nodes*
- *over several decades, this would help knit the street's buildings into a cohesive fabric*
- *the most immediate way to develop a regular rhythm, however, would be through planting of street trees at regular intervals*



# Architectural Guidelines - *Build a Lasting Neighborhood*



## Proportion and Orientation

This refers to the dimensional and directional relationship between the formal elements that shape a space or a building and its facades within the overall composition. The proportion and orientation of buildings and spaces help us understand their use and 'fit' along the street. Buildings along East Lake Street generally have a horizontal orientation, that is, their facades are longer than they are tall. Many buildings have expansive horizontal storefronts with the potential for high visibility between inside and outside. On their first floor, new buildings should continue this horizontal orientation.

### Applications

- *upper floors should be more balanced between vertical and horizontal orientations*
- *the lack of containment on the street detracts from the intensity of the experience there (see Spatial enclosure)*
- *generally, new buildings should be two-to-three stories in height with a maximum of three stories to increase this spatial relationship*



## Solar Access

This addresses the capacity of a site or building to receive unobstructed sunlight. We are becoming increasingly aware of the physiological benefits and the alternative energy potential of sunlight. Especially in dense urban neighborhoods, it is important to design infill projects with a recognition of the importance of using passive solar heating and avoiding shading adjacent properties.

### Applications

- *as new buildings are constructed along East Lake Street, the direct access to sunlight enjoyed by adjacent residences and other buildings on the street should be maintained*
- *new buildings should be of limited height, set back from property lines, or stepped down toward adjacent properties so that solar access is maintained*



## Entry Conditions

This addresses formal elements which define the points of entry into buildings, such as roofs, raised porches, railings, recesses and other projecting forms. A building's entry tells us in subtle ways that we are welcome and, in some cases, how we are expected to act upon entering. Entrances can be formal or casual depending on the function and symbolic significance of a particular building.

### **Applications**

- *building entrances should be oriented toward the front of the building and toward Lake Street whenever possible*
- *employing recesses, porches, transparent entry systems and other elements should convey an inviting, and open impression*
- *a regularly spaced series of entrances along the street is preferable to a single entry in long buildings*

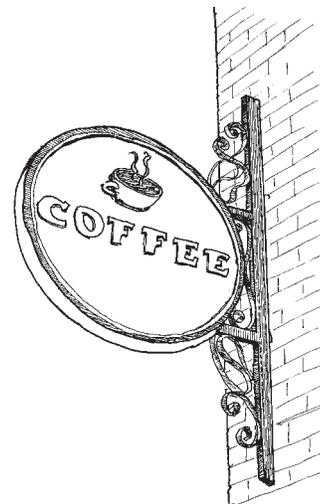


## Facade Materials and Building Signage

This refers to the types of materials selected and the mixing of materials to create a building façade. During the past hundred years, building materials have expanded from a limited range of natural materials to an array of synthetic materials. As a consequence of using these new materials, our built environment has become less homogeneous and less cohesive. East Lake Street exhibits a wide range of building materials: wood, brick, metal, concrete masonry, stucco, plastics and others. This is partially due to the range of building types from single-family houses to light industrial uses. Signage materials and design are included as part of a building's facade.

### **Applications**

- *future buildings should employ materials of high quality, durability, and character taking into account the balance of life-cycle costs with first costs of the material*
- *glass, steel and masonry are encouraged - plastics and aluminum are discouraged except in limited applications*
- *“Signs should be integrated with the building’s architecture and compatible with its style. Projecting wall signs are most appropriate. Signs should be sized for a pedestrian environment.” (see p. 38, Minnehaha Avenue Corridor Study, BRW, May 1999)*
- *large backlit signs on high poles will not be allowed as they create an environment that does not encourage active pedestrian use*



# Architectural Guidelines - *Build a Lasting Neighborhood*



## Roof Forms and Materials

This refers to the shape of the roof, its composition, and the selection of materials used to cover it. Roof forms can enliven a building and a streetscape. Roof materials can also add texture and color to bring interest and draw attention, as people walk or drive along the street. The buildings along East Lake Street have varied roof forms and materials, but few roofs along the street are notable.

### Applications

- where appropriate, roof elements may be used to mark key street intersections or focus attention on significant buildings
- by using roof forms and materials that relate to each other up and down the street, a more harmonious streetscape can be achieved
- in structures with flat roofs, facade and parapet details become more significant



## Public/Private Continuum

This addresses the subtle changes in space and forms that traditionally inform people when they are progressing from public to private places. Some urban environments, especially commercial areas, have become so utilitarian that they have lost the decorum and recognition of progression from public to private space. As new development occurs, the greatest challenge for builders and the neighborhoods will be to bring a continuity of forms, materials, and spaces which knit the street together without diminishing the variety that makes East Lake a memorable street.

### Applications

- buildings along East Lake Street should provide a sense of arrival and of transition from their most public to most private spaces. For example, the street and public sidewalk are the most public and the residential interior or "back of the shop" are the most private
- a variety of building and site elements can be employed for the semi-public and semi-private spaces: planting buffers, entry recesses or porches, vestibules and lobbies, etc. can fulfill these intermediate roles

## Existing Neighborhood Architectural Assets

Pictured here are a few examples of buildings along East Lake Street and in other parts of Longfellow that exhibit the kinds of qualities described in the Architectural Guidelines.



3927-31 East Lake Street



The Lake Street Garage restaurant and building detail, *INSET*



Longfellow Community School



*RIGHT: Victory Christian Center with its ornate but deteriorating facade*  
*INSET: some of the intricate Arts and Crafts tile from the entryway.*

# Recommendations and Next Steps - *Make it Happen*

The Task Force has described neighborhood issues and challenges, has listed neighborhood strengths and assets, and has created a **Neighborhood Action Plan** (pp. 6-7) to specifically target redevelopment objectives for East Lake Street. The following summary of recommendations and next steps responds to each of these challenges, highlights key projects and initiatives, and provides a checklist of specific activities necessary to implement the plan.

## Challenge #1

### *Neighborhood Character - build on existing strengths*

**Project summary** - The upcoming Lake Street repaving project provides a rare opportunity for Longfellow to work directly with City and County staff to determine location and character of streetscape enhancements for this segment of the corridor. The Neighborhood Action Plan recommends a strategy for public realm improvements throughout the study area, with increased emphasis and intensity of streetscape treatments at specific nodes, for example the 'Commercial District Façade Improvements' at 36th Avenue (see Guidelines). These nodes occur at important neighborhood crossroads, activity areas and amenities including 36th, 39th and 43rd Avenues and the intersection of Lake Street and West River Road (see the Neighborhood Action Plan).

**Additional priority projects supporting neighborhood enhancements include the following:**

- 1 Public realm improvements including lighting, street trees, paving and other enhancements.
- 2 The public park space north of Lake Street along West River Road (a crucial component of the East Gateway project).
- 3 The Lake Street planted median and traffic calming project from West River Road to the 43rd Avenue node (also an important component of the East Gateway project).
- 4 Public art and cultural celebration.



**Action steps checklist:**

- Meet with City and County staff to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting public realm improvements and recommendations for a reconfigured Lake Street; discuss project schedule, budget, funding sources and other technical and logistical issues related to the Lake Street Repaving Project.
- Meet with neighborhood property and business owners and tenants to describe Neighborhood Action Plan recommendations; determine feasibility and interest in establishing a Special Service District to finance and maintain streetscape and building façade improvements; identify participants, roles and responsibilities.
- Meet with Minneapolis Community Development Agency, Met Council, City Planning Department and other resources to refine existing and explore new opportunities for a paint-up/fix-up/façade improvements project fund to support small business enhancements.
- Meet with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board representatives to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting the proposed public park space at Lake Street and West River Road.
- Meet with local corporations, institutions and foundations to explore ideas and commitment to an 'adopt-a-block' sponsorship program (or other creative approaches) for public art, streetscape improvements, seasonal plantings or lighting displays, cultural resources and celebration and other special events.

**NOTES:**

# Recommendations and Next Steps - *Make it Happen*

## Challenge #2

### *Traffic and Transit - share the street*

**Project summary:** The Neighborhood Action Plan proposes development opportunities for a mix of residential and commercial uses which will generate more traffic through the neighborhood. The intent of the Neighborhood Action Plan is to support this mix of uses while seeking to minimize negative impacts of new development on those who already live here - sustaining the high quality of life that brought people to this neighborhood in the first place. Improved transit systems will improve accessibility, and recommendations for streetscape enhancements, traffic calming and reconfiguration of Lake Street will contribute to a more comfortable, pedestrian-friendly public realm (see Guidelines). Regardless, traffic remains a critical concern. To fully understand this challenge demands a more detailed traffic study and its short and long term impacts. The traffic study should include participants such as the City of Minneapolis, the Longfellow Community Council, Minnehaha Academy, Lake Street Council, potential developers of new properties, and others to **specifically target the following issues:**

- 1 traffic counts and level of service - primary streets and major intersections
- 2 local and regional effects on traffic created by new development projects throughout the Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor
- 3 relationship to transit, including LRT
- 4 relationship to pedestrian and bicycle movement
- 5 potential traffic calming measures and street design options including bulb-outs and planted medians

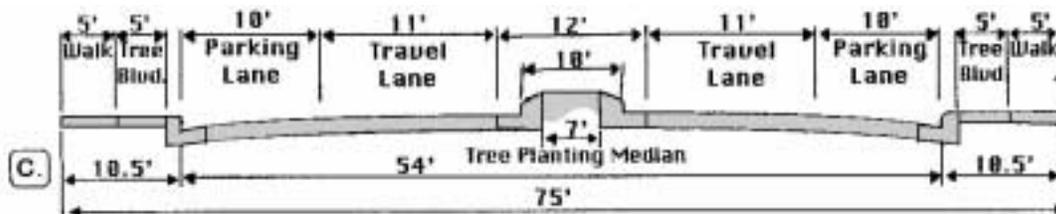


"Bulb-outs," or widened sidewalks at corners, can help to calm traffic. Such improvements must be coordinated with City and County agencies and MetroTransit.



Additional transit facilities -- potentially including custom facilities such as this one on Grand Avenue in St. Paul -- should be pursued with MetroTransit.

BELOW, example of a street design option for South Nicollet Ave (courtesy of City of Minneapolis) similar in width to much of East Lake Street. This drawing suggests a center median, parking on both sides and one lane of through-traffic in each direction. The feasibility of such a design should be explored as part of an overall traffic study.



**Action steps checklist:**

- Meet with City Council members, City Planning Department, Department of Public Works, Minnehaha Academy and other stakeholders to determine feasibility, budget, schedule and participation in a neighborhood traffic study
- Meet with City and County staff to discuss options and opportunities for planted median and other traffic calming measures based on proposed street cross sections
- Meet with Metro Transit and other transit/transportation representatives to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting public realm improvements related to transit stops and new development at transit nodes; discuss current and future plans for transit system improvements and their impacts on neighborhood planning initiatives
- Meet with Midtown Greenway representatives to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting public realm improvements related to pedestrian and bicycle movement; discuss current and future plans for Greenway/bike trail construction and their impacts on neighborhood planning initiatives

**NOTES:**

# Recommendations and Next Steps - *Make it Happen*

## Challenge #3

### *Parking - provide solutions to meet round-the-clock needs*

**Project summary:** The number of parking spaces needed to support development projects proposed in the Neighborhood Action Plan are reflected in the following estimates:

new housing (1.5 spaces for 270 units)	405 spaces
new commercial (1 space/500 square feet for 72,500 square feet)	145 spaces

Note: while much of this new parking will be provided within each development site, the neighborhood will need to balance their objectives for additional commercial activity, potential for destination amenities and opportunities for special events to fully evaluate the impacts of parking on neighborhood character and livability. As part of this study, the Task Force prepared an inventory and description of available parking, including on-street (158) and off-street (390) spaces, within the study area. This inventory serves as the basis for several strategies to meet current and future parking needs, including publicly and privately supported solutions. **The Task Force recognizes that the most realistic long term solutions for parking will require a creative integration of the following strategies:**

**Strategy 1** - Proposed projects must meet parking requirements on-site as part of their site plan submittal process (defined by City criteria and neighborhood 'liveability objectives'); Longfellow may want to exercise some flexibility in these criteria to support commercial projects, favoring the shared parking strategies outlined below.

**Strategy 2** - There are a number of small business and non-profit organizations which have adjacent private parking lots with available space after regular business hours, especially at 33rd, 37th, 39th, and 42nd Avenues. Explore opportunities to create formal agreements to share parking.

**Strategy 3** - There are a number of small parking lots dispersed throughout the neighborhood which provide employee and customer parking for specific businesses. These lots are often underutilized, providing little or no opportunity for additional public parking use. The opportunity for shared parking with adjacent businesses or for general public parking needs should be explored.

**Strategy 4** - There are a number of vacant or underutilized properties (some parking lots) fronting on Lake Street; these sites may provide an opportunity to work with the City to locate a consolidated municipal parking lot with dedicated spaces for business use and general public parking.

**Strategy 5** - Take advantage of alley access to provide additional small parking lot areas serving specific business or residential development; some portion of employee or long term parking needs may also be met at these locations. Every little bit helps!

**Strategy 6** - As part of the Lake Street repaving project, maximize availability of on-street parking, preferably within parking bays defined by traffic-calming bulb-outs and other streetscape enhancements (coordinate with MetroTransit).



**Action steps checklist:**

- Meet with local business owners, non-profit groups and other property owners to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting parking strategies, potential space availability and commitment to work together to find shared solutions to parking issues
- Meet with City and County staff to discuss options and opportunities for traffic calming measures and other parking issues related to the Lake Street repaving project
- Meet with City Council members, City Planning Department, Department of Public Works, Minnehaha Academy and other stakeholders to determine feasibility, budget, schedule and participation in a neighborhood or community-wide parking study

**NOTES:**

# Recommendations and Next Steps - *Make it Happen*

## Challenge #4

### *Mix of Uses - balance residential and commercial development*

**Project summary-** One of the primary objectives for this study is to create a plan which balances a mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses within an economically viable, neighborhood-scale framework for development. To accomplish this, the Neighborhood Action Plan discourages wholesale displacement and demolition of existing structures in favor of strategic development projects built around recognized neighborhood assets, viable businesses and other amenities. Current market information supports this approach and tells us two things - first, that new and infill housing projects must take a lead role in defining location and intensity of development within the neighborhood and second, that a variety of housing types with a range of prices will be a successful addition to the mix of uses along East Lake Street. Recommended housing types include rental lofts, rental apartments, for-sale lofts, for-sale apartments and live-work townhomes. **The suggested yearly rate of absorption (based on current market information) for these housing types includes:**

rental lofts / apartments over retail	72 units/year
for-sale lofts / apartments	18 units/year
live-work townhomes	6 units/year

Based on this information, the Neighborhood Action Plan identifies numerous opportunities for new residential development (approximately 175 - 270 units depending on building heights) primarily located at neighborhood nodes. Highest priority is placed on development of the Gateway Project and on proposed residential infill between 38th, 39th and 45th Avenues.

Commercial development is also proposed, either as ground-floor retail integrated within mixed-use buildings or as part of a multi-building strategy to enhance existing commercial districts within the neighborhood. A variety of potentially viable retail or restaurant uses along Lake Street, as described on the Neighborhood Action Plan, should be evaluated and included as part of future planning activities. **The type, location and quantity of commercial space to be developed is dependent upon the following:**

- attracting new residents and visitors to East Lake Street
- enhancing the character and quality of the public realm
- clear definition of neighborhood objectives for preferred commercial uses adjacent to existing residential areas

**Much of the Task Force's discussion focused on the following mixed-use, commercial projects:**

#### **• consolidation of the two SuperAmerica stores into one improved urban store**

As previously discussed, consolidation of the two SuperAmerica stores provides an opportunity to create an improved urban store at a single location and to pursue residential or mixed-use development at the vacated site.

#### **• mixed-use infill building at northwest corner of 36th Avenue node**

The northwest corner of 36th Avenue must be improved, in terms of visual appearance and built form, in order to complete the four-corner intersection needed to anchor this important neighborhood commercial district. The Neighborhood Action Plan recommends demolition of existing structures, perhaps assembling several adjacent sites to create a more significant mixed-use building.



• ***the 'tavern-on-the-green' concept for new restaurant development fronting on 'Oak Park' (a proposed neighborhood green space) located between 43rd and 44th Avenues along Lake Street***

Improvements to recreation and open space systems are also an essential component of the mixed-use Neighborhood Action Plan. The proposed green space at Lake Street and West River Road (Park Board property) and development of proposed green space between 43rd and 44th Avenues ("Oak Park") will create two signature gathering places. Connections to the Mississippi River, the Rowing Club and to existing neighborhood parks and trails via "green street" and public realm enhancements would further enhance neighborhood character, address safety and security issues and provide opportunities for neighborhood-based planting initiatives.



**Action steps checklist:**

- Meet with representatives from SuperAmerica to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting proposed mix of uses, location and intensity of commercial nodes and preferred location for their improved urban store; discuss feasibility, schedule, roles and responsibilities and other technical issues to move ahead with consolidation plan
- Meet with property owners, northwest corner of 36th Avenue and Lake Street, to review Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting proposed mix of uses, location and intensity of commercial nodes and specific recommendations related to this node; discuss feasibility, schedule, roles and responsibilities to move ahead with plans for renovation or new mixed-use building at this location
- Meet with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to discuss location, feasibility, roles and responsibilities for creating new greenspace as part of the East Gateway project
- Conduct proactive search for appropriate (preferred) list of restaurants, retail shops and other commercial uses in keeping with Neighborhood Action Plan objectives. This search should focus on small retail uses related to proposed mixed-use residential development and on the possibility for attracting new white tablecloth restaurant as part of the 'Oak Park' development strategy between 43rd and 44th Avenues
- Conduct proactive search to identify and contact appropriate arts and cultural organizations with interest in permanent space along East Lake Street

**NOTES:**

# Recommendations and Next Steps - *Make it Happen*

## Challenge #5

### *Planning Tools - understand zoning, redevelopment districts and other options*

**Project summary:** A variety of planning tools and implementation approaches were discussed as part of the East Lake Street corridor study process including:

**Approach 1** - Revise current zoning to accommodate proposed changes in land use - the potential for increased residential densities or additional commercial development at appropriate locations demands a careful look at implications for changes in zoning.

**Approach 2** - Apply Pedestrian Overlay Zoning, corridor zoning or other types of overlay/spot zoning to emphasize specific enhancements or proposed development projects.

**Approach 3** - Request 'redevelopment district' status for all or part of the East Lake Street study area - evaluate short and long term implications, positive and negative impacts related to use of redevelopment district as a tool to implement proposed development projects.

The purpose of these planning tools is to provide enough depth and specificity to guide development without removing the potential for creative expression of place and unique neighborhood character. Toward that end, a number of proposed development projects in the Neighborhood Action Plan will require zoning changes. This can be a relatively straight-forward process given the shared 'neighborhood and political will' to move this Neighborhood Action Plan forward. It is essential that this neighborhood meet on a regular basis with City Planning staff to review and re-evaluate implementation strategies, work-in-progress and development successes. Specific zoning needs (overlays or other options) can be identified and structured to meet the specific requirements and objectives of the Neighborhood Action Plan.

Use of redevelopment district designation may be appropriate as a means to assemble land for specific development objectives and to set the stage for more specific neighborhood discussion about long-term objectives for the entire corridor.

### **Action steps checklist:**

- Meet with City Planning staff, Minneapolis Community Development Agency and the Lake Street Council to review the Neighborhood Action Plan and Development Guidelines specifically highlighting proposed mix of uses, location of new housing projects and commercial nodes; discuss specific recommendations or strategies related to zoning, redevelopment districts and other options.

### **NOTES:**

## Challenge #6

### *Set Priorities - determine phasing and funding strategies*

**Project summary:** The Longfellow community has defined overall objectives for future development along East Lake Street, and the Task Force has expressed a long term vision in the Neighborhood Action Plan. **This Corridor Study forwards a set of guidelines and strategies and the following action steps will serve to broaden the audience and target resources to implement the Neighborhood Action Plan:**

#### Action steps checklist:

- Meet with Midtown Community Works Implementation Committee to present the Neighborhood Action Plan, describe projects already in progress and seek support for neighborhood objectives
  - Continue to explore roles, responsibilities and opportunities to create a neighborhood-based 'community development corporation'
  - Work with 'community development corporation' (such as Seward Redesign) to create and implement a proactive marketing plan
  - Prepare a preferred developer list and conduct a developer forum
  - Establish public/private partnerships to facilitate project review and approvals as well as funding
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## In Conclusion

The pieces are in place; now what needs to be done to put this Neighborhood Action Plan in motion?

### ***leadership, patience, communication***

The Task Force has worked together to set priorities, selecting projects which will have the most positive impact and will best demonstrate the new course of action for redevelopment. Leadership at this level of planning should be carried forward to various neighborhood committees and business organizations to expand ownership of the Neighborhood Action Plan and ensure continued support for these neighborhood-based initiatives.

Continued communication of ideas to a much wider audience of both public and private stakeholders is also essential for success - in fact, the format and content of this document is organized to more easily target this growing audience including; City Councilpersons, County Commissioners, the Metropolitan Council, The Mayor, City Planning Office, Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation Board, real estate, investor/lender, marketing/promotions, developer/builder, foundations, institutions, corporations, advocacy groups and a wealth of other resources. Many of these groups and individuals are seeking exactly the kinds of projects and ideas described in the Neighborhood Action Plan. Carry the story to them.

And last of all, be patient! The Neighborhood Action Plan is a framework for development activities that will take time - years, perhaps decades to realize. It is gratifying to see change take place as a direct result of neighborhood efforts, but at the same time, it is challenging to stay involved as the pace slows, project priorities shift or overall neighborhood objectives are redefined. But stay with it, and the incremental changes -- the little success stories -- will add up!