

5.0 - TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOALS AND VISION

GOALS OF OUR PLAN

Transportation is a vital component of our neighborhood revitalization plan. Our goals are to make efficient use of the transportation assets we already have, to promote development of new transportation assets, and to increase access to the regional transportation system for our visitors and residents.

ELEMENTS OF OUR PLAN

Our plan recognizes three key elements for our transportation strategy. These are:

- making efficient use of and strengthening our connections with the regional transit system
- encouraging and supporting bike and pedestrian circulation
- appropriately integrating automobile traffic and the regional highway network with the needs of our community

5.1 - WHAT IS HERE NOW: EXISTING ASSETS

THE REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

Ventura Village has good access to the regional transit system. Several bus lines connect our neighborhood to points in Minneapolis and beyond. Many of our citizens depend on transit to reach employment and shopping opportunities throughout our city.

- Franklin Avenue runs through the neighborhood and hosts a commercial corridor that is home to many small businesses. The #2 bus line runs along this street and provides connection to the University of Minnesota complex and to the Fairview Riverside campus as well as to commercial and residential districts like Nicollet Avenue and the Whittier and Seward neighborhoods.
- Transit service along Bloomington Avenue runs north to south, and provides access to a community clinic in our neighborhood and connects to commercial districts at Lake Street and downtown Minneapolis.
- Service along Chicago Avenue connects us to downtown, to north Minneapolis, and to the southern suburbs. A major transit transfer point near Franklin Avenue provides access to the Abbott Northwestern Hospital Complex, the Great Lake Center, and a number of businesses in the Lake Street commercial corridor.
- Park and Portland Avenue provide north-south access to downtown. They host several transit routes, and provide connection to Lake Street and points south. A major housing and commercial development is proposed for the corner of Franklin and Portland Avenue.

A table summarizing transit service in our neighborhood is given below:

Route Number	Streets	Destination	Day Frequency	Peak Freq	Night Freq	Weekend Freq
2	E-W, Franklin	U of Mn/Kenwood	20 mins	10 mins	30 mins	45 mins
5	S-N, Chicago	Brooklyn Center/MOA	7-8 mins	6-8 mins	15-18 mins	10 mins
7	S-N, Minnehaha	MOA	20 mins	15 mins	30 mins	30 mins
8	E-W	U of Mn/Downtown	*	*	*	30 mins
14	N-S, Bloomington	Brookdale/S Mpls	12-20 mins	12 mins	30 mins	20 mins
19	N-S, Cedar	Honeywell/MOA	20 mins	15 mins	30 mins	30 mins
20	N-S, Minnehaha	Downtown/Highland	30 mins	20 mins	1 hour	30 mins
22	N-S, 24th St, Cedar	Brookdale/MSP Air	20 mins	12 mins	20 mins	20 mins
39	N-S, Park/Portland	Lake St	*	20 min*peak	*	*
43	Circulator	Minnehaha Mall	*	*	*	45 mins

LIGHT RAIL: A TRANSIT ASSET FOR VENTURA VILLAGE

Construction has already started for the Twin Cities' first light rail transit (LRT) line. The line will run north and south and will connect downtown to the airport, the Mall of America, and points between (add map). Ventura Village will host a station for the system near the intersection of Franklin Avenue and Hiawatha. This station will allow connection from Franklin Avenue to any points along the LRT alignment starting in 2001. Connection to this regional transit asset will greatly aid the commercial and residential revitalization of Ventura Village by providing our residents and visitors with improved access to employment, shopping and recreational opportunities existing throughout our region. Our residents have actively participated in the design workshops for the Franklin station and eagerly anticipate its inauguration.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The neighborhood of Ventura Village enjoys the unique asset of being a revitalizing community within walking distance to downtown. Our residents can easily walk or bike to employment and entertainment opportunities in downtown, uptown, nearby Lake Street or our own Franklin Avenue commercial corridor. Ventura Village is one of the few Metro-area pedestrian-friendly communities where it is possible to get around comfortably without an automobile. To make it even better, we propose to increase the availability of safe and convenient bike and pedestrian connections throughout our neighborhood and beyond. This will benefit our businesses, our residential properties, and most of all, our residents and friends.

THE REGIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Ventura Village residents and visitors have access to the regional system through several entry/exit points located in and near the neighborhood:

- 5th Avenue ramp: provides access to 35W North and Interstate 94 East
- Hiawatha Avenue: provides access to 35W North and I-94 West
- 26th and 28th Street: provide access to Hiawatha Avenue
- Lake Street: access to 35W, access to Hiawatha Avenue

- Cedar Avenue: provides access to Interstate 94 East
- Downtown ramps: access to Interstate 94 and 35W

One of the problems that our neighborhood faces is that this very system has worked to isolate our neighborhood by creating an "urban island" encircled by wide bands of high-speed freeways. Although geographically adjacent, we are effectively separated from the neighborhoods that border us on three sides. For example, seventeen lanes of traffic separate us from Elliott Park and the rest of Downtown Minneapolis.

5.2 - WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR OUR FUTURE: PROPOSED CHANGES

Our vision for future access and transportation in and around Ventura Village includes several modifications to the transportation infrastructure now existing in Ventura Village. Among these changes we propose:

- converting existing one-way corridors into two-way streets
- instituting traffic calming measures
- providing transit shuttle service connecting Franklin Avenue with the new light rail (LRT) system station at Franklin and Hiawatha
- expanding the existing bikeway network
- adopting a transit-oriented development (TOD) model for redevelopment and revitalization
- developing properties and urban connections over freeway air-rights

5.2.1 - ONE-WAY TO TWO-WAY STREETS - PROPOSAL FOR CORRIDOR MODIFICATION

Ventura Village proposes to convert the Park and Portland Avenue corridors, which currently function as one-way street pair, back into their original configuration as two-way streets. This proposal is motivated by our desire to

- provide a safe pedestrian and bicyclist environment in our neighborhood
- increase Ventura Village's potential for economic development
- bring our neighborhood corridors into compliance with the provisions of the Minneapolis Plan

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Park and Portland avenues are each currently one-way corridors. They are each three lanes wide, with on-street parking on both sides, with a bikeway adjoining one of the parking lanes. The gutter-to-gutter distance of these streets varies from 56 to 60 feet.

IMPACTS ON URBAN CONNECTION AND SAFETY

In their current configuration, both Park and Portland avenues act as surface freeways connecting South Minneapolis to Downtown. Because of the avenues' width and signal timing settings, they encourage speeding and other unsafe driving behaviors that discourage integration with the

commercial and residential fabric of our neighborhood.

CONVERSION FEASIBILITY / EXISTING GEOMETRICS

Both Park and Portland avenues have sufficient width to accommodate the proposed changes. Numerous two-way, four lane corridors of similar size exist in Minneapolis, including other principal north-south avenues like Lyndale and Hennepin (which have the same width as Park and Portland avenues for the same stretch). A 56 to 60 ft corridor provides enough space for two-way, four lane flow, accommodating one side of on-street parking and a bikeway lane. With 11 ft lanes (to be used by the City and County in the reconstruction of Lake Street), there is enough space for four lanes, a bikeway and one lane of on-street parking (or two lanes of on-street parking without a bikeway, as in Hennepin and Lyndale avenues).

It should also be noted that both Park and Portland Avenues have greater right-of-way than Hennepin and Lyndale avenues (100 ft vs. 88 ft), which allows for the possibility of increasing road, bikeway and sidewalk widths in the future.

IMPACTS ON TRAFFIC

This proposal will actually improve access into downtown Minneapolis by increasing the number of traffic lanes into and out of the city. A reconfigured Park and Portland Avenue can host 2 northbound and 2 southbound lanes each, making for a total of 4 northbound lanes and 4 southbound lanes (compared to 3 northbound and 3 southbound lanes at present). Additionally, this proposal produces other positive effects, including:

- calming traffic by reducing speeds
- providing a safer and friendlier environment for pedestrians and bicyclists
- increasing the attractiveness of commercial investment at major intersections like Franklin and Portland.

5.2.2 - THE VENTURA VILLAGE BIKEWAYS

We propose expanding existing and building additional bikeways in our neighborhood in order to:

- increase traffic for area businesses,
- provide alternative transportation options for our residents,
- connect the neighborhood to adjoining communities and downtown, and
- serve as a link to public transit

Capital improvements made in Ventura Village or in nearby areas should include measures to facilitate the provision of such a network.

The following are recommended guidelines for bikeways in and around Ventura Village:

BIKEWAYS ON COMMERCIAL STREETS

- Bikeways shall be placed on, or in close proximity of, commercial streets in Ventura Village that connect to the Minneapolis bikeway system. Residential streets immediately off of the commercial corridor such as 18th Street East and 22nd Street East are viable alternatives to Franklin Avenue for East/West bicycle travel because of their proximity to major corridors and relative safety due to relatively low automobile traffic volume. Ventura Village proposes changing these streets to one-way traffic because their present width does not allow two-way auto traffic during winter months.

BIKEWAYS ON RESIDENTIAL AND SECONDARY STREETS

- Bikeways on one-way streets should border on-street parking such as those on Park and Portland Avenues, if on-street parking is present on both sides of the street.
- Bikeways on one-way streets with only one side of on-street parking should include the curb to utilize a part of a street that typically has little transit use. This has been done on 15th Street SE near the University of Minnesota, which has maximized the usable area of the street.
- Bikeways bordering on-street parking are the preferred bikeway configuration for Ventura Village and should be provided unless their provision is not practicable or if located on small residential streets that meet the criteria for curb inclusion.

PARK BIKEWAYS

- City parks along and near the proposed East/West residential bikeways should be incorporated into the Ventura Village and Minneapolis bikeway system.
- System connections that currently do not exist should be established. Presently, 22nd Street is cut off by Peavey Park between the avenues of Chicago and Park. The 22nd Street bikeway should continue through Peavey Park in order to connect the westbound bikeway to the northbound and southbound bikeways on Park and Portland Avenues.
- East Phillips Park should also include a bike path to make a connection with neighboring Seward by way of the proposed bridge over Hiawatha Avenue behind the AIHCDC (see map).

BIKEWAY SIGNAGE

- Appropriate signage must be added to Franklin Avenue and other major streets to direct East/West bicycle traffic to 18th and 22nd Streets or bikeways will be underutilized.

BIKEWAY GEOMETRICS AND DESIGN

- Width of bikeways should be a minimum of 36" or 3' and a maximum of 5' across for one lane.

Size should depend on the speed and frequency of automobile traffic. For example, a bikeway on Portland Avenue, presently a one-way, three-lane thoroughfare, would require a wider bike lane than a residential street, such as 18th Street.

- Bikeways should be clearly visible to all forms of transit and uniform in design.

INTEGRATION OF BIKEWAYS AND THE TRANSIT SYSTEM

- Bike racks should be incorporated in sidewalk designs close to bus stops, parking lots, area businesses, and major intersections to better connect transit in the area.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO FACILITATE BIKEWAY PROVISION

The City of Minneapolis has recognized the importance of transportation alternatives to the automobile and has taken many active steps to help bring about the noteworthy increase in bicycle commuting over the last two decades. Partnerships with the City and organizations dedicated to improving bicycle transit systems should be explored to reduce bikeway provision costs.

5.2.3 - THE FRANKLIN AVENUE / LRT TRANSIT SHUTTLE

Ventura Village seeks to obtain monies through the Metropolitan Council and other public agencies to fund transit circulator service along Franklin Avenue. This service would run along Franklin Avenue, between Nicollet Avenue and the future LRT station at Franklin and Hiawatha. Franklin Avenue is the main commercial corridor through our neighborhood, and is also the linear center of our community. All our residences and businesses are within ¼ mile of this strip, and this transit shuttle would in fact connect our entire neighborhood to the light rail station. We believe that this service will stimulate development of pedestrian-oriented facilities near Franklin Avenue and will aid in the revitalization of this commercial and residential strip. Additionally, circulator service will help establish convenient connections into our neighborhood for visitors and residents, and provide increased opportunities for the revitalization and success of our neighborhood commercial properties.

5.2.4 - THE VENTURA VILLAGE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) MODEL

--- instead of additional lanes for freeway - under development

5.2.5 - PROPOSAL FOR AIR-RIGHTS DEVELOPMENT

Ventura Village proposes to develop commercial and residential properties over existing freeway right-of-way. We want to do this to improve neighborhood continuity, connection, and circulation, and to re-establish our neighborhood's urban fabric, which was disrupted as a result of freeway construction in the 1960s. We see air-rights development as an important component of our

strategy to increase our neighborhood's residential and commercial vitality and desirability, and to aid its ongoing economic and social recovery. For more details on this proposal, please go to Chapter 9 - Ventura Village Initiatives, Section 9.1 - Proposal for air-rights development.

5.3 - SUMMARY: OUR TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

Ventura Village proposes several strategies for maximizing access to our existing and proposed transit assets to support our revitalization.

We propose:

- Strengthening our connections with the existing transit infrastructure in our city, and the adoption of a transit-first strategy for guiding development in our neighborhood.
- Provision of a transit circulator along Franklin Avenue to connect businesses along this important commercial strip to potential visitors riding LRT. This circulator would provide continuous service from the LRT station at Franklin and Hiawatha along the length of Franklin to connect to Interstate 35W. Ventura Village is studying the feasibility of providing a bus transfer hub at 35W to connect to proposed 24-hour Metro Transit express service running on this corridor and connecting to the southern suburbs.
- The construction of lower profile, higher density development, including mixed use, infill, and commercial/residential development near our major streets, connecting residents to transit assets and decreasing the need for automobile transportation for our residents.
- Reintegration of our neighborhood and re-establishment of the area's urban fabric through the construction of air-rights development ("land bridges") over the surrounding freeways. These idea was originally proposed by City of Minneapolis planners during the time of the original construction of Interstate 94 and 35W. Please see our chapter on air-rights development for more details.